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This on-line photo essay highlights the personal stories of young girls and women around the world. Currently more than 51 million girls between the ages 15 to 19 worldwide are married, according to ICRW research. Some 100 million girls worldwide are expected to be married before age 18 in the next decade. The highest percentages of marriages are in West Africa, South Asia and East and Central Africa, where more than 30 percent of girls are already married. Child marriage poses serious risks to married girls' health and threatens to push developing countries deeper into poverty. In Africa, child brides in relationships with a significant age gap are more susceptible to HIV infection than sexually active unmarried girls. Countries with high rates of child marriage are more likely to be categorized as least developed countries.

Article can be accessed on-line [here](#) .