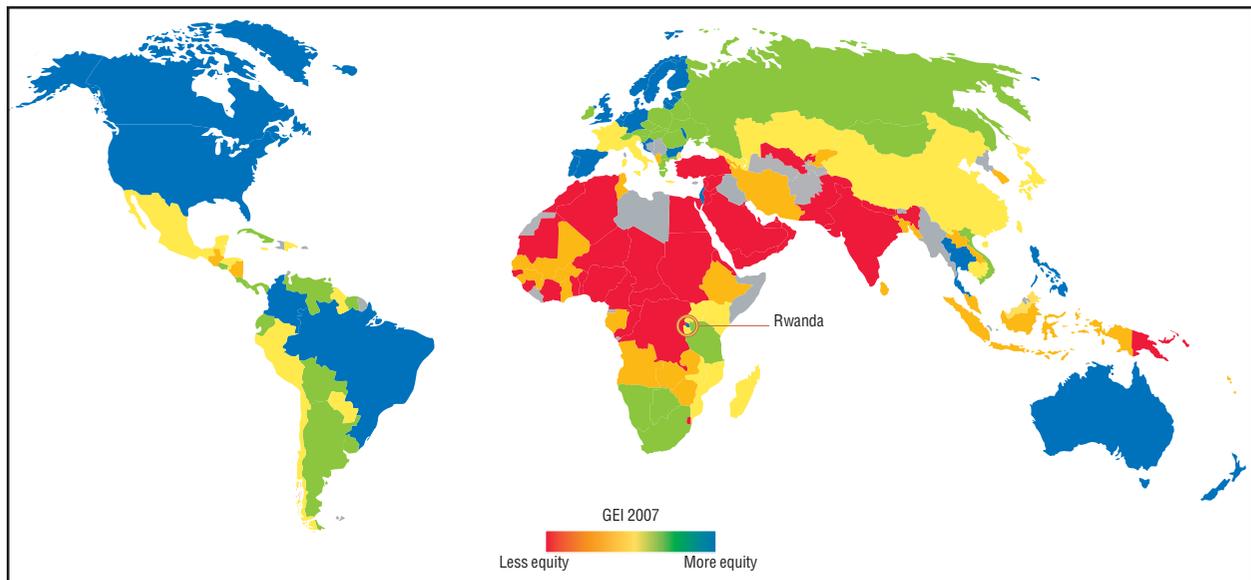


GENDER EQUITY INDEX 2007

Inequity persists

The results of the 2007 Social Watch Gender Equity Index (GEI) clearly demonstrate that a country's level of wealth does not automatically determine its degree of equity. Rwanda, one of the world's least developed countries, ranks third on the list of GEI scores, after Sweden and Finland, thanks to intensive affirmative action efforts. In the meantime, a number of high-income countries rank far down on the list. The evolution of the GEI between 2004 and 2007 reveals a few global advances, but the general trend seen throughout the world is either very slow progress or no progress at all. The United States, a high-income country, is one of the 10 countries that have experienced the greatest regression. Obviously, the key to gender equity lies not in a country's economic power, but rather in its government's political will.



Gender-based inequity is a phenomenon that transcends borders, cultures, religions, nations and income levels. The achievement of gender equity is a challenge for the entire modern world because although its manifestations are diverse, the gap between women and men persists in all countries.

In most societies inequalities manifest in the division of responsibilities between men and women, in access to and control of resources and in decision-making processes.

In addition to affecting the life of everyone on the planet and in particular that of women, who comprise at least half of the population, this gap influences countries' economic and social development.

Social Watch Gender Equity Index

Gender equity is a complex, multifaceted concept and is difficult to measure. With the objective of making a contribution to the debate and to the consistent monitoring of women's situation, Social Watch has developed a Gender Equity Index. This index makes it possible to position and classify countries according to a selection of indicators relevant to gender inequity and based on internationally available and comparable information.

The GEI classifies 154 countries and conclusively verifies that in no country do women enjoy the same opportunities as men, that high income levels are not necessary for the elimination of gender disparities and that although over the years some aspects of women's situation have improved their opportunities in economic and political areas are still clearly limited.

The three dimensions included in the GEI are: economic activity, empowerment and education. The index's range of values is from 0 to 100, with lower values indicating greater inequity and higher values greater equity.

Sweden, Finland, Rwanda and Norway occupy the highest positions in the 2007 GEI. These countries register the least inequality between women and men. This good performance has been achieved by the application of affirmative action policies, particularly for political quota legislation and labour market equity.

The GEI presents information on 40 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, 36 in Europe, 28 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 19 in the Middle East and North Africa, 18 in East Asia and the Pacific, 6 in Central Asia, 5 in South Asia and 2 in North America. Together these countries represent more than 90% of the world's population.

The GEI was created in 2004. Here we present trends during the 2004-2007 period as well as the latest available data on individual countries.

Key data:

- There are currently only 12 women who have been elected as Head of State or Government amongst a total of approximately 200 such positions in the world.
- Women owned only 23% of companies in the European Union in 2004.
- Of the 550 million low-paid workers in the world, it is estimated that 330 million, or 60%, are women (ILO).
- In some countries the 2006 gender wage gap was as high as 30% or 40%. This means that women are paid between 30% and 40% less.
- Of the 17 million women aged 15 to 49 who live with HIV/AIDS, 98% live in developing countries and 77% in Sub-Saharan Africa (WHO).

TABLE 1. GEI VALUES IN 2007 AND RECENT GEI TRENDS (2004-2007)

Country	GEI	Evolution (%) (2004-2007)	Country	GEI	Evolution (%) (2004-2007)	Country	GEI	Evolution (%) (2004-2007)
Sweden	89	6	Switzerland	67	4	Iran	54	
Finland	84	5	Venezuela	67	7	Mauritius	54	4
Rwanda	84	18	Belarus	66	8	Indonesia	53	-1
Norway	83	8	Botswana	66	-10	Lao, PDR	53	-3
Barbados	80	3	Costa Rica	66	1	Angola	52	-21
Germany *	80		Cuba	66		Bangladesh	52	-9
Denmark	79	-3	Mongolia	66	-6	Guinea	52	
Iceland	79	5	Suriname	66		Mali	52	2
New Zealand	78	1	Viet Nam	66	1	Nicaragua	52	-5
Lithuania	77	2	Cyprus	65	5	Ethiopia	51	9
Netherlands	77	6	Dominican Republic	65	3	Gabon	51	-2
Spain	77	14	Georgia	65	-4	Samoa	51	
Australia	76	5	Mozambique	65	6	Tunisia	51	5
Latvia	76	0	Peru	65	9	Burkina Faso	50	1
Philippines	76	4	France	64	1	Gambia	50	-5
Bahamas	75	7	Kazakhstan	64	4	Guatemala	50	15
Canada	75	-2	Maldives	64		Sao Tomé and Príncipe	50	
Colombia	75	9	Uganda	64		Solomon Islands	50	
Belgium	74	9	Burundi	63	5	Guinea-Bissau	49	
Bulgaria	74	-4	Italy	63	0	Kuwait	49	0
Estonia	74	-1	Azerbaijan	62	2	Swaziland	49	2
Moldova	74	0	Belize	62	10	West Bank and Gaza	49	
United Kingdom	74	4	Chile	62	1	Algeria	48	4
United States of America	74	-7	Lesotho	62	12	Djibouti	48	
Brazil	73	4	Madagascar	62	-3	Lebanon	48	4
Croatia	73	5	Cambodia	61	-2	Qatar	48	
Israel	73	7	Cape Verde	61	15	Syria	48	5
Portugal	73	3	China	61	6	United Arab Emirates	48	1
Thailand	73	-3	Honduras	61	-3	Cameroon *	47	
Austria *	72		Jamaica	61	-3	Congo, DR *	47	
Ecuador	72	17	Mexico	61	1	Jordan	47	2
Namibia	72	3	Paraguay *	61		Niger	47	6
Poland	72	-4	Guyana	60		Turkey	47	-13
Slovenia	72	-1	Japan	60	-1	Bahrain	46	1
Tanzania	72		Kenya	60	-3	Egypt	45	-10
Ukraine	72	0	Luxembourg	60	1	Eritrea	45	-8
Romania	71	1	Malawi	60	4	Nigeria	45	
Russian Federation	71	-4	St. Vincent and Grenadines	60		Congo, Rep. *	44	
Argentina	70	5	Malta	59	8	Nepal	44	7
Hong Kong	70		Armenia	58	-5	Oman	43	5
Hungary	70	1	Ghana	58	-3	Morocco	42	-4
Slovakia *	70		Malaysia	58	-10	Pakistan	42	-2
South Africa	70	0	Sri Lanka	58	-5	Saudi Arabia	42	-4
Czech Republic *	69		Zambia	58	5	Benin	41	-4
El Salvador	69	10	Albania	57	-3	Central African Republic	41	-11
Ireland	69	6	Kyrgyzstan	57	-6	Chad	41	-4
Panama	69	11	Fiji	56	4	India	41	
Trinidad and Tobago	69	-1	Korea, Rep.	56	-1	Togo	41	4
Bolivia	68	6	St. Lucia	56		Côte d'Ivoire	39	4
Macedonia	68	0	Vanuatu	56		Sierra Leone	39	9
Uruguay *	68		Zimbabwe	56	-1	Yemen	31	11
Greece	67	6	Senegal	55	3			

* For these countries, GEI was calculated using the gaps in gross primary and secondary education enrolment rates as there was a lack of data on net rates. For methodological reasons GEI trends were not calculated in these cases. NOTE: For the measurement of GEI trends necessary values were imputed in order to ensure comparability.

Inequity: a problem both current and global

An analysis of the 2007 general values reveals first of all that the gender gap persists in all countries of the world.

Equity as policy

Nordic countries that have implemented affirmative action to eliminate gender inequalities occupy the upper GEI positions with higher equity levels. However, Rwanda is also amongst the top 10 countries, which demonstrates that it is not necessary to achieve high levels of economic growth or industrialization in order to implement effective policies that generate more equity.

After the 1994 Rwandan genocide, in which a million people died, civil society, the state and international stakeholders made a major effort for the reconstruction of the country that had been devastated by war. The initiatives undertaken incorporated gender equity, an essential dimension in a country where women had to develop strategies to maintain their families, take on responsibility in the community and support each other to overcome the physical and psychological consequences of the genocide.

Women joined forces in spontaneous and informal ways, as well as in an organized way, to help widows and orphans. Much effort was put into improving the situation of women in terms of economic independence, a more equitable distribution of responsibilities between the sexes, enhanced social service provision, juridical reforms and the protection of girls and adolescents.

The geography of inequity

GEI values range from 31 (Yemen) to 89 (Sweden). A majority of countries with the worst performance in relation to gender inequality are from Sub-Saharan Africa (Table 1).

GEI performance by region (Table 3) has North America in first place (74), Europe second (72), Latin America and the Caribbean third (65) and East Asia and the Pacific fourth (62). The regions with the lowest GEI values are, in descending order, Central Asia (60), Sub-Saharan Africa (54), South Asia (52) and the Middle East and North Africa (48). The GEI trends show that although North America has the highest GEI values it is the region that has most regressed in recent years.

Reading Table 4 we could say that a country's wealth is related to its level of gender inequality. However, upper-middle income countries have higher average GEI values than high-income countries that do not belong to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This may indicate the survival of inequitable social structures in countries with significant economic growth, such as several Arab countries. This data suggest that the modification of inequitable situations does not fundamentally depend on economic development but rather on the transformation of cultural patterns and power distribution.

Education and empowerment: decisive factors

Amongst the 10 countries with the highest GEI values the dimension with the greatest equity is education, where (except for Rwanda) the values are at, or close to, 100 (perfect equity) (Table 5).

THE CASE OF RWANDA: THE POWER OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Why does Rwanda occupy such a high GEI position? Its surprisingly good performance is related to the recent implementation of affirmative action policies involving legally binding regulations, sometimes of a constitutional nature, designed to promote change in social factors, including structural ones.

The following are examples of rapid changes that have taken place in this country over recent years:

- 30% of decision-making related positions were assigned to women.
- Local funds and micro-credits were provided for production projects led by women.
- In 2003 Article 187 of the new Rwandan Constitution formalized equity promotion structures such as the National Council of Women.
- A Gender Issues Monitoring Office was created, to facilitate the participation of women in public life and to ensure that development initiatives are egalitarian in generating benefits for both sexes.

As a result of these changes many women entered public life as political leaders. In the Chamber of Deputies seats held by women increased to 48.8%. There was also a significant increase in the participation of women at ministerial and local government levels.

The most interesting conclusion to be made is that a high level of economic development is not necessary in order to implement effective gender inequity reduction measures.

TABLE 2. GEI indicator values: Rwanda, 2004 and 2007

Empowerment					
Gaps	Professionals and technicians gap	Managers and directors gap	Parliamentarians gap	Ministerial gap	Empowerment gender gap
2004	no data	no data	96	05	50
2007	no data	no data	95	67	81
Economic activity					
Gaps	Activity rate gap		Income gap	Economic activity gender gap	
2004	88		no data	88	
2007	95		74	85	
Education					
Gaps	Literacy gap	Primary enrolment gap	Secondary enrolment gap	Tertiary enrolment gap	Education gender gap
2004	96	89	no data	50	78
2007	98	100	no data	62	87

TABLE 3. GEI average values by region

Region	GEI
North America	74
Europe	72
Latin America and the Caribbean	65
East Asia and the Pacific	62
Central Asia	60
Sub-Saharan Africa	54
South Asia	52
Middle East and North Africa	48

TABLE 4. GEI average values in relation to country income levels

Groups of countries by income	GEI
High income countries	73
Upper-middle income countries	64
High income countries (non OECD)	62
Lower-middle income countries	60
Low income countries	54

TABLE 5. GEI dimension values: the 10 most equitable countries

Country	Education	Economic activity	Empowerment	GEI
Sweden	100	84	84	89
Finland	100	79	75	84
Rwanda	87	85	81	84
Norway	100	81	67	83
Germany	99	67	75	80
Barbados	100	83	58	80
Denmark	100	79	59	79
Iceland	99	79	58	79
New Zealand	100	76	57	78
Netherlands	100	70	63	77

TABLE 6. GEI dimension values: the 10 least equitable countries

Country	Education	Economic activity	Empowerment	GEI
Saudi Arabia	96	19	13	42
Pakistan	74	34	19	42
Morocco	85	29	12	42
Benin	52	56	16	41
Central African Republic	43	70	11	41
Togo	57	50	17	41
Chad	39	75	9	41
Sierra Leone	52	53	14	39
Côte d'Ivoire	62	38	17	39
Yemen	52	35	7	31

In the least equitable countries the most inequitable dimension is empowerment, in which there are situations such as that in Yemen where the value is seven (Table 6).

Nearly insignificant progress

During the 2004-2007 period the general gender equity trend was for limited or non-existent progress.

Three regions registered progress: in first place, Latin America and the Caribbean, second Europe and third the Middle East and North Africa, but in all cases progress measured less than 6%.

East Asia and the Pacific along with Sub-Saharan Africa registered almost insignificant variations. Three regions suffered GEI regression: South Asia, Central Asia and North America. North America registered the most significant gender equity regression, basically because the United States' GEI performance fell by 7% (Table 7).

Income and equity are not directly related

Examining the variations in relation to income levels we find that low-income countries have not progressed. However, the differences between countries with high, middle and lower-middle incomes are not significant, which confirms that the relation between a country's income and gender equity is not direct.

Among the ten countries that most regressed are ones with a low, lower-middle, upper-middle and high income, for example in the latter category the United States.

TABLE 7. GEI change by geographical region - 2004-2007 (%)

Region	GEI 2004 - 2007: Percentage variation
Latin America and the Caribbean	5.13
Europe	2.52
Middle East and North Africa	2.23
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.86
East Asia and the Pacific	-0.33
South Asia	-2.62
Central Asia	-3.29
North America	-4.37

TABLE 8. GEI change by income group - 2004-2007 (%)

Income group	GEI 2004 - 2007: Percentage variation
High Income	3.21
High Income (no OECD)	3.00
Upper-Middle Income	1.32
Lower-Middle Income	2.78
Low Income	-0.27

Measuring variation as a percentage, the countries that registered the most progress during this period were in first place Rwanda, followed by Ecuador, Cape Verde and Guatemala. ■

TECHNICAL NOTES: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE GEI

1. Dimensions and indicators

- Empowerment (% of women in technical positions, % of women in management and government positions, % of women in parliaments, % of women in ministerial posts).
- Economic activity (income gap, activity rate gap).
- Education (literacy rate gap, primary school enrolment rate gap, secondary school enrolment rate gap, tertiary education enrolment rate gap).

2. Gaps

To construct the gaps in the indicators that did not register them originally, two transformations were carried out. First the percentages for men were calculated, then the differences for women:

% of men in technical positions,
% of men in management and government positions,
% of men in parliaments,
% of men in ministerial posts.

Secondly, for each country the weight of the female population in relation to the male was calculated for the relevant age ranges (over 19 years old, except for the economically active population indicator, for which over 14 years old was used).

Weight of female population = % female population / % male population

The gap was calculated for each indicator for each country, with the rate for women as the numerator and the rate for men as the denominator, weighted by the inverse of the weight of the female population.¹

% female rate * (weight of female population)⁻¹ / % male rate

3. The construction of the components of the index in each dimension

For each dimension the average of the indicators of the gaps was calculated, but no values were given for countries for which information was available for less than half the indicators of the dimension in question.

4. Construction of the index

The index was calculated as an average of the values obtained in the three dimensions (the average of the gaps in each dimension).

¹ The value 0 was re-codified as 0.01 to allow algebraic calculations. At the other end of the scale, values greater than 1 were re-codified as 1, since this is the normative limit employed for the purposes of the index.