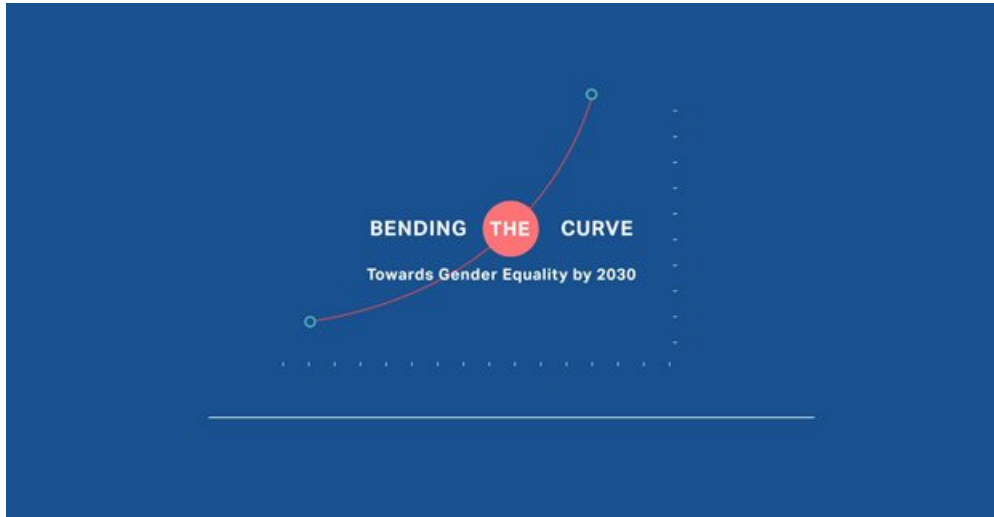


Global progress on gender equality 'limping along' - new report

Recently released research shows that 67 out of the 129 countries studied, and home to 2.1 billion girls and women, won't achieve any of the set gender equality targets by 2030 if their current pace continues.



The report, *Bending the curve towards gender equality by 2030*, was released by the Equal Measures 2030 (EM2030) partnership and covers five key gender equality targets: access to contraception, girls' education, political leadership, workplace equality laws, and safety. More than a third of countries have been moving slowly – or even in the wrong direction – on at least four of these five issues over the past decade or two.



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Ipsos 6 Mar 2020



'Stagnating or even backtracking'

"Far too many countries have been stagnating or even backtracking on vital issues that affect the lives and futures of billions of girls and women, such as whether they finish school or if they have equal rights at work. Globally, progress towards gender equality is limping along," said Alison Holder, director of Equal Measures 2030.

Looking at past progress on the five issues studied, the research found that:

- Access to contraception – a key issue for gender equality and for poverty reduction – has moved slowly at the global level over the past two decades and several countries have moved in the wrong direction.
- Globally, more girls are completing secondary school than ever before (with the rates increasing nearly 2% each year over recent decades) but the percentage of girls that finish secondary school in many developing countries still remains extremely low, and there are even countries from across the world moving in the wrong direction (including Russia, Egypt, Sri Lanka, and Bulgaria).
- Women's representation in powerful government positions has improved globally in recent decades, but little of that change happened in the last ten years and 40 (out of 129) countries have lower percentages of women in ministerial roles than they did twenty years ago.
- Many countries have made improvements in their workplace equality laws, but still only 36 of the 129 countries studied

had done enough to receive a top score (based on data collected by the World Bank, that measure legal protections for women in the workplace every year).

- The issue that has progressed most slowly at the global level over the past 10 or 20 years is girls' and women's perceptions of their personal safety. Nearly half of women globally don't feel safe walking in their area at night and this figure has barely changed since 2006. In fact, perceptions of safety worsened in nearly half of the countries studied.

"This report shines a light on how little improvement we've seen on fundamental issues like whether women feel safe walking in their own neighbourhood at night, which has barely changed or even worsened in the last decade. Women's safety directly impacts on all aspects of their lives – from their own education and that of their children, to which jobs they pursue, and their social mobility," said Sivananthi Thanenthiran, executive director of the Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW).



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14 Nov 2019



'New sense of urgency'

"The takeaway from this report is clear: At the current pace of progress, none of us will live to see a world where men and women are truly equal," said Mark Suzman, CEO of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "The data that Equal Measures has collected and crunched should give all of us a new sense of urgency. We all must do more to take up the cause of gender equality."

But the research also found examples of countries – from all regions of the world – that made rapid progress on the five issues studied. For example, in Rwanda, access to contraception moved from covering 12% of girls and women in 2000 to 69% in 2018. In Ghana, the percentage of girls who completed secondary school grew from just 5% in 2003 to over 40% 12 years later. And several countries have made very fast progress on having women represented in Cabinet positions (including Uruguay which went from zero women ministers to 42% in less than 15 years, Canada which went from 30% to parity in four years, and Ethiopia which went from 10% to 48% women in just one year).

The report found that if all countries matched the pace of fast-moving countries over the next decade, nearly three quarters of the world's girls and women could instead live in countries that would reach four or even all five of these gender equality targets by the year 2030.



The importance of showing up

Aileen Sauerman 30 Aug 2019



Rapid change is possible

“What this research shows is that rapid change on gender equality is possible. Of course, every context is different and there is no single recipe. But, by making concrete changes in laws, policies and budget decisions, governments and other champions can drive real change for girls and women,” concluded Holder.

Reacting to the research findings, Françoise Girard, president of the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), delivered a call to action: “Twenty-five years ago, governments committed to achieve gender equality. This report shows that they need to do much more to live up to their promise. More than that, it highlights the opportunity before us. With political will, financial resources, and the power of the feminist movement, our vision for Generation Equality can be realised. We call on world leaders to prioritise equality, and to work with feminists globally to accelerate progress.”

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