

Gender indexes – an overview

In legal and statistical parlance, 'indicators' are the criteria used to measure progress towards specific objectives. Gender indicators – a sub category – have developed over the past 30 years with the aim of measuring inequalities in the fulfilment of women's rights across different countries and social systems. Since 1990, when the Gender Development Index and the Gender Empowerment Measure were generated, no less than 10 international gender indicators have been created. These indexes may vary in length, approach (e.g. which legal provisions are taken into consideration for the assessment), level of analysis (e.g. which statistical data are used and to what extent they are used), and scope (e.g. descriptive, analytical).

Indexes of international organisations

Many international organisations have produced indicators to assess the level of gender inequality across different countries. Gender indexes have been created, inter alia, by the World Bank (WB), the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Key examples are the [Gender-related Development Index](#) – created by the UN Development Programme, and covering three dimensions: life expectancy, education and income – and the OECD [Social Institutions and Gender Index](#), a gender index based on the OECD's gender, institutions and development database.

Indexes of civil society and others

Civil society organisations have also developed indicators to tackle gender inequality. Notable examples are the [Gender Equality Index](#) – developed by Social Watch to measure the gap between women and men in education, the economy and political empowerment – and the [Gender Gap Index](#) of the World Economic Forum, combining quantitative datasets with the results of a survey of 9 000 business leaders in 104 countries.

Regional gender indexes

Regional indicators are specifically tailored to measure gender gaps at regional level. One example among the regional indicators is the [Gender Equality Index](#) of the European Gender Equality Institute. This is tailored to the EU policy context, and measures gaps between men and women while taking into account the overall achievements of EU Member States. It builds on comparable data from Eurostat and allows Member States and EU institutions to evaluate the impact of policies over time and to identify policy measures to close gender gaps.

The [African Gender and Development Index](#) – created by the UN Economic Commission for Africa – has been designed to provide African policy-makers with a tool to monitor progresses made in the implementation of the international conventions on gender equality ratified by African countries.

Different approaches

While the different gender indexes generally come to similar conclusions regarding the state of gender equality internationally or regionally, it should be noted that their targets and methodologies are different. Their approaches depend on the availability of data and not all of them take into account the level of achievement. However, they are generally recognised as suitable tools for the comparison of different countries with regard to their respective indicators.

The table overleaf sets out the different indexes being produced and the main components of each.

Existing Gender indexes

Indexes of international organisations

<p>UNDP Gender Development Index</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational attainment • Longevity • Income 	<p>UNDP Gender Empowerment Measure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in governmental, managerial decision-making • Participation in professional roles and in economic activities 	<p>UNDP Gender Inequality Index</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour market • Empowerment • Reproductive health 	<p>UNDP Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational attainment • Longevity • Income 	<p>OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discriminatory family code • Restricted physical integrity • Son bias * • Restricted resources and entitlements • Restricted civil liberties
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Indexes of civil society and others

<p>World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic participation and opportunity • Education attainment • Health and survival • Political empowerment 	<p>Social Watch Gender Equity Index</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Economic participation • Women's empowerment 	<p>Dijkstra and Hanmer Relative Status of Women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio of female and male index for education • Ratio of female and male index for life expectancy • Relative female and male returns to labour 	<p>Plantenga et al European Union Gender Equality Index</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal sharing paid work • Gender pay gap • Decision-making power • Gender gap in education • Unpaid time 	<p>Bericat European Gender Equality Index</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Work (contract conditions, occupational and pay segregation) • Power (political, managerial)
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Regional governmental organisations' indexes

<p>European Institute for Gender Equality Gender Equality Index</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work (Participation, Segregation, Quality of work) • Money (Financial resources, economic situation) • Knowledge (Attainment, Segregation, Lifelong learning) • Time (Economic activities, Care activities, Social activities) • Power (Political, Social, Economic) • Health (Status, Behaviour, Access) • Violence (direct and indirect) • Intersecting inequalities (Discrimination and other social grounds) 	<p>African Gender and Development Index</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Status Index • African Women's Progress Scoreboard
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Graphic: EPRS; Data source: European Institute for Gender Equality, Gender Equality Index Report, 2013, p.11. UN Economic Commission for Africa, The African Gender and Development Index, 2011.

* The 'Son bias' sub-index captures social institutions that limit women's decision making-power and undervalue their status in the household and the family.