



1.3 Gender differences

	Female population % of total 1998	Female advantage								Child mortality rate female-male difference 1988-98 ^a
		Labor force participation		Adult illiteracy rate		Net primary enrollment ratio		Life expectancy at birth		
		ratio of female to male		female-male difference		female-male difference		female-male difference		
		1970	1998	1970	1998	1980	1997	1970	1998	
Albania	48.7	0.7	0.7	29	14	..	3	3	6	0
Algeria	49.4	0.3	0.4	27	22	-20	-7	2	3	..
Angola	50.6	0.9	0.9	..	..	-8	-1	3	3	..
Argentina	50.9	0.3	0.5	1	0	1	0	7	7	..
Armenia	51.4	0.9	0.9	8	2	..	..	6	7	..
Australia	50.1	0.5	0.8	..	..	0	0	7	6	..
Austria	50.9	0.6	0.7	..	..	0	0	7	6	..
Azerbaijan	51.0	0.8	0.8	..	..	..	..	8	7	..
Bangladesh	49.4	0.7	0.7	24	23	-29	-11	-2	0	10
Belarus	53.0	1.0	1.0	3	0	..	..	8	12	..
Belgium	51.0	0.4	0.7	..	..	0	0	7	6	..
Benin	50.7	0.9	0.9	10	31	-38	-34	2	4	1
Bolivia	50.3	0.5	0.6	25	14	-10	-5	4	3	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	50.4	0.6	0.6	..	..	..	..	4	6	..
Botswana	51.0	1.2	0.8	-2	-5	14	5	4	2	-2
Brazil	50.6	0.3	0.5	7	0	-4	-6	4	8	1
Bulgaria	51.2	0.8	0.9	7	1	0	3	5	7	..
Burkina Faso	50.6	1.0	0.9	10	19	-7	-14	4	2	3
Burundi	51.0	1.0	1.0	27	17	-8	-5	3	3	13
Cambodia	51.6	1.0	1.1	25	38	0	0	3	3	..
Cameroon	50.3	0.6	0.6	26	13	-11	-5	3	3	6
Canada	50.4	0.5	0.8	..	..	0	0	7	6	..
Central African Republic	51.4	..	..	20	26	-32	-17	5	4	1
Chad	50.5	0.7	0.8	11	18	-23	-25	3	3	-7
Chile	50.5	0.3	0.5	2	0	1	-2	6	6	-1
China	48.4	0.7	0.8	31	16	-9	0	1	3	1
Hong Kong, China	49.9	0.5	0.6	27	7	1	4	6	6	..
Colombia	50.6	0.3	0.6	3	0	2	0	4	6	0
Congo, Dem. Rep.	50.5	0.8	0.8	24	24	-23	-21	3	3	..
Congo, Rep.	51.1	0.7	0.8	28	14	-6	-5	5	4	..
Costa Rica	49.3	0.2	0.4	1	0	1	1	4	5	..
Côte d'Ivoire	49.1	0.5	0.5	18	17	-20	-16	3	1	-13
Croatia	51.6	0.6	0.8	12	2	0	0	..	9	..
Cuba	49.9	0.3	0.6	0	0	0	0	3	4	..
Czech Republic	51.3	0.8	0.9	..	..	0	0	..	7	..
Denmark	50.4	0.6	0.9	..	..	0	0	5	5	..
Dominican Republic	49.2	0.3	0.4	5	0	2	5	4	4	0
Ecuador	49.8	0.2	0.4	10	4	0	0	3	5	-3
Egypt, Arab Rep.	49.1	0.3	0.4	29	24	-22	-9	3	3	6
El Salvador	50.9	0.3	0.6	11	6	0	0	4	6	3
Eritrea	50.4	0.9	0.9	29	27	..	-3	3	3	-11
Estonia	53.2	1.0	1.0	..	..	0	0	9	11	..
Ethiopia	49.8	0.7	0.7	13	12	-13	-17	3	2	..
Finland	51.2	0.8	0.9	..	..	0	0	8	7	..
France	51.3	0.6	0.8	..	..	0	0	8	8	..
Gabon	50.6	0.8	0.8	..	..	..	..	3	3	..
Gambia, The	50.6	0.8	0.8	6	14	-34	-15	3	4	-4
Georgia	52.3	0.9	0.9	..	..	-1	-1	..	8	..
Germany	51.1	0.6	0.7	..	..	0	0	6	6	..
Ghana	50.3	1.0	1.0	26	19	..	..	3	3	-1
Greece	50.8	0.3	0.6	16	3	0	0	4	5	..
Guatemala	49.6	0.2	0.4	16	15	-8	-7	2	6	2
Guinea	49.7	0.9	0.9	..	..	-19	-25	1	1	-10
Guinea-Bissau	50.8	0.7	0.7	18	40	-32	-27	2	3	..
Haiti	50.8	0.9	0.8	8	5	3	5	-1
Honduras	49.6	0.3	0.4	6	0	1	2	4	5	..



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	Female population % of total 1998	Female advantage								Child mortality rate female-male difference 1988-98 ^a
		Labor force participation ratio of female to male		Adult illiteracy rate female-male difference		Net primary enrollment ratio female-male difference		Life expectancy at birth female-male difference		
		1970	1998	1970	1998	1980	1997	1970	1998	
Hungary	52.1	0.7	0.8	1	0	1	-2	6	9	..
India	48.4	0.5	0.5	28	24	-22	-12	-2	2	13
Indonesia	50.1	0.4	0.7	25	11	-10	-1	2	4	1
Iran, Islamic Rep.	49.8	0.2	0.4	23	14	-22	-2	-1	2	..
Iraq	49.1	0.2	0.2	25	21	-6	-10	2	2	..
Ireland	50.1	0.4	0.5	..	..	0	0	5	5	..
Israel	50.3	0.4	0.7	10	4	..	..	3	4	..
Italy	51.4	0.4	0.6	3	1	0	0	6	7	..
Jamaica	50.4	0.8	0.9	-7	-8	2	0	3	4	..
Japan	51.0	0.6	0.7	..	..	0	0	5	7	..
Jordan	48.2	0.2	0.3	38	12	-1	1	..	3	3
Kazakhstan	51.5	0.9	0.9	..	..	..	..	..	11	-5
Kenya	49.9	0.8	0.9	30	14	-4	3	4	2	2
Korea, Dem. Rep.	49.8	0.8	0.8	..	..	..	..	4	4	..
Korea, Rep.	49.6	0.5	0.7	14	3	0	0	4	7	..
Kuwait	47.5	0.1	0.5	20	5	-9	-2	4	6	..
Kyrgyz Republic	51.0	0.9	0.9	..	..	0	0	..	8	1
Lao PDR	50.5	..	..	24	32	-7	-7	3	3	..
Latvia	54.0	1.0	1.0	0	0	0	0	9	11	..
Lebanon	50.9	0.2	0.4	25	12	..	..	4	4	..
Lesotho	50.8	0.7	0.6	-26	-22	25	11	4	2	..
Libya	48.1	0.2	0.3	43	24	0	0	3	4	-1
Lithuania	52.8	1.0	0.9	1	0	..	..	8	10	..
Macedonia, FYR	50.0	0.4	0.7	..	..	..	-2	..	4	..
Madagascar	50.2	0.8	0.8	21	14	..	2	3	3	-7
Malawi	50.6	1.0	1.0	39	29	-10	2	1	0	-12
Malaysia	49.3	0.4	0.6	24	9	-1	0	3	5	0
Mali	50.7	0.9	0.9	7	15	-11	-14	3	4	2
Mauritania	50.4	0.9	0.8	19	21	..	-8	3	3	..
Mauritius	50.1	0.2	0.5	19	7	-1	0	4	8	..
Mexico	50.5	0.2	0.5	10	4	3	0	5	6	2
Moldova	52.2	1.1	0.9	10	2	..	..	..	7	..
Mongolia	49.8	0.8	0.9	28	21	0	5	3	3	..
Morocco	50.0	0.5	0.5	24	26	-28	-19	3	4	-2
Mozambique	51.5	1.0	0.9	21	31	-6	-11	3	3	-2
Myanmar	50.2	0.8	0.8	27	9	-2	-1	3	3	..
Namibia	50.2	0.7	0.7	13	2	12	5	3	2	4
Nepal	49.4	0.6	0.7	25	35	-51	-31	-1	0	..
Netherlands	50.5	0.3	0.7	..	..	0	0	6	6	..
New Zealand	50.8	0.4	0.8	..	..	0	0	6	5	..
Nicaragua	50.3	0.3	0.5	2	-3	2	3	3	5	-1
Niger	50.6	0.8	0.8	9	15	-13	-12	3	4	18
Nigeria	50.7	0.6	0.6	20	18	..	..	3	3	84
Norway	50.2	0.4	0.9	..	..	1	0	6	6	..
Oman	46.7	0.1	0.2	27	21	-23	-2	2	3	..
Pakistan	48.2	0.3	0.4	23	29	..	..	0	2	15
Panama	49.5	0.3	0.5	2	1	1	1	3	5	..
Papua New Guinea	48.5	0.7	0.7	22	16	..	..	0	2	-7
Paraguay	49.6	0.4	0.4	11	3	-2	1	4	5	2
Peru	50.3	0.3	0.4	22	10	-1	-1	3	5	1
Philippines	49.6	0.5	0.6	4	1	-3	0	3	4	-2
Poland	51.3	0.8	0.9	1	0	0	0	7	8	..
Portugal	52.1	0.3	0.8	12	5	3	0	7	7	..
Puerto Rico	51.8	0.4	0.6	2	0	6	9	..
Romania	50.9	0.8	0.8	7	2	-3	0	4	8	-2
Russian Federation	53.3	1.0	1.0	2	0	0	0	..	12	-1



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	Female population	Female advantage								Child mortality rate female-male difference 1988-98 ^a
		Labor force participation		Adult illiteracy rate		Net primary enrollment ratio		Life expectancy at birth		
		ratio of female to male		female-male difference		female-male difference		female-male difference		
		1970	1998	1970	1998	1980	1997	1970	1998	
Rwanda	50.6	1.0	1.0	24	15	-5	..	3	2	-14
Saudi Arabia	44.7	0.1	0.2	35	18	-24	-4	3	4	..
Senegal	50.1	0.7	0.7	17	20	-14	-12	5	4	-2
Sierra Leone	50.9	0.6	0.6	..	..	..	..	3	3	..
Singapore	49.7	0.3	0.6	26	8	-1	-2	5	4	..
Slovak Republic	51.2	0.7	0.9	..	..	..	..	..	8	..
Slovenia	51.4	0.6	0.9	0	0	..	0	7	8	..
South Africa	51.9	0.5	0.6	4	2	2	0	6	5	..
Spain	51.1	0.3	0.6	7	2	0	0	5	7	..
Sri Lanka	49.1	0.3	0.6	17	6	-5	0	2	4	-1
Sudan	49.8	0.4	0.4	31	25	..	..	3	3	1
Sweden	50.5	0.6	0.9	..	..	0	0	5	5	..
Switzerland	50.4	0.5	0.7	..	..	0	0	6	6	..
Syrian Arab Republic	49.4	0.3	0.4	40	29	-19	-8	3	5	..
Tajikistan	50.2	0.8	0.8	9	1	..	..	5	6	..
Tanzania	50.5	1.0	1.0	35	19	..	1	3	2	-7
Thailand	50.0	0.9	0.9	15	4	-1	2	4	5	0
Togo	50.4	0.6	0.7	28	34	-31	-24	3	2	15
Trinidad and Tobago	50.2	0.4	0.5	12	4	1	0	5	5	-1
Tunisia	49.5	0.3	0.5	26	22	-21	0	1	4	0
Turkey	49.5	0.6	0.6	33	18	-7	-2	4	5	2
Turkmenistan	50.5	0.8	0.8	..	..	..	..	7	7	..
Uganda	50.2	0.9	0.9	30	22	..	..	2	-1	-10
Ukraine	53.5	1.0	0.9	1	0	..	..	8	11	..
United Arab Emirates	33.6	0.0	0.2	23	-4	3	-1	4	3	..
United Kingdom	50.9	0.6	0.8	..	..	0	0	6	5	..
United States	50.7	0.6	0.8	..	..	1	0	8	6	..
Uruguay	51.5	0.4	0.7	-1	-1	-1	1	7	8	..
Uzbekistan	50.4	0.9	0.9	19	9	..	..	..	6	-6
Venezuela, RB	49.7	0.3	0.5	7	1	4	2	5	6	..
Vietnam	51.1	0.9	1.0	19	5	-5	0	3	5	..
West Bank and Gaza	49.2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	..
Yemen, Rep.	48.9	0.4	0.4	25	43	..	..	1	1	3
Yugoslavia, FR (Serb./Mont.)	50.2	0.6	0.7	..	..	..	..	4	5	..
Zambia	50.4	0.8	0.8	32	15	-8	-1	3	0	-3
Zimbabwe	50.4	0.8	0.8	17	9	-9	-2	3	3	0
World	49.6 w	0.6 w	0.7 w	21 w	14 w	-9 w	-4 w	3 w	4 w	..
Low income	49.0	0.6	0.7	28	19	-14	-6	1	3	..
Excl. China & India	50.0	0.6	0.7	22	18	-14	-8	2	3	..
Middle income	50.5	0.6	0.6	10	6	-4	-2	4	6	..
Lower middle income	50.8	0.7	0.7	9	7	-6	-2	4	6	..
Upper middle income	50.2	0.4	0.6	11	4	-2	-2	5	7	..
Low & middle income	49.4	0.6	0.7	22	15	-11	-5	2	4	..
East Asia & Pacific	48.9	0.7	0.8	28	14	-8	0	2	4	..
Europe & Central Asia	51.9	0.9	0.9	6	4	-1	0	6	9	..
Latin America & Carib.	50.4	0.3	0.5	7	2	-1	-2	4	6	..
Middle East & N. Africa	49.0	0.3	0.4	27	22	-20	-7	2	3	..
South Asia	48.5	0.5	0.5	27	24	-23	-12	-1	1	..
Sub-Saharan Africa	50.5	0.7	0.7	20	17	-11	-9	3	3	..
High income	50.7	0.5	0.8	0	0	6	6	..
Europe EMU	51.2	0.5	0.7	0	..	6	7	..

a. Data are for the most recent year available.



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About the data

This table contrasts male and female outcomes for selected social indicators: labor force participation, adult illiteracy, net primary school enrollment, life expectancy at birth, and child mortality. A labor force participation ratio of 1.0 indicates gender equality in labor force participation in the formal sector, while a lower ratio shows that women's participation is lower than men's. For net primary enrollment, a positive value means that the enrollment ratio for girls is higher than that for boys, and a negative number that girls are falling behind. Conversely, for adult illiteracy and child mortality, a positive value indicates female disadvantage. A positive value for life expectancy represents female advantage.

Differences in outcome are the consequence of differences in the opportunities and resources available to men and women. Such disparities exist throughout the world, but they are most prevalent in poor developing countries. Inequalities in the allocation of such resources as education, health care, and nutrition matter because of the strong association of these resources with well-being, productivity, and growth. This pattern of inequality begins at an early age, with boys routinely receiving a larger share of education and health spending than girls do, for example. Girls in many developing countries are allowed less education by their families than boys are—a disparity reflected in lower female primary school enrollment and higher female illiteracy. As a result women have fewer employment opportunities, especially in the formal sector. Women who do work outside the home often also bear a disproportionate share of the responsibility for household chores and child-rearing.

Life expectancy has increased for both men and women in all regions, but female morbidity and mortality rates sometimes exceed male rates, particularly during early childhood and the reproductive years. In high-income countries women tend to outlive men by four to eight years on average, while in low-income countries the difference is narrower—about two to three years. The female disadvantage is best reflected in differences in child mortality rates in some countries. Child mortality captures the effect of preferences for boys because adequate nutrition and medical interventions are particularly important for the age group 1–5. Because of the natural female biological advantage, when female child mortality is as high as or higher than male child mortality, there is good reason to believe that girls are discriminated against.

For more information on the underlying indicators see *About the data* for tables 2.1 (population), 2.3

(labor force), 2.10 (net primary enrollment), 2.12 (illiteracy), and 2.18 (child mortality and life expectancy at birth). For other gender-related indicators see tables 1.2 (maternal mortality), 2.1 (women per 100 men aged 65 and older), 2.4 and 2.5 (employment and unemployment), 2.12 (education outcomes), 2.13 (pupils and teachers), 2.16 (reproductive health), 2.17 (prevalence of anemia and smoking), and 2.18 (adult mortality).

Definitions

- **Female population** is the percentage of the population that is female.
- **Labor force** comprises people who meet the International Labour Organization definition of the economically active population: all people who supply labor for the production of goods and services during a specified period. It includes both the employed and the unemployed. While national practices vary in the treatment of such groups as the armed forces and seasonal or part-time workers, in general the labor force includes the armed forces, the unemployed, and first-time job-seekers, but excludes homemakers and other unpaid caregivers and workers in the informal sector.
- **Adult illiteracy rate** is the percentage of adults aged 15 and above who cannot, with understanding, read and write a short, simple statement about their everyday life.
- **Net primary enrollment ratio** is the ratio of the number of children of official school age (as defined by the education system) enrolled in school to the number of children of official school age in the population.
- **Life expectancy at birth** is the number of years a newborn would live if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of its birth were to stay the same throughout its life.
- **Child mortality rate** is the probability of dying between the ages of one and five, if subject to current age-specific mortality rates.

Data sources

The calculations of gender ratios and differences were carried out by World Bank staff. For the sources of the underlying indicators see *Data sources* for the tables referred to in *About the data*.