

Gender Country Profile



Cameroon

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General

Total male population under 15 (2014) (CIA, 2015): 5,001,984

Total female population under 15 (2014) (CIA, 2015): 4,927,122

Total male population over 15 (2014) (CIA, 2015): 6,598,118

Total female population over 15 (2014) (CIA, 2015): 6,603,484

Health

Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births (2010) (CIA, 2015): 690

Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births (2014) (CIA, 2015): 55.1

Under-five mortality rate for males per 1,000 live births (2012) (United Nations Gender Statistics, 2015): 110.8

Under-five mortality rate for females per 1,000 live births (2012) (United Nations Gender Statistics, 2015): 88.6

Births attended by skilled health professional (2011) (WHO, 2012b): 63.6%

Prevalence of HIV among males aged 15–49 (World Economic Forum, 2013): 3.8%

Prevalence of HIV among females aged 15–49 (World Economic Forum, 2013): 5.4%

Life expectancy for men (2012) (WHO, 2014a): 55

Life expectancy for women (2012) (WHO, 2014a): 57

Education

Male youth literacy rate, ages 15–24 (2010) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 85.20%

Female youth literacy rate, ages 15–24 (2010) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 76.42%

Male adult literacy rate, ages 15+ (2010) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 78.33%

Female adult literacy rate, ages 15+ (2010) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 64.80%

Male adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 97.11%

Female adjusted net enrolment rate in primary education (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 85.87%

Male gross enrolment ratio in secondary education (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 54.27%

Female gross enrolment ratio in secondary education (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 46.44%

Male gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education (2011) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 13.72%

Female gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education (2011) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 10.08%

Graduates from tertiary education who are female : NA

Students in engineering, construction and manufacturing tertiary education programs who are female (2011) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 26.1%

Teachers in primary education who are female (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 51.2%

Teachers in secondary education who are female (2012) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 44.4%

Teachers in tertiary education who are female (2010) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2015): 19%

Economic Activity

Males over 15 who are active in the labour force (United Nations Statistical Commission, 2010): 64%

Females over 15 who are active in the labour force (United Nations Statistical Commission, 2010): 53%

Men who have an account in a formal financial institution (World Economic Forum, 2013): 19%

Women who have an account in a formal financial institution (World Economic Forum, 2013): 11%

Decision-Making

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (World Bank, 2014): 31%

Human Rights

Girls married before 15 (2013) (Girls Not Brides, 2015): 13%

Females married between 15 and 19 (World Economic Forum, 2013): 33%

Women subjected to physical/sexual violence by an intimate partner during their lifetime (UN Women, 2012): 51.1%

Women subjected to physical/sexual violence by an intimate partner or a non-partner during their lifetime: NA%

Gender Gaps

Health

According to the International Medical Corps (2012), polygamy is widely practiced. This may be one factor making women more susceptible to HIV infection.

Due to cultural attitudes, some young people and children are not receiving sex education, which contributes to vulnerability to HIV infection. For example, one study conducted in 2013 revealed that 40% of rural men aged 17–66 did not have sufficient knowledge about HIV prevention, making them more likely to transmit HIV if they were carriers (Versteegh et al., 2013). Another study conducted among Cameroonians over age 10 revealed that 21% had inaccurate knowledge about HIV transmission (UNESCO, 2011).

Education

According to Think Africa Press (2013), “A study by the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and the Family published in 2012 found that for every 100 boys in education in Cameroon in 2009/2010, there were only 85 girls. Despite some efforts to correct this inequality, this ratio has remained stubbornly consistent since 2002/2003, and notably this gender disparity widens as you travel from the urban centres to the further-flung and more poverty-stricken hinterlands.”

Economic

A report by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (2014) indicates that in Cameroon, “according to traditional practices, a woman becomes the ‘property’ of her husband once the dowry is paid” and may also become the property of her in-laws. The same report notes that “a representative of the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and the Family . . . of Cameroon, stated that a young woman is treated like a commodity in her family: they can force her into a marriage or arrange one for her with two or more suitors, and thus increase the amount of the bride price”. These practices and laws strongly suggest that females have essentially no economic autonomy in law.

Women do not enjoy the same legal rights as men in property ownership and divorce. Under customary laws, women are still regarded as part of their husband’s property, and a husband therefore may sell, without the wife’s consent, land that is jointly owned by both spouses. This makes it extremely difficult for women to inherit property. Due to the custom of dowry, a wife under customary law becomes a part of her husband’s property, as do any assets she brings into the marriage. She cannot inherit land from her husband in the event of his death or in divorce. All of this makes it extremely difficult for women to obtain assets and to reduce their economic dependency on men (Cheka, 1996).

Decision-Making

Several factors discourage women from participating in political life, including pervasive traditional attitudes, their domestic roles as care-givers, and their increased susceptibility to poverty. Women remain under-represented at all levels of politics. For example, only 8% of mayors are female and 0% of regional governors (Lukmef-Cameroon, 2013).

Human Rights

Girls in Cameroon often must undergo early marriage. The mean age of first marriage is 17.6 countrywide, but in some regions, girls are married as young as 11 (Takwa, 2009).

In Cameroon, sex offenders still may evade punishment if they marry their victims (Centre for Civil and Political Rights, 2010, p. 11).

A study conducted in 2004 (the most recent available data) revealed that 13% of women in Cameroon had been sexually assaulted (Takwa, 2009).

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