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# Comments on “Gender Equality and Development: Indonesia in a Global Context” by Professor Lisa Cameron

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# Key Issues Brought to Light

- Gender equality in Indonesia is about where you'd expect given the country's level of development.
- **No straightforward relationship between growth and gender equality** → At per capita incomes less than a particular amount, gender inequality varies with culture and/or policy settings and implies *that governments, even in low-income countries, have the ability to improve gender equality through concerted efforts.* → *How to measure impact of these efforts, if it is not reflected by GDP? How can gender-equal development be measured?*
- Indonesia has **more gender inequality** than some neighboring countries and **less than others**; and **less than in the vast majority of Muslim-majority nations worldwide.**

Drivers of inequality:

- Women's low **economic participation** seems to be a significant driver.
- Many **women leave the work force when they get married and have children.**
- **Childcare duties** seem to drive this decision.

Female **labour force participation is important** as it tends to **reduce family violence and lead to happier homes.**

## Key Policy Messages

- Reform in the formal sector to **promote flexible workplace conditions.**
- Reforms and inclusive **change in social norms** that position mothers as the *main caregiver.*
- **Public information campaigns** that challenge people's perceptions of gender norms to increase women's economic participation.

# Measurements of Gender Equality: What Is Measured vs. What Should be Measured?



Economy Profile  
**Indonesia**

Score (imparity = 0, parity = 1)  
**0.697**

Rank (out of 146 countries)  
**92nd**

Index Edition  
**2022**

Economy Profile  
**Malaysia**

Score (imparity = 0, parity = 1)  
**0.681**

Rank (out of 146 countries)  
**103rd**

Index Edition  
**2022**

## Global Gender Gap Index Indicators 2022

Indicator	Rank	Score*	Compare with Global average	Gap F-M	Female vs Male	Min Max
<b>Economic Participation and Opportunity</b>	80th	<b>0.674</b>				
Labour-force participation rate %	110th	0.658		-27.96	53.70 vs 81.67	0-100
Wage equality for similar work 1-7 (best)	23rd	0.747		-	-	-
Estimated earned income int'l \$ 1,000	109th	0.541		-6.81k	8.01k vs 14.83k	0-150k
Legislators, senior officials and managers %	80th	0.480		-35.12	32.44 vs 67.56	0-100
Professional and technical workers %	1st	1.000		2.07	48.97 vs 51.03	0-100
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	102nd	<b>0.972</b>				
Literacy rate %	88th	0.970		-	-	-
Enrolment in primary education %	106th	0.952		-4.59	92.02 vs 96.61	0-100
Enrolment in secondary education %	1st	1.000		2.20	87.84 vs 90.04	0-200
Enrolment in tertiary education %	1st	1.000		5.24	33.75 vs 38.99	0-200
<b>Health and Survival</b>	77th	<b>0.970</b>				
Sex ratio at birth** %	1st	0.944		-	-	-
Healthy life expectancy** years	84th	1.030		-	-	-
<b>Political Empowerment</b>	90th	<b>0.169</b>				
Women in parliament %	88th	0.280		-56.20	21.90 vs 78.10	0-100
Women in ministerial positions %	88th	0.207		-65.71	17.14 vs 82.86	0-100
Years with female/male head of state (last 50)	41st	0.069		-43.51	3.25 vs 46.75	0-50

## Global Gender Gap Index Indicators 2022

Indicator	Rank	Score*	Compare with Global average	Gap F-M	Female vs Male	Min Max
<b>Economic Participation and Opportunity</b>	88th	<b>0.656</b>				
Labour-force participation rate %	108th	0.660		-26.36	51.19 vs 77.55	0-100
Wage equality for similar work 1-7 (best)	25th	0.742		-	-	-
Estimated earned income int'l \$ 1,000	71st	0.644		-11.38k	20.63k vs 32.01k	0-150k
Legislators, senior officials and managers %	106th	0.331		-50.30	24.85 vs 75.15	0-100
Professional and technical workers %	90th	0.851		-8.06	45.97 vs 54.03	0-100
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	56th	<b>0.995</b>				
Literacy rate %	85th	0.973		-	-	-
Enrolment in primary education %	1st	1.000		0.32	98.44 vs 98.76	0-100
Enrolment in secondary education %	1st	1.000		6.30	80.70 vs 86.99	0-200
Enrolment in tertiary education %	1st	1.000		11.39	37.05 vs 48.44	0-200
<b>Health and Survival</b>	68th	<b>0.972</b>				
Sex ratio at birth** %	111th	0.943		-	-	-
Healthy life expectancy** years	73rd	1.038		-	-	-
<b>Political Empowerment</b>	123rd	<b>0.102</b>				
Women in parliament %	116th	0.176		-70.00	15.00 vs 85.00	0-100
Women in ministerial positions %	90th	0.192		-67.74	16.13 vs 83.87	0-100
Years with female/male head of state (last 50)	78th	0.000		-50.00	0 vs 50.00	0-50

Source: WEF Global Gender Equality Report 2022

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index ranks countries according to their proximity to gender equality rather than to women's empowerment.

The Index rewards countries for smaller gaps in access to these resources, regardless of the overall level of resources. The ranks are relative.

*Is "Economic Participation and Opportunity" the only issue in Indonesia?*

## Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

### An Index of Empowerment:

The Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) builds up a multidimensional empowerment profile for each man and woman that reflects their overlapping achievements in different domains, and aggregates these (Alkire et al. 2013).

Table 1. *The domains, indicators, and weights in the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index*

Domain	Indicator	Weight
Production	Input in productive decisions	1/10
	Autonomy in production	1/10
Resources	Ownership of assets	1/15
	Purchase, sale, or transfer of assets	1/15
	Access to and decisions about credit	1/15
Income	Control over use of income	1/5
Leadership	Group member	1/10
	Speaking in public	1/10
Time	Workload	1/10
	Leisure	1/10

Source: Authors.

When measuring equality there is the question:

*Inequality between who?*

- ***Intrahousehold inequalities.***
- Importantly the index measures both women’s and men’s empowerment levels in each domain. Thus it can also show:
- It contains a measure of gender parity, based on differences in empowerment between the primary male and primary female adult within each household.

*What should “development” mean? Development should be for all. Revised empowerment index for Indonesia? Gendered MPIs?*

Measuring access to basic needs, however using a gendered approach, i.e., whether within the household both men and women, boys and girls have access to education.

Although not perfect, Indonesia has data (Susenas modules Sosbud).

# Low Levels of Economic Participation for Women in Indonesia, Why is this the case?



- Indonesia noticeably **underperforms** in terms of economic participation.
- While various institutional factors seem to play a role, **social norms** around women's role as **the family's primary care-giver** are a **critical driver** of many women **deciding not to work**, or *not being given the option* of working.
- **Traditional gender norms** are a key driver of gender inequality and, more specifically, low female labour force participation.

Online survey by author (Cameron, Contreras and Suarez (2023)):

- Reasons for **not supporting women working** is that women's role is to care for their children
- Reasons **women had** to leave the labour force: (23.7%) finding someone to look after their child is difficult, with 9.1% also reporting that childcare is expensive. (Did women state norms and culture as a reason?)

World Values Survey 2018:

- Indonesia has the highest proportion of respondents agreeing with the statement: "men should have more right to a job than women".
- 20% of female respondents reported that they were not working because **their husband did not wish them to**, whereas the number of women who reported that they were not working because **they did not wish to** was **only 1%**.

COVID-19 exacerbated hours spent by women in family caregiving roles. Underlining the issue of **how the burden of care should be distributed** within the household.

**Policy message:** Female **labour force participation** is important as it tends to reduce family violence and lead to happier homes.

Comments:

- The issue is not that women switch from employment to **caregiving**, however, is that **they made this decision through choice**.
- Even as more women work for pay, their share of family responsibilities has not diminished (ILO 2009, **The Way to Care is to Share**). Increasing female labour force participation should then not be an end in itself.
- The need to recognize **Caregiving in the household** as a **legitimate form of work**.

# Leaves us wanting more



Deeper dives to unearth gender equality and empowerment issues in Indonesia:

- When both measures of inequality and empowerment are used – what is Indonesia’s story?
- What happens if we examine intrahousehold inequalities? To supplement the more macro/national measures and indices.
- What other reasons drive persistent inequality? Which norms and cultures prevent equality?
- Do the changing roles of familial networks/social networks, affect women’s decisions to leave work?
- Summaries and assessments of what has been done in Indonesia (existing policies regarding women in work and support for family caregiving).
- Is increased participation in the labour force truly an end solution? What happens to care responsibilities when women work?



# Public information campaigns: Empowerment and Equality



Source: Loryn Brantz, Feminist Baby

# THANK YOU



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