

Bending the Curve Towards Gender Equality by 2030



Gender Data and the Generation Equality Action Coalitions

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2020 marks 25 years since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and countries around the world will be taking stock of progress to date and how much more needs to be done. New research released by the Equal Measures 2030 partnership in *Bending the Curve* highlights the urgency of accelerated action to reach gender equality as outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The Generation Equality Action Coalitions

One important vehicle for accelerated action and investment linked to the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action are the Generation Equality 'Action Coalitions'. The campaign has galvanized six Action Coalitions to be launched in 2020, which are set to be innovative, multi-stakeholder partnerships across government, international organizations, civil society and the private sector aiming to drive investment and deliver concrete results.

Following a consultative and evidence-based process, the six themes selected were:

Gender-based violence

Economic justice and rights

Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

Feminist action for climate justice

Technology and innovation for gender equality

Feminist movements and leadership

The process to identify the Action Coalitions was underpinned by strong data and analysis showing why each issue is of crucial importance for girls' and women's rights. The analysis in *Bending the Curve Towards Gender Equality by 2030*¹ and the data from the Equal Measures 2030 2019 SDG Gender Index² can help to illuminate the pressing need for the Coalitions to catalyze cross-sector action on gender equality. However, a lack of sufficient and sufficiently-disaggregated data³ continue to constrain our understanding of these issues, which is why data and accountability must be a deliberate part of each Action Coalition.

BENDING THE CURVE TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY BY 2030

¹ *Equal Measures 2030, Bending the Curve Towards Gender Equality (Equal Measures 2030, 2020)*, <https://data.em2030.org/2020-index-projections/bending-the-curve-towards-gender-equality-by-2030/>.

² *Equal Measures 2030, 2019, "Harnessing the Power of Data for Gender Equality: Introducing the 2019 EM2030 SDG Gender Index."* <https://data.em2030.org/2019-global-report/>.

³ *For more on data gaps and how to fill them, see forthcoming Data 2X report 'Mapping Gender Data Gaps: an SDG Era Update'* <https://data2x.org/resource-center/mapping-gender-data-gaps-an-sdg-era-update/>.

Action Coalition: Gender-based violence

- Lack of comparable global data on gender-based violence prevents in-depth examination of this issue, though the data available, and significant anecdotal evidence, indicate that violence affects a large proportion of girls and women in every country around the world.
- As a proxy measure, *Bending the Curve* looked at girls' and women's own perceptions of their safety when walking at night in the 129 countries included in the 2019 SDG Gender Index.⁴ Globally, progress on this measure remains very slow and varies widely depending on the country: nearly half

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of countries studied saw change in the *wrong* direction with *more* girls and women reporting feeling unsafe than they did a decade ago.⁵ Progress towards ensuring that every girl and woman feels safe walking at night needs to be 13 times faster globally to reach the target by 2030.⁶

- The 2019 SDG Gender Index also looked at women's perceptions of domestic violence. High proportions of women in many countries think it is acceptable for a man to beat his wife in certain circumstances.⁷ Recent analysis shows that these kinds of attitudes towards violence are deeply entrenched, even among young people: 37 per cent of youth (15–19 years old) believe that a husband can be justified in hitting or beating his wife.⁸

- Significant data gaps remain on the issue of violence against girls and women, for example to understand real prevalence rates of intimate partner violence, of gender-based violence in the workplace and on public transport, and of the prevalence, investigation, and sentencing of sexual violence.

Action Coalition: Economic justice and rights

- Laws that guarantee equality for women in the workplace are an important foundation for women's economic justice and rights. *Bending the Curve* found that while the trend is generally moving in the right direction, the world still has a long way to go: over the past 11 years, only 20 countries have introduced sufficient laws on women's equality in the workplace to meet seven key standards⁹ (as measured by the World Bank's *Women, Business and the Law* research).¹⁰ To ensure that by 2030 every girl and woman is legally entitled to equality at work, we need 93 more countries to bring their workplace equality laws up to this threshold (doubling the current pace of change).¹¹
- The economic justice and rights agenda is well covered by the 2019 SDG Gender Index: at least one third of the 51 issues in the index are directly linked to women's economic justice and rights, including laws on women's land rights, women's views on food and housing affordability, use of bank accounts, digital banking, internet access, and government spending on social assistance.
- Data gaps continue to hamper efforts to understand the current situation and pace of change towards greater economic rights for women. For example, we need more and better data on women's paid and unpaid care work, the gender pay gap, rates of gender-based violence in and around the workplace, women's labour rights in practice, and the impact and take up of parental leave policies.

4 Data gaps prevented the inclusion of all countries and territories in the 2019 SDG Gender Index.

5 *Equal Measures 2030, Bending the Curve Towards Gender Equality (Equal Measures 2030, 2020)*, <https://data.em2030.org/2020-index-projections/bending-the-curve-towards-gender-equality-by-2030/>.

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Equal Measures 2030, 2019, "Harnessing the Power of Data for Gender Equality: Introducing the 2019 EM2030 SDG Gender Index."* <https://data.em2030.org/2019-global-report/>.

8 'UNICEF global databases and national surveys' as cited in 'Generation Equality, 2020. "Action Coalitions: Summary of Preliminary Data Analysis", (Available on request from UN Women).

9 The seven workplace equality laws included in the composite indicator are as follows: Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender? Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value? Can women work the same night hours as men? Can women work in jobs deemed dangerous in the same way as men? Are women able to work in the same industries as men? Is paid maternity leave of at least 14 weeks available to women? Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?

10 *Equal Measures 2030, Bending the Curve Towards Gender Equality (Equal Measures 2030, 2020)*, <https://data.em2030.org/2020-index-projections/bending-the-curve-towards-gender-equality-by-2030/>.

11 *Ibid.*

Action Coalition: Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights

- Girls' and women's control over their bodies and sexual and reproductive health is fundamental to the fulfillment of their potential and the enjoyment of all other rights.
- 13 million girls and young women under the age of 20 gave birth in 2019.¹² Access to safe, voluntary family planning is central to gender equality, and is also a key factor in reducing poverty. Girls and women who are unable to access modern forms of contraception or make informed decisions about their bodies face greater health risks, including contracting sexually transmitted diseases, having children at a young age, and being unable to safely space pregnancies.
- Between 2000 and 2018, access to contraception decreased in 14 countries. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, gains were strong and the regional average improved from just 32 per cent in 2000 to 54 per cent in 2018.¹³ Globally, progress on access to modern methods of family planning needs to accelerate by more than three times to reach the target by 2030. This would lead to more than 400 million girls and women having access to contraception to plan if and when they have children than if the current pace continued to 2030.¹⁴
- Data gaps remain a challenge for issues related to SRHR and bodily autonomy. For example, data are often collected for ages 15–49 despite the fact that, for many girls and boys, the sexually active and reproductive phase of their lives begins before age 15. Equally, a number of issues remain politically controversial and data are not collected, not reported, and/or methodologies are not standardized, for example on comprehensive sexuality education, access to abortion, and whether data on unmet need for contraceptives includes married *and* unmarried women.

¹² Save the Children, 2019. *Changing Lives in our Lifetime: Global Childhood Report 2019*. www.savethechildren.org/content/dam/usa/reports/advocacy/global-childhood-report-2019-pdf.pdf.

¹³ *Equal Measures 2030, Bending the Curve Towards Gender Equality (Equal Measures 2030, 2020)*, <https://data.em2030.org/2020-index-projections/bending-the-curve-towards-gender-equality-by-2030/>.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ UNDP, 2016. *Policy Brief: Gender and Climate Change – Overview of linkages between gender and climate change*. www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/gender/Gender%20and%20Environment/UNDP%20Linkages%20Gender%20and%20CC%20Policy%20Brief%201-WEB.pdf.

¹⁶ *Equal Measures 2030, 2019, "Harnessing the Power of Data for Gender Equality: Introducing the 2019 EM2030 SDG Gender Index."* <https://data.em2030.org/2019-global-report/>.

Action Coalition: Feminist action for climate justice

- Climate change and environmental destruction are decidedly feminist issues: women are likelier than men to live in poverty, and gendered social roles that reproduce socioeconomic power imbalances leave girls and women particularly vulnerable to a wide variety of climate consequences, including reduced access to water, food, shelter, and vital services. Unsurprisingly, 80 per cent of people displaced by climate change are girls and women, and women are more likely than men to suffer from increased workload and income loss due to climate disasters.¹⁵
- In the 2019 SDG Gender Index, SDG 13 on climate change was second from the bottom, with progress globally only halfway to the targets. This is a dismal snapshot in a world facing a climate emergency. One of the issues measured is whether countries are putting in place plans and policies to reduce risks when disaster strikes – only 15 of 129 countries (11 per cent) received excellent scores on this measure.¹⁶
- Data gaps severely hamper our ability to measure and track progress on the gender dimensions of climate change. We need data to better understand the impact of slow onset crises and climate-induced migration on women, the impact (by sex) of climate-related changes on agriculture, and more data about women's leadership roles in countries' planning and decision-making on climate-related issues.

Action Coalition: Technology and innovation for gender equality

- The persistent gap in women's access to digital technology continues to undermine their full participation in and benefit from modern social, health, education, and financial resources. Given that technology and innovation are set to be defining elements of well-paid jobs in the future, it's also critical that girls and women are equally able to access opportunities to learn about and develop skills in these areas.

- Globally, the 2019 SDG Gender Index showed a 'failing' score of 55 out of 100 on SDG 9 – one of the lowest goal scores in the Index – which includes issues of women's digital payments, access to internet, and women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) research.
- Whilst the percentage of women and men accessing the internet has rapidly increased globally in the first decades of the 21st century, women remain 10 per cent less likely than men to access the internet or to own a mobile phone.¹⁷
- Gender parity in STEM research roles has been achieved in some regions, including Southern and Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Central Asia, whilst large disparities still remain in North America and Western Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia. Globally just 28 per cent of STEM researchers are women.¹⁸
- Whilst this is a growing field of study, data gaps continue to prevent us from fully understanding and addressing the gender discrimination in technology and innovation including information on youth and adult ICT skills, gender pay gaps in the technology sector, and violence faced by girls and women online.
- Policies to end violence against girls and women, for example.¹⁹ But they are critically under-funded: women's rights organisations receive only around one per cent of aid money committed for gender equality worldwide.²⁰ The lack of resources and support is especially acute for women's movements and leadership in humanitarian and fragile settings.²¹
- The need to increase women's representation in leadership roles can be seen starkly in the projections of women holding ministerial-level positions in governments around the world. *Bending the Curve* found that just 23 per cent of senior government posts are held by women and 77 million girls and women live in countries that currently have not a single female minister. More than 650 million girls and women across 64 countries have never had an elected or appointed female head of state or government.²²
- Progress on this issue has slowed in recent years and 40 countries have moved backward since 2001. Progress needs to accelerate by two times to ensure women are equally represented in the most powerful political positions by 2030.²³

Action Coalition: Feminist movements and leadership

- For there to be sustainable progress on gender equality, we must fix the system that discriminates against girls and women and holds them back. A crucial part of this is ensuring girls and women have equal voice and power and can claim their seat at decision-making tables.
 - Research shows that feminist movements have an important and unique role to play in driving policy and law change on key gender equality issues: strong feminist movements and women's rights organisations were found to be the key ingredient in countries that brought in progressive
- 'Gender data and accountability' has been identified as a 'cross-cutting lever' for all Coalitions, recognizing that concerted effort and investment are still needed to be able to analyze and act on the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by girls and women (see *Bending the Curve* for further information on data gaps and leaving no one behind). Investment is also needed in order to leverage under-utilized data for advocacy and policy change, increase national statistical offices' gender data capacity, review and upgrade survey instruments with a feminist lens, and leverage new technologies for data collection and use. This is why it is absolutely crucial that both data (quantitative and qualitative) and data-driven accountability for results are deliberate workstreams within each of the six Action Coalitions.

17 ITU, "ICT Facts and Figures," 2019 and 2013; GSMA, "The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2019," 2019.

18 Sophia Huyer, "Chapter 3 - Is the gender gap narrowing in science and engineering?" in UNESCO Science Report – Towards 2030, (UNESCO, 2015), <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000235447>.

19 M Htun and A.L. Weldon, "The civic origins of progressive policy change: combatting violence against women in global perspective", *American Political Science Review* 106, no.3 (2012), http://ncdsv.org/images/APSR_CivicOriginsProgressivePolicyChangeCombatingVAWinGlobalPerspective-1975-2005_8-2012.pdf.

20 OECD, *Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Donor Charts*. OECD, 2019, www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-topics/Aid-to-gender-equality-donor-charts-2019.pdf.

21 *Women Deliver, Feminist Humanitarian System Building Block I: Advancing Gender Transformative Localization*. New York: Women Deliver, 2019, <https://womendeliver.org/publications/feminist-humanitarian-system-building-block-i-advancing-gender-transformative-localization/>.

22 *Equal Measures 2030, Bending the Curve Towards Gender Equality (Equal Measures 2030, 2020)*, <https://data.em2030.org/2020-index-projections/bending-the-curve-towards-gender-equality-by-2030/>.

23 *Ibid.*