

BOX 7

SDG Gender Index: by advocates, for advocates

Gender advocates – gender equality champions from all sectors, with a particular focus on girls’ and women’s movements and advocates – are an important target audience for the SDG Gender Index. To better understand their needs, we commissioned a global survey, carried out by Ipsos,ⁱ which is one of the world’s largest survey-based market research companies that delivers survey-based research to inform decision makers on contemporary societal and economic problems.

The EM2030 Global Advocates Survey 2018 attracted responses from 613 gender advocates around the world who shared their views on progress towards gender equality, how they feel about current data sources and the issues they think should be prioritized in the push for better and more accessible data to meet the SDGs for girls and women. The open-access survey was designed to inform EM2030’s work more broadly, but has also helped us to shape the SDG Gender Index.

The breadth of issues reflected in our SDG Gender Index reflects the wide-ranging gender equality issues that advocates see as a priority for the achievement of the gender equality aspects of the SDGs. We asked them to prioritize issues on the basis of what they saw as important, even if this differed from the issues they prioritize in their own advocacy.

Respondents saw the following four policy areas as the highest priority for progress on gender equality:

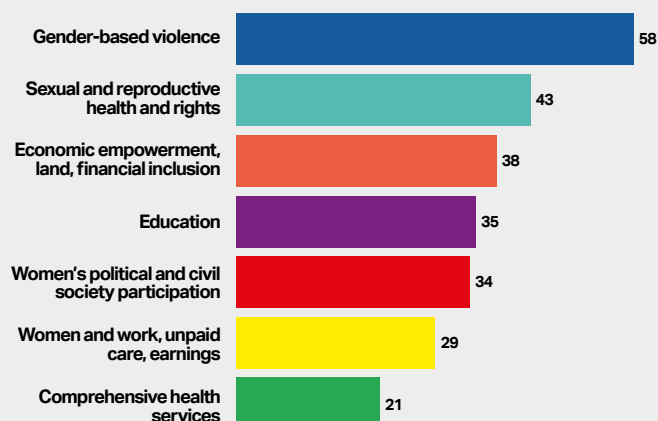
- GBV (58 per cent)
- SRHR (43 per cent)
- economic empowerment, access to land and financial inclusion (38 per cent)
- equitable and quality education at all levels (35 per cent).

The four policy areas seen as being of lowest priority for gender equality progress were:

- girls and women in conflict/post-conflict situations (14 per cent)
- access to public infrastructure, including clean energy, water and sanitation (9 per cent)
- women and the effects of climatic and environmental changes (9 per cent)
- public finance, public spending and taxation (7 per cent).

FIGURE 3

Gender-related policy priorities identified by advocates
(Percentages)



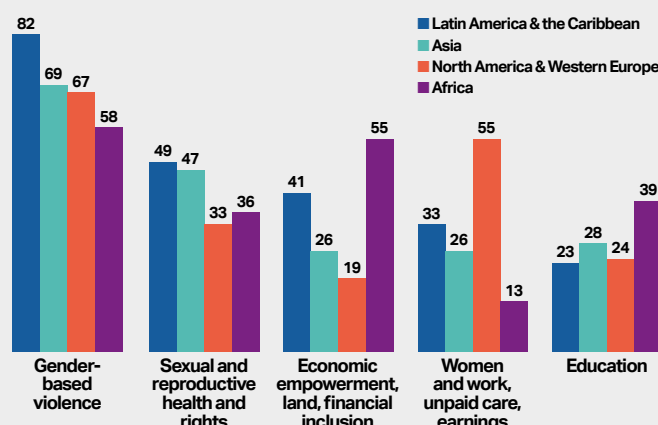
Source: Equal Measures 2030, 2018

Notes: 613 respondents; multiple responses (up to 3) were possible

Advocates’ views on gender equality policy priorities differed significantly by region.

FIGURE 4

Gender equality policy priorities identified by national advocates by region
(Percentages)



Source: Equal Measures 2030, 2018

Notes: Number of respondents (n) by region: Latin America & the Caribbean=39, Asia=68, North America & Western Europe=58, Africa=76; Multiple responses (up to 3) were possible

The issues judged by advocates to be lower gender equality policy priorities (based on the list of issues we provided, and the limitation of them choosing just three) should not be discounted as important gender equality issues, as the experience of the EM2030 partner organizations and our engagement with wider stakeholders shows. These issues are discussed in depth in annex 3, where we provide a goal-by-

ⁱ <https://www.ipsos.com/en>.

goal rationale for why all of the issues in our Index matter for gender equality.

Fewer than one in ten advocates (9 per cent) who responded to the survey, for example, prioritized “the effects of climatic and environmental change” as a key issue for gender equality, despite the severe impact of climate change on a wide range of issues from health, to land, to livelihoods, particularly for girls and women.

And just 7 per cent of advocates surveyed selected tax and public finance as a high-priority gender equality issue. When asked specifically about whether “tax issues have a big impact on gender equality,” 15 per cent of respondents said they “don’t know” and 19 per cent had a neutral view on the question. More positively, however, nearly four in five (79 per cent) respondents agreed that “government spending and investment in public services has a big impact on gender equality.” The majority (55 per cent) of advocates surveyed agreed that “tax policies and issues have a big impact on gender equality.”

More work is needed to raise the profile of tax and public finance issues among advocates, but there is some awareness and understanding of the critical importance of investment in public services that can support progress on many other gender equality issues. For more on the importance of tax and public finance for gender equality, see annexes 3 and 4).

The Global Advocates Survey helped to clarify that our SDG Gender Index needs to:

- reflect issues that top the list of advocates’ priorities and for which there is a ready-made constituency of support (such as GBV and SRHR)
- draw attention to systemic issues that are rarely thought of as gender equality issues but that influence gender equality progress across all SDGs, such as climate and public finance
- provide a platform for advocacy on more and better gender data (including disaggregated data) to fill the gaps where there is not enough global data at present to measure several critical gender equality policy issues.

BOX 8

How was the Global Advocates Survey conducted?

We sought to reach and hear from the widest range of gender advocates from all sectors and across the world. For the purposes of this study, we adopted a broad definition to capture those who don’t have a formal job as an advocate but who champion gender equality in their sector or community. Respondents were considered gender equality advocates if they had “taken action to advocate for gender equality in the last three years,” with example actions including: working for an organization whose work includes advocating for gender equality, signing a petition, joining a public mobilization or contacting an elected representative about gender equality.

Using both paper and online surveys for the data collection was deemed to be the most effective method to engage with this diverse group of advocates and to collect their views on gender progress, priorities and the use of data and evidence to promote change.

Our recommendation for this approach assumed that an online survey would allow participants the necessary time and flexibility to complete the survey from anywhere in the world. Paper surveys (which were processed electronically) were used to reach those who might not have reliable access to the internet.

A special effort was made by a wide range of girls’ and women’s advocacy networks and groups to promote and disseminate the survey across their networks. The link to the survey questionnaire was also circulated through social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), in electronic newsletters and other communication channels.

The survey was conducted between 8 March and 23 May 2018. The questionnaire was developed in five languages: Bahasa Indonesian, English, French, Hindi and Spanish (reflecting languages spoken in the EM2030 focus countries).

- In total, **613** advocates from **48** countries responded to the survey.

- Respondents were made up of 82 per cent women, 17 per cent men, and 1 per cent who described themselves in a different way.

82%
women

17%
men



BOX 8 (CONTINUED)

How was the Global Advocates Survey conducted?

- Of those who stated a single country on which their advocacy was focused (as compared with those who said their advocacy was regional or global, which totalled 316), the vast majority (73 per cent) are from the Global South, with a regional breakdown of national advocates as follows:
 - Africa: 76 (from nine countries)
 - Asia: 68 (from seven countries)
 - North America & Western Europe: 58 (from 15 countries)
 - Latin America & Caribbean: 39 (from 17 countries)
- More than one in five respondents (22 per cent) submitted paper forms and the remaining share (78 per cent) completed the online questionnaire. The two groups (paper and online survey respondents) were roughly similar in terms of the distribution of age, sex and location.
- Most respondents (79 per cent) indicated that they “work for an organisation whose work includes advocating for gender equality (including paid and voluntary positions).” There was a fairly even divide between advocates answering for a specific country (52 per cent) and those answering from a cross national (including regional or global) perspective (48 per cent).



BOX 9

There is no ‘magic bullet’ indicator for gender equality

The EM2030 Global Advocates Survey asked respondents to select one indicator that might propel gender equality in the right direction. The responses vary enormously, but there is a strong view that there is no ‘magic bullet’ indicator that can guarantee gender equality on its own, given the cross-cutting and complex nature of gender issues.

Some respondents cited indicators related to participation and representation ...

“More women in legislative seats! Even better- women of COLOR!”

“Invest in and measure equity instead of equality: look internally at international organisations and political bodies. It is not about the number of women present, it is about their share, the value of their voices, the empowerment of women, the access to power systems.”

... some flagged up indicators on GBV ...

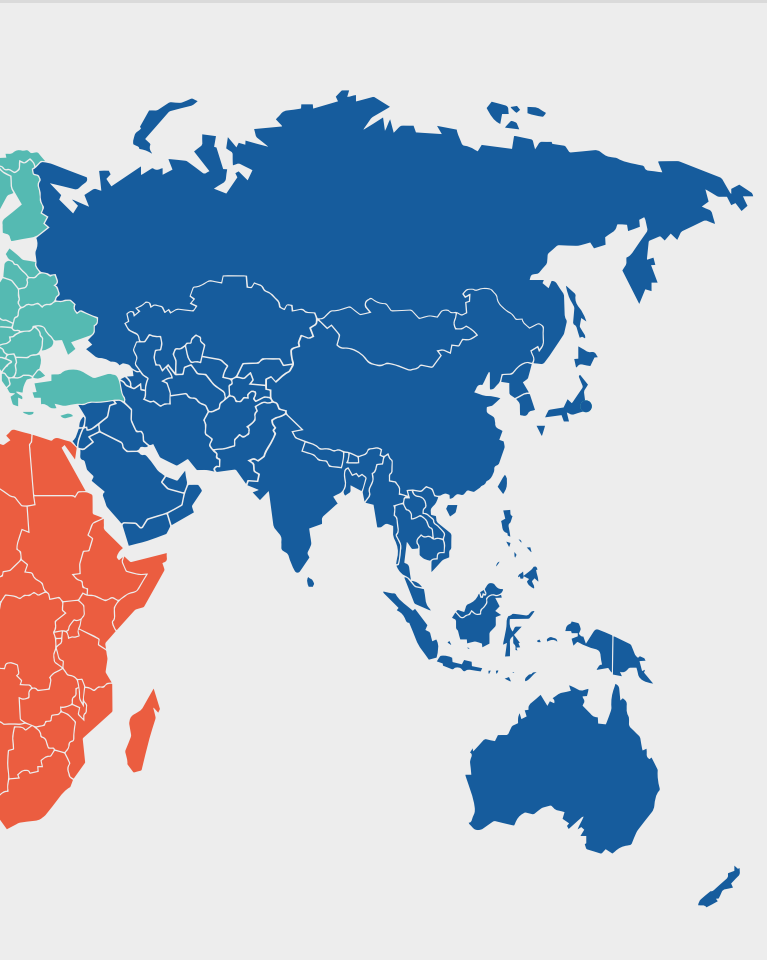
“Proportion of women who experience any form of gender-based violence. Violence is destructive. Peace is constructive. If women live in a safe environment – at home, in their communities – gender equality and women’s empowerment can thrive.”

“Women’s perception of their safety and human security – in the home, in the community, in their political engagements at all levels.”

... some highlighted education ...

“If in 5 years we have more women attending school it will be the first indicator to know that gender equality is starting to be relevant.”

“Education parity at all levels.”



... some emphasised wealth, poverty and the gender pay gap ...



Per cent global and national wealth controlled by per cent women compared with per cent of men."



Pay gap ... pay gap ... pay gap."

... and others emphasised the age of marriage ...



Child marriage rates: It's an amazing proxy for progress on a wide range of gender equality goals."



Marriage age as a proxy indicator for economic empowerment, career opportunities."

But some queried the validity of the question itself.



Oh gosh, this is very hard question because gender equality can't be reduced to only one single indicator!"



I don't think there is a single indicator/metric that would capture this complex issue."



I think that reducing this complex problem to a single metric is a disservice to the cause of achieving gender equality and equity."

Tellingly, one gender advocate responded:



I don't think a single metric is capable of reflecting something as nuanced as gender equality.

So – maybe some kind of index?"