

Childbirth plans and childlessness trends in Hungary among women and men

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Introduction

One of the basic principles of our family policy is to help break down barriers for those who wish to have children. This is precisely why we often use the motto: "let all desired children be born", inherited from Mary Kopp. The question arises, however, as to the exact number of children wanted in recent times and whether this number is sufficient in order to achieve the birth rate needed to repopulate the population.

To ensure population reproduction, a total fertility rate of 2.1 would need to be achieved, which was 1.23 in 2011, rose to 1.59 in 2021, fell again in 2022 (1.52) and continued to drop in 2023 (1.50).

In Hungary, childbearing behaviour has been investigated and examined by several studies in recent years, which provide a comprehensive picture of the number of children desired and the number of children born for both men and women. The Hungarostudy survey of 18-40 year olds conducted by the Hungarian Demographic Research Institute of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH), the KINCS 2021 Hungarostudy survey of 18-40 year olds, the Századvég large sample family values survey conducted in cooperation with KINCS and the Hungarian Youth Study have also examined these issues.

According to these surveys, the average number of desired children remains above two among Hungarians. As fertility rates have increased since 2010, the gap between the number of desired and the number of children born has narrowed; there is still at least "half a child" of a difference.



Desired number of children

The number of children desired is around 2 according to available survey data, slightly higher for women than for men. This means that the number of children desired among young adults is just at the limit needed in order to reproduce the population.

Desired number of children according to CSO data (2016, 2021)

- The ideal number of children is 2.2 for both women and men in 2016, according to the CSO Hungarian Demographic Research Institute survey, and the planned number of children is 2.0 for women and 1.9 for men on average.
- The most important conclusion of the Demographic Portrait 2021 volume is that the gap between the number of children intended and the number of children realized is open, i.e. there are still children intended who are not born. In 2001, the female cohort aged 27-29 had an average of 1 child and planned to have an average of 2.22 children. In 2012, i.e. aged 38-40, the number of children planned fell to 2.03, while the number of children born was 1.67.

Desired number of children according to Hungarostudy data (2021)

- According to previous waves of Hungarostudy surveys, Hungarians in general plan to have more than 2 children (in 2006, women under 35 planned to have 2.08 children and men 2.07).
- In 2021, the average total number of children planned in their lifetime among 18-29 year olds is 2.07 (the sum of the number of existing children [average 0.23] and the number of children still planned).
- Men under 30 years of age plan to have 2.03 children and women under 30 years of age plan to have 2.1 children on average (this includes the number of existing children). Only the additional average number of children planned (excluding the number of existing children): 1.65 for men and 1.87 for women.



- According to the Hungarostudy 2021 survey, the total number of children planned for life increases with age, but the youngest generation is also thinking of having two children (18-19 years old 2.06; 20-24 years old 2.06; 25-29 years old 2.08; 30-39 years old 2.09; 40 years old 2.1).
- The 2021 survey also found that 57% of men aged 18-40 planned to have a child in the next 5 years, compared to 71% of women. Among those aged under 30, 31% of 18-24 year olds planned to have a child in the next 5 years, 81% of 25-29 year olds and 88% of 30 and over.

Desired number of children according to the Századvég research endeavour on family values (2021)

- According to the 2021 survey of 60 000 people, the desired number of children was 2.11 for men aged 18-29 and 2.12 for women.
- 18-29 year olds think in terms of a two-child family model (2.1 desired number of children), and their ideal number of children is 2.31.

Desired number of children according to the Hungarian Youth (Magyar Ifjúság) research endeavour (2020)

- Young people aged 15-29 plan to have 1.77 children, with men planning to have fewer children (1.7) than women (1.85).
- The number of children planned increases with age (18-19 years: 1.72; 20-24 years: 1.74; 25-29 years: 1.84).

Annex

Women and childbearing since 1980

Year	Total number of women	Number of women from 15-49	Women aged 15-49 as a percentage of all women %	Number of live births	Live births per thousand women aged 15-49	Total Fertility Rate
1980	5 520 754	2 583 434	46,8	148 673	57,6	..
1990	5 389 919	2 529 529	46,9	125 679	49,4	1,87
2001	5 349 286	2 549 059	47,7	97 047	38,1	1,31
2011	5 219 149	2 335 129	44,7	88 049	37,7	1,23
2012	5 207 259	2 333 955	44,8	90 269	38,7	1,34
2013	5 192 845	2 326 115	44,8	88 689	38,2	1,34
2014	5 173 974	2 311 352	44,7	91 510	39,7	1,41
2015	5 159 792	2 296 004	44,5	91 690	40	1,44
2016	5 141 966	2 282 209	44,4	93 063	40,9	1,49
2017	5 122 270	2 262 077	44,2	91 577	40,6	1,49
2018	5 106 769	2 243 595	43,9	89 807	40,2	1,49
2019	5 096 935	2 224 985	43,7	89 193	40,2	1,49
2020	5 088 736	2 207 884	43,4	92 338	42	1,56
2021	5 066 978	2 184 735	43,1	93 039	42,7	1,59
2022	5 044 135	2 168 713	43	88 491	40,9	1,52
2023	4 974 484	2 131 847	42,9	85 200	40,1	1,50

Men who had children since 1980

Year	Total number of men, persons	Number of men from 15-49, persons	Men aged 15-49 as a percentage of all men %	Number of live births	Live births per thousand men aged 15-49	Total Fertility Rate
1980	5188709	2586513	49,8	148 673	57,5	..
1990	4984904	2549655	51,1	125 679	49,3	..
2001	4851012	2567631	52,9	97 047	37,8	..
2011	4718479	2385047	50,5	88 049	36,9	..
2012	4724666	2396763	50,7	90 269	37,7	..
2013	4715953	2392605	50,7	88 689	37,1	..
2014	4703391	2380674	50,6	91 510	38,4	..
2015	4695779	2369225	50,5	91 690	38,7	..
2016	4688519	2360504	50,3	93 063	39,4	1,36*
2017	4675291	2343810	50,1	91 577	39,1	..
2018	4671602	2331731	49,9	89 807	38,5	..
2019	4675821	2322931	49,7	89 193	38,4	..
2020	4680790	2311487	49,4	92 338	39,9	..
2021	4663794	2287911	49,1	93 039	40,7	..
2022	4644875	2270828	48,9	88 491	39,0	..
2023	4625260	2245224	48,5	85 200	37,9	..

(*)Source: 2016 micro census, estimated data .. means no data