



Using Data on National Laws and Policies to Accelerate Effective Change

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Social Policies Can Have a Large Impact on Reproductive Health

Tuition-Free Education: Impact on Family Planning and Health Decision-making

- Examining the effects of **tuition-free primary education** laws
- 323,047 women aged 15 - 49 in 19 LMICs and 105,954 men
- **Findings**
 - ✓ **Women with full exposure to tuition-free primary education were 47% more likely to have met family planning needs**, relative to women with no exposure.
 - ✓ **152% increase** in likelihood of **modern contraception use**
 - ✓ **43% more likely to report having some say in decisions about their own health**, relative to women with no exposure.



Source: Bose,B and Heymann, J. (2019), Effects of tuition-free primary education on women's access to family planning and on health decision-making: A cross-national study. Social Science & Medicine, 238: 112478. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2019.112478>

Tuition-Free Education: Impact on Child Marriage and Early Childbearing

- Examining the effects of **tuition-free education** laws
 - ✓ 153,087 women aged 15 - 49 in 5 African countries
- Findings
 - ✓ **Abolishing secondary tuition-fees reduced the probability of marriage before age 15 by 4.1 percentage points and before age 18 by 5.5 percentage points**, a far greater magnitude than abolishing primary school tuition fees alone.
 - ✓ **Abolishing secondary tuition-fees reduced the probability of childbearing before age 18 by 8.6 percentage points.**



Source: Bhuwania, P., Huh, K. and Heymann, J. (2023), Impact of Tuition-Free Education Policy on Child Marriage and Early Childbearing: Does Secondary Matter?. Population and Development Review, 49: 43-70. <https://doi.org/10.1111/padr.12538>

Laws Targeting Women and Girls Can Have
Health Benefits for All

Paid Maternity Leave: Impact on Infant Survival

- Examining the effects of **paid maternity leave** duration on **infant death**
 - ✓ 282,751 births in 20 LMICs (years 2000-2007)
- **Findings**
 - ✓ Extending the duration of paid maternity leave decreased the probability of infant death.
 - ✓ **Each additional month** of paid maternity leave led to **7.9 fewer infant deaths** per 1,000 live births, reflecting a 14% reduction relative to the mean.



Photo: Flickr/[Steve Evans](#)

Source: Nandi A, Hajizadeh M, Harper S, Koski A, Strumpf EC, and Heymann SJ. Increased Duration of Paid Maternity Leave Lowers Infant Mortality in Low- and Middle-income Countries: A Quasi-experimental Study. *PLoS Medicine*. Published online before print March 2016.

Paid Maternity Leave: Impact on Health Care

- Examining the effects of **paid maternity leave**
 - ✓ 258,769 infants from 20 LMICs (years 2001-2008)

- **Findings**
 - ✓ Extending the duration of paid maternity leave had a **positive effect** on immunization rates for **all three doses** of the DTP vaccine.
 - ✓ Each additional FTE week of paid leave increased coverage of:
 - ❖ DTP1 (1.38 percentage points)
 - ❖ DTP2 (1.62 percentage points)
 - ❖ DTP3 (2.17 percentage points)



Source: Hajizadeh M, Heymann J, Strumpf E, Harper S, Nandi A. Paid maternity leave and childhood vaccination uptake: Longitudinal evidence from 20 low-and-middle-income countries. *Social Science and Medicine* 2015

Paid Maternity Leave: Impact on Child Nutrition and Health

- Examining the effects of **paid maternity leave**
- 992,419 live births in 38 LMICs (years 1996-2014)
- **Findings**
 - ✓ A 1-month increase in in paid maternity leave led to a:
 - ❖ **7.4% increase** in the prevalence of early initiation of **breastfeeding**
 - ❖ **5.9% increase** in the prevalence of **exclusive breastfeeding**
 - ❖ **2.2 month** increase in breastfeeding **duration**.
- Moreover, a 1-month increase in paid maternity leave reduced **cases of bloody diarrhea by 61** per 10,000 children under age 5, a 36% relative reduction.



Sources: Chai Y, Nandi A, and Heymann SJ. Does Extending the Duration of Legislated Paid Maternity Leave Improve Breastfeeding Practices? Evidence from 38 Low- and Middle-income Countries. *BMJ Global Health*. 2018 Oct 1;3(5):e001032. .

Chai A, Nandi A, Heymann SJ. Association of increased duration of legislated paid maternity leave with childhood diarrhea prevalence in low- and middle-income countries: a difference-in-differences analysis. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*. February 2020.

Relationship between Female Participation in Education and Men's and Women's Survival

- Examining the relationship between **gender parity in education** and **male and female expectancy** at the country level
 - ✓ Controlling for country level differences, such as per capita GDP, % urban population, unemployment rate, and domestic government health expenditure as % GDP

Findings

- A **10% higher educational parity** score was associated with
 - ✓ **59.5 fewer maternal deaths** per 100,000 live births
 - ✓ **2.1 year increase in female life expectancy** at birth
 - ✓ **0.9 year increase in male life expectancy** at birth

Source: Gadoth, A. and Heymann, J. Gender parity at scale: Examining correlations of country-level female participation in education and work with measures of men's and women's survival. eClinicalMedicine, Volume 20, 100299. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eclinm.2020.100299>

Laws Can Change Norms

Paid Parental Leave: Impact on Attitudes towards Work

- Examining the effects of **paid parental leave policy that incentivize or encourage fathers to take time off**
- 68,214 individuals in 9 countries
- **Findings**
 - ✓ In countries with policies **incentivizing or encouraging fathers to take paid parental leave**, adults were **27% more likely to disagree** with the statement “**when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women**”.



Source: Omidakhsh, N., Sprague, A. and Heymann, J. (2020), Dismantling Restrictive Gender Norms: Can Better Designed Paternal Leave Policies Help? . Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy, 20: 382-396. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12205>

Paid Maternity Leave: Impact on Attitudes towards Work and Decision Making

- Examining the effects of **paid maternity leave**
- 100,294 married couples in 19 LMICs for decision-making outcomes. 53,811 individuals ages 15 to 60 in 17 LMICs for women's equal rights to employment
- **Findings**
 - ✓ **A one-month increase** in the legislated duration of **paid maternity leave increased the odds** that women and their partners/spouses reported that **women had more decision-making power by 40% and 66% respectively.**
 - ✓ **a 41.5 percentage point increase** in the prevalence of individuals **disagreeing** with the statement that **“when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women”**



Source: Chai, Y., Ríos-Salas, V., Stek, P. et al. Does Enhancing Paid Maternity Leave Policy Help Promote Gender Equality? Evidence from 31 Low- and Middle-Income Countries. *Gend. Issues* 39, 335–367 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-021-09293-4>

Tuition-Free Education: Impact on Attitudes toward Intimate Partner Violence

- Examining the effects of **tuition-free education** laws
- 683,150 women aged 15 - 49 in 29 African countries
- **Findings**
 - ✓ **reduced** the **probability IPVAV was perceived as justified** under at least one circumstance **by 5.3 percentage points**.
 - ✓ Declines were **greater** in countries that abolished fees in **secondary school** relative to those that only abolished fees in primary.



Source: Bhuwania, P. and Heymann, J. (2022), Tuition-free secondary education and women's attitudes toward intimate partner violence: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa. SSM – Population Health, 17: 101046. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2022.101046>

Child Marriage Laws: Impact on Attitudes and Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence

- Examining the effects of **laws establishing a minimum age of marriage for girls of 18 with no parental consent loopholes**
- 532,255 women in 19 LMICs and 104,704 men in 11 LMICs
- **Findings**
 - ✓ **improved attitudes towards IPV** among both women and men.
 - ✓ **reduced the risk of experiencing physical and sexual abuse.**



Source: Omidakhsh N, Heymann J. Improved child marriage laws and its association with changing attitudes and experiences of intimate partner violence: a comparative multi-national study. J Glob Health. 2020 Jun;10(1):010707. doi: 10.7189/jogh.10.010707. PMID: 32257164; PMCID: PMC7101085.

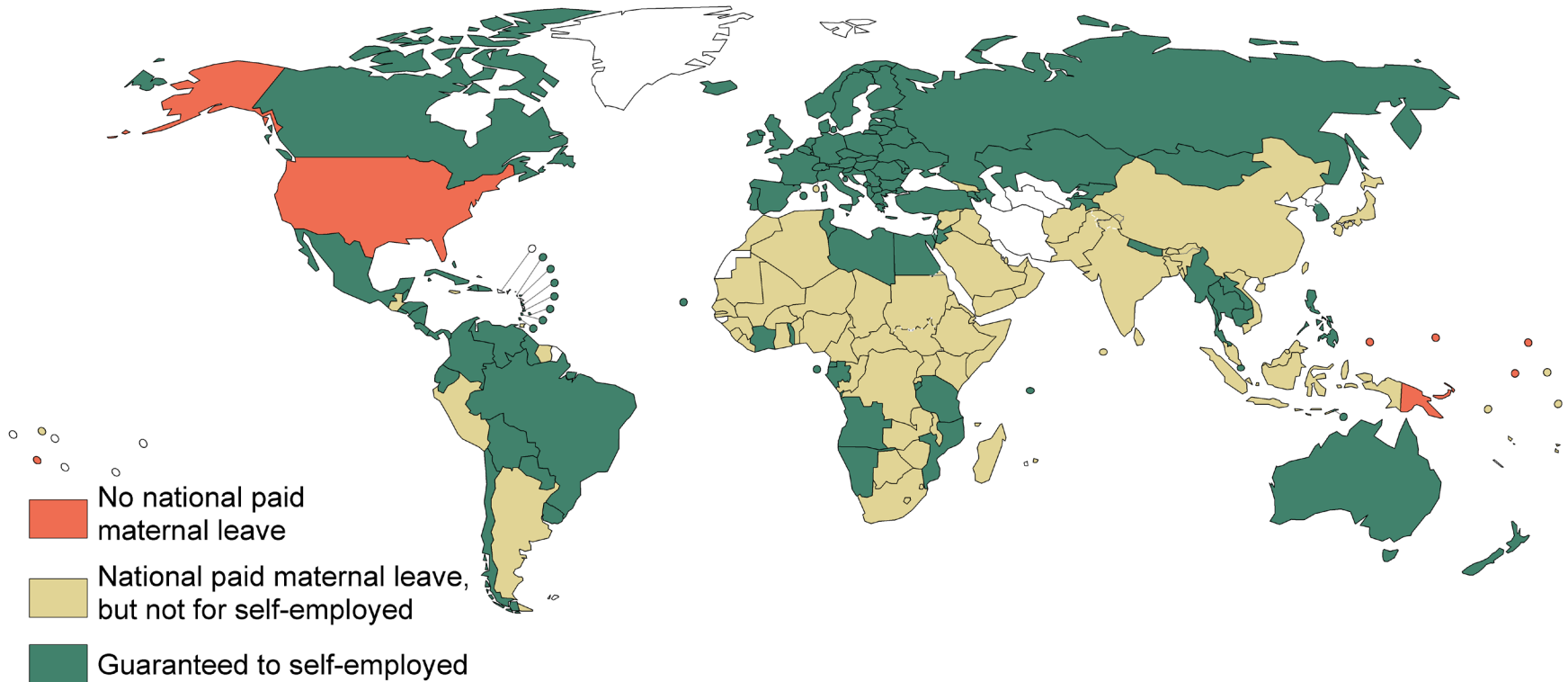
What matters to laws being effective?

Quantitative measures can map whether national laws and policies:

- ✓ Cover all women
- ✓ Address implementation
- ✓ Close legal loopholes

Covering all women

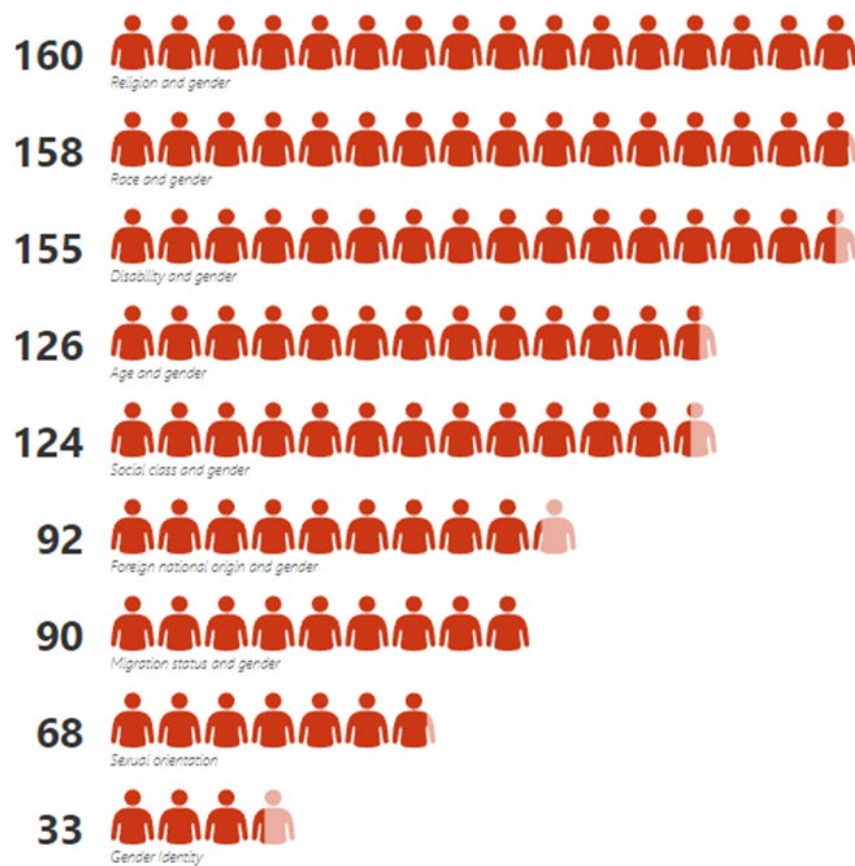
Do countries guarantee self-employed workers access to paid maternal leave?



Source: *WORLD Policy Analysis Center, Adult Labor Database, 2022*

Source: Heymann, J., Sprague, A. and Raub, A., 2023. *Equality within Our Lifetimes: How Laws and Policies Can Close—or Widen—Gender Gaps in Economies Worldwide*. California: University of California Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/luminos.147>

HOW MANY COUNTRIES PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION AT WORK FOR ALL WOMEN?



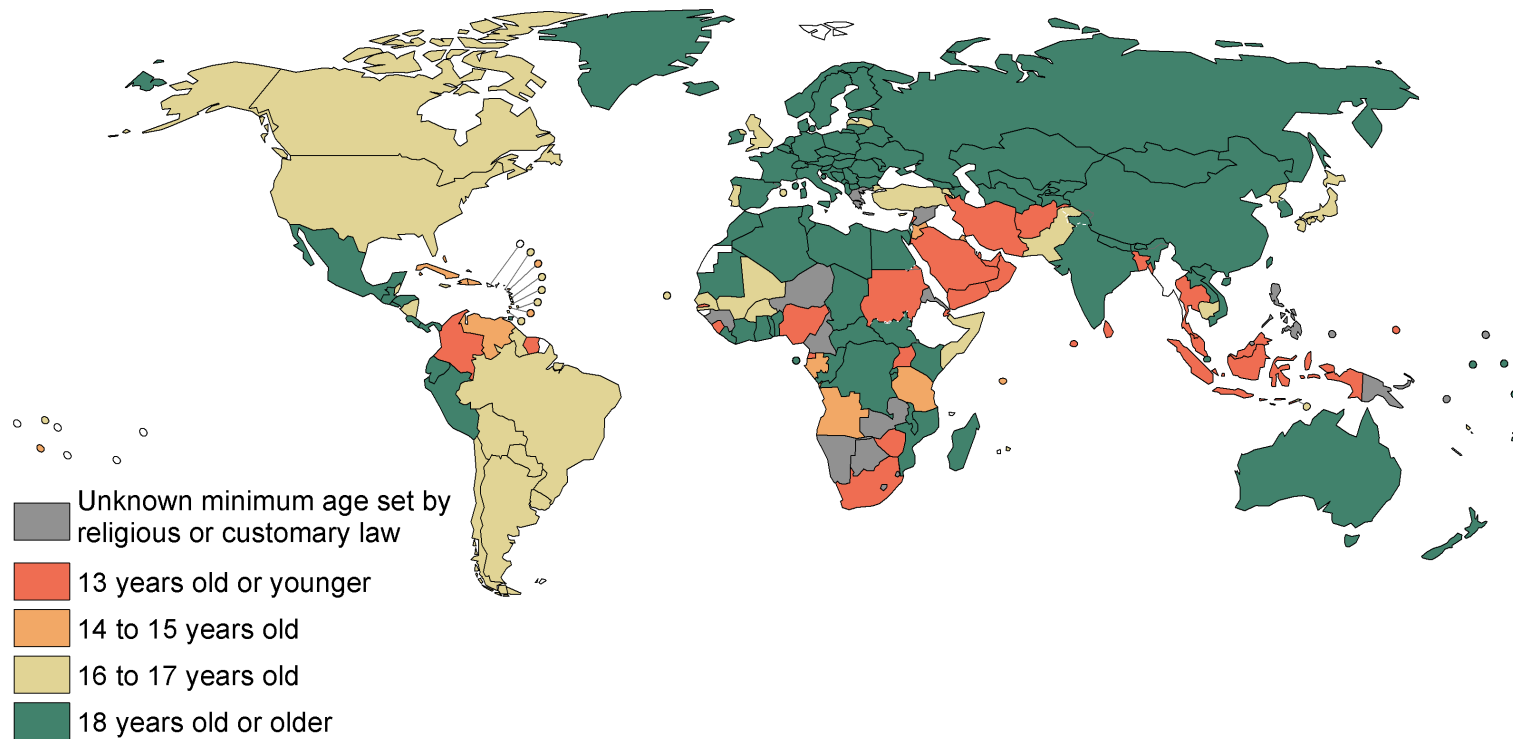
Addressing implementation

Do countries prohibit sexual harassment at work and take steps to effectively implement it?



Closing legal loopholes

What is the legal minimum age of marriage for girls when legal loopholes, including parental consent and religious or customary law, are taken into account?



Source: WORLD Policy Analysis Center, *Child Marriage Database*, 2019



Source: Heymann, J., Sprague, A. and Raub, A., 2023. *Equality within Our Lifetimes: How Laws and Policies Can Close—or Widen—Gender Gaps in Economies Worldwide*. California: University of California Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/luminos.147>