SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
SIGI REGIONAL REPORT
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<td>AfDB</td>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome</td>
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<td>AUC</td>
<td>African Union Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil society organisation</td>
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<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
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<td>ECA</td>
<td>Europe and Central Asia</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation</td>
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<td>FGM</td>
<td>Female genital mutilation</td>
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<td>Gross domestic product</td>
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<td>GEM</td>
<td>Global Entrepreneurship Monitor</td>
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<td>GNWP</td>
<td>Global Network of Women Peacebuilders</td>
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<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human immunodeficiency virus</td>
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<td>HRW</td>
<td>Human Rights Watch</td>
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<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
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<td>Inter-Parliamentary Union</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
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<td>National Women Entrepreneur Council</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
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<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>SIGI</td>
<td>Social Institutions and Gender Index</td>
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<td>SMEs</td>
<td>Small and medium sized enterprises</td>
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<td>United Nations Security Resolution</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>WEAI</td>
<td>Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index</td>
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The SIGI
in sub-Saharan Africa
Regional overview

Political commitments to and investments in gender equality have put sub-Saharan Africa in a strong position to eliminate entrenched discrimination against women that is perpetuating cycles of inequality and poverty across the region. The 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 offer unprecedented potential for African governments to build on and consolidate the important gains in gender equality over the past two decades (UN, 2015c; AUC, 2015) (See Box 1.1). The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) Regional Report for sub-Saharan Africa presents a detailed analysis of how legislative reform and efforts to transform discriminatory social norms have translated into positive changes for women and their communities across these countries. The Report also identifies the remaining challenges and attests to the need for a dedicated focus on transforming discriminatory social institutions to achieve these twin socially transformative agendas.

**Discriminatory social institutions** are formal and informal laws, social norms and practices that restrict or exclude women and consequently curtail their access to rights, justice, resources and empowerment opportunities.

Sub-Saharan Africa’s mixed report card for gender equality suggests that new approaches to redress uneven progress on key empowerment areas are needed. With the impetus of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the region has taken important steps forward on tackling gender gaps, but continues to fall behind other global regions on most key indicators with progress stunted and highly uneven across sub-regions (UNDP, 2015). For example, gender gaps in primary education have been significantly reduced or even eliminated in certain countries: 93 primary school-age girls were enrolled in primary school in 2013, compared to 84 in 1995 (World Bank, n.d.). However, the gulf between girls and boys widens with higher levels of education: 86 secondary school-age girls for 100 boys were enrolled in secondary school in 2013, compared to 81 in 1995, and 73 tertiary school-age girls for 100 boys were enrolled in tertiary education in 2013, compared to 63 in 1995. Such inequalities in education negatively affect women’s empowerment opportunities across their life course, as the stubborn inequalities in labour force outcomes demonstrate. Women’s labour force participation remains concentrated in informal employment (84% of women non-agricultural workers compared with 63% of male non-agricultural workers in Africa). There is an important silver lining to this otherwise negative assessment: female political participation has increased by 10 percentage points since 2000, propelled by legislative and voluntary quotas and awareness-raising campaigns (see page 56). The regional average of 20% of female MPs is on par with the global average of 21% and Rwanda remains the country with the highest percentage of female MPs globally, with 64% (UNDP, 2015; OECD, 2014).

**The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** were adopted at the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015. Among the 17 goals focusing on the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) is one stand-alone goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment (SDG 5). Gender equality is mainstreamed in other goals (cf. SDG 1, 6, and 8) (UN, 2015c).1

Reducing and eliminating discriminatory social institutions can support regional aspirations for gender equality and strengthen Africa’s path towards inclusive growth. This Regional Report includes new analysis on how discriminatory social institutions can affect key empowerment areas prioritised in the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, as well as broader regional growth strategies. Discriminatory social institutions are an important factor explaining persistent gaps in education and employment outcomes, and women’s and girls’ disempowerment (Ferrant and Nowacka, 2015). For example, discrimination affecting adolescent girls and women will compound their ability to complete or pursue further studies and seek gainful employment. Early marriage prevalence rates are closely

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1. SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

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associated with poorer education completion rates as well as health outcomes for girls. Similarly, traditional gender roles perpetuate the unequal share of time spent on unpaid care work by women and men. OECD research points to the multiple negative economic outcomes of women’s double work burden and time poverty, notably their stronger concentration in informal and vulnerable employment, and gender wage gaps (Ferrant, Pesando and Nowacka, 2014). Moreover, discriminatory social institutions are not innocuous for economic growth. New evidence suggests that the cost of gender discrimination in discriminatory social institutions for the region amounts to a total income loss of USD 340 billion (Ferrant and Kolev, 2016).

Box 1.1. Agenda 2063 - The future we want for Africa

At the 50th anniversary of the African Union (AU), Governments and Heads of State recommitted themselves to a Pan African vision of “An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa”. This resulted in Agenda 2063, a vision and roadmap for inclusive growth and sustainable development. The Agenda lays out a global strategy for Africa to reach its full potential benefitting all Africans. The 60-year plan was developed through consultations with multiple stakeholders in the region including youth, women, CSOs, research and academia, policy makers, the private sector, media and religious leaders.

The Agenda comprises 7 Aspirations and calls on action from all members of African society to realise this vision. Aspiration 6 focuses on women’s empowerment:

Aspiration 6: An Africa where Development is People-Driven, Unleashing the Potential of its Women and Youth

Agenda 2063 attests to governments’ recognition of the importance of gender equality for Africa to reach its full potential. Within the framework of Agenda 2063 governments aspire to empower women and remove all forms of gender-based discrimination:

- The African woman will be fully empowered in all spheres, with equal social, political and economic rights, including the rights to own and inherit property, sign a contract, register and manage a business. Rural women will have access to productive assets, including land, credit, inputs and financial services.

- All forms of violence and discrimination (social, economic, political) against women and girls will be eliminated and they will fully enjoy all their human rights. All harmful social practices (especially FGM) will be ended and barriers to quality health and education for women and girls eliminated.

- Africa of 2063 will have full gender parity, with women occupying at least 50% of elected public offices at all levels and half of managerial positions in the public and the private sector.

In addition, Article 6 of Agenda 2063 calls for the full implementation of the African Charter on the Rights of the Child which includes an end to all harmful practices specifically child marriage.

On the adoption of Agenda 2063, governments made specific commitments to:

- Improve employability and entrepreneurship of women.
- Develop and implement affirmative policies and advocacy to ensure women’s increased access to land and inputs, and ensure that at least 30% of agricultural financing is accessed by women.
- Implement programmes on climate change targeting women.
- Achieve gender parity by 2020 in public and private institutions, and the removal of all forms of gender discrimination in the social, cultural, economic and political spheres. Mobilise a concerted drive towards immediately ending child marriages, female genital mutilation and other harmful cultural practices that discriminate against women.

Agenda 2063 is a call to action recognising the key role that governments play in creating an enabling environment for women and girls to unleash their full potential.
The region is among the poorer performers globally in the 2014 edition of the SIGI, with over half of the countries showing high to very high levels of discrimination across most SIGI sub-indices (Figure 1.1). In particular, women’s rights to land, assets and financial services are compromised by discriminatory laws and practices preventing women from owning, controlling or having decision-making power over such critical resources. Ensuring the economic empowerment of women is further complicated by feeble protection of their inheritance rights and high inequality in the distribution of unpaid care work. A second area of concern is the poor coverage and quality of legal protection and other measures to protect women from violence (rape, sexual harassment and domestic violence), including female genital mutilation (FGM) and to guarantee their sexual and reproductive health and rights. On average, 43% of women in the region have experienced gender-based violence in their lifetime; moreover, 54% of women regionally agree that domestic violence is justified on certain grounds (OECD, 2014a).

Figure 1.1. Share of sub-Saharan African countries by level of discrimination in the SIGI

Regional disparities in the SIGI scores reflect the legal and cultural diversity of the sub-Saharan Africa region: levels of discrimination in social institutions are lower in southern African countries than in Central, Western and Eastern Africa (Figure 1.2). Women’s and girls’ rights are particularly vulnerable in conflict and fragile states, the majority of which are found in sub-Saharan Africa (OECD, 2015a). Levels of discrimination in the SIGI are higher in these countries than the regional average, especially in the area of women’s physical integrity, given the higher incidence of gender-based and sexual violence and the breakdown of formal justice systems (OECD, 2013; OECD, 2015a).

However, this Regional Report provides evidence that discrimination is on the decline in certain key social institutions affecting women. Legislative reforms to close gender gaps in land rights have seen a decrease in formal discrimination against women’s land ownership from nine countries in 2012 to five countries in 2014. In some countries, joint land registration initiatives and other programmes (e.g. increasing female legal literacy) also appear to be transforming norms and perceptions of female land and asset ownership. Decreasing rates of early marriage reflect the success of regional, national and community campaigns to eliminate a major cause of adolescent girls’ disempowerment (see Box 3.1). Today, 24% of women aged 15-19 are married in the region, down from 26% in 2012. Political leadership appears to be a key catalyst driving social norm change. This Regional Report shares some good practices which have made successful inroads in these complex domains.
The Report demonstrates that there is no magic bullet for gender equality: long-term, holistic and multi-stakeholder actions and community-led solutions are required to tackle the drivers of inequality between women and men. The SIGI country profiles for the region provide interesting examples of the mix of policy approaches employed to transform discriminatory social institutions. Countries with the strongest record on gender equality often complement legislative reform with other long-term initiatives involving civil society, traditional community leaders and the judiciary as core partners in recognition that these actors are critical for transforming discriminatory social institutions. For example, South Africa, one of the leading performers of the region, offers insightful snapshots on key actors and processes to advance gender equality, such as gender-responsive legislation, an active women’s rights movement, community campaigns and the involvement of men and boys to challenge entrenched discriminatory attitudes and practices (see page 12).

**Figure 1.2. Sub-regional scores in the SIGI**

![Sub-regional scores in the SIGI](image)

Notes: This figure presents the average sub-regional scores in the SIGI. Higher SIGI values indicate higher inequality: the SIGI ranges from 0 for very low discrimination to 1 for very high discrimination.


The advent of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063 represent a unique opportunity for sub-Saharan Africa to accelerate progress on gender equality. Sub-Saharan Africa has signed up to two ambitious socially transformative agendas which boast great promise for gender equality. Successful achievement of these agendas will strongly rely on effectively addressing discriminatory social institutions. SDG 5 and Agenda 2063’s Aspiration 6 aim to eliminate inheritance inequality, early marriage, gender-based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), unequal access to productive resources and insecure land rights. As the analysis of this Report outlines, however, these remain among the most challenging and sticky areas for progress, despite legislative changes and political commitments. Putting social norm change at the core of future actions could be one of the most effective means to guarantee that the region will be on track to fulfil its promises on gender equality and women’s empowerment.
**Key messages**

1. **Discrimination against women represents an important cost for the region's development.** New evidence based on the SIGI points to the adverse impacts of discriminatory social institutions on long-term growth. Overall, gender-based discrimination in social institutions is estimated to represent income losses of USD 340 billion across the region. Promoting gender equality in legislative frameworks, practices and attitudes fosters inclusive and dynamic economies, particularly important for the region's development ambitions.

2. **Without more comprehensive efforts to eliminate discriminatory social institutions, the ambitious gender equality aspirations of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda are at risk.** The uneven progress across the region after several decades of investments in gender equality points to the need for approaches that address the drivers of inequalities between women and men. Just as discriminatory social institutions are one of the principal problems for equality, their transformation and elimination should be seen as a core part of the solution. The Report showcases the intricate matrix between social norms and attitudes, formal and informal laws and their impact on the ability of both women and men to make decisions over key resources, to access education and employment opportunities, and have their rights respected. Effectively tackling discriminatory social institutions, whether by, for example, reducing rates of girls’ early marriage or strengthening women’s land and property rights, would be a powerful driver for achieving the region’s gender equality commitments and fostering rights-based, sustainable social transformation.

3. **All national laws should respect and enshrine non-discrimination principles in line with their commitments to the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW), and other international and regional treaties.** Countries of the region have made important strides in removing discrimination from national laws and constitutions. However, *de jure* and *de facto* equality is compromised by ongoing discrepancies within plural legal systems where discriminatory customary and other informal laws tend to prevail. Harmonisation of non-discrimination principles in line with international commitments and standards would create an enabling environment where women’s rights and well-being are respected by all, and women are encouraged to exercise and claim their rights.

4. **Anchoring gender equality in social norm change will require bottom-up, horizontal as well as top-down approaches involving men and boys, and other community actors.** While political leadership has moved gender equality to the mainstream of political action across the region, without active engagement with civil society, men and boys, women’s rights groups and other community leaders, laws promoting gender equality will exist in a vacuum, with limited impact. The Report highlights that the growing focus on the role of men and boys in social norm change, notably in violence against women, has helped to generate organic changes in attitudes towards expected gender roles. Moreover, women and girls themselves are also critical agents of change and should not be seen solely as “victims”. Empowering them with information on their rights and ensuring that community justice structures enable them to claim their rights has been shown to enhance the impact of laws in many countries of the region. Women are often also themselves perpetrators of discrimination; the Report points to the need for policy interventions to target widespread female acceptance and intergenerational transmission of discriminatory attitudes in order to overcome a key barrier to progress on gender equality.

5. **Building the evidence base on the extent and nature of discriminatory social institutions and on what works to transform these institutions would help to ensure that progress is on track, identify emerging challenges and solutions, and hold governments and development actors accountable to their commitments to women and girls.** Gender data gaps mean that regional policymakers and the international development community only have a fragmented picture of the depth and extent of gender inequalities. Much remains to be known about critical issues, such as women’s land access and ownership, intra-household decision-making, or attitudes and perceptions of women and men. More effective policymaking will require additional investments in national technical capacity to measure and track gender equality across regional and national policy targets, capturing changes in social norms and gender roles to better understand the linkages with women’s empowerment and development outcomes.
Key results

**Discriminatory family code**

**Early marriage:** While there are signs that early marriage is declining in sub-Saharan Africa, prevalence remains almost double the world average of 13%, with 24% of girls aged 15-19 married, divorced or widowed in the region. In Mali and Niger, this affects over half of all girls aged 15-19. Regional frameworks have established the legal age of marriage at 18 for girls and boys; however at the national level, over half of the countries in the region legally allow girls to marry under the age of 18 (26 out of 43 countries).

**Restricted physical integrity**

**Female genital mutilation:** Despite regional commitments to end FGM, the practice remains an issue in 26 countries in the region and affects over 27% of women in the entire sub-Saharan region. While there is evidence that the number of women and girls who are subjected to FGM is decreasing, prevalence rates remain alarmingly high in some countries affecting over 90% of women in Guinea and Somalia.

**Son bias**

**Missing women:** Unbalanced (or skewed) sex-ratios during women's reproductive years (15-49) are a concern in 19 countries in the region found primarily in Southern and Western Africa. Excess female mortality is connected to high rates of maternal mortality in Western Africa and HIV/AIDS infection among women in Southern Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa stands out from other regions with evidence of missing women (e.g. South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa) as skewed sex ratios are not present at birth but occur among older age groups.

**Restricted resources and assets**

**Women's access to land:** No country has removed discrimination both in the law and in practice in women's access to and control over land. Women face legal discrimination in accessing land in five countries in the region. Even where women's land rights are legally guaranteed, discriminatory customs and practices restrict their ability to realise these rights: regional estimates suggest that women hold substantially fewer agricultural land titles individually or jointly (19%) than men.

**Restricted civil liberties**

**Women's political voice:** Women in sub-Saharan Africa have seen their political voice strengthened over the past two decades through increased political representation: women occupied 20% of parliamentary seats in the region in 2014, on par with the global average of 21%. Progress has been uneven though, with some countries seeing women’s participation advance faster than others. Rwanda has the highest percentage of women MPs in the world (64%), while in Swaziland, women's representation is at 6%. Quotas have shown mixed results in the 28 countries that instituted them at the national and/or sub-national level: while they led to increases in women's political participation in Senegal and Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo saw little change.
**Tackling gender discrimination in social institutions: Learning from South Africa**

South Africa has the lowest levels of discrimination against women in sub-Saharan Africa for the SIGI 2014. The country is classified as having very low to low levels of discrimination in all sub-indices except women’s access to resources and assets and son bias, where there were medium levels of discrimination (Figure 1.3).

South Africa has a strong national framework promoting gender equality. Equality is enshrined in the Constitution (1996) and gender-based discrimination is prohibited. The Department of Women is responsible for promoting the empowerment of women and monitoring the implementation of laws and policies concerning women. The National Policy Framework for Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality (2002) details the country’s policy for gender mainstreaming and mechanisms to ensure gender justice and equality.

The Children's Act (2005) accords women and men equal rights in the family including shared parental authority during marriage and after divorce. The law also sets the minimum legal age of marriage for both sexes at 18. Rates of early marriage are very low (3%), and contrast with the regional average (24%). In certain communities there are reports that *ukuthwala* or bride abduction is practised. While there is no specific law against ukuthwala, perpetrators have been charged with abduction and rape (Centre for Human Rights, 2014). The Reform of Customary Law of Succession and Regulation of Related Matters Bill (2008) provides equal inheritance rights for women and men and outlaws customary practices that discriminate against women and daughters.

South Africa has comprehensive legislation addressing violence against women, criminalising domestic violence, rape, including spousal rape, and sexual harassment. Despite legal protection, 13% of women have experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime. Social acceptance of domestic violence is high (34%) and there are high rates of underreporting and low conviction rates of perpetrators (US Dept. State, 2013; UNODC, 2014). Female genital mutilation is outlawed under the Children’s Act (2005) and there are very few reported cases.

The Constitution (1996) guarantees women’s rights to make decisions concerning reproductive health. Contraception is available for free at most health clinics, as outlined in the National Contraception and Fertility Planning Policy and Service Delivery Guidelines (2012). Even with these measures, 17% of women have an unmet need for family planning.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic remains an issue for women in South Africa despite a decline in new infections (UNAIDS, 2014a), explaining South Africa's poor performance in the son bias sub-index. Women's greater physiological vulnerability to the virus is exacerbated by high rates of gender-based sexual violence: young women in South Africa who have experienced intimate partner violence are 50% more likely to have HIV than young women who have not (UNAIDS, 2014a). Community-based interventions such as MenCare+ and One Man campaign which work with men and boys have shown promising results in addressing the underlying discriminatory social norms that perpetuate violence against women (UNAIDS, 2014b).
The Constitution (1996) accords women and men equal rights to land and non-land assets; however, discriminatory customary laws in the Bantustans region favour male heads of households restricting women's access to land (Thipe, 2013). Large asset gaps exist between women and men in South Africa, with men more likely to own land and non-land property than women (ICRW, 2011). To promote women’s economic empowerment, the Department of Trade and Industry’s Isivande Women’s Fund provides financial services to women entrepreneurs (DTI, n.d.).

Women in South Africa are active in the public sphere and have the same rights as men to access public spaces. South Africa has one of the highest rates of female political participation in the world: women hold 44% of parliamentary seats and 42% of ministerial positions. At the sub-national level, quotas require 50% of candidates on party lists to be women. Women’s CSOs are active on issues such as gender-based violence, gender stereotypes and the rights of women from minority groups (Centre for Human Rights, 2014).

Despite new legislation, gender gaps in employment outcomes remain. The recently passed Equality of Opportunity and Treatment Act (2014) requires employers to ensure equal pay and eliminate unfair discrimination. The Employment Act (1997) grants women four months of maternity leave at 60% of their salary paid for by the government and entitles fathers to three days of paid paternity leave. Nevertheless, women see poorer outcomes in employment than men: they are more likely to be in informal employment and the gender pay gap is 21% (UN Women, 2015b). Women are also less likely to participate in the labour force than men (50% compared to 64%) and compared to other women in the region (65%) (World Bank, n.d.).
### Sub-Saharan Africa sub-regions

**Central Africa**
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Democratic Republic of the Congo

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**Eastern Africa**
- Burundi
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Rwanda

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**Southern Africa**
- Angola
- Botswana
- Lesotho
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mauritius

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**Western Africa**
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- Côte d’Ivoire
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Liberia

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*Levels of discrimination in the SIGI*

- **Very low**
- **Low**
- **Medium**
- **High**
- **Very high**
- **Not ranked**

*South Sudan is not ranked in the 2014 edition of the SIGI.*
SIGI 2014 results for sub-Saharan Africa
About the SIGI

The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) measures gender-based discrimination in social norms, practices and laws across 160 countries. The SIGI comprises country profiles, a classification of countries and a database (see Figure 1.4); it serves as a research, policy and advocacy tool for the development community and policy makers. The SIGI covers five dimensions, spanning major socio-economic areas that affect the life course of a girl and woman: discriminatory family code, restricted physical integrity, son bias, restricted resources and assets, and restricted civil liberties. These dimensions look at the gaps that legislation, prevalence and attitudes create between women and men in terms of rights and opportunities (see Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.4. The composition of the SIGI

As a composite index, the SIGI scores countries on 14 indicators. As shown by Figure 1.5, the indicators are grouped into five sub-indices that each measure one dimension of social institutions related to gender inequality.

The SIGI is an unweighted average of a non-linear function of its five sub-indices. The SIGI and its sub-indices values are between 0 and 1, with 0 indicating no inequality and 1 indicating complete inequality (cf. Methodology in Annex or the full methodological background paper available at www.genderindex.org).

Discrimination against women is defined as follows in Article 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women:

(it) shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.
Discriminatory family code

This sub-index captures social institutions that limit women’s decision-making power and undervalue their status in the household and the family. These formal and informal laws, social norms and practices co-exist in different types of legal systems including civil or common law, customary law, and religious laws and cover areas such as marriage, parental authority and inheritance. Women’s decision-making power and status determine both their ability to choose their own development pathways and the well-being of their families.

Restricted physical integrity

This sub-index captures social institutions that limit women’s and girls’ control over their bodies, that increase women’s vulnerability, and that normalise attitudes toward gender-based violence. This includes formal and informal laws, norms and practices that fail to protect women’s physical integrity and reproductive autonomy and that allow violence and female genital mutilation. Restricted physical integrity due to gender-based violence and to a lack of reproductive autonomy has serious impacts on health outcomes for women and their children and on economic and social development indicators by increasing women’s vulnerability to poverty.

Son bias

This sub-index captures unequal intra-household investments in caring for, nurturing and allocating resources to sons and daughters, reflecting the lower value given to girls. A family preference for sons over daughters can manifest itself in different ways, including higher mortality, worse health status or lower educational attainment among girls. Consequences of social norms and practices that devalue daughters are various: missing women, under-investment in the health and nutrition of girls leading to infant mortality, under-investment in girls’ education, etc.

Restricted resources and assets

This sub-index captures discrimination in women’s rights to access and make decisions over natural and economic resources. This includes discriminatory practices which undermine women’s rights to own, control or use land and non-land assets; discriminatory practices that restrict women’s access to financial services; and social norms imposing that women’s assets be mediated only by men. Insecure or weak rights to land, non-land assets and financial services reduce income-generating opportunities for women, lower decision-making power for women within the household, increase food insecurity for women and their families, and make women and families more vulnerable to poverty.

Restricted civil liberties

This sub-index captures discriminatory laws and practices that restrict women’s access to public space, their political voice and their participation in all aspects of public life. This includes a lack of freedom of movement, the inability to vote or run for election, and negative attitudes toward women as public figures or as leaders. This sub-index highlights the importance of women’s participation in community actions and public decision making for a range of development outcomes such as governance, health and education.

Figure 1.5. The five dimensions of the SIGI

Note: For more information, please refer to the methodology in Annex (see page 70) or the full methodological background paper available at www.genderindex.org.
The SIGI in sub-Saharan Africa

SIGI classification

The 2014 edition of the SIGI scores 108 countries according to their level of discrimination in social institutions. It classifies them into five groups, from very low levels of discrimination in social institutions to very high. This classification groups countries having a similar level of discrimination in the SIGI by minimising differences between countries' SIGI scores in the same class and maximising the differences between classes.

The scores for the SSA region from the 2014 edition of the SIGI and its five sub-indices are presented in the Annex (see page 75).

Classifications for all 108 countries according to the sub-indices are as follows:

- The discriminatory family code sub-index classifies 159 countries. Top performers are Australia, Korea and South Africa, among others, while the poorest performers include Afghanistan, India and Mali.
- The restricted physical integrity sub-index classifies 120 countries. Top performers are France, the United States and Uruguay, among others, while the poorest performers include Mauritania, Somalia and Sudan.
- The son bias sub-index classifies 129 countries. Top performers are Costa Rica, Haiti and Swaziland, among others, while the poorest performers include Azerbaijan, Nepal and Pakistan.
- The restricted resources and assets sub-index classifies 160 countries. Top performers are Mauritius, Sweden and Ukraine, among others, while the poorest performers include Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Papua New Guinea.
- The restricted civil liberties sub-index classifies 160 countries. Top performers are Bolivia, Lesotho and Zimbabwe, among others, while the poorest performers include Iran, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia.

Countries with very low levels of gender discrimination in social institutions (SIGI < 0.04)

These countries are characterised by robust legal frameworks and measures that provide equal rights in the family code, in access to resources and assets, and that promote women's civil liberties. In most of these countries, women and men have equal parental and inheritance rights, and early marriage is not a common practice. Women do not face restrictions on their access to public space or their participation in politics. Neither missing women nor female genital mutilation is a concern. However, the countries lack laws to protect women from violence and measures to implement them, and women need better access to justice. On average 20% of women in these countries have been victims of domestic violence in their lifetime.

Countries with low levels of gender discrimination in social institutions (0.04 < SIGI < 0.12)

These countries are characterised by strong laws providing equal rights for women and men in the family code, in access to resources and assets, and in civil liberties. Both sexes enjoy equal opportunities to own and make decisions over land and other resources. Female genital mutilation is not practised, and most women have reproductive autonomy. These countries have inadequate legal frameworks regarding violence against women. On average 31% of women have been victims of domestic violence in their lifetime, and more than 29% of women agree that domestic violence is justified under certain circumstances.

Countries with medium levels of gender discrimination in social institutions (0.12 < SIGI < 0.22)

These countries are characterised by inconsistent or conflicting legal frameworks covering the family code, women's access to resources and assets, and civil liberties. The strong influence of customary practices perpetuates discrimination in these areas. Specifically, women face discrimination in terms of the legal age of marriage, parental authority, inheritance, and rights to land and financial services. Women are restricted in their access to public space, as well as in their participation in political life due to the absence of quotas at the national and/or sub-national levels. Legal frameworks addressing violence against women are inadequate (e.g. certain types of violence are not included). On average, 39% of women agree that domestic violence is justified under certain circumstances.
Countries with high levels of gender discrimination in social institutions (0.22 < SIGI < 0.35)

These countries are characterised by discrimination embedded in customary laws, social norms and practices and by inappropriate legal protection against gender discrimination in all dimensions of social institutions. The legal frameworks and/or the customary laws discriminate against women in respect to the legal age of marriage, parental authority and inheritance. Women's physical integrity is restricted due to inadequate legal frameworks to address violence against women and high levels of acceptance of domestic violence. Moreover, female genital mutilation is a common practice. Most of these countries have medium to very high levels of devaluation of daughters and preference for sons, as shown by the numbers of missing women or the unbalanced sex ratios at last birth. Finally, women's access to public space and resources is limited. On average 32% of women have been victims of domestic violence in their lifetime, and more than 49% of women agree that domestic violence is justified under certain circumstances.

Countries with very high levels of gender discrimination in social institutions (SIGI > 0.35)

These countries are characterised by very high levels of discrimination in legal frameworks and customary practices across most sub-indices and by very poor implementation measures. The family code greatly discriminates against women: almost one-third of girls younger than 19 are married, and women face severe discrimination in their parental authority and inheritance rights. Women's rights to own and control land and other resources and to access public space are extremely limited. There are serious infringements on their physical integrity matched by high levels of acceptance and prevalence of domestic violence: 44% of women have been victims of domestic violence, and 59% accept that it is justified under certain circumstances.
The development cost of discriminatory social institutions
The cost of discrimination in sub-Saharan Africa

Gender equality is a fundamental human right as well as a critical economic opportunity, leading to positive economic and human development outcomes including improvements in health and education, more efficient labour markets, and economic growth (Ferrant and Kolev, 2016; Ferrant, 2015; Branisa, Klasen and Ziegler, 2013). It is increasingly recognised as “smart economics”: the global economy cannot operate at its full potential with constraints holding back a significant proportion of the world’s population. Increasing women’s opportunities and rights would benefit all: closing gender gaps would improve women’s well-being as well as increase countries’ monetary living standards, as measured by their income per capita.

Gender inequality represents a cost for countries, associated with lower incomes. Restricting women’s economic contribution through both lower involvement in the workforce and discrimination in social institutions is costly for countries, as shown in the following two sections. Hence, narrowing gender gaps in the workforce as well as tackling discriminatory social institutions represent a macroeconomic opportunity for inclusive growth. Gains from parity emerge from equal outcomes in work (Cuberes and Teignier, 2013; Woetzel et al., 2015) and are also linked to socially transformative change (Ferrant and Kolev, 2016).

The cost of gender gaps in labour force participation

While women make up half of the world’s population, their economic contribution is highly restricted: counting only their participation in the market economy, women generate 37% of the global GDP. The female workforce represents a huge potential for economic growth: 865 million women worldwide have the potential to contribute more fully to their national economies (Aguirre et al., 2012). Even if women already participate in large numbers in SSA, they have yet to achieve parity in labour markets: female workers currently generate about 39% of the region’s GDP, despite accounting for 46% of the workforce (Woetzel et al., 2015).

Figure 2.1. Higher inequalities in unpaid care work, lower equality in labour force participation

Note: This figure presents the estimated female share of the labour force as a percentage of total labour force by levels of gender inequality in unpaid care work, measured as the female-to-male ratio of time devoted to unpaid care activities, controlling for GDP per capita, fertility rate, urbanisation rate, maternity leave, gender inequality in unemployment and education and regional characteristics.

Social norms are the missing link explaining the low share of output produced by women. Women are often relegated to low-skilled and low-paid jobs and disproportionately represented in lower productivity sectors. Furthermore, women participate less and work fewer hours for pay than men because of their household and caring responsibilities (Ferrant, Pesando and Nowacka, 2014). Traditional social norms place the primary responsibility for reproductive and care work on women: in sub-Saharan Africa women devote four to ten times more time than men to unpaid care and domestic activities. However, this contribution is not counted in standard measures of GDP. Moreover, the time spent on unpaid care work has a strong negative correlation with female labour-force participation rates, and the unequal distribution of caring responsibilities among household members is a significant barrier to enhancing the economic role of women (Figure 2.1).

Unpaid care work refers to non-remunerated activities performed within the household for its maintenance and well-being such as childcare and housework (Elson, 2000).

These restrictions on women's economic role have serious macroeconomic consequences. The income losses attributable to gender gaps in the labour market are substantial: 38% in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), 25% in South Asia (SA), 17% in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), 16% in East Asia and the Pacific (EAP). In SSA, the total income loss is 12%, with regional disparities (Figure 2.2): from 1% in Rwanda, Liberia and Ghana to 31% in Niger (Cuberes and Teigner, 2015).

Figure 2.2. Income losses associated with gender gaps in labour force participation

The SSA economy would benefit from greater parity between women and men. Huge macroeconomic gains would be made if women were able to fully develop their labour market potential. For example, closing the gender gap in order to allow women to play the same role in labour markets as men, would add as much as USD 28 trillion (26%) to annual global GDP in 2025 and USD 700 billion in SSA, representing 27% of the region's GDP. About 45% of this potential increase in SSA income could come from raising female participation rates to match those of men, 37% from shifting women into higher-productivity sectors and 18% from closing the gap between women and men in part-time work (Woetzel et al., 2015).

The cost of gender discrimination in social institutions

Discriminatory social institutions are also costly for economies. While their role has been neglected in the gender and growth literature, discriminatory social institutions hinder economic growth. Higher levels of discrimination in social institutions, as measured by the SIGI, are associated with lower levels of income per capita. This negative effect is explained by the influence of discriminatory social institutions on the way in which human assets are generated, as well as technological progress and the efficiency with which these assets are used in production (Ferrant and Kolev, 2016). Gender-based discrimination in social institutions is associated with huge income losses for all regions around the world, reducing potential income per inhabitant. The current level of discrimination induces a loss of USD 12 trillion or 16% of global income. For SSA countries, this is equivalent to a total loss of USD 340 billion (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3. Income losses associated with discriminatory social institutions by region

Notes: This figure presents the regional income and income loss associated with current levels of gender-based discrimination in social institutions. Income losses are measured in terms of 2011 real income at current PPP. The regions are: East Asia and the Pacific (EAP), South Asia (SA), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) and Middle East and North Africa (MENA). This regional classification excludes Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries, which are represented as a stand-alone group (OECD).


Each action to reduce and eliminate discrimination can produce long-term positive results for African countries. Eliminating all forms of gender-based discrimination in social institutions requires long-term commitments. However, by introducing gender-responsive policies and programmes, removing discrimination in legal frameworks, and providing equal rights to both sexes, countries could gradually reduce their level of discrimination. At the global level, a gradual reduction
of gender-based discriminatory social institutions by 2030 could increase the annual GDP growth rate by 0.03 to 0.6 percentage points over the next 15 years, depending on the scenario (Ferrant and Kolev, 2016). For example, compared to the business-as-usual scenario where the level of discrimination in 2030 would remain the same, Sudan would see its annual GDP per capita growth rate increased by 0.05 percentage points by reducing its level of discrimination in social institutions from very high to high (as measured in the SIGI 2014 classification). This effect rises up to 0.2 percentage points by reaching the South African level of discrimination, and 0.7 percentage points by eradicating discriminatory social institutions over the next 15 years (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4. Income gains in Sudan associated with reduced discrimination in social institutions

Notes: This figure presents GDP forecasts for 2030 in four scenarios: (i) business-as-usual (BAU), using available growth forecast, and assuming no change in level of gender-based discrimination in social institutions in Sudan between 2015 and 2030; (ii) upgrade in the SIGI classification, considering that Sudan would decrease its level of gender-based discrimination in social institutions in order to attain a lower group along the SIGI classification in 2030; (iii) best-in-region, considering that Sudan would decrease its level of gender-based discrimination in social institutions in order to reach the South African level of discrimination (Best Regional Performer) in 2030; (iv) gender parity, assuming that Sudan would have eradicated gender-based discrimination in social institutions by 2030. GDP forecasts are measured in terms of 2011 real GDP per capita at current PPPs.


Regional differences in levels of gender-based discrimination in social institutions could account for sub-regional disparities in living standards. This Regional Report shows that women living in SSA face various levels of deprivation related to discriminatory social institutions, which vary widely in terms of form and intensity from the top performer, South Africa, to the lowest performer, Sudan. The variation in levels of gender-based discrimination in social institutions may explain sub-regional development gaps. 3% and 4% of the income gap between Southern Africa, the best performing sub-region of Africa, and Eastern and Western Africa respectively may be explained by differences in the level of discrimination in social institutions. This is significant compared to 23% and 16% of the income gap accounted for by differences in capital stock accumulation, 4% and 6% by differences in human capital, and 14% and 13% by differences in factor productivity. Therefore, Western and Eastern Africa could reduce the income gap with Southern Africa by 3% and 4%, respectively, by decreasing their levels of discrimination in social institutions to Southern African levels.
The various forms of gender discrimination exacerbate each other, increasing the cost of discriminatory social institutions for African economies. In addition to the harmful effects on women’s rights and well-being, the economic impacts of gender-based discrimination in social institutions from the individual to the national levels are very significant. The cost attributable to gender gaps in the labour market is higher in countries having high levels of discrimination in social institutions (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5. **Income losses associated with gender gaps in labour force participation by SIGI classification**

![Graph showing income losses associated with gender gaps in labour force participation]

Note: This figure presents the regional average and country's maximum income losses attributable to gender gaps in the labour market by levels of gender-based discrimination in social institutions, as measured by the SIGI.


**Discriminatory social institutions: The drivers of gender inequality in Africa**

Gender discrimination cuts across most aspects of socioeconomic development and society at large, restricting both women’s opportunities and outcomes. Equal opportunities refers to non-discrimination in the provision and availability of and access to resources, rights and institutions; equality in outcomes refers to the ability for women and men to equally benefit from education, employment or salaries. In the African context, the SIGI measures discrimination in rights and opportunities by capturing discriminatory social institutions, while the African Development Bank's (AfDB) Gender Equality Index captures gender inequality in outcomes (see Box 2.1).

The various forms of gender discrimination exacerbate each other, increasing the relevance of tackling discriminatory social institutions in Africa. Discriminatory social institutions have gained prominence as a useful analytical framework to illuminate what drives gender inequality in outcomes. By guiding male and female behaviours and shaping the interactions, discriminatory social institutions influence women’s economic outcomes: this is the missing link to understand the persistence of unequal outcomes between women and men, as this section will show. Economic development allows for various opportunities to promote gender equality; economic growth alone, however, is not enough.
Restricted rights and opportunities: A barrier to gender parity in outcomes

Gender inequality in opportunities and outcomes remains pervasive in SSA, despite the significant economic and social progress of the last decades: nowhere do women possess the same legal, economic and social rights as men. As described in the Overview, in terms of discriminatory social institutions, the region is one of the poorest performers with a SIGI ranging from 0.0599 in South Africa to 0.550 in Sudan. Similarly, women’s outcomes are still lower than men’s as reflected by the AfDB’s Gender Equality Index scores ranging from 15.8 in South Africa to 74.5 in Somalia. This is explained by restrictions on women’s employment (the economic dimension), access to education and health (the human development dimension).

Discriminatory social institutions explain what stops women from achieving equal outcomes in areas such as education, employment, business and health. Discriminatory laws and norms, as measured by the SIGI, restrict the role of African women as producers, active citizens, leaders and actors of human development, as measured by the AfDB’s Gender Equality Index. Discriminatory social institutions set the parameters of what decisions, choices or behaviours are deemed acceptable or unacceptable for women in a society and therefore define their role and influence their outcomes. Figure 2.6 shows that higher levels of gender-based discrimination in social institutions are associated with lower equality in outcomes, even when controlling for factors such as the level of economic development and urbanisation or sub-regional characteristics.

Figure 2.6. Higher gender inequality in opportunities and rights, lower equality in outcomes

Notes: This figure presents the estimated level of gender inequality in outcomes, measured by the AfDB’s Gender Equality Index, by the level of gender-based discrimination in social institutions, controlling for GDP per capita, government expenditures in both health and education, unemployment rates, urbanisation rates and sub-regional characteristics. Higher SIGI score indicates higher inequality: the SIGI ranges from 0 for low discrimination to 1 for very high discrimination. Higher AfDB’s Gender Equality Index score indicates higher equality: the AfDB’s Gender Equality Index ranges from 0 to 100, where 100 indicates perfect gender equality.


Gender inequalities in opportunities and outcomes intersect and overlap to reinforce women’s marginalisation. Countries having higher levels of discrimination in social institutions are further from achieving gender parity. Countries ranked as having low levels of discrimination in social institutions in the SIGI classification have achieved on average 67% of the way towards perfect equality, as measured by the AfDB’s Gender Equality Index. On the other side of the spectrum, countries classified as having very high levels of discrimination in the SIGI have an AfDB’s Gender Equality Index score of 45 (Figure 2.7).
The development cost of discriminatory social institutions

Box 2.1 The African Development Bank’s Gender Equality Index

The AfDB’s Gender Equality Index reflects the status of women in Africa along three dimensions of equality:

- economic opportunity (business and employment),
- human development (education and health),
- law and institutions.

Each dimension draws on a series of indicators, measuring equality in business and employment, education, health, political representation, and legal and household rights.

Countries are scored on a scale from 0 to 100, where 100 indicates perfect gender equality. With an average of 54, the AfDB’s Gender Equality Index mirrors sub-regional disparities: African countries range from 75 in South Africa to 16 in Somalia. The top ten countries are South Africa, Rwanda, Namibia, Mauritius, Malawi, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Cabo Verde, and Madagascar.


Figure 2.7. AfDB’s Gender Equality Index score by SIGI classification

The cost of discriminatory social institutions for human development

Sub-Saharan African countries have low levels of human development compared to the rest of the world: the UNDP’s Human Development Index (HDI) ranges from 0.683 in Botswana to 0.337 in Niger, compared to 0.944 in Norway. This is mainly explained by low health and education outcomes (respectively measured by life expectancy and mean years of schooling; see Box 2.2), as well as low income per capita. In parallel, SSA displays high levels of inequality in the HDI: in Niger for example, the female level of human development is 71% of the male level. This is consistent with the results from the AfDB’s human development sub-index: Niger has achieved only 42% of the way towards perfect equality in access to education and health.
Discriminatory social institutions are powerful drivers of gender inequality in human development outcomes. The relationship between the SIGI and the AfDB’s Gender Equality Index described above is mainly driven by its effect on the human development dimension. This dimension includes gender inequality in education outcomes (literacy rate, and primary, secondary and tertiary school enrolment rates) and women’s access to health services (maternal mortality ratio, births attended by skilled health staff, unmet need for contraception and pregnant women receiving prenatal care).

Figure 2.8 shows that obstacles to women’s access to education and health are more prominent in countries with higher levels of gender-based discrimination in social institutions, leading to less gender equality in human development outcomes. The AfDB's human development sub-index score decreases as the SIGI increases: countries having low levels of discrimination in social institutions have an average score of 83, compared to 67 for countries having medium levels and 51 for those having high-to-very high levels.

Figure 2.8. Higher discrimination in social institutions, lower gender equality in human development

Note: This figure presents the estimated level of gender inequality in human development, measured by the human development sub-index of the AfDB's Gender Equality Index, by the level of gender-based discrimination in social institutions, controlling for GDP per capita, government expenditures in both health and education, unemployment rates, urbanisation rates, share of female teachers and sub-regional characteristics. Higher SIGI score indicates higher inequality: the SIGI ranges from 0 for low discrimination to 1 for very high discrimination. Higher AfDB’s Gender Equality Index score indicates higher equality: the AfDB’s Gender Equality Index ranges from 0 to 100, where 100 indicates perfect gender equality.

Box 2.2 The UNDP Human Development Index

The UNDP Human Development Index measures countries’ achievements in key dimensions of human development: health, education and standard of living. The health dimension includes life expectancy at birth, the education dimension years of schooling for adults aged 25 years and more and expected years of schooling for children of school entering age. Finally the standard of living is measured by gross national income (GNI) per capita.

The HDI ranges from 0 to 1, indicating very high levels of human development. With a HDI average of 0.50 in 2013, most of the SSA countries are classified as having low levels of development (except Gabon, South Africa, Cabo Verde, Namibia, Ghana, Zambia, Sao Tome and Principe and Equatorial Guinea classified as medium). Regional disparities appear: Niger has a low level of development with a score of 0.34, compared to score of 0.67 in Gabon.


Gender-based discrimination is associated with human development deprivation. Discriminatory laws, norms and practices not only affect African women’s well-being, but also that of African men, as measured by the UNDP’s Human Development Index (HDI). Figure 2.9 presents the female and male HDI scores, as well as gender equality in human development, captured by the female-to-male ratio of HDI, by SIGI classification. This negative bivariate correlation shows that both female and male levels of human development as well as gender equality in the HDI decrease with higher levels of discrimination in social institutions. It suggests that African countries classified as having low levels of discrimination in social institutions have higher levels of both female and male human development. In addition, the level of gender equality in human development is higher than in countries having higher scores in the SIGI.

Therefore, reducing gender-based discrimination in social institutions would promote the well-being of women and men, diminish gender inequalities in human development outcomes and also contribute to poverty reduction, economic growth and development.

Figure 2.9. The development cost of discriminatory social institutions

Notes: This figure presents the average HDI score by SIGI classification. Please note that no SSA country is ranked as having very low levels of discrimination in the SIGI classification. The HDI ranges from 0 to 1, indicating very high levels of human development.

Spatial disparities in social institutions and poverty exacerbate gender gaps in secondary education: The role of early marriage in Uganda

Spatial inequalities reproduce and reinforce gender inequalities, increasing the challenges rural and poor women and girls face to break cycles of poverty and marginalisation. Discriminatory social institutions represent an important structural barrier for women and girls to access equal empowerment opportunities to men and boys, perpetuating gender inequalities across a range of socio-economic areas. Spatial inequalities across regions in terms of poverty and levels of discrimination in social institutions, compound these gender inequalities, further widening gender gaps and regional differences in key development areas, such as education.

**Early marriage** is defined as a formal marriage or informal union before the recommended minimum age as established by a number of international declarations and conventions. It is measured as the percentage of girls aged 15-19 who are married, divorced, widowed or in informal unions.

**Early marriage** is a discriminatory social institution that particularly affects girls’ rights and well-being: globally, more than 700 million women aged 18 and older were married or entered into union under the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2014). Early marriage is linked to negative health, education and employment outcomes, which affect not only girls but also their children’s and communities’ well-being (Erulkar, 2013; Harper et al. 2014; OECD Development Centre, 2015). Its detrimental impact for girls’ rights, empowerment opportunities, and economic development has pushed early marriage to the forefront of the development 2030 Agenda.

Disparities in early marriage mirror regional social norms and prevalence of poverty

**Regional differences in early marriage prevalence rates can be explained by disparities in customary practices.** Indeed, such diversity can be observed at the national level. Data from the Uganda Social Institutions and Gender Index (Uganda SIGI database, 2015 – see Box 2.3 on pg. 32) offers further evidence of how early marriage interlocks with spatial inequalities (Figure 2.10). Although marriage of an under 18 year old girl is illegal under the Ugandan Constitution, Penal Code and Children’s Act, provisions in the Customary Marriage Act allow for 16-year old girls to marry (OECD Development Centre, 2014). This discrepancy explains regional trends in early marriage. In Uganda, half of 20-49 year-old women are married before they turn 18. While there is a decline in early marriage (40% of 20-24 year-old women compared to 56% of women 40-44 years old), still 15% of 20-49 year-old women were married by the age of 16 and 49% by 18, compared to 0.5% and 8% for men in the same age cohort. These national averages hide regional disparities which suggest the ongoing influence of customary practices: 13% of women living in Kampala were married by 16 and 25% before 18. Meanwhile, in the Northern region, 34% of women were married by 16 and 60% before the age of 18.

**Poverty is an important driver of early marriage:** key factors include perceptions of daughters as an economic burden or as a source of wealth, property and livestock from bride price. Spatial income inequalities are large: while 90% of the population in the region of Karamoja belong to the two lowest wealth quintiles, 90% of the population in Kampala belong to the highest wealth quintile. Those income inequalities are reflected in early marriage prevalence: almost two out of three women living in the poorest families were married before 18 compared to one in four women in the richest families. Similarly, girls in the highest wealth quintile living in Kampala marry about three years later than girls in the lowest wealth quintile living in the Northern region.
Box 2.3. Uganda Social Institutions and Gender Index (Uganda-SIGI)

With the support of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) and in partnership with the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), the OECD Development Centre launched the first country pilot of the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) in Uganda in 2015 to strengthen national policy making aimed at tackling the root causes of gender inequalities.

The Uganda-SIGI’s approach

The Uganda-SIGI is a tailor-made policy and research tool, adapting the conceptual framework of the global SIGI to the national context. It aims to better understand how discrimination against women and girls plays out at the sub-national level in relation to compounding factors such as urban/rural differences, socio-economic status, and education level. The adapted Uganda-SIGI framework is the result of national consultations, in-depth research, focus-group discussions, and household and individual surveys.

Over the past two decades, Uganda has achieved solid progress towards gender equality, courtesy of comprehensive laws and policies strengthening women’s political participation and land rights, among others. However, the lack of sub-national data on gender discrimination has impacted the effectiveness of these policy measures. The Uganda-SIGI addresses these data gaps and provides policy makers, civil society and the development community with a comprehensive database of information on discriminatory social institutions at the sub-national level. In addition, the data and results offer benchmarks to track Uganda’s progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Uganda-SIGI results

Through its surveys and the Uganda-SIGI, this country study provides new data on discriminatory social institutions across 10 sub-regions and 112 districts of Uganda. Results first bring to light the urgency to include social norms in policy approaches aimed at empowering women and eliminating gender inequalities at both the local and national levels. Second, results show how regional disparities at the sub-national level are often hidden by national level statistics and the importance of designing policies that specifically target local issues and involve community actions. Gaps between opinions and perceived and actual practices highlight the urgency to tackle discriminatory social institutions through a multi-pronged and holistic approach.

- **Discriminatory family code**: Acceptance of early marriage remains pervasive: on average 45% of the population agrees with marrying girls before 18, up to 59% in the Northern region. This social norm disproportionately applies to girls: 85% of Ugandans believe that men should be married later.

- **Restricted physical integrity**: Persistent discriminatory attitudes still reduce women’s right to sexual and reproductive health: about one in three people think that a woman cannot be justified in refusing having sex with her husband, nor decide by herself whether to use contraception.

- **Son preference**: While two-thirds of Ugandans agree that girls and boys should have an equal share of caring responsibilities, half of the population reports that in practice, girls are still performing more housework.

- **Restricted resources and assets**: Only one-third of land is owned or co-owned by women. There is strong support for this inequality: 27% of the population supports unequal land rights, reaching as high as 54% in the Mid-Northern sub-region.

- **Restricted civil liberties**: One-third of the population believe that women do not enjoy the same opportunities as men to access justice; this increases to 60% in the Southwest sub-region. The same share agrees that unequal access is justified.

Social norms also help to explain regional disparities in the practice of early marriage. The practice of early marriage is deeply rooted in social norms and attitudes that confer a lower status to girls, restricting girls' rights in the family and their ability to exercise agency. Using the Uganda-SIGI, evidence shows correlations between regions with high early marriage prevalence rates and a range of factors underpinning this discriminatory social institution (Figure 2.11), such as:

- higher acceptance rates of early marriage (almost 50% of respondents set the minimum age of marriage for girls lower than 18);
- higher parental control over marriage (87% of respondents declare that women are not the initiators of their own marriages in Northern region);
- higher percentage of respondents agrees that a bride price gives a status for a girl (up to 91% in the Northern region); and
- premarital pregnancy rates.

Figure 2.11. Higher acceptance of early marriage, higher prevalence rates

Note: This figure presents the relationship between attitudes towards girls’ early marriage and prevalence, controlling for attitudes and prevalence of early marriage for boys, levels of poverty (share of population in the lowest wealth quintile) and average sub-regional income.

The cost of early marriage in loss of human capital

Higher regional early marriage prevalence rates parallel wider regional gender gaps in secondary education. Early marriage cuts short girls’ education, with domestic and childcare responsibilities forcing many girls to drop out. The regional differences in early marriage also appear to be positively correlated with regional educational attainment rates. Female secondary education remains low in Uganda (12.5% of women have completed the secondary level), but with significant regional differences: while in Kampala, 34% of women complete secondary school, this drops to 17% in the Central region, 5% in the North and less than 3% in Karamoja. Yet, in regions where early marriage of girls is more common, female secondary completion rates are lower (Figure 2.12) and the gender gap is larger. For example, in the Southwest region 14% of girls marry by the age of 16 and the gender gap in secondary education is low (for every 100 men that completed secondary school, 96 women achieved the same educational level). In the North about 28% of women married by 16 and gender gap in education is quite high (for every 100 men that completed secondary school, 48 women achieved the same educational level).

Figure 2.12. Higher prevalence of early marriage, lower completion of secondary school for girls

The various negative impacts of early marriage generate substantial costs for countries. National economies would benefit from eliminating early marriage through reduced population growth, increased educational outcomes for girls and budget savings for the government. In the case of Niger, which has the highest early marriage prevalence rate in the world (61%, Gender Institutions and Development Database, 2014), preliminary estimates indicate that eradicating early marriage could lead to benefits valued at more than USD 25 billion over the next 15 years (Wodon et al., 2015).

Reducing the prevalence of early marriage is critical for securing girls’ rights and well-being and enabling them to take full advantage of empowerment opportunities. In addition to conferring major benefits to girls, eliminating early marriage has broader societal benefits: the earlier a girl marries, the lower the level of schooling, which not only limits her employment and earning potential, but also has other consequences ranging from health to autonomy, and other development outcomes. National policies should take into account the regional disparities in outcomes as well as entrenched discriminatory social institutions in order to achieve better results for girls and development. Implementing laws prohibiting early marriage and challenging attitudes which reinforce this customary practice are critical to address early marriage.
SIGI sub-index analysis
Women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa continue to face high levels of discrimination in the family despite strengthened regional and national legislative frameworks. Of the 43 countries covered in the SIGI, 29 have high to very high levels of discrimination against women in the discriminatory family code sub-index. Regional human rights instruments and amendments to legal codes have been important first steps in addressing entrenched gender inequality in the household; however, this has not led to equal treatment for women and men. The uneven implementation of laws and the persistence of discriminatory customary laws remain a major barrier to women’s ability to realise their rights in the family. In addition, high rates of early marriage in the region further limit girls’ decision-making power in the household and are linked to poorer socio-economic and health outcomes.

Early marriage remains a major concern in the region, although prevalence rates are decreasing. Rates of early marriage for the region are much higher than the global average (13%) with 24% of girls aged 15-19 married, divorced or widowed. In the SIGI 2014 nine of the ten countries with the highest rates of early marriage in the world are found in sub-Saharan Africa. The highest rates are found in the Central and Western African sub regions (29%), reaching as high as 61% in Niger (the highest prevalence globally). Overall, however, the region has seen a slight decrease in early marriage from 28% in 2008 (GID-DB, 2009) and while the practice remains pervasive, some countries have seen important decreases in early marriage across age cohorts. In Ethiopia, for example, 73% of women aged 45-49 were married before 18 compared to 41% of women aged 20-24 in 2011 (see Figure 3.1.1).
Legal frameworks to protect girls and boys from early marriage exist at the regional level. Several regional human rights charters have condemned early marriage and call upon states to take proactive measures to combat it including establishing the legal age of marriage at 18 for girls and boys. These include the African Youth Charter (Article 8) and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Article 6). The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Article 21) specifies the minimum age of marriage to be 18 years of age and calls for “effective action” from states including mandatory registration of all marriages. The African Union Commission’s Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa (2014-2018) aims to enhance the implementation of these policy instruments and raises the efforts against early marriage to the regional level (see Box 3.1).

Despite the introduction of early marriage into regional policy instruments, girls can still legally marry under the age of 18 in over half of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Certain governments have recognised the importance of establishing the legal age of marriage at 18 years in legislation to combat early marriage. Notable changes in legislation include Togo’s Persons and Family Code (2012), Kenya’s Marriage Act (2008) and Madagascar’s Family Code (2007) setting the minimum age of marriage at 18 for girls and boys. Even where such legislation exists, it may be weakened by the existence of plural legal systems; thus, while the legal age of marriage is 18 under the civil code, customary or religious laws may allow girls to marry much younger (e.g. Botswana, Lesotho and Niger). For example, the Ugandan Constitution (1995) criminalises early marriage and sets the minimum age of marriage at 18, but this is contradicted in other laws such as the Customary Marriages Act (1973) which allows girls to marry at the age of 16. Indeed, some customary laws do not stipulate a minimum age of marriage (e.g. Namibia, Malawi and Zimbabwe) and there are reports of girls younger than 15 marrying (HRW, 2015, UNICEF, 2015). This practice is supported by favourable attitudes towards early marriage with 45% of the population setting the minimum age of marriage girls before 18 (OECD Development Centre, 2015).

Higher prevalence of early marriage is linked to greater poverty and the constraints economic hardship places on families. Research has shown that early marriage in sub-Saharan Africa is most likely to occur in poor, rural areas with fewer work or education opportunities (Population Council, 2014). In this context, daughters may be married at a young age if they are seen as a monetary burden on their natal household (AfDB, 2015). On the other hand, where the custom of paying a bride price is practised, early marriage can be seen as an opportunity for economic advancement for a family and a way to ease strain on a household’s limited resources. In a survey undertaken in South Sudan, most
respondents referred to “material gain” as a major incentive to marry daughters at a young age (Brown, 2012). Research has found early marriage to be a “coping mechanism” for impoverished families who resort to marrying off their daughter at a young age to reduce family costs and/or obtain a bride price (Harper et al. 2014). This situation may be compounded by discriminatory social norms which prize younger brides. Indeed, in certain communities, bride-prices have been found to be higher for younger girls (Brown, 2012).

Box 3.1. African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa

The African Union's Campaign to End Child Marriage was launched in 2014 in Addis Ababa at the Conference of Ministers of Social Development. The Campaign is a reaction to the slow reduction of early marriage in Africa and the impact this has on the continent’s development outcomes. It is projected that if action is not taken within the next decade, over 14 million girls under 18 will be married every year or 39 000 girls a day.

The Campaign builds on already existing activities undertaken by Member States and development partners to support the drive to end early marriage and increase awareness of its negative effects. Partners include the Ford Foundation, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Save the Children, Plan International, Africa Child Policy Forum (ACPF) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The Campaign has three components: advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, and facilitation of technical assistance and capacity building. The Campaign supports AU Member States’ national strategies and programmes to end early marriage, promotes universal access to birth registration, quality education and sexual and reproductive health services, as well as the strengthening of the evidence base on what works to end early marriage.

The AU has selected 30 countries in which to launch national campaigns, beginning with Niger in December 2014. National campaigns have subsequently been launched in Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Niger and Mali.

Since the start of the AU Campaign, governments have reinforced their commitment by adopting the Common African Position on Ending Child Marriage in Africa in June 2015 under which governments pledge to increase efforts to eliminate early marriage by 2030. The AU has also published a report entitled “The Effects of Traditional and Religious Practices of Child Marriage on Africa's Socio-Economic Development” (2015) which reviews current research, reports and toolkits on early marriage in Africa. The report emphasises the central role of social norms in influencing the acceptable age of marriage for women and highlights promising tools to combat the harmful practice.

In September 2015, experts from Regional Economic Communities, Member States and regional-based CSOs from Eastern and Southern Africa met in Zambia to attend the first regional capacity-building workshop. The workshop was organised by the African Union Commission in conjunction with UNFPA, UNICEF, Inter-African Committee and the African Child Policy Forum and focused on mechanisms and strategies to end early marriage and other harmful practices.

The First African Girls’ Summit on Ending Child Marriage in Africa took place in November 2015, hosted by the AU and the Government of Zambia. The event brought together Member States’ First Ladies, international organisations, CSOs, traditional leaders and women and girl victims of early marriage to share best practices and on-going challenges to ending early marriage.

The practice of early marriage cuts short girls’ education, having negative economic effects throughout their life course (see page 30). Countries in sub-Saharan Africa with higher prevalence rates of early marriage have lower secondary school enrolment and completion rates for girls (OECD Development Centre, 2014) (Figure 3.1.2). SIGI data shows that early marriage prevalence rates are correlated with gender gaps in educational attainment. Moreover, early marriage is also associated with poorer health outcomes for girls and their children, and higher fertility rates. Research has found that girls who marry early are at greater risk of domestic violence and have less reproductive autonomy (Erulkar, 2013). They are also more likely to bear children at a young age: in Mozambique, 39% of girls who married before the age of 15 also had their first child before 15. Adolescent pregnancy has a higher risk of maternal mortality and children of young mothers face higher rates of under-nutrition and mortality (Population Council, 2014; UNICEF, 2015).

National action plans are evidence of countries’ political will to end early marriage. Governments such as Ethiopia and Zambia have recognised the need for a comprehensive approach to address the multiple drivers of early marriage. Ethiopia’s National Strategy and Action Plan on Harmful Traditional Practices against Women and Children (2013) led by the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs, include a national communication plan, increasing national statistical capacity to track trends and inform policy, and ensure implementation and enforcement of national laws. In 2013, the government of Zambia initiated a three-year national action plan to end early marriage led by the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs. The campaign draws on traditional leaders to bridge national level policies to implementation at the village level including amending relevant customary and religious laws to legally protect girls from early marriage (Girls not Brides, 2015).
Women continue to face de facto discrimination in the household even where equal rights are legally guaranteed. This includes women’s and men’s parental authority over their children. Close to three-quarters of countries (31 out of 43) accord women and men equal legal parental authority in the household both during marriage and after divorce. Legal restrictions on women’s parental authority remain in seven countries in the region (e.g. Guinea, Mauritania and Swaziland). This includes recognising men as the sole legal head of household (Sudan) or granting fathers sole custody of children (Zimbabwe). In many countries in the region, customary law is legally recognised and exempted from non-discrimination clauses (e.g. Botswana, Lesotho and Nigeria) (World Bank, 2015). Thus, discriminatory customary law that establishes men as the sole head of household can undermine women’s position and decision-making power in the household. This can have a widespread impact: in Nigeria, over two-thirds of the population follow customary law which establishes men as the sole head of household (Emery, 2013).

Women in the region face barriers to claiming their inheritance rights despite legal frameworks granting women and men equal inheritance rights in the majority of countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Women’s legal rights to inheritance as widows and daughters are protected in all but five countries in the region (e.g. Chad and Gambia). Recent positive legal changes include Zimbabwe’s Deceased Estates Bill (2011) and amendments to Togo’s Personal and Family Code in 2012 which provide widows and daughters with the same inheritance rights as widowers and sons. In some cases, the law may only apply to certain types of land. For example, in Sierra Leone, the Devolution of Estates Act (2007) grants women and men equal rights to inheritance from their spouse but excludes “family property”, which applies to over 80% of land. Instead family property falls under customary law which accords women a smaller share than men. In Tanzania, under the Local Customary Law Declaration Order No.4 (1963), women inherit immovable property for use only during their lifetime which they cannot sell unless there are no male relatives.

Data on widow’s inheritance in the region reveal that widows face widespread discrimination in property and asset inheritance even when the law guarantees their rights. DHS data for 15 countries in sub-Saharan Africa found that less than half of widows (47%) report inheriting any assets and even fewer (32%) report inheriting the majority of assets (see Figure 3.1.3). In 13 of the 15 countries surveyed, the deceased spouse’s children or family inherited the majority of assets. Only in Rwanda and Senegal were widows most likely to inherit the majority of assets (Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2011). Unequal inheritance rights or their poor implementation can negatively impact women’s socio-economic rights by increasing women’s vulnerability to homelessness and restricting their access to productive resources including land (COHRE, 2004).

Figure 3.1.3. Who inherits the majority of assets? Inheritance practices in selected countries

Notes: This figure presents the percentage of the deceased man’s family inheriting the majority of assets for selected countries. Sample is among women aged 15 to 49 and mean values are weighted according to population-level weights provided in the DHS. Source: Demographic and Health Surveys (1988-2015), http://dhsprogram.com/data/.
Women’s rights in the family including parental authority and access to inheritance may become even more vulnerable when they become widows. This is an important issue for the region as it has the highest levels of widows globally with over 40% of women aged 60-64 being a widow. This is due to the high rates of HIV/AIDS and conflicts as well as large age gaps between spouses connected to early marriage (UN, 2015b; Population Council, 2014). SIGI country profiles for the region highlight the multiple discriminatory practices widows face including reports of property grabbing (e.g. Burkina Faso and Swaziland), forced eviction (e.g. Guinea-Bissau) and levirate inheritance, where women are considered to be part of their deceased husband’s property (e.g. Mali).

Levirate marriage, where widows are obliged to marry the brother of their deceased husband in order to keep patrilineal property together, is common across the region and remains legal under certain customary laws (e.g. Gambia and Mali). Levirate marriage may exclude women from accessing their inheritance unless they agree to marry a male relative of their husband. These practices restrict women’s rights in the household, often making them dependent on their husband’s family (COHRE, 2004). Countries have taken measures to criminalise such discriminatory practices towards widows including levirate marriage (e.g. Benin, Burkina Faso and Togo). Nevertheless, the practice remains common and widows may risk losing their home and children if they refuse marriage.

The majority of countries in the region have legislation providing for women’s right to initiate divorce. Nevertheless, four countries in the region still legally discriminate against women concerning the right to initiate divorce (Gabon, Mauritania, Niger and Sudan). In the remaining countries, women have the same legal rights as men to initiate divorce. However, SIGI results reveal discriminatory customs or practices in 15 countries, negatively impacting women’s ability to claim their legal rights (e.g. Botswana, Guinea, Lesotho and Nigeria). For example, in Lesotho, women and men are accorded equal rights to initiate divorce, but this excludes customary marriages under which women’s rights to divorce are limited (US State Department, 2012). Women may face social stigma and economic hardships after divorce. Where bride price is practised, women may be forced to repay their bride price to acquire a divorce (e.g. Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia). In Uganda, a recent Supreme Court ruling found this to be illegal under Article 21(2) of the Constitution as it perpetuates “inequality between men and women” (Mifumi (U) Ltd v. Attorney General, 2014).

Figure 3.1.4. Time spent on housekeeping activities by Ghanaian women and men

Note: This figure presents the time spent in minutes per day by Ghanaian women and men on housekeeping activities in 2006.
Source: Ghana Living Standards Survey 2005-06.
The persistence of discriminatory gender stereotypes in the household is evidenced by women’s unequal burden of unpaid care work across the region. On average, women spend four times more time on unpaid care work than men; however, this varies greatly between countries ranging from 1.2 times more in Uganda to 17 times more in Mali. Lack of adequate infrastructure forces families to spend more time collecting water and fuel for cooking. This disproportionately affects women and girls who undertake 71% of water collection in sub-Saharan Africa (UN, 2015a): in Ghana for example, women spent on average 41 minutes per day collecting water (Figure 3.1.4). The unequal division of unpaid care work is reinforced by discriminatory attitudes against women’s role in the household. In Uganda, one-third of women and men believe that care activities should not be shared equally within the household (OECD Development Centre, 2015).

Good practices

- **Transforming social norms to delay marriage in Ethiopia:** The Berhane Hewan programme was launched in 2004 by the Ethiopia Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs, the Amhara Regional Bureau of WCYA, the Population Council and UNFPA in Ethiopia. The two-year programme aimed to delay the age of marriage for girls and support girls who married as children through a combination of community awareness-raising and financial support for them to remain in school. The programme provided school supplies and peer mentoring groups and conditional asset transfers to families who did not marry their daughters. An evaluation showed positive results as girls in the project site were three times more likely to be in school and no girl was married during the pilot phase of the project. The project is now being replicated by the Population Council and partners for the period 2010-16 in Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and Tanzania (The Population Council, 2014).

- **Challenging discriminatory gender roles within the household in South Africa:** The Sonke Gender Justice Network developed the “Fatherhood project” in 2006 to challenge traditional norms on masculinities in South Africa. The project works with local government and civil society groups to engage with men through digital storytelling and media to engage men in a dialogue for social change. The programme aims to increase men’s involvement as fathers and caregivers and change negative attitudes about expected roles in the family. The evaluation of the programme showed positive results: men who participated in the programme adopted new roles that were traditionally viewed as “unmanly”, such as spending more time parenting, caring for the ill or supporting women in balancing workloads (USAID, 2011).
The restricted physical integrity sub-index measures the following: prevalence of violence against women; attitudes towards violence against women; laws addressing domestic violence, rape (including spousal rape) and sexual harassment; and the prevalence of female genital mutilation (FGM). It also measures women’s reproductive autonomy.

Women in the region face the highest levels of discrimination in the restricted physical integrity sub-index: 30 out of 43 countries show high to very high levels of discrimination while only one country shows low levels of discrimination.

Sub-Saharan Africa showed the highest levels of discrimination in the restricted physical integrity sub-index of all the geographical regions included in the 2014 SIGI. Of the 43 countries covered in the region, 30 were classified as having high to very high discrimination. While countries have increased women’s legal protection from violence, legislative gaps remain, particularly concerning domestic violence. Discriminatory social norms justifying violence against women are reflected in high acceptance rates by women. Conflict in certain countries increases women’s vulnerability to gender-based violence and limits their ability to seek justice. Female genital mutilation (FGM) continues to affect girls particularly in Eastern and Western Africa where progress in eliminating the harmful practice has been slow.

There has been growing regional recognition that violence against women is a violation of human rights. In 2015, the Heads of State and Governments of the African Union adopted Agenda 2063, in which they aspire to eliminate “all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls” and commit to working towards ending harmful practices including FGM. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the ‘Maputo Protocol’) (2003) calls on states to adopt appropriate measures to ensure the protection of women from all forms of violence (see Box 3.2). This includes measures to ensure proper implementation and enforcement of laws concerning both physical and sexual violence in public and private domains (articles three and four). The Maputo Protocol has been signed and ratified by 35 countries in the region.
Box 3.2. Maputo Protocol

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol) was adopted by the African Union in 2003 in Maputo, Mozambique. The Protocol came into force in 2005 after it was ratified by 15 Member States. The Protocol provides a framework for the promotion and protection of women's rights in Africa by expressly outlining women's rights and the obligations of governments with respect to these rights.

The Protocol has been ratified by 36 Member States, 15 Member States have signed but not ratified and 3 Member States have yet to sign.

The Protocol guarantees women's social and economic rights and their right to take part in all political processes. The Protocol also calls for an end to violence against women and all harmful practices including FGM. In addition, it guarantees their control over their sexual and reproductive health. The Protocol is binding upon ratification and Member States are called to ensure proper implementation and enforcement of the Protocol.

Tackling violence against women is an urgent challenge for the region given legislative weaknesses and high prevalence rates. The absence of national legislation in over one-third of the countries in the region leaves many women without legal protection from domestic violence. Of the 43 countries in the region, 17 do not have legislation on domestic violence (e.g. Burundi, Central African Republic, Côte d’Ivoire and Sudan). Legislation is most scarce in Central and Western Africa where only 7 of 22 countries have introduced laws protecting women from domestic violence. Existing laws often provide only patchy coverage for women. For example, they may only cover certain types of violence (e.g. Burkina Faso and Cameroon do not include emotional or economic violence) or fail to recognise marital rape (e.g. Malawi and Uganda).

Fig. 3.2.1. Domestic violence against men and women in Ghana and Uganda

Note: This figure presents the percentage of currently married men and women ages 15-49 by their experience of different types and combinations of violence perpetrated by the current spouse in their lifetime in Ghana and Uganda. The information is not available for sexual violence against men in Ghana.

The prevalence of domestic violence remains high across the region. On average, 43% of women in sub-Saharan Africa report having experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner at some point in their lives. Rates are much higher in some countries, affecting over 70% of women in Angola and Ethiopia. Data on prevalence rates reveal the gendered nature of domestic violence: women are more likely than men to experience intimate-partner violence (WHO, 2011) and women are more likely to experience violence from an intimate partner than from a stranger (AfDB, 2015). In Uganda, for example, women are twice as likely as men to experience spousal violence (OECD Development Centre, 2015). Moreover, women are more likely to experience all types of violence (physical, psychological, economic or sexual): 32% of Ghanaian and 47% of Ugandan women were victims of emotional violence during their lifetime compared to 19% and 33% of Ghanaian and Ugandan men, respectively (see Figure 3.2.1).

Social norms justifying violence against women help to explain high prevalence rates of domestic violence even in countries with adequate legislation. Analysis of SIGI data reveals that high rates of domestic violence in the region correspond with high levels of social acceptance. Over half of women (53%) believe that their husband or partner is justified in beating his wife or partner under certain circumstances such as burning food or leaving the house without permission. Acceptance is much higher in some countries (e.g. 92% in Guinea). Results from the SIGI show that higher acceptance rates correlate with higher prevalence rates: in Rwanda, 15% of women report experiencing intimate partner violence in their lifetime and 44% of women accept the harmful practice, while in the Democratic Republic of Congo 76% of women have been victims and 64% accept it (see Figure 3.2.2).

**Fig. 3.2.2. Higher acceptance of domestic violence by women is related to higher prevalence rates**

Note: This figure presents the estimated prevalence rate of domestic violence against women by acceptance of domestic violence, controlling for existence of laws addressing domestic violence and prevalence of domestic violence against men.

Large gaps remain in legislation concerning \textbf{rape} in the region making it difficult for women to seek justice. While the majority of countries have legislation concerning rape, only two countries (Mozambique and Rwanda) have comprehensive laws that cover marital rape and do not drop criminal penalties if perpetrators marry their victim. In the remaining 41 countries, legislation addressing rape contains legal loopholes for perpetrators. Indeed, 30 exclude marital rape (e.g., Ethiopia and Zimbabwe) and 7 allow the perpetrator to escape if they marry the victim (e.g., Mauritania and Somalia). Marital rape is also justified by attitudes restricting women's sexual autonomy. In Mali, for example, 78\% of women aged 15-49 declare that a woman is not justified in refusing having sex with her husband, compared to 5\% in Chad and Rwanda (see Figure 3.2.3).

\textbf{Figure. 3.2.3. Restriction on women's sexual autonomy: no reason to justify refusing sex with her husband}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure323.png}
\caption{Restriction on women's sexual autonomy: no reason to justify refusing sex with her husband}
\end{figure}

Note: This figure presents women's attitudes towards women's sexual autonomy as measured by percentage of women aged 15-49 declaring that no reasons justify a wife refusing to have sex with her husband.

Source: Demographic and Health Surveys (1988-2015), Demographic and Health Surveys, \url{http://dhsprogram.com/data/}. 
Sexual violence against women impacts their ability to refuse sex or negotiate condom use which can lead to unintended pregnancies or HIV infection (UN Fund, 2012). Rape negatively affects maternal and new-born health and has been linked with higher risks of maternal mortality (WHO, 2012; Kendall and Danel, 2014). Rape contributes to the spread of the HIV/AIDS virus which disproportionately affects women in the region (Ramjee and Daniels, 2013). A study in South Africa found that women who experienced intimate partner violence were more likely to contract HIV than those who were not (UN Fund, 2012).

SIGI country profiles for the region highlight high rates of underreporting by women of gender-based violence making it difficult to know the true extent of the problem (e.g. Cameroon and Guinea-Bissau). In Uganda, less than half of women who have experienced intimate partner violence in the past twelve months reported the incident or sought help to prevent future violence (OECD Development Centre, 2015). Discriminatory attitudes within the justice system may deter women from reporting sexual violence to police. Country profiles report police’s unwillingness to intervene in cases of domestic violence because it is seen as a private matter (e.g. Gabon, Nigeria and Senegal).

Country profiles also indicate weak enforcement of laws and lack of adequate resources hindering effective implementation of laws concerning violence against women (e.g. Malawi, South Africa). There are reports that even when perpetrators are arrested, cases may not be investigated or may be dropped by the courts before reaching a verdict (US State Department, 2012). Specialised training for police officers and those working in the justice system can help address biases against women reporting gender-based violence. For example, UN Women held training for police officers in Nigeria and helped to draft the Gender Policy for the National Police Force (2009). Liberia and South Africa have also instituted quotas of 20% and 40%, respectively, for women in police forces (Harsh, 2012).

Governments in the region have recognised the need for a holistic approach to support the specific needs of female survivors of violence. One-stop centres and gender desks have been instituted in numerous countries to adequately address the multiple needs of victims of gender-based violence. In South Africa, Thuthuzela Care Centres combine medical, security, psycho-social, and justice services located in hospitals (UNODC, 2014). These have proven effective in increasing women’s likelihood of reporting rape and have been replicated across the country. In Rwanda, gender desks at police stations are staffed mostly by women trained to help victims of sexual and other forms of violence (Kimani, 2012). These initiatives create supportive environments that encourage women to report crimes and participate in the criminal justice process. Governments have also developed protocols for police and health care providers on how to respond to victims of gender-based violence. For example, the Government of Kenya released National Guidelines on Management of Sexual Violence in Kenya (2009) which recognise sexual violence as a health and human rights problem as well as the need for comprehensive care for victims.

Women in conflict and post-conflict settings are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, where a series of conflicts have taken place since 1994, 400 000 women aged 15-49 were raped over a 12-month period (Peterman, Palermo and Bredenkamp, 2011). Following the 2001 crisis in Côte d’Ivoire, 67% of women in the country were victims of gender-based violence (AfDB, 2013). These numbers might not show the entire extent of the problem as women are unlikely to report sexual violence during conflict due to general insecurity (Slegh et al., 2014). Police may also be unable to properly respond to reports of violence against women during conflict and levels of impunity have been found to increase during conflict (OECD, 2013).
United Nations Security Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on women, peace and security recognises the important role women can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts (see Box 3.3). The resolution identifies the necessity of using a gender lens in peace and security efforts to address the specific issues women and girls face in conflict situations such as rape and other forms of sexual violence. Côte d’Ivoire was the first post-conflict country to adopt a National Action Plan (2007) on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 followed by Uganda (2008) and Liberia (2009). In most conflict and post-conflict settings in the region, the implementation of UNSCR 1325 has focused mainly on responding to the needs of women as victims. In the DRC, Liberia and Uganda, specialised prosecution units opened to deal with sexual and gender-based violence crimes. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, UNDP supports a network of legal aid clinics to address the issue of impunity for perpetrators of violence. Women’s participation in official peace processes, including negotiations, continues to be limited though, as women are often left out entirely or restricted to support staff. For example, in the current peace process in Mali only 5 of 100 delegates are women (UN Women, 2015a).

**Box 3.3. UNSCR 1325**

Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security was adopted by the United Nations Security Council in 2000. The resolution recognises the changing nature of warfare in which civilians, particularly women, are increasingly targeted while at the same time they continue to be excluded from peace processes. UNSCR 1325 acknowledges that women and men have different experiences during and after conflict and that sustainable peace is not possible if the needs of half of the population are excluded.

UNSCR 1325 reaffirms the key role women can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and post-conflict reconstruction. The resolution calls for the equal participation of women in all operations promoting peace and security and for gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping operations.

Women in the region lack comprehensive legal protection from sexual harassment due to gaps in legislation. While over half of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa (27 out of 43) have laws addressing some form of sexual harassment, most laws are limited in where they protect women. The majority of laws (61%) only cover sexual harassment that takes place in the workplace (e.g. Lesotho and Mauritius), while only 17% of countries cover sexual harassment in educational settings and only 12% cover public spaces (World Bank, 2015). Recognising that sexual harassment takes place in other settings than just work, Benin and Ethiopia introduced laws on sexual harassment in educational institutions and public spaces (World Bank, 2015).²

Women in the region lack reproductive autonomy: one in four women in the region has an unmet need for family planning, double the world average. In addition, women in Africa have the lowest level of contraception use (33% compared to 64% globally) (WHO, 2015). Lower reproductive autonomy of women is connected to poor health service infrastructure in the region. Poor women and women in rural settings face even greater difficulties in accessing reproductive health services as poverty and location compound women’s already limited resources (UNFPA, 2012a).

**Reproductive autonomy** is measured as the percentage of married women aged 15-49 with an unmet need for family planning.
While there are positive signs that the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) is declining, rates remain high, affecting over 40% of women in the region (UNICEF, 2013). The practice is concentrated in Eastern and Western Africa where 44% and 48% of women respectively have undergone the procedure. In contrast, 17 countries concentrated in Central and Southern Africa report no or very few cases (e.g. Gabon, Lesotho). At the national level, the highest rates of FGM are found in Guinea and Somalia where over nine in ten women have been subjected to the practice. In those countries, FGM prevalence is stagnating (Figure 3.2.4), while it is decreasing in Liberia where 85% of women aged 45-49 were cut against 44% of adolescent girls (15-19 years old) in 2012.

The international community has played an important role in bringing attention to the harmful effects of FGM and supporting the campaign to end it. Since the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, FGM has been classified as a form of violence against women (UNICEF, 2013). Most recently, the elimination of FGM was included in SDG 5 on gender equality. At the regional level, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child calls for governments to end harmful traditional practices but does not explicitly mention FGM. The Maputo Protocol specifically addresses FGM and upon ratification, governments commit to taking legislative measures to eradicate all forms of FGM such as implementing sanctions and harsher punishment for those involved (Article 5).

Fig 3.2.4. Decreasing FGM prevalence

Notes: This figure presents the prevalence rate of female genital mutilation (FGM) among women aged 15-19 and 45-49. CAR refers to Central African Republic.

Since the 1990s, many countries in the region have enacted decrees or legislation related to FGM, although implementation remains weak. While the number of national legal frameworks to address FGM has increased, they vary in their scope and punishment. For example, Mauritania’s decree (2005) only bans the practice in medical facilities for minors. In Ethiopia, the Constitution (1994) indirectly refers to FGM by outlawing “harmful customs”. These weaknesses in legislation allow practitioners to continue performing FGM legally. For example, Kenya originally outlawed FGM under the Children’s Act (2001) for girls under 18. This was circumvented by delaying the procedure until girls turned 18. Kenya addressed this issue by explicitly outlawing FGM for all women in 2011 (UNFPA, 2013). Research by UNFPA (2012b) has found that laws on FGM are often poorly implemented. For example, in Burkina Faso, where FGM has been outlawed since 1996, only seven convictions were recorded in 2012 and very high prevalence rates persist (76%). Eritrea has been much more aggressive in implementing its law on FGM with 155 convictions in the same year (UNFPA, 2012b).
Understanding the social pressure surrounding FGM helps to explain why the practice persists in certain areas. FGM is often seen as a rite of passage for girls entering into adulthood and determining their marriageability; however, it is rarely the adolescent girl deciding if she should undergo the procedure or not (UNICEF, 2013). Instead, decisions concerning FGM depend on input and pressure from extended families and communities (UNICEF, 2013). Support for FGM appears to be decreasing particularly among younger generations. Nevertheless, acceptance remains high in countries where FGM is widely practised: in Mali and Guinea, where over eight in ten women undergo some form of FGM, 73% and 69% of women and girls believe that FGM should continue (UNICEF, 2013). Recognising that laws are insufficient to tackle FGM, UNFPA has developed a programme aimed at changing discriminatory social norms which support the practice. The “Alternative Rite of Passage” programme offers girls a safe way to celebrate their transition to womanhood in their communities without undergoing FGM. In one community in Kenya, 308 girls pledged to stay uncut with the support of their parents, local leaders, and community members (UNFPA, 2012b).

**Good practices**

- **Mobilising communities to eliminate female genital mutilation in Ethiopia:** Since 1999, the local NGO “Kembatti Mentti Gezzimma” (KMG) has worked in the Kembatta zone in Ethiopia to eliminate female genital mutilation (FGM). The programme focuses on challenging the acceptance of FGM and increasing awareness of its harmful effects at the community level. “Community conversations” led by trained facilitators brought together entire communities to reflect on the current situation of women and girls and violence, and disseminated prevention information and the development of sanctions. A key factor in the programme’s success was the commitment of nearly all traditional leaders to abandon the practice. As a result of KMG’s intervention over the past two decades, the practice of FGM has decreased drastically in the region from 97% in 1999 to less than 5% in 2008 (Stern and Anderson, 2015).

- **Empowering survivors of gender-based violence in Côte d’Ivoire:** Recognising the high rates of gender-based violence (GBV) following conflict in Côte d’Ivoire in 2001, the African Development Bank (AfDB) implemented a project to provide health and legal services and economic opportunities for women victims of GBV. From 2007 to 2012, the project helped 3,500 women and girl survivors of GBV through three schemes: first, the establishment of service centres providing medical, psychosocial, economic, legal and judiciary services for GBV survivors; second, income-generating projects for women’s associations where GBV survivors were encouraged to join; and finally, the training of NGO partners in effective responses to GBV. It is estimated that the project raised awareness of GBV for 1.5 million community members including social and health workers, policemen, judicial agents and community leaders (AfDB, 2013).
Son bias

Sub-Saharan Africa showed the lowest levels of discrimination in the son bias sub-index compared to the other sub-indices measured by the SIGI. Of the 43 countries in the region, 16 have low to very low levels of discrimination. Nevertheless, a sub-set of countries show evidence of missing women due to high maternal mortality rates and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Excess female mortality during women’s reproductive years is cause for alarm in some countries and is increasing in severity. Governments have made progress in closing gender gaps in education supported by the MDG campaign. Despite this, discriminatory gender norms in the household are stalling the region’s progress in girls’ education.

High female mortality during women’s reproductive years has resulted in missing women in the region. In the SIGI, 19 countries show evidence of missing women with skewed sex ratios most pronounced between women and men aged 15 to 49 (e.g. Botswana, Gabon, Nigeria and Zambia, Figure 3.3.1). This issue is concentrated in Southern and Western Africa where excess female mortality during women’s reproductive years has led to skewed sex ratios. In 2008, there was an estimated 1 182 000 excess female deaths in the region with over half occurring among women aged 15–49 (World Bank, 2011). The situation is intensifying as sub-Saharan Africa is the only region where the absolute number of missing women has increased in the past two decades.
The concept of “missing women” was first introduced by Amartya Sen in 1990. He hypothesised that over 100 million women were missing due to excess mortality of women from inequality and neglect (Sen, 1990). Missing women is calculated by the shortfall in the number of women in sex ratios for ages 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-64 and 64+ relative to the expected number if there were no sex-selective abortions, no female infanticide or similar levels of health and nutrition, correcting for natural biological and physiological differences. Computed by Professor Stephan Klasen using the method discussed in Klasen and Wink (2002).

Sub-Saharan Africa stands out from other regions with evidence of missing women where skewed sex ratios are seen later in life as shown in Figure 3.3.1. In other regions with evidence of missing women (e.g. East Asia and the Pacific, Central Asia and the Caucasus, and South Asia), skewed sex ratios are seen generally from birth or among infants and are linked to sex-selective abortions and infanticide. In contrast, sex ratios at birth in sub-Saharan Africa follow natural expectations and therefore show no strong evidence of fertility preference for sons. Instead, excess female mortality is most alarming among 15-49 year olds, corresponding with women’s reproductive years (World Bank, 2011). In addition, unlike other regions which have seen declines in excess female mortality and evening out of skewed sex ratios (South Asia and East Asia and the Pacific), most sub-Saharan African countries have seen little change and the situation has intensified since 2000 for countries in Southern Africa (World Bank, 2011).

Figure 3.3.1. Sex ratios by age cohort

Excess female mortality during women’s reproductive years is connected to high rates of maternal mortality and, in certain countries, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the two leading causes of death for women in the region (World Bank 2011). This is a result of multiple, compounding factors including lack of secure access to health services and discriminatory social norms which give a lower value to women’s and girls’ health within the household. MDG 5 (Improve Maternal health) brought global attention to the problem of maternal mortality and the need for women to receive antenatal and postnatal care. As a result, rates of maternal mortality in the region have decreased from 987 deaths per 100 000 live births in 1990 to 547 in 2015. Despite progress, the region has the highest rate of maternal mortality globally, more than double the world average of 216 (World Bank, n.d.). In Chad and Sierra Leone, women face the greatest risk of dying from maternal conditions, 1 in 18 and 1 in 17, respectively compared to 1 in 36 on average globally (WHO, 2015).
Discriminatory social norms which restrict women’s and girls’ access to health services during their reproductive years have stalled progress on decreasing female mortality. Many women and girls in the region lack secure access to family planning services or have limited control over their sexual and reproductive health (World Bank 2012; WHO, 2015). Consequently, the region sees high fertility rates, 5 births per woman on average compared to 2.5 globally (World Bank, n.d.). This contributes to the high prevalence of maternal mortality as more births per woman increases their chances of dying due to birth-related issues (UN, 2015b).

The other major cause of missing women in the region is the HIV/AIDS epidemic which has mainly affected Southern Africa, the region hardest hit by HIV/AIDS across the globe (e.g. Lesotho, Malawi and South Africa). One promising development is that rates of new infections seem to be slowing although women continue to be disproportionately affected (UN, 2015b). Women are more likely to be infected than men due to physiological differences, and account for almost 60% of all persons infected in the region (UN, 2015b).

Concerning HIV/AIDS, girls have been found to face greater barriers to HIV testing than boys and to be less knowledgeable about the virus (UNAIDS, 2014b). Violence against women and girls in the household reinforces gender power imbalances and limits women’s agency over their sexual health. The spread of the virus has also been linked to high rates of domestic violence as women who have experienced intimate partner violence are 50% more likely to be living with HIV/AIDS (UN, 2015b). Adolescent girls are especially vulnerable: they acquire HIV five to seven years earlier than adolescent boys and may see infection rates seven times higher than those of their male counterparts (UNAIDS, 2015b).

Discrimination against girls in the household also manifests itself in unequal educational outcomes between daughters and sons. Over the past two decades the region has made progress in improving girls’ access to education; however, no country in sub-Saharan Africa has achieved gender parity in both primary and secondary education (World Bank, n.d.). Primary school enrolment rates have increased from 59% in 2001 to 76% in 2013 (World Bank, n.d.) due in large part to MDG 2 (Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education). In contrast, secondary school enrolment rates have advanced more slowly, increasing from 20% to 24% over the same time period (World Bank n.d.). Overall, gender gaps remain in the region: for every 100 boys there are only 93 girls in primary school on average in 2013 (World Bank, n.d.). In addition, girls are more likely to be out of school than boys (36% compared to 31%) (UN, 2015b).

Figure 3.3.2. Son preference in education for selected countries and the ratio of female-to-male tertiary school enrolment rates

Note: These figures present son preference in tertiary education as measured by the percentage of the population declaring that tertiary education is more important for boys than for girls, and the female-to-male ratio of tertiary education school enrolment rates.

Social norms that discriminate against girls in the household are holding back the region’s efforts to close gender gaps in education. Negative attitudes towards girls’ education help to explain the persistent gender gaps in years of schooling. SIGI data for 11 countries shows a slight preference for sons in education: 27% of people on average agree that university education is more important for boys than girls, ranging from 8% in Ethiopia to 46% in Mali. Where parents undervalue their daughter’s education they may be less likely to financially support their continued schooling. In Nigeria where 46% of the population declares that tertiary education is more important for boys than for girls, 72 girls are enrolled in tertiary education for 100 boys (see Figure 3.3.2). In a survey undertaken in the West Nile region of Uganda, 43% of out-of-school girls cited lack of parental support as the main reason for leaving school (Stoebenau et al., 2015). Eliminating school fees is one way to facilitate girls’ access to formal education. Fifteen countries in the region have abolished school fees for primary education since 2001. For example, Lesotho passed the Education Act (2010) providing for free and compulsory primary education. This was followed by increases in enrolment rates for girls at the primary and secondary levels. Benin eliminated school fees for girls in public primary schools in rural areas in 2000 and saw an increase in girls’ primary school completion rates from 25% to 68% in 2013 (World Bank, n.d.).

Social norms which justify gender-based violence in schools undermine government initiatives to improve girls’ access to education. Research in the region shows that schools may not always be safe environments for girls who may face the threat of violence from both male pupils and teachers (UNESCO, 2015). In a survey conducted in Liberia (2014) 29% of girls reported abuse by teachers, school staff or classmates: this may discourage parents from sending their daughters to school (MAE, 2012). Governments in the region have introduced initiatives to address the negative impact of gender-based violence on girls’ educational prospects. South Africa introduced a series of legislative measures protecting students and establishing a code of conduct for teachers. This included a safe school initiative, training in anti-bullying tactics and aligning schools with local police stations to improve responses to gender-based violence (UNESCO, 2015a). Nine other countries have adopted legislation addressing sexual violence at school (e.g. Benin, Cameroon, Guinea, and Togo) (MAE, 2012). For example, Swaziland strengthened its legislative framework to address gender-based violence at schools with the introduction of a series of bills covering sexual offenses, children, and education, and establishing formal guidance and counselling for teachers and schools, and assessments of students’ risk of gender-based violence (Plan International, 2014).

Figure 3.3.3. Time spent on paid and unpaid activities by gender and age cohort

Note: This figure presents average hours spent by day on paid and unpaid activities by gender and age cohort for children enrolled and non-domestic workers.
Discrimination against girls in the household may result in the unequal distribution of household tasks negatively affecting girls’ ability to pursue an education. Girls in the region undertake a larger share of household tasks than boys such as water and fuel collection, which adds to girls’ time-poverty (UNESCO, 2015). As Figure 3.3.3 shows, girls enrolled in school in South Africa not only spend more time on unpaid work, they also spend less time on paid work than boys (South Africa time use survey, 2010). In countries where girls were found to spend more time on unpaid care work than boys, gender gaps in primary school completion rates were larger (Ferrant and Nowacka, 2015). This gendered division of labour is underpinned by discriminatory stereotypes in the household. The Uganda-SIGI country study (2015) found strong expectations that girls should spend more time on domestic work than boys to prepare them for marriage. Harmful practices such as early marriage and adolescent pregnancy reinforce these stereotypes. Discriminatory gender roles, which place the larger share of household and caring activities on wives, are often incompatible with school requirements. Consequently, girls who marry early are less likely than non-married adolescent girls to continue their schooling (Harper et al, 2014; UNESCO, 2015; UNICEF, 2013).

**Good practice**

- **Addressing gendered barriers to girls’ education in Kenya:** In 2015, Plan International initiated the Adolescent Girls Initiative-Kenya (AGI-K) in Nairobi slums to tackle barriers to girls’ education. The intervention combines conditional cash transfer schemes and a mentorship programme where girls learn about sexual and reproductive health. Studies have previously shown that conditional cash transfers based on school attendance were successful in increasing school attendance in sub-Saharan Africa. The Adolescent Girls Initiative-Kenya (AGI-K) covers 176 primary schools and has enrolled over 2 000 girls in the mentorship programme. The intervention uses an automated tracking system to monitor school attendance and at-home visits in the case of a prolonged absence. The programme will run for two years (Plan International, 2015; The Population Council, 2016).
The restricted resources and assets sub-index captures discrimination in women’s rights to and control over land and non-land assets. It measures whether women and men have equal and secure access to use, control and own land and non-land assets, and equal access to financial services from formal institutions.

29 out of 43 countries show high to very high levels of discrimination in the restricted resources and assets sub-index. Lack of legal rights and discriminatory practices continue to restrict women’s access to and control over resources and assets.

Severe restrictions on African women’s rights to land and non-land assets and to access financial services represent important obstacles to their economic empowerment, limiting their ability to reduce their vulnerability to poverty and to secure sustainable livelihoods (Figure 3.4.1). Sub-Saharan Africa has the poorest results and record on women’s land and property rights in the SIGI 2014 due primarily to the predominance of discriminatory customary laws and poorly enforced legislative frameworks governing land and property. Across the continent, there are significant gender gaps in land and property ownership, with widows particularly vulnerable to property grabbing or disinheritance. Such gaps reflect widespread discriminatory perceptions and attitudes towards women as economic actors and decision makers that also reduce their opportunities to engage in entrepreneurial and other economic activities.

Land rights and access to productive and financial resources are now widely recognised as pillars of women’s economic empowerment and sustainable development. In Agenda 2063, for example, African governments agreed to Aspiration 6 which states that “the African woman will be fully empowered in all spheres, with equal social, political and economic rights, including the rights to own and inherit property, sign a contract, register and manage a business. Rural women will have access to productive assets, including land, credit, inputs and financial services.” These aspirations are also included at the global level in the SDGs (e.g. SDG 2.3; SDG 5a) and enshrined in the majority of national legislative frameworks and constitutions across the region.
Equality in land and asset ownership and financial access are not only important for women’s economic rights, but also have wide-ranging positive impacts on family nutrition, education, food security, agricultural productivity and women’s well-being (M. van den Bold et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2010). Low female ownership and/or decision-making power over land and assets has been linked with increased vulnerability of women and their families to poverty, lower female household bargaining power, and reduced income-generating opportunities for women (FAO 2011; OECD 2014c). Indeed, low female ownership of land and assets fosters an “asset trap” as these are often required as collateral from financial institutions, preventing women from obtaining credit and loans (Jones et al, 2010).

Secure access to land remains one of the biggest challenges facing women in sub-Saharan Africa: women’s rights to own, control, inherit, manage and make decisions over land remains very low and insecure across all countries of the region. This stands in stark contrast with their strong participation in the rural economy as agricultural producers or family labourers: estimates suggest that women represent on average 50% of the agricultural labour force, but only 18% of agricultural holders (Figure 3.4.2). Due to the complexity of different systems as well as conceptualisations of land ownership, it is difficult to estimate the percentage of land which (married or unmarried) women own, or directly manage or control (Doss et al., 2013). Irrespective of types or definitions of land ownership, however, it is clear from the limited available data that women are severely disadvantaged across all main indicators of land rights in respect to men. For example, only 3% (Mali) to a maximum of 32% (Malawi) of land titles are owned by women; and from LSMS-ISA data covering six African countries, women solely own (documented and undocumented) less than 1% of land in Nigeria to a maximum of 31% in Malawi (Doss et al, 2013). Recent research of six African countries suggests that even when women own or manage land, gender gaps remain in agricultural productivity: male-managed plots produce significantly more than female-managed plots, ranging from 17% in Uganda to 25% in Malawi (World Bank, 2015). This has been attributed to a range of underlying inequalities and gaps, such as lower education levels, access to new agricultural technologies, fertilisers and other inputs, and difficulties for women to attract higher-quality labourers or credit (World Bank, 2015).

Legal equality for women’s land rights in national constitutions and laws have not proven sufficient to counter these deeply entrenched inequalities due to inconsistencies within plural legal systems. While all but three countries (Gambia, Sudan and Zambia) offer legislative equality, all sub-Saharan African countries have some form of discrimination, notably in the customary law, which prevents women from
enjoying secure access to land by either blocking their right to inherit or own land in their own name. The existence of plural legal systems, that is the coexistence of statutory and customary laws, perpetuate discriminatory practices in land access. For example, although the Liberian Property Law and its Constitution grants equal land and non-land ownership rights for women and men, customary laws that favour male ownership tend to prevail, nullifying the statutory equality provisions. Similarly, the Rural Land Code (2007) of Benin granted equality in land ownership rights; however, customary laws that stipulate that only men can inherit land continue to exclude women from ownership opportunities. As customary laws apply to different groups in the population, it is complex to estimate the female share of the population affected by discriminatory customary laws. For example, under some customary laws in Burkina Faso, women from certain ethnic groups only have access to land through their husband; however, this does not apply to women from other ethnic groups (van den Bold, 2015).

Figure 3.4.2. Women’s share of agricultural holders and workers

![Figure 3.4.2. Women’s share of agricultural holders and workers](image)

Note: This figure presents the female share of agricultural holders and of agricultural workers as the percentage of total holders by country.


Discrimination in customary laws is perpetuated and mirrored in social norms and perceptions on women’s land ownership. Almost one in three Ugandans believe that women should not have the same access to land as men. This percentage increases to 43% in the Southwest and 54% in the Northern sub-regions of the country, which are predominantly rural. Importantly, this also includes women: over one in four women (27%) agree on unequal land ownership (Uganda-SIGI, see Box 2.3).

Legal reform to eliminate discriminatory provisions in customary laws helps to challenge discriminatory norms. In Kenya, a series of legislative reforms aiming to harmonise different land laws has helped to protect women’s land rights. The National Land Policy (2009) repealed discriminatory customary laws preventing women and children from land ownership; this was followed in 2012 by the Land Act, the Land Registration Act and the National Land Commission Act, which provided a forum for women to make land claims.

Complementing legal reforms are targeted interventions such as gender-sensitive land registration and women’s legal literacy. In Ethiopia, land reforms enacted since 1997 provided women the right to own, lease and register land in their own name or jointly with their husband. Research suggests that Ethiopia’s land registration policy had a direct impact on social norms and perceptions of women’s land ownership, acting as an effective complement to legal reforms (Laver, 2015). Land registration also improved women’s knowledge of their rights (Quisumbing, 2014): case studies suggest that some widows felt empowered to claim their land rights and register land in their own name despite challenges from their late husbands’ family (Laver, 2015). A recent DHS indicates that since the land reforms, women are equally likely to own land as men, either alone (50%) or jointly (51%).
Gender inequalities also prevail for women's and men's secure access to non-land assets. Five countries offer equality in law and practice (Eritrea, Guinea, Lesotho, Madagascar and Mauritius); however, women in five countries (Cameroon, Republic of the Congo, Congo, Sudan and Zambia) have no legal rights to own, administer or manage non-land assets in their own name. Promising examples across the region suggest that legal reforms have made an impact on women's ownership rights. For instance, the Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act (2006) of Lesotho aimed to tackle discriminatory provisions in customary laws, which affected married women in particular. The Act allowed women the right to own and register property (as well as land) in their own names or jointly with their husbands.

Discriminatory customary laws and practices continue to negatively affect women's legal rights to non-land assets in three-quarters of countries in the region. For example, in Togo, married women's right to own property and assets is dependent on their legal marital regime. Under the Persons and Family Code (2012), married women can own property and assets independently; however, if the marriage is contracted under the community of property regime, husbands are the sole recognised legal administrators of the family's property. Similarly, while women's property ownership rights are protected under Tanzania's Law of Marriage Act (1971), these rights are reported to be undermined by prevailing customary laws within certain ethnic or religious communities.

There are indications that discriminatory formal or customary laws may be out of step with attitudes and norms towards women's asset ownership. In the Uganda-SIGI survey, close to three-quarters of respondents were favourable towards women's ownership of household assets, such as livestock, housing, transport and electrical equipment. Respondents with higher levels of education (secondary education and above) were particularly favourable (OECD Development Centre, 2015).

Gender gaps in land and asset ownership compound women's difficulties to access financial resources (Figure 3.4.3). Without land or assets, women have a reduced ability to obtain a bank loan from a formal financial institution due to the need for collateral (O’Sullivan et al; 2014; FAO, 2014). Results from the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) confirm that “the top contributor to women’s disempowerment is access to and decisions on credit” (Alkire et al, 2013). This has widespread implications for their economic empowerment, notably their ability to increase or improve farming plots, purchase new technology or start and scale-up an enterprise (O’Sullivan et al; 2014; FAO, 2014).

Figure 3.4.3. Higher restrictions on women's access to land, higher restrictions on women's access to financial services

Note: This figure presents the relationship between discrimination against women's right to access land and financial services, controlling for levels of poverty (share of population in the lowest wealth quintile).
Across the region, two-thirds of countries discriminate in the law and/or in practice. Discriminatory practices include banks insisting on a husband’s signature (e.g. Niger and Uganda) or collateral such as assets or land (e.g. Gambia and Somalia). Illiteracy and lower levels of business knowledge also complicate women’s access to loans (e.g. Liberia and Madagascar). Underpinning discriminatory practices are perceptions that women should not have the same access to financial services: the Uganda-SIGI results indicate that 20% of respondents agreed that women do not have the same right to credit as men and 25% agreed that they should not have equal decision-making power over financial transactions (OECD Development Centre, 2015).

Facilitating women’s access to microfinance, where lending criteria are lower, is a common strategy to overcome this discrimination. In Namibia, for example, a government programme works with microfinance organisations and banks to help rural women access microcredit. Similar initiatives can also be found in other countries of the region (e.g. the Democratic Republic of Congo and Kenya). As a result, in many countries, women represent the majority of microcredit borrowers (e.g. Angola and Tanzania). However, microcredit and other forms of informal saving mechanisms are characterised by high interest rates, small loan sizes and short length. Research from Uganda suggests that this reduces possibilities for women to exit the informal sector and to expand their businesses (Ellis et al; 2006).

Given the regional prioritisation of women’s economic empowerment, entrepreneurship of women has been widely encouraged. The African Development Bank’s (AfDB) Women in Business Programme offers wide-ranging services targeting women, including removing barriers to women’s access to credit, providing business support and business skills training, and developing business incubators. In Mauritius, the National Women Entrepreneur Council (NWEC), operated under the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, organises specialised training, networking events, a market and incubator Centre, and trade fairs to support women entrepreneurs. In the 2015/16 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, Senegal had the highest percentage of women starting or running their own business (37%) out of all surveyed countries, with only a slight gap with men (40%). However, twice as many women as men cited necessity as their reason for becoming an entrepreneur (GEM, 2015/16).

Good practices

- **Training women to secure their land rights in Mozambique:** From 2010 to 2014, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), in partnership with the Ministry of Justice of Mozambique, implemented a programme to challenge discriminatory customary land practices and increase awareness on the adverse impacts of women’s land dispossession. The programme consisted of 19 paralegal training courses and over 500 community meetings to raise awareness of the benefits of gender equality and women’s legal rights to land. Trained paralegals have subsequently held community sessions to inform women about their rights and successfully supported several women in obtaining and securing land titles. As a result of the programme, awareness of women’s land rights has increased among women and men across Mozambique. Discriminatory customs are also being challenged as traditional courts have begun to recognise widows’ and children’s’ rights and women are appointed as customary judges for the first time (UN Women, 2015c).

- **Partnering with the private sector to economically empower women in Burkina Faso:** Since 2006, the l’Occitane Foundation has worked to develop women’s entrepreneurship in Burkina Faso. While the company has been working with women in the country producing shea butter since the 1980s, recently it decided to strengthen this partnership by focusing on activities that support women’s economic empowerment. The Foundation developed a three pillar approach: literacy programmes targeting women; financial and technical support through microcredit programmes and trainings; and support of entrepreneurial activities for small businesses. As a result, more than 15 000 rural women have been supported in developing and strengthening their business in Burkina Faso (Fondation l’Occitane, 2016; UNDP, 2013).
Box 3.4. IFAD: Land certificates - A tool for women’s empowerment in Ethiopia

Customary land tenure systems prevail in most areas in sub-Saharan Africa. Under customary law, women tend to have weaker but nonetheless protected rights. However, these rights tend to be eroded in rapidly changing societies. The main challenge is to manage the transition in a way that strengthens, or at least defends, the rights of the rural poor and women. IFAD has learned that defending and expanding women’s rights requires comprehensive action at different levels: information and capacity building; organisational and empowerment measures; and legal assistance and advocacy.

In Ethiopia women are protected by the country’s law, not only in political, civil and economic terms, but also with regard to access to natural resources, including land. Over the past decade and a half, Ethiopia has embarked on an ambitious and exemplary land reform programme, including strong efforts to secure women’s legal land rights.

Based on this context, one of the components of the IFAD-supported Community-based Integrated Natural Resources Management Programme (CBINReMP) in the Lake Tana watershed in Northeastern Ethiopia focuses on land tenure security. The project, ongoing since 2010, is supporting the issuing of land certificates and has until January 2016 granted 530 000 first level certificates for about 99% of family lands. In married households, family land is being registered and certificates are being issued with husband and wife as co-owners (52% of the land registered) and have been given to all women heads of households in the target area.

Activities targeted men and women, both together and separately, in a range of institutions, especially at the grassroots’ level, the elders’ and land administration committees, and groups of women. Through these activities the project has sensitised communities with regard to women’s rights and land, which is the fundamental element for economic empowerment. It has raised awareness about land laws (land proclamation, regulation and procedures), land transaction (including inheritance, donation or gift and rent), and long-term land investments.

“As a result of receiving the land certificate, women are empowered economically, socially and at the household level. They can make decisions together with their husbands. They sit down together and make decisions about how to use their land and how to manage their incomes. They get respect in the community” - Tenagne Kebede, CBINReMP, Focal point at the Bureau of Environmental Protection, Land Administration and Use, Ethiopia.

The acquisition of land rights has empowered women both socially and economically. Women are investing in their land, for example planting perennials and trees and using soil and water conservation methods to increase the productivity of the plots. This has enabled them to increase their income. They are able to buy more food and to raise poultry and cattle – things that have helped them to increase and diversify their family’s diet, leading to higher food security and improved nutrition.

Being respected and having a voice in the community is often linked to owning assets. As women now are landholders, they are joining elders’ and land administration committees or are functioning as arbitrators in land disputes. All of these positive changes have increased women’s self-confidence, empowered them on many levels and enables them to serve their communities.

Sources:
IFAD/GLTN: Factsheet - Women’s access to land in sub-Saharan Africa,
Women in sub-Saharan Africa have seen their political voice strengthened even as discriminatory laws and practices continue to limit their civil liberties. Despite progress, 22 countries in the region show high or very high discrimination restricting women’s civil liberties. Government-legislated quotas have been important drivers in increasing political representation of women. Women’s rights movements have played a significant role in promoting women’s political voice and calling for greater accountability to women’s civic rights. CSOs play a key role in addressing barriers women face to political participation, such as lack of funding and training. Discrimination against women in the public sphere, including patriarchal attitudes which justify violence against women, continue to block women’s secure and equal access to public space and restrict their political empowerment.

While there are few legal barriers to women’s access to public space in the region, negative attitudes towards women in public life and discriminatory social norms hinder women’s ability to exercise their civil liberties. Of the 43 countries in the region, four legally discriminate against women regarding their freedom of movement (Democratic Republic of Congo [DRC], Gabon, Niger and Sudan). For example, in the DRC and Niger, women are obliged under their respective legal codes (the DRC Family Code [1987] and the Niger Civil Code [2005]) to follow their husband in terms of residence and have no legal say over where they will live once married. In the remaining 39 countries, there are no legal barriers to women accessing public space. Despite this, discriminatory practices restrict women’s secure and equal access to public spaces. Discriminatory social norms that justify violence against women may deter women from fully enjoying their legal rights.

The restricted civil liberties sub-index captures discriminatory laws and practices that limit women’s access to public space, their political voice and participation in public life. It measures access to public space and political voice, which includes quotas to promote women’s political representation at the national and sub-national levels and the percentage of women in national parliaments.

Results for this sub-index are evidence of countries’ commitment to expanding women’s civil liberties: 15 countries were classified as having very low to low discrimination in the restricted civil liberties sub-index. However, 22 countries still show high to very high levels of discrimination in the sub-index.
SIGI country profiles cite the threat of violence against women in public spaces as restraining women’s freedom of movement (e.g. Burundi and Chad). Within the household, traditional family structures hinder women’s freedom of movement: in a national household survey for Uganda (2015), 95% of respondents agreed that married women should ask permission from their husband before undertaking a journey away from home, with only 50% agreeing that husbands should also ask permission from their wives (OECD Development Centre, 2015).

The region has seen steady increases in women’s political voice over the past ten years. Women’s parliamentary representation has increased from 11% in 2000 to 20% in 2014 (IPU, 2015; GID-DB, 2014). While this is below the global average (24%), sub-Saharan Africa surpasses other developing regions (e.g. East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia). The number of women holding ministerial positions has also increased from an average of 15% in 2005 to 19% in 2015 (AfDB, 2015). In some countries, women have been elected to the highest position possible. Currently, Liberia and the Central African Republic are governed by female Heads of States and, since 2012, the Commission of the African Union has been chaired by a woman (H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma).

Women’s political representation has benefited from commitments at the regional level to support women’s political voice through affirmative action measures. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the rights of Women in Africa (2003) endorses measures taken at the national and local levels to increase women’s political representation. In the African Union’s Agenda 2063, governments highlighted the importance of removing the “political glass ceiling” that restricts women’s progress and reaching full gender parity in elected public offices and in managerial positions in the public and private sector.

Figure 3.5.1. Women’s political representation and quotas

While the region as a whole has seen improvements in women’s political voice, certain sub-regions are progressing faster than others, driven in large part by the introduction of quotas (see Figure 3.5.1). While over half of the countries in the region (28 of 43) have instituted quotas at the national and/or sub-national level these are concentrated in Eastern and Southern Africa, helping to explain the regional discrepancies in women’s political participation. The highest levels of women’s political participation are seen in Eastern Africa (30%), reaching as high as 64% in Rwanda, the highest representation of women in the world. Southern Africa has a slightly higher rate of representation than the other sub-regions, with women occupying 24% of parliamentary seats; however, there are wide discrepancies between countries ranging from 39% in Mozambique to 6% in Swaziland, the lowest in the entire sub-Saharan region. The lowest levels of women’s political participation are found in Central and Western Africa, 15% on average.
The majority of countries in Eastern and Southern Africa had instituted legislative quotas at either the national or sub-national level, with eight having them at both levels (e.g. Burundi, Eritrea and Zimbabwe). Rwanda’s success story of achieving the highest proportion of women ever recorded in a parliamentary chamber (64%) is due in large part to the inclusion of women in the post-conflict and reconstruction process following the 1994 genocide and the gender-responsive policies that emerged. The Constitution (2003) that emerged from the reconstruction process included reserved seats for women and legislated candidate quotas. The ratification of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and the adoption of a National Action Plan (2009-2012) were two factors contributing to women’s increased decision-making power in the political sphere (see Box 3.3). This included nation-wide consultations of women and women’s CSOs to review key legislation leading to a number of gender-responsive laws such as organic Law n° 16 (2003) which establishes a 30% quota in political organisations (GNWP, 2010).

Central and Western Africa have seen slower progress in increasing women’s political representation with few countries instituting quotas at either the national or sub-national level. The experiences of Senegal and Zimbabwe underscore the importance of quotas in fast-tracking women’s representation in national parliaments. Senegal saw an increase in parliamentary seats held by women from 23% in 2012 to 43% in 2013 after it amended its Electoral Law in 2012 calling for parity on all candidate lists and alternating male and female candidates. Zimbabwe increased from 15% in 2013 to 32% in 2014 after the introduction of the new Constitution that included 60 reserved seats for women.

Despite progress, the threat of violence may deter women from participating in elections as either candidates or voters (Kellow, 2010; Dersnah 2013). Patriarchal attitudes which justify violence and gender-based discrimination reinforce the masculine nature of the political sphere, blocking women from fully participating and limiting their political empowerment (Abdennebi-Abderrahin, 2013). This is of particular concern in conflict and post-conflict states, where harassment and violence against female political candidates may serve as a disincentive for women to participate in the political sphere (Kellow, 2010). At the same time, peace talks and post-conflict reconstruction periods offer opportunities to advance women’s rights if a gender perspective is incorporated (OECD, 2013). Discriminatory attitudes also inhibit women’s ability to exercise their political voice (Figure 3.5.2). Results from the Uganda-SIGI country study (2015) revealed the persistence of discriminatory attitudes towards female political leadership, with 60% of respondents agreeing that men make better political leaders than women.

Figure 3.5.2. Unfavourable opinions towards female political leadership, lower female political participation

![Graph showing the relationship between negative attitudes towards female political leadership and female political participation.](http://stats.oecd.org)

Note: This figure presents the estimated female political participation by level of negative attitudes towards female political leadership (percentage of people declaring that men make better political leaders than women), controlling for income level, presence of quotas and sub-regional characteristics.

Women’s rights groups in the region have played a vital role in supporting women’s political participation and civic engagement. The region has a dynamic and growing women’s movement that has pushed for legislative and constitutional changes to provisions that discriminate against women. For example, women’s groups in Uganda spearheaded a coalition of CSOs advocating for the Equality Opportunities and Commission Act (2007) that provides a legal basis to challenge laws, policies, customs and traditions that discriminate against women and girls. In Rwanda, a conglomeration of 40 women’s advocacy and CSOs serves to advise the government on major social and political issues affecting women (Abdennebi-Abderrahin, 2013). Other activities include encouraging women to vote, serving as election monitors and supporting female candidates through training and capacity building (Ndlovu and Mutale, 2013).

Women’s CSOs also provide assistance to female politicians who may lack the financial resources and political experience (Dersnah, 2013). The Zambia National Women’s Lobby, for example, has provided female candidates with capacity training, mentorship programmes and established regional and local networks for women in the public sphere (Zambia National Women’s Lobby, 2015). These are important measures to help women overcome entrenched gender biases in the political sphere.

Fig. 3.5.3. Number of legal gender differences in “getting a job”

Note: This figure presents the number of legal restrictions against women in “getting a job” by country.
Legal discrimination against women in the workplace reinforces gender stereotypes of what jobs are deemed appropriate for women and limits their opportunities for employment. Countries such as Angola, Côte d’Ivoire, Malawi and Namibia have all passed laws on equal remuneration for work of equal value and non-discrimination in hiring (UN Women, 2015b). However, in many countries in the region, women’s rights in the workplace are not guaranteed in practice and they may face legal discrimination concerning their employment (e.g. Guinea, Burkina Faso and Mali). These include restricting women’s ability to work night hours (e.g. Madagascar) and limiting or prohibiting women’s rights to work in mining (e.g. Cameroon) or factories (e.g. Benin) (World Bank, 2015). In Ethiopia for example, it is prohibited to employ women in any type of work deemed “arduous or harmful to their health” (Labour Proclamation No.377/2003); this includes positions in the mining and construction sectors. Restrictions from mining and construction sectors as well as factories bars women from industries that may contain relatively high paying jobs, accentuating gender pay gaps and confining women to lower paid sectors (World Bank, 2015). SSA countries have at least 3 legal restrictions on women’s right to get a job, up to 16 in Ethiopia and Madagascar (Figure 3.5.3).

In sub-Saharan Africa, just over half (51%) of countries meet or exceed the ILO recommendations of 14 weeks paid maternity leave, paid collectively (i.e. not solely by employers) (e.g. Guinea, Madagascar, Togo) (ILO, 2014). In general, countries have been moving towards more comprehensive maternity leave programmes funded either entirely or partially by social security systems (ILO, 2014). While the number of countries providing maternity leave has increased in the last decade, the number of women benefitting from these measures remains small. Only 18% of women workers are covered by maternity leave in Africa, largely due to their high representation in the informal sector: 89% of women in the region are in informal employment (compared to 83% of men). In addition, less than 10% of workers in sub-Saharan Africa are entitled to maternity leave cash benefits (UN Women, 2015b).

**Good practices**

- **Strengthening the confidence of women to increase their political participation in Malawi:** Since 2013, the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD) and the Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD) have worked to strengthen the inclusion and meaningful participation of women in leadership and decision making within political parties in Malawi. The project is composed of a mentoring programme; a review of party constitutions from a gender perspective; as well as advocacy activities to sensitize the political parties. Over 60 mentors were identified during a two-day event in 2013 organised by CMD. Building off the programme, mentors and mentees formed their own networks to support one another’s political participation including running for parliamentary and council seats in the May 2014 elections (Tenthani et al., 2014).

- **Protecting women from political violence through women’s situation rooms in Kenya:** The Women’s Situation Room was first introduced in 2011 by the Liberia-based NGO “Angie Brooks International Centre” as an early intervention system to mitigate electoral violence, in particular threats and barriers to voting towards women. In advance of the elections in Kenya, 500 women and youth were recruited and trained as special election observers in areas prone to violence. These observers reported incidents of violence or threats to the Women’s Situation Room, where the information was passed down to a team of Kenyan women leaders who could influence local politicians and authorities in order to reduce tensions or acts of violence. Over 1 200 reports, including voting complaints, gender-based violence, or electoral offences, were received and mediated in real time during the elections (Godia, 2015).
Habitat’s Safer Cities Programme was launched in response to a request from African city Mayors to help them tackle urban crime and violence. With twenty years of experience, UN-Habitat’s Safer Cities Programme has implemented effective urban safety and crime prevention programmes in 77 cities and towns in 24 countries around the world, including Côte d’Ivoire, Kenya, Sudan and South Africa among others. The Programme supports cities and towns in adopting city-wide urban safety strategies and action plans, building on socially inclusive and participatory approaches that contribute to a safer and just city for all.

Safety audits: The first step to safer, more inclusive cities

Women and girls are often the most negatively impacted by crime and violence in urban spaces, especially when fear hinders access to public space in the form of street crime, sexual violence, harassment and intimidation. The threat of violence may deter women from pursuing education and work opportunities. Women and girls are typically more reliant on non-motorised transport and, as such, depend more heavily on safe walkways, well lit public spaces and the presence of human scale surveillance. Nevertheless, the participation of women in the process of making their communities safer is often weak, and the voice of women and girls often unrepresented in the planning and budgetary spending decisions at the city level.

In order to increase women’s voice in urban and safety planning, the Safer Cities Programme uses women's safety audits to assess where and to what extent women feel at risk of violence in their cities. The audits consist of exploratory walks by small groups of women who identify places where crime is high and where they feel particularly unsafe. The audits help decision makers better understand the gendered nature of violence in urban settings and its impact on women’s movement. UN-Habitat has led safety audits in Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, Durban and Abidjan, among others.

“Safe Communities”: Using mobile technology to measure women's and girls’ safety in Nairobi

UN-Habitat launched the Safer Nairobi Initiative in 2001. The initiative included a “victimisation survey” with gender segregated results, training sessions on the Local Crime Prevention Toolkit, and women’s safety audits to better understand how violence limits women’s freedom and access to services and opportunities.

In 2015, in partnership with “SafetiPin”, UN-Habitat introduced a new initiative that draws on the expansive use of mobile technologies in Kenya to generate accurate data on safety in Nairobi. The project mobilises local populations, including women and community groups to track and measure the feeling of safety in their communities on the SafetiPin mobile app. Using mobile technology allows the data to be cross-checked with other information to find links between a sense of safety and other parameters such as street lighting, openness, and infrastructure among others. The wide availability of mobile technology allows data to be generated at a meaningful level for cities to use when forming city-wide plans and strategies.

Sources:
Methodology

Selection of variables
Variables included in the SIGI 2014 were selected on the following criteria, based on the 2012 conceptual framework:

- **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 and have extensive coverage across countries.

- **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 sub-index should be statistically associated, and thereby capture similar dimensions of social institutions without being redundant.

Country profiles
The SIGI country profiles contain fully referenced qualitative information relative to social institutions, organised by sub-indices. They were drafted following a standardised structure to ensure comparability across countries in line with the following guidelines:

- **Conceptual relevance**
  Qualitative information should be relevant to the conceptual framework of discriminatory social institutions.

- **Sources**
  All information should be referenced and sourced from constitutions, legal frameworks, and primary publications, reports or studies, using the most recent data. Data should be sourced from and cross-checked with reliable studies, reports and publications, including country reports to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, reports by international organisations and country sources.

- **Validation**
  Country profiles were developed through a two-stage internal draft and review process. Qualitative information was validated by external gender experts with knowledge of the policy and legal landscape for gender equality and women’s rights at a national level (see list of experts in OECD Development Centre (2014a)).

The SIGI and its sub-indices are constructed according to the steps below.

**Step 1: Building the Gender, Institutions and Development Database**

Truncating quantitative data at the equality benchmark and inverting the scale.

The SIGI and its sub-indices range from 0 for low discrimination to 1 for very high discrimination.

For some variables, equality is reached at 0.5 instead of 1. Equality in political representation, for example, is achieved when 50% of parliament members are women. Hence, countries having more than 50% of women have a score of 50%.

According to the variable, the scale from low to very high discrimination is inverted to fit with the 0-1 scale. For female political representation, for example, a higher share of women in parliamentary seats means lower discrimination against women. Hence, countries having 50% of women have a score of 0.

Assigning a score to qualitative variables
The qualitative information detailed in the SIGI country profiles are quantified using the following coding manual described in Table A.1:

- **0**: Women and men enjoy the same rights in law and in practice.
- **0.25**: The legislation is not well implemented.
- **0.5**: The customary laws and practices discriminate against women.
- **0.75**: The legislation is contradictory, non-specific or limited in scope and definition.
- **1**: Women and men do not enjoy the same rights in the legal framework.

In cases where no or insufficient information exists, variables are not assigned a value. The legal indicators are assessed based on all applicable legal frameworks, including civil law, religious law, customary law and traditional law.

The SIGI and its sub-indices are constructed according to the steps below.

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According to the variable, the scale from low to very high discrimination is inverted to fit with the 0-1 scale. For female political representation, for example, a higher share of women in parliamentary seats means lower discrimination against women. Hence, countries having 50% of women have a score of 0.
Constructing indicators

Some indicators are based on one variable while others on several. In the latter case, the indicator is the average of its available variables. For example:

\[
\text{Parental authority} = \frac{1}{2} (\text{Parental authority during marriage} + \text{Parental authority after divorce})
\]

Standardising the indicators

Standardisation of the original variables is done by subtracting the mean and then dividing by the standard deviation for continuous variables, using results of an ordered probit model for ordinal categorical variables.

Step 2: Aggregating indicators to build the sub-indices

Measuring association between indicators

Each sub-index combines indicators that are assumed to belong to one dimension of discrimination in social institutions. The statistical association between the indicators is tested using a Kendall Tau b rank correlation analysis and a multiple joint correspondence analysis (MCA).

Why square each SIGI sub-index?

The quadratic form is inspired by the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke poverty measures (Foster et al., 1984):

- The partial compensation means that very high inequality in one dimension can be only partially offset by low inequality in another dimension.
- The SIGI measures gender inequalities corresponding to deprivation that increases more than proportionally when inequalities increase.
- The SIGI has an aversion to high values of sub-indices.

Constructing the sub-indices

The sub-indices aim to provide a summary measure of each dimension of discrimination. Constructing a sub-index consists of aggregating the indicators with a reasonable weighting scheme through a polychoric principal component analysis (PCA). The first principal component is used as a proxy for the common information contained in the indicators: it is the weighted sum (see table in Annex) of the standardised indicators that captures as much of the variance in the data as possible.

Step 3: Computing the SIGI

The SIGI is a composite indicator built as an unweighted average of a non-linear function of the sub-indices:

\[
\text{SIGI} = \frac{1}{5} \text{Discriminatory family code}^2 + \frac{1}{5} \text{Restricted physical integrity}^2 + \frac{1}{5} \text{Son bias}^2 + \frac{1}{5} \text{Restricted resources and assets}^2 + \frac{1}{5} \text{Restricted civil liberties}^2
\]

Why are the sub-indices equally weighted?

Equal weights for each sub-index offer two benefits:

- Each dimension of discriminatory social institutions has equal value.
- No dimension is more important than another in terms of deprivation experienced by women.

How are the SIGI categories defined?

The SIGI classification clusters 108 countries into five levels of discrimination in social institutions: very low, low, medium, high and very high. It is based on the Jenks Natural Breaks Classification. This method of classifying data optimally arranges values into the five levels, or classes. It aims to minimise the average deviation from the class mean, while maximising the deviation from the means of the other classes. Hence, this method reduces the variance within classes and maximises the variance between classes.
### SIGI 2014 framework: Variables and coding

#### DISCRIMINATORY FAMILY CODE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal age of marriage</td>
<td>Legal age of marriage: Whether women and men have the same legal minimum age of marriage</td>
<td>0: The law guarantees the same minimum age of marriage to both women and men, and the minimum age is 18*. 0.25: The law guarantees the same minimum age of marriage to both women and men, and the minimum age is lower than 18. 0.5: The law guarantees the same minimum age of marriage to both women and men, but there are customary, traditional or religious laws that discriminate against some women by allowing them to be married at a younger age than men. 0.75: The law does not guarantee the same minimum age of marriage to women and men, and the gap between women's and men's minimum age of marriage is less than or equal to two years. 1: The law does not guarantee the same minimum age of marriage to women and men, and the gap between women's and men's minimum age of marriage is greater than two years. However, there is no law on the minimum age of marriage.</td>
<td>SIGI Country Profiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early marriage</td>
<td>Prevalence of early marriage: Percentage of girls aged 15-19 who are married, divorced, widowed or in informal unions</td>
<td>0-100%</td>
<td>UN World Marriage Data (2012) Demographic Health Survey Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental authority</td>
<td>Parental authority in marriage: Whether women and men have the same right to be the legal guardian of a child during marriage</td>
<td>0: The law guarantees the same parental authority to women and men during marriage. 0.5: The law guarantees the same parental authority to women and men during marriage, but there are some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against women. 1: The law does not guarantee the same parental authority to women and men during marriage, or women have no rights to parental authority.</td>
<td>SIGI Country Profiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parental authority in divorce: Whether women and men have the same right to be the legal guardian of and have custody rights over a child after divorce</td>
<td>0: The law guarantees the same parental authority to women and men after divorce. 0.5: The law guarantees the same parental authority to women and men after divorce, but there are some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against women. 1: The law does not guarantee the same parental authority to women and men after divorce, or women have no rights to parental authority.</td>
<td>SIGI Country Profiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inheritance</td>
<td>Inheritance rights of widows: Whether widows and widowers have equal inheritance rights</td>
<td>0: The law guarantees the same inheritance rights to both widows and widowers. 0.5: The law guarantees the same inheritance rights to both widows and widowers, but there are some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against widows. 1: The law does not guarantee the same inheritance rights to widows and widowers, or widows have no inheritance rights at all.</td>
<td>SIGI Country Profiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inheritance rights of daughters: Whether daughters and sons have equal inheritance rights</td>
<td>0: The law guarantees the same inheritance rights to both daughters and sons. 0.5: The law guarantees the same inheritance rights to both daughters and sons, but there are some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against daughters. 1: The law does not guarantee the same inheritance rights to daughters and sons, or daughters have no inheritance rights at all.</td>
<td>SIGI Country Profiles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SIGI 2014 framework: Variables and coding (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Violence against women (average of five variables)</strong></td>
<td>Laws on domestic violence: Whether the legal framework offers women legal protection from domestic violence</td>
<td>0: There is specific legislation in place to address domestic violence; the law is adequate overall, and there are no reported problems of implementation. 0.25: There is specific legislation in place to address domestic violence; the law is adequate overall, but there are reported problems of implementation. 0.5: There is specific legislation in place to address domestic violence, but the law is inadequate. 0.75: There is no specific legislation in place to address domestic violence, but there is evidence of legislation being planned or drafted. 1: There is no legislation in place to address domestic violence.</td>
<td><strong>SIGI Country Profiles</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laws on rape: Whether the legal framework offers women legal protection from rape</td>
<td>0: There is specific legislation in place to address rape, marital rape is included, perpetrators cannot escape prosecution if they marry the victim and implementation is effectively enforced. 0.25: There is specific legislation in place to address rape, marital rape is included and perpetrators cannot escape prosecution if they marry the victim, although implementation is not effectively enforced. 0.5: There is specific legislation in place to address rape, marital rape is not included and perpetrators cannot escape prosecution if they marry the victim. 0.75: There is specific legislation in place to address rape, marital rape is not included and perpetrators can escape prosecution if they marry the victim. However, legislation is being planned or drafted. 1: There is no legislation in place to address rape.</td>
<td><strong>SIGI Country Profiles</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laws on sexual harassment: Whether the legal framework offers women legal protection from sexual harassment</td>
<td>0: There is specific legislation in place to address sexual harassment, the law is adequate overall and there are no reported problems of implementation. 0.25: There is specific legislation in place to address sexual harassment, the law is adequate overall but there are reported problems of implementation. 0.5: There is specific legislation in place to address sexual harassment, but the law is inadequate. 0.75: There is no specific legislation in place to address sexual harassment, but there is evidence of legislation being planned or drafted. 1: There is no legislation in place to address sexual harassment.</td>
<td><strong>SIGI Country Profiles</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | Attitudes toward violence: Percentage of women who agree that a husband/partner is justified in beating his wife/partner under certain circumstances | 0-100% | **Demographic Health Surveys**
**Multiple Cluster Indicator Surveys**
**World Value Survey** |
| | Prevalence of violence in the lifetime: Percentage of women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner at some time in their lives | 0-100% | **Demographic Health Surveys**
**World Health Organization**
**International Violence Against Women Survey**
**European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights** |
| Female genital mutilation | FGM prevalence: Percentage of women who have undergone any type of female genital mutilation | 0-100% | **World Health Organization**
**Population Reference Bureau**
**Multiple Cluster Indicator Surveys**
**Demographic Health Surveys** |
| Reproductive autonomy | Unmet need for family planning: Percentage of married women aged 15-49 with an unmet need for family planning, i.e. who do not want any more children for the next two years and who are not using contraception | 0-100% | **Demographic Health Surveys**
**Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys**
**World Health Organization** |
### Missing women

#### Missing women**: Shortfall in the number of women in sex ratios for ages 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-64, 65+ relative to the expected number if there were no sex-selective abortions, no female infanticide or similar levels of health care and nutrition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>The incidence of missing women is low.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>The incidence of missing women is moderate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>The incidence of missing women is high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The incidence of missing women is severe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Fertility preferences

#### Fertility preferences: Share of males as the last child from women currently not desiring additional children or sterilised

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-100%</td>
<td>The incidence of missing women is severe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Secure access to land

#### Secure access to land: Whether women and men have equal and secure access to land (use, control and ownership)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The law guarantees the same rights to own, use and control land to both women and men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>The law guarantees the same rights to own, use and control land to women and men, but there are some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The law does not guarantee the same rights to own, use and control land to women and men.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Secure access to non-land assets

#### Secure access to non-land assets: Whether women and men have equal and secure access to non-land assets (use, control and ownership)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The law guarantees the same rights to own and administer property other than land to both women and men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>The law guarantees the same rights to own and administer property other than land to women and men, but there are some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The law does not guarantee the same rights to own and administer property other than land to women and men, or women have no legal rights to own and administer property other than land.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Access to financial services

#### Access to financial services: Whether women and men have equal access to financial services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The law guarantees the same rights to access formal financial services (e.g. credit, bank account and bank loans) to both women and men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>The law guarantees the same rights to access formal financial services to both women and men, but there are some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The law does not guarantee the same rights to access formal financial services to women and men, or women have no legal rights to access financial services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Access to public space

#### Access to public space: Whether women face restrictions on their freedom of movement and access to public space, such as restricted ability to choose their places of residence, visit their families and friends or to apply for a passport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The law guarantees the same rights to freely move to both women and men.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>The law guarantees the same rights to freely move to women and men, but there are some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The law does not guarantee the same rights to freely move to women and men, or women have no freedom of movement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Political voice

#### Quotas: Whether there are legal quotas to promote women’s political participation at national and sub-national levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>There are legal quotas to promote women’s political participation both at the national and sub-national levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>There are legal quotas to promote women’s political participation either at the national or at the sub-national level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There are no legal quotas to promote women’s political participation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sub-Saharan Africa country SIGI scores per sub-index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>SIGI</th>
<th>Discriminatory family code</th>
<th>Restricted physical integrity</th>
<th>Son bias</th>
<th>Restricted resources and assets</th>
<th>Restricted civil liberties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOW LEVELS OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE SIGI</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>0.0599</td>
<td>very low</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>0.2164</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>0.0876</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>0.2116</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>0.1002</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>very low</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>0.1173</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>0.3522</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEDIUM LEVELS OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE SIGI</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>0.1339</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>0.4082</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>0.1375</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>0.3793</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>0.1392</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>0.3435</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>0.1662</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>0.5055</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>0.1719</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>0.5041</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>0.1860</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>0.5488</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>0.1985</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>0.6337</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>0.2033</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>0.4725</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>0.2073</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>0.5354</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>0.2110</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>0.4932</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>0.2119</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>0.3071</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>0.2157</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>0.6122</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>0.2163</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>0.5635</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIGH LEVELS OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE SIGI</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>0.2450</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>0.8662</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Rep. of Tanzania</td>
<td>0.2504</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>0.7166</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cote d’Ivoire</td>
<td>0.2537</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>0.4955</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>0.2780</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>0.2763</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>0.2803</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>0.5024</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>0.2819</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>0.5419</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>0.2988</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>0.3946</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>0.3206</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>0.5413</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>0.3285</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>0.5327</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VERY HIGH LEVELS OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE SIGI</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>0.3720</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>0.3309</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>0.3828</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>0.5669</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>0.3911</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>0.6723</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>medium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>0.3954</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>0.7556</td>
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<td>low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>0.4022</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>0.6457</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic Rep. of the Congo</td>
<td>0.4276</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>0.5169</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>0.4415</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>0.4489</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>0.5149</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
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<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>0.5958</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>0.4665</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>0.9705</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>medium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>0.5164</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>0.8309</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>0.5240</td>
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<td>medium</td>
<td>0.5131</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>0.5550</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>0.8382</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NOT RANKED IN THE SIGI</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>0.3996</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equatorial Guinea</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.5545</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>0.3321</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>0.1998</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: South Sudan is not ranked in the 2014 edition of the SIGI. No countries in the region have been classified as having very low levels of gender-based discrimination in social institutions (see Figure 1.1).
Notes


2. See the son bias and restricted civil liberties sub-indices to learn more about sexual harassment in schools and the political sphere.

3. Data collected during the supervision mission in January 2016.


5. When the indicator aggregates categorical and continuous variables, the latter are the object of discretisation.

6. Where data are available for only one variable of an indicator, the score is based solely on that available variable.
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Bantebya, G. K., F. K. Muhanguzi and C. Watson (2014), Adolescent girls in the balance: Changes and continuity in social norms and practices around marriage and education in Uganda, Overseas Development Institute, London.


MAE (2014), Gender-based violence at school in French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa: Understanding its impact on girls’ school attendance to combat it more effectively, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris.


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UNODC (2014), Handbook on effective prosecution responses to violence against women and girls, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Vienna.


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