



Global
Governance
Forum

The Gender Equality And Governance Index

Linking Gender And Human Well-Being

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Executive Summary

The Gender Equality and Governance Index (GEGI) analyzes data from a variety of international organizations to achieve a broad-based and comparative understanding of gender discrimination within five critical areas: governance, education, work, entrepreneurship, and violence. Covering 158 countries, the GEGI serves as a valuable tool for policymakers to evaluate progress towards gender equality in their country and to pinpoint specific areas for improvement.

The index encompasses a range of factors, including the level of development, economic growth, the ratio of women-to-men in the labor force, educational achievement, and fertility rates. It also accounts for the quality of institutions, the political empowerment of women, discriminatory laws, and civil conflict. It's important to recognize that laws implemented at one point may have an effect further into the future.

Key findings for 2022 are that Iceland, Spain, Canada, Norway and Belgium made the top five spots – based on 2021 data – and Qatar, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza, Iran, and Afghanistan were at the bottom of the index. (See full set of rankings on page 56)

The GEGI analysis continues to show that women are making the most gains in full or flawed democracies, that they are making important inroads in attaining more government positions – especially where quota systems are in place – and improvements are being made in reducing gender pay gaps. Cultural attitudes towards gender and towards women, however, continue to hold them back from progressing in education and in the workforce, and to obstruct the necessary changes in gender roles. Educational quality remains poor in most low-income states. For budding entrepreneurs, over 100 economies still lack legal provisions that prohibit gender-based discrimination in access to finance.

Violence against women also continues to be a worldwide problem, although it disproportionately affects low- and lower-middle-income countries and regions. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, about 30 percent of women worldwide experience some form of physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes, with most being from intimate partners.

The GEGI was built with the understanding that indexes – despite their limitations – can generate debate on key policy issues, to precipitate remedial actions, and to track progress. A well-designed composite indicator thus provides a useful frame of reference for evaluation, both between countries and over time. The GEGI analyzes data from a variety of international organizations and valuable survey data to achieve a broad-based and comparative understanding of gender discrimination on a global scale. By breaking scores down into the following five pillars, the GEGI allows policymakers to pinpoint specific areas for improvement.

PILLAR I: Governance and Equality

In governance, women are still grossly underrepresented in executive and policymaking bodies. For gender equality to become a reality, with all its attendant benefits, women must be equally represented at the highest levels of decision-making across a country.

PILLAR II: Education

In education, improving both the quality and quantity of human capital by expanding educational opportunities for girls boosts not only their opportunities, but also economic growth. Nonetheless, in many countries, cultural attitudes against female education continue to prevail, and investment in girls' education is still far below that of boys.

PILLAR III: Women and Work

In the workforce, gender inequalities in employment constrain the labor market, making it difficult for firms and businesses to scale up efficiently. Globally, about 39 percent of the world's total labor force is female and 61 percent are male – measuring labor force participation as a percentage of the total population¹. Incentives to work, including paid parental leave and childcare services, have proven effective in increasing female labor force participation.

PILLAR IV: Entrepreneurship and Business

In business, entrepreneurship and self-employment is an equally important avenue for female empowerment. Women entrepreneurs contribute significantly to economic innovation and growth if given access to the same training, capital, credit, and rights as men. Women still face severe difficulty in some countries, however, in accessing financial accounts and securing credit.

PILLAR V: Violence Against Women

On violence trends, women are most vulnerable to violence in cultures where long-held customs and fundamental prejudices place the culpability for violence on the women themselves. The cost that society incurs from violence against women is high and has been exacerbated by responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Scores and associated rankings reveal which countries have made the greatest progress in reducing gender inequalities in the areas identified by the index. As such, they can point the way forward. Why have Iceland, Canada and Portugal done so well across the full range of factors identified in the GEGI Index, while Qatar, Afghanistan, and Iran have done so poorly? Are there correlations between these rankings and policies that foster or hinder women's integration into the labor market, access to education and technologies, equal protection under the law, discriminatory social and cultural practices, and so on?

The GEGI Index is offered as a tool to help countries track their progress over time. As countries adopt different strategies to reduce gender disparities, they can measure the collective impact of these actions on gender equality on a continuous and consistent basis.

¹ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTLFE.ZS>. As is well known, such figures exclude unpaid care work and thus underestimate the true extent of women's work and the contribution they make to overall GDP.

Structure of the Gender Equality and Governance Index (GEGI)

Pillar I: Governance Stability

1. Legal Provisions

- a. Does the constitution contain a clause on equality? (1)
- b. If there is a non discrimination clause in the constitution, does it explicitly mention sex or gender? (1)
- c. Has CEDAW been ratified? (2)
- d. Has CEDAW been ratified without reservations and is there agreement with its optional protocol? **
- d. Has CEDAW been ratified without reservations? (2)
- d. Is there agreement with the CEDEAW optional protocol? (2)

2. Participation in Governance

- a. What is the proportion of women in ministerial positions? (%) (3)
- b. What is the share of seats held by women representatives in national parliament? (%) (4)
- c. Are there legislative quotas for women in national parliament and in sub national bodies, such as state legislatures? **
- c. Are there legislative quotas (reserved seats) in place for women representatives in national parliament? (5)*
- c. Are there quotas for women insubnational bodies, such as state legislatures? (5)*
- c. Are there quotas for women on corporate boards? (1)*

3. Equal Rights and Values

- a. Are married women required to obey their husbands? (1)
- b. Is women's testimony in court afforded equal weight to men's? (1)
- c. Does the law provide for the valuation of nonmonetary contributions? (1)
- d. Do you agree that "women having the same rights as men" is an essential characteristic of democracy? (% of population) (6)
- e. Do spouses have equal rights to convey citizenship? (1)

4. "Her" –storical Context

- a. How many years since women are allowed to vote? (7) (16) (17)
- b. The number of years that the country has had a woman head of state and/or prime minister (8)
- c. The number of years that the country has had a woman central bank governor and/or finance minister (9)
- d. How early on in the country's history was a woman appointed to a high court? (7)

Pillar II: Entrepreneurship and Doing Business

1. Doing Business

- a. Can a woman open a bank account in the same way as a man? (1)
- b. Can a woman register a business in the same way as a man? (1)
- c. Does the law prohibit discrimination by creditors based on gender? (1)
- d. Account ownership by women at financial institution or with a mobile money service provider (% of population ages 15+) (3)
- e. Women who have saved to start, operate, or expand a farm or business (% of population ages 15+) (3)
- f. Do you agree with the statement "On the whole, men make better business executives than women do" (% of population) (6)
- g. Do you agree with the statement that "If a woman earns more money than her husband, it's almost certain to cause problems" (% of population) (6)

2. Mobility Restrictions

- a. Can a woman choose where to live in the same way as a man? (1)
- b. Can a woman travel outside the home in the same way as man? (1)
- c. Can a woman apply for a passport and travel abroad alone in the same way as a man? **
- c. Can a woman apply for passport in the same way as a man? (1)
- c. Can a woman travel abroad alone in the same way as a man? (1)

3. Property Rights

- a. Do men and married women have equal ownership rights to property? (1)
- b. Do sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets from their parents? (1)
- c. Do female and male surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets? (1)

Pillar III: Education for Equality

- 1. Difference in primary and secondary education between men and women (school life expectancy) (10)
- 2. Difference in tertiary education between men and women (school life expectancy)
- 3. Mean years of schooling (female, 25+ years)
- 4. Do you agree with the statement that “A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl” (% of population) (6)
- 5. Adolescent fertility rate (birth per 1,000 women ages 15–19) (3)
- 6. Contraceptive prevalence, modern methods (% of women ages 15–49) (3)
- 7. Female/male ratio of Internet Usage (12)

Pillar IV: Women and Work

1. Incentives to Work

- a. Is there paid leave available to women of at least 14 weeks? (1)
- b. Is there paid parental leave? (1)
- c. Are mothers guaranteed an equivalent position after maternity leave? (1)
- d. Are child care payments tax deductible? (1)
- e. Men (15+ years old) who disagreed with the statement: “It is perfectly acceptable for any woman in your family to have a paid job outside the home if she wants one.” (%) (11)

2. Working without Restrictions

- a. Can a woman get a job in the same way as a man? (1)
- b. Are women able to work in the same industries as men? (1)
- c. Does the law mandate equal

remuneration for work of equal value? (1)

- d. Does the law mandate non discrimination based on gender in employment? (1)
- e. Are the ages at which men and women can retire with full pension benefits equal? (1)
- f. Do you agree with the statement: “When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women” (% of population) (6)
- g. Ratio of female to male labor force participation rate (%) (modeled ILO estimate) (3)
- h. Difference between male and female share of vulnerable employment (% , modeled ILO estimate) (3)
- i. Factor Weighted Gender Pay Gap

Pillar V: Violence against Women

- 1. Lifetime risk of maternal death (1 in:) (3)
- 2. Percentage of women ages 15 years and older who report that they “feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where you live” (11)
- 3. Is there domestic violence legislation? (1)
- 4. Percentage of women who experienced over their lifetime physical or sexual violence committed by their intimate partner (11)
- 5. Status of Sexual Harassment Legislation**
 - a. Is there legislation that specifically address sexual harassment? (1)
 - b. Is there legislation on sexual harassment in employment? (1)
 - c. Are there criminal penalties or civil remedies for sexual harassment in employment? (1)
- 6. Conviction rate of persons convicted of intentional homicide of females (per 100,000 of population) (13)
- 7. Is there a preference for sons as manifested in a high sex ratio at birth? (15)

The Gender Equality and Governance Index 2022: Linking Gender and Human Well-Being

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(with contributions from Abosedo Alimi, Diana Chacon, Imani Duncan,
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Introduction

Between the publication of the 2020 and 2022 Gender Equality and Governance Index (GEGI) reports, the turmoil caused to lives and livelihoods due to the COVID-19 pandemic has reversed many of the gains made by women and girls over the past decades. One of the most glaring impacts has been a significant increase in the level of violence toward women as many found themselves in long term lockdown situations with abusive partners and with more limited access to social or legal services. According to the United Nations, almost 1 in 2 women reported that they, or a woman they know, experienced a form of violence since the COVID-19 pandemic. ³

While the pandemic has affected everyone – including men and boys – more women lost jobs, experienced more strains related to mental and/or emotional health, and were less likely to receive cash relief or unemployment benefits. ⁴ Millions of girls in low-income countries may never return to school, and it is estimated that ten million more girls will be forced into marriage in the next decade. ⁵ In a more positive vein, while women were more likely to have greater burdens related to domestic work and childcare, men also took on greater responsibilities. ⁶

Regardless of global shocks like these, there has still been remarkable progress for women globally over the past 50 years. A study done at the World Bank, within the Global Indicators Group, looked at 17 indicators of gender discrimination in 100 countries between 1960 and 2010, reading the Constitution, the Civil Code and other legal instruments and discovered considerable progress in the elimination of such restrictions on women across virtually every region of the world, with the possible exception of the Middle East and North Africa, where progress was disappointingly marginal. ⁷

2 The authors are most grateful to Zarrin Caldwell for her excellent editorial support during the preparation of this paper. They would also like to thank Shaily Acharya, Dario Arjomandi, Jessica Hall and Gemma Hedayati for data updates and other computational work and research. Global Governance Forum Fellows Abosedo Alimi, Diana Chacon, Imani Duncan, Martha Lidia Oxi Chuy and Maya Tamayo made important contributions to this report in the form of feature pieces displayed in the report. Ms. Duncan's contribution does not appear separately but is embedded throughout the report.

3 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/press-release/2021/11/press-release-new-un-women-data-confirms-violence-against-women-has-worsened-due-to-the-covid-19-pandemic>.

4 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/news/2021/12/new-data-show-women-and-girls-far-less-likely-to-receive-covid-19-relief>.

5 <https://data.unicef.org/resources/covid-19-a-threat-to-progress-against-child-marriage/>.

6 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/news/2021/12/new-data-show-women-and-girls-far-less-likely-to-receive-covid-19-relief>.

7 Indeed, in Iran, women were worse off in 2010 in significant ways than they had been in 1960, much of it linked to the 1979 Islamic Revolution. (For further details the reader may consult the 2012 Women, Business and the Law report).

It remains that many forms of gender discrimination are still embedded in the law in many countries, and the pace of change remains particularly slow in the Middle East and North Africa. The latest update of the Women, Business and the Law (WBL) database from the World Bank – some of whose data is incorporated into GEGI – shows nearly 1,700 examples of such discrimination in the laws of the 190 countries where data is gathered. Among others, the law can curtail job opportunities available to a woman by imposing limits on her working hours or on the types of industries in which she can be employed, or by excluding her from major sectors of the economy or from better-paid jobs.

Ubiquitous gender inequalities, present in all areas of life – including the home, education, income, law, political representation and employment – inevitably undermine the growth potential of an economy. Especially in the context of low-income countries, this untapped potential cannot be ignored, as it is a key step in the journey towards improved prosperity for all.

To date, research on achieving prosperity has focused on issues such as access to education, industrialization and investment in vital infrastructures, the need to lay a foundation of macroeconomic stability, securing an open trade system, and assessing and monitoring corruption, to name just a few. Much less attention has been given, until relatively recently, to adequately and effectively assessing the role of women in advancing the progress of society.

Most recognize that the effects of equality for women are interconnected and compounding, and work to benefit the population, the state, and its overall economy. Improved education for women leads to lower births per woman, not only because of her greater knowledge of family planning, but also because educated women are more likely to want to engage in fulfilling work and have financial security, in addition to childbearing. Increased financial security across a wider population means less reliance on government facilities and social welfare. Lower fertility levels reduce child mortality and assist in expanding the range of educational opportunities for the next generation. Moreover, a working-age population that is growing more rapidly than the overall population will boost per-capita economic growth. All these factors intersect and work to boost and put the economy on a path of sustained growth over the long term.

In contrast, the subjugation of women has resulted in a whole range of social ills, economic loss, and political dysfunction. Gender equality is not a zero-sum game; it does not imply any loss for men. Quite the reverse. It is to the advantage of all to develop human potential across the board. The most competitive countries in the world, those that are prosperous, that have attained high levels of income per capita, and that are currently operating near the boundaries of what economists call the “technology frontier,” are the very same countries where women have the greatest equality, where their rights are protected, their well-being is promoted, and their potential is increasingly enhanced. In other words, when men walk in partnership with women, everyone benefits.⁸

⁸ Lopez-Claros, Augusto; Nakhjavani, Bahiyyih. *Equality for Women = Prosperity for All* (p. 5-10). St. Martin's Press, 2018.

Feature:

Progress and Setbacks for Afghani Women

The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 – after almost 20 years of involvement – left the country in a state of crisis and with a deteriorating economy. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said in late 2021 that 55 percent of the population needed humanitarian assistance and that almost 23 million people faced acute hunger.⁹

While many are suffering in Afghanistan, the situation for women in the past, present, and future touches on different elements of GEGI's pillars and provides an instructive case study.

After the Taliban were deposed in 2001, and for the next 20 years, there were significant improvements in the economic and social status of women. One can point to several notable developments. With considerable donor support, the Afghan government had built over 3,000 functional health facilities, which provided ready access to medical care to some 87 percent of the population. The school enrolment rate for girls in primary and secondary education in 2017 was about 39 percent compared to about six percent in 2003.

Also in 2017, over 100,000 women were receiving a university level education. Before the U.S. withdrawal, Afghani women held 21 percent of jobs in civil service, 16 percent of senior management positions, and 24 percent of parliamentary seats, in contrast to virtually none in these different roles before 2001. There were also 250 female judges in the country. The female labor force participation rate rose from about 15 percent in 2000 to almost 22 percent by 2019. Female life expectancy had risen from 56 years in 2001 to 66 years by 2017. Mortality in childbirth also fell sharply.

While progress over the past 20 years was significant, women in Afghanistan still face many more barriers to their progress than women in other countries. According to the World Bank's Women, Business and Law Project, there are 22 restrictive laws that limit opportunities for women. The GEGI Index for 2022 puts Afghanistan in last place out of 158 countries. Regardless, it's important to recognize that Afghani women still made huge strides across multiple areas of economic, social, and political endeavor. More rights for women overall improved their socio-economic status.

The Path Ahead

What happens next is hard to ascertain, although the status of women under Taliban rule in the past gives reason for concern. In the late 1990s, the UN High Commission for Refugees referred to onerous social, cultural, and economic restrictions imposed on the population, but particularly on women. They were forbidden to work outside the home, had limited access to healthcare, were subject to a host of mobility restrictions, and girls were banned outright from attending school and university. The constant

9 <https://reliefweb.int/organization/ocha>

threat of physical violence for possible violations of an array of new restrictions was an added burden. Most women in the country had experienced violence or knew someone who was a victim.

Most expect the current Taliban leadership to go back to their playbook and to dissuade foreign governments from meddling in their cultural and religious values, or their national sovereignty. But, many would argue that they do not represent the majority of Afghans. Their oppressive practices, rather, are based on the preferences of a power elite.

The Afghani population has tasted some of the economic and political freedoms enshrined in its 2004 Constitution and may well be less willing to go back to the Middle Ages. Memories are fresh from that disastrous experiment and women may resist in ways that were not possible a quarter of a century ago. The Taliban will also need to govern and, thus, will need to do the kinds of things governments do in the 21st century. Trading with the rest of the world, running public services, paying salaries, ensuring food security, protecting public health, and educating the population will require the support of the international community and its donor infrastructure.

More broadly, maybe dialogues over what is happening to fragile states like Afghanistan will impel a rethink of the concept of national sovereignty and redefine national interests in a way that provides incentives for states to find common ground in the pursuit of the noble values embedded in the UN Charter, with its emphasis on the protection of human rights and the rule of law. In the absence of that reorientation, such oppression is likely to keep occurring.

Governance and Equality

1. Eighty percent of the top 20 countries are full democracies, including Norway, Spain, and the Netherlands.
2. In contrast, 85 percent of the bottom 20 countries in the index are ruled by authoritarian regimes, including Kuwait, Sudan and Jordan.
3. There are a few countries, however, which are outliers. For instance, Rwanda is ranked 4th in the GEGI for governance and equality but is classified as an authoritarian regime by the Economist Intelligence Unit.
4. Forty-seven countries have had a woman serve as the central bank governor or finance minister.

Gender equality will not be achieved by individual actions and changing cultural attitudes alone, nor by simply removing barriers to opportunity. True equity for women can be achieved only when equal access and rights are institutionalized, both with respect to women's contributions to the economy and to the state. Governance itself must be so thoroughly infused with the concept of equality that it can, eventually, be fully implemented at all levels of society.

The increased presence of qualified women at the higher levels of the professions, of political leadership, and of intellectual creativity will have a salutary influence on society

and is urgently needed.¹⁰ The presence of women in positions of leadership in law and governance is especially important. In an historically male-dominated political system, women's qualifications and suitability for office have been consistently downgraded. As a result, the world has not been able to benefit from the insights and experiences that women can bring to political decision-making.¹¹

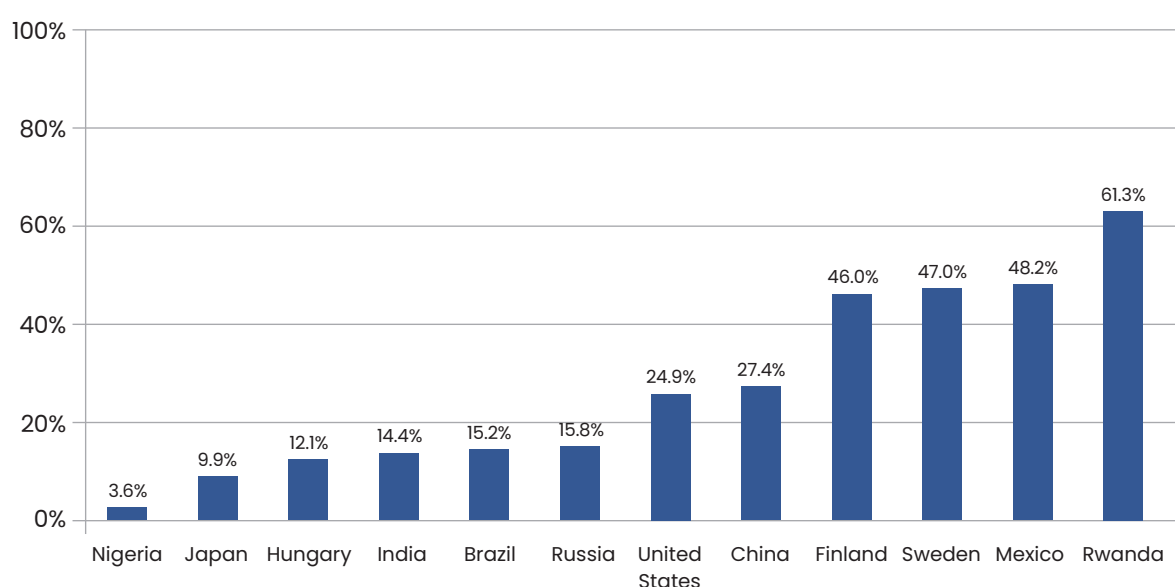
The Governance and Equality pillar of the GEGI examines the ratification of international legal instruments, the degree to which women are in positions of leadership in their countries, whether quotas for women exist in legislatures and corporate boards, a woman's legal rights vis-à-vis that of men, and voting rights.

Key Results

Political empowerment and the full involvement of women in all levels of governance is an important piece of the journey towards full gender equality. Globally, women hold about 25 percent of seats in national legislatures. While there is certainly a long way to the Interparliamentary Union, countries where women hold at least 45 percent of seats include Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Finland, Grenada, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Rwanda, South Africa, and Sweden.¹²

Over 60 percent of Rwanda's seats in the national parliament are held by women, which is the highest in the world. The Rwandan Constitution commits itself to granting women at least 30 percent of posts in decision making organs. A total of 24 seats, or two from each province and the city of Kigali, are also reserved for women.¹³ New Zealand comes closest

Percentage of Women in Parliament by Country



10 Lopez-Claros, Augusto; Nakhjavani, Bahiyyih. *Equality for Women = Prosperity for All*, St. Martin's Press, 2018, pg. 252.

11 Ibid, pg. 118.

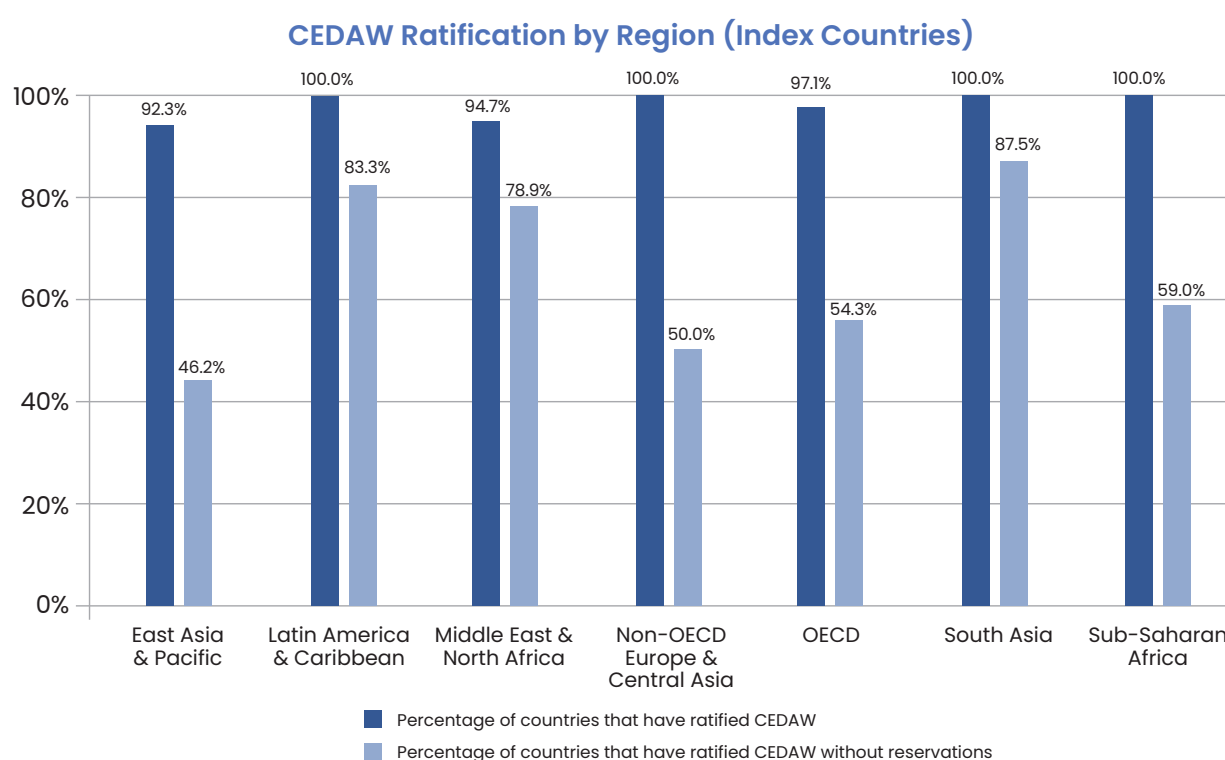
12 <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=1&year=2022>.

13 <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/country-view/255/35>.

to the parity point and despite not having mandated quotas for women. Rather, in New Zealand, political parties have set their own goals for quotas.

In the private sector, there are 15 countries with gender quotas for corporate boards, according to the 2021 GEGI Index: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, India, Israel, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Portugal, Spain, and the United Arab Emirates. Countries like France and Spain are taking the lead in this domain with quotas of around 40 percent and several other countries in Europe are on track to meet this goal by 2040. Brazil, China, India, and Russia are among countries where less than 15 percent of women are on corporate boards.

COVID-19 Ramifications



Presidents and prime ministers around the world – both women and men – stepped up to take leadership roles during COVID-19 emergencies, but much has been written since about the effectiveness of women’s leadership during this time.

A 2021 working paper from UN Women specified that “no matter their particular role or their country’s particular circumstances, many women placed premiums on communicating clearly, responding rapidly, and attending to social protection.” Among others, women leaders were adept at crisis management and communication, acted decisively and quickly to contain the virus, and prioritized policies to address the pandemic’s social and economic impacts, especially for vulnerable populations. Women, added the report, “played critical roles as governors and mayors; as cabinet

ministers, especially ministers of health; as members of parliament; and as COVID-19 task force members and experts.”¹⁴

Although women prime ministers and heads of state account for only about 10 percent of such positions among the 193 member states of the United Nations, women have been recognized for their leadership role in coping with the pandemic. This was the case in Finland, Germany, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, Barbados and Taiwan, all of which provided effective management through an approach that prioritized collective human security and socio-economic wellbeing, and was reflective of greater inclusiveness, transparency, and flexibility.

Of note too is that women represent close to 70 percent of the global health workforce and, as such, they have been on the frontlines of battling the COVID-19 pandemic and have been more vulnerable to the virus.¹⁵

Equality and the Law

With or without external shocks like COVID-19, an important legal indicator of a country’s commitment to gender equality is its adherence to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW is an international treaty resting on the foundations of the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is rooted in the “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family.” When a country becomes a signatory to this convention, it is a public commitment to equality and a legal obligation to eradicate gender-based discrimination.

Currently, 188 UN member states have ratified CEDAW and made that public commitment. Exceptions include the United States, Palau, the Holy See, Iran, Sudan, and Tonga. While a dedication to removing barriers to gender equality is a step in the right direction, the Convention does not ensure that countries will fully implement it. The effectiveness of CEDAW is also hindered by a state’s ability to include individual “reservations,” which limit its obligations under the terms of the treaty. These reservations cannot be incompatible with the objective and purpose of the treaty, but do provide countries with an excuse to avoid its full implementation based on, for example, political ideology, national security, legal standards, or cultural autonomy.

Among countries in the GEGI that have ratified CEDAW to date, 59 retain reservations that block the implementation of its statutes. For example, Jordan refuses to be bound by Article 9 Paragraph 2 of CEDAW, which grants women equal rights with men in respect to the nationality of their children. Similarly, Spain has excluded succession to the Spanish Crown in the Convention, thereby protecting male-preference through the principle of primogeniture. More troublesome are reservations that are more

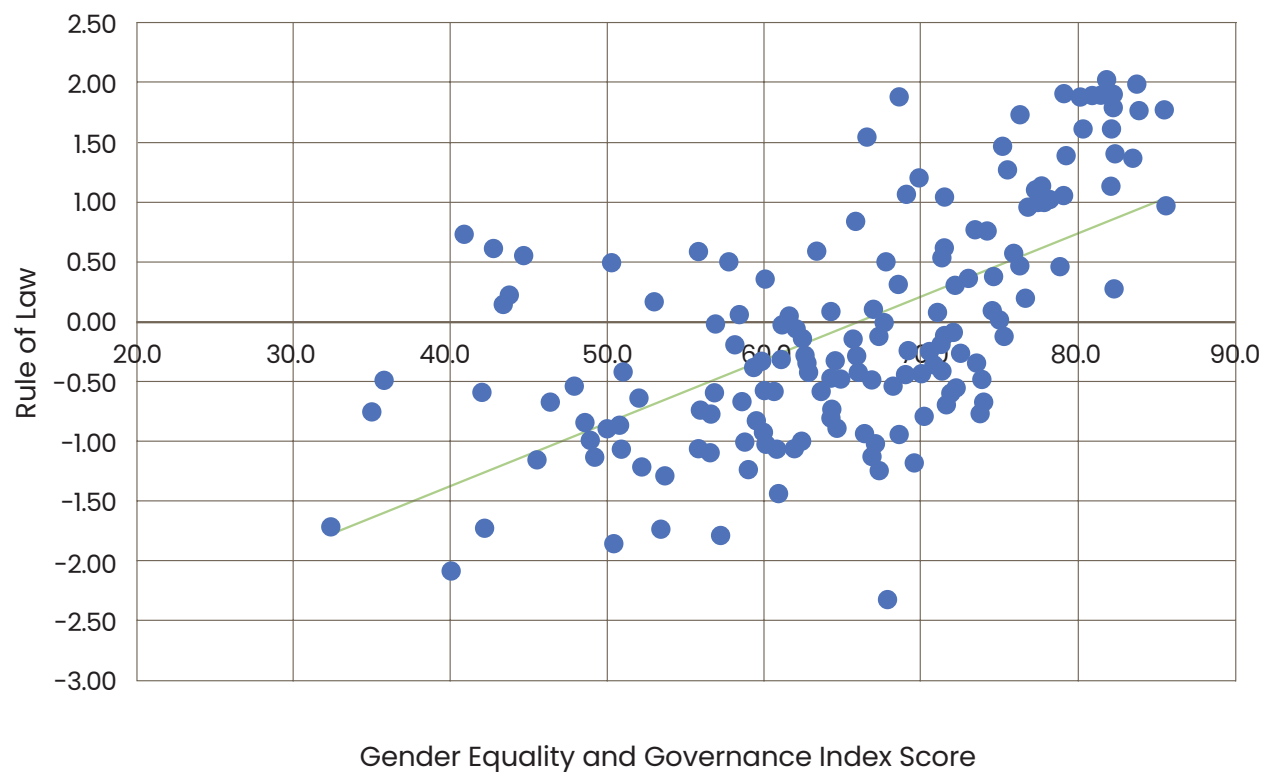
14 <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2021/Effective-decisive-and-inclusive-Womens-leadership-in-COVID-19-response-and-recovery-en.pdf>.

15 <https://www.catalyst.org/research/women-in-healthcare/>.

comprehensive and general in nature in countries like Bahrain, Bangladesh and Egypt, among others. In many countries, family law and family relations adhere to local practices rather than the gender equality inherent in full implementation of CEDAW, thus undermining gender equality globally.

At the national level, the legal framework of a country must support equal rights for women if real progress is to be made. The latest update of the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law database shows 1,669 examples of such discrimination in the laws of the 190 countries where data is gathered. One way to determine if a country's legal framework supports gender equality can be found in examining language in its constitution. Does a country's constitution contain an explicit clause on equality, for example? Addressing sexual equality and non-discrimination in a constitution may be a starting point, but it rarely is the last word in codifying a country's commitment to the pursuit of equality. Some countries, like Australia and Denmark, lack explicit references to equality or discrimination on the grounds of gender, but have implemented many measures to protect and support women's equality.

Gender Equality and Governance Index Score vs Rule of Law Score



The Role of Quotas

At the national level, many more countries are reserving seats for women in their national parliaments. Such political quotas can positively affect the lives of women at all levels of society and reduce gender disparities. The Interparliamentary Union (IPU) reports that more than 130 countries have adopted quota policies of some kind, including requirements in some countries that 30 or 50 percent of seats must go to women, for example.¹⁶

While the IPU recognizes that mandating quotas may not always result in advancements for women in parliaments, the impact of quotas in public leadership positions has still shown promising results. And, where these laws exist, there is clearly more government spending on social services and welfare and lower rates of corruption. Countries with quotas for women in parliament also show a higher degree of women participating in the labor force. More generally, women's visible presence in top-level positions in governance has important role modeling and symbolic effects at grassroots levels.

Women often have, and are getting, more prominent roles in subnational and local-level governance as well. The UN reports that women constitute 36 percent of elected members in local deliberative bodies in 133 countries.¹⁷ According to the 2022 GEGI Index, 72 countries have a quota for women in subnational governments. Studies have found that, when women are in leadership positions at these levels, investment in infrastructure increases and the quality of life improves for all members of the community. As women become more accepted in these roles, cultural biases also begin to change.

In the top 500 multinational corporations, only 16 percent of board members are women, although companies like Pfizer, Apple, and Goldman Sachs stand out with a percentage of 30 percent or above. While critics believe that meritocracy is undermined by selection of candidates based on gender, numerous studies have shown positive correlations between women on boards and financial success.

Voting Rights

Achieving the right to vote has also been crucial in ensuring the confidence and encouraging the empowerment of women everywhere, and in giving them the chance to participate in civic society and decision-making processes. It's not a magic wand, but, once the right to vote is in place, women's priorities can be protected and their civic and economic participation in society enhanced. Only as women have been gradually perceived as a significant portion of the electorate have their concerns finally been brought to the table to influence public discourse and resulting legislation.¹⁸

¹⁶ <https://www.ipu.org/news/press-releases/2019-03/new-ipu-report-shows-well-designed-quotas-lead-significantly-more-women-mps>.

¹⁷ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures>.

¹⁸ Lopez-Claros, Augusto; Nakhjavani, Bahiyyih. *Equality for Women = Prosperity for All*, St. Martin's Press, 2018, pgs. 164 and 167.

The 2021 GEGI Index measures how long it has been since women received the right to vote in a country. Although the concept of women's suffrage has been vigorously debated for well over two centuries – with women being given the right to vote 128 years ago – women's voting rights are still significantly hampered in several countries.

In countries like Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, and Tanzania, women can vote, but often in only certain types of elections and/or they face a variety of restrictions in doing so. Such restrictions may include pressure against voting coming from male members of the family or restrictions on her mobility.¹⁹

19 <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-where-women-cant-vote>.

Feature: The Cost of Excluding Women from Political Leadership – The Case of Nigeria

Abosede Alimi, Global Governance Forum Fellow

Nigeria is Africa's biggest economy, but women have an extremely low level of representation in political bodies. Women occupy only 8 of 109 seats in the lower house parliament and 21 of 360 seats in the upper house. Nigeria is not alone in its underrepresentation of women, but the costs associated with this unequal representation are multidimensional and far reaching.

The representation of women in decision-making roles benefits society overall. There is strong evidence that, as more women are elected, family-friendly and diverse policy making increases, as seen in such countries as France, Sweden, South Africa, and Rwanda. Women tend to promote "fairness, transparency, and impartiality" as well as improved service delivery. They also often propose structural reforms that have a redistributive agenda that addresses inequities, provides social safety nets, and leads to greater social and economic sustainability.

Other studies show a positive correlation between higher levels of gender equality and women's political participation with better overall governance and significantly lower levels of corruption. Nigeria ranks 184th out of 192 countries in female representation in parliament per the IPU.²⁰ And, it ranks at 154 out of 180 countries on the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI).²¹ As a comparison, Rwanda has more women in parliament than any other country – over 60 percent – and they come in at 52 on the CPI. Nigeria's level of corruption is widely known but has the potential to be remedied and mediated through more inclusive representation.

Costs of Running for Office

Even when select Nigerian women do get into office, they may have short tenures because of shaming or someone bringing corruption allegations against them. We've seen these patterns in Nigeria to get women out of office. Women need to learn how to protect themselves in office as not everyone is excited about them being there. Women also face a unique challenge of social discrimination when they do show interest in political involvement. This can range from verbal or sexual assault, threats, and media harassment.

Another barrier is the exorbitant cost of running a political campaign. Women, who are often economically disenfranchised, are unable to tap into the same financial support systems as men. We were hoping a recently amended Nigerian Electoral Act would limit campaign spending, but, in contrast, it has resulted in a 10-fold increase in the costs of

20 <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=1&year=2022>.

21 <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021>.

running a campaign. This has only decreased the already small group of women who can afford to run for office, and it dangerously homogenizes the political body.

Getting women into positions of political leadership should be prioritized and treated with urgency. However, it is not as simple as running and being elected. The option to choose politics in Nigeria's current climate is dangerous, physically and financially, for women striving for equality and justice.

Moving Forward

Our next general election in February 2023 provides a good opportunity to change the equation. As has been done elsewhere, one key recommendation is to set up a legislated gender quota with adequate political finance regulations to back it up. Everywhere there has been an increase in women's political representation, there has been a legislated quota. We are working hard to create additional legislative seats for women and ElectHER – an organization I founded – is raising funds to support and train more women who want to run for office. Nigeria has the largest economy and population in the region and, as such, can no longer carry on without women in their decision-making processes.

Feature: Nurturing Female Leadership in the Philippines

Maya Tamayo, Global Governance Forum Fellow

As the country with the longest tradition of democratic governance in Asia, the Philippines has long recognized the worth of women's political participation. The Republic Act 9710 – commonly called the Magna Carta of Women – provides for equitable representation in decision-making processes.

Such legal instruments are a testament to the unwavering zeal of a women's movement that has constantly pushed for reforms towards genuine empowerment and participation. In the last 2019 elections, women did take almost 30 percent of seats in the Senate and Congress, but there is still much work to be done. Women have less representation in local elections and there are still not enough women candidates running for office.

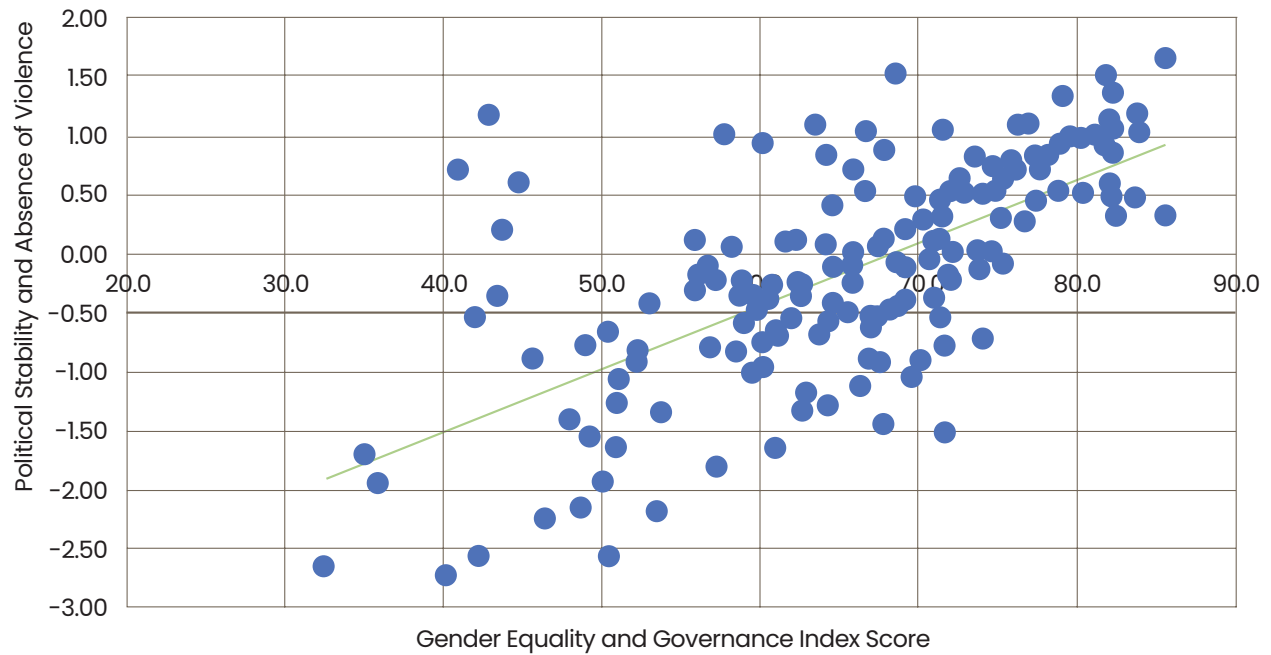
Patronage systems and power held by “political families” is strong in the Philippines, politics is still considered a male domain, and women aspiring to run for office are more likely to face tougher challenges. In addition, motherly duties often can't accommodate a political career. For women who do make it into office, they have had to carefully calibrate the extent to which they can adopt traditional leadership standards, which favor masculine traits. They are forced to constantly negotiate coming across as weak and emotional vs. strong and aggressive.

The Angat Bayi initiative (AB) – run under the auspices of the Center for Women's and Gender Studies at the University of the Philippines – strives to empower young women to step into these leadership roles through fellowship programs, mentoring support, and learning sessions. The aim of AB is to promote the unique attributes of women to create a stronger society, and to prioritize agency and justice.

At a practical level, AB matches young women with seasoned political leaders to share experiences and strategies. We also have a leadership course for women working in the civil service and a program called “Passion Projects.” The latter is a space where fellows develop out-of-the-box solutions to pressing problems in the community, such as in water, housing, health systems, gender-based violence, etc. Some of the projects that have emerged are the Feminist Legal Network, a women-led housing project in Baguio City, a Gender Responsive COVID-19 Survivor Toolkit, a women's shelter, and women's livelihood projects in select cities and municipalities. We also developed the Likhang Bayi Women's Economic Empowerment Program, which centers around developing an online marketplace and resource hub for women entrepreneurs.

While the Angat Bayi program has been transformational for many young women and raised their capacity, it goes beyond a single fellow and extends to the community she hopes to govern someday as well as to the future generations she will support.

Gender Equality and Governance Index Score vs. Political Stability and Absence of Violence Score



Education



1. The top 23 nations of the GEGI under this pillar are all democracies, although about a quarter of these are classified as flawed democracies.
2. The top 40 countries of the GEGI for this pillar are either high income or upper middle-income countries.
3. There are, as usual, exceptions to the rule. Gabon and Nigeria are major oil producers, but rank 155th and 149th respectively on the education pillar of the GEGI.
4. The country with the highest mean years of schooling for females is Estonia, or almost 14 years.

Efforts to address gender inequality through legislation, leadership, and political reform are necessary, but insufficient. When women and girls are denied access to education, patriarchy prevails, and human capital is wasted. Inequalities in education artificially reduce the pool of talent from which companies and governments can draw.

Expanding educational opportunities for girls is a direct way to boost economic growth and has a positive multiplier effect on families, communities, and countries. Income levels and educational attainment reinforce each other and generate a virtuous circle. And, with the right tools at their disposal, women and girls can be the source of innovative ideas and groundbreaking solutions to pressing global challenges.

The Education pillar of GEGI looks at diverse levels of primary, secondary, and tertiary education between genders as well as their views about education, their internet usage, and the impacts of teen pregnancy.

Key Results

While the world has made impressive strides in getting more girls into school over the past 25 years – over 180 million according to UNESCO – girls remain underrepresented in school settings at all levels in the developing world.²² The latest data from the GEGI show that all low-income states included in the index suffer from a low rate of school enrolment for girls relative to boys. In nations like these that need to promote a thriving economy, the focus should be on educating and enhancing the skills of the whole population, while ensuring that girls have equal educational opportunities.

Countries like Gabon and Nigeria have high incomes based on oil revenues, but rank low in educational attainment for women. This finding reflects a whole range of other gender-specific restrictions which are independent of its income status.

Democratic forms of governance appear to be better able to encourage the build-up of human capital. However, where patriarchal attitudes still dominate the culture, a democratic system of government may not necessarily result in greater access to education for women and girls. The GEGI examines these attitudes towards women in democratic states by asking, “Do you agree that women having the same rights as men is an essential characteristic of democracy?” The answers have been eye-opening. In 16 so-called democracies, less than 50 percent of the population agreed. Only one country has a positive response rate of more than 90 percent; none have 100 percent agreement.

The GEGI indicates that a majority of people surveyed in the Philippines, Kyrgyzstan and Russia believe that university education for boys is more important than for girls. These negative views make it more difficult for women to enter tertiary education or the workforce. Even when they have the same or better qualifications, women are often not taken seriously when they attempt to compete with men. Other than Estonia (mentioned above), other countries with the highest average lengths of time for females to stay in school include Canada, Germany, Latvia, the United States, and Switzerland. Young women in these countries, on average, are in school for 13–14 years.

Responses to COVID-19 threaten to reverse some of the important gains made in educating girls and young women. Projections by UNESCO and the Global Education Monitoring Report suggest that some 11 million girls may not return to school, with higher risks for adolescent girls in low and lower-middle-income countries. And, two-thirds of those countries have cut education budgets.²³

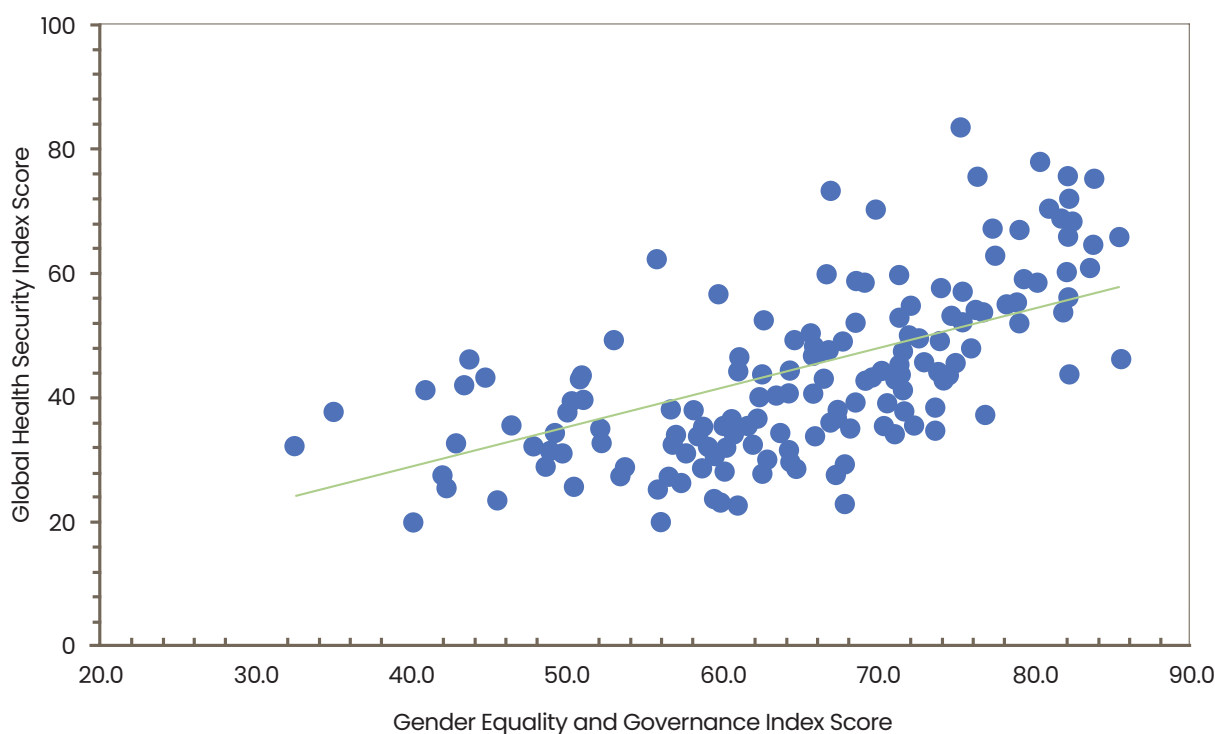
22 <https://en.unesco.org/news/girls-education-and-covid-19-new-factsheet-shows-increased-inequalities-education-adolescent>.

23 Ibid.

Although it was limited to several countries in Africa, research by Echidna Giving shows that overall school dropout rates were low, and similar, for boys and girls when schools reopened after COVID-19 shutdowns. Despite this positive news, there were more gender inequalities for adolescent girls – many of whom did not come back to school based, in part, on having to take on more household responsibilities, families having more limited economic means, and girls becoming pregnant, and/or being married off. A study in Kenya in late 2020 found that older adolescent girls were less confident that they would return to school and more likely to experience symptoms of depression than younger girls. The research confirms that COVID-19 has impacted the educational trajectories of these young women in long-lasting ways. Education systems globally are grappling with some of the same concerns.²⁴

Improvements in online learning is only part of the solution as, in least developed countries, 15 percent of women vs. 28 percent of men use the internet.²⁵ An article in Harvard Political Review about COVID-19 impacts on girl's education in India cites technology disparities between girls and boys. Government aided schools in India – and schools in many other countries – were often providing meals so, with these closed, many girls whose families live in poverty are experiencing both higher food insecurity and less access to education.²⁶

Gender Equality and Governance Index Score vs. Global Health Security Index



²⁴ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2021/09/22/what-do-we-know-about-the-effects-of-covid-19-on-girls-return-to-school/>.

²⁵ <https://en.unesco.org/news/girls-education-and-covid-19-new-factsheet-shows-increased-inequalities-education-adolescent>.

²⁶ <https://harvardpolitics.com/covid-19-girls/>.

The Influence of Culture

Longer term, if the prevailing attitude towards girls' education in a country is predominantly negative, statistics show that the level of education for women and girls is correspondingly low. And wherever there is "son preference," or wherever patriarchy is the underlying basis for power in the nation or the family, the education of girls invariably suffers.

Lack of investment in education for women and girls perpetuates the notion that a woman's role in society is solely to serve her husband and raise children. If traditional caretaking roles fall exclusively on women and girls, their potential is severely curtailed, and men are deprived of developing deeper relationships with their children. The economic cost to society when girls are groomed solely for underappreciated domestic service vs. entrepreneurship, leadership in public affairs, and creative contributions to society is immeasurable.

Another barrier to higher levels of education for some women is childbirth, whether the pregnancy was intended or consensual. According to the World Bank, millions of girls are sexually assaulted at, or on their way to, school every year.²⁷ Once a girl becomes pregnant it can be significantly harder and sometimes impossible for her to continue schooling or work.

Access to contraceptives can empower a woman to choose when she wants to become a mother and hold off until she finishes her education. Widespread availability of contraceptives creates opportunities for women and can increase levels of labor force participation for women who can control their fertility. Increasing the number of girls who receive an education also lowers fertility levels, reduces child and maternal mortality, and expands the range of educational and employment options available to the next generation.

Changing Norms

Findings from the latest World Values Survey indicates that support for gender is "part of a broader cultural change that is transforming industrialized societies with mass demands for increasingly democratic institutions. Although a majority of the world's population still believes that men make better political leaders than women, this view is fading in advanced industrialized societies, and also among young people in less prosperous countries."²⁸

But stereotypes are still engrained in many countries. This is true in relation to race, religion, cultural stereotypes, and, above all, gender prejudice. If the lesson plans used and subject matter taught in schools merely reinforce inequities, no amount of literacy

27 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/girlseducation#1>.

28 <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSCContents.jsp>.

and education will serve to close the gender gap.²⁹ Gender stereotypes can also influence career choices, with young women choosing not to pursue fields in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) for example.

Better compensation for teachers would also make a difference to reorient the critical role of teachers in advancing civilization. Teachers, the world over, are generally undervalued, poorly paid, and overworked. If education is not given the importance it deserves, if the teaching profession is not better validated in financial terms, not only the millions of women who teach but the billions of children they teach and therefore society will suffer.³⁰ According to the most recent data compiled by the Organization for Cooperation and Development, secondary school teachers with at least 15 years of work experience make over \$100K/year in Luxembourg, followed by Germany at over \$90K.³¹

29 Lopez-Claros, Augusto; Nakhjavani, Bahiyyih. *Equality for Women = Prosperity for All* (pp. 210–211). St. Martin's Press.

30 Lopez-Claros, Augusto; Nakhjavani, Bahiyyih. *Equality for Women = Prosperity for All* (p. 221). St. Martin's Press.

31 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/girlseducation#1>.

Feature: Education and Gender in Guatemala – Building the Promise of Prosperity

Martha Lidia Oxí Chuy, Global Governance Forum Fellow

Guatemala is a multicultural and multilingual country with great ecological wealth. However, Guatemala ranks 127th out of 189 countries in the 2020 Human Development Report and close to 50 percent of the population is considered poor. About 20 percent of the country's population is illiterate and the national education system has low levels of coverage, efficiency, and quality. Opportunities after elementary school are particularly limited.

Inequality in Guatemala is also strongly linked to ethnicity, gender, and geography. If you are indigenous – about 42 percent of the population – and are living in rural areas or are female, you will face many more barriers. Only two percent of indigenous women have access to university, for example, and very few make it into political positions. Rural indigenous women are among the most vulnerable, and discriminated against, segment of the population.

To change that dynamic, some visionary leaders created the MAIA Impact School to ensure that indigenous girls and young women – in middle and high school – had access to a holistic education and advancement opportunities. The name MAIA is related to the symbol for wisdom in the Mayan tradition and is in Sololá, one of the municipalities with the highest poverty rates in the country. It is one of the few organizations in Central America designed, led, and managed by indigenous women and has been in operation, in some form, for six years.

The 270 students currently studying with MAIA have access to a high-quality education that is based on achieving culturally relevant, 21st century skills. As an organization, MAIA invests in efforts to enable students to achieve four goals: economic independence, continuing education, having a family on their own terms, and empowering them to empower others. At MAIA, indigenous language and identity is celebrated, and the rural environment valued. Being from the communities themselves, the management team and teachers know the potential and needs of the girls, so it is an innovative model of efficiency and locally-led development.

All the girls are on scholarships, and 50 new students are accepted every year. The selection process is rigorous and includes the parent's commitment and involvement for the full six years – including a program for the students and their families on social and emotional learning. Funding has come from individuals, foundations, and awards. The latter includes the Zayed Sustainability Award for the best secondary institution in the Americas.

Extended school closures related to COVID-19 will further widen existing inequalities in Guatemala. Although MAIA's work has also been impacted, it was still able to maintain

student retention rates at 98 percent. Students had access to technological tools that have allowed them to continue with their learning.

By supporting the next generation of these conscientious and capable young women, we hope to reduce the inequities and to break the cycles of poverty that have held back Guatemala's development.

Women and Work



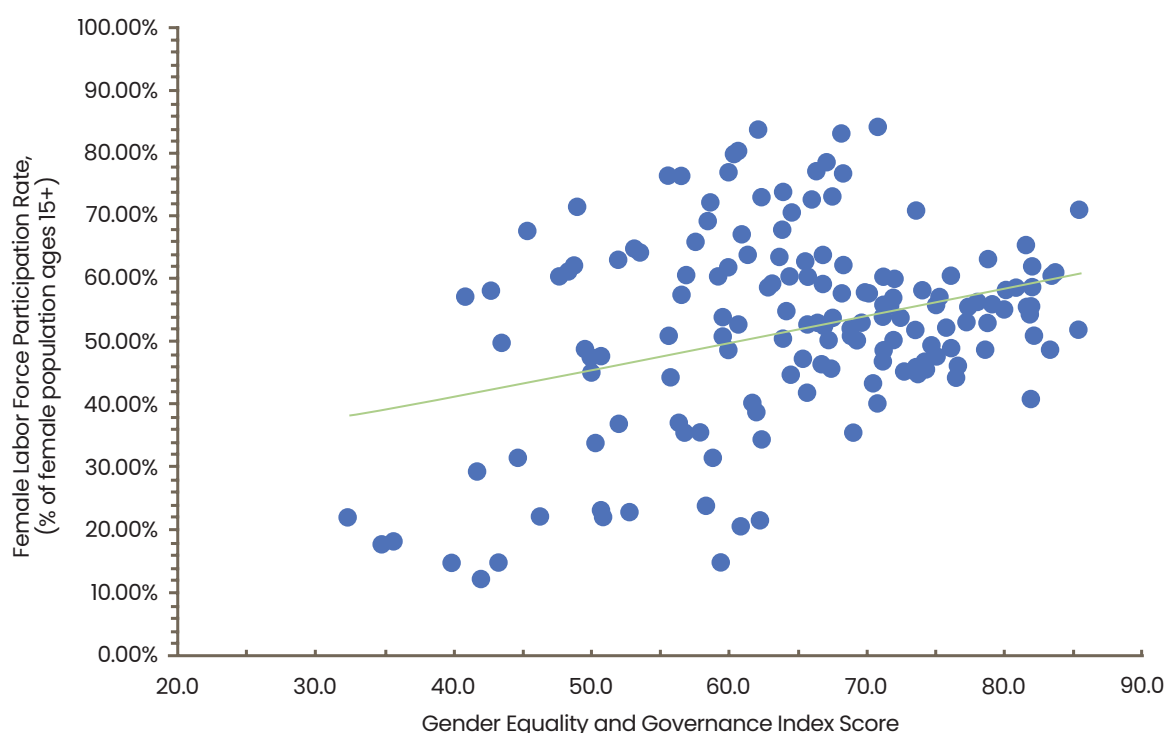
1. The top 20 countries of the GEGI in women and work are high income, democratic states. The overwhelming majority of them are members of the European Union.
2. Currently, 18 countries in the world do not allow women to obtain a job in the same way as a man. These countries are all authoritarian regimes and are mainly in the Middle East, North Africa, or Sub-Saharan Africa.
3. Some 70 countries in the world do not allow women to work in the same industries as men. These countries span all regions, income levels, and regime types.³²
4. In Russia, there are over 450 jobs that are off-limits to women, including many highly paid jobs in the energy sector and in the transportation and industrial manufacturing sectors.

Equal opportunity for both women and men to enter the workforce is essential for future growth and economic development. When women work and earn equal income because of their efforts, they are also empowered both in the workplace and in the home. Studies have shown that, in those families where women contribute to family income, more resources are allocated to children's health and education. The families themselves also exhibit higher levels of saving, undertake more productive investments, and have better credit ratings.

³² This data comes from the most recent iteration of the Women, Business, and the Law survey that is published by the World Bank.

Unfortunately, there is still a wide gender gap in employment. Labor force participation rates for women are consistently lower than they are for men nearly everywhere, and wage gaps between women and men persist. In about half of countries covered in this index, the law does not mandate equal remuneration. As a result, women earn less than men for comparable work. This is a form of discrimination that contributes to the feminization of poverty, or the increasing inequality in living standards between men and women.

Gender Equality and Governance Index Score vs. Female Labor Force Participation Rate



A prerequisite for narrowing gender inequalities in the workforce is to broaden the range of incentives that will facilitate her entry into the labor force. The “Women and Work” pillar of the GEGI examines the incentives in place to either encourage, or discourage, women from working. These include paid parental leave, childcare support, and cultural attitudes about working women. It also measures whether it is easy, or difficult, for women to get a job in the same way as a man, to work in the same industries, and to be paid equal wages. Finally, it looks at factors like whether the law mandates non-discrimination in employment, whether retirement benefits are equal, and who is most likely to be in vulnerable employment situations.

Key Results

In the latest index, the top countries for the least discrimination – and most opportunities – for women in the workplace were Belgium, Canada, France, Italy, Luxembourg, New Zealand, and the United States. Women in countries like Afghanistan, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan, Qatar, and Sri Lanka had the fewest. The former are largely full or flawed democracies, and the latter are largely authoritarian regimes.

Countries with some of the lowest gender pay gaps included Gambia, Malawi, the Netherlands, Panama, Sweden, Tanzania, and Thailand. Some with the highest included Armenia, Brazil, Chile, Estonia, Russian Federation, South Africa and South Korea.

In many countries, especially in the Middle East, there are significant restrictions on women and work. The female to male labor force participation rate is 26 percent in Pakistan, 25 percent in Egypt, 24.3 percent in Iran, followed by Jordan at 22.8 percent and Syria at 19.7 percent.³³ These ratios indicate that many women in these countries are not formally employed, but work in informal sectors like childcare and domestic work. Women are also more likely to work in vulnerable industries, or those with high labor intensity and low wages. In Egypt, the difference between the share of men and women employed in these industries is about 17%, indicating that women find themselves in this type of employment at a higher frequency than men.

In Iran, there are no criminal penalties or civil remedies for sexual harassment in the workplace, no laws mandating equal pay, no paid parental leave, and women are forced to retire earlier than men. The law also fails to prohibit discrimination by creditors based on gender, posing a huge barrier to women in the workplace.

COVID-19 Ramifications

Over the past two years, the cascading impacts from COVID-19 has both created new challenges and unveiled existing inequalities in the labor market. The crisis has also laid bare and exacerbated the growing economic divide within, between, and across socio-economic groups, but particularly for women. According to the World Economic Forum, one in three jobs held by women were designated as “essential” during the pandemic, yet women faced disproportionately high unemployment due to their work in sectors like retail, restaurants and the hospitality industry. The economic crisis created by COVID-19 is expected to contribute to global unemployment of more than 200 million people in 2022, with women and youth workers worst hit, reports the United Nations.³⁴

A UN report on the impact of COVID-19 on women said that “From past experience and emerging data, it is possible to predict that the impacts of the COVID-19 global recession

33 This data from the GEGI is modeled on the International Labor Organization estimate.

34 <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/05/women-are-essential-to-the-economy-gender-gap-inequality-childcare-workforce-employment/> and <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/06/1093182>.

will result in a prolonged dip in women's incomes and labor force participation, with compounded impacts for women already living in poverty.”³⁵

Since early 2020, there have also been significant changes to women's everyday lives, especially for mothers who often had to juggle paid work with heavier childcare responsibilities. In most countries, childcare centers and schools closed temporarily, or for extended periods, to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Drastically changed home dynamics resulted in many parents and caregivers being pressured to work from home or find a way to manage new challenges.

The unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work strained, and continues to strain, many families and could erase decades of advances in gender equality. Before the pandemic, for every one hour of unpaid care work delivered by men, three hours were delivered by women. That figure has at least doubled with women delivering at least six hours for every one hour of unpaid care work undertaken by men, according to the United Nations.³⁶

The National Council for Women in Egypt published “Egypt's Rapid Response to Women's Situation during the COVID-19 Outbreak,” which created a plan of action to ensure that women in Egypt received more support to stay and succeed in the workforce despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic.³⁷

Incentives to Work

Longer term trends indicate that female-friendly workplace practices have been on the rise. Over the past half century, for example, there has been progress in dismantling numerous discriminations against women embedded in the laws of countries, many of which had imposed various restrictions on her participation in the job market.

While some women may wish to give primacy to keeping a home and/or raising children, others may need to make a choice between childbearing and the need to enter the labor market for some measure of financial autonomy or to advance their careers.³⁸ Thus, maternity and paternity leave policies, tax-deductible childcare services, and guaranteed non-discrimination during the child-rearing years is critical. Countries with limited, or nonexistent, maternity and paternity leave disincentivize women's decisions to join or continue in the workforce after the birth of a child.

As the data in the GEGI indicates, 71 countries do not offer at least 14 weeks of leave, although the World Health Organization recommends 16 weeks. Paid parental leave is only offered in 43 economies, or in about 30 percent of the countries in the index. This

35 <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/Policy-brief-The-impact-of-COVID-19-on-women-en.pdf>. Page 4.

36 UN Women (2020). Whose time to care: Unpaid care and domestic work during COVID-19. <https://data.unwomen.org/publications/whose-time-care-unpaid-care-and-domestic-work-during-covid-19>

37 <http://ncw.gov.eg/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/policypapereng.pdf>

38 López-Claros and Nakhjavání (2018), p. 121–123.

suggests an uneven allocation of childcare. These figures have not changed since the last GEGI report, which signals an unfortunate stagnation. Paternity leave policies also provide an alternative and complement to maternity benefits and bear significantly on a woman's decision to work or return to work, as well as the social benefit of parents bonding with their young children.

Working without Restrictions

The law can curtail job opportunities available to a woman and, thus, reduce meaningful recompense for her social contributions. It can impose limits on her working hours or on the types of industries in which she can be employed, excluding her from major sectors of the economy and from better-paid jobs.³⁹

Restrictions on women's ability to work in certain industries are based on historically strict norms of division of labor, which reinforces the biological differences between the sexes. These restrictions discourage women from broadening the range of their professional interests and contribute to a large wage gap. According to the World Bank, over 100 countries have laws that prevent women from working in some jobs – like in manufacturing, mining or construction, for example.⁴⁰

Female labor force participation matters, but so do the kinds of jobs they can fill and how well-paid these jobs can be. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2020 shows that women are, on average, heavily under-represented in many emerging professions, with the largest gap in those requiring disruptive technical skills, like cloud computing, engineering and artificial intelligence.⁴¹

The GEGI data reveals many barriers that must be removed if workplace gender equality is to be achieved. Most significantly, cultural norms, traditional attitudes, and legal restrictions determine whether women choose to work in the first place, which jobs they can seek, and how much they will be paid for services.⁴²

39 López-Claros and Nakhjavání (2018), p. 9-10.

40 Note: The World Bank collects data for 190 countries; the GEGI has collected data on 158 countries. <https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/wbl>.

41 <https://www.weforum.org/projects/hardwiring-gender-parity-in-the-future-of-work>.

42 López-Claros and Nakhjavání (2018), p. 107.

Feature: Labor participation and the time poverty “epidemic” faced by women

Diana Chacon, Global Governance Forum Fellow

The third pillar of GEGI – on Women and Work – showcases the uneven playing field in which women must balance their work and family lives. Exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the time poverty faced disproportionately by women around the world can be perceived as a sort of “epidemic” that needs to be discussed and acted upon.

Under typical social constructions, wage labor and individuals became interconnected and defined either as “breadwinners” (male household head) or “their dependents” (women and children).⁴³ The differences between the activities completed by the wage-earning male and the caregiving role of women in the family will further define economic measures of productivity. Within these parameters, the choices that produce the highest level of utility are the ones regarded as economically beneficial and, therefore, the ones to be sought after.

Sometime in the 1980s there was a refocus of economic development strategies that began to address the systematic bias towards women in economic activity and enabled their greater participation in the labor force. Although some might affirm that the shift of the economic system challenged the patriarchal order of society and the role of women by enabling them access to the workforce, this argument can be contested. The type of inclusion attained has given rise to the so-called *feminization of labor*, characterized by the liberalization of markets and deregulation, which were sometimes accompanied by work in precarious conditions, leaving women to deal with the “second shift.” In this shift, women may be juggling housework, childcare, and the provision of care for elderly relatives in disproportionately higher amounts in relation to their male partners and/or other men in the household. As a result, working life represents an element of burden and stress, regardless of its merits and the satisfaction it could bring.

During the pandemic, the challenges of this shift were shown to affect women regardless of their socioeconomic level. This has, and will have, profound effects on their mental health, but also on their children and the rest of the family. Moreover, the meager conditions in which poor women are working – and the limited availability of resources with which to manage the extra burdens – reveal that they are especially prone to suffer from structural inequalities.

The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action underlined the importance of better government policies that would enable a more equitable sharing of responsibilities between men and women. Although the issue is multifaceted and touches the very core of the economic structures of our society, there are different ways to tackle it.

43 Beneria, L., Berik, G. and Floro, M. (2015). *Gender, development and globalization: Economics as if All People Mattered*. New York: Routledge.

It is imperative to reframe the provision of care as an infinite cost-free resource that accounts for the gaps of public services to one that positions such care as a social and collective responsibility in which unpaid caregivers are treated as right holders.

Women should not have to struggle to try and fit into our still largely “women unfriendly” societies to keep up with their roles as mothers, daughters, workers, wives, and so on. Instead, these roles should also be considered towards achieving communities that support and empower them. From a policy approach, this will mean that women’s contributions to society would need to account for welfare arrangements that tackle “time poverty,” liberating working women from the burden of the “double shift.” Mechanisms for improvement can include publicly funded daycare and elderly care facilities, as well as caregiving allowances. Policy initiatives need to also work towards behavior change activities that re-evaluate historically established traits associated with women and transfer an equal amount of responsibility to men.

Feature: ClosinGap

Female talent as the key to economic recovery

Ana Polanco, Chairwoman of ClosingGap Executive Committee and Head of Operations Europe, Merck Group.

Anna Merino, Strategy & Economic Director at PwC Spain, and Author of ClosinGap Index.

ClosinGap was born with the commitment to promote social transformation for women in the business and economic sphere, through a close public-private collaboration. Twelve companies that joined to form this cluster in Spain have been working on this objective since 2018 – Merck, Mapfre, Repsol, Meliá, Mahou San Miguel and Solán de Cabras, PwC, Caixabank, BMW Group, Kreab, the CEOE Foundation, the ONCE Social Group and Telefónica.

Leading companies in the main economic sectors, which have close to one million employees around the world, have worked together and in a coordinated way to promote female talent. The aim is to reduce, and eventually eliminate, the many gender gaps that still persist in our society.

Spain is one of the most advanced countries in gender equality. This is highlighted by numerous international indices, such as GEGI, where Spain ranks as the second-best country in the world for gender equality. However, the data also reveal that there is still a long way to go to achieve full equality of opportunities between men and women.

At ClosinGap, we set out to focus on the potential of women in relation to economic growth and on how the productivity of our country could increase if we had an equal society. We have worked conscientiously to promote knowledge and to debate inequality from an economic perspective – putting in the forefront the opportunity cost that the different gender gaps have for the economy.

One of our efforts from the beginning was to measure in an aggregate way how we were faring in terms of parity in Spain, and to measure it periodically to be able to monitor progress and setbacks. Taking it a step further, we carried out research that would allow us to have a combined and dynamic vision of how we are evolving. In the search for possible formulas, and with this objective in mind, the first ClosinGap Index was launched in 2021. It was a synthetic indicator built with a very solid methodology and with quality data from public sources. It was also annually updated.

The ClosinGap Index was developed by PwC, one of the members of the cluster, and it is the first indicator with these characteristics that exists in Spain and one of the few developed internationally. It is made up of five categories with a great impact on GDP, either directly or indirectly, and interrelated: Employment, Education, Work-Life Balance, Digitization, and Health and Well-being. These categories, in turn, are made up of 28 key variables in the personal and professional development of a society.

In 2020, the ClosinGap Index stood at 64.1%, which means that there would still be almost 36 gap points to close to achieve equality in Spain. In addition, if we take into

account how this marker has evolved in the last five years, since 2015, we conclude that, if this trend continues, we will not reach 100% parity until 2055. That is, we would need 35 years to achieve full equality, if we do not introduce measures that accelerate this rate. This also confirms the magnitude of the challenge we are facing. The indicator was updated in 2021 in order to integrate the effects of the pandemic, showing a decrease to 63.3% attributable to, among others, an increase in the gender gap in terms of work-life balance due to more women asking for part-time employment for family and home-related issues. Moreover, the pandemic had a negative effect of two additional years, or up to 37 years, to close the gap in Spain.

Calculating the impact on GDP of these inequalities and the economic potential that we could gain if we were able to close these gaps was another fundamental objective that we set for ourselves. Despite representing 51.4% of the working-age population, women only contribute 41.5% of GDP.

All the categories analyzed have an impact on the economy through the labor market, where there are evident imbalances in the participation between men and women, in the number of hours worked, and in the under-representation of women in the most productive sectors. If we were able to equalize the rates in these three areas, the Spanish GDP could grow by up to 18.5%, which translates into an increase of 231 billion euros.

We certainly cannot afford to give it up. We must persist in the message that the promotion of female talent is not only fairer for women and society, but that it is essential to accelerate the growth and reconstruction of our country. Equality must be a priority on the political, social, and business agenda because, only with a firm commitment and an ambitious plan of action, will we be able to see real progress. We can't wait 35 years. This is the only way to transform society and build a healthier economy.

Entrepreneurship and Business



1. Nearly 60 percent of women have accounts with a financial institution or with a mobile money service provider, but the range of variation is very large from about 7 percent in Burundi to 99 percent in Denmark
2. Authoritarian regimes score lowest in allowing women equal access and opportunities in entrepreneurship. Seventeen of the worst ranking 20 countries globally have this type of regime.
3. Countries ranking worst in this pillar span income groups, ranging from low income to high income, which indicates that other factors are at play.
4. Other than COVID-related, women face less mobility restrictions in the world today than 10 years ago. Countries with mobility restrictions vary by regime type, region and income level. Two countries share the lowest ranked spot: Iran and Oman.

Given that just seven percent of women in low-income countries are employed as wage workers, entrepreneurship or self-employment is an equally important avenue to empower women. According to the World Bank, women own about one-third of all businesses worldwide. This statistic, however, conceals significant regional variations. Women own just 18 percent of businesses in South Asia but own 50 percent of businesses in Latin America and the Caribbean.⁴⁴

44 <https://www.enterprisesurveys.org/en/enterprisesurveys>

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) for 2020/2021, women lag men in starting businesses in most countries. The GEM report noted that only six economies – out of 43 analyzed – had female entrepreneurship that matched or exceeded the male rate. While the gender gap is small in some countries, the report noted, “there are still too many economies in which men are much more likely to be starting a new business than women, including nine GEM economies in which men were at least twice as likely.”⁴⁵

The Entrepreneurship and Doing Business pillar assesses how easily a woman can launch and operate a business in each country. This includes looking at measures such as whether women can open bank accounts, register a business, and apply for credit in the same way as a man in 158 countries. It also measures whether they have the same level of mobility, such as whether they can apply for a passport and travel abroad by themselves. Finally, it examines equal opportunities to property rights and inheritance.

Key Results

In the index, the question is asked, ‘Can a woman open a bank account in the same way as a man?’ Answers reveal that this is not possible in Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, and Niger. However, this question barely scratches the surface of the challenges facing women in entrepreneurship. The instances of countries prohibiting discrimination by creditors based on gender reveals that, even if women could open a bank account in the same way, they may not be protected from gender-based discrimination in gaining access to credit, for instance.

According to the World Bank’s “Women, Business and the Law” report for 2021, several economies have made reforms since 2019 that have made it easier for women to register a business and/or to access finance. These include Pakistan, Bahrain, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, the Marshall Islands and Uzbekistan. Regardless, notes this report, “108 economies still lack legal provisions that expressly prohibit gender-based discrimination in access to finance,” which is necessary for women to become entrepreneurs.⁴⁶

In the GEGI, Cabo Verde, Iceland, and the Maldives have a three-way tie for the first-place ranking in terms of the ease of starting and running a business compared to men. Women in most countries – at least 116 of them – have the same mobility rights as men.

In terms of property rights, there are 114 countries that also achieved a perfect score, meaning that women have equal rights to property and inheritance of assets. Mauritania and Niger share the lowest ranked spot on this measurement.

45 <https://www.gemconsortium.org/report/gem-20202021-global-report><https://www.gemconsortium.org/report/gem-20202021-global-report>, pg. 62.

46 https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/sites/wbl/documents/2021/02/WBL2021_ENG_v2.pdf. Pg. 19.

COVID-19 Ramifications

Crises like the pandemic have exposed underlying fragilities and exacerbated existing inequalities. The UN Secretary-General's policy brief underscored the regressive impact of COVID-19 on gender equality. For example, while women make up only 39 percent of global employment, they accounted for 54 percent of overall job losses. Women's jobs, in other words, were almost twice as vulnerable to the crisis as men's.⁴⁷

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor also points to "evidence that the proportion of females starting or running a new business in 2020 has declined much more sharply than the male equivalent." They surmise that the reason is because of women's heavier burdens with household and home-schooling work that has followed the pandemic.⁴⁸

Some of the largest gender gaps in this domain during the pandemic were in North America and Europe. Women in North America, for example, were 50 percent more likely than men to report closing a business due to the pandemic. Some of this may have been due to less ability to rely on paid family care services outside the home.⁴⁹

According to the World Bank, business closures were also higher for women-owned businesses during the pandemic than for those owned by men. This discrepancy was the case across all world regions.⁵⁰ It is expected that more data will surface on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on business overall, but for women in particular.

Benefits of Entrepreneurship

Society has much to gain from closing the gender gap in entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurs contribute significantly to economic innovation and growth if given access to the same training, capital, credit, and rights as men. And, on average, women invest 90 percent of their earnings back into their communities – compared to just 35 percent for men.

With the pressures of increasing globalization, nations are often looking to increase their competitiveness on the international stage. Studies show that countries which have rapidly integrated women into the workforce have improved their international competitiveness, allowing for the efficient development of export-oriented manufacturing industries. These industries are key to stabilizing the economy in the long term.

47 <https://globalgovernanceforum.org/building-forward-better-why-womens-leadership-matters-during-covid-19-beyond/>

48 <https://www.gemconsortium.org/report/gem-20202021-global-report>, pg. 62

49 <https://entrepreneurship.babson.edu/gem-women-entrepreneurship-report/>

50 <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/women-entrepreneurs-needed-stat> and <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/global-state-small-business-during-covid-19-gender-inequalities>.

Investment in female entrepreneurship typically falls in three broad categories: improving women's access to capital and credit, training women on critical financial and business tactics, and creating access to networks and to markets. Creating incentives for individuals and corporations to invest in women-owned companies, as WEConnect International does, and developing mentorship programs to train young women entrepreneurs have valuable payoffs.

"More than half of women in developing countries see entrepreneurship as a path to a better future, despite often facing persistent structural and cultural barriers" says Smaiyra Million, Executive Director of The Arthur M. Blank Center for Entrepreneurship at Babson College.⁵¹

These barriers include addressing outdated attitudes toward women. Social and cultural norms must be adjusted to support rather than ostracize women in the business world, both through law and practice. Factors like incentives that governments offer to facilitate the integration of women to the labor market must also be addressed, as this determines a woman's desire and ability to work outside the home.

Ongoing Challenges

Women have made great strides, but still face a variety of structural inequalities and barriers from engaging in entrepreneurship and doing business compared to men. The International Finance Corporation has found that women entrepreneurs face a global financing deficit of \$1.5 trillion. This is primarily due to lack of access to financial accounts and services, which is most acute in low-income countries. In these countries, only 32 percent of women, on average, have a financial account. Furthermore, because women tend to earn less and have fewer property rights than men, they have a harder time providing collateral to secure a loan. Without account access, women are often more reliant on male family members, which limits their independence.

Women often have different goals for starting a business and are more likely to do so, "out of necessity"⁵² whilst men are more likely to be, "pursuing an opportunity." This difference greatly affects the ways women engage in business, often choosing more low risk opportunities.

Lack of access to freedom of travel poses a significant barrier to a woman's ability to grow and expand business. Although shifts to remote work in a world impacted by COVID-19 may change travel norms, traveling has been key to building business partnerships, making deals, and growing a successful company or firm. A pre-Covid study published in 2009 in Oxford Economics USA found that for every dollar spent on travel, businesses reap \$12.50 in incremental revenue.⁵³

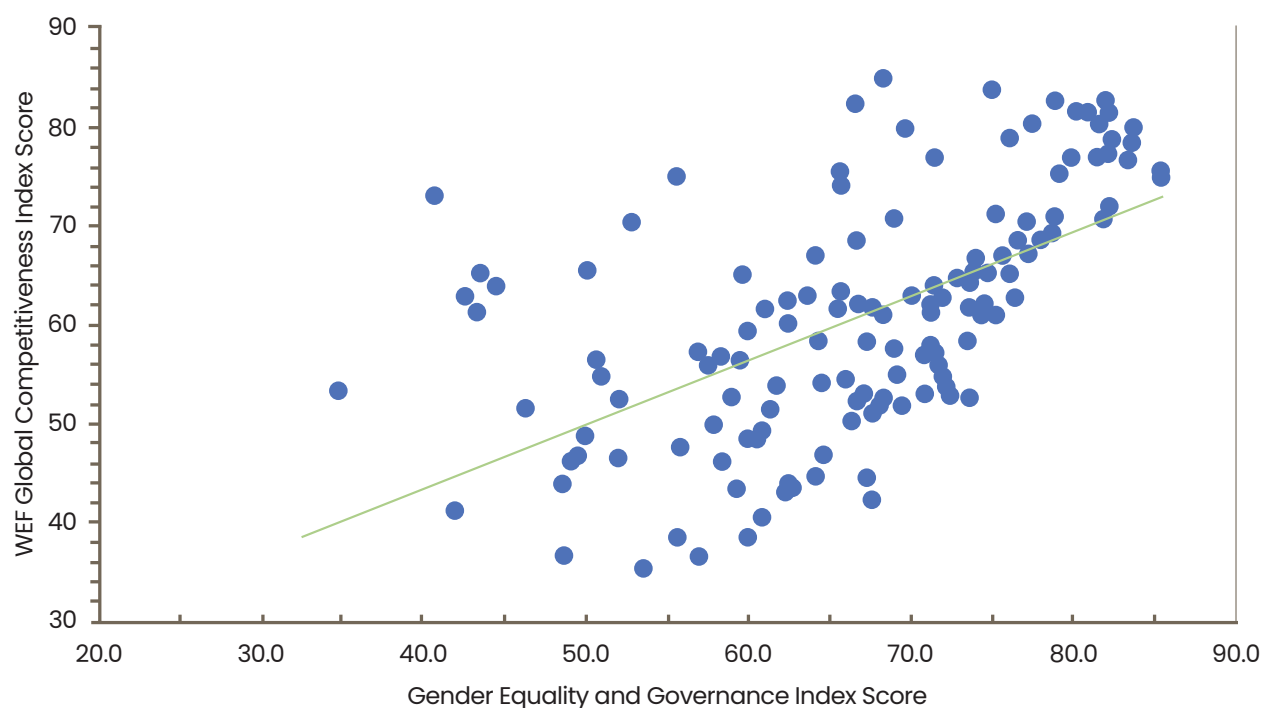
51 <https://entrepreneurship.babson.edu/gem-women-entrepreneurship-report/>.

52 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. (2019). 2018/2019 Women's Entrepreneurship Report.

53 Oxford Economics USA. (2009). The return on investment of US business travel.

If women are precluded from moving freely outside the home, applying for a passport, and traveling abroad, their business ventures are likely to suffer. Globally, women have 88 percent of the mobility that men have. Women's mobility is most restricted in the MENA region, where women only have 56 percent of the mobility accorded to men. For instance, women can only travel freely outside the home in 45 percent of MENA countries whereas in Europe and Latin America, women approach full equality on this front, reaching upwards of 95 percent of the same degree of mobility as men.

Gender Equality and Governance Index Score vs. Global Competitiveness Index Score



PILLAR V

Violence Against Women



1. Of the 20 countries that have the best aggregate score on this pillar of the GEGI, more than half are in Europe. Sub-Saharan Africa scores lowest, followed by the Middle East and North Africa.
2. The lifetime risk of maternal death across the world is one in 3,864. However, in countries such as Chad, South Sudan, and Sierra Leone, this risk is closer to 1 in 20.
3. Currently, 30 countries do not have domestic violence legislation.
4. Globally, on average, 56 percent of women feel safe walking alone at night.

Efforts to improve gender equality in governance, education, employment, and entrepreneurship are laudable, but will fall short unless one crucial obstacle to equality is addressed: violence against women. Much of this violence goes unacknowledged, unreported, and unaddressed, or is referred to as something else, like death from “injuries.” Some 7,000 women – mostly young brides – are still dying annually in India over disputes related to the provision of dowries to the bridegroom’s family.⁵⁴

The World Health Organization reports that, globally, about 30 percent of women worldwide experience some form of physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes. Most

⁵⁴ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1752928X20301426> ; <https://www.statista.com/statistics/632553/reported-dowry-death-cases-india/>

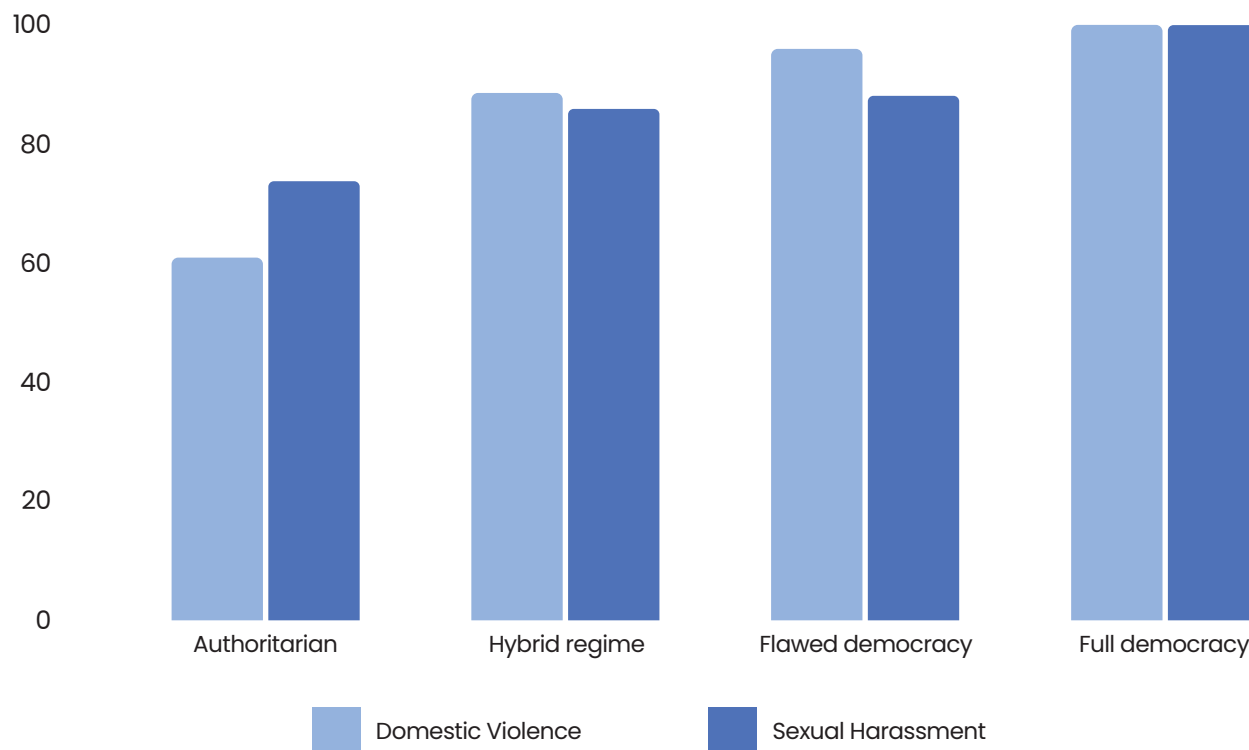
of this violence is from intimate partners.⁵⁵ While violence against women exists in every country, it is not uniform across the globe. UN Women, for example, indicates that violence against women disproportionately affects low- and lower-middle-income countries and regions.⁵⁶

Pillar V of the GEGI ranks countries by how well they perform on eight indicators related to violence against women. These include lifetime risk of maternal death, women's self-assessments of safety, prevalence of intimate partner violence, legislation on domestic violence and sexual harassment, and the prevalence of "son preference." Through this combination of factors, Pillar V attempts to capture the full picture of violence against women, both de jure and de facto, in 158 countries. A low score for this pillar indicates a difficult environment for women, with low levels of protection and high levels of vulnerability to violence.

Key Results

Violence against women is higher in countries that have authoritarian regimes vs. democracies, or an average score of 70.3 for the former and 64.7 for the latter. Part of this gap in scores can be explained by the gap in legislation protecting women.

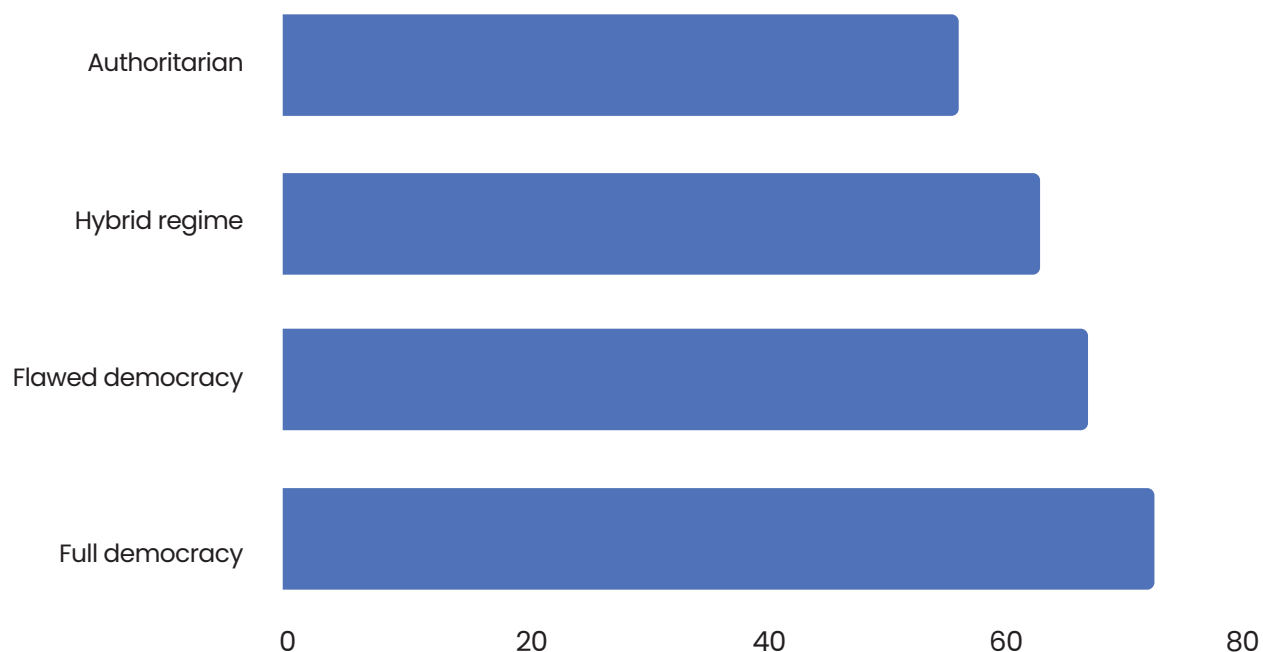
Violence against women overall pillar score by regime



55 <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>

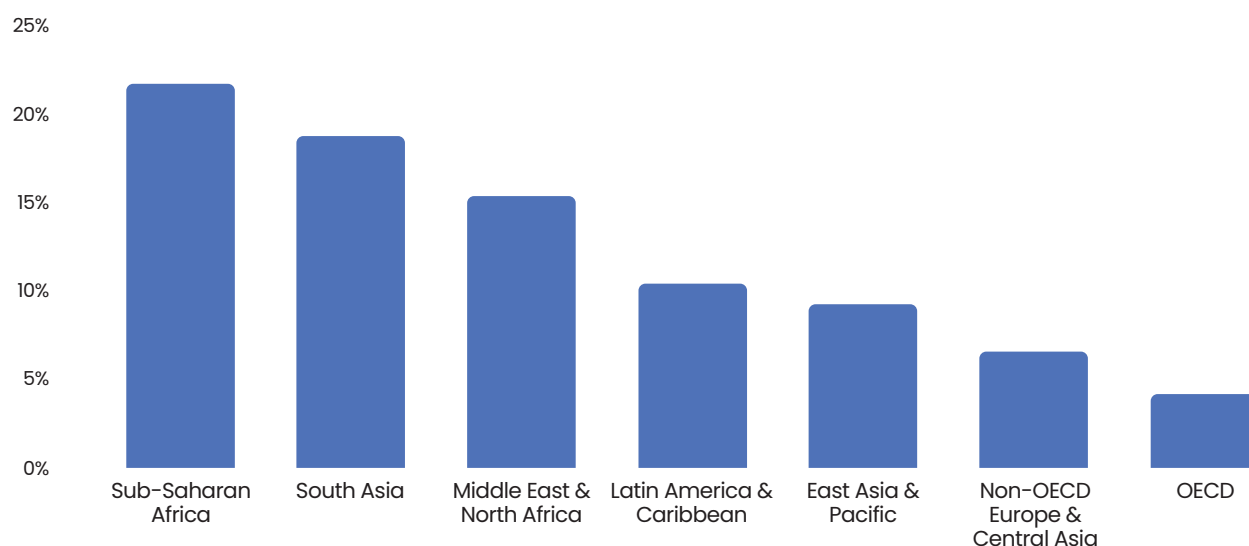
56 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>.

Violence against women pillar score by regime



Regional differences are also noteworthy and account for differences in the percentage of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner over their lifetime. Such violence is highest in Sub-Saharan Africa followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (about 27 percent for both). It is lowest in East Asia and the Pacific (7.7 percent), and relatively low in Europe and Central Asia (11.3 percent).

Percentage of women who has experienced intimate partner violence



The perception of safety that women have is also important. This encompasses the percentage of women 15 years and older who report that they “feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where you live.” In Afghanistan, this is reported at 12.2 percent whilst in Singapore it is reported at 93.6 percent. This statistic represents a woman’s ability, or inability, to have freedom and autonomy, e.g. they may be trapped in homes for fear of being unsafe outside at night.

COVID-19 Ramifications

Despite long-term trends and solutions in different countries, special consideration must be given to the immediate crisis facing women in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has witnessed an increase in domestic violence as many more women have sheltered at home and, often, in households facing higher levels of stress.

UN Women clarifies that there has been an increase in reported cases of domestic violence to helplines, women’s refuges/shelters, and the police linked to COVID-19. Calls to helplines have also increased five-fold in some countries. While some countries have reported a decline in the number of domestic violence incidents, some attribute this trend to lower access to social and legal services during mandatory lockdowns.⁵⁷

The UN refers to this situation as a “shadow pandemic,” with an astonishing 1 in 2 women saying that they, or a woman they know, have experienced violence since the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵⁸ Many of the victims are the invisible wives and mothers and sisters and daughters trapped within the four walls of their homes the world over who find themselves at the mercy of husbands and sons and brothers and fathers lashing out at them in quarantine rage.

Economists at the International Monetary Fund indicate that the number of reported cases of gender-violence linked to lockdowns increased by more than 130 percent in Nigeria. In Croatia, reported rapes increased by 228 percent during the first five months of 2020 compared to 2019.⁵⁹

In the United Kingdom, more women were killed in the first three weeks of the lockdown than any other three-week period in the past decade. To stem the violence and encourage reporting, courts in Italy, Austria, and Germany have begun ruling that, in domestic violence cases, the abuser must leave the family home rather than the victim.⁶⁰

In the Shadows

Per longer term trends, women are most vulnerable to violence in cultures where long-held customs and fundamental prejudices place the blame for violence on the women

57 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>.

58 <https://data.unwomen.org/publications/vaw-rga>.

59 <https://blogs.imf.org/2021/11/24/how-domestic-violence-is-a-threat-to-economic-development/>.

60 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>.

themselves. Guilt and shame are often used as tools to convince women that they are complicit in the crimes committed against them. As a result, women hide their scars, and the violence continues.

Fewer than one-third of women experiencing domestic violence will ever say anything about it publicly, notes the World Bank.⁶¹ UN Women also reports that fewer than 40 percent of women who experience violence will seek help of any kind. Any help that is sought will largely be from family and friends and not from formal institutions.⁶²

Due to the insidious and often secretive nature of this violence, it is difficult to have accurate data which measures the true and devastating pervasiveness of the problem. Hence, violence against women is likely to go unreported. Uncovering causal estimates with cross-country panel data is also challenging.

Major strides have been made in the creation, ratification, and implementation of legal instruments to protect women. Globally, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women– ratified by all but six member states as of 2022 – established violence against women to be a form of discrimination and this violence was framed in the content of international human rights law.⁶³ And there are regional instruments like the ratification of the Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe. This human rights treaty to prevent and combat violence against women has been signed by all EU states and has played an important role in reforming laws.

But like the paper trail laid by international efforts to establish legal rights and protection for women, the proliferation of court activities and police administration does not necessarily address the fundamental problem. The reality is that intimate partner violence, marital rape, and sexual abuse still carry too many stigmas against women themselves.⁶⁴

Domestic Violence Legislation

Can domestic violence legislation protect women? One recent study explores the relationship between the presence of domestic violence legislation and the female-to-male mortality ratio.⁶⁵ Data was collected across 159 economies spanning almost two and a half decades – between 1990 and 2014. Data on domestic violence was compiled from the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law (WBL) project, which defines domestic violence as including physical violence, emotional or psychological violence, sexual violence, or financial or economic violence. Legislation that does not provide for sanctions or orders of protection against domestic violence does not satisfy the criteria of having domestic violence legislation.

61 López-Claros and Nakhjavání (2018), p. 63.

62 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>.

63 López-Claros and Nakhjavani (2018), p. 61..

64 López-Claros and Nakhjavani (2018), p. 63..

65 Mohammad Amin, Asif M. Islam and Augusto Lopez-Claros, "Absent laws and missing women: Can domestic violence legislation reduce female mortality? John Wiley and Sons Ltd, May 2021, 1–20, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/rode.12799>

According to the most conservative baseline estimate, domestic violence legislation leads to a decline of 2.3 percent in the adult mortality of women relative to men. Although this figure seems small, it translates into millions of lives saved globally.

The authors also complemented these findings by exploring intimate partner violence data from the World Health Organization for 73 countries, available for a single year for a country varying between 2000 and 2014. They confirmed the finding that domestic violence legislation is correlated with lower intimate partner violence. Although the data collected is imperfect, it establishes that domestic violence legislation is effective in many diverse contexts and makes a difference in terms of female mortality.

Laws have been slow to evolve and have had many implementation challenges and, currently, 30 countries still do not have any domestic violence legislation. Regardless, laws that aim to deter undesirable behaviors or to reinforce positive outcomes help change social norms and are, therefore, an important part of the overall strategy to save lives. As just one example, across provinces in Mexico, legislation criminalizing domestic violence is associated with a significant reduction in suicide rates among women.⁶⁶

Progress has also been made globally. In 1990, for example, there were only four countries that had passed some form of legislation protecting women from domestic violence. However, the number of countries adopting such legislation expanded rapidly and reached 89 by 2014.⁶⁷ These trends are partly due to peer pressure and the adoption of various UN Conventions by a growing number of countries, but also to growing public awareness of the damaging impacts of violence against women.

Women with more resources tend to have better options outside of abusive partnerships and are, therefore, more likely to leave violent partners. Building on this insight, the intra-household bargaining model argues that women with better outside options relative to men have higher “threat points” that enable them to credibly threaten to leave.

Domestic violence legislation can also improve women’s threat points, but this is only likely if laws are enforced, or if there is a credible due process where she can find recourse in the judicial system. Other theories suggest that greater autonomy for women can lead to greater domestic violence given the insecurity and jealousy that a partner may feel.⁶⁸ Regardless, by raising the cost of inflicting violence, legislation against domestic violence reduces its prevalence.

Additional Considerations

One of the most devastating facets of violence against women is the high rates of lifetime risk of maternal death. In Chad, one in every 15 women will die over her lifetime during the periods immediately before, during, or following childbirth. In Sierra Leone, it is 1 in every 20 women. Compare this with the rate in Italy where one in 51,300 will face

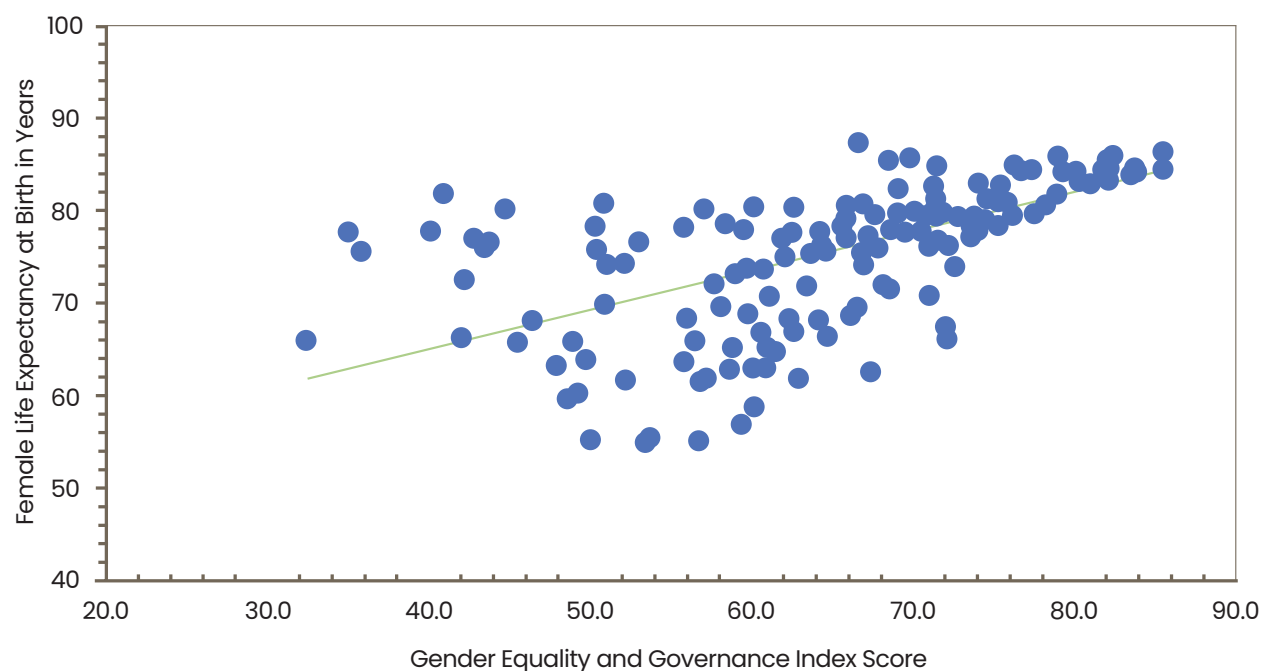
66 <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11150-017-9362-4>.

67 Amin, Islam and Lopez-Claros, 2021.

68 See work by Eswaran and Malhotra: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1540-5982.2011.01673.x>.

the same circumstances, or in Norway where that figure is one in 20,900 women. Access to healthcare, education, and sound infrastructure all play a role in the global inequities surrounding a woman's risk of death upon having a child.

Gender Equality and Governance Index vs. Female Life Expectancy



This is an area desperately in need of improvement, involving more widespread distribution of information about family planning, reprioritizing public expenditures to boost primary health care spending, and tackling endemic corruption. The latter, in particular, diverts resources away from areas intended to improve the social safety net.

Son preference, particularly in South and East Asia, is directly connected to violence against women. This practice leads to sex-specific abortions, female infanticide, abandonment, neglect, and abuse and, ultimately, results in a destabilizing gender imbalance. In China, which ranks 90 in the GEGI, men outnumber women by 34 million. In India, the excess is 54 million.⁶⁹

Violence against women also costs the global economy billions. A 2021 study from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development says that gender-based violence reduces Global Domestic Product (GDP) from 2 to 3.5 percent per year, although some studies have indicated this is even higher.⁷⁰ The true cost of domestic violence is immeasurable, however, because it encompasses physical and mental

⁶⁹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/251129/population-in-china-by-gender/> and <https://statisticstimes.com/demographics/country/india-sex-ratio.php>.

⁷⁰ <https://oecd-development-matters.org/2021/03/08/gender-based-violence-the-pandemic-with-in-a-pandemic-with-devastating-human-and-economic-consequences/>.

consequences that can reverberate for a very long time. Lifetime costs for victims can include medical and legal costs as well as lost productivity.

Stemming the violence will require confronting questions of culture and tradition. For this reason, it can only be properly addressed in the context of broader gender considerations. To achieve long-term economic growth and stable social progress, countries must take proactive measures in favor of gender equality, particularly in the developing world where discriminations against women are most often entrenched in the legal framework. It is our intention that the GEGI will help guide the way towards this goal.

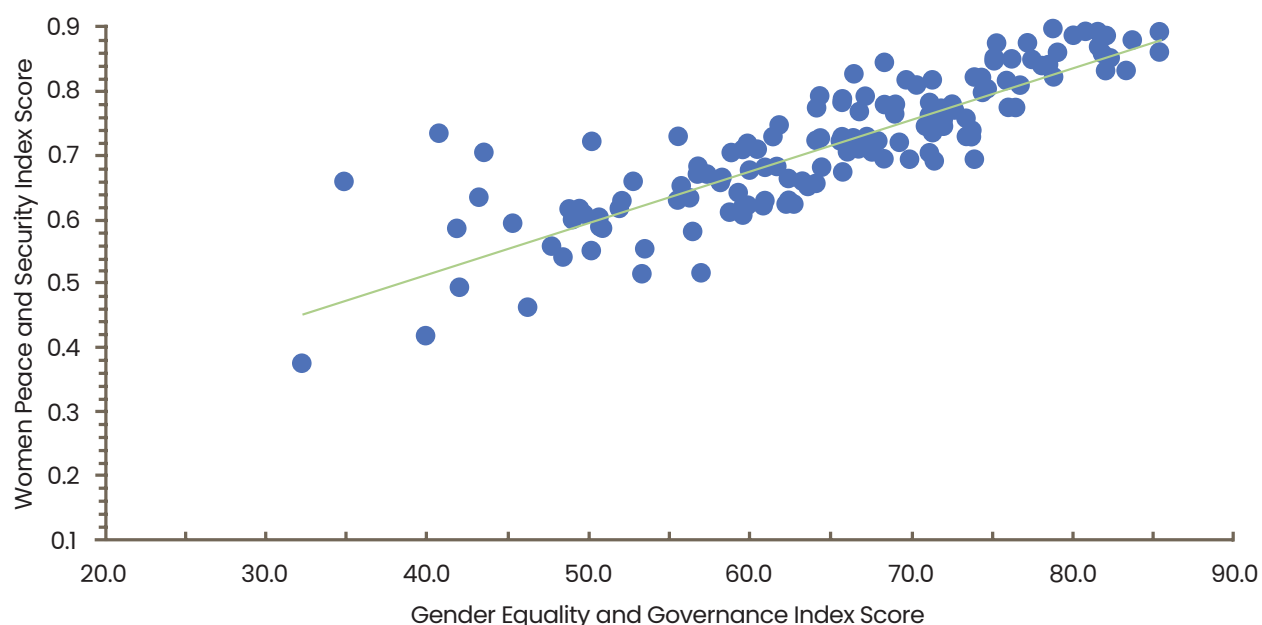
Feature: Women, Peace and Everyday Security

One of the most ambitious and comprehensive initiatives to respect, protect, and promote women's rights in the last couple of decades is the United Nation's Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.

Since adopting UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000, the UN has added 10 more decisions, which together comprise the WPS agenda. This work has recognized the gender-related harms and sufferings uniquely impacting women as victims of armed conflicts. At the same time, it underscores the importance of women being agents of peace and security, and the critical importance of gender-mainstreaming in all political and diplomatic work.

Initially, the WPS agenda called upon Member States to protect women and girls from gender-based violence in armed conflict. Subsequently though, it demanded the complete 'cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence.' It acknowledged that armed conflict has distinct consequences for women, that women are exposed to unique suffering and distress, and that they have special needs. It has also acknowledged the important seat that women must have at the table for peacebuilding initiatives.

Gender Equality and Governance Index vs. Women Peace and Security Index



Broadening the Scope

The dialogue on WPS has evolved over time. Women's rights to representation and participation, a guarantee of their autonomy, and commitment to secure women's presence in policy making and decision-making venues have all been advanced. The slogan "women's rights are human rights" received more substantive meaning and content. Gender-mainstreaming became a more integral part of the agenda of WPS and a necessary tool to broaden the awareness for gender equality among decision makers in the public and private spheres.

Embedded in the UNSCR 1325 language is a broader understanding of the concept of 'security,' which has become particularly poignant during the COVID crisis. The "shadow pandemic" of an alarming increase in violence against women has impacted women everywhere. Furthermore, the lack of gender equality undermines the security not only of the women themselves, but also of their families, communities, and nations at large. Additionally, one can no longer claim that 'security' concerns only relate to situations of war and armed conflict. 'Security' now encompasses physical and mental health, nutrition subsistence, occupational security and, considering the looming climate crisis, actual physical sustainability.

Looking Forward

The WPS agenda is integrated into the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – an important instrument of international human rights law that has been ratified by 189 States Parties. Having served on the committee for CEDAW for 12 years, part of our role was to see how countries were implementing National Action Plans and integrating commitments and principles of the WPS agenda into these plans.⁷¹ Among others, we have worked on promoting concrete measures to ensure that women's human rights are protected before, during, and after conflict.

While many would rightly view the current moment as signifying backsliding in terms of women's rights and gender equality, it is important to recall the advances that were made not that long ago. We must reclaim this potential and attempt to overcome those forces that would take us back to a past where women were marginalized, and the world suffered as a result.

71 Ruth Halperin-Kaddari is one of the co-authors of this report, but also served twice as Vice-Chair of the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Conclusion

The Gender Equality and Governance Index provides a data-driven, objective look at the state of gender equality in the world, bringing together some 60 indicators to assess the progress made by countries in narrowing gender disparities. As this exercise is repeated biennially it will also provide a vertical perspective on the progress countries are making with respect to their own past since, in the end, it is not so much the ability to assess the performance made by other countries that provides the real value of indices, but rather the ability to track progress at home, where public and other policies can be formulated in a way that reduces gender inequalities.

The calamities brought about by the COVID pandemic has highlighted women's many vulnerabilities as a result of long-standing discriminations across virtually every country in the world. COVID has been the most destabilizing shock to the global economy at least since the Great Depression but, as we saw in the report, the evidence convincingly shows that its impact on men and women has been asymmetric, with the latter being more adversely affected, whether in respect of the job market, the incidence of violence against them or other metrics captured in the index.

In early 2022 the world faces an uncertain economic and security situation. There is an economic recovery underway, but experts are divided on its inherent strength and sustainability. The picture is made more complicated by the whole series of unresolved global problems which we confront, from climate change and its associated repercussions, to an unsettled security situation in many parts of the world—Ukraine, the South China Sea, the Middle East to name a few—reflecting the unfoldment of potentially destabilizing superpower confrontations. But this is not all. COVID has set back in a major way the progress made over the past 30 years in reducing the incidence of extreme poverty and it has clearly also undermined efforts to narrow income disparities. On all of these fronts women and girls are especially vulnerable and run the risk of bearing a disproportionately large burden of whatever ill-advised decisions may be made on many of these fronts by our still very male-dominated political culture.

More than ever before the world needs the empowerment of women, politically, economically and across every sphere of human endeavor. The costs of her absence from the corridors of power over the past century have been too high and, with the developments of new technologies and their possible misuse, persistent nationalisms which stand increasingly at odds with emerging notions of global citizenship, particularly among the young, and deep-seated inertia and lack of imagination among those currently managing our global commons, we are approaching a time when the integration of women into high-level decision making will not longer be just an issue of fairness and human rights, but an indispensable condition for survival. The stakes are too high and we can no longer wait.

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Gender Equality and Governance Index Rankings

COUNTRY	SCORE	2022 RANKINGS	2020 RANKINGS	DIFFERENCE
Iceland	85.5	1	1	0
Spain	85.5	1	2	1
Canada	83.8	3	9	6
Norway	83.7	4	8	4
Belgium	83.5	5	3	-2
France	82.4	6	6	0
Italy	82.2	7	4	-3
Luxembourg	82.2	7	7	0
Sweden	82.2	7	5	-2
Germany	82.1	10	14	4
Netherlands	82.1	10	12	2
Portugal	82.0	12	13	1
Finland	81.8	13	9	-4
New Zealand	81.8	13	16	3
Denmark	81.0	15	9	-6
United Kingdom	80.3	16	15	-1
Austria	80.1	17	18	1
Ireland	79.3	18	18	0
Czech Republic	79.0	19	27	8
Switzerland	79.0	19	22	3
Poland	78.8	21	17	-4
Lithuania	78.2	22	25	3
Taiwan, China	77.6	23	21	-2

Latvia	77.5	24	23	-1
Slovenia	77.3	25	26	1
Malta	76.8	26	24	-2
Greece	76.6	27	29	2
Australia	76.3	28	27	-1
Hungary	76.2	29	31	2
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	75.9	30	18	-12
Estonia	75.4	31	29	-2
Serbia	75.3	32	51	19
United State of America (USA)	75.2	33	32	-1
Bulgaria	74.9	34	46	12
Croatia	74.6	35	33	-2
Montenegro	74.5	36	53	17
Cyprus	74.1	37	37	0
Mexico	74.0	38	39	1
El Salvador	73.8	39	35	-4
Peru	73.8	39	35	-4
Dominican Republic	73.6	41	41	0
Mauritius	73.6	41	63	22
Romania	72.9	43	34	-9
Mongolia	72.6	44	43	-1
Paraguay	72.2	45	37	-8
Namibia	72.1	46	54	8
South Africa	72.0	47	43	-4
Ecuador	71.9	48	50	2
Ukraine	71.6	49	52	3
Israel	71.5	50	65	15
Uruguay	71.5	50	46	-4
Panama	71.4	52	58	6
Albania	71.3	53	49	-4

Brazil	71.3	53	45	-8
Costa Rica	71.3	53	67	14
Moldova	71.0	56	56	0
Rwanda	71.0	56	55	-1
North Macedonia	70.5	58	60	2
Belarus	70.3	59	57	-2
Colombia	70.1	60	66	6
Korea, Republic of (South Korea)	69.8	61	40	-21
Nicaragua	69.5	62	42	-20
Bosnia & Herzegovina	69.2	63	46	-17
Argentina	69.1	64	61	-3
Chile	69.1	64	59	-5
Singapore	68.5	66	71	5
Georgia	68.5	66	86	20
Cambodia	68.5	66	69	3
Nepal	68.2	69	84	15
Cabo Verde	67.8	70	83	13
Venezuela	67.8	70	70	0
Vietnam	67.7	72	63	-9
Zimbabwe	67.4	73	62	-11
Trinidad & Tobago	67.3	74	75	1
Honduras	67.2	75	74	-1
Bolivia	66.9	76	78	2
Thailand	66.9	76	76	0
Philippines	66.8	78	71	-7
Japan	66.6	79	73	-6
Lao PDR	66.5	80	96	16
Kenya	66.2	81	68	-13
Maldives	65.9	82	91	9
China	65.8	83	82	-1

Kazakhstan	65.8	83	80	-3
United Arab Emirates	65.8	83	133	50
Armenia	65.6	86	87	1
Zambia	64.7	87	87	0
Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan)	64.6	88	79	-9
Jamaica	64.5	89	94	5
Russian Federation	64.3	90	85	-5
Bahamas	64.2	91	90	-1
Belize	64.2	91	108	17
Ethiopia	64.2	91	77	-14
Azerbaijan	63.7	94	92	-2
Bhutan	63.4	95	93	-2
Burkina Faso	62.9	96	89	-7
Malawi	62.6	97	107	10
Turkey	62.6	97	99	2
Morocco	62.5	99	97	-2
Madagascar	62.3	100	120	20
Suriname	62.1	101	114	13
Guatemala	61.9	102	101	-1
Ghana	61.5	103	98	-5
India	61.1	104	100	-4
Uganda	61.0	105	104	-1
Burundi	60.9	106	121	15
Uzbekistan	60.7	107	115	8
Tanzania	60.6	108	103	-5
Barbados	60.1	109	113	4
Cote d'Ivoire	60.1	109	95	-14
Mozambique	60.1	109	118	9
Djibouti	59.8	112	112	0
Indonesia	59.7	113	101	-12

Algeria	59.5	114	110	-4
Lesotho	59.4	115	123	8
Tajikistan	59.0	116	104	-12
Liberia	58.8	117	81	-36
Benin	58.6	118	109	-9
Tunisia	58.4	119	119	0
Senegal	58.1	120	117	-3
Botswana	57.7	121	121	0
Democratic Republic of the Congo	57.2	122	106	-16
Sri Lanka	57.0	123	111	-12
Togo	56.8	124	124	0
Sierra Leone	56.7	125	126	1
Comoros	56.5	126	134	8
Gabon	56.0	127	138	11
Malaysia	55.8	128	125	-3
Angola	55.8	128	125	-3
Chad	53.7	130	116	-14
Central African Republic	53.4	131	128	-3
Saudi Arabia	53.0	132	138	6
Guinea	52.2	133	127	-6
Bangladesh	52.1	134	128	-6
Egypt	51.0	135	144	9
Myanmar	50.9	136	135	-1
Lebanon	50.8	137	142	5
Libya	50.4	138	131	-7
Bahrain	50.3	139	148	9
Nigeria	50.0	140	130	-10
Eswatini	49.7	141	145	4
Cameroon	49.2	142	138	-4
Haiti	48.9	143	132	-11

Mali	48.6	144	137	-7
Niger	47.9	145	151	-4
Pakistan	46.4	146	147	1
Congo, Republic of	45.5	147	143	-4
Oman	44.7	148	149	1
Kuwait	43.7	149	151	2
Jordan	43.4	150	153	3
Brunei Darussalam	42.8	151	150	-1
Iraq	42.2	152	146	-6
Mauritania	42.0	153	156	3
Qatar	40.9	154	152	-2
Syria	40.1	155	154	-1
West Bank and Gaza	35.8	156	155	-1
Iran, Islamic Republic of	35.0	157	157	0
Afghanistan	32.4	158	158	0

About the Authors

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Amanda Ellis leads Global Partnerships for the exciting new ASU Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory. Previously New Zealand Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva (2013–16), Ms. Ellis also served as Prime Minister's Special Envoy, playing a key role in New Zealand's successful UN Security Council bid. She subsequently served as co-chair for the UN Security Council High Level Group on Humanitarian Access into Syria. Prior to that, as Deputy Secretary (International Development) in the New Zealand Foreign Ministry Ms. Ellis was the first woman to lead the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) Programme, managing an annual budget of over \$0.6 billion. Previous roles include Lead Specialist in the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Group of the World Bank Group where she led the project that created "Women, Business and the Law." She was Head of the Global Gender Group at the International Finance Corporation, and National Manager Women in Business at Westpac Banking Corporation. The author of two best-selling Random House business books and five research titles on gender and growth in the World Bank Directions in Development series, Ms. Ellis is a founding member of the Global Banking Alliance for Women and the recipient of the TIAW Lifetime Achievement Award for services to women's economic empowerment. She serves on a number of boards, including the Global Governance Forum.

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