Applying a gender lens on the SDGs

How are women & girls doing?

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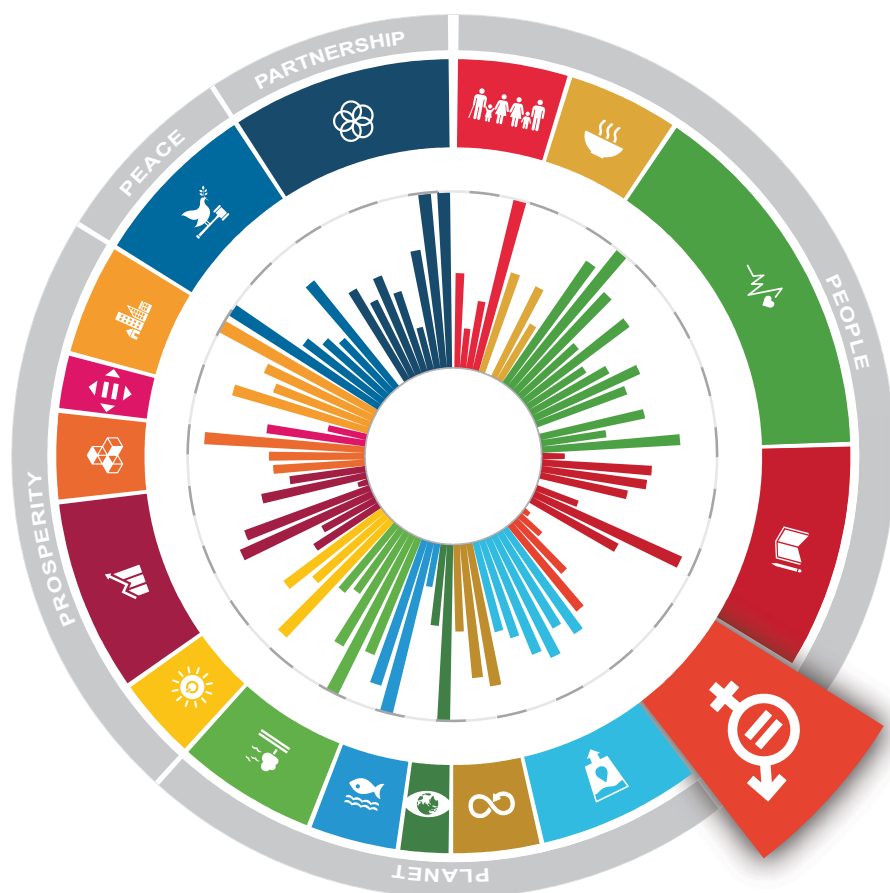
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls to leave no-one behind

Making progress for women and girls is crucial for achieving the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs. The 2030 Agenda has Gender Equality as one of its main ambitions, with a dedicated goal (SDG 5) which includes a broad plea to end discrimination between women and men, as well as references to gender-specific concerns in numerous SDG targets. Hence, measuring progress on SDGs for women and girls is a key statistical challenge for NSOs around the world.

The 2030 Agenda is comprised of 17 SDGs and 169 targets, while the 246[1] indicators that make up the *UN Global Indicator Framework* are used for its global monitoring. Building on the innovative methodology detailed in the *Measuring Distance to the SDG Targets* report (OECD, 2019), this brief presents the main findings of new OECD analysis pursued to measure SDG outcomes for women and girls in OECD countries. A more detailed analysis will be published later this year in an OECD Statistics Working Paper.

The gender data challenge: identifying indicators and data by gender in the SDGs

Assessing how women and girls are doing in relation to the SDGs starts with identifying the relevant SDG targets and indicators and the data available to monitor achievements. The SDGs are universal and integrated, relevant to all people everywhere. While some of the 169 targets refer to issues that concern society as a whole and the planet, others relate to individuals, such as reducing malnutrition rates (target 2.2), where achievements may differ between women and men. Additionally, some targets are explicitly focused on women, such as on reducing maternal mortality (target 3.1).

Targets and indicators relevant for this gender analysis were first identified from the *UN Global Indicator Framework* using textual analysis, so that an indicator is deemed to be gender-related if the indicator's name includes gender-related term (e.g. men, women, boy, girl, gender, etc.). In addition, as some gender-relevant indicators do not refer explicitly to gender, the indicators were also classified manually according to individual-level disaggregation and gender-relevance. Analysis is based on data sourced from the *UN Global SDG Database*, complemented with OECD data where relevant.

Based on this analysis, 104 of the 246 indicators listed in the *UN Global Indicator Framework* are identified as gender-related. Most of these indicators pertain to the *People* goals, including Health, Education, and Gender Equality, but also Institutions (goals 3, 4, 5 and 16, see Figure 1). Conversely, there are few gender-related indicators for *Planet* goals, with no indicators relating to Oceans and Biodiversity (goals 14 and 15), and only one indicator for Sustainable Production and Climate (goals 13 and 12).

Figure 1. Availability of SDG gender-related data for OECD countries
Based on the UN Global Indicator List and the UN SDG Database complemented with OECD data
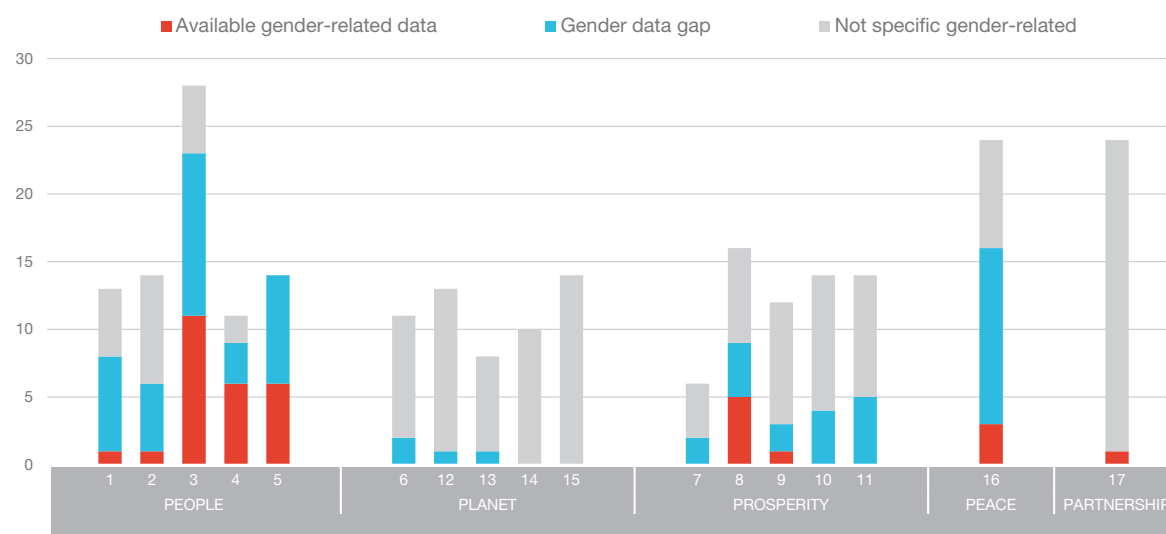
Note: The chart shows the number of indicators on the UN Global SDG Indicator Framework by goal. Orange bars represent indicators identified as gender-related for which data are available for at least 10 OECD countries; blue bars represent indicators identified as gender-related but for which there is no data for at least 10 OECD countries; and grey bars represent indicators that are not identified as gender-related in the SDG framework.
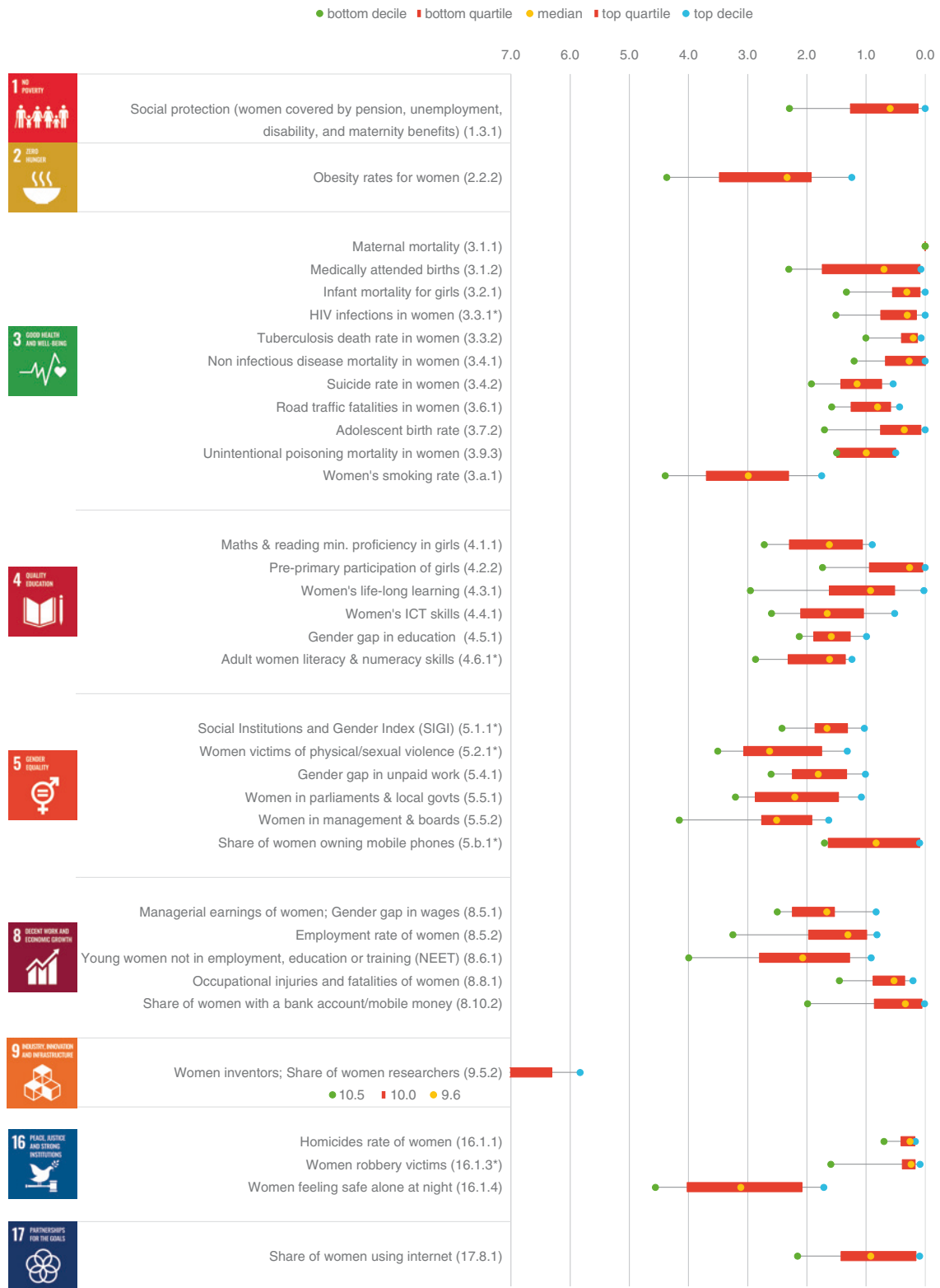
In practice, data are available[2] for only 35 indicators (33%) of the 104 gender-related indicators, distributed across 9 of the 17 goals. No gender data are available for all goals related to *Planet* (goals 6 and 12 to 15), as well as Energy, Inequality and Cities (goals 7, 10 and 11). Most available gender data are for goals on Health, Education, Economy and Gender Equality (goals 3, 4, 8 and 5) but even in these cases significant data gaps exist, especially for Institutions, Health and Gender Equality (goals 16, 3 and 5). The analysis below is limited to these 35 gender-related indicators.

Results: how are women & girls doing on SDGs?

Based on the *Measuring Distance* methodology and available data, OECD countries are on average closest to meeting targets for women on Health (goal 3, see Figure 2). OECD members have already achieved the target on maternal mortality, and despite large differences between countries, are close to meet targets on mortality and morbidity rates, including for HIV, tuberculosis, and non-infectious diseases. In addition, women in OECD countries are also close to meeting targets on mortality from homicides and traffic accidents (goals 16 and 3) and occupational injuries (goal 8). Conversely, they are further away from targets in three areas: healthy life-styles (obesity and smoking, goals 2 and 3), safety (physical and sexual violence, and feeling safe in their neighbourhood, goal 16) and representation (the share of women among researchers and inventors, in management positions and in company boards, and in parliaments, goals 9 and 5).

Figure 2. Distance from achieving the 2030 SDG gender-related targets, OECD average

● bottom decile   ▮ bottom quartile   ● median   ▮ top quartile   ● top decile

| | 7.0 | 6.0 | 5.0 | 4.0 | 3.0 | 2.0 | 1.0 | 0.0 |

1 NO POVERTY
Social protection (women covered by pension, unemployment, disability, and maternity benefits) (1.3.1)

2 ZERO HUNGER
Obesity rates for women (2.2.2)

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
Maternal mortality (3.1.1)
Medically attended births (3.1.2)
Infant mortality for girls (3.2.1)
HIV infections in women (3.3.1*)
Tuberculosis death rate in women (3.3.2)
Non infectious disease mortality in women (3.4.1)
Suicide rate in women (3.4.2)
Road traffic fatalities in women (3.6.1)
Adolescent birth rate (3.7.2)
Unintentional poisoning mortality in women (3.9.3)
Women's smoking rate (3.a.1)

4 QUALITY EDUCATION
Maths & reading min. proficiency in girls (4.1.1)
Pre-primary participation of girls (4.2.2)
Women's life-long learning (4.3.1)
Women's ICT skills (4.4.1)
Gender gap in education (4.5.1)
Adult women literacy & numeracy skills (4.6.1*)

5 GENDER EQUALITY
Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) (5.1.1*)
Women victims of physical/sexual violence (5.2.1*)
Gender gap in unpaid work (5.4.1)
Women in parliaments & local govts (5.5.1)
Women in management & boards (5.5.2)
Share of women owning mobile phones (5.b.1*)

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
Managerial earnings of women; Gender gap in wages (8.5.1)
Employment rate of women (8.5.2)
Young women not in employment, education or training (NEET) (8.6.1)
Occupational injuries and fatalities of women (8.8.1)
Share of women with a bank account/mobile money (8.10.2)

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
Women inventors; Share of women researchers (9.5.2)

● 10.5   ▮ 10.0   ● 9.6

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
Homicides rate of women (16.1.1)
Women robbery victims (16.1.3*)
Women feeling safe alone at night (16.1.4)

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS
Share of women using internet (17.8.1)

Note: The charts shows the distribution of OECD countries' distances from achieving the 2030 target for SDG gender-related indicators. Distances are expressed in standardised units (see OECD, 2019 for details on methodology), with 0 indicating that the level for 2030 has already been attained and 7 is the distance most OECD countries have already travelled. Yellow dot refers to the OECD median distance. The bar boundaries indicate the top and bottom quartiles of the country distribution. Blue dots indicate the top decile and green dots indicate the bottom decile of the country distribution. Data are available for at least 30 countries, except when noted by (*), indicating that data are available for 10 to 30 countries.

How far are women from achieving the SDGs relative to men?

For some indicators, the distance to target can be presented for both women and men individually, thus providing a measure of the gender gap. Data for both men and women are more limited, and available for 26 of the 35 indicators used in this brief (Figure 3). These data show that on average in the OECD, both men and women have a similar distance to travel in areas such as ownership of mobile phones and using internet, and are also fairly equal in distance to target when it comes to being victims of robbery. Women are closer to SDG targets than men on all indicators related to Health (Goal 3), but are further away from targets in many employment-related targets such as labour market participation, share of researchers, youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) and managers' earnings, as well as on feeling safe and ICT skills.

Figure 3. Difference between women and men in the distance they have to travel in order to achieve the 2030 SDG targets, OECD average
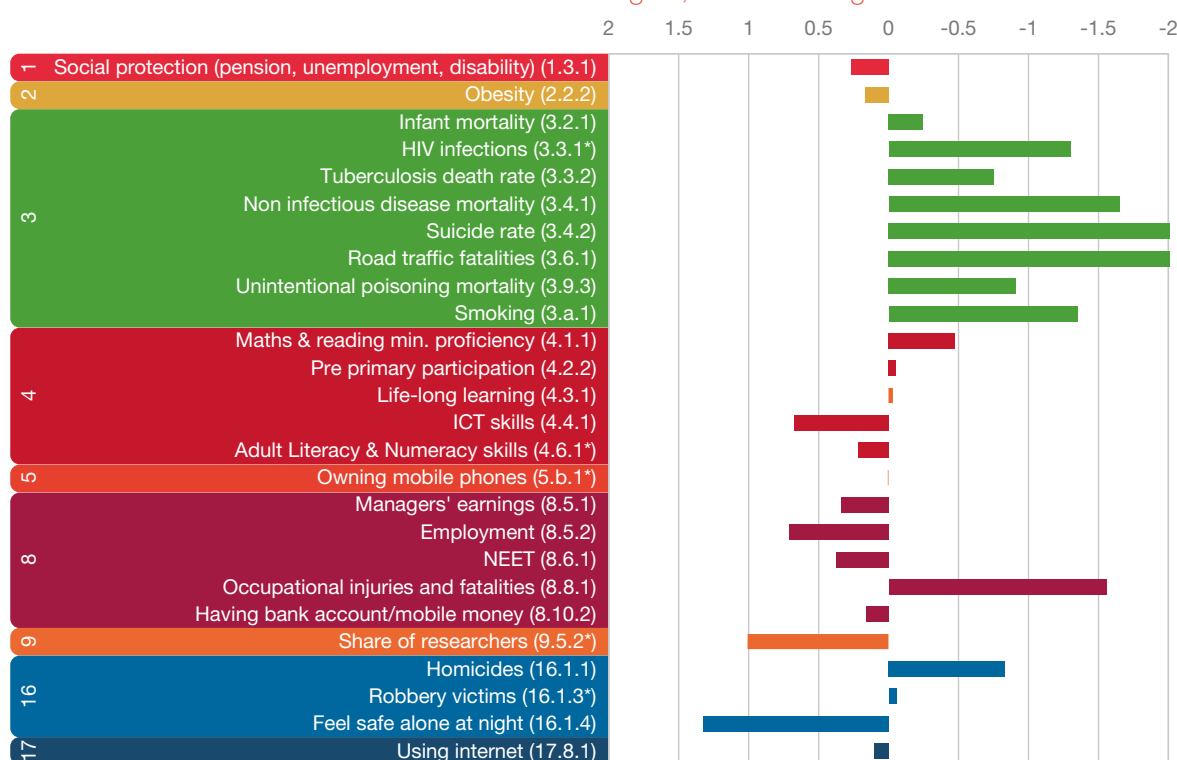
Note: the bars show the difference between men and women's distance from achieving the 2030 targets, for the OECD average. Bars on the right-hand side of the zero line indicate that women are closer to targets than men, while those on the left-hand side indicate that men are closer to targets than women. Distances are measured in standardised units. See OECD (2019) for details on methodology.

Addressing data gaps is key for assessing the progress of women on SDGs

In this brief, only the explicit gender-relevant targets and indicators are considered for the analysis. A more expansive gender analysis could also go beyond the explicit scope of the SDG targets to consider the different impacts that achieving them may have on men and women. Different behaviours and social norms and roles could mean that women are affected differently or have a different impact on these. For example, achieving

targets related to household energy and water consumption may have a profound effect on women's lives compared to men in societies where water and firewood collection are mostly done by women.

This assessment shows that many OECD countries will need to make more progress in order to achieve the gender-related SDGs, especially in areas such as violence and safety, employment, representation and management. However, evidence remains scant as only 104 of the 246 indicators on the *UN Global Indicator Framework* are gender-related or can be disaggregated by gender. In particular, very few of the Planet goals, targets and indicators are gender related or are specifically focused on women, even if, in some areas, environmental factors may have significantly different impacts on men and women (as discussed in the forthcoming *Gender and Environment*, 2020).

Furthermore, data availability (defined as at least 10 out of the 36 OECD members) is limited to only 35 indicators (33% of the gender-related indicators), mainly those related to goals on Health, Education, Economy and Gender Equality. When it comes to gender and the SDGs, we know less than what we do not know, which considerably hinders our assessment of progress. The scope for progress in the statistical agenda on gender is, therefore, huge.

References

OECD (2019), *Measuring Distance to the SDG Targets 2019: An Assessment of Where OECD Countries Stand*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/a8caf3fa-en

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1. Proposal for the IAEG to be determined in March 2020.
2. Data availability is considered for a minimum of 10 OECD countries.

Measuring Distance to the SDG Targets 2019: An Assessment of Where OECD Countries Stand - This third edition presents the latest results for OECD countries, both on average and individually, as well as new exploratory approaches to assessing progress over time and transboundary aspects of the SDGs. Based on the UN Global List of 244 indicators, the report study evaluates the distance that OECD countries need to travel to meet SDG targets for which data is currently available. By providing a high-level overview of countries' strengths and weaknesses in performance across the SDGs, the report aims to support member countries in navigating the SDGs and in setting their own priorities for action within the broad 2030 Agenda.

» Key findings: oe.cd/to-SDG-targets

» Read online: oe.cd/il/to-SDG-targets-RoL

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