

# WOMEN, BUSINESS AND THE LAW 2018



## Accessing institutions

*Accessing institutions explores women's ability to interact with public authorities and the private sector in the same ways as men, through examining constraints on women's decision-making and freedom of movement.*

### Key facts for this indicator:

- Over a third of the economies examined legally restrict women's agency and freedom of movement in at least one area measured by accessing institutions.
- In 18 economies, women cannot get a job or pursue a trade or profession without permission from their husband.
- Limitations on married women's legal capacity, including the ability to work without their husbands' permission, weaken decision-making ability.
- When women cannot independently decide where they want to go, travel or live, they may face difficulty getting to work or conducting business transactions.
- Reforms increasing women's access to institutions may contribute to women holding greater positions of authority. *Women, Business and the Law* analysis shows that women are more likely to hold leadership positions in public life when they have increased legal decision-making abilities.
- Four economies reformed in the accessing institutions indicator, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Rwanda and Senegal.
- The Democratic Republic of Congo reformed its family code to allow married women to sign contracts, get jobs, open bank accounts, and register businesses in the same way as married men. It also removed the obligation for a married woman to obey her husband and has allowed spouses to mutually choose the marital home.
- Iraq enacted a new law that introduces electronic passports. The application process is now the same for men and women and no longer requires women to bring a guardian.
- Rwanda granted both spouses equal rights to choose the marital home. It also removed the provision designating the husband as "head of household."
- Senegal enacted a new national identity card law in 2016, introducing biometric cards. The application process is now equal for men and women. A married woman's identity card no longer includes the name of her husband.

*Women, Business and the Law* measures how laws, regulations and institutions differentiate between women and men in ways that may affect women's incentives or capacity to work or to set up and run a business. It analyzes gender-based legal differences in 189 economies, covering seven areas: accessing institutions, using property, getting a job, providing incentives to work, going to court, building credit and protecting women from violence. The report is published every two years. The full report and accompanying datasets are available at [wbl.worldbank.org](http://wbl.worldbank.org).