Social Institutions and Gender Index

SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Southeast Asia



OECD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Social Institutions and Gender Index

SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Southeast Asia



This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of the member countries of the OECD or its Development Centre.

This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

Please cite this publication as:
OECD (2021), *SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Southeast Asia* , Social Institutions and Gender Index, OECD Publishing, Paris, *https://doi.org/10.1787/236f41d0-en*.

ISBN 978-92-64-86971-4 (print)
ISBN 978-92-64-53494-0 (pdf)

Social Institutions and Gender Index
ISSN 2663-4716 (print)
ISSN 2663-4724 (online)

Photo credits: Cover design by the OECD Development Centre on the basis of images from © Andrey_rage /shutterstock.com.

Corrigenda to publications may be found on line at: *www.oecd.org/about/publishing/corrigenda.htm*.

© OECD 2021

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at *http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions*.

Preface

Tackling discriminatory social norms and practices – such as those restricting women's decision-making power or limiting their access to economic resources and assets – can translate to an additional 3.3 percentage points in annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth in Southeast Asia alone.

Southeast Asian countries are committed to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. All countries have ratified the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and in 2010 they adopted the comprehensive Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children. Moreover, the region committed to reducing violence against women with the adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Elimination of Violence against Children in ASEAN in 2013. Gender equality and women's empowerment are also mainstreamed in the ASEAN Declaration on the Gender-Responsive Implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and Sustainable Development Goals. Still, there is a long way to go before equality between men and women is achieved. In 2018, women spent, on average, 3.8 times more time than men did on unpaid care and domestic work, including raising children, caring for sick or elderly family members and managing household tasks.

Since 2009, the OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) has supported Southeast Asia to better understand the persistent and structural barriers to gender equality in the region. The *SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Southeast Asia* shows that despite significant progress towards gender equality since the third edition of the SIGI in 2014, deeply rooted informal laws and practices, and pluri-legal systems continue to hinder women's and girls' advancement in several areas.

This publication calls on Southeast Asian governments and all relevant stakeholders to work towards the eradication of gender-based discrimination in social institutions. More specifically, this report makes a strong case for investing in gender equality by i) updating legislation in line with international standards; ii) developing justice enforcement mechanisms; iii) adopting a holistic approach that accounts for women's diversity while engaging men and boys; iv) strengthening the scope and quality of gender-disaggregated data collection; and v) improving communication and awareness on gender-based discrimination. As Southeast Asian policy makers seek to incorporate a gender approach into national recovery efforts, the OECD Development Centre continues to optimise the SIGI's policy relevance for the region and thereby contribute to achieving gender equality in all spheres of life in a post-COVID-19 world.

Mario Pezzini

Director, OECD Development Centre

Special Advisor to the OECD Secretary-General on Development

Foreword

Since 2009, the OECD Development Centre has shed light on the structural and multiple barriers affecting women's and girls' lives in developing and developed countries through the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI). The SIGI measures discrimination against women in social institutions across 180 countries. By taking into account laws, social norms and practices, the SIGI captures the underlying drivers of gender inequality, with the aim of promoting gender-transformative policies that are built on data and evidence. The SIGI is also one of the official data sources for monitoring Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 5.1.1.

The *SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Southeast Asia* provides new evidence-based analysis of the setbacks in and progress towards gender equality since 2014 across the region. It provides regional analysis on how discriminatory social institutions – including formal and informal laws, social norms and practices – continue to constrain women's empowerment and restrict their access to opportunities and rights. The report also provides policy recommendations that aim to reshape gender norms, promote women's empowerment and build a truly inclusive society, especially in the current context of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Acknowledgements

The *SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Southeast Asia* was prepared by the OECD Development Centre under the supervision of Mario Pezzini, Director of the OECD Development Centre and Special Advisor to the OECD Secretary General on Development and Bathylle Missika, Head of the Network, Partnerships and Gender Division. The Gender team was led by Hyeshin Park, Economist and Gender Programme Co-ordinator and the report was drafted by Pierre de Boisséson, Alejandra Meneses, Gabrielle Naumann-Woleske and Hyeshin Park. The production of the report was co-ordinated by Alejandra Meneses, Policy Analyst with the Gender Programme. The report was edited by Brenda O'Hanlon. Many thanks go to the OECD Development Centre's Publication and Communications team, Henri-Bernard Solignac-Lecomte, Delphine Grandrieux, Elizabeth Nash, Mélodie Descours and Irit Perry.

The OECD Development Centre is grateful for the strong and long-standing support of the SIGI from the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). This publication benefited from the financial support of the Korean Delegation to the OECD.

The report benefited from insights from several OECD colleagues who contributed through their valuable comments. We would like to highlight the support of Gaëlle Ferrant (OECD), Alessandro Goglio (OECD), Elizabeth Holbourne (OECD), Bathylle Missika (OECD) and Lorenzo Pavone (OECD). The report also benefited from constructive inputs and updates from the Philippine Commission on Women.

The OECD Development Centre would also like to extend its gratitude to the members of the SIGI Technical Group: Fareda Banda, Shailaja Chandra, Jacques Charmes, Andrea Den Boer, Geske Dijkstra, Caroline Harper, Stefan Klasen, Inaki Permanyer and Amber Peterman. Particular thanks go to Professor Eduardo Zambrano, California Polytechnic State University, for revising the methodological framework in partnership with the OECD Development Centre's Gender Team.

Finally, the OECD Development Centre expresses its thanks to colleagues within and outside the OECD who provided comments on the revised conceptual and methodological frameworks and on the SIGI country notes. The Centre also thanks the country profile authors and validators, as well as the SIGI National Focal Points. The full list of these individuals and institutions can be found at www.genderindex.org.

Table of contents

Preface 3

Foreword 4

Acknowledgements 5

Reader's guide 9
References 15

Abbreviations and acronyms 17

Executive summary 18

1 The Social Institutions and Gender Index in the Southeast Asian region 23
Social Institutions and Gender Index overview 25
Discriminatory social institutions constitute major barriers to women's empowerment 33
A path towards gender equality: Key policy recommendations 49
Improve communication and awareness 54
References 55
Notes 61

2 Thematic analysis 63
Introduction 64
Discrimination in the family is the most challenging issue in the Southeast Asian region 64
Restricted physical integrity is the dimension in which the Southeast Asian region scores the best 72
Restricted access to productive and financial resources 80
Restricted civil liberties 91
References 97
Notes 109

Annex A. The SIGI's methodology 113
Aggregation and construction of the index 114
Definition of the variables 115
Questions used to calculate the SIGI scores 122

Annex B. Estimating the economic cost of discriminatory social institutions 127
Estimating the cost of discriminatory social institutions 127

Estimating the potential economic gains from gender equality 128
References 129
Notes 130

Tables

Table 1. Number of SIGI variables available, by country 12
Table 2. Scoring methodology for legal variables 13
Table 3. Classification of countries based on SIGI scores and dimension/indicator scores the title 14
Table 4. Glossary and definition of terms 14

Table A A.1. Scoring methodology for legal variables 114
Table A A.2. Variables used in the analysis and the construction of the SIGI 2019 115
Table A A.3. SIGI questionnaire 122

Figures

Figure 1. Composition of the SIGI 2019 10
Figure 2. Number of SIGI dimensions and indicators computed, by country 11
Figure 1.1. Discrimination in social institutions remains high in Southeast Asia compared with other geographical regions 25
Figure 1.2. The benefits of reducing gender-based discrimination are potentially substantial for Southeast Asia 26
Figure 1.3. Policy measures aimed at tackling the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis lack a gender lens 28
Figure 1.4. SIGI scores vary widely across Southeast Asian countries 30
Figure 1.5. Discrimination in the family sphere is the most acute form of discrimination in Southeast Asia 31
Figure 1.6. Maternal mortality remains high although progress have been achieved and households bear a large share of health-related costs 35
Figure 1.7. Chronic malnutrition is a critical issue in Southeast Asia 36
Figure 1.8. Adolescent pregnancies originate in discriminatory social institutions such as girl child marriage 37
Figure 1.9. The quality of education remains limited in Southeast Asia, while gender segregation by field of study is important 41
Figure 1.10. Women are less integrated than men in the labour market in all Southeast Asian countries 43
Figure 1.11. Women's heavier burden of unpaid care and domestic tasks hampers their labour force participation 44
Figure 1.12. Gender-based discriminatory norms hinder women's political participation 48
Figure 2.1. Girl child marriage in Southeast Asia remains relatively low compared with the rest of the world 67
Figure 2.2. The distribution of unpaid care and domestic work between women and men remains unequal across Southeast Asian countries 69
Figure 2.3. Prevalence of domestic violence and attitudes justifying it remain high in the Southeast Asian region 75
Figure 2.4. Sex imbalances at birth in Viet Nam have spiked since 2005 78
Figure 2.5.The majority of women in the Southeast Asian region use some method of contraception 80
Figure 2.6. Men legally own the vast majority of agricultural land in Southeast Asia 85
Figure 2.7. Access to bank accounts remains a challenge for both men and women in Southeast Asia, although progress was made between 2011 and 2017 86
Figure 2.8. Maternity leave is common in Southeast Asia, unlike paternity leave, but length and entitlement vary 89
Figure 2.9. In Southeast Asia, negative attitudes towards working women are common, while women continue to be underrepresented in positions of economic power 90
Figure 2.10. Women's representation as political decision makers in Southeast Asia has improved but remains low 94

Figure A A.1. The composition of the SIGI 2019 113
Figure A B.1. Economic gains in the Southeast Asian region from a reduction in gender-based discrimination 129

Boxes

Box 1. The SIGI components 9
Box 1.1. Gender lenses are mostly absent from post-COVID-19 policy measures and recovery plans 28
Box 1.2. The implications of the COVID-19 crisis on the health of Southeast Asian women 39
Box 1.3. The economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis on Southeast Asian women 45
Box 1.4. Women must be included at the decision-making level if COVID-19 recovery strategies are to take gender into account 49
Box 2.1. Southeast Asian countries remain a hub for human trafficking 76
Box 2.2. Land titling in Southeast Asia: Risks, challenges and opportunities for women 84
Box 2.3. The different concepts of equal remuneration 88
Box 2.4. Good practice: Legal aid provisions 97

Box A B.1. Limitations of the model for regional analysis 127

Follow OECD Publications on:

http://twitter.com/OECD_Pubs
http://www.facebook.com/OECDPublications
http://www.linkedin.com/groups/OECD-Publications-4645871
http://www.youtube.com/oecdilibrary
http://www.oecd.org/oecddirect/

This book has...

StatLinks
A service that delivers Excel® files from the printed page!

Look for the *StatLinks* at the bottom of the tables or graphs in this book. To download the matching Excel® spreadsheet, just type the link into your Internet browser, starting with the *http://dx.doi.org* prefix, or click on the link from the e-book edition.

Reader's guide

The Social Institutions and Gender Index 2019 conceptual framework

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) is a unique cross-country measure of discriminatory social institutions, which include formal and informal laws, social norms and practices that restrict women's and girls' rights, access to empowerment opportunities and resources. The SIGI comprises four components that provide policy makers with facts and evidence in order to enhance governments' efforts to deliver their gender equality commitments (Box 1).

Box 1. The SIGI components

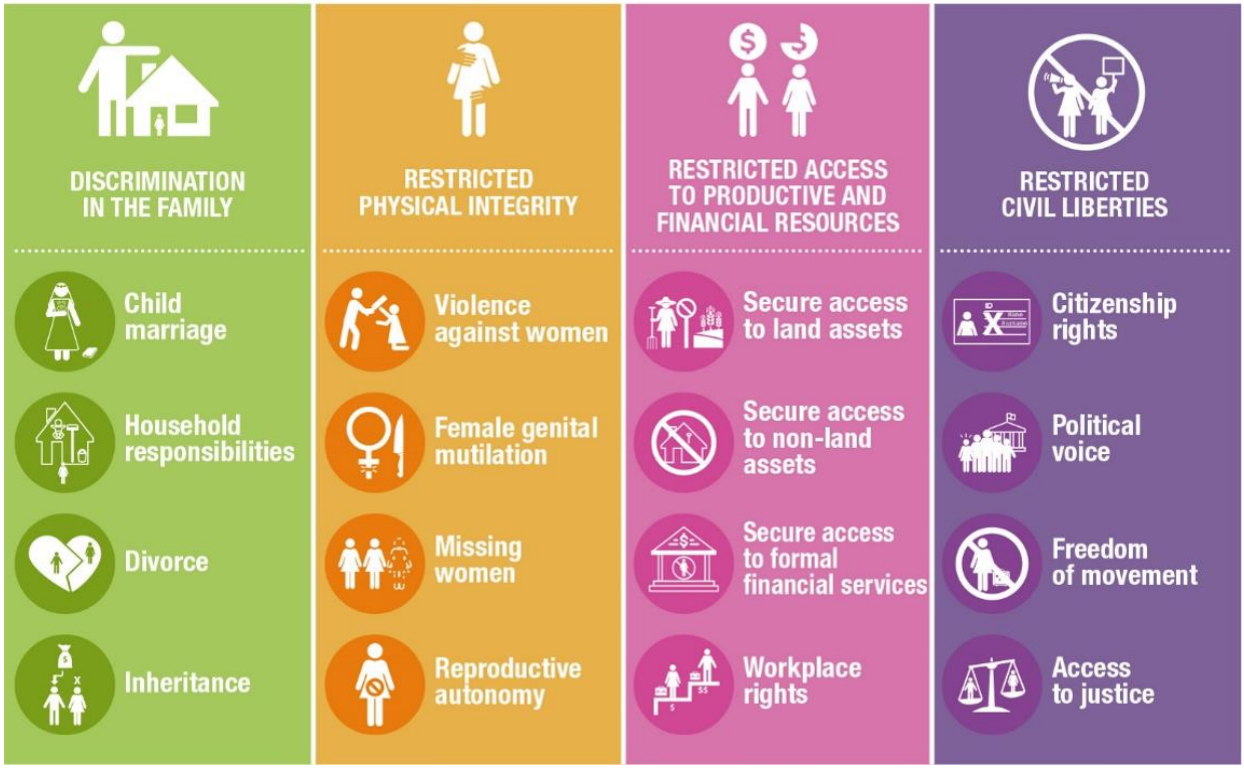
The SIGI comprises four components:

- country profiles containing comprehensive, qualitative information on legal frameworks and action plans to protect women's rights and promote gender equality (for 180 countries)
- the Gender, Institutions and Development Database (GID-DB), comprising variables measuring the level of discrimination in laws (categorical variable), social norms (attitudinal data) and practices (prevalence rates) for 180 countries
- a cross-country ranking classifying 120 countries according to their level of discrimination in social institutions
- a policy simulator allowing policy makers to scope out reform options and assess their likely effects on gender equality in social institutions

The SIGI and its dimensions look at the gaps that legislation, attitudes and practices create between women's and men's rights and opportunities. The SIGI covers four dimensions, spanning major socio-economic areas that affect women's and girls' entire lifetimes (Figure 1):

- The "Discrimination in the family" dimension captures social institutions that limit women's decision-making power and undervalue their status in the household and the family.
- The "Restricted physical integrity" dimension captures social institutions that increase women's and girls' vulnerability to multiple forms of violence and limit their control over their bodies and reproductive autonomy.
- The "Restricted access to productive and financial resources" dimension captures women's restricted access to and control over critical productive and economic resources and assets.
- The "Restricted civil liberties" dimension captures discriminatory laws and practices restricting women's access to, and participation and voice in, the public and social spheres.

Figure 1. Composition of the SIGI 2019



Source: (OECD, n.d.[1]), Social Institutions and Gender Index, www.genderindex.org.

Each dimension builds on four indicators combining qualitative and quantitative information. In theory, each indicator builds on a combination of three variables:

- **law** variables, which are discrete variables, and aim to measure the level of discrimination in formal and informal laws
- **attitudes** and **practices** variables, which are continuous variables, and aim to measure the level of discrimination in social norms.

The variables used as proxies for each indicator depend on data availability, reliability and country coverage. For example, some variables are not available at all (such as information on inheritance practices), and some variables are only available for a few countries (such as the time spent on unpaid care work). Consequently, discrepancies exist between the theoretical framework and the variables effectively included in the SIGI 2019 Global Report. Overall, the SIGI framework builds on 27 core variables.

The SIGI 2019 Global Report is the fourth edition of the SIGI. The conceptual framework was entirely revised, which renders comparison over time impossible at the aggregate level (index, dimensions and indicators). Nevertheless, some comparison over time is possible at the variable level for the attitudes and practices variables. For more details on the SIGI methodology, refer to Annex A.

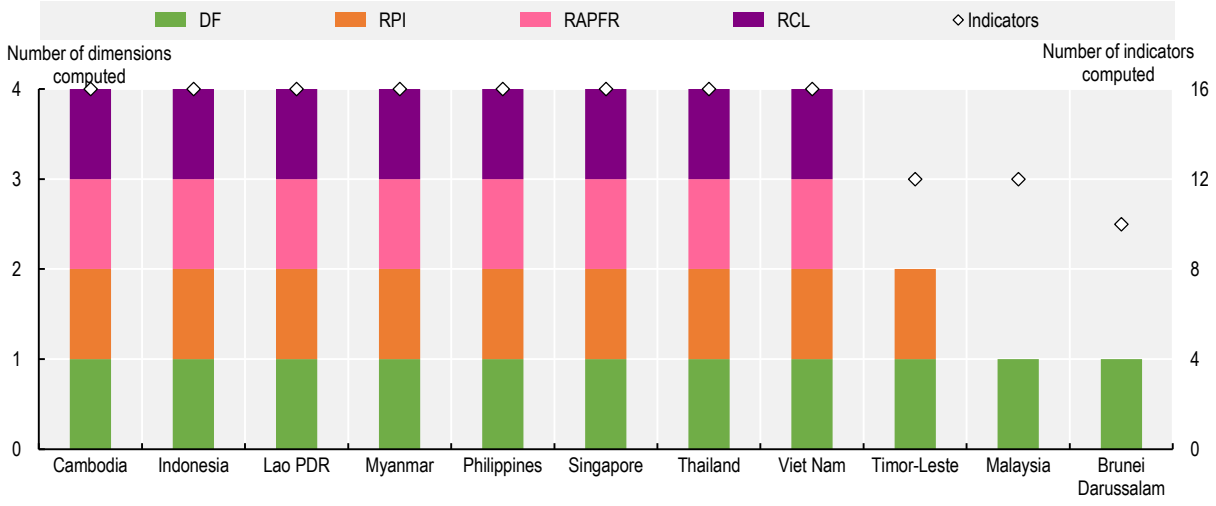
Geographical coverage

The data collection process for the fourth edition of the SIGI in 2019 covered 11 countries in Southeast Asia:

- Brunei Darussalam;
- Cambodia;
- Indonesia;
- Lao People's Democratic Republic (hereafter "Lao PDR");
- Malaysia;
- Myanmar;
- Philippines;
- Singapore;
- Thailand;
- Timor-Leste; and
- Viet Nam.

Due to data limitations and the fact that an overall SIGI score can only be computed for countries with data points in every single indicator and variable composing the index, only eight Southeast Asian countries were given a SIGI score in 2019 (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Number of SIGI dimensions and indicators computed, by country



Note: The SIGI framework comprises a total of 4 dimensions and 16 indicators.
Source: (OECD, 2019[2]), Social Institutions and Gender Index, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/f0c48e52-en.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229635

Three countries – namely Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Timor-Leste – do not have enough data to compute scores across all 16 SIGI indicators (Table 1). In Timor-Leste, four variables are missing and scores could only be calculated for two dimensions. In Malaysia, data points in four variables are also missing but only one dimension could be calculated because of missing data in the lifetime prevalence

rate of violence against women. Finally, Brunei Darussalam has missing data in seven variables and only one dimension score was computed ("Discrimination in the family").

Table 1. Number of SIGI variables available, by country

		Cambodia	Indonesia	Lao PDR	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Viet Nam	Malaysia	Timor-Leste	Brunei Darussalam
Child marriage	Laws	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Practices	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Household responsibilities	Laws	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Divorce	Laws	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Inheritance	Laws	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Violence against women	Laws	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Attitudes	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
	Practices	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-
Female genital mutilation	Attitudes	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Practices	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Missing women	Practices	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Reproductive autonomy	Laws	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Practices	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Land assets	Laws	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Non-land assets	Laws	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Financial services	Laws	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Practices	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
Workplace rights	Laws	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Attitudes	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
	Practices	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Citizenship rights	Laws	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Political voice	Laws	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Practices	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Freedom of movement	Laws	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Practices	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
Access to justice	Laws	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Practices	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
Number of variables available		**27**	**27**	**27**	**27**	**27**	**27**	**27**	**27**	**23**	**23**	**20**
Number of variables missing		**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**4**	**4**	**7**

Source: (OECD, n.d.[1]), Social Institutions and Gender Index, www.genderindex.org.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229654

Timing and data sources

Qualitative data

The qualitative information for the 11 Southeast Asian country profiles was developed through a multiple-stage internal drafting and reviewing process. First, legal consultants responded to a questionnaire comprising 312 questions on social institutions and fully referenced country profiles, following a standardised structure to ensure comparability across countries/territories. Second, gender experts and/or government representatives with knowledge of the policy and legal landscape for gender equality and

women's rights at a national level validated the responses. The cut-off date for the qualitative information was 30 June 2017 – publishing qualitative (i.e. legal variables) across 180 countries is a multistage and complex process (data collection, process, management, validation and dissemination) which spans over one year and explains the delay between the collection cut-off date and the publication of data. All country profiles can be retrieved from the website www.genderindex.org.

A coding manual was created to quantify the level of legal discrimination based on the qualitative information collected. The coding manual ensures consistency across variables, guarantees objectivity in the selection criteria for scoring, and allows for comparability across countries as well as over time (See Annex A). Of the 312 questions, 144 were used to assign a discrete value to each of the 14 legal variables. The coding manual is based on all applicable legal frameworks, including civil, as well as customary, religious or traditional practices or laws. When information is missing or insufficient, variables do not receive a value. A five-level scale (0, 25, 50, 75 and 1) serves as the basis for encoding the categorical variables and reflects the level of discrimination in formal and informal laws (Table 2).

Table 2. Scoring methodology for legal variables

	Score
The legal framework provides women with the same rights as men, with no exceptions, and applies to all groups of women. There are no customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women.	0
The legal framework provides women with the same rights as men, with no exceptions, and applies to all groups of women. However, some customary, religious or traditional practices or laws do discriminate against women.	25
The legal framework provides women with the same rights as men. However, it foresees exceptions, or does not apply to all groups of women.	50
The legal framework restricts some women's rights.	75
The legal framework fully discriminates against women's rights.	1

Source: (OECD, n.d.[1]), Social Institutions and Gender Index, www.genderindex.org.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229673

Quantitative data

Quantitative information, such as attitudinal and prevalence data, was collected from various secondary data sources according to the country and variable. The OECD Development Centre's Gender Team used international data sources – such as Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), the World Values Survey (WVS), and the National Household Survey (NHS) – and then proceeded to harmonise the data in order to ensure comparability across countries. The cut-off date for the quantitative information was 31 December 2017.

SIGI scores and classification

The SIGI is a composite index. The scores for the overall index, the dimensions and the indicators range from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating no discrimination and 100 indicating absolute discrimination against women. In order to facilitate the analysis and presentation of results, countries are classified into five categories at the index level, as well as at the dimension and indicator levels. Table 3 summarises the categories and the cut-off points of the different categories based on the SIGI scores on the one hand, and on the dimension and indicator scores on the other hand.

Table 3. Classification of countries based on SIGI scores and dimension/indicator scores the title

Level of discrimination	SIGI scores	Dimension/indicator scores
Very low	[0-20]	[0-10]
Low level	[20-30]	[10-25]
Medium level	[30-40]	[25-50]
High level	[40-50]	[50-75]
Very high level	[50-100]	[75-100]

Note: Both SIGI scores and dimension/indicator scores range from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating no discrimination and 100 indicating absolute discrimination.
Source: (OECD, n.d.[1]), Social Institutions and Gender Index, www.genderindex.org.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229692

Glossary

Table 4. Glossary and definition of terms

Term	Definition	Reference
Child marriage	Any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 years and an adult or another child	(UNICEF, n.d.[3])
Customary, religious or traditional practices or laws	Customs, religions and traditional practices observed among a specific community	(OECD, n.d.[1])
Discrimination against women	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	(United Nations, 1979[4])
Domestic violence	Violence that occurs within the private sphere, generally between individuals who are related through blood, intimacy or law	(CEDAW, 2017[5])
Equal access	Equal opportunities to have access to resources, assets, services, training and education opportunities, markets, sources of income, and decent employment opportunities	(FAO, 2016[6])
Equal opportunity	Equality in employment regardless of race, skin colour, sex, religion and so forth; non-discriminatory practices in hiring employees	(United Nations, n.d.[7])
Female genital mutilation	All procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons	(United Nations, 2008[8])
Femicide	Intentional killing of females (women or girls) because they are females	
Forced marriage	A marriage that takes place without the free or valid consent of one or both of the partners and involves either physical or emotional duress	(OHCHR, n.d.[9])
Gender-based violence	Any harmful act directed against individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of their gender or sex	(United Nations, 1993[10]) (UN Women, n.d.[11])
Gender gap	Disproportionate difference between men and women and boys and girls, particularly as reflected in attainment of development goals, access to resources and levels of participation	(UN Women, n.d.[11])
Gender norms	Ideas about how men and women should be and act. Most of such rules are learned and internalised early in life, which creates an inter-generational cycle of gender socialisation and stereotyping.	(UN Women, n.d.[11])
Gender-responsiveness	Creation of an environment that reflects an understanding of girls' and women's realities and needs, and that addresses them by paying attention to the unique needs of females; valuing their perspectives; respecting their experiences; understanding developmental differences between girls and boys, women and men; and ultimately empowering girls and women	(UNICEF, 2017[12])
Missing women	Concept first introduced by Amartya Sen in 1990. He hypothesised that more than 100 million women were missing due to the excess mortality of women from inequality and neglect. The missing women phenomenon is captured by the shortfall in the number of girls aged 0-4 years, relative to their expected survival rate in the absence of sex-selective abortions and female infanticide, and with similar levels of health and nutrition to boys, correcting for natural biological and physiological differences.	(Sen, 1990[13])

Sexual and reproductive health and rights	Right for all to make choices regarding their own sexuality and reproduction, providing they respect the rights of others to bodily integrity. This definition also includes the right to access information and services needed to support these choices and optimise health.	(UN Women, n.d.[11])
Sexual harassment	Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature Unwelcome behaviours, advances and practices of a sexual nature that may include, but are not limited to sexual suggestions or demands; requests for sexual favours; and sexual, verbal or physical conduct or gestures that are or might reasonably be perceived as offensive or humiliating	(United Nations, 2018[14])
Unmet need for family planning	Gap between women's reproductive intentions and their contraceptive behaviour, defined as the proportion of currently married or in-union women of reproductive age (15-49 years) who want to cease or delay childbearing but are not using any method of contraception	(United Nations, 2014[15])
Violence against women	Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life	(United Nations, 1993[10])

References

CEDAW (2017), *General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19*. [5]

FAO (2016), *Meeting our goals. FAO's programme for gender equality in agriculture and rural development*, http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6618e.pdf (accessed on 11 June 2020). [6]

Mercado, L., M. Naciri and Y. Mishra (2020), *Women's Unpaid and Underpaid Work in the Times of COVID-19*, UN Women, https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2020/06/womens-unpaid-and-underpaid-work-in-the-times-of-covid-19 (accessed on 27 January 2021). [16]

OECD (2019), "Social Institutions and Gender Index (Edition 2019)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/f0c48e52-en (accessed on 5 January 2021). [2]

OECD (n.d.), *Social Institutions and Gender Index*, https://www.genderindex.org/ (accessed on 11 June 2020). [1]

OHCHR (n.d.), *Child, early and forced marriage, including in humanitarian settings*, https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WRGS/Pages/ChildMarriage.aspx (accessed on 11 June 2020). [9]

Sen, A. (1990), "More Than 100 Million Women Are Missing", *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 37/20. [13]

UN Women (n.d.), *Gender Equality Glossary*, https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36 (accessed on 11 June 2020). [11]

UNICEF (2017), *Gender Equality: Glossary of Terms and Concepts*. [12]

UNICEF (n.d.), *Child marriage*, https://www.unicef.org/protection/child-marriage (accessed on 11 June 2020). [3]

United Nations (2018), *Resolution 73/148: Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: sexual harassment*, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1660337?ln=en. [14]

United Nations (2014), *World Contraceptive Use 2014 (POP/DB/CP/Rev2014)*, https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/dataset/contraception/wcu2014/Metadata/WCU2014_UNMET_NEED_metadata.pdf. [15]

United Nations (2008), *Eliminating Female genital mutilation*, https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/43839/9789241596442_eng.pdf. [8]

United Nations (1993), *Resolution 48/104: Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.21_declaration%20elimination%20vaw.pdf. [10]

United Nations (1979), *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*, https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3970.html. [4]

United Nations (n.d.), *Principle 6 | UN Global Compact*, https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles/principle-6. [7]

Abbreviations and acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	civil society organisation
GDP	gross domestic product
GID-DB	Gender, Institutions and Development Database
ILO	International Labour Organization
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NHS	National Household Survey
NSOs	National Statistical Offices
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
WVS	World Values Survey

Executive summary

In the quarter century since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), Southeast Asian governments have accelerated their commitments to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. All Southeast Asian countries have ratified the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, which aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework in 2020. Yet, the region still has a long path toward gender equality. The *Social Institutions and Gender Index 2021 Regional Report for Southeast Asia* demonstrates that discrimination in laws, social norms and practices in Southeast Asia remains high compared with the rest of the world. The economic cost of discriminatory social institutions for Southeast Asia amounts to around USD 200 billion, accounting for 7.5% of the regional gross domestic product (GDP) and translates into a loss of USD 1 853 per capita. While wide variation exists across Southeast Asian countries, the region displays high levels of discrimination in terms of intra-household dynamics and caregiving roles, labour status, political representation as well as pervasive domestic violence. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates women's vulnerabilities and reinforces pre-existing imbalances. In this context, this report explores how discriminatory social institutions hinder women's empowerment and gender equality. It also calls for governments to take urgent action to build truly inclusive societies.

Discriminatory social institutions constitute major barriers to women's empowerment and their investment in human capital

Laws and social norms limit women's access to sexual and reproductive healthcare and enable harmful practices that result in poor health and well-being outcomes

The SDG 3 prioritises women's health and well-being, particularly through its emphasis on access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services and the reduction of maternal mortality. No country in Southeast Asia legally guarantees universal access to contraception. In 2018, 13% of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) reported having an unmet need for family planning, which was a slight increase compared with 2014 (12%). Meanwhile, important legal limitations and social norms constrain women's reproductive autonomy, negatively affect their sexual and reproductive health and lead to poor health outcomes. In 2017, one-half of Southeast Asian countries had maternal mortality rates higher than 100 deaths per 100 000 live births. One contributing factor to maternal mortality in the region is the prevalence of adolescent pregnancies. These early pregnancies increase the likelihood of maternal mortality, while also negatively affecting girls' educational attainment and quality of life. In 2017, Southeast Asia had high rates of adolescent births, with an average rate of 43 births per 1 000 women aged 15 to 19 years. Adolescent pregnancy rates are closely correlated with the prevalence rate of girl child marriage, revealing the fundamental role of social norms in women's suboptimal health outcomes.

About 25% of women in Southeast Asia have suffered physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime. Violence, and the fear of it, can prevent women from pursuing

education, working, earning an income, making decisions about their health or their children's education, and exercising their political rights and voice. The prevalence of gender-based violence in Southeast Asia is deeply rooted in discriminatory social norms and attitudes that consider violence a private matter. On average, 30% of Southeast Asian women and girls believe that a husband can be justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances, such as if she burns food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, or refuses sex with him. Likewise, female genital mutilation, a particular form of violence against young girls and adolescents, continues to exist in several countries in the region as a result of customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that allow and encourage this harmful practice as well as the absence of legislative frameworks aimed at eliminating and banning female genital mutilation.

While parity in education supports women's empowerment, deeply embedded social norms lead to gender segregation in education

Southeast Asia has achieved gender parity in education. In all Southeast Asian countries for which data are available, as many girls as boys – and sometimes more girls than boys – are enrolled in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Nevertheless, deeply entrenched social norms trigger gender segregation in tertiary education, notably in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields, which has a direct impact on women's and men's choice of labour sector and status. The lack of representation of women in STEM fields leads to their underrepresentation in positions such as engineers, scientists or architects, which are often high-status and high-paying careers. This has further consequences not only on women's self-esteem and representation in positions of power but also on their level of income and their economic empowerment in general. Social norms, stereotypes and strong unconscious gender biases perceive STEM fields as masculine domains, which guides women's and men's decisions to enrol in these types of programmes. Indeed, these stereotypes and biases begin to be internalised as early as in primary or secondary education, during which learning materials and gender-biased teaching perpetuate gender stereotypes by assigning certain functions and skills to girls and boys. Furthermore, the lack of female teachers in STEM fields as the level of education increases combined with the low labour force participation of women in STEM-oriented economic sectors has a cyclical effect resulting in fewer female role models in STEM, which in turn, plays a crucial role in shaping young girls' expectations and further reduces their engagement in these fields.

Women's economic and political empowerment is hindered by discriminatory laws and social norms

Economic inclusion empowers women to make meaningful and strategic decisions on their own and to realise their potential through investment in health and education. Yet, women's labour force participation in the region falls far behind that of men. On average, the labour force participation rate is 23 percentage points lower for women than for men in Southeast Asia. One of leading causes of this difference are discriminatory social norms that confine women to reproductive and care roles. For instance, more than one in five people in Southeast Asia have negative views on women's paid employment outside of the home. Moreover, 45% believe that children will suffer when their mothers work. The burden of unpaid care and domestic work hinders women's full and active access to labour markets. In 2018, women spent, on average, four times more time than men did on unpaid care and domestic work. COVID-19 has also exacerbated the workload of childcare, household chores and elderly care which has been primarily faced by women and girls in Southeast Asia.

Laws and social norms hinder women's access to productive assets such as land and financial services, which are important factors for their economic empowerment. Especially in rural areas where agricultural activities dominate the economy, land ownership and access to assets are critical for women's ability to secure their rights and take control over their lives. Women represent only 13% of landowners on average

while they account for 39% of the agricultural workers across the region. Legal frameworks and land titling practices perpetuate these imbalances by discriminating against women's ownership and administration of productive assets as well as by granting decision-making power to men. These laws and practices are rooted in the powerful social expectation that a central part of men's identity is being the primary decision makers in important family matters, especially when it comes to investments and large family assets such as property.

Women's political representation and inclusion in decision-making bodies is limited in the region despite the progress made since the early 2000s. In 2020, women accounted for just 20% of parliamentarians in the region. Discriminatory social norms are one of the persistent causes of women's underrepresentation and deny them opportunities to exercise their voices and make decisions on an equal footing with men. Indeed, more than half of the population in Southeast Asia believe that men make better political leaders than women, thus societies fail to prioritise women's political participation, leadership and representation. Women's underrepresentation yields a self-sustaining cycle. When women lack representation, their perspectives are less likely to be taken into account, which, in turn, makes it less likely that actions will be taken to eliminate the barriers to women's greater participation.

A path towards gender equality: Key policy recommendations

COVID-19 has disproportionally affected women and girls and there is a risk of potential regressions in terms of gender equality. COVID-19 recovery policies should include a gender perspective not only to mitigate the negative consequences on women and girls but also to put the root causes of gender inequality at the heart of holistic policy making for truly inclusive and gender-equal societies. Southeast Asian countries need to take action to tackle discriminatory laws, social norms and practices to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.

Key policy actions to fast forward gender equality in Southeast Asia

Update and harmonise legislation

- Ensure that the national legal frameworks of Southeast Asian countries are in alignment with international conventions and amend laws to eliminate discriminatory legislation

Develop enforcement mechanisms

- Strengthen the capacity building of law enforcement authorities and guarantee legal redress
- Sensitise all actors in the judicial system to gender-based discrimination
- Develop adequate infrastructure and service provision in remote areas to ensure that all women have access to justice and benefit from public programmes

Adopt a holistic and intersectional approach

- Address gender-based discrimination at all social and political levels
- Integrate an intersectional approach in public policy, which incorporates women's other identities, such as ethnicity, age and religion, to reduce gender inequalities.
- Engage men and boys as positive agents of change

Invest in data

- Strengthen the scope and the quality of sex-disaggregated data collection at all geographical levels
- Strengthen statistical co-operation across Southeast Asian countries to guarantee the comparability and support the monitoring of SDG 5
- Invest in data collection on gender norms, including on the norms of masculinities

Improve communication and awareness

- Conduct effective communications campaigns aimed at eliminating the various forms of gender-based discrimination

1 The Social Institutions and Gender Index in the Southeast Asian region

This chapter presents an overview of the results for the Southeast Asian region based on the fourth edition of the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) in 2019 and its four dimensions: “Discrimination in the family”, “Restricted physical integrity”, “Restricted access to productive and financial resources”, and “Restricted civil liberties”. It outlines the main areas of progress and challenges regarding formal and informal laws, social norms, and practices related to gender equality in 11 countries in Southeast Asia. Uncovering the high economic cost induced by discriminatory social institutions, it highlights that reforms aimed at achieving gender equality could “turn lead into gold” and convert existing gender-based discrimination into an opportunity to accelerate economic growth and well-being. The chapter also explores the interaction between women’s empowerment and discriminatory social institutions by examining four core perspectives: health, education, economics and decision making. Finally, building on the evidence uncovered by the SIGI, this chapter provides a set of policy recommendations to enhance Southeast Asian governments’ efforts to deliver on their gender equality commitments and make progress towards achieving SDG 5.

> "We cannot achieve 'the future we want' if half of our population is not empowered to be part of the journey."
>
> Angel Gurría, OECD Secretary-General, SIGI 2019 launch event, March 2019

Gender equality is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is both a standalone goal – Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 – and a core component of 13 of the 17 SDGs.[1] Overall, 76 of the 169 SDG targets establish conditions for gender equality and women's rights, and 53 of the 231 indicators explicitly mention women, girls, gender or sex. The fundamental principle of leaving no one behind requires addressing the structural causes of gender inequality as well as its consequences on the lives of millions of women and girls around the world. The momentum initiated by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has opened up new perspectives on change, mobilised new actors, and paved the way for the implementation of new policies and programmes that seek to achieve gender equality.

Twenty-five years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) in 1995, Southeast Asian governments[2] have demonstrated their commitment to advancing on the path towards gender equality. All countries in the region have signed and ratified the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). At the regional level, political commitments have primarily taken place within the framework of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In 2010, ASEAN countries committed to gender equality through the comprehensive Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children (ASEAN, 2010[1]). It was followed in 2015 by the adoption of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, which pledged to promote a high quality of life and equitable access to opportunities for women and to protect their human rights (ASEAN, 2015[2]). In 2017, ASEAN countries operationalised their political commitment and aligned it with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the ASEAN Declaration on the Gender-Responsive Implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the Sustainable Development Goals (ASEAN, 2017[3]). The declaration represents a key milestone, as it urges governments to collect high-quality and sex-disaggregated data. Moreover, it introduces the concepts of gender-responsive policies and budgeting, encourages women's equal access to and full participation in the decision-making bodies and mechanisms involved in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and calls for the engagement of men and boys as agents of change. In 2020, ASEAN countries strengthened their commitments toward gender equality and the advancement of women's rights through the consolidation of the ASEAN Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Framework.

Yet, achieving gender equality in Southeast Asia remains a long journey, and discriminatory social institutions continue to critically undermine women's and girls' rights and opportunities. Many legal frameworks discriminate against women and girls in essential areas of their lives. Moreover, patriarchal and customary norms continue to influence both personal and collective opinions and behaviours throughout the region. The effect on women's and girls' lives is profound, ranging from an unequal distribution of household chores, poor labour status and lower political representation to pervasive domestic violence. In this regard, women and girls in Southeast Asia face systemic discrimination every day, which severely limits women's access to economic and leadership opportunities. As the COVID-19 crisis unfolds across the world, its socio-economic consequences already exacerbate women's vulnerabilities and reinforce existing imbalances (OECD, 2020[4]). This chapter explores these deeply entrenched discrimination in Southeast Asia and provides policy recommendations to address the root causes of gender inequality and ensure that all women and girls in the region can live their lives fully empowered.

Social Institutions and Gender Index overview

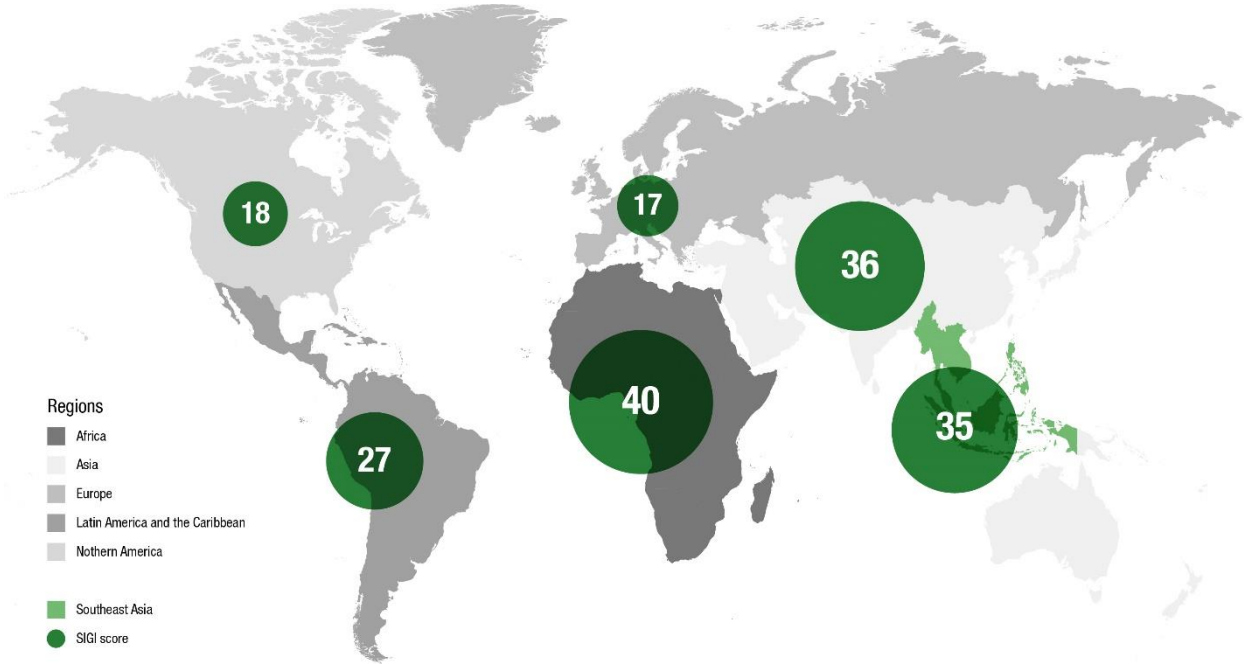
Since its first edition in 2009, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD's) Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) has been measuring, assessing and analysing the deeply entrenched discrimination and barriers faced by women and girls across the world. Laws, social norms and practices delineate the legally and socially acceptable ways to think, do, express or act in relation to gender. When these social institutions discriminate against women and girls, they establish multiple structural and sometimes violent barriers, which span the entire life course of women and girls. In this regard, discriminatory social institutions intimately connect an individual's set of rights and opportunities with their gender.

SIGI results in Southeast Asia show that discriminatory social institutions remain important

The *SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Southeast Asia* shows that discrimination in laws, social norms and practices in Southeast Asia remain high compared with the rest of the world. The results uncover the progress and setbacks that the region has experienced since 2014 across the four dimensions of the SIGI: "Discrimination in the family", "Restricted physical integrity", "Restricted access to productive and financial resources", and "Restricted civil liberties". The Southeast Asian region's score – denoting its level of discrimination in social institutions – is 35, in line with the score for Asia as a whole (36). However, it remains significantly higher than the level of discrimination encountered in Europe (17), Northern America (18), and Latin America and the Caribbean (27) (Figure 1.1). Within Asia as a whole, Southeast Asia scores better than West Asia (41) and South Asia (48), but it trails behind East Asia, which has a score of 22.

Figure 1.1. Discrimination in social institutions remains high in Southeast Asia compared with other geographical regions

SIGI scores in Southeast Asia and selected regions of the world, 2019



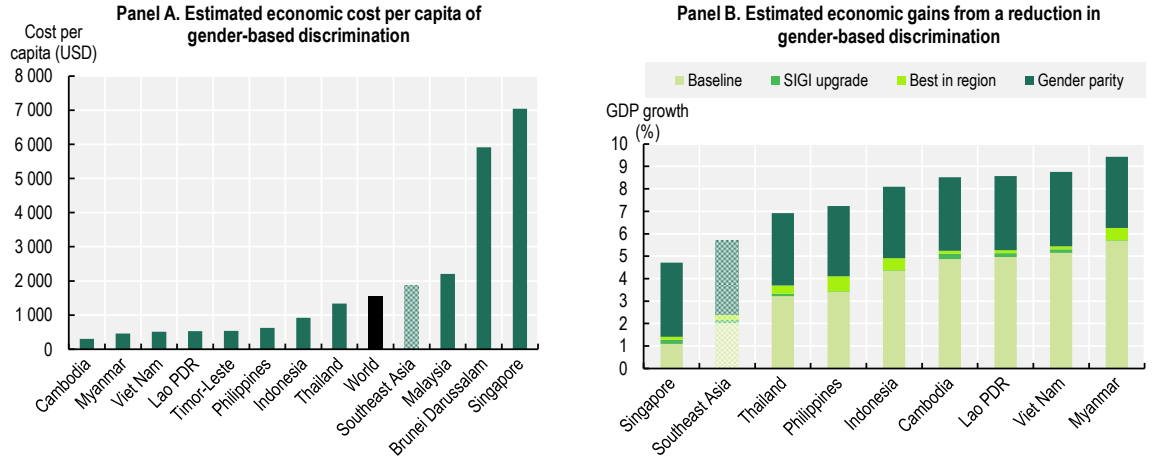
Note: Scores range from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating no discrimination and 100 indicating absolute discrimination.
Source: (OECD, 2019[5]), Social Institutions and Gender Index, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/f0c48e52-en.

Discriminatory social institutions yield a high economic cost, whereas increasing gender equality would constitute a tremendous growth opportunity

Overall, the cost of discriminatory social institutions for Southeast Asia amounts to around USD 200 billion, accounting for 7.5% of the regional gross domestic product (GDP) (OECD, 2019[6]). Through its influence on the unequal distribution of power between men and women in the family, in the economic sphere and in public life, gender-based discrimination in social institutions impedes economic growth. The effects go well beyond the limitations placed on human development: by reducing the pool of talent and limiting countries' capacity to innovate and accumulate human and financial capital, discriminatory social institutions limit economic growth. In other words, the regional economy cannot operate at its full potential if systemic constraints hold back half of the population. Controlling for other geographic, economic and institutional factors that also explain economic growth, the current level of discrimination in social institutions in Southeast Asia costs an estimated USD 1 853 per capita (Figure 1.2, Panel A).

The distribution of losses across Southeast Asia is not uniform. Due to different population sizes and differences in terms of GDP per capita, the losses per capita are higher in small, wealthier countries in the region. The estimated cost of discriminatory social institutions ranges from USD 300 per capita in Cambodia to around USD 7 000 per capita in Singapore (Figure 1.2, Panel A).

Figure 1.2. The benefits of reducing gender-based discrimination are potentially substantial for Southeast Asia



Note: Panel A presents the national income losses associated with current levels of gender-based discrimination in social institutions. Income losses are measured in terms of 2017 real income at current Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). Countries are ordered by increasing income losses.

Panel B presents the forecasted average annual GDP growth rates between 2018 and 2030 under various scenarios. GDP forecasts are measured in terms of 2010 real GDP per capita at current PPP. GDP forecasts follow four distinct scenarios: 1) "Baseline", using available growth forecasts, and assuming no change in the global level of gender-based discrimination in social institutions between 2018 and 2030; 2) "SIGI upgrade", assuming that each country would decrease gender discrimination enough by 2030 to be classified as the next SIGI classification level; 3) "Best in region", assuming that each country would decrease gender discrimination enough by 2030 to attain the region's best performer's 2019 SIGI score; and 4) "Gender parity", assuming that each country would have eliminated gender-based discrimination in social institutions by 2030. Data are missing for Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Timor-Leste (no SIGI score).

Source: OECD calculations based on (OECD, 2019[5]), *Social Institutions and Gender Index*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/f0c48e52-en; (USDA, 2017[7]), *ERS International Macroeconomic Dataset*, https://data.nal.usda.gov/dataset/international-macroeconomic-data-set; and (World Bank, 2020[8]), *World Development Indicators*, https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229711

The main factors affecting the cost associated with discriminatory social institutions are women's human capital, labour force participation and physical capital accumulation. A country's level of economic growth depends on its levels of physical and human capital, as well as on total factor productivity (Mankiw, Romer and Weil, 1992[9]; Solow, 1956[10]). In 2019, the OECD estimated that at the global level, discriminatory laws, norms and practices that women and girls faced lowered the development of women's human capital by 16%, reduced women's labour force participation by 12% and restricted women's physical capital accumulation by 8% (OECD, 2019[6]).

In this regard, reducing gender-based discrimination in social institutions through appropriate policies and programmes could yield substantial economic benefits. In addition to fulfilling fundamental human rights, gender equality in social institutions could generate substantial macroeconomic gains that are not limited to women but would benefit everyone. Estimated economic gains are based on four distinct scenarios (see Annex B for more details). The "Baseline" scenario assumes that Southeast Asia would experience an average annual GDP growth rate of 2% between 2018 and 2030. Under the "SIGI upgrade" scenario – in which each country in the region would slightly decrease the level of gender-based discrimination so that its SIGI score by 2030 would allow it to change its respective SIGI category[3] – Southeast Asia would add 0.2 percentage points to its annual GDP growth. Under the "Best in region" scenario – which assumes that each country addresses its respective gender-based discrimination so that by 2030 its SIGI score reaches that of Southeast Asia's top performer in 2019 (Singapore) – Southeast Asia would add another 0.2 percentage points to its average annual growth rate. Finally, under the "Gender parity" scenario – which assumes that each country fully addresses its respective gender-based discrimination by 2030 and reaches a SIGI score of 0, indicating no discrimination – Southeast Asia would add another 3.3 percentage points to its annual GDP growth (Figure 1.2, Panel B).

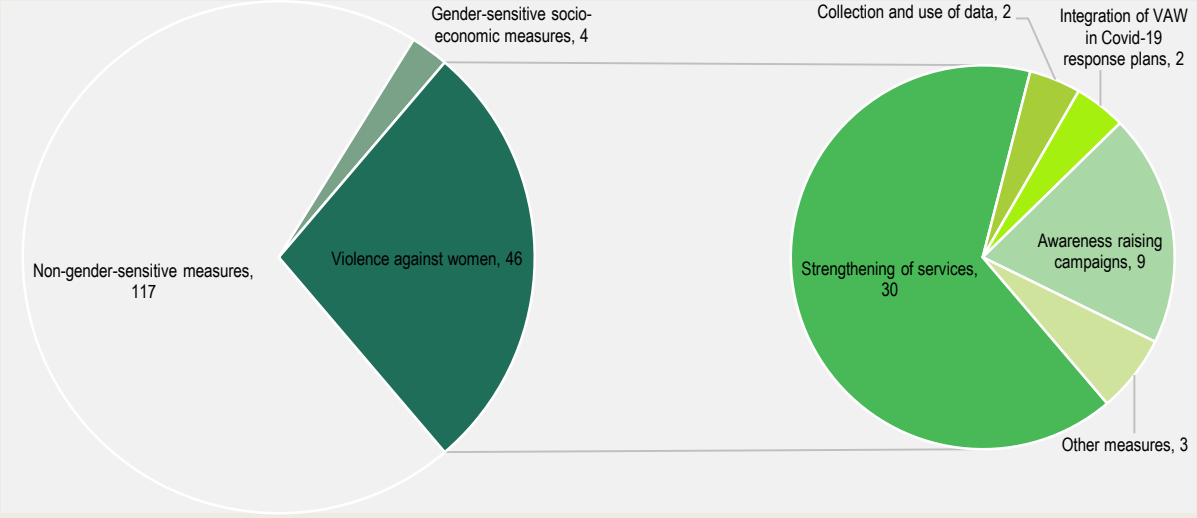
In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, which threatens Southeast Asia's macroeconomic stability with deep socio-economic ramifications, addressing the gender disparities becomes even more important in light of future economic recovery plans (Box 1.1). Early evidence shows that the crisis has exacerbated pre-existing challenges to women's economic empowerment, such as caring responsibilities, reducing the time that women could potentially dedicate to paid activities (OECD, 2020[4]). Moreover, women in developing countries are more likely than men to be in temporary, part-time and precarious employment, with lower pay, weaker legal protections and a lack of access to social protection measures. At the same time, certain sectors of the economy – for example, retail, food and accommodation, and tourism – have been disproportionately hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. In many developing countries, these sectors constitute a key sector of the country's economy and a major employer for women, which further aggravates women's post-crisis economic situation.

Box 1.1. Gender lenses are mostly absent from post-COVID-19 policy measures and recovery plans

In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, Southeast Asian governments implemented several policies aimed at addressing the socio-economic effects that the crisis is having on the most vulnerable, and in particular women. Most of these policy measures entail social protection and labour support measures which may benefit women ultimately, although they are not targeted specifically at them. For instance, all Southeast Asian countries have implement conditional and unconditional cash transfer programmes which target the most vulnerable population groups and should disproportionately benefit women. Likewise, Indonesia, Thailand and Viet Nam have put in place measures of tax deferral or tax exemptions aimed at micro and small enterprises which may ultimately benefit women's entrepreneurs and owners of small businesses (UNDP, 2021[11]). The forthcoming OECD's report *Strengthening Women's Entrepreneurship in Agriculture in ASEAN Countries* highlights that social assistance interventions have constituted the bulk of the measures implemented by governments, indirectly targeting vulnerable women who are often employed informally (OECD, Forthcoming[12]).

Figure 1.3. Policy measures aimed at tackling the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis lack a gender lens

Number of policy measures implemented in Southeast Asia in response to the COVID-19 crisis by gender-sensitiveness



Note: Gender-sensitive socio-economic measures look at a broad range of social protection, labour market, economic and fiscal measures taken in response to COVID-19 and identified as gender-sensitive. Social protection and labour market measures are defined as gender-sensitive if they target women's economic security or address unpaid care. Fiscal and economic measures are defined as gender-sensitive if they provide support to female-dominated sectors of the economy, on the assumption that this is likely to protect women's employment and thereby their economic security.
Source: (UNDP, 2021[11]), *COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker*, https://data.undp.org/gendertracker.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229730

As the COVID-19 crisis is having a regressive effect on gender equality and women's empowerment, a gender perspective is integral to building a strong, resilient, green and inclusive recovery. Yet, despite the

policy measures implemented by the region's governments, too often, a gender lens is missing from recovery plans. The large majority of policies designed to offset the socio-economic effects of the crisis have failed to integrate such a gender lens. As of January 2021, data from the UNDP's COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker show that since the outbreak, 167 policy measures have been implemented by Southeast Asian countries, of which only 50 are classified as gender-sensitive, that is 30% (UNDP, 2021[11]). Moreover, among these 50 measures classified as gender-sensitive, 46 of them directly seek to tackle violence against women and girls in the COVID-19 context. These violence-specific measures include, in particular, the strengthening of services such as hotlines and reporting mechanisms, the operational continuity and expansion of shelters, the provision of psychosocial support, the reinforcement of police and justice responses to address impunity, the operational continuity of health sector response to violence against women and the coordination of accessible services. As a result, across the entire region, only four measures specifically address the other socio-economic negative consequences faced by women and girls in the areas of social protection, labour market, economic inclusion and/or fiscal justice (Figure 1.3).

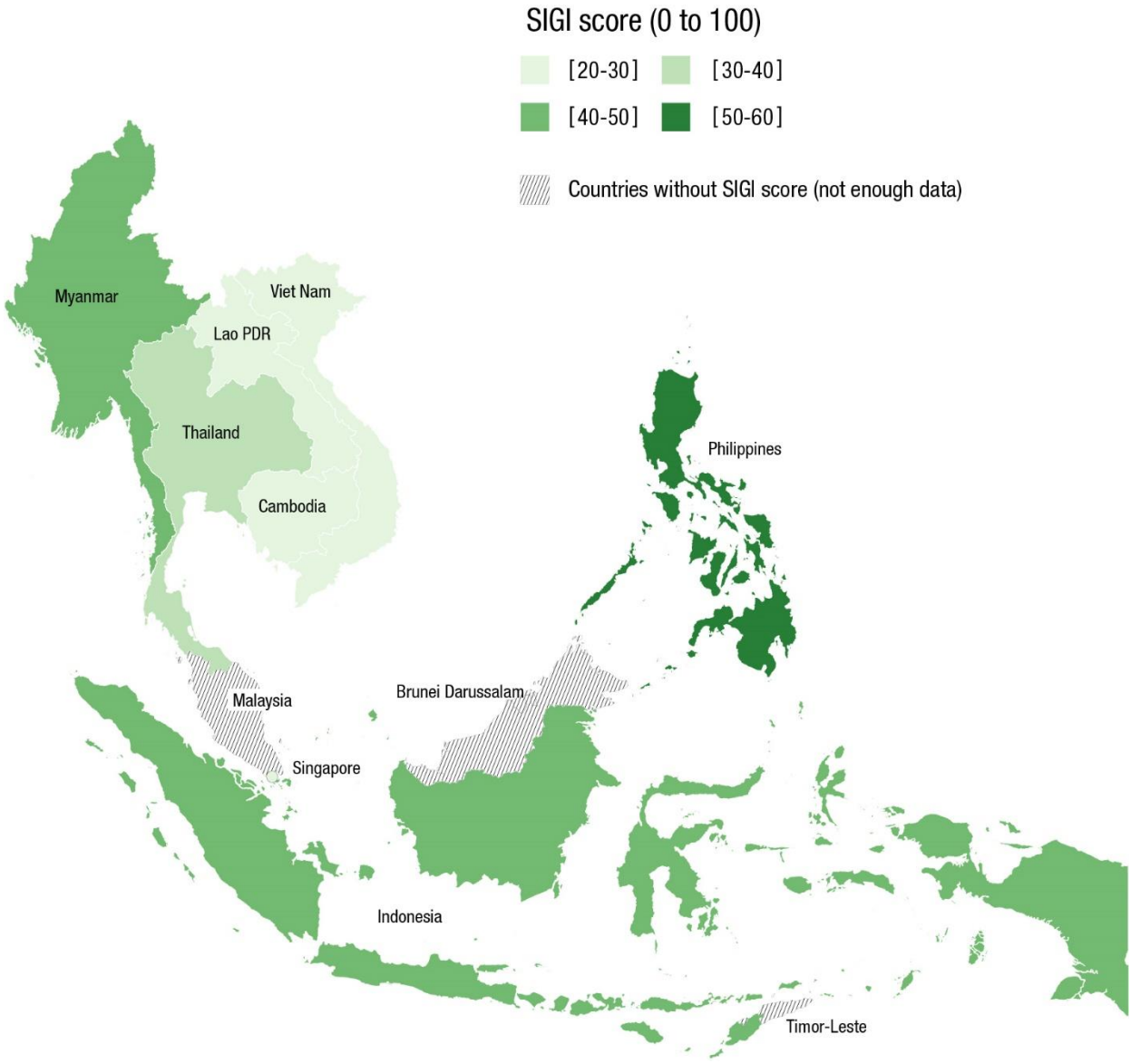
The current state of Southeast Asia's policy response to the COVID-19 crisis therefore calls for governments to take more forceful steps to address gender inequalities. It In particular, integrating a gender lens at the outset of policy design would improve social and economic outcomes for millions of women and girls and boost economic growth. This includes both emergency compensation measures to counteract the negative health and socio-economic effects of the crisis, as well as structural changes to address pre-existing inequalities.

SIGI results highlight wide variations across Southeast Asian countries

Wide variations exist across Southeast Asian countries as levels of discrimination in social institutions range from low to very high. Viet Nam is the region's top performer, with a low level of discrimination and an overall SIGI score of 25. At the global level, the country ranks 60th, underscoring the need for the region as a whole to intensify its efforts to eliminate the discriminatory social institutions faced by women and girls. Viet Nam's relatively good performance primarily stems from rather strong legal frameworks governing household dynamics (including household headship, child marriage among girls, inheritance and divorce), civil liberties and access to productive resources. Yet, the country suffers from weak workplace rights, a worrying environment conducive to high rates of violence against women and evidence of preference towards sons over daughters. Viet Nam is closely followed by Lao People's Democratic Republic (hereafter "Lao PDR"), Singapore and Cambodia, which also exhibit low levels of discrimination (Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4. SIGI scores vary widely across Southeast Asian countries

SIGI scores by country, 2019



Note: Scores range from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating no discrimination and 100 indicating absolute discrimination.
Source: (OECD, 2019[5]), Social Institutions and Gender Index, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/f0c48e52-en.

Because of data limitations and the fact that the overall SIGI score can only be computed for countries with data points in every single indicator and variable composing the index, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Timor-Leste did not obtain a score in 2019 (see Reader's guide). Among these countries, Timor-Leste obtained a score in two of the SIGI's four dimensions, while Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia each obtained scores in only the "Discrimination in the family" dimension.

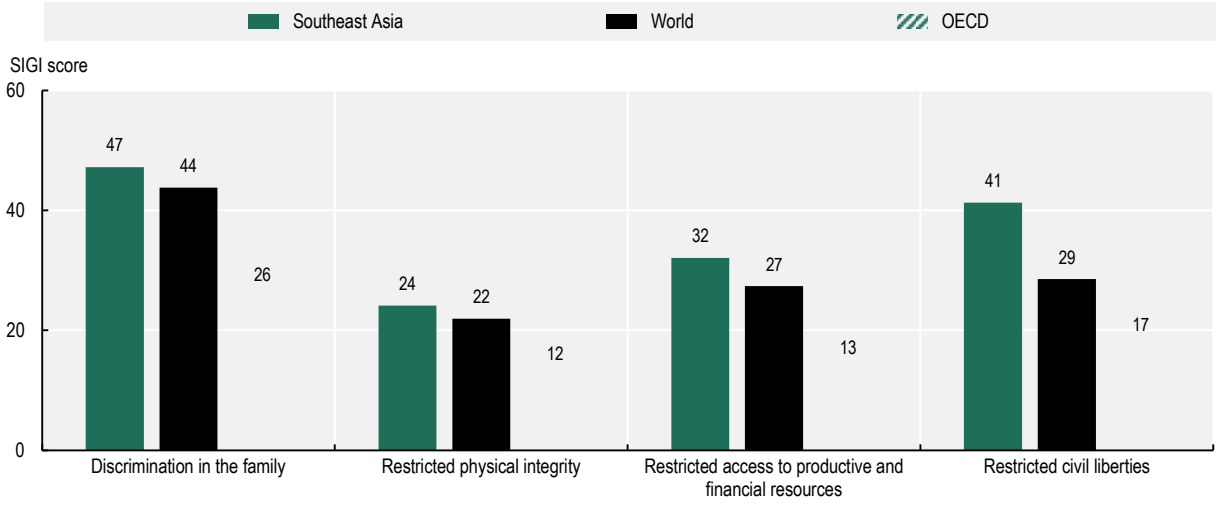
The strongest forms of discrimination are those related to family and civil liberties

"Discrimination in the family" is the most challenging dimension of the SIGI in Southeast Asia – as it is in the rest of the world. Discrimination faced by women and girls in the region in the family sphere stems from

important social institutions governing intra-household dynamics between men and women. The region exhibits a medium level of discrimination in this dimension, with a score of 47; this is in line with the global average of 44 and slightly lower than Asia's average of 53, but is 21 points above the OECD average (Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5. Discrimination in the family sphere is the most acute form of discrimination in Southeast Asia

SIGI dimensions' scores in Southeast Asia, world and OECD, 2019



Note: Scores range from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating no discrimination and 100 indicating absolute discrimination.
Source: (OECD, 2019[5]), *Social Institutions and Gender Index*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/f0c48e52-en.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229749

In particular, the region displays high levels of discrimination in terms of intra-household dynamics and caregiving roles. Although the majority of countries' legal frameworks guarantee women's equal status in the family sphere, deeply entrenched social norms and practices continue to strongly discriminate against women and girls. Southeast Asian women continue to perform the bulk of unpaid care and domestic work. Between 2014 and 2018, women's time dedicated to unpaid care and domestic work relative to men increased from 2.9 times to 3.8 times longer than men. The consequences for women's social and economic empowerment are far-reaching: reduced labour force participation, lower access to job opportunities, lower revenue and, ultimately, a high cost for the economy as a whole. This gap in unpaid care and domestic work directly stems from discriminatory social norms and expectations that uphold traditional gender roles. While men are expected to be the breadwinner and the primary decision maker in the household, women remain confined to household duties, taking care of the home and children. For instance, in 2018, 73% of the population in Thailand declared that children suffer when a mother works for pay outside of the home, whereas 43% of the population in Singapore agreed with that statement. The COVID-19 crisis has increased the share of women in unpaid care and domestic work. In addition, remittances have also been strongly impacted, implying that women have to undertake more responsibilities in the household with less money, with adverse consequences in terms of stress and anxiety (Mercado, Naciri and Mishra, 2020[13]).

Conversely, Southeast Asia achieves its best dimension-level score in the "Restricted physical integrity" dimension (Figure 1.5). Southeast Asian countries have made important progress to improve legal

frameworks aimed at eradicating violence against women. Over the last decade, and in particular since the third edition of the SIGI in 2014, countries have increasingly made efforts to strengthen their legal frameworks while implementing national strategies to eliminate this issue. Nine countries[4] have laws that criminalise domestic violence, and six countries[5] have laws that protect women from physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence. Since 2014, five countries[6] have amended existing laws or established new ones addressing violence against women. During this same period, seven countries[7] have established a national action plan aimed at supporting the implementation of laws addressing violence against women.

Yet, domestic violence continues to be a serious problem in Southeast Asia, which displays high levels of discriminatory attitudes and practices. On average, 25% of women have suffered physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime, a rate that reaches 59% in Timor-Leste and 44% in Thailand. Furthermore, social attitudes justifying the use of domestic violence are widespread. On average, 30% of women and girls in the region believe that a husband can be justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances: if she burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, or refuses to engage in sexual intercourse with him. In four Southeast Asian countries,[8] the share of women and girls justifying domestic violence exceeds 50%.

Important forms of discrimination in the "Restricted civil liberties" dimension primarily stem from limited political representation, a low feeling of safety in public spaces and restrictive laws that prevent women from having full and unhindered access to justice. Although Southeast Asia's legal frameworks guarantee women's political participation, their representation in political institutions at the national level remains low. Only 19% of the region's parliamentarians are women, reflecting significant discriminatory social norms: more than one-half of the region's population agrees that men make better political leaders than women. At the same time, the low level of public safety remains a key issue for women, not only limiting their day-to-day lives and activities but also constraining their active involvement in public life. On the legal front, in various Southeast Asian countries, women do not hold the same legal rights as men to confer their nationality on their spouse or children. Meanwhile, women's legal access to justice is hampered in many Southeast Asian countries by legal pluralism (the coexistence of multiple legal systems), highlighting discrimination experienced by women and girls in customary and religious courts and dispute resolution mechanisms.

Southeast Asia has made significant progress in securing women's right to access productive and financial resources, but critical issues remain regarding their protection in the workplace. Southeast Asian countries have undertaken important legal reforms granting women equal rights to access and control productive and financial resources such as land, houses and bank accounts. However, discriminatory social norms, common gender biases, and traditional practices undermine the reach of such advances. Women are disproportionately underrepresented among the owners of land and houses, which critically undermines their ability to have the collateral necessary in order to mobilise capital and to seek credit. At the same time, although renewed efforts from governments have closed most gender gaps in access to financial services, women's absolute levels of access to bank accounts remain too low in one-half of the region's countries. Furthermore, women continue to face severe discrimination regarding their rights in the workplace. Many laws or legal provisions bar them from accessing certain professions or working on an equal footing with men; fail to adequately protect them regarding non-discrimination in employment; and fail to establish comprehensive maternity and paternity leave policies. As discriminatory social norms superimpose themselves – 22% of the Southeast Asian population holds negative attitudes towards working women and believes it is not acceptable for a woman to have a paid job outside her home if she wants one – women's access to the labour market and to quality employment constitute pressing issues for Southeast Asia.

Discriminatory social institutions constitute major barriers to women's empowerment

> "Realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets."
>
> (United Nations, 2015[14]), Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development seeks to transform the world so that every woman and girl benefits from full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment are removed. Beyond SDG 5, which specifically targets gender equality, gender equality and women's empowerment are necessary requirements for the achievement of all SDGs. As stated by the United Nations, the empowerment of women is "the process by which women take control over their lives, acquiring the ability to make strategic choices" (United Nations, 2002[15]). In other words, women's empowerment implies that women are in a position to make meaningful choices, to exercise control over their lives, and to influence decisions that affect their lives in both the private and public spheres (OECD, 2017[16]).

Against this backdrop, numerous dimensions and tools are critical to empowering women. Women's empowerment is a complex and multidimensional concept that results from a combination of many factors. In particular, quality education, training, self-confidence, access to and control over resources, political representation and decision-making power, proper health, control over their bodies, and the capacity to transform social institutions constitute critical determinants of women's empowerment. In many ways, women's empowerment is intrinsically linked with human development, as the critical factors of empowerment – such as education, skills or health – overlap with the fundamental building blocks of human capital. Any constraint placed on these factors hampers women's empowerment and diminishes their potential human capital development, which has long-term implications for the productivity of the current and next generations of workers, as well as for the present and future socio-economic status of countries.

Discriminatory social institutions, and particularly gender-based social norms, are at the heart of limitations placed on women's empowerment. Embedded social and cultural values, norms, and beliefs constitute the basis for structures and institutions of power. These power structures are key determinants of women's educational, economic, health and political status within a society, which in turn play a critical role in women's opportunities and abilities to achieve equal power compared to men. For instance, the combination of child marriage among girls and norms favouring boys' education can severely diminish girls' educational status, which has adverse consequences on their empowerment and their future ability to gain control over their lives. Likewise, traditional views of women's roles within the household and imbalances of unpaid care and domestic work significantly hamper women's economic empowerment.

This section sheds light on these interlinkages between a range of key factors affecting women's empowerment and discriminatory social norms from the perspective of Southeast Asian women across four major areas: health, education, economic empowerment and political empowerment.

Low health status resulting from discriminatory practices and social norms constrains women's empowerment

Guaranteeing women's health is fundamental to achieving women's empowerment, as it improves women's well-being, educational level, employment opportunities and productivity. The main channel through which health interacts with women's economic empowerment is human capital. Good health is a

key determinant of human capital. Malnutrition, early pregnancies, illnesses, violence against women and lack of access to reproductive services can severely affect women's and girls' educational outcomes, economic autonomy and career prospects, which all strongly influence their empowerment. Moreover, human capital development is a cumulative and long-term process that occurs throughout a person's lifetime. Therefore, it strongly depends on individuals' ability to survive and to reach working age in a healthy condition. In this regard, maternal health is critical, as it affects the health status of both mothers and their children. For instance, by reducing women's life expectancy, maternal mortality directly hampers women's human capital development and interrupts the process of human capital accumulation. Similarly, downstream consequences of poor maternal health – such as low birthweights or infant mortality – affect the next generation and further reduce future levels of human capital.

Discriminatory social norms and practices can play a critical role in lowering women's health status. For instance, the practice of child marriage among girls is strongly associated with adolescent pregnancies, which carry severe health risks for young women. Likewise, women's lack of reproductive autonomy and constraints placed on their rights to safely abort lead to increased risks of health complications. Meanwhile, violence against women is an epidemic in itself with long-term and profound psychological and health consequences and carries a significant economist cost to society. Finally, discriminatory social norms and practices that constrain women's access to and decision-making power over their own healthcare, as well as resources such as land or household finances, affect maternal health and have adverse consequences on women's nutrition and that of their children.

Poor maternal health in Southeast Asia partly derives from discriminatory barriers

In Southeast Asia, poor maternal health remains an issue of concern. One-half of the region's countries continue to display high maternal mortality rates. Although important progress have been achieved since 2010, rates were higher than 100 deaths per 100 000 live births in 2017 in six Southeast Asian countries,[9] and reached 250 deaths per 100 000 live births in Myanmar (Figure 1.6, Panel A). The high proportion of newborns with low birthweight also points towards evidence of poor performance in maternal health and nutrition across the region, which affects the next generation. In 2015, 24% of Southeast Asian newborns had a low birthweight, compared with 15% at the global level (WHO, 2020[17]). Poor maternal health outcomes often stem from gender-based discrimination, including insufficient or inadequate access to basic healthcare, lack of access to family planning and reproductive healthcare services, the prevalence of child marriage among girls, and episodes of violence against women. In this regard, addressing these underlying causes is critical to the empowerment of women (Amnesty International, 2011[18]).

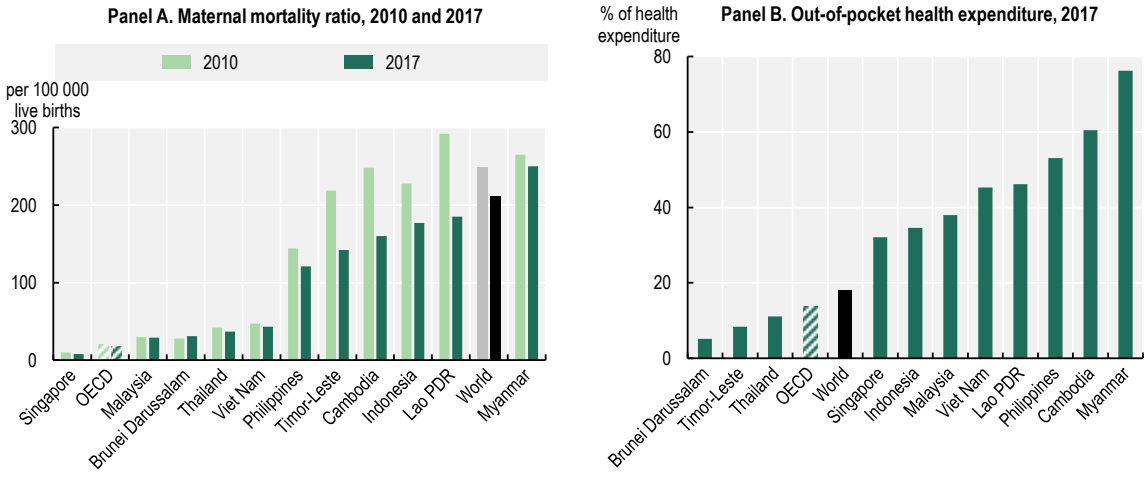
Discriminatory social institutions are strong determinants of women's poor maternal health outcomes. In the four Southeast Asian countries with data available, a significant percentage of women report that their husband is the primary decision maker over their healthcare, ranging from 31% of women reporting this in Timor-Leste to 47% in the Philippines (DHS, n.d.[19]). The norms of restrictive masculinities that position men as the decision makers over household choices, including over their partner's access to healthcare, may result in suboptimal decisions in this area, especially when men do not understand female anatomy or pregnancy (Blanc, 2001[20]). In order to make informed healthcare decisions and promote better outcomes, it is crucial that women are empowered to be agents in making decisions regarding their own healthcare. Indeed, evidence from other regions shows that when women have decision-making power over their own healthcare, they are more likely to seek out pregnancy care services (Mistry and Galal, 2009[21]) and maternal and child health outcomes improve (Singh, Bloom and Brodish, 2013[22]).

Furthermore, discriminatory norms and practices that constrain women's control over resources such as household finances and assets have important implications. Evidence from Indonesia shows that women's ownership over assets influences reproductive decision making within the household and may lead to better reproductive health outcomes (Beegle, Frankenberg and Thomas, 2001[23]). This operates through at least two mechanisms. Ownership over assets may give women more bargaining power within their

household, which can translate into more autonomy in decision making. Second, ownership over assets may prove fundamental in women's ability to access quality healthcare services, as the cost of seeking maternal healthcare services – including the costs of both utilisation and travel – may also constitute a significant barrier. Moreover, the opportunity costs of seeking healthcare, including taking time off from productive work and unpaid care responsibilities, further impede access to maternal healthcare services for poor women. In Southeast Asia, high healthcare costs and out-of-pocket health-related expenses (Figure 1.6, Panel B) tend to exacerbate these cost-related barriers (UN ESCAP, 2018[24]). Women's inability to afford these costs on their own partly stems from women's low economic empowerment, which is strongly linked with discriminatory social norms and practices. Finally, women's maternal health is hampered by a general lack of awareness of gender issues among national healthcare systems and providers (Qureshi and Shaikh, 2007[25]).

Figure 1.6. Maternal mortality remains high although progress have been achieved and households bear a large share of health-related costs

Maternal mortality ratios and share of out-of-pocket payments of total current health expenditures



Source: (World Bank, 2020[8]), *World Development Indicators*, https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators.

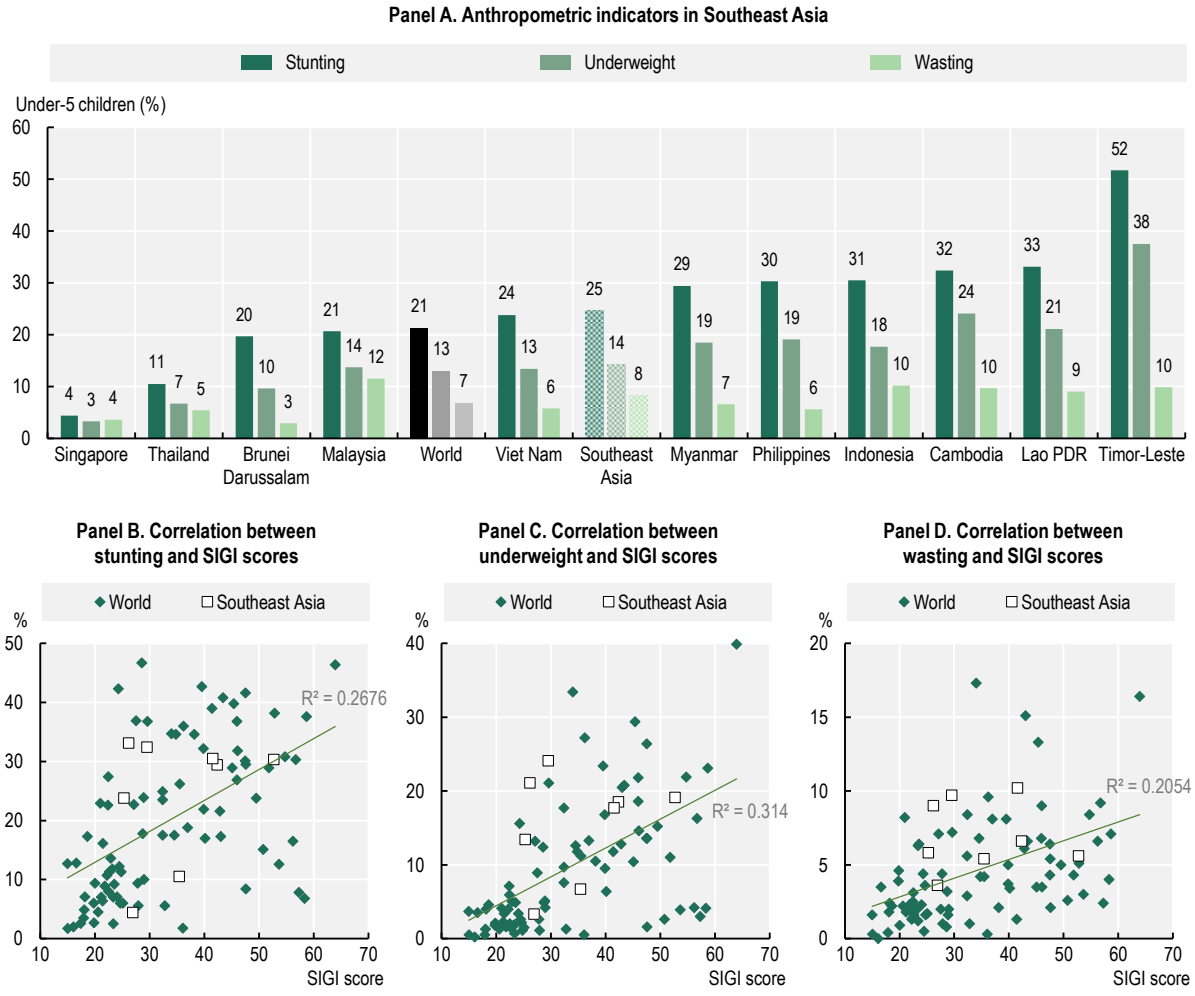
StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229768

Southeast Asia's poor performance in maternal health also stems from issues related to chronic malnutrition, which themselves take root in discriminatory social norms and practices that prevent women from accessing, and from making decisions about, land and other assets. Chronic malnutrition is a critical issue in Southeast Asia. In 2019, 25% of Southeast Asian children under the age of five were stunted – that is, they were too short in height for their age – with this share ranging from 4% in Singapore to 52% in Timor-Leste. Likewise, proportions of wasted or underweight children are high, pointing towards systemic malnutrition (Figure 1.7, Panel A). The high proportion of newborns with low birthweight is both a cause and a consequence of poor maternal and child nutrition: girls who suffered from child malnutrition reach their childbearing years with short stature, which increases the risk of low birthweight in their children, thus continuing the intergenerational transmission of malnutrition (Chaparro, Oot and Sethuraman, 2014[26]; Han et al., 2012[27]). Discriminatory social institutions have an effect on women's nutritional status through a number of channels. Legal restrictions on access to land ownership, as well as social norms preventing women from controlling and using land, directly affect women's food security. The SIGI, which captures an extremely large and comprehensive array of these discriminatory social institutions, shows

that, although weak, there is a positive correlation between high discrimination in social institutions and poorer nutritional outcomes (Figure 1.7, Panels B, C and D).

Figure 1.7. Chronic malnutrition is a critical issue in Southeast Asia

Share of children aged under 5 years old who are stunted, underweight and wasted in Southeast Asian countries; and correlation between anthropometric scores and SIGI scores



Note: "Child stunting" refers to a child who is too short for his or her age. A child is identified as stunted when his or her height-for-age ratio is lower than two standard deviations from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards. "Child underweight" refers to a child who is not heavy enough for his or her age. A child is identified as underweight when his or her weight-for-age ratio is lower than two standard deviations from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards. "Child wasting" refers to a child who is not heavy enough for his or her height. A child is identified as wasted when his or her weight-for-height ratio is lower than two standard deviations from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards.

Panel A: Data cover different years depending on the country, as follows: Indonesia and the Philippines (2018); Lao PDR and Viet Nam (2017); Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand (2016); Cambodia (2014); Timor Leste (2013); Brunei Darussalam (2009); and Singapore (2000). Countries are ordered by increasing shares of stunted children.

Panels B, C and D: Data cover 93 countries for stunting and 92 countries for underweight and wasting.

Source: (OECD, 2019[5]), *Social Institutions and Gender Index*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/f0c48e52-en; and (WHO, 2020[17]), *Global Health Observatory data repository*, https://apps.who.int/gho/data.

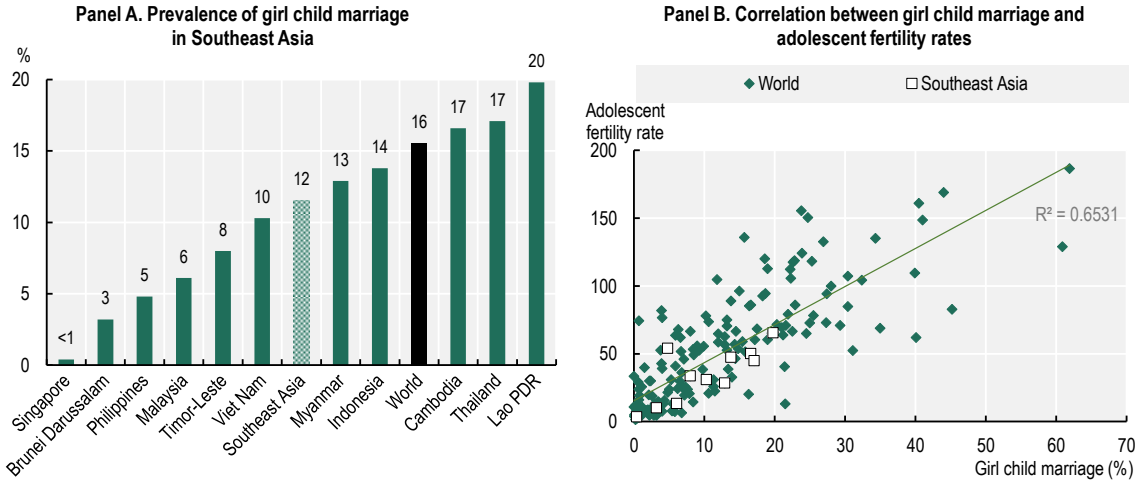
StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229787

High rates of adolescent pregnancies are closely intertwined with persisting practices of child marriage among girls

Adolescent pregnancy remains a critical issue in Southeast Asia, affecting young women's empowerment early on in their life cycle. The region exhibits a high prevalence of adolescent births, with an average rate of 43 births per 1 000 women aged 15-19 years (see Chapter 2 for more details). The implications are very important and generally well documented. The main adverse effects include not only future health problems, increased likelihood of maternal mortality and low birthweights, but also lower quality of life and increased school dropout rates (WHO, 2015[28]), all of which negatively affect young women's empowerment and human development. For instance, globally, adolescent pregnancies and subsequent childbirth complications constitute the leading cause of death among girls aged 15-19 years (WHO, 2020[29]). Moreover, adolescent pregnancies often force young mothers to discontinue their education, which hampers their future economic opportunities, employment options and career choices. In this regard, the Human Capital Index (HCI) for women, a composite measure of women's human capital level computed by the World Bank, shows that a strong negative correlation exists between higher adolescent fertility rates and lower human capital development.

Figure 1.8. Adolescent pregnancies originate in discriminatory social institutions such as girl child marriage

Share of women aged 15-19 years who have been or are still married, divorced, widowed or in an informal union, 2018; and correlation between child marriage among girls and adolescent fertility rates



Note: Girl child marriage is calculated as the share of women aged 15-19 years who have been or are still married, divorced, widowed or in an informal union. Adolescent fertility rate is calculated as the number of births per 1 000 women aged 15-19 years.
Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2019[30]), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://doi.org/10.1787/ba5dbd30-en; and (WHO, 2020[17]), *Global Health Observatory data repository*, https://apps.who.int/gho/data.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229806

Adolescent pregnancies appear to be closely intertwined with discriminatory laws, norms and practices, notably through the acceptance and prevalence of child marriage among girls. For instance, evidence shows that higher adolescent fertility is closely associated with higher prevalence rates of child marriage among girls (OECD, 2019[6]). Although lower than the global average and other developing regions, child marriage continues to affect 11.6% of Southeast Asian women between the ages of 15 and 19 years,

ranging from less than 1% in Singapore to 20% in Lao PDR (Figure 1.8, Panel A). The social acceptance and practice of child marriage among girls is itself linked with discriminatory social institutions and with cultural norms and traditions (UNESCO, 2018[31]). Data from the Gender, Institutions and Development Database (GID-DB) show that there is a strong and significant positive correlation between the practice of child marriage among girls and higher adolescent fertility rates (Figure 1.8, Panel B). Beyond child marriage among girls, a wide range of discriminatory social institutions also plays a role in perpetuating this high incidence of adolescent pregnancies, including women's lack of decision-making power within the household, an asymmetrical balance of power, lack of education, unequal access to justice, etc.

Lack of reproductive autonomy and restrictive laws on abortion jeopardise women's health

Reproductive autonomy is a critical component of women's sexual and reproductive health. Legal and social barriers hindering women's access to basic contraception methods and control over their own body can have dramatic adverse health effects, including an increased risk of unplanned pregnancies and increased risk of clandestine and unsafe abortions that often lead to further health complications (WHO, 2011[32]).

Guaranteeing women's reproductive autonomy is fundamental to achieving women's empowerment, as it improves women's well-being, educational level, employment opportunities and productivity. Unintended and unplanned pregnancies constrain women's and girls' future educational and economic opportunities. Lower fertility rates can reduce the risks associated with pregnancy and contribute to increasing women's life expectancy. From a human capital perspective – a lifetime cumulative process – it proves critical, expanding women's economic prospects and increasing the potential returns on girls' and women's education. At the same time, smaller family size is associated with higher educational attainment and greater investment in girls, compounding the effects of reproductive autonomy on women's empowerment in the next generation (UN ESCAP, 2018[24]).

In Southeast Asia, women's limited reproductive autonomy rights are rooted in discriminatory laws and social norms. No country in the region legally guarantees universal access to contraception. In 2018, 13% of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) reported having an unmet need for family planning, which was a slight increase compared with 2014 (12%). Meanwhile, important legal limitations constrain women's power to control their own body and their rights to safely abort. As evidenced by the SIGI, in seven Southeast Asian countries,[10] abortion is illegal unless it is performed to save a woman's life (see Chapter 2 for more details). Apart from restrictive laws, barriers to contraception also stem from discriminatory social norms that deny women the power to make decisions about and control their own contraceptive use, pregnancy and childbearing.

Violence against women has deep long-term psychological and health consequences for women

Violence against women is one of the major barriers to women's empowerment. In Southeast Asia, on average, 25% of women have suffered physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime in the nine countries[11] where such data are available (see Chapter 2 for more details). Moreover, the increased stress levels, economic insecurity and fear due to the COVID-19 crisis as well as the implementation of lockdown measures might put many women at risk of increased domestic violence with fewer support resources for survivors (Box 1.2). The causal relationship and interplay between women's empowerment and gender-based violence is complex and may run both ways. The prevalence of gender-based violence has far-reaching implications for women's empowerment. Violence, or the fear of it, can prevent women from pursuing education, working, earning an income, making decisions about their health or their children's education, and exercising their political rights and voice (Jahan, 2018[33]; Vyas and Watts, 2009[34]). At the same time, women's empowerment may influence gender-based violence, either positively or negatively. Women who are more educated, who have higher incomes and

who have more decision-making power within the household or their community are found to be less vulnerable to gender-based violence. Yet, challenging the established balance of power may also increase the risk of gender-based violence. A growing body of evidence shows that the process of women's empowerment can trigger a backlash from male partners who seek to reassert their control by resorting to violence (Jahan, 2018[33]; Alonso-Borrego and Carrasco, 2017[35]; Vyas and Watts, 2009[34]).

Gender-based violence in Southeast Asia – including physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence, as well as violence in the private and public spheres – is deeply rooted in discriminatory social norms and attitudes that consider violence a private matter. On average, 30% of Southeast Asian women and girls hold attitudes justifying the use of domestic violence (see Chapter 2 for more details). Likewise, female genital mutilation, a particular form of violence against young girls and adolescents, continues to exist in several countries in the region as a result of customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that allow and encourage this harmful practice.

Box 1.2. The implications of the COVID-19 crisis on the health of Southeast Asian women

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has had drastic health, social and economic consequences for the world's well-being, including in Southeast Asia. More specifically, the crisis is having a disproportionate impact on women's health access and outcomes, which will in turn have long-lasting impacts on their empowerment and threaten a reversal of the progress achieved over the last decades.

Women are the primary formal and informal frontline healthcare workers, which disproportionately exposes them to COVID-19

Women constitute the bulk of the healthcare workforce in Southeast Asia. In particular, they account for 79% of the region's nurses (Boniol et al., 2019[36]). Coupled with women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work – which entails caring for the sick at home – women are at the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic, which increases their risk of infection and their vulnerability to the disease (OECD, 2020[4]).

The pressure of the pandemic on healthcare systems and the diversion of resources puts pressure on women's health

The COVID-19 crisis is putting increasing pressure on Southeast Asian countries' healthcare capacities. The mobilisation and diversion of resources towards the fight against the pandemic reduces the healthcare access of non-COVID-19-affected patients who are seeking care for other diseases or for non-emergency healthcare procedures – such as routine prenatal check-ups. The region's limited pre-crisis capacities, coupled with the current crisis, means that there is a greater risk of care shortages. On average, all Southeast Asian countries have fewer hospital resources per capita than the OECD average (OECD, 2020[37]). Moreover, prior to the crisis, Southeast Asian countries already faced shortages of medical workers, including doctors and nurses (OECD, 2020[37]).

The health consequences for women are wide-ranging. Evidence from past health-related crises and epidemics has shown that the diversion of resources to the emergency response may contribute to a rise in maternal mortality, especially in regions where healthcare capacities are weak or already under strain (OECD, 2020[4]; Wenham, Smith and Morgan, 2020[38]). Moreover, the fear of becoming infected with COVID-19 in medical settings may deter individuals, including women, from seeking care in the first place. Finally, constraints put on households' economic resources limit their ability to seek care and cover the associated fees, and thus may threaten their access to critical reproductive and sexual health services (United Nations, 2020[39]). In the context of gender-based discrimination, this often implies that the first individuals within households to experience the discontinuation of healthcare services are

women. This becomes particularly critical for pregnant women who might not receive the appropriate prenatal care, leading to potential future health complications for both the mother and the child.

The COVID-19 pandemic puts many women at risk of increased domestic violence with fewer support resources for survivors

The COVID-19 crisis has increased stress levels, economic insecurity and fear; moreover, most people are spending more time at home than they were before the pandemic, with businesses closing, lockdowns being instituted and many employers moving to teleworking. In this setting, especially with interruptions of work and job losses, violence at home may be a reaction to this instability. Indeed, paid work is a fundamental part of constructions of "ideal masculinity", and being the breadwinner constitutes a source of authority in the household. With this role in question, violence may arise as a reaction, and instances of domestic violence have increased (OECD, 2020[4]). Indeed, early evidence in different Southeast Asian countries has pointed towards an increase in calls and complaints reporting episodes of domestic violence during the lockdowns implemented in March and April 2020 (United Nations, 2020[39]; Setianto, 2020[40]). Moreover, the emergency situation and the strains put on resources severely affects survivors' ability to escape violent homes. Likewise, the potential downstream economic consequences of COVID-19 – including losses of employment, reduced economic activity and increased unpaid care work – are particularly dangerous for women who are victims of violence, as economic control is a key tool of abusers. This financial insecurity may force victims to remain with their abusers.

Parity in education supports Southeast Asian women's empowerment, but discriminatory social institutions and biases continue to shape educational choices

Education is a critical component of women's empowerment, with long-lasting impacts not only on their economic status but also on the sociocultural, interpersonal, political and psychological dimensions of their empowerment (Aslam, 2013[41]). The most evident relationship between education and women's empowerment is the impact of education on women's income, employment status and skills development. In this regard, not only does education itself matter, but the type of education as well. The fields of study chosen by girls and boys often differ significantly, which yields important consequences for future employment and income level (Llena-Nozal, Martin and Murtin, 2019[42]). Beyond economic and labour market outcomes, women's education is also essential to their socio-political and interpersonal empowerment – that is, their ability to gain knowledge and decision-making power both within the household and in the public sphere. Education plays a central role in shaping the perception of women in a number of areas, ranging from decision making regarding family size, to satisfaction with life, to their role in society. Yet, evidence shows that to be truly empowering, education needs to be both sufficient – that is, women need to reach a high level of educational achievement – and of high enough quality (Aslam, 2013[41]; Kabeer, 2009[43]).

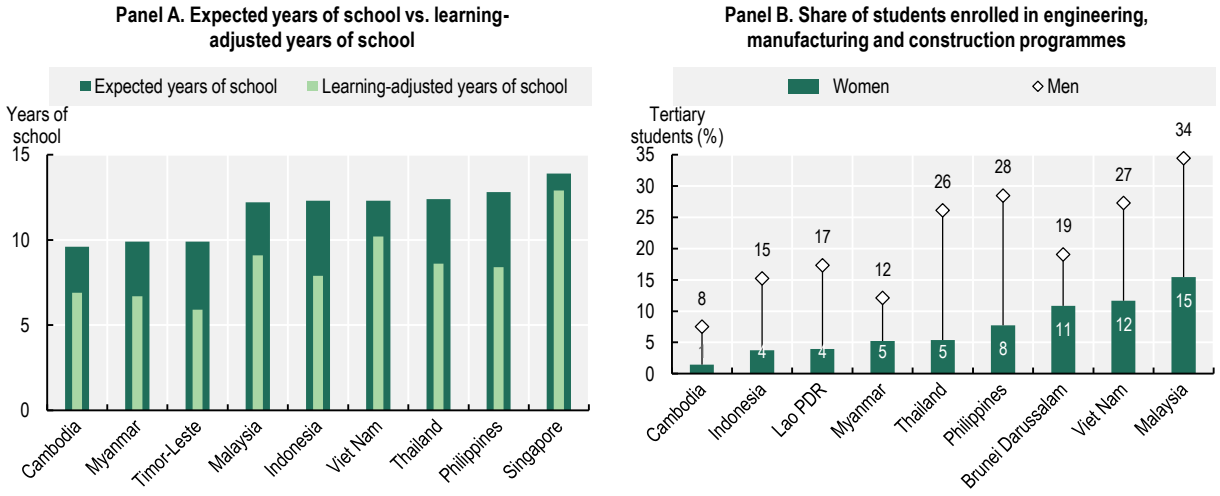
Southeast Asia has achieved gender equality in education, but quality remains low, which triggers downstream consequences for women's empowerment

Southeast Asia has achieved gender parity in education. In all countries in the region for which data are available, as many girls as boys are enrolled in primary and secondary education. On average, the gender parity index (GPI) – which measures the quotient of the number of girls divided by the number of boys enrolled – stood at 1 in 2018 for net primary education enrolment in Southeast Asia. That same year, the GPI for net secondary education enrolment stood at 1.1, meaning that slightly more girls were enrolled than boys. This trend is even more pronounced at the tertiary level: in 2018, the GPI for tertiary education was 1.2 for Southeast Asia as a whole, reaching 1.6 in Brunei Darussalam. Overall, all Southeast Asian

countries but Cambodia (and Timor-Leste, which does not have data) displayed a GPI above 1 for tertiary education enrolment (UNESCO, 2020[44]).

However, the quality of education remains limited for both girls and boys. Results from the 2018 edition of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) show that, apart from Singapore, all Southeast Asian countries for which data are available[12] severely trail behind the rest of the world in all three core subjects assessed – reading, mathematics and science. Southeast Asia's average scores in reading – calculated using the sample of countries for which data existed in 2018 – stood at 413 compared with 453 at the global level and 487 in OECD member countries. Likewise, the region's average scores in mathematics and science stood at 432 and 433, respectively, compared with 459 and 458 at the global level and at 489 and 489 in OECD member countries. Similar analysis carried out for the HCI showed that Southeast Asian countries suffer from wide gaps between the theoretical and expected years of schooling and the actual years of schooling when adjusted by harmonised school test scores (World Bank, 2018[45]). For instance, in Indonesia and the Philippines, this difference is 4.4 years. In other words, in Indonesia, while students are expected to complete 12.3 years of schooling, they complete 7.9 learning-adjusted years of schooling; and in the Philippines, instead of 12.8 expected years of schooling, students complete 8.4 learning-adjusted years (Figure 1.9, Panel A).

Figure 1.9. The quality of education remains limited in Southeast Asia, while gender segregation by field of study is important



Note: Panel A: Data are missing for Brunei Darussalam and Lao PDR. Countries are ordered by increasing expected years of school.
Panel B: Data cover different years depending on the country, as follows: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia and Myanmar (2018); the Philippines (2017); Thailand and Viet Nam (2016); Brunei Darussalam (2014). Data are missing for Singapore and Timor-Leste. Countries are ordered by increasing shares of women enrolled in engineering, manufacturing and construction programmes.
Source: (World Bank, 2018[45]), *Human Capital Index*, https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/dataset/human-capital-index; and (UNESCO, 2020[44]), *UNESCO Institute for Statistics* (UIS), http://data.uis.unesco.org.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229825

Quality of education is a critical issue, as it may strengthen women's empowerment and it plays a role in addressing the root causes of discriminatory social norms and unconscious biases from an early age. Providing good-quality education for girls entails access to gender-sensitive, safe and supportive educational environments and infrastructures. These are identified as critical factors to foster the development of the necessary self-awareness and confidence among girls and women to overcome the challenges and discrimination they currently or will face as a result of gender inequality (McCracken et al.,

2015[46]). At the same time, quality education is paramount to ensuring that discriminatory attitudes and biases among both girls and boys are addressed from a very early age. High-quality education that incorporates gender-sensitive material and learning processes contributes to shaping understandings of masculinities and cultivating gender-equitable attitudes.

Deeply embedded social norms lead to higher gender segregation in tertiary education, which undermines women's empowerment

Gender segregation in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields across Southeast Asia remains very high. Although more women than men are enrolled in tertiary education, the share of men enrolled in tertiary-level engineering, manufacturing and construction programmes is consistently and markedly larger than the share of women across all Southeast Asian countries (Figure 1.9, Panel B). In the Philippines and Thailand, the gap is a full 21 percentage points. Overall, in six[13] out of the nine Southeast Asian countries for which data are available, the gender gap in STEM enrolment is larger than ten percentage points.

Discriminatory social norms and attitudes, which lead men to enrol in STEM fields, play a critical role in shaping these educational choices. There are multiple underlying factors that relate to both social norms and learning processes. On the one hand, social norms, stereotypes and very strong unconscious biases lead people to perceive STEM fields as masculine and play a critical role in dictating the types of programmes in which women enrol compared with men. The self-selection bias is considered one of the main reasons why girls opt out of STEM fields, which comes directly from stereotypes about gender roles and cognitive abilities (Llena-Nozal, Martin and Murtin, 2019[42]; UNESCO, 2017[47]). On the other hand, from as early as primary or secondary education, learning materials perpetuate gender stereotypes by assigning certain functions and skills to girls and boys. The lack of female teachers in STEM as the level of education increases, combined with the low labour force participation of women in STEM fields, results in fewer female role models in STEM, which plays a role in shaping young girls' expectations and further reduces girls' engagement in these fields (UN ESCAP, 2018[48]; UNESCO, 2015[49]). Furthermore, women and girls have less access to information and communication technology (ICT) than men and boys in Southeast Asia, which in turn decreases girls' and women's enrolment and representation in STEM fields (OECD, 2019[50]).

These distinct educational choices have far-reaching implications for women's empowerment through effects on their integration and prospects within the labour market. Educational choices have a direct impact on women's and men's choice of labour sector and status. The lack of representation of women in STEM fields leads to their lower representation in positions such as engineers, scientists or architects, which are often high-status and high-paying careers (UNESCO, 2015[51]). This has further consequences not only on women's self-esteem and representation in positions of power, but also on their level of income and on their economic empowerment in general.

The economic empowerment of Southeast Asian women is hampered by discriminatory norms and practices that curtail their labour participation, access to resources and skills development

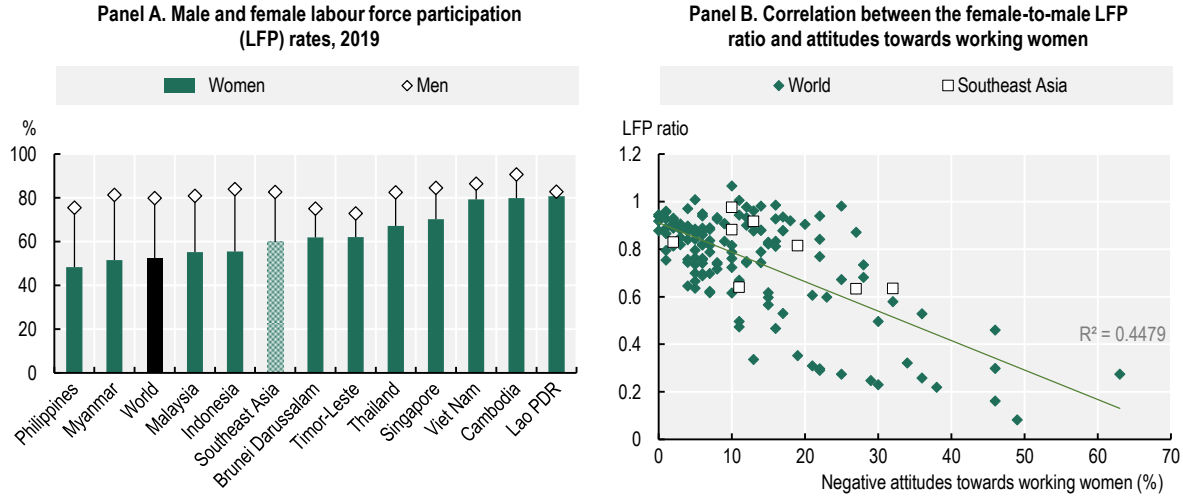
The economic dimension is central to women's empowerment and includes women's ability to participate in the labour market and to earn an income, as well as their ability to access and control productive and financial resources. However, it also encompasses a wider set of issues, including their control over their own time, lives and bodies, and their meaningful participation and representation in economic decision-making processes at all levels – from within the household to the highest economic and political positions (UN Women, 2020[52]). Women's economic empowerment evidently focuses primarily on women's capacity to make strategic choices and have agency in the economic sphere, but it also paves the way for changes

in other dimensions of their lives, such as well-being, social empowerment, health or education (Kabeer, 2009[43]).

Women's labour force participation is strongly shaped by expectations towards their social role

Important gender imbalances exist in Southeast Asia's labour markets, which have far-reaching implications for women's economic empowerment as well as for the economy as a whole. On average, the labour force participation rate is 23 percentage points lower for women than for men (Figure 1.10, Panel A). In four Southeast Asian countries[14] – which are also the ones with the lowest female labour force participation – the discrepancy exceeds 25 percentage points. Women's inclusion in the labour market and their ability to have their own source of income is essential to their empowerment. Economic empowerment puts women in a position to make meaningful and strategic decisions on their own that have further impacts on other dimensions of their empowerment and human capital, such as investing in their health or in their education. A growing body of evidence indicates that these effects are not only limited to women themselves, but also have knock-on effects on their communities, households and children, notably through greater investment in children's education, improved nutrition and reduced gender-based violence. At the same time, women's labour inclusion yields significant economic benefits for society as a whole. Given a similar distribution of innate abilities among women and men, gender-driven labour imbalances artificially reduce the pool of skilled workers from which economic actors can draw, thereby reducing the overall economic growth of a given region (Ferrant and Kolev, 2016[53]).

Figure 1.10. Women are less integrated than men in the labour market in all Southeast Asian countries

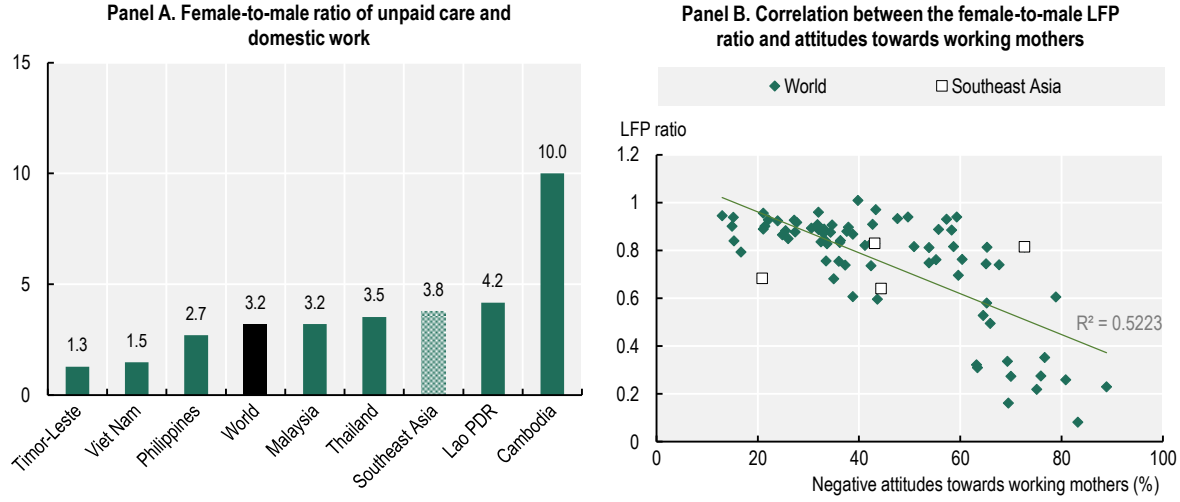


Note: Panel A: The labour force participation rate is calculated as the labour force divided by the total working-age population. The working-age population refers to people aged 15-64 years.
Panel B: Negative attitudes towards working women are defined as the share of the population that disagrees with the statement: "It is perfectly acceptable for any woman in your family to have a paid job outside the home if she wants to." The female-to-male labour force participation ratio is calculated as women's labour force participation rate divided by men's labour force participation rate. Attitudinal data cover 146 countries; data are missing for three Southeast Asian countries: Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Timor-Leste. R^2 is 0.4479.
Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2019[30]), Gender, Institutions and Development Database, https://doi.org/10.1787/ba5dbd30-en; (OECD, 2020[54]), Labour Force Statistics, https://oe.cd/ds/2Sp; and (ILO, 2020[55]), ILOSTAT, https://ilostat.ilo.org/data.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229844

Discriminatory social institutions – in particular social norms within society and the household – have a strong effect on women's economic empowerment and labour force participation. OECD research has shown that discrimination in social institutions has a strong, significant and negative effect on the gender gap in labour force participation (Ferrant and Kolev, 2016[53]). Evidence from the SIGI shows that in all Southeast Asian countries except Lao PDR and Singapore, discriminatory customary and traditional practices continue to undermine legal frameworks and restrict women's work-related rights. Attitudes related to women's paid employment are also important. Social norms that discourage women from making the choice to have a paid job outside the household are highly and negatively correlated with lower female-to-male labour force participation ratios (Figure 1.10, Panel B). In Southeast Asia, 22% of the population holds such negative views, ranging from 2% in Singapore to 32% in Indonesia (see Chapter 2 for more details).

Figure 1.11. Women's heavier burden of unpaid care and domestic tasks hampers their labour force participation



Note: Panel A: The female-to-male ratio of unpaid care and domestic work is calculated as the average number of hours dedicated by women to unpaid care and domestic tasks divided by the average number of hours dedicated by men to the same tasks. Data are missing for Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Myanmar and Singapore.
Panel B: Negative attitudes towards working mothers are defined by the share of the population that agrees with the statement: "When a mother works for pay, the children suffer." The female-to-male labour force participation ratio is calculated as women's labour force participation rate divided by men's labour force participation rate. Attitudinal data cover 80 countries, including 4 Southeast Asian countries: Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore. R^2 is 0.5223.
Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2019[30]), Gender, Institutions and Development Database, https://doi.org/10.1787/ba5dbd30-en; (OECD, 2020[54]), Labour Force Statistics, https://oe.cd/ds/2Sp; and (ILO, 2020[55]), ILOSTAT, https://ilostat.ilo.org/data.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229863

Moreover, women's high burden of unpaid care and domestic work reinforces their low participation in the labour market and limits their economic empowerment. Women in Southeast Asia continue to assume the bulk of unpaid care and domestic work. In 2018, in the seven Southeast Asian countries[15] for which data are available, women spent, on average, 3.8 times more time than men did on unpaid care and domestic work, including raising children, caring for sick or elderly family members, and managing household tasks (Figure 1.11, Panel A). The ongoing COVID-19 crisis exacerbates these imbalances with lockdown measures often leading to additional unpaid care and domestic work falling on women's shoulders (Box 1.3). Women's disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic responsibilities has far-reaching

implications for their economic empowerment that have been thoroughly documented. Among others, it constrains the allocation of their time, their mobility, their employment opportunities and their ability to engage in political activities. It also pushes women to seek work arrangements that are more flexible, often part-time and closer to home, all of which results in the segregation of women into the informal sector and low-status jobs (UN ESCAP, 2018[48]; Kabeer, 2009[43]).

The unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work in households is the product of discriminatory social norms and traditional views of gender roles that confine women to domestic tasks within the home. In 2018, for instance, 73% of respondents in Thailand declared that children will suffer when a mother works for pay outside the home. Similarly, the share of the population holding such views stood at 44%, 43% and 21% in the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia, respectively. These social norms data reveal the deeply entrenched and gender-differentiated social expectations faced by women and men. These expectations are indeed relational; women's paid labour is not viewed as favourably as men's because paid work is a fundamental aspect of masculine identity (OECD, 2021[56]). Indeed, men are often expected to be breadwinners and financial providers for their family in order to be considered "real" men. In turn, caring for family members and the home – through unpaid labour – is a primary social expectation of women. By confining women to domestic tasks within the home, these rigid social norms and restrictive masculinities have a profound impact on women's participation in the labour market (Figure 1.11, Panel B).

Box 1.3. The economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis on Southeast Asian women

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered the deepest global economic recession in nearly a century, disrupting economic activity and negatively affecting well-being and jobs. In Southeast Asia, economic output is projected to contract by 2.8% as a result (OECD, 2020[37]).[16] The crisis is having disproportionate economic impacts on women that, if not mitigated, may induce a long-term worsening of their economic empowerment and increase in gender inequality.

The economic crisis primarily affects sectors in which women are overrepresented

The COVID-19 crisis, through lockdown and confinement measures as well as the disruption of international supply chains and tourism, has severely affected some specific sectors, such as retail trade, accommodation and food services, and domestic services. In Southeast Asia, women are overrepresented in these sectors (United Nations, 2020[39]). Across the region, women account for 54% and 60% of the workers employed in the wholesale and retail trade sector and in the accommodation and food services sector, respectively. Women also account for a disproportionate share of the workers involved in household and domestic services, which suffered heavily from the crisis (ILO, 2020[57]). Domestic workers often do not benefit from any social protection schemes, which might even increase their hardship when faced with job uncertainty. Informality, which characterises women's employment more so than men's in Southeast Asia, further adds to their vulnerability and limits women's ability to benefit from social protection (Lai, 2020[58]).

Lockdown and confinement measures exacerbate the unpaid care and domestic work burden of women

The overload of healthcare systems, combined with the reduced functioning of essential services like schools or day-care centres, increase the burden of unpaid care and domestic work that falls on Southeast Asian women, accentuating the gender imbalances that already existed prior to the crisis. Evidence in several countries in the region, such as the Philippines and Thailand, indicates that women's unpaid care and domestic work burden increased as a result of COVID-19 mitigation measures. Beyond direct consequences for their employment, skills development and economic empowerment, this increased burden also exacerbated women's vulnerability to mental and emotional health complications (United Nations, 2020[39]).

Women's restricted access to critical economic resources is rooted in norms of restrictive masculinities and discriminatory practices that perpetuate men's economic dominance

Access to, and control and decision-making power over, productive resources such as land and financial assets is critical to women's economic empowerment. In rural areas, and specifically in countries where economies are dominated by the agricultural sector, both statutory and customary land tenure systems that undermine women's status constitute major barriers to their economic empowerment. No less important is women's right to housing, which, when restricted, can severely increase women's economic insecurity, as well as their social and personal insecurities. In instances of divorce or death of their spouse, discriminatory practices preventing women from claiming their rights to property or land can put them at risk of losing all the benefits and rights they enjoyed, thus directly affecting their ability to make strategic choices and meaningful decisions. Securing these rights and exercising their decision-making power over these assets is therefore paramount to women's empowerment. Indeed, evidence also shows that enhanced access to land and housing for women leads to greater self-esteem as well as greater respect from other family and community members. The returns are far-reaching and include improved outcomes for their children through higher survival rates, better nutrition and higher school attainment (UN ESCAP, 2018[48]).

In Southeast Asia, women's weak access to land and non-land assets threatens their ability to take control over their lives. Sex-disaggregated data on ownership of land or houses remain scarce around the world, and Southeast Asia is no exception. Nevertheless, across the seven Southeast Asian countries[17] for which data on land ownership are available, women represent only 13% of landowners on average – whereas they account for 39% of the agricultural workers across the overall region (see Chapter 2 for more details). These outcomes are induced, at least in part, by the existence of legal frameworks that discriminate against women's ownership and administration of productive assets. These laws, present in some Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia or the Philippines, grant decision-making power to husbands and thus limit women's ability to claim their rights in cases of disagreement. These legal frameworks are rooted in the powerful social expectation that part of men's identity, as men, involves being the primary decision makers in important family matters, especially when it comes to large family assets such as property. Similarly, social practices governing household assets in marriage and inheritance also prevent women's land ownership. There are many examples of cases in which, following marriage, the administration of the household finances is customarily transferred to the husband. Meanwhile, women's ability to inherit assets is intrinsically linked with customary practices which favour boys' inheritance rights over girls'. For instance, in Viet Nam, patrilineal inheritance customs favouring sons over daughters continue to prevail in some ethnic communities (see Chapter 2 for more details).

Discriminatory social norms and expectations perpetuate women's limited access to land and non-land assets. Individuals obtain access to assets through purchase, inheritance or state intervention (Kabeer, 2009[43]). In each of these three channels, evidence shows that strongly embedded discriminatory social norms and practices prevent women from accessing assets on an equal footing with men. Women's ability to purchase assets is directly hampered by constraints placed on their ability to work and to earn an income, which in turn, as previously mentioned, stem from discriminatory social norms and traditional views of gender roles. These social norms include strong beliefs regarding women's and men's roles in the household and in broader society. According to binary gender roles, men are expected to provide financially for their families whereas women are expected to take care of the home and family members through unpaid care and domestic work. This division of work and the remuneration of men's but not women's work underpins the devaluation of women's labour. Social norms that expect men to be the main breadwinner undermine women's access to work, promotions and equal remuneration for work of equal value. These forces, in turn, lead to very few women having the resources necessary to purchase assets on their own, which further reinforces men's economic dominance.

Finally, even when state interventions are designed to correct ownership imbalances, social norms and biases may undermine their effects. Attempts by Southeast Asian governments to reform land titling in order to endow women with formal land titles show that traditional practices can ignore multiple interests and favour sole registration under the husband's name, effectively depriving women of the control over land they previously had in practice (Liamzon, Arevalo and Naungayan, 2016[59]; Rao, 2011[60]). In Viet Nam, for example, the initial design of the land titling reform failed to provide for joint titling by allowing only one name to be registered on the title issued. Although the issue was addressed in a further reform, the immediate consequence was that certificates were only issued under the name of the man of the household, highlighting the strength of social norms and practices (see Chapter 2 for more details).

The interaction between economic empowerment and education suggests that women's empowerment is constrained by lower skills development

The integration of women in the workplace is critical for skills development – a particular form of education – which contributes to raising their employment status and empowering them. A major part of individuals' human capital development occurs beyond formal learning in the education system and takes place directly within the work environment, either through informal on-the-job skills acquisition or through formal training and retraining. In a rapidly evolving global economy, it becomes crucial for companies and their employees to keep abreast of structural changes and to constantly update their skills in order to maintain their employability (OECD, 2019[61]). In this regard, acquiring new skills is an essential component of women's economic empowerment that leads to better job status, higher income and more decision-making power, both in the professional environment and within the household.

In Southeast Asia, labour imbalances and gender-based segregation deter women's skills development in two ways: fewer opportunities to build skills through on-the-job training and in informal settings on the one hand, and lower incentives to invest in skills development on the other hand. First, formal training programmes increase the skills of employees or endow them with new ones. While critical in a rapidly evolving professional environment characterised by rapid innovation and new digital tools, formal training is also an essential factor for employees seeking better job opportunities, higher labour status and increased income. In Southeast Asia, 32% of managers are women. While this is a higher percentage than the global average of 24%, gender-equal representation in managerial positions remains a distant goal and unequal representation contributes to limiting women's training and advancement opportunities, effectively hampering their human capital development and empowerment. Second, women's relatively low labour force participation – partly based on discriminatory social norms and practices – acts as a powerful deterrent to their investment in skills development, particularly through education. Skills development strongly depends on perceptions of the labour market and the expected returns on investments aimed at raising human capital. Labour markets that present strong imbalances, such as Southeast Asia, do not provide an adequate signal for women to sacrifice resources and to invest in skills development.

Women's empowerment requires amplifying women's voices in decision-making bodies

Opportunities for women to participate in decision making, whether this is in the workplace, in their communities or in government, are critical for women's empowerment. Having a voice in decision-making processes ensures that women have opportunities to shape their environments, assert their agency and advocate for their further empowerment. Without more women at decision-making tables, it is less likely that the perspectives of women and girls will be taken into account within policy processes, or that actions to eliminate the barriers to their participation will be taken (Box 1.4). Conversely, gender-equal representation can also have a self-reinforcing effect by inspiring more women and girls to aspire to these roles, encouraging societies to support women's leadership and creating opportunities for a gender lens

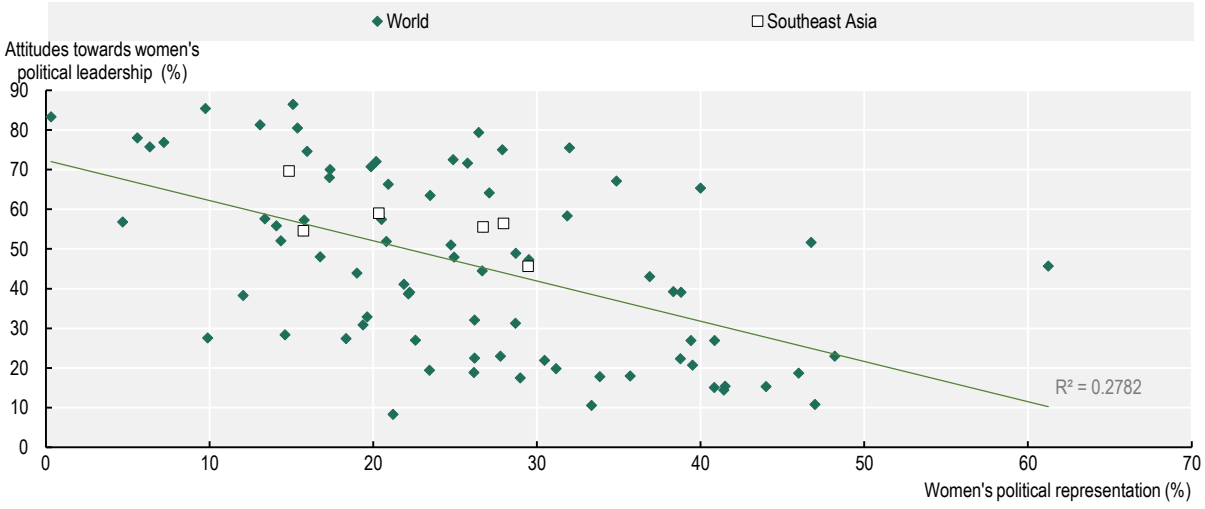
to be applied in policy making. Ultimately, women's empowerment and participation in decision making are "fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace" (United Nations, 1995[62]).

Nevertheless, data show that women's inclusion in diverse decision-making bodies remains limited in the Southeast Asian region. In politics, women's representation has improved since the early 2000s; however, in 2020, women accounted for just 20% of members of parliament in the region's single or lower houses of parliament (IPU Parline, 2020[63]). When it comes to corporate decision making, women are also underrepresented among the five Southeast Asian countries[18] with available data; the percentage of board seats held by women ranged from 10% in Indonesia to 25% in Malaysia in 2019 (Emelianova and Milhomem, 2019[64]). Also striking is the small percentage of women chief executive officers (CEOs) in these countries. In 2019, among Southeast Asian countries with available data, Thailand was home to the highest percentage of women CEOs (14%) (Emelianova and Milhomem, 2019[64]).

Persistent discriminatory social institutions induce these unequal outcomes and hinder women's ability to exercise their voices or to advocate for their empowerment. Among these institutions are social norms. In Southeast Asia, 57% of the population across six countries[19] reportedly agrees that "on the whole, men make better political leaders than women" (OECD, 2019[6]). These discriminatory social norms which view women as less capable of this type of leadership are a key driver behind women's underrepresentation in politics (Figure 1.12). Other social institutions, namely legal frameworks and socially accepted practices, define and uphold the "rules of the game" which create an unequal playing field for women's participation in decision making (see Chapter 2 for more details). These institutions include the social norms that place the bulk of unpaid care work on women's shoulders, the practice of political violence against women, and legal frameworks that fail to provide mechanisms to encourage gender-equal participation in decision-making bodies.

Figure 1.12. Gender-based discriminatory norms hinder women's political participation

Correlation between attitudes towards women's political leadership and women's representation in parliaments



Note: Attitudes towards women's political leadership are defined as the share of the population that agrees with the statement: "On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do". Women's political representation is defined as the percentage of women in the total number of representatives in the lower or single house of parliament. Attitudinal data are missing for Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Timor-Leste.

Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2019[30]), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://doi.org/10.1787/ba5dbd30-en.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229882

Box 1.4. Women must be included at the decision-making level if COVID-19 recovery strategies are to take gender into account

While women across Southeast Asia are at the forefront of the measures taken to address the COVID-19 pandemic, they are underrepresented at the decision-making table when it comes to responding to and planning crisis recoveries. In the healthcare sector, for example, women make up nearly 70% of the healthcare workforce, facing exposure as a result; yet, women remain underrepresented in the sector's leadership positions (OECD, 2020[4]). In order to ensure that the COVID-19 crisis does not continue to exacerbate existing inequalities, including gender inequality in particular, the decision-making bodies creating and leading responses and recovery efforts must include the voices of women and girls. Without their voices, the possibility for gender-responsive responses and recoveries remains increasingly remote (OECD, 2020[4]).

A path towards gender equality: Key policy recommendations

"Words must be matched by action if change is to become lasting"

Angel Gurría, OECD Secretary-General

In order to address discriminatory social institutions and build a truly inclusive society, policy makers and all relevant stakeholders across Southeast Asian countries need to take action. The COVID-19 pandemic calls for much stronger political commitments to include a gender perspective in crisis management efforts. The pandemic should be an opportunity to put addressing the root causes of gender inequality, including harmful social norms, at the heart of recovery policies. By taking the gendered impact of policy measures into account from the onset of policy design through country-level analysis, countries can avoid excessive socio-economic costs and allow faster recovery from the crisis while ensuring that the pandemic does not reverse the progress made towards the achievement of SDG 5 and other gender-related targets. This section outlines policy recommendations and develops them across five critical, cross-cutting areas:

- update and harmonise legislation in line with international standards
- develop enforcement mechanisms to effectively deliver justice
- adopt a holistic and intersectional approach, taking into account women's diversity while engaging men and boys as positive agents of change
- strengthen the scope and the quality of sex-disaggregated data collection at all geographical levels
- improve communication and awareness.

Update and harmonise legislation in line with international standards

Southeast Asian governments should ensure that their national legal frameworks are in agreement with international conventions and amend laws to eliminate discriminatory legislation

Southeast Asian governments should strengthen their efforts to close legal loopholes that allow negative practices, such as child marriage among girls or female genital mutilation, and amend discriminatory provisions concerning women's workplace, land and citizenship rights. Furthermore, legislation related to violence against women should be comprehensive and aim for a systemic approach. In addition, Southeast

Asian governments should harmonise customary, religious or traditional laws with national and subnational legal frameworks in order to guarantee that every woman and girl is equally protected under the law regardless of her ethnicity, marital status, religion or location. Customary practices governing women's access to land, inheritance, financial resources and justice restrain the efficacy of laws and policies aimed at fostering gender equality and women's empowerment.

In particular, policy makers in Southeast Asia should focus on the laws covered by the following SIGI indicators:

- In the "Child marriage" indicator, Southeast Asian governments should set 18 years as the minimum legal age for marriage for girls and boys without any legal exceptions. In Indonesia, for instance, the Constitutional Court amended the Marriage Act in 2019 and raised the minimum legal age for marriage to 19 years for women (Government of Indonesia, 2020[65]).
- In the "Violence against women" indicator, policy makers should incorporate comprehensive and inclusive approaches covering all forms of violence – including sexual harassment, domestic violence, rape and honour crimes. In Malaysia, for instance, the Domestic Violence Act was amended in 2017 to extend its scope and enhance the protection of victims and survivors of domestic violence. In addition, relevant provisions under the Penal Code were also modified to ensure that women were effectively protected from any harm or abuse (Government of Malaysia, 2019[66]).
- In the "Female genital mutilation" indicator, some Southeast Asian governments still need to recognise female genital mutilation as a harmful practice and abide by international commitments made in this area. Countries in which certain communities perform and encourage the practice of female genital mutilation should enact legislation to criminalise this practice and establish penalties for all perpetrators, including parents and medical practitioners.
- In the "Workplace rights" indicator, Southeast Asian governments should enhance women workers' legal protections and strengthen labour legislation in order to guarantee women's equal access to employment, ensure adequate protection from gender-based discrimination at work, comply with the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value, and provide paid maternity and paternity leave schemes. In Indonesia, for example, the government issued and approved Regulation No. 78 in 2015, which mandates that every worker has the right to receive the same wage for work of the same value (Government of Indonesia, 2015[67]). In addition, in 2018, the government of the Philippines passed the 105-Day Expanded Maternity Leave Law, which extended the length of maternity leave from 8 weeks to 15 weeks, with 100% salary coverage (Government of the Philippines, 2018[68]).
- In the "Citizenship rights" indicator, Southeast Asian governments should pass legislation to provide married women with the same rights as married men to confer their nationality on their children and spouses. In Viet Nam, for instance, the 2008 Law on Vietnamese Nationality establishes equal rights between women and men to acquire Vietnamese nationality through marriage and naturalisation. In addition, the law provides equal rights to retain (Art. 10), change (Art. 27) and confer nationality on children (Arts. 14-17) (Government of Viet Nam, 2008[69]).

Develop enforcement mechanisms to effectively deliver justice

Southeast Asian governments should strengthen the capacity building of law enforcement authorities and guarantee legal redress

Southeast Asian governments should further invest in providing capacity building and training to crucial actors such as law enforcement officials, teachers, health and care providers, community leaders, and other relevant stakeholders in order to ensure the adequate application of the law and prevent gender-

based discrimination across key areas. These measures should be mainstreamed at the national, subnational and local levels to guarantee the protection of all women and girls. Once the national legal framework is updated and protective measures are in place, policy makers should guarantee that the violations against women's rights are effectively monitored, prosecuted and punished.

Southeast Asian countries should sensitise all actors in the judicial system to gender-based discrimination

In the Southeast Asian region, policy makers should run awareness-raising campaigns and capacity-building programmes on understanding and responding to gender-based discrimination, violence and intersectional discrimination for all the actors in the judicial system – including the personnel in justice entities, legal professionals, judges and prosecutors – in order to ensure that the country's justice system is gender responsive. All the actors within the legal apparatus should implement a gender-sensitive approach and governments should guarantee that judges interpret the legislation in accordance with the principles of equality and international human rights. In Cambodia, for instance, the Ministry of Women's Affairs trained judicial police officers in legal procedures and reconciliation processes related to women's rights and domestic violence (Government of Cambodia, 2019[70]).

All the actors in the judicial system should also be aware of the institutional, socio-economic and cultural barriers that women face in accessing justice. Therefore, it is essential to increase the general awareness of the most persistent women's rights issues in order to deliver justice more effectively. Similarly, in Indonesia, more than 2 000 police officers have received gender-responsive training aimed at increasing capacity and sensitivity when dealing with cases involving women and children (Government of Indonesia, 2020[71]).

Southeast Asian countries should develop adequate infrastructure and service provision in remote areas in order to ensure that all women have access to justice and benefit from public programmes

Policy makers should ensure that all groups of women have adequate access to the justice system and create an enabling environment for women. Governments should make legal information, regulations and proceedings available to all women, without discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status. Institutions and services should be available in urban and rural areas, as the distance to institutions represents an obstacle to women's attempts to access justice. Language also constitutes a major barrier that impedes women from claiming their rights. Therefore, the language used by legal professionals and justice system personnel should be simplified and should avoid gender stereotypes and biases, particularly towards victims and survivors of gender-based violence and abuse. In addition, guidelines, manuals and key information on legal proceedings, procedures and legal aid services should be available in local languages.

Furthermore, Southeast Asian governments should guarantee the affordability of justice processes and mechanisms. This includes providing the total or partial coverage of direct and indirect costs of litigation, such as the monetary cost of filing a complaint, the lawyer's fees and the cost of transportation. Policy makers should also take into account the monetary costs for women to start legal proceedings, as well as the opportunity costs (which are not necessarily measured), such as the consequences for women's productivity, and the psychological effects linked to social stigma, as legal redress is not culturally acceptable in certain communities.

Adopt a holistic and intersectional approach, taking into account women's diversity while engaging men and boys as positive agents of change

Policy makers must systematically incorporate a holistic and intersectional approach into both legislation and programmes, as most of the challenges faced by women and girls cannot be dealt with in isolation. In

order to implement a successful whole-of-society approach in the Southeast Asian region, policy makers must work along three main axes.

Address gender-based discrimination at all social and political levels

To reduce gender-based discrimination, policy makers need to develop comprehensive national strategies that address gender-based discrimination at different levels, which requires mobilising a wide range of actors. Gender-based discriminatory social institutions manifest themselves in different environments: at the individual level, at the household level, at the community level and, finally, at the societal level. A whole-of-society shift, therefore, requires developing programmes and interventions at each of these levels. A holistic approach entails mobilising different actors depending on the level of intervention. For instance, grassroots organisations are essential to spur change at the household and community levels, while national legislative bodies and religious authorities can have a critical impact at the societal level. For example, in Indonesia, ahead of the 2019 elections, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection provided a module to support women candidates with the aim of bolstering women's political representation. The training covered the meaning of representation, the electoral system, vote calculations, mapping voter networks and competitors' support, as well as winning strategies. Furthermore, the module provided capital in order to enable female candidates to mount competitive campaigns (Government of Indonesia, 2020[71]).

Integrate the problem of intersectional discrimination faced by certain women and girls into policy responses

Policy makers need to target interventions by taking into account women's diversity and the fact that women can face multiple forms of discrimination that superimpose themselves. The socio-economic characteristics of women and girls are strong determinants of the types of discrimination they face. Disability, poverty, rural status, job informality, migration status, etc. constitute a large array of potential discriminatory factors that intersect with gender-based discrimination and that need to be integrated into the design of policies. For example, Thailand developed the 2nd Women with Disability Development Plan (2017-2021) in order to address the issue of violence against women with disabilities (Government of Thailand, 2020[72]). Many workplace-related laws that govern maternity leave and benefits or social and health insurance schemes increasingly seek to address the issue of covering informal sector workers, where women are often overrepresented. Recent examples include new laws in Lao PDR and the Philippines (Government of the Philippines, 2018[68]; Addati, Behrendt and Wagenhäuser, 2016[73]). Meanwhile, in Malaysia, the Department of Women's Development has created legal clinics to help women by enhancing their knowledge of their rights and available means of legal redress. In addition to these clinics, low-cost legal services targeting low-income women are available through various channels, including the Legal Aid Bureau (Government of Malaysia, 2019[74]). Likewise, in Cambodia, the government increased budget allocations for justice services and legal aid for low-income women (Government of Cambodia, 2019[70]). In Timor-Leste, in order to improve rural women's access to justice, mobile courts have been established and make their rounds to different locations (Cummins, 2018[75]). Moreover, Decree No. 11/2017 recognised Tetum as an official language in the judicial sector, thus improving the accessibility of the formal justice system to non-Portuguese-speaking women (Government of Timor-Leste, 2019[76]).

Engage men and boys as positive agents of change

Shifting social norms requires a whole-of-society approach; this includes engaging men and boys. Studies show that challenging patriarchal norms, such as the social expectation for men to be the breadwinners or that men need to be tough, can have far-reaching positive implications for men's health and happiness and for women's well-being and empowerment across multiple areas (Barker, 2007[77]; MenEngage, n.d.[78]; van der Gaag et al., 2019[79]). However, these studies have also shown that attitudinal and

behaviour change is possible. Policy makers must implement and scale up evidence-based approaches to challenge the negative aspects of masculine norms while promoting greater awareness of the multiple ways that women and men benefit from addressing restrictive gender norms. In this regard, the Philippines has numerous examples of programmes aimed at engaging men and boys in gender equality, including the Men's Responsibilities in Gender and Development (MR GAD) programme, Men Faithful to their Family Responsibilities and Obligations (*Kalalakihang Tapat sa Responsibilidad at Obligasyon sa Pamilya*) (KATROPA) programme and the Empowerment and Reaffirmation of Paternal Abilities (ERPAT) programme (Republic of the Phillipines, n.d.[80]; DSWD, n.d.[81]). The ERPAT programme for example, is integrated in a conditional cash-transfer programme and includes modules on family development that teach recipient parents about shared household and care responsibility (DSWD, n.d.[81]).

Strengthen the scope and the quality of sex-disaggregated data collection at all geographical levels

Southeast Asian countries must invest in statistical capabilities to produce more and better sex-disaggregated data at all geographical levels, from local to national levels. In order to ensure that statistics are produced at the most accurate levels of analysis and to help build the business case in favour of gender equality, policy makers must work along two main axes.

Invest in statistical capabilities to produce more and better sex-disaggregated data at various geographical levels

High-quality data are essential to ensure that policy makers understand the scope and the drivers of gender inequality. To grasp all of the dimensions of gender-based discrimination and the full extent of their socio-economic consequences, governments and civil society organisations need to commit to systematically collecting sex-disaggregated data. These efforts should not be limited to areas that are traditionally identified as "gender sensitive" (e.g. sex-disaggregated data on labour force participation), but should be extended to all statistical activities (e.g. sex-disaggregated data on land or homeownership). The availability of a large array of sex-disaggregated data would support further research and help uncover unknown interlinkages between gender-based discrimination and other socio-economic phenomena, as well as capture intersectional discrimination. For example, Myanmar recently launched a statistical programme on data related to violence against women. In co-operation with the United Nations Population Fund and civil society organisations, the three-year National Study on Violence against Women and Girls (2019-2021) aims to collect statistics to estimate the prevalence, frequency and forms of gender-based violence experienced by women, in line with SDG indicators 5.2.1 and 5.2.2. Beyond these traditional statistics, the extent of the data collected should also reveal the association between violence, health and economic outcomes; the identification of factors that either protect or put women and girls at risk of gender-based violence; the documentation and comparison of strategies and services that women and girls use to deal with gender-based violence; and the provision of novel estimates of the economic cost of violence (Government of Myanmar, 2019[82]).

Strengthen statistical co-operation across Southeast Asian countries to guarantee comparability and support the monitoring of SDG 5

As part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the collection of quality sex-disaggregated data across a wide range of issues is critical in order to monitor the achievement of the SDGs. Beyond the indicators of SDG 5 on gender equality, the OECD estimates that 45% of the indicators contained in the *UN Global Indicator Framework* (that is, 102 indicators out of 247) can be identified as gender relevant (Cohen and Shinwell, 2020[83]). In 2018, **Cambodia** finalised the Cambodian Sustainable Development

Goals Framework (2016-2030), aligning its national statistical framework with the SDG framework (Government of Cambodia, 2018[84]). The framework is the product of an extensive collaborative process involving a Rapid Integrated Assessment from the United Nations Development Programme in 2016 (UNDP, 2016[85]), an SDG assessment from the United Nations Statistics Division in 2017 and an EU-ASEAN Capacity Building Project for Monitoring Integration on Progress and Statistics (COMPASS) in 2017 (European Union and ASEAN, 2017[86]). The framework consists of nationalising the SDGs to Cambodia's specific context and challenges, and comprises 18 goals, 88 targets and 148 indicators. Of the 148 indicators included in Cambodia's national framework, 47 are gender specific (Government of Cambodia, 2019[70]; Government of Cambodia, 2019[87]).

Invest in data collection on gender norms, including on the norms of masculinities

In order to identify progress towards transforming masculinities, it is essential to understand these context-specific norms. Data that can measure societies' expectations of men and boys should be collected. This requires that data take into account not just men's beliefs but the beliefs of men and women together, because norms of masculinities are not self-directed by individual men, but are passed down and reinforced within communities (OECD, 2021[56]). These data should also recognise that men have some degree of agency in accepting or rejecting the norms of masculinity in their communities, but must face social sanctions if they choose to deviate significantly from social expectations. Data on what men think their community believes – for example, the percentage of men and boys reporting that "society as a whole tells me that a husband shouldn't have to do household chores" – are critical for understanding why men do not adopt more gender-equitable norms (Heilman, Barker and Harrison, 2017[88]). This data is crucial in the planning and evaluating of policies and programmes to engage men and boys in gender equality, such as SRH Module for Boys implemented by the National Population and Family Development Board in **Malaysia** (Government of Malaysia, 2019[66]).

Improve communication and awareness

Communication on gender equality is key to changing social attitudes and practices. Effective communication generates awareness of gender-based discrimination and the benefits of gender equality and women's empowerment. Moreover, campaigns can educate the public, empower them to take a stand in their particular environment and increase the political will for bold action. Examples of effective communication can be found throughout Southeast Asia. For example, in Viet Nam, in order to better address sexual harassment, the 2015 *Code of Conduct on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace* included tips and good practices to help employers successfully communicate sexual harassment policies to their staff members, business contacts, contractors, clients and suppliers (Government of Viet Nam, 2015[89]). In Thailand, the "Violence on Thai TV dramas" campaign has used multiple platforms, including Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, to disseminate videos and infographics on gender-based violence in the media (Government of Thailand, 2020[72]). Finally, in the Philippines, the Philippine Commission on Women developed and implemented the #AgendaNiJuana (Juana's Agenda) campaign ahead of the 2019 elections to spread awareness on the importance of gender balance in political leadership (Government of the Philippines, 2019[90]). These examples show that communication efforts can take multiple forms and seek to achieve a variety of aims, from preventing violence to growing societal support for women's political leadership.

References

Addati, L., C. Behrendt and M. Wagenhäuser (2016), *Maternity cash benefits for workers in the informal economy*, ILO, Geneva, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-beijing/documents/publication/wcms_537934.pdf (accessed on 15 September 2020). [73]

Alonso-Borrego, C. and R. Carrasco (2017), "Employment and the risk of domestic violence: does the breadwinner's gender matter?", *Applied Economics*, Vol. 49/50, pp. 5074-5091, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00036846.2017.1299103. [35]

Amnesty International (2011), *Maternal Health Key To Empowering Women*, https://www.amnestyusa.org/maternal-health-key-to-empowering-women/ (accessed on 3 November 2020). [18]

ASEAN (2017), *ASEAN Declaration on the Gender-Responsive Implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and Sustainable Development Goals*, ASEAN, Manila, https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/7.-ADOPTION_ASEAN-Declaration-on-the-GR-Implementation_CLEAN_Sept.8-2017_for-31st-Summit_CLEAN.pdf (accessed on 19 August 2020). [3]

ASEAN (2015), *ASEAN Community Vision 2025*, ASEAN, Kuala Lumpur, https://www.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/images/2015/November/aec-page/ASEAN-Community-Vision-2025.pdf (accessed on 19 August 2020). [2]

ASEAN (2010), *Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children*, https://asean.org/?static_post=ha-noi-declaration-on-the-enhancement-of-welfare-and-development-of-asean-women-and-children (accessed on 4 August 2020). [1]

Aslam, M. (2013), *Empowering women: education and the pathways of change*, UNESCO, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000225925. [41]

Barker, G. (2007), *The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality*, https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/w2000/W2000%20Men%20and%20Boys%20E%20web.pdf. [77]

Beegle, K., E. Frankenberg and D. Thomas (2001), "Bargaining Power Within Couples and Use of Prenatal and Delivery Care in Indonesia", *Studies in Family Planning*, Vol. 32/2, pp. 130-146, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1728-4465.2001.00130.x. [23]

Blanc, A. (2001), "The Effect of Power in Sexual Relationships on Sexual and Reproductive Health: An Examination of the Evidence", *Studies in Family Planning*, Vol. 32/3, pp. 189-213, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1728-4465.2001.00189.x. [20]

Boniol, M. et al. (2019), "Gender equity in the health workforce: Analysis of 104 countries", *Health Workforce Working Paper*, No. 1, World Health Organization, https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/311314/WHO-HIS-HWF-Gender-WP1-2019.1-eng.pdf. [36]

Chaparro, C., L. Oot and K. Sethuraman (2014), *Overview of the Nutrition Situation in Seven Countries in Southeast Asia*, USAID, Washington DC, https://www.fantaproject.org/sites/default/files/download/Southeast-Asia-Nutrition-Overview-Apr2014.pdf. [26]

Cohen, G. and M. Shinwell (2020), "How far are OECD countries from achieving SDG targets for women and girls? : Applying a gender lens to measuring distance to SDG targets", *OECD Statistics Working Papers*, No. 2020/02, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/17a25070-en. [83]

Cummins, D. (2018), *Women's Multiple Pathways to Justice: Alternative Dispute Resolution and the impact on women in Timor-Leste*, https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2019/03/tl-multiple-pathways.pdf?la=en&vs=554. [75]

DHS (n.d.), *STATcompiler*, https://www.statcompiler.com/en/. [19]

DSWD (n.d.), *DSWD's ERPAT program empowers fathers to become community role models*, https://pia.gov.ph/features/articles/1025168. [81]

Emelianova, O. and C. Milhomem (2019), *Women on boards 2019 Progress Report*, MSCI, https://www.msci.com/documents/10199/29f5bf79-cf87-71a5-ac26-b435d3b6fc08. [64]

European Union and ASEAN (2017), *EU-ASEAN Capacity Building Project for Monitoring Integration on Progress and Statistics (COMPASS) - Project Sheet*, https://asean.org/storage/2017/02/COMPASS.pdf (accessed on 2 October 2020). [86]

Ferrant, G. and A. Kolev (2016), "Does gender discrimination in social institutions matter for long-term growth?: Cross-country evidence", *OECD Development Centre Working Papers*, No. 330, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jm2hz8dgls6-en. [53]

Government of Cambodia (2019), *Cambodia's Voluntary National Review 2019 on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23603Cambodia_VNR_Publishing HLPF.pdf (accessed on 2 October 2020). [87]

Government of Cambodia (2019), *National Report Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) - Cambodia*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/cambodia.pdf. [70]

Government of Cambodia (2018), *Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) Framework (2016-2030): Part 1: Reviewing Previous Results and Next Steps*, http://mop.gov.kh/DocumentEN/CSDG%20Framework-2016-2030%20English.pdf (accessed on 6 January 2021). [84]

Government of Indonesia (2020), *National Report Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) - Indonesia*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/indonesia.pdf. [71]

Government of Indonesia (2020), *National Report Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) - Indonesia*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/indonesia.pdf. [65]

Government of Indonesia (2015), *Government Regulation No. 78*, http://ditjenpp.kemenkumham.go.id/arsip/terjemahan/44.pdf (accessed on 14 August 2020). [67]

Government of Malaysia (2019), *National Report Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) - Malaysia*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/malaysia.pdf. [74]

Government of Malaysia (2019), *National Report Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) - Malaysia*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/malaysia.pdf (accessed on 2 October 2020). [66]

Government of Myanmar (2019), *National Report Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) - Myanmar*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/myanmar.pdf. [82]

Government of Thailand (2020), *National Report Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) - Thailand*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/thailand-en.pdf. [72]

Government of the Philippines (2019), *National Report Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) - Philippines (2014-2019)*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/philippines.pdf. [90]

Government of the Philippines (2018), *Republic Act No. 11210*, https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2019/02feb/20190220-RA-11210-RRD.pdf (accessed on 15 September 2020). [68]

Government of Timor-Leste (2019), *National Report Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) - Timor-Leste (2014-2018)*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/timor-leste.pdf. [76]

Government of Viet Nam (2015), *Code of conduct on sexual harassment in the workplace*, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs; Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour; Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-hanoi/documents/publication/wcms_421220.pdf. [89]

Government of Viet Nam (2008), *Law on Vietnamese Nationality*, https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4ac49b132.pdf. [69]

Han, Z. et al. (2012), "Maternal Height and the Risk of Preterm Birth and Low Birth Weight: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses", *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada*, Vol. 34/8, pp. 721-746, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/s1701-2163(16)35337-3. [27]

Heilman, B., G. Barker and A. Harrison (2017), *The Man Box: A Study on Being a Young Man in the US, UK, and Mexico*, https://promundoglobal.org/resources/man-box-study-young-man-us-uk-mexico/. [88]

ILO (2020), *Employment by sex and economic activity - ILO modelled estimates*, ILOSTAT, https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/. [57]

ILO (2020), *Labour force participation rate by sex*, ILOSTAT, https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/ (accessed on 2 November 2020). [55]

IPU Parline (2020), *Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments*, https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=7&year=2020. [63]

Jahan, S. (2018), *Violence against women, a cause and consequence of inequality*, https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2018/violence-against-women-cause-consequence-inequality.html (accessed on 2 November 2020). [33]

Kabeer, N. (2009), "Women's economic empowerment: Key issues and policy options", *Women's Economic Empowerment*, SIDA, https://www.sida.se/contentassets/a7f86b2b8a774b0dacb7bce5f689dae5/womens-economic-empowerment-key-issues-and-policy-options_296.pdf. [43]

Lai, J. (2020), *Covid-19's Gender Problem in Informal Southeast Asia*, https://www.csis.org/blogs/new-perspectives-asia/covid-19s-gender-problem-informal-southeast-asia. [58]

Liamzon, C., A. Arevalo and M. Naungayan (2016), *Women's Land Rights in Asia*, Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), http://www.angoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Women-issue-brief1.pdf. [59]

Llena-Nozal, A., N. Martin and F. Murtin (2019), "The economy of well-being: Creating opportunities for people's well-being and economic growth", *OECD Statistics Working Papers*, No. 2019/02, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/498e9bc7-en. [42]

Mankiw, N., D. Romer and D. Weil (1992), "A Contribution to the Empirics of Economic Growth", *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 107/2, pp. 407-437, http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2118477. [9]

McCracken, K. et al. (2015), *Empowering women and girls through education*, European Parliament, Brussels, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/510022/IPOL_STU(2015)510022_EN.pdf. [46]

MenEngage (n.d.), *Men, Masculinities, and Changing Power: A Discussion Paper on Engaging Men in Gender Equality From Beijing 1995 to 2015*, http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Men-Masculinities-and-Changing-Power-MenEngage-2014.pdf. [78]

Mercado, L., M. Naciri and Y. Mishra (2020), *Women's Unpaid and Underpaid Work in the Times of COVID-19*, https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2020/06/womens-unpaid-and-underpaid-work-in-the-times-of-covid-19 (accessed on 27 January 2021). [13]

Mistry, R. and O. Galal (2009), "Women's autonomy and pregnancy care in rural India: a contextual analysis", *Soc Sci Med.*, Vol. 69/6, pp. 926-933, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2009.07.008. [21]

OECD (2021), *Man Enough? Measuring Masculine Norms to Promote Women's Empowerment*, Social Institutions and Gender Index, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/6ffd1936-en. [56]

OECD (2020), *Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India 2020 – Update: Meeting the Challenges of COVID-19*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/e8c90b68-en. [37]

OECD (2020), "Labour Market Statistics: Labour force statistics by sex and age", *OECD Employment and Labour Market Statistics* (database), https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/data-00309-en (accessed on 2 November 2020). [54]

OECD (2020), *Women at the core of the fight against COVID-19 crisis*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-covid-19-crisis-553a8269/. [4]

OECD (2019), *Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India 2020: Rethinking Education for the Digital Era*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/1ba6cde0-en. [50]

OECD (2019), *Getting Skills Right: Future-Ready Adult Learning Systems*, Getting Skills Right, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264311756-en. [61]

OECD (2019), *SIGI 2019 Global Report: Transforming Challenges into Opportunities*, Social Institutions and Gender Index, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/bc56d212-en. [6]

OECD (2019), "Social Institutions and Gender Index (Edition 2019)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/f0c48e52-en (accessed on 5 January 2021). [5]

OECD (2017), "Gender equality and women's empowerment in fragile and conflict-affected situations : A review of donor support", *OECD Development Policy Papers*, No. 8, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/b75a1229-en. [16]

OECD (Forthcoming), *Strengthening Women's Entrepreneurship in Agriculture in ASEAN Countries*, OECD Publishing, Paris. [12]

OECD Development Centre/OECD (2019), "Gender, Institutions and Development (Edition 2019)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/ba5dbd30-en (accessed on 5 January 2021). [30]

Qureshi, N. and B. Shaikh (2007), "Women's empowerment and health: the role of institutions of power in Pakistan", *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, Vol. 13/6, pp. 1459-1465, http://dx.doi.org/10.26719/2007.13.6.1459. [25]

Rao, N. (2011), *Women's Access to Land: An Asian Perspective*, UN Women, Accra, Ghana, https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/egm/Rao-EP-3-EGM-RW-30Sep-2011.pdf. [60]

Republic of the Phillipines (n.d.), *Gender and Development (GAD)*, https://rpo9.popcom.gov.ph/gender-and-development-gad/. [80]

Setianto, N. (2020), *The Disproportionate Effect of COVID-19 on Southeast Asian Women: Case Studies From Malaysia and Indonesia*, AIIA, https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/the-disproportionate-effect-of-covid-19-on-southeast-asian-women-case-studies-from-malaysia-and-indonesia/. [40]

Singh, K., S. Bloom and P. Brodish (2013), "Gender Equality as a Means to Improve Maternal and Child Health in Africa", *Health Care for Women International*, Vol. 36/1, pp. 57-69, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07399332.2013.824971. [22]

Solow, R. (1956), "A Contribution to the Theory of Economic Growth", *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 70/1, p. 65, http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1884513. [10]

UN ESCAP (2018), *Advancing gender equality and universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights*, United Nations, Bangkok, https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/ESCAP-APPC-2018-3%20%28Final%29.pdf. [24]

UN ESCAP (2018), *Strategies for advancing women's economic empowerment in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals*, United nations, Bangkok, https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/CSD5_women_economic_E_0.pdf. [48]

UN Women (2020), *Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment*, https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures (accessed on 2 November 2020). [52]

UNDP (2021), *Covid-19 Global Gender Response Tracker*, UNDP Covid-19 Data Futures Platform, https://data.undp.org/gendertracker/ (accessed on 1 February 2021). [11]

UNDP (2016), *Rapid Integrated Assessment - Cambodia SDG Profile*, https://cambodia.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/RIA_Cambodia_Analysis_07Oct2016.pdf (accessed on 2 October 2020). [85]

UNESCO (2020), *UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)*, http://data.uis.unesco.org/ (accessed on 2 November 2020). [44]

UNESCO (2018), *Addressing the patterns of child marriage, early union and teen pregnancy in Southeast Asia: A matter of urgency*, https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/addressing-patterns-child-marriage-early-union-and-teen-pregnancy-southeast-asia-matter (accessed on 2 November 2020). [31]

UNESCO (2017), *Cracking the code: Girls' and women's education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)*, UNESCO, Paris, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000253479/PDF/253479eng.pdf.multi. [47]

UNESCO (2015), *A Complex formula: girls and women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics in Asia*, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000231519. [51]

UNESCO (2015), *A Complex formula: girls and women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics in Asia*, UNESCO, Paris, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000231519?posInSet=1&queryId=4c684e86-513e-4303-89ba-4841de4a573a. [49]

United Nations (2020), *Policy Brief: The impact of COVID-19 on South-East Asia*, UN, https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/2020-07/SG-Policy-brief-COVID-19-and-South-East-Asia-30-July-2020.pdf. [39]

United Nations (2015), *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, United Nations, New York, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf. [14]

United Nations (2002), *Eradicating poverty, including through the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle, in a globalizing world*, United NAtions, New York, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/46/csw46a_e_final.pdf. [15]

United Nations (1995), *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action.pdf (accessed on 22 October 2020). [62]

USDA (2017), *ERS International Macroeconomic Data Set*, https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/international-macroeconomic-data-set/. [7]

van der Gaag, N. et al. (2019), *State of the World's Fathers: Unlocking the Power of Men's Care*, https://men-care.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2019/06/SOWF-2019_006_WEB.pdf. [79]

Vyas, S. and C. Watts (2009), "How does economic empowerment affect women's risk of intimate partner violence in low and middle income countries? A systematic review of published evidence", *Journal of International Development*, Vol. 21/5, pp. 577-602, http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jid.1500. [34]

Wenham, C., J. Smith and R. Morgan (2020), *COVID-19: the gendered impacts of the outbreak*, Lancet Publishing Group, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30526-2. [38]

WHO (2020), *Factsheet: Adolescent pregnancy*, https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-pregnancy (accessed on 2 November 2020). [29]

WHO (2020), *The Global Health Observatory*, https://www.who.int/data/gho. [17]

WHO (2015), *Adolescent Pregnancy: Situation in South-East Asia Region*, World Health Organization, https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/204765/B5164.pdf. [28]

WHO (2011), *Factsheet: Sexual and reproductive health*, https://www.who.int/hac/events/drm_fact_sheet_sexual_and_reproductive_health.pdf (accessed on 2 November 2020). [32]

World Bank (2020), *World Development Indicators (WDI)*, https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/dataset/world-development-indicators. [8]

World Bank (2018), *Human Capital Index (HCI)*, https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/dataset/human-capital-index (accessed on 2 November 2020). [45]

Notes

[1] SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16 and 17.

[2] Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (hereafter: Lao PDR), Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[3] The SIGI classifies countries into five categories based on their global SIGI score: very low level of discrimination (SIGI <20); low level of discrimination (SIGI 20-30); medium level of discrimination (SIGI 30-40); high level of discrimination (SIGI 40-50); and very high level of discrimination (SIGI >50).

[4] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Timor-Leste, Thailand and Viet Nam.

[5] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[6] Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

[7] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

[8] Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR and Timor-Leste.

[9] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines and Timor-Leste.

[10] Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

[11] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[12] Data are missing for Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[13] Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

[14] Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and the Philippines.

[15] Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam.

[16] Projections from the OECD exclude Timor-Leste.

[17] Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

[18] Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. It is also important to note that all of the data from this source are collected only from companies on the MSCI ACWI Index, and the sample sizes differ among countries.

[19] Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

2 Thematic analysis

This chapter presents an overview of women's discrimination in the four key dimensions of the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI): "Discrimination in the family", "Restricted physical integrity", "Restricted access to productive and financial resources, and "Restricted civil liberties" in Southeast Asian countries. It examines discriminatory social institutions – formal and informal laws, social norms and practices – that limit women's and girls' rights and empowerment over their life course. The chapter also seeks to provide policy makers with the necessary tools and evidence to design effective gender-responsive policies to tackle gender inequality in the four dimensions of the SIGI.

Introduction

The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), which measures gender-based discrimination in social institutions, covers four dimensions spanning major socio-economic areas that affect women's and girls' entire lifetimes. The "Discrimination in the family" dimension captures social institutions that limit women's decision-making power and undervalue their status in the household and the family. The "Restricted physical integrity" dimension focuses on social institutions that increase women's and girls' vulnerability to multiple forms of violence and limit their control over their bodies and reproductive autonomy. The "Restricted access to productive and financial resources" dimension concentrates on women's restricted access to and control over essential productive and economic resources and assets. The "Restricted civil liberties" dimension looks at restrictions on women's access to, and participation and voice in, the public and political spheres. Each dimension builds on four indicators that provide a combined assessment of gender-based discrimination in laws, practices and attitudes.

This chapter is divided into four sections that cover each dimension of the SIGI. For each dimension's indicators, the chapter provides a detailed analysis of the current state of discrimination faced by women and girls, the progress achieved since the last edition of the SIGI in 2014, and the challenges that remain in Southeast Asian countries.

Discrimination in the family is the most challenging issue in the Southeast Asian region

Gender equality in the private and family spheres is paramount in order to achieve women's empowerment in other key areas. However, discriminatory social institutions in particular challenge women's capacity to contribute as equal actors in the domestic and public spheres. For example, traditional gender stereotypes restrict women and girls to household tasks and caring responsibilities, which prevents them from pursuing professional careers, entering the job market, or assuming leadership roles in the community or society in general. Rigid gender norms within the family result in girls marrying before the age of 18 years, having an inferior status and less decision-making power at home, being economically dependent on men, and enduring violence and harassment in the private sphere. Traditional gender stereotypes do not remain confined to the home and are frequently replicated at the community level, as well as across other institutions such as schools, the workplace and other governance systems more broadly.

"Discrimination in the family" is the most challenging dimension of the SIGI in the Southeast Asian region. The region has a medium level of discrimination in this dimension, with a SIGI score of 47; this is in line with the global average of 44, but is 21 points above the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average. The 11 Southeast Asian countries scored in this dimension exhibit values ranging from low to high levels of discrimination. Viet Nam is the region's best performer in this dimension, with a score of 23, thanks to a strong legal framework granting women the same rights as men in the family sphere. In the Southeast Asian region, responsibility for household tasks and caregiving is the most pervasive and acute form of discrimination against women in the family sphere. The region's average score in this indicator is 57, exceeding the average score of 49 for OECD member countries.

Policy options to address discrimination in the family

- Establish 18 years as the minimum legal age for marriage for girls and boys, without any legal exceptions, in order to comply with international and regional legal frameworks aimed at eliminating the harmful practice of child marriage.

> *In 2019, the Constitutional Court of **Indonesia** amended the Marriage Act and raised the minimum legal age for marriage to 19 years for women (Government of Indonesia, 2020[1]).*

- Adopt comprehensive strategies at the national and/or subnational levels to eliminate child marriage, and mainstream child marriage prevention programmes into other government initiatives, particularly in the areas of education, health and employment.

> *In 2018, the **Cambodian** government officially launched the* Provincial Action Plan to Prevent Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy in Ratanak Kiri Province 2017-2021 *to address child marriage and teenage pregnancy in a province with high prevalence rates of both issues (Government of Cambodia, 2019[2]).*

- Stipulate legal provisions recognising women's equal right to be the head of the household, and guarantee equal parental authority.
- Provide better access to childcare facilities and care for the elderly, which will reduce the time that women spend on these activities, resulting in an increase in women's economic empowerment, leadership and leisure time.

> *The **Malaysian** government has introduced financial incentives to encourage employers to grant on-site childcare facilities for employees' children. For instance, in 2018, the government established 50 childcare centres, while private sector employers can receive a double tax deduction which will cover costs related to the provision and maintenance of childcare facilities in the workplace (Government of Malaysia, 2019[3]).*

- Harmonise civil, family, customary and religious laws to ensure that women have the same rights as men to initiate and finalise a divorce or annulment and be the legal guardians of their children after divorce.

> *In **Malaysia**, the government amended the Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act in 2017. The amendment incorporates the right of a spouse who has converted to Islam the converting spouse to file a petition for divorce to dissolve the civil marriage (Government of Malaysia, 2019[3]).*

- Repeal discriminatory laws that prevent women from remarrying for a specified period of time after divorce.
- Prohibit discrimination against widows and daughters in inheritance laws. Legal frameworks should explicitly allow women to inherit land and non-land assets on an equal basis with men.
- Strengthen protection mechanisms by prohibiting disinheritance of the surviving spouse and criminalising dispossession or "inheritance grabbing".

Greater efforts are needed to end the practice of child marriage in Southeast Asian countries by 2030

Child marriage is a harmful practice and a serious violation of a child's human rights, with multiple human development consequences. This discriminatory practice has disproportionate, immediate and long-term effects on girls' education, physical integrity, health and emotional development. The international community has stressed the importance of ending this harmful practice in numerous international

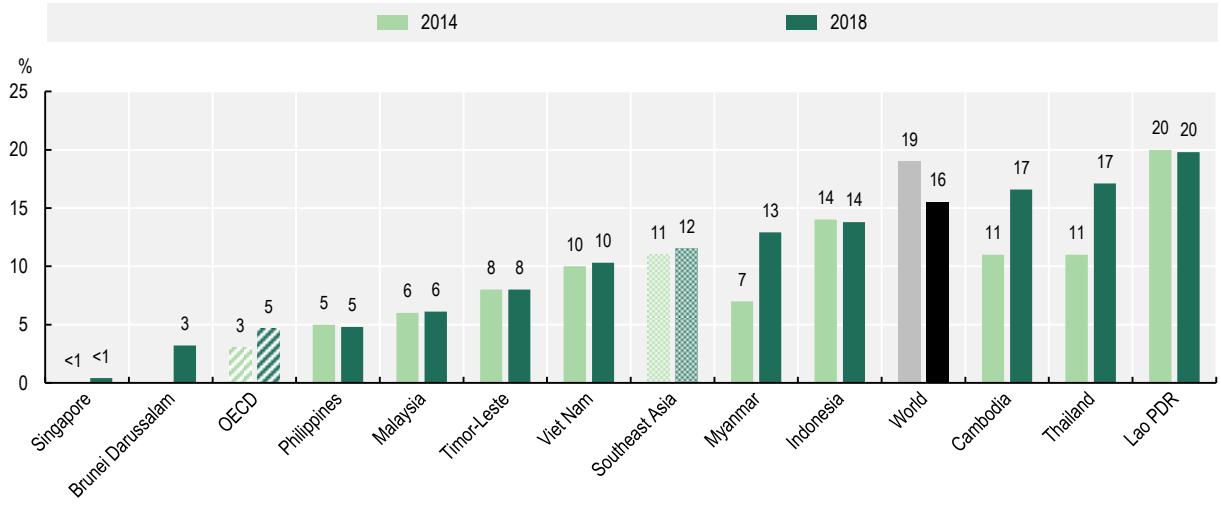
frameworks. For instance, the 1962 Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages establishes that all States Parties should take "legislative action to specify a minimum age of marriage" (Arts. 1, 2 and 3) (United Nations, 1962[4]). Furthermore, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) states "the betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect" (Art. 16 (2)) (United Nations, 1979[5]). More recently, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims to "eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage" under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 5.3 (United Nations, 2016[6]). In addition, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries have committed to the 2013 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Elimination of Violence against Children in ASEAN, which recognises the importance of reinforcing regional efforts to protect children from all forms of violence, including child marriage (ASEAN, 2013[7]).

Southeast Asian governments have made progress towards ending child marriage. In 2019, ASEAN governments took a strong stance against child, early and forced marriage by organising a regional forum with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and Plan International to recognise the multiple challenges of tackling this discriminatory practice and mobilise various stakeholders to accelerate actions towards its elimination by 2030 (ASEAN, 2019[8]). Child marriage is prohibited in six countries[1] in the Southeast Asian region. Since the last edition of the SIGI in 2014, Indonesia reformed the Marriage Act in 2019; this raised the minimum legal age for marriage to 19 years for girls, with parental consent. Prior to this amendment, the Marriage Act allowed girls to legally marry at the age of 16 years and boys to legally marry at the age of 19 years, with parental consent (Government of Indonesia, 2020[1]). Furthermore, five countries[2] have implemented public measures to generate social support for the enforcement of laws on the minimum legal age for marriage. In Lao PDR, for instance, the 2016-2020 National Plan of Action on Mothers and Children aims to curb child marriage, including by training individuals to disseminate information on child marriage at the district and provincial levels (CRC, 2017[9]). In addition, four countries[3] stipulate legal sanctions for those facilitating the marriage of boys and girls who are under the minimum legal age for marriage. In Singapore, a special marriage licence is required for those wishing to marry under the age of 18 years, and they are required to attend a mandatory marriage preparation programme. Individuals who enter themselves or their children into marriage are convicted and punished, with no more than three years' imprisonment and a fine not exceeding SGD 5 000 (Singapore dollars). The same punishment is valid for any Registrar who issues a marriage licence outside the laws laid down in the Women's Charter (Government of Singapore, 2009[10]).

The Southeast Asian region has relatively low levels of child marriage compared to the global average and other developing regions. On average, 11.6% of women in the region between the ages of 15 and 19 years are married, divorced or widowed, compared with 16% globally and 23% in Southern Asia. At the regional level, this ranges from less than 1% in Singapore to 20% in Lao PDR (Figure 2.1). Between 2014 and 2018, the proportion of child marriage among girls increased slightly, from 10.6% to 11.6%.

Figure 2.1. Girl child marriage in Southeast Asia remains relatively low compared with the rest of the world

Share of women aged 15-19 years who have been or are still married, divorced, widowed or in an informal union, 2014 and 2018



Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2019[11]), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://doi.org/10.1787/ba5dbd30-en.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229901

Legal loopholes still undermine positive advances in efforts to protect girls' rights and end child marriage by 2030. In five countries,[4] girls may still marry under the age of 18 years in exceptional cases. In Cambodia, for instance, if one of the parties has attained the age of majority of 18 years and the other party is a minor who is at least 16 years of age, the parties may marry with parental or judicial consent (Government of Cambodia, 2007[12]). The legal frameworks of Timor-Leste and Thailand allow girls to marry under the age of 18 years, which translates into high levels of discrimination in this indicator. In Timor-Leste, the minimum legal age for marriage is set at 16 years for both sexes and for all groups of persons, despite the age of majority being set at 17 years (Government of Timor-Leste, 2011[13]). In Malaysia, either civil or sharia law can determine the minimum legal age for marriage. Under sharia law, the minimum legal age for marriage is 16 years for females and 18 years for males, with an exception that permits Muslim girls and boys under these ages to marry with the permission of the Sharia Court (Government of Malaysia, 2006[14]).

The persistence of discriminatory practices and customary laws in the Southeast Asian region compromises the region's efforts to eradicate child marriage. In all Southeast Asian countries, customary laws and traditional practices allow and encourage child marriage. In Indonesia, for instance, the practice of child marriage is largely influenced by socio-economic and cultural factors such as poverty, economic dependency, financial incentives and dowry practices, as well as a lack of access to education and health services (UNICEF, 2016[15]). Similarly, in Thailand, the "bride price" practice is common and pressures women and their families into accepting early and child marriages (Laiphrakpam and Aroonsrimorakot, 2016[16]). In Malaysia, a high number of Muslim teenagers are reported to marry just before reaching the minimum legal age for marriage. This is often due to early unintended pregnancies and religious taboos around sex outside of marriage, whereas in poorer communities, many girls often get married at a young age to ensure their families' economic survival (Girls Not Brides, n.d.[17]).

Legislation on equal household responsibilities should be strengthened to foster gender equality in the home

Gender equality in the family sphere is a fundamental stepping stone to foster women's empowerment in other areas and plays a key role in the well-being of families and societies. Women's and men's equal rights and responsibilities in the family sphere are enshrined in international treaties and benefit from a wide international consensus. The CEDAW affirms women's and men's equal rights and responsibilities as parents (Art. 16 (c)) and acknowledges that women have the same rights and responsibilities as men concerning guardianship, wardship and trusteeship of children (Art. 16 (g)) (United Nations, 1979[5]). In addition, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action promotes men and women sharing equal responsibility for the family and considers equality's critical role in their well-being and in that of their families (Art. 15) (Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995[18]). SDG target 5.4 advocates "the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family" and highlights the need to "recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work" (United Nations, 2016[6]). Furthermore, regional commitments include the adherence of ASEAN countries to the 2010 Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children. Governments specifically aim to strengthen "family resilience – as the basic units of society – and the capacity of families in meeting new challenges arising from rapid social economic and environmental/climate changes through the establishment of an ASEAN network for family development" (ASEAN, 2010[19]).

The majority of Southeast Asian countries have comprehensive legal frameworks that address women's rights regarding parental authority. Eight countries[5] grant wives and husbands equal parental authority and the same rights and responsibilities with regard to their children during marriage. In Viet Nam, the 2014 Law on Marriage and Family proclaims equal rights and obligations between husbands and wives, as well as between parents. In this respect, married couples must share family work and jointly agree on their domicile. Both parents share the obligation to meet their family's essential needs, to jointly care for and raise their children and to act as their legal guardians regardless of their marital status (Government of Viet Nam, 2014[20]). Similarly, in Timor-Leste, parental authority belongs to both parents, whether married or not, and either can be granted the right to be the legal guardian of their children (Government of Timor-Leste, 2011[13]). In other countries, plural legal systems complicate the application of equal parental authority for mothers and fathers where customary or religious laws contradict civil law and discriminate against women.

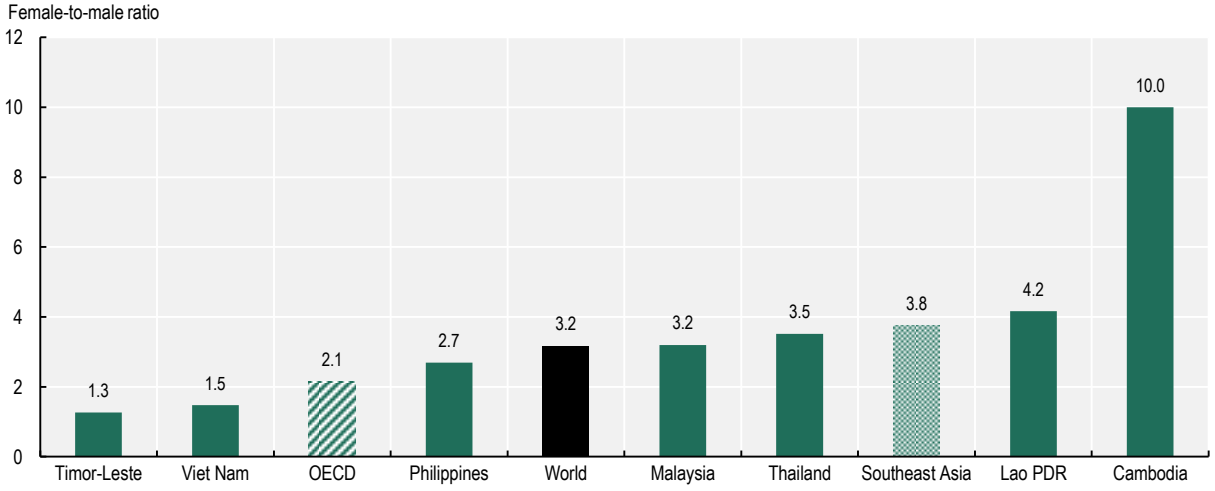
There are only three Southeast Asian countries where the law does not recognise women's equal status in the family sphere. Women's status in the private sphere remains subordinate to their husband's authority in Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia. In these countries, the man is solely recognised as the head of household, and/or women are required by law to obey their husbands. For instance, Indonesia's Civil Code explicitly establishes that men are the heads of households, and women must obey their husbands and are obliged to live wherever their husbands deem fit (Government of Indonesia, 1847[21]). Furthermore, in Brunei Darussalam, there are legal consequences if a wife disobeys her husband. Therefore, a wife will lose her husband's financial support if she unreasonably refuses to obey his lawful wishes or commands – for instance, if she refuses sexual relations with her husband, if she leaves her husband's home against his wishes, or if she refuses to move with her husband to another home or place without any valid reason (OECD Development Centre, 2019[22]). In Malaysia, women who wilfully disobey any order lawfully given by their husbands commit an offence and are punished with a fine (Government of Malaysia, 1984[23]).

Women in the Southeast Asian region continue to assume the bulk of unpaid care and domestic work. In 2014, women spent, on average, 2.9 times more time on unpaid care and domestic work than men did, including raising children, caring for sick or elderly family members, and managing household tasks. Since the third edition of the SIGI in 2014, little progress has been made in reducing the disparity between women's and men's care responsibilities. In 2018, women spent, on average, 3.8 times as long as men on

unpaid care and domestic work in the seven countries[6] for which data are available. This gap is largest in Cambodia, where women spend approximately three hours on this work for every 18 minutes spent by men (Figure 2.2). The gender gap in time spent on domestic work reflects traditional societal views about women's roles in the family sphere, which translate into the roles that society accepts for women in the public sphere. Indeed, in four Southeast Asian countries[7] for which data are available, 45% of the respondents declare that children will suffer when a mother works for pay outside the home.

Figure 2.2. The distribution of unpaid care and domestic work between women and men remains unequal across Southeast Asian countries

Female-to-male ratio of unpaid care and domestic work, 2018



Note: Data are missing for Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Myanmar and Singapore. Global, OECD and subregional averages are calculated on the sample of countries for which data are available.
Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2019[11]), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://doi.org/10.1787/ba5dbd30-en.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229920

Discriminatory practices within the household are prevalent across some Southeast Asian countries, thus limiting women's ability to exercise their parental authority. In practice, social expectations of the division of responsibilities within the family show a strong preference for traditional gender roles. Men are expected to be the main breadwinners, whereas women are primarily expected to take care of the family home and to look after their children. In Cambodia, for instance, discriminatory social norms consider women to be less competent than men in regard to family finances and decision making, and thus they have less power than men to make decisions about their family (STAR Kampuchea and ILC, 2013[24]). Similarly, in Viet Nam, patriarchal attitudes persist in practice, with husbands being heads of households and wives being responsible for housework and childcare under the subordination of their husbands (Jones et al., 2014[25]).

Divorce rights are guaranteed in the majority of Southeast Asian countries, but child custody practices offer a mixed picture

Ensuring women's right to divorce contributes to their empowerment and especially to their ability to evade violent partners without having their parental authority threatened. Although women's entitlement to equality on and after divorce is not considered a human right, international frameworks have acknowledged

it. For instance, the CEDAW calls on States Parties to eliminate discrimination against women at the inception of and during marriage, and at its dissolution by divorce (Art. 16 (1)) (United Nations, 1979[5]).

The majority of countries in the Southeast Asian region grant women and men equal rights to initiate divorce. Divorce laws in eight Southeast Asian countries[8] put women on an equal footing with men. For example, in Viet Nam, the 2014 Law on Marriage and Family proclaims equal rights for husbands and wives to file for divorce and allows for filing by mutual consent or at the request of one spouse. In addition, domestic violence is considered valid grounds for divorce (Government of Viet Nam, 2014[20]). Decree No. 126/2014/ND-CP further protects women by stipulating that the practice of forcing children to live with their father after a divorce, or forcing the mother to return wedding gifts to her ex-husband's family, are prohibited (Government of Viet Nam, 2014[26]). In Thailand, previously, only husbands could divorce their wives for adultery, but the Civil and Commercial Code has been amended to give both spouses equal rights when it comes to the right to divorce (Government of Thailand, 1925[27]).

Women and men continue to share legal parental guardianship after divorce in the majority of countries[9] in the Southeast Asian region. In Cambodia, in instances of divorce, the spouses may agree on custody of their child or children and if an agreement cannot be reached, a court will decide custody as part of the divorce proceedings (Government of Cambodia, 2007[12]). Similarly, in Thailand, both spouses are expected to contribute to the maintenance of their children, and women and men have equal rights to guardianship following divorce (Government of Thailand, 1925[27]). In Lao PDR, parental rights continue after divorce, in which case child custody is jointly determined by both parents or is awarded to either parent by the court if an agreement cannot be reached between them (OECD Development Centre, 2019[28]).

However, obstacles remain concerning women's ability to exercise their right to file for divorce. In particular, women's right to divorce is weakened by restrictions that limit when they can legally file for divorce. For example, the law may prohibit women from filing for divorce when they are pregnant,[10] or only allow women to demand a legal separation or petition the nullity of a marriage under certain circumstances.[11] In the Philippines, infidelity, physical abuse and abandonment are grounds for legal separation, but do not constitute causes for annulment of a marriage (Government of the Philippines, 1987[29]). This means that if a woman's husband has committed one of these acts, she must remain legally married to him. A bill to legalise divorce on the grounds of "irreparable breakdown of the marriage and total non-performance of marital obligations" failed to pass in the 15th (2010-13) and 16th (2013-16) Congress. The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) lobbied for a divorce law to be passed in the 17th Congress (2016-19). However, progress was made in 2020 as the Committee on Population and Family Relations of the Philippine House of Representatives approved the Marriage Dissolution Bill (Library of Congress, n.d.[30]). In other countries,[12] the legal frameworks prohibit women from remarrying within a specified period after divorce. In Cambodia, under current legislation, a divorced woman may not remarry until 120 days have elapsed since the date of the dissolution or annulment of her previous marriage. The passing of the Civil Code in 2007 reduced the number of days from 300 to 120 (Government of Cambodia, 2007[12]).

Pervasive customary and religious practices continue to hinder women's right to file for divorce in only a few countries. In some Southeast Asian countries, civil legal frameworks may be subject to personal laws based on religious jurisprudence that sometimes contain discriminatory provisions against women and stipulate different divorce requirements for women and men. For instance, in some countries, men have the unilateral right to divorce repudiation without resorting to legal proceedings (*talaq*), whereas women are required to seek legal recourse and justify their decision in a court of law. In Singapore, while men have the right to divorce by pronouncing *talaq*, women can only obtain a divorce through breach of marriage or against specific grounds, such as if her husband has been imprisoned, is impotent, is insane, treats his wife with cruelty, or has more than one wife and did not receive approval for this (Government of Singapore, 1996[31]). In Malaysia, under the civil law, women have the same rights as men to initiate divorce. The 1976 Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act provides that couples may seek a divorce and determine the terms of the divorce by mutual consent (Government of Malaysia, 2006[14]). However, under

the Islamic Family Law (Federal Territories) Act, the Sharia Court can order a divorce and permit a husband to pronounce a *talaq* in court. Conversely, women can only divorce their husbands on grounds based on the prescribed *ta'lik*,[13] including failure to provide financial maintenance, absence of the husband for a period exceeding four months, or on the grounds of violence against the wife (Government of Malaysia, 1984[23]).

Child custody practices offer a mixed picture across Southeast Asian countries. In countries where Islamic law is applied, the Sharia Court typically grants the mother the care and custody of children under a certain age. For instance, in Brunei Darussalam, the mother is vested with the custody of her children who are not *mumayyiz* (a child who has attained the age of being capable to differentiate a matter) upon divorce. While the law does not specify the age of children who are *mumayyiz*, it is defined as a child who is capable of forming his or her own views on a matter. However, a woman will lose custody of her children under the following circumstances: if she marries another man, if she exhibits bad behaviour, if she changes her place of residence with the intention of preventing the father from exercising the necessary supervision of the child, if she becomes an apostate, or if she neglects or abuses her children (Government of Brunei Darussalam, 2000[32]). In other countries, such as Thailand and Timor-Leste, male judges often give child custody to the father, whereas in practice the mother ends up being responsible for taking care of the child. Unlike other countries, Cambodia does not provide for the possibility of joint custody after divorce. Based on domestic jurisprudence, custody is generally granted to the mother. The parent who loses custody rights, however, maintains the right to be consulted on matters relating to the child's or children's well-being, including in relation to education and possible change of residency (OECD Development Centre, 2019[33]).

The enforcement of inheritance rights is key to women's economic empowerment in Southeast Asian countries

Equal inheritance rights are a key precondition for women's economic independence and empowerment. Women's equal inheritance rights are also closely linked with asset ownership and financial inclusion. Restricted inheritance rights, together with discriminatory practices, may result in an increase in the incidence of poverty among widows and daughters. The international community has acknowledged the importance of guaranteeing equal inheritance rights in various international declarations. For instance, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action calls on governments to undertake legislative and administrative reforms to give women and girls full rights to the inheritance of land and other property (para. 60 (f)), and to review national inheritance tax systems in order to eliminate any existing bias against women (para. 165 (f)) (Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995[18]). In addition, the General recommendation No. 29 on article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution) establishes the principle of equal treatment of surviving females and males, and prohibits the disinheritance of the surviving spouse (para. 53) (United Nations, 2013[34]). More recently, SDG target 5.A calls on all governments to "undertake reforms to give women equal rights to […] inheritance" (United Nations, 2016[6]).

Women's and girls' inheritance rights are guaranteed by legislative frameworks, but the enforcement of these rights could be further strengthened. Nine countries[14] in the Southeast Asian region give female surviving spouses and daughters the same rights as their male counterparts to inherit land and non-land assets. Furthermore, almost all Southeast Asian countries[15] ensure that women have the same rights as men to make a will. However, the lack of properly enforced inheritance rights can have negative economic consequences for women. In the Southeast Asian region, only four countries[16] prohibit disinheritance of the surviving spouse and, among these countries, only Lao PDR and Viet Nam criminalise property dispossession or "inheritance grabbing". For instance, in Viet Nam, disinheritance of surviving spouses is explicitly prohibited, including after remarriage, and property dispossession is criminalised in its many forms. Moreover, Decree No. 126/2014/ND-CP stipulates that the practice of dispossessing surviving

wives of their inheritance or of their wedding presents should be eliminated (Government of Viet Nam, 2014[26]).

Customary, religious or traditional practices or laws affect women's inheritance rights in multiple ways, thus limiting women's economic prospects given the region's large farming and agriculture sector. In 9 out of 11 countries[17] in the region, women and daughters face discrimination concerning inheritance rights. This is due in part to the legal recognition of customary laws concerning the family code, which in Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand include discriminatory provisions against women's and girls' rights to inherit equal shares as men and boys. For example, in Brunei Darussalam, according to sharia law, daughters are awarded one-half of what sons are awarded in the distribution of family inheritance. Additionally, a female surviving spouse will inherit one-quarter of her deceased husband's property if there are no children and one-eighth if there are children (Government of Brunei Darussalam, 2011[35]). Even where the legal code does not discriminate, discriminatory practices such as son preference in some countries mean that women and girls may receive a smaller share of the inheritance than their male relatives, or none at all. For example, in Lao PDR, in patrilineal ethnic groups – such as the *Hmong, Khmu, Phounoy, Makong, Mien* and *Lolo* – sons inherit the land and parental home, and the son caring for the parents until their death receives a larger share of the inheritance, as well as the house. *Khmu* daughters are altogether excluded from inheritance if they have married and left the house, and *Makong* widows are also excluded from any inheritance because all rights are passed on to their children (Ministry of Justice Law Research; International Cooperation Institute; UNDP, 2011[36]).

In practice, women's right to inheritance is also affected by the low rate of registration of customary marriages and by the habitual transmission of property to the eldest surviving male heir in the case of customary marriages, if the surviving spouse is a woman. Moreover, the traditional inheritance system regulated by matrilineal and patrilineal lines is still dominant across Southeast Asian countries, especially in rural areas. The practice of widow inheritance, a custom dictating that a man's widow should be cared for by her brother-in-law, continues to be prevalent in some countries. This custom has been criticised for objectifying women as property to be inherited, rather than beneficiaries capable of inheriting from the estates of their husbands.

Restricted physical integrity is the dimension in which the Southeast Asian region scores the best

Women's control over their own bodies plays a significant role in increasing their agency and empowerment. In the Southeast Asian region, various issues limit women's right to physical integrity, including the numerous forms of violence against women and the legal frameworks that limit women's reproductive autonomy. Restrictions on physical integrity prevent women from pursuing their goals in the public and private spheres, such as through education and employment.

"Restricted physical integrity" is the dimension in which the Southeast Asian region scores the best among the four dimensions of the SIGI, with a relatively low level of discrimination. The average SIGI score in this dimension is 24 across nine countries[18] for which data are available, compared with an average of 12 for OECD member countries and a global average of 22. Cambodia is the region's best performer in this dimension, with a score of 14. The "Violence against women" indicator is the most significant issue within the "Restricted physical integrity" dimension in the Southeast Asian region. The region's average score in this indicator reaches 46, compared with 29 in OECD member countries and 40 at the global level.

Policy options to guarantee women's physical integrity

- Provide all women with legal protection from all forms of gender-based violence – notably new forms of violence such as online harassment and stalking – in all places, such as public spaces and schools.

> *In **Lao PDR**, in 2015, the National Assembly passed the Law on Preventing and Combatting Cyber Crime. The law establishes legal provisions to protect women and girls from being victims of cyber pornography (Government of Lao PDR, 2019[37]).*

- Ensure the effective enforcement of the law. Ensure that women can seek legal redress under the formal justice system and that this right cannot be taken away by customary, religious or traditional practices or laws. Ensure that protection and support services are available for victims of gender-based violence and facilitate women's access to the law enforcement and justice systems.

> *In **Viet Nam**, the Criminal Procedure Code was amended in 2015 to provide adequate protection mechanisms to victims and survivors of gender-based violence as well as other persons involved in legal actions. The amendments aim to put in place mechanisms to guarantee the security of the denunciator, witnesses and victims in order to protect them against further harm (Government of Viet Nam, 2019[38]).*

- Policies and interventions must adopt a multisectoral approach to ending violence against women. For example, supporting women's access to economic empowerment opportunities can enhance their status within the household or increase their ability to leave abusive relationships.

> *In 2017, the Government of **Timor-Leste** approved the second phase of the National Action Plan Towards Gender-Based Violence. The National Action Plan aims to strengthen the multisectoral approach, which was established during the first stage of the implementation of the National Action Plan, and it also aims to reinforce the continued joint efforts between civil society organisations (CSOs) and the government to eliminate violence against women. For instance, the government, in partnership with CSOs, has set up "Safe Rooms" to provide a secure place and specialised support services to victims and survivors of gender-based violence (Government of Timor-Leste, 2019[39]).*

- Include female genital mutilation modules in national surveys systematically, in order to monitor its use or prevalence.

> *In **Indonesia** in 2013, the National Institute of Health Research and Development of the Ministry of Health carried out the first nationally representative household survey on the prevalence of female genital mutilation and cutting. The survey on female genital mutilation and cutting was incorporated into the Basic Health and Research Survey conducted in 33 provinces and 497 cities across the country (UNICEF, 2013[40]).*

- Criminalise the practice of female genital mutilation and establish penalties for all perpetrators, including parents and medical practitioners.
- Adopt comprehensive strategies to help shift son-biased social norms. Enact non-discriminatory legislation to address the root causes of son preference: grant women and men the same legal status, rights and responsibilities in the family and society, particularly in areas such as marriage, inheritance, dowries, family headship or parental authority.
- Adopt a human rights-based approach to sexual and reproductive health and rights that safeguards the reproductive autonomy of women and acknowledges that women's decisions about their own bodies are personal and private. Enable women who wish to do so to obtain legal abortions within defined gestational periods.

- Ensure that all women have affordable and secure access to high-quality and culturally accepted family planning and health information and services. Public/private partnerships can broaden access through, for example, subsidised family planning service delivery by private entities and publicly funded voucher programmes or information campaigns.

Violence against women still represents a significant challenge in the Southeast Asian region

Violence against women constitutes a grave violation of human rights and restricts women's ability to maintain political, economic, social and cultural rights and freedoms on an equal basis with men. Violence against women is widely recognised as a fundamental human rights violation. This was formalised in the CEDAW General recommendation No. 19: Violence against women, which obliges States Parties to "ensure that laws against family violence and abuse, rape, sexual assault and other gender-based violence give adequate protection to all women, and respect their integrity and dignity", and to provide "appropriate protective and support services" to victims (United Nations, 1992[41]). In addition, ASEAN countries have also accelerated actions to guarantee putting an end to violence against women. The 2013 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Elimination of Violence against Children in ASEAN calls on ASEAN governments to "strengthen and, where necessary, enact or amend national legislations for the elimination of violence against women and violence against children, and to enhance the protection, services, rehabilitation, education and training, recovery and reintegration of victims/survivors" (ASEAN, 2013[7]). In addition, the 2016-25 ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Women is aimed at institutionalising elimination of violence against women policies and sustained support across pillars and sectors. It urges ASEAN Member States to endorse the following strategies: "devising effective coordinated strategies to prevent violence; protecting victims/survivors of violence; developing and strengthening legal framework; strengthening capacity of individuals and institutions; collecting data and monitoring the efforts through periodic review" (ASEAN, 2016[42]).

Southeast Asian countries are increasingly making efforts to promote the elimination of violence against women. Seven Southeast Asian countries[19] have established a national action plan or policy to support the implementation of legislation addressing violence against women. For instance, the second National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women 2014-2018 is the pivotal policy framework to eliminate violence against women and girls in Cambodia. This plan identified three priority issues: domestic violence, rape and sexual violence, and violence against women with increased risk (Government of Cambodia, 2014[43]). However, the prohibition of mediation in all cases of violence against women is largely missing in Southeast Asia, while the Philippines prohibits particular local governments officials or judges from directing the victim or survivor of domestic violence and offender to alternate modes of dispute resolution such as conciliation or mediation (Government of the Philippines, 2004[44]). Furthermore, six countries[20] have legal exceptions in the form of customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that reduce penalties for domestic violence. Since the last edition of the SIGI in 2014, five Southeast Asian countries[21] have amended laws or established new legislation addressing violence against women. For instance, in December 2014, Lao PDR passed a law on the prevention and elimination of violence against women and children, which encompasses domestic and public violence, including in educational institutions, workplaces and alternative care settings. The law specifies that no custom, tradition or belief can be invoked to justify this type of violence and highlights the multifaceted nature of violent acts (physical, sexual, psychological and economic), listing polygamy and unequal wages as forms of psychological and economic violence against women, respectively (Government of Lao PDR, 2014[45]).

Legislation on domestic violence protects women in the Southeast Asian region. Domestic violence is criminalised in nine Southeast Asian countries,[22] and the legal frameworks of six countries[23] protect women from physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence, and cover abuse from family

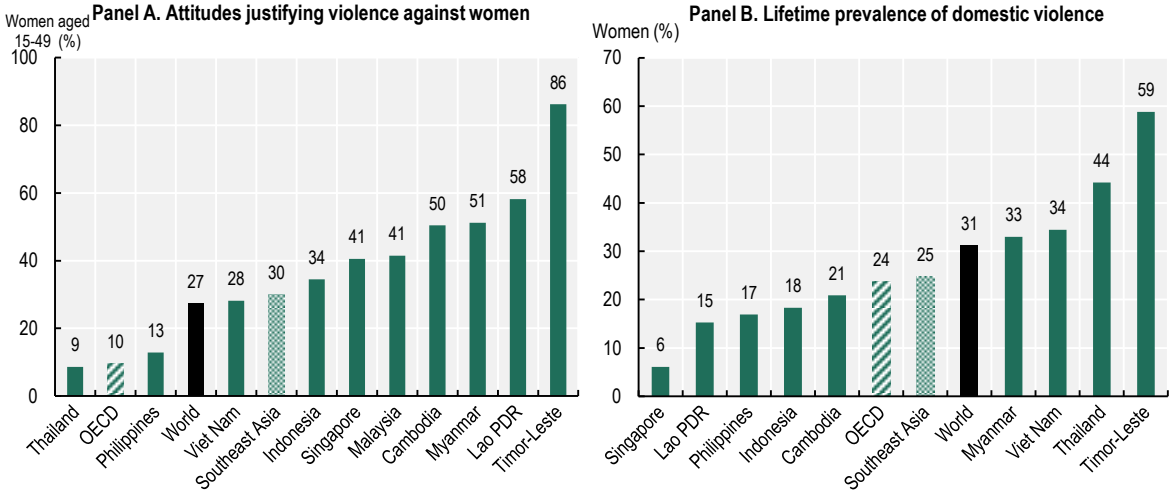
members. In addition, the legislation on domestic violence in nine countries[24] contains specific provisions for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators. For instance, in Cambodia, the law requires that authorities in charge of intervening in cases of domestic violence offer the appropriate assistance to victims of violence, including temporary shelters and urgent medical assistance (OECD Development Centre, 2019[33]). Furthermore, more than one-half of Southeast Asian countries[25] have endorsed a policy or national action plan addressing domestic violence.

Legislation on rape and sexual harassment remains inconsistent across the region. All Southeast Asian countries, with the exception of Brunei Darussalam, have endorsed legislation addressing sexual violence and have criminalised rape. However, six countries[26] in the Southeast Asian region do not include marital rape in the legal definition of rape. Meanwhile, in the Philippines, the law allows perpetrators to escape prosecution if they marry the victim. All Southeast Asian countries except for Indonesia provide legal protection from sexual harassment, but only seven countries[27] in the region criminalise sexual harassment.

Domestic violence continues to be a serious problem in the region. On average, 25% of women have suffered physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime in the nine countries[28] for which data are available. Although this is lower than the global average (31%), it varies across the region, ranging from 6% of women in Singapore to 59% in Timor-Leste (Figure 2.3, Panel B). Since the last edition of the SIGI in 2014, the percentage of ever-partnered women who suffered violence from an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime decreased from 30% in 2014 to 25% in 2018.

Figure 2.3. Prevalence of domestic violence and attitudes justifying it remain high in the Southeast Asian region

Share of women aged 15-49 years justifying the use of domestic violence, and share of women who suffered domestic violence during their lifetime, 2018



Note: Panel A presents the share of women aged 15-49 years who consider a husband to be justified in hitting or beating his wife for at least one of the following specified reasons: if his wife burns food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, or refuses to engage in sexual intercourse with him. Data for Panel A are missing for Brunei Darussalam.
Panel B presents the share of women who suffered intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence during their lifetime. Data for Panel B are missing for Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia.
For both panels, global, OECD and subregional averages are calculated based on the sample of countries for which data are available.
Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2019[11]), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://doi.org/10.1787/ba5dbd30-en; and (World Values Surveys, 2017[46]), *World Values Survey*, http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229939

However, the current estimates of domestic violence rates underestimate the reality. In the Southeast Asian region, widespread perceptions that domestic violence is a private matter and should be resolved within the family prevent women from reporting crimes. Furthermore, the lack of public trust in the justice system and the negative attitudes of judicial officers and law enforcement personnel towards female victims of violence continue to impede the effective prosecution of cases of violence against women. For instance, in Indonesia, a CEDAW report notes that women seeking to use the law to obtain justice in cases of domestic violence have found the process to be lengthy, complicated and ultimately ineffective (CEDAW, 2016[47]).

In addition, the effects of the COVID-19 epidemic may exacerbate the risks of violence against women and set back the progress made in this area in the Southeast Asian region. Recent reports highlight a spike in the cases of domestic violence in some Southeast Asian countries. In Malaysia, the crisis helpline, *Talian Kasih*, registered a 57% increase in calls from women after the lockdown measures were enforced; during this time domestic violence was one of the major concerns. Similarly, in Indonesia, the Legal Aid Foundation of the Indonesian Women's Association for Justice recorded a threefold increase in the total number of reported domestic violence cases two weeks after the introduction of the teleworking and stay-at-home measures (Australian Institute of International Affairs, 2020[48]).

Discriminatory social norms fuel domestic violence. Across the ten countries with available data[29], 30% of women and girls believe that a husband can be justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances: if she burns food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, or refuses sexual relations (Figure 2.3, Panel A). While women in Timor-Leste are particularly likely to condone domestic violence (86%), only 9% of women in Thailand hold these discriminatory attitudes.

Furthermore, human trafficking is one of the worst forms of violence against women and girls and remains a concern in the region. In Southeast Asia, trafficked women and girls encounter high rates of sexual, psychological and physical abuse, including rape, forced abortions and torture. They are usually trafficked for the purposes of sexual and economic exploitation (United States Departement of State, 2020[49]) (see Box 2.1).

Box 2.1. Southeast Asian countries remain a hub for human trafficking

Southeast Asian governments have made great strides to strengthen their legal frameworks to combat all forms of human trafficking. Currently, four Southeast Asian countries[30] are signatories of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. At the regional level, the ASEAN Member States[31] recognised that trafficking in persons represents a violation of human rights and an offence to the dignity of human beings as stated in the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in 2017 (ASEAN, 2017[50]). The ASEAN Member States also established the ASEAN Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which aims to eliminate and punish all forms of trafficking in persons and work towards a comprehensive and co-ordinated regional approach to accomplish these objectives (ASEAN, 2017[50]).

At the national level, countries have enhanced their legislation on human trafficking, and on sexual and labour exploitation. All Southeast Asian countries have criminalised both sex trafficking and labour trafficking, and have prescribed penalties ranging from fines to imprisonment or both. Since the third edition of the SIGI in 2014, four Southeast Asian countries[32] have enacted legislation and made legislative reforms to prevent and combat trafficking in persons (United States Departement of State, 2020[49]). For instance, Singapore passed the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act, criminalising sex, labour and organ trafficking, which came into force in 2015. This is in addition to the Inter-Agency Taskforce on Trafficking in Persons, which was established in 2012 to co-ordinate actions and align

policies between agencies (CEDAW, 2017[51]). Similarly, in 2017, the government of Timor-Leste approved Law No. 3/2017 on the Prevention and Elimination of Human Trafficking (Government of Timor-Leste, 2019[39]).

Despite the adoption of national action plans or strategies to fight against human trafficking and meet international standards, implementation and prosecution remain weak across Southeast Asian countries. Since the last edition of the SIGI in 2014, more than one-half of Southeast Asian countries[33] have adopted national action plans. In 2019, the government of Cambodia formulated and launched the 2019-2023 national action plan to address emerging forms of human trafficking predominantly affecting women and girls, such as surrogacy and sex trafficking at nightclubs (United States Departement of State, 2020[49]). However, only five Southeast Asian countries[34] have put in place measures and programmes aimed at providing medical, physiological and counselling services, as well as protection measures, for female victims and survivors of human trafficking. Across the region, there is an increasing number of girl victims and low conviction rates, a lack of effective mechanisms for the referral of victims to rehabilitation and reintegration services, and the continued stigmatisation and administrative penalties applied to women and girls in prostitution, who are treated as perpetrators rather than as victims (United States Departement of State, 2020[49]).

More data are required to estimate the prevalence of female genital mutilation in some Southeast Asian countries

The practice of female genital mutilation poses a serious threat to women's physical integrity, health and overall well-being, and encompasses "all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injuries to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons" (WHO, 2018[52]). Female genital mutilation is internationally recognised as a harmful practice and a violation of women's and girls' human rights. For instance, the CEDAW, in particular General recommendation No. 14: Female circumcision calls on States Parties to "take appropriate and effective measures with a view to eradicating the practice of female circumcision" (United Nations, 1990[53]). Most recently, the international community has played a crucial role in bringing attention to the harmful consequences of female genital mutilation and advocating for campaigns to end it. SDG target 5.3 explicitly aims to "eliminate all harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation" (United Nations, 2016[6]).

The lack of available data suggests that female genital mutilation is not a concern in most Southeast Asian countries, with the exception of Indonesia. No country in the region has passed a law to specifically criminalise female genital mutilation. Since the third edition of the SIGI in 2014, the Indonesian government has affirmed through the Ministry of Health Regulation No. 6/2014 that female circumcision has no medical benefit. However, Article 2 of this regulation gives the Council for Health and Religious Consideration the mandate to publish guidelines regarding the facilitation of "female circumcision which guarantees the safety and health of the females who are circumcised and does not mutilate the genitals of the female", thus effectively legitimising the practice (CCPR, 2015[54]). In the absence of clear regulations and legislation related to female genital mutilation, 49% of girls aged 0-14 years have undergone female genital mutilation in Indonesia (as reported by their mothers), compared with 83% in Mali and 51% in Mauritania (UNICEF, 2019[55]).

Evidence suggests that female genital mutilation is prevalent among certain religious groups in a few Southeast Asian countries. In four countries,[35] customary, religious or traditional practices or laws allow and encourage this harmful practice. For instance, in Brunei Darussalam, the Committee on the Rights of the Child reports on the persistence of female genital mutilation, which is legally defined in Brunei Darussalam as female circumcision. The Ministry of Religious Affairs reportedly recognises female circumcision as a religious rite (OECD Development Centre, 2019[22]). Similarly, in 2009, Malaysia's National Fatwa Committee declared a series of fatwas or religious edicts focusing on limiting women's right

to physical integrity. In particular, a fatwa made it obligatory for girls to undergo circumcision during childhood. Even though it did not carry the weight of law, this fatwa deeply influenced the behaviours of the Muslim community in Malaysia (OECD Development Centre, 2019[56]).

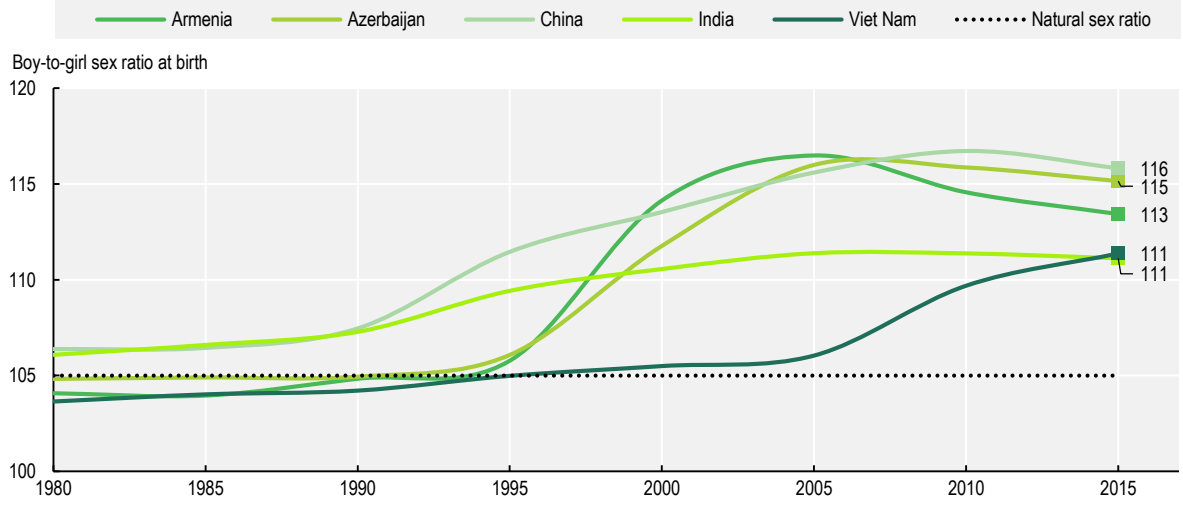
Missing women is an area of concern in Viet Nam

"Missing women" was a concept coined by Amartya Sen, who postulated in 1990 that more than 100 million women were missing due to excess female mortality in some developing countries. This phenomenon is the result of a systematic undervaluation of female children, and results from neglect and higher female infant mortality (Sen, 1990[57]). States have an obligation to eliminate discriminatory practices leading to the phenomenon of missing women. The 1979 CEDAW (Art. 5) requires States Parties to "modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices, customs and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes" (United Nations, 1979[5]).

The missing women phenomenon is a concern in Viet Nam, where the sex ratios are unbalanced when compared with the natural sex ratio. The natural sex ratio among children aged 0-4 years is around 105 boys per 100 girls (ranging from around 103 to 107 boys per 100 girls). It is slightly above what would be expected naturally in Singapore (106.8) and Malaysia (106.9). However, in most Southeast Asian countries with evidence of discrimination in this indicator, there has been a slight to moderate decrease in the sex ratio for children aged 0-4 years between 2010 and 2020. The exception has been Viet Nam, where the sex ratio for children aged 0-4 years increased from 106 in 2005 to 111 in 2015 (Figure 2.4). The imbalanced sex ratio at birth is partly due to the gradually increasing access to affordable sex determination and sex selection technology, which has permitted couples to pursue their desire for one or more sons. In addition, discriminatory social norms foster bias towards sons and undervalue daughters. In Viet Nam, only 11% of the population declared that they would prefer to have a daughter (UNFPA, 2018[58]).

Figure 2.4. Sex imbalances at birth in Viet Nam have spiked since 2005

Sex ratios at birth between boys and girls aged 0-4 years in Viet Nam and selected countries, 1980-2015



Note: Sex ratio between boys and girls aged 0-4 years is defined as the average number of boys per 100 girls.
Source: (United Nations, 2017[59]), *World Population Prospects: the 2017 Revision*, https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229958

The Vietnamese government has taken action at the regional and national levels to reverse unequal sex ratios at birth. The government has issued various regulations and laws prohibiting gender-based sex selection and sex identification of foetuses in any form. In 2013, Decree 176 included penalties for medical practitioners and any other actors performing sex-selective abortions. In addition, the Decree imposes fines for informing parents of the foetus's sex by means of an ultrasound or medical test (Government of Viet Nam, 2013[60]). Outlawing sex-selective abortions and ultrasounds is a key first step to tackling these issues, but it does not address the underlying reasons why the women are missing, or for parents' gender preference. Against this backdrop, Viet Nam has used media campaigns to tackle discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes that undervalue daughters. More recently, the Ministry of Health has established a national strategy entitled Controlling the Imbalance of Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) for 2016-2025 (UNFPA, 2019[61]).

Women's reproductive autonomy rights are limited and often threatened by discriminatory laws across Southeast Asian countries

Guaranteeing women's right to make autonomous decisions about their bodies and their reproductive autonomy is considered an enabling factor in women's empowerment. Women's sexual and reproductive health and rights are enshrined in international agreements. The 1979 CEDAW calls on States Parties to ensure, on an equal basis between men and women, "the same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights" (Art. 16), and to take all "appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of healthcare in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to healthcare services, including those related to family planning" (Art. 12) (United Nations, 1979[5]).

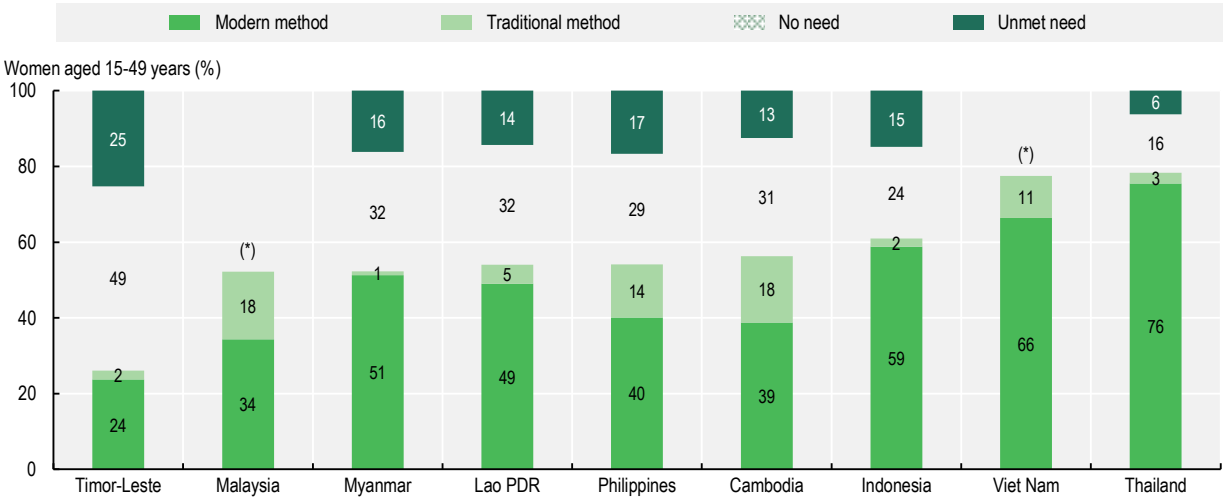
Restrictive legal frameworks often threaten women's reproductive autonomy rights in the case of unintended pregnancy. Abortion on demand is legal in Cambodia, Singapore and Viet Nam within a 6-12- or 24-week gestational limit and at a later stage of the pregnancy under specific circumstances. For instance, in Cambodia, abortion can be sought up to 12 weeks and after this period is permitted in specified circumstances, including in cases of foetal unviability and if the pregnancy is the result of a rape. The most commonly legally accepted justification for an abortion is a serious threat to the woman's life. In seven of the remaining Southeast Asian countries,[36] abortion is illegal unless it is performed to save a woman's life. In Timor-Leste, through an amendment to Article 141 of the Criminal Code introduced on 15 July 2009, abortion constitutes a crime unless it is the only means to save the life of the pregnant woman. The procedure should be authorised by a medical panel or by a physician or health professional in a public health institution, through a medical certificate written and signed by three doctors, and providing the pregnant woman and/or her spouse's consent (OECD Development Centre, 2019[62]). In Indonesia, abortion is only legal in the case of a medical emergency detected in the early stage of pregnancy threatening the life of the mother, or in the case of a pregnancy resulting from rape. The determination of a medical emergency requires a team consisting of at least two healthcare workers and chaired by a physician who has competence and authority (OECD Development Centre, 2019[63]). In Malaysia, under the Penal Code, one doctor can make the decision to carry out a termination, and if the patient is a Muslim woman, the consent of her husband is also required (Government of Malaysia, 1976[64]).

No country in the Southeast Asian region guarantees universal access to contraception and little progress has been made in this area since 2014. Some 13.2% of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) report having an unmet need for family planning. This regional average has increased slightly since 2012 (11%) and 2014 (12.5%). The gap between women's reproductive intentions and their contraceptive behaviour ranges from 6% in Thailand to 25% in Timor-Leste (Figure 2.5). Women's low reproductive autonomy in the Southeast Asian region is linked to a lack of adequate health service infrastructure, a lack of information and awareness, and discriminatory social institutions that restrict women's control over their bodies. Furthermore, adolescent pregnancy remains a concern in some Southeast Asian countries. The region

reports 43 births per 1 000 girls aged 15-19 years, which is in line with the global rate of 42 births per 1 000 girls aged 15-19 years in 2018. However, in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and the Philippines, adolescent fertility is eight points above the global rate.

Figure 2.5.The majority of women in the Southeast Asian region use some method of contraception

Contraceptive prevalence by method and unmet need for family planning for married and in-union women aged 15-49 years, various years



Note: Data cover different years depending on the country, as follows: Indonesia, Lao PDR and the Philippines (2017); Myanmar, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam (2016); Cambodia and Malaysia (2014). Data are missing for Brunei Darussalam. Latest available data for Singapore are excluded because they are too old (1997). Countries are ordered by shares of women using any contraception method (modern or traditional).
(*) Latest surveys used in Malaysia and Viet Nam do not collect data on unmet need for family planning or absence of need for contraception.
Source: (United Nations, 2020[65]), *World Contraceptive Use 2020*, https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/dataset/contraception/wcu2020.asp.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229977

Restricted access to productive and financial resources

Access to productive and financial resources is essential in order for women to gain economic and productive power. Equal access also entails equality between men and women in the labour market, whether in terms of equal remuneration, attitudes towards women's labour participation or women's representation in managerial positions. Throughout the world, it is an essential precondition for achieving women's economic empowerment. SDG target 5.A calls on all governments to: "Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws" (United Nations, 2016[6]).

Yet, numerous factors restrict women's rights and ability to fully participate in their respective countries' economies. Legal and normative barriers that prevent women from entering the labour market and thriving in their jobs preclude women from achieving their full economic potential. These direct factors, which include restrictions on access to economic assets or gender discrimination in the workplace, perpetuate the economic subordination of women. Such restrictions often stem from norms related to masculinities

and the deeply socially entrenched traditional narrative that men should be the breadwinners and control household decisions, including those related to their families' economic tools and assets. These norms also underpin important indirect factors, such as unequal power dynamics within the household or discriminatory inheritance and divorce laws and practices (OECD, 2021[66]). For instance, social norms and practices opposing women working in paid employment are strongly intertwined with the traditional role of women as unpaid caregivers within the household. Meanwhile, inheritance practices can deprive women from owning assets, which has direct implications for their ability to accumulate capital and to seek credit.

The Southeast Asian region displays a medium level of discrimination in the "Restricted access to productive and financial resources" dimension. The region scores 32 in this dimension, compared with a global average of 27 and an average of 13 for OECD member countries. Within this dimension, restrictions on workplace rights constitute the most pervasive form of discrimination. In this particular indicator, the Southeast Asian region scores 47, compared with a global average of 45 and an average of 27 for OECD member countries. Moreover, important discrepancies exist across the eight countries[37] in the Southeast Asian region scored in this dimension, with scores ranging from 12 in Singapore to 67 in the Philippines. Singapore's low level of discrimination in this dimension primarily stems from laws that guarantee women equal rights to access land and non-land assets as well as any type of financial services.

Policy options to address discrimination in access to productive and financial resources

- Continue to develop land titling and strengthen the administrative mechanisms that allow women to claim land titles. In particular, develop the use of joint land titling and implement mechanisms that allow women to add their name to the title of jointly owned land.

  *In **Viet Nam**, the Marriage and Family Law of 2000 and the Land Law of 2001 strengthened joint land titling. The laws mandate that the names of both husband and wife must be recorded on titles of land obtained during the marriage and that any plot under the common ownership of husband and wife by law must be registered under the names of both of them. In 2014, Decree No. 43/2014/ND-CP, detailing a number of articles of the new 2013 Land Law, allowed a spouse whose name is not on the land title to request a competent agency to issue a new title containing both spouses' names (Government of Viet Nam, 2014[67]).*

- Develop integrated financial consumer protection and strengthen financial education frameworks that focus on the needs of specific vulnerable groups.

  ***Almost all of the countries** in the Southeast Asian region have developed education initiatives on consumer rights and responsibilities (OECD, 2018[68]). Among others, Singapore has established MoneySense under the supervision of the Monetary Authority of Singapore and the Ministry of Manpower, which aims to enhance the basic financial literacy of consumers. The programme covers the three tiers of financial literacy: Tier 1 focuses on basic money management such as skills in budgeting and saving, and responsible use of credit; Tier 2 focuses on financial planning to plan for long-term financial needs; and Tier 3 covers investment know-how which aims to increase knowledge about different investment products and skills for investing (MoneySENSE, n.d.[69]).*

- Remove legal provisions that prevent women from accessing certain professions or performing certain tasks.
- Extend the length of maternity leave to the International Labour Organization (ILO)-recommended minimum of 14 weeks and provide beneficiaries with 100% salary coverage. Develop ad hoc mechanisms such as cash transfers to extend maternity schemes to the informal sector.

*In **Lao PDR**, the 2014 Social Security Law allows informal sector workers to join the National Social Security Fund. The coverage provided by this fund includes access to maternity benefits, based on a contribution rate of 9% of the worker's chosen reference wage (Addati, Behrendt and Wagenhäuser, 2016[70]).*

*Similarly, in 2018, under the 105-Day Expanded Maternity Leave Law, the **Philippines** extended maternity leave to 15 weeks, with 100% salary coverage. The law also extended the coverage of maternity benefits to female informal workers, provided that they have remitted to the social security system at least three monthly contributions in the 12-month period preceding the birth of the child (Government of the Philippines, 2018[71]).*

- Develop paternity leave schemes across all Southeast Asian countries and progressively align them with maternity schemes in order to encourage an equal redistribution of unpaid care duties. Ensure as much as possible that paternity leave entitlements are non-transferable to spouse or partner.

*In 2018, the **Philippines** enacted the 105-Day Expanded Maternity Leave Law, which allows a female worker who is entitled to maternity leave to transfer up to 7 of the 105 days of her paid leave to the child's father, regardless of whether they are married or not. The scheme brings the period of eligible paid paternity leave to 14 days (Government of the Philippines, 2018[71]).*

Laws guarantee women's access to land and non-land assets, yet exclude some groups of women

Access to land and non-land assets is fundamental to ensuring women's economic empowerment, independence and control over means of production. Women's equal access to, use of, and control over assets and property is grounded in core international human rights instruments. Among others, Article 2 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises the right to property for all individuals (United Nations, 1948[72]). Article 14.2 of the 1979 CEDAW calls for the elimination of discrimination against women in rural areas, and Article 16.1 explicitly calls on States Parties to take all appropriate measures to ensure "the same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property" (United Nations, 1979[5]). The CEDAW Committee further considers "women's rights to land, natural resources, as well as fisheries as fundamental human rights" (CEDAW, 2016[73]). The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action reiterated the call on governments to "ensure women's equal access to economic resources, including land", and "to formulate and implement policies and programmes that provide access to and control of land" (para. 58(n)) (Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995[18]).

Almost all legal frameworks in Southeast Asia protect women's rights regarding ownership of, access to, and use of land and non-land assets. In this regard, Brunei Darussalam, Lao PDR and Singapore exhibit no discrimination against women in terms of ownership, control, and use of assets and properties. In Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam, only *de facto* discrimination can be found, indicating that legal frameworks protecting women's rights to access land and non-land assets are in place.

Some countries in the Southeast Asian region continue to display legal frameworks that discriminate against women regarding ownership and administration of productive assets. In the Philippines, Articles 96 and 124 of the Family Code grant administrative rights over a couple's assets – including land – to the husband in cases of disagreements between spouses (Government of the Philippines, 1987[29]). In Malaysia, the coexistence of civil law and sharia law under the country's dual legal system translates into legal discrimination against certain women's rights to own and inherit land and property. Although under the Constitution of Malaysia men and women share the same rights to own, acquire, manage and dispose of assets, it does not extend this principle to the private sphere of Muslim communities, where sharia law – coupled with traditional practices – does not always support women's full enjoyment or

exercise of their rights (FAO, 2020[74]). Likewise, in indigenous communities or certain states in Malaysia – and particularly in Sabah and Sarawak – marriages and divorces continue to be governed by native customary law or aboriginal custom, which favours the husband's ownership of assets. Meanwhile, Timor-Leste's legal framework lacks specific laws regulating women's access to land assets in cases of divorce or separation. Similarly, in Myanmar, women retain equal rights under the 2008 Constitution to enter into land tenure contracts and to administer property, but there is no guidance on how women can, in practical cases, defend their rights on the divorce or death of their husband (ADB et al., 2016[75]).

Land titling is a central and controversial issue in Southeast Asia that carries many risks for women. Historically, in the context of Southeast Asia's matriarchal social structures – such as the Cham people in Cambodia and Viet Nam, or the Minangkabau people in Indonesia and Malaysia – women benefited from relatively expansive access to land through communal, traditional and customary occupation of land (Hirsch, 2011[76]). This phenomenon was further magnified by women's significant involvement in the agricultural workforce. However, since the 1980s, Southeast Asian countries have engaged in large-scale land titling campaigns to formalise the ownership, use and control of land. These processes of formalisation and titling can yield many benefits for women (Box 2.2), providing them rights, but existing practices can subvert these processes and carry important risks for vulnerable groups – particularly women. For instance, titling can formalise inequality by fixing land distributions where they were previously negotiable (Hirsch, 2011[76]). Moreover, when formal land titles are issued, traditional practices tend to ignore multiple interests and to favour sole registration under the name of the husband, effectively depriving women of control over land they previously enjoyed in practice (Liamzon, Arevalo and Naungayan, 2015[77]; Rao, 2011[78]). Even in countries with advanced titling legislation, such as Viet Nam, the issuance of joint land titling guaranteeing women's legal ownership of land within the household remains very scarce. In practice, male-only certificates are often issued and mediation of disputes tends to favour men over women (Menon, Rodgers and Kennedy, 2017[79]; CEDAW, 2015[80]). Finally, the process of mapping, registration and titling of land puts many women who have traditionally occupied land at risk of eviction, particularly when occupancy is opposed by powerful interests. In the context of the transformation of Southeast Asia's agricultural sector and the transition from subsistence agriculture to cash crop farming, which is associated with potential land-grabbing practices, this latest point becomes even more critical (Borras and Franco, 2011[81]; Hutchison, 2008[82]).

In this regard, the existing *de facto* forms of discrimination – discriminatory customary, religious or traditional practices – that hinder women's access to productive assets are at risk of increasing. In Cambodia, Indonesia and Timor-Leste, evidence show the existence of customary and religious practices that discriminate against women with respect to the ownership and inheritance of land assets, particularly in the cases of indigenous women (CEDAW, 2019[83]; CEDAW, 2015[84]; CEDAW, 2012[85]). In Thailand, many decisions in remote rural communities regarding the distribution and use of productive assets continue to be made based on customary practices that can severely disadvantage women (FAO, 2020[86]). In Viet Nam, although inheritance laws guarantee equality between sons and daughters, patrilineal inheritance customs, combined with local gender attitudes in some ethnic groups, participate in restricting women's access to agricultural land (Hoang et al., 2013[87]). Against this backdrop, ongoing titling processes in Southeast Asia could increase the discriminatory practices faced by women if no corrective measures are implemented to guarantee that women will not only benefit from the formalisation of land ownership, but will also be represented in the decision-making bodies.

Box 2.2. Land titling in Southeast Asia: Risks, challenges and opportunities for women

Since the 9180s, Southeast Asia has experienced large-scale land titling campaigns

Historically, land title registration has been well established in Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Singapore – although some issues remain regarding the titling of communal land (Jones, 2010[88]).

In other Southeast Asian countries, systematic, large-scale tiling campaigns started as early as the 1950s, but accelerated as of the 1980s. Following earlier incomplete attempts, Thailand, the Philippines (with the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program) and Indonesia (with the Land Administration Project) all initiated comprehensive, systematic land titling programmes in 1985, 1988 and 1995, respectively. Communist Southeast Asian countries initiated their own titling programmes in the 1990s, in the wake of the introduction of market reforms. In Viet Nam, the Land Laws of 1988 and 1993 introduced formal land titles. Lao PDR followed with the start of the Land Titling Project in 1997. Finally, Cambodia converted occupancy and usage rights into ownership rights under the 2001 Land Law (Jones, 2010[88]). Most recently, in 2017, Timor-Leste enacted the Special Regime for the Definition of Ownership of Immovable Property, also known as the Land Law (Government of Timor-Leste, 2017[89]).

Land titling can represent an opportunity for women to improve their tenure security, increase their decision-making power and develop their access to institutional credit

The central question is whether this process of land registration benefits women and enhances their secured access to land. Conceptually, land titling represents an opportunity to advance women's economic empowerment. It provides:

- **Tenure security**: By recognising and formalising existing rights, land titling provides tenure assurance. In this regard, it provides the legal landowner with legal protection against land-grabbing practices or unlawful claims.
- **Incentives for investment**: Land titling encourages productive investment by guaranteeing that the legal landowner reaps the benefits of the resources invested.
- **Access to institutional credit**: Formalising landownership provides the landowner with the necessary legal rights to engage the land as collateral and to successfully seek credit.

As a result of legal reforms setting the framework for land registration, Southeast Asian countries have issued millions of land titles. In some countries, women have largely benefited from these campaigns. For instance, between 2013 and 2019, Cambodia issued more than 2.3 million land title certificates, with 18% of them issued to married and single women and 60% issued to spousal common properties, compared with 13% attributed to married and single men (CEDAW, 2019[90]).

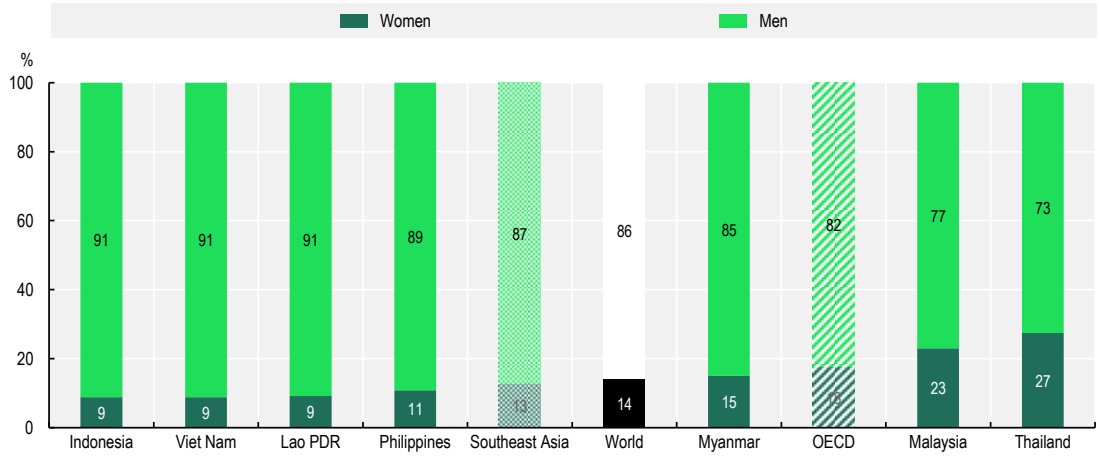
The benefits of land titling are particularly relevant to women and can constitute a tool for women's economic empowerment, but only if the implementation of land titling programmes take women into account. This requires making women equal partners in terms of land inheritance and ownership, paying special attention to marital property through joint titling; informing women about their rights to claim legal ownership of land; and developing support mechanisms to help women claim their rights.

Such discriminatory practices translate into women's limited ownership of agricultural land and houses compared with men. Although lack of data and informal practices make it challenging to produce precise estimates, women represent only 13% of landowners in Southeast Asia – whereas they account for 39% of the agricultural workers across the region (ILO, 2020[91]). The proportion of women in Southeast Asia owning agricultural land is lower than the global average (14%) and is also lower than the average for OECD member countries (18%). It ranges from 9% in Indonesia – where women account for 36% of the agricultural workforce – to 27% in Thailand, where they make up 41% of the agricultural workforce

(Figure 2.6). Likewise, although data on homeownership remain scarce and incomplete, men continue to disproportionately own and control these assets compared with women. Only four countries[38] in the Southeast Asian region have sex-disaggregated data on homeownership, which constrains the analysis and constitutes a major barrier for policy makers in general. In Timor-Leste and Myanmar, 43% and 37% of homeowners are women, respectively. In Indonesia, the share of women among homeowners is 29%. Conversely, the rate is 69% in Cambodia (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2019[11]). Overall, women's limited access to land and non-land assets has far-reaching negative implications that limit their economic empowerment. For instance, the absence of formal land titles proving the ownership of land prevent women from seeking credit. In the absence of collateral, banks are reluctant to lend money, which in turn limits women's ability to start businesses.

Figure 2.6. Men legally own the vast majority of agricultural land in Southeast Asia

Share of women and men among owners of agricultural land in Southeast Asia, 2018



Note: Data are missing for Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Singapore and Timor-Leste. The Southeast Asian average is calculated for the sample of countries for which data are available. The global average is calculated for the 97 countries for which data are available.
Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2019[11]), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://doi.org/10.1787/ba5dbd30-en.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934229996

Women's access to financial services has made great strides

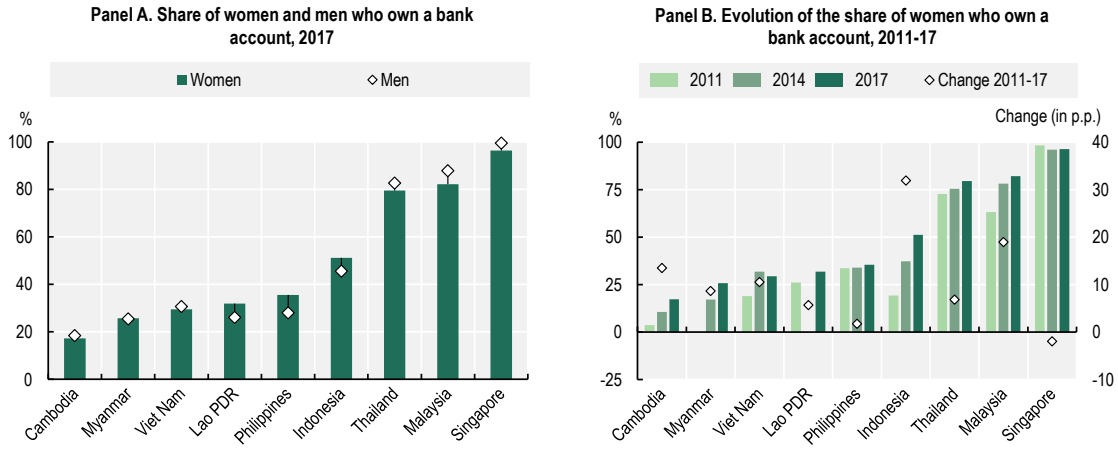
Full, equal and unhindered access to financial services – including owning a bank account – is critical for empowering women with the essential tools for their economic independence and strengthening women's entrepreneurship. Numerous international instruments establish the legal basis for women's right to benefit from equal access to financial services, including Article 13 of the CEDAW (United Nations, 1979[5]), further amended and expanded in 2004 by the CEDAW Committee's General recommendation No. 25 (United Nations, 2004[92]). The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action also acknowledges the need to promote and support women's employment, access to credit and capital, and entrepreneurship (Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995[18]).

All Southeast Asian countries have eliminated all forms of legal discrimination preventing women from accessing financial services – that is, opening a bank account or obtaining credit. Recent progress includes the Philippines, for example, where the Republic Act No. 10963 – also known as the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion Act – was signed into law in 2017 and amended the National Internal Revenue Code (Government of the Philippines, 2017[93]). The new law eliminated some paragraphs referring to the

husband and wife, clearing the legal framework of discriminatory provisions. Overall, six Southeast Asian countries[39] do not show evidence of any customary or traditional practices that could constrain women's access to financial services. In the remaining five countries in the region, customary practices continue to prevent some groups of women from accessing certain financial services. In most cases, these discriminatory customary practices stem from the belief that men constitute the head of the household and are in charge of the household's finances, implying that women must obtain the prior consent of their husband before obtaining credit. In a similar fashion, in rural areas, the absence of women's names on land titles often prevents them from directly seeking credit – because of the lack of adequate collateral – and forces them to obtain it through their husband.

The region's comprehensive and gender-equal legal frameworks translate into equal access to finance for both women and men. Data from the *Global Findex Database* show that the shares of men and women owning a bank account at a financial institution are on par across most countries in the Southeast Asian region (World Bank, 2017[94]). The largest gender gap (seven percentage points) is found in the Philippines, but it is in favour of women, as 35% of women own an account at a financial institution compared with 28% of men. The largest gender gap in favour of men is found in Malaysia, where it reaches six percentage points (Figure 2.7, Panel A).

Figure 2.7. Access to bank accounts remains a challenge for both men and women in Southeast Asia, although progress was made between 2011 and 2017



Note: Panel A presents the respective rates of women's and men's account ownership at a financial institution (as per the definition in the *Global Findex Database*). The gender gap is the difference, in percentage points, between men's ownership rate and women's ownership rate. Data are missing for Brunei Darussalam and Timor-Leste.
Panel B presents the evolution of the rate of women's account ownership. Data are missing for Brunei Darussalam and Timor-Leste. Data for 2011 are missing for Myanmar; data for 2014 are missing for Lao PDR. Change over the period 2011-17 is calculated between 2014 and 2017 for Lao PDR.
Source: (World Bank, 2017[94]), *Global Findex database*, https://globalfindex.worldbank.org.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934230015

Marked progress has been recorded between 2011 and 2017. Over this period, the share of women owning an account at a financial institution has systematically increased in all Southeast Asian countries except for Singapore, where it dropped slightly by two percentage points. In Indonesia, the proportion of women owning an account at a financial institution increased by 32 percentage points, while it increased by 19 and 14 percentage points in Malaysia and Cambodia, respectively (Figure 2.7, Panel B).

Yet, in more than one-half of Southeast Asian countries, the proportion of both men and women owning a bank account remains low, underscoring the low level of financial literacy in certain countries among both men and women. Despite the progress that has been made, the share of both men and women owning a bank account remains below 50% in five Southeast Asian countries.[40] In Cambodia, for instance, only 17% and 18% of women and men, respectively, have a bank account at a financial institution (Figure 2.7, Panel A). The underlying factors exist at both the country level and individual level and, depending on the country, include low economic and financial development, low gross domestic product, low per capita income, unsupportive regulatory environment, lack of product offerings/banking infrastructure, and low levels of financial literacy. Recent studies in the Southeast Asian region show that financial literacy – and, more particularly, financial knowledge – is low compared with OECD member countries. In some Southeast Asian countries, such as Lao PDR and Myanmar, the regulatory frameworks for consumer protection remain weak, which hampers the financial inclusion of the poorest and the most disadvantaged groups (OECD, 2018[68]). OECD's *Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India 2019: Towards Smart Urban Transportation* also pinpoints adults' limited financial literacy and awareness in Indonesia as a major impediment to the development of mobile banking and to bridging the financial inclusion gap (OECD, 2018[95]).

Deeply entrenched social norms and specific legal restrictions hamper women's workplace rights

The protection of women's rights in the workplace is paramount in order to ensure gender-balanced labour participation, economic empowerment and equal remuneration. Many international instruments lay the foundations for the recognition of women's workplace rights, including the CEDAW, which calls for the elimination of all discrimination related to employment, remuneration and choice of profession (United Nations, 1979[5]). National legislation is guided by core ILO conventions that establish key labour standards and promote effective employment equality between women and men. These conventions notably include the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111); the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156); the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183); and the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) (ILO, 2011[96]; ILO, 2000[97]; ILO, 1981[98]; ILO, 1958[99]; ILO, 1951[100]).

In one-third of Southeast Asian countries, women continue to face high levels of legal discrimination that bar them from accessing certain professions or working on an equal footing with men. In four Southeast Asian countries,[41] the law prohibits women from entering certain professions. Moreover, in three of them – namely Lao PDR, Malaysia and Viet Nam – the law contains provisions that limit women's right to work the same hours during the night as men. For instance, in Malaysia, section 35 of the Employment Act 1955 stipulates that women cannot work underground, while section 34 of the Act prohibits women from undertaking night work (Government of Malaysia, 1955[101]). In Lao PDR, Articles 96 and 97 of the Labour Law introduces limitations related to pregnancy. It bars pregnant women from certain types of jobs, forbidding them from undertaking activities deemed hazardous or physically challenging and working at night (Government of Lao PDR, 2013[102]). In Viet Nam, similar work restrictions related to pregnancy are contained in Article 155 of the Labour Code. For instance, overtime and night work are prohibited for women who are more than seven months pregnant or who are nursing an infant (Government of Viet Nam, 2012[103]). Myanmar's Factories Act 1951 introduced extensive restrictions on jobs and tasks women are allowed to perform. It also grants power to the Factory and General Labour Laws Inspection Department to prohibit women from undertaking any type of activity that the department deems dangerous (ILO, 2017[104]; Government of Myanmar, 1951[105]). Finally, in the Philippines, although under the Labour Code women are free to choose whatever profession they wish to pursue, limitations continue to exist for Muslim women who may face opposition from their husband under Article 36 of the Code of Muslim Personal Laws of the Philippines (Government of the Philippines, 1977[106]).

In some Southeast Asian countries, the law also fails to adequately protect women regarding non-discrimination in employment. In Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Myanmar and Singapore, the law fails to mandate non-discrimination in employment on the basis of sex. In these countries, the law does mandate non-discrimination in employment in general, but does not specify sex- or gender-based discrimination. Conversely, the other seven countries in the region have clearly inscribed in their legal frameworks the prohibition on discrimination against women in all employment-related aspects. For instance, in the Philippines, the Labour Code explicitly indicates that "It shall be unlawful for any employer to discriminate against any woman employee with respect to terms and conditions of employment solely on account of her sex" (Government of the Philippines, 1974[107]).

A large majority of Southeast Asian countries have successfully updated their laws to align with the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value. All Southeast Asian countries, with the exception of Brunei Darussalam and Myanmar, have ratified the ILO's Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), Article 2, which states that "each member shall, by means appropriate to the methods in operation for determining rates of remuneration, promote and, in so far as is consistent with such methods, ensure the application to all men and women workers of the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value" (ILO, 1951[100]). Yet, this recognition of the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value (Box 2.3) has not yet been incorporated into the domestic legal frameworks of all Southeast Asian countries. Eight countries[42] in the region specifically mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value in their laws. Most recently, in 2015, Indonesia issued and enacted Government Regulation No. 78, of which Article 11 mandates that every worker is entitled to receive the same wages for work of the same value (Government of Indonesia, 2015[108]). Conversely, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Singapore's laws fail to do so.

Box 2.3. The different concepts of equal remuneration

The principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value, as set out in the Preamble to the ILO Constitution (ILO, 1919[109]), is not the same as equal remuneration for equal work.

Equal remuneration for equal work

The concept of equal remuneration for equal work means that similarly qualified women and men will be paid equally when they perform the same or virtually the same work in equivalent conditions. Therefore, the definition limits the application of the equal pay principle to work undertaken by women and men in the same area of activity and in the same enterprise (ILO, n.d.[110]).

Equal remuneration for work of equal value

The concept of equal remuneration for work of equal value is broader than the concept of equal remuneration for equal work. It encompasses cases where men and women do different work. The concept is based on the idea that when men and women perform work that is different in content, involves different responsibilities, requires different skills or qualifications, and is performed under different conditions, but is overall of equal value, they should receive equal remuneration (Oelz, Olney and Tomei, 2013[111]). Consequently, it requires a means of measuring and comparing different jobs on the basis of objective criteria such as skills, working conditions, responsibilities and effort. In order to determine whether different types of work have the same value, they can be assessed through a job evaluation method.

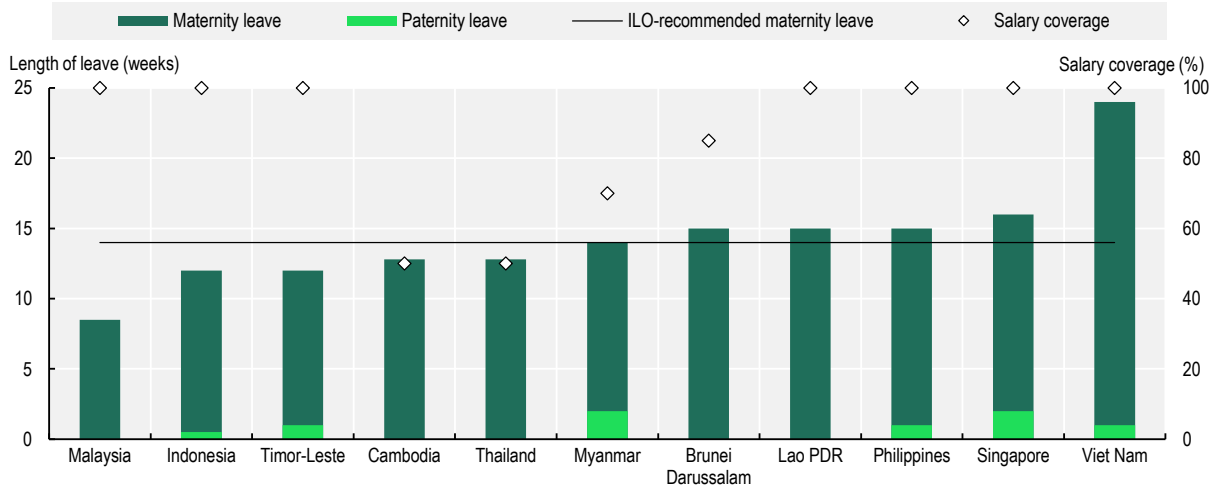
Examples of jobs that have been compared in the context of evaluating equal pay for work of equal value include: caterers and cleaners (mostly women) with gardeners and drivers (mostly men); social affairs managers (mostly women) with engineers (mostly men); and flight attendants (mostly women) with pilots and mechanics (mostly men).

All Southeast Asian countries mandate maternity leave, but length and salary coverage vary greatly between countries. Across Southeast Asia, all countries legally mandate compulsory maternity leave. However, in six Southeast Asian countries,[43] the compulsory length of maternity leave is shorter than the ILO-recommended length of 14 weeks (Figure 2.8). For instance, whereas in Viet Nam the law mandates 24 weeks of maternity leave, the length of the mandatory maternity leave is only 60 days (around 8.5 weeks) in Malaysia (Government of Malaysia, 1955[101]; Government of Viet Nam, 2014[112]; Government of Viet Nam, 2012[103]). Salary coverage also varies across the region. In seven Southeast Asian countries,[44] laws mandate that 100% of the salary should be covered during the woman's period of absence (Figure 2.8). Conversely, in Cambodia and Thailand, the compulsory salary coverage for maternity leave drops to 50%.

Moreover, women's entitlement to maternity leave schemes remains heavily dependent on their formal employment status. In many instances, schemes mandated by the law are mandatory under certain conditions, such as participation in the social security system or a minimum period of formal employment. For instance, according to Article 183 of Cambodia's Labour Law, wage benefits associated with maternity leave are only granted to women who have a minimum of one year of uninterrupted service in the enterprise that employs them (Government of Cambodia, 1997[113]). Conversely, some Southeast Asian countries have begun to address the exclusion of female informal workers from maternity leave schemes. In Lao PDR, the 2014 Social Security Law allowed informal sector workers to join the National Social Security Fund, the coverage of which include access to maternity benefits, based on a contribution rate of 9% of the worker's chosen reference wage (Addati, Behrendt and Wagenhäuser, 2016[70]). Likewise, in 2018, under the 105-Day Expanded Maternity Leave Law, the Philippines extended maternity leave to 15 weeks with 100% salary coverage. The law also extended the coverage of maternity benefits to female informal workers, provided that they had remitted to the social security system at least three monthly contributions in the 12-month period preceding the birth of the child (Government of the Philippines, 2018[71]).

Figure 2.8. Maternity leave is common in Southeast Asia, unlike paternity leave, but length and entitlement vary

Length of maternity and paternity leave and legal salary coverage



Source: (OECD Development Centre, 2019[114]), *SIGI Country Profiles*, https://www.genderindex.org; (ILO, 2020[115]), *Working Conditions Laws Database*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail; and national legislation.

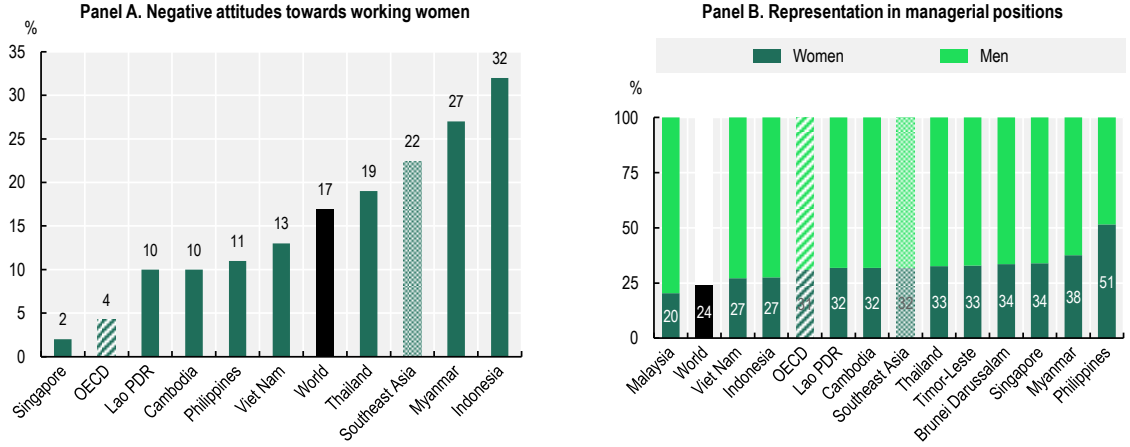
StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934230034

Meanwhile, paternity leave entitlements remain scarce, limited in duration and restricted to formal employees. Six countries[45] in Southeast Asia mandate paternity leave, whereas the remaining five countries do not have any legal provisions granting such schemes. Compared with maternity leave, legally mandated paternity leave is much shorter in duration, ranging from two days in Indonesia to two weeks in Myanmar and Singapore (Government of Myanmar, 2012[116]; Government of Indonesia, 2003[117]; Government of Singapore, 2002[118]) (Figure 2.8). These differences send a strong message regarding the role of men and women in parenthood and uphold unequal divisions of unpaid care labour when it comes to children. Nevertheless, in recent years, some changes have emerged. In 2017, for example, Singapore successfully amended the law to increase the duration of paternity leave to two weeks. As with maternity leave, entitlement to paternity leave heavily depends on the labour status of workers, most notably their participation in the formal sector and in social security schemes. For instance, in Viet Nam, the Social Insurance Law mandates paternity leave for male employees who are paying social insurance premiums (Government of Viet Nam, 2014[112]).

The legal limitations faced by Southeast Asian women in terms of choice of profession or rights to equality in the workplace are magnified by negative attitudes towards working women. In all Southeast Asian countries except for Lao PDR and Singapore, there is evidence of discriminatory customary and traditional practices undermining legal frameworks and restricting women's work-related rights. Moreover, across the region, 22% of the population holds negative attitudes towards working women and believes it is not acceptable for a woman to have a paid job outside the home if she wants one (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2019[11]). In comparison, 17% of the global population, and only 4% of the population in OECD member countries, holds such negative views of women's right to work for pay. Large discrepancies exist across the Southeast Asian region, as negative attitudes towards working women in the region range from 2% in Singapore to 32% in Indonesia (Figure 2.9, Panel A).

Figure 2.9. In Southeast Asia, negative attitudes towards working women are common, while women continue to be underrepresented in positions of economic power

Share of the Southeast Asian population disagreeing with women having a paid job, and share of women and men in managerial positions



Note: Panel A presents the percentage of the population aged over 18 years that disagrees or disagrees strongly with the statement: "It is perfectly acceptable for any woman in your family to have a paid job outside the home if she wants to". Data are missing for Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Timor-Leste. Global, OECD and subregional averages are calculated on the sample of countries for which data are available.
Source: (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2019[11]), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://doi.org/10.1787/ba5dbd30-en; and (World Values Surveys, 2017[46]), *World Values Survey*, http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934230053

In practice, discriminatory legal frameworks and customary practices translate into a lower representation of women in managerial positions compared with men. At the regional level, only 32% of managers in Southeast Asia are women (OECD Development Centre/OECD, 2019[11]). Although women's representation in managerial positions is better in Southeast Asia than at both the global level and the OECD level, it remains far from equality. In some Southeast Asian countries, though, great progress has been achieved. In the Philippines, for instance, data show that women are more represented than men in managerial positions, underscoring the country's many advances achieved in updating its legal framework in terms of workplace rights; in 2018, 51% of managers in the Philippines were women (Figure 2.9, Panel B).

Restricted civil liberties

Civil liberties are the basic freedoms citizens are entitled to from their governments. As established under SDG target 5.5, civil liberties are a precondition for "women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life" (United Nations, 2016[6]). While women's participation in wider social life demonstrates the significant change that has unfolded throughout the 20th century in Southeast Asia, women continue to see their civil liberties constrained by discriminatory laws and social norms. Legal restrictions on women's civil liberties can take various forms, from restrictions on married women's ability to confer their nationality on their spouse to gender-differentiated procedures for obtaining passports. Moreover, women from minority ethnic groups face tremendous discrimination in terms of their access to citizenship, political engagement and justice, and there are numerous examples in the Southeast Asian region of grave human rights abuses.

The "Restricted civil liberties" dimension of the SIGI encompasses citizenship rights, political voice, freedom of movement and access to justice. The Southeast Asian region scores 41 in the "Restricted civil liberties" dimension, denoting a medium level of discrimination against women in this area. Southeast Asia's score in this dimension is considerably higher than the global average score of 29 and the average score of 17 in OECD member countries. Among the eight Southeast Asian countries[46] with SIGI scores in this dimension, there is tremendous variation, from 14 in Viet Nam – denoting a very low level of discrimination – all the way to 57 in Thailand, which indicates a very high level of discrimination against women in this dimension. Viet Nam's success in this dimension is due in large part to the fact that its laws ensure women's rights, regardless of their marital status, to acquire, change and retain their nationality and confer their nationality on their children and spouse.

Policy options to protect and enhance women's civil liberties

- Ensure adequate and specialised legal aid for women and girls, especially those who are from low-income backgrounds or have been victims of violence.

  *In **Malaysia**, the Department of Women's Development has created legal clinics to provide information to the public. These clinics aim to help women by enhancing their knowledge of their rights and available means of legal redress. In addition to the clinics, low-cost legal services are available through various channels, including the Legal Aid Bureau (Government of Malaysia, 2019[3]).*

- Guarantee women's access to the formal justice system by providing mobile court services in rural areas that can accommodate diverse linguistic needs.

> *In **Timor-Leste**, mobile courts have been established and make rounds to different locations (Cummins, 2018[119]). Moreover, Decree No. 11/2017 recognised Tetum as an official language in the judicial sector, thus improving the accessibility of the formal justice system (Government of Timor-Leste, 2019[39]).*

- Provide training for law enforcement and court officials on understanding and responding to gender-based discrimination and violence, as well as intersectional discrimination.

> *In **Cambodia**, the Ministry of Women's Affairs trained judicial police officers in legal procedures and reconciliation processes related to women's rights and domestic violence (Government of Cambodia, 2019[2]).*

- Encourage women's political participation through specialised training and temporary special measures such as quotas and incentives as appropriate.

> *In **Indonesia**, ahead of the 2019 elections, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection provided a module to support women candidates. The training covered the meaning of representation, the electoral system, vote calculations, mapping voter networks and competitors' support, as well as winning strategies. Furthermore, the module provided capital in order to enable female candidates to mount competitive campaigns (Government of Indonesia, 2020[1]).*

- Promote women's capabilities of being effective leaders and decision makers through campaigns to change social norms.

> *In the **Philippines**, the PCW launched the #AgendaNiJuana (Juana's Agenda) campaign ahead of the 2019 elections to call for gender balance in leadership and promote women's political participation and representation (Government of the Philippines, 2019[120]).*

- Pass legislation to provide married women with the same rights as married men to confer their nationality on their children and spouse.

> *In **Lao PDR**, the 2004 Law on Lao Nationality makes no distinctions between men and women and provides equal citizenship rights to both. Specifically, men and women have the same rights to retain their nationality and to confer it on their children (Arts. 10 and 11) and spouses (Arts. 14 and 15) (Lao People's Democratic Republic, 2004[121]).*

Nationality laws uphold gender inequality in citizenship rights

Citizenship or nationality rights are essential to the realisation of other fundamental rights, such as education, social security, employment and political participation. Women's equality with men in this area is enshrined in a number of international agreements, including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 15), the 1957 Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (Art. 1), the 1979 CEDAW (Art. 9) and Resolution 32/7 adopted by the UN Human Rights Council (2016) (para. 3) (United Nations, 1948[72]; United Nations, 1957[122]; United Nations, 1979[5]; United Nations, 2016[123]). Despite these agreements, however, at the regional level, Southeast Asia's score reveals a medium level of discrimination, indicating the continued existence of both legal and non-legal discrimination against women's citizenship rights.

All of the Southeast Asian countries guarantee women's rights to acquire, change and retain their nationality. Women enjoy equal legal status with men regardless of their civil status. Nevertheless, customary, religious or traditional practices or laws infringe on these rights in some countries, namely in Cambodia and Myanmar. For example, in Myanmar, difficulties obtaining government documents are a significant issue, with census data revealing that "almost a third of the population of Myanmar do not have a form of identity document, [and] 54% of those who do not have identity cards are women" (UNHCR; UN

Women, 2018[124]). Underlying these data are insufficiencies in administrative services in rural areas and processing fees that constitute barriers to obtaining identity cards.

In the Southeast Asian region, most legal discrimination pertains to women's ability to confer their nationality on their spouse or children. These laws reflect the view that women gain legal status by having a relationship with a man. In four Southeast Asian countries,[47] women do not share the same legal rights as men to confer their nationality on their spouse. For example, in Thailand, the non-Thai spouses of Thai men have the right to choose their nationality, while the non-Thai spouses of Thai women do not have this right and can only officially acquire Thai nationality by requesting a change (Government of Thailand, 1965[125]). Thailand tried to remedy this in a 2009 amendment by lowering the requirements for the non-Thai spouses of Thai women to apply for Thai nationality (Government of Thailand, 2008[126]). With regard to conferring nationality on children, neither Brunei Darussalam nor Malaysia guarantee women the same rights as men regardless of marital status. While Malaysia allows Malaysian men to confer their nationality on their children born outside of Malaysia, women are not legally entitled to do so in the same manner (United Nations, 2018[127]).

Discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity also prevents women from minority groups from obtaining citizenship and the basic rights and services this legal status entails. In Cambodia, the ethnically Vietnamese *Khmer Krom* – despite being recently registered as permanent residents of Cambodia – lack citizenship rights, leading to their denial of other basic rights, protections and services (United Nations, 2020[128]). In Myanmar, since the 2017 attacks on border posts in northern Rakhine State, Rohingya women and girls have not only been the targets of violence, but also account for the majority of internally displaced persons in Myanmar. Despite the fact that these women and children have remained in Myanmar, they continue to face the systematic denial of their citizenship by the government (United Nations, 2019[129]); (United Nations, 2019[130]).

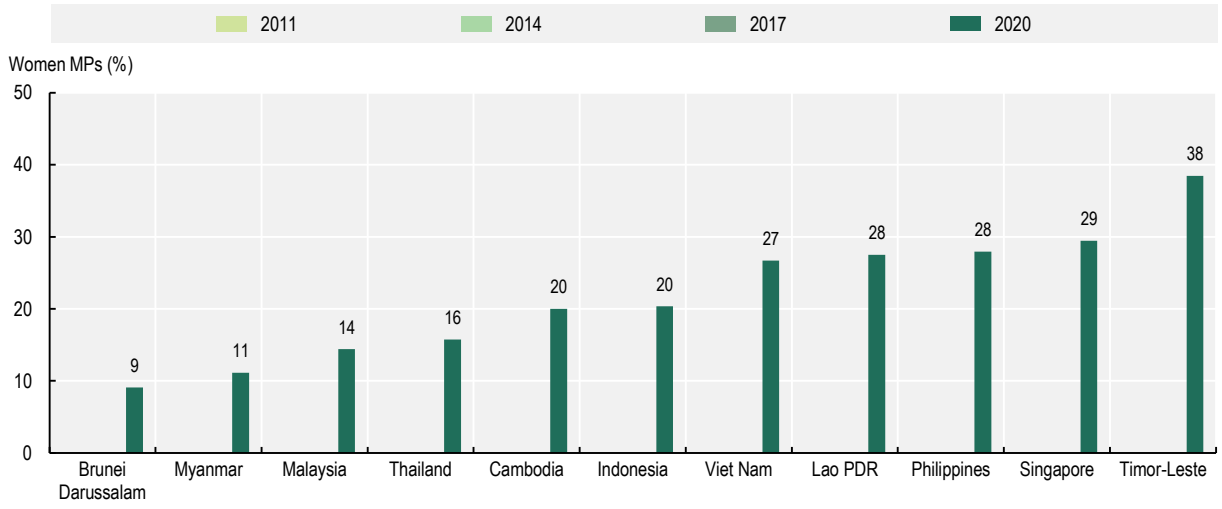
Women's political voice has improved at the national level since 2017

Women's right to participate actively in politics is fundamental to their empowerment and the health of societies. Numerous international agreements have highlighted the importance of women's political voice, including the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the CEDAW (Art. 7). Furthermore, SDG target 5.5 calls on States to "ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life" (United Nations, 2016[6]). Women's political voice is also a regional priority for Southeast Asia, as the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025 establishes a strategic measure to "[e]nsure inclusive participatory and representative decision making at all levels with special attention to the needs of those in disadvantaged situations including ethnic minority groups, children, youths, women, persons with disabilities, and elderly/older persons" (B.2.9) (ACWC, 2018[131]). Moreover, the ASEAN Committee on Women's *Work Plan 2016-2020* includes the objective to "[i]ncrease the proportion of women in leadership…particularly in appointed and elected positions in the public and private sectors" (ASEAN, n.d.[132]).

All countries in the Southeast Asian region provide women with the same legal rights as men to vote and hold public office in the legislative and executive branches of government. However, women remain underrepresented as political decision makers. When the data for the fourth edition of the SIGI in 2019 were calculated in 2017, women accounted for just 19% of the representatives in the lower or single houses of parliament in the Southeast Asian region. However, this figure conceals variation between countries, where women's representation as members of parliament (MPs) ranged from 29% in Timor-Leste to 5% in Thailand. In 2020, Southeast Asian women's political representation has improved, with women accounting for 21% of MPs. This increase is largely due to tremendous gains made by women in Thailand, where the percentage of female MPs increased from 5% in 2017 to 16% in 2020. Despite these gains, this level of representation remains insufficient considering that women constitute approximately one-half of the population (Figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10. Women's representation as political decision makers in Southeast Asia has improved but remains low

Share of women MPs in lower or single houses of parliament, 2011-20



Note: Data for Brunei Darussalam are missing for 2011 and 2014. Countries are ranked by increasing share of female MPs in 2020.
Source: (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2020[133]), *IPU Parline*, https://https://data.ipu.org.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934230072

While the social, historical and institutional characteristics of the political systems throughout Southeast Asia vary tremendously, gender-based stereotypes and discriminatory practices are two of the factors that constrain women's ability to be leaders in politics. On average, 57% of the population in the six countries[48] with available data agrees with the statement: "On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do". Yet, in some places, these negative attitudes regarding women's political leadership are even stronger – such as Malaysia, where 70% of the population reportedly agrees with this statement. In addition to negative attitudes, evidence from six Southeast Asian countries[49] shows that women face non-legal, social discrimination in terms of their right to hold public office. This takes various forms, from practices that drive down women's rates of educational attainment, to political violence against ethnic and religious minorities, to the time burden of unpaid care and domestic work that also prevents women from participating in the labour force.

Quota systems can help promote women's political leadership; however, in Southeast Asia, these measures have yielded mixed results. Four countries[50] in the region have quotas at the local and/or national level. Timor-Leste leads in the region, with its quota mandating that one in every three candidates be a woman, which has led to women holding 38.5% of seats in the upper house (Government of Timor Leste, 2011[134]; Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2020[135]). However, similar national-level quotas, such as those in Indonesia (Government of Indonesia, 2012[136]) and Viet Nam (Government of Viet Nam, 2015[137]), have not yet led to the same levels of representation. While candidate quotas such as these can ensure representation on ballots, they do not always lead to better representation of women in elected positions. At the local level, Timor-Leste's quotas have also been impactful, with the Suco Law (09/2016) requiring at least one female candidate for the election of the village and hamlet chief, which led to a near doubling in the number of female chiefs between 2009 and 2016 (International Women's Development Agency, 2016[138]). The Philippines has quotas at the local level, and other bodies – including development councils and planning bodies – are required to include at least 40% women (Republic of the Philippines, 2008[139]).

Special measures other than quotas are also promising avenues for increasing women's political voice. In the Philippines, political parties have financial incentives to include women, and at least two parties have voluntarily instituted their own quotas (International IDEA, 2020[140]). In Indonesia, Thailand and Timor-Leste training is offered to promote women's political voice (OECD Development Centre, 2019[114]; UNDP, n.d.[141]; UN Women, n.d.[142]). For example, in 2017, Timor-Leste, allocated USD 24 000 of the state's budget to offer municipal-level gender mainstreaming and community-level women's leadership training (OECD Development Centre, 2019[114]).

While legal frameworks generally protect women's freedom of movement, social practices continue to limit women's mobility

Women's freedom of movement is vital for their ability to exercise their civil liberties, access public services and take advantage of opportunities in the public sphere. Freedom of movement is recognised as a universal human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) (Art. 13) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) (Art. 12). Moreover, the CEDAW calls on States Parties to "accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile" (Art. 15) (United Nations, 1979[5]). Despite wide recognition of the right to freedom of movement, countries' legal frameworks fail to guarantee this right to women on an equal basis with men, and social norms and practices continue to constrain women's liberties in this regard.

Most Southeast Asian countries guarantee women's equal access to identity documents and passports, and the ability to travel outside the country. In Southeast Asia, eight countries[51] have legal frameworks that guarantee women's freedom of movement, meaning that women's access to identity documents and passports and their ability to travel outside the country are protected on an equal footing with men regardless of civil status. In the remaining three countries, aspects of their legal frameworks impose constraints specifically on married women. For example, in Myanmar, the law does not give married women the same rights as married men to apply for passports. In Brunei Darussalam, the Islamic Family Law restricts women's mobility by outlawing women from leaving their husbands' homes without permission (Government of Brunei Darussalam, 2000[32]). Based on traditional beliefs of women's subordination to men within marriage, these laws position men as having authority over their spouses.

Discriminatory customary, religious or traditional practices or laws also serve to discriminate against women's right to apply for identity cards and passports in three Southeast Asian countries.[52] In Myanmar, rural women face barriers to obtaining identity documents due to a lack of accessible administrative services (Gender Equality Network, 2013[143]). This is a particularly important issue, as women who lack identity documents face restricted freedom of movement and are unable to register the birth of their children, which impedes their children's access to rights, services and education (United Nations, 2019[129]; UNHCR; UN Women, 2018[124]). In Cambodia, members of the *Khmer Krom* ethnic group struggle to obtain birth certificates and identity documents (United Nations, 2017[144]). In Indonesia, identity card applications require information on religion, but limit applicants to selecting one of the six officially recognised religions (Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism). As a result, members of minority religions, such as the Ahmadiyah, are effectively barred from obtaining identity cards, thus preventing them from registering marriages or receiving medical care at hospitals (Human Rights Watch, 2017[145]).

Public safety is a key aspect of ensuring women's freedom of movement within their cities, regions and countries. SIGI data consistently show that women feel less safe in public than men, both globally and within the Southeast Asian region. Globally, and within OECD member countries, 65% of those declaring that they feel unsafe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live are women. In Southeast Asia, this figure grows to 73%, reflecting even stronger gendered dynamics when it comes to public safety. Nevertheless, this figure varies at the country level. In the Philippines and Singapore, women account for

61% of the respondents who report feeling unsafe, while this figure grows to 81% in Indonesia. Urgent action is required in order to ensure that women feel safe in their communities and thus empowered to participate actively in public life. One promising initiative is the UN Women's Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Flagship Programme Initiative, in which Quezon City, Philippines and Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam are participating cities (UN Women, 2019[146]). This global initiative aims to shed light on the challenges women face in public space such as sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women, and assist in developing, implementing and evaluating innovative measures to make public spaces safer for women and girls (UN Women, 2019[146]).

Legal pluralism continues to hamper women's access to justice

Women's ability to access justice encompasses redress for rights violations, bringing cases in front of judicial authorities, benefiting from legal aid, accessing courts, obtaining a fair trial with an effective remedy, and providing testimony. Women's equal rights with men to access justice and to a fair trial is guaranteed in the 1979 CEDAW (Art. 15) and its General Recommendation No. 33 (2015), as well as SDG target 16.3, which aims "to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all" (United Nations, 1979[5]; United Nations, n.d.[147]). The ASCC Blueprint 2025 includes a strategic measure to "[p]romote regional inter-sectoral mechanisms towards a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach in enhancing…gender equality, human rights, social justice, and fundamental freedoms of all, especially the vulnerable groups…" (B.3.1) (ACWC, 2018[131]). Despite these commitments, women continue to face barriers due to legal discrimination; customary, religious or traditional practices or laws; and their own lack of confidence in their countries' justice systems.

Nearly all Southeast Asian countries have legal frameworks that guarantee women's access to justice on an equal footing with men. All Southeast Asian countries, with the exception of Indonesia, have legal frameworks that protect women's rights to sue, hold public or political office in the judiciary, and have their testimony carry the same weight as men's in civil, criminal, and family courts and tribunals. In Indonesia, the law does not allow married women to conclude "specific agreements" (Government of Indonesia, 1847[21]). Despite overall strong legal frameworks, discrimination remains a significant issue in customary and religious courts.

In practice, discrimination against women's rights to provide testimony and sue is common in customary and religious courts and tribunals in the Southeast Asian region. In six Southeast Asian countries,[53] women's testimony does not carry the same weight as men's testimony in customary and religious courts and tribunals. This issue highlights the difficulties associated with legal pluralism, or the coexistence of multiple legal systems. The use of customary and religious courts, as well as alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, is common in the Southeast Asian region; however, in the absence of enforcement mechanisms and structures of accountability, they are a site of discrimination against women. In Indonesia, for example, sharia courts and the formal justice system coexist, but the outcomes, especially for women, can vary dramatically, as Islamic laws do not always guarantee women equal rights and treatment as men, especially in inheritance cases (Hussain, 2011[148]). Moreover, in rural Lao PDR, customary judicial mechanisms coexist with the formal legal system at the village level, where Councils of Elders or clan leaders decide cases and resolve disputes. While these informal systems vary across locations and ethnic groups, in general, it seems that decision-making roles are reserved for men (Ministry of Justice Law Research; International Cooperation Institute; UNDP, 2011[36]).

While alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms are an accessible means of pursuing justice, without clear policies and accountability they put women at risk of discrimination. In the absence of accessible fixed courts or mobile courts, women – especially those in rural areas – often turn to ADR mechanisms, such as mediation with a community leader. ADR is often more convenient and less expensive than formal justice proceedings; however, ADR processes can reinforce unequal gender power dynamics and limit women's agency as parties in disputes, thus limiting the potential for just outcomes

(Cummins, 2018[119]). This issue has been widely recognised, however, with countries like Timor-Leste creating mobile courts and planning to harmonise existing formal and customary dispute resolution mechanisms (Cummins, 2018[119]). Furthermore, efforts to provide legal aid aim to make formal justice systems more accessible for women and are becoming increasingly common in the region (Box 2.4).

Box 2.4. Good practice: Legal aid provisions

Countries throughout Southeast Asia are recognising the role legal aid can play in facilitating women's access to justice

Financial constraints can prevent women from pursuing justice, especially in cases of domestic violence. In an effort to eliminate this obstacle, numerous Southeast Asian countries have created mechanisms to provide legal aid, especially to low-income women. Between 2014 and 2019, Cambodia increased the budget allocated for justice services and legal aid for low-income women, and in 2019, sought the collaboration of the Bar Association of the Kingdom of Cambodia in providing pro bono legal services to victims of gender-based violence (United Nations, 2019[149]). Moreover, in 2017, both Malaysia (Legal Aid (Amendment) Bill 2017) and Viet Nam (2017 Law on Legal Aid) passed legislation to facilitate access to legal aid services (United Nations, 2018[127]). In Viet Nam, the 2017 Law on Legal Aid pays special attention to victims of domestic violence (Viet Nam, 2018[150]). Moreover, in Malaysia, the creation of legal clinics by the Department of Women's Development has facilitated women's access to information about their rights and forms of legal redress (Government of Malaysia, 2019[3]).

Women's lack of confidence in the judicial system also prevents them from seeking legal redress for rights violations, including gender-based violence and employment discrimination. Globally, women represent about one-half (51%) of the persons who do not trust the justice system. In OECD member countries and Asia as a whole, this figure drops to 50%. In Southeast Asia, however, women account for 53% of the persons who do not trust the justice system, which at the country level ranges from 42% in Lao PDR to 58% in Myanmar.

References

ACWC (2018), *The ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) Work Plan 2016-2020*, https://asean.org/storage/2019/01/37.-December-2018-The-ASEAN-Commission-on-the-Promotion-and-Protection-of-the-Rights-of-Women-and-Children-ACWC-Work-Plan-2016-2020.pdf. [131]

ADB et al. (2016), *Gender Equality and Women's Rights in Myanmar: A Situation Analysis*, https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/209596/gender-equality-womens-rights-myanmar.pdf (accessed on 13 August 2020). [75]

Addati, L., C. Behrendt and M. Wagenhäuser (2016), *Maternity cash benefits for workers in the informal economy*, ILO, Geneva, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-beijing/documents/publication/wcms_537934.pdf (accessed on 15 September 2020). [70]

ASEAN (2019), *ASEAN calls for ending child, early and forced marriage*, https://asean.org/asean-calls-ending-child-early-forced-marriage/ (accessed on 4 August 2020). [8]

ASEAN (2017), *ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, https://asean.org/asean-convention-against-trafficking-in-persons-especially-women-and-children/ (accessed on 29 September 2020). [50]

ASEAN (2016), *ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Women (ASEAN RPA on EVAW)*, https://acwc.asean.org/resources/other-documents/asean-regional-plan-of-action-on-the-elimination-of-violence-against-women-asean-rpa-on-evaw/ (accessed on 6 August 2020). [42]

ASEAN (2013), *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Violence against Children*, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/WG/ASEANdeclarationVaW_violenceagainstchildren.pdf (accessed on 4 August 2020). [7]

ASEAN (2010), *Ha Noi Declaration on the Enhancement of Welfare and Development of ASEAN Women and Children*, https://asean.org/?static_post=ha-noi-declaration-on-the-enhancement-of-welfare-and-development-of-asean-women-and-children (accessed on 4 August 2020). [19]

ASEAN (n.d.), *ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women (AMMW) Overview*, https://asean.org/asean-socio-cultural/asean-ministerial-meeting-on-women-ammw/overview/. [132]

Australian Institute of International Affairs (2020), *The Disproportionate Effect of COVID-19 on Southeast Asian Women: Case Studies From Malaysia and Indonesia*, http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/the-disproportionate-effect-of-covid-19-on-southeast-asian-women-case-studies-from-malaysia-and-indonesia/ (accessed on 6 August 2020). [48]

Borras, S. and J. Franco (2011), *Political Dynamics of Land-grabbing in Southeast Asia: Understanding Europe's Role*, Transnational Institute, Amsterdam, https://www.tni.org/files/download/Political%20Dynamics%20of%20Land-grabbing%20in%20Southeast%20Asia.pdf (accessed on 17 August 2020). [81]

CCPR (2015), *Indonesia: NGO assessment of the implementation of follow--up recommendations-with the support of Centre for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR)*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/IDN/INT_CCPR_NGS_IDN_19967_E.pdf (accessed on 6 August 2020). [54]

CEDAW (2019), *Concluding observations on the 6th periodic report of Cambodia*, United Nations, New York, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3838743?ln=en (accessed on 17 August 2020). [83]

CEDAW (2019), *List of issues and questions in relation to the sixth periodic report of Cambodia*, United Nations, New York, https://undocs.org/en/CEDAW/C/KHM/Q/6/Add.1 (accessed on 13 August 2020). [90]

CEDAW (2017), *Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Singapore*, http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhskcAJS%2fU4wb%2bdIVicvG05RwNu4B3gFsGLGnHHPdDbcdListPjSxtjh3CsjiKCSARvfmpojkjKAQHbP8QyZctE4gtnnv6T%2bHBYLKwZJ7kJ3NW (accessed on 29 September 2020). [51]

CEDAW (2016), *CEDAW Shadow Report Indonesian National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Nasional anti Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan – Komnas Perempuan) National Human Rights Institution, Independent Report*, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=IDN&Lang=EN. [47]

CEDAW (2016), *General recommendation No. 34 on the rights of rural women*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/INT_CEDAW_GEC_7933_E.pdf (accessed on 13 August 2020). [73]

CEDAW (2015), *Concluding observations on the combined 2nd and 3rd periodic reports of Timor-Leste*, United Nations, New York, http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/817146 (accessed on 17 August 2020). [84]

CEDAW (2015), *Concluding observations on the combined 7th and 8th periodic reports of Viet Nam*, United Nations, New York, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/833896?ln=en (accessed on 17 August 2020). [80]

CEDAW (2015), *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention, Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of States parties due in 2010 : Philippines*, https://www.refworld.org/publisher,CEDAW,,PHL,577e0baf4,0.html (accessed on 5 August 2020). [151]

CEDAW (2012), *Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Indonesia*, United Nations, New York, http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/748335 (accessed on 17 August 2020). [85]

CRC (2017), *Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 44 of the Convention - Second to Sixth periodic reports of States parties due in 2016 – Lao, CRC/C/LAO/3-6,*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fLAO%2f3-6&Lang=en (accessed on 4 August 2020). [9]

Cummins, D. (2018), *Women's Multiple Pathways to Justice: Alternative Dispute Resolution and the impact on women in Timor-Leste*, https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2019/03/tl-multiple-pathways.pdf?la=en&vs=554. [119]

FAO (2020), *Gender and Land Rights Database: Malaysia*, http://www.fao.org/gender-landrights-database/country-profiles/countries-list/customary-law/en/?country_iso3=MYS (accessed on 15 September 2020). [74]

FAO (2020), *Gender and Land Rights Database: Thailand*, Gender and Land Rights Database, http://www.fao.org/gender-landrights-database/country-profiles/countries-list/customary-law/en/?country_iso3=THA (accessed on 13 August 2020). [86]

Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action.pdf (accessed on 20 May 2020). [18]

Gender Equality Network (2013), *Myanmar Laws And CEDAW: The Case for Anti-Violence Against Women Laws*, https://www.burmalibrary.org/docs20/Myanmar_Law+CEDAW-en-red.pdf. [143]

Girls Not Brides (n.d.), *Malaysia - Child Marriage Around The World.*, https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/malaysia/ (accessed on 4 August 2020). [17]

Government of Brunei Darussalam (2011), *Syariah Courts Act*, http://www.agc.gov.bn/AGC%20Images/LAWS/ACT_PDF/cap184.pdf (accessed on 6 August 2020). [35]

Government of Brunei Darussalam (2000), *Islamic Family Law*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/103720/126155/F-389103611/BRN103720.pdf (accessed on 4 August 2020). [32]

Government of Cambodia (2019), *National Report Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) Cambodia*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/cambodia.pdf?la=en&vs=4558 (accessed on 7 August 2020). [2]

Government of Cambodia (2014), *The Second National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women 2014-2018*, https://cambodia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/NAPVAW2014-2018%28Eng%29.pdf (accessed on 6 August 2020). [43]

Government of Cambodia (2007), *Civil Code of Cambodia*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=93489&p_country=KHM&p_count=183 (accessed on 4 August 2020). [12]

Government of Cambodia (1997), *Labor Code*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/docs/701/labour (accessed on 13 August 2020). [113]

Government of Indonesia (2020), *National Report Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) +25 Indonesia*, https://asiapacificgender.org/sites/default/files/documents/Indonesia_(English).pdf (accessed on 4 August 2020). [1]

Government of Indonesia (2015), *Government Regulation No. 78*, http://ditjenpp.kemenkumham.go.id/arsip/terjemahan/44.pdf (accessed on 14 August 2020). [108]

Government of Indonesia (2012), *Law concerning the Election of Members of the House of Representatives, Regional Representatives Council, and House of Representatives District (No. 8 of 2012)*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=91377&p_country=IDN. [136]

Government of Indonesia (2003), *Law No. 13/2003 - Indonesian Labour Law*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/docs/760/Indonesian%20Labour%20Law%20-%20Act%2013%20of%202003.pdf (accessed on 13 August 2020). [117]

Government of Indonesia (1847), *Indonesian Civil Code*, https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3ffbd0804.pdf (accessed on 4 August 2020). [21]

Government of Lao PDR (2019), *National Review of Lao People's Democratic Republic Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/lao%20pdr.pdf?la=en&vs=3411 (accessed on 29 September 2020). [37]

Government of Lao PDR (2014), *Law on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Children*, http://un-act.org/publication/view/lao-pdrs-law-on-preventing-and-combating-violence-against-women-and-children-2014/ (accessed on 6 August 2020). [45]

Government of Lao PDR (2013), *Labor Law*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/MONOGRAPH/96369/113864/F1488869173/LAO96369%20Eng.pdf (accessed on 13 August 2020). [102]

Government of Malaysia (2019), *National Report Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) Malaysia*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/malaysia.pdf?la=en&vs=5202 (accessed on 7 August 2020). [3]

Government of Malaysia (2006), *Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976*, http://jafbase.fr/docAsie/Malaisie/Mariage&Divorce.PDF (accessed on 4 August 2020). [14]

Government of Malaysia (1984), *Islamic Family Law (Federal Territory) Act 1984 - Act 303*, http://www2.esyariah.gov.my/esyariah/mal/portalv1/enakmen2011/Eng_act_lib.nsf/858a0729306dc24748257651000e16c5/1d314361e2750042482569810025f0fc?OpenDocument (accessed on 4 August 2020). [23]

Government of Malaysia (1976), *Penal Code*, http://www.agc.gov.my/agcportal/uploads/files/Publications/LOM/EN/Penal%20Code%20%5BAct%20574%5D2.pdf (accessed on 7 August 2020). [64]

Government of Malaysia (1955), *Employment Act 1955 (No. 265)*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WEBTEXT/48055/66265/E55mys01.htm (accessed on 13 August 2020). [101]

Government of Myanmar (2012), *Social Security Law*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/90653/104626/F1632361911/MMR90653.pdf (accessed on 13 August 2020). [116]

Government of Myanmar (1951), *Act No. 65 - Factories Act*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/MONOGRAPH/88477/123120/F1558150740/MMR88477%20Eng%202016.pdf (accessed on 13 August 2020). [105]

Government of Singapore (2009), *Women's Charter*, https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/WC1961 (accessed on 4 August 2020). [10]

Government of Singapore (2002), *Child Development Co-Savings Act (Cap. 38A)*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/59371/65096/F-709036614/SGP59371.pdf (accessed on 13 August 2020). [118]

Government of Singapore (1996), *Administration of Muslim Law Act*, https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/AMLA1966?ProvIds=P1III-#pr46B- (accessed on 5 August 2020). [31]

Government of Thailand (2008), *Nationality Act, No.4*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=82874&p_country=THA&p_count=458. [126]

Government of Thailand (1965), *Nationality Act*, https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/506c08862.pdf. [125]

Government of Thailand (1925), *The Thailand Civil and Commercial Code*, https://www.samuiforsale.com/law-texts/thailand-civil-code-part-1.html (accessed on 5 August 2020). [27]

Government of the Philippines (2019), *BPfA+25 Philippine Progress Report 2014-2019 BPfA+25*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/philippines.pdf?la=en&vs=1359. [120]

Government of the Philippines (2018), *Republic Act No. 11210*, https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2019/02feb/20190220-RA-11210-RRD.pdf (accessed on 15 September 2020). [71]

Government of the Philippines (2017), *Republic Act No. 10963*, https://www.bir.gov.ph/images/bir_files/internal_communications_1/TRAIN%20matters/RA-10963-RRD.pdf (accessed on 13 August 2020). [93]

Government of the Philippines (2004), *Republic Act 9262: Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004*. [44]

Government of the Philippines (1996), *Republic Act No. 8239*, https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1996/11/22/republic-act-no-8239/. [152]

Government of the Philippines (1987), *Executive Order No. 209 - Family Code*, https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1987/07/06/executive-order-no-209-s-1987/ (accessed on 13 August 2020). [29]

Government of the Philippines (1977), *Presidential Decree No. 1083 - Code of Muslim Personal Laws of the Philippines*, https://www.lawphil.net/statutes/presdecs/pd1977/pd_1083_1977.html (accessed on 13 August 2020). [106]

Government of the Philippines (1974), *Presidential Decree No. 442 - Labor Code*, https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1974/05/01/presidential-decree-no-442-s-1974/ (accessed on 13 August 2020). [107]

Government of Timor Leste (2011), *Law No. 7/2011*, http://mj.gov.tl/jornal/lawsTL/RDTL-Law/RDTL-Laws/Law%20no.%207_2011%20Second%20Amendment%20to%20Law%206-2006%20of%20December%20%20Law%20on%20the%20Election%20of%20the%20National%20Parliament.pdf. [134]

Government of Timor-Leste (2019), *Timor-Leste's Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) National Review and Appraisal Report (2014-2018)*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/timor-leste.pdf?la=en&vs=5308 (accessed on 29 September 2020). [39]

Government of Timor-Leste (2017), *Law No. 13/2017 - Special Regime for the Definition of the Ownership of Property*, http://www.mj.gov.tl/jornal/public/docs/2017/serie_1/Tradusaun_REJIME_ESPESIAL_BA_DEFINISAUN_TITULARIDADE_BEIN_IMOVEL_Lei_No_13_2017.pdf (accessed on 13 August 2020). [89]

Government of Timor-Leste (2011), *Law No. 10/2011 approving the Civil Code.*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=&p_isn=89755&p_country=TMP&p_count=58 (accessed on 4 August 2020). [13]

Government of Viet Nam (2019), *National Review Report on 25-year Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action - Socialist Republic of Viet Nam*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/vietnam.pdf?la=en&vs=114 (accessed on 29 September 2020). [38]

Government of Viet Nam (2015), *Law No. 85/2015/QH13 on election of deputies to the National Assembly and People's Councils*, https://vanbanphapluat.co/law-no-85-2015-qh13-on-election-of-deputies-to-the-national-assembly-and-people-s-councils. [137]

Government of Viet Nam (2014), *Decree No. 126/2014/ND-CP detailing for implementation of the Law on marriage and family*, https://vanbanphapluat.co/decree-no-126-2014-nd-cp-detailing-for-implementation-of-the-law-on-marriage-and-family (accessed on 5 August 2020). [26]

Government of Viet Nam (2014), *Decree No. 43/2014/ND-CP detailing a number of articles of the Land Law.*. [67]

Government of Viet Nam (2014), *Law No. 58/2014/QH13 - Social Insurance Law*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/99775/126463/F-1921723198/VNM99775%20Eng.pdf (accessed on 13 August 2020). [112]

Government of Viet Nam (2014), *Law on Marriage and Family*, http://un-act.org/publication/viet-nams-law-on-marriage-and-family-2014/ (accessed on 4 August 2020). [20]

Government of Viet Nam (2013), *Decree No. 176/2013/ND-CP penalties for administrative violations against medical laws*, https://vanbanphapluat.co/decree-no-176-2013-nd-cp-penalties-for-administrative-violations-against-medical-laws (accessed on 7 August 2020). [60]

Government of Viet Nam (2012), *Law No. 10/2012/QH13 - Labour Code*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/MONOGRAPH/91650/114939/F224084256/VNM91650.pdf (accessed on 13 August 2020). [103]

Hirsch, P. (2011), *Titling against grabbing? Critiques and conundrums around land formalisation in Southeast Asia*, http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.476.8538&rep=rep1&type=pdf (accessed on 17 August 2020). [76]

Hoang, C. et al. (2013), *The women's access to land in contemporary Viet Nam*, UNDP, Hanoi, https://www.vn.undp.org/content/vietnam/en/home/library/democratic_governance/women_access_to_land_in_viet_nam.html (accessed on 17 August 2020). [87]

Human Rights Watch (2017), *Indonesia's Ahmadiyah Push Back Against Discriminatory Laws*, https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/23/indonesias-ahmadiyah-push-back-against-discriminatory-laws. [145]

Hussain, J. (2011), "More than one law for all: Legal pluralism in Southeast Asia", *Democracy and Security*, Vol. 7/4, pp. 374-389, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17419166.2011.617621. [148]

Hutchison, J. (2008), "Land titling and poverty reduction in Southeast Asia: Realising markets or realising rights?", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 62/3, pp. 332-344, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10357710802286791. [82]

ILO (2020), *Employment by sex and economic activity - ILO modelled estimates*, ILOSTAT, https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/ (accessed on 17 August 2020). [91]

ILO (2020), *Working Conditions Laws Database*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/travmain.home (accessed on 27 March 2020). [115]

ILO (2017), *ILO Guide to Myanmar Labour Law*, International Labour Oragnization, Yangon, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-yangon/documents/publication/wcms_577563.pdf (accessed on 13 August 2020). [104]

ILO (2011), *C189 - Domestic Workers Convention*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:2551460:NO (accessed on 13 August 2020). [96]

ILO (2000), *C183 - Maternity Protection Convention*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312328:NO (accessed on 20 May 2020). [97]

ILO (1981), *C156 - Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312301:NO (accessed on 13 August 2020). [98]

ILO (1958), *C111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312256:NO (accessed on 13 August 2020). [99]

ILO (1951), *Convention C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C100 (accessed on 13 August 2020). [100]

ILO (1919), *Constitution of the International Labour Organisation (ILO)*, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:62:0::NO:62:P62_LIST_ENTRIE_ID:2453907:NO#A1 (accessed on 13 August 2020). [109]

ILO (n.d.), *2.4 Equal remuneration for work of equal value*, https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/wages/minimum-wages/rates/WCMS_433906/lang--en/index.htm (accessed on 13 August 2020). [110]

International IDEA (2020), *Philippines*, https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/country-view/240/35. [140]

International Women's Development Agency (2016), *Timor-Leste doubles the number of women Village Chiefs in recent elections*, https://iwda.org.au/timor-doubles-the-number-of-women-village-chiefs-in-recent-elections/. [138]

Inter-Parliamentary Union (2020), *IPU Parline*, https://data.ipu.org/ (accessed on 14 August 2020). [133]

Inter-Parliamentary Union (2020), *Timor-Leste*, https://www.ipu.org/parliament/TL. [135]

Jones, D. (2010), "Land Registration and Administrative Reform in Southeast Asian States: Progress and Constraints", *International Public Management Review*, Vol. 11/1, pp. 67-89, https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Land-Registration-and-Administrative-Reform-in-and-Jones/6ad63073d0caf76e85d2eb22c5a913c7c0a8c5e7 (accessed on 17 August 2020). [88]

Jones, N. et al. (2014), *Early marriage among Viet Nam's Hmong: How unevenly changing gender norms limit Hmong adolescent girls' options in marriage and life*, https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9182.pdf (accessed on 4 August 2020). [25]

Laiphrakpam, M. and S. Aroonsrimorakot (2016), "Dowry in India and bride price in Thailand", *Thai Interdiscipnary Research*, Vol. 11/6, pp. 33-39, http://dx.doi.org/10.14456/jtir.2016.31. [16]

Lao People's Democratic Republic (2004), *Law on Lao Nationality*, http://www.vientianetimes.org.la/Laws%20in%20English/10.%20Law%20on%20Lao%20Nationality%20(2004)%20Eng.pdf. [121]

Liamzon, C., A. Arevalo and M. Naungayan (2015), *Women's Land Rights in Asia*, Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, http://angoc.org/portal/womens-land-rights-in-asia/ (accessed on 17 August 2020). [77]

Library of Congress (n.d.), "Global Legal Monitor", *Philippines: House Bill on Divorce Approved in Committee*, https://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/philippines-house-bill-on-divorce-approved-in-committee/ (accessed on 14 January 2021). [30]

Menon, N., Y. Rodgers and A. Kennedy (2017), "Land Reform and Welfare in Vietnam: Why Gender of the Land-Rights Holder Matters", *Journal of International Development*, Vol. 29/4, pp. 454-472, http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jid.3203. [79]

Ministry of Justice Law Research; International Cooperation Institute; UNDP (2011), *Customary Law and Practice in Lao PDR*, http://www.undp.org/content/dam/laopdr/docs/Reports%20and%20publications/Customary_Law_Laos2011_english_master1.pdf. [36]

MoneySENSE (n.d.), *Factsheet on MoneySENSE*, https://www.mas.gov.sg/-/media/MAS/resource/news_room/press_releases/2015/Factsheet-on-MoneySENSE.pdf (accessed on 15 September 2020). [69]

OECD (2021), *Man Enough? Measuring Masculine Norms to Promote Women's Empowerment*, Social Institutions and Gender Index, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/6ffd1936-en. [66]

OECD (2018), *Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China and India 2019: Towards Smart Urban Transportation*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/saeo-2019-en. [95]

OECD (2018), *Financial inclusion and consumer empowerment in Southeast Asia*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/finance/Financial-inclusion-and-consumer-empowerment-in-Southeast-Asia.pdf. [68]

OECD Development Centre (2019), *SIGI Country Profile Brunei Darussalam*, https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/BN.pdf (accessed on 6 August 2020). [22]

OECD Development Centre (2019), *SIGI Country Profile Cambodia*. [33]

OECD Development Centre (2019), *SIGI Country Profile Indonesia*, https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/ID.pdf (accessed on 7 August 2020). [63]

OECD Development Centre (2019), *SIGI Country Profile Lao People's Democratic Republic*. [28]

OECD Development Centre (2019), *SIGI Country Profile Malaysia*, https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/MY.pdf (accessed on 6 August 2020). [56]

OECD Development Centre (2019), *SIGI Country Profile Timor-Leste*, https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/TL.pdf (accessed on 7 August 2020). [62]

OECD Development Centre (2019), *SIGI Country Profiles*, https://www.genderindex.org/country-profiles/. [114]

OECD Development Centre/OECD (2019), "Gender, Institutions and Development (Edition 2019)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/ba5dbd30-en (accessed on 6 January 2021). [11]

Oelz, M., S. Olney and M. Tomei (2013), *Equal Pay: An Introductory Guide*, International Labour Oragnisation, https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/WCMS_216695/lang--en/index.htm (accessed on 20 November 2019). [111]

Rao, N. (2011), *Women's Access to Land: An Asian Perspective*, https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/egm/Rao-EP-3-EGM-RW-30Sep-2011.pdf (accessed on 17 August 2020). [78]

Republic of the Philippines (2008), *Republic Act 9710 "Magna Carta of Women"*, Philippine Commission on Women, http://pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/files/documents/laws/republic_act_9710.pdf. [139]

Sen, A. (1990), "More Than 100 Million Women Are Missing", *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 37/20. [57]

STAR Kampuchea and ILC (2013), *Shadow report on women's land rights in Cambodia – analysis of the status of compliance with CEDAW Articles 14, 15 and 16.*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/KHM/INT_CEDAW_NGO_KHM_15172_E.pdf. [24]

UN Women (2019), *Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Programme Overview*, https://endvawnow.org/en/initiatives-articles/42-safe-cities-and-safe-public-spaces-programme-overview.html. [146]

UN Women (n.d.), *Political Participation of Women*, https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/fr/focus-areas/governance/political-participation-of-women. [142]

UNDP (n.d.), *Strengthening Women's Participation and Representation in Governance in Indonesia (SWARGA)*, https://www.id.undp.org/content/indonesia/en/home/operations/projects/democratic_governance/strengthening-womens-participation-and-representation-in-governa.html. [141]

UNFPA (2019), *Viet Nam Country Profile Global Programme to Prevent Son Preference and the Undervaluing of Girls: Improving the sex ratio at birth in select countries in Asia and the Caucasus*, https://vietnam.unfpa.org/en/publications/global-programme-prevent-son-preference-and-undervaluing-girls-improving-sex-ratio (accessed on 7 August 2020). [61]

UNFPA (2018), *The Imbalanced Sex Ratio at BIrth in Viet Nam. New Insights and Policy Recommendations*, https://vietnam.unfpa.org/en/publications/imbalanced-sex-ratio-birth-viet-nam-new-insights-and-policy-recommendations (accessed on 7 August 2020). [58]

UNHCR; UN Women (2018), *A Gender Analysis of the Right to Nationality in Myanmar*, https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field office eseasia/docs/publications/2019/01/gender-analysis-of-right-to-nationality-in-myanmar.pdf?la=en&vs=528. [124]

UNICEF (2019), *UNICEF global databases 2019, based on Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and other nationally representative surveys.*, https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/female-genital-mutilation/. [55]

UNICEF (2016), *Child Marriage in Indonesia: Progress on Pause*, https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/UNICEF-Indonesia-Child-Marriage-Research-Brief-1.pdf (accessed on 4 August 2020). [15]

UNICEF (2013), *Statistical Profile on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting - Indonesia*, https://www.orchidproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/FGMC_IDN.pdf (accessed on 29 September 2020). [40]

United Nations (2020), *Concluding observations on the combined fourteenth to seventeenth reports of Cambodia*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2fC%2fKHM%2fCO%2f14-17&Lang=en. [128]

United Nations (2020), *World Contraceptive Use 2020*, https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/dataset/contraception/wcu2020.asp (accessed on 31 August 2020). [65]

United Nations (2019), *Concluding observations on the report of Myanmar submitted under the exceptional reporting procedure*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fMMR%2fCO%2fEP%2f1&Lang=en. [129]

United Nations (2019), *Summary record of the 1668th meeting*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fSR.1668&Lang=en. [130]

United Nations (2019), *Summary record of the 1730th meeting*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fSR.1730&Lang=en. [149]

United Nations (2018), *Concluding observations on the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Malaysia*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fMYS%2fCO%2f3-5&Lang=en. [127]

United Nations (2017), *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia*, http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs20/Myanmar_Law+CEDAW-en-red.pdf. [144]

United Nations (2017), *World Population Prospects 2017 Revision*, https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2017_DataBooklet.pdf. [59]

United Nations (2016), *Resolution 32/7 The right to a nationality: women's equal nationality rights*, https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/32/7. [123]

United Nations (2016), *Sustainable Development Goal 5*, Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5 (accessed on 15 November 2019). [6]

United Nations (2013), *General recommendation No. 29 on article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhsldCrOlUTvLRFDjh6%2fx1pWDn3WHqqJ3IVTSBdup3cNv3DQC%2fGcQdgTzvPZJiBl3Uvy2%2fdGCrYDfjaxHtk2Xa0GOPds69ZKD4rX0xgLCmpw%2fA (accessed on 20 May 2020). [34]

United Nations (2004), *General recommendation No. 25 on Article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/INT_CEDAW_GEC_3733_E.pdf (accessed on 20 May 2020). [92]

United Nations (1992), *General recommendation No. 19: Violence against women*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/INT_CEDAW_GEC_3731_E.pdf (accessed on 20 May 2020). [41]

United Nations (1990), *General recommendation No. 14: Female circumcision*, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/INT_CEDAW_GEC_3729_E.pdf (accessed on 20 May 2020). [53]

United Nations (1979), *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*, https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3970.html (accessed on 11 June 2020). [5]

United Nations (1962), *Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages*, https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1964/12/19641223%2002-15%20AM/Ch_XVI_3p.pdf (accessed on 20 May 2020). [4]

United Nations (1957), *Convention on the Nationality of Married Women*, https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetailsIII.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVI-2&chapter=16&Temp=mtdsg3&clang=_en. [122]

United Nations (1948), *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/ (accessed on 20 May 2020). [72]

United Nations (n.d.), *Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies*, https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/. [147]

United States Departement of State (2020), *Trafficking in Persons Report 20th Edition*, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-TIP-Report-Complete-062420-FINAL.pdf. [49]

Viet Nam (2018), *Concluding observations on the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Viet Nam: Information provided by Viet Nam in follow-up to the concluding observations*. [150]

WHO (2018), *Female genital mutilation*, https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation. [52]

World Bank (2017), *2017 Global Findex database*, https://globalfindex.worldbank.org/ (accessed on 13 August 2020). [94]

World Values Surveys (2017), *World Values Surveys*, http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/. [46]

Notes

[1] Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Viet Nam.

[2] Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (hereafter: Lao PDR), Singapore, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[3] Indonesia, Lao PDR, Singapore and Viet Nam.

[4] Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Singapore.

[5] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[6] Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[7] Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

[8] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[9] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[10] Lao PDR and Myanmar.

[11] The Philippines.

[12] Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

[13] It is a type of agreement between husbands and wives.

[14] Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[15] Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[16] Cambodia, Lao PDR, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[17] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[18] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[19] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

[20] Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[21] Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

[22] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[23] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[24] Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[25] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[26] Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore and Timor-Leste.

[27] Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore and Timor-Leste.

[28] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[29] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[30] Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand.

[31] Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

[32] Brunei Darussalam, Lao PDR, Singapore and Timor-Leste.

[33] Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Viet Nam.

[34] Cambodia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Viet Nam.

[35] Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.

[36] Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

[37] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

[38] Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar and Timor-Leste.

[39] Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

[40] Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam.

[41] Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar and Viet Nam.

[42] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[43] Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

[44] Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[45] Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[46] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

[47] Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand.

[48] Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

[49] Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

[50] Indonesia, the Philippines (at local level only), Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[51] Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

[52] Cambodia, Indonesia and Myanmar.

[53]Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Timor-Leste.

Annex A. The SIGI's methodology

The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) covers four dimensions, spanning major socio-economic areas that affect the entire lifetimes of women and girls (Figure A A.1):

- The "Discrimination in the family" dimension captures social institutions that limit women's decision-making power and undervalue their status in the household and the family.
- The "Restricted physical integrity" dimension captures social institutions that increase women's and girls' vulnerability to multiple forms of violence and limit their control over their bodies and reproductive autonomy.
- The "Restricted access to productive and financial resources" dimension captures women's restricted access to and control over critical productive and economic resources and assets.
- The "Restricted civil liberties" dimension captures discriminatory laws and practices restricting women's access to, and participation and voice in, the public and social spheres.

Figure A A.1. The composition of the SIGI 2019



Source: (OECD, n.d.[1]), Social Institutions and Gender Index, www.genderindex.org.

Each dimension builds on four indicators. In theory, each indicator builds on a combination of three variables: the first variable aims to measure the level of discrimination in formal and informal laws, while the second and the third variables aim to measure the level of discrimination in social norms and practices,

respectively. The variables used as proxies for each indicator depend on data availability and reliability, and on country coverage. For example, some variables are not available at all (such as information on the social acceptance of discriminatory inheritance practices), and some variables are only available for a few countries (such as the time spent on unpaid care work).

Consequently, discrepancies exist between the theoretical framework and the variables effectively included in the SIGI 2019. Overall, the SIGI framework builds on 27 core variables:

- Fourteen categorical variables describe the level of discrimination in legal frameworks (available for all SIGI indicators but two: missing women and female genital mutilation). These variables are based on 144 questions out of the 312 used to draft the SIGI country profiles.
- Three attitudinal variables describe the level of discrimination in social norms.
- Ten variables on prevalence rates describe the level of discrimination in practices.

Aggregation and construction of the index

The variables, indicators, dimensions and, ultimately, the SIGI are built according to the steps below.

Step 1: Building the Gender, Institutions and Development Database

Quantitative variables: Truncating data at the equality benchmark and inverting the scale

Quantitative data are collected and harmonised to be comparable across countries/territories. Data sources vary according to the country/territory and the variable. For example, the prevalence of child marriage among girls is collected through the UN World Marriage Database, while the proportion of women members of parliament is based on the Inter-Parliamentary Union database.

All the SIGI components (variables, indicators, dimensions and index) range from 0, indicating no discrimination, to 1, indicating absolute discrimination:

- For some variables, equality is reached at 0.5 instead of 1. Equality in political representation, for example, is achieved when 50% of MPs are women. Therefore, countries/territories where 50% or more of their MPs are female have a score of 0.
- For some other variables, the scale from no discrimination to absolute discrimination may be inverted to fit with the 0-1 scale.

Qualitative variables: Assigning a score

The qualitative legal information detailed in the SIGI country profiles is quantified using a coding manual based on a 5-level scale (0, 25, 50, 75 and 1) (Table A A.1)

Table A A.1. Scoring methodology for legal variables

	Score assigned
The legal framework provides women with the same rights as men, with no exceptions, and applies to all groups of women. There are no customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women.	0
The legal framework provides women with the same rights as men, with no exceptions, and applies to all groups of women. However, some customary, religious or traditional practices or laws do discriminate against women.	25
The legal framework provides women with the same rights as men. However, it foresees exceptions, or does not apply to all groups of women.	50
The legal framework restricts some women's rights.	75
The legal framework fully discriminates against women's rights.	1

Source: (OECD, n.d.[1]), Social Institutions and Gender Index, www.genderindex.org.

Step 2: Building the indicators

The variables composing each indicator are aggregated using the SIGI aggregation formula.

Some indicators are based on one variable, while others are based on several. In the latter case, the indicator is calculated only if all variables are assigned a value. For example, for the "Violence against women" (VAW) indicator, the aggregation is:

$$VAW = \ln\left(\frac{1}{3}e^{Laws\ on\ VAW} + \frac{1}{3}e^{Attitudes\ towards\ domestic\ violence} + \frac{1}{3}e^{Prevalence\ of\ domestic\ violence}\right)$$

Step 3: Building the dimensions

The indicators composing each dimension are aggregated using the SIGI aggregation formula.

The dimensions aim to provide a summary measure of each area of discrimination. The dimension is calculated only if all indicators are assigned a value. For example, for the dimension "Discrimination in the family" (DF), the aggregation is:

$$DF = \ln\left(\frac{1}{4}e^{Child\ marriage} + \frac{1}{4}e^{Household\ responsibilities} + \frac{1}{4}e^{Inheritance} + \frac{1}{4}e^{Divorce}\right)$$

Step 4: Building the SIGI

The SIGI is calculated only if all dimensions are assigned a value, using the same aggregation formula.

$$SIGI = \ln\left(\frac{1}{4}e^{DF} + \frac{1}{4}e^{RPI} + \frac{1}{4}e^{RAPFR} + \frac{1}{4}e^{RCL}\right)$$

Definition of the variables

Table A A.2. Variables used in the analysis and the construction of the SIGI 2019

Variable	Coding	Sources
DISCRIMINATION IN THE FAMILY		
Child marriage		
Laws on child marriage (S) Whether the same minimum legal age for marriage applies to both women and men	0: The law guarantees the same minimum legal age for marriage at 18 years for both women and men, without legal exceptions regarding consent or for some groups of women. Customary, religious or traditional practices or laws do not encourage child marriage among girls.	SIGI country profiles
	0.25: The minimum legal age for marriage might be different for men and women, but they must be at least 18 years old, without legal exceptions regarding consent or for some groups of women. Some customary, religious or traditional practices or laws encourage child marriage among girls.	
	0.5: The minimum legal age for marriage might be different for men and women, but it is over the age of 18 years. However, legal exceptions exist concerning consent and/or some groups of women.	
	0.75: The law allows child marriage for both women and men, or there is no minimum legal age for marriage for either women or men.	
	1: The law allows child marriage for women but not for men.	
Prevalence of child marriage among girls (S) Percentage of girls aged 15-19 years who have been or are still married, divorced, widowed or in an informal union	0-100%	UN World Marriage Data (2017)

Prevalence of child marriage among boys Percentage of boys aged 15-19 years who have been or are still married, divorced, widowed or in an informal union	0-100%	UN World Marriage Data (2017)
	Household responsibilities	
Laws governing household responsibilities (S) Whether women and men have the same legal rights, decision-making abilities and responsibilities within the household	0: Women enjoy the same legal rights and decision-making freedoms and responsibilities within the household as men, without legal exceptions for any groups of women. Customary, religious or traditional practices or laws do not discriminate against women's legal rights.	SIGI country profiles
	0.25: Women enjoy the same legal rights and decision-making freedoms and responsibilities within the household as men, without legal exceptions for any groups of women. However, customary, religious or traditional practices or laws discriminate against women's legal rights.	
	0.5: Either not all groups of women enjoy the same legal rights and decision-making freedoms and responsibilities within the household as men, or there is no law regulating household headship.	
	0.75: Women do not enjoy the same legal rights as men either to be recognised as the head of household or to have parental authority.	
	1: Women do not enjoy the same legal rights as men to be recognised as the head of household and to have parental authority.	
Attitude towards housewives Percentage of the population aged over 18 years that thinks that Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay	0-100%	International Social Survey Programme World Values Survey
Attitude towards women earning money Percentage of the population aged over 18 years that agrees or agrees strongly that If a woman earns more money than her husband, it is almost certain to cause problems	0-100%	International Social Survey Programme World Values Survey
Attitude towards working mothers (*) Percentage of the population aged over 18 years that agrees or agrees strongly that When a mother works for pay, the children suffer	0-100%	International Social Survey Programme World Values Survey
Women's and men's share of unpaid care work responsibility (*) Female-to-male ratio of time spent on unpaid, domestic, care and volunteer work in a 24-hour period		Various sources[1]
Women's contribution to unpaid care work Women's average time spent (in hours) on unpaid domestic, care and voluntary work in a 24-hour period		Various sources[1]
Men's contribution to unpaid care work Men's average time spent (in hours) on unpaid domestic, care and voluntary work in a 24-hour period		Various sources[1]
	Inheritance	
Laws on inheritance (S) Whether women and men have the same legal rights to inherit land and non-land assets	0: Widows and daughters enjoy the same rights as widowers and sons to inherit land and non-land assets. This applies to all groups of women. Customary, religious or traditional practices or laws do not discriminate against women's inheritance rights.	SIGI country profiles
	0.25: Widows and daughters enjoy the same rights as widowers and sons to inherit land and non-land assets. This applies to all groups of women. However, there are some customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's inheritance rights.	
	0.5: Widows and daughters enjoy the same rights as widowers and sons to inherit land and non-land assets. However, this does not apply to all groups of women.	
	0.75: Either widows or daughters do not enjoy the same rights as	

	widowers and sons to inherit land and/or non-land assets.	
	1: Neither widows nor daughters enjoy rights to inherit land and/or non-land assets.	
	Divorce	
Laws on divorce (S) Whether women and men have the same legal rights to initiate divorce, with the same grounds and evidential requirements for divorce or annulment	0: Women have both the same rights to initiate divorce and have the same requirements to finalise divorce or annulment as men, without negative repercussions on their parental authority. This applies to all groups of women. Customary, religious or traditional practices or laws do not discriminate against women regarding divorce or their parental authority after divorce.	SIGI country profiles
	0.25: Women have both the same rights to initiate divorce and the same requirements to finalise divorce or annulment as men, without negative repercussions on their parental authority. This applies to all groups of women. However, there are some customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women regarding divorce and/or their parental authority after divorce.	
	0.5: Women have both the same rights to initiate divorce and the same requirements to finalise divorce or annulment as men, without negative repercussions on their parental authority. However, this does not apply to all groups of women.	
	0.75: Women do not have the same rights regarding divorce as men: either their rights to initiate divorce and/or their requirements to finalise divorce or annulment are unequal, or their parental authority after divorce is restricted.	
	1: Women do not have the same rights regarding divorce as men: their rights to initiate divorce and/or the requirements to finalise divorce or annulment are unequal, and their parental authority after divorce is restricted.	
RESTRICTED PHYSICAL INTEGRITY		
	Violence against women	
Laws on violence against women (S) Whether the legal framework protects women from violence including intimate partner violence, rape and sexual harassment without legal exceptions and through a comprehensive approach	0: The legal framework protects women from violence including intimate partner violence, rape and sexual harassment without any legal exceptions and through a comprehensive approach.	SIGI country profiles
	0.25: The legal framework protects women from violence including intimate partner violence, rape and sexual harassment without any legal exceptions. However, the approach is not comprehensive.	
	0.5: The legal framework protects women from violence, including intimate partner violence, rape and sexual harassment. However, there are some legal exceptions.	
	0.75: The legal framework protects women from some forms of violence, including intimate partner violence, rape, or sexual harassment, but not all.	
	1: The legal framework does not protect women from any form of violence: neither, intimate partner violence nor rape nor sexual harassment.	
Attitude towards domestic violence (S) Percentage of women aged 15-49 years who consider a husband to be justified in hitting or beating his wife for at least one of the specified reasons: if his wife burns food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, or refuses to engage in sexual intercourse with him	0-100%	Pan American Health Organization (2014) UNICEF global databases (2017) World Health Organization World Values Survey (2005-16)
Lifetime prevalence of domestic violence (S) Percentage of women who have suffered intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence during their lifetime	0-100%	Various sources[2]

Prevalence of domestic violence in the last 12 months Percentage of women who have suffered intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	0-100%	Various sources[2]
Female genital mutilation		
Attitude towards female genital mutilation (S) Percentage of women aged 15-49 years who have heard about female genital mutilation and think the practice should continue	0-100%	UNICEF Global Databases (2017)
Prevalence of female genital mutilation (S) Percentage of women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation	0-100%	UNICEF Global Databases (2017)
Missing women		
Missing women (S) Sex ratio among 0-4 year-olds (number of males per 100 females)	105-116	UNDP World Population Prospects (2017)
Reproductive autonomy		
Laws on reproductive autonomy (S) Whether the legal framework protects women's sexual and reproductive health and rights	0: The legal framework protects women's reproductive health and rights in the case of unintended pregnancy, without conditions.	SIGI country profiles
	0.25: The legal framework protects women's reproductive health and rights in the case of unintended pregnancy, but imposes conditions.	
	0.5: The legal framework only protects women's reproductive health and rights in the case of unintended pregnancy with some conditions.	
	0.75: The legal framework only protects women's reproductive health and rights in the case of unintended pregnancy under strict conditions.	
	1: The legal framework does not protect women's reproductive health or rights in the case of unintended pregnancy.	
Access to family planning (S) Prevalence of unmet need for family planning percentage of currently married or in-union women of reproductive age (15-49 years) who want to cease or delay childbearing but are not using any method of contraception	0-100%	United Nations Population Fund (2017) United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018)
RESTRICTED ACCESS TO PRODUCTIVE AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES		
Secure access to land assets		
Laws on access to land assets (S) Whether women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to land assets	0: Women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to land assets, without legal exceptions. This applies to all groups of women. Customary, religious or traditional practices or laws do not discriminate against women exercising their legal rights.	SIGI country profiles
	0.25: Women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to land assets, without legal exceptions This applies to all groups of women. However, some customary, religious or traditional practices or laws discriminate against women exercising their legal rights.	
	0.5: Women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to land assets. However, this does not apply to all groups of women.	
	0.75: Women and men have the same legal rights to own land assets, but not to use, make decisions about and/or use land assets as collateral.	
	1: Women do not have the same legal rights as men to own land assets.	
Access to land ownership(*) Percentage of men in the total number of agricultural holders	0-100%	Demographic and Health Surveys

Secure access to non-land assets		
Laws on access to non-land assets (S) Whether women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to non-land assets	0: Women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to non-land assets, without legal exceptions. This applies to all groups of women. Customary, religious or traditional practices or laws do not discriminate against women exercising their legal rights.	SIGI country profiles
	0.25: Women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to non-land assets, without legal exceptions. This applies to all groups of women. However, some customary, religious or traditional practices or laws discriminate against women exercising their legal rights.	
	0.5: Women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to non-land assets. However, this does not apply to all groups of women.	
	0.75: Women and men have the same legal rights to own non-land assets, but not to use, make decisions about and/or use non-land assets as collateral.	
	1: Women do not have the same legal rights as men to own non-land assets.	
Access to house ownership (*) Percentage of men in the total number of people who own a house alone	0-100%	Demographic and Health Surveys
Secure access to formal financial services		
Laws on access to formal financial services (S) Whether women and men have the same legal rights to open a bank account and obtain credit at a formal financial institution	0: Women and men have the same rights to open a bank account and obtain credit at a formal financial institution, without legal exceptions. This applies to all groups of women. Customary, religious or traditional practices or laws do not discriminate against women exercising their legal rights.	SIGI country profiles
	0.25: Women and men have the same rights to open a bank account and obtain credit at a formal financial institution, without legal exceptions. This applies to all groups of women. However, some customary, religious or traditional practices or laws discriminate against women exercising their legal rights.	
	0.5: Women and men have the same rights to open a bank account and obtain credit at a formal financial institution. However, this does not apply to all groups of women.	
	0.75: Women and men have the same rights to open a bank account at a formal financial institution. However, women do not have the same rights as men to obtain credit.	
	1: Women do not have the same rights as men to open a bank account at a formal financial institution.	
Access to bank account services (S) Percentage of women in the total population aged 15 years and over who have an account at a financial institution (by themselves or together with someone else)	0-100%	Global Findex database
Access to financial loans Percentage of women in the total population aged 15 years and over who borrowed any money from a financial institution in the past 12 months	0-100%	Global Findex database
Access to credit card services Percentage of women in the total population aged 15 years and over who own a credit card	0-100%	Global Findex database
Workplace rights		
Laws on workplace rights (S) Whether women and men have the same legal rights and opportunities in the workplace	0: The legal framework guarantees equality between women and men in the workplace. Parental leave is available to mothers and fathers and the law protects women's rights during pregnancy and maternity/parental leave. Customary, religious or traditional practices or laws do not discriminate against women in their legal right to enter certain professions, choose a profession and register a business.	SIGI country profiles
	0.25: The legal framework guarantees equality between women and men in the workplace. Parental leave is available to mothers and	

	fathers and the law protects women's rights during pregnancy and maternity/parental leave. However, there is evidence of customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women who exercise their legal right to enter certain professions, choose a profession or register a business.	
	0.5: The legal framework guarantees equality between women and men in the workplace. Parental leave is available to mothers and fathers and the law protects women's rights during pregnancy and maternity/parental leave. However, this does not apply to all groups of women.	
	0.75: The legal framework guarantees equality between women and men in the workplace. However, parental leave is not available to mothers and fathers and/or the law does not protect women's rights during pregnancy and maternity/parental leave.	
	1: The legal framework does not guarantee equality between women and men in the workplace.	
Attitudes towards working women (S) Percentage of the population that disagrees with It is perfectly acceptable for any woman in your family to have a paid job outside the home if she wants to	0-100%	International Labour Organization and Gallup Inc. (2017) Latinobarometer World Values Survey
Representation in managerial positions (S) Percentage of women in the total population employed in management	0-100%	International Labour Organization
RESTRICTED CIVIL LIBERTIES		
Citizenship rights		
Laws on citizenship rights (S) Whether women and men have the same citizenship rights and ability to exercise their rights	0: Women and men have the same rights to acquire, change and retain their nationality and to confer their nationality on their spouse and children, without legal exceptions. This applies to all groups of women. Customary, religious or traditional practices or laws do not restrict these rights.	SIGI country profiles
	0.25: Women and men have the same rights to acquire, change and retain their nationality and to confer their nationality on their spouse and children, without legal exceptions. This applies to all groups of women. However, some discriminatory customary, religious or traditional practices or laws restrict these rights.	
	0.5: Women have the same rights as men to acquire, change and retain their nationality and to confer their nationality on their spouse and children. However, this does not apply to all groups of women.	
	0.75: Women and men have the same rights to acquire, change and retain their nationality. However, women face legal restrictions on their rights to confer their nationality on their husband and/or children.	
	1: Women and men do not have the same rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality.	
Freedom of movement		
Laws on freedom of movement (S) Whether women and men have the same rights to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) and passports and to travel outside the country	0: Women and men have the same rights to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) and passports and to travel outside the country, without legal exceptions. This applies to all groups of women. Customary, religious or traditional practices or laws do not discriminate against these rights.	SIGI country profiles
	0.25: Women and men have the same rights to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) and passports and to travel outside the country, without legal exceptions. This applies to all groups of women. However, some customary, religious or traditional practices or laws discriminate against women exercising these rights.	
	0.5: Women and men have the same rights to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) and passports and to travel outside the country. However, this does not apply to all groups of women.	

	0.75: Women do not have the same rights as men either to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) or passports or to travel outside the country.	
	1: Women do not have the same rights as men to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) or passports, and to travel outside the country.	
Security feeling (S) Percentage of women in the total number of people who declare not feeling safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live	Rescaled to 0-100%	Gallup World Poll (2017)
Political voice		
Laws on political voice (S) Whether the legal framework promotes women's equal political representation	0: Women and men have the same rights to vote and to hold public and political office in the legislative and executive branches of government. There are special measures to promote women's political participation at the national or subnational levels. Customary, religious or traditional practices or laws do not restrict these rights.	SIGI country profiles
	0.25: Women and men have the same rights to vote and to hold public and political office in the legislative and executive branches of government. There are special measures to promote women's political participation at the national or subnational levels. However, some discriminatory customary, religious or traditional practices or laws restrict these rights.	
	0.5: Women and men have the same rights to vote and to hold public and political office in the legislative and executive branches of government. There are no legal quotas or special measures or incentives for political parties to promote womens political participation.	
	0.75: Women and men have the same rights to vote. However, women face discrimination against their rights to hold public and political office in the legislative and executive branches of government.	
	1: Women and men do not have the same rights to vote.	
Political representation (S) Percentage of women in the total number of representatives of the lower or single house of parliament	0-100%	Inter-Parliamentary Union (2018)
Attitude towards women's political leadership (*) Percentage of the population that agrees with On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do	0-100%	World Values Survey
Access to justice		
Laws on access to justice (S) Whether women and men have the same rights to provide testimony in court, to hold public or political office in the judiciary, and to sue	0: A woman's testimony holds the same evidentiary weight as a man's in all types of court cases, and women have the same rights as men to hold public or political office in the judiciary, and to sue. Customary, religious or traditional practices or laws do not discriminate against women's legal right to provide testimony in court, or to be a judge, advocate or other court officer, or to sue.	SIGI country profiles
	0.25: A woman's testimony holds the same evidentiary weight as a man's in all types of court cases, and women have the same rights as men to hold public or political office in the judiciary, and to sue. Women's testimony carries the same evidentiary weight as men's in customary/religious courts/tribunals. However, some customary, religious or traditional practices or laws discriminate against women in their legal right to provide testimony in court, or to be a judge, advocate or other court officer, or to sue.	
	0.5: A woman's testimony holds the same evidentiary weight as a man's in all types of court cases and women have the same rights as men to sue. However, women do not have the same rights as men to hold public or political office in the judiciary.	
	0.75: Women and men have the same rights to sue. However, a woman's testimony does not hold the same evidentiary weight as a man's in all types of court cases.	

	1: Women and men do not have the same rights to sue.	
Confidence in the judicial system and courts (S) Percentage of women in the total number of people who declare not having confidence in the judicial system and courts of their country	0-100%	Gallup World Poll (2017)

Notes:
(S) Variables included in the computation of the SIGI.
(*) Variables not included in the computation of the SIGI but stored in the Gender, Institutions and Development Database.
Source: (OECD, n.d.[1]), *Social Institutions and Gender Index*, www.genderindex.org.

Questions used to calculate the SIGI scores

The SIGI country profiles are derived from a questionnaire on gender-related legal frameworks – both formal and traditional/cultural – in the countries and territories covered. The questions are mainly divided into two groups: legal framework (formal laws) and de facto (customary, religious or traditional practices or laws). While most of the questions have "Yes" or "No" answers, two of them have numeric values (i.e. the questions on the minimum legal age for marriage for women and men). The list of questions is presented in Table A A.3.

Table A A.3. SIGI questionnaire

DISCRIMINATION IN THE FAMILY	
Child marriage	
Legal framework	What is the legal age of marriage for women?
	What is the legal age of marriage for men?
	Is the legal age of marriage the same for women and men?
	Are there legal exceptions to the legal age of marriage that allow women and men under the legal age of marriage to marry with the consent of: a Parent b Guardian c Judge d The court Other authority. Please indicate which authority is concerned.
	Does the legal age of marriage apply to all groups of women?
De facto	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that allow or encourage early marriage of girls?
Household responsibilities	
Legal framework	Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to be recognised as the head of household?
	Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to be the legal guardians of their children during marriage?
	Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to be legal guardians of their children in informal unions?
	Regarding women's legal rights to be recognised as the head of household, does the law apply to all groups of women?
De facto	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to be recognised as the head of household?
	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to be the legal guardians of their children?
	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to choose where to live?
Divorce	
Legal framework	Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to initiate divorce?
	Do women have the same requirements as men to finalise a divorce or annulment?
	Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to be the legal guardians of their children after divorce?
	Regarding divorce, does the law apply to all groups of women?
De facto	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal rights to initiate divorce?
	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to be the legal guardians of their children after divorce?

Inheritance	
Legal framework	Does the law provide daughters with the same rights as sons to inherit land?
	Does the law provide daughters with the same rights as sons to inherit non-land assets?
	Does the law provide female surviving spouses with the same rights as male surviving spouses to inherit land?
	Does the law provide female surviving spouses with the same rights as male surviving spouses to inherit non-land assets?
	Regarding inheritance rights of daughters, does the law apply to all groups of women?
	Regarding inheritance rights of female surviving spouses, does the law apply to all groups of women?
De facto	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against daughters' legal rights to inherit?
	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against female surviving spouses' legal rights to inherit?
RESTRICTED PHYSICAL INTEGRITY	
Violence against women	
National legal framework on violence against women	
	Does the law provide for a comprehensive approach to address violence against women with specific provisions for: a Investigation, prosecution and punishment of the perpetrator b Protection and support services for victims/survivors
	Has legislation provided for the removal of provisions which reduce penalties in the case of so-called honour crimes?
Laws addressing domestic violence	
Legal framework	Is domestic violence a criminal offence?
	Does domestic violence legislation cover the following abuse: a Physical? b Sexual? c Psychological? d Economic?
De facto	Are there any exceptions included in the customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that reduce penalties for domestic violence?
Laws addressing rape	
Legal framework	Is rape a criminal offence?
	Does the legal definition of rape include marital rape?
	Does the law repeal discriminatory practices such as reduced sentences or escaping punishment if the perpetrator marries the victim?
Laws addressing sexual harassment	
Legal framework	Does the legal framework provide legal protection from sexual harassment?
	Does the law on sexual harassment include criminal penalties?
	Does the definition of sexual harassment cover: a The workplace? b Educational establishments? c Sporting establishments? d Public places? e Cyber harassment or cyber stalking?
Reproductive autonomy	
Legal framework	Is abortion legal?
	Are there any conditions on legal abortion? a No restrictions on reasons for abortion b To preserve the mental health of the woman c Due to rape, statutory rape, or incest d To preserve the physical health of the woman e Due to foetal inviability f To save the woman's life
RESTRICTED ACCESS TO PRODUCTIVE AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES	
Secure access to land assets	
Legal framework	Regarding land, does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to: a Own b Use c Make decisions d Use as collateral

	Regarding land, does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to: a Own b Use c Make decisions d Use as collateral
	Regarding land, does the law apply to all groups of women?
De facto	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal rights regarding land to own, use, make decisions and use as collateral?
	Secure access to non-land assets
Legal framework	Regarding property and other non-land assets, does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to: a Own b Use c Make decisions d Use as collateral
	Regarding property and other non-land assets, does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to: a Own b Use c Make decisions d Use as collateral
	Regarding property and other non-land assets, does the law apply to all groups of women?
De facto	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal rights regarding non-land assets to own, use, make decisions and use as collateral?
	Secure access to formal financial services
Legal framework	Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to open a bank account at a formal financial institution?
	Does the law require married women to obtain the signature and authority of their husband/guardian to open a bank account at a formal financial institution?
	Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to obtain credit?
	Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to obtain credit?
	Regarding access to formal financial services, does the law apply to all groups of women?
De facto	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to open a bank account?
	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to obtain credit?
	Workplace rights
Legal framework	Does the law mandate non-discrimination on the basis of sex in employment?
	Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?
	Does the law prohibit women from entering certain professions?
	Does the law allow women to work the same night hours as men?
	Does the law mandate paid maternity leave?
	Does the law mandate paid paternity leave?
	Does the law mandate parental leave?
	Does the law require women to have permission from their husband or legal guardian to: a Choose a profession/occupation or work b Register a business
	Regarding women's legal right to choose a profession/occupation or work, and/or to register a business, does the law apply to all groups of women?
De facto	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to enter certain professions?
	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that require women to have permission from their husband or legal guardian to: a Choose a profession/occupation or work b Register a business
RESTRICTED CIVIL LIBERTIES	
	Citizenship rights
Legal framework	Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to acquire nationality?
	Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to acquire nationality?
	Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to change their nationality?

	Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to change their nationality?
	Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to retain their nationality?
	Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to retain their nationality?
	Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to confer nationality on their spouse?
	Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to confer nationality on their children?
	Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to confer nationality on their children?
	Regarding women's nationality rights, does the law apply to all groups of women?
De facto	Are there discriminatory customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality?
	Are there discriminatory customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal rights to confer nationality on their spouse and/or children?
Freedom of movement	
Legal framework	Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to apply for identity cards?
	Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to apply for identity cards?
	Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to apply for passports?
	Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to apply for passports?
	Regarding identity cards and/or passports, does the law apply to all groups of women?
	Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to travel outside the country?
	Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to travel outside the country?
De facto	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's rights to apply for identity cards or passports?
Political voice	
Legal framework	Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to vote?
	Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to vote?
	Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to hold public and political office in a Legislature? b Executive?
Enforcement, monitoring and promotion	Do legal quotas exist to promote women's political participation at the national level?
	Do legal quotas exist to promote women's political participation at the local level? For the respective country, please define local level.
	Does the law provide for special measures other than quotas to promote women's political participation at the national level?
	Does the law provide for special measures other than quotas to promote women's political participation at the local level? For the respective country, please define local level.
	Are there incentives for political parties to include women on candidate lists for national elections?
	Are there incentives for political parties to include women on candidate lists for local elections?
De facto	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to vote?
	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to hold public office?
Access to justice	
Legal framework	Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to hold public and political office in the judiciary?
	Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to sue?
	Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to sue?
	Does a married woman's testimony carry the same evidentiary weight in court as a married man's in all types of court cases such as: a Civil b Criminal c Family court d Tribunal
	Does an unmarried woman's testimony carry the same evidentiary weight in court as an unmarried man's in all types of court cases such as: a Civil b Criminal c Family court d Tribunal
De facto	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to sue?
	Does a woman's testimony carry the same evidentiary weight in customary/religious courts/tribunals as a man's?
	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women in terms of providing testimony in court?

	Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to be judges, advocates or other court officers?

Source: (OECD, n.d.[1]), *Social Institutions and Gender Index*, www.genderindex.org.

Annex B. Estimating the economic cost of discriminatory social institutions

Estimating the cost of discriminatory social institutions

Using empirical econometric methods combined with the results from the SIGI, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Centre explored the economic cost associated with gender-based discrimination. To analyse the relationship between gender-based discrimination in social institutions and income, the research uses different estimators – ordinary least squares (OLS) and two-stage least squares (2SLS) – and specifications. All resulting regressions have a high explanatory power and suggest a strong, negative and significant relationship between SIGI scores and income per capita in all specifications: higher levels of gender-based discrimination in social institutions are associated with lower levels of income per capita. The results are robust to the inclusion of additional controls, including gender gaps in outcomes. This means that the measurement obtained is the net effect of gender discrimination in social institutions on income, filtered from the effect of gender inequality in outcomes (Ferrant and Kolev, 2016[2]).

Box A B.1. Limitations of the model for regional analysis

With regard to any attempt to put a price tag on gender discrimination, caution should be used when interpreting the results and estimates for Southeast Asia. The calculation of the economic cost associated with gender-based discrimination is an exercise performed at the global level, using cross-country data. In the context of the SIGI regional analysis, applying the same global economic cost rate to a specific region is a strong assumption, as it ignores the fact that the regional intensity of gender discrimination results in different impacts on the economic cost. Unfortunately, substantial data limitations do not allow us to perform region-specific empirical analysis, while restricting the sample of countries would reduce the significance of the result, rendering the analysis ineffective.

The estimates thus constitute a reflection of the economic cost calculated at the global level. Other endogenous factors in Southeast Asia could yield a significant upward or downward impact on the final and real regional economic cost associated with gender-based discrimination.

Simulations run following the publication of the 2019 SIGI scores estimated the income loss associated with current levels of discrimination at up to USD 6 trillion, or 7.5% of current global income (OECD, 2019[3]). Restricting the results to the specific case of Southeast Asia, the cost of discriminatory social institutions amounts to around USD 200 billion, accounting for 7.5% of the regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (see Box A B.1 for more details on the limitations of the model for the regional analysis).

Further investigation of the channels of transmission shows that the negative impact of discriminatory social institutions on countries' level of income operates by lowering total factor productivity and by reducing the level of education and labour force participation among women. The results show a stronger effect for low-income countries. At the same time, they showed that gradually dismantling gender-based discrimination in social institutions could yield substantial macroeconomic benefits.

Estimating the potential economic gains from gender equality

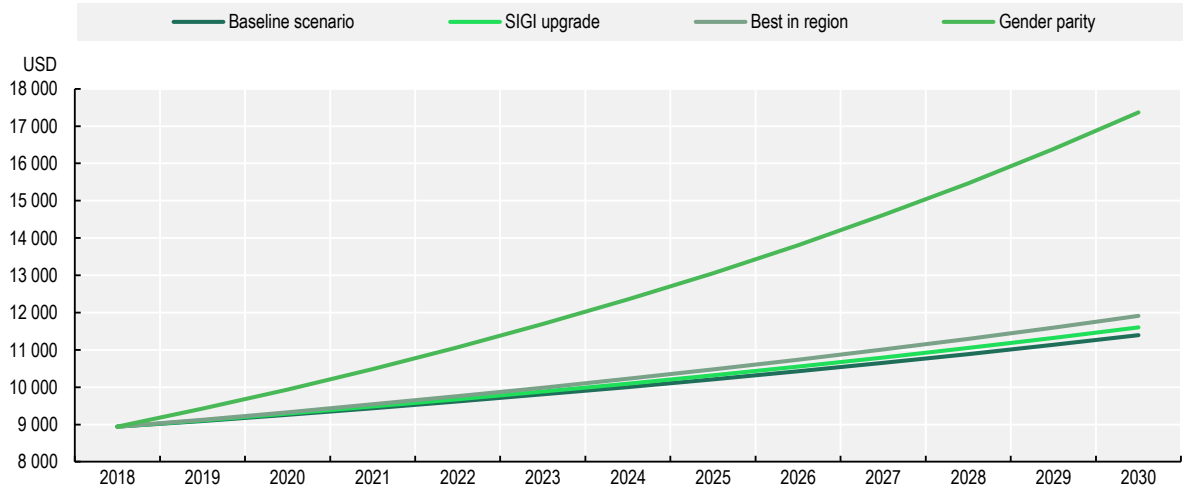
In order to measure the potential economic gains that countries and regions could harness from a significant reduction in gender discrimination, the SIGI developed four distinct scenarios (Ferrant and Kolev, 2016[2]):

- The first scenario, called "Business as usual" (BAU), assumes no change in the global level of gender-based discrimination in social institutions between 2018 and 2030, and therefore constitutes the baseline scenario.
- The second scenario, "SIGI upgrade", assumes that each country addresses its respective gender-based discrimination so that its SIGI score by 2030 allows it to change its SIGI category.[3] For instance, considering a country that is classified as having a medium level of gender-based discrimination, with a score between 30 and 40, the "SIGI upgrade" scenario assumes that by 2030, the country has addressed this discrimination in a way that has advanced it to the next category and the country is now classified as having a low level of gender-based discrimination – meaning a SIGI score of 20-30.
- The third scenario, "Best in region", assumes that each country in Southeast Asia addresses its respective gender-based discrimination so that by 2030, its SIGI score reaches that of the region's top performer in 2019. For instance, consider a country with a SIGI score of 45 that is located in a region where the top performer has a SIGI score of 20. The "Best in region" scenario assumes that by 2030, this country has addressed its own gender-based discrimination in a way that has enabled it to reach the score of the region's top performer in 2019. By design, this scenario also assumes that the score of the region's top performer does not change by 2030.
- Finally, the fourth scenario, "Gender parity", assumes that each country fully addresses its respective gender-based discrimination by 2030 and reaches a SIGI score of 0, indicating no discrimination.

These four scenarios enable the measurement of the potential economic benefits that Southeast Asia and the region's countries could gain from reductions in gender-based discrimination. In Southeast Asia, under the "BAU" scenario (the baseline scenario), GDP is expected to grow on average by 2% annually between 2018 and 2030 (USDA, 2017[4]).[4] Under the "SIGI upgrade" and "Best in region" scenarios, annual growth forecasts increase slightly to 2.2% and 2.4%, respectively, at the regional level. In monetary terms, this translates to forecasted GDPs per capita in 2030 that reach USD 11 603 and USD 11 915 under the "SIGI upgrade" and "Best in region" scenarios, respectively, compared with USD 11 398 under the "BAU" scenario. The "Gender parity" scenario assumes a gradual and total elimination of gender-based discrimination by 2030, and clearly yields the largest economic gains. Under the "Gender parity" scenario, average annual GDP growth is expected to reach 5.7% in Southeast Asia, equivalent to an annual increase of 3.7 percentage points compared with the baseline scenario. In monetary terms, the "Gender parity" scenario would lead to GDP per capita reaching USD 17 369 by 2030, representing a gain of nearly USD 6 000 per capita compared with the baseline scenario (Figure A B.1).

Figure A B.1. Economic gains in the Southeast Asian region from a reduction in gender-based discrimination

2018-30



Note: GDP forecasts are measured in terms of 2010 real GDP per capita at current PPP. GDP forecasts follow four distinct scenarios: 1) the baseline scenario, using available growth forecasts, and assuming no change in the global level of gender-based discrimination in social institutions between 2018 and 2030; 2) "SIGI upgrade", assuming that each country would decrease gender discrimination enough by 2030 to be classified as the next SIGI classification level; 3) "Best in the region", assuming that each country would decrease gender discrimination enough by 2030 to attain the region's best performer's 2019 SIGI score; and 4) "Gender parity", assuming that each country would have eliminated gender-based discrimination in social institutions by 2030. Regional calculations do not include Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Timor-Leste (no SIGI score).

Source: OECD calculations based on (OECD, 2019[5]), *Social Institutions and Gender Index*, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/f0c48e52-en; (USDA, 2017[4]), *ERS International Macroeconomic Dataset*, https://data.nal.usda.gov/dataset/international-macroeconomic-data-set; and (World Bank, 2019[6]), *World Development Indicators*, https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators.

StatLink https://doi.org/10.1787/888934230091

References

Ferrant, G. and A. Kolev (2016), "Does gender discrimination in social institutions matter for long-term growth?: Cross-country evidence", *OECD Development Centre Working Papers*, No. 330, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jm2hz8dgls6-en. [2]

OECD (2019), *SIGI 2019 Global Report: Transforming Challenges into Opportunities*, Social Institutions and Gender Index, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/bc56d212-en. [3]

OECD (2019), "Social Institutions and Gender Index (Edition 2019)", *OECD International Development Statistics* (database), https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/f0c48e52-en (accessed on 12 November 2020). [5]

OECD (n.d.), *Social Institutions and Gender Index*, https://www.genderindex.org/. [1]

USDA (2017), *ERS International Macroeconomic Data Set*, https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/international-macroeconomic-data-set/ (accessed on 12 November 2020). [4]

World Bank (2019), *World Development Indicators (WDI)*, https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/dataset/world-development-indicators (accessed on 14 November 2019). [6]

Notes

[1] ActionAID (2013), Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2013), Cabo Verde National Institute of Statistics (2012), ECLAC (2010), ECLAC (2016), General Statistics Office of Viet Nam (2014-15), Instituto Nacional de Estadistica y Censos – Costa Rica, National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (2013-14), National Statistics, Republic of China (Chinese Taipei) (2000), OECD SIGI Burkina Faso country study (2018), OXFAM (2017), République de Guinée (2002-03), Statistics Sierra Leone (2003-04), Timor-Leste Ministry of Finance (2007), Troisième enquête Camerounaise auprès des ménages, UNSD time use data portal (2016), Zimbabwe 2014 LFS.

[2] ActionAID (2013), Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2013), Cabo Verde National Institute of Statistics (2012), ECLAC (2010), ECLAC (2016), General Statistics Office of Viet Nam (2014-15), Instituto Nacional de Estadistica y Censos – Costa Rica, National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (2013-14), National Statistics, Republic of China (Chinese Taipei) (2000), OECD SIGI Burkina Faso country study (2018), OXFAM (2017), République de Guinée (2002-03), Statistics Sierra Leone (2003-04), Timor-Leste Ministry of Finance (2007), Troisième enquête Camerounaise auprès des ménages, UNSD time use data portal (2016), Zimbabwe 2014 LFS.

[3] The SIGI classifies countries into five categories based on their global SIGI score: very low level of discrimination (SIGI <20); low level of discrimination (SIGI 20-30); medium level of discrimination (SIGI 30-40); high level of discrimination (SIGI 40-50); and very high level of discrimination (SIGI >50).

[4] GDP forecasts are measured in terms of 2010 real GDP per capita at current PPP, and projections are extracted from the 2017 ERS International Macroeconomic Data Set of USDA.

Social Institutions and Gender Index

SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Southeast Asia

Achieving gender equality and tackling discriminatory laws, social norms and practices set a direct path toward a more inclusive economy and society. The *SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Southeast Asia* provides new evidence-based analysis on the setbacks and progress in achieving gender equality between 2014 and 2019 in 11 countries. The report uncovers the discrimination women face within social institutions in various dimensions; in the family and household context, in relation to physical integrity and access to productive and financial resources, as well within the political and civil spheres. The *SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Southeast Asia* explores the interaction between women's empowerment and discriminatory social institutions by looking specifically at four core areas – health, education, the economic dimension and decision making. It also unveils the cost of discriminatory social institutions for Southeast Asian countries and the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis for women and girls. Building on the regional analysis of how discriminatory social institutions continue to hinder efforts toward SDG 5, the report provides a set of policy recommendations to enhance governments' efforts to deliver on their gender equality commitments by 2030.

PRINT ISBN 978-92-64-86971-4
PDF ISBN 978-92-64-53494-0