



What do women want? Gender, perceptions data and development priorities

Tanvi Bhatkal

Key messages

- There are very few gender-based differences in the most important development priorities expressed by people in the MY World, particularly in poorer countries, despite considerable variations across countries.
- Perceptions data are important but do not necessarily contain all the information needed for making effective policy choices, and in particular expressed priorities may have different underlying motivations in different contexts where gendered barriers prevent equal access to opportunities.
- There is an apparent paradox whereby women in most gender-unequal countries express relatively higher demand for gender equality in the MY World survey than other perceptions data would suggest, which attests to the need for further study of women's perceptions of gender inequality.

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Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), expiring in 2015, spurred global efforts to meet the needs of the poor across the world. Since the base year of 1990, a great deal of progress has been made: the proportion of people living in extreme poverty has been halved, as has the share of people without access to safe drinking water; significant gains have been made in fighting tuberculosis and malaria; and gender-based disparities in primary school enrolment have been eliminated (United Nations, 2014).

Yet, in many countries, progress on many fronts – including on the gender-related goals – has been inadequate. Large differences in enrolment for secondary and tertiary education levels between boys and girls persist in many developing regions; the share of women in non-agricultural employment remains lower than that of men; and growth in women's political participation has been limited, with female members of parliament accounting for only about 22% of all parliamentary seats as of January 2014 compared to 14% in 1990 (ibid).

International policy dialogue is now centred on setting the development agenda to follow the MDGs. As part of this post-2015 discussion, there has been a big push from many governments and civil society organisations for gender equality and women's rights to be emphasised in the future goals. A stand-alone gender goal is proposed, in addition to mainstreaming gender across other goals, with a focus on areas that would contribute most to empowering girls and women.

In addition to the governmental negotiations, a huge number of consultations have been conducted to understand people's priorities, of which the MY World survey, with over 3.8 million responses, is the largest. This briefing seeks to understand people's development priorities from a gendered perspective. How are girls' and women's priorities, in terms of what they believe will improve their wellbeing and that of their families, different from those of boys and men? In which countries do

women demand gender equality as a critical development objective? What are the gendered barriers women face in realising their aspirations? And how do expressed development priorities relate to their perceptions and their objective circumstances? This briefing attempts to listen to the voices of girls and women from varied circumstances and shed some light on these questions.

MY World

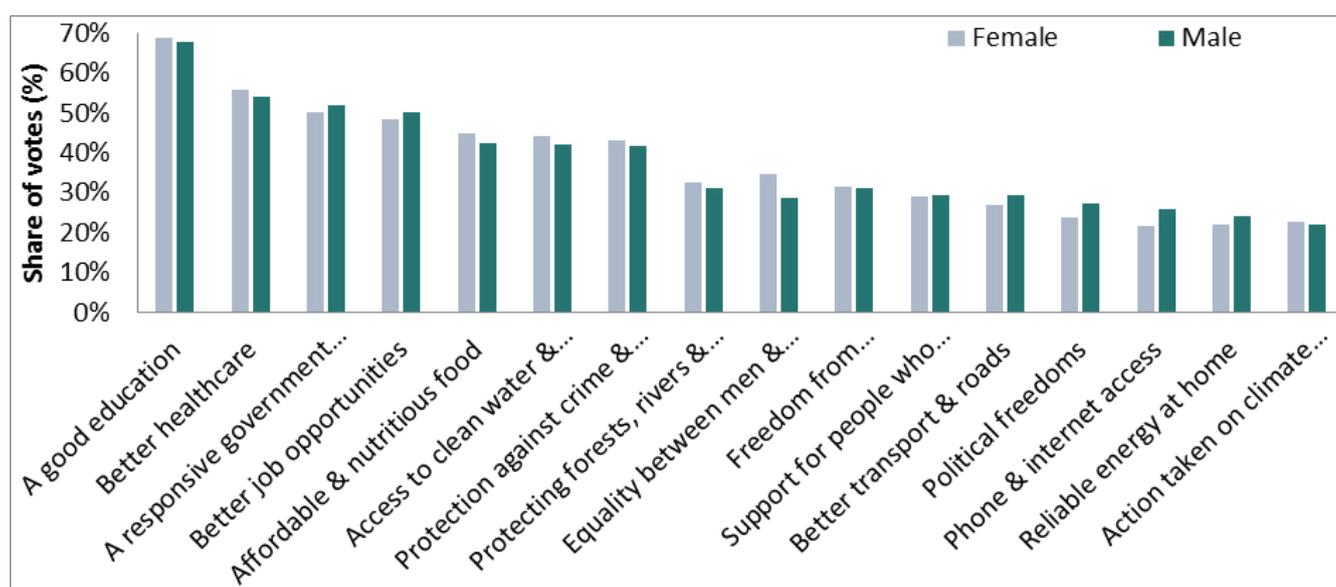
MY World is a global UN survey that aims to understand the development priorities of people from across the world. It asks respondents one simple question: *which six out of 16¹ development priorities are most important to them and their families.*

The survey has been ongoing since late 2012 and will continue until the end of 2015. It is available online in the six UN official languages, through mobile phones using short message service (SMS) and toll-free phone using interactive voice response (IVR), and via paper-and-pencil based offline surveys conducted by grassroots organisations, faith based communities, youth groups, private sector bodies and NGO partners.

MY World has been designed to be as open as possible to encourage responses by all methods; as a result, it does not employ a rigorous sampling methodology and is not intended to be globally representative in the statistical sense. Demographic data captured on respondents – age, gender and education level – help disaggregate population sub-groups. The results here are illustrative rather than indicative for most countries, but we have six countries with representative data which we look at in some further detail. MY World results are used to understand broad trends in development priorities based on individual and national circumstances.

1 The 16 options are based on priorities expressed by poor people in previous research, polling exercises and on-going technical and political discussions about possible goals for the post-2015 agenda (see methodology). MY World also allows a seventeenth option where respondents can suggest their own priority.

Figure 1: MY World global responses



So far, MY World has received over 3.8 million responses² from across 194 countries:

- About 45% of the responses are from female respondents, compared with ~50% females in the global distribution.
- A majority of responses – about 57% – are via offline surveys, 18% via SMS, and 25% from online responses.
- A majority of responses are from developing countries, with almost 30% from low HDI countries and nearly 30% from medium HDI countries. Low HDI countries, which constitute about 15% of the global population, are therefore over-represented (World Bank, n.d.).
- The median age for both male and female respondents is 22 years, relative to the global median age of 30 years. Over 60% of respondents are aged between 16 and 30 years.
- Over 10% of respondents have not completed primary school, about 20% each have completed primary education and undertaken some secondary schooling, and about half have completed secondary level education. Our sample displays slightly higher levels of educational attainment than the global distribution where 21% of individuals (aged 15 and above) have not completed primary school, 14% have completed primary, and 15% have completed secondary and beyond (Barro and Lee, 2014).

MY World results

At a global level, the leading two priorities – **a good education and better healthcare** – have received attention

through the MDG and other international development efforts, although several challenges remain. In addition, a large share of male and female respondents selected **a responsive government we can trust and better job opportunities** (see Figure 1).

By and large, the gender differentials in prioritisation are negligible³, particularly among the highest ranked options (see Table 1). This suggests some global consensus on what is most important to improving people's lives, and indicates the scope for a common political agenda for international development.

The options with relatively higher gender differentials at the aggregate level are:

- *Equality between men and women* which has the greatest gender differential, with 35% of females selecting it compared to less than 29% of males
- *Phone and internet access* which was selected by around 22% of females and 26% of males
- *Political freedoms* which was selected by nearly 24% of females compared to about 27% of males

It is, however, important to unpack these global aggregates to understand whether they conceal variations across geographies, income levels or population sub-groups. This would allow development efforts to focus on the needs of the poor and marginalised in those particular regions of the world.

2 This briefing considers only those responses where six options were selected; 1,903,710 responses analysed following data cleaning (data downloaded on 27 May 2014).

3 Although the gender differences are small for most priorities, all gender-based differentials are statistically significant at the 1% level of significance.

Table 1: Overall responses by gender

Priority	Overall Rank	Female (%)	Male (%)	Gender difference (F - M) (%)
A good education	1	69%	68%	1%
Better healthcare	2	56%	54%	2%
A responsive government we can trust	3	50%	52%	-2%
Better job opportunities	4	48%	50%	-2%
Affordable and nutritious food	5	45%	43%	2%
Access to clean water and sanitation	6	44%	42%	2%
Protection against crime and violence	7	43%	42%	1%
Protecting forests, rivers and oceans	8	33%	31%	1%
Freedom from discrimination and persecution	9	32%	31%	0%
Equality between men and women	10	35%	29%	6%
Support for people who can't work	11	29%	30%	-1%
Better transport and roads	12	27%	30%	-2%
Political freedoms	13	24%	27%	-4%
Phone and internet access	14	22%	26%	-4%
Reliable energy at home	15	22%	24%	-2%
Action taken on climate change	16	23%	22%	1%

Trends in core development priorities

While gender, age and educational attainment are related to people's selected priorities, analysis reveals that none of these individual features are as important as country level characteristics or country *fixed effects*⁴ in explaining people's selection in MY World.

This section disaggregates people's expressed priorities based on gender, education levels and country (although responses vary depending on age, this section focuses on patterns based on education levels). It explores patterns in responses based on national circumstances by disaggregating countries into quintile groups depending on their income as measured by per capita GDP (PPP, current international \$). The lowest quintile is associated with countries with the lowest per capita GDP (PPP) in 2012 (World Bank, n.d.). This disaggregation is highly correlated with disaggregation based on UNDP's Human Development Index (correlation coefficient between HDI quintile and per capital GDP quintile = 0.89).

To further examine how priorities vary across population sub-groups, responses within each income quintile of countries are further disaggregated based on the educational attainment of individuals. This helps identify differences in priorities that are related to people's socio-economic circumstances.

A good education ranks highest in about 85% of countries and ranks second in another 10% of countries. It is the top ranked priority in all income quintiles of countries, and across all education levels (see Figure 2). Overall, a larger share of female respondents selects a good education among their top priorities and, in fact, the female bias is slightly greater in the lowest income quintile of countries.

Better healthcare, which ranks second overall, was selected as a top priority among a larger share of respondents in poorer countries. This may be, in part, on account of higher public investment in healthcare in more developed countries which leads to greater satisfaction and a corresponding lower priority for healthcare (Appleby, 2013). While girls and women are more likely to select healthcare across all income quintiles, the female bias is more pronounced in poorer countries, with 58% of females and 53% of males from the bottom income quintile of countries selecting it compared to 46% of females and 44% of males in the top quintile (see Figure 3).

The third most commonly selected option is a **responsive government we can trust**. A smaller share of respondents from the poorer countries select governance as a priority (see Figure 4). It may be that more immediate priorities such as basic infrastructure and social services, which are under the purview of the government, take precedence in these countries. It may also be that people in

⁴ The goodness of fit (R2) of regressions with country fixed effects are between 3 and 27 times the OLS regression with only the three variables collected by MY World (age, education and gender).

Figure 2: Share of respondents selecting a good education

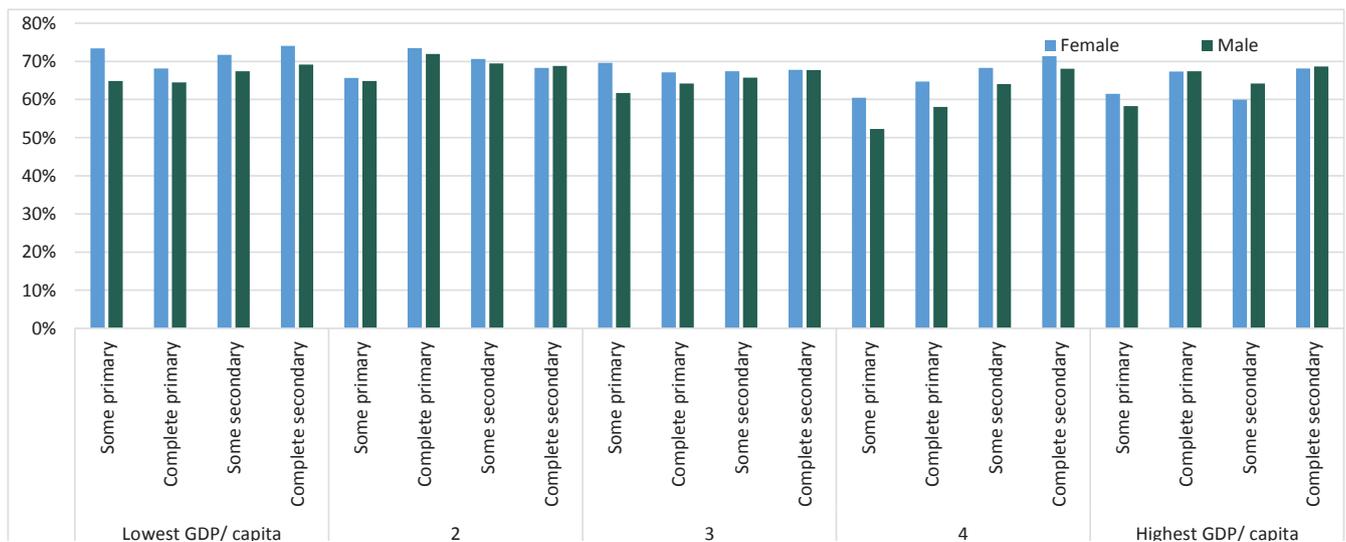
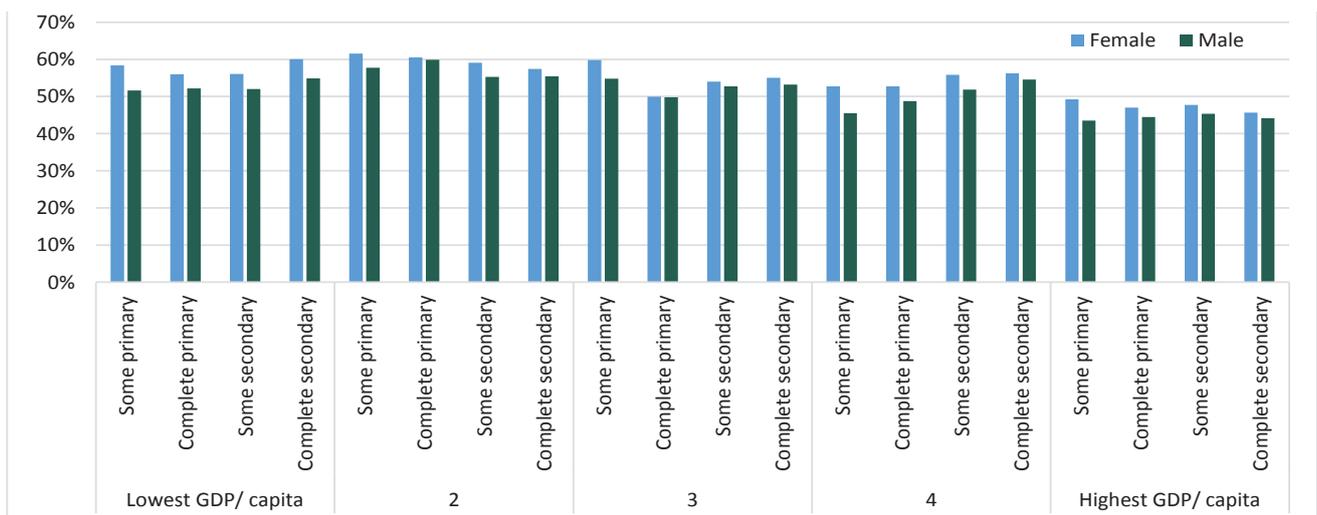


Figure 3: Share of respondents selecting better healthcare



more developed countries have higher expectations from their government (Bergh et al, 2014).

Interestingly, while the overall male bias is reflected among most population groups, i.e. all education levels and across all income quintiles of countries, it is more pronounced in more developed countries where 53% of females and 59% of males selected it.

Political freedoms, which is lower ranked, displays a similar albeit starker trend. Here, however, there is a pronounced male bias in the two lowest and highest quintiles of countries. In the lowest income quintile of countries, about 20% of females and 28% of males select political freedoms; the gender differential reduces to 2-3 percentage points in the subsequent two quintiles, and then increases to about 10 percentage points in the top two quintiles.

The fourth ranked option, linked to a good education, is **better job opportunities**. A larger share of respondents from the lower income quintiles of countries selected better jobs as a top priority (see Figure 5). It is ranked among the top four priorities in 29 out of 36 countries in the bottom income quintile and in 17 countries in the second quintile compared to only 13 countries in the fourth and six countries in the top quintile. From a gender perspective, although globally a larger share of male respondents voted for jobs, there is a small female bias in the lowest income quintile – and the aggregate male bias is driven by more developed countries.

Gendered development barriers

The overall consensus in terms of men and women’s development priorities must be considered in the context of

Figure 4: Share of respondents selecting an honest and responsive government

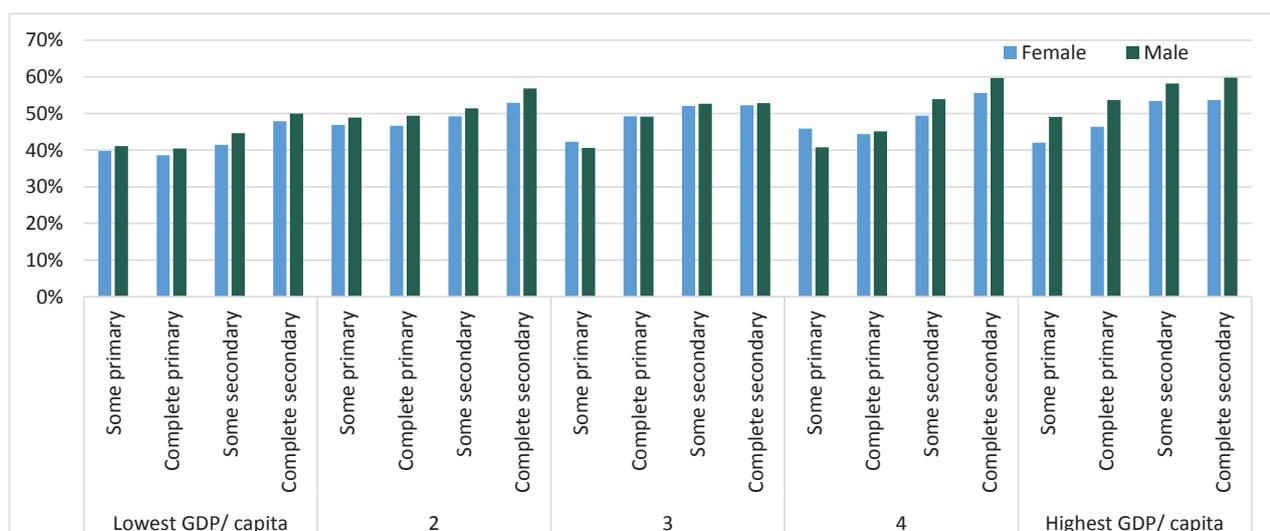
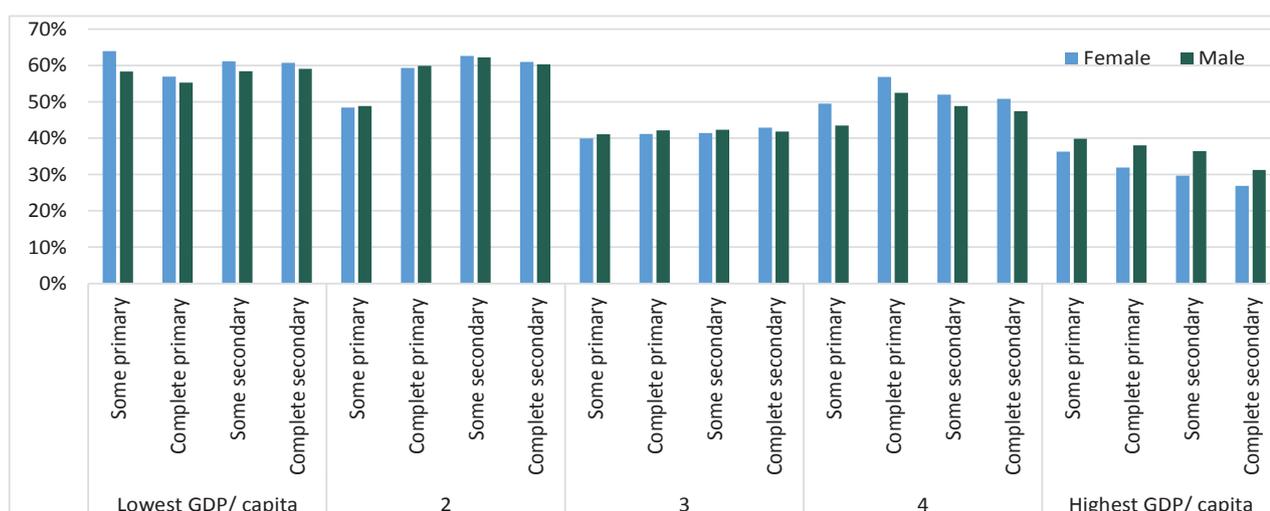


Figure 5: Share of respondents selecting better job opportunities



existing unequal outcomes resulting from gendered barriers to realising their aspirations and the marginalisation of girls and women in many parts of the developing world. Men and women may have similar priorities, but girls and women often face specific gendered barriers that prevent them from realising these aspirations. For instance, in the case of jobs and livelihoods, while the more detailed MY World representative surveys⁵ do not show any marked gender differences in livelihood constraints between men and women, further questioning shows that is not the whole picture. In the four countries where specific questions were asked relating to childcare – which gender roles almost universally dictate to be women’s

responsibility – it is found to pose a considerable burden for the majority of women (see Box 1).

Likewise, women frequently bear a higher burden of various other unpaid domestic and agricultural work that often goes unrecognised and negatively impacts their health and options for pursuing job opportunities (United Nations Development Programme, 2011; World Bank, 2011). Such gendered barriers in all spheres of life need to be considered and addressed when setting development goals and by international development efforts.

Men and women may have similar development priorities but face some different constraints to realising these aspirations. Such gendered barriers in all spheres of life need to be considered and addressed when setting

⁵ UNDP conducted nationally representative MY World surveys in six African countries that are geographically representative of each country and of the gender and age structure of the population, asking additional questions to help draw conclusions about their populations.

Box 1: Gendered barriers to livelihood ambitions

The offline MY World representative surveys asked a set of questions relating to livelihood constraints in six African countries – Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Senegal. Respondents were asked to identify the single most important constraint that prevented them from achieving their livelihood ambition.

The leading constraint in most countries, out of 23 possible options, was poor finances or lack of money, most commonly cited by both men and women in Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique and Liberia, and in the top five in Senegal. Another identified challenge was the high cost of living commonly cited in Ghana, Mozambique and Senegal. In addition, in Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria and Senegal, unemployment or a poor job was a common concern. In Liberia corruption and lack of opportunity were often cited, and in Nigeria ineffective government, discrimination and security were among the leading problem.

Most respondents mentioned macro problems affecting the family or economy as prime constraints, and the responses exhibited little gender-based variance. Gender bias ranked in the bottom five in most countries, except among women in Mozambique (9th), Ghana (14th) and Kenya (15th) – and even in these countries less than 3% of female respondents cited gender bias as their chief constraint. As with the MY World survey, the broader national context and shared experiences of the poor seem to dominate as chief problems.

However, this need not mean that women do not face additional, gender-specific constraints. For instance, the burden of domestic tasks and caring for children and the elderly is often disproportionately borne by girls and women. Considered low-status activities and unrecognised in national statistics, these tasks affect their time use and education and job market participation, impacting their prospects for empowerment (Ilahi, 2000; Kes and Swaminathan, 2006). At the request of the Hewlett Foundation, which funded several MY World surveys, a set of questions relating to childcare (which is of interest to the Foundation) were included in the MY World surveys in some countries (Kenya, Mozambique, Liberia and Senegal). These allow us to understand some of the gendered barriers to education and jobs, both highly ranked in MY World.

The surveys bear out that women shoulder a larger burden of childcare responsibilities; childcare work was higher among women, particularly less educated women in rural areas, in all four countries.

In Senegal, women were 15 percentage points more likely to be taking care of young children. About half of rural and 40% of urban women stated childcare responsibilities were a constraint to achieving their livelihood ambition. The prominent channels through which childcare was a constraint were by limiting time for business and income generating activities (cited by 50% of rural and 28% of urban women) and lack of employment opportunities (31% of rural and 42% of urban women).

In Kenya, women in both urban and rural areas were over 10 percentage points more likely to take care of young children than men. A high share – about 84% of rural women and 80% of urban women – stated childcare was a constraint to achieving their livelihood ambition. This was most commonly due to the cost of childcare (cited by 38% of rural and 42% of urban women involved in childcare) and the limits posed by childcare on time for business or income generating activities (17% of rural and 15% of urban women).

In Liberia, women were 10 percentage points more likely to be responsible for childcare than men. More than 60% of women in felt that childcare responsibilities posed a constraint to achieving their livelihoods ambition. This was due to childcare costs (cited by 50% of rural and 32% of urban women), lack of childcare services (15% of rural and 17% of urban women), lack of employment opportunities (15% of rural and 22% of urban women) and in urban areas due to childcare affecting work or education (12%).

In Mozambique, women were about 5 percentage points more likely to be taking care of children. A little over half of women (55% in rural and 50% in urban areas) believed childcare posed a constraint to their livelihood. In rural areas this was mainly due to the cost of childcare (47%) and lack of employment opportunities (24%). Among urban women, apart from childcare costs (26%), it was due to limited time available for business or income generating activities (24%) and impacts on work or education (22%).

development goals and making policies to improve people's lives.

In addition, despite the similarities, some priorities in the MY World survey. Despite the underlying similarity, some priorities in the MY World survey revealed gender-based differences in voting patterns that merit further discussion. Although lower ranked in the survey overall, the prioritisation of the four infrastructure options

– **access to clean water and sanitation, better roads and transport, phone and internet access and reliable energy at home** – reveals some trends which highlight the need for caution when using perceptions data to inform planning of development initiatives at the national or international level.

Of the four, *access to clean water and sanitation* is the only option with a female bias at the global level – with

Figure 6: Share of respondents selecting better roads & transport

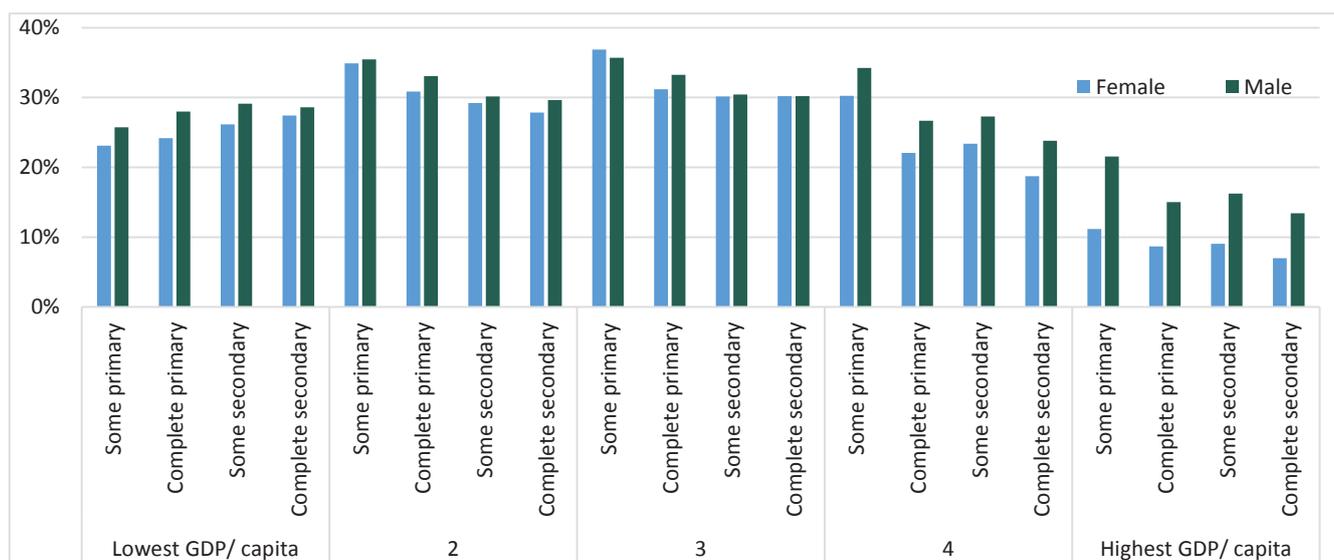
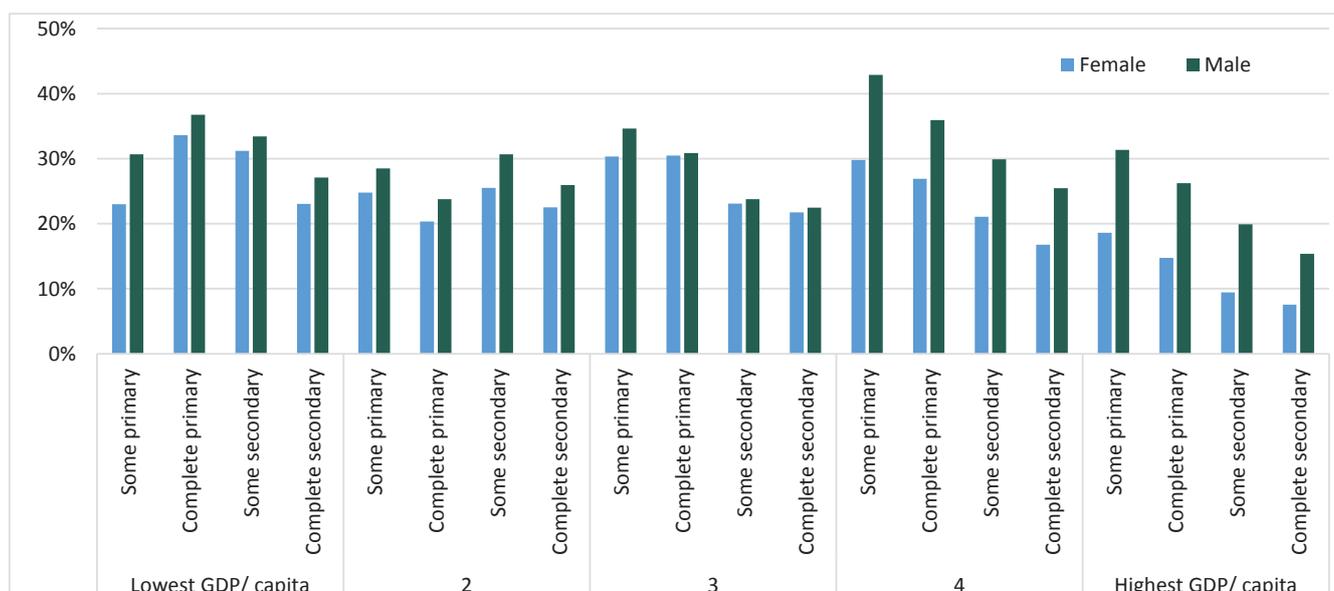


Figure 7: Share of respondents selecting phone and internet access



44% of female respondents selecting it compared to 42% of males. The other three options – *better roads and transport* (27% of females vs. 30% of males), *phone and internet access* (22% of females vs. 26% of males), and *reliable energy at home* (22% of females vs. 24% of males) – are more commonly selected by male respondents. This bias is still present, though less marked, when looking just at the responses from the poorest countries.

The gender differential in the four infrastructure options is considerably lower in the lowest two income quintiles of countries. In other words, the aggregates – as

in the case of the governance option – conceal different trends in different parts of the world. The male bias in the infrastructure options of *better roads and transport* (see Figure 6), telecommunications (Figure 7) and *reliable energy at home* (Figure 8) is driven by a higher prioritisation of these in the richer countries⁶. In the case of *access to clean water and sanitation* (see Figure 9), there is a female bias among the least educated in the bottom income quintile of countries, greater gender parity in subsequent quintiles and once again a female bias in the highest quintile.

⁶ Respondents in the highest income quintile of countries may have selected six priorities not only considering what was “most important to them and their family” but also based on their opinion of important development challenges in less developed countries and what they thought global development goals should be.

Figure 8: Share of respondents selecting reliable energy at home

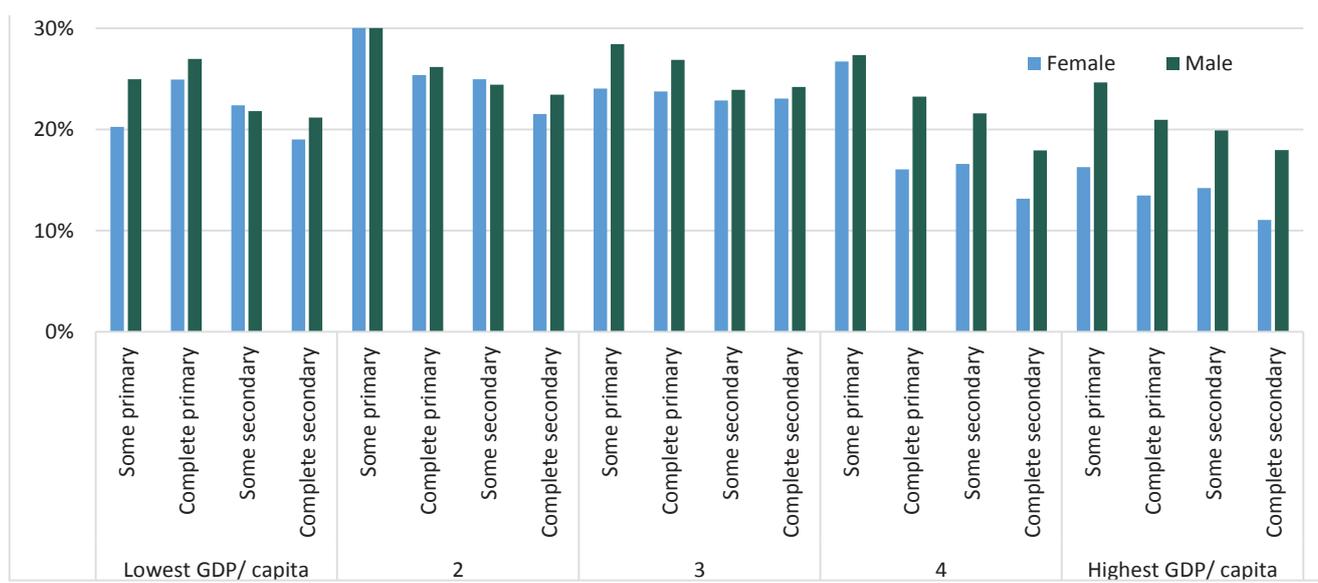
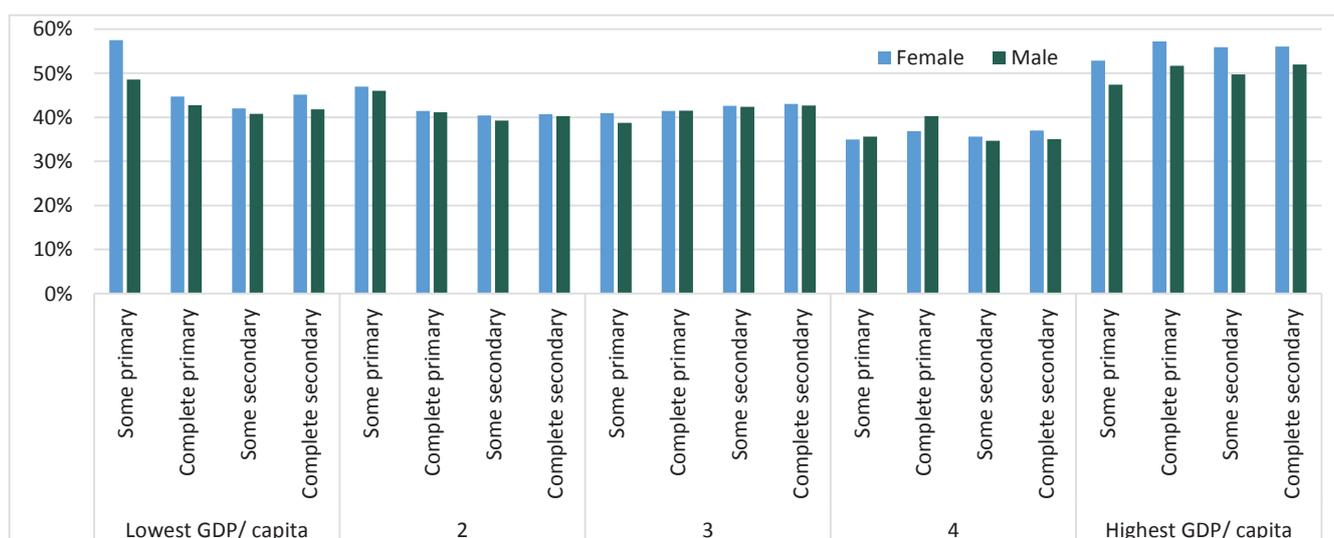


Figure 9: Share of respondents selecting access to clean water & sanitation



This bias, though slight, is at first sight, counterintuitive. As with childcare, women expend considerable time on unpaid domestic work. Women account for about 40% of the total global workforce, but 58% of unpaid work and 50% of informal employment (World Bank, 2011). Their burden of domestic labour is exacerbated by poor infrastructure and transport networks in developing countries, as they walk long distances to collect firewood or water (Ilahi, 2000; ICRW 2005; Kes and Swaminathan, 2006; World Bank, 2011). In addition, walking carrying the heavy weights of water and fuel wood poses health risks relating to injury, and journeys through unsafe environments exposes them to other health risks, and possible violence and sexual abuse. Indoor air pollution caused by cooking with solid fuels is estimated to cause

nearly 4.3 million premature deaths annually (as of 2012), with a greater burden on women and children who spend more time near the hearth (World Health Organisation 2014). Poor infrastructure therefore negatively affects girls and women in several ways.

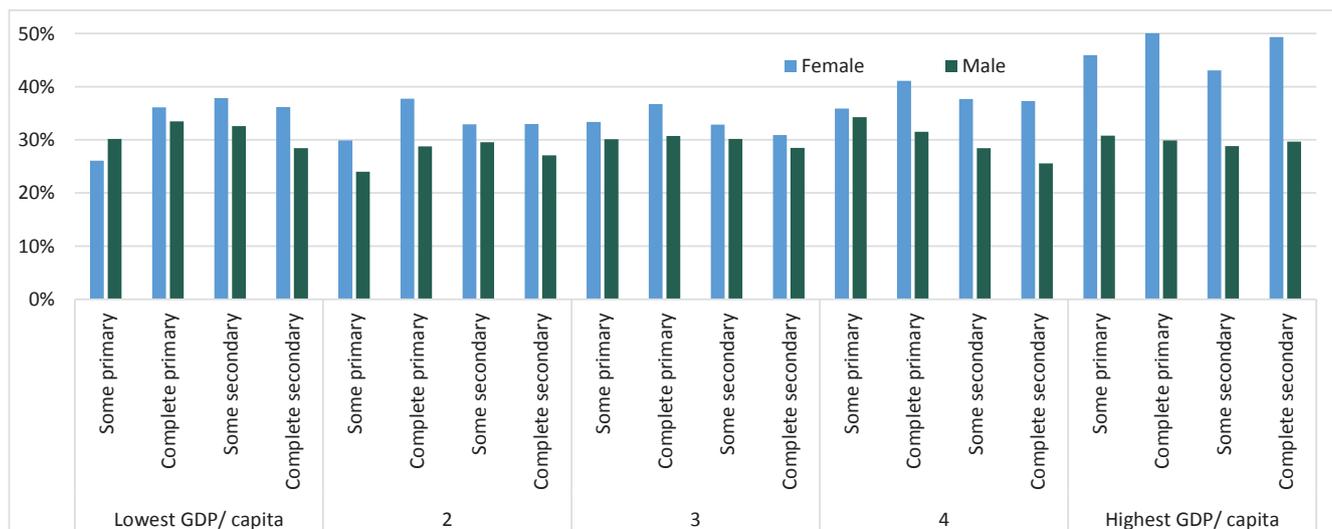
On the other hand, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be an instrument for women's empowerment (ICRW, 2010; Melham et al, 2009). For instance, research in Bolivia, Egypt, India and Kenya found mobile phone ownership improved women's access to education, health, and business and employment opportunities and, moreover, 85% of women felt more independent and 93% felt safer due to their mobile phone (GSMA Development Fund et al, 2013). Yet, access remains unequal – a woman is 21% less likely to own a

Box 2: Defining ‘equality between men and women’

MY World defines equality between men and women “means that men and women should have the same rights and opportunities. Boys and girls should have equal access to school and the same quality of education; men and women should have the same chance of getting elected to parliaments, the same chances of being involved in political and social life, and experience the same opportunities and rewards in the workplace.”

The definition encompasses equality across economic, political and social spheres. To the extent women select a good education or better job opportunities to empower themselves and their daughters, this analysis may underestimate the extent to which they value gender equality.

Figure 10: Share of respondents selecting equality between men and women



mobile phone than a man – 23% less likely in Africa, 24% in the Middle East and 37% in South Asia (ibid).

In this context, the provision of basic infrastructure services, such as roads, energy, telecom, and water and sanitation systems, is likely to reduce the work burden on women and contribute to their security and empowerment. The male bias in the prioritisation of these services may point to a certain caution necessary in using perceptions data to make policy decisions, and the value of combining both perceptions data and other information to provide a clear picture of the constraints people face and the variety of policy instruments needed to overcome them.

Prioritisation of gender equality

The option explicitly relating to gender – *equality between men and women* – is defined broadly (see Box 2). The option with the greatest overall gender differential in selection (6 percentage points), it ranks eighth for female respondents and 11th for male respondents.

Globally, over 35% of girls and women selected *equality between men and women* as a priority (compared to less than 29% of boys and men). Disaggregating countries

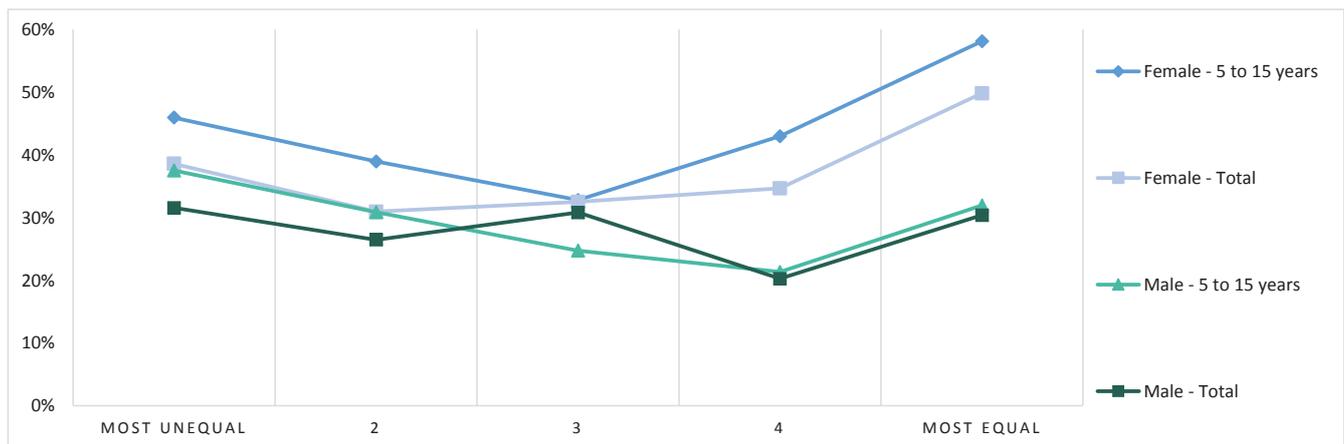
into quintiles based on per capita GDP (PPP), the share of females selecting gender equality among their top six priorities is stable at about 33% in the first three quintiles, and then increases in the richer, more developed countries in the top quintile (see Figure 10). On the other hand, among males, the share of respondents selecting gender equality is lower and relatively stable across all quintiles – ranging from 27% to 31%.

In the lowest two quintiles a lower share of female respondents with incomplete primary education select gender equality relative to better educated (wealthier) respondents. However, this need not mean that the most disadvantaged women do not desire gender equality; it may be that they choose other more tangible priorities in which gender equality is implicit. Indeed, among girls and women with only up to primary education in the bottom two quintiles of countries, a higher share selected *a good education* and *better job opportunities* relative to those with higher education.

On disaggregating based on UNDP’s Gender Inequality Index⁷ (GII), which measures achievement loss due to gender inequality, an interesting trend emerges. About half of female

7 The GII measures progress on three critical dimensions: reproductive health (measured by the maternal mortality ratio and adolescent fertility rate), empowerment (measured by the gender differential in the share of parliamentary seats and higher education attainment levels), and labour market participation (measured by women’s participation in the workforce).

Figure 11: Share of respondents selecting equality between men and women by GII quintile



respondents in the most gender-equal quintile of countries select *equality between men and women* among their top priorities. This share falls in the next two quintiles to slightly over three in ten (see Figure 11). Finally, in the last quintile consisting of the most gender-unequal countries, about 4 in 10 of female respondents select it. The share of male respondents selecting it is considerably lower for all quintiles.

The gender differential in the share of respondents selecting gender equality is correspondingly high in the most equal countries – about 20 percentage points in the most equal quintile of countries. This difference is markedly reduced in the third quintile to 2 percentage points, after which it increases to 7 percentage points in the most unequal countries.

This trend is particularly stark among young people – those up to 15 years old. Even among male respondents, a larger share of respondents aged 15 years or less in the gender-unequal countries selects the gender equality option.

To be clear about this pattern, we check whether high demand for gender equality in few large countries or countries over-represented in MY World is driving this trend. On disaggregating countries, the U-shaped trend persists; a high share of females in the most gender-equal countries select gender equality, which drops before rising again in the most unequal countries (see Figure 12). In more than half the countries in the top quintile (i.e. with the lowest GII value), at least half of female respondents selected gender equality. In the middle three GII quintiles, there are nearly no countries in which more than half of female respondents selected gender equality. Finally, more than half of girls and women in about 1 in 10 countries in the most gender-unequal quintile selected are gender equality among their top priorities.

This U-shaped trend for the prioritisation of gender equality among girls and women is corroborated by the World Values Survey (WVS) 2005-08 (World Values Survey 2014a), which contains nationally representative surveys, although less developed countries are relatively underrepresented⁸. The survey asked respondents to rank five MDG issues⁹ in order of importance. Women from the bottom GII quintile consisting of the most gender-unequal societies were most likely to select **discrimination against girls and women** among the top two challenges, despite often belonging to poor countries with other pressing needs. This share then falls before rising again in the most gender-equal countries.

However, in the bottom two quintiles, i.e. the more gender-unequal countries, a significantly smaller share of the least educated girls and women select *equality between men and women*. For instance, in the most gender-unequal quintile, only a third of female respondents with incomplete primary schooling selected it relative to 45% among those with complete primary education, nearly 40% among those with some secondary education and 36% among those that have completed secondary education. These differences may be due to lower aspirations among the less educated, and often marginalised, groups – or due to other, more tangible priorities taking precedence.

The overall pattern of women in gender unequal countries giving relatively higher priority to gender equality is interesting in light of other data which suggest that women in gender-unequal societies accept their subordinate position in some respects.

For instance, in Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) from over 50 low and middle-income countries conducted over the past decade, around four in ten of

⁸ Only 10% of the countries covered by the World Values Survey are categorised as low HDI countries, and another 20% are medium HDI countries.

⁹ The World Values Survey asked respondents which out of five problems they considered to be the most serious for the world as a whole: people living in poverty and need; discrimination against girls and women; poor sanitation and infectious disease; inadequate education; and environmental pollution.

women agreed that a husband was justified in beating his wife if she went out without informing him, neglected their children, argued, refused sex or burned food. This share was about half in 19 countries of the most gender-unequal quintile, decreasing in more gender-equal countries to about a quarter in the four countries in the fourth quintile.

Figure 12a: Share of female respondents selecting equality between men and women by GII value

All countries

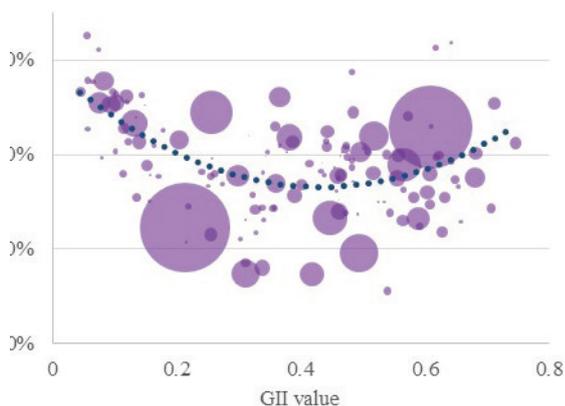
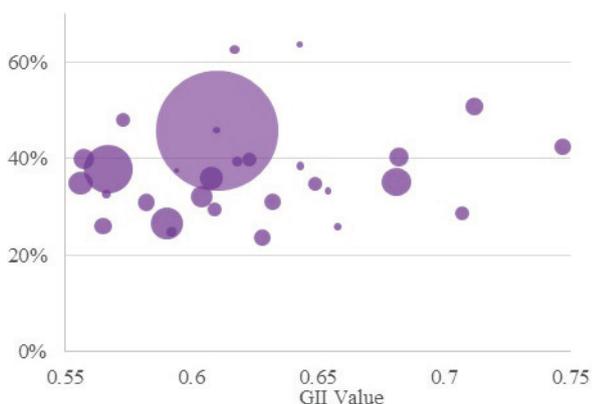


Figure 12b: Share of female respondents selecting equality between men and women by GII value

Bottom (gender-unequal) GII quintile



Similarly, about 10% of women in the most gender-unequal quintile of countries agreed a man was justified in beating his wife in all of these cases compared to less than 4% in the fourth quintile.

Similarly, women in gender-unequal societies seem more accepting of unequal opportunities to education and jobs compared to their counterparts in more gender-equal countries, as reflected in the results of the 2010-14 World Values Survey. For example, one in three women in the most gender-unequal quintile of countries agreed or strongly agreed that a university education was more important for boys than girls, compared to one in four in the second quintile, around one in five in the subsequent two quintiles and one in nine in the most gender-equal quintile (World Values Survey 2014b). About three in five women in the most unequal countries agreed that men have a greater right to jobs when they are scarce, compared to one in three women in the middle quintile, and about 1 in 8 in the most equal quintile. The proportion of women in gender-unequal countries contesting the unequal rights to education and jobs is more than 10 percentage points higher than the share among men in these countries. So while a relatively large share of both men and women seem to accept the entrenched unequal distribution opportunities, women in the most gender-unequal countries do so more than women in more equal societies.

These findings suggest a paradox: on the one hand, women in gender-unequal countries appear reconciled to inequality in some respects, but at the same time they aspire to gender equality and prioritise it over other development objectives. The underlying cause of this apparent paradox is unclear. This lack of concordance among these perceptions would benefit from further in depth, qualitative study.

This paradoxical finding again underscores the need for care in interpreting perceptions data – gender equality may well mean different things to different respondents. Making progress on securing equal rights and opportunities for girls and women is dependent on hearing their voices and, moreover – as reiterated by this analysis – on understanding and addressing the gendered barriers and entrenched gender roles in unequal societies.

Implications for research and policy

There are few gender-based differences in respondents’ opinions of the most important development priorities in MY World, particularly in poorer countries. It is clear that men and women share key aspirations and a truly global, universal agenda that reflects the needs and priorities of all people is possible and achievable. However, men and women face different constraints in achieving their goals.

In particular, although there are only minor gender-based differences in most priorities expressed in MY World, further probing in selected countries reveals that gendered barriers including childcare and unpaid domestic work prevent access to education and job opportunities. Such barriers need to be better understood and addressed through development efforts.

Table 2: Results of World Values Survey (2010-14)

Variable	GII Quintile ->	Most unequal		2		3		4		Most equal	
		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
A university education is more important for a boy than a girl	Agree/ strongly agree	34%	45%	26%	35%	22%	30%	17%	26%	11%	16%
	Disagree/ strongly disagree	66%	55%	74%	65%	78%	70%	83%	74%	89%	84%
When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to jobs than women	Agree	62%	79%	56%	67%	34%	44%	35%	47%	16%	20%
	Disagree	28%	15%	35%	24%	49%	38%	46%	32%	64%	54%
No. of countries		5		4		14		12		12	

Source: World Values Survey (2014b)

As respondents were given 3 options (agree, disagree, neither), the presented results do not add to unity.

Similarly, in the case of infrastructure, perceptions data (which are often similar for men and women) often do not reveal distinct gendered patterns of use and constraints. For instance, in the case of transport, women generally make more trips than men, often outside rush hours, with a greater variety of routes (for household shopping or accompanying children to health centres), and usually within a more restricted geographical area (Duchene, 2011). Developing gender sensitive infrastructure would then entail factoring in how women's economic and domestic activities are affected by infrastructure. In implementing a new agenda, these related issues need to be addressed in an integrated manner to make efforts aimed to promote gender equality more effective. For instance, achieving gender parity in access to education and jobs will improve women's bargaining power within and outside the home (Schultz, 2001; Doss, 2013), help secure

gender equality in other aspects of life, and potentially improve health and education outcomes for the next generation (Quisumbing and Maluccio, 2000; Schultz, 2002). In this context, it is notable that a larger share of female MY World respondents from the lowest income quintile of countries selected *a good education* and *better job opportunities* among their top priorities compared to their male counterparts. Finally, though women in gender-unequal countries prioritise gender equality above women in more equal societies, they appear more reconciled to the entrenched unequal distribution of opportunities in certain respects. This apparent paradox needs to be further studied, understood and addressed.

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Appendix 1: Demographic and Health Surveys included

Albania (2009)	Armenia (2010)	Azerbaijan (2006)
Bangladesh (2011)	Benin (2006)	Bolivia (2008)
Burkina Faso (2010)	Burundi (2010)	Cambodia (2010)
Cameroon (2011)	Colombia (2010)	Congo, Rep. (2011)
Cote d'Ivoire (2012)	Congo, Dem. Rep. (2007)	Egypt, Arab Rep. (2008)
Ethiopia (2011)	Dominican Republic (2007)	Ghana (2008)
Guinea (2005)	Gabon (2012)	Haiti (2012)
Honduras (2012)	Guyana (2009)	Indonesia (2012)
Jordan (2007)	India (2006)	Lesotho (2009)
Liberia (2007)	Kenya (2009)	Malawi (2010)
Maldives (2009)	Madagascar (2009)	Moldova (2005)
Morocco (2003)	Mali (2006)	Namibia (2007)
Nepal (2011)	Mozambique (2011)	Niger (2006)
Nigeria (2008)	Nicaragua (2001)	Philippines (2008)
Rwanda (2010)	Peru (2012)	Senegal (2011)
Sierra Leone (2008)	Sao Tome & Principe (2008)	Tanzania (2010)
Timor-Leste (2009)	Swaziland (2006)	Uganda (2011)
Ukraine (2007)	Turkey (2004)	Zimbabwe (2010)
	Zambia (2007)	



Overseas Development Institute
203 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8NJ
Tel +44 (0)20 7922 0300
Fax +44 (0)20 7922 0399
www.odi.org
info@odi.org

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