

THE WORLD NEEDS WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND EXPERTISE

GENDER EQUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORT 2024

G7 GENDER EQUALITY
ADVISORY COUNCIL
GEAC 2024



G7 ITALIA
2024

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1. Foreword



Eugenia Roccella

Italian Minister for Family,
Natality and Equal Opportunities

The crises of our time and the profound changes we are witnessing remind us of a critical truth: building a world where the differences between women and men are recognized and valued through real equal opportunities is not just about equity and fairness – it's about laying the foundation for peace, justice, development, and freedom.

Today, we know that women and girls carry the heaviest burden in times of crisis – from declining birth rates to conflicts and global emergencies. Yet, their voices are too often silenced, their needs ignored, and their immense potential undervalued. Addressing this issue is not just a moral imperative: it is an investment in a more just, prosperous society – for everyone, women and men alike.

Political thinking and action on equal opportunities begin with a clear understanding of reality, moving away from the mistaken narrative of women as a minority to be protected, or as a vulnerable group to be safeguarded. Women are half of the population, half of humanity, half of the world. This numerically obvious statement must be compared with the reality described in the following pages and should guide the reading of the proposals arising from it. It will then become even more evident that the different roles and skills of women in society must be fully recognized and that policies should strengthen empowerment tools, from education to employment, from medicine to caregiving, from career pathways to family choices, with the need to overcome all specific disadvantages, such as the motherhood penalty, which persist even where women's rights and freedoms are most recognized.

As the Italian Presidency of the G7, we made gender equality and equal opportunities a cornerstone of our agenda, ensuring it runs across all our priorities. This approach builds on efforts to promote women's empowerment and freedom and reflects the commitment of previous G7 Presidencies.

As Minister for Family, Natality, and Equal Opportunities, I had the honor of chairing the G7 Ministerial Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, held in Matera on October 5, 2024. Together with my G7 colleagues and the EU Commissioner, we addressed two critical issues which we consciously decided to align. First, the prevention and fight against violence toward women and girls. And second, the empowerment of women as a powerful engine of growth for all our nations.

These priorities are deeply connected: when women have opportunities, autonomy, and economic independence, they gain the means to break free from violence. Empowerment is not just an objective: it is a solution.

We adopted the G7 Ministerial Declaration, bringing much-needed attention to women and girls living in conflict zones or facing the denial of their rights and freedoms. The Statement also introduced several new perspectives, such as the role of sport as a tool for inclusion and equality, recognizing the importance of ensuring that all women and girls can access sports competitions under conditions of real fairness and safety.

Throughout this year, the Italian G7 Presidency has also relied on the valuable support of the Gender Equality Advisory Council, which, under the leadership of its President Marina Terragni – whom I thank – has proven to be a key player in amplifying the voices of women and girls around the world.

The work of the GEAC during this intense year – culminating in the Recommendations presented to G7 Leaders at the Puglia Summit held on June 13-15, 2024, and in the publication of this Report – is fully aligned with the goals of the Italian G7 Presidency, reinforcing its strategic priority to advance the rights and empowerment of all women and girls. The choice of themes explored in the Report – Conflicts, Care, Education, and Young Generations – reflects, with remarkable concreteness and innovation, the impact that recognizing and valuing women's skills could have on our economies, our societies, and the future of us all.

Over the years, the reflections of the GEAC have provided essential guidance, improving the G7's ability to promote effective commitments and policies. This collaboration has strengthened the G7's role as a key player in the global effort to improve the conditions and lives of women and girls. My hope is that the partnership between G7 members and the GEAC can continue, fostering deeper collaboration and lasting change to ensure true equality of rights, freedom, and opportunities between women and men.

Let's keep working together – G7 nations, partners, and global allies – to ensure that women and men enjoy equal rights, equal freedoms, and equal opportunities. Only then can we truly build a better, fairer world for all.

2. Preface



Marina Terragni

Chair, 2024 Gender Equality Advisory Council,
Journalist and writer

Inequality between women and men stands as one of the most entrenched barriers to a just and prosperous world, limiting not only the potential of women and girls but also growth, peace, and resilience of societies everywhere. In a world facing complex, interlinked crises, it is increasingly clear that real progress demands an unwavering commitment to women's empowerment. As long as half of humanity is held back, our shared aspirations for stability and prosperity will remain unattainable.

The Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC) plays a critical role in championing this vision. With the introduction of the Terms of Reference (TOR) by Japan's G7 GEAC Presidency in 2023, this year's Council operates within a strengthened, more enduring framework, designed to ensure continuity and collaboration across G7 Presidencies. This new structure includes national representatives appointed by both the actual and next Presidency – in this case, Italy and Canada – as well as additional experts selected by the current Presidency to address specific annual priorities. Through this approach, the GEAC is equipped to drive long-term impact, bringing together diverse expertise and perspectives to advance the global dialogue on women's rights and empowerment.

I am deeply grateful to the 2024 GEAC members, whose unwavering dedication and exceptional expertise have been invaluable in shaping this Report. Their commitment has brought remarkable depth and richness to our work, as they have collaborated to share valuable insights, critically analyze complex and interconnected challenges, and propose innovative, forward-thinking solutions that will bring us closer to a world where men and women enjoy equal opportunities and rights. Under the Italian Presidency, the 2024 GEAC has concentrated on four priority issues: Conflicts, Care, Generation Z, and Education. These focus areas embody our shared belief that equality is not merely a question of rights but a cornerstone of global stability and sustainable progress. By addressing these pressing issues, the Council highlights both the specific needs and the transformative potential of women and girls, positioning them as powerful agents of change in driving a more equitable and sustainable future.

As the G7 Leaders unite to address these recommendations, this Report emerges as both a strategic guide and a powerful call to action. Achieving equality and female empowerment requires unwavering dedication and global collaboration, and I am confident that, with the constant efforts of the GEAC and the commitment of world leaders, we can make tangible progress toward a future where women and girls can thrive and reach their fullest potential.

As we write the introduction to this GEAC 2024 Report, we learn about updates regarding Ahoor Daryaei – this is her name on social media – the Iranian girl who protested outside Tehran's Azad University by undressing after being rebuked by the Revolutionary Guards for her non-Sharia-compliant attire. After being detained for two weeks in a mental health centre, she has been returned to her family and will not be prosecuted, as she is considered “mentally ill”. According to a statement issued by the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Paris, she allegedly “suffers from mental fragility”, and her case is described as being “of a private nature”. It is evident that the first concern of the Iranian theocratic regime has been to depoliticize Ahoor's protest, although her action is undoubtedly part of the brave battle of the Woman, Life, Freedom movement.

Nearly in the same days in Afghanistan the Minister of Promotion of Virtue, Prevention of Vice, and Complaints Hearing Khalid Hanafi disclosed a new edict banning women from “hearing other women's voices”, even during prayers. Afghan women are already prohibited from speaking in public (under threat of arrest), attending school or university, working in public administration, using cell phones, driving, taking a taxi, speaking to male doctors, engaging in sports, going to the gym or parks, or wearing bright colors.

Meanwhile, in Iraq, a new law would be under consideration to lower the age of sexual consent from 18 to 9 years. This step aims to remove any obstacle to the practice of early marriage, full-fledged torture inflicted on child girls and young girls who are often sold as brides by indigent families (UNICEF estimates that there are about 290 million child brides in South Asia alone).

This situation represents a proper “Gender Apartheid”, as described by Iranian writer in exile Masih Alinejad whom I invited to join GEAC 2024. As I told her, I find the term “Sex Apartheid” more effective since it is on the grounds of their sex that women - in these and other parts of the world - are subjected to persecution and violence. It is an intolerable violation of the most basic human rights, to which the response from international institutions remains weak and uncertain.

Among the emerging issues influencing the public debate on women's rights, we should also recall the challenges of ensuring safety, equality, and fairness in sports for women and girls. On 8 October 2024, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls, Reem Alsalem, presented a report addressing the issue of violence against women and girls in sports. In this report, Ms. Alsalem underscores the prevalence of multiple forms of violence faced by women and girls in sports, including economic, physical, psychological, and online abuse. Their safety, equality, and dignity are often severely undermined by pervasive discrimination in a field predominantly controlled by men. Furthermore, the Special Rapporteur emphasizes that it is fundamental to “ensure that female categories in organized sport are exclusively accessible to persons whose biological sex is female. In cases where the sex of an athlete is unknown or uncertain, a dignified, swift, noninvasive and accurate sex screening method (such as a cheek swab) or, where necessary for exceptional reasons, genetic testing should be applied to confirm the athlete's sex”. A survey quoted in the report reveals strong support for this approach, with 82% of the 928 female Olympians surveyed in favor. To fully unlock the transformative potential of sports in driving social change, achieving equality, and empowering all women and girls, it is crucial to promote a safer and fairer environment for all female athletes.

Does it make sense – you may be wondering – to talk about equality and empowerment when, in some regions of the planet, the very fact of being born a woman continues to be in itself a life-threatening condition? And how much longer should we fight to create a world where women and girls can fully realize their potential, free from violence, discrimination, and systemic barriers?

Yet feminism teaches us that wherever even one woman struggles for her freedom, her gain is a victory for all women. And while the path toward full equality between women and men may be difficult, every small step forward contributes to the goal of creating a fairer society free from discrimination and violence. This awareness inspires us to continue in our efforts, with the resolve to move beyond rhetoric and face the stark realities of a world fractured by conflict and in desperate need of care and healing. A world that, now more than ever, calls for the strength, experience, and unique perspectives of women.

3. Introduction

In a world facing multiple crises and social transformations, including those related to health, education, demographic and geopolitical challenges, and climate change, we must acknowledge that uncertainty and threats disproportionately and negatively affect women and girls. Under the Italian Presidency of the G7, the Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC) reaffirms its commitment to placing the empowerment of women, in all their diversity, at the forefront of the G7 agenda, recognizing its critical role in addressing today's most pressing global challenges by fostering sustainable peace, economic resilience, and inclusive social progress. Achieving this goal tomorrow demands taking action today through a comprehensive, forward-thinking approach, grounded in the understanding that promoting equal opportunities and embracing women's specificities and differences requires a cross-cutting and multidimensional effort. Building on the work of previous years, the GEAC's 2024 agenda focuses on four priority issues: Conflicts, Care, Generation Z, and Education. These focal areas highlight the needs and the potential of women and girls as agents of change in the evolving global landscape, and, through the annual updating of the G7 Dashboard on Gender Gaps by the OECD, underline the importance of reliable data collection and monitoring. As G7 Leaders convene to address these themes, this Report serves both as a roadmap and a call to action for policymakers.

We are witnessing a backlash against women's rights. Global economic, social, and political instability has severely impacted the United Nation's (UN) Sustainable Development Goal No. 5, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Today, more than 614 million women and girls live in conflict-affected countries, representing a 50% increase since 2017. In these regions, women bear unique and disproportionate burdens, often becoming targets of violence while simultaneously acting as voices for peace and agents of resilience. The underrepresentation of women in peace negotiations is not only an issue of gender imbalance but a missed opportunity for sustainable solutions, as women often facilitate more lasting agreements rooted in justice, community trust, and human rights. Despite the historic adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 over two decades ago, which underscored the importance of women's participation in conflict resolution, in 2023 women constituted only 9.6% of peace negotiators globally. This figure underscores the urgent need for mechanisms that empower women to exert meaningful influence in peacebuilding processes by dismantling the barriers that hinder their participation. The G7 has a central role in championing gender-inclusive approaches to international security, recognizing that peace is strengthened when the voices of all affected communities are represented.

The realm of care represents another area where gender inequality persists. Although foundational to society and the global economy, and despite the increasing demand for care, care work remains systematically undervalued, as women continue to bear a disproportionate share of caregiving responsibilities, mostly without remuneration. This parallels other traditionally female household labor which gains economic value only when entering the marketplace, while remaining invisible and unpaid at home. Such lack of recognition perpetuates unregulated labor markets, hinders economic advancement, and reinforces income inequality. In the context of aging populations and evolving social needs, care work is set to become an even more central economic driver in the coming decades (potentially creating nearly

300 million jobs by 2035), placing additional strains on women's ability to balance careers, personal lives, and family obligations. Recognizing the value of care not only as a social good but as an economic imperative could transform care work into a respected and vital part of the labor force, contributing to gender equity and supporting societal stability. The G7 can lead the way in advancing what may be termed a "CaRevolution", repositioning care from an invisible burden to an economic infrastructure that deserves investment and public support, while placing it at the heart of human relationships and valuing the skills expressed through this experience. By implementing measures such as paid family leaves, pension credits for caregivers, and substantial investments in public care services, the labor of care can be expanded and acknowledged not as a penalizing obligation, but as a profession that sustains communities and economies alike.

As the first fully digital generation, Generation Z faces unprecedented social, economic, and psychological pressures, compounded by the realities of a rapidly changing world. Social media, a central component of Gen Z's daily life, provides both opportunities and challenges – particularly for young women, who are disproportionately affected by its more negative aspects. While digital platforms offer spaces for connection and self-expression, they also expose young women to harmful stereotypes, cyberbullying, and premature sexualization, all of which have been linked to rising rates of anxiety, depression, and body image issues. Mental health challenges among young women are at an all-time high, with social media contributing significantly to feelings of isolation and inadequacy. As this generation navigates the complex landscape of the digital age against a backdrop of geoeconomic uncertainty, it is essential to promote policies that safeguard their well-being, regulate harmful content, and increase digital literacy. Investing in mental health support for Generation Z is not only about addressing immediate needs: it is a long-term commitment to building resilient and thriving future generations. The G7 is uniquely positioned to advance these priorities, ensuring that digital spaces are safe, supportive, and conducive to positive development.

Education has long been recognized as the bedrock of empowerment and opportunity, particularly for women and girls. Access to quality education is one of the most powerful tools for breaking cycles of poverty, inequality, and violence, providing individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to shape their futures. However, barriers to education remain entrenched in many parts of the world, often driven by cultural norms, economic constraints, and political instability. Girls in conflict-affected areas such as Afghanistan continue to face severe restrictions on their access to education, underscoring the need for international efforts to support and protect this fundamental human right. Education is not only a path to individual empowerment but a crucial element in building societies that are resilient to future crises. Educated girls are more likely to contribute to sustainable development and resilience in climate-affected regions, making educational equity an essential investment for a future marked by environmental challenges. Furthermore, in a world increasingly driven by technology with the growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions in all sectors, promoting digital literacy for girls can help close gender gaps in emerging fields, such as STEM and mainly in Information and communication technology (ICT), empowering women to fully participate – including as leaders – in the job market of tomorrow. The lack of women in STEM is becoming an urgent and primary issue from the economic, ethical, and scientific point of view, and it is fueling inequalities between women and men in the workplace. By committing to inclusive and quality education globally, the G7 can create the conditions for a future that is safe, equitable, innovative, and prepared to tackle the complex challenges of the coming centuries.

As we consider the priorities of the 2024 GEAC, it is evident that the world stands at a crossroads where gender equality is not merely an aspirational goal, but a key element for global prosperity and peace. The 2024 GEAC's commitment to Conflicts, Care, Generation Z, and Education reflects the urgency of empowering women and girls across every dimension of life, illustrating the interconnected nature of the challenges we face, and the comprehensive solutions required to address them. The GEAC also recalls that equality between women and men will not be achieved without the eradication of all kinds of violence against women and girls. Addressing and eradicating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in all its forms is indeed a fundamental prerequisite for female empowerment and the realization of women's full potential.

In 2024, the GEAC continues to advocate for integrating a women's perspective across all policy areas and, in particular, a gender-responsive budgeting into all domains of government spending in order to create a more inclusive society, address women's needs, and recognize their skills, value, and talents. The present Report calls upon G7 Leaders to embrace these priorities as part of a broader and stronger commitment. In doing so, we recognize that a future of peace, prosperity, and resilience is possible only when all voices are heard, valued, and empowered to shape the world we share. As global leaders and policymakers, the G7 has a profound responsibility to drive meaningful progress in these areas, fostering a world where gender equality and the political significance of differences between women and men are not only goals but guiding principles for all. And where women and girls are not merely participants, but leaders alongside men in building a more just and sustainable future.

4. GEAC 2024 Themes

4.1 Conflicts

4.2 Care

4.3 Gen Z

4.4 Education

4.1 Conflicts

Let women make peace



4.1 Conflicts

Let women make peace

Recommendations to the G7 Leaders

- Identify and eliminate all obstacles to the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda at the national level, by adopting concrete positive actions and setting measurable targets to increase women's participation and decision-making in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding processes, and in the rebuilding of post-conflict societies, thus ensuring that women's voices are central and influence key decisions.
- Recognize, support and integrate the contributions of women-led community organizations into broader peacebuilding frameworks, as they continue to be excluded from the official peace processes. Further strengthen engagement and dialogue with relevant grassroots women's organizations and networks of women's mediators and peacebuilders, especially in conflict prevention and resolution efforts.
- Support the strengthening of feminist diplomacy as an innovative strategy in international relations, which promotes equality between women and men as a key guiding principle, in particular in all financial decisions (gender budgeting and equal conditionality) and ensures sustainable participation of women in decision-making in diplomacy, while advocating for a broader integration of a feminist and gender-balanced perspective into the foreign and development cooperation policy of the G7 countries.
- Ensure better protection of victims of conflicts and strengthen legal frameworks to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions, including gender apartheid, while taking into account that women bear the most severe consequences of conflicts such as famine, poor health conditions and forced migration.
- Take strong commitments to adequately prosecute perpetrators of sexual violence against women and girls in conflict situations since women and girls are the most exposed to sexual violence and rapes used as war weapon and protect those who are fleeing conflict zones to prevent human traffickers from exploiting already vulnerable women and children.
- Invest in strategies to increase women's participation in the cybersecurity sector, intelligence and secret services with the aim of reinforcing national security and defense also through women's talents.
- Recognize that climate change can exacerbate resource scarcity and displacement, which may lead to conflicts, and develop comprehensive strategies that address these root causes by promoting sustainable resource management, peacebuilding efforts, and conflict resolution mechanisms, with a focus on empowering women as agents of peace.

The Issue

In a world increasingly fractured by conflict, 2023 stands as a stark reminder of the consequences of governance failures. Rising inequality, political polarization, disinformation, and weak accountability systems – combined with inadequate education and leadership training – fuel violence and extremism, blocking paths to constructive change. Weak governance is not solely a policy challenge, it is a root cause of conflict: countries with unstable governance structures are 3 times more likely to spiral into armed conflict than their stable counterparts¹. Fragile institutions, unable to meet citizens' basic needs, in fact, create fertile ground for corruption and social division, environments where conflict thrives. As public trust erodes and inequalities surge, societies inch ever closer to the tipping point.

Today's global conflicts and geopolitical tensions represent a profoundly challenging time for peace and security, which are severely threatened in many regions of the world. In this context, the role of women emerges as pivotal, embodying perspectives and practices fundamentally different from those historically dominant in war and political disputes. As conflicts persist and new alliances redefine international landscapes, the wisdom and nurturing ethos often associated with the difference of being women become not only a valuable asset but an imperative for sustainable peace and security.

To acknowledge that women are disproportionately affected by the ravages of war, facing significant challenges in meeting basic economic needs and accessing food, hygiene, healthcare, and maintaining their dignity, is a fundamental starting point for meaningful action. These hardships underscore their victimization in conflict scenarios. Young women often encounter double discrimination due to their age and gender. This dual burden places them at heightened risk, as women and girls are disproportionately exposed to sexual violence and rape, which are frequently used as weapons of war in conflict zones and terrorist actions. Such experiences not only inflict severe trauma but also diminish women's ability to contribute meaningfully to peace processes.

This complex situation requires the development of targeted policies. The focus on women and girls should in any case extend beyond their vulnerabilities to recognize their potential to drive peacebuilding efforts. Women's participation in peace pro-

cesses has been shown to enhance the likelihood of successful negotiations and lead to more sustainable agreements: they advocate for often-overlooked issues such as justice and human rights, foster trust among divided communities, represent marginalized groups, facilitate compromises, and generate public support for established agreements². Therefore, to forge a path toward lasting peace, women need to rise as leaders with full agency. In this sense, women's direct participation in peace processes must go hand-in-hand with strengthening ties to grassroots movements, including the recognition and institutionalization of women's mediator networks, which play a critical role in connecting local voices to national and international peace efforts and ensuring that their perspectives are effectively integrated into conflict resolution strategies.

The Disproportionate Burden on Women

In 2023, over 170 armed conflicts were recorded and the number of women and girls living in conflict-affected countries reached 612 million, a figure that reflects a 50% increase since 2017³. Women are among the most vulnerable populations in armed conflicts, often subjected to escalating violence, including sexual assault and rape. Being a victim means not only bearing a disproportionate physical and psychological burden during these crises and their violence but also systemic exclusion from political speech and decision-making processes. The male-dominated nature of warfare leads to female voices being underrepresented at negotiating tables as well as during peace settlements and reconstruction phases, highlighting the urgent need for their inclusion in efforts to foster sustainable peace and security.

The adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security 25 years ago marked a significant step towards recognizing women's rights to participate equally in conflict prevention, negotiations, and post-conflict reconstruction, while underscoring the global need to rely on women's active contributions. However, the progress made since then has been painfully slow. From 1992 to 2019, women comprised merely 13% of negotiators in peace processes worldwide and 6% of mediators⁴. This persistent underrepresentation emphasizes the urgent need for mechanisms that empower women to exert meaningful political influence in conflict situations.

The Relationship between Conflict, Climate, and Gender-Based Violence

The interconnection between climate change, conflict, and GBV further complicates this landscape. According to the OECD, 80% of climate refugees are women, with all the implications that entails. As climate crises exacerbate resource scarcity – including food shortages – and lead to displacement, tensions can escalate into violence disproportionately affecting women. In conflict-affected regions, women face heightened risks of GBV, including sexual violence used as a deliberate tactic of war and terrorism.

In addition, new research on the implications of childhood and youth trauma on conflict recovery and prevention, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, highlights the importance of understanding and addressing the psychological and cognitive impact of conflict on youth as a vital step in breaking cycles of violence⁵.

In a significant milestone, the Security Council acknowledged the climate, peace, and security nexus for the first time in the mandate of the UN Missions in South Sudan, explicitly urging the incorporation of “gender-sensitive risk assessment on the negative impacts of climate change”. However, only 19 out of 43 climate security projects had a central or strong focus on women and girls⁶.

The Situation in Afghanistan and Other Neglected Conflict Zones

The plight of women in Afghanistan serves as a stark reminder of the fragility of progress amidst conflict. Between 2001 and 2021, Afghan women made significant strides across various sectors, showcasing remarkable resilience and strength despite ongoing challenges. However, the resurgence of the Taliban in August 2021 marked a catastrophic reversal of said advancements, plunging women back into a cycle of oppression and violence. Since the Taliban takeover, women have faced severe restrictions on their freedom of movement and are systematically excluded from decision-making roles in both the public and private spheres. Many have been subjected to violence, harassment, and intimidation, with incidents of GBV rising alarmingly. The ongoing conflict has directly affected millions of women and girls, by devastating essential services and leading to a significant decline in access to healthcare and social support for women,

particularly those displaced by violence. Afghan women and girls live under a regime of ‘gender apartheid’, or more precisely, ‘sex apartheid’, manifested in an institutionalized system of discrimination, oppression, and domination. Therefore, the GEAC urgently calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities and the implementation of measures to safeguard the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan. Inclusion of women in diplomatic efforts is crucial to ensure their perspectives shape the future of the country, underscoring the international community’s absolute necessity to involve women in all negotiation and political processes, as well as in reflections on the future of the country.

In addition, it is essential to recognize that conflicts in which women experience violence cannot be viewed as one-sided; the emphasis must be placed on the impact on women’s lives, regardless of which side they are on. This concern extends to overlooked or forgotten conflicts, such as those in Sudan, Yemen, and Syria, where the gender impact of conflicts and crises remains profound due to the lack of mechanisms for women to contribute meaningfully to the future of their countries. Efforts to include women in diplomatic and peace processes in these areas are crucial to reach sustainable solutions.

Unfortunately, this issue extends beyond the Middle East, as evidenced in the 2022 negotiations between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front, where neither party included women in their negotiating team, despite a woman serving as a mediator in the subsequent peace agreement. Similar patterns emerged in the EU-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina dialogue process and the negotiation of the Five-Point Consensus on Myanmar, where women’s voices were notably absent⁷.

A Call for Redefining Frameworks

As we confront these multifaceted challenges, it is imperative to redefine the frameworks guiding our responses to conflict. Recognizing women’s perspectives and leadership in peace processes and governance is essential to dismantling the structures that perpetuate violence and inequality. By fostering a new paradigm that prioritizes women’s voices and experiences, we can work towards a more just and peaceful world, based on the values of care and respect for life, recognizing that while wars may be settled through diplomacy

and treaties, true recovery and lasting peace must start from the ground up through grassroots efforts, community rebuilding, and reconciliation. To achieve this, greater steps must be taken by governments to actively support women's participation, including providing dedicated funding for peacebuilding and mediation organizations, and integrate their roles into decision-making processes, foreign policy and programs in conflict-affected countries for the benefit of society as a whole. This effort would be crucial in narrowing the persistent gender gap, currently estimated to close in 130 years⁸.

Given the evidence of the beneficial impact that women's unique experiences and insights have on peace negotiations and agreements, the role of women in conflicts must evolve from the margins to the center of peacebuilding efforts. Embracing this shift can lead to transformative change, ensuring that humanity prevails over the chaos of conflict. The G7, with three permanent Security Council members and significant global influence, is uniquely positioned to support this evolution, beginning with full support for the most critical conflict zones, including Afghanistan, Iran, Sudan, Ukraine, and Yemen.

Facts and Figures

Visibility and Representation of Women in Security and Conflict

- In 2023, women's representation as conflict negotiators and mediators stood at **9.6%** and **13.7%** respectively, highlighting a worrying lack of progress in recent years⁹.
- Out of the 31 agreements reached in 2023, only **8%** included explicit references to women, girls and gender¹⁰.
- In conflict-affected countries where legislated gender quotas are in place, the proportion of women legislators was **27%** in 2022. Without quotas, women make up only **17%** of parliamentarians¹¹.
- Globally, women represent **13%** of defense ministers¹², **25%** of ministers of foreign affairs¹³, and **21%** of ambassadors and permanent representatives¹⁴.
- In 2022, the conflict parties in Yemen continued to reject women's participation despite consistent advocacy by the UN Special Envoy, who encouraged at least **30%** of women in delegations and additional and non-transferrable seats for women¹⁵.

Gender-Based Violence

- In 2022, the killings of **34 female** human rights defenders were verified in conflict-affected countries. However, this is likely only a fraction of real cases¹⁶.
- Women and girls were the main targets in more than **3,200** political violence events worldwide in 2022, and more than **50%** took place in conflict-affected countries, where events of political violence targeting women have increased by **1.5 times** since 2020¹⁷.
- **2,455** reported cases of conflict-related sexual violence were verified in 2022, with the highest numbers recorded in the Democratic Republic of Congo¹⁸.
- Compared to 2022, there has been a **20%** rise in the number of child abductions in war contexts, and the abduction of girls alone has increased by **40%**¹⁹.

- **87%** of Afghan women have experienced at least one form of physical, sexual, or psychological violence in their lifetime²⁰.

- **73%** of global executions, especially of women, took place in Iran in 2023²¹.

Climate, Conflict and Disaster Risk

- When extreme weather disasters strike, women and children are **14 times** more likely to die than men, mostly due to limited access to information, limited mobility, decision-making, and resources²².
- Women and girls represent roughly **4 out of 5** people displaced by the impacts of climate change²³.
- Although natural disasters alone have affected **400 million** people this century in the African continent, Africa receives just over **3%** of climate finance flows²⁴.
- Conflict is the main driver of hunger in most of the world's food crises: today, **around 20 million** people are facing famine in Yemen, South Sudan, Burkina Faso, and North-Eastern Nigeria²⁵.

Case Studies and Best Practices

The Itinerant Peace Universities by Leaders for Peace²⁶

Leaders for Peace is a global initiative dedicated to empowering emerging leaders to address the root causes of conflict and instability. By focusing on youth and education, it uses innovative platforms like its Peace Universities to equip future leaders with the skills needed to tackle global challenges such as climate change, gender equality, AI and conflict resolution. The organization's mission revolves around creating sustainable governance solutions and empowering future leaders through hands-on experiences and expanding its impact worldwide. The Itinerant Peace Universities operate in conflict-prone regions to provide immersive, mobile training that reaches underserved communities, demonstrating a scalable model for sustainable governance solutions. Since 2018, over 2,000 students from more than 30 countries have participated, with many joining governments and international organizations to form a network of change-makers.

INSAF Center for Rights and Development²⁷

INSAF Center for Rights and Development, a Yemeni NGO established in 2019 under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, focuses on advancing women's rights and addressing GBV in Yemen. Operating in a challenging context marked by poverty, unemployment, low literacy rates, lack of legal protections, displacement, child marriage and one of the world's highest maternal mortality rates due to inadequate medical care, INSAF leads impactful initiatives for women's protection and empowerment, including minorities.

Notably, INSAF has relocated Jewish and Christian families to safety in collaboration with international partners, intervened to halt the execution of women, and supported survivors of domestic violence through psychological rehabilitation and educational assistance. The organization also prioritizes advocacy for women in government roles and fosters social cohesion through community training. Efforts include raising awareness about cyberbullying and GBV, and lobbying for laws to criminalize cybercrimes against women. INSAF promotes women's economic and political empowerment through workshops, platforms, and campaigns, aiming to boost their participation in

decision-making and negotiations, and reflecting a holistic approach to addressing systemic barriers.

The Rapid Response Window from the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund

The Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) has launched a Rapid Response Window (RRW) to address the funding gap in women's participation in formal peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements. Open to all Official development assistance (ODA) eligible countries with a Track 1 or Track 2²⁸ peace process or implementation of a peace agreement, it provides financing for strategic, short-term and urgent services and initiatives led by women peacebuilders and women's civil society organizations to increase women's influence in national, subnational and international formal peace processes. Since its establishment in 2016, the WPHF has supported more than 1,000 local women's civil society organizations in 46 crisis- and conflict-affected countries, including 98 organizations with critical institutional funding, to safeguard their existence, strengthen their capacities, and adapt to evolving challenges²⁹. Since the introduction of the RRW in 2020, the WPHF doubled the number of organizations supported. As of March 2024, 166 women's rights organizations in 35 countries have received targeted and flexible support to elevate their work for peace, de-escalate violence, and address the barriers to women's participation in peace processes³⁰.

Regional Women Mediator Networks

Over the last decade, many Member States and regional organizations have supported the establishment of 8 Regional Mediator Networks³¹, which have emerged as critical mechanisms for sustaining peace and concrete tools to advance and monitor the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS)³². These networks ensure coordinated efforts to support women's meaningful participation in peace processes, such as amplifying the voices of grassroots organizations and maintaining open, continuous dialogue among stakeholders. In formal spaces, they strengthen the role of women as lead mediators and experts in mediation processes, while also giving recognition, visibility, and legitimacy to the valuable work women are doing in informal and local settings, supporting multi-track mediation approaches³³. At the same time, they gather expertise and knowledge, promote conflict sensitivity and foster long-term resilience and social cohesion, playing a vital role in sustaining peace and stability.

Sudan's Juba Peace Agreement

The 2019 Sudan Peace Agreement, known as the Juba Peace Agreement, marked a significant step in ending decades of conflict in Sudan, particularly in the Darfur region and other marginalized areas. Women played a critical role in this peace process, both within the official negotiation teams and through civil society efforts. Female mediators were integral to the talks between the transitional government and rebel groups, and women's organizations were active in advocacy and public consultations, pushing for the inclusion of gender-sensitive provisions. These efforts led to the recognition of women's rights in the final agreement, including the allocation of 40% representation for women in transitional legislative bodies³⁴. The agreement also addressed issues such as sexual violence, land rights, and the participation of women in reconstruction and governance. Despite challenges in its implementation, the Juba Peace Agreement set a precedent for integrating women's experiences and leadership into Sudan's path toward peace.

In Sudan, women are also leading the way in the action towards climate change by learning new skills in agricultural practices to plant trees and stop soil erosion, tree farming, and water conservation. The ultimate goal of these initiatives is to increase women's income while mitigating climate consequences, strengthening local communities with a double impact.

HÁWAR.help BACK TO LIFE Project in Iraq

Addressing the root causes of displacement through education and reconciliation, the BACK TO LIFE Women's Empowerment Center in Iraq provides a safe place for women and girls of all faiths to process and heal from trauma, learn new skills, and gain work experience in the BACK TO LIFE Shop. The center was built in 2018 in a camp for internally displaced people (IDPs) in Northern Iraq and has since been expanded. As of today, over 2,600 women and children have participated in weekly literacy and handicraft courses, as well as educational workshops on topics such as women's rights, entrepreneurship, and mindfulness³⁵. Within all the BACK TO LIFE project activities and events, Yazidis, Muslims, and Christians grow beyond their role as victims together and learn from each other. The project thus makes an essential contribution to ethno-religious reconciliation and to combating the causes of human flight and displacement in Iraq.

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4.2 Care

A central societal value



4.2 Care

A central societal value

Recommendations to the G7 Leaders

- Recognize care as one of the greatest challenges of our time, as we face an ageing population with 2.3 billion people globally needing care as of 2030¹.
- Assess and include the economic value of women's unpaid care work in national macroeconomic calculations, given that if women's unpaid work were assigned a monetary value, it would exceed up to 40% of GDP in some countries², while recognizing that care work is essential for the wellbeing of individuals and the functioning of the society and economy and should therefore be appropriately valued.
- Promote employment in the care sector as a positive career option for both women and men, in a sector that could create almost 300 million jobs by 2035³.
- Scale up actions to recognize, reduce and redistribute women's disproportionate share of care work by facilitating the equal sharing of care responsibilities between women and men and implementing effective work-life balance measures thereby increasingly opening opportunities for women to enter the workforce, while strengthening public care infrastructure and services to ensure accessible, affordable, and quality care for children, older people, persons with disabilities and other care recipients, also with a view to concretely supporting parenthood.
- Develop policies to encourage and value the inclusion of unpaid care work in professional curricula while acknowledging that care work requires soft skills such as emotional intelligence, interpersonal qualities, teamwork, creativity, stress tolerance, flexibility, and fast problem-solving capability. In this regard, recognize the skills of carers through a certification process and reflect periods spent on care responsibilities in pension schemes.
- Establish and finance national and international observatories to monitor and regularly update data and projections on the need for care work.
- Explore new and innovative care models starting from women's experience of care, which makes them leaders in this innovation process.

The Issue

The need for care is a fundamental aspect of the human condition. At certain stages of existence – such as childhood, old age, and illness – such need becomes more acute, yet our reliance on others is a constant in the interdependent fabric of humanity. It is necessary to change current social organization of care from a private, individual (primarily women's) obligation to the foundation of a social model that acknowledges the interdependence among human beings and the fundamental relational nature of humanity, overcoming the notion of the individual as isolated, entirely autonomous, and independent. Moreover, we must acknowledge that all forms of care are interconnected, whether directed toward ourselves, one another, our families, communities, nations, or our planet. Therefore, care cannot be viewed as an occasional service or a commodity to be fully 'outsourced,' nor can it rest disproportionately on the shoulders of women, many of whom face economic consequences in performing this essential work. While the gender imbalance in caregiving roles offers a space for targeted initiatives that engage both men and women, it is essential to recognize that, despite its intrinsic value to societal well-being, care work remains substantially undervalued and inadequately compensated. Therefore, a reorganization and a reduction of paid working hours should be considered to fully recognize and value the caregiving responsibilities that everyone undertakes throughout their life.

Recognizing these aspects is vital for creating professional employment paths that elevate the care sector as an attractive career choice for women and men, while ensuring quality care delivery and the rights and dignity of those requiring. Caregiving is multifaceted, with caregivers representing a diverse array of individuals and communities – each with their unique needs and challenges. Certain sub-groups – such as the 'sandwich generation' caregivers⁴, who care for both aging parents and young children – face compounded challenges as they navigate the dual pressures of professional and caregiving responsibilities.

Care can no longer be viewed as a private matter and almost exclusively women's responsibility, provided free of charge. This is particularly true in the face of an aging population that demands an immense investment of time and energy, often leading to caregiver burnout and the impossibility of meeting all care needs while being financially

secure; dynamics that also underpin the growing problem of low natality rates. Addressing these challenges requires a focused examination of who provides care, how it is delivered, and the transformative potential of long-term, large-scale investments in the care economy. Only by elevating care to a central societal value can we build thriving, resilient and equitable economies that meet the needs of current and future generations.

Care Work Uncovered: Who Cares and How

As global demographics shift towards aging populations and environmental and health crises intensify, the demand for care work has surged to unprecedented levels. Historically, this critical work has predominantly been provided by women – either without financial compensation in households or for low pay in the paid care sectors. Still today, 76% of 75.6 million domestic workers worldwide are women, with around 81% in informal employment⁵. Care work encompasses a wide range of responsibilities, including childcare, elder care, and support for individuals with disabilities, all of which require essential skills. These include emotional intelligence, interpersonal qualities, teamwork, creativity, stress tolerance, flexibility, and fast problem-solving capabilities, all skills identified by the World Economic Forum as pivotal for success in the workforce by 2025⁶.

Daily, more than 16 billion hours of unpaid care and domestic work are performed – an amount that would account for 9% of global GDP, or around \$11 trillion per year, if paid at the minimum wage, with women's contribution counting 6.6% compared to men's 2.4%⁷. In some countries, if women's unpaid work were assigned a monetary value, it could reach up to 40% of global GDP⁸. It is fundamental to promote a better understanding of the economic contributions of care, shifting away from current perceptions that have persistently underestimated its socio-economic potential. Furthermore, it is equally important to recall the link between care, migration, and gender roles and look at its interconnection.

Global demographic and labor market developments have created increasing demands for care services both within and across national boundaries, driving growing flows of women from low and middle-income labor surplus countries to high-income countries. Today, women account for approximately 73.4% (or around 8.5 million) of all

migrant domestic workers, with countries such as Greece, Italy, and Spain relying on foreign-born workers for home-based caregiving in over 60% of cases⁹. As many paid care workers are migrants and/or belong to historically disadvantaged and marginalized communities, this adds an extra layer of vulnerability regarding employment conditions and social security protections.

The Care Paradox

This situation gives rise to what can be termed the "Care Paradox". That is, despite the increasing demand for care work and caregiving roles across all spheres of the economy, there has not been a concomitant increase in the recognition of the value of care work to social and economic wellbeing, vis-a-vis public policies and investments. This paradox creates a feedback loop that both creates and exacerbates social and economic inequities, particularly for women. The current social organization of unpaid and (under)paid care work often leads to professional penalties and economic disadvantages for those who provide it, underpinning structural disparities in job quality, career progression, wages, savings and pensions between women and men throughout their employment and retirement. Low-income and single parent households face the greatest time constraints, financial challenges and trade-offs between their caregiving and employment responsibilities.

Across all G7 countries, the demand for care work will only increase in the coming years, driven by demographic changes and societal needs. To address the Care Paradox, G7 Leaders must recognize, value and invest in care policies, services and infrastructure to create an equitable social organization of care work, jobs generation of major magnitude, and quality, rights-based care and support across the life-course. By integrating care work into professional curricula and recognizing its essential contribution to economic and social wellbeing, more equitable societies can be created. This shift not only addresses the immediate needs of caregivers but also lays the groundwork for a future where care, as a fundamental human experience, is respected and valued. To ensure this vision becomes a reality, the G7 should take a leadership role in advocating for proper remuneration, ensuring that time spent on care responsibilities is reflected in pension schemes, and improving working conditions for caregivers.

Towards a CaRevolution

A transformative approach – a CaRevolution¹⁰ – is required to reconfigure how care work is recognized, organized, shared, valued and invested in. This paradigm shift demands recognition that care is a public good and caregiving is a shared responsibility between women and men to achieve family well-being, gender equality, and better health for mothers, fathers, and children; not an individual obligation¹¹ or a female issue. It further demands recognition of the rights of those both providing and requiring care across the life-course. This evolution calls for policy changes that center on care as a critical element of societal infrastructure.

Care-enabling policies must be designed to uphold and fulfill the rights of those providing and receiving care, while simultaneously reducing social inequalities, especially related to gender. Additionally, it is essential to foster convergence between the public and private sectors to make caregiving professions more attractive, fairly valued, and adequately compensated. Through joint initiatives, effective solutions - such as reduced work hours - can be explored, recognizing that paid employment is only one facet of the comprehensive labor required for sustaining life. When measures are both care-enabling and gender equitable¹², the synergy they create fosters shared objectives, promoting an environment where the value of care is fully recognized and supported.

Finally, implementing skilling, standardization and certification programs to equip caregivers with the competencies needed to adapt to new demands and technologies can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of caregiving tasks. Importantly, this allows for better quality and options of care and support for those requiring care. The CaRevolution has already begun, but with comprehensive and determined leadership from the G7, the pace of change and its positive outcomes can be accelerated.

Facts and Figures

Opportunities for Progress, Challenges to Overcome

- For **6 out of 10** people, caring responsibilities regard at least 2 family members¹³.
- In wealthier countries, **80%** of the employment gender gap is explained by women leaving the labor market after the birth of their first child¹⁴.
- In the UK, **25%** of mothers are forced to leave their jobs due to childcare responsibilities¹⁵.
- On a global average, mothers are granted **192.3 days** of leave, while fathers receive only **22.5 days**¹⁶.
- Earning **24%** less than men, women face a larger gender pay gap in the health and care sector than in other economic sectors¹⁷.
- An estimated **90%** of domestic workers have no access to social security (e.g., maternity protection and benefits)¹⁸.
- Informal unpaid caregiving for older adults can negatively impact caregivers' mental and physical health, women more than men¹⁹.
- In 2020, school and preschool closures required **672 billion hours** of additional unpaid childcare globally²⁵.
- Globally, an estimated **43 million** new childcare jobs are needed to meet the current gap in access²⁶.
- **93%** of global workers consider work-life balance crucial to their career decisions, even more than career ambition itself²⁷.
- Legislation on childcare services can slowly improve women's labor force participation rate: **+2%** increase on average, reaching up to **4%** five years after law enactment²⁸.

Prioritizing Care in a Changing World

- Global life expectancy is projected to increase by **4.6 years** by 2050, reaching an average of **78.1 years**. However, more years of life will be lived in poor health due to non-communicable diseases and chronic conditions²⁰.
- Over **1.3 billion** individuals live with some form of disability, representing around **16%** of the global population²¹.
- **1 in 3** adults worldwide has multiple chronic conditions²². At the same time, nearly 1 billion people worldwide suffer from some form of mental disorder²³.
- For the first time since 1960, the number of live births in the EU has fallen below **4 million**, one of the lowest fertility rates in the world²⁴.

Case Studies and Best Practices

The European Care Strategy for Caregivers and Care Receivers

Introduced by the European Commission in 2022²⁹, this new strategy aims to improve access to quality, affordable care services for both care receivers and caregivers. A key part of this strategy focuses on early childhood education and care, setting ambitious targets for Member States to achieve by 2030. These include ensuring that 50% of children under the age of 3 are enrolled in early childhood education and care services, and that 96% of children between ages 3 and the start of primary school are also enrolled, in line with the goals of the European Education Area framework.

To address existing gaps in care services across Europe, the EU strategy focuses on offering crucial support to caregivers, who are predominantly women, and helping improve work-life balance, labor market participation, and overall societal well-being. It reflects a long-term commitment to enhancing the care sector and supporting families across the EU.

The United Kingdom (UK) Carer's Allowance

The UK provides a variety of support systems for caregivers. One of the primary benefits is the Carer's Allowance, which offers £81.9 per week for individuals who provide over 35 hours of care weekly to persons with disabilities. This allowance is taxable and contributes to overall taxable income.

Additionally, the UK offers respite care services, allowing caregivers a much-needed break. These services can include home care, where caregivers assist individuals in their own homes, and daycare centres that facilitate social activities and transport for the elderly. Residential care homes also provide short-term options for those needing care.

Another significant initiative is the Carer's Leave Act, implemented in April 2023, opening up many more possibilities for carers who are employed. Employees are entitled to one week's unpaid leave per year if providing or arranging care for someone with a long-term care need. This leave is flexible, ensuring job protection like other family-related leaves.

A Transformative Model for Public Childcare: Quebec's Approach

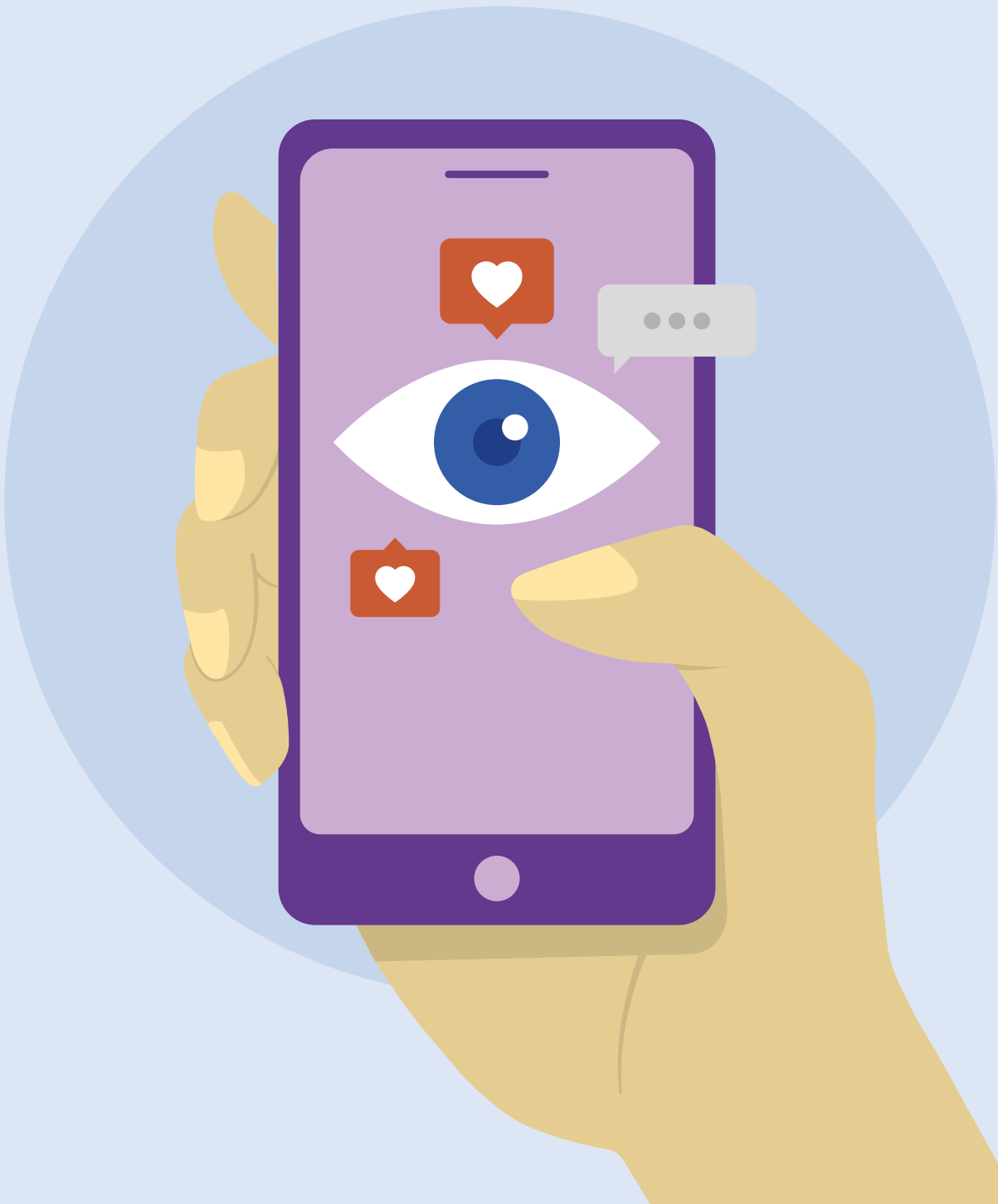
Quebec's publicly subsidized childcare program exemplifies a forward-thinking approach to family support and gender equity. Parents in Quebec benefit from 69 weeks of paid parental leave, paired with a universal childcare system that is subsidized and accessible. This model has profoundly impacted women's labor force participation, achieving an 85% employment rate among mothers with children aged 0 to 5 – one of the highest rates globally³⁰.

Importantly, Quebec's program demonstrates economic sustainability, as increased workforce participation by women generates significant tax revenues, offsetting the program's costs. Moreover, the childcare sector itself contributes to the economy, employing new childcare workforce and creating a robust cycle of economic benefit³¹. Research highlights how the program goes beyond just employment figures. It fosters early childhood development, reduces gender disparities in caregiving, and ensures that parents – particularly mothers – can balance work and family responsibilities without compromising career prospects.

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4.3 Gen Z

Navigating a Digital World under pressure



4.3 Gen Z

Navigating a Digital World under pressure

Recommendations to the G7 Leaders

- Establish and finance observatories on young people's mental health, and strengthen local services for younger generations.
- Ensure the effective implementation of international and national legislation regulating children's access to social media, and strengthen age verification methods.
- While recognizing the benefits of the Internet and digital technologies for young people's information, education, and leisure, increase investments in the identification, mitigation and eradication of potential threats for them, including sexist and stereotyped content and all forms of online violence, and establish or improve measures to eliminate children's access to online pornography from an early age, access that harms relations between future women and men.
- Invest in affective and sexual education programs for younger generations dedicated to fight against sexism, with a specific focus on mutual respect between women and men and sexual and reproductive rights.
- Promote policies for younger generations in Africa, especially for young women and girls, bearing in mind that 60% of today's African population is made up of young people under the age of 25 and that by 2050¹, one-third of all young people in the world between the ages of 15 and 24 will be African².

The Issue

Digital technologies have advanced more rapidly than any innovation in our history. Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s³, is the first generation to have grown up in a fully digital world, characterized by constant connectivity, the prevalence of social media, and unprecedented access to information. At the same time, Gen Z has had to face unparalleled societal disruptions. The global financial crisis, new geopolitical tensions, rising costs of living, job market instability, climate change, and the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have left many young people feeling disillusioned and anxious about their future.

On the one hand, this generation of 'digital natives' is more socially conscious and pragmatic than previous ones – particularly in areas such as gender equality, racial justice, climate change, and mental health. On the other hand, however, the very tools that have empowered Gen Z also present unique challenges, especially for young women and girls, who are disproportionately affected by the negative aspects of online engagement and global connectivity (e.g., online violence and harassment, early sexualization, exposure to unrealistic standards of beauty and success, ...).

A Generation under Pressure

Generation Z is navigating complex digital challenges against a backdrop of growing economic uncertainty, with young people confronting higher living costs and a shrinking number of stable job opportunities. This environment has not only altered their priorities but also given rise to new needs. For example, both young women and men have gradually become more inclined to prioritize relationships and work-life balance over career progression. This cultural shift is evident in the growing preference for flexible work arrangements, such as part-time positions or remote work, which offer more autonomy and a better balance between professional and personal lives. Interestingly, Gen Z's approach is also influencing older generations, like Millennials, who are increasingly adopting these priorities and seeking similar work-life flexibility, further accelerating a broader transformation in workplace culture.

Today's economic instability, along with the pressure to succeed in an increasingly competitive world, contributes to the deteriorating mental

health of populations worldwide. After 2021, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a 25% increase in the global prevalence of anxiety and depression, two of the most common mental health problems⁴. This is especially noticeable among young people – particularly young women, who are often balancing economic challenges with societal expectations related to family and caregiving. Indeed, 49% of young women within Gen Z report feeling severely stressed, a higher percentage than young men⁵. Gen Z is also more likely to suffer from physical health issues than previous generations. Sedentary lifestyles driven by the digital age, alongside rising rates of eating disorders and self-harm, further compound these challenges⁶.

Additionally, the evolving concept of gender roles is reshaping expectations for both young women and men. While progress has been made in the fight for gender equality, there are emerging tensions as more men perceive gender equality as discriminatory: 60% of Gen Z men now think that women's equality discriminates against men, compared to 40% of Gen Z women⁷. This trend is coupled with a decline in male educational attainment, leading to fewer opportunities in the labor market and a sense of disenfranchisement among young men. Such dynamics raise important questions about how to address traditional structures in a rapidly changing world, ensuring the needs of both women and men are met.

The Impact of Social Media

At first glance, digital platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and X have become primary tools for self-expression, entertainment, and socialization for Gen Z. In a deeper sense, said platforms have contributed to shaping a considerable part of their visions, beliefs, and behaviors. Among Generation Z, over half of the population spends at least one hour on social media on an average day, with 35% using social media for at least two hours (vs. 24% of Millennials)⁸. While social media can offer a sense of community, it also amplifies gender stereotypes, sexism and violence, introducing new pressures and vulnerabilities. Indeed, a significant concern for Gen Z is the alarming rise in mental health issues, especially among young women. The increase in depression, anxiety, self-harm, eating disorders, and cases of gender dysphoria has been linked not only to societal pressures but also to the influence of social media.

Generation Z, on average, is more likely than other generations to associate social media with negative feelings and poor mental health. Girls face heightened exposure to premature sexualization, pornification, body image issues, and online bullying (including revenge porn), all of which contribute to a growing sense of inadequacy and distress. As social media platforms amplify unrealistic and unattainable standards of beauty and success, which perpetuate and reinforce stereotypes, young women often find themselves feeling socially isolated and inadequate, struggling to reconcile such pressures with their own identities.

The rapid rise of digital technologies has also fueled the spread of GBV, misogyny, sexism, and cyberbullying. Algorithms designed to engage users by reinforcing their biases and views have a detrimental effect on young women, perpetuating harmful stereotypes as well as generating more sexist behaviors from young men. On platforms like TikTok, which has a user base consisting of 60% Gen Z individuals⁹, the normalization of aggressive content has reinforced negative dynamics. The proliferation of online pornography, which frequently objectifies and dehumanizes women, further exacerbates these issues, contributing to a rise in violent sexual behaviors¹⁰.

Shaping a Responsible Digital Culture

Addressing these issues requires the collaboration of all sectors of society – starting from schools, families, and social platforms. In particular, schools, being the institutions closest to younger individuals, are ideally suited to helping them learn about gender equality and navigate the benefits and dangers of digital technologies (e.g., by introducing specific education programs and organizing lectures with experts). The involvement of parents can also be instrumental in reinforcing these messages and fostering open communication channels at home, ensuring a coordinated approach with teachers¹¹. In addition to these efforts, content creators should be held accountable for what they share online. Introducing clear rules for responsible content creation can help curb the spread of harmful or misleading information and reduce the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and toxic behavior. By fostering a culture of accountability, platforms and creators can build safer, more respectful digital spaces for young people. In this regard, Australia has recently enacted a law restricting social media access for children under 16,

marking one of the first and most stringent regulations targeting big tech globally. This legislation underscores the responsibility of social media platforms to enforce compliance, highlighting the urgent need for a regulatory system designed to safeguard new generations.

While social media and technology are often part of the conversation surrounding youth mental health issues, they also hold great potential as tools for promoting well-being and offering accessible mental health support. For instance, developers could design algorithms that make it easier for young people experiencing emotional distress to connect with support groups, crisis hotlines, or emergency mental health services. Moreover, digital mental health platforms could partner with both virtual and community-based providers to ensure that individuals with more urgent needs are linked to timely and culturally appropriate crisis support¹².

Global Demographic Shifts

As the Western world struggles with a sharp demographic decline, Africa is poised to become the heart of Generation Z, sparking a “youthquake” that will reshape the global demographic landscape. By 2050, one out of every four people on earth and more than one-third of the world’s young population (between the ages of 15 and 24) are expected to be African¹³. This shift presents both challenges and opportunities. Investments in education and training are crucial to empowering young African men and women, equipping them with the skills necessary to navigate an increasingly digital and interconnected world. However, there is also an urgent need to address gender norms and biases, particularly in regions where inequality between women and men remains deeply entrenched, and economic disparities persist.

In this multifaceted scenario, gender equality remains a critical issue for Gen Z, as the generation grapples with the interconnection of social, economic, and technological changes. The challenges they face – ranging from mental health struggles to economic insecurity – demand targeted interventions that consider the specific experiences of both young women and men.

Facts and Figures

Perceptions of Gender Equality¹⁴

- Gen Z (**45%**) and Millennials (**44%**) are more likely to identify as feminists, compared to **37%** of Gen X and **36%** of Baby Boomers.
- Younger generations are more likely to agree that gender equality will be achieved in their lifetime (**60%** of Gen Z and **61%** of Millennials, vs. **53%** of Gen X and **44%** of Baby Boomers).
- Gen Z are also the most likely to have taken action in support of gender equality in the past year (**68%**). This percentage falls steadily with each generation, with Baby Boomers the least likely to have taken action (**41%**).
- At the same time, about half of Gen Z (**52%**) and Millennials (**53%**) agree that things have gone so far in promoting women's equality that men are being discriminated against, falling to **46%** of Gen X and **40%** of Baby Boomers.
- Younger generations are also the most likely to agree that a man who stays home to look after his children is less of a man, with **30%** each of Gen Z and Millennials agreeing with this statement compared to **22%** of Gen X and just **14%** of Baby Boomers.

Economic Insecurity and Shift in Priorities¹⁵

- Although global inflation is forecast to decline steadily, it reached an average of **6.8%** in 2023 – resulting in a marked increase in the cost of living worldwide¹⁶.
- **30%** of Gen Z and **32%** of Millennials feel financially insecure, and over half of both groups live paycheck-to-paycheck.
- Nearly half of millennials (**46%**) cite work as central to their identity compared to **36%** of Gen Z. For Gen Z, cultural activities such as reading, playing or listening to music, seeing performances, etc. are ranked as nearly equal to work in importance.
- Good work-life balance is the top reason why both Gen Z (**25%**) and Millennials (**31%**) choose their organization.

Climate change¹⁷

- Environmental sustainability is a top concern for Gen Z and Millennials, with **62%** of Gen Z and **59%** of Millennials reporting feeling anxious or worried about climate change in recent times.
- In response, the majority of both generations take action to minimize their impact on the environment (**73%** of Gen Z and **77%** of Millennials). And they feel governments should play a bigger role in pushing businesses to address climate change (**77%** of Gen Z and **79%** of Millennials).

Mental Health Crisis¹⁸

- Across 31 countries, **44%** of the population consider mental health to be the number one health concern their country is facing (vs. **26%** in 2020). Overall, men appear significantly less concerned over mental health in their country than women (**38%** vs. **50%**).
- Young age is a critical time for the promotion of mental well-being. At least **50%** of mental health disorders debut before the age of 15, and **80%** of the latter happen before the age of 18¹⁹.
- Mental health issues among Generation Z are at an all-time high, with young women particularly affected. **49%** of Gen Z's young women globally report feeling severely stressed (vs. **39%** of Millennial women), compared to **32%** of Gen Z's young men (vs. **30%** of Millennial men).
- **41%** of Gen Z's young women globally have reportedly experienced severe depression (vs. **34%** of Millennial women), compared to **31%** of Gen Z's young men (vs. **28%** of Millennial men).
- Research on the effects of social media on mental health has witnessed a rapid acceleration in the last **10 years**, with the yearly number of publications increasing by a **factor of 16**²⁰.
- **27%** of Generation Z report that technology and social media hurt their mental health, a sharp increase compared to Millennials (**19%**), Gen X (**14%**) and Baby Boomers (**9%**)²¹.
- **32%** of teenage girls who already feel dissatisfied with their bodies report feeling worse after viewing content on social media²².

Sexualization, Violence and Misogyny Online

- **45%** of Gen Z and Millennial women report having personally experienced online violence (vs. **31%** of Gen X and Baby Boomer women)²³.
- **58%** of girls and young women report having experienced online harassment, as early as 8 years old. As a result, many of them are left feeling physically unsafe (**24%**), mentally and emotionally stressed (**42%**), and lose self-esteem or self-confidence (**42%**)²⁴.
- **19%** of girls who were harassed online very frequently have decreased their use of social media, and **12%** of them have stopped using it²⁵.
- A recent survey found that in France for every 100 videos, only **36%** of women are featured on TikTok, with **60%** of videos portraying male stereotypes often involving violence or jokes at the expense of women²⁶.
- Cases of gender dysphoria among minors have seen a sharp rise, with **80%** of them involving young girls²⁷. This phenomenon is linked to the increased pressure young people, especially women, face online, where they are subjected to unrealistic beauty standards and premature sexualization.

Case Studies and Best Practices

THE EUROPEAN UNION'S EFFORTS

The Directive on Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence²⁸

In May 2024, the EU adopted its first-ever Directive to effectively combat violence against women (VAW) and domestic violence. The Directive is part of the EU's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, which confirms the Commission's commitment to prevent and combat GBV, support and protect victims, and hold perpetrators accountable.

Besides introducing the criminalization of female genital mutilation and forced marriage, the Directive also covers the crimes of non-consensual sharing of intimate images, cyberstalking, cyber harassment, and cyber incitement to hatred or violence. Member States will be obliged to introduce a national Action Plan and put in place robust measures of prevention, protection, access to justice and support for victims (with increased safeguards and support especially for children), and coordination and cooperation between authorities. By June 2027 all EU Member States will have to adapt their national laws, budgets, and resources to the requirements of the Directive.

The Digital Services Act (DSA)²⁹

The EU's Digital Services Act, which came into effect in 2023, is a groundbreaking piece of legislation aimed at regulating online platforms and ensuring a safer digital space. The DSA obliges platforms like social media networks to be scrutinized by the Commission and requires them to remove illegal content, enhance transparency in algorithms, and provide more control to users, including better protection for minors. It specifically addresses online harms like cyberbullying, hate speech, and exposure to harmful content, which are particularly relevant to Gen Z.

Additionally, such online platforms will be required to disable autoplay to discourage prolonged viewing among minors. Design elements deemed manipulative, such as perpetually scrolling timelines aimed at fostering addictive user behavior, will be strictly prohibited for implementation by tech companies. As of February 17, 2024, the DSA rules apply to all platforms.

New Zealand's Youth Mental Health Project³⁰

The Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project (YMHP) was established as a four-year cross-agency program in 2012. It consisted of 26 initiatives aimed at improving the mental health and well-being of youth aged 12 to 19 with or at risk of developing mild to moderate mental health issues. The initiatives took a holistic approach by addressing both the mental health needs of students and the broader school environment. Key components included early intervention programs, school-based health services, and innovative digital mental health support resources.

One of the most successful aspects of this project was its collaboration across sectors – combining education, healthcare, and digital platforms to provide mental health support tailored for youth. This includes SPARX, an online e-therapy tool designed to help adolescents with mild to moderate depression through gamification, providing therapy in a familiar and engaging format for younger audiences. The project also strengthened school-based support services by integrating mental health professionals into school systems, ensuring accessible help for students.

Since it was established in 2012, YMHP successfully implemented all 26 initiatives in its portfolio. As a result, more services and resources were available – and in most cases continue to be available – to identify, support, and treat youth with mild to moderate mental health issues. YMHP generated a gross monetary economic benefit of \$21,000 to \$30,000 per positively impacted youth, meaning that the value of the benefits or outcomes for youth, society, and the government's coffers was more than the cost of providing YMHP initiatives. The cost-benefit analysis found that early identification & support services delivered the greatest economic value.

Italy's Mattei Plan for Africa³¹

Launched by Italy in January 2024, the Mattei Plan is a 5-year bilateral cooperation strategy between Italy and African countries aimed at training young women and men, providing them with the skills needed to tackle global economic challenges. The main pillars on which action will be focused are Education, Agriculture, Health, Energy, and Water, and there will be nine African countries involved in pilot projects: Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt,

Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mozambique. The Plan places a strong emphasis on education and vocational training, with a focus on gender equality and female participation.

€5.5 billion will be allocated for the Plan, divided as follows: 2.5 billion from Development Cooperation funds and 3 billion from the Italian Climate Fund, a fund created under the Draghi Government with the Budget Law for 2022. The Italian development bank, Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, will launch by the end of 2024 a new financial instrument aimed at facilitating participation in the Plan by the private sector, which is necessary to supplement public funds and make the Italian offer more substantial.

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4.4 Education

The greatest investment



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The greatest investment

Recommendations to the G7 Leaders

- Ensure access to quality, equitable, and inclusive education for all women and girls and, while respecting their ambitions and vocations, support girls in diversifying their educational choices including in emerging fields and growing economic sectors, such as STEM and jobs of the future, and promote digital literacy already in primary education with the ultimate goal to close the gender gap in the tech sector.
- Acknowledge the urgency of conceiving and developing an inclusive AI founded on gender-balanced AI teams and data.
- Integrate humanistic studies into AI development and control. Indeed, the humanities, encompassing fields such as ethics, philosophy, history, and cultural studies, provide essential insights that can stimulate a critical approach by eliminating gender biases and guide the responsible and equitable advancement of AI technologies.
- Adopt concrete policies to address the multiple barriers young women and girls face in accessing and completing education, especially in vulnerable situations and in conflict areas.
- Prioritize education as a key strategy to break the cycle of physical and sexual violence, which can foster a culture of respect, equality, non-sexist and non-violence, effectively addressing the root causes and preventing the occurrence of such violence.
- Ensure that, in the political agenda, education is always considered as an investment and not just as an expense. Recognizing that education is vital to foster long-term economic growth, social stability, innovation, productivity, and enhanced global competitiveness, increase financing for education, including specific international cooperation programs targeting women's and girls' educational needs in line with current and future needs of the global economy.
- Fulfill the G7 agreed pledge to a fully funded Education for all and implement accountability mechanisms.

The Issue

Education is key to building future societies that are resilient to the 'triple threats' of conflict, climate change, and economic crises. Educational equality promotes better health, safety, and well-being, while advancing social, economic, and environmental sustainability. For instance, educating girls not only delays early marriage, reduces unintended pregnancies, and decreases maternal and infant mortality rates, but educating boys is equally crucial as it fosters respect, reduces violence, and creates a more inclusive society.

The priority is ensuring that every woman has the freedom to pursue her vocations and talents without obligation. Education must offer equal opportunities and equip everyone with the right tools to follow their own path in an increasingly digital world, adapting to the needs of the 21st century. In a time of worker shortages and considering actual school dropout rates, every individual's contribution becomes essential, making the education of women not only a matter of equality but a necessity for societal progress and welfare improvement, particularly in addressing systemic inequalities.

Gender equality in education also fosters global peace and stability, as educational disparities can lead to socio-economic instability, which heightens the risk of conflict.¹ Investing in education, particularly for girls, has a positive multiplier effect, driving social inclusion, economic growth, and democratization. Gender-responsive budgeting, which evaluates public investments based on their impact on men and women, is crucial for promoting gender equality through financial decisions. If all girls were to receive 12 years of quality education, global human capital wealth could increase by \$15–30 trillion. Just one additional year of schooling can increase a woman's earnings by 20%², leading to more resilient households, enhanced economic security, and broader societal progress. Similarly, closing the digital divide between women and men could save an estimated \$500 billion over the next five years³. Investing in future oriented STEM programs and digital competencies for girls dedicated to preparing them for the jobs of the future needs to be a top priority for G7 countries.

Moreover, education plays a critical role in tackling the global climate crisis. Educated girls and women are better equipped to make informed decisions about environmental sustainability, helping their communities adapt to climate change. As extreme

weather increasingly threatens jobs, livelihoods, and ecosystems – especially in lower-income countries – strengthening education systems with a focus on climate resilience and guaranteeing equal participation in decision-making positions is vital.

Overcoming Gender Barriers in Tech and STEM

Educational disparities are aggravated by persistent challenges that girls face in gaining access to technology and digital skills, critical tools for succeeding in today's tech-driven economies. Furthermore, the underrepresentation of women in AI development perpetuates gender biases in emerging technologies, as algorithms often reflect and reinforce existing social inequalities. This lack of diversity in tech highlights the urgent need to ensure an inclusive education that equips girls with critical thinking and digital literacy skills to shape the technologies of the future. As part of this effort, prioritizing AI literacy especially for girls and women, is crucial to bridging the digital divide and enabling them to actively contribute to and lead in AI-driven industries. Ensuring equal access to STEM education sets off a positive ripple effect: it not only empowers women to enter and excel in STEM fields but also paves the way for female leadership.

Considering that the share of women among STEM graduates has not changed over the past 10 years and it is still at a mere 35%⁴ and less than 20% in ICT⁵, it is urgent to challenge entrenched gender norms, stereotypes, and biases that limit girls' opportunities – particularly in STEM fields. Stereotypes are reinforced from an early age, both at home and in schools⁶, shaping children's perceptions of what roles are deemed appropriate for them, with boys often pushed toward STEM fields, and girls frequently discouraged or subtly steered away from them. This bias is perpetuated through various channels, including the types of toys children are given, the language adults use, and the expectations set by teachers and parents. Moreover, the lack of female role models in textbooks and in general in STEM fields, the fact that teachers tend to call on boys 30% more frequently than girls, and the broader influence of societal expectations on children's educational paths⁷ further reinforces this divide, limiting young girls' aspirations and career choices.

While participation in education and the world of work are distinct realms, especially in STEM fields, they are closely interconnected: despite increasing numbers of women studying these subjects, their

representation in STEM careers remains disproportionately low. Notwithstanding the efforts to challenge stereotypes, to overcome persistent global disparities, and empower women to thrive in high-demand careers, it is necessary to tackle also the so-called “STEM Paradox”, according to which countries with greater gender equality surprisingly tend to have lower female representation in STEM fields. For instance, in the EU, where gender equality levels are relatively higher, less than 40% of scientists and engineers are women⁸.

Given the complexity of this phenomenon and the variation in reasons across countries, research suggests that the gender gap may partly arise from greater personal freedom and broader options available in gender-equal societies, alongside persistent cultural factors and choices rooted in early socialization (e.g., parental beliefs, unconscious biases). While further research is necessary, some studies indicate that in countries with high levels of social security and welfare, women may have more freedom to prioritize personal interests and preferences over financial considerations, which can lead women to choose careers outside of STEM⁹. Conversely, in countries where economic security is a pressing concern, women tend to choose STEM fields more frequently due to their higher earning potential and job security.

The STEM paradox underscores the need for nuanced strategies: simply improving girls' science education or promoting gender equality may not close the STEM gap. A more comprehensive approach must account for intraindividual academic strengths, social expectations, and economic incentives that shape career paths in STEM and beyond.

Education's Role in Breaking the Cycle of Violence

GBV has a profound impact on education, often resulting in high dropout rates and limiting learning opportunities, especially for girls and in low-income and conflict-affected regions. Every year, approximately 246 million children worldwide experience violence in or around schools, which includes bullying, physical violence, and sexual harassment. Alarmingly, one in four young women have experienced violence by age 24¹⁰, and around 60 million girls face sexual assault on their way to or school each year¹¹. These figures highlight the pervasive nature of violence against women and girls worldwide, underscoring the urgent need for

safe learning environments. Violence – whether physical, psychological, or sexual – disrupts education, inflicts long-term trauma, and undermines future opportunities for girls.

Addressing violence against women and girls within educational settings is therefore essential, as students who experience violence in school tend to have lower academic achievement, reduced attendance, and higher dropout rates¹². By contrast, with comprehensive strategies, including safeguarding policies and training for teachers – educated on gender sensitive matters including on eliminating stereotypes and sexism – schools can be the starting point for empowering students to build better societies as they grow. Only by creating safe and supportive learning spaces education can fulfill its transformative potential, playing a critical role in shaping inclusive and equitable societies. In safe environments, students can learn critical thinking skills, challenge harmful gender norms, and develop healthy relationships. Schools serve as key spaces to impart essential knowledge to children about sexual and reproductive health and rights, to foster respect, and spread concepts like consent, while implementing preventive measures against sexual and gender-based violence.

Financing Education

In 2021, the G7 set two ambitious targets: to enroll 40 million more girls in school and to ensure 20 million more girls can read by the age of 10 in low and lower-middle income countries¹³. Achieving these goals by the 2026 target date, and ultimately meeting SDG4 by 2030, requires substantial support and financing for education, in line with the outcomes of the African Union (AU) Summit and AU Year of Education 2024¹⁴.

To back these efforts, G7 members pledged at least 2.75 billion dollars in funding over 5 years for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)¹⁵. It is crucial that G7 members not only honor this pledge but actively support mechanisms to measure progress. This includes ensuring education initiatives are fully funded through significant public and private financing and guaranteeing that advancements towards these targets are tracked and transparently reported.

Financial Literacy

Financial education plays a critical role in achieving gender parity, as it empowers girls and women with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate economic systems and make informed decisions about their futures. Access to financial literacy enables women to manage personal finances, invest in education, and pursue entrepreneurship, which in turn drives economic independence and breaks the cycle of poverty. This is especially important in regions where women are underrepresented in formal labor markets or where access to financial resources is limited. Many women entrepreneurs do not even apply for loans because of low financial literacy, risk aversion, or fear of failure. Women generally report feeling less confident about their financial capabilities compared to men, a disparity often linked to lower levels of financial literacy. Despite its importance, only 21% of countries include financial and monetary management in their primary education curricula¹⁶, limiting early exposure to these vital skills. Even among younger generations, financial literacy remains alarmingly low, with 40% of Gen Z in developed countries demonstrating a poor understanding of financial concepts¹⁷.

Gender Stereotypes and Sports

Education is essential for promoting gender equality, and sports provide a unique and powerful means of challenging stereotypes, boosting confidence, fostering mutual respect, and empowering women and girls. By challenging stereotypes, sports offer a platform for both boys and girls to learn and practice equality while building healthier and more equitable environments. Sports not only support the physical and mental well-being of girls and young women but also empower them to break down societal norms that limit their participation.

Recognizing these benefits, women's participation in sport has been included for the first time in a G7 document, in the 2024 G7 Ministers' Statement on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, adopted in Matera on 5 October 2024. Through the Statement, the G7 Gender Equality Ministers and the EU committed "to ensuring equal opportunities for women and girls in sport activities in all areas, such as access, coaching, training, competition, remuneration and prizes, and recognize the impor-

tance of sport competitions for all women and girls based on shared transparent, relevant scientifically and evidence-based standards, independently governed by sports institutions, in order to avoid discrimination and advance gender equality"¹⁸.

On the other hand, a recent report on violence against women and girls in sports by Reem Alsalem, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls, highlights that many of these benefits are hindered by a range of challenges. GBV, including sexual harassment and abuse, remains alarmingly prevalent in sports environments and often goes unaddressed, revealing a culture of impunity that obstructs progress towards gender equality. Economic exploitation is another widespread issue, with women athletes facing control over their finances, economic sabotage, and persistent disparities in pay and sponsorships compared to their male counterparts¹⁹.

As the 2024 Paris Olympics showed, achieving gender parity among athletes is possible. On the other side, only 23% of coaches in the Olympic games were female²⁰, highlighting the persistent male-dominated culture across sports. Achieving true equality in sports requires a multifaceted approach that combines inclusive physical education programs with policies that protect women's rights to fair competition and safe participation. Schools play a pivotal role by providing spaces where both boys and girls can confront and dismantle gender norms, fostering a culture of respect and encouraging lifelong engagement in sports.

Afghanistan

Since September 2021, Afghan girls over the age of 12 have been indefinitely denied the opportunity to return to school, leaving 1.4 million girls and young women without access to formal education²¹. Currently, 80% of school-aged Afghan girls and young women – around 2.5 million – are out of school, with nearly 30% of girls having never entered primary education. This devastating situation was further compounded in December 2022 when university education for women was suspended, affecting over 100,000 female students enrolled in government and private institutions²². The ban on higher education has not only stripped women of their right to learn but has also severely impacted Afghanistan's professional sectors. Female students pursuing degrees in medicine, engineering, law, and education have had their aspirations shattered, further deepening the gender disparity in these critical fields. Furthermore, while girls' education is still allowed for those under the age of 12, the number of students enrolled in primary school has significantly declined since 2021. As of 2022, Afghanistan had only 5.7 million children, both girls and boys, enrolled in primary education, a big downfall compared to the 6.8 million in 2019²³.

The impact of these setbacks is particularly tragic given the remarkable progress made in the two decades before the Taliban's return to power. Between 2001 and 2018, the number of women in higher education increased nearly 20-fold²⁴. Now, the country risks losing an entire generation of educated women, severely hindering its social, economic, and political development and limiting Afghanistan's potential workforce, innovation capacity, and ability to rebuild itself.

It is crucial for the international community, particularly the G7 and influential regional actors, to urgently call for an effective and compelling response from all involved parties, starting with the UN, to restore Afghan girls' and women's access to education.

Facts and Figures

Access to Education

- Since 2015, there has been a significant increase in female enrollment across educational levels: there are now **22.5 million** more girls in primary school, **14.6 million** more in lower secondary, and **13 million** more in upper secondary education²⁵.
- In 2023, around **132 million** girls were out of school worldwide, with **40 million** of them being of primary school age²⁶.
- In Sub-Saharan Africa, gender parity **has not been achieved** at any level of education²⁷.
- The gender gap widens in lower-middle-income countries where Learning Poverty is observed for **57.9%** of female pupils, and **61.3%** of males²⁸.

Gender Disparities in Competencies and Skills

- Female students represent far less than **50%** of all students graduating with a degree in STEM-related fields of study in most countries²⁹.
- There are **244 million** fewer women than men using the Internet worldwide³⁰.
- In 2023, **12.5%** of young women aged 15–29 in the EU were classified as NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), compared to **10.1%** of young men, which is 2.4 percentage points lower³¹.
- In G7 countries, women constitute **31.8%** of tertiary-level STEM graduates³².
- In Europe, women occupy only **22%** of technology positions in companies³³.
- In the past decade, the overall share of women working in the ICT sector (**29%**) has increased by only **1%** in OECD countries³⁴.
- **80%** of AI solutions are developed by men³⁵.

Completion and Attainment

- Countries are moving further away from their national SDG4 benchmarks on gender parity in secondary education completion. In total, **36%** of countries have set a national target on this gender gap, the lowest rate of all benchmark indicators³⁶.
- The dispersion of gender parity scores in terms of Educational Attainment shows that overall performance is strong, yet a group of countries continue to lag behind full parity. Six economies in the Sub-Saharan African region have scores lower than **80%**: Chad (**66.7%**), Democratic Republic of the Congo (**68.3%**), Angola (**74.3%**), Guinea (**73.2%**) and Mali (**77.6%**)³⁷.
- The share of women among STEM graduates has not changed over the past 10 years and it is still at a mere **35%**³⁸.

Case Studies and Best Practices

Advancing Gender Equality in STEM: Insights from France

France has emerged as a leader in promoting gender equality in education, particularly within STEM fields, implementing a wide range of impactful initiatives. Below are brief descriptions of three initiatives aimed at advancing gender equality in tech. These programs range from educational support to increased female participation in tech studies, to strengthening commitment to gender parity within the French tech startup ecosystem and promoting a more ethical AI.

The TechPourToutes³⁹ program, developed by Fondation Inria and six partner organizations, seeks to support 10,000 young women annually in their pursuit of technology and digital careers. Targeting high school and university students aged 15 to 25, the program provides a comprehensive support system for career planning, access to digital education, and successful entry into the workforce. Set to launch in September 2025, this program represents a key pillar of France's "All Equal" interministerial plan, aiming to raise the percentage of women graduating in digital fields from 19% to 30% by 2030. To achieve this, TechPourToutes adopts a collaborative approach, uniting schools, universities, companies, and public institutions to foster a coordinated effort toward inclusivity. Key strategies include promoting interest in digital studies among young women, supporting their progress to reduce dropout rates, and effecting systemic change in educational and corporate environments. By combining sustained, individualized mentorship with large-scale reach, TechPourToutes aims to create a lasting impact on digital gender parity nationwide.

Launched by the French Tech Mission in collaboration with over 60 public organizations and supported by the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Gender Parity Pact⁴⁰ addresses the low representation of women in leadership and technical roles in startups, where fewer than 10% of founding teams are solely female and only 18% of leadership positions are held by women. The Gender Parity Pact outlines five commitments: (1) achieving 20% female board representation by 2025, increasing to 40% by 2028; (2) training all managers on diversity and anti-harassment policies; (3) ensuring gender-neutral job postings; (4) maintaining a gender-balanced team of representatives; and (5) supporting parents

returning from parental leave. Since its launch, over 700 startups have signed the pact, with notable results: 43% of managers, 38% of executive committee members, and 28% of board members are now women, reflecting the Pact's influence on the ecosystem's diversity and inclusion efforts.

The "Pacte Femmes & IA"⁴¹, a women companies network within the scientific and technological sector launched by Cercle InterElles, represents a significant commitment to establishing responsible and gender-equal practices in AI. This initiative involves 16 major technology companies and aims to confront gender biases embedded within AI systems while promoting equality in the tech industry. The Pact outlines practical steps for companies, such as employing evaluation grids to measure progress and incorporating gender bias considerations into operational strategies. Ultimately, it serves as a roadmap for organizations dedicated to cultivating an equitable AI landscape, fostering not just technological advancement but also social equity in the tech sector.

Pakistan's Free Education for Girls in Rural Areas Initiative⁴²

Pakistan's 2024 initiative to provide free education for girls in rural areas targets provinces like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, where gender disparities in education are particularly severe. With female literacy rates as low as 24% in Balochistan⁴³, the program aims to reduce barriers to education by constructing new schools, improving teacher training, and offering free transportation for girls. The initiative also seeks to address economic challenges faced by families, providing financial incentives to encourage girls to stay in school and complete their education. A notable focus is on reducing dropout rates, which are influenced by early marriages, domestic duties, and security concerns in rural areas.

In addition to infrastructure and training improvements, the program emphasizes closing the digital gender divide, a crucial element for improving future job prospects for girls, particularly in emerging sectors like STEM. This aligns with global educational strategies to ensure that girls in these regions are equipped with the skills needed for the future economy.

Mexico's Inclusive Curriculum Reform⁴⁴

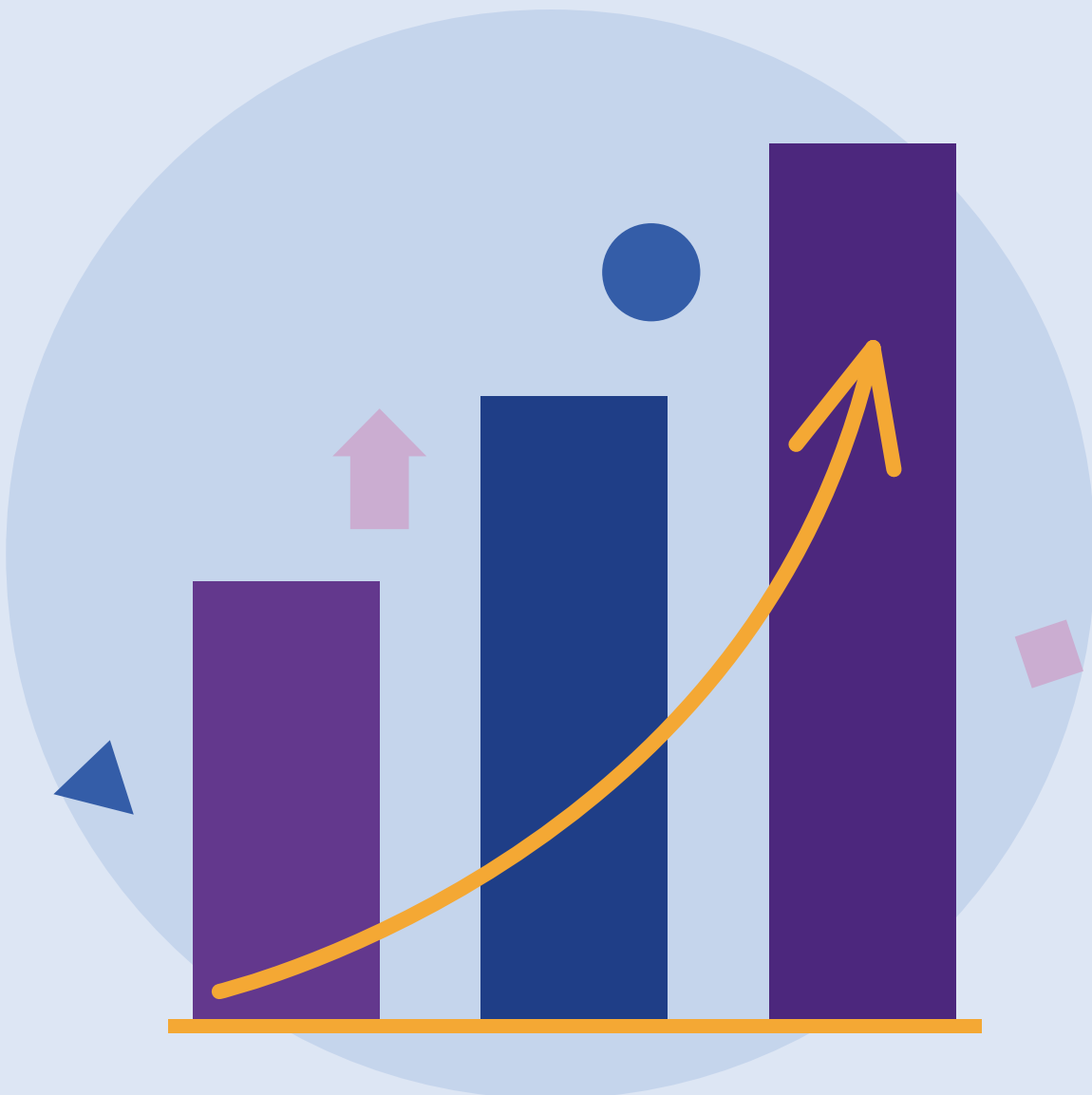
In 2024, Mexico implemented a major curriculum reform to address gender bias in education, with a focus on creating more inclusive learning environments. This initiative integrates gender-sensitive materials across all education levels, from primary schools to higher education institutions. The reform aims to ensure that girls see themselves represented in textbooks and learning resources, thus fostering a sense of belonging in areas where they are historically underrepresented, such as STEM fields⁴⁵.

Additionally, teacher training programs now include specific modules on promoting gender equality in the classroom. This effort is intended to combat entrenched stereotypes and help educators cultivate inclusive, gender-sensitive teaching practices. The reform also places a strong emphasis on changing societal attitudes toward women's education through public awareness campaigns, particularly targeting rural regions where traditional gender roles can be more deeply entrenched.

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5. G7 Dashboard on Gender Gaps



5. G7 Dashboard on Gender Gaps

The G7 Dashboard on Gender Gaps, developed by the OECD, serves as a vital tool for monitoring and evaluating progress toward gender equality within G7 countries. Established by the GEAC in 2022, it is designed to present clear and accessible data reflecting the current status of gender equality. It provides policymakers with essential insights for comparing gender equality conditions across member countries and assessing the effects of various policies over time.

The Dashboard encompasses seven key areas: education; employment and social security; entrepreneurship; leadership; intimate partner violence; health and well-being; and funds for development cooperation. It utilizes data collected consistently across all G7 countries, with comparative values for G7 countries, including the EU, and the OECD as a reference for comparison.

On June 12, 2024, the Italian G7 Presidency released the update of the G7 Dashboard on Gender Gaps for 2024, further enhancing and expanding this tool to ensure ongoing assessment of each country's progress. Ensuring the quality and relevance of the data remains crucial, and the 2024 Dashboard focuses on providing a comprehensive international comparison based on the latest available data.

Robust, high-quality, and consistent data play an essential role in tackling social challenges and unraveling the complexities surrounding gender equality. The indicators in the G7 Gender Dashboard were chosen to provide an easily accessible "birds-eye view" of key indicators on gender gaps covering a range of socio-economic areas of foremost policy relevance across G7 countries. Understanding the specific policies and socio-political dynamics that influence gender gaps enables the reinforcement of successful strategies, and enhancing collaboration in data sharing is imperative for advancing this shared global objective. While the manifestations of gender inequality may differ from one nation to another, unified efforts can inspire creative and impactful solutions that address these challenges on a global scale.

Education

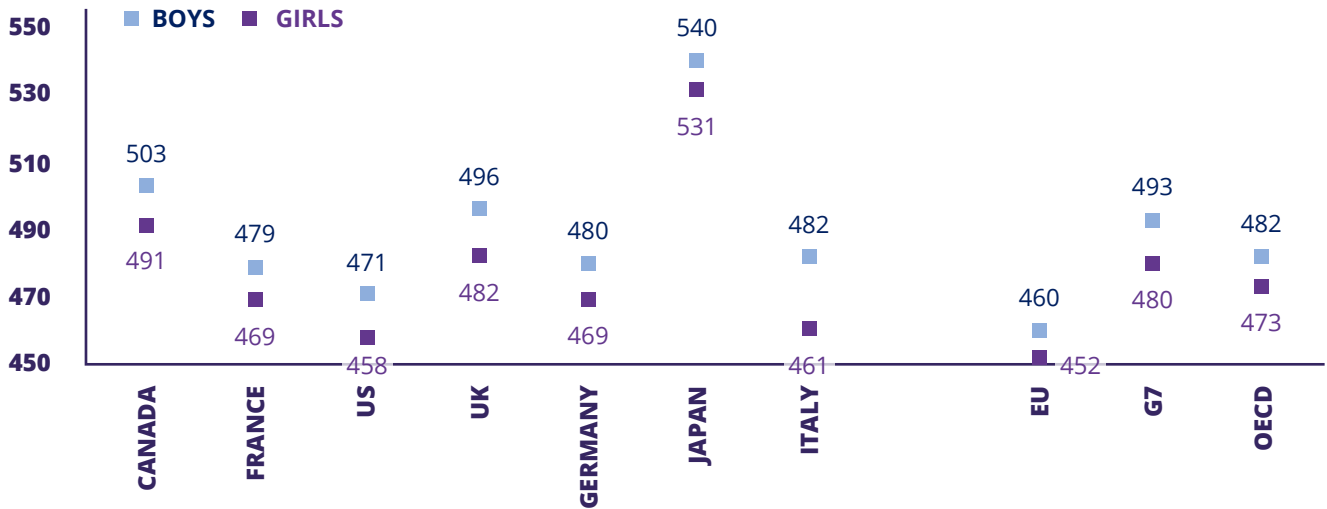
As a fundamental human right, education constitutes the cornerstone of sustainable development and social progress. As the world rapidly evolves through technological advancements and environmental challenges, equipping individuals with critical thinking, digital literacy, and adaptable skills becomes imperative. These competencies are crucial to navigating and thriving in increasingly complex job markets influenced by disruptive technologies and a shift toward sustainable practices. Ensuring equitable access to quality education fosters resilience and innovation, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive society where everyone can participate meaningfully in shaping the future.

The G7 has therefore decided to track education with three indicators that stand as proxies for the educational participation of women: mathematical literacy, proportion of women among all who attained tertiary education, and the proportion of women among all tertiary graduates in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

OECD PISA Mathematics scores

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) measures 15-year-olds' ability to use their reading, mathematics, and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges. The Mathematics score, in particular, shows significant disparities among G7 nations, with Japan outperforming all other countries by a wide margin. In all G7 countries, the PISA scores of men are higher than those of women. Major differences in the gender test score gap become evident when comparing countries. The gap is smallest in Japan (9 points), followed by France (10), Germany (11), Canada (12), the US (13), the UK (14) and Italy (21). The GEAC highlights that, alongside efforts to narrow the test score gap between men and women, raising overall mathematical competencies remains a critical priority. Many G7 nations have room for improvement in

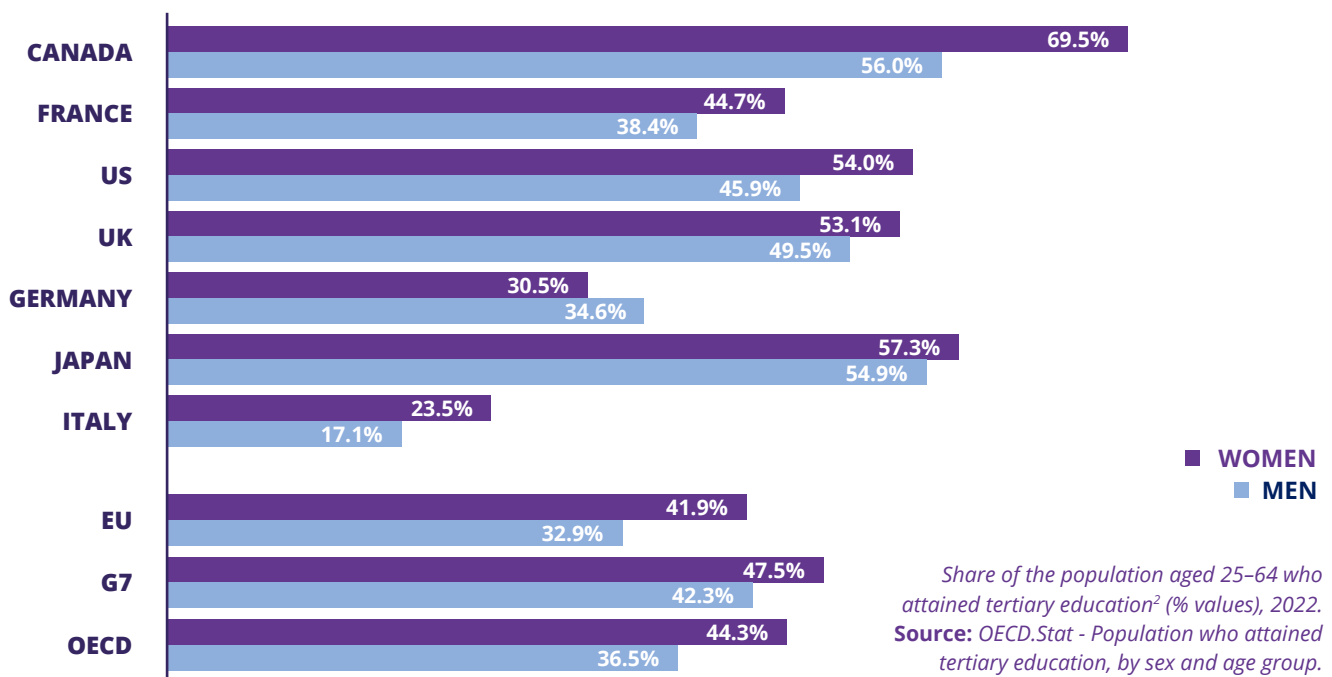
strengthening math skills for both genders. Notably, the GEAC advises that these countries make substantial additional investments in this area, particularly in light of potential declines in test scores from 2022 following the educational disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Such investment is essential to address both the existing disparities between countries and the overall decline in math proficiency.



OECD PISA Mathematics scores by gender (mean score), 2022. Source: OECD (2024) Mathematics performance (PISA)¹.

Share of the population aged 25–64 who attained tertiary education

In all G7 countries except Germany, women surpass men in tertiary education attainment. According to 2022 data, Canada leads with a remarkable 69.5% of women holding a post-secondary or tertiary degree, while more than half of women in Japan, the US, and the UK have achieved this level of education. Notably, in countries where fewer women pursue tertiary education, such as Germany and Italy, men’s attainment rates are also relatively low. As this trend has shown little change from last year’s dashboard, which included 2020 data, it is essential to look beyond gender disparities and focus on broader strategies that not only increase higher education participation for both women and men but also expand pathways for women to access leadership positions.

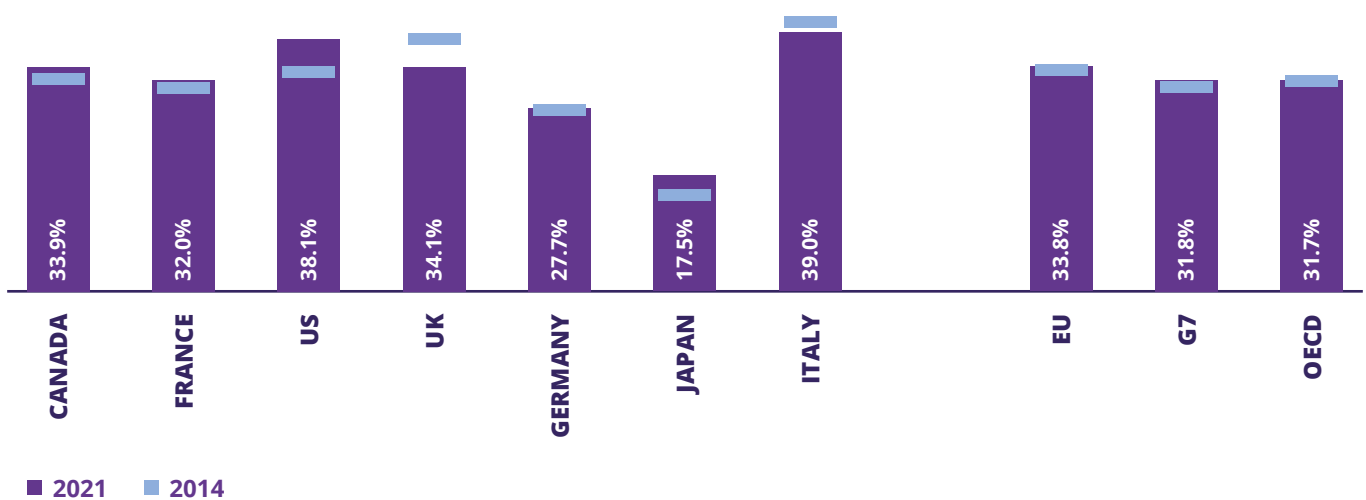


Share of the population aged 25–64 who attained tertiary education² (% values), 2022. Source: OECD.Stat - Population who attained tertiary education, by sex and age group.

Share of women among all tertiary graduates in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

Across all G7 countries, the percentage of women among STEM graduates remains lower than that of men. A comparison with the 2023 GEAC Report shows minimal change in the gender gap in STEM from 2020 to 2021. Italy, despite having the lowest overall percentage of female tertiary graduates among the G7, leads in the proportion of women graduating in STEM fields, with 39%. In contrast, Japan has one of the highest rates of female post-secondary and tertiary education attainment but the lowest representation of women in STEM disciplines.

Additionally, the overall share of female STEM graduates has shown little improvement over the past seven years. This underscores the urgent need for countries to address the attrition gap between education and the workforce, implementing strategies to strengthen women's participation in STEM education and career pathways.



Share of women among all tertiary graduates in STEM³ (% values), 2014-2021. Source: OECD.Stat - Share of graduates by gender in fields of education.

Employment and Social Security

Women's economic empowerment is both a catalyst for and a result of achieving gender equality. Financial independence is shaped by various factors, including workforce participation, income from wages and pensions, and care work responsibilities. Effectively bridging the gender gaps in economic opportunities and participation entails adopting a holistic approach integrating both public and private sector strategies to address the double burden of both paid and unpaid work that women bear due to their caregiving roles, negatively impacting their labor force participation rate. Such an approach aims to ensure that both women and men have equitable access to resources, thereby enhancing overall material well-being across their lifetime.

To monitor and address disparities in economic empowerment, the G7 tracks six key indicators that highlight differences between women and men: labor force participation, part-time employment, wages, unpaid care work, childcare costs, and pension income.

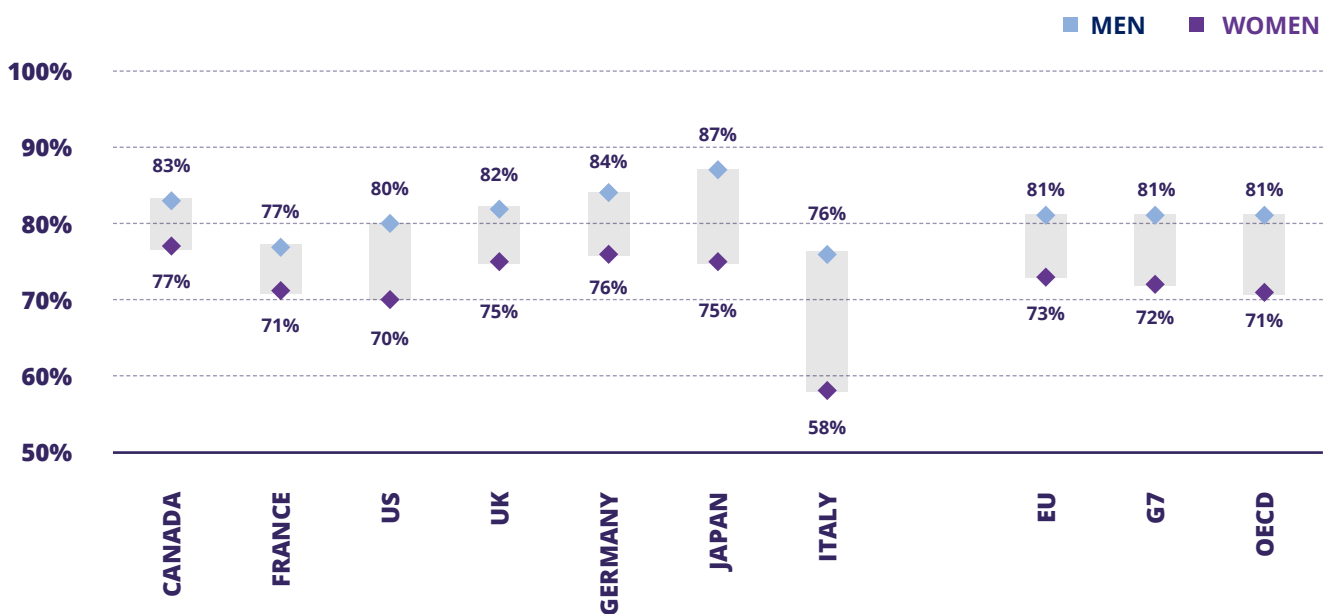
Labor force participation rate

The labor force participation rate (LFPR) reflects the percentage of women and men aged 15–64 who are part of the labor force. The 2023 data reveals that in all G7 countries, men's LFPR surpasses that of women, with significant variation across countries. The gender gap in LFPR is narrowest in Canada, France, and the

UK, where differences between participation rates are around 6 to 7 percentage points. Conversely, Italy exhibits the widest gender gap at 18 percentage points, followed by Japan with a 12-point difference.

When examining women's LFPR specifically, the highest rates are seen in Canada (77%) and Germany (76%), with the UK and Japan following close behind. Italy has the lowest rate for women's participation at 58%.

These disparities underscore the need for targeted policies that not only close the gender gap in labor force participation but also bolster overall female labor participation. Increasing the employment rate of the female population, with workforce participation being a key driver of individual economic and social empowerment and an enabler of sustainable and inclusive development, is a key priority to implement measures with potential win-win effects, both for the inclusion and empowerment of women and for society at large.



Labor force participation rate among 15-64-year-olds⁴ (% values), 2023. Source: OECD.Stat - Labour force participation rate.

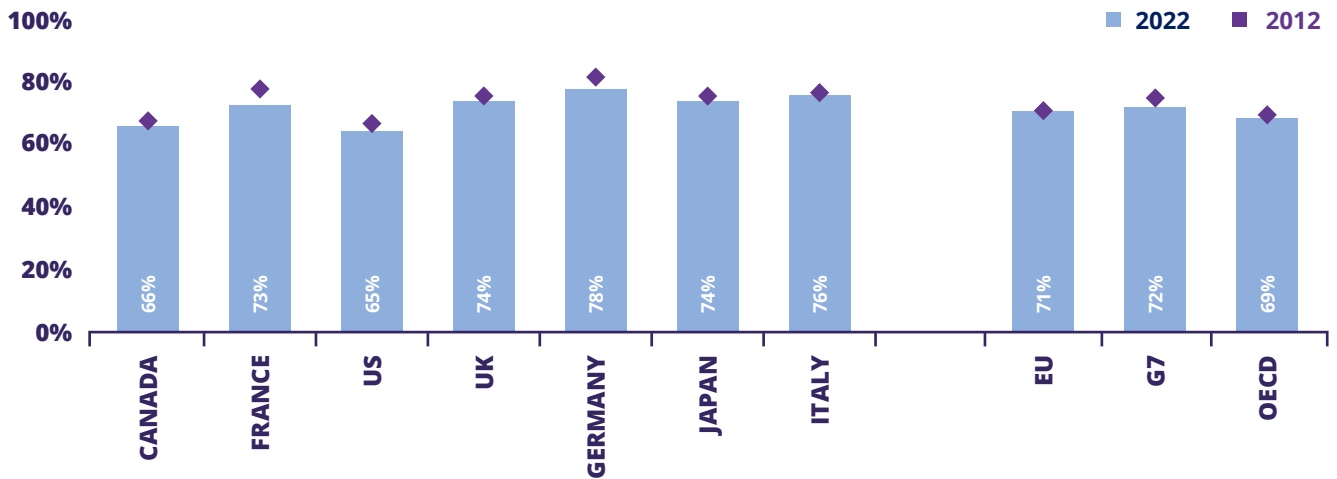
Share of women among all part-time employees

This indicator highlights differences in working hours between genders. "Part-time" is defined as working fewer than 30 hours per week, which provides only a broad estimate of actual gender-based differences in working hours. For instance, women might work close to 30 hours per week in one country but only 10 hours per week in another; both cases, however, fall under the part-time category.

More importantly, the distinction between full-time and part-time employment extends beyond hours worked. In some countries, transitioning from part-time to full-time work is challenging, and those in part-time roles often face limited job mobility, leading to a higher likelihood of being confined to unstable or precarious employment.

Across G7 countries, women are significantly more likely than men to engage in part-time employment. However, the proportion varies markedly by country. In the US and Canada, women constitute approximately 66% of the part-time workforce. This percentage rises to around 74% in France, Italy, the UK, and Japan, while Germany records the highest share, with 78% of part-time positions held by women. Although women's overall labor force participation has increased substantially in recent years, the proportion of women in part-time employment has remained almost unchanged over the past decade.

In addition to differences in working hours, employment stability and mobility are crucial factors affecting women's financial security. While women's participation in the workforce has increased, caregiving responsibilities and restrictive part-time employment structures often hinder career progression and limit their ability to transition into full-time roles (see the **Care** essay and recommendations). This constraint not only impacts women's long-term financial independence but also perpetuates economic disparities. To address these challenges, the GEAC advocates for policy measures that support flexible job mobility between part-time and full-time employment, enabling women to pursue diverse career pathways without sacrificing stability or economic growth potential.



Share of women among all part-time (<30h per week) employees aged 15-64⁵ (% values), 2012-2022. **Source:** OECD.Stat - FTPT employment.

Gender wage gap in percent

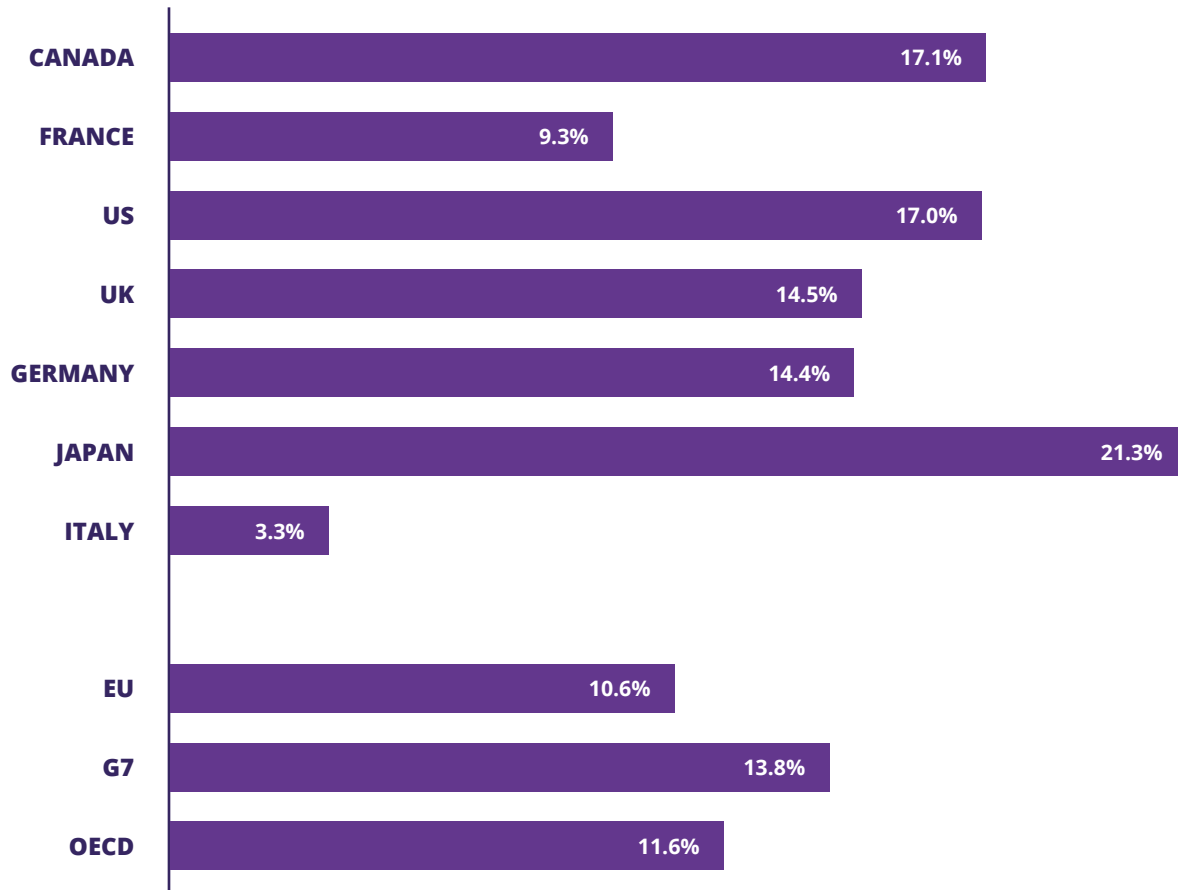
The gender wage gap refers to the disparity between the average earnings of men and women employed full-time, typically expressed as a percentage of men's average income. Since fewer women than men hold full-time positions, this metric does not capture income differences across all workers on a weekly, monthly, or annual basis. In line with previous recommendations, the 2024 GEAC advocates for broadening data collection to encompass diverse employment types, including part-time and marginal employment, to provide a more comprehensive view of income disparities.

In all G7 countries, men employed full-time earn more on average than women employed full-time. Japan shows the largest wage gap in 2022 at 21.3%, although the gap has decreased by 7.4 p.p. since 2010. In Canada, despite high female labor force participation, women continue to face a gender wage gap of nearly 17%, highlighting a pressing need for initiatives to address these disparities. For instance, the European Commission's Directive on equal pay and pay transparency, effective as of April 2023, mandates that companies report gender pay gaps and provide justifications for any observed wage differences.

The factors contributing to the gender wage gap are multifaceted and complex, making it difficult to identify a single cause. The wage gap is not solely attributable to market-based variables but is also influenced by societal and structural factors beyond the labor market. As explored in this Report's essay on **Care**, women disproportionately take on unpaid caregiving responsibilities, leading them to occupy more flexible, lower-paying positions that align with caregiving demands. Additionally, women are more likely to experience career interruptions, which hinder their access to promotion opportunities and career advancement compared to their male counterparts.

Given that female employment remains segregated in certain sectors and that STEM roles are generally associated with higher wages and greater economic opportunities, the 2024 GEAC report calls on G7 Lea-

ders to address gender disparities in STEM not only by promoting STEM education but also by establishing mentorship programs and incentives specifically for women in order to build a more diverse and equitable workforce, fostering innovation and advancing gender equality. These initiatives target skills in AI, digital literacy, and climate resilience, aiming to counteract early biases that often steer women away from technical fields (see the **Education** essay and recommendations).

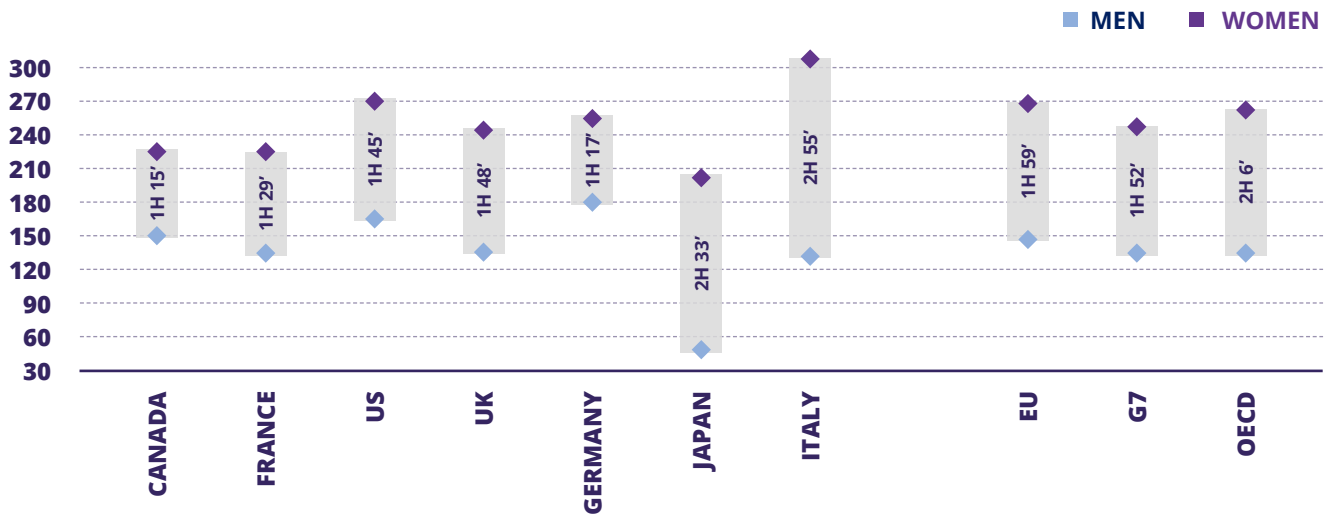


Gender wage gap⁶ (% values), 2022. **Source:** OECD.Stat - Decile ratios of gross earnings: Gender wage gap (median).

Gender gap in unpaid care and housework in minutes per day

Differences in labor force participation, part-time work, and wages are closely connected to differences in unpaid care and housework. In all G7 countries, women consistently dedicate more time to caregiving tasks than men do. Yet the gender gap in unpaid care and housework varies substantially between countries, ranging from 1 hour and 15 minutes in Canada to nearly 3 hours in Italy. Women in Italy dedicate almost 5 hours per day to unpaid care work (vs. men’s 2 hours), the highest duration among G7 countries and significantly more than the EU, G7, and OECD averages.

As noted by the OECD, the data presented here serve as a placeholder due to the lack of internationally comparable data. The definition of unpaid work and the measurement of time spent in unpaid work varies by country and across the surveys on which the Dashboard relies. The 2024 GEAC therefore calls upon G7 Leaders to invest in collecting targeted, internationally comparable data on women’s unpaid care work to make measurement and assessments more accurate and reliable.

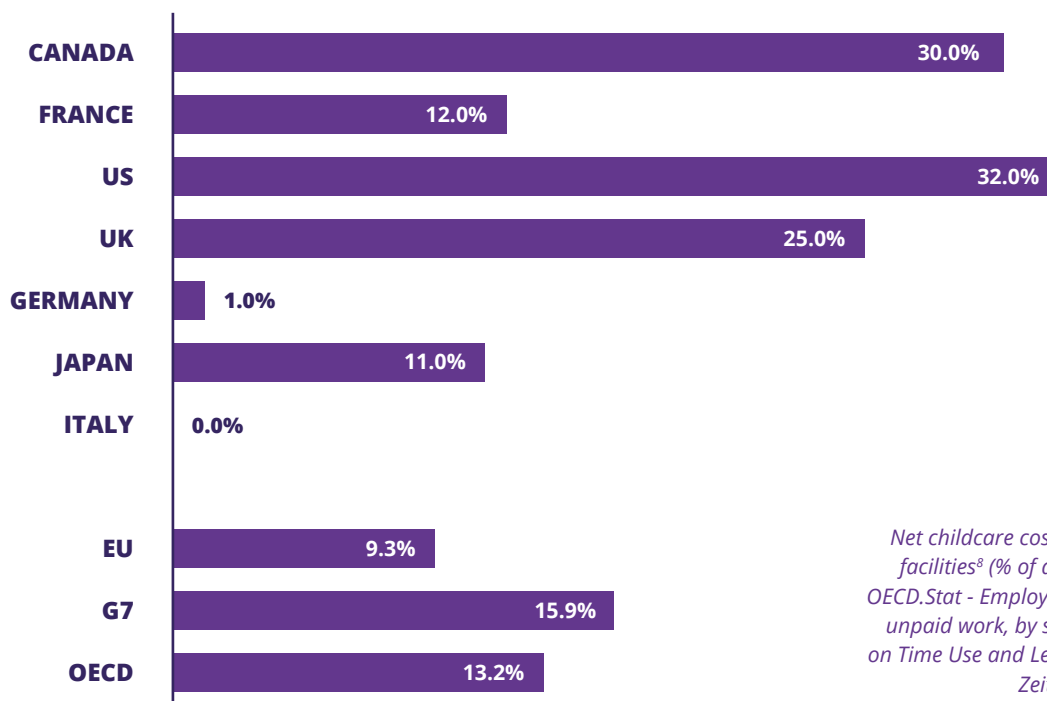


Gender gap in unpaid care and housework⁷ (minutes per day among 15-64-year-olds), 2021 or latest year available. **Source:** OECD.Stat - Employment: Time spent in paid and unpaid work, by sex; Japanese 2021 Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities.

Net childcare costs for parents using childcare facilities

Access to affordable, high-quality childcare is critical to enabling women’s active participation in the labor force. Since its 2023 edition, the GEAC Dashboard introduced and updated a new indicator tracking the cost of full-time, center-based childcare, using publicly provided centers where the option exists; where childcare is locally regulated, data refer to childcare settings for a specific sub-national jurisdiction (e.g., Berlin for Germany, Michigan for the US).

Data from 2022 shows that the costs of childcare facilities in G7 countries vary widely, taking up more than a quarter of the average annual salary in Canada (28%) and the UK (25%). Parents in Italy and Germany, by contrast, pay very little for state-sponsored childcare services. The 2023 GEAC has called upon G7 Leaders to develop, fund, and support various kinds of high-quality childcare systems (see **Care** essay and recommendations).



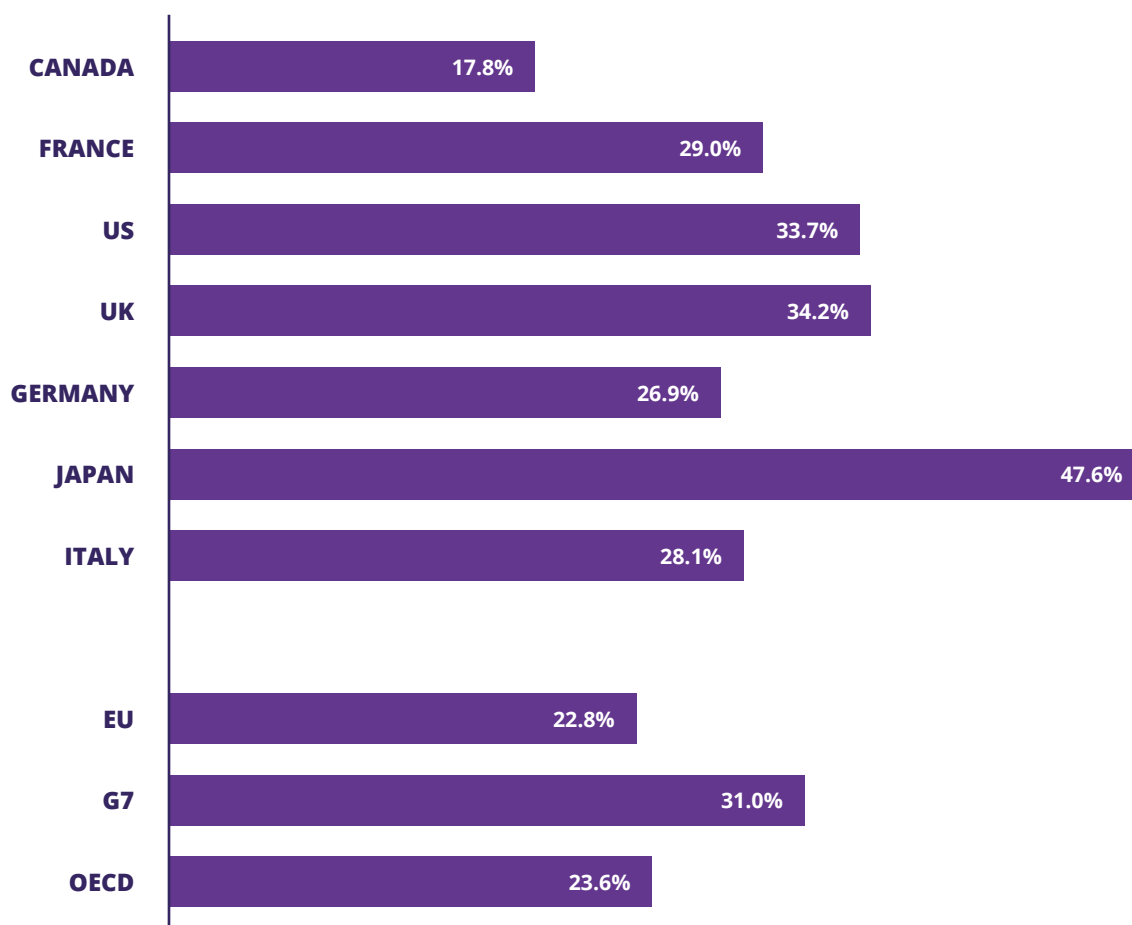
Net childcare costs for parents using childcare facilities⁸ (% of average wage), 2022. **Source:** OECD.Stat - Employment: Time spent in paid and unpaid work, by sex, the Japanese 2021 Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities, German 2024 Zeitverwendungserhebung (ZVE).

Gender gap in pension income in percent

The gender gap in pension income is defined as the difference between the mean retirement income of men and women over the mean retirement income of men among pension beneficiaries. Here, the OECD lacks sufficient data to show progress over time; furthermore, the data presented were collected in different years across different countries, making it difficult to make informed international comparisons.

Within G7 countries, women's pensions are generally lower than men's, though the gender gap differs substantially, ranging from 17.8% in Canada to 47.6% in Japan. Most countries with data updated since the 2023 GEAC Report have shown a reduction in the gender pension gap, including Canada, France, the UK, Germany, and Italy.

Since pension amounts are closely tied to paid employment, it is unsurprising that women generally receive lower pension incomes. As discussed, women are less likely to occupy full-time, stable positions and are more likely to experience career interruptions. Pension systems also differ by country, and the assurance of financial security in later life depends on specific design elements, such as provisions allowing a surviving spouse to benefit from their deceased partner's pension or eligibility for spousal pensions following a divorce. Additionally, while all G7 countries – except the US – provide pension credits for maternity leave, the methods for calculating benefits related to caregiving breaks vary significantly. Although the structure of pension systems is complex, they remain essential for ensuring financial security for all individuals.



Gender gap in pension income⁹ (% of average wage), 2023 or latest year available. **Source:** Eurostat Database - Gender pension gap by age group and for non-European OECD countries OECD (2021), Towards Improved Retirement Savings Outcomes for Women; OECD calculations based on MHLW (2020), Annual Report of the Public Pension System and Statistics Canada (2022) - Income of individuals by age group, sex, and income source.

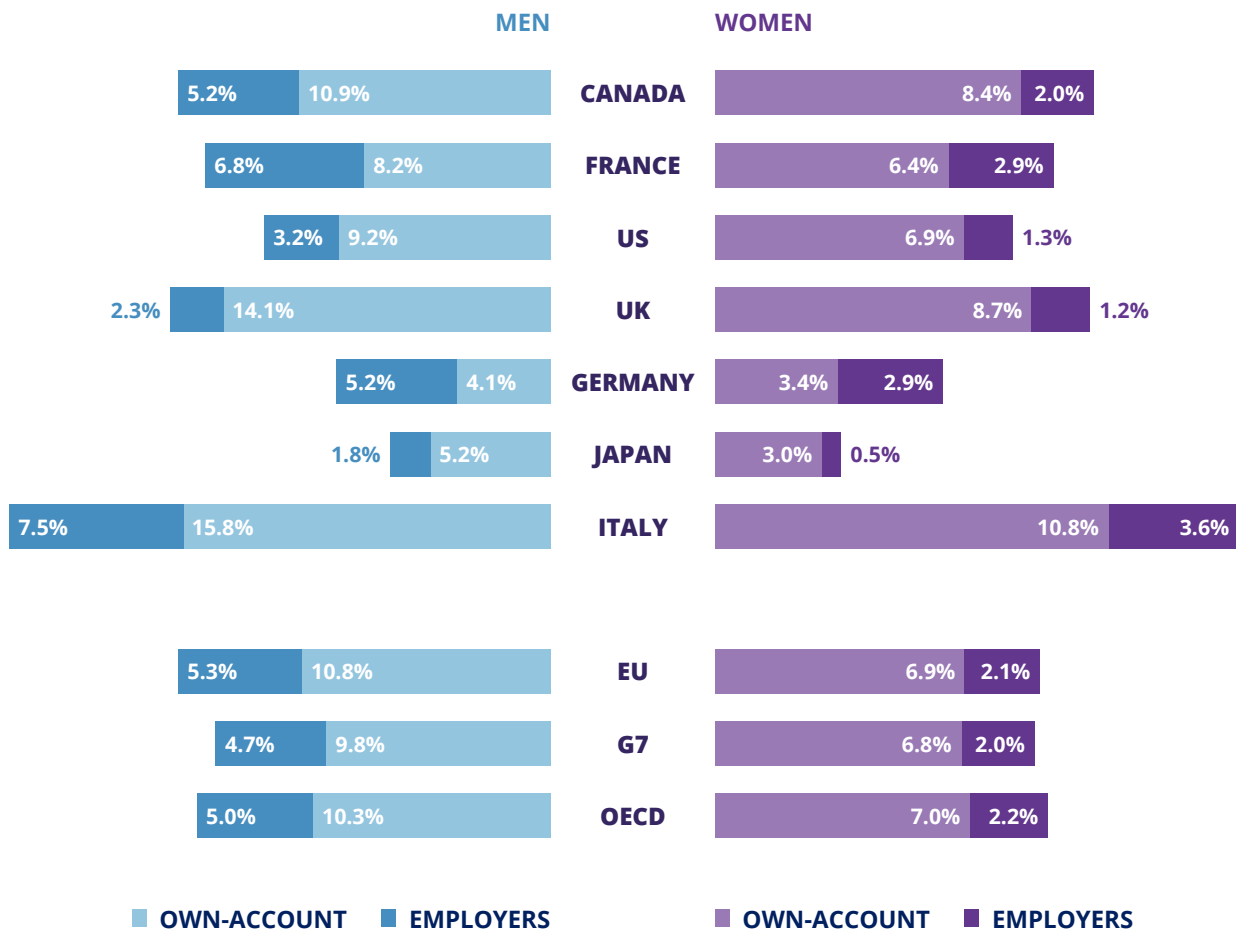
Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship serves as a critical pathway to economic independence and growth, offering individuals the opportunity to create businesses, innovate, and drive job creation. In the context of gender equality, entrepreneurship also empowers women by providing them with financial independence and decision-making authority, which are essential for promoting inclusive economic development. This indicator focuses on the share of self-employed individuals, distinguishing between those who are “own-account” workers without employees and “employers” who employ one or more individuals.

Share of self-employed with and without employees among all employed

The labor markets in G7 countries show significant differences in self-employment cultures. In Japan and Germany, relatively few individuals pursue self-employment, while the rates are much higher in Italy, the UK, France, and Canada. However, self-employment doesn't always guarantee stable or sufficient income. Many solo entrepreneurs face uncertain and challenging conditions, often remaining outside the formal job market with traditional wage employment.

Data from all countries has been updated from the previous year. Despite the wide variance in rates of self-employment across the G7, the proportion of self-employed women with and without their own employees is still lower than the corresponding proportion of men. Similar patterns are evident within the EU and across the OECD.



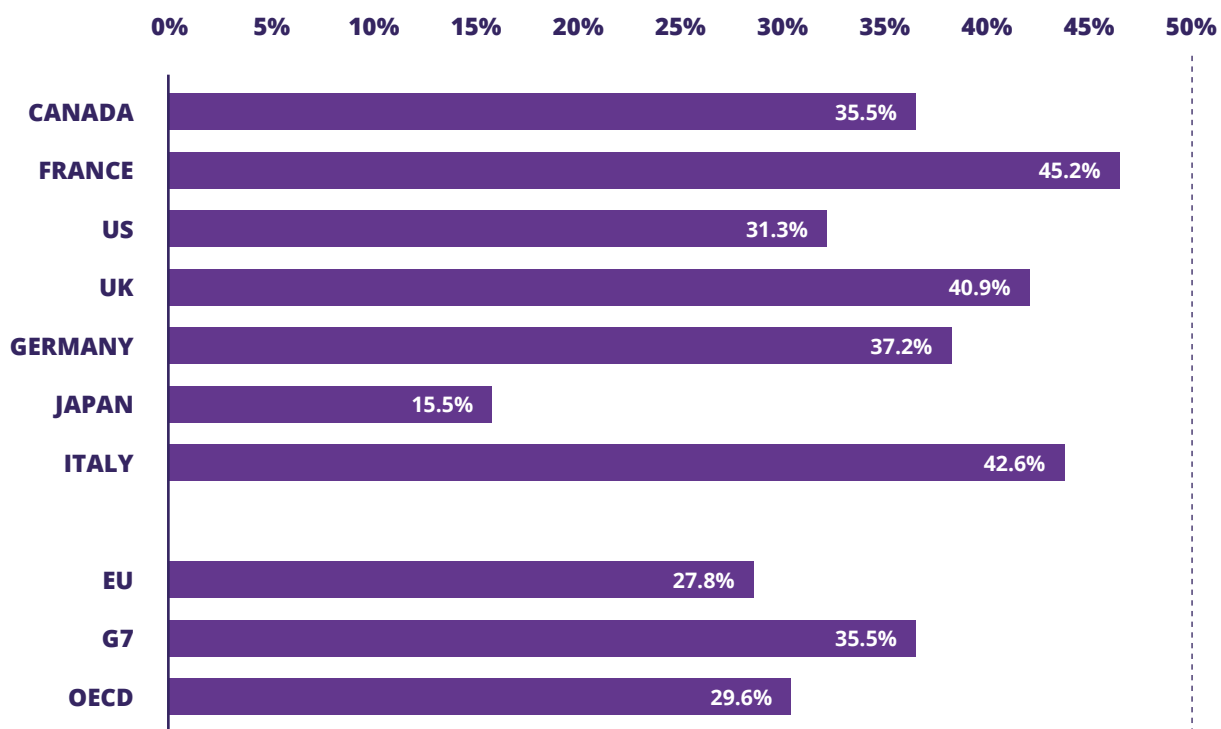
Share of self-employed with and without employees among all employed¹⁰, (% values), 2022. **Source:** OECD.Stat - Entrepreneurship: Share of employed who are employers, by sex, OECD.Stat - Entrepreneurship: Share of employed who are own-account workers, by sex and OECD calculations based on data delivered by the United Kingdom's Office for National Statistics.

Leadership

The G7 Dashboard includes two indicators for leadership. Leadership in the economy is measured by the share of women in board seats of the largest publicly listed companies, and leadership in politics by the share of women in lower or single houses of parliament. These indicators provide important clues about the participation of women in senior positions with decision-making authority. By tracking progress over time and across countries, it is also possible to assess the impact of policy measures aimed at closing gender gaps in leadership positions.

Share of women in board seats of the largest publicly listed companies

This indicator is provided for the year 2022, with comparative data from 2016 and 2021 available in the 2022 GEAC Report. It includes a broad range of board roles, making international comparisons difficult. No G7 country has gender-equal representation on supervisory boards, although France, which mandates at least 40% women on corporate management boards, is closer to gender parity at 45.2%. Italy and the UK share similar high percentages. In this scenario, it would be particularly valuable to observe changes over time and in response to policies such as the European Commission's 2022 Directive on Gender Balance in Corporate Boards.

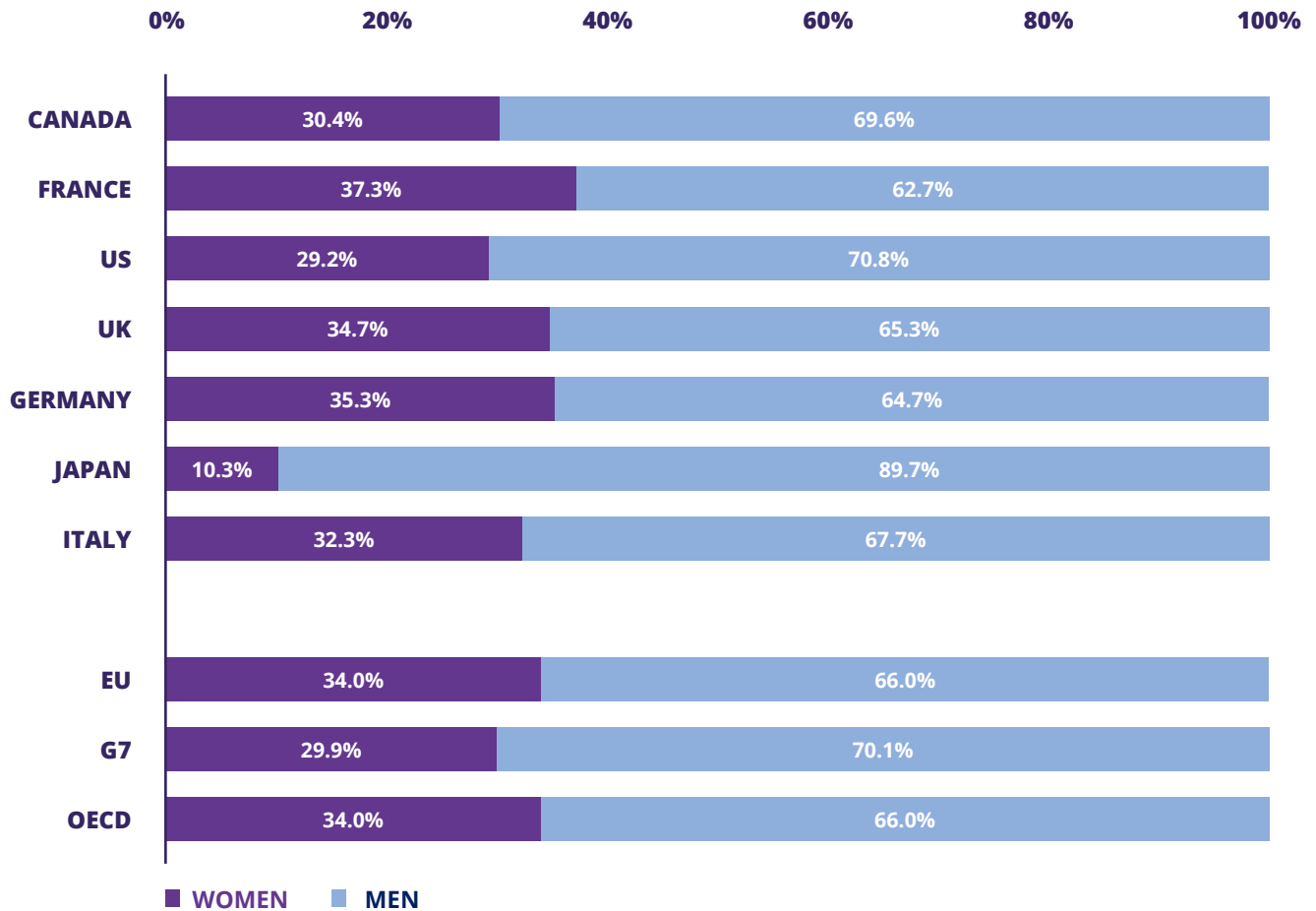


Share of women in board seats of the largest publicly listed companies¹¹ (% values), 2022. **Source:** OECD.Stat - Employment: Female share of seats on boards of the largest publicly listed companies and for non-OECD EU countries Eurostat Database - Positions held by women in senior management positions.

Share of women in lower or single houses of parliament

This indicator examines the representation of elected officials in the national parliaments of G7 countries as of 2024. No G7 country has reached full gender parity, although France performs relatively well, with nearly 40% of parliamentary seats occupied by women. A comparative analysis reveals substantial dispari-

ties across G7 nations, with the percentage of women in parliament ranging from 37.3% in France (a slight decrease of 0.5 percentage points from 2023) to just 10.3% in Japan. The GEAC suggests conducting more in-depth research on the progress each country has made toward achieving gender parity in political leadership. This analysis could provide insights into what lessons other nations can learn and how they might create conditions that allow both women and men to equally shape their country's future.



Share of women in lower or single houses of parliament (% values), 2024. Source: OECD.Stat - Gender equality in parliament and IPU Parline Database.

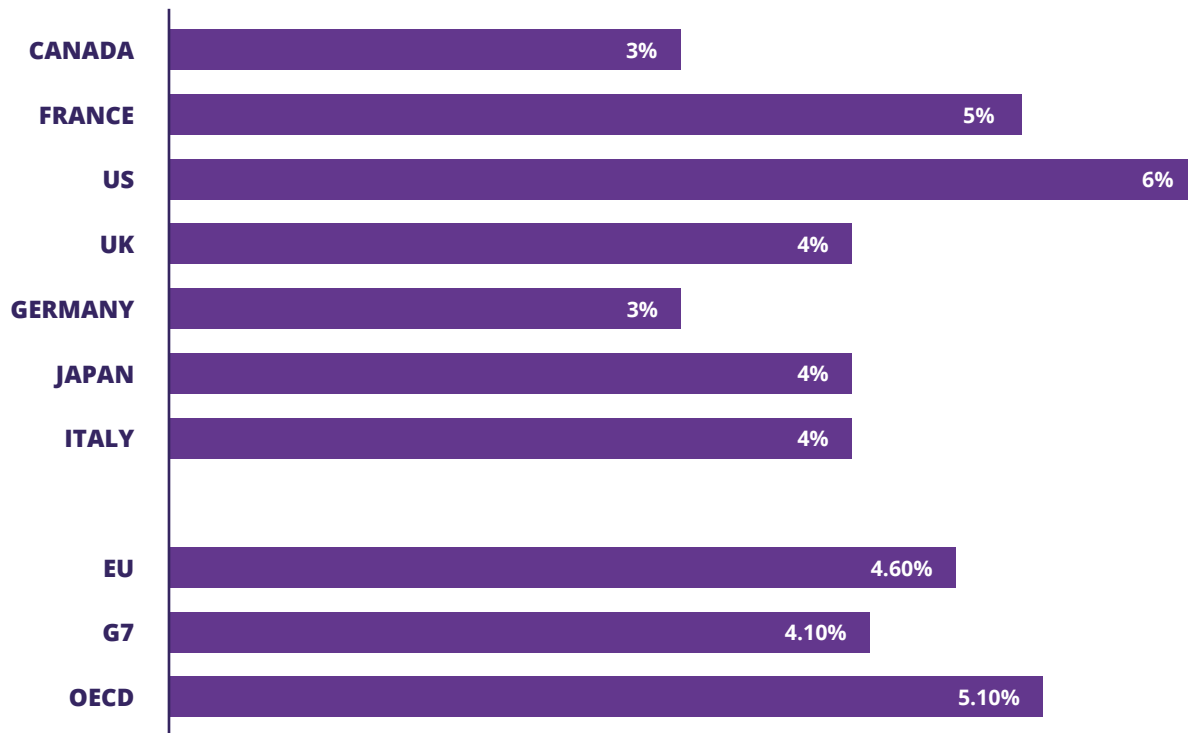
Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a severe violation of human rights that affects countless individuals worldwide, predominantly women and girls, and poses significant social and health-related challenges. Recognizing its devastating impact, the G7 has identified IPV as a critical political priority and an essential issue to address within the scope of gender equality and well-being. This indicator is included in the Dashboard as a placeholder, underscoring the urgent need for robust, internationally comparable data.

Prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence against women and girls by an intimate partner

The OECD and GEAC recognize that current data on GBV are insufficient: they refer only to women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 and exclusively consider acts of violence committed against ever-married or partnered women. Furthermore, data published in the 2024 Dashboard have not been updated since the 2022 and 2023 GEAC Report. Due to a lack of available and reliable data, the Dashboard remains uncommented.

Recognizing the distinct impacts of intimate partner violence on women and girls, especially in conflict-affected areas, the GEAC 2024 calls for enhanced funding and support to collect comprehensive data on GBV, with particular emphasis on intimate partner violence. This data collection is critical to developing targeted interventions and ensuring that gender-sensitive policies address the full scope of violence, effectively protecting women and girls in vulnerable situations from educational environments to conflict zones.



Ever married/partnered women aged 15-49 that have been subject to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence over the past 12 months¹² (% values), 2018. **Source:** OECD.Stat - Gender equality in parliament and IPU Parline Database.

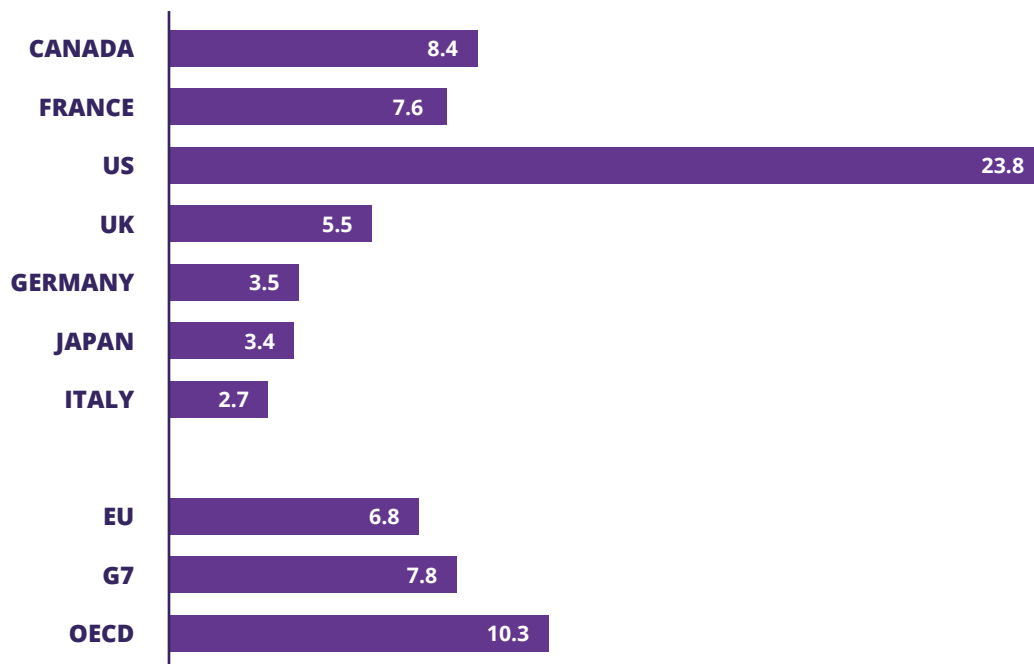
Health & Well-being

The Health & Well-being indicator is integral to understanding the broader gender equality landscape, as health outcomes and experiences of well-being significantly impact economic and social stability. Gender inequalities in health can manifest through disparities in access to care, vulnerability to specific health conditions, and experiences of gender-based violence. The data presented here focuses on the major sub-indicator of maternal mortality rates, critical for assessing both direct health impacts on women and girls and the efficacy of health-related support systems. Enhancing health data quality, accessibility, and comparability across nations remains a priority to inform gender-sensitive health policies and ensure all individuals can achieve optimal health outcomes.

Maternal mortality per 100,000 live births

Maternal mortality data, similar to statistics on intimate partner violence, presents several interpretative challenges. According to the OECD, maternal mortality figures involve very low case counts, leading to substantial annual variability – especially in G7 countries and those with smaller populations. To mitigate these fluctuations, the OECD suggests that a 5-year data aggregation may provide more stability in future analyses. Additionally, methodological constraints such as potential gaps in data collection, exclusion of certain cases, and misclassification errors further complicate the reliability of these figures.

It is important to highlight that the US has a markedly higher maternal mortality rate compared to other G7 nations. Given that accessible, comprehensive reproductive healthcare has been a key focus of previous GEAC recommendations and aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5.6, which seeks to guarantee universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, the GEAC advises enhancing data collection efforts. Additionally, the GEAC encourages future committees to analyze the policies and practices associated with unusually high or low maternal mortality rates. However, at this time, the GEAC restrains from interpreting the data further.



Maternal mortality per 100,000 live births¹³, 2021 or latest year available. **Source:** OECD.Stat - Gender equality in parliament and IPU Parline Database.

Funds for Development Cooperation

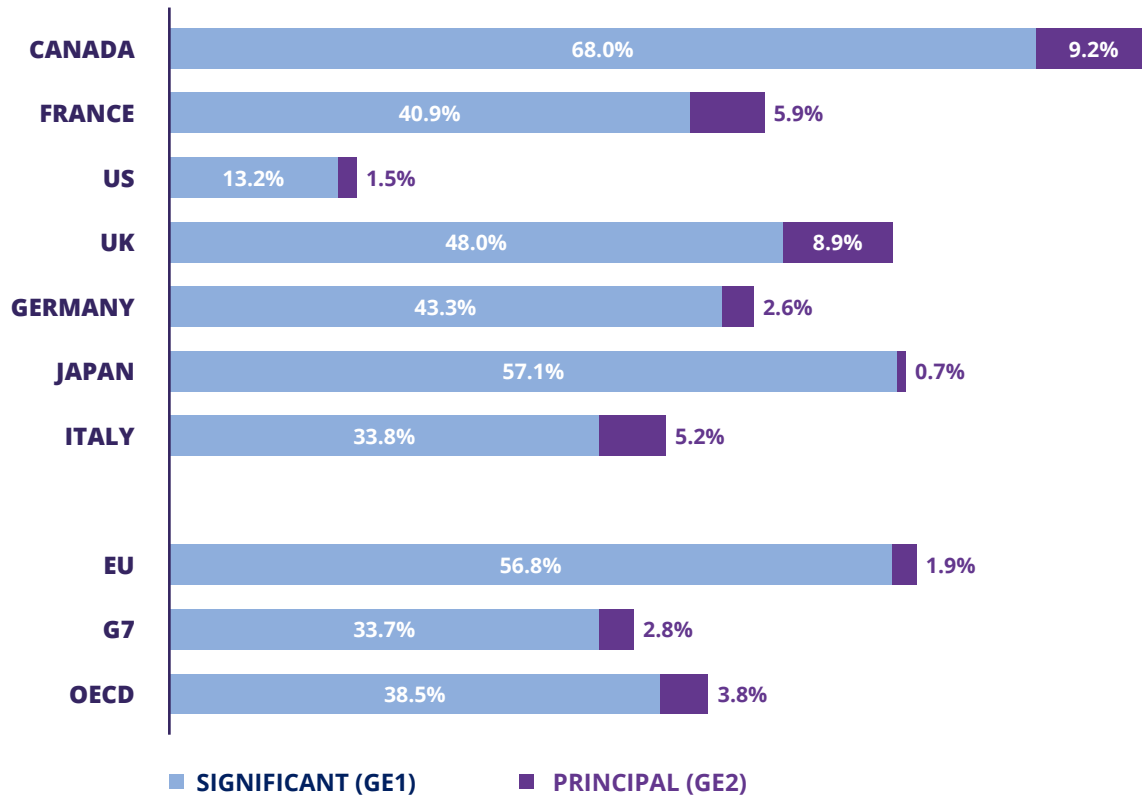
Development aid plays a vital role in supporting women across numerous countries facing challenges such as armed conflict, climate change, displacement and migration, and the suppression of fundamental human rights.

Share of aid activities targeting gender equality as Significant (GE1) and Principal (GE2)

In the analyzed bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments, G7 countries vary notably in the emphasis they place on initiatives that benefit women, whether directly or indirectly. The graph illustrates the proportion of aid efforts focused on gender equality from 2021 to 2022, divided into two categories: "Principal" (GE2) and "Significant" (GE1). "Principal" activities are those where promoting gender equality is the primary goal, whereas "Significant" activities refer to those where gender equality is an important goal, but not the central purpose.

Although ODA for gender equality has generally risen over time, just 3% of all ODA within the G7 countries designates gender equality as a primary goal. Having adopted both gender-responsive budgeting and a feminist foreign policy, Canada stands out with 77% of its ODA directed toward initiatives where gender equality is either the main objective (9%) or an important secondary objective (68%). However, ODA efforts overall have declined compared to 2021-22, dropping by 13 p.p. Among the G7, the US contributes the least to gender equality, allocating only 14.7% of its total ODA to such measures.

In continuity with the work carried out in 2023, the 2024 GEAC has called for increased funding for development assistance activities in support of gender equality, particularly for grassroots women's organizations (see **Conflict** essay and recommendations). In addition, greater efforts are needed to assess the impact of ODA and the amount of funds reaching grassroots organizations.



Share of aid activities targeting gender equality as Significant (GE1) and Principal (GE2)¹⁴, (% values), 2021-2022. **Source:** OECD calculations based on OECD.Stat - Aid activities targeting gender equality and women's empowerment (CRS).

- 1.** Mathematical performance, for PISA, measures the mathematical literacy of a 15-year-old to formulate, employ, and interpret mathematics in a variety of contexts to describe, predict, and explain phenomena, recognizing the role that mathematics plays in the world. PISA scores are scaled to fit approximately normal distributions, with means around 500 score points and standard deviations around 100 score points. The mean score is the measure, per country and year, and by gender. The OECD average does not include Colombia, Costa Rica, Latvia and Lithuania. The EU average does not include non-OECD EU members (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Malta, Romania), Latvia and Lithuania. This indicator (indirectly) relates to SDG Indicator 4.1.1.
- 2.** The share of the population that attained tertiary education refers to graduates from ISCED 5-8 programs (see UNESCO, 2011). For Japan, this includes post-secondary non-tertiary programs.
- 3.** The share of women among all tertiary graduates in STEM is defined as the share of women among all those who graduate from tertiary education (ISCED 5-8) in STEM fields exclusively. The OECD average does not include Israel. For Japan, data on graduates in information and communication technologies are included in each of the other educational fields. Both sub-indicators relate to SDG Indicator 4.5.1.
- 4.** The labor force participation rate is defined as the labor force divided by the total working-age population (aged 15-64).
- 5.** For the US, data refers to dependent employment only and for Japan, data refers to actual hours worked.
- 6.** Defined as the unadjusted difference between median wages of men and women relative to the median wages of men, based on gross earnings of full-time employees. The earnings pay reporting periods are weekly earnings for Canada, the UK and the US, and monthly earnings for France, Germany, Italy and Japan.
- 7.** This includes routine housework, shopping, care for household and non-household members, volunteering, travel related to household activities, and other unpaid activities. Data refers to 2021 for Japan, 2019 for the US, 2015 for Canada and the UK, 2014 for Italy, 2013 for Germany, and 2010 for France. The OECD average excludes Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Iceland, Israel, Slovakia, and Switzerland. The EU average excludes all non-OECD EU members as well as the Czech Republic and Slovakia.
- 8.** Calculations on net childcare costs seek to approximate typical settings for publicly provided full-time centre-based childcare in each country, and childcare settings for a specific sub-national jurisdiction have been used as follows: Ontario for Canada; Berlin for Germany; Rome for Italy; England for the UK; and Michigan for the US. For France and Japan, national rules apply and for EU countries, see OECD (2022). As costs reflect the situation in one geographical location, they are not necessarily representative for the whole country.
- 9.** The gender gap in pensions is defined as the difference between the mean retirement income of men and women (aged 65+) over the mean retirement income of men (aged 65+), among pension beneficiaries. Data for Canada refer to 2022, for Japan to 2020, for the US to 2019 and for the UK to 2018. For Japan, data also include pension recipients under the age of 65, while excluding private pensions. The OECD average does not include Australia, Costa Rica, Israel, Korea and New Zealand.
- 10.** Incorporated self-employed are only partly or non-included in the counts of self-employed in several countries. This may affect comparability across countries. Data refer to 15-64-year-olds, with exception of the US, where they refer to all 16 years old or more. The OECD average does not include Colombia and Costa Rica.
- 11.** Defined as the share of seats held by women in the highest decision-making body in the given company (board of directors, supervisory board, etc.). For EU countries, data refer to the largest 50 members of the primary blue-chip index in the country concerned (including only those companies that are registered in the given country). For non-EU countries, data refer to companies covered by the MSCI ACWI index, with management and audit boards omitted. The OECD average does not include Costa Rica.
- 12.** Ever married/partnered refers to women who have been married, cohabitating or in any other formal or informal union with an intimate partner. While never married/partnered women and those above the age of 49 can still be subject to physical and/or sexual violence, the presented figures reflect limitations in available data of sufficient quality. Data refer to country prevalence estimates. For Germany, data refer to the proportion of ever-partnered women aged 18-74 years. Data refer to 2018, except for Germany where they refer to 2014.
- 13.** For more information on data collection methodologies, please refer to OECD Health Statistics 2023 Definitions, Sources and Methods. For Canada, Italy, and the US data refer to 2020, for the UK to 2017 and for France to 2015. The EU average does not include non-OECD EU members.
- 14.** The data on commitments for gender equality and women's empowerment is collected on an annual basis in the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS) using the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) gender equality policy marker. Commitments are presented as two-year averages in constant 2021 USD as they can be very volatile on a year-to year basis.

6. GEAC 2024 Members

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Regional Director, UN Women Eastern & Southern Africa

Lierre Keith (Gen Z WG)

American writer, feminist and food activist, founder of Women's Liberation Front

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7. Acknowledgments

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