

Methodological note to calculate gender data gaps and countries' performance on the status of women and girls

The goal of this experimental exercise is to reveal gender data gaps and to measure the status of women and girls in each country using the SDGs indicators. Instead of measuring gender (in)equality or parity between females and males, as many existing measures do, we instead focus on measuring women's and girls' outcomes, without comparing them to men and boys. Although this measure wouldn't tell us anything about gender equality, one of the merits of this approach is that it allows us to better understand some of the specific challenges that women and girls face, including in areas where there are no equivalent indicators for men such as violence against women or maternal mortality.

Overall, we use the 62 female SDGs indicators (79 data series in total) in the Women Count Data Hub's SDGs Dashboard for the 193 UN Member States. For each indicator, we calculate the 33rd and 66th percentiles of the distribution and based on those two values countries are classified as belonging to High performance, Medium performance and Low performance categories, using the following rule:

- For "negative" directional indicators (i.e. lower values are better)
 - *High*: If the country's value is between 0 and the 33rd percentile;
 - *Medium*: If the country's value is between the 33rd and the 66th percentiles;
 - *Low*: If the country's value is between the 66th and the 100th percentiles; and
 - *Data unavailable*: If data is missing.
- For "positive" directional indicators (i.e. higher values are better):
 - *High*: If the country's value is between the 66th and the 100th percentiles;
 - *Medium*: If the country's value is between the 33rd and the 66th percentiles;
 - *Low*: If the country's value is between 0 and the 33rd percentile; and
 - *Data unavailable*: If data is missing.

Using these results, the values are calculated as follows:

$$\text{Percentage of indicators in High category} = 100 \times \frac{\sum \text{High indicators}}{\text{Total indicators}}$$

and similarly, for the *Medium*, *Low* and *Data unavailable* categories. Overall, the four categories add up to 100 per cent.

There are three important points to note about this methodology that should be considered when interpreting the results:

1. Because the cut-off points are the 33rd and 66th percentiles of the data, the categories *Low*, *Medium* and *High* performance are measures of where countries are relative to each other. Therefore, theoretically, even if overall outcomes for women and girls are lagging or advancing for all countries, some countries would still fall in each of the three categories (although we did not find any such case in our analysis).
2. Because indicator data availability differs by country, the different performance categories are not strictly comparable across countries. Therefore, country performance should be looked at in conjunction with data availability.

3. As indicated above, this is **not** a measure of gender equality. Therefore, a country could do well in these indicators but may not do as well if disparities between females and males are high. To look at gender equality, in the future, we may build on this analysis to compare indicators that only have female and male components (i.e. those disaggregated by sex).

Note: This methodology is experimental, so we would appreciate any comments or suggestions to improve it. Please send any comments you might have to gender.data@unwomen.org.