

# SHIFTING SOCIAL NORMS:

## The Missing Link to Achieve Gender Equality in G20 Countries

Women20 (“W20”), the official G20 engagement group<sup>\*</sup>, has outlined ambitious strategies to reduce gender inequality in G20 countries. However, progress has been slow. Using the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) lens to review progress, a new report prepared by the OECD Development Centre for the W20 ***“From promises to action: Addressing discriminatory social institutions to accelerate gender equality in G20 countries”*** states that unless further attention is paid to discriminatory social institutions<sup>\*\*</sup>, gender equality in the G20 will remain a distant goal. As such, social institutions constitute the “hidden part of the iceberg” that helps explain why progress has been so slow in spite of legal reforms and social movements.



<sup>\*</sup> The W20 is a transnational network of women’s organisations, female entrepreneurs associations and think tanks.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Discriminatory social institutions are formal and informal laws, social norms and practices that restrict or exclude women and girls, consequently curtailing their access to rights, justice, empowerment opportunities and resources.

# LABOUR EQUITY / G20

In G20 countries,  
women spend much more  
time than men on...

## UNPAID CARE WORK

TODAY only about **half of G20 countries** are on track to meet the **25x25 target** to decrease the 2012 gender gap in labour force participation by 25% by 2025.

### Labour force participation / 2018\*



### Part-time work / 2017\*\*



## Why has progress been so slow?

### Social norms **PERSIST** in some countries

In Indonesia, India and Saudi Arabia, **32%**, **25%** and **22%** of people respectively feel it is **unacceptable** for women to work outside of the home.

### Gender roles in the household and society **also PERSIST**

Women may choose to work part-time for **flexibility**, but they also face.....

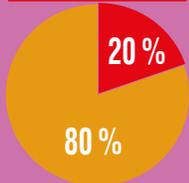
- **job insecurity**,
- **lower pay**, and
- **fewer opportunities for training and promotion.**

# FINANCIAL EQUITY / G20

In almost **half of the G20 countries**, more than **90%** of both **women and men have an account at a bank**. Yet, on average, **20% of women in G20 countries\* still lack...**

## ACCESS TO FORMAL BANK ACCOUNTS

Lack access



Have access

Women confidently **manage household expenses**, but married women in at least **six G20 countries defer long-term financial decisions**, such as investment, to **their spouse**, believing men know more.

## Why has progress been so slow?

### Social norms PERSIST

Women seem to **lack confidence** in the financial sphere due to a **lack of financial education** as well as **access to collateral**. In addition, **cultural attitudes and norms still favour men entrepreneurs**.

### Discriminatory practices

Evidence shows that **some banks** continue to **require permission from a husband or father** to approve a **woman's loan application**.



\*Data are unavailable for Argentina and Saudi Arabia.

# GOVERNANCE / G20

Women have the same rights as men to hold public and political office in parliament, public administration and government\*, but...

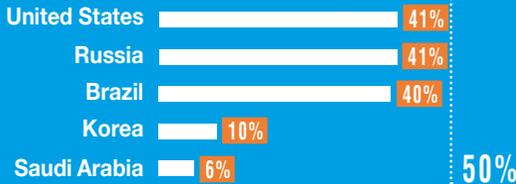
## THEY ARE UNDERREPRESENTED IN GOVERNANCE



In 2019 **women** represent **only 1/4** of members of parliaments

### Women in managerial positions:

In all G20 countries women are underrepresented in managerial positions. For example:



## Why has progress been so slow?



### Social norms PERSIST

In six of the G20 countries, more than half of the population still **thinks that men make better political leaders than women.**

### Insufficient special measures

Almost half of the G20 countries have established

- **quotas,**
- **incentives for political parties,**
- **other special measures to promote women's political participation and representation.**

**Only four G20 countries** have enacted legislation to achieve gender equality on corporate boards.

\*In Saudi Arabia women are prevented from serving as judges.

# How can we move the needle on gender equality in the G20?

The report highlights the need to pay more attention to discriminatory social institutions across G20 countries. This means identifying, tracking (through relevant and comparable data) and addressing discriminatory social institutions that are the root causes of gender inequality. Specific actions are to:

## Labour equity

- Ensure adequate enforcement of laws to secure equal treatment of women and men in the workplace.
- Address social norms that confine women to care and reproductive roles through awareness and sensitisation campaigns on the benefits of more gender equal roles in the household.
- Rebalance unpaid care and domestic work to facilitate women's participation in the labour market, including through the involvement of both men and employers.

## Financial equity

- Remove discriminatory laws that do not guarantee women's equal access to economic resources.
- Highlight successful women entrepreneurs and introduce gender neutral entrepreneurship education to shift mind-sets about associating entrepreneurship with men.
- Ensure women's access to financial services, and invest in programmes that develop women's financial knowledge, confidence and skills.

## Governance

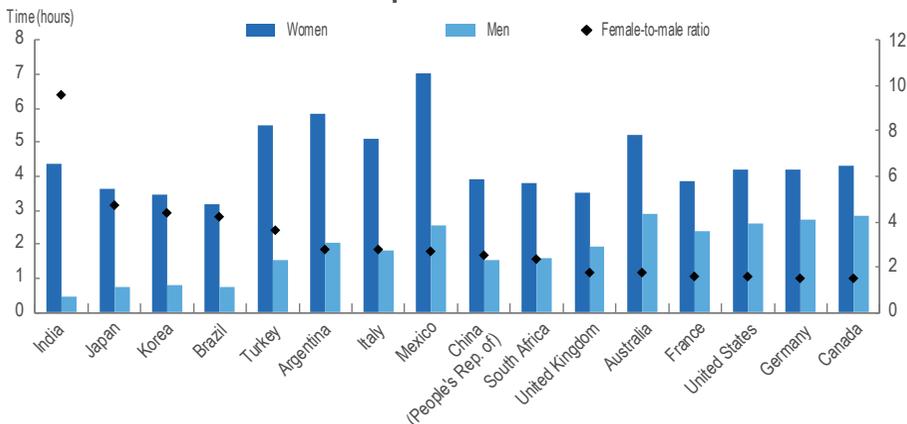
- Consider transitional or corrective measures to promote gender diversity in both public and private governance bodies.
- Promote a more positive image of women leaders to address persisting gender stereotypes.
- Develop training programmes for women who wish to pursue a career in politics, and mentoring programmes to improve women's leadership roles on corporate boards.

Consult the full report at: [oe.cd/gender-equality-sigi-w20](https://oe.cd/gender-equality-sigi-w20)  
More information about SIGI can be found at: [www.genderindex.org](http://www.genderindex.org).

# The role of social norms

The report identifies the burden of **unpaid care work** as one of the toughest barriers to gender equality across all pillars. Gendered social norms place women's most important role within the household, limiting their opportunities to play multiple other roles in broader society—as workers, business owners, politicians and more—due to lack of time and resources. **Across G20 countries, unpaid care responsibilities are three times higher for women than men**, ranging from one and a half times more in Canada, Germany and the United States, to nine times more in India (See figure). The social practice of unpaid care work being women's responsibility is a cross-cutting discriminatory social institution not only impeding gender equality throughout all areas of life in the G20, but widening gender gaps in terms of access to resources and opportunities.

## In G20 countries, women spend much more time than men on unpaid care work



Note: Data are for 2019. Data for Indonesia, Russia and Saudi Arabia are not available.

Source: OECD (2019), Gender Institutions and Development Database, [oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019](https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019).

### About the report:

Under the G20 Japanese presidency, W20 has set a concrete and ambitious strategy to achieve gender equality by “Closing the Gender Gap for New Prosperity”. The report “*From promises to action: Addressing discriminatory social institutions to accelerate gender equality in G20 countries*” analyses progress and challenges in three areas – labour equity, financial equity and governance – by taking discriminatory social institutions (laws, norms and practices) into account, and includes recommended policy actions. The report also contains 19 country profiles that highlight context-specific social institutions and trends.