

# Stopping Child Marriage, Preventing Maternal and Newborn Mortality and Morbidity



2008 Countdown to 2015

# Child Marriage and Pregnancy



- Globally, the overwhelming majority of adolescents who get pregnant are married.
- Worldwide, over 50 million girls are currently married and have babies while children themselves.
- Child marriage brings high costs in development opportunities, stymied education, limited life options, and poor health.
- Where child marriage rates are highest: high poverty, high birth/death rates, lower levels of development.

# Percentage of Ethiopian girls who are married by age 15 and age 18 among 15-24, by region (Pop Council 2005)



	Married by 15	Married by 18	Median Age
Rural	31.0	59.0	18.0
Urban	10.1	22.6	24.0
Amhara	45.8	67.5	16.5
Tigray	28.9	55.4	18.4
Afar	29.9	68.2	17.4
Addis	7.5	14.1	24.00

# Common Characteristics of married girls



- Less social mobility/freedom of movement and less access to modern media or other sources of information than unmarried girls
- Less autonomy and say in the household and reproductive decision making than unmarried women
- Unprotected sexual relations with husband likely to be older, more sexually experienced (risk of HIV)
- Elevated risk of maternal and infant mortality for the youngest first-time mothers (those under 16) compared to young women who marry and initiate childbearing later

# Trends of Pregnancy Among Adolescents



Estimated 14 million adolescent girls (between 15-19 years old) give birth each year

One-third of young women in low-income countries give birth before age 20

Sub-Saharan Africa: more than 50% adolescent girls give birth before age 20; in some African countries, 70%

South/Southeast Asia: Bangladesh (64%), Nepal (51%), and India (47%)

Latin America/Caribbean: 30-40% in Bolivia, Colombia, Honduras, Peru

# Teenage Birth Rates

(per 1000 women aged 15-19)

- South Korea • 3
- Netherlands • 5
- Tunisia • 7
- Australia • 16
- United Kingdom • 20
- Russia • 30
  
- United States • 53
- Indonesia • 55
- South Africa • 66
- Brazil • 73
- Bangladesh • 117
- Niger • 233



# REGIONAL SURPRISES

LAC (Source ECLAC 2005)



COUNTRY	YEAR OF CENSUS	%ADOLESCENTS AGED 15-19 WHO HAVE HAD CHILDREN
ARGENTINA	1991	11.9
	2001	12.4
BRAZIL	1991	11.5
	2000	14.8
ECUADOR	1990	13.5
	2001	16.3
HONDURAS	1988	16.6
	2001	18.3

# Consequences of Adolescent Pregnancies



- Adolescent girls are twice as likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth compared to women in their 20s.
- Pregnancy/childbirth-related deaths are the number one killers of 15-19 year old adolescent girls worldwide.
- For girls under 15, the risks are 5 times higher.

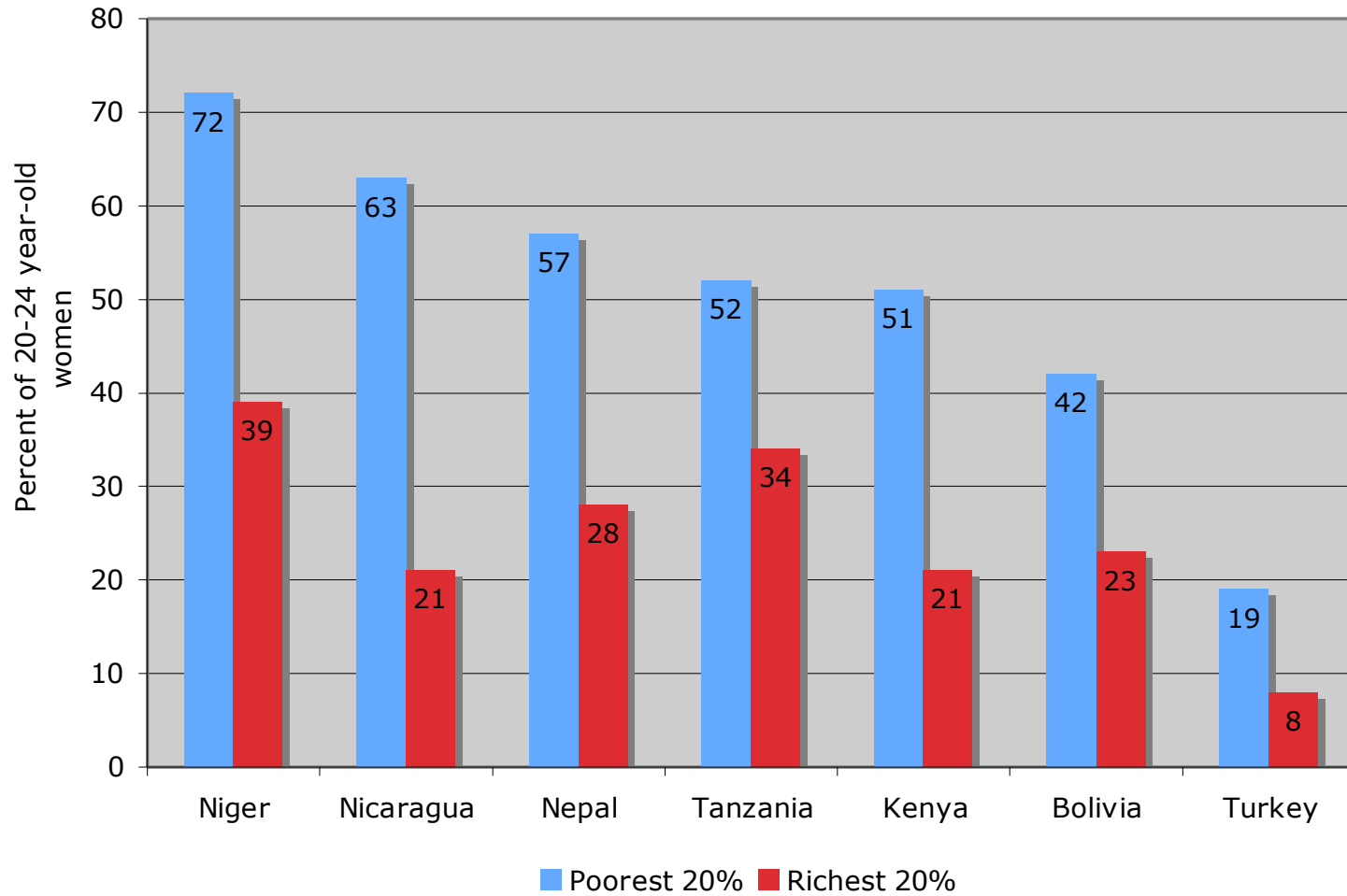
# Roots of Adolescent Pregnancy



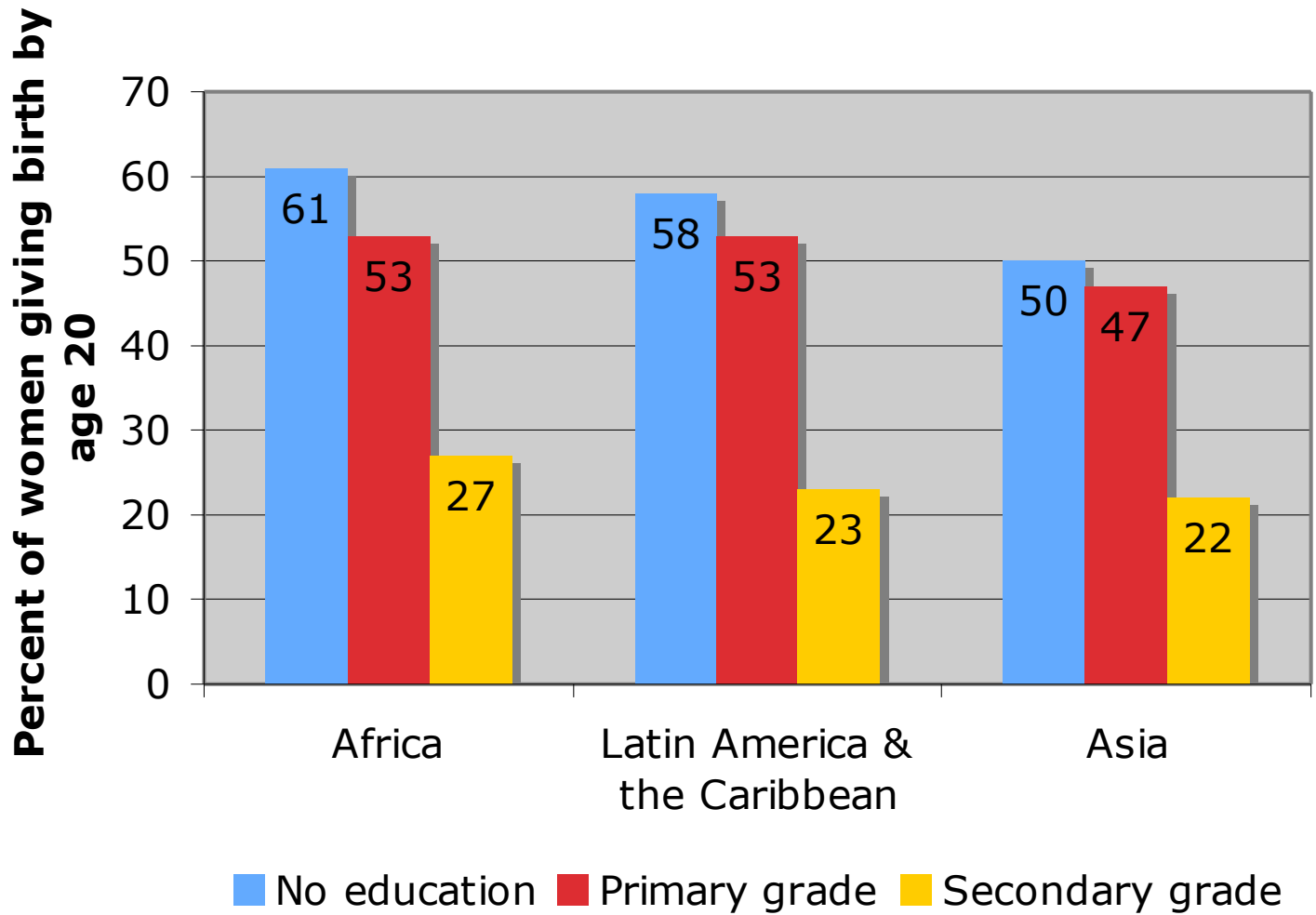
Overlapping factors make adolescent girls vulnerable to unwanted pregnancy:

- Family poverty
- Limited formal education
- Low social status of girls and young women in the family/community

## Poor Girls Are More Likely to Give Birth During Adolescence



## Schooling Helps Girls Avoid Early Childbearing



# Expand Life Options For Adolescent Girls



- Promote girls education, especially for poor and marginalized girls through secondary education
- Prevent child marriage
- Provide sexuality education, including RH information, skills and services
- Give pregnant and parenting adolescents the opportunity to complete school and gain skills and access to maternal health services

# Expand Life Options for Adolescent Girls



- Treat female students with the same respect as males and promote their participation in the classroom
- Seek opportunities to integrate sexual and reproductive health education into basic health curricula and make sure referral resources and information are available to students
- Ensure a safe learning environment



Thank you!