The Pursuit of Gender Equality

AN UPHILL BATTLE

OECD

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OECD
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

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Foreword

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right. It is also a keystone of a prosperous, modern economy that provides sustainable inclusive growth. Gender equality is essential for ensuring that men and women can contribute fully at home, at work and in public life, for the betterment of societies and economies at large.

The OECD has long championed this cause. In 2010, building on its extensive work, the OECD launched the OECD Gender Initiative to examine the obstacles to gender equality in the fields of education, employment and entrepreneurship. This work led to the flagship 2012 publication *Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now!* and an extensive work stream assessing policies to promote gender equality in different countries. These country reviews have informed novel policy initiatives like *NiñaSTEM PUEDEN*, which the OECD and the Mexican Ministry of Education jointly launched. The OECD's online Gender Data Portal has become a leading global source for statistical indicators on female education, employment, entrepreneurship, political participation, and social and economic outcomes.

The OECD's strong focus on gender equality, in collaboration with other international organisations, has been crucial for raising the profile of the gender agenda internationally and securing strong commitments by G20 and G7 leaders. In particular, the OECD was instrumental in advancing the G20 target to reduce the gender gap in labour force participation rates between men and women by 25% by 2025.

The 2013 OECD Gender Recommendation and the 2015 OECD Gender Recommendation in Public Life propose concrete measures that member countries and other adherents can implement to advance gender equality. The present report, *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle*, represents the OECD's stocktaking of how well – or not – countries are doing in implementing policy measures aimed at reaching gender equality goals. Despite the OECD's analysis, policy recommendations and international targets, countries need to do more.

This report presents a stark call to action. In the past five years, countries have made very little progress in reaching gender equality goals. Gender gaps persist in all areas of social and economic life and across countries, and the size of these gaps has often changed little. While young women in OECD countries now obtain more years of schooling than young men, on average, girls are much less likely to study in the lucrative science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. Women's labour force participation rates have moved closer to men's rates over the past few decades, but in every OECD country women are still less likely than men to engage in paid work. When women do work, they are more likely to work part-time, are less likely to advance to management, are more likely to face discrimination and earn less than men. The median full-time female worker earns almost 15% less than her male counterpart, on average, across the OECD – a rate that has barely changed since 2010. Women also remain underrepresented in political and business leadership positions.

Countries are, however, making progress in some key policy areas:

- Several countries now offer *strong financial incentives to fathers to take parental leave* for at least two months. Fathers' leave taking is essential for gender equality in paid and unpaid work, as it encourages parents to share caregiving more equally and facilitates mothers' labour market participation. These egalitarian behaviours can improve father's and mother's well-being, set a good example for children, and – over time – are likely to lessen prevailing gender stereotypes.
- Gender pay gaps persist worldwide, despite women's dramatic gains in education. Many factors drive the gender pay gap, including gender segregation in fields of study and jobs, women's higher likelihood of interrupting their careers for caregiving, and – though harder to identify – discrimination and biases against women. Since 2013, about two-thirds of OECD countries have introduced new *pay equity initiatives* and pay transparency is a key lever in bringing gender pay differentials within companies to light.
- *Gender quotas and other targets* are helping to increase the number of women in political and private sector leadership. Women's underrepresentation in leadership limits the presence of female voices in important decisions, and deprives girls and young women of strong role models. Changing stereotypes requires a broad, societal understanding that women are capable of achieving as much as men in business and in public life.
- Harassment and violence against women (VAW) represent the worst manifestation of gender inequality, but VAW remains endemic in much of the world. A survey conducted for this report finds that addressing VAW is a top priority issue for most OECD countries, and governments and stakeholders are increasingly *strengthening legislation and conducting awareness-raising campaigns aimed at preventing and ending VAW*. Yet progress remains slow and uneven. This is a crucial front in the uphill battle for gender equality.

These inequalities should have long been resolved. There is no reason for women to trail behind men in social, economic and political outcomes. The cost of inaction is high: reducing the gender gap in labour force participation by 25% by 2025 could, through increases in the size of their labour forces, add 1 percentage point to projected baseline GDP growth across the OECD over the period 2013-25, and almost 2.5 percentage points if gender participation gaps were halved by 2025. In the face of sluggish growth, ageing societies and increasing educational attainment of young women, the economic case for gender equality is clear.

We must advance in making gender equality a reality.

The OECD Gender Recommendations help motivate governments, employers, families and schools around the globe to close gender gaps, empower girls and women, and promote gender equality. Every country faces its own obstacles to reaching gender equality, and to make a real difference we must change public policies in tandem with stereotypes, attitudes and behaviours. Together, we can ensure that boys and girls, and men and women, have equal opportunities to succeed and contribute to their society and economy.

Angel Gurría
Secretary-General of the OECD

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The OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (ELS) led the writing and co-ordination of chapters of this report, under the senior leadership of Stefano Scarpetta (Director of ELS), Mark Pearson (Deputy Director of ELS) and Monika Queisser (Senior Counsellor in ELS and leader of the OECD Horizontal Project on Gender Equality). Willem Adema, Senior Economist, supervised the organisation of chapters and managed the project.

This report is the result of extensive teamwork and collaboration across OECD directorates and would not have been possible without contributions from the following authors: Willem Adema, Francesca Borgonovi, Stijn Broecke, Chris Clarke, Jean-Christophe Dumont, Ronnie Downes, Nicola Ehlermann, Emily Esplen, Paolo Falco, Gaëlle Ferrant, Valerie Frey, Elena Gentili, Pinar Guven, David Halabisky, Fianna Jurdant, Mariarosa Lunati, Duncan MacDonald, Thomas Manfredi, Chiara Monticone, Liliane Moreira, Timothy Muir, Keiko Nowacka, Gwenn Parent, Jonathan Potter, Nicol Scherie, Vincenzo Spiezia, Mariagrazia Squicciarini, Roula Sylla, Yun Tang, Tatyana Teplova, Olivier Thevenon, Céline Thevenot and Andrew W. Wyckoff.

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Acronyms and conventional signs

OECD country ISO codes

Australia	AUS	Korea	KOR
Austria	AUT	Latvia	LVA
Belgium	BEL	Luxembourg	LUX
Canada	CAN	Mexico	MEX
Chile	CHL	Netherlands	NLD
Czech Republic	CZE	New Zealand	NZL
Denmark	DNK	Norway	NOR
Estonia	EST	Poland	POL
Finland	FIN	Portugal	PRT
France	FRA	Slovak Republic	SVK
Germany	DEU	Slovenia	SVN
Greece	GRC	Spain	ESP
Hungary	HUN	Sweden	SWE
Iceland	ISL	Switzerland	CHE
Ireland	IRL	Turkey	TUR
Israel	ISR	United Kingdom	GBR
Italy	ITA	United States	USA
Japan	JPN		

Other major economy and G20 country ISO codes

Argentina	ARG	Pakistan	PAK
Bangladesh	BGD	Philippines	PHL
China	CHN	Romania	ROU
Colombia	COL	Russian Federation	RUS
Costa Rica	CRI	Saudi Arabia	SAU
India	IND	Singapore	SGP
Indonesia	IDN	South Africa	ZAF
Lithuania	LTU	Ukraine	UKR

Other acronyms and abbreviations

ECEC	Early childhood education and care
GEQs	OECD gender equality questionnaires 2016
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
SDGs	Sustainable development goals
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
VAW	Violence against women

Conventional signs

".." indicates data are not available.

In figures, OECD refers to unweighted averages of OECD countries for which data are available.

(↘) in the legend relates to the variable for which countries are ranked from left to right in decreasing order.

(↗) in the legend relates to the variable for which countries are ranked from left to right in increasing order.

Note on data sources

The data presented in this report are based on a range of different types of sources, including questionnaires to governments, official statistics, and national and cross-national surveys. Where data are based on information extracted from several different surveys, efforts have been made to "harmonise" definitions and ensure the comparability of concepts and measures across surveys. However, it should be noted that comparability may still be affected by differences between surveys in terms of the core definitions and the underlying survey methods, including the sampling frames, sampling methods and reference periods.

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Executive summary

Gender inequality pervades all aspects of social and economic life, and affects countries at all levels of development. Young women in OECD countries now often obtain more schooling than young men, but women continue to be poorly represented in the lucrative science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. The number of women in the labour force has moved closer to that of men in the past few decades, but in every country women are still less likely to engage in paid work.

When women do enter the labour force, they are more likely to work part-time, they are less likely to advance to management and they earn less than men. The median full-time female worker earns almost 15% less than her male counterpart, on average, across the OECD – a rate that has changed little in the past decade. Women are less likely to be entrepreneurs, and female-owned businesses tend to earn less than male-owned ones. Across countries, gender gaps increase with age, reflecting the crucial role that parenthood plays in gender equality. Much more than fatherhood, motherhood typically has marked negative effects on workforce participation, pay and career advancement. Gender inequalities pervade public life, as well: women are underrepresented in political office, holding less than one-third of seats in lower houses of national legislatures, on average, in the OECD.

Clearly much remains to be done to narrow – and eventually close – gender gaps worldwide. In a survey carried out for this report, countries identified the three most important gender inequality issues in their country as violence against women, the gender wage gap and the unequal sharing of unpaid work. Motivated by these and other inequalities, as well as 2013 and 2015 OECD Gender Recommendations, countries have made some important policy changes in the past five years:

- Most OECD countries are tackling workplace harassment, a form of violence against women, through stronger laws and regulations governing sexual harassment. Information or awareness-raising campaigns aimed at defining and preventing sexual harassment are commonly used. More research is needed to understand whether (and how well) such programmes work.
- Several countries have initiated programmes aimed at getting girls and young women into STEM and encouraging more young men to study and work in health and education.
- About two-thirds of countries have introduced specific policies to close the gender wage gap. Pay transparency is a key lever; companies are increasingly required to analyse gender wage gaps and share the results publicly.
- Access to early childhood education and care is crucial for gender equality, as it helps both mothers and fathers work when children are young. Several OECD countries recently addressed affordability through increases in subsidies, benefits or rebates, the introduction or expansion of free childcare hours and/or more direct public investment in new facilities for young children.

- A majority of OECD countries have initiated policies that promote gender balance on boards and in senior management. Countries that adopted a quota saw a more immediate increase in the number of women on boards, while those that took a "softer" approach, using disclosure rules or targets, have seen a more gradual increase over time.
- Many OECD countries have implemented affirmative action measures to move more women into public leadership. More women have entered high-level political office as a result of mandatory quotas requiring a minimum number of women elected or quotas compelling parties to nominate a certain ratio of female/male candidates.
- In an effort to get parents to share caregiving more equally, many countries now provide fathers with financial incentives to take parental leave for at least two months This is important, as fathers' equal participation in caregiving is crucial for ensuring that mothers can remain and advance in the labour force.
- Many countries are trying to close gender gaps in access to finance and entrepreneurial skills by improving access to bank financing through loan guarantees. Two other common strategies are the use of public procurement to support female entrepreneurs and efforts to improve women's access to risk capital. Entrepreneurship training, mentoring programmes, workshops, business counselling and support in building entrepreneurial networks have also shown promise.
- For gender equality to be fully realised, gender equality must be embedded in all policy making, in all ministries and at all levels of government. Gender budgeting is an increasingly common tool for ensuring that women's and girls' concerns are mainstreamed in policy and public administration, and almost half of OECD countries report that they have introduced, plan to introduce, or are actively considering introducing gender budgeting.
- The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Agenda 2030's gender-dedicated goal and targets (SDG5), promises to increase the prioritisation of gender equality in national and global development agendas.

Despite these promising policy measures, progress has been far too slow so far. There has been little change in outcomes on the ground. Gender gaps stubbornly persist in educational, social, economic and political outcomes. These inequalities must be urgently addressed.

Countries must step up their efforts through sustained campaigns, monitoring policies aimed at gender equality, greater public investment, and the introduction and expansion of legal measures. The policy suggestions in this report, combined with the OECD Gender Recommendations, should serve as a toolkit for policy makers and stakeholders willing to tackle gender inequality. The time is now to ensure that better policies lead to better lives – for girls and boys, and for women and men.

Part I

Gender equality: A global overview

Chapter 1

Gender equality in the OECD and around the world: An overview

Key findings

- Girls and young women now outpace boys and young men in educational attainment, on average, in OECD countries. Yet gender gaps in employment, entrepreneurship and public life persist, and gaps have changed little in recent years. Public policies are not doing enough to end these inequalities.
- Government priorities have been shifting, reflecting heightened awareness of certain policy challenges. Over half of countries surveyed identify violence against women as one of their three most urgent gender inequality issues. Other urgent issues include women being paid less than men for the same work and the unequal sharing of household tasks between men and women.
- Some public policies have improved dramatically in the past five years. In many countries, the increasing availability of paid paternity leave is helping to ensure that fathers and mothers have an equal stake in caregiving, thus reducing barriers to women's labour force participation. Since 2013, approximately two-thirds of OECD countries have introduced pay transparency measures to address wage inequities. Countries are increasingly implementing and strengthening policies aimed at violence against women, which remains endemic worldwide. Affirmative action measures are successfully helping to increase the number of women in public and private senior leadership.
- Despite progress in these and other policy areas, gender gaps persist. All countries must urgently implement and strengthen policies aimed at gender equality, for the betterment of women, men, girls, boys and society as a whole. The policy advice presented in this report and embedded in the OECD Gender Recommendations serve as tools for tackling this challenge.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Gender equality for inclusive growth

As this report details, gender gaps persist in all areas of social and economic life, and in countries at all levels of development. There has been very little progress over the past five years. Young women in OECD countries now often obtain more schooling than young men, but continue to be less likely to study in the lucrative science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields. Women's labour force participation rates have moved closer to men's over the past few decades, but in every country women are still less likely than men to engage in paid work. When women *do* work, they are more likely to work part-time, are less likely to become managers, are less likely to be entrepreneurs and earn less than men. The median full-time female worker earns just under 15% less than her male counterpart, on average, across the OECD (Table 1.1) – a rate that has barely moved in recent years (Figure 1.3). Women are also underrepresented in private sector management and in politics, holding, on average, fewer than one-third of lower house seats in national legislatures in the OECD. On the whole, however, gender gaps are largest in private sector employment and entrepreneurship.

Girls' remarkable progress in educational attainment worldwide is perhaps the greatest gender equality success story of the past half-century (OECD, 2012). Yet it will take more time before changes in young women's educational profiles translate into narrower gender gaps in labour markets. Indeed, existing gaps in labour market outcomes of prime age and older workers continue to be influenced by education and career decisions that they made 20 to 40 years ago, when societal norms and career expectations were different. Further policy action is needed – immediately – to ensure that girls' and young women's gains translate into gender equality throughout the life cycle. Gender gaps often emerge around the time of parenthood, when more traditional gender norms around work and life take hold in families.

There is cause for optimism, however. Even if socioeconomic outcomes have changed slowly on the ground, countries have made good progress in some policy areas in the past half-decade, particularly in paternity and parental leave, reducing the gender wage gap, addressing violence against women and promoting women in leadership.

Getting fathers to take leave from work when children are young is important for equality, as fathers' unpaid caregiving is key for ensuring that mothers have the option to fully participate in the labour market, in society and the economy. Over half of OECD countries now offer paid paternity leave for at least a few days around childbirth, and more and more are reserving a parental leave period that only fathers can use (Chapter 16). Gender issues are intrinsically linked with family-friendly policies – around paid leave, care supports and flexible workplace arrangements – that help both men and women achieve a better work-life balance and greater well-being.

To fight the gender wage gap, approximately two-thirds of OECD countries introduced new policies on pay equity since 2013. Pay transparency is a key tool, and companies are increasingly required to analyse gender wage gaps and share that information publicly. Other countries are trying new strategies, like online pay gap calculators or certifications for companies showing good practice (Chapter 12).

Governments are also recognising violence against women (VAW) as a priority area and taking steps to prevent and eradicate it (Chapter 5). For example, many countries have introduced or reinforced anti-harassment laws. Others are conducting awareness-raising campaigns about definitions of sexual harassment, ways to prevent sexual harassment and legal rights (for victims) and obligations (for employers) when harassment occurs. To ensure that women are represented in decision making, many OECD and developing countries have initiated some form of affirmative action to increase female representation in politics (Chapter 14).

Table 1.1. Countries where women do well in education have the smallest gender gaps in labour force participation and leadership positions

Key indicators of gender gaps in education, employment and entrepreneurship

Top performers | Moderate performers | Bottom performers

	Education:			Employment:			Entrepreneurship:
	Gender gap in mean PISA reading scores	Gender gap in mean PISA mathematics scores	Gender gap in the share that have attained tertiary education (p.p.)	Gender gap in the labour force participation rate (p.p.)	Gender gap in the share of managerial employment (p.p.)	Gender gap in median earnings for full-time employees (%)	Gender gap in the share of employed who are employers (p.p.)
Age group:	15-year-olds	15-year-olds	25-34 year-olds	15-64 year-olds	All ages	All ages	15-64 year-olds
Year:	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2016
Note:	a	a	b	c	d	e	f
OECD average [g]	-26.9 *	7.9 *	-11.9	12.2	37.7	14.3	3.3
OECD std. dev. [g]	9.6	7.4	6.5	8.0	16.1	7.4	0.8
Finland	-46.5 *	-7.5 *	-16.4	3.0	33.4	18.1	3.9
Sweden	-39.2 *	-2.2	-15.6	3.6	20.9	13.4	3.6
Norway	-39.8 *	-2.3	-17.3	4.3	27.9	7.1	1.7
Iceland	-41.6 *	-1.1	-16.8	4.8	23.5	9.9	3.3
Latvia	-42.1 *	-1.9	-28.4	6.1	11.4	21.1	3.5
Denmark	-22.2 *	9.4 *	-17.8	6.3	46.3	5.8	2.9
Portugal	-16.7 *	10.0 *	-15.2	6.4	34.7	18.9	3.1
Slovenia	-43.2 *	3.8	-22.3	7.4	25.3	5.0	3.2
Estonia	-27.9 *	5.2	-20.3	7.5	38.6	28.3	3.2
Canada	-26.2 *	9.0 *	-17.7	7.6	29.0	18.6	3.3
Israel	-22.9 *	8.5	-19.4	7.8	35.5	21.8	4.6
France	-29.1 *	6.0	-8.4	7.9	36.7	9.9	3.7
Germany	-20.8 *	16.6 *	-1.9	9.1	41.4	17.1	3.5
Switzerland	-25.3 *	12.0 *	-2.9	9.2	29.6	16.9	4.4
Belgium	-16.0 *	14.3 *	-12.1	9.2	34.9	3.3	3.3
Austria	-20.2 *	27.0 *	-5.6	9.2	40.6	17.0	3.8
Netherlands	-23.6 *	2.5	-8.9	9.9	47.9	14.1	3.3
New Zealand	-32.3 *	8.5 *	-8.4	10.2	..	6.1	2.1
United Kingdom	-21.9 *	11.6 *	-6.8	10.3	29.3	17.1	1.8
Luxembourg	-21.3 *	11.3 *	-10.4	10.4	63.6	3.4	2.4
Spain	-20.2 *	16.0 *	-12.1	10.8	37.2	11.5	2.8
Australia	-31.7 *	5.8	-11.9	11.5	27.6	13.0	3.4
United States	-20.1 *	8.5 *	-8.3	11.5	13.2	18.9	2.1
Hungary	-24.8 *	8.2	-12.3	13.1	18.9	9.5	3.2
Slovak Republic	-35.6 *	5.7	-16.1	13.2	37.4	13.4	2.3
Poland	-29.4 *	11.4 *	-18.7	13.4	19.7	11.1	2.4
Ireland	-12.0 *	16.1 *	-11.8	14.8	31.5	14.4	4.0
Czech Republic	-26.1 *	7.1	-13.9	14.9	41.0	16.5	2.6
Greece	-37.3 *	0.1	-12.4	16.0	48.6	6.2	4.1
Japan	-13.3 *	13.8 *	-2.7	18.2	75.2	25.7	2.1
Italy	-16.0 *	19.9 *	-11.6	20.0	46.9	5.6	3.9
Korea	-40.5 *	-7.0	-9.0	20.8	79.0	37.2	4.4
Chile	-11.9 *	18.3 *	-1.6	21.9	49.3	21.1	2.9
Mexico	-15.7 *	7.3 *	-1.8	35.1	31.4	16.7	3.0
Turkey	-27.8 *	5.9	0.6	42.0	73.7	6.9	4.6
Brazil	-23.1 *	15.5 *	-6.1	21.3	25.3	24.8	..
China	-16.2 *	5.8	0.7	14.0	50.1	..	..
Colombia	-15.6 *	10.9 *	-7.3	22.1	14.0	11.1	..
Costa Rica	-15.0 *	16.1 *	-5.0	26.6	17.4	3.7	..
India	.. ..	.. ..	..	52.9	71.0	56.0	..
Indonesia	-23.4 *	-2.7	-1.1	33.0	53.7	36.8	..
Lithuania	-39.1 *	-1.3	-19.9	3.3	20.8	12.5	..
Russian Fed.	-26.1 *	6.0	-13.1	10.9	22.6	..	..
South Africa	.. ..	.. ..	-2.2	13.0	37.8	40.5	4.9

Note: Countries are ranked in ascending order according to the gender gap in the labour force participation rate. Values are shaded according to the size of the gender gap relative to the OECD average and the OECD standard deviation. "Top performers" are those with gender gaps more than half a standard deviation below the OECD average (i.e. those with smaller gender gaps or gender gaps that more strongly favour women), "moderate performers" those with gender gaps within half a standard deviation of the OECD average, and "bottom performers" those with gender gaps more than half a standard deviation above the OECD average (i.e. those with larger gender gaps or gender gaps that more strongly favour men). "(p.p.)" denotes a gender gap measured in percentage points; "(%)" denotes a gender gap measured in percentage terms. For the gender gaps in mean PISA reading and mathematics scores, countries marked with an * are those where the gender gap is statistically significant. Data for "China" refer to the four PISA-participating China provinces (Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Guangdong) only.

For notes *a* to *g* and sources, please see the online StatLink.

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In the past five years, these national programmes and campaigns have been strengthened by important international commitments to gender equality. The OECD and other intergovernmental organisations were instrumental in bringing gender equality to the fore of the G20 agenda, including the 2014 commitment by G20 leaders to reduce the gender gap in labour force participation by 25% by 2025. The OECD also supported the creation of Women20 (W20), which promotes women's economic empowerment as an integral part of the G20 process. At the G7, the OECD and other organisations have made important inroads in promoting women's entrepreneurship and getting more girls into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects – an issue which the OECD is also directly addressing through its NiñaSTEM PUEDEN joint initiative with the Mexican Ministry of Education. And, of course, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – particularly the gender-dedicated goal and targets in SDG5 – have helped to increase the prominence of gender equality within national and global agendas.

No country in the world has achieved gender equality. Even the most egalitarian continue to experience troubling gaps between men's and women's (and girls' and boys') aspirations, opportunities and outcomes. Such inequality is not only a moral failure, but a serious barrier to inclusive economic growth – to the detriment of society as a whole. Achieving equality between women and men requires a holistic, whole-of-government approach in which all stakeholders prioritise gender equality as an integral part of the design, implementation and evaluation phases of public policies and budgets

The OECD has long championed gender equality (e.g. OECD, 1980 and 1985). Building on its extensive work, the OECD through its 2010 launch of the OECD Gender Initiative strengthened its focus on the obstacles to gender equality in the fields of education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life. The detailed policy suggestions in this report, combined with the OECD Gender Recommendations (OECD, 2013 and 2015a), should serve as a toolkit for policy makers and stakeholders willing to tackle gender inequality.

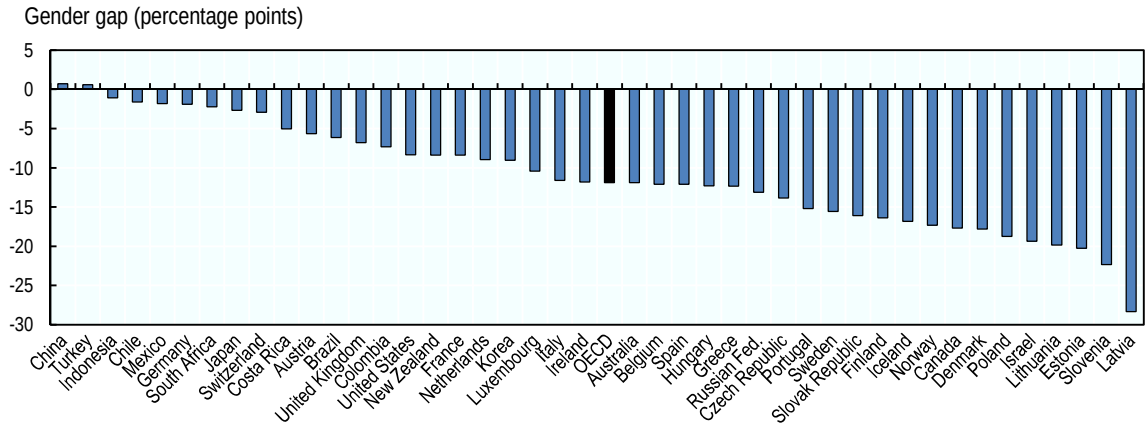
Gender gaps in labour market outcomes persist, despite girls and young women's gains in education

Although many countries have achieved gender parity in access to primary and secondary education, there is wide regional variation. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, fewer girls than boys still enrol in primary school (Chapter 6). In OECD countries, girls and young women now typically outperform boys and young men in reading proficiency and are more likely to complete their university education (Figure 1.1). In 2014 across the OECD, 57% of bachelor's and master's degrees were obtained by women. Yet, despite the gains they have in many areas of education, teenage girls across the OECD state that they are less satisfied with life than teenage boys (Chapter 6 and OECD, 2017a).

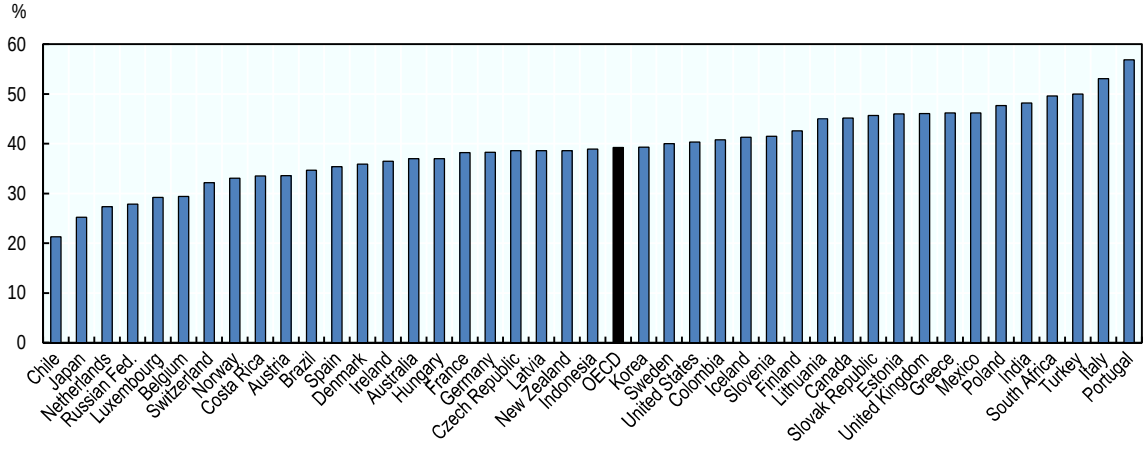
Gender stereotyping and perceptions of ability, rather than *actual* ability (OECD, 2015b), contribute to gender gaps in proficiency and participation in STEM fields (Figure 1.1 and Chapter 8). The fields of study (and subsequent career paths) of boys and girls start to diverge by the age of 15. OECD-wide, 15-year-old boys are, on average, more than twice as likely as girls to expect to work as engineers, scientists or architects. In higher education, young women are under-represented in STEM; for example, women account for less than 20% of entrants into tertiary-level computer science programmes in OECD countries and only around 18% of engineering entrants (Chapter 7).

Figure 1.1. Young women are better educated than young men, but less likely to choose to study science, mathematics or computing at university level

Panel A. Gender gap (male minus female) in the share of the population that has attained tertiary education, 25-34 year-olds, 2015 or latest available year[a]



Panel B. Female share (%) of tertiary graduates in science, mathematics and computing, 2014 or latest available year[b]



Note: For Panel A, countries are sorted from left to right in descending order according to the gender gap (male minus female) in the share that have attained tertiary education. For Panel B, countries are sorted from left to right in ascending order according to the female share (%) of tertiary graduates in science, mathematics and computing.

"Tertiary education" includes all types of tertiary-level qualifications – i.e. short-cycle tertiary qualifications (Levels 5 of the International Standard Classification of Education 2011), bachelor or equivalent level qualifications (ISCED 2011 Level 6), master or equivalent level qualifications (ISCED 2011 level 7), and doctoral or equivalent level qualifications (ISCED 2011 level 8).

"Tertiary graduates in science, mathematics and computing" includes graduates from all types of tertiary-level programmes (ISCED 2011 levels 5 to 8) in the field of science, mathematics and computing.

a) Data for China refer to 2010, for Chile and Indonesia to 2013, and for Brazil, France and South Africa to 2014

b) Data for Belgium, Canada, Iceland, India and South Africa refer to 2013.

Source: OECD (2016), *OECD Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2016-en.

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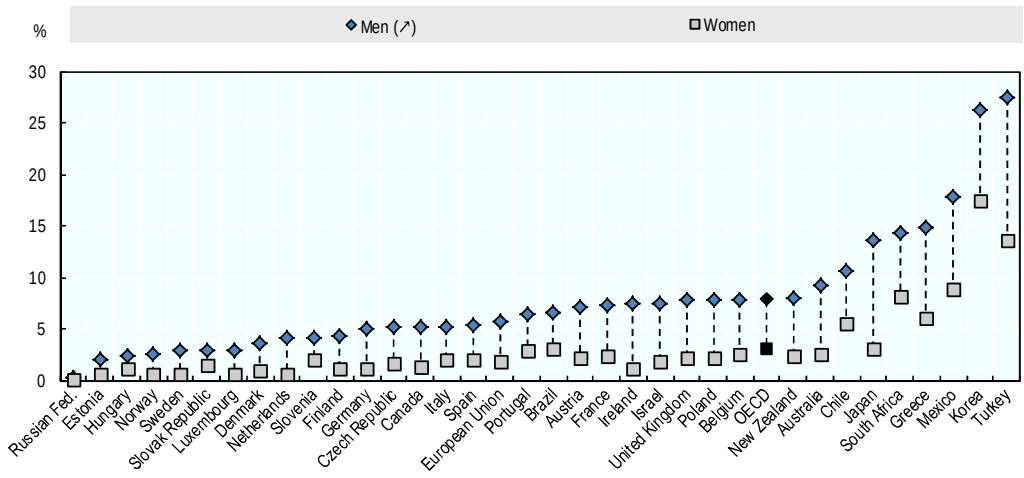
While female labour force participation rates have moved closer to men's over the past few decades, women are still less likely to be in the workforce and often experience lower job quality across OECD countries. Migrant women face particularly daunting barriers; their employment rates are usually lower than those of native-born women and migrant men (Chapter 21). Women who do work are more likely to work part-time, for lower pay, and in less lucrative fields such as the public sector, health and education (Chapters 9 and 22), while higher proportions of their better paid male peers work in finance, banking and insurance (Chapter 11). Far more men than women work long hours in paid work (Figure 1.8), even though long hours do not imply greater productivity (OECD, 2017b). As long as men's long hours are viewed as showing career commitment, and as long as women are more likely to take leave to care for children or relatives, some employers will be less inclined to invest in female employees.

Figure 1.2. Men are much more likely to spend more time at the workplace than women

Percentage of employed with usual weekly working hours equal to or greater than 60 hours per week, by gender, 2014 or latest available year[a]



Note: Data refer to usual weekly working hours in the main job only, except for Australia, New Zealand and Norway (usual weekly working hours in all jobs) and Japan and Korea (actual weekly working hours in all jobs).

a) Data for Brazil refer to 2011

b) Data for Korea refer to actual weekly working hours equal to or greater than 54 hours per week

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on national household and labour force surveys; Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílio (PNAD) for Brazil; the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey for Turkey; and the European Social Survey (ESS) for the Russian Federation.

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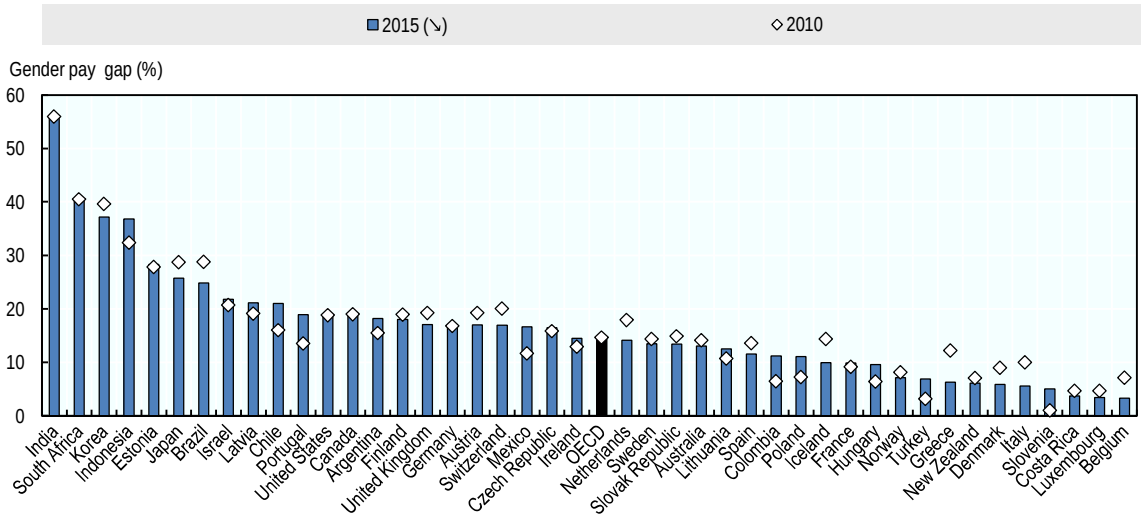
All of these factors contribute to substantial gender pay gaps, with median full-time female workers earning almost 15% less, on average, than their male peers OECD-wide (Figure 1.3). Although overall pay inequality has improved little in recent years, the good news is that gaps in participation and pay are narrowest among young men and women (Chapter 12). But gender-related labour market gaps widen when children enter the household, as couples then often take on more "traditional" gender roles. Gaps emerge earlier in countries where the average age at which women bear their first child is lower than the OECD average of 29 years (*OECD Family Database*) and where traditional attitudes to women's role in the home are more prevalent (OECD, 2016a, 2016b and 2017c). After controlling for differences in observed worker and job characteristics and working hours, just over half of the gender gap in monthly pay remains unexplained in

OECD and G20 countries (Chapter 12). Attitudes, norms, social institutions, and discrimination are important factors, particularly in G20 countries where gaps are wide and women more likely to be unpaid family workers and/or engage in informal work (Chapters 19 and 20).

The quality of women's jobs is often lower, as well. In countries with high levels of labour market informality, women are frequently overrepresented in informal jobs. These jobs offer little social protection, high job insecurity, and (often) low pay (OECD, 2016a and 2016b). Women also often hold lower-quality informal jobs. Employers and wage workers tend to fare better in job quality and pay, whereas own-account, domestic and family workers – a grouping in which women predominate – typically fare worse (OECD, 2017b).

Figure 1.3. Gender pay gaps have changed little across OECD and G20 countries and they remain substantial

Gender gap in median monthly earnings,[a] full-time employees, 2010 and 2015 or latest available year[b]



Note: The gender gap in median monthly earnings is defined as the difference between male and female median monthly earnings divided by male median monthly earnings, for full-time employees. Full-time employees are defined as those individuals with usual weekly working hours equal to or greater than 30 hours per week.

a) Data refer to weekly earnings for Australia, Canada, India, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States, and to hourly wages for Denmark, Greece, Iceland, New Zealand, Portugal and Spain.

b) Data refer to 2014, not 2015, for Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey. They refer to 2013 for Sweden, 2012 for India and South Africa, and 2011 for Israel. Data refer to 2011, not 2010, for Brazil, Chile and Costa Rica.

Source: *OECD Employment Database* (http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm) for OECD countries, Colombia and Costa Rica; and OECD Secretariat calculations based on the Encuesta Permanente de Hogares (EPH) for Argentina, the Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílio (PNAD) for Brazil, the National Sample Survey (NSS) for India, the National Labour Force Survey (SAKERNAS) for Indonesia, and the General Household Survey (GHS) for South Africa.

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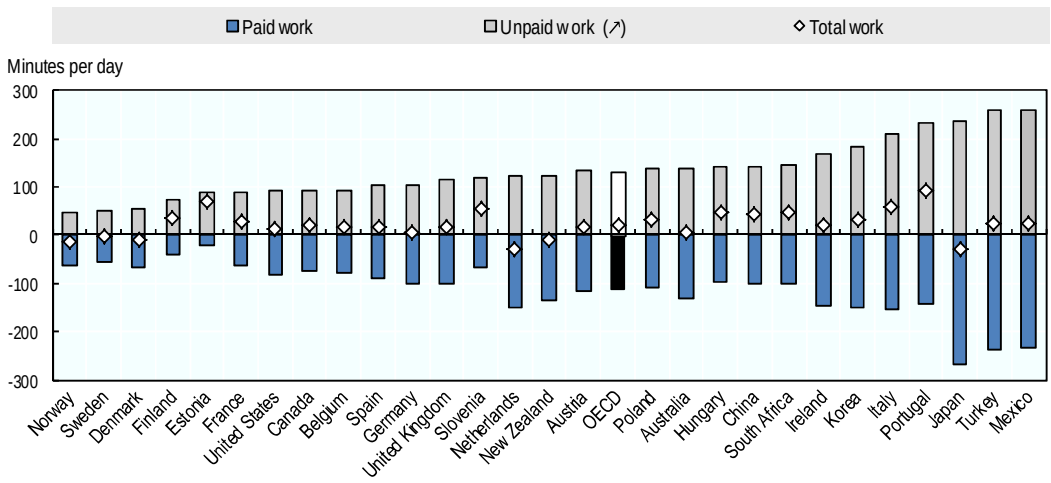
In OECD countries with data available, and indeed throughout the world, women do far more unpaid work than men (Figure 1.4, OECD Gender, Institutions and Development Database – GID-DB). On average in the OECD, women do the greatest share of unremunerated housework and childcare in Korea, Japan, Mexico, Portugal, Turkey and Italy, where women undertake more than three-quarters of all unpaid work. The gaps are typically even larger in developing countries, where inadequate access to time-saving infrastructure (e.g., water piped into the home) and technology (e.g., washing machines) increases the total time required for chores (OECD, 2017b). In India and Pakistan, for example, women spend around ten times as many hours on unpaid work as men (OECD Development Centre, 2014). Time trends suggest that, over time and across countries, women have gradually reduced the time they spend on unpaid work – in part due to time-saving technology – while men's behaviours have changed little (OECD, 2017c).

Figure 1.4. Women do more work in total – paid and unpaid – than men in most OECD countries

Gender gap in minutes spent per day on paid and unpaid work, female minus male, 15-64 year-olds



Note: Data for Australia are for 15+ years-olds, for Hungary 15-74 year-olds, and for Sweden 25-64 year-olds. Reference years vary across countries: Australia: 2006; Austria: 2008-09; Belgium: 2005; Canada: 2010; China: 2008; Denmark: 2001; Estonia: 2009-10; Finland: 2009-10; France: 2009; Germany: 2001-02; Hungary: 1999-2000; Italy: 2008-09; Ireland: 2005; Japan: 2011; Korea: 2009; Mexico: 2009; the Netherlands: 2005-06; New Zealand: 2009-10; Norway: 2010; Poland: 2003-04; Portugal: 1999; Slovenia: 2000-01; South Africa: 2010; Spain: 2009-10; Sweden: 2010; Turkey: 2006; the United Kingdom: 2005; and the United States: 2014.

Source: *OECD Gender Data Portal*, http://www.oecd.org/gender/data/.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933573848

Given that time is a finite resource, hours spent on unpaid work have negative effects on availability for paid work, and gender gaps in unpaid work hours correspond with gaps in paid working hours. In countries where unpaid work in the home is more equally shared, there also tend to be smaller gender-specific differences in hours spent in the workplace (Chapter 15).

Culture and norms play a significant role in defining gender roles, both at work and at home. Countries with a culture of long *paid* working hours tend to have correspondingly large gender differences in labour market behaviour and the sharing of unpaid care and housework. This is especially true in households with dependent children, though women are also the main providers of elderly care (Chapter 22). However, with more highly-educated women than men entering the marriage market, women are less likely to partner with better-educated men. Nowadays, women often live with men educated at similar levels, while those who are highly educated tend more and more to partner "downwards". The least eligible partners, who risk being left on the sidelines, are poorly-educated men.

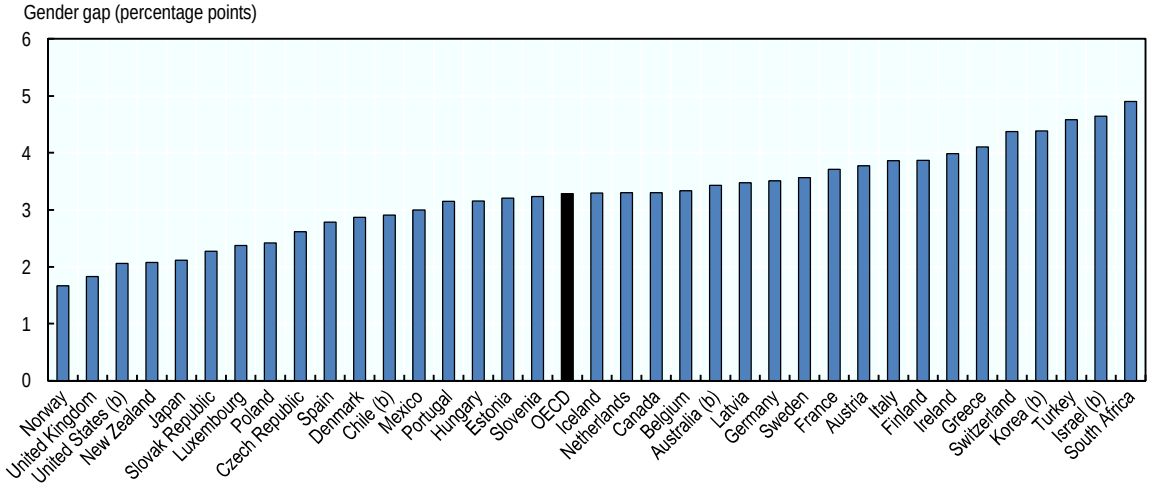
Opinions of working mothers have grown more favourable, albeit slowly, particularly in countries where the government has increased public support to help parents combine work and family commitments. Men, too – especially the highly-educated – are increasingly involved in parenting activities. Nevertheless, even when both partners work full-time, the division of household labour is rarely a 50-50 split. Women tend to do less unpaid housework or childcare as their share of household earnings rises, but the relationship is not linear. There is some evidence that high-earning women often do more housework in order to conform to gender norms at home, if not in the workplace – an example of so-called "doing gender" behaviour (Bertrand et al., 2015).

Women's lower labour force participation, their higher likelihood of interrupting their careers to care for family members, and their higher incidence of part-time work (Chapter 18), together with other, less tangible factors – including discrimination – all affect the number of women who advance to senior positions (Chapter 13). There remains a thick glass ceiling in both public and in private sectors. In 2016, women accounted for 33% of senior management positions in central government, even though they made up 52% of all central government employees. In the private sector in 2016, women occupied only one in five seats on the boards of publicly listed companies, up slightly from a rate of 16.8% in 2013. Women held only 4.8% of chief executive officer positions in 2016, though this was double their share in 2013 (Chapter 14).

Female entrepreneurs do not fare much better. Women are still much less likely to be self-employed than men, and are less likely than men to employ staff (Figure 1.5). Reflecting the size of their companies, the sectors in which women operate, and a variety of other factors, self-employed women earn less than their male peers – at least a fifth less, in almost all OECD countries (Chapter 24 and OECD, 2017d).

Figure 1.5. Employed women are much less likely than employed men to be self-employed and have employees

Gender gap (male minus female) in the share of the employed who are employers, percentage points, 15-64 year-olds, 2016 or latest available year[a]



Note: The share of the employed who are employers is the number of self-employed who have employees as a percentage of the total number of employed. To improve international comparability, the figures for Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States include the unincorporated and incorporated self-employed.

a) For Australia, Chile, Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, the United States, and the OECD average, data refer to 2015.

b) Data for Australia, Chile, Israel and Korea refer to 15+ year-olds, and for the United States to 16-64 year-olds.

Source: OECD (2017), *Entrepreneurship at a Glance 2017*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/entrepreneur_aag-2017-en.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933573867

Priority issues and recent policy gains

A serious commitment to gender equality

The OECD has placed gender equality at the top of its agenda. It actively promotes the principles underlying the OECD Gender Recommendations (Box 1.1) as part and parcel of its strategic agenda to combat unequal income opportunities, as enshrined in its Inclusive Growth Initiative and the Secretary-General's 21 for 21 Agenda. The 2013 OECD Gender Recommendation and the 2015 OECD Gender Recommendation in Public Life call on adherent countries to enhance gender equality in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life through legislation, policy, investment, monitoring and campaigns. Since 2013, many countries have prioritised gender equality in public policy. Yet gender gaps persist. All countries must step up their efforts to ensure that policies truly reflect – and result in – inclusive societies in which boys, girls, men and women can all reach their true potential.

Box 1.1. The OECD Gender Recommendations: Background to this report

The OECD Gender Recommendations are rooted in the OECD Gender Initiative, which started in 2010; the All on Board for Inclusive Growth initiative, launched in 2012; and the understanding that, despite existing policies, "significant gender disparities and biases nevertheless remain in educational and occupational choices; earning levels and working conditions; career progression; representation in decision-making positions; in public life; in the uptake of paid and unpaid work; in entrepreneurial activities; in access to finance for entrepreneurs; and in financial literacy and financial empowerment" (OECD, 2013).

The "Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship" – hereafter referred to as the 2013 Gender Recommendation – was adopted on 29 May 2013. It sets out a number of measures that OECD members and non-members (Colombia, Costa Rica, Kazakhstan, Lithuania and the Russian Federation) who adhered to it should consider implementing in order to address gender inequalities in education, employment and entrepreneurship (OECD, 2013). In particular, it recommends that adherents should – through appropriate legislation, policies, monitoring and campaigning – provide equal access to education, better enable female labour force participation, promote family-friendly policies, foster greater male uptake of unpaid work, work toward a better gender balance in positions of public and private sector leadership, and promote entrepreneurship among women. The 2013 Gender Recommendation also calls on adherents to draw up policy principles and guidelines and build good practices and data on gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship. It also issues a call to "further the Recommendation's objectives through co-operation with all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, public agencies, trade unions, employers' organisations and civil society".

The 2013 Gender Recommendation inspired and informed the development of the Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life – hereafter the "2015 Gender Recommendation in Public Life" – which was adopted by the Council on 14 December 2015 (OECD, 2015a). It focuses on effective governance and the implementation of gender equality and gender mainstreaming measures in public life, as well as on enhancing women's equal access to public leadership opportunities in parliament, government, the judiciary and the civil service.

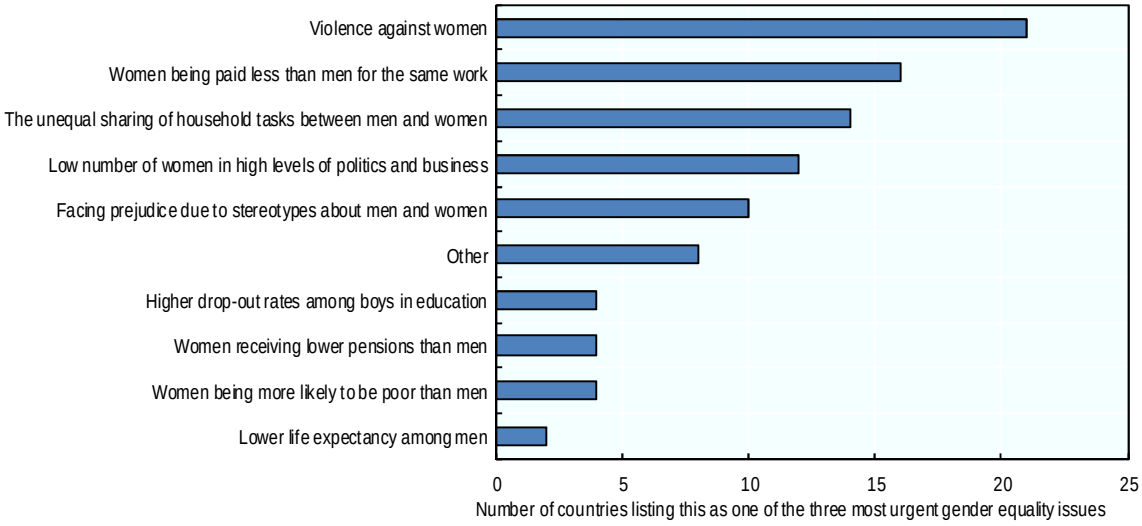
The OECD Gender Recommendations require regular reporting on progress in their implementation. This report is an elaboration of the 2017 progress report to the OECD Council (OECD, 2017e). It draws on the indicators in the OECD Gender Data Portal and the wide range of ongoing OECD gender work (*OECD Gender Data Portal*), including analysis of and data on education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life; OECD Regional Initiatives on Governance and Competitiveness (including in MENA countries); the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET); the OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI);financial education, health, science, access to justice and equality before the law and taxation; and the OECD Better Life Index.

In 2016, in preparation for reporting on progress in implementing the OECD Gender Recommendations, various OECD Committees sent questionnaires on their respective focal areas of the Recommendation to adherent countries to seek their input on policy changes, announced policy changes or progress in implementing the Recommendations since their adoption. Such questionnaires – hereafter referred to as the "OECD Gender Equality Questionnaires" (OECD GEQs 2016) were sent to the Corporate Governance Committee (CGC) and its Working Party on State-Owned Enterprises and Privatisation Practices (WPSOPP); the Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy (CSSP);the Education Policy Committee (EDPC); the Employment, labour and Social Affairs Committee (ELSAC); the Directing Committee for the Co-operative Action Programme on Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED); and the Working Party on SMEs and Entrepreneurship (WPSMEE). The International Network on Financial Education (INFE) launched a survey on financial literacy and financial inclusion and the Governing Board of the OECD Development Centre ran a consultation on gender issues and best practices. Responses to the questionnaires were assessed during the second part of 2016 and early 2017, and selected content is presented in this report.

The 2016 OECD Gender Equality Questionnaires (GEQs) asked countries to identify the three most urgent gender equality issues they face. The most widespread was violence against women – 21 of the 37 responding countries listed violence against women as one of their three most urgent issues (Figure 1.6). The second most common was "Women being paid less than men for the same work", with 16 countries prioritising it. The third most pressing issue was the unequal sharing of household tasks, prioritised by 14 countries. Identifying urgent issues has resulted in important policy initiatives in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life.

Figure 1.6. Priority issues in gender equality

Number of adherent countries to the 2013 Gender Recommendation listing the following as one of the three most urgent gender equality issues needing to be addressed in their country



Note: 35 countries responded. Each country could select up to three priority issues.

Source: OECD Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee (ELSAC), Questionnaire on Progress in Implementing the 2013 Gender Recommendation.

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Eliminating violence against women

Violence against women (VAW) remains widespread. It is estimated that 35% of all women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence (WHO, 2013). OECD countries have increasingly prioritised sexual harassment and violence against women as a policy issue (Figure 1.6). Reflecting the 2013 Gender Recommendation's call for intensified efforts to combat sexual harassment, in itself a form of VAW, new policy measures have typically taken one of two forms:

- new or stronger laws or regulations governing sexual harassment, or
- raising awareness and improving understanding of sexual harassment in order to prevent it.

Austria, Costa Rica, France, Iceland, Israel, Korea, Mexico, Portugal and Slovenia are among the adherent countries that introduced or reinforced anti-harassment laws. By contrast, the Russian Federation partially decriminalised domestic violence in 2017. Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Israel, Korea, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Portugal have all conducted, or are conducting, awareness-raising campaigns about what constitutes sexual harassment, ways to prevent it, and legal rights (for victims) and obligations (for employers) when harassment occurs. Other countries, like the Czech Republic and Sweden, have built sexual harassment into larger national strategies on gender equality or gender-based violence. Countries are also increasingly collecting data on harassment and VAW. They must strengthen those efforts, as large data gaps remain (Chapter 5).

Combatting pay inequality

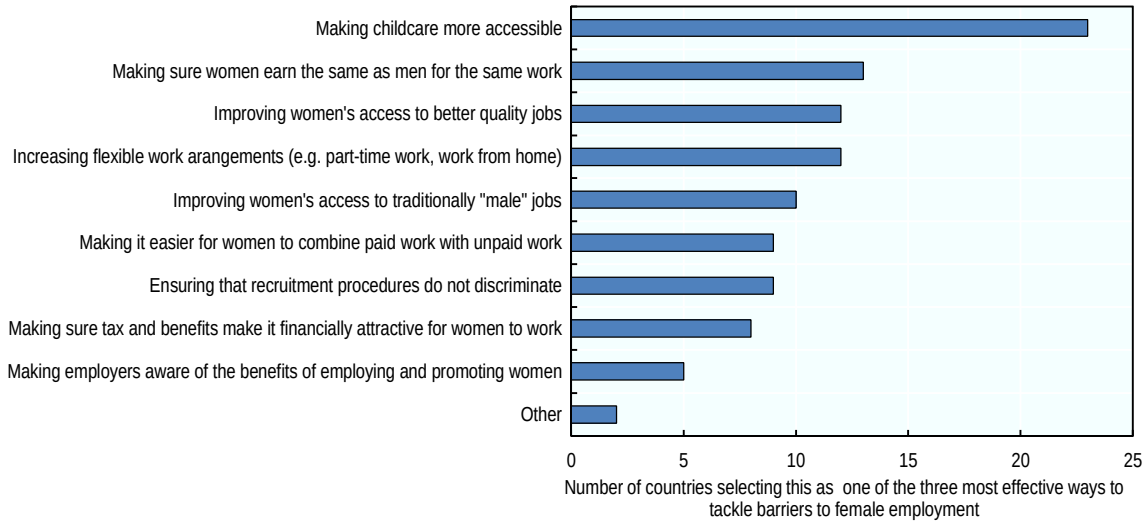
Persistent gender pay gaps (Figure 1.3) have prompted about two-thirds of countries to introduce new equal pay policies since they adopted the 2013 Gender Recommendation. A key component of such polices is transparency on pay, and companies are increasingly required to analyse their gender wage gaps or disclose gender-disaggregated data on wages to employees, auditors and the public (Chapter 12). Since 2013, Australia, Japan, Germany, Lithuania, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom have implemented or proposed such measures. Other new strategies include the introduction of so-called "pay gap calculators" – often publicly available online, as in Australia – as well as certifications or awards for companies that show best practices in areas of gender equality such as equal pay. Such certifications or awards have been introduced in Costa Rica, Iceland, Latvia and Mexico.

Bringing down barriers to female employment

Female employment rates have increased by an average of almost 3 percentage points across the OECD since 2012. The gender employment gap remains at 11%, however, and OECD governments continue to consider how best to reduce barriers to employment. Figure 1.7 shows country responses to the OECD GEQ (2016) question "What are the three most effective ways to tackle barriers to female employment?". The most common response, cited by 23 countries, was "making childcare more accessible". The second most widespread, cited by 13 countries, was "making sure women earn the same as men for the same work", while "increasing flexible work arrangements" and "improving women's access to better quality jobs" were the joint third most popular policy measures, with 12 responses apiece. New and reinforced policy measures are needed to ensure that countries stay on the right track in meeting the G20 "25% by 2025" target, which sets the goal of reducing the gender gap in labour force participation by 25% by 2025 (Figure 1.10).

Figure 1.7. Country priority rankings: The most effective ways to remove barriers to female employment

Number of adherent countries to the 2013 Gender Recommendation listing the following as one of the three most effective ways to tackle barriers to female employment



Note: 35 countries responded. Each country could select up to three policy responses.

Source: OECD Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee (ELSAC), Questionnaire on Progress in Implementing the 2013 Gender Recommendation.

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Access to affordable childcare

Many OECD governments have introduced measures to improve access to early childhood education and care (ECEC) since the start of 2013 (Chapter 17). Several – such as Canada, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, the Slovak Republic and Poland – have taken steps to address affordability, usually through increases in subsidies or benefits/rebates for public childcare and, occasionally, through the introduction or expansion of free childcare (e.g. Norway and the United Kingdom).

Other strategies for improving ECEC access and attendance include the introduction of legal entitlements to places in childcare from a certain age and the lowering of compulsory attendance ages. Several countries have also increased public investment in new facilities, in most cases with an emphasis on places for children under 3 years old. Korea arguably undertook the most comprehensive reform of recent years. Its increases in public ECEC investment have more than tripled the share of children under age 6 enrolled in ECEC facilities since 2004 (OECD, 2017f).

Childcare needs do not stop when children enter primary school, however. School-age children's participation in out-of-school-hours care remains low in many OECD countries (Chapter 17). Parents with school-age children may consequently struggle to work full-time and many mothers in OECD countries continue to work only part-time even as their children age.

Improving women's access to private sector leadership

In accordance with the OECD Gender Recommendations, most OECD countries have initiated policies to promote gender balance on company boards and in senior management (Chapter 14). Countries that introduced quotas saw a more immediate increase in the

number of women on boards, while those that took a softer approach, such as voluntary target setting and disclosure of existing gender outcomes in companies, have seen a more gradual increase over time (Chapter 14). For example, the United Kingdom's voluntary business-led initiative lifted the share of women on boards from 13% in 2010 to 27% in 2016. Similarly, since they endorsed the OECD Gender Recommendation, Australia, Chile, the Czech Republic, Japan, Poland, Portugal, Luxembourg and Switzerland initiated soft targets to achieve gender balance on the boards of PLCs and/or state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Australia and Chile – together with other countries like Finland, Spain and the United Kingdom – started to include disclosure requirements in their corporate governance codes and regulations compelling corporations to reveal the gender balance on their boards.

Since 2013, nine countries – Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Israel and Norway – have introduced compulsory gender quotas for PLC and SOE board membership. Finland, though it does not enshrine targets in law in its state-owned enterprise sector, has a rule in its nomination practices that ensures at least 40% representation of each gender. While quotas have boosted the number of women on boards, the gains at the top have not been reflected below board level.

Growing the number of female entrepreneurs

Since approving the 2013 Gender Recommendation, most OECD countries have sought to promote female entrepreneurship by narrowing gender gaps in access to finance and entrepreneurial skills. One widely used strategy has been to improve access to bank financing through loan guarantees, raising the ceiling of the amounts guaranteed and making additional training and networking support available to beneficiaries. New loan guarantee schemes tend to be more common in emerging economies, where banks are often reluctant to lend to small and medium-sized enterprises and less sensitive to gender issues or to the untapped market potential of women-owned businesses. One example is the *Caisse centrale de garantie* in Morocco (Chapter 25). In OECD economies, the recent trend has been to raise guarantee ceilings and make additional training and networking support available to beneficiaries – as is the case with France's *Fonds de garantie pour la création, la reprise, le développement d'entreprise à l'initiative des femmes* (the guarantee fund for women's business creation, rescue and development).

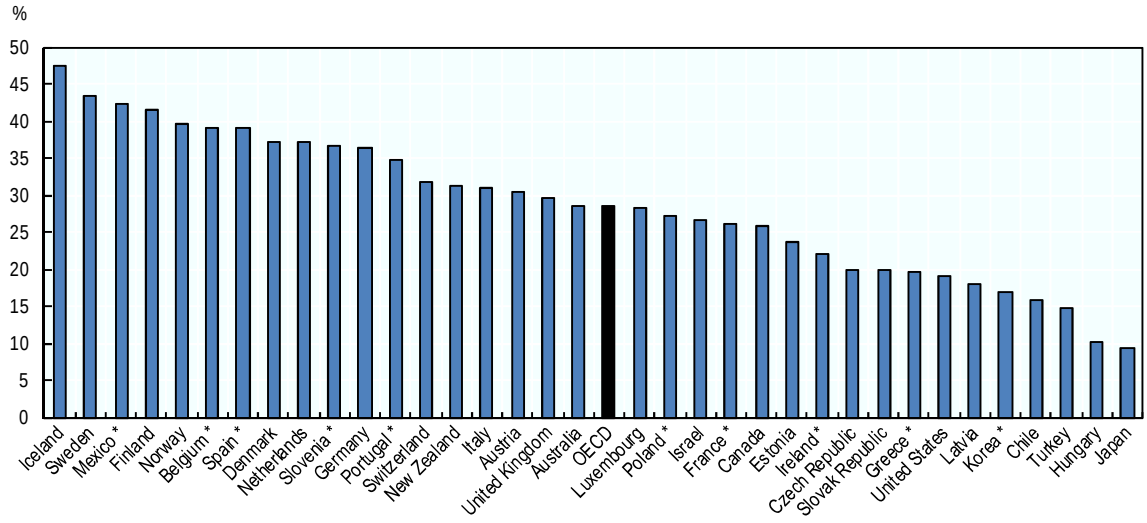
Two other strategies gaining ground are the use of public procurement (targeting government contracts to female-owned businesses) and efforts to improve women's access to risk capital. Many countries also seek to address gender gaps in entrepreneurship awareness and entrepreneurial culture, networks and skills through, for example, training, coaching, mentoring programmes, workshops, business counselling and support for building entrepreneurial networks (Chapters 24 and 25; OECD/EC, 2015, 2017).

Towards a fairer representation of women in public life

In line with both OECD Gender Recommendations, most OECD countries have put in place some form of gender quota action to increase female representation in politics, though measures vary in extent and type – e.g. reserved seats quota, legal candidate quota, and political parties' voluntarily instituted quotas (Chapter 14). Of the 28 OECD countries with available data in 2016, 24 had voluntary political party quotas, ten had legislated quotas in their single or lower houses of parliament, ten had introduced quotas in their electoral law, and three had gender quotas written in their constitution. Nevertheless, women are far from parity with men in legislative bodies (Figure 1.8). They held, on average, only 28.7% of legislative seats in OECD countries in 2016 (Chapter 14).

Figure 1.8. Women remain underrepresented in national legislatures in OECD countries

Female share (%) of seats in parliaments, lower-house or single-chamber, 2016



Note: Data refer to 1st December 2016. Countries marked with an asterisk (*) had legislated quotas (i.e. quotas implemented via the legislative process) in place in 2016.

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union Women in National Parliaments Database, http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm; Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) PARLINE Database, http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp; Quota Project Database, http://www.quotaproject.org/.

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In other regions of the world – such as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) – women are even less well represented in national legislatures. Only Tunisia and Algeria, where women hold over 30% of seats in parliament, exceed the OECD average. Progress in women's political participation in MENA has been attributed chiefly to the introduction of quota provisions, adopted by political parties and incorporated into electoral law or, in some cases, into the constitution (Chapter 20).

Affirmative action in public services

There is low take-up in the civil service of measures which explicitly seek to enhance the recruitment of women and ensure that they enjoy equal opportunity in promotion and career advancement. According to 2016 data, the most common policy measure, which ten OECD countries reported using, is gender diversity hiring targets for women. But otherwise governments in only a few countries set gender targets for promotion, use preferential treatment in promotion, or use coaching programmes or information sessions targeted at women (Chapter 14). In a similar vein only a few countries have moved towards affirmative action in the judiciary to ensure gender-balanced representation (Chapter 14).

Mainstreaming gender in policy making

If gender equality is to be fully realised, a whole-of-government approach must be adopted. This approach must include the tools to deliver outcomes and mechanisms that ensure accountability, as emphasised in the 2015 Gender Recommendation in Public Life. To that end, gender equality should be built into all policy making in all ministries and all levels of government. In 2015, 25 OECD countries reported having introduced obligatory gender impact assessments when developing new legislation. Gender budgeting is an

increasingly used tool for bringing women's and girls' concerns into mainstream policy and public administration. Almost half of all OECD countries report that they have introduced, plan to introduce or are actively considering introducing gender budgeting. If countries' gender budgeting approaches are to have the desired impact on gender equality, however, they:

- need gender-disaggregated data,
- should set specific, measurable, agreed-upon, realistic and time-based (SMART) targets,
- must standardise gender-responsive budget and policy routines,
- must conduct external gender audits, and
- their legislative bodies should monitor and evaluate gender-budgeting measures (Chapter 3).

For policy implementation to be effective, it is crucial to have clear and legitimately assigned roles and responsibilities for mainstreaming gender equality in public institutions (OECD, 2017b). A number of countries (e.g. Mexico and Canada) have recently taken steps to strengthen the role of centres of government in monitoring the inclusion of a gender perspective in all policies, along with central gender institutions, and to reinforce the role of central gender equality institutions with regard to gender mainstreaming (e.g. Chile and Sweden).

Countries must step up their efforts to make gender equality an integral part of the design, development, implementation and evaluation phases of public policies and budgets, while generating systematic evidence of the impacts of gender equality efforts on the ground.

Changing policies, changing minds: The persistence of stereotypes as a barrier to equality

Public attitudes towards the roles of men and women have changed slowly over time in the OECD (OECD, 2016a and 2017c). However, gender stereotyping at work, at home, and in society at large continues to be a serious obstacle to greater gender equality. The media, too, play an important role in cementing gender stereotypes. Media reflects and can normalise violence against women, "hegemonic masculinity", and even sex trafficking, and women's limited representation in media outlets – particularly at high levels – has negative implications for how girls and women are portrayed in entertainment and news (Montiel, 2014).

Gender stereotypes take hold early in life. Data from the OECD's PISA educational assessments reveal that, by the time they are 15, boys and girls expect to pursue careers in stereotypically gender-specific fields, regardless of the subjects in which they are proficient (Chapter 7). Teenage girls seem less satisfied with life than teenage boys, but the reasons underlying this gender gap are not well understood (Chapter 6). OECD PISA also shows that many parents still harbour different expectations for their sons and daughters (OECD, 2015a). For example, in Chile, 50% of 15-year-old boys' parents expected that they would work in areas related to science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM). Yet only 16% of girls' parents hoped that their daughters would go on to careers in STEM-related fields. Policy makers are aware of the importance of gender stereotyping at school – perhaps nowhere more so than in Sweden, where the pre-school curriculum seeks to counteract traditional gender patterns and gender roles (Chapter 7).

Choosing STEM-related fields

Gender stereotyping and gendered expectations still drive educational choices even when the gender-equal policies and incentives are in place. STEM-related fields are highly lucrative, yet girls and young women are underrepresented in them (Figure 1.1). A number of countries, including Australia, the Flemish community in Belgium, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, have introduced new measures or reinforced existing ones – aimed at parents, teachers and students – that address the issue of the under-representation of girls and other groups in STEM fields (Chapter 7). For example, in England, "Your Daughter's Future" is an online guide for parents to help parents with school subjects and career choices, while "Opening Doors" provides good practice in countering gender stereotyping in schools for teachers and students. The OECD-Mexico initiative, NiñaSTEM PUEDEN, launched in early 2017 by the OECD and Mexico's Secretariat of Public Education, invites Mexican women who have prominent careers in science and mathematics to act as mentors, visiting schools and encouraging girls to choose STEM subjects and be ambitious.

Stereotypes restrict the choices of both women and men. Men, for example, remain underrepresented in health care and education sectors. In the Netherlands, action to promote STEM careers among young women is accompanied by initiatives to draw men into the education sector (Chapter 9).

Promoting women's financial literacy

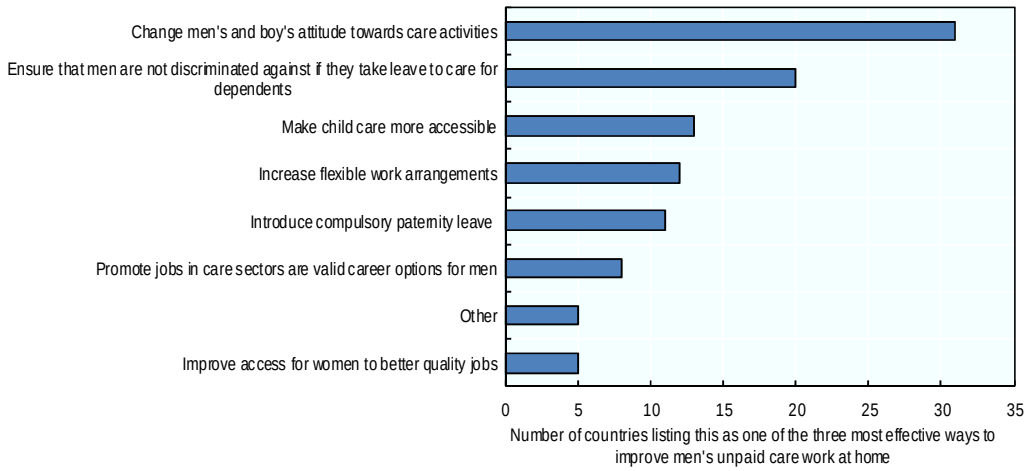
Gender gaps in financial literacy also remain a barrier to women's financial empowerment (Chapter 10). The 2015 financial literacy survey run by the OECD and its International Network on Financial Education (INFE) suggests that women have less financial knowledge than men in 19 of 30 participating countries and economies, with no significant gender disparities in the other countries and economies. Men also tend to be more financially resilient than women. Many countries have developed initiatives, such as financial education programmes, to improve women's financial literacy, but more evidence is needed to determine the effect of such programmes on gender gaps.

Changing norms of masculinity

Reshaping gender stereotypes at home and in the workplace does not just require changing women's behaviour. It requires changing men's behaviour, too. Countries increasingly recognise that fathers' participation in unpaid care and housework is critical to gender equality. In Latin America, as in many other regions of the world, a "culture of machismo" permeates through family behaviours and public institutions, seriously impeding progress on gender equality (Promundo, 2017). Governments recognise that getting fathers to participate in unpaid care work is a keystone of gender equality outside of the home. When asked how best to increase men's unpaid care work at home, the most common answers were changing boys' and men's attitudes towards caregiving and ensuring that men do not experience discrimination when they take leave from work to care for dependents (Figure 1.9).

Figure 1.9. Country priority rankings: Getting men to spend more time on care activities

Number of adherent countries to the 2013 Gender Recommendation listing the following as one of the three most effective ways to improve men's unpaid care work at home



Note: 35 countries responded. Each country could select up to three strategies.

Source: OECD Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee (ELSAC), Questionnaire on Progress in Implementing the 2013 Gender Recommendation.

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Many countries are encouraging a more equal division of unpaid work across men and women through fathers' leave programmes, which incentivise fathers to leave work to care for young children (Chapter 16). Although many countries have statutory paternity leave for a few days around childbirth, leave needs to be longer to make a real difference to caregiving behaviour. Since 2000, ten OECD countries have moved to provide fathers with strong financial incentives to take parental leave for at least two months. Nordic countries often reserve parts of the parental leave period for the exclusive use for each parent for a few months, and both Japan and Korea provide mothers and fathers with around one year of non-transferable paid parental leave each. Other options include "bonus periods", where a couple may qualify for some extra weeks of paid leave if both parents use a certain amount of shareable leave. This is the case in Germany, where two bonus months can be granted

These programmes give fathers the incentive to take up leave by setting aside reserved (or "bonus") months of parental leave that the family receives only if the father commits to taking leave. This is an important step, given that parenting behaviours established at childbirth tend to persist as children age, with important implications for parents' division of paid and unpaid work later in life. Parents' behaviour, in turn, is one of the strongest predictors of an individual's gendered behaviours and expectations, as adult children mimic (in attitudes and acts) how their parents shared paid and unpaid work (Cunningham, 2001; McGinn et al., 2015).

Collective bargaining or enterprise-level agreements often regulate flexibility in workplace practices. Nevertheless, policy can help by providing information, facilitating companies' exchange of best practices, encouraging collective bargaining on flexible workplace issues and by allowing employees a right to request a change in their working practices (Chapter 18). In Belgium, France, Germany and New Zealand, for example, all employees in companies of a certain size are entitled to request flexible working arrangements, e.g. changes to part-time work or different start and finishing times. Since

2013 several OECD countries, including Australia, Hungary, Portugal, Slovenia and Turkey, have introduced or extended the rights of parents with young children to at least request part-time or flexible work, while both the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have gone furthest in widening the "right to request" to all workers regardless of caring responsibilities or personal circumstance.

Raising awareness

Many OECD governments have also sought to change gender stereotypes through public awareness campaigns. Since 2013, at least six OECD countries – Australia, Austria, the Czech Republic, Korea, Portugal and Slovenia – have carried out national public awareness campaigns against gender stereotyping and norms, using a mixture of traditional and online media channels. Australia's joint public-private campaign, the "Equilibrium Man Challenge", was a novel online micro-documentary series that sought to raise awareness of the work-life balance by following a group of men who had taken up flexible work arrangements, often to care for family members.

More information is needed on the negative impact that media and social networks may have on social norms and gender stereotypes. This research, combined with more rigorous evaluations of targeted public information campaigns (Paluck et al., 2016; Broockman and Kalla, 2016), would improve the effectiveness of future efforts to reduce gender stereotyping.

The way forward

Strengthening international measures for gender equality

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Agenda 2030's gender-dedicated goal and targets (SDG5), promises to make gender equality a higher priority in national and global development agendas (Chapter 2). Agenda 2030's universal framework is a sober reminder that no country has achieved gender equality. Despite some improvements, such as girls' educational attainment, progress in most areas has been slow and uneven. The OECD Gender Recommendations call on adherent countries to co-operate with developing countries and emerging economies to address issues like women's low labour force participation, gender wage gaps, early marriage, discriminatory social norms and stereotypes, and high rates of violence against women and girls.

Many legal and institutional barriers, too, still remain. Women in over 100 countries covered by the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) have to contend with legal and other forms of discrimination in their access to land and property, while domestic violence legislation is inadequate in 77 countries (OECD, 2014b). All these factors have detrimental effects on women's rights and well-being and on national development outcomes.

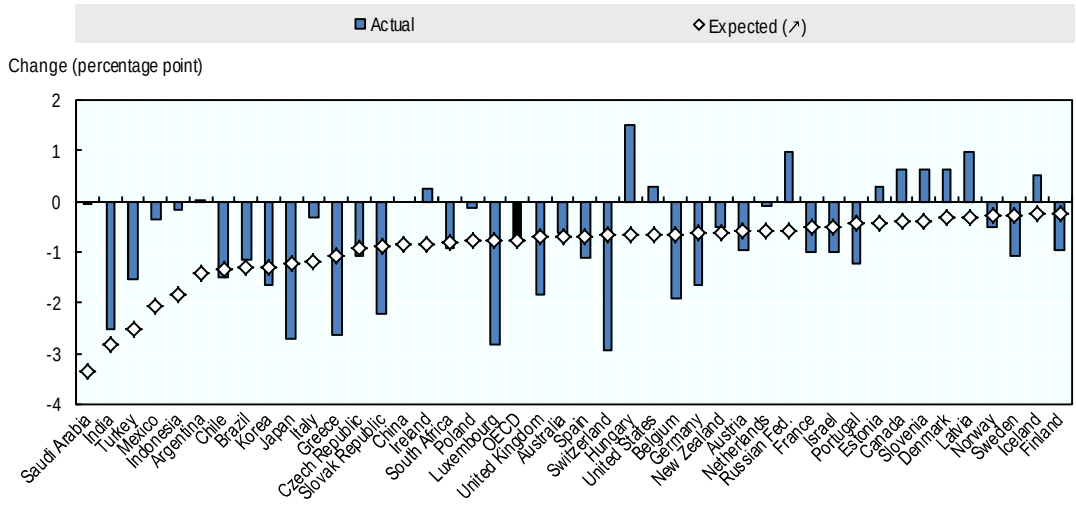
The OECD plays an active role in promoting the principles underlying the OECD Gender Recommendations at G7 meetings:

- The OECD promoted women's entrepreneurship and role models as agreed by G7 leaders at their summit in Schloss Elmau in 2015.
- For Japan's presidency of the G7, the OECD helped develop an initiative that encourages more girls and women to enter STEM disciplines.
- In 2017, the OECD worked closely with the Italy's presidency of G7 to develop a roadmap for a Gender-Responsive Economic Environment.

The OECD was also instrumental in bringing gender equality to the fore of the G20 agenda, particularly in setting the target adopted by G20 Leaders at the 2014 Brisbane Summit to reduce the gender gap in labour force participation by 25% by 2025, and in drawing up a set of key policy principles to improve the quality of employment (OECD et al., 2014). Given that young women are as well-educated as young men (if not more so), their contributions to the labour market far exceed that of added work hours. Achieving the G20 gender target would bring millions more women into the workforce, reduce poverty, and significantly increase growth across the OECD and the G20. Many G20 countries are on the right path in reaching this target, but policy efforts are still needed to make this a reality (Figure 1.10).

Figure 1.10. Many countries are well-placed to meet the 25% by 2025 target

Actual versus expected percentage point change in the gender gap in labour force participation, 15-64 year-olds, 2012-2015



Note: The actual decline refers to the actual change in the gender gap in the labour force participation rate between 2012 and 2015. The expected decline is calculated assuming a linear decline in the gender gap between 2012 and 2025. For Argentina, the data for 2015 refer to Q2 2015. For India, the data refer to the population aged 15 and over. No recent data are available for China to calculate the actual decline in the gender gap. For China, the data for 2012 have been projected to calculate the expected decline in the gender gap. Data accessed March 2017.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on national labour force surveys.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933573981

In Mexico, for example, reducing the gender gap in labour force participation by 25% by 2025 could add 0.24 percentage points to the projected annual average growth rate of GDP per capita for the period 2013-25 – equivalent to boosting cumulative GDP per capita growth by just under 4 percentage points over the whole period (see Annex 1.A1 for method and results). Going further and halving the gender gap in labour force participation by 2025 could lead to a cumulative 8.7 percentage point increase in growth in GDP per capita over the period 2013-25. The largest potential gains are in Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Mexico and Turkey. Potential effects are smaller in Canada, New Zealand and European countries where existing gender gaps in labour participation are relatively small, at least in terms of headcount participation. Indeed, equality in working hours and labour force participation would bring additional increases in countries where women often work fewer than 30 hours per week, with sizeable increases projected in countries like Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (OECD, 2012).

Building on good practice

The evidence in this report confirms that much remains to be done to narrow – and eventually close – gender gaps. Countries must redouble their efforts through sustained campaigns, the monitoring and evaluation of policies, exchanges of best practice, and the expansion of legal measures and public investments. Governments and stakeholders should draw from the different policies in this report and learn from best practices, including:

- The various STEM-related initiatives across the OECD,
- Support for a better work-life balance of working parents through the provision of parental leave and ECEC,
- Pay transparency initiatives to reduce gender pay gaps,
- Different policy pathways towards better representation of women in public and private leadership,
- Efforts to help partners more evenly share paid and unpaid work,
- Initiatives to improve access to finance for female entrepreneurs, and
- Efforts to promote good governance for gender equality.

Some countries face greater challenges than others, but all countries have room to improve on gender equality. No single road that leads to equality. The "best" policy options are country-specific; policy changes should reflect existing gaps in gender equality and will be influenced by broader institutional, historical and cultural contexts. Given the size of prevailing gender gaps, all countries must urgently improve their gender equality policies to improve the outcomes of all women, men, boys and girls.

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Annex 1.A1

Increasing female labour supply and the growth dividend

Promoting gender equality and encouraging female labour participation could yield considerable economic gains in OECD and G20 countries. This analysis uses the "25% by 2025" target as a benchmark for progress in labour force participation, even for countries outside the G20. To illustrate potential effects, research conducted for this report made use of the OECD's in-house labour force projection and long-term growth models to estimate both the size of the labour force (15-74 year-olds) and GDP per capita in OECD and G20 countries under three hypothetical scenarios:

- The "baseline" scenario, where labour force participation rates of men and women of all ages are estimated using the OECD's standard dynamic age-cohort model, which projects participation rates (by gender and five-year age groups) based on current (2006-15) rates of labour market entry and exit. In many countries, there has been a trend increase in the female labour force participation. Not, though, in China or the United States, where rates declined among men and women. There have also been different trends by age group. While labour participation has fallen in many countries among young people as they have stayed on longer in education, it has risen among prime age and older workers in a number of countries in response to rising standards of educational attainment and stronger financial incentives to remain in work.
- The "gender gap reduced by 25% by 2025" scenario. In this scenario, male participation rates are projected (by five-year age group) on the basis of current (2006-15) rates of labour market entry and exit. As for female participation rates, they are projected so that the gap observed in 2012 between male and female participation rates within each five-year age group falls by 25% by 2025.
- The "gender gap reduced by 50% by 2025" scenario. In this scenario, male participation rates are projected (by five-year age group) on the basis of current (2006-15) rates of labour market entry and exit. Female participation rates are projected so that the gap observed in 2012 between male and female participation rates within each five-year age group falls by 50% by 2025.

For the targeted fall of 25% by 2025 in the labour participation gender gap, a baseline scenario was developed which accounts for likely changes in the labour force participation of men and women in the absence of any policy reforms. The baseline scenario does not assume fixed participation rates, but constant labour force entry and exit rates for five-year age groups at their historical average over the period 2006-15.

Estimates of the size of the labour force in each of the three scenarios were produced by combining the assumed labour force participation rates with projections of the size of the working age population (15-74 year-olds) from the *OECD Population and Demography Database*. In each case, the labour force was projected individually by gender and five-year age group, with the overall labour force size being the sum across both genders and all

five-year age groups. If the projected labour force size is smaller than the baseline scenario, then it is assumed that the baseline scenario applies.

Estimates of GDP per capita were calculated using a modified version of the long-term growth models presented in *OECD Economic Outlook*, No. 95 (OECD, 2014). These growth models estimate GDP based on a standard Cobb-Douglas production function with the usual long-term growth determinants (i.e. physical capital, human capital, potential employment and labour efficiency). Estimates of changes to GDP per capita in each of the three scenarios were produced by adjusting projections from the long-term growth models according to the assumed change (relative to the baseline) in the overall labour force participation rate (which enters the model as a sub-component of potential employment). In each case, changes and developments in all other factors of production – such as physical and human capital, productivity, and the remaining sub-components of potential employment – were held steady at the baseline.

Although the size of the labour force (15-74 year-olds) is projected to rise in OECD countries, it will decline significantly in Germany, Japan, the Russian Federation and the European Union as a whole with population ageing. In some countries (e.g. Australia and Canada), meeting the 25% target for a reduction in the gender gap in labour force participation by 2025 would involve only a modest further increase in the size of the labour force relative to the baseline scenario, as the gender gap in labour force participation is already set to fall by close to 25% by 2025 (to judge by recent trends).

Table 1.A1.1 shows estimates of the average annual rate of growth in GDP per capita and the cumulative points change (relative to the baseline) in growth in GDP per capita under each of the three hypothetical scenarios. Results suggest that the effects of closing gender gaps in participation rates would vary considerably from country to country but also that, in a number of cases, the potential growth dividend from closing gender gaps and boosting labour forces could be substantial.

In Mexico, for example, reducing the gender gap in labour force participation by 25% by 2025 could, through increases in the size of the labour force, add 0.24 percentage points to the projected annual average growth rate of GDP per capita for the period 2013-25 – equivalent to boosting cumulative GDP per capita growth by just under 4 percentage points over the whole period. Going further and halving the gender gap in labour participation by 2025 (the "50-by-2025 scenario") could add up to 0.67 percentage points to the projected average annual growth rate for the period 2013-25, equivalent to a 8.7 percentage point increase in growth across the whole period.

The largest potential gains can seemingly be reaped in Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Mexico and Turkey. They would be smaller in Canada, New Zealand and European countries where existing gender gaps in labour participation are relatively small, at least in terms of headcount participation. In a number of European countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland) plus Chile, Israel and Japan, reducing the gender gap in labour force participation by 25% by 2025 might not add any further boost to the average annual rate of growth in GDP per capita. The reason is that, on the basis of recent trends, gender gaps in labour participation in these countries are already expected to fall by at least a quarter by 2025. However, almost all of these countries could still see gains in GDP growth if they were to go further and reduce the gender gap in labour force participation by 50% by 2025 (the "50-by-2025 scenario").

Table 1.A1.1. Projected average annual growth rate in GDP per capita in USD 2005 PPP, percentage, 2013-25

	Baseline	25-by-2025 scenario: gender gaps in LFPR reduced by a quarter by 2025			50-by-2025 scenario: gender gaps in LFPR halved by 2025		
OECD countries	Projected average annual growth rate	Projected average annual growth rate	Percentage points change relative to baseline	Cumulative points change relative to baseline in 2025	Projected average annual growth rate	Percentage points change relative to baseline	Cumulative points change relative to baseline in 2025
Australia	2.11	2.17	0.06	1.01	2.31	0.20	2.55
Austria	1.67	1.67	0.00	0.00	1.76	0.09	1.19
Belgium	1.32	1.32	0.00	0.00	1.41	0.09	1.22
Canada	1.21	1.27	0.06	0.89	1.37	0.15	1.98
Chile	3.96	3.96	0.00	0.00	4.18	0.22	2.85
Czech Republic	2.84	2.89	0.05	0.95	3.04	0.20	2.63
Denmark	1.32	1.38	0.06	0.91	1.44	0.12	1.56
Estonia	3.22	3.25	0.04	0.73	3.33	0.11	1.49
Finland	1.68	1.74	0.06	0.95	1.80	0.12	1.57
France	1.75	1.75	0.00	0.00	1.84	0.09	1.23
Germany	1.35	1.35	0.00	0.00	1.46	0.11	1.48
Greece	2.63	2.63	0.00	0.00	2.73	0.10	1.27
Hungary	1.89	1.99	0.11	1.72	2.10	0.21	2.78
Iceland	0.99	1.07	0.08	1.15	1.09	0.11	1.37
Ireland	1.72	1.72	0.00	0.00	1.78	0.06	0.76
Israel	1.80	1.80	0.00	0.00	1.88	0.09	1.15
Italy	1.15	1.15	0.00	0.00	1.34	0.20	2.55
Japan	1.30	1.30	0.00	0.00	1.59	0.30	3.87
Korea	2.82	3.01	0.19	3.43	3.30	0.48	6.26
Luxembourg	1.44	1.44	0.00	0.00	1.50	0.06	0.81
Mexico	1.77	2.01	0.24	3.94	2.44	0.67	8.66
Netherlands	1.85	1.85	0.00	0.00	1.96	0.11	1.39
New Zealand	1.73	1.77	0.05	0.76	1.90	0.17	2.20
Norway	1.49	1.49	0.00	0.00	1.56	0.07	0.92
Poland	2.41	2.50	0.09	1.52	2.64	0.23	3.01
Portugal	1.31	1.31	0.00	0.00	1.49	0.18	2.32
Slovak Republic	2.68	2.80	0.12	2.13	2.94	0.26	3.39
Slovenia	1.57	1.68	0.11	1.69	1.77	0.20	2.60
Spain	1.10	1.10	0.00	0.00	1.10	0.00	0.04
Sweden	2.08	2.11	0.03	0.52	2.16	0.09	1.13
Switzerland	1.45	1.45	0.00	0.00	1.60	0.15	1.91
Turkey	3.59	3.82	0.23	4.54	4.25	0.66	8.53
United Kingdom	2.08	2.13	0.05	0.87	2.26	0.18	2.35
United States	1.88	1.98	0.10	1.56	2.13	0.25	3.26
Other G20 countries							
Brazil	1.79	2.03	0.24	3.86	2.29	0.50	6.47
China	5.26	5.51	0.26	3.32	5.65	0.39	5.03
India	4.61	5.24	0.63	14.53	6.75	2.14	27.29
Indonesia	4.63	4.85	0.22	4.99	5.30	0.67	11.68
Russian Federation	3.09	3.23	0.14	2.55	3.32	0.23	4.39
South Africa	3.91	4.01	0.09	1.87	4.17	0.26	5.30

LFPR: Labour force participate rate.

Source: OECD Secretariat estimates based on the *OECD Demography and Population Database*, http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=POP_PROJ, the *OECD Employment Database*, http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm, and the *OECD Economic Outlook No. 95 long-term baseline projections database*, http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=EO95_LTB.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933573943

These projections are purely mechanical insofar as they assume changes in female participation do not interact with other labour inputs – such as male labour participation, or male and female working hours – or any other production factors like physical or human capital or productivity. With these limitations in mind, projections should be read only as estimates or approximations of the impact that changes in female labour supply will have on economic output.

Chapter 2

Sustainable development goals and gender equality

Key findings

- The internationally-agreed "Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development" holds great promise for achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG5) recognises gender equality as a universal driver of sustainable development and asserts the need to accelerate efforts to end gender inequality. Agenda 2030's universal scope applies to all countries – including OECD countries – and presents a sober reminder that all countries have a way to go to reach gender equality.
- Official Development Assistance (ODA) in support of gender equality has more than quadrupled since 2000, reaching an all-time high of USD 36.5 billion in 2015. Despite this positive trend, significant underinvestment persists in areas key to meeting the gender equality commitments of the Sustainable Development Goals, which include the economic and productive sectors. Similarly, only a small proportion of ODA specifically addresses women's needs and interests.
- Data are critical to tracking progress towards SDG5 and other gender-related targets. Yet considerable data gaps persist. Of Agenda 2030's 53 gender-related SDG indicators, only 32 can draw on available data, which limits understanding of key areas such as unpaid care work or women's access to productive resources.

Agenda 2030: A timely lever to achieve the unfinished business of gender equality

In September 2015, when governments from across the world signed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, they pledged to strive for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls by 2030. This commitment is reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG5), the standalone goal on gender equality, and in the gender-specific targets included across the other SDGs, such as SDG8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth (United Nations, 2015a).

SDG5 is an ambitious new commitment that addresses many of the most urgent, stubborn inequalities affecting women and girls everywhere, committing governments to, inter alia, end all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work, ensure women's equal rights to productive resources, and increase women's leadership and participation in decision making.

Agenda 2030's universal scope is a sober reminder that no country has achieved gender equality. Persistent challenges include stagnating female labour force participation, gender wage gaps, entrenched discriminatory social norms and stereotypes, and high rates of violence against women and girls. All have detrimental effects on women's rights and well-being and on national development outcomes. Ferrant and Kolev (2016) showed that reducing gender-based discrimination in social institutions could – depending on the chosen scenario – lead to an annual increase in the global GDP growth rate of between 0.03 and 0.6 percentage points by 2030.

Agenda 2030 seeks to put gender equality higher up national and global development agendas. It draws on and reinforces existing normative instruments and frameworks, such as the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the OECD's recommendations on gender equality (OECD, 2013a and 2015a). Efforts in recent decades have indeed brought widespread political recognition of gender equality's importance for women's rights and development processes. Similarly, on the ground, the gender gap has narrowed in education and, albeit to a lesser degree, in employment.

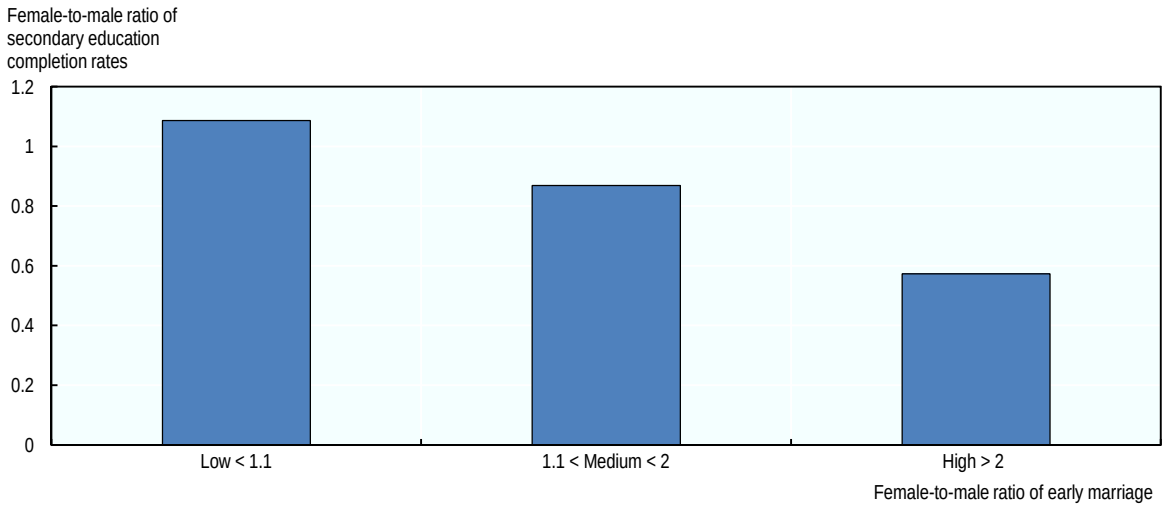
Despite growing global consensus and commitment, mixed records on gender equality show that it is unfinished business and points to how Agenda 2030 could be a lever for fast-tracking progress. Benchmarking some of the targets in SDG5 helps clearly single out the strategic opportunities and daunting challenges ahead. SDG 5.1, for example, recognises that removing all forms of discrimination from formal and informal (customary, religious and traditional) laws is a critical first step in building an enabling environment for gender equality. Since 2012, legislative reforms have led to reductions in discrimination, and 64 economies enacted 94 reforms to boost women's economic opportunities (World Bank, 2016). As for SDG 5.3, at least 12 countries have enacted laws or introduced policies to end child and early marriage (OECD, 2014a). Yet, many legal and institutional barriers remain. Today, for example, women in just over 100 countries covered by the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) still grapple with legal and other forms of discrimination in access to the ownership of land and property, while legislation in 77 countries inadequately addresses domestic violence.

SDG 5.3 aims to "(e)liminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation". In developing countries, 39 000 girls under the age of 18 are married every day. In other words, one in three girls marries before they are 18, and one in nine are under 15 (ibid.). This discriminatory social institution not only infringes girls' rights – 85 countries covered by the SIGI allow girls to marry younger than boys – it

is also an underlying factor influencing gender inequalities in education. In countries where early marriage is twice as prevalent among girls as among boys, only 60 girls complete their secondary education for every 100 boys. That ratio rises to 90 girls for 100 boys in countries where both girls and boys are less likely to marry young (Figure 2.1). In short, achieving SDG 5.3 could help accelerate progress on gender equality in education, also an objective of SDG4 which seeks to ensure inclusive, equitable, high-quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nations, 2015a).

Figure 2.1. Greater gender inequalities in early marriage, lower gender equality in secondary education

Association between levels of gender equality in early marriage and gender equality in secondary education



Note: This figure shows the relationship between the gender gap in early marriage and the predicted values of gender gaps in secondary completion rates, controlling for the country's level of poverty and GDP per capita, its share of female teachers, government expenditure on education, the gender gap in unemployment rates, rates of urbanisation, regional dummies and year fixed effects (on a four-year basis: 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010).

Source: *OECD Gender, Institutions and Development Database 2014*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/data-00728-en, and World Bank World Development Indicators, http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574019

Other SDG5 targets are similarly promising and potentially transformative. Securing women's right to land and property (Target 5a) has been linked with a wide range of positive effects, such as better health outcomes for their families (Klasen and Lamanna, 2009), greater economic empowerment (FAO, 2011) and stronger decision-making power within the household (Agarwal and Panda, 2005). As for 5.2, the stark figures on intimate partner violence make achieving it a matter of urgency to protect women's fundamental rights and well-being. One in three women worldwide report having experienced sexual or physical violence from a current or former partner (WHO, 2013; Chapter 5).

Challenges in the implementation of Agenda 2030

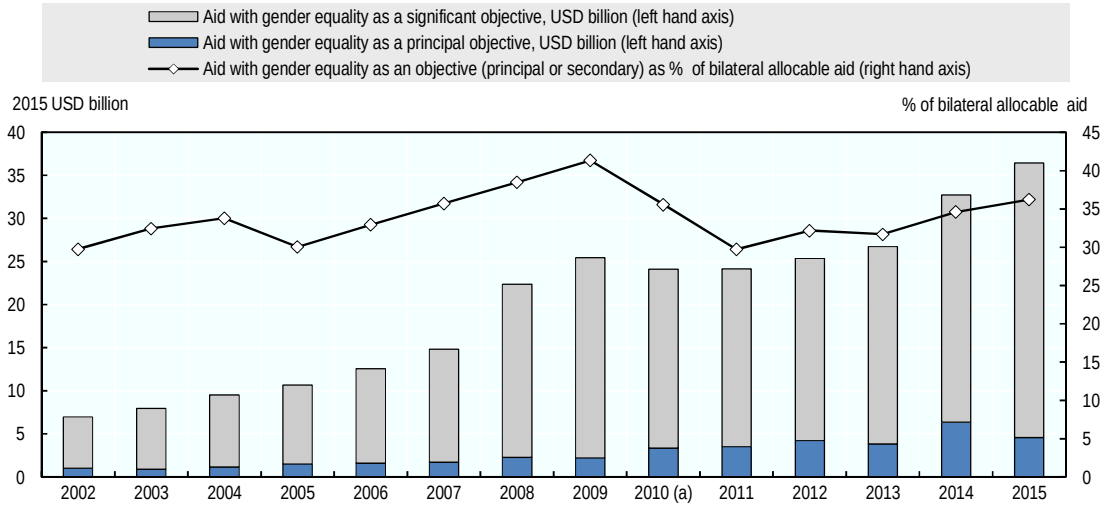
The transformative potential of Agenda 2030 is great. Yet meeting its gender equality goal and targets requires resources and co-ordinated action as financial shortfalls and data gaps risk undercutting real progress on the ground. Funding should be on an ambitious scale if political aspirations are to become reality.

The call from the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) on financing for development (adopted in July 2015) for gender equality to be integrated into all aspects of financial

decision making lays the foundation for achieving SDG gender equality targets (United Nations, 2015b). Similarly, the OECD (2013a) appeals to its members to support developing and emerging countries' efforts to address the gender facets of poverty by "increasing the gender equality and women's empowerment focus of aid, especially in the economic and productive sectors". Official Development Assistance (ODA) in support of gender equality and women's empowerment reached an all-time total high of USD 36.5 billion in 2015 – a five-fold increase over the course of the Millennium Development Goals from just under USD 7 billion in 2002 (Figure 2.2). There has also been a particularly high priority placed on gender equality in aid to fragile contexts (OECD, 2015b).

Figure 2.2. Aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment

Annual commitments of all Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries, excluding EU institutions, USD billion and constant 2015 prices, 2002-15



Note: An aid activity may target gender equality as a "principal" or "significant" objective. Principal means gender equality was an explicit, fundamental objective, while significant means that it was an important, but secondary, objective.

a) Break in calculation of bilateral allocable aid.

Source: *OECD-DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS) Aid Activity Database*, http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/gender.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574038

Despite the upward trend in ODA, investments remain insufficient to finance the achievement of the SDG gender equality commitments and only a small proportion of it specifically addresses women's needs. Financing for dedicated gender equality projects and programmes in particular is far lower than for those in which gender equality is mainstreamed. In 2015, just USD 4.6 billion targeted gender equality as a principal objective – 4.6% of the aid screened against the DAC gender equality policy marker (OECD, 2016a). By comparison, USD 31.9 billion – or 31.7% of ODA – targeted gender equality as a secondary or significant objective. Altogether, 36.2% of bilateral ODA was responsive to women's needs and interests in 2015.

Development investment falls short of political commitment in a number of SDG priority areas. Despite growing international recognition of the transformative potential of women's economic empowerment for achieving gender equality and sustainable development, there is persistent underinvestment in the economic and productive sectors. In 2013-14, only 2% of ODA to these sectors targeted gender equality as a principal objective

(OECD, 2016b). And, while gender equality is fairly well integrated into donor support to agriculture and employment, the proportion of aid to other economic and productive sectors remains very small. The gender focus is weakest in the infrastructure sectors such as energy and transport. This is despite strong evidence that women's access to quality infrastructure is essential for expanding their economic opportunities, reducing unpaid work burdens, and advancing gender equality.

While there is growing recognition of the gendered impacts of climate change and of the importance of integrating gender in climate responses to increase effectiveness, there is also scope to improve the gender responsiveness of climate finance. In 2014, 31% of DAC members reported that their bilateral ODA for climate change also targeted gender equality objectives, though just 3% as a principal objective. OECD (2016c) argued that more needs to be done to prioritise gender equality in climate change action in the energy and transport sectors, which remain largely gender blind.

Finally, the women, peace and security agenda is another area where the translation of commitments into progress on the ground remains a challenge. While ODA to promote gender equality in fragile states is on an upward trajectory, only a small proportion specifically addresses gender equality and responds to women's needs. In 2012-13, a mere 6% of aid to fragile states and economies targeted gender equality as its main objective, while 29% targeted gender equality as a secondary objective. OECD (2015b) suggested there is a lack of investment in programmes designed to further the cause of women, peace and security in fragile contexts.

While ODA remains crucial – especially to the least developed countries (LDCs) and fragile contexts which have a lower capacity to attract other forms of external finance – it alone cannot provide the financing needed to achieve gender equality. OECD (2014b) shows that countries' most important sources of revenue for achieving gender equality are domestic, such as taxes, even in the poorest countries. In 2012, total tax revenue collected in Africa was ten times the volume of development assistance. Supporting gender-responsive public finance management systems is critical to ensuring that countries prioritise gender equality when they mobilise and spend domestic resources. Donors have an important role to play in supporting national governments' efforts to institutionalise gender-responsive planning and budgeting. To that end, they should align aid with national efforts to advance gender equality.

OECD (2013a) identified the need to put in place public finance management systems that track budget allocations for women's economic empowerment. One entry point for ensuring that domestic resource mobilisation and allocation are gender-responsive is Indicator 8 of the ten-indicator monitoring framework used by the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) to measure progress in implementing the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (BusanHLF4, 2011). Developed by UN Women and the OECD, Indicator 8 measures the share of countries "with systems that track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment. OECD/UNDP (2016) found that two-thirds of participating countries have a tracking system and make the information public. This is a measure of the strength of developing governments' commitment to financing the achievement of gender equality (OECD/UNDP, 2016). However, OECD/UNDP (2016) also concluded that the years ahead would be critical for strengthening the translation of robust legal and policy frameworks into systemic tracking of gender equality allocations in practice.

Measuring and tracking progress towards SDG5

SDG5's ambitious targets need to be matched by robust, reliable data (Box 2.1). Agenda 2030 recognises that "quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data will be needed to help with the measurement of progress and to ensure that no-one is left behind". Gaps in gender-related and disaggregated data have historically been cited as a major obstacle to evidence-based policy making and global advocacy (United Nations, 1995), and examples of programmes that help to bridge those gaps include the "kNOwVAWdata" programme which aims to strengthen regional and national capacities to measure violence against women in Asia and the Pacific (UNFPA, 2016). Technical co-operation between international specialised agencies is, however, helping to bridge the gaps. For example, the OECD Development Centre and the World Bank are working with UN Women to update indicators for SIGI 2018 and the next version of the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law Database.

Box 2.1. Measuring OECD countries' distance to the SDG5 targets

In response to requests from some member countries for assistance in navigating the complexity of the Sustainable Development Goals and identifying priorities in the broad 2030 Agenda, the OECD conducted the study *Measuring Distance to the SDG Targets: An assessment of where OECD countries stand* (OECD, 2017). The assessment is an attempt to produce an instrument that would enable countries to assess where they stand in their efforts to meet the SDG targets and how far they still have to go (Boarini and Cohen, forthcoming). Drawing on the latest available data from the OECD and UN, and following the UN global indicator framework as closely as possible, the assessment brings together 128 individual indicators covering 98 targets across all 17 SDGs.

As for SDG5, OECD (2017) examined 5 of the 9 targets: 5.1 – end all forms of discrimination against women; 5.2 – eliminate all forms of violence against women; 5.4 – recognise and value unpaid work; 5.5 – ensure the full and effective participation of women; and 5A – give women equal access to asset ownership.

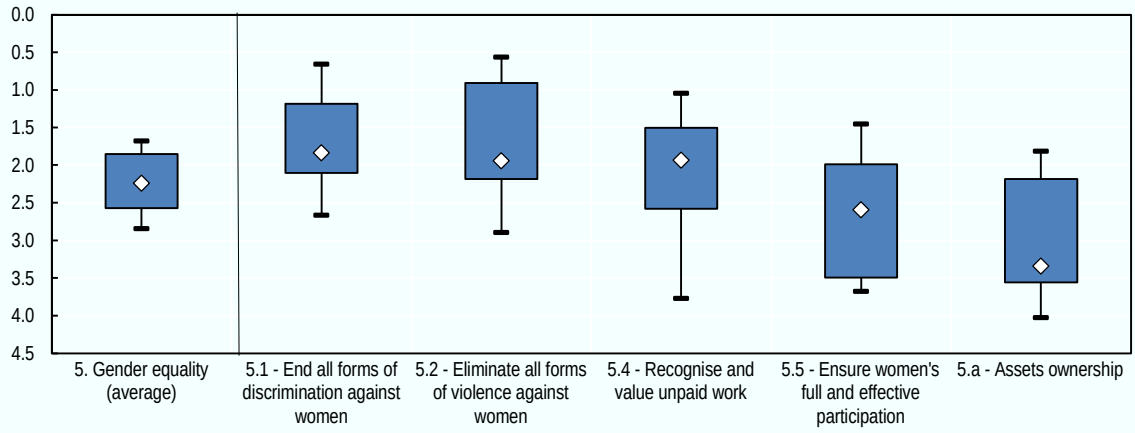
To measure what countries have to do to achieve targets by 2030, the assessment seeks to establish their current positions, which it determines by the distance to be travelled by 2030 to the finish line. That, in turn, requires assigning end values to targets. The end values of the gender equality targets are literal interpretations of the targets translated into figures. For instance, the end value of SDG 5.2, "eliminate all forms of violence against all women", is set at 0 as measured by the two indicators of reported physical and/or sexual violence against women by a partner or a non-partner. When a target is full female participation, for example, the end value is set at 50% (i.e. full gender parity). The standardised measurement unit is the standard deviation observed within the current distribution of OECD countries. For example, target 5.5 is measured through the share of seats in national parliaments held by women. The level to be achieved by 2030 is 50%, as the target is full gender equality. The standard deviation of the shares currently observed among OECD country scores is ~10 percentage points. Denmark's share of seats held by women is 37%. So its standardised score on this indicator is the difference between its current share (37%) and the target (50%), divided by the standard deviation (10%) = 13/10 = 1.3 units.

Figure 2.3 shows the distances that OECD countries have yet to travel before they meet the five measured gender equality SDG targets. While OECD countries have some way to go on all five, the average distance is greatest on SDG 5a, "access to ownership and control of land" (measured by the share of female agricultural landholders) and on SDG 5.5, "women's full and effective participation (measured by the share of seats held by women in national parliaments and on large company boards). Figure 2.3 also shows that distances to be travelled from their current position vary considerably from country to country. For instance, on SDG 5.4 ("recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work", measured by the gender gap in unpaid work), the worst-performing OECD countries (those in the 10th percentile) have almost four times further to go than the best-performing ones (those in the 90th percentile) before they reach full gender parity.

Box 2.1. Measuring OECD countries' distance to the SDG5 targets *(cont.)*

Figure 2.3. OECD countries have a particularly long way to go to meet the target of gender-equal asset ownership

Distribution of distances to travel to achieve the gender equality goal, OECD countries, by target



StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574057

Reading note: The figure shows the distribution of OECD countries' current starting positions in relation to the five gender targets as determined by OECD (2017). On the left is the average standing across all five gender equality targets. The y axis indicates the distance from the target in standardised units, with 0 denoting that the 2030 target has already been reached. For each target and indicator, the box plot indicates: the current position of the OECD median country (shown by the white diamond within the box); the 1st and the 3rd quartiles of the distribution of starting positions (corresponding to the box boundaries); and, the 10th and 90th percentiles of this distribution (shown by the whiskers external to the box).

Note: All OECD countries with available data are included in the analysis; this ranges from 22 to all 35 countries, depending on the indicator. The indicators used to measure gender equality and women's empowerment are as follows: Discrimination against women is measured by whether or not there are legal frameworks that govern gender equality and the gender wage gap (with the latter defined as the difference between the median earnings of men and women relative to the median earnings of men). Violence against women is measured by two indicators: the proportion of females over 15 years old who 1) report physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate or former intimate partner and 2) who report sexual violence by a non-partner. Unpaid work is measured as the gender difference in the amount of unpaid work carried out by people aged 15 to 64. Women's participation is measured by the share of seats in national parliaments held by women, and the share of seats held by women on the boards of the largest publicly listed companies. Asset ownership (equal right of access to land ownership and property) is measured by the share of female agricultural landholders.

SDG5 requires ambitious, innovative investment if data gaps are to be filled. Agenda 2030 is an opportunity to build robust monitoring mechanisms and strengthen evidence bases which ensure that policies are better informed. To date, only 12 of the 53 SDG gender-related indicators are available in all countries (UN Statistical Division, 2017), with gaps relating to important areas of women's empowerment and well-being – e.g. women's legal rights, political representation, policy-making power and land rights. Such important data challenges have sparked calls for a "gender data revolution" and OECD (2013a) encourages donor countries to support "the collection of data disaggregated by gender" in developing and emerging countries. And yet the share of ODA dedicated to statistics has fallen in recent years from 0.34% in 2011 to 0.25% in 2014 (PARIS21, 2016).

Key policy messages

- Agenda 2030's universal framework, goals and targets offer a critical opportunity to fast-track progress in gender equality and women's empowerment in all countries. To meet their gender-related commitments, all countries need to scale up their efforts in reducing key policy, financing and data gaps.
- Important investments in the resources and technical capacity of national statistical offices will be necessary to meet the measurement challenges of tracking the SDGs, namely the regular and comprehensive collection of sex-disaggregated data. Improved co-ordination with other ministries and sectors, in particular national gender ministries, will be essential to promote the use of data for evidenced-based policy making that truly empowers women and girls.
- Financing on an unprecedented scale will be needed if the SDGs are to deliver on their gender equality promises. This will require the mobilisation and effective use of all sources of finance, both international and domestic, by closing financing gaps in donor funding and ensuring that domestic resource mobilisation and allocation is gender-responsive.

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Chapter 3

Governance for gender equality

Key findings

- Gender budgeting has gained momentum in the past decade and is viewed as a valuable tool for tackling perceived inequalities in policy development and resource allocation. Seven OECD countries have reported progress in their gender budgeting practices since 2013, while the vast majority of other OECD countries implement some form of gender responsiveness in the policy-making process. This may, in turn, impact public spending.
- Twenty-five OECD countries report that regulators are required to include gender impact assessments when developing all or some primary laws.
- A well-functioning accountability structure is the cornerstone of governance for gender equality. Out of 22 OECD countries that have parliamentary gender equality committees (either specialised or combined with other portfolios), two were put in place after 2013. However, few committees seem to have the authority to influence, or even monitor, the gender responsiveness of parliamentary work generally.

Gender awareness must be built in to all legislation and government at all levels

If countries are to fully realise gender equality in education, labour markets and public life, they must continue to mainstream it in governance. To that end, gender equality awareness should be embedded in all ministries and levels of government and reflected in all policies and policy processes, from development and design to implementation, evaluation and accountability.

The OECD's gender recommendations (OECD, 2013 and 2015), particularly the *2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life*, set out a multi-dimensional approach to making gender equality a core principle of modern public governance. It includes promoting gender-responsive policies and closing the gender gap in public leadership and public employment. The approach draws on a broad array of mainstreaming tools, such as gender-impact assessments (GIA) and gender budgeting, together with mechanisms for holding governments accountable for gender-sensitive policies and expenditure.

Gender budgeting: A key change in governance

The budget process – the allocation of public resources to deliver the government's policy goals and accountability for the use and impact of those resources – is central to national policy making. Gender budgeting is viewed as an increasingly important tool for promoting gender equality and inclusive growth in OECD countries. It is also highly relevant to the commitment to meeting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as Gender Equality (SDG5), and related governance tools such as key targets and indicators (Chapter 2).

In the past, relatively few OECD countries have been thorough in their approach to incorporating gender-equality issues into the design of public policies. This has led to a situation where disparities and inequalities between the sexes have, to a greater or lesser extent, become embedded in the allocation of public resources. This negative legacy is evident in such policy domains as the labour market, education and health, as well as in management and leadership.

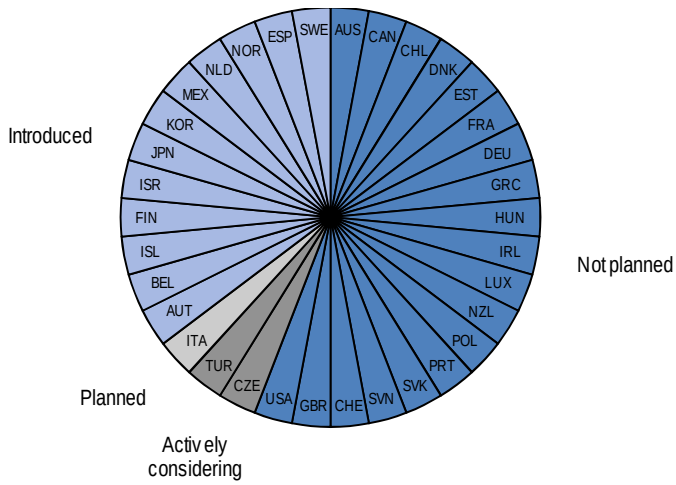
Given that the budget process is the gateway to resource allocation, as well as a key determinant of the standard of public policy formulation, it is important to assess a budget's likely impact on gender-responsive public governance.

The practice of gender budgeting is gaining momentum in OECD countries, with almost half now reporting that they have introduced it, are planning to introduce it, or are actively considering doing so (Figure 3.1). In 2013, Austria and Mexico made progress in this area, as did Israel, Norway and Sweden in 2014, and Japan and Iceland in 2015.

The OECD has pioneered an analysis of gender budgeting that considers each phase of the budget process as potential entry points for gender-responsive policy making. The OECD (2016) typology of gender budgeting sets out that a gender perspective should be integrated into each key stage of the policy development process – design, implementation, evaluation and accountability – to yield maximum impact.

Figure 3.1. Almost half of OECD countries have either introduced, plan to introduce or are actively considering introducing gender budgeting

Status of gender budgeting in OECD countries



Source: 2016 OECD Survey of Gender Budgeting.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574076

Although gender budgeting practices vary in the countries which have introduced them, they may be divided into three broad categories:

- Gender-informed resource allocation, whereby the gender impact of individual policy decisions and funding allocations is considered in the overall resource allocation process.
- Gender-assessed budgets, where the impact of the budget as a whole is subject to some degree of gender analysis.
- Needs-based gender budgeting where budget decisions are underpinned by a prior assessment of gender needs, which gauges the extent of gender inequalities and identifies the policy domains where they are widest.

The categories are broadly cumulative: those countries which gender-assess their budgets generally also practice gender-informed resource allocation, while those that do needs-based gender budgeting generally gender assess them, too. Roughly two-thirds of the OECD member countries that engage in gender budgeting fall into the first or second categories, while just three carry out gender needs assessments as part of the budget process (Table 3.1).

The vast majority (90%) of the 19 countries that have not formally introduced gender budgeting still have some form of gender responsiveness in the policy-making process. The nature and quality of approaches vary. When countries are beginning to introduce gender responsiveness into the policy-making process, they often focus on a few policy areas. The policy areas where gender-responsive policies are most likely to be seen are economic independence of women, the equality agenda, education, gender-based violence and work-life balance. New policies in those areas are likely to be subject to some form of gender assessment to gauge their impact of the policy on gender equality.

In countries that are at a more advanced stage of gender-responsive policy making, gender-impact assessment is more likely to be part of the policy-making process. For example, when UK Government officials assess the impacts of government policy, they are advised to document any equalities impact and attach any equalities impact analysis. The Government of Canada has committed to scrutinising the gender-specific impacts of policies, legislation, and programmes on women and men before deciding whether to go ahead with them. Countries such as Norway and Germany report that they "mainstream" gender equality; because it is the responsibility of line ministries to promote the gender agenda in their policy domains, they do not consider any special gender budgeting to be necessary. From 1983 to 2014, the Australian Federal Government published an annual Women's Budget Statement that provided informative descriptions of government policies significant to women and gender equality. The Swedish Government has recently enhanced the focus upon gender budgeting to ensure that a gender equality perspective is applied systematically in the budget process.

Table 3.1. Gender budgeting systems fall into three broad categories

Gender budgeting systems: A typology, 2016

Gender budgeting categories		Use of gender budgeting tools								
		Ex ante gender impact assessment	Gender perspective in resource allocation	*Ex post* gender impact assessment	Gender perspective in performance setting	Gender perspective in spending review	Gender-related budget incidence analysis	Gender budget baseline analysis	Gender audit of the budget	Gender needs assessment
Gender informed resource allocation	Belgium	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Japan	-	●	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Finland	-	●	-	●	-	-	-	-	-
Gender assessed budgets	Iceland	●	●	●	●	-	-	●	-	-
	Israel	●	-	●	-	-	●	●	-	-
	Korea	-	●	-	●	●	-	●	-	-
	Spain	●	●	●	●	-	●	●	●	-
	Sweden	●	-	●	●	●	-	-	●	-
Needs-based gender budgeting	Austria	●	-	●	●	-	●	●	-	●
	Mexico	●	●	●	●	-	●	●	-	●
	Norway	●	●	-	-	-	●	-	●	●

Source: 2016 OECD Survey of Gender Budgeting.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574095

For gender budgeting to be most effective, a gender dimension should be applied in each strategic phase of the policy cycle. These strategic phases include; i) the *ex ante* phase, in which the possible gender impacts of policies and resource allocations should be assessed and taken into account in decision making and the objectives of gender-positive policies specified; ii) an implementation phase, whereby the performance and results of gender-responsive policies should be monitored; and iii) the *ex post* evaluation and accountability phase, where there is evaluation of the gender impact of individual policies, assessment of the performance and results of gender-positive policies against their intended objectives, an independent gender audit of the budget as a whole and active and critical scrutiny by parliament, civil society and the general public of the results of gender-based analysis so that the key messages can be highlighted and fed into the subsequent phases of the budget cycle.

A broad interpretation of gender budgeting includes direct financial allocations made to advance a gender-equality objective. For example, a number of programmes in Mexico's education system awards grants to young mothers, arts scholarships to women and scholarships to indigenous women in areas of higher education associated with careers previously considered suitable only for men. In Japan, an increased focus on gender policies has led to measures to reduce discrimination against mothers in the workplace. In the Netherlands, gender-responsive policy is having an impact on how funding is allocated. For example, in early 2017, the Science Minister announced an additional EUR 5 million allocation to support the appointment of 100 female professors, as part of an effort to address an under representation of women in this university level.

In spite of these examples, only half of the countries that practice gender budgeting could point to precise ways in which they positively affected gender equality. This may partly be because gender budgeting is still relatively new in some countries and further benefits may come to the fore in the future.

Important tools for gender budgeting

To help steer gender budgeting approaches towards the desired gender equality outcomes, a number of conditions and foundational factors need to be in place:

- *A co-ordinated, whole-of-government approach*. Gender budgeting requires co-ordination and leadership from a number of government departments, typically finance ministries and those ministries responsible for gender equality.

  Iceland's Ministry of Finance, for example, works with the Ministry of Welfare to draw up a gender budgeting programme. Similarly, a gender budgeting working group in Spain brings together representatives from the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality, the Office of the Secretary of State for Budgets and Expenditure, and the Directorate General of Budgets.

- *Gender-disaggregated data*. The routine availability of gender-specific data sets and statistics would greatly facilitate building an evidence base for identifying gender gaps, designing policy interventions and evaluating impacts. In 10 of the 12 OECD countries that implement gender budgeting, gender-disaggregated data is available in some selected areas of public service.

  In 2008, Israel amended its Statistics Law to require that every data collecting institution must analyse and publish statistics by gender. And, since 2014, line ministries have had to conduct gender analyses of how they use their budgets. In the field of science (scholarships and funds), gender analysis has led to a more balanced allocation of resources, while in sport it has sparked public debate and legal action. Yet some ministries still struggle to obtain the necessary data, as shown in an independent study of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour. There are just two OECD countries, Norway and Sweden, where gender-disaggregated data is routinely available in the required depth in all or most key areas of public service.

- *Measurable outputs and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Agreed-upon, Realistic and Time-based) targets*. Gender-specific outputs linked to budget allocations would facilitate gender-equality assessments of the budget – especially in the context of performance-budgeting approaches pursued in many OECD countries. Two-thirds of the OECD countries that have introduced gender budgeting develop and use gender indicators to assess its impact.

- *Standardised gender-responsive budget and policy routines*. If gender responsiveness is to become an enduring feature of modern budgeting, it will need to become embedded within the normal annual budgeting and policy-making routines, rather than be used only as an extrinsic form of analysis. The tendency of gender budgeting to "wax and wane" as a policy priority across different administrations needs to be countered with rigorous, standardised international approaches that demonstrate impact and added value in terms of informing the reprioritisation and reallocation of resources. In this regard, gender budgeting should not be adopted as a bureaucratic compliance exercise, but should be intrinsically linked with the substance of public policy development in all domains.

  The constitution of Austria, for example, has included gender budgeting as a requirement at all levels of government since 2009. It is embedded in the performance-based budgeting framework codified in the budget law. The provisions require each chapter within the Annual Budget Statement to set out outcome objectives, with at least one objective directly addressing gender equality.

- *External audits.* Executive-led gender budgeting should be complemented with external gender audits and civic audits (i.e. dialogue with members of civil society to assess the impact of gender budgeting). Lessons from these audits should feed into future budget decision making to ensure that the effectiveness of spending in achieving gender quality outcomes can be improved over time.

  For example, in Spain, the gender-responsive strategy of the regional Government of Andalusia has gradually been extended since 2003. In 2007, a methodology called the "G+ Programme" was created to identify the budget programmes with the greatest impact for improving gender equality. Gender audits, introduced in 2013 to assess the implementation of the G+ Programme, are the latest stage in this strategy.

- *An active, engaged parliament.* In any budgetary process, parliament is the ultimate forum of accountability. The effectiveness of gender-related budget accountability is thus intrinsically linked to the quality of broader budget accountability frameworks in parliament. In modern budgeting, effective parliamentary engagement extends beyond the once-yearly approval of the budget to include *ex ante* phases of budget policy development, *ex post* accountability on the basis of audit findings and institutional arrangements (e.g. Parliamentary Budget Offices) that help parliamentarians deal on equal terms with complex, opaque budgetary information.

  For example, the Parliamentary Budget Office in Austria supports the National Council in the budgetary process and has a specific remit to consult on performance and gender budgeting.

In short, the challenges of effective gender budgeting are in many ways a microcosm of the challenges of modern budgeting. Indeed, many of the aspects outlined above as desiderata of good gender budgeting are equally desiderata of good budgeting and good policy formulation – particularly the need for clear, multi-dimensional budgetary impact analyses and evaluation and accountability frameworks that feed directly into the policy and budget cycle.

Future research into gender budgeting approaches should take as its starting-point the differentiated analytical framework and explore in more depth the opportunities for, and effectiveness of, different approaches in each area. The OECD's role as an international convenor of practitioners and global standard-setter should be drawn upon, not only for policy recommendations, but to identify best practices and priorities for future progress.

In addition to gender budgeting, there are other methods of gender mainstreaming. One such method is to integrate gender impact assessments in the regulatory process. According to the OECD's 2015 Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance (iREG), 25 OECD countries reported that they required regulators to do this when developing all or some primary laws. This number points to progress since 2013 when countries such as Belgium, Denmark and France introduced or strengthened their requirements for gender impact assessment when developing primary laws.

In Denmark, for example, few laws underwent gender assessment. In response, the government introduced a reform that requires all public authorities to incorporate gender equality in all their planning and administration. It is supported by guidance and recommendations on gender impact assessment from a practical perspective (the use of data, statistics and tools) and from a theoretical one (the relevance of gender impact analysis). The reform also entails workshops held to help ministries bring a gender-sensitive approach to their work (European Commission, 2014).

Accountability for and oversight of gender mainstreaming

One of the main risks of gender mainstreaming – like any government-wide objective – is that it may become the responsibility of everyone and no-one. OECD (2014) has underlined that the limited accountability mechanisms is the main barrier to effective gender mainstreaming in many OECD countries.

Against that background, legislatures have an important role to play as champions of gender equality in ensuring oversight for the work of governments on gender equality. In 2016, for example, Canada's House of Commons passed a motion to create the Special Committee on Pay Equity (ESPE), whose job was to conduct hearings on pay equity and propose a plan that would enable the House to vote on proactive federal pay equity. After consulting widely, the ESPE tabled its report. The report considered how the pay equity system was currently being implemented, how it could be improved, and how to learn from other jurisdictions in order to come up with a fairer, more efficient federal regime. The Government of Canada responded with a statement that it would introduce reform for pay equity in both the federal public service and the federally regulated private sector (Government of Canada, 2016b).

In 2016, 22 OECD countries had parliamentary gender-equality committees (Figure 3.2). While most had been established more than a decade previously, Ireland and the United Kingdom put theirs' in place in 2014 and 2015, respectively. Other countries task committees with different remits to deal with issues related to gender equality (e.g. Sweden's Labour Market Committee and the Government Administration Committee in New Zealand). However, gender equality committees are not in themselves enough to guarantee more gender-sensitive policies.

The outcomes of recent parliamentary business in Mexico show that, out of 1 523 initiatives discussed in Congress in 2015-16, only 42 (2.75%) came before the Gender Equality Committee. Almost all were exclusively focused on amendments to the General Law on Women's Access to Life Free of Violence and General Law for Equality between Women and Men (OECD, 2017). This example demonstrates how law making and policy processes continue to see gender issues as women-only add-ons.

Figure 3.2. Two-thirds of OECD countries have gender equality parliamentary committees, 2016

a) Different Australian Government parliamentary committees canvass gender equality issues and the Australian Parliament also engages in gender mainstreaming and equality focussed capacity building activities in other countries' parliaments.

Source: Official websites of OECD country legislatures; PARLINE database on national parliaments, http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574114

As the OECD states in its *2015 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life*, independent institutions also have a crucial role to play in advancing the gender equality agenda. In 2015, for example, the Auditor General of Canada published a report on implementing gender-based analysis (GBA). In response to the report's main recommendations, Status of Women Canada, the Privy Council Office and the Treasury Board Secretariat committed to work together with other federal departments and agencies. The three institutions have developed an action plan covering the period 2016-20 that intends to put into practice the activities that the Auditor General advocates for closing gender gaps. The plan will seek to build on progress made and lessons learned as it strives towards a more rigorous application of gender-based analysis (GBA+) in developing government proposals and evaluating federal programmes (Government of Canada, 2016a). For the Swedish government to ensure that gender equality policies and priorities are reflected in the governance of agencies and their activities, a national Gender Equality Agency will be operation form the beginning of 2018 onwards.

Key policy messages

- The institutions of government must strengthen their efforts to mainstream gender equality in public policies and budgets, while generating systematic evidence of the impacts of gender equality efforts on the ground. For gender budgeting to be used as a tool of accountability, a gender perspective gender should be built into all phases of policy design; development, implementation, evaluation and accountability.
- Gender budgeting approaches can be more effective when they are underpinned by certain foundational elements – a co-ordinated, whole-of-government approach; the availability of gender-disaggregated data; and an active and engaged parliament.
- Countries are encouraged to strengthen the mandates and capacities of legislatures and other independent institutions (e.g. independent audit institutions) to ensure effective oversight and accountability so that gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives are implemented with full impact.

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Chapter 4

Socio-demographic change and gender roles

Key findings

- With more highly-educated women than men entering the so-called "marriage market", fewer women are marrying better-educated men. Increasingly, they live with men who are educated to similar levels, and highly-educated women increasingly partner with a less well-educated partner. The least educated men are more likely to left be on the sidelines of the marriage market and remain single. If they do live with a partner, though, they are more likely than other groups to marry rather than to cohabit informally.
- The division of labour by gender role persists in families. Men are most often the main earner and women the main carer. However, opinions towards working mothers have become more positive – particularly in countries where the government has increased support for parents seeking to combine work and family commitments. Men, especially the highly-educated, are increasingly involved in parenting.
- Although it remains a minority pattern, the greater number of female-headed single-parent families and changes in partnering patterns make it increasingly likely that women are the primary family breadwinner.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Family formation patterns are changing

Women's progress in education, greater access to the labour market, and changes in gender norms all affect men's and women's aspirations and opportunities in life. Women's rising levels of educational attainment – and the associated narrowing of the gender gap in education – are one of the main drivers of change, with major implications for gender equality, the formation and/or dissolution of partnerships and childbearing decisions (van Bavel, 2012).

In the 20th century, men were almost always better educated than their wives – a pattern tied to patriarchal norms that characterise marriage practices around the world (Therborn, 2004). Educational attainment paid off for men both in the labour market (giving them access to higher salaries) and the marriage market (making them more attractive partners) (Becker, 1991). The traditional marriage pattern was also compatible with the gender imbalance in higher education in favour of men.

However, the gender gap in educational attainment started to narrow and, by the mid-1990s, was to the advantage of women in most OECD countries (OECD, 2012). The rise of women's education raises their minimum standards for acceptable matches, lessens their economic need for marriage and, in theory, increases the chances that they may choose not to marry (van Bavel, 2012). Less well-educated men are likely to be the main losers, as they are more likely to remain single than any other group (De Hauw et al., 2016).

Most adults live with a partner, but young cohorts postpone union formation

Individuals in OECD countries overwhelmingly live with partners – as married couples, in civil registered unions or in informal cohabitation (*OECD Family Database*). Married couples and civil unions are the most common arrangements, but about 10% of people aged 20 and over OECD-wide – i.e. one in six of all partnered adults – cohabit informally. The younger generations are more and more likely to postpone entering into a couple and, when they do enter, they increasingly cohabit before formally registering or marrying (Pailhé et al., 2014). As a result, six adults in ten aged between 20 and 34 are single, while 17% of the young adults cohabit informally.

In most countries, adults educated to at least upper-secondary level are much more likely to cohabit informally with a partner than peers with less education. Informal cohabitation is also associated with more equal sharing of paid and unpaid work, especially when there are no children in the household (OECD, 2017).

Variations in the prevalence of informal cohabitation across countries are wide. It is high in France, New Zealand and the Nordic countries, but very low in Greece, Italy, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Turkey. Such differences point to differing degrees of acceptance of non-married partnerships. Attitudes are not set in stone, however; there is some evidence that cohabitation starts among individuals with higher levels of educational attainment, and then spreads among all population groups (Nazio, 2008; Lestheaghe, 2010).

In almost all OECD countries, 20-to-34 year-old men are much more likely to be single than women in the same age group, especially among those whose level of educational attainment is medium or low (Table 4.A1.1):

- 67% of men educated to a medium level are single,
- 64% of men with low education; and,
- 59% of the highly-educated.

The situation is different among women of the same age. On average 47% of women with low levels of education are single, as are 57% of those educated to a medium level, and 49% of those who have a degree-level qualification. Highly-educated women are the least likely to live alone in many OECD countries.

Men and women often partner those with the same level of educational attainment

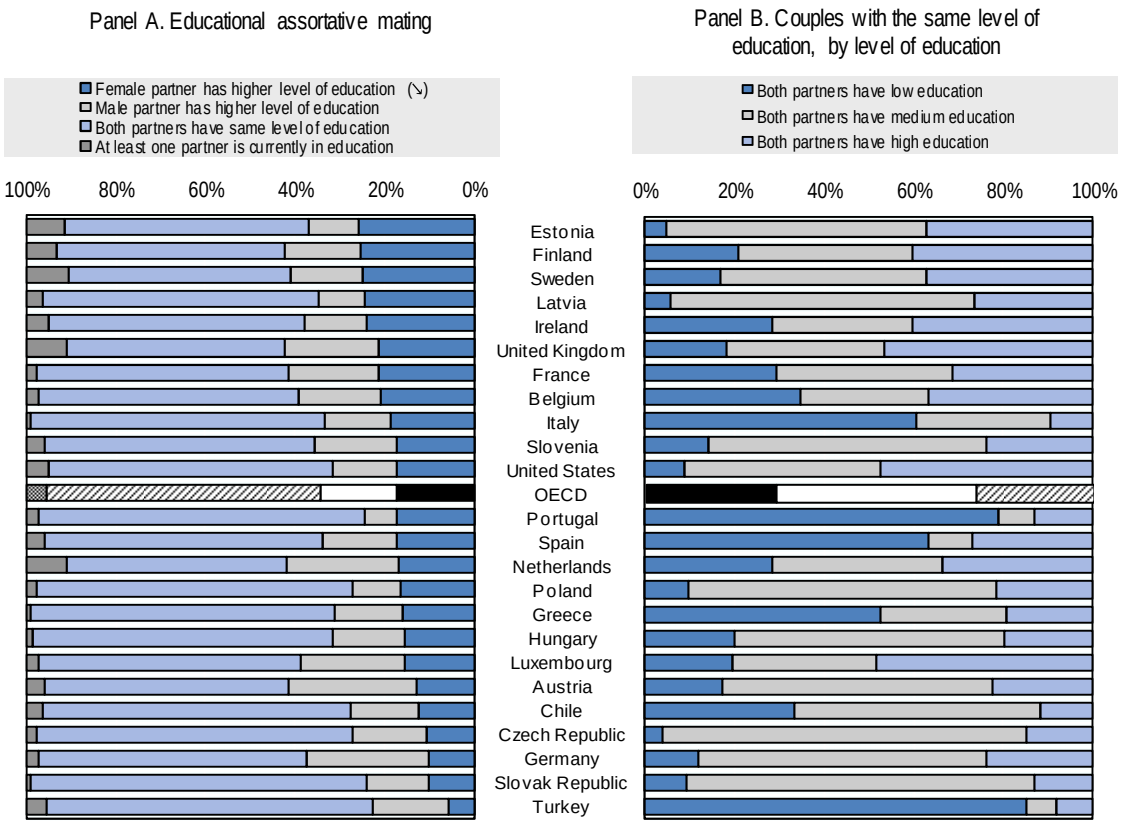
Patterns are changing in "educational assortative mating" – i.e. the pairing of individuals with similar socio-economic and educational traits. The rise in young women's levels of educational attainment has contributed to an increase in marriage between individuals who hold a similar level of education (so called "educational homogamy") (De Hauw et al., 2016; Esteve et al., 2016). There are, however, cross-national variations in the extent to which men and women with similar educational attainment form unions (Figure 4.1, Panel A).

On average, around six in ten adults aged 20 and over are partnered with someone who has a similar level of educational attainment (Figure 4.1). Couples where both partners hold an upper-secondary education degree are the most common, but the proportion of those where both are low-educated is relatively high in Greece, Italy, Spain and, especially, in Turkey (Figure 4.1, Panel B).

In couples where partners have different levels of educational attainment, those where the woman holds the higher qualification are more common in 14 out of 24 countries for which data are available (Figure 4.1, Panel A). On average one in six women in 2014 lived with a partner who had a lower level of education, though that proportion is as high as one in four in Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Sweden. Highly-educated women in particular, tend to partner with less well-educated men rather than remain single (De Hauw et al., 2016; Esteve et al., 2016).

Figure 4.1. More than one in six adults live in a couple where the woman has a higher level of education attainment than her partner

Distribution (%) of individuals living with an opposite-sex partner by pattern of educational attainment in current partnership, 20-year-olds and over, 2014 or latest available year[a]



Note: Educational attainment is measured on a three-part ordinal variable (low education, medium education and high education), with distinctions between the three levels corresponding to the usual International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) classification system: "low education" corresponds to a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 0-2 (early-childhood education, primary or lower secondary education); "medium education" reflects a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 3-4 (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education); and "high education" corresponds to a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 5-8 (short-cycle tertiary education, bachelor or equivalent, master or equivalent, doctoral or equivalent).

a) Data for Finland and Sweden relate to 2012, and for Chile, Germany and Turkey to 2013.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) for European Union countries, the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN) for Chile, the Turkish Household Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Turkey, and the United States Current Population Survey (CPS) basic files for the United States.

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Parenthood postponed

Fertility rates have fallen over recent decades across the OECD. To a large extent, the decline can be attributed to the rising opportunity cost of having children, which is, in turn, linked to women's financial incentives for working and building a career (Hotz et al., 1997; OECD, 2011). For that reason, women with higher educational attainment generally try to establish themselves in the labour market before having children (Wood et al., 2016; Greulich et al., 2017). As a result, the average age at which women

have their first child increased from 26 in 1970 to almost 29 in 2014 across the OECD (*OECD Family Database*).

Differences in partner's educational attainment also tend to affect couples' fertility behaviour (Nitsche et al., 2015). In most European OECD countries, for instance, couples where both partners hold university-level degrees tend to postpone having their first child longer than other couples, but are more likely to have a second and/or a third child.

By contrast, couples in which the man is more highly-educated than the woman have their first child earlier, but are less inclined to enlarge their families. To a considerable extent, that pattern stems from the fact that women with lower levels of education struggle to secure employment (Greulich et al., 2017) or plan their families (Kapitany and Speder, 2012).

Gender role divisions are slowly eroding

Changes in educational assortative mating also affect the gains partners can expect from a division of responsibilities once children are born. The rise in the number of partners with similar educational attainment may, in particular, be expected to encourage partners to share paid and unpaid work more equally.

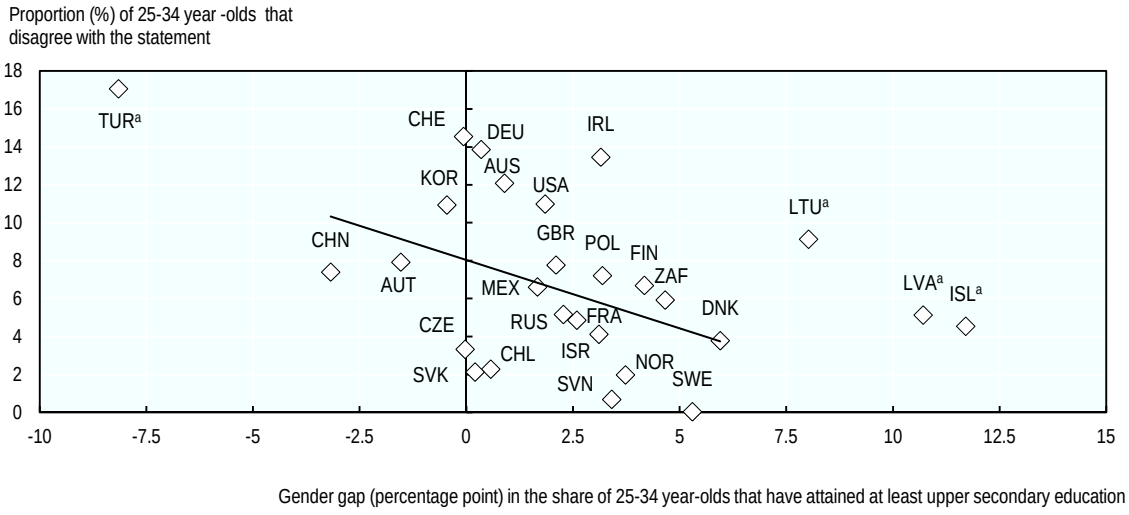
Does the rise in female educational attainment herald more gender-equal attitudes? Figure 4.2 suggests there is an association between women's educational advantages and the attitudes of young people towards gender and family roles, as captured by the responses of survey respondents to two different statements on gender roles. The figure shows that, on the whole, countries with larger educational gender gaps in favour of young women also tend to be those where young people hold more favourable opinions towards maternal employment and two-earner households. In these countries, young people are less likely to *disagree* with the idea that both partners should contribute to household income (Panel A), and are less likely to *agree* with the idea that a pre-school-age child is likely to suffer when their mother works (Panel B).

The fact that young women outperform men in education is associated with greater acceptance of gender equality. However, the evidence shows that the extent to which men and women modify the gender division of paid and unpaid work is limited (Chapters 11 and 15).

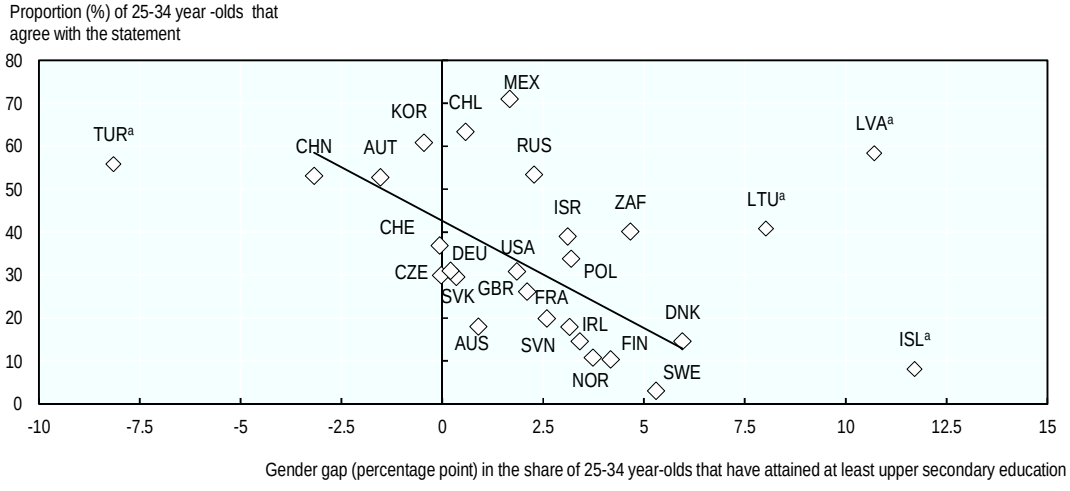
In most households in all OECD countries, men are still more likely to be in paid work, while women often reduce the hours spent in paid work and take on the bulk of unpaid work in the home (Chapter 15). As a result, women's earnings account, on average, for no more than one-third of a couple's earnings in the OECD (OECD, 2017).

Figure 4.2. The wider the gender education gap in favour of women, the more pronounced gender egalitarian attitudes are

Panel A. Scatterplot between the gender gap in the in the share of 25-34 year-olds that have attained at least upper secondary education and the proportion (%) of 25-34 year-olds that disagree with the statement: "Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income"



Panel B. Scatterplot between the gender gap in the in the share of 25-34 year-olds that have attained at least upper secondary education and the proportion (%) of 25-34 year-olds that agree with the statement: "A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works"



Note: Data on the gender gap in the share of 25-34 year-olds that have attained at least upper secondary education refer to 2015, except for China (2010), Chile and the Russian Federation (2013), and France (2014). Data on attitudes refer to 2012. Data on attitudes for Germany refer to West Germany only.

a) Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania and Turkey are considered outliers and are excluded from the calculation of the line of best fit.

Source: OED (2016), *Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2016-en, and OECD Secretariat calculations based on International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) 2012, www.issp.org/.

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Differences in earnings between men and women who marry reveal traditional attitudes. In the United States, for instance, men tend to marry women who earn less than they do – a tendency which, surprisingly, is more marked among couples where the wife's education level equals or surpasses the husband's than among those where the wife is less well educated (Qian, 2016). Gender identity norms help explain the persistence of social roles where the wife earns less than her husband (Bertrand et al., 2015). Many wives also continue to do more housework than their husbands – even in couples where they are the main earners – in order to comply with gender norms at home (Bittman, 2000; Bertrand et al., 2015; OECD, 2017).

The role of fathers

Despite the persistence of division of labour by gender role, fathers are more involved in childcare and children's education than they were before: no longer are men expected exclusively to be breadwinners but they are increasingly expected to share parenting responsibilities with their partners (Gauthier et al., 2004; Craig and Mullan, 2011). Timing and pace of change may vary across countries, but a change in the role behaviour of fathers is to be observed across the OECD (Goldscheider et al., 2015).

The numerous factors that have contributed to men's growing participation in housework and care (Goldscheider et al., 2014) include:

- growing female employment,
- the availability of family-friendly policies; and,
- changing attitudes towards work, care and gender roles, marked by the increase in the perceived value of fathers' involvement in the development of their children.

However, the greater involvement of fathers reflects life-style choices that are more frequently those of partners who are highly-educated, cohabit and hold gender-egalitarian views (OECD, 2017).

Female breadwinners

The rise in the number of women who are the main breadwinners in the family is also an indication that the traditional gender division of labour is losing ground. For instance, in four out of ten American households with children under 18, the mother is either the sole or primary earner – a share that has quadrupled since 1960 (Wang et al., 2013). In Europe, roughly one in eight women earn 50% or more of household earnings (OECD, 2016; Klesment and van Bavel, 2015).

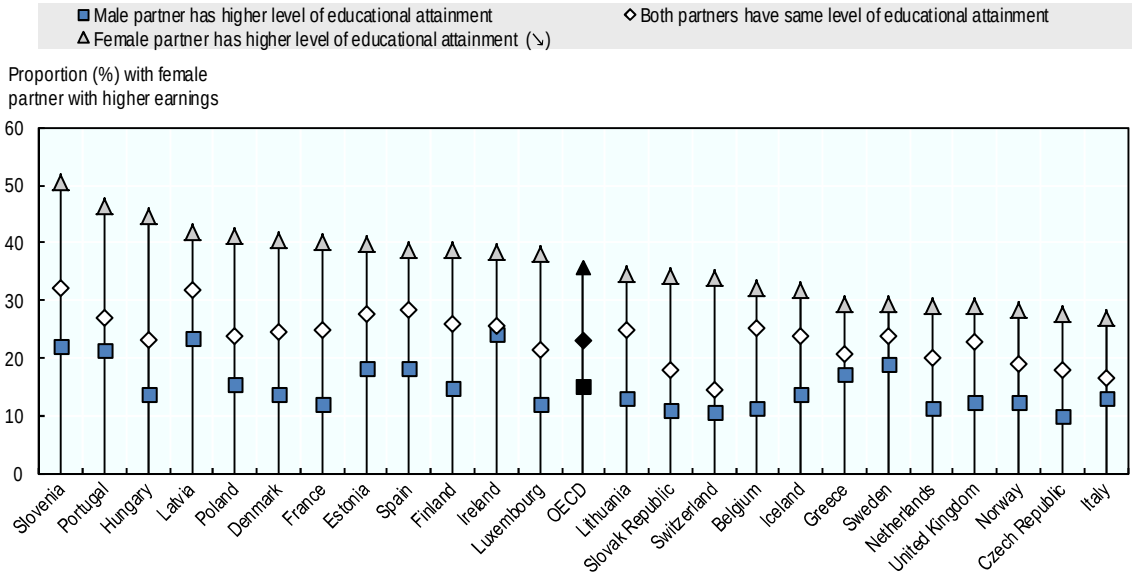
Evolving family dynamics help explain the increase in the proportion of female primary breadwinners in all economically advanced countries (Cory and Stirling, 2015; Klesment and van Bavel, 2015). Changes in patterns of educationally assortative mating are important drivers, as evidenced by the growing share of women with higher qualifications and, therefore, better career prospects than their husbands. Across European OECD countries, women are the primary earners in 36% of couples where the female partner has a higher level of educational attainment than the male partner (Figure 4.3) – a rate that is over 50% higher than for couples where both partners have the same level of educational attainment.

Divorce exposes women to greater income vulnerability

Nevertheless, the unequal division of paid and unpaid work in favour of men persists. And women tend to suffer greater income losses than men in the wake of divorce or separation. In Switzerland, for instance, women are in case of divorce three times more likely than men to experience an income decrease of 20% or more (Figure 4.4). The loss of the higher share of income previously provided by the male partner, together with the fact that women often receive custody of children and/or shoulder the responsibility for relatives in need of long-term care, spells greater financial difficulties for women than men after divorce or separation. Women face a higher risk of poverty, whereas men's living standards frequently remain stable even when they pay alimony (Bonnet et al., 2016).

Figure 4.3. Thirty-six per cent of women who have a higher level of educational attainment than their partner are the primary earners in couple households

Proportion (%) of opposite-sex couples where the female partner has higher earnings than the male partner by pattern of educational attainment in the couple, opposite-sex couples with both partners aged 25-54, 2014 (income reference year 2013)



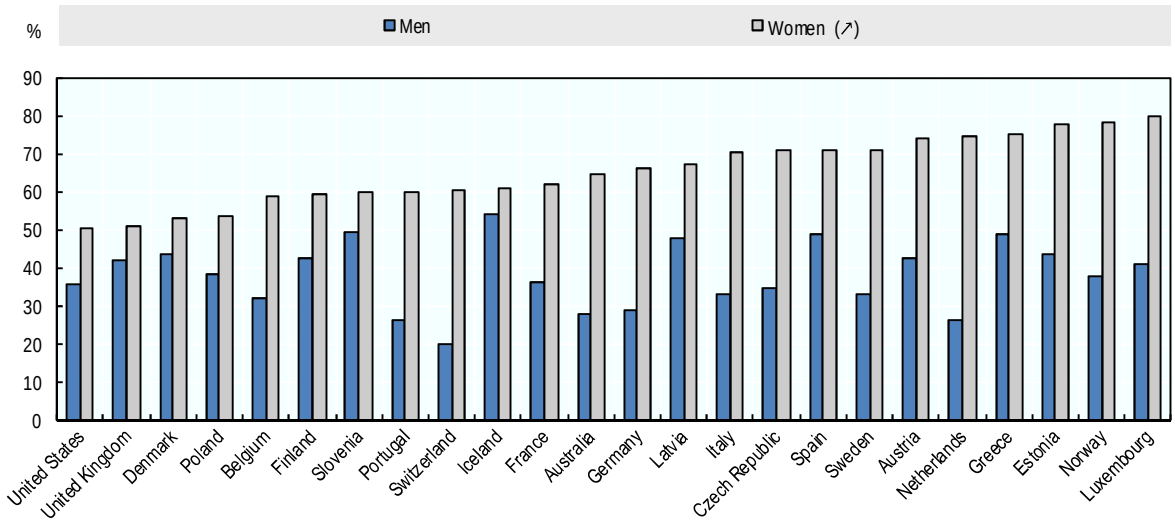
Note: "Earnings" are defined as cash or near cash employee income (i.e. wages) and cash income from self-employment. Couples where the female partner has higher earnings than the male partner are those where the female partner's earnings are greater than the male partner's earnings by any margin. Couples where either partner has negative earnings (e.g. from cash losses in self-employment) and couples where both partners have no earnings are excluded. Proportions among valid cases only; couples where either partner has missing information on educational attainment and/or earnings from employment or self-employment are excluded. For the definition and measurement of levels of education, see the notes to Figure 4.1. The income reference year is 2013.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions Survey (EU-SILC).

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574171

Figure 4.4. Women are more likely than men to suffer a heavy loss of income after divorce or separation

Percentage of the recently separated population who experienced a year-on-year decrease of 20% or more in their household disposable income, by sex, 2008-11



Note: Working-age population. Equivalised household incomes, in real terms. Year-on-year observations were pooled from 2007 to 2013 for each country and from 2008-12 for the United States.

There are several data-driven caveats to be borne in mind when following individuals after they split, the main one being those who move into another dwelling (Lacovou and Lynn, 2013). In countries where data collection is based on household surveys – most of the countries in EU-SILC – every member of the initial household is supposed to be tracked and re-interviewed. However, in practice, attrition tends to rise in cases of separation. In countries where surveys are based on administrative registers – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia and Sweden – only one member of the household is followed. These limits should be kept in mind when interpreting the results.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey for European Union countries (except Germany), Iceland and Norway, and the Cross-National Equivalent File (CNEF) for Australia, Switzerland, Germany and the United States.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574190

Family living arrangements after parents separate are also important determinants of the living standards of single-parent families and the opportunities that they have to engage in paid work. In France, for instance, mothers with shared custody arrangements show a 15 percentage-point higher chance of finding employment than those that obtain the sole custody of children after divorce (Bonnet et al., 2017). The effect is particularly pronounced among the poorest women and among those who, prior to divorce, were not in the labour force. Sharing the custody of children with the father also increases women's chances of re-partnering (Schnor et al., 2015; Berger et al., 2017).

The economic consequences of divorce in the short and medium term vary across countries, depending on social protection systems, labour market characteristics, and the public support that allows parents to combine work and family commitments (De Vaus et al., 2014). Labour market participation is key to raising the living standards of women and their families after divorce or separation. It requires support by a comprehensive system of childcare services, and working-time flexibility to help them combine work and family commitments.

Key policy messages

- Greater support to reconcile work and family commitments will help both men and women realise their fertility intentions as well as their labour market aspirations.
- Policy should support a more equal sharing of paid and unpaid work among partners. Affordable childcare helps both parents, and leave benefits, flexible work options and tax/benefit systems should also be so designed to provide both parents with equal financial incentives to take leave and engage in paid work (Chapters 15-18).
- Effective child alimony payments and measures encouraging father's involvement upon partnership dissolution are particularly important to help single mothers combine work and family commitments and reduce the poverty risk for single-parent families.

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Annex 4.A1

Additional data on the distribution of single young people by level of education

Table 4.A1.1. Share of young adults who are single by level of education

Proportion (%) of individuals not living with a partner by level of educational attainment, 20-34 year-olds, 2014 or latest available year[a]

	Total				Men				Women			
	Total	Low education	Medium education	High education	Total	Low education	Medium education	High education	Total	Low education	Medium education	High education
Australia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Austria	58.7	49.8	60.3	58.6	65.3	62.9	66.2	64.4	52.0	38.7	53.7	53.7
Belgium	57.0	58.1	62.5	50.2	62.4	65.4	66.5	54.4	51.6	48.1	57.7	47.2
Canada	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Chile	63.5	54.5	57.7	76.1	66.1	59.0	60.5	78.3	60.9	50.0	55.0	74.1
Czech Republic	53.2	54.9	55.9	45.4	60.1	61.1	62.0	52.3	46.0	47.9	48.4	40.9
Denmark	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Estonia	50.5	50.8	55.7	41.7	57.4	57.5	60.7	49.1	43.4	37.3	49.5	37.1
Finland	43.7	50.7	49.5	28.6	50.0	56.5	55.3	30.0	37.0	41.2	42.4	27.8
France	47.4	49.3	50.5	43.0	53.0	55.4	55.6	48.4	41.9	42.4	45.0	38.6
Germany	59.9	64.1	62.4	50.3	66.9	73.5	69.0	54.9	52.8	53.6	55.2	46.4
Greece	73.8	58.8	77.6	75.1	82.2	73.3	85.2	82.9	65.3	34.6	69.7	69.3
Hungary	59.2	49.6	64.3	51.7	66.8	60.7	70.8	58.1	51.3	37.3	56.7	47.3
Iceland	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Ireland	59.7	60.7	65.6	53.1	63.2	60.7	67.9	57.7	56.3	60.7	63.1	49.8
Israel	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Italy	70.9	58.8	75.5	72.6	79.0	69.9	82.4	83.2	62.6	43.8	68.2	66.1
Japan	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Korea	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Latvia	57.5	59.6	62.1	49.2	62.0	64.7	64.7	52.5	53.0	48.6	58.7	47.3
Luxembourg	60.9	66.6	67.2	52.4	66.5	66.8	72.6	59.6	55.4	66.5	61.3	46.4
Mexico	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Netherlands	53.0	61.7	58.8	41.2	59.9	70.4	64.6	45.8	46.0	49.3	52.4	37.7
New Zealand	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Norway	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Poland	54.1	71.3	58.3	43.7	59.9	78.4	62.7	47.2	48.0	57.7	52.6	41.4
Portugal	60.9	52.9	66.9	61.9	66.3	59.8	72.2	67.3	55.6	42.6	61.7	58.7
Slovak Republic	66.3	63.3	67.7	63.5	73.7	75.4	75.0	68.3	58.5	49.8	58.7	60.2
Slovenia	63.3	65.0	67.6	53.9	70.8	77.1	72.5	63.2	54.9	43.9	60.9	48.0
Spain	63.3	58.7	69.9	62.0	69.9	67.3	74.7	68.6	56.5	46.5	65.2	56.8
Sweden	61.2	66.5	67.5	48.2	67.1	70.3	71.7	54.6	55.1	61.3	62.4	43.7
Switzerland	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Turkey	45.3	33.8	55.7	59.8	53.6	44.4	61.2	62.4	37.1	25.1	48.5	57.0
United Kingdom	52.0	56.6	54.5	47.4	54.7	58.0	55.6	52.0	49.3	54.8	53.3	43.6
United States	55.1	52.6	61.4	47.1	59.1	56.0	64.2	51.5	51.2	48.5	58.2	43.5
OECD	57.9	57.0	62.3	53.2	64.0	64.3	67.2	58.6	51.7	47.1	56.6	49.3

Note: Partnership status is determined by the presence of a spouse or cohabiting partner in the same household. Individuals who are "not living with a partner" are defined as those without a spouse or cohabiting partner in the same household. For the definition and measurement of levels of education, see the notes to Figure 4.1. Proportions among valid cases only; individuals with missing information on education attainment and/or individuals with partners with missing information on educational attainment are excluded.

a) Data for Finland and Sweden refer to 2012, and for Chile, Germany and Turkey to 2013.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) for European Union countries, the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN) for Chile, the Turkish Household Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Turkey, and the United States Current Population Survey (CPS) basic files for the United States.

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Chapter 5

Violence against women: A new policy priority for OECD countries

Key findings

- Violence against women (VAW) remains a global pandemic. More than one-third of all women worldwide are estimated to have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.
- OECD countries are prioritising sexual harassment and violence against women as a policy issue. New policy measures have typically taken one of two forms: 1) new or stronger laws or regulations governing sexual harassment; and 2) information or awareness-raising campaigns aimed at defining and preventing sexual harassment.
- Countries are increasingly collecting data on harassment and VAW, but sizeable knowledge gaps remain.

Violence against women remains far too widespread

Violence against women (VAW) remains a global pandemic and is a growing policy priority for OECD countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 35% of all women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence and/or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime (WHO, 2013). Male intimate partners account for most of this violence. Globally, 30% of all women who have ever been in a relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence perpetuated by intimate partners, who also commit 38% of all murders of women. In high-income countries, the prevalence of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence is 23.2% of ever-partnered women (ibid.). A 2014 survey of European Union countries found that around 13 million women had experienced physical violence in the 12 months prior to the survey and that 33% had experienced physical and/or sexual violence since they were 15 years old (FRA, 2014a). While most victims report that they were pushed or shoved, excluding pushing and shoving reduces the overall incidence only slightly, from 31% to 25%. Moreover, many of the women who were pushed or shoved also experienced other forms of violence.

Public attitudes continue to reflect a disturbing acceptance of domestic violence. In the 160 countries included in the OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), one in three women agrees that domestic violence is justified (OECD Development Centre, 2014).

VAW affects multiple aspects of victims' lives, including their education, employment, income, social protection, justice, security and health. WHO (2016) lists threats to women's health that include:

- injuries,
- unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy complications such as miscarriage, stillbirth, pre-term delivery and low birth-weight babies,
- mental health problems like depression, post-traumatic stress, sleep difficulties and eating disorders,
- fatal outcomes, i.e. homicide or suicide.

These are not only serious human rights violations. There are significant economic effects, as well. Women may be unable to work and lose wages, stop participating in activities, and struggle to care for themselves and their children (ibid.). In Mexico, for example, where 71% of women report feeling insecure in public transport, stakeholders point to the fear of violence or harassment as a barrier to women commuting to work (OECD, 2017).

Policy increasingly prioritises violence against women, including sexual harassment

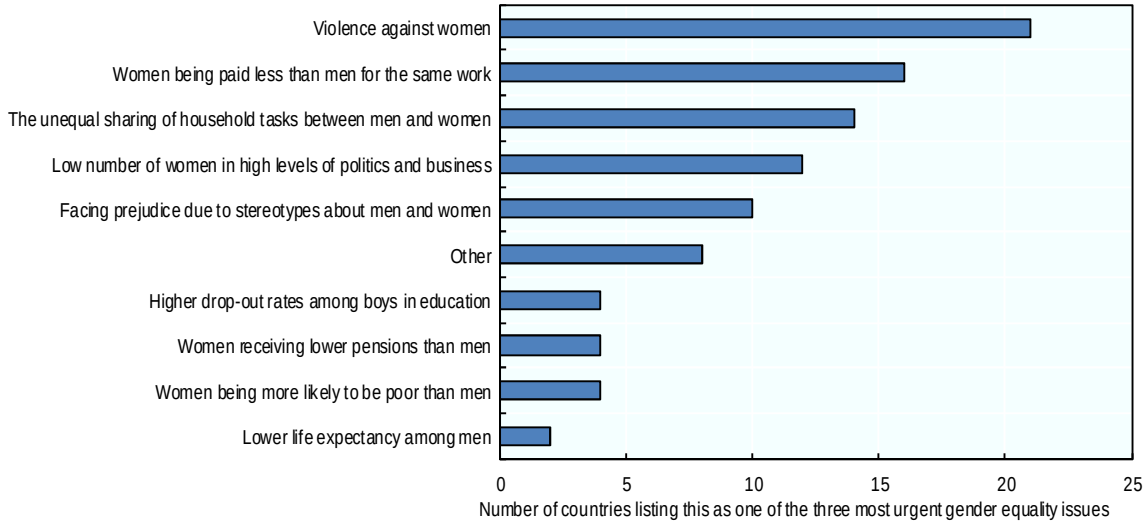
The 2016 OECD Gender Equality Questionnaire (GEQ) revealed that OECD countries are increasingly prioritising violence against women (VAW) as an issue in its own right. Twenty-one of the 37 responding OECD countries and other adherents to the OECD Gender Recommendation listed VAW as one of the three most urgent issues facing their country (Figure 5.1).

The OECD has historically called for better measures to end one particular form of violence against women – sexual harassment in the workplace (OECD, 2013). Workplace sexual harassment presents both a human rights challenge and an economic cost. Victims of sexual harassment suffer negative psychological and physical health consequences, which

lowers workplace productivity and contributes to employee turnover, absenteeism, loss of managerial time to investigate complaints and legal expenses (Hersch, 2015). Organisations therefore have incentives to eliminate workplace sexual harassment, but – as it clearly persists – further policy measures are needed to ensure that workplaces are safe and inclusive.

Figure 5.1. Priority issues in gender equality

Number of adherent countries to the 2013 Gender Recommendation listing the following as one of the three most urgent gender equality issues needing to be addressed in their country



Note: 35 countries responded. Each country could select up to three priority issues.

Source: OECD Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee (ELSAC), Questionnaire on Progress in Implementing the 2013 Gender Recommendation.

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Nineteen OECD countries report having introduced new measures to end sexual harassment since 2013 (GEQ, 2016). This represents a policy area with a relatively large number of changes. The new measures have typically fallen into one of two categories:

- new or stronger laws or regulations governing sexual harassment,
- information or awareness-raising campaigns around what constitutes sexual harassment and the right to a life free from sexual harassment.

Austria, Costa Rica, Finland, France, Iceland, Israel, Korea, Mexico, Portugal and Slovenia are among those that have introduced or reinforced anti-harassment legislation. Various countries expanded the definition of sexual harassment through new laws and regulations. Others have stiffened maximum penalties (e.g., France), better defined employer obligations (e.g., Iceland, Korea, Mexico and Slovenia), and/or focused on harassment in particular industries or sectors (e.g., higher education in Israel). Australia, Portugal and Sweden report having strengthened their legislative systems and policies in various ways to combat violence against women and girls. As of 2014, at least 78 countries around the world had laws in place regulating workplace sexual harassment, including most OECD countries (World Bank, 2014). In 2017, Japan plans to expand guidelines on measures that management should take to curb sexual harassment in the workplace.

Other national governments have carried out information campaigns or published guidelines for workers and employers with definitions of sexual harassment, ways to prevent it, and legal rights (for victims) and obligations (for employers) when harassment occurs. Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Israel, Korea, Lithuania, Portugal and the Netherlands have all conducted, or are in the process of conducting, some form of awareness-raising or have distributed guidelines to workplaces. Portugal, for example, promoted a study providing updated information on the phenomenon of the sexual and moral harassment in the workplace, which aimed to support the efforts of public authorities, employers, employees and their representatives to prevent and combat harassment in the workplace (Torres et al, 2016). Others, like the Czech Republic, have embedded sexual harassment within larger national strategies on gender equality or gender-based violence.

Institutional culture and regulations play an important role in preventing and eliminating sexual harassment at work. Training on what constitutes sexual harassment has been found to help workers, particularly men, identify what constitutes unacceptable sexual behaviours (Antecol, 2015). Emphasising prevention is important, for example by issuing strong statements of zero tolerance (Hersch, 2015). It is crucial to ensure that victims have access to safe, straightforward mechanisms for filing complaints, which should include being able to report harassment to a range of colleagues and having effective protection from retaliation by co-workers or supervisors. Sexual harassment goes underreported by victims, as evidenced by the low rates of legal charges filed relative to the levels of sexual harassment reported in surveys (McCann, 2005). The absence of safe and effective avenues for reporting harassment can clearly limit the effectiveness of the new regulations that countries have been introducing.

Because workplace culture is central to sexual harassment, anti-harassment laws and initiatives targeting employers show promise and should be evaluated carefully. Slovenia, for example, in 2013 clarified an employer's liability for damages and compensation in the event of discrimination or workplace mobbing. In these cases, the employer is liable under civil law. Mental distress is emphasised as an element in defining non-pecuniary damage incurred to a candidate or worker, though determining fair compensation in court is difficult.

Iceland, too, expanded its anti-harassment regulation to more clearly define employer obligations around ostracism, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment and violence in the workplace. All Icelandic workplaces are required to draw up a plan describing the measures they take to prevent harassment and how they respond if it occurs. Plans must be tailored to meet the needs of specific workplaces. Many countries, as part of their awareness-raising campaigns, provide employers with information on employers' obligations to prevent and respond to harassment.

A multidimensional approach to ending violence against women

Because VAW affects multiple aspects of victims' lives, policies must take a holistic approach. Mexico is one example of an OECD country that has comprehensively prioritised the prevention and elimination of VAW over the past decade (OECD, 2017). Mexico's multifaceted approach – entitled the Integrated Programme to Prevent, Address, Sanction, and Eradicate Violence Against Women – involves a range of government actors at all levels of government. One important policy measure is the Secretariat of the Interior's ability to issue "gender alerts", which oblige authorities to implement measures that protect women's rights and physical security, conduct more comprehensive investigations into acts of VAW, and increase efforts to address the problem in areas where violence is prevalent. The gender alerts send a strong statement about the severity of the problem. Publicly

funded justice centres that have been set up in many Mexican states are helping some women locally, as well. These multi-purpose anti-violence centres are intended to offer psychological, legal and medical care; temporary shelter; and consultation with child development experts. The centres also often offer workshops on social and economic empowerment to help women break the cycle of violence and start a self-sustainable life free from violence.

Although Mexico – like every OECD country – still has a long way to go to ensure that women live their lives free from violence, its policy measures signal that the government is drawing attention to, and committed to eliminating, VAW.

Since 2010, Australia has been implementing The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (the National Plan). The National Plan aims to achieve a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children. It sets out six national outcomes for all governments to deliver during the 12 year life of the plan:

- Communities are safe and free from violence.
- Relationships are respectful.
- Indigenous communities are strengthened.
- Services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence.
- Justice responses are effective.
- Perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account.

The National Plan has a strong focus on primary prevention and acknowledges that gender equality is required to stop the violence from happening in the first place. It recognises the importance of driving long-term cultural and attitudinal change around violence against women and gender equality more broadly.

In addition to the National Plan and the Action Plans that sit underneath it, in 2015 Australia announced an AUD 100 million Women's Safety Package to provide a safety net for women and children at high risk of experiencing violence. The package included funding to improve frontline support and services, leverage innovative technologies to keep women safe, and provide education resources to help change community attitudes to violence and abuse.

Sweden, too, is taking a comprehensive approach. In November 2016, the government adopted a national ten-year strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women, including measures against domestic violence, honour-based violence, prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes. The objectives of this strategy are: 1) increased and effective efforts to prevent violence, 2) improved detection of violence and stronger protection of and support to women and children subjected to violence, 3) more effective law enforcement, and 4) improved knowledge and methodological development. The strategy takes a holistic approach, noting also the links between men's violence against women and, for example, economic gender equality and gender equality in health.

Unfortunately, some countries are taking steps in the wrong direction. The Russian Federation, for example, partially decriminalised domestic abuse in 2017, even though the country's record on violence against women has been extensively criticised by civil society groups and intergovernmental organisations (Amnesty International, 2017; UN OCHCR, 2013).

Given the multidimensional nature of VAW, it is crucial that countries invest further political commitments, funding, qualified human resources, and co-ordination efforts across

policy areas to end VAW. Government actors must build specialised human resources capacity and co-ordinate effectively to prevent VAW. When violence happens, governments must also successfully protect victims, support victims' empowerment and reintegration in society, and hold perpetrators accountable.

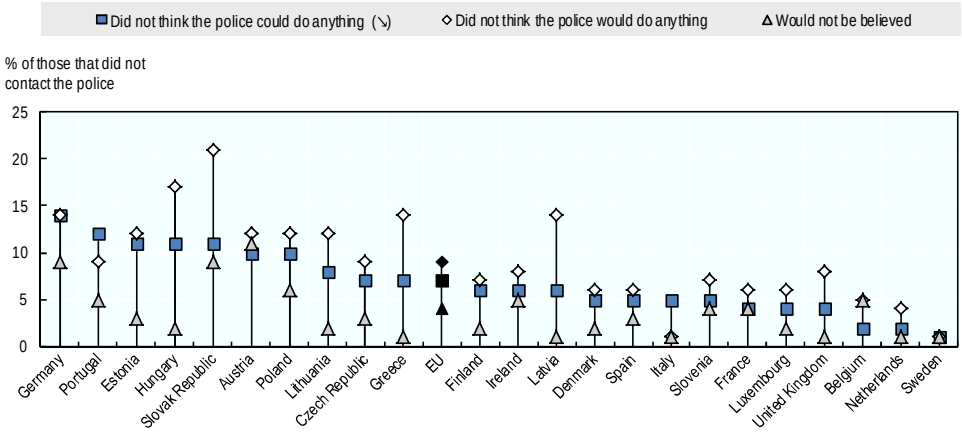
Access to justice remains problematic in OECD countries, as many victims of VAW fail to report violence. According to data from a survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA, 2014a), only 14% of women EU-wide who report having been the victim of at least one serious incident of violence by a partner since the age of 15 say that they contacted the police about the most serious such incident (FRA, 2014a). Reasons for not contacting the police vary, but a common deterrent is mistrust in institutions of law enforcement (Figure 5.2):

- 9% of victims say they did not report the crime because they did not think that the police *would* do anything,
- 7% did not report because they did not think the police *could* do anything,
- 4% thought they would not be believed.

Fear of reprisal was another significant factor in failure to report. In Lithuania, the Slovak Republic, Hungary, Belgium and Austria, among women who stated that they had been seriously assaulted by their partner but did not contact the police, at least one-fifth failed to do so out of fear of the offender or reprisal. Indeed, fear of reprisal accounts for 13% of women not reporting violence, on average, in the European Union (FRA, 2014a).

Figure 5.2. The belief that the police could not or would not do anything is a common reason for not reporting serious incidents of partner violence

Proportion (%) reporting that they did not contact the police following the most serious incident of partner violence because they "did not think the police could do anything", they "did not think the police would do anything", or they "would not be believed", among women who report having been the victim of at least one serious incident of physical and/or sexual violence by a partner since the age of 15 and who say they did not contact the police about the most serious such incident, 2012



Note: When asked about the reasons for not contacting police following the most serious incident of physical and/or sexual violence by a partner since the age of 15, respondents could indicate one or more answer categories according to their experiences. Partners include persons with whom the respondents were, or had been, married, living together without being married, or involved in a relationship without living together.

Source: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), violence against women survey dataset, http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-violence-against-women-survey.

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The challenge of measuring violence against women

Measuring VAW is difficult. Survey-based estimates likely underestimate the extent of the problem, as many victims are reluctant to admit abuse. Administrative data, such as police reports, are typically even less informative. As described above, many violent crimes against women go unreported for reasons like fear of further violence and threats (towards the woman and her loved ones), stigma, lack of means for self-support, inadequate institutional protection and mistrust of the criminal justice system (OECD, 2017). Careful planning and protocols are needed to ensure that questions are phrased appropriately and that women feel safe to answer honestly.

Comparisons across countries are nearly impossible due to differences in survey methodologies and national differences in respondents' likelihood of reporting harassment. Many factors explain observed differences across countries in the prevalence of VAW (FRA, 2014b), including:

- the social acceptability of talking about violence with other people,
- underlying levels of gender equality in society, which may lead to higher (or lower) levels of disclosure of violence,
- women's exposure to the risk of violence, e.g. whether or not they work outside the home,
- differences in countries' overall levels of violent crime, which can drive cross-national differences in violence against women (FRA, 2014b).

WHO (2013) states that "differences in political and cultural factors mean that individual countries need their own data, and that extrapolating one country's prevalence estimates to another is not necessarily appropriate for policy and programmatic decision making". Instead, countries should regularly collect their own data to serve as baselines for measuring progress. For countries that have carried out multiple waves of surveys with questions on sexual harassment and/or violence against women, it is possible to observe changes over time. However, it is difficult to say whether higher or lower rates of reporting indicate substantive change on the ground, greater awareness of what constitutes sexual harassment and/or willingness to report, which is both an individual and societal construct.

A look at the leading cross-national survey on violence against women (FRA, 2014b) illustrates the dilemma in interpreting the incidence of reported violence. The survey presents a counterintuitive result: there is a positive correlation between the prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence and European Gender Equality Index scores. Countries which score high in gender equality (like the Nordic countries) had higher levels of *reported* violence against women than countries which are ranked as less egalitarian.

However, when using the same survey to compare extreme forms of violence – so-called "coercive control", in which an intimate partner supresses a victim's autonomy, rights and liberties through physical, emotional and psychological abuse – countries with higher levels of gender equality perform much better (Nevala, 2017). Countries with the lowest share of women under a partner's coercive control were Sweden, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark and the Czech Republic, all of which had rates below 5%. The highest prevalence of coercive control – between 10% and 16% of women – was in Eastern Europe (ibid.). Such findings present a puzzle for causal inference: are women in northern European countries more likely to experience (non-coercive control) violence, or are they simply more likely to report it?

Governments are trying to understand the prevalence of harassment and violence in their countries. A range of OECD countries have carried out multiple (albeit infrequent) waves of national surveys with questions on sexual harassment. Countries include Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Sweden. Their data are useful for within-country comparisons (Eurofound, 2015). In Korea, too, the Ministry of Gender Equity and Family Affairs conducted a survey of 1 200 private and 400 public companies in 2015, which will be repeated every three years (Korean Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2016).

Countries like Canada and the United States are also increasingly conducting surveys of sexual harassment in the military, as hierarchical organisational structures are associated with relatively high rates of sexual harassment and assault against women (Cotter, 2016; Morral et al., 2016). In response to sexual harassment and assault, the Canadian Armed Forces implemented "Operation Honour", a victim-focused mission to eliminate harmful and inappropriate behaviour in the military. The strategy aims to facilitate the reporting of harassment and better support victims.

Mexico does well in attempting to quantify harassment and VAW. It carried out an extensive household survey (National Survey of Household Dynamics [ENDIREH]) with questions on violence against women and workplace harassment in 2006, 2011 and 2016. It also conducts an annual survey of the Federal Public Administration with questions on harassment at work – the Organisational Climate and Culture Survey (ECCO).

Despite the challenges, VAW is an issue that governments must make better efforts to quantify and understand. As one-off surveys and modules within wide-ranging surveys produce only limited information on physical and sexual violence, countries should conduct VAW-specific surveys and repeat them over time. The United Nations *Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence Against Women* is a useful instrument (United Nations, 2014) in this exercise.

Key policy recommendations

- Measuring violence is important. Governments should conduct VAW-specific surveys and repeat them over time in order to understand better the determinants and patterns of violence. One-off VAW surveys and VAW modules in larger surveys gather only limited information.
- Given the prevalence and multidimensional nature of VAW, countries must intensify their political commitment and increase funding, qualified human resources, awareness campaigns, and co-ordination efforts in all areas of policy and across branches of government, including education, employment, social protection, justice, security and health.

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Part II

Gender equality in education

Chapter 6

Where girls still lag behind in education

Key findings

- By 2014, gender parity in access to primary, lower secondary and upper secondary had generally been achieved worldwide. However, global averages mask persistent disparities in regions and countries. Girls are, for example, still less likely than boys to be enrolled in primary school in sub-Saharan Africa – fewer than 95 girls for every 100 boys.
- In no country or economy that participates in the OECD PISA assessment do more girls than boys perform at the highest levels in mathematics.
- Despite the gains made by girls and young women in many areas of education, teenage girls across the OECD report lower levels of life satisfaction than teenage boys.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Though the gender gap has narrowed, gender-related education disparities are still there

Over the past century, countries around the world have made significant progress in narrowing, and even closing, long-standing gender gaps in educational attainment. Since the early 1900s, the number of years that working-age adults spend in education increased from an average of 6 to 12 years among men and from 5 to 13 years among women. Indeed, more young women than ever before are now participating in formal and higher education in the OECD and, over the past decade, gender gaps in educational attainment have reversed. In 2000, adult men had higher tertiary-level attainment rates than adult women, but by 2012 34% of women across OECD countries had attained a tertiary education, compared with 30% of men.

The increase in female participation in education was also dramatic in non-OECD countries. Among the over 100 non-OECD countries that are part of the Barro and Lee dataset (2013), the average number of years that working-age adults spend in education countries rose from around two to about eight among men and from one to eight years for women. By 2014, gender parity in access to primary, lower secondary and upper-secondary school had been achieved, on average, across the globe (UNESCO, 2016).

Despite such impressive gains, global averages mask persistent disparities in many regions and countries. In North Africa, for example, just 95 girls are enrolled in primary school for every 100 boys and, in sub-Saharan Africa, the ratio is 93/100. As for secondary schools, gender disparities are more widespread. In 2014, 54% of countries globally had not achieved gender parity in lower-secondary education, while in upper-secondary school the figure was 77% (UNESCO, 2016).

Discriminatory gender norms rob girls of educational opportunity

In low- and middle-income countries, policies to lower the direct cost of schooling for girls should be combined with policies to reduce the opportunity cost of their caring and housework responsibilities. They include childcare programmes for siblings and flexible school times in the harvesting season. Tackling discriminatory norms, attitudes and practices through the media, religious institutions and community leaders can also help to dismantle some of the barriers to girls' education (Box 6.1).

Incentives to delay marriage and reduce adolescent pregnancy – including cash-transfer programmes, and sexual and reproductive health education – are also an effective way of keeping adolescent girls at school. Although Mexico has effectively achieved gender parity in upper-secondary school completion rates with a gender gap of less than 1 percentage point, it has very school high drop-out rates – more than 40% of male and female 15-to-19 year-olds were not enrolled in education in 2013 – and the lowest upper-secondary graduation rate in the OECD. Of the 15-to-29 year-old female drop-outs, 8% listed pregnancy or having a child as the reason for leaving school early, and 11% cited getting married or entering a union. Accordingly, Mexico's Secretariat of Education (SEP) has made a serious financial commitment to keeping at-risk students – such as teenage mothers – in school by offering scholarships with a gender component. From 2013 to 2015, SEP offered over 700 000 scholarships aimed at keeping girls in school (OECD, 2017a).

Box 6.1. Obstacles to girls participating in education in developing countries

In 2014, only 39% of girls in sub-Saharan Africa completed lower secondary school, even though 76% of them were enrolled in primary school (World Bank, 2016). In addition to the direct costs of schooling, poverty (Filmer, 2000), opportunity costs (World Bank, 2001) and restricted access to quality education (Arceo-Gomez and Campos-Vasquez, 2014) prevent girls from going on to secondary education. There are a host of other factors, too. They include the lack of separate toilets for girls and boys (Birdthistle et al., 2011), a dearth of female teachers, long distances to school and violence against young women.

The shortage of female teachers in Yemen, for instance, may be why 28% of girls drop out of school before completing their secondary education (Ashuraey et al., 1995). In Afghanistan, for every mile the journey to school is reduced, girls' enrolment increases by 19 percentage points, compared to 13 among boys (Burde and Linden, 2012). Data from 40 low- and middle-income countries show that up to 10% of adolescent girls reported incidents of forced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts at school in the previous year (UNICEF, 2014). In South Africa, 8% of girls in secondary school reported that they had been sexually assaulted or raped at school in the previous year (Burton and Leoschut, 2013).

Discriminatory social practices and institutions, such as early marriage and gender roles that assign caring responsibilities to girls might also cut short their education in adolescence (Ferrant and Nowacka, 2015). Formal and informal laws, social norms and practices reinforce the social expectation that women and girls should handle household chores (Ferrant et al., 2014), so burdening them with more tasks that cut into the time they might otherwise spend in education. Girls who devote 28 hours or more per week to domestic and care work spend 25% less time at school than those for whom it takes up 10 hours per week (ILO, 2009). And since girls are twice as likely as boys to spend long hours doing housework, education gender gaps widen even further.

Similarly, girls' decisions to drop out of school often come just before or after early marriage or in the wake of pregnancy, which only adds to their caring responsibilities. In Bolivia, for example, 19% of 15-to-24 year-old females who had not completed secondary education cited marriage as the main reason and 14% pregnancy (Demographic and Health Surveys, Bolivia, 2008).

In Ethiopia, the Berhane Hewan Programme, launched in 2004, sought to delay the age at which girls marry and support those who had married as children through a combination of community awareness-raising and financial backing for remaining in school. The programme provided school supplies, put in place peer mentoring groups, and made asset transfers to families who did not marry their daughters. An evaluation showed positive results as girls in the project site were three times more likely to be in school and none married during the project's pilot phase (Erulkar and Muthengi, 2009). The project has been replicated by the Population Council and Partners for the period 2010-16 in Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and Tanzania (Population Council, 2014).

Another measure which shows promise in keeping girls in school is the ongoing 2015 Plan International initiative Adolescent Girls Initiative-Kenya (AGI-K) for girls who live in the slums of Nairobi. AGI-K combines conditional cash transfer schemes and a mentorship programme where girls learn about sexual and reproductive health. It covers 176 primary schools and has enrolled over 2 000 girls in its mentorship programme; it uses an automated tracking system to monitor school attendance and at-home visits in the event of long absences (Austrian et al, 2015).

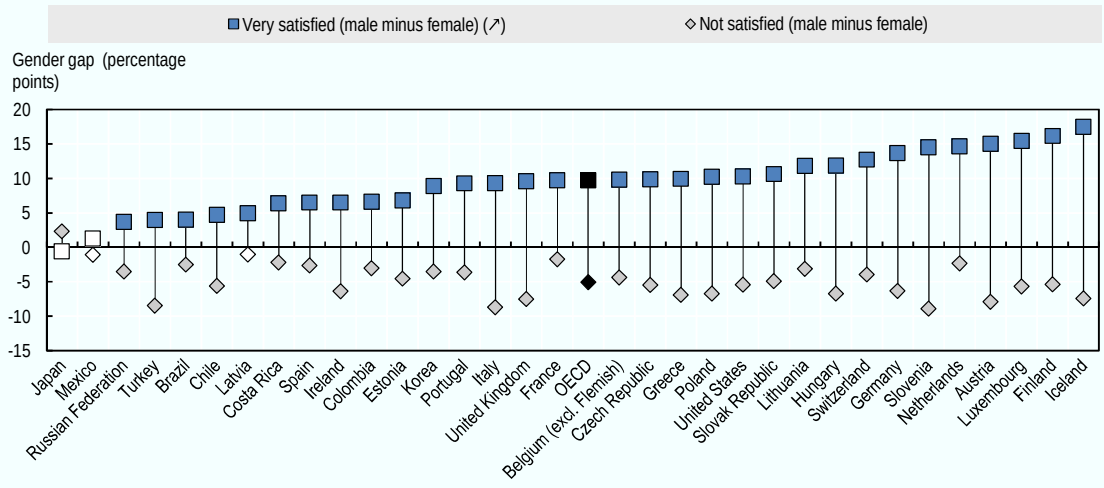
Box 6.2. Despite their educational gains, teenage girls are often less satisfied with life than boys

Although best known for its academic proficiency tests, the 2015 OECD PISA assessment also contained a study of student life satisfaction and well-being (OECD, 2017b). Students were asked about how motivated they felt to perform well in school, their relationships with peers and teachers, their home life and how they spend their time outside of school. The results, mostly based on self-reports, complemented the standard PISA proficiency data by providing insight into teenage students' hopes, aspirations and thoughts about their own lives.

One of the most striking findings to emerge from the study was that, despite gains made by girls and young women in many areas of education, teenage girls do not seem happier or more satisfied with life than teenage boys. In fact, across almost the whole OECD, girls report significantly lower life satisfaction than boys. On average, 15-year-old girls were around 10 percentage points less likely than their male peers to say they were "very satisfied" with their lives, and about 5 points more likely to report low levels of life satisfaction, too (Figure 6.1). The scale of the well-being gender gap varied from country to country, although differences were statistically insignificant only in Mexico and, in part, in Japan and Latvia.

Figure 6.1. Teenage girls report significant lower life satisfaction than teenage boys

Gender gap (male minus female) in the proportion of 15-year-old students reporting they are "very satisfied" and "not satisfied"
with their lives, 2015



Note: Shaded markers represent statistically significant gender differences and white markers non-statistically significant. Life satisfaction is based on students' self-reports. Students were asked to rate their life on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 denotes the worst possible life and 10 the best possible. A rating of 9 or 10 is classified as "very satisfied", while a rating of between 0 and 4 is classified as "not satisfied".

Source: *OECD PISA 2015 Database*, http://www.oecd.org/pisa/data.

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The reasons behind teenage girls' lower life satisfaction are not fully understood and many determinants probably come into play. One interesting result, though, is that, among *adults*, gender seems to have little effect on self-reported well-being. Indeed, there seems to be something specific to adolescence that produces the gender gap in self-reported life satisfaction. One possibility is that the gap reflects girls' harsh self-criticism as they go through adolescence. The 2015 PISA assessment did not collect information on students' body image, but existing research suggests that exposure to mass media depictions of the "thin-ideal body type" (Grabe et al., 2008) and photo sharing in social media exert a significant negative impact on adolescent girls' self-perceptions and satisfaction.

Narrowing gaps in mathematics scores and numeracy

Figures from OECD PISA 2015 show that, although girls and women have made impressive headway in educational attainment around the world, gender gaps persist in mathematics and numeracy. Across the OECD in 2015, boys outperformed girls in mathematics by an average of eight points – equivalent to around one-fifth of a year of schooling. The gap was wider among high achievers, with the highest-scoring 10% of boys outperforming the top 10% of girls by 16 points. At the mean, the pro-boy advantage was statistically significant in 28 out of the 70 countries with available data, and was greatest in Austria, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Germany, Ireland, Italy and Spain, where boys' average score exceeded girls' by more than 15 points. The gender gap among the highest-performing students (those in the 90th percentile of the performance distribution) is significant in most countries and economies and exceeds 15 points in 30. In no PISA-participating country or economy do more girls than boys perform at Level 5 or above in mathematics.

In the vast majority of countries, the mathematics gender gap failed to change significantly between 2012 and 2015, data from OECD PISA 2012 and 2015 show. Although it actually shrank by an average three points across OECD countries over the period, it was thanks mainly to the change in one country, Korea, where boys' mathematics scores dropped more steeply than girls'. As a result, while Korea had one of the widest pro-boy gender gaps in 2012, girls outperformed boys in 2015, although the difference was not statistically significant.

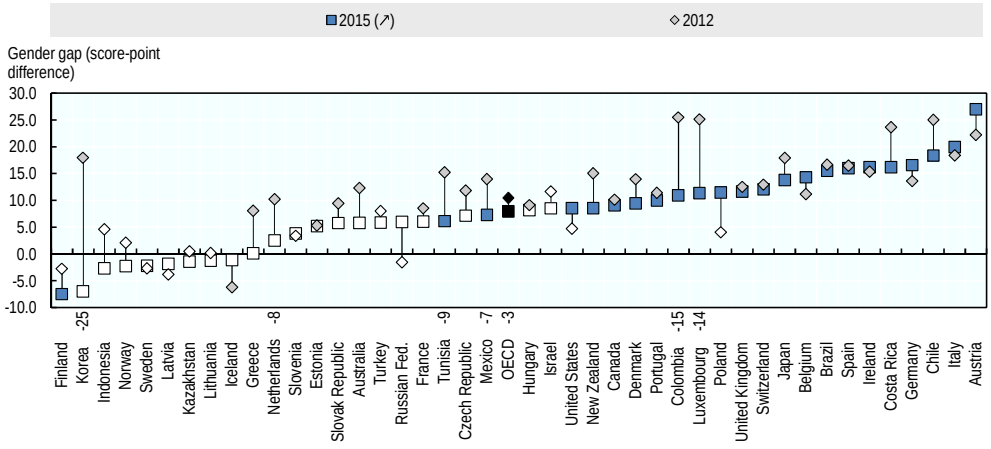
Tunisia also saw a significant deterioration in mathematics performance among both boys and girls between 2012 and 2015, although boys' scores fell more dramatically (Figure 6.2): the gender gap in favour of boys consequently narrowed by nine points. Colombia had the widest pro-boy mathematics gender gap of all PISA-participating countries/economies in 2012, but was able to close it significantly – even among the country's highest-achieving students. While boys' performance remained stable between 2012 and 2015, girls did 20 points better on average, with the highest-achieving improving by 28 points. In Luxembourg, Mexico and the Netherlands, the pro-male gender gap shrank because boys performed more weakly, while girls stayed steady.

Despite the prevalence of statistically significant gender differences, the actual size of the gender gap in mathematics proficiency at the age of 15 is often not all that large – in other words, 15-year-old boys frequently perform better at mathematics than 15-year-old girls, but not very much better. However, comparisons between the performance of 15-year-old students in OECD PISA in 2003 and the performance of roughly the same birth-cohort at around age 24 in the 2012 OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) suggest that gender gaps in mathematics sometimes widen as teenagers move into adulthood (Figure 6.3). Among OECD countries with available data, the average standardised gender gap is 0.12 points at the age of 15, and 0.18 points at around age 24 – still only small. However, in Canada, Austria and Norway the standardised gender gap among those aged around 24 is greater than 0.3 points, and in Finland and the United States it is larger than 0.5 points (Figure 6.3). These are gaps that are considerably larger than those for the same birth-cohorts earlier at age 15.

The gender gap among the top mathematics performers remained stable between the ages of 15 and 23-25 – on average, the standardised gap between the highest-achieving 10th of males and females was 0.24 at 15 years old and 0.23 at 23-25. By contrast, the gap widened, but not by much, among the bottom performers (Borgonovi et al., 2017).

Figure 6.2. Gender differences in mathematics performance changed little between 2012 and 2015

Gender gap (male minus female difference in score points) in mean PISA scores in mathematics, 2012 and 2015



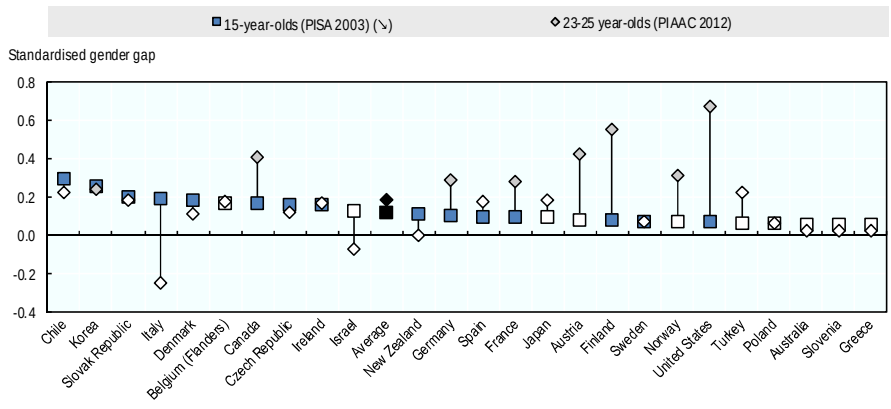
Note: Shaded markers represent statistically significant gender differences, and white markers non-statistically significant gender differences. Statistically significant changes between PISA 2012 and PISA 2015 are shown next to the country name.

Source: *OECD PISA 2015 Database*, http://www.oecd.org/pisa/data/.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574285

Figure 6.3. Gender differences in mathematics performance sometimes grow as teenagers become young adults

Standardised gender gaps (male minus female) in numeracy proficiency among 15-year-olds (PISA 2003)[a] and 23-25 year-olds (PIAAC 2012)



Note: The standardised gender gap refers to the score-point difference between the male and female scores, divided by the pooled standard deviation. Shaded markers represent statistically significant gender differences at the 5% level, and white markers non-statistically significant gender differences at the 5% level. Data are based on two different samples of young men and young women drawn from roughly the same birth-cohort at different points in time – from 15-year-olds in 2003, and from 23-25 year-olds in 2012. This design is known as a "pseudo-cohort" analysis – the data show the evolution of the gender gap when following a "pseudo-cohort" over time, as opposed to following exactly the same individuals, as would be the case with full panel data. For more details, see Borgonovi et al. (2017).

a) For Chile, Greece, Israel, New Zealand, Slovenia and Turkey, data for 15-year-olds are based on PISA 2006 rather than PISA 2003, and data for 23-25 year-olds are based on PIAAC round 2 (2015) rather than PIAAC round 1 (2012).

Source: Borgonovi, F. et al. (2017), "Youth in Transition: How Do Some of the Cohorts Participating in PISA Fare in PIAAC?", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 154, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/51479ec2-en.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574304

What explains mathematics gender gaps? One reason might be that girls and young women are more likely than boys and young men to hold negative perceptions of their abilities in mathematics and to report stress and anxiety in problems and situations that involve mathematics (OECD, 2015a). In 2012, OECD PISA asked students to report on whether they felt confident doing a range of pure and applied mathematics tasks; in 2015, OECD PISA asked students to report their feelings of self-confidence with respect to science. In general, girls reported less self-confidence than boys in both subjects, although the confidence gender gap was much wider in mathematics than in science problems. Girls' faith in their science abilities also seems to vary with the type of task they are asked to perform. Chapter 7 in this report discusses evidence on women's under-representation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects and careers, and emphasises the importance of programmes aimed at challenging gender-stereotypical attitudes and expectations and at building girl's self-confidence in STEM fields.

Key policy messages

- In countries where girls' and young women's access to education is limited, it is important to reduce the direct cost of schooling, make educational and transport facilities safe, and reduce the opportunity cost of the caring and housework responsibilities that girls are assigned. Governments must also tackle discriminatory norms, attitudes and practices through, for example, gender-awareness training, media programmes, and the endorsement of girls' education by community leaders. Incentives to delay early marriage and curb teenage pregnancies are also critical to keeping adolescent girls in school.
- In most OECD countries, the challenge of gender equality in education has moved from attainment to opportunity – boys and girls must have the same opportunity to high-quality education in all subjects, including education, mathematics and science. Policy should also ensure that women have the same chances as men to develop the skills they have acquired in school, the workplace and everyday life.
- Educators should encourage boys and girls to work hard from their youngest years to realise their potential, learn from their mistakes and solve problems on their own – all of which will help build student's self-confidence.

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Chapter 7

The under-representation of women in STEM fields

Key findings

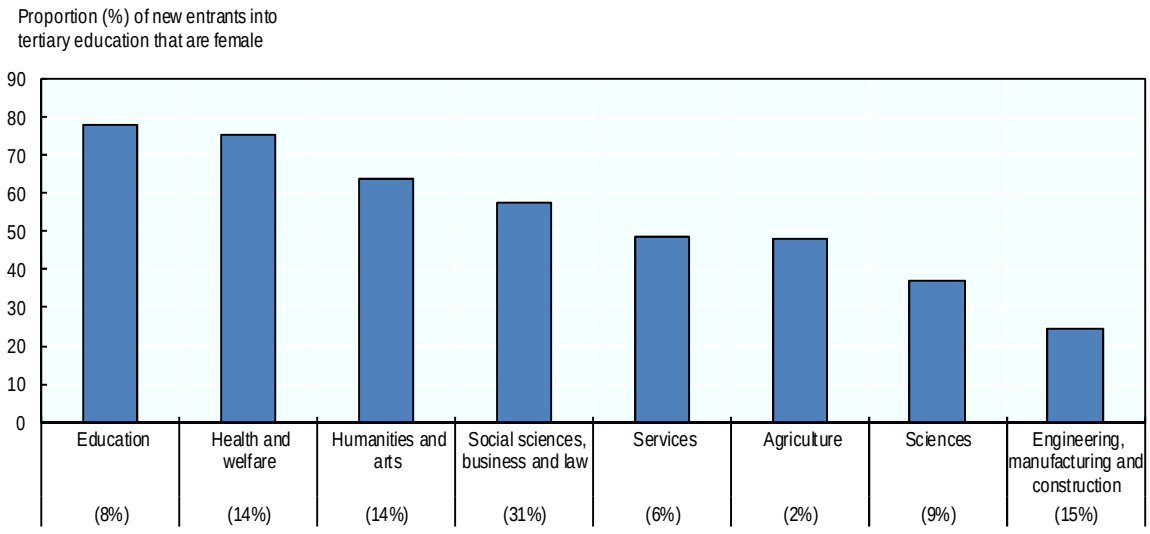
- In higher education, young women are under-represented in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Women account for less than 20% of entrants into tertiary-level computer science programmes in OECD countries and only around 18% of engineering entrants.
- The career paths of boys and girls already start to diverge by the age of 15. OECD-wide, 15-year-old boys are, on average, more than twice as likely as girls to expect to work as engineers, scientists or architects. And while less than 0.5% of girls wish to be ICT professionals, almost 5% of boys do.
- Policy makers across the OECD are aware of the importance of gender stereotyping at school and the effect it may have on education and career choices in the future. Since the OECD Council adopted the OECD Gender Recommendation, many countries have taken new measures or reinforced existing ones to increase the participation of under-represented groups – who include women and girls – in STEM studies and occupations.

Girls are under-represented in STEM subjects and careers

Graduates in STEM subjects are in high demand in the labour market and jobs are among the most highly paid. Therefore the under-representation of women in such fields is significant. Indeed, the OECD Survey of Adult Skills reveals that, in most countries, wages are strongly associated with workers' proficiency in numeracy. Over the past century, OECD countries have made significant progress in narrowing or closing long-standing gender gaps in educational attainment. However, in higher education and afterwards, young women are still under-represented in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). In 2014, for example, women accounted for about 37% of new entrants into tertiary-level science programmes, on average across the OECD, and only about 24% of entrants into engineering, manufacturing and construction programmes (Figure 7.1). The under-representation of women in STEM subjects is particularly striking when it comes to computer science, where they make up less than 20% of new entrants, on average across OECD countries (*OECD Online Education Database*). And while 46% of those entering tertiary-level manufacturing and processing programmes are women, women still make up only 18% of all new entrants on to engineering programmes (*OECD Online Education Database*).

Figure 7.1. Women are under-represented among new entrants in STEM fields in higher education

Proportion (%) of new students entering tertiary education who are female, by field of education, OECD average, 2014



Note: The figures in parentheses under the x-axis labels indicate the share (%) of all new entrants in each field of education.

Source: OECD (2016), *Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/edu/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm.

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Interestingly, women tend to have poorer numeracy skills than men even when they work in STEM occupations. Given that barriers to entry in STEM professions tend to be higher for women than for men, due to social norms and stereotypes, it would be reasonable to assume that only very capable women would enter STEM occupations and that, through positive self-selection, they would be more proficient than men among those working in STEM occupations.

Choices made at the age of 15 can have long-term consequences

In their teens, students in many countries (and their families) make important decisions about the study paths they will follow towards their future – whether or not to continue in formal academic or vocational education, undertake a tertiary degree course, or enter the labour market. Disparities between the interests and preferences of 15-year-old boys and girls, in their academic strengths, and in their participation in after-school courses or training activities may therefore have a significant impact on gender gaps later on.

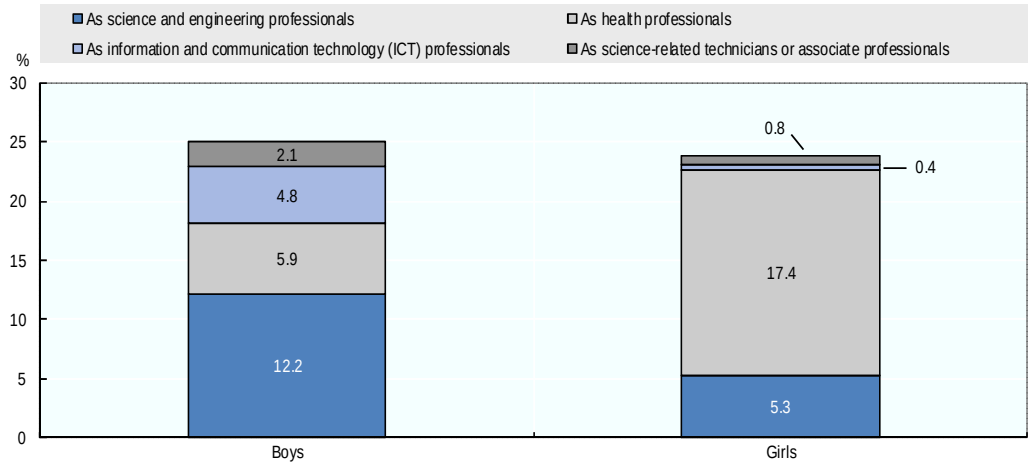
The dearth of women in fields of study such as computing and engineering is rooted in boys' and girls' gender-related career expectations (OECD, 2016b). Although, on average, the share of pupils of both sexes who wish to be working in a science-related field is the same, at nearly 25%, OECD-wide, there are significant differences from country to another. In Hungary, for example, boys are almost twice as likely (at 24%) as girls (at 13%) to say they intend to pursue a career in science, while the opposite is true in Indonesia – 22% of girls compared to 9% of boys.

In Australia, Canada, Germany, Hungary, Spain and Sweden, not only do fewer girls than boys perform at the highest levels of proficiency in science, but even when they do, a smaller proportion wishes to work in a science-related occupation. In most other countries, though, shares are similar, while in Denmark and Poland, top-performing girls are significantly more likely than their male peers to set their sights on a science career.

However, even when the shares of boys and girls who expect a science-related career are balanced, boys and girls tend to think of working in different fields of science. Twice as many boys, on average, expect to work as engineers, scientists or architects. When it comes to a career in ICT, for example, the gap widens to 4.8% of boys and only 0.4% of girls (Figure 7.2). Particularly large differences between boys' and girls' expectations for their future are observed in some countries. In Finland, for example, boys (at 6.2%) are more than four times as likely as girls (at 1.4%) to expect a career as an engineer, scientist or architect. These findings indicate that the career paths of boys and girls are already starting to diverge before the age of 15, and well before important career choices are actually made. One contributory factor is entrenched stereotypes about which careers are suitable for men and which ones for women. They are passed on to children by their families, teachers and society at large. Indeed, PISA reveals, that parents are more likely to expect their teenage sons than their daughters to work in STEM occupations – even when they perform just as well as their male classmates in mathematics, science and reading (OECD, 2015).

Figure 7.2. In science careers, girls rather than boys expect to become health professionals

Proportion (%) of 15-year-olds who expect to work in a science-related occupation by the age of 30, by type of science professional, OECD average, 2015



Note: PISA 2015 asked students what occupation they expected to be working in by the time they were 30 years old. Students could enter any job title or description. The occupations that they gave in their answers were later classified in the 2008 International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO 08). These coded answers were used to create an indicator of science-related career expectations, defined as those whose realisation requires the study of science beyond compulsory education, typically in formal tertiary education. Within this large group of science-related occupations, the following major groups were distinguished: science and engineering professionals; health professionals; science technicians and associate professionals; and information and communication technology (ICT) professionals.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on *OECD PISA 2015 Database*, http://www.oecd.org/pisa/data/.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574342

Perhaps surprisingly, gender differences in aptitudes and attitudes towards science are relatively slight

OECD PISA 2015 was the first PISA assessment to measure students' thoughts about the validity and limitations of scientific experiment and the tentative and evolving nature of scientific knowledge. It did so through their responses to the statements:

- "A good way to know if something is true is to do an experiment."
- "Ideas in science sometimes change."
- "Good answers are based on evidence from many different experiments."
- "It is good to try experiments more than once to make sure of your findings."
- "Sometimes scientists change their minds about what is true in science."
- "The ideas in science books sometimes change."

The responses expressed broad support for scientific enquiry and clear awareness of the tentative, evolving nature of scientific knowledge. Gender disparities in students' epistemic beliefs were generally narrow. Where there any, the most frequent were that more girls than boys voiced support for empirical approaches to enquiry as a source of knowledge and for the view that scientific ideas were tentative and subject to change (OECD, 2016b).

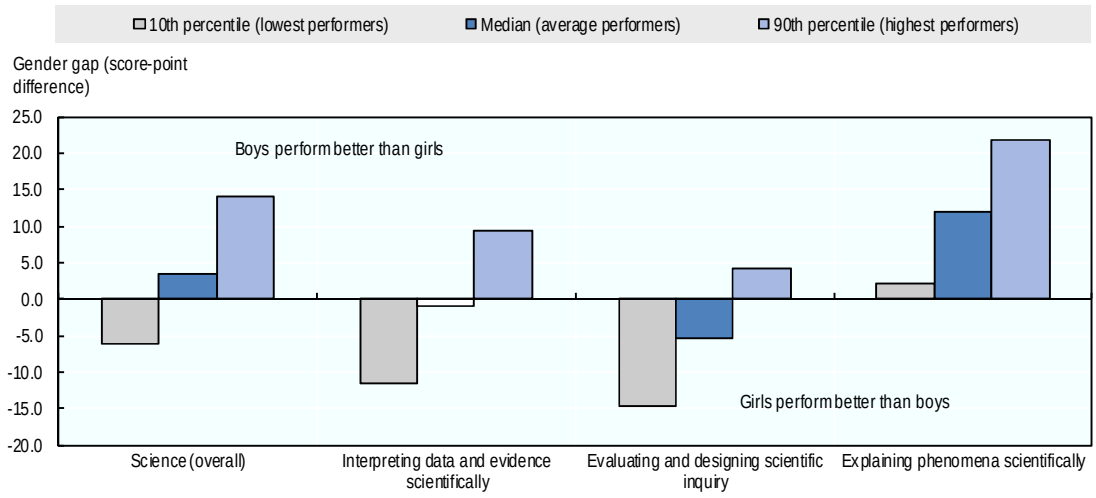
Although OECD PISA data suggest that boys and girls are generally on a par when it comes to performance in science, gender differences do emerge in boys' favour among the highest-achieving students in test questions which:

- require students to explain phenomena scientifically,
- call for science to explain natural and technological phenomena,
- refer to physical systems that require, for example, knowledge of the structure and properties of matter – e.g. chemical properties, magnetic fields, interactions between energy and matter.

Girls are generally less likely to be among the lowest-achieving students, appear to be more proficient in evaluating and designing scientific enquiry, and to be more interested in knowing how scientists enquire and develop scientific theories (Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3. Gender differences in science scores are more pronounced among the highest-achieving students

Gender gap (male score minus female score) in PISA scores in science at the 10th percentile (lowest performers), median (average performers) and 90th percentile (highest performers), by area of scientific proficiency, OECD average, 2015



Note: Shaded bars represent statistically significant gender differences, and white bars non-statistically significant gender differences.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on *OECD PISA 2015 Database*, http://www.oecd.org/pisa/data/.

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Policies to promote gender equality in educational choices

Policy makers across the OECD are aware of gender stereotyping at school and the effect that it may have on future education and career choices. Perhaps nowhere more so than in Sweden, where the revised 2010 pre-school and school curricula state:

> *"The preschool should counteract traditional gender patterns and gender roles. Girls and boys in the preschool should have the same opportunities to develop and explore their abilities and interests without having limitations imposed by stereotyped gender roles."*

Since the OECD Council adopted the Recommendation on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship (OECD, 2013), several countries have taken action to combat gender stereotyping at school. In Chile, for example, the 2014-2018 Programme for Government, announced by President Michelle Bachelet for her second term in office, contains important provisions on non-discrimination and promoting equity.

In 2013, the Hungarian Government revised textbooks for school grades 1 to 8, removing stereotypes and developing awareness of gender equality. New content included chapters in biology textbooks that describe the work of female scientists to illustrate women's contribution to the progress of science. The sections entitled "Careers in Physics", for example, cite women who have been successful in their fields of work. History manuals, too, discuss gender equality and the historical background to the changes in women's traditional roles.

Australia, the Flemish community in Belgium, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, have introduced new measures or reinforced existing ones – aimed at parents, teachers and students – that address the issue of the under-representation of girls and other groups in STEM fields (Box 7.1).

Box 7.1. Action by OECD countries to address gender issues in STEM subjects and careers

The Australian Government's initiative, "Restoring the focus on STEM in schools", seeks to increase the uptake of science subjects in schools. One of the four key elements in the initiative is the expansion of Summer Schools for STEM students to include a greater number of girls and disadvantaged students. Under the National Innovation and Science Agenda (NISA), the Australian Government is initially investing AUD 13 million over 2016-17 to 2019-20 to encourage more girls and women to study STEM and pursue STEM-based and entrepreneurial careers.

In England, the government has published "Your Daughter's Future", an online guide for parents to help them support their daughters as they make the important decisions of which school subjects to pursue towards which careers. "Opening Doors" is a project from the Institute of Physics that seeks to help schools and teachers counter gender stereotyping in STEM subjects.

The National Pact for Women in MINT Careers, widely known as "Go Mint", was launched in 2008 at the instigation of the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research to increase young women's interest in scientific and technical degree courses – MINT is the German-language acronym for STEM. The Go Mint initiative brings together politics, business, science and the media to improve the image of STEM-related professions in society.

Japan seeks to promote women's careers in STEM (RIKO in Japanese). Initiatives include the RIKO Challenge which seeks to encourage more girls to consider taking up a career in a STEM field. To that industry, academia and the government come together and take action such as promoting leading female researchers and engineers as role models, holding events to give girls STEM job experience, taking them on tours of firms and universities.

In Central America, the Costa Rican Technological Institute (ITCR) set up a specialised training centre to build women's capacity in STEM and entrepreneurship. The OECD-Mexico initiative, NiñaSTEM PUEDEN, launched in early 2017, invites Mexican women who have prominent careers in science and mathematics to act as mentors, visiting schools and encouraging girls to choose STEM subjects and be ambitious.

In the United States, the Department of Education's programme, Race to the Top, launched in 2009, prioritises improving STEM overall and in under-represented groups – including women and girls – in the grants it awards to states. The department's Investing in Innovation programme also has a STEM focus. It seeks to increase the number of STEM teachers from groups traditionally under-represented in STEM – e.g. minorities, individuals with disabilities, women. To that it provides them with high-quality preparation, training and professional development. The National Science Foundation's Increasing the Participation and Advancement of Women in Academic Science and Engineering Careers, "ADVANCE", is an integral part of the NSF's multifaceted strategy to broaden women's participation in the STEM workforce. The NSF awards grants to support ADVANCE projects at institutions and organisations designed to increase the participation and advancement of women in STEM academic careers.

Building girls' confidence

While advancing STEM education appears to be a common objective in many countries, it remains unclear what approach is best suited to promoting STEM skills to further economic growth. Generally, proposals for reform of STEM education maintain that, because science, technology, engineering and science are so important, every student should be given the best-quality education in those subjects (Atkinson and Mayo, 2010). Greater exposure to them, it is assumed, will prompt more young people to choose STEM careers. However, unless serious efforts are made to help students, particularly girls, overcome their anxiety about mathematics and their lack of confidence in their own science and mathematics abilities, then even the best STEM teaching will do nothing to narrow the gender gap in STEM studies and careers. At the same time, an "all STEM for some" approach – whereby only the students most interested in and capable of doing well in STEM get STEM-educated – runs the risk of reinforcing current gender inequalities and not tapping into the great potential among high-achieving girls.

Teachers and parents can help build girls' confidence in their abilities in mathematics and science by evaluating their actual abilities – noting the tasks they can accomplish relatively easily and those with which they struggle. They can offer positive feedback on work well done and offer girls opportunities to "think like scientists" in low-stakes situations, where making mistakes does not affect marks (OECD, 2015).

Training teachers to recognise and address any biases they may hold about boys and girls will help them to teach more effectively so that students make the most of their potential. Several countries have revised their textbooks to remove stereotypes and bias so that children of both sexes are free to explore their interests and perceive the labour market as open to their contribution. However, schools in many education systems appear ill-equipped to ease pupils smoothly into further education and training or the labour market. Nor do they seem well positioned to ensure that girls consider careers in all fields, including computing, mathematics, physics, engineering, manufacturing and construction. Education systems should improve their career guidance and orientation advice services and give girls role models that make them feel comfortable with making choices that do not fit traditional stereotypes. Furthermore, education systems should not only work to support girls, but also to critically address masculine cultures and norms among boys and in male dominated STEM educations that work to discriminate against women and girls.

Key policy messages

- More young people could choose STEM careers if there was greater focus on helping students, particularly girls, to overcome their anxiety towards mathematics and their lack of confidence in their own STEM abilities
- Teachers and parents can build girls' confidence in their abilities in mathematics and science by evaluating their actual abilities and giving them positive feedback on the work they do well and helping in areas where they are weaker without giving them low marks.
- Training teachers to recognise and address any bias they may harbour about boys and girls will help them to become teach more effectively so that students are able to make the most of their potential.

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Chapter 8

Boys fall behind at school, but catch up shortly thereafter

Key findings

- In 2014 across the OECD, 57% of bachelor's and master's degrees were obtained by women; though only 47% of doctoral graduates were women.
- Among adults whose parents reached upper-secondary or post-secondary (but non-tertiary) education, women are more educationally upwardly mobile OECD-wide; they are, on average, 10 percentage points more likely to go on to study at the tertiary level than men.
- In 22 of the 35 OECD countries, boys are more likely than girls to be all-round low achievers at the age of 15, with any gender differences in the remaining countries small and not statistically significant. By the age of 27, however, young men outperform young women in numeracy and perform on a par with them in literacy. Further research is needed to discern whether this evolution reflects genuine changes in the relative aptitudes of men and women, differences in test engagement across age groups, or differences in survey design between tests.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Women have generally higher upper-secondary and higher education qualifications

Modern economies reward the highly-educated with higher wages, while adults with no or poor qualifications are at greater risk of being unemployed. OECD-wide, the average unemployment rate among adults who did not reach upper-secondary level is 12.4%, but just 4.9% among those with higher education. And full-time workers with upper-secondary education earn 19% more, on average, than those who did not go that far (OECD, 2016a).

Educational attainment is also positively associated with well-being, good health, social integration and civic participation. One of the challenges facing education systems in many OECD countries is school drop-out and the large numbers of pupils who leave school with no upper-secondary qualification. They generally experience great difficulty entering – and remaining in – the labour market.

Women are more likely than men to complete upper-secondary school – the final stage of secondary education in most OECD countries. In 2014, 88% of women OECD-wide were expected to graduate from upper-secondary level education, compared with 83% of men. In all countries with available data – except for China, Ireland and Korea – female pupils make up the bulk of upper-secondary graduates from standard academic programmes – 55% on average. In 32 of the 39 countries with available data, men are more likely than women to graduate from vocational programmes (OECD, 2016a).

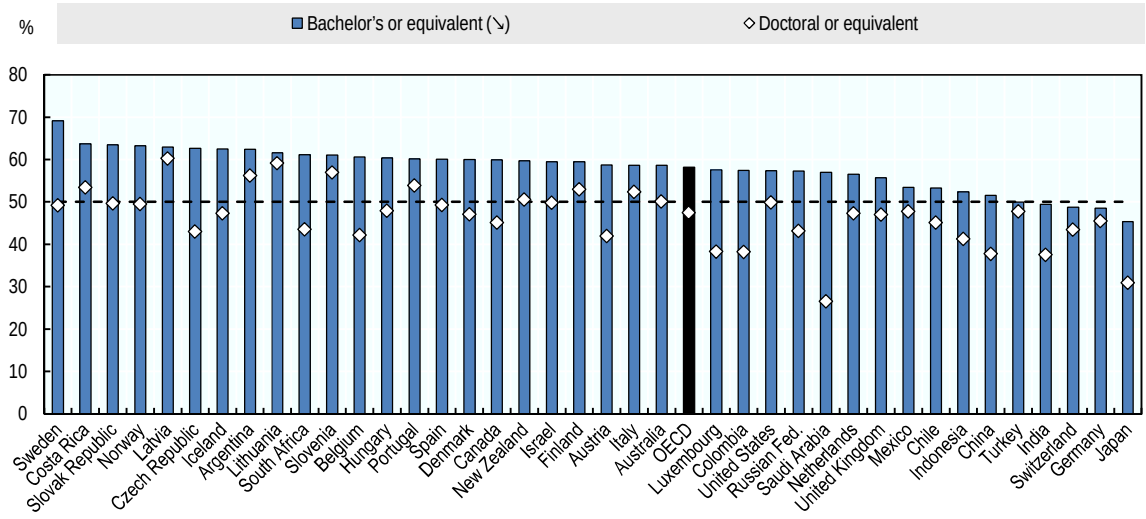
In 2014, more women than men earned tertiary qualifications, except among doctoral graduates (Figure 8.1). They accounted for:

- 56% of short-cycle graduates,
- 58% of graduates with bachelor's degrees, or equivalent;
- 57% of graduates with master's (or equivalent);
- 47% of doctoral graduates.

In only three countries (Germany, Japan and Switzerland) were over half of bachelor's degree graduates men, while in Sweden less than one-third were male.

Figure 8.1. Most students obtaining a bachelor's degree are women, though women are often under-represented among doctoral graduates

Female share of tertiary graduates, by level of tertiary education, 2014 or latest available year[a]



a) Data for Argentina, Canada, Iceland, India and South Africa refer to 2013.

Source: OECD (2016), *Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/edu/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm.

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Men are less likely to earn a tertiary degree, because they are less likely to enrol or complete courses than females. In several countries, they also take longer than their female peers to graduate within the expected time – 35% do so, compared with 46% of women, in the 15 OECD countries with data on bachelor's degree completion times. The average gender gap is thus 11 percentage points though it is as wide as 20 percentage points or more in Estonia and Finland, but 5 or less in Australia, Austria, Israel and Norway.

Both sexes' completion rates are higher in three-year bachelor's degree courses – 74% of females and 63% of males. The gender gap therefore remains stable at 11 percentage points, though in Finland, New Zealand and the United States, it narrows by 4 points or more when completion rates factor in the extra time that it takes men to complete their studies.

Box 8.1. Intergenerational mobility

Women are more likely than men to improve on their parents' level of education. In 26 of 33 countries with available data, women whose parents completed upper-secondary or post-secondary (but non-tertiary) education are an average 10 percentage points more likely than men to go on further and study at the tertiary level. The gender gap in upward educational mobility in favour of women is particularly wide – 19 percentage points or more – in Denmark, Estonia, Finland and Italy. Among adults whose parents had no upper-secondary schooling, women are also more likely than men to go on to the tertiary level – 24% versus 21% in 2014.

Boys and low achievement

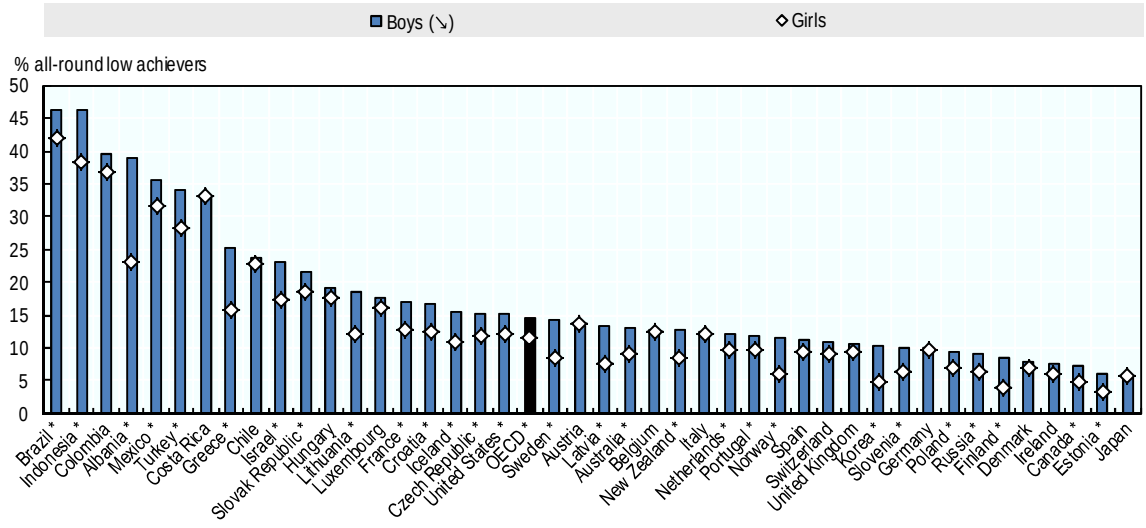
Gender differences in education qualifications are the logical extension of gender differences in educational performance among 15-year-old students. Boys of that age are more likely than girls to be all-round low achievers. In other words, they are more likely to

perform below the baseline level of proficiency in all three subjects tested in PISA assessments: reading, mathematics and science. And they are particularly likely to struggle with reading. In 2015, an average of 14.5% of boys OECD-wide, compared with 11.4% of girls, were all-round low achievers (Figure 8.2).

In 22 of the 35 countries, more boys than girls are all-round low achievers, while in the other 13 there is no significant difference. The gender gap in the percentage of all-round low achievers is wider than 5 percentage points in Greece, Israel, Korea, Latvia, Norway, Sweden and Turkey. In 26 of 35 partner countries and economies with available data, boys are also more likely than girls to be all-round low achievers. Nowhere are higher proportions of girls all-round low achievers.

Figure 8.2. Boys are often more likely than girls to be all-round low achievers

Proportion (%) of students that are all-round low achievers in PISA reading, mathematics and science, by gender, 2015



Note: In countries marked with an asterisk (*), the gender gap in the proportion of all-round low-achievers is statistically significant at the 5% level.

Source: *OECD PISA 2015 Database*, http://www.oecd.org/pisa/data/.

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The sizeable number of boys who fail to make the grade in PISA assessments is a major challenge for education systems (OECD, 2015). Pupils who perform poorly in all subjects are hard to motivate and keep in school because there is very little that teachers, school principals and parents can build on to promote improvement. They may also come to feel disconnected and find it easier to build an identity based on rebellion against school and formal education than to engage and make the effort needed to break the cycle of poor performance and low motivation.

OECD PISA results show that boys' behaviour, both inside and outside school, has a strong impact on their school performance. They are less likely than girls to spend time on their homework or to feel that they belong to their school community. There is also a greater chance that they play videogames, are extreme Internet users, arrive late for school, and have poor relations with their teachers.

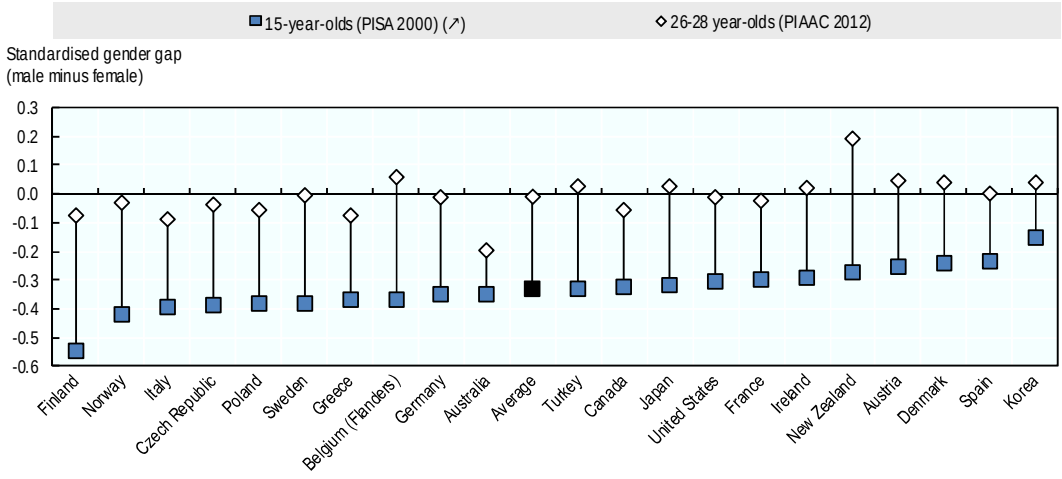
Gender gaps in literacy narrow with age

A comparison between the literacy performance of the 15-year-olds tested in OECD PISA 2000 and the performance of the same (pseudo-) cohort when assessed again at around age 27 in the 2012 OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) suggests that gender gaps narrow considerably as young people transition from compulsory schooling to further education, training and the labour market. Borgonovi et al. (2017) show that, in the PISA 2000 study, the average gap in literacy between 15-year-old boys and girls was 0.33 of one standard deviation, a moderate gap. By the time the students had become young adults, the gap had narrowed considerably or closed altogether (Figure 8.3). On average, the gender gap in literacy skills at the age of 27 was 0.01 of a standard deviation (a negligible level) and no larger than 0.25 (New Zealand) in any of the countries that were part of the analysis.

The shrinking gender gap in literacy between the ages of 15 and 27 was observed across the performance spectrum, but was most pronounced among low-performing young men. In the bottom reading and literacy performance decile among 15-year-olds, it was as wide as 0.46 (in favour of girls), but by the time the cohort had reached the age of 27, the gap had nearly closed altogether to just 0.09. At the top of the performance distribution (90th percentile), the gap had been narrower among 15-year-olds (0.23) and had also practically disappeared – it stood at a tiny 0.02.

Figure 8.3. Gender performance gaps in literacy tests among teenagers often disappear by the mid-20s

Standardised gender gaps in literacy among 15-year-olds (PISA 2000) and 26-28 year-olds (PIAAC 2012)[a]



Note: The standardised gender gap is the score-point difference between the male and the female scores, divided by the pooled standard deviation. All gender gaps among 15-year-olds are statistically significant at the 5% level. No gender gaps among 26-28 year-olds are statistically significant at the 5% level. Data are based on two different samples of young men and young women drawn from roughly the same birth-cohort at different points in time – from 15-year-olds in 2000, and from 26-28 year-olds in 2012. This design is known as a "pseudo-cohort" analysis – the data show the evolution of the gender gap when following a "pseudo-cohort" over time, as opposed to following exactly the same individuals, as would be the case with full panel data. For more details, see Borgonovi et al. (2017).

a) For Greece, New Zealand and Turkey, data for 15-year-olds are based on PISA 2003 rather than PISA 2000, and data for 26-28 year-olds are based on PIAAC round 2 (2015) rather than PIAAC round 1 (2012).

Source: Borgonovi, F. et al. (2017), "Youth in Transition: How Do Some of the Cohorts Participating in PISA Fare in PIAAC?", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 154, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/51479ec2-en.

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Gender differences in literacy proficiency could stem from a combination of cognitive, motivational and behavioural factors (Ruble et al., 2006), as well as differences in test coverage and survey design. Disparities in gender-related motivation between the PISA and PIAAC tests and in the cognitive and behavioural development of young men and women between the ages of 15 and 27 could account for girls' relatively greater proficiency in PISA than in PIAAC. Boys' performance in the PISA assessment appears to have been particularly affected by their lower motivation and ability to remain focused throughout the test session (Borgonovi and Biecek, 2016). Computer-based delivery and, more crucially, the fact that the Survey of Adult Skills was conducted as a one-to-one study in respondents' homes with a trained interviewer, rather than as a group exercise in a school setting, may have elicited greater engagement, motivation and effort.

It is possible that, in their teenage years, boys may need stronger incentives to display their knowledge and skills. Their performance in school settings, particularly when the stakes are low, may depend more on motivation and engagement. What is more, boys in their teens show indifference to school and, in particular, to reading as a way of asserting their social identity and status among peers (Smith and Wilhelm, 2002; 2006) – which might be a reason for demonstrating little motivation to perform well in school tests.

A final factor which may have contributed to the narrowing of the literacy gender gap was how the two sexes' reading and writing practices evolved. At the age of 15 girls were significantly more likely to read for enjoyment than boys. In the countries that took part in OECD PISA 2000 and OECD PIAAC, almost two-thirds of girls read for pleasure, while only just over 50% of boys did. Girls were also more likely to read more complex matter, such as fiction, at the age of 15 than boys. However, gender gaps in reading and writing practices tended to narrow considerably as students matured to the age where they were part of PIAAC's young adult sample. The proportions of young males and females reading and writing out of interest converged to the point where, in some countries, more young men than women are engaged readers (Borgonovi et al., 2017).

Finding ways to engage low-performing boys and girls

Parents and teachers should seek ways to engage low-performing boys and girls with learning. Teenagers in general, and boys in particular, often struggle with discipline and think too little of their futures even though it would be good for their overall welfare (Thaler and Sustein, 2008). Parents and teachers can devise strategies for nudging teenagers towards greater self-control and discipline, or, at least, for lessening their opportunities for the type of poor behaviour that lead many to drop out of education without qualifications.

OECD PISA results suggest that any reading is better than no reading. Efforts to promote reading should, therefore, take into account students' different reading preferences as well as their reading abilities. Parents and teachers can use online reading, comic books, magazines and newspapers to coax low performers into the habit of reading for enjoyment.

A methodical approach that entices disengaged readers with easy, appealing reads, before gradually introducing more complex tasks and texts, could spark boys' interest in reading and ultimately improve their performance. Some education systems have promoted Drop Everything and Read Initiatives (DEAR) in which students are encouraged to read during school hours. A daily DEAR scheme can do more for students than give more time to read. It also gives teachers a structure for monitoring pupils over a period of time, assessing their progress and offering them targeted reading support. It also affords students the chance to read what they want, share what they have read, and receive the support they need for further reading exploration and reflection. So that reading stays interesting for

initially disengaged or poor readers, daily reading sessions should not last for too long (between 20 and 30 minutes) and ideally be followed by students writing an entry in their reading log.

Parents and teachers should also steer teenagers towards responsible use of digital media by developing their ability to control themselves. While gaming and browsing the web can promote some skills and be used as learning aids, they are associated with poor academic results, greater social isolation and less involvement in school when they take up excessive time. One way in which parents can help is by getting their children to draw up weekly timetables for their online activities and see that they keep to them. If they do, then parents should reward them to strengthen their behaviour as responsible consumers of digital content.

Finally, research on low-performing boys highlights the need for gender transformative programmes and measures. Gender gaps in achievement, attendance and behaviour should be understood in connection to cultural ideals about masculinity that ground boys' disengagement from their schooling (Kimmel, 2010).

Key policy messages

- It is crucial to improve low-performing boys' and girls' involvement in school to curb the risk of dropping out, which would compromise their future access to education and training opportunities.
- A structured approach that entices reluctant readers with easy, appealing reads, before gradually introducing more complex tasks and texts, could spark low-performing boys' and girls' interest in reading and ultimately improve their literacy performance. Parents and teachers could use online reading, comic books, magazines and newspapers to help boys develop the habit of reading for enjoyment.
- Videogaming and web browsing can promote some skills and be used as learning aids. But when young people spend excessive amounts of time online, their academic results are affected, they can become socially isolated and show lower engagement in school. Parents and teachers should help boys and girls become responsible users of digital media by developing their ability to regulate their time through, for example, the use of a weekly timetable of online activity.

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Chapter 9

Boys and men are under-represented in health studies and among teachers

Key findings

- In 2015, 22% of girls but only 8% of boys expected to work in the health sector in the future – a gender gap that has widened since 2006 in most OECD countries. In 2015, nearly four times as many women as men studied health and welfare across the OECD.
- On average across the OECD, only 18% of primary school teachers are men, 32% of lower secondary teachers, and 42% of upper secondary teachers. The current expectations of 15-year-olds across the OECD in 2015 give little reason to expect a more gender balanced future – around 8% of girls but only 3% of boys expect to work as teachers.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Men are under-represented in health and welfare

Analysis of gender segregation in educational choices and labour market outcomes often focuses on women's under-representation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professions. Sadly, though, skewed gender ratios are also pertinent in the fields of health and education, where it is men who are in a minority. Indeed, the perceived feminisation of the teaching profession may be a factor in teenage boys' low motivation and lack of involvement in school. Some female teachers may also use methods to which they do not relate, encouraging behaviour that girls are socialised to perform and sanctioning attitudes more commonly associated with boys. In all OECD countries, there is a positive relationship between the share of men who teach and the share of boys who graduate from upper-secondary school (OECD, 2016a). The inference is that the presence of male teachers may give boys a more affirmative learning environment and that they can be positive role models.

The under-representation of men in health care is also of concern because the sector is forecast to grow in the future, in contrast to male-dominated fields like manufacturing and construction, which nevertheless command higher wages. Unless men are willing to enter the female-dominated health care profession, it may soon have to contend with unmet demand for workers.

Health care is, in fact, often associated with welfare (social services), a field often referred to as health and welfare. The share of men who study for a degree in social services varies from country to country. In Brazil, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia, the share is less than 10%, compared to 40% in Indonesia and Japan. OECD-wide, one in four health and welfare students is male, but the statistic masks wide variations between related subfields and specialisations.

Men are less likely than women to work as teachers

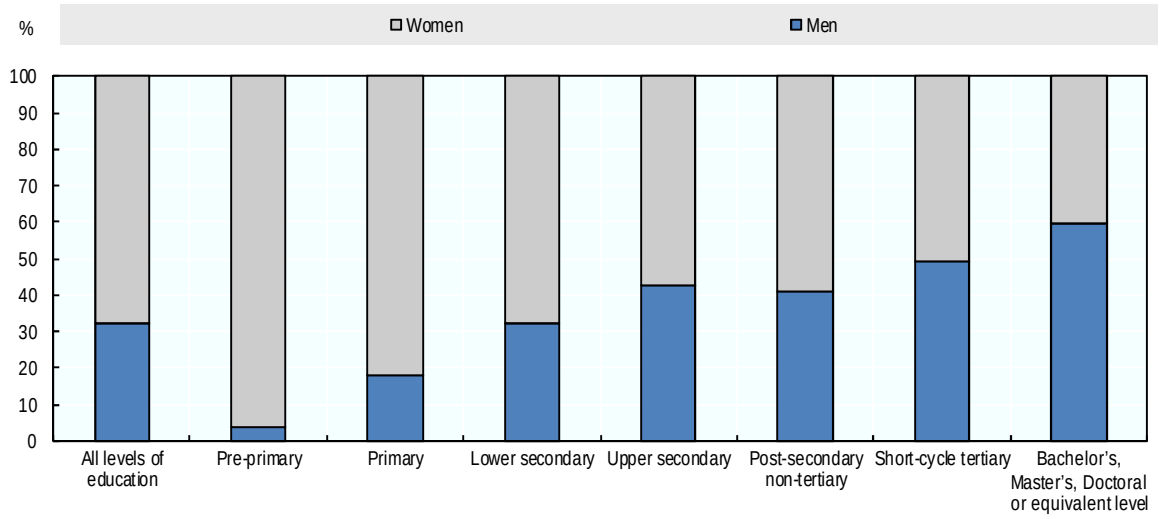
In all OECD and key partner countries with available data, women make up the bulk of primary school teachers. Men account for only 18% on average and, in 11 out of 42 countries with available data, less than 10%. As the level of education rises, so does the proportion of male teachers – 32% and 42% in lower- and upper secondary school, respectively, and 47% of teachers in higher education (Figure 9.1).

Such figures are of concern, as many of the male teachers currently employed in primary and secondary schools will soon reach retirement age. The result will be even larger proportions of female teachers – what some have termed the "feminisation" of the teaching profession. In 25 of the 36 OECD and key partner countries with available data, the share of men among secondary school teachers aged 29 or younger is smaller than among those aged 50 to 59 years old. Only in Italy (51%) and Japan (56%) do men comprise the majority of teachers under 30. In China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Turkey, most teachers aged between 50 and 59 are men and, in China, Indonesia, Korea and Turkey, the share of male teachers aged 29 or younger is at least 37 percentage points lower than those between 50 and 59. Those proportions reflect an enormous shift in the gender profile of the teaching profession across the generations.

Of all degree-level courses, the greatest gender imbalance was in education studies, where fewer than one in four graduates OECD-wide were men in 2014 (OECD, 2016a) and, in eight countries, less than five. In no country was the gender gap pro-men. Only in India, Indonesia, Luxembourg and Turkey was it less than 2/1 in women's favour. The female-to-male ratio in university-level education studies was highest in Estonia at 12/1.

Figure 9.1. Most teachers are women, but the share of male teachers rises with the level of education

Gender distribution (%) of teachers by level of education, public and private institutions, OECD average, 2013



Source: OECD (2016), *Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/edu/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574437

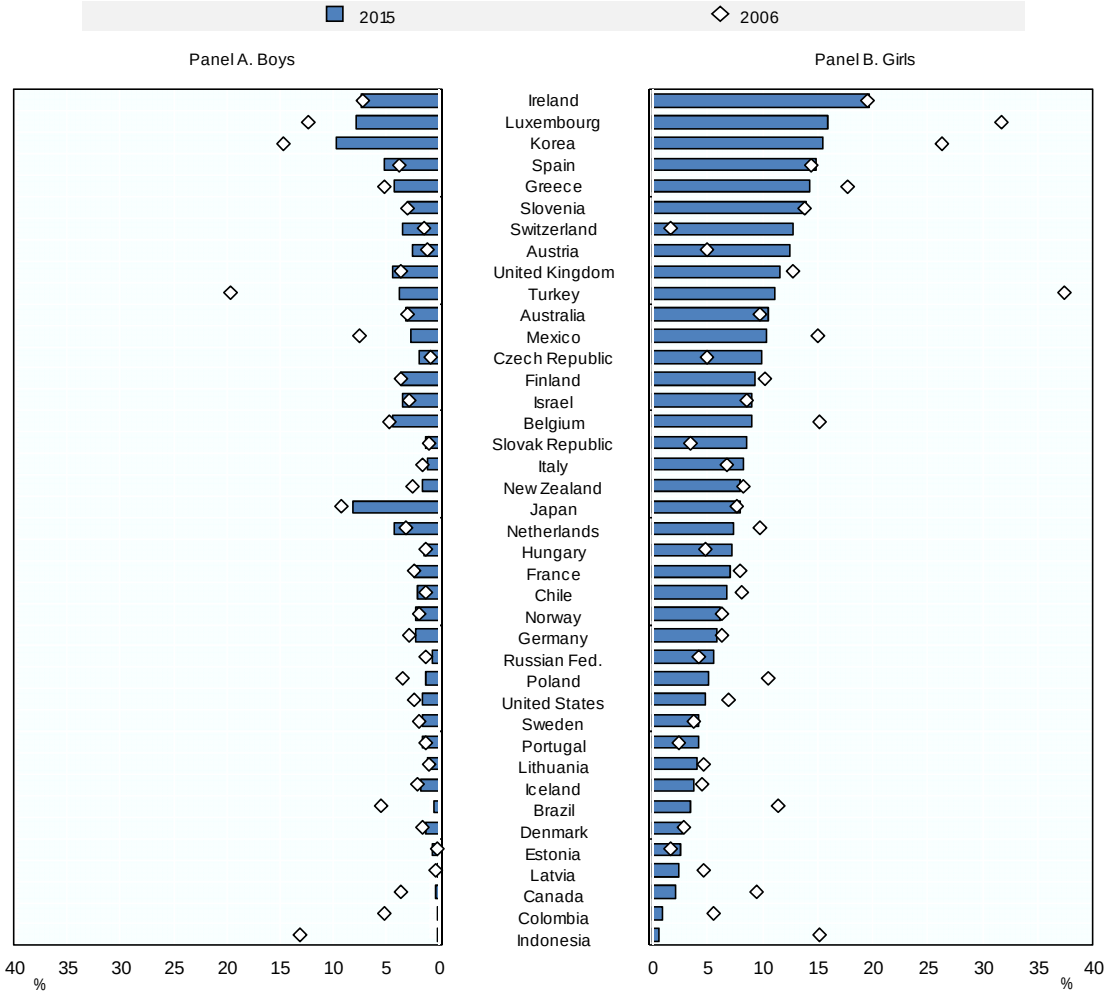
The gender gaps in career plans to work as teachers or health workers emerge in adolescence

As early as the age of 15, boys are already less likely than girls to expect to work in health and welfare or teaching. In 2015, around 8% of girls but only 3% of boys OECD-wide said that they expected to work as teachers. In Ireland, Korea and Luxembourg, more than 15% of girls expected to work as teachers, while in Japan and Korea, over 8% of boys so reported (Figure 9.2). Girls were more likely than boys to think of teaching as a career in all countries and economies expect for Japan.

In some of the countries with data for both 2006 and 2015, the proportion of students expecting a teaching career changed significantly. In Austria, the Slovak Republic and Switzerland, for example, the percentage of girls who reported that they expected to work as teachers grew by more than 5 percentage points over the ten-year period. By contrast, the would-be teachers among girls in Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Indonesia, Korea, Luxembourg, Poland and Turkey, fell by over 5 percentage points. As for the percentage of boys who said that they were expecting teaching careers, it rose by 2 percentage points in Switzerland, but dropped by the same amount or more in Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Indonesia, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Poland and Turkey.

Figure 9.2. More girls than boys expect to work as teachers

Proportion (%) of 15-year-olds who expect to work as teachers by the age of 30, by gender, 2006 and 2015



Note: Countries are sorted from top to bottom in descending order according to the proportion of 15-year-old girls who expected to work as teachers by the age of 30 in 2015. PISA 2015 asked students what occupation they expected to be working in by the time they were 30 years old. Students could enter any job title or description. The occupations that they gave in their answers were later classified in the 2008 International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08). Since the same question was asked of students in 2006, it is possible to assess changes between 2006 and 2015 in the percentage of boys and girls who expected to work as teachers.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on *OECD PISA 2015 Database*, http://www.oecd.org/pisa/data/.

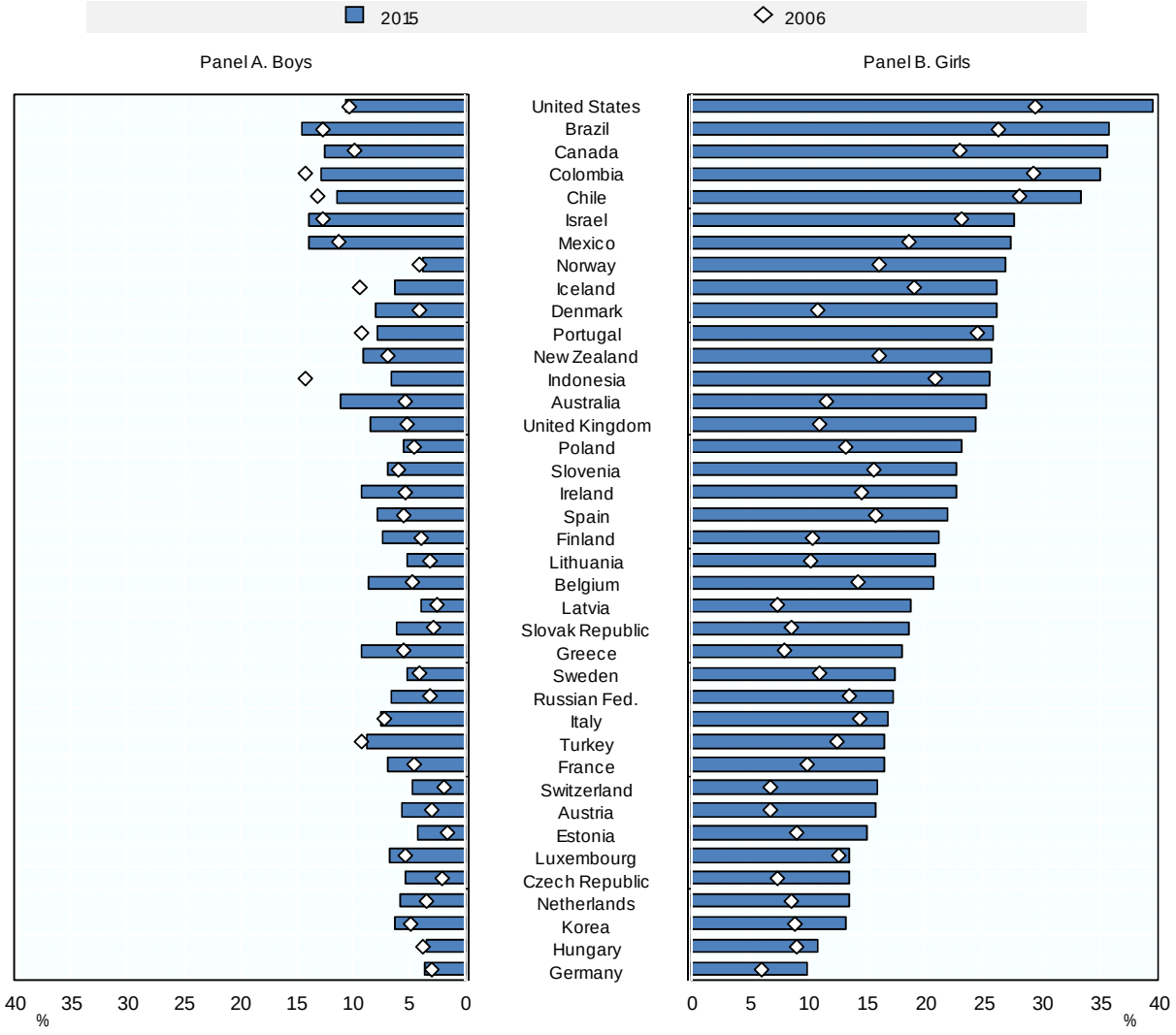
StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574456

Boys and young men are unlikely to pursue health-related studies

OECD PISA suggests that 15-year-old girls are two to three times more likely to pursue health-related studies than boys. Furthermore, while the expectations of 15-year-old boys were relatively stable between 2006 and 2015, the percentage of girls who stated that they expected to work in the health care sector grew significantly in most countries (Figure 9.3). As a result, the gender gap in the percentage of students expecting to work in the health care sector grew in most countries. In Canada, the United Kingdom, Iceland, Norway, Denmark and Indonesia the gap widened by at least 10 percentage points.

Figure 9.3. Girls are increasingly more likely than boys to expect to work in the health care field

Proportion (%) of 15-year-olds who expect to work in the health care sector by the age of 30, by gender, 2006 and 2015



Note: Countries are sorted from top to bottom in descending order according to the proportion of 15-year-old girls who expected to work in the health care sector by the age of 30 in 2015. PISA 2015 asked students what occupation they expected to be working in by the time they were 30 years old. Students could enter any job title or description. The occupations that they gave in their answers were later classified in the 2008 International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08). Since the same question was asked of students in 2006, it is possible to assess changes between 2006 and 2015 in the percentages of boys and girls who expected to work as health professionals.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on *OECD PISA 2015 Database*, http://www.oecd.org/pisa/data/.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574475

The preferences of 15-year old students suggest it is no surprise that, in OECD countries, nearly four times as many women as men study health and welfare and, in Estonia and Latvia, at least seven times as many. Indeed, the disparity in the proportions of men and women beginning their studies in health and welfare indicate that the gender gap is not about to close. Some 75% of new freshmen in health and welfare degree courses are women, while in no OECD or partner country are men a majority. The smallest share of women – 65% – among new entrants is in Japan (OECD, 2016a).

Addressing gender imbalances in the teaching profession

Policy makers in many countries have expressed concern that so few men go into teaching (OECD, 2005; UNESCO, 2012). The profession's low social status is one factor. So are its pay levels. They are lower than in other occupations which require similar levels and lengths of training. To determine whether low pay and social status explain cross-national differences in the teacher gender gap, empirical research has explored variations in proportions both of male teachers and of male students who expect to be teachers (Park and Byun, 2015; Han et al. 2017, forthcoming). Interestingly, research on "occupational feminisation" finds that the movement of women into certain professions over time has led to lower pay in those occupations as a result of employers devaluing women's work (Levanon, et al 2009).

Findings suggest that better salaries and higher social status do draw more men to teaching but cannot in themselves close the gender gap. Indeed, although public discussion has also singled out low pay as one reason why men shun careers in teaching (and in health and welfare, for that matter), other factors come into play. Gendered perceptions of certain occupations is one.

Policy makers across the OECD have long been aware of gender stereotyping at school, how it affects education and career choices, and how the perceived femininity or masculinity of certain occupations may prevent boys and girls from expressing their talent and abilities. Teachers are predominantly women and the gender gap in the profession has become more visible in recent years, as older cohorts of teachers retire. It is particularly pronounced in primary school, when children internalise stereotypes and "sex-type" perceptions of occupations. As a result, fewer and fewer young people will be exposed to male teachers, particularly in early childhood, thereby strengthening stereotypes.

Countries that have endorsed the 2013 OECD Gender Recommendation have taken action to combat gender stereotypes and segregation in the labour market (OECD 2013). Such action must seek to make men feel able to enter fields currently dominated by women. And public campaigns should encourage both boys and girls to consider a career in teaching, school environments to value diversity and families to see the benefits of teacher diversity.

Most occupations in the education and health and welfare sectors require special qualifications, which men do not seek to obtain – in part because of their stereotypical views of some professions being for women. Another reason, though, is that they consider that teacher training has a high opportunity cost and that other professions yield greater financial returns for the same investment. Attracting men to fields like teaching and health and welfare requires not only making salaries competitive, but providing those who undergo training in these fields with financial support.

Key messages

- Gender imbalances in the teaching profession are particularly pronounced at primary-school level, at a time when children internalise stereotypes. Public campaigns should seek to encourage both boys and girls to consider a career in teaching and school environments to value diversity. They should also educate families on the benefits of teacher diversity.
- Salary levels, particularly those of (pre-)primary school teachers, are widely considered low. Governments should strengthen financial incentive to enter the teaching profession – especially in primary education.

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Chapter 10

Gender gaps in financial literacy and financial education

Key findings

- The 2015 OECD/INFE survey of financial literacy suggests that women have less financial knowledge than men in 19 out of 30 participating countries and economies, with no significant gender differences in the other countries and economies.
- In general, men tend to appear more financially resilient than women: according to the 2015 survey, men are more likely than women to report that they would be able to face major unexpected expenses, to cover living expenses in case of income loss, and to support themselves in retirement independently of their spouses or family. While this is likely related to a range of factors, including gender differences in income and assets, women's more limited financial knowledge may also play a role – in several countries, gender differences in financial resilience appear to be smaller once gender differences in financial knowledge are also taken into account.
- More and more countries are collecting internationally comparable data on gender differences in financial literacy. However, evidence on the effectiveness of financial education initiatives targeted at women and girls is still limited, and gender sensitive evaluation efforts need to be stepped up.

The 2013 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship calls on countries to take action to narrow the gender gap in financial literacy. Since 2013, governments and not-for-profit organisations are continuing existing financial education initiatives targeted at women and girls or where women are the main beneficiaries, with only a few new programmes with a focus on women created since then.

Gender differences in financial knowledge remain

A large body of evidence suggests that women have less financial knowledge than men and tend to be less confident than men about their financial knowledge and skills (Drolet, 2016; OECD, 2013; Silgoner et al., 2015). Moreover, although women tend to live longer than men, they have shorter working lives and lower average incomes from which to save for old age. A lack of knowledge of basic financial concepts and lack of confidence are likely to reduce women's ability to access and use appropriate financial products and opportunities. It may also reduce their ability to set up a small business; build up emergency savings; save for retirement; and choose the best financial products for their needs. Women need to improve their financial literacy even more than men in order to address the challenges they face in achieving financial well-being (OECD, 2013).

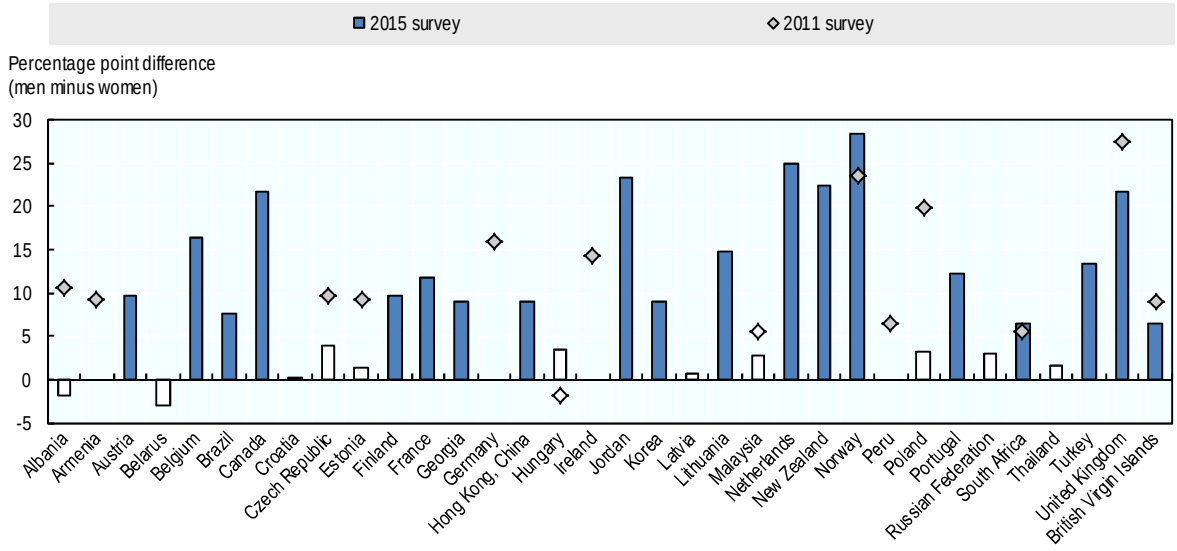
More and more countries are providing internationally comparable data on gender differences in financial literacy, defined as a combination of awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour necessary to make sound financial decisions and ultimately achieve individual financial well-being (Atkinson and Messy, 2012). The OECD/INFE data collection in 2010/11 provided a first international comparison of gender difference in financial knowledge for 14 countries (Atkinson and Messy, 2012; OECD, 2012), while the OECD/INFE 2015 survey covered some 30 countries and economies (OECD, 2016).

The 2015 data reveal that gender differences in financial knowledge remain. Figure 10.1 shows the difference in the percentage of men and women who can correctly answer at least five questions out of seven on financial knowledge. In 19 out of 30 countries and economies, more men than women were able to correctly answer at least five questions (as indicated by the blue bars). Gender differences in financial knowledge recorded in the 2011 survey (as indicated by the grey diamonds) were generally also in favour of men. Among the ten countries for which comparable data over time is available, Albania and Poland reported a statistically significant reduction in gender differences in financial knowledge, while in the other countries gender differences have not changed significantly (Table 10.A1.1 in Online Annex 10.A1).

Data from the 2015 OECD/INFE survey also confirm evidence that women tend to be less confident than men about their financial knowledge (Table 10.A1.2 in Online Annex 10.A1). When asked how they would rate their own knowledge about financial matters compared to other adults in their country, men are more likely than women to report above average knowledge in 13 countries/economies out of 30, even after comparing men and women with similar levels of (test-based) financial knowledge.

Figure 10.1. Men have more financial knowledge than women in many countries

Difference in the percentage of men and women who can answer correctly at least five financial knowledge questions out of seven



Note: Countries are sorted, from left to right, in alphabetical order. Shaded bars and markers represent gender differences that are statistically significant at the 5% level. White bars and markers represented gender differences that are not statistically significant at the 5% level. The OECD/INFE survey of financial literacy and financial inclusion collects data on the financial knowledge, attitudes and behaviour among adults aged 18-79 in Albania; Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Brazil; British Virgin Islands; Canada; Croatia; the Czech Republic; Estonia; Finland; France; Georgia; Hong Kong, China; Hungary; Latvia; Lithuania; Malaysia; the Netherlands; New Zealand; Norway; Poland; Portugal; the Russian Federation; South Africa; Thailand; Turkey and the United Kingdom. OECD (2016) presents more detail on the survey and its main results.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the 2011 and 2015 *OECD/INFE Survey on Financial Literacy and Financial Inclusion*, http://www.oecd.org/finance/financial-education/measuringfinancialliteracy.htm.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574494

Women are less financially resilient than men

Women in many countries appear to be more cautious and forward looking than men, but at the same time they are found to be less financially independent and resilient, in the sense that they are less able than men to face negative economic shocks and to provide for themselves in the future (Austen et al., 2014; Fuhrman, 2015; and OECD, 2013). The 2015 OECD/INFE survey showed that in 15 countries and economies men are less likely than women to agree with at least one of the statements: "Before I buy something I carefully consider whether I can afford it" and "I keep a close personal watch on my financial affairs". In 13 countries and economies men are more likely to agree with at least one of the statements: "I tend to live for today and let tomorrow take care of itself" and "I find it more satisfying to spend money than to save it for the long term" (Table 10.A1.3 in Online Annex 10.A1). Fewer women than men in 19 out of 30 countries and economies would be prepared to risk some of their own money when saving or making an investment.

However, in several countries and economies that participated in the 2015 OECD/INFE survey, fewer women than men reported that they could make ends meet on a monthly basis (Canada, France, New Zealand, Norway, the Russian Federation, Thailand and the United Kingdom) and that they could cover living expenses for at least three months if they lost their main source of household income (Austria, the British Virgin Islands, Brazil, France, Jordan, the Netherlands, South Africa and the United Kingdom – Table 10.A1.4 in Online

Annex 10.A1). Moreover, in many participating countries, men are more likely than women to report that they would support their retirement with private pensions or by drawing down accumulated financial and other assets, while women are more likely than men to reply that they would rely on spouses and children for financial support in retirement (Table 10.A1.5 in Online Annex 10.A1).

Financial knowledge is associated with gender differences in financial resilience

The fact that women are less financially resilient and independent than men on average is likely to be related to a number of socio-economic factors, such as occupation, earnings level and income stability (Schmidt and Sevak, 2006; Siermiska et al., 2010) and/or to legal discrimination and gender norms (Demirguc-Kunt et al., 2013). However, women's more limited financial knowledge may also play a role.

OECD (2016) suggests that in more than half of the countries with available data, men are more likely than women to report that they would be able to face a major expense equivalent to one month's income without borrowing the money or asking family or friends to help (Table 10.A1.6 in Online Annex 10.A1). In Albania, Canada, Georgia, Portugal, South Africa and the United Kingdom, men are over 50% more likely than women to say that they could do so. In Croatia, Jordan, Malaysia and Turkey, men and women appear equally likely to report that they would be able to cope with a major financial shock once socio-demographic characteristics are taken into account. In other countries, especially Belgium, Canada, New Zealand and Portugal, the gender difference in individuals' ability to cope with a shock appears to be smaller once gender differences in financial knowledge are also taken into account. This suggests that, at least in some countries, gender differences in financial knowledge are associated with differences in financial resilience, and that improving women's financial knowledge could help them to set up more successful financial strategies to face negative shocks.

Financial education initiatives to improve women's financial literacy continue

Governments and not-for-profit organisations continue to target financial education initiatives at women and girls, although not many new programmes have been created since 2013. Some governments continue to address the needs of girls and women as part of co-ordinated national strategies for financial education, as in Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Israel, Lebanon and Turkey. For instance, women participating in the conditional financial transfer programme Bolsa Família became one of the priority target audiences of the Brazilian national strategy launched in 2012. In India, self-help groups, small groups almost exclusively composed of women sharing regular saving contributions and lending to the members of the group, are one of the targets of the national strategy launched in 2012.

Examples of recent government-led programmes targeted at specific groups of women, or at groups that are mostly composed of women, testify to the different areas where women are at a disadvantage. For example, since women are less likely than men to participate in the stock market (Almenberg and Dreber, 2015), in 2015 the Treasury in Poland introduced the programme "The Stock Exchange is a Woman" to familiarise women with financial investments. In 2015, the Australian financial regulator launched the online "Women's Money Toolkit", providing impartial financial guidance about life events such as having a baby, caring for others, buying a home, illness and disability and family breakdown. In 2014-15, Hong Kong, China and Thailand developed initiatives – in the form of seminars or booklets – for parents/mothers with young children to equip them with sound money management skills at an important stage in their lives. Emerging economies

typically target women owners of micro and small businesses. For example, the Credit Counselling and Debt Management Agency in Malaysia, in collaboration with a private college and the country's largest micro-credit organisation, implements a financial education programme for women small-business entrepreneurs, whereby college students were trained by the debt agency to assist selected women entrepreneurs on financial management, business registration and business strategies.

The potential of digital financial services for women's greater financial and economic inclusion (World Bank Research Group et al., 2015) prompted the Indonesian Financial Services Authority to launch the mobile application "Yuk Sikapi" in 2015 to educate women who have micro, small, or medium-sized enterprises about financial planning and to encourage them to use formal financial products and services. The application provides chat rooms for users to ask questions to the regulator, a platform for discussion with all users, and sends regular reminders to save.

Not-for-profit organisations also play an important role in delivering financial education to women and girls. The Isadora Duncan Foundation in Spain provides information and workshops to single-parent families (the majority of which are female-headed) about household financial management, budgeting and understanding consumer policies. Fundación Mujeres has been developing workshops on business management and finance for female entrepreneurs in Nicaragua since 2007. In the Australian state of Victoria, the non-profit WIRE – Women's Information and Referral Exchange – provides women with free and confidential information and support on a broad range of issues including on money, and aims to improve women's financial empowerment through research and financial literacy programmes. In the United States, a number of non-profits provide financial education specifically for women to support those who have recently divorced, or who might not have access to retirement planning advice in the workplace (such as Savvy Ladies; Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement – WISER; Financial Literacy Organisation for Women and Girls – FLOW).

More evidence is needed on whether and how to close gender gaps

There is evidence that financial education programmes are contributing to helping men and women improve their financial literacy, but there is still a general lack of rigorous programme evaluation. The same is true for initiatives specifically devoted to women (see Box 10.1), as few programmes for women are evaluated and there is a lack of systematic evidence of different gender outcomes in the evaluation of programmes targeting both men and women. More evidence is needed to get a better understanding of whether and how financial education programmes are closing gender gaps in financial literacy and financial outcomes.

Box 10.1. Evaluating financial education programmes for women

Financial education is defined as "the process by which financial consumers/investors improve their understanding of financial products, concepts and risks and, through information, instruction and/or objective advice, develop the skills and confidence to become more aware of financial risks and opportunities, to make informed choices, to know where to go for help, and to take other effective actions to improve their financial well-being" (OECD, 2005). Examples of recent financial education programmes for women that have been evaluated show promising results and provide some initial evidence about what kind of delivery mechanisms are likely to advance women's financial knowledge and skills the most.

The Citi-Tsao Foundation has carried out the Financial Education Programme for Mature Women in Singapore since 2008, targeting low-income women aged 40 and over. The initiative provides practical suggestions for understanding how money works and how women can take charge of their finances to become more financially independent and secure as they grow older. The programme consists of a specially-tailored curriculum covering five modules in 20 weekly sessions of three hours each. Through these sessions, participants are taught about savings and planning for the long term, budgeting and investing. An impact evaluation revealed that after completing the programme, a third of participants started building emergency funds, and that more participants were better able to smooth consumption, even though debt reduction was still a problem for many participants.

The non-profit organisation BSR with the collaboration of Women's World Banking launched the HERfinance project in 2012 in India. Garment-factory workers are increasingly paid through digital direct-deposits, but many are transacting with a bank for the first time, and do not know how to use their new bank accounts or how to withdraw their salaries from an ATM. HERfinance consists of a workplace-based peer-education programme, where some employees at each factory are trained on how to train their colleagues. The programme covers budgeting, saving, financial planning, responsible borrowing, discussing finances with family, and using local financial services, not only through scheduled educational sessions at work but also informally, in casual conversations. The evaluation of a pilot in India among about 10 000 employees of 11 garment factories (the majority of whom were women) indicated that after the programme women were 39% less likely to report needing help using an ATM, had a better grasp of bank terminology, and were 44% more likely to report saving some of their income for personal needs. Most male employees already knew how to withdraw money and were already saving, so their behaviour was less impacted than that of women. Findings also suggest positive results in terms of women's empowerment, as women were also 23% more likely to say that they decided how to allocate their salaries and were twice as likely to report discussing household spending decisions with family members (Ghuliani and Goldenberg, 2015).

Financial literacy and business training for female entrepreneurs in India showed another way in which programme delivery matters for effectiveness. A random group of clients of India's largest women's bank, SEWA Bank, were invited to attend a programme including business counselling and basic financial literacy training (Field et al., 2016). Half of the participants, chosen at random, were invited to attend the sessions with a peer of their choice. The brief sessions had positive effects on business behaviours and outcomes, but only among those who were trained alongside a friend. Women invited with a friend were more likely to use loans for business purposes and reported higher volumes of business, while women invited alone almost exclusively used the loans for home repair and did not report a higher volume of business relative to the control group. Peer effects could operate through multiple channels: for instance, women may exhibit greater confidence when they are in a more supportive environment, or peers may help women attain their goals by providing support after the training is over. There was also evidence that the positive impacts of training with a friend were stronger among women from religious or caste groups with social norms that restrict female mobility.

Key policy messages

- Countries must continue collecting evidence on financial literacy gender gaps in order to monitor gender differences in financial literacy and financial outcomes and to better target financial education initiatives.
- More evidence is needed on the extent to which financial education programmes are effectively addressing the needs of women, and on the delivery methods that can best bridge gender gaps in financial literacy and financial outcomes.
- Countries are encouraged to incorporate financial education into other measures that promote female economic empowerment, such as training on business skills or on how to use digital financial services. They should also incorporate financial education into other initiatives where women are likely to be the main beneficiaries, such as conditional financial transfers, to improve women's financial independence.

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Annex 10.A1

Additional tables available on line at

Table 10.A1.1. Gender differences in financial knowledge

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574513

Table 10.A1.2. Gender differences in self-assessed financial knowledge

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574513

Table 10.A1.3. Gender differences in financial attitudes

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574513

Table 10.A1.4. Gender differences in the ability to cover living expenses

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574513

Table 10.A1.5. Gender differences in funding retirement

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574513

Table 10.A1.6. Gender differences in the ability to cope with a major expense

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574513

Part III

Gender equality in employment

Chapter 11

Women at work: A snapshot of women in the labour force

Key findings

- Female employment rates remain well below men's, but gender gaps in employment rates have narrowed in almost three-quarters of OECD countries since 2012.
- Despite women's gains in the labour market, women are still far less likely than men to work full time; women earn less than men; women are less likely to reach management and executive levels; and women tend to be in lower-paid sectors and occupations.
- Some groups of women face especially high barriers to equal participation in the labour force. Mothers and women with lower levels of education, skills and income tend to fare worse than their peers.

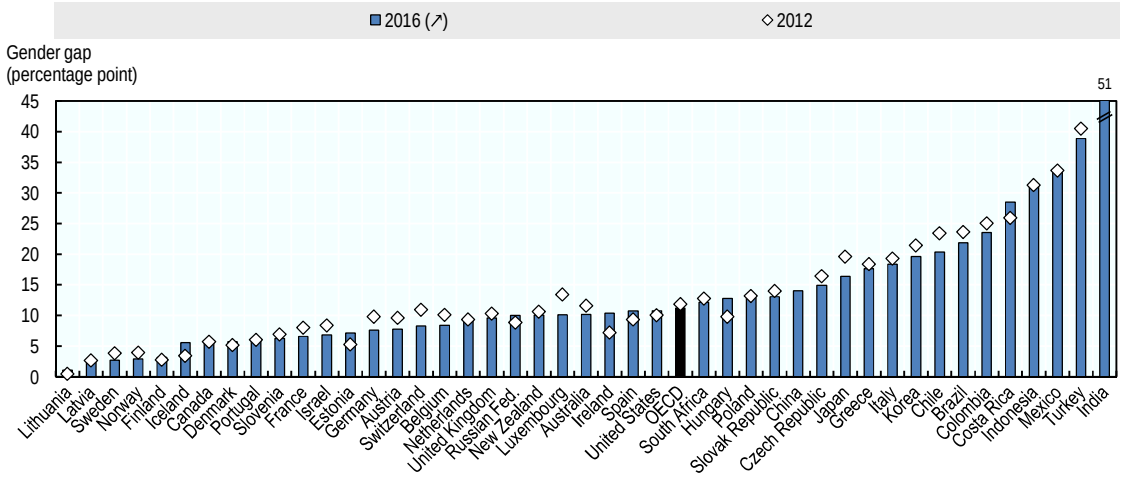
The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Female employment in the OECD: Cause for cautious optimism?

In every OECD country, men remain more likely to be in paid work than women. Yet historical trends give cause for optimism: gender gaps in employment rates have been narrowing in most OECD countries since 2012, continuing a decades-long pattern and contributing to a decrease of 0.6 percentage points in the OECD average gender gap from 2012 to 2016. The employment rate for working-age men was 74.1% in 2016, up from 71.9% in 2012 on average across the OECD. The OECD average employment rate for women was 62.8%, up from 60.1% in 2012 (Figure 11.1).

Figure 11.1. Gender gaps in employment rates have narrowed in many countries since 2012

Gender gap (male minus female) in the employment rate, 15-64 year-olds, 2012 and 2016 or latest available year[a]



a) Data for China refer to 2010, for India to 2012, for Indonesia to 2013 and for Brazil to 2015.

Source: OECD Employment Database, http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm

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Many factors have contributed to the rising number of women in the workforce: the greater educational attainment of young women compared with young men; gradually changing stereotypes and expectations around gender roles; improvements in public policies aimed at combining paid work with childrearing; and the rising economic need – both in single and couple households – for women to work. Closing gender gaps also reflect a decline or stagnation in male labour force participation in some countries. The share of men employed declined by more than 1 percentage point between 2012 and 2016 in three OECD countries: Chile, Norway and Luxembourg (*OECD Employment Database*).

In several OECD countries, the gap between male and female employment rates actually *increased* between 2012 and 2016, sometimes considerably so: in Estonia, Iceland, Ireland, Hungary and Spain, the gender gap grew by more than 1 percentage point between 2012 and 2016 (Figure 11.1). Explanations for the widening gender gap vary, but in some cases the wider gap reflects women's relative gains in the labour market during and immediately after the Great Recession, which have since lessened as men have re-entered the market. In Ireland, for example, there was a substantially sharper rise in male unemployment compared with female unemployment from 2008 to 2012, following the loss of construction jobs, but men have made substantial gains since 2012 (Conefrey et al., 2014).

Large differences also persist in gender gaps across countries, producing a cross-national pattern which has changed little. Gender gaps in employment remain very small in Nordic countries, for example, but relatively large in Turkey, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico and the Asian OECD countries.

Gender gaps in hours worked and occupations

While women are making slow but steady gains in employment across most OECD countries, gender gaps persist in job quality and occupations. Women still face obstacles to working full-time hours; are often employed in low-paying, female-dominated sectors; and face gender-specific challenges to advancing in their careers (e.g., weaker professional networks or fewer female managers).

Across OECD countries, women are far more likely than men to work part-time (Chapter 18), although men's part-time employment rates grew slightly in all but two OECD countries (Latvia and Poland) between 2004 and 2014. On average across the OECD in 2014, 24.5% of employed women worked part-time, defined as fewer than thirty hours per week in the main job, an increase of just less than 1 percentage point from 2004. Only 9.0% of employed men work part-time, a 2.3 percentage point increase from 2004. Women's movement into part-time work is especially pronounced after they become mothers and typically assume a disproportionate responsibility for unpaid childcare (Chapter 15). While part-time work does keep women attached to the labour market, it has important drawbacks: women working part-time earn less than full-time workers and often miss out on opportunities to advance in their careers.

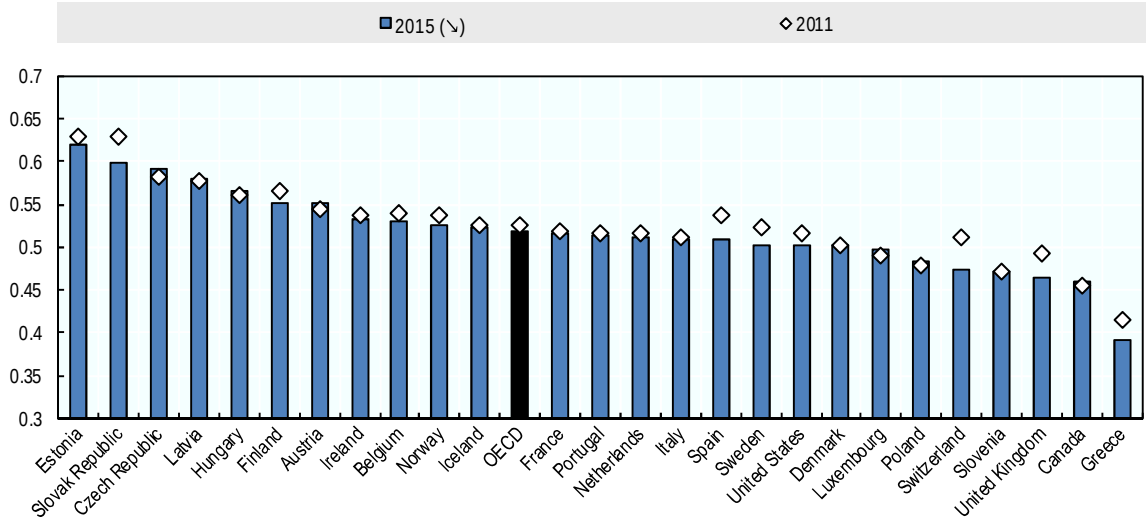
Men, in turn, are more likely to work very long hours in the labour market. In many countries, expectations of long hours in the workforce combine with women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid work to produce gendered effects in the labour market: women face difficulties combining long hours of unpaid work with the long time commitment expected in many full-time jobs. This is particularly true in countries with traditionally long full-time work hours, such as Germany, where mothers tend to work part-time, and in Mexico, where mothers are more likely to opt out of the labour market entirely (OECD, 2017a and 2017b).

Men and women are also still likely to work in different sectors and occupations. Women continue to be overrepresented in the service sector, specifically within areas such as retail, health and social work: 84% of employed women worked in the services sector in 2015 (60.7% of men), 11.6% in industry (32.6% of men); and 4% in agriculture (6.3% of men) (Annex Table 11.A1.1). Just over one-fifth of all employed women work in wholesale and retail trade, accommodation and food, and 17.3% work in health and social work activities. Related to this, women experience higher levels of occupational segregation than men, and are restricted in the jobs they "choose" to go into by a variety of factors, including educational background and gendered socialisation (Chapter 8). Across EU countries for which data are available, the most common occupational categories for women are shop salespeople, cleaners, personal care workers, pre-primary and primary school teachers and secretaries (OECD calculations of the EU Labour Force Survey, 2014). Figure 11.2 presents an "index of dissimilarity" based on the number of different occupations women work in compared with men. The scale for the difference across male and female distribution ranges from 0 to 1, from the lowest to the highest level of segregation. Every country experiences job segregation by gender, and therefore every country has a value greater than zero, but the rankings are somewhat difficult to interpret as they cannot account for factors such as self-selection or cross-country differences in female

employment rates. Indeed, the Nordic countries have historically had higher levels of occupational gender segregation and Mediterranean countries lower levels, in part because increases in occupational segregation have positively correlated with growth in the female labour supply (European Commission, 2009).

Figure 11.2. Women are concentrated in fewer job categories than men

Index of gender dissimilarity in occupations, 2011 and 2015



Note: The index of dissimilarity, or Duncan index, measures the sum of the absolute difference in the distribution of female and male employment across occupations. It assumes that segregation implies a different distribution of women and men across occupations: the less equal the distribution, the higher the level of segregation. It ranges from 0 to 1, from the lowest to the highest level of segregation. Here it was calculated using the ISCO classification of occupations, at 3-digit levels.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) for European Union countries, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, the Canadian Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Canada, and the United States Current Population Survey (CPS) March Supplement for the United States.

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The glass ceiling remains intact

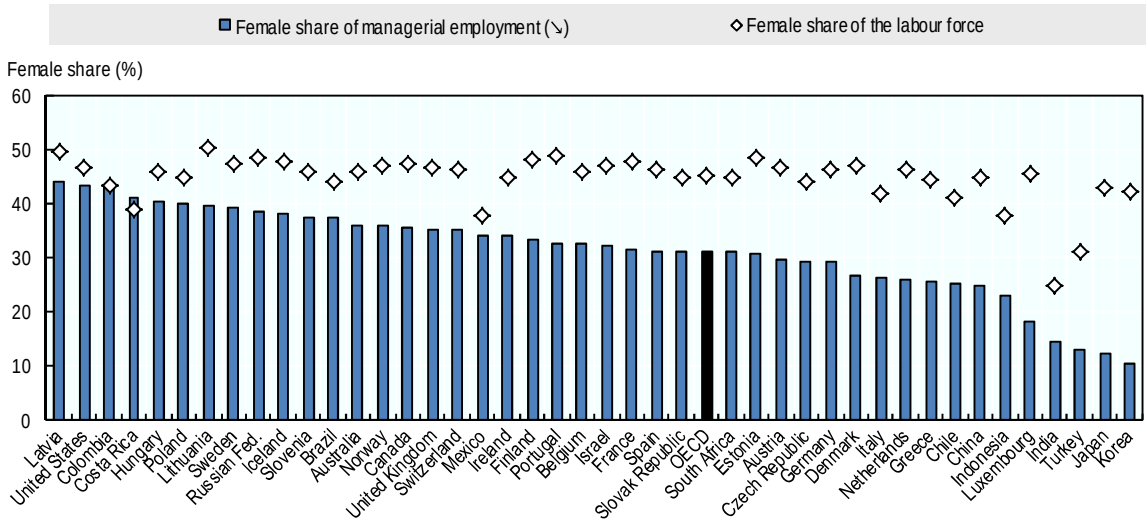
Women's lower labour force participation, their higher probability of interrupting their careers to care for family, their higher likelihood of working part-time, and other, less tangible factors – including discrimination – all lead to attrition in the number of women who advance to upper management. The "leaky pipeline" to top jobs has contributed to women making up only about one-third of managers in the OECD, though there is considerable variation across countries (Figure 11.3). Women are also far less likely than men to become CEOs, sit on boards of private companies, or hold public leadership positions, although government quotas (and, to a lesser degree, targets) have led to relatively quick changes in the share of private and public leadership positions held by women (Chapter 14).

Highly-educated and childless women fare better than others

Many women face compounding disadvantages. Across education levels, gender gaps in employment rates are smallest among men and women with higher levels of education: there is an 8.5 percentage point gender gap in employment rates among highly-educated men and women, which increases to a 19.5 percentage point gap among men and women with low levels of education (Figure 11.4). In some countries, such as Finland, Norway, Portugal and Sweden, the gender gap in the employment rate is lower than 3 percentage points for highly-educated men and women. An exception to this pattern is Korea, where highly-educated women's options to return to well-paid regular employment after a period out of the workforce to provide care to young children or dependent relatives are limited, and rather than taking up low-paid non-regular employment, women may stay at home if they can afford to do so.

Figure 11.3. Women are under-represented in management positions

Female share of management employment and female share of labour force, all ages, 2015 or latest available year[a]



Note: For Colombia, the female share of managerial employment is the female share of the employed that hold jobs classified in International Standard Classification of Occupations 1968 (ISCO 68) major group 2 (administrative and managerial workers); for Canada, Chile, India, Indonesia and the United States, the female share of managerial employment is the female share of the employed that hold jobs classified in International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) 88 category one (as legislators, senior officials and managers). For all other countries (except China), the female share of managerial employment is the female share of the employed that hold jobs classified in International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) 08 category one (as managers) that are female. National Occupation Classification for China. For Colombia and India, data on the female share of managerial employment refer to 15-64 year-olds only.

a) Data for China refer to 2010, for India to 2011-12, for Indonesia and the United States to 2013, and for Australia, Brazil, Canada and South Africa to 2014.

Source: For the female share of the labour force: OECD Employment Database, http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm, for all countries. For the female share of managerial employment: ILO (2016), ILOSTAT database, http://www.ilo.org/ilostat, for all countries except Colombia, China and India; Census data for China; and OECD Secretariat calculations based on the Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares (GEIH) for Colombia and the National Sample Survey (NSS) for India.

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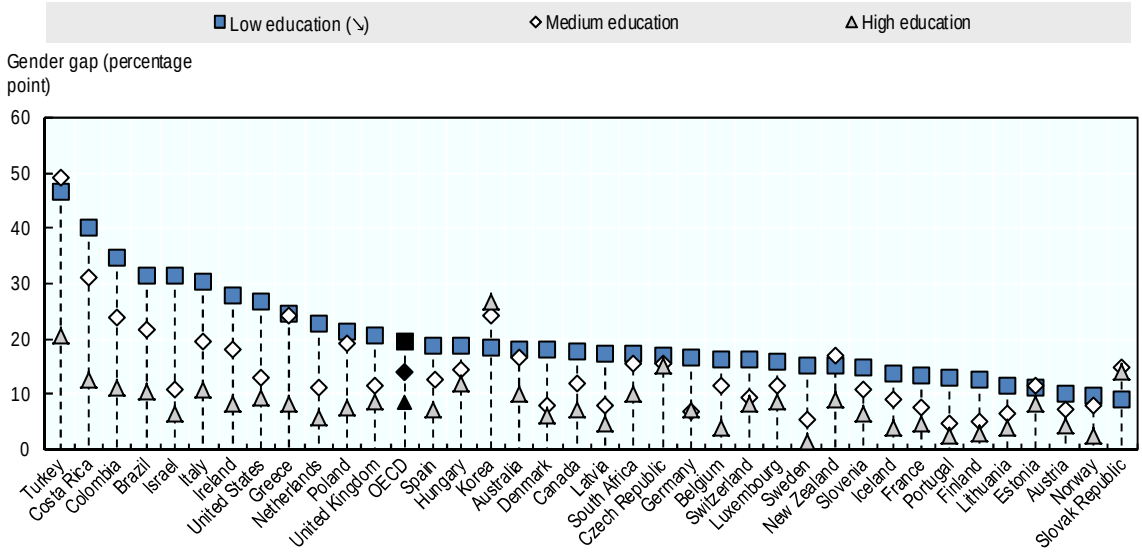
Figure 11.4. Large gender gaps in employment rates for less-educated workers

Gender gaps (male minus female) in the employment rate by level of education, 25-64 year-olds, 2015 or latest available year[a]



Note: Educational attainment is measured on a three-part ordinal variable (low education, medium education and high education), with distinctions between the three levels corresponding to the usual International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) classification system: "low education" corresponds to a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 0-2 (early-childhood education, primary or lower secondary education); "medium education" reflects a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 3-4 (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education); and "high education" corresponds to a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 5-8 (short-cycle tertiary education, bachelor or equivalent, master or equivalent, doctoral or equivalent).

a) Data for France, Brazil and South Africa refer to 2014

Source: OECD (2016), *Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2016-en.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574589

Large gaps among workers with low levels of education are frequently tied to the financial incentives faced by higher- versus less-educated women. Education correlates with wages, and less-educated women generally earn less than both highly-educated women and less-educated men (Chapter 12). Childcare fees reduce the attractiveness of labour force participation, and for many less-educated women this results in low financial incentives to work. Barriers to paid work are especially high for migrant women with low levels of education. These women tend to have lower labour force participation rates than both migrant men and native-born women (Chapter 21).

Gender gaps in the labour force increase with age, particularly after men and women start families. Women's careers are disproportionately hampered by childbearing and childrearing. Women who are mothers are more likely than childless women to work fewer hours, earn less than men, or opt out of the workforce entirely. Men tend to have a higher probability of work after becoming fathers (OECD, 2016).

The gender gap in the employment rate between *childless* men and women is a relatively small 4.8 percentage points, on average, across the OECD. This gender gap more than quadruples, to 22.6 percentage points, when comparing men and women who have at least one child aged 0-14 (Figure 11.5, Panel A). In the three Baltic countries and Finland, the gender employment gap for men and women without dependent children is positive.

This is in part due to sectors of female employment being less affected by the Great Recession than male employment, and because the pre-existing gender employment gaps were relatively small.

The negative effects of motherhood on labour force participation are particularly pronounced for women with low levels of education (Figure 11.5, Panel B). While it is challenging for most parents (both mothers and fathers) to balance a career with childrearing, low wages tend to reduce the financial incentives even further. Tackling the low levels of participation among mothers with low levels of education is crucial for closing remaining gender gaps in labour force participation, and it is necessary for meeting the G20 target of a 25% reduction in gender gaps by 2025.

Targeting policies for gender equality

The other chapters in this report detail various policy measures that governments have taken to reduce gender gaps in employment. Such measures include those steps necessary for work-life balance: paid parental leave, good quality and affordable childcare, workplace flexibility measures, and promoting the equal sharing of unpaid work responsibilities. The results of this overview chapter suggest that the potentially largest payoffs to female labour force participation may come from promoting the workforce participation of mothers, less-educated women and lower-skilled women.

Figure 11.5. Less-educated mothers face barriers to paid work

Gender gaps (male minus female) in the employment rate by the presence of at least one child aged 0-14 and for men and women with at least one child aged 0-14 by level of education, 25-54 year-olds, 2014 or latest available year[a]

Panel A. Gender gap in the employment rate by the presence of at least one child aged 0-14

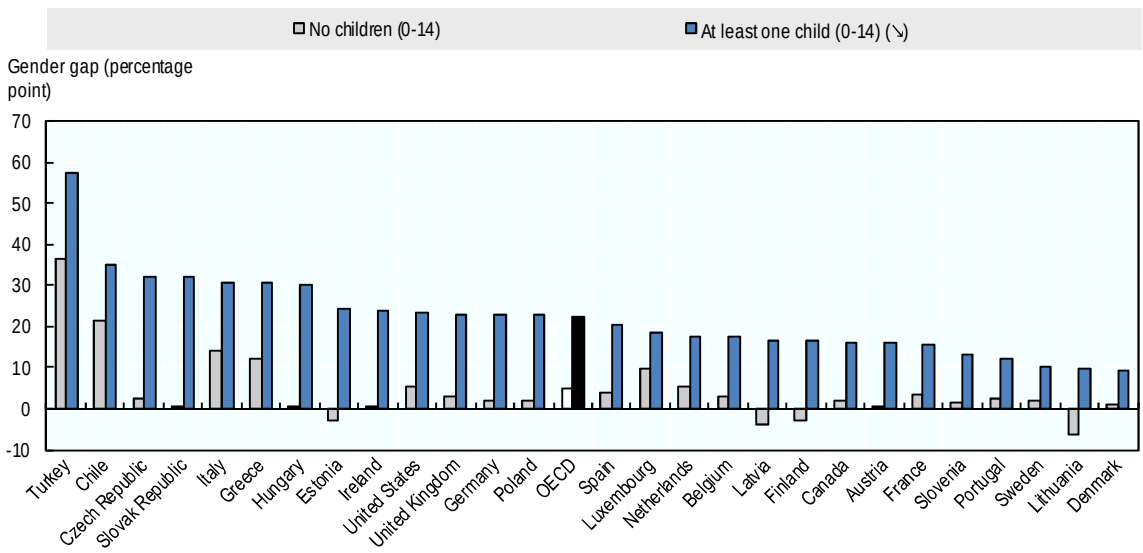
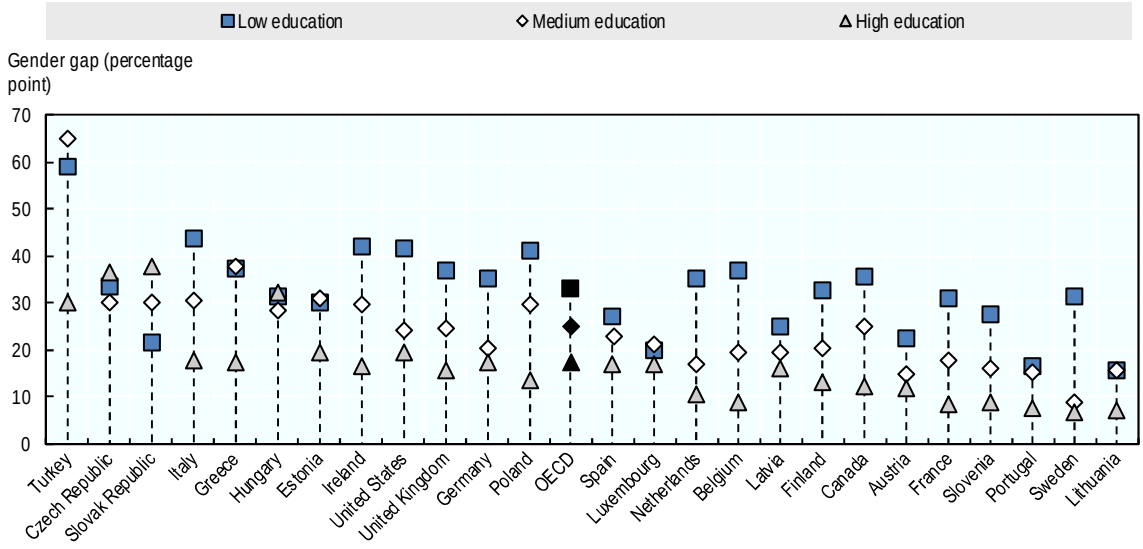


Figure 11.5. Less-educated mothers face barriers to paid work *(cont.)*

Gender gaps (male minus female) in the employment rate by the presence of at least one child aged 0-14 and for men and women with at least one child aged 0-14 by level of education, 25-54 year-olds, 2014 or latest available year[a]

Panel B. Gender gap in the employment rate for men and women with at least one child aged 0-14, by level of education



Note: For both panels, countries are sorted from left to right in descending order according to the gender gap in the employment rate between men and women with at least one child (0-14)

Individuals with "at least one child (0-14)" are defined as those that live in the same household as a child (aged 0-14) for who they are reported as either the mother or the father. Those with "no children (0-14)" are defined as those who live in a household without any children (aged 0-14) for who they are reported as the either the mother or the father. For Canada, children aged 0-15, and for the United States children aged 0-17.

Educational attainment is measured on a three-part ordinal variable (low education, medium education and high education), with distinctions between the three levels corresponding to the usual International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) classification system: "low education" corresponds to a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 0-2 (early-childhood education, primary or lower secondary education); "medium education" reflects a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 3-4 (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education); and "high education" corresponds to a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 5-8 (short-cycle tertiary education, bachelor or equivalent, master or equivalent, doctoral or equivalent).

a) Data for Denmark, Finland and Sweden refer to 2012, and for Chile, Germany and Turkey to 2013.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) for European Union countries, the Canadian Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Canada, the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN) for Chile, the Turkish Household Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Turkey, and the United States Current Population Survey (CPS) basic files for the United States.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574608

Most of the social and employment policies that are "good for women" in general will have an even greater payoff for mothers and women at the lower end of the education, skill and income spectrum. Employment-protected paid leave around childbirth and when children are young is important for ensuring that women have income security around these life events and have a job to return to when their child is older. Paid parental leave is associated with higher female labour force participation across countries, as it incentivises women's employment prior to giving birth (to ensure paid leave eligibility) and gives women employment security post-birth. Publicly-funded wage replacement during maternity and parental leave is especially important for low-income workers, who, in some countries, are less likely than high-skilled or higher-income workers to received generous

leave benefits through their employers (Adema et al., 2015). Subsidised childcare is critical for shifting the scales in favour of low-income mothers' work. A statutory right to request flexible work is another measure that can help parents achieve the work-life balance they need without risking losing their job. Such policies are especially important for single parents, who often struggle to provide childcare and engage in paid work and who face higher poverty risks than couple families (*OECD Family Database*).

Key policy messages

- Governments must continue to implement measures aimed at promoting work-life balance, including paid parental leave (Chapter 16), good quality and affordable early childhood education and care (Chapter 17), and smart workplace flexibility measures for both fathers and mothers (Chapter 18).
- Policies should continue to focus on disadvantaged women, e.g. low-skilled women with children, to ensure that engaging in paid work "pays off".
- Policies should not only prioritise getting women into jobs, but also improving the quality of women's jobs. Further efforts are needed to address gender gaps in wages, hours worked, occupations held and sectors in which women are employed.

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OECD Family Database, http://www.oecd.org/social/family/database.htm.

Annex 11.A1

Additional data on gender segregation

Table 11.A1.1. Women tend to be over-represented in service sector jobs

Distribution of employment by broad economic activity, by gender, 2015 or latest available year[a]

	Men			Women		
	Agriculture	Industry	Services	Agriculture	Industry	Services
OECD	6.3	32.6	60.7	4.0	11.6	84.0
Australia	3.7	30.9	65.4	2.0	8.7	89.3
Austria	5.7	36.3	58.0	5.2	11.5	83.3
Belgium	1.6	32.8	65.6	0.7	8.4	90.9
Canada	2.9	30.0	67.1	1.2	8.4	90.4
Chile	12.8	32.3	54.9	4.5	10.7	84.8
Czech Republic	3.9	49.3	46.7	1.6	23.8	74.6
Denmark	3.8	29.4	66.9	0.9	9.3	89.8
Estonia	5.3	43.5	51.2	2.5	17.5	80.0
Finland	6.1	34.1	59.8	2.2	8.7	89.1
France	3.7	30.2	64.7	1.6	9.4	87.9
Germany	1.8	40.0	58.2	1.0	13.9	85.1
Greece	13.5	20.1	66.4	12.4	7.8	79.8
Hungary	6.8	40.0	53.2	2.6	19.1	78.4
Iceland	6.5	27.7	65.8	1.7	6.9	91.3
Ireland	9.9	26.5	63.5	1.6	8.7	89.6
Israel	2.3	25.3	69.3	0.6	8.4	89.2
Italy	4.8	36.8	58.4	2.4	13.3	84.3
Japan	3.9	33.8	62.3	3.2	14.6	82.3
Korea	5.6	32.6	61.8	5.7	13.7	80.6
Latvia	10.9	34.7	54.4	5.1	12.7	82.1
Luxembourg	1.2	17.5	72.2	0.7	4.1	87.0
Mexico	19.4	30.0	50.5	3.6	16.5	79.9
Netherlands	2.8	23.4	73.9	1.4	5.6	93.0
New Zealand	9.1	30.3	60.4	4.6	9.7	85.5
Norway	3.0	31.6	65.4	0.9	7.1	92.1
Poland	12.5	41.9	45.7	10.3	16.4	73.3
Portugal	9.7	33.4	57.0	5.4	15.2	79.4
Slovak Republic	4.7	48.4	47.0	1.3	20.7	78.0
Slovenia	7.0	43.5	49.5	7.1	18.2	74.6
Spain	5.8	29.5	64.7	2.1	8.7	89.2
Sweden	3.0	28.6	68.5	1.0	6.9	92.1
Switzerland	3.7	27.9	66.2	2.7	9.6	84.8
Turkey	17.8	31.1	51.0	37.0	15.3	47.7
United Kingdom	1.8	28.4	69.8	0.8	7.8	91.4
United States	2.3	27.4	70.3	0.9	8.3	90.8
Colombia	22.7	23.8	53.5	7.0	13.6	79.4
Costa Rica	17.3	25.0	57.7	4.2	9.6	86.1
Lithuania	11.6	34.0	54.3	6.6	16.4	76.9
Brazil	17.1	30.5	52.3	10.5	11.8	77.6
China	..	..	..	..	..	..
India	..	..	..	..	..	..
Indonesia	33.6	26.0	40.4	31.7	15.9	52.4
Russian Federation	8.2	37.6	54.2	5.1	16.2	78.7
South Africa	6.6	33.3	60.1	4.3	11.7	84.0

Note: Data for Australia, Austria, Canada, Chile, Ireland, Israel, New Zealand, Colombia, Brazil, the Russian Federation and South Africa are based on International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) Rev. 3. Data for all other countries are based on ISIC Rev. 4. Information on industrial classification not available for the United States.

a) Data for Austria and New Zealand refer to 2010, for Denmark to 2011, for Australia and Israel to 2012, for Turkey to 2013, and for Canada, Chile, Ireland, Korea, the United Kingdom and Brazil to 2014.

Source: OECD Annual Labour Force Statistics (ALFS) Database, http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=ALFS_EMP; for France, Luxembourg, Switzerland, the United States, Costa Rica, Latvia, Lithuania, India and South Africa: ILO (2016), *ILOSTAT database*, http://www.ilo.org/ilostat.

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Chapter 12

The gender wage gap

Key findings

- The gender pay gap among full-time workers, across OECD countries, is basically unchanged at just below 15% since 2010. Gender pay gaps are especially large among high earners.
- When focusing on the monthly earnings of all employees (including those working part-time), most of the gender gap in earnings is explained by women working fewer hours in the labour market than men. Occupation and industry segregation also play an important role. Education, by contrast, has played a positive role in closing the gender gap.
- After controlling for differences in the observed characteristics, unexplained factors – including discrimination, which is difficult to measure – underlie large parts of gender pay gaps across the OECD.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

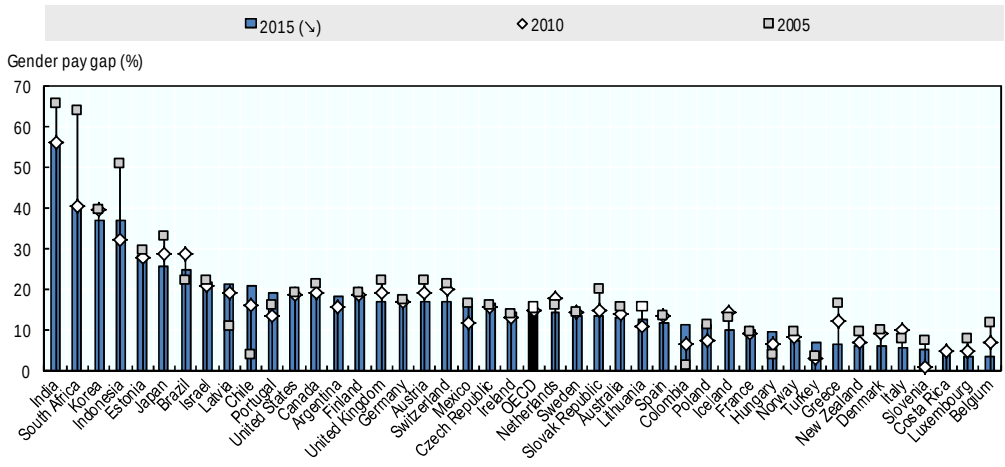
The gender pay gap remains at just below 15%

Around the world, women continue to earn less than men. Gender pay gaps have lessened very slowly over time, as workers' characteristics rarely change quickly. Indeed, the current employment outcomes of prime-age and older workers are influenced by education and career decisions that were made 20 to 40 years ago, when societal norms, technology and career expectations were different from what they are today.

In 2015, the median monthly gender pay gap, across OECD countries, was 14.3% – a rate that has barely changed since 2010 and is only about 1 percentage point lower than a decade earlier (Figure 12.1). Since 2005, the gender pay gap has decreased by 4 percentage points or more in Austria, Belgium, Greece, Denmark, Japan, Luxembourg, the Slovak Republic, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. In G20 economies, it has decreased by more than 4 percentage points in India, Indonesia and South Africa. The pay gap has remained broadly unchanged in the Unites States, and in many EU countries. By contrast, it has increased slightly in recent years in France, the Czech Republic and Ireland, and to a greater extent in Brazil, Portugal and Turkey. Increases of 5 percentage points or more were recorded in Chile, Colombia, Hungary and Latvia.

Figure 12.1. The median monthly gender pay gap for full-time employees has changed little in the past decade

Gender gap in median monthly earnings,[a] full-time employees, 2005, 2010 and 2015 or latest available[b]



Note: The gender gap in median monthly earnings is defined as the difference between male and female median monthly earnings divided by male median monthly earnings, for full-time employees. Full-time employees are defined as those individuals with usual weekly working hours equal to or greater than 30 hours per week.

a) Data refer to weekly earnings for Australia, Canada, India, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States. They refer to hourly wages for Denmark, Greece, Iceland, New Zealand, Portugal and Spain.

b) Data refer to 2014, not 2015, for Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey. They refer to 2013 for Sweden, 2012 for India and South Africa, and 2011 for Israel. Instead of 2010, data refer to 2011 for Brazil, Chile and Costa Rica. Instead of 2005 they refer to 2006 for Chile, Estonia, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey, and 2007 for Colombia.

Source: OECD Employment Database (http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm) for OECD countries, Colombia and Costa Rica; and OECD Secretariat calculations based on the Encuesta Permanente de Hogares (EPH) for Argentina, the Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílio (PNAD) for Brazil, the National Sample Survey (NSS) for India, the National Labour Force Survey (SAKERNAS) for Indonesia, and the General Household Survey (GHS) for South Africa.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574646

Estimates for India (56%) and South Africa (41%) suggest that gender pay gaps in emerging economies are well above those in OECD countries, while Korea and Japan also show relatively high median gender pay gaps. In countries such as Belgium and Slovenia, relatively high minimum wages combined with a widespread coverage of collective bargaining – which in Belgium also involves gender pay reporting for companies with 50 staff or more – contribute to relatively small gender pay gaps.

It must be emphasised that the gender pay gap captures the difference in earnings for *men and women who are in employment*. The raw figures capture both the gender differences in worker's characteristics and the differences in the selection process in the labour market between men and women. While it is relatively simple to control for gender differences in worker's characteristics, it is more challenging to adjust the estimates for selection into work, as choosing to work varies with age, marital status, parenthood, attitudes, and the policies in place in a particular country. The relatively low wage gaps in countries such as Turkey, Colombia, Greece and Italy, for example, are related to this selection effect; fewer women are in the labour market in those countries, but those who work tend to have similarly high skills and earnings as men. Also, gender pay gaps can vary significantly depending on the definition of earnings used: monthly or annual estimates reveal much larger gaps than hourly figures, for example, due to large gender differences in hours worked (Box 12.1).

Statistical techniques like the Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition help in disentangling the different effects driving the observed wage gap. These factors include the gender composition of the labour force, a worker's and job's characteristics, and the role of discrimination and other unobservable factors which make up the so-called "unexplained" component. Figure 12.3 shows the mean gender gap, for both monthly and hourly wages, decomposed into the parts that are explained by differences between men and women in age, educational achievements, industry and occupation, hours worked and parenthood status, which the economic literature identifies as the main drivers of the overall hourly pay gap (Goldin, 2014; Chiappori et al., 2009; Greenwood et al., 2016). The corresponding unexplained part of the pay gap is also presented.

Women's gains in educational attainment might imply that women should, on average, earn more than men (Figure 12.3). However, any positive effects of education are outweighed by other factors. The gender difference in the likelihood of working very long hours drives 7% of the wage gap. Industrial segregation explains another 11% of the gender gap in monthly earnings at the mean, but most of the monthly pay gap is explained by women working short hours. This accounts for 26% of the observed gap on average across the OECD. The effect of short hours is especially strong in countries where part-time work is relatively common, especially among women, as in Australia, Austria, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (Figure 12.3, Panel A). However, when the decomposition of the gender pay gap is considered for hourly earnings (Figure 12.3, Panel B), then the effect of working hours on gender pay differentials is insignificant, and that over half of the gender pay gap across OECD countries appears due to an "unexplained component". The unexplained component is hard to disentangle, and is associated with a variety of factors that drive wage differentials, including gender stereotyping, social conventions, institutions, discrimination against women, and personal, unobservable characteristics of workers, such as motivation and ability.

Gender discrimination is difficult to measure. Field experiments in which two identical resumes are submitted with nothing differing except the gender of the applicant have provided tangible evidence that discrimination occurs in hiring (OECD, 2008). Country-level studies, too, shine light on this issue. The Australian Human Rights Commission, for

example, recently reviewed discrimination related to pregnancy and the return to work after childbirth and found that about half of all women experience discrimination during pregnancy, parental leave, or after returning to work (AHRC, 2014). A Statistics Canada study found the persistence of a sizeable wage gap even within the same occupation and points to gender discrimination as a possible explanation, along with women's preferences for more flexible positions (to accommodate caregiving responsibilities), and women being less willing or adept at negotiating their pay or competing – attributes deemed "masculine" by society (Moyser, 2017).

Box 12.1. The impact of earnings definition on gender pay gaps

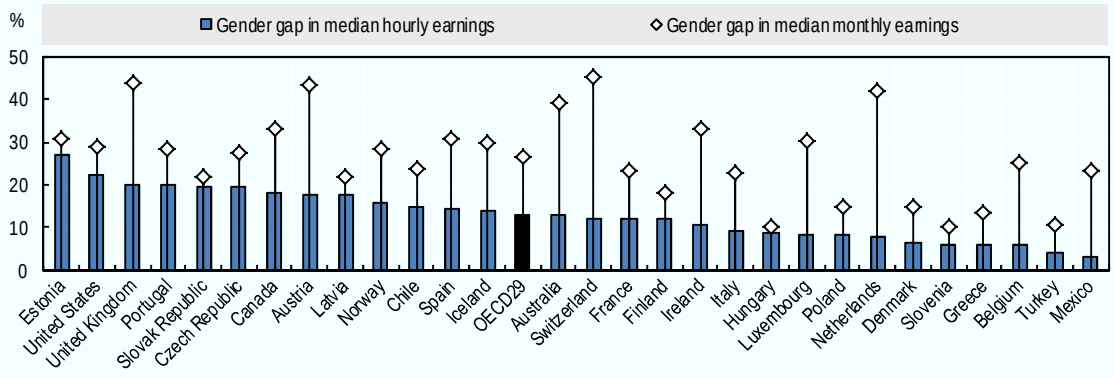
When it comes to measuring the size of the gender pay gap, the type of earnings used (hourly, weekly, monthly, or annual earnings) matters – a lot. Across the OECD women tend to work shorter hours than men, so estimates based on weekly, monthly or annual earnings – which reflect not only the wage rate paid, but also the number of hours an individual works per day, per week, and so on – tend to result in larger pay gaps than estimates based on hourly earnings. For example, on average across the 29 OECD countries with data available on the gaps in both median hourly and median monthly earnings, the gender gap for all employees based on *monthly* earnings (26.5%) is more than 13 percentage points larger than the gap for all employees based on *hourly* earnings (12.9%) (Figure 12.2, Panel A). In countries where women are especially likely to work short hours, like Australia, Austria, the Netherlands and Switzerland, the gap based on monthly earnings is more the 25 percentage points larger than the hourly gap. Especially for these countries, the hourly earnings pay gap may be a more appropriate measure as it disregards the differences in the number of hours worked in a given week, month or year.

One way to at least partially control for the effects of gender differences in working hours is to focus just on employees working full-time – as is done in Figure 12.1, for example. Yet, even though the difference between the median hourly and median monthly pay gap tends to be smaller when looking only at those working full-time, there is still a difference (Figure 12.2, Panel B). On average across the 29 OECD countries with available data on both the monthly and hourly gender gaps, the gap in median *monthly* earnings just for full-time employees (18.6%) is still about 6 percentage points larger than the gap in median *hourly* earnings for full-time employees (12.5%). These persisting differences likely reflect the fact that even among full-time employees, working hours still differ between men and women. Men are much more likely than women to work very long hours, for example, while female full-time workers are often more likely to be found working shorter full-time hours of around 30-34 hour per week (Chapter 1; *OECD Employment Database*).

Figure 12.2. Gender gaps in monthly earnings are larger than gender gaps in hourly earnings

Gender gaps in median hourly earnings and in median monthly earnings, 2014 or latest available[a]

Panel A. All employees

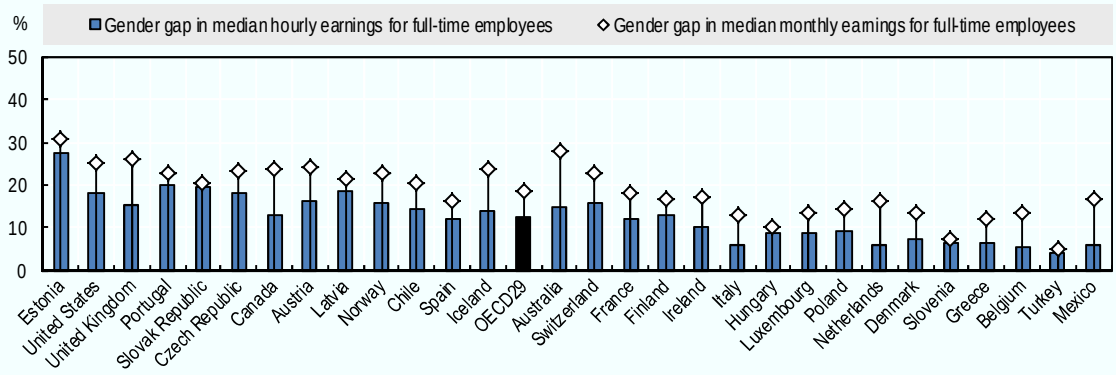


Box 12.1. The impact of earnings definition on gender pay gaps *(cont.)*

Figure 12.2. Gender gaps in monthly earnings are larger than gender gaps in hourly earnings *(cont.)*

Gender gaps in median hourly earnings and in median monthly earnings, 2014 or latest available[a]

Panel B. Full-time employees



Note: For both panels, countries are sorted from left to right in descending order according to the gender gap in median hourly earnings among all employees. The gender gap in median monthly earnings is defined as the difference between male and female median monthly earnings divided by male median monthly earnings. The gender gap in median hourly earnings is defined as the difference between male and female median hourly earnings divided by male median hourly earnings. Full-time employees are defined as those individuals with usual weekly working hours equal to or greater than 30 hours per week. The countries shown differ from those in Figure 12.1 because comparable data on the gender gaps in hourly *and* monthly earnings is sometimes not available.

a) Data for Chile and Turkey refer to 2013.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey for European Union countries, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Survey (HILDA) for Australia, the Canadian Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Canada, the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN) for Chile, the Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (ENIGH) for Mexico, the Turkish Household Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Turkey, and the United States Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS-ASEC) for the United States.

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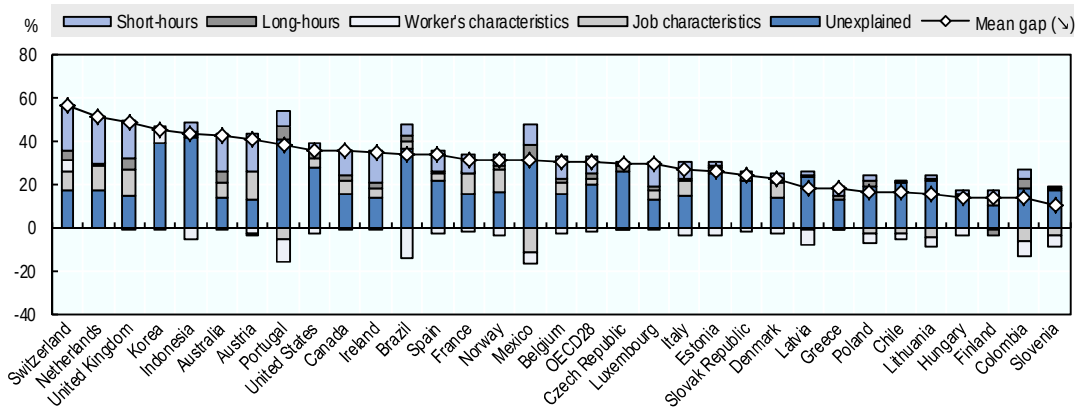
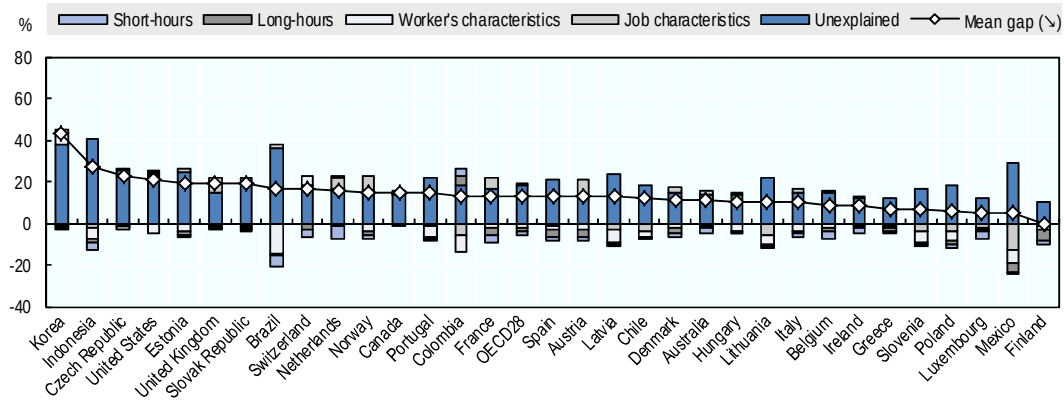
Figure 12.3. Differences in working hours and the type of job can help explain part of the gender pay gap, but much remains unexplained

Decomposition of the gender gap in monthly earnings and in hourly earnings, 2014 or latest available[a]

Panel A. Gender gap in mean monthly earnings



Panel B. Gender gap in mean hourly earnings



Note: The decomposition is performed using the Oaxaca-Blinder methodology, using the coefficients from a pooled model over both groups as a reference. Short-hours refer to a dummy variable equal to one where an individual works less than 30 hours per week in the main job. Long-hours refer to the composition effect of working more than 50 hours per week in the main job. Worker's characteristics refer to a full set of dummies for age categories, educational attainment groups and parenthood status. Job characteristics refer to a full set of dummies for industry and occupation. The countries shown differ from those in Figure 12.1 because the survey data needed for the decomposition are lacking for some countries.

a) Data for Chile refer to 2013, and for Colombia to 2015.

Reading note: The figures show the contribution of various factors to the overall gender pay gap. For instance, in Switzerland, the fact that women are more likely to work short hours (part-time) contributes 21.7 percentage points to the observed gender gap in mean monthly earnings. Gender differences in workers' characteristics and in job characteristics contribute 5.3 and 9.1 percentage points, respectively. The part of the gender gap in monthly earnings that is not explained by gender differences in observable variables, the so called "unexplained" part, accounts for 17.3 percentage points.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey for European Union countries, Norway and Switzerland, the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Survey (HILDA) for Australia, the Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílio (PNAD) for Brazil, the Canadian Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Canada, the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN) for Chile, the Encuesta Nacional de Calidad de Vida (ECV) for Colombia, the National Labour Force Survey (SAKERNAS) for Indonesia, the Korean Labor and Income Panel Study (KLIPS) survey for Korea, the Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (ENIGH) for Mexico, and the United States Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS-ASEC) for the United States.

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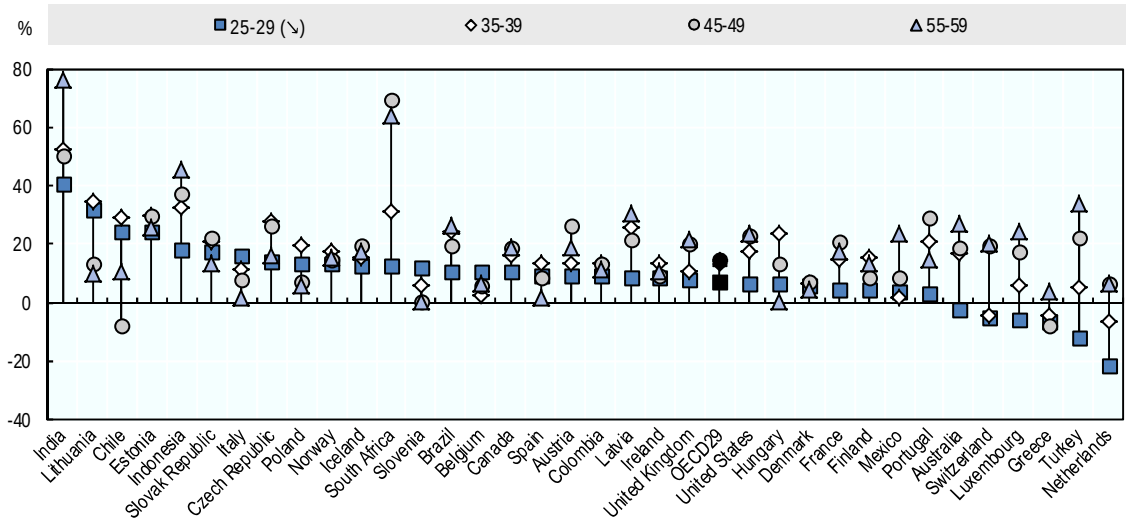
The gender pay gap increases with age and during parenthood

Gender differences in pay are generally larger among older workers than among their younger counterparts (Figure 12.4). On average across the 29 OECD countries with available data, the gender gap in median hourly earnings for full-time-employed 25-29 year-olds stands at about 7%, increasing to 13% for 35-39 year-olds, 14% for 45-49 year-olds, and 15% for 55-59 year-olds. In fact, in six of the 29 OECD countries with available data (Australia, Greece, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Turkey and the Netherlands), full-time-employed young women aged 25-29 are actually better paid that young men aged 25-29 (Figure 12.4). In all six of these countries, these "negative" pay gaps disappear when looking at differences among the older age groups – for 55-59 year-olds, for example, all six countries see a pay gap in favour of men, with the gap in Australia as large as 27% and in Turkey as big as 34%.

Figure 12.4. The gender pay gap increases with age

Gender gap in median hourly earnings, full-time employees, by age group, 2014 or latest available[a]



Note: The gender gap in median hourly earnings is defined as the difference between male and female median hourly earnings divided by male median hourly earnings. Full-time employees are defined as those individuals with usual weekly working hours equal to or greater than 30 hours per week.

a) Data for India and South Africa refer to 2012, for Chile and Turkey to 2013, and for Colombia to 2015.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey for European Union countries, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Survey (HILDA) for Australia, the Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílio (PNAD) for Brazil, the Canadian Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Canada, the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN) for Chile, the Encuesta Nacional de Calidad de Vida (ECV) for Colombia, the National Sample Survey (NSS) for India, the National Labour Force Survey (SAKERNAS) for Indonesia, the Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (ENIGH) for Mexico, the General Household Survey (GHS) for South Africa, the Turkish Household Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Turkey, and the United States Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS-ASEC) for the United States.

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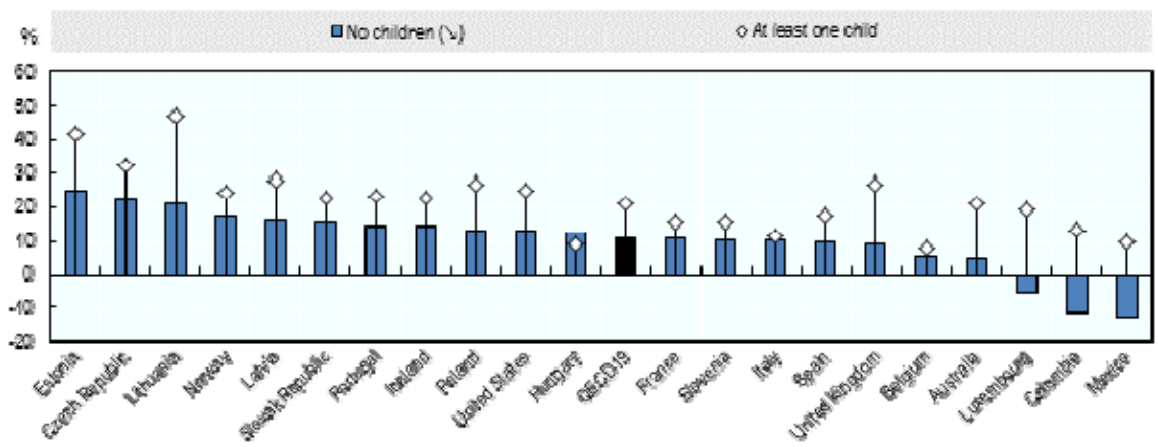
Gender gaps in paid and unpaid work (Chapter 15) widen when workers become parents – with negative consequences for wages. Women bear a disproportionate responsibility for unpaid work in the home, particularly childcare, which limits their ability to engage and advance in the labour market. As a result, gender pay gaps tend to be wider among parents than non-parents. On average across the 19 OECD countries with available data, in 2014, the gender gap in median hourly earnings among full-time-employed men and women with at least one child was 21.2%, almost double the gap for full-time-employed men and women without children (11.0%). The cost of motherhood is especially high in the Baltic countries, the United Kingdom and the United States, plus also some Eastern European countries. Because mothers tend to have different characteristics than childless women, and because working mothers often reduce working hours or seek out "family-friendly" jobs upon parenthood, isolating the actual effect of becoming a mother on wages is not always straightforward. It is possible that at least part of the "motherhood penalty" in wages could be due to differences between mothers and non-mothers in areas like education, work experience, career aspirations and job characteristics, for example. However, the literature on the subject has established that a motherhood penalty generally persists even after controlling for factors like education, job type and women's "self-selection" into motherhood (Budig and England, 2001; Gough and Noonan, 2013). Fathers, notably, suffer no such parenthood penalty; indeed, evidence suggests that fatherhood may actually have a positive effect on (at least some) men's earnings and career trajectories (Correll, Benard and Paik 2007; Hodges and Budig, 2010).

Figure 12.5. The gender gap is higher in the presence of children

Gender gap in median hourly earnings, full-time employees, 25-44 year-olds, by presence of children, 2014 or latest available[a]



Note: The gender gap in median hourly earnings is defined as the difference between male and female median hourly earnings divided by male median hourly earnings. Full-time employees are defined as those individuals with usual weekly working hours equal to or greater than 30 hours per week. Countries are shown only if the sample size for full-time employed men and women (aged 25-44) with at least one child exceeds 200.

a) Data for Colombia refer to 2015.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey for European Union countries, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Survey (HILDA) for Australia, the Encuesta Nacional de Calidad de Vida (ECV) for Colombia, the Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (ENIGH) for Mexico, and the United States Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS-ASEC) for the United States.

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Within-occupation and industry gender pay gap

There is no clear pattern across countries in the gender pay gap for workers in high- versus low-skilled jobs. In some countries, where gender pay gaps for workers in high-skilled jobs are over 20%, including Austria, Chile, Portugal, Switzerland, the Czech Republic and Spain, gaps for workers in low skilled jobs are often considerably smaller. By contrast in some countries with small overall gender pay gaps such as Italy, Hungary, Luxembourg and Slovenia, female managers may earn the same or more than their male counterparts, with gender pay gaps in favour of men for those working in lower skilled occupations.

Industry, however, appears to plays a key role in the wage gap. Across OECD countries, women working in information and communications technology, in finance and in personal services are generally paid less than their male counterparts. In 2014, on average across OECD countries, the gaps in median hourly earnings in these industries stood at 22.1%, 22.8% and 23.9%, respectively. Some countries, like Chile, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia and Portugal also see a particularly severe pay gap in the industrial sector, with women paid more than 30% less than men. Others (Estonia and the United States) have extremely large pay gaps in finance, with women earning 40% less than men. In general, the sector with the smallest pay gap is public administration, with a median gap of 8.7%, consistent with more rigid and less discriminatory wage setting mechanisms, as well as anti-discriminatory practices and regulations. The accommodation and food industry and other business services (real estate and professional services) also report similarly narrow gender gaps in hourly pay (9.6% and 11.9%, respectively, on average across the OECD). In personal services, a sector usually dominated by low-skilled employment, the gender pay gap is particularly high at around or above 40% in Austria, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg and Turkey.

The gender pay gap by educational level

The gender pay gap for full-time employees is, on average, smaller among men and women with low levels of educational attainment. Across the OECD, the median hourly gap is 16.5% for women with less than upper secondary education, 18.1% for those holding upper secondary education, and 17.4% for tertiary graduates. The cross-country dispersion of gender pay gaps by educational attainment, however, is quite large. In Australia, Austria, Denmark, Hungary, Iceland and Norway, gender pay gaps among the highly-educated are as much as 10 percentage points higher than for those with low levels of education. By contrast, in Estonia, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Switzerland, gender gaps among people with less than secondary education are actually much larger than for high skilled women. This pattern also holds in some emerging economies, like India and Indonesia, where gender gaps for low-skilled workers are just below 50% – roughly twice as high as for workers who have completed university education.

The gender pay gap often increases along the hourly wage distribution

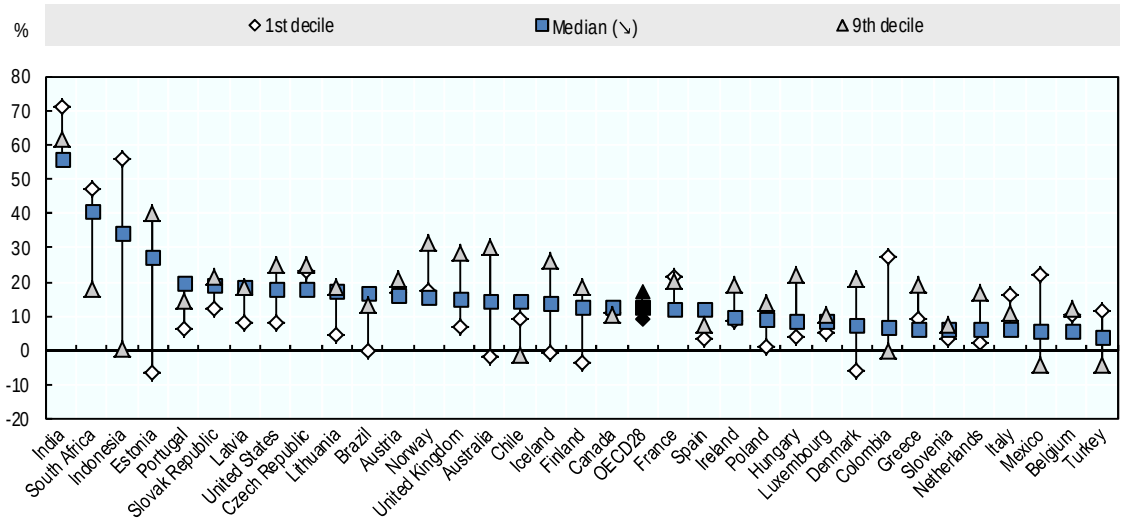
Focusing just on gender gaps in mean or median earnings provides only a partial picture of gender differences in pay. The well-documented gender gap in very highly pay (Goldin, 2014; OECD, 2012) is a major feature across OECD countries and G20 countries, as gender pay gaps tend to increase along the hourly wage distribution (Figure 12.6). On average, across the 28 OECD countries with available data, the gender gap in hourly earnings for full-time employees is 9% at the first (lowest) decile, 11.5% at the third, 12.6% at the

seventh and 17.2% at the ninth. At the top decile of the distribution, the pay gap ranges from a negative pay gap of about 4% – that is, a pay gap *in favour of women* of about 4% – in Mexico and Turkey, to pay gaps in favour of men that are as large as 40% in Estonia and 62% in India. The gender pay gap among the higher paid tends to be larger in countries where pay gaps among the lower paid are relatively small.

However, not all countries see a wider pay gap at the top end of the earnings distribution. In Chile, Italy, Mexico and Turkey, plus also several emerging economies (Colombia, India, Indonesia and South Africa), the gender gap in hourly earnings at the first (lowest) decile of the earnings distribution is larger than the gap at the median or at the ninth (highest) decile. This likely reflects a strong selection effect in these countries, with many low-skilled women either dropping out of the labour force or engaging only in informal employment – so that they are not, or are only in some part, accounted for in the pay gap statistics – and with the remaining female workforce disproportionately highly-skilled in comparison to men.

Figure 12.6. The gender pay gap increases along the hourly wage distribution

Gender gap in hourly earnings, full-time employees, by decile of the wage distribution, 2014 or latest available[a]



Note: The gender gap in hourly earnings is defined as the difference between male and female hourly earnings at the given decile of the wage distribution, divided by male hourly earnings at the given decile of the wage distribution. Full-time employees are defined as those individuals with usual weekly working hours equal to or greater than 30 hours per week.

a) Data for India and South Africa refer to 2012, for Chile and Turkey to 2013, and for Colombia to 2015.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey for European Union countries, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Survey (HILDA) for Australia, the Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílio (PNAD) for Brazil, the Canadian Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Canada, the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN) for Chile, the Encuesta Nacional de Calidad de Vida (ECV) for Colombia, the National Sample Survey (NSS) for India, the National Labour Force Survey (SAKERNAS) for Indonesia, the Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (ENIGH) for Mexico, the General Household Survey (GHS) for South Africa, the Turkish Household Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Turkey, and the United States Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS-ASEC) for the United States.

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Policies to address the gender wage gap

Reflecting the stubborn persistence of gender pay gaps, 25 countries report having introduced new national measures to reduce wage disparities between men and women since 2013. One favourable policy measure involves pay transparency, which makes companies acknowledge the size of their gender pay gap. Companies are increasingly required to carry out analyses of gender wage gaps, and are requested or required to share this information with employees, government auditors, or the public. These types of measures have been proposed or introduced in several countries since 2013, including Australia, Japan, Germany, Lithuania, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. In some countries, the results of these analyses must be shared with employees or employee representatives.

In Lithuania, for example, at the request of employee representatives, employers with more than 20 employees are required from 1 July 2017 to provide average wages by professional group and gender at least once a year. In Switzerland, draft legislation would require employers with at least 50 employees to conduct a regular wage analysis, have the analysis reviewed by a third party, and inform employees about the results of the review. In other countries, this information is also requested (or mandated) to be shared publicly. In Germany, legislation expected to take effect in 2017 will require companies with over 500 employees to publish equal pay measures and outcomes. The United Kingdom also mandated that companies report differences in pay between male and female employees, starting in April 2017. In the case of Sweden, the legal framework on wage gap analysis was amended in 2016 to improve pay transparency: wage gap analysis must be carried out annually by all employers, and companies with ten or more employees must document the result of the analysis and make results available.

Austria legislated pay transparency rules in 2011 and in 2015 carried out an evaluation of the implementation of these measures. Companies are required to report pay and indicate the minimum wage in job vacancies, in order to improve pay transparency at the time of hiring.

Other new strategies include the introduction of pay gap calculators, which are often publicly available online, as well as certifications for companies showing best practice in gender pay equality. The Czech Republic offers, and Greece is developing, pay calculators that help employees better understand what salary they should receive for a given job, sector and locality. Spain has developed and made available to companies a self-diagnosis gender pay gap tool and software for rating job positions with a gender perspective. Costa Rica, Mexico and Latvia have introduced certifications or awards for companies showing a commitment to reducing the gender pay gap, among other measures (e.g. reducing discrimination, improving diversity in workplaces). Iceland is piloting an "Equal Pay standard" certification system. A few countries, including Israel, Lithuania, Slovenia and Sweden, have strengthened anti-discrimination laws aimed at reducing pay inequality, and five countries report having carried out awareness campaigns around the gender wage gap, targeting the public, employees and/or employers (OECD GEQs 2016). Countries that have commissioned studies of the gender wage gap include Australia, France, Iceland, the Netherlands and Portugal.

Following the passage of the Workplace Gender Equality Act of 2012, Australia has developed a comprehensive approach to gender pay equality. All non-public sector employers with 100 or more workers are required to provide the Australian Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) with data regarding the remuneration profile of managers and non-managers by gender and workplace profile; the existence of a

remuneration policy or strategy (including any gender pay equity objectives included in such a strategy or policy; whether any remuneration pay gap analysis has been undertaken (and if so, when); and the actions taken, if any, as a result of a gender remuneration pay gap analysis. Additional reporting requirements that went into effect in 2015-16 require employers to provide data on the number and proportion of employees who were awarded promotions by gender, employment status and manager/non manager. WGEA offers a comprehensive website with guidance on reporting requirements and a gender pay gap calculator, which is intended to help organisations identify and analyse the causes of various types of gender pay gaps (WGEA, 2017).

Within the public sector, some OECD countries have recently shown a commitment to adopt special measures to overcome the pay gap. For example, in October 2016 the Canadian Government committed to introduce legislative reform towards "Proactive pay equity" in both the federal public service and the federally regulated private sector. This concept includes engaging employers to examine their own pay practices; identifying possible gender wage discrimination and adjusting wages accordingly; and maintaining the plan over time. In 2016, the United Kingdom announced its intention to include a mandatory requirement for public bodies with 250 or more employees to undertake gender pay gap reporting. Portugal is promoting equal pay in state-owned companies by requiring state-owned enterprises to report on salaries paid to women compared with men every three years and establish workplace plans to address wage inequalities.

It is too soon to tell whether such measures reduce gender pay gaps, but these initiatives draw attention to pay inequalities. They also incentivise companies that care about reputation and want to spend efficiently on fair wages that reflect productivity (rather than, for example, excessive hours on the job). These pay equity measures should be evaluated rigorously.

Key policy messages

- Pay transparency measures are a promising tool for shining a light on pay inequality, but these measures are relatively new and outcomes have not been well evaluated. The effects of pay transparency policies need to be studied carefully, and evaluation plans should be included in programme design.
- Working hours have little impact on hourly pay gender pay gaps, but in countries where the incidence of part-time work is high, the gender pay gaps in monthly earnings or annual income are mechanically very high. Countries should ensure that women have a right to return to full-time work if they moved to part-time work for caregiving reasons.
- Large unexplained gender pay gaps still persist, both on a monthly or an hourly basis, even after accounting for worker and job characteristics. It is not possible to separately identify the factors driving the unexplained component, but these likely include discrimination in hiring, career progression and opportunities in the labour market. A smart mix of legal provisions and public awareness is crucial in tackling persistent discrimination against women. A combination of transparency rules and the promotion of firms' best practices in terms of hiring (like unbiased job advertising, structured interviews to test candidates fairly, and human resources management for impartial career development) is essential to further close the gender pay gaps across OECD countries.

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Chapter 13

Barriers to women's career path and income mobility

Key findings

- Women's careers are one third shorter than men's and are much more likely to involve part-time work. Much of the difference in earnings progression is generated before age 40 as women miss many labour market opportunities during the early stages of their careers.
- Childbirth marks a crucial point in women's careers. Withdrawing from the labour market around childbirth can have long-lasting effects on women's labour force participation and earnings. Childbirth is also often accompanied by greater income vulnerability for women in many countries.
- Women experiencing job loss are subject to smaller household income losses than men. Lower earnings as well as the buffer role played by their partner's earnings underlie this result.
- After a divorce or a separation, women tend to suffer greater income losses than men. The loss of the income previously provided by a partner, the (potentially) increased difficulty of combining work and care commitments, the change in taxes paid and benefits received can lead to substantive income drops after a relationship ends.

Despite major improvements in young girls' and women's education (Chapter 7), sizable gains in female participation in the labour market (Chapter 11), and the development across decades of anti-discrimination legislation, the gender pay gap persists in OECD countries (Chapter 12). Frequent career interruptions help explain at least part of this observed gap: life and career events impact women's income mobility and earnings profile in ways they tend not to for men.

Women's careers are shorter than men's, with fewer opportunities

Women's careers are one third shorter, on average, than men's, and are much more likely to involve part-time work (OECD, 2018, forthcoming). Women are slightly less mobile than men on average, with significant cross-country and age differences. Every year, on average across OECD countries, 16% of the working-age population experiences a change in their professional situation. They change employer, change their working time (switching from full-time to part-time or vice-versa), lose their job, find a new one, become unemployed or inactive, or re-enter the labour market after a period of inactivity. Cross-country differences are large, with professional mobility ranging from 12% of the working age population or less in Italy, France, Greece, Ireland and Portugal, to more than 25% in Finland, Sweden and Iceland.

Gender differences in labour market transitions are rather small – on average less than half a percentage point. However, while women have on average the same number of labour transitions as men, the transitions are of a different nature. Women experience fewer episodes of unemployment, changes in employer, or changes in contract type. In almost all countries, women more often change working time than men, and women are also more likely to move in and out of the labour force. Age patterns of labour mobility are different for men and women and can partly explain the gender wage gap as women i) have more stable careers when they are young; ii) more often change their professional situation at prime age (driven by moves in and out of the labour force); and iii) less often go through a professional change when above 55 years old. The missing labour transitions (change of job, employer or contract type) at the early stages in their career significantly shape women's careers: job churn at this crucial time in one's career has the highest effect on wage growth and helps in finding the right job. These missed opportunities penalise women, as most of the gender pay gap is generated before age 40 (Chapter 12).

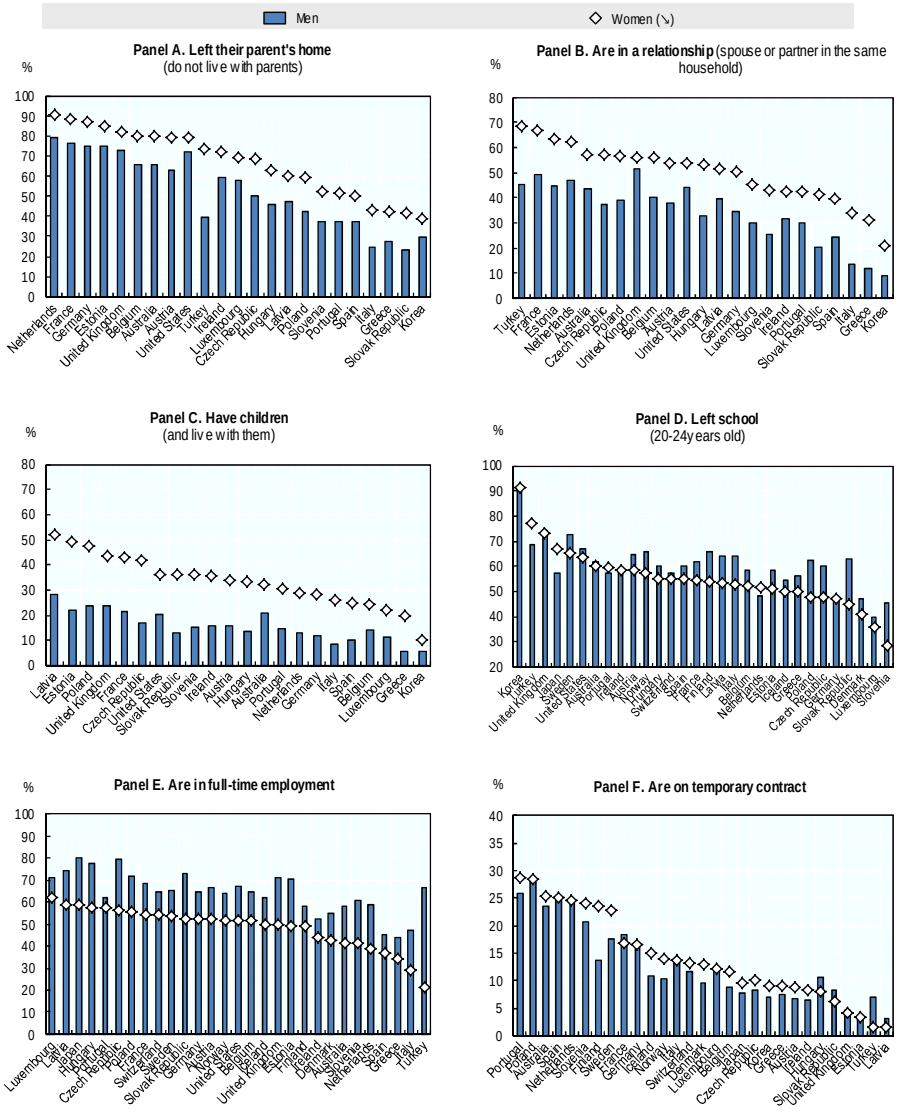
Women start their careers differently

Careers start differently for women and men (Figure 13.1). In all OECD countries, women leave their parent's home earlier than men, on average, and women also enter relationships earlier. They have children earlier and more often live with them. Women are also more likely to enter the labour market through temporary jobs than men. In all OECD countries except Japan, Portugal, the Netherlands and Turkey, women leave school later than men, delaying their entry into the labour market. In continental and southern European countries and in Korea, young adults stay longer in education before entering the labour market. In other countries, like Australia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland, they enter paid work earlier, with a dual work/education approach (e.g., apprenticeship) playing a crucial role in bridging educational and professional aspects (Figure 13.A1.1 in Annex 13.A1). Interestingly, in the Nordic countries and the United Kingdom, this dual role at the earliest stage of their career is more frequent for young women, while in Finland and the United Kingdom, continued dual activity (education and work) is also fairly common at the very late stages of women's careers

(Figure 13.A1.1). The way women and men enter the labour market differs and impacts their future career evolution: women are much more likely to begin their careers in temporary jobs in Australia, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Luxembourg (Figure 13.1).

Figure 13.1. Major life events at career start

Percentage of the population aged 25-29 (except Panel D, 20-24 years old), 2015 or latest available[a]



Note: For each panel, countries are sorted from left to right in descending order according to the value for women on the given measure.

a) Data for Japan refer to 2012, for Turkey to 2013, and for Australia and Korea to 2014.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) for European Union countries, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Survey (HILDA) for Australia, the Korea Labor and Income Panel Study (KLIPS) for Korea, the Turkish Household Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Turkey, and the Current Population Survey (CPS) basic file for the United States. For Japan, data provided by R. Kambayashi based on the Japanese Labour Force Survey.

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Childbirth is a turning point in women's labour market activity

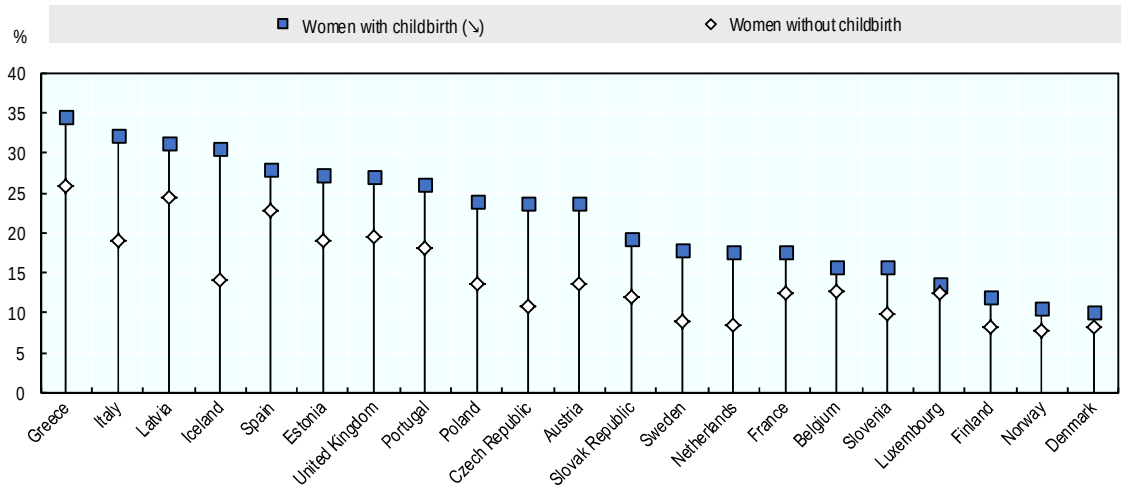
Childbirth often represents an important breakpoint for women's patterns of labour market activity. In many countries labour market activity among childless men and women is fairly similar, but large differences tend to emerge once women become mothers and men become fathers (OECD, 2016). Women in particular are likely to adapt their paid work according to the additional responsibilities that come with parenthood, especially when children are very young, but also as they get older, though the extent to which being a mother affects female labour market activity differs considerably across countries (OECD, 2016).

Practically all employed mothers take a break from work shortly before and during the first few weeks or months after childbirth but, after this period, differences in national parental leave support and childcare systems contribute to different labour market dynamics (OECD, 2016). While in some countries, like Portugal and the Netherlands, mothers frequently return to paid work after a few months of paid leave (OECD, 2007; Wall and Escobedo, 2013), in many others the share of mothers actually at work rebounds only once children start to enter pre-primary education at around age three or primary school at about age six (OECD, 2016). Women's withdrawal from the labour market upon childbirth, as measured by the gap in the participation rate between men and women with similarly aged children, can be: very common and for a long period of time (around three years or more), such as in Australia, Austria, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and the United Kingdom; common but for only a relatively short period of time (a year or less), such as in Denmark, Iceland, Latvia and Luxembourg; or less common but for a very long period of time (roughly five years or more), as is sometimes found in Belgium, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Korea and Poland (OECD, 2018).

Withdrawing from paid work at childbirth can have serious consequences for incomes. In many countries, women who experience childbirth are far more likely than those who do not to suffer from a large drop in income from one year to the next (Figure 13.2). Indeed, in the Czech Republic, Iceland, the Netherlands and Sweden, women are approximately twice as likely to experience a year-on-year decrease of 20% or more in their household disposable income when they have a child. Only in Luxembourg and to a slightly lesser extent Denmark, are women who do and do not experience childbirth almost equally likely to suffer a large drop in income.

Figure 13.2. Childbirth leads to significant negative household income shocks

Percentage of women with and without childbirth experiencing a year-on-year decrease of 20% or more in their household disposable income, 2007-13



Note: Working-age population. Equivalised household incomes, in real terms. Year-on-year observations were pooled from 2007 to 2013 for each country. Following the birth of a child, household income may vary for two reasons: 1) total household income might change due to withdrawal of the mother from the labour market, to a change in her labour supply, to a change in the labour supply of the father, to a change of employer, to a change of contract, as well as due to new benefits or tax-credits linked to the childbirth; 2) the size (n) of the household increases, decreasing mechanically the total equivalised household income even without any change in total household disposable income (which is divided by the square root of (n+1) in t+1 while it was only divided by the square root of n in t).

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey.

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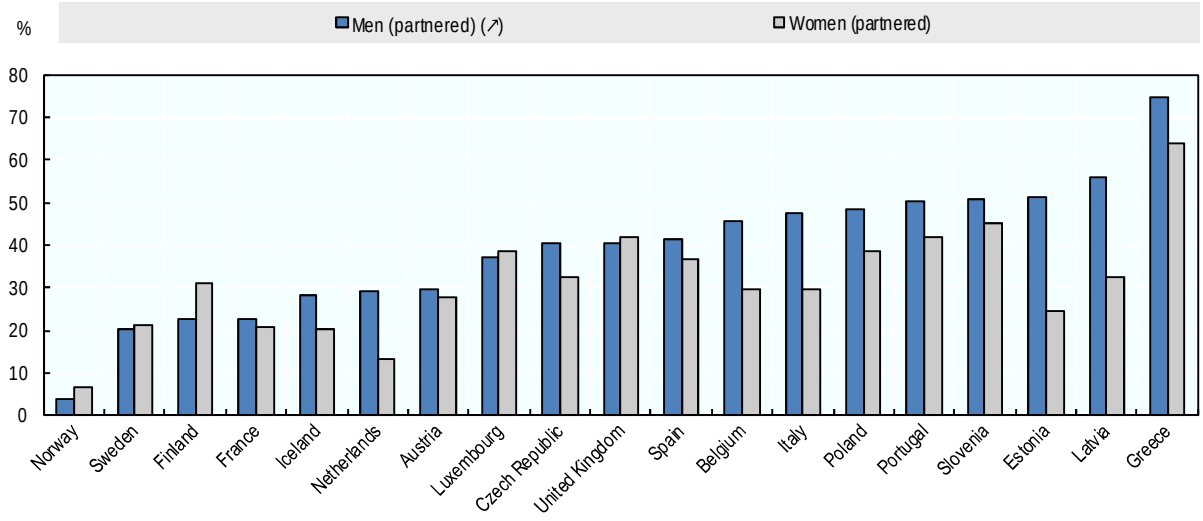
Financial consequences of job losses are smoothed by pooling resources

Because of their different roles in the labour market and in caregiving, women and men tend to be impacted differently by events such as job loss. Women who lose their jobs lose less household income than men (Figure 13.3). Lower earnings might explain this result, as well as the buffer role played by their partner's income: as men tend to earn higher wages, on average, than women, job loss by the male partner implies on average a greater income loss for the household budget. For instance, in the Netherlands, where 75% of women with dependent children work part-time, only around 15% of partnered women who lose their job also experience a significant loss of income (of 20% or more). For partnered men, this figure is roughly twice as high. Countries where women's participation in the labour market is high – or where the gender pay gap is limited – tend to have more equal results.

Figure 13.3. Household income drops less through the loss of women's jobs

Share of the recently unemployed population experiencing a year-on-year decrease of 20% or more in their household disposable income, individuals living with a spouse or partner, by sex, 2010-13



Note: Working-age population. Equivalised household incomes, in real terms. Year-on-year observations were pooled from 2010 to 2013.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey.

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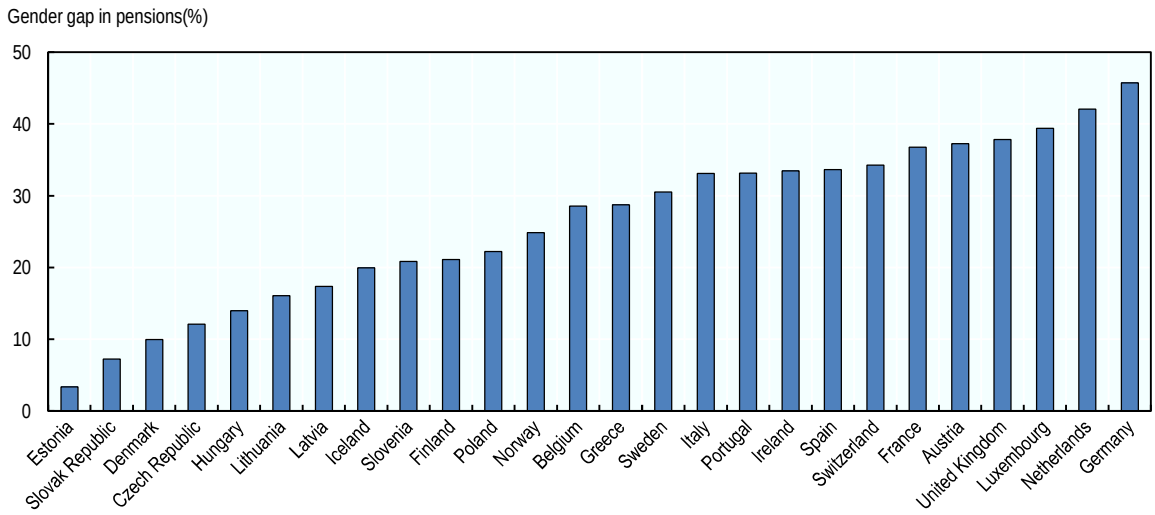
Career breaks lead to gender gaps in pension entitlements

Career interruptions and/or withdrawing early from the labour force also affect women's pensions. Shorter working careers and constrained career and earnings profiles, relative to men, help explain why on average women's pensions are of smaller value than men's. Figure 13.4 shows that among pension recipients in 2013/14 the gender pension gap was less than 10% only in Estonia, Denmark and the Slovak Republic. In most other countries gender pension gaps range from 10% to 40% and are close to 45% in Germany and the Netherlands. The pension gaps presented in Figure 13.4 only concern pensioners and thus reflect employment and lifestyle behaviours of past decades. Older generations of women often started a family earlier and generally spent less time in paid work than working women nowadays. Furthermore, until recently women's pensionable age was lower than that of men in many pension systems across the OECD. Pension reform means that pensionable ages in future are projected to be the same for men and women in all OECD countries, except for Chile, Poland, Israel and Switzerland (OECD, 2015).

Notwithstanding these reforms and the reduction in gender employment gaps, as long as women are over-represented in occupations and jobs that are less well paid and/or in part-time employment – which underlies the huge pensions gap in Germany and the Netherlands – gender pension gaps are likely to remain an important outcome of gender inequalities in labour markets.

Figure 13.4. Most countries have a large pension gap

Gender gap in pensions, 65+ year-olds, 2014 or latest available[a]



Note: The gender gap in pensions is defined as: (1-(women's average pension / men's average pension))*100. "Pensions" include public pensions, private pensions, survivor's benefits and disability benefits. The gender gap in pensions is calculated for people aged 65 and older only.

a) Data for Austria, Denmark, Greece, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia and Spain refer to 2013

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey for all countries except Germany; European Commission calculations based on EU-SILC for Germany.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574817

Key policy messages

- Policies should take a life-course approach and consider the different barriers present at different stages of women's lives. Women often miss out on crucial labour market mobility opportunities during the early stages of their careers as this period coincides with the arrival of children in the household. Policy can limit the loss of labour mobility opportunities by taking measures that facilitate employment and make work financially attractive even when combined with care commitments. Child and out-of-school hours supports, in-work credits and policies that promote leave-taking among fathers (Chapters 16-18) can help to reduce gender participation gaps.
- Childbirth represents a critical point in a women's career and can affect not only labour force participation, but also current income. Financial supports within the tax-benefit system such as paid leave, childcare supports, and other in-work benefits can help smooth income shocks occurring at that time.
- The main barriers to equal pension entitlements lie in women's work and earnings patterns. However, pension systems can help narrow the pension gap by compensating women in retirement for career interruptions related to childbirth; have the same pensionable ages for men and women; and have minimum entitlements to limit poverty risks in old age.

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Annex 13.A1

Women's detailed activity status across the life course

Figure 13.A1.1. Distribution (%) of women by detailed activity status, by five-year age group, 2015 or latest available year[a]

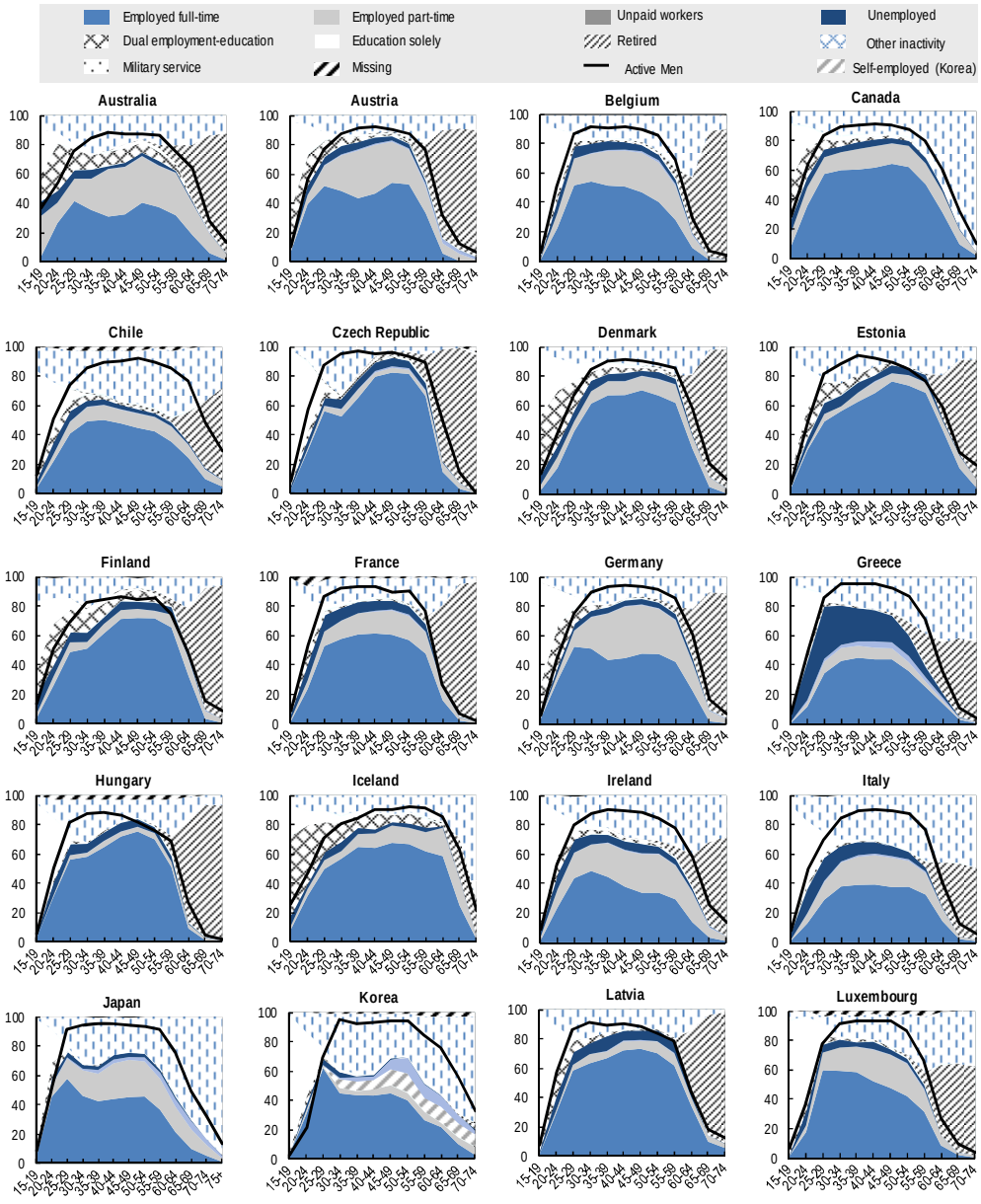
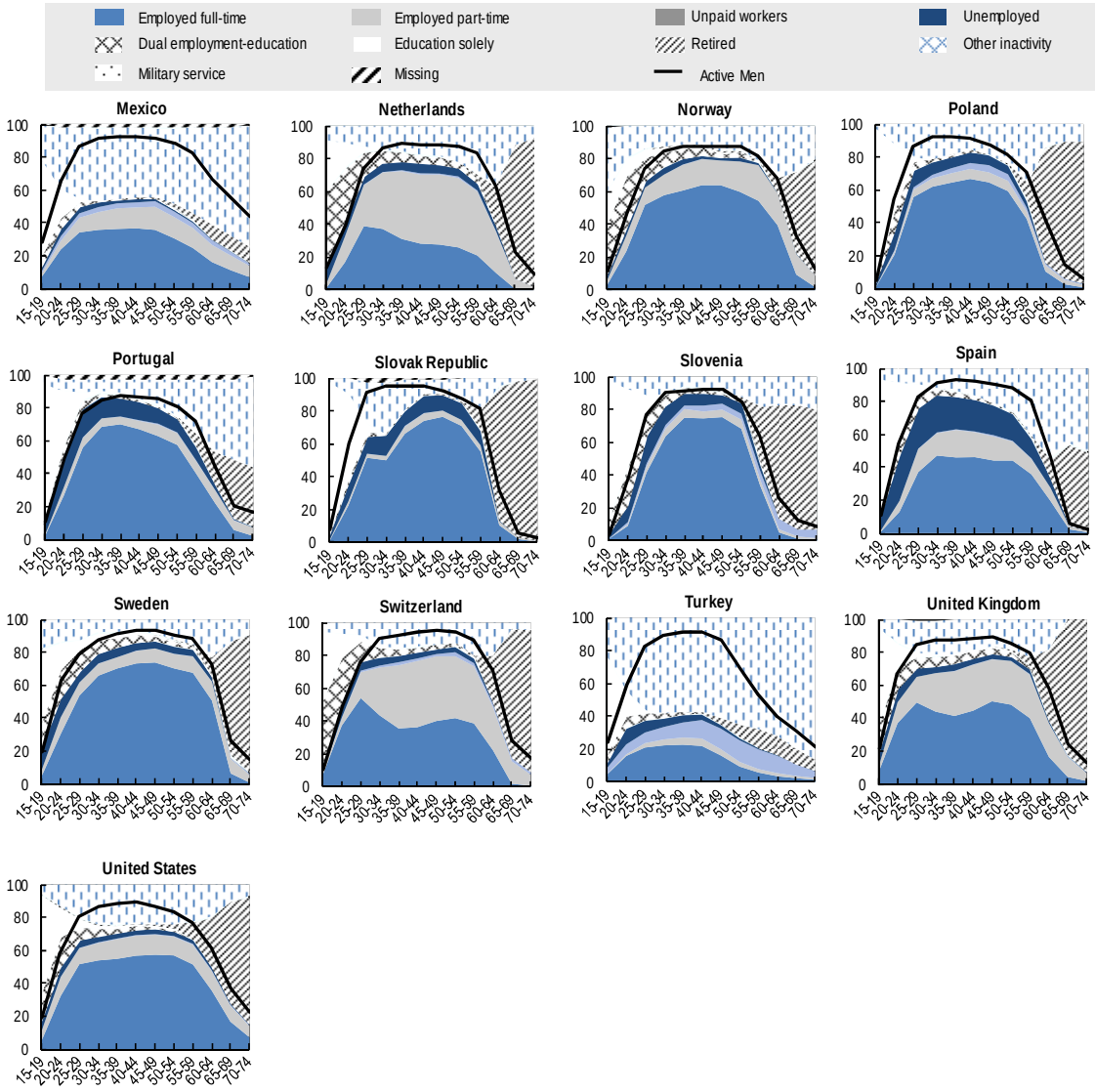


Figure 13.A1.1. Distribution (%) of women by detailed activity status, by five-year age group, 2015 or latest available year[a] *(cont.)*



Note: The solid line displays the proportion of active men; "active" includes the categories "employed full time", "employed part time", "unpaid workers" and "unemployed". This activity rate for men may differ from official figures due to distinction of the separate category "dual employment-education" that helps identify how men and women enter the labour market. The activity rates presented here are in fact "activity rates with achieved education". "Part time" is defined as less than 30 hours worked per week. For Korea, data on working hours are available for employees only; the self-employed appear as a separated category. For Canada and Japan, "retired" are included in "other inactivity". For Japan, the unpaid workers category is in fact "family workers".

a) Data for Israel to 2011, for Japan refer to 2012, for Chile and Turkey to 2013, and for Australia and Korea to 2014.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) for European Union countries, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Survey (HILDA) for Australia, the Canadian Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Canada, the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN) for Chile, the Israeli Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Israel, the Korea Labor and Income Panel Study (KLIPS) for Korea, the Encuesta Nacional de Ocupación y Empleo (ENOE) for Mexico, the Turkish Household Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Turkey, and the Current Population Survey (CPS) basic file for the United States. For Japan, data provided by R. Kambayashi based on the Japanese Labour Force Survey.

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Chapter 14

Glass ceilings still unbroken

Key findings

- Gender balance at the top of listed companies is still a distant goal. In 2016, women sat on 20% of board seats OECD-wide, up slightly from 16.8% in 2013. On average, 4.8% of CEOs were women in 2016, double the 2.4% in 2013.
- In 2016, women held 28.7% of seats in lower or single houses parliament, a marginal increase over 2013's 27.5%. As for appointments to the executive, no OECD country has passed legislation setting quotas. Men occupy slightly over 70% of ministerial positions and women 29.3%, on average. In the judiciary, gender parity has been reached in professional judicial appointments, with women accounting for 54.7% of judges OECD-wide. Yet, women's representation, while high in lower courts, progressively falls in the higher courts.
- Countries have adopted various actions to promote gender balance on boards and in senior management. As of 2016, nine OECD countries had introduced gender quotas for the boards of publicly listed and/or state-owned enterprises. Other countries have taken an approach that is not legally binding, involving voluntary targets, corporate governance codes and/or disclosure rules.
- The lack of structural and institutional backing for women throughout their careers is identified as a serious obstacle to their reaching senior positions. Other obstacles include social and cultural norms, inadequate buy-in or support from leaders, assumptions about women's behaviour that serve them ill, underdeveloped professional networks, as well as lack of accountability and proper monitoring systems.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Progress in women's representation at the top between 2013 and 2016

Bridging the gender divide in public and corporate life is a matter of fairness as well as effective governance. However, more women in business and politics do not mean more women in leadership positions. Overall, the slow pace of change reveals persistent, complex challenges not yet resolved. Improvement differs by country, sector and institution and is often driven by affirmative action specifically designed to narrow existing gender gaps.

At the corporate level, there has been but a modest increase in the female share of seats on boards of listed companies, and gender balance in the top echelons is still a distant goal. Uneven improvement is attributable to different factors, such as the absence of policy in some OECD countries, obstacles to adopting and enforcing policies where they exist, and entrenched social norms at the company level.

As for the public sector, political party culture and voting practices affect women's access to policy making and positions of leadership. Indeed, culture and practices across state institutions – and especially in recruitment, appointment and promotion – determine how many women make it to the top (OECD, 2015a).

In 2016, women sat on 20% of seats on the boards of publicly listed companies (PLCs) OECD-wide – up slightly from 16.8% in 2013. At the same time, country responses to the OECD's Gender Equality Questionnaire (GEQ) suggest that, in 2016, 4.8% of chief executive officers (CEOs) were women, double 2013's 2.4%. Australia, Belgium, France, Italy, Poland and Sweden saw the greatest progress in gender-balanced boardrooms, and Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg and Australia in the rise of female CEOs. And in 80% of OECD countries, the share of women sitting on PLC boards of directors rose between 2013 and 2016. Progress, however, has been modest rather than substantial: only Belgium, Italy and Sweden recorded increases greater than or equal to 10 percentage points. Belgium and Italy have quotas for listed companies to achieve 33% women on boards; this could be one factor driving the increase. Sweden, on the other hand, has a voluntary rule in their Corporate Governance Code "an equal distribution among the sexes shall be the goal".

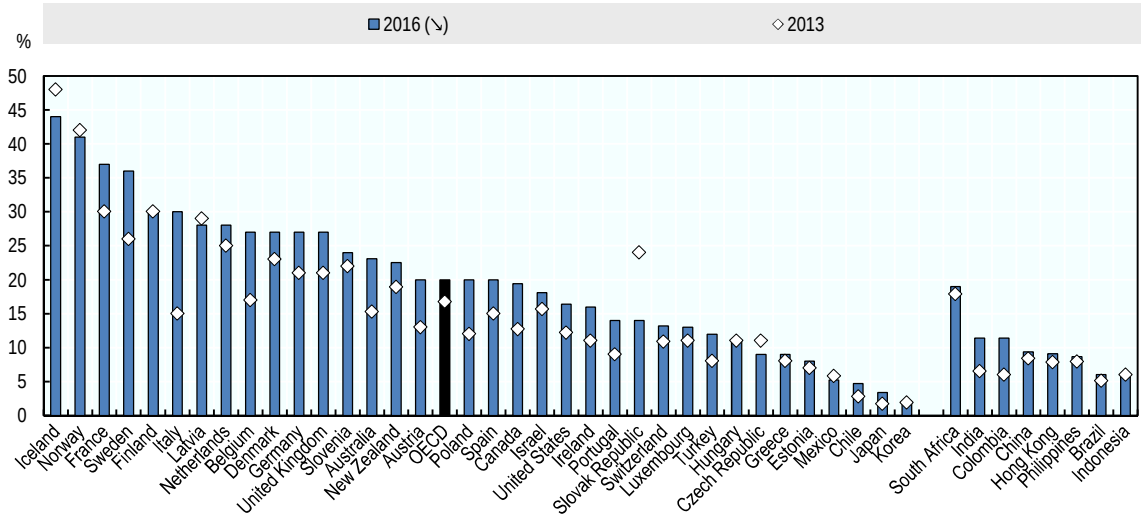
As for gender balance in legislative bodies, women have yet to reach parity with men in any OECD country. Women occupied an average of 20.6% of seats in lower or single houses of parliament in 2002, 27.5% in 2013, and 28.7% in 2016. While women's representation in lower or single houses of legislature has grown in some OECD countries – such as the United Kingdom, Mexico, Portugal and Spain – it has undergone setbacks in countries like Finland, Greece and Denmark (IPU, 2016).

When it comes to the proportion of women serving as presiding officers in parliaments, the OECD-wide gender gap is even greater. Of the 54 such positions in OECD legislatures, women hold only 10 – a share of just 18.5% and only slightly above the worldwide average of 17.9% on 1st January 2016. The Netherlands is the only OECD country with women presiding in both upper and lower houses. Compared to 2010, when there were 8 female presiding officers out of 54, only two extra appointments have been made in the OECD (IPU, 2016).

With regard to the appointment of women to ministerial positions, there was an 8% increase between 2005 and 2015 in OECD countries. Numbers of female ministers, however, vary significantly from one year to another. They are determined solely by political cycles and cabinet reshuffles (OECD, 2015b), as no OECD country has adopted legislated gender quotas in executive positions. Slightly over 70% of ministers are men and 29.3% women OECD-wide. Sweden is a strong performer in this regard as its cabinets have been gender-balanced since 1994.

Figure 14.1. Women's representation on company boards is growing slowly

Female share of seats on boards of directors in publicly listed companies, 2013 and 2016 or latest available year[a]



Note: For EU countries, Iceland, Norway and Turkey, data refer to the proportion of seats held by women on the boards of the 50 biggest companies on those countries' primary blue-chip index and registered in those countries. "Board members" refers to all members of the highest decision-making body in a company – e.g. the board of directors for a company in a unitary system or the supervisory board for companies in two-tier systems. For countries with data based on Lee et al. (2015), data refer to the proportion of seats held by women on boards of companies covered by the MSCI's "global director reference universe", a sample of 4 218 global companies covering all companies of the MSCI ACWI, World, EAFE and Emerging Markets indices – plus an additional 1 700 large and mid-cap developed market companies, 900 of which are either incorporated or primarily traded in the United States.

a) For Australia, Canada, Chile, Israel, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Switzerland, the United States, Brazil, China, Colombia, India, Indonesia and South Africa, data for 2010, 2013 and 2016 refer to Q4 2010, Q1 2013 and Q3 2015, respectively. For EU countries, Iceland, Norway and Turkey, data for 2010, 2013 and 2016 refer to H2 2010, H2 2013 and H1 2016, respectively.

Source: For EU countries, Iceland, Norway and Turkey, EC Database on Women and Men in Decision Making, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm; for all other countries, Lee et al. (2015).

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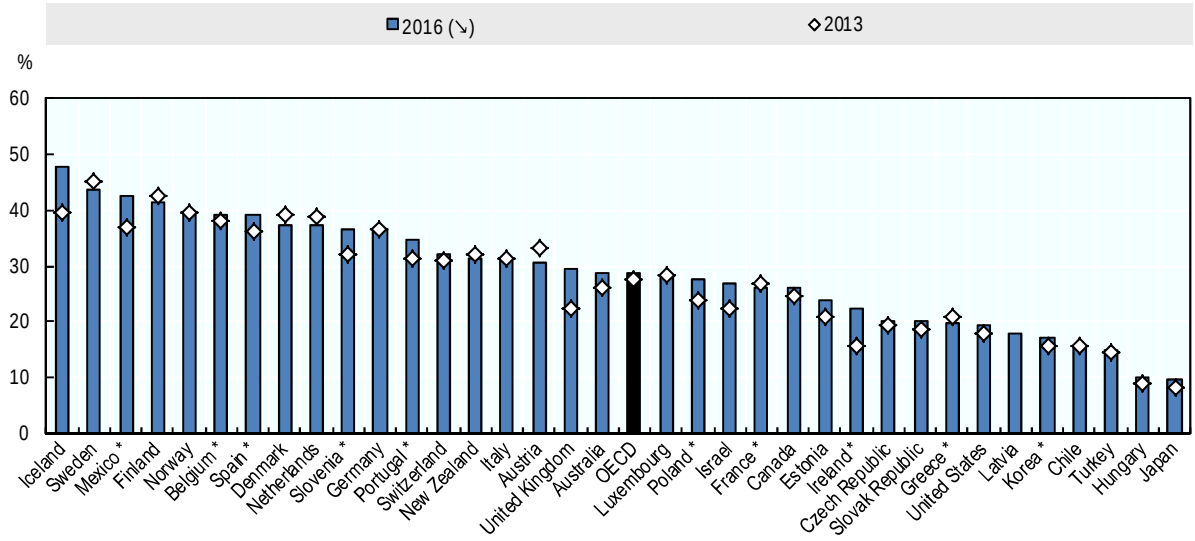
Gender gaps in the civil service persist. Between 2010 and 2015 there was no variation in the share of women employees in central government in OECD countries, which remained stable at about 52-53% (OECD, 2011; OECD 2017a). The share of women in professional positions in the civil service of 26 countries grew a little to 54.7% in 2015 from the 2010 level of 54.1% in 19 countries (OECD, 2011; OECD 2017a). However, women remain under-represented in the middle and senior tiers of management. The female share of employment in central government management positions has increased in recent years, but still points to a persistently leaky pipeline (Figure 14.3). Out of the overall 52.4% share of women employees, women make up only:

- 42.4% of middle management positions in 28 countries – up from 39.7% in 20 countries in 2010;
- 32.6% of senior management positions in 29 countries – up from 28.6% in 20 countries in 2010.

Figure 14.2. Women remain under-represented in parliaments and progress is slow in many OECD countries

Female share (%) of seats in parliaments, lower-house or single-chamber, 2013 and 2016



Note: Data for 2013 refer to 1st December 2013, and for 2016 to 1st December 2016. Countries marked with an asterisk (*) had legislated quotas (i.e. quotas implemented via the legislative process) in place in 2016.

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union Women in National Parliaments Database, http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm; Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) PARLINE database, http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp; Quota Project Database, http://www.quotaproject.org/.

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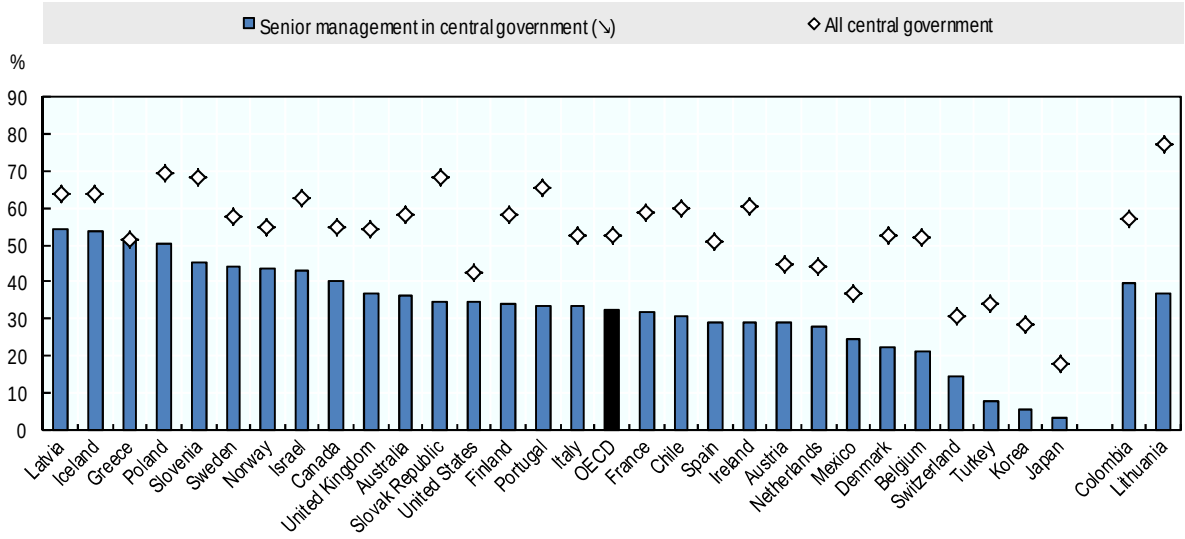
Data suggest that the leaky pipeline at management level is consistent across the public sector. In the 28 European Union countries for which data were available, women held 35.3% of the highest administrative positions in national government in 2016 – a minimal increase of 5.1 percentage points over 2013. As for the second most senior level, women accounted for 41.1% of posts, a tiny increase of 2.5 percentage points over 2013. Behind these average figures, there are variations from country to country, particularly at the highest levels of the civil service (EIGE, 2016).

Figure 14.3. Although women often make up more than half of employees in central government, they tend to be under-represented in senior government management positions

Female share of employment in senior management in central government, and female share of all employment in central government, 2015 or nearest available year[a]



Note: Data coverage and the classification of occupations in central government sometimes vary across countries. For more detail and country-specific notes, please see OECD (2017, Figure 3.8 and Annex D).

a) Data for Italy and France refer to 2014, and for the United Kingdom to 2016. Data for senior management positions in Korea are for 2016.

Source: OECD (2017), *Government at a Glance 2017*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2017-en.

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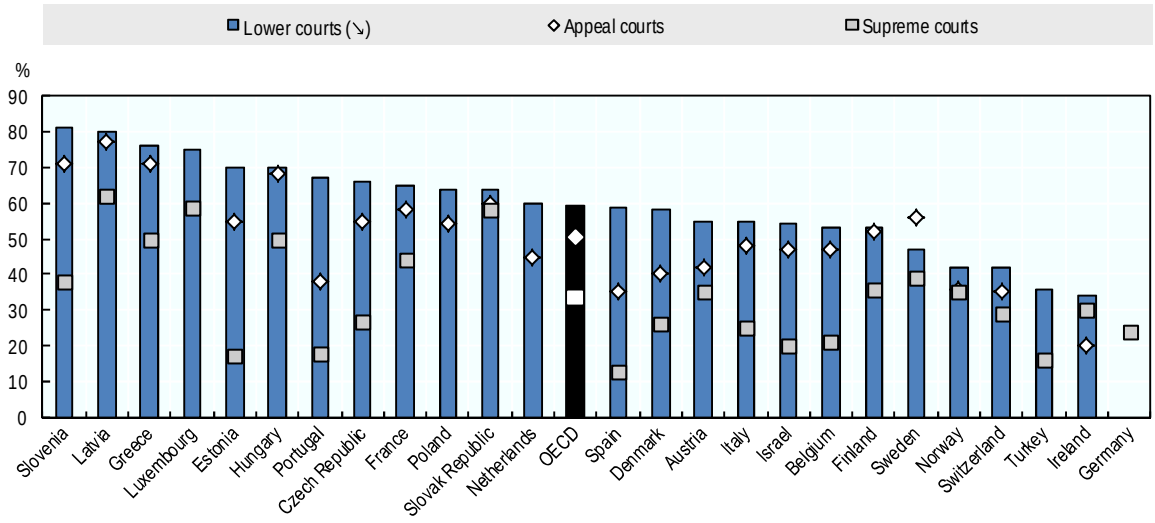
There has been great progress in the numbers of women working in judicial systems and gender gaps are narrower. Available statistics show that, on average across the OECD, women make up 54.7% of all judges. They are well represented in lower courts, where they are in a majority (59.4%), while in second instance, or appeal, courts there is a gender balance – 49.5% of male officers and 50.5% of females.

However, the higher a court is in the judicial hierarchy, the lower is the share of female judges (Figure 14.4). Only 33.6% of Supreme Court judges are women. The trend is mirrored in the proportion of female presiding judges – 45.9% and 28% in courts of first and second instance, respectively, and 18.6% in Supreme Courts. If judges are excluded, women are overrepresented in court staff, accounting for an average of 75% of positions.

Figure 14.4. The higher the level of the judicial hierarchy, the lower the share of female judges

Female share (%) of professional judges, by level of court, 2014



Source: CEPEJ – European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (2016), "European Judicial Systems – Efficiency and Quality of Justice", *CEPEJ Studies No. 23*, Edition 2016 (2014 data), European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

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Changing policy environments

Most OECD countries have initiated policies to promote gender balance on boards and in senior management (OECD, 2015c). Those that have introduced quotas have seen more immediate increases in the number of women on boards, while those that have taken a softer approach, using disclosure or targets, have seen a more gradual increase over time (Box 14.1). Most countries either require businesses to disclose the gender balance on their boards or, as part of their corporate governance codes, compel companies to comply or explain.

The United Kingdom's voluntary business-led initiative, for example, has brought improvement in gender diversity. Since 2011 companies listed on the FTSE 100 index of big firms have been encouraged to ensure that at least 25% of board members are women, with the voluntary challenge later widened to all firms listed on the larger FTSE 350 index, and increased with companies now asked to reach 33% female board members by 2020. The corporate governance code that governs companies listed in the premium segment also requires them to comply with board diversity disclosures. Sweden also uses its corporate governance code to steer companies towards gender balance – an approach that has brought results.

Similarly, since they endorsed the OECD Gender Recommendation, Australia, Chile, the Czech Republic, Japan, Poland, Portugal, Luxembourg and Switzerland initiated soft targets to achieve gender balance on the boards of PLCs and/or state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Australia and Chile – together with other countries like Finland, Spain and the United Kingdom – started to include disclosure requirements in their corporate governance codes and regulations compelling corporations to reveal the gender balance on their boards. Spain also uses voluntary agreements, whereby companies commit to meeting

gender diversity target in decision-making positions and on their boards of directors. They also pledge to develop and enforce measures to that end.

As of 2016, nine countries – Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Israel and Norway – have introduced compulsory gender quotas for PLC and SOE board membership. Finland, while it does not enshrine targets in law in its state-owned enterprise sector, has a rule in its nomination practices that ensures at least 40% representation of each gender. While quotas have boosted the number of women on boards in many countries, the gains at the top have not been reflected below board level.

Box 14.1. Gender diversity quotas, targets and disclosure rules for corporate boards

A quota system requires a minimum level of representation of both genders on company boards. A required quota written in law allows the government to enforce it and sanction companies for breaking the law by, for example, annulment of an appointment to the board, issuing warnings or levying fines.

Targets are measurable gender equality goals that companies should seek to meet to ensure gender balance on their boards of directors. They are to be achieved within specific timeframes set by the government or companies themselves. Targets are generally voluntary, so companies enjoy a certain leeway in meeting them. However, if they fail to meet targets or foster diversity, governments can hold them accountable by requiring them to explain publicly if they comply and if not, why not – the comply-or-explain approach, used in the Netherlands, for example.

Disclosure rules compel companies to disclose the gender make-up of their boards and even their gender diversity policies. They may be written in law or be provisions in corporate governance codes that required companies to comply with the rule or explain why not. All countries that practice gender quotas also use the disclosure rule, which is not always true of countries with voluntary gender diversity targets.

Most OECD countries practice some form of gender quota action to increase female representation in politics. The following are some examples (for further information, see www.quotaproject.org):

- Reserved seats gender quota – a constitutional and/or legislative requirement, which regulates the number of women and men elected.
- Legal candidate gender quotas – also a constitutional and/or legislative requirement, which compels political parties to put up a certain share of female and/or male candidates in elections.
- Political party gender quotas – which are adopted on voluntary basis and define the minimum number of female and/or male candidates who will stand for election on a party's list.

In 2016, of the 28 OECD countries with the data available:

- 24 had voluntary political party gender quotas,
- 10 had legislative gender quotas in their single chambers or lower houses,
- 10 had incorporated gender quotas into electoral law,
- 3 had written gender quotas into the constitution,
- 9 OECD countries are also reported to have passed gender quota legislation at subnational level,
- 0 OECD countries practice reserved-seat gender quotas.

The size of quotas varies, too, ranging from 14% to 44%, though none go as far as 50%. In 2014, however, Mexico passed an important amendment to Article 41 of the Federal Constitution that does require parity. It compels political parties to ensure gender parity when they nominate candidates in federal and local congressional elections and that they alternate male and female names on their lists of candidates. The move was a critical improvement on the previous constitutional requirement that at least 40% of deputies in the Assembly should be of the same sex (OECD, 2017b).

Quota actions, far from being an overall solution to gender-balanced representation in leadership, have shown to positively affect women's political representation. 13 of the 16 OECD countries where women's representation reaches 30% or more in single chambers and lower houses use gender quota systems, whether legislative or voluntary. However, between 2013 and 2016, no further countries joined the 10 that reported practicing legislative quotas, although France did embrace them in 2013 at the subnational level. Nor was there any change in how many countries used voluntary party gender quotas.

Practice of political gender quotas in diverse regional contexts

Despite persistent challenges to women's political participation, many countries in different regions of the world have legislated or changed their constitution to introduce legally binding gender quota actions and increase shares of women elected to parliament. From 2005 to 2015, female representation more than doubled in lower houses and single chambers in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), with Algeria and Tunisia crossing the 30% threshold beyond which the United Nations considers that women can truly influence policy. (See Chapter 20 for more details on quota provisions in MENA.)

In Latin America and the Caribbean, parliamentary gains for women came in the wake of the widespread introduction of gender quotas in the 1990s. More countries have followed suit since then, such as Chile in January 2015, Colombia in July 2011 and Uruguay in March 2009. Some countries have also further committed to gender balance by moving from gender quotas (ensuring a minimum percentage of the under-represented sex) to the adoption of requirements for gender parity. Ecuador was the first in 2008, followed by Costa Rica in 2009, Bolivia in 2010, Nicaragua and Panama in 2012 and Mexico in 2014. The 2015 electoral reform in Chile establishes so-called "flexible parity," allowing neither gender to exceed 60% (or fall below 40%) of all candidates.

In Asia, despite the adoption of gender quotas by many countries, the average percentage of women in parliaments (19.5%) remains far below the 30% threshold (IPU, 2017). Countries where women's representation in parliament is greatest – such as China, Bangladesh and Pakistan, for example – generally rely on legal gender quotas. The experience of Timor-Leste, the Asian country with the highest share of women in parliament in 2016, is instructive – following the introduction of a 25% female candidate quota in 2006, and the later extension of the quota to 33% in 2011, the female share of seats in the national parliament jumped from 25% in the 2001 election to 29.2% in 2007 and to 38.5% in the election in 2012 (IPU, 2017). However, some of the countries where women's political representation is relatively high have not adopted legal gender quotas. Instead, some rely on voluntary gender quotas and/or targets adopted by political parties, as in the Philippines, or on the promotion of women by the state, as in Viet Nam. In others, like India, Malaysia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand, the lack of legal gender quotas at the national level surely plays a role in the persistently low shares (below 12% [IPU, 2017]) of women elected in parliament. In the case of India, however, the picture is completely different at the subnational level, where several states have adopted affirmative actions and women's representation is higher.

Affirmative action in public services

Despite minor variations, there is low take-up in the civil service of measures which explicitly seek to enhance the recruitment of women and ensure that they enjoy equal opportunity in promotion and career advancement. According to 2016 data, the most common policy measure, which ten OECD countries reported using, is gender diversity hiring targets for women. In and around 2010, OECD countries began to use affirmative promotion and career advancement action designed for under-represented groups to specifically target women:

- Germany and Israel gave women preference in promotion;
- Austria, Canada, Germany, Korea and Switzerland gave women preference in promotion and recruitment;
- Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States ran information sessions specifically targeting women to make them aware of career development opportunities;
- Japan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States introduced coaching programmes specifically aimed to support women in acquiring higher career positions;
- Austria, France, Japan, Korea, Spain and Switzerland adopted gender targets for promotion ensuring that a certain number of women is given the chance to advance in their career.

Between 2010 and 2013, though, some countries cut back on gender affirmative actions. Austria and Iceland reported using gender diversity preference in hiring in 2010, but not in 2016, while France and Japan said they had discontinued preparatory training for civil service entrance examinations specifically targeting women candidates. France did, however, report in 2016 that it rewarded public service departments that had recruited more women and/or meet gender diversity targets.

Some OECD countries are moving towards affirmative action in the judiciary to ensure gender-balanced representation. Ireland, for example, established a Judicial Appointments Commission in 2016 which states that one of its priority goals is gender balance in judicial office. In 2013, Spain's General Council of the Judiciary approved the Equality Plan for Careers in the Judiciary. Designed to achieve effective gender equality in career advancement across the Spanish justice system, the plan includes: equal recruitment by public entrance examination; equal opportunity training and awareness-raising; vocational training; balancing work and family life; and, greater female participation in senior positions within judicial office. Some OECD countries – such as Denmark, Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom – indicated that they had taken measures to promote gender-sensitive recruitment processes in their court systems in 2014 (CEPEJ, 2016).

Remaining challenges

Obstacles to gender balance in corporate and public decision-making positions remain. They stem not only from institutional and organisational structure, but from social and cultural norms, inadequate buy-in or support from leaders, assumptions about women's behaviour that serve them ill in leadership positions, and underdeveloped professional networks for women. Measures such as quotas, soft targets and parity requirements to ensure numerical gender balance are important. But they are not enough to afford women equal access to and full participation in public and private leadership. Any affirmative

measures, such as quotas, should be considered as transitions to long-term changes in systems and cultures whereby men and women lead and contribute on an equal footing, and to their individual potential, to the political and economic development of their countries.

The figures and analysis in this chapter show that many challenges have gone unaddressed in the last three years. Men and women continue to share social responsibilities unequally in all OECD countries, as longstanding gendered representations and social norms hamper women's career development – even when they are educated to comparable and higher levels. Although policy makers are increasingly seeking ways to strike a work-life balance for both men and women in positions of leadership, women still struggle to reconcile private and professional responsibilities, particularly as they reach the top. The lack of structural and institutional backing for women throughout their careers is a serious obstacle to their reaching senior positions in the private or public sector. Besides childcare support, flexible work arrangements, and care-related leave for both women and men, what women need – and is essential but often lacking – is the provision of effective, sufficient and equal opportunity to develop as leaders. That includes: sponsorship, mentoring, building confidence and access to networks.

Key policy messages

- Single out clearly the reasons why progress in gender-balanced leadership, in both private and public sectors, has been slow and inconsistent in recent years across the OECD. All countries should invest in building evidence supported by targeted, gender-disaggregated data that is systematically collected in order to address the remaining challenges with tangible reforms.
- Gender quota actions are useful but cannot resolve women's persisting under-representation in public leadership. There needs to be a basket of measures tackling the multi-faceted challenges. Consistent changes to the law and coherent policy reform are crucial to ensure that men and women have equal access to political representation in election practices and public office, in civil service recruitment and promotion, and in human resources management in general within the public sector. Requirements for gender balance in positions of leadership need to be strengthened at national, subnational and institutional levels as part of the push for change. Tackling the mind-sets of incumbent male leaders and managers and changing institutional cultures still embedding gender bias in both public and private sectors is also key. Changes in legal and policy frameworks should include better accountability and effective monitoring of organisations' performance in achieving gender balance in senior management.
- Investing in male and female leadership role models is key. Institutions and policy makers need to invest in promoting leadership development schemes for women, also based on peer-to-peer support – such as sponsorship, mentoring, building confidence and access to networks. But it is also critical to engage men leaders in achieving gender equality. This could be done by establishing male role models from top private and public sector management to drive the change in gender stereotypes and cultural norms which continue to hamper women's access to and participation in decision making.

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Chapter 15

Gender inequality in unpaid work

Key findings

- Women continue to spend far more hours than men on unpaid childcare and housework, and in most OECD countries, women spend more *total* time on paid and unpaid work than men do.
- Women's hours in unremunerated work restrict the time they can spend in paid work, a pattern seen both within households and at the cross-national level.
- Norms, attitudes and behaviours around childcare and housework change slowly over time, and children tend to mimic – in later years – their own parents' paid and unpaid work behaviours. Recognising that the unequal distribution of unpaid work is a key barrier to gender equality overall, many OECD governments are promoting fathers' parental leave-taking and care for young children, as well as a range of public awareness campaigns challenging gender stereotypes and norms.

Women still do most unpaid work

Time is a finite resource. Long hours at home spent cooking, cleaning and caring for family limits the amount of time individuals can spend in paid work. Women have a disproportionate share of responsibility for caregiving, which can prevent them from entering full-time jobs, remaining in the labour market, and advancing their careers, earnings and pension entitlements. This unpaid work commitment can also discourage women from having children.

Women's responsibility for unpaid work also raises employers' relative cost of hiring women, which means employers may discriminate against hiring women of childbearing age due to the risk that they will leave the job to care for children. This perception stems not only from norms and social expectations around childrearing, but also from legal institutions and policies that treat men and women differently, such as maternity and paternity leave schemes in most (including OECD) countries. At the same time, stereotypes and expectations that men will heavily engage in the labour market – rather than provide family care – take away valuable time that fathers may want to spend with their family.

In OECD countries with available data, and indeed throughout the world, women do far more unpaid work than men. On average, women do the greatest share of unremunerated housework and childcare in Korea, Japan, Mexico, Portugal, Turkey and Italy, where women undertake more than three-quarters of all unpaid work. Women in Turkey and Mexico spend the most time per day on unpaid work, in absolute values, at over six hours per day on average, compared with under two hours for men (*OECD Gender Data Portal*). The gaps are typically even larger in developing countries (OECD, 2014a), where inadequate access to time-saving infrastructure (e.g., water piped into the home) and technology (e.g., washing machines) increases the total time required for unpaid work. In India and Pakistan, for example, women spend around ten times as many hours on unpaid work as men (OECD, 2014a).

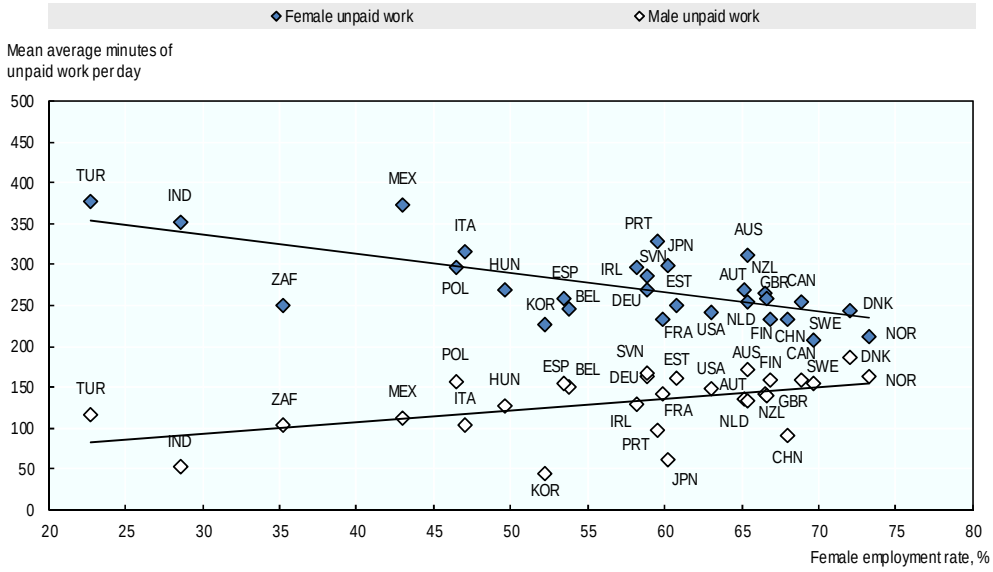
In most OECD countries, women's disproportionate hours spent on unpaid work result in women spending more hours *in total* on combined paid and unpaid work (*OECD Gender Data Portal*). In all but six OECD countries (Denmark, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden), women spend more time than men on combined hours of paid and unpaid work. The gender gap in unpaid work hours corresponds closely with the gender gap in paid work hours: in countries in which there are small differences in unpaid work, there also tend to be small gender differences in hours spent in the labour market.

Childcare and housework obligations restrict women's paid work prospects

A disproportionate responsibility for unpaid work limits women's abilities to enter and progress in the labour market. When women – and especially mothers – enter the workforce, their responsibility for childcare and housework often impedes career progression and can relegate them to low-skill, temporary and part-time work. Across countries, at the aggregate level, women participate more in the labour market when their male partners take on more housework (Hook, 2006; OECD, 2017a). Women in countries with high female employment rates also spend fewer minutes on unpaid work than women in countries with lower female employment rates (Figure 15.1). Norway, Denmark and Sweden are OECD leaders in promoting the equal sharing of unpaid work. While women in these countries still do more childcare and chores than men, the difference between female and male time spent in unpaid work is less than one hour each day.

Figure 15.1. Better gender balance in unpaid work correlates with greater equality in labour markets

Mean average minutes per day in unpaid work, by gender and female employment rates, 15-64 year-olds



Note: Data on unpaid work are for 15+ year-olds for Australia, 15-74 year-olds for Hungary, and 25-64 year-olds for Sweden. Reference years vary across countries: Australia: 2006; Austria: 2008-09; Belgium: 2005; Canada: 2010; China: 2008 for unpaid work and 2010 for the female employment rate; Denmark: 2001; Estonia: 2009-10; Finland: 2009-10; France: 2009; Germany: 2001-02; Hungary: 1999-2000; India: 1999 for unpaid work and 2010 for the female employment rate; Italy: 2008-09; Ireland: 2005; Japan: 2011; Korea: 2009; Mexico: 2009; the Netherlands: 2005-06; New Zealand: 2009-10; Norway: 2010; Poland: 2003-04; Portugal: 1999; Slovenia: 2000-01; South Africa: 2010; Spain: 2009-10; Sweden: 2010; Turkey: 2006; the United Kingdom: 2005; and the United States: 2014.

Source: *OECD Gender Data Portal*, http://www.oecd.org/gender/data/, and *OECD Employment Database*, http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574931

This cross-national pattern holds at the household level, as well. In OECD countries, male-breadwinner couples tend to adhere to a more traditional division of paid and unpaid labour: when a male partner works full-time, the female partner predominantly takes on housework and childcare. In dual-earner couples, in contrast, male partners take on a larger share of housework than sole male breadwinners.

Yet even when both partners work full-time, the division of household labour is rarely a 50-50 split. The female share of unpaid labour in dual full-time earner households varies across countries, for example, from 62% of all unpaid labour on average in Germany, to 88% on average in Korea (OECD, 2017a). Women generally do less unpaid housework and childcare as their share of household earnings goes up, but the relationship is not linear. There is some evidence from Australia and the United States that high-earning women do more housework in order to conform to gender norms at home, if not in the workplace – an example of so-called "doing gender" behaviour (Bittman, 2003; Bertrand et al., 2015).

Time-use surveys have not been conducted systematically over time in most OECD countries, though some countries, like Mexico, have shown a more serious commitment to this measurement tool (OECD, 2017b). This important data gap – which disproportionately discounts women's labour – complicates efforts to understand time trends in the gendered division of unpaid work. Nevertheless, research on countries that do collect time-series time-use data suggests that gender equality in housework has increased over time since the

1960s, on average, around the world, but that there has been a slowing of the gender convergence from the late 1980s in those countries where men's and women's housework was already more equal (Altintas and Sullivan, 2016).

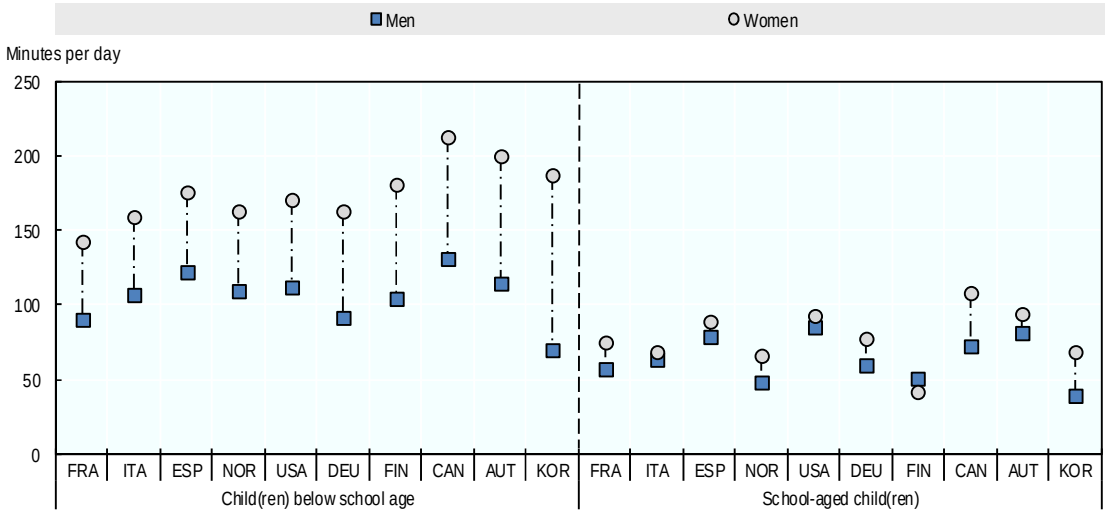
Who does what? Determinants of the distribution of unpaid work

Many factors influence within-household responsibilities for unpaid work. High-income and highly-educated couples share unpaid work more equally, relative to lower-income and less-educated couples. Couples without children tend to have a more egalitarian approach to unpaid housework and care work across countries as well, relative to similarly-aged couples with children. Across OECD countries, women's unpaid work burden typically increases when children enter a family (OECD, 2017a).

In couple families in OECD countries, fathers spend less time with children than mothers do, but the gap diminishes as children grow older (Figure 15.2). These gaps exist not only in active childcare hours, but also simply hours spent in the presence of children (OECD, 2017a). As a proportion of total time spent on childcare, fathers spend more of their total childcare time reading, playing, talking with and teaching children (i.e., interactive care, often referred to as "quality time") than mothers do. Mothers, in turn, devote a relatively larger share of their total childcare to physical care and supervision. Because mothers spend more time overall on childcare, mothers also spend more total quality time with young children than fathers, on average (OECD, 2017a).

Figure 15.2. Mothers spend more time on childcare than fathers, but gaps narrow as children age

Time spent on childcare activities by youngest child's age, in minutes per day



Note: Countries are sorted from left to right in ascending order according to gender difference (women minus men) in time spent on childcare activities among men and women with child(ren) below school age. Data for partnered men and women (those who live in the same household as a spouse or cohabitating partner, married or not) in couples with a female partner aged 25-45, only. Pensioners and students excluded. Data restricted to "carers", i.e. mothers and fathers who are engaged in at least one childcare activity during a time-use diary day.

Source: OECD (2017), *Dare to Share: Germany's Experience Promoting Equal Partnership in Families*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264259157-en.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574950

Changes in the unpaid work behaviour of women, rather than men, have been most important in gradually narrowing the gender gap over time. Higher-earning women, in

particular, are increasingly outsourcing household chores, employing others (typically women) to undertake chores and care work, and buying time-saving electronic devices, which have reduced their unpaid work burden relative to lower-earning women. While fathers have increased the hours spent on childcare in some countries, men's time spent on housework has not changed much (OECD, 2017a). Fathers' uptake of parental leave has been found to be important in improving fathers' commitment to childcare as children age (Adema, et al., 2015), and OECD governments are increasingly recognising that paid leave for fathers when children are very young is an important tool for gender equality (Chapter 16).

Box 15.1. The value of unpaid work

Unpaid work is valuable, both in monetary and non-monetary terms. It represents money saved over what a household would have to pay for the same service in the private market. Unpaid work at home increases the overall consumption of goods and services, represents implicit income and is crucial for enabling the labour force participation of beneficiary household members (Becker, 1965, is seminal on this topic). In rural communities, agricultural production carried out within the household for family consumption has especially important value (Stiglitz et al., 2007). Consumption and production can also be more broadly defined to include the production and rearing of children, as well as maintaining a clean home (Browning et al., 2014).

Despite being a key factor driving the well-being of individuals, their families and societies, unpaid care work is excluded from traditional measures of national wealth, such as GDP (Ferrant et al., 2014; Miranda, 2011). The invisibility of unpaid care activities in Systems of National Accounts leads to underestimates of countries' wealth production: between one-third and half of all valuable economic activity is not accounted for in 26 OECD countries, India, China and South Africa (OECD, 2011). In Mexico, for example, the economic value of unremunerated domestic and care work was estimated to be 4.2 billion pesos in 2014 – equal to 24.2% of Mexico's GDP (OECD, 2017b).

Household satellite accounts (accounts that measure and value unpaid household labour, household production and household output) would enable a better estimation of women's economic and social contribution. Women's paid work contributes to 37% of global GDP, but this result only accounts for women's participation in the market economy: unpaid work undertaken by women amounts to as much as USD 10 trillion of output per year, equivalent to 13% of global GDP (Woetzel et al., 2015). These estimates are particularly relevant in developing countries, where women perform even more unpaid care work. In Ecuador, for example, unpaid care production is estimated to equal 15% of the GDP, with 12% performed by women compared to 3% by men (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos del Ecuador, 2014).

Better time-use statistics are needed to develop and standardise household satellite accounts across countries, as time-use data are necessary for measuring "inputs" (i.e., value of time spent on unpaid care) rather than "outputs" (i.e., "goods produced") as measurement tools (Varjonen et al., 1999). Colombia became the first country to formally acknowledge the economic contribution of unpaid care work with its passage of a law (La ley 1413 de 2010) mandating time-use surveys to account for the care economy and women's invisible contribution to national accounts.

Policies can help to distribute the burden of paid and unpaid work more equally

OECD countries recognise that gender equality requires changes on the part of men as well as women, and inequality in unremunerated work is increasingly acknowledged as a key component of broader discriminatory social institutions and norms (OECD Development Centre, 2014b). In response to the OECD Gender Equality Questionnaire, 14 countries identified the unequal sharing of household tasks as an urgent gender equality issue in their country, and the most common answer to the question, "How can governments improve men's unpaid responsibilities at home?" was "Change men's and boy's attitudes towards care activities". Correspondingly, governments have attempted to

influence gender norms around caregiving through typical family policy measures such as extensions of paternity leave for fathers, father-specific reservations of (typically shareable) parental leave and the extension of flexible work arrangements to fathers (Chapters 16 and 18), but also around education choices and school practices (Chapters 7 and 9). Focusing on men's and women's behaviours after childbirth is particularly important, as couples tend to be more egalitarian before having children but then assume more "traditional" gender roles after they become parents.

About two-thirds of OECD countries now offer paid paternity leave, a short but typically well-paid period that fathers can use within the first few months after a baby's arrival. An increasing number of countries have reserved leave periods for fathers (or a father-specific "bonus") within national parental leave schemes, which are typically a shareable period of child-rearing leave available to parents after the maternity and paternity leave periods end. It can take some time for changes in policy to influence behaviour, but evidence from several OECD countries reveals that providing fathers with their own exclusive leave entitlements can boost male take-up, especially when leave is well-paid (Chapter 16).

Germany offers an interesting example of an effort to consolidate the equal sharing of parenting responsibilities. In 2015, Germany introduced the Parental Allowance Plus (*ElterngeldPlus*) and Partnership Bonus (*Partnerschaftsbonus*) measures, which provide financial incentives for both parents to work part-time (between 25-30 hours per week) and share caregiving when children are very young. The stated goal of the programme is to give parents more time for family, support a partnership of family and vocation, promote shared parenting and ensure the livelihood of mothers (OECD, 2017a).

Of course, public policy can only go so far in promoting gender equality at home if inegalitarian attitudes, sexism and misogyny persist in society. Survey data show that public opinion towards the roles of men and women have changed slowly over time in OECD and emerging economies (OECD, 2016 and 2017b). Although fathers taking parental leave and engaging in more part-time work are steps in the right direction, they are likely to only slowly produce long-term, aggregate-level changes in unpaid work behaviours. Indeed, the effects of early gender socialisation (UNICEF, 2007) at school and at home are strong and long-lasting, and one of the strongest predictors of an individual's gendered behaviours and expectations is their parents. Across countries, adult children tend to mimic (both in attitudes and behaviours) their parents' division of paid and unpaid labour (Cunningham, 2001; McGinn et al., 2015).

In addition to implementing fathers' leave programmes, many governments have committed to trying to change gender stereotypes through public awareness-raising campaigns. Since 2013 at least seven OECD countries, including Australia, Austria, the Czech Republic, Korea, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden, have carried out national public awareness campaigns tackling gender stereotyping and norms, using a mixture of traditional and online media channels. Among these, Australia's joint public-private campaign was novel: the "Equilibrium Man Challenge" was an online micro-documentary series attempting to raise awareness of work-life balance by following a group of men who are pursuing flexible work arrangements, often to care for family members. Australia reports that the documentaries reached nearly 30 000 views, and were successful in generating awareness of flexible work and promoting uptake of flexible work arrangements in the partner organisations. Portugal and Slovenia's national campaigns specifically targeted the equal sharing of household activities and a better reconciliation of work-life responsibilities. In Sweden, several projects have been initiated exploring the ways by which gender norms can restrict boys and men with regard to opportunities in schools,

men's relationships with their children, health, social vulnerability and risk behaviour, and men's use of violence and their exposure to violence.

Information campaigns are a soft measure for changing opinions and behaviours, and evidence suggests that mass media interventions and other brief stimuli are not usually effective in durably reducing prejudice (Paluck, 2016; Broockman and Kalla, 2016). Randomised control trials have not been used to evaluate campaigns aimed at reducing gender stereotypes, but scholars have found evidence of information interventions reducing prejudice against transgender individuals in the United States (Broockman and Kalla, 2016) and reducing opposition to migrants in Japan (Facchini et al., 2016). During the design phase of information campaigns, governments should strategise about how to accurately evaluate effects on gender stereotypes to ensure the most effective use of public resources.

Key policy messages

- Governments should expand the use of social policy tools to incentivise fathers' caregiving. Well-paid paternity leave and father-specific parental leave have been found to encourage fathers' leave take-up and can help to establish equitable caregiving.
- Changing stereotypes and norms around caregiving and housework is crucial but challenging. Governments should apply a range of tools, including awareness campaigns, to reduce bias against male caregiving and promote gender-equitable sharing of unpaid work.
- Governments must commit to improving data gaps in unremunerated work. This could include carrying out more frequent time-use surveys, better collecting data on fathers' leave-taking, and conducting public opinion surveys before and after public awareness campaigns and publicly disseminating the results.

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Chapter 16

A good start for equal parenting: Paid parental leave

Key findings

- All OECD countries other than the United States have national schemes that provide mothers with a statutory right to paid leave. On the whole, this is good for maternal and child health and for female labour market outcomes.
- Fathers' leave-taking is beneficial for fathers, mothers and children. However, while it is not unusual for fathers to take leave for a few days around childbirth, their use of parental leave remains low.
- To encourage fathers' use of parental leave, an increasing number of countries now reserve part of the leave period for fathers or offer leave that provides fathers with strong incentives to use leave for a few months or more.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Over the past few decades, maternity leave, paternity leave and parental leave have become major features of national support packages for families in OECD countries. Designed to be used around childbirth and when children are very young, employment-protected paid leave can help parents achieve a range of work and family goals. As well as protecting the health of working mothers and their newborn children, paid leave helps keep mothers in paid work and provide parents with the opportunity to spend time at home with children when they are young (Adema et al., 2015; Rossin-Slater, 2017). In line with the principles of the 2013 OECD Gender Recommendation, paid leave is also increasingly being used to promote gender equality (OECD, 2013). A growing number of countries have introduced "fathers-only" leave, such as paid paternity leave and longer periods of paid leave reserved for or targeted at fathers within parental leave systems, to encourage men to spend more time at home caring for their children.

Paid maternity and paternity leave entitlements directly around childbirth

Many OECD countries provide extensive paid leave programmes for parents around the time of childbirth. All OECD countries except the United States have national schemes that offer mothers a statutory right to paid maternity leave (Figure 16.1, Panel A), usually for between 15 and 20 weeks. In the United States, a few individual states provide mothers with an entitlement to paid leave benefits through either sick-leave insurance or specific family leave programmes (Adema et al., 2015).

Over half of all OECD countries also provide fathers with an entitlement to paid paternity leave – short but usually well-paid periods of leave that fathers can use within the first few months after a baby's arrival (Figure 16.1, Panel B). In most countries paternity leave lasts for one or two weeks, although in some (e.g. Greece, Italy and the Netherlands) it lasts for no more than a few days. Where available, paternity leave is generally well used by new fathers (Moss, 2015; *OECD Family Database*). However, the limited duration of paternity leave means that even if taken in full, fathers will often end up spending at most only a few weeks at home.

Paid parental leave for infants and young children

In addition to these shorter periods of maternity and paternity leave, many countries provide parents with access to additional paid parental and/or home-care leave – longer periods of employment-protected paid leave that focus more on allowing parents to provide care for young children over the medium term. Paid parental leave payment rates are often substantially higher than home care payment rates. The length of paid parental and home-care leave varies considerably across OECD countries (Figure 16.1, Panel C). In most countries, parents can access a total of between 6 and 18 months of paid parental and home-care leave. However, in some countries – like the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Hungary and the Slovak Republic and, for families with two or more children, also France – parents can take paid parental leave and/or home care leave until their child's second or third birthday.

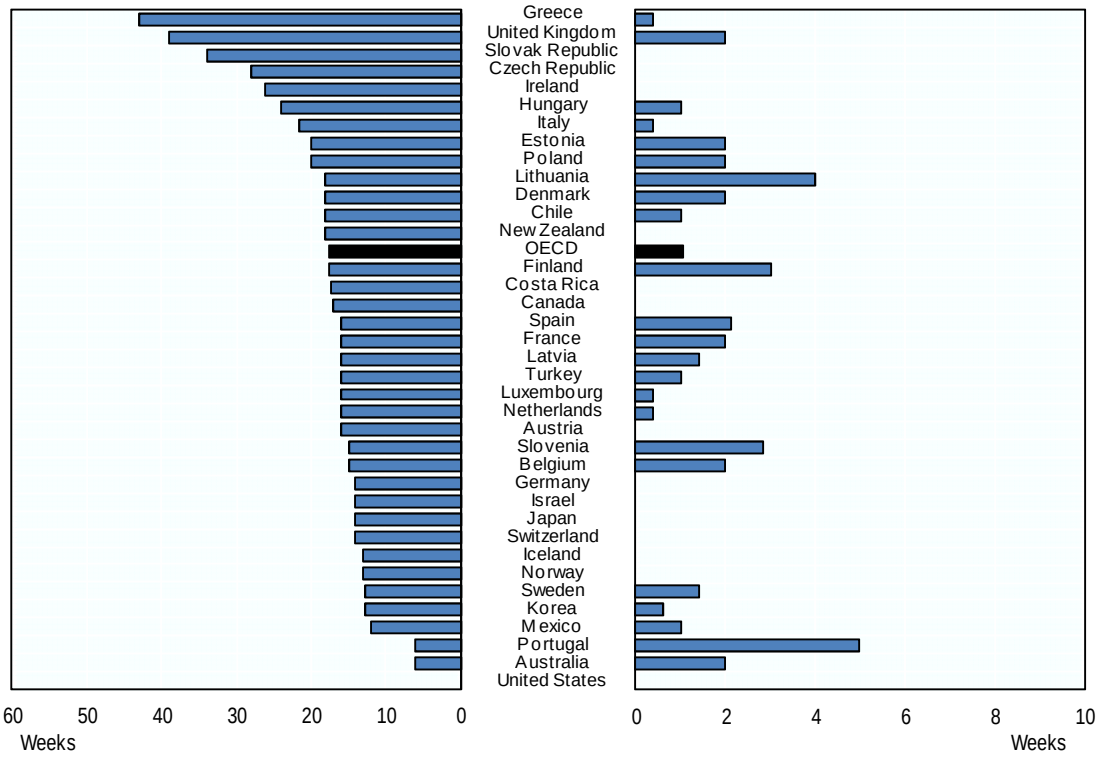
Entitlements to paid parental leave are often shareable family entitlements, with each family having the right to a certain number of weeks of parental leave payments to divide as they see fit. While in theory this means that both parents have the opportunity to take paid parental leave, in practice use of shareable leave is almost always dominated by mothers (Moss, 2015). Fathers often earn more than their partners (OECD, 2016), so unless leave benefits (almost) fully replace previous earnings it usually makes economic sense for the mother to take the bulk of the leave. Societal attitudes towards the roles of mothers and fathers in caring for young children and concerns around potential career implications also contribute to a general reluctance among many fathers towards taking long leave (Rudman and Mescher, 2013; Duvander, 2014).

Figure 16.1. All OECD countries but one offer paid maternity leave and most provide paid paternity leave and/or paid parental leave

Duration of paid maternity leave, paid paternity leave and paid parental leave, 2016

Panel A. Weeks of paid maternity leave

Panel B. Weeks of paid paternity leave



Panel C. Weeks of paid parental and home care leave, by type

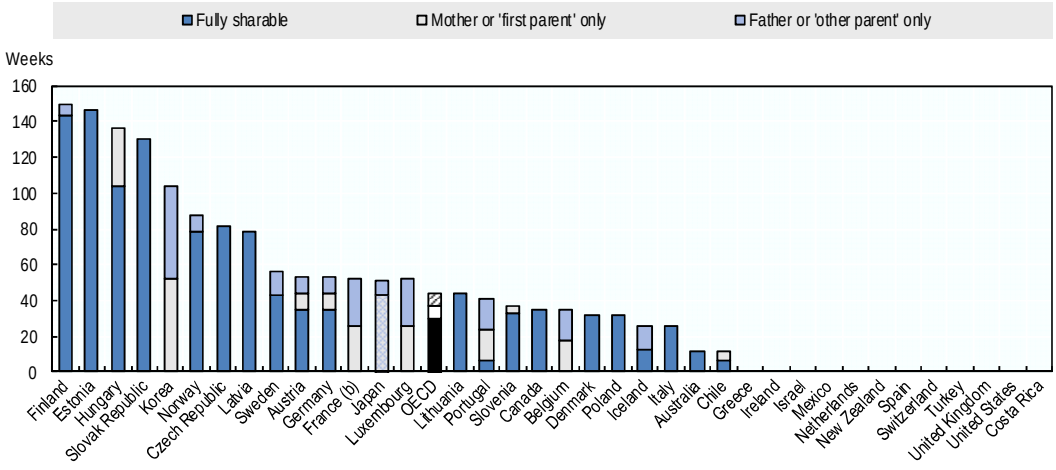


Figure 16.1. All OECD countries but one offer paid maternity leave and most provide paid paternity leave and/or paid parental leave *(cont.)*

Duration of paid maternity leave, paid paternity leave and paid parental leave, 2016

Note: Data refer to paid leave entitlements in place as of April 2016 and do not reflect entitlements introduced or amended after April 2016, such as, for example, the recently introduced paid paternity leaves in the Czech Republic and Ireland, or the recent extensions to paid paternity leave in Spain and Slovenia. Data reflect statutory entitlements provided at the national or federal level only. They do not include regional variations or additional/alternative entitlements provided by states/provinces or local governments (e.g. Quebec in Canada, or California in the United States), or any employer-provided benefits that are paid beyond the statutory minimum duration. Payment rates during paid leave differ across countries. Data refer to statutory entitlements only and do not reflect the actual use of these entitlements, which may be influenced by cultural and societal norms and the preferences of parents.

Note for Panels A and B: Countries are sorted in descending order according to weeks of paid maternity leave. Information refers to weeks of paid maternity leave, defined as an employment-protected leave of absence for employed women at or around the time of childbirth, or adoption in some countries, and weeks of paid paternity leave, defined as employment-protected leaves of absence for employed fathers (or other relevant partners) at or in the first few months after childbirth. For Iceland, Norway, Portugal and Sweden, "weeks of paid maternity leave" includes weeks of paid parental leave that are reserved for the exclusive use of the mother. For Finland, "weeks of paid paternity leave" includes only the three weeks of paid paternity leave that can be used while the mother is on maternity or parental leave; the remaining six weeks of paid paternity that can be used only when the mother is not on maternity or parental leave (and, as a result, are unlikely to be used "at or in the first few months after childbirth") are classified in Panel C under "Father or 'other parent' only" paid parental leave.

Note for Panel C: Countries are sorted from left to right in descending order according to the total number of weeks of paid parental and home care leave. Information refers to paid parental leave and subsequent periods of paid home care leave to care for young children. All weeks are additive (i.e. additional to) to those weeks of maternity and paternity leave shown in Panels A and B. Periods labelled "mother or first parent only" and "father or other parent only" refer to individual non-transferable entitlements, "mummy and daddy quotas" or periods of an overall leave entitlement that can be used only by one parent and cannot be transferred to the other, and any weeks of shareable leave that must be taken by one or both parents in order for the family to qualify for "bonus" weeks of parental leave. For some countries (e.g. Japan) the individual "mother or 'first parent' only" and "father or 'other parent' only" periods must be used simultaneously if both parents are to use the entirety of their entitlement. These periods are represented by the cross-hatched bars.

a) Data for France refer to the entitlement for a family with only one child. Families with two or more children can receive paid parental leave for a longer period.

Source: OECD Family Database, Indicator PF2.1: http://www.oecd.org/social/family/database.htm.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574969

To help encourage take-up among men, a number of OECD countries now provide fathers (and mothers) with their own individual paid parental leave entitlements on a "use it or lose it" basis (Figure 16.1, Panel C). These parent-specific entitlements can take several different forms. Most common are "mummy and daddy quotas" – specific portions of an overall parental leave period that are reserved exclusively for each parent, most often associated with the Nordic countries. Other options include "bonus periods" – where a couple may qualify for some extra weeks of paid leave if both parents use a certain amount of shareable leave, as in Germany, for instance – or the provision of paid parental leave as an individual entitlement for each parent right from the start. Parent-specific paid parental leave periods usually last for a couple of months, though both Japan and Korea provide mothers and fathers with around one year of non-transferable paid parental leave each (Figure 16.1, Panel C). However, as with parental leave more generally, these periods of parent-specific leave are not always well paid – in France, for example, parental leave is paid through a low flat-rate benefit that replaces only around 15% of previous earnings for an individual on the average wage (*OECD Family Database*). Low payment rates like this are likely to discourage many fathers from taking leave.

It can take some time for changes in policy to influence behaviour, but evidence from several OECD countries suggests that providing fathers with their own leave entitlements can help increase fathers' use of parental leave, especially when it is well paid (O'Brien, 2009; Moss, 2015). In Sweden, for instance, the introduction of one-month "mother and father quotas" in 1995 was followed not only by an increase in the number of fathers using any leave, but also a steady but consistent increase in the share of days of paid leave used by men (Duvander and Johansson, 2012). Three months are now reserved for each parent. In Germany, the proportion of children with a father that used parental leave increased from 20.8% for children born in 2008 to 34.2% for children born in 2014 following the introduction in 2007 of the two-month "bonus period" when both parents take at least two months of leave (Reich, 2010; Destatis, 2016).

Paid leave pays off – for mothers, fathers and families

Social expenditure on paid leave can be substantial. On average across the OECD, it amounts to roughly 0.3% of GDP, and this rises to 0.7% of GDP or higher in some of those countries with the lengthiest and/or most generous paid leaves, like the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Slovenia and Sweden (*OECD Social Expenditure Database*). However evidence from across OECD countries suggests that paid leave carries substantial benefits, not just for parents but also for children and families as a whole.

Much of the existing evidence on the effects of paid leave focuses on leave aimed at or taken by mothers. On the whole, the message is that paid leave for mothers is mostly good for both women and children. Paid leave helps mothers recover from childbirth, can improve maternal health and well-being, and could possibly also promote child health outcomes (Adema et al., 2015; Rossin-Slater, 2017). A judiciously chosen period of paid leave can also boost female employment, increase maternal employment continuity, and promote labour market re-entry after childbirth, at least up to a point (Thévenon and Solaz, 2013; Adema et al., 2015; Rossin-Slater, 2017). There is a risk, however, that very long periods of leave could damage women's human capital development and career progression by lengthening the time new mothers spend outside of paid work, and possibly also discourage employers from hiring or promoting women of childbearing age (Thévenon and Solaz, 2013; Adema et al., 2015; Rossin-Slater, 2017).

Fathers' leave-taking also carries considerable payoffs. While couples today tend to be fairly egalitarian in their division of (unpaid) household labour before children are born, things often change soon after childbirth. Simply put, women start to do much more unpaid work when children enter the equation (OECD, 2016). This is what makes fathers' leave taking around childbirth so important. Fathers who take leave are more likely to take an active role in childcare both early-on and after they return to work (Huerta et al., 2013; Almqvist and Duvander, 2014; Bünning, 2015), especially when they use at least a couple of weeks of leave (Huerta et al., 2013). Increased paternal engagement leads in turn to better health and development outcomes for children (Sarkadi et al., 2008; Huerta et al., 2013), and to benefits for fathers themselves. Men who take leave report greater satisfaction in parenting (Haas and Hwang, 2008), while those who are more involved with their children report greater life satisfaction and better psychological well-being (Craig and Sawrikar, 2009; Schindler, 2010).

Fathers' leave taking is good for women's labour market outcomes, too. In addition to encouraging men to shoulder a greater share of unpaid work, the social normalisation of leave taking by fathers may help reduce gender discrimination in the workplace and reduce the risk that women are the only ones taking care-related leave – and with it the subsequent negative effects on female earnings and career advancements (Rønsen and Kitterød, 2015).

Recent progress in paid leave policies for fathers

Many OECD countries have made progress in paid leave policies since the adoption of the OECD 2013 Gender Recommendation, especially in policies aimed at increasing father's use of leave. OECD governments are increasingly aware of the importance of encouraging men to spend more time at home caring for their children. The 2016 OECD Gender Equality Questionnaire (OECD GEQ 2016) reveals that 14 countries think getting men to participate more in household tasks is crucial for achieving gender equality, and several have introduced new measures to encourage fathers' leave taking in recent years.

Several OECD countries have looked to promote men's use of leave through the introduction or extension of fathers-only leave like paternity leave and fathers-specific paid parental leave. Since the start of 2013, four OECD members (the Czech Republic, Ireland, Italy and Turkey) have introduced statutory paid paternity leave for the first time, while Portugal, Spain and Slovenia have extended existing provisions, and Estonia has re-introduced paternity benefits after their suspension in 2009 following the economic crisis. Two OECD countries have also introduced or extended father-specific paid parental leave: in 2014, France introduced a form of father-specific parental leave by reserving (depending on the size of the family) between six and twelve months of parental leave payments for the "second parent" (albeit with payments still set only at a very low level), while in 2016 Sweden extended their "mother and father quotas" from two to three months. Norway actually moved in the opposite direction by cutting the length of their quotas from 14 weeks to 10 weeks in 2014, having only increased them from twelve weeks the previous year, while the Netherlands abolished all financial support available to both fathers and mothers taking parental leave.

Other countries have looked to promote fathers' use of leave by improving payment rates and increasing financial incentives to take leave. Some countries have done this through reforms that mean parental leave in general is better paid, as in Japan, for example, which recently increased the payment rate during the first six months of parental leave from 50% to 67% of earnings, up to a moderate ceiling. Others (e.g. Austria and Korea) have increased payment rates through new benefits or bonuses targeted explicitly at fathers. For example, in 2014 Korea introduced a special "daddy month", with the payment rate on the parental leave benefit increased from 40% to 100% of previous earnings (up to a ceiling) for the first month of leave taken by the "second" parent. In January 2016 the "daddy month" was extended to the first three months of leave taken by the second parent. This latter extension may well have contributed to a recent 50% jump in the male share of parental leave users, from 5.6% in 2015 to 8.5% in 2016 (MOEL, 2017).

Key policy messages

- Provide mothers with access to (well-) paid employment-protected maternity leave, but ensure that any paid leave programmes aimed at or available to mothers do not discourage or disincentivise the mothers' return to work.
- Provide fathers with their own individual entitlements to (well-) paid leave. Access to paid paternity leave for use around childbirth is a good start, but to make a real difference to care behaviours fathers should also be given their own non-transferable entitlements to paid parental leave.

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Chapter 17

Childcare supports: Helping both parents in paid work

Key findings

- Participation in early childhood education and care (ECEC) not only varies across OECD countries but also within countries across socio-economic groups. In many OECD countries, children from poorer families are far less likely to be found using formal ECEC than their better-off peers.
- Despite public support, ECEC often remains expensive for parents. In some OECD countries, a single parent with two children earning two-thirds of the average wage can spend nearly half their disposable income on formal childcare.
- Participation in out-of-school-hours care by school-age children remains low in many OECD countries. This increases the difficulty of full-time work for parents with school-age children, and may help explain why many mothers in OECD countries continue to work only part-time even as their children grow up

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Participation in early childhood education and care varies across countries and socio-economic groups

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) services are central to a range of family, child and gender objectives. Access to affordable ECEC provides parents with options to make the work-life decisions that fit their needs and helps parents with young children fully engage in paid work. Since it is mothers far more than fathers who adjust their patterns of paid work around the demands of childcare (Chapter 11; OECD, 2016a), ECEC services are especially important for female labour market opportunities and for ensuring that women have the freedom to engage in paid work even after becoming parents (Jaumotte, 2003; Thévenon, 2013; Del Boca, 2015; Olivetti and Petrongolo, 2017). On top of this, a growing body of evidence suggests that participation in high-quality ECEC can also have positive effects on child cognitive and social development (e.g. Camilli et al., 2010; Havnes and Mogstad, 2011; OECD, 2013), particularly for children from more disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. Heckman et al., 2010; Ruhm and Waldfogel, 2012; Havnes and Mogstad, 2015; García et al., 2016).

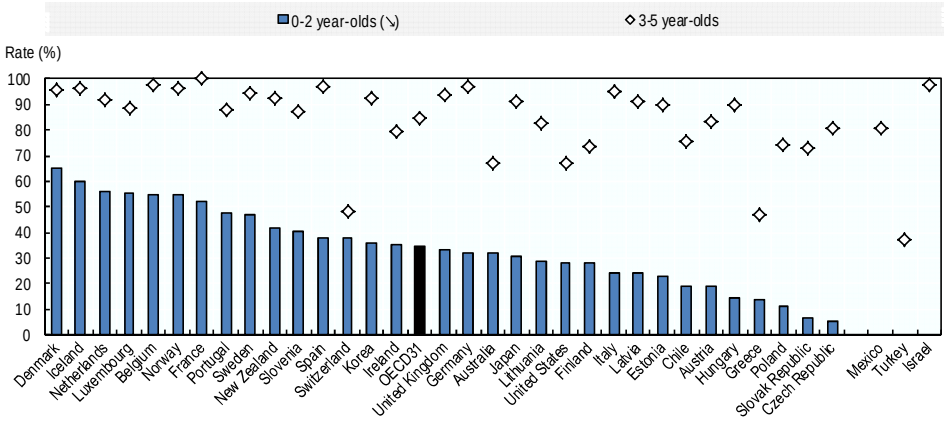
Public support for ECEC is essential for ensuring that all parents have access to affordable services. All OECD governments help fund early childhood education and care in one way or another, and on average across OECD countries public investment in ECEC amounts to just over 0.7% of GDP (*OECD Social Expenditure Database*). Public investment in ECEC is highest in the Nordic countries and France, standing at over 1% of GDP (*OECD Social Expenditure Database*). In most other OECD countries pubic spending on ECEC amounts to between 0.5% and 0.9% of GDP; it is lowest in Turkey at 0.2% of GDP.

Differences in public childcare support, together with variations in parental leave entitlements (Chapter 16) and attitudes towards non-parental care for young children, contribute to large cross-national differences in the use of ECEC, especially among very young children under age 3. On average across OECD countries, just over one third of children under age 3 participate in formal ECEC, but this varies from around 6% in the Czech and Slovak Republics to as high as 65% in Denmark (Figure 17.1). Participation is high in the Nordic countries, except for in Finland where many parents use home-care leave to care for very young children at home, and also in the Benelux countries (Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands), where paid leave is relatively short. In the Netherlands, most children attend on a part-time basis only (*OECD Family Database*). Participation by children under age 3 tends to be lowest in Central and Eastern European countries. In these countries, lengthy parental leave entitlements often encourage many parents to stay at home until children enter pre-primary education.

Participation is generally much higher among slightly older children aged 3-5 (Figure 17.1). In many OECD countries pre-primary education is offered to all children as a statutory right from the age of 3, and services are frequently heavily subsidised or provided for free. Several countries have made pre-primary attendance compulsory (e.g. Austria, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland), at least for a year or two before primary school. As a result, in most OECD countries more than 80% of 3-5 year-olds are enrolled in pre-primary education or primary school (Figure 17.1), and in many, enrolment rates reach well over 90%. In some countries, like Belgium and France, where pre-primary education is offered for free to all children from around or before the age of 3, pre-primary attendance among children aged 3-5 is effectively 100%.

Figure 17.1. Participation in ECEC varies across OECD countries, particularly among very young children

Participation rates for 0-2 year-olds in formal childcare and pre-school services,[a] and enrolment rates for 3-5 year-olds in pre-primary education or primary school,[b] 2014 or latest available year[c]



Note: The OECD average includes all OECD member countries with data available for both age groups.

a) Participation rates for 0-2 year-olds concern children up to and including 2 years of age and generally include children in centre-based services (e.g. nurseries or day care centres and pre-schools, both public and private), organised family day care, and care services provided by (paid) professional childminders, although exact definitions vary slightly across countries. See *OECD Family Database* (http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm) Indicator PF3.2 for country-specific notes and more detail.

b) Enrolment rates for 3-5 year-olds include children enrolled in pre-primary education (International Standard Classification of Education [ISCED] 2011 Level 2) and primary education (ISCED 2011 Level 1), only. Potential mismatches between the enrolment data and the coverage of the population data (in terms of geographic coverage and/or the reference dates used) may affect enrolment rates. See the notes to Indicator C2 in Annex 3 of the OECD's *Education at a Glance 2016* for more details: http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/EAG2016-Annex3.pdf.

c) For participation rates among 0-2 year-olds, data for the United States refer to 2011 and for Chile to 2015. For enrolment rates for 3-5 year-olds, data for Estonia and Iceland refer to 2013.

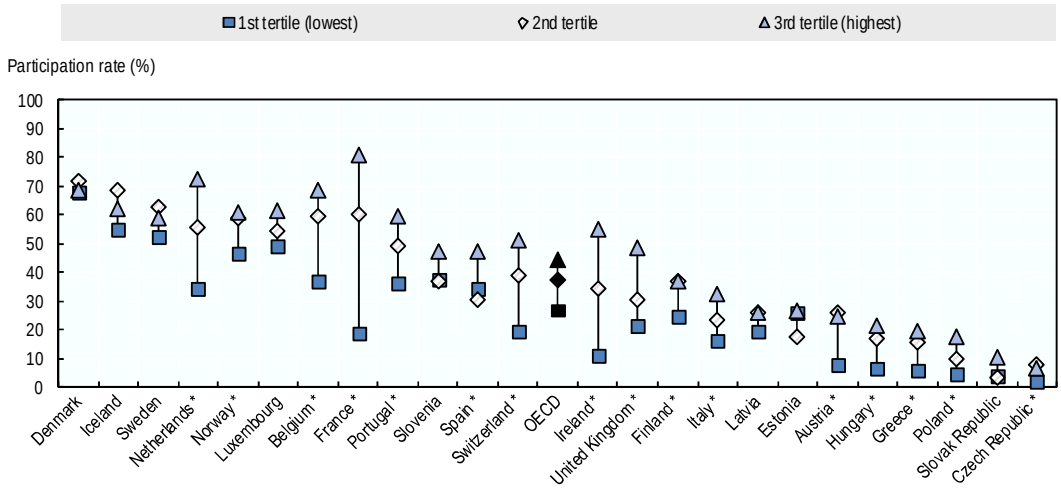
Source: *OECD Family Database*, Indicator PF3.2, http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933574988

Some children are more likely to participate in childcare than others. In many OECD countries participation differs across socio-economic groups, with children from disadvantaged backgrounds usually most likely to miss out (OECD, 2016b). For example, in many European OECD countries very young children (aged 0-2) from low-income households are far less likely to use formal ECEC services than their better-off peers (Figure 17.2). Differences between income groups are largest in Belgium, Ireland, the Netherlands and especially France, where children (aged 0-2) from high-income households are over four times more likely to use formal ECEC than children (aged 0-2) from the poorest households. The drivers behind these inequalities vary from country to country, but in France, for example, low participation among children from poorer households is driven in large part by a combination of shortages in the supply of publicly-operated centre-based services for children under age three and, despite public financial support for parents, the relatively high cost of private care services like private childminders (OECD, 2016b). However, not all countries see differences in participation across income groups – Denmark, Iceland and Sweden stand out in particular as countries where participation rates are high and vary little with household income. In these countries, a combination of heavily-subsidised, income-tested fees and sufficient supply means that very young children are likely to participate in formal ECEC regardless of whether they live in richer or poorer families.

Figure 17.2. Children from low-income families are more likely to miss out on ECEC

Participation rates for 0-2 year-olds in formal childcare and pre-school services, by equivalised disposable income tertile, 2014



Note: Countries are sorted from left to right in descending order according to the overall participation rate for children aged 0-2. In countries marked with an *, differences in participation rates across groups are statistically significant at p<0.05. Data include children using centre-based services (e.g. nurseries or day care centres and pre-schools, both public and private), organised family day care, and care services provided by (paid) professional childminders, and exclude those using unpaid informal services provided by relatives, friends or neighbours. Equivalised disposable income tertiles are calculated using the disposable (post-tax-and-transfer) income of the household in which the child lives – equivalised using the square root scale, to account for the effect of family size on the household's standard of living – and are based on the equivalised disposable incomes of children aged less than or equal to 12.

Source: *OECD Family Database*, Indicator PF3.2, http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575007

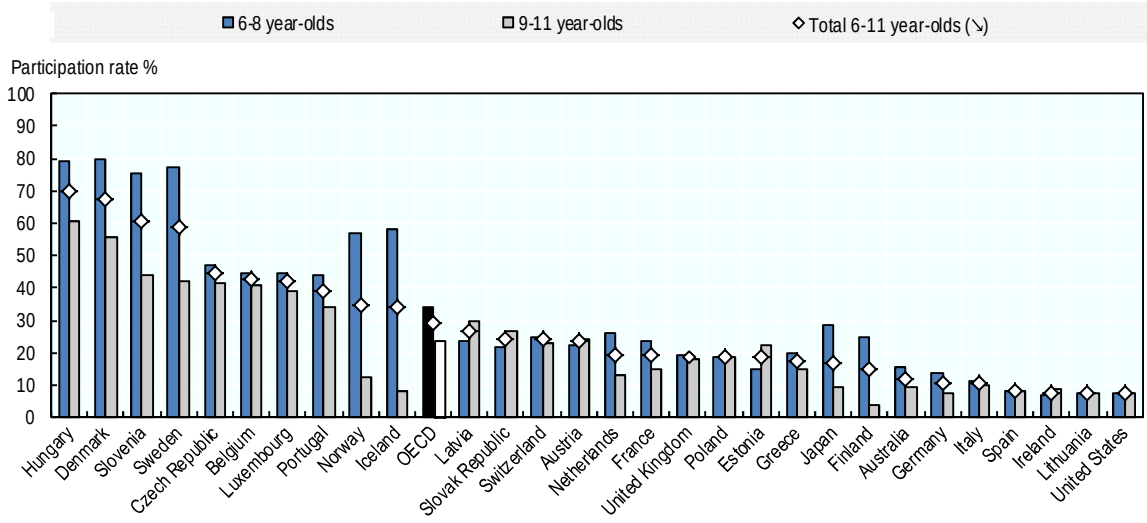
Out-of-school-hours care services remain under-developed in most OECD countries

Childcare issues do not disappear once children enter pre-primary or primary school. Children in the educational system do spend a large amount of time at school, but opening hours are frequently incompatible with a full-time working week and school holidays are almost always longer than annual leave entitlements for employees. Informal care services provided by friends or relatives can help, but these are not always available and working families with school-age children often need to find additional formal solutions both before and after school, and also during school holidays.

A few OECD countries have developed extensive out-of-school-hours (OSH) care systems for school-age children. In Denmark, Hungary, Slovenia and Sweden more than 50% of children aged 6 to 11 go to centre-based OSH services during a typical week (Figure 17.3), with these rates reaching around 80% for children at the younger end of the age bracket (aged 6 to 8). In Denmark and Sweden, OSH services are often co-ordinated with school authorities to provide all-day care for children, with services normally provided on school premises or nearby, and opening hours usually stretching until at least 5pm. Costs are also subsidised. In Denmark, services are often offered free to low-income families, while in Sweden there is a maximum fee of around 2% of gross household income for the first child and lower rates for subsequent children, ensuring that OSH services are generally affordable for most families.

Figure 17.3. Participation in out-of-school-hours care remains low in most OECD countries

Participation rates for 6-11 year-olds[a] in centre-based before and/or after school care services, by age group, 2014 or latest available[b]



Note: Data generally reflect the proportion of children who use centre-based out-of-school-hours care services for at least one hour during a usual week. Data generally cover the use of services offered before and/or after school hours only, and do not cover "school-going" children who use centre-based care services only during school holidays or only on days when schools are closed. Exact definitions do vary slightly across countries. See *OECD Family Database* (http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm) Indicator PF4.3 for country-specific notes and more detail.

a) Data for Australia refer to children aged 6 to 12 and the age groups 6 to 8 and 9 to 12, for Japan to children aged 7 to 11 and the age groups 7 to 8 and 9 to 11, and for the United States to children aged 5 to 11 and the age groups 5 to 8 and 9 to 11.

b) Data for the United States refer to 2011, and for Hungary and Norway to 2013.

Source: *OECD Family Database*, Indicator PF4.3, http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575026

However, in most OECD countries OSH care services remain under-developed (Plantenga and Remery, 2013; Plantenga and Remery, 2017). In many countries fewer than one-in-four children aged 6 to 11 are in centre-based OSH services during a usual week (Figure 17.3), and all too often the provision of OSH services depends on the goodwill of local authorities and/or stakeholder actions. This shortage of comprehensive OSH care can present a major obstacle to full-time paid work for parents with school-age children, and may help explain why many mothers in OECD countries continue to work only part-time even as their children grow up (OECD, 2016a; *OECD Family Database*).

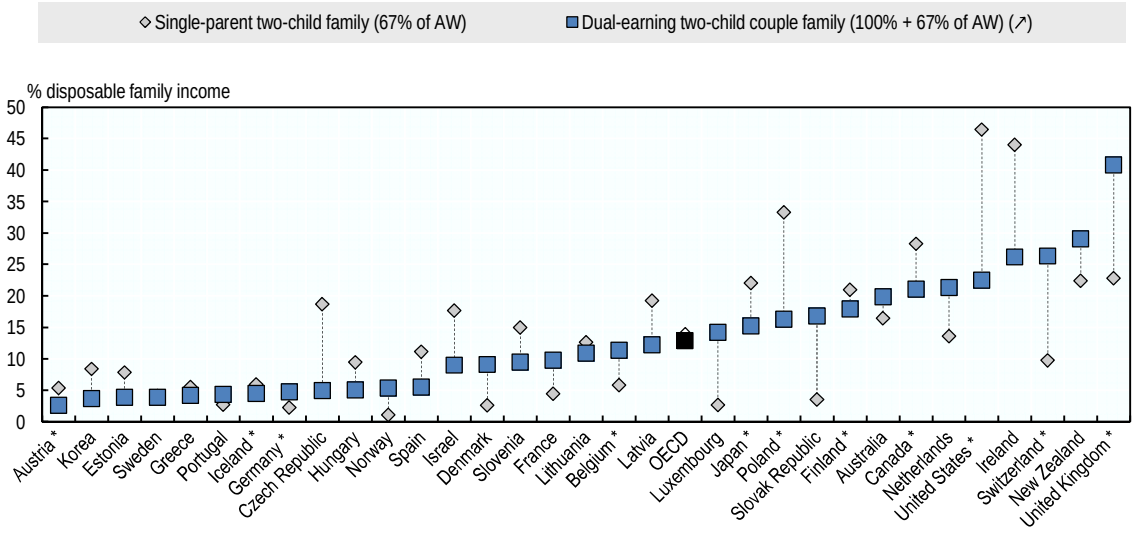
A lack of affordable ECEC continues to act as an obstacle to paid work for many parents

A scarcity of affordable childcare continues to act as a barrier to employment for many women. Places in early childhood education and care remain in short supply in many OECD countries, especially for children below age three (EC/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014), and costs to parents are often high. On average across OECD countries childcare costs claim roughly 13% of the disposable family income of a two-child full-time dual-earner couple on moderate earnings (Figure 17.4), and the bill is often higher (in relative terms) for low-earning couples and single parents; in Ireland and the United States, for example, the amounts charged to a single parent with two children can reach around 45% of

disposable income (Figure 17.4). These high costs weaken financial incentives to work and act as a barrier to paid employment for second earners and single parents, especially those with low potential earnings. Indeed, on average across European OECD countries, more than one-in-five economically-inactive mothers with a very young child report that a lack of affordable childcare prevents them from looking for work at all (OECD, 2016a).

Figure 17.4. Childcare costs remain very high in some OECD countries

Out-of-pocket childcare costs for a two-child family as a proportion (%) of disposable family income, by family type, 2015



Note: Data reflect the net cost (gross fees less childcare benefits/rebates and tax deductions, plus any resulting changes in other benefits received following the use of childcare and/or change in family income) of full-time care in a typical childcare centre for a two-child family, where all parents are in full-time employment and the children are aged 2 and 3. Gross earnings for the two earners in the "dual-earning two-child couple family" are set equal to 100% of average earnings for the first earner and 67% of average earnings for the second earner. Those for the single earner in the "single-parent two-child family" are set at 67% of average earnings. Full-time care is defined as care for at least 40 hours per week. Data for countries marked with an * are based on estimates for a specific region or city, rather than for the country as a whole. See the *OECD Tax and Benefit Systems* website (http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/benefits-and-wages.htm) for more detail on the methods and assumptions used and for information on the policies modelled for each country.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on *OECD Tax and Benefit Models 2015*, http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/benefits-and-wages.htm.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575045

Many OECD countries have, however, made progress in policies aimed at improving access to ECEC in the years following the introduction of the OECD 2013 Gender Recommendation. OECD governments are increasingly aware of the importance of accessible childcare services, as illustrated by responses to the 2016 OECD Gender Equality Questionnaire (GEQ), for example, which reveal that almost two-thirds of countries think "making childcare more accessible" is one of the three "most effective ways to tackle barriers to female employment". Over the past few years, many OECD members have introduced or extended measures aimed at increasing the accessibility and affordability of ECEC, in one form or another.

Many OECD countries have concentrated on the costs of childcare, and have taken steps to improve affordability for parents. In most cases these measures take the form of increases in subsidies or benefits/rebates for parents using childcare (e.g. Canada, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, the Slovak Republic and Poland). In New Zealand, for example, the level of both the Childcare Subsidy and the Out of School Care and Recreation subsidy – fee-

subsidies paid directly to providers on behalf of low-income families using registered ECEC and OSH services, respectively – were increased by 25% in 2016. Some countries have also looked to reduce the overall cost of childcare through the introduction or expansion of free childcare hours (Norway and the United Kingdom). Norway, for instance, has over the last few years phased-in 20 weekly hours of free childcare for 3-5 year-olds from low-income families.

Korea provides an example of one of the most extensive efforts to improve affordability and reduce costs to parents. Korea has long provided financial assistance for the cost of centre-based care, but historically these subsidies were restricted to children from the very poorest households only. From 2004 onwards, however, the income test on the subsidy was gradually loosened and the level of the subsidy itself steadily increased. In 2013, the income test was removed altogether, effectively establishing a programme of free childcare for all children up to age six regardless of background or family income level. These reforms were supported by extensive public financial investment – public spending on ECEC in Korea increased from 0.1% of GDP in 2004 to 0.9% in 2014, the largest increase in the OECD over the period (*OECD Social Expenditure Database*) – and have contributed to massive increases in participation. Since 2005, the proportion of children aged 0-2 using centre-based childcare services has more than trebled from 9% to 34% (*OECD Family Database*) while the share of children aged 3-5 in pre-primary education has jumped from 31% to 92% (*OECD Education Database*).

Several countries have also introduced measures aimed at addressing shortages in the supply of childcare places. Some have attempted to improve the availability of ECEC services by introducing a legal obligation for local governments to provide all children above a certain age with a place in formal care (Germany, Poland and, from September 2017, the Czech Republic). Others have moved to ease supply shortages by increasing or extending public investments in new facilities (Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Switzerland), in most cases with an emphasis on places for children under age three. Germany has adopted elements of both in a comprehensive package of reform. Since August 2013, all children aged one or older have been legally entitled to a place in ECEC, and this has been backed up by the continuation of a programme of public investment that has seen the number of children under 3 enrolled in public or publicly-subsidised care more than double over the past decade, from just under 290 000 in 2006 to over 720 000 in 2016 (Destatis, 2016).

Key policy messages

- Governments should continue efforts to increase the supply and affordability of places in ECEC, especially those aimed at very young children under the age of 3.
- Further reducing the costs charged to parents – by, for example, increasing subsidies for providers or by offering parents further financial support through the tax-benefit system – is crucial for ensuring that ECEC remains affordable and that work pays for second earners and single parents.
- Governments must step up investment in out-of-school-hours care services, which can help parents with school-age children participate in paid work full-time.

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Chapter 18

Flexible working arrangements

Key findings

- Since women take on most childcare work, one might expect mothers to make more use of flexible working arrangements than fathers, or to work in jobs with greater access to flexible working. Indeed, women are much more likely to work part-time but otherwise gender differences in use of or access to flexible working practices are small. Men are more often than women in a senior position which gives them more control over work schedules.
- Companies with more skilled workers, more female employees, and with "good" management practices are also more likely to offer some working flexibility.
- Access to flexible working arrangements such as changeable start and finishing times and teleworking, is highly correlated to the use of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) which is unevenly spread across jobs and occupations

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Though still wide, the gender gap in part-time employment is narrowing

Flexible workplace practices are primarily designed to address employer needs in the production process, but they can also help employees in general and working parents in particular strike a better work-life balance (Chung et al., 2007; Riedman, 2006; Plantenga and Remery, 2009; Eurofound, 2016; OECD, 2011, 2016). Workplace flexibility can help working parents to match their work schedule with childcare and/or school hours and can make an important contribution to employees' satisfaction (Cazes et al., 2016). Working from home saves time on the commute and enables employees to stay close to their children and partners in the event of caregiving. However, flexitime may involve working longer hours, fatigue and stress (Golden, 2012; Lott and Chung, 2016).

Workplace flexibility encompasses a range of practices from reduced hours and flexitime options (such as starting and finishing work at different times) to more advanced options, e.g. working "compressed" weeks (working an extra hour each day and to get Friday afternoon off) or using "time accounts" to spread working hours across weeks or months. Workplace flexibility also includes working from home or teleworking.

Part-time work can be an option for employees who need to reduce their working hours on a permanent basis, though it widely comes at the price of reduced earnings and curtailed career prospects. Women – often mothers – are almost three times more likely than men to work part-time in OECD countries, and almost one in ten work fewer than 20 hours per week (OECD, 2017a). Nevertheless, behind those average figures, trends in female part-time employment over the past 10 years trends are diverse (Figure 18.1):

- in around 40% of all OECD countries the proportion of employed women working part-time declined – by as much as 5 percentage points or more in Norway and Poland;
- in another 40% part-time female employment increased – by 5 percentage points or more in Austria, Chile, Greece, Japan, Spain and Turkey;
- in a small group of countries, including those with very high shares of part-time female employment, like Australia, the Netherlands and Germany, there was little change.

Part-time employment is on the increase among men. Apart from Colombia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and the Russian Federation, all countries that adhere to the 2013 OECD Gender Recommendation (OECD, 2013) experienced increases in part-time employment among employed men between 2004 and 2014. However, in most countries, much of the growth in male part-time work occurred after the onset of the 2008 financial crisis, suggesting the increase was more a consequence of the recession and the post-crisis employment environment than a move towards greater gender equality as such (*OECD Employment Database*).

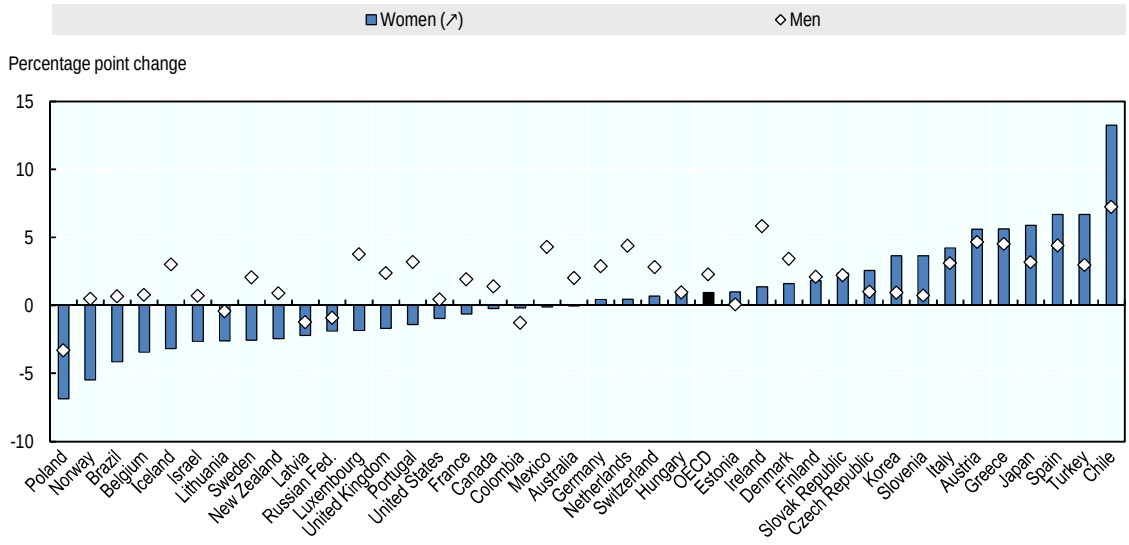
Mothers are less likely than fathers to work from home

Some three out of four European employees enjoy some form of flexible working, though shares vary from 50% in Greece to 90% in the Netherlands and the Nordic countries (Eurofound, 2015), where employees have access to a wider range of flexible work options. Broadly speaking, in countries where flexible arrangements are common

practice, parents are more likely to use them than employees without dependent children. And in many countries, parents are likely to use flexitime opportunities to work from home (OECD, 2016). Generally, though, the use of flexible working arrangements is not closely related to the presence of children in households.

Figure 18.1. Trends in the share of female workers in part-time jobs are mixed, but part-time work is becoming increasingly common among men

Percentage point change in the proportion of employed in part-time employment, 2004-14, by sex, all ages



Note: Part-time employment as a proportion of total employment. "Part-time" here refers to persons who usually work less than 30 hours per week in their main job. For the United States, data reflect part-time employees among dependent employees only. For Japan and Korea, part-time employment is based on actual rather than usual weekly working hours.

Source: OECD Employment Database, http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575064

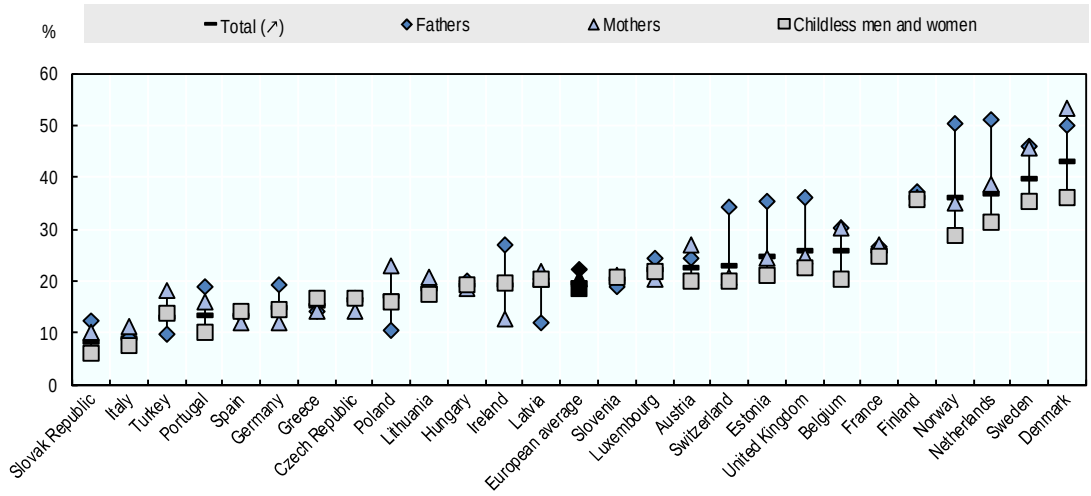
In many European countries, gender differences in access to flexible working time arrangements are narrow, though fathers appear more likely than mothers to have control over their own working time arrangements (Figure 18.2). Around one in five employees in Europe work from home on a regular or occasional basis, but the proportion is twice as high in Scandinavia and the Netherlands (OECD, 2016). In these countries about 50% of fathers and 40% of mothers work from home occasionally or regularly.

Breaks during the working day can help parents balance work and family commitments. OECD-wide, over 60% of employees can easily take one or two hours off during the working day to attend to personal or family matters. And fathers are much more likely than mothers and/or childless employees to do so in many countries (OECD, 2016).

Flexible workplace practices are widespread among both sexes in the United States, where 55% of female and 53% of male employees reported access to flexible workplace practices (US CEA, 2015). In Australia, gender differences appear wider as more female (34%) than male (21%) employees made requests for flexible work arrangement in 2015 (FWC, 2016).

Figure 18.2. Fathers are often more likely than other employees to work from home

Percentage of employees who have worked from home at least once over the past 12 months, by sex and parenthood status, all ages, 2015



Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the 6th European Working Conditions Survey (2015), www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575083

The small gender differences in access to flexible working arrangements are essentially related to two broad categories of factors (OECD, 2016):

- workplace and work organisation (Box 18.1),
- personal characteristics of employees.

Professionals and managers enjoy much greater access to flexitime than clerical, service and low-skilled workers, who are also much less likely to work from home because work is organised on the basis of fixed schedules.

Access and use of flexible work schedules is closely associated with the intensive use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) at work, as it facilitates flexible working time schedules as well as working from home.

Long working hours (over 40 a week) and long commuting times are also associated with a much higher propensity to work from home – and with fewer opportunities for taking breaks during the working day for personal reasons. There is some evidence – in Germany, for example – that greater control over working hours is more likely to lead to longer hours (and additional earnings) for men than for women (Lott and Chung, 2017). One reason for the gendered impact of flexitime is that women are more likely to use control over working hours to meet family commitments and may even forsake additional income for flexibility. Men, by contrast, more often use control over working time primarily as a means to further their career prospects rather than as a tool to address work/life balance issues.

Box 18.1. Why do companies provide flexible working time arrangements?

From the employer perspective, flexible working practices can help recruit and retain staff, reduce absenteeism and turnover rates (Bloom et al., 2010) and help project a family-friendly public image (den Dulk et al., 2013). Flexible working time arrangements (FWTAs) can increase staff and overall workplace productivity, although changing workplace practices can generate short-term costs (Beauregard and Henry, 2009). Flexible working arrangements require efficient management practices and considerable communication capacity to manage varied work patterns among higher numbers of staff.

In OECD countries with comparable available data, 87% of companies provide at least some employees with at least some kind of flexible working time arrangements (*OECD Family Database*). Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany and Sweden have the highest proportion of such firms – almost 99% in Finland. Employers are least inclined to allow flexibility in Greece and Turkey, although more than 50% of companies in those countries offer at least some kind of flexible working time arrangement to at least some employees.

Firms with otherwise similar characteristics but higher proportions of skilled workers and female employees are more likely to provide FWTAs (Thévenon et al., 2018, forthcoming). The higher its share of female employees, the more likely a company is to offer FWTAs, though take-up drops with the proportion of skilled workers in the company.

Large organisations are more likely to offer FWTAs than small or medium-sized organisations, as it can be costlier for smaller businesses to rearrange tasks among workers. Across European countries, 80% of large companies offer flexitime, compared to 71% of medium firms and 64% of small firms (European Company Survey, 2013). Bigger establishments offer more part-time work and a higher degree of flexibility than smaller ones.

Work organisation and management practices are also key determinants of the provision of FWTAs. Teamwork halves the likelihood that a company will allow its employees to vary the times at which they start and finishing their working days, but it does not affect the supply of part-time work.

Certain "best" management practices (pay and bonus options, training, hiring for the long term, and recruiting internally as a matter of priority) are positively associated with the provision of flexible working arrangements, except with part-time work. Long-term hiring practices and employees' involvement in decision-making processes go also hand in hand with higher provision of FWTAs (Thévenon et al, 2018, forthcoming).

Policies to promote greater access to flexible working arrangements

Improving the accessibility of flexible working arrangements is not just a matter of efficiency but also of fairness. They may, for example, be particularly important to low-wage workers who cannot afford to work part-time. Failure to address this issue is likely to contribute to a significant group of employees experiencing stress at home and/or at work, which may increase absenteeism and reduce productivity (Bond and Galinsky, 2011).

Collective bargaining or enterprise-level agreements often regulate flexibility in workplace practices (Hegewisch, 2009; Eurofound, 2016). Nevertheless, governments can also help here by providing information, facilitating companies' exchange of best practices, encouraging collective bargaining on flexible workplace issues and by allowing employees a right to request a change in their working practices (OECD, 2016). In Belgium, France, Germany and New Zealand, for example, all employees in companies of a certain size are entitled to request flexible working arrangements – e.g. changes to part-time work or different start and finishing times.

Since the implementation of the 2013 OECD Gender Recommendation, several OECD countries, including Australia, Hungary, Portugal, Slovenia and Turkey, have

introduced or extended the rights of parents with young children to at least request part-time or flexible work, while, for example, both the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have gone further in widening the "right to request" to all workers regardless of caring responsibilities or personal circumstance. Extending the "right to request" is important as it confers bargaining power and lessens the risk of discrimination against certain groups of workers, e.g. parents when they are the only group asking for flexible working arrangements.

A few countries (Finland, Germany, Korea and Turkey) have also introduced payments or allowances for parents who reduce their working hours, with the aim of minimising financial barriers to part-time work. Since the mid-2000s, German policies have moved to promote a more gender-equal sharing of paid and unpaid work – in this sense it is ahead of most OECD countries (apart from the Nordics). Germany encourages part-time work among fathers and an equal sharing of paid and unpaid work. The parental allowance ("ElterngeldPlus", implemented in 2015) comes with a partnership bonus, whereby each parent can receive up to four additional months of payments if both work part-time simultaneously for at least four months. There is also a range of publicly supported initiatives involving stakeholders in the private sector, which include greater sharing of best practices and audits of family-friendly companies. In 2015, various stakeholders (including employer associations and unions) signed a memorandum on the *Neue Vereinbarkeit* (new reconciliation) of work and family life, which identifies areas of progress (e.g. greater awareness of flexible working hours in companies) and challenges still to be overcome, e.g. longer paid working hours for mothers.

No matter the level of policy support, progress in communications and mobile technologies will continue to provide more opportunities for many employees to work with flexible schedules, including working from home. Moreover, technological progress is likely to affect different jobs and occupations in different ways, which may widen rather than reduce inequalities in remote work, and affect male and female employees differently given gender segregation in employment (OECD, 2017b).

Whether FWTAs will benefit employees' work-life balance remains uncertain, however, since there is a risk that its use blurs the frontier between work and family life so leading to longer working hours (Fagan, 2014; Lott and Chung, 2016; Eurofound and ILO, 2017). To prevent such risks, a recent law enacted in France in January 2017 seeks to grant employees the "right to disconnect" from email, smartphones and other electronic ties once their working day has ended. The law requires companies with 50 or more employees to negotiate new out-of-office email guidelines with staff. Firms have a duty to regulate the use of emails to ensure employees get a break from the office. If management and staff cannot agree on new rules, the firm must publish a charter to define and regulate when employees should be able to switch off. Germany also offers examples of sectoral or company-level agreements regulating out-of-office work. For instance, in January 2014, German car manufacturer BMW reached an agreement stipulating that all employees are allowed to register time spent working outside the employer's premises as working time, which opens up the possibility of overtime compensation. Employees are also encouraged to agree fixed "times of reachability" with their supervisors.

Key policy messages

- Greater flexibility at work can help all workers find a better balance between their work and their family lives. The benefits are likely to be particularly large for women, however, since in all countries it is women who continue to carry out the bulk of unpaid work and who tend to shoulder most family responsibilities (Chapter 15).
- Governments can promote workplace flexibility in different ways including: granting all employees a right to request flexible working; encouraging social partners to cover workplace flexibility in collective bargaining agreements; and/or helping companies change their work organisation, through the exchange of best practice and information campaigns.
- Governments should monitor the use of flexible working practices to ensure that workers using flexible working are not discriminated against and that its use does not impinge on workers' well-being, for example through long "on-line" working hours.

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Chapter 19

Gender gaps in education and labour markets of emerging economies

Key findings

- Gender gaps in labour force participation have shrunk in many emerging economies, but progress has been patchy. Latin America recorded the most significant improvements, particularly in Chile and Costa Rica where the participation gap has been narrowing by 1 percentage point per year since the mid-1990s. Large gender gaps in labour force participation persist in the Middle East and North Africa (Chapter 20), India and Indonesia.
- Gender differences in participation in primary and secondary education have largely disappeared and in many countries young women are now more likely to participate in tertiary education than young men. The most remarkable improvements have been recorded in Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, China, Turkey, Indonesia and India. Big gender differences persist in mathematics and science.
- Gender pay gaps persist and are particularly large in India, Indonesia and South Africa. Women are less likely than men to be in managerial positions, but the picture is diverse: the female share of managers in Latin America is higher than the OECD average, while the opposite generally holds for other emerging economies.

Uneven progress in narrowing education and employment gender gaps in emerging economies

Gender gaps in education and labour market participation have shrunk considerably in 16 emerging economies, which account for over half of the world's population (and for which data are available). They are Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Mexico, Peru, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Tunisia and Turkey (OECD, 2016a).

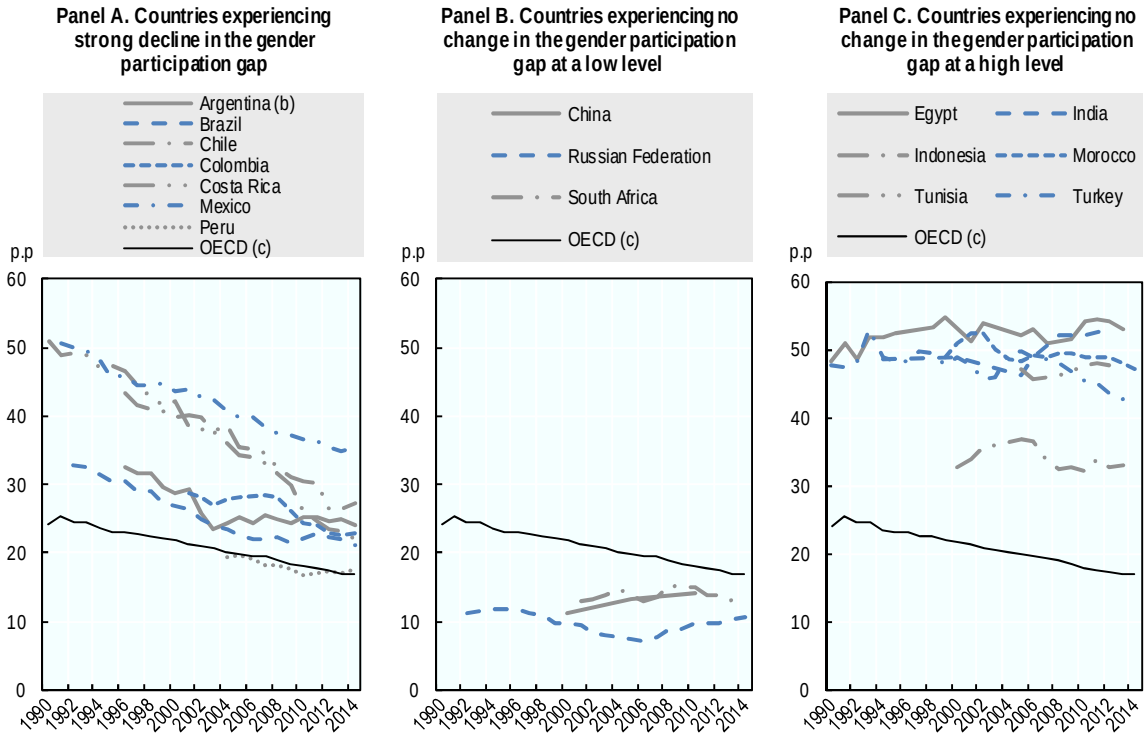
However, progress has been uneven (Figure 19.1). Gender gaps in labour force participation narrowed in Latin America – particularly in Chile and Costa Rica where it has been narrowing by about 1 percentage point per year since 1990. By comparison, the average OECD country reduced the participation gap by only 0.3 percentage points per year over the same period. By contrast, the participation gap remains very wide in the Middle East and North Africa, India and Indonesia. In all those countries (except Indonesia), women's labour market participation is about 50 percentage points below that of men. The gap remained low in China, South Africa and the Russian Federation.

The labour market participation gap also varies significantly within countries and the most disadvantaged socio-economic groups typically display the greatest gender disparities. While highly-educated women have, on average, 16.5 percentage points lower participation rates than men, the gap is 41 points among less-educated men and women. Indeed, high levels of education translated into narrow gaps in labour participation even in countries where overall female participation is low. An exception to this pattern is India, where a woman staying at home is frequently considered to increase the family's social status (OECD, 2014, Chapter 4).

Increased female labour force participation is associated with a steady narrowing of the gender education gap. In 1950, women worldwide only had 73% of the years of schooling that men had. By 2010, that ratio had almost reached 90% and it continues to rise (Barro and Lee, 2013). The rate of convergence was even higher in developing countries, where the ratio increased from only 57% in 1950 to 86% in 2010. Across emerging economies, boys' and girls' enrolment rates in primary and secondary education are almost identical (Figure 19.2, Panels A and B) and women are now more likely to enter higher education, as they are in OECD countries. Countries with the most striking improvements are Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, China, South Africa, Turkey, Indonesia and India.

Figure 19.1. Gender gaps in labour force participation are falling in many emerging economies, but at an uneven pace

Gender gaps (male minus female) in labour force participation rates, 15-64 year-olds,[a] selected emerging economies, 1990-2014



a) 16-64 year-olds for China, and 15 or more for Morocco.

b) Selected urban areas.

c) OECD is the unweighted average for 34 OECD member countries (Latvia is not included).

Source: *OECD Employment Database*, http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm, for Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, the Russian Federation, South Africa and Turkey; *ILO ILOSTAT Database*, http://www.ilo.org/ilostat, Geneva, for Egypt; Census data for China; and OECD Secretariat calculations based on the Encuesta Permanente de Hogares (EPH) for Argentina, the National Sample Survey (NSS) for India, the National Labour Force Survey (Sakernas) for Indonesia, the Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (ENAHO) for Peru, and the National Survey on Population and Employment (ENPE) for Tunisia; data provided by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INEC) based on the Encuesta de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples (EHPM) and the Encuesta Continua de Empleo (ECE) for Costa Rica; Enquête nationale sur l'emploi, Haut Commissariat au Plan (Direction de la Statistique) for Morocco.

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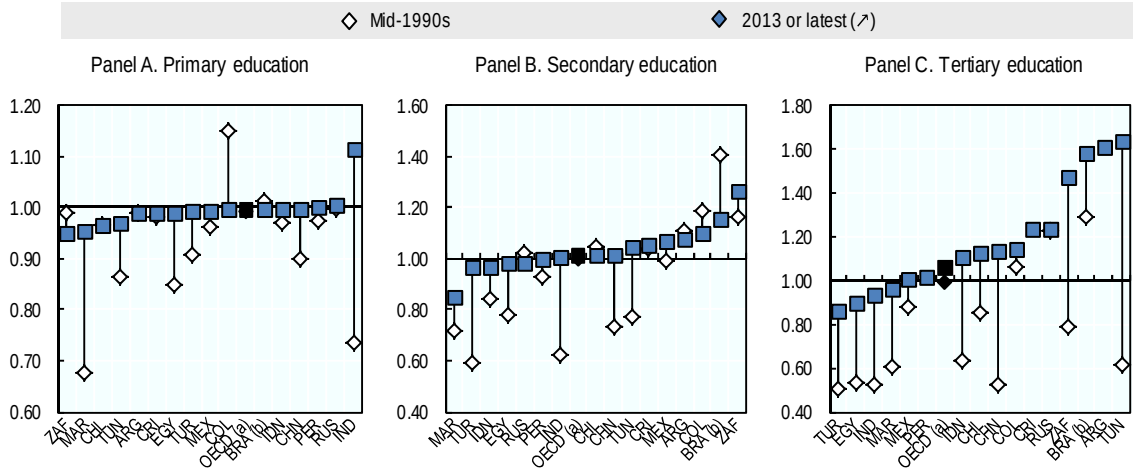
Figure 19.2. Gender disparities in enrolment in primary and secondary education have almost disappeared in most emerging economies, and in many countries women are now more likely enter higher education

Gender parity index (GPI) of school enrolment ratios by education level, selected emerging economies, mid-1990s and 2013 or latest



Note: Data refer to the female to male gross enrolment ratio. Gross enrolment refers to the number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education. For the tertiary level, the population used is the five-year age group starting from the official secondary school graduation age.

a) OECD is the unweighted average of the OECD countries in the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) database.

b) Proportion of youth aged 16, 20 and 24 years old who have successfully obtained primary, secondary and tertiary-level degrees, respectively.

Source: *UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) database*, http://data.uis.unesco.org/; OECD Secretariat estimates based on Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílio (PNAD) for Brazil.

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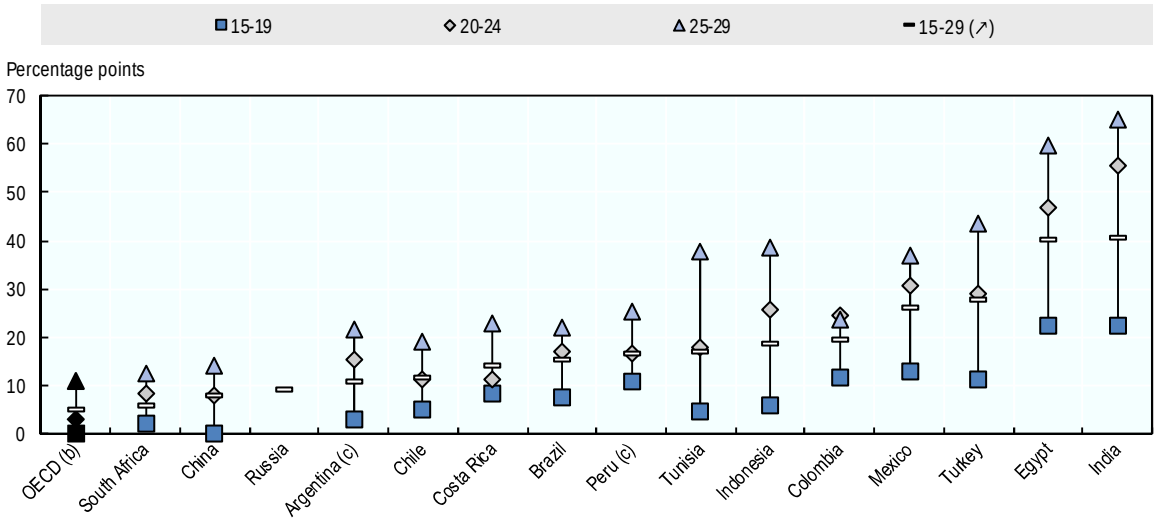
Among young people, more women than men are not in employment, education or training (so-called "NEET" status) (Figure 19.3). The pattern is observed in all the countries analysed and is much wider in emerging economies than in the average OECD country. The gap is narrowest among the youngest NEETs (15 to 19 years old) and widens with age – a reflection of the fact that while the gender gap in school enrolment has disappeared in most countries, gender differences in labour force participation persist. This is largely related to the negative effect motherhood has on labour force participation. Indeed, gaps are larger in countries where the age of first birth is earlier. The widest disparities are recorded in India, followed by Egypt, Turkey, Mexico and Indonesia. The gap is smallest in South Africa, the Russian Federation and China.

Figure 19.3. NEET rates are significantly higher among young women

Percentage-point difference in NEET rates between women and men, by age group, 2015 or latest available[a]



a) 2010 for China and Tunisia; 2011-12 for India; 2012 for Egypt; 2012-13 for Peru; 2013 for Chile; and 2014 for Brazil, Argentina, Indonesia and South Africa.

b) The OECD average is the unweighted average of 34 OECD countries (Japan is not included)

c) Selected urban areas.

Source: OECD Education Database, http://www.oecd.org/education/database.htm, for Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Turkey and the OECD average; ILO School-to-Work Transition Survey (ILO SWTS) for Egypt and Peru; Census data for China; and OECD Secretariat calculations based on the Encuesta Permanente de Hogares (EPH) for Argentina, the National Sample Survey (NSS) for India, the National Labour Force Survey (Sakernas) for Indonesia, the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) for South Africa, and the National Survey on Population and Employment (ENPE) for Tunisia.

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Gender differences in test results persist in most countries. The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of 15-year-old students shows that while girls typically outperform boys in reading, in many emerging economies they continue to lag behind in both mathematics and science (OECD, 2016b). The widest gaps are in Central and South America, especially Chile, Costa Rica and parts of Argentina. These performance gaps have not changed much in recent years, and are important because they drive occupational segregation, with women less likely to work in industries requiring STEM-related studies.

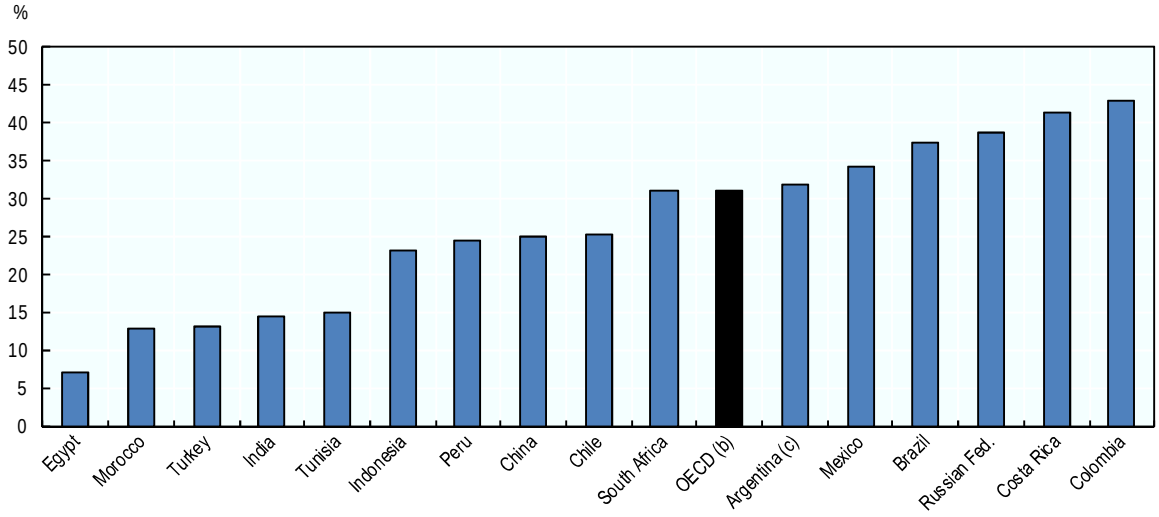
Women often hold worse jobs than men

Men and women are not equally distributed across different sectors of the economy. On average, men are more likely to be employed in the production of goods and construction, while women are considerably more likely to be employed in social and personal service sectors. Working women often hold lower-quality jobs, as indicated by lower pay, less job security and a greater risk of extremely low pay. Women are also often severely under-represented in managerial positions (Figure 19.4), even if women in some emerging economies, like the Russian Federation and several Latin America countries, fair better in this regard than women in OECD countries, on average. Many jobs held by women in emerging economies are informal, although gender differences in formal employment are not wide (OECD, 2016a). Informal firms are typically less productive and provide workers

with fewer opportunities for human capital accumulation (La Porta and Shleifer, 2008, 2014), which represents an additional drag on female earnings and on their opportunities for career advancement (OECD, 2015b, Chapter 5). The sectors and occupations where men most typically work tend to be more productive and pay higher wages (OECD, 2016a).

Figure 19.4. Women are under-represented in managerial positions in emerging economies

Female share of managerial employment, 2015 or latest available year[a]



Note: For Colombia, data refer to female share of the employed that hold jobs classified in International Standard Classification of Occupations 1968 (ISCO 68) major group 2 (administrative and managerial workers); for Chile, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Peru and Tunisia, data refer to the female share of the employed that hold jobs classified in ISCO-88 major group 1 (legislators, senior officials and managers); for Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico, the Russian Federation, South Africa and Turkey, data refer to the female share of the employed that hold jobs classified in ISCO 08 major group 1 (as managers). National occupation classification for China. Data for Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Mexico, Morocco, the OECD average, the Russian Federation, South Africa and Turkey refer to all ages, for China to 16+ year-olds, and for Argentina, Colombia, Egypt, India, Peru and Tunisia to 15-64 year-olds.

a) Data for Morocco refer to 2008, for China to 2010, for India to 2011-12, for Tunisia to 2012, for Egypt and Indonesia to 2013, and for Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Peru and South Africa to 2014.

b) OECD is the unweighted average for 34 OECD member countries (New Zealand is not included).

c) Selected urban areas.

Source: LO (2016), ILOSTAT database, http://www.ilo.org/ilostat, for Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Mexico, the OECD average, the Russian Federation, South Africa and Turkey; ILO Key Indicators for the Labour Market (KILM) 2015 for Egypt and Morocco; Census data for China; and OECD Secretariat calculations based on the Encuesta Permanente de Hogares (EPH) for Argentina, the Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares (GEIH) for Colombia, the National Sample Survey (NSS) for India, the Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (ENAHO) for Peru, and the National Survey on Population and Employment (ENPE) for Tunisia.

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In many emerging economies, a large share of working women (often the majority) are self-employed, although they typically own smaller, less successful and more frequently informal businesses than men. Credit constraints, as well as lower levels of financial literacy and business-related knowledge, are among the key drivers of gender gaps in entrepreneurship (Chapter 23).

As a result of the multiple constraints they face, on average across emerging economies, the median full-time female employee earns about 24% less than her male counterpart, compared to just below 15% less in OECD countries (Figure 19.5). In the Russian

Federation, Peru, Brazil, Chile, Argentina and Mexico, the gender gap is higher than the OECD average. In most countries where historical data are available, the pay gap has lessened since 2005. Change has generally been limited, except in India, Indonesia, the Russian Federation and South Africa, where the gap closed, respectively, by 10, 14, 8 and 24 percentage points over the past decade – though these countries still have very large pay gaps. By contrast, gender pay gaps have increased in Chile, Colombia and Turkey. Wide gender pay gaps persist in comparisons of workers with the same levels of education and in similar jobs. (For a detailed discussion, see OECD, 2016a.)

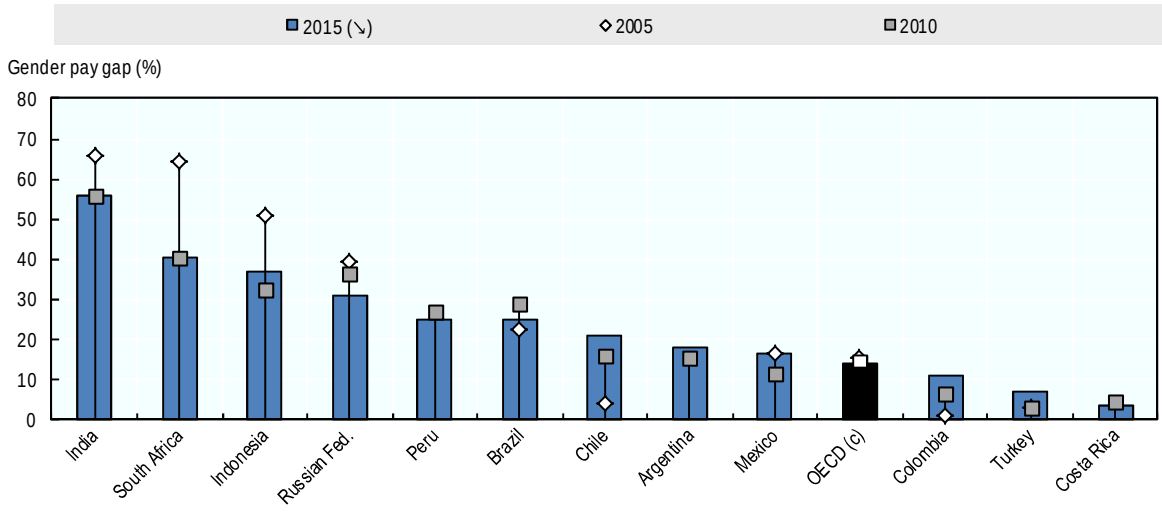
Many occupations offer high rewards in terms of pay and career advancement to people able to work long hours and accept inflexible schedules (Goldin, 2014). However, as in OECD countries, gender pay gaps in emerging economies are only partially attributable to observed differences in worker and job characteristics (Chapter 12). Attitudes, social conventions and institutions and discrimination probably play an important role in pay differentials between men and women, though they are hard to measure.

In the emerging economies, even more than in OECD countries, women are still typically expected to take on larger shares of unpaid housework and family care than men. And when female workers are employed full time they typically spend a much larger share of their time on additional housework (including childcare) than men who are full-time workers. This severely restricts women's labour market opportunities. When paid work and housework are combined, women typically work longer hours than men (OECD, 2017; OECD, 2016a).

Persistent disparities in the division of housework and family care may be particularly difficult to overcome since they are closely tied to anti-egalitarian social norms and feed into stereotypes that limit the role of women in society and the labour market. Stereotypes, norms and attitudes around the role of men and women move very slowly over time, and have shown less progress in emerging economies than OECD ones (OECD, 2017). There are also linkages between discriminatory social institutions and higher gender inequality in (paid and unpaid) work across the world; many women in emerging economies still face legal and other forms of discrimination in their efforts to access economic resources such as land, property and financial services (OECD Development Centre, 2014). All these factors have detrimental effects on women's rights, their economic participation and their well-being, thereby curtailing inclusive economic growth opportunities.

Figure 19.5. The gender pay gap remains substantial in most countries

Gender gap in median monthly earnings,[a] full-time employees, 2005, 2010 and 2015 or latest available[b]



Note: The gender pay gap is defined as the difference between male and female median monthly earnings divided by male median monthly earnings for full-time employees.

a) Data for India refer to weekly earnings of full-time employees.

b) Data refer to 2014, not 2015, for Argentina, Brazil, Indonesia, Peru, the Russian Federation and Turkey, and to 2012, not 2015, for India and South Africa. Instead of 2010, data refer to 2011 for Brazil, Chile and Costa Rica, and instead of 2005 they refer to 2006 for Chile and Turkey and to 2007 for Colombia.

c) OECD is the unweighted average for OECD member countries in 2015 or latest/nearest year available.

Source: *OECD Employment Database* (http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm) for OECD countries, Colombia and Costa Rica; and OECD Secretariat calculations based on the Encuesta Permanente de Hogares (EPH) for Argentina, the Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílio (PNAD) for Brazil, the National Sample Survey (NSS) for India, the National Labour Force Survey (SAKERNAS) for Indonesia, the Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (ENAHO) for Peru, the Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS) for the Russian Federation, and the General Household Survey (GHS) for South Africa.

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Key policy messages

- A broad range of measures that help parents combine work and family commitments (see Chapters 15-18) as well as infrastructural investments in electricity, transport and ICT infrastructure can help reduce women's time in unpaid work and promote formal employment.
- Fight gender discrimination in the labour market with 1) specific legislation prohibiting discrimination in hiring and pay on the basis of gender and 2) affirmative action with careful behavioural design, which can help to overcome deep-seated gender biases in hiring and management practices.
- Curb informal employment through effective strategies which encompasses a broad range of policies aimed at reducing the costs of formalisation, increasing its benefits and strengthening enforcement of labour codes. Consider gendered differences in formalising different types of employment.

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Chapter 20

Gender inequality in the Middle East and North Africa: Women's participation in economic and public life

Key findings

- Daunting legislative, economic and social barriers to women's participation in economic and public life persist. Despite enshrining the principles of non-discrimination and equality between men and women in constitutions and labour legislation, gender inequalities in the broader legislative framework and in practice continue to affect women's effective access to employment and career development. Furthermore, some sectors where women account for the majority of the workforce are not regulated or protected by labour law provisions.
- The public sector's take-up of gender quotas has helped increase women's representation in decision-making positions, particularly in politics and parties' electoral practices. But challenges remain in ensuring that women enjoy equal opportunity to participate in and influence decision making in parliaments, governments and local councils.
- Public policies and budgets are not systematically evaluated for their effect on gender equality and safety. Sexual harassment issues, for example, continue to plague women's participation in economic and public life.

Women's representation in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life

In recent years, governments in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region have taken a range of initiatives to mainstream gender equality. In parallel to the political activism across the region, strong demands from civil society and women's movements have contributed to new governance structures, leadership and legal and political reform, with Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia re-drafting their constitutions. Increasing women's economic, social and political empowerment has been part of the drive to broaden inclusion. The MENA-OECD Initiative on Governance and Competitiveness for Development (OECD, 2017a) has been following these developments and supporting stakeholders in their actions to reform policy, with the MENA-OECD Governance Programme working on gender equality in public life (OECD, 2015a), and the MENA-OECD Competitiveness Programme addressing women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship (OECD, 2013a, 2014, 2015b, 2017b forthcoming). Despite great progress in reducing gender inequalities in education, women do not generally enjoy equal participation in or access to opportunities in employment, entrepreneurship and public life. Further reform is therefore essential if gender equality principles are to translate into concrete policy reform and practice on the ground.

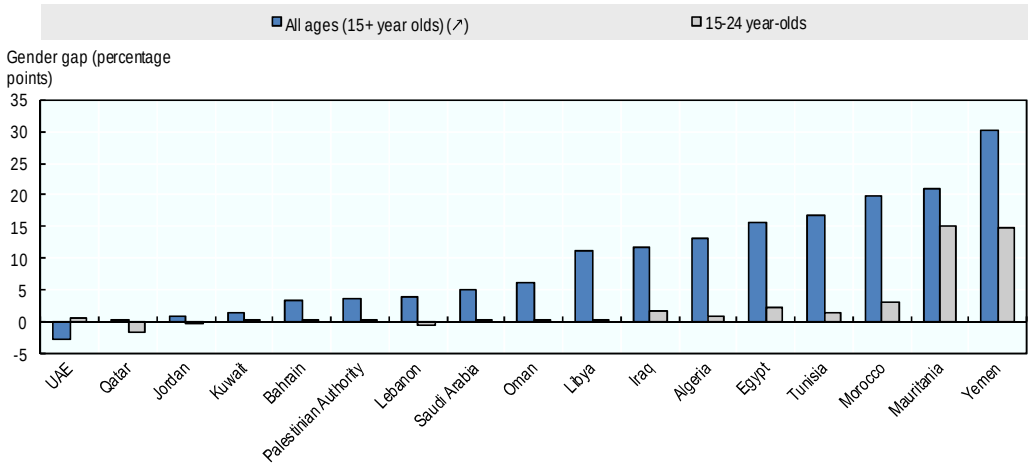
Most MENA countries have remarkably improved access to different levels of education for both men and women. Gender gaps in adult literacy rates are gradually falling and, in many countries, they have mostly closed among the young (Figure 20.1). Female illiteracy remains a policy issue primarily for Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania, Morocco and Yemen (World Bank, 2016).

Girls tend to be slightly less likely to attend primary school than boys, while the enrolment gap in secondary education has narrowed. As for higher education, young women tend to outnumber their male peers in almost all MENA countries (ibid.), although they study different subjects (World Bank, 2007). As in many OECD countries, female students in the MENA region concentrate more on educational sciences, the humanities and the arts. They are less well-represented in the fields of engineering, manufacturing and construction. Therefore, women's education may not match market needs, another factor that may obstruct their recruitment in the private sector.

However, despite improvements in women's education, female labour force participation remains very low – only 22%, compared to more than 50% in OECD countries (Figure 20.2). Rates are rising in most MENA countries, however, especially in the UAE and in Qatar, where they have increased by more than 10 percentage points since 2000. Female participation is, in fact, significantly higher in Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) due, in large part, to the significant numbers of foreign workers.

Figure 20.1. In most MENA countries, gender gaps in literacy have disappeared among the young

Gender gap (male minus female) in literacy rates, 15+ year-olds and 15-24 year-olds, 2015

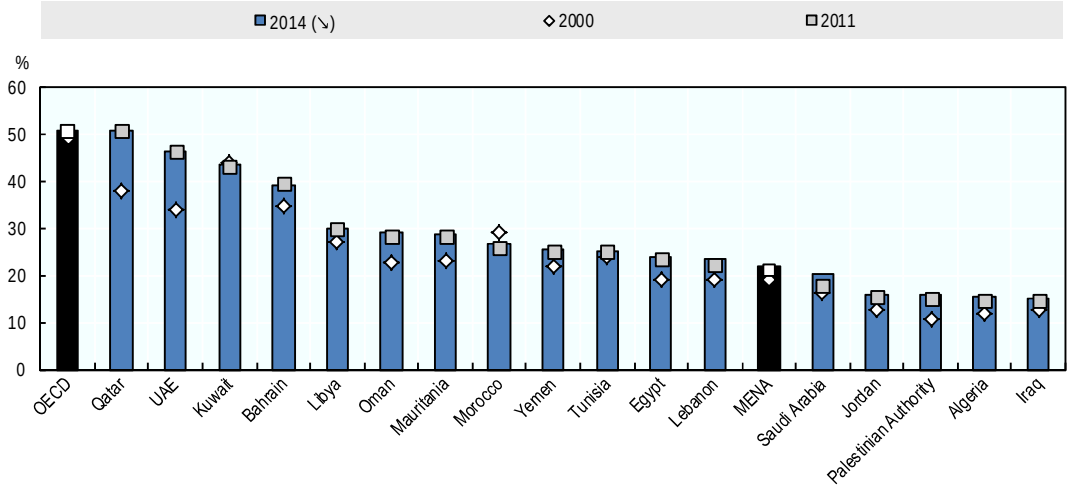


Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on data from World Bank World Development Indicators, http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators/.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575197

Figure 20.2. Female labour force participation rates are low in MENA countries, but rising slowly

Female labour force participation rate (%), all ages (15+ year-olds), 2000, 2011 and 2014



Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators, http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators/.

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Despite their low labour force participation, women's unemployment rates in MENA countries are among the highest worldwide – over 17% of economically active women are jobless and, in all MENA countries except Kuwait, their rates are much higher than men's (World Bank, 2014). Unemployment is particularly high among young women, ranging from 7.6% in Qatar to 69.2% in Libya among 15-to-24 year-old, for a region-wide average of 38% (ibid.).

The MENA gender gap in entrepreneurship is the widest in the world. Around 4% of adult women are early-stage entrepreneurs (i.e. those active in starting a business or

managing a new business less than 42 months old) compared with 14% of men (GEM, 2013). However, the lack of gender-disaggregated data makes it difficult to evaluate and monitor female entrepreneurship in the MENA region.

A prominent employer is the public sector, in which women tend to be well or even over-represented -- as in OECD countries, women are better represented in the public sector than in the economy as a whole (OECD, 2015c):

- in Egypt, for instance, the public sector accounts for 56% of employed women and 30% of employed men,
- in Jordan, 52% of the female workforce is employed in the public sector (OECD-CAWTAR, 2014),
- in the UAE, women form 51% of the federal government's workforce (FAHR, 2016).

As for the quality and level of employment, a Tunisian labour market study reveals that women educated to levels comparable to men are employed in jobs that require lower qualifications (Stampini and Verdier-Chouchane, 2011). And, according to the ILO (2015), few women hold senior and executive positions in either the private or public sector: they account for 14.8% in Tunisia, 12.8% in Morocco, 9.7% in Egypt, 5.1% in Jordan and 4.9% in Algeria (ILO, 2015).

As for women's representation in the judiciary, the available data point to wide variations from country to country. The proportion of women in Tunisia's Supreme Court is above the OECD average of 33% (CEPEJ, 2016), while in other countries they are still underrepresented among judicial appointees. It is also important to bear in mind the dual legal systems in many Arab countries, where state and Sharia law exist side by side. With the sole exception of the Palestinian Authority, which appointed two women to its Sharia courts, there are no women in the Sharia judiciary anywhere in the region.

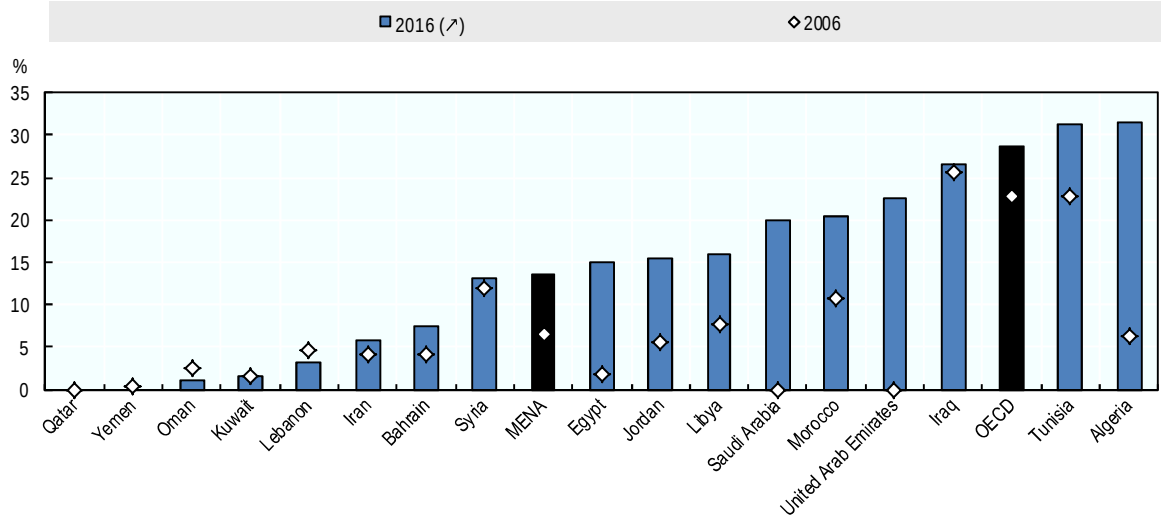
Altogether – whether at the ministerial level, in parliament, or in the judiciary – men still occupy the bulk of decision-making positions.

In spite of accounting for only 10% of ministerial positions in government (up from 7% in 2005), women have more than doubled their representation in the lower houses of bicameral systems and in single-chamber parliaments over the past decade (Figure 20.3). Indeed, Algeria and Tunisia have crossed the 30% threshold above which the United Nations deems women can truly influence policy. Egypt and Morocco also made great progress, respectively increasing women's representation from 2% to 15% and 11% to 21% in their most recent elections. On average, women represent 18.1% of members of parliament in both houses combined, which still leaves men dominating decision making (IPU, 2016). Only one country – the UAE – has a woman leading its legislature, the first in the region's history.

Progress in women's political participation is chiefly attributable to the introduction of quota provisions across the region, which have been adopted by political parties, enacted in electoral law, and in some cases, written into the constitution. Tunisia took a bold step in 2014 by enshrining in its legal framework both parity and the principle of alternating men and women in parties' electoral lists to ensure equal representation of both sexes. Egypt's 2014 Constitution reserves 25% of local council seats for women, while Jordan sets aside nearly one-third, together with 10% in its House of Representatives.

Figure 20.3. On average, women's representation in parliaments in MENA countries has doubled over the past decade

Female share (%) of seats in parliament, lower houses or single chambers, MENA region, 2006 and 2016



Note: Data for 2006 refer to 30th November 2006, and for 2016 to 1st November 2016. For the OECD average, data for 2006 refer to 31st December 2006, and for 2016 to 1st December 2016.

Bahrain had no elections between 1975 and 2002. Oman had partial suffrage in 1994 and universal suffrage in 2003. Qatar allows women's suffrage only for municipal elections. Saudi Arabia has announced suffrage for 2015. Data for Yemen relates to the year of suffrage in the Democratic Republic of Yemen. The Arab Republic of Yemen had women's suffrage in 1970.

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union Women in National Parliaments Database, http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm; national official documents.

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Although quotas and other affirmative gender measures have been shown to increase women's representation in leadership, OECD studies have also found that they must be combined with other measures if women are to enjoy equal access to leadership in politics and the business (Box 20.1).

Box 20.1. Tools to increase women's representation in corporate boards in MENA

In the MENA region, the few seats held by women on corporate boards can be ascribed, in part, to their low economic participation. There are multiple tools available to address the gender imbalance, ranging from government-set targets to voluntary compliance with corporate governance codes. The G20/OECD Principles of Corporate Governance (OECD, 2015d) recommend that countries consider measures such as voluntary targets, quotas, disclosure requirements, and public awareness campaigns to boost female participation in corporate decision-making positions. What is needed is a holistic approach to create an ecosystem for female corporate leadership in the region that will develop into a virtuous circle: women's greater participation in corporate boards will require increased economic participation, targeted career training and mentoring, and access to networks, which will, in turn, empower them to join the ranks of corporate boards and become female corporate leaders, where they will be role models who may encourage women's increased economic participation at the top of corporations.

Remaining barriers to gender equality in the MENA Region

Gains in education have not (yet) translated into a significant increase in women's economic and political empowerment or in employment and entrepreneurship. A wide range of barriers, which often spring from traditional gender norms and discriminatory social institutions (OECD Development Centre, 2014), continue to hinder women's full participation in economic and public life and in decision making. Various legal provisions still differentiate between men's and women's roles and gender-biased obligations persistently affect women's job opportunities and career prospects. Personal status codes generally impact on family decision making, women's wealth, and their ability to pursue a profession, engage in travel, or head a family.

Most labour laws in the MENA region are set out in frameworks that prohibit discrimination in recruitment, remuneration, promotion and the termination of contracts. However, some rules distinguish between men and women, with certain provisions purporting to "protect" women. For example, they bar women from certain types of work, such as those that entail night-shifts, and from certain industries. Laws also state that women and men do not have the same entitlements to non-wage benefits. Indeed, social benefits are paid almost exclusively to men as, by law, they are generally the heads of household. Other regulations make it more costly to recruit women. In the private sector, for instance, employers alone bear the costs of maternity leave, child nursing or the setting up of child-care facilities, which may deter them from hiring female workers. It is also worth mentioning that some sectors still remain outside the realm of labour laws, and many women working in these sectors (e.g. agriculture or domestic services) are usually unable to access employment-related benefits.

Employers tend to recruit and invest in male workers, particularly when a job requires travel. Social expectations that women will stop working when they start a family restrict their employment and career-development opportunities. In the event of staff redundancies, employers reportedly prefer laying off female employees on the grounds that men are heads of households. Women's high unemployment rates may thus be the result of employers' preference for recruiting and promoting men – in part, at least.

Women's high levels of employment in the public sector are attributable to the fact that jobs in the public service are more socially acceptable to them, i.e. more suitable to the socially constructed female gender role (e.g. teaching). The public service also provides greater job security, a safer and less demanding work environment, a better work-life balance, and, in some cases, higher pay and more benefits than the private sector.

Women's underrepresentation in senior positions of responsibility in both public and private sectors may be linked to the significant female drop-out rates from the labour force. Many top posts indeed only become accessible with considerable work experience. Yet, that raises the question as to whether and to what extent the sheer difficulty of making it to the higher echelons may dissuade women from entering or staying in the labour market. With the exception of the UAE, no country has introduced regulations or adopted a voluntary quota policy designed to create opportunities for women to become corporate leaders and reduce the gender-related promotion gap.

When it comes to entrepreneurship, women struggle to set up and run businesses due to a lack of work experience, limited integration in business networks and poor access to finance (Chapter 24). Underlying factors include social and cultural norms which constrain women's overall economic independence and assertiveness, reduce their wealth (regulated by their status in the family and inheritance succession), and affect self-assessments of their capacities and needs in developing a business.

Other factors that impinge on women's economic participation include the high and increasing degrees of violence to which they are exposed in public spaces and in the workplace. MENA countries afford very little protection against gender-based violence and sexual harassment, with only a few having introduced provisions to curb sexual harassment by the employer (but not by other employees) or in public spaces.

As for access to justice, women are often unaware of their rights. Yet even when they are, social norms and economic inequality may discourage them from addressing the courts. In addition, even when equitable legal provisions are in place, courts are not always able to fully enforce their rulings. MENA countries' justice systems have had to contend with a number challenges, especially since the Arab revolutions of 2011. Challenges take the shape of legal protection systems that often lack tailored responses to vulnerable parts of the population, e.g. low-income groups, women, young people and victims of crime.

In an effort to address persistent gender barriers and gaps, many MENA countries have either integrated gender mainstreaming in their explicit gender equality strategies or included it in a wider strategy. Morocco, Lebanon, Bahrain and the Palestinian Authority, for example, made gender mainstreaming part of their national gender strategy in 2014. Other countries, like Egypt and Tunisia, reported in 2014 that gender mainstreaming was part of separate strategies, although Egypt also included it in its new 2016 National Sustainable Development Strategy, "Egypt Vision 2030".

Still, MENA countries continue to struggle to translate high-level mainstreaming strategies into a practical gender lens that is fully integrated into all policies and budgets. Importantly, effective gender mainstreaming requires robust collection of sex-disaggregated data across different sectors. While MENA countries have made progress in data collection, significant data gaps remain, which makes it a challenging task to effectively promote gender mainstreaming and monitor the impact of policy reforms and strategies on the lives of men and women.

Key policy messages

- Ensure that labour codes encompass all workers. Reconsider purported protection provisions in some labour laws in order to eliminate gender discrimination and enable women to choose work they consider appropriate to their aspirations. Strengthen the application of merit, diversity, transparency and fairness principles in private and public sectors and expand measures to promote the work-life balance (Chapters 15-18) and combat sexual harassment.
- Introduce measures supporting equal access to finance and entrepreneurship opportunities (Chapter 24), including the amendment of legislation applying to finance and inheritance and introduce provisions that prohibit discrimination based on sex or marital status.
- Consider adopting affirmative-action programmes or other gender-balance measures, such as temporary quotas or targets, in politics and parties' electoral practices and in public and private governance structures (e.g. leadership and management positions, corporate boards). Such measures may be complemented by leadership development opportunities for women and men – through career counselling, coaching and mentoring – to ensure gender-equal access to senior posts.
- Strengthen the capacity of governments to develop gender-sensitive policies and undertake gender mainstreaming strategies. To that end, a comprehensive approach that integrates gender analysis into the policy development process is required. Data collection must be further improved so that it yields faithful views of economic and political participation, while policy reform should be assessed and monitored.

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Chapter 21

Women on the move

Key findings

- More than one migrant in two in the OECD is a woman. Migrant women predominate in the category of "family migrants".
- Migrant women face a double disadvantage in the labour market, resulting in employment rates that are below those of native-born women and men and foreign-born men in most OECD countries.
- Highly-educated women are more likely to emigrate than their male counterparts.

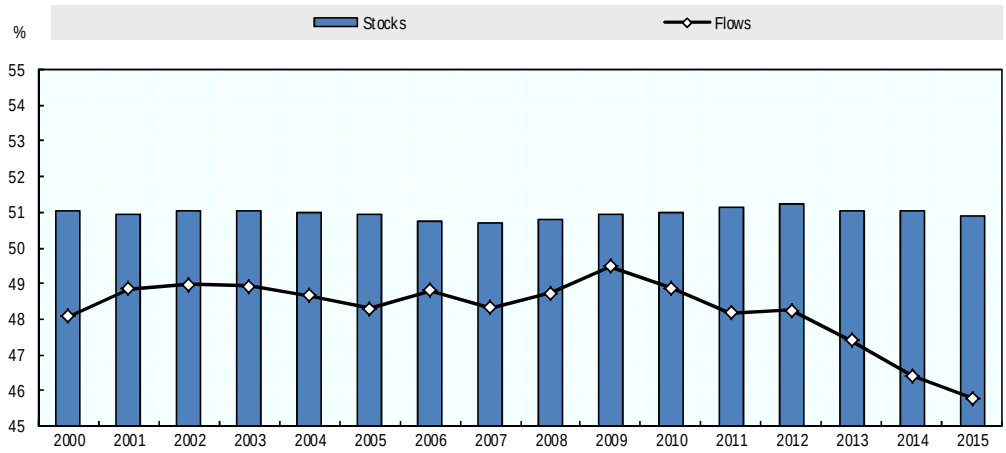
The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

There are more migrant women than men

Since 2000, the average share of immigrants who are women living in OECD countries has been remarkably stable, remaining within a 0.5 percentage point range at around 51% (Figure 21.1). Over the same period, inflows of women have shown greater fluctuation. They peaked in 2009, when almost exactly one in two migrants was a woman, but then steadily declined to stand at 46% in 2015 (Figure 21.1; estimates based on provisional and partial data).

Figure 21.1. The share of women in migration flows to OECD countries has fallen slightly in recent years

Share of migrant women in flows and in stocks of foreign populations, OECD average, 2000-15



Source: *OECD International Migration Database*, http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/oecdmigrationdatabases.htm.

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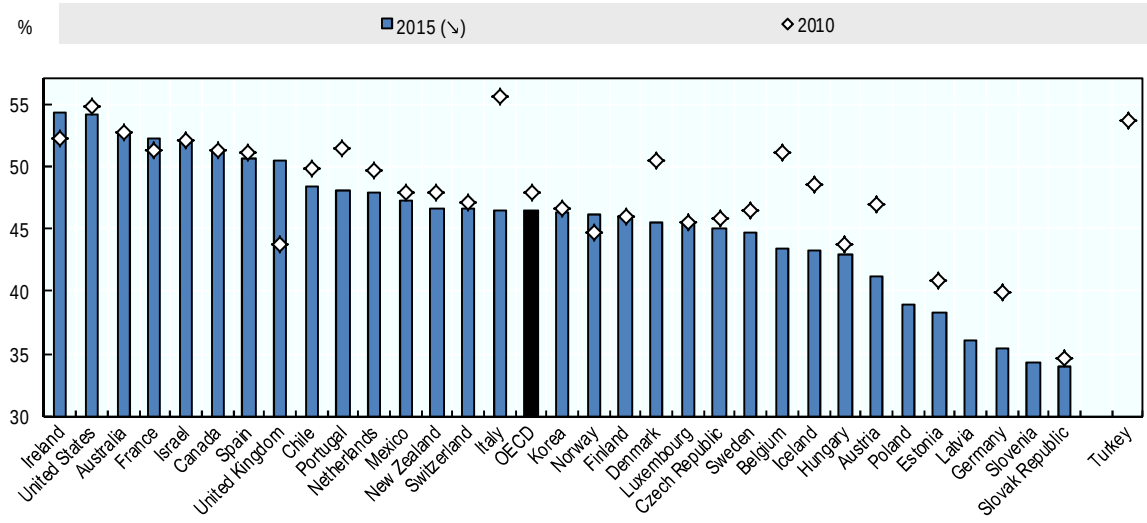
The three main categories of permanent migration are linked to migration for family reasons, employment or humanitarian protection. Women are part of all of these migration categories, but are more likely to be overrepresented in family migration. Women's migration to the OECD consequently reached its highest point in 2009, when the employment inflow was relatively low. It declined slightly thereafter, as migration for employment picked up, particularly within the European Union, and again more recently as large inflows of refugee and asylum seekers arrived. The downward trend in women's migration was observed in most OECD countries, rising only in flows to Canada, France, Ireland, Norway and the United Kingdom (Figure 21.2). The gender composition of migrant stocks has been affected only very marginally, however, as, once again, the migration categories in which women account for the highest shares are those most likely to be a permanent movement.

Recent trends in family migration

Women's migration is especially pronounced in family migrant flows. While men are often perceived as the principal immigrants – the first-comers who arrived as workers, students or refugees – women account for most of the spouses who either accompany or join the principal migrants later, a pattern sometimes referred to as that of "trailing wives" (Cooke, 2008). Family migration trends may thus be associated chiefly with women, even though family migrants also include minor-aged children whose gender distribution is balanced.

Figure 21.2. Most OECD countries have seen the share of women in flows to OECD countries decline since 2010

Share of women in migration flows to OECD countries, 2010 and 2015



Note: The OECD average is the unweighted average for all countries with data available in both 2010 and 2015.

Source: OECD International Migration Database, http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/oecdmigrationdatabases.htm.

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To investigate the gender dimension in family migration empirically, this section draws on the 2014 ad-hoc module (AHM) of the European Labour Force Survey, compiled by Eurostat. These recent data come from migrants' self-declared motives for moving to European OECD countries (with the exceptions of Denmark, Ireland and the Netherlands). Family migrants are identified as having been born outside the European Union who indicate "family reasons" as the main reason for migrating or who were minors when they arrived in the country where they were surveyed. Trends can be derived from comparisons between the 2014 AHM and an earlier data set from 2008.

The two data sets reveal that women make up a clear, stable majority of family migrants in European OECD countries – 61% in both 2014 and 2008. This share is not only higher than among labour migrants (36% in 2014), refugees (40%) or international students (42%), but would grow further if only family migrants who arrived as adults were considered, since those who came as children probably rebalance the gender distribution of family migrants.

Evidence for other OECD countries confirms that predominance of women among family migrants. In Canada, women account for 60% of migrants in the family class and many of the family migrants who accompanied labour migrants. They make up considerably lower shares among principal labour migrants (42%) and refugees (50%), based on the 2014 Longitudinal Immigration Database. In Australia, women account for 68% of recent family migrants, compared to 49% of recent refugees and 45% of recent labour migrants, based on 2013 Australian Bureau of Statistics data.

Migrating for family reasons, rather than being the principal migrant, can have implications for integration in the host country. Labour migrants and international students necessarily interact with the host country society through their jobs and study programmes. Family migrants are more likely to be cut off from the host society, which compromises

their chances of learning the language. In such circumstances, a family migrant can become highly dependent on the principal migrant – legally, too, as their residence permit is often initially tied to their spouse.

As part of the AHM 2014 data collection, migrants were asked to rate their proficiency in the host country's language (which sometimes coincided with their native language). The results suggested that female family migrants struggled comparatively often with the host country language. 16% rated themselves as beginners, 21% as having an intermediate level, and the remainder (63%) claimed to have an advanced or native-level command. Among female labour migrants, only 9% said they were beginners, 24% intermediate, and 67% advanced or native-level speakers. Women who arrived as international students reported still better command of the host language. Of male family migrants, 79% claimed to have advanced or native level – a much higher proportion than any of the three groups of migrant women.

Integration is determined, in part, by education. Better educated migrants generally find it easier to acquire a high standard of proficiency in the host county's language, to navigate the host country's institutions and access its job market. A clear trend of rising levels of education emerges from comparisons of 2008 and 2014 data. The share of family migrants with low levels of education fell from 46% in 2008 to 38% in 2014, while those educated to a medium level remained roughly stable (35% in 2008 and 37% in 2014). But the proportion of the highly-educated grew from 17% in 2008 to 23% in 2014. By 2014, family migrants were better educated than labour migrants or refugees, in the sense that family migrants exhibited a greater share with a high education level and a smaller share with a low education level.

There is a gender dimension to the considerable improvement in educational attainment among family migrants. Figure 21.3 shows that the decrease in the share with a low education level was stronger for female family migrants than for male family migrants, and likewise for the increase in the share with a high education level. To some extent, this could mirror a similar trend among the native-born: those family migrants who arrived as children might exhibit trends in their educational attainment in parallel to the native-born. However, since the rise is more pronounced among family migrants than the native-born, the educational attainment of family migrants who arrived as adults has likely also improved, and especially for women. When it comes to labour migrants, by contrast, men drive the upward trend in educational attainment.

Figure 21.3. Migrants are increasingly well educated – especially male labour migrants and female family migrants

Percentage point change between 2008 and 2014 in shares with a given level of educational attainment, by migrant status and gender, European OECD countries

Note: The 2014 data cover all European OECD countries except Denmark, Ireland and the Netherlands. The 2008 data cover all European OECD countries except Finland. However, family migrants cannot be identified in non-EU-15 countries. Due to the small number of migrants living in the new EU member states in 2008, though, findings should be largely unaffected.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) ad-hoc modules 2014 and 2008.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575292

Growing labour migration in women dominated sectors: Care and domestic work

While labour migrants, as noted above, have traditionally been more likely to be men, there are some occupations and activities where they are predominantly women. Occupations which are already overwhelmingly held by women understandably attract female labour migrants.

One major category of employment of migrant women is work for private households, doing housework or caring for young children, the disabled, or the elderly. OECD countries where labour migration is subject to wage and skill thresholds generally do not allow labour migration in these categories, since the work is classified as low skilled and is low paid.

In countries where care work is a legal migration channel, flows are substantial. The number of care workers in Israel rose from fewer than 22 000 in 2000 to more than 57 000 in 2016. In Canada, the inflow of live-in caregivers increased from 3 000 in 2005 to 11 700 in 2014. In Italy, inflows have generally been restricted since the late 2000s, but two waves of regularisations, in 2009 and 2012, led to hundreds of thousands of women being granted permits for domestic work. In Korea, a working visit visa programme for ethnic Koreans from other Asian countries, primarily China, has drawn a large number of women into domestic work, especially childcare. In 2014, there were more than 120 000 women with such visas, working primarily as cleaners or domestic workers.

Care work in institutions, like hospitals and retirement homes, and under contract to employers (e.g. visiting nurses and nurses' aides) is also a labour migration channel in some OECD countries.

Migrant women's double disadvantage in the labour market

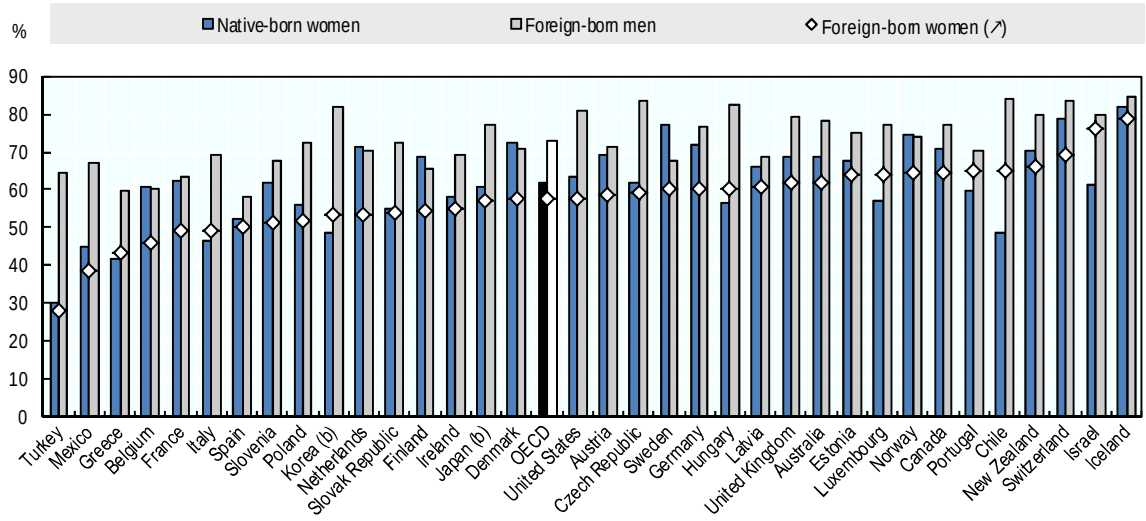
Across the OECD, working-age migrant women are at a double disadvantage in employment compared to migrant men and native-born women. This disadvantage appears to be driven chiefly by the gender differences in labour market behaviour, although there are wide variations from country to country.

Employment rates of migrant women compared to migrant men and native-born women

On average, employment rates are 57.4% for migrant women, 61.8% for native-born women, and 73.3% for migrant men. Country rates vary considerably, with only 28.1% of migrant women in Turkey in work and as many as 78.5% in Iceland. In countries such as New Zealand, Canada, Australia and the United States, rates among migrant women are all equal to or higher than the OECD average (Figure 21.4).

Figure 21.4. Migrant women are at a double disadvantage in the labour market

Employment rates among native and foreign-born, 15-64 year-olds, by gender, 2014-15 or latest available[a]



a) Data for Japan refer to 2010, for Korea to 2012-13, and for Chile and Mexico to 2015

b) Korea and Japan determine who is an immigrant on the basis of nationality, not on the basis of country of birth. Population in Korea aged from 15 to 59 years old.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) for European Union countries, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey; national Labour Force Surveys for Australia, Canada and New Zealand; Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN) for Chile; Japanese Population Census 2010 for Japan; Foreign Labour Force Survey and Economically Active Population Survey of Korean nationals (EAPS) for Korea; Encuesta Nacional de Ocupación y Empleo (ENOE) for Mexico; and the United States Current Population Survey (CPS) for the United States.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575311

In every OECD country considered, employment rates are lower among migrant women than their male peers who were, on average, 15.9 percentage points more likely to be employed. The gender gap varied, though, from country to country. The widest gender gaps were in Turkey, Mexico and Korea, with differences of 30 percentage points. In the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Slovak Republic and Poland, men are roughly 20 percentage points more likely to be employed than women. Other countries with a gender gap for migrants above 20 percentage points include the United States, Japan and Italy. The smallest differences are in Israel, Iceland and Portugal, with differences of 3-6 percentage points. Likewise, the Baltic states and Scandinavian countries all had some of the smallest differences between sexes, at around 10 percentage points.

Comparisons of employment rates between migrant and native-born women reveal greater cross-country variation. In the 2010s, rates to the advantage of native-born women showed the widest margins in Scandinavia and Western European countries, such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and France. Native-born women in the Netherlands and Sweden were as much as 17 percentage points more likely to be in work than their migrant peers. Significantly, those countries tend to boast some of the highest overall rates of employment. Conversely, in Chile and Israel migrant women were 15 percentage points more likely to be employed than native-born women. Greece, Italy, Hungary, Korea, Portugal and Luxembourg were also countries where migrant women were more likely to be employed than native born women. On average, the OECD employment rate for native-born women is 4.5 percentage points higher than foreign-born women.

Together, these data show that migrant women are not only less likely to be employed when compared to migrant men, but they are also less likely to be employed when compared to native-born women. Similarly, migrant women are almost always more likely to be unemployed compared to native-born women. However, the largest differences tend to be gender – rather than migration-related.

The widest migration-based differences tended to be in countries with the highest rates of employment, which suggests that it may be harder to close these gaps at the top end of the scale. And because such countries also have high overall rates of education, the gap between migrant and native women may stem from other causal factors.

Positive trends do emerge over time, however. In a forthcoming publication, the OECD (2017) compares the employment rates of four cohorts of family migrants in Europe between 2014 and 2008. They were significantly higher among female family migrants in 2014 than in 2008 in all four cohorts. Rates among male family migrants, though, fell in the two most recent cohorts. This development contrasts with that exhibited by labour migrants, where male and female employment dropped in all four cohorts. The noteworthy increase among female family migrants, albeit from a comparatively low level, might have been a consequence of their improving educational attainment, but might also reflect that female family migrants increasingly enter the labour market to offset falling employment among their male spouses.

Policy responses to foster the integration of migrant women

Tackling the double disadvantage faced by many migrant women in OECD countries requires flexible policy responses that take their specific needs into consideration. Until recently, however, the issue had received relatively little attention and few countries have developed systematic policies to address it.

As a rule, efforts to integrate immigrant women should start from a family angle, considering that these women often have primary childcare responsibilities in their family.

Combining childcare with training programmes for immigrant mothers is one useful approach that countries like Austria, Canada, Germany and New Zealand have taken. Another option is to provide migrant women with access to entrepreneurship. It is a particularly effective pathway into the labour market. It affords the opportunity of engaging in gainful activity that is more flexible and easier to combine with childcare and other commitments, and where cultural barriers are less of an obstacle than regular employment. Moreover, female migrant entrepreneurs can act as role models and potential employer for other migrant women.

Many of the issues that migrant women face are related to their immigrant status as family migrants. Indeed, family migrants, who, due to immigration rules, usually do not depend on benefits, are often neglected by integration policies – such as active labour market policy measures – which are designed for and sometimes even restricted to benefit claimants. Underlying the neglect is the assumption that female family migrants are cared for by their sponsor, who can provide them with all necessary support, and that the women therefore have less or no need for professional counselling on integration services.

To address this issue, Australia, Canada and Germany have all responded with services that advise eligible newly arriving family migrants on the services they might need and inform them of available integration support. Some countries even explicitly target less educated women with regional programmes to help them develop new skills and increase their participation in the labour market. Language training is another important tool. In Sweden, some municipalities offer language training for immigrant parents at public childcare facilities or preschools, primarily targeting immigrant women.

Some migrant women are largely confined to the household and their ethnic community, which makes it hard to reach them via regular information channels. Where that is the case, specific outreach activities are an important part of successful policies. Mentorship programmes, for example, can strengthen ties with the host society. Mentors frequently have an immigrant background themselves and can approach migrant women in familiar spaces without cultural or linguistic barriers. An example is the Danish “District Mothers” programme, which trains unemployed immigrant mothers to visit and advise other women in their neighbourhood on education and job search options. Similar schemes operate in Germany, the Netherlands and Portugal. Norway, on the other hand, provides grants to immigrant organisations and other NGOs to strengthen the local participation of immigrants and help them find their place in social networks.

Finally, it is important to design suitable incentive packages that encourage migrant women to engage, or re-engage, in training or take up employment. Incentives can take several forms, but largely focus on fine-tuning the mix of tax and benefits in a way that favours activity over inactivity. One example, again from Norway, involves transitional into-work benefits that combine benefits and training with work for an initial length of time. As part of a broader activation strategy, the Netherlands have combined work and disability benefit programmes in an attempt to bring down barriers to retraining and employment.

Evidence suggests that cash-for-care subsidies paid to the parents of children not attending kindergarten can be highly detrimental to mothers’ labour market participation. This is particularly true for low-educated women with several children in countries where public childcare is expensive, as childcare costs accumulate. For such women, the additional income that can be expected from employment is unlikely to outweigh the costs of public childcare, so they have little incentive to use it. Providing affordable public childcare is hence a strategic measure for governments who want to support women's labour market participation.

The gender dimension of the brain drain

The emigration of highly-educated women is a growing concern worldwide

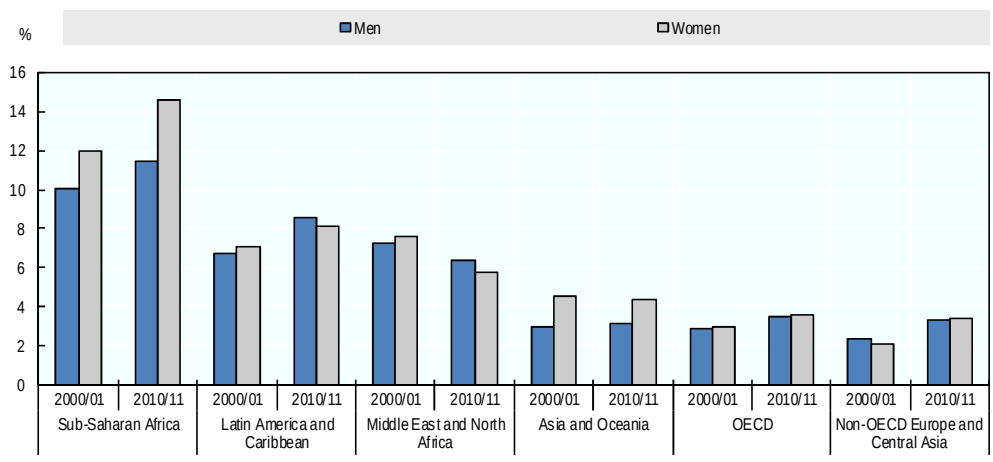
The emigration of highly-educated women and men has grown significantly in recent decades, and women account for a growing share of these migrants. Although the gender dimension of the brain drain has been little studied, partly because of the lack of detailed data, the gender dimension of these flows raises specific concerns.

The emigration rate of highly-educated women – the so-called female brain drain – is higher than men's, driven particularly by outflows from Asia and Oceania and Sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 21.5). The emigration rate is measured as the number of highly-educated emigrants from a certain country/region as a share of all highly-educated people (aged 15 and above) in that country/region, including those who have emigrated. Indeed, 15% of all highly-educated women from sub-Saharan Africa were living in an OECD country in 2010-11, according to the *Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries* (DIOC) – the highest emigration rate of women of any region and 3 percentage points higher than that of men. The emigration rate of highly-educated men and women increased, in fact, in most regions between 2000-01 and 2010-11. For nearly half of the countries covered by DIOC, over 10% of highly-educated emigrant women live abroad, and this figure reaches more than 20% for about sixty countries (OECD, 2015).

The Middle East and North Africa region is an exception, however, where rising outflows were offset by the sharp increase in the number of highly-educated persons overall. As a result, the emigration rate of highly-educated men and women from the region fell by 1 and 2 percentage points respectively between 2000-01 and 2010-11.

Figure 21.5. In Asia and in Sub-Saharan Africa, highly-educated women are more likely to emigrate to OECD countries than highly-educated men

Emigration rates of the highly-educated to OECD countries, by gender and region of origin, 2000-01 and 2010-11



Note: The emigration rate of highly-educated women (men) is measured as the number of highly-educated emigrant women (men) aged 15 and above from a certain country/region as a share of all highly-educated women (men) aged 15 and above in that country/region, including those who have emigrated. "Highly educated" refers to those who have attained tertiary education. Regions of origin are sorted from left to right in descending order according to the emigration rate of highly-educated women to OECD countries in 2010/11.

Source: *OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries* (DIOC), 2000/01 and 2010/11, http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/dioc.htm.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575330

The number of highly-educated migrant women has increased sharply

The total number of highly-educated migrant women in OECD countries increased by 80% between 2000-01 and 2010-11, while that of men increased by 63% (Figure 21.6). Those percentages translate into rises from nearly 9 million to over 16 million women and over 9 million to nearly 15 million men. Again this is mainly driven by migrants from the Asia and Oceania region and the between OECD countries, though the number of highly-educated women doubled among migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Oceania and non-OECD European countries. Central Asia, Nepal, Mongolia, Saudi Arabia, Paraguay, Afghanistan and Lithuania also saw enormous growth – over 250% – in the number of highly-educated migrant women who emigrated to the OECD between 2000-01 and 2010-11 (ibid.).

A number of factors explain the feminisation of migration among the highly-educated

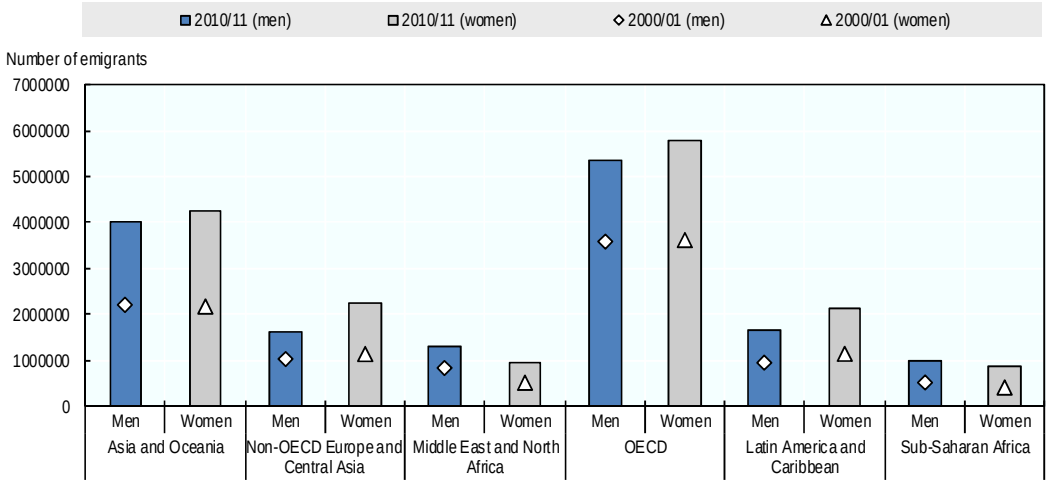
Both supply and demand factors help explain the rising numbers of highly-educated migrant women in OECD countries. Development and changing economic structures in developed and developing countries have led to an increase in female educational attainment. Different cultural attitudes to gender equality, women's changing social roles, and women's greater autonomy and access to resources have also contributed to the improvement in their educational levels in recent years in most countries in the world. As a result, the supply of highly-educated women in countries of origin has grown.

Rising rates of family reunification, coupled with an increase in the emigration of highly-educated men, who had, until recently, been the principal migrant, may have also been factors in the growing outflows of highly-educated women. Indeed, highly-educated women are increasingly the principal labour migrants rather than family dependents, though Docquier et al. (2009) find that highly-educated women are more responsive to the emigration of highly-educated men than vice versa.

Changes in attitudes towards migration of women also play a role in women's greater propensity to migrate (Curran et al., 2001). Emigrant women tend to return less to their country of origin, partly because migration facilitates their empowerment. They also tend to use networks in destination countries more extensively and their networks tend to be more developed and active than those used by men.

Figure 21.6. Across all regions, the number of highly-educated women emigrating to OECD countries increased between 2000/01 and 2010/11

Number of highly-educated emigrants to the OECD by region of birth and gender, 2000/01 and 2010/11



Note: The population of emigrants in the y axis refers to people aged 15 and above. "Highly educated" refers to those who have attained tertiary education.

Source: *OECD Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries* (DIOC), 2000/01 and 2010/11, http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/dioc.htm.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575349

Box 21.2. The role of discriminatory social institutions in origin countries

Gender-based discrimination in social institutions in women's countries of origin may influence women's decisions to migrate. They migrate to escape (Lam and Hoang, 2010):

- sexual violence and abuse;
- social stigma if they are single women, widows or divorcees;
- restrictions on their freedom;
- pressure to marry or the obligation to remain chaste until marriage (Jolly and Reeves, 2005).

Discriminatory social institutions in origin countries may also curtail women's ability to emigrate. A girl who marries early, for example, is less likely to finish her education, which limits her employment opportunities (Ferrant and Nowacka, 2015) and renders her more socially and financially dependent on her husband – even for migration. In Moldova, women report having fewer opportunities to migrate because they have fewer resources available than men (IOM, 2005). It may also be less acceptable for women to move about and travel alone (Jolly and Reeves, 2005).

The relationship between emigration and levels of discrimination in social institutions graphically presents an inverse u-shape across countries. An analysis of the OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) illustrates that discrimination in the country of origin can be an incentive for women to migrate, but only up to a certain threshold, at which point it becomes an obstacle for migration and emigration of women diminishes (Ferrant and Tuccio, 2015).

The female brain drain is a challenge to development

The brain drain is a challenge to the development of some countries of origin, and the female brain drain raises additional concerns. The emigration of highly-educated women affects negatively infant mortality, under-5 mortality and secondary school enrolment rates in countries of origin (Dumont et al., 2007). Women's levels of education are an important factor for growth, as it is correlated with investments in children's education. Africa's high female emigration rate may thus have serious implications for its human development and economic growth. Women also contribute more to and have a greater command of household income when highly educated, which may translate into higher investment in children's education and lower fertility rates.

The female brain drain is also a special concern for developing countries, as highly-educated women represent a scarcer resource than educated male peers. As women frequently face unequal access to higher education and highly skilled jobs, their emigration may entail higher relative losses of human capital than the emigration of highly-educated men (Docquier et al., 2009).

On the upside, however, the feminisation of migration flows may positively affect amounts of remittances sent back to the home country. Remittances increase as women make an increasing share of all migrants. Women also tend to send remittances over longer periods of time, so they may have a different impact on recipients' expenditures than those sent by men. Nonetheless, Dumont et al. (2007) show that remittances do not seem to compensate developing countries for the loss of highly-educated women. They find evidence that the female brain drain has a worse impact on development than the outflow of male migrants, while there is no gender-related difference in the way that the emigration of less educated persons affects development.

Key policy messages

- Ensure measures aimed at supporting migrant integration are flexible and able to take into consideration issues specific to migrant women, such as their caregiving responsibilities, the language barrier and isolation in the host community.
- Encourage migrant women to engage (or re-engage) in training or to take up employment, notably when they come from countries where women are underrepresented in the labour market
- Incorporate the impact of the feminisation of migration, particularly of the highly skilled, into diaspora policies.

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Chapter 22

Gender, health and labour force participation

Key findings

- Although women typically live longer than men, the extra years of life are often lived in poor health. Women are more likely to be disabled when they are of working age, which can limit labour market opportunities, and they are more likely to rely on long-term care services at the end of their lives. Monitoring and improving the quality of long-term care is crucial to the wellbeing of many older women.
- Women are the main providers of informal care to older family members. Strengthening social protection for long-term care can reduce gender disparities among informal caregivers, while strengthening support for caregivers can ease the adverse impacts of caring on mental health and employment.
- Women make up the majority of the health and social care workforce, but despite recent increases in the proportion of female doctors, women remain underrepresented in the most highly skilled, and highly paid, occupations.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

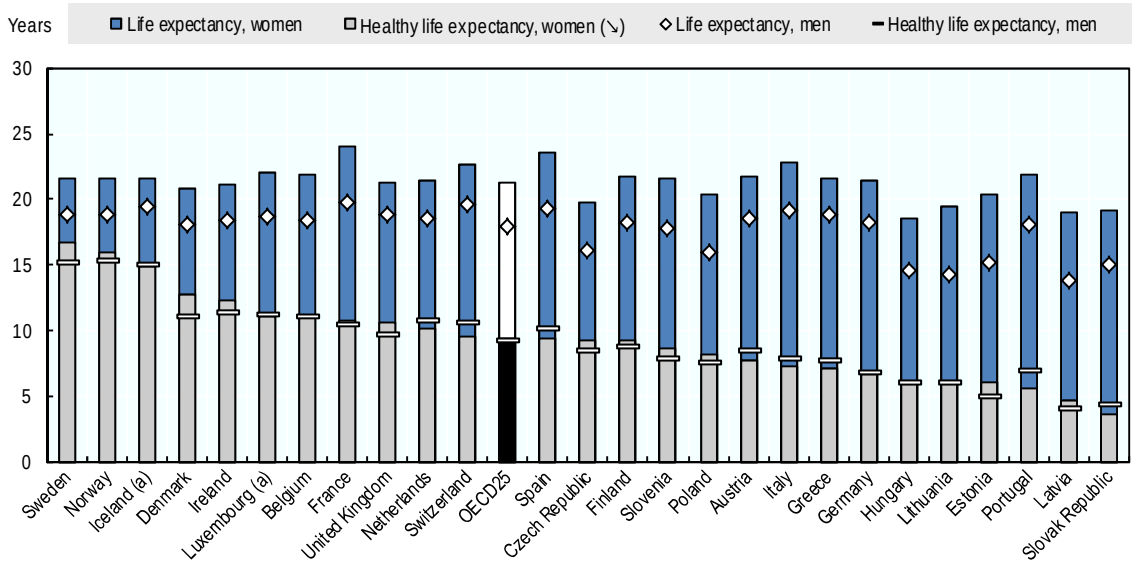
Women live longer than men, but spend their extra years in poor health

In all OECD countries, both sexes have made huge gains in life expectancies – someone born now can expect to live for ten years longer than someone born 50 years ago. Women live longer than men. On average across OECD countries, girls born in 2013 could expect to live an average of 83.1 years, compared to 77.8 for boys. However, women are prone to poor health during their extra years.

While women benefit from longer lives, they tend to have poorer health in old age. While men are more likely to suffer from fatal illnesses such as lung cancer and heart attacks, non-fatal disabling conditions such as arthritis and depression are more common among women. In 2014, women's life expectancy at the age of 65 was 21.3 years – significantly higher than men's 17.8. Their *healthy* life expectancy, by contrast, at age 65 was almost identical, at 9.4 years for women and 9.2 for men (Figure 22.1).

Figure 22.1. Women have longer overall life expectancies than men, but similar healthy life expectancies

Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy at age 65, European OECD countries, 2014



Note: Countries are sorted from left to right in ascending order according to the length of women's healthy life expectancy at the age of 65.

a) For Iceland and Luxembourg, data refer to a three-year average for 2012-14

Source: OECD/EC (2016), *Health at a Glance Europe 2016 – State of Health in the EU Cycle*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264265592-en.

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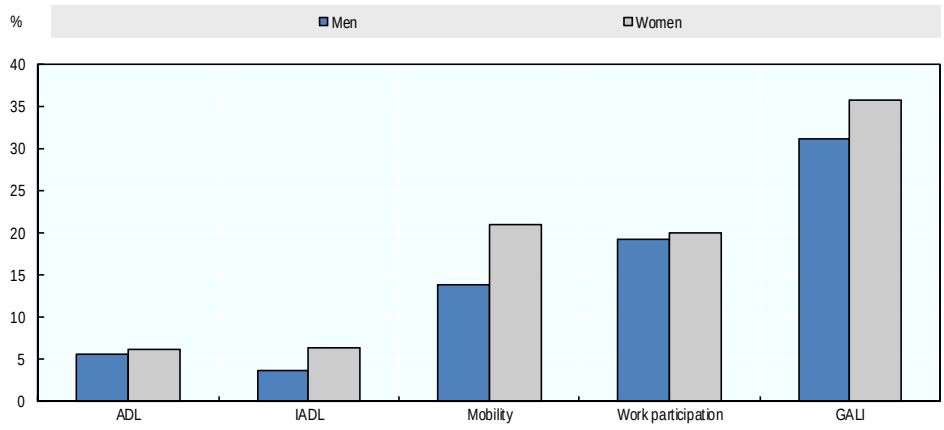
Women can expect to live around 20% longer than men at age 65 (Figure 22.1), albeit not always in good health, and are much more likely to rely on long-term care (LTC) services. In 2014, two-thirds of residents in LTC institutions were women OECD-wide (OECD, 2017). Countries have poor understanding of the quality of LTC services and rarely monitor them at the national level (OECD/EC, 2013). Addressing the knowledge and data gaps is crucial to improving the quality of life of those who rely on LTC services.

Women are more likely to develop disabilities earlier in life

Although many people reach the age of 65 in good health, a significant number develop conditions as they near the end of their working lives, which affect their ability to carry out their usual daily activities or ability to work. Such limitations are more common among women than men: 36% of 50-to-64 year-old women in European countries – versus 31% of men – report that health problems restrict their daily activities (Figure 22.2). As for functional mobility limitations in the same age group, women are 50% more likely than men to report being affected. Elderly people of low socioeconomic status, whether male or female, are more widely affected by all types of limitation.

Figure 22.2. Women are more likely to develop disabilities by the time they reach the age of 65

Proportions (%) of 50-64 year-old men and women who report being affected by at least one of five kinds of activity limitation, European countries, 2013



Note: Self-reported limitations due to disability or ill health measured by five different indices: i) Activity of Daily Living (ADL), which are the basic tasks of everyday life and personal care; ii) Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs), activities that make it possible to assess a person's ability to live independently; iii) functional limitations related to mobility, mild and severe forms of functional limitations related to walking and climbing stairs, including walking across a room, walking 100 metres, climbing one flight of stairs without resting and climbing several flights of stairs without resting ; iv) health-related limitations on participation in paid work; v) the Global Activity Limitation Index (GALI), measuring limitations due to a health problem in activities people usually do.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) Wave 5, http://www.share-project.org.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575387

Poor health can impact negatively on work and income. People with chronic diseases are less likely to be in work and have lower earnings. For example, people with diabetes work fewer hours on average (Pelkowski et al., 2004; Saliba et al., 2007) and miss an average of two additional work days per year due to health issues (Tunceli et al., 2005). People diagnosed with cancer who remain in the labour force work from three to seven hours less per week (Bradley et al., 2005; OECD, 2011).

However, evidence of gender disparities in the impact of poor health on work is mixed. While women aged 50-64 are significantly more likely to report health-related limitations on their daily activities, the shares of men and women who state that poor health restricts their participation in paid work are about the same (Figure 22.2). Women aged 50 to 59 years old who suffer from two or more chronic diseases, however, are one-third less likely to be in employment than those with none, while men with two or more chronic diseases are only a quarter less likely to be in work than men with none (OECD/EC, 2016).

It is also possible that the causation runs the other way. Work can affect health, although the empirical evidence to that effect is mixed. Higher disposable income, for example, can improve the chances of leading a healthy life, while people in work are in some countries more likely to have comprehensive health insurance. However, strenuous work can exert an adverse impact on both physical and mental health (Currie and Madrian, 1999; Grossman, 2000).

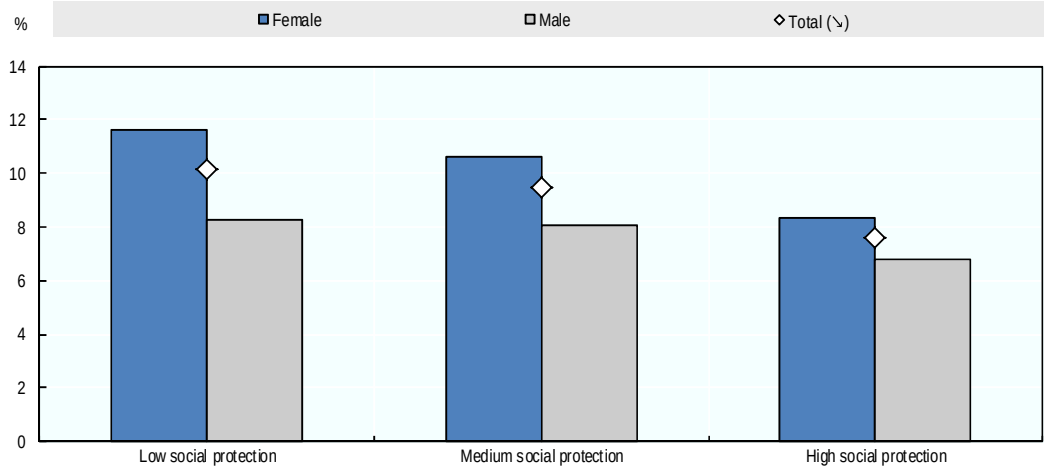
Women are more likely to provide informal care, which can affect their health and work

People are not only affected by their own health, but also by the health of their loved ones. While formal LTC services are available in all OECD countries, family and friends provide much of the informal support that people need when they can no longer live completely independently. This type of support is often referred to as informal care and in all OECD countries it is primarily provided by women (Figure 22.3). In 15 European countries in 2013, an average of 10% of women over 50 provided informal care every day, compared to 8% of men. Behind that average figure, however, gender gaps varied from country to country. In Sweden, for example, 57% of daily carers aged over 50 are women, while in Slovenia women account for 70%. Women also make up the bulk of the workforce in the formal health care sector (Box 22.1).

Although informal care may be beneficial to recipients and rewarding for carers, it comes at a price, as the time devoted to it could have been used for paid work or leisure. Indeed, informal carers who provide intensive care (more than 20 hours per week) are less likely to be in work and more likely to suffer from mental health problems (OECD, 2011), with women disproportionately affected.

Figure 22.3. Women over age 50 are more likely to provide informal care than their male peers, especially in countries without comprehensive social protection for long-term care

Average proportion (%) of over-50s providing daily informal care in European countries with different levels of social protection, by gender, 2013



Note: People providing care for people in the same household were not asked about the frequency of care, but are included here. People caring for their children, step-children, nieces or nephews are excluded. Public spending on long-term care is used as a proxy for social protection: >1% of GDP = "low social protection"; 1-2% GDP = "medium"; >2% GDP = "high".

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) Wave 5, http://www.share-project.org/.

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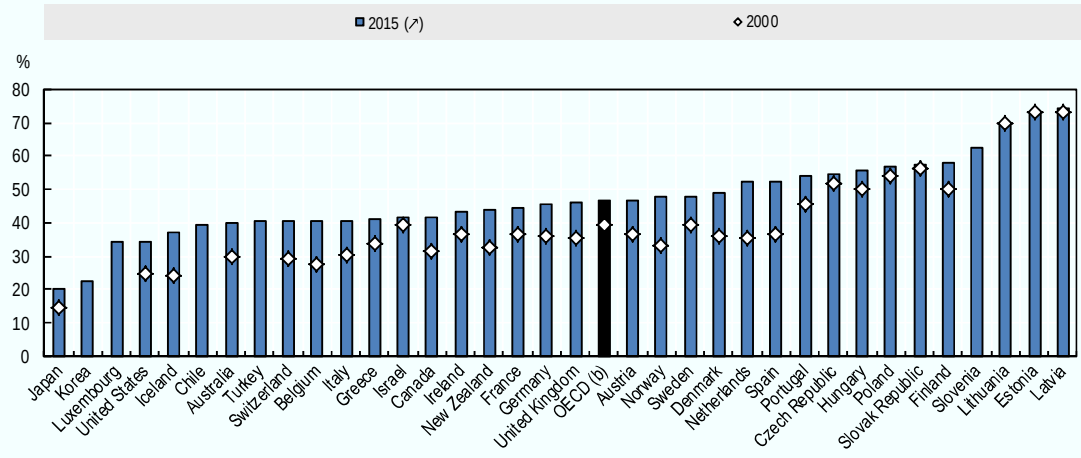
Box 22.1. Female workers heavily dominate the health care sectors, though mostly in lower-skilled jobs

Although women make up most of the overall health workforce, they remain underrepresented in the most highly skilled health care occupations, such as medicine. Although nearly half of all doctors are women OECD-wide, there is significant variation from country to country. In Japan and Korea only around 20% of doctors are women, while in Latvia and Estonia they account for over 70%. However, the gender composition of doctors is changing with women representing an increasing share. In 1990, only 29% of doctors in OECD countries were women, an average share that had risen to around 39% by 2000, and 46% by 2015.

Even when female workers take up more highly skilled professions such as medicine, they are often found in the lowest-paying specialisations. Evidence from countries such as France and Canada suggests that the share of female doctors tends to be greater in general medicine than in higher paying specialisations like surgery.

Figure 22.4. Although women make up less than half of all doctors OECD-wide, their share is growing

Female share of doctors, 2000 and 2015 or latest available[a]



a) For 2000, data for Lithuania refer to 2001, for Latvia and Norway to 2002, and for Iceland to 2003. For 2015, data for the Czech Republic refer to 2013, and for Denmark, Japan, Sweden and the United States to 2014.

b) Unweighted average across all OECD countries with data available for the given time point.

Source: *OECD Health Statistics 2017*, http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/health-data.htm.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575425

Strengthening social protection for long-term care and better supporting informal carers can help mitigate gender gaps

In general, gender gaps in informal care provision are narrower in countries with comprehensive LTC provision, i.e. those which spend more than 2% of their GDP on public LTC (Figure 22.3). In such countries, women aged over 50 in 2013 were 23% more likely to provide daily informal care than their male peers, while in those countries with little social protection – which spent less than 1% of their GDP on public LTC – women were 41% more likely to be daily carers. While cultural factors play an important role in determining gender roles, strengthening LTC provisions would help redress the gender imbalance in informal care in many countries.

A range of benefits and support services exist in OECD countries that can help mitigate the impact of care provision on informal carers. Women, who provide most informal care, stand to gain the most. Financial benefits are the most common form of support for carers (Courtin et al., 2014), though take-up is sometimes low and levels of compensation are rarely comparable to the opportunity cost of informal care – e.g. the time they could spend working in a formal job (see Muir, 2017 for more detail). Respite care, which is also available in some countries, affords carers with breaks from their care-giving responsibilities.

While carers value such services highly, evidence of their effectiveness in improving mental health outcomes is inconclusive (OECD, 2011). Stronger support services for caregivers and further research into which approaches work best are crucial to understanding the gender-unequal impact of informal care.

Increasing female labour force participation may not reduce rates of informal caregiving

One likely reason why women aged 50 provide a greater share of informal care is that they are less likely to have had full careers than their males from the same age cohort. In the European countries for which data were available, 63% of women aged over 50 in 2009 had spent ten or more years between the ages of 18 and 64 outside education and full-time employment. The share of men was only 11%. Given the negative effect of career gaps on earnings potentials (Chapter 13), women generally stand to lose less income if they reduce or give up paid work to provide informal care.

However, patterns of informal care provision among the current population of women over 50 point to a relationship between work history and informal care provision that is not straightforward. Women currently aged over 50 who have had full careers (less than ten years outside work and full-time education) are no less likely to provide daily informal care than women who have had interrupted careers. As a result, while female labour force participation rates are expected to increase in the future, this may not be enough to reduce gender inequalities in the provision of informal care – unless they are accompanied by broader shifts in perceptions of gender roles (Chapter 14). Effective social protection and infrastructure for LTC and better support for caregivers are therefore likely to remain important parts of policies against gender inequality.

Key policy messages

- Improving the access, affordability and quality of LTC services should be a policy priority for OECD countries. It would particularly benefit women, who are the main users of such services and who also provide most of the informal care that older people rely on when formal care is unavailable or unaffordable.
- Support for informal carers should be strengthened. Support can take the form of cash benefits or services such as respite care, but more research is needed to understand which approaches are the most effective and how caregivers' take-up of support can be increased.
- Information and training is another important way in which informal carers can be supported. It can help them to provide a better quality of care and to manage their own workload more effectively, reducing the negative impacts of their caring roles. While daughters are much more likely than sons to provide informal care to their elderly parents, including male family members in information and training programmes could help to reduce this gender imbalance.

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Chapter 23

Going digital: The future of work for women

Key findings

- Women can benefit from flexibility and choice in where, when, and how to work, and this flexibility may boost their employment rates. However, these benefits may be offset by lower job quality. If more flexibility results in increased working hours and problems in separating work and personal life, the bottom line may simply be greater stress.
- Most workers participate in the platform economy to supplement incomes from other paid work and to balance family responsibilities. This suggests women may benefit from work in the platform economy, but – aside from some sales platforms – women are so far not better represented in platform work than men.
- The risk of automation has traditionally been associated with manufacturing, and therefore primarily male jobs. However, some large industries with high shares of women, such as food and beverage service activities and retail trade, are at a high average risk of automation. OECD analysis suggests that, summing across all industries, the average risk of automation is similar for men and women.

This chapter is based on the "OECD Policy Brief on the Future of Work", published under the same name in July 2017 and available at http://www.oecd.org/els/emp/future-of-work/Going-Digital-the-Future-of-Work-for-Women.pdf.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Will the ongoing digital transformation strengthen the position of women in the labour market? More flexible ways of working may make it easier to combine paid work with caring responsibilities, which are still more often taken on by women. Automation is also more likely to replace less skilled jobs, giving women an advantage since they now outperform men on most measures of educational attainment.

However, a closer look at the evidence suggests a mixed picture. Women and men have just as much to gain and fear from new digital technologies. Women may benefit from increased flexibility in work, but the unscrupulous use of new atypical work arrangements may also reduce job quality. Automation has so far been most common in sectors like agriculture and manufacturing, where men dominate. But in the future, automation is expected to spread, albeit to different degrees, across all sectors and most occupations, including those traditionally dominated by women, such as retail trade, food and beverage services. In addition, jobs are likely to grow the most in business services, health, education and social services – many of which have been traditionally female-dominated. At the same time, persistent gender differences in field of study (Chapters 6 and 7) may mean that women will benefit less from the new job opportunities in STEM-related occupations.

Whether digitalisation will close or widen gender gaps in the labour market will, to a large extent, depend on policy. Governments therefore have a crucial role to play. This chapter discusses the possible impact of digitalisation on women and men, and proposes a range of policies to ensure that technological change supports a closing, and not a widening, of gender gaps.

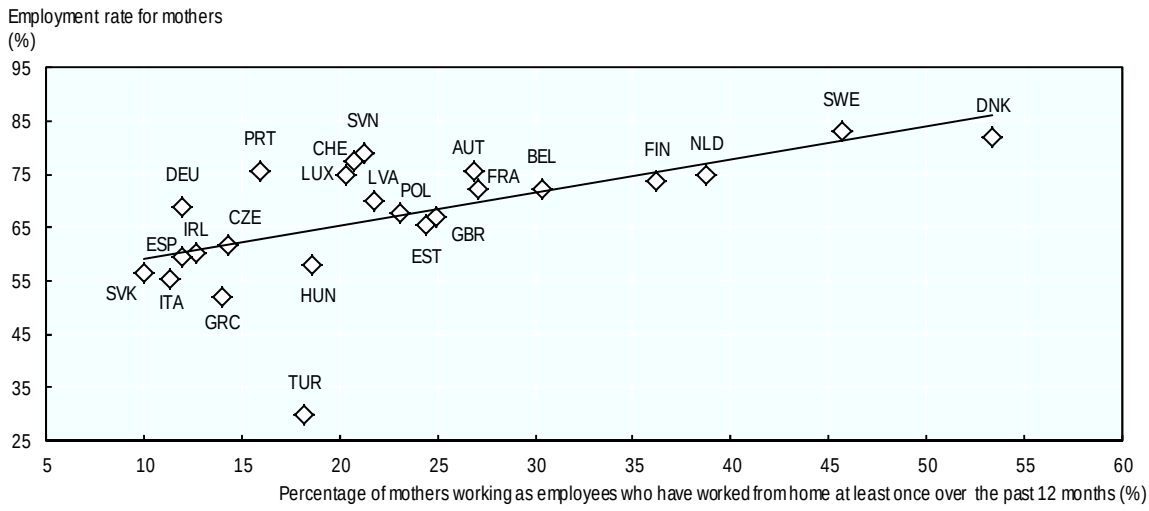
More flexibility in work can increase women's employment, but also raises concerns about job quality

Flexibility and choice in where, when and how to work can be beneficial to women and, in particular, may boost their employment rates. For example, countries with the highest shares of women working from home also tend to have high maternal employment rates (Figure 23.1) – while no such relationship emerges for men. Moreover, evidence from the United States shows that gender pay gaps tend to be lower in industries where working arrangements are more flexible (Goldin, 2014). Those are typically industries where work can be split into self-contained tasks and allocated to multiple workers without requiring each one of them to work long and inflexible hours.

However, these benefits may be offset by lower job quality. OECD work shows that well-being suffers when the demands placed upon workers by employers are not in line with the resources at workers' disposal (OECD, 2014). If more flexibility results in increased working hours and problems in separating work and personal life, the bottom line may simply be greater stress. Whether such flexibility ends up being good or bad for workers will depend on (see also Chapter 18) whether it is: i) voluntary or not; ii) associated with more or less work autonomy; and iii) paired with more or less job security.

Figure 23.1. Greater work flexibility correlates with higher maternal employment

Percentage of mothers (all ages) working as employees who have worked from home at least once over the past 12 months, and employment rates (%) for mothers (15-64 year-olds), 2014/15



Note: Data on working from home refer to 2015. Data on maternal employment refer to 2014, except for Denmark and Finland (2012) and Germany and Turkey (2013). "Mothers" are defined as women with at least one child aged 0-14. For Sweden, for the data on maternal employment, data refer to women aged 15-74 with at least one child aged 0-18.

Source: *OECD Family Database*, http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm, and OECD Secretariat calculations based on the Sixth European Working Conditions Survey, https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/european-working-conditions-surveys.

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The impact of digitally-mediated platforms on gender gaps is still unclear

"Non-standard work", such as part-time, temporary or self-employment, is not a new phenomenon; it already accounts for about one in three jobs across the OECD (OECD, 2015a). But new digital technologies and applications are allowing more freedom in where and when work is carried out.

The rise of the platform economy, while fast, still affects only a small share of workers: in 2015 an estimated 0.5% of US workers provided services through online intermediaries (Katz and Krueger, 2016). Most workers participate in the platform economy to supplement incomes from other paid work and to balance family responsibilities – which are still taken on predominantly by women. In the United States, for example, the proportion of female drivers is higher for Uber (14%) than for traditional taxis (8%). Women (42%) are more likely than men (29%) to say that their main reason for driving with Uber is that they "can only work part-time or flexible schedules" because of a "family, education, or health reason" (Hall and Krueger, 2015).

However, the very high turnover of platform workers suggests that such work may be associated with lower job quality. One study found that more than half of online platform participants quit within 12 months, and that women were more likely to drop out than men: 62% and 54%, respectively (JPM, 2016). Older, male workers making less income and who experienced at least one month of non-employment were more likely to stay attached to platforms.

Other aspects of platform work, however, may be more beneficial to women. For example, online job platforms have an international reach and can provide opportunities for

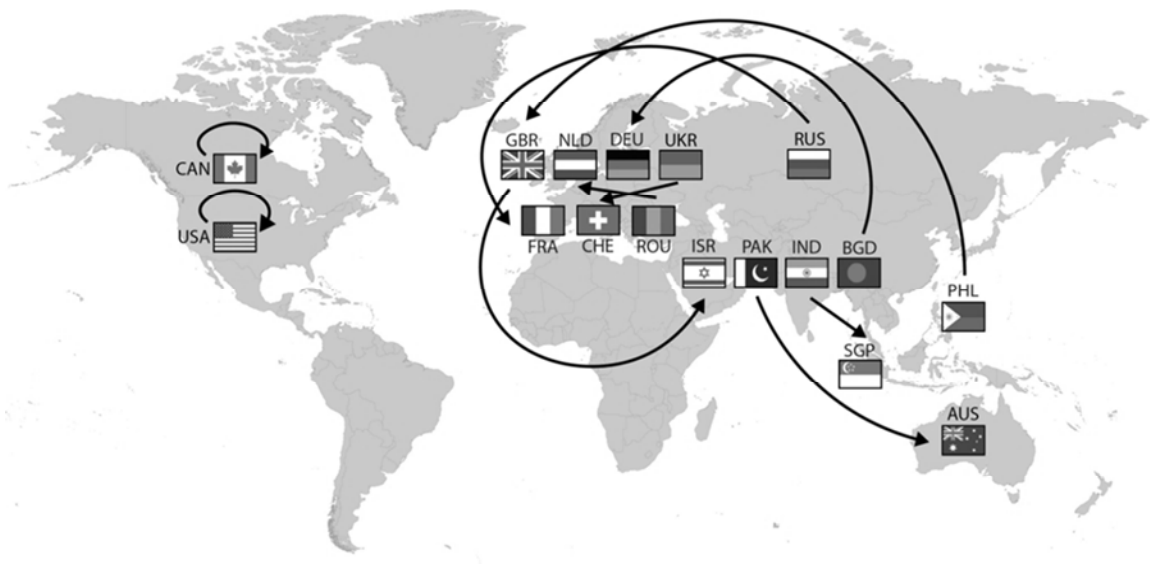
women to work and exit from the shadow and grey economy in countries where cultural barriers or rules make it difficult for them to work in the formal economy. As shown in Figure 23.2, workers providing services on online platforms appear to be mostly located in low-income countries while employers are mainly based in high-income ones. However, policy must ensure that online platforms do provide real opportunity, rather than substituting a traditional sweat shop for a digital one.

A recent Facebook, OECD and World Bank survey of online entrepreneurs operating on Facebook found that women-run firms exceeded the percentage run by men in Australia, Canada, the Philippines, the United Kingdom and the United States, and tied with men in Thailand (OECD, 2017a). And, in contrast to the offline world, female entrepreneurs on Facebook had, on average, similar business confidence scores as men – while in Malaysia and the Philippines women tended to be significantly more optimistic (OECD, 2017a). The study concluded that digital businesses may help level the playing field for women and men since customers can be reached across the world and cultural norms are avoided.

So far, however, women do not appear to be more present in the platform economy than men. On the contrary, United States data indicate that most of the participants in the online platform economy are men (JPM, 2016), although women are a majority on Etsy (89%), a large sales platform for self-made goods, as well as on Airbnb (67%) (MBO, 2015). Similarly, in the United Kingdom, an estimated 69% of gig workers are male (RSA, 2017). How technology-induced flexibility will influence gender gaps therefore remains to be seen.

Figure 23.2. Digital service workers on online platforms are mostly located in low-income countries

Top ten employer and provider countries on Upwork, 2014



Note: Upwork is one of the leading global freelancing platforms. Top 10 employer (provider) countries are denoted by their flags and three-digit international codes. Circular arrows denote flows where employer and provider countries coincide.

Source: OECD (2016), "New Forms of Work in the Digital Economy", *OECD Digital Economy Papers*, No. 260, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jlwnklt820x-en, based on Upwork, 2015.

Automation is expected to spread across most sectors and occupations, affecting both men and women

Digitalisation is creating job opportunities in new industries (e.g. platform-based services and digital products) and new occupations (e.g. software developers, data analysts, medical imagining specialists, bloggers and others) (OECD, 2016b). But it also leads to job losses, as more and more tasks traditionally performed by humans are either automated or off-shored, or both. Already, the occupational structure is becoming more polarised in many countries, with job losses primarily in middle-skilled routine occupations and job creation in both high- and low-skilled ones (Autor et al., 2006; Marcolin et al., 2016; OECD, 2017b).

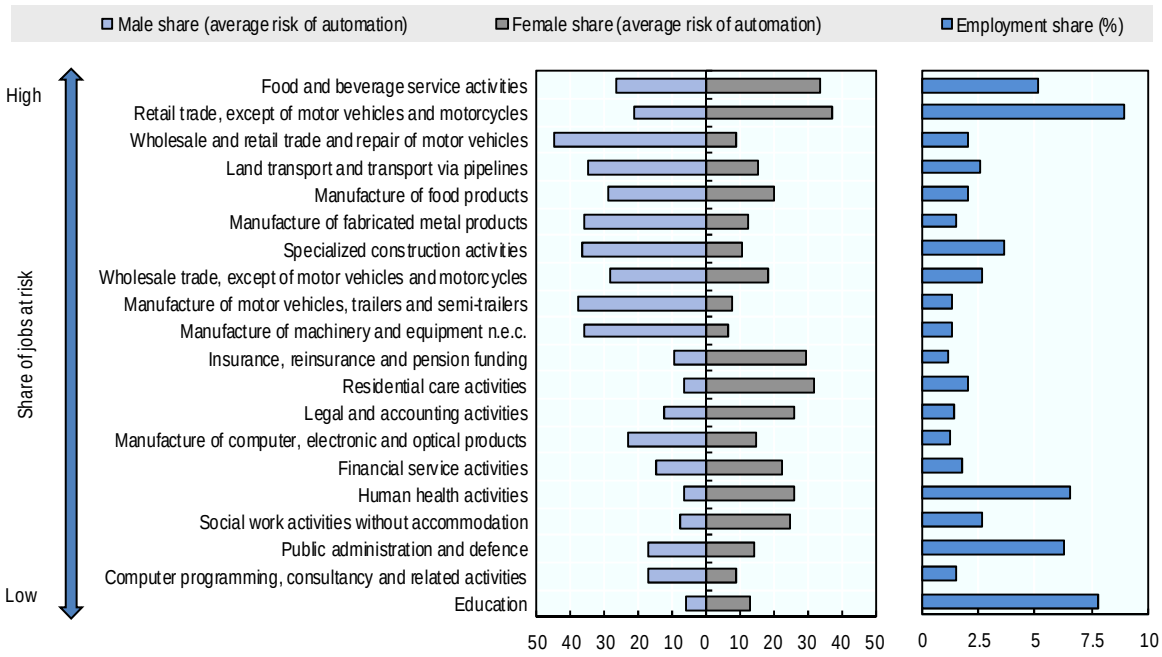
Looking ahead, it has been estimated that 9% of jobs are at high risk of automation in OECD countries (i.e. over 70% of tasks in those jobs could be automated), and that an additional 25% of jobs could change significantly as many (between 50 and 70%) of the associated tasks could be automated (OECD, 2016c).

While the risk of automation has traditionally been associated with manufacturing, and therefore primarily male jobs, further OECD analysis shows a mixed and more balanced picture. Some large industries with high shares of women are at a high average risk of automation: food and beverage service activities and retail trade (Figure 23.3). Men, in turn, dominate in industries like manufacturing, construction and transportation where the average risk of automation is also high. Other female-dominated sectors, such as education, social work and health care have a lower risk of job automation; but since many women work in these large sectors, the absolute number of female workers at risk of being displaced is still high. Summing across all industries, the average risk of automation is similar for men and women.

Being at risk of automation is not the same as actual job loss. First, adoption of new technologies is often slow due to economic, legal and societal hurdles. For example, even though the technology for driverless cars already exists, a host of legal, ethical, safety and social reasons explain why robots have not yet replaced drivers. Second, history shows that workers have adapted to major changes during large technological revolutions by changing the tasks that they perform at work, thus avoiding mass technological unemployment. This has been the case of bank tellers, for example, following the introduction of automated teller machines (ATMs). Evidence for the United States shows that, while the number of ATMs rose, so did the number of bank tellers – who evolved from performing routine transactions to becoming part of the "relationship banking team" focused on problem solving and marketing (Bessen, 2015). Third, while innovation may reduce labour demand and raise unemployment, at least in the short run, it also triggers automatic market adjustments working in the opposite direction, such as the production of new digital goods and services; higher consumption of non-digital products following lower production costs and prices; as well as higher investment in digital technologies across sectors (OECD, 2016d).

Figure 23.3. The risk of automation varies by industry

Share of jobs at risk, by industry and gender



Note: The figure shows the 20 industries with the greatest number of jobs at risk of automation (measured as the average risk of automation weighted by the employment share of the industry), with industries sorted from top to bottom in descending order according to the overall risk of automation. The width of each bar in the left panel represents the average share of jobs at risk in each industry. The placement of each bar relative to the centre line depicts how that risk is shared between men (light blue) and women (grey). Values in the right panel represent the share of total employment held by each industry. Risk of automation values are based on the likelihoods calculated by Arntz et al. (2016). Countries covered in this analysis include the 29 OECD countries that participated in the first and second rounds of the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC).

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) 2012 and 2015, and Arntz, M., T. Gregory and U. Zierahn (2016), "The Risk of Automation in OECD Countries: A Comparative Analysis", *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 189, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jlz9h56dvq7-en.

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The new world of work will depend crucially on skills

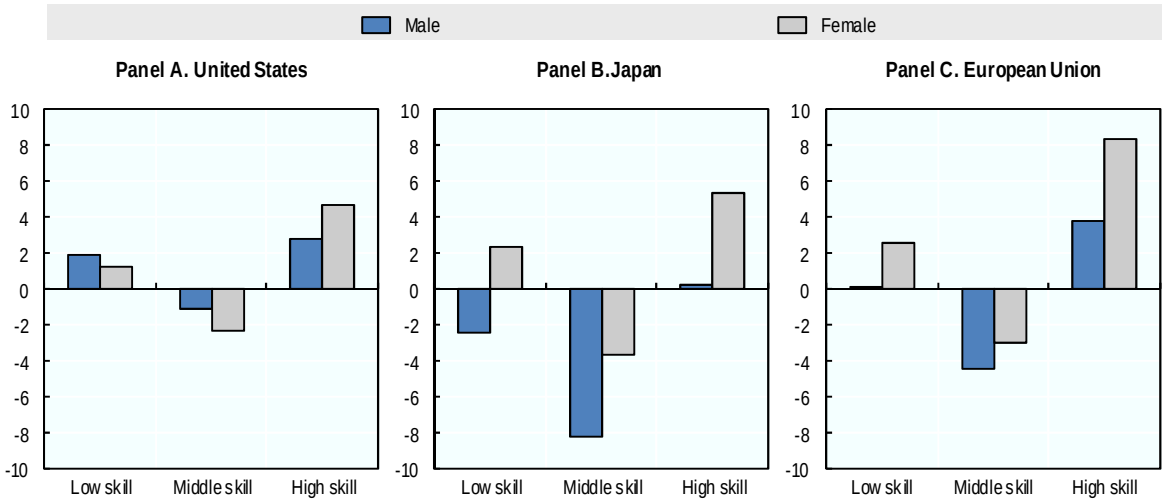
Skills provide an important safeguard against the risk of automation. Fewer than 5% of workers with a tertiary degree are at a high risk of losing their job due to automation, on average, compared to 40% of workers with a lower secondary degree (Arntz et al., 2016; OECD, 2016c). This is good news for women. Across OECD countries, more women than men are now tertiary graduates (OECD, 2016d). Indeed, looking at the type of jobs gained and lost over the last 15 years, shows that most job growth has been on the high-skill end, and that women have benefited from this more than men (Figure 23.4). This is true in the United States, Japan, as well as in Europe as a whole. Similarly, jobs in the middle of the skills distribution have declined in absolute terms in all countries, but the gender distribution of losses varies by country. Everywhere, more women now also work in low-skilled jobs. In the United States, a larger share of the growth in low-skilled jobs has gone to men, while the opposite is true in Europe. In Japan, the number of men in low-skilled jobs has declined.

"Soft" skills are also likely to grow in importance in the new world of work. Evidence from the United States shows that the ability to work in teams, problem-solving and

communication skills will be particularly sought after (Deming, 2015). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that occupational employment at the national level is projected to increase by 30-40 percent for home health aides, physician assistants and nurse practitioners from 2014-2024 (BLS, 2015). However, recent OECD analysis (Grundke et al., 2017) shows that gender differences in soft skills, such as self-organisation, management and communication skills, are very small (Figure 23.5). Women appear to have higher ICT skills, but lag behind men when it comes to quantitative and mathematics-related skills.

Figure 23.4. Women have gained most from the growth in high-skilled jobs

Change in employment levels from 2003 to 2015[a] by gender and skill level, United States, Japan and European Union,[b] millions of jobs



Note: High-skill occupations include jobs classified under the ISCO-88 major groups 1, 2 and 3: legislators, senior officials, and managers (group 1), professionals (group 2), and technicians and associate professionals (group 3). Middle skill occupations include jobs classified under the ISCO-88 major groups 4, 7 and 8, that is, clerks (group 4), craft and related trades workers (group 7), and plant and machine operators and assemblers (group 8). Low skill occupations include jobs classified under the ISCO-88 major groups 5 and 9: service workers and shop and market sales workers (group 5), and elementary occupations (group 9).

a) Data for Japan are for the period 2003 to 2010 due to a structural break in the data.

b) Data for the European Union cover all European Union member countries except for Croatia, Malta and the Slovak Republic. Data for Germany are from 2003 to 2013. Data for beyond 2010 are mapped from ISCO-08 to ISCO-88 using a many-to-many mapping technique.

Source: OECD Secretariat estimates based on the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) for the European Union, the Japanese Labour Force Survey (LFS) for Japan, and the United States Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Groups (CPS MORG) files for the United States.

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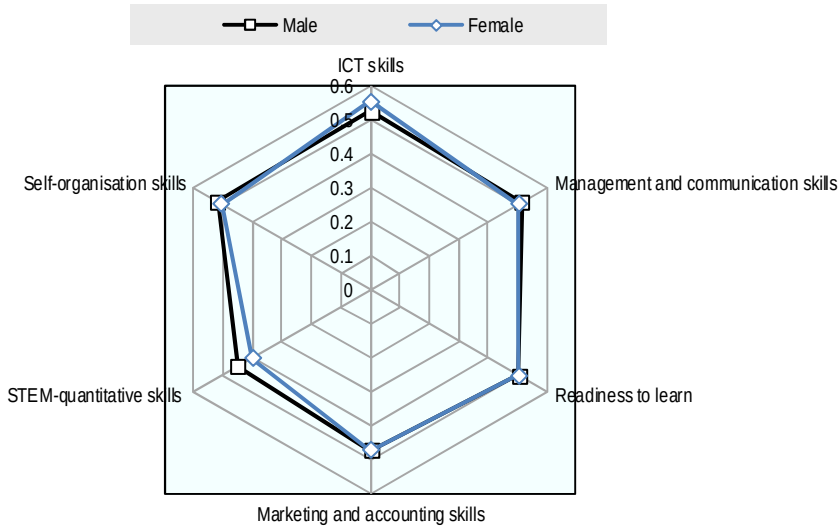
Figure 23.5. Women and men have very similar skills, except for STEM-quantitative skills

Median values, by gender



Note: Estimates based all countries that participated in the first and second rounds of the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC). "ICT skills" measure proficiency in ICT use such as programming software or navigating the internet.

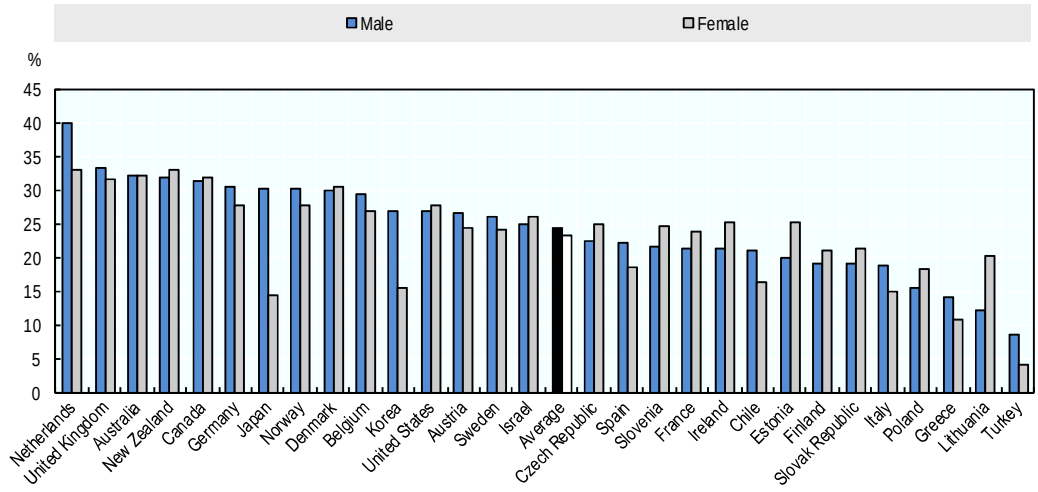
Source: OECD Secretariat estimates based on Grundke, R. et al. (2017), "Skills and Global Value Chains: A Characterisation", *OECD Science, Technology and Industry Working Papers*, No. 2017/05, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/cdb5de9b-en.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575520

While gender gaps in general ICT skills (Figure 23.5) and the use of software at work (Figure 23.6) tend to be quite small in most countries, there is a large gender gap in ICT specialist skills: 5.5% of male workers in OECD countries are ICT specialists but only 1.4% of female workers (Figure 23.7). This gap needs to be closed. It should be noted, however, that the majority of job growth is likely to be concentrated in business, as well as in health, education and social services (Cedefop, 2016). Most new jobs will therefore not require high-level STEM skills.

Figure 23.6. In most countries, gender differences in the use of software at work are small

Daily users of office software at work, by gender, as a percentage of all workers, 2012 or 2015



Note: Data for Belgium refer to Flanders and for the United Kingdom to England and Northern Ireland, only. Data for the following 22 countries are based on the first round of the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) and refer to the year 2012: Australia, Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland), and the United States. Data for the remaining countries come from the second round of the first wave of the PIAAC survey and refer to 2015.

Source: OECD Secretariat calculations based on the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) 2012 and 2015.

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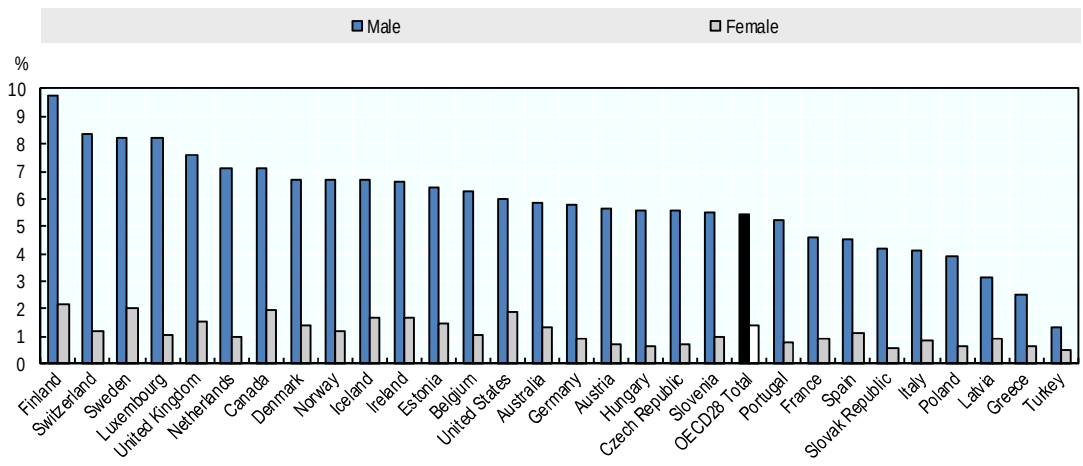
Figure 23.7. Most ICT specialists are men

ICT specialists as a percentage of all male and female workers, 2014



Note: ICT specialists are defined as individuals employed in "tasks related to developing, maintaining and operating ICT systems and where ICTs are the main part of their job". ICT specialists' figures are based on the following ISCO-08 3-digits occupations: 133, 215, 25, 35, 742. The "OECD28 Total" is the weighted average for all 28 OECD countries with available data.

Source: OECD (2016), "Skills for a Digital World: 2016 Ministerial Meeting on the Digital Economy Background Report", *OECD Digital Economy Papers*, No. 250, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jlwz83z3wnw-en.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575558

Policy can help improve women's labour market prospects in the new world of work

The digital transformation offers an opportunity to lower some of the barriers women in the workforce have been facing. But this will not happen automatically and, without action, barriers could even increase. To avoid this, policy makers will need to implement a variety of measures.

Promote female participation in STEM

While women now outperform men in overall educational attainment in OECD countries, they remain far less likely to pursue studies in the most specialised STEM fields (Chapter 7). Given that women are underrepresented in STEM, women are unlikely to benefit from new job opportunities in engineering, intensive computer and mathematical work and related fields. Gender segregation by field of study and the resulting knowledge gaps in scientific subjects should be addressed by removing gender bias in curricula and parental attitudes; raising students' awareness about the likely consequences of choosing different fields of study; and facilitating women's access to STEM-related jobs through apprenticeships. Attitudes and stereotypes can also be affected through the use of role-models, networks and popular culture.

Remove barriers to lifelong learning

Adapting and upgrading the skills and competences of those already in the labour market also requires urgent policy action. Workers who are most exposed to the risk of automation are the least likely to participate in training: only around 40% of them participate in training each year, compared to 70% of those who are at low risk of automation – with little difference between men and women. For women, adult learning can also help during family-related absences from work (such as maternity leave or eldercare) which, given the speed of technological change, may make the return to work difficult.

Ensure gender equality in support for displaced workers. Policies to cope with the labour market adjustment provoked by digitalisation (and globalisation) may be inadvertently biased against women. For example, schemes for displaced workers often focus on large scale retrenchments in industrial sectors whereas women in the service sector often do not receive such support. Giving all displaced workers access to the same types of services, regardless of the sector or the size of their previous employer, will help improve re-employment rates for both men and women.

Close gender gaps in access to, and in the use of, new technologies. The job effects of digitalisation also depend on access. About 60% of the world population, many of them women in low- and middle-income countries, still have no access to the internet: 250 million fewer women are online than men, and 1.7 billion women do not own a mobile phone (ITU, 2017). Many women face affordability barriers due to higher levels of female poverty and less access to financial services. Improving access to networks relies on physical factors, such as an adequate power supply; affordable prices require a competitive environment that encourages market entry since entrants typically introduce the newest technology which in turn improves coverage and lowers prices. National connectivity policies should apply a gender lens to ensure equal access for all. This will also require collecting gender-disaggregated data.

Promote flexible ways of working using new technologies

Employees and employers can use new technologies to reorganise work schedules and introduce job sharing and home offices. Better reconciliation of work and family life will benefit all workers, but in particular women who in all countries still bear the brunt of family responsibilities and usually work fewer paid hours than men. Employers obviously are key in promoting workplace flexibility, but governments can help by (Chapter 18): i) granting all employees a right to request flexible working time arrangements; ii) encouraging social partners to cover flexible workplace practices in collective bargaining agreements; and iii) helping companies change their work organisation through the exchange of best practice and information campaigns promoting a change in the workplace culture (OECD, 2016e). Also, digital technologies and the flexible ways of working they may enable, could help foster more gender-balanced career paths and thus reduce earnings inequalities.

At the same time, governments need to ensure more flexible ways of working do not lower job quality. This includes guaranteeing that working time regulations (including minimum rest periods) are respected, that such regulations are reviewed in light of the latest technological developments, and providing guidance for employees and employers on good practices in terms of flexible work arrangements, including training and awareness raising on both the benefits and potential risks. Highly mobile workers, who regularly work outside the employer's premises, report less positive outcomes than other employees regarding their work-life balance, health and well-being at work (Eurofound/ILO, 2017); this group therefore needs special attention.

Finally, social protection systems must adapt to new forms of work. The rise of non-standard employment is challenging traditional forms of social protection which were often built around the male breadwinner in stable, long-term employment. Non-standard workers, and thus many women, are unlikely to benefit from the same advantages as those on standard work contracts. For example, across the European Union, an estimated 46% of self-employed women aged 15-49 are not entitled to maternity benefits (European Commission, 2015). Tax and benefit systems need to be adapted so that all workers are covered. Portability regulation can prevent the loss of social benefit entitlements when workers move between jobs and countries. In France, an individual activity account has been introduced which attaches rights to training and overtime to workers rather than to jobs; in Germany a similar model is being considered. Another good practice example can be found in the United States, multi-employer plans allow mobile workers to earn and retain their benefits even as they move between employers. Finally, governments may want to expand the role of non-contributory schemes. Several countries are now also experimenting with various forms of basic income schemes.

Key policy messages

- Governments should design smart education policies to ensure that women not miss out on jobs in digital technology. Getting more young women into in-demand STEM fields (Chapter 7) and enabling workers to upgrade their skills are important steps.
- Ensure that national connectivity policies close gender gaps in access to and use of new technologies. Related to connectivity, governments and employers should enable flexible work among employees but ensure that more flexible ways of working do not lower job quality, e.g. by guaranteeing working time regulations.
- Adapt social protection systems to the rise of non-standard employment and ensure that non-standard workers can contribute to – and benefit from, the standard social protection arrangements.

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Part IV

Gender equality in entrepreneurship

Chapter 24

Gender gaps in entrepreneurship persist

Key findings

- Women are less likely than men to be entrepreneurs. The gender gap in entrepreneurial activities has changed very little in most countries since 2012.
- The gender gap applies to all age groups, though it is narrower among young people than the population as a whole.
- Self-employed women are less likely than self-employed men to have employees. They also tend to earn less. Evidence suggests a slight narrowing in the gap between the proportion of self-employed men and women with employees. The evidence on self-employment earnings is too sparse to draw conclusions about whether the gap is closing.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Gender disparities in self-employment rates

Promoting female entrepreneurship is increasingly viewed as contributing to economic growth, job creation, income equality and social inclusion. Indeed, recent estimates suggest that if the entrepreneurship gender gap were eliminated, global GDP could rise by as much as 2%, or USD 1.5 trillion (Blomquist et al., 2014). Against that background, government institutions and policies should seek to ensure that men and women enjoy equal opportunity to set up and run businesses (Chapter 25). By pushing forward the principles of the 2013 OECD Gender Recommendation, the OECD has been instrumental in making women's entrepreneurship a global governance priority in the G20 and G7. The OECD supports G20 work addressing important gender implications for women's participation in SMEs and entrepreneurship, particularly addressing the barriers of access to finance and financial literacy (Chapter 10). The OECD supported the preparation of the G7 Roadmap for a Gender-Responsive Economic Environment, a key deliverable of the 2017 Taormina Summit, which builds on the G7 Principles on Women's Entrepreneurship agreed by G7 leaders at the 2015 Schloss Elmau Summit. The G7 has also mandated the OECD to monitor progress on promoting women's entrepreneurship.

One of the most commonly used measures of entrepreneurship activities – when entrepreneurship is measured through statistics on individuals – is self-employment (Box 24.1). The proportion of women who are self-employed is generally lower than the proportion of men. In 2016, the self-employment rate for women ranged from 4.1% in Norway to 23.5% in Mexico. As for the self-employment gender gap, Chile registered the smallest gap (1.9 percentage points) and Turkey the largest (14.5 percentage points) (Figure 24.1). In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the gap was even greater (Box 24.2).

Box 24.1. Measuring self-employment

The self-employed are defined as those who own and work in their own businesses (OECD, 2016). They include unincorporated businesses and own-account workers and declare themselves as "self-employed" in population or labour force surveys. Some work alone in their business, while others create jobs by hiring employees.

Self-employment has traditionally been thought of as a full-time labour market activity, but it is changing and now takes a number of different forms. Hybrid entrepreneurship (i.e. where self-employment is combined with employment, education and/or volunteer work), group entrepreneurship (i.e. self-employment in a team) and freelancers (i.e. self-employed people who undertake project-based work, often in creative industries) are emerging forms of self-employment that can provide increased flexibility in terms of balancing work and personal life and can support women's entrepreneurship.

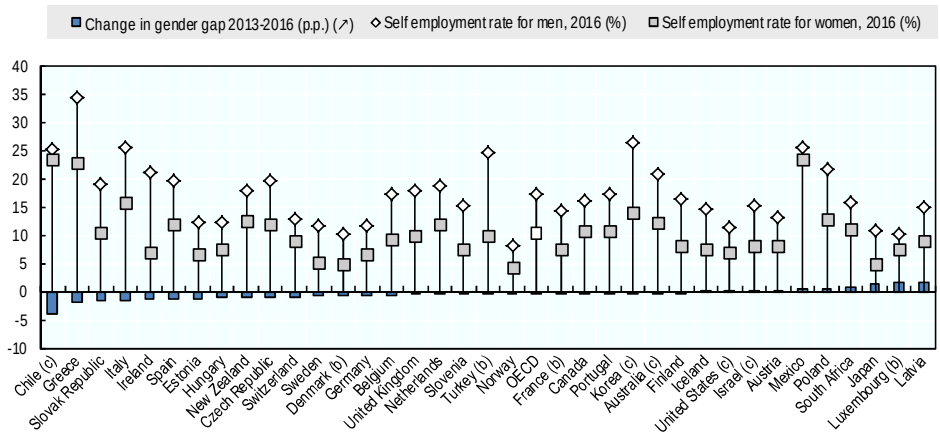
At the same time, there are some new forms of self-employment that are generally considered to be low quality work, e.g. the individual has low earnings and limited potential for career development. "Dependent" self-employment, for example, refers to arrangements whereby a worker is economically dependent and subordinate to one or two end-users (OECD/EC, 2017 forthcoming). Although self-employed, the individual does not have control over their tasks and typically earns less than they would if they were an employee in the client company. Further, the individual has less employment security and probably lower social security coverage.

Informal entrepreneurship (i.e. self-employment that is not registered with the tax authorities) is nothing new. But is a growing issue in developing countries where women's enterprises tend to be clustered in the informal economy with limited access to capital, financing, business support services or markets. Lengthy, costly and bureaucratically complex business registration procedures hinder the development of formal enterprises and hence the capacity of many women's enterprises to grow beyond the subsistence microenterprise level (ILO, 2016).

Between 2013 and 2016, the self-employment gender gap narrowed in many countries, though only slightly in most of them (Figure 24.1). The gap closed the most in Chile, where it narrowed by just over 4 percentage points, but widened the most in Japan, Latvia and Luxembourg.

Figure 24.1. Men are more likely to be self-employed than women, but the gap has narrowed slightly in many countries

Self-employment rates (%) by gender, 15-64 year-olds, 2016 or latest available,[a] and changes in the self-employment gender gap (male minus female), 15-64 year-olds, 2013-16



Note: The self-employment rate is defined as the share of self-employed among all employed, i.e. the self-employed and those working as employees. To improve international comparability, the figures for Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States include the unincorporated and incorporated self-employed. The gender gap is defined as the difference between the male self-employment rate and the female self-employment rate in a given year. The change in gender gap is the percentage point difference between the gender gap in 2016 and the gender gap in 2013.

a) For Australia, Chile, Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, the United States, and the OECD average, data for 2016 refer to 2015. For these countries the change in the gender gap was calculated over 2013-15.

b) 2014 data for France and Turkey, 2015 data for Luxembourg and 2016 data for Denmark present a break in series.

c) Data for Australia, Chile, Israel and Korea refer to 15+ year-olds, and for the United States to 16-64 year-olds.

Source: OECD (2017), *Entrepreneurship at a Glance 2017*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org /10.1787/entrepreneur_aag-2016-en.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575577

Self-employed women also tend to operate different types of businesses than self-employed men. In most countries, 70% or more of self-employed women work in the services sector, compared to about 50% of men (OECD, 2016). Some of the traditional sectors in which many women's businesses operate are characterised by low barriers to entry, high competition, low productivity and low profit margins. Self-employed women tend to work fewer hours than self-employed men, but more hours than women who work as salaried employees (OECD, 2016).

The gender gap in self-employment tends to be smaller among young people (15-29 years old). In 2016, the largest gender gaps were those in Greece and the Slovak Republic (around 8 percentage points), while in Mexico young women were actually slightly more likely to be self-employed than young men. Since 2013, the gender gap in self-employed young people has narrowed in approximately half of OECD countries, particularly in Spain, Italy, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom (Figure 24.2). However, the gap widened slightly in several other countries, with the greatest increases recorded in Luxembourg, New Zealand and Portugal.

Box 24.2. Women's entrepreneurship in the MENA region

In the MENA region, women's economic empowerment has tremendous potential for enhancing growth, competitiveness and social development. Governments in the region have introduced national gender strategies and measures to improve women's economic status.

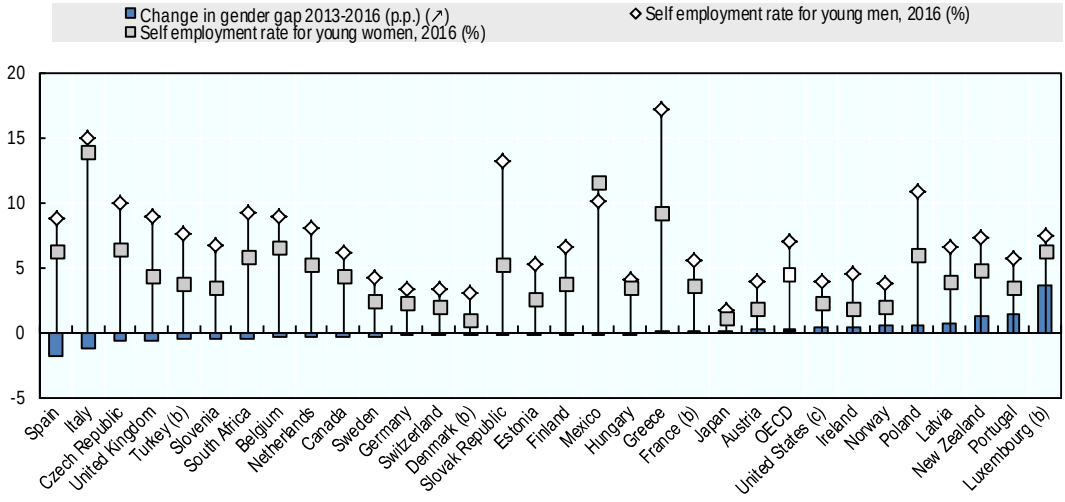
Despite advances in women's education over recent decades, less than one quarter of working-age women participate in the labour force and many are unemployed. Only one in eight is an entrepreneur, in contrast to one in three men, and less than 10% of incorporated businesses are women-owned.

Increasing women's economic empowerment would help develop the private sector and stimulate innovation and growth in the MENA region. Studies by the OECD-MENA Women's Business Forum have shown that stronger institutional support, greater awareness of available entrepreneurship training and support services for women, and better access to and start-up services financing would bolster female business creation in the region (OECD, 2014).

Business development services (BDS), such as counselling, coaching and mentoring, have proved effective in increasing women's access to support for starting and growing businesses. In the MENA region, BDS providers should seek to tailor and market their services to female entrepreneurs. To that end, they should be more attuned to women's specific needs. It is also important to schedule support at times that are not typically dedicated to family care, e.g. when children need to be taken to school. Gender-sensitive adjustments would allow a wider pool of women entrepreneurs to receive BDS support, increasing the chances of success for women entrepreneurs.

Figure 24.2. Gender gaps in self-employment tend to be smaller among young people

Self-employment rates (%) by gender, 15-29 year-olds, 2016 or latest available,[a] and changes in the self-employment gender gap (male minus female), 15-29 year-olds, 2013-16



Note: See the notes to Figure 24.1 for definitions.

a) For Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, the United States and the OECD average, data for 2016 refer to 2015. For these countries the change in the gender gap was calculated over 2013-15.

b) 2014 data for France and Turkey, 2015 data for Luxembourg and 2016 data for Denmark present a break in series.

c) Data for the United States refer to 16-29 year-olds.

Source: OECD (2017), *Entrepreneurship at a Glance 2017*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org /10.1787/entrepreneur_aag-2016-en.

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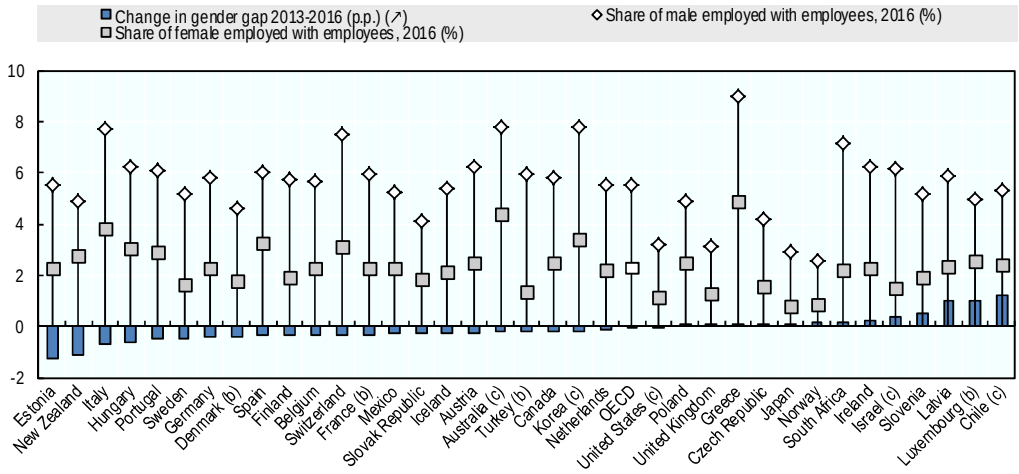
Self-employed with employees

Overall, women are much less likely than men to be self-employed and have employees – less than half as likely in 2016. At approximately 5 percentage points, the gap was widest in South Africa, Turkey and Israel. At less than 2 percentage points, the narrowest gaps were in Norway and the United Kingdom (Figure 24.3).

Between 2013 and 2016, the gap between the proportion of employed women and men with employees closed slightly in more than half of OECD countries (Figure 24.3). The gap narrowed the most in Estonia and New Zealand and increased the most in Latvia, Luxembourg and Chile.

Figure 24.3. Men are much more likely to be self-employed and have employees than women

Share of the employed who are employers (%) by gender, 15-64 year-olds, 2016 or latest available,[a] and change in the gender gap (male minus female) in the share of the employed who are employers, 15-64 year-olds, 2013-16



Note: See the notes to Figure 24.1 for definitions.

a) For Australia, Chile, Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, the United States and the OECD average, data for 2016 refer to 2015. For these countries the change in the gender gap was calculated over 2013-15.

b) 2014 data for France and Turkey, 2015 data for Luxembourg and 2016 data for Denmark present a break in series.

c) Data for Australia, Chile, Israel and Korea refer to 15+ year-olds, and for the United States to 16-64 year-olds.

Source: OECD (2017*), Entrepreneurship at a Glance 2017,* OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org /10.1787/entrepreneur_aag-2016-en.

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Self-employment earnings

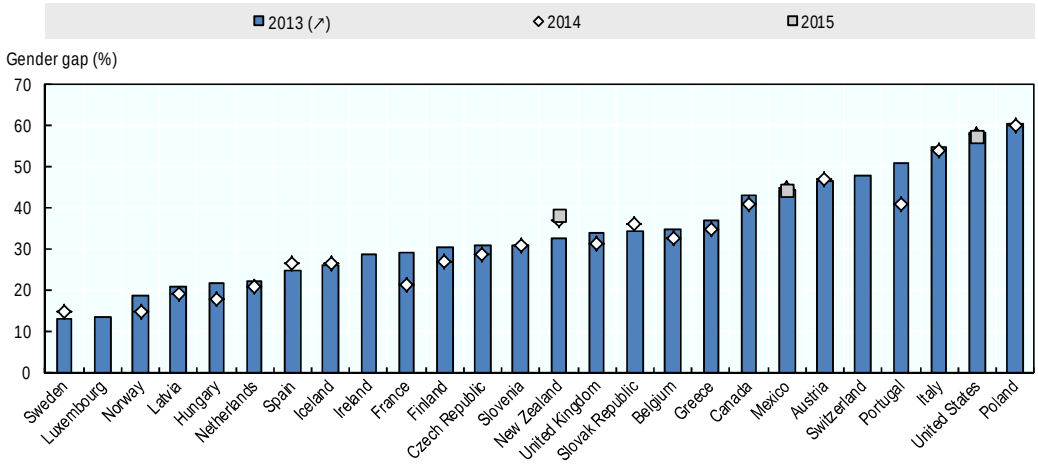
There continues to be an earnings gap between self-employed women and self-employed men (Figure 24.4). The earnings gap in 2014 was greatest in Poland (60%), the United States (58%) and Italy (54%). It is attributable to several factors:

- Women are more likely than men to work in sectors that are highly competitive and less profitable.
- There is evidence to suggest that women are less likely to take risks in order to earn more (OECD, 2012).
- Self-employed women are more likely to work fewer hours per week (idem).

Between 2013 and 2014, the earnings gap narrowed in France and Portugal by around 8 to 10 percentage points, while widening by more than 4 points in New Zealand. In most other countries for which data are available the gender gap in self-employment earnings essentially remained constant.

Figure 24.4. Gender gaps in earnings from self-employment are very wide in many OECD countries

Gender gap in self-employment income (%), all ages (18+ year-olds), 2013, 2014 and 2015



Note: The gender gap in self-employment income is unadjusted and defined as the difference between male and female average self-employment incomes divided by average male self-employment income and multiplied by 100. Self-employment income is defined here as the income received during the income reference period by individuals as a result of their involvement in self-employment jobs. It is calculated as gross receipts minus operating expenses, and can thus be either positive or negative (profits or losses).

Source: OECD (2017), *Entrepreneurship at a Glance 2017*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org /10.1787/entrepreneur_aag-2016-en.

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Key policy messages

- Public policy must address persistent gender inequalities in entrepreneurship by addressing institutional barriers and closing gaps in access to finance and entrepreneurship skills (Chapter 25).
- Policy measures must seek to build entrepreneurship awareness and motivations among women as well as men. Public policy must reach out to women entrepreneurs to support their business growth, through targeted business development support (e.g. coaching, mentoring and business counselling) (Chapter 25).
- Policies supporting female entrepreneurs should be part of comprehensive social protection systems that empower all workers. Policies should enable female (and male) workers to balance paid and unpaid work by developing work-life supports like paid parental leave and good-quality and affordable childcare.

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Chapter 25

Policies to address barriers to women entrepreneurs

Key findings

- Women tend to have different motivations and intentions than men in becoming entrepreneurs. They may be attracted to self-employment for the greater flexibility it can offer in managing the work-life balance and family care responsibilities – one of the reasons women entrepreneurs are less likely to seek to grow their businesses than men entrepreneurs.
- The main challenges that women identify in starting a business include gaps in entrepreneurship skills and difficulties accessing start-up financing. Policy instruments for addressing these challenges, such as training and grants for female entrepreneurs, need to be expanded because they have not fully reached the potential target population.
- Many countries are developing new policy approaches that more tailored support for growth-oriented women entrepreneurs. They include dedicated business incubator and accelerator programmes for women entrepreneurs and building dedicated risk capital infrastructure.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Self-employment motivations and intentions

The rationale behind targeted policies and programmes to promote and support women's entrepreneurship is often built on three arguments:

- Women are more underrepresented in entrepreneurship than men. Closing this gap would yield welfare gains for individual women and society as a whole.
- There is evidence that women are held back in entrepreneurship by institutional and market failures, such as social attitudes that discourage them from creating businesses, and market failures that make it more difficult for women entrepreneurs to access resources like skills training, finance and networks.
- Evaluations suggest that women are less aware of public support programmes and that mechanisms used to select programme participants can favour male entrepreneurs (OECD/EC, 2017).

There is a commonly held perception that women are pushed into self-employment by social pressures to reconcile work and domestic responsibilities. This view is supported by many studies based on small samples and self-reported answers (OECD/EC, 2017). However, Saridakis et al. (2014), analysing time-series data on the United Kingdom, observe that women's self-employment decisions are significantly influenced by business considerations (e.g. state of the economy and access to finance) and that social factors (e.g. marriage prospects and family-related obligations) influence men and women in a similar way.

Although women-owned businesses have survival rates comparable to men's, there is evidence that they generally make less profit and labour productivity is lower (OECD, 2012). Such differences can be explained in part by different motivations and the different sectors in which women entrepreneurs operate. They are often concentrated in sectors in which they had previous work experience but are highly competitive and less profitable. Most women-run ventures are in fields that are not related to science, technology engineering and mathematics (STEM) (Marlow and McAdam, 2012). They are therefore not well represented in sectors with high value added potential. Furthermore, many women are either reluctant to grow their business by increasing the scale of their business operations, offering new products or services, selling in new markets or investing in new assets (Watson and Robinson, 2003), or establish a maximum business size beyond which they would prefer not to expand (Cliff, 1998).

Barriers to business start-up

Lack of entrepreneurship skills

Many of the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs are also faced by men entrepreneurs, but higher proportions of women tend to face them. It is, however, important to recognise that women entrepreneurs have widely mixed personal outlooks and business resources (Hughes et al., 2012).

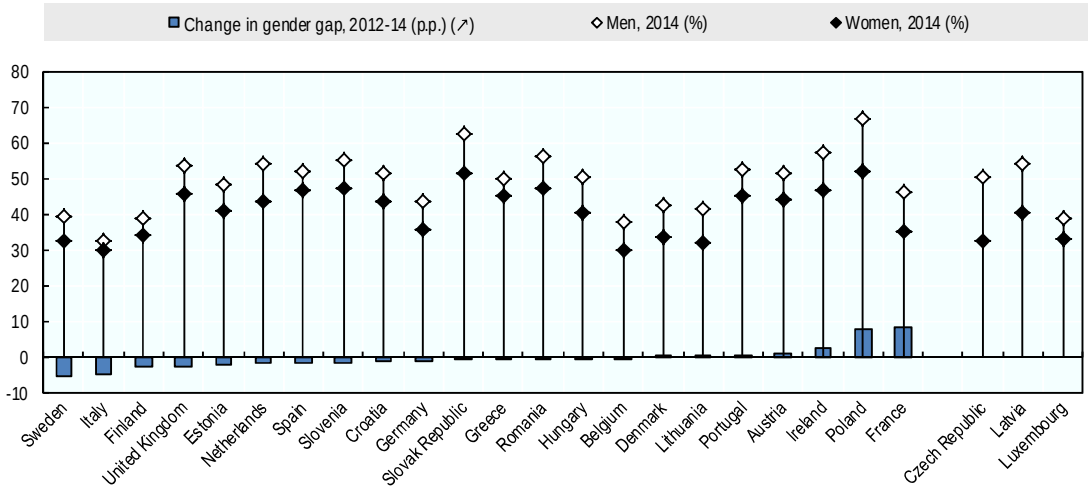
One of the greatest challenges cited by most entrepreneurs is the lack of entrepreneurship skills. Although women are as likely as men to have high skill levels, they appear to be at a disadvantage when it comes to self-employment and business creation. One of the greatest differences is that women entrepreneurs typically have less experience

in self-employment and, therefore, less well developed management skills and smaller business networks (Shaw et al., 2009).

Women are also less likely than men to perceive that they have the skills, knowledge and experience to start a business (Figure 25.1). However, the gap between men and women in perceived entrepreneurship skills has closed in many countries, especially in Sweden (by 5 percentage points) and Italy (4 points), where it seems to have nearly vanished. Nevertheless, a gender gap remains in perceived access to entrepreneurship training (OECD, 2016).

Figure 25.1. Men are more likely than women to report they can start a business, though the gap is narrowing in most countries

Proportion of adults (18-64 year-olds) who report that "I have the skills, knowledge and experience to start a business" by gender, 2014 or latest available,[a] and change in the gender gap, 2012-14



a) Data for the Czech Republic, Latvia and Luxembourg refer to 2013. The change in the gender gap since 2012 is not computed for these countries.

Source: OECD Secretariat tabulations of data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575653

Female entrepreneurs struggle to access finance

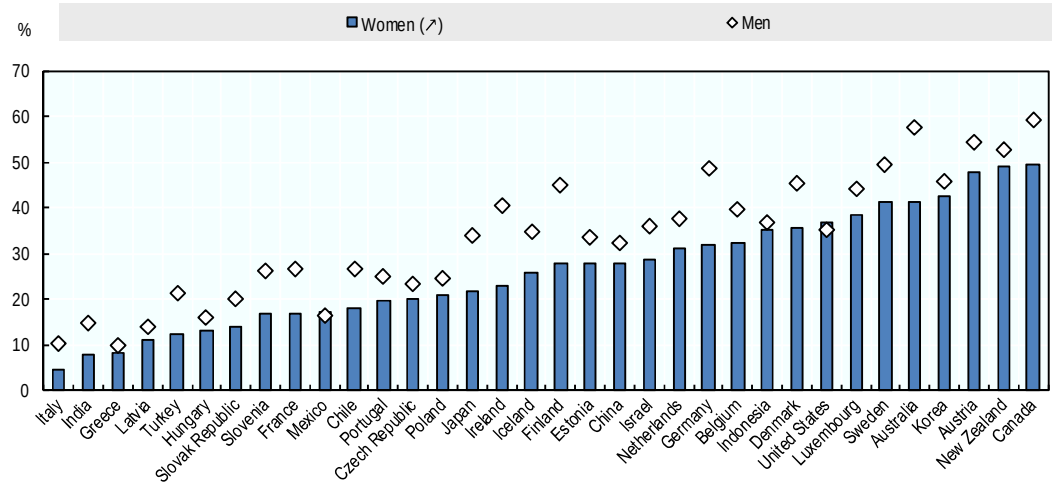
The other significant challenge for entrepreneurs is access to finance. Women entrepreneurs generally have lower levels of capitalisation and are more reliant on owner equity and insider financing than men (Coleman and Robb, 2016; Shaw et al., 2009). They also grapple with greater challenges in accessing loans and debt financing. Research suggests that, in emerging markets, for example, closing the credit gap by 2020 could produce a 12% increase in per capita income by 2030 – a gain that could be as large as 25% to 28% in countries such as Brazil and Viet Nam, where the credit gaps in the formal SME sectors are currently widest (GMI, 2014).

Several studies have observed gender-based differences in credit terms, such as higher collateral requirements and interest rates, despite controlling for structural characteristics like sector and size of business. One explanation offered by researchers is that financial institutions are gender-biased against women because they are often influenced by gender stereotypes (Carter et al., 2007). The access to finance barrier for women is evident in the gap between the proportions of men and women who believe they can obtain the financing

they need to start a business. Only in the United States and Mexico were women more likely than men to report that they could access the funds they needed to start or grow a business in 2013 (Figure 25.2). Those two countries aside, the gender gap ranged from 2 percentage points in Greece to 17 percentage points in Finland, Germany and Ireland. There is little data available to assess whether the gap is widening or narrowing.

Figure 25.2. Men are more likely to have access to finance to start or grow a business

Proportion of individuals who answered "yes" to the question "Do you have access to the money you would need if you wanted to start or grow a business?", by gender, 2013



Source: OECD (2016), *Entrepreneurship at a Glance 2016*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/entrepreneur_aag-2016-en.

StatLink http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933575672

Supporting the development of entrepreneurship skills for business growth

Traditional policy action that supports the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills include entrepreneurship training, coaching and mentoring programmes, workshops, business counselling and support in building entrepreneurial networks. Such programmes are often tailored to the specific barriers faced by women and delivered to women-only groups of beneficiaries. In many countries, women's enterprise (or entrepreneurship) centres are a long-established model for identifying the needs of women entrepreneurs and designing appropriate support to help them overcome the challenges of starting a sustainable business. This approach should be promoted and adopted as a good practice, particularly in emerging economies (OECD/EC, 2017; OECD, 2014a).

However, many countries are increasingly recognising the growth potential of women-owned enterprises (White, 2013) and placing a greater emphasis on programmes to help women acquire and develop the skills needed to successfully launch and run businesses with high growth potential. One approach is to deliver tailored support through women-only business incubators.

Such incubators typically offer the usual business incubator support – premises, networking opportunities, training and workshops, etc. – but tailor them to the needs of women entrepreneurs and facilitate support. Experience in the United States suggests that dedicated incubators can be more effective than mainstream incubators which rely on male-centric networks, fail to reach out to women's networks, select entrepreneurs through male-

dominated selection panels, offer gender-insensitive programmes that do not address the needs of women and tend to promote a "macho" environment that is off-putting to women entrepreneurs (ICIC, 2016; Jaffee and Johnson, 2015). Estimates note that fewer than 3% of business incubators are dedicated to women entrepreneurs (InfoDev, 2010), though the provision is some countries is well above that mark – in Korea, for example, there are approximately 200 women's business incubators. Other examples of recently launched women-specific business incubators initiated through public-private partnerships can be found in Egypt, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority and Saudi Arabia (OECD, 2014a).

A similar emerging trend is the rise of business accelerator programmes for women, who are greatly underrepresented in mainstream accelerator programmes (Aspen, 2015). The distinction between an incubator and an accelerator is blurred, but women-focused business accelerator programmes traditionally seek to accelerate the start-up process over three to six months for high-potential female entrepreneurs, predominantly in technology-driven fields. One of the main objectives is to prepare them for injections of private risk capital and entry into the marketplace.

Policy makers support female business accelerators to encourage more women to enter innovative and technology fields, address the challenges that they face in accessing seed and investment capital, develop the capability of female entrepreneurs to scale up their business models and achieve growth, and create role models for young women in STEM fields. Business accelerators for women are often started by successful women entrepreneurs, but they may also be initiated by gender-sensitive business support organisations or as part of government programmes. The United States is the global leader in the creation of business accelerators for women, but other examples can be found in Australia, Canada, Ireland, Mexico, India and New Zealand (Box 25.1).

Box 25.1. Lightning Lab XX, New Zealand

The Lightning Lab XX programme, based in Wellington, is a four-month mentorship-driven business acceleration programme (OECD/EC, 2017). It encourages women entrepreneurs to launch and grow new start-ups. Lightning Lab XX makes a seed investment of NZD 20 000 (approximately EUR 12 600) in each company that is admitted into the programme in return for a small equity stake, and offers support services that it delivers through mentors. The programme receives funding from the science and innovation arm of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. Callaghan Innovation has provided additional funding, while other partners and sponsors include Spark, Microsoft Ventures, ANZ Bank, Simmonds Stewart and EY. The most recent programme, which was mostly digitally focused, ran from March to July 2016 and was the fifth Lightning Lab programme to be run in New Zealand since 2013. Of the 115 teams that applied for the Lightning Lab XX programme, 9 were selected to participate.

Facilitating access to finance

Most government policies to improve access to finance for women entrepreneurs focus on interventions that provide grants, loans and microcredit. A growing trend is to improve access to bank financing through loan guarantees. Evaluations of women-specific loan guarantees in Canada suggest that they create more jobs than mainstream programmes (WEDC, 2014), while programmes in European Union countries also tend to show positive impacts (OECD/EC 2014 and 2017). New loan guarantee schemes tend to be more prevalent in emerging economies, where banks are often reluctant to lend to the SME sector and generally insensitive to gender issues or to the untapped market potential of women-owned businesses. One example is the *Caisse centrale de garantie* in Morocco (Box 25.2). In more advanced economies, the recent trend has been to raise guarantee ceilings and

make additional training and networking support available to beneficiaries – as is the case with France's *Fonds de garantie pour la création, la reprise, le développement d'entreprises à l'initiative des femmes* (the guarantee fund for women's business creation, rescue and development).

Box 25.2. *Caisse centrale de garantie :* Morocco's credit guarantee agency

Following the 2011 Arab Spring, Moroccan public agencies started to mainstream gender considerations into public programmes and services (OECD, 2014a). In response to the trend and to women's low participation in loan guarantee products, the government's credit guarantee agency (*Caisse centrale de garantie*) launched ILAYKI in March 2013. ILAYKI is a new preferential partial guarantee product that guarantees 80% of a bank loan to start-ups wholly owned by one or more women with loan values of less than MAD 1 million (approximately EUR 90 000). The guarantee rate is higher than other guarantee products where 70% is typically guaranteed. The rationale for this preferential treatment of women entrepreneurs is that they are less likely to be able to provide collateral for loans, largely due to gender gaps in property and inheritance rights as well as in employment and wages. ILAYKI is promoted through banks and the Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Morocco.

Another emerging approach used to facilitate finance for women entrepreneurs is to improve their access to public procurement markets with special provisions for contracting with women-led businesses. Government procurement of goods and services makes up a significant amount of GDP in most countries, ranging from 10% to 15% in developed economies and 30% to 40% in emerging economies (ITC, 2014). However, it is estimated that only about 1% of such contracts go to women-owned businesses (ibid.). By promoting supplier diversity in their public procurement policies, governments can address inequities in the marketplace, foster the growth potential of women-owned businesses and introduce qualified women-owned businesses into the supply chain, which increases competition and potentially leads to cost savings (OECD, 2014; Niethammer, 2013). While a number of OECD and G20 countries have recently implemented special federal contracting provisions for SMEs, only a small number appear to have implemented measures targeted at women-owned businesses. They include the United States (Box 25.3), Korea, the Dominican Republic, South Africa and Indonesia.

Box 25.3. Public procurement measures for women-owned businesses in the United States

In 1994, the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act established a non-mandatory goal of 5% of the value of all prime contracts and sub-contracts of each federal agency in each fiscal year to be awarded to women-owned small businesses (WOSBs). A number of measures were implemented to further that goal, including the Small Business Programs Reauthorization Act of 2000 that allowed agencies to restrict competition in contracting with industries in which WOSBs were underrepresented. Another important step occurred in 2011, when the WOSB Federal Contracting Programme went into effect, allowing set-asides for contracting to WOSBs for the first time in industries where WOSBs were substantially underrepresented. In 2013, caps on the contract size falling within the set-aside limits were removed. Further changes in 2015 authorised contracting agencies, under certain conditions, to restrict competition for WOSBs or sole-source to a WOSB. In 2015, the 5% target was reached and WOSBs received contracts worth USD 17.8 billion (approximately EUR 15.8 billion). Despite reaching its goal, the Small Business Administration continues to seek opportunities to improve access to procurement for women. (For more information, see Beede and Rubinovitz, 2015.)

A third recent policy trend is improving access to risk capital:

- venture capital (equity financing that is provided by firms or funds to small, early-stage firms that have high growth potential)
- business angel investments (start-up financing provided by individuals in the form of convertible debt or equity).

Both venture capital and angel investment markets are male-dominated (Brush et al., 2014b; CrunchBase, 2016; Sohl, 2015) and investments tend to be concentrated in male-dominated sectors like STEM-related sectors. Experiments in the United States show that investors are 60% more likely to invest in male entrepreneurs, even when the content of investment pitches is the same (Brooks et al., 2014), which suggests that women entrepreneurs pitching to investors can expect a lower chance of success because of their gender.

Options for gender rebalancing include attracting more women investors and advisors as part of traditional venture capital and angel networks, and forming women's venture capital funds led by women and specifically directed at investment in women-owned enterprises. Support may be forthcoming from public policies that encourage the formation of women-focused venture capital investments – by, for example, offering matching funds for investment in women-owned or women-led start-ups, early-stage and expansion-stage ventures. The United Kingdom also takes this approach (Box 25.4).

Other new approaches that will benefit women entrepreneurs include the use of tax credits, as in Canada with the Restoration of the Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporation Tax Credit in the 2016 federal budget. As for the Japanese government, it launched its Venture Business Creation Council in 2014 to strengthen linkages between financial, industrial, research and government actors and to promote investment.

Box 25.4. Aspire Fund: Capital for Enterprise, the United Kingdom

In 2008, the UK Department of Business, Innovation and Skills established the Aspire Fund for Women in Business with GBP 12.5 million (approximately EUR 15.4 million) of public money to co-invest in women-led enterprises. This fund was launched under the Capital for Enterprise (CfEL) fund, an arm's length fund of funds manager for venture capital whose objective was to increase the number of high-growth women-led businesses. The fund matched private sector investments in women-led ventures seeking an investment of between GBP 100 000 and GBP 2 million (approximately EUR 123 200 to EUR 2.5 million) to help finance growth, with a maximum public investment of GBP 1 million (approximately EUR 1.2 million). To be eligible for funding, entrepreneurs are required to participate in investment readiness programmes. In 2014, CfEL operations became part of the new British Business Bank (BBB) programme under the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. The Aspire Fund is currently focusing on the provision of follow-on investments to existing portfolio companies.

It is increasingly common for access to finance initiatives to be integrated into broader business development approaches. For example, policies may help women to strengthen their entrepreneurship skills through training, workshops, business counselling, coaching and mentoring at the same time as supporting access to finance in order to increase the chances policies and their beneficiaries being successful.

One of the key questions in delivering entrepreneurship support to women is whether it needs to be delivered through dedicated programmes by specialist agencies, or whether it

can be integrated into mainstream programmes. Both approaches are used in OECD and G20 countries and the approach is usually determined by social attitudes towards women in society and the labour market. Countries where women face fewer challenges in accessing education and opportunities in the labour market (e.g. Finland, Germany, Austria and Sweden) tend to deliver women's entrepreneurship support largely through mainstream programmes. However, access to such support is a challenge in many other countries. There is consequently a preference for dedicated women's support programmes in specialist agencies and mainstreamed across programmes.

Regardless of the approach taken, however, the keys to success are to ensure that support is accessible by women and that it is relevant. Programmes need to build linkages with the mainstream business community and mainstream support institutions to ensure that women-specific support does not reinforce the barriers that women face.

Key policy messages

- Policy makers should recognise the institutional influences that adversely affect women's entrepreneurial motivations and intentions and their access to resources for entrepreneurship. Negative social attitudes to women's entrepreneurship need to be offset through awareness campaigns and education.
- Greater policy support for female entrepreneurship is needed in the areas of entrepreneurial skills and access to finance. Fundamental policy tools include dedicated entrepreneurship training, coaching and mentoring programmes for female entrepreneurs and women entrepreneurship loan guarantee schemes.
- Once such basic supports are in place, policy can increase support for business growth among women entrepreneurs by providing more advanced skills through business incubators and accelerators, opening up new markets through, for example, access to public procurement and strengthening the infrastructure around risk capital investments.

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The Pursuit of Gender Equality

AN UPHILL BATTLE

Gender inequalities persist in all areas of social and economic life and across countries. Young women in OECD countries generally obtain more years of schooling than young men, but women are less likely than men to engage in paid work. Gaps widen with age, as motherhood typically has marked negative effects on gender pay gaps and career advancement. Women are also less likely to be entrepreneurs, and are underrepresented in private and public leadership positions.

The 2013 and 2015 OECD Gender Recommendations provide guidance on how to advance gender equality in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life; this book discusses recent developments in these areas in one overview chapter and 24 short chapters which each include key findings and policy recommendations. Topics include violence against women, gender budgeting, the unequal sharing of unpaid work, labour market outcomes and migration. The book presents a range of indicators illustrating gender gaps. It also discusses recent policy initiatives, such as pay transparency measures to reduce gender wage gaps and policy reform aimed at fathers taking parental leave. Overall, progress has been slow and there is a strong need for further policy action to close gender gaps in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life.

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