

A SNAPSHOT OF GENDER INEQUALITY

**50 OF THE
WORLD'S
MOST
SEXIST
LAWS,
POLICIES
& NORMS**

UNITED NATIONS
FOUNDATION

#equal
EVERYWHERE

A SNAPSHOT OF GENDER INEQUALITY

THIS IS WHERE WE ARE AT THE BEGINNING OF 2022:

There is still no place or part of life where girls and women are treated equal — under the law, at home, in government, or in life. Across the globe, gender inequality remains enshrined in our laws, policies, and norms, pervading every sphere of daily life.

Ahead of International Women’s Day on March 8, the UN Foundation surveyed the latest research on discriminatory laws, policies, and norms globally from some of the world’s most authoritative sources, including the World Bank’s Women, Business and the Law team; UN Women; and the UN Statistics Division.

In no particular order, here are 50 of the most egregious, absurd, and discriminatory examples of how girls and women are being held back.

There are many more. And until they are gone, girls and women cannot be equal everywhere.

ON THE COVER: Stela Savin from central Moldova, participates in a boxing exercise. Her dream is to become a world boxing champion.

Photo: UN Women Moldova/Diana Savina



UN Women/Ryan Brown

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GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE HOME

1 18 countries have laws that require a married woman to obey her husband.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

2 Women spend about 3.2 times as many hours as men on unpaid care work.

(SOURCE: UN WOMEN AND UN STATISTICS DIVISION)

3 In 25 countries, children can attain citizenship only from their fathers. In 41 countries, daughters cannot inherit the same way as sons.

(SOURCE: UNHCR AND WORLD BANK)

4 In 23 countries, the minimum age of marriage for girls is below 18 years, and only 40 countries have a minimum age set at 18 for both boys and girls, with no exceptions.

(SOURCE: UN WOMEN)

5 Nearly 40% of countries limit women's property rights.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

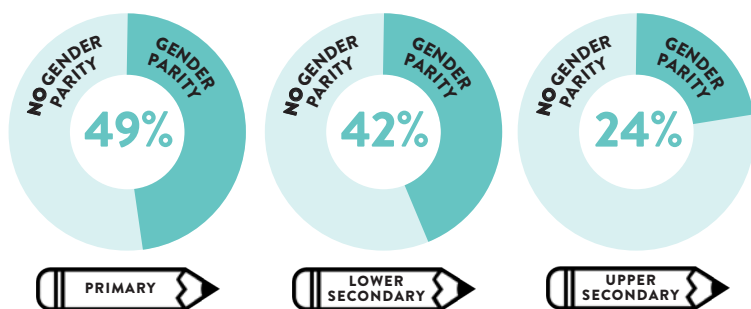
6 More than half of girls and women in 64 countries still can't make their own decisions about whether to have sex, use contraception, or seek healthcare.

(SOURCE: UNFPA)



GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE HOME

7 Only 49% of countries have achieved gender parity in primary education. At the secondary level, the gap widens: Just 42% of countries have achieved gender parity in lower secondary education, and only 24% have done so in upper secondary education.



These gaps are largely due to discriminatory norms, including child marriage, gender-based violence, lack of hygiene or sanitary products for girls, lack of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights for girls, and favoring investment in education for boys.

(SOURCE: UNICEF)

8 In 66 countries, women do not have the same rights as men to remarry.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

9 Girls between 5 and 14 years old spend 40% more time — or a collective 160 million more hours per day — on unpaid household chores than boys their age.

(SOURCE: UNICEF)

10 32 countries have no laws addressing domestic violence.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)



GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE COMMUNITY



11 More than 2.5 billion girls and women around the world are affected by discriminatory laws and the lack of legal protections. (SOURCE: UN WOMEN)

12 On average, women across the world are afforded just three-quarters of the legal rights as men. (SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

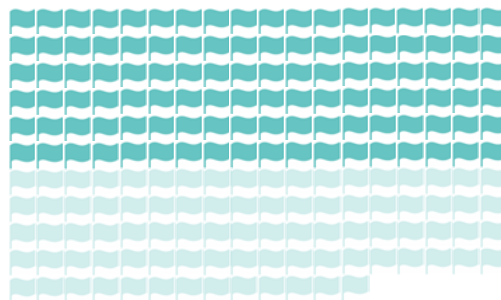
13 In 20 countries, the law exempts perpetrators from rape charges if they marry the survivor. (SOURCE: UNFPA)

14 30% of countries still restrict women's freedom of movement. (SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

15 In 16 countries, women's testimony does not carry the same evidentiary weight in court as men's. (SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

16 In 33 countries, women cannot apply for a passport in the same way as men. (SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

17 Laws in 108 countries allow financial institutions to make it harder for women to access loans.



(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

18 Based on data from 95 countries, almost half continued to restrict women from working in certain jobs or industries.

(SOURCE: UN WOMEN AND UN STATISTICS DIVISION)

19 In G20 countries, a 2015 study found that of the 29% of women who faced harassment at work, 61% never or rarely reported it.

(SOURCE: THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION)

20 146 countries do not offer paid parental leave, which has a disproportionate impact on women in the workforce because women shoulder the bulk of child care.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

21 While 70% of the world's health and social workers are women, they are paid 11% less than their male counterparts.

(SOURCE: UN WOMEN)

22 98 countries are not legally required to provide equal pay for work of equal value.

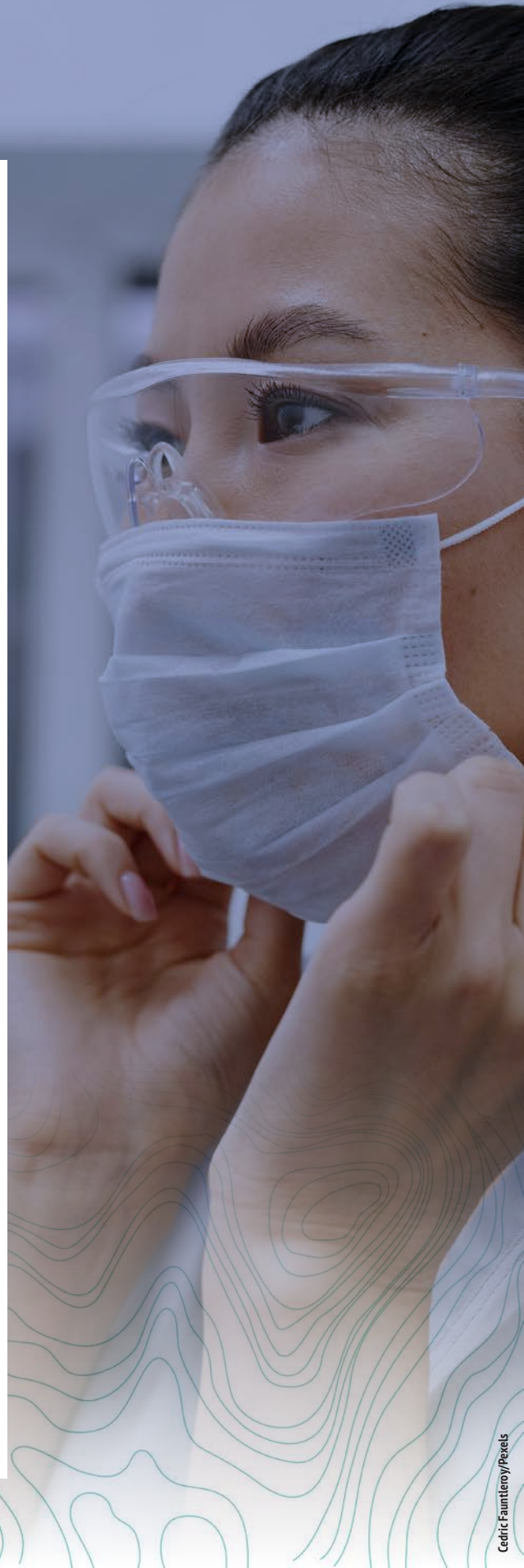
(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

23 More than 70% of women-owned small- and medium-sized enterprises have inadequate or no access to financial services.

(SOURCE: GOLDMAN SACHS/INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORPORATION)

24 18 countries require women to have their husband's permission to work outside the home.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)



GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

25 Despite the fact that globally, 70% of women prefer to work in paid jobs, the rate of female participation in the labor force is only 49% compared with 75% for men.

(SOURCE: ILO)

26 In 72 countries, women face industry restrictions when looking for jobs.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

27 In 50 countries, there is no legal protection against sexual harassment in the workplace.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

28 More than 1 billion women do not have access to the financial system.

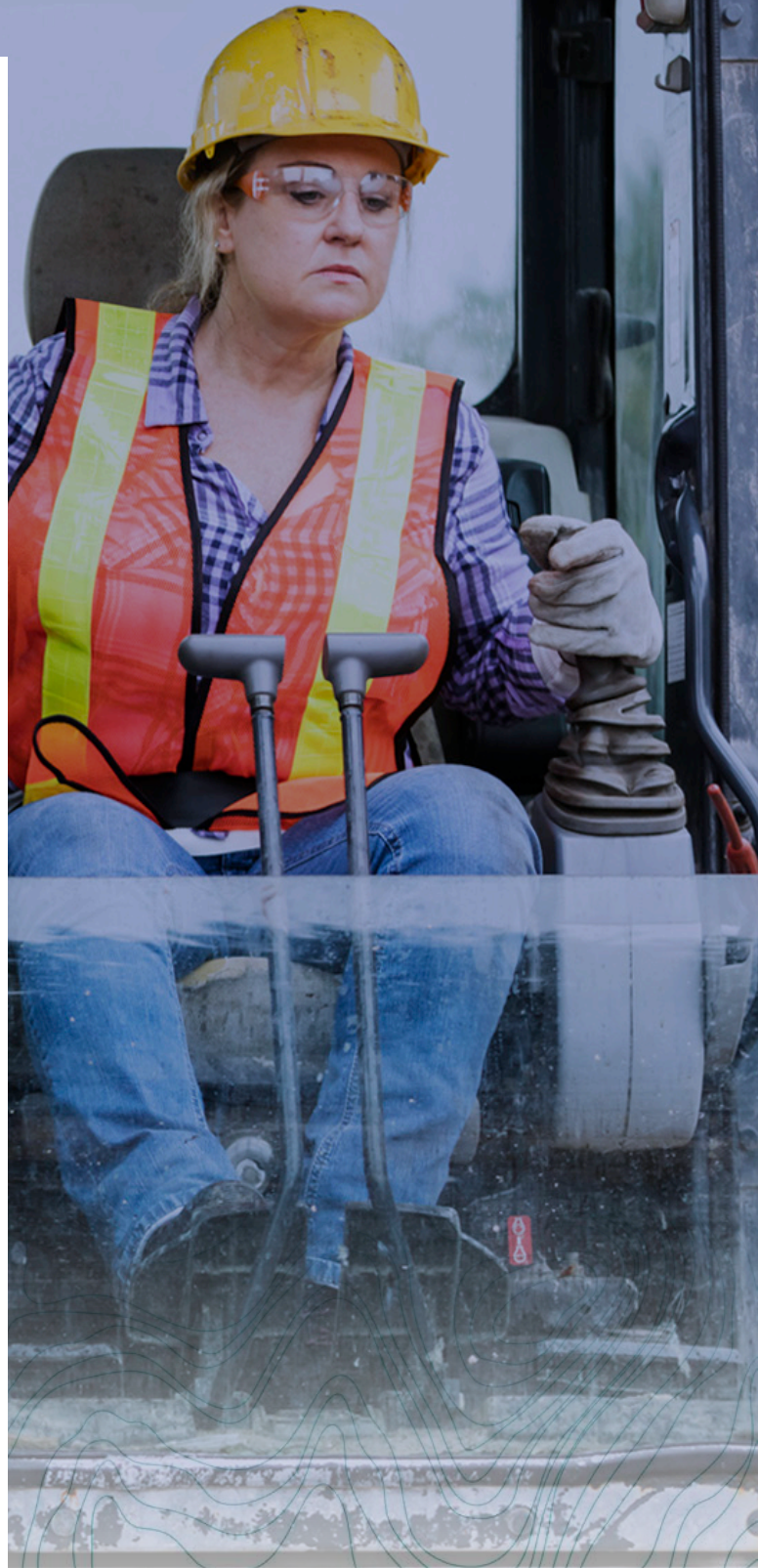
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(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)

29 In 38 countries, employers can legally dismiss pregnant workers.

(SOURCE: WORLD BANK)



GENDER INEQUALITY IN LEADERSHIP

30 Women currently lead only 23 Global 500 companies, an all-time high.

(SOURCE: FORTUNE)

31 As of 2021, women hold only 25.6% of parliament seats around the world.

(SOURCE: UN WOMEN AND UN STATISTICS DIVISION)

32 Women make up only 16% of board members in the top 500 companies (by market capital) and as little as 12% in the technology sector.

(SOURCE: OECD)

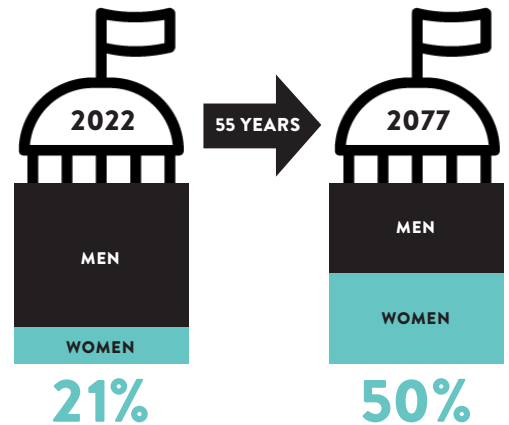
33 As of Sept. 1, 2021, 26 women were serving as Heads of State and/or Government in 24 countries. At the current rate, gender equality in the highest positions of power will take 130 years.

(SOURCE: UN WOMEN)

GENDER INEQUALITY IN LEADERSHIP



34 Only 21% of government ministers are women; at the current rate of progress, gender parity in ministerial positions will not be achieved before 2077.



(SOURCE: INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION AND UN WOMEN)

35 A survey across 187 countries shows that women are significantly underrepresented in COVID-19 task forces. Globally, there is gender parity in only 4.4% of all task forces.

(SOURCE: UNDP AND UN WOMEN)

36 Data from 133 countries shows that women constitute just 36% of elected representatives in local government.

(SOURCE: UN WOMEN AND UN STATISTICS DIVISION)

37 Less than 1% of leading global financial institutions have achieved gender parity.

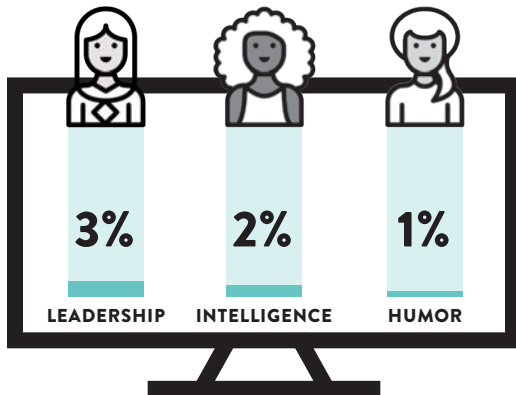
(SOURCE: OMFIF)

GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE MEDIA

38 Even though girls and women represent 51% of the population, there is a 2-to-1 ratio of male characters to female characters across advertising, film, and television.

(SOURCE: COMMON SENSE MEDIA)

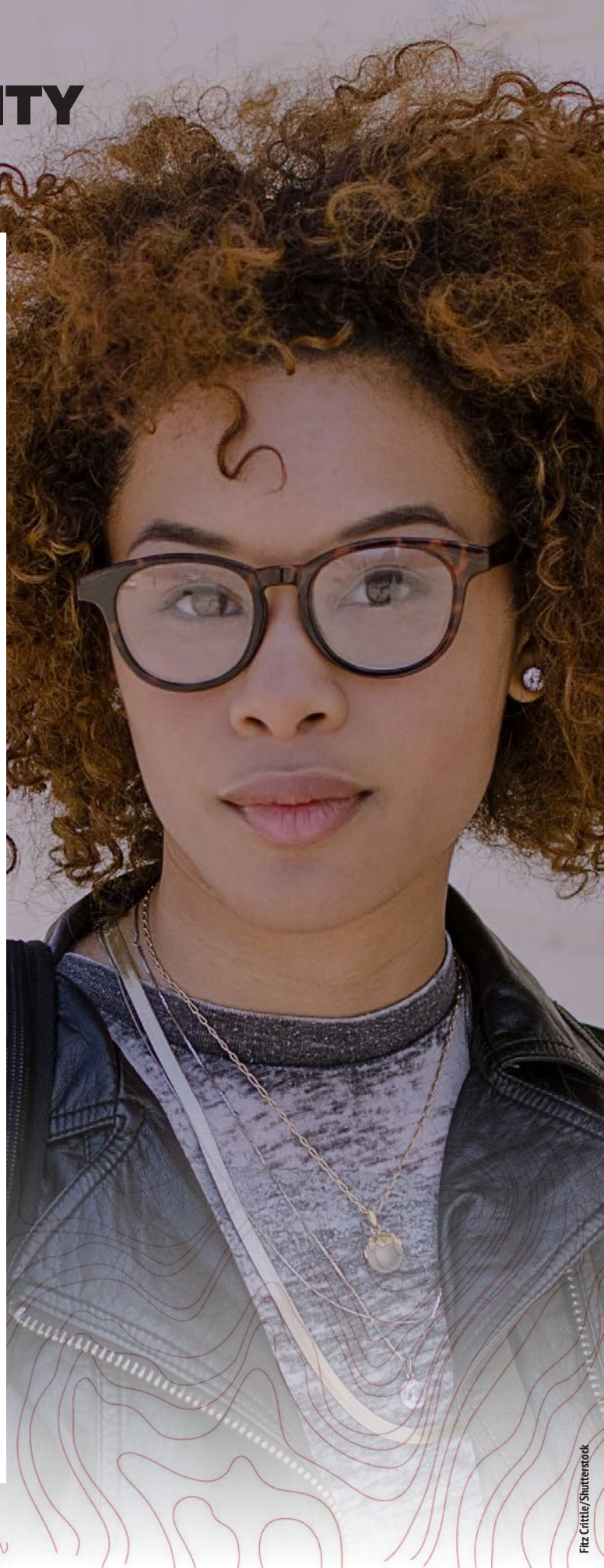
39 A survey of global advertising in 2016 revealed that only 3% of ads featured women in leadership roles, just 2% portrayed them as intelligent, and only 1% portrayed them as having a sense of humor.



(SOURCE: UNILEVER)

40 In a 2020 study across 116 countries, only 25% of subjects and sources in mainstream news media were women, a 1 percentage point increase from 2015. At this rate, it will take at least 67 years to close the average gender equality gap in traditional news media.

(SOURCE: GLOBAL MEDIA MONITORING PROJECT)



GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE MEDIA

41 During 2020, women made up 27% of health specialists appearing in coronavirus stories, far less than the 46% world average given in labor force statistics.

(SOURCE: GLOBAL MEDIA MONITORING PROJECT)

42 In 2020, 40% of stories in traditional news media were reported by women, compared with 37% in 2005 — an increase of a mere 3 percentage points over the 15-year period.

(SOURCE: GLOBAL MEDIA MONITORING PROJECT)

43 In a 10-year survey of ads that won or were shortlisted for the prestigious Cannes Lions award, male characters outnumber female characters 2 to 1, yet female characters are four times as likely as male characters to be shown in revealing clothing.

(SOURCE: GEENA DAVIS INSTITUTE)



GENDER INEQUALITY IN TECH

44 One large tech company's automated resume screeners were found to reject female applicants more often than male applicants. The AI system showed systemic bias against women, even downgrading graduates of two all-women's colleges.

(SOURCE: REUTERS)

45 Within a study of 1,270 images with diverse subjects, facial recognition software from three major tech companies was found to disproportionately fail for female users; one software program had a 34.4% error rate between lighter-skinned men and darker-skinned women.

(SOURCE: MIT MEDIA LAB)

46 Only 35% of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) students in higher education globally are women.

(SOURCE: UNESCO)

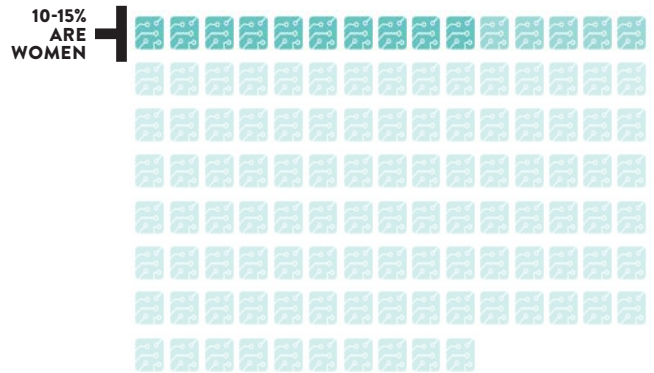
47 An analysis of 133 AI systems across industries since 1988 found that 44.2% demonstrate gender bias, with 25.7% exhibiting both gender and racial bias.

(SOURCE: STANFORD SOCIAL INNOVATION REVIEW)

GENDER INEQUALITY IN TECH



48 A 2018 review of leading technology companies found that only 10-15% of AI researchers were women.



(SOURCE: WIRED)

49 A study of 189 software algorithms from 99 developers found that when running the algorithms against an FBI database containing 1.6 million domestic mugshots, there were higher rates of false positives for African American women.

(SOURCE: NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY)

50 A study found that one social media company disproportionately targeted men with jobs in stereotypically male industries and women with ads for stereotypically female industries, despite similar job qualifications.

(SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA)

GENDER INEQUALITY

THIS IS JUST A SNAPSHOT.

There are far too many egregious examples to list here. There is nowhere on Earth where girls and women can avoid sexist laws, policies, and norms.

Yet wherever there is injustice, there are also brave advocates — of all genders — who are fighting to eliminate discrimination and achieve the benefits of equality for everyone, everywhere. In fact, more than 1,500 reforms have been passed over the past five decades to dismantle sexist rules and regulations, and progress on this front has been achieved in every region of the world.

These courageous champions won't stop, and neither will we.

While progress has been made to repeal discriminatory laws and pass new legislation protecting and promoting women's rights, putting these changes into action remains a stubborn challenge. Simply reforming sexist regulations is not enough; it must be backed by action and enforcement.



GENDER INEQUALITY

Everyday activists — especially women's rights defenders — also need enough support and resources to succeed. This includes protection from retribution and reprisals for their work, flexible and unrestricted funding, and collective pushback against the shrinking of civic space that we're seeing in many countries.

When it comes to emerging areas where gender discrimination is reinforced, amplified, or replicated — such as algorithmic bias — we need public-private partnerships to find ethical, political, and technical solutions.

The planet's most influential CEOs must also lead the charge on gender equality. From parental leave and employee pay to board representation and depictions in advertising, companies play a key role in shaping social norms and breaking down gender barriers.

The examples of discriminatory laws, policies, and norms are clear, and so is our message: We won't stop until girls and women are equal everywhere.

LEARN MORE AND TAKE A STAND AT
[EQUALEVERYWHERE.ORG](https://www.equaleverywhere.org)

