

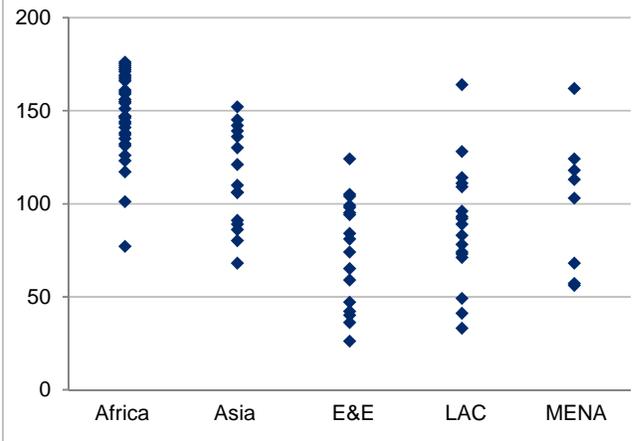
Save the Children has published the Mothers' Index each year since 2000 to compare the well-being of mothers across the world because of the importance of their health and security to the welfare of their children. The 2013 *State of the World's Mothers* report discusses the importance of the first day of life for newborns across countries and publishes the 14th annual Mothers' Index. This snapshot highlights the statistical findings of the 2013 Mothers' Index, focusing on non-high-income countries that received at least \$2 million in obligations of USAID assistance in fiscal year 2011, henceforth referred to as USAID-assisted countries.

## Mothers' Index

The Mothers' Index includes measures of maternal health, children's well-being, women's educational status, women's economic status, and women's political status. Each of these dimensions of well-being is measured by a different indicator. Unfortunately, because the 2013 index uses a different methodology than past years, scores are not comparable between this year and last (please see the last section of the snapshot for more detail on the methodology). The data in the index are for the national level, and there may be significant variation within countries between regions, ethnic groups, or social classes.

Finland was ranked first in the 2013 Mother' Index and Congo (Kinshasa) was ranked last out of 176 countries. Of USAID-assisted countries, Belarus performed the best on the index at 26th in the world; Congo (Kinshasa) ranked last. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa performed poorly on the Mothers' Index on average, filling all of the bottom ten spots and none of the top ten. In the overall index, not limited to USAID-assisted countries, European countries did well, with Scandinavian countries comprising five out of the top six. Looking only at USAID-assisted countries, those in Eastern Europe tended to rank higher, with a few countries from Latin America (Cuba, Costa Rica, and Mexico) and North Africa (Tunisia and Libya) also performing strongly.

**2013 Mothers' Index Rankings by Region**  
(USAID-assisted countries, higher numbers=worse rankings)



**2013 Mothers' Index**  
(top and bottom USAID-assisted countries)

Top 10 (rank)	Bottom 10 (rank)
Belarus (26)	Liberia (166)
Cuba (33)	Cote d'Ivoire (167)
Serbia (36)	Chad (168)
Macedonia (40)	Nigeria (169)
Costa Rica (41)	Central African Republic (171)
Montenegro (42)	Niger (172)
Bosnia and Herzegovina (47)	Mali (173)
Mexico (49)	Sierra Leone (174)
Tunisia (56)	Somalia (175)
Libya (57)	Congo (Kinshasa) (176)



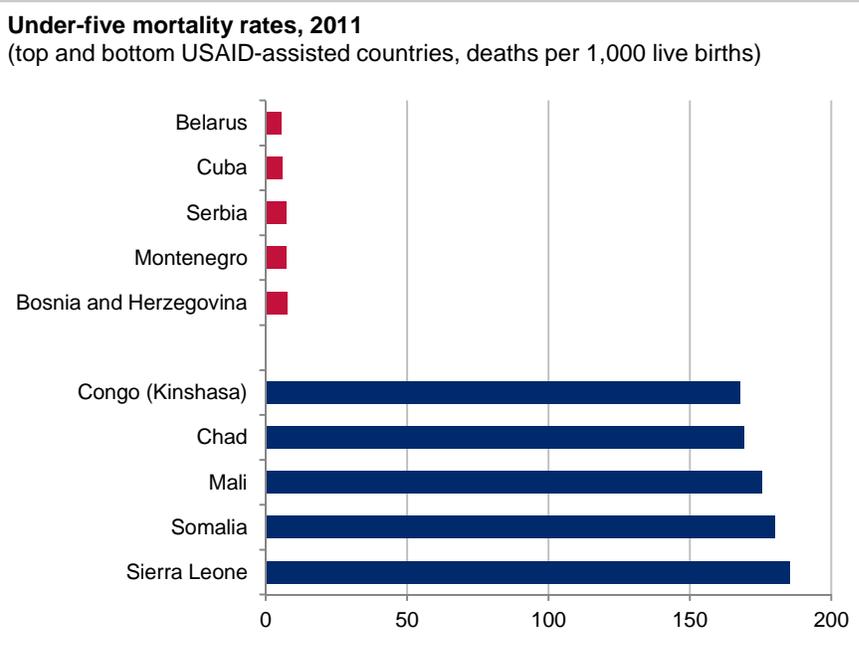
The top performers did well on multiple indicators, with the very top countries performing consistently high on all five sub-indicators. Within the USAID-assisted countries, many of the top ten listed in the table were in the top ten for most of the indicators. Similarly, the bottom countries performed poorly on all five indicators; countries that did better on one indicator tended to avoid the very bottom spots. The following sections look at the indicators for maternal health, children's well-being, educational status, economic status, and political status in greater depth.

## Maternal Health

Save the Children uses the lifetime risk of maternal mortality as an indicator of maternal health. Maternal mortality takes into account overall fertility rates, the likelihood of dying from any individual birth, and the preexisting health of the mother. It has wide variation between countries, with a woman in the lowest-ranked country, Chad, being 1,087 times more likely to die of maternal causes than a woman in Belarus, the best-ranked USAID-assisted country. Among USAID-assisted countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Serbia also performed well. Since 2000, 56 of the 90 USAID-assisted countries with data have seen their maternal mortality rates drop half or more, with Belarus and Lebanon seeing the highest percentage improvements. Unfortunately, five countries (Georgia, Cuba, Turkmenistan, Guyana, and Jamaica) have seen maternal mortality increase.

## Children's Well-Being

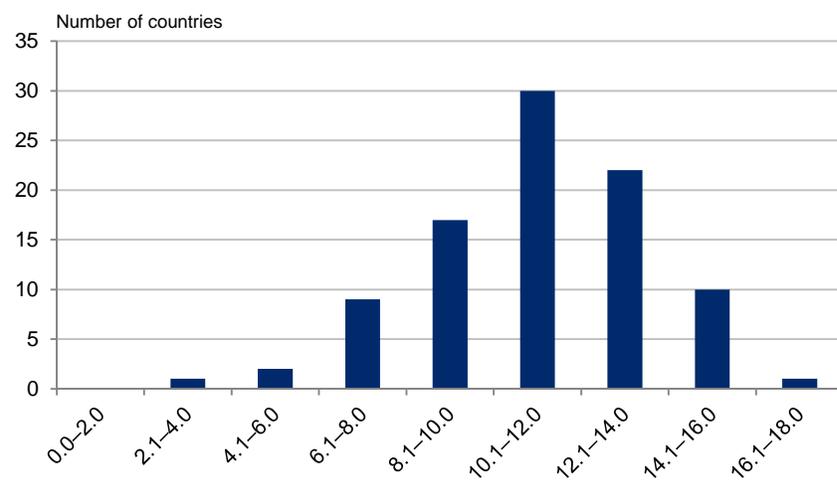
Because of the importance to mothers of their children's health, Save the Children includes the under-five mortality rate as a measure of children's well-being. In Sierra Leone, 18.5 percent of children die before their fifth birthday. Although that is a high percentage, since 2005, child mortality has dropped 34 percent in Sierra Leone and 22 percent on average in the bottom five countries for this indicator. Of the best-performing USAID-assisted countries, Belarus, Montenegro, and Serbia have seen over 50 percent declines; only 0.6 percent of children in Belarus die before age five.



## Educational Status

Save the Children measures educational status by looking at the expected number of years of formal schooling. Save the Children includes educational status in its index because of education's impact on quality of life, income, and health, and because high educational attainment for mothers improves the well-being of children. In almost two-thirds of countries, children can expect at least ten years of schooling; the graph shows relatively few countries offering minimal schooling. The lowest performer on this measure is Somalia, where a child can only expect to be in school for 2.4 years.

**USAID-assisted countries by expected number of years of formal schooling, 2012**

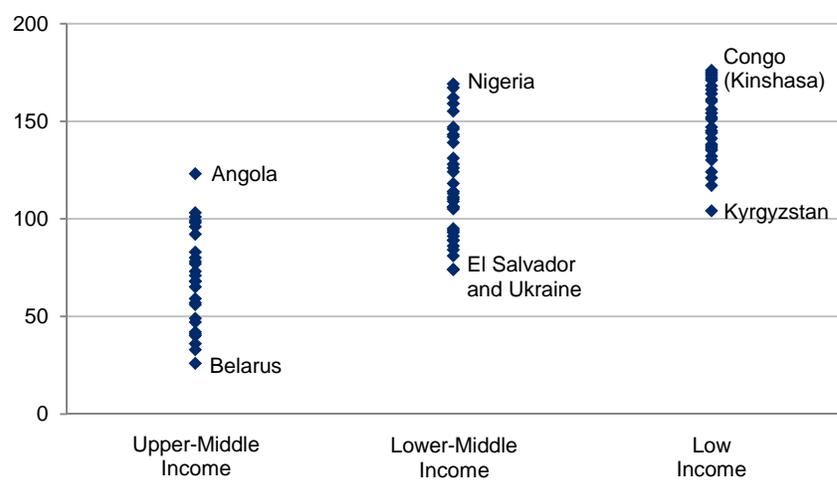


The best USAID-assisted performer is Libya, where a child can expect to be in school for 16.2 years. Because it includes expected schooling for children of both sexes, this indicator is distinct from the expected years of female schooling indicator used in past version of the Mothers' Index.

## Economic Status

Gross national income per capita, a new indicator in the 2013 index, measures the economic resources available in a country; the more income a woman has, the better she is able to provide for her children. Libya is the wealthiest USAID-assisted country on the index and Somalia is the poorest. Unsurprisingly, many of the sub-indicators are correlated with how rich or poor a country is. All of the top 25 countries on the overall index are considered high-income by the World Bank and no low-income country breaks the top 100. In the graph, upper-middle income countries perform noticeably better, grouped together between 26th and 103rd out of 176 (the exception is Angola at 123rd).

**2013 Mothers' Index Rankings by World Bank Income Group**  
(USAID-assisted countries, higher numbers=worse rankings)



The best-ranked low-income country is Kyrgyzstan at 104th. The lower-middle-income countries sit in between, but their best performers, El Salvador and Ukraine, still trail Belarus by almost 50 spots, while their worst performer, Nigeria, is in the bottom 10.

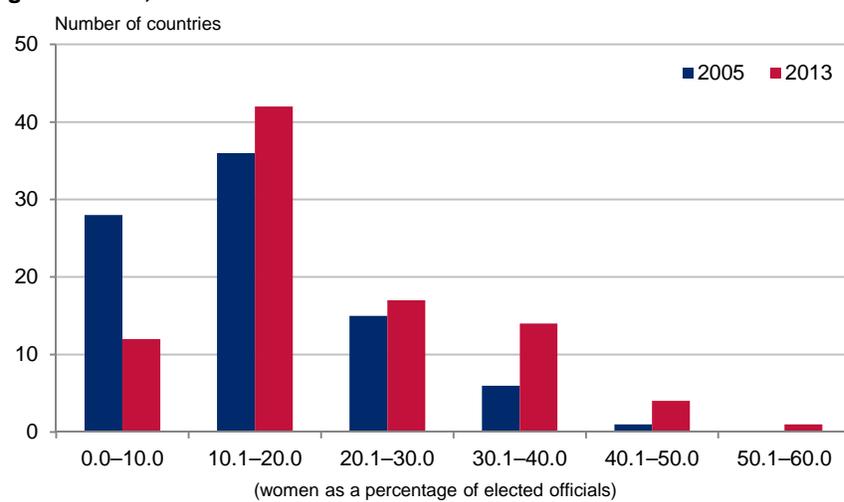
## Political Status

Save the Children includes the participation of women in national government as a measure of women's political status because when women are represented in a country's politics, issues affecting mothers and children are more likely to be policy priorities. Sixty percent of USAID-assisted countries have 20 percent female representation or less, and only six percent of countries have 40 percent female representation or greater. Rwanda is the top performer on this indicator; over 50 percent of its elected officials are women. The worst performer

among USAID-assisted countries is Yemen, at 173rd out of 176 countries. The numbers have improved since 2005, when 74 percent of the same group of countries (minus four which had no data) had 20 percent female participation or below, and over a quarter had 10 percent or below.

This indicator behaves somewhat differently than the others; the other four indicators tend to move together, but the participation of women in government is much less strongly correlated with the others. For several low-ranked countries, their performance on women's participation in government pulled them out of the very lowest spots. For instance, while Congo (Kinshasa) beat Somalia on the other four indicators, it fell behind in female representation, at 156th in the world to Somalia's 118th, putting it last in the world on the overall index. Afghanistan's overall ranking of 145th in the world was not worse because it was 36th in the world in female representation in parliament, with 28 percent of seats held by women. On the other end of the index, Japan's rank of 137th on women's representation is far out of line with its top-40 rankings on the other four indicators (two of which are top-10), which certainly helped pull it down to 31st in the world in the overall scores. If we look at the top- and bottom-scoring USAID-assisted countries on this indicator, we see a different group than for the other indicators, which more closely mirror the overall index. Unlike in the other indicators, USAID-assisted countries, even poor ones, occupy many of the top spots, though wealthy countries still tend to do somewhat better than poor countries. Six of the top ten countries on this indicator are USAID-assisted; Rwanda and Cuba are first and second in the world, and Senegal, South Africa, Nicaragua, and Mozambique also appear in the top ten.

**USAID-assisted countries by female representation in national government, 2005 and 2013**



**Female Representation in National Government**  
(top and bottom USAID-assisted countries)

Top 5 (rank)	Bottom 5 (rank)
Rwanda (1)	Burma (Myanmar) (163)
Cuba (2)	Haiti (166)
Senegal (4)	Lebanon (167)
South Africa (6)	Egypt (170)
Nicaragua (7)	Yemen (173)

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## Methodology

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Save the Children significantly changed its methodology to keep up with best practices for the 2013 Mothers' Index. The 2007–2012 indexes included the current five sub-categories (maternal health, children's well-being, educational status, economic status, and political status) but had more indicators for most categories. The index was split into three tiers based on income level, and the tiers used different indicators and were thus not comparable.

The 2013 revisions streamlined the index to use one indicator measuring a development outcome for each category. Indicators were chosen based on coverage, variation, and what Save the Children believes matters most to mothers. Unfortunately, the significant differences in methodology mean that the scores from previous years are not comparable to this year's scores.

To calculate overall ranks on the index, Save the Children first ranks countries by each indicator, resulting in five sub-rankings for each country. The sub-rankings are averaged to get composite scores. Countries are ranked from 1 to 176 by composite scores to get the overall Mothers' Index rank. Because of this methodology, each of the indicators is weighted equally and the best-scoring countries tend to score well on all indicators; a low score on one pulls them down. Similarly, the worst-scoring countries tend to perform poorly on all indicators.

### Additional Information

For questions or more information, please contact the author, Katherine Shanahan, at [kshanahan@devtechsys.com](mailto:kshanahan@devtechsys.com).

Save the Children Mothers' Index Data: To access the entire Mothers' Index dataset, please visit the Economic and Social Database (ESDB) at <http://esdb.eads.usaidallnet.gov/>. The ESDB also includes data from many of the Mothers' Index source organizations, including the World Health Organization, UNDP, UNESCO, and the World Bank.