Herstory

Life for the ladies ain't been no crystal stair.

February 26, 2015 By Kate Ferguson

Findings from a recent World Bank Group report show that although women's and girls' lives have improved, we have a long way to go to achieve gender equality worldwide. Below are some sobering facts researchers found:

- Gender-based violence affects women everywhere. Women suffer from physical or sexual violence at the hands of their boyfriends, husbands or partners, making their homes the place they're least likely to be safe. According to findings by the World Health Organization, the following statistics reflect the share of physical and intimate partner violence suffered by women worldwide: South Asia, 43 percent; sub-Saharan Africa, 40 percent; Latin America and the Caribbean, 33 percent; East Asia and the Pacific, 30 percent; Europe and Central Asia, 29 percent; Australia and New Zealand, 28 percent; North America, 21 percent.

- Many girls only have limited control over their sexual and reproductive rights. If present trends continue, 142 million girls under age 18 will become wives, and 1 in 5 girls will become pregnant before their 18th birthday. This can negatively affect a country's economy and boost the death rates of girls ages 15 to 19.

- Fewer women than men own property and housing. This difference may be wide in some areas of the world. In addition, in some countries women may only acquire land through male relatives, another driver of gender inequality.

- In most areas of the world, women are underrepresented in politics and positions of power.

Although rates differ by region and country, globally, less than 22 percent of parliament members are women and fewer than 5 percent of mayors are women.

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