



In many countries in the world, only men inherit land, although women do most of the work in fields. This keeps women dependent on men and shackles them in poverty.

[According](#) to the UN Development Program ([UNDP](#)), discriminatory laws represent one of many obstacles holding back women's economic participation. Social norms, lack of autonomy, and limited access to assets all play a part, and the costs—particularly in poor and emerging countries—are steep.

It is not only women in developing countries who suffer from the gender gap. Women in Europe still work 59 days ' [for free](#) ', according to the European Commission [report](#) from December 2013.

Gender gaps are pervasive across continents and sectors. Female farmers tend to have [lower productivity](#) , smaller plots, and grow less profitable crops. Female employees are more likely to work in temporary and part-time jobs, and less likely to be promoted. In Mexico and Honduras, women accounted for 70 percent of all layoffs during the global economic crisis. Across advanced economies, women earn 16 percent less than men, even in the same occupations, hold fewer senior positions, and account for fewer entrepreneurs.

Closing these gender gaps could yield enormous dividends for development. Having as many

women in the labor force as men could boost economic growth by 5 percent in the United States, 9 percent in Japan, and 34 percent in Egypt, according to UNDP.

Social norms are a key factor in constraining women's time and undervaluing their potential. Housework, child-rearing, and elder care are typically considered women's responsibility, while nearly four in 10 people globally—close to five in 10 in developing countries—agree that, when jobs are scarce, men deserve priority.

In the European Union, the magic number is 16.2. That's the size of the gender pay gap in percent, or the average difference between women and men's hourly earnings across the EU, according to the latest figures - figures that have not moved an inch in the space of a year.

The pay gap between women and men is still a reality in all EU countries, ranging from 27.3% in Estonia to 2.3% in Slovenia.

Gender inequality varies tremendously across countries—the losses in achievement due to gender inequality (not directly comparable to total inequality losses because different variables are used) range from 4.5 percent to 74.7 percent.

Countries with unequal distribution of human development also experience high inequality between women and men, and countries with high gender inequality also experience unequal distribution of human development, [according to](#) the latest UN [Human Development Report](#).