www.viennafamilycommittee.org
Digital Networks
www.10yearsIYF.org
www.civilsocietynetworks.org
www.20yearsIYF.org

Quarterly Bulletin of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

September 2023, No. 127
Deadline for contributions: 15.11.2023

Vienna NGO Committee on the Family
VALERIA FOGLAR-DEINHARDSTEIN, M.Sc.
LIECHTENSTEINSTRASSE 111-115
1090 VIENNA
AUSTRIA
EMAIL: CONTACT@VIENNAFAMILYCOMMITTEE.ORG

Dear Readers of 'Families International',

In this 127th issue of the Quarterly Bulletin 'Families International' (FI), you can find a wide range of family-related texts and resources, starting with the "UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons and UNODC Observatory on Smuggling of Migrants", which was presented by Dr. Claire Healy at the last International Forum on May 15th 2023.

Following this, a report on technology in relation to marital problems by the Institute for Family Studies can be found, as well as a policy brief entitled "Moving towards a culture of assessment for learning in Lao schools", which was provided by UNICEF Innocenti. What is more, the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family's member organisation Make Mothers Matter (MMM) has contributed a text about the importance of recognising and valuing unpaid care work.

Last but not least, a list of recent and upcoming events is provided at the end of this issue of 'Families International'.

Sincerely,
Karin Kuzmanov, M.Sc.
Executive Editor

Table of Contents

From the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons and UNODC Observatory on Smuggling of Migrants 3

From the Institute for Family Studies

More Scrolling, More Marital Problems 10

From UNICEF Innocenti

Moving towards a culture of assessment for learning in Lao schools 18

From Member Organisations of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

Make Mothers Matter (MMM)
Recognizing and Valuing Unpaid Care Work: Promoting Social Justice for Mothers – MMM @ the 111th International Labour Conference 23

Recent & Upcoming Events 29

Impressum 30

From the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons and UNODC Observatory on Smuggling of Migrants

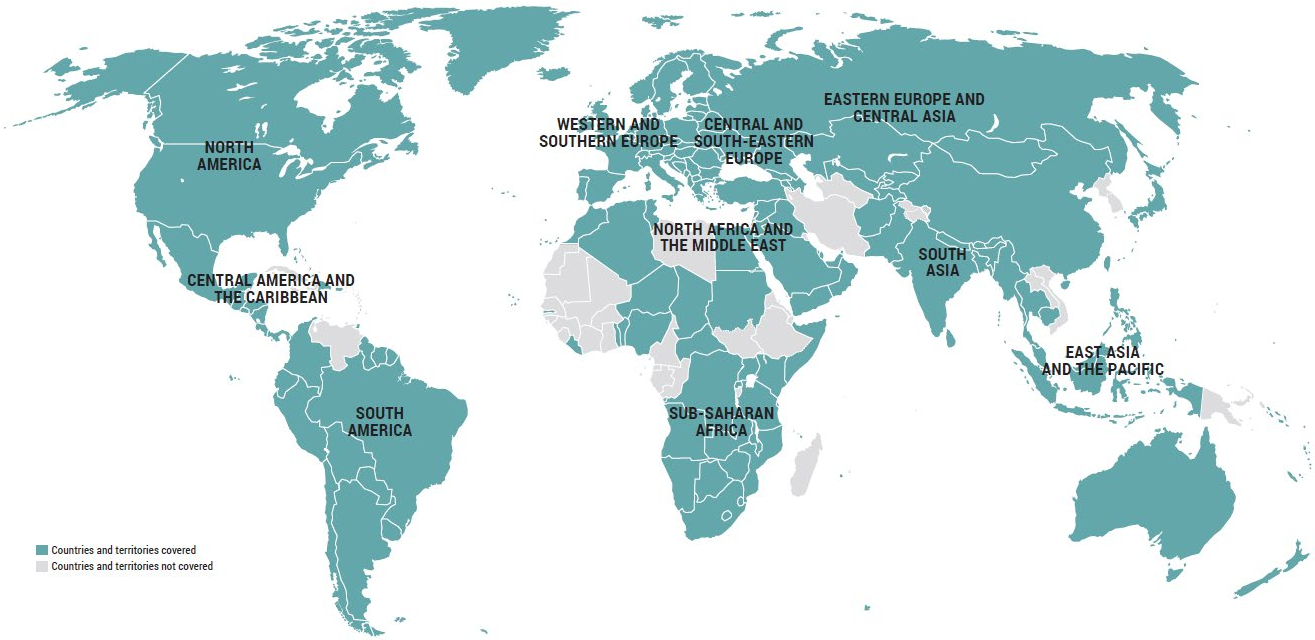
On 15 May 2023, Dr. Claire Healy, Research Officer at the Crime Research Section of the UNODC Research and Trend Analysis branch, presented to the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family the research findings of the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022 and of the UNODC Observatory on Smuggling of Migrants.

The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons is published biannually, as the UN General Assembly in 2010 mandated "… the UNODC to collect information and report biennially …on patterns and flows of trafficking in persons at the national, regional and international levels…." (Para 60, A/RES/64/293 – United Nations Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons). Since 2009, UNODC has conducted a yearly global data collection around the world to capture core indicators on trafficking in persons, including identification of victims and their profiles, arrests and prosecutions of alleged offenders, and convictions of traffickers.

Based on this data collection, UNODC has the largest dataset on trafficking in persons worldwide, covering the period 2003-2022 and containing anonymized details of over 450,000 identified victims and over 300,000 (alleged) offenders. The database also includes detailed court case narratives from over 800 trafficking court cases covering 4,365 victims and 2,525 (alleged) offenders.

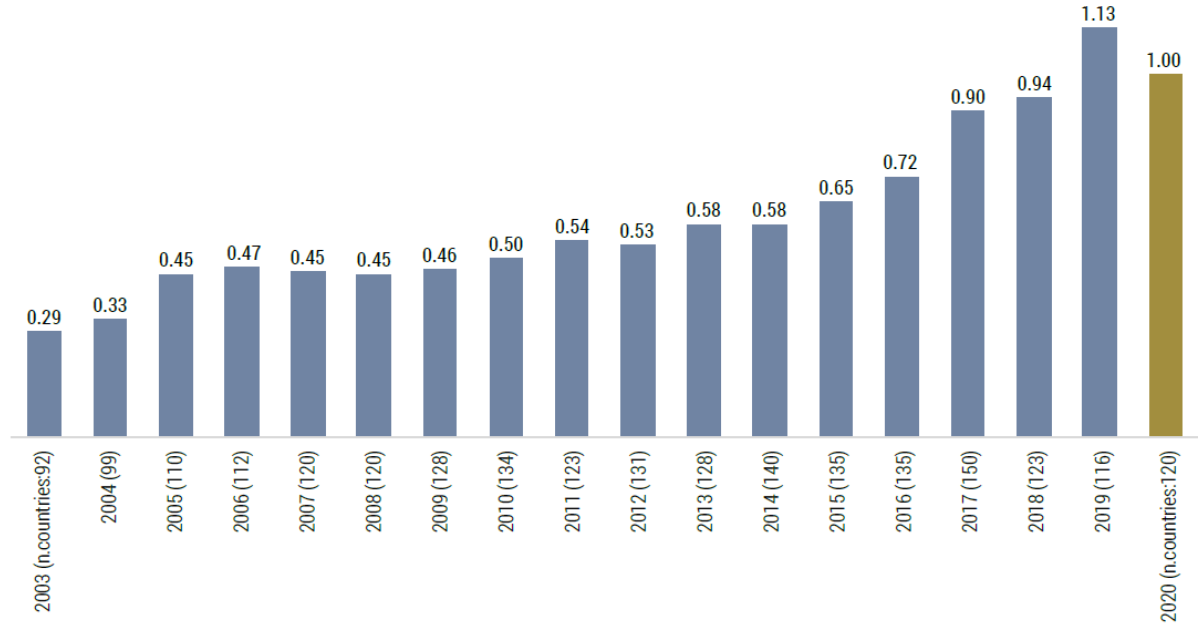
The Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022 (available at: www.unodc.org/glotip/) is the 7th edition of the Global Report and covers 141 countries in all regions of the world (see map below).

Countries covered by the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022



Among the key findings of the report are that 2020, the year that the COVID-19 pandemic began, was the first year since data collection commenced that fewer trafficking victims (per population) were detected globally than the previous year (see graph below).

Total victims detected per 100,000 populati on, 20032020

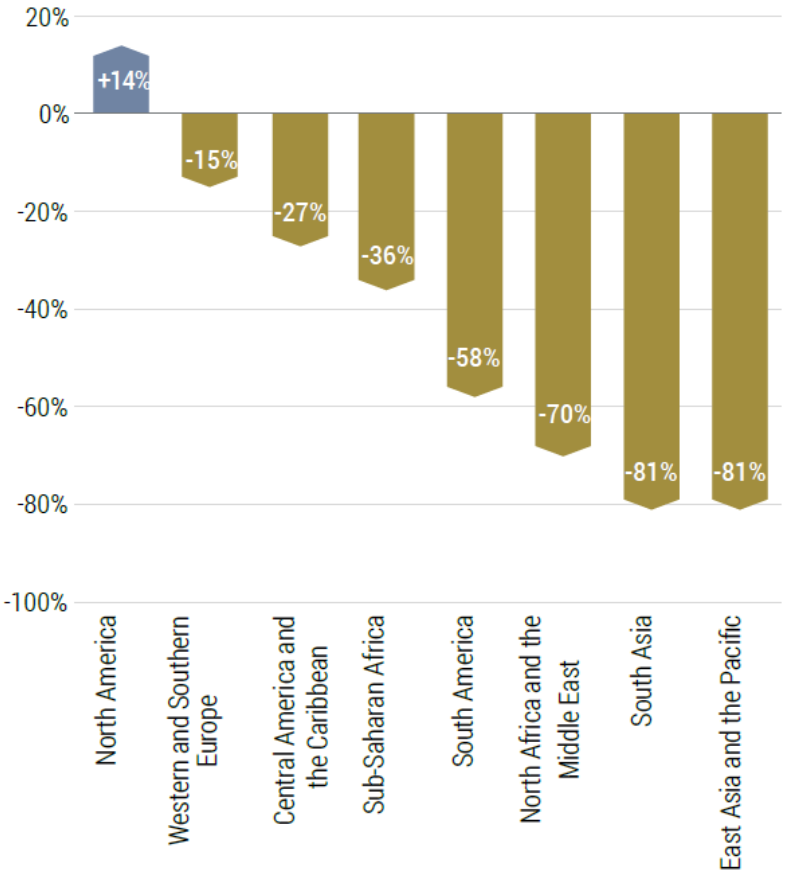


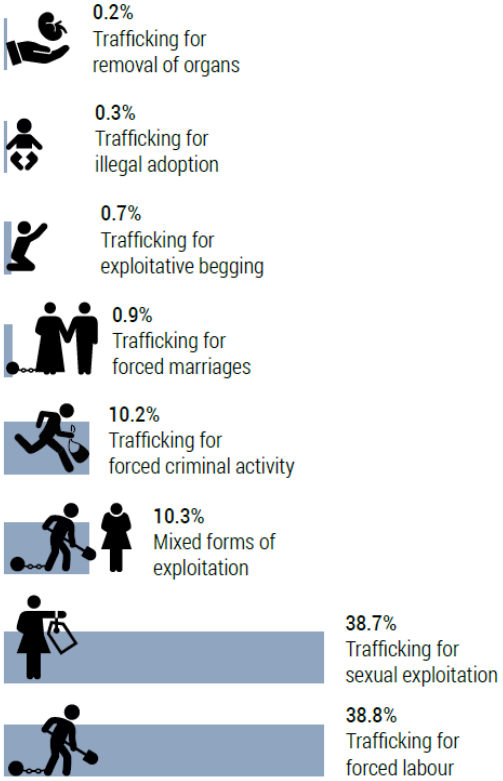
Source: UNODC elaboration of national data and UNDESA World Population Prospects 2019.

The evidence analyzed for the Report indicates that this decline is the result of a combination of three main factors: (a) during the pandemic, anti-trafficking responders had reduced capacity to identify victims of trafficking; (b) the pandemic-related lockdowns and restrictions offered fewer opportunities for traffickers to operate; and (c) victims of sexual exploitation were moved to more concealed locations.

Largely due to travel restrictions, cross-border trafficking detections declined 21%, while domestic trafficking (within one country) experienced a much less significant decline, of just 3%. When the rates of identification of foreign victims of trafficking in persons are examined per region, the largest declines in identification were in East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia, and North Africa and the Middle East (see graph below).

Percentage change in number of identified foreign victims of trafficking from 2019 to 2020, by region





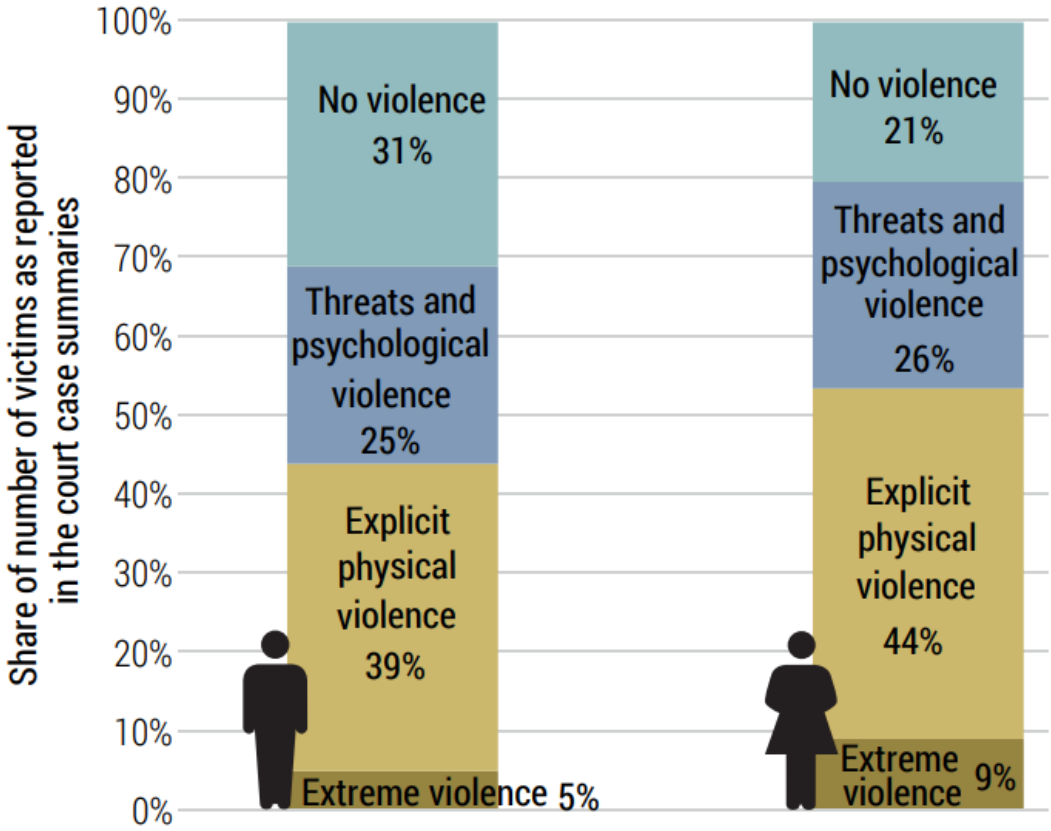
There was a more pronounced decline in the identification of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation from 2019 to 2020, of 24% globally. This was particularly the case in North Africa and the Middle East, East Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America. This is because trafficking for sexual exploitation was in many cases moved to more concealed and less safe locations, such as private apartments, private homes and hotels.

In terms of forms of exploitation, 2020 marks the first year since data collection began that trafficking for forced labor was detected in the same proportions as trafficking for sexual exploitation. There was also an increase in the identification of victims of trafficking for forced criminal activity, and mixed forms of exploitation (see graph).

Detected victims of trafficking, by form of exploitation, 2020

While the proportion of trafficking victims identified who were women has decreased significantly since 2004, from 74% to 42%, the proportion of men and boys has increased significantly, from 13% to 23% and from 35 to 17%, respectively. The number of girls identified has increased from 10% to 18%.

However, the report found that female victims are three times more likely to suffer violent forms of trafficking, with girls even more likely than women (see graph below).



Source: GLOTIP collection of court case summaries and Sherloc Case Law Database.

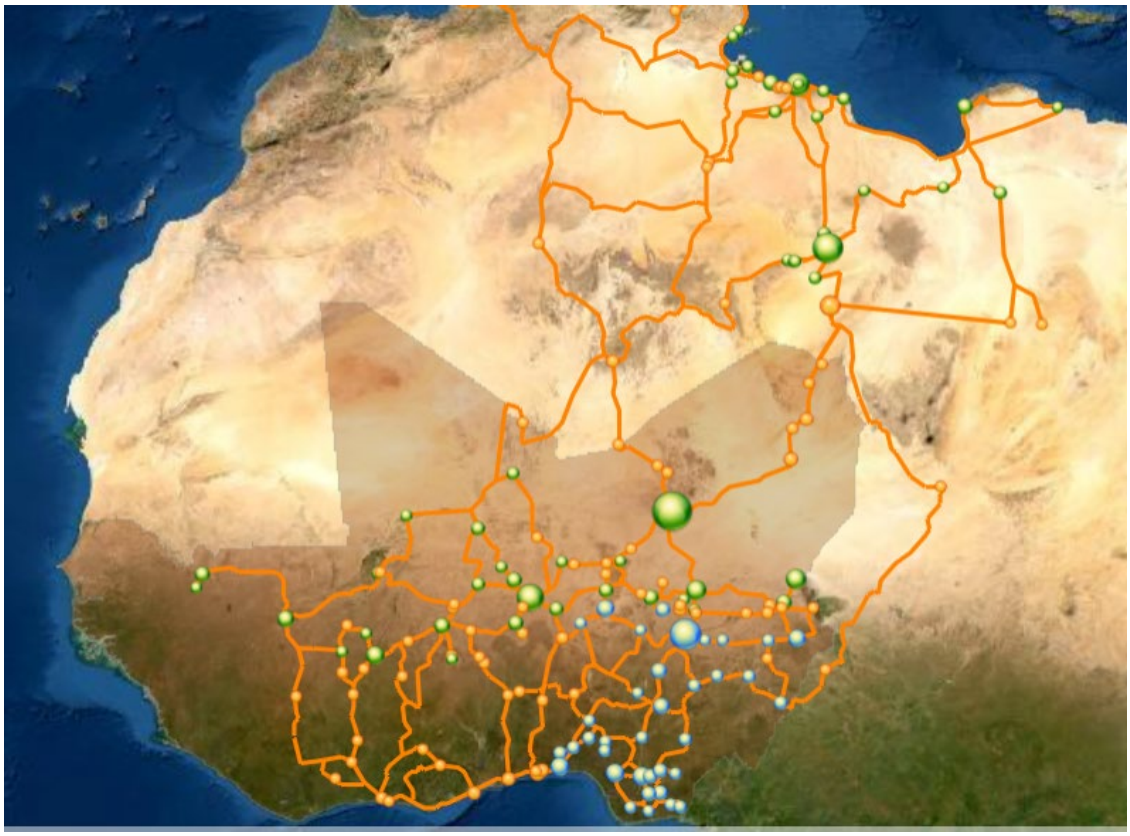
Another concerning finding is that victims must rely on "self-rescue" in order to exit exploitation. According to court case summaries analyzed, 41% of identifications of victims were due to their own initial acting, 11% by their community or strangers, and 10% by their families; while 28% were due to action by law enforcement and 9% by other institutions or civil society.

* * *

Dr. Healy also presented the UNODC Observatory on Smuggling of Migrants, a data collection and research analysis initiative by UNODC that commenced in 2019 and was launched online in 2021 (www.unodc.org/res/som). The Observatory seeks to address the lack of robust administrative data on migrant smuggling and the need for an evidence base to guide counter-smuggling responses and protection

for migrants and refugees. The Observatory provides regularly updated, accurate and policy-relevant data and information about migrant smuggling on an online platform. The UN General Assembly in 2019 mandated UNODC to "systematically collect data and information from Member States on migrant smuggling routes, the modus operandi of migrant smugglers and the role of transnational organized crime" UNGA Resolution A/73/186 (29.01.2019).

UNODC Observatory on Smuggling of Migrants map of smuggling routes from Nigeria



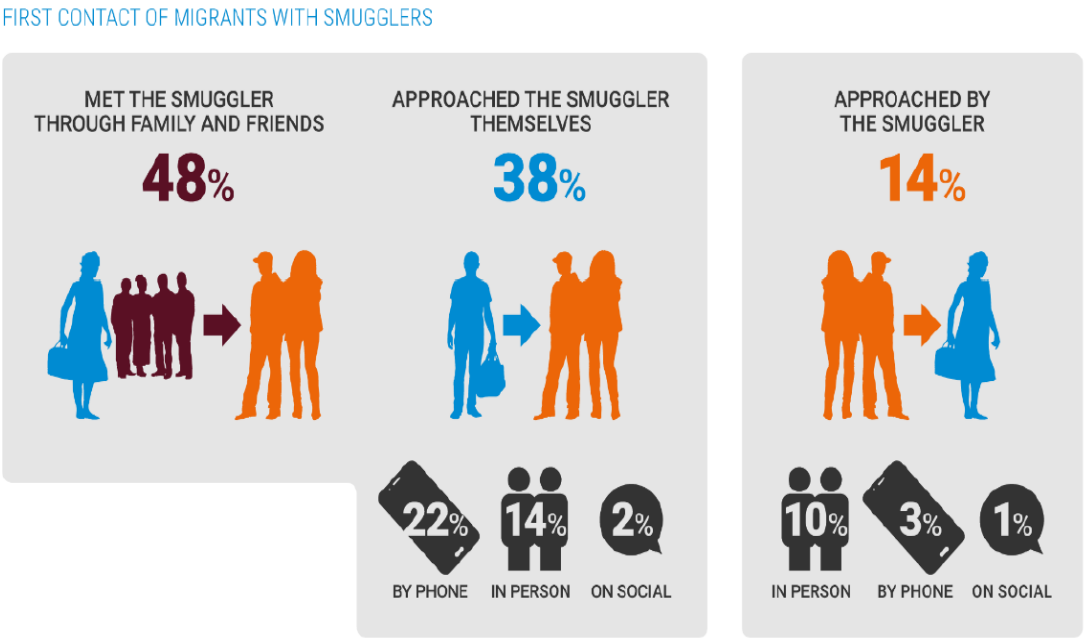
The Observatory provides the evidence base to inform responses, as per the UN Smuggling of Migrants Protocol, to prevent and combat smuggling of migrants; to promote cooperation among States on counter-smuggling; and to protect the rights of smuggled people.

Image of the Observatory website

Current Observatory research presented online includes an analysis of four different sets of migrant smuggling routes originating in West Africa: West Africa, Libya and Central Mediterranean; Morocco and the Western Mediterranean route; Northwest African route (to the Canary Islands); and Migrant Smuggling from Nigeria. The Observatory also has ongoing research to be presented in the course of 2023, on migrant smuggling in Southeast Asia, and in the context of the war in Ukraine.

The Observatory analysis points to the drivers of migrant smuggling as: the motivation to migrate combined with a lack of legal migration alternatives; the perception that smuggling is cheaper and easier than independent travel; requests to people on the move for bribes by officials, and for protection money by non-state armed actors, which the smugglers pay on their clients' behalf.

Generally it is the potential client (migrant/refugee) who approaches a smuggler to request their services, rather than a smuggler "recruiting" a client (see infographic below).



Smuggling fees depend on the number of actors involved, their commissions, the risks of the journey, and the profiles and perceived wealth of the clients. Smuggling fees also include bribes and protection money to police, border guards, military or non-state armed groups. While some smuggled people are abused and exploited by smugglers, constituting aggravated smuggling offences, it is more common that smuggled people are abused by other actors, such as criminals, border officials, armed groups and military or police.

All of the detailed findings of the Observatory, based on each set of smuggling routes, can be accessed on the Observatory website.

From the Institute for Family Studies

MORE SCROLLING, MORE MARITAL PROBLEMS

Less sex, more divorce worries for couples distracted by phones

Wendy Wang and Michael Toscano

July 26, 2023

© Copyright 2023 Institute for Family Studies All rights reserved.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Wendy Wang is director of research at the Institute for Family Studies.

Michael Toscano is the executive director of the Institute for Family Studies.

© Copyright 2023 Institute for Family Studies All rights reserved.

Introduction

Smartphones and social media were supposed to bring us closer together. But the more we learn about their effects, the more we see that these tools come with a price. Research by Jean Twenge and others has shown that teens who use social media excessively are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and sleep deprivation. Recently, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy issued an advisory warning that social media are causing a profound mental health crisis among America's children.

Even though most research on excessive smartphone usage focuses on teens and young adults, it does not mean that older Americans are immune to this issue. In the recent IFS teen and tech report with Jean Twenge, about 1 in 7 parents of teens (15%) said they use their phones or other digital devices "almost constantly" during conversations, meals, or family events. And there is growing evidence that our closest, most important relationships, such as our marriages and dating relationships, are suffering as a result. Using a sample of 145 adults, James Roberts and Meredith David found that "phubbing" (prioritizing one's phone over people) among romantic partners leads to greater relationship dissatisfaction.

Reflecting on more than 25 years of practice, therapist Andrew Sofin recently observed:

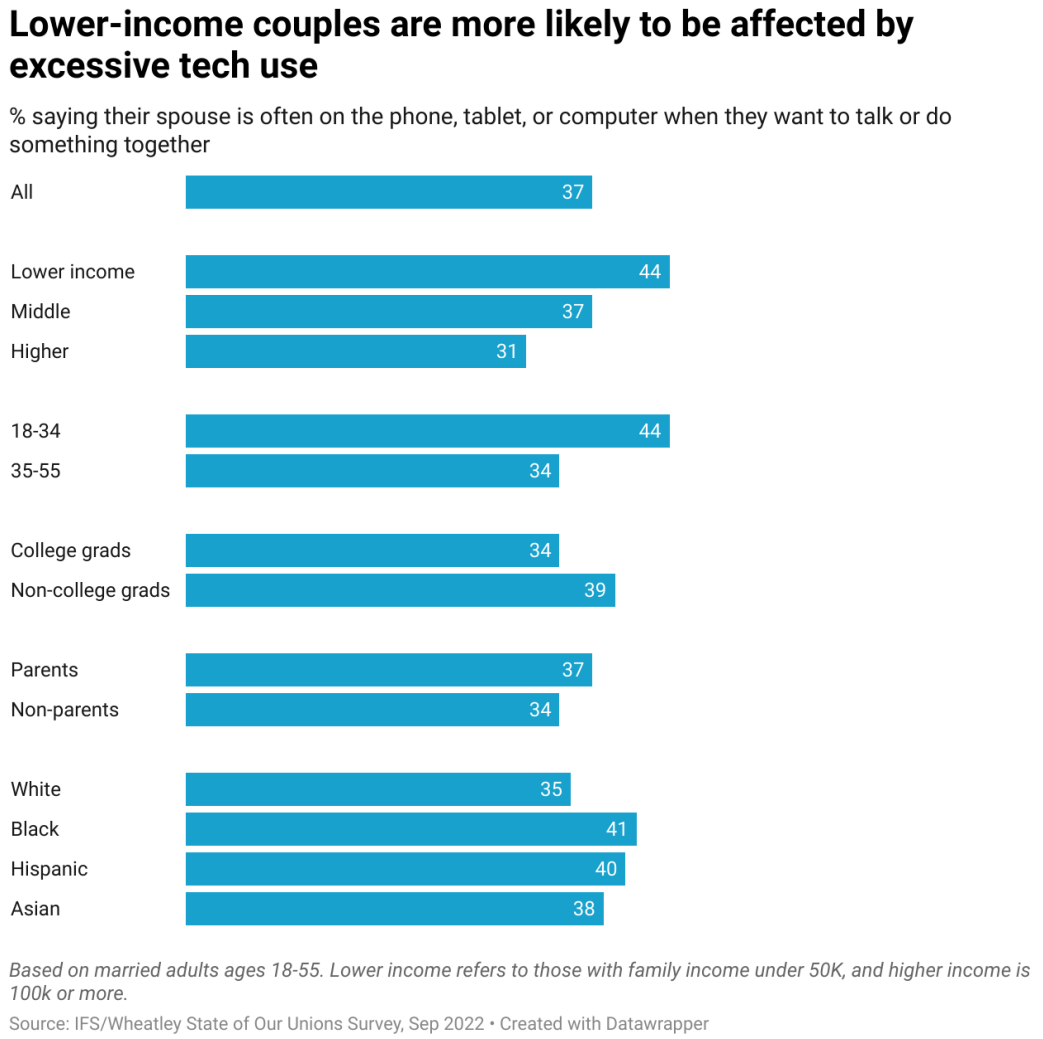
> Smartphones have caused more upheaval than anything I've seen in my career. We've normalized them being intrusive and taking precedence when people are lying in bed, playing Wordle or scrolling through TikTok rather than talking to each other.

How prevalent is excessive smartphone usage in marriage? Do all marriages suffer from phone addiction equally? What is the link between smartphones and marital quality? We take up these and other questions here.

© Copyright 2023 Institute for Family Studies All rights reserved.

The Demographics of Phone Distraction

More than one-third of married Americans (37%) say that their spouse is often on the phone or some kind of screen when they would prefer to talk or do something together as a couple, according to a new Institute of Family Studies/Wheatley Institute survey of 2,000 married couples ages 18 to 55. The phone problem is even worse among lower-income couples, with 44% indicating that their spouse is distracted by phones while they desire quality time together, compared with 31% of higher-income couples.



Younger couples are more likely to be distracted by their phone at home. A full 44% of married adults under age 35 say that their spouse is on the phone too much, compared with 34% of those aged 35-55. In addition, married adults without a college degree are more likely than college-educated adults to report that their spouse is distracted by their phone (39% vs. 34%).

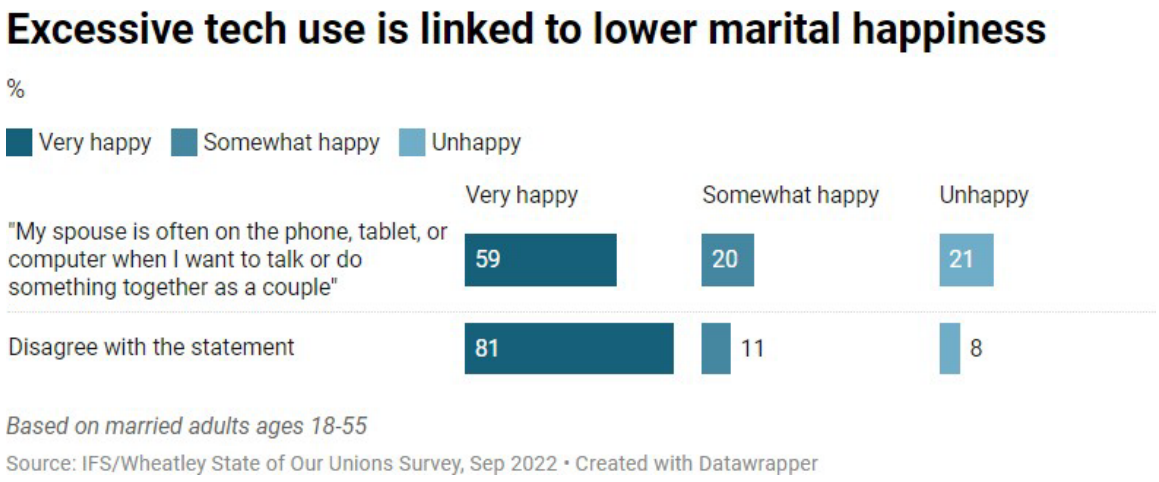
More Scrolling More Marital Problems

© Copyright 2023 Institute for Family Studies All rights reserved.

Meanwhile, husbands and wives are just as likely to feel left out because of their spouses' overuse of a smart phone. Liberals and conservatives are equally affected, as are those who attend church regularly and those who do not.

Smartphones and Marital Quality

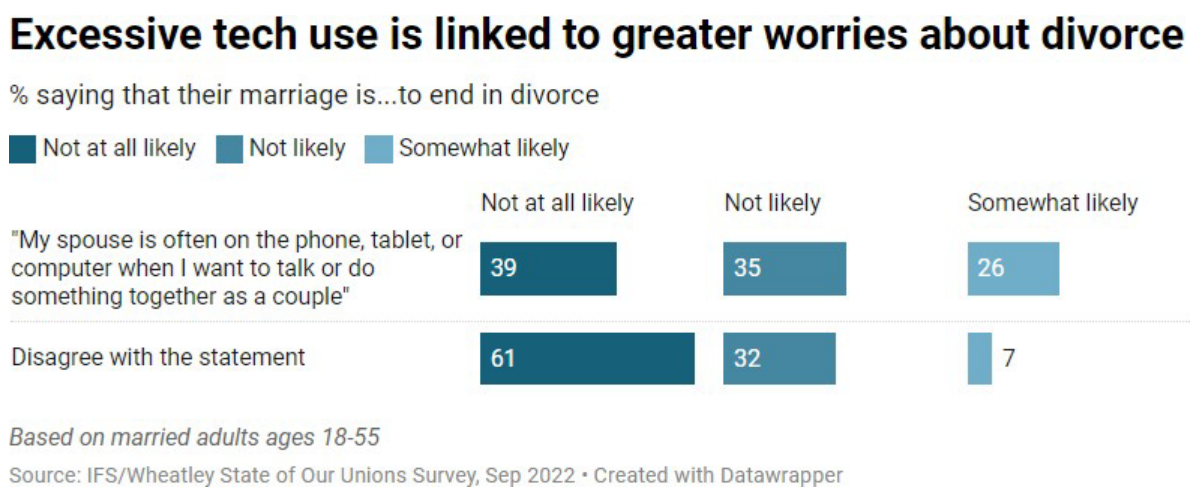
Excessive phone usage by a spouse leads to general frustrations, but it also is linked to more serious marital issues. In fact, couples who deal with excessive phone use are less happy about their marriage than others. Only about 6 in 10 married adults whose spouse is often on the phone (59%) say they are "very happy" with their marriage, compared with 81% of those who don't struggle with this issue. More so, 1 in 5 married adults (21%) with a spouse that overuses a phone say they are not happy with their marriage, compared with only 8% of couples who do not report a phone issue.



Moreover, excessive phone usage is linked to greater worries about divorce. About a quarter of couples who lack control over their phones (26%) say their marriages may end in a divorce in the near or distant future. Among couples without a phone issue, only 7% say they are pessimistic about their marriage.

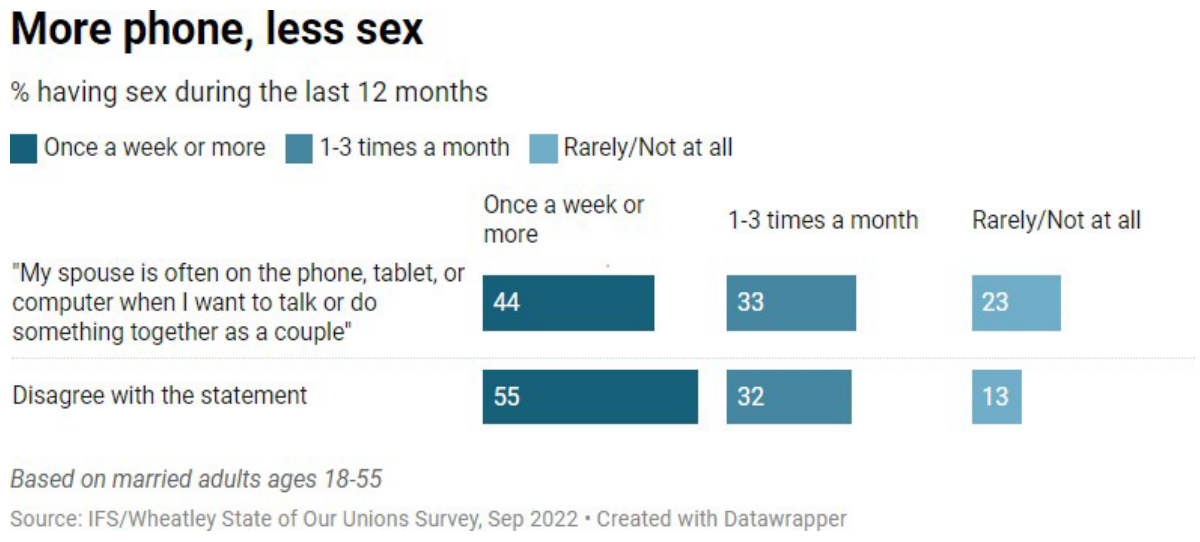
More Scrolling More Marital Problems

© Copyright 2023 Institute for Family Studies All rights reserved.



The link between smartphones and relationship quality remains significant in a multivariate model controlling for a range of factors such as age, gender, race, education, income, and whether couples have children. Holding all these factors constant, couples who experience phone distractions are about 70% less likely than other couples to be very happy with their marriage.
Moreover, the odds of a future divorce perceived by these couples is four times higher than it is among couples who do not have a phone problem.

Two things may be contributing to lower marital satisfaction among couples who have a phone problem: less sex and fewer date nights. Fewer than half of these couples (44%) have sex once a week or more often, and about 1 in 5 of these couples (23%) report that either they haven't had sex at all in the past 12 months (11%) or only once or twice (12%). In contrast, the couples with greater control over their phones are more likely to report more frequent sex.



More Scrolling More Marital Problems

© Copyright 2023 Institute for Family Studies All rights reserved.

Regular date nights are linked to happier marriages. Couples where one spouse is often on the phone, however, are less likely to go on dates. Nearly 6 in 10 of these couples (58%) say that they either do not have date nights or only have a date night a few times a year, compared to 48% of couples who do not have a phone problem.

Conclusion

It is difficult to determine for certain whether excessive phone use is the culprit of marital problems, given that addiction to phones may be an indicator of an already-unhappy marriage. Unhappy spouses might resort to using phones to escape and avoid communication with their partner. On the other hand, smartphones are engineered to be addictive. It is naïve to assume that adults would be totally immune to their design. The most likely scenario is that marital difficulty and addiction to smartphones are reinforcing each other, and that—without breaking out of the smartphone addiction—the underlying marital problems will be exacerbated to the breaking point and near impossible to address.

The fact that lower-income couples are more prone to distraction by phones at home is particularly troublesome. As we know, marriages are already more fragile for these couples and the marriage rate is much lower among lower-income and working-class Americans. The added strain of phone addiction further exacerbates the fragility of these marriages. Many troubled marriages have the potential to be healthier with some changes. Routine conversation, dates, and sex connect spouses and foster stability and happiness. A spouse spending more time on his or her phone will spend less time doing other things, such as reading a book, playing board games with the family, or connecting with family members. Addiction to smartphones crowds out the opportunity for couples to make time for one another. Time spent intentionally together is especially critical for low-income marriages, as the extended networks of such couples tend to be in a precarious state. In such a brittle social environment, spouses bear a greater psychological and relational load. Therefore, addiction to a device is a recipe for failure and, as we have seen, divorce.

In light of this, we recommend the following:

1. Marriage and pre-marriage counselors should strongly urge couples to establish rules about the use of smartphones.

2. Couples should voluntarily use basic phones that are designed to limit their functionality to the essentials—talk, text, email—to put themselves in the best position to overcome the addictive qualities of these devices.

© Copyright 2023 Institute for Family Studies All rights reserved.

3. Social media companies should re-design their platforms to root out their most addictive features, such as infinite scroll.

4. Community and national leaders should establish social norms around smartphones— e.g., at school, in church, throughout the media, and elsewhere—that frequent use in the company of others is unhealthy, except when necessary for technical purposes.

5. Public or privately sponsored public service announcements should be launched to inform Americans about the dangers of smartphone addiction to one's relationships, with a special effort to ensure that low-income Americans are fully educated about the risks.

Marriage is the thread that holds society together. For the sake of their families and for the good of society, spouses should be empowered to resist the technological forces that threaten to fray the marital bond.

More Scrolling, More Marital Problems

© Copyright 2023 Institute for Family Studies All rights reserved.

From UNICEF Innocenti

Keyfindings

Teachers in highly effective schools adopt several teaching strategies that are reflective of formative assessment and related to targeted instruction more frequently than teachers in less effective schools.

Teachers in highly effective schools report higher levels of confidence in their assessment knowledge and pedagogical skills.

Principals and teachers in highly effective schools report closer monitoring of lower performing students' learning and how it changes over time.

Principals and teachers in highly effective schools report providing significantly more frequent feedback to parents based on student learning assessments.

Context

Although the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) has made steady progress in expanding access to primary and lower secondary education, many children still finish primary school unable to read, write or do simple calculations. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, learning outcomes were low, with 50 per cent of Lao grade 5 students scoring in the lowest achievement band on the 2019 Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) regional assessment.[1] Despite this learning crisis, some schools are outperforming others, even in the most disadvantaged areas. The Data Must Speak (DMS) positive deviance research aims to identify these 'positive deviant' or 'highly effective'[2] schools and examine their practices and behaviours. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from school principals, teachers, students and parents at positive deviant and comparison schools to identify their behaviours and practices. In addition, Village Education Development Committee members and District Education and Sports Bureaux staff were also surveyed.[3]

This brief presents key findings on practices adopted by highly effective schools related to formative assessment and serves to further country-level policy dialogues on the use of formative assessment to improve student learning.

© UNICEF/UN0253484/Labrado

Research findings

Formative assessment, frequently referred to as 'assessment for learning' or continuous assessment, can provide valuable feedback for teachers and/or students that can be used to adjust the teaching and learning process and can inform instructional activities and remedial action.[4] In the post-COVID-19 context, formative assessment can also play a critical role in accelerating learning recovery.[5] International evidence suggests that formative assessments have strong potential to yield promising learning results, especially for lower performing students, if certain conditions are met.

In 2018, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) in Lao PDR introduced a learning assessment framework highlighting the importance of effective formative and summative assessments as a means of monitoring and improving students' learning.[6] While Lao PDR's Education and Sports Sector Development Plan 2021–2025 builds on this framework by emphasizing the need for formative assessment in classrooms, the development of detailed guidelines on formative assessment is still under way and schools across the country have not systematically implemented formative assessment.

1 United Nations Children's Fund and Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization, SEA-PLM 2019 Main Regional Report: Children's learning in 6 Southeast Asian countries, UNICEF and SEAMEO, Bangkok, 2020, <www.unicef.org/eap/media/7356/file/SEA-PLM%202019%20Main%20Regional%20Report.pdf>.

2 Highly effective schools are performing better in terms of student learning than other schools with similar characteristics, as measured through SEA-PLM and Department of Education Quality Assurance data.

3 More detailed information about the sampling methodology can be found in the full report.

4 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 'Assessment for Learning: The case for formative assessment', OECD/CERI International Conference 'Learning in the 21st Century: Research, innovation and policy', 2008, <www.oecd.org/site/educeri21st/40600533.pdf>.
Global Education Monitoring Report Team, Global Education Monitoring Report 2020. Inclusion and education: All means all, UNESCO, Paris, 2020, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373718>.
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization International Institute for Educational Planning, 'Formative Assessment', IIEP Learning Portal, UNESCO, Paris, 2023, <https://learningportal.iiep.unesco.org/en/issue-briefs/monitor-learning/formative-assessment>, accessed 18 April 2023.

5 United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and World Bank, Where Are We On Education Recovery?, UNICEF, New York, 2022, <www.unicef.org/media/117626/file/Where%20are%20we%20in%20Education%20Recovery?.pdf>.

6 Lao People's Democratic Republic, Ministry of Education and Sports, 'Ministerial Decree on the Assessment Framework for General Education' Ref. No. 9849/MOES, 2018.

This research suggests that highly effective schools in Lao PDR adopt practices relating to formative assessment in the classroom and focus more on students' learning outcomes.

Teachers in highly effective schools adopt several teaching strategies that are reflective of formative assessment and related to targeted instruction more frequently than teachers in less effective schools. Teachers in highly effective schools were more likely to check and correct students' work on a regular basis and to track students' results in their own records, which could inform related remedial action. Students in highly effective schools more frequently reported that their teachers continued to teach until all students understood. Survey results from teachers in highly effective schools corroborated these results (Figure 1). Teachers and school principals from highly effective schools also indicated more frequent support for students requiring extra help, with students from these schools agreeing that their teachers provide extra support when they need it.

In the qualitative data, teachers and school principals in highly effective schools also reported adopting some specific practices to support students' learning based on their evaluation of students' academic performance. One highly effective school installed 'reading corners' – areas of classrooms dedicated to books. One teacher at this school mentioned they would lend students storybooks to read at home. Teachers would then randomly pick an extract from a book for a student to read (e.g., some arranged letters, vowels, then words). If students could not do it, they would take the book back home with them and repeat the exercise the next day.

Teachers in highly effective schools report higher levels of confidence in their assessment knowledge and pedagogical skills. Teachers' assessment knowledge and pedagogical skills may help them conduct formative assessment in classrooms. In highly effective schools, 66.8 per cent of teachers strongly agreed that they had good knowledge of assessment, compared with 50.5 per cent in less effective schools. Meanwhile, 51.3 per cent of teachers in highly effective schools strongly agreed that they had good pedagogical skills, compared with 43.1 per cent in less effective schools (Figure 2). This is in line with other results of the study underlining that teachers in highly effective schools have significantly greater knowledge of teaching content.

Principals and teachers in highly effective schools report closer monitoring of lower performing students' learning and how it changes over time. Teachers in highly effective schools were more likely to monitor weaker students' learning during classes. For example, teachers in one of these schools walked around the classroom to identify students who needed help in different areas. Teachers would then work with these students in the afternoon or the next day on that specific topic to improve their understanding of it. Another highly effective school reported summarizing the monthly results of all students and tracking how their performance had evolved during the month, with a specific focus on lower performing students.

Figure 1: Teachers' self-reported teaching practices

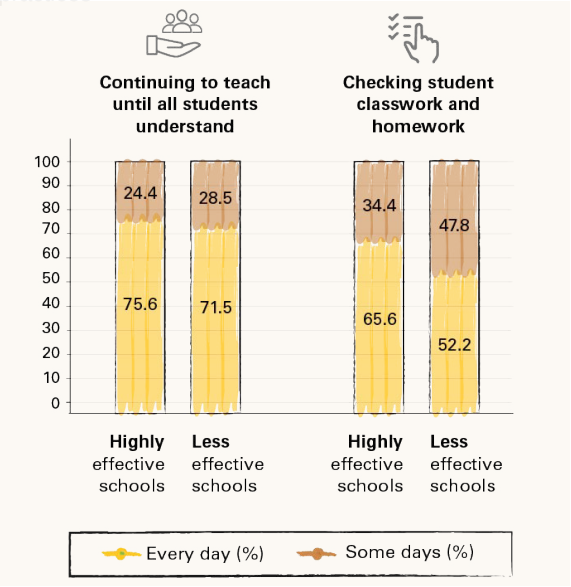
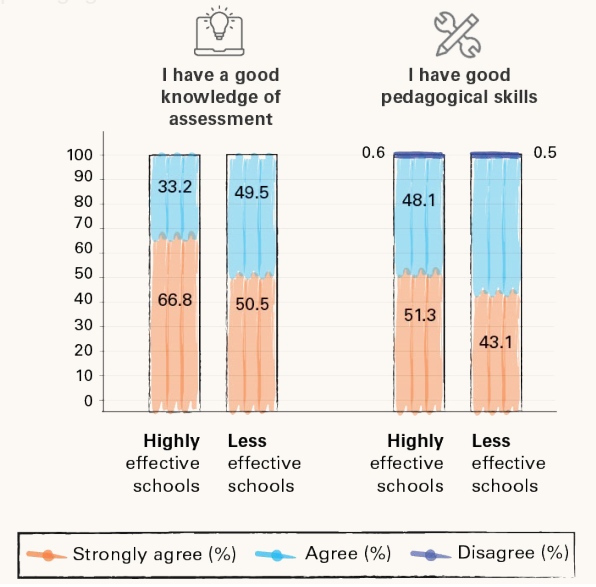


Figure 2: Teachers' self-reported levels of confidence in their assessment knowledge and pedagogical skills



Source: Department of Education Quality Assurance, 2020/21.

Principals and teachers in highly effective schools report providing significantly more frequent feedback to parents based on student learning assessments. Approximately 73 per cent of principals in highly effective schools reported that they often engaged with teachers on providing feedback to parents based on student assessment and progress, compared with about 46 per cent in less effective schools (Figure 3). About 86 per cent of teachers in highly effective schools reported providing feedback to parents on a weekly or monthly basis, compared with about 69 per cent in less effective schools (Figure 4). Informing parents about assessment results, especially formative assessment results, provides them with the opportunity to understand and appreciate their children's progress and achievements over time. It also gives them important information for engaging further with school staff and supporting their children's learning at home.

Figure 3: School principals' self-reported frequency of engaging with teachers to provide feedback to parents on student assessment and progress

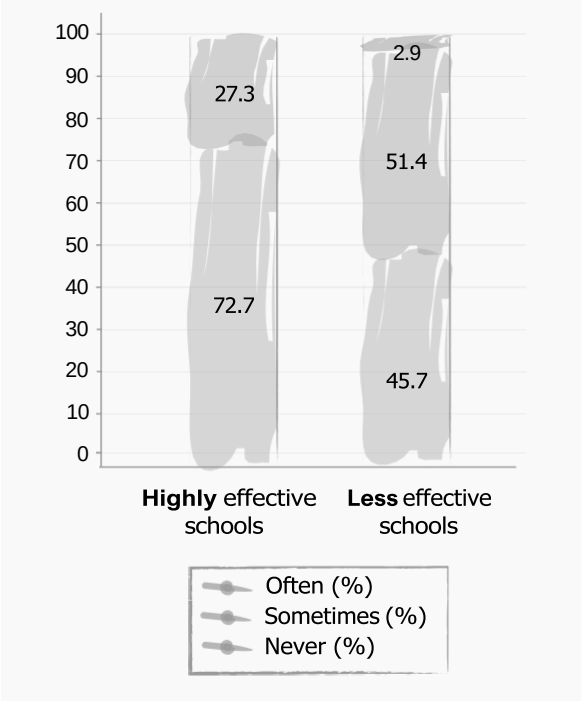
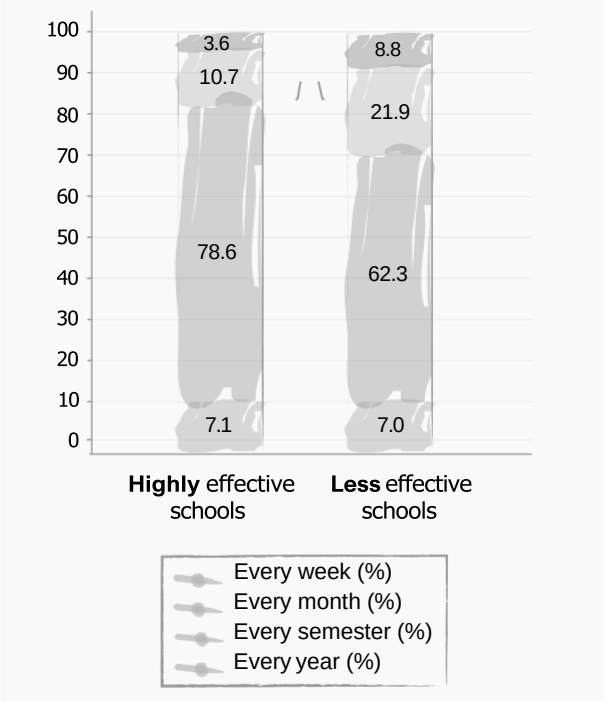


Figure 4: Teachers' self-reported frequency of providing feedback to parents on student assessment and progress



Source:Department of Education Quality Assurance, 2020/21.

Institutionalize formative assessment in teaching and learning practices, including through equipping school principals and teachers with the necessary skills and tools. At the systems level, this can include embedding formative assessment within sector planning, teacher education and professional development. It also requires equipping teachers with the skills and tools needed to better assess and monitor students' learning levels through both pre-service and in-service professional development. The MoES could consider developing a toolkit of resources, including remedial, catch-up and accelerated practices and programmes designed for specific subjects, which could help teachers adapt their practices to different learning levels among students. The use of formative assessment is even more critical to target adequate remedial support to learners following COVID-19-related school closures.