



REPORT



AFRICAN WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE



World Union of
Catholic Women's
Organisations



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World Women's Observatory

SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

This research investigates in a quantitative manner women's experiences of different types of violence and how this affects the development of their lives.

The data shown in this research comes from a self-administered survey of African women conducted by the World Women's Observatory (WWO) of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO), with the Hilton Foundation as a partner, which explores issues related to economic, domestic and educational violence, among others.

The contribution of this research is to provide a first approach to the phenomenon under study, to recognise scenarios of violence that women in Africa are experiencing, constituting a first starting point for future studies.

FINDINGS

For this study, a total of 10,680 women from 36 African countries were surveyed, with the aim of exploiting and making visible the experiences of economic and domestic violence to which the population of this continent is exposed, in the light of some of its characteristics.

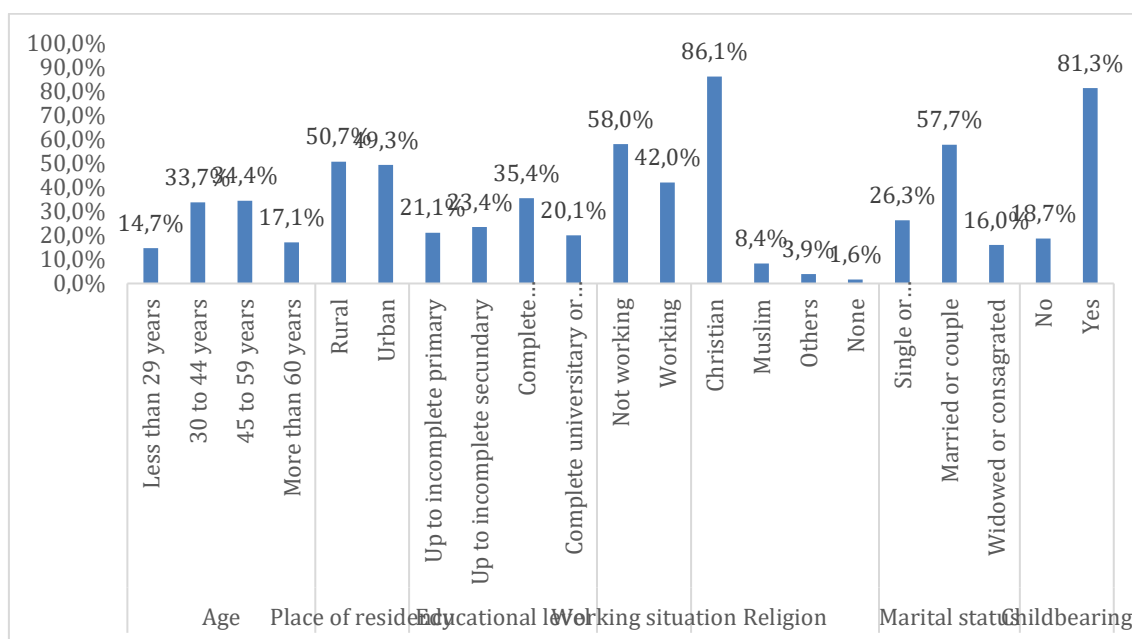
- Most of the respondents reside in Cameroon and Nigeria, however, women from the following countries participated too: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Esuatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Senegal, South Africa and Zimbabwe, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
- Of these, 33.7% are aged 30-44 and 34.4% are aged 45-59, while the proportion of younger and older people is lower, 14.7% and 17.1% respectively.
- At the same time, it is noted that women residents of both urban agglomerations and rural areas (49.3 per cent and 50.3 per cent, respectively) were surveyed in an equitable manner.
- 86.1% of the respondents are Christian, only 8.4% are Muslim and 3.9% of the respondents embrace other religions present on the continent.
- In terms of educational level, 35.4% of the women who participated in the survey had completed secondary or tertiary levels, 23.4% had uncompleted secondary education

and 21.2% had uncompleted primary education or less. In turn, 20% of them have completed university or more.

- Then, on the employment situation of African women, it is observed that only 42% were working at the time of answering the questionnaire, while the rest were not.
- Regarding their marital status, 20.7% of the women who participated are single, 46.1% are married, 11.6% are in a couple, 5.5% are separated or divorced, 15.1% are widowed and 1% are consecrated women, that is to say, it was possible to survey different family situations. However, for a better analysis of the data, the categories were regrouped into: single or separated/divorced (26.3%), married or in a couple (57.7%) and widowed or consecrated (16%).
- And finally, 81% of the respondents have children.

Distribution according to age, place of residence, educational level, activity status, marital status and having children.

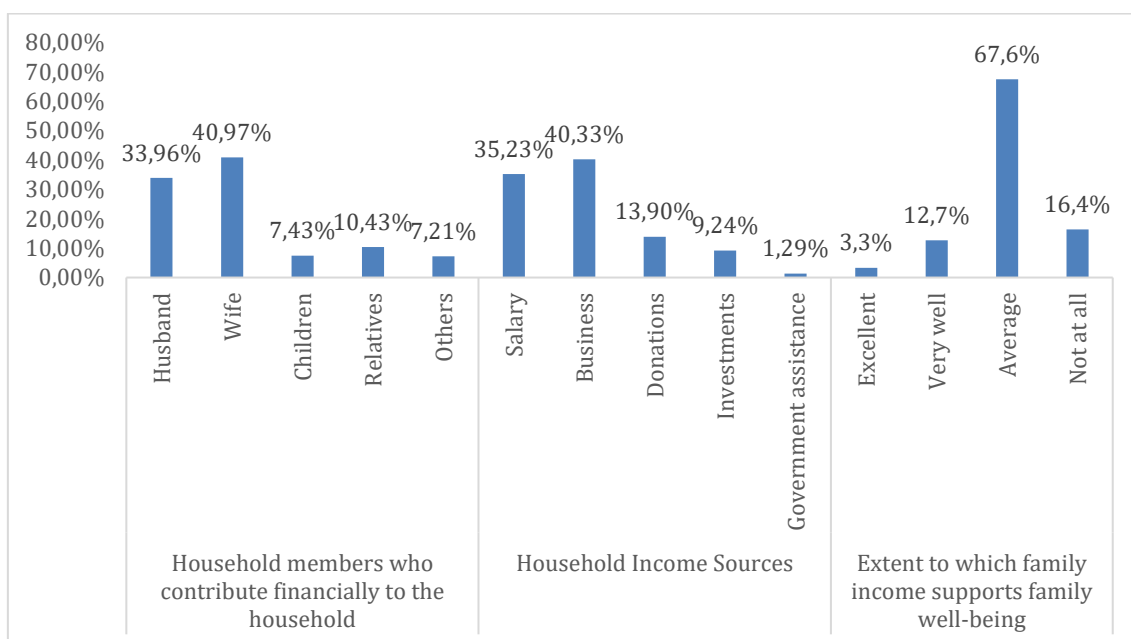
As a percentage of African women aged 18 and over. Year 2023.



Source: own elaboration based on the survey "Experiences of African women" of the World Women's Observatory.

- In terms of unmet basic needs, 61.7% of African women reported experiencing food needs, 56.1% education, 66.2% health, 61.9% security, 47.5% housing and 63.5% psychological needs.
- The prevalence of wives as a main income earner in the household is higher among women who are college educated or more; Christian; over 30 years of age; working or have children.

Household members contributing financially to the household (a), sources of household income (b) and level at which household income meets household needs (c). As a percentage of responses (a, b) and population (c) of African women aged 18 and over. Year 2023.

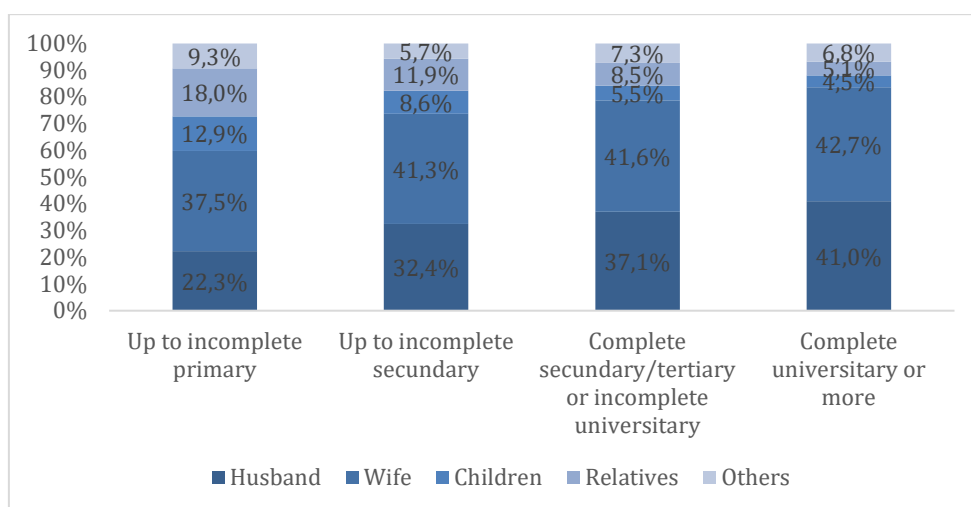


Source: own elaboration based on the survey "Experiences of African women" of the World Women's Observatory.

Household members contributing financially to the household according to educational level.

As can be seen in the graphic, at all levels of education, female heads of household are the main income earners in the household.

As a percentage of responses from African women aged 18 and over. Year 2023.

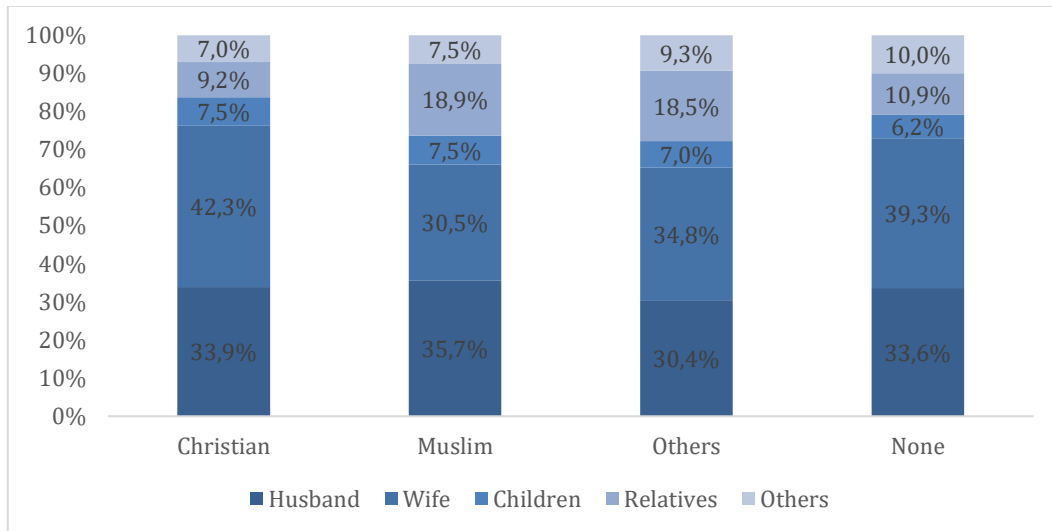


Source: own elaboration based on the survey "Experiences of African women" of the World Women's Observatory.

Household members contributing financially to the household according to religion.

This graphic shows that female heads of household are the biggest financial contributors to the household in the Christian religion, in other religions or in the case of those who do not profess any religion. Only in the case of Muslims do male heads of household contribute the most financially to the household.

As a percentage of responses from African women aged 18 and over. Year 2023.

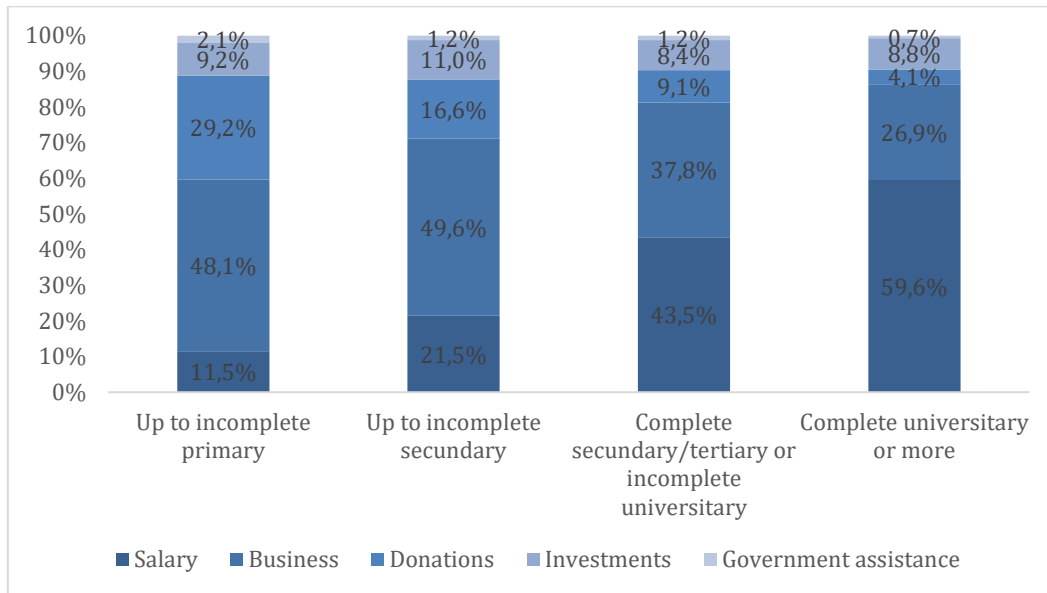


Source: own elaboration based on the survey "Experiences of African women" of the World Women's Observatory.

- The incidence of wages as the main source of income increases the higher the educational level of women, while the lower the educational level, the higher the incidence of income from self-employment. The following graph shows how almost 50% of the income in the 2 lowest educational levels is due to own business.

Sources of household income by educational level.

As a percentage of responses from African women aged 18 and over. Year 2023.



Source: own elaboration based on the survey "Experiences of African women" of the World Women's Observatory.

- In terms of the ability of income to cover household needs, more than 70% of women with uncompleted secondary education or less, or those who do not identify with any religion, report that their income barely covers their needs, becoming the most affected among their peers. This same trend is replicated for women who do not work or who live in rural areas.

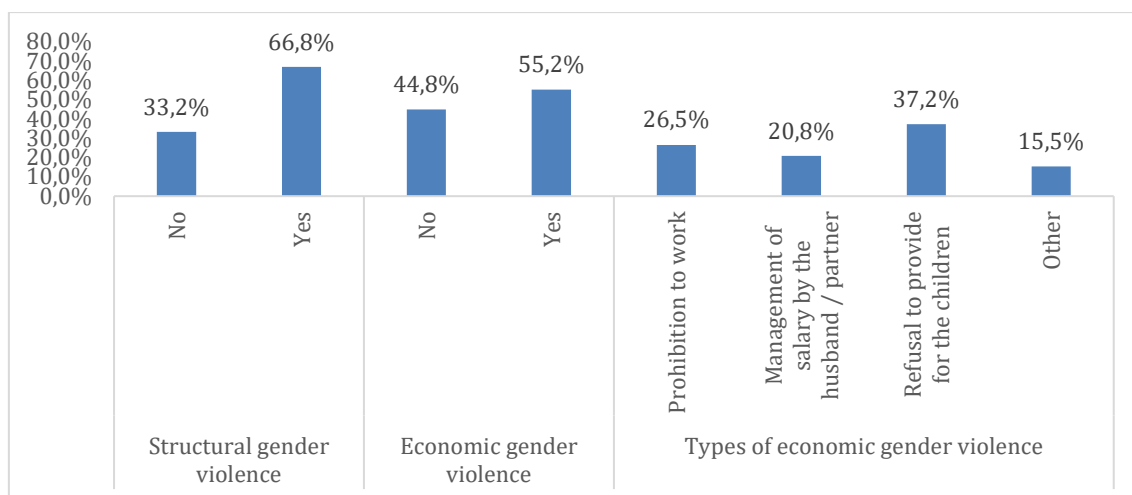
ECONOMIC VIOLENCE

Next, results are analysed on whether women reported being victims of structural gender-based violence (economic, religious or cultural violence), being victims of economic gender-based violence and what types of economic violence they experienced.

- It is observed that 66.8% of women experience structural violence, i.e. they report having suffered some type of violence in general, but 55.2% of women in particular, reported having suffered economic violence. In turn, of those who reported suffering economic aggression, 37.2% of the answers they gave were linked to the refusal to provide for children and 26.5% to the prohibition to work.

Structural gender-based violence (a), economic gender-based violence (b) and types of economic gender-based violence experienced (c).

In percentage of population (a, b) and responses (c) of African women aged 18 and over. Year 2023.

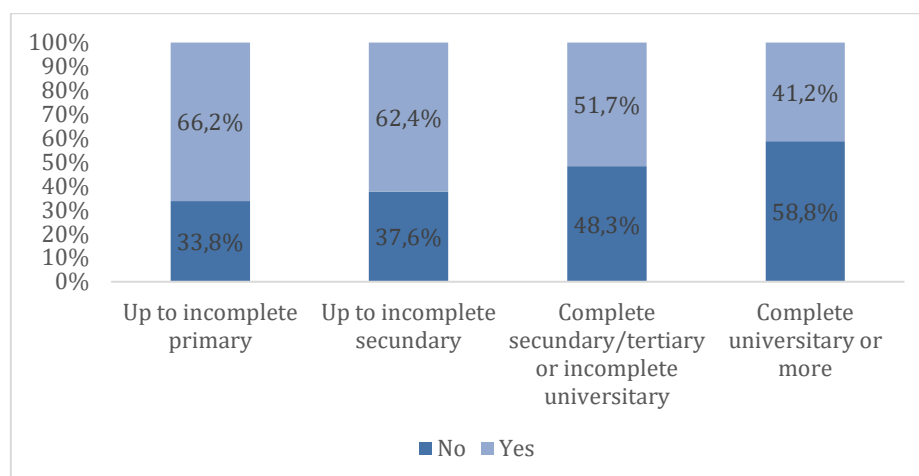


Source: own elaboration based on the survey "Experiences of African women" of the World Women's Observatory.

- With regard to economic violence, African women with the lowest level of education, uncompleted secondary school or less, were the most likely to report being victims of this type of aggression, and it decreases among those with the highest level of education. According to religion, Muslim women were the most likely to report experiencing economic violence. This was also reported by 67% of women who have children and 73% of women living in rural areas.

Economic gender violence according to educational level

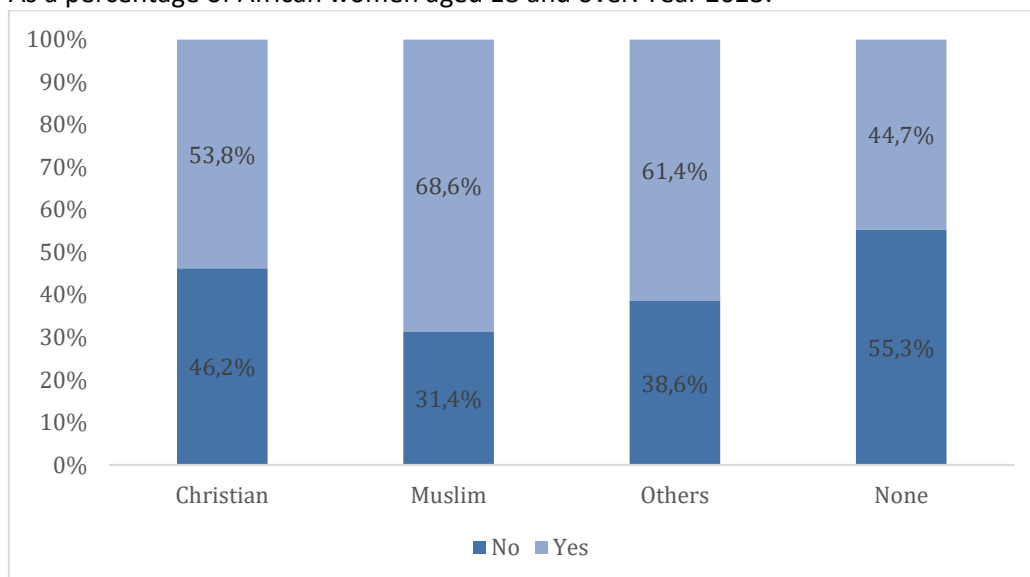
As a percentage of African women aged 18 and over. Year 2023.



Source: own elaboration based on the survey "Experiences of African women" of the World Women's Observatory.

Economic gender-based violence by religion.

As a percentage of African women aged 18 and over. Year 2023.



Source: own elaboration based on the survey "Experiences of African women" of the World Women's Observatory.

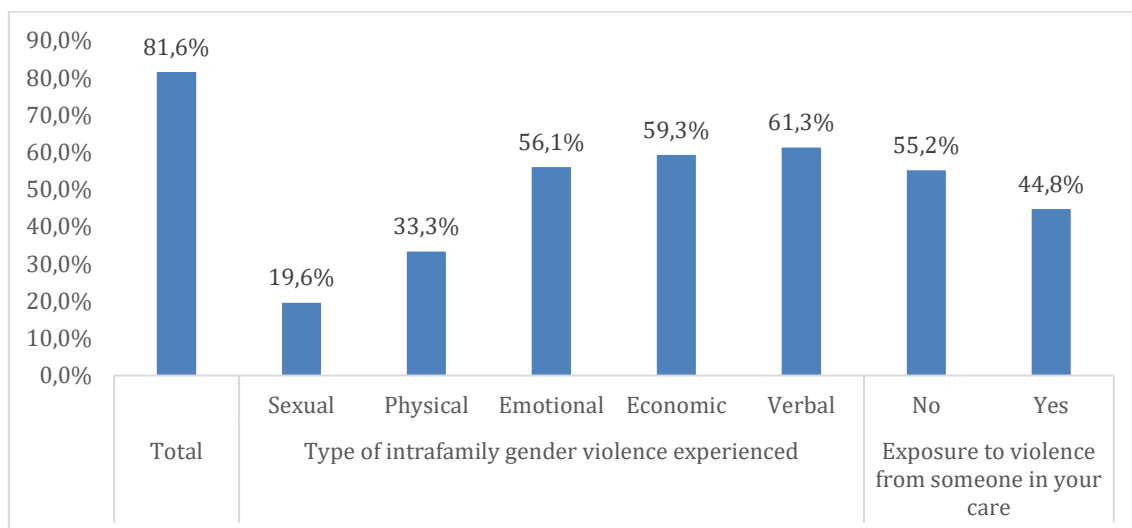
GENDER VIOLENCE WITHIN THE FAMILY

With regard to intra-family gender-based violence, data on African women who report having been victims of domestic violence are presented, as well as the different types of violence that occur.

It is noted that 81.6% of African women suffer from total domestic violence, that is, they suffer from one of the following types of violence: physical, emotional, sexual, economic or verbal. Specifically, 19.6 % of the women reported sexual violence in their families, 33.3 % physical violence in their families, 56.1 % emotional violence, 59.3 % economic violence and finally 61.3 % verbal violence. Then, when the women were asked whether someone under their care had been exposed to some type of violence, In order to investigate whether such a situation is perpetuated towards third parties, 44.8 per cent of women acknowledge that this had indeed happened.

Total intrafamilial gender-based violence, type of intrafamilial gender-based violence experienced and exposure to violence by someone in their care.

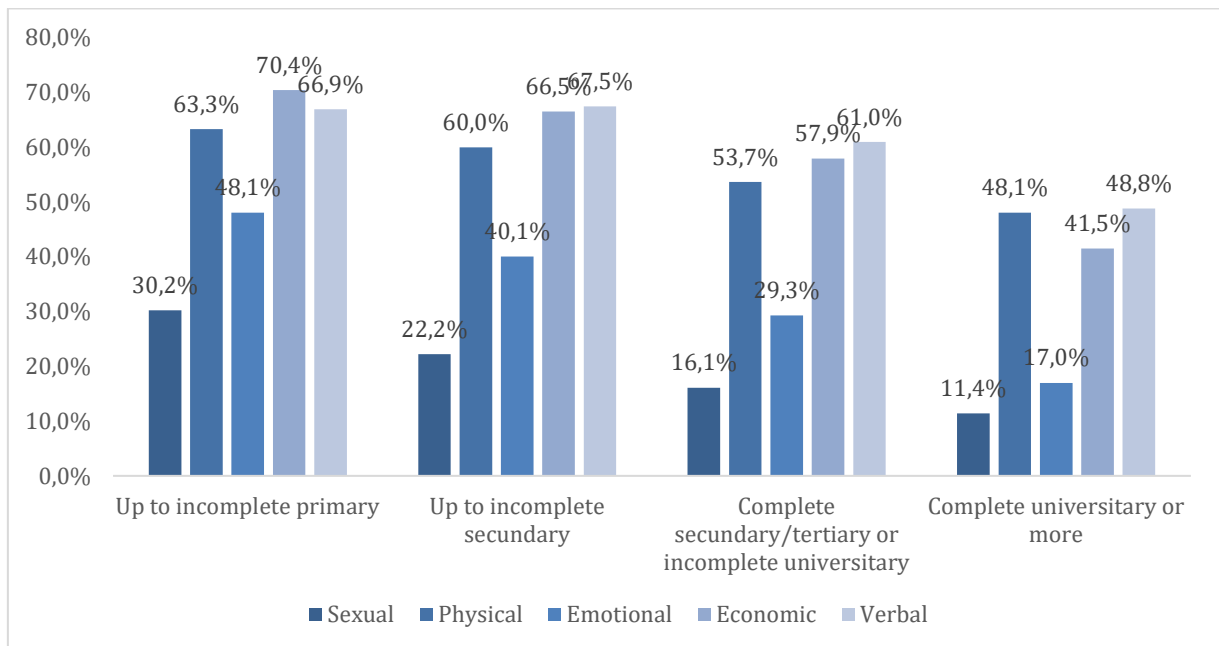
As a percentage of African women aged 18 and over. Year 2023.



Source: own elaboration based on the survey "Experiences of African women" of the World Women's Observatory

- With regard to the types of intra-family gender-based violence according to educational level, it is evident that all of them increase the lower the level of education of the respondents. Mainly 70.4% and 66.9% of the African women with uncompleted primary education or less who participated in the survey reported suffering economic and verbal domestic violence, respectively.

Types of domestic gender-based violence experienced according to educational level
 In percentage of African women experiencing domestic violence over 18 years of age. Year 2023.



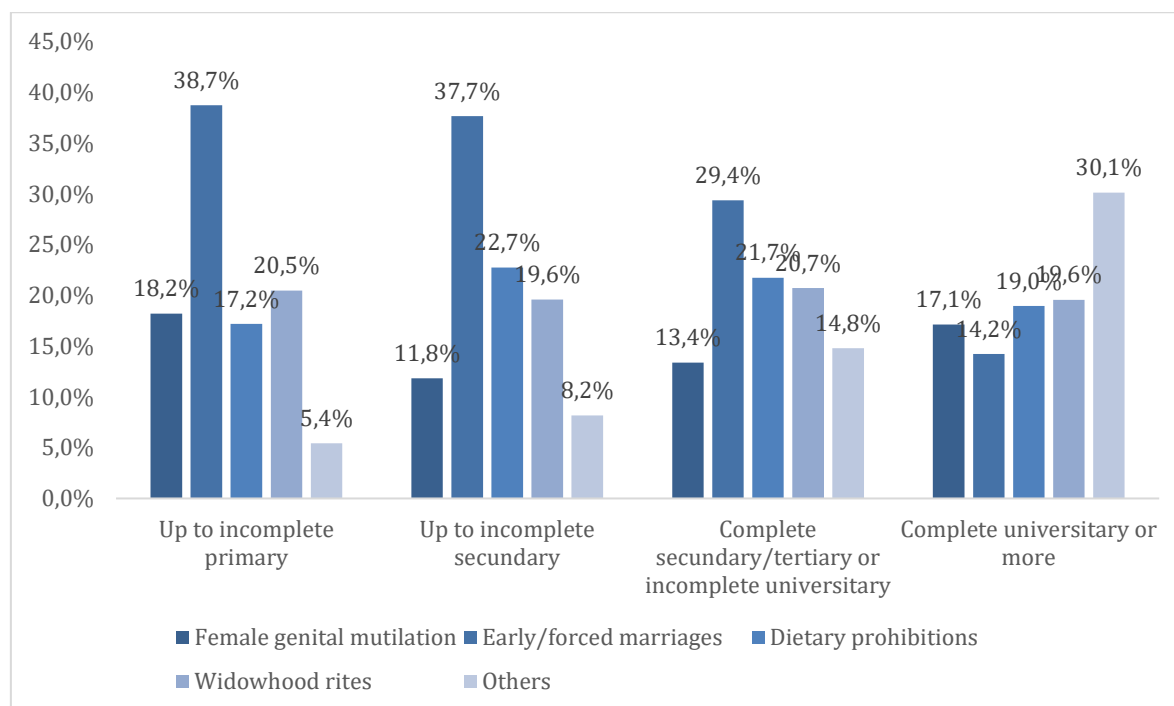
Source: own elaboration based on the survey "Experiences of African women" of the World Women's Observatory

OTHER FORMS OF STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

Regarding the types of cultural violence experienced according to educational level, it is observed that early or forced marriages are more commonly reported by women with lower levels of education than their peers with other levels of education. While female genital mutilation seems to be a cross-cutting issue for all women regardless of educational level.

Type of cultural gender-based violence experienced by educational level.

As a percentage of responses from African women aged 18 and over. Year 2023.



Source: own elaboration based on the survey "Experiences of African women" of the World Women's Observatory

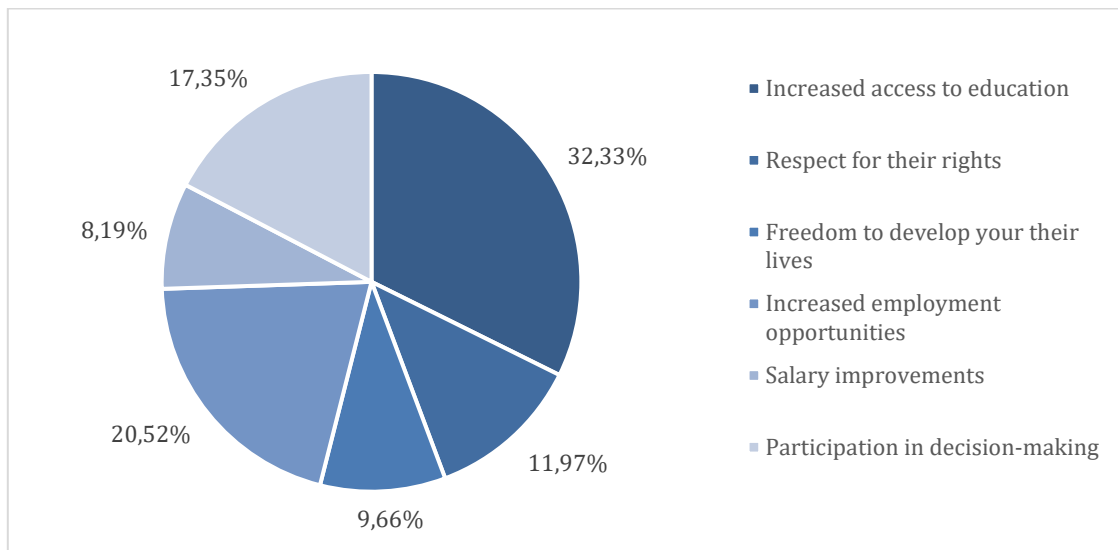
CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the findings show that African women with lower levels of education who participated in the survey, experience a higher level of violence in general terms, that is to say, regardless of the type of violence. This is reflected in the high percentages of African women who reported being victims of economic and domestic violence, among others. At the same time, in percentage terms, Muslim women are the main victims of violence, above Christian women.

Consequently, due to the scenario of violence to which African women are exposed, they indicate that there are two main changes that must be made for the full development of women in their respective countries in order to redress such inequalities, and these are, transformations that seek to ensure that women have greater access to education, and more and better employment opportunities, making it evident that there is a gender gap in access to such rights in comparison to men. Thirdly, and no less important, 17.3% of women's responses stated that changes in favour of women's participation in decision-making, i.e. in positions of leadership and power, should also be promoted.

Changes in education is the measure most frequently reported by the women surveyed at all levels of education and of all religions for their proper development and full exercise of their rights. The higher the level of education of the women surveyed, the higher the percentage of responses stating that women's participation in decision-making is the second most important measure needed.

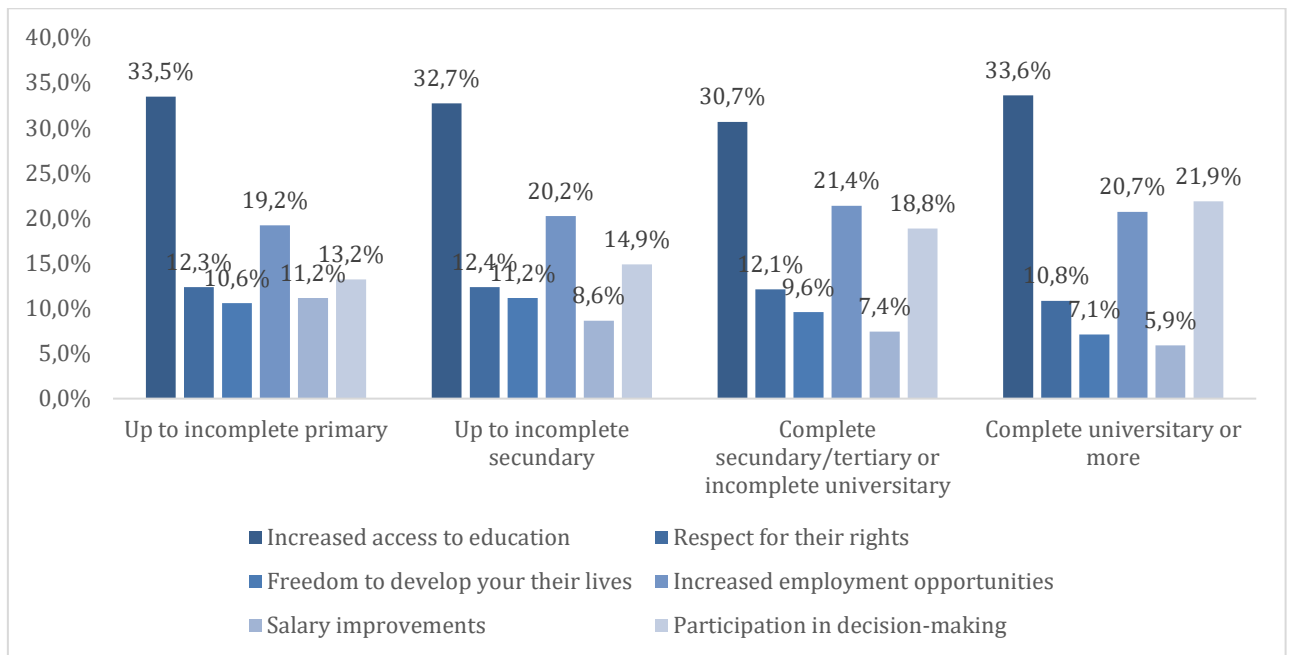
Most important changes needed for the full development of women in African countries.
As a percentage of responses from African women aged 18 and over. Year 2023.



Source: own elaboration based on the survey "Experiences of African women" of the World Women's Observatory

Most important changes needed for the full development of women in African countries by level of education.

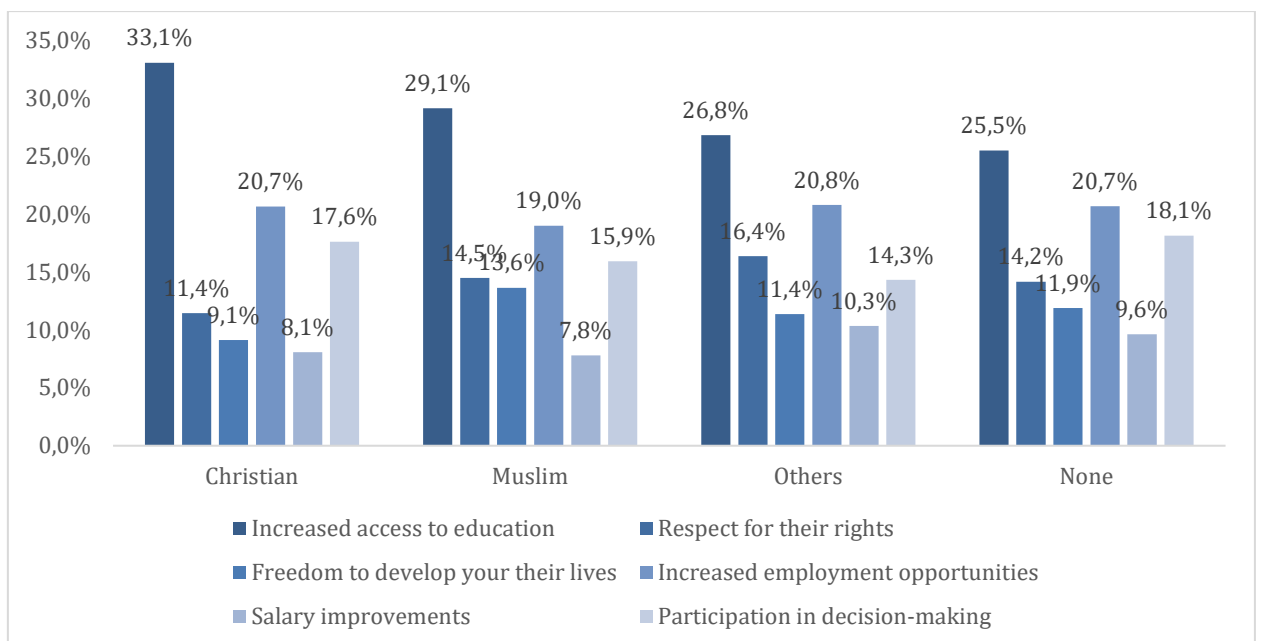
As a percentage of responses from African women aged 18 and over. Year 2023.



Source: own elaboration based on the survey "Experiences of African women" of the World Women's Observatory

Most important changes needed for the full development of women in African countries according to religion.

As a percentage of responses from African women aged 18 and over. Year 2023.



Source: own elaboration based on the survey "Experiences of African women" of the World Women's Observatory

We at the Global Observatory for Women have carried out this analysis because we are convinced that it is through listening that we can transform lives. This is a first step of many more to come. We thank the 10,680 African women who anonymously and courageously and selflessly responded to the survey. We are convinced that the best way to work is in a network, and for this we have created the African Network against Violence and Discrimination against Women together with more than 50 organisations and congregations with whom we will address the main issues that have emerged from this analysis.

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