



Gender equality

5

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

One hundred fifty countries have at least one law that treats women and men differently, and 63 countries have five or more. Such institutional biases—together with adverse social norms, persistent gender gaps in access to assets, and the failure to recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid domestic work—undermine women’s economic empowerment. Goal 5 offers an opportunity to deliver transformative actions for addressing these constraints and for accelerating progress toward stronger economies.

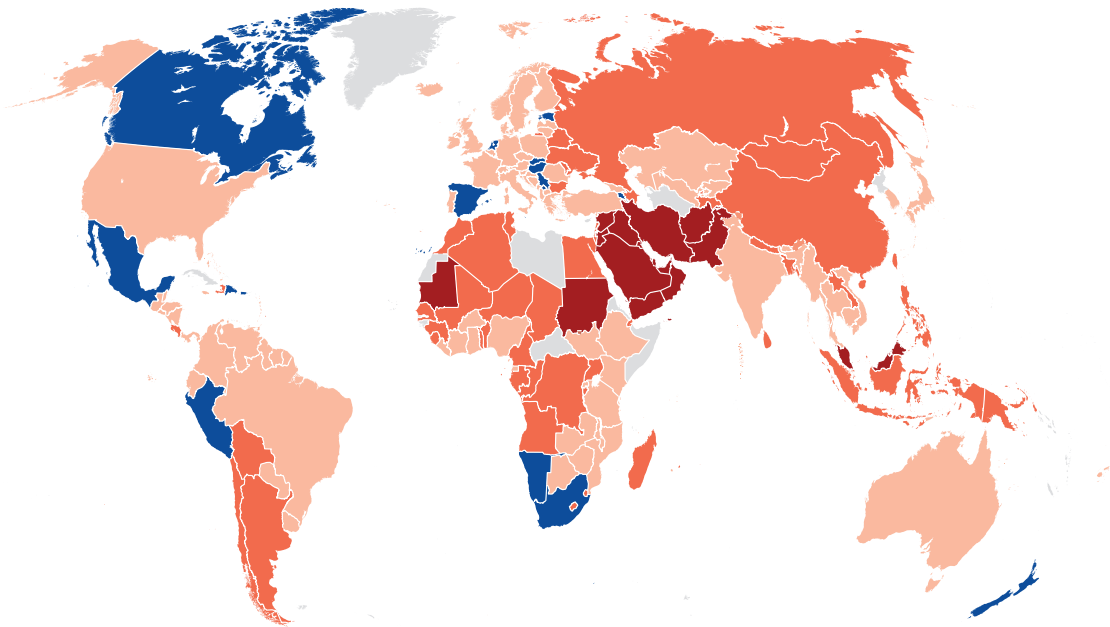
Ending legal gender differences

Ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls is crucial for inclusive sustainable development (target 5.1). Widespread legal gender differences affect women’s economic prospects—for example, by making it difficult for women to own property, open bank accounts, start businesses, and enter certain professions. Countries in the Middle

East and North Africa have on average 16 laws relating to employment and entrepreneurship that differentiate between women and men, while countries in South Asia average 8, and those in Sub-Saharan Africa average 6 (figure 5a).^{1,2} In East Asia and Pacific, the average number of legal gender differences is 5, followed by Europe and Central Asia with 3, Latin America and the Caribbean with 2, and North America with 1.

5a Employment and entrepreneurship related legal gender differences are widespread

Number of employment and entrepreneurship related laws differentiating between women and men



Source: World Bank Group, 2015, *Women, Business, and the Law 2016: Getting to Equal*, Washington, DC.

Combating harmful social norms

Despite the existence of violence against women across the globe, specific laws against gender-based violence are not universal (target 5.2). In 49 countries there is no specific law against domestic violence, in 45 there is no legislation to address sexual harassment, and 112 countries do not criminalize marital rape. And in many countries societal norms permit physical and verbal abuse—for instance, if a wife argues with her husband or partner, refuses to have sex, burns food, goes out without telling him, or neglects the children (figure 5b). In Timor-Leste and Central African Republic, for example, the law penalizes domestic violence, sexual harassment and marital rape, but around 80 percent of women still justify spousal abuse in any of the five circumstances listed. While recent laws to address gender-based violence signal progress over the past couple of years, social norms against wider gender equality reduce the potential for change.

Breaking the cycle of early marriage and poverty

A woman's access to education and later her employment opportunities as well as the nature and terms of her work are often compromised by early marriage: Goal 5 looks to eliminate this

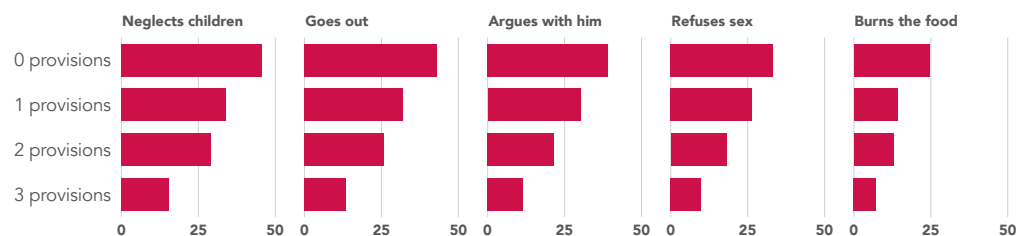
practice (target 5.3). Young married girls whose schooling is cut short often lack the knowledge and skills for formal work and are limited to occupations with lower incomes and inferior working conditions (figure 5c). Early marriage is widespread in parts of South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Even though Niger, Chad, Central African Republic, and Mali legally prohibit child marriage, and there are penalties for authorizing or knowingly entering into early marriage, more than half of all girls are married by age 18.³

Promoting shared responsibility for unpaid work

Women typically spend disproportionately more time on unpaid domestic and care work than men. Goal 5 seeks recognition of this work and a more equitable distribution of these activities between women and men (target 5.4). Of the countries surveyed, women spend on average between 13 (Thailand) and 28 percent (Mexico) of their time in unpaid domestic and care activities, while men spend between 3 (Japan) and 13 percent (Sweden) (figure 5d).⁴ This unequal division of responsibilities is correlated with gender differences in economic opportunities, including low female labor force participation, occupational sex segregation, and earnings differentials.

5b Women are more likely to tolerate domestic abuse in countries with fewer legal provisions against domestic violence

Share of women believing a man is justified in beating his wife for different reasons, by number of legal provisions in a country against domestic violence (%)

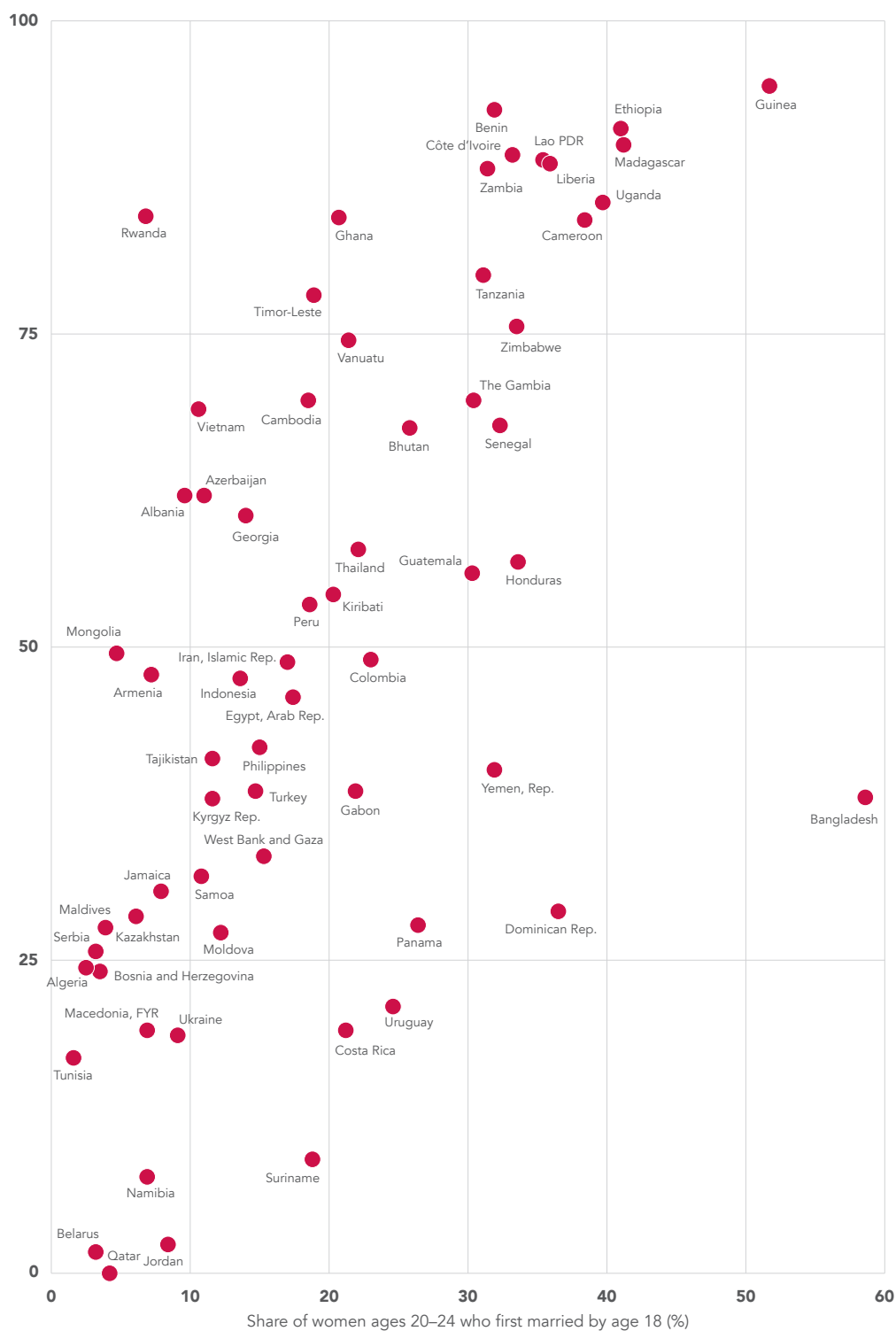


Note: The number of legal provisions ranges between 0 and 3 depending on the existence of a law on domestic violence, sexual harassment or marital rape. (yes = 1, no = 0).

Source: Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), and other surveys, most recent year available during 2009–15; World Bank Group, 2015, *Women, Business and the Law 2016: Getting to Equal*, Washington, DC; WDI (SG.VAW.NEGL.ZS, SG.VAW.REFU.ZS, SG.VAW.GOES.ZS, SG.VAW.BURN.ZS, SG.VAW.ARGU.ZS, SG.LEG.DVAW); World Bank Gender Statistics database (SG.LEG.DVAW, SG.LEG.MRRP, SG.LEG.SXHR). Aggregations based on available data from 54 countries.

5c Early marriage correlates with women in inferior working conditions

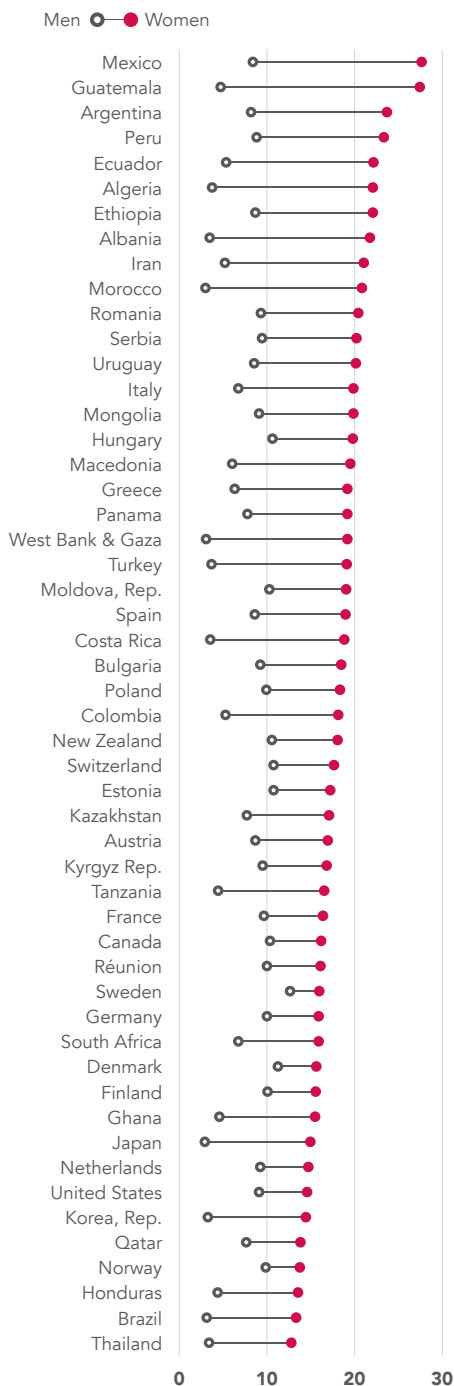
Vulnerable employment female (unpaid family workers or own-account workers, % of female employment)



Source: Demographic and Health Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, and other surveys ; International Labour Organization Key Indicators of the Labour Market database; WDI (SP.M18.2024.FE.ZS, SL.EMP.VULN.FE.ZS), most recent year available during 2009–15.

5d Women spend more time on unpaid work than men

Share of total time allocated to unpaid domestic and care work, countries for which data are available (%)

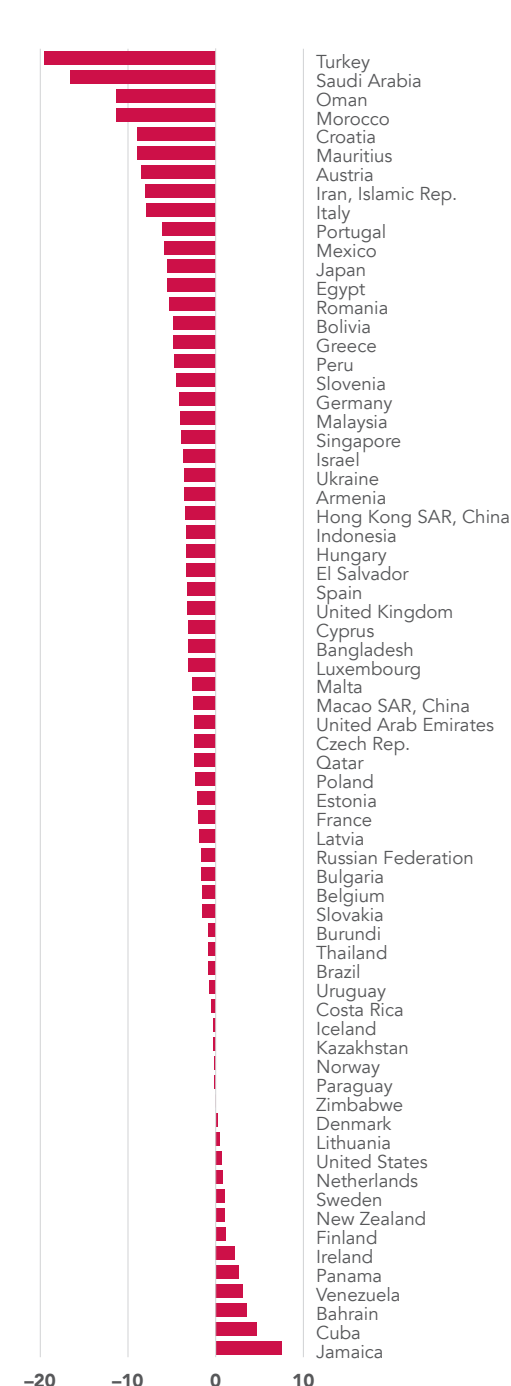


Note: Data may not be strictly comparable across countries as the methods and sampling involved for data collection may differ. Figure displays most recent year available during 2009–15.

Source: United Nations Statistical Division.

5e Differences persist between men and women's Internet use

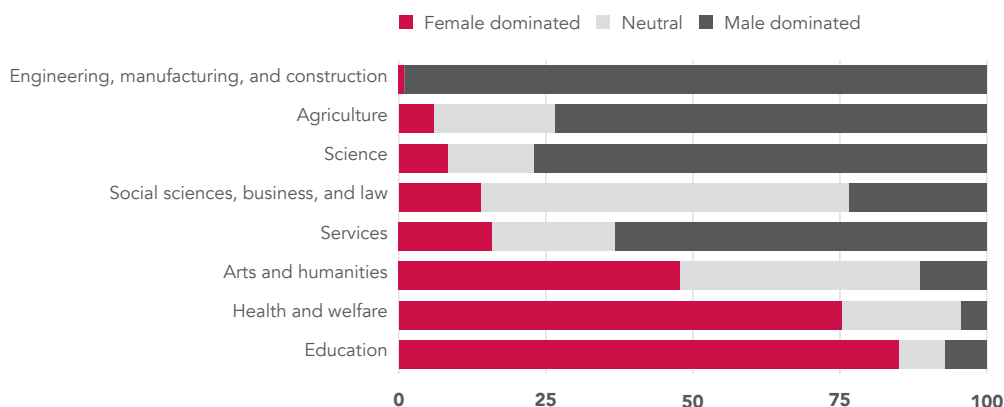
Difference between the percentage of female and male population using the Internet (percentage points)



Source: International Telecommunication Union, most recent year available during 2012–15.

5f In most countries women dominate in health and education studies and men in engineering and science studies

Share of countries where the field of study is female- or male-dominated (%)



Note: A given tertiary education program is “female dominated” if the female share of enrollment in the program is 5 percentage points higher than female share of tertiary graduates, “male dominated” if female share of enrollment in the program is 5 percentage points less than female share of tertiary graduates, and neutral if the difference between female share of enrollment in the program and female share of tertiary graduates is less than 5 percentage points. The country sample size for each field of study ranges from 101 to 115.

Source: Estimations based on UNESCO Institute for Statistics; Education Statistics database UIS.FEP.56.F600, UIS.FEP.56.F140, UIS.FEP.56.F500, UIS.FEP.56.F700, UIS.FEP.56.F200, UIS.FEP.56.F400, UIS.FEP.56.F800, UIS.FEP.56.F300, SE.TER.GRAD.FE.ZS, most recent year available during 2012–15.

Enhancing women’s use of technology

Technology can contribute to women’s empowerment by helping them overcome mobility constraints, access relevant information and new communication channels, and participate in existing networks (target 5.b).

Widespread differences between men and women in access to basic technology persist in most parts of the world (figure 5e). Overall, women are less likely to be Internet users regardless of their region or income. The difference in Internet use can be as high as

report receiving their wage payments into an account, and large gender gaps remain. Women in low- and middle-income countries are about a third less likely than men to report having received any wage payments into an account in the previous year.⁴

Expanding female participation in nontraditional areas

Teaching both women and men the technical skills and capabilities to succeed in the digital economy is a top priority. Across the world, women are overrepresented in education and

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