

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



Achieving the SDGs for women and girls requires an enabling environment, including the mobilization of adequate resources, fair and equitable trade and technological progress for sustainable development and capacity-building, delivered through partnerships based on accountability and solidarity, and adequate data to monitor implementation. All of these have important gender dimensions. For instance, budget cuts that reduce social spending may increase the demands on women's unpaid care and domestic work, while access to labour-saving technology may contribute to reducing the drudgery of such work.

Facts and figures

- In 2016-2017, members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) targeted an average of USD 44.8 billion per year, corresponding to 38 per cent of their bilateral allocable aid, towards gender equality as either a significant (secondary) or principal (primary) objective. This is higher than ever before.¹
- At the same time, support to programmes specifically dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment as their principal objective remains low at 4 per cent and 62 per cent of aid remains gender blind.²
- Despite progress in implementing gender responsive budgeting globally, gaps remain in country efforts to establish comprehensive and transparent tracking systems. Based on 2018 data from 69 countries 13 countries fully met the criteria of having in place a tracking system that measures and makes publicly available gender budget data, and 41 countries approached the requirements.³
- The IMF estimates economic losses due to gender gaps from 5 per cent to over 30 per cent of GDP per capita across a wide range of developed and developing countries.⁴
- Only 23 per cent of the available data for the gender-specific indicators was from 2010 or later, and only 16 per cent was available for two or more points in time.⁵
- The costs and benefits of technology remain unequally distributed. For example, internet usage among women globally was 6 percentage points lower than among men in 2017.⁶

Policy messages

1. Delivering on the gender equality commitments of the 2030 Agenda stands and falls with allocation of sufficient resources for their achievement.

Essential services on which millions of women and girls depend—health, education, water, childcare, shelters—are chronically underfunded or simply unavailable. Where they exist, they are often the first to be hit by austerity measures. Far from a world of scarcity, we live in a world of unprecedented opulence, but where resources are unfairly distributed and do not reach those who need them the most. The financial resources flowing out of developing countries, for example, are 2.5 times the amount of aid flowing in, undermining the ability of these countries to invest in their people and repair their damaged environments. Unrecorded capital flight, including illicit financial flows, constitute the bulk of these outflows—compared to which gender allocations in official development aid are a drop in the ocean. Global tax competition has further compromised the ability of developing countries to raise sufficient domestic resources. Between 2005 and 2014, developing countries across all regions except Latin America decreased their corporate tax rates, for example, losing an important source of domestic revenue.⁷

2. Fiscal policies and public financial management can be used to account for and address gender and other inequalities.

Gender-responsive budgeting is an effective tool for tracking financial commitments to and actual expenditure on gender equality.⁸ Stronger measures are also needed to increase women's representation and leadership

in financial institutions, as women account for less than 2 per cent of financial institutions' chief executive officers and less than 20 per cent of executive board members.⁹ In virtually all countries, there is scope for raising or reallocating resources to strengthen public services that are essential for women and girls. It is a matter of political will and of using all available policy tools. The cost of inaction is simply too high.

3. Gaps in gender data make it difficult to assess and monitor the direction and pace of progress for women and girls.

Uneven coverage of gender-specific indicators, gaps in gender data (including data on women and girls experiencing multiple and intersecting inequalities), quality concerns and lack of trend data constrain monitoring of the SDGs from a gender perspective. 54 out of the 232 indicators in the global indicator framework are gender-specific, meaning that they are designed to capture the situation of women and girls, explicitly call for the disaggregation by sex or refer to gender equality as the underlying objective. However, 6 out of the 17 SDGs are gender-blind at the indicator level—the global framework does not currently monitor progress for women and girls in these areas. Based on a 2017 analysis, only 23 per cent of the available data for the gender-specific indicators was from 2010 or later, and only 16 per cent was available for two or more points in time. Data reflecting the various challenges faced by women in their daily lives, including in undervalued areas such as time spent on caring for family members remain inadequate. These gaps limit the ability to design gender-responsive policies and programmes. Unless gender is mainstreamed into national statistical strategies, gender data scarcity will persist.

4. The potential of technology to support sustainable development for women and girls is enormous, but the costs and benefits of technologies remain unequally distributed and their risks inadequately managed.

The potential of science, technology and innovation to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development for women and girls is enormous: pharmaceutical inventions, such as vaccines or antiretroviral drugs, can save the lives of millions of women and girls; family planning methods increase women's reproductive choices; and running water and electricity reduce the drudgery and increase the productivity of unpaid work that is disproportionately performed by women and girls. Yet the costs and benefits of scientific and technological progress remain unequally distributed – between countries, between women and men, and between different groups of women. Significant barriers remain, for example, for women and girls to fully benefit from the new opportunities provided by information and communication technologies (ICTs). Globally, internet usage among women is 6 percentage points lower than among men. The gender digital divide is largest in least developed countries where connectivity infrastructure is still insufficiently developed and the cost of connecting to the Internet is high.¹⁰

¹ OECD, 2019. "Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment". Accessed on 5 July 2019.

² Ibid.

³ Special Edition: Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, Report of the Secretary General.

⁴ UN, Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development. 2019. *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2019*.

⁵ UN Women, 2019. Expert Group Meeting - Report and Recommendations. "Tackling global challenges to equality and inclusion through the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Spotlight on SDGs 10, 13 and 16." 27-28 February 2019, Vienna.

⁶ UN Women, 2018. *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. New York.

⁷ Ortiz, I. et al. 2017. "Fiscal Space for Social Protection and the SDGs: Options to Expand Social Investments in 187 Countries."

⁸ UN, Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development. 2019. *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2019*.

⁹ Sahay, R. and M. Cihak. 2018. "Women in Finance: A Case for Closing Gaps", IMF Staff Discussion Notes, No. 18/05.

¹⁰ Gurumurthy, A. and N. Chami. 2017. "A feminist action framework on development and digital technologies." Association for Progressive Communication Issues Paper.