



Save the Children.
100 YEARS

CHANGING LIVES IN OUR LIFETIME

GLOBAL CHILDHOOD REPORT 2019



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Some names of parents and children have been changed to protect identities.

Introduction

Children born today have a better chance than at any time in history to grow up healthy, educated and protected, with the opportunity to reach their full potential. Even a generation ago, a child was twice as likely to die before reaching age 5, 70 percent more likely to be involved in child labor and 20 percent more likely to be murdered.

In commemoration of its founding 100 years ago, Save the Children is releasing its third annual *Global Childhood Report* to celebrate progress for children. We examine the major reasons why childhood comes to an early end, and find significantly fewer children suffering ill-health, malnutrition, exclusion from education, child labor, child marriage, early pregnancy and violent death. In the year 2000, an estimated 970 million children were robbed of their childhoods due to these causes. That number today has been reduced to 690 million² – meaning at least 280 million children are better off today than they would have been two decades ago.

A comparison of *End of Childhood Index* scores finds the overall situation for children has improved in 173 out of 176 countries since 2000. This is welcome news – and it shows that investments and policies are working to lift up many of our children. Tremendous progress for children is taking place in some of the poorest countries in the world, providing ever-increasing evidence that development work is paying huge dividends in countries where needs are greatest.

Drilling down to look at the individual indicators in the index, we find countries have made impressive progress in fulfilling children's rights by reducing under-5 mortality. Countries have also made substantial progress in enrolling children in school and reducing malnutrition, child labor and child marriage. Progress in these areas has resulted in millions fewer children missing out on childhood. However, the world has made less progress in reducing adolescent births and child homicide, and there has been no progress at all in reducing the number of children living in areas of violence and conflict. In fact, the number of children living in war zones or forced to flee their homes due to conflict has skyrocketed since 2000.

Today, 1 child in 4 is being denied the right to a childhood – a time of life that should be safe for growing, learning and playing. These stolen childhoods are increasingly concentrated in the world's conflict zones. As noted above, of the eight indicators we examine, displacement due to conflict is the only one that is on the rise. There are 30.5 million more forcibly displaced people now than there were in 2000, an 80 percent

HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF CHILDREN HAVE BEEN SAVED

Global progress has saved millions of childhoods since the year 2000. Now¹ there are:

- 4.4 million fewer child deaths per year
- 49 million fewer stunted children
- 115 million fewer children out of school
- 94 million fewer child laborers
- 11 million fewer married girls
- 3 million fewer teen births per year
- 12,000 fewer child homicides per year

increase. Finding ways to fulfill children's health, education and protection rights in conflict zones is central to the challenge of ensuring every child has the childhood they deserve.

WHAT DRIVES PROGRESS?

In the 1990s, Save the Children pioneered a radical approach to making change that came to be known as "positive deviance." The approach was based on the idea that within every community, there are some people who, with the same resources and constraints as everyone else, do things differently and achieve better results than the norm. Their children are healthier, better educated or better protected than one would expect, given the challenges they face. Learning from these success stories proved to be

SUCCESS STORIES

This report includes case studies of countries that have made strong progress in improving children's well-being in recent decades. For example:

Bangladesh has achieved remarkable reductions in under-5 mortality following sustained investments in health.

Ethiopia has dramatically lowered the prevalence of stunting through a package of interventions to improve children's nutrition.

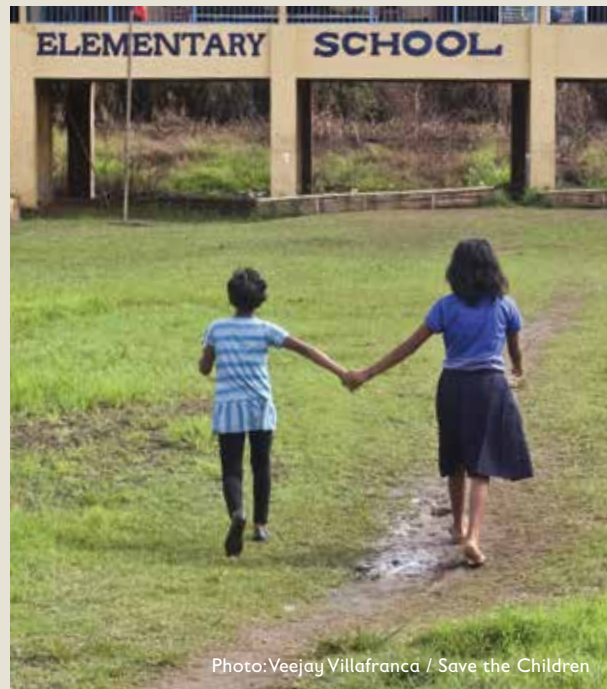
Mexico has greatly reduced the proportion of children involved in child labor by investing in education and poverty reduction.

Philippines achieved an impressive rise in the number of children enrolled in school by offering incentives and flexible options.

India has greatly reduced child marriage through legal reforms, programs to educate and empower girls, and public awareness campaigns.

Afghanistan has slashed its adolescent birth rate by increasing girls' education and improving health services, with donor assistance.

Colombia is making good gains to reduce violence against children through public investments in safety and programs for at-risk youth.



a powerful tool to improve the well-being of children and communities, and also the effectiveness of organizations. In our centennial year, we are paying tribute to this innovative idea, and using it to identify countries that are achieving better than average progress for children. By looking at the strategies employed successfully within these countries, we find inspiration to inform work elsewhere.

Even in the poorest countries in the world, there are many examples of extraordinary progress. This is a clear demonstration that, when the right steps are taken, “development works.” Building on this evidence, this report makes a powerful case for greater investment in child-sensitive development.

Success stories in this report illustrate some of the strategies that are working to save children around the world. They include: strengthening legal frameworks, improving health systems, investing in education, improving household incomes, and empowering teenagers to make life choices that set them on a path to realize their full potential.

The moral case for investing in children is compelling. In a world so rich in resources, know-how and technology, it is

unacceptable that we allow today's levels of child deprivation to continue.

Lost childhoods are a result of choices that exclude particular groups of children by design or neglect. A child's experience of childhood is largely determined by the care and protection they receive, or fail to receive, from adults. The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* affirms children's right to survival, food and nutrition, health and shelter. Children also have the right to be educated, both formally and informally. They have the right to live free from fear and discrimination, safe from violence, and protected from abuse and exploitation. And they have a right to be heard and to participate in decisions that affect them.³

In 2015, world leaders gathered at the United Nations to make a bold commitment – to end poverty in all its forms by 2030 and protect the planet for future generations. Taken together, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) they established paint a vision of a future in which all children enjoy their rights to health, education and protection – the building blocks of childhood.⁴ Crucially, signatories to the

agreement promised to ensure this would happen for all segments of society – regardless of income, geography, gender or identity. And they promised that those who are furthest behind – the most excluded in society – would be reached first.

This pledge to leave no one behind must be upheld. Only then will we realize its potential to transform the lives of millions of children across the world, guaranteeing every last child the childhood they deserve.

WHAT HAS CHANGED IN 100 YEARS?

Millions of children are alive and thriving today because of medical and technological advances we tend to take for granted. Breakthrough discoveries of vaccines to prevent childhood diseases, coupled with better care for mothers and babies, have saved countless lives and improved overall health. The world has also made good progress in building human and institutional capacity to deliver lifesaving solutions to the hardest to reach and most vulnerable children.

But perhaps the most important change in the last 100 years is in how we think about children. In 1919, when Eglantyne Jebb founded Save the Children, her conviction that children have a right to food, health care, education and protection from exploitation was not a mainstream idea. The Declaration on the Rights of the Child, drafted by Jebb, was adopted by the League of Nations in 1924. It asserted these rights for all children and made it the duty of the international community to put children's rights in the forefront of planning. The *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which was adopted in 1989 and has been ratified by all but one country, further changed the way children are viewed and treated – as human beings with a distinct set of rights, instead of as passive objects of care and charity.

As these visionary frameworks have gained acceptance, public opinion about children has been slowly but steadily shifting worldwide. For example, more people around the world now believe children belong in school, not toiling in fields and factories. And more governments have enacted laws to prevent child labor and child marriage, and to make school free and mandatory for all children, regardless of their gender, race, refugee status or special needs.

The world has come a long way in 100 years, but we still have a long way to go to ensure every child, everywhere, grows up healthy, educated and protected from harm.



Photo: Save the Children

In the 1920s in Hungary, these children and their six siblings had lost their mother and were suffering from rickets.

End of Childhood Index Results 2000 vs. 2019

Save the Children’s third annual *End of Childhood Index* compares the latest data for 176 countries – more than any other year – and assesses where the most and fewest children are missing out on childhood. Singapore tops the ranking with a score of 989. Eight Western European countries and South Korea also rank in the top 10, attaining very high scores for children’s health, education and protection status. Central African Republic ranks last among countries surveyed, scoring 394.

The 10 bottom-ranked countries – eight from West and Central Africa – are a reverse image of the top, performing poorly on most indicators. Children in these countries are the least likely to fully experience childhood, a time that should be dedicated to emotional, social and physical development, as well as play. Low index rankings also highlight the challenges of armed conflict and poverty. Nine of the

bottom 10 countries are low-income and six of the bottom 10 are fragile and conflict-affected states.⁵ In these and

WHAT DO THE SCORES MEAN?

End of Childhood Index scores for countries are calculated on a scale of 1 to 1,000. The scores measure the extent to which children in each country experience “childhood enders” such as death, severe malnutrition, being out of school and shouldering the burdens of adult roles in work, marriage and motherhood. Here’s a quick guide on how to interpret country scores:

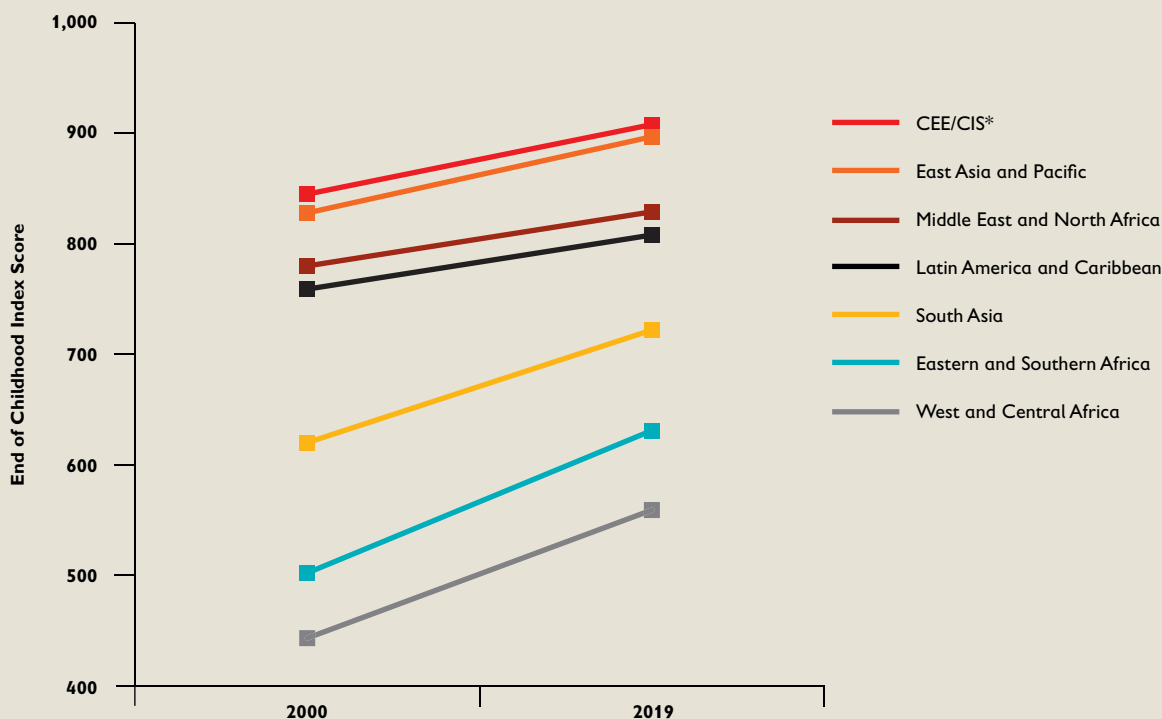
- 940 or above – Few children missing out on childhood
- 760 to 939 – Some children missing out on childhood
- 600 to 759 – Many children missing out on childhood
- 380 to 599 – Most children missing out on childhood
- 379 or below – Nearly all children missing out on childhood

For more details, see the Methodology and Research Notes beginning on page 54.

2019 END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX RANKINGS

TOP 10 Where childhood is most protected		BOTTOM 10 Where childhood is most threatened	
RANK	COUNTRY	RANK	COUNTRY
1	Singapore	167	Burkina Faso
2	Sweden	168	DR Congo
3	Finland	169	Guinea
3	Norway	170	Nigeria
3	Slovenia	171	Somalia
6	Germany	172	South Sudan
6	Ireland	173	Mali
8	Italy	174	Chad
8	South Korea	175	Niger
10	Belgium	176	Central African Republic

END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX SCORES ARE BETTER NOW IN ALL REGIONS



*Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

many other countries around the world, children are robbed of significant portions of their childhoods.

The United States, China and Russia may be the three most powerful countries in the world – in terms of their economic, military and technological strength and global influence – but all three badly trail most of Western Europe in helping children reach their full potential. China and the U.S. are tied for 36th place, and Russia ranks 38th. Their scores are 941, 941 and 940, respectively – at least 30 points behind most Western European countries. China has made the most progress of the three in recent decades, steadily improving conditions for its children, while Russia and the U.S. have made less progress.

GREAT GLOBAL PROGRESS FOR CHILDREN

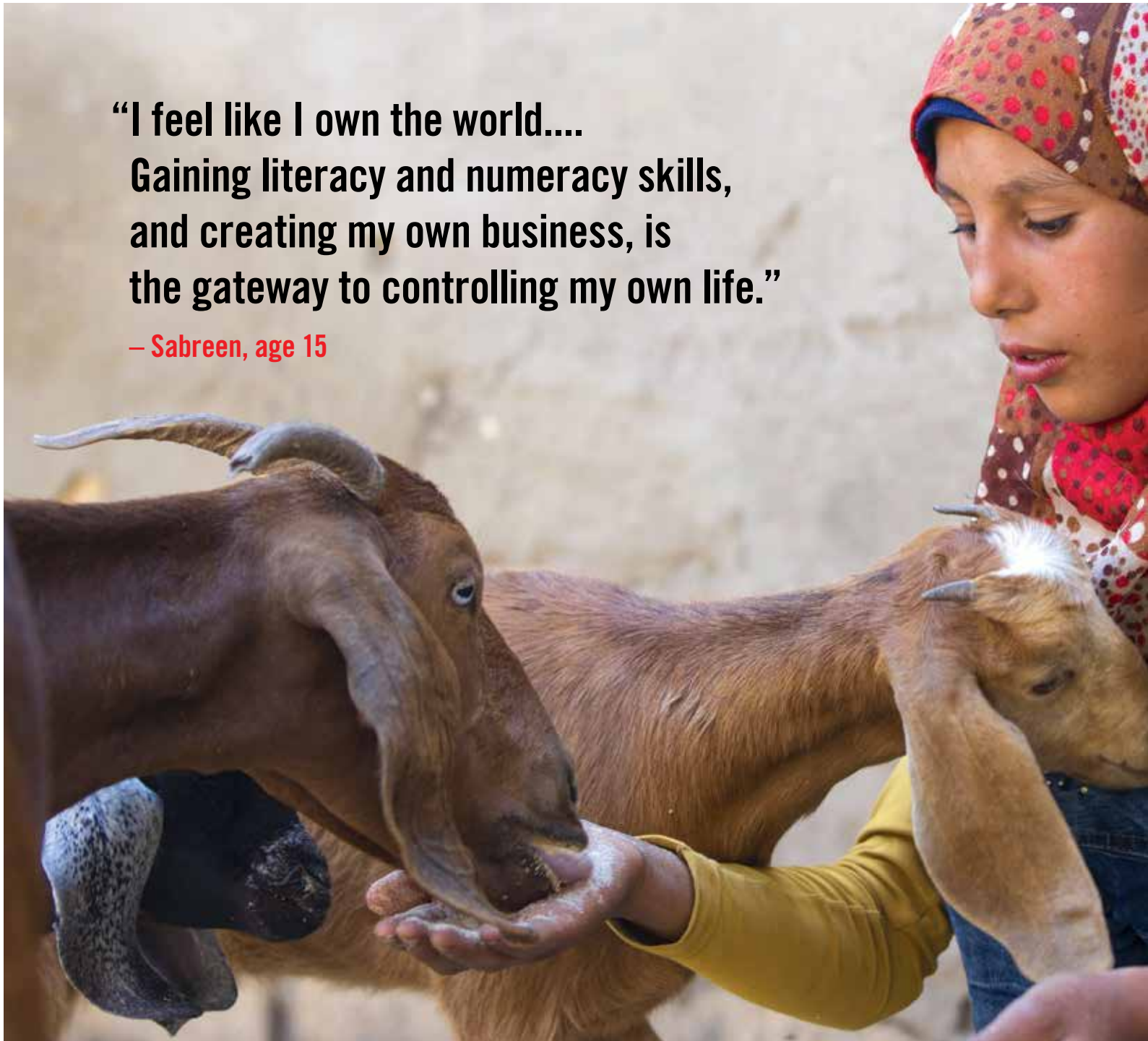
Save the Children took a look back at the data for the year 2000 and found a remarkable story of progress, in almost every country, in just one generation. A comparison of *End of Childhood Index* scores for 2000 and 2019 shows 173 out of

176 countries are doing better at giving their children full and stable childhoods. The most dramatic progress has been among some of the world's poorest countries. These successes show that poverty does not have to be a barrier to progress, and political choices can matter more than national wealth.

Sierra Leone has achieved a 246-point increase in its index score since 2000, rising from 345 to 591. Two decades after the end of the 11-year civil war, and just a few years after a devastating Ebola outbreak, the country has made strong gains for children on almost all indicators. Child marriage is down nearly 60 percent. Under-5 mortality has been cut by more than half (53 percent). Child labor is down by at least 40 percent. Fewer children are stunted and there are fewer teen births (rates for both are down by about 30 percent). Child homicide declined 20 percent. But, by far, the greatest progress is that fewer families are affected by conflict. In 2000, 1 in every 5 people in Sierra Leone had been forcibly displaced from home. Today, that figure is 1 in 700 – a 99 percent reduction.

**“I feel like I own the world....
Gaining literacy and numeracy skills,
and creating my own business, is
the gateway to controlling my own life.”**

— Sabreen, age 15



Rwanda's score rose 241 points, from 503 to 744. Twenty-five years after the Rwandan genocide, the country has improved on most indicators. Under-5 mortality is down 79 percent. Many more children are in school and many fewer children are married before age 18 (the out-of-school rate and child marriage rate are both down by 60 percent). Rwanda has also cut child labor, adolescent births and child homicides in half since 2000.

Ethiopia increased its score by 237 points, rising from 414 to 651. Improvements in child survival and education have been the main drivers of progress, but reductions in malnutrition and child marriage have also been important. Child mortality, children out of school and child marriage have all been

cut by about half or more. The adolescent birth rate is down 41 percent, stunting is down 33 percent, and child homicide is down 30 percent.

Niger has more than doubled its score since 2000, from 167 to 402. In relative terms, this is the greatest increase of any country. Niger was the lowest-ranked country on the index in 2017 and 2018, but this year it rises from the bottom, as the situation for children has continued to improve, while conditions have worsened in Central African Republic. Niger's under-5 mortality rate is down 62 percent since 2000 – that's 44,000 fewer child deaths each year. School enrollment rates have more than doubled (from 19 to 48 percent). And child homicide is down 36 percent. In 2000, nearly all children in



Sabreen, age 15, dropped out of school in fourth grade to help support her family in Egypt. She later enrolled in Save the Children's Youth in Action program to improve her reading and math skills. After graduating, she began a business raising livestock.

Photo: Joseph Raouf / Save the Children

Niger were missing out on childhood. One child in 4 did not survive to age 5. Over 80 percent of children were out of school and over half were chronically malnourished. Two-thirds of girls aged 15 to 19 were already married and more than 1 in 5 gave birth each year. Niger still has a long way to go – especially with regard to child marriage and early child-bearing – but sustained improvements over the years point to a brighter future for many of Niger's children.

Many other countries in **sub-Saharan Africa** also have made tremendous progress since 2000. Burkina Faso achieved a 220-point score increase, from 345 to 565, by improving child survival and school enrollment. Zambia's score is up 201 points, from 422 to 623, due mainly to improvements in child

survival. Liberia is up 182 points, from 417 to 599, due to 60 percent fewer deaths under age 5. Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique and Uganda all increased their scores by about 160 points or more. Improvements in children's health and survival were the main drivers of progress in these countries as well. Uganda also significantly cut teen births.

In **South Asia**, Bhutan achieved a 194-point increase, rising from 617 to 811, mostly by getting more children into school. Afghanistan also made excellent progress, increasing its score 185 points, from 411 to 596, by cutting child deaths and teen births in half. Bangladesh's score rose 153 points, from 575 to 728, primarily because of improvements in child survival. Nepal's score is up 142 points, from 543 to 685, due mostly to decreases in mortality, malnutrition and teen births. And India's score is up 137 points, from 632 to 769, largely because of improvements in child health and survival.

In **East Asia and the Pacific**, Timor-Leste raised its score 199 points, from 526 to 725, mostly due to reductions in child deaths and displacement. The score for Cambodia increased 149 points, from 606 to 755, because of gains in child survival, nutrition and school enrollment. China's score rose 80 points, from 861 to 941, due to reductions in child deaths and malnutrition. Indonesia lifted its score 71 points, from 721 to 792 by improving child health and getting more children into school. And Vietnam's score is up 67 points, from 764 to 831, due to significant reductions in stunting.

In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, the most progress was made by Haiti and Nicaragua, with 98- and 97-point increases, respectively. Haiti's score rose from 620 to 718. Nicaragua's score rose from 698 to 795. Both countries improved child survival and school enrollment. Bolivia achieved an 81-point increase, from 685 to 766, by cutting under-5 mortality and stunting in half. Ecuador rose 78 points, from 739 to 817, primarily by getting more children into school. Colombia, Guatemala and Peru all had score increases in the 65- to 75-point range. The biggest driver of progress in Colombia was the decline in child homicide. Guatemala's score increase was due to fewer adolescent births, child deaths and children out of school. Peru cut its stunting rate by 58 percent.

In **Eastern Europe and Central Asia**, Tajikistan achieved a 124-point increase, rising from 718 to 842, due to improvement in child survival and nutrition. Uzbekistan's score rose 98 points, from 789 to 887, primarily because of improvements in child health and survival. Kyrgyzstan's score is up 84 points, from 748 to 832, due to impressive reductions in stunting. Bosnia and Herzegovina's score increased 77 points, from 863 to 940, because displacement is down significantly. Ukraine's score is up 65 points, from 867 to 932 due to improvements in child survival. And Georgia raised its score 68 points, from 815 to 883, by getting more children into school and improving child health.

In the **Middle East**, progress for children since 2000 has been greatly affected by continued violence and conflict. Iraq's score is up 82 points, from 686 to 768, due to improvements on every indicator but displacement and adolescent fertility.

Narom has a checkup with midwife Soeung Sokha, who is part of an outreach team that goes to villages every month in Stung Treng Province, Cambodia. The team provides prenatal care, contraception, vaccinations and promotes health awareness.



Jordan, currently the home of millions of refugee children, increased its score 52 points, from 857 to 909. Child deaths, malnutrition, child marriage and adolescent births are all down by more than a third in Jordan.

Developed countries made more modest gains and we often see rising inequality despite overall progress. The biggest score increases are in Latvia and Estonia (both up 40 points from 927 to 967) and Lithuania (up 39 points from 934 to 973). Child mortality is down more than 70 percent in Latvia and Estonia. Lithuania made good gains across five indicators.

Only three countries have seen a decline in their scores since 2000:

- **Syria**, now in its ninth year of war, has lost 151 points from its 2000 score, dropping from 794 to 643. Threats to childhood have risen steadily, with significant increases in malnutrition, children out of school and displacement. In 2000, there was almost no forced displacement in Syria.

Today, 75 percent of the population is displaced from their homes by the conflict.

- **Venezuela**, experiencing a socioeconomic and political crisis since 2010, has a score drop of 32 points, from 739 to 707. The under-5 mortality rate has risen 40 percent and child homicide is up 60 percent. Displacement has also risen sharply.
- **Trinidad and Tobago's** score fell 29 points, from 885 to 856. Chronic malnutrition has led to a doubling of the stunting rate (from 5 to 11 percent of children under age 5) and data suggest the child homicide rate has quadrupled, from 4 to 16 deaths per 100,000 children.

See the 2000-2019 Progress Rankings, 2019 Country Rankings, the *Complete End of Childhood Index* and an explanation of the methodology, beginning on page 47.

10 Factors Driving Change for Children Since 2000

Here are 10 key factors that have contributed to global progress for children in recent decades.

1 The MDG agenda – Launched in 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) galvanized a 15-year global campaign to end poverty in all its forms. This was the first-ever global strategy with quantifiable targets to be agreed upon by all United Nations member states. Thanks to concerted global, regional, national and local efforts, the MDGs saved the lives of millions and improved conditions for many more.

A recent Brookings Institution study found as many as 19 million extra child lives – most of them in Africa – were saved because of MDG-accelerated action.⁶ Major increases in rates of progress also resulted in as many as 111 million more children completing primary school and at least 471 million extra people being lifted out of extreme poverty.⁷ And yet, for all these gains, progress was uneven. Extreme poverty and inequalities persist. This is especially true for the roughly 1.5 billion people in conflict-affected countries and on the extreme margins of society who benefited least from the goals.⁸

2 Government commitment – Strong political leadership at the national level – among heads of government and key policymakers – has played a crucial role in helping millions more children survive and thrive.⁹ In Ethiopia, for example, the nation's steadfast commitment and leadership over several decades to save the lives of newborns in both urban and remote rural areas has resulted not only in global recognition of the country's advances, but also the recent appointment of its former top health administrator as the head of the World Health Organization. Of course, changes in government can undermine such efforts, but in countries like Bangladesh, Colombia and Ethiopia, progress has continued despite changes in leadership.¹⁰

In addition, in sharp contrast to 2000, more national governments recognize the value of increased social investment and poverty reduction and have created enabling legislation that addresses these issues. Progress against child labor in Brazil and Mexico, for example, would not have happened without active government policies.¹¹ Several countries – including Burkina Faso, India, Malawi and Sierra Leone – have recently created legislation addressing the basic right of

children not to be married at an early age. And Ghana and Sierra Leone are the latest countries to take important steps to provide children with a free and compulsory education and set a minimum age for employment, though implementation of these policies remains challenging in both countries.

3 Social investment and economic growth – Economic growth on its own does not guarantee greater resources for social investment in children's programs, but a number of countries have used additional resources resulting from economic growth to create highly effective programs benefitting children (for example, Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia and Vietnam).¹² Economic growth has driven malnutrition reductions in China and Mongolia and child labor reductions in Central Asia. In addition, revising fiscal and tax policies and making them more equitable can boost household incomes, providing additional funds to parents to pay for their children's health care, nutrition and education.

Conditional cash transfers are another social protection strategy that has proven effective in many countries. Governments or organizations transfer money to people who meet certain criteria, such as enrolling children in school or receiving vaccinations. Food and other incentives have also been used this way. For example, in Bangladesh, girls received incentives to delay marriage, avoid teenage childbearing and stay in school.¹³

4 Improved planning and implementation – Policy commitments are important but they require detailed and coordinated programs to succeed. The most effective programs often involve a number of sectors participating toward the same goal while seeking support and buy-in from local communities and major donors. Practitioners have found that coordinated investments in education, health, poverty reduction, water and sanitation (i.e., "whole systems" approaches) can have a much greater impact on improving the lives of children than interventions from individual sectors.¹⁴ India's comprehensive approach to tackling child marriage, for example – including policy reforms and investments in education, livelihoods and community mobilization for change – has

been the key to its success. Similarly, multisectoral programs have been critical drivers of nutrition gains in Ethiopia and across Africa.

Timing is also important. Typically, investments in education come first and support later gains in health and nutrition. Throughout the planning and implementation process, governments need to acknowledge the role that NGOs and donors play in filling gaps that invariably develop in translating detailed plans into action.

5 Reducing inequities – Progress in child well-being has often been greatest where there has been an explicit emphasis on directing resources to and improving the situation of the poorest and most marginalized groups. Vietnam has targeted programs to disadvantaged minority ethnic groups. Bangladesh has worked to reduce sex differentials in child mortality and school enrollment, and Brazil has had success in reducing malnutrition and child mortality among the poorest quintiles and in the poorest parts of the country.¹⁵ Egypt, Mali, Malawi, Niger and Sierra Leone have done especially well at reaching the poorest children with lifesaving health interventions. All are examples of countries taking the extra step as they seek to improve the lives of their most marginalized citizens – including millions of children whose lives remain untouched throughout decades of progress.

Much remains to be done to reach the poorest children who tend to be the furthest behind. Studies by Save the Children and UNICEF suggest that global development goals would be reached faster with a focus on the most disadvantaged children and communities.¹⁶

6 Development assistance – Global aid declined in the 1990s, but has doubled since 2000.¹⁷ Development assistance plays a key role in improving children's well-being, particularly in low-income countries. An analysis by the Overseas Development Institute and Save the Children found countries in sub-Saharan Africa that received the most aid over the period 1998-2008 also made the most progress in child well-being.¹⁸

Targeting aid to children not only improves their lives in the short term, but also can pay huge dividends for a poor country's economy over the longer term. One recent study found that spending \$1 on childhood vaccines in a low-income country can generate as much as \$44 in future savings.¹⁹ Other studies have shown that girls' education can be the single best investment a poor country can make to improve its economic future.²⁰ Early childhood care and development interventions also promise high rates of return to families, societies and nations.²¹

Of course, aid alone will not drive progress. Aid is most effective for children where national commitments to child well-being already exist and can strengthen and facilitate the implementation of effective programs and services. It often

takes innovative initiatives – coupled with good local governance, political commitment and donor support – to ensure major progress. Consider the dramatic reduction in children's deaths due to infectious diseases. In many of the world's poorest neighborhoods, local physicians with government support have worked tirelessly with global alliances like Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, to help children survive malaria, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, HIV and tuberculosis, to name only a few. Today more than 90 percent of people in 131 countries have been vaccinated against many of these diseases.²² Progress also requires that countries themselves take ownership of their own development, and as this report's case studies illustrate, many developing countries are doing just that.

7 Empowering women and young girls – Advances in girls' education (including equal access to primary school), falling fertility rates, delays in marriage and first pregnancy, greater participation in the labor market, and a stronger political voice all represent major advances for women since the year 2000. And not surprisingly they have had a direct and major impact on the health, social and economic well-being of women and their children. As this report shows, rising education rates among women and girls have been critical to improvements in child health in Bangladesh and child protection in Afghanistan and India.²³

Empowering women and girls also leads to strengthened economies and more equitable societies.²⁴ Investing in education programs for girls and increasing the age at which they marry can return \$5 for every dollar spent.²⁵ Investing in programs improving incomes for women can return \$7 dollars for every dollar spent.²⁶ And yet, despite this progress, gender inequalities remain pervasive in each and every dimension of sustainable development.²⁷

8 Women's leadership – Since 1995, when the Beijing Platform for Action was adopted, the proportion of women serving in parliaments around the world has more than doubled, growing from 11 percent that year to 24 percent in 2019.²⁸ Women in government have gained ground in 90 percent of the 174 countries for which data are available for 1995 to 2019.²⁹ The number of single or lower houses of parliament where women occupy 30 percent or more of the seats (the target identified in Beijing) has increased from 5 to 50, while those with 40 percent or more have jumped from 1 to 15. The number of male-only parliaments dropped, from 10 to 3. As of January 1, 2019, there were three countries with over half of parliamentary seats held by women: Rwanda (61 percent), Cuba (53 percent) and Bolivia (53 percent).³⁰

Evidence is growing of the positive impact women's participation has on policy outcomes for children and families and development outcomes more broadly.³¹ Issues like gender-based violence, equal pay, child care, health care, reproductive rights, family leave, violence against children and child



Niger, one of the poorest countries in the world, has made tremendous progress since 2000 in improving conditions for children. A significant portion of Niger's national budget during this period has come from foreign aid (45% in 2002 and 15% in 2017).³² The United States has been the largest donor, contributing \$437 million in 2018.³³

Photo:Victoria Zegler / Save the Children

marriage are increasingly on the political agendas of countries. A robust body of research shows that a greater proportion of women legislators has a profound impact on peace and security.³⁴ Female legislators also tend to increase foreign aid, particularly for education and health.³⁵ At the grassroots level, women and girls are leading efforts to end child marriage in India, Indonesia, Lebanon, Mexico, Pakistan, Senegal and other countries.³⁶

9 New technologies – Since 2000, the spread of mobile phones, computers and the Internet have transformed the way people live, work and interact. Nearly the entire world population (96 percent) now live within reach of a mobile cellular network, up from 58 percent in 2001.³⁷ And more than half of the world's population is now online, up from just over 6 percent in 2000.

New, compelling evidence shows digital solutions are positively linked to progress on most (11 of 17) Sustainable Development Goals.³⁸ Information and communications technologies (ICTs) have had a positive impact on economic growth, boosting incomes for people from all segments of society. There is growing evidence that ICTs have also contrib-

uted to improvements in child survival, health and well-being.

Telemedicine is making medical advice and treatment options available to people no matter where they live. Digital health platforms are being used by frontline health workers to diagnose and treat pneumonia, remind parents about actions that keep their babies healthy, and improve the coordination of vaccination campaigns and bed net distributions to prevent mosquito bites that spread malaria. Mobile phones are being used to register births, improve early diagnosis of HIV in infants, monitor malnutrition in children and to educate individuals about family planning, adolescent health and prenatal care. During the recent Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone, mobile phones were used to send emergency alerts, support health worker responses and increase access to help lines.

Digital tools and technologies are being used to improve livelihoods (for example, e-commerce platforms help expand market opportunities and mobile banking allows poor families to save and gain access to credit).

ICTs are also increasing access to quality education and promoting learning. This progress has been especially valuable for girls, refugees, children with disabilities and others who might otherwise be out of school.^{39,40,41,42,43}



In Indonesia, Nurul participates in a Save the Children employment skills training program to improve her future opportunities and reduce her risk for exploitive labor.

10 Social media – Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and other social media platforms have spread around the world with remarkable speed. The Pew Research Center surveyed adults in 37 countries and found social media usage varied from a high of 75 percent in Jordan to a low of 20 percent in Tanzania and India.⁴⁴ Across the 19 developing countries surveyed, 53 percent of adults said they used social media, up from 34 percent just five years earlier.

Social media has had a huge impact on how people communicate with one another and access information. By giving a platform to anyone who wants to use it, social media has the potential to open and democratize societies.⁴⁵ It can facilitate discussions, inspire action and vastly speed up the diffusion of information, ideas, practices, values and social norms that support positive change.⁴⁶ Children and adolescents are

using social media to amplify their voices and seek solutions to problems affecting them and their communities.⁴⁷

There is some evidence that social media has had a positive impact on global development.⁴⁸ It has been used to support greater engagement in health issues, promote social activism, boost economic activity, facilitate disaster response and relief, bolster civic engagement, enhance advocacy efforts and mobilize for peace. The public profile of child marriage, for example, has been boosted through increased media attention globally.⁴⁹ Similarly, socially conscious consumerism may be contributing to declines in child labor.⁵⁰

While there are important concerns about the social, political and economic fallout from the spread of digital activities – for example, misuse of social media that encourages violence, bullying and suicide – most experts believe the good outweighs the bad.^{51,52}

More Children Are Healthy and Surviving to Age 5

For new parents today who fear that one or more of their children will die at an early age, there is good news. Since 2000, nearly every country has made substantial progress in reducing child mortality. Worldwide, half as many children under age 5 now die from preventable causes compared to the year 2000, thanks to global action that has improved coverage and quality of maternal and child health care, immunizations, treatment of pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria and other deadly diseases. Improved nutrition and access to family planning have also saved many lives.⁵³

49% decline in the under-5 mortality rate worldwide = Good Progress

Result: Over 50 million children's lives saved since 2000⁵⁴

More than 80 countries have cut their under-5 mortality rates at least in half since 2000 – 69 of these countries are developing nations. Every region of the world and income group has countries making good gains for children's health and survival, including a majority (59 percent) of low-income and lower-middle-income countries.

Notable progress has been made in West and Central Africa, where nearly half (11 of 24) of countries in the region – including some of the poorest countries in the world – have at least halved their under-5 mortality rates since 2000. Insecticide-treated bed nets have helped improve the survival of young children, as have immunization campaigns, dietary supplements, and programs to encourage breastfeeding.⁵⁵ Strong government commitment and policy changes, such as universal health care in Burkina Faso and Mali, are also important factors.⁵⁶ Liberia, Niger and Senegal have made tremendous gains, cutting child deaths by 60, 62 and 66 percent, respectively. Congo has cut its child death rate by 58 percent and Burkina Faso by 55 percent. Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Sierra Leone have each reduced child deaths by 52

percent or more. Data suggest Mali, Niger and Sierra Leone have done especially well at reaching the poorest children with lifesaving solutions.

In East and Southern Africa, Rwanda – another low-income country – has cut its under-5 mortality rate by a remarkable 79 percent since 2000. Major health sector reforms and investments in Rwanda have built up the health workforce, increased immunization coverage and increased exclusive breastfeeding, among other advances. Improved socio-economic conditions have also been important for Rwanda's success.⁵⁷ Other countries making noteworthy progress since 2000 include: Malawi (68 percent decline in child deaths), Uganda (66 percent decline), Tanzania (59 percent),

ALMOST HALF AS MANY CHILDREN ARE DYING PER YEAR

Global number of deaths of children under 5

2000



2017



Source: UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME), 2018

TOO LITTLE PROGRESS ON PNEUMONIA

Childhood pneumonia is the leading infectious cause of death in children under age 5 and it kills more children than diarrhea, malaria and HIV combined. In 2017, over 800,000 children died from pneumonia. Pneumonia-related deaths are falling more slowly compared to deaths caused by other childhood diseases.⁵⁸

Pneumonia affects children and families everywhere, but is most prevalent in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa and is strongly linked to poverty and exclusion.⁵⁹ The children most at risk tend to be from the poorest families in rural areas and urban slums. They are the most likely to be malnourished and the least likely to be immunized, diagnosed and treated.⁶⁰

By 2030, pneumonia will kill 11 million more children unless steps are taken to strengthen health systems and ensure all families have the tools they need to prevent and treat this illness.⁶¹ Scaling up proven, low-cost, low-tech interventions – including immunizations, exclusive breastfeeding and better nutrition – could prevent nearly half (5.3 million) of these deaths.⁶² And yet, progress to stop pneumonia is being hampered by too little investment and by persistent inequities within countries.⁶³

Mozambique (58 percent) and Kenya (56 percent). In each of these five countries, data suggest progress has been equitable, meaning the poorest children have benefitted at least as much as the national average.

In South Asia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal have achieved great reductions in child mortality since 2000. Bangladesh's child death rate is down 63 percent, Bhutan's is down 60 percent, Nepal's is down 59 percent and India's is down 57 percent. There have been equitable gains among the poorest children in both Bangladesh and India. (See page 15 for more on what's working in Bangladesh.)

In the Middle East, Egypt stands out for its 53 percent drop in child deaths since 2000 and success in reaching the poorest children with lifesaving health care.

While there is much child survival progress to celebrate around the world, the job is nowhere near done. Death rates of children in the first days after birth have remained stubbornly high around the world. In India, for example, the latest figures indicate that close to two-thirds of all under-5 deaths (605,000) occur among newborns in the first 28 days of life. The number of Indian children dying after the first month and before age 5 has fallen by 70 percent since 2000 – from 1.3 million to 384,000 – but the number of newborn deaths has declined by only 52 percent.⁶⁴

Many of the poorest children are still vulnerable to ill-health and early death. Lack of universal health coverage, inadequate diets and unsafe water still put the most disadvantaged children at the highest risk of death in almost every country. An estimated 5.4 million children still die before their fifth birthday each year. At a time when the knowledge and technology to save lives is available, 15,000 child deaths each day is unacceptable.⁶⁵

Isabella, from South Sudan, attended lessons at Save the Children's Mother and Babies Area at the Omugo refugee settlement in Uganda. She learned about the importance of breastfeeding, holding your baby close to your skin, and a healthy, mixed diet. She has become a strong advocate for the Mother and Babies Area, and reaches out to other women to encourage them to participate.



Photo: Fredrik Lerneryd / Save the Children

Photo: Save the Children



Hasabullah recovered from life-threatening pneumonia thanks to treatment from a health worker trained by Save the Children. Now his mother Mukta tells others in their village about services at the community clinic, and many more children from poor families are being treated.

CASE STUDY

Better Child Health in Bangladesh

When 8-month-old Hasabullah's ordinary-seeming cold turned into pneumonia, Mukta, his mother, did not know what to do. The family is very poor and she could not afford a doctor visit. Even if she did have money, there was no hospital or recognized doctor nearby. "I felt I could do nothing but cry," said Mukta.

Pneumonia kills 37 children each day in Bangladesh, though it can often be easily treated with low-cost antibiotics. It is one of the leading causes of death before age 5 in low-income countries. But Bangladesh is fighting back successfully against pneumonia and other deadly childhood diseases.

The next day, Mukta heard people in her village talking about Sumon, the paramedic at the community clinic, who had just been trained to treat pneumonia, and about how medicines were available at the clinic. Mukta took her sick son to the clinic. Sumon diagnosed Hasabullah's pneumonia and prescribed an antibiotic syrup for five days. Hasabullah was completely cured. "I was surprised that a serious disease like pneumonia could be treated here in my village by a community health worker," said Mukta. "I'm very grateful."

Bangladesh has cut its under-5 mortality rate by 63 percent since 2000 and by 77 percent since 1990. In 1990, the country had 532,000 child deaths. Today, that number is around 100,000. Bangladesh is expected to reach the global target of 25 or

fewer deaths per 1,000 births years before the 2030 deadline.⁶⁶ Progress has been equitable – benefitting poor and rich, girls and boys, and also rural and urban children.

Bangladesh has had a sustained commitment to improving child health over successive governments. Investments have been focused to strengthen health systems and to introduce and scale up proven solutions for mothers, children and newborns. Targeted, well-designed and equity-oriented programs have achieved high immunization coverage and high rates of treatment for diarrhea and pneumonia. The health of newborn babies has also been a priority.⁶⁷ Child deaths have dropped in part because of the country's commitment to innovation and knowledge-sharing (for example, use of mobile phones to share health information).⁶⁸ Women's and girl's education and empowerment are key factors driving progress, as are changing social norms and overall improvements in socioeconomic conditions. Bangladesh has also engaged civil society, including children and young people, in setting public policy priorities and influencing budget allocations. New initiatives that promise to reduce the remaining preventable causes of under-5 child deaths include the launch of the National Newborn Health Program, that focuses on scaling up a package of evidence-based interventions in all 64 districts of the country.

Fewer Children Suffer Malnutrition that Causes Stunting

Young children who do not get enough food and nutrients cannot grow properly and can become too short for their age. This condition is called “stunting” and it prevents children from developing to their full potential – both mentally and physically.

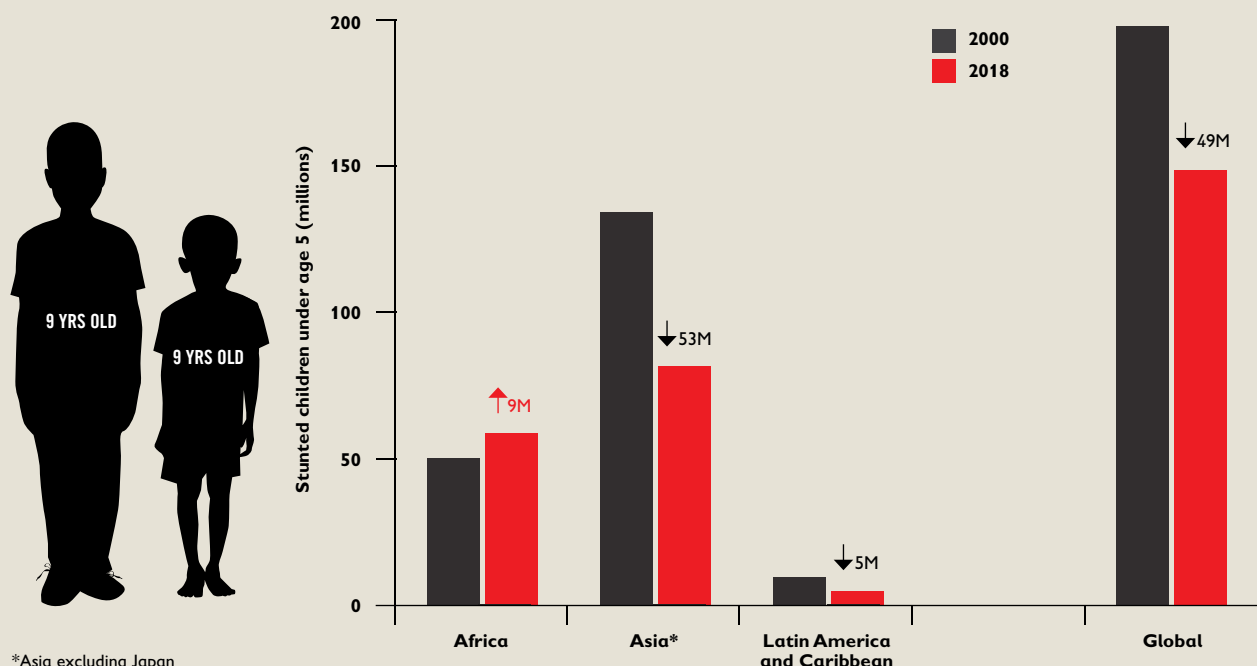
33% decline in the child stunting rate worldwide = Good Progress

Result: 49 million fewer stunted children today compared to 2000

Stunted growth is caused by chronic malnutrition in the womb and during the first two years of life (the first 1,000 days). The damage is largely irreversible, and stunted children face a lifetime of lost opportunities in education and work. They are also more likely to succumb to illness and disease, and can die as a result.

Beyond the individual impacts of this problem, stunting is an enormous drain on economic productivity and growth. Economists estimate that stunting can reduce a country’s

STUNTING NUMBERS ARE UP IN AFRICA, DOWN IN ASIA & LATIN AMERICA



*Asia excluding Japan

Source: UNICEF, WHO, World Bank Group Joint Malnutrition Estimates, March 2019 Edition



Photo: Adam Dean / Save the Children

GDP by as much as 12 percent.⁶⁹

Many factors can contribute to a child becoming stunted – including low socioeconomic status, dietary intake, infections, the mother’s nutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and poor sanitation. Because of these varied challenges, stunting is a difficult problem to beat. Nearly 1 in 4 children under age 5 worldwide has stunted growth. But still, global stunting prevalence has dropped from 32.5 percent in 2000 to 21.9 percent in 2018, and the number of stunted children fell from 198 million to 149 million. This translates to a 33 percent global decline in stunting. As a result, there were 49 million fewer stunted children in 2018 than in 2000.⁷⁰

Almost all the children saved from stunting live in Asia. Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan have cut their stunting rates by an impressive 76 and 64 percent, respectively. China’s 54 percent reduction means there are nearly 8 million fewer stunted children in that country. Progress in populous India, although less dramatic (30 percent decline), has resulted in 23 million fewer stunted children. Taken together, reductions in China and India alone account for well over half of the total global decline.⁷¹ Reduced stunting rates in these countries have been driven in large part by agricultural and economic success, improved breastfeeding and complementary feeding behaviors and/or micronutrient interventions.^{72,73,74}

Many Latin American countries have also made significant gains. Argentina and Bolivia have each reduced their stunting rates by half since the late 1990s. El Salvador and Peru cut rates by 58 and 59 percent, respectively. Paraguay – with a 68 percent reduction – made the most progress in the region. However, the poorest children in Latin America still suffer disproportionately from chronic undernutrition, and progress has favored the richest.

In the Middle East, strong progress was made by Iran (67 percent reduction in stunting) and the State of Palestine (54 percent reduction). New household survey data suggest Iraq

has cut stunting by nearly two-thirds since 2000 (from 28 to 10 percent).⁷⁵

In sub-Saharan Africa, stunting rates are stagnant or have risen in many countries, and the overall number of stunted children in Africa has increased from 50 million to 59 million. But still there are bright spots. Kenya and Mali have reduced stunting by 36 and 37 percent, respectively. Kenya’s rate fell from 41 percent in 2000 to 26 percent in 2014. Mali’s rate fell from 42 percent in 2001 to 27 percent today.⁷⁶ Uganda cut its stunting rate by 36 percent since 2000 and Ethiopia’s rate is down 33 percent (see page 18 for more on how Ethiopia achieved this success). Other African countries making noteworthy progress include Burkina Faso (with a 49 percent reduction), Ghana (with a 39 percent reduction) and Senegal (37 percent reduction). Improvements in child nutrition in Africa have been linked to international aid, a broad scaling up of health interventions that reduced childhood illness (e.g., malaria control, vaccination coverage, HIV prevention and treatment) and water, sanitation and hygiene facilities.⁷⁷

In the Pacific region, most countries have made minimal progress or no progress in providing children with sufficient nutrition to prevent stunting. In 2000, 37 percent of children in the region were stunted. Today, that figure is 38 percent. Stunting has risen in Papua New Guinea (13 percent increase) and Vanuatu (11 percent increase). Countries making progress include Samoa (which has cut its stunting rate by 23 percent), Timor-Leste (18 percent reduction)⁷⁸ and Indonesia (14 percent reduction).

While the world has made great progress in reducing undernutrition, change has not been fast enough or inclusive enough. Recent research by Save the Children found that in 2030 – the deadline for the Sustainable Development Goal to end hunger in all its forms – 119 million children will still find their physical and cognitive development stunted by malnutrition, with the poorest children at highest risk.⁷⁹



Photo: Jiro Ose / Save the Children

Awatash and her children drink milk at home in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. Through a Save the Children nutrition program, she received five sheep and training on how to grow vegetables during the rainy season. “Before I got the sheep, I had difficulty feeding my children,” says Awatash. “They had health problems and didn’t attend school regularly because they were hungry. I felt bad all the time and was worried. Now I am hopeful. My children’s health is better and we are eating three meals a day.”

CASE STUDY

Ethiopia’s Success in Fighting Stunting

In East Africa, a part of the world known for severe droughts, food shortages and hunger, Ethiopia has been making steady gains in its fight against child malnutrition. Since 2000, Ethiopia’s stunting rate has fallen by a third (33 percent) and since 1990 it has fallen by 47 percent.

More than 1.3 million fewer Ethiopian children are stunted now compared with 2000. No other country in Africa has saved more children from the damaging effects of chronic malnutrition. This progress is especially noteworthy because Ethiopia is the 18th poorest country in the world and it faces recurring droughts.

The Ethiopian government’s commitment to end child under-nutrition has taken many forms. Ethiopia has strengthened legal frameworks, most recently with the National Food and Nutrition Policy, which acknowledges every child’s right to adequate nutrition.⁸⁰ It has steadily increased funding for nutrition programs with investments in large-scale, multisectoral programs such as the Productive Safety Net Programme and the ONEWASH National Programme.⁸¹ In addition, in 2017, Ethiopia endorsed its first national policy that promotes the survival and development of every child.

Local governments in Ethiopia are making significant investments in nutrition – in fact, 75 percent of total expenditure on nutrition comes from sub-national governments.⁸² However, government funding for proven interventions such as breastfeeding promotion and micronutrient supplementation is relatively low.⁸³

Ethiopia’s poorest children are not benefitting as much as their wealthier peers, and data suggest nutrition gaps between rich and poor children have widened.⁸⁴

Save the Children has worked to improve nutrition among the poorest Ethiopian children, who are 74 percent more likely than their best-off peers to be stunted. Launched in 2011, Save the Children’s ENGINE program worked at all levels – household, community and national – to improve nutrition in the first 1,000 days. ENGINE provided counseling for pregnant women and new mothers, and supported gardening and animal raising. It used radio programs and worked with religious leaders to raise awareness of children’s nutrition. And at the national level, ENGINE built nutrition capacity within the government and strengthened government partners to advocate for, develop and implement policies supportive of better nutrition. When the project concluded in 2016, more than 26,000 people had been trained in child health and nutrition and more than 5.6 million children had been reached. Stunting was reduced by up to 20 percent among children aged 3-36 months and there were significant increases in breastfeeding and dietary diversity.⁸⁵

While Ethiopia’s chronic malnutrition rate is decreasing, it remains high (38 percent of children under age 5 are stunted). And acute malnutrition has gotten worse in recent years, with more than 600,000 children in need of lifesaving treatment, and over 8 million people – over half of them children – requiring emergency food aid.⁸⁶

More Children Are Attending School and Learning

Educating children gives a new generation the tools to fight poverty and prevent disease. Education builds confidence, literacy and dignity. It builds a stronger foundation for the future we all share. And it's every child's right.

33% decline in the out-of-school rate worldwide = Good Progress

Result: 115 million fewer children are out of school now than in 2000

From 2000 to 2017, the worldwide number of out-of-school children shrank by nearly 115 million and the rate fell by 33 percent.⁸⁷ Thirty-five countries have cut their out-of-school rates by 50 percent or more since 2000. During this same period, the number of illiterate youth fell by 42 million, from 144 million to 102 million.⁸⁸ But progress has stalled in recent years. In at least 36 countries, the data suggest out-of-school rates have risen, and in eight of those countries, out-of-school rates have risen by 50 percent or more.⁸⁹

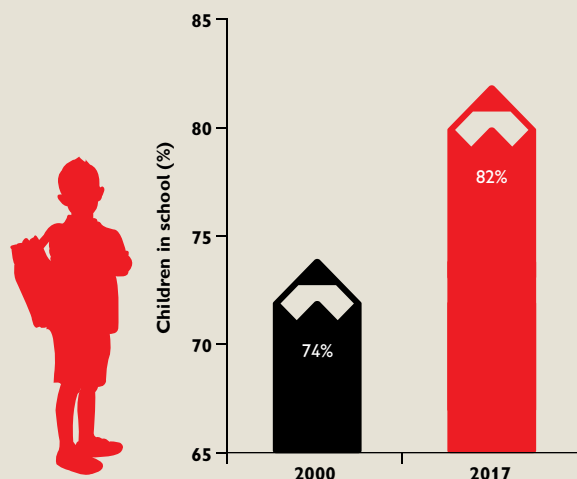
Georgia has achieved an impressive 88 percent reduction in its out-of-school rate (from 17 percent of children out of school in 2005 to 2 percent today). Education in Georgia is free of charge and compulsory from age 6 to 18.⁹⁰ Georgia has committed to removing barriers to education and to social inclusion for all children, including those with disabilities. The number of registered students with special education needs rose from only 160 in 2009 to 7,061 in 2018,⁹¹ but this represents only 35 percent of school-aged children with disabilities.⁹² In 2013, the government of Georgia introduced free preschool for all children. Today nearly two-thirds of all 3- to 5-year-olds are in school.⁹³

Ecuador has cut its out-of-school rate by 73 percent (from 20 percent of children out of school in 2000 to 5 percent today). Since 2009, primary education has been free and compulsory for 15 years beginning at age 3.⁹⁴ Ecuador has also progressed in making education available to disadvantaged groups, including girls and children in rural areas.⁹⁵

Rwanda is another country making good gains in education. Household survey data suggest Rwanda's out-of-school rate has dropped by 61 percent (from an estimated 59 percent of children out of school in 2000 to 23 percent today).⁹⁶ Limited data suggest progress in Rwanda has favored the poorest at every level of education, although equity gaps remain and too many children at all income levels are failing to receive a basic education.

Niger has also made important breakthroughs in education. School enrollment rates have more than doubled since 2000, from 19 to 48 percent. This is the greatest leap in enrollment

4 OUT OF 5 CHILDREN ARE NOW IN SCHOOL



Note: Given as 100 minus the rate of out-of-school children, adolescents and youth of primary and secondary school age worldwide

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. UIS. Stat. Accessed 8 April 2019

PROGRESS IN EARLY EDUCATION

Early childhood education is one of the best investments a country can make to prepare children for learning and to help them succeed later in life. Early education also enhances the efficiency of the school system by reducing repetition and drop-outs and improving achievement, especially among girls and disadvantaged groups.⁹⁷

Given the benefits, it's no wonder enrollment in preschool is on the rise worldwide. A growing number of countries, especially in Latin America, now consider at least one year of pre-primary school compulsory.⁹⁸ Still, many countries are struggling to provide preschool for their children. The lowest rates are found in sub-Saharan Africa, with 43 percent of children enrolled in early learning programs, compared to 95 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean. At the global level, the participation rate in early childhood education was 69 percent in 2017, up from 61 percent eight years earlier.⁹⁹

in the world (a 2.5-fold increase), followed by Burkina Faso (2.4-fold increase) and Ethiopia and Djibouti (each with a 1.9-fold increase).¹⁰⁰

Excellent progress is also happening in developed countries. Ireland, Lithuania and Spain have all slashed their

out-of-school rates by 75 percent or more since 2000. Italy, Sweden and the United Kingdom have also made strong progress, each cutting their out-of-school rate by 70 percent or more.

While many countries have made impressive progress removing barriers to education, the world still has a long way to go before achieving universal primary and secondary education. Today, 262 million children of primary and secondary school age are still out of school.¹⁰¹ That's almost 18 percent or 1 of every 6 school-aged children worldwide. The figure rises to 1 in 3 children in the world's poorest countries. And it's more than 1 in 2 among refugee children.¹⁰²

Children who are not enrolled in school are among the most vulnerable and hardest to reach in the world. They come from the poorest households and often have to work to help support their families. Some face discrimination as ethnic minorities. Others live with disabilities. Many are refugees, IDPs or migrants. Most often they are girls (see sidebar on girls below). And nearly three-quarters of them live in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (each region has 97 million out-of-school children).^{103,104}

Efforts are needed not only to get children into school and keep them there, but also to improve the quality of education. More than half of children and adolescents worldwide – an estimated 617 million (most of whom are in the classroom) – are unable to read a simple sentence or handle a basic math calculation.¹⁰⁵ Lack of access to school and poor learning outcomes must both be addressed to truly solve the world's out-of-school problem.

TOO MANY GIRLS STILL DON'T GO TO SCHOOL

Photo: Simon Edmunds / Save the Children



Of the more than 130 million children who have gained access to education since 2000, over 60 percent are girls. But despite this progress, girls still face many barriers to education, including cultural norms, poverty, early and forced marriage, teen pregnancy, refugee conditions, gender-based violence and disability.

In sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia, girls of every age are more likely to be excluded from education than boys. For every 100 boys out of school in these regions, 115 and 123 girls, respectively, are denied the right to education.

South Asia, by comparison, has seen tremendous progress on school life expectancy. A girl starting school today in this region can expect to receive 12 years of education, compared to 7 years in 2000 (and less than 6 years in 1990).

In contrast, a girl in sub-Saharan Africa can expect to receive about 9 years of schooling, while boys receive 10 years. At the country level, over half of all school-age girls are not in school in Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Niger and South Sudan. The female out-of-school rate (primary + secondary) is at least 10 percentage points higher than the male rate in countries like Angola, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Pakistan, Togo and Yemen.



Ashly sits in the area where Reading Camps are held on Saturdays in Caloocan City. With 20 other children, she gets her education here, because her family cannot afford to send her to school.

CASE STUDY

Expanding Education in the Philippines

“My mom lets me go to school only if there is extra money,” says Cristina, age 9. “I was able to attend before, but not anymore. Now I wash dishes for a small canteen where my mother works.”

Eight-year-old Ashly tells a similar story: “I used to go to school. I’m supposed to be in Grade 3. But I have to help Mama and Papa sell vegetables. I sell them in the street every day from noon until late at night. I have many cousins who also don’t go to school!”

There are 1.3 million children like Cristina and Ashly in the Philippines today who are not enrolled in school. But this is far fewer than the 2.9 million children who were out of school 20 years ago. In 1999, 1 child in 6 was out of school. Today, that figure has dropped to 1 in 16. After almost two decades of no progress, the Philippines cut the share of children out of school by about 60 percent in just the last 10 years.

Girls in particular have benefitted from this progress. The out-of-school rate for school-aged girls has fallen by 69 percent since 1999, compared to 55 percent for boys. This means, however, that boys are now much more likely to be out of school than girls, especially older boys.

Progress in the Philippines is reducing inequalities. The poorest children have made by far the greatest gains at every level of education.

The Philippines Department of Education (DepEd) has implemented an intense and continuous campaign to reduce the number of children quitting school. It has incentivized school attendance with feeding programs and cash transfers based on school attendance.¹⁰⁶ DepEd has also piloted a wide range of alternative schooling models to offer flexibility for students’ differing circumstances and address the specific needs of learners.¹⁰⁷

For children who still are not in school, Save the Children has adapted its successful Literacy Boost approach to provide learning opportunities outside the classroom. Christina and Ashly both participate in Reading Camps where they engage in fun, play-based activities to develop their literacy skills and habits. “I learned how to read, write and draw,” said Ashly. “They teach me and tell stories and then we all read together.” Since it was launched in the Philippines in 2012, the Literacy Boost program has been implemented in seven cities and provinces throughout the country. In 2018 alone, it reached 31,560 girls and 33,080 boys.

"I know that going to school is very important because it allows me to gain knowledge to share with others," says Awa, age 10, in Mali. "If I work hard, in the future, it can open doors for me."



Fewer Children Are Forced into Work

The latest child labor estimates tell a story of real progress and of a job unfinished. Child labor rates and the global number of child laborers have declined dramatically in recent years. Globally, rates are down 40 percent, and 94 million fewer children are working now than in 2000. But progress has slowed and the world remains far from the 2025 target to end child labor in all its forms.¹⁰⁸

40% decline in the child labor rate worldwide = Good Progress

Result: 94 million fewer children in child labor now than in 2000

Much of the decline in child labor in recent years has been credited to active policy efforts to extend and improve schooling, extend social protection, expand basic services, and establish legal frameworks against child labor.¹⁰⁹

Globally, there has been better progress in reducing child labor among older children than among younger ones. The number of child laborers aged 12 to 17 has fallen 42 percent, from 136 million in 2000 to 79 million today.¹¹⁰ During the same period, child labor among 5- to 11-year-olds fell by a third, from 110 million in 2000 to 73 million today. These young child laborers are of particular concern, as they are most vulnerable to workplace abuses and compromised education.¹¹¹

The most dramatic gains in ending child labor have been in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.¹¹² Uzbekistan cut its child labor rate by an impressive 92 percent (from 29 percent of children aged 5 to 14 in 2000 to 2 percent at last measure). Albania's child labor rate is down by as much as 79 percent (from 24 percent in 2000 to 5 percent today). Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine each appear to have reduced their child labor rate among 5- to 14-year-olds by more than 60 percent. Economic growth, poverty reduction and political commitments have led to significant progress in this region. Each of the countries above has ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) child labor conventions.¹¹³ But

while countries in this region have made progress in reducing child labor among 5- to 14-year-olds, almost all older child laborers in the region today are involved in hazardous work.¹¹⁴

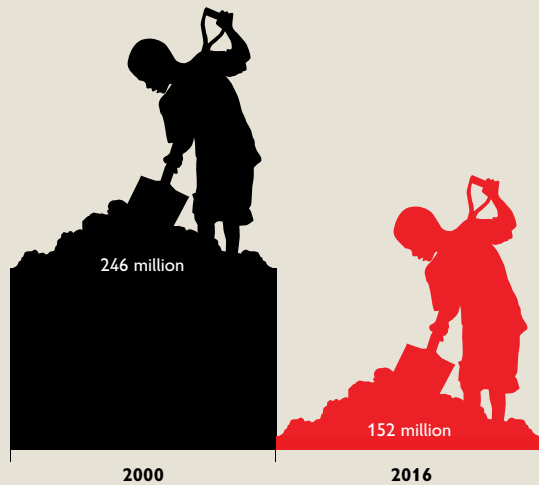
Mexico has made impressive progress against child labor, cutting its rate by 80 percent – from 24 percent of children aged 5 to 14 in 2000 to 5 percent today. (See page 25 for more on how Mexico achieved this success.)

Cambodia is also making excellent progress with child labor, which is down 78 percent, from 43 percent of children in 2001 to 9 percent today.

Vietnam cut its child labor rate 67 percent, from 28 percent of children aged 5 to 14 working in 2000 to 9 percent today. The government has laid the foundation for effective and sustainable action against child labor by ratifying ILO conventions^{115,116} and has gone through several revisions of national child labor laws to address remaining issues. Vietnam's successful work to reduce poverty has improved living conditions for many families and reduced the need to send children to work. The country has invested heavily in education, ensuring high enrollment rates, with a particular emphasis on ethnic minority children and children in remote mountainous areas.¹¹⁷ Mass media and international NGOs have helped to raise awareness of child rights and the harmful effects of child labor. Currently, Vietnam is implementing a national program to prevent and minimize child labor from 2016 to 2020.¹¹⁸

Brazil has also made significant progress in fighting child labor. There are currently around 1 million Brazilian children aged 5 to 14 engaged in child labor, compared to an estimated 7 million children in 2002 (over 80 percent decrease).¹¹⁹ The 1988 Constitution prohibited child labor in Brazil,¹²⁰ and the government has taken steps to reduce its prevalence by adopting international conventions and guidelines.¹²¹ In recent years, however, the country has seen an increase in child labor among children aged 5 to 9. An estimated 80,000 children in this age group are working.¹²²

FAR FEWER CHILDREN ARE INVOLVED IN CHILD LABOR



Note: Figures reflect the absolute number of children aged 5-17 engaged in child labor.

Source: ILO. *Global Estimates of Child Labour: Results and Trends, 2012-2016*

In South Asia, trends for child labor among 5- to 14-year-olds (exclusive of household chores) suggest India and Bangladesh have made very good gains for children (70 percent and 66 percent reduction, respectively). Pakistan has cut child labor for this age group by 29 percent. New national estimates suggest the child labor rate in Nepal has also decreased significantly.¹²³

Despite global progress, there are still 152 million children engaged in child labor – nearly 1 in 10 children worldwide – with almost half of them (73 million) in hazardous work that directly endangers their health, safety and emotional development. A hypothetical country made up only of these child laborers would rank as the world's ninth largest. Unless progress is accelerated, 121 million children will still be engaged in child labor in 2025.¹²⁴

Nearly half of the world's child laborers live in Africa (72 million). Sub-Saharan Africa also has the largest proportion of its children working (29 percent).¹²⁵ In West and Central Africa, 32 percent or nearly 1 in 3 children aged 5 to 17 is involved in child labor. In the Middle East and North Africa, fewer than 1 in 10 (7 percent) of children in this age group are performing potentially harmful work compared to 11 percent of children in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In contrast to all other regions, child labor has actually increased in sub-Saharan Africa.¹²⁶ A breakthrough in this region will be critical to ending child labor worldwide.



These boys live in a hut inside a brick factory in Nepal with their mother, brothers and sisters. They don't go to school because they spend several months of the year at the brick kilns and have to help support the family. Save the Children is setting up daycare centers and running "child clubs" where youngsters like these boys can learn and play.

Photo: Oli Cohen / Save the Children

Amador receives support from Save the Children to grow food, earn an income and reduce household expenses, so he can afford to keep his five children in school.



CASE STUDY

Mexico's Progress in Ending Child Labor

Amador dropped out of school to work and make money when he was about 10. “My dad was disabled and I was the last child,” he said. “I did not have an education. I still don’t read very well.”

Amador’s story was much more common in 2000 than it is now. Just a generation ago, 1 of every 4 Mexican children aged 5 to 14 was engaged in child labor.¹²⁷ Today, Mexico has cut its child labor rate from 24 to 5 percent – a remarkable 80 percent decline. This progress saves an estimated 4 million children a year from child labor.¹²⁸

Data suggest Mexico’s progress has been broad-based, benefiting both male and female children, children from urban and rural areas, and children from all regions. Progress has been strong among the poorest households, and equity gaps are shrinking.¹²⁹

The Mexican government regularly collects and disseminates information on child labor.¹³⁰ It has also invested in education and provided incentives for children to attend school rather than work. Education reforms in the 1970s and 1980s helped create a new generation of more educated parents less inclined to send their children to work.¹³¹ The Prospera program, launched

in 1997, offers small cash payments to impoverished parents to keep children in school and attend workshops on nutrition, hygiene and family planning.¹³² Improvements in living standards and an overall reduction in poverty also contributed to the decline in child labor, as did the movement of jobs away from the agricultural sector.¹³³

Save the Children Mexico has partnered with the sugar industry to better comply with Mexico’s child labor laws and make changes in the way business is done. This alliance, established in 2012, identifies child labor risks throughout the sugar supply chain, finds alternatives for at-risk children and supports community work to prevent child labor in the fields. The partnership also advocates for better child labor regulations and has working groups to promote best practices.

There are still an estimated 3.2 million child laborers in Mexico,¹³⁴ so increased attention on this problem is needed, especially in rural areas. Amador is determined that his five boys will not be among that statistic. “I’m giving my children an education... so they can study and be someone in life.”

Fewer Children Are Married Before Age 18

Getting married as a child forces millions of girls into adulthood and motherhood before they are physically and mentally ready. These girls, including many under the age of 15, are often isolated, with their freedom curtailed. They frequently feel disempowered and are deprived of their rights to health, education, safety and participation.¹³⁵

25% decline in the child marriage rate worldwide = Good Progress

Result: 11 million fewer child brides today compared to 2000

Child brides often experience early pregnancy, putting them at greater risk of dangerous complications in pregnancy and childbirth, contracting HIV and suffering domestic violence. With little access to education and economic opportunities, they and their families are more likely to live in poverty.^{136,137}

Marriage before age 18 is illegal in a growing number of countries and rates are declining around the world. Progress has accelerated in recent years as attitudes change, more girls are educated and governments invest in programs for adolescents. An estimated 25 million child marriages have been prevented in just the past decade.¹³⁸ If all girls were enabled to complete secondary education, an estimated 51 million more child marriages could be averted by 2030, bringing the world closer to meeting the SDG target.¹³⁹

According to the latest UN estimates,¹⁴⁰ wealthy countries in the Middle East are making strong progress in reducing the share of girls aged 15 to 19 currently married or in union. The following have cut the practice by half or more: Oman (by 83 percent since 2000), United Arab Emirates (by 80 percent), Kuwait (by 71 percent), Qatar (by 71 percent), Saudi Arabia (by 71 percent) and Bahrain (by 65 percent).

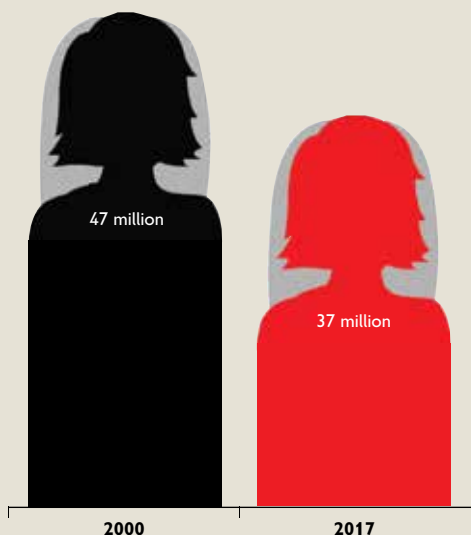
Multiple, reinforcing actions appear to have helped Lebanon make very good progress against child marriage, though some gains are slipping since the country became host to a large influx of refugees from the Syrian conflict.¹⁴¹ Between 2000 and 2009, Lebanon achieved a 51 percent reduction in child marriage (from 5.1 to 2.5 percent of girls aged 15 to 19). Social norms around child marriage have changed as multiple actors – including girls, their families and local religious leaders – have been engaged.¹⁴² In 2016, the government developed a national strategy to end child marriage in Lebanon. That same year, the National Coalition to Protect Children from Child Marriage came into existence, led by the Lebanese Women’s Democratic Gathering (RDFL) and bringing together more than 56 national and international organizations, including Save the Children. RDFL launched the #NotBefore18 campaign and recently drafted a law that would set the minimum age for marriage at 18 with no exceptions. Currently there is no minimum age.¹⁴³

In South Asia, the most impressive gains have been in India, where child marriage is down 51 percent since 2000 (from 30 to 15 percent) and 63 percent since 1990. (See page 28 for more about how India is winning its fight against child marriage.) Afghanistan has cut its rate by 44 percent (from 29 to 16 percent). Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan have each cut rates by more than one-third since 2000.

In Ukraine, disaggregated data suggest that in recent years child marriage rates among the poorest girls have fallen twice as fast as for girls overall.¹⁴⁴ Save the Children projects the rich-poor child marriage equity gap will nearly close in this country by 2030.¹⁴⁵

In sub-Saharan Africa, there is evidence of a decrease in child marriage in many countries. However, progress has been uneven and some countries have seen little or no reduction.¹⁴⁶

THE NUMBER OF MARRIED GIRLS HAS DROPPED SIGNIFICANTLY SINCE 2000



Note: Figures reflect the absolute number of girls aged 15-19 currently married or in union.

Source: Estimated by Save the Children from UN DESA, Population Division. *Estimates and Projections of Women of Reproductive Age Who Are Married or in a Union: 2018 Revision*, and UN DESA, Population Division. *World Population Prospects 2017*.

Djibouti, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia have each made noteworthy progress, cutting their child marriage rates by 61 percent, 59 percent and 53 percent, respectively.

Sierra Leone reduced child marriage from an estimated 37 percent in 2000 to 15 percent today. Sierra Leone is a low-income country and during this time it was also considered a “fragile situation” by the World Bank. Various partners – including UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women and Save the Children – have been advocating against child marriage in Sierra Leone for many years. In 2017, advocates worked with political parties in advance of presidential elections to urge them to prioritize ending child marriage. Save the Children made the case that ending child marriage is important not just as a child right, but also as a way to reduce infant mortality and boost national development. Child marriage and teenage pregnancy became key priorities for the party that went on to win the election in 2018. The current government acted quickly to provide free quality education to excluded groups (especially girls). And Sierra Leone’s First Lady has launched a “Hands Off Our Girls” campaign and invited other first ladies of African countries to join her in advocacy to end child marriage.¹⁴⁷

A few other West and Central African countries have made similar gains for girls. Guinea-Bissau cut child marriage by 68 percent. And Benin, Gabon and Ghana each achieved a 60 percent reduction. However, with reductions limited to the wealthiest segments of society in many of these countries, gaps in levels of child marriage between the wealthiest and poorest have dramatically increased. In fact, globally, levels

are now four times higher among the poorest than the wealthiest, compared to twice as high around 1990.¹⁴⁸

There are also signs of rising political will to end child marriage in Africa. The African Union’s campaign to end child marriage has been launched in 24 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe.¹⁴⁹

While there is plenty of global progress to celebrate, no region and few countries are on track to meet the SDG target of eliminating child marriage by 2030. At current rates of decline, it will take at least half a century to eliminate child marriage worldwide. Meanwhile, every year, 12 million more girls around the world become wives. Without further acceleration, more than 150 million additional girls will marry by 2030.^{150,151}

Progress in many African countries has been too slow to keep up with population growth. As a result, even though marriage rates have dropped, the absolute number of child brides has risen by more than 100,000 in eight countries. There are over 200,000 more married girls aged 15 to 19 today in Tanzania and Democratic Republic of the Congo than there were in 2000. There are 254,000 more in Niger. And in Nigeria, an estimated 465,000 more girls aged 15 to 19 are married or living in union now compared to 2000. The other countries with over 100,000 more child brides today compared to 2000 are: Chad, Madagascar, Mali and Mozambique.¹⁵²

Photo: Ahmed Bayram / Save the Children



“We call for a law that bans marrying children who are under 18,” says Marwa, 17, a child rights advocate living in Lebanon. “Child marriage has serious health consequences for both boys and girls. Some children die while giving birth because their bodies are still fragile. Others are left with psychological and physical problems. As young people, we can influence the society we live in.”



Photo: Rajan Zaveri / Save the Children

When Sandhya was 10, she dropped out of school to work picking chilies with her mother. A Save the Children community worker convinced Sandhya's mother to let her return to school, and helped the family supplement their income through government programs they were unaware of. Teachers recognized Sandhya's leadership potential when she spoke strongly at school about the problem of child marriage and her mother's experience. She was selected as a Save the Children child champion, and she has been supported to speak out in other communities about why marriage is dangerous for children.

CASE STUDY

Fighting Child Marriage in India

Kamala was only 12 or 13 when she was married to an older man she had never met before from another village. The marriage was difficult, and Kamala left her husband after having two children. She faced disapproval in her community and she struggled financially, but she knew it was the right thing for her children.

When Kamala was married, about 30 percent of girls in India were child brides. Today, the share has been reduced to 15 percent – a 51 percent decrease since 2000, though differences across states remain large.¹⁵³

Kamala's 13-year-old daughter Sandhya is an example of how much has changed in just a generation. Sandhya is at the top of her class at school, and she is a passionate advocate against child marriage. She recently prevented one of her friends from being forced into early marriage. "We went and launched a police complaint, and they intervened and stopped the marriage," said Sandhya.

India's remarkable progress has saved millions of girls from early marriage. Had rates remained unchanged, there would

be 9 million more married girls in India today.¹⁵⁴ The data also suggest marriage rates for the poorest girls have fallen at least as much as for everyone else.¹⁵⁵ And the decline in child marriage has been most rapid among girls younger than 15.¹⁵⁶

In 1978, India raised the minimum age of marriage from 15 to 18 for girls and from 18 to 21 for boys. The government has become more action-oriented in the last two decades, introducing and strengthening large-scale programs that reach tens of millions of girls. Declines in child marriage are due in large part to economic growth, rising rates of girls' education, proactive investments by government and partners in adolescent girls (including cash transfers to keep girls in school) and increased public awareness about the illegality of child marriage and the harm it causes. Community-based interventions including empowerment counseling, sexual and reproductive health information, vocational training and life skills development for girls have also been important factors.^{157,158,159,160,161,162}

Fewer Girls Are Becoming Mothers

Childbearing at a young age, when a girl's body is not physically mature enough to deliver without complications, often leads to devastating consequences.

Complications from pregnancy and childbirth are the leading cause of death for adolescent girls between the ages of 15 and 19 globally.¹⁶³ And babies born to adolescent mothers face a substantially higher risk of dying than those born to women aged 20 to 24.¹⁶⁴

22% decline in the adolescent birth rate worldwide = Fair Progress

Result: 3 million fewer teen births per year now than in 2000

Young mothers are less likely to be in school and more likely to struggle financially. This puts them and their children at risk of exploitation, ill-health and perpetuating cycles of poverty. Early childbearing also severely impacts the economies of communities and nations.

In 2000, 16 million girls aged 15 to 19 gave birth.¹⁶⁵ Today, that number has been cut to about 13 million. But progress has been uneven. South Asia and North America have made good gains in reducing adolescent births, cutting rates by over 50 percent. The Middle East and North Africa have made less progress, with only an 11 percent reduction. In the East Asia and Pacific region, UN estimates suggest rates have risen by 5 percent. And because the population of adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa continues to grow, projections indicate the number of adolescent pregnancies will *increase* to over 6 million per year by 2030 (from about 4.5 million per year in 2000).¹⁶⁶

Globally, if current trends continue, there will be more than 70 million babies born to teenage girls between now and 2030. And Nigeria is expected to overtake India as the country with the largest burden of adolescent births.¹⁶⁷

Very early childbirth (before age 15) appears to be declining in all regions, while childbearing among older adolescents (ages 15 to 17) has remained steady.¹⁶⁸

As a region, South Asia has reduced its adolescent birth

rate by 53 percent since 2000. Impressive gains have been made in India, which has cut teen births by 63 percent since 2000 and 75 percent since 1990. This reduction has resulted in over 2 million fewer teen births in India now compared to 2000 (3.5 million vs. 1.4 million), meaning progress in India alone accounts for nearly three-quarters of the global reduction in adolescent births during this period. Much of India's progress has been the result of socioeconomic development that has enabled more girls to stay in school, and increased access to sexual and reproductive health services.¹⁶⁹ (See page 28 for more about how India has achieved these successes).

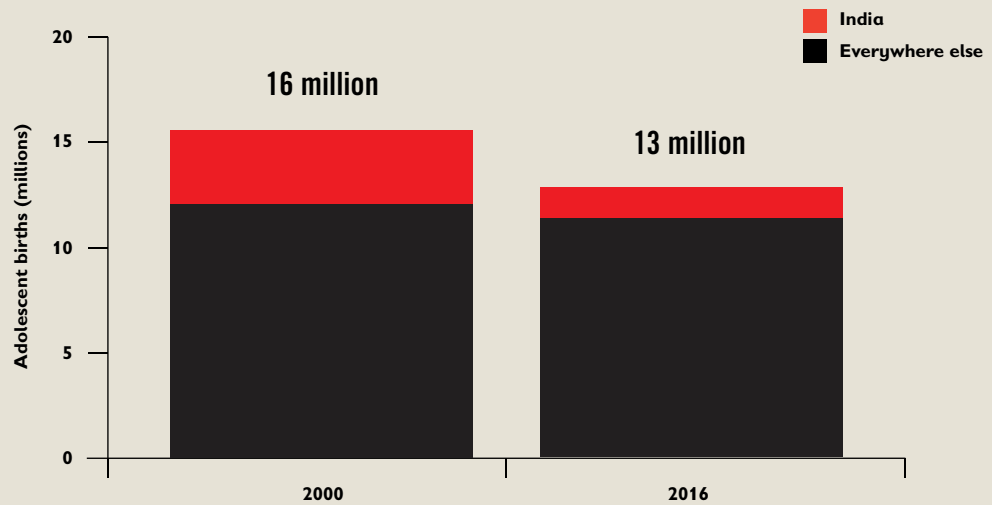
Another South Asian country making excellent progress is Bhutan. The country has cut its adolescent birth rate by 72 percent since 2000, from 79 to 22 births per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19. Only three countries in the world have achieved greater progress (Maldives, Oman and DPR Korea).

Most births to adolescents (95 percent) occur in developing countries, and 9 in 10 of these births occur within marriage or a union.¹⁷⁰ But in high-income countries and Latin America and the Caribbean, teen births outside of marriage are more common.

Since 2000, the United States has cut adolescent births by 56 percent, from 46 to 21 births per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19. This translates to 237,000 fewer teen births in 2016 than in 2000. Only 10 countries in the world have made more progress on this indicator. The decline in teen pregnancies and births in the U.S. were largely due to improvements in contraceptive use.¹⁷¹ Yet, despite this progress, the United States still has one of the highest adolescent birth rates in the developed world. The teen birth rate in the U.S. is on par with those of Albania and Slovakia (21 and 22 births per 1,000 girls per year, respectively).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the countries making good progress include the Bahamas and Grenada (both with

PROGRESS IN INDIA DRIVES GLOBAL DECLINE IN ADOLESCENT BIRTHS



Source: Estimated by Save the Children from World Bank, Adolescent Fertility Rate (data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT, Accessed 8 April 2019) and UN DESA, Population Division. *World Population Prospects 2017*.

a 45 percent reduction in teen births). Colombia has cut its teen birth rate by 42 percent. Jamaica has reduced its rate by 38 percent. And Belize, Guatemala and Honduras have each cut teen birth rates by one-third.

Regional leaders in Africa are South Sudan (47 percent reduction in teen birth rates since 2000), Rwanda (45 percent

reduction) and Ethiopia (41 percent reduction). All three are low-income countries. In Rwanda, current use of modern contraceptives among married teens aged 15 to 19 rose from 1 percent in 2000 to 33 percent in 2015. Among sexually active unmarried women, use of modern contraceptive methods was much lower – with a rate of 11.6 percent in 2015.¹⁷²



Photo: Minzayar Oo / Panos / Save the Children



Photo: Farzana Wahidi / Save the Children

Wajhia didn't go to school when she was younger because there was no school near her home in a remote district of Kabul. Now she is in an intensive catch-up program supported by Save the Children and she is passionate about learning. "Girls should get married at the age of 22 or 23, when they finish their education," she says.

CASE STUDY

Afghanistan's Progress in Reducing Teen Births

"I see a big difference in my life compared to my mother's," says Wajhia, age 17. "My mother is illiterate and was married at 16. She struggled to raise nine children. I'm happy because if I was not attending school I would have been married last year."

Wajhia is an example of dramatic progress in just one generation in Afghanistan. In 2000, the country had one of the highest adolescent birth rates in the world (154 births per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19). Today, that rate has been reduced by 55 percent (to 69 births per 1,000 girls). The vast majority of teen births in Afghanistan were, and still are, the result of early marriage.

This progress is especially impressive given that Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world and has endured decades of armed conflict. Also, limited data suggest equity gaps are relatively small, which means the poorest Afghan girls have benefitted as much as, if not more than, the average.

One reason for the drop in teen births is that the fall of the Taliban was followed by a rise in aid from NATO countries that funded schools, maternal health and family planning services.

Afghanistan's national health system communicated with girls, families and communities to raise awareness of the risks associated with child marriage and the benefits of smaller families.¹⁷³

Another reason for progress is that the Taliban's ban on schooling for girls was lifted by the Afghan government, and it launched a "back to school" campaign in 2002. Today, more Afghan women are getting an education and jobs, factors that typically delay the decision to start a family.

Wajhia's mother is grateful for the Save the Children program that is educating her daughter and many other girls in their village. "It has saved them from being forced into early marriage and being deprived of their basic rights," she said. "I got married when I was very young. It took away all my dreams and aspirations. However, the situation is completely different for my daughter. I hope she becomes an influential woman in the future. I want my granddaughters to attend school starting at an early age so they can have the childhoods that Wajhia and I both did not have."

Fewer Children Are Being Murdered

Suffering violence, witnessing violence or fearing violence should not be part of growing up. In 2016 alone, 85,000 boys and girls under the age of 20 were murdered. About 40 percent of these victims were under age 15. Compared to the 97,000 child homicides in 2000, this is 12,000 fewer and translates into a 17 percent decrease in the child homicide rate globally.¹⁷⁴ Each of these deaths represents hundreds or even thousands more children who live in violent or abusive environments where they face repeated threats to their survival and healthy development.

17% decrease in the child homicide rate worldwide = Fair Progress

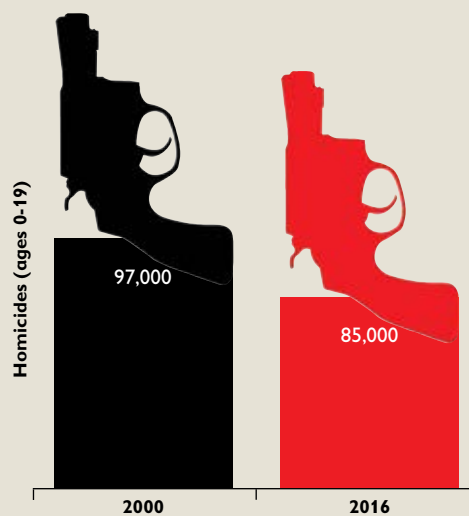
Result: 12,000 fewer children murdered per year now compared to 2000

Child homicide reductions in China alone account for about half the global number of lives saved. There were nearly 8,300 children murdered in China in 2000, compared to an estimated 1,800 today. This translates into a 72 percent decrease in the murder rate.

Cambodia has also made great gains in reducing violence against children. Since 2000, the latest data suggest Cambodia has cut its child homicide rate by 76 percent. The total number of victims fell from an estimated 210 to 50 per year during this time. Children in Cambodia are increasingly protected by improved national legislation and services to prevent violence and exploitation. Recent laws have strengthened the juvenile justice system and discouraged violence against children at home, in school and in institutional settings.¹⁷⁵ (For more on what's working in Cambodia, see page 33.)

In Eastern Europe, two countries made remarkable progress. Ukraine's child homicide rate is down 79 percent since 2000. The total number of victims has fallen from 380 to 60 per year. Romania has cut its child homicide rate by 75 percent since 2000. The total number of victims has fallen from 70 to 10 per year.

30 FEWER CHILDREN ARE MURDERED EACH DAY



Note: These estimates have wide confidence intervals: [58,079-150,865] for 2000 and [44,514-141,984] for 2016.

Source: Save the Children's analysis of WHO, *Global Health Estimates 2016: Deaths by Cause, Age, Sex, by Country and by Region, 2000-2016*. (Geneva:2018)

The world's highest child homicide rates are found in Latin America and the Caribbean, where nearly 70 children die every day due to interpersonal violence. Only 9 percent of the world's children live in the region, but 29 percent of all child homicides occur there – nearly 25,000 victims each year.¹⁷⁶

This homicide rate is over three times the global average. While every other region appears to have made progress in reducing violence against children, the data suggest homicide rates and numbers have increased in Latin America and the Caribbean. Four of the five countries with the highest child

homicide rates in the world are located in the region – Venezuela, Colombia, Honduras and El Salvador. (For more about what Colombia is doing to stop violence against children, see page 34.)

PROTECTING CHILDREN IN CAMBODIA

Save the Children works on many fronts to ensure children in Cambodia grow up in safe and nurturing environments, free from violence and abuse. To improve the national legal framework, Save the Children – in collaboration with UNICEF and other child-focused organizations – supported the government of Cambodia in drafting and passing the Juvenile Justice Law in 2016 and its three-year implementation plan for 2018-2020. It also provided technical expertise to develop a policy and action plan for protecting children in schools, which has been adopted by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

Save the Children supports increased investments to promote children's rights and well-being. Budget allocations for social services, including child protection, in Save the Children's targeted communities have increased significantly

since 2013.¹⁷⁷ This was achieved through integrated advocacy efforts at both the local and national level that contribute to the Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children and the National Positive Parenting Strategy. Save the Children supports children to lobby at the local level and builds capacity of local authorities to consider children's rights when they prepare their local budgets.

Groundbreaking tools and approaches for child protection and child participation are also helping local leaders to make positive changes for children. These include a child protection guidebook and planning tools to strengthen Commune Councils and Committees for Women and Children – both introduced by Save the Children and local partners.



Photo: Hanna Adcock / Save the Children



Luis, age 16, is active in Young Entrepreneurs for Peace and “I Participate, I Communicate” (PACO) – two youth initiatives supported by Save the Children in Tumaco, a region that has seen an increase in violence recently. “Those of us who are in PACO talk and behave differently than those who are not,” said Luis. “I am now very outgoing, and I have confidence to speak and defend my rights.”

CASE STUDY

How Colombia is Reducing Violence Against Children

Colombia has suffered from high levels of violence for much of its history, but the latest international data show the child homicide rate is down 37 percent compared to 2000. While Colombia still has the second highest child homicide rate in the world (after Venezuela), this progress has saved thousands of young lives. In 2016 alone, there were estimated to be 2,300 fewer children murdered than in 2000 (3,300 deaths in 2016 vs. 5,600 in 2000)¹⁷⁸ – the largest absolute decline seen outside of China and India.

Progress in Colombia is especially noteworthy since murder rates appear to have risen in many other countries in the region.

The decline in violence against children is part of a wider trend in Colombia. The murder rate overall has been steadily falling since the mid-1990s. Reforms have been implemented at the national and local level, in partnership with NGOs, academics and business people. Mayors in Bogotá, Cali and Medellín have invested in community policing and welfare programs for neighborhoods with many at-risk youth. They have also improved public transportation and upgraded public spaces with better lighting and other improvements. Basic public services – especially schools and libraries – have been prioritized. And Colombia has built up programs to promote early childhood development, better parenting, youth employment (especially for young offenders), mentorship, poverty reduction and life-skills training.^{179,180,181}

Save the Children has been working since 1963 to protect

children in Colombia and help them reach their full potential. It provides safe learning spaces, free from violence, in schools and community centers. Programs help teenagers find employment opportunities and delay parenthood. Teens are also coached to become leaders in their communities and advocates for a culture of peace. At the same time, Save the Children works with parents, teachers and other caregivers to end humiliating and dangerous forms of punishment and promote positive parenting techniques.

Eleven-year-old Laura and her younger brother escaped abuse by their mother’s boyfriend. Laura now lives with her grandmother’s neighbor in Cali, and though she is safe and well cared for, she carries emotional scars from her past. “The teachers and psychologists from Save the Children come on Thursdays,” said Laura. “What I like best about the psychologists is I can tell them everything. We play together and they are good people.” Laura also enjoys meals and activities at a Save the Children-supported child-friendly space. “My favorite workshops are skating and painting. Right now I am drawing. I like to draw when I am thinking about my little brother.”

The situation for children in Colombia, however, remains precarious. Recent reports suggests displacement, the recruitment and use of children by armed groups, landmine explosions, attacks on schools and violent child deaths – particularly those due to collective violence and legal intervention – have risen.^{182,183,184,185}

More Children Are Suffering Due to Conflict

The world is experiencing the highest levels of displacement on record. Today, one person is newly displaced every two seconds.¹⁸⁶ Children are disproportionately affected by this crisis. Children make up about 30 percent of the world's population, but more than half the world's refugees are children¹⁸⁷ – a troubling prospect when one considers the long-term consequences of so much suffering among the next generation of adults.

80% increase in displacement due to conflict worldwide = No Progress

Result: 30.5 million more forcibly displaced people now than in 2000¹⁸⁸

By the end of 2017, an unprecedented 68.5 million people around the world had been forced from their homes as a result of conflict or persecution, including nearly 31 million children.¹⁸⁹

While the Syrian conflict contributed significantly to this increase, there have been other major displacements throughout the world over the last five years, notably in and from Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Myanmar, South Sudan, Sudan, Ukraine and Yemen. That said, more than half of all refugees worldwide (56 percent) came from just three countries: Syria (6.5 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million) and South Sudan (2.2 million).¹⁹⁰

The vast majority of the world's refugees – 85 percent – are hosted in developing countries, with one-third of the global total in the world's least developed countries.¹⁹¹ This compares to about 70 percent in developing countries in the early 2000s.¹⁹² Turkey hosts more refugees than any other country (3.6 million), followed by Pakistan (1.4 million), Uganda (1.1 million), Germany (1 million) and Iran (979,000). Relative to their national population size, Lebanon and Jordan

host more refugees than any other countries in the world.¹⁹³

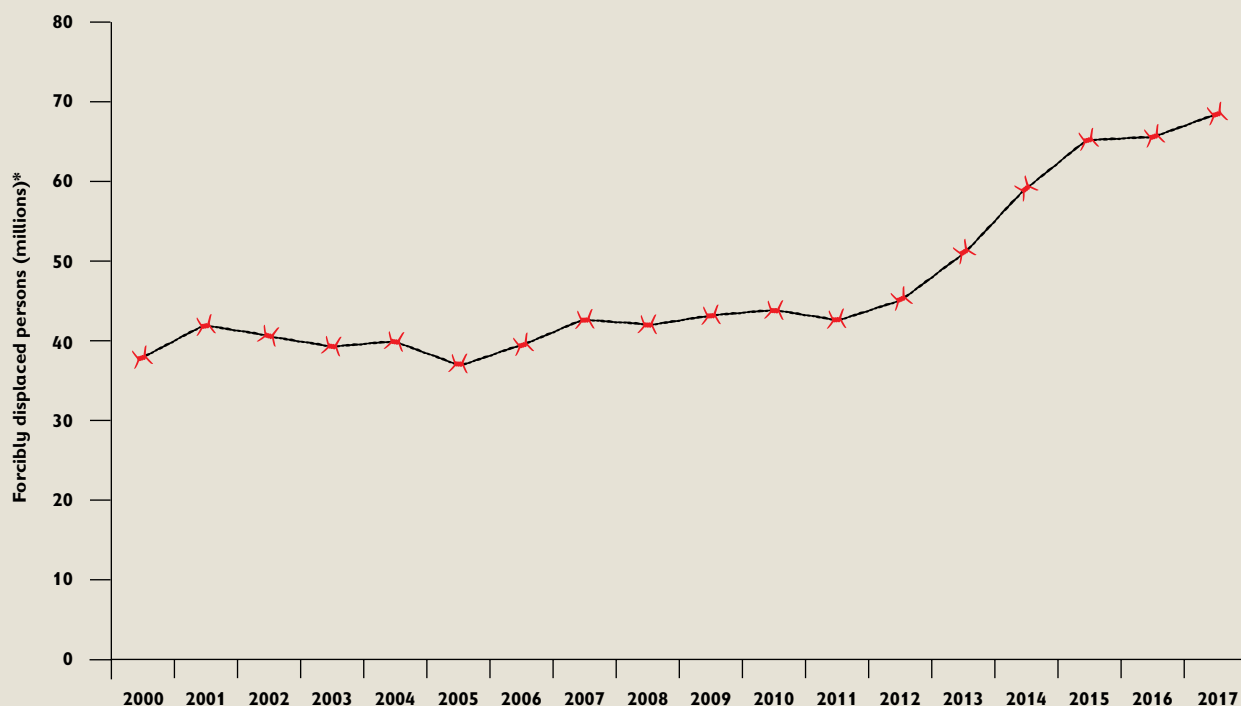
There are also more children living in conflict zones today, and those children are more at risk than at any point in this millennium. In 2017, 420 million children – roughly 1 in 5 children worldwide – were living within 50 kilometers of a conflict incident, more than double the number in 1995. The top 10 worst conflict-affected countries to be a child today are: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Large numbers of children in these countries are living close to high-intensity conflicts marked by grave violations of children's rights (killing and maiming, recruitment, sexual violence, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals and denial of humanitarian access).¹⁹⁴

In 2016, collective violence claimed the lives of an estimated 53,000 children worldwide. While only 7 percent of the world's children live in the Middle East and North Africa, nearly 64 percent of children who died in 2016 due to collective violence lived in this region – up from only 12 percent of deaths in 2000. In just the past five years, the region has seen over 180,000 child deaths due to conflict.¹⁹⁵

Poor health, malnutrition and death. The major causes of child mortality in conflict settings are largely preventable and treatable: pneumonia, diarrheal diseases, malaria and measles. These illnesses claim more children's lives because the health care and nutritious food that could save them is unavailable or out of reach due to insecurity. Newborn babies are especially vulnerable, as risks to mothers and newborns multiply due to lack of skilled care, medicines and unsanitary conditions.

Not surprisingly, the five countries with the world's highest

CONFLICTS ARE FORCING EVER GREATER NUMBERS OF PEOPLE FROM THEIR HOMES



*Includes refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons **Sources:** UNHCR, *Global Trends 2017*, UNHCR, *Global Trends 2016*, UNHCR Population Statistics Database, popstats.unhcr.org, Accessed 15 April 2019 and IDMC, *Global Internal Displacement Database*, internal-displacement.org/database, Accessed 15 April 2019

under-5 mortality rates are all current or former fragile and conflict-affected states: Central African Republic, Chad, Mali, Sierra Leone and Somalia. If current trends continue, none of these countries will achieve the SDG target for child survival reduction by 2030, and only one (Sierra Leone) will reach the target by 2050.¹⁹⁶

Many children who manage to survive in these fragile and conflict-affected settings suffer from malnutrition. Recent estimates put the number of stunted children living in conflict-affected countries between 68 million and 113 million (45 to 75 percent of the global total).¹⁹⁷

Children out of school. A large – and growing – share of the world’s out-of-school children live in conflict-affected countries, where progress in education has been slowest.¹⁹⁸ At last count, at least 62.5 million children, adolescents and youth were out of school in 32 countries affected by conflict.¹⁹⁹

On average, refugee children are likely to be out of school for at least three to four years, making it harder for them to catch up on learning, and more likely to drop out if they do not receive the right support.²⁰⁰ Only 61 percent of refugee children attend primary school compared with 91 percent of children globally. Refugee enrollment at the secondary level is even worse – just 23 percent of refugee adolescents receive a

secondary education, compared with 84 percent globally.²⁰¹

Girls are almost two-and-a-half times more likely to be out of primary school if they live in conflict-affected countries, and 90 percent more likely to be out of secondary school than their counterparts in other countries not affected by conflict.²⁰²

While education is available in some refugee camps, it is often disorganized, temporary, under-resourced, overcrowded and limited to primary education.²⁰³ Displaced children often cannot access schools outside camps for reasons of security, lack of documentation, restrictions to the movement of certain population groups, costs related to education or the lack of language skills needed to participate in schools in new locations. For example, about two-thirds of refugees live in places where none of the official languages is the language of their country of origin.²⁰⁴

Child labor. There is a strong correlation between child labor and conflict. The incidence of child labor in countries affected by armed conflict is 77 percent higher than the global average and the incidence of hazardous work is 50 percent higher.²⁰⁵ Children in conflict-affected countries are often removed from school to contribute to household income or to help with additional household burdens. This is especially true in sub-Saharan African countries hard hit by

conflict. In fact, all but 2 of the 9 countries with “very high” child labor rates (defined as prevalence at or above 40 percent) are in Africa and 7 of the 9 are current or former fragile or conflict-affected states.

Child labor is also on the rise among Syrian refugee children and local children living near the camps.²⁰⁶ In Jordan, for example, a recent survey of the resident child population (which included migrants and refugee households) found child

labor rates have roughly doubled compared to pre-crisis figures.²⁰⁷ Similarly, there is anecdotal evidence of a rise in child labor in Yemen as families struggle to survive.²⁰⁸

Child marriage and adolescent births. Conflict and forced displacement make girls more vulnerable to child marriage and adolescent pregnancy. Fear of rape and sexual violence, of unwanted pre-marital pregnancies, of family shame and dishonor, of homelessness and hunger or



“Dear Leaders, we need your support,” writes Diella, a 12-year-old refugee from Burundi living in Rwanda. “We, the children living in Mahama Refugee Camp, are suffering much. If you can get clothes and shoes for us, that would be good. If you can find hair cutting machines for us, that will also be good because some of us are suffering from illness caused by dirt in our hair. I miss my neighbors, school and classmates, and some of my family members. I miss the mangoes and avocados we used to eat.”

Photo: Elysee Nijigena / Save the Children

Photo: Hanna Adcock / Save the Children



“I’ve been here for seven months now,” says Abdo, a 16-year-old carpentry student at a Save the Children vocational training center in South Sudan. “Life at home is getting worse for my family. My father died a long time ago. He was a soldier and we moved a lot. I’ve been introduced to different levels of carpentry. I’ve made a chair, a bed, a clothes stand and each time I progress to the next level. This gives me the strength to support my family. With the money I’ve earned, I bought a goat and two chickens, which I kept at home. I bought food for my family. My mother became sick and was at hospital and I sold a goat to pay for her treatment. When I complete the course, I will open a workshop so I can provide for my siblings with food and clothes.”

Photo: Save the Children



“I wish that all children could be healthy and happy,” says Layla, a 13-year-old who lives in a displacement camp in northeast Syria. “I wish that they can grow up safe and live their lives. This is my dream.”

starvation have all been reported by parents and children as reasons for child marriage. In some instances, child marriage has been used to facilitate migration out of conflict-affected countries and refugee camps.²⁰⁹ In others, it has been used by armed groups as a weapon of war.²¹⁰

Child marriage is reportedly on the rise for girls in Syria and among Syrian refugee populations in Lebanon and elsewhere.^{211,212} Marriage of children under 18 years old is not a new phenomenon in Syria. However, with the protracted nature of the crisis, child marriage has evolved from a cultural practice to a coping mechanism. Families arrange marriages for girls, believing marriage will protect them and also to ease financial burdens on the family. According to experts in gender-based violence, this trend is increasing and girls are being married at younger ages.²¹³

The vast majority of adolescent births worldwide take place within marriage, so it is not surprising that some of the highest rates of early childbearing are found in conflict-affected countries where early marriage is common. Mali and Chad, for example, have the second- and third-highest teen birth rates in the world, with 1 in 6 girls aged 15 to 19 giving birth each year.

Progress in conflict-affected countries. Meeting children’s health, education and protection needs in areas of



“I wish we had better food to eat,” says Hasina, 13, a Rohingya refugee now living in Bangladesh. “Back in my village, we had all sorts of food that I liked very much. Sometimes I still feel hungry after eating breakfast, but I cannot ask for any extra as our food has to feed all the family for the month. I am happiest when I’m at the learning center. I have so many friends there and I enjoy learning new things. Save the Children staff are very good to us, they do not beat us or yell at us. I have learned from going to school to stay happy and if you face anything bad, talk to Save the Children.”

Photo: Kristiana Marton / Save the Children

conflict is challenging, but solutions do exist. In many conflict-affected countries, important work has been done to give more children the opportunity to reach their full potential. For example, since 2000, Afghanistan has made significant progress in reducing child deaths, malnutrition, children out of school, child marriage and teen births. Internationally, the Global Compact on Refugees includes a time-bound commitment to return children to learning and include refugees in national education plans.

Many conflict-affected countries have overcome great challenges to improve children’s health and survival. For example, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has reduced under-5 mortality by 44 percent since 2000, despite persistent and brutal armed conflict. In South Sudan – where civil war has created a massive humanitarian crisis – deaths among young children are down 47 percent. And in conflict-affected Mali, child deaths have been reduced 52 percent.

Boys in Myanmar play with a balloon after school.



Photo: Victoria Zegler / Save the Children

Recommendations

In 2015, world leaders agreed to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – a set of 2030 targets for eradicating extreme poverty in all its forms. As part of this agreement, governments committed to a Pledge to Leave No One Behind, which, if realized, should mean the pace of change will be fastest for those left furthest behind.

Putting those children who are furthest behind first is no easy task. It means collecting and reporting the data necessary to identify those children furthest behind, and then developing strategies and allocating resources to improve their health and education outcomes, protect them from violence and forced labor, and empower all of them, especially girls, to reach their full potential.

This year countries have the opportunity to renew their commitment to achieving the SDGs. In July, national representatives will gather for the annual High-Level Political Forum to review a subset of the SDGs, including three goals critical to children's progress – providing access to quality education (SDG 4), reducing inequality (SDG 10) and promoting peaceful societies (SDG 16). Later, in September, under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly, world leaders will gather to report on where countries stand in achieving the SDGs by 2030 in a gathering now being referred to as the SDG Summit. The summit represents the first heads-of-state level meeting on the SDGs since they were adopted in 2015 and provides an opportunity for national leaders to reinvigorate their commitment and identify ways to accelerate progress.

This year, the United Nations marks the 30th anniversary of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Save the Children believes that the SDGs are a necessary and critical step toward respecting and supporting children's rights – especially those of girls – including their rights to health, education, and protection. The SDGs are also important in helping children become equal and active members of society.

WHAT WE MUST GUARANTEE FOR ALL CHILDREN

As countries review progress towards the SDGs, Save the Children calls on policy makers to make three critical guarantees to ensure children are a priority in their specific plans:

- **Increase investments in children** – To achieve the SDGs and ensure that all children have access to quality basic services, including protection and social protection services, governments (including donor nations) need to raise the necessary resources. Governments must ensure these resources reach excluded children in keeping with the focus on public investment in children outlined by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Improved public investment to assist excluded children must include the removal of cost barriers to services as well as measures to ensure minimum financial security for all children through child-sensitive social protection. Children who are furthest behind must be identified and prioritized in terms of investments, service provision and decision making.
- **Take action to ensure all children are treated equally** – This includes ending discriminatory policies, norms and behaviors such as preventing girls from accessing health services or denying education to a child because of their ethnicity or gender. To facilitate children accessing quality services, governments must also put in place systems to register every child at birth.
- **Count and include all children, regardless of who they are or where they are from** – Governments need to ensure that all children, especially excluded children, are counted in data that are used to measure progress on the SDGs. Data should be collected and disaggregated by age, economic group, gender, sex, race, ethnicity and geography or migratory status, and be reported publicly in accessible formats. In addition, excluded children – girls and boys – should participate in policy making and budgeting, and be supported to monitor progress and hold governments to account.

A GLOBAL ACTION PLAN FOR CHILDREN

To further ensure that children remain a priority in achieving SDGs, Save the Children is calling on country governments, donor nations and other stakeholders to put a greater emphasis on ending child poverty, eliminating under-5 child mortality, helping all children have access to a quality education and improved learning outcomes, ending wars and conflicts and empowering all girls, no matter their race, creed or color, while also putting an end to child marriage. What steps can be taken now toward achieving these specific goals for children? Here's Save the Children's own set of recommendations for a global action plan for children.

Steps to address child poverty:

- All countries should adopt a national action plan to reduce and eliminate child poverty, together with dedicated budgets and monitoring systems that track improvements in poverty-related deprivations among girls and boys of all ages.
- All governments should ensure that children in poverty (and their families) benefit from universal social protection measures, such as child grants, and should expand program coverage as quickly as possible to reach all children who are poor.

Steps to ensure no child dies before age 5:

Sustainable Development Goal 3 is a commitment to ensure healthy lives, including ending preventable child deaths. To achieve this goal, world leaders, donors and other stakeholders must commit to the following key action steps:

1. Achieve universal health coverage

Universal health coverage (UHC) would ensure all citizens have access to affordable, quality care regardless of their wealth, ethnicity, gender or location and without being pushed into financial hardship or denied services because of how they are paid for. It is a way forward for achieving the Health for All goal under the SDG framework. This year (2019) provides an opportunity for countries to recommit or pledge concrete steps toward achieving UHC.

In September, world leaders will gather for the UN High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage to discuss ways to achieve this goal under the auspices of the UN General Assembly. The final outcome document should be a roadmap to help guide national governments, civil society, donors and the private sector to work together to achieve UHC. This roadmap must include steps countries will take to overcome remaining barriers to ensuring no child dies before age 5, including:

- Donor governments must provide external financial support, including pledging new and additional resources to the Gavi Alliance in the upcoming replenishment conference in 2020.
- Countries must commit to investing in building strong primary health care systems that deliver high-quality, accessible services free at the point of use.
- Countries must commit to supporting health services that seek to leave no one behind and to address first those furthest from coverage.
- Countries must commit to public financing for health through fair revenue-pooling such as taxes and the elimination of out-of-pocket payments.
- Donor governments must commit to supporting countries to mobilize domestic resources to increase investment in achieving UHC and to increase efficiencies and transparency for the way health funds are spent, as well as to align their aid to build strong national systems.
- Countries must ensure the final UHC declaration includes references to essential services such as those that can prevent pneumonia (the largest infectious disease killer of children under the age of 5), improve nutrition (malnutrition remains the underlying cause of 45 percent of deaths in children under the age of 5), and ensure adolescent reproductive health. Globally, more than 13 million adolescents give birth each year. Adolescent mothers face a higher risk of maternal mortality and morbidity than older women, and their children face a higher risk of neonatal, infant, and child mortality and morbidity.
- Countries must build a workforce of community health workers as part of a system of UHC. This is an important step for low-resource settings. Countries must also have plans to invest in and empower community health workers.

2. Focus on child nutrition in planning for the 2020 Nutrition for Growth Summit

As part of the SDG framework, world leaders agreed to end all forms of malnutrition by 2030. First held in 2013, the Nutrition for Growth Summit brings together stakeholders, including country and donor governments, to invest in solutions to fight malnutrition and achieve the goal. The third summit will be held in Japan in 2020. Leading up to and at the Nutrition for Growth Summit 2020, donor and country governments should:

- Prepare to commit to making substantial financial commitments and to invest in costed national plans for



In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, baby Joy has pneumonia. She is being examined and treated by head nurse Hubert Matondo at a health center on the outskirts of Kinshasa.

addressing malnutrition in children under the age of 5. Plans should also include efforts to address maternal and adolescent nutrition.

- Make current investments in nutrition more targeted and effective through better tracking, analysis and reporting, ensuring they are age- and gender-responsive, and by building strong accountability mechanisms to ensure investments reach those that are most vulnerable and in need.
- Develop targets (for those countries and donor governments without targets) to demonstrate progress toward meeting the globally agreed upon World Health Assembly nutrition targets.
- Ensure that governments incorporate the World Health Organization's International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes and distributors of breast milk substitutes publicly commit to upholding the Code and its subsequent resolutions. Governments should agree

to meet targets set to achieve full compliance and to integrate subsequent resolutions fully into their laws and regulations.

3. Increase resources to end pneumonia deaths among children

While other major causes of child deaths such as diarrhea and malaria have fallen, pneumonia remains the largest infectious killer of children under the age of 5. To achieve the goal of ending preventable child deaths by 2030, world leaders must increase their attention to pneumonia and take concrete steps to prevent and treat it.

Specifically, Save the Children calls for:

- High-burden countries to develop pneumonia action plans that can be integrated into plans to achieve UHC
- Stakeholders to improve case management of pneumonia by strengthening health systems



Photo: Andrew Pacutho / Save the Children

In rural Uganda, Save the Children has trained teachers to use participatory learning approaches that make it fun for children to build literacy and math skills.

- Stakeholders to aim to achieve universal immunization by ensuring that the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) is available, accessible and affordable.

Steps to ensure all children have access to quality learning and improved learning outcomes:

Sustainable Development Goal 4 is the commitment to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all. To achieve this goal, world leaders, donors and other stakeholders must commit to the following:

- Create national plans to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, safe and quality basic education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes, including literacy, numeracy and social-emotional skills.
- Provide sufficient, gender-responsive and more equitable allocation of public resources to deliver safe, inclusive and equitable quality education, with a focus on those left behind.
- Ensure that donor governments commit to supporting countries to mobilize domestic resources to increase investment in education.

- Advocate for G20 leaders to commit to bring reforms in the global tax system that will enable countries to expand their tax base to increase domestic budget.
- Ensure that donor governments provide external resources and contribute to multilateral institutions such as the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait.
- Follow through on G7 commitments to close the gap in access to education during conflict and crisis, and for refugees and the internally displaced (especially for girls), including through prioritizing a gender-responsive approach across the continuum of immediate humanitarian response and long-term development programming, and by identifying and addressing the specific gender-related barriers faced by girls in accessing education.

Steps to stop the war on children:

One in five children in today's world lives in an area affected by conflict, and the lack of practical help on the ground to keep children safe or help them recover from harm is a disgrace. Eglantyne Jebb – who founded Save the Children 100 years ago – said “Every war is a war against children.” A century later, the world is still failing to protect our most vulnerable from the horrors of that war.

The war on children will only stop when all of us – from citizens and community leaders to military commanders and heads of state – respect the idea that children should always be off-limits in war. We *can* help make the war on children stop if we work together, and force world leaders to listen and act decisively.

Specifically, Save the Children is calling on governments to do one or more of the following – depending on national context:

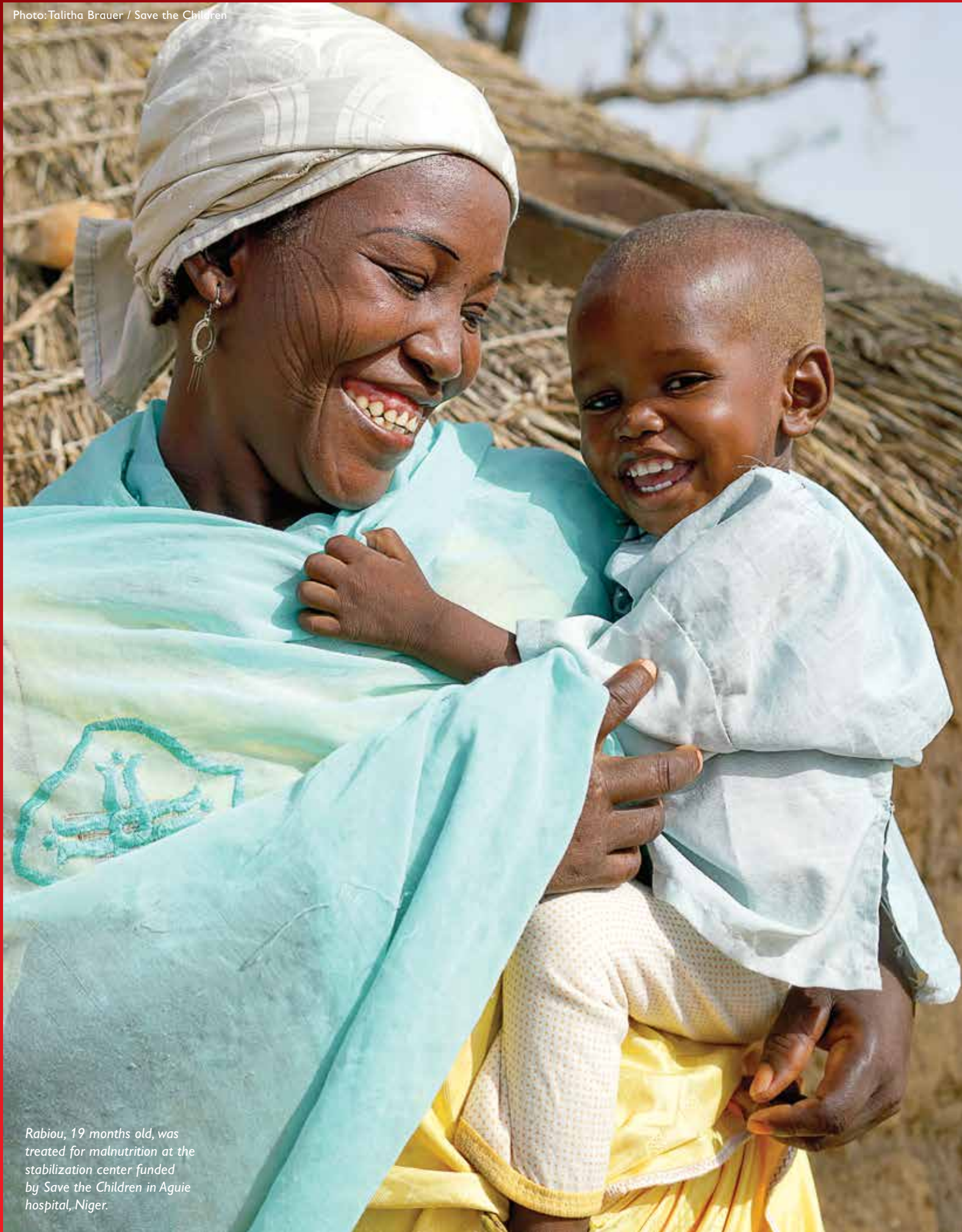
- **Uphold international standards** by strengthening child protection principles in military doctrine and trainings, regulating and improving transparency on international arms transfers, and committing to sign and implement international standards and laws critical to protecting children, including the Safe Schools Declaration, Arms Trade Treaty, Optional Protocol to the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and Paris Principles and Commitments.
- **Hold perpetrators of crimes against children to account** through judicial and political mechanisms and support international and domestic mechanisms to prosecute cases of violations of children's rights in conflict.
- **Take practical action to protect children and support their recovery** by increasing multi-year investments in humanitarian child protection, ensuring

mental health and psychosocial support for children and their families are well resourced and mainstreamed, increasing investments in education and programs to address sexual and gender-based violence, and including children in peacemaking and peacebuilding initiatives.

Steps to empower all girls and end child marriage:

As this report shows, persistent structural gender inequality, including discrimination against girls, remains a barrier to achieving many of the SDGs. The goals highlight that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Simply put: we will not be successful in tackling the biggest development challenges of our time, for and with the most deprived children, without a priority focus on and investment in gender equality. Save the Children calls on country governments and donors to:

- Be held accountable to girls for accelerating progress for advancing girls' rights in order to end child marriage and its consequences and increase gender equality. This includes commitments to:
 - Accelerate action to address child marriage at national, regional, and international levels through utilization of transparent accountability mechanisms.
 - Ensure development and implementation of costed national action plans to end child marriage and ensure the meaningful participation and engagement of girls and community leaders – traditional and religious – in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of such plans.
- Increase donor and national government investment to end child marriage and mitigate its consequences through gender-responsive budgeting across sectors and stand-alone financing for gender equality, including increased funding to support the provision of and access to sexual and reproductive health services and information, protection from all forms of violence, and safe, quality education for the most deprived and marginalized girls.
- Work together to empower girls as agents of change in their own lives and communities and transform patriarchal laws and social norms that allow and accept child marriage and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence.
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive database on child marriage in humanitarian contexts to fill current gaps that hamper addressing comprehensively the drivers of the practice as well as the needs of already married girls.



Rabiou, 19 months old, was treated for malnutrition at the stabilization center funded by Save the Children in Aguié hospital, Niger.

Progress Rankings 2000-2019

COUNTRY	2000 END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX SCORE	2019 END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX SCORE	CHANGE IN SCORE 2000-2019
Sierra Leone	345	591	246
Rwanda	503	744	241
Ethiopia	414	651	237
Niger	167	402	235
Burkina Faso	345	565	220
Angola	369	581	212
Guinea-Bissau	388	597	209
Zambia	422	623	201
Timor-Leste	526	725	199
Bhutan	617	811	194
Afghanistan	411	596	185
Liberia	417	599	182
Eritrea	429	606	177
Kenya	573	747	174
Mozambique	394	567	173
Equatorial Guinea	411	581	170
Malawi	446	615	169
Guinea	366	531	165
Senegal	528	691	163
Uganda	523	683	160
Mali	271	430	159
Bangladesh	575	728	153
Cambodia	606	755	149
Burundi	530	676	146
Maldives	774	917	143
DPR Korea	764	906	142
Nepal	543	685	142
Ghana	623	763	140
India	632	769	137
Madagascar	463	596	133
Sao Tome & Principe	618	751	133
Chad	277	408	131
South Africa	639	769	130
Cameroon	457	582	125
Côte d'Ivoire	483	608	125
Tajikistan	718	842	124
Gabon	664	775	111
Mongolia	766	877	111
Tanzania	493	604	111
Eswatini	637	747	110
Nigeria	395	504	109
Zimbabwe	569	677	108
Lesotho	472	579	107
Yemen*	548	652	104
South Sudan	358	461	103
Togo	576	679	103
Myanmar	684	786	102
Congo	614	715	101
Laos	543	643	100
Albania	809	908	99
Haiti	620	718	98
Uzbekistan	789	887	98
Benin	534	631	97
Nicaragua	698	795	97
Mauritania	487	582	95
Gambia	571	661	90
Morocco	774	864	90
Comoros	597	684	87
Pakistan	540	626	86
Turkey	818	904	86

COUNTRY	2000 END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX SCORE	2019 END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX SCORE	CHANGE IN SCORE 2000-2019
DR Congo	472	556	84
Kyrgyzstan	748	832	84
Namibia	676	760	84
Iraq	686	768	82
Bolivia	685	766	81
China	861	941	80
Iran	789	869	80
State of Palestine	784	863	79
Ecuador	739	817	78
Bosnia & Herzegovina	863	940	77
Sudan	539	615	76
Djibouti	657	732	75
Guatemala	566	639	73
Indonesia	721	792	71
Kazakhstan	864	933	69
Peru	766	835	69
Colombia	693	761	68
Georgia	815	883	68
Oman	857	925	68
Vietnam	764	831	67
Ukraine	867	932	65
Turkmenistan	840	902	62
Azerbaijan	789	849	60
Botswana	741	800	59
Honduras	624	682	58
United Arab Emirates	874	931	57
Algeria	851	907	56
Armenia	852	908	56
Russia	884	940	56
Paraguay	748	803	55
Romania	865	920	55
Saudi Arabia	873	928	55
Costa Rica	846	900	54
Mexico	772	826	54
Bahrain	905	958	53
Jordan	857	909	52
Cuba	867	918	51
El Salvador	694	745	51
Mauritius	869	919	50
Lebanon	878	926	48
Sri Lanka	867	915	48
Suriname	812	860	48
Croatia	919	965	46
Dominican Republic	748	794	46
Kuwait	896	942	46
Samoa	868	911	43
Bulgaria	882	923	41
Jamaica	816	857	41
Moldova	827	868	41
Estonia	927	967	40
Latvia	927	967	40
Lithuania	934	973	39
Tunisia	891	929	38
Philippines	763	800	37
Serbia	890	927	37
Bahamas	866	901	35
Egypt	798	833	35
Hungary	928	963	35
Argentina	848	881	33
Papua New Guinea	642	675	33

Few children missing out on childhood

Some children missing out on childhood

Many children missing out on childhood

Most children missing out on childhood

Nearly all children missing out on childhood

* Most of the available data for these countries predate escalations of violence and do not reflect the harsh realities for children in these settings.

Coloring reflects the extent to which children are missing out on childhood. For details, see Methodology and Research Notes.

PROGRESS RANKINGS 2000-2019

COUNTRY	2000 END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX SCORE	2019 END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX SCORE	CHANGE IN SCORE 2000-2019
Portugal	945	978	33
Qatar	900	933	33
United States	909	941	32
Solomon Islands	658	689	31
Thailand	829	859	30
Cabo Verde	811	840	29
New Zealand	939	968	29
Guyana	759	786	27
Saint Vincent & the Grenadines	842	869	27
Uruguay	850	877	27
Iceland	952	978	26
North Macedonia	876	900	24
United Kingdom	948	972	24
Vanuatu	774	798	24
Finland	962	985	23
Marshall Islands	749	772	23
Brazil	785	806	21
Ireland	961	982	21
Greece	944	964	20
Israel	954	974	20
Italy	960	980	20
Poland	948	968	20
Belize	782	801	19
Montenegro	902	921	19
Slovenia	966	985	19
Somalia	449	468	19
Belarus	933	951	18
Australia	958	975	17
Cyprus	960	977	17
Singapore	972	989	17
Canada	955	971	16
Norway	969	985	16
Brunei Darussalam	892	907	15
Chile	901	916	15
France	959	973	14
Luxembourg	960	974	14
Spain	963	977	14
Belgium	966	979	13
Germany	969	982	13
Panama	779	792	13
Sweden	974	986	12
Switzerland	963	975	12
Republic of Korea	969	980	11
Barbados	905	915	10
Denmark	961	971	10
Central African Republic	385	394	9
Malaysia	883	890	7
Malta	954	961	7
Fiji	870	876	6
Japan	968	973	5
Saint Lucia	878	881	3
Tonga	908	910	2
Seychelles	864	865	1
Trinidad & Tobago	885	856	-29
Venezuela	739	707	-32
Syria*	794	643	-151

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End of Childhood Index Rankings 2019

RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE
1	Singapore	989 [^]	60	Jordan	909 ^v	119	Namibia	760 ^v
2	Sweden	986 [^]	61	Albania	908 [^]	120	Cambodia	755 [^]
3	Finland	985 [^]	61	Armenia	908 ^v	121	Sao Tome & Principe	751 ^v
3	Norway	985	63	Algeria	907 [^]	122	Eswatini	747 ^v
3	Slovenia	985 ^v	63	Brunei Darussalam	907 [^]	122	Kenya	747 [^]
6	Germany	982 [^]	65	DPR Korea	906 [^]	124	El Salvador	745 ^v
6	Ireland	982 [^]	66	Turkey	904	125	Rwanda	744 ^v
8	Italy	980	67	Turkmenistan	902 [^]	126	Djibouti	732 [^]
8	Republic of Korea	980	68	Bahamas	901 ^v	127	Bangladesh	728 [^]
10	Belgium	979 [^]	69	Costa Rica	900 [^]	128	Timor-Leste	725 [^]
11	Iceland	978 ^v	69	North Macedonia	900	129	Haiti	718 ^v
11	Portugal	978 ^v	71	Malaysia	890 ^v	130	Congo	715 ^v
13	Cyprus	977 ^v	72	Uzbekistan	887 [^]	131	Venezuela	707 ^v
13	Spain	977	73	Georgia	883 ^v	132	Senegal	691 [^]
15	Australia	975	74	Argentina	881 ^v	133	Solomon Islands	689 [^]
15	Switzerland	975	74	Saint Lucia	881 [^]	134	Nepal	685 [^]
17	Israel	974 [^]	76	Mongolia	877 ^v	135	Comoros	684 ^v
17	Luxembourg	974 [^]	76	Uruguay	877 [^]	136	Uganda	683 ^v
19	France	973 ^v	78	Fiji	876 ^v	137	Honduras	682 [^]
19	Japan	973	79	Iran	869 [^]	138	Togo	679 ^v
19	Lithuania	973 [^]	79	Saint Vincent & the Grenadines	869	139	Zimbabwe	677 ^v
22	United Kingdom	972 [^]	81	Moldova	868 [^]	140	Burundi	676 [^]
23	Canada	971 [^]	82	Seychelles	865 ^v	141	Papua New Guinea	675 ^v
23	Denmark	971	83	Morocco	864 [^]	142	Gambia	661 [^]
25	New Zealand	968 [^]	84	State of Palestine	863 ^v	143	Yemen*	652 [^]
25	Poland	968	85	Suriname	860 [^]	144	Ethiopia	651 ^v
27	Estonia	967 [^]	86	Thailand	859 ^v	145	Laos	643 ^v
27	Latvia	967 [^]	87	Jamaica	857 ^v	145	Syria*	643 ^v
29	Croatia	965	88	Trinidad & Tobago	856 ^v	147	Guatemala	639 [^]
30	Greece	964 ^v	89	Azerbaijan	849 [^]	148	Benin	631 [^]
31	Hungary	963 [^]	90	Tajikistan	842 [^]	149	Pakistan	626 ^v
32	Malta	961	91	Cabo Verde	840	150	Zambia	623 ^v
33	Bahrain	958 [^]	92	Peru	835 [^]	151	Malawi	615 ^v
34	Belarus	951 ^v	93	Egypt	833 [^]	151	Sudan	615 ^v
35	Kuwait	942 ^v	94	Kyrgyzstan	832 [^]	153	Côte d'Ivoire	608 ^v
36	China	941 [^]	95	Vietnam	831 [^]	154	Eritrea	606 ^v
36	United States	941 ^v	96	Mexico	826 [^]	155	Tanzania	604 ^v
38	Bosnia & Herzegovina	940 ^v	97	Ecuador	817 [^]	156	Liberia	599 ^v
38	Russia	940 ^v	98	Bhutan	811 [^]	157	Guinea-Bissau	597 ^v
40	Kazakhstan	933 [^]	99	Brazil	806 ^v	158	Afghanistan	596 [^]
40	Qatar	933 ^v	100	Paraguay	803 ^v	158	Madagascar	596 [^]
42	Ukraine	932	101	Belize	801 ^v	160	Sierra Leone	591 [^]
43	United Arab Emirates	931 ^v	102	Botswana	800	161	Cameroon	582 ^v
44	Tunisia	929 [^]	102	Philippines	800 [^]	161	Mauritania	582 ^v
45	Saudi Arabia	928 [^]	104	Vanuatu	798 ^v	163	Angola	581 [^]
46	Serbia	927 ^v	105	Nicaragua	795 [^]	163	Equatorial Guinea	581 ^v
47	Lebanon	926 [^]	106	Dominican Republic	794 [^]	165	Lesotho	579 ^v
48	Oman	925 ^v	107	Indonesia	792 ^v	166	Mozambique	567 ^v
49	Bulgaria	923 ^v	107	Panama	792	167	Burkina Faso	565 [^]
50	Montenegro	921 [^]	109	Guyana	786 ^v	168	DR Congo	556
51	Romania	920 [^]	109	Myanmar*	786 ^v	169	Guinea	531 [^]
52	Mauritius	919 [^]	111	Gabon	775 ^v	170	Nigeria	504 ^v
53	Cuba	918 [^]	112	Marshall Islands	772	171	Somalia	468 ^v
54	Maldives	917 ^v	113	India	769 [^]	172	South Sudan	461 ^v
55	Chile	916 [^]	113	South Africa	769 ^v	173	Mali	430 [^]
56	Barbados	915 [^]	115	Iraq*	768 [^]	174	Chad	408 ^v
56	Sri Lanka	915 [^]	116	Bolivia	766 [^]	175	Niger	402 [^]
58	Samoa	911	117	Ghana	763 [^]	176	Central African Republic	394 ^v
59	Tonga	910 ^v	118	Colombia	761 [^]			

Few children missing out on childhood**

Some children missing out on childhood

Many children missing out on childhood

Most children missing out on childhood

[^] Score is up from last year

^v Score is down from last year

Index scores reflect the average level of performance across a set of eight indicators related to child health, education, labor, marriage, childbirth and violence. The only reason a country was not included in this analysis was insufficient data (e.g., the country was missing values for three or more indicators). To see the underlying dataset, including data gaps, turn to pages 50-53. Performance bands reflect the extent to which children are missing out on childhood. For details, see Methodology and Research Notes.

* Data collection in times of conflict is difficult and dangerous. Latest available data for conflict-affected countries often predate escalations of violence and do not capture the harsh realities for children in these settings. In Syria and Yemen, for example, recent evidence suggests rates of child labor and child marriage have risen. These trends are not reflected in the data or index ranking.

** Although relatively few children in these countries are missing out on childhood, the absolute number of children missing out likely totals in the millions. This is especially true in more populous countries at the bottom of the performance band (e.g., United States, Russia).

Complete End of Childhood Index 2019

CHILDHOOD ENDER	CHILD DIES	CHILD IS SEVERELY MALNOURISHED	CHILD IS OUT OF SCHOOL	CHILD BEGINS WORK LIFE	CHILD MARRIES	CHILD HAS A CHILD	CHILD IS A VICTIM OF EXTREME VIOLENCE			END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX 2019	
							INDICATOR	Under-5 mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	Child stunting (% children aged 0-59 months)	Out-of-school children of primary and secondary school age (%)	Children engaged in child labor (% ages 5-17)	Adolescents currently married or in union (% girls aged 15-19)	Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19)	Population forcibly displaced by conflict (% of total)†	Child homicide rate (deaths per 100,000 population aged 0-19)	Score (out of 1,000)	Rank (out of 176)
	2017	2013-2018*	2013-2018*	2013-2018*	2013-2018*	2016	2018	2016			
Afghanistan*	67.9	40.9	41.9 z	29.4	16.9 b	68.8	14.9 c	3.0	596	158	
Albania	8.8	11.3 a	6.9	5.1 x,y	6.7 a	20.7	1.0	2.0	908	61	
Algeria*	24.0	11.7 x	9.7 x,z	5.0 y	3.1 b	10.4	0.0	1.6	907	63	
Angola	81.1	37.6	36.4 x	23.4	18.2	154.5	0.1	5.0	581	163	
Antigua and Barbuda	7.4	...	18.9	...	...	44.7	0.1	0.7	–	–
Argentina	10.4	8.2 x	2.9	4.4 x,y	12.7 x	63.0	0.0	3.1	881	74	
Armenia	12.6	9.4	7.1 x	8.7 y	4.6	24.0	0.8	0.6	908	61	
Australia	3.5	2.0 x	2.4	...	0.5 b	13.3	0.0	0.4	975	15	
Austria	3.6	...	...	...	2.7 x	7.2	0.0	0.2	–	–
Azerbaijan	23.0	18.0	6.4	6.5 x,y	8.9 a,x	52.6	6.4	0.9	849	89	
Bahamas	7.2	...	11.2	...	2.4 x	28.0	0.2	10.1	901	68	
Bahrain	7.3	...	2.3	...	5.3 b,x	13.5	0.0	0.3	958	33	
Bangladesh	32.4	36.1	17.4	4.3 y	32.4 x	84.4	0.0	1.5	728	127	
Barbados	12.4	7.7 x	6.5	1.9 x,y	1.4 a,x	39.2	0.1	3.9	915	56	
Belarus	3.7	4.5 x	2.4	1.4 x,y	7.4 x	18.0	0.1	0.5	951	34	
Belgium	3.8	...	1.6	...	2.2 x	5.1	0.0	0.4	979	10	
Belize	14.2	15.0	10.2	3.2 y	20.8 a	64.7	0.1	11.9	801	101	
Benin	98.3	32.2 a	23.8	32.9 a	16.0 a	88.1	0.0	3.8	631	148	
Bhutan	30.8	33.6 x	19.1	2.9 x,y	15.2 x	22.1	0.9	0.6	811	98	
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	34.9	16.1	11.7	26.4 x,y	11.6 x	69.0	0.0	6.0	766	116	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5.7	8.9 x	...	5.3 x,y	0.6 x	10.4	4.7	0.7	940	38	
Botswana	37.6	31.4 x	...	9.0 x,y	7.1 x	31.7	0.0	4.6	800	102	
Brazil	14.8	7.1 x	7.2	6.6 y	15.1 x	62.7	0.0	17.7	806	99	
Brunei Darussalam	10.5	19.7 x	9.1	...	3.1 b,x	10.9	0.0	1.0	907	63	
Bulgaria	7.5	...	7.9	...	8.4 x	40.3	0.0	0.4	923	49	
Burkina Faso	81.2	27.3	38.5	39.2 x,y	31.5 x	106.5	0.2	5.0	565	167	
Burundi	61.2	55.9	20.6	26.3 x,y	5.9 a	27.4	6.3	4.1	676	140	
Cabo Verde	17.4	...	20.5	6.4 x,y	8.1 x	74.7	0.0	4.4	840	91	
Cambodia	29.2	32.4	22.5 x	19.3 y	15.6	49.9	0.1	0.7	755	120	
Cameroon	84.0	31.7	22.6	47.0	20.1	108.8	1.1	6.2	582	161	
Canada	5.1	...	2.4	...	1.7	9.8	0.0	0.7	971	23	
Central African Republic	121.5	40.7 x	49.1 x	28.5 x,y	54.8 x	105.8	29.3 c	7.7	394	176	
Chad	123.2	39.9	46.1	51.5	38.3	164.5	1.1	5.7	408	174	
Chile	7.4	1.8	6.2	6.6 x,y	5.7 x	46.6	0.0	1.9	916	55	
China*	9.3	8.1	7.6 z	...	3.1 b	6.5	0.0 e	0.6	941	36	
Colombia	14.7	12.7 x	7.9	7.8 y	12.7	49.5	16.1 c	20.9	761	118	
Comoros	69.0	32.1 x	28.1	22.0 x,y	16.4 x	67.2	0.1	3.7	684	135	
Congo*	47.5	21.2	11.0 x,z	23.3	16.1 a	114.1	3.4	4.4	715	130	
Costa Rica	9.0	5.6 x	5.3	4.1 x,y	7.1	54.6	0.0	3.3	900	69	
Côte d'Ivoire	88.8	21.6	30.9	31.3 a	18.4 a	133.4	0.2	6.7	608	153	
Croatia	4.6	...	6.3	...	2.0 x	9.4	0.7	0.2	965	29	
Cuba	5.4	...	6.6	...	11.1	45.0	0.2	1.3	918	53	
Cyprus	2.7	...	3.0	...	3.1 x	4.7	0.0	0.5	977	13	
Czech Republic	3.3	...	...	...	0.9 x	10.2	0.0	0.2	–	–
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	19.0	19.1 a	...	5.1 a	0.0 a	0.3	0.0	2.7	906	65	
Democratic Republic of the Congo*	91.1	42.6	16.6 z	38.4	21.3	125.2	6.6 c	7.3	556	168	
Denmark	4.3	...	3.8	...	3.5 x	4.2	0.0	0.3	971	23	
Djibouti	61.7	33.5 x	52.9	7.7 x,y	2.6 b,x	19.4	0.3	3.4	732	126	
Dominican Republic	29.9	7.1	10.8	12.8	18.1	96.1	0.0	5.3	794	106	

Coloring reflects prevalence: Moderate High Very high

COMPLETE END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX 2019

CHILDHOOD ENDER	CHILD DIES	CHILD IS SEVERELY MALNOURISHED	CHILD IS OUT OF SCHOOL	CHILD BEGINS WORK LIFE	CHILD MARRIES	CHILD HAS A CHILD	CHILD IS A VICTIM OF EXTREME VIOLENCE			END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX 2019	
							Population forcibly displaced by conflict (% of total)†	Child homicide rate (deaths per 100,000 population aged 0-19)			
INDICATOR	Under-5 mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	Child stunting (% children aged 0-59 months)	Out-of-school children of primary and secondary school age (%)	Children engaged in child labor (% ages 5-17)	Adolescents currently married or in union (% girls aged 15-19)	Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19)	2017	2018	2016	Score (out of 1,000)	Rank (out of 176)
Ecuador	14.5	23.9	5.3	4.9 y	20.0 x	74.6	0.1	2.9		817	97
Egypt	22.1	22.3	8.0	7.0	14.4 b	51.0	0.0	2.2		833	93
El Salvador	14.5	13.6	22.5	8.9 y	16.3	70.3	3.3	17.9		745	124
Equatorial Guinea	89.6	26.2 x	...	...	22.0 x	157.9	0.0	1.0		581	163
Eritrea	43.1	50.3 x	62.7	...	...	53.5	11.0	3.2		606	154
Estonia	2.7	...	4.5	...	4.4 x	13.3	0.0	0.3		967	27
Eswatini	53.9	25.5	21.8	7.3 x,y	3.7	78.5	0.0	10.8		747	122
Ethiopia	58.5	38.4	33.6	27.4 x,y	17.4	64.9	1.3	4.2		651	144
Fiji	25.3	...	7.8 x	...	7.6 b,x	43.7	0.2	1.4		876	78
Finland	2.3	...	1.7	...	0.3	6.9	0.0	0.5		985	3
France	4.2	...	2.5	...	2.7	8.8	0.0	0.4		973	19
Gabon*	48.3	17.5 x	7.7 x,z	13.4 x,y	13.5 x	98.5	0.0	3.8		775	111
Gambia*	63.6	25.0	35.9 z	19.2 x,y	23.8	81.9	1.6	5.5		661	142
Georgia	10.8	11.3 x	2.0	4.2 y	10.6 x	47.1	7.8	1.1		883	73
Germany	3.7	1.3 x	...	...	0.4	6.8	0.0	0.3		982	6
Ghana	49.3	18.8	19.0	21.8 y	6.4	67.6	0.1	4.5		763	117
Greece	5.3	...	7.8	...	1.8 x	7.5	0.0	0.2		964	30
Grenada	16.7	...	10.5	...	...	30.4	0.1	1.8		—	—
Guatemala	27.6	46.5	28.6	25.8 x,y	19.8	72.5	0.5	10.4		639	147
Guinea	85.7	30.3 a	37.8	38.1 a	35.2 a	137.4	0.4	5.2		531	169
Guinea-Bissau*	84.2	27.6	30.6 z	51.1	11.4	87.2	0.3	6.9		597	157
Guyana	31.3	12.0	9.5 x	18.3	13.3 a	86.7	0.1	6.0		786	109
Haiti*	71.7	21.9 a	14.3 x,z	24.4 x,y	6.9 a	38.2	0.6	14.9		718	129
Honduras	18.2	22.7 x	30.1	14.1 y	22.6 x	72.2	2.7	18.3		682	137
Hungary	4.5	...	6.4	...	0.7	19.8	0.1	0.3		963	31
Iceland	2.1	...	4.9	...	0.4	7.3	0.0	0.7		978	11
India	39.4	38.4	20.2	11.8 x,y	15.2 a,b	24.5	0.0	1.3		769	113
Indonesia	25.4	36.4	14.2	6.9 x,y	12.8 x	48.0	0.0	2.8		792	107
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	14.9	6.8 x	6.8	11.4 x,y	21.1 b,x	25.7	0.2 c	1.4		869	79
Iraq	30.4	9.9 a	21.9 x	7.3 a	18.4 a,b	79.8	8.3 c	6.7		768	115
Ireland	3.5	...	0.2	...	1.1 x	10.1	0.0	0.3		982	6
Israel	3.6	...	1.9	...	2.5 b	9.7	0.0	0.8		974	17
Italy	3.4	...	2.4	...	1.5 x	6.2	0.0	0.2		980	8
Jamaica	15.2	6.2	...	3.3 x,y	3.4 x	54.4	0.1	15.0		857	87
Japan	2.6	7.1 x	1.7	...	0.5 b	4.2	0.0	0.1		973	19
Jordan	17.0	7.8 x	...	1.7 y	11.0 b	23.3	0.1	1.5		909	60
Kazakhstan	10.0	8.0	0.9	2.2 x,y	6.0	28.4	0.0	1.2		933	40
Kenya	45.6	26.0	20.5 x	...	12.0	81.8	0.0	2.5		747	122
Kiribati	54.6	...	...	...	15.8 x	17.2	0.0	6.9		—	—
Kuwait	8.1	4.9	7.5	...	5.3 b,x	9.4	0.1	0.9		942	35
Kyrgyzstan	20.0	12.9	5.5	25.8	13.1	38.8	0.1	1.2		832	94
Lao People's Democratic Republic	63.4	33.0 a	19.2	42.5 a	23.5 a	63.3	0.1	3.9		643	145
Latvia	4.2	...	2.8	...	2.6 x	13.8	0.0	0.9		967	27
Lebanon	7.8	...	20.1 x	1.9 x,y	3.3 b,x	12.2	0.2	1.4		926	47
Lesotho	85.9	33.2	24.7	...	17.7	89.7	0.0	19.2		579	165
Liberia	74.7	32.1	49.7	20.8 x,y	14.3	128.8	0.2	5.9		599	156
Libya	12.4	21.0 x	...	...	...	5.7	4.0	0.9		—	—
Lithuania	4.3	...	0.8	...	2.1 x	11.4	0.0	1.0		973	19
Luxembourg	2.6	...	7.5	...	1.0 x	5.4	0.0	0.1		974	17
Madagascar*	44.2	49.2 x	29.2 x,z	22.9 y	33.7 x	111.7	0.0	4.4		596	158
Malawi	55.4	37.1	17.5	39.3	23.5	141.0	0.0	0.8		615	151
Malaysia	7.9	20.7	13.4	...	6.0 b,x	13.4	0.0	1.9		890	71

Coloring reflects prevalence: Moderate High Very high

COMPLETE END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX 2019

CHILDHOOD ENDER	CHILD DIES	CHILD IS SEVERELY MALNOURISHED	CHILD IS OUT OF SCHOOL	CHILD BEGINS WORK LIFE	CHILD MARRIES	CHILD HAS A CHILD	CHILD IS A VICTIM OF EXTREME VIOLENCE			END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX 2019	
							Indicator	Indicator	Indicator		
INDICATOR	Under-5 mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	Child stunting (% children aged 0-59 months)	Out-of-school children of primary and secondary school age (%)	Children engaged in child labor (% ages 5-17)	Adolescents currently married or in union (% girls aged 15-19)	Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19)	Population forcibly displaced by conflict (% of total)†	Child homicide rate (deaths per 100,000 population aged 0-19)			
	2017	2013-2018*	2013-2018*	2013-2018*	2013-2018*	2016	2018	2016	Score (out of 1,000)	Rank (out of 176)	
Maldives*	7.9	15.3 a	11.1 x,z	...	3.8 a	6.5	0.0	1.3	917	54	
Mali	106.0	26.9 a	46.0	55.8	38.9 a	171.1	1.2 c	6.9	430	173	
Malta	6.4	...	5.7	...	0.5 x	16.8	0.0	0.4	961	32	
Marshall Islands	34.0	...	23.7	...	21.1 x	84.5 x,z	0.0	1.6 z	772	112	
Mauritania	79.0	27.9	39.6	37.6	27.8 a,b	80.5	1.0	7.0	582	161	
Mauritius	13.1	...	8.9	...	7.0 x	26.9	0.0	0.5	919	52	
Mexico	13.4	12.4	10.4	12.4	15.4	61.4	0.1	4.9	826	96	
Mongolia	17.2	10.8	8.6 x	17.3	4.9	24.2	0.2	1.4	877	76	
Montenegro	3.5	9.4	7.2	12.5	2.1	12.1	0.2	0.5	921	50	
Morocco	23.3	14.9 x	11.5	8.3 x,y	11.0 b,x	31.7	0.0	0.7	864	83	
Mozambique	72.4	43.1 x	26.5	22.2 x,y	43.1 a	138.9	0.1	1.6	567	166	
Myanmar	48.6	29.2	18.8	9.3 y	11.9 b	29.0	2.9 c	2.0	786	109	
Namibia	44.2	23.1	15.1 x	...	5.4	75.0	0.1	8.7	760	119	
Nauru	33.0	24.0 x	22.0	...	18.3 x	94.0 z	0.0	...	—	—	
Nepal	33.7	35.8	13.8	37.4	27.1 a	62.1	0.1	1.5	685	134	
Netherlands	3.9	...	...	...	0.1	4.1	0.0	0.3	—	—
New Zealand	5.3	...	1.5	...	0.5 b,x	20.6	0.0	0.7	968	25	
Nicaragua	17.2	17.3 x	10.4 x	...	22.4 x	86.9	0.1	5.2	795	105	
Niger	84.5	42.2	51.6	30.5 x,y	59.8 x	194.0	0.8 c	7.5	402	175	
Nigeria*	100.2	43.6	38.0 z	50.8 a	22.2 a	109.3	1.3 c	5.4	504	170	
North Macedonia	13.7	4.9 x	15.7 x	12.5 x,y	4.3 x	16.6	0.2	0.4	900	69	
Norway	2.6	...	2.1	...	0.1	5.7	0.0	0.2	985	3	
Oman	11.3	14.1	3.9	...	3.3 a,b	7.9	0.0	1.9	925	48	
Pakistan	74.9	47.2 a	40.8	...	13.5 a,b	37.7	0.2	6.5	626	149	
Panama	16.1	19.1 x	16.8	2.5 y	14.1 a	82.8	0.0	9.6	792	107	
Papua New Guinea	53.4	49.5 x	27.5	...	14.8 x	53.4	0.0	4.5	675	141	
Paraguay	21.0	5.6	15.4 x	26.4 a	16.1 a	56.6	0.0	3.0	803	100	
Peru	15.0	13.1	4.1 x	21.8 y	11.3	48.4	0.0	3.7	835	92	
Philippines	28.1	33.4	6.1	11.1 x,y	8.5 a	59.9	0.5 c	3.5	800	102	
Poland	4.7	...	5.3	...	1.2 x	13.0	0.0	0.2	968	25	
Portugal	3.7	...	2.4	...	0.6 b,x	9.9	0.0	0.4	978	11	
Qatar	7.6	...	10.7	...	4.0 a,b	10.2	0.0	3.8	933	40	
Republic of Korea	3.3	2.5 x	3.1	...	0.4 b,x	1.7	0.0	0.4	980	8	
Republic of Moldova	15.5	6.4 x	17.0	16.3 x,y	9.9 x	22.7	0.2	0.8	868	81	
Romania	7.8	...	13.8	...	6.7 x	33.7	0.0	0.3	920	51	
Russian Federation	7.6	...	3.4	...	7.5 x	22.5	0.1	1.5	940	38	
Rwanda*	37.9	37.9	22.6 z	28.5 x,y	3.0	26.8	2.2	2.9	744	125	
Saint Lucia	16.6	2.5 x	10.6 x	3.9 x,y	...	41.3	0.6	5.1	881	74	
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	16.2	...	3.5	...	16.7 x	50.1	1.3	4.4	869	79	
Samoa	16.5	4.7	8.8	...	7.8 a	24.8	0.0	1.2	911	58	
Sao Tome and Principe	32.4	17.2	10.9	26.0	15.3	96.3	0.0	4.1	751	121	
Saudi Arabia	7.4	9.3 x	4.0	...	5.6 b,x	8.3	0.0	4.1	928	45	
Senegal	45.4	16.5 a	39.3	23.0	23.3 a	74.9	0.3	4.4	691	132	
Serbia	5.7	6.0	4.7	9.5	3.1	19.3	3.0 d	0.3	927	46	
Seychelles	14.2	7.9 x	9.5	...	...	57.8	0.0	1.5	865	82
Sierra Leone	110.5	26.4 a	26.1	39.0 a	15.3 a	115.6	0.1	6.4	591	160	
Singapore	2.8	...	0.1	...	0.4 b,x	3.7	0.0	0.1	989	1	
Slovakia	5.6	...	...	...	1.6 x	22.2	0.0	0.3	—	—
Slovenia	2.1	...	2.8	...	0.5 x	4.3	0.0	0.1	985	3	
Solomon Islands	20.6	31.6	31.3 x	47.8 y	11.4 a	47.8	0.0	1.9	689	133	
Somalia*	127.2	25.3 x	48.7 x,z	49.0 x,y	24.6 b,x	102.2	25.8 c	3.1	468	171	
South Africa	37.1	27.4	9.8	...	3.1 a	44.4	0.0	15.6	769	113	

Coloring reflects prevalence: Moderate High Very high

COMPLETE END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX 2019

CHILDHOOD ENDER	CHILD DIES	CHILD IS SEVERELY MALNOURISHED		CHILD IS OUT OF SCHOOL	CHILD BEGINS WORK LIFE	CHILD MARRIES	CHILD HAS A CHILD	CHILD IS A VICTIM OF EXTREME VIOLENCE			END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX 2019				
		Child stunting (% children aged 0-59 months)						Out-of-school children of primary and secondary school age (%)	Children engaged in child labor (% ages 5-17)	Adolescents currently married or in union (% girls aged 15-19)			Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19)	Population forcibly displaced by conflict (% of total)†	Child homicide rate (deaths per 100,000 population aged 0-19)
INDICATOR	Under-5 mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	2013-2018*		2013-2018*	2013-2018*	2013-2018*	2016	2018	2016	Score (out of 1,000)	Rank (out of 176)				
South Sudan	96.4	31.1	x	66.7	...	40.1	x	65.2	31.6	c	2.4	461	172		
Spain	3.1	...		1.1	...	x	3.5	8.7	0.0		0.2	977	13		
Sri Lanka	8.8	17.3		6.4	1.0	y	6.0	a	14.8	0.8	0.8	915	56		
State of Palestine	20.9	7.4		12.3	5.7	x,y	9.1	b	57.2	2.2	2.7	z	863	84	
Sudan	63.2	38.2		47.3	x	24.9		20.0	b	67.2	6.7	c	3.1	615	151
Suriname	19.6	8.8	x	15.8	4.1	x,y	11.8	x	46.7	0.0	3.5		860	85	
Sweden	2.8	...		0.7	...		0.3	5.3	0.0		0.6		986	2	
Switzerland	4.2	...		6.1	...		0.4	3.1	0.0		0.3		975	15	
Syrian Arab Republic	17.0	27.5	x	45.0	4.0	x,y	9.7	b,x	39.5	74.5	c	1.0	643	145	
Tajikistan	33.6	17.5	a	10.9	x	10.0	x	12.6	a	36.9	0.1	0.5	842	90	
Thailand	9.5	10.5		12.4	x	8.3	x,y	14.1	a	51.8	0.0	2.0	859	86	
Timor-Leste	47.6	45.6	a	19.7	...		8.2	a	45.6	0.0	4.6		725	128	
Togo	72.9	27.5		21.6	27.9		12.7		89.6	0.1	4.8		679	138	
Tonga	16.0	8.1	x	10.3	...		4.6	x	15.1	0.1	2.2		910	59	
Trinidad and Tobago*	26.1	11.0	x	4.2	x,z	2.3	a,x,y	2.1	b,x	31.0	0.0	16.4	856	88	
Tunisia*	13.0	10.1	x	13.3	x,z	2.1	x,y	1.2	b,x	7.6	0.0	0.6	929	44	
Turkey	11.6	9.5		10.4	5.9	x,y	6.6	b	26.9	0.1	0.9		904	66	
Turkmenistan*	47.3	11.5		0.4	z	0.3		6.0	24.8	0.0	1.5		902	67	
Tuvalu	24.9	10.0	x	16.3	...		8.0	b,x	28.0	x,z	0.0	...	-	-	
Uganda*	49.0	28.9		23.3	z	16.3	x,y	19.9	a	110.5	0.4	6.4	683	136	
Ukraine	8.8	...		4.9	2.4	x,y	6.5	x	24.7	4.4	0.7		932	42	
United Arab Emirates	9.1	...		5.1	...		6.7	b,x	28.2	0.0	1.7		931	43	
United Kingdom	4.3	...		0.8	...		2.9	x	13.5	0.0	0.6		972	22	
United Republic of Tanzania	54.0	34.4		42.7	28.8	y	22.3		116.6	0.0	4.1		604	155	
United States	6.6	2.1	x	3.4	...		5.8	x	20.6	0.0	3.4		941	36	
Uruguay	8.2	10.7	x	6.2	7.9	x,y	7.4		55.4	0.0	3.6		877	76	
Uzbekistan	22.5	19.6	x	6.3	...		4.9	x	16.7	0.0	0.5		887	72	
Vanuatu	26.9	28.5		16.1	15.2	y	11.3	a	42.5	0.0	1.3		798	104	
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	30.9	13.4	x	17.3	...		15.8	x	85.8	2.7	23.8		707	131	
Vietnam*	20.9	24.6		10.2	z	16.4		9.7	29.0	0.4	1.2		831	95	
Yemen	55.4	46.5		28.9	22.7	x,y	16.7	b	61.8	7.6	c	2.8	652	143	
Zambia*	60.0	40.0		22.2	z	40.6	x,y	16.9		86.0	0.0	5.5	623	150	
Zimbabwe	50.3	26.8		24.9	...		19.6		105.8	0.2	8.3		677	139	
GLOBAL AND REGIONAL AVERAGES*															
Sub-Saharan Africa§	75.5	33.9		31.7	29.4		23.0		122.0	2.3	5.4		593	-	
Eastern and Southern Africa	59.1	34.1		29.5	25.8		20.0		112.8	2.1	5.1		631	-	
West and Central Africa	91.2	33.7		32.7	31.9		26.7		129.8	2.1	5.9		559	-	
Middle East and North Africa	23.0	15.0		17.9	6.9		12.8		41.0	4.7	2.5		829	-	
South Asia	44.8	35.0		22.8	12.4	y,z	29.0	z	44.3	0.3	2.0		722	-	
East Asia and Pacific	15.8	9.0		9.7	10.0	y,z**	5.7		21.2	0.1	1.4		897	-	
Latin America and Caribbean	17.7	9.6		9.9	10.5		10.9		74.3	1.5	11.4		808	-	
CEE/CIS‡	13.1	8.5		6.7	5.4	y,z	7.3		29.0	0.9	1.0		908	-	
World	39.1	22.2		17.6	12.6	y,z**	16.0		50.4	0.9	z	3.3	781	-	

Coloring reflects prevalence: **Moderate High Very high**

... Data are unavailable or outdated (i.e., pre-2005)

+ Data refer to the most recent year available during the reference period

a Estimate from recent MICS or DHS (pending reanalysis)

b Estimate does not include consensual unions

c There is evidence of recruitment and use of children (e.g., as child soldiers)

d Includes displaced populations from Serbia and Kosovo

e Includes displaced populations of Tibetan origin

x Data refer to the most recent year available during the period 2005-2012

y Data differ from the standard definition (interpret with caution)

z Data are from the secondary source (interpret with caution)

§ Includes Eastern and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa, Djibouti, Sudan

‡ Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

** Excludes China

* To include as many countries as possible in the rankings, school attendance data for these 20 countries were sourced from surveys because recent enrollment data were not available

† Includes refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees (refugees and IDPs) and others of concern to UNHCR

Note: For indicator definitions, primary and secondary data sources, prevalence thresholds and regional classifications, see Methodology and Research Notes.

Methodology and Research Notes

Every child has a right to childhood. The concept of childhood is defined in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.²¹⁴ It represents a shared vision of childhood: healthy children in school and at play, growing strong and confident with the love and encouragement of their family and an extended community of caring adults, gradually taking on the responsibilities of adulthood, free from fear, safe from violence, protected from abuse and exploitation. This ideal contrasts starkly with the childhood many children experience.

Countries differ greatly in their ability to protect childhood. The *End of Childhood Index* explores this variation across countries, revealing where and how children are being robbed of the childhoods they deserve. The hope is it will stimulate discussion and action to ensure every last child fully experiences childhood.

CHILDHOOD ENDERS

This index does not capture the full extent of deprivations or hardships affecting children. Instead, it focuses on some key rights or “guarantees” of childhood: life, healthy growth and development, education and protection from harm. If a child experiences all of these, his/her childhood is considered to be “intact.”

The index tracks a series of events that, should any one of them occur, mark the end of an intact childhood. These events are called “childhood enders” and include: child dies, malnutrition permanently impairs child’s development, child leaves or fails to enter school, child begins work life, child marries, child has a child, and child is a victim of extreme violence.

End events erode childhood. Depending on the number and severity of enders experienced, the loss of childhood could be complete or only partial.²¹⁵ But once a child experiences an ender, childhood becomes fractured rather than complete.²¹⁶ Each event represents an assault on childhood. At some point, as the assaults mount up, childhood ends.

Countries are scored and ranked according to performance across this set of enders, revealing where childhood is most and least threatened.

INDICATORS, DEFINITIONS AND DATA SOURCES

The following eight indicators were selected because they best represent these enders, are available for a large number of countries and are regularly updated.²¹⁷ Data were obtained from reliable and reputable sources, almost exclusively UN agencies, and are publicly available to those interested in doing additional analyses.

ENDER	INDICATOR
Child dies	Under-5 mortality rate
Child is severely malnourished	Child stunting (%)
Child is out of school	Out-of-school children, adolescents and youth (%)
Child begins work life	Child labor (%)
Child marries	Adolescents currently married or in union (%)
Child has a child	Adolescent birth rate
Child is a victim of extreme violence	Population forcibly displaced by conflict (%)
Child is a victim of extreme violence	Child homicide rate

Under-5 mortality rate (USMR): The probability of dying between birth and exactly 5 years of age, expressed per 1,000 live births. Estimates are for 2017. Source: *UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (childmortality.org)*.

Child stunting (moderate and severe): Percentage of children aged 0-59 months who are below minus two standard deviations from median height-for-age of the WHO Child Growth Standards. Estimates are for the most recent year available 2005-2018. Sources: *UNICEF, WHO, World Bank Group, Joint Malnutrition Country Dataset, May 2018 Edition*,²¹⁸ updated with data from recent MICS and DHS surveys for 14 countries (see *Complete End of Childhood Index*).

Out-of-school rate (OOSC) for children, adolescents and youth of primary and secondary school age: The number of children, adolescents and youth of official primary and secondary school age who are not enrolled²¹⁹ in primary, secondary or higher levels of education, expressed as a percentage of the population of official school age. Children and young people (about ages 6 and over) who are enrolled in pre-primary education are considered to be out of school.²²⁰ Data are for the most recent year available 2005-2018. Sources: *UNESCO's UIS.Stat (data.uis.unesco.org)*, supplemented with household survey data from *UNESCO's World Inequality Database on Education (education-inequalities.org)* for 20 countries (see *Complete End of Childhood Index*). Note: Household survey data were used to estimate OOSC rates only where official data were unavailable or outdated (i.e., pre-2005). Rates were derived by dividing the number of children, adolescents and youth out of school (calculated as: primary OOSC*primary population + lower secondary OOSC*lower secondary population + upper secondary OOS*upper secondary population) by the total population of official primary and secondary school age. Official school age population data were sourced from *UIS.Stat* and refer to the same OOSC reference year.

Child Labor: Percentage of children 5-17 years old involved in child labor.²²¹ Data are for the most recent year available 2005-2018. Sources: *UNICEF (data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-labour/)*, updated with data from recent MICS surveys for 10 countries (see *Complete End of Childhood Index*).

Adolescents currently married or in union: Percentage of girls 15-19 years of age who have been married and are not either divorced, widowed or separated. Data including consensual unions or other types of customary unions are prioritized. Where unions have not been reported together with currently married, this omission is marked with a “b” in the index table. Data are for 2005-2018. Where more than one data point was available for the same reference year, the lowest value was used. Sources: *United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Population Division. World Marriage Data 2017*, updated with data from recent MICS and DHS surveys for 38 countries (see *Complete End of Childhood Index*).

Adolescent birth rate: Births to women aged 15-19 per 1,000 women in that age group. Estimates are for 2016 for all

but the three countries with supplemental data. Sources: *World Development Indicators, World Bank (data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT)*, supplemented with data for Marshall Islands, Nauru and Tuvalu from the *SDG Indicators Global Database (unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/?indicator=3.7.2)*.

Population forcibly displaced by conflict or persecution: Total population of concern to UNHCR,²²² by country or territory of origin, expressed as a percentage of the country's or territory's population. Data are for mid-2018. Sources: *UNHCR. Mid-Year Trends 2018. (Geneva: 2019)* and *UNDESA, Population Division. World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision*.

Evidence of child soldiers: Countries identified as having governmental armed forces, government-supported armed groups or other parties that recruit or use child soldiers. The term “child soldier” includes children who are serving in any capacity, including in a support role, such as a cook, porter, messenger, medic, guard or sex slave. Sources: *CSPA List from Trafficking in Persons Report 2018 (state.gov/jtip/rls/tiprpt/2018/282577.htm)* and *Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, Annex I and Annex II (undocs.org/A/72/865)*. Note: This indicator is not factored into the index score but has been noted in the *Complete End of Childhood Index* table.

Child homicide rate: Estimated number of deaths caused by interpersonal violence among children and adolescents aged 0-19 years (from WHO), expressed per 100,000 population in that age group (from UNDESA, Population Division). Estimates are for 2016. Sources: *WHO. Global Health Estimates 2016: Deaths by Cause, Age, Sex, by Country and by Region, 2000-2016 (terrance.who.int/mediacentre/data/ghe/)* and *UNDESA, Population Division. World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision (esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/)*, supplemented with rates for State of Palestine and Marshall Islands from *Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). Global Burden of Disease Study 2016 (ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool)*.

CALCULATIONS

As indicators are measured on different scales, each was first normalized using a linear scaling technique:

$$X_N = (X - \text{Worst}) / (\text{Best} - \text{Worst})$$

Where:

X_N is the normalized value

X is the actual value

Worst is the highest observed value for the indicator

Best is the lowest possible value for the indicator

This technique ensures scores range between 0 and 1 and that all indicators are coded positively (i.e., higher scores indicate better performance).²²³

All indicators are weighted equally. The overall index score was calculated by summing across the normalized scores for

ENDER	INDICATOR	BEST	WORST	WEIGHT
Child dies	Under-5 mortality rate	0.0	156.9	1/8
Child is severely malnourished	Child stunting (%)	0.0	57.5	1/8
Child is out of school	Out-of-school children, adolescents and youth (%)	0.0	67.5	1/8
Child begins work life	Child labor (%)	0.0	55.8	1/8
Child marries	Adolescents currently married or in union (%)	0.0	59.8	1/8
Child has a child	Adolescent birth rate	0.0	201.2	1/8
Child is a victim of extreme violence	Population forcibly displaced by conflict (%)	0.0	65.4	1/8
Child is a victim of extreme violence	Child homicide rate	0.0	32.8	1/8

each indicator and then dividing by eight. Scores were multiplied by 1,000 and rounded to three digits. Countries were sorted from high to low by this overall index score (with 1,000 being the best possible score) and then ranked from 1 to 176.

To help ensure index scores are comparable from year to year and that countries can track progress over time, the best (i.e., minimum) and worst (i.e., maximum) values and the indicator weights have been fixed from the inaugural year onwards as shown in the table above.

MISSING VALUES

The *Complete End of Childhood Index* table includes all 186 countries with recent data (from 2005 and onwards) for at least five of the eight indicators, but not all of them are included in the index rankings.

Countries missing homicide data were dropped from the rankings.²²⁴ Countries missing up to any two of the other seven indicators were allowed to remain in the index. This was the only way to ensure a sufficient number of high-income OECD countries were included, as most do not collect or publish data on stunting or child labor.

In total, 176 countries had sufficient data to be ranked. 98 countries have data for all eight indicators. 34 countries are missing one indicator. 44 countries are missing two indicators, 33 of which are high-income countries.²²⁵

For countries lacking stunting, out-of-school or child labor data, the normalized score for their under-5 mortality rate was used in place of the missing value(s). Under-5 mortality is the leading indicator of child well-being and is strongly correlated with these three indicators.²²⁶ For countries lacking child marriage data, the normalized score for their adolescent birth rate was ascribed. These two indicators are also highly correlated.²²⁷

Ascribing fillers for these missing values helped ensure countries weren't being rewarded for the lack of data and

that data imputations for missing values were based on a country's performance on another, strongly correlated, childhood ender.

PREVALENCE THRESHOLDS AND PERFORMANCE BANDS

Country-level performance on each indicator was assessed according to the thresholds in the table on the next page. Countries with "moderate," "high" or "very high" prevalence of enders were color-coded as shown.

To the greatest extent possible, indicator thresholds were based on international standards. The classification schemes used for under-5 mortality and stunting are established.²²⁸ The same breakdowns for stunting were used for out-of-school, child labor and child marriage. The breakdowns for adolescent births were adapted from those used by the World Bank and the WHO.²²⁹ Those for displacement were based loosely on categories used by UNHCR for a related indicator.²³⁰ The homicide strata were adapted from UNICEF and UNODC.²³¹

To establish tiers or "performance bands," the boundary points between threshold levels were normalized for each

BAND	SHARE OF CHILDREN MISSING OUT ON CHILDHOOD	INDEX SCORES
1	Relatively few children	≥ 940
2	Some children	760 to 939
3	Many children	600 to 759
4	Most children	380 to 599
5	Nearly all children	≤ 379

INDICATOR	VERY LOW	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Under-5 mortality rate (per 1,000)	< 10	10 to < 25	25 to < 50	50 to < 100	≥ 100
Child stunting (%)	< 5	5 to < 20	20 to < 30	30 to < 40	≥ 40
Out-of-school children and youth (%)	< 5	5 to < 20	20 to < 30	30 to < 40	≥ 40
Child labor (%)	< 5	5 to < 20	20 to < 30	30 to < 40	≥ 40
Child marriage (%)	< 5	5 to < 20	20 to < 30	30 to < 40	≥ 40
Adolescent birth rate (per 1,000)	< 15	15 to < 50	50 to < 100	100 to < 150	≥ 150
Population displaced by conflict (%)	< 1	1 to < 2	2 to < 5	5 to < 20	≥ 20
Child homicide rate (per 100,000)	< 1	1 to < 5	5 to < 10	10 to < 20	≥ 20
PERFORMANCE BAND	≥ 940	760 - 939	600 - 759	380 - 599	≤ 379

indicator and then indexed. Index scores were rounded to two decimal places and then multiplied by 1,000 to give the cut-off points for each tier. Countries were placed into one of five bands according to their index scores (see table on bottom of page 56).

COUNTRY CLASSIFICATION

The *End of Childhood Index* presents data for the world as a whole and for various country groupings. These groupings are based on UNICEF's nomenclature (from data.unicef.org) and regional classification. For a list of countries and territories in each region, see: UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2016*, p. 112.

Global and regional data were sourced from the UN,²³² with the exception of out-of-school, forced displacement and child homicide rates. Regional averages for these three indicators were calculated by Save the Children, as were global rates for the last two. Each was calculated as a weighted average, with the relevant population used as the weights.²³³ All UNICEF countries with available data were included in these estimates.²³⁴ Population coverage was above 95 percent for all region-indicator pairs.²³⁵

The designations employed in this report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of Save the Children concerning the legal status of any country or territory or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

LIMITATIONS AND CAVEATS

It would not be impossible to include all the factors that erode childhood in a single index. This index focuses only on the most significant ends for which reliable and comparable data are widely available. Some indicators (e.g., sexual violence, trafficking, hazardous work) would have been included had there been sufficient data. Others (e.g., incarceration, orphanhood, migration, bullying, corporal

punishment, substance use) had data but weren't included because they do not necessarily – in and of themselves – signal the end of childhood. A child who is incarcerated, for example, can receive substantial rehabilitation services including counseling, schooling and a reliable network of caring adults. Many potential indicators (e.g., child abuse) were also discarded due to data quality concerns or because they were not the most relevant indicator for the ender in question (e.g., suicide for child dies).²³⁶

Save the Children has not independently verified the data used in this report. To ensure the data are of the highest quality, all data are from reputable international sources that closely review and adjust national data to ensure that they are as accurate and comparable as possible.

The index presents the most recent data available as of 22 March 2019. Data are not available for the same reference year for all indicators or for all countries. Of the 176 countries ranked, 72 have very recent data (i.e., 2012-onward) for all indicators. 104 countries have at least one data point from 2005-2011.

For 15 countries without official education data, as well as five whose most recent official figures predate 2005, household survey data were used to give an indication of the extent of exclusion from education.²³⁷

Using the total population of concern to UNHCR can overestimate the share of national population forcibly displaced by conflict because “others of concern” can include host communities who are affected by conflict but aren't necessarily displaced persons.²³⁸

TECHNICAL NOTE ON THE 2000 VS. 2019 ANALYSIS

Index scores were calculated for each region and all 176 countries ranked in 2019 for the year 2000 using the same indicators, sources and calculation methodology outlined above, with a few important exceptions: a) trend data were

not available for child labor for enough countries, so estimates for 2019 were used and b) too few countries had national child marriage data for 2000, so UN estimates were used.²³⁹ The decision to hold child labor rates constant resulted in higher index scores for 2000 but more conservative changes in scores for 2000-2019. In this way, countries were not rewarded for lack of data. Similarly, where point estimates for out-of-school or stunting rates were not available for 2000, data for the closest available year were used, provided it was not older than 1995. Where two values were equidistant from 2000 (e.g., 1999 and 2001), they were averaged. This occurred six times for OOSC and five times for stunting.

Indicator-level analyses for 2000-2018 (or latest available year) were approached in the same way for all countries and areas with available data (i.e., not only countries on the 2019 *End of Childhood Index*). But minor changes to child labor, child marriage and displacement indicators were necessary.²⁴⁰

Country and global progress assessments were made based on the percent reduction since 2000, as given in the table below. Countries were considered “positive deviants” if they achieved very good or excellent progress for children and were a) a low-income country,²⁴¹ b) a fragile or conflict-affected state,²⁴² c) a regional outlier (defined as one of only one or two countries in the region to achieve very good or excellent progress), or d) disaggregated data suggested the poorest quintile had benefitted from as much or more progress as/than the national average (defined as within 3 percentage points).

This analysis included the latest available data as of 9 January 2019. Country examples were then updated in early April 2019 to include more recent stunting, OOSC and displacement data.

TECHNICAL NOTE ON THE GLOBAL ESTIMATE CALCULATION

In 2017, Save the Children’s first *End of Childhood Report* revealed that at least 700 million children worldwide had been robbed of their childhoods (i.e., they had experienced one or more childhood ender events). This year’s report estimates the same figure for today and for 2000 using the latest available trend data as of 12 April 2019 and the calculation methodology established in 2017.

Today’s count (690 million) is for 2017 and includes estimates for three discrete groups of children: children aged 0-17 who have died (145 million),²⁴³ children aged 0-5 who are stunted (182 million)²⁴⁴ and children aged 6-17 who are out of school (262 million).²⁴⁵ It also includes a subset of child laborers (86 million)²⁴⁶ and a subset of refugee and internally displaced children (16 million)²⁴⁷ who are not likely to be accounted for in the other groups.

The figure for 2000 (969 million) includes estimates for all but one of these same groups of children: 216 million children who would have been alive in 2000 and aged 0-17 if they hadn’t died,²⁴⁸ 237 million stunted children aged 0-5,²⁴⁹ 376 million school-aged children (± ages 6-17) who were out of school in 2000,²⁵⁰ and an estimated 139 million child laborers who were likely in school.²⁵¹ Data were not sufficient to reliably estimate the number of refugee and internally displaced children in 2000 not otherwise accounted for.

To reach these numbers, a series of reasonable assumptions were made based on evidence of overlap between these groups of children. For details, including the limitations of this analysis, see page 40 of the 2017 *End of Childhood Report*.

PERFORMANCE BANDS FOR PROGRESS ON ALL CHILDHOOD ENDERS, 2000 TO LATEST YEAR AVAILABLE

Excellent progress for children	75-100% reduction in childhood ender
Very good progress for children	50-74% reduction in childhood ender
Good progress for children	25-49% reduction in childhood ender
Fair progress for children	1-24% reduction in childhood ender
No progress for children	0% or prevalence of childhood ender has increased

Endnotes

¹ These figures represent the difference between the total number of children affected by each childhood ender in 2000 and the total number affected at last estimate. The most recent year for which these global estimates are available is 2018 for stunting, 2017 for under-5 mortality, children out of school and child marriage, and 2016 for child labor, adolescent births and child homicide.

² One-fifth of these children have died. The rest – 545 million or 24 percent of children under the age of 18 worldwide – are alive and missing out on childhood. For details on this analysis, see the Methodology and Research Notes.

³ Queen's University Belfast and Save the Children. *Enabling the Exercise of Civil and Political Rights: The Views of Children*. (2016)

⁴ The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) represents a global consensus on the terms of childhood. It recognizes childhood as a separate space from adulthood defined by a specific set of rights. It is the responsibility of all duty bearers for children – governments, international organizations, civil society, families and individuals – to ensure that children's rights are fulfilled and protected. When children are left unprotected and vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, their childhood is undermined. A protective environment is pivotal to governments' and societies' commitment to ensuring that no child is deprived of the material, spiritual and emotional resources needed to achieve their potential or participate as full and equal members of society. This report shows that for hundreds of millions of children, the promise of childhood that undergirds the Convention is a broken one. For more on the CRC's role in defining the concept of childhood, see UNICEF's *State of the World's Children 2005*.

⁵ This set of countries refers to those included on the World Bank Group's *Harmonized List of Fragile Situations* from FY06 to FY19. The full list with details can be found at worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/harmonized-list-of-fragile-situations

⁶ McArthur, J.W. and K. Rasmussen. "Change of Pace: Accelerations and Advances during the Millennium Development Goal Era." *World Development* 105 (2018) 132–143

⁷ The same Brookings study found that for undernourishment and access to safe water, accelerations in the majority of developing countries were outweighed by slowdowns in the rate of progress in many populous countries (i.e., more people were undernourished and without water in 2015 than would have been had 1990s trends continued).

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- ¹⁷⁸ Please note that due to wide confidence intervals, this difference is not statistically significant. WHO's estimates for Colombia, including upper and lower bounds, are: 5,570 [3915-7466] for 2000 and 3,274 [2032-4713] for 2016.
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- ²¹² A recent survey of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, for example, found 29 percent of girls aged 15 to 19 were married, an increase of 7% from 2017. Source: UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP. *Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*. (Beirut: 2018)
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- ²¹⁴ Childhood means more than just the time between birth and adulthood. It refers to the state and condition of a child's life – to the quality of those years. As the most widely endorsed human rights treaty in history, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 and ratified by all but one country, represents a global consensus on the terms of childhood. Although there is not absolute agreement on the interpretation of each and every provision of the Convention, there is substantial common ground on what the standards of childhood should be. Source: UNICEF. *The State of the World's Children 2005*.
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- ²¹⁶ This does not mean that children who experience enders are not still children or that they cannot still enjoy some aspects of childhood. A child who is out of school, for example, may still learn other skills at home. Refugee children still play and may study if the right policies and programs are in place. And even though they have taken on adult roles and responsibilities, child brides and teen mothers are still children entitled to protection and support.
- ²¹⁷ Other selection criteria included: reliability, face validity, comparability, policy relevance, news-worthiness, contemporaneity and alignment with SDG targets.
- ²¹⁸ A March 2019 edition was released in April after the index had been finalized and put into production.
- ²¹⁹ For the 20 countries where household survey data are used, the indicator represents the share of school-aged children not attending school.
- ²²⁰ The current international standard is to treat children of primary age or older enrolled in pre-primary education as out of school because pre-primary education does not meet the same education standards as formal primary or higher education. This may result in an overestimate of the rate of children who are not in school, in particular in countries where pre-primary education is compulsory.
- ²²¹ A child is considered to be involved in child labor under the following conditions: a) children aged 5-11 who, during the reference week, did at least one hour of economic work or at least 28 hours of household chores; b) children aged 12-14 who, during the reference week, did at least 14 hours of economic work or at least 28 hours of household chores; c) children aged 15-17 who, during the reference week, did at least 43 hours of economic work or household chores; and d) children aged 5-17 years old in hazardous working conditions.
- ²²² Includes refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees (refugees and IDPs) and others of concern who do not necessarily fall directly into any of the other groups but to whom UNHCR may extend its protection and/or assistance services.
- ²²³ Syria's score for displacement is the only exception. Because this year's estimate (74.5%) exceeds the "worst" possible score of 65.4, Syria's normalized score is actually negative (-0.14).
- ²²⁴ This affected only two countries: Nauru and Tuvalu.
- ²²⁵ The *Complete End of Childhood Index* table indicates the indicator(s) that are missing for these 78 countries.
- ²²⁶ In the inaugural year, correlation coefficients were 0.68, 0.76 and 0.74, respectively.
- ²²⁷ The correlation coefficient was 0.81.
- ²²⁸ See, for example, data.unicef.org/topic/child-survival/under-five-mortality/ and data.unicef.org/topic/nutrition/malnutrition/
- ²²⁹ See gamapservr.who.int/mapLibrary/Files/Maps/Global_AdolescentBirthRate_2015.png and data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT?view=map
- ²³⁰ UNHCR. *Mid-Year Trends 2016*. p11
- ²³¹ See UNICEF. *Hidden in Plain Sight: A Statistical Analysis of Violence Against Children*. (New York: 2014) p39 and UNODC. *Global Study on Homicide 2013*. (Vienna: 2014) p1
- ²³² Under-5 mortality rate and stunting data were pulled from data.unicef.org. World and regional averages for child labor, child marriage and adolescent childbearing were pulled from *The State of the World's Children 2017*, with the exception of the global average for child labor, the CEE/CIS average for child labor and child marriage rates for South Asia, which were all pulled from *The State of the World's Children 2015*, as well as the child labor rate for East Asia and Pacific, which was pulled from *The State of the World's Children 2016*.
- ²³³ The official primary + secondary school-aged population in 2017 (UIS, Stat), total national population in 2018 (UN DESA) and child population aged 0-19 in 2016 (UN DESA) were used as weights for out-of-school, displacement and child homicide averages, respectively. The only exceptions were school-aged populations for Brazil, Singapore and USA (all 2016) and Ukraine (2014). The global average for child homicide was estimated in the same way (i.e., as a weighted average of country rates) but the rate of forced displacement worldwide was calculated directly from the latest global count from UNHCR (unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html) and world population data from UN DESA, both for the start of 2018.
- ²³⁴ Even if a country did not have sufficient data to be included in the *Complete End of Childhood Index* table, if it had indicator-level data, it was included in global and regional rates for that indicator.
- ²³⁵ Coverage exceeded 99% for all estimates except for school-aged populations in the Middle East and North Africa (96% coverage).
- ²³⁶ A list of excluded indicators has been compiled and can be provided upon request.
- ²³⁷ Household surveys measure participation as attendance at any time during the preceding school year – a fairly generous approach that is not substantively dissimilar to formal enrollment. Holding constant other reasons that survey and administrative data may differ (such as attendance in non-formal schools), one would expect attendance to be slightly lower than enrollment since children may be officially enrolled but not attend. For the seven countries with old enrollment data, attendance rates are actually higher than enrollment figures, which produced more favorable results.
- ²³⁸ This is especially true in Uganda, where over 90% of the total population of concern to UNHCR (180,000 of 197,000 people) are host communities.
- ²³⁹ UN DESA Population Division. *Estimates and Projections of Women of Reproductive Age Who Are Married or in a Union: 2018 Revision*. (New York: 2018)
- ²⁴⁰ The closest indicator available with trend data for child labor was for 5- to 14-year-olds and included household chores for at least 21 hours (the *End of Childhood Index* indicator is for ages 5-17 and sets the bar at 28 hours of household chores for 5- to 14-year-olds) and was only disaggregated by urban/

rural. Similarly, the only disaggregated trend data for child marriage available was the percent of women aged 20-24 who were first married or in union by age 18 (the *End of Childhood Index* indicator is the share of girls aged 15-19 currently married or in union). For the analysis of displacement trends, the change in total population of concern to UNHCR by country of origin (i.e., the absolute number affected) was used, not the change in share of population affected. Data for 2000 were sourced from UNHCR's Population Statistics Database (popstats.unhcr.org). Note that the pre-secession estimate for 2000 was used for both South Sudan and Sudan.

²⁴¹ Defined by the World Bank as those with a GNI per capita, calculated using the World Bank Atlas method, of \$995 or less in 2017. For a list of these 34 countries see: datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups.

²⁴² This set of countries refers to those included on the World Bank Group's *Harmonized List of Fragile Situations FY19*. The full list with details can be found at: worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/harmonized-list-of-fragile-situations.

²⁴³ Estimated by subtracting the total population aged 0-17 alive mid-2017 from the total number of births mid-1999 to mid-2017. Source: UN DESA, Population Division. *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision*.

²⁴⁴ Total includes 152 million children under age 5 and an estimated 30 million children aged 5. Children aged 5 were assumed to be as likely as children aged 0-4 to be stunted (i.e., the global under-5 stunting rate of 22.4% in 2017 was applied to the 133 million children aged 5 worldwide that year). Sources: UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates, March 2019 edition and UN DESA, Population Division. *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision*

²⁴⁵ Estimate is for 2017. Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. UIS.Stat. Accessed 12 April 2019

²⁴⁶ Includes 25% of laborers aged 15-17 (9 million) and 67% of laborers aged 7-14 (76 million). See page 40 of the 2017 *End of Childhood Report* for details. Data are

for 2016 and sourced from the ILO (*Global Estimates of Child Labour: Results and Trends, 2012-2016*).

²⁴⁷ Includes an estimated 8 million displaced children aged 0-5 who are not likely to be stunted and an estimated 8 million displaced children aged 6-17 who are likely to be in school, or 16 million of the 31 million displaced children worldwide. Note: These estimates use the latest demographic data (popstats.unhcr.org) and enrollment rates for refugees (UNHCR. *Turn the Tide: Refugee Education in Crisis*) and assume refugee and IDP children are just as likely as children in their respective countries of origin to be stunted. See page 40 of the 2017 *End of Childhood Report* for details on these calculations.

²⁴⁸ Estimated by subtracting the total population aged 0-17 alive mid-2000 from the total number of births mid-1982 to mid-2000. Source: UN DESA, Population Division. *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision*.

²⁴⁹ Total includes 198 million children under age 5 and an estimated 39 million children aged 5. Children aged 5 were assumed to be as likely as children aged 0-4 to be stunted (i.e., the global under-5 stunting rate of 32.5% was applied to the 120 million children aged 5 worldwide in 2000). Sources: UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates, March 2019 edition and UN DESA, Population Division. *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision*

²⁵⁰ UNESCO Institute for Statistics. UIS.Stat. Accessed 12 April 2019

²⁵¹ Includes an estimated 25% of laborers aged 15-17 (15 million) and 67% of laborers aged 7-14 (124 million). See page 40 of the 2017 *End of Childhood Report* for details. Note: This assumption likely overestimates the number of children in child labor and school, but not by much. A recent study by Understanding Children's Work, for example, suggests closer to 55% of child laborers were in school in 2000, which would put the number missing out on childhood at 135 million. 55% represents the weighted average of children combining employment and schooling as a share of children in employment across 18 countries with available data for 2000 (or closest year). Source: Guarcello et al. *Evolution of the Relationship Between Child Labour and Education Since 2000: Evidence from 19 Developing Countries*. (Rome: 2015)

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Design by Alison Wilkes.

These Mexican girls enjoy music and dance activities that build their reading skills.





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ON THE COVER
*Djeneba, age 11, is a student
in sixth grade at Kassanso
School in Mali.*

Photo: Talitha Brauer /
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