

## Understanding the Drivers of Gender Inequality

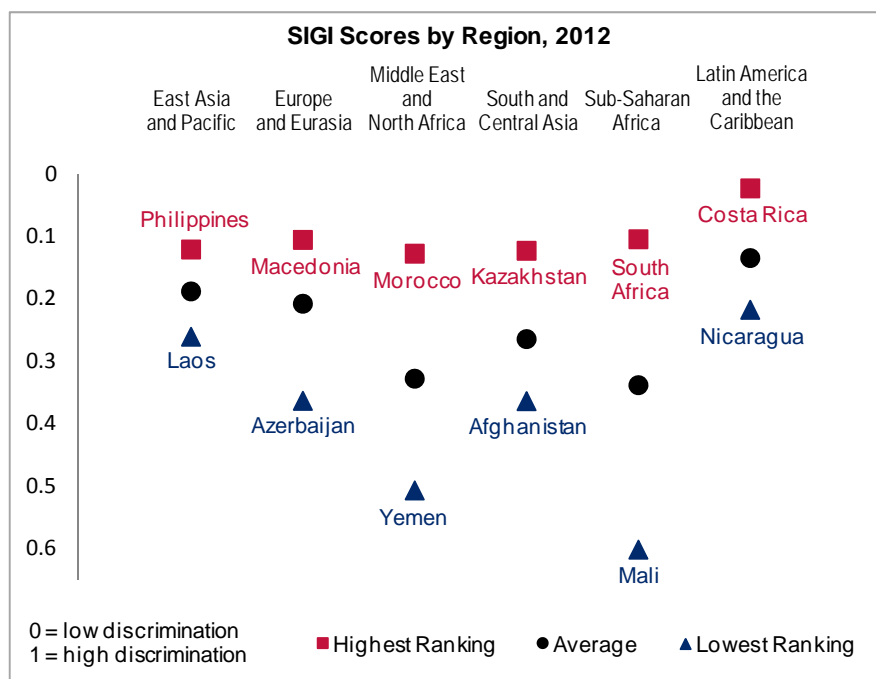
The OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) 2012 focuses on the underlying social institutions that influence gender roles and relations to shed light on the processes that lead to unequal gender outcomes. The SIGI and its five sub-indices are based on variables from the OECD Gender, Institutions and Development Database, which provides information on social institutions related to gender inequality in over 100 countries (see page 4 for the sub-indices). Only countries that are non-OECD or non-European Union countries with a population of more than 1 million are included in the SIGI; countries must also have available data on the relevant social institutions. The focus of this report will be on countries that received USAID assistance in fiscal year 2010.

## Main Findings

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) shows the lowest level of overall discrimination against women in the 2012 SIGI rankings. Sub-Saharan Africa shows the highest level of discrimination. Among the top ten countries, six are in LAC and two are at the top of the overall 2012 SIGI rankings: Costa Rica and Paraguay. LAC is also the top-ranking region for the Restricted Physical Integrity and Restricted Civil Liberties sub-indices, while also showing a strong performance for Son Bias and Discriminatory Family Code.

East Asia and the Pacific is the second highest-ranking region in the 2012 SIGI rankings. East Asia

and the Pacific is the top-ranking region for the Restricted Resources and Entitlements sub-index; the region also shows a strong performance in the Discriminatory Family and Restricted Physical Integrity sub-indices. The region's weakest areas are the Son Bias and Restricted Civil Liberties sub-indices. The highest-ranked country in the region is the Philippines followed closely by Cambodia.



Europe and Eurasia is the third highest performing region. The region ranks best for the Discriminatory Family Code sub-index and also shows a strong performance in the Restricted Physical Integrity and Restricted Resources and Entitlements sub-indices. However, the region has the poorest performance on the Son Bias sub-index. The highest ranked country in the region is Macedonia, which has enacted strong legislation on gender parity with equal rights for men and women enshrined in its constitution.

South and Central Asia is the third lowest ranking region in the SIGI 2012. The region has the second poorest performance on the Son Bias sub-index due to the high number of missing women mostly concentrated in South Asia with the exception of Sri Lanka. The region also performs poorly in the Discriminatory Family Code sub-index with a high prevalence of early marriage: 48 and 32 percent of 15–19 year old girls are married in Bangladesh and Nepal respectively. Dual legal systems or religious legal systems often limit women's status, particularly in the sphere of the family and inheritance rights. Land rights and access to productive resources are a significant problem, despite some countries having laws providing equal rights to women. However, this situation is not the case across the region. In Bhutan, 60 percent of rural women hold land registration.

#### Average Scores for the Social Institutions and Gender Index by Region

Region	Social Institutions and Gender Index Score	Discriminatory Family Code Sub-Index Score	Restricted Physical Integrity Sub-Index Score	Son Bias Sub-Index Score	Restricted Resources and Entitlements Sub-Index Score	Restricted Civil Liberties Sub-Index Score
East Asia and Pacific	0.1872	0.2587	0.2313	0.6139	0.2582	0.5565
Europe and Eurasia	0.2070	0.1681	0.1967	0.7721	0.2639	0.3890
Middle East and North Africa	0.3271	0.5462	0.4774	0.6528	0.4321	0.5756
South and Central Asia	0.2636	0.3610	0.3549	0.7075	0.3901	0.4486
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.3374	0.5449	0.5515	0.4168	0.5109	0.5902
Latin America and the Caribbean	0.1337	0.2327	0.1922	0.4637	0.2929	0.2917

NOTE: 0 = low discrimination 1 = high discrimination.

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is the second lowest ranking region and is the lowest ranked region for the Discriminatory Family Code sub-index. In many countries in the region, women's rights within the family are severely restricted. However, in Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco reforms to Family Codes have provided equal rights for women in the family. Women's rights to land ownership and credit are protected by law in every country, but in reality, women face pressure to cede management of land, property and other assets to their husbands or male relatives due to persistent social norms.

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) shows the poorest performance with nine out of ten bottom-ranking countries including Somalia, Congo (Kinshasa), Sudan, and Mali. SSA shows the poorest performance across most sub-indices—Restricted Resources and Entitlements, Restricted Civil Liberties, and Restricted Physical Integrity. Discrimination in the family and in access to resources often stems from dual or tri-partite legal systems, where customary or religious laws often discriminate against women. Women’s access to productive resources is a serious challenge in the region, particularly given the significant share of women working in agriculture. Early marriage is a significant problem in some parts of the region—in Niger and Mali, 61 percent and 50 percent respectively of girls aged 15–19 are married. The region does contain some high performing countries. South Africa is ranked fourth and Namibia and Rwanda also show strong performances at ranks 21 and 28 respectively.

Despite positive steps, pervasive and persistent social institutions continue to limit women and girls’ horizons in all regions. Out of 101 countries scored in the 2012 SIGI that received USAID funding in the past fiscal year, 71 have discriminatory inheritance laws or practices. All countries in the MENA region and the majority of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (39 out of 42) covered in this report give unequal inheritance rights to men and women.

#### Country Spotlight: South Africa

South Africa ranks fourth in the overall 2012 SIGI rankings. The country has made efforts to remove discrimination against women under the dual legal system. The constitution protects women’s right to equality and prohibits discrimination. The government has taken steps to equalize women’s rights within all types of marriage, particularly customary marriage. Recent reforms regarding women’s inheritance rights have been introduced following a landmark constitutional court case which found that stipulations under customary law that only males could inherit were unconstitutional and invalid. The country has laws criminalizing domestic violence and rape. Despite these positive developments, rape is reported as widespread and laws criminalizing violence against women need to be enforced, the national conviction rate is only 7 percent for charges relating to gender based violence.

### Persistent Issues: Son Bias and Restricted Physical Integrity

Despite steps toward gender equality, two areas constitute persistent problems: Son bias and Restricted Physical Integrity. Attitudes that normalize violence against women are common in MENA and in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Iraq, Jordan, and Morocco over 50 percent of women and in Guinea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (Kinshasa), and Mali over 75 percent of women agree that domestic violence is justified in some circumstances. In the MENA region only Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, and Tunisia have some form of specific legislation in place protecting women against domestic violence. Despite progress across Sub-Saharan Africa in introducing laws to address violence against women, rape within marriage is not criminalized in the region and 12 countries have no laws addressing domestic violence. Gender based violence remains a widespread issue in South and Central Asia where data indicate that many countries in the region (7 out of 11) have norms that tolerate violence against women with over half of women in Tajikistan and Bangladesh having experienced intimate partner violence.

Son Bias is an issue of concern in the East Asia and the Pacific as sex-ratio data indicate that missing women are a persistent problem, particularly in China. Data on the share of males as the last child also indicate that son bias is strong in some parts of the region, including China, Vietnam, and Laos. Europe and Eurasia also performs poorly on the Son Bias sub-index. Sex-ratio data show that missing women are a problem in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Albania, and Armenia. Data on the share of males as the last child also indicate a widespread prevalence of son bias across the region. Widespread son preference in South and Central Asia remains a problem with missing women in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan.

## What is the OECD's Social Institution and Gender Index?

The SIGI is based on variables from the OECD Gender, Institutions and Development Database which provides information on social institutions related to gender inequality in over 100 countries. It is a composite measure of social institutions which are mirrored by societal practices and legal norms that produce inequalities between men and women in non-OECD countries. The indicators in this report were constructed using country notes drafted by gender and development experts following a standardized structure and format to ensure comparability across countries. Countries that do not have data for all sub-indices are not ranked.

### Social Institution and Gender Index Components

Sub-Index	Factors Used
Discriminatory Family Code	Measures women's decision making power and status in the household based on the legal age of marriage, early marriage prevalence, parental authority rights and inheritance rights.
Restricted Physical Integrity	Analyzes restrictions affecting women's control over their bodies based on measures of violence against women, female genital mutilation and the extent to which women can exercise reproductive autonomy.
Son Bias	Assesses intra-household bias towards sons and the devaluation of daughters based on variables measuring the number of missing women and gender bias in fertility preferences.
Restricted Resources and Entitlements	Examines access to, control of, and entitlement over resources such as land and credit.
Restricted Civil Liberties	Identifies access to, participation and voice in the public and social spheres.

### Additional Information

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To access the complete country Social Institutions and Gender Index dataset, please visit the Economic and Social Database (ESDB) at <http://esdb.eads.usaidallnet.gov/>. The ESDB website also offers gender-related datasets such as Women, Business and the Law from the World Bank and the Global Gender Gap from the World Economic Forum.

To access the full report, visit OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index site at <http://genderindex.org/>.