

Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls with disabilities (Goal 5)

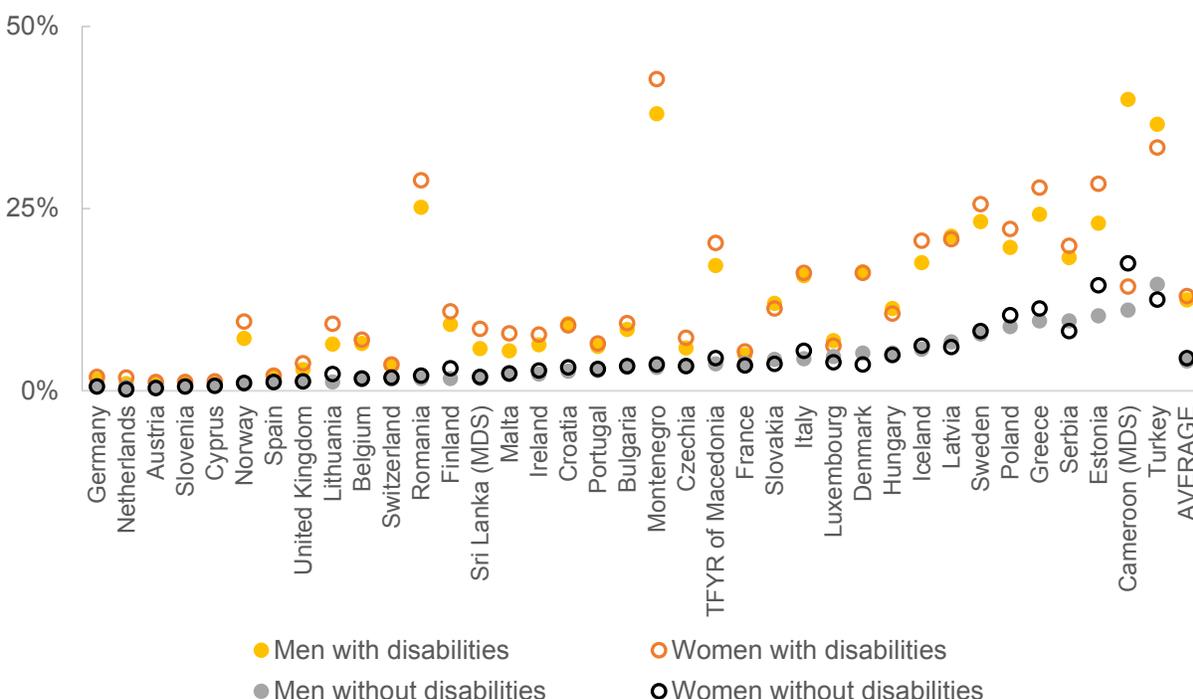


Disability-inclusive development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs provide a powerful framework to guide local communities, countries and the international community toward the achievement of disability-inclusive development. The 2030 Agenda pledges to leave no one behind, including persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups, and recognizes disability as a cross-cutting issue to be considered in the implementation of all of its goals. The Agenda also includes seven targets and 11 indicators explicitly referencing persons with disabilities, covering access to education and employment, availability of schools that are sensitive to students with disabilities, inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities, accessible transport, accessible public and green spaces, and building the capacity of countries to disaggregate data by disability.

Women with disabilities are often subjected to double discrimination due to their gender and disability status and continue to be at a disadvantage in most spheres of society and development. Available data suggests that **the gap is stark compared with men without disabilities: women with disabilities are three times more likely to have unmet needs for health care (Figure 1); three times more likely to be illiterate (Figure 2); two times less likely to be employed and two times less likely to use the Internet. Among those employed, women with disabilities are two times less likely to work as legislators, senior officials or managers.** Women with disabilities tend also to be in a worse position than women without disabilities. Moreover, women with disabilities are at heightened risk of suffering sexual violence compared to those without disabilities.

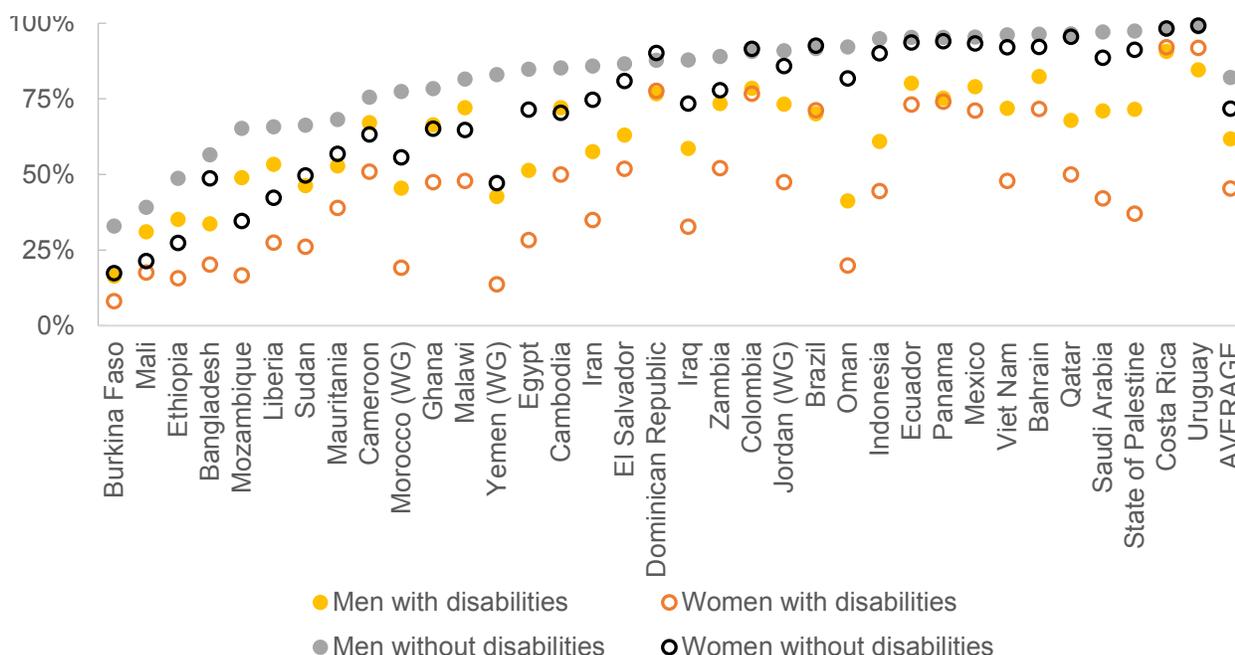
Figure 1: Percentage of persons who needed but could not get health care, by disability status and sex, in 37 countries, around 2016.



Note: (MDS) identifies countries with data collected with the Model Disability Survey. Data from Cameroon were collected in selected regions of the country and are not nationally representative.

Source: Eurostat¹ and WHO.²

Figure 2: Literacy rate for the population 15 years and older, by disability status and sex, in 35 countries, around 2010.



Note: (WG) identifies countries with data collected with the Washington Group Short Set of Questions.
 Source: ESCWA³ and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (on the basis of data from IPUMS⁴).

Compared with men with disabilities, women with disabilities are more likely to have unmet health-care needs; more likely to be unemployed or inactive in the labour market; and less likely to work as legislators, senior officials or managers. In poverty, lack of access to education and the Internet as well as physical violence, the evidence does not seem to indicate a further disadvantage for women with disabilities relative to men with disabilities, suggesting that in several countries attitudinal and environmental barriers against disability, not gender, are the major factor driving the disadvantage experienced by women with disabilities. However, for lack of access to employment and sexual violence, environmental barriers and negative attitudes against both gender and disability seem to play a significant role.

Many countries still address gender and disability issues separately without focusing on the intersection between the two, but there are increasingly positive initiatives. For instance, in Latin America, 17 out of 20 countries include disability in their national gender plans. However, only 6 out of 19 countries address gender in their disability laws.

Actions to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls with disabilities

- Address the needs and perspectives of women and girls with disabilities in national strategies or action plans on disability and on gender.
- Develop policies and programmes focused on women and girls with disabilities aiming at their full and equal participation in society.
- Support the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities by investing in their education and supporting their transition from school to work.
- Raise awareness on the needs of women and girls with disabilities and eliminate stigma and discrimination against them.
- Enhance the collection, dissemination and analysis of data on women and girls with disabilities and disaggregate and disseminate data by sex, age and disability.

¹ Eurostat Database. Data available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database> (accessed in March-May 2018)

² Model disability surveys in Cameroon, Chile and Sri Lanka, 2015–2016. Data provided by the World Health Organization in April 2018.

³ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia. Arab Disability Statistics in Numbers 2017. Available at: www.unescwa.org/sub-site/arab-disability-statistics-2017 (accessed May to October 2018).

⁴ Minnesota Population Center, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International, various data sets from 2001 to 2012. Data available at <https://international.ipums.org/international/> (accessed in 2017 and 2018).