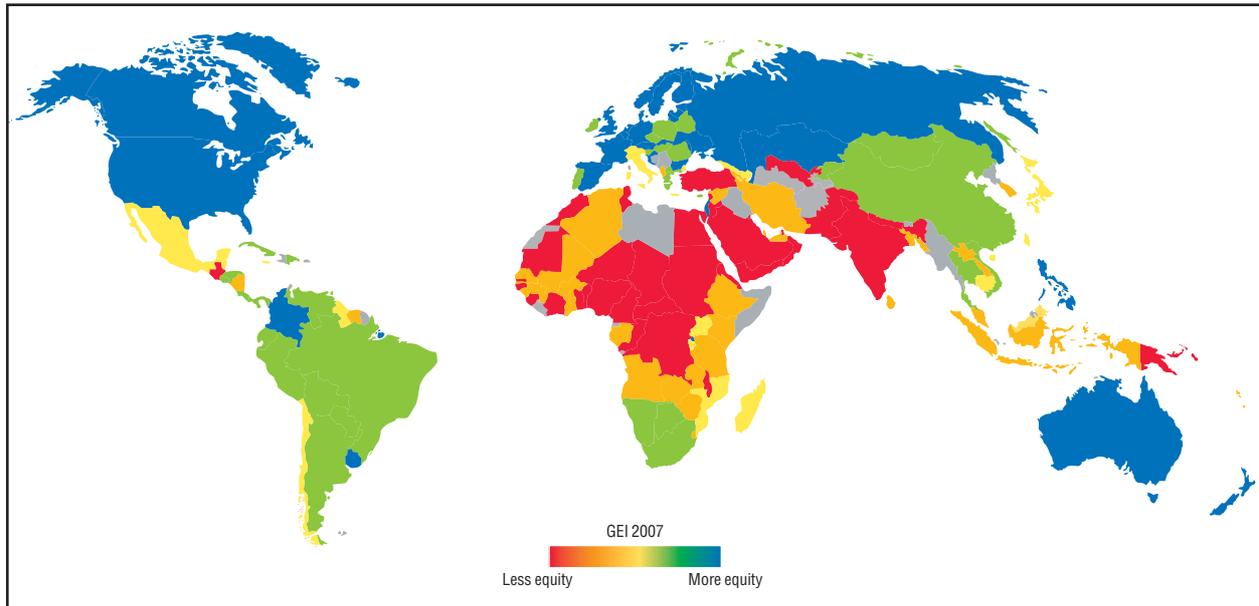


GENDER EQUITY INDEX 2008

20th century debts, 21st century shame



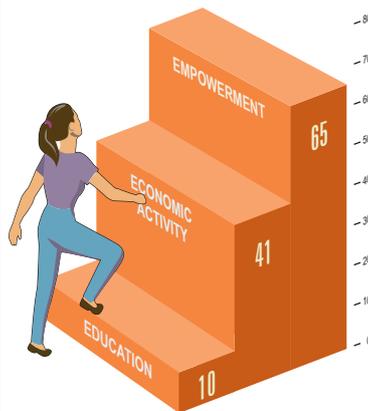
In order to contribute to the understanding of gender-based inequities and to monitor the status and its evolution, Social Watch has developed the Gender Equity Index (GEI). This index is based on internationally available comparable data and it makes it possible to position and classify countries according to a selection of indicators relevant to gender inequity in three different dimensions: education, participation in the economy and empowerment.

In 2008, the GEI ranks the present situation of 157 countries, based on the most recent statistics available, and is able to determine evolution trends in 133 countries by comparing their present index with that of five years ago. (See the detailed methodology references and complete listings in www.socialwatch.org).

The index has a maximum possible value of 100%, which would indicate no gender gap at all in each of the three dimensions. The GEI measures the gap between women and men, not their welfare. Thus, for example, a country where both boys and girls have equal access to university studies would rank 100 in this aspect, and a country where both boys and girls are equally unable to complete primary school would also rank 100. This is not to imply that the quality of the education should not be improved. It just says that boys and girls suffer from the same lack of quality.

Education is the only component in the index where many countries have actually reached parity level. When parity has been reached, obviously no further progress is possible. But beyond the fact that many countries do not progress, the GEI education component reveals that many of them are regress-

The stairway to gender equity



Big steps ahead

The step leading to gender equity in education in all countries of the world is not a very big one. Yet, more countries are regressing in education than those making progresses. A larger number of countries show significant progress in economic activity, but the number of those regressing is also considerable and the global trend is therefore unclear. Evolution in empowerment seems promising, since most countries are showing progress, yet this is by far the largest gap to overcome.

ing. In the two other dimensions, related to women's integration into economic and political life, no country shows complete parity yet.

Income alone does not generate equity

The GEI evidences that income differences between countries are no justification for gender-based inequities. Many poor countries have achieved a high level of equity, which is a positive achievement, even when that means an equitable distribution of poverty. In fact, the reverse is often true: many countries that have acceptable average figures in social indicators frequently hide behind those averages enormous disparities between men and women. The elimination of gender disparities can be achieved with active policies and does not require that countries improve their income levels in order to succeed.

Sweden, Finland and Norway continue to have the highest rankings in the 2008 GEI. Although the three countries do not lead in all the dimensions that make up the index (see gaps in Education, Empowerment and Economic Activity) they have good performances in all of them. Germany ranks fourth and Rwanda – one of the poorest countries in the world – takes the fifth place. In all these cases, the gender gap has been reduced through active policies, including gender quotas for political participation in elected bodies and pro-equity regulations in the labour market.

The GEI has been computed for 42 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, 37 in Europe, 28 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 17 in the Middle East and North Africa, 18 in East Asia and the Pacific, 7 in Central Asia, 6 in South Asia and 2 in North America. Together these countries represent more than 94% of the world's population.

Progress and setbacks

More than half the women in the world live in countries that have made no progress in gender equity in recent years. This is the main conclusion of the Social Watch 2008 GEI which, for the first time, shows recent evolution and trends in bridging the gap between men and women in education, economy activity and empowerment.

The GEI 2008 illustrates that the greater equity levels to be found in education are not paralleled by acceptable levels in the economic field nor in the empowerment of women. Political empowerment is the area where most progress has been made in recent years as a result of active policies, yet economic equity shows disparate results, with as many countries regressing as those where there is progress. In education the gap is comparatively closer, but the trend for many countries is to regress.

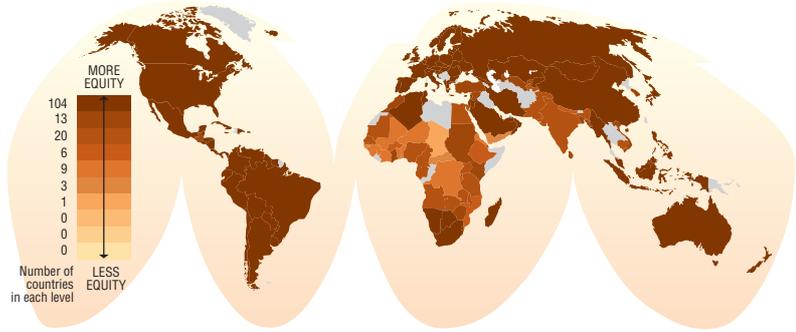
Difficulties in reaching equity cannot be justified by a lack of resources: the GEI mapping and that of each of its components show that – regardless of income levels – each country can reduce gender disparity through adequate policies. ■

GEI regional average by component

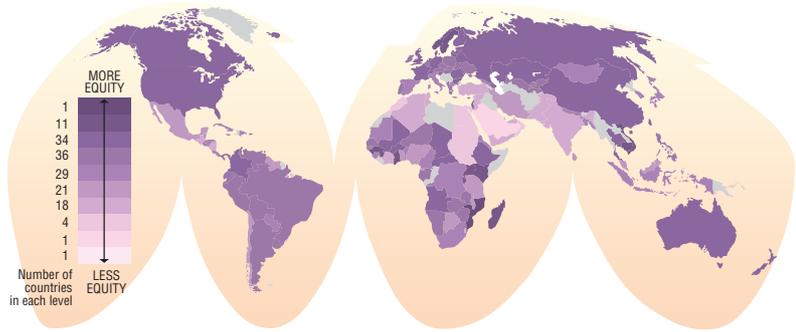
	Education	Economic activity	Empowerment
World*	90	59	35
Central Asia	92	65	30
East Asia	94	62	37
Europe	99	68	49
Latin America & Caribbean	99	57	45
Middle East & North Africa	90	35	19
North America	100	73	53
South Asia	80	47	20
Sub-Saharan Africa	73	61	24

* The size of the gap: Index points needed to achieve equity (100) globally in each dimension of the GEI.

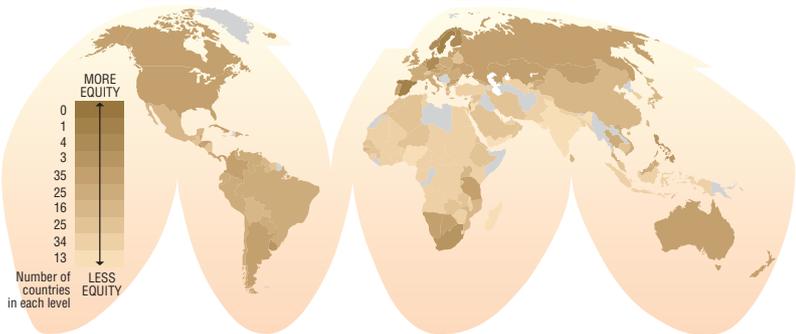
Education gap



Economic activity gap



Empowerment gap



GEI VALUES IN 2008 AND RECENT GEI TRENDS (2004-2008)								
Country	GEI 2008	Evolution (%) (2004-2008)	Country	GEI 2008	Evolution (%) (2004-2008)	Country	GEI 2008	Evolution (%) (2004-2008)
Sweden	89	5.8	Peru	69	22.6	Angola	53	-18.7
Finland	85	6.9	Honduras	69	11.7	Gabon	53	-2.7
Norway	84	11.4	Czech Republic	69	-2.5	Tajikistan	52	-6.9
Germany	80		China	69	9.9	Indonesia	52	-6.5
Rwanda	80	13.3	Cyprus	69	13.3	Ethiopia	52	9.7
Bahamas	80	9.7	Venezuela	68	11.1	Burkina Faso	52	-2.3
Denmark	80	-1.1	Macedonia	68	8.8	Nicaragua	52	-10.0
New Zealand	78	3.4	Costa Rica	68	4.2	Algeria	52	11.0
Iceland	78	4.9	Paraguay	67	14.6	Bangladesh	51	-5.2
Netherlands	78	7.7	El Salvador	67	9.3	Cape Verde	51	-6.8
Lithuania	77	3.4	Greece	66	7.0	United Arab Emirates	51	9.3
Spain	77	16.8	Bolivia	66	12.5	Syria	51	9.6
Barbados	77	3.6	Botswana	66	-6.0	Guinea	51	-7.1
Russian Federation	76	5.6	Belarus	66	4.8	Mali	50	-6.5
Australia	76	6.6	Dominican Republic	66	6.5	Samoa	50	
Philippines	76	4.9	Singapore	66	4.5	Swaziland	50	-2.3
Latvia	76	1.6	Italy	65	5.4	Qatar	50	1.0
Canada	76	-2.7	Uganda	64	3.3	Cameroon	49	-9.1
Colombia	75	11.8	Georgia	64	-0.4	Gambia	49	-20.4
Kazakhstan	75	19.0	Lesotho	64	15.8	Mauritania	49	3.1
United States of America	75	-2.9	Belize	64	15.5	Tunisia	49	-4.1
United Kingdom	75	6.4	Mozambique	64		Guatemala	49	5.0
Uruguay	75	9.2	Switzerland	63	-0.4	Guinea-Bissau	48	2.9
Slovakia	74	0.5	Brunei Darussalam	63	15.5	Oman	48	14.2
Bulgaria	74	1.5	Chile	62	6.1	Malawi	48	-22.5
Moldova	74	2.1	Maldives	62	-8.7	Lebanon	47	2.2
Ukraine	74	6.7	Azerbaijan	62	0.2	Saudi Arabia	47	13.2
Estonia	74	1.2	Burundi	62	2.2	Jordan	47	0.2
Croatia	74	7.1	Luxembourg	61	3.1	Sao Tome and Principe	47	
Belgium	73	10.1	Jamaica	61	-8.5	Niger	47	1.3
Austria	73	4.6	Japan	61	2.8	Bahrain	46	-1.0
France	73	15.0	Madagascar	61	-4.1	West Bank and Gaza	46	-2.6
Israel	73	9.2	Guyana	61	6.0	Djibouti	46	
Portugal	72	4.3	St Vincent and Grenadines	61		Turkey	46	-8.6
Hong Kong	72	2.1	Cambodia	60	-1.3	Equatorial Guinea	45	9.2
Romania	72	4.1	Mauritius	60	16.8	Eritrea	45	-26.1
Argentina	72	22.7	Mexico	60	2.6	Nepal	44	3.3
Kyrgyzstan	71	12.2	Kenya	59	-5.2	Morocco	43	
Poland	71	-2.3	Malta	59	25.3	Congo, Rep.	43	-3.5
Vietnam	71	7.7	Ghana	58	-6.4	Nigeria	43	-18.0
Panama	71	14.3	Tanzania	58		Central African Republic	42	-12.2
Slovenia	71	0.9	Malaysia	58	-7.9	Pakistan	42	-0.3
Ecuador	71	22.3	Zimbabwe	57	-3.4	Sudan	41	-11.5
Hungary	71	2.7	Uzbekistan	57	-10.2	Sierra Leone	41	-3.1
Namibia	71	3.2	Suriname	56	-11.1	Benin	41	-16.7
St Lucia	71		Vanuatu	56		Chad	41	-13.0
Mongolia	70	9.0	Albania	56	-8.1	India	40	-8.8
Ireland	70	10.2	Zambia	55	-2.4	Egypt	40	-20.0
South Africa	70	4.3	Timor-Leste	55		Togo	39	-5.5
Thailand	70	0.3	Senegal	55	-2.1	Côte d'Ivoire	37	-7.1
Trinidad and Tobago	70	2.5	Korea, Rep.	54	-4.5	Yemen	29	1.8
Cuba	70	6.4	Iran	54	18.6			
Brazil	69	10.5	Sri Lanka	53	-13.1			