

Women, Peace and Security Index: A Tool for Advancing Gender Equality

The Women, Peace and Security Index (WPS Index) is designed to support efforts to advance women's rights and equality worldwide. The WPS Index now measures women's well-being in 167 countries around the world. It examines three dimensions of women's lives: inclusion (political, social, economic); justice (formal laws and informal discrimination); and security (at the family, community, and societal levels). A score between 0 (worst possible) and 1 (best possible) is generated for each country, ultimately determining their rank.

The WPS Index can be used by activists to spotlight achievements as well as injustices in their communities and countries. Its public rankings can be leveraged to hold decision-makers accountable.

Activists can also reference the index's direct links to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to which all national governments have committed. The index can support voluntary national reviews, a process through which countries evaluate their progress against the SDGs.

The 2019–2020 edition of the WPS Index, created by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security in partnership with the Peace Research Institute Oslo, builds on the inaugural 2017 index with updated data and new analysis. This guide outlines some ways to use the multidimensional WPS Index results as a catalyst to advance gender equality. On the WPS Index website, you can explore data and rankings for 167 countries in greater detail, and access exclusive National Geographic visualizations and an animated video.

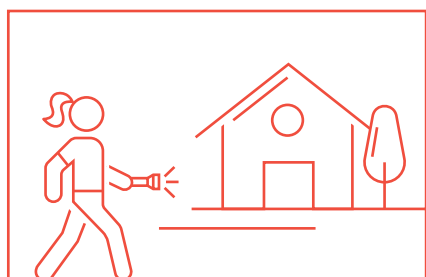
**The WPS Index aligns with the
UN Sustainable Development
Goals, to which all national
governments have committed**



Spotlighting Progress and Pain

Few countries perform uniformly well or uniformly poorly across all dimensions of women's well-being. Consider Australia, which performs relatively poorly in women's perceived community safety, but far better in women's financial inclusion and discriminatory norms. Or Timor-Leste, which does relatively poorly on women's education and employment, but relatively well in women's cell-phone use. (Note: 1 is the best possible score). The WPS Index illuminates key achievements and deficits in each country, which can help inspire and inform activism.

Mixed performance in Australia



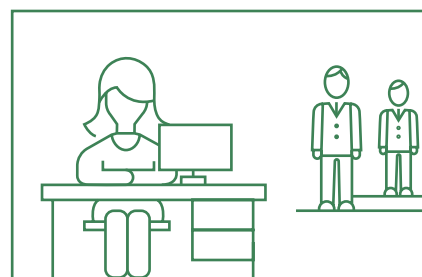
49.6%

of women feel safe walking home at night.



99.2%

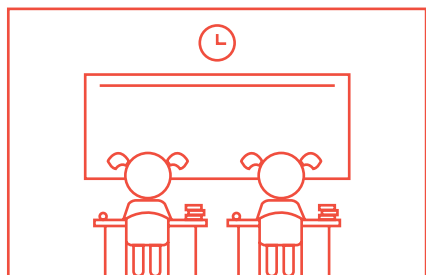
of women have a bank account or use a mobile money service, which is key to financial independence.



1%

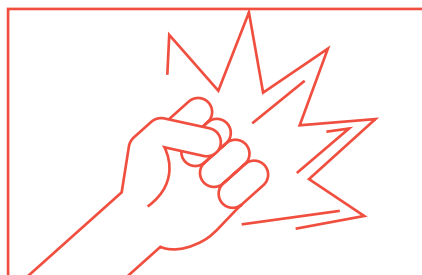
of men do not think it's acceptable for a woman in their family to have a paid job outside the home.

Challenges and Opportunities in Timor-Leste



3.6 years

is the average years of education for girls.



46.4%

of women have experienced intimate partner violence in the past 12 months.



33.8%

is the percentage of seats held by women in the national parliament.

Comparing Neighbors

The WPS Index facilitates direct country comparisons, which demonstrate that it is possible to advance women's rights and equality in every country, regardless of location. In every region, some countries excel while others lag behind. The WPS Index reveals regional variations, which can help changemakers better target and advocate for policy reforms.

Chile performs relatively poorly in legal discrimination according to regional standards, particularly when compared to its neighbor, Peru.

Legal Discrimination Against Women (Aggregate score of 0-84)



The WPS Index also reveals wide variations within regions. For example, the average rate of women's employment is 54.3 percent in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. But the range within the region is wide, from 28.3 percent in Tajikistan to 65.9 percent in Kazakhstan.

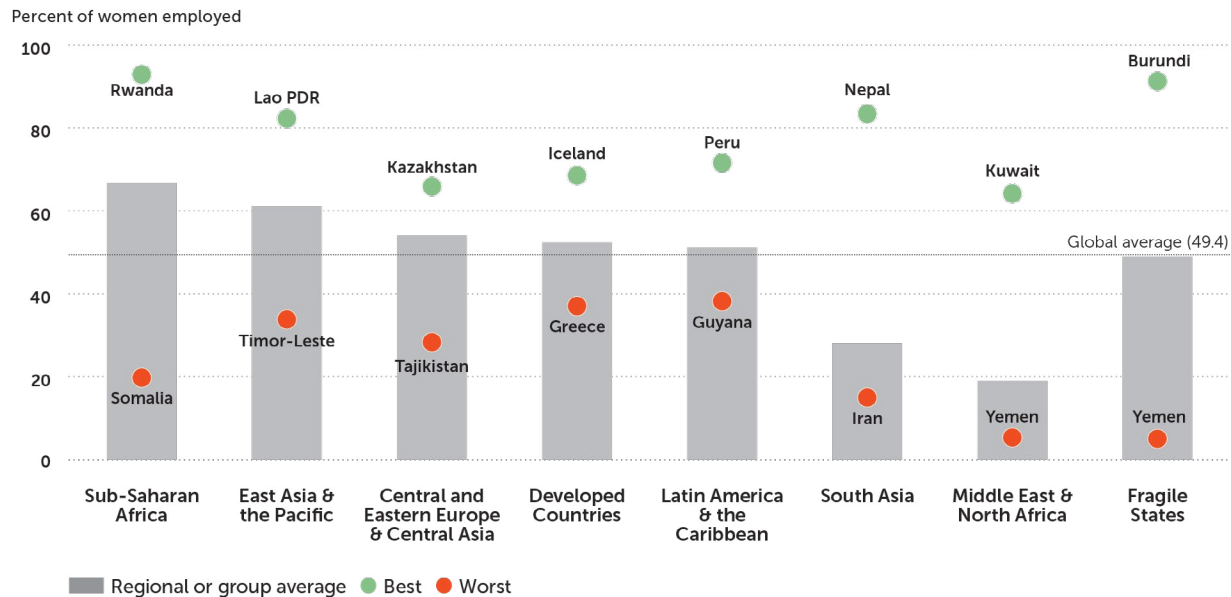
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This exercise of rating and ranking can be really powerful because countries, like human beings, think in relative terms and compare themselves with others. They care about their status and standing, and it can be a really powerful motivator.

Judith Kelley

Author of [Scorecard Diplomacy](#) and Dean of the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University.

Large differences across regions and countries in women's paid employment



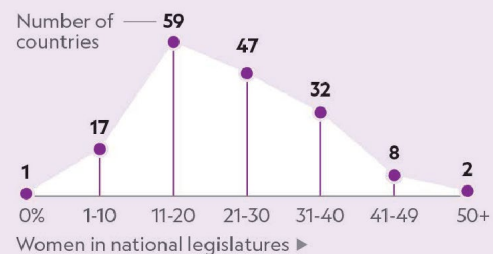
The WPS Index provides global averages for various aspects of women's well-being and status, from rates of intimate partner violence to sex-selective abortions. The results and analysis show which countries are exceeding global and regional averages and which countries fall short. For example, the average percentage of women in parliament globally is 21.5 percent. This year's report brings attention to the multitude of countries where fewer than 20 percent of parliamentarians are women. Some 19 countries, including Haiti and Thailand, have levels of parliamentary representation in the single digits.

Rates of women's parliamentary representation vary widely



Representation in government

The average share of women in national legislatures is 21.5 percent worldwide. At the current pace, it will take 52 years to reach gender parity.



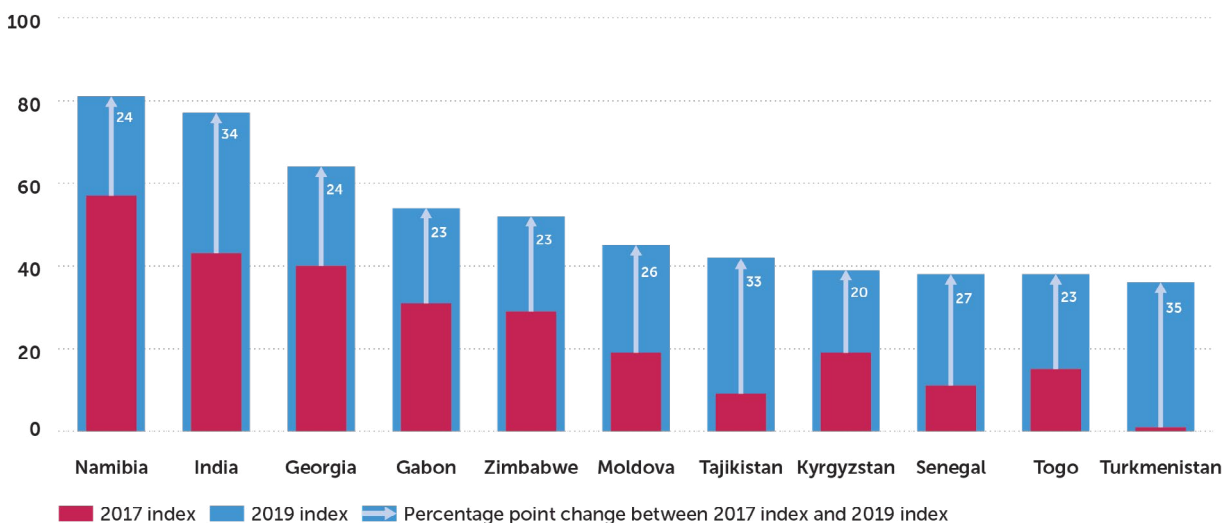
Understanding Trends Over Time

The 2019–2020 WPS Index report tracks performance since the first edition in 2017. Some 59 countries have recorded significant progress, while only one (Yemen) saw significant deterioration. Overall, the world is heading in the right direction.

The most marked gains were in financial inclusion, with 85 countries demonstrating at least 5 percent improvement on that score. India's progress was particularly significant, where the share of women with their own bank account rose from 43 percent to 77 percent. Highlighting success stories can both inspire decision-makers and create pressure to step up efforts to accelerate progress.

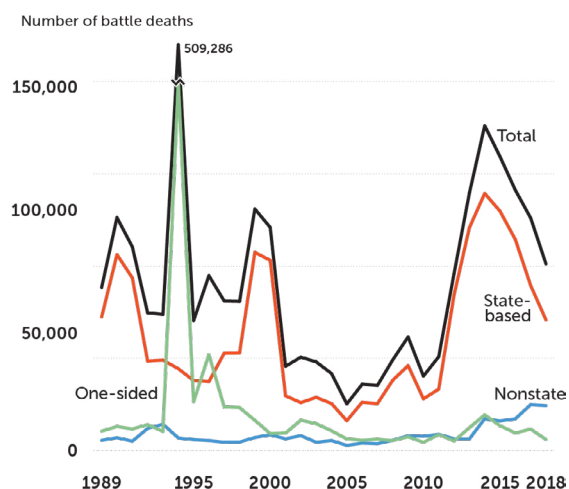
Top 10 gainers in women's financial inclusion since 2017 WPS Index

Percent of women with financial account



Understanding and communicating longer-term trends is also helpful for recognizing shifts and predicting future patterns. For example, organized violence has declined globally since 2014, which has significant implications for women's safety and well-being.

Total battle deaths have declined globally since 2012–14 peak

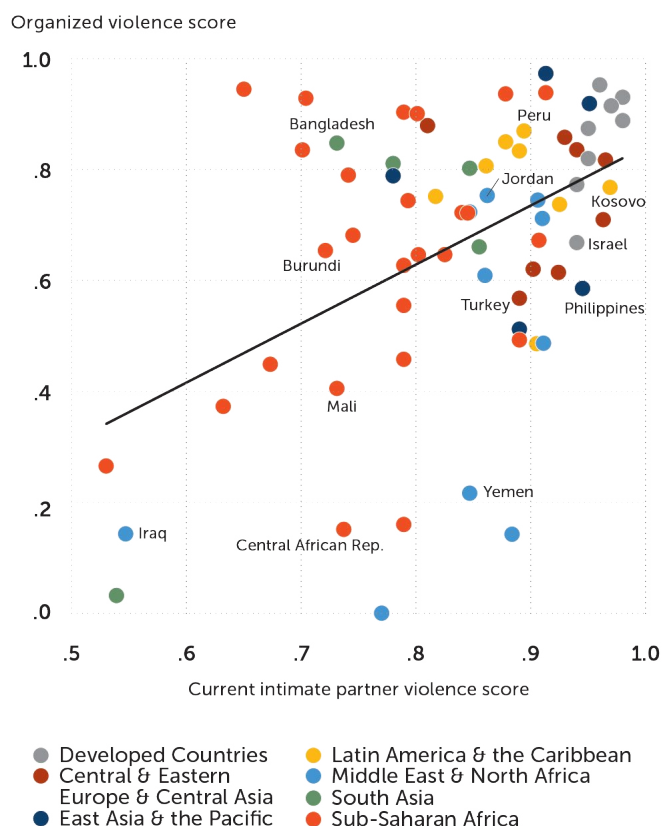


Yet, there is much work ahead. Despite gains in girls' and women's education, the gender gap in employment rates is stuck at about 30 percentage points, with fewer than half of working-age women in paid employment. This can be traced partly to gender gaps in unpaid care. Countries with less equitable distributions of unpaid care tend to score worse on the WPS Index.

Connecting the Dots

The WPS Index illustrates the strong correlation between women's perceptions of community safety and rates of intimate partner violence. This reinforces how aspects of women's well-being are interlinked and underscores the importance of a multidimensional approach to women's well-being in advocacy and policy-making.

Community safety and intimate partner violence are linked



Further Resources for Advocacy

Beyond the WPS Index, key data resources to support advocacy include the following:

- [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [Inter-Parliamentary Union](#): Up-to-date data on the percentage of women in the upper and lower houses of legislative bodies
- [International Labour Organization statistical database](#): Provides data on employment, unemployment, skills, and representation in management
- [United Nations Population Division \(UNPD\) database](#): Provides comprehensive demographic data across countries and regions, including son bias
- [UN Women Global Database on Violence against Women](#): Presents data on laws and policies, as well as on rates of intimate partner violence
- [Uppsala Conflict Data Program](#): Tracks trends in organized violence over time
- [World Bank Global Findex Database](#): Provides comprehensive data on financial access
- [World Bank Women, Business, and the Law Database](#): Assesses the extent and patterns of discriminatory laws across countries
- [SIGI \(Social Institutions & Gender Index\)](#): Offers country profiles with qualitative and quantitative analysis of women in society across such areas as discriminatory family law, civil liberties, and restricted access to resources
- [UN Human Rights](#): Provides recent reports on the status of human rights in various countries, including reports from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), with recommendations for improvement

