Lives, Choices and Futures

What young people want and what shapes their decisions about relationships and parenthood

Findings from the *Demographic Futures Survey* 2026

United Nations Population Fund

Acknowledgements

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Foreword

Across the world, young people aspire to meaningful futures, fulfilling relationships and, for many, families. Yet many are making life's biggest decisions amid growing uncertainty. Rising housing costs, economic insecurity, conflict, inequality and rapid technological change are shaping how they imagine and plan for their futures.

Drawing on the voices of more than 108,000 Internet-connected young adults aged 18–39 years across 73 countries and territories, the UNFPA Demographic Futures Survey is one of the largest global studies of its kind. It reveals a clear and consistent finding: many young people continue to aspire to relationships, marriage and parenthood. The question is not whether young people value these life goals, but whether they have the conditions to realize them. Financial security, stable employment, affordable housing and support all matter.

The findings point to a gap between aspirations and perceived opportunities. They invite us to look beyond demographic trends to the conditions that shape young people's choices: economic opportunities, employment security, affordable housing, accessible childcare, gender-equitable parental leave, flexible working arrangements and gender equality more broadly. When these conditions are in place, young people are better able to build the lives they want and have the children they want, when they want them. By enabling young people to make free and informed choices about their relationships, families and futures, we invest not only in individual dignity, but in stronger, more resilient societies.

UNFPA's rights-based approach to demographic policy sees demographic outcomes through the lens of individual agency, choice and the conditions that enable people to realize the futures they desire. Young people's decisions reflect both their own aspirations and the opportunities available to them.

Ultimately, this report is a story of hope. Many respondents report feeling positive about the future, even as they acknowledge significant concerns and constraints. They imagine lives built on security, connection and purpose. The choices young people make today will shape the demographic, social and economic future of our societies. Our role is not to make those choices for young people, but to help ensure they have the agency, freedom, opportunities and support to make them for themselves.

Diene Keita

United Nations Under-Secretary-General
and Executive Director
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Executive summary

Across much of the world, partnership formation is occurring later, marriage rates have declined and fertility has fallen to historically low levels. Two thirds of the world's population now lives in countries or areas where the total fertility rate is below 2.1 children per woman – the level commonly associated with the population size remaining stable over time.[1] Low fertility is no longer confined to a narrow set of high-income countries; it is now evident across a wide range of contexts, including many middle-income countries, while fertility is also declining in many countries where birth rates remain comparatively high. These demographic shifts have become an increasingly prominent focus of public debate and policy discussions.

While scholarly research has generated extensive evidence into the determinants of partnership formation, marriage and childbearing, and existing survey infrastructures have provided valuable insights into related issues, largely in European contexts, UNFPA identified a need for comparable evidence from a much broader range of countries. To address this gap, UNFPA conducted the *Demographic Futures Survey*, one of the largest surveys of its kind, covering 73 countries and territories across all world regions. The survey examines young adults' aspirations and experiences regarding life goals, partnerships and parenthood, with particular attention to the factors that may facilitate or constrain their transitions to adulthood.

Drawing on the responses from 108,926 Internet-connected young adults aged 18–39 years, the survey provides comparative evidence on respondents' aspirations for their lives, as well as the constraints they report in achieving them. The findings show that partnerships and having children remain important aspirations for many young adults. At the same time, economic insecurity, housing constraints and difficulties finding a suitable partner are among the factors most frequently rated as important barriers to achieving them.

This report presents the first descriptive analyses of the *Demographic Futures Survey* data and highlights findings from selected key survey questions. It is intended as a starting point for more in-depth comparative analysis. It builds on and is consistent with preliminary findings presented in the 2025 *State of World Population* report. Ultimately, it contributes to a growing body of evidence that shows that understanding and responding to demographic change requires attention not only to demographic outcomes themselves, but also to the social, economic and institutional conditions that enable individuals to realize the futures they desire.

Note on methodology and interpretation

This report is based on the *Demographic Futures Survey*, which collected data from 108,926 Internet-connected young adults aged 18–39 across 73 countries and territories. It is important to note that the *Demographic Futures Survey* is not statistically representative of national populations. While the data have been weighted by sex, age and educational attainment, the results are not nationally representative and should not be interpreted as population-level estimates. Rather, they provide comparative insights into the aspirations, perceptions and reported experiences of the surveyed group across diverse global contexts.

Key findings

The key findings presented below should be interpreted considering the survey methodology and sample design.

Life goals, future outlook and social media

- **Economic security and being fit and healthy are the highest-rated life goals,** with each rated as important by approximately 90 per cent of respondents.
- **Overall, two thirds of respondents report feeling somewhat or very positive about the future.** The proportion reporting that they feel very positive varies substantially across regional groupings, ranging from 62 per cent in West and Central Africa to 19 per cent in Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States.[2]
- **Conflict and security risks, and economic insecurity and inequality are the highest-rated concerns about the future.** More than three quarters of respondents across the full sample rate each as somewhat or very worrying. Artificial intelligence is the lowest-rated concern on average, although nearly half of respondents still rate it as somewhat or very worrying.
- **More than 40 per cent of respondents report spending over two hours a day on social media or the Internet for entertainment,** making it the most time-intensive form of online activity examined.
- Respondents in **East and Southern Africa and Latin America report the highest levels of online engagement.**

Partnerships and relationships

- **Marriage remains a common ideal relationship arrangement among surveyed young adults.** More than two thirds of respondents selected an ideal relationship and living arrangement that includes marriage: 36 per cent before living together, and 34 per cent after a period of cohabitation. Sixteen per cent report remaining single as their preferred living arrangement.
- **Among respondents aged 25–39 who ideally wish to marry or live with a partner, one quarter are currently single and not dating.** The proportion is higher among male respondents (30 per cent) than among female respondents (19 per cent).
- **Financial security is the highest-rated consideration for partnership formation,** cited as important by 81 per cent of respondents. Economic and housing constraints[3] constitute the most commonly reported category of barrier to partnership, rated important by 57 per cent.
- Among respondents who are currently seeking a partner, **personal networks, school or work environments, and online platforms are the most commonly reported channels for meeting potential partners,** each reported by approximately one third of respondents.

Parenthood aspirations and realities

- **Across most regional groupings, two children is the most commonly reported ideal family size.** Larger ideal family sizes are more common in West and Central Africa and in East and Southern Africa. On average, male respondents report a higher ideal number of children than female respondents.
- Across all regional groupings, **the mean number of children reported by respondents aged 35–39 is lower** than the mean ideal number of children reported by respondents aged 18–39.
- **Among respondents aged 35–39, the proportion with no children is highest in Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States:** 49 per cent among male respondents and 41 per cent of female respondents. Within this group without children, 73 per cent of males and 62 per cent of females report that they would ideally like to have children. The proportion of respondents aged 35–39 with no children is substantially lower in East and Southern Africa (18 per cent for males, 19 per cent for females) and West and Central Africa (34 per cent for males, 14 per cent for females), and in these regional groupings almost all respondents aged 35–39 without children reported that they would ideally like to have children.
- **The highest-rated preconditions for feeling ready to become a parent are being financially secure (88 per cent), having stable employment (87 per cent) and feeling emotionally ready (85 per cent).** On average, female respondents rate each of the preconditions as more important than male respondents.
- **The joy and happiness children bring is the highest-rated reason for having children,** with 80 per cent of respondents rating it as important. This pattern is observed among both respondents with and without children. Reasons related to government encouragement and contributions to the future workforce are among the lowest-rated reasons for having children.
- **Economic and housing constraints[4] constitute the highest-rated barrier to having children,** with 72 per cent of respondents rating this as important. Lack of a suitable partner and health and reproductive factors are the next highest-rated barriers.

Taken together, the findings suggest that many respondents' aspirations for partnership and parenthood are closely linked to broader economic, social and personal circumstances. Across countries and regional groupings, many respondents continue to value partnership and parenthood. At the same time, many report that financial and employment security, stable housing and emotional readiness are important preconditions for pursuing these aspirations.

The findings underscore the wider conditions that shape young people's choices. Enhancing economic opportunities, employment security, affordable housing, accessible childcare and gender equality can help create the conditions to support young people to have the number of children they want, when they want them, and build the lives they aspire to lead. Such an approach is consistent with UNFPA's rights-based approach to demographic policy that centres individual agency and recognizes the social, economic and institutional contexts in which decisions about partnership and parenthood are made. The findings also help identify areas for further research and policy discussion, including economic and employment security, affordable housing, gender equality, reproductive health services, workplace and family support, and social protection systems.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Across the world, young people are making decisions about whether to form a partnership, whether or when to have children, and how to build the lives they want. These decisions take place amid changing economic, social and political conditions. Young people are navigating a complex transition to adulthood shaped by rising housing costs, labour-market insecurity, intergenerational inequalities, digital change and concerns about conflict, climate change and political instability.

These conditions form part of the context for some of the most significant demographic changes in modern history. Across much of the world, partnership formation is occurring later, marriage rates have declined and fertility has fallen to historically low levels. Two thirds of the world's population now lives in a country or area where the total fertility rate is below 2.1 children per woman[5] – the level commonly associated with the population size remaining stable over time. Low fertility is no longer confined to a relatively small group of high-income countries. It is now evident across a wide range of settings, including many middle-income countries.[6, 7] The scale and speed of these changes are shaping public discourse and policy agendas around the world.

The UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* provides new comparative evidence on young people's life goals and future outlook, partnership formation, and parenthood aspirations and experiences. The survey findings suggest a consistent pattern: many young people broadly seek security, partnership, family and a positive future, while also reporting barriers that they perceive as important in pursuing these aspirations. Understanding these aspirations and constraints is essential to informing policy discussions grounded in evidence, rights and choices.

Evidence from previous UNFPA research

The UNFPA 2025 *State of World Population* report took an important step towards generating new evidence on shifting fertility and family aspirations. Drawing on survey data from adults aged 18–88 in 14 countries, it showed that many people are unable to realize their reproductive intentions – whether that means having more children, fewer children, or having children at the time they would prefer. Reproductive outcomes, the report found, often reflect not free choice but constraints: economic insecurity, partnership instability, inadequate access to reproductive health services and the unequal distribution of care responsibilities. In turn, the

report pointed to the importance of understanding demographic change through a rights-based lens that centres reproductive agency, lived experience and the conditions that either enable or prevent the choices people want to make.

The present report builds directly on this foundation. The 2025 *State of World Population* survey focused primarily on fertility outcomes and covered the full adult population. To understand how reproductive choices take shape, it is necessary to look earlier in the life course – at the aspirations, concerns and circumstances of young people for whom partnership and parenthood are still prospective rather than completed transitions. It is also necessary to examine the broader context in which those transitions are embedded: life goals, perceptions of opportunity and inequality and the social norms that shape what young people believe is possible for them.

The *Demographic Futures Survey*

To generate new empirical evidence on young adults' preferences, aspirations and family and reproductive decisions, UNFPA has developed the *Demographic Futures Survey*. The survey collected data from 108,926 Internet-connected young men and women aged 18–39 across 73 countries and territories and all world regions. This includes countries with long-standing "lowest-low" fertility, those experiencing a rapid fertility decline in recent years, and those with still relatively higher fertility.[8] It is the first survey of its kind to enable systematic cross-country comparison of young people's aspirations, experiences and constraints across such a broad and diverse range of settings, using a single consistent instrument.

▶ **The survey collected data from 108,926 Internet-connected young people aged 18–39 across 73 countries and territories.**


Condom

▶ The *Demographic Futures Survey* speaks to the question at the heart of contemporary demographic debate: not whether young people want families, but why so many are finding it harder to have them.

The *Demographic Futures Survey* examines three interconnected domains:

- **Life goals and future outlook:** young people's life goals, feelings about the future, major worries and concerns, perceptions of opportunity and inequality, and patterns of social media use.
- **Partnership formation:** attitudes towards family and gender expectations, ideal and actual partnership and living arrangements, how young people meet or search for partners, and the reasons and barriers respondents report in relation to partnership.
- **Parenthood aspirations and realities:** fertility ideals, achieved family size among older respondents, the proportion of respondents who do not have children, and the motivations, preconditions and barriers associated with having children.

In examining these themes, the *Demographic Futures Survey* contributes to the evidence base in three important ways. First, its broad geographical scope enables a systematic comparison of Internet-connected young adults' aspirations, experiences and constraints across selected countries in all world regions using a single consistent instrument. This complements existing data sources, such as the *Generations and Gender Survey*, which have generated valuable evidence in family formation, fertility and life course transitions, particularly in high- and middle-income settings focused on people aged 18–79 years. Second, the survey places a strong emphasis on young people's perceptions, aspirations and motivations, exploring what they want for their futures, what they worry about and how they assess the opportunities available to them. Third, it incorporates questions on a range of emerging and comparatively underexplored factors that may shape young people's decision-making, including housing constraints, environmental concerns and social media use, providing comparative evidence across diverse contexts. Together, these features offer new insights into the factors influencing young adults' decisions about relationships, parenthood and the future, contributing to broader discussions on demographic change, human well-being and sustainable development.

This report

This report presents the first comprehensive analysis of the *Demographic Futures Survey.* Chapter 2 describes the survey's methodology, scope and approach to analysis, and limitations. Chapter 3 examines young people's life goals, outlook and concerns, including perceptions of opportunity and inequality. Chapter 4 focuses on the norms, aspirations, pathways and barriers regarding partnership formation. Chapter 5 analyses parenthood, including fertility ideals, achieved family size among older respondents, the proportion of respondents without children, and the factors respondents rate as enabling or constraining parenthood. Chapter 6 synthesizes the main findings and outlines considerations for policy discussion and future research. Throughout the report, data are presented for the pooled sample, by regional grouping, and by country-level income group (see Annex A for details).

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Chapter 2

Methodology overview

Countries and territories included in the *Demographic Futures Survey*, by regional groupings.

Region	Number	Countries and territories
Arab States (including Gulf Cooperation Council countries)	8	Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Tunisia
Asia and the Pacific	16	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	15	Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kosovo*, Kyrgyz Republic, North Macedonia, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan
East and Southern Africa	6	Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia
Latin America and the Caribbean	13	Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay
West and Central Africa	3	Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria
Western Europe, Australia, Canada and United States of America	12	Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States

**All references to Kosovo in this report should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).*

The UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* was conducted among Internet-connected males and females aged 18–39 years in 73 countries and territories across all world regions.[9] This chapter summarizes the survey design, sample, data-collection procedures, weighting approach and key limitations. Full methodological details are provided in Annex A.

The survey was implemented as a cross-national self-administered online questionnaire lasting approximately 15 minutes, including a subset of established survey items adapted from the *Generations and Gender Survey* and the *European Social Survey*. The survey was reviewed and validated by an external expert advisory committee of leading scholars in family demography and survey research.

Data collection was conducted by two professional online survey firms – Kantar Lightspeed (59 countries) and GeoPoll (14 countries) – primarily through online respondent panels in the fourth quarter of 2025 and the first quarter of 2026. In three countries, these approaches were supplemented by broader online distribution and telephone interviews to achieve target sample sizes. The survey was administered in each country's principal national language and in English, with additional languages offered in selected multilingual countries.

A pilot survey was conducted in eight countries across different regions, with approximately 1,000 respondents per country to assess item functioning, response distributions and survey duration. Minor adjustments were subsequently made before full deployment. In addition, a soft launch covering 10 per cent of the target sample was implemented in each country before full-scale data collection. The survey platform incorporated multiple quality assurance procedures to enhance the quality, consistency and reliability of responses.

Where feasible, a 50/50 sex quota was applied, alongside soft age quotas broadly aligned with census proportions for each survey age group. The final analytic sample comprises 108,926 Internet-connected respondents aged 18–39, after excluding cases with missing values for sex, education and rural/urban residence. In most countries, sample sizes ranged between 1,000 and 2,000 respondents, while 14 countries had sample sizes below 1,000.

It is important to note that the *Demographic Futures Survey* is not statistically representative of national populations. Due to its online methodology, the survey captures the perspectives of Internet-connected young adults aged 18–39 in each country. As widely documented in the literature on online surveys, such approaches tend to overrepresent more urban and more educated populations, particularly in lower-income settings.[10] To mitigate these biases, post-stratification weights were applied to all analyses, to align the samples more closely with known population distributions for each country with respect to sex, age group and educational attainment. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted as reflecting the views of Internet-connected young adults aged 18–39, adjusted for key compositional characteristics, rather than as nationally representative estimates. Particular caution is therefore warranted when interpreting country-level results for countries with the smallest sample sizes.

In addition, comparisons across countries should be interpreted in light of differences in Internet access and use, survey mode and sample composition that may remain after weighting adjustments.

▶ **The survey provides comparable insights from Internet-connected young adults across 73 countries and territories.**

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Chapter 3

Life goals, future outlook and Internet and social media use

Young people today are navigating a rapidly changing environment characterized by opportunity and uncertainty. Across the world, they are pursuing goals related to education, employment, financial security and personal development, while simultaneously confronting economic pressures, political instability and rapid technological, social and environmental change. This chapter presents respondents' reported life goals, feelings about the future, concerns, perceptions of opportunities and inequalities, and patterns of Internet and social media use. These findings provide context for understanding the subsequent analysis of partnerships and parenthood, in Chapters 4 and 5.

Life goals

The survey asks respondents to rate the importance attached to various life goals[11] or milestones. Economic security and being fit and healthy emerge as the most important life goals, with approximately 90 per cent of respondents rating each as important, and around 70 per cent rating them as very important.

Family life, including having a partner and having children, is considered important by 73 per cent of respondents and very important by 45 per cent. By contrast, having a large network of friends ranks lowest among life goals examined, with nearly one quarter of respondents (24 per cent) rating it as not important.

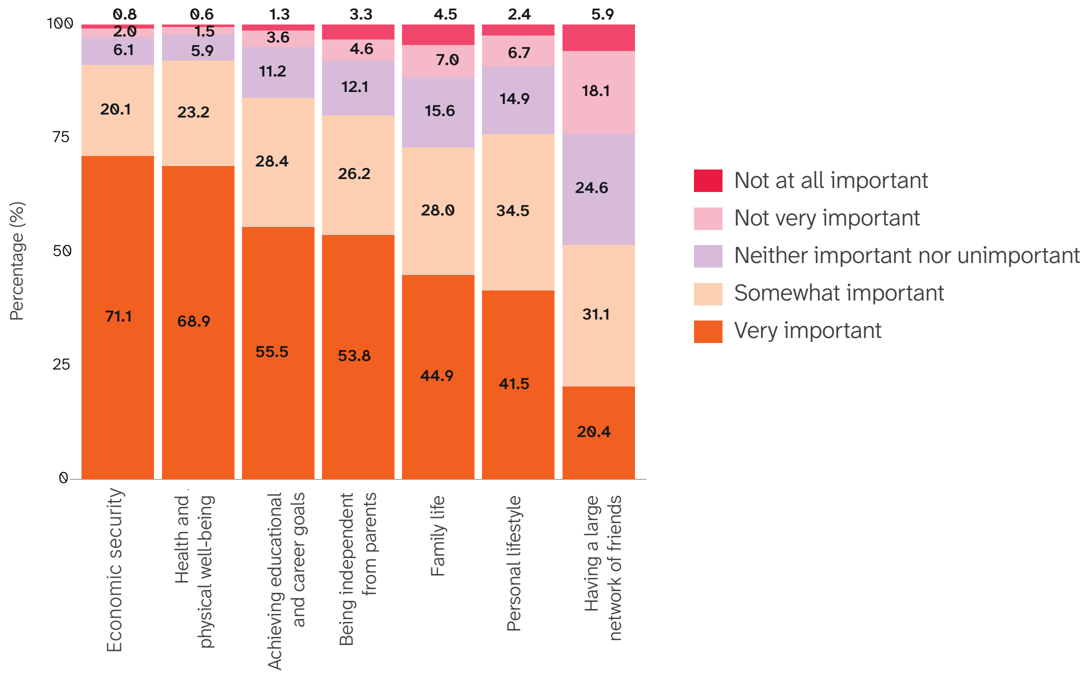
Across the full sample, the importance assigned to life goals varies relatively little by sex. Differences by age are also limited for most life goals, with two notable exceptions. Achieving educational and career goals tends to be more important among younger respondents, while the importance attached to family life increases with age.

At the regional level, prioritization of life goals broadly mirrors the pattern across the full sample. Across all regional groupings, economic security and being fit and healthy are consistently rated highest, while having a large network of friends is rated lowest.

90% rate economic security, health and physical well-being as top life goals.

Economic security and being fit and healthy top respondents' life goals.

Figure 3.1 Percentage of respondents by perceived importance of key life goals.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Question: How important do you consider the following activities or milestones in your life?

Feelings about the future

Respondents were also asked how positive they feel about the future. Most respondents report positive feelings about the future, despite also expressing concerns about a range of economic, social and global risks. Two thirds report feeling somewhat or very positive about the future on average, including nearly 30 per cent who hold a very positive view. However, around 15 per cent express somewhat or very negative feelings, while roughly one in five hold a neutral outlook.

Feelings about the future are broadly consistent by age and sex, but substantial differences emerge across regional groupings. These differences should be interpreted in light of the survey methodology: while the analysis applies post-stratification weights by sex, age and educational attainment, respondents were Internet-connected young adults and may differ from the wider youth population in other ways. Positive perceptions of the future are markedly higher in lower-income settings. In West and Central Africa, 62 per cent of respondents report feeling very positive about the future, while the corresponding figure is 48 per cent in East and Southern Africa.

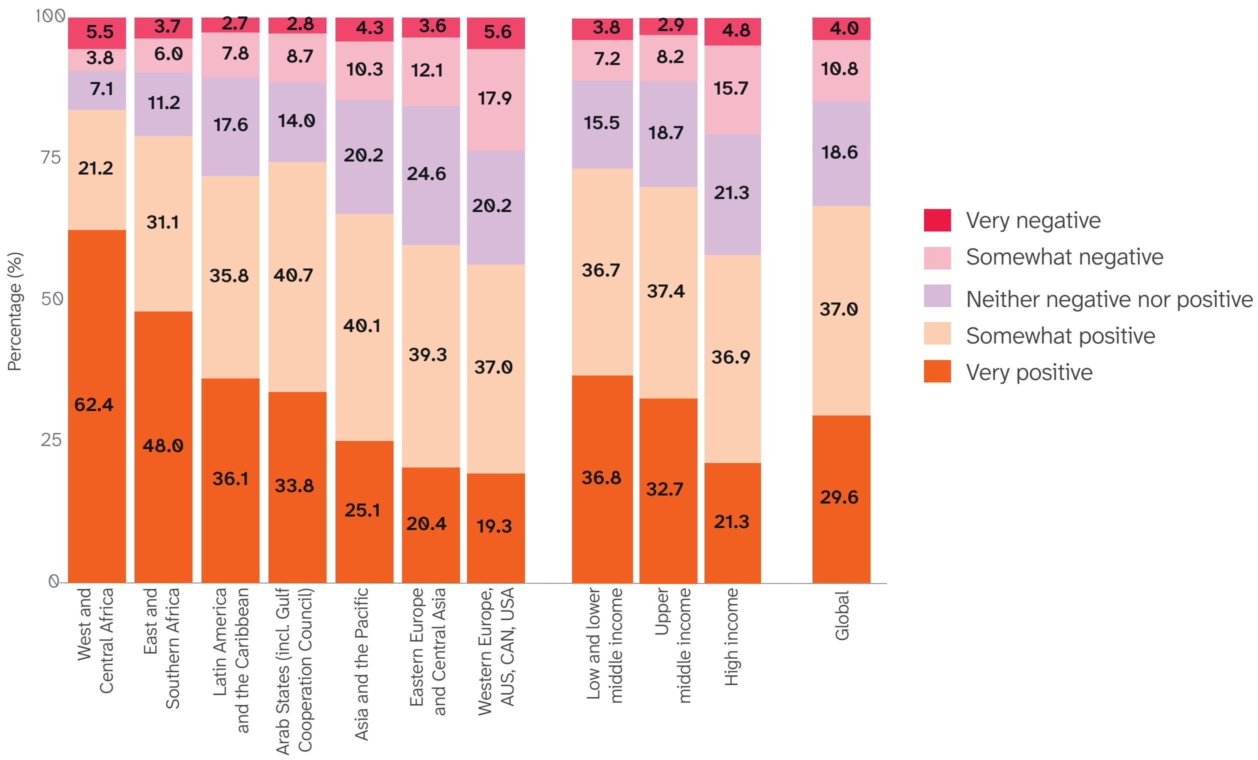
By contrast, only 19 per cent of respondents in Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States report feeling very positive.

A similar gradient is evident across country income groups. Respondents in low- and lower-middle-income countries are the most optimistic overall, with 37 per cent reporting feeling very positive about the future, compared with 33 per cent in upper-middle-income countries, and 21 per cent in high-income countries. Conversely, neutral and negative perceptions are more common in higher-income settings, particularly in Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States.

▶ **62% of respondents in West and Central Africa feel very positive about the future compared with 19% in Western Europe, North America and Australia.**

Two thirds of young people surveyed feel positive about the future.

Figure 3.2 Percentage of respondents by extent to which they feel positive about the future, by regional grouping and country income group.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Question: How positive, if at all, do you feel about the future?

What worries young people?

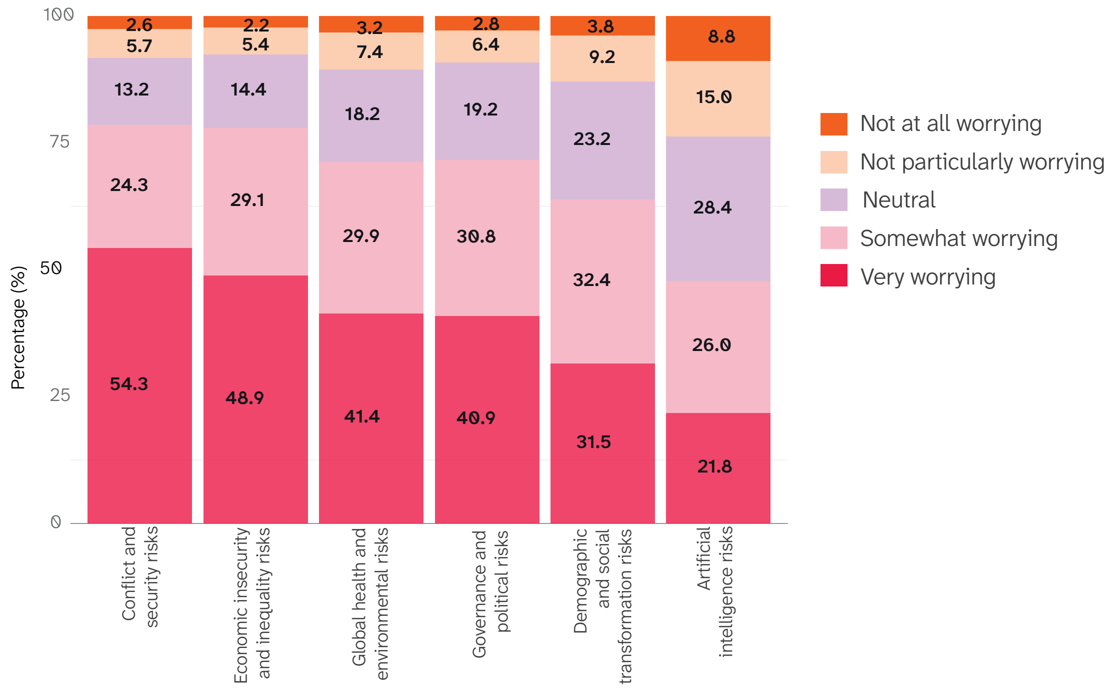
When respondents were asked about their concerns for the present and future, conflict and security risks,[12] together with economic insecurity and inequality, emerged as the top concerns. More than three quarters of respondents rated each of these concerns as somewhat or very worrying, with around half describing them as very worrying. Global health and environmental risks, as well as governance and political risks, form a second tier of concerns, although they are also viewed as worrying by a substantial majority of respondents.

By contrast, artificial intelligence is the lowest-ranked concern across the full sample, although nearly half of respondents still rate it as somewhat or very worrying. A comparatively large share of respondents also selected a neutral response on AI-related risks, indicating that views on this issue are less clearly defined than for other concerns tested.

▶ **Artificial intelligence is the lowest-ranked concern.**

Conflict, economic insecurity and inequality top young respondents' concerns.

Figure 3.3 Percentage of respondents by levels of worry about selected factors.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Question: Looking at today's situation and thinking about the future, how worrying do you find each of the following?

Across all regional groupings, conflict and security risks or economic security and inequality are the issues most likely to be rated as very worrying. Differences by sex are also evident, with female respondents tending to rate each issue as more worrying than male respondents on average. By contrast, ratings vary relatively little across age groups.

To capture the extent to which young people feel worried about simultaneous threats, the analysis also examined the proportion of respondents who report being worried about all the top three of the global risks: conflict and security risks, economic insecurity and inequality, and global health and environmental risks. The results reveal striking cross-country variation in perceived vulnerability to multiple global risks, ranging from 14 per cent in Norway to 71 per cent in Costa Rica.

Importantly, the findings also suggest that widespread concern about global risks does not necessarily translate into pessimism about the future. In many countries, particularly in Africa – including Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa – as well as parts of Latin America such as Costa Rica, Guatemala and Panama, high levels of concern coexist alongside relatively strong optimism about the future.

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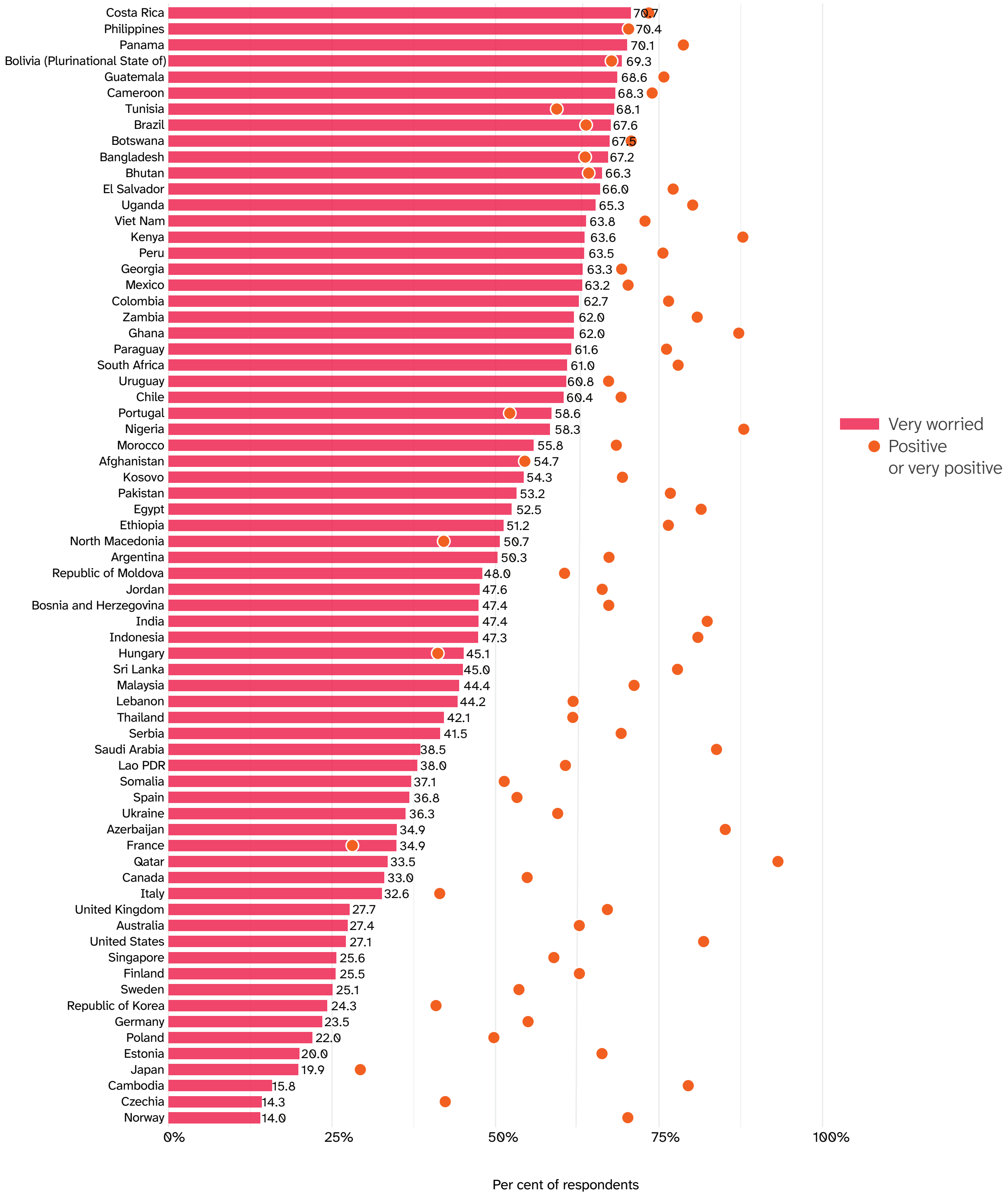
Positive views of the future coexist with widespread concerns about multiple risks.

Figure 3.4 Percentage of respondents very worried about all top three global concerns (bars) and who feel positive or very positive about the future (dots).



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Data for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan not included in the country-level plot as the sample size for the question on concerns about the present and future is too small for meaningful analysis.

Question: Looking at today's situation and thinking about the future, how worrying do you find each of the following? How positive, if at all, do you feel about the future?

How young people perceive opportunities and inequalities

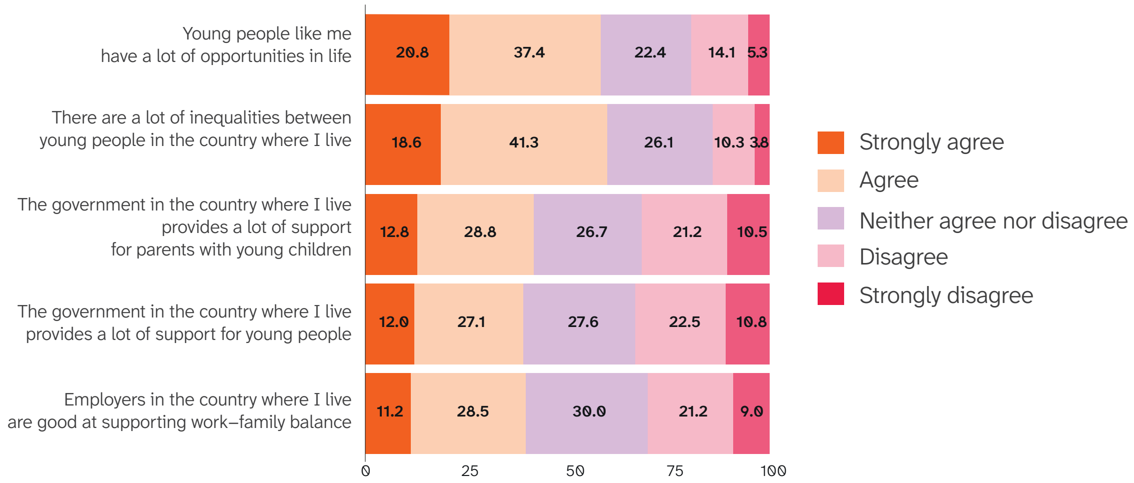
Young people's decisions about partnership, parenthood and other major life transitions are shaped not only by their personal ambitions, but also by how they perceive the broader environment in which they live. The survey therefore examined young people's perceptions of opportunities and inequalities in their countries, as well as the extent to which they feel supported by governments and employers in their countries. These responses provide insights into how respondents perceive opportunities, inequalities and institutional support.

Overall, respondents' views highlight the co-existence of optimism about opportunities and concerns about inequality and support systems. While 58 per cent agree or strongly agree that young people in their countries have many opportunities, 60 per cent believe there are substantial inequalities among young people. At the same time, only 39 per cent agree or strongly agree that their government provides a lot of support for young people. Similarly low proportions feel that governments provide strong support for parents with young children or that employers effectively support work–family balance.

▶ Opportunity, but inequality: 58% see opportunity; 60% see inequality.

Respondents see opportunity and inequality concerning their life goals.

Figure 3.5 Percentage of respondents by perceptions of opportunities, inequalities and support systems.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

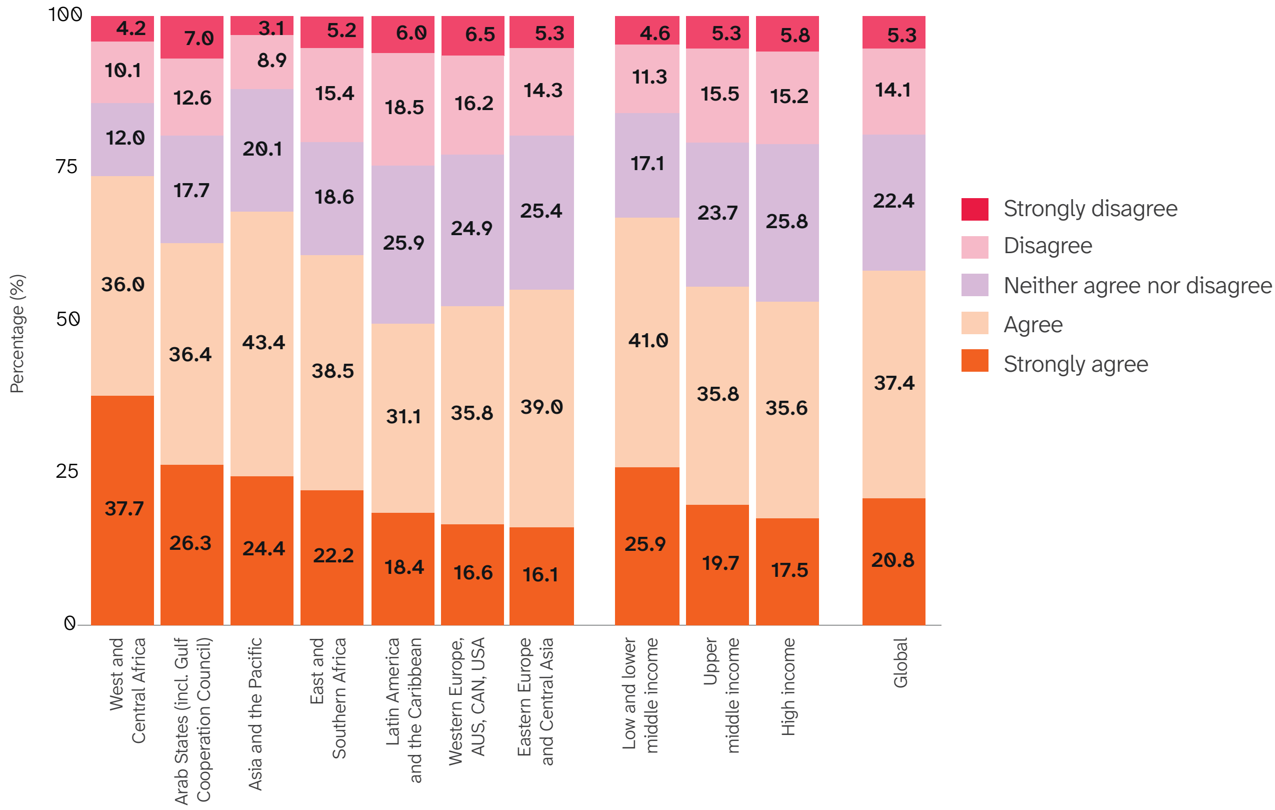
Question: Thinking about your life and that of young people, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: 1. Young people like me have a lot of opportunities in life; 2. The government in my country provides a lot of support for young people; 3 There are a lot of inequalities between young people in my country; 4. The government in my country provides a lot of support for parents with young children; 5. Employers in my country are good at supporting work–family balance.

Perceptions of opportunity vary substantially across regional groupings. Respondents in West and Central Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Arab States report higher levels of perceived opportunity available to them. Between 63 and 74 per cent of respondents in West and Central Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Arab States agree or strongly agree that young people like them have many opportunities in life. By contrast, only about half of respondents in Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America feel the same.

A comparable pattern emerges across income groups. Around 67 per cent of young people in low- and lower-middle-income countries agree or strongly agree that young people like them have many opportunities in life, compared with 56 per cent in upper-middle-income countries and 53 per cent in high-income countries. Literature suggests that this comparatively optimistic outlook among respondents in lower-income settings partly reflects perceptions of upward generational mobility and visible socioeconomic progress in rapidly developing contexts,[13] as well as the high socioeconomic profile of the Internet-connected population captured by the survey. Further research is needed to understand these differences.

Respondents in lower-income countries see more opportunity than those in higher-income countries.

Figure 3.6 Percentage of respondents by extent of agreement with the statement, "Young people like me have a lot of opportunities in life", by regional grouping and country income group.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

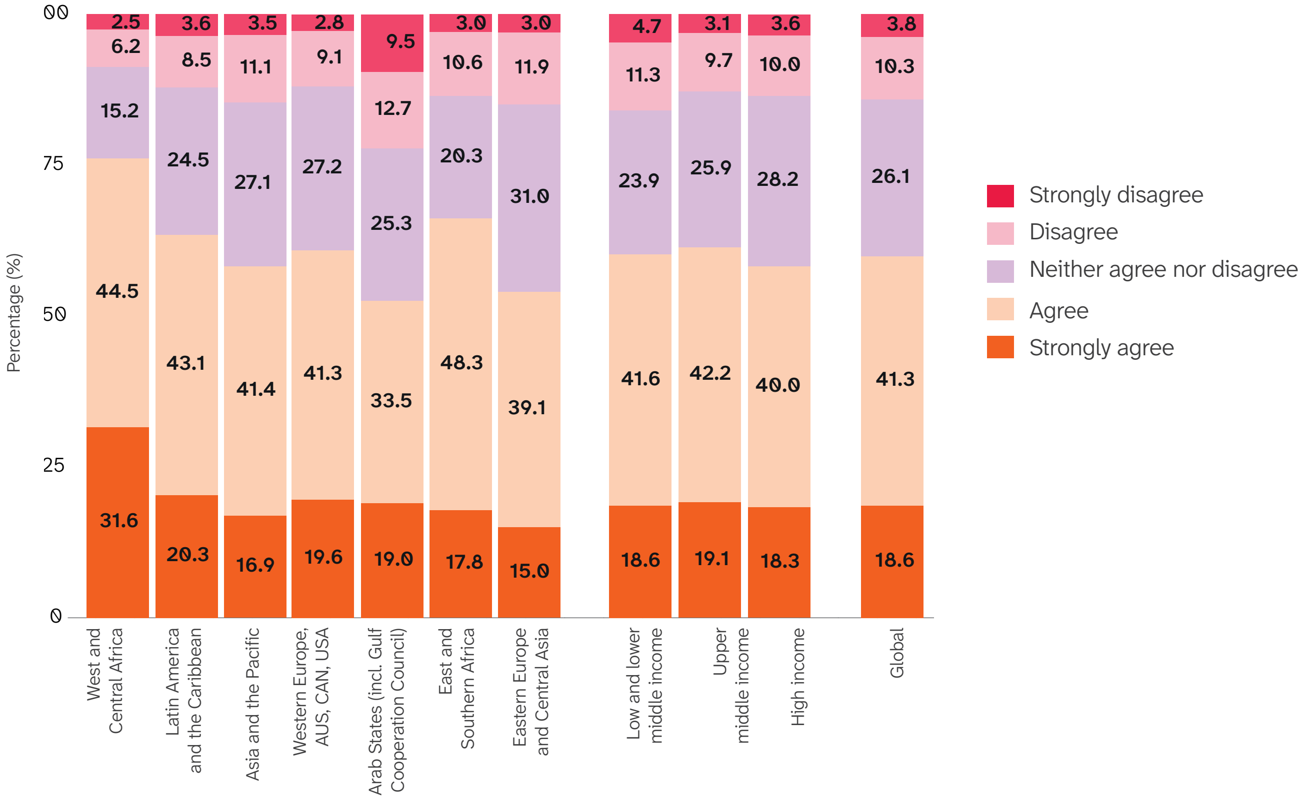
Question: Thinking about your life and that of young people, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Young people like me have a lot of opportunities in life.

Despite this relative optimism, perceptions of inequality remain widespread. In West and Central Africa, nearly 77 per cent of respondents agree or strongly agree that there are substantial inequalities among young people, while two thirds of respondents in East and Southern Africa express similar views. These findings are consistent with broader evidence documenting substantial economic and social inequalities in many countries. However, the survey measures respondents' perceptions of inequality rather than objective levels of inequality. Perceptions of inequality are also remarkably consistent across income groups overall, with between 58 and 61 per cent of respondents in each income group category perceiving substantial disparities among young people.

▶ Perceptions of inequality are broadly consistent across country income groups.

Perceived inequalities are highest among respondents in West and Central Africa and broadly similar across income groups.

Figure 3.7 Percentage of respondents by extent of agreement with the statement, "There are a lot of inequalities between young people in the country where I live", by regional grouping and country income group.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Question: Thinking about your life and that of young people, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: There are a lot of inequalities between young people in the country where I live.

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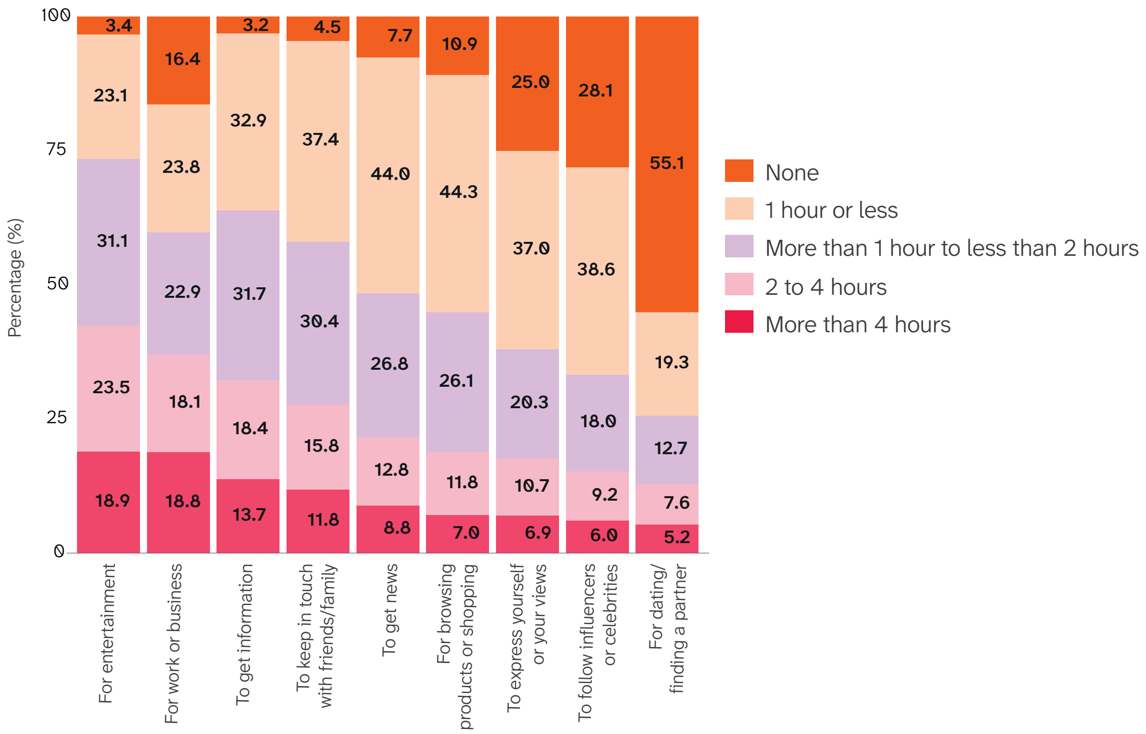
Social media use

Digital and social media platforms have become a central feature of young people's daily lives, shaping how they access information, maintain relationships, express themselves, seek opportunities and form aspirations. Understanding patterns of online activity is therefore important not only in its own right, but also because digital spaces increasingly constitute important environments for socialization, information exchange and relationship formation – including the partnership dynamics explored in Chapter 4 of this report.

Overall among surveyed respondents, entertainment is the most common use of the Internet and social media, with 42 per cent of respondents spending two or more hours per day online for this purpose. This is followed by work or business (37 per cent spending two or more hours daily), obtaining information (32 per cent), and staying connected with family and friends (28 per cent). By contrast, dating and finding a partner is the least time-intensive use, with 55 per cent of respondents reporting that they spend no time online for this purpose.

Over 40 per cent of respondents spend more than two hours daily online for entertainment.

Figure 3.8 Percentage of respondents by time spent on social media or the Internet daily for various purposes.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Question: On a typical day, approximately how many hours do you spend using the Internet or social media for the following purposes? With social media we mean, for example, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Tinder, or other similar platforms in your country: 1. to keep in touch with friends/family; 2. to get news; 3. to get information (e.g. about health, leisure, parenthood and other topics); 4. for entertainment; 5. for dating/finding a partner; 6. for browsing products or shopping; 7. to follow influencers or celebrities; 8. to express yourself or your views; 9. for work or business.

Regional differences in social media use and Internet use are substantial. Respondents in East and Southern Africa and Latin America generally report the highest levels of online engagement across most purposes examined. In these regional groupings, approximately half of respondents spend two or more hours per day on the Internet or social media for entertainment, work and business, and obtaining information. By contrast, respondents in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, as well as in Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States, generally report lower levels of daily social media.

Differences are also evident across income groups. For most purposes, respondents in low- and lower-middle-income and upper-middle-income countries spend similar amounts of time online. This is higher than respondents in high-income countries, although the pattern varies somewhat by purpose: respondents in upper-middle-income countries report the highest use for entertainment and keeping in touch with friends and family, while time spent online for work or business, dating or finding a partner, and self-expression generally decreases as the country income level increases.

▶ Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States report lower levels of daily social media than other regions.

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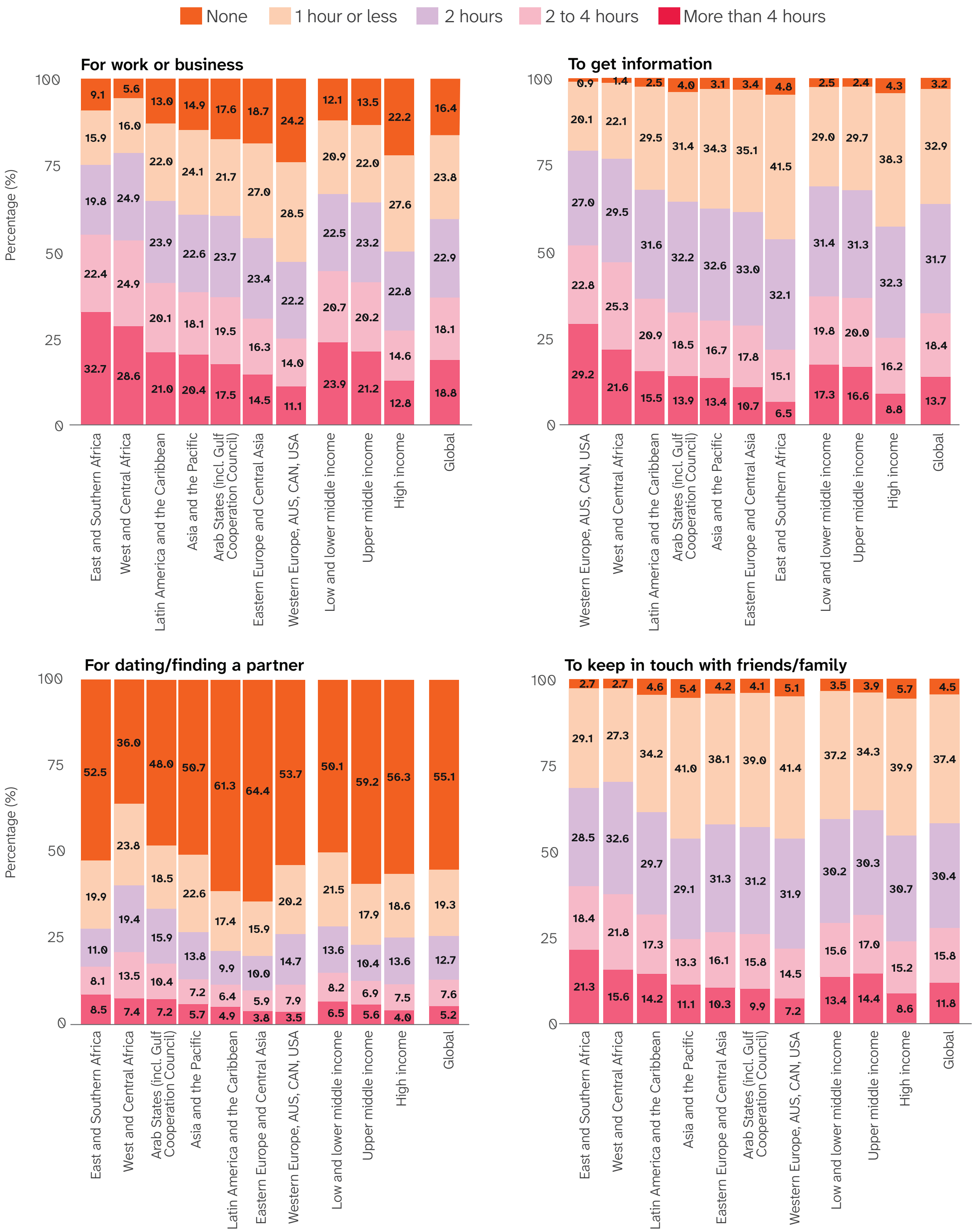
Reported time spent online is highest among respondents in East and Southern Africa and Latin America.

Figure 3.9 Percentage of respondents by time spent on social media or the Internet daily for various purposes, by regional grouping and country income group.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Differences by sex are relatively modest among respondents in the pooled sample for most forms of online activity. However, males are somewhat more likely than females to use social media for dating or finding a partner, while females are slightly more likely to use it for browsing products or shopping.

Age differences are more pronounced. The strongest age gradients are observed for entertainment, obtaining information, keeping in touch with family and friends, and, to a lesser extent, for following influencers or celebrities, with time spent on these activities generally declining with increasing age. Use of the Internet and social media for work or business purposes peaks among respondents aged 25–29 years.

Educational attainment is also associated with notable differences in online behaviour. Among respondents in the pooled sample, a clear negative gradient is observed for activities such as dating and finding a partner, following influencers or celebrities, obtaining news, self-expression, and browsing products or shopping online, with time spent on these activities generally decreasing as educational attainment increases. Conversely, use of social media for work and business purposes increases slightly with higher levels of education.

▶ **Internet and social media use for work or business peaks among those aged 25–29 years.**

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Chapter 4

Forming partnerships and starting family life

Forming and sustaining partnerships remains important for most young people, yet the routes into relationships, cohabitation and marriage are changing, while many young people also face new social and economic barriers to family formation. This chapter examines respondents' attitudes towards selected family-related choices, ideal and current partnership and living arrangements, how respondents meet or look for partners, and the reasons and barriers they rate as important to partnership.

Attitudes towards family situations

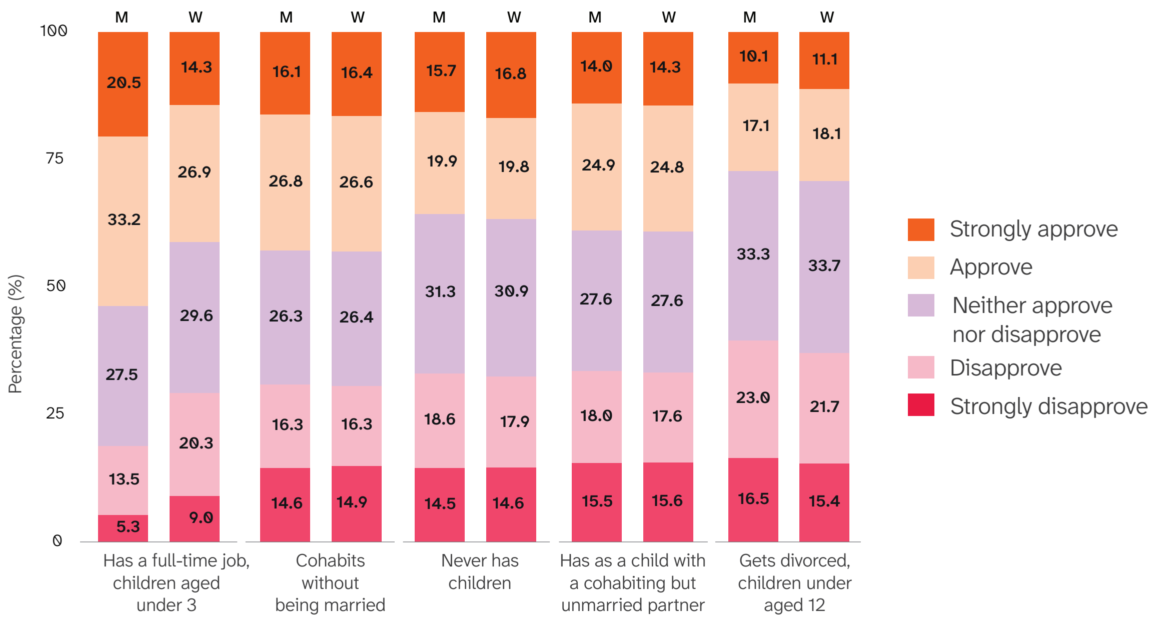
Attitudes towards family situations shape how young people think about partnership, cohabitation, childbearing, gender roles and the division of work and care within households. The survey therefore asked respondents about the extent to which they approve or disapprove of a series of family-related situations and life choices as they apply to women or to men.

Across the full sample, respondents' attitudes are broadly similar regardless of whether the behaviour refers to a woman or a man, with one important exception. Respondents are more likely to disapprove of mothers working full-time while having children under the age of three than fathers doing the same. On average, 29 per cent of respondents disapprove or strongly disapprove when a woman has a full-time job while caring for children under three, compared with 20 per cent when the same situation concerns a man.

The majority of the full sample either approve or remain neutral towards cohabitation without being married, having children outside marriage and remaining without children. Divorce while children are under 12 attracts the highest levels of disapproval overall, although even here views are mixed rather than overwhelmingly negative.

Respondents are more likely to disapprove of women than men working full-time while raising young children.

Figure 4.1 Percentage of respondents, of both sexes, approving or disapproving selected situations involving a woman or a man.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Question: How much do you approve or disapprove if a man/woman: 1. chooses never to have children; 2. lives with a partner without being married; 3. has a child with a partner he/she lives with but is not married to; 4. has a full-time job while he/she has children aged under 3; 5. gets divorced while he/she has children aged under 12?

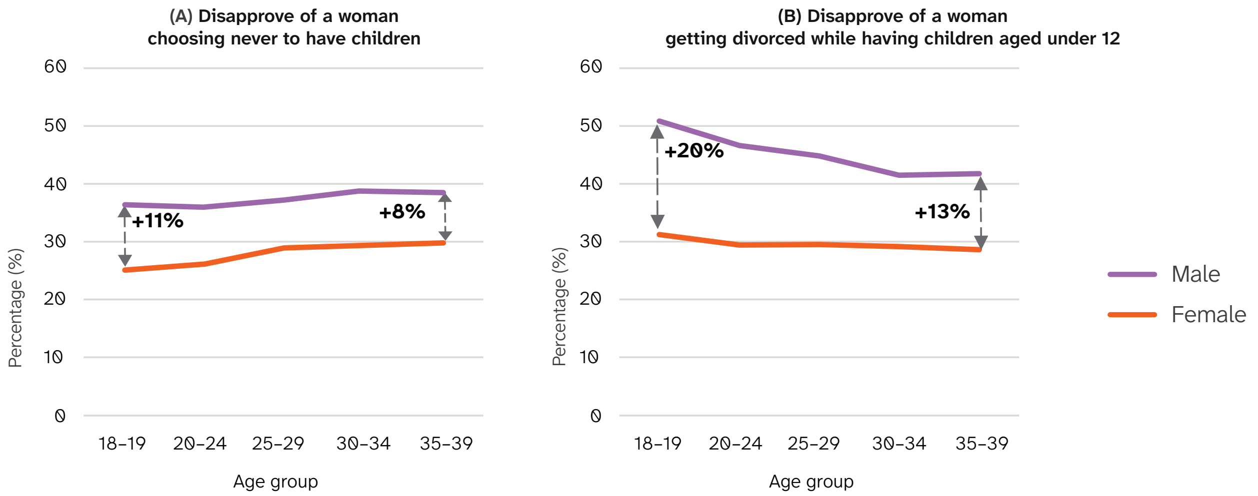
There are important differences across demographic groups. Male respondents are significantly more likely than female respondents to disapprove of divorce while having children under 12, and of the decision never to have children. These gender differences become more pronounced when examined across age groups. Younger men are more likely than older men to disapprove of divorce with children under 12, regardless of whether the parent is a woman or a man. In contrast, younger women are less likely than older women to disapprove of choosing not to have children, with comparatively smaller age group differences among men.

Taken together, these findings indicate differing patterns of approval and disapproval by respondents' sex and age group for the scenarios concerning divorce while having children under 12 and choosing not to have children (see Figure 4.2).

▶ **Male respondents are significantly more likely than women to disapprove of divorce while having children under 12, and of never having children.**

Gender differences in attitudes towards some family-related situations are largest among younger respondents.

Figure 4.2 Percentage of respondents who disapprove of a woman: (a) choosing never to have children; and (b) getting divorced while having children aged under 12.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.

Question: How much do you approve or disapprove if a woman: a) chooses never to have children; b) gets divorced while she has children aged under 12?

Disapproval of all five family-related situations examined generally declines with increasing educational attainment, while respondents living in rural areas tend to report higher levels of disapproval than those living in urban areas.

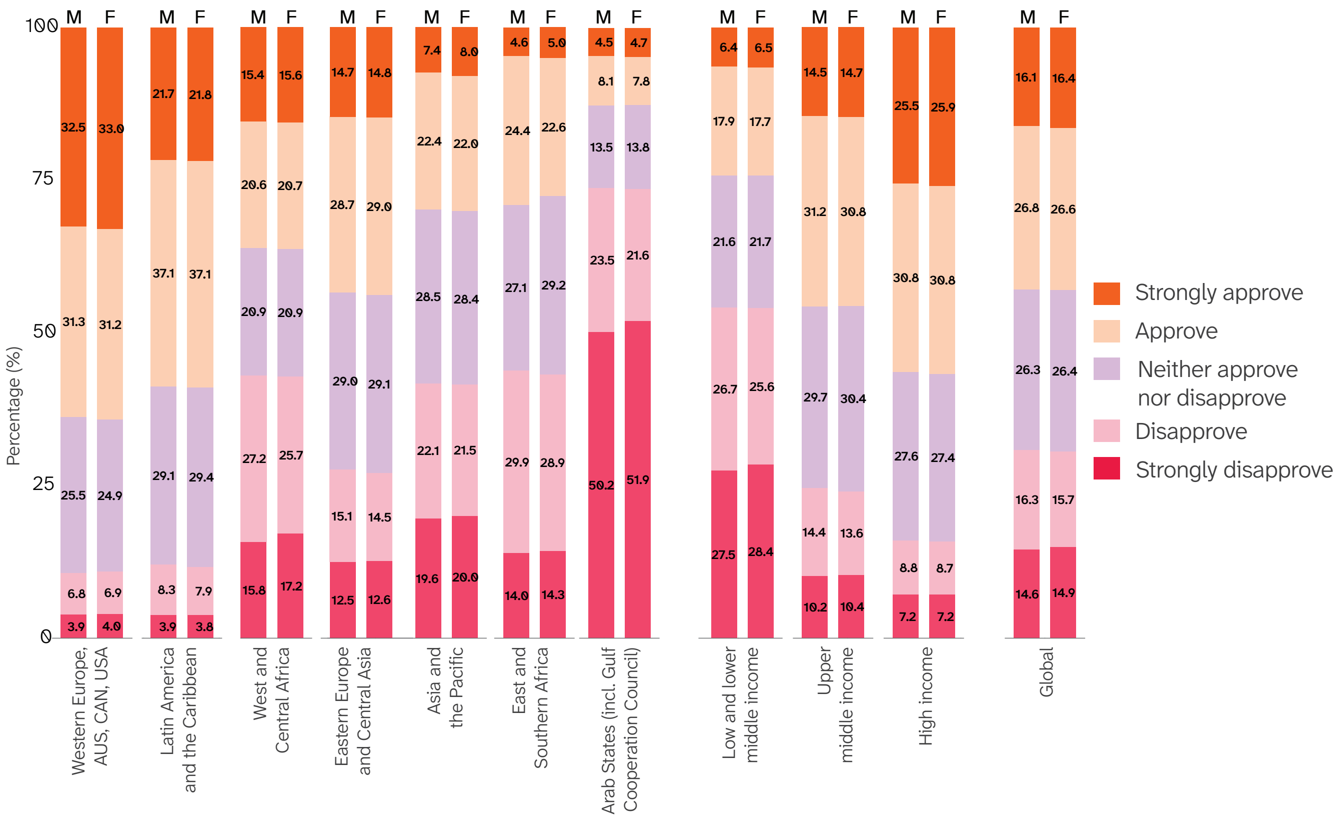
Regional variation is also substantial. Disapproval of all family situations examined is highest among respondents in the Arab States, and generally lowest in Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States, as well as Latin America. Across income groups, levels of disapproval of family situations tend to decline as national income levels increase.

▶ **Disapproval of all 5 family-related situations examined generally declines with increasing educational attainment.**

Disapproval of most family situations is highest in the Arab States and lowest in Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States.

Figure 4.3 Percentage of respondents of both sexes, approving or disapproving of selected family- and work-related situations involving a woman or a man, by sex, regional grouping and country income group.

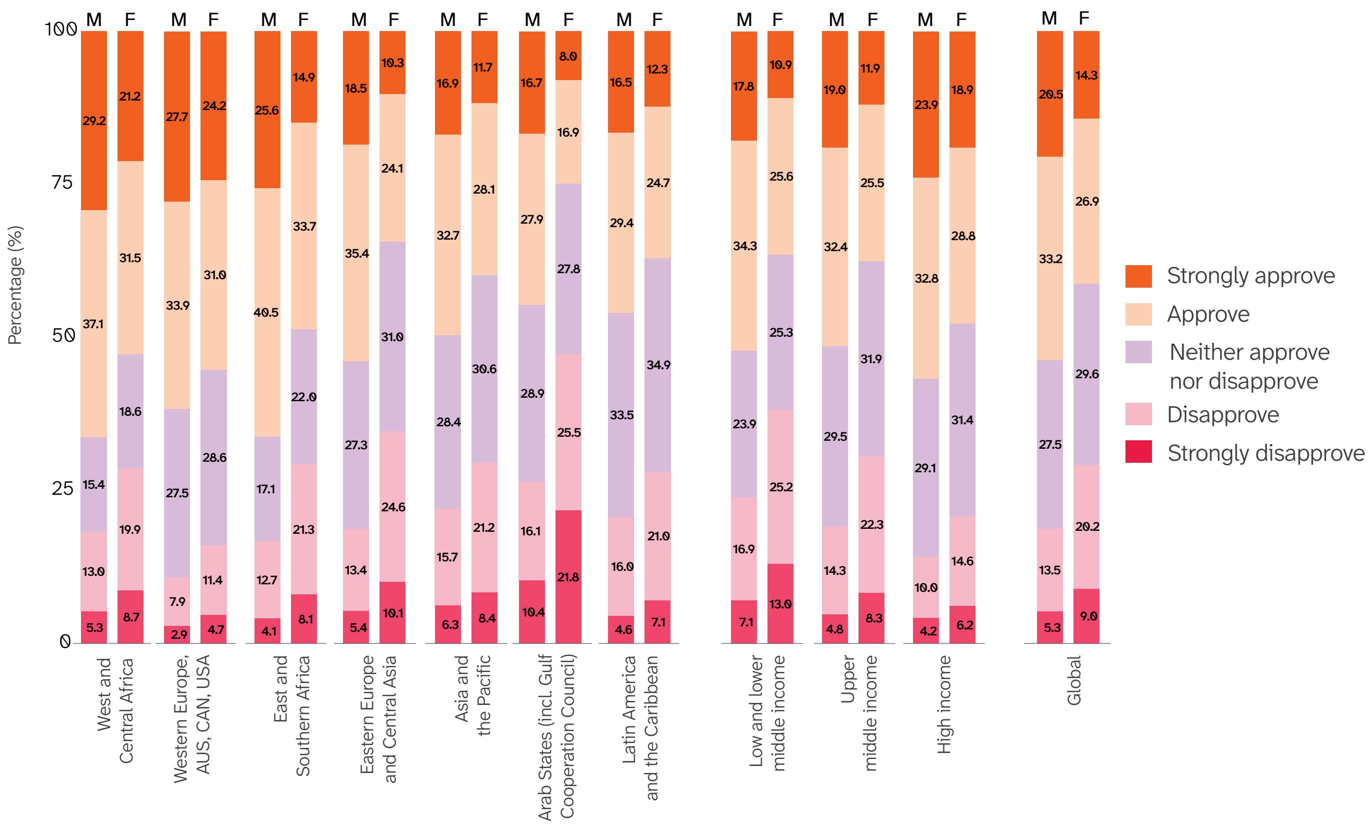
A. Cohabits with a partner without being married



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Question: How much do you approve or disapprove if a man/woman lives with a partner without being married?

B. Woman or man has a full-time job while having children aged under 3



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Question: How much do you approve or disapprove if a man/woman has a full-time job while he/she has children aged under 3?

Partnership and living arrangements

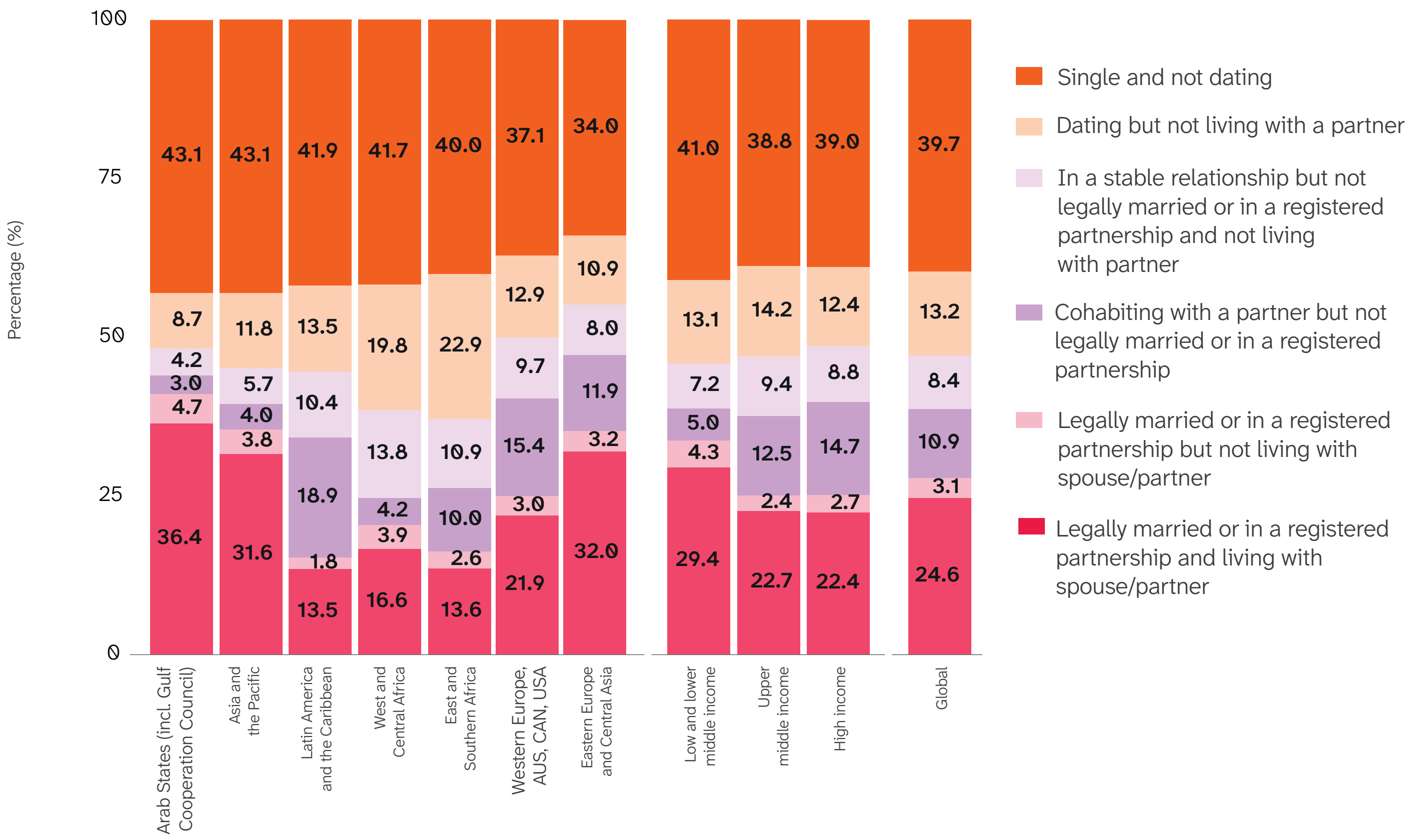
The survey asks young adults about their current partnership and living arrangements. In the pooled sample, the most common arrangement is being single and not dating, reported by 40 per cent of respondents. The second most common arrangement is being legally married or in a registered partnership and living with a spouse or partner, reported by 25 per cent. This is followed by dating but not living with a partner, reported by 13 per cent of respondents. The least common arrangement is being legally married or in a registered partnership but not living with a spouse or partner, reported by only 3 per cent.

Being single and not dating is the most common arrangement in every regional grouping and income group, reported by more than one third of respondents in each case. In four of the seven regional groupings, the second most common arrangement is being legally married or in a registered partnership and living with a spouse or partner. The exceptions are East and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa, where dating without living with a partner ranks second; and Latin America, where cohabitation without marriage or a registered partnership is the second most common arrangement. Across all income groups, being married or in a registered partnership and living together ranks second.

▶ Being single and not dating is the most common arrangement in every regional grouping and country income group.

40 per cent of respondents are single and not dating.

Figure 4.4 Percentage of respondents by current relationship and living arrangement, by regional grouping and country income group.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Ideal versus actual partnership and living arrangements

This section examines how young people imagine their ideal relationship trajectories and living arrangements, and how these aspirations compare with their current realities.

Marriage is a common ideal relationship arrangement among most surveyed young adults, although the preferred path to marriage varies considerably. Overall, 36 per cent of respondents report that their ideal living arrangement is to marry before living together, while a further 34 per cent prefer to cohabit first and marry later. Together, these findings indicate that more than two thirds of young people envision marriage as part of their preferred partnership trajectory.

At the same time, a diversity of preferred arrangements is also evident. Around 9 per cent of respondents prefer cohabitation without marriage, while 5 per cent would ideally have a partner without living together. Notably, 16 per cent of respondents report that their ideal living arrangement is to remain single.

Regional differences are substantial. Marriage without prior cohabitation is the dominant preferred pathway in the Arab States (66 per cent), Asia Pacific (49 per cent), and West and Central Africa (46 per cent). By contrast, cohabitation followed by marriage is the most preferred arrangement in Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America. Approximately 40 per cent of respondents in these regional groupings favour this option.

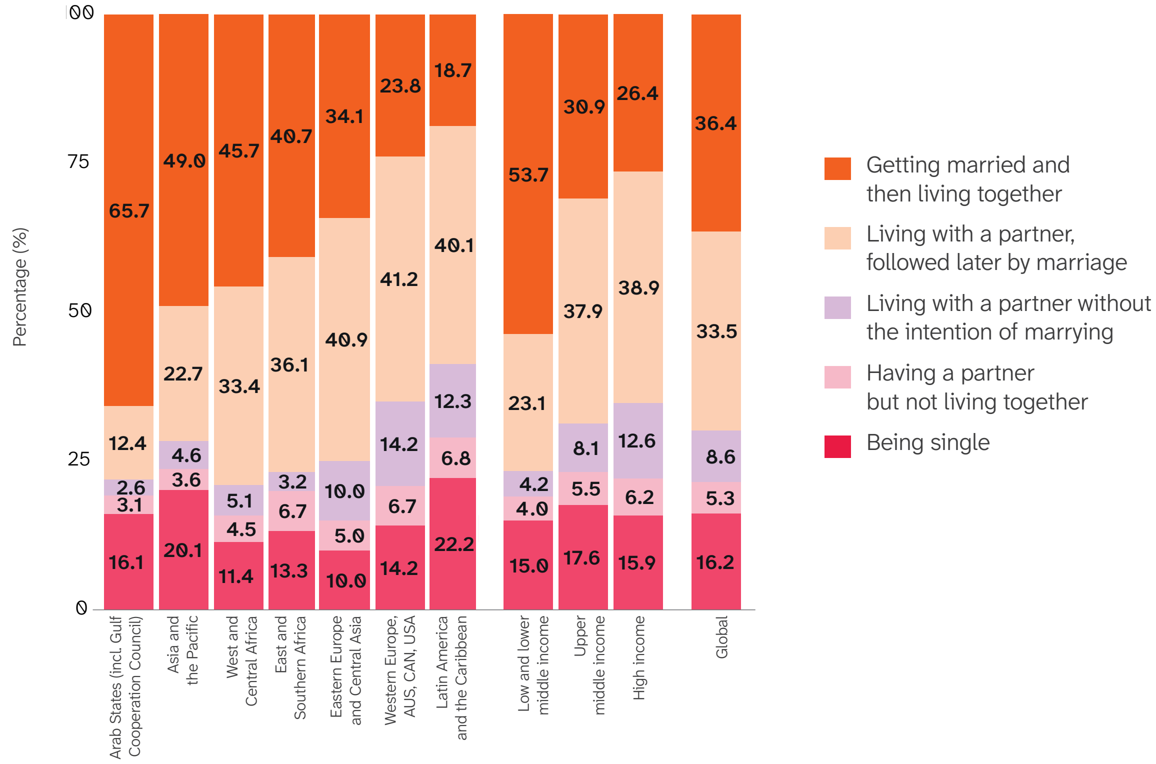
Remaining single emerges as the third most preferred arrangement across all regional groupings. Preferences for remaining single are highest in Latin America (22 per cent) and Asia and the Pacific (20 per cent), and lowest in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (10 per cent) and West and Central Africa (11 per cent).

More than 2/3 envision marriage as part of their preferred relationship path.

© UNFPA Nepal/Luis Tato

Over two thirds of respondents would like to marry, either directly or after cohabitation.

Figure 4.5 Percentage of respondents by preferred relationship and living arrangement, by regional grouping and country income group.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Question: People have different preferences for relationships and living arrangements. In an ideal world, which of these would you choose?

Patterns also differ across income groups. In low- and lower-middle-income countries, marriage before cohabitation is the most preferred living arrangement, with 54 per cent favouring this option. In contrast, in upper-middle-income countries and high-income countries, the most common preferred arrangement is cohabitation followed by marriage, preferred by 38 per cent and 39 per cent of respondents, respectively. Cohabitation without intending to marry is also more common as an ideal arrangement in high-income countries (13 per cent) than in upper-middle-income countries (8 per cent) and low- and lower-middle-income countries (4 per cent).

On average, differences in ideal relationships and living arrangements by sex are relatively small. Preferences are also broadly similar across age groups, with one notable exception: the proportion reporting remaining single as their ideal living arrangement declines steadily with age, from 21 per cent among respondents aged 18–19 to 14 per cent among those aged 35–39.

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Partnership aspirations and current relationship status

A notable share of respondents report a gap between their partnership aspirations and their current relationship status. Across the full sample, approximately one quarter aged 25–39 ideally want a partner but are currently single and not dating. This proportion is substantially higher among male (30 per cent) than female respondents (19 per cent).

The survey does not examine the reasons why some respondents who ideally want a partner are currently single and not dating. Further research is needed, particularly in low- and lower-middle-income countries, to better understand the factors associated with these patterns. The proportion of males who ideally want a partner and yet are single and not dating is relatively consistent across regional groupings, ranging from around 28 to 32 per cent. However, regional variation among females is more pronounced. The lowest proportions are observed in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and in Asia and the Pacific (both around 16 per cent), while the highest proportion is recorded in West and Central Africa (25 per cent). Differences across income groups are comparatively modest for both sexes, although male respondents are consistently more likely than female respondents to ideally want a partner while currently being single and not dating across all income categories. Educational attainment also shapes these patterns. Among respondents aged 25–39, those with no formal education are the most likely to ideally want a partner while being single (33 per cent). The proportion is lower and relatively similar among respondents with primary (25 per cent), secondary (26 per cent) and tertiary education (23 per cent).

▶ **1 in 4 respondents who want a partner are single and not dating.**

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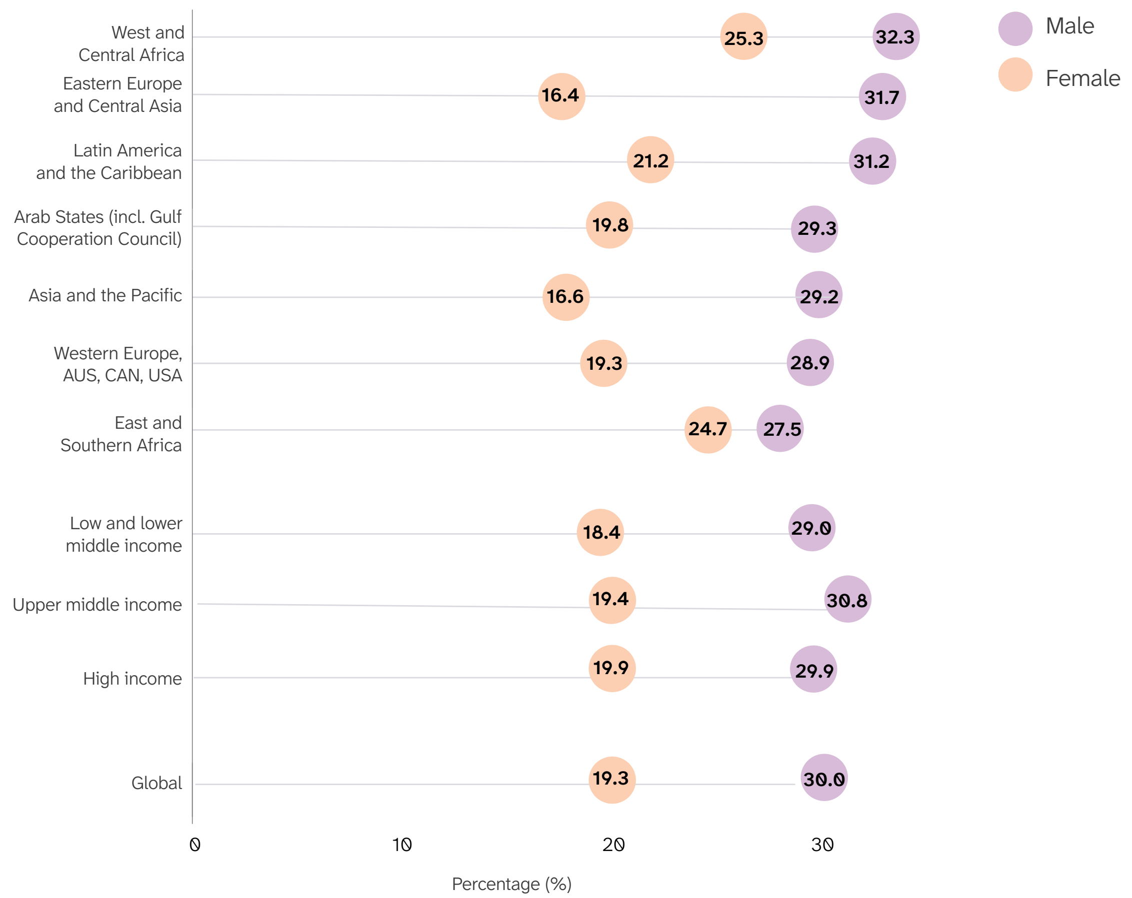
Among respondents aged 25–39 who want a partner, around one quarter are single and not dating, with a higher share among males.

Figure 4.6 Percentage of respondents aged 25–39 years who are single and not dating and ideally want a partner, by sex, regional grouping and country income group.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.

Question: Denominator: Age 25–39 and for the question "People have different preferences for relationships and living arrangements. In an ideal world, which of these would you choose?", answers: living with a partner, followed later by marriage; getting married and then living together; having a partner but not living together; or living with a partner without the intention of marrying. Numerator: For the question "Which of the following best describes your current relationship and living arrangement? (if you are divorced or widowed, please answer for your current relationship and living arrangement)", answers: single and not dating.

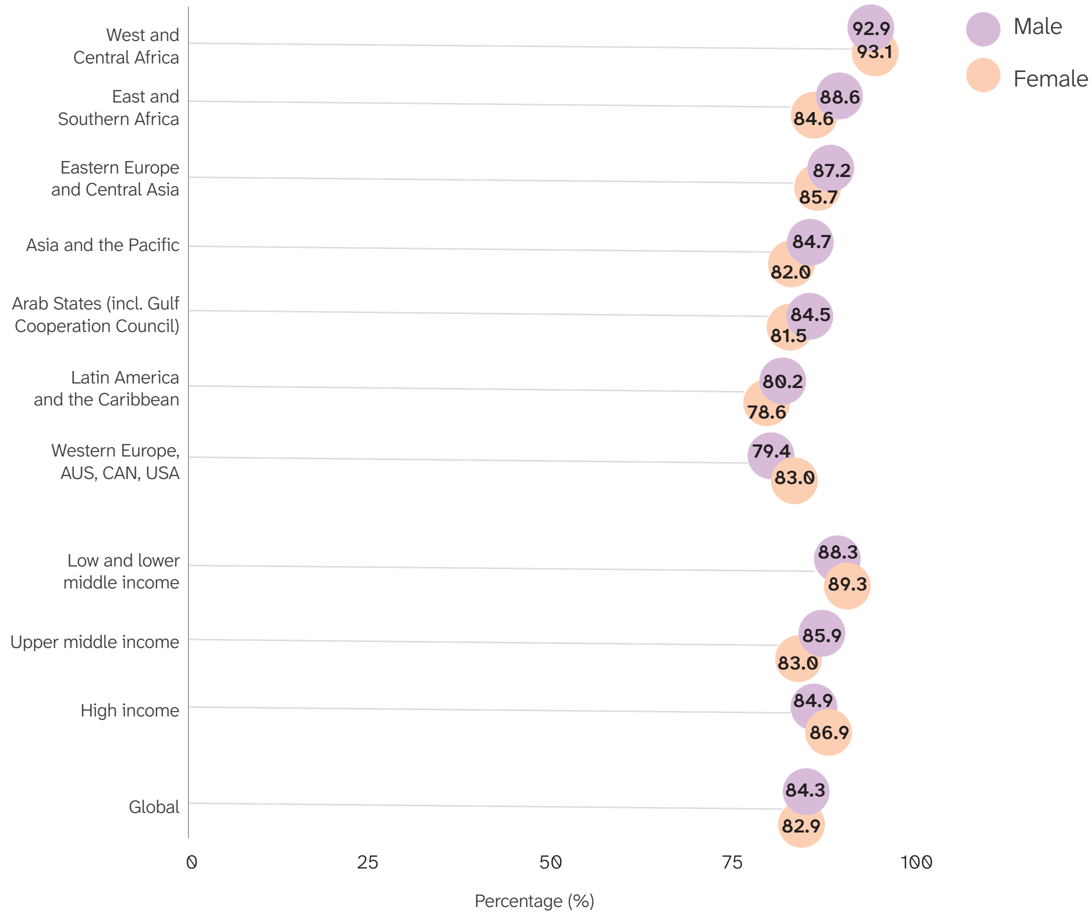
Among respondents aged 25–39 who are in non-cohabiting relationships, the overwhelming majority express a desire to live with a partner. On average, 84 per cent report wanting to marry or cohabit with a partner. Regional variation is relatively limited, though the highest proportions are observed in West and Central Africa, where approximately 93 per cent of both males and females express this desire. The lowest proportions are observed in Latin America, though even there nearly four in five respondents wish to marry or live with a partner (79 per cent of females, 80 per cent of males).

Differences across country income groups are relatively modest. The highest proportions are observed in low- and lower-middle-income countries, where approximately 88 per cent of males and 89 per cent of females wish to live with their partner, while somewhat lower levels are observed in upper-middle-income countries (86 per cent of males, 83 per cent of females). Differences by sex are generally small across all other regional groupings and income groups.

▶ 84% of those aged 25–39 want to marry or cohabit with a partner.

Among respondents aged 25–39 who are dating or in a non-cohabiting relationship, more than 80 per cent want to marry or live with a partner.

Figure 4.7 Percentage of respondents aged 25–39 years and currently dating or in a non-cohabiting relationship who want to marry or live with a partner, by sex, regional grouping and country income group.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026

Question: Denominator: Age 25-39 and for the question "Which of the following best describes your current relationship and living arrangement? (if you are divorced or widowed, please answer for your current relationship and living arrangement)": Dating but not living with a partner; or In a stable relationship but not legally married or in a registered partnership and not living with partner. Numerator: People have different preferences for relationships and living arrangements. In an ideal world, which of these would you choose? Living with a partner, followed later by marriage; Getting married and then living together; or Living with a partner without the intention of marrying.

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How people met their current partner

The ways young people meet their partners have changed significantly in recent decades, shaped by urbanization, educational expansion, changing social norms and the rapid growth of digital technologies. While family, friendship, school and workplace networks remain important, online and digital platforms have become increasingly prominent for relationship formation.

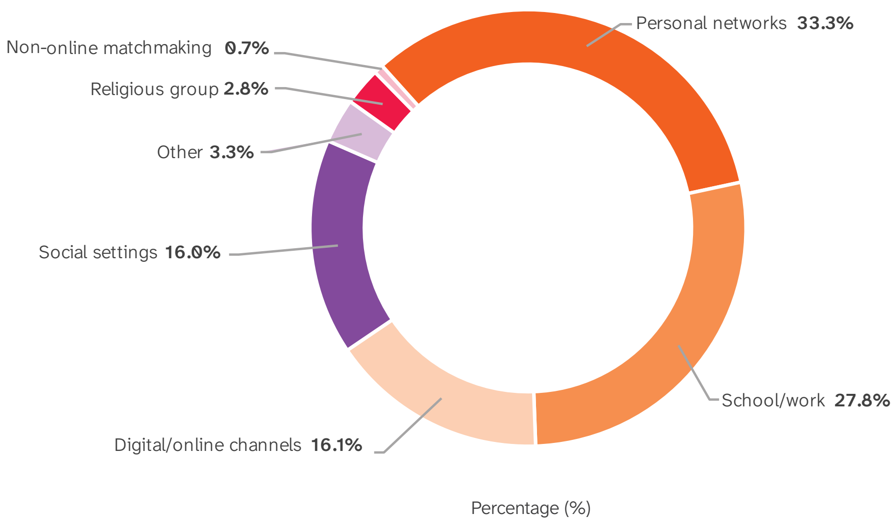
Overall, approximately 62 per cent of respondents reported currently being in a partnership, including dating relationships, stable relationships, cohabiting unions, or marriages and registered partnerships. These respondents were subsequently asked how they met their current partner.[14]

Personal networks remain the most common path to partnership formation, accounting for 33 per cent of respondents who met their partner though friends, relatives or other social connections on average. School or work environments represent the second most common channel (28 per cent). Online or digital channels account for 16 per cent of partnerships, a proportion equal to those who cite social settings such as bars, parties or public venues. Personal networks are either the single or joint most common pathway across all income groups.

The importance of digital channels varies considerably across regional groupings. Online and digital channels are most commonly reported in Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States, where 21 per cent of respondents met their current partner online, compared with only 10 per cent in the Arab States and 7 per cent in West and Central Africa. Within the Asia and Pacific region, Malaysia and Thailand stand out as countries where more than one quarter of respondents met their partner through online channels.

One third of young people met their partner through personal networks.

Figure 4.8 Percentage of respondents by how they met their current partner.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Question: How did you meet your current partner?

Differences by sex in how respondents met their current partner are relatively small. However, some age-related differences are evident. The likelihood of meeting a partner through personal networks or social settings increases modestly with age, while the probability of meeting through school or work declines across older age groups.

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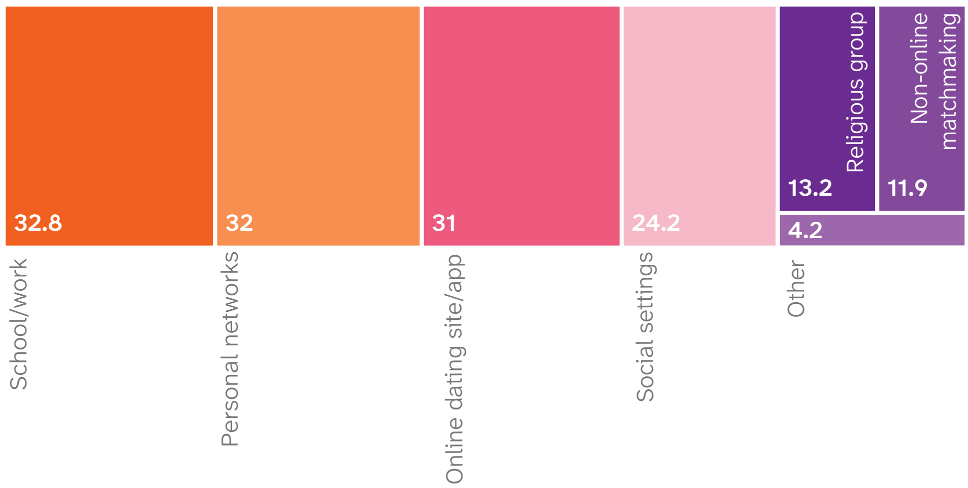
How young people are looking to meet partners

The survey also asked respondents who are currently single or dating but not living with a partner, and who are actively seeking a partner (approximately 19 per cent of all respondents), how they are currently trying to meet potential partners.[15]

Overall, three channels emerge as the most common ways for meeting a new partner: school or work (33 per cent), personal networks such as friends and family (32 per cent), and online dating sites or applications (31 per cent). Social settings, including bars, parties and public venues, are also relatively common, though less frequently cited. Interestingly, religious groups (13 per cent) and non-online matchmaking channels (12 per cent) are more commonly used among those currently searching for a partner than by partnered respondents describing how they met their current partner.

Most respondents are looking to meet a new partner through school or work, personal networks or through digital/online channels.

Figure 4.9 Percentage of respondents by how they are looking to meet a new partner.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026..

Question: Through which avenues are you looking for a partner? Choose all that apply.

Regional differences are substantial. Personal networks are the most common channel among respondents in Asia and the Pacific (39 per cent) and in the Arab States (38 per cent). Online dating sites and applications are the leading channel in Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States (41 per cent), as well as in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (34 per cent). By contrast, school or work environments are the most common channel in West and Central Africa (38 per cent), Latin America (35 per cent) and East and Southern Africa (34 per cent).

At the national level, Finland, Germany, Qatar and Sweden stand out as the countries where at least half or more respondents report using digital platforms to search for a partner. Across income groups, online dating applications are the most common channel in high-income countries (37 per cent), while school or work is the most common channel in upper-middle-income countries (33 per cent). In low- and lower-middle-income countries, school or work (35 per cent) and personal networks (34 per cent) are the leading channels.

Differences by sex are relatively small. However, age patterns are more evident. The likelihood of seeking a partner through school or work declines steadily with increasing age, while the use of online dating platforms increases across older age groups. Educational differences are also apparent: respondents with tertiary education are more likely to use personal networks, school or work, social settings or online dating applications, whereas non-online matchmaking channels are most common among respondents with no formal education.

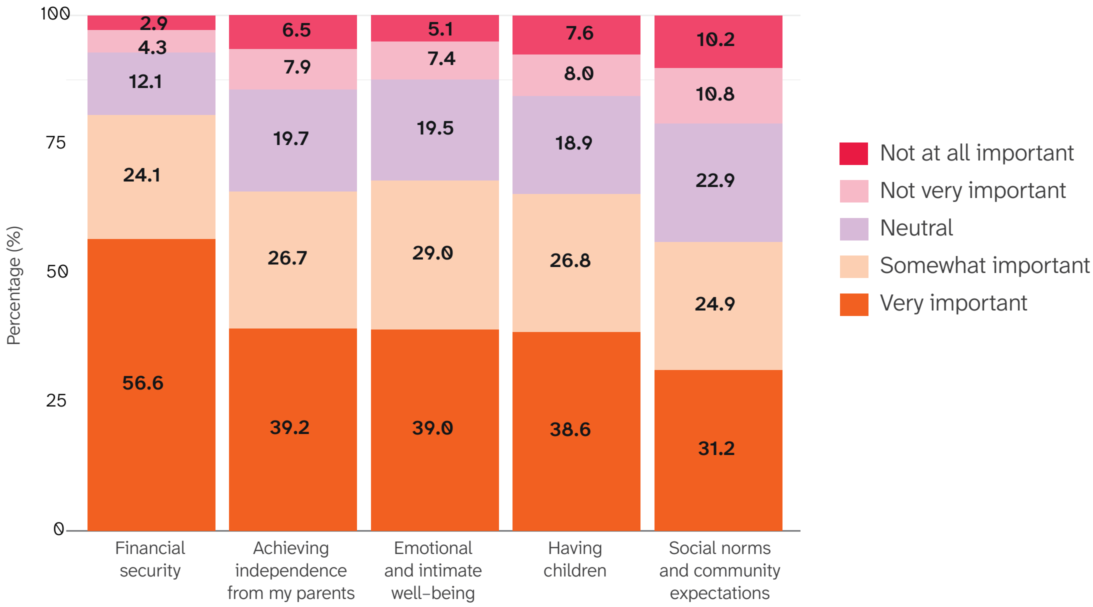
Motivations for partnership

Young people associate marriage and stable cohabiting relationships with a combination of emotional, economic and social motivations. The survey asks respondents about the importance of various reasons for getting or being married or having a stable cohabiting relationship.[16] Financial security is the highest-rated reason for wanting to be in a stable partnership or marriage, with 81 per cent of respondents rating it as somewhat or very important, including 57 per cent who consider it very important. Emotional and intimate well-being, achieving independence from parents and having children also rank highly as motivations for entering a stable partnership or marriage.

Although practical and personal considerations dominate, social norms and community expectations play a meaningful role. More than half of respondents (56 per cent) rated social norms and community expectations as at least somewhat or very important in motivating partnership formation.

Respondents rate financial security as the top motivation for partnership.

Figure 4.10 Percentage of respondents by the perceived importance of various reasons for partnership.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Question: [For respondents who are not married, in a registered partnership, or living together] For you personally, how important are the following reasons for getting married or having a stable cohabiting relationship? [For respondents who are married, in a registered partnership, or living together] How important are they for being married or having a stable cohabiting relationship?

Across all regional groupings, financial security remains the most important reason for forming a partnership. The importance attached to financial security is particularly pronounced in East and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa, where approximately 70 per cent of respondents rated it as very important.

Financial security is also the most important reason across all income groups, cited by 46 per cent of respondents in high-income countries, 62 per cent in upper-middle-income countries, and 64 per cent in low- and lower-middle-income countries.

On average, differences by sex are relatively modest, although males tend to assign slightly greater importance than females to social norms and community expectations. Some differences are also evident. The importance attached to having children and emotional and intimate well-being increases slightly with age, while the importance assigned to financial security and achieving independence from parents declines modestly across older age groups. Nevertheless, financial security remains the most important motivation across all age groups.

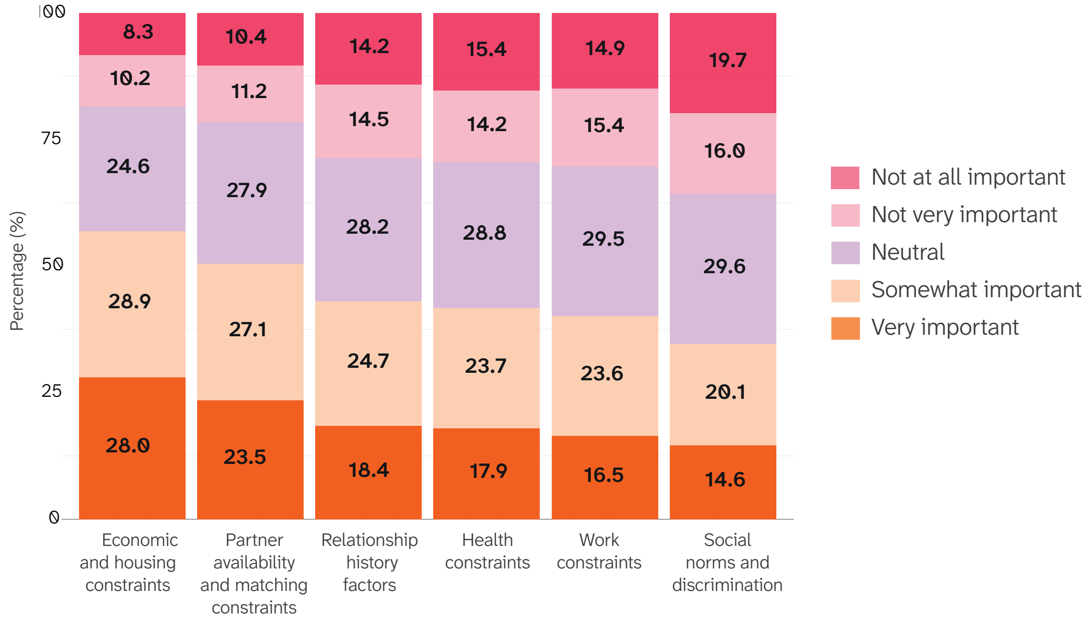
Barriers to partnership

Alongside the reasons for partnership, the survey asks about the importance of various barriers in preventing young people from getting married or being in a stable cohabiting relationship.[17] Economic and housing constraints emerge as the most significant barrier, with 57 per cent of respondents rating this as a somewhat or very important barrier to partnership formation on average. Partner availability and matching constraints constitute the second most important barrier, while social norms and discrimination are the least important overall.

▶ 57% cite economic and housing constraints as primary barriers to a stable partnership.

Economic and housing constraints are the top barriers to partnerships.

Figure 4.11 Percentage of respondents by the perceived importance of various barriers to partnership.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Question: [If respondent is not married or in a stable cohabiting relationship] For you personally, how important are the following barriers in preventing you from getting married or being in a stable cohabiting relationship? [If respondent is married or in a stable cohabiting relationship] In your life, how important have the following barriers been to you getting married or living with a partner in a stable union?

Across all regional groupings and income groups, economic and housing constraints consistently rank as the leading barrier to partnership formation. On average, differences by sex are relatively small, although females are generally somewhat more likely than males to rate each barrier as very important. The largest differences by sex are observed for partner availability and matching constraints. Age-related differences are comparatively modest across all barriers, suggesting that economic insecurity, housing affordability and relationship uncertainty affect young people relatively consistently throughout their life.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Chapter 5

Parenthood aspirations and realities

Parenthood is an important aspiration for many respondents around the world. At the same time, respondents identify a range of conditions that they consider important for feeling ready to become a parent. This chapter examines fertility ideals, achieved family size among older respondents, the prevalence of respondents aged 35–39 who do not currently have children, the preconditions respondents associate with parenthood, and the motivations and barriers they report in relation to having children.

Lifetime fertility ideals

Across all income groups, the most commonly reported ideal number of children is two. This is the preferred ideal for 32 per cent of respondents in low- and lower-middle-income countries, 41 per cent in upper-middle-income countries, and 45 per cent in high-income countries.

Similarly, in five out of seven regional groupings, two children is the most commonly reported ideal family size: Asia Pacific (47 per cent), Latin America (47 per cent), Western Europe and Australia, Canada and the United States (44 per cent), Eastern Europe and Central Asia (37 per cent), and the Arab States (31 per cent).

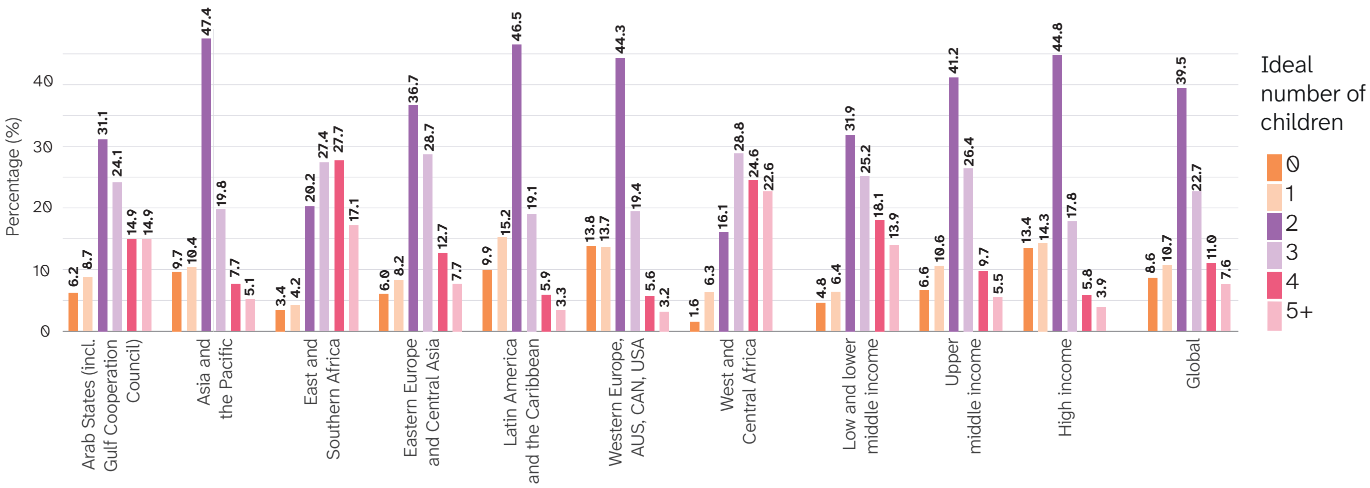
Respondents in sub-Saharan Africa report a markedly different ideal family size preference. In East and Southern Africa, the two-child ideal family size remains substantial (20 per cent), but larger family ideals are more common, with three children (27 per cent) and four children (28 per cent) cited most frequently. In West and Central Africa, only 16 per cent reported two children as ideal, while three children (29 per cent) is the dominant ideal, followed by four children (23 per cent) and five or more children (25 per cent).

In the Arab States, two children remains the largest ideal category, although three children (24 per cent) and larger family ideals are cited considerably more frequently than in Western Europe, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, Latin America, and the Asia and the Pacific region.

There is also important variation in the proportion reporting an ideal number of zero children. This proportion is highest in Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States (14 per cent) and lowest in West and Central Africa (2 per cent) and East and Southern Africa (3 per cent). When looking by income group, the proportion reporting an ideal of zero children is highest among high-income countries (13 per cent) and lower among upper-middle-income countries (7 per cent) and low- and lower-middle-income countries (5 per cent).

Two children is the most common ideal among respondents in all income groups and most regional groupings, although larger family ideals are more common in West and Central Africa and East and Southern Africa.

Figure 5.1 Percentage of respondents by ideal number of children, by regional grouping and country income group.



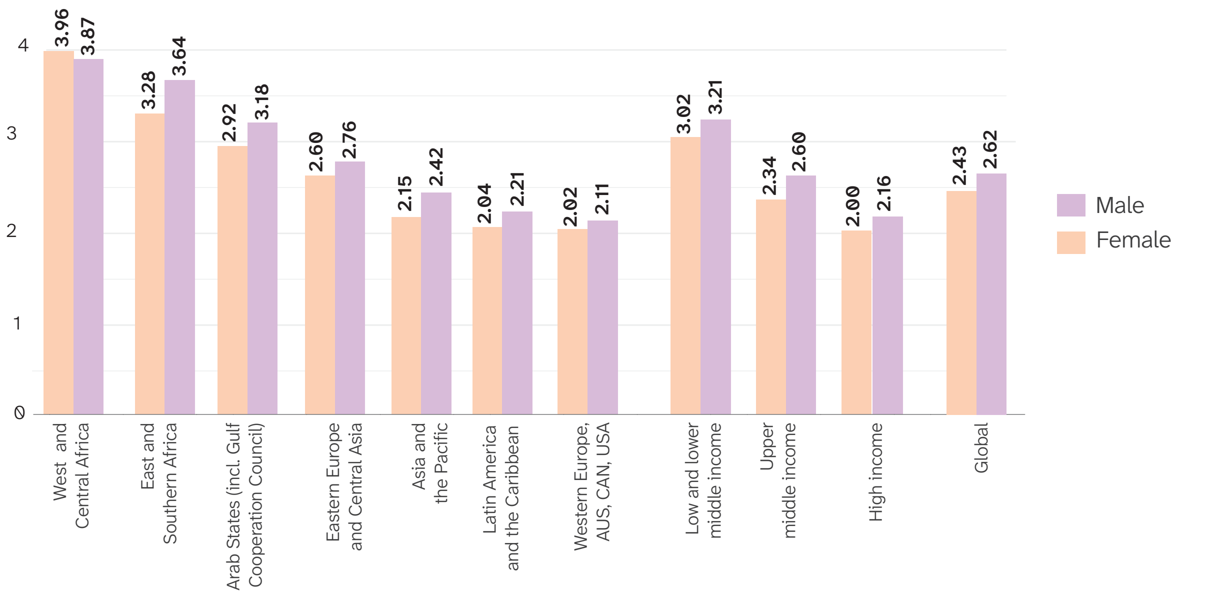
Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Question: For you personally, what would be the ideal total number of children you would like to have?

Males report on average an ideal number of children of 2.62, compared with 2.43 among females. In all regional groupings except West and Central Africa, the mean ideal number of children is higher among males than females. The same pattern is observed across all three country income groups.

Mean ideal family size is higher among male than female respondents in all regional groupings except West and Central Africa.

Figure 5.2 Mean ideal number of children among respondents, by regional grouping, country income group and sex.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.

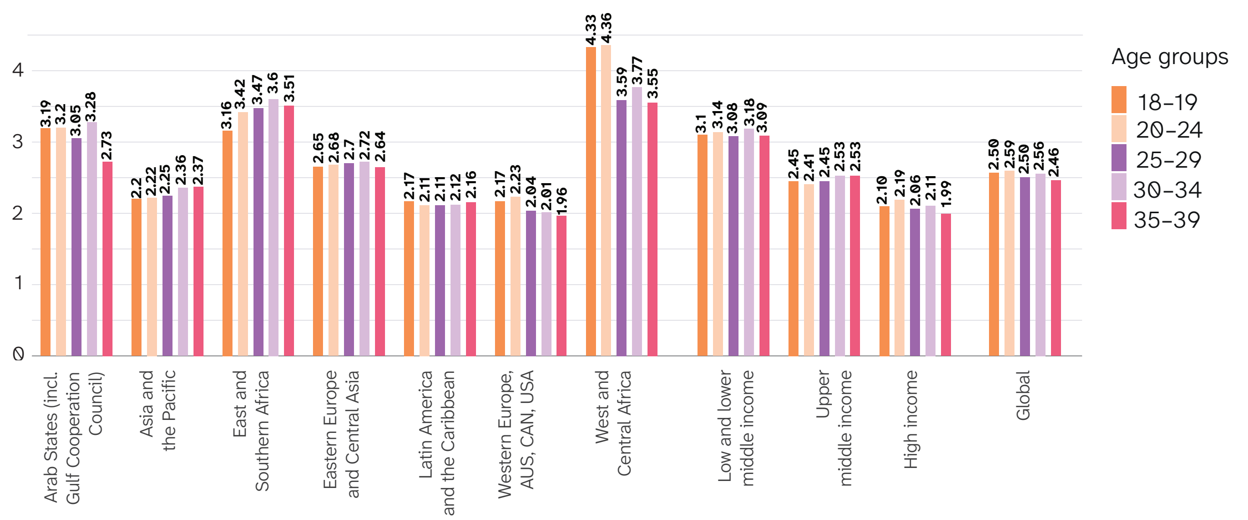
Question: For you personally, what would be the ideal total number of children you would like to have?

Differences in fertility ideals across age groups are generally modest, although patterns vary across regional groupings among respondents in the full sample. In the Arab States, West and Central Africa, and Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States, the mean ideal number of children declines slightly with increasing age. By contrast, ideals increase modestly in Asia and the Pacific and East and Southern Africa, while remaining relatively stable across age groups in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and in Latin America.

Age differences in the mean ideal number of children within each income group are generally relatively small.

Ideal family size varies by age group, region and income group.

Figure 5.3 Mean ideal number of children among respondents, by regional grouping, country income group and age group.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.

Question: For you personally, what would be the ideal total number of children you would like to have?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Reported fertility ideals and achieved family size

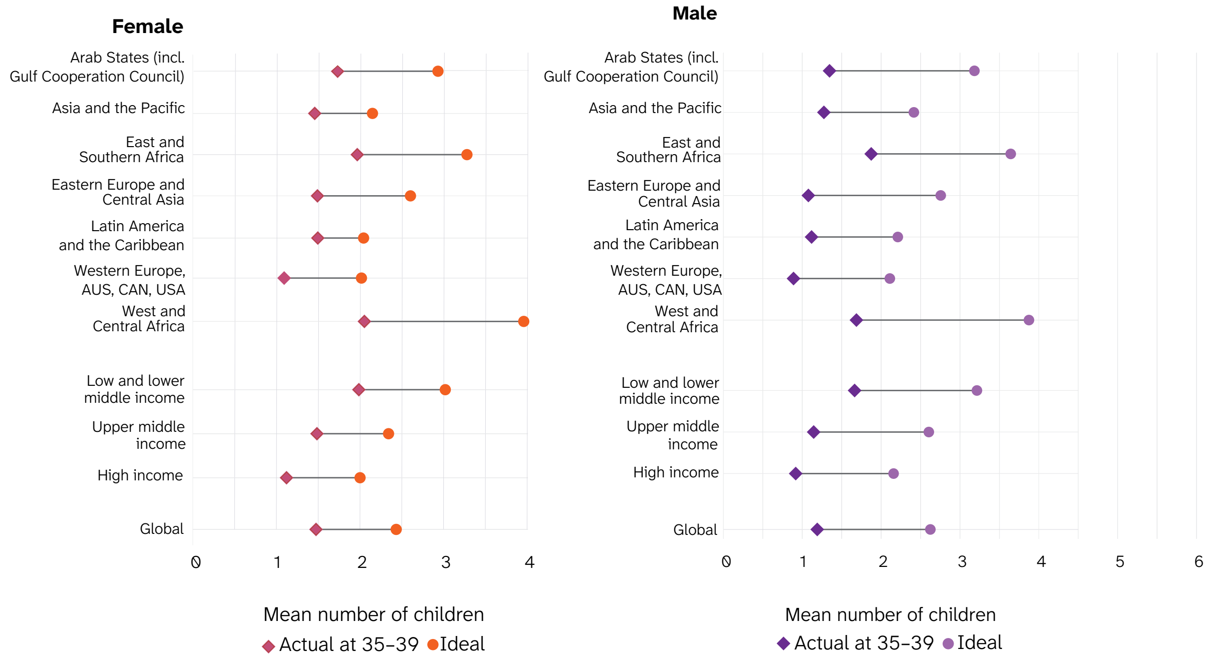
Fertility ideals indicate how many children young people would ideally like to have over their lifetimes. Comparing reported fertility ideals for the whole sample with achieved family size among older respondents provides insight into the relationship between aspirations for family size and current family outcomes.

In this section, the average ideal number of children among all respondents aged 18–39 is compared with the actual number of children among respondents aged 35–39 years, used here as a proxy for completed family size. In low-fertility settings, where childbearing is increasingly being postponed, some respondents aged 35–39 may still go on to have children. As such, part of the observed fertility gap may reflect delayed rather than permanently unrealized fertility. Nevertheless, the comparison provides a useful descriptive indication of the relationship between reported fertility ideals and achieved family size.

Across all regions and income groups, the mean number of children reported by respondents aged 35–39 is lower than the mean ideal number of children reported by respondents aged 18–39. The gap is also relatively similar across income groups (0.86–1.03 among females, 1.24–1.55 among males). In all regional groupings, people aged 35–39 also have fewer children than the average ideal number among 18–39-year-olds. The gap is largest in West and Central Africa, where it reaches 1.91 children among females and 2.19 children among males. Among both sexes, the smallest gaps are observed in Latin America (0.55 among females, 1.09 among males) and Asia and the Pacific (0.69 among females, 1.14 among males).

Respondents aged 35–39 have fewer children, on average, than the ideal number reported by respondents aged 18–39.

Figure 5.4 Mean ideal number of children among respondents aged 18–39 and mean actual number of children for respondents aged 35–39 years among females (left panel) and males (right panel), by regional grouping and country income group.



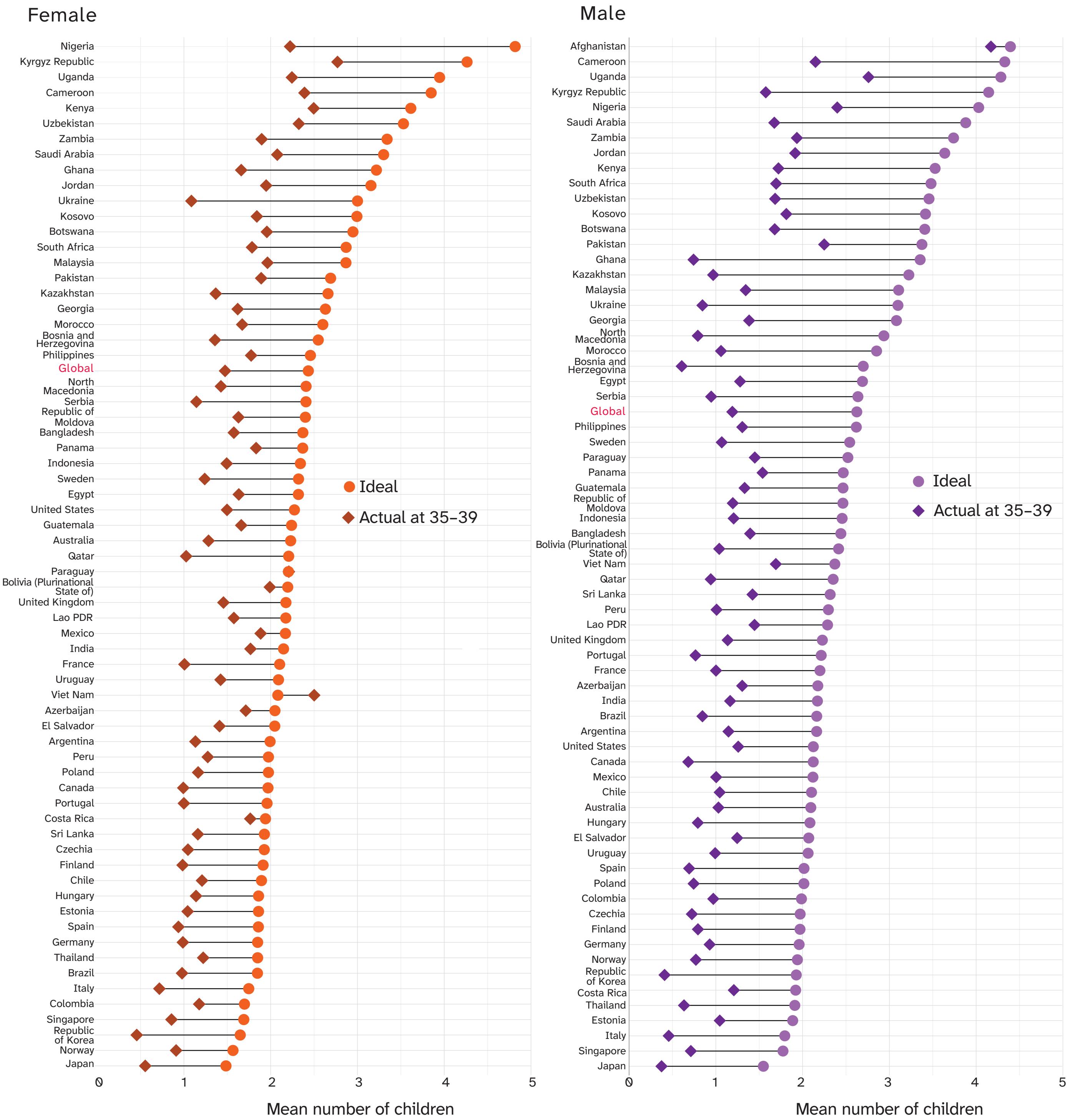
Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.

Question: [For 18–39-year-olds] For you personally, what would be the ideal total number of children you would like to have? [For 35-39-year-olds] How many living children do you currently have (please include biological and adopted children, but do not include step-children)?

At the country level, realized fertility among respondents aged 35–39 is lower than stated fertility ideals, with very few exceptions. Among female respondents, the largest fertility gaps are observed in Somalia (2.84) and Nigeria (2.59), which both have high ideal fertility among 18–39-year-olds and relatively high achieved fertility among those aged 35–39, and Ukraine (1.91), which has a moderate ideal fertility and low achieved fertility at 35–39 years. Among male respondents, the largest gaps are observed in Ghana (2.61), the Kyrgyz Republic (2.57), Kazakhstan (2.26) and Ukraine (2.25). By contrast, the smallest gaps are found in Costa Rica (0.18), Bolivia (Plurinational State of) (0.21) and Mexico (0.29) among female respondents, and Cambodia (0.21) and Afghanistan (0.22) among male respondents.

In nearly all countries, respondents aged 35–39 have fewer children than the ideal number among respondents aged 18–39.

Figure 5.5 Mean ideal and mean actual number of children at ages 18–39 and mean actual number of children at ages 35–39 among respondents by country and sex (left panel – females; right panel – males).



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Bhutan, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Somalia and Tunisia not included due to the small sample of individuals 35–39 answering these questions.

Question: [For 18–39-year-olds] For you personally, what would be the ideal total number of children you would like to have? [For 35–39-year-olds] How many living children do you currently have (please include biological and adopted children, but do not include step-children)?

Parental status and aspirations among adults surveyed aged 35–39

The *Demographic Futures Survey* examined the proportion of respondents aged 35–39 who do not currently have any children. These figures describe respondents' parental status at the time of the survey, and provide a useful indication of delayed transitions to parenthood. They should not be interpreted as a measure of actual fertility since some respondents may still go on to have children. They may also be affected by the selectivity of the survey sample, given the higher proportions of highly educated, urban and unmarried respondents relative to the general population.

On average, the proportion of adult respondents aged 35–39 who report having no children is substantially higher among males (41 per cent) than females (30 per cent). Among respondents aged 35–39 who do not currently have children, the majority would ideally like to have children: 79 per cent among males and 72 per cent among females on average.

The proportion of respondents aged 35–39 with no children is highest in high-income countries, where 49 per cent of male respondents and 41 per cent of female respondents do not currently have children. Most respondents in this group would ideally like to have children (71 per cent of males and 64 per cent of females). However, the proportion reporting that they ideally want no children is higher in high-income countries (29 per cent of males and 36 per cent of females) than in other income groups.

In contrast, the proportion of respondents aged 35–39 with no children is much lower in low- and lower-middle-income countries: 32 per cent among males and 17 per cent among females, and most respondents in this group would ideally like to have children (93 per cent of males and 84 per cent of females).

At the regional level, the proportion of respondents aged 35–39 with no children is highest in Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States, where 49 per cent of male and 41 per cent of female respondents do not currently have children. Among these respondents, 73 per cent of males and 62 per cent of females would ideally like to have children. The proportion of respondents aged 35–39 with no children is substantially lower in East and Southern Africa (18 per cent for males, 19 per cent for females) and West and Central Africa (34 per cent for males, 14 per cent for females).

In these regional groupings, nearly all respondents aged 35–39 who do not currently have children report that they would ideally like to have children. Among respondents without children in East and Southern Africa, 91 per cent of males and 96 per cent of females would ideally like to have children, while 97 per cent of males and 98 per cent of females without children in West and Central Africa report that they would ideally like to have children.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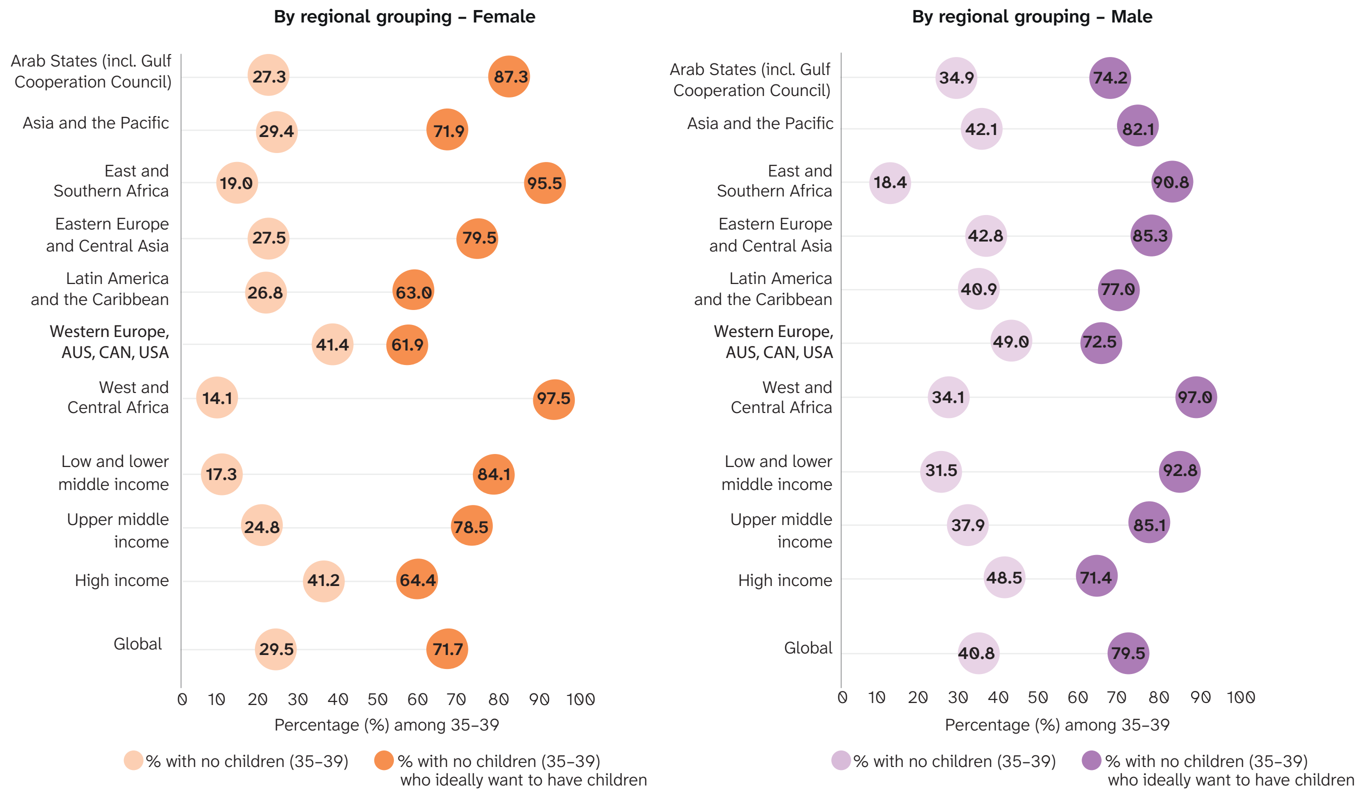
Across regional groupings and income groups, most respondents aged 35–39 who do not currently have children would ideally like to have them.

Figure 5.6 Percentage of respondents aged 35–39 with no children who would ideally like to have children,[18] by sex (left panel – females; right panel – males), regional grouping and country income group.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.

Question: How many living children do you currently have (please include biological and adopted children, but do not include step-children)?; For you personally, what would be the ideal total number of children you would like to have?

At the country level, the proportion of respondents aged 35–39 with no children, and the extent to which this aligns with fertility aspirations, vary substantially. In Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, several Western European countries, Canada and some Eastern European countries, having no children at ages 35–39 is relatively common, and a sizeable proportion of respondents report that their ideal number of children is zero. By contrast, in most sub-Saharan African countries and several South and Southeast Asian countries, relatively few respondents aged 35–39 do not have children, and among those who do not, the majority would ideally like to have children.

Several countries also exhibit high or moderately high proportions of respondents aged 35–39 without children, even though over 98 per cent of those respondents report that they would ideally like to have children. These include Ghana, Kazakhstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, North Macedonia and Ukraine. In 18 countries surveyed, the proportion of respondents aged 35–39 without children and who would like to have children is over 75 per cent.

▶ **Several countries have high proportions of respondents aged 35–39 without children, even though over 98% would ideally like to have children.**

In many countries, most respondents aged 35–39 with no children would ideally like to have children.

Figure 5.7 Percentage of respondents aged 35–39 with no children who would ideally like to have children, by country.

Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Bhutan, Cambodia, Lebanon, Somalia and Afghanistan not included due to the small sample size of respondents aged 35-39 who answered these questions.

Question: How many living children do you currently have (please include biological and adopted children, but do not include step-children)? For you personally, what would be the ideal total number of children you would like to have?

Preconditions for parenthood

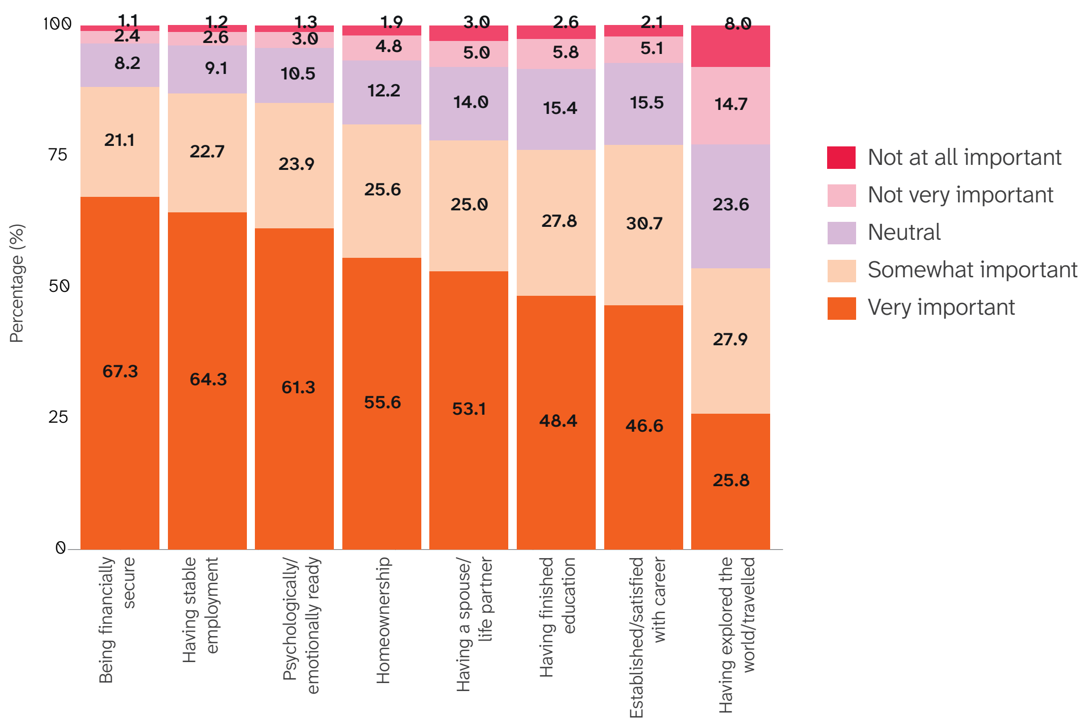
The survey asks young people about the importance of various preconditions for having children. Financial security emerges as the most important precondition, with 88 per cent of respondents rating it as somewhat or very important, including 67 per cent who rate it as very important. This is closely followed by stable employment (87 per cent somewhat or very important, 64 per cent very important) and psychological or emotional readiness (85 per cent somewhat or very important, 61 per cent very important).

Homeownership and having a spouse or life partner are also highly valued preconditions. Factors related to personal fulfilment, such as having explored or travelled the world, are considered somewhat or very important by most respondents. Preconditions related to professional or personal fulfilment are generally rated lower than those related to financial security, employment and emotional readiness. Overall, the findings suggest that many young people feel they must achieve readiness across multiple dimensions before becoming parents.

▶ 88% of respondents rate financial security as a precondition for having children, followed by stable employment at 87%.

Financial security is respondents' top precondition for parenthood.

Figure 5.8 Percentage of respondents by the perceived importance of various preconditions for parenthood.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Question: People have different opinions about what should be in place before becoming a parent. How important for you are the following preconditions for becoming a parent?

Across regional groupings, financial security and stable employment consistently rank among the most important preconditions for parenthood, followed closely by psychological and emotional readiness. By contrast, having explored or travelled the world is the least likely to be rated very important. Females rate all preconditions more highly than males. Meanwhile, the perceived importance of all eight preconditions for parenthood declines gradually with age, particularly for homeownership and having completed education, likely reflecting the fact that older respondents have already crossed some of these thresholds or adjusted expectations over time.

Motivations for parenthood

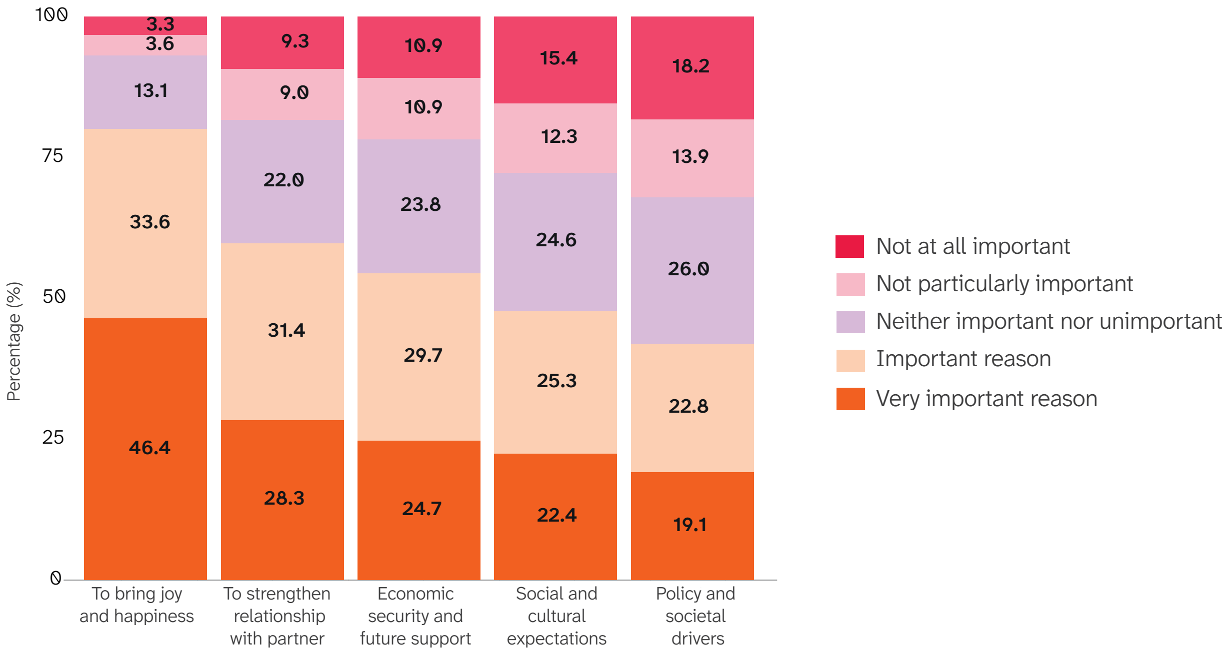
Understanding why young people want children complements an understanding of how many children they ideally want and the conditions under which they feel ready to become parents. The survey asked people about the importance of various reasons for having children.[19]

Personal motivations are substantially more important than societal or policy-related motivations. Bringing joy and happiness is the dominant reason respondents report for wanting children, with 80 per cent rating it as somewhat or very important and 46 per cent rating it as very important. Strengthening the relationship with a partner follows (60 per cent somewhat or very important, 28 per cent very important), while policy and societal-related considerations – such as government encouragement and workforce concerns – receive lower ratings, with 48 per cent citing these as somewhat or very important. These findings suggest that respondents view parenthood from personal and relational perspectives rather than broader societal and policy objectives.

▶ **8 in 10 respondents are motivated by the joy children bring.**

Joy and happiness are respondents' most reported reasons for wanting children.

Figure 5.9 Percentage of respondents by the perceived importance of various reasons for parenthood.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

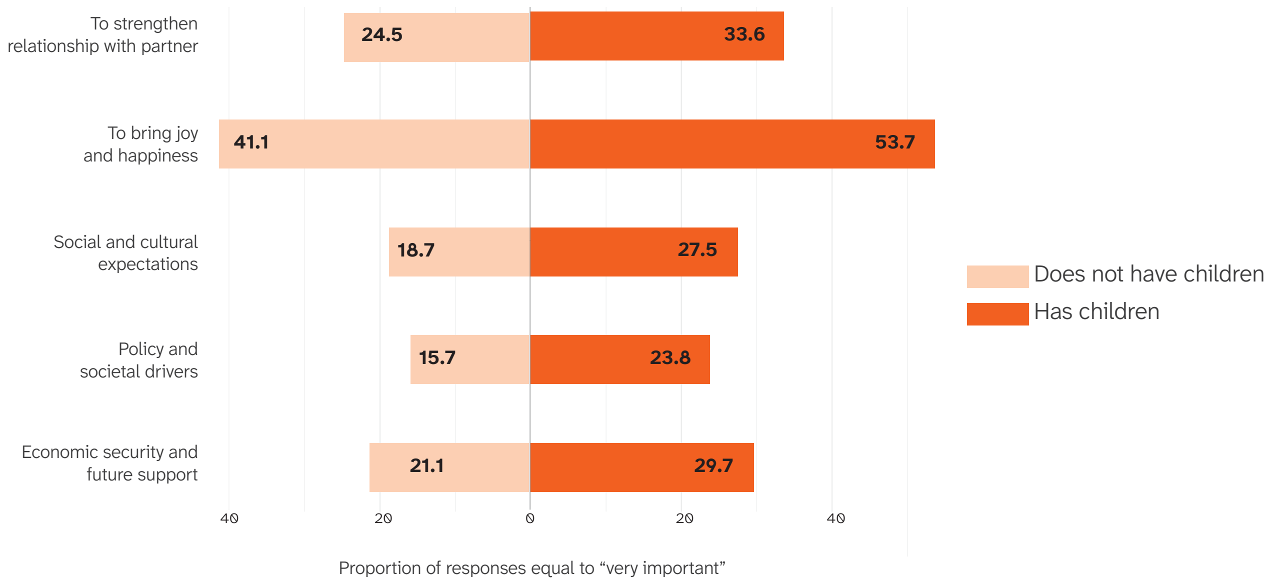
Question: [For respondents who have children] For you personally, how important are the following reasons for having children? [For respondents who do not have children] Hypothetically, how important for you would the following reasons be for having children?

Bringing joy and happiness is the leading motivation across all regional groupings and income groups. Differences by sex are relatively small overall, although males are somewhat more likely than females to rate strengthening the relationship with a partner, economic security and future support, social and cultural expectations, and policy and societal motivations as very important. Respondents with lower educational attainment place greater importance on strengthening the relationship with a partner and societal norms and expectations. Differences by age group are minimal.

Respondents who already have children are more likely than those without children to rate most motivations for parenthood as very important. In both groups, joy and happiness remain the most important motivation, though considerably more common among respondents who already have children (54 per cent versus 41 per cent). However, the survey design does not allow one to draw conclusions about whether parenthood changes these attitudes or whether individuals with stronger motivations are more likely to become parents.

Respondents with children more often rate reasons for parenthood as very important.

Figure 5.10 Proportion of respondents rating motivations for parenthood as very important, by motivation cluster.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.

Question: [For respondents who have children] For you personally, how important are the following reasons for having children? [For respondents who do not have children] Hypothetically, how important for you would the following reasons be for having children?

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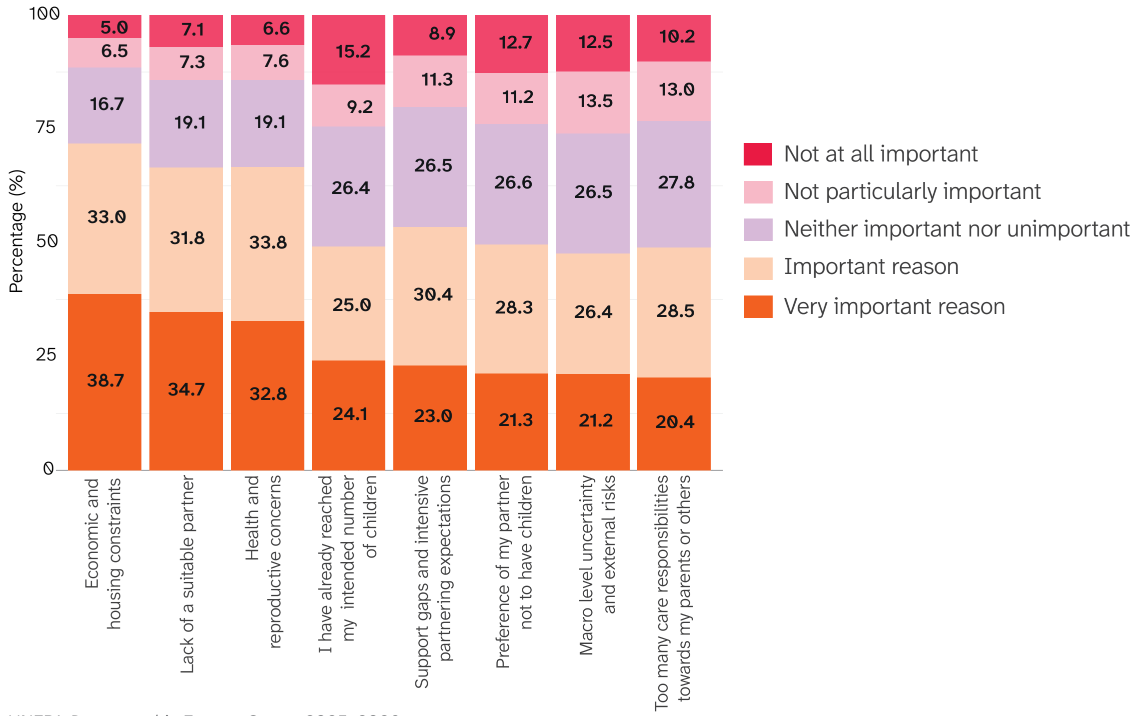
Barriers to parenthood

The survey also asked about barriers to having children.[20] Economic and housing constraints emerge as the leading barrier to parenthood. Overall, 72 per cent of respondents rate these as a somewhat or very important barriers, including 39 per cent who consider them very important. The lack of a suitable partner and health and reproductive concerns, each with 67 per cent rating them somewhat or very important reasons, follow closely behind.

Economic and housing constraints constitute the top-reported barriers to parenthood, followed closely by lack of a suitable partner and health and reproductive concerns.

Figure 5.11 Percentage of respondents by the perceived importance of various barriers to parenthood.



Source: UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey* 2025–2026.
Note: Totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Question: [For respondents who have children] Hypothetically, how important for you would the following reasons be for NOT having children? [For respondents who do not have children] For you personally, how important are the following reasons for NOT having children?

Economic and housing constraints rank as the leading barrier in nearly every regional grouping. The main exceptions are Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States, where economic and housing constraints and the lack of a suitable partner are jointly the most important barriers, with 33 per cent each, and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, where the lack of a suitable partner (37 per cent) slightly exceeds economic and housing constraints (36 per cent).

As with the preconditions, female respondents are more likely than male respondents to rate every barrier as very important, with the largest differences observed for health and reproductive concerns. The survey does not directly examine reasons for these differences, but they highlight the importance of considering gender when examining attitudes towards parenthood. Across most barriers, the proportion rating economic reasons as very important declines modestly with age. Respondents who already have children are substantially more likely than those who do not to report having reached their intended number of children as a very important reason for not wanting additional children.

Taken together, the findings suggest that many respondents' aspirations for partnership and parenthood are closely linked to the conditions they identify as important for family formation. Many respondents value partnership, parenthood, stability and family life, while also rating financial security, housing stability and emotional readiness as important considerations in relation to these aspirations.

Chapter 6

Conclusions


صحة المرأة

▶ **Against a backdrop of economic uncertainty, conflict and rapid change, young people retain a remarkable capacity for hope.**

Drawing on responses from more than 108,000 Internet-connected young adults aged 18–39 across 73 countries and territories, the *Demographic Futures Survey* provides comparative evidence on respondents' aspirations, perceptions and reported experiences related to their futures, partnerships and parenthood. This report presents the first descriptive analysis of selected survey questions and is intended as a starting point for further comparative and analytical research.

The findings show that many respondents value partnerships and having children, while also identifying a range of financial, employment, housing, relationship-related and personal factors as important to partnership and parenthood. Taken together, the findings suggest that respondents' aspirations for partnership and parenthood are closely linked to broader economic, social and personal circumstances. Considered alongside previous demographic research, they contribute to a broader understanding of how decisions about partnership and parenthood are shaped by the contexts in which they are made.

The report contributes to a growing body of evidence that shows that understanding and responding to demographic change requires attention to social, economic and institutional conditions. Such an approach is consistent with UNFPA's rights-based approach to demographic policy: one that understands demographic outcomes through the lens of agency, choice and the conditions that enable people to realize the futures they want. Young people's decisions about relationships and parenthood are shaped not only by personal preferences and values, but also by the wider circumstances in which those choices are made.

Many young people want partnerships, but aspiration and circumstances do not always align

Across all world regions, marriage, either before or after a period of cohabitation, remains a common ideal relationship arrangement among surveyed young adults. Over two thirds of respondents report an ideal relationship and living arrangement that includes marriage, either directly or following a period of cohabitation. At the same time, 16 per cent of respondents report that their ideal living arrangement is to remain single.

The survey underscores a notable gap between partnership aspirations and current relationship status. Approximately one quarter of respondents aged 25–39 who ideally want to marry or live with a partner are currently single and not dating. This is substantially higher among male respondents (30 per cent) than among female respondents (19 per cent).

Respondents also identify economic considerations as important to partnership. Financial security is the highest-rated consideration for partnership aspirations, while economic and housing constraints are the most commonly reported barrier to partnership.

Young people want families, but conditions matter

In almost every country surveyed, respondents aged 35–39 report having fewer living children on average than the ideal number of children reported by respondents aged 18–39. While these measures are derived from different age groups and should not be interpreted as a direct measure of unrealized fertility intentions, they are consistent with a gap between reported fertility ideals and achieved family size.

▶ Many young people surveyed want families, but financial security is central to whether parenthood feels possible.

At the same time, many respondents aged 35–39 who do not have children report they would ideally like to have children. In all regional groupings, most respondents aged 35–39 without children would ideally want to have children. In many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, parts of Asia, Eastern Europe and the Arab States, this is true for almost all respondents aged 35–39 without children.

Financial security is the highest-rated precondition among young adults for feeling ready to have children, while economic and housing constraints constitute the most frequently cited barrier to having children across the full sample. Taken together, these findings suggest that many respondents view economic stability as an important condition for pursuing family aspirations: they want families, but they want to be financially secure first.

While financial security is an essential precondition for parenthood, the reasons for having children lie elsewhere. Eight out of ten respondents, both with or without children, rate the joy and happiness that children bring as an important or very important reason for having children. By contrast, reasons related to government encouragement and contributions to the future workforce are among the lowest-rated considerations.

Optimism coexists with worries about the future

Overall, two thirds of respondents report feeling somewhat or very positive about the future. This is a finding that deserves recognition: against a backdrop of economic uncertainty, conflict and rapid change, Internet-connected young people retain a remarkable capacity for optimism. However, levels of optimism vary substantially across regional groupings, with the highest proportions reporting that they feel very positive found in East and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa, and lower proportions observed in Western Europe, Australia, Canada and the United States. At the same time, many respondents express concerns about the future. Conflict and security risks, together with economic insecurity and inequality, are the highest-rated concerns across regional groupings.

Respondents also report concerns about high inequality and relatively low levels of perceived institutional support. Around four in ten respondents across the full sample agree that governments provide adequate support for young people and for parents with young children, while similar proportions report that employers effectively support work–life balance.

Gender norms continue to shape family life

The survey demonstrates gender differences in attitudes towards selected family-related behaviours. While levels of approval are similar for most of the behaviours presented, respondents across all regional groupings are more likely to disapprove of a woman with children under three working full-time in paid employment than of a man in the same situation. This difference is greatest among younger respondents. Considered alongside wider research on gender, paid work and the distribution of care, the findings suggest that gendered expectations influence attitudes towards employment, caregiving and parenthood.

Gender differences are also evident in respondents' attitudes towards parenthood. Female respondents consistently rate every precondition and potential barriers to having children as more important than male respondents. At the same time, among respondents aged 35–39 who do not have children, female respondents are more likely than male respondents to report that they ideally do not want to have children.

Where young people live and their social status shape the transition to adulthood

The *Demographic Futures Survey* illustrates that, while many young adults around the world share similar aspirations for partnership and parenthood, important differences exist across regional groupings and social groups. Respondents vary not only in their outlook on the future, but also in their preferred family size, attitudes towards family formation, relationship and living arrangements, and reported experiences of partnership and parenthood.

Attitudes towards family expectations also vary by educational attainment and place of residence. Disapproval of family arrangements such as cohabitation before marriage, divorce or choosing to remain without children tends to be lower among respondents with higher levels of education and among those living in more urbanized settings. Similarly, respondents with lower levels of formal education are more likely to report being single and not dating despite ideally wanting to live with a partner. These differences highlight the diversity of young people's experiences and suggest that policies and programmes intended to help young adults achieve their aspirations should be responsive to different social, economic and cultural contexts.

Areas for policy consideration

The *Demographic Futures Survey* findings help identify several areas for further policy reflection, dialogue and research across a wide range of contexts.

First, the findings contribute to a long-standing debate in demographic research regarding the relative importance of ideational change and structural conditions in shaping family formation and fertility behaviour. While theories such as the second demographic transition have emphasized the role of changing values, individual autonomy and shifting family preferences,[21] the *Demographic Futures Survey* finds that many respondents continue to value partnership and parenthood. At the same time, respondents frequently identify economic security, housing, employment and other contextual factors as important conditions for pursuing these aspirations.

Second, the findings suggest that economic and social conditions are important considerations for respondents' aspirations for partnership and parenthood. Financial security, stable employment and housing affordability are among the highest-rated preconditions for family formation, while economic and housing constraints are among the most frequently cited barriers. Considered alongside existing demographic research, these findings reinforce the importance of examining how housing affordability, employment security and support for parents with young children shape opportunities for partnership and parenthood. They also suggest the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value of framing policy discussions around broader economic and social circumstances in which young people make rational decisions about family life.

The findings further underscore the close relationship between partnership formation and parenthood. Respondents identify financial security as an important consideration for both transitions, suggesting that discussions of delayed fertility should be considered alongside broader patterns of delayed partnership formation and transitions to independent adulthood.

Third, the findings accentuate the importance of gender in shaping attitudes towards partnership and parenthood. Female respondents consistently rate preconditions for parenthood and barriers to having children as more important than male respondents, while attitudes towards caregiving responsibilities differ between women and men. These findings suggest that gender equity in both the home and labour market remains an important consideration in policy discussions related to family formation and demographic change.

Considered alongside a broader body of research, the findings also point to the importance of examining how the division of care responsibilities, workplace expectations and family support policies influence opportunities for partnership and parenthood. Areas frequently cited in the literature include parental leave, childcare provision, flexible working arrangements and efforts to promote a more equitable distribution of unpaid care work. In discussions of demographic change, gender equity is therefore relevant not only as a matter of rights and social inclusion but also as an important consideration in supporting individuals to realize their family aspirations.

Finally, respondents report relatively low levels of perceived support from governments, employers and other institutions. While the survey does not directly examine institutional trust, these findings emphasize the importance of considering how social protection systems, workplace policies and public institutions shape the environments in which young people make decisions about education, work, partnership and parenthood. Strengthening these enabling conditions may help support young people's agency and their ability to pursue the futures they value.

The *Demographic Futures Survey* ultimately showcases both the aspirations many respondents hold and the challenges they report in seeking to realize them. Across countries and regions, many respondents remain optimistic about the future, continue to value partnership and parenthood, and express a desire to achieve these aspirations under conditions they consider conducive to family life. More broadly, the findings contribute to a growing body of evidence suggesting that understanding and responding to demographic change requires attention also to the social, economic and institutional conditions that shape people's opportunities and choices. By supporting young people's agency and expanding the opportunities available to them, societies can become more resilient, inclusive and responsive to demographic change.

Methodological annex

This annex describes the design, sample, data-collection procedures and analytical approach of the UNFPA *Demographic Futures Survey*. It is intended to be read alongside the main report.

A1. Survey design and scope

The *Demographic Futures Survey* is a cross-national, self-administered online questionnaire covering 108,926 respondents from 73 countries and territories across all world regions. It was designed to capture the aspirations, experiences and concerns of young people aged 18–39 with respect to life goals, partnership formation and parenthood, and represents the largest cross-national study of its kind in terms of geographical coverage. Throughout the report, data are presented by regional grouping (Table A1), and country-level income level groups (Table A2).

Table A1. Countries and territories included in the *Demographic Futures Survey*, by regional groupings.

Region	Number	Countries and territories
Arab States (including Gulf Cooperation Council countries)	8	Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Tunisia
Asia and the Pacific	16	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	15	Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, North Macedonia, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Kosovo
East and Southern Africa	6	Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia
Latin America and the Caribbean	13	Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay
West and Central Africa	3	Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria
Western Europe, Australia, Canada and United States of America	12	Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States

Table A2. Countries and territories included in the *Demographic Futures Survey*, by income group.

Income group	Number	Countries and territories
High income	25	Australia, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay
Upper middle income	22	Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, North Macedonia, Paraguay, Peru, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, South Africa, Thailand, Ukraine, and Kosovo
Low and lower middle income	25	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cambodia, Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, India, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Zambia
Unclassified	1	Ethiopia

The questionnaire takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. It was developed by UNFPA in collaboration with a team of consultants from Bocconi University, and reviewed by an external expert advisory committee of leading scholars in family demography and survey research. The instrument consists of newly developed questions and validated items from established international surveys, such as the *European Social Survey* (ESS) and the *Generations and Gender Survey* (GGS). Items drawn from these sources are listed in Table A3. Moreover, the fertility ideals lifetime rating question (Q31)[22] represents an innovative approach to measuring fertility ideals, asking respondents to rate each number of children (0 through 5+) on a 0–10 scale of how ideal that number is for them personally. The item was first introduced in the Italian Trust-Network-Fertility survey[23] and subsequently included in the *Fertility Motivations Survey*.[24]

Table A3. *Demographic Futures Survey* items drawn from existing data sources.

European Social Survey

Survey item *(Demographic Futures Survey)*	ESS variable	ESS source
Social and gender attitudes	D40–D44	Rotating module: Timing of Life, ESS Round 3
Age norms	D35, D38	Rotating module: Timing of Life, ESS Round 3

Generations and Gender Survey

Survey item *(Demographic Futures Survey)*	GGS variable	GGS source
Social media use	dem15_2001	Country-specific questions, Norway
Concerns about the present and future	b16unc01a–b16unc01m	User module: Global Uncertainty and Institutional Trust, GGS II Wave 2
How current partner was met	DEM22a	Baseline questionnaire, GGS II Wave 1
Currently seeking a partner	b04sing03	User module: Singlehood, GGS II Wave 2
Channels used to find a partner	b04sing04	User module: Singlehood, GGS II Wave 2
Contraception use	FER12	Baseline questionnaire, GGS II Wave 1
Infecundity problems	FER05	Baseline questionnaire, GGS II Wave 1
Fertility intentions (next three years)	FER14	Baseline questionnaire, GGS II Wave 1
Total intended number of children	FER16a	Baseline questionnaire, GGS II Wave 1
Personal fertility ideal	FER16b	Baseline questionnaire, GGS II Wave 1
Sex preference (one child only)	FER17	Baseline questionnaire, GGS II Wave 1

Data collection

Data were collected in Q4 of 2025 and Q1 of 2026 by two professional online survey firms operating in 73 countries and territories (Table A4). Kantar Lightspeed collected data in 59 countries via its online respondent panel. GeoPoll collected data in 14 countries, primarily via online panels. In Bhutan, GeoPoll's online panel data were supplemented by online survey distribution through UNFPA networks (26 per cent of the Bhutan sample). In Georgia, to reach the desired number of responses, computer-assisted telephone interviews and computer-assisted web interviews were used.

Table A4. Data collection by provider.

Provider	Countries and territories (number)
Kantar Lightspeed	Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czechia, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zambia (59 countries)
GeoPoll	Afghanistan, Bhutan,* Cambodia, Georgia,** Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao People's Democratic Republic, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Somalia, Tunisia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Kosovo (14 countries and territories)

* Bhutan: GeoPoll online panel (74 per cent of responses) supplemented by UNFPA network distribution (26 per cent).
** Georgia: GeoPoll online panel (47 per cent) supplemented by computer-assisted telephone interviews (51 per cent) and UNFPA network distribution (2 per cent).

The survey was offered in each country's principal national language and in English. Additional languages were provided in selected multilingual countries.

Piloting and quality assurance

Before fielding the main survey, a pilot survey was conducted in eight countries: Brazil, India, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, the Republic of Korea, South Africa and Sweden, with approximately 1,000 respondents per country. The pilot assessed item functioning, response distributions and survey duration. Following the pilot survey, minor adjustments were made before administering the main survey. For the main survey, a soft launch covering 10 per cent of the target sample was implemented in each country before full-scale data collection began.

During data collection, the following quality assurance checks were applied consistently by both survey providers:

- Cases below a minimum interview duration were removed (8 minutes for GeoPoll countries; two fifths of each country's median interview length for Kantar countries).
- Attention checks were incorporated into the questionnaire and respondents who failed both platform-based attention checks were excluded.
- Interviews were excluded where respondents simultaneously failed a straight-lining flag on three or more questions and a living arrangement consistency check.
- Age eligibility was verified during the survey; respondents outside the 18–39 range were terminated, and discrepancies between recruitment age and confirmed age were allowed one correction before exclusion.

A2. Sample

Where operationally feasible, a 50/50 sex quota was applied alongside soft age quotas broadly aligned with census proportions for each survey age group. In practice, adherence to quotas varied. In Afghanistan, the achieved sample was overwhelmingly male, reflecting the severe restrictions on women's participation in public life. In the Republic of Korea, pilot data identified a heavy skew by employment status, resulting in the introduction of census-based quotas on employment status for that country in the main survey.

The final analytic sample comprises 108,926 respondents after excluding cases with missing values for sex, education or rural/urban residence, and a small number of cases where very small subgroup sizes combined with very large post-stratification weights would have produced unreliable estimates (see Section A3 for details). Sample sizes by country range from 268 (Bhutan) to 2,079 (Singapore), with a median of approximately 1,700. Fourteen countries have samples below 1,000. The three countries with the smallest sample sizes, Bhutan (*n*=268), Lebanon (*n*=467) and Afghanistan (*n*=509), should be interpreted with particular caution and are not suitable for detailed in-country subgroup analysis (Table A5).

Table A5. Sample size by country and territory.

Country/Territory	Number	Country/Territory	Number
Afghanistan	509	Lao People's Democratic Republic	926
Argentina	1,941	Lebanon	467
Australia	1,927	Malaysia	1,677
Azerbaijan	749	Mexico	1,737
Bangladesh	1,417	Morocco	1,938
Bhutan	268	Nigeria	1,612
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	1,776	North Macedonia	839
Bosnia and Herzegovina	758	Norway	906
Botswana	1,911	Pakistan	1,715
Brazil	1,627	Panama	1,397
Cambodia	1,015	Paraguay	1,406
Cameroon	1,331	Peru	1,843
Canada	1,672	Philippines	1,578
Chile	1,709	Poland	1,745
Colombia	1,749	Portugal	1,959
Costa Rica	968	Qatar	1,594
Czechia	1,633	Republic of Korea	1,723
Egypt	1,720	Republic of Moldova	867
El Salvador	1,552	Saudi Arabia	1,841
Estonia	1,345	Serbia	1,774
Ethiopia	1,062	Singapore	2,079
Finland	1,763	Somalia	866
France	1,803	South Africa	1,639
Georgia	1,752	Spain	1,852
Germany	1,872	Sri Lanka	1,561
Ghana	1,652	Sweden	1,831
Guatemala	1,298	Thailand	1,738
Hungary	1,756	Tunisia	881
India	1,722	Uganda	1,427
Indonesia	1,563	Ukraine	1,424
Italy	1,743	United Kingdom	2,014
Japan	1,827	United States	1,657
Jordan	1,001	Uruguay	1,574
Kazakhstan	836	Uzbekistan	1,783
Kenya	1,838	Viet Nam	1,653
Kosovo	924	Zambia	1,607
Kyrgyz Republic	1,807		

Note: Countries with 500 or fewer respondents (Afghanistan, Bhutan, Lebanon) should be interpreted with particular caution.

Representativeness

The *Demographic Futures Survey* is not nationally representative. Owing to the online methodology, the sample covers young people with Internet access in each country, and indeed a well-documented limitation of online surveys is that they tend to over-sample more urban and more educated respondents, especially in lower-income settings. Table A6 shows that the education distribution for the *Demographic Futures Survey* is highly skewed towards tertiary educated respondents (53 per cent) and those living in big cities and suburbs (54 per cent).

Table A6. Sample composition by regional grouping, income grouping, sex, age, education and place of residence.

Region	Number	Percentage
World region		
East and Southern Africa	9,484	8.7
West and Central Africa	4,595	4.2
Latin America and the Caribbean	20,577	18.9
Arab States (including Gulf Cooperation Council)	10,308	9.5
Asia and the Pacific	22,971	21.1
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	19,992	18.4
Western Europe, Australia, Canada and United States	20,999	19.3
Sex		
Female	55,626	51.1
Male	53,300	48.9
Age group		
18–19	8,656	7.9
20–24	26,662	24.5
25–29	26,446	24.3
30–34	24,698	22.7
35–39	22,464	20.6
Education		
No education	628	0.6
Primary	3,998	3.7
Secondary	46,906	43.1
Tertiary	57,394	52.7
Place of residence		
Big city or suburbs	59,191	54.3
Small city or town	36,042	33.1
Rural area	13,693	12.6
Total	**108,926**	**100**

Note: Figures reflect the unweighted analytic sample of 108,926 respondents.

Post-stratification weights were applied to bring the sample composition closer to the known national population structures for 18–39-year-olds on three dimensions: sex, age group and educational attainment (see Section A3). Even after weighting, the data should be interpreted as reflecting the views of Internet-connected young people with compositional adjustments, rather than as nationally representative estimates.

A3. Post-stratification weighting

Post-stratification weights were applied to all analyses to reduce the influence of compositional differences between the achieved sample and the national population of 18–39-year-olds, with respect to sex, age group and educational attainment.

Population targets

Age and sex distributions were derived from the United Nations World Population Prospects 2024 Revision (single-year data for the 18–19 group; five-year group data for 20–24 through 35–39). For Ukraine, country office-supplied estimates were used in place of World Population Prospects figures. Education distributions were derived from the Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital, using four categories: no education, primary, secondary and tertiary. For the 18–19 age group, education distributions were imputed from the 20–24 group (excluding tertiary), scaled by a factor of two fifths to account for the shorter two-year span.

Weight construction

For each respondent, the post-stratification weight equals the ratio of the population proportion in their age–sex–education cell to the observed sample proportion in that cell. Weights are normalized within each country to a mean of one, so that the weighted sample size for each country matches its unweighted achieved sample. This approach ensures that countries with sparse lower-education subgroups do not exert a disproportionate influence on global and regional estimates.

In 34 countries, the standard four-category education approach produced at least one cell with a normalized weight above 15 – a threshold indicating that too few respondents would be asked to represent too large a share of the population to yield credible estimates. For these countries, education was simplified to two categories: non-tertiary (combining no education, primary and secondary) and tertiary. Where even this simplified approach still produced weights above 15 for specific age–sex combinations, the education dimension was removed entirely for those cells and a pure age–sex weight was applied. Kosovo, where disaggregated education population data were unavailable, was weighted on sex and age only throughout (Table A7).

Table A7. Weighting approach by country and territory.

Weighting approach	Countries and territories
Standard weights (sex × age × education)	Australia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan
Sex × age × binary education (non-tertiary/tertiary)	Afghanistan (males only), Argentina, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Cambodia, Cameroon, Colombia, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Thailand, Uganda, Viet Nam, Zambia
Sex × age only	Kosovo Specific age–sex subgroups in Afghanistan, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nigeria, Paraguay, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Viet Nam*

* A supplementary table listing specific age–sex cells where age-and-sex-only weighting was applied is available from the authors on request.

Respondents outside the scope of weighted analysis

Two groups of respondents appear in the full *Demographic Futures Survey* data set but are excluded from the weighted analysis presented in this report. First, respondents with missing values on sex (0.4 per cent), education (2.8 per cent) or place of residence (0.05 per cent), and those identifying as a gender other than female or male (0.2 per cent), since weighting targets are defined for female and male respondents only; these exclusions account for 3,719 observations in total. Second, respondents in subgroups too small to yield credible weighted estimates even after all available simplifications: all female respondents in Afghanistan (*n*=32), female respondents aged 18–19 in Indonesia (*n*=2) and respondents aged 18–19 of both sexes in Saudi Arabia (*n*=2 each), accounting for a further 38 observations.

Endnotes

1 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2024. *World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results* (UN DESA/POP/2024/TR/NO.9). New York: UN DESA.

2 Throughout the report, the surveyed countries of Western and Northern Europe (Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom) are grouped with Australia, Canada and the United States as they are at broadly similar stages of the demographic transition and share some socioeconomic characteristics.

3 The 'economic and housing constraints' cluster of responses includes the following individual answer options: financial insecurity, employment instability or uncertain work conditions, and lack of affordable or suitable housing.

4 The 'economic and housing constraints' cluster of responses includes the following individual answer options: financial reasons, and lack of suitable housing.

5 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2024. *World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results* (UN DESA/POP/2024/TR/NO.9). New York: UN DESA.

6 Gietel-Basten, Stuart and others, 2022. "Changing the Perspective on Low Birth Rates: Why Simplistic Solutions Won't Work." *BMJ* 379: e072670.

7 Wilkins, Elizabeth and others, 2025. "Future-Proofing the ICPD PoA: Reproductive Rights in a Low-Fertility World." *Studies in Family Planning* 56: 198–206.

8 It is worth noting that, due to the non-representativeness of the sample, fertility levels and family patterns of survey respondents may not reflect those of the general population in their countries. This is particularly the case in low-income settings where wealthy, highly educated and urban individuals are overrepresented among the Internet-connected population.

9 The seven regional groupings broadly correspond to the UNFPA regional classifications. It is important to note, however, that presenting data for broad regions involves a degree of aggregation across countries with often very different demographic and development profiles. For example, the Asia and the Pacific region includes both Afghanistan – a low-income country with a total fertility rate of 4.84 – and the Republic of Korea, a high-income country with a total fertility rate of 0.72. Similarly, countries in Eastern Europe generally have considerably lower fertility levels than those in Central Asia. Accordingly, while this global *Demographic Futures Survey* report provides a high-level overview of the findings, these important subregional differences will be explored in greater depth in a series of regional reports that will follow.

10 According to the latest International Telecommunication Union data, Internet use is greater than 80 per cent in 46 of the 73 countries and territories surveyed. In each of the surveyed countries for which data are available, the Internet use among youth is higher than that for the general population (https://datahub.itu.int/data/?i=11624). In the remaining countries, especially most of those in sub-Saharan Africa, Internet use is lower, and this is where we can reasonably expect a higher selection bias relative to the general population.

11 The responses are clustered into several overarching categories: economic security (being financially secure, owning my own home); achieving my education and career goals (achieving my educational goals, having a successful career); family life (having a life partner/spouse, having children); being independent from my parents; being fit and healthy; personal lifestyle (having free time, travelling the world); having a large network of friends.

12 Responses are clustered into several overarching categories: economic insecurity and inequality risks (economic crisis, high unemployment, increased social inequality); conflict and security risks (conflict and wars, terrorism, organized crime); governance and political risks (political instability, weakened democracy); global health and environmental risks (climate change, global epidemics); demographic and social transformation risks (overpopulation/population pressure, population ageing and decline, increased number of refugees); artificial intelligence (AI) risks.

13 Pew Research Center, 2014. "Emerging and Developing Economies Much More Optimistic than Rich Countries about the Future". Available at: https://www.pewresearch.org/

14 Responses are clustered into several overarching categories: personal networks (through friends, through family members); school/work (at work/through a professional connection, at school/college/university); religious group (through a religious or spiritual group/activity); social settings (through a hobby or interest group, at a social event (e.g. party, gathering); in a public place (e.g. bar, restaurant, street, aeroplane, etc.); non-online matchmaking (through a non-online matchmaking event or service); digital/online channels (through an online dating site/app, through social media); other.

15 Responses are clustered into several overarching categories: personal networks (through friends, through family); school/work (at work/through a professional connection, at school/college/university); religious group (through a religious or spiritual group/activity); social settings (through a hobby or interest group, at a social event (e.g. party, gathering), in a public place (e.g. bar, restaurant, street, aeroplane, etc.); non-online matchmaking (through matchmaking events or services); digital/online channels (through online dating site/app); other.

16 Responses are clustered into several overarching categories: emotional and intimate well-being (not being alone, living with the person I feel affection for); obtaining sexual fulfilment; having children; achieving independence from my parents; financial security (being financially secure); social norms and community expectations (honouring the wishes of my family and gaining respect in the community, gaining respect in the community).

17 Responses are clustered into several overarching categories: economic and housing constraints (financial insecurity, employment instability or uncertain work conditions, lack of affordable or suitable housing); work constraints (work-related reasons prevent us from living together); social norms and discrimination (family expectations or pressure discourage me from forming a union, cultural or religious expectations make it difficult to find a suitable partner, I face discrimination or social stigma in forming a union [e.g. due to gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability]); partner availability and matching constraints (I cannot find a partner who shares my values or life goals); relationship history factors (I have negative experiences in past relationships).

18 The percentage of respondents aged 35–39 who do not have children and would ideally like to have children is calculated as the proportion who answered zero to the survey question on the number of children the respondent currently has and reported a value greater than or equal to one for the question on the ideal total number of children they would like to have.

19 Responses are clustered into various overarching categories: to bring joy and happiness; to strengthen relationship with partner (having children strengthens and stabilizes the relationship with one's partner); social and cultural expectations (to continue tradition and the family line; there are strong expectations from peers, society, religion, family or my partner to have children; parenthood fulfils religious values related to family; being a parent brings status and respect); economic security and future support (having a child will provide me with support later in life); policy and societal drivers (children are needed so that someone will work for our country in the future, my government encourages having children).

20 Responses are clustered into various overarching categories: lack of a suitable partner; preference of my partner not to have children; support gaps and intensive parenting expectations (insufficient involvement of my partner in housework/childcare, successful parenting expectations are too high); economic and housing constraints (financial reasons, lack of suitable housing); health and reproductive concerns (health issues, concerns about health problems related to pregnancy and childbirth); macro-level uncertainty and external risks (climate change/environment concerns, lack of stability in my region/the world); too many care responsibilities towards my parents or others; I have already reached my intended number of children.

21 UNFPA, 2025. *State of World Population Report*. Available at: https://www.unfpa.org/swp2025

22 The properties and performance of this measure relative to the traditional single-number approach to fertility ideals from the *Italian Trust-Network-Fertility Survey* are discussed in Plach, Samuel, Arnstein Aassve and Letizia Mencarini, 2026 (forthcoming). "What is the ideal number of children?" *Demographic Research*.

23 Mencarini, Letizia and others, 2024. *Italian Trust-Network-Fertility (ITNF) Survey*.

24 Mencarini, Letizia and others, 2025. *Fertility Motivations (Fer-Mo) Survey*.


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