

Beijing+25: Accelerating Progress for Women and Girls

The Way Forward



7. Expand access to better data.

Accurately tracking progress against the Beijing Platform and SDG commitments requires sex-disaggregated data. The COVID-19 crisis has exposed both the gaps and the importance of sex-disaggregated data—from the health impacts to domestic violence, job losses, and social protection coverage. Even upper-middle and high-income countries, such as Brazil and the United States, have struggled to report COVID-19 infection rates by sex. Global Health 50/50 has revealed that 23 of 106 countries surveyed do not have sex-disaggregated data on the impacts of the virus. This includes countries with some of the highest numbers of COVID-19 cases, such as Russia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates. To address the gender data gap and better monitor progress for women and girls, the report suggests the following strategies:

Break down data by gender, race, indigenous status, poverty level, and other demographic characteristics in order to address the intersectional challenges facing women. UN Women and World Bank estimates of people living in extreme poverty show that poverty rates vary greatly by sex, age, and marital status. This highlights the importance of intersectional data in understanding the profile of the poor and reveals a key policy implication: eradicating poverty will require attention to the multitude of vulnerabilities affecting women.

Expand the availability, quality, and coverage of sex-disaggregated data worldwide.

Without more and better gender-specific data, monitoring the implementation of the gender equality agenda will fall short, and marginalized groups risk being overlooked. Remedying these data deficits is critical to building back better and addressing the disproportionate effects of crises such as COVID-19 on women and girls.

UN Women guidance for rapid gender assessment surveys on the impacts of COVID-19 – part of the Women Count hub collaboration between UN Women, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and several governments – identifies three major strategies for gender-responsive data collection:

1. Promoting a supportive policy environment to address institutional and financial constraints and to strengthen policies and practices governing the production and use of gender statistics.
2. Supporting efforts to improve the steady production of gender statistics, including building the technical capacity of national statistical systems and providing financial support to improve data collection for better monitoring the SDGs.
3. Improving access to data to inform policy advocacy through solutions such as open access, dissemination tools, and user–producer dialogue to enable data users to make better use of gender statistics in policy, programs, and advocacy.

We have much to learn from good practices around the world, supported by organizations like UN Women, Data2x, and Global Health 50/50.

- At the national level, Sweden now requires all government agencies to publish [annual reports](#) that include sex-disaggregated statistics in order to promote accountability and make gender equality visible across society. Israel, Norway, and Spain have also mandated the regular collection of sex-disaggregated data. However, only 13 percent of countries have dedicated funding for producing [gender statistics](#).
- In Denmark, laws require companies with more than 10 employees to produce annual gender-segregated wage statistics. After [mandatory reporting](#) was introduced in 2006, the pay gap in Denmark declined by 2 percentage points and private companies were more compliant (35 percent) than those in the public sector (27 percent).
- In Uganda, UN Global Pulse analyzed [digital data](#) to track perceptions of contraception and teenage pregnancy among young Ugandans over time. The study demonstrated the potential for digital data, accessed through platforms like Facebook, to inform development programming and accelerate progress toward the UN SDGs.

Sex-disaggregated data capturing intersectional cleavages is a pre-requisite of fulfilling the Beijing commitments and advancing toward gender equality. These data are key to exposing gaps, particularly among marginalized groups, and informing policies to reduce gender disparities. International organizations, national governments, and local leaders need to commit to collecting sex-specific data to ensure that no woman is left behind.