Social Institutions and Gender Index

SIGI 2023 Global Report

GENDER EQUALITY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

OECD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

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Foreword

Since 2009, the OECD Development Centre has shed light on the structural and multiple barriers affecting women's and girls' lives in developing and developed countries through the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI). By taking into account formal and informal laws, social norms and practices, the SIGI captures the underlying drivers of gender inequality, with the aim of promoting gender-transformative policies that stem from data and evidence. The SIGI is also one of the official data sources for monitoring Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.1.1.

For the fifth edition of the SIGI, the *SIGI 2023 Global Report: Gender Equality in Times of Crisis* measures discrimination against women in social institutions across 179 countries, providing new evidence-based analyses of the setbacks in and progress towards gender equality across the world since 2019.

For the first time, the report includes two thematic chapters. It stresses how discriminatory social institutions curtail women's and adolescents' fundamental access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. It also sheds light on the gendered impacts of climate change and underlines how women can play a pivotal role in climate change mitigation and adaptation. The report shows how a gender inclusive response to these challenges, by empowering women as agents of change, could constitute a window of opportunity to put equality back at the heart of the global policy agenda.

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Editorial

With only seven years to go before 2030, the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) – "leaving no one behind" – is compromised. Despite progress, gender equality remains a distant goal and the world is not on track to achieve SDG 5, nor the other gender-related targets. At the heart of our failure to achieve gender equality lie persistent discriminatory social institutions. These formal and informal laws, social norms and practices fundamentally dictate what women and men are allowed to do, what they are expected to do, and in the end what they do. In the overwhelming majority of cases, women lose out. Addressing them is essential because gender equality is not only a social and moral obligation – it is a fundamental lever for strong, green and inclusive economic development.

Since 2009, those discriminatory social institutions – the "hidden part of the iceberg" – have been the focus of the OECD Development Centre's work and efforts. Looking back at these last 15 years, substantial progress towards gender equality has been achieved. But change has not been linear, and some regions still lag behind. Advances are fragile, and rights are vulnerable to political change or backlash. The gendered impacts of today's global crises, including the acceleration of climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, cannot be overlooked. In many cases women and girls have been disproportionately affected by their consequences. These crises are also diverting resources away from the fight against gender inequality towards what are considered more pressing issues, thus undermining its status as a systemic and urgent problem to address. Recent attacks on women's and girls' basic rights are a case in point.

However, women and girls very often hold the key to societal progress. As this report shows, when it comes to the objective of making agriculture more sustainable, women are a critical source of knowledge and expertise, including on how to incorporate climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. Yet, they are not sufficiently given a voice to put such knowledge into practice, where social norms make men the primary decision makers at home or in the public sphere.

The thematic analysis of the *SIGI 2023 Global Report: Gender Equality in Times of Crisis* stresses the pivotal role women can play in climate change mitigation and adaptation, making the case to improve the response to climate change by empowering women as agents of change. However, exploiting this window of opportunity requires to address the root causes of gender inequality. Building on the fifth edition of the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), the report outlines these causes and provides evidence of their impacts on girls' and women's empowerment and agency, in all aspects of their lives.

The SIGI is a global public good. It supports both OECD and non-OECD countries in designing transformative policies to address these fundamental barriers to gender equality and unleash women's and girls' potential, for the benefit of all.

Ragnheiður Elín Árnadóttir,

Director, OECD Development Centre

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ART	Assisted reproductive technology
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CRA	Climate-resilient agriculture
CRC	United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child
CSA	Climate-smart agriculture
CSE	Comprehensive sexuality education
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FGM/C	Female genital mutilation and cutting
GBV	Gender-based violence
GID-DB	Gender, Institutions and Development Database
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IPV	Intimate-partner violence
LGBTI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and more
MMR	Maternal mortality rate
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
STI	Sexually transmitted disease
TUS	Time-use survey
UCDW	Unpaid care and domestic work
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VAW	Violence against women
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

Social institutions refer to the established set of formal and informal laws, norms and practices that govern behaviour in society. Discrimination in these institutions is at the heart of the inequalities and inequities that women face worldwide. Achieving gender equality, therefore, demands transforming discriminatory social norms into gender-equitable ones.

Based on updated measures of the levels of discrimination in social institutions across 179 countries, the fifth edition of the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) shows that change is underway but must accelerate. Progress has occurred across all regions of the world, and developing countries are bridging the gap with developed countries. Since the fourth edition of the SIGI, in 2019, many countries have enacted legal reforms that protect women's rights and grant them equal opportunities, notably to address violence against women in a comprehensive manner, prevent child marriage and increase women's political representation. Moreover, civil society and feminist organisations have relentlessly and effectively advocated for women's sexual and reproductive rights.

Yet, progress is not homogeneous, advances remain fragile, and women and girls continue to experience important deprivations and inequalities in all aspects of their lives. Large disparities remain across and within regions. Worldwide, 40% of women and girls live in countries where the level of discrimination in social institutions is estimated to be high or very high. Certain rights, such as the right to safe and legal abortion, are under threat and have already been legally restricted in several countries. Changes since the fourth edition of the SIGI thus reveal a mixed picture of progress and setbacks, confirming a well-established fact: transforming attitudes and practices takes time.

Notably, discrimination remains highest within the family sphere, where discriminatory laws, social norms and practices create fundamental and systemic differences between men and women – e.g. unequal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, unequal access to inheritance or early and forced marriage. By weakening women's and girls' agency, discriminatory social institutions also have lasting consequences on all other aspects of women's and girls' lives: from sexual and reproductive health and rights, to violence against women, economic empowerment, political representation, and decision-making power in the private and public spheres. For instance, social norms according to which men are the ultimate decision makers – either as a partner or father – undermine women's and girls' ability to choose, voice and act on contraception and family planning preferences.

Similarly, gender-based traditional hierarchies within the household negatively influence women's capacity to cope with disasters induced by climate change. These distinct roles at the household level are often replicated at the national and political levels, where women do not have the same opportunities as men to participate in disaster risk reduction management nor to contribute to the development of mitigating policies. Overall, policies aimed at mitigating the effects of climate change continue to be largely gender-blind, exacerbating women's disproportionate vulnerability to its socio-economic effects. Strengthening women's resilience, especially in developing countries, is essential to remedy this asymmetric exposure to risks.

Ongoing crises can also exacerbate challenges, and ignoring their gendered impacts can substantially aggravate the well-being and livelihoods of millions of women and girls. Recent simultaneous shocks – COVID-19, climate change, the global food crisis, etc. – are threatening to reverse some gender equality gains. For instance, the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19, particularly in contexts where discriminatory informal laws exist, are putting millions of girls at risk of early and forced marriage. Likewise, conflicts jeopardise adolescents' and women's access to essential sexual and reproductive health services, including maternal and newborn healthcare or contraception. These threats and crises also increase the risk of backlash against gender equality, diverting resources towards issues that are considered more pressing in times of crisis and downplaying the status of gender inequality as a systemic and urgent problem.

Yet, these crises offer a window of opportunity for greater gender equality and women's empowerment. Because of women's pivotal role and unique perspective, empowering them and realising gender equality would improve the policy and programmatic response to crises. It constitutes an opportunity to bridge gaps between men and women and put equality back at the heart of the global policy agenda. For instance, the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 have shed light on a large range of existing gender-based inequalities and highlighted the need to include women in decision-making processes. Ensuring that a diverse range of opinions, expertise and socio-professional backgrounds are represented at all levels would generate substantial added value for societies. Likewise, leveraging women's unique expertise and perspectives could substantially strengthen climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. For instance, indigenous women have been on the frontline of environmental and conservation initiatives; their valuable expertise and awareness can help find innovative solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Likewise, empowering women in agriculture and providing them with equal access to resources could increase the productive capacity of women-owned farms by 20% to 30% in developing countries. Finally, women are essential to strengthening resilience to climate-induced disasters. Evidence demonstrates that women are powerful agents during and in the aftermath of disasters by rapidly contributing to post-recovery efforts.

To accelerate change and eliminate discrimination in social institutions, bold action is needed by all – from governments and policy makers to development partners, the private sector, philanthropic actors and civil society organisations. Doing so requires a co-ordinated effort from all these stakeholders. It also entails recognising intersecting forms of discrimination that go beyond gender – e.g. age, ethnicity, place of residence or religion, among others – and add to gender-based discrimination.

Public, private, philanthropic and civil society actors should seek to:

- reform and amend laws to guarantee equal rights and opportunities, and support existing legislation with a comprehensive policy framework.
- transform discriminatory social norms into gender-equitable ones.
- include men and boys in promoting gender equality.
- make the invisible visible through a better collection of gender-disaggregated, gender-relevant and intersectional data and indicators.
- further monitor the impact of initiatives, and share lessons about what works and what does not.
- finance gender equality, including key transformative actors such as grassroots and feminist movements.

1 Overview

Building on the analysis presented in the following chapters of the *SIGI 2023 Global Report*, the present chapter provides an overview of the main results of the fifth edition of the OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) launched in March 2023. In the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, it highlights how gender equality remains a distant objective despite notable progress. The chapter also presents the main findings of the two thematic chapters of the report, underlining the key role that discriminatory social institutions play in restricting women's and adolescents' sexual and reproductive health and rights across the world and exploring the gendered dimensions of climate change. The chapter concludes by stressing the need for bold action in favour of gender equality, not only from governments and policy makers but from all stakeholders including bilateral and multilateral development partners, the private sector, philanthropic organisations and civil society.

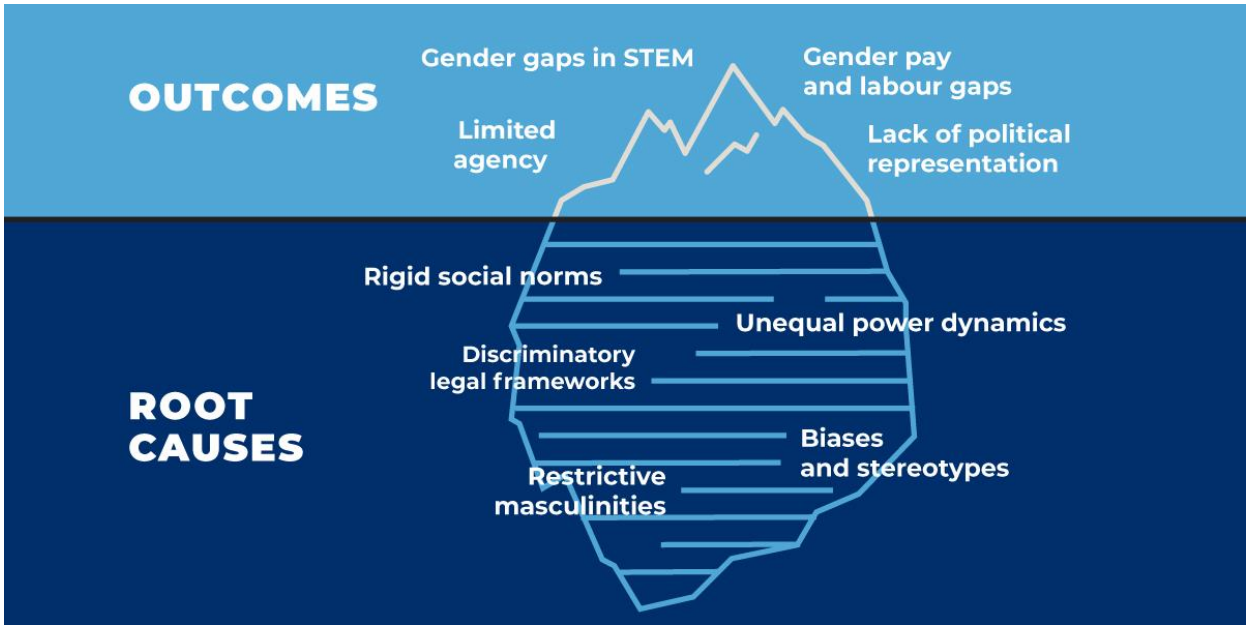
In 2015, members of the United Nations reached a fundamental agreement over 17 major goals – the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – that should be achieved by 2030 and that would serve as the blueprint for peace and prosperity, leaving no one behind. In line with the former Millennium Development Goals,[1] eradicating discrimination against women and girls is enshrined as a stand-alone objective (SDG 5), while gender equality is embedded in nearly all 17 goals. In total, around 45% of the indicators of the SDG framework (102 out of 247) are gender-relevant (Cohen and Shinwell, 2020[1]).

Yet, with only seven years to go, the world is not on track to achieve the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. Evidence shows that progress in SDG 5 as well as in all other gender-related indicators is too slow (Equal Measures 2030, 2022[2]). Worse, the socio-economic consequences of recent crises have exacerbated existing gender inequalities and, in some countries, aggravated discrimination against women and girls (United Nations, 2022[3]). International and regional crises have increased the risk of backlash against gender equality by diverting resources towards issues allegedly more pressing and by undermining the perceived status of gender inequalities as a systemic and urgent problem to address. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, disruptions in programmes to prevent child marriage, coupled with households' rising economic insecurity, have resulted in 10 million additional girl child marriages that would have otherwise been averted (UNICEF, 2021[4]). During humanitarian emergencies, which can result from disasters induced by climate change or conflicts such as the war of aggression against Ukraine, women and girls face an increased risk of gender-based violence and violation of their sexual and reproductive health and rights (see Chapter 3). If prevention, adaptation and mitigation strategies for climate change mainly remain gender-blind, gendered impacts will likely worsen, aggravating women's vulnerabilities (see Chapter 4).

Gender equality and parity[2] are not only social and moral obligations, they are fundamental levers for strong, green and inclusive economic development (OECD, 2023[5]). Conversely, excluding women or erecting barriers against their rights and agency induces significant economic losses. The channels through which these occur are multiple, complex and often intertwined with one another. Some forms of discrimination faced by women yield an opportunity cost because of the untapped potential they represent. This means that the value generated by economies would be greater in the absence of discrimination, for instance through an increase in human capital or a better allocation of female workers (OECD, 2019[6]; Ferrant and Kolev, 2016[7]). That is typically the case of social norms that restrict women's access to the labour market, education or productive assets. Other types of discrimination have direct social and economic costs for societies. For instance, because of violence against them, women may be unable to work, lose wages, stop participating in regular activities, and have a decreased ability to care for themselves and their family members (OECD, 2020[8]). All these impacts are often compounded when girls and women are exposed to intersecting forms of discrimination which go beyond gender – e.g. age, ethnicity, place of residence or religion, among others.

Discrimination in social institutions – the established set of formal and/or informal laws, norms and practices that govern behaviour in society – is at the heart of inequalities and inequities that women face. They fundamentally dictate what women and men are allowed to do, what they are expected to do and what they do. The inequalities observed and experienced by women and girls are just the tip of the iceberg: discriminatory norms and social institutions rest below the surface, reinforcing the status quo. Since 2009, this "invisible part of the iceberg" (Figure 1.1) has been the focus of the OECD Development Centre's work and has been measured through the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI). It constitutes the root causes of gender gaps observed at the outcome level such as gender-based differences in education, income and wages, access to health services, and so forth (Box 1.1). Focusing on social institutions and strengthening efforts to transform discriminatory social norms are therefore paramount to achieving gender equality, as it often constitutes the crucial bottleneck that prevents change from happening.

Figure 1.1. Discriminatory social institutions are the root causes of gender inequality outcomes



Box 1.1. What is the Social Institutions and Gender Index?

The SIGI measures discrimination in social institutions faced by women and girls throughout their lives

The SIGI is a unique cross-country composite index measuring the level of gender-based discrimination in social institutions. The fifth edition covers 179 countries compared to 180 countries in 2019.[3] The SIGI looks at the gaps that legislation, attitudes and practices create between women and men in terms of rights, justice and empowerment opportunities at all stages of their lives.

The SIGI builds on a framework of 4 dimensions, 16 indicators and 25 underlying variables. It covers the major socio-economic areas that affect women and girls throughout their lifetime, from discrimination in the family to restrictions on their physical integrity, their economic empowerment, and their rights and agency in the public and political spheres (see Annex B).

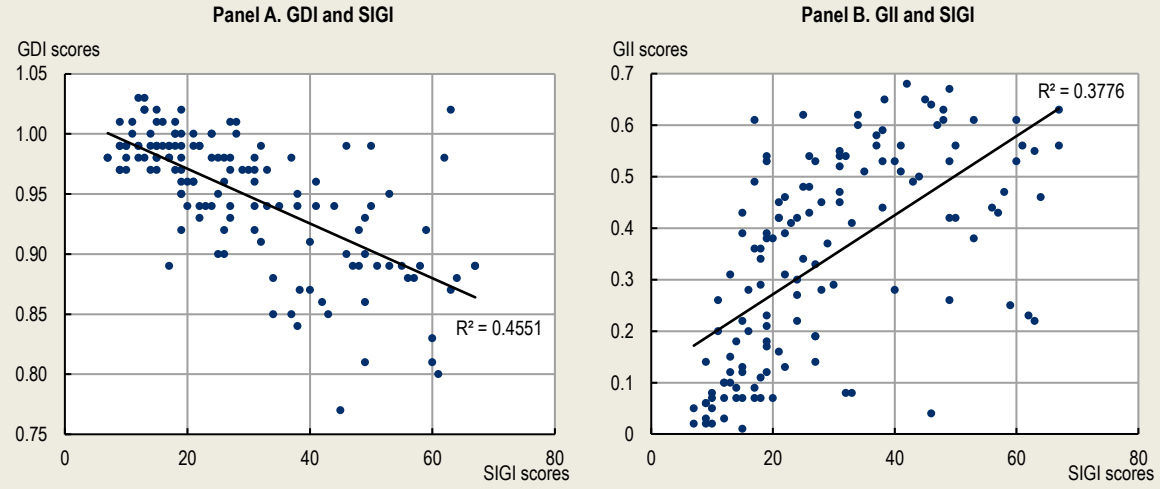
The SIGI measures the root causes of gender gaps observed at the outcome level

Worldwide and regionally, most gender equality indices – e.g. the Gender Development Index and the Gender Inequality Index – seek to measure deprivations and inequalities between men and women at the outcome level. Their focus is on the upper and visible part of the iceberg, and they tend to include measures related to boys' and girls' enrolment in education, differences in income and wages, inequalities in access to health services, and so forth.

The SIGI, on the other hand, studies the submerged part of the iceberg. The connection between the SIGI and other gender equality indices is that discriminatory social institutions are the root cause of the gender gap observed at the outcome level. They play a fundamental and underlying role by erecting invisible barriers that have lasting consequences on women's and girls' lives. More specifically, levels of discrimination measured at the outcome levels are stronger in countries where social institutions are more discriminatory (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2. Discriminatory social institutions captured by the SIGI are at the heart of differences between women and men

Correlation between the SIGI and selected gender indices measuring outcome-level inequalities and deprivations



Note: SIGI scores range from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating no discrimination and 100 indicating absolute discrimination. In Panel A, the Gender Development Index (GDI) measures gender inequalities in achievement in three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and command over economic resources. A GDI of 1 indicate gender parity; scores between 0 and 1 indicate inequality in favour of men; and scores above 1 indicate inequality in favour of women. Data cover 137 countries for which both GDI and SIGI scores are available. In Panel B, the Gender Inequality Index (GII) measures gender-based disadvantages in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market. It shows the loss in potential human development due to inequality between women's and men's achievements in these dimensions. GII scores range from 0 to 1, with 0 indicating that women and men fare equally and 1 indicating that one gender fares as poorly as possible in all measured dimensions. Data cover 134 countries for which both GII and SIGI scores are available.
Source: (OECD, 2023[9]), "Social Institutions and Gender Index (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/33beb96e-en; (UNDP, 2021[10]), Gender Development Index, https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/composite-indices; and (UNDP, 2021[11]), Gender Inequality Index, https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/composite-indices.

StatLink https://stat.link/tj9mnz

The fifth edition of the SIGI shows that change is underway but must accelerate

The fifth edition of the SIGI sheds light on the structural and multiple barriers that affect women's and girls' lives in developing and developed countries. Between the fourth edition of the SIGI in 2019 and the fifth in 2023, the number of countries in which levels of discrimination in social institutions are low or very low[4] has increased by 10, to reach 85 countries out of the 140 that obtained a SIGI score in 2023 (see Annex A). Progress has occurred across all regions of the world, and developing countries are bridging the gap with developed countries. In 2023, 45% of the countries which exhibit very low levels of discrimination in social institutions are non-OECD countries (25 out of 55).

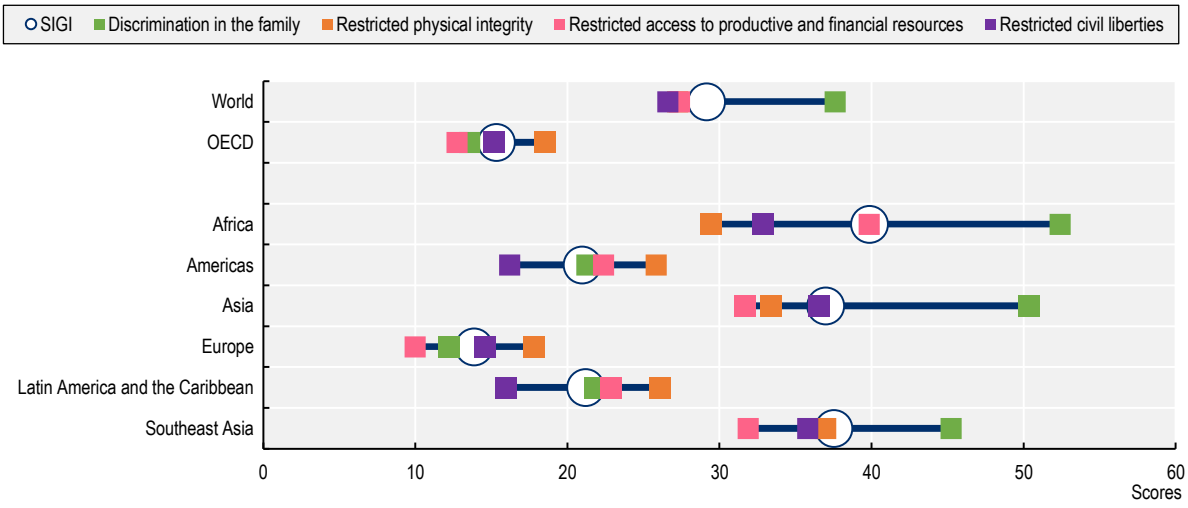
Progress and challenges are not homogeneous. Whereas many countries have enacted legal reforms protecting women's rights and granting them equal opportunities, change in social norms paints a mixed picture of improvements and setbacks. For instance, the share of people thinking that it is always or sometimes acceptable for a man to beat his wife decreased by 12 percentage points between 2014 and 2021. In general, while discriminatory views towards women in positions of power in politics or in

enterprises are decreasing, discriminatory attitudes related to traditional roles of men and women have worsened. For instance, between 2014 and 2021, the share of individuals thinking that men should have more right to a job than women when jobs are scarce increased by 4 percentage points, while the share of the population thinking that it is almost certain to cause problems if a woman earns more money than her husband went up by 6 percentage points (Inglehart et al., 2022[12]).[5]

Some progress has been achieved globally in reducing gender gaps and eliminating harmful practices. Estimates from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) suggest that girl child marriage dropped from one in four women married before the age of 18 in 2010, to less than one in five in 2022 (UNICEF, 2023[13]; UNICEF, 2022[14]; UNICEF, 2018[15]). Whereas women dedicated 3.3 times more hours to unpaid care and domestic work than men in 2014, the ratio has decreased to 2.6 in 2023. The share of women who have experienced intimate-partner violence during the last 12 months has dropped from 19% in 2014 to 10% in 2023. Finally, the share of women in national parliaments has increased from 22% in 2014 to 24% in 2019 and nearly 27% in 2023 (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[16]; OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2019[17]; OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2014[18]).

Figure 1.3. Levels of discrimination vary widely across regions, and discrimination is the highest in the family dimension

SIGI and dimensions scores



Note: Scores range from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating no discrimination and 100 indicating absolute discrimination.
Source: (OECD, 2023[9]), "Social Institutions and Gender Index (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/33beb96e-en.

StatLink https://stat.link/zm20jd

Results from the fifth edition of the SIGI reveal ample variation across and within regions. In the Americas and Europe, levels of discrimination are assessed as low and very low, respectively, with SIGI scores of 21 and 14 (Figure 1.3). Conversely, in Africa and Asia, SIGI scores reach 40 and 37 respectively, indicating that, in these regions, levels of discrimination remain high. Wide variations also exist within regions. In Africa, for instance, there is a substantial number of countries in all categories of the SIGI classification, but only four African countries are in the very low category: Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. Likewise, in Asia, levels of discrimination vary from very low to very high, with countries classified in all categories. In countries that do not fare well, these wide variations may reflect the lack of political will to address the root causes of discrimination, weak governance or conflict and/or the difficulties

to implement laws, policies and programmes. For countries that fare better, they highlight their strong commitments to eradicate gender discrimination, including through legal reforms and implementation of laws, programmes and policies aimed at challenging discriminatory social norms.

Globally, discrimination remains the highest within the family sphere

Worldwide, discrimination in the family remains the most challenging dimension in the SIGI framework. In Africa and Asia, levels of discrimination are found to be very high in this dimension of the SIGI, with respective scores of 52 and 50 (Figure 1.3). High levels of discrimination that women and girls face in the private sphere often constitute the primary barrier that prevents their active participation in the public and economic spheres. Moreover, because the transmission of prevailing social norms starts from an early age (Göckeritz, Schmidt and Tomasello, 2014[19]) and are formed within the household, high levels of discrimination in the family affect to what extent the next generation's attitudes and behaviours will be gender equitable. The persistence of unequal power relations between women and men within the household and, in many countries, the existence of discriminatory civil and personal status laws prevent gender equality in the family sphere. Their effects span over women's entire lives, impacting their rights to enter into marriage, their status within the household, their ability to seek and obtain a divorce, and their opportunities to engage in paid work, become entrepreneurs or inherit from their parents or spouse on equal grounds with men.

At the global level, women spend 2.6 times more time than men on unpaid care and domestic work. On average, women dedicate 4.7 hours per day to unpaid care and domestic tasks, compared to 1.8 hours for men (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[16]). These systemic differences stem from social norms and traditional views that assign strict gender roles and responsibilities within the household and societies. By confining women to their care and reproductive roles, these norms have lasting consequences on women's labour inclusion (see Chapter 2). Not only do they constrain women's participation in the labour market, but they also influence women's labour status, pushing them into low-wage sectors, the informal economy or part-time arrangements, while keeping them out of leadership and management positions (OECD, 2023[20]).

Discriminatory social norms that confine women and men to stereotypical roles affect women's ability to take decisions at the household level. Within the logic of norms of restrictive masculinities, men are expected to be financially dominant, to control household assets and to have the final say in household spending and decisions. This includes control over relationships and other activities of household members, as well as investment in health and education for the whole family (OECD, 2021[21]).

Women's lack of agency is particularly acute in the context of inheritance, aggravating their vulnerabilities to economic deprivations. Historically, individuals have obtained access to assets, particularly land, through purchase, inheritance or state intervention (Kabeer, 2009[22]). In that perspective, any legal or social limitation placed on women's and girls' ability to inherit has negative direct and indirect implications for women's economic empowerment – especially in countries where a large share of the population works in agriculture. Yet, legal restrictions that hamper women's inheritance rights remain widespread in certain regions. Worldwide, 36 countries[6] out of 178, which account for 17% of women globally and are all located in Africa and Asia, do not grant daughters and sons the same rights to inherit. Likewise, 37 countries[7] comprising 18% of women do not grant equal inheritance rights to widows and widowers (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[23]).

Finally, despite better legal protections, girl child marriage remains far from being eradicated. Between 2019 and 2023, 21 countries[8] have enacted legal reforms aimed at combatting child marriage by ensuring that the minimum legal age of marriage would be 18 years for both men and women and/or by eliminating legal provisions that allow for exceptions to the minimum legal age. These reforms have been instrumental in reducing girl child marriage rates and preventing girls from being married off against their own will (McGavock, 2021[24]; Maswikwa et al., 2015[25]). Yet, the mounting economic pressure caused by multiple, simultaneous

shocks with strong interdependencies – COVID-19, climate change, the global food crisis, etc. – together with persisting informal laws encouraging the marriage of young girls, puts millions of girls at risk of early and forced marriage and may even reverse some of the progress made towards eradicating this harmful practice (UNICEF, 2023[26]).

Violence against women and girls remains a global pandemic

Violence against women refers to a wide range of harmful acts that are rooted in unequal power relations between men and women and that result in – or are likely to result in – physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women (United Nations, 1993[27]). Violence against women can take place anywhere and can take many forms, but in most situations, it is perpetrated by current or former male intimate partners. The impact of violence against women on women's lives is devastating, including health problems, limited access to education, substantial losses of income, and socio-psychological consequences on children who grow up in violent homes. Violence against women also bears enormous direct and indirect social and economic costs for societies.

Violence against women remains a global issue which affects millions of girls and is likely underestimated. In 2023, nearly one in three girls and women (28%) aged 15 to 49 years has experienced intimate-partner violence at least once in her lifetime; and one in ten has experienced it over the last year (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[16]). Challenges associated with reporting violence against women – the difficulty in recognising what violence is, fear of retaliation and a lack of resources to leave the home – together with the socio-economic consequences of crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic or climate-related events, mean that its prevalence is likely underreported and that the real figures may be well above the ones recorded by official surveys (OECD, 2020[28]).

Although its causes are complex and multi-faceted, violence against women is fundamentally underpinned by harmful social norms "normalising" men's use of violence. Attitudes justifying intimate-partner violence are strongly associated with more women experiencing it during the past year and are often deeply ingrained in social norms that are perpetuated from one generation to the next. Worldwide, in 2023, 30% of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years think that it is acceptable for a husband to beat his wife under certain circumstances, for instance, if she burns the food or goes out without telling him (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[16]). These attitudes are rooted in norms of restrictive masculinities dictating that a "real" man should protect the household and exert his control over women through domestic violence, while women are expected to accept this violence (OECD, 2021[21]). The widespread belief that domestic violence is a private matter tends to establish that no one – particularly public or judicial authorities – should intervene in the violence that takes place between spouses (Nnyombi et al., 2022[29]), further complicating attempts at eradicating it.

Addressing violence against women requires first and foremost strong and comprehensive legal frameworks. Such frameworks imply that girls and women are protected from all forms of violence including domestic violence and intimate-partner violence, rape and marital rape, honour crimes, and sexual harassment – without any exceptions or legal loopholes. A comprehensive approach also includes legally codified provisions for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of these crimes – if sought by the victim/survivor – as well as protection and support services for victims/survivors (OECD, 2019[6]). Worldwide, according to the SIGI methodology, only 12 countries[9] out of 178 have such comprehensive laws that address all types and forms of violence against women. In contrast, 46 countries continue to fail to criminalise domestic violence; 70 countries do not have a definition of rape based on the lack of consent;[10] and 22 countries do not legally define and prohibit sexual harassment, while 48 countries do not criminalise it (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[23]).

Discriminatory laws and restrictive norms of masculinities hamper women's economic empowerment globally

Since 2019, progress in women's position in the labour market has stagnated, and gender inequalities continue to persist. Worldwide, women's labour force participation rate stands at 47%, compared to 73% for men, which translates into a gender gap of 25 percentage points (International Labour Organization, 2023[30]). The gender gap remains a major concern across all regions, ranging from 11 percentage points in Europe to 30 percentage points in Asia (International Labour Organization, 2023[30]).

Men's and women's unequal standing in the labour force takes root in discriminatory social norms. These traditional norms establish men as the main breadwinner, which gives them priority over women in the workplace. Worldwide, in 2023, 45% of the population believes that when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[16]). Symmetrically, discriminatory social norms confine women to motherhood and caregiving roles within the household, hampering their ability to work. Globally, in 2023, 52% of the population thinks that when women work, the children suffer. Nevertheless, in most instances – particularly in contexts of poverty or limited resources – women are still expected to work and to contribute the household's income, which translates into a double burden of both paid and unpaid work. As a result, women are often compelled to seek part-time and home-based jobs that offer greater flexibility to manage both paid and unpaid work but often come with more precarious working conditions (International Labour Organization, 2018[31]; Mohapatra, 2012[32]).

Discriminatory social norms also lead to a more segregated labour market – both horizontally and vertically.[11] Stereotypes of the social definition of jobs and whether they are deemed appropriate for men and women lead to important horizontal segregation. For instance, worldwide, men account for 92% of total employment in the construction sector whereas women account for 71% of workers employed in health and social care activities (International Labour Organization, 2021[33]). Norms of restrictive masculinities that perpetuate the notion that men are inherently better leaders than women also perpetuate substantial vertical segregation in the labour market. Women are largely excluded from senior decision-making positions and power roles. In 2023, only 15% of firms worldwide are headed by a woman, women account for only 25% of managers and 45% of the global population thinks that men make better business executives than women (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[16]). This dual segregation of the labour market contributes to a deepening of the wage and revenue gap between men and women, with women earning approximately 20% less than men in 2019 (International Labour Organization, 2019[34]).

Women and girls' agency in the public sphere is improving, but slowly

Since 2000, women's political representation has improved, but at the current pace, it is projected to take 40 more years to achieve parity in parliaments (see Chapter 2). In 2023, the proportion of members of parliament who are women reached 26.6%, compared to 24.1% in 2019,[12] representing an increase of 2.5 percentage points (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2023[35]). Women's underrepresentation in politics exists at both ends of the political spectrum – whether among heads of state or government or within local governments. In 2023, women account for only 11% of heads of state and 10% of heads of government (Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women, 2023[36]). Likewise, in 2021, at the global level, only 36% of elected members in deliberative bodies of local government were women (Berevoescu and Ballington, 2021[37]).

Laws – particularly quotas – are fundamental to improving women's representation. An increasing number of countries are enacting laws and implementing policies which establish gender quotas, with the aim of promoting women's political representation. Worldwide, in 2023, more than half of countries (93 out of 178) have established constitutional and/or legislated gender quotas at the national level (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[23]). At the global level, data from the fifth edition of the SIGI show that women's representation in parliaments is significantly greater in countries where quotas exist than in countries where

they do not. In particular, gender quotas at the national level have had a positive and statistically significant effect on women's representation in parliaments in the Americas and Asia. Many countries have also established other measures than quotas such as disclosure requirements, parity laws, the obligation to alternate sexes on party lists and/or financial incentives for political parties, whereas, as of 2023, 76 countries have a national action plan supporting the legislation in place and promoting equality between women and men in political and public life (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[23]).

The establishment of quotas and other temporary measures, together with policy frameworks and strategies promoting women's representation in politics, is crucial in a global context where social norms and stereotypes of women's and men's ability to be political leaders continue to limit women's agency and opportunities to be elected in parliaments. Worldwide, nearly half of the population (48%) believes that men make better political leaders than women. The ideal of men's dominance and power which lies behind these attitudes is deeply embedded within restrictive masculinities (OECD, 2021[21]). In this context, gender political quotas are a powerful instrument to overcome these systemic barriers (OECD, 2023[20]; OECD, 2022[38]; OECD, 2016[39]). Yet, to be effective, gender quotas may require not only normative and cultural change, but also sanctions that are enforced when quotas are not respected. Among the 93 countries that have national-level quotas, only half (47 countries) have enacted legal provisions or mechanisms that enable legal or financial sanctions for parties or candidates who fail to comply with the law (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[23]).

Safeguarding adolescents' and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights is fundamental to achieving gender equality

Multiple and simultaneous shocks characterised by strong interdependencies – COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, the global food crisis, etc. – are exacerbating women's vulnerabilities, depleting scarce resources to advance gender equality and putting societies at risk of experiencing a backlash against gender equality. While the impact of crises on women spans all aspects of their lives, it can have lasting consequences on specific areas that are crucial to their empowerment and agency – such as sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) which have recently been jeopardised on several fronts. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic caused disruptions in family planning services leading to 1.4 million unintended pregnancies in 2020 (UNFPA, 2020[40]). Moreover, climate-related disasters can strain the capacity of health systems, thus limiting access to essential sexual and reproductive health services (Women Deliver, 2021[41]).

Despite SRHR being widely recognised as a human right, a global health imperative, and fundamental to promoting sustainable and inclusive development, millions of people are at least partially deprived of their sexual and reproductive rights. Crises and conflicts are likely to exacerbate this deprivation and reinforce inequalities in access to and realisation of SRHR. Gender is a key determinant of such inequalities, but its intersection with personal characteristics including sexual orientation, race, socio-economic status, class, disability or place of residence ultimately determines individuals' but also specific populations' ability to realise their rights and thus achieve optimal sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

Discriminatory social institutions are at the heart of gender inequalities in SRHR. Traditional gender roles and norms, unequal power hierarchies, social stigma and harmful practices disproportionately undermine adolescents' and women's agency, sexual, reproductive and bodily autonomy. Resulting SRHR inequalities tend to be amplified in developing countries where resource constraints affect access to information, service provision and quality of care (Guttmacher Institute and Lancet, 2018[42]). Addressing underlying legal, social and structural barriers is thus fundamental to secure access to SRHR for all women and girls as a key component of wider efforts to promote gender equality, reduce inequalities in access to education and employment and, ultimately, accelerate inclusive development.

Laws can support or restrict reproductive and sexual rights

Third-party or parental consent laws can restrict individuals' access to sexual and reproductive health services and treatment. For instance, in more than 75% of countries with data available,[13] adolescents under the age of 18 cannot get tested for the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) without parental consent, and in 44 out of 90 countries[14], parental consent is needed to access contraceptives, including condoms (UNAIDS, 2021[43]). In addition, laws dictating that a woman must obey her husband can limit women's ability to make relevant family planning decisions, including on whether to use contraception or attend prenatal healthcare appointments.

Weak legal frameworks on gender-based violence leave girls and women at particular risk of having their right to bodily integrity violated. Such shortcomings can stem from the absence of laws or loopholes within existing laws. For instance, when laws on sexual harassment do not explicitly apply to the school environment, students' sexual and reproductive rights, and consequently their health, can be violated. Moreover, weak law enforcement and the persistence of informal (customary or religious) laws can negatively affect a person's SRHR. This is the case, for example, with female genital mutilation or cutting, which continues to persist even in countries that specifically prohibit it (see Chapters 2 and 3).

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women calls on countries to legalise abortion at least in cases of rape, incest, threats to the life or health of the pregnant woman, and severe foetal impairment (CEDAW, 2022[44]). Yet, access to safe and legal abortion is uneven across the world. Globally, around 140 million women of reproductive age do not have access to abortion under any circumstances, even when their lives are in danger; and more than 60% of women of reproductive age (representing about 1.1 billion women) cannot have a legal abortion in the case of rape, statutory rape and/or incest. This comes at a high cost. Evidence shows that the share of unsafe abortions is significantly higher in countries with restrictive laws (Bearak et al., 2020[45]). Moreover, unsafe abortions are a leading cause of preventable maternal deaths and result in millions of girls and women being hospitalised every year (UNFPA, 2022[46]).

Restrictive gender norms result in low prioritisation of girls' and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights

Patriarchal norms restrain girls' and women's rights to safe, quality and affordable sexual and reproductive health services (Crear-Perry et al., 2021[47]). Unequal power structures have created inequalities in people's ability to choose, voice and act on contraception and family planning preferences and can undermine women's ability to seek essential sexual and reproductive health services and/or reach facilities when needed (Moreau et al., 2020[48]). In contexts where men take decisions for the couple, where women's mobility is conditioned on the presence of a man and/or where women are economically dependent on men, women's sexual and reproductive autonomy is curbed. Such norms are anchored in the population's beliefs which determine the attitudes and behaviours of the next generation.

Evidence shows that adolescents are likely to reproduce dominant social norms that will underpin their sexual and reproductive health behaviour, decision making, and ability to exercise their rights and health outcomes now and in the future (Liang et al., 2019[49]; Pulerwitz et al., 2019[50]). Trying to comply with the social expectations and existing norms of what it means to be a man or woman and how one should act accordingly, adolescents may reinforce ideals of male strength and control and of female vulnerability and need for protection. Norms of masculinities, such as taking sexual risks, having multiple partners or avoiding healthcare can affect boys' SRHR with consequences on their partners' health and rights (Buller and Schulte, 2018[51]).

Social stigma and provider bias can result in the reluctant usage of health services, with implications on individuals' SRHR. Evidence shows that, in certain contexts, service providers are not comfortable with providing family planning services to young, unmarried women without children (Solo and Festin, 2019[52]), and they discourage newly-married women from using contraception, in order to fulfil their role as mothers

(Oduenyi et al., 2021[53]). Sexual orientation and gender identity can further heighten individuals' risk of discrimination when seeking sexual and reproductive health advice or treatment. Finally, social stigma can prevent individuals from accessing quality information and/or seeking relevant care. Digital media and online resources can be useful tools to provide such information and advice but also bear certain risks for users (see Chapter 3).

The intersection of structural barriers and gender-based discrimination creates inequalities within and across countries

People across the world face different structural realities and challenges. At the country level, resources – or the lack of them – determine the quality and reach of healthcare systems. This includes the number of available healthcare facilities within reach, the reliability of commodity supply and the number of healthcare providers that received specific training, e.g. on gender-sensitive service provision (WHO, 2010[54]) (Roozbeh, Nahidi and Hajiyan, 2016[55]). Similarly, resources are required to establish well-functioning education systems, which are a necessary precondition for children and adolescents to access comprehensive sexuality education as taught in school. In times of crises and conflict, resources may be diverted to other issues, threatening the adequate and uninterrupted provision of sexual and reproductive health services.

In countries where the reach of affordable sexual and reproductive health care is limited, individual financial constraints and/or residence in remote areas can create inequalities in access. Discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, disability or education can further exacerbate inequalities within countries. When intersecting with discriminatory social institutions, adolescents, women and marginalised populations living in remote areas are most likely to be left behind.

Mitigating the impacts of climate change requires empowering women as agents of change

Among the multiple and simultaneous shocks the world currently faces, the impacts of climate change are systemic, profoundly and rapidly transforming and reshaping the world's social, economic and political landscape. The effects of climate change can substantially exacerbate women's vulnerabilities – for instance by increasing the time they dedicate to collecting firewood or by increasing their exposure to gender-based violence in the aftermath of disasters – and hamper their well-being in specific and sometimes disproportionate ways. These gendered consequences of climate change have been increasingly recognised since the early 1990s, and efforts to address them have strongly accelerated following the 2014 Lima Work Programme on Gender and the 2015 Paris Agreement, which highlights the need to develop and implement gender-responsive national climate policies (UNFCCC, 2015[56]; UNFCCC, 2014[57]).

Nevertheless, women's inclusion as agents of change in designing and implementing responses that mitigate the impacts of climate change remains limited. Today almost 60% of long-term low-emission development strategies do not account for gender dynamics (UNFCCC, 2022[58]). Not only does excluding women weaken the effectiveness of the strategies aimed at coping with the effects of climate change, but it also constitutes a lost opportunity. Indeed, the policy and programmatic responses to the effects of climate change could constitute a window of opportunity to bridge gaps, empower women and put equality back at the heart of the global policy agenda.

Climate-resilient agriculture, disaster risk-reduction and renewable energy play crucial roles in mitigating the impacts of climate change and building resilience and capacity to adapt to its detrimental effects. Incorporating a gender perspective in climate change policies and initiatives from the outset can ensure that the needs and experiences of women are addressed and that their capacities are strengthened to cope with the impacts of climate change.

Empowering women farmers for climate-resilient agriculture

Climate change disproportionally affects women farmers and rural women due to structural gender inequalities and discriminatory social institutions (FAO, 2020[59]). Systemic gender inequalities result in women farmers generally having limited access to land, labour, smart technologies, agricultural inputs, and social and institutional networks (FAO, 2023[60]). Underlying drivers include discriminatory formal and informal laws restricting women's ownership and management of agricultural land, but also gender norms that favour male decision-making power over land and resources, both at the household and public levels (UNFCCC, 2022[61]; FAO, 2020[59]). Moreover, smallholder farmers depend on natural resources for securing food, water and fuel and for their agricultural work. Climate change or shocks can reduce the availability of such resources in general and/or punctually, which disproportionately puts women farmers' livelihoods at risk.

Yet, women around the world play a pivotal role in agriculture and rural economies and are key to build strong and resilient global food systems. The agricultural sector remains one of the largest employers of women in developing countries. In South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, more than 50% of women are employed in agriculture, compared to 25% at the global level (World Bank, 2023[62]). Women farmers' knowledge is an invaluable source of insights on resilience and good practices and should be used to guide climate-resilient agriculture adaptation and mitigation measures. Women have expertise in local crops, plants and trees and have a comprehensive knowledge of traditional, sustainable, and local farming and agricultural practices (FAO, 2017[63]). In addition, women are active members in co-operatives, producer organisations and rural committees. If given the means and a voice, women can be key agents of change to accelerate the shift towards climate-resilient agriculture.

Disaster risk reduction must be gender-inclusive to enhance resilience

The impact of climate-related hazards and disasters is not gender-neutral. Evidence reveals that disasters perpetuate and amplify gender inequality. On average, women and girls face higher risks than men during and in the aftermath of a disaster (UNHCHR, 2022[64]; CARE International, 2014[65]). These risks include the loss of livelihoods, exposure to gender-based violence, early and forced marriage, deterioration in sexual and reproductive health, increased workloads, and limited access to education. At the heart of these gendered consequences are the roles and responsibilities men and women have historically assumed which are shaped by patriarchal values and unequal power structures (Ciampi et al., 2011[66]).

Socio-economic factors, cultural norms and traditional practices are the root causes of the inequality between women, girls, men and boys which determine the gendered impact of climate-related disasters. Access to resources and decision-making power affects how women prepare for and respond to disasters (Nellemann, Verma and Hislop, 2011[67]). The feminisation of poverty, different hierarchies at the household level, inequalities in access to financial resources and gender-blind communication when disasters strike all fuel gender inequality while preventing inclusive disaster risk reduction and mitigation attempts. Among others, these factors notably decrease power, mobility, and agency for women and girls in moments of crisis.

While the post-disaster context presents diverse challenges for women, it is important to recognise that women are not just victims of disasters. Women are powerful agents of change during and after disasters, but their inclusion in the design and implementation of disaster risk reduction policies and programmes remains limited. Consequently, designed policies and interventions risk being gender-blind, thus failing to prevent and mitigate the gendered impacts of climate change-induced disasters. Enhancing societies' resilience requires addressing the underlying factors that result in women being more vulnerable during and in the aftermath of disasters, as well as systematically integrating a gender lens into any disaster risk reduction strategy.

Including women is key to enhancing the reach and use of renewable energies

Women tend to be the main users and producers of energy at household and community levels. In developing countries, traditional energy sources – often biomass – are still largely used for cooking. Due to traditional gender roles and practices, women continue to carry the bulk of unpaid care and domestic work – which includes collecting energy sources for daily domestic tasks. The consequences of climate change such as deforestation, land degradation and desertification have a disproportionate impact on women by increasing the time necessary to collect fuel for cooking (OECD, 2021[68]). At the same time, relying on firewood to cook is among the many causes of deforestation, land degradation and desertification, all of which aggravate the impact of climate change (Boskovic, 2018[69]). Women are also at the forefront of the negative effects of using traditional energy sources, such as household air pollution (UN Women, 2018[70]).

While countries around the globe are increasingly adopting renewable energy, universal access is out of reach – particularly for women. Many women are affected by the energy poverty phenomenon, both in more advanced economies, where the issue of affordability of energy is the main preoccupation, and in less advanced economies, where the issues are centred on energy availability, access and reliability (OECD, 2021[68]). This is especially true in households that are not equipped with electricity, which means women have no other choice than to collect biomass for energy purposes (GI-ESCR, 2021[71]).

Gender equality and female empowerment can improve and accelerate access to the supply of sustainable energy. To avoid the worst impacts of climate change, the world needs to reduce its emissions by almost half by 2030 and must reach net zero by 2050 (United Nations, 2023[72]). In this context, renewable energy appears as one of the solutions, and women have a central role to play as energy professionals, energy decision makers and energy consumers (OECD, 2021[68]). Women's uptake of renewable energies would not only empower them economically, but could also benefit whole communities as women are powerful agents of change and can play a leading role to help shift energy consumption to renewable sources (OECD, 2021[68]; OECD/ASEAN, 2021[73]). However, women's lack of decision-making power in the household and at the community level, which stems from discriminatory social norms, limits their use of cleaner sources of energy and prevents them from making a meaningful contribution to energy-related decisions in projects that affect them (REN21, 2022[74]; Yi-Chen Han et al., 2022[75]; Lozano Alejandra et al., 2021[76]). Women also remain largely underrepresented in the renewable energy sector, and those who work in it face discriminatory norms and implicit biases that limit their opportunities, careers and professional advancement (UN Women, UNEP, n.d.[77]). A 2018 survey covering both individuals and companies from the renewable energy sector across 144 countries revealed that 75% of women believe that women working in this sector or seeking to join it face gender-related barriers, such as biases on gender roles and on women's technical and physical competencies, prevailing hiring practices, lack of flexibility in the workplace and lack of mentorship opportunities (International Renewable Energy Agency, 2019[78]).

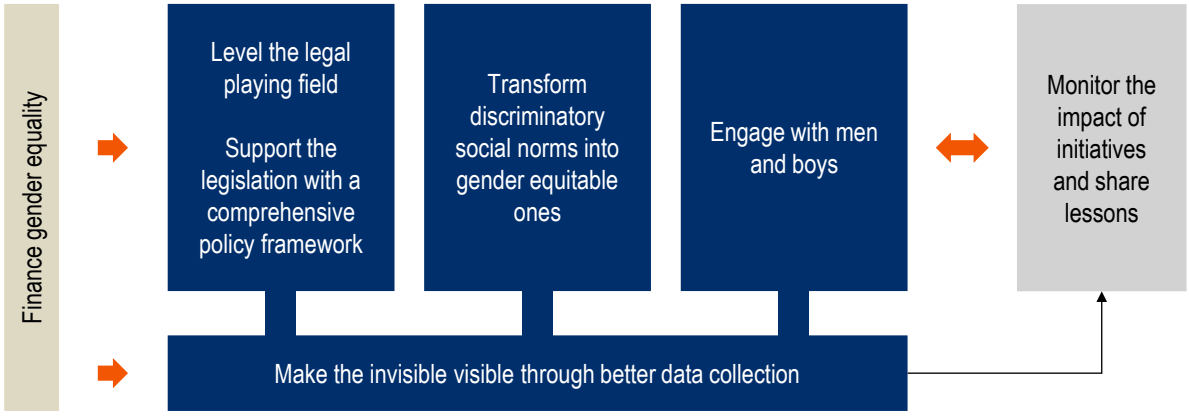
Policy makers, together with other key actors, must take bold action to eliminate discrimination in social institutions

Gender equality is still far from being achieved. As outlined in this chapter, the world is not on track to achieve SDG 5, nor is it on track to achieve all the other gender-related indicators and targets of the 2030 Agenda – which fundamentally matter to women's and girls' well-being. Addressing current gender gaps and inequalities requires a co-ordinated effort from all stakeholders, from policy makers to bilateral and multilateral development partners, private and philanthropic actors, academic and research institutes, as well as feminist and civil society organisations. To ensure no one is left behind, this effort requires embedding an intersectional approach across all actions and initiatives, accounting for the fundamental characteristics of individuals – such as age, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status,

class, religion, disability, place of residence, and so forth – that can exacerbate vulnerabilities and deepen the impact of discrimination and crises.

Results from the fifth edition of the SIGI shed light on the fundamental role of discriminatory social institutions in shaping gender inequalities. In this context, strengthening ongoing efforts and taking bold action to eradicate deeply embedded discrimination and transform social norms into gender-equitable ones are utmost priorities (Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4. Policy options to advance gender equality and transform discriminatory social institutions into gender-equitable ones



Level the legal playing field and support the legislation with a comprehensive policy framework

Governments and policy makers must level the playing field to ensure men and women benefit from the same rights and opportunities.

- Enact laws in favour of gender equality; reform and amend laws that contain discriminatory provisions: Ensuring that legal frameworks do not create inequalities between men and women and do not erect formal barriers to women's empowerment is a fundamental prerequisite. Legislators should pay special attention to parallel and plural legal systems, notably when the coexistence of different legal systems – such as customary, statutory and/or religious rights – introduces incoherence and conflicting legal statuses.
- Ensure that the legislation is enforced: Governments must ensure that existing laws apply. Moreover, individuals in general, and women in particular, do not necessarily know their rights or are aware of changes in the law. Efforts should therefore seek to raise awareness on the existing legislation to inform the population about their rights and provide free legal aid.
- Develop national action plans and comprehensive strategies to guide and structure policies in favour of gender equality. For these legislative efforts to be effective, governments and policy makers should support the legislation with a comprehensive policy framework. In line with actions undertaken by many countries, and in order to go beyond the traditional perimeter of action of ministries of gender equality, these policy frameworks should systematically apply a gender lens and an intersectional approach to a broad range of areas, including economic affairs, education, employment and health.

Transform discriminatory social norms into gender-equitable ones

To address the fundamental barriers to gender equality, governments and policy makers, together with civil society organisations, philanthropic organisations and the private sector, must design and implement policies and programmes that seek to transform discriminatory social norms into gender-equitable ones.

- Leverage the power of edutainment and role models: Edutainment is the combination of education and entertainment in the form of soap operas, radio and television shows or delivered via chatbots. It constitutes a powerful tool to disseminate knowledge while deconstructing restrictive gender norms and promoting behavioural change. Productions in local languages and with local celebrities or influencers can increase the reach and acceptability and hence the impact of edutainment. To promote alternatives to the gender-restrictive status quo, leveraging the power of role models is also critical – both online and offline. Programmes and policies seeking to transform discriminatory social norms should engage with influencers and the media to shift the public discourse and promote more gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours.
- Mobilise community leaders and gatekeepers: Transforming attitudes requires a whole-of-society approach that targets all individuals at all levels – from communities to national structures. Programmes and interventions designed to transform discriminatory social norms into gender-equitable ones must be carefully crafted to ensure they take into account all relevant stakeholders and include them from the outset. Specifically, interventions should be aware of the key role played by gatekeepers such as traditional and/or religious leaders, teachers, healthcare/education providers, and youth leaders. The social status of these individuals places them in a position to promote changes in social norms or maintain the status quo. Because social norms are collectively enforced, programmes limited to working with a single target group will be insufficient to achieve transformative change.
- Recognise that the transformation of social norms takes time: Consistent commitment is required to change discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, in both developed and developing countries. This type of commitment requires sustained financial and technical support in favour of the organisations that are implementing interventions on the ground and/or promoting gender equality through their work. In developing countries, international development partners should closely work with the multiple actors in charge of designing and implementing programmes to allow for long-term programming over several years. These actors not only include governments and policy makers but also grassroots organisations and private development implementers. Budget should also be allocated for the monitoring and follow-up phases of programmes in order to evaluate their effectiveness, keep track of changes in norms and ensure that gains are sustained over time.

Engage with men and boys

Policies and programmes focusing on gender equality and aiming at transforming social norms must go beyond women and girls and should involve men and boys. Initiatives should seek to include areas that are often coined as relevant for girls and women only, such as maternal and newborn health.

- Deconstruct traditional gender roles and responsibilities: Government and policy makers, together with all other actors, should develop and implement specific activities targeted at men and boys, including, for example, safe spaces where men and boys can learn about gender equality and discuss it without fear of judgement or receive training, support and resources on how to adopt more gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours.
- Communicate on the benefits of gender equality for all: Governments and policy makers, with the active support of development partners, private sector actors as well as grassroots and civil society organisations, must invest in research and communication to show men and boys that gender equality is not a zero-sum game. Communication is key to ensuring the benefits of more gender-equal societies

are clearly outlined and demonstrated to all, including how addressing norms of restrictive masculinities could substantially improve the well-being and mental health of men and boys.

Make the invisible visible through better data collection

To maximise impact and understand the true nature of discrimination, it is essential to make the invisible visible through better data collection.

- Improve data collection and dissemination: Given the hidden nature of discriminatory social institutions and the current scarcity of good, comparable and timely gender-disaggregated, gender-relevant and intersectional data, efforts to collect representative data and to expand their availability in terms of both coverage and quality are critical. Governments, through national statistical offices, must be at the heart of these efforts, with the active support of bilateral and multilateral development partners that are able to mobilise the necessary resources and statistical knowledge (PARIS21, 2023[79]).
- Minimise costs: Strategies to develop and improve gender-disaggregated, gender-relevant and intersectional data should seek to minimise costs, for instance by incorporating gender equality indicators into surveys that are already carried out on a regular basis.
- Seize new opportunities: With the emergence of new players and tools – technology firms, social networks, big data, Artificial Intelligence, etc. – the data landscape is rapidly evolving (Data2X, 2021[80]). The volume and timeliness of the generated data offer vast and new opportunities, especially to monitor the gendered impact of crises. Governments and policy makers, with the support of the private sector, development partners and research institutes, should seek to leverage these new data tools to improve the understanding of issues and the monitoring of policies and programmes. At the same time, they must ensure that shortcomings and risks are carefully monitored and handled, including issues related to privacy and lack of representative samples.

Monitor the impact of initiatives and share lessons

Building on quality data, all actors must strive to better monitor the impact of initiatives and share lessons about what works and what does not. It requires close co-operation among distinct actors on an equal footing, particularly to ensure that local expertise and best practices are taken into account.

- Uncover the root causes of discriminatory social norms: To maximise impact and optimise the use of limited resources, it is critical to assess the impact of programmes and policies and to adapt them if necessary. Bilateral and multilateral development partners, philanthropic actors as well as academic institutions should invest time and resources in research to detect the most impactful approaches and to clearly identify the causes of discriminatory social norms.
- Assess the gender impact of programmes and policies: As actors are increasingly expected to include a gender lens when designing and implementing programmes, policies, strategies and laws – including in initiatives for which gender equality is not a core objective – gender impact assessments are a useful tool to evaluate the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming. Gender impact assessments should serve to replicate useful programmes and adjust them when no or only limited impact is achieved.
- Support civil society organisations and activists: In parallel, civil society organisations and activists must play a key role in holding governments and policy makers accountable for their actions and commitments towards gender equality, which requires clear metrics to track progress. Ensuring grassroots and feminist organisations are able to fulfil their accountability role requires development partners as well as philanthropic and private actors to support them technically and financially.

Financing gender equality

Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls requires substantial investments. In a context of scarce resources, contributions from all actors should be leveraged, co-ordination should help minimise cost and innovative approaches should allow finding new sources of funding.

- Increase the leverage of Official development assistance (ODA) for gender equality: In the context of development, members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee should aim to commit a substantial share of ODA to gender equality and women's empowerment, which currently stands at 44% of ODA (OECD, 2023[81]; OECD, 2023[82]).
- Complement efforts from development partners with innovative approaches, using new funding instruments: For instance, blended finance funds and facilities have the power to mobilise more financial resources for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (OECD, 2022[83]; OECD, 2022[84]). Private and philanthropic actors also have a critical role to play in supporting efforts from public actors through innovative approaches. For example, foundations could help de-risk investments by providing first-loss capital (Criterion Institute, 2020[85]).
- Adopt good public financial management and budgeting tools: To improve the management and allocation of funds dedicated to advancing gender equality, governments and policy makers must adopt good practices such as gender-responsive public financial management and budgeting. These approaches require strong commitments from governments, combined with technical support from development partners and public finance experts, to expand the use of *ex ante* gender-impact assessments, gender budget tagging, gender budget statements and gender budget audits.
- Mainstream gender into green financing: As green and sustainable financing tools are rapidly developing, policy makers must ensure that gender- and environment-related considerations do not operate in silos but are rather integrated into common metrics and tools. In particular, policy makers and development partners should systematically mainstream gender considerations in green infrastructure planning, financing, procurement and delivery. This would ensure that sustainable infrastructure better meets the needs of women and vulnerable groups while reducing environmental externalities and improving the quality of life for all (OECD, 2022[86]).
- Finance frontline actors: Entities funding actions and initiatives in favour of gender equality and women's empowerment must specifically target frontline actors, notably grassroots and feminist organisations, when it comes to financial support. These players, who relentlessly advocate for gender equality and know the issues through their direct interactions with project beneficiaries and evidence from the ground, are critical to the achievement of SDG 5. Yet, they are often ignored and tend to lack resources to deploy and maintain their programmes and to fulfil their strategic role of holding accountable other actors.

Notes

[1] In the framework of the eight Millennium Development Goals established in 2000, Goal 3 sought to "promote gender equality and empower women".

[2] Gender equality and parity are intrinsically linked. Gender equality refers to equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Gender parity is a numerical concept attached to gender equality and related to the number or proportion of women and girls relative to men and boys. It

is often calculated as a female-to-male ratio, a share of women among a certain category or a gap in percentage points.

[3] Between the fourth edition of the SIGI released in 2019 and the fifth edition released in 2023, Suriname was added. Following Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, Belarus and Russia were excluded from the fifth edition of the SIGI.

[4] Countries are classified into five groups according to their SIGI score: (1) very low level of discrimination (SIGI < 20); (2) low level of discrimination (20 < SIGI < 30); (3) medium level of discrimination (30 < SIGI < 40); (4) high level of discrimination (40 < SIGI < 50); and (5) very high level of discrimination (SIGI > 50).

[5] Depending on the statement, data are calculated over a sample of 36 or 37 countries for which data are available for both consecutive waves 6 and 7 of the World Values Survey, which correspond to the periods 2010-14 and 2017-22, respectively. These countries account for 50% of the population aged 18 years and above. Countries covered by both waves 6 and 7 are: Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Cyprus, Ecuador, Egypt, Germany, Hong Kong (China), Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United States and Zimbabwe.

[6] Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Yemen.

[7] Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Guinea, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Yemen.

[8] Antigua and Barbuda, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Guinea, Ireland, Japan, Mauritius, Mexico, Mozambique, Norway, Philippines, Samoa, São Tomé and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Chinese Taipei, Uzbekistan, West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Zimbabwe.

[9] Benin, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, France, Madagascar, Malta, Mexico, Peru, Türkiye and Uruguay.

[10] In a consent-based approach, the definition of rape is based on voluntary, genuine and willing consent and recognises a broad range of coercive circumstances where consent cannot be voluntary, genuine or willing and where the victim is incapable of giving consent. In contrast, definitions of rape that do not follow the consent-based approach are often based on force or the threat of force, as opposed to lack of consent (Equality Now, 2021[87]).

[11] Horizontal segregation refers to the underrepresentation or overrepresentation of women or men in certain occupations or economic sectors. Vertical segregation refers to the underrepresentation or overrepresentation of women or men in different grades or levels of responsibility within the entire economy, a sector or a specific company.

[12] All figures on the share of women among members of parliament refer to the share as of 1 January of the stated year.

[13] Data are available for 144 countries (2019). In 34 countries, the law does not require parental consent for adolescents to access HIV testing. In 50 countries, parental consent is required for adolescents younger than 18 years; in 29 countries it is required for adolescents younger than 16 years and in 31 countries it is required for adolescents younger than 14 years.

[14] Data are available for 90 countries (2019). In 46 countries, the law does not require parental consent for adolescents to access contraceptives. In 26 countries, parental consent is required for adolescents younger than 18 years; in 6 countries, parental consent is required for adolescents younger than 16 years; in 9 countries, parental consent is required for adolescents younger than 14 years and in 9 countries parental consent is required for adolescents younger than 12 years.

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2 Results of the fifth edition of the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)

This chapter presents an overview of the global results of the fifth edition of the OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) launched in March 2023. Looking at formal and informal laws, social norms and practices, it summarises the main areas where progress has been accomplished since 2019 and where challenges remain towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda. Building on the four dimensions of the SIGI's conceptual framework and adopting a global perspective, the chapter explores (i) how discrimination within the family sphere is the highest; (ii) why violence against women remains a global pandemic underpinned by its social acceptance; (iii) to what extent discriminatory laws and restrictive norms of masculinities hamper women's economic empowerment; and (iv) why women's and girls' agency in the public sphere remains limited despite the progress accomplished.

In Brief

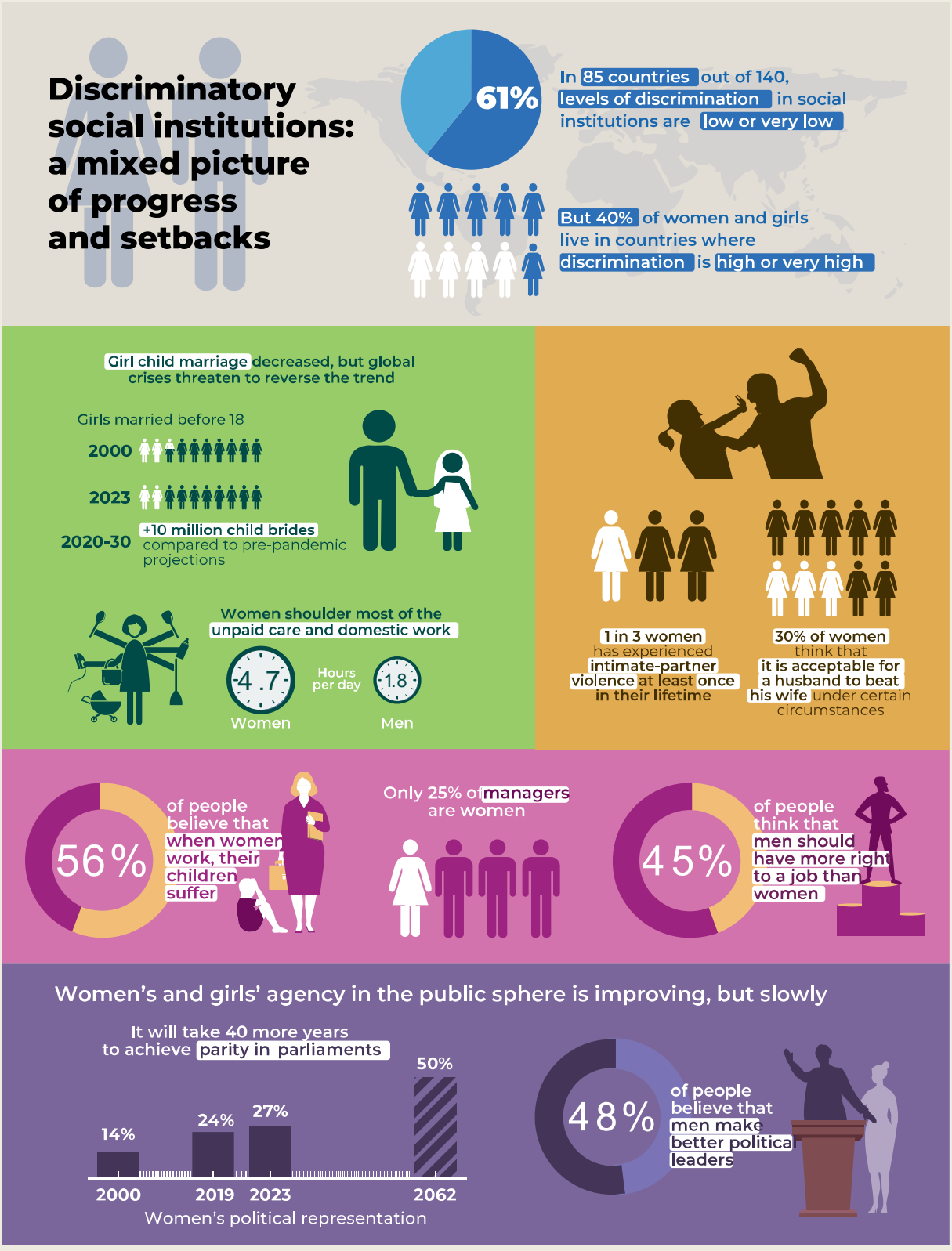
Change in discriminatory social institutions is underway but must accelerate

- The number of both developed and developing countries committing to ending gender-based discrimination is on the rise thanks to legal reforms, the implementation of policies in favour of gender equality and positive changes in discriminatory attitudes.
- Nevertheless, challenges continue to severely hamper the empowerment of women and girls. Globally, 40% of women and girls live in countries where levels of discrimination in social institutions are high or very high; and in 18 countries, levels of discrimination in social institutions are very high. Although the SIGI global average score is 29,[1] denoting a low level of discrimination, situations are very diverse with ample variation across and within regions.
- Since the fourth edition of the SIGI in 2019, many countries have enacted legal reforms that protect women's rights and grant them equal opportunities, notably to comprehensively address gender-based violence, to prevent child marriage and to increase women's political representation. Yet, progress and challenges are not homogeneous. Changes in social norms paint a mixed picture and practices such as girl child marriage, imbalances in unpaid care and domestic work or intimate-partner violence have improved but at a very limited pace.
- In this context, gender equality remains a distant goal, and the world is not on track to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 by 2030.

Discrimination in social institutions spans all aspects of women's and girls' lives

- Discrimination is the highest within the family sphere. Social norms confining women to care and reproductive roles translate into women dedicating 2.6 times more time to unpaid care and domestic work than men. Women's lack of agency in the household, which is particularly acute in the context of inheritance, aggravates their vulnerabilities to economic deprivations.
- Despite better legal protections, girl child marriage remains far from eradicated. Multiple and simultaneous shocks – COVID-19, climate change, global food crisis, etc. – together with persisting discriminatory informal laws put millions of girls at risk of early and forced marriage.
- Violence against women and girls remains a global pandemic. In 2023, nearly one in three women has experienced intimate-partner violence at least once in her lifetime; and one in ten has survived it over the last year. While fundamentally underpinned by harmful social norms "normalising" men's use of violence, addressing violence against women requires establishing strong and comprehensive legal frameworks, as part of robust systems, that cover all its forms.
- Globally, the gender gap in labour force participation stands at 25 percentage points. These differences take root in discriminatory social norms that establish men as the main breadwinner – giving them priority over women in the workplace – and confine women to their motherhood and caregiving role – hampering their ability to work for a pay. Discriminatory social norms on the social definition of jobs and on women's leadership abilities also lead to a more segregated labour market – both horizontally and vertically.
- With 27% of members of parliament who are women in 2023, women's and girls' agency in the public sphere is improving, but slowly. At the current pace, it will take at least 40 years to reach parity in national parliaments. Progress has been substantially driven by gender political quotas, particularly in a context where social norms and stereotypes of women's ability to be political leaders continue to limit their agency and opportunity to be elected in parliaments.

Infographic 2.1. Change in discriminatory social institutions is underway but must accelerate



What are the fundamental underlying causes of gender inequality, and why have we not been able to eradicate discrimination against women and girls? Since 2009, this question has been the focus of the work of the OECD Development Centre. The analysis produced over the course of 15 years has revealed that discriminatory social institutions – the established set of formal and/or informal laws, norms and practices that govern behaviour in society – are at the heart of differences between women and men. The inequalities observed and experienced by women and girls are just the tip of the iceberg: discriminatory norms and social institutions rest below the surface, reinforcing the status quo. Social institutions fundamentally dictate what women and men are allowed to do, what they are expected to do and what they do. The OECD Development Centre measures this "invisible part of the iceberg" through the SIGI. The fifth edition of the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), in 2023, sheds light on the structural and multiple barriers that affect women's and girls' lives in developing and developed countries, highlighting the progress achieved since the fourth edition and the challenges remaining.

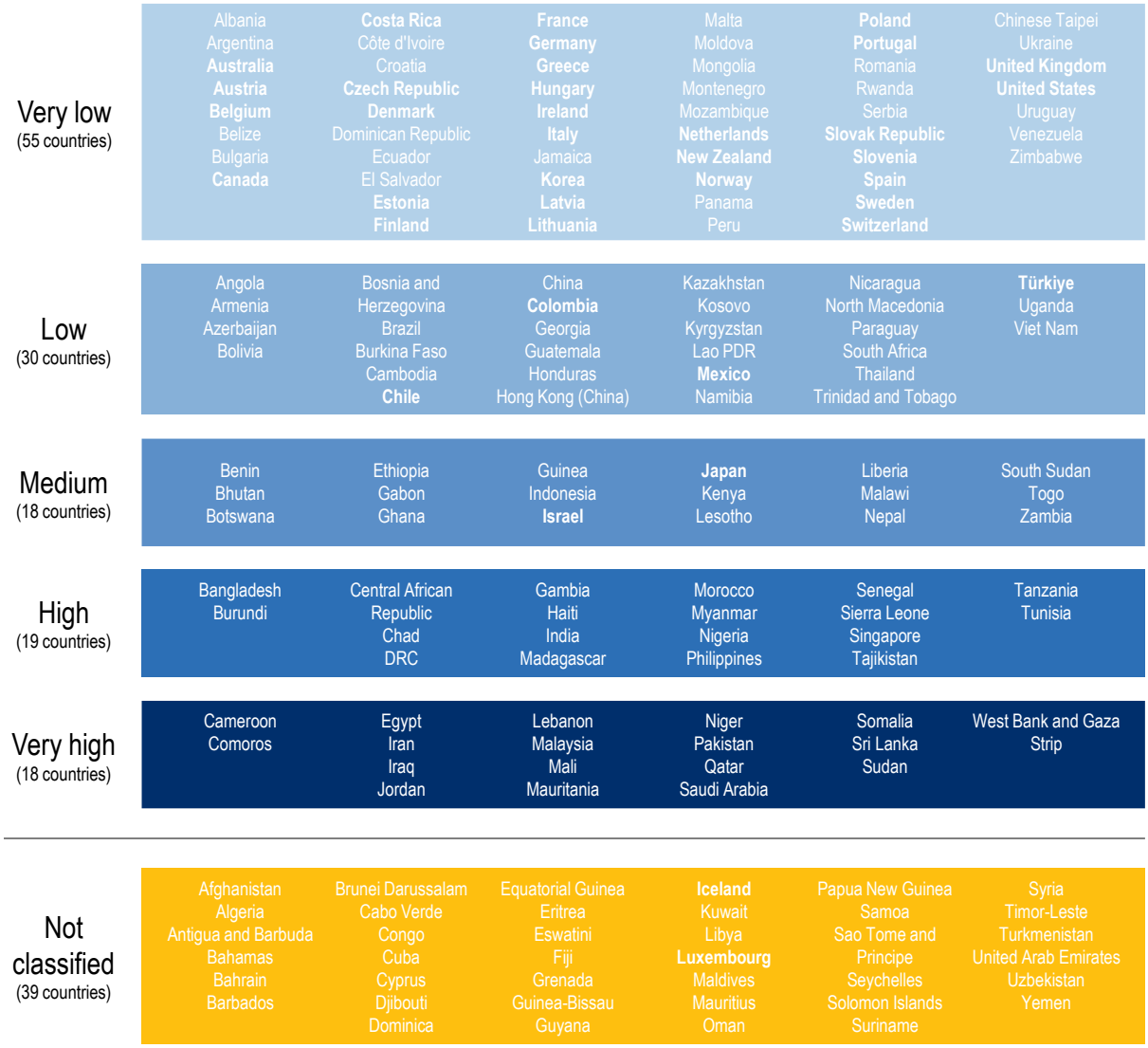
Global results of the fifth edition of the SIGI underline that change is underway but must accelerate

The number of both developed and developing countries committing to ending gender-based discrimination is on the rise. Legal reforms and policies in favour of gender equality, and the evolution of attitudes are starting to pay off. Discrimination in social institutions is being eliminated, albeit at a very slow pace and with some setbacks in certain areas, which dangerously puts the world at risk of not achieving SDG 5. Between 2019 and 2023, the number of countries in which the level of discrimination is low or very low[2] has increased by 10, to reach 85 countries out of 140 that obtained a SIGI score in 2023 (Figure 2.1 and Annex A). Progress has occurred across all regions of the world, and developing countries are bridging the gap with developed countries. In 2023, among the 55 countries for which the level of discrimination in social institutions is estimated to be very low, 25 (45%) are non-OECD countries.

Yet, numerous challenges remain, and discrimination in social institutions continues to severely hamper the empowerment of women and girls. Globally, 40% of women and girls live in countries where the level of discrimination in social institutions is estimated to be high or very high. In 18 countries, all located in Africa and Asia, the levels of discrimination in social institutions are measured as very high. Moreover, levels of discrimination may be underestimated because countries not classified by the SIGI due to missing datapoints also tend to display high level of discrimination in the variables and indicators for which data are available. The lack of data prevented the calculation of SIGI scores for 39 countries out of the 179 covered by the fifth edition, which were nevertheless included in the Gender, Institutions and Development Database (GID-DB) (see Annex B). In particular, for 38 of these 39 countries, a full set of legal data was collected.[3] Among these 38 countries that have legal data but that did not obtain a SIGI score, 17 have legal frameworks for which discrimination is assessed as very high, and 3 have legal frameworks for which discrimination is assessed as high.[4] Had these countries been included, it would likely have substantially increased the number of countries with high and very high levels of discrimination in social institutions. Conversely, only 4 of these 38 countries have legal frameworks for which discrimination is assessed as very low.

Figure 2.1. Discrimination in social institutions continues to hamper women's empowerment in many countries

Classification of countries according to their SIGI score



Note: Scores range from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating no discrimination and 100 indicating absolute discrimination. Countries are classified into five groups according to their SIGI score: (1) very low level of discrimination (0 < SIGI < 20); (2) low level of discrimination (20 < SIGI < 30); (3) medium level of discrimination (30 < SIGI < 40); (4) high level of discrimination (40 < SIGI < 50); and (5) very high level of discrimination (50 < SIGI < 100). Countries not classified have missing data which prevented the calculation of SIGI scores. Bolded countries are OECD countries.
Source: (OECD, 2023[1]), "Social Institutions and Gender Index (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/33beb96e-en.

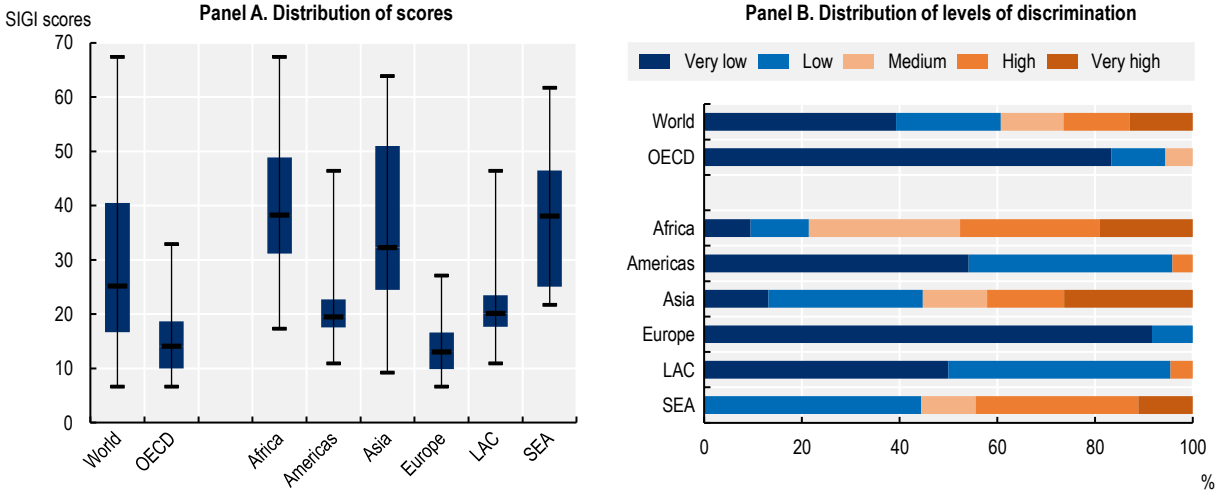
Progress and challenges are not homogeneous and certain regions lag behind others

The SIGI global average score is 29,[5] indicating that levels of discrimination in social institutions across the world are estimated to be low and close to medium. This result hides very diverse situations with ample variation across regions and within countries themselves. In Europe and the Americas, SIGI scores respectively attain 14 and 21, denoting very low and low levels of discrimination. In Asia and Africa however, SIGI scores reach 37 and 40 respectively, indicating medium and high level of discrimination.

Wide variations also exist within regions (Figure 2.2, Panel A). In Africa, for instance, there is a substantial number of countries in all categories of the SIGI classification, but with only four African countries in the very low category: Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. Likewise, in Asia, levels of discrimination range from very low to very high, with countries classified in all categories (Figure 2.2, Panel B). In countries that do not fare well, these wide variations may reflect the lack of political will to address the root causes of discrimination and/or weak governance or conflict. Entrenched social norms can also pose challenges to implementing laws, policies and programmes, even in contexts where political support for gender equality exists. For countries that fare better, the variations highlight their strong commitments to eradicating gender discrimination, including through legal reforms, implementation of laws, and programmes and policies aimed at challenging discriminatory social norms.

Figure 2.2. Levels of discrimination in social institutions vary widely across regions

Distribution of SIGI scores (Panel A) and levels of discrimination (Panel B) by regions and selected sub-regions



Note: LAC refers to Latin America and the Caribbean, and SEA refers to Southeast Asia. Panel A presents the statistical distribution of SIGI scores across regions and selected sub-regions. For each geographical area, the lower bar corresponds to the lowest SIGI score of the area, the upper bar the highest SIGI score of the area and the intermediary bar to the median SIGI score of the area. For each area, the box contains SIGI scores ranging between the first and the third quartile. The median and variance of SIGI scores obtained for each area reveal to what extent levels of discrimination are low or high (median) and whether areas are very heterogenous (large variance or inter-quartile range). Scores range from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating no discrimination and 100 indicating absolute discrimination. Panel B presents the distribution of countries by levels of discrimination across regions and selected sub-regions. Countries are classified into five groups according to their SIGI score: (1) very low level of discrimination (SIGI < 20); (2) low level of discrimination (20 < SIGI < 30); (3) medium level of discrimination (30 < SIGI < 40); (4) high level of discrimination (40 < SIGI < 50); and (5) very high level of discrimination (SIGI > 50). At the global level, data cover 140 countries for which SIGI scores were calculated in 2023. Data cover 36 OECD countries, 42 countries of Africa, 24 countries of the Americas (including 22 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean), 38 countries of Asia (including 9 countries of Southeast Asia) and 36 countries of Europe.

Source: (OECD, 2023[1]), "Social Institutions and Gender Index (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/33beb96e-en.

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Since 2019 and the fourth edition of the SIGI, many countries have enacted legal reforms that protect women's rights and grant them equal opportunities. These legal reforms have covered all areas and spheres of women's lives. Policy makers have increasingly addressed gender-based violence through comprehensive legal reforms that not only aim to eradicate physical and sexual violence against women but also to eliminate girl child marriage and female genital mutilation and cutting. With the objective of preventing child marriage, countries have also taken steps to strengthen their laws governing marriage by establishing 18 years as the minimum age of marriage for women and men, with no exceptions. More

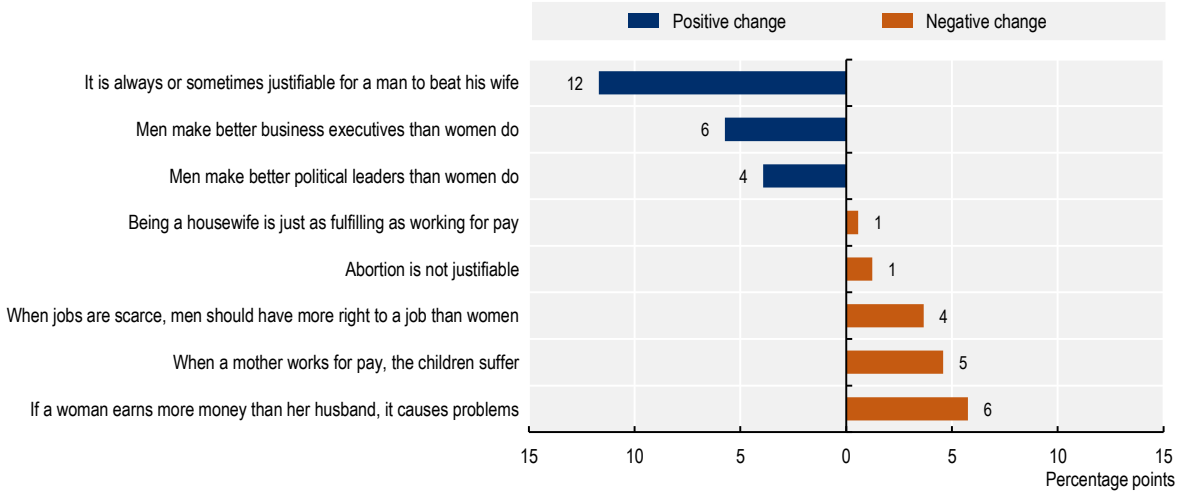
countries have enacted legislated quotas at the national level to increase women's representation in national parliaments.

Transforming social norms fundamentally takes time as they relate to the core beliefs of individuals, and these changes are not immune to backlash and regression. Global and local challenges such as socio-economic crises and uncertainty can trigger social resistance to progress and potentially induce a backlash against gender equality. Based on 37 countries[6] that account for 50% of the world's population aged 18 years and more and for which attitudinal data are available for both wave 6 (2010-14) and wave 7 (2017-22) of the World Values Survey (Inglehart et al., 2022[2]), results paint a mixed picture of progress and setbacks (Figure 2.3):

- Attitudes towards intimate partner violence and women's leadership in both economic and political spheres have seen positive changes. Between 2014 and 2022, discriminatory attitudes towards women's leadership in politics and in the economic sphere have decreased by 4 and 6 percentage points respectively. Over this period, the share of individuals holding such discriminatory views decreased in 31 countries out of 37. Likewise, the share of people thinking that it is always or sometimes acceptable for a man to beat his wife decreased by 12 percentage points between 2014 and 2021.
- However, social norms related to women's equal rights and ability to work have become more negative. Between 2014 and 2022, the share of individuals thinking that men should have more right to a job than women when jobs are scarce increased in 19 countries and by more than 5 percentage points in 14 of them. Overall, it increased by 4 percentage points. Likewise, the share of the population thinking that it is almost certain to cause problems if a woman earns more money than her husband went up by 6 percentage points, increasing in 24 countries while decreasing in only 13 countries.

Figure 2.3. Changes in social norms are a mixed picture of progress and setbacks

Change in discriminatory attitudes between 2014 and 2022



Note: For each statement, the figure presents the change in percentage points between the share of the population holding discriminatory views in 2014 and 2021. A positive change indicates that the share of the population holding discriminatory attitudes decreased between 2014 and 2021; a negative change indicates that the share of the population holding discriminatory attitudes decreased between 2014 and 2021. Depending on the statement, data are calculated over a sample of 36 or 37 countries for which data are available for both consecutive waves 6 and 7 of the World Values Survey, which correspond to the periods 2010-14 and 2017-22, respectively. These countries account for 50% of the population aged 18 years and more.
Source: (Inglehart et al., 2022[2]), World Values Survey: All Rounds, https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWVL.jsp.

StatLink https://stat.link/pdrbj0

Against this backdrop, gender gaps have been reduced and harmful practices have declined but at a very limited pace. The slow progress jeopardises the achievement by 2030 of SDG 5 as well as the 102 indicators of the SDG framework (out of 247) that are gender-relevant (Cohen and Shinwell, 2020[3]). Estimates from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) suggest that girl child marriage dropped from one in four women married before the age of 18 in 2010, to less than one in five in 2022 (UNICEF, 2023[4]; UNICEF, 2022[5]; UNICEF, 2018[6]). Whereas women dedicated 3.3 times more time to unpaid care and domestic work than men in 2014, it has decreased to 2.6 times more in 2023. Likewise, the share of women who have survived intimate-partner violence during the last 12 months has dropped from 19% in 2014 to 10% in 2023. On the political side, the share of women in national parliaments has increased from 24% in 2019 to nearly 27% in 2023 (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]; OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2019[8]; OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2014[9]). Yet, despite these advances, gender equality remains a distant goal, and the world is not on track to achieve SDG 5 by 2030 (Box 2.1). Moreover, recent crises may have further derailed efforts to achieve gender equality. For instance, evidence suggests that the COVID-19 crisis has increased the amount and intensity of women's unpaid domestic work, although the full impact of the crisis will remain unclear until proper time-use surveys are conducted (UN Women, 2020[10]).

Box 2.1. Gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals: Where does the world stand?

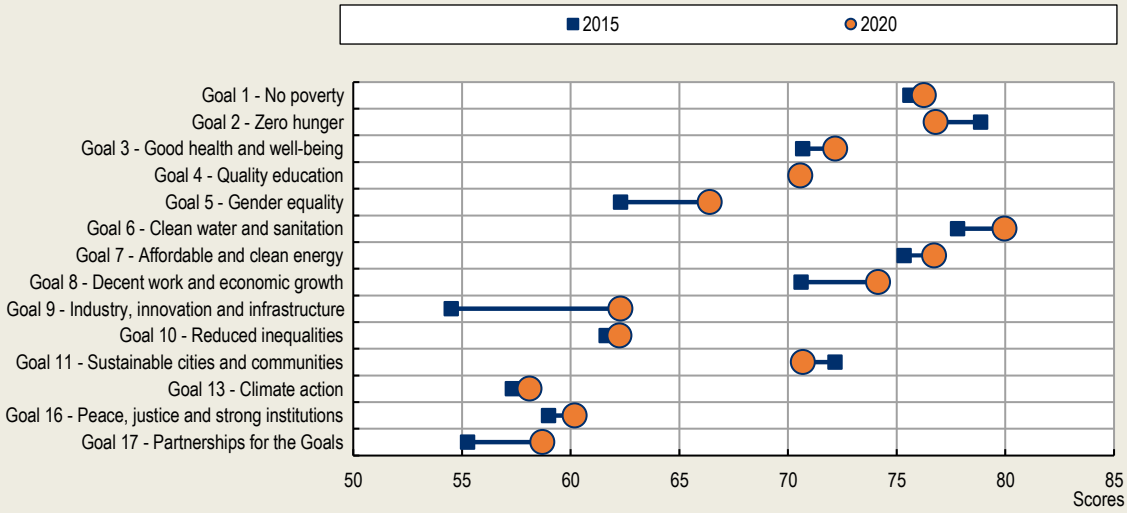
Eradicating discrimination against women and girls is a stand-alone objective of the SDGs under Goal 5. Composed of 9 targets and 18 indicators, SDG 5 covers a large range of issues including discriminatory legislation, all forms of violence against women and girls, unpaid care and domestic work, representation in decision-making positions, universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and access to productive resources (United Nations, 2015[11]). Since 2018, the OECD's SIGI is one of the official data sources for monitoring SDG Indicator 5.1.1 on "[w]hether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor gender equality and women's empowerment", together with UN Women and the World Bank Group's Women Business and the Law. Beyond SDG 5, gender equality is also embedded in nearly all 17 goals. In total, around 45% of indicators of the SDG framework (102 out of 247) are gender-relevant (Cohen and Shinwell, 2020[3]).

Current trends show that the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030. The socio-economic consequences of recent crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the global food crisis, have exacerbated existing gender inequalities and, in some countries, worsened the situation (United Nations, 2022[12]).

In 2022, an analysis from Equal Measures 2030 carried out across 56 gender-related indicators, covering 14 of the 17 SDGs, revealed that only about 68% of gender targets had been achieved in 2020 (Equal Measures 2030, 2022[13]). If current trends continue, only 71% would be achieved by 2030. The analysis highlighted that, between 2015 and 2020, about two-thirds of countries with comparable historical data made progress towards more gender equality, and one-third showed no progress or moved in the opposite direction, towards more gender-unequal societies.

Figure 2.4. The world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030

Change in Equal Measures 2030 global scores between 2015 and 2020, by Sustainable Development Goal



Note: Scores range between 0 and 100 points, with 0 being the worst and 100 being the best score. A higher score means that the world is closer to achieving gender equality targets in the corresponding SDG.
Source: (Equal Measures 2030, 2022[13]), 2022 SDG Gender Index, https://www.equalmeasures2030.org/2022-sdg-gender-index/.

StatLink https://stat.link/wlgu32

At the global level, the highest levels of gender equality in terms of achievement were found in specific SDGs, namely SDG 1 on poverty, SDG 2 on nutrition, SDG 6 on water, and SDG 7 on clean energy. Conversely, lower levels of gender equality were found in SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, SDG 10 on reduced inequalities, SDG 13 on climate action, SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions and SDG 17 on partnerships for the Goals. The greatest progress, between 2015 and 2020, was recorded in SDG 9, SDG 5, SDG 8 and SDG 17 (Figure 2.4).

Gender-based discrimination is multiform and often overlaps across different dimensions

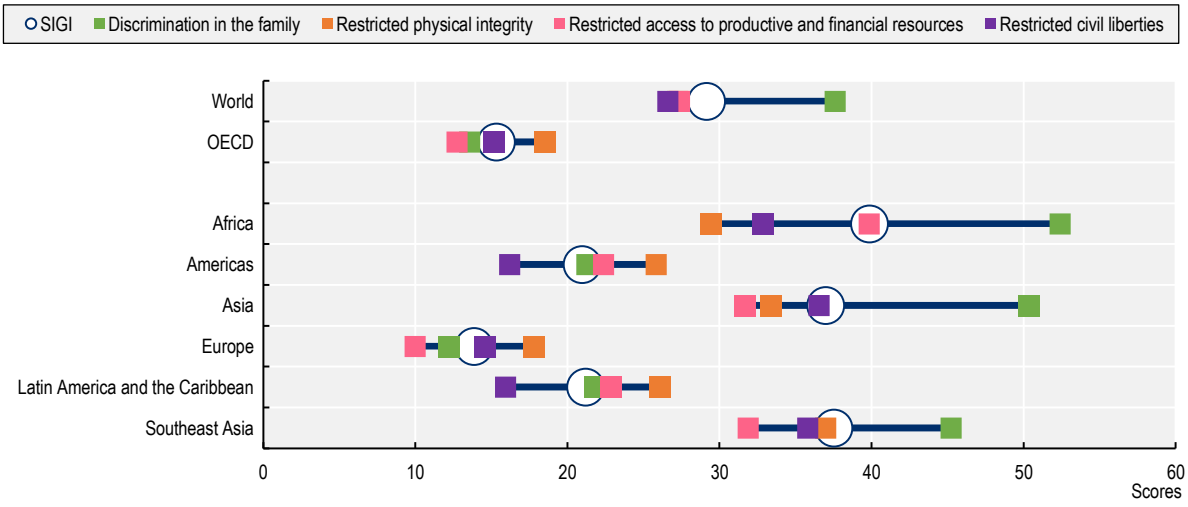
The fifth edition of the SIGI shows where challenges remain and what still needs to be done to achieve a world free of gender-based discrimination. Results at the dimension level paint a complex picture composed of a mix of global issues and localised challenges. The persistence of high levels of discrimination in certain areas across all regions and countries suggests that some issues, such as violence against women, are truly global. In other areas, levels of discrimination vary widely across regions and countries, highlighting the fact that problems may be more specific to and contingent on local contexts, legal structures or customs. Despite this duality, results across the SIGI dimensions and indicators suggest that interlinkages remain strong and that different forms of discrimination often overlap, inequalities in one area often translating into inequalities in others.

Worldwide, results at the dimension level show that discrimination is the highest in the family dimension of the SIGI framework (Figure 2.5). In Africa and Asia, levels of discrimination are found to be very high in this dimension of the SIGI, with respective scores of 52 and 50. These high levels of discrimination that women face in the private sphere often constitute the primary barrier that prevents women and girls from

exercising their voice and participating in the public sphere. Women's and girls' lack of agency and decision-making power regarding their time, bodies and resources, as measured at the family level by the "Discrimination in the family" dimension, directly hinders their empowerment.

Figure 2.5. Levels of discrimination vary widely across regions, and discrimination is the highest in the family dimension

SIGI and dimensions scores



Note: Scores range from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating no discrimination and 100 indicating absolute discrimination.
Source: (OECD, 2023[1]), "Social Institutions and Gender Index (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/33beb96e-en.

StatLink https://stat.link/zm20jd

The results also highlight that violence against women and women's control over their own bodies remain issues prone to legal pushbacks and that they affect all countries – developing and developed ones alike. "Restricted physical integrity" is the dimension where differences between regions are the smallest (Figure 2.5). Violence against women, which remains a global pandemic, is underpinned by its widespread social acceptance and deep-rooted notions of masculinities (Box 2.2) (OECD, 2021[14]), whereas restrictive laws across the world continue to prevent women from seeking a safe abortion under extreme circumstances, sometimes at the cost of their own lives. Worldwide, 8% of women of reproductive age (aged between 15 and 49 years), representing about 140 million women, cannot seek a safe and legal abortion even if it is necessary to save the mother's life, and less than 40% of women of reproductive age, representing about 710 million women, are legally authorised to seek a safe abortion at least under essential grounds – i.e. to save the mother's life, to preserve the mother's physical and/or mental health, and in cases of rape, statutory rape or incest and foetal impairment (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[15]) (see Chapter 3).

Levels of discrimination in the economic and civil liberty spheres are relatively lower but remain important in absolute terms, notably in certain regions. Compared to the other dimensions, the levels of discrimination found in the dimensions "Restricted access to productive and financial resources" and "Restricted civil liberties" tend to be lower. Issues in these dimensions appear to be more localised, with certain specific regions facing high levels of discrimination in one of them. For instance, Africa and Asia display medium levels of discrimination in the "Restricted civil liberties" dimension compared to very low levels in the Americas and Europe (Figure 2.5). In Asia, this dimension is the second highest, behind "Discrimination in

the family". In the economic sphere, Africa displays high levels of discrimination in the "Restricted access to productive and financial resources" dimension (Figure 2.5), highlighting women's profound economic disempowerment in many countries of the region. Conversely, in Europe, the economic dimension is the lowest one, and the region has attained very low levels of discrimination, showcasing the large gains achieved since 2000, including in terms of economic rights, access to maternity and paternity leave and women's representation in management.

Box 2.2. What are masculinities?

Masculinities are social constructs that are both shaped by and part of social institutions – formal and informal laws, social norms and practices. They relate to perceived notions, shared by both men and women, about how "real" men behave and, importantly, how men are expected to behave in specific settings in order to be considered "real" men.

Masculinities are diverse and differ across cultures, geographical locations and time periods but also within cultures. They are informed by factors such as age, socio-economic background, race, and religion. They also develop and operate at different levels, including the interpersonal, communal, institutional and societal levels.

The impact of masculinities on gender equality runs both ways. Masculinities can promote women's empowerment and gender equality or can obstruct it when they encourage men to develop beliefs, behaviours and attributes which undermine these goals. In this context, in 2021, the OECD Development Centre defined the following terminology to inform its work and guide its analysis:

- "Gender-equitable masculinities" describes masculinities that are supportive of women's empowerment and gender equality and that undermine patriarchal structures and unequal gender power dynamics.
- "Restrictive masculinities" describes masculinities that confine men to their traditional role as the dominant gender group, undermining women's empowerment and gender equality.

Source: (OECD, 2021[14]), *Man Enough? Measuring Masculine Norms to Promote Women's Empowerment*, Social Institutions and Gender Index, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/6ffd1936-en.

Discrimination is the highest within the family sphere at the global level

As mentioned above, discrimination in the family remains the most challenging dimension of the SIGI framework. High levels of discrimination found in the family sphere highlight the persistence of deep-rooted unequal power relations between women and men within the household. They also reflect the existence, in many countries, of discriminatory civil and personal status laws which grant different rights to men and women. These discriminatory laws have impacts throughout their entire lives, affecting their rights to contract marriage, their status within the household, their ability to seek and obtain a divorce, or their opportunities to inherit from their parents or husband on equal grounds with men. Because perceptions, attitudes and behaviours are formed at an early age, notably through education and human interactions taking place in the immediate family environment, high levels of discrimination in the family have lifelong repercussions on women's and men's attitudes towards gender equality and on their perception of traditional roles of men and women.

Despite better legal protections, girl child marriage remains far from being eradicated

Between 2019 and 2023, 21 countries have enacted legal reforms aimed at combatting child marriage. Reforms and amendments have primarily focused (i) on ensuring that the minimum legal age of marriage is set at 18 years for both men and women, and (ii) on eliminating any legal provisions that established exceptions under which individuals were allowed to marry below the minimum legal age – for instance with the consent of the parents or of a judge. More precisely, six countries[7] raised the minimum age of marriage of girls to 18 years old; 13 countries[8] eliminated legal exceptions; and two countries[9] did both at the same time.

Since 2000, legislative progress that better protects girls and boys from child marriage has been instrumental in slowly reducing the number of children married before the age of 18 years. Whereas in 2010, one in four women aged between 20 and 24 years reported they had been married as children, the rate had fallen to less than one in five in 2022 (UNICEF, 2023[4]; UNICEF, 2022[5]; UNICEF, 2018[6]). Data from the OECD Development Centre and based on household surveys from multiple years estimate that, in 2023, 26% of women aged between 20 and 24 years had been married before the age of 18 years (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]).

However, trajectories and dynamics differ across regions. Gains have been primarily concentrated in Asia, and more particularly in South Asia. While the sub-region remains home to the largest number of child brides, it is the place that reports the fastest progress (mostly in India), and girl child marriage rates are expected to continue to decline. Conversely, in Latin America and the Caribbean, child marriage rates have stagnated at around 25% (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]), whereas in sub-Saharan Africa there is a risk of an increase in the absolute number of girl brides. This is because population growth rates outpace the decline in girl child marriage rates, particularly in Central and West Africa (Liang et al., 2019[16]; UNICEF, 2018[6]). In 2023, 33% of women from sub-Saharan Africa aged between 20 and 24 years have been married before the age of 18 years (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]). The practice is closely intertwined with adolescent pregnancy: on the one hand, out-of-wedlock early pregnancies may force parents to marry their daughters to avoid the social stigma, while, on the other hand, marrying off early increases the likelihood of getting pregnant. Together, these dynamics have disastrous consequences on adolescent girls' health and yield long-term physical, social and economic effects (see Chapter 3).

Girl child marriage is closely associated with socio-economic factors, notably the social view of a woman's role and the economic uncertainty that families may face. Traditional views tend to confine women to their reproductive roles. In this regard, customary and religious laws often use physical and biological milestones such as puberty and the onset of the first menstrual period as the *de facto* age of majority of a girl. At the same time, in contexts of poverty and economic hardship, parents may choose to marry off their daughter as soon as possible to spare limited resources and cut spending by reducing household size (UNICEF, 2021[17]). The practice of bride price[10] may also create further incentives. In places where the groom or his family must pay a bride price to the bride's family, parents may marry off their daughters as a source of income.

Against this backdrop, the economic pressure caused by COVID-19 and the global food crisis may have exacerbated the risk of more girls being married before the age of 18 years. Lockdowns, reduced economic activity, school closures and mounting uncertainties have likely all contributed to increasing the incentives for families to marry off their daughters at a young age (UNICEF, 2021[17]). Estimates suggest that the pandemic has increased the number of child brides compared to the pre-COVID-19 projections by 10 million over the period 2020-30. The ongoing food crisis triggered by the invasion of Ukraine has dramatically aggravated the share of the global population exposed to food insecurity and poverty, increasing the risks of girls being exposed to child and forced marriage, early pregnancy, and other sexual and reproductive health and rights violations (Wright et al., 2023[18]; WFP, 2023[19]).

In a more general global context of climate change where shocks destroy lives, crops and livelihoods and undermine people's ability to feed themselves, young girls are highly vulnerable to child marriage (see Chapter 4). Recent evidence from the Horn of Africa suggests that in regions most affected by droughts, child marriage has more than doubled in the space of one year, with lifelong consequences in terms of health and human capital (UNICEF, 2023[20]). These setbacks and threats put the world, collectively, at high risk of not meeting the SDG target 5.3 which aims at "eliminating all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations" by 2030.

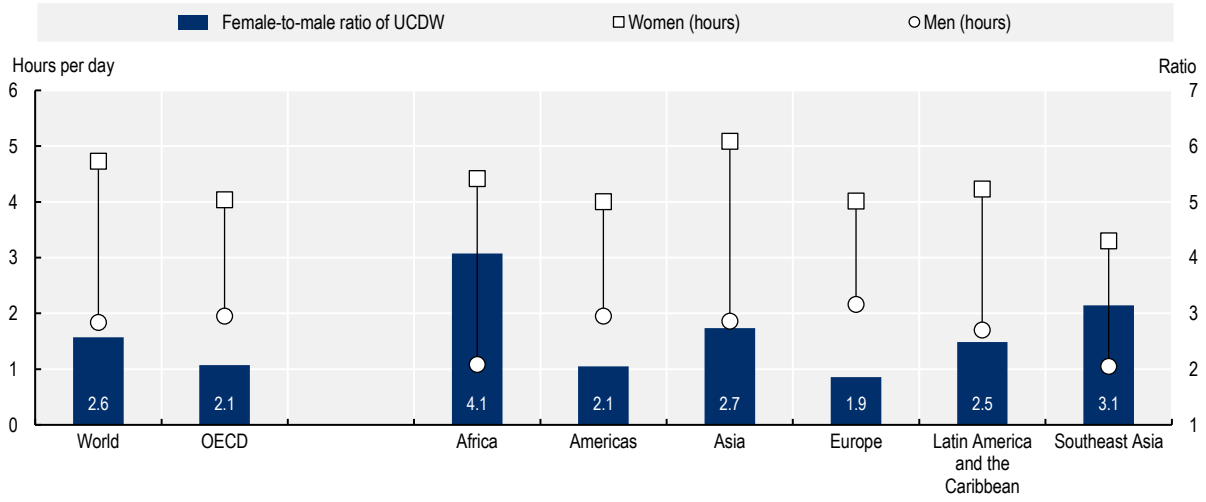
Women continue to undertake a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work

Across all countries of the world, social norms and traditional views tend to assign men and women strict roles within the household and societies. These social constructs relate to perceived notions – shared by both men and women – about how men and women should behave, and how society, communities and other individuals expect them to behave in order to be considered "real" men and "real" women (OECD, 2021[14]). They are the two faces of the same coin, norms of restrictive masculinities often mirroring traditional views on the roles of women. Whereas men are expected to be the main breadwinner of the household, discriminatory social norms tend to confine women to their care and reproductive roles, putting them in charge of raising the children and fulfilling house chores. Worldwide, 45% of the population thinks that when jobs are scarce, men should have more rights to them than women, and 35% of the population believes that when a woman earns more than her husband, it causes problems. At the same time, mirroring these norms of restrictive masculinities, 65% of the population believes that being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay, and 56% declares that when a mother works for pay, the children suffer (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]).

The consequence of these discriminatory norms is that women shoulder most of the unpaid care and domestic work. At the global level, women dedicate, on average and every day, 4.7 hours of their time to unpaid care and domestic tasks, compared to 1.8 hours for men.[11] In other words, women spend 2.6 times more hours on unpaid care and domestic work than men do (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]). In Africa, the female-to-male ratio of time spent on unpaid care and domestic work reaches 4.1, which reflects both the large number of hours that women dedicate to it and the very limited participation of men in unpaid activities. In contrast, in Asia, women dedicate slightly more hours per day to unpaid care and domestic work than in Africa, but the female-to-male ratio is substantially lower (2.7) because of men's higher involvement in unpaid work (Figure 2.6). These systemic differences in unpaid care and domestic work have deep implications for women's labour engagement and outcomes, such as women's overrepresentation in low-wage sectors, in the informal economy or among part-time workers, as well as women's underrepresentation in leadership and management positions (see section "Discriminatory laws and restrictive norms of masculinities hamper women's economic empowerment globally").

Figure 2.6. Women undertake a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work

Female-to-male ratio of unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) and daily amount of time spent on unpaid care and domestic tasks by women and men, 2023



Note: Unpaid care and domestic work refers to activities related to the provision of services for own final use by household members or by family members living in other households. Activities are listed in the International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics 2016 (ICATUS 2016) under major divisions 3 (unpaid domestic services for household and family members) and 4 (unpaid caregiving services for household and family members). Unpaid care work refers to activities related to childcare and instruction, care of the sick, elderly, or disabled household and family members, and travel related to these unpaid caregiving services. Unpaid domestic work refers to activities including food and meals management and preparation, cleaning and maintaining of own dwelling and surroundings, do-it-yourself decoration, maintenance and repair of personal and household goods, care and maintenance of textiles and footwear, household management, pet care, shopping for own household and family members, and travel related to the previous listed unpaid domestic services. The female-to-male ratio of UCDW is calculated as the amount of time dedicated by women to UCDW per day divided by the amount of time dedicated by men to UCDW per day. Aggregates are calculated based on available data extracted from time-use surveys and covering 90 countries at the global level. Available data include 34 OECD countries, 16 countries from Africa, 19 countries from the Americas, 25 countries from Asia and 30 countries from Europe, as well as 17 countries from Latin America and the Caribbean and 4 countries from Southeast Asia.
Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]), "Gender, Institutions and Development (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/7b0af638-en.

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The full understanding of these imbalances is hampered by the lack of available data and the time necessary to collect them, which makes it difficult to monitor sudden changes, notably in contexts of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Worldwide, harmonised data on time-use, collected through household-based time-use surveys (TUS), are available for only half of the countries (90 out of 179), with many data points lacking recent updates. The scarcity of data underlines the need for renewed efforts to adequately measure time allocation and to normalise regular production of gender-responsive statistics. Moreover, although they constitute the main and most reliable statistical tool available to measure women's and men's allocation of time, TUS are complex, costly and require an extended amount of time for planning, preparation, collection and treatment of data.

Crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have direct and immediate impacts on the amount of time dedicated to unpaid care and domestic work. Yet, in this context, the effectiveness of TUS is jeopardised by their relative lack of timeliness and the fact that a crisis may impede traditional in-person data-gathering. In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, rapid gender surveys have been developed to rapidly collect data on the gendered impact of the crisis on unpaid care and domestic work (UN Women, 2020[10]). However, these new statistical instruments pose challenges of their own. The data collection method implemented

is often phone- or Internet-based, which may introduce biases, particularly in developing contexts where phone and Internet penetration remains limited. Limited access to phones or the Internet can exclude entire segments of the population from being surveyed, and they are often the most vulnerable groups – poor, rural population, women, adolescents, and so forth. The reduced size of the sample, compared to household-based surveys, can also lead to issues of representativeness.

Discriminatory social norms and practices within the household weaken women's agency

Women's role in the household and ability to make decisions is limited

Discriminatory social norms that confine women and men to stereotypical roles affect women's ability to take decisions at the household level. Men being perceived as the main breadwinner and women being confined to care and reproductive roles result, at the household level, in power being concentrated in the hands of men. Within the logic of norms of restrictive masculinities, being the main financial provider confers to men the right to be financially dominant – therefore controlling household assets – and to have the final say in household spending and decisions, including relationships and activities of other household members (OECD, 2021[14]).

Being the primary earner in a household is a powerful position that underpins traditional notions of power and authority, including over the education and the health of children (OECD, 2021[14]). Women's lack of involvement in decision-making processes has far-reaching implications, as women are more likely to invest in health and education, more particularly in that of girls (Saleemi and Kofol, 2022[21]; Pratley, 2016[22]; Branisa, Klasen and Ziegler, 2013[23]). For instance, in 2022, in Côte d'Ivoire, evidence showed that households in general, and men in particular when they are solely in charge, have higher educational aspirations for boys than for girls and, in contexts of limited resources, tend to prioritise the education of the former over that of the latter (OECD, 2022[24]). Similar conclusions were found in Tanzania, where differences in educational outcomes between men and women were found to partly stem from norms favouring the education of boys over that of girls (OECD, 2022[25]). In this regard, women's increased empowerment at the household level holds implications for countering harmful gender norms in the future by enabling education for women and girls and creating a valuable pathway towards more sustainable livelihoods.

The inequities generated by norms and traditional views that limit women's agency within the household are further reinforced by discriminatory formal and informal laws which restrict women's role in the family. Only a few legal frameworks make women's and men's differences of status in the household explicit. Worldwide, 28 countries,[12] by law, do not grant women the same rights as men to be recognised as the head of the household, and in 21 countries[13] married women must obey their husbands. Likewise, in six countries,[14] married women do not have the same rights as married men to own land, whereas in 11 countries[15] they do not have the same rights to use land or non-land assets as married men do. Yet, beyond formal and codified laws, informal and uncodified laws – that is customary, traditional, and religious laws and rules – play a key role in limiting women's agency within the household. In more than half of the countries (90 out of 178), informal laws create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to being recognised as the head of household. In many instances, informal laws, stemming from traditions, patriarchal values and deep-rooted cultural practices, establish men as the dominant figure of the household, in charge of all important decisions, including how to spend money.

Discriminatory inheritance practices constrain women's empowerment

The nexus between limits on women's agency at the household level and the economic deprivations they face is particularly acute in the context of inheritance. In developing contexts and countries where agriculture continues to represent a significant share of economic output and employment, individuals'

ability to own and use assets such as agricultural land is a key factor in their economic empowerment. Historically, individuals have obtained access to assets, particularly land, through purchase, inheritance or state intervention (Kabeer, 2009[26]). In that perspective, any legal or social limitation placed on women's and girls' ability to inherit has negative direct and indirect implications for women's economic empowerment. Not only does it limit their access to productive assets, but it also deprives them of valuable capital that could be leveraged to finance other non-agricultural income-generating activities (OECD, 2021[27]). These indirect channels can have severe consequences for women's entrepreneurship (see section "Discriminatory laws and restrictive norms of masculinities hamper women's economic empowerment globally").

Legal restrictions that hamper women's inheritance rights remain widespread in certain regions. Worldwide, 36 countries, which account for 17% of women globally and are all located in Africa and Asia, do not grant daughters and sons the same rights to inherit. Likewise, 37 countries comprising 18% of women do not grant equal rights to widows. Moreover, in more than half of the countries (95 out of 178), informal laws create different rights or abilities between sons and daughters or widows and widowers when it comes to inheritance.

Violence against women and girls remains a global pandemic

Violence against women refers to a wide range of harmful acts that are rooted in unequal power relations between men and women and that result in – or are likely to result in – physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women (United Nations, 1993[28]). In this regard, violence against women is part of the broader concept of gender-based violence, which refers to violence directed against a person because of that person's gender or violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately (European Union, 2023[29]). Violence against women is ubiquitous – it can take place anywhere, in public or in private spheres, offline or online. In most situations, it is carried out within the family environment and is perpetrated by women's current or former male intimate partners – a phenomenon known as intimate-partner violence (IPV) (OECD, 2020[30]; Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006[31]). Violence against women and IPV can take many forms, ranging from physical or economic abuse to rape and female genital mutilation and cutting in its most extreme forms (Box 2.3). It affects women of all ages, races, religions and socio-economic backgrounds.

Box 2.3. How does the SIGI 2023 Legal Survey define violence against women?

The SIGI framework adopts the life cycle approach to better understand violence against women and girls. In line with the updated SIGI framework developed in 2019 (Ferrant, Fuiret and Zambrano, 2020[32]), the SIGI 2023 Legal Survey covers different types of violence against women and measures the degree of legal protection against these abuses on different counts (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[15]).

The SIGI 2023 Legal Survey looks at violence against women and girls through five main channels: child marriage, female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C), domestic violence or IPV, rape, and sexual harassment. For each of these types of violence, the SIGI 2023 Legal Survey assesses legal frameworks on three primary counts: (i) national laws themselves; (ii) their execution, enhancement and monitoring through the existence of dedicated national action plans, programmes and policies; and (iii) informal (customary, traditional and religious) laws and rules that encourage discriminatory practices and/or hinder the application of formal laws.

The impact of violence on women's lives is devastating. Women who have survived violence are more likely to suffer from physical and mental health problems, including depression, anxiety and post-traumatic

stress disorder (WHO, 2021[33]). They are also at an increased risk of developing chronic health conditions such as cardiovascular diseases or the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Children who grow up in violent homes may experience a wide range of behavioural and emotional disturbances, putting them at risk of acting violently themselves once they reach adulthood, which perpetuates the cycle of violence (WHO, 2021[33]). By affecting women's health and well-being, violence against women, particularly IPV, has long-lasting consequences on all other areas of women's lives (OECD, 2023[34]). For instance, acts of violence against women may affect women's ability to work or induce significant losses in revenues. Women's economic dependence on their partners may also hinder their ability to leave an abusive relationship, as they may lack the necessary resources or financial independence to do so. Overall, violence against women bears enormous direct and indirect social and economic costs for societies. In 2021, the European Institute for Gender Equality estimated that gender-based violence across the European Union yielded a yearly cost of EUR 366 billion (EIGE, 2021[35]).

Combatting violence against women requires the establishment of strong laws supported by comprehensive policy frameworks

Addressing violence against women requires first and foremost to establish strong and comprehensive legal frameworks that take into account and respond to the experiences of all victims/survivors. Although not sufficient, enacting laws that protect women against all forms of violence constitutes a necessary step to putting an end to impunity and societal acceptance of violence against women. Their implementation entails vertical and horizontal co-ordination mechanisms, review mechanisms, sufficient funding, and a clear identification of roles and responsibilities of state actors and relevant stakeholders (OECD, 2023[36]). In line with the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (United Nations, 1993[28]), the General recommendation No. 35 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 2017[37]), and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, better known as the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011[38]), comprehensive legal frameworks imply that girls and women are protected from all forms of violence including domestic violence and IPV, rape and marital rape, honour crimes, and sexual harassment – without any exceptions or legal loopholes. A comprehensive approach also includes legally codified provisions for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of these crimes, as well as protection and support services for victims/survivors (OECD, 2019[39]). Worldwide, according to the SIGI methodology, only 12 countries[16] out of 178 have such comprehensive laws that address all types and forms of violence against women (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]).

In contrast, too many countries fail to criminalise domestic violence or to take into account all forms of domestic abuse. Since 2017, only 14 additional countries[17] have enacted legal provisions that criminalise domestic violence, whereas, as of 2023, 46 countries accounting for 16% of the world's population of women, fail to do so (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[15]). Moreover, legal definitions of domestic violence tend to ignore key types of abuse, creating loopholes that prevent the prosecution of certain acts of domestic violence and leave women vulnerable. In nearly all countries, the definition of domestic violence covers physical abuse (148 out of 178 countries) or psychological abuse (142 out of 178 countries). Legal protection is weaker regarding sexual abuse, with only 131 countries integrating it into their definitions of domestic violence. Finally, only 121 countries worldwide include economic violence – the action of limiting a partner's or spouse's access to economic resources or preventing him or her from getting a job – in their definitions of domestic violence. Domestic economic violence can trap victims/survivors in abusive homes through economic dependency on the perpetrator.

Likewise, legal definitions of rape often fail to include a consent-based approach or to cover the specific case of marital rape. Worldwide, 70 countries, accounting for 44% of women, do not have a definition of rape based on the lack of consent (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[15]).[18] Even when the definition of rape is based on the lack of consent, legal provisions that require proof of physical force or proof of penetration may weaken the ability of survivors to obtain the perpetrator's conviction, and the legal

definition of rape may exclude a large range of situations or acts. Among the 108 countries whose definition of rape is based on the lack of consent, 21 require proof of physical force to establish that rape has been committed; and 63 of them require proof of penetration. The legal challenge surrounding rape is particularly acute regarding marital rape. Beyond the difficulty to prove that rape occurred and social views that tend to think that a husband is entitled to sexual intercourse (OECD, 2023[36]), many legal frameworks fail to explicitly cover the act. Worldwide, 86 countries, accounting for 65% of women globally, do not explicitly mention marital rape in their definition of rape, jeopardising married women's ability to seek redress when they have not consented to sexual intercourse.

Sexual harassment is largely prohibited by countries, though not necessarily a crime nor taken into account outside the workplace. Worldwide, 22 countries still do not legally define and prohibit sexual harassment, and 48 countries, accounting for 33% of women, do not criminalise sexual harassment. (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[15]) A key issue related to the prohibition and criminalisation of sexual harassment is the places to which legal protections extend. Most laws define sexual harassment in the framework of their labour codes or legislation, establishing a strong link between sexual harassment, the labour environment and hierarchical relations. For that reason, in nearly all countries that prohibit sexual harassment, the legal protections from sexual harassment specifically apply to the workplace. However, in doing so, they often fail to specifically extend this protection to other critical places such as educational places and/or the Internet. Defining sexual harassment solely based on labour relations therefore tends to weaken the reach of the law and to create legal uncertainty as to whether the provisions contained in the labour legislation can also apply to acts of sexual harassment that occur in a school, online or in any other non-work-related place.

Since 2017, countries that have strengthened laws addressing violence against women have taken a comprehensive approach to reform. For instance, in 2020, Mexico introduced a "General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence" which recognises several types of violence against women, including psychological, physical, patrimonial, economic and sexual violence, as well as femicide. The law targets all spheres of women's lives by covering the workplace, educational institutions and unions. It also provides an extensive overview of the roles and responsibilities of governmental agencies, ministries and public service providers in relation to implementation, co-ordination, capacity-building and data collection (OECD, 2023[36]). In 2020, Spain introduced several legal reforms which have expanded the protection of victims/survivors of violence, strengthened existing protection mechanisms for victims/survivors of IPV and extended them to survivors of other forms of violence against women, including sexual violence, forced marriages, and female genital mutilation and cutting, and introduced new provisions covering psychological violence, stalking, online violence and other forms of violence in the digital environment. Through training and professional specialisations, the new legislation has also reinforced the capacities of professionals from the educational field, health and social services, security forces, and the judiciary and the prison system, while mandating the formulation of a State Prevention Strategy aimed at evaluating and monitoring the legal framework (OECD, 2023[36]).

In general, the legislation in place needs to be accompanied by a comprehensive policy framework which ensures that enough resources are available and that guidelines are in place. Successful policies aimed at eradicating violence against women build on long-term commitments from governments and the implementation of a whole-of-government approach. These increasingly take the form of stand-alone dedicated national action plans. As of August 2022, 111 countries had a national action plan or policy in force to support the implementation of the legislation addressing violence against women, and 83 countries had a dedicated national action plan or policy that set forth as a priority the integration and co-ordination of services and mechanisms for survivors of violence against women (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[15]). To be effective, these policy frameworks and roadmaps for action must address multiple forms of violence in all settings, contain various ways of addressing these forms of violence, bring together different ministries, agencies and levels of government (horizontal vs. vertical co-ordination), and establish clear budgetary commitments (OECD, 2023[36]). Specific components of national action plans often include

guidelines for the different stakeholders involved in providing integrated service delivery, including medical and judicial personnel, police officers and social workers (OECD, 2023[34]).

Violence against women is a true global pandemic, underpinned by its social acceptance and restrictive norms of masculinities

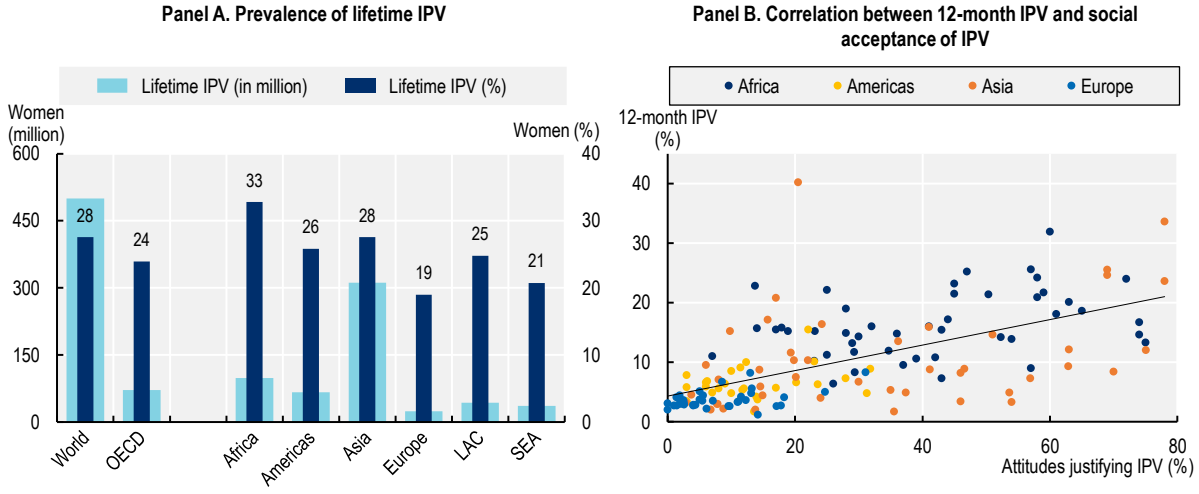
Despite the progress accomplished on the legal front, violence against women remains a global issue that affects millions worldwide and that is likely underestimated. Globally, in 2023, nearly one in three girls and women (28%) aged 15 to 49 years have survived IPV at least once in her lifetime; and one in ten women aged more than 15 years have survived IPV over the last year (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]). In absolute terms, this means that more than half a billion girls and women have been subjected to violence at the hands of their current or former spouse, partner or boyfriend at some point in their lives (Figure 2.7, Panel A). It also means that nearly 300 million women have been physically, sexually or psychologically abused by their intimate partner during the last year. Challenges associated with measuring violence against women – difficulty to recognise what violence is, fear of retaliation, lack of resources to escape it – mean that the prevalence of violence against women is likely underreported and that the real figures may be well above the ones recorded by official surveys (OECD, 2020[30]). These challenges have been further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic which trapped abused women at home and disrupted support services (OECD, 2023[34]).

The causes of violence against women are complex and multi-faceted. It is often rooted in gender inequality, which is perpetuated by discriminatory social norms and beliefs that reinforce the subordination of women to men. Poverty and the stress that results from the lack of income, as well as social isolation, can also contribute to violence against women, particularly IPV (Capaldi et al., 2012[40]; Jewkes, 2002[41]).

The prevalence and perpetuation of violence against women are fundamentally underpinned by its social acceptance, including by women themselves. Worldwide, in 2023, 30% of women aged 15 to 49 years think that it is acceptable for a husband to beat his wife under certain circumstances, namely if she burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children or refuses sexual relations (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]). It ranges from 9% of women in Europe and 17% of women in the Americas to 32% and 38% in Asia and Africa, respectively. Globally, attitudes justifying IPV are strongly associated with more women experiencing it during the last year (Figure 2.7, Panel B). Such social acceptance of IPV is often deeply ingrained and perpetuated from generation to generation. It primarily stems from the belief that domestic violence is a private matter whose consequences and handling should remain within the household or the family. In this perspective, social norms also tend to establish that no one – particularly public or judicial authorities – should intervene in the violence that takes place between spouses (Nnyombi et al., 2022[42]).

Figure 2.7. Violence against women is a global pandemic, underpinned by its social acceptance

Share and number of women who have survived intimate-partner violence (IPV) during their lifetime (Panel A) and relationship between the share of women who have survived IPV during the last 12 months and attitudes condoning IPV (Panel B)



Note: LAC refers to Latin America and the Caribbean, and SEA refers to Southeast Asia. In Panel A, the population of reference for the lifetime IPV rate and the number of women is girls and women aged 15 to 49 years. In Panel B, the population of reference for the 12-month IPV rate is women aged over 15 years. For attitudes justifying IPV, the primary source is the World Health Organization, with attitudinal data calculated as the share of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who think a husband to be justified in hitting or beating his wife for at least one of the specified reasons, i.e. if his wife burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children or refuses sexual relations. When data are missing, they are complemented by alternative sources of data, namely the World Values Survey and Eurobarometer. For the World Values Survey, data reflect the share of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who think it is at least somehow justifiable for a husband to beat his wife. For Eurobarometer, data reflect the share of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who think domestic violence acceptable under certain circumstances or in all circumstances.

Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]), "Gender, Institutions and Development (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/7b0af638-en.

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At the heart of the social acceptance of violence against women lie norms of restrictive masculinities that perpetuate male dominance in the private sphere as well as acceptance and entitlement to perpetrate physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence. These norms dictate that a "real" man should protect and exercise guardianship over women in the household. In this perspective, domestic violence may constitute a way for men to exercise this guardianship and may emerge as a means to reaffirm men's control over women (OECD, 2021[14]). Symmetrically, these norms of restrictive masculinities establish that women should be "obedient, silent and good" and should accept the violence inflicted by men and in some cases by other women. In this context, violence can also be perceived as a means to sanction a woman who deviates from the norm and fails to fulfil her role or duty. In contexts of poverty, the stress induced by men failing to live up to the idea of "successful" manhood – for instance, by providing for their household – can result in episodes of intra-family violence (Jewkes, 2002[41]).

The extreme case of female genital mutilation and cutting highlights the central role of laws and social norms

The continuous practice of female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C)[19] often stems directly from social norms around womanhood. Social pressure from community members and customs is particularly strong, including the perception that mutilation can prevent sexual promiscuity, constitutes a rite of passage for

young girls transitioning into adulthood and is an essential condition for marriage (UNDP, 2016[43]; UNICEF, 2013[44]). Women themselves play a central role in upholding these social norms. The role of elder women and grandmothers in perpetuating mutilation of their own daughters' and granddaughters' genitals has been largely documented. Finally, norms of restrictive masculinities establishing that a "real man" should marry a woman who has been excised or cut also contribute to perpetuating the practice, which signals the need to work with men when it comes to the unacceptability of FGM/C practices (OECD, 2021[27]).

The practice of FGM/C, although rooted in specific customs that are largely present in African countries, is no longer only a developing country issue. Worldwide, mutilations are traditionally concentrated in a limited number of countries that have been well-identified and documented by international organisations at the forefront of the fight against FGM/C (Equality Now, End FGM European Network and US End FGM/C Network, 2020[45]; OHCR et al., 2008[46]). In these countries located in Africa and Asia, the share of women who have been mutilated, excised or cut varies widely. Globally, it is estimated that as many as 200 million women have been victims/survivors of FGM/C. In nine African countries,[20] more than three in four girls and women aged 15 to 49 years have experienced FGM/C. Yet, recent evidence has highlighted that FGM/C takes place across all regions, including in many American and European countries, among indigenous and/or diaspora communities originating from countries where FGM/C is known to be common (28 Too Many, 2021[47]). In some contexts, girls are taken across national borders to undergo FGM/C in a country where the legislation against the practice is either non-existent or less strict, a phenomenon known as cross-border FGM/C.

To eradicate FGM/C, including in countries for which it is not a local custom but where the practice occurs nevertheless in certain communities, it is essential to establish strong legal frameworks that provide enough grounds to prosecute acts of mutilation beyond borders. Among the 30 countries where data on FGM/C are collected because it is documented as a historical traditional practice, 24 have enacted specific laws criminalising FGM/C (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]; World Bank, 2020[48]). Conversely, in countries where FGM/C is not a customary practice but where many girls from migrant communities are at risk of it, legislative reform has been slower. Historically, these countries have criminalised FGM/C through general provisions of their criminal codes covering acts of mutilation or prohibiting violence, acts against bodily integrity, assault, harm and so forth. Only recently, since the early 2000s, have they started to enact specific laws or legal provisions against FGM/C. In Europe, for instance, data from the SIGI show that 22 countries out of 38 (58%) have laws that criminalise FGM/C on narrow grounds;[21] and 28 out of the 38 OECD members now have legislation in place that specifically addresses FGM/C (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[15]).

Cross-border FGM/C also requires specific legal frameworks that take a comprehensive approach. In Australia, for example, each state or territory has legal provisions on cross-border FGM/C. In Germany, not only performing but assisting or persuading others to perform FGM/C is a criminal offence, even if committed abroad (OECD, 2023[36]). While prevalence data remain extremely scarce, the European Commission, based on analysis carried out in 17 European countries, estimates that there are over 600 000 FGM/C survivors living in Europe and around another 190 000 women and girls who are at risk of it (EIGE, 2023[49]; European Commission, 2021[50]; End FGM European Network, 2020[51]).

Although acts of mutilation can still be prosecuted in countries that do not have specific legislation – for instance under provisions on bodily injury, harm or assault – the existence of specific laws or provisions constitutes a strong political commitment towards ending the harmful practice (Equality Now, End FGM European Network and US End FGM/C Network, 2020[45]). Establishing such a legal framework is a first step to putting in place more specific and comprehensive policies, including the provision of specialised services for survivors of FGM/C, counselling and shelters. It can also help ensure that the legislation provides an adequate framework to prosecute FGM/C acts, including when they are committed abroad. For instance, the Netherlands – within the framework of its pioneering so-called "chain approach"[22] to eradicate FGM/C – amended legal provisions covering these harmful acts in 2013 to extend the country's jurisdiction to acts of FGM/C performed abroad in case the victim/survivor is a Dutch citizen or has a

permanent place of residence in the Netherlands, but also when the offender is a foreign national and/or is not a resident of the Netherlands (Pharos, n.d.[52]).

Discriminatory laws and restrictive norms of masculinities hamper women's economic empowerment globally

The economic dimension is central to women's empowerment. It focuses primarily on women's capacity to make strategic choices and exercise agency in the economic sphere and, more precisely, their ability to participate in the labour market, earn an income, and access and control key resources such as land. This perspective is at the core of the SDGs and directly embedded into SDG target 5.A, which calls on all governments to "[u]ndertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws" (United Nations, 2015[11]). It also encompasses a wider set of issues, including women's control over their own time, lives and bodies, as well as their meaningful participation and representation in economic decision-making processes at all levels – from within the household to the highest economic and political positions (UN Women, 2020[53]). Women's economic empowerment also paves the way for changes in other dimensions of their lives, such as well-being, social empowerment, health or education (Kabeer, 2009[26]).

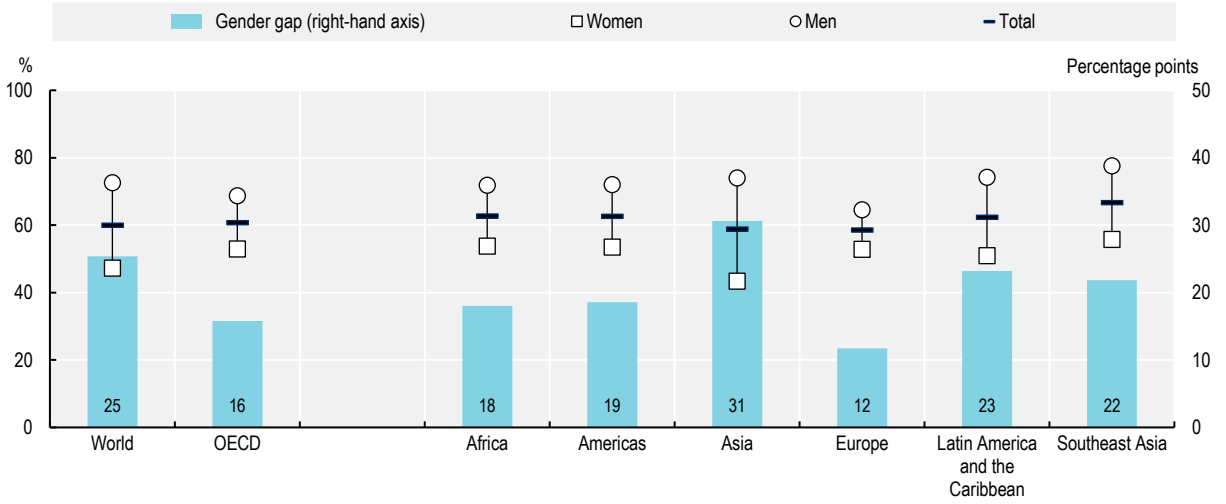
Results from the fifth edition of the SIGI show that restrictive laws and discriminatory social norms continue to profoundly hamper women's economic empowerment. In particular, they restrict women's rights and ability to enter the labour force, weaken their labour status when they work, and limit their access to key economic assets such as land.

Women's participation in the labour market remains limited compared to men's

Since 2019, improvement in women's position in the labour market has stagnated, while gender inequalities continue to persist. Worldwide, women's labour force participation rate has remained steady at approximately 47%, and the female employment rate has not changed significantly, standing at around 45% (ILO, 2023[54]). Gender gaps in the labour market remain a major concern, with women still less likely than men to be active members of the labour force. In 2022, at the global level, men's participation rate was 25 percentage points higher than women's (Figure 2.8), and the gender gap was ranging from 11 percentage points in Europe to 30 percentage points in Asia (ILO, 2023[54]).

Figure 2.8. Worldwide, women are less likely than men to participate in the labour market

Labour force participation rates of men and women and gender gap, 2022



Source: (ILO, 2023[55]), "Labour force participation rate by sex (ILO modelled estimates)", *Statistics on the population and labour force, ILOSTAT*, https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/.

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The International Labour Organization's "Jobs Gap" indicator reveals important gender disparities compared to traditional measures of unemployment, highlighting women's disadvantage. The "Jobs Gap"[23] considers all individuals who would like to work but are not necessarily actively looking for a job or available immediately due to various constraints. It reached 12.3% in 2022, more than twice the global unemployment rate (5.8%). About two-thirds of women included in the "Jobs Gap" measure are not included in the traditional unemployment count because they do not meet the required criteria – being available to work and/or actively looking for a job; this is the case of less than half of men (ILO, 2023[56]). Contrary to what is observed in traditional measures of unemployment, the gender gap in the "Jobs Gap" indicator is significant. It reaches nearly 11 percentage points in Latin America and the Caribbean – with a jobs gap rate of 22% for women compared to 12% for men, 9 percentage points in Africa – with a jobs gap rate of 26% for women compared to 17% for men, and 3 percentage points in Southeast Asia – with a jobs gap rate of 9% for women compared to 6% for men (ILO, 2023[54]). These differences between traditional and alternative measures of labour indicators illustrate the need for more gender-transformative approaches to statistical production, analysis, and reporting.

Men's and women's unequal standing in the labour force often takes root in discriminatory laws that restrict women's economic empowerment in many different dimensions. For instance, it can limit their freedom of decision. In 2023, in 11 countries,[24] women are still required to obtain their husband's or guardian's permission to take a paid job, while in 6 countries[25] they need consent to start their own business (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[15]). Legal discrimination can also encourage wage imbalances between men and women. In 2023, 52 countries fail to mandate, by law, equal pay for work of equal value, and in 13 countries,[26] most of them located in Asia, the law does not prohibit discrimination in employment on the basis of sex. Moreover, because legal discrimination tends to be primarily concentrated in certain highly populated countries, a very large number of women face restrictions in their economic opportunities (Hyland, Djankov and Goldberg, 2020[57]). For instance, while 29% of countries (52 out of 178) fail to mandate, by law, equal pay for work of equal value, these countries account for 48% of women worldwide. Likewise, 42% of countries (74 out of 178) prohibit, by law, women from entering certain professions, but these legal prohibitions affect 67% of women worldwide (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[15]).

Beyond laws, restrictive social norms impose severe limitations on women's economic empowerment. Conservative gender roles assign women the role of caregivers and make them responsible for all domestic chores (Ferrant, Pesando and Nowacka, 2014[58]). Conversely, being the main breadwinner is perceived as a masculine trait which gives men priority over women in the workplace. As mentioned above, in 2023, 45% of the world's population believes that when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women; the number increases to 55% in Africa and Asia (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]).

Discriminatory social norms may create structural barriers and discourage women from entering the labour market. For instance, motherhood is often seen as a central dimension of women's identity, especially in rural areas. Globally, 52% of the population thinks that when women work, the children suffer (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]). In certain contexts where traditional gender roles dictate that the care of the children should not be delegated, these views can even justify the absence or low provision of childcare services and facilities (Halliday and Little, 2001[59]). Women's own internalisation of sexist and patriarchal cultural values and views constrain their participation in the labour market, despite women having the necessary skills or qualifications – as evidenced by the reversal of gender gaps in favour of girls and women across primary, secondary and tertiary education (Encinas-Martín and Cherian, 2023[60]; UNESCO, 2019[61]). In these cases, discriminatory attitudes often outweigh the positive effect of human capital characteristics, such as education, that should theoretically lead to a greater labour inclusion of women (Contreras and Plaza, 2010[62]).

Furthermore, when women join the labour market, they often face a double burden of paid and unpaid work. This double burden faced by women tends to exist in all settings, developed and developing countries alike. When resources are limited, especially in low-income countries, it often reflects the fact that working and contributing to the household's income is a necessity. In this context, women are expected to work in order to support themselves and their families. Women's paid activities often come in addition to their existing care and household responsibilities, which can cause substantial "role overload" – that is the tension that arises from trying to respond simultaneously to conflicting commitments (Oropesa, 1993[63]). As a result, women work significantly longer hours than men, which provokes a vicious cycle of income and time poverty, together with a deterioration of their physical and mental well-being (ActionAid, 2017[64]; Chopra and Zambelli, 2017[65]). For instance, data across 29 OECD countries show that women work about one hour more per day than men while dedicating 3.5 hours more than men to unpaid care and domestic work (OECD, 2023[66]; World Economic Forum, 2016[67]). Likewise, in Côte d'Ivoire and Tanzania, data show that women work, on average, two hours more per day than men do, dedicating half of their time to paid activities and the other half to unpaid care and domestic tasks (OECD, 2022[24]; OECD, 2022[25]).

Social norms and structural biases weaken women's status in the labour market

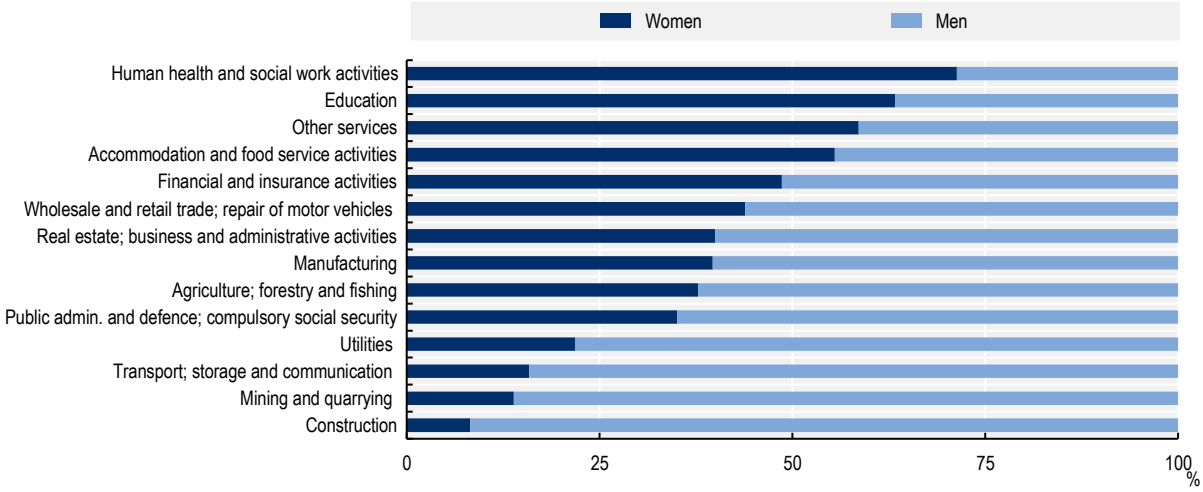
Discriminatory social institutions and restrictive norms often push women towards the informal sector. Because traditional gender roles dictate that women should prioritise domestic work, it limits their mobility and time-allocation options, leading to reduced employment opportunities. Women are often compelled to seek part-time and home-based jobs that are compatible with their caregiving responsibilities and offer greater flexibility to manage both paid and unpaid work (ILO, 2018[68]; Hoyman, 1987[69]). These jobs are mostly available in the informal market, where working conditions are often precarious, with low salaries and a lack of social protection (Mohapatra, 2012[70]). Although more men than women work in informal employment at the global level, women are more likely than men to work in the informal sector in developing countries. For example, in Africa, the share of women in informal employment (90%) surpasses that of men (83%) (ILO, 2018[71]).

Gender-based occupational segregation is a pervasive issue, where women are often concentrated in specific sectors. For instance, men are overrepresented in jobs traditionally associated with physically demanding activities. Worldwide, men account for 92% of total employment in the construction sector, as well as 86% of employment in the mining sector. Conversely, women are over-concentrated in the service

sector. Women account for 71% of workers employed in health and social care activities, 63% of workers employed in the education sector, and 59% of the workers employed in other services,[27] which include, among others, domestic workers (Figure 2.9). ILO data based on household surveys and covering 114 countries[28] show that women account for 77% of workers employed as domestic workers or household-based employees (ILO, 2022[72]). In certain specific sectors, horizontal segregation stems from discriminatory provisions that are based on what society deems to be inappropriate for women's perceived physical capacities. For instance, in 74 countries around the world, laws prohibit women from entering certain professions (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[15]). Most of these laws prohibit the employment of women in industrial jobs characterised by heavy and dangerous working conditions, as well as in subterranean tunnels, mines and other underground work.

Figure 2.9. Gender-based occupational segregation remains substantial

Share of employed women and men by sector of occupation, 2021



Note: Economic activity is classified using the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, revision 4 (ISIC rev 4). Category "Other services" aggregate workers from categories R, S, T and U of ISIC rev 4, corresponding respectively to "Arts, entertainment and recreation" (R), "Other service activities" (S), "Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use" (T), and "Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies" (U).
Source: (ILO, 2021[73]), "World: Employment by sex and economic activity - ILO modelled estimates, Nov. 2022 (thousands)", *Statistics on employment, ILOSTAT*, https://www.ilo.org/shinyapps/bulkexplorer45/?id=X01_A&indicator=EMP_2EMP_SEX_ECO_NB.

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At the heart of gender-based occupational segregation lie restrictive norms of masculinities. Gender norms play a crucial role in promoting and sustaining the social definition of tasks as either "masculine" or "feminine". The belief that men should work in physically and mentally challenging jobs, while women should focus on jobs associated with feminine traits influences the allocation of men and women across occupations. Biases tend to manifest themselves both on the side of job seekers (e.g. through internalisation of discriminatory beliefs or self-selection bias during the application process) as well as on the side of employers or hiring persons (e.g. unconscious bias during the selection process and assessment of skills and abilities) (Henningsen, Eagly and Jonas, 2021[74]; OECD, 2021[14]). These stereotypes are often formed during childhood and adolescence, at the early stages of identity development, and can persist throughout adulthood. Parents' perceptions of gender roles and stereotypes of boys' and girls' innate abilities can influence children's self-perceptions and activity choices. In this regard, parents' emotional reactions to their children's performance in various activities play a critical role, as well as the importance they attach to their children acquiring various skills or even the activities and

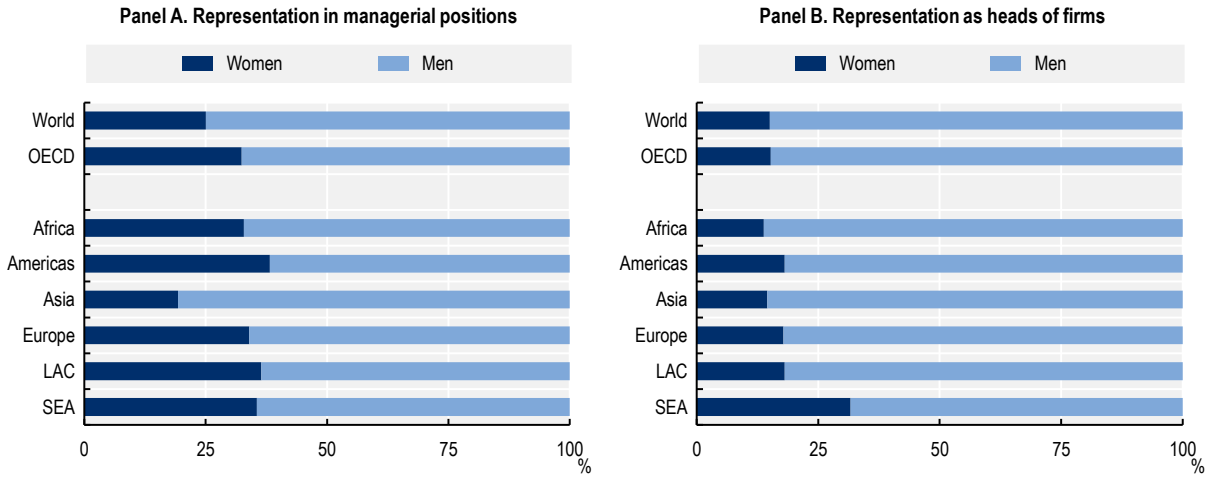
toys they provide. In turn, parents' perceptions affect children's confidence in their abilities, interest in mastering different skills, and the amount of time and effort they devote to developing and demonstrating those skills (OECD, 2022[24]; Eccles, Jacobs and Harold, 1990[75]).

In this perspective, education plays a major role in shaping gender norms and self-perception, which dictate future life decisions, such as career choices. Data from the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018 indicate that the internalisation of discriminatory social messages about gender and employment starts at a very young age. For instance, 15% of boys aged 15 years declared that they wanted to work in jobs with science and engineering backgrounds (e.g. engineers, architects, physicists, etc.), compared to only 7% of girls aged 15 years who declared planning to work in these areas (OECD, 2019[76]). Moreover, the interest gap in careers related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) has widened between boys and girls in recent years. Between 2015 and 2018, the proportion of boys wanting to work in information and communications technology fields increased by 1.1 percentage points, while, at the same time, the proportion of girls only increased by 0.2 percentage points (OECD, 2019[76]). Teachers' expectations and biases can have a significant impact on students' performance by affecting their beliefs in their own competences (Wang and Degol, 2013[77]), increasing the gender gap in STEM-related career aspirations (Wang, 2012[78]). In this context, increasing the presence of female teachers in the classrooms, particularly in scientific fields, can encourage girls to pursue STEM-related career paths (Chen, Sonnert and Sadler, 2019[79]).

Women's participation in the labour market is also characterised by vertical segregation, with women being largely excluded from senior decision-making positions and power roles. In 2023, only 15% of firms worldwide are headed by a woman, and women account for 25% of managers (Figure 2.10). Regional disparity is important. Whereas women account for 38% of the managers in the Americas, this share falls to 19% in Asia. Very little progress has been accomplished since the fourth edition of the SIGI in 2019, when the share of women among managers stood at 24% worldwide (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2019[8]).

Figure 2.10. Women are underrepresented in positions of power in the economic sphere

Share of women and men in managerial positions (Panel A) and as heads of firms (Panel B)



Note: LAC refers to Latin America and the Caribbean, and SEA refers to Southeast Asia. Data of Panel B are based on the World Bank's Enterprise Surveys, which cover 191 000 firms across 154 countries, and data on the share of women and men in senior and middle management positions are from the SDG Indicators Database.
Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]), "Gender, Institutions and Development (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/7b0af638-en.

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Vertical segregation is deeply rooted in norms of restrictive masculinities that perpetuate the notion that men are inherently better leaders than women. Effective leadership is often associated with traits traditionally perceived as masculine, such as toughness, aggressiveness and dominance (OECD, 2021[14]; Cann and Siegfried, 1990[80]). In 2023, 45% of the global population believes that men make better business executives than women, and 56% in Africa (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]). Furthermore, because successful managers are understood to possess characteristics more commonly ascribed to men, it may encourage women to emulate men and to adopt a masculine leadership style to succeed as leaders (Kawakami, White and Langer, 2000[81]). Additionally, restrictive masculinities dictate that men must be the financial leader of the household and therefore earn more than women, thereby creating unequal bargaining power within the household. These views promote seeing women's wages as complementary and can discourage women from negotiating their wages and aspiring to raises, unconsciously limiting their decision making (OECD, 2021[14]).

Both horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market contribute to a deepening of the wage and revenue gap between men and women. On the one hand, sectors in which women are concentrated tend to have lower added value and lower productivity and to offer lower wages compared to sectors in which men are overconcentrated (OECD, 2023[82]; OECD, 2021[83]; Macpherson and Hirsch, 1995[84]). For instance, industrial jobs often require specialised engineering skills or education and tend to offer higher wages. Conversely, jobs in the service sectors, such as retail or hospitality, typically have lower entry requirements and therefore offer lower salaries (Nelson, 1994[85]). On the other hand, within sectors, enterprises or household-based businesses, women tend to occupy lower positions than men, characterised by lower wages or revenues. The combination of these two dynamics results in large income differentials between men and women (OECD, 2021[83]). In 2019, at the global level, women earned approximately 20% less than men, although wide variations exist across countries.[29] Voluntary or involuntary part-time employment, in which women tend to be overrepresented and concentrated, is one of the main contributory factors to this pay gap (ILO, 2019[86]; Eurostat, 2023[87]).

Men's traditional status and roles, household decision-making practices and discriminatory inheritance practices limit women's access to land

In contexts where agriculture continues to represent a significant share of the economy, women's low ownership of and ability to use land hampers their economic empowerment and opportunities. Worldwide, agriculture represents a limited share of the economic output: about 4% of global gross domestic product in 2021 (World Bank, 2021[88]). However, in spite of the progressive global transition of countries towards industry and services, the agricultural sector continues to function as a primary source of employment, accounting for 26% of global employment in 2021 (World Bank, 2021[89]). Moreover, in certain regions, agriculture is still a critical sector, both in terms of value and employment. For instance, in 2021, the sector accounted for 17% of sub-Saharan Africa's and South Asia's outputs, while employing 52% and 42% of their workforce, respectively (World Bank, 2021[89]; World Bank, 2021[88]). Against this backdrop, women account for only 35% of landowners at the global level. The inequalities in ownership and control have essential implications for women's empowerment, not only for food security and income generation but also in the optic of using assets as credit collateral for saving for the future, for acquiring other assets or for starting a business (Namubiru-Mwaura, 2014[90]; Niethammer et al., 2007[91]). Agricultural land is a social asset which, historically, has brought political power, especially in agrarian societies (Holcombe, 2020[92]). In this regard, restrictions on women's ownership of land can shape their lack of agency, political influence and decision-making power (OECD, 2021[27]).

Unequal ownership of and control over land between men and women is rooted in discriminatory social institutions. For instance, in Africa, as discrimination in social institutions increases, the average share of women among owners of agricultural land decreases (OECD, 2021[27]). Multiple underlying factors come into play, ranging from discriminatory laws that limit women's rights to hold or control land assets to customary laws and social norms that undermine existing statutory laws.

The legislation may restrict women's control over land, notably through laws that regulate rights and duties within married couples. Worldwide, there are virtually no countries with laws that explicitly restrict unmarried women's rights to own, control or use land. However, 12 countries[30] out of 179 have legal provisions that limit married women's ownership and/or use of land, often granting the administration of the couple's assets to the husband. Moreover, in 28 countries,[31] the law establishes that the husband is the head of the family, with implicit control and ownership over the management and administration of assets and properties, including agricultural plots and land (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[15]).

Imbalances between men and women are rooted in the powerful social belief that land belongs to men and that they should be the primary decision-makers regarding important family matters, including large family assets such as land property. In many settings, the occupation of land and the associated rights depend on kinship and other social and political relationships among people using the land (Higgins and Fenrich, 2011[93]). These informal dynamics often supersede existing civil or common law. In such instances, rules and customary laws that tend to favour men over women become the primary determinant of who owns, manages, inherits and has access to land. These informal laws take root in traditional and customary views transmitted from generation to generation, which assume that men undertake the bulk of agricultural work and grant them ownership of the land on this basis. At the same time, customary rules and laws, in many countries, often establish men as the primary decision makers in the household with the power to administer key assets (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[15]).

Inheritance legislation and informal practices also play a central role in denying women access to land. Because inheritance is one of the primary means to acquire assets, particularly land, legal restrictions on women's rights and ability to inherit have severe consequences on their ownership of land and non-land assets (see section "Discrimination is the highest within the family sphere at the global level"). Moreover, because these restrictions and ensuing limitations span generations, they hold implications not only today, but for space to empower women over time. In many instances, these restrictive laws are compounded by discriminatory laws and practices that can circumvent the codified law and further constrain women's and girls' ability to enforce their rights. The fifth edition of the SIGI shows that in more than half of the countries (95 out of 178), informal laws create different rights or abilities between sons and daughters, or widows and widowers, when it comes to inheritance.

Against this backdrop, social practices governing household assets in marriage may further constrain women's ownership of land and restrict their inheritance rights. In many African countries, a woman traditionally leaves her family upon marriage and joins her husband's family. Under this premise, any property she might own would be lost to the family of her clan. It therefore becomes crucial for the members of the woman's family to ensure that land stays in the family through inheritance and preferences for sons. In other words, women's ability to inherit assets is intrinsically linked to customary practices which favour boys' inheritance rights over girls' (OECD, 2022[24]; Niava et al., 2022[94]; OECD, 2021[27]). These practices sometimes circumvent the law that establishes equal inheritance rights between men and women. Evidence from Côte d'Ivoire shows that, in 2021, 35% of widows did not receive any inheritance shares compared to only 8% of widowers. At the same time, 36% of the population believed that girls should not inherit land, and an additional 9% thought that girls should be authorised to inherit land but not on equal footing with boys (OECD, 2022[24]). Likewise, evidence from Tanzania showed that men perceived themselves as the rightful candidates within the family to own land and other assets. In this context, sons are valued as the only members of the family able to become leaders and to perpetuate the clan's name (OECD, 2022[25]; Mbuyita, 2021[95]). The consequences for women themselves are severe during a marriage but also afterwards, as they are often left with very few assets in cases of divorce or following the death of the husband.

The lack of potential financial collateral induced by women's lack of access to productive assets constitutes a substantial obstacle to their access to credit, particularly when they engage in entrepreneurial activities. (Niethammer et al., 2007[91]) show that women often face challenges in securing loans due to their limited ownership of land and other property that can serve as collateral. Estimates from the limited number of

countries for which data are available reveal that only 37% of women own a house alone, compared to 64% of men, and 28% of women are landholders, compared to 51% of men (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]). Women's relative poverty in assets means that their small businesses, particularly in contexts of low-income households, face challenges in securing loans or financing, leading to a vicious cycle of poverty (Jaka and Shava, 2018[96]).

Beyond the lack of collateral, other constraints placed on women's access to financial services further hamper women's entrepreneurship. Physical distance to banking branches – notably in rural areas – and lack of financial literacy play a key role in limiting both men's and women's access to credit, although women tend to be more disadvantaged. In addition, gender-based discriminatory practices by loan providers can be a powerful deterrent to accessing basic financial services. In this regard, loan officers often assess borrowers not only on the grounds of the merits of their individual cases but also based on their personal perceptions of traditional gender roles, which leads to women being categorised as high-risk borrowers even if they meet the necessary criteria (Carter et al., 2007[97]; Rouse and Jayawarna, 2006[98]).

Women's and girls' agency in the public sphere is improving, but slowly

Without adequate representation of women in politics it is difficult, if not impossible, for women to help reform laws and ensure policies are designed to build more inclusive societies. Women's representation in parliament goes beyond their democratic right to be elected or their ability to hold the highest level of decision-making positions – it is a fundamental lever to ensure women's potential and perspectives are an integral part of political and development priorities that benefit societies and the global community. The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the positive role that women can play in decision-making bodies and the benefit of having decision-making bodies that are gender-balanced with diverse experiences and backgrounds (UN Women, 2020[99]). Women's involvement during the crisis led to a more inclusive policy response that took into account the specific needs of women and other marginalised groups. Yet, while the positive impact of gender-balanced decision-making bodies has been recognised during the pandemic, women only made up 24% of the members of ad-hoc decision-making structures globally (UN Women and UNDP, 2022[100]). The ongoing aftermath of the crisis therefore constitutes an opportunity to build back better and to increase and strengthen women's representation in positions of power. Conversely, keeping women out of the prevention of and response to ongoing and/or future global crises may exacerbate the gendered impact of these challenges (see Chapter 3 and Chapter 4).

Women are underrepresented in political and public life

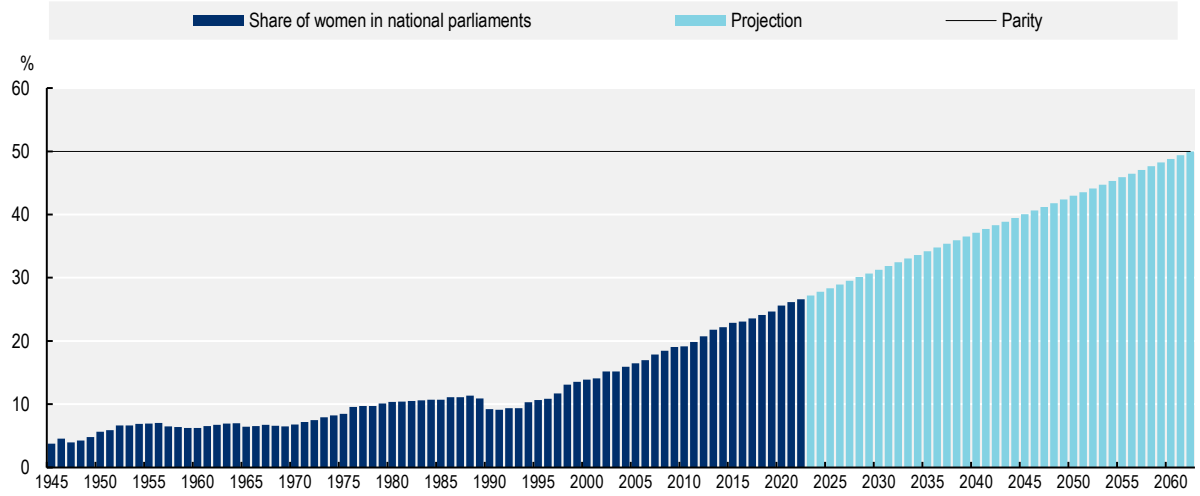
Women's political representation has made progress but, at the current pace, it will take 40 more years to achieve parity in parliaments. In 2023, among the 179 countries included in the fifth edition of the SIGI, the proportion of members of parliament who are women reached 26.6%, compared to 24.1% in 2019,[32] representing an increase of 2.5 percentage points (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2023[101]). Although the increase may appear slow, it also means that if the average rate of progress recorded between 2012 and 2022 remains the same, gender parity in parliaments could, in theory, be achieved by 2062, in about 40 years (Figure 2.11). In practice, it will likely take more time to achieve parity, as marginal gains tend to decrease as the world gets closer to the objective of parity, and future potential crises may trigger unforeseen setbacks.

Gains have been uneven across regions but have been shared equally by developing and developed countries alike. In the Americas, the share of women among members of parliament has reached 34.1% in 2023, compared to 28.5% in 2019 – representing an increase of 5.6 percentage points (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2019[8]; OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]). Over the same period, women's representation in parliaments in Europe increased by 4.1 percentage points to reach 33.1%. In contrast, progress has been slower in Africa and Asia. In the former, the share of women in parliaments

rose from 23.4% in 2019 to 25.4% in 2023 (+2 percentage points), whereas, in the latter, the share went up from 18.7% in 2019 to 20.6% in 2023 (+1.9 percentage points). Worldwide, 12 countries[33] out of 179 have attained parity or near-parity[34] in political representation, up from 4 countries[35] in 2019. Among these 12 countries, half are OECD countries.

Figure 2.11. Women's political representation in parliaments is increasing, albeit at a slow pace

Share of women in national parliaments, 1945-2062



Note: Projections are calculated using the average yearly increase in women's share in national parliaments in percentage points, over the period 2012-22 (+0.58 percentage points per year).
Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]), "Gender, Institutions and Development (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/7b0af638-en.

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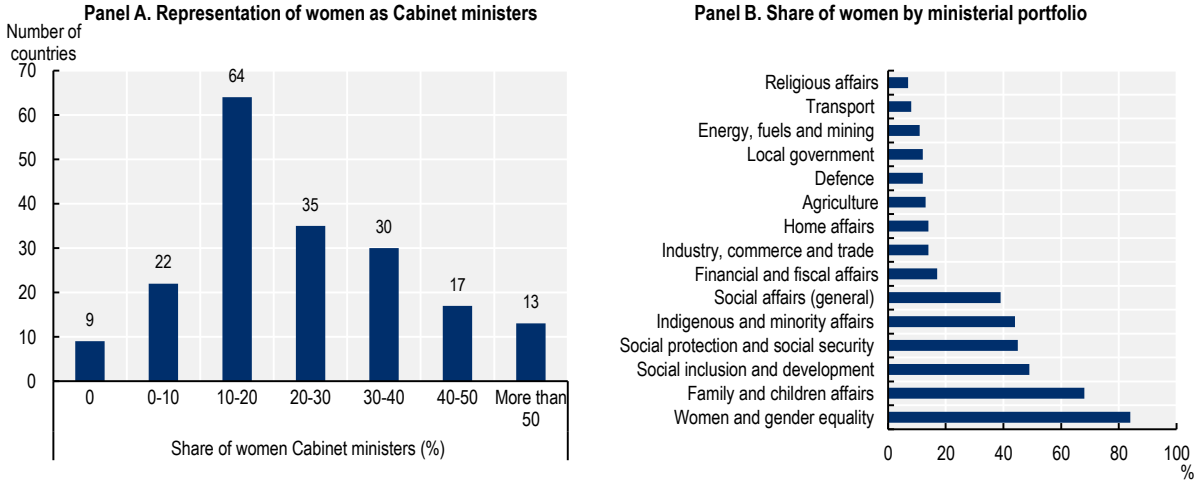
Beyond their representation in parliaments, women are underrepresented at both ends of the political spectrum – among heads of state or government and at the local level. In 2023, women account for only 11% of heads of state and 10% of heads of government (Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women, 2023[102]). Wide variations exist across countries. In 13 countries,[36] women represent more than 50% of the Cabinet members who head ministries, and in an additional 17 countries,[37] they account for 40-50% of the Cabinet members. Conversely, in 9 countries, there are no women at all among Cabinet members, whereas in 22 countries, less than 10% of Cabinet members are women (Figure 2.12, Panel A).

The allocation of portfolios among Cabinet members also tends to follow social norms and stereotypes related to gender differences. Women's portfolios are often related to policy areas perceived as better fitted to their innate abilities. For instance, in 2023, at the global level, women account for 84% of the ministers of women and gender equality, 68% of the ministers of family and children affairs, and more than 40% of the ministers of social inclusion and development, social protection and social security, and indigenous and minority affairs. Conversely, women make up only 17% of the ministers of financial and fiscal affairs, 14% of the ministers of home affairs, 12% of the ministers of defence, and only 7% of the ministers of religious affairs (Figure 2.12, Panel B).

At the other end of the political spectrum, women's representation in deliberative bodies of local government is higher than in parliament but still not on equal terms with men. In 2021, at the global level, only 36% of elected members in deliberative bodies of local government were women (Berevoescu and Ballington, 2021[103]).

Figure 2.12. Women are underrepresented in governments and confined to social, gender and children affairs

Number of countries by share of women among Cabinet ministers (Panel A) and share of women Cabinet ministers by type of portfolio (Panel B)



Note: Panel A presents the number of countries grouped by the share of women among Cabinet members across 190 countries for which data are available, as of 1 January 2023. The portfolios presented in Panel B are selected based on the largest and lowest shares of women. Classification of ministerial portfolios is based on the ministerial titles of Cabinet members who head ministries.
Source: (Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women, 2023[102]), "Women in politics: 2023" map, https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/03/women-in-politics-map-2023.

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Laws – particularly quotas – are fundamental to improving women's representation

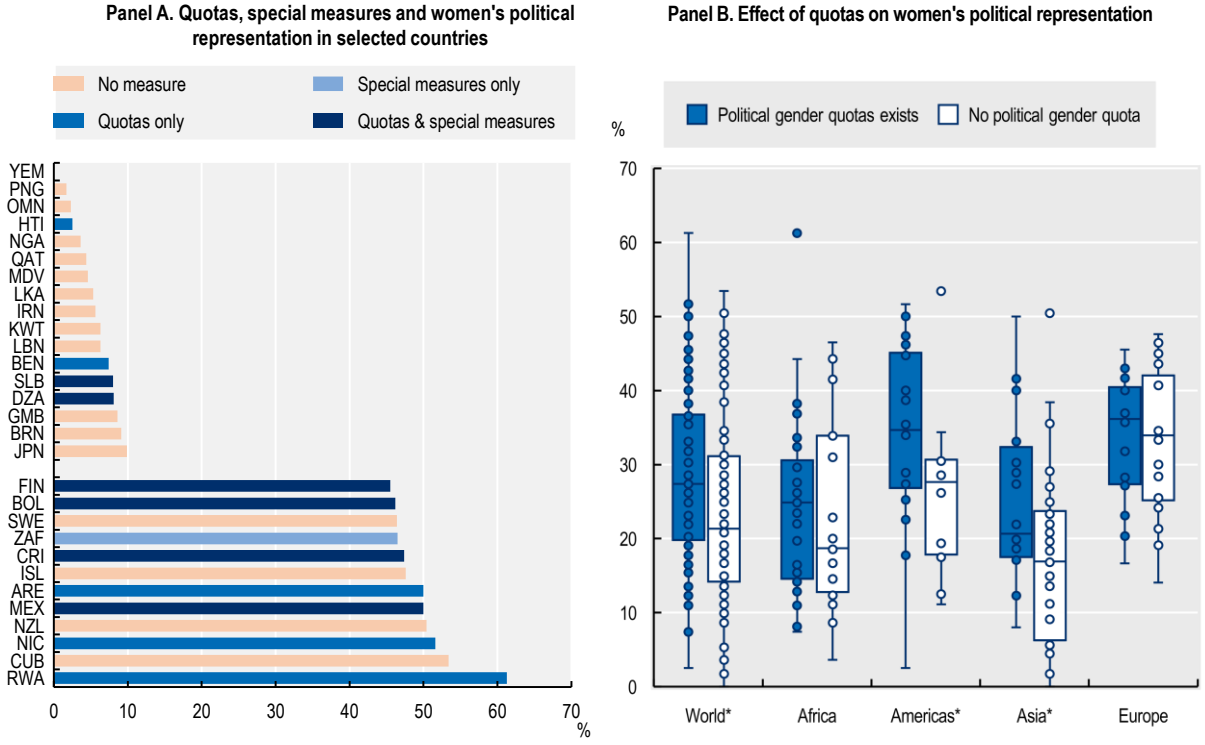
An increasing number of countries are enacting laws and implementing policies which establish legislated gender quotas in politics, with the aim of promoting women's political representation. The *2015 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Equality in Public Life* highlights the importance of quotas as one of the main measures to achieve gender-balanced representation in decision-making positions in the public sphere (OECD, 2023[104]; OECD, 2022[105]; OECD, 2016[106]). Worldwide, in 2023, more than half of countries (93 out of 178) have established constitutional and/or legislated gender quotas at the national level. Since the fourth edition of the SIGI, eight additional countries[38] have done so. Moreover, nine countries without gender quotas have, nevertheless, implemented other types of special measures such as disclosure requirements, parity laws, the obligation to alternate the sexes on party lists or financial incentives for political parties.

Legislated gender quotas have been instrumental in guaranteeing a more balanced representation of men and women in parliaments. Among the 12 countries out of 178 that have achieved parity or near-parity in parliaments, 7 have legislated gender quotas, and 5 have implemented other special measures, including 4 that have established both binding quotas and other types of measures. In contrast, among the 17 countries of the world that have less than 10% of women in their parliaments, only 4 have legislated gender quotas, and none of them has established special measures (Figure 2.13, Panel A). At the global level, the difference in women's representation in parliaments between countries where quotas exist and countries where they do not is found to be significant. More precisely, gender quotas have had a positive and significant effect on women's representation in parliaments in the Americas and Asia (Figure 2.13, Panel B). Yet, the effectiveness of gender quotas as a legal and policy instrument is weakened by the lack of sanctions for failure to implement them. Worldwide, among the 93 countries that have national-level quotas, only half

(47 countries) have enacted legal provisions or mechanisms that foresee legal or financial sanctions for parties or candidates when they fail to implement the rule set by the law. Binding quotas and voluntary targets have also shown tangible results in the private sector, for instance contributing significantly to increasing the representation of women on the boards of listed companies (OECD, 2023[104]).

Figure 2.13. Legislated gender quotas can help guarantee a more balanced representation of men and women in parliaments

Share of women in national parliaments in selected countries (Panel A) and share of women in national parliaments by existence of gender quotas (Panel B)



Note: In Panel A, the countries selected are those for which the share of women in national parliaments is lower than 10% or superior to 45%, which corresponds to near-parity. Near-parity in political representation is attained when the share of women among the members of parliament is superior or equal to 45%. Panel B presents the share of women in parliaments in the 178 countries for which data are available distributed according to the existence of legislated gender quotas or not and by geographical area. Each dot corresponds to a country. For each geographical area, the box contains countries located between the first and the third quartile. The horizontal line within each box corresponds to the median share of women in parliaments. The lower and upper whiskers indicate variability in the share of women in parliaments outside the first and third quartiles. Geographical areas marked with an asterisk (*) are those for which the difference in the average share of women in national parliaments between countries with gender quotas and countries without any quota is significant, at 5%.
Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]), "Gender, Institutions and Development (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/7b0af638-en.

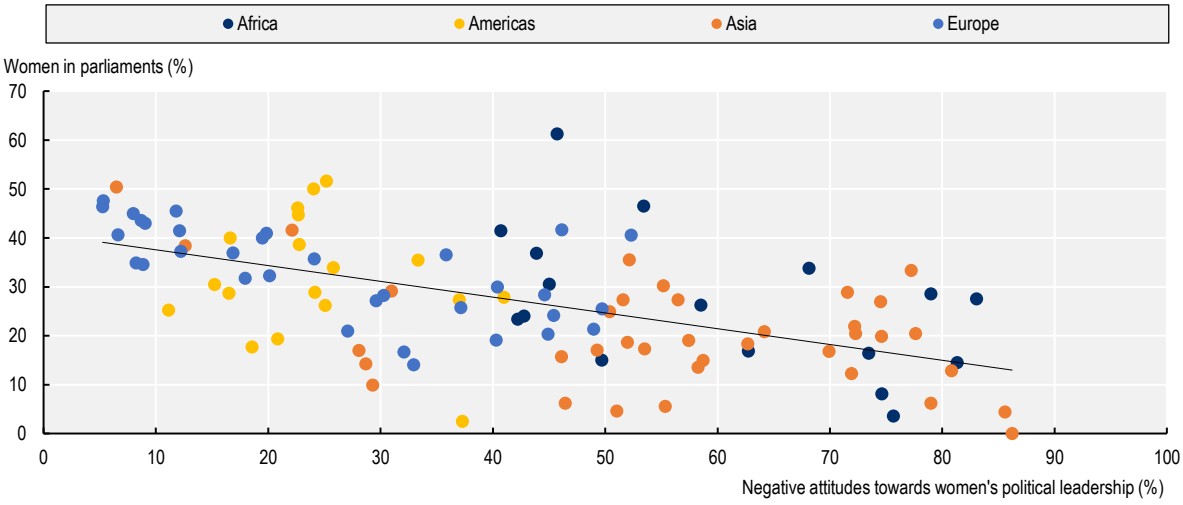
StatLink https://stat.link/6b1qci

Discriminatory social norms and stereotypes of women's and men's ability to be political leaders are at the heart of the barriers that continue to limit women's agency and opportunities to be elected in parliaments. This, in turn, affects the policy space for gender equality reforms. Worldwide, nearly half of the population[39] (48%) believes that men make better political leaders than women. In Africa and Asia, the share of the population holding these views reaches 60% and 56% respectively. The ideals of men's dominance and power over both women and men, which is behind these attitudes, are deeply embedded within restrictive

masculinities (OECD, 2021[14]). These discriminatory views have been held throughout history and stem from deeply ingrained ideas such as that women are too kind and caring to be leaders, women are too emotional or women are too erratic and irrational. They are strongly associated with a lower representation of women in political leadership (Figure 2.14). Moreover, women leaders themselves suffer from stereotypes attached to being leaders and, when they reach positions of political power, society expects them to behave as male leaders (OECD, 2021[14]). These norms, together with women's low political representation and scarcity of existing role models, can send a strong signal to younger generations of women and disincentivise them to pursue a political career.

Figure 2.14. Discriminatory social norms and stereotypes limit women's political empowerment

Relationship between women's representation in national parliaments and attitudes towards women's political leadership



Note: Negative attitudes towards women's political leadership are calculated as the share of the population who agree or strongly agree with the statement: "Men make better political leaders than women." Data cover 105 countries for which both indicators are available and which account for 92% of the world's population aged 18 years and more.
Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[7]), "Gender, Institutions and Development (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/7b0af638-en.

StatLink https://stat.link/2rzl3w

Notes

[1] Scores range from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating no discrimination and 100 indicating absolute discrimination.

[2] Countries are classified into five groups according to their SIGI score: (1) very low level of discrimination (SIGI < 20); (2) low level of discrimination (20 < SIGI < 30); (3) medium level of discrimination (30 < SIGI < 40); (4) high level of discrimination (40 < SIGI < 50); and (5) very high level of discrimination (SIGI > 50).

[3] Overall, SIGI scores could not be computed for 39 countries out of 179 because of missing data. Among these 39 countries, no legal data were collected for Afghanistan (see Annex B for more details).

[4] As SIGI scores can only be computed if a given country has data points for all variables of the SIGI framework, countries that lacked at least one data point related to practices or attitudinal variables could not obtain a SIGI score. Nevertheless, as legal data points are available for all countries except Afghanistan, it is possible to calculate a SIGI legal score for 178 countries that follows the same methodology as the SIGI – scores range from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating no discrimination and 100 indicating absolute discrimination.

[5] Scores range from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating no discrimination and 100 indicating absolute discrimination.

[6] Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Cyprus, Ecuador, Egypt, Germany, Hong Kong (China), Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United States and Zimbabwe.

[7] Gabon, Guinea, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan and West Bank and Gaza Strip.

[8] Antigua and Barbuda, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Mauritius, Mexico, Mozambique, Norway, Philippines, São Tomé and Principe, and Zimbabwe.

[9] Chinese Taipei and Japan.

[10] Marriage-related payments are of two main types: bride price and dowry. Bride price refers to a situation where the groom and/or his family makes a wedding payment to the bride's family in the form of livestock, money, commodities or other valuables. Dowry refers to the opposite, whereby the bride's family provides a payment, such as property or money, to the groom or his family at the time of marriage. Globally, the bride price tradition is significantly more common than the tradition of dowry, the latter being mostly present in South Asia (Nyyssölä, 2022[107]).

[11] Data are extracted from time-use surveys available across 90 countries. Available data include 16 countries from Africa, 19 countries from the Americas, 25 countries from Asia and 30 countries from Europe.

[12] Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Republic of the Congo (Congo), Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Djibouti, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Oman, Qatar, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia and Yemen.

[13] Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Yemen.

[14] Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Niger and Sudan.

[15] Cameroon, Chad, Chile, Congo, DRC, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Niger, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Sudan.

[16] Benin, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, France, Madagascar, Malta, Mexico, Peru, Türkiye and Uruguay.

[17] Armenia, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Kosovo, Lesotho, Liberia, New Zealand, Seychelles, United Arab Emirates and United Kingdom.

[18] In a consent-based approach, the definition of rape is based on voluntary, genuine and willing consent and recognises a broad range of coercive circumstances where consent cannot be voluntary, genuine or willing and where the victim/survivor is incapable of giving consent. In contrast, definitions of rape that do not follow the consent-based approach are often based on force or the threat of force, as opposed to lack of consent (Equality Now, 2021[108]).

[19] FGM/C refers to all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injuries to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice has no health benefits for girls or women and can cause severe bleeding, problems urinating, cysts, infections, as well as complications in childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths (OHCR et al., 2008[46]).

[20] Burkina Faso (76%), Eritrea (83%), Mali (83%), Sierra Leone (83%), Sudan (87%), Egypt (87%), Djibouti (94%), Guinea (95%) and Somalia (99%).

[21] The SIGI methodology assesses laws on FGM/C according to two scenarios: (1) criminalisation on *narrow grounds* includes laws that contain criminal penalties for acts of “female genital mutilation”, “permanent altering/removal of external genitalia”, “female circumcision”, “excision”, “infibulation” and “genital mutilation”; (2) criminalisation on *broad grounds* includes “mutilation”, “harming of a person's organs”, “serious bodily injury” and “bodily injury/hurt/assault.”

[22] The inception of the Dutch “chain approach” dates back to 1993. The policy is aimed at (i) preventing girls and women living in the Netherlands from being circumcised, and (ii) providing good-quality medical and psychosocial care to women and girls who have been circumcised. The national policy focuses on legal measures, prevention, education and health care. It is the product of close co-ordination between governmental entities and agencies and non-governmental organisations (Pharos, n.d.[52]).

[23] The “Jobs Gap” indicator developed by the International Labour Organization intends to go beyond traditional measures of unemployment, which require jobseekers to be available to work and to be looking for a job in order to be accounted for. Therefore, to be considered unemployed, it is not enough to be jobless and have an interest in working. An unemployed person must have been recently seeking work and available to take up a job at very short notice, typically a week. This situation may exclude many potential workers from the official statistics, notably women because of their disproportionate involvement in unpaid care work which may not allow them to be immediately available for work or may not leave them enough time to actively look for employment. To go beyond traditional measures of unemployment and account for individuals not covered by official statistics, the jobs gap rate captures all persons who would like to work but do not have a job, regardless of their availability or actions to find a job (ILO, 2023[56]).

[24] Cameroon, Chad, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Qatar, Sudan, Syria, West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Yemen.

[25] Cameroon, Mauritania, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen.

[26] Belize, Brunei Darussalam, Congo, Cuba, Dominica, Iran, Jordan, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka and Sudan.

[27] Category “Other services” aggregate workers from categories R, S, T and U of ISIC rev.4, corresponding respectively to “Arts, entertainment and recreation” (R), “Other service activities” (S), “Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use” (T), and “Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies” (U) (ILO, 2023[109]).

[28] Data are based on Labour Force Surveys (LFS), Household, Income and Expenditure Surveys (HIES), Household surveys (HS) and Population Census (PC). Data cover 114 countries and cover the period 2012-22, with 73% of data covering the period 2019-22 (ILO, 2022[72]).

[29] Calculations are based on data collected across 73 countries that account for 80% of the global population. See (ILO, 2019[86]) for more details.

[30] Cameroon, Chad, Chile, Congo, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Niger, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Sudan.

[31] Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, DRC, Djibouti, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Oman, Qatar, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia and Yemen.

[32] All figures on the share of women among members of parliament refer to the share as of 1 January of the stated year.

[33] Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Finland, Iceland, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Rwanda, South Africa, Sweden and United Arab Emirates.

[34] Near-parity in political representation is attained when the share of women among the members of parliament is superior or equal to 45%.

[35] Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua and Rwanda.

[36] Albania (67%), Finland (64%), Spain (64%), Nicaragua (63%), Liechtenstein (60%), Chile (58%), Belgium (57%), Mozambique (55%), Andorra (50%), Colombia (50%), Germany (50%), Netherlands (50%) and Norway (50%).

[37] Canada (49%), South Africa (48%), Sweden (48%), Rwanda (48%), Peru (47%), Costa Rica (46%), New Zealand (45%), Australia (44%), Estonia (43%), Latvia (43%), Lithuania (43%), Switzerland (43%), Iceland (42%), Mexico (42%), Ethiopia (41%), Portugal (41%) and Monaco (40%).

[38] Benin, Chad, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Malta and United Arab Emirates.

[39] Data cover 105 countries which account for 92% of the world’s population aged 18 years and more.

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3 Laws, norms and practices: Barriers or levers for sexual and reproductive health and rights?

Discriminatory social institutions impede women and men from realising their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) across the world. Laws, practices and social norms disproportionally undermine adolescents' and women's access to and realisation of SRHR as they are shaped and embedded in patriarchal systems. This chapter first looks at adolescents' SRHR as a decisive factor for a person's lifelong health, rights and development. It then analyses three aspects of SRHR that are globally relevant and locally essential to accelerate inclusive development in developing countries: maternal and newborn health; contraception use and family planning; and access to safe and legal abortion. The chapter provides actionable and evidence-based policy recommendations on how to address the discriminatory social institutions that limit access to and realisation of SRHR, including a focus on adolescents.

In Brief

Safeguarding adolescents' and women's SRHR is fundamental to achieving gender equality

Adolescence – it's time to set the right course for SRHR

- Failure to enable and empower adolescents to realise their SRHR has implications on their life trajectories with spillover effects on communities and societies.
- Parental consent laws, legal loopholes in laws on gender-based violence and harmful practices and education bans for pregnant students undermine adolescents' SRHR.
- Adolescents reproduce prevailing social norms with gendered implications for their SRHR. They are further exposed to social stigma and discrimination from health providers which can limit their access to services.
- Comprehensive sexuality education can play a key role to alter the status quo by providing adolescents with high quality information on SRHR alongside education on gender norms, values and power dynamics.

Progress reducing maternal and newborn mortality is staggering

- Significant progress in reducing preventable maternal and newborn deaths was achieved from 2000 to 2015 but has been staggering over the past years (2016-20).
- Conflict and crises can disrupt access to healthcare facilities and services with devastating implications for the number of maternal and newborn deaths.
- Women's dependency on men, as dictated by social norms that grant men decision-making power including over finances and women's movement, undermine women's reproductive autonomy.

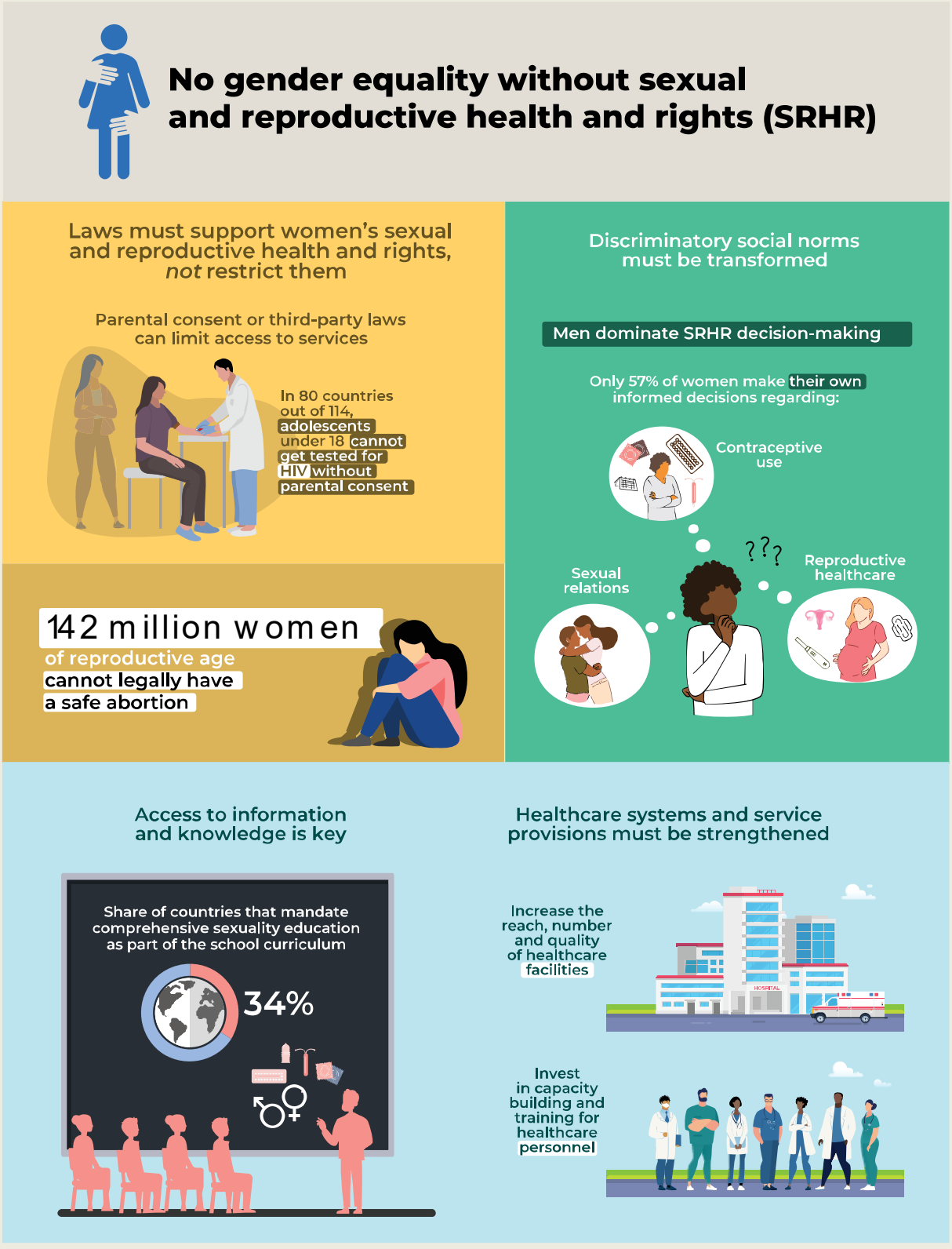
Social norms limit decision-making power over contraception and family planning

- Patriarchal norms and power systems undermine a person's ability to choose, voice and act on contraception and family planning preferences.
- Legal barriers, including third-party consent laws can prevent girls and women from accessing contraception and family planning services. The average unmet need for family planning is 7 percentage points higher in countries where the law requires women to obey their husbands.
- Personal beliefs on who should take contraception and family planning decisions shape the behaviour in practice to the detriment of women's rights, autonomy and health.

Access to safe and legal abortion is uneven across the world

- Less than 40% of women of reproductive age worldwide can have a legal abortion in all essential circumstances as recommended by the CEDAW – but with important regional discrepancies.
- The share of unsafe abortions is higher in countries with restrictive abortion laws. It is estimated that every year more than 45% of abortions are unsafe among which the majority occur in developing countries.

Infographic 3.1. Transforming discriminatory social institutions is key to achieving SRHR



Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are recognised as a basic and inalienable human right[1] although the recognition and realisation of SRHR vary across countries and regions (see Box 3.1). Beyond being a global health imperative and a human right, SRHR are fundamental to achieving gender equality, reducing poverty, and promoting sustainable and inclusive development (UNFPA, 2014[1]). Yet, millions of people are (partially) deprived of their sexual and reproductive rights, impeding them from achieving the best possible health outcomes and making decisions about their own lives (Guttmacher-Lancet Commission, 2018[2]). This in turn can have spill-over effects on the welfare and development of societies. For instance, early pregnancies increase the risk of complications during childbirth, putting both the mother's and baby's health at risk, but they can also interrupt girls' education with negative consequences on their socio-economic opportunities and independence. Combined, (unintended) early pregnancies can thus put pressure on the health system of a country and limit women's decisions about their own lives and, in turn, contribution to the economy and to society. The importance of SRHR has been anchored in the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action[2] and the Sustainable Development Goals 3 (Good Health and Well Being), 4 (Quality Education) and 5 (Gender Equality) (United Nations, 2023[3]; UNFPA, 1994[4]).

Intersecting forms of discrimination disproportionately threaten women's and marginalised groups' SRHR. Increasingly, attention is paid to intersectional discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, class, religion, disability, etc. and how they affect a person's ability to realise their SRHR (Luna and Luker, 2013[5]). Such discrimination can be amplified in developing countries where resource constraints affect access to information, service provision and quality of care (Guttmacher-Lancet Commission, 2018[2]). Crises and conflict further exacerbate such inequalities through various channels. For instance, climate-related disasters can strain the capacity of health systems, thus limiting access to essential SRHR services (Women Deliver, 2021[6]). The COVID-19 pandemic caused disruptions in family planning services leading to 1.4 million unintended pregnancies in 2020 (UNFPA, 2020[7]). Humanitarian emergencies can disrupt access to contraception and healthcare facilities and can increase women's and marginalised populations' risk of suffering from gender-based violence (UNOCHA, 2021[8]).

Discriminatory social institutions – formal and informal laws, attitudes, and practices – are at the heart of gender inequalities regarding SRHR. Traditional gender roles and norms according to which men are the ultimate decision makers undermine women's agency over their own bodies and health. Men, but also women may act as gatekeepers, restricting adolescents' and women's access to sexual and reproductive information and services. Unequal power hierarchies between partners, parents and children or between service providers and service seekers can deter the more vulnerable people from voicing and realising their preferred choices including, for example, on contraception use. Social stigma can prevent help-seeking, for example in the case of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C) undermine girls' human rights, bodily autonomy and integrity. Both informal and formal laws create inequalities in access but also in decision making over SRHR. Together, attitudes, practices and laws create a discriminatory "web" of social institutions limiting particularly women, adolescent and vulnerable groups – including indigenous people, persons with disabilities or LGBTI+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and more) persons.

With the objective to provide actionable recommendations for policy makers, development partners and civil society, this chapter uncovers the discriminatory social institutions limiting equitable access to and realisation of selected SRHR aspects that are both of global relevance and/or that could fast track advances in developing countries: (i) adolescents' SRHR; (ii) maternal and newborn health; (iii) contraception and family planning; and (iv) access to safe and legal abortion.

Box 3.1. Defining sexual and reproductive health and rights – from 1968 to present

The understanding, meaning and scope of SRHR have evolved over time. In 1968 at the International Conference on Human Rights in Teheran, reproductive rights were for the first time intrinsically linked to human rights: "Parents have a basic human right to determine freely and responsibly the number and the spacing of their children." More than 25 years later, in 1994 at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, 179 countries reiterated that reproductive rights embrace existing human rights and that sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights are fundamental to development and women's empowerment.

Since then, the global understanding of SRHR has significantly advanced, including increasing recognition of how discrimination, stigma and poor quality of care undermine people's access to and realisation of SRHR. Up to present, the Guttmacher-*Lancet* Commission on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights provides the most holistic definition of SRHR, grounded in human rights and the right to health as put forward by the World Health Organization. Yet, this definition is not adopted by all countries and organisations due to the lack of consensus on certain aspects of SRHR.

According to the Guttmacher-*Lancet* Commission, "Sexual and reproductive health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to all aspects of sexuality and reproduction, not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Achieving sexual and reproductive health relies on realising sexual and reproductive rights, which are based on the human rights of all individuals to:

- have their bodily integrity, privacy and personal autonomy respected.
- freely define their own sexuality, including sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.
- decide whether and when to be sexually active; choose their sexual partners; have safe and pleasurable sexual experiences.
- decide whether, when and whom to marry.
- decide whether, when and by what means to have a child or children, and how many children to have.
- have access over their lifetimes to the information, resources, services and support necessary to achieve all the above, free from discrimination, coercion, exploitation, and violence."

Source: (Guttmacher-Lancet Commission, 2018[2]), *Accelerate Progress: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for All — Executive Summary*; (WHO, 2017[9]), *Sexual health and its linkages to reproductive health: an operational approach*; (UNFPA, 1994[4]), International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD); (United Nations, 1968[10]), International Conference on Human Rights 22 April-13 May 1968, Teheran.

Adolescence – the time to set the right course for sexual and reproductive health and rights

Adolescence represents a critical age window where young people shape their own attitudes and beliefs and learn to make independent decisions. Focusing on adolescents' SRHR is crucial as that age is a decisive moment in life, with implications at the individual, community and societal levels. However, failures to enable adolescents to access comprehensive sexual and reproductive healthcare affect their life trajectories in a myriad of interdependent ways. When access to relevant information and services, including contraception, is limited or unavailable, adolescents can face an increased risk of STIs, early

and/or unintended pregnancies, complications in childbirth, and unsafe abortions with undisputable consequences on their health, education, employment opportunities, and overall well-being and socio-economic situation (Munakampe, Zulu and Michelo, 2018[11]). Boys' and girls' SRHR are thus not only a question of individual health, rights and well-being but also of sustainable development – particularly in countries where adolescents make up large parts of the population.

Differences in population growth rates affect adolescents' SRHR outcomes. To date, there are 1.3 billion adolescents in the world – more than ever before – accounting for 16% of the world's population (UNICEF, 2023[12]). The proportion of adolescents among the population is highest in Asia and the Pacific but is expected to experience the sharpest decline over the coming years, whereas the share of adolescents will continue to increase in Africa. Such population trends can put pressure on healthcare systems, increasing the risk of unmet demands for SRHR services – disproportionately affecting adolescents in countries where they represent a significant part of the population. Moreover, population growth can outpace declining rates, e.g. in girl child marriage, thus leading to a larger total number of girls being deprived of their rights (see Chapter 2) (Liang et al., 2019[13]; UNICEF, 2018[14]). Legal frameworks that effectively prohibit such harmful practices and guarantee SRHR can play a key role in mitigating such reversing trends.

Legislation can support or restrain SRHR for adolescence and beyond

Age of consent laws can restrain adolescents' access to sexual and reproductive rights. When the law requires parental consent and/or does not provide for consent-free counselling – as recommended by the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)[3] – adolescents may be reluctant or unable to solicit SRHR services and advice (United Nations, 2016[15]; United Nations, 2009[16]). In more than 75% of countries (110 out of 144),[4] adolescents under the age of 18 cannot get tested for HIV without parental consent and in half of countries (44 out of 90),[5] parental consent is needed to access contraceptives, including condoms (UNAIDS, 2021[17]). The CRC further recognises the importance of setting an acceptable minimum legal age for sexual consent and recommends not to criminalise consensual sex among adolescents[6] (United Nations, 2016[15]). Internationally, no consensus on a minimum legal age for sexual consent has been reached, proving the difficulty of balancing the right to protection and the recognition of the autonomy of adolescents. In some countries, the age of consent varies between girls and boys, which can reinforce persisting gender inequalities and leave adolescents, especially girls, unprotected from sexual abuse and violence. In other countries, adolescents' consensual sexual activity is prohibited by the law (Kangaude and Skelton, 2018[18]; Government of Kenya, 2006[19]; Government of Ethiopia, 2004[20]). This can lead to or reinforce the stigmatisation of young people's sexual development, limit access to information, prevent or delay the use of contraception, lead to unsafe sexual behaviour and negatively affect adolescents' help-seeking in case of STIs and unintended pregnancies (UNFPA, 2017[21]).

Weak legal frameworks and informal laws leave children and adolescents insufficiently protected from child marriage and FGM/C (see Box 3.1). In 17% of countries (30 out of 178), the minimum legal age of marriage for women is below 18 years, whereas for men this is the case in 8% of countries (15 out of 178), highlighting the gendered dimensions of child marriage (see Chapter 2) (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[22]). While child marriage deprives mostly girls of their right to choose when to marry, it also has implications on additional SRHR outcomes. Child marriage is often accompanied by adolescent pregnancies, which entails high risks of maternal mortality, morbidity and infant mortality and may lead to greater social isolation and increased risks of intimate-partner violence (Izugbara, 2018[23]; Lee-Rife et al., 2012[24]). While FGM/C affects women's entire lives, it particularly undermines young girls' rights to bodily autonomy, integrity and security. Survivors of FGM/C often experience immediate and long-lasting health consequences that can cause severe bleeding, infections, complications in childbirth and also, inter alia, undermine their right to have pleasurable sexual experiences. Most countries (80%) where FGM/C is a

local custom have enacted laws that specifically prohibit the practice. Nevertheless, weak law enforcement and informal laws allow for FGM/C to persist (see Chapter 2) (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[22]).

When laws on gender-based violence do not extend to the school context, adolescents' SRHR are at risk. School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) can entail severe consequences on learners' physical and mental health, increase their risk of contracting STIs or becoming pregnant, and negatively affect their educational attainment and outcomes. Among 196 countries, 32% do not provide legal protection from any form of violence in educational institutions (UNESCO, 2022[25]). Data from the fifth edition of the SIGI further reveal that the legal framework on sexual harassment – a common form of SRGBV – often fails to comprehensively protect students from this form of violence. In fact, the law in most countries (138 out of 178) specifies that sexual harassment is prohibited at the workplace but in just about half of the countries (96 out of 178) does the law specifically cover the school environment. No specific mention of the school environment can constitute a legal loophole and weaken the protection of children and adolescents. Among the 82 countries where sexual harassment is not prohibited in schools, 33% of countries are in Africa and 39% in Asia (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[22]).

Beyond SRGBV, laws that prohibit pregnant girls from attending school and/or re-integrate the school system after having given birth limit girls' educational opportunities. Globally, it is estimated that the law in 8% of countries restricts pregnant and parenting girls' right to education and only 27% of countries explicitly enshrine this right in legislation (UNESCO, 2022[25]). For instance, the law in Tanzania prohibited pregnant students and adolescent mothers from continuing their education in public schools until 2021 when the "pregnancy ban" was finally abolished (Human Rights Watch, 2022[26]).

Adolescents reproduce discriminatory norms with gendered impacts on their SRHR

Adolescents are likely to reproduce dominant social norms which in turn underpin their sexual and reproductive health behaviour, decision making, and ability to exercise their rights and health outcomes now and in the future (Liang et al., 2019[13]; Pulerwitz et al., 2019[27]). Gender norms have a different effect on boys' and girls' access to and realisation of SRHR. Trying to comply with the social expectations and existing norms of what it means to be a man or woman and how one should act accordingly, adolescents may reinforce ideals of male strength and control and female vulnerability and need for protection. For instance, evidence from South Africa and Uganda shows that whereas boys who have multiple sexual partners achieved popularity, girls were more likely to be socially excluded (Khumalo et al., 2020[28]; Muhanguzi, 2011[29]). Norms of masculinities, such as taking sexual risks, having multiple partners or avoiding healthcare can affect boys' SRHR with consequences on their partners' health and rights (Buller and Schulte, 2018[30]). Moreover, such attitudes can lead to violations of bodily integrity in practice – particularly of their female partners. For instance, recent data from France reveal that almost one-quarter (23%) of men aged 25 to 34 years believe that one must be violent sometimes to be respected (Government of France, 2023[31]).

Even when adolescents seek sexual and reproductive health services, they often face discrimination and stigma. For example, in settings where it is not socially acceptable for unmarried girls or women to be sexually active, service providers may be reluctant to share relevant information and/or access to contraceptives as well as sexual and reproductive health checks and interventions including abortions (Save the Children, 2019[32]). Sexual orientation and gender identity can further heighten the risk of discrimination. In countries where same-sex relationships are criminalised and/or where recognition of gender identity is not possible, young LGBTI+ persons' right to bodily and mental integrity is violated from the onset and they are likely to face stigmatisation with undisputable consequences for their access to and realisation of SRHR (WHO, 2023[33]). Given adolescents' limited socio-economic independence, their SRH choices and realisation of rights can be restricted by families or communities (Pulerwitz et al., 2019[27]).

Is digitalisation a curse or a blessing for adolescents' SRHR?

With the digital transformation, norms and behaviours are no longer only shaped offline. Digital media and online resources represent a useful tool for adolescents to develop their sexuality, inform themselves about sexual and reproductive health topics and seek advice. For instance, the cost-free mobile application "Hello Ado" aims at providing young people in Central and West Africa with SRHR information, e.g. via a list of service providers who can answer their questions or by offering direct exchanges via a chatbot (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, 2020[34]). Social media further allow boys and girls to explore and challenge norms, values and identities, particularly in conservative settings where open discussions around SRHR are restricted.

However, the use of social media and exposure to digital content also entail several risks. Adolescents are at risk of predatory behaviour from individuals they contact online. Anonymity may create gaps between socially tolerated behaviour and communication online and offline. Emerging forms of gender-based violence (GBV) including stalking and cyber harassment can have lasting real-life consequences on young people's health, well-being and rights (see Chapter 2). Moreover, exposure to harmful or discriminatory content can shape adolescents' choices, behaviour and attitudes towards sexuality and reproductive health (UNFPA, 2021[35]; Liang et al., 2019[13]). For instance, evidence reveals that when youth consume media that sexualise girls and women, there is a greater acceptance and replication of such discriminatory notions on gender and sexual roles (Coyne et al., 2019[36]).

There are disparities between girls' and boys' use of online resources, with diverging effects on their SRHR. Evidence shows that, on average, men start consuming online content at an earlier age than women and for longer time periods. This may increase boys' and men's exposure to pornography, which often promotes patriarchal gender roles and does not respect essential elements such as consensual and safe sexual relations (UNFPA, 2021[35]; OECD, 2020[37]). Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) can enable children and adolescents to learn about relevant information, resources and skills to realise their SRHR, both online and offline.

The C in CSE (comprehensive sexuality education) is key

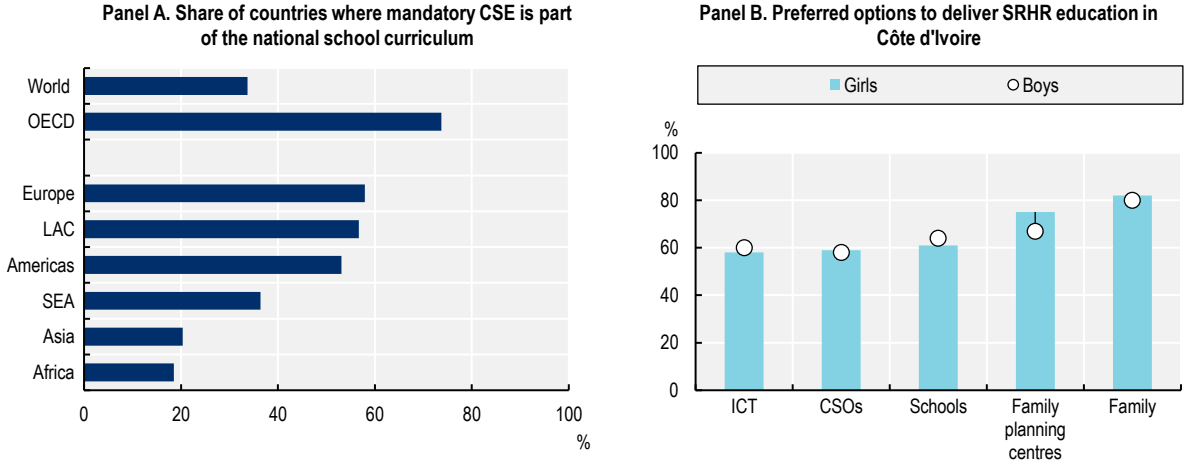
While adolescents across the world face different realities and challenges, sexuality education is indispensable for everyone. CEDAW, the CRC and the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights Committee highlight the need for evidence-based and age appropriate comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in order to promote access to sexual and reproductive health services within wider gender equality efforts. Specifically, CSE programmes that account for gender and power dynamics, social contexts as well as children's and adolescents' rights are found to be more likely to promote respectful and pleasurable relationships, safe sexual behaviour and egalitarian attitudes to sexuality and reproduction (UNESCO et al., 2018[38]). Evidence further shows that discussions about power and values can encourage learners to reflect on and question restrictive norms of masculinities (Greene et al., 2019[39]). Equipping children and adolescents with the relevant knowledge, information and skills for their age empowers them to detect when their rights are violated, which is particularly relevant for GBV, child marriage and FGM/C.

Access to CSE, however, remains limited across all regions. While the concept and importance of CSE is emphasised in recommendations by international committees, achieving global consensus on access to CSE is not a globally agreed-upon target. In fact, most countries report that sexuality education is integrated into their national school curricula in some form, but there are many differences regarding the topics covered and age groups targeted (UNESCO et al., 2021[40]). Although the trend is towards a more comprehensive curriculum, the extent to which "non-traditional" or controversial aspects such as sexual orientation, gender identity, gender power dynamics, the importance of consent and pleasure, or access to safe abortion services are included varies (OECD, 2020[37]). The SIGI finds that only one-third of countries (60 out of 178) are mandating CSE globally (Figure 3.1, Panel A). It further highlights important regional disparities. The share of African and Asian countries where CSE is mandatorily taught in schools

is much lower than in Europe or the Americas, although it is in those regions where the world's youth is predominantly living (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[22]).

Figure 3.1. Access to CSE is uneven across regions, and schools may not always be the preferred place to deliver education on SRHR

Share of countries where mandatory CSE is part of the national curriculum (Panel A) and share of the population in Côte d'Ivoire in favour of the different settings presented to deliver education on SRHR (Panel B)



Note: In Panel A, LAC refers to Latin America and the Caribbean, and SEA refers to Southeast Asia. In Panel B, ICT refers to information and communications technology, and CSO refers to civil society organisations. Panel B presents the percentage of the Ivorian population who think that girls or boys should receive sexual and reproductive education for each of the possible options.
Source: (OECD, 2022[41]), SIGI Côte d'Ivoire Database, https://stats.oecd.org and (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[22]), "Gender, Institutions and Development (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/7b0af638-en.

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To reach all children and adolescents, CSE cannot only be taught in schools. Globally, in 2020, school enrolment rates stand at 91% for primary schools but only at 67% for upper secondary schools (UNESCO, 2020[42]). Particularly at the secondary education level, school enrolment is far from universal in many developing countries and gender disparities persist. While schools are central places for children's and adolescents' learning and socialisation, the role schools and teachers can and should play in delivering CSE can be controversial. This is especially the case when moral and political views are not aligned with the educational content or the perceived need for sexual education. Civil society organisations have raised concerns that conservative lawmakers and politicians can exert pressure at all administrative levels to exclude certain key concepts from the nationally mandated (comprehensive) sexuality education content. For instance, during Bolsonaro's presidency in Brazil (2019-22), teachers reported being hesitant to educate their students on gender and sexual orientation as they were fearing consequences by elected officials or community members (Human Rights Watch, 2022[43]). Moreover, teachers may often lack insufficient training and guidance to deliver CSE which in turn can undermine their 'suitability' to do so. For instance, in Côte d'Ivoire, the adult population considers that girls and boys should receive SRHR education but preferably within the family (Figure 3.1, Panel B). Accounting for country context, CSE must be provided in various settings to reach all boys and girls, and those delivering it should receive adequate training.

Policy recommendations to improve adolescents' sexual and reproductive health and rights

Adolescence is an age full of opportunities but also risks – particularly when prevailing laws and norms threaten adolescents' rights and health outcomes. Policy makers, development partners and civil society should concert their efforts to convert current barriers into levers, minimise risks and amplify opportunities.

Enact or update laws to ensure adolescents' sexual and reproductive rights are upheld

In line with international or regional legal frameworks, governments in consultation with human and women's rights organisations and youth leaders should reform discriminatory laws that prevent adolescents' SRHR:

- Clearly define an age of consent for medical services and guarantee that adolescents have access to counselling and advice without parental consent in line with the CRC. Consider setting a specific minimum age of consent for HIV testing and contraception.
- Set an appropriate minimum age of consent for sexual activity that balances adolescents' need for protection and development, without gender differences, and decriminalise consensual sexual relations among adolescents in line with the CRC.
- Set 18 as the minimum age for marriage without any exceptions as recommended by the CRC and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and work with community and traditional leaders to ensure law enforcement.
- Criminalise the practice of FGM/C and establish penalties for all perpetrators, including parents and medical practitioners. Add an extraterritorial jurisdiction clause extending penalties to citizens who commit the crime outside of the country.
- Remove bans prohibiting pregnant and parenting adolescent girls from attending and/or returning to school and sitting exams.
- Strengthen laws on GBV, ensuring they extend to the school environment.

Tackle discriminatory social norms that undermine adolescents' access to and realisation of SRHR

Respective ministries in collaboration with development partners, civil society and the private sector should develop and implement evidence-based programmes focusing on changing transformative norms:

- Leverage edutainment – a combination of education and entertainment – to promote gender-equitable attitudes and practices regarding decision making, including over contraception use, and to tackle harmful practices including child marriage and FGM/C, etc.

  > *Sex Ki Adalat is a web series accessible on YouTube that was developed by Population Foundation of India dealing with taboo topics related to sexual and reproductive health. A project evaluation has shown that the series enhanced evidence-based knowledge on SRHR and provoked a questioning of regressive social norms (Population Foundation of India, 2023[44]).*

- Engage with local influencers and role models to organise (media) campaigns centred on masculinities, gender equality and SRHR.

  > *In Mozambique, the civil society network HOPEM (Homens pela Mudança) works to shift restrictive attitudes, norms and values around gender by conducting trainings on masculinities, launching media-based campaigns or organising a Men's march for gender equality. The activities have resulted in more*

> *men recognising gender related vulnerabilities and numerous celebrities breaking the silence around gender-based violence (MenEngage Africa, 2023[45]).*

- Develop and/or support existing local initiatives such as gender school clubs to engage children and adolescents in discussions and workshops on gender, values and power hierarchies to help them form gender-equitable attitudes and norms.
- Develop and implement training programmes for healthcare providers to ensure adolescents receive adequate and discrimination-free SRHR advice and services.

Deliver CSE to all children and adolescents – in and out of school

- Civil society and development partners should pursue advocacy efforts and closely work with governments to highlight the long-term benefits of CSE to prevent and respond to health challenges, promote gender equality and ensure children's and adolescents' rights. This includes advocating for an expansion of the content to cover all aspects of SRHR and to include modules on gender norms and power dynamics.
- Policy makers in consultation with education, health and gender experts should adopt or update national curricula or strategies to mandate CSE delivery for children and adolescents with evidence-based and appropriate content for each age group. Involving parents, religious leaders and youth in the design and implementation of CSE can strengthen effective delivery and pave the way to expand the content taught.
- Ministries and other government bodies in charge of national education, together with civil society and development partners, should consider integrating CSE in wider education and health efforts and develop strategic plans on how CSE can be delivered to all children and adolescents, regardless of schooling status and in both formal and informal settings.
- Design and set up budgetary tracking mechanisms to monitor governments' financial commitments and efforts to achieve CSE targets as stated in national action plans or policies, including budget allocation to develop and provide training for CSE implementers.

Maternal and newborn health – understanding what slows down progress

Maternal and newborn health has significantly improved over the years, but conflict and crises slow down such progress

The importance of reducing maternal and newborn mortality is enshrined in the 2030 Agenda. SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) has set the objective to reduce the global maternal mortality rate (MMR) to less than 70 maternal deaths per 100 000 live births and to end preventable deaths of newborns and children under the age of five by 2030[7] (United Nations, 2015[46]). Beyond ensuring human rights to life and health, improving the well-being of mothers and children is a crucial public health challenge, as it determines the health of the next generation with spillover effects on future children's well-being, education and socio-economic inclusion (WHO and International Center for Equity in Health, 2015[47]).

Newborn health has made substantial progress in child survival since 1990. Globally, the number of neonatal deaths declined from 5 million in 1990 to 2.4 million in 2020, but there are still approximately 6 700 newborn deaths every day, amounting to 47% of all child deaths under the age of 5 years (WHO, 2022[48]). Seventy-five per cent of neonatal deaths occur during the first week of life, mainly caused by preterm birth, childbirth-related complications and infections. The chances of survival strongly depend on the child's birthplace. Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest neonatal mortality rate in 2020, with 27 deaths per 1 000 live births, followed by Central and Southern Asia with 23 deaths per 1 000 live births. A child

born in sub-Saharan Africa is ten times more likely to die in the first month than a child born in a high-income country (Figure 3.2, Panel A).

Figure 3.2. Maternal and newborn mortality has been decreasing globally but unevenly

Panel A shows trends in the neonatal mortality rate over time and by region. Panel B shows trends in the maternal mortality rate over time and by region.

Note: In Panel A, the newborn mortality rate corresponds to the number of newborn deaths per 1 000 live births. In Panel B, the maternal mortality rate corresponds to the number of maternal deaths per 100 000 live births. In both panels, Australia and New Zealand are not included, but they exhibited the lowest newborn mortality rates and maternal mortality rates globally in 2021 (2.4 newborn deaths per 1 000 live births and 4 maternal deaths per 100 000 live births). In both panels, the regions displayed correspond to the official regions used for SDG data reporting.
Source: (UNICEF, 2022[49]), Neonatal mortality, UNICEF Data, https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-survival/neonatal-mortality/ and (WHO, 2023[50]), Maternal and reproductive health, Global Health Observatory (GHO), https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/topic-details/GHO/maternal-and-reproductive-health.

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Despite significant progress in reducing maternal mortality over the past ten years, 287 000 women globally died from pregnancy or childbirth-related complications in 2020 – and the vast majority of them in Africa (WHO et al., 2023[51]). From 2000 to 2020, the global MMR declined on average 2.1% every year (Figure 3.2, Panel B). This was achieved thanks to improvements in healthcare, nutrition and hygiene levels. Nonetheless, the majority (75%) of maternal deaths occur because of preventable causes including severe bleeding, high blood pressure, infections and complications from unsafe abortions (WHO et al., 2023[51]). Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounted for approximately 70% of global maternal deaths in 2020. Among the countries, Nigeria has the highest estimated number of maternal deaths, accounting for over one-quarter of all estimated global maternal deaths in 2020, followed by India, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia (WHO et al., 2023[51]).

Contrary to the positive trend in reducing maternal mortality over the 2000-15 period, MMRs stagnated or worsened in most regions between 2016 and 2020 (Figure 3.2, Panel B). In Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Northern America, there were increases in the MMR between 2016 and 2020 (Figure 3.2, Panel B) (WHO et al., 2023[51]). In particular, the countries with the most significant percentage increases in the MMR between 2000 and 2020 are, in descending order, Venezuela, Cyprus, Greece, the United States, Mauritius, Puerto Rico, Belize and the Dominican Republic (WHO et al., 2023[51]), with increases ranging from 183% in Venezuela to 36% in the Dominican Republic. For instance, Venezuela's deep economic, political and social crisis has affected women's access to antenatal care and hospital delivery, which they seek across the border in Brazil and Colombia (John Hopkins Center for Humanitarian Health, 2022[52]).

Conflict and crises particularly put maternal and newborn health at risk. Within humanitarian settings, and especially in the context of armed conflicts, insecurity coupled with forced displacement produces an instability that leads to a higher risk of maternal and newborn mortality (WHO et al., 2023[51]; Jawad et al., 2021[53]). In 2020, according to the OECD States of Fragility Index, thirteen countries were classified as "extremely fragile"[8] (OECD, 2020[54]).. The average MMR in these countries was over double the world average in 2020 (507 maternal deaths compared to 223 per 100 000 live births) (UNICEF, 2020[55]), and the newborn mortality rate was substantially higher than the world average in 2020 (27 newborn deaths compared to 18 per 1 000 live births) (UNICEF, 2022[49]). Crises other than armed conflict also compromise maternal and newborn health. A study on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis shows that the disruptions in health services during the pandemic led, on average, to an increase of 3.6% in child mortality and 1.5% in maternal mortality in 18 low- and middle-income countries[9] (Ahmed et al., 2022[56]). Moreover, climate change directly and indirectly affects maternal and newborn health. For instance, extreme weather events can demolish health infrastructure, disrupt service provisions or lead to forced displacement of people with implications for their access to necessary healthcare (Women Deliver, 2021[6]).

Barriers – both structural and social – hinder maternal and newborn health

High-quality healthcare systems are key to improving and guaranteeing maternal and newborn health. Yet, resource constraints can compromise countries' capacity to establish a high-quality care system – particularly in remote and rural areas (WHO, 2010[57]). Health systems' (partial) failure to ensure maternal and newborn health can translate into delays in seeking and receiving care after reaching the healthcare facility, shortages of essential medical supplies and poor accountability of the system itself (Roozbeh, Nahidi and Hajiyan, 2016[58]). A study conducted in Nigeria revealed that women choose not to give birth in healthcare facilities because prior experiences of mistreatment and healthcare facilities' poor reputations have eroded their trust in the health system (Bohren et al., 2017[59]).

The distance to healthcare facilities can hamper women's access to services, with implications for their own and their (future) children's health. For instance, cattle camp residents and pastoralists from Ethiopia, Mali and South Sudan, reported distance as a crucial challenge to accessing healthcare facilities (Dahab and Sakellariou, 2020[60]; Kohi et al., 2018[61]). Farming and raising livestock are common activities in these countries, where farmers and pastoralists often live in continuous movement (Ag Ahmed, Hamelin-Brabant and Gagnon, 2018[62]; Medhanyie et al., 2018[63]; Wilunda et al., 2017[64]). Weather events can further hinder access to hospitals and health centres. For instance, rainy seasons in Mozambique, South Sudan and Togo can cause roads to flood, preventing women from seeking facility-based maternal care (Arnold et al., 2016[65]; Munguambe et al., 2016[66]; Wilunda et al., 2017[64]). During weather-related hazards – which are likely to increase due to climate change (see Chapter 4) – in some countries, such as Togo, walking is the only available means to reach a healthcare facility, due to the condition of the roads (Arnold et al., 2016[65]).

Beyond such structural barriers, patriarchal norms result in low prioritisation of girls' and women's rights, including their right to safe, quality and affordable SRH services (Crear-Perry et al., 2021[67]).

Discriminatory gender norms can reduce women's ability to obtain healthcare, influence how health providers treat them and exclude women's involvement from family planning choices (Roozbeh, Nahidi and Hajiyan, 2016[58]). For instance, a study in Tanzania shows that a woman's decision to give birth in a healthcare facility is dependent upon the husband's approval. This often depends either on the men's conviction that childbirth is a natural duty or on their desire to avoid their wives from being exposed to male healthcare providers (Kohi et al., 2018[61]). In settings where women's mobility is conditioned by the presence of a man and/or where men are the healthcare decision makers, women may be precluded from seeking pre-natal healthcare or from reaching healthcare facilities on time. A study from Mali reported that it was not acceptable for women to go alone to healthcare facilities, and they had to be accompanied by their husbands for their security, for cultural acceptance and for covering the financial expenses (Dahab and Sakellariou, 2020[60]). Women's economic dependence on men can thus further limit access to and decision making over essential healthcare services.

Traditions and customs can lead to misconceptions about the importance of using maternal healthcare services. For example, women from pastoralist communities in Ethiopia reported preferring home delivery to order to participate in commonly observed religious practices after childbirth (Medhanyie et al., 2018[63]). In South Sudan, women declared they could give birth to their babies anywhere naturally, without the need for prior preparations. They perceived the use of maternal healthcare facilities to be restricted to complicated pregnancies, as did women from a study in Mozambique (Wilunda et al., 2017[64]; Munguambe et al., 2016[66]).

While many women are affected by the above-mentioned barriers to a certain degree, some are more discriminated against than others. A geography of inequality can be identified between countries but also within countries. Poverty is a crucial factor which can act as a multiplier of the different obstacles that hinder women's access to SRH services. For instance, lower-caste women in India face greater hardships in access to essential reproductive healthcare services compared to higher-caste women due to the financial burden required (Mishra, Veerapandian and Choudhary, 2021[68]). Discrimination linked to race and sexual orientation is also a crucial factor that affects women's treatment in healthcare facilities. For instance, Romani women, the largest minority group in Europe, have strong difficulties accessing maternal healthcare due to internalised racism of health providers, problems of poor communication and a lack of sexual education (Janevic et al., 2011[69]). Moreover, a study from the United States reports that more than half (51%) of LGBTQIA+ birthing people reported that the quality of their experience with pregnancy, birth and postpartum care was impacted by bias or discrimination (Alvarado et al., 2022[70]).

Contraception and family planning – questions of reproductive justice and autonomy

Increased access to contraception has profoundly affected the lives of many. Contraception use means greater control over family planning decisions, reduces the possibility of contracting STIs (depending on contraception method), allows for sexual freedom and can help, in some cases, to manage medical conditions (Cadena, Chaudhri and Scott, 2022[71]). However, unequal power structures have created inequalities in a person's ability to choose, voice and act on contraception and family planning preferences (Moreau et al., 2020[72]). Social and/or theoretical concepts such as reproductive justice and reproductive autonomy highlight stakeholders' call for a more nuanced and intersectional examination when looking at contraception use and family planning (Grace and Anderson, 2016[73]; Luna and Luker, 2013[5]).

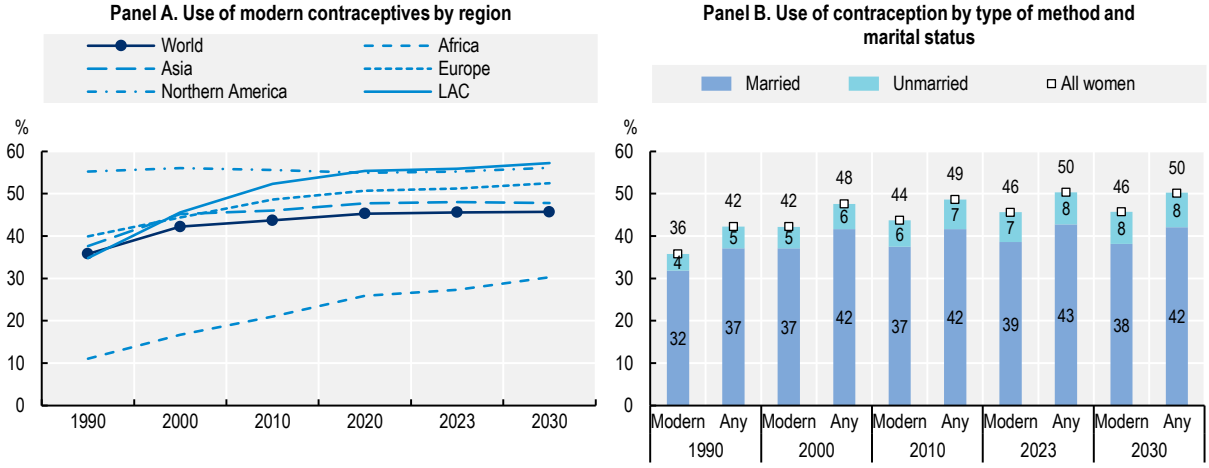
Modern contraception as a mean to control family planning decisions has been enshrined in the development agenda. The SDG Indicator 3.7.1. monitors "the proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods of contraception" (United Nations, 2022[74]). The 2017 Family Planning Summit states that "family planning is a best-buy in global development. When women and girls have access to family planning, they are able to

complete their education, create or seize better economic opportunities, and fulfil their full potential – in short, entire families, communities and nations benefit" (Family Planning 2020, 2017[75]). Worldwide, it is estimated that 13% of all women (and 17% of married or in-union women) of reproductive age have an unmet need for family planning. In other words, 13% of women of reproductive age who want to stop or delay childbearing do not use modern contraception. Regional discrepancies persist, and estimated unmet needs are highest in Africa, standing at 18% for all women and 24% for married or in-union women (United Nations, 2022[76]). Unmet needs for family planning are, on average, significantly lower in the Americas, Asia and Europe with some country variation (United Nations, 2022[76]; OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[22]).

Unmet needs for family planning persist despite the increased use of modern contraceptive methods. In 2023, worldwide, half of all women are estimated to use any method of contraception, and most use a modern method. Among those, the majority are married or in union (Figure 3.3, Panel B). While Africa remains the region where the use of modern contraception remains the lowest worldwide, it is also the region where usage rates have increased the most (Figure 3.3, Panel A). The reasons for not using contraception can be the results of commodity supply issues or personal preferences but can also be the product of social and legal barriers that restrain disproportionately (young) women's ability to access and decide over contraception use with implications for family planning. For instance, only 57% of women[10] make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive healthcare (United Nations, 2022[77]).

Figure 3.3. Contraception use has increased substantially since 1990, but gaps persist

Share of women aged 15-49 years using contraception by regions (Panel A) and by marital status (Panel B)



Note: LAC refers to Latin America and the Caribbean. Panel A shows the estimated median share of women (regardless of marital status) aged 15-49 years using a modern contraception method from 1990 to 2030, by region. Panel B shows the estimated median share of women aged 15-49 years using a modern or any contraception method from 1990 to 2030, by marital status. Modern contraceptives include female and male sterilisation, intra-uterine devices, implants, injectables, oral contraceptive pills, male and female condoms, vaginal barrier methods (including the diaphragm, cervical cap and spermicidal foam, jelly, cream and sponge), the lactational amenorrhea method, emergency contraception, and other modern methods not reported separately (e.g. the contraceptive patch or vaginal ring). Any methods of contraception include both modern and traditional methods, the latter including rhythm (e.g. fertility awareness-based methods, periodic abstinence), withdrawal and other traditional methods.
Source: (United Nations, 2022[76]), Family Planning Indicators, https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/data/family-planning-indicators.

StatLink https://stat.link/pdye4w

Structural factors and discriminatory social institutions limit access to and decision-making power over contraception use and family planning

Restrictive laws hinder access to and use of contraception. Age restrictions and parental notification laws on contraception use can limit adolescents' access to family planning services (see above). Moreover, third-party consent laws can prevent girls and women from accessing contraceptives. Under these types of legal provisions, a third party – often a spouse or another relative – must provide their consent before one can receive a contraception method. Despite a declaration from the Human Rights Committee deeming such legal provisions a violation of privacy, this is still the reality in some countries (OHCHR, 2020[78]). In some parts of Kenya, for example, providers are required to have permission from a third party before providing certain types of contraception (Solo and Festin, 2019[79]). In addition, laws according to which a woman must obey her husband could deter them from using contraceptives. This can be the case when the man is opposed to contraception use but also when he does not allow his wife to go by herself to a service provider. The SIGI data show that in 19 countries where the law requires women to obey their husbands, the average unmet need for family planning is 28% compared to 21% in 151 countries without such a law (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[22]).[11] This finding highlights the need for eradicating gender-based discrimination in social institutions, including laws, in order to enhance gender equality goals.

Healthcare and transportation infrastructure are also decisive in ensuring access to family planning services. A general lack of healthcare facilities and/or concentration of service centres in urban areas can be a burden on women's and men's ability to access services, particularly in rural areas. Infrastructure challenges also arise regarding the supply of medical resources and contraceptives. Commodity supply chain shortages can translate into a lack of choice in family planning methods available – especially in already underserved areas that are difficult to reach and where it is difficult to ensure supply continuity. This can thus result in decreasing contraception use (Mukasa et al., 2017[80]).

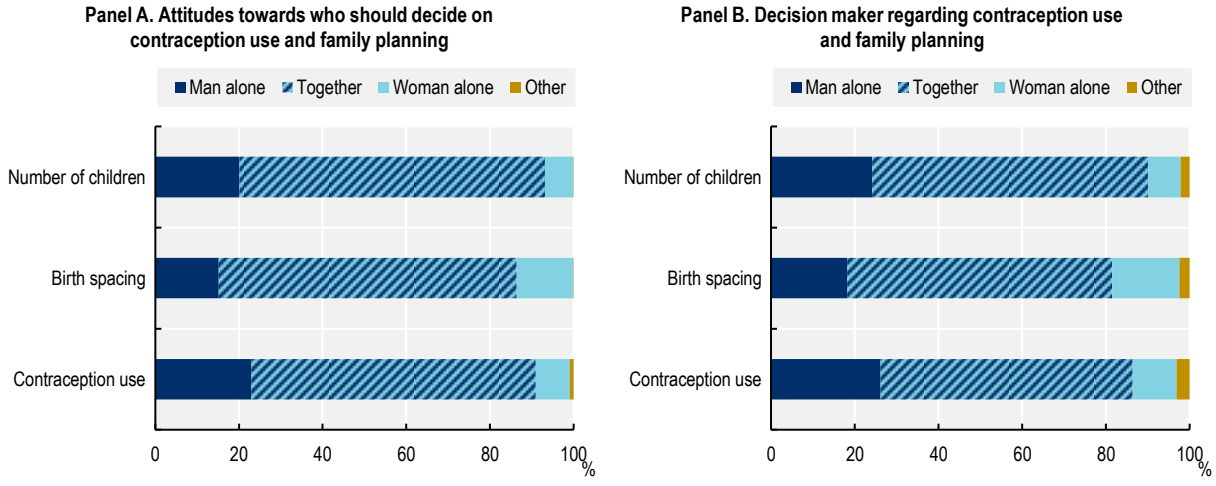
Provider bias can limit access to contraceptives. Even when a person can reach family planning centres, pharmacies or other relevant structures, stigmatisation and bias against specific population groups can prevent them from accessing contraception. For instance, a study from Malawi found that more than 40% of providers stated not being comfortable with providing family planning services to young, unmarried women without children (Solo and Festin, 2019[79]). In urban Kenya, 41% of providers reported that they would not offer one or more methods of contraception to women without any children (Tumlinson, Okigbo and Speizer, 2015[81]). In Nigeria, many health providers have discouraged the use of contraceptives among newly-married women due to their belief that couples should have children soon after their marriage, that people with small families should have bigger ones or that women should obtain the consent of their husbands to receive contraception (Oduenyi et al., 2021[82]).

Poverty and economic dependence are important barriers to contraception. Financial resources (or the lack of) determine whether a person can cover the costs related to transportation to reach a healthcare facility or provider of contraceptives, can pay for service fees and the price of the chosen method. Women's and adolescents' economic dependence on men can limit independent decision making over healthcare spending. For instance, SIGI data from Côte d'Ivoire and Tanzania reveal that in 52% and 24% of all families respectively, the father alone decides on healthcare spending for children (OECD, 2022[83]). This comes at a cost as women's limited ability to make investment decisions for their own or their children's health is associated with poorer (sexual and reproductive) health outcomes (Government of the United Kingdom, 2004[84]). To counteract women's financial dependence and ensure that everyone, regardless of their economic situation, has access to contraception, policies mandating free-of-charge or subsided service provision are essential. In fact, the SIGI data show that more than 40% of countries worldwide (74 out of 178) have a national strategy to provide contraception free of charge or to subsidise it – with a similar share of countries in each region[12] (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[22]).

Attitudes according to which men should be the decision makers on contraception use and reproductive choices can undermine women's decision-making power in practice. For instance, recent SIGI data from Côte d'Ivoire show that more than one-fifth of the population thinks that the man alone should decide on contraception use within the couple, which corresponds to the decision-making pattern in practice. The same pattern also holds true for attitudes on who should and who actually decides the number of children the family should have, and birth spacing (Figure 3.4) (OECD, 2022[83]). Evidence from Palestine, Lebanon, Uganda and Tanzania further shows that more than one-third of men who agree that it is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant think that contraception use should be the man's decision. This underlies an important paradox. While men view pregnancy (and its avoidance) as a "woman's issue", they are not willing to grant women the final say over their bodily autonomy (Equimundo, 2022[85]). In that sense, both men's opposition or non-involvement in family planning decisions can restrict women's uptake and continued use of contraceptives (Thummalachetty et al., 2017[86]; Kabagenyi et al., 2014[87]).

Figure 3.4. In Côte d'Ivoire, decision making over contraception use and family planning is largely in the hands of men

Share of the population of Côte d'Ivoire who thinks men and/or women should take important family planning decisions (Panel A) and those who take these decisions in practice (Panel B)



Source: (OECD, 2022[41]), SIGI Côte d'Ivoire Database, https://stats.oecd.org.

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Married women's ability to access contraception can be hindered by social norms that link marriage with motherhood. In contexts where women's identity and status strongly rely on their roles as wives and mothers, married women may face social pressure to have children and may suffer adverse consequences in case of infertility (Box 3.2). Married women who do not conform to the status quo – i.e. those who do not want to have children or want to delay a pregnancy – may be reluctant to (openly) use contraception as they fear judgement, spousal retaliation or even intimate-partner violence. When unequal power dynamics are questioned, a person's bodily autonomy can thus be violated. This is the case for any relationship regardless of a person's marital status, gender identity or sexual orientation. For instance, 23% of women in 64 countries report not being able to refuse sex and 8% are unable to make decisions specifically about contraception (UNFPA, 2022[88]). In Tanzania, 40% of women but only 11% of men who currently have a partner and use a contraception method do so without the knowledge of their partner (OECD, 2022[89]).

The modern contraception paradigm – does a one-size-fits-all approach work?

Globally, women's contraceptive autonomy is undermined by providers and research bias in the reproductive health industry. Evidence has revealed instances where family planning providers have given women certain contraception methods as a matter of routine and often without their consent. For instance, women in three African countries reported that providers refused to remove long-acting reversible contraceptives upon their request (Hardee et al., 2014[90]) (Britton et al., 2021[91]; Yirgu et al., 2020[92]; Callahan et al., 2020[93]). Even when service providers respect women's preferences, women may feel trapped to use a certain contraception method because there are no effective and reversible options available for men. Research and development of hormonal contraceptives for men has been underway for almost as long as for women, but they have never made it beyond clinical trials (Reynolds-Wright, Cameron and Anderson, 2021[94]). Clinical trials have been suspended, as male participants experienced adverse events such as changes in libido, headaches, weight gain, changing moods, etc. The fact that the same adverse effects are considered manageable for women reveals a gendered notion of what is acceptable for men and who is ultimately responsible for managing pregnancy – with undisputable implications for women's bodily autonomy and well-being (Abbe and Roxby, 2020[95]).

Since the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, the family planning discourse has shifted away from population control. Yet, the majority of family planning programmes focus on fertility reduction targets and contraception uptake rather than adopting a person-centred approach that focuses on people's needs and enables them to make autonomous decisions on family planning (Cahill et al., 2018[96]; Ouedraogo et al., 2021[97]; Senderowicz et al., 2023[98]). The success or impact of family planning programmes is often tied to numeric targets such as the share of the population using a modern contraception method. These indicators fall short in measuring whether programmes are person-centred and effectively promote people's autonomous choice and use of contraception methods. Moreover, quantitative goals of contraception uptake can in certain circumstances reduce the provision of care and undermine individuals' reproductive rights. To promote high quality and person-centred provision of SRH services, novel indicators that go beyond numeric goals and measures, and thus reflect individuals' and communities' priorities are needed. Increasingly, researchers are working to develop frameworks and indicators which would eventually allow to measure reproductive autonomy and quality of care (Senderowicz et al., 2023[98]).

Community involvement and sensitivity to local preferences and needs have been proven to be decisive for the success of family planning programmes. National governments in co-operation with development partners have been implementing family planning programmes for several decades, but not all have been successful. While the "intensity" of structural, social and legal barriers may partly explain regional differences in contraception use, modern contraception methods can be perceived as imported Western products that may not be trusted or are insensitive to local values and preferences (Cadena, Chaudhri and Scott, 2022[71]; Gautier et al., 2020[99]). Recent studies mention the collective memory of development partners promoting "the pill" in developing countries, as well as of medicinal experiments that were run in African countries during the colonial period, as a partial explanation of aversion towards certain contraception methods (Gautier et al., 2020[99]; Coulibaly, 2017[100]). In contrast, evidence reveals that family planning programmes that are integrated into existing health services, that are community-managed and sensitive to populations' needs, and transform discriminatory social norms in a cultural and local accepted way have been most effective while "imported" programmes failed to achieve their goals (Skinner et al., 2021[101]; Mwaikambo et al., 2011[102]). For instance, the Tupange programme in Kenya has been associated with a significant increase in modern contraception use. Family planning services were scaled up by integrating them into existing health services and working with national health staff and community groups. The programme further focused on improving the availability of services and commodities and enhancing the choice of methods (Keyonzo et al., 2015[103]).

Box 3.2. Infertility: An overlooked and underfunded area of sexual and reproductive health and rights

According to 2022 estimates, one in six persons has experienced infertility at some point in their life. The prevalence of lifetime infertility in high-income countries is similar to that in low- and middle-income countries, standing at 17.8% and 16.5% respectively. Some regional discrepancies persist. Lifetime infertility prevalence is estimated to be highest in the Western Pacific Region (23%) and lowest in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (11%) (WHO, 2023[104]). Although the share of women and men seeking fertility care is similar in developing and developed countries, only a small, privileged part of the concerned world population has access to the most technologically advanced treatments.

In contexts where women's identity and status are closely linked to motherhood and marriage, the negative consequences of infertility tend to be more severe. In developing countries, the central role children continue to play for a family's economic survival alongside traditional gender roles particularly exacerbates women's experience with infertility. Women who cannot have children risk being stigmatised and isolated by family and/or local communities, which can result in negative consequences on their physical integrity, mental health, marital relationship and socio-economic situation. For instance, a study from Gambia revealed persistent social pressure on women to have children. When unable to conform to the traditional gender roles, women have faced social stigma but also emotional and physical violence from their partner (Dierickx et al., 2018[105]; Greil, McQuillan and Slauson-Blevins, 2011[106]).

Patriarchal norms according to which infertility is a threat to masculinity can nurture the misconception that infertility is a woman's issue. Therefore, men may simply assume that there is "nothing wrong with them", thus not seeing the need to get tested or refusing to do so. While women may be blamed, stigmatised and held responsible for the situation, men's solution to infertility may be divorce or remarriage – or polygamy in settings where this is socially and legally tolerated (Mumtaz, Shahid and Levay, 2013[107]; Greil, McQuillan and Slauson-Blevins, 2011[106]).

Resource constraints, laws and intersectional discrimination create inequalities in access to infertility care within and between countries. Developed countries dispose of more resources to offer subsidised or free-of-charge fertility care, whereas developing countries may have to balance budget constraints and health priorities (Ombelet, 2011[108]). Differences in laws regulating assisted reproductive technology (ART) and third-party reproduction further create inequalities in access across and within countries. Single women's and female-female, trans and intersex couples' access to ART is disproportionately prohibited by the law. For instance, Norway only legalised single women's access to ART in 2020 and France in 2021 (Norwegian Health Care Service, 2023[109]; Government of France, 2022[110]).

Intersectional discrimination on the basis of, for example, gender, race, socio-economic status or education level creates inequalities in access to treatment – in terms of one's own capacity to afford it but also in terms of bias and discrimination from service providers. Data from the United Kingdom and the United States reveal that while service providers advise "[w]hite and affluent couples [to take up treatment], poorer women, non-native English speakers, and women of colour often find many barriers to receiving an official diagnosis of infertility – let alone treatment" (Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, 2020[111]; Luna and Luker, 2013[5]). Overall, data at the country level reveal that higher levels of gender inequality[13] are associated with lower utilisation of ART such as in vitro fertilisation (Dyer et al., 2020[112]).

Access to safe and legal abortion – a fragile right?

Women's[14] right to safe and legal abortion is – beyond being a question of human rights – a question of life and death. Estimates show that every year more than 45% of abortions are unsafe (UNFPA, 2022[88]). This entails severe consequences for women's health and well-being especially in developing countries, where the quasi-totality of all unsafe abortions occurs (WHO, 2021[113]). It is estimated that unsafe abortions lead to 39 000 deaths per year, among which 60% are concentrated in Africa and 30% in Asia (WHO, 2022[114]). In fact, unsafe abortions are a leading but evitable cause of maternal mortality and morbidity (see above), and every year millions of girls and women are hospitalised following complications of unsafe abortion procedures. Unsafe abortions can further threaten girls' and women's mental health and socio-economic situation with negative spillover effects on communities and societies as a whole (WHO, 2021[113]; Bearak et al., 2020[115]).

Globally, 189 countries have signed the CEDAW which enshrines in Articles 12 and 16 (e) women's right to health, including their right to bodily autonomy and reproductive freedom (United Nations, 1979[116]). More specifically, CEDAW calls on countries to legalise abortion at least in cases of rape, incest, threats to the life or health of the pregnant woman and severe foetal impairment (CEDAW, 2022[117]). This is also reflected by regional frameworks such as the Maputo Protocol which protects African women's right to safe abortion "in cases of sexual assault, rape, incest and where the continued pregnancy endangers the mental and physical health of the mother or the life of the mother or the foetus" (African Union, 2003[118]). The 2022 guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO) on the quality of abortion emphasise that "abortion care must be safe, timely, affordable, non-discriminatory and respectful", calling for the removal of restrictive policies and laws (WHO, 2022[119]).

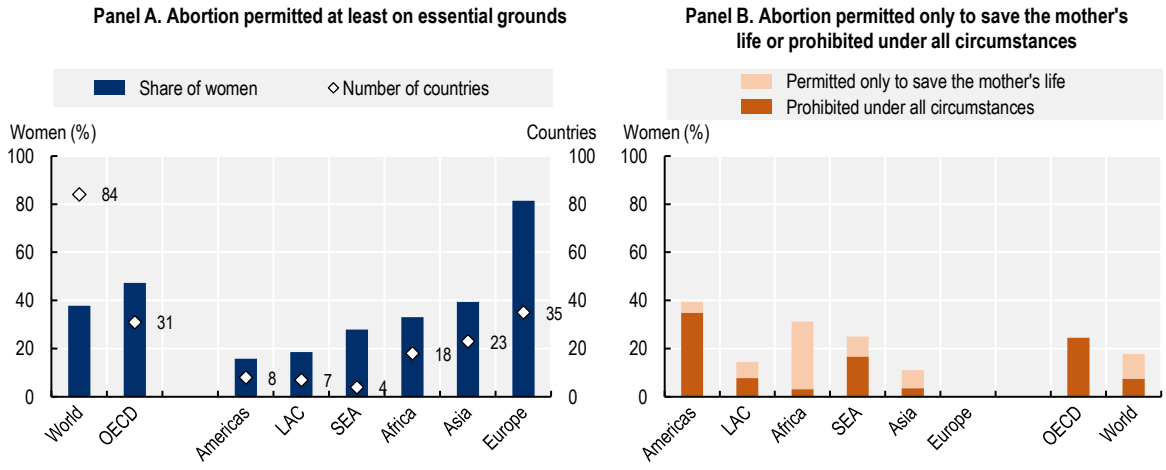
Restrictive laws are at the heart of unsafe abortions

The share of unsafe abortions is higher in countries with restrictive abortion laws. Data reveal that the share of unintended pregnancies resulting in induced abortion is similar across countries irrespective of the legal status of abortion (Bearak et al., 2020[115]). However, the share of unsafe abortions is significantly higher in countries with restrictive laws. According to the Guttmacher Institute, in countries with the least restrictive abortion laws, less than 1% of abortions are unsafe, contrasting sharply with 31% in countries with the most restrictive laws (Singh et al., 2018[120]). When carried out using a method appropriate to the pregnancy duration and assisted by an informed and skilled person, abortions are a safe healthcare intervention (WHO, 2022[114]). Yet, legal but also socio-economic and structural barriers unevenly restrict girls' and women's access to abortion care.

Access to safe and legal abortion is uneven across the world. Out of 178 countries covered by the fifth edition of the SIGI, 15 countries fully prohibit abortion without any exceptions, and 25 countries only permit abortion when it is necessary to save a woman's life.[15] This means that, worldwide, 142 million women of reproductive age do not have access to abortion under any circumstance and 193 million women of reproductive age only have access to abortion when their life is in danger (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[22]). In contrast, in 47% of countries (84 out of 178) representing more than 710 million women of reproductive age, the law permits abortion at least on all essential grounds[16] or upon the woman's request[17] (Figure 3.5, Panel A). The data reveal regional discrepancies. While more than 80% of European women of reproductive age can legally and safely interrupt a pregnancy on essential grounds, this is the case for less than 40% of Asian women, for 33% of African women and only 16% of women living in the Americas.[18] This trend is reflected in the share of women living in countries that only permit abortion when essential to save the mother's life (Figure 3.5, Panel B).

Figure 3.5. Access to safe and legal abortion is out of reach for many women in Africa and the Americas

Share of women living in countries where abortion is permitted at least on essential grounds (Panel A) and where abortion is prohibited under all circumstances or permitted only to save the mother's life (Panel B)



Note: In Panel A, essential grounds include saving the woman's life, preserving the physical or mental health of the mother, if the pregnancy is the result of rape, statutory rape or incest, and the case of foetal impairment. In Panels A and B, LAC refers to Latin America and the Caribbean, and SEA refers to Southeast Asia.
Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[22]), "Gender, Institutions and Development (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/33beb96e-en.

StatLink https://stat.link/jqevpi

Laws in many countries fall short of recognising the need to grant women the right to abortion for reasons other than those directly affecting the mother's (or foetus') life and health. According to SIGI data, in 83 countries worldwide and thus affecting more than 60% of women of reproductive age, abortion is not legally permitted in case of rape, statutory rape or incest. At a regional level, this translates into more than 80% of women living in the Americas, and about 60% of women living in Africa and Asia not having access to safe and legal abortion under these circumstances (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[22]).[19] In some countries where the law is silent on rape and/or incest but where abortion is permitted to preserve the mother's physical and mental health, interrupting a pregnancy following rape or incest may thus be possible if justified for health reasons. However, this will always depend on a third party's opinion and interpretation of the law. As recommended by CEDAW, legally enshrining women's right to safe abortion following rape or incest is essential given the detrimental consequences such pregnancies can have, including, but not only, on their mental health and socio-economic situation (CEDAW, 2022[117]). Furthermore, legal thresholds such as penetration tests can create obstacles for survivors to seek justice and exercise their rights (see Chapter 2).

Third-party consent laws represent legal barriers regarding girls' and women's right to access safe abortion care. In most countries (65%, or 106 out of 163 countries) where abortion is legal, a medical practitioner must approve the procedure (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[22]). For instance, in Thailand, a medical practitioner other than the professional who will perform the abortion must certify that the mental health of the pregnant woman is at risk if she seeks an abortion based on this reason (Government of Thailand, 1956[121]). In addition, third-party consent laws may require that the father provides his consent, which constitutes a high barrier in cases where the pregnancy is the result of non-consensual sex, but generally undermine women's agency and reproductive rights. Moreover, adolescents face barriers unique

to their age group, such as the need to have parental consent or the fact that parents have to be notified (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2022[122]). The WHO recognises that third-party authorisation requirements can create undue delays in accessing abortion services and exacerbate physical and mental health conditions for pregnant women who are seeking abortion services (WHO, 2012[123]).

Abortion rights are not set in stone. The 2022 United States Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade showed that women's reproductive rights can be restricted at any time (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2022[124]). Such legal rollbacks – which can come in many forms – not only affect women's access to safe abortion but can also include legal consequences for service providers. Despite the global attention paid to Roe v. Wade, more countries have recently curbed women's access to legal and safe abortion. Several countries have undertaken law reforms that expand women's access to abortion – often following year-long advocacy and activism led by civil society organisations. While some countries decriminalised abortion, others have expanded the circumstances based on which a woman can legally have an abortion or are taken measures to enshrine abortions rights in their constitution (see Box 3.3).

Box 3.3. Recent developments in reproductive rights

Across the world, several countries have undertaken law reforms to enhance women's access to safe and legal abortion. In contrast, a growing number of countries is curbing women's reproductive rights. For instance:

Law reforms restricting women's and girls' access to safe and legal abortion

- Honduras: In 2020, Honduras amended its Constitution to prohibit abortion outright, sending a strong signal as the law already prohibited abortion under any circumstances (Government of Honduras, 2020[125]).
- Hungary: While abortion has been legal since 1953,[20] Hungarian women are now subject to a mandatory ultrasound where they must listen to the foetus' heartbeat before they can have an abortion (Government of Hungary, 2022[126]).
- Poland: In 2020, Poland's Constitutional Tribunal ruled that abortions in cases of foetal impairment are unconstitutional, which translates into a near-total ban, as most abortions prior to the ruling were performed due to foetal abnormalities (Government of Poland, 2020[127]).
- United States: In 2022, the Supreme Court overturned the landmark ruling Roe v. Wade which constitutionally granted women's right to abortion. Since then, several states have reformed their laws to prohibit abortion or to restrict access to abortion, for instance by limiting the gestational limit (Government of the United States of America, 2021[128]).

Law reforms enhancing access to safe and legal abortion

- Argentina: The Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy Bill was passed by the National Congress in December 2020 which liberalises and protects women's rights to access a safe and legal abortion until the fourteenth week of pregnancy. Prior to 2020, abortion was banned and criminalised unless it was to save the woman's life or the result of rape or incest (Government of Argentina, 2020[129]).
- Benin: The Law on Sexual and Reproductive Health was amended in 2021, granting women access to safe and legal abortion on all essential and socio-economic grounds until the twelfth week of pregnancy (Government of Benin, 2020[130]).
- Colombia: The recent ruling of the Constitutional Court of Colombia in 2022 decriminalised abortion in all cases up to 24 weeks of pregnancy. Beyond the gestational limit, abortion remains

legal when the pregnancy represents a risk to the health or life of the woman or is the result of rape (Government of Colombia, 2022[131]).

- France: In 2023, the Senate voted in favour to include women's right to voluntary termination of pregnancy in the Constitution, after the National Assembly had adopted the bill in 2022 (Government of France, 2023[132]).
- Gabon: Before 2021, abortion was illegal and criminalised. An amendment to the Penal Code of Gabon introduced for women the possibility of having an abortion when the mother's life is in danger, if the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest, or in the case of foetal impairment (Government of Gabon, 2020[133]).
- India: In 2021, the Indian Supreme Court ruled that different gestational limits based on marital status were unlawful. Previously, under the Medical Termination of Pregnancies Act (1971), married women could have abortions up to 24 weeks into their pregnancies, but single women were limited to 20 weeks (Government of India, 2022[134]).
- Kenya: In 2022, the High Court of Kenya ruled that "abortion care is a fundamental right under the Constitution and that arbitrary arrests and prosecution of patients and healthcare providers seeking or offering such services is illegal" (Government of Kenya, 2022[135]).
- Korea: In April 2019, South Korea's Constitutional Court ruled that the ban on abortion was unconstitutional and mandated the National Assembly to revise the law by 31 December 2020. In the absence of a legal revision, abortion in South Korea was decriminalised on 1 January 2021 (Government of Korea, 2019[136]).
- Mexico: In 2021, the Mexican Supreme Court ruled that penalising abortion is unconstitutional. Since then, several states have amended their laws to decriminalise and legalise abortion up to 12 weeks of pregnancy (Government of Mexico, 2021[137]).

A complex web of structural and social barriers limits women's access to safe abortion

Insufficient numbers of service providers and financial constraints restrict access to safe abortion care – particularly for rural and poor women. In 2019, Northern Ireland decriminalised abortion, but the provision of abortion services remained limited. To address this, the government amended the law in 2022, which now obliges the Northern Ireland Department of Health to commission and fund abortion services (Rough, 2023[138]; Government of the United Kingdom, 2022[139]). In Zambia, where abortion is legal on all grounds, an unknown number of women each year resort to unsafe procedures, as abortion care remains inaccessible. As the law stipulates that only a registered medical practitioner and not a nurse or midwife can perform an abortion, safe access is rendered out of reach for many and especially those living in rural areas where the doctor-per-person ratio[21] is lower than in urban settings (Ngoma, Masumo and Sianchapa, 2017[140]). Moreover, girls and women who are financially dependent or lack financial resources may not be able to access safe abortion services when these are expensive and/or not covered or subsidised by the public healthcare system.

Women's access to safe abortion can be restricted when service providers limit access to information or treatment based on personal beliefs. Conscientious objection refers to healthcare workers or service providers refusing to provide information on or carry out an abortion based on personal beliefs which may be often anchored in culture, religion or the fear of social stigma. In Italy, for example, where abortion is legal and free during the first 90 days of pregnancy, many women face difficulties in accessing abortion services, as medical staff refuse to carry them out. According to the Italian government, the phenomenon of conscientious objection concerned 65% of gynaecologists, 45% of anaesthesiologists and 36% of non-medical personnel in 2020 (Government of Italy, 2022[141]).

Social stigma can limit access to quality information. When relevant information is not easily accessible, misconceptions about the risks and safety of abortion procedures can prevail, disproportionately affecting

illiterate, rural and indigenous women and women with disabilities, among others and depending on context (National Partnership for Women & Families and Autistic Self Advocacy Network, 2021[142]). Moreover, many women tend to rely on informal sources of information based on anecdotal experiences of other women and community members. Resorting to informal but trusted sources can be fuelled by abortion stigma, which refers to "a shared understanding that abortion is morally wrong and/or socially unacceptable" (Makleff et al., 2019[143]). Evidence from India and Kenya (countries where abortion is legal on all essential grounds) reveals that many women considering abortion expect to be judged not only by community members but also by medical professionals (Makleff et al., 2019[143]).

Restrictive gender norms and social tolerance of GBV impede women's reproductive rights. In contexts where men are the socially designated decision makers, women may be reluctant to disclose an unintended pregnancy out of fear of their partner's reaction, interference or even abandonment – which can increase the number of unsafe abortions conducted in secrecy. For example, evidence from Tanzania and Côte d'Ivoire reveals that 19% and 33% of women respectively who had an abortion did so without the knowledge of their partner or spouse (OECD, 2022[83]; OECD, 2022[89]). A woman may also experience a violation of her rights when her partner or family forces her to have an abortion (Lo Forte, 2018[144]).

Conclusion and ways forward

Ensuring everyone's SRHR is a necessity from a health, human rights and gender equality perspective. Yet, numerous barriers prevent particularly adolescents' and women's ability to make choices about their own lives and optimal health outcomes. This in turn, undermines their ability to realise their sexual and reproductive rights. While some barriers such as the lack of quality healthcare infrastructure can be contingent on a country's resources, discriminatory social institutions undermine SRHR worldwide. Transforming restrictive laws, discriminatory attitudes and behaviours is thus crucial but takes time and is not necessarily a linear process. Key stakeholders should concert their efforts and work in close co-ordination to optimise the use of resources and create synergies across interlinked sectors such as health and education.

To counteract backlash movements on certain reproductive and sexual rights, development partners and philanthropic actors are in a powerful position to centre SRHR as a policy priority and support stakeholders promoting increased access to services and rights on the ground (OECD, 2022[145]). Precisely, policy makers at all administrative levels, in close co-operation with civil society and development partners should work to update or reform discriminatory laws, transform social norms and provide well-functioning healthcare systems that cater particularly to adolescents' and women's SRHR needs. The design and implementation of laws, policies or programmes should follow three guiding principles: (i) systematically adopt an intersectional approach; (ii) collect and use gender-disaggregated data to design targeted and evidence-based policies and programmes; (iii) engage boys and men by developing targeted interventions that permit them to reflect upon restrictive masculine norms and equip them with the tools and knowledge to reconstruct such rigid norms.

Policy recommendations to enhance sexual and reproductive health and rights

Enact or reform laws and policies

In line with international and regional legal frameworks, policy makers – in consultation with women's rights and civil society organisations focusing on SRHR – should reform laws and enact policies that legally enshrine the right and access to sexual and reproductive health.

- Bar legal provisions that mandate third-party consent to access contraceptives and that require women to obey their husbands.
- Stipulate free (or subsidised) access to all contraception methods in national action plans or relevant legal frameworks to ensure access and choice.
- Enact or reform laws that grant women access to safe and legal abortions in line with CEDAW.

Address discriminatory social norms

National ministries in charge of health and gender – in collaboration with development partners including bilateral agencies and multilateral organisations, foundations, national and international non-governmental organisations and grassroots organisations – should design and implement transformative social norms interventions. The following elements should be factored in:

- Closely work with traditional, religious and community leaders to co-create and implement interventions on gender-equitable decision making for family planning decisions.
- Leverage edutainment campaigns and national role models to promote gender-equitable masculinities and to engage men as allies for women's rights.
- Integrate modules on gender equality, power structures, and rights across all health and women empowerment programmes.
- Throughout interventions, systematically include activities and safe spaces for boys and men where they can reflect both alone and together with girls and women on prevailing gender norms and learn how to adopt more equitable attitudes and behaviours.
- Allocate budget for monitoring and evaluation to track if interventions are achieving their objectives. Prioritise interventions with concrete plans to achieve change that can be sustained over the long term, as transforming norms takes time and may not be linear.

Strengthen healthcare systems and service provision

National governments in charge of finance, development and health, in co-operation with development partners, should allocate sufficient budget to ensure everyone's access to high-quality healthcare within reach.

- Invest in health infrastructure to increase the number of healthcare facilities in remote and underserved areas and to improve the quality of existing facilities.
- Leverage innovative and alternative ways such as telemedicine to increase access to SRHR services. To account for inequities in access to technology, hybrid models where telemedicine is integrated with community accompaniment can help bridge such gaps and ensure consistent access to services as shown during the COVID-19 pandemic (UNFPA, 2021[146]).

- Allocate budget for capacity building and training of healthcare personnel, midwives and nurses to ensure high-quality services provision including prenatal care, child delivery, and family planning advice free of bias.
- In collaboration with grassroots organisations, raise awareness of the risks of unsafe abortions, and provide accurate information on abortion care providers (where legal).

Notes

[1] In accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences (UNFPA, 2014[1]; UN Women, 1995[150]).

[2] In 2019, the International Conference on Population and Development renewed its commitments, focusing on achieving zero unmet needs for family planning information and services, zero preventable maternal deaths, and zero sexual and gender-based violence and other harmful practices (e.g. FGM/C, exploitation, trafficking) against women and girls (Nairobi Summit, 2019[147]).

[3] Paragraph 101, General Comment No. 12; and Paragraph 39, General Comment No. 20.

[4] Data are available for 144 countries (2019). In 34 countries, the law does not require parental consent for adolescents to access HIV testing. In 50 countries, parental consent is required for adolescents younger than 18 years; in 29 countries it is required for adolescents younger than 16 years and in 31 countries it is required for adolescents younger than 14 years.

[5] Data are available for 90 countries (2019). In 46 countries, the law does not require parental consent for adolescents to access contraceptives. In 26 countries, parental consent is required for adolescents younger than 18 years; in 6 countries, parental consent is required for adolescents younger than 16 years; in 9 countries, parental consent is required for adolescents younger than 14 years and in 9 countries parental consent is required for adolescents younger than 12 years.

[6] Paragraph 40, General Comment No. 20.

[7] SDG Target 3.2 on neonatal and child mortality states: “By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1 000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1 000 live births.”

[8] Afghanistan, Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Iraq, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

[9] Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Uganda.

[10] SDG indicator 5.6.1 “Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care”. Data is available for 64 countries, spanning the years 2007-21.

[11] SIGI data reveal that in 21 out of 178 countries, the law requires women to obey their husband. For 19 out of these 21 countries, data on unmet needs for family planning is available (2023 estimates, married or in-union women, modern methods of contraception only). Among the 157 countries where the law does not require women to obey their husband, data on unmet needs for family planning is available for 151 countries, resulting in a sample of 170 countries. The countries where women are required to obey their husband are the following (ordered by the increasing share of women with unmet needs): Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Qatar, Mali, West Bank and Gaza Strip, Djibouti, Pakistan, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Bahrain, Mauritania, Somalia, Equatorial Guinea, Yemen and Oman. The difference in average value of unmet family planning needs between countries where the law obliges women to obey their husbands versus those where this is not the case is statistically significant (p-value of 0.002).

[12] In Africa, 19 out of 54 countries with available data mandate for free or subsidised contraceptives in their national action plans. In the Americas, it is 14 out of 32 countries; in Asia it is 24 out of 55 countries and in Europe it is 17 out of 38 countries with available data.

[13] Levels of gender inequality are measured with the help of the UN Development Programme's Gender Inequality Index (GII), which "is a composite metric of gender inequality using three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market. A low GII value indicates low inequality between women and men, and vice-versa".

[14] While this chapter focuses on girls' and women's abortion rights, individuals who may not identify as women also need access to safe and legal abortion and related healthcare services.

[15] In the absence of a federal law on abortion, the SIGI Methodology relies on the most restrictive law that applies in any federal state.

[16] Essential grounds include that abortion is permitted (i) to save a woman's life, (ii) to preserve her mental and physical health, in the case of rape, statutory rape or incest, and (iii) in the case of foetal impairment.

[17] Abortion available at women's request means that women can have an abortion for any reason prior to the gestational limit defined by their country. While the most common gestational limit is 12 weeks, it varies across or sometimes even within countries (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2023[148]).

[18] The presented data refer to the share of women of reproductive age in each region. In Africa, abortion on essential grounds (all circumstances except for socioeconomic reasons) is legal in 17 out of 54 countries; in the Americas it is legal in 8 out of 32 countries; in Asia it is legal in 23 out of 55 countries and in Europe it is the case for 35 out of 38 countries (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[22]).

[19] The SIGI 2023 legal database covers 178 countries. In 83 out of 178 countries abortion is not legally permitted in case of rape or incest. In Africa, this is the case for 28 out of 54 countries; in the Americas this is the case for 24 out of 32 countries; in Asia this is the case for 29 out of 55 countries and in Europe it is the case for 2 out of 38 countries.

[20] Abortion is legal upon request until 12 weeks of pregnancy and also beyond the gestational limit when interrupting the pregnancy is necessary to save the women's life or preserve her health.

[21] In 2021, Zambia had three practicing medical doctors per 10 000 inhabitants (WHO, 2021[149]).

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4 Empowering women to become agents of change for a climate-resilient world

This chapter explores the gendered dimensions of climate change impacts, focusing on three climate change responses (i) resilient agriculture, (ii) disaster risk reduction and (iii) renewable energy. It examines existing systemic barriers hindering women's empowerment to respond to, adapt to and mitigate climate change. The chapter seeks to inform policy makers at the regional and national levels on how they can better incorporate a gender lens in the implementation of their policies, programmes and strategies under the Paris Agreement. Finally, the chapter aims at supporting countries to enhance gender equality and mainstream a gender-transformative approach into sectoral and broader climate change policies and actions.

In Brief

Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by climate change. Yet, they are key agents of change in mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Empowering women through climate-resilient agriculture

- Globally, women play important roles in agriculture and in building strong and resilient global food systems. About, 25% of women's employment is in agriculture.
- However, climate change disproportionally affects women farmers and rural women due to structural gender inequalities and discriminatory social institutions.
- Traditional gender roles and stereotypes can exclude women farmers from decision-making processes at the household and public levels, hindering women's ability to take actions to combat the effects of climate change in their farms and communities.
- Empowering women in agriculture and providing them with equal access to productive resources could increase the production of women-owned farms by 20% to 30% in developing countries.

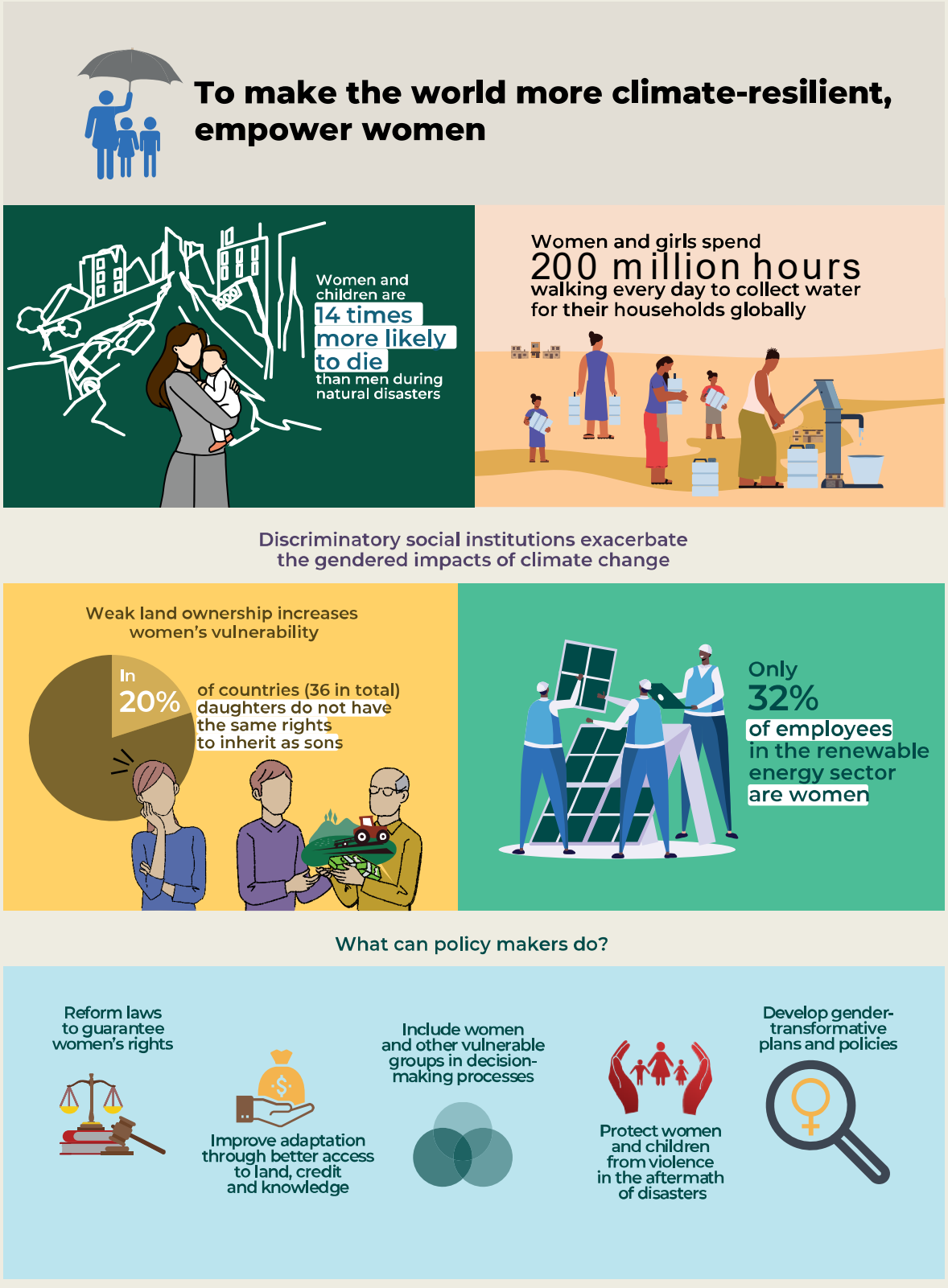
Making disaster-risk reduction gender-inclusive to enhance women's resilience

- Climate disasters are not gender neutral. Women and children are 14 times more likely to die than men during a disaster.
- In the aftermath of disasters, women and girls are vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), early and forced marriages, loss of livelihood, restricted access to education, deterioration in sexual and reproductive health and increased domestic workload.
- In pre- and post-disaster contexts, unequal access to resources and decision-making power between women and men affects how they prepare for and respond to disasters.
- However, evidence shows that women can be powerful agents of change during and after disasters. For instance, in Bangladesh, a women-led committee created in the aftermath of the floods taught other women how to build portable clay ovens, elevate their houses, and use radios to learn about possible floods or other climate-related events.

Empowering women as agents of change in the renewable energy sector

- Women are the main providers and users of energy within their homes and communities. They are at the forefront of the negative effects stemming from the use of traditional energy sources, such as firewood, animal dung, crop waste and charcoal.
- Women remain under-represented in the renewable energy sector. They account for only 32% of employees in the renewable energy sector, notably due to gender stereotypes, biases and structural barriers.
- Empowering women would strengthen the renewable energy industry, support the deployment of more projects and, ultimately, help mitigate climate change. Projections anticipate that a 90% reduction in global carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions by 2050 can be achieved by further deploying renewable energy, and efforts that leverage women as agents of change in their communities could multiply those benefits.

Infographic 4.1. Women's empowerment is key to improve mitigation and adaptation strategies



Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns (UNDP, 2023[1]). These shifts may be natural, for example through variations in the solar cycle. However, since the 1800s**,** human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas and to exploitative agricultural practices that contribute to human-induced greenhouse gases (GHG) (European Commission, 2023[2]). Human activities and burning fossil fuels have accelerated greenhouse gas emissions to a point where the Earth cannot process them anymore and therefore can no longer maintain the planet's temperature stable. This has triggered severe climatic disruptions and a global increase in temperatures (European Commission, 2023[2]). The Earth is now about 1.1°C warmer than it was in the late 1800s, and the last decade (2011-20) was the warmest on record (WMO, 2022[3]). Global surface temperatures have increased faster since 1970 than in any other 50-year period over the last 2 000 years (IPCC, 2021[4]). The ramifications of climate change are already reshaping our world as we know it. While no region of the world is spared, countries and groups of people are differently affected by the life-threatening effects of climate change.

Climate change affects various aspects of life, from the environment to human health and socio-economic systems, but its impacts vary across populations and are compounded by intersecting discriminatory social institutions related to gender, ethnicity, age, socio-economic status or location. Women are among the most affected by climate change due to their social, economic and cultural roles and responsibilities, which further exacerbate their vulnerability to climate-related risks and disasters (UNHCHR, 2022[5]; Nelleman, Verma and Hislop, 2011[6]). Therefore, understanding how climate change impacts women and their communities is crucial for achieving climate justice and building a sustainable future for all.

The link between climate change and gender has been recognised since the early 1990s. The impact of climate change on gender equality was first acknowledged during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (1992) (United Nations, 1992[7]). Since then, there has been growing consensus that gender inequality and climate change must be addressed hand in hand, and the international community has continued to underscore women's important role in managing natural resources and securing sustainable livelihoods (UNFCCC, 2021[8]). In addition, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) General Recommendation 37 calls on states to advance gender mainstreaming into all areas and elements of climate action (OHCHR, 2018[9]). The 2030 Agenda provides the overarching policy framework linking gender, the rule of law and climate change, as expressed in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 (Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment), 7 (Affordable and Green Energy), 13 (Climate Action) and 16 (Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies) (United Nations, 2015[10]). Nearly all of the SDGs intersect with gender equality and the impacts of climate change, but the nine environment-related SDGs fall short of embedding gender equality concerns and hence do not adequately support policy makers in designing gender-transformative policies. Only 20 of the 114 indicators with an environmental angle in the SDG framework account for a gender dimension (Cohen and Shinwell, 2020[11]; OECD, 2021[12]).

Recently, these efforts have been strongly accelerated through the 2015 Paris Agreement which establishes the link between gender and climate change, recognising the need to develop and implement gender-transformative national climate policies. The Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) recognises the need for gender equality and the empowerment of women in addressing climate change (UNFCCC, 2023[13]), and the Glasgow Climate Pact calls upon states to increase the full, meaningful and equal participation of women in climate action (UNFCCC, 2021[14]). The enhanced Lima Work Program on Gender for the UNFCCC further promotes activities to advance knowledge and understanding of gender-transformative climate action and its coherent mainstreaming (UNFCCC, 2023[15]). Lastly, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 emphasises the importance of women's participation in effectively managing disaster risks and the need for gender-disaggregated data (UNDRR, 2015[16]). International conventions all call for financial assistance to prevent and cope with climate change. Financial mechanisms, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF), incorporate a gender lens. For instance, the GCF Gender

Policy requires entities seeking funding to include a gender assessment of their proposal and develop a project-level gender action plan (Green Climate Fund, 2019[17]). Currently, however, only 0.01% of all worldwide funding supports projects that address both climate change and women's rights (UNDP, 2016[18]).

While there is an increased awareness of the nexus between climate change and gender, the path towards achieving sustainable and inclusive development is still far from reach. In 2022, despite an increasing integration of a gender perspective in climate-related national plans and policies, nearly 60% of long-term low-emission development strategies continue to be gender-blind (UNFCCC Secretariat, 2022[19]). This chapter seeks to analyse three key areas connected to climate change and their gendered dimensions:

1. **Climate-resilient agriculture**, given women's significant role in agriculture, rural economies, and the creation of strong and resilient global food systems. As the global population continues to grow, the agricultural sector is crucial to decreasing food waste and ending extreme poverty and hunger.
2. **Disaster risk reduction**, as the growing toll of climate-related disasters and the need for readiness and risk management increases, women find themselves among the most impacted by such hazards.
3. **Renewable energies**, as women are the primary energy users and producers at the household level globally. They represent key actors in reducing emissions and shifting to sustainable energy sources and more productive energy uses – such as clean cooking, lighting and cooling.

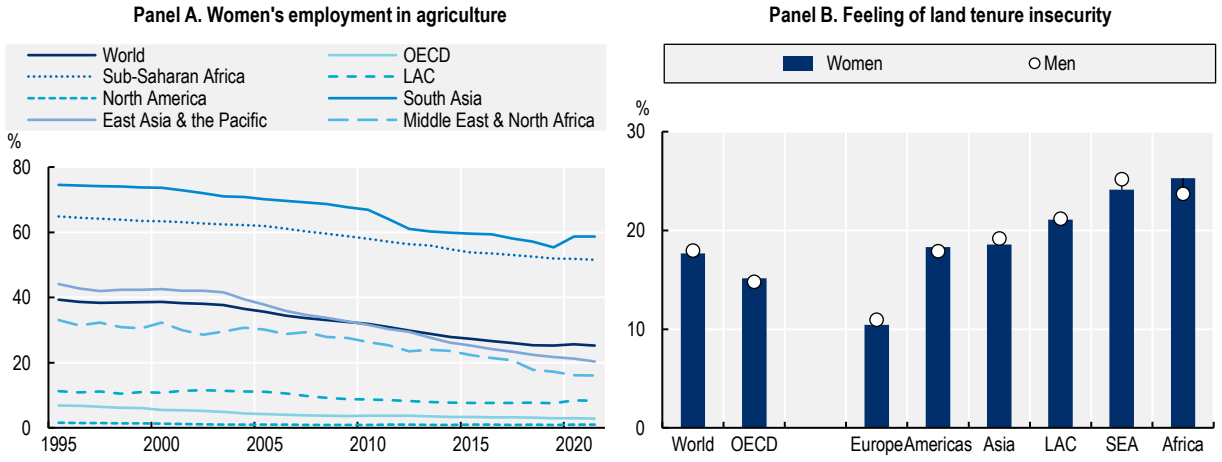
These three areas play crucial roles in mitigating the impacts of climate change and building resilience and capacity to adapt to its detrimental effects. Tackling the challenges created by climate change requires both a mitigation approach to address the causes of climate change and adaptation strategies to address its impacts. Incorporating a gender perspective in climate change policies and initiatives can ensure that the vulnerabilities of women are addressed and that their capacities and roles are strengthened to cope with the impacts of climate change. Analysing the nexus between gender and climate change in these three key areas is essential to identify and address gender inequalities that exacerbate climate change vulnerability, ensure the inclusion of women's needs and experiences in climate change policies, and promote women as agents of change in mitigating the effects of climate change.

Empowering women through climate-resilient agriculture

Around the world, women play significant roles in agriculture, rural economies and in building strong and resilient global food systems (Giner, Hobeika and Fischetti, 2022[20]). The agricultural sector remains one of the largest employers of women in developing countries. Globally, 25% of women's employment is in agriculture (Figure 4.1, Panel A). This percentage reaches peaks of 80% in Mozambique, 76% in Burkina Faso, 75% in South Sudan and Nepal, 74% in the Central African Republic and 72% in Madagascar (World Bank, 2022[21]). Women farmers contribute to all the stages of the agribusiness value chains, from the work in the field to the sale, processing and consumption of products (FAO, 2011[22]).

Figure 4.1. Many women are employed in agriculture and experience land tenure insecurity

Share of women employed in agriculture, 1995-2021 (Panel A) and share of men and women feeling land tenure insecurity (Panel B)



Note: LAC refers to Latin America and the Caribbean, and SEA refers to Southeast Asia. In Panel B, land tenure insecurity is calculated as the share of the population who believe it is likely that they could lose the right to use their property or part of it against their will in the next years. Data cover 140 countries.

Source: (World Bank, 2022[21]), "Employment in agriculture, female (% of female employment)", *World Development Indicators (WDI)* (database), https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.FE.ZS, and (Prindex, 2020[23]), Women's perception of tenure security: Evidence from 140 countries, https://www.prindex.net/reports/womens-perceptions-tenure-security-evidence-140-countries/.

StatLink https://stat.link/rc475s

Nevertheless, women's jobs in agriculture tend to be more precarious, and their working conditions are likely to be worse than men's (FAO, 2023[24]). In the agricultural sector, women are overrepresented in seasonal, informal, part-time and low-wage work and often do not have adequate access to work-based social protection schemes (ILO and FAO, 2021[25]). For instance, in 2022, 43% of women in the agricultural sector worked as contributing family workers compared to only 15% of men. Conversely, 14% and 65% of men working in the agricultural sector worked as employers or own-account workers respectively, compared to 8% and 47% of women (ILO, 2022[26]). Likewise, in OECD countries, women are less likely than men to own and administer a family business. On average, approximately 30% of farms in the European Union are supervised by a woman (Giner, Hobeika and Fischetti, 2022[20]). The gender gap in average wages in agriculture also remains a concern. In 2023, on average, women earn 18% less than men in wage employment in agriculture (FAO, 2023[24]). Women who are contributing family workers in the agricultural sector are less likely to receive remuneration than their male counterparts and they usually do not have access to workers' social security and pension rights. In addition, female contributing family workers might be overlooked from agricultural projects as they have limited decision-making power in major farming and agricultural activities (FAO, 2023[24]).

Climate change disproportionally affects women farmers and rural women due to structural gender inequalities and discriminatory social institutions (FAO, 2020[27]). Globally, women represent the majority of the world's poor and are more likely to depend on the availability of natural resources for securing food, water and fuel and for their agricultural work. Structural gender inequalities imply that women agricultural producers generally have limited access to land, financial services, labour, smart technologies, agricultural inputs, cooling services as well as social and institutional networks. Women also tend to have less diversified sources of employment and income. Discriminatory social norms and practices – such as

negative attitudes towards women's paid work outside the home or limited freedom of movement – further restrict women's agency and decision-making power over land and resources at the household level and in the economic sphere (see Chapter 2). For instance, women's unpaid care burden limits their ability to cope with, react to, adapt to and mitigate the negative effects of climate change (FAO, 2017[28]). Overall, these combined socio-economic barriers lead to women farmers being more exposed than their male counterparts to the effects of climate shocks, particularly smallholder women farmers (FAO, 2020[27]).

What are the differentiated effects of climate change on women in agriculture?

The adverse consequences of climate change increase the time that women and girls spend on unpaid care and domestic work and limit the time they could dedicate to their education or other activities. Globally, women dedicate 2.6 more time to unpaid care and domestic work than men (see Chapter 2). In low-income countries, women and girls are the main actors responsible for household water supply, homestead irrigation and energy supply for cooking and heating (UNIDO and UN Women, 2013[29]). Women farmers and rural women allocate a considerable proportion of their time to undertake various agricultural activities and household tasks simultaneously, often to the detriment of their productivity (Katila et al., 2019[30]). For instance, in 2016, women and girls spent 200 million hours walking every day to collect water for their households at the global level (UNICEF, 2016[31]). In this context, the effects of climate change on food security, access to clean water and other vital resources disproportionally affect women (OXFAM, 2022[32]). Water scarcity, droughts and depletion of forests would translate into longer walking distances for women and girls, having negative consequences on their health and even becoming dangerous activities. For instance, carrying heavy vessels of water for long periods of time can be dangerous for pregnant women (UN-Water, 2023[33]). In addition, as women walk increasingly long distances to find water and other resources, the risk of sexual assault increases (Soliman, Carlsson and Warren, 2022[34]).

Climate change is a significant factor that affects both food security and the livelihoods of women farmers and rural women. At the global level, although food production has doubled over the last three decades, the number of people affected by hunger has increased since 2014 (FAO et al., 2020[35]). The gap between men's and women's food security is growing globally. In 2021, 32% of women were moderately or severely food insecure compared to 28% of men – a gap of more than 4 percentage points, compared with 3 percentage points in 2020 (FAO et al., 2022[36]). Due to climate-related shocks, conflicts and insecurity affecting agricultural production, women farmers are also more vulnerable to the four dimensions of food security: availability, access, utilisation and stability. For instance, women farmers resort to extreme coping mechanisms such as reducing their food intake to feed their children, with consequences on their daily productivity, and may take on precarious and dangerous forms of agricultural work to increase their income (OXFAM, 2019[37]).

Climate-resilient agriculture (CRA) is crucial to achieving the SDGs (2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 15) by 2030, delivering food security to feed 9.7 billion people projected by 2050 and fostering inclusive development (OECD, 2021[12]; OECD, 2020[38]; United Nations, 2019[39]). Climate resilience refers to the ability of an agricultural system to forecast, prepare for, adapt to, absorb and recover from the effects and impacts of climate change and extreme weather events. CRA encompasses many practices such as climate-smart agriculture, biotechnology and agroecological approaches, as well as sustainable forest, fisheries and soil management (FAO, 2021[40]). As the global population continues to increase, the production of sustainable agriculture is key to ending extreme poverty, hunger and the worst forms of malnutrition at the global level. In 2018, agriculture accounted for 4% of global domestic product (GDP), and in some developing countries, it reached more than 25% of GDP (IDA, 2018[41]). In addition, sustainable agriculture contributes to inclusive economic growth. For example, small-scale farming that applies gender-smart solutions could enable more women to join the agricultural value chains (OECD and FAO, 2021[42]).

What systemic barriers limit women's capacity to adopt climate-resilient agriculture?

Weak land tenure disproportionally affects women and smallholder women farmers due to discriminatory laws and social norms in more than half of the world. Regardless of the land regime, tenure security for women is described as a situation where women can use or manage land predictably for an established timeframe (Doss and Meinzen-Dick, 2018[43]). Discriminatory formal and informal laws undercut women's ownership and management of agricultural land (UNFCCC Secretariat, 2022[44]). Women are often denied fundamental human rights such as the right to own the land they cultivate and to manage and take decisions over land. For example, in Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Niger and Sudan, wives do not have the same rights as their husbands to own land. In 11 countries[1] out of 178, married women do not have the same rights as their husbands to use land and 36 countries[2] do not provide daughters with the same rights as sons to inherit (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[45]). Customary laws may also undermine existing statutory laws and may prevent women from inheriting, acquiring, using, managing and/or owning land.

Land tenure security is not only based on the legal recognition of ownership and management of assets. Perceived tenure security is gaining considerable attention as an important behavioural incentive (Murken and Gornott, 2022[46]). In 2020, perception data from 140 countries revealed that 487 million women considered it likely or very likely that they would have to forcibly leave their land or property in the next five years (Figure 4.1, Panel B). A greater proportion of women than men were concerned about relinquishing their property rights after divorce or during widowhood. Among the respondents to the survey, almost 48% of married women in sub-Saharan Africa reported feeling insecure about their property rights in the context of divorce, compared to 34% of married men (Prindex, 2020[23]).

Land tenure insecurity hinders women's adaptive capacity and limits their ability to adopt CRA approaches and innovations. This, in turn, increases their vulnerability to the effects of climate change (IPCC, 2022[47]). It compels women farmers and rural women to adopt negative coping strategies such as reducing their food consumption, temporarily migrating or engaging in non-agricultural activities in response to climate change effects (Dibakoane, Siyongwana and Shabalala, 2022[48]; Feyertag, 2022[49]). Unsustainable coping mechanisms often induce desertification, erosion and land deterioration, with impacts on the ecological environment. Studies in Ethiopia and Uganda have revealed that individuals who have secure land rights and tenure are more likely to use and invest in soil conservation approaches to prevent land erosion (Deininger and Ayalew, 2008[50]; Deininger and Jin, 2006[51]). Research on the links between agricultural innovation and women farmers conducted in Africa showed that women do not have adequate incentives to adopt soil management methods on their parcels due to the possibility of losing their assets and investments. This, in turn, makes women farmers more exposed and vulnerable to the negative consequences and risks of climate change (Doss, 2001[52]).

Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) innovations have the potential to significantly address and mitigate the impacts of climate change. However, the adoption of these innovations is hindered by gender-based discrimination, particularly affecting women in agricultural systems (Giner, Hobeika and Fischetti, 2022[20]; IFPRI, 2019[53]). CSA encompasses various climate-friendly techniques and solutions, including water irrigation systems, solar energy, dry-seeded crops, and soil conservation measures. The approach is built upon three interconnected pillars: i) improving agricultural output and earnings, ii) enhancing resilience to climate change, and iii) reducing greenhouse gas emissions (Lipper et al., 2018[54]). However, the main factors required for CSA – human, financial, and social capital – are unevenly distributed among different socio-demographic groups in agriculture. In general, women farmers are particularly disadvantaged compared to men farmers in the adoption of the CSA innovations due to unequal power dynamics (Mwesigye, Guloba and Barungi, 2019[55]). Despite possessing valuable knowledge and expertise in sustainable agricultural practices, indigenous women often face intersecting forms of discrimination based on both their gender and indigenous identity (CIF, 2021[56]).

Lack of information, awareness, education and skills related to means of production and technology restricts women farmers from implementing CSA innovations. For instance, limited access to climate information services further hampers women's capacities to adopt and manage climate-related risks. Recent data reveal that women farmers do not have access to timely weather and climate information, which in turn reduces the effectiveness of the adoption of CSA practices (Partey et al., 2018[57]). Likewise, successful uptake of CSA demands technical expertise, such as proper selection and use of herbicides and insecticides. This knowledge of and access to improved seeds often require enrolment in co-operatives or farmers' associations. Nonetheless, women farmers are less likely to have durable networks outside of their communities and are rarely perceived as equal members of co-operatives. To address these shortcomings, some countries, such as Greece, have set up a framework for women-led farmers' cooperatives to support their agricultural activities (OECD, 2022[58]).

Furthermore, women's lack of access to financial resources and credit is one of the main constraints that explain women farmers' limited uptake of agricultural technologies. Access to flexible credit lines can support low-income women, particularly smallholder farmers, boost their investments in innovative and clean technologies and encourage the adoption of CRA practices (UN Women, 2021[59]). Access to credit provides women farmers with more options to invest in agricultural inputs (e.g. quality seeds, fertilisers, solar systems) and enhance their productivity (UN Women, 2021[59]; Nyasimi et al., 2014[60]). Nevertheless, many women smallholders lack access to the assets or the financial services – sometimes even the knowledge to use such services – that would allow them to invest in enhancing their resilience to climate change. Many women agricultural producers work in remote areas and are less likely to benefit from loans or programmes from formal financial institutions as they often require land titles, statutory proof of identity and collateral to receive a credit application (FAO, 2017[61]).

Discriminatory social norms that confine women to domestic roles have a significant impact on their access to knowledge, capacity-building opportunities, and technology adaptation trainings, which are crucial for mitigating the effects of climate change. These norms create barriers that hinder women's empowerment and their active participation in various aspects of agricultural development. At the global level, rural women work on average 16 hours per day, combining both unpaid care and domestic work and income-generating activities (FAO, IFAD and World Bank, 2015[62]). Women's unpaid care and domestic work burden exacerbates their time poverty, which limits the hours women and girls can dedicate to learning, working and investing in income-generating activities as sellers, employers or employees, or taking on leadership positions in agricultural cooperatives (Huot et al., 2023[63]). It can also hinder their ability to access and benefit from services and social networks such as rural co-operatives and organisations (FAO, 2023[24]).

Traditional gender roles and stereotypes that exclude women farmers from decision-making processes at the household and public levels limit women's ability to take actions to combat the effects of climate change on their farms and in their communities. In general, particularly in developing countries, women farmers have less decision-making power than male farmers when it comes to critical assets such as land, livestock, credit, and farm equipment and tools (Quisumbing et al., 2013[64]). Yet, the adoption of climate-resilient agricultural practices is intrinsically linked with women's ability to take decisions regarding all these resources on the farmland. Studies have revealed that women farmers with greater decision-making power in agriculture are more likely to adopt CSA practices than those with reduced decisional power (Shahbaz et al., 2022[65]). Likewise, in Bangladesh, evidence concluded that women who have equal participation in decision-making processes at the household level are more likely to cultivate a larger variety of crops, which in turn, reduces the risk that climate change poses to food security and nutrition (De Pinto et al., 2020[66]).

Gender biases and gender-blind approaches at the institutional level pose significant challenges for women farmers in strengthening their leadership skills and sharing their knowledge in various agricultural and governance bodies such as cooperatives, associations, and land committees. For instance, a study in Ethiopia concluded that women farmers face limited access to extension services and training opportunities, as these resources are predominantly provided to men and male-headed households

(Lecoutere, 2017[67]). Even when women farmers can participate in cooperatives or farmers' organisations, the impact on household dynamics and the equal division of labour and domestic tasks may be limited (Lecoutere, 2017[67]). Additionally, in some regions, rural cooperatives and farmers' organisations may not even exist, further exacerbating the challenges faced by women farmers. The absence of these social networks and structures deprives both women and men farmers of opportunities to collectively acquire agricultural inputs, access markets, and leverage their collective bargaining power.

Strengthening women's roles in climate-resilient agriculture is a key way forward

It is crucial to highlight the role of women farmers and smallholders as key agents of change in shifting towards climate-resilient agriculture. They are active members in co-operatives, producer organisations and rural committees. Their knowledge is an invaluable source and should be used to guide the implementation of climate-resilient agriculture, as well as adaptation and mitigation measures more generally. Among others, women have expertise in local crops, plants and trees and have a comprehensive knowledge of traditional, sustainable, and local farming and agricultural practices (FAO, 2017[61]).

The multiple impacts of climate change on women farmers' livelihoods require to accelerate gender mainstreaming and call for an institutional shift in agricultural policies, strategies, and development plans. The pace of adopting gender mainstreaming in agricultural programming and policies has been slow, and concrete changes have not yet been fully realised at the institutional, national, and local levels. It is important to recognise that gender mainstreaming efforts alone may not automatically lead to sustainable change in the lives of women farmers at household and public levels. The integration of a gender-transformative approach in agriculture has sometimes been considered as a technical fix without necessarily tackling the root causes of gender inequalities, social exclusion and gaps within the agricultural and rural sectors (Verma, 2014[68]). To ensure meaningful and sustainable change, it is crucial to embrace a gender-transformative approach throughout all phases of the policy-making process (Schiebinger, 2014[69]).

In order to build CRA in the advent of climate change, gender mainstreaming should include clear identification of the differentiated needs of women regarding their capacities, priorities and roles. Gender mainstreaming should be also accompanied and supported by adequate budgetary allocations. In addition, funds and investments in climate information services should be accessible and user-friendly for women agricultural producers. Among the key barriers stand the lack of technical expertise and the limited awareness of existing actions aimed at supporting women smallholders and climate change adaptation and mitigation (Howland, Le Coq and Acosta, 2019[70]). To guarantee and foster women's uptake of CSA practices and innovations, it is essential to eliminate discriminatory social norms and practices concerning women's role in agriculture and their adoption of innovations and technologies (FAO, 2017[61]). More generally, agricultural policies and programmes should address harmful social norms against women and girls, discriminatory attitudes and unequal power dynamics at all levels of society.

Policy recommendations: Towards gender-transformative agricultural measures in climate action

Governments and development partners face a unique chance to fast-track the road to climate action by incorporating and mainstreaming gender into their agricultural initiatives, policies, actions, strategies and plans at all levels. A gender-transformative approach to climate change is based on a holistic system that focuses on the economic, political, ecological and cultural causes of vulnerability of different groups. These measures are generally targeted to shift power relations shaped by discriminatory social norms and practices and to empower women so that they have a greater capacity to adapt, mitigate and strengthen their resilience to the effects of climate change.

Shifting normative frameworks to guarantee women's land rights on equal footing with men

- Governments should close legal loopholes in women's land rights and tenure to ensure women's and men's equal access to, ownership of, use of and decision-making power over the land.

> *In 2022, the Government of Sierra Leone adopted the Customary Land Act and the Land Commission Act which granted equal rights for men and women to own and use land. Both laws aim to promote gender equality and guarantee that married couples can jointly register land ownership (Government of Somalia, 2022[71]).*

- Governments should harmonise customary laws with national laws in line with international human rights commitments (e.g. CEDAW) to strengthen women's land tenure and ensure the effective enforcement of the law.
- Governments should make use of other legal tools to protect women's land rights such as joint titling, providing equal inheritance rights and recognising female heads of households.
- Governments and stakeholders should carry out public information and outreach campaigns on legal land reforms. Sensitisation programmes and advocacy efforts are critical to shifting discriminatory attitudes in the use and management of land.

> *To bridge the gap between legal frameworks and local practices on women's land rights, the World Bank, Landesa Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) Partners, UN-Habitat, Habitat for Humanity, the Huairou Commission, together with local women's organisations at the global level launched a global advocacy campaign entitled "Stand for Her Land" (Stand for Her Land, 2023[72]).*

Designing capacity-building programmes that reach women farmers and enhance their adaption capacities

- Stakeholders should design adequate incentives such as financial grants and technical support to encourage women farmers to proactively invest ex-ante in risk prevention and mitigation measures and preparedness to face the adverse effects of climate change on agriculture.
- Stakeholders should ensure that training on the adoption of CSA technologies is accessible and affordable to women farmers, as well as tailored to their educational and technical knowledge. Programmes and initiatives should be adapted to the local and agroecological context and result from participatory processes so the direct users of the innovations can evaluate the advantages and disadvantages.

> *The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research implemented a programme in India to work with women-led organizations to strengthen their capacity to adopt climate-smart agricultural technologies and innovations and to access climate information services. Furthermore, the programme prioritised the involvement of women's self-help groups and enhanced women's agency and voice (Huyer, 2021[73]).*

Allocating financial resources and investments towards women farmers

- Stakeholders should re-direct and prioritise climate finance, investments and funding towards the most marginalised and impacted groups – including indigenous, rural and poor women – in the most affected geographic regions by the impacts of climate change.
- Climate finance should in particular ensure long-lasting support to women's cooperatives, associations and feminist networks, which strengthen women's voice and role as agricultural producers.
- The private sector should shift from a traditional approach to financing, based on collateral loans, to one that handles risks and leverages innovative sources of guarantees (moveable assets, such as livestock, machinery and tools). Alternative distribution channels that use mobile

banking and mobile phone payments can also be very effective to reach women farmers living in rural and remote areas. Policies need to unlock access to data for farmers and support the objectives in emerging markets to reduce trade barriers to digital infrastructure, promote policies for infrastructure sharing, and avoid taking the digital ecosystem as a tax collection tool but as a social inclusion one.

> *In 2018, E-Granary, a digital platform which delivers financial services to smallholder farmers was launched in Uganda and Rwanda. The mobile platform employs alternative collateral/ mechanisms such as group guarantees for credit access to enable women farmers to access credit lines and financial services (E-granary, 2023[74]).*

- Stakeholders should further support and encourage women to join women farmer's organisations, including grassroots, forest and farm producers' organisations and cooperatives to build community climate resilience. Social structures and groups are particularly important to access data, resources and economic opportunities needed to address the effects of climate change.

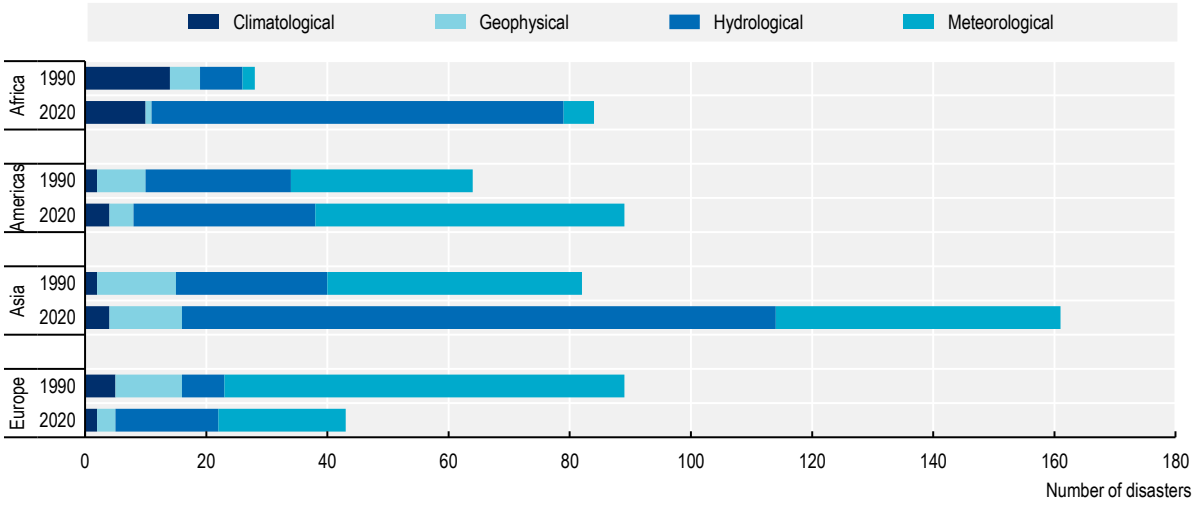
Making disaster risk reduction gender inclusive to enhance women's resilience

Climate change is leading to an increase in the frequency and intensity of various climate-related disasters. Rising global average temperatures (Hansen et al., 2020[75]) contribute to the extreme weather events such as heatwaves, droughts, flooding, winter storms, hurricanes and wildfires. Over the last 20 years, more than 7 000 disasters have been recorded worldwide. These events have claimed approximately 1.23 million lives, affected over 4 billion people, and led to global economic losses of nearly USD 3 trillion (UNDRR and CRED, 2020[76]). These numbers will only increase in the future.

Climate-related disasters can take different forms. Worldwide, floods are the most common type of disaster, accounting for 44% of total events considered. Storms are the second most common, accounting for 28% of events worldwide. Droughts and wildfires account for 5% and 3% of total events respectively (UNDRR and CRED, 2020[76]). Geophysical disasters, such as earthquakes and volcanic activity, make up a total of 9% of all events, the majority of which are earthquakes (Figure 4.2). Overall, the number of disasters between 2000 and 2020 reached an average of 367 recorded events per year (UNDRR and CRED, 2020[76]), representing an increase by a factor of 5 over the last 50 years (WMO, 2021[77]).

Figure 4.2. Climate-related disasters have been increasing steadily since 1990, specifically in Africa and Asia

Number of climate-related disasters, 1990 and 2020



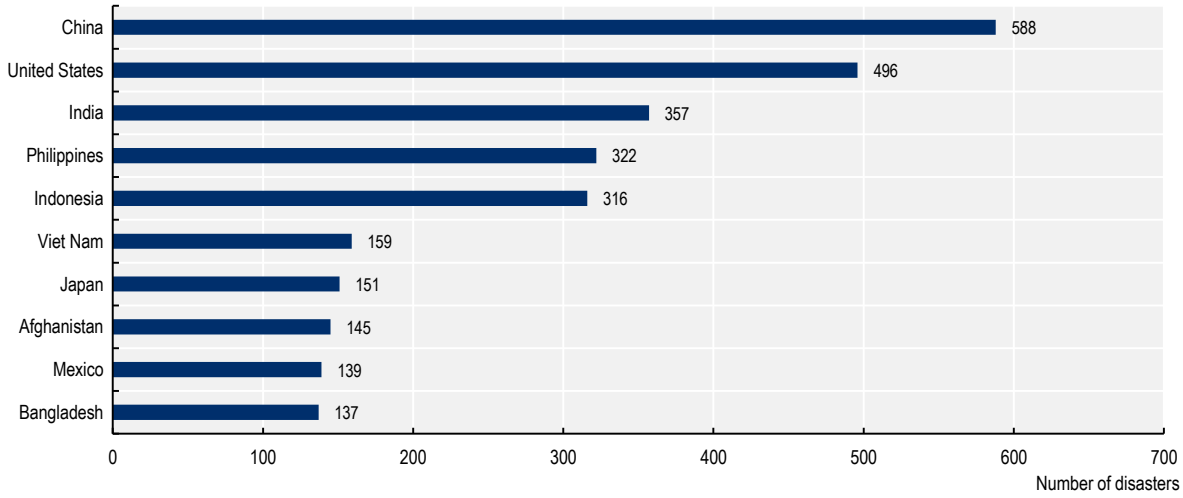
Note: Climatological events include droughts and forest and land fires. Geophysical events include earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic activity and mass movement. Hydrological events include floods, landslides and wave action. Meteorological events include storms and extreme temperatures.
Source: (EM-DAT, 2023[78]), EM-DAT Public, https://public.emdat.be.

StatLink https://stat.link/ie3uv2

Climate-related disasters affect certain regions and countries more than others. Between 2000 and 2019, Asia suffered the highest number of disaster events. In total, there were 3 068 events in Asia, followed by 1 756 in the Americas and 1 192 in Africa (UNDRR and CRED, 2020[76]). The most affected countries in this period have been China and the United States (Figure 4.3). Overall, eight of the top ten countries affected by disaster events are in Asia. There are notable differences between the types of events experienced by these countries. For example, 30% of disasters in Indonesia are geophysical events, and 65% are hydrological events. In contrast, in Viet Nam, 52% of events are hydrological, and 45% are meteorological. China and India account for over 2.8 billion disaster-affected people between 2000 and 2019, approximately 70% of the global total (UNDRR and CRED, 2020[76]).

Figure 4.3. China and the United States were the most affected countries by climate-related disasters between 2000 and 2020

Number of climate-related disasters, 2000-20



Source: (EM-DAT, 2023[78]), EM-DAT Public, https://public.emdat.be.

StatLink https://stat.link/kqh6gv

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies and programmes can help countries cope with climate-related disasters. DRR is about identifying, assessing and reducing the risk of disasters which is important to strengthen resilience and mitigate exposure of the affected communities (UNESCO, 2023[79]; UNDRR and CRED, 2020[76]). The prevention of and preparation for disasters can alleviate the burden left in their aftermath and are critical to minimise the impact on human lives, infrastructure and economic activity.

DRR is crucial to achieving the SDGs. Target 5 of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) aims to "significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected by disasters" by 2030 (United Nations, 2023[80]). In this context, the main global protocol regulating DRR is the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, an international agreement adopted in 2015 which aims to reduce disaster risk and minimise the damage caused by natural and human-induced hazards. The Sendai Framework also includes implementing measures to reduce communities' vulnerability to disasters and increase their resilience, as well as improving early warning systems and access to information about risks and hazards (UNDRR, 2015[16]). Due to the gendered impacts of climate change, the Sendai Framework also recognises the importance of integrating a gender perspective into all DRR policies and practices and the need to empower women and promote a more equitable and universally accessible response, recovery and reconstruction (UNDRR, 2023[81]).

What are the differentiated impacts and consequences of climate-related disasters on women and girls?

Climate disasters are not gender neutral. They affect men and women differently, mainly due to the distinct gender roles that men and women have historically assumed. Socio-economic factors, cultural norms and traditional practices are the root causes of the inequality between women, girls, men and boys and determine the gendered impact of climate-related disasters. When disasters strike, women and children are 14 times more likely to die than men (UNHCHR, 2022[5]; CARE International, 2014[82]). For instance, of the 230 000 people killed in the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, 70% were women (Okai, 2022[83]). During

the heatwaves that erupted across Europe in 2003, the excess of deaths for women was 75% higher than that for men in France (Fouillet et al., 2006[84]). When cyclone Gorky hit Bangladesh in 1991, 90% of the fatalities were women. Research conducted following the cyclone highlighted that gender roles and norms played a significant role in the difference in evacuation decisions and limited women's mobility during the event (Ayeb-Karlsson, 2020[85]).

Women and girls are subject to indirect impacts that arise in the aftermath of disasters, such as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), early and forced marriages, loss of livelihood, reduced access to education, deterioration in sexual and reproductive health, and increased workload, all of which compound the gender-specific impacts of disasters. For example, a needs assessment conducted by Mercy Corps in Karamoja, Uganda, revealed that harmful practices, including domestic violence, child marriage, statutory rape and female genital mutilation or cutting, spike during droughts and prolonged dry spells (GFDRR et al., 2020[86]). Likewise, in 2005, SGBV against women increased in the areas of the United States affected by Hurricane Katrina (Anastario, Lawry and Shehab, 2009[87]). Risks of SGBV are particularly acute in displacement contexts as displaced women often have to reside in congested evacuation centres and informal settlements (UNHCHR, 2022[5]). According to a 2011 joint study of the United Nations International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development and the Centre for International Climate and Environmental Research, the trafficking of girls and women and other forms of SGBV have considerably grown due to disasters in Southern Asia (Desai and Mandal, 2021[88]). Child marriage rates also spike in the aftermath of a disaster. Evidence from different countries and regions struck by climate disasters, such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Kenya, shows that child marriage is often seen as a means to cope with the economic consequences of these events by securing funds or assets (UNFCCC Secretariat, 2022[44]).

In addition, climate-related disasters increase women's unpaid care and domestic work. Discriminatory social norms confine women to their role of primary caretakers of the household (see Chapter 2). In developing countries, it translates into women being mainly tasked with gathering firewood for cooking and fetching water for daily use. The impact of climate change on food security, access to clean water, health and the difficulties with securing resources escalate during climate shocks, further augmenting women's time spent on unpaid care and domestic work (Hu, 2022[89]). Increasing women's unpaid care work translates into further losses of opportunities, impacting their income and education prospects and exacerbating existing inequalities and unbalanced power relations with men. These difficulties are further compounded by the fact that women are also more vulnerable to the economic impacts of climate disasters, as they are often employed in sectors that are more exposed to climate risks, such as agriculture, or in vulnerable forms of employment such as the informal sector, which account for 58% of employed women globally (ILO, 2018[90]).

Furthermore, climate-related disasters weaken the capacity of health systems and hinder access to SRHR services. The impacts of climate change are linked to some components of SRHR more than others. There is strong evidence analysing how climate change results in negative maternal health outcomes and an overall lack of access to SRHR services, which are crucial for women's and children's well-being (UNFPA, 2021[91]). When health facilities and supply chains are put in jeopardy, there is a negative impact on access to and quality of SRH services, such as maternal and newborn health assistance, emergency contraception and safe abortion services as well as menstrual hygiene products (Women Deliver, 2021[92]). For example, a study in Bangladesh showed that increasing incidences of flooding have led to low stocks of contraceptives at health facilities in rural and remote areas (Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women, 2014[93]). Climate change also has a strong and direct impact on maternal mortality. Rising temperatures, more frequent heat waves and droughts, and heavy rainfall affect food and water security and impede women's access to safe and clean drinking water (Harville, Xiong and Buekens, 2010[94]). This is particularly problematic for pregnant women, as water requirements increase with gestational age (Zhang et al., 2020[95]). Similarly, nutrient deficiencies caused by food insecurity and undernutrition among pregnant women can affect pregnancy, nursing and newborn outcomes and lead to low-weight births, miscarriages and perinatal mortality (UNICEF, 2022[96]).

Many barriers fuel gender inequality before and after disasters

Differences in access to resources and decision-making power between men and women have a significant impact on how they prepare for and respond to disasters (Ciampi et al., 2011[97]). Poverty plays a critical role in determining a person's capacity to cope with disasters (UNDRR, 2023[98]). Factors such as poor housing, farms and settlements in unsafe and remote locations, limited resources, less robust coping strategies, and inadequate access to information mean that both women and men living in poverty are disproportionately affected by the impacts of natural disasters and experience slower recovery (UNDRR, 2023[98]). However, structural discrimination that affects women's lives, such as lower salaries and pensions, unequal access to resources, discriminatory legal frameworks, and limited decision-making power, results in higher rates of poverty among women compared to men (UN Women, 2000[99]). This feminisation of poverty not only increases women's risks of transmitting intergenerational poverty but also renders them even more vulnerable to the impacts of natural disasters (McLanahan and Kelly, 2006[100]).

Different hierarchies at the household level strongly impact women's capacity to cope with disasters. Unequal access to inheritance and household finances, limited decision-making power and restricted mobility for women and girls all affect their access to post-disaster assistance and compensation for losses and damages. For instance, in the aftermath of the 2010 flooding in Pakistan, discriminatory familial restrictions required women to be accompanied by a male guardian, severely limiting their access to conventionally delivered aid, such as food assistance, medical services (including SRH services), and sometimes even their access to toilets (GFDRR et al., 2020[86]). Additionally, many women also lacked proof of identity, which further hindered their eligibility to receive assistance from relief schemes (UNDRR and CRED, 2020[76]).

These hierarchical gender roles observed at the household level are reflected at the national and political levels. Women face significant barriers to direct participation and effective influence in politics, spanning from the household to community, national, regional and international levels (Nelleman, Verma and Hislop, 2011[6]). For instance, in many countries, women are obliged by law to obey their husbands and do not have the same rights to be head of the household (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[45]). The traditional roles assigned to women as mothers and housewives further reinforce these inequalities and hinder their engagement in public and political spheres. Consequently, women's involvement in DRR management, policy development and their recognition as essential stakeholders in disaster response and recovery stages are significantly impacted.

The ability to save money and access a bank account is also crucial for building resilience to climate-related disasters and serves as a key element in households' coping and recovery mechanisms during and after such events. A study conducted in Ghana shows that, following the 2015 flood, 43% of affected households relied on their savings as the primary way of coping (Erman et al., 2020[101]). While legal discrimination regarding women's rights to open a bank account has been eliminated (only three out of 178 countries still impose such restrictions), gender gaps persist. Globally, only 67% of women own an account at a financial institution, compared to 72% of men (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[45]). Bank loans and insurance also serve as means for households to recover economically from the impact of disasters. However, due to prevalent discriminatory legal frameworks in many countries, women do not enjoy the same rights as men to inherit or own land and non-land assets (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[45]). This impedes women's ability to recover, as they often lack the assets and collateral required to access formal sources of finance and obtain loans.

The lack of access to information further perpetuates gender inequality and hampers the effectiveness of DRR and mitigation efforts. In some countries, warning information is primarily disseminated through mass media channels that may not be accessible to all individuals or designed with women in mind. Additionally, vulnerable individuals, particularly women and marginalised groups in rural or isolated areas, may lack access to technology, communication and services or possess lower levels of literacy, resulting in potential gaps in accessing critical information (Pudmenzky et al., 2022[102]). A study carried out in Nepal revealed

that 71% of men received early warning information through formal sources such as government or non-governmental organisations, whereas 51% of women obtained information through informal social sources such as word of mouth from community or family members (Pudmenzky et al., 2022[102]). These vulnerabilities are further exacerbated in countries with diverse language-speaking or indigenous groups, as the lack of information in local languages creates barriers in accessing and comprehending essential information (UNDRR and UN Women, 2022[103]). Moreover, women are often discouraged from learning crucial coping strategies and lifesaving skills, such as climbing trees or swimming (Nelleman, Verma and Hislop, 2011[6]). A study conducted in the Philippines shows that 87% of men know how to swim, while only 51% of women possessed this skill (Hunter et al., 2015[104]). This disparity may stem from cultural norms that steer girls towards engaging in different cultural and recreational activities that may not include sports, which is often perceived as more masculine.

Building women's resilience to climate-related disasters is essential

Post-disaster contexts bring forth diverse challenges for women, but it is important to recognise that they are not just victims. Substantial evidence demonstrates that women are powerful agents of change during and after disasters. For instance, in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch that devastated Honduras and Nicaragua in 1998, women took the initiative in organising disaster recovery efforts, actively participating in tasks such as hauling cement, constructing temporary shelters and latrines, and engaging in governance initiatives and working to restore livelihoods (GFDRR et al., 2020[86]). Indigenous women also play a crucial role in developing, applying, transmitting, and preserving traditional knowledge that enhances community resilience in extreme weather events (UNDRR, 2023[105]).

To promote more effective and inclusive disaster preparedness, response, and recovery, governments and international organisations need to understand and address social norms that impact DRR. This entails working with communities to challenge harmful norms and foster positive behaviours that reduce risks and enhance resilience. Empowering women and girls can support gender-equitable disaster risk reduction, while promoting social inclusion can ensure that vulnerable groups are better equipped to cope with and recover from disasters. DRR efforts can be strengthened to create more resilient and inclusive societies by recognising women as agents of change and addressing social norms.

Policy recommendations: Towards building resilience to climate-related disasters

Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by climate change-induced disasters. Due to discriminatory social institutions, women experience higher losses of lives and livelihoods during and in the aftermath of disasters. In every aspect of their lives, from life expectancy to education, housing, health, safety, job security and nutrition, women and girls are impacted more severely than men. Yet, women are excluded from shaping disaster risk reduction and resilient policies, strategies and programmes. Therefore, it is crucial to include women in policy- and decision-making institutions, in the dialogue on adaptation to climate change, and in the governance of natural resources.

Policy makers and stakeholders should commit to implementing the following measures to reduce the gendered impacts of climate-related disasters.

Create national and international mechanisms of communication and consultation to engage with the women and men affected by climate-related disasters

- Governments should consult with civil society organisations and local communities to include women and men equally in identifying and prioritising areas of intervention in disaster risk

reduction strategies (such as roundtables, focus groups and participatory discussions) in line with Point 5 of the UNDP 10-Point Action Agenda (UNDP, 2022[106]).

- Governments should ensure women's and men's equal access to climate-related disasters early warning systems based on better use of more varied means of communication that do not isolate the more vulnerable parts of the population.

> *Oxfam in Pakistan ("Sustainable livelihoods and disaster risk reduction" program) created a women's relief committee, supported by men, to select criteria for targeting beneficiaries, identifying vulnerable households, and allocating food rations in the event of a climate-related disaster. It also distributed wireless telephone sets to the most vulnerable women in the community to include them in early warning information systems (Ciampi et al., 2011[97]).*

Remove legal barriers and address discriminatory social norms leading to gender inequality in climate-related disasters

- Governments should set 18 as the minimum age for marriage without any exceptions as recommended by the CRC and CEDAW to protect girls in the aftermath of disasters from forced marriage.
- Governments should amend laws that establish men as head of the household and collaborate with civil society organisations and traditional/community leaders to produce edutainment programmes to challenge discriminatory social norms that confine women to the household.

> *In Bangladesh, a community awareness programme was launched in 2017 through girls' radio clubs by the Coastal Association for Social Transformation Trust. 40 radio clubs now provide information to over 500.000 listeners in the Bay of Bengal about women's and girls' rights, reproductive health, domestic violence and child marriage, as well as ways to adapt and prepare for the effects of climate change (COAST Foundation, 2023[107]).*

Protect women and children from physical and psychological harm in the aftermath of disasters

- Governments should close legal loopholes and enact laws to protect women and girls from SGBV, child marriage, FGM/C, and economic and psychosocial harm.
- Governments should invest in social support structures and support women's organisations and CSOs that protect women from SGBV.
- Governments, in the aftermath of disasters, should work rapidly on the strengthening and restoring of SGBV and protection services, implementing shock-responsive safety net projects for women and children.

> *In the aftermath of Cyclones Yasa and Ana in Fiji, twelve Women-Friendly Spaces were established by UNFPA to provide a safe space for women and girls to access psychosocial support and related services for survivors of GBV. These spaces also offer women and girls access to SRH services, information and commodities. In addition, "Dignity Kits" were distributed to women and girls, containing hygiene and sanitary items (UNFPA, 2023[108]).*

Establish a strategy for managing the financial impacts of disasters, comprising a gender perspective

- Governments, along with the Ministry of Finance and of the Environment, should allocate the necessary resources to ensure sufficient institutional capacity and expertise for the assessment of disaster risks and the relative costs and benefits and address special financial support for female farmers impacted by climate disasters.
- Governments, along with the Minister of Finance, should foresee public compensation and financial insurance to provide timely, targeted, and inclusive assistance for the losses stemming

from climate-related disasters for the most vulnerable parts of the population (e.g. women farmers, indigenous women).

Develop gender-transformative recovery plans and policies

- Governments should institutionalise quota systems to enhance gender parity in DRR decision-making processes, policies, and interventions.

> *In Uganda, the World Bank and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) are supporting the government to strengthen the financial resilience of the most vulnerable parts of the population through a social protection project that provides employment through public works projects and direct cash transfers to households without able-bodied members. This project requires that at least 40% of the public works projects' participants are women and implements gender-responsive measures to ensure that the selected activities are located close to villages and appropriately meet the needs of women (GFDRR et al., 2020[86]).*

- Governments should develop and prioritise recovery plans and policies that include the diverse needs and capacities of all women, men, girls and boys in the context of climate-related disasters.

> *Following the increase in climate-related disasters, the Government of the Philippines in 2009 passed two laws that establish a legal basis for gender mainstreaming in climate change and DRR policies. The 2009 Climate Change Act recognises women as a vulnerable group and requires the application of a gender lens for climate change plans and programmes (Government of the Philippines, 2009[109]). In addition, the 2010 Philippines Disaster Reduction and Management Act states that the government must "ensure that disaster risk reduction and climate change measures are gender-responsive." The law also institutionalises gender analysis in early recovery and requires the inclusion of the Gender Development Office on newly formed Local Disaster Risk Reduction Management Committees (Government of the Philippines, 2010[110]).*

- Governments should work with grassroots, civil society and women's organisations which have the insights, information, experiences, networks, and resources crucial to increasing disaster resilience.

Empowering women as agents of change in the renewable energy sector

Evidence shows that fossil fuels, such as coal, oil and gas, are responsible for 75% of global greenhouse gas emissions, and almost 90% of all carbon dioxide emissions, and they are not infinite resources (SEI et al., 2019[111]). In developing countries, cooking is still largely based on traditional modes that are detrimental to climate change. Overuse of wood fuel for cooking also contributes to deforestation, land degradation and desertification, all of which increase the risk of climate change (OECD, 2021[12]; Boskovic et al., 2018[112]). Globally, greenhouse gas emissions from forest degradation, that come from wood fuel harvest, amount to about 30% (Clean Cooking Alliance, 2022[113]). As a result of burning biomass and residential solid fuel combustion, Africa, Asia and Latin America contribute to about 88% of global black carbon emissions,[3] which directly contribute to global warming (Climate & Clean Air Coalition, 2023[114]).

The gendered dimension of energy is dual. On the one hand, because of traditional gender roles, women are the primary users of energy within the household and are often the primary providers in developing or low-income contexts where households continue to rely on biomass sources for their cooking needs. This disproportionate exposure to unclean sources of energy has deep implications on their unpaid care and domestic work burden as well as on their health. Moreover, climate change tends to heighten these adverse effects. Overall, although many women are affected by the energy poverty phenomenon both in developing and developed countries, the challenges they face differ. In more advanced economies, the issue of affordability of energy is the main preoccupation, whereas in less advanced economies issues

revolve around energy availability, access and reliability (OECD, 2021[12]). On the other hand, women remain largely disempowered in the renewable energy sector, which constitutes one of the main pathways to reduce global emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change. Women face a number of barriers that prevent them from being involved in the sector and from fully participating in decisions related to the development and deployment of innovative projects.

The widespread use of unclean energy and lack of access to electricity has disproportionate impacts on women

The use of unclean sources of energy substantially impacts women's unpaid care and domestic workload. Globally, more than 2.5 billion people still do not have access to clean cooking, and 770 million people lack access to electricity – mainly in Africa and Asia (IEA, 2022[115]). In developing countries and low socio-economic contexts, this lack of access to electricity translates into the need to collect energy sources such as firewood, animal dung, crop waste and charcoal (The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2020[116]). Because traditional gender roles and practices in the household confine women to domestic roles (see Chapter 2), women and girls bear the brunt of this additional unpaid care and domestic workload. These activities are both time consuming and physically demanding (The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2021[117]). Moreover, intersecting characteristics such as living in rural, remote or conflict-affected areas can further exacerbate the energy poverty phenomenon. For example, in West Africa, while the average electrification rate is nearly 76% in urban areas, it drops to 29% in rural areas (Gafa and Egbendewe, 2021[118]).

Climate change further exacerbates women's burden of unpaid care and domestic work that result from collecting water or biomass for energy purposes. Drought and land degradation induced by climate change often means that women have to walk longer distances to collect water or firewood. The increase of their burden of unpaid care and domestic work further reduces women's and girls' participation in income-generating activities, as well as their educational opportunities (UNCCD, 2022[119]).

Moreover, women's use of unclean sources of energy in the household, notably for cooking purposes, exposes them to severe negative health effects. Collecting biomass for energy purposes or water are physically demanding tasks which can put women at risk of injury, for example while collecting heavy loads of fuel (Haddad et al., 2021[120]). Furthermore, the long and sometimes arduous journeys to gather these resources can expose women to various forms of violence, including physical assault, sexual harassment, and rape (Haddad et al., 2021[120]; WHO, 2016[121]). Using open fires or inefficient stoves fuelled by kerosene, biomass and coal also lead to high concentrations of polluted fumes in the household, which disproportionately impacts women. In 2012, women and girls accounted for six out of every ten premature deaths due to household air pollution (UN Women, 2018[122]). Unclean fuels and inefficient technologies also affect other family members. Estimates suggest that half of all premature deaths caused by household air pollution are children under the age of five (WHO, 2022[123]).

Lack of access to electricity can also have significant implications for women's ability to adapt to and mitigate the adverse effects of climate change. For instance, in regions highly susceptible to high temperatures, data from 54 countries and 22 sub-national regions in 2022 indicate that approximately 719 million women and 448 million men were at high risk of lacking access to cooling services (SEforALL, 2023[124]; SEforALL, 2022[125]).

In this context, the adoption and utilisation of renewable energy systems at the household level can play a crucial role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving the health and well-being of women and their families, and alleviating their unpaid domestic workload (IEA, 2022[115]). However, despite the numerous benefits and the fact that transitioning to renewable energies is vital for mitigating climate change and empowering women economically, women face significant systemic and structural barriers that hinder their participation in the renewable energy sector.

The renewable energy sector is critical for achieving a 90% reduction in global carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 and creating new employment opportunities. The sector is expected to generate 42 million jobs by 2050 – four times its 2020 level (IRENA, 2020[126]; IRENA, 2017[127]). Women's active involvement in the renewable energy value chain can significantly contribute to sustainable consumption behaviours and improved energy efficiency (ASEAN and OECD, 2021[128]; OECD, 2021[12]). In addition, analysis across selected OECD countries has shown that women tend to show more environmental concern than men and are more responsive to behavioural nudging (OECD, 2022[58]). Nonetheless, women remain largely excluded from the energy sector, accounting for only 32% of employees of the renewable energy sector, compared to 22% in the oil and gas sector (IRENA, 2019[129]). Within the renewable energy sector, in 2021, women accounted for 40% of those employed in solar photovoltaics, compared to only 21% in the wind industry (IRENA, 2022[130]). Discriminatory norms and implicit biases continue to limit women's entry into the energy sector and their professional advancement (EmPower and UNEP, 2020[131]).

Women's exclusion from the renewable energy sector stems from several systemic and structural barriers

Among others, the main barriers that prevent women from being involved in the energy sector include: (i) traditional gender roles within the household; (ii) discriminatory social norms limiting women's decision-making power in the household; (iii) women's lack of decision-making power in the public sphere; (iv) women's limited access to land ownership and management as well as financing ; and (v) biases on women's and men's ability to work in the energy sector at large.

Due to traditional gender roles which lead to women shouldering the bulk of unpaid care and domestic work, women have less time and autonomy than men to engage in paid activities, including renewable energy businesses. Globally, more than half of the population (56%) thinks that when a mother works for pay, her children suffer. These attitudes reflect the belief that a woman's place is at home, while men should be the primary economic providers of the household (OECD, 2021[132]). The share is even higher in some parts of the world, reaching 76% in North Africa and 81% in South Asia (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[45]). Such beliefs translate into women doing most of the unpaid care and domestic work at the household level. For example, in Africa and Asia, women can spend between three and nearly six hours a day on activities only related to cooking and collecting fuel (Haddad et al., 2021[120]). In comparison, women spend on average about four hours a day on all unpaid care and domestic work tasks in OECD countries (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[45]). This unpaid work burden severely limits women's opportunity to pursue educational opportunities, to engage into income-generating activities, including business opportunities related to the renewable energy sector, or even to simply access information about renewable energy (ENERGIA, World Bank and UN Women, 2018[133]).

In many countries, discriminatory social norms continue to limit women's decision-making power, particularly in terms of household spending decisions. Despite being the primary users of energy at the household level, women often lack influence over the types of energy that is purchased, which constrains their use of cleaner energy sources. Generally, men tend to be the main decision makers regarding energy and the acquisition of electrical appliances (IRENA, 2017[127]). However, research suggests that involving women in household energy decisions not only benefits their daily work but also contributes to creating an energy-efficient environment (Shrestha et al., 2021[134]). For example, a study in urban households in Kathmandu revealed gender differences regarding the decision to purchase energy-saving electrical appliances. It also showed that women had higher environmental awareness than men, demonstrated, for example, by checking their energy bills or switching off lights when not in use (Shrestha et al., 2021[134]). Although the decision to adopt cleaner sources of energy largely depends on their availability, reliability and affordability, as well as on the choice of appliances, women who are independent income earners have more decision-making power when it comes to switching to clean cooking (ENERGIA, 2019[135]).

Women's lack of decision-making power in the household often extends to the public sphere, further constraining their ability to contribute meaningfully to energy decision making. For example, due to cultural norms around how women should behave in public, women from ethnic minority groups in Viet Nam were marginalised during the construction of the Truong Son hydropower project (Yi-Chen Han et al., 2022[136]). This type of marginalisation is also true in local renewable projects in more developed countries, as described in the case studies of the islands of El Hierro in Spain and Tilos in Greece. While women were able to express their views in the design phase of the projects, they were excluded from the project assessment phase, which meant that their specific experiences were not taken into account, and therefore they perceived fewer positive returns than men (Tsagkari, 2022[137]). To ensure that renewable energy projects translate into gender justice and that the benefits of the project are fairly distributed between women and men, women need to be included in the decision-making process throughout the whole project cycle, from design to evaluation (Tsagkari, 2022[137]). Women and men must have equal opportunities to engage in the energy value chain as designers, workers and users, which would guarantee that renewable energy interventions meet the needs of all households and community members (Nelson and Kuriakose, 2017[138]). Conversely, excluding women from decision-making process related to renewable energy projects means that their knowledge, needs and preferences are not being considered. Beyond being detrimental to them and their communities, it constitutes a missed opportunity to leverage their expertise acquired as primary energy users that could strengthen climate mitigation strategies.

Women's limited ownership and use of land pose significant obstacles to their involvement in renewable energy businesses and their ability to participate in negotiation or consultation processes related to large-scale projects. On the one hand, lack of land ownership prevents women from having the necessary capital to access financing for renewable energy technologies, to start a business, or to improve their productivity, which would ultimately benefit their families' well-being (Nelson and Kuriakose, 2017[138]). On the other hand, in the context of large-scale renewable energy projects, such as solar arrays or wind turbines, which demand big plots of land – often controlled by men – discriminatory social norms that limit women's ownership and access to land, or inequitable inheritance practices, may cause conflicting interests (Nelson and Kuriakose, 2017[138]). Indeed, such inequality in terms of ownership and security of land tenure can lead to excluding women from negotiation or consultation processes between project operators (be it governments or private sector companies) and local communities, as the latter generally consult directly with landowners – who are usually men (The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2020[116]).

Gender perceptions and biases limit women's opportunities worldwide to engage in the energy sector. A 2018 survey covering both individuals and companies from the renewable energy sector across 144 countries revealed that 75% of women believe that women working in this sector or seeking to join it face gender-related barriers, such as perception of gender roles, cultural and social norms, prevailing hiring practices, lack of flexibility in the workplace and lack of mentorship opportunities (IRENA, 2019[129]). Such gender biases and general societal views about girls' and women's potential start early within the education system, with the belief that girls' abilities are more limited than boys' in scientific topics. This is the case, for example, in Côte d'Ivoire, where 32% of the population thinks that boys have higher innate abilities than girls in mathematics (OECD, 2022[139]). These views continue to be reflected at upper levels of education, as can be seen in the share of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. Globally, women represent only 35% of all students in higher education enrolled in STEM-related fields of study (UNESCO, 2017[140]). Discriminatory norms and lack of information, training and professional guidance mean that girls and women have limited opportunities to engage in the renewable energy sector and that they miss out on the vast potential benefits that the sector brings.

What are the ways forward to address structural impediments to women as agents of change in the renewable energy sector?

The United Nations, at the High-Level Dialogue on Energy in 2021, recognised that access to an effective supply of sustainable energy can be improved and accelerated by gender equality and women's empowerment. It states that women should be empowered in the "design, production and distribution of modern energy services, including for productive uses" and that equal representation of women in decision-making processes in the area of energy should be prioritised (United Nations, 2021[141]). More than USD 400 billion in new finance and investments to increase renewables and access to electricity and clean cooking technologies were announced. Indeed, it is estimated that by 2030 renewable energy is likely to power over 60% of new access to electricity. Investing in new energy sources through off-grid and mini-grid systems is the way forward to democratise access to electricity and reduce the time women spend on unpaid care and domestic work, thus empowering them and their communities economically (UNEP, 2020[142]). A Gender and Energy Compact – a global, multi-stakeholder coalition – was also created so that women have equal opportunity to lead, participate in and benefit from a just energy transition and so they can have equal access to and control over sustainable energy products and services (UNIDO, ENERGIA and GWNET, 2023[143]; United Nations, 2021[144]).

Being driven by SDG 7 on ensuring "access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all" (United Nations, 2015[145]), almost all countries, as of 2019, have had renewable energy support policies in place to varying degrees (REN21, 2022[146]). Yet, SDG 7 has no gender-specific indicators, and despite increasing efforts in recent years to close gender gaps, more efforts are needed to mainstream gender in policies and programmes and address the underlying drivers of gender inequality, which are rooted in discriminatory social institutions. Gender equality considerations are not consistently being integrated into policies, plans or commitments related to renewable energy. For example, a review of renewable energy policies in 33 countries found that only 6 policies (18%) included gender keywords and considerations, and when they were, it was referring to women as recipients or beneficiaries, rather than as active agents in programme implementation (IRENA, 2019[129]). In addition, gender equality in the renewable energy sector is insufficiently financed: out of the 44% of official development assistance with gender equality as a policy objective in 2020-21, the energy sector has among the lowest financial flows (OECD, 2023[147]).

Finally, to ensure women are adequately represented in the renewable energy sector, a gender-transformative approach is necessary. It notably requires governments to work collaboratively with other partners to address deeply rooted obstacles that girls and women face in their societies and empower them to become agents of change.

Policy recommendations: Towards a gender-transformative approach in the renewable energy sector

Accelerating the transition to renewable energies and sustainable development for all requires the integration of a gender lens in renewable energy policies, legislation, action plans, strategic frameworks and programmes, including gender-transformative budgeting, at all levels. Only by recognising the differentiated impacts of climate change on women and men and their needs, and by giving women more autonomy and decision-making power as the primary energy users and producers will women be able to adapt to, mitigate and become more resilient to negative impacts of climate change. The uptake of renewable energy can be scaled up by empowering women. At the heart of this lies the need to shift power relations at the household level, and in societies more generally, and acknowledge the capacities of women as agents of change.

Reform discriminatory legislation paired with sensitisation campaigns to change norms

- Governments need to amend laws that establish men as the sole decision maker in the household and run sensitisation campaigns with development partners and civil society on the role that women play as energy users and suppliers and the importance of equal decision-making in the household, especially when it comes to spending decisions.
- All actors should leverage existing women's networks and run awareness-raising campaigns to expand women's access to key information so that they are well informed about the existence of renewable energy, its benefits, and the possibilities that it can bring to their livelihoods, including in agricultural practices.
- Governments, in collaboration with education providers, the private sector and civil society, should run awareness-raising campaigns to spark more girls' interest in opting for science and innovation subjects in school, along with mentoring programmes to enrol women in STEM higher education and guide them in their career choices. Children should be targeted from an early age to avoid perpetuating biases and stereotypes about their innate abilities.

> *In Ghana, UNESCO in partnership with the Girls' Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service has organised quarterly STEM clinics across various districts where secondary girls' participation in STEM subjects is low. Through the STEM clinics, which are one-day STEM events during which girls build their skills through practical sessions and interact with female scientists, girls have gained confidence and increased their interest in the subjects (UNESCO, 2019[148]).*

Increase women's access to credit, land tenure and key energy resources

- Governments, together with foundations, the private sector and development partners, should boost financing and grants that are specifically directed at women-led businesses or women-led cooperatives aiming to shift to renewable energy. This could be done for example by imposing that a minimum percentage of large corporations' budget is spent on women-owned businesses in the renewable industry. Changing procurement procedures, as well as setting lower tariffs so that smaller, women-led companies can participate in auctions for renewable energy, would help foster women's entrepreneurship in this sector (OECD, 2021[12]).

> *In Senegal, Energy for Impact's women's economic empowerment programme, "The Energy Opportunities for Women in Senegal (EOWS), aims to develop women-led enterprises. Government organisations and the private sector have established a credit programme and provide concessionary finance on a leasehold basis for initial capital for equipment purchases, and Energy for Impact guarantees the value of energy products through a loan guarantee fund (ENERGIA, 2017[149]).*
>
> *In 2021, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted a gender mainstreaming policy to address barriers hindering women's participation in energy access (ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, 2020[150]).*

- Governments should eliminate legal barriers that restrict women from accessing finance, including barriers to women's financial literacy, to facilitate their access to bank loans and credit.
- Governments, together with the public and private sectors, should invest further in sustainable infrastructure development and demand-driven innovation systems where it is most needed, including for agriculture, and with the participation of women. For example, sufficient deployment of electricity to remote households could free up time for women who rely on traditional methods of cooking. Infrastructure development that takes into account gender considerations is essential to ensure that women are not left out and equally benefit from opportunities that arise (OECD, 2021[151]).

Build the capacity of women to be active actors in the renewable energy sector

- All actors need to implement adequate and accessible gender-transformative training programmes to expand the use of renewable energy while challenging discriminatory social norms. Indeed, training women in renewable energy use has a positive multiplier effect on communities.

> *The Wonder Women programme in Indonesia trained women to sell clean energy (solar lighting) solutions in remote villages, reaching over 250 000 people, while boosting women's income and their decision-making power in the household (IRENA, 2019[129]).*
>
> *Social enterprise Solar Sisters, whereby women entrepreneurs sell and deliver clean energy to their communities, has proven to increase women's income generation opportunities and led them to have greater autonomy and decision making in the household (International Center for Research on Women, 2015[152]).*

- All actors need to put in place and support networking and mentorship programmes to encourage more women to pursue STEM careers or enter the renewable energy sector, including by leveraging on the power of successful female role models and by engaging with men and women who could act as mentors for women who wish to start a business or have a career in renewable energies.

> *The "Women TechEU" initiative supports women-led tech start-ups through coaching and mentoring and targeted funding for female founders to grow their businesses (European Commission, 2023[153]).*
>
> *In Uganda, ENVenture organises entrepreneur training bootcamps covering many different topics, including finance, marketing, sales, accounting, and business management (ENVenture, 2023[154]).*

Conclusion and ways forward

The gendered dimensions of climate change highlight the differentiated impacts on women and men, as well as the barriers that hinder women's participation in climate change response mechanisms and policies. Women, in their roles as primary caregivers and due to societal expectations, bear the responsibility of sustaining livelihoods, whether through agricultural work or as energy users and producers, often combining both paid activities with unpaid care and domestic work. However, women are among the most vulnerable populations and marginalised groups, experiencing the impacts of weather changes and climate shocks more than men. At the same time, women are key agents of change and drivers of solutions regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies due to their invaluable knowledge.

The well-established "gender-environment nexus" shows the importance of applying a gender lens to policies, legislations and strategic frameworks and programmes at all levels (OECD, 2021[12]). Governments and development partners should not only acknowledge the gender-differentiated impacts of climate change and take into account girls' and women's specific needs, but also include them to contribute and strengthen climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, from the local to the national levels. Only by adopting a full gender equality spectrum and by allocating sufficient funds for gender-transformative climate financing, will progress be made towards achieving SDG 5 and all other related SDGs upon which our future depends.

The following policy recommendations should be applied across the three sectors of climate-resilient agriculture, disaster risk reduction and renewable energies.

- Governments should adopt gender mainstreaming policies, action plans or strategies, which include gender-transformative budgeting. Governments should appoint national gender focal

points across ministries (such as Energy, Industry, Trade, Environment and Labour) and provide capacity-building on gender equality issues across sectors.

> *The Government of Ecuador passed in 2021 the National Agenda for Gender Equality 2021-2025 which puts forward 39 lines of action to mitigate the effects of climate change on gender equality. They include the integration of a gender perspective among all policies, plans and projects related to climate change, the reinforcement of the capacities of the public entities working on climate change and the promotion of women's resilience to climate-related disasters and their participation in decision-making (Government of Ecuador, 2021[155]).*
>
> *Burkina Faso has adopted a gender action plan developed under the auspices of the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, which includes a gender-sensitive budget (ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, 2020[150]).*

- All stakeholders should integrate a gender approach throughout the lifecycle of climate programming, that considers the gender-differentiated impacts of interventions, but also maximises opportunities to involve women in every stage of a project or programme.

> *The Climate Investment Funds provides a checklist for project designers and implementers to mainstream gender into the renewable energy project cycle (Nelson and Kuriakose, 2017[138]).*

- Governments need to collaborate with international and regional organisations, philanthropies, the private sector, and civil society organisations to raise awareness of the intersection between discriminatory social institutions and climate change through sensitisation campaigns and gender-transformative programmes.
- Engaging all stakeholders, including men and boys, as well as community leaders, is crucial in shifting negative norms and expectations that affect girls and women. This includes putting in place programmes that promote gender-equitable masculinities, for example when it comes to household decision-making.

> *Adopting an "Engaging Men and Boys" approach in climate justice programming has proven to bring positive results. For example, activities of the "Where the Rain Falls" project in India and the Samarthya project in Nepal used awareness-raising and gender dialogues with men and local households and community power holders to challenge the established social norm that "women are not farmers". As a result, the local government increasingly recognised the needs and priorities of women (CARE International, 2022[156]).*

- All stakeholders should apply as an overarching framework the 3Rs – recognise, reduce and redistribute – to unpaid care and domestic work throughout their policies, programmes and interventions, given women's disproportionate time spent on such tasks, which significantly affects their ability to engage in climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies and cope with its effects.
- Governments and the private sector need to put in place quotas or regulatory frameworks to strengthen women's representation and participation in decision-making bodies at all levels, so as to ensure that they participate on an equal footing with men in the climate change agenda.
- Governments, together with national statistical offices and international and regional organisations, need to prioritise and invest in high-quality gender-disaggregated, gender-relevant and intersectional data collection and analysis, to better understand gender-differentiated impacts and needs and to further improve monitoring and evaluation of gender-disaggregated data and indicators over time, with a focus on the most impacted groups.

> *Canada has pledged USD 134 million for increasing the representativeness of data collected through the Statistics Canada's Disaggregated Data Action Plan with the aim of enhancing statistical analysis of sex-disaggregated data and supporting efforts to make decision-making in the country fairer and more inclusive. UNFCCC highlights how such measures help improve the fairness and inclusivity of planned climate policies (UNFCCC Secretariat, 2022[44]).*

Notes

[1] Cameroon, Chad, Chile, Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Niger, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Sudan.

[2] Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Yemen.

[3] Black carbon is part of fine particulate air pollution. It is formed by the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, wood and other fuels. Complete combustion would turn all carbon from the fuel into carbon dioxide (CO_2), but combustion is never complete and CO_2, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, and organic carbon and black carbon particles are all formed in the process (Climate & Clean Air Coalition, 2023[114]).

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Annex A. Results of the fifth edition of the SIGI

The fifth edition of the SIGI in 2023 covers 179 countries. Because of data gaps, SIGI scores are calculated for only 140 countries in the fifth edition, up from 120 countries in the fourth edition in 2019. SIGI scores range from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating no discrimination and 100 indicating absolute discrimination. Based on their SIGI scores, countries and territories are classified into five levels of discrimination, ranging from very low to very high (Table A A.1).

Aggregated scores are calculated at different geographical levels using the countries and territories for which data and scores are available (Table A A.2). Table A A.3 provides a full overview of the results for all 179 countries included in the fifth edition, at the index and dimension level.

Table A A.1. Classification of countries based on SIGI scores

Level of discrimination	SIGI scores
Very low	[0-20]
Low	[20-30]
Medium	[30-40]
High	[40-50]
Very high	[50-100]

Table A A.2. SIGI 2023 results: Regional aggregates

Geographical area	SIGI score	Classification	SIGI score by dimension			
			Discrimination in the family	Restricted physical integrity	Restricted access to productive and financial resources	Restricted civil liberties
World	29	Low	38	27	27	27
OECD						
OECD countries	15	Very low	14	18	13	15
Non-OECD countries	34	Medium	44	30	32	30
G20						
G20 countries	24	Low	27	25	21	19
Non-G20 countries	30	Medium	39	27	28	28
Regions						
Africa	40	High	52	29	40	33
Americas	21	Low	21	26	22	16
Asia	37	Medium	50	33	32	37
Europe	14	Very low	12	18	10	15
Sub-regions						
Latin America and the Caribbean	21	Low	22	26	23	16
Southeast Asia	38	Medium	45	37	32	36
Sub-Saharan Africa	38	Medium	48	30	38	30

Source: OECD (2023), "Social Institutions and Gender Index (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/33beb96e-en.

StatLink https://stat.link/ku5tzv

Table A A.3. SIGI 2023 results: By country

Country	SIGI score	Classification	SIGI score by dimension			
			Discrimination in the family	Restricted physical integrity	Restricted access to productive and financial resources	Restricted civil liberties
Africa						
Algeria	NA	NA	80	NA	45	60
Angola	26	Low	22	29	40	10
Benin	34	Medium	22	14	38	58
Botswana	31	Medium	53	14	20	34
Burkina Faso	25	Low	29	23	30	19
Burundi	41	High	63	26	37	33
Cabo Verde	NA	NA	9	16	NA	NA
Cameroon	67	Very high	87	32	84	55
Central African Republic	49	High	65	31	46	50
Chad	45	High	46	30	79	14
Comoros	55	Very high	87	31	30	60
Congo	NA	NA	55	NA	58	47
Côte d'Ivoire	17	Very low	12	29	15	13
Djibouti	NA	NA	80	NA	43	11
DRC	47	High	52	32	65	34
Egypt	56	Very high	79	31	46	62
Equatorial Guinea	NA	NA	55	40	NA	NA
Eritrea	NA	NA	55	NA	NA	NA
Eswatini	NA	NA	48	49	NA	55
Ethiopia	31	Medium	41	24	40	17
Gabon	32	Medium	42	20	39	27
Gambia	48	High	67	32	47	43
Ghana	38	Medium	44	28	25	52
Guinea	34	Medium	56	29	34	13
Guinea-Bissau	NA	NA	42	NA	NA	NA
Kenya	35	Medium	40	31	44	25
Lesotho	37	Medium	64	21	46	10
Liberia	38	Medium	60	43	28	18
Libya	NA	NA	86	NA	NA	72
Madagascar	41	High	43	31	38	51
Malawi	31	Medium	13	34	25	50
Mali	53	Very high	69	56	39	45
Mauritania	67	Very high	88	32	85	55
Mauritius	NA	NA	47	NA	6	35
Morocco	49	High	80	33	43	33
Mozambique	19	Very low	22	8	33	13
Namibia	28	Low	26	49	26	5
Niger	60	Very high	84	34	84	23
Nigeria	42	High	57	28	35	47
Rwanda	19	Very low	35	17	15	6
São Tomé and Principe	NA	NA	5	15	NA	NA
Senegal	40	High	75	33	35	5
Seychelles	NA	NA	9	NA	NA	NA
Sierra Leone	48	High	42	48	50	51
Somalia	51	Very high	71	37	40	54
South Africa	23	Low	52	18	12	2
South Sudan	38	Medium	60	38	31	18

Sudan	63	Very high	90	33	85	25
Tanzania	50	High	87	35	30	35
Togo	37	Medium	51	28	18	47
Tunisia	49	High	86	11	36	47
Uganda	27	Low	41	32	28	5
Zambia	31	Medium	34	31	32	27
Zimbabwe	19	Very low	19	20	29	8
Americas						
Antigua and Barbuda	NA	NA	45	NA	NA	NA
Argentina	18	Very low	9	18	34	7
Bahamas	NA	NA	50	NA	NA	NA
Barbados	NA	NA	36	NA	NA	NA
Belize	18	Very low	10	21	19	22
Bolivia	21	Low	27	26	19	9
Brazil	22	Low	22	21	16	27
Canada	17	Very low	13	17	19	21
Chile	27	Low	8	23	61	7
Colombia	24	Low	22	29	34	8
Costa Rica	11	Very low	5	21	14	3
Cuba	NA	NA	21	24	NA	10
Dominica	NA	NA	8	NA	NA	NA
Dominican Republic	15	Very low	4	29	16	8
Ecuador	17	Very low	18	24	17	8
El Salvador	20	Very low	15	27	22	13
Grenada	NA	NA	8	NA	NA	NA
Guatemala	26	Low	29	30	28	15
Guyana	NA	NA	9	20	NA	21
Haiti	46	High	50	38	34	62
Honduras	26	Low	16	31	39	16
Jamaica	18	Very low	8	29	19	16
Mexico	22	Low	39	23	16	6
Nicaragua	21	Low	11	29	19	25
Panama	15	Very low	2	25	21	11
Paraguay	21	Low	10	25	3	40
Peru	19	Very low	37	21	9	5
Suriname	NA	NA	62	58	NA	14
Trinidad and Tobago	25	Low	33	24	15	28
United States	19	Very low	13	29	15	18
Uruguay	19	Very low	31	10	22	12
Venezuela	17	Very low	10	26	24	5
Asia						
Afghanistan	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Armenia	24	Low	26	28	24	17
Australia	15	Very low	8	13	17	23
Azerbaijan	30	Low	21	49	23	23
Bahrain	NA	NA	89	NA	41	57
Bangladesh	49	High	82	27	43	36
Bhutan	33	Medium	45	25	20	40
Brunei Darussalam	NA	NA	92	NA	NA	NA
Cambodia	22	Low	22	18	29	17
China	27	Low	8	46	29	22
Cyprus	NA	NA	42	NA	8	27
Fiji	NA	NA	17	26	NA	NA
Georgia	28	Low	42	18	28	21

Hong Kong (China)	26	Low	31	33	16	23
India	43	High	60	51	41	14
Indonesia	38	Medium	53	32	29	36
Iran	64	Very high	93	36	53	65
Iraq	61	Very high	87	51	41	61
Israel	32	Medium	41	27	23	35
Japan	33	Medium	44	29	30	27
Jordan	58	Very high	89	48	34	55
Kazakhstan	21	Low	15	34	21	12
Korea	20	Very low	20	16	29	14
Kuwait	NA	NA	83	NA	33	70
Kyrgyzstan	29	Low	27	20	34	37
Lao PDR	25	Low	25	28	25	23
Lebanon	57	Very high	89	36	39	55
Malaysia	62	Very high	86	47	49	61
Maldives	NA	NA	80	32	30	NA
Mongolia	13	Very low	15	20	4	14
Myanmar	44	High	40	55	46	33
Nepal	31	Medium	40	14	16	48
New Zealand	14	Very low	8	10	20	17
Oman	NA	NA	86	NA	43	NA
Pakistan	60	Very high	86	45	48	54
Papua New Guinea	NA	NA	49	42	NA	NA
Philippines	50	High	57	49	50	42
Qatar	63	Very high	92	37	38	74
Samoa	NA	NA	21	39	NA	NA
Saudi Arabia	59	Very high	80	55	35	61
Singapore	46	High	45	46	41	53
Solomon Islands	NA	NA	60	42	NA	NA
Sri Lanka	53	Very high	63	42	63	44
Syria	NA	NA	83	NA	43	68
Chinese Taipei	9	Very low	0	22	6	7
Tajikistan	40	High	42	51	41	24
Thailand	27	Low	14	20	22	47
Timor-Leste	NA	NA	26	37	20	NA
Türkiye	24	Low	31	13	30	21
Turkmenistan	NA	NA	36	23	NA	NA
United Arab Emirates	NA	NA	80	NA	17	NA
Uzbekistan	NA	NA	42	NA	45	10
Viet Nam	24	Low	38	38	8	10
West Bank and Gaza Strip	51	Very high	80	35	42	40
Yemen	NA	NA	90	NA	54	71
Europe						
Albania	9	Very low	9	15	5	7
Austria	10	Very low	8	12	5	14
Belgium	7	Very low	8	10	4	7
Bosnia and Herzegovina	27	Low	32	14	40	21
Bulgaria	19	Very low	8	26	21	19
Croatia	17	Very low	31	14	7	14
Czech Republic	15	Very low	8	20	10	21
Denmark	15	Very low	25	12	7	17
Estonia	13	Very low	0	25	4	21
Finland	12	Very low	0	24	3	18
France	10	Very low	8	16	11	5

Germany	12	Very low	8	18	7	17
Greece	19	Very low	39	12	6	15
Hungary	15	Very low	8	21	3	27
Iceland	NA	NA	31	NA	3	20
Ireland	14	Very low	25	16	4	11
Italy	9	Very low	8	15	7	7
Kosovo	21	Low	21	16	33	12
Latvia	13	Very low	8	19	1	22
Lithuania	12	Very low	8	15	7	19
Luxembourg	NA	NA	8	NA	11	7
Malta	19	Very low	13	39	7	15
Moldova	11	Very low	15	15	5	9
Montenegro	13	Very low	14	17	5	15
Netherlands	9	Very low	0	11	7	19
North Macedonia	22	Low	8	23	38	16
Norway	7	Very low	0	13	5	8
Poland	18	Very low	8	32	21	11
Portugal	10	Very low	8	13	4	13
Romania	16	Very low	15	20	8	20
Serbia	15	Very low	21	13	12	13
Slovak Republic	14	Very low	8	21	4	22
Slovenia	18	Very low	8	23	22	17
Spain	9	Very low	15	14	4	3
Sweden	9	Very low	4	13	2	16
Switzerland	10	Very low	0	15	11	13
Ukraine	16	Very low	15	11	22	17
United Kingdom	12	Very low	13	24	4	6

Source: OECD (2023), "Social Institutions and Gender Index (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/33beb96e-en.

StatLink https://stat.link/16oyi2

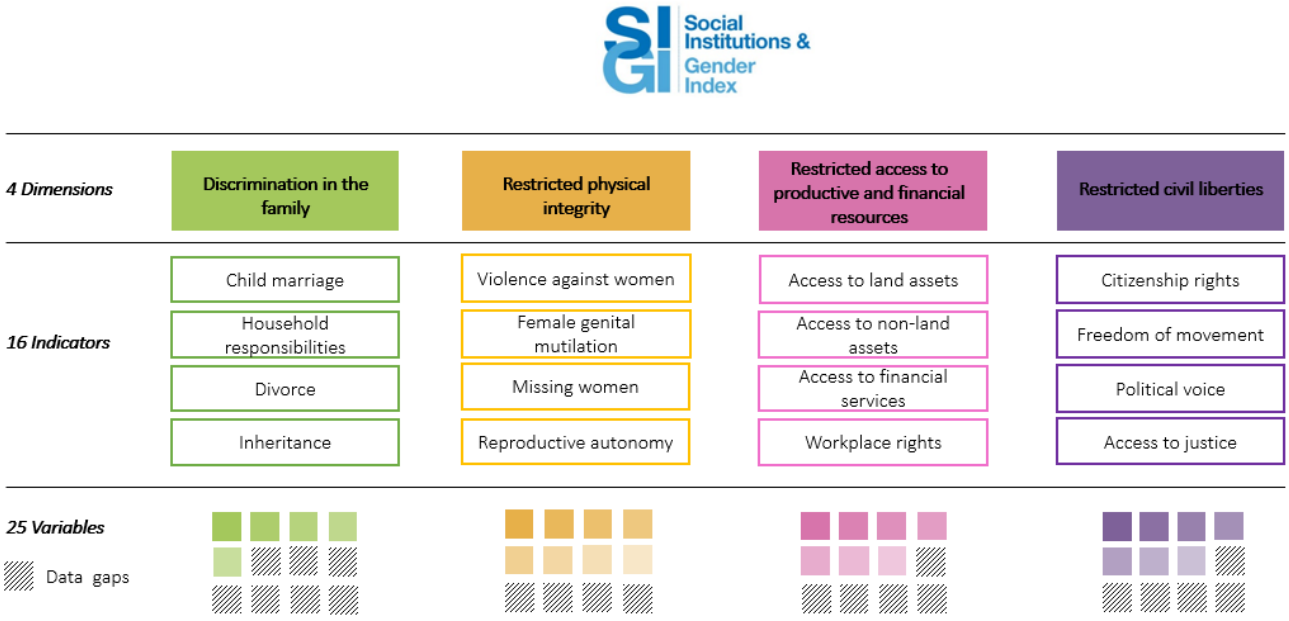
Annex B. Methodology of the SIGI

The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) measures discriminatory social institutions in key areas that affect women's and girls' lives. Produced by the Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) since 2009, the SIGI documents the persistence and prevalence of gender discrimination across countries at different stages of development. The SIGI aims to support policy making by providing quality data to policy and decision makers, experts and researchers, international and philanthropic organisations, as well as the public at large.

Conceptual framework of the SIGI

The SIGI is a composite index that builds on a framework of 4 dimensions, 16 indicators and 25 underlying variables (for the fifth edition) (Figure A B.1).

Figure A B.1. Conceptual framework of the fifth edition of the SIGI



The four dimensions of the SIGI cover the major socio-economic areas that affect women and girls throughout their lifetime:

- The "Discrimination in the family" dimension captures social institutions that limit women's decision-making power and undervalue their status in the household and the family.
- The "Restricted physical integrity" dimension captures social institutions that increase women's and girls' vulnerability to multiple forms of violence and limit their control over their bodies and reproductive autonomy.

- The “Restricted access to productive and financial resources” dimension captures women’s restricted access to and control over critical productive and economic resources and assets.
- The “Restricted civil liberties” dimension captures discriminatory social institutions restricting women’s access to, and participation and voice in, the public and social spheres.

Variables included in the SIGI conceptual framework

Each dimension of the SIGI comprises four indicators (Figure A B.1). Theoretically, each indicator builds on three variables. The first variable aims to measure the level of discrimination in formal and informal laws, while the second and the third variables aim to measure the level of discrimination in social norms and practices:

- Legal variables describe the level of gender-based discrimination in legal frameworks. Data for these variables are collected by the OECD Development Centre via a legal questionnaire (the SIGI 2023 Legal Survey) consisting of 173 questions. The survey was first filled by legal experts and professional lawyers from national and international law firms, before being reviewed by the Gender team of the OECD Development Centre and sent to governments for validation of the data. The cut-off date for the legal information collected was 31 August 2022.
- Attitudinal variables describe the level of discrimination in social norms. Data for these variables are compiled from secondary data sources. The cut-off date for the attitudinal data was 31 December 2022.
- Practice variables describe the level of discrimination in terms of prevalence and parity. Data for these variables are compiled from secondary data sources. The cut-off date for the practice data was 31 December 2022.

Treatment of missing data

In theory, the computation of the SIGI should be based on 48 variables (16 indicators each composed of 3 variables). However, because of data gaps, discrepancies exist between the conceptual framework and the number of variables used to calculate the SIGI. In total, the fifth edition of the SIGI in 2023 is based on 25 variables – including 15 legal variables, 9 practice variables and 1 attitudinal variable (Table A B.1). These variables were selected based on the following criteria:

- Conceptual relevance: The variable should be closely related to the conceptual framework of discriminatory social institutions and measure what it is intended to capture.
- Underlying factor of gender inequality: The variable should capture an underlying factor that leads to unequal outcomes for women and men.
- Data quality, reliability, and coverage: The variable should be based on high-quality, reliable data. Ideally, the data should be standardised across countries/territories and have extensive coverage across countries/territories.
- Distinction: Each variable should measure a distinct discriminatory institution and should add new information not measured by other variables.
- Statistical association: Variables included in the same dimension should be statistically associated, and thereby capture similar areas of social institutions without being redundant.

Variables that measure important concepts covered by the SIGI but that could not be used to calculate the SIGI because of their low geographical coverage, are featured in the Gender, Institutions and Development Database (GID-DB). The GID-DB is a repository of legal, attitudinal and practice data measuring gender-based discrimination. For the fifth edition of the SIGI, this database includes 53 variables, including the 25 variables used to compute the SIGI (Table A B.1).

Table A B.1. SIGI and GID-DB variables included in the fifth edition of the SIGI

Variable	Coding	Sources	Type of variable
Discrimination in the family			
Child marriage			
Laws on child marriage	[Scale: 0-100: scores range from 0 (no discrimination) to 100 (absolute discrimination)] 0: Child marriage is illegal for both women and men and the legal age of marriage is the same for women and men, without any legal exception. There are no informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) that allow or encourage girl child marriage. 25: Child marriage is illegal for both women and men, without any legal exception. However, some informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) allow or encourage girl child marriage. 50: Child marriage is illegal for both women and men. However, legal exceptions exist for some groups of women or with the consent of certain persons (e.g. parents, legal guardians or judge). 75: Child marriage is legal for both women and men, or there is no legal age of marriage specified. 100: Child marriage is legal for women whereas the legal age of marriage of men is 18 or above.	(OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[1])	SIGI
Prevalence of boy child marriage	Percentage of boys aged 15-19 years who have been or are still married, divorced, widowed or in an informal union.	(UNICEF, 2022[2])	GID-DB
Prevalence of girl child marriage	Percentage of girls aged 15-19 years who have been or are still married, divorced, widowed or in an informal union.	(UNICEF, 2022[3])	SIGI
Prevalence of girl child marriage (SDG Indicator 5.3.1)	Percentage of women aged 20-24 years married or in union before age 18.	(UNICEF, 2022[4])	GID-DB
Household responsibilities			
Laws on household responsibilities	[Scale: 0-100: scores range from 0 (no discrimination) to 100 (absolute discrimination)] 0: Women have the same legal rights as men to be “head of household" or “head of family” (or the law does not make any reference to these concepts) and to be legal guardians of their children during marriage or in informal unions. There are no informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities regarding being recognised as the head of household, being the legal guardians of children nor choosing where to live. 25: Women have the same legal rights as men to be “head of household” or “head of family” (or the law does not make any reference to these concepts) and to be legal guardians of their children during marriage or in informal unions. However, some informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) create different rights or abilities regarding being recognised as the head of household, being the legal guardians of children or choosing where to live. 50: Women have the same legal rights as men to be “head of household” or “head of family” (or the law does not make any reference to these concepts) and to be legal guardians of their children during marriage or in informal unions. However, legal exceptions exist for some groups of women.	(OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[1])	SIGI

	75: Women do not have the same legal rights as men to be either "head of household" or "head of family" or to be legal guardians of their children during marriage or in informal unions. 100: Women neither have the same legal rights as men to be "head of household" or "head of family" nor to be legal guardians of their children during marriage or in informal unions.		
Attitudes on gender roles in the household	Percentage of the population aged 18 years and above agreeing or strongly agreeing that "being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay."	(World Values Survey, 2022[5])	GID-DB
Attitudes on women's income	Percentage of the population aged 18 years and above agreeing or strongly agreeing that "if a woman earns more money than her husband, it's almost certain to cause problems."	(World Values Survey, 2022[5])	GID-DB
Attitudes on women's work and children	Percentage of the population aged 18 years and above agreeing or strongly agreeing that "when a mother works for pay, the children suffer."	(World Values Survey, 2022[5])	GID-DB
Unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) ratio	Female-to-male ratio of time spent on unpaid, domestic and care work in a 24-hour period.	(United Nations, 2022[6])	GID-DB
UCDW daily hours: men	Men's average time spent (in hours) on unpaid domestic and care work in a 24-hour period.	(United Nations, 2022[6])	GID-DB
UCDW daily hours: women	Women's average time spent (in hours) on unpaid domestic and care work in a 24-hour period.	(United Nations, 2022[6])	GID-DB
Divorce			
Laws on divorce	[Scale: 0-100: scores range from 0 (no discrimination) to 100 (absolute discrimination)] 0: All women and men have the same rights as men to initiate or file for a divorce, to finalise a divorce or an annulment, and to retain child custody following a divorce. There are no informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities regarding initiating a divorce or being the legal guardians of children after a divorce. 25: All women and men have the same rights as men to initiate or file for a divorce, to finalise a divorce or an annulment, and to retain child custody following a divorce. However, some informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) create different rights or abilities regarding initiating a divorce or being the legal guardians of children after a divorce. 50: Women have the same rights as men to initiate or file for a divorce, to finalise a divorce or an annulment, and to retain child custody following a divorce. However, legal exceptions exist for some groups of women. 75: Women do not have the same rights as men to initiate or file for a divorce, or to finalise a divorce or an annulment, or to retain child custody following a divorce. 100: Women do not have the same rights as men to initiate or file for a divorce, or to finalise a divorce or an annulment. Women do not have the same rights as men to retain child custody following a divorce.	(OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[1])	SIGI
Inheritance			
Laws on inheritance	[Scale: 0-100: scores range from 0 (no discrimination) to 100 (absolute discrimination)] 0: All widows and daughters have the same rights as widowers and sons to inherit. There are no informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities regarding inheritance between sons and daughters and between male and female surviving spouses. 25: All widows and daughters have the same rights as widowers and sons to inherit. However, some informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) create different rights or abilities regarding inheritance between sons and daughters or between male and female surviving spouses.	(OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[1])	SIGI

	50: Widows and daughters have the same rights as widowers and sons to inherit. However, legal exceptions exist for some groups of widows and/or daughters. 75: Widows do not have the same rights as widowers to inherit, or daughters do not have the same rights as sons to inherit. 100: Widows and daughters do not have the same rights as widowers and sons to inherit.		
Restricted Physical Integrity			
Violence against women			
Laws on violence against women	[Scale: 0-100: scores range from 0 (comprehensive legal framework) to 100] 0: The law protects women from the following forms of violence: honour crimes, intimate partner violence, rape and sexual harassment. There are no legal exceptions that reduce penalties for domestic violence and the law recognises marital rape. The law is comprehensive (e.g. regarding specific provisions, all types of violence covered and all places covered). 25: The law protects women from the following forms of violence: honour crimes, intimate partner violence, rape and sexual harassment. There are no legal exceptions that reduce penalties for domestic violence and the law recognises marital rape. However, the approach is not fully comprehensive (e.g. lack of specific provisions, not all types of violence covered or not all places covered). 50: The law protects women from the following forms of violence: honour crimes, intimate partner violence, rape and sexual harassment. However, legal exceptions reduce penalties for domestic violence, or the law does not recognise marital rape. 75: The law protects women from some but not all of the following forms of violence: honour crime, intimate partner violence, rape and sexual harassment. 100: The law does not protect women from any of the following forms of violence: intimate partner violence, rape and sexual harassment.	(OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[1])	SIGI
Attitudes justifying intimate-partner violence	Percentage of women aged 15 to 49 years who consider a husband to be justified in hitting or beating his wife.	(WHO, 2022[7]) (World Values Survey, 2022[5]) (European Commission, 2016[8])	SIGI
Lifetime intimate-partner violence (IPV)	Percentage of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15-49 years subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner over their lifetime.	(WHO, 2022[7])	SIGI
Intimate partner-violence (IPV) rate in the last 12 months	Percentage of ever-partnered women and girls subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months.	(United Nations, 2022[6])	GID-DB
Female genital mutilation (FGM)			
Laws protecting girls and women from FGM	[Scale: 0-100: scores range from 0 (strongest protection by the law) to 100 (no protection by the law)] 0: The law criminalises FGM on narrow grounds and there are no informal laws that allow or encourage FGM. 25: The law criminalises FGM on broad grounds and there are no informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws) that allow or encourage FGM; or the law criminalises FGM on narrow grounds, informal laws exist, but the statutory law takes precedence over them. 50: The law criminalises FGM on broad grounds only. Informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws) exisit that allow or encourage FGM but the statutory law takes precedence over them.	(OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[1])	SIGI

	75: The law criminalises FGM on broad grounds only. Informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws) exist that allow or encourage FGM and the statutory law does not take precedence over them. 100: The law does not protect women and girls from FGM at all. Narrow grounds: Laws that explicitly criminalise FGM. Laws make reference to FGM, excision, female circumcision, genital mutilation or permanent altering/removal of external genitalia. Broad grounds: FGM can be prosecuted under law provision on mutilation, harming of a person's organs, (serious) bodily injury, hurt or assault.		
Attitudes of women towards FGM	Percentage of women aged 15-49 years who have heard about FGM and think the practice should continue.	(UNICEF, 2022[9])	GID-DB
Attitudes of men towards FGM	Percentage of men aged 15-49 years who have heard about FGM and think the practice should continue.	(UNICEF, 2022[9])	GID-DB
Prevalence rate of FGM	Percentage of women aged 15-49 years who have undergone FGM.	(UNICEF, 2022[9])	GID-DB
Missing women			
Missing women: measurement whether the population has a preference for sons over daughters	Boy-to-girl ratio among 0-4-year-old (number of males per 100 females). Note: The natural birth ratio is 105 boys for 100 girls.	(United Nations, 2022[10])	SIGI
Reproductive autonomy			
Laws on women's right to safe and legal abortion	[Scale: 0-100: scores range from 0 (rights are guaranteed) to 100 (rights are not guaranteed)] 0: The law protects women's right to a legal and safe abortion and does not require the approval of the father of the foetus to seek a legal abortion. 25: The law protects women's right to a legal and safe abortion. However, the law requires the approval of the father of the foetus to seek a legal abortion. 50: The law protects women's right to a legal and safe abortion when it is essential to save the woman's life and when the pregnancy is the result of rape, statutory rape and incest. However, the law does not protect women's right to a legal and safe abortion in one or more of the following circumstances: to preserve the mother's mental or physical health, for social and economic reasons, or in case of foetal impairment. 75: The law does not protect women's right to a legal and safe abortion in one or more of the following circumstances: when it is essential to save the woman's life or when pregnancy is the result of rape, statutory rape or incest. 100: The law does not provide women the right to a legal and safe abortion under any circumstance.	(OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[1])	SIGI
Prevalence of unmet family planning needs	Percentage of currently married or in-union women of reproductive age (15-49) who want to stop or delay childbearing but are not using any method of contraception.	(United Nations, 2022[11])	SIGI
Restricted access to productive and financial resources			
Access to land assets			
Laws on access to land assets	[Scale: 0-100: scores range from 0 (no discrimination) to 100 (absolute discrimination)] 0: All women and men have the same legal rights to own and use land assets. There are no informal laws (customary, traditional	(OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[1])	SIGI

	or religious laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities regarding the ownership or use of land. 25: All women and men have the same legal rights to own and use land assets. However, some informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) create different rights or abilities regarding the ownership or use of land. 50: Women and men have the same legal rights to own and use land assets. However, legal exceptions exist for some groups of women. 75: Women and men have the same legal rights to own land assets. However, women do not have the same legal rights to use and/or make decisions over land. 100: Women do not have the same legal rights and access as men to own and use land assets.		
Gender gap in land ownership	Share of women in the total number of land holders.	(The DHS Program, 2022[12])	GID-DB
Land ownership of men	Percentage of men who are land holders.	(The DHS Program, 2022[12])	GID-DB
Land ownership of women	Percentage of women who are land holders.	(The DHS Program, 2022[12])	GID-DB
Access to non-land assets			
Laws on access to non-land assets	[Scale: 0-100: scores range from 0 (no discrimination) to 100 (absolute discrimination)] 0: All women and men have the same legal rights to own and use non-land assets. There are no informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities regarding the ownership or use of non-land assets. 25: All women and men have the same legal rights to own and use non-land assets. However, some informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) create different rights or abilities regarding the ownership or use of non-land assets. 50: Women have the same legal rights as men to own and use non-land assets. However, legal exceptions exist for some groups of women. 75: All women and men have the same legal rights to own non-land assets. However, women do not have the same legal rights as men to use and/or make decisions over non-land assets. 100: Women do not have the same legal rights as men to own non-land assets.	(OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[1])	SIGI
Gender gap in house ownership	Share of women in the total number of people who own a house alone.	(The DHS Program, 2022[12])	GID-DB
House ownership of men	Percentage of men who own a house alone.	(The DHS Program, 2022[12])	GID-DB
House ownership of women	Percentage of women who own a house alone.	(The DHS Program, 2022[12])	GID-DB
Access to financial services			
Gender-based discrimination in the legal framework on financial assets and services	[Scale: 0-100: scores range from 0 (no discrimination) to 100 (absolute discrimination)] 0: All women have the same rights as men to open a bank account at a formal financial institution and to obtain credit, and the law does not require married women to obtain the signature and authority of their husband to do so. There are no informal laws (customary, religious, or traditional laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women to open a bank account or obtain credit. 25: All women have the same rights as men to open a bank account at a formal financial institution and to obtain credit, and the	(OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[1])	SIGI

	law does not require married women to obtain the signature and authority of their husband to do so. However, informal laws (customary, religious, or traditional laws/rules) create different rights or abilities between men and women to open a bank account or obtain credit. 50: Women have the same rights as men to open a bank account at a formal financial institution and to obtain credit, and the law does not require married women to obtain the signature and authority of their husband to do so. However, legal exceptions regarding access to formal financial services exist for some groups of women. 75: Women have the same rights as men to open a bank account at a formal financial institution and the law does not require married women to obtain the signature and authority of their husband to do so. However, the law does not provide women with the same rights as men to obtain credit. 100: Women do not have the same rights as men to open a bank account at a formal financial institution or the law requires married women to obtain the signature and authority of their husband to do so.		
Gender gap in bank account ownership	Share of women in the total number of people aged 15 and above who have a bank account at a financial institution (by themselves or together with someone else).	(World Bank, 2021[13])	SIGI
Bank account ownership of men	Percentage of men who have a bank account at a financial institution (by themselves or together with someone else).	(World Bank, 2021[13])	GID-DB
Bank account ownership of women	Percentage of women who have a bank account at a financial institution (by themselves or together with someone else).	(World Bank, 2021[13])	GID-DB
Workplace rights			
Laws on workplace rights	[Scale: 0-100: scores range from 0 (no discrimination) to 100 (absolute discrimination)] 0: Women and men are guaranteed equality in the workplace, including the right to equal remuneration for work of equal value, to work the same night hours, to work in all professions, and to register a business. The rights of all women are protected during pregnancy and maternity/parental leave. There are no informal laws (customary, religious, or traditional laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women to enter certain professions, take a paid job or register a business. 25: Women and men are guaranteed equality in the workplace, including the right to equal remuneration for work of equal value, to work the same night hours, to work in all professions, and to register a business. The rights of all women are protected during pregnancy and maternity/parental leave. However, some informal laws (customary, religious, or traditional laws/rules) create different rights or abilities between men and women to enter certain professions, take a paid job or register a business. 50: Women and men are guaranteed equality in the workplace, including the right to equal remuneration for work of equal value, to work the same night hours, to work in all professions, and to register a business. Women's rights are protected during pregnancy and maternity/parental leave. However, legal exceptions to the rights to take a paid job and/or to register a business exist for some groups of women. 75: Women and men are guaranteed equal rights to enter all professions, to work the same night hours as men, and to work or register a business without the permission of someone else. However, women are not guaranteed non-discrimination in employment on the basis of sex, equal remuneration for work of equal value, or protection of their rights during pregnancy and maternity/parental leave. 100: Women do not have the same rights as men to enter all professions, to work the same night hours as men, or to work or register a business without the permission of their husband or legal guardian.	(OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[1])	Yes
Attitudes on women's right to a job	Percentage of the population aged 18 years and above agreeing or strongly agreeing that "when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women."	(World Values Survey, 2022[5])	GID-DB

Attitudes on women's ability to be a business executive	Percentage of the population aged 18 years and above agreeing or strongly agreeing that "men make better business executives than women do."	(World Values Survey, 2022[5])	GID-DB
Gender gap in management positions (SDG Indicator 5.2.2)	Share of women among managers.	(United Nations, 2022[6])	SIGI
Gender gap in top management positions	Share of firms with a woman as top manager.	(World Bank, 2022[14])	GID-DB
Restricted civil liberties			
Citizenship rights			
Laws on citizenship rights	[Scale: 0-100: scores range from 0 (no discrimination) to 100 (absolute discrimination)] 0: Women and men have the same rights to acquire, change and retain their nationality as well as to confer their nationality to their spouse and children. There are no informal laws (customary, traditional, or religious laws) that create different rights or abilities between men and women to acquire, change, or retain their nationality, or to confer nationality to their spouse and/or children. 25: Women and men have the same rights to acquire, change and retain their nationality as well as to confer their nationality to their spouse and children. However, some informal laws (customary, traditional, or religious laws) create different rights or abilities between men and women to acquire, change, or retain their nationality, or to confer nationality to their spouse and/or children. 50: Women and men have the same rights to acquire, change and retain their nationality as well as to confer their nationality to their spouse and children. However, legal exceptions exist for some groups of women. 75: Women and men have the same rights to acquire, change and retain their nationality. However, women do not have the same rights as men to confer their nationality to their spouses and/or children. 100: Women do not have the same rights as men to acquire, change or retain their nationality.	(OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[1])	SIGI
Freedom of movement			
Laws on freedom of movement	[Scale: 0-100: scores range from 0 (no discrimination) to 100 (absolute discrimination)] 0: Women have the same rights as men to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) or passports, and to travel outside the country. There are no informal laws (customary, religious, or traditional laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women to apply for identity cards or passports. 25: Women have the same rights as men to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) or passports, and to travel outside the country. However, some informal laws (customary, religious, or traditional laws/rules) create different rights or abilities between men and women to apply for identity cards or passports. 50: Women have the same rights as men to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) or passports, and to travel outside the country. However, legal exceptions exist for some groups of women. 75: Women do not have the same rights as men to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) or passports, or to travel outside the country. 100: Women do not have the same rights as men to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) or passports, nor to travel outside the country.	(OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[1])	SIGI
Gender gap in safety feeling	Share of women among the total number of persons declaring not feeling safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live.	(Gallup, 2021[15])	SIGI

Safety feeling of men	Percentage of men declaring not feeling safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live.	(Gallup, 2021[15])	GID-DB
Safety feeling of women	Percentage of women declaring not feeling safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live.	(Gallup, 2021[15])	GID-DB
Political voice			
Laws on political voice	[Scale: 0-100: scores range from 0 (no discrimination) to 100 (absolute discrimination)] 0: Women and men have the same rights to vote and to hold public and political office in the legislature and executive branches. There are constitutional/legislated quotas or special measures other than quotas (e.g. disclosure requirements, parity laws, alternating the sexes on party lists, financial incentives for political parties) in place to promote women's political participation at the national or local levels. There are no informal laws (customary, religious or traditional laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women to vote or hold public office. 25: Women and men have the same rights to vote and to hold public and political office in the legislature and executive branches. There are constitutional/legislated quotas or special measures other than quotas (e.g. disclosure requirements, parity laws, alternating the sexes on party lists, financial incentives for political parties) in place to promote women's political participation at the national or local levels. However, some informal laws (customary, religious or traditional laws/rules) create different rights or abilities between men and women to vote or hold public office. 50: Women and men have the same rights to vote and to hold public and political office in the legislature and executive branches. However, there are no constitutional/legislated quotas or special measures other than quotas (e.g. disclosure requirements, parity laws, alternating the sexes on party lists, financial incentives for political parties) in place to promote women's political participation at the national or local levels. 75: Women and men have the same rights to vote. However, women do not have the same rights as men to hold public and political office in the legislative or executive branch. 100: Women do not have the same rights as men to vote.	(OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[1])	SIGI
Attitudes on women's ability to be a political leader	Percentage of the population aged 18 years and above agreeing or strongly agreeing that "men make better political leaders than women do."	(World Values Survey, 2022[5])	GID-DB
Gender gap in political representation	Share of women in the total number of representatives in parliament (lower house).	(IPU Parline, 2022[16])	SIGI
Access to justice			
Laws on access to justice	[Scale: 0-100: scores range from 0 (no discrimination) to 100 (absolute discrimination)] 0: Women and men have the same rights to sue. Women's and men's testimony carries the same evidentiary weight in all types of courts, and in all justice systems when parallel plural legal systems exist. Women have the same rights as men to hold public or political office in the judiciary branch. There are no informal laws (customary, religious or traditional laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women to sue someone, to provide testimony in court, or to be a judge, advocate or other court officer. 25: Women and men have the same rights to sue. Women's and men's testimony carries the same evidentiary weight in all types of courts, and in all justice systems when parallel plural legal systems exist. Women have the same rights as men to hold public or political office in the judiciary branch. However, some informal laws (customary, religious or traditional laws/rules) create different rights or abilities between men and women to sue someone, to provide testimony in court, or to be a judge, advocate or other court officer. 50: Women and men have the same rights to sue. Women's and men's testimony carries the same evidentiary weight in all types of courts, and in all justice systems when parallel plural legal systems exist. However, women do not have the same rights as	(OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[1])	SIGI

	men to hold public or political office in the judiciary branch. 75: Women and men have the same rights to sue. However, women's testimony does not carry the same evidentiary weight as men's testimony in all types of courts, or in all justice systems when parallel plural legal systems exist. 100: Women do not have the same rights as men to sue.		
Gender gap in population's confidence in the judicial system and courts	Share of women among the total number of persons declaring not having confidence in the judicial system and courts of their country.	(Gallup, 2021[15])	SIGI
Confidence in the judicial system and courts of men	Percentage of men who declare not having confidence in the judicial system and courts of their country.	(Gallup, 2021[15])	GID-DB
Confidence in the judicial system and courts of women	Percentage of women who declare not having confidence in the judicial system and courts of their country.	(Gallup, 2021[15])	GID-DB

Note: SIGI variables refer to variables used to construct the composite index. GID-DB variables refer to those measuring gender-based discrimination included in the respective database but not used to calculate the index.
Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[17]), "Gender, Institutions and Development (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/7b0af638-en.

Geographical coverage of the fifth edition of the SIGI

For the fifth edition of the SIGI, the OECD Development Centre collected data for 179 countries.

Legal data cover 178 countries. Following the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban in August 2021, available legal sources were no longer valid, and no comprehensive and reliable legal sources could be found to assess the new legal framework of the country. Nevertheless, attitudinal and practice variables for Afghanistan were collected and included in the GID-DB.

The coverage of attitudinal and practice data varies for each variable.

Because of data gaps in one or more of the 25 variables used to compute the SIGI, SIGI scores could not be calculated for 39 countries (Table A B.2). In other words, a full set of data for the 10 attitudinal and practice variables included in the computation of the SIGI is available for 140 countries (78% of the total number of countries included in the GID-DB).

The regional coverage of the GID-DB and the SIGI is as follow:

- 54 countries in Africa, among which 42 (78%) obtained a SIGI score.
- 32 countries in the Americas, among which 24 (75%) obtained a SIGI score.
- 55 countries in Asia, among which 38 (70%) obtained a SIGI score.
- 38 countries in Europe, among which 36 (95%) obtained a SIGI score.

Table A B.2. Number of SIGI variables missing, by country

	Discrimination in the family					Restricted physical integrity							Restricted access to productive and financial resources						Restricted civil liberties							Number of missing SIGI variables
	Child marriage		Household responsibilities	Divorce	Inheritance	Violence against women			Female genital mutilation	Missing women	Reproductive autonomy		Land assets	Non-land assets	Financial services		Workplace rights		Citizenship rights	Freedom of movement		Political voice		Access to justice		
	L	P	L	L	L	L	A	P	L	P	L	P	L	L	L	P	L	P	L	L	P	L	P	L	P	
Afghanistan	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	16
Brunei Darussalam	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	6
Seychelles	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	6
Antigua and Barbuda	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	5
Bahamas	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	5
Dominica	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	5
Guinea-Bissau	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	5
Barbados	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	4
Equatorial Guinea	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	4
Eritrea	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	4
Grenada	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	4
Fiji	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	3
Oman	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	3
Papua New Guinea	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	3
Samoa	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	3
São Tomé and Principe	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	3
Solomon Islands	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	3

United Arab Emirates	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	3
Bahrain	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	2
Cabo Verde	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	2
Djibouti	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	2
Iceland	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	2
Libya	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	2
Mauritius	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	2
Syrian Arab Republic	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	2
Timor-Leste	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	2
Turkmenistan	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	2
Algeria	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	1
Cuba	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	1
Cyprus	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	1
Guyana	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	1
Kuwait	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	1
Luxembourg	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	1
Maldives	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	1
Republic of the Congo	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	1
Suriname	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	1
Swaziland	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	1
Uzbekistan	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	1
Yemen	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	1

Note: Legal variables are labelled L, attitudinal variables are labelled A and practice variables are labelled P. Countries are ordered by the number of missing variables in descending order. While these 39 countries did not receive a SIGI score, available data are featured in the Gender, Institutions and Development Database (GID-DB). For Afghanistan, legal data were not collected as no reliable and up-to-date resources could be located following the takeover by the Taliban in 2021.

Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[17]), "Gender, Institutions and Development (Edition 2023)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://doi.org/10.1787/7b0af638-en

StatLink https://stat.link/atmpb3

Statistical computation of the SIGI

The statistical methodology of the SIGI consists in aggregating the levels of discrimination as measured by the variables into 16 indicators, which are in turn aggregated into 4 dimensions. These 4 dimensions are then aggregated into the SIGI score. At each stage of the aggregation process, the same aggregation formula is used.

The current methodology was developed in 2017 following an extensive process of consultation with gender and statistical experts and was first applied for the fourth edition of the SIGI published in 2019 (Ferrant, Fuiret and Zambrano, 2020[18]). In 2020, the methodology was reviewed during an Expert Group Meeting, and an internal quality review was undertaken in 2021 with the support of OECD's Statistics and Data Directorate. The fifth edition of the SIGI in 2023 is the second time this methodology is applied.

Data cleaning and manipulation

Attitudinal and practice data

The SIGI relies on secondary data for the attitudinal and practice variable with varying data sources depending on the country/territory and the variable in question.

To ensure comparability across countries and adherence to the SIGI framework, quantitative data are first cleaned. This includes, for instance, ensuring that the population base is the same, or ensuring that the most recent datapoint is selected when relying on data from various sources.

In order to fit the SIGI scale that ranges from 0 to 100, with 0 being the best outcome and 100 being the worst, all quantitative variables are rescaled following a min-max normalisation process, which varies depending on the type of variable.

- Variables measuring absolute levels of women's deprivation: These variables do not have a male counterpart. Examples include the prevalence rate of female genital mutilation or the share of women facing unmet needs for family planning. These variables are expressed so that 0% corresponds to the best outcome for women – e.g. no women having experienced female genital mutilation – and 100% as the worst possible outcome for women – e.g. all women of reproductive age who want to delay a pregnancy with unmet needs for family planning.
- Variables measuring relative levels of achievement or deprivation of women compared to men as the fraction of women among a particular sub-population: For these variables, the best possible outcome is 50%, indicating equality between men and women. These variables are capped at 50% and rescaled following a min-max normalisation process so that scores range from 0 to 100 with 0 being the best outcome for gender equality and 100 the worst possible outcome.
    - Case 1: The worst possible outcome is 100%, indicating that women account for the entire population deprived or facing discrimination. In this case, discrimination exists as long as women's share is above 50%. No penalties are applied if women perform better than men and if their share drops below 50%. Examples include the gender gap in safety feeling, i.e. the share of women among those not feeling safe when walking alone at night, or the gender gap in bank account ownership, i.e. the share of women among bank account owners.
    - Case 2: The worst possible outcome is 0%, indicating that women account for the entire population deprived or facing discrimination. In this case, discrimination exists as long as women's share is below 50%. No penalties are applied if women perform better than men and if their share exceeds 50%. Examples include the gender gap in management positions or among members of national parliaments.

- Variables measuring the relative levels of achievement or deprivation of women compared to men as the female-to-male ratio: These variables are calculated as the value for women divided by the value for men. For these variables, the best possible outcome is 1, indicating equality between men and women. The worst possible outcome is the maximum value of the ratio across all countries covered. These variables are capped at 1, meaning that discrimination exists as long as the female-to-male ratio is above 1. No penalties are applied if women perform better than men and if the ratio drops below 1. These variables are rescaled following a min-max normalisation process so that scores range from 0 to 100 with 0 being the best outcome for gender equality and 100 the worst possible outcome. Examples include the boy-to-girl ratio where, because the natural birth ratio stands at 105 boys per 100 girls, the variable is capped at 105.

Legal data

The SIGI relies on primary data collection for the legal variables, measuring gender-based discrimination in formal and informal laws. The SIGI 2023 Legal Survey consists of 173 questions, among which 114 are used to create the legal variables (see Annex C).

The information captured by the SIGI 2023 Legal Survey is encoded to build 15 legal variables across each indicator of the SIGI conceptual framework – the only indicator that does not have a legal variable is the *Missing women* indicator as there are no laws that can be measured for this type of discrimination against girls.

A coding manual was created to quantify the level of legal discrimination based on the information collected via the SIGI 2023 Legal Survey. The coding manual ensures consistency across variables, guarantees objectivity in the selection criteria for scoring, and allows for comparability across countries as well as over time. A five-level classification (0, 25, 50, 75 and 100) serves as the basis to encode the legal information and reflects the level of discrimination in formal and informal laws: 0 denotes equal legal protections between women and men, without legal or customary exceptions, and 100 denotes a legal framework that fully discriminates against women's and girls' rights (Table A B.3).

Table A B.3. Scoring methodology for legal variables

	Score
The legal framework provides women with the same rights as men, with no exceptions, and applies to all groups of women. There are no customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women.	0
The legal framework provides women with the same rights as men, with no exceptions, and applies to all groups of women. However, some customary, religious or traditional practices or laws do discriminate against women.	25
The legal framework provides women with the same rights as men. However, it foresees exceptions or does not apply to all groups of women.	50
The legal framework restricts some women's rights.	75
The legal framework fully discriminates against women's rights.	100

Scores of legal variables take into account all applicable legal frameworks in the country whether formal or informal, including those that may only apply to part of the population. In many countries across the world, parallel, dual, plural or federal legal frameworks exist, all of which can further co-exist with informal law and justice systems. The SIGI methodology takes this legal plurality into account by assessing whether all women have the same rights under the respective applicable formal laws. The SIGI methodology further assesses whether informal laws create exceptions to the formal law(s).

Construction of indicators, dimensions and the SIGI

Following the cleaning and rescaling of attitudinal and practice data, as well as the encoding of legal data, quantitative and qualitative variables are grouped into a unique database, which serves to build the indicators, dimensions and the SIGI.

The computation of the SIGI relies on the use of the same formula in three different stages to aggregate variable into indicators, indicators into dimensions and dimensions into the SIGI. The formula was developed in 2017, during the revision process that produced the current methodology (Ferrant, Fuiret and Zambrano, 2020[18]).

Aggregation of variable into indicators

In theory, each indicator of the SIGI relies on three distinct variables, each measuring a different area where discrimination can occur: a legal variable, an attitudinal variable and a practice variable. Because of data gaps, this is not always possible and certain indicators rely on only one or two variables. Underlying variables are equally weighted within a given indicator. For instance:

$$Violence\ against\ women = \ln\left(\frac{1}{3}e^{Legal\ variable} + \frac{1}{3}e^{Practice\ variable} + \frac{1}{3}e^{Attitudinal\ variable}\right)$$

or

$$Political\ voice = \ln\left(\frac{1}{2}e^{Legal\ variable} + \frac{1}{2}e^{Practice\ variable}\right)$$

Scores for an indicator can only be calculated if data are available for all underlying variables. In case of missing data, the indicator score is left to missing.

Aggregation of indicators into dimensions

Each dimension builds on four indicators that are equally weighted. For instance:

$$\text{Disrimination in the family} = \ln\left(\frac{1}{4}e^{Child\ marriage} + \frac{1}{4}e^{Household\ responsibilities} + \frac{1}{4}e^{Divorce} + \frac{1}{4}e^{Inheritance}\right)$$

Scores for a dimension can only be calculated if data are available for all underlying indicators. In case of missing data in one or more indicators – resulting from missing data in the underlying variables – the dimension score is left to missing.

Aggregation of dimensions into the SIGI

The four dimensions are aggregated into the SIGI score for each country. Dimensions are equally weighted:

$$\text{SIGI Score} = \ln\left(\frac{1}{4}e^{Discrimination\ in\ the\ family} + \frac{1}{4}e^{Restricted\ physical\ integrity} + \frac{1}{4}e^{Restricted\ access\ to\ productive\ and\ financial\ resources} + \frac{1}{4}e^{Restricted\ civil\ liberties}\right)$$

SIGI scores can only be calculated if data are available for all underlying dimensions. In case of missing data in one or more dimensions – resulting from missing data in the underlying variables – the country does not obtain a SIGI score.

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Annex C. SIGI 2023 Legal Survey

Legal experts and lawyers completed the SIGI 2023 Legal Survey between March 2022 and February 2023, with a cut-off date for legal information on 30 August 2022. The Gender team of the OECD Development Centre performed data quality checks before sharing the responses with governments to validate the collected data.

For the fifth edition of the SIGI, the legal survey was revised and shortened following a consultation process with experts who participated in the fourth edition of the SIGI in 2019. In total, the SIGI 2023 Legal Survey consists of 173 questions, among which 114 are used to calculate the SIGI (questions not used to compute the SIGI are highlighted in grey in Table A C.1).

Table A C.1. Questionnaire of the SIGI 2023 Legal Survey

Discrimination in the family
Child marriage
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to enter into marriage?
Are there legal provisions that prohibit forced marriage?
What is the legal age of marriage for men and women?
Are there legal exceptions to the legal age of marriage that allow women and men under the legal age of marriage to marry with the consent of: a. Parent and/or legal guardian? b. Judge or court? c. Other? (specify) d. No legal exceptions
Regarding women's rights to enter into marriage, does the law apply to all groups of women?
Does the legal age of marriage apply to all groups of women?
Is it illegal to facilitate the marriage of an individual who is under the minimum age of marriage?
Are there legal sanctions/penalties for facilitating the marriage of an individual who is under the minimum age of marriage?
Are there informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) that allow or encourage the early marriage of girls?
Household responsibilities
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to be "head of household" or "head of family"?
Does the law require a married woman to obey her husband?
Does the law include legal consequences if a wife disobeys her husband?
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to be the legal guardians of their children during marriage?
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to be legal guardians of their children in informal unions?
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to choose where to live?
Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to choose where to live?
Regarding women's legal rights to be recognised as head of household or head of family, does the law apply to all groups of women?
Are there informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to being recognised as the head of household?
Are there informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to being the legal guardians of their children?
Are there informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to the choice of where to live?

Divorce
Do women and men have the same rights to initiate/file for a divorce?
Can women and men finalise a divorce or annulment with the same requirements?
Do women and men have the same rights to child custody following a divorce?
Regarding divorce, does the law apply to all groups of women?
Are there informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to initiating divorce?
Are there informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to being the legal guardians of their children after divorce?
Inheritance
Do daughters and sons have the same rights to inherit?
Do female and male surviving spouses have the same rights to inherit?
Regarding inheritance rights of daughters, does the law apply to all groups of women?
Regarding inheritance rights of female surviving spouses, does the law apply to all groups of women?
Does the law prohibit the disinheritance of the surviving spouse?
Is "property dispossession/grabbing" criminalised?
Are there informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between sons and daughters when it comes to inheritance?
Are there informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between male and female surviving spouses when it comes to inheritance?
Restricted physical integrity
Violence against women: General
Is there a law specifically addressing violence against women?
Are there specific provisions in the law for investigation, prosecution and punishment of the perpetrator?
Are there specific provisions in the law for protection and support services for victims/survivors?
Are there specific provisions in the law for protection and support services for victims/survivors?
Does the law include reduced penalties in case of so-called "honour crimes"?
Is there a national action plan or policy to support the implementation of the legislation addressing violence against women?
What are the start date and end date of the national action plan or policy in question?
Is there a national mechanism with the mandate to monitor and review the implementation of the national action plan or policy?
Does the law, policy or action plan include any budgetary commitments?
Does the law, policy or national action plan mandate specialised training and capacity building for professionals who may deal with sexual violence specifically?
Does the law, policy or national action plan outline responsibilities for the state to provide medical support to victims/survivors of violence against women?
Does the law, policy or national action plan provide for legal assistance to victims/survivors of violence against women?
Violence against women: Domestic violence
Is domestic violence a criminal offence?
Does domestic violence legislation cover the following types of violence: a. Physical abuse b. Sexual abuse c. Psychological abuse d. Economic abuse e. The legislation does not cover any of these abuses
Does the law forbid mediation and/or conciliation in cases of domestic violence?
Is there a law, policy or national action plan that sets forth as a priority the integration/co-ordination of services and mechanisms for survivors of violence against women?
Is it a law, policy or national action plan? a. Law b. Policy

c. National action plan d. Other (specify)
Does the law, policy or national action plan provide for guidelines/protocols/trainings to sensitise police and/or professionals in the justice sector to violence against women?
Does the law, policy or national action plan provide for guidelines/protocols/training to sensitise professionals in the health sector to violence against women?
Are there any exceptions included in informal laws (traditional, religious, and/or customary rules/laws) that reduce penalties for domestic violence?
Violence against women: Rape
Is rape a criminal offence?
Is the legal definition of rape based on lack of consent?
If the legal definition of rape is based on lack of consent, does this require proof of physical force?
If the legal definition of rape is based on lack of consent, does this require proof of penetration?
Does the legal definition of rape include marital rape?
Does the law permit the reduction or removal of legal punishment if the perpetrator marries the victim?
Violence against women: Sexual harassment
Does the law prohibit sexual harassment?
Does the law on sexual harassment include civil remedies?
Does the law on sexual harassment include criminal penalties?
Do legal protections from sexual harassment apply in the following places? a. The workplace b. Educational establishments c. Public places d. Online / on the internet e. None of these places
Violence against women: Other violence
Is there a law addressing femicide?
Is there a law addressing political violence against women?
Is there legislation or are there measures in place to protect women from violence in political and public life?
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
Does the law prohibit female genital mutilation (FGM)?
Does the law include criminal penalties for: a. medical practitioners b. parents c. other practitioners of FGM d. no criminal penalties
Are there informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws/rules) that allow/encourage FGM?
Does the law take precedence over informal laws (customary, traditional or religious laws) that allow, condone or prescribe FGM?
Is there a national action plan to address FGM?
Reproductive autonomy
Is abortion illegal?
Is abortion criminalised?
Is abortion legally permitted in cases where: a. it is essential to save the woman's life? b. it is essential to preserve the physical health of the woman? c. it is essential to preserve the mental health of the woman? d. pregnancy is the result of rape or statutory rape? e. pregnancy is the result of incest? f. social and economic reasons do not allow the mother to sustain a pregnancy? g. foetal impairment? h. none of these cases
Does a woman require the approval of a medical practitioner to seek a legal abortion?

Does the law require the approval of the father of the foetus to seek a legal abortion?
Is there any national plan or policy that provide universal access to family planning services?
Is there any law or national policy that provide free or subsidised access to contraception?
Does the national school curricula include mandatory and comprehensive sexuality education?
Restricted access to productive and financial resources
Access to assets (land and non-land)
Regarding land, does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to own land?
Regarding land, does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to use land?
Regarding property and other non-land assets, does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to own these assets?
Regarding property and other non-land assets, does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to use these assets?
Regarding land, does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to own land?
Regarding land, does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to use land?
Regarding property and other non-land assets, does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to own these assets?
Regarding property and other non-land assets, does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to use these assets?
Regarding land, does the law apply to all groups of women?
Regarding property and other non-land assets, does the law apply to all groups of women?
Does the law provide for joint land titling for land used or acquired by married couples?
Does the law provide for joint land titling for land used or acquired by informal unions?
Is there a national action plan promoting women's equal access to land assets and/or property?
Are there informal laws (customary, religious or traditional laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to the ownership or use of land assets?
Are there informal laws (customary, religious or traditional laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to the ownership or use of non-land assets?
Financial services
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to open a bank account at a formal financial institution?
Does the law require married women to obtain the signature and authority of their husband to open a bank account at a formal financial institution?
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to obtain credit?
Regarding access to formal financial services, does the law apply to all groups of women (regardless of race, ethnicity caste, etc.)?
Are there informal laws (customary, religious, or traditional laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to opening a bank account?
Are there informal laws (customary, religious, or traditional laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to obtaining credit?
Workplace rights
Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment on the basis of sex?
If yes, does it specifically cover: a. Hiring b. Promotions c. Termination d. None of these cases
Are there penalties for companies or institutions that discriminate against women in recruitment and promotion?
Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?
Does the law or regulation require companies to report on how they pay women and men?
Does the law prohibit women from entering certain professions?
Does the law allow women to work the same night hours as men?
Does the law mandate paid maternity leave?
What is the length of paid maternity leave?

Please provide the legal reference for laws governing the payment of maternity leave.
Does the law mandate paid paternity leave?
What is the length of paid paternity leave?
Please provide the legal reference for laws governing the payment of paternity leave.
Does the law mandate paid parental leave?
What is the length of paid parental leave?
Please provide the legal reference for laws governing the payment of parental leave.
Does the law prohibit employers from asking about a woman's pregnancy or her intention to have children during the recruitment or promotion process?
Does the law protect women's employment security when they are on maternity leave?
Does the law require women to have permission from their husband or legal guardian to take a paid job?
Does the law require women to have permission from their husband or legal guardian to register a business?
Regarding women's legal right to take a paid job or work and/or register a business, does the law apply to all groups of women (regardless of race, ethnicity caste, etc.)?
Are there informal laws (customary, religious, or traditional laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to entering certain professions?
Are there informal laws (customary, religious, or traditional laws/rules) that require women to have the permission from their husband or legal guardian to take a paid job?
Are there informal laws (customary, religious, or traditional laws/rules) that require women to have the permission from their husband or legal guardian to register a business?
Restricted civil liberties
Citizenship rights
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to acquire nationality?
Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to acquire nationality?
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to change their nationality?
Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to change their nationality?
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to retain their nationality?
Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to retain their nationality?
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to confer nationality to their spouse?
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to confer nationality to their children?
Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to confer nationality to their children?
Regarding women's nationality rights, does the law apply to all groups of women (regardless of race, caste, ethnicity, etc.)?
Are there informal laws (customary, traditional, or religious laws) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to acquiring, changing, or retaining their nationality?
Are there informal laws (customary, traditional, or religious laws) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to conferring nationality to their spouse and/or children?
Freedom of movement
Does the government provide national identity cards?
Can a married woman apply for a national identity card in the same way as a married man? (in terms of rights and procedures)
Can an unmarried woman apply for a national identity card in the same way as an unmarried man? (in terms of rights and procedures)
Can a married woman apply for a passport in the same way as a married man (in terms of rights and procedures)?
Can an unmarried woman apply for a passport in the same way as an unmarried man (in terms of rights and procedures)?
Regarding identity cards and/or passports, does the law apply to all groups of women (regardless of race, caste, ethnicity, etc.)?
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to travel outside the country?
Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to travel outside the country?
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to travel outside their homes?
Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to travel outside their homes?
Are there informal laws (customary, religious, or traditional laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to applying for identity cards or passports?

Political voice
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to vote?
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to hold public and political office in the legislative branch?
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to hold public and political office in the executive branch?
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to hold public office in the judiciary branch?
Do constitutional/legislated gender quotas exist to promote women's political representation at the national level?
Do constitutional/legislated gender quotas exist to promote women's political representation at the local level? Please specify the local level.
Does the law provide for special measures other than quotas to promote women's political representation at the national level?
Does the law provide for special measures other than quotas to promote women's political representation at the local level? Please specify the local level
Does the law provide for sanctions for failure to implement gender quotas?
Is there a national action plan promoting equality between women and men in political and public life?
Are there informal laws (customary, religious or traditional laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to voting?
Are there informal laws (customary, religious or traditional laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to holding public office?
Access to justice
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to sue?
Does a woman's testimony carry the same evidentiary weight as a man's in the following courts? a. Civil courts b. Criminal courts c. Family courts d. Tribunals e. None of the above
Does the country have parallel plural legal systems?
Does a woman's testimony carry the same evidentiary weight as a man's in all justice systems?
Are there informal laws (customary, religious or traditional laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes suing someone?
Are there informal laws (customary, religious or traditional laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to providing testimony in court?
Are there informal laws (customary, religious or traditional laws/rules) that create different rights or abilities between men and women when it comes to being judges, advocates or other court officers?

Note: Questions highlighted in grey were not used to build the SIGI legal variables.
Source: OECD Development Centre/OECD (2023), *SIGI 2023 Legal Survey*, https://oe.cd/sigi.

Glossary

Term	Definition	Source
Adaptation (in climate change)	Adaptation refers to adjustments in ecological, social or economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli and their effects. It refers to changes in processes, practices, and structures to moderate potential damages or to benefit from opportunities associated with climate change.	(UNFCCC, n.d.[1])
Adolescence	Adolescence is the phase of life between childhood and adulthood, from ages 10 to 19.	(WHO, n.d.[2])
Agroecological approach	Agroecology (or regenerative agriculture) is a holistic and integrated approach that simultaneously applies ecological and social concepts and principles to the design and management of sustainable agriculture and food systems. It seeks to optimise the interactions between plants, animals, humans, and the environment while also addressing the need for socially equitable food systems.	(FAO, n.d.[3])
Assisted reproductive technology (ART)	Assisted reproductive technology (ART) includes all fertility treatments in which either eggs or embryos are handled. ART procedures involve surgically removing eggs from a woman's ovaries, combining them with sperm in the laboratory, and returning them to the woman's body or donating them to another woman. They do not include treatments in which only sperm are handled (i.e. intrauterine – or artificial – insemination) or procedures in which a woman takes medicine only to stimulate egg production without the intention of having eggs retrieved.	(CDC, 2019[4])
Biomass	Biomass refers to the biodegradable fraction of products, waste and residues from agriculture (including vegetal and animal substances), forestry and related industries, as well as the biodegradable fraction of industrial and municipal waste.	(European Environment Agency, 2001[5])
Black carbon	Black carbon, or soot, is part of fine particulate air pollution and contributes to climate change. It is formed by the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, wood and other fuels. Complete combustion would turn all carbon in the fuel into carbon dioxide (CO_2), but combustion is never complete and CO_2, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, and organic carbon and black carbon particles are all formed in the process. The complex mixture of particulate matter resulting from incomplete combustion is often referred to as soot. Black carbon is a short-lived climate pollutant with a lifetime of only days to weeks after release in the atmosphere.	(Climate & Clean Air Coalition, n.d.[6])
Bodily autonomy	Bodily autonomy refers to the power of women to make choices about their own bodies without facing coercion or violence.	(UNFPA, 2021[7])
Child marriage	Child marriage refers to any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 and an adult or another child.	(UNICEF, n.d.[8])
Climate change	Climate change refers to the long-term changes in the Earth's climate and temperature that are warming the atmosphere, ocean and land.	(United Nations, n.d.[9])
Climate finance	Climate finance refers to local, national or transnational financing – drawn from public, private and alternative sources of financing – that seeks to support mitigation and adaptation actions that will address climate change.	(UNFCCC, n.d.[10])
Climate information services (CIS)	Climate information services refer to decision aides which derive from climate information that assists individuals and organisations in society to carry out improved ex-ante decision making.	(WMO, 2013[11])
Climate-resilient agriculture (CRA)	Climate-resilient agriculture (CRA) refers to the ability of an agricultural system to anticipate and prepare for, as well as adapt to, absorb, and recover from the impacts of changes in climate and extreme weather.	(Alvar-Beltrán et al., 2021[12])
Climate-smart agriculture (CSA)	Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) is an integrated approach to managing landscapes – cropland, livestock, forests and fisheries – that addresses the interlinked challenges of food security and accelerating climate change. CSA aims to simultaneously achieve three outcomes: increased productivity, enhanced resilience, and reduced emissions.	(World Bank, 2021[13])

Climate justice	Climate justice means linking human rights with development and climate action. It entails having a people-centred and human rights approach to climate action. This entails ensuring representation, inclusion, and protection of the rights of those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Pursuing climate justice means combatting social, gender, economic, intergenerational and environmental injustice.	(UNICEF, 2022[14])
Climatological disaster	A climatological disaster refers to hazards caused by long-lived, meso- to macro-scale atmospheric processes ranging from intra-seasonal to multi-decadal climate variability. They include droughts, forest and land fires.	(CRED, n.d.[15])
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.	(United Nations, n.d.[16])
Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE)	Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to: realise their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.	(UNESCO, 2023[17])
Conscientious objection	Conscientious objection refers to healthcare workers or service providers refusing to provide information on or carry out an abortion based on personal beliefs which may be often anchored in culture or religion.	(Center for Reproductive Rights, n.d.[18])
Disaster	A disaster refers to a situation or event, which overwhelms local capacity, necessitating a request to national or international level for external assistance. An unforeseen and often sudden event that causes great damage, destruction and human suffering.	(CRED, n.d.[15])
Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)	Disaster risk reduction is aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk and managing residual risk, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development.	(UNDRR, n.d.[19])
Discriminatory social institutions	Discriminatory social institutions are the complex web of formal and informal laws, social norms and practices that restrict women's and girls' access to rights, justice, empowerment opportunities and resources, undermining their agency and authority.	(OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2023[20])
Domestic violence	Domestic violence refers to violence that occurs within the private sphere, generally between individuals who are related through blood, intimacy or law.	(CEDAW, 2017[21])
Edutainment	Edutainment (short for "entertainment-education") is the use of entertainment media with educational and development objectives. Edutainment can take the form of movies, television shows, documentaries, social media campaigns, music and games.	(World Bank, 2023[22])
Employment	Employment is defined as persons of working age who were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit, whether at work during the reference period or not at work due to temporary absence from a job, or to working-time arrangement.	(World Bank, 2023[23])
Energy poverty	Energy poverty is a situation in which households are unable to access essential energy services and products. It occurs when energy bills represent a high percentage of consumers' income, or when they must reduce their household's energy consumption to a degree that negatively impacts their health and well-being.	(European Comission, n.d.[24])
Family planning	Family planning refers to use of modern contraceptives or natural techniques to limit or space pregnancies.	(The DHS Program, n.d.[25])
Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) refers to all the procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injuries to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.	(OHCHR et al., 2008[26])
Feminisation of poverty	Increasing incidence and prevalence of poverty among women compared to men, as a result of structural discrimination that affects women's lives and is reflected in lower salaries, lower pensions, fewer benefits, etc.	(European Commission, 1998[27])
Food security	Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.	(FAO, 2003[28])
Gender-Based Violence (GBV)	Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to any harmful act directed against individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of their gender or sex.	(UN Women, n.d.[29])

Gender-responsive plans	Gender-responsive plans are programmes which intentionally employ gender considerations to affect the design, implementation and results of programmes and policies. Gender-responsive programmes and policies reflect girls' and women's realities and needs, in components such as site selection, project staff, content, monitoring, etc. Gender-responsiveness means paying attention to the unique needs of females, valuing their perspectives, respecting their experiences, understanding developmental differences between girls and boys, women and men and ultimately empowering girls and women.	(UNICEF, 2017[30])
Geophysical disaster	Geophysical disasters are events originating from solid earth. They include earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic activity, and mass movement.	(CRED, n.d.[15])
Global warming	Global warming refers to changes in the surface-air temperature, referred to as the global temperature, brought about by the greenhouse effect which is induced by emission of greenhouse gases into the air.	(European Environment Agency, 2000[31])
Greenhouse gases	Greenhouse gases (GHG) are gases in the atmosphere, such as carbon dioxide, methane, water vapor, and ozone, that absorb solar heat reflected by the surface of the Earth, warming the atmosphere.	(National Geographic, 2022[32])
Greenhouse effect	The greenhouse effect happens when certain gases – known as greenhouse gases – collect in Earth's atmosphere. Greenhouse gases let the sun's light shine onto Earth's surface, but they trap the heat that reflects back up into the atmosphere. In this way, they act like the insulating glass walls of a greenhouse. The greenhouse effect keeps Earth's climate comfortable. Without it, surface temperatures would be cooler by about 33 degrees Celsius.	(National Geographic, 2022[32])
Hydrological disaster	Hydrological disasters are hazards caused by the occurrence, movement and distribution of surface and subsurface freshwater and saltwater. They include floods, landslides and wave action.	(CRED, n.d.[15])
Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)	Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is an infection that attacks the body's immune system, specifically the white blood cells called CD4 cells. HIV destroys these CD4 cells, weakening a person's immunity against opportunistic infections, such as tuberculosis and fungal infections, severe bacterial infections, and some cancers.	(WHO, n.d.[33])
In vitro fertilisation (IVF)	In vitro fertilisation (IVF) refers to a procedure in which eggs are removed from a woman's ovary and combined with sperm outside the body to form embryos. The embryos are grown in the laboratory for several days and then either placed in a woman's uterus or cryopreserved (frozen) for future use.	(National Cancer Institute, n.d.[34])
Informal economy	Informal economy refers to all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements. Their activities are not included in the law, which means that they are operating outside the formal reach of the law; or they are not covered in practice, which means that – although they are operating within the formal reach of the law, the law is not applied or not enforced; or the law discourages compliance because it is inappropriate, burdensome, or imposes excessive costs.	(ILO, 2023[35])
Informal laws	Informal systems are also often referred to as "traditional", "indigenous", "customary" or "non-state" justice systems. Informal justice systems tend to address a wide range of issues of significant concern to the people, including personal security and local crime; protection of land, property and livestock; resolution of family and community disputes; and protection of entitlements, such as access to public services.	(United Nations, n.d.[36])
Infertility	Infertility is a disease of the male or female reproductive system defined by the failure to achieve a pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse.	(WHO, 2023[37])
Intimate-partner violence	Intimate partner violence refers to behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours.	(WHO, n.d.[38])
Land tenure security	Land tenure security is the certainty that a person's rights to land will be recognised by others and protected in cases of specific challenges.	(FAO, 2002[39])
Masculinities	Masculinities refer to socially constructed definitions of being a man, which can change over time and from place to place. The term relates to perceived notions and ideals about how men should or are expected to behave in a given setting.	(United Nations, 2014[40])
Maternal health	Maternal health refers to the health of women during pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period.	(WHO, n.d.[41])
Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)	The maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is the number of maternal deaths during a given time period per 100 000 live births during the same time-period.	(WHO, 2023[42])
Meteorological disaster	Meteorological disasters are events caused by short-lived/small to mesoscale atmospheric processes (in the spectrum from minutes to days). They include storms and extreme temperatures.	(CRED, n.d.[15])
Mitigation	Mitigation refers to the lessening or limitation of the adverse impacts of a hazardous event through proactive measures taken before an emergency or disaster occurs. It should be noted that, in climate change policy, "mitigation" is defined differently, and is the term used for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions that are the source of climate change.	(UNDRR, 2017[43])

Modern methods of contraception	Modern methods of contraception include oral contraceptive pills, implants, injectables, contraceptive patch and vaginal ring, intrauterine device (IDU), female and male condoms, female and male sterilisation, vaginal barrier methods (including the diaphragm, cervical cap and spermicidal agents), lactational amenorrhea method (LAM), emergency contraception pills, standard days method (SDM), basal body temperature (BBT) method, TwoDay method and sympto-thermal method.	(WHO, n.d.[44])
Newborn health	Newborn health refers to the health of babies in their first 28 days of life. It includes birth-attendances, measures to prevent and manage newborn illness, and encompasses the physical, social, and emotional well-being of newborns.	(WHO, n.d.[45])
Newborn mortality	Newborn mortality (or neonatal mortality) refers to deaths among live births during the first 28 completed days of life.	(WHO, 2022[46])
Parental consent laws	Parental consent laws refer to consent given on a minor's behalf by at least one parent, or a legal guardian, or by another person properly authorised to act for the minor, for the minor to engage in or submit to a specified activity. Laws of some jurisdictions require parents' consent to be given for a minor to legally engage in certain activities.	(US Legal, 2023[47])
Perinatal health	Perinatal health refers to the health of women and babies from 22 completed weeks of gestation until 7 completed days after birth.	(WHO, n.d.[48])
Renewable energy	Renewable energy is energy that is derived from natural sources that are replenished at a faster rate than they are consumed, including hydro, bioenergy, geothermal, aerothermal, solar, wind and ocean.	(Sustainable Energy for All, 2013[49]).
Reproductive age	Reproductive age refers to people in the age range between 15 and 49 years old.	(WHO, 2023[50])
Reproductive justice	Reproductive justice is an intersectional concept born out of social justice movements led by Black women in the 1990s in the United States. It emphasises how intersecting social identities (including gender, race and class) affect a person's right to have a child, not to have a child and the right to parent any children one has.	(In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda, n.d.[51])
Resilience	Resilience is defined as the ability not only to withstand and cope with challenges but also to undergo transitions, in a sustainable, fair and democratic manner.	(European Commission, n.d.[52])
Roe v. Wade	"Roe v. Wade" was a landmark decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973 in which the Court ruled that the Constitution of the United States generally protects a pregnant individual's liberty to have an abortion under the 14th Amendment that protects individual privacy and liberty. Once overturned in 2022 by the Supreme Court following "Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization", several states in the United States took immediate action to ban or strongly restrict women's reproductive rights.	(Center for Reproductive Rights, n.d.[53])
School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV)	School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) refers to act or threats of different forms of violence that occurs in and around schools, concerns millions of students across cultural, economic and geographic barriers.	(UNESCO and UN Women, 2016[54])
Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)	Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are spread predominantly by unprotected sexual contact. Some STIs can also be transmitted during pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding and through infected blood or blood products. The most common and curable STIs are trichomonas, chlamydia, gonorrhoea, and syphilis. STIs have a profound impact on health. If untreated, they can lead to serious consequences including neurological and cardiovascular disease, infertility, ectopic pregnancy, stillbirths and increased risk of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). They are also associated with stigma, domestic violence, and affect the quality of life.	(WHO, n.d.[55])
Social institutions	Social institutions are patterns of belief, practice and organisation that shape the lives of individuals and groups in society. Functional social institutions can be found in education, health, justice and social protection, and include norms, practices and laws. Social institutions are shaped by power dynamics, social values, social norms, and stereotypes.	(UNESCO, ISSC and Institute of Development Studies (IDS), 2016[56])
Social norms	Social norms are the perceived informal, mostly unwritten, rules that define acceptable and appropriate actions within a given group or community, thus guiding human behaviour. They consist of what we do, what we believe others do, and what we believe others approve of and expect us to do. Social norms are therefore situated at the interplay between behaviour, beliefs and expectations.	(UNICEF, 2021[57])
Sustainable agriculture	To be sustainable, agriculture must meet the needs of present and future generations for its products and services, while ensuring profitability, environmental health and social and economic equity.	(FAO, n.d.[58])
Third-party reproduction	Third-party reproduction, also referred to as donor-assisted reproduction, is defined as an alternative human reproduction technique in which DNA or pregnancy is provided by a third party (gamete donors and/or gestational carriers), that is, a person other than the prospective parents, who will raise the resulting baby. There are four different types of third-party reproduction arrangements, which at the same time allow combinations between them: egg donation, sperm donation, embryo donation/adoption and surrogacy.	(Ballesteros et al., 2022[59])

Traditional methods of contraception	Traditional methods of contraception include rhythm method (periodic abstinence), withdrawal (coitus interruptus), fertility awareness-based methods, etc.	(United Nations, 2016[60])
Unmet need for family planning	Unmet need for family planning refers to the gap between women's reproductive intentions and their contraceptive behaviour, defined as the proportion of currently married or in-union women of reproductive age (15-49 years) who want to cease or delay childbearing but are not using any method of contraception.	(United Nations, 2014[61])
Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW)	Unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) refer to non-market, unpaid work carried out in households (by women primarily, but also to varying degrees by girls, men and boys). This work includes both direct care (of persons) and indirect care (such as cooking, cleaning, fetching water and fuel, etc.).	(ActionAid, 2023[62])
Unsafe abortion	Unsafe abortion refers to a procedure for terminating an unintended pregnancy carried out either by persons lacking the necessary skills or in an environment that does not conform to minimal medical standards, or both. The following conditions typically characterise an unsafe abortion, sometimes only a few conditions prevail, and sometimes all or most of them: no pre-abortion counselling and advice; abortion is induced by an unskilled provider, frequently in unhygienic conditions, or by a health practitioner outside official/adequate health facilities; abortion is self-induced by ingestion of traditional medication or hazardous substances; abortion is provoked by insertion of an object into the uterus by the woman herself or by a traditional practitioner, or by a violent abdominal massage; a medical abortion is prescribed incorrectly or medication is issued by a pharmacist with no or incorrect instructions and no follow-up.	(WHO, 2021[63])
Violence against women (VAW)	Violence against women means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.	(United Nations, 1993[64])
Young people	Young people refer to those persons between the ages of 10 and 24 years.	(WHO, n.d.[65])
Youth	Youth is the period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence and refers to those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years.	(United Nations, n.d.[66]) (WHO, n.d.[65])

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Social Institutions and Gender Index

SIGI 2023 Global Report

GENDER EQUALITY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

What are the root causes of gender inequality? Building on the fifth edition of the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), the *SIGI 2023 Global Report* provides a global outlook of discriminatory social institutions, the fundamental causes of gender inequality. It reveals how formal and informal laws, social norms and practices limit women's and girls' rights and opportunities in all aspects of their lives. Globally, 40% of them continue to live in countries where gender-based discrimination is assessed as high or very high.

The report stresses how discriminatory social institutions curtail women's and adolescents' fundamental access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. It also sheds light on the gendered impacts of climate change and underlines how women can play a pivotal role in climate change mitigation and adaptation. To accelerate efforts aimed at achieving SDG 5 and eliminating the underlying and structural factors that hamper women's empowerment, the report offers concrete policy actions. It calls for a gender-transformative approach to leverage crises and challenges into windows of opportunity to establish women and men as agents of change.

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