Policy Paper

INEQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY: IDENTIFYING THOSE *LEFT BEHIND IN* THE GAMBIA

Table of Contents

UNITED NATIONS
ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

1. INTRODUCTION

As part of the 2021 UN Gambia Common Country Analysis (CCA) update, the UNESCAP *Inequality of Opportunity* analysis uses new methodological tools to identify the furthest behind, by grouping people with the lowest access to opportunities or highest barriers to effective participation. These groups are defined by common circumstances over which the individual has little or no direct control, such as their household's wealth or their place of residence.

The analysis explores inequality in eight areas affecting a person's life prospects: education; women's access to sexual and reproductive health, attitudes towards violence against women, access to basic drinking water and basic sanitation; access to clean energy; use of ICTs, financial inclusion and children's nutrition. These opportunities and barriers are covered by specific commitments outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This report starts by reviewing overall inequality of opportunity levels as measured by the D-Index (section 2). It then zooms into The Gambia to identify the shared circumstances of population groups that are left furthest behind in areas with significant inequality (section 3).

1.1 Scope of the analysis

In The Gambia, 10 opportunities and 3 barriers are identified where significant inequality prevents people from fulfilling their potential, namely: access to electricity and clean fuels, bank account ownership, basic drinking water and basic sanitation, violence justified against women, completion of secondary and higher education, women's access to skilled birth attendance during childbirth, women's access to modern contraception, internet use, and stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age. Each of these opportunities or barriers are covered by specific commitments outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (see Annex 1).

Access to electricity and clean fuels: Reliable and affordable energy services are fundamental to everyday life. Equality in access to clean energy increases productivity, reduces health disparities, and bolsters gender equality.

Bank account ownership: Owning a bank account encourages saving, enables people to obtain loans and provides a secure channel for payments in the form of remittances, government cash transfer and salaries. Inequality in access to formal financial services amplifies existing divisions in communities and societies.

Basic drinking water: Clean water is not only vital for survival, but also for supporting a healthy and productive population. Access to clean water is critical for achieving gender equality and enhancing women's empowerment, as women usually bear the brunt of collecting clean water.

Basic sanitation: The use of improved facilities that are not shared with other households and where excreta is safely disposed helps to maintain health and increase lifespans. Inequality in basic sanitation threatens human dignity and constitutes a major economic and health burden.

Prevalence of women's attitude towards domestic violence: The acceptance of the use of violence to uphold certain gender roles in society can signal a broader acceptance of violence against women in intimate relationships. These gender roles include whether a woman goes out without telling her husband, whether she neglects the children, she argues with him, she refuses sex with him, or she burns the food.

Completion of secondary and higher education: Inequality in education matters because more education often results in a better job with higher incomes and a chance to break patterns of poverty and vulnerability. Inequality in child nutrition, access to basic sanitation and clean fuels is also associated with inequality in educational attainment.

Women's access to skilled birth attendance during childbirth: Access to health personnel during childbirth is crucial in reducing maternal and child deaths. Ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and services equalizes women's opportunities for long-term health and breaks cycles of poverty.

Women's access to modern contraception: Use of modern contraceptive methods remains the first step towards positive sexual and reproductive health outcomes for all women. Inequality in the use of modern contraceptives renders some women more likely to experience unintended pregnancies, which can result in disability and even death. Tightly spaced births also have significant cognitive and nutritional consequences for children.

Internet use: ICTs are indispensable in boosting productivity and economic activity, enabling knowledge and information sharing, and broadening the delivery of services. Inequality in the use of the internet creates deep divides that are expected to amplify as technology reshapes lives.

Stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age: Inequality among children's nutrition levels matters because proper nutrition provides the foundation upon which developmental progress is built. As children receive poorer nutrition, they are therefore more likely to be stunted or wasted and face cognitive and developmental consequences of malnutrition in the long-term.

1.2 Relevance in the context of COVID-19

The results of this analysis are as timely as ever. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to consider and address the vulnerabilities of the most marginalized segments of the population. While everyone can become infected, people living in poverty or who are otherwise disadvantaged may be less well equipped to cope with the socioeconomic impacts of this health crisis.

For example, ease in the use of the internet has proved crucial for navigating the new realities brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to the internet equates access to crucial health information. It also enables connections amidst social distancing measures and helps mitigate some of its economic effects, by allowing working from home, e-commerce and e-learning. The groups with the lowest use of the internet may not be able to cope with the social and economic consequences of the pandemic.

Closures of educational institutions due to COVID-19 could exacerbate the gap in secondary education completion. The socioeconomic disadvantages of the furthest behind groups might hamper their ability to follow e-learning from their place of residence. Women might face added pressures to abandon their studies, while students in households without internet access might fall further behind. Similarly, school and health clinic closures might also restrict access to sexual and reproductive health education or services among younger groups of women.

Inequality in these areas was already concerning before the pandemic. While only 61 cases had been registered in The Gambia as of 7 July 2020, the consequences of the pandemic will reverberate globally. Its lessons must also reach citizens of all countries. This analysis will help focus the attention of the UN Country Team and the Government of The Gambia to reach the furthest behind first.

2 MEASURING INEQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

What is the D-Index?

Rising inequality is a concern across the developed and developing world alike. Sustainable Development Goal 10 highlights the pressing need to reduce inequality in all its forms.

Inequality refers to the unequal distribution not only of income and wealth, but also of opportunities and services. **Inequality of opportunity undermines the realization of human rights and constitutes a barrier for social mobility.**

The dissimilarity index (D-Index) measures how different groups - such as women, poorer households, or rural residents - **fare in terms of access to a certain opportunity,** or how different groups disproportionately experience a certain barrier. Like the Gini coefficient, the D-Index ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates no inequality, and 1 indicates that the entire access to a service is reserved to a specific group of people with shared circumstances (e.g. men from urban areas).

Building the D-Index

To obtain the D-Index, inequality in access to an opportunity (or in the prevalence of a barrier) is generated by the formula:

$$D = \frac{1}{2\bar{p}} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \beta_i \, |p_i - \bar{p}|$$

- β_i is the proportion of the group i in the sample, (sum of β_i equals 1)
- $\bar{p}$ is the average access rate in the country
- p_i is the level of access of population group i, and takes values from 0 to 1
- n is the number of groups defined by different circumstances

Based on the interactions between circumstances, the entire sample is divided into distinct population groups. The D-Index is therefore the weighted average of the absolute difference between distinct population groups with shared circumstances and the average access rate in the country ($\bar{p}$). The analysis draws on data from latest available Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) or Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS).

Which opportunities or barriers is ESCAP measuring?

Household opportunities
- access to basic drinking water
- access to basic sanitation
- access to electricity
- access to clean fuels
- ownership of a bank account
- use of the internet

Individual opportunities
- completion of secondary education
- completion of higher education
- access to modern contraception
- access to skilled birth attendance during childbirth
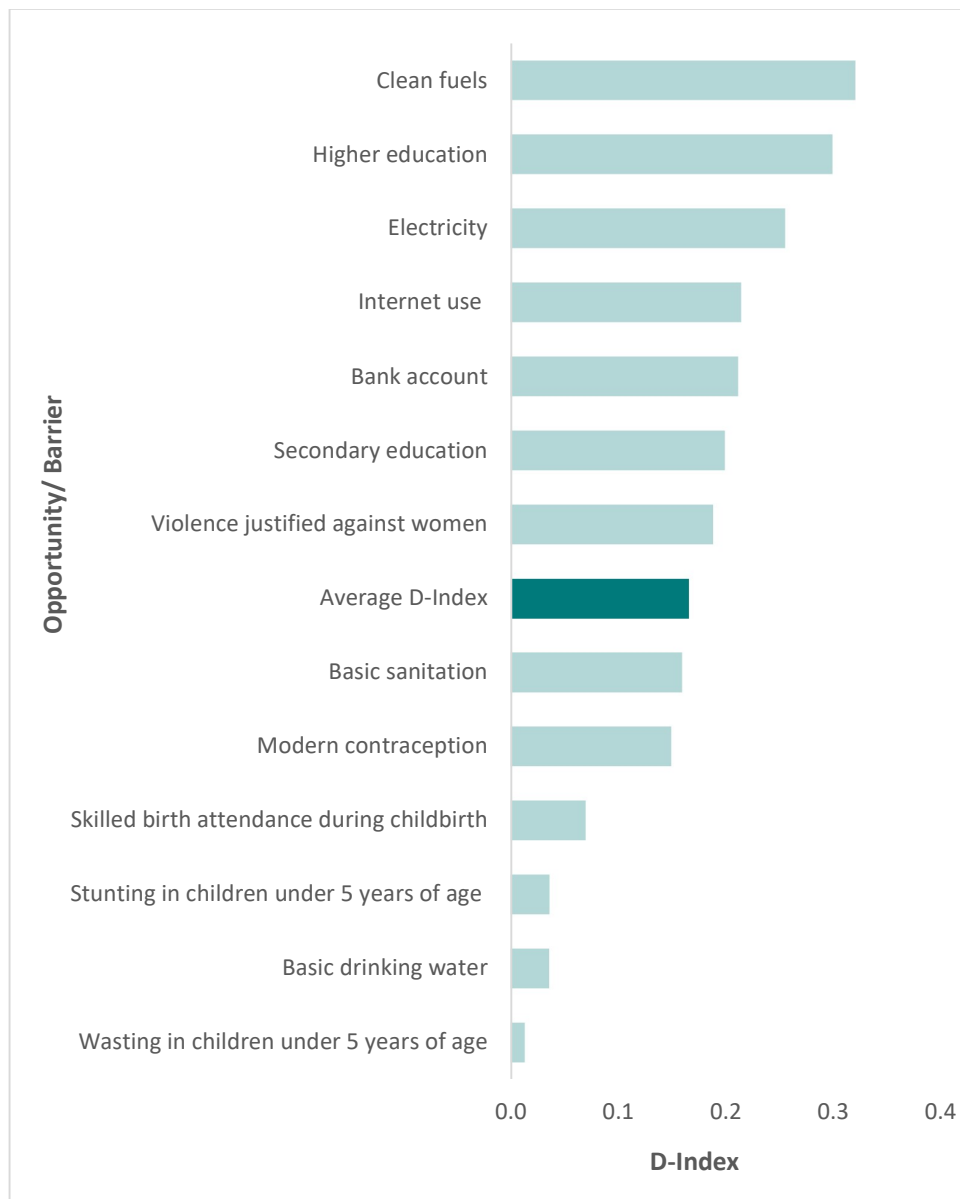
Individual barriers
- prevalence of stunting, wasting and overweight in children under 5 years of age
- prevalence and attitude towards violence against women

Forthcoming
- prevalence of child marriage
- prevalence of adolescent pregnancy

2.1 D-Index in The Gambia, by opportunity or barrier

Source: ESCAP elaboration using data from the latest MICS (2018).

Note 1: Prevalence of overweight in children under 5 years of age is not shown because the average prevalence is below 3 per cent and the sample size of the survey does not permit drawing inferences for the population.

Note 2: In general, the D-Index measures the distribution of a positive outcome. Violence justified against women and prevalence of stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age are not positive outcomes, but rather barriers for women's and children's fulfilment in life. To calculate the D-Index for these barriers, while keeping the same interpretation as for other positively defined indicators (opportunities), the *absence* of violence justified against women and prevalence of stunting and wasting is first calculated. The remaining calculations follow the same formula as for standard positively defined indicators.

3 IDENTIFYING THE FURTHEST BEHIND

The classification and regression tree (CART) methodology

The commitment to leave no one behind is enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. **A methodological approach to identify those furthest behind in access to opportunities or those who face disproportionately higher barriers** is a first step towards guaranteeing that no one is left behind.

The classification and regression tree (CART) methodology is an analytical structure that identifies population groups with distinct access levels to opportunities or occurrence of barriers. A total of 10 opportunities and 3 barriers are considered, as shown in the next section. The analysis draws on The Gambia's MICS 2018. Behind the classification and regression tree methodology is an algorithm that looks at each circumstance, separates households or individuals into different groups based on significantly different access levels and stops when no "information gain" can be generated by a new partition.

3.1 Who are the furthest behind in The Gambia?

Bank account (ownership), The Gambia, 2018
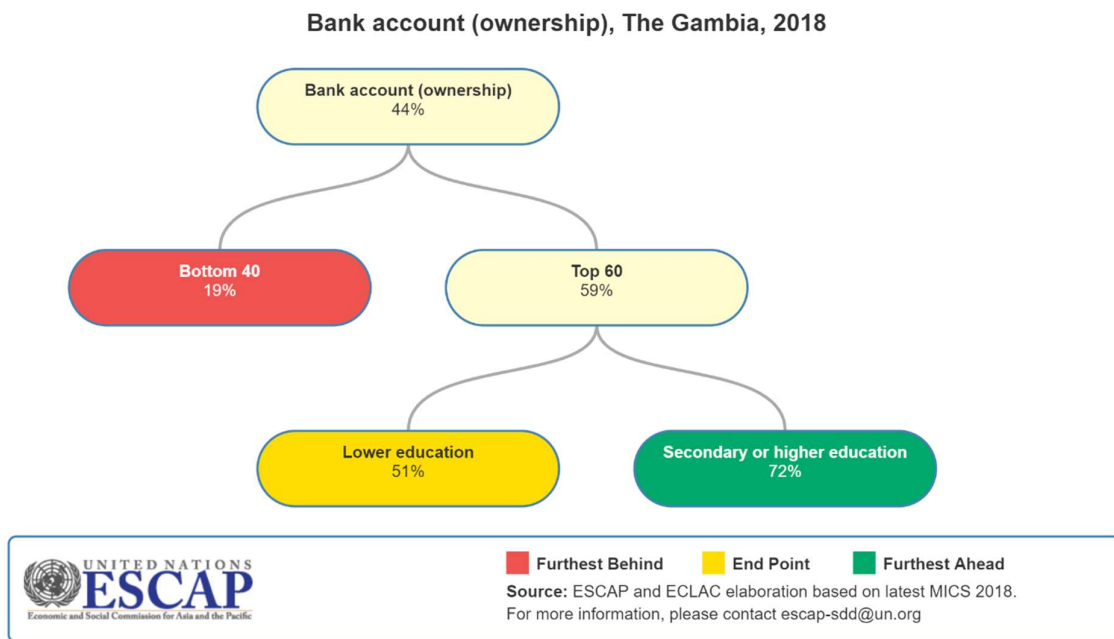
The classification tree shows that, on average, 44 per cent of households own a bank account. The red box shows the furthest behind group: households belonging to the bottom 40 per cent of the wealth distribution, among which only 19 per cent own a bank account (compared to 72 per cent in the best-off group).
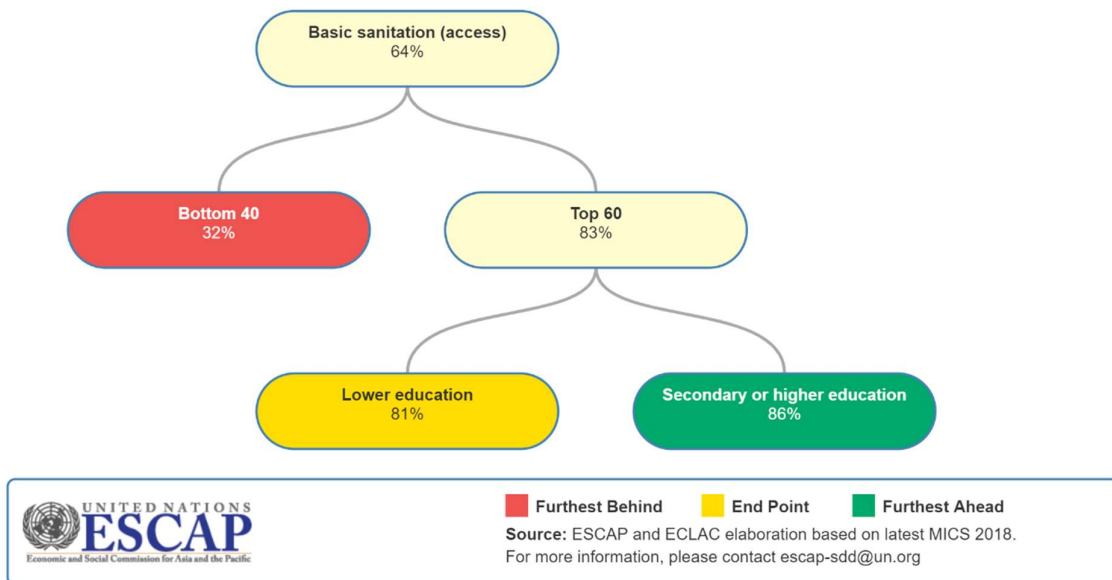
Basic drinking water (access), The Gambia, 2018
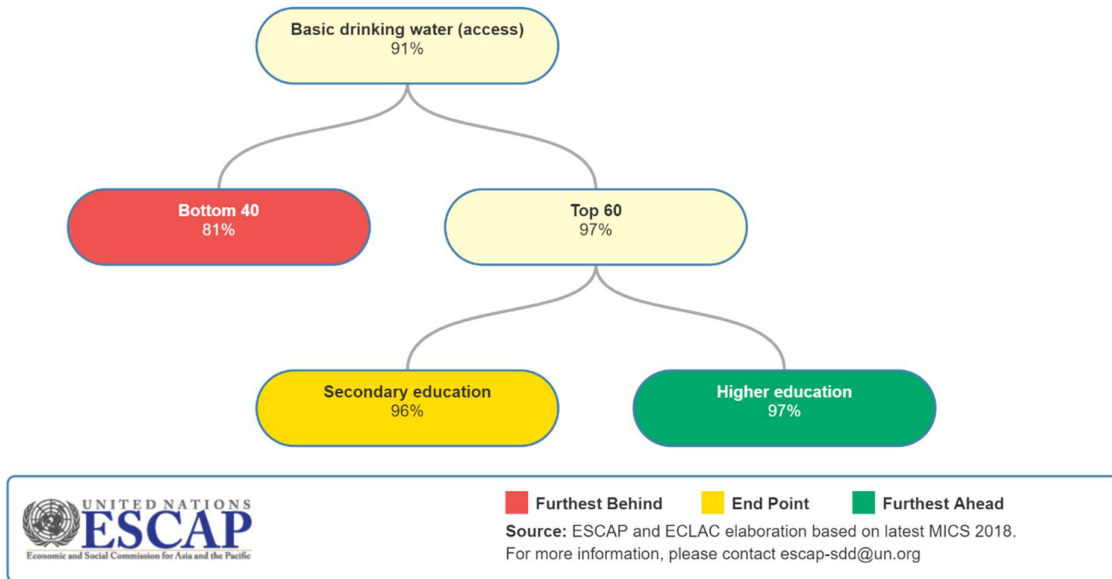
The classification tree shows that, on average, 91 per cent of households have access to basic drinking water. The red box shows the furthest behind group: households belonging to the bottom 40 per cent of the wealth distribution, among which 81 per cent have access to basic drinking water (compared to 97 per cent in the best-off group).
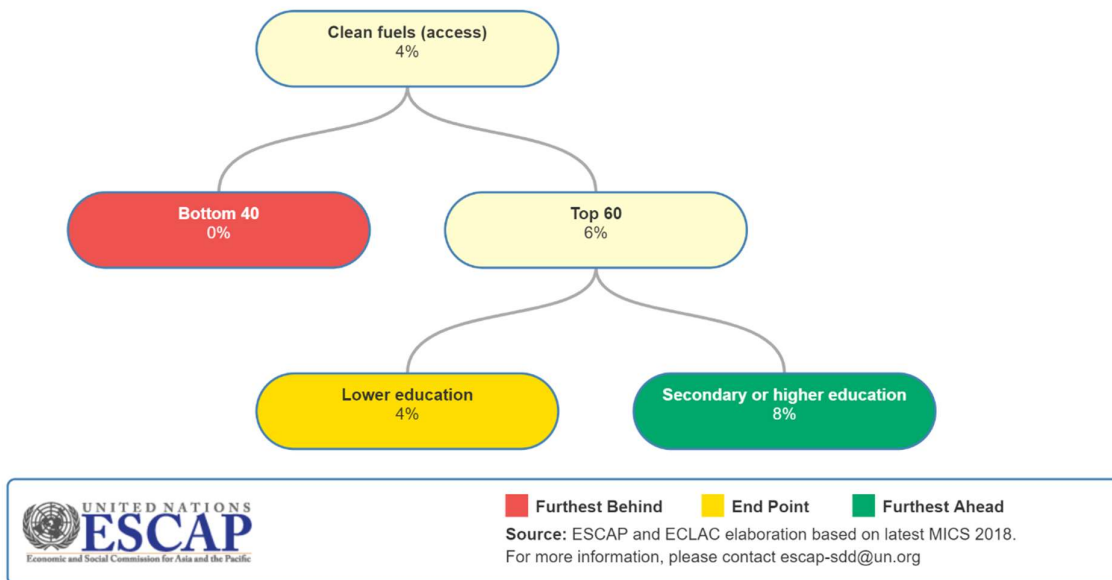
Basic sanitation (access), The Gambia, 2018

The classification tree shows that, on average, 64 per cent of households have access to basic sanitation. The red box shows the furthest behind group: households belonging to the bottom 40 per cent of the wealth distribution, among which 32 per cent have access to basic sanitation (compared to 86 per cent in the best-off group).
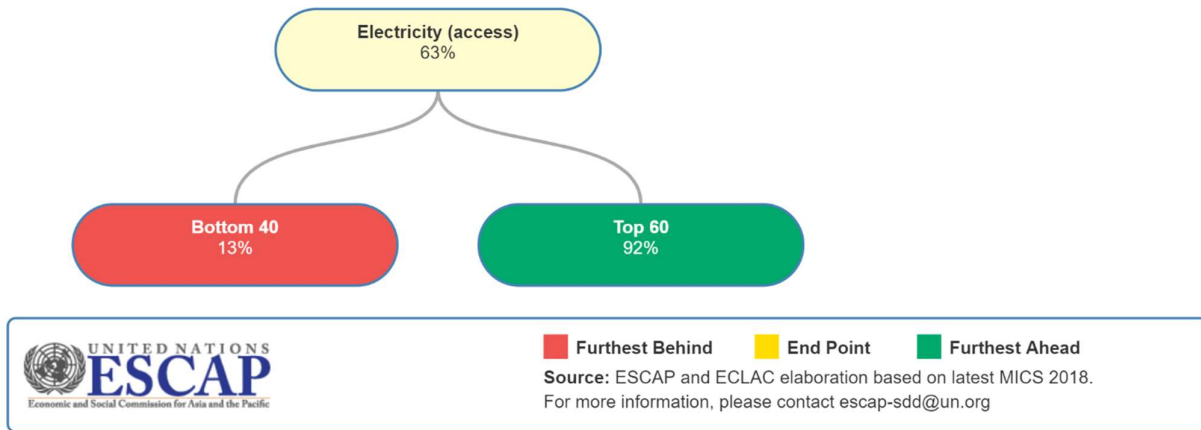
Clean fuels (access), The Gambia, 2018

The classification tree shows that the average access to clean fuels is only 4 per cent. The red box shows the furthest behind group: households belonging to the bottom 40 of the wealth distribution, among which none have access to clean fuels (compared to 8 per cent in the best-off group).

Electricity (access), The Gambia, 2018

The classification tree shows that, on average, 63 per cent of households have access to electricity. The red box shows the furthest behind group: households belonging to the bottom 40 per cent of the wealth distribution, among which only 13 per cent have access to electricity (compared to 92 per cent in the best-off group). No further split is made by the algorithm for this tree, as most information is captioned by this simple split based on household wealth.
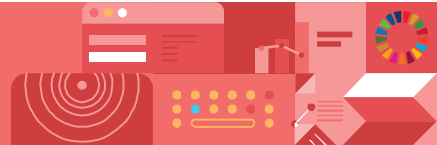
Internet use, The Gambia, 2018
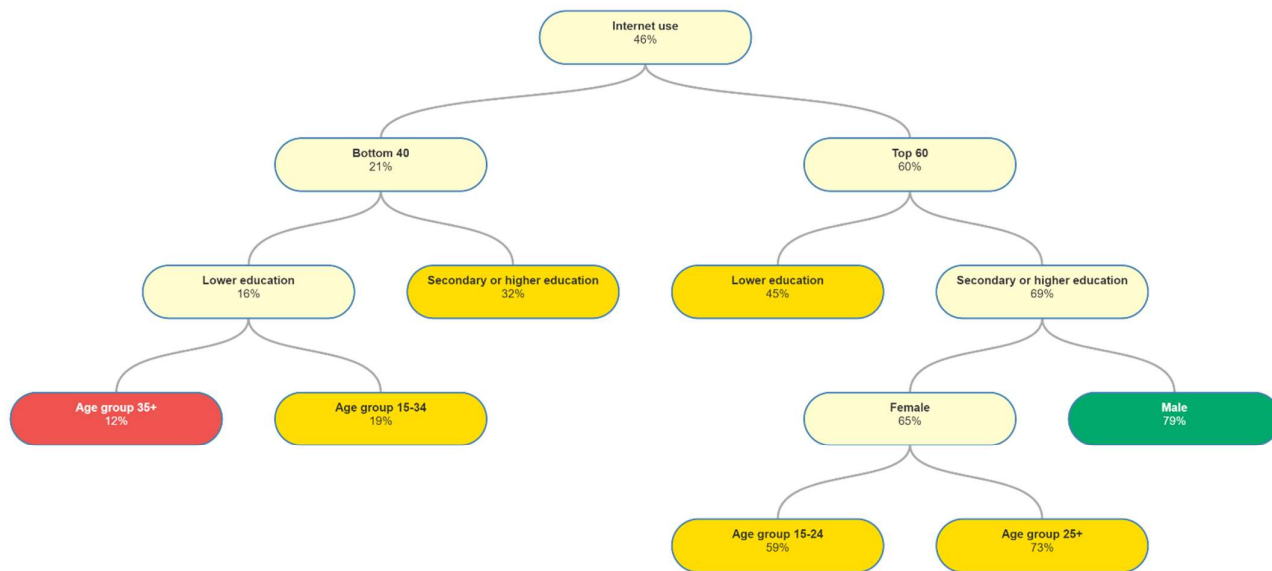
Internet use
46%

Bottom 40
21%

Top 60
60%

Lower education
16%

Secondary or higher education
32%

Lower education
45%

Secondary or higher education
69%

Age group 35+
12%

Age group 15-34
19%

Female
65%

Male
79%

Age group 15-24
59%

Age group 25+
73%

Furthest Behind   End Point   Furthest Ahead

Source: ESCAP and ECLAC elaboration based on latest MICS 2018.
For more information, please contact escap-sdd@un.org

UNITED NATIONS
ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

The classification tree shows that, on average, 46 per cent individuals uses the internet. The red box shows the furthest behind group: poorer individuals above 35 years old with lower education, among which only 12 per cent uses the internet (compared to 79 per cent in the best-off group).

Modern contraceptive methods (access), women 15-49 years old, The Gambia, 2018
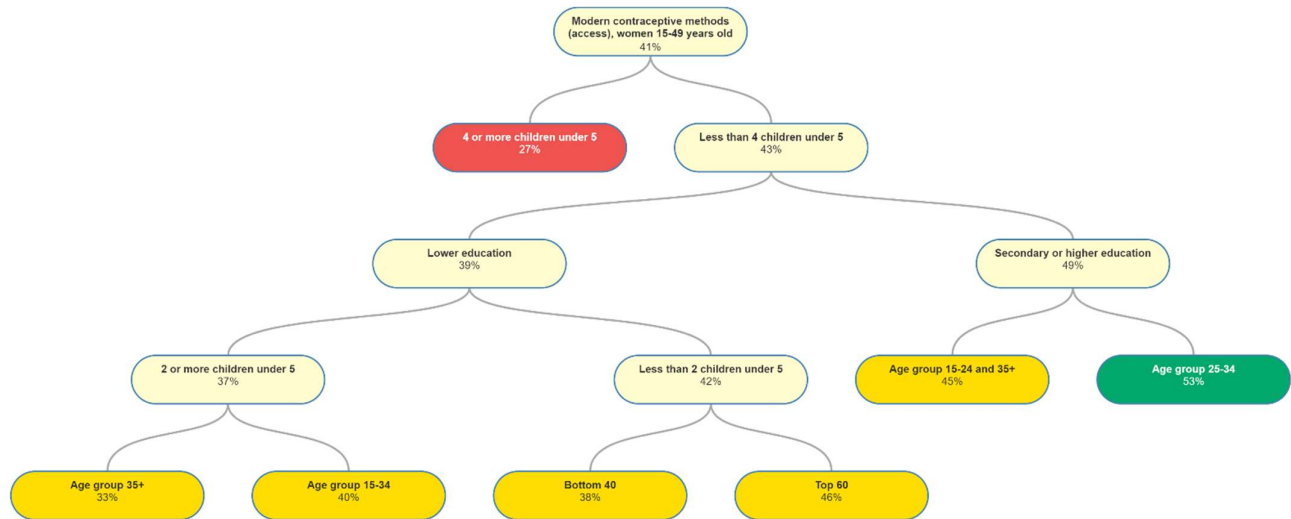
Source: ESCAP and ECLAC elaboration based on latest MICS 2018.
For more information, please contact escap-sdd@un.org

The classification tree shows that the average access of women to modern contraception is 41 per cent. The red box shows the furthest behind group: women with 4 or more children under 5 years of age, among which 27 per cent have access to modern contraception (compared to 53 per cent in the best-off group).

This indicator mirrors exactly the definition of SDG indicator 3.7.1 "Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods." It shows the percentage of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) who desire either to have no (additional) children or to postpone the next child **and** who are currently using a modern method of contraception. The indicator is also referred to as the demand for family planning satisfied with modern methods.

Skilled birth attendance during childbirth (access), The Gambia, 2018

Skilled birth attendance
during childbirth (access)
82%

Bottom 40
74%

Top 60
89%

Lower education
72%

Secondary or higher education
82%

Lower education
85%

Secondary or higher education
94%

Less than 3 children under 5
71%

3 or more children under 5
73%

Age group 25-34
84%

Age group 15-24 and 35+
87%

Age group 25-34
71%

Age group 15-24 and 35+
75%

UNITED NATIONS ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

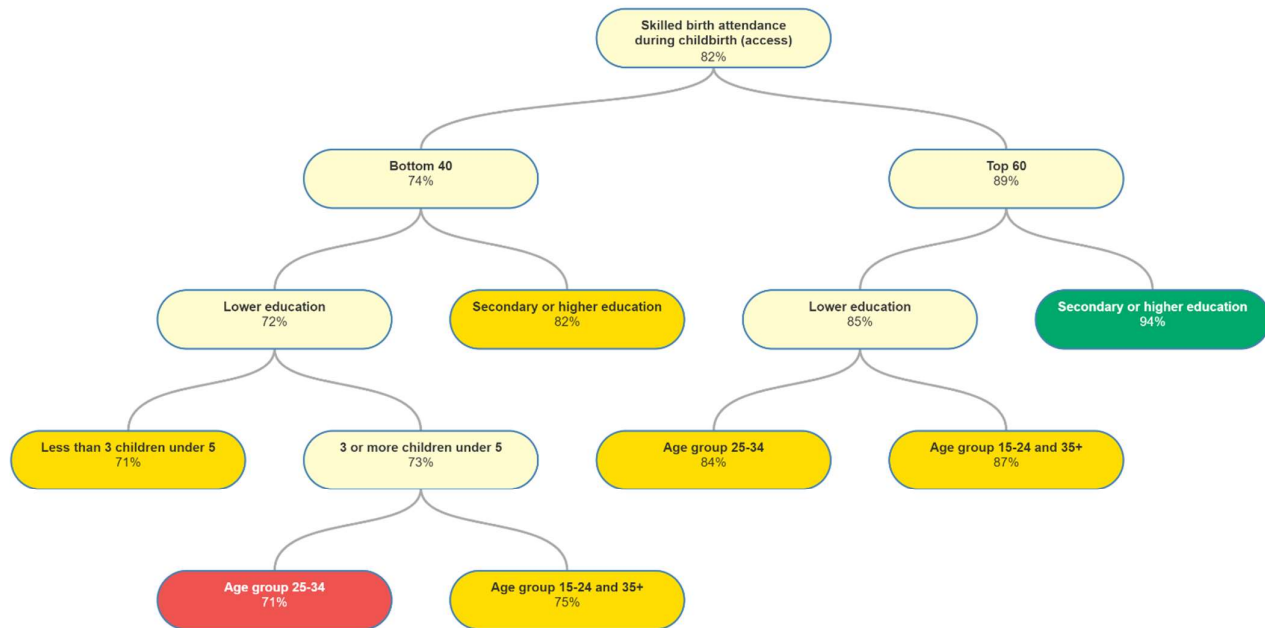■ Furthest Behind   ■ End Point   ■ Furthest Ahead

Source: ESCAP and ECLAC elaboration based on latest MICS 2018.
For more information, please contact escap-sdd@un.org

The classification tree shows that the average access to skilled birth attendance during childbirth is 82 per cent. The red box shows the furthest behind group: poorer women between 25 – 34 years old with lower education and 3 or more children under 5 years of age, among which 71 per cent have access a skilled birth attendant during childbirth (compared to 94 per cent in the best-off group).

Violence justified against women, women 15-49 years old, The Gambia, 2018

Violence justified against women, women 15-49 years old
50%

- **Urban** — 39%
  - **Secondary or higher education** — 31%
    - **Age group 25+** — 26%
    - **Age group 15-24** — 36%
  - **Lower education** — 50%
    - **Less than 2 children under 5** — 42%
    - **2 or more children under 5** — 57%
- **Rural** — 76%
  - **Secondary or higher education** — 65%
  - **Lower education** — 80%
    - **Less than 2 children under 5** — 74%
    - **2 or more children under 5** — 82%
      - **Less than 4 children under 5** — 81%
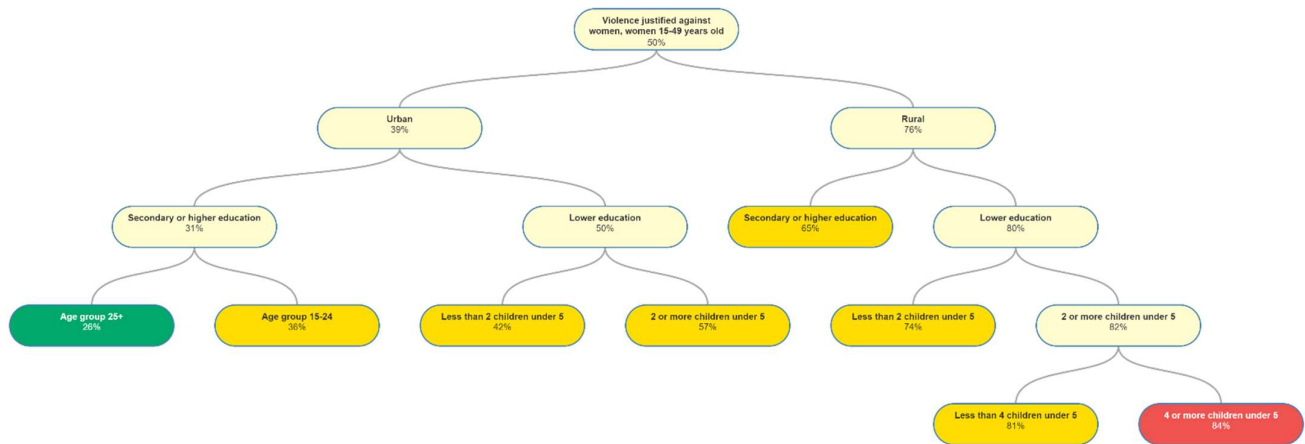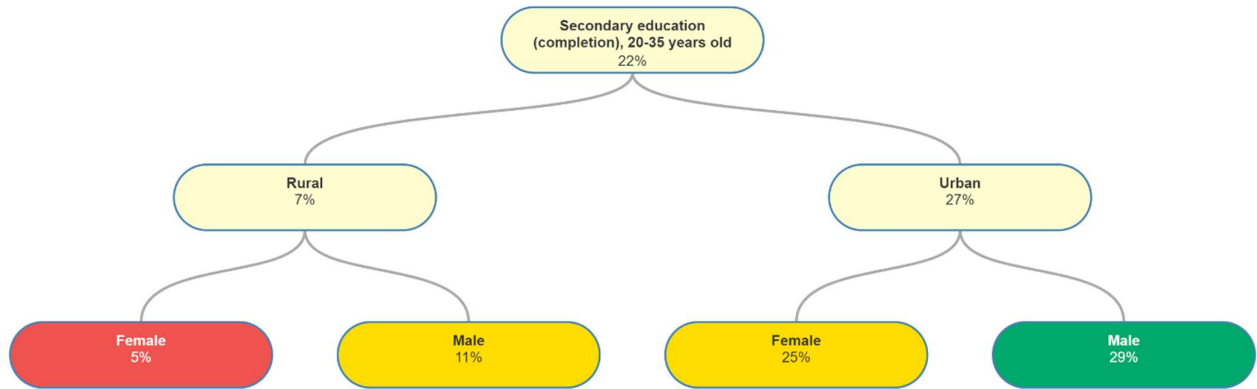   - **4 or more children under 5** — 84%

Furthest Behind | End Point | Furthest Ahead

Source: ESCAP and ECLAC elaboration based on latest MICS 2018.
For more information, please contact escap-sdd@un.org

The classification tree shows that the prevalence of attitudes tolerating/condoning violence against women is 50 per cent. The red box shows the characteristics of those women most likely to justify this practice: women with lower education with 4 or more children under 5 years of age living in rural areas, among which 84 per cent justify their partner in beating them (compared to 26 per cent in the best-off group).

This indicator refers to the prevalence of attitudes to violence against women, as the attitudes or beliefs of respondents can be used as a proxy indicator of the level of tolerance for the use of violence against women in an intimate relationship. The indicator is constructed by analyzing the proportion of women who belief their partner is justified in beating them if: 1) she goes out without telling him, 2) she neglects the children, 3) she argues with him, 4) she refuses sex with him, 5) she burns the food.

Secondary education (completion), 20-35 years old, The Gambia, 2018

The classification tree shows that the average secondary education completion rate is 22 per cent. The red box shows the furthest behind group: women living in rural areas, among which only 5 per cent has completed secondary education (compared to 29 per cent in the best-off group).
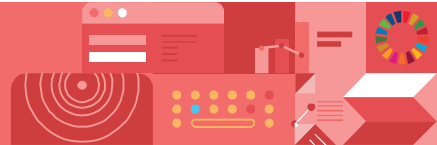
Higher education (completion), 25-35 years old, The Gambia, 2018

Higher education (completion), 25-35 years old
4%

Bottom 40
1%

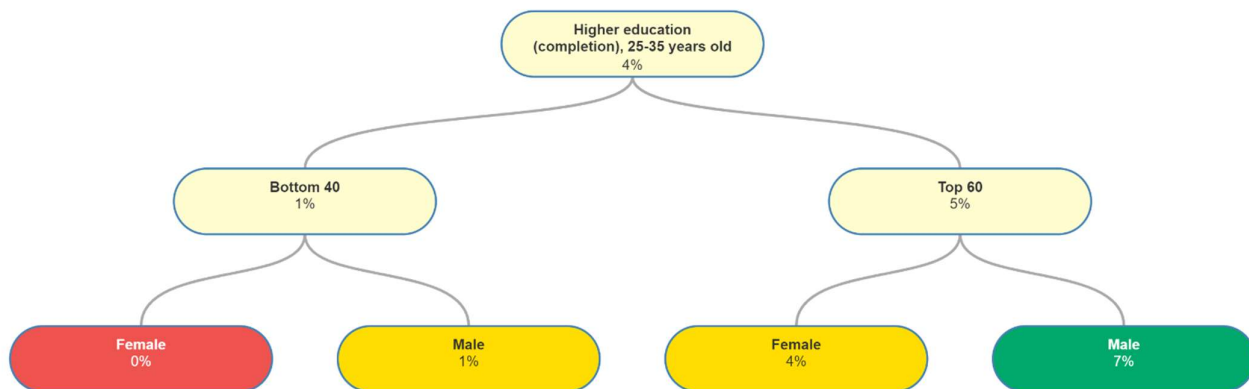Top 60
5%

Female
0%

Male
1%

Female
4%

Male
7%

■ Furthest Behind   ■ End Point   ■ Furthest Ahead

Source: ESCAP and ECLAC elaboration based on latest MICS 2018.
For more information, please contact escap-sdd@un.org

UNITED NATIONS
ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

The classification tree shows that the average higher education completion rate is only 4 per cent. The red box shows the furthest behind group: poorer women, among which none has completed higher education (compared to 7 per cent in the best-off group).

Wasting in children under 5 years of age (rate), The Gambia, 2018
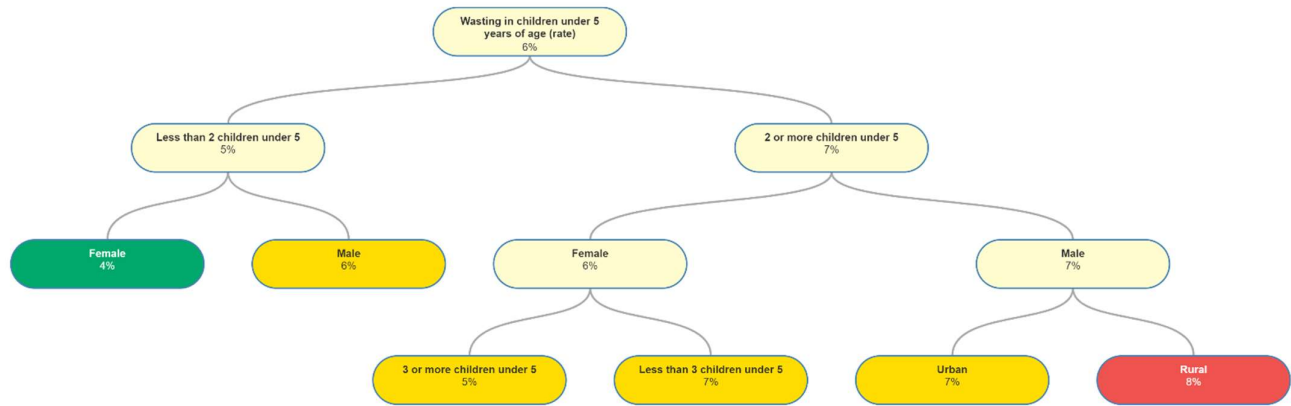
The classification tree shows that the average wasting rate for children under 5 years of age is 6 per cent. The red box shows the furthest behind group: boys living in rural areas with 2 or more siblings, among which 8 per cent are wasted (compared to 4 per cent in the best-off group).

Stunting in children under 5 years of age (rate), The Gambia, 2018
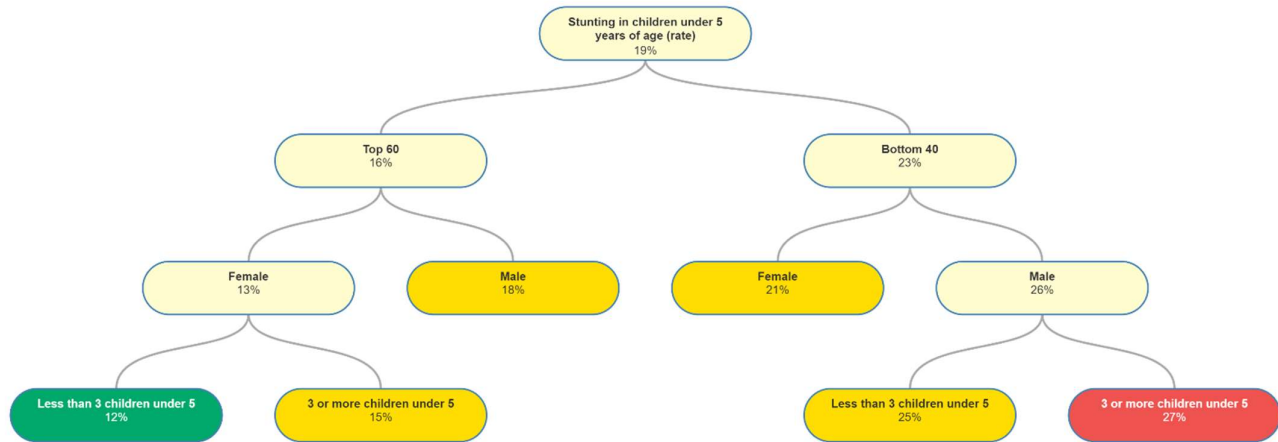
The classification tree shows that the average stunting rate for children under 5 years of age is 19 per cent. The red box shows the furthest behind group: poorer boys with 2 or more siblings (3 or more children total), among which 27 per cent are stunted (compared to 12 per cent in the best-off group).

4 CONCLUSION

There are many circumstances shaping access to different opportunities or the experience of a certain barrier by different groups. This analysis is restricted to those circumstances (variables) available in the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey for The Gambia. The classification and regression tree (CART) analysis used in this study only presents circumstances if they are found to significantly explain gaps in access between groups (reduce 'entropy' and increase 'information gain').[1] Ultimately, these circumstances define the composition of the groups, but should not be interpreted as causes of lower access to an opportunity.

The study has shed light on the layers of characteristics (circumstances) shared by the furthest behind group in access to electricity and clean fuels, bank account ownership, basic drinking water and basic sanitation, violence justified against women, completion of secondary and higher education, women's access to skilled birth attendance during childbirth, women's access to modern contraception, internet use, and stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age. The figure below summarizes the information obtained from the trees presented above, highlighting the average rate, the rate of the best-off group, as well as the rate of the furthest behind group.

The findings are of direct use for generating discussions on transformations needed to "leave no one behind" and reach the "furthest behind first" as pledged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Considering the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, the groups that are furthest behind need to be brought into focus more urgently than ever.

---

[1] For more information on the methodology, please see: ESCAP (2020). Leaving no one behind: A methodology to identify those furthest behind in accessing opportunities in Asia and the Pacific. Social Development Division Working Paper #2020-01.
Available from: https://www.unescap.org/resources/leaving-no-one-behind-methodology-identify-those-furthest-behind-accessing-opportunities

4.1 How large are the gaps in access to opportunities or prevalence of barriers?
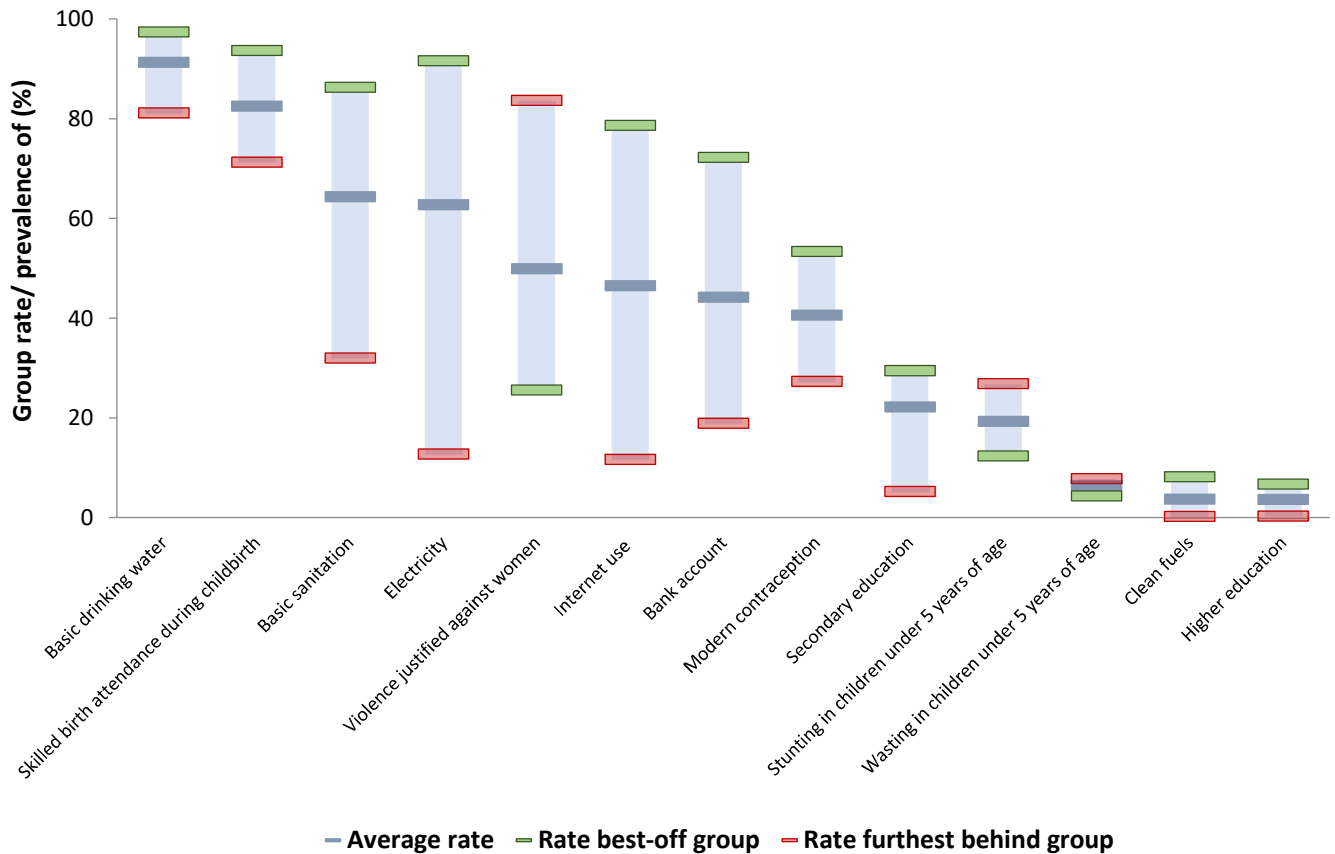
Average rate — **Rate best-off group** — **Rate furthest behind group**

Source: ESCAP elaboration using data from the latest MICS 2018 survey.

Note 1: Prevalence of overweight in children under 5 years of age is not shown because average prevalence is below 3 per cent and the sample size of the survey does not permit drawing inferences for the population.

Summary of gaps between the best off and the furthest behind groups

Source	Year	Analysis	Sample size of reference population	Average rate	Size of best-off group	Rate of best-off group	Size of the furthest behind group	Rate of the furthest behind group	Gap in rate between the best-off and the furthest behind group
MICS	2018	Bank account	7405	44.17%	23.45%	72.18%	36.55%	18.85%	53 pp
MICS	2018	Basic drinking water	7405	91.26%	46.24%	97.37%	36.55%	81.15%	16 pp
MICS	2018	Basic sanitation	7405	64.29%	23.45%	86.25%	36.55%	31.94%	54 pp
MICS	2018	Clean fuels	7405	3.68%	23.45%	8.15%	36.55%	0.19%	8 pp
MICS	2018	Electricity	7405	62.73%	63.45%	91.56%	36.55%	12.68%	79 pp
MICS	2018	Higher education	8441	3.61%	28.62%	6.66%	20.07%	0.26%	6 pp
MICS	2018	Internet use	18162	46.43%	11.63%	78.59%	8.96%	11.61%	67 pp
MICS	2018	Modern contraception	3479	40.58%	14.81%	53.32%	14.00%	27.27%	26 pp
MICS	2018	Secondary education	13509	22.11%	33.60%	29.40%	15.95%	5.19%	24 pp
MICS	2018	Skilled birth attendance during childbirth	3472	82.43%	24.21%	93.62%	7.71%	71.23%	23 pp
MICS	2018	Stunting in children under 5 years of age	9686	19.24%	16.43%	12.29%	11.80%	26.79%	14 pp
MICS	2018	Violence justified against women	13640	49.90%	18.66%	25.53%	5.48%	83.61%	58 pp
MICS	2018	Wasting in children under 5 years of age	9677	6.36%	11.42%	4.29%	17.28%	7.76%	3 pp

Source: ESCAP elaboration using data from the latest MICS 2018 survey.

Note 1: Prevalence of overweight in children under 5 years of age is not shown because average prevalence is below 3 per cent and the sample size of the survey does not permit drawing inferences for the population.

Summary of the characteristics of the furthest behind groups

Opportunity or barrier/ Circumstances	Wealth	Residence	Education	Gender	Mother education	Children under 5 years of age	Age group	Marital status	Electricity
Bank account	B40			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Basic drinking water	B40			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Basic sanitation	B40			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Clean fuels	B40			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Electricity	B40			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Higher education	B40		n/a	Female	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Internet use	B40		Lower education		n/a	n/a	35 + years old	n/a	
Modern contraception				n/a	n/a	4 or more children under 5 years of age		n/a	n/a
Secondary education		Rural	n/a	Female	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Skilled birth attendance during childbirth	B40		Lower education	n/a	n/a	3 or more children under 5 years of age	25 - 34 years old		n/a
Stunting in children under 5 years of age	B40		n/a	Male		3 or more children under 5 years of age	n/a	n/a	n/a
Violence justified against women		Rural	Lower education	n/a	n/a	4 or more children under 5 years of age		n/a	n/a
Wasting in children under 5 years of age		Rural	n/a	Male		2 or more children under 5 years of age	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: ESCAP elaboration using data from the latest MICS 2018 survey.

Note 1: Prevalence of overweight in children under 5 years of age is not shown because average prevalence is below 3 per cent and the sample size of the survey does not permit drawing inferences for the population

ANNEX

1. Opportunities and barriers and their links to the SDGs

Indicator	Survey used	Reference population in survey	Wealth: Bottom 40-Top 60	Residence: Urban - Rural	Education: No/Primary - Secondary - Higher	Sex: Male-Female	Children: Yes-No, Number	Age: 15-24, 25-34, 35-49	Marital status (Single, currently/ formerly married or in a union)	Household access to electricity: Yes-No	Related SDG indicator
Completion of secondary education	DHS/MICS	Household member aged 20-35	Wealth	Residence	n/a	Woman/ Man	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex
Completion of higher education	DHS/MICS	Household member aged 25-35	Wealth	Residence	n/a	Woman/ Man	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex
Stunting in children under 5 years of age	DHS/MICS	Child aged 0-5 who has been measured	Wealth	Residence	Mother's Education	Boy/ Girl	Number of children under <5 years of age	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age
Overweight in children under 5 years of age	DHS/MICS	Child aged 0-5 who has been measured	Wealth	Residence	Mother's Education	Boy/ Girl	Number of children under <5 years of age	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.2.2 Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight)
Wasting in children under 5 years of age	DHS/MICS	Child aged 0-5 who has been measured	Wealth	Residence	Mother's Education	Boy/ Girl	Number of children under <5 years of age	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.2.2 Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight)
Use of modern contraceptive	DHS/MICS	Women between 15-49 currently in union	Wealth	Residence	Respondee's education	Only Woman	Number of children under <5 years of age	Age group	n/a	n/a	3.7.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods
Skilled birth attendance during childbirth	DHS/MICS	Women between 15-49 ever given birth in the last 5 years	Wealth	Residence	Respondee's education	Only Woman	Number of children under <5 years of age	Age group	Marital status	n/a	3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
Access to basic drinking water	DHS/MICS	All households	Wealth	Residence	Highest Education in household	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services
Access to basic sanitation services	DHS/MICS	All households	Wealth	Residence	Highest Education in household	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6.2.1 Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water
Access to electricity	DHS/MICS	All households	Wealth	Residence	Highest Education in household	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.1.1 Proportion of population with access to electricity
Access to clean fuels	DHS/MICS	All households	Wealth	Residence	Highest Education in household	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.1.2 Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology
Ownership of bank account	DHS/MICS	All households	Wealth	Residence	Highest Education in household	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8.10.2 Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile money-service provider
Internet use	DHS/MICS	All households	Wealth	Residence	Highest Education in household	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes/No	17.8.1 Proportion of individuals using the internet
Sexual or physical violence against women	DHS/MICS	Ever married women	Wealth	Residence	Respondee's education	Only Woman	Number of children under <5 years of age	Age group	n/a	n/a	5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age

UNITED NATIONS
ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

2. Gaps and limitations

The 13 indicators measuring access to household and individual opportunities or prevalence of barriers have been identified as areas where inequality jeopardizes a person's life prospects. Each of these opportunities or barriers are covered by specific commitments outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals. The findings are of direct use for generating discussions on transformations needed to "leave no one behind" and reach the "furthest behind first" as pledged in the 2030 Agenda.

There are many variables shaping access to different opportunities or the prevalence of barriers. For example, distance from a health-care provider is an important circumstance that might shape a woman's access to modern contraception. Similarly, distance to a banking institution main be a barrier for individuals seeking to open a bank account or conduct financial transactions. These variables are not measured in existing DHS and MICS surveys, so results have to be understood with this caveat.

Consistent with other similar studies on inequalities, this analysis does not consider inequality within groups or in households. Even with homogeneous groups, additional unobserved circumstances may affect outcomes.

The main reason for restricting age to 25-35 for higher education is to avoid: (1) skewing the results because of an older population with significantly lower education levels; and (2) including individuals that, because of their young age, could not have completed their education. Similarly, for secondary education the age range is 20-35 years old.

Wealth, as used in this report, is a composite index reflecting a household's cumulative living standard, developed by the DHS and MICS researchers and combines a range of household circumstances including: a) ownership of household assets, such as TVs, radios and bicycles; b) materials used for housing; and c) type of water and sanitation facilities.

The classification and regression tree (CART) analysis only presents circumstances in the tree branches if they are found to reduce "entropy". Ultimately, these circumstances define the composition of the groups, but should not be interpreted as "causes" of a lower opportunity or of higher barriers. There are also many other factors that could potentially impact the results, but because of data limitations have not been included.

CONTACT DETAILS

For further queries, please contact the Social Development Division of UN-ESCAP at escap-sdd@un.org

For thematic reports, please visit: https://www.unescap.org/our-work/social-development/poverty-and-inequality/resources

For more information on the classification trees, please visit: https://www.socialprotection-toolbox.org/inequality

Photo by Julia Kado on Wikimedia Commons

UNITED NATIONS
ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific