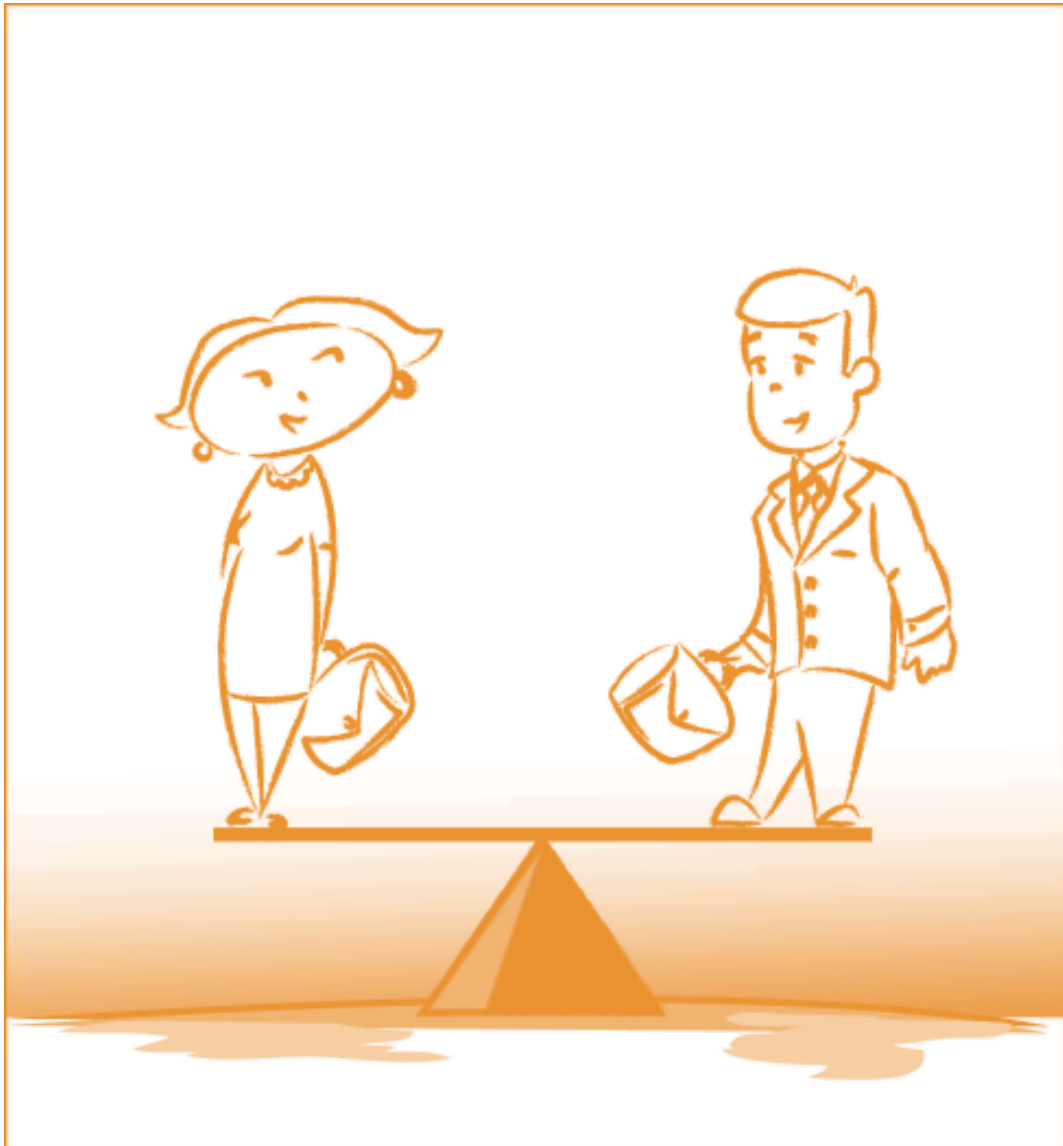


GENDER GAP REPORT 2007

THE GENDER EDGE





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MAKATI BUSINESS CLUB
2nd Floor, AIM Conference Center
Benavidez corner Trasierra Streets
Legaspi Village, Makati City, Philippines
Tel. nos.: 751-1134 to 45
Fax nos.: 750-7405 / 750-7406
E-mail: makatibusinessclub@mbc.com.ph
Website: www.mbc.com.ph

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Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.

—Kofi Annan, 2001 Nobel Peace Prize laureate

The understanding of the word “gender” has evolved in recent decades. From strictly biological considerations, gender now also takes into account the economic, social, and cultural opportunities of a man or a woman. Although society has tagged gender roles and occupations exclusively for either males or females, the dividing line between the two is slowly being removed by new schools of thought.

Any discussion of gender issues inevitably touches on the equality between the sexes—in enjoyment of power, resources, opportunities, and rewards. Society needs to accept that being a female is not a disadvantage, nor being a male an advantage. To achieve gender equality, women need to be empowered to attain their full potential and be able to contribute towards sustainable development.

Recognizing that equal rights is a critical factor in the promotion of economic, social, and political development worldwide, the World Economic Forum designed a methodology to quantify the efforts of countries in narrowing and eradicating the gap between the genders. To come out with its rankings, the WEF identified four pillars or sub-indices that are functions of specific variables based on data. The four pillars are *Economic Participation and Opportunity*, *Educational Attainment*, *Health and Survival*, and *Political Empowerment*.

Of the top 10 countries with the narrowest gender gaps in the WEF’s latest Gender Gap Report, 8 are from Europe, of which 5 are Nordic countries—Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland, and Denmark. The other 2 countries are New Zealand and the Philippines. Noticeably, the Philippines is the only Asian country. It maintained its position at No. 6 among 128 countries, the same rank in 2006 when the WEF pioneered the Gender Gap Report with a survey of 115 countries.

TOP 10

The Philippines is the only Asian country in the upper echelon

Sub-Indexes:

- 1 Economic Participation and Opportunity
- 2 Educational Attainment
- 3 Health and Survival
- 4 Political Empowerment

COUNTRY	Gender Gap Index		SUB-INDEXES							
	Rank (out of 128)	Score (in percent)	1		2		3		4	
			Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
Sweden	1	81.5	6	76.1	27	99.9	73	97.4	1	52.5
Norway	2	80.6	10	75.1	1	100.0	51	97.9	3	49.4
Finland	3	80.4	22	72.3	21	99.9	1	98.0	2	51.7
Iceland	4	78.4	23	72.1	67	98.7	95	97.0	4	45.6
New Zealand	5	76.5	8	75.5	19	99.9	67	97.4	9	33.1
Philippines	6	76.3	2	78.9	1	100.0	1	98.0	14	28.3
Germany	7	76.2	29	70.0	35	99.5	56	97.8	6	37.4
Denmark	8	75.2	18	73.4	1	100.0	96	97.0	13	30.5
Ireland	9	74.6	48	66.7	1	100.0	80	97.3	8	34.3
Spain	10	74.4	84	58.9	39	99.4	74	97.3	5	42.1

Source: Gender Gap Report 2007

GLOBAL PATTERNS

Among the four pillars involved in gender gap issues, the *Educational Attainment* sub-index posted the highest score. The prominent mark in educational attainment indicates that both men and women are given equal opportunities in learning, from primary to tertiary levels. In today's information revolution, every person's right to learn is underscored, while education is no longer just a privilege of the dominant gender.

Some countries have already removed gender-based biases in this category. These countries are Norway, the Philippines, Denmark, Ireland, Australia, Belgium, Lesotho, Jamaica, France, Luxembourg, Poland, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Belize, and the Maldives. The near 100% scores in educational attainment also show that this is the easiest factor to improve on, especially for low-ranking nations in the Re-

port. Internet access can complement instruction and learning in order to help bridge the gender gap.

Another window of opportunity is in the category of *Health and Survival*, where the scores of all 128 countries are above 92%. However, not a single country has closed the gap entirely. Health and survival encompasses variables such as *sex ratio at birth* and *healthy life expectancy*. Breakthroughs in medicine and continual research and development have increased the chances of females to survive. There are 34 countries top-scoring at 98.0% in the health and survival sub-index, and that includes the Philippines.

Meanwhile, in terms of *Economic Participation and Opportunity*, which measures participation in the labor force, income, and wage equality, the scores vary from the 25.1% of Yemen to the 79.7% of Mozambique. This sub-index does not look at the level of economic prosperity of a country; it rewards the country that does not

GOOD EXAMPLE

The Philippines ranks 1st in Educational Attainment and Health & Survival and leads its Asian neighbors

Sub-Indexes:

- 1 Economic Participation and Opportunity
- 2 Educational Attainment
- 3 Health and Survival
- 4 Political Empowerment

COUNTRY	2007		2006		Change In Score	Sub-Indexes							
	Rank (out of 128)	Score (in percent)	Rank (out of 115)	Score (in percent)		1		2		3		4	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score		Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
Philippines	6	76.3	6	75.2	1.1	2	78.9	1	100.0	1	98.0	14	28.3
Vietnam	42	68.9	-	-	-	11	74.5	103	89.2	91	97.0	42	14.8
Thailand	52	68.2	40	68.3	(0.1)	21	72.4	81	97.3	1	98.0	110	5.0
Singapore	77	66.1	65	65.5	0.6	55	65.5	98	93.1	115	95.8	71	10.1
Indonesia	81	65.5	68	65.4	0.1	82	59.9	93	94.9	81	97.2	70	10.1
Malaysia	92	64.4	72	65.1	(0.7)	93	56.7	71	98.5	97	96.9	101	5.6
Cambodia	98	63.5	89	62.9	0.6	52	66.4	112	84.5	1	98	105	5.3

Source: Gender Gap Report 2007

THE PHILIPPINE SCORE CARD

The Philippines needs to involve more women in politics to rank higher than No.14

GENDER GAP VARIABLES	2007			2006		
	Rank (out of 128)	Score (from 0 to 1)	World Average	Rank (out of 128)	Score (from 0 to 1)	World Average
Economic Participation and Opportunity	2	0.789	0.577	4	0.757	0.596
Labour force participation	84	0.67	0.69	74	0.66	0.69
Wage equality for similar work	7	0.82	0.64	25	0.73	0.64
Income (in US\$)	44	0.60	0.5	41	0.59	0.52
Legislators, senior officials, and managers	1	1.00	0.26	1	1.00	0.37
Professional and technical workers	1	1.00	0.68	1	1.00	0.79
Educational Attainment	1	1.000	0.916	1	1.000	0.939
Literacy rate	1	1.00	0.85	1	1.00	0.91
Enrolment in primary education	1	1.00	0.97	1	1.00	0.97
Enrolment in secondary education	1	1.00	0.92	1	1.00	0.94
Enrolment in tertiary education	1	1.00	0.81	1	1.00	0.86
Health and Survival	1	0.980	0.958	1	0.98	0.973
Sex ratio at birth (female/male)	1	0.94	0.92	1	0.94	0.94
Healthy life expectancy	1	1.06*	1.04*	1	1.06*	1.04*
Political Empowerment	14	0.283	0.142	16	0.269	0.138
Women in parliament	71	0.17	0.19	53	0.19	0.22
Women in ministerial positions	18	0.33	0.13	18	0.33	0.21
Number of years with a female head of state (in last 50 years)	6	0.33	0.11	7	0.29	0.04

Source: Gender Gap Report 2007

Note: *equality level is at 1.00; greater 1.00 means that females outshine males

discriminate based on gender in job contracting and in offering opportunities to climb the ranks. For instance, the Philippines is considered a low-middle-income country in terms of gross domestic product, but manages to rank No. 2 in economic participation and opportunity. The gap in the *Political Empowerment* sub-index appears to be the most difficult to mend. The arena of politics remains dominated by males as shown by the wide gaps and as captured by the low scores. With only a 52.5% closure of the gap, Sweden leads all countries. Saudi Arabia has the widest gap at 0.0% closure. The low sub-index score of Saudi Arabia is highly influenced by its legal framework and its male-dominated culture and traditions that limit the rights of women.

ALMOST EQUAL

While maintaining its No. 6 rank, the score of the Philippines actually slightly improved by 1.1 percentage points to 76.3% from 75.2% a year ago. Compared to other countries in Asia, the Philippines appears to have gained more with its 1.1% improvement because neighboring nations advanced by less or even decelerated.

The Philippines leads Asian nations in all four pillars. The country's improvement in score could be attributed to the level of respect for women in the country, democratic activities, and high respect for human rights.

In *Economic Participation and Opportunity*, the Philippines placed No. 2 overall because of the strength in two variables, namely, *legislators, senior officials and managers*, and *professional and technical workers*. Meanwhile, the mediocre No. 84 rank in *labor force participation* means that there are more men than women who seek jobs in the formal sector. However, the women in the labor force are skilled workers and some even hold executive jobs. In the Philippines, men and women are provided equal opportunity to climb the corporate ladder and receive non-discriminating compensation as reflected by the high index score.

In *Educational Attainment*, the Philippines shows no sign of an existing gap and performed better than Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand. There is no preference for male students over female students. However, this does not negate the fact that not all Filipino children are privileged to attend school. Ranking No. 1 in all considered variables also does not necessarily mean students receive quality education.

In *Health and Survival*, the Philippines, Thailand, and Cambodia, as well as 31 other countries scored 98.0%, better than the world average index of 95.8%. This category is affected by variables like *sex ratio at birth* and *healthy life expectancy*. *Healthy life expectancy's* average of 1.04 signifies that more women live longer than men. In the Philippines, women live an average of 73.9 years, which is longer than the 69.5-year life expectancy for men.

In *Political Empowerment*, Nordic countries and the rest of Europe lorded over this sub-index. However, the Philippines managed to position itself at No. 14 even with a low sub-index score of 28.3%. In the 13th Congress (July 2004–July 2007), male legislators took majority of the seats. In the House of Representatives, there were only 27 women lawmakers compared to 193 male congressmen. On the other hand, the Senate was composed of 17% women and 83% men.

The Report also considered the number of years a female headed the country. In the last 50 years, two women presidents—Corazon Aquino and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo—have led the country. From 1956 to 2006, the two women presidents have ruled for a total of 11 years. The index score and rank of the Philippines in political empowerment could even go higher until 2010 when President Arroyo finishes her term.

CONCLUSION

The world is now slowly easing the gap in terms of access to opportunities. Topnotch Sweden is already 85.1% in eliminating the gap, thus only 14.9% from completion. Meanwhile, tailender Yemen is almost half-way at 45.1%.

The Philippines is a matriarchal society where women play a vital and fundamental role in the development of the country. Based on the gender-related data, the Philippines is a good workplace where women and men enjoy equal rights, opportunities, and rewards. An open working environment has allowed the country to hone its human capital and consequently benefit from this human capital as one of the drivers of the country's economy.

In order to move higher in the Gender Gap Report rankings, the Philippines needs to pay more attention to the political empowerment aspect and involve more women in policymaking. By empowering women and increasing their representation, women will be able to substantially contribute to the nation's overall development.

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Research by

KAREN B. BITAGUN

Research Associate

Tel. No. 751-1140

e-mail: karen.bitagun@mbc.com.ph