



What can gender indices tell us about gender norms that affect adolescent girls?

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Knowledge to action:
Researching gender norms that affect adolescent girls



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Key points

- Gender indices - combined measures of a number of indicators of different issues - give us an overall picture of the relative wellbeing of women and girls and men and boys in different countries. Some use indicators which are very relevant to adolescent girls (such as the adolescent pregnancy rate, or rate of child marriage). But there are no global indices that focus on adolescent girls only.
- The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) focuses directly on norms, while other gender indices give insights into wellbeing outcomes that are related to norms and to other factors. As such, they provide complementary information that we can use to uncover whether changes in gender norms are resulting in improvements in development outcomes for women and girls.
- Some indices have sub-indices that focus on particular areas of wellbeing or gender equality. Trends and scores in the indicators used to compile these sub-indices could give valuable insights into changes in specific dimensions of women and girls' lives.
- The availability of data for various countries and their ranking or classification is useful for benchmarking purposes. It means we can compare the situation of women and adolescent girls in different countries and, where trend data are available, we can look at progress made across multiple dimensions of their wellbeing. The indices thus can be a useful advocacy tool, motivating governments to do better to move up the ranking. They are also useful for citizens and civil society groups pushing for greater accountability, particularly in countries or regions where women and girls fare poorly in terms of gender norms and development outcomes.

Setting the scene

Gender indices can give us a summary measure of different indicators affecting the wellbeing and development of women and girls. They typically look at one or more of the following aspects of people's lives: health, education, economic empowerment, labour opportunities, political voice, and supportive laws and institutions. In most cases, indices have been produced more than once for the same country, which means we can analyse trends in outcomes for women and girls over time.

While indices tend to measure outcomes across these dimensions rather than gender norms specifically, evidence of changes in the situation of women and girls in a country over time enables us to begin a conversation about the factors that have contributed to those changes. There is an increasing amount of literature that we can draw on, which explores how gender norms can affect women and girls' overall wellbeing. One of the indices we discuss here, SIGI, is particularly relevant because it focuses on the role played by formal and informal social institutions (which it defines as formal and non-formal laws, attitudes and practices) and how they affect the lives of women and girls in different countries.

This Research and Practice Note looks in detail at five global indices that provide the best measures of gender equality and empowerment: the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI); the Gender Inequality Index (GIE); the Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI); the African Gender Inequality Index (GEI); and the African Gender Development Index (AGDI).¹

The indicators analysed by these five indices mainly focus on women but they are not disaggregated by age. So, although they can help us to understand some of the factors that are likely to affect the wellbeing and development of adolescent girls, they are not directly applicable to girls. But this said, some of the indicators they use *are* specific to adolescent girls. The SIGI has three: on early marriage, reproductive autonomy (or unmet need for family planning), and son preference in education; the GII has two: on adolescent fertility rates and women who attained secondary education; the GGGI uses the ratio of girls and boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education to capture the gender gap in access to education. The GEI has similar indicators for African countries (girls' enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary schooling). Although this index was created very recently, it does not have an indicator on child marriage – notable for its omission,

1 As well as these five, there are two other major indices that we have not included: the Gender Development Index (GDI), which measures the gender gap in three key areas of human development (health, education, and command over economic resources); and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), which measures the extent of gender inequality within a country based on estimates of women's relative economic income, participation in high-paid positions with economic power, and access to professional and parliamentary positions. But we have excluded them from this Note because of certain methodological and theoretical weaknesses (critiqued in Ferrant, 2010, for example).

given that it is an important source of gender inequality in some African countries in particular. The AGDI has two indicators relevant to adolescent girls: enrolment and completion in primary and secondary school, and time use of respondents (who include girls aged 15 to 19).

While the SIGI focuses on the social institutions that affect women and girls' lives, the other four indices draw on outcome or status indicators, such as women and girls' access to services, or their level of development and participation in economic and political life. These are useful for exploring how practices that are linked to gender norms are evolving. All five indices include measures of key areas of human development that are linked to broader national development outcomes (such as human capital, economic status and participation, and political voice). As such, they provide a more complete and multi-dimensional picture of the situation of women and girls.

Taking a closer look at the five indices

How can these indices help us to understand how gender norms that affect adolescent girls are changing? And what are their limitations? This section provides an overview of the characteristics of the five indices discussed in this Research and Practice Note, exploring how they can be used to help us analyse the discriminatory gender norms that affect adolescent girls.

The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)

The **SIGI** measures discrimination against women in social institutions (formal and informal laws, social norms, and practices) across 160 countries. It covers five dimensions

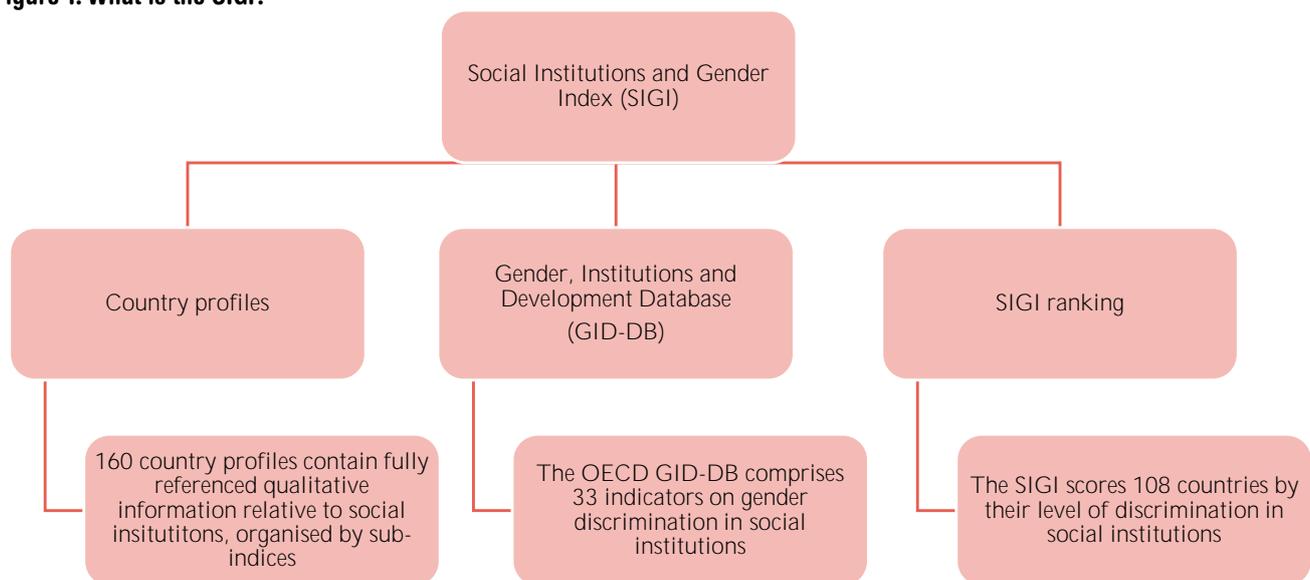
of discriminatory social institutions that affect women and girls' lives:

- Discriminatory family codes (legal restrictions on child marriage, equal rights of guardianship of children and inheritance rights)
- Restricted physical integrity (laws restricting violence against women, attitudes around domestic violence and unmet family planning needs)
- Son bias (shortfall in the number of women in sex ratios)
- Restricted resources and assets (legal rights to ownership of land and assets and access to financial services)
- Restricted civil liberties (lack of freedom of movement and political voice).

The SIGI variables quantify discriminatory social institutions such as unequal inheritance rights, early marriage, violence against women, and unequal land and property rights. Data are available for all 14 variables in 108 countries, while **160 countries** have data for some of the variables (SIGI covers East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa). SIGI data reveal that gender gaps in social institutions translate into gender gaps in development outcomes such as participation in the labour force, levels of poverty and marginalisation, and education.

Developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the SIGI is comprised of three main components: (i) country profiles containing comprehensive qualitative information on legal, cultural, and traditional laws and practices that

Figure 1: What is the SIGI?



Source: OECD, 2014c

discriminate against women and girls, researched by the SIGI team through research on law and practice; (ii) the Gender, Institutions and Development Database (**GID-DB**), comprising 33 indicators on gender discrimination in social institutions for which there are three rounds of data: 2009, 2012 and 2014; and (iii) the index, classifying 108 countries into five categories according to their level of discrimination in social institutions (OECD, 2014c).

The 2014 SIGI gives equal weights to each sub-index. This implies that each dimension of discriminatory social institutions has equal value. This is done to signal that no one dimension is more important than another in terms of deprivation experienced by women. The index's formula is such that a high level of inequality is penalised in every dimension (OECD, 2014c). While the aim of SIGI is to have information on all indicators for all countries, this is

not always possible as some countries do not gather data on some specific variables which make up key indicators. For example, most Middle Eastern countries do not have data for indicators related to physical integrity and son bias.

As a composite index, the SIGI and its sub-indices enable us to compare underlying discrimination against women across countries for which there are data, allowing international, regional and sub-regional analyses. Table 1 below shows the issues covered and their corresponding indicators.

Trend data

It is difficult to do trend analysis of the composite SIGI index for countries or regions because the frameworks for 2009, 2012 and 2014 have been significantly amended. For example, in 2014, six new variables were included in

Table 1: Issues covered in the SIGI and indicators in brackets

Discriminatory family code	Restricted physical integrity	Son bias	Restricted resources and	Restricted civil liberties
	Violence against women	Missing women	Secure access to land	Access to public space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal age of marriage (whether women and men have the same legal minimum age of marriage) Early marriage (percentage of women married between 15-19 years of age) Parental authority in marriage (whether women and men have the same right to be the legal guardian of a child during marriage) Parental authority in divorce (whether women and men have the same right to be the legal guardian of and have custody rights over a child after divorce) Inheritance rights of widows and daughters (whether widows and widowers have equal inheritance rights; whether daughters and sons have equal inheritance rights) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laws on domestic violence (whether the legal framework offers women legal protection from domestic violence) Laws on rape (whether the legal framework offers women legal protection from rape) Laws on sexual harassment (whether the legal framework offers women legal protection from sexual harassment) Attitudes toward violence (percentage of women who agree that a husband/partner is justified in beating his wife/partner under certain circumstances) Prevalence of violence over the person's lifetime (percentage of women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner at some time in their lives) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shortfall in the number of women in sex ratios for ages 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-64, 65+ relative to the expected number if there were no sex-selective abortions, no female infanticide or similar levels of health care and nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether women and men have equal and secure access to land use, control and ownership Secure access to non-land assets Whether women and men have equal and secure access to non-land assets use, control and ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether women face restrictions on their freedom of movement and access to public space, such as restricted ability to choose where they live, visit their families and friends, or to apply for a passport
	Female genital mutilation/cutting	Fertility preferences	Access to financial services	Political voice
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FGM/C prevalence (percentage of women who have undergone any type of female genital mutilation/ cutting) Reproductive autonomy Unmet need for family planning (percentage of married women aged 15-49 with an unmet need for family planning, i.e. who do not want any more children for the next two years and who are not using contraception) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of males as the last child from women currently not desiring additional children or sterilised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether women and men have equal access to financial services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quotas (whether there are legal quotas to promote women's political participation at national and sub-national levels)
				Political representation
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of women in national parliaments

the Gender Institutions and Development Database on key issues around sexual reproductive health rights, decision-making authority within the family, time use, and unpaid care. Trend data by component and by country are only available for some of the indicators in the index.

How useful is the SIGI for analysing how gender norms affect adolescent girls?

The SIGI ranking is a useful tool for comparing how countries fare across the various dimensions of social norms covered by the index. One of several methodological changes introduced by the SIGI in 2014 was the clustering of countries in five groups from very low to very high levels of discrimination in social institutions. Classifications are available for the overall SIGI composite indicator results (108 countries) or for each sub-index. This classifies groups of countries with similar levels of discrimination by minimising differences between their SIGI scores in the same class and maximising the differences between classes (OECD, 2014c). This change was designed to allow common characteristics or trends in discriminatory laws, practices and attitudes to come to the fore. In this way, the SIGI can provide an incentive for countries to move into categories with lower levels of discrimination, though countries judged as having high levels of discrimination may simply ignore or challenge the finding. It also contextualises results, pinpointing actions and policies that can either accelerate or block gender equality. However, the SIGI could be even more useful if

it had age-disaggregated indicators that would enable a better analysis of how gender norms affect adolescent girls specifically.

The Gender Inequality Index (GII)

The **GII** shows the gap in potential human development due to gender inequalities across three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and economic status (see ‘table 2: issues covered’ on the following page for indicators). Since there is no country with perfect gender equality, all countries suffer some loss in achievements in key aspects of human development when gender inequality is taken into account. This is what the GII aims to capture.

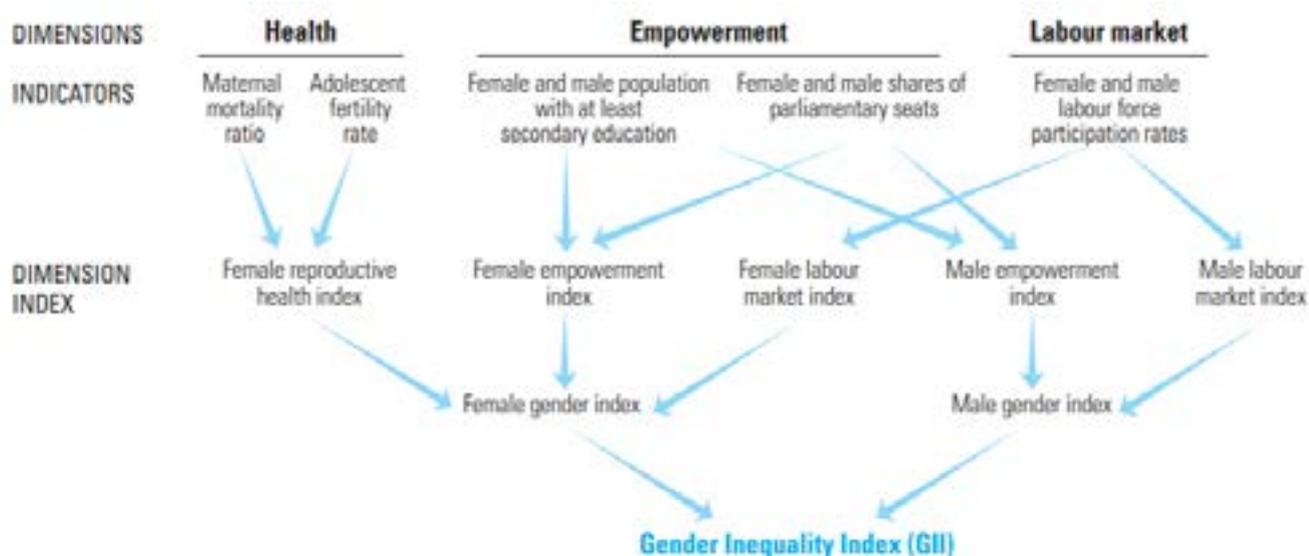
How is the GII calculated?

The GII is based on countries ranked by the Human Development Index (HDI) and was introduced in 2010 by UNDP’s Human Development Report. The GII scores range from 0 to 1, with 0 implying that men and women fare equally well and 1 meaning that both sexes fare equally badly. Lower scores on the index can be interpreted as a loss in wellbeing across its three dimensions due to gender inequalities with respect to the ‘equality scenario’.

The average score for all countries included in the GII is 0.451. It reflects a percentage loss of 45.1% in achievement across the three dimensions due to gender inequality.

Regional averages range from 12.6% among European Union (EU) member states to nearly 57.8% in sub-Saharan

Figure 2: How is the GII calculated?



Source: UNDP (2013)

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Table 2: Issues covered by the GII

Reproductive health	Empowerment	Labour market
Two indicators measure women's reproductive health: the maternal mortality ratio and adolescent fertility rates.	Empowerment is measured by two indicators: the share of parliamentary seats held by women and men, and women's attainment up to secondary education and above.	The female labour market dimension is measured by one indicator: women's participation in the workforce.
The wellbeing of women during childbirth is intrinsically important and a clear signal of women's status in society. Early childbearing, as measured by the adolescent fertility rate, is associated with greater health risks for mother and baby and tends to limit young women's education, also confining them to low-skilled and low-paid work.	Women have traditionally been disadvantaged in the political arena at all levels of government. To capture this disadvantage, the index uses the ratio of female to male representatives in parliament. Higher educational attainment expands women's freedoms by strengthening their capacity to question, reflect and act on their situation and by increasing their access to information. Educated women are more likely to enjoy satisfying work, participate in public debate, provide adequate care for their and their family's health, etc.	Female labour force participation includes employed and unemployed women (those actively looking for work) as well as those seeking part-time work. While these data are useful, they neglect to measure occupational segregation in the labour market and the gender wage gap.

Africa. At national level, losses due to gender inequality range from 2.1% in Slovenia, to 73.3% in Yemen. Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and the Arab states suffer the largest losses due to gender inequality (57.8%, 53.9% and 54.6% respectively).

Trend data

Trend data are available for the different components and reported on an annual basis as part of the Human Development Indices in the UNDP's Human Development Report. However, this does not mean that the data for each country in the index change annually. Individual country data are based on the latest year for which data were collected. Although the GII was first calculated in 2010, it was calculated retrospectively for some countries so that index data are, in some cases, available for 2000 and 2005. The latest year for which there is new data is 2013. While most countries have index data for at least three of those years, not all countries have GII data for all years and some have none at all. The data set for the HDI (on which the GII is based) is quite comprehensive in terms of coverage, and the variables making up the index are available for most countries on the HDI, though not necessarily for all years.

How useful is the GII for analysing how gender norms affect adolescent girls?

The GII has two particularly relevant outcome indicators related to adolescent girls: the adolescent fertility rate and educational attainment up to secondary level. While the outcome indicators do not provide direct information about gender norms, countries' poor performance on these indicators implies that there are factors impeding progress on these key dimensions of human development for girls. As such, it prompts an exploration of the contribution of gender norms, along with other variables, to such poor outcomes.

The Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI)

The **GGGI** measures gender-based gaps in access to resources and opportunities rather than the actual levels of available resources and opportunities. It gives us a snapshot of the different outcomes for men and women in relation to basic rights such as health, education, economic participation and political empowerment. Developed by the World Economic Forum, it covers 144 countries for which it has disaggregated data, though not all indicators are available for all countries. The GGGI evaluates countries based on outcomes rather than inputs or means. (Variables related to country-specific policies, rights, culture or customs are considered 'input' or 'means' variables, so are not included in the index, but are displayed in the [country profiles](#).)

Trend data

The GGGI scores are available for most countries for every year from 2006 to 2014, although there are some countries for which data for specific years are missing. Data for all countries in the index are available for at least two years. Trend data by indicator are also available for most countries, compiled directly from annual reports.

How useful is the GGGI for analysing how gender norms affect adolescent girls?

The GGGI only has one indicator that captures a specific aspect of adolescent girls' development: the gender gap from primary to tertiary education. This is interesting as it can uncover whether there is an increasing gender gap as girls and boys progress through the different levels of schooling, resulting in boys completing higher levels of education. As with the GII, this indicator provides information about gender parity in educational outcomes and hints at factors related to gender norms. The other dimensions included in the index are not specific to

Table 3: Issues covered by the GGGI

Economic participation and opportunity	Educational attainment	Health and survival	Political empowerment
<p>his sub-index contains three concepts: the participation gap, the remuneration gap and the advancement gap.</p> <p>The participation gap is measured by looking at labour force participation rates for men and women.</p> <p>The remuneration gap is captured through a hard data indicator (ratio of estimated female-to-male earned income) and a qualitative variable gathered through the World Economic Forum’s Executive Opinion Survey (wage equality for similar work).</p> <p>The advancement gap is captured through two hard data indicators (the ratio of women to men among legislators, senior officials and managers; and the ratio of women to men among technical and professional workers).</p>	<p>This sub-index captures the gender gap in access to education by looking at the female-to-male ratios for enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education. It also presents the ratio for the female-to-male literacy rate.</p>	<p>This sub-index gives an overview of the gender gap in health. The first variable used is the sex ratio at birth, which aims to capture the phenomenon of ‘missing women’ found in countries with strong son preference.</p> <p>The second variable is healthy life expectancy – that is, an estimate of the number of years women and men can expect to live in good health by taking into account the years lost to violence, disease, malnutrition or other relevant factors.</p>	<p>This sub-index measures the gap between men and women at the highest level of political decision-making through the ratio of women to men in ministerial-level positions and parliamentary positions. It also looks at the ratio of women to men in terms of years in executive office (prime minister or president) over the past 50 years. There are as yet no variables capturing differences at local levels of government.</p>

adolescent girls. But collecting gender-disaggregated data in future for the indicators on ‘economic participation and opportunity’ would be very valuable. It would help us to understand which kinds of environments are more conducive to adolescent girls entering the labour force when they leave school – particularly the factors that enable them to take up formal work opportunities, which are typically more secure.

Africa Gender Equality Index (AGEI)

The **Africa Gender Equality Index (AGEI)** was created in 2015 by the African Development Bank so has only one round of data so far. It was designed to measure gender inequality and promote equal development, and already covers 52 of Africa’s 54 countries. Scores range from 0 to 100, with 100 representing perfect gender equality. It scores countries for each of the three dimensions (see Figure 3 on the following page) as well as providing an overall score, which determines the country’s ranking.

Trend data

Trend data are not yet available as the index has only been operational for one year. The African Development Bank aims to publish the index every two years.

How useful is the AGEI for analysing how gender norms affect adolescent girls?

The AGEI has indicators that can help us understand how gender norms might be changing adolescent girls’ access to education. One of the sub-indicators on health is about unmet family planning needs for women, which could apply to older adolescent girls as they become sexually active. However, as an index focused on African countries, the absence of an indicator (or sub-indicator) on

child marriage and adolescent pregnancy is an important omission, given the prevalence of these problems at the regional level. Similarly, measures of female youth employment would be particularly relevant to assess the work opportunities available to girls in the region. If such measures were included, the index would be a very useful tool with which to monitor the broader situation of adolescent girls.

The African Gender and Development Index (AGDI)

The **African Gender and Development Index (AGDI)** enables policy-makers to assess how well they are doing in implementing policies and programmes geared towards ending women’s marginalisation. It was developed by the UN’s Economic Commission for Africa.

The vision African women playing an active role in Africa’s development...	Breakthrough areas Enhancing African women’s access to...
... as producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land • Credit • Infrastructure connections
... in human development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and skills • Health and fertility • Personal safety
... as active citizens and leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality before the law • Voice and representation

Source: AfDG, 2015

Table 4: Issues covered in the AGEI

Equality in economic opportunities	Equality in human development	Equality in law and institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do women and men have equal opportunities in business and employment? • Labour participation rate • Wage and salary workers • Wage equality • Estimated earned income • Loan from a financial institution in the past year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do girls and boys have equal opportunities at school? • Literacy rate • School enrolment, primary • School enrolment, secondary • School enrolment, tertiary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are women and men equally represented in institutions? • Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments • Proportion of women in ministerial-level positions • Number of justices on the constitutional court who are women
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do women have access to reproductive health services? • Maternal mortality ratio • Births attended by skilled health staff • Unmet need for contraception • Pregnant women receiving prenatal care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do women and men have the same legal rights? The score is based on the answers to 11 questions: • Is there a non-discrimination clause in the constitution? • Do women have the same rights to access credit and bank loans as men? • Do women have equal legal rights to own and administer property other than land as men? • Can a married woman apply for a passport in the same way as a man? • Can a married woman choose where to live in the same way as a man? • Does a woman's testimony carry the same evidentiary weight in court as a man's? • Is there specific legislation in place against rape? • Is there specific legislation in place against sexual harassment? • Do women have equal legal rights to own and/or access agricultural land as men? • Does the land mandate equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value? • Are there laws mandating non-discrimination based on gender in hiring?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do women and men have the same household rights? The score is based on the answers to 11 questions: • Are married women required by law to obey their husbands? • Can a married woman be 'head of household' or 'head of family' in the same way as a man? • Do daughters and their male counterparts have equal rights as heirs? • Do women have equal legal rights on legal guardianship of a child during marriage? • Do women have equal legal rights on custody rights over a child after divorce? • Are there laws on the minimum legal age of marriage that do not discriminate against women? • Can a married woman confer citizenship to her children in the same way as a man? • Do married couples jointly share legal responsibility for financially maintaining the family's expenses? • Who legally administers property during marriage? • Do widows have equal rights to their male counterparts as heirs? • Is there specific legislation in place against domestic violence?

It has two parts: the quantitative Gender Status Index (GSI) and the qualitative African Women's Progress Scoreboard (AWPS). The index is still being developed and has been piloted over two phases, starting with 12 countries in 2009 and extending to another 18 countries in 2011. Only data for 2009 are available online, in the [African Women's Report](#). That report includes disaggregated data, per indicator, for the 12 countries in the first phase, and shows how they scored against each other. But it does not give a complete index for all 12 countries.

The AGDI was developed as a tool with which to monitor the gender dimensions of national, regional and international frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and National Development Planning Frameworks such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

Trend data

Trend data are not available for this index, either by individual components or overall. Although at least two rounds of the index have already been conducted (2009 and 2011), the 2011 report is not available.

How useful is the AGDI for analysing how gender norms affect adolescent girls?

The AGDI has several indicators that include data on adolescent girls specifically – such as school enrolment and completion rates, literacy, HIV prevalence, youth

employment, and time use. The latter is particularly useful because it can generate insights on the extent to which pressures on adolescent girls to take up paid work or prioritise household duties (including caring for family members) leaves them with little time for school work. Overall, the AGDI's interesting methodology and the issues covered make it a useful index for analysing changes in gender norms.

How gender indices could shed greater light on the situation of adolescent girls

This section draws together our assessment of how the five indices can help us monitor and analyse the situation of women and adolescent girls. We also suggest ways in which the indices could be strengthened to make them even more useful for analysing changes in gender norms that affect adolescent girls over time and in different contexts.

More innovation: indices that combine quantitative and qualitative data

The large-scale quantitative data provided by the indices are valuable in enabling us to see the big picture about how the gender norms that affect adolescent girls may be changing. But three of the indices we have discussed – SIGI, GGGI and AGDI – have innovated to include qualitative as well as quantitative indicators. This rich pool of qualitative data is also very useful in generating insights that allow us to capture nuances around particularly sensitive issues such as domestic violence, sexual and reproductive health, and harmful traditional practices – all of which can have an enormous impact on girls' lives.

Indices such as the SIGI and the GEI also use 'qualitative' measures for their indicators, not by drawing on data collected through qualitative methods, but by 'qualitatively' assessing how countries fare with respect to certain indicators based on a detailed assessment of relevant documentation, particularly related to countries' legal, policy and institutional environments. This information can help users interpret the statistical data in the indices.

Using gender indices to complement one another

Across the five indices, there is some repetition in the indicators used to capture the key dimensions of girls' lives – for instance, several include data on girls completing primary and secondary education, or the proportion of women participating in the workforce. The indices also tend to measure similar thematic areas, but they do so in different, complementary ways. For example, in relation to health, while the GII focuses on women's reproductive health through maternal mortality and adolescent fertility rates, the GGGI focuses on other aspects, including the

Table 3: Issues covered in the AGDI

The Gender Status Index...	The African Women's Progress Scoreboard (AWPS)...
... provides quantitative data on gender inequalities by measuring gender differences in:	... measures government performance in terms of policies on women's advancement and empowerment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social capabilities: education (enrolment, completion, literacy); health (child health, HIV/AIDS); and income (wages, income) Economic power ('opportunities'): time use; employment; access to resources (means of production, which includes ownership of assets and access to credit), and management Political power ('agency'): public sector and civil society 	It tracks progress in ratifying relevant conventions and implementing policies in line with international commitments such as the Beijing Platform for Action on issues including violence against women, maternal mortality, reproductive rights, women's rights to land and to equal wages, and access to new technologies and agricultural extension services

sex ratio at birth and life expectancy. And whereas the GII looks at political empowerment by measuring the number of women occupying parliamentary seats, the GGGI measures the ratio of women to men in parliamentary positions (and includes a measure for the ratio of women and men in terms of years in executive office). The GGGI country profiles could provide additional insights into how social norms change, given their more detailed data.

Some indices have unique indicators, which can give us particular insights into how women and girls are faring in a given country and a particular area of development. The GEL, for example, measures whether ‘...a woman’s testimony carries the same evidentiary weight in court as a man’s’.

As well as exploring outcome indicators, the African Gender Development Index (AGDI) looks at changes in policy, and how policy commitments might be translated into changes in gender norms for women and girls in their everyday lives. The AGDI has several indicators that include data on adolescent girls specifically – such as school enrolment and completion rates, literacy, HIV prevalence, time use and youth employment – but not all variables are age-disaggregated. The index is still being developed though, so it is possible these data may be collected in future rounds. Perhaps its complexity, and the large number of indicators it uses, drawing data from various sources, make it difficult to update on a periodic basis; so while the broad range of indicators give it more depth, not all data can be collected periodically for all participating countries and data cannot all be shared in a useable format.

The SIGI is the most relevant index for undertaking an analysis of the discriminatory gender norms that affect women. The index *‘aims to capture a neglected aspect of gender discrimination that is social institutions, considered as the underlying drivers of gender inequality. While other gender-specific measures capture gender inequality in outcomes, the SIGI measures its underlying causes: gender inequality in opportunities’* (OECD, 2014c). However, if it included more age-disaggregated indicators, it would yield significantly more insights on how gender norms affect adolescent girls.

Responding to concerns about the SIGI’s value added with respect to other indices, its 2014 Methodological Background Paper (OECD, 2014c: 31) provides a statistical demonstration of how the index offers complementary information to other indices. In fact, through a linear regression model, the Methodological Background Paper shows that higher discrimination against women in social institutions (as measured by the SIGI) is related to higher levels of inequality in social and economic outcomes (OECD, 2014c). This is an important point as it adds to the evidence about the negative effects of discriminatory gender norms on women and girls’ development outcomes.

To illustrate the complementarity between the SIGI and other gender outcome indices, Table 1 gives the index values and rankings for the 2014 SIGI, the 2014 GGGI, the 2013 GII and the 2013 HDI for four countries: Argentina, Lebanon, Rwanda and Yemen. These were purposely chosen because they are at different ends of the spectrum in terms of their SIGI and HDI values, and to show how the relation between indices plays out.

Take Argentina. Its SIGI ranking suggests a very low level of discrimination against women and girls among (in terms of social institutions and practices). Its GGGI ranking, which places it among the first quintile of countries, suggests a relatively small gender gap. Its GII ranking is approximately at the midpoint, while it is considered a country with very high human development. This suggests a consistently positive correlation between development outcomes, gender equality outcomes, and gender norms and practices.

Yemen lies at the opposite end of the spectrum. It ranks low on all gender indices and has a low overall level of development (as indicated by its HDI ranking), which affects wellbeing and opportunities for both sexes. It has a very high level of discrimination in terms of its social institutions, which means women and girls have very limited access to rights, justice and empowerment opportunities.

Rwanda and Lebanon reflect different patterns of outcomes. While Lebanon has relatively high levels of human development (ranking 65 out of 187 countries on the HDI), its SIGI ranking shows a high level of discrimination in its social institutions. This is reflected in its low GGGI score, indicating a significant level of gender inequality in Lebanon. Its GII score (80 out of 154 countries) reflects good outcomes for women in terms of access to basic health and education services – although this is driven by the country’s high level of human development rather than prevailing gender norms that are favourable to women’s development.

Rwanda, on the other hand, has a medium level of discrimination (SIGI) and ranks in the top 10 (seventh place) on the GGGI, which is testament to the country’s commitment to promoting gender equality. Also, despite a low score on the HDI (151 out of 187 countries), Rwanda’s GII score is almost the same as Lebanon’s, which means that there is relatively good gender equality in access to basic services that are particularly important to women. This suggests that Rwanda makes a strong effort to reduce or eliminate discrimination in social institutions, despite being a low-income country, and that this is resulting in relatively good access to basic services for women and girls.

Table 5: Country comparison across indices

	SIGI (2014) 0 = low discrimination / 1 = high discrimination	GGGI (2014) 1 = Equality / 0 = Inequality	GII (2013) 0 = women and men fare equally well / 1 = either gender fares as poorly as possible	HDI (2013) 0 = very poor levels of human development / 1 = very high levels of HD
Argentina	0.0106999 Very low level of discrimination	0.7317 31/142	0.381 74/154	0.808 49/187
Lebanon	0.289653 High level of discrimination	0.4321 133/142	0.413 80/154	0.765 65/187
Rwanda	0.133873 Medium level of discrimination	0.7854 7/142	0.41 79/154	0.506 151/187
Yemen	0.563403 Very high level of discrimination	0.5145 142/142	0.733 152/154	0.500 154/187

The GII, which has trend data for individual indicators and the aggregate index, gives us useful information about outcomes for women and girls. Given that it uses a similar ranking mechanism to the HDI, we can glean some interesting insights by comparing a country's ranking on both indices. The GII makes it easier to see the types of investment and policy choices a country makes in providing services that are particularly important for women's development – a decision that is strongly linked to the country's social institutions. That is, by comparing the GII to the HDI, we can see which rich countries fare worse in terms of outcomes for women and girls than one would expect by looking at their level of human development and income status. We can also see which poorer countries have better levels of gender equality.

Take Qatar, for example. Despite its high ranking for human development (31 out of 187 countries in the 2014 HDI), which reflects its high income level, it is ranked 113 out of 154 countries in the GII, indicating low levels of gender equality. Mongolia, on the other hand, although ranking 103 out of 182 countries in the HDI, does much better in the GII (at 54 out of 154 countries). It is worth noting that improving access to basic services for women and girls (which is more affordable for high-income countries) would have a positive bearing on the GII even if other indicators (such as the number of parliamentary seats occupied by women or women's participation in the labour force) scored relatively low.

How can data from these five gender indices be used to best effect?

Given the growing momentum for policy and programming work around discriminatory gender norm change, the indices we have discussed in this Note have the potential to become even more useful monitoring and benchmarking tools. They can help citizens hold their governments to account for progress in development outcomes for women and girls, and can promote a closer look at the gender norms that underpin many of these outcomes. In the context of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) agenda in particular, gender indices will become even more relevant as a tool to measure countries' progress toward meeting goal number 5: *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*.

Using measures from these composite gender indices generates useful data on many of the key areas of women and girls' lives that determine their wellbeing. But, as we have shown, each index is underpinned by a number of sub-indices or components that also provide relevant information for policy-makers, development practitioners, researchers or citizens. Data for the sub-indices are available for the same years as the indices, so they can also be used for trend and point analysis to generate information about how women and girls are faring in a specific area such as health or education, in a specific country or region, at one moment or over a period of time.

There are organisations that are innovating with how to measure the wellbeing of adolescent girls as a specific group. Box 1 on the following page gives an example of a relatively new and promising index that attempts to measure the situation of adolescent girls in one country.

Box 1: Adolescent Girls Vulnerability Index

Unlike the other five indices explored in this Note, the Adolescent Girls Vulnerability Index (AGI) looks specifically at the vulnerabilities faced by adolescent girls, using Demographic Health Survey (DHS) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) data. The AGI was developed as a response to the lack of data on the many dimensions of adolescent girls' lives. It covers just one country (Uganda) and has just one round of data available so far (for 2013).

It uses the United Nations' definition of adolescence (individuals aged 10-19) and collects data for subgroups: early adolescence (10-14) and later adolescence (15-19). Its indicators are based on extensive research on adolescence. They provide rich insights into the many dimensions of adolescent girls' lives, including poverty, household and family structures, regional and community characteristics, housing conditions, education, employment, sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and family formation (marriage and parenthood).

The AGI is considered a measure of extreme vulnerability. At the individual level, girls (both 10-14 and 15-19) are considered vulnerable if deprived in any one dimension. At the household level, girls are vulnerable if they experience 2 of 3 deprivations. At the community level, girls are considered vulnerable if they experience 1 of 3 deprivations. A girl is considered vulnerable if deprived in all dimensions – individual, household and community.

Although it is not currently a multi-country index, it was designed in such a way that it could be used to compare across time and countries. In principle, this makes it a very useful tool to measure and monitor the situation of adolescent girls globally.

By looking at a country's SIGI score and, more importantly, its SIGI country profile, it is possible to explore how changing social institutions (which are making positive progress in most of the countries where change is visible) are translating into better wellbeing for women and girls. These SIGI country profiles, which contain comprehensive qualitative information on legal, cultural, and traditional laws and practices that discriminate against women, also enable us to take a closer look at what specific gender norms need to change. They therefore provide evidence on the best entry points for those seeking to catalyse such change (whether from within or outside).

When we use global indices to analyse how discriminatory gender norms affect outcomes for women and girls, we should remember that indicators are aggregated at a national level. In order to get a clearer picture of how discriminatory gender norms change at the local level, we need more disaggregated data covering different age cohorts, and different localities and/or regions within a country. This is vital given that there are many variations in social institutions and gender norms and practices among different population groups within a country, which need to be understood in context. Still, the global indices we have – particularly those that enable trend analysis or a multi-dimensional snapshot of specific countries – can serve as useful tools to help civil society groups put pressure on governments to do more to change discriminatory gender norms where progress is very slow or not happening at all. This said, countries' rankings on

international indices can be politically sensitive, and low rankings can lead governments to disregard the index. This may particularly be the case when a country's overall score is pulled down by high levels of discrimination or poor outcomes in one area.

Looking ahead, there is much more that can be done to enable consistent monitoring of progress in indicators for women and adolescent girls' wellbeing. National statistical agencies need to invest more resources in gathering sex- and age-disaggregated data, as well as data on adolescent girls as a specific cohort. Moreover, existing indices still do not capture important dimensions of gender equality and women's socioeconomic wellbeing. For example, informal work, unpaid and reproductive work, or time use have only recently been included in indices such as the AGDI and the GEI, but there are no complete data to estimate these in all countries.

The innovative Adolescent Girls Vulnerability Index, which uses global data sets to take a close look at how girls are faring in one country (Uganda), shows how gender indices could be used to benchmark and monitor the situation of adolescent girls in individual countries, across regions and globally. This could serve as a useful tool to encourage governments in lower-performing countries to make specific efforts to promote the wellbeing of adolescent girls, both for the sake of girls themselves and because of the significant developmental benefits from enhancing girls' wellbeing.

Resources

[Data for various indices developed by UNDP](#), including GDI and HDI

[World Economic Forum's webpage](#) for gender parity, including links to the Global Gender Gap Report:

[2014 Social Institutions and Gender Index](#)

[2012 Social Institutions and Gender Index](#)

[2009 Social Institutions and Gender Index](#)

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