

BAROMETER

The Girl Child



11 October is **international day of the girl child**. The 2018 theme is ***With Her: A Skilled Girl Force***. Expanding existing learning opportunities and preparing girls adequately to enter the work force should be a priority of SADC Member States.

The girl child carries the burden of multiple roles in the home and at school. Girls as young as five are forced to fetch water before leaving for school in the morning and rush home to do household chores after school. Gender blindness in some education systems continue to place girls in the 'home economics' classes while boys are placed in 'technical' related classes.

The United Nations predicts that of 600 million adolescent girls that will enter the work force in the next decade globally, 90% of those from developing countries will work in the informal sector where low pay and abuse prevail.¹

The World Health Organisation (WHO) notes that “Healthy women, children and adolescents whose rights are protected are the very heart of sustainable development.” However, low investments in health and education centres by some SADC Member States points towards imminent failure to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), leaving millions of girls behind.

The girl child continues to face limited opportunities due to deeply entrenched patriarchy in the SADC region. The region has been advocating for girls to take up Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects in order to participate in the science and engineering professions in future.

Access to sexual reproductive health services by girls is hampered negative attitudes from health care professionals and dual legal systems. Some of the challenges facing girls in SADC include teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS, unsafe abortions, child marriage, vulnerability to sex and child labour trafficking and lack of access to sexual reproductive health and rights information services.²

The SADC Gender Protocol states that State Parties shall implement legislative and other measures to eliminate all practices, which negatively affect the fundamental rights of women, men, **girls** and boys, such as their right to life, health, dignity, education and physical integrity. Member States are to develop strategies to prevent and eliminate all harmful social and cultural practices, such as child marriage, forced marriage, teenage pregnancies, slavery and female genital mutilation. State Parties shall take special measures to increase the number of **girls** taking up Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects and ICT at the secondary, tertiary and higher levels.

#Voice&Choice
With Her: A Skilled GirlForce



¹ United Nations events - International Day of the Girl Child.

² <https://zimbabwe.unfpa.org/en/news/zimbabwe-school-health-policy-promote-sexual-and-reproductive-health-schools>. Accessed June 30, 2018.

KEY INDICATORS OF THE GIRL CHILD IN SADC

Country	EDUCATION			WORK	MARRIAGE			REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH	
	Secondary school enrolment rates for girls ³	Secondary school completion rates girls ⁴	% of female students studying Engineering, manufacturing and construction ⁵	Proportion of girl children between ages 7 and 14 who work ⁶	Legal age of marriage ⁷	Child marriage (%) 2010-2017 ⁸		Births per 1000 women ages 15-19 ⁹	Rates of births by age 18% ¹⁰
						% Married by 18	% Married by 15		
 Angola	11	35	7	25	Legal age of marriage is 18, but boys can marry at 16 and girls at 15 with the consent of legal guardian	30	8	162	Data not available
 Botswana	52	49	6	7	18	Data not available	Data not available	31	Data not available
 Comoros	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	28	18	Data not available	Data not available	67	Data not available
 DRC	36	54	1	44	Minimum age for marriage increased from 14 for girls and 18 for boys to 18 for both in 2009	37	10	122	27
 eSwatini	41	34	Data not available	9	Legal age of marriage is 18, but girls can marry from 16 with the consent of the Minister of Justice; under customary law, marriages can take place from puberty	5	1	67	17
 Lesotho	45	29	5	23	Legal age for marriage is 21, but girls can legally marry at 16 and at 18 for boys with the consent of the Minister of Justice, while under customary law, girls and boys can marry after puberty	17	1	93	29
 Madagascar	32	31	3	27	Legal age for civil marriage is 18 but under customary law there is no fixed age requirement	41	12	115	36
 Malawi	36	37	Data not available	44	Legal age for marriage for girls and boys is 18; a 2017 constitutional amendment reinforced this position	42	9	135	31
 Mauritius	86	81	3	Data not available	Official age for marriage is 18 for boys and girls but girls can get married from 16 with parental consent	Data not available	Data not available	28	
 Mozambique	19	18	4	28	18	48	14	137	40
 Namibia	58	55	1	12	The age for civil marriage is 21	7	2	76	15
 Seychelles	81	76	1	Data not available	Legal age for marriage is 18 but girls can get married from 15 with parental consent	Data not available	Data not available	57	
 South Africa	88	88	4	Data not available	Minimum age for marriage is 18	6	1	44	15
 Tanzania	48	34	2	34	Girls can marry from 15 and boys from 18	31	5	118	28
 Zambia	43	47	Data not available	40	Legal age to marry is 21 but at 16 boys and girls can marry with parental consent; under customary law marriage can take place from puberty	31	6	88	31
 Zimbabwe	45	44	6	14	A landmark court case has set the age of marriage at 18	32	4	109	22

Key issues

- ▶ **Twenty nine percent** of girls in Sub-Saharan Africa are child labourers¹¹ keeping them out of school.
- ▶ **Angola**, at 7% has the highest proportion of female students studying Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction in SADC.
- ▶ **Angola** has more girls completing secondary school (35%) than being enrolled (11%). **Malawi** shows the same trend though with only a small margin with 36% girls enrolled compared to 37% completing secondary schools. Only South Africa shows equal numbers at 88% for both enrolment and completion. The rest of the SADC countries show a lower percentage of girls completing secondary school education compared to enrolled. This could be due to early and child marriages, teenage pregnancies amongst other challenges.
- ▶ **Mozambique** has the highest incidence of child marriages with 48% of girls married by the age of 18 and 14% girls married by the age of 15.

- ▶ Several other countries have a high proportion of women marrying before age 18, including **Malawi** (42%), **Madagascar** (41%) and **DRC** (37%).
- ▶ **Mauritius** has reservations in setting the age of marriage at 18 due to religion and the country's constitution - the country remains without this minimum and is the only country not to have signed the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

³ World Economic Forum, Gender Gap Report (2017); <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2017> Accessed 06/10/2018

⁴ UNESCO country data: Education <http://uis.unesco.org/country/ZA> Accessed April 2018

⁵ UNESCO data portal: Education <http://uis.unesco.org/country/ZA> Accessed 07/10/2018

⁶ UNICEF data portal: Child Labour, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-labour/> Last updated in December 2017, Accessed 8/10/2018; <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=gender-statistics#> Updated April 2018, Accessed April 2018

⁷ Girls not Brides: Minimum Age of Marriage in Africa: <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Minimum-age-of-marriage-in-Africa-March-2013.pdf> Accessed 08/10/2018; C Moma, L Makamure, SADC Gender Protocol Barometer (2018)

⁸ UNICEF (2018) 'Child Marriage' available at: http://www.unicef.org/search/search.php?q_en=child+marriage&go.x=0&go.y=0 (accessed 12 June 2018)

⁹ World Bank Gender Statistics. Last Updated: 09/01/2018 Accessed April 2018

¹⁰ UNICEF Global Database: Child Marriage. <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-marriage/> and Births by 18. <https://data.unicef.org/topic/maternal-health/adolescent-health/> Last accessed 29 June 2018

¹¹ UNICEF Data Portal: Child Labour <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-labour/> Accessed 08/10/2018.

- ▶ In 2017, the **DRC** renewed its previous FP2020 commitments to include reform of laws that protect adolescent girls from early marriage through education, awareness raising, social reintegration, and women's empowerment programs.
- ▶ The SADC region has recently taken a bold and determined approach to end child marriages by adopting the SADC Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Children Already in Marriage in 2016.
- ▶ Lack of preparation for menstruation, poor availability of menstrual hygiene products and pain result in menstruation often being associated with shame, fear and reduced participation by girls and women in social, cultural and educational endeavours.
- ▶ **Botswana** enacted legislation to for compulsory provision of sanitary pads at schools in 2017. Countries such as Lesotho and Zambia are making progress towards a policy framework to provide girls with menstrual hygiene products.
- ▶ **Mauritius** and **Seychelles** have extensive access to water, while other countries struggle. Fewer than half the population in three countries (Angola, DRC and Mozambique) have access to water. This negatively affects girls' school attendance.
- ▶ At 10%, access to sanitation in **Madagascar** is alarmingly low.



Girl children need to access equal education opportunities in order to eliminate generational poverty.
Credit: Trevor Davies

- ▶ Incidents of school students falling into pit latrines are on the increase in **South Africa**. While legislation prohibits schools from using plain pit and bucket latrines, as of January 2018, 4 358 schools across South Africa continued to use only plain pit latrines as toilets.
- ▶ SADC recorded 1450 total births per 16,000 women between 15 to 19 years in 2015¹². More than 10% of girls between the ages of 15 and 19 give birth in seven SADC countries (Angola, DRC, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zimbabwe). The adolescent fertility rate in Lesotho, Namibia and Zambia remains high compared to global levels. Mauritius and Botswana have the lowest rates in the region. Girls sometimes fall victim to unsafe abortion methods due to the illegality and unavailability of abortion services in more than 10 SADC countries.
- ▶ Concerted policy interventions and actions remain vital to support teenage mothers to re-enter the education system, as well as reduce teenage pregnancies.
- ▶ In June 2018, **Zimbabwe** launched a school health policy that the ministries of health and childcare and primary and secondary education jointly developed and will implement.
- ▶ In December 2017, **Madagascar** passed the Reproductive Health and Family Planning Law after many years of advocacy to revoke colonial policy that prohibited promotion of contraception. The law recognises reproductive health and family planning as basic human rights for all, irrespective of age thereby including girls.
- ▶ **South Africa** has set the minimum age for access of contraception at 12 years. However, girls have limited opportunities in accessing contraception due to attitudes of health care workers.
- ▶ In **Tanzania**, the current policy environment prevents teenage mothers to re-enter the education system.
- ▶ Gender based violence at schools largely perpetrated to girls by school teachers and fellow students prevent girls from attending school. Little or no data exists on the prevalence of sexual abuse in SADC schools preventing a holistic action plan to curb sexual violence.
- ▶ A survey on sexual abuse in schools in **South Africa** revealed that 26.5% of girls were violated.
- ▶ The proportion of adolescent women living with HIV ranges from less than two percent in **Comoros** to more than 40% in eSwatini.
- ▶ **South Africa** recognised the extreme vulnerabilities to HIV infection faced by adolescent girls and young women aged 15 to 24. In 2015, 1975 young women were being infected every week. This is now down to 1500 or 29% of all new infections. **South Africa** has the largest number of adolescent girls living with HIV at 350,000.

#Girlchild
#MyBodyMyChoice
#Voice&Choice
#SheDecides
#Childnotbride
#RightbyHer
#OurGirlsMatter
#DayoftheGirlChild
#IDG2018
#withMalala
#11Daysofaction
@GirlsNotBrides
@GenderLinks
@GenderProtocol
@SAfAIDS

