



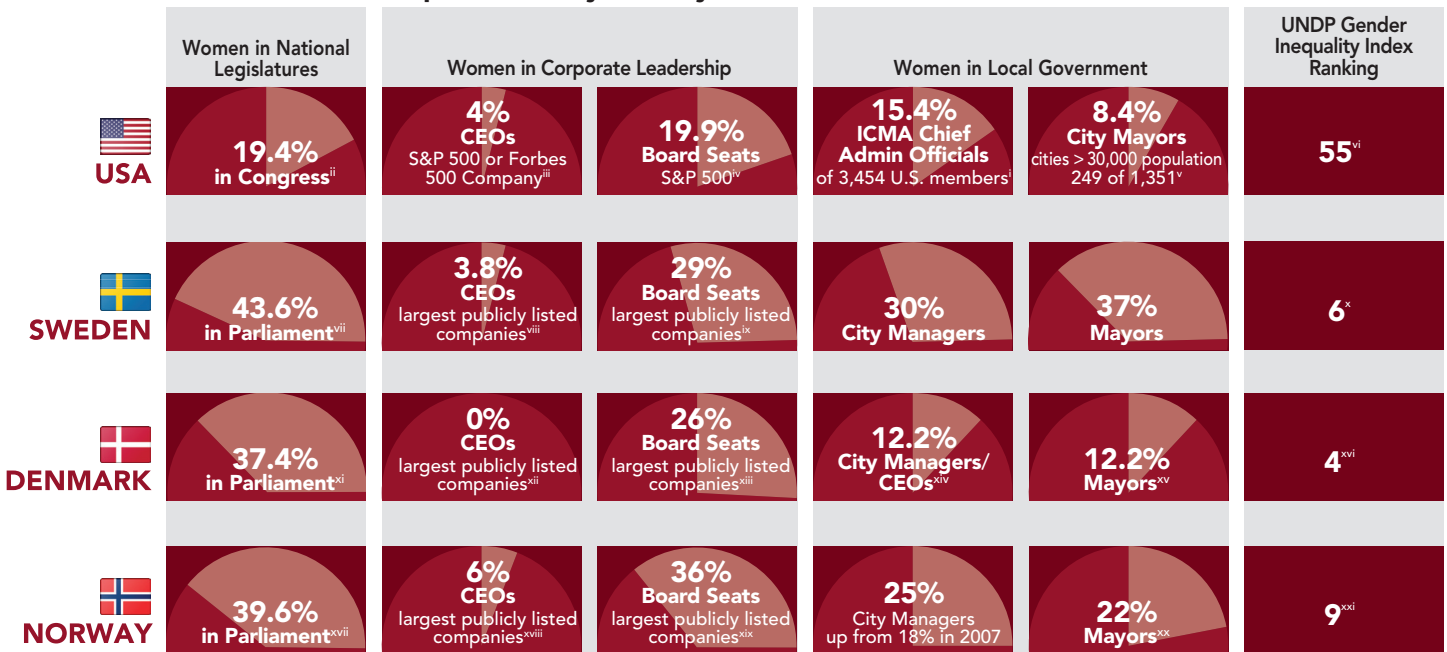
Research on gender parity focuses on the economic impacts of excluding half of the world’s working-age population from participation in economic activities. The consequence is clear: if women don’t achieve their full economic potential, the global economy will suffer. According to McKinsey Global Institute’s report, “advancing women’s equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth.”ⁱ

COMPARING LEVELS OF GENDER PARITY

Women’s representation in leadership roles in politics and the economy are significant indicators of the gender parity. No country has gender equality, but the countries with the best gender parity are the Nordic European countries as shown by the studies of the UNDP (United Nation Development Programme), OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), World Economic Forum, and Catalyst. Having a comparative understanding of women in leadership positions in the United States and some Nordic countries provides a good starting point for gender parity discussions in the U.S.

The higher participation of women in politics and the economy in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark compared to the U.S. might be due to those countries’ existing supportive programs and regulations, such as **childcare assistance, additional income for working mothers, paid parental leave, obligatory and voluntary gender quotas in public and private entities, and targeted subsidies to female businesses**. That being said, the level of women participation in local politics and in the private sector still needs to increase in these countries.

Women in Leadership Positions by Country



IMPROVING PARTICIPATION LEVELS

Improving gender parity in the economy and politics can begin with questions that probe the context of current levels of women participation in the workforce and politics and that identify barriers and opportunities. For example,

- What would make leadership positions more attractive to women?
- How can more women be encouraged to apply for leadership positions?
- What barriers exist in each society for women to hold leadership positions, and what can be done to remove them?

- What role can current leaders play to help shepherd this effort?
- How do the kinds of “course corrections” differ by age group?
- What kinds of initiatives will facilitate networking and learning about this issue?
- How can technology be used to enhance the discussions and the sharing and networking?
- What milestones or benchmarks can be set to measure progress?



ENDNOTES

- i. There is no comprehensive dataset to identify the gender of all Chief Administrative Officials (CAO) in the U.S. In addition to the ICMA membership data, another important source is the 2012 ICMA State of the Profession Survey. This survey was sent to 7,550 city-type local governments with a population 2,500 and above and to all 1,306 county governments with an elected executive or council-administrator. According to this survey, the percentage of women CAOs among respondents was 19.8% out of 1,951.
- ii. CAWP. Women in U.S. Congress 2015. 2016. <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/women-us-congress-2015>
- iii. Catalyst. Pyramid: Women in S&P 500 Companies. New York: Catalyst, July 26, 2016. <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-sp-500-companies> & Fortune. The Percentage of Female CEOs in the Fortune 500 Drops to 4%, June 6, 2016. <http://fortune.com/2016/06/06/women-ceos-fortune-500-2016/>
- iv. Catalyst. Pyramid: Women in S&P 500 Companies. New York: Catalyst, July 26, 2016.
- v. Representation 2020. Gender Parity Index. January 2015. <http://www.representation2020.com/gender-parity-index.html> & iKNOWPolitics. Women Mayors. September 12, 2014. <http://iknowpolitics.org/en/discuss/e-discussions/women-mayors-women-elected-head-villages-towns-and-cities>
- vi. UNDP's Gender Inequality Index measures gender inequalities in reproductive health, empowerment, and economic status in 155 countries. Gender Inequality Index 2014. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>
- vii. IPU. Women in National Parliaments, August 1, 2016. <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm#1>
- viii. European Commission's Database on women and men in decision-making. 2012. http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/womenonboards/factsheet-general-2_en.pdf
- ix. OECD. Female Share of Seats on Boards. 2016. <http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=54753>
- x. UNDP's Gender Inequality Index, 2014.
- xi. IPU. Women in National Parliaments, August 1, 2016.
- xii. European Commission's Database on women and men in decision-making. 2012.
- xiii. OECD. Female Share of Seats on Boards. 2016. <http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=54753>
- xiv. Local Government Association in Denmark. <http://www.kl.dk/English/>
- xv. Ibid.
- xvi. UNDP's Gender Inequality Index, 2014.
- xvii. IPU. Women in National Parliaments, August 1, 2016.
- xviii. The Economist. A Nordic mystery. Nov. 15, 2014. <http://www.economist.com/news/business/21632512-worlds-most-female-friendly-workplaces-executive-suites-are-still-male-dominated>
- xix. OECD. Female Share of Seats on Boards. 2016.
- xx. European Parliamentary Research Service. Women in Politics: Norway. Nov.25 2013. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/eplibrary/Norway.pdf>
- xxi. UNDP's Gender Inequality Index, 2014.