

Preface

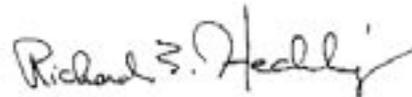
From indicators to action: OECD provides the analysis

The OECD exists to promote policies designed “to achieve the highest sustainable economic growth and employment and a rising standard of living”. We are proud of the role we play in helping countries learn from one another in achieving these goals, and in identifying “best practice” in a very broad range of policies, from education and pensions to macroeconomic policy and trade.

To identify best practice, the OECD develops indicators which illustrate some vital differences in experience, across countries, over time and across different groups. Such indicators are not plucked from thin air. Rather, they are the product of many years of painstaking work in identifying the issue, getting agreement across countries, collecting and standardising data. For many years now, we have been trying to improve analysis by collecting statistics separately for women and men. Outcomes for women and men are very different across many different areas of life, and policies have to reflect this. Best practice across countries in many areas of policy cannot be “gender-blind”.

The “Quality Framework and Guidelines for OECD Statistics” indicates that, whenever appropriate, the OECD should collect data disaggregated by sex. The indicators in this brochure are a tiny sample of the data which are now collected by the OECD. They illustrate some important differences between women and men. Sometimes outcomes are better for women than for men – they perform better at school, they are less likely to go to prison, to smoke, are less likely to be “socially isolated”, and they live longer. In other areas, men have a better time of it – they earn more and are more likely to get into positions of power in both political and economic life.

In addition to these indicators of outcomes, we need to analyse policy. There is not space to showcase all of our gender-related work in this brochure, but we are making a lot of headway in many different areas of gender analysis, not just in the areas that you would expect – pensions, family policies and education, for example – but also in trade, entrepreneurship and development aid. If governments want “more growth, employment and a better standard of living”, then they are going to need more of this sort of gender-sensitive analysis, and more indicators of how men and women are doing. The OECD is committed to sustain this effort providing solid statistical evidence and analysis.



Dick Hecklinger
OECD Deputy-Secretary General