



ECOWAS COMMISSION  
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO  
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

# ETUDE SITUATIONNELLE DE REFERENCE DES INEGALITES DE GENRE DANS LES 15 ETATS MEMBRES DE LA CEDEAO

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DRAFT RAPPORT

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## *1. Introduction*

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises gender equality as a fundamental human right. This right is reiterated in various international treaties and conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979, which considers discrimination against women to be a violation of fundamental rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted in 1989, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), adopted in Cairo in 1994, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995, the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and its gender component, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, adopted in 2003. More recently, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has led to a commitment by world leaders to work towards achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (SDG3). This ambition has been translated into various significant actions in favour of gender equality and the elimination of discrimination against women and girls. It is true that the relationship between the sexes is changing in a number of ways, but there is unanimous agreement that the goal of gender equality is far from being achieved. There is evidence to suggest that progress on all gender equality indicators is slow and much more needs to be done if equal rights and opportunities for women and men are to be achieved (Equal Measure 2030, 2022).

Africa, like other regions, is no exception when it comes to gender equality. In West Africa in particular, gender inequality and discrimination against women have reached critical levels. As evidenced by the 2019 Africa Gender Equality Index rankings, most countries in the ECOWAS region rank at the bottom in terms of gender equality compared to other regions (AfDB and UNECA, 2020). These inequalities are felt in virtually all sectors, including access to basic services such as water, health, education, sanitation, energy, etc., property rights, employment and the public sphere. The inequalities faced by women and girls are also due to discriminatory social norms and institutions, which are the cause of the persistence of abuses against women and girls, such as child marriage and other forms of gender-based violence. In addition

discrimination against women has been exacerbated by the socio-economic consequences of recent crises, in particular that of COVID-19 (OECD, 2023).

Gender equality is an essential element for the representation and full participation of women and men in the economic, social and political spheres and in all other spheres of life, as recognised by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In the revised ECOWAS treaty (article 3), member states committed themselves to the development, harmonisation, coordination and definition of appropriate policies and mechanisms for improving the economic, social and cultural conditions of women in the region. This commitment to advancing gender issues in the region is renewed in ECOWAS Vision 2050 through its fifth pillar, which aims to build a fully inclusive community of people. Within this framework, a regional policy with a gender strategy (2010-2020) has been formulated, which aims to create an energising framework for the perception of gender issues and their consideration in regional cooperation and integration processes in West Africa. Institutional measures upstream of this strategy included the creation in 2003<sup>1</sup> of a Specialised Agency of the ECOWAS Commission dedicated to gender issues. This measure was specifically recorded in Decision A/DEC.16/01.3 on the transformation of the West African Women's Association (WAWA) into the ECOWAS Centre for Gender Development (CCDG) (ECOWAS Parliament, 2011). The Centre was set up to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the ECOWAS region and to support member states in implementing operational programmes at national and regional level.

The CCDG's objectives include conducting programmes on various gender issues and working with member states to collect, collate and analyse sex-disaggregated data. Indeed, the availability of quality data and reliable and comparable gender indicators at ECOWAS level is necessary in order to take stock of gender equality, define guidelines for achieving the objectives and monitor the progress made. Some data exists at Member State level but, for the most part, it is not harmonised and comparable at ECOWAS level.

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(1) <https://ecowas.int/atelier-dinformations-et-de-partage-avec-les-points-focaux-genre-du-ccd-g-dans-les-etats-membres-de-la-cedeao/?lang=en>

The development of the ECOWAS Gender Barometer is part of the implementation of one of the objectives of the ECOWAS gender strategy, which includes the establishment of data collection systems to monitor inequalities between women and men and to support the planning and monitoring of evidence-based national and regional interventions on gender equality. The index is based on a conceptualisation of gender equality as a multidimensional process. It is based on a combination of gender indicators in a single, synthetic measure that takes into account, to a large extent, the complexity of the notion of gender equality. One of the aims of the index proposed here is to assess the status of women relative to men in various social, economic and political spheres.

As well as being a fundamental right, gender equality is an instrumental objective. It is a prerequisite for achieving inclusive growth, building peaceful and resilient societies and sustainable development. On the other hand, discrimination against women and infringements of their rights are a source of major socio-economic damage for them and their families, but also for their communities and countries (OECD, 2023). In Africa, it is estimated that eliminating gender inequality could increase productivity by one billion people (AfDB, 2015). In West Africa, reducing gender gaps in labour market participation, for example, could lead to significant increases in income ranging from 1% to 30% of GDP depending on the country (OECD, 2018). Similarly, the adoption of egalitarian laws, practices and attitudes would save the ECOWAS region annual losses of around 120 billion dollars (Bouchama, 2018). In addition to the economic impacts, eliminating gender inequalities would promote better access to education for girls and higher future incomes for them, and can help improve health, nutrition and well-being in general.

The benefits of gender equality justify the will of ECOWAS and the commitments made by States at global and regional level to reduce the gaps between women and men. The materialisation of these commitments implies the need for quality and reliable gender data and analysis tools to take stock of the gender equality situation, to identify areas where inequalities are persistent and require policy intervention, and to guide decision-making and the formulation of appropriate, evidence-based policies that improve people's well-being, their access to economic opportunities and development outcomes. Yet the production of such data still remains a challenge in Africa in general

particularly in West Africa. The lack of quality data and evidence on gender makes it difficult, if not impossible, to monitor the actions implemented and hampers gender-sensitive decision-making. Furthermore, although there is a consensus among policy and practice actors on the need to design an index that encompasses measures of gender equality, the calculation of such a tool remains limited due to the lack of harmonisation of available data (AfDB and ECA, 2020; EIGE, 2013).

To overcome this problem of lack of data, the CCDG has undertaken the development of a gender equality index, called the ECOWAS Gender Barometer, which will be a tool for assessing gender equality and monitoring future progress in member countries. The development of this index requires the collection of data on the indicators that will feed the dimensions that make up the index, the creation of a harmonised database on these indicators and the analysis of gender disparities in these indicators.

## **2. Analysis of gender inequalities in the ECOWAS region**

### ***1. Description of indicators***

Gender equality is a priority at the heart of development policies and programmes at ECOWAS level. It is recognised as an essential factor in the development of the populations of Member States. This is borne out by the various initiatives implemented to this end at regional level, which have led to significant progress in reducing the gap between women and men in a number of socio-economic spheres. The ECOWAS Gender Barometer is a summary tool for measuring progress in member states. The previous sections provide an overview of the community-wide policy priorities for gender equality, as well as the methodological approach to constructing the index.

This section presents the measurement framework of the ECOWAS Gender Barometer. The measurement framework presents the areas of gender equality that make up the index and provides a description of the gender indicators for each of these areas.

## Structure of the Ecowas Gender Barometer

### STRUCTURE OF THE ECOWAS GENDER BAROMETER

Areas	1. Education	2. Health	3. Employment and income	4. Access to resources and assets
Sub-areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to education</li> <li>• Quality of education</li> <li>• Qualification professional</li> <li>• Representation in the teaching profession</li> <li>• Literacy of teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health and HIV / AIDS</li> <li>- Sexual and reproductive</li> <li>- Child health</li> <li>- Mortality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participation in the labour market</li> <li>- Inequalities in the labour market</li> <li>- Entrepreneurship</li> <li>- Job quality Child labour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to land and other productive resources</li> <li>- Access to financial services</li> </ul>
Areas	5. Leadership and decision-making	6. Technology	7. Gender-based violence : dimension not included in index calculation	
Sub-areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managerial leadership</li> <li>• Political leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital finance</li> <li>• Use of technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevalence of violence</li> <li>• Seriousness of acts of violence</li> <li>• Reporting experiences of violence</li> </ul>	

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The levels of achievement and gender gaps in these indicators are examined both at ECOWAS level and for each of the fifteen (15) Member States. It is important to note that these gaps can be in favour of men as well as women. The year 2021 has been taken as the benchmark for examining the situation for each of the indicators. The levels of achievement in 2017 have also been examined in order to assess the progress made between these two years. Some adjustments were made to overcome the problem of missing data. For countries without statistics for 2021, information has been imputed by replacing it with data from the most recent year available. Where appropriate, the years considered are specified.

### 1.1. Education" domain

As a fundamental human right, education is an important driver of change and development and one of the best channels for reducing poverty, improving health and livelihoods, ensuring social stability and building sustainable economic growth (Bentaouet Kattan et al., 2023). Education itself is central to reducing inequality and achieving gender equality, but achieving gender equality in education is also a channel to social justice and achieving development goals (Global Partnership for Education, 2019). Girls' education in particular occupies an important place in development policies, and the need to invest in it is globally recognised. At the level of ECOWAS, gender equality in education is a p r i o r i t y .

Education remains a concern for the region's decision-makers. The importance of education and gender equality in education for the region's human, social and economic development has been set out in various Community plans and strategies.

Objective 1 of the ECOWAS Youth Policy and Strategic Action Plan, drawn up in 2010, aims to "ensure equal access to quality education, institutions and training programmes for all young men and women in the region". The strategic areas defined for this purpose include (1) prioritising the achievement of the goal of basic education for all; (2) reforming educational content and curricula, in particular programmes that reinforce traditional female roles and restrict the full participation of women at all levels; (3) the creation of an environment conducive to the promotion of girls' education through legislative and policy reforms, the redistribution of resources to meet the specific educational needs of girls, and other actions likely to promote gender equality in the education system.

Similarly, through Target 2 of the ECOWAS Children's Policy (2019-2030), the Member States of the Community undertake by 2030 to ensure the inclusion of and equitable access for girls and boys to quality education programmes at pre-school, primary, secondary, technical and vocational education and training levels (objectives 2, 3, 5, 6, ); reducing gender disparities in education and promoting gender equality through education programmes (goal 7), and ensuring a safe, inclusive and protective learning environment for girls and boys (goal 8).

The adoption and implementation of these regional instruments, as well as the commitments made at continental and international level, have led to significant progress in the region in terms of education in general and gender equality in education in particular. However, despite the progress made, disparities persist across the region. Many challenges, some of which are discussed below, remain to be overcome in order to achieve gender equality in education.

As a component of the ECOWAS Gender Equality Index, the education domain examines the probability of accessing different levels of education, of continuing to learn and of succeeding, as well as the training pathways followed. The gender indicators that make up the domain are grouped into five (05) sub-domains (table 1) and make it possible to

examine whether girls and boys/women and men have the same opportunities in terms of entry, retention, exit and educational opportunities.

*Table 3: Measurement framework for the 'Education' domain*

Sub-domains	Concepts measured	Indicators	Source of data
Access to education	Enrolment by level of education	Gross enrolment rate in pre-school	
		Gross enrolment rate in primary education	
		Gross enrolment rate in secondary secondary education	
		Gross enrolment rate in tertiary tertiary education	
		Number of children of out of school	
Quality of education	Completion of a cycle cycle	Primary school primary education	
		Completion rate of lower secondary secondary education	
	Repetition	Number of repeaters in primary education (all grades combined) classes)	
Professional qualifications	Profile of tertiary graduates	Proportion of women among tertiary tertiary graduates by field of study	
	Inactivity among young people	Proportion of young people without education, employment or training	
Representation in the teaching profession	Teacher qualifications	Percentage of qualified teachers in secondary education	
	Parity in the teaching profession	Proportion of female teachers in higher higher education	
Literacy	Adult literacy	Adult literacy rate adults (aged 15 and over)	

### **Key results:**

***Undeniable progress has been made in gender equality in education, but continued efforts are needed to achieve parity in educational opportunities.***

- *Disparities in access to education have narrowed considerably, but vary in scale and importance between states and between levels of education.*
- *Access to pre-school education has generally changed very little in the region as a whole, but girls have an advantage over boys when it comes to pre-school enrolment.*
- *The gender gap in access to education has narrowed considerably across the region, at both primary and secondary levels, but disparities persist and are more pronounced at secondary level.*
- *Moreover, several Member States have managed to close the gender gap in access to primary and secondary education, or even better, the gaps have widened in favour of girls in the States concerned.*
- *In tertiary education, on the other hand, access remains at very low levels, and much remains to be done to close the gaps and achieve parity.*

#### **1.1.1. Access to education**

Because of the beneficial effects of education, it is accepted that all individuals should have access to formal education. Access to education lies at the heart of development and is essential for long-term improvements in productivity, intergenerational poverty reduction, demographic transition, preventive healthcare, women's empowerment and reducing inequality (Lewin, 2015). The global promotion of inclusive and equitable education for all has fostered significant progress in improving access to education and enrolment rates at all levels of education, from pre-school to tertiary, for girls in particular. These levels of access are assessed on the basis of the gross enrolment rate at the various levels of education and the out-of-school rate.

##### **1.1.1.1. Gross enrolment ratio (GER)**

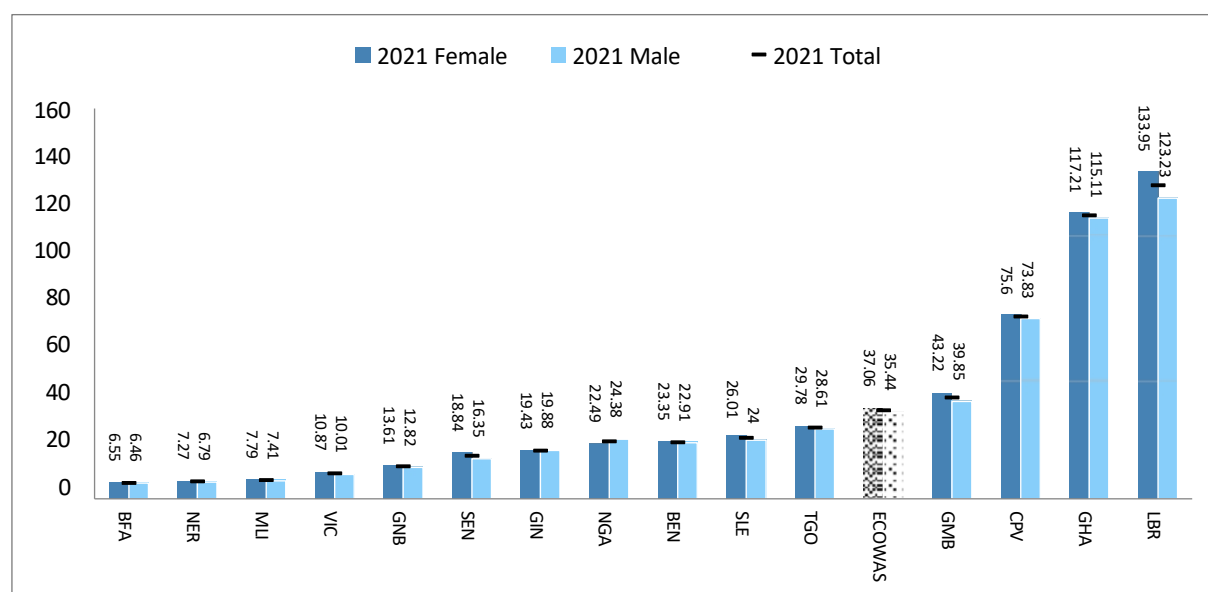
*Definition of the indicator:* The GER represents the total number of pupils (or students) enrolled in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official eligible school-age population corresponding to the same level of education during a given school year. It is calculated by dividing the number of pupils (or students) enrolled in a level of education, whatever their age, by the population of official school age at the same level of education and then multiplying the result by 100.

Source of definition: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

### - *Pre-school education*

Expanding access to early childhood education is a means of realising the right to education with a view to promoting lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2022). Pre-school education is instrumental in building a solid foundation for children's social, emotional and general well-being, and improves children's preparation for primary school and their overall educational achievement (UNICEF, 2023). Speaking of gender equality, pre-school education has the capacity to equalise the starting point for girls and boys (Gordon, 1994). However, the beneficial effects of pre-school education are not limited to children. In addition to its impact on children's learning and development, pre-school services provide significant benefits for parents, particularly mothers of young children. Indeed, the provision of pre-school services has the potential to reduce inequalities in the labour market by promoting women's participation in the labour market and increasing their income (UN WOMEN, 2021; Halim et al., 2018).

**Graph 18.1:** *Gross pre-school enrolment rate by gender in ECOWAS, 2021*

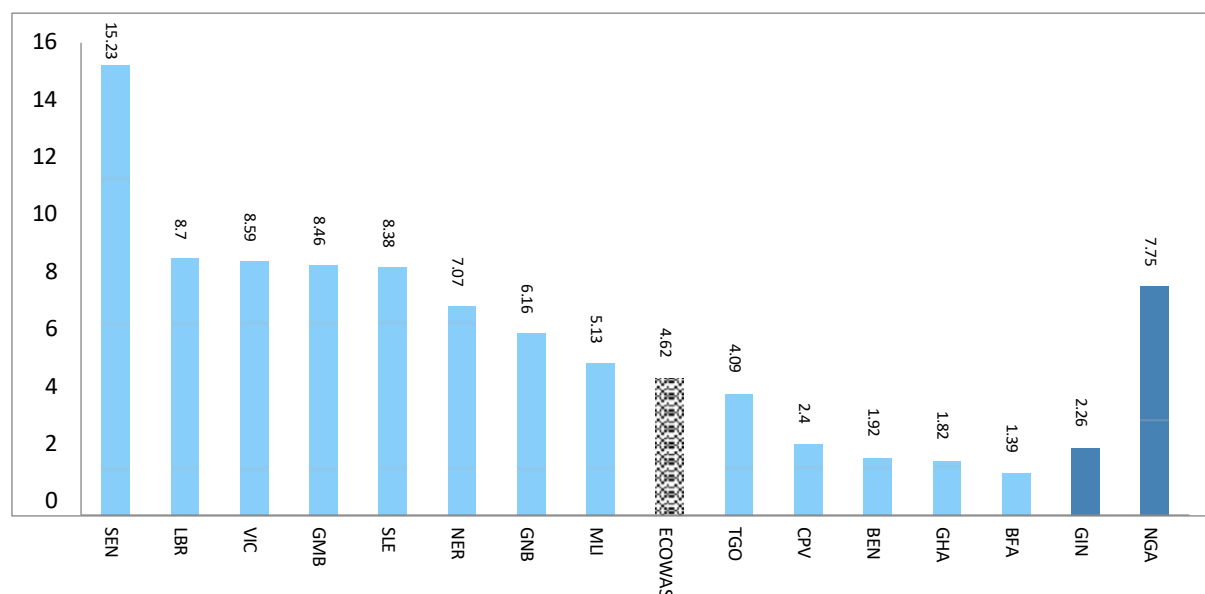


Source :

***At ECOWAS level, early childhood education has developed very little despite the progress made in this area.*** The gross pre-school enrolment rate rose slightly between 2017 and 2021, from 33.14% to 36.24% on average, an increase of 3.1 percentage points over the period. However, there are disparities between Member States and between the sexes. In 2021, eleven (11) of the fifteen (15) Member States

Member States had gross pre-school enrolment rates below the regional average (see graph 1.1.). These rates ranged from 6.5% in Burkina Faso to 128.48% in Liberia. The data suggest that girls are more likely to participate in pre-school education than boys. The average pre-school enrolment rate for girls was 37.06%, compared with 35.44% for boys. The same trend can be observed at state level, with the exception of Nigeria and Guinea, where estimates suggest higher pre-school enrolment rates for boys (graph 1.2).

**Graph 19.2:** Gender gap in access to pre-school education, ECOWAS 2021



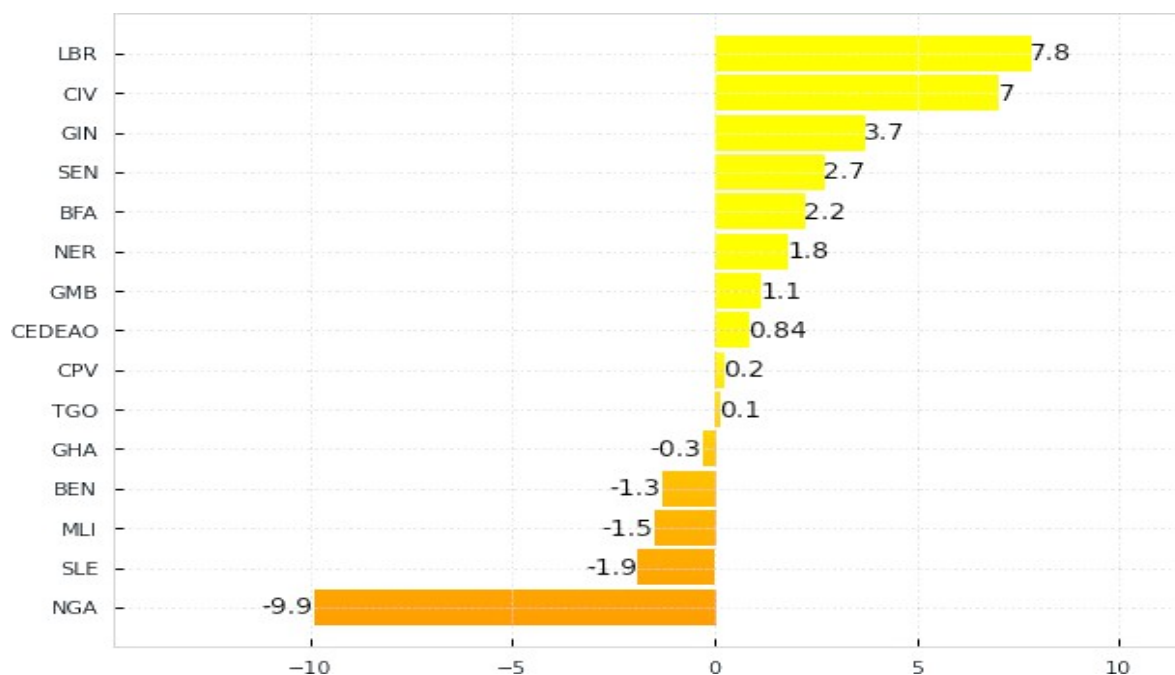
Source :

**Moreover, in the majority of Member States, the gender parity gap has evolved considerably and has widened in favour of girls.** Gaps in access to pre-school education have closed considerably and only two Member States (Nigeria and Guinea) still have gaps in favour of boys but are close to parity with respectively 7.75

% and 2.26% residual gaps (graph 1.2). For the other Member States, the disparities to the detriment of girls have been entirely closed and the gap towards parity has widened significantly to the detriment of boys, ranging from 1.39% in Burkina Faso to 15.23% in Senegal. However, progress between 2017 and 2021 varies from country to country, as Figure 1.3 shows. A third of the countries, including Ghana, Benin, Mali, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, saw an increase in the gender gap over the period, ranging from 0.3 percentage points to almost 10 percentage points. The gaps almost stabilised in Cabo-Verde and Togo, while they narrowed further in the other countries, ranging from

from 1.1 percentage points in Gambia to 7 percentage points or more in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.

**Figure 20.3:** *Change in gender gaps in access to pre-school education between 2017 and 2021*



Source :

The development observed in the sub-region in terms of access to pre-school education, although modest, has been made possible by the development and implementation of early childhood development policies and programmes in several of the region's countries, particularly following the advent of education for all, as is the case in Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana and Senegal. These interventions, coupled with increased private investment in the sector, have led to an expansion of early childhood education and care services in the region. However, the development of early childhood education faces a number of geographical, economic, socio-cultural and political challenges. Specifically, there are inequalities in the coverage of early childhood services, especially in rural areas; the costs of accessing services, particularly private ones, are high for the poorest; and parents are unaware of the benefits of pre-school education (UNESCO, 2010). Other factors limiting access to pre-school education relate to the quality of provision and services, in particular the quality of infrastructure and teaching materials, the lack of qualified educators and the quality of educational programmes (Mahdjoub et al., 2022; Agbenyega, 2013).

### - *Primary education*

Significant efforts have also been made to achieve universal primary education. Regionally, the gross enrolment ratio in primary education was 100.15% in 2021, compared with 91.48% in 2017. In 2021, the majority of countries (8 out of 15) also had primary GERs of over 100%. These include Sierra Leone (156.45%), Togo (124.2%), Guinea-Bissau (118.69%), Benin (116.71%), Gambia (102.74%), Ghana (103.44%), Cabo-Verde (100.89%) and Guinea (100.79%). The GER remained high in the other countries, ranging from 64.8% in Niger to 98.19% in Côte d'Ivoire. Boys were more likely than girls to attend school in the majority of countries, with differences ranging from 0.36 percentage points in Liberia to 16.56 percentage points in Guinea (graph 1.4).

**Graph 21.4:** *Gross enrolment ratio by gender in primary education in ECOWAS, 2021*

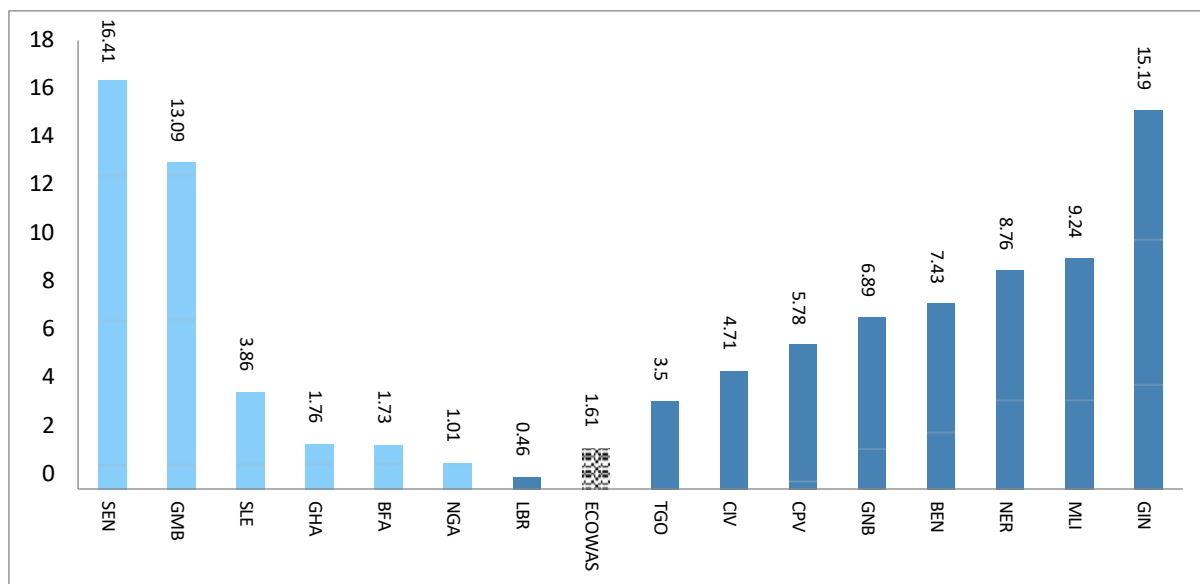


Source :

***The parity gap in access to primary education has been closed and tipped in favour of girls in several Member States.*** While several countries are making progress towards parity in basic education, some have managed to close the gap, which is now widening to the detriment of boys. These are Senegal (16.51%), Gambia (13.09%), Sierra Leone (3.86%), Ghana (1.76%), Burkina Faso (1.73%) and Nigeria (1.01%). For the other Member States, the deviation from parity ranges from 0.46% in Liberia to 15.19% in Guinea (Figure 1.5). These gaps have improved in 2021 compared to their 2017 level for all Member States except Guinea.

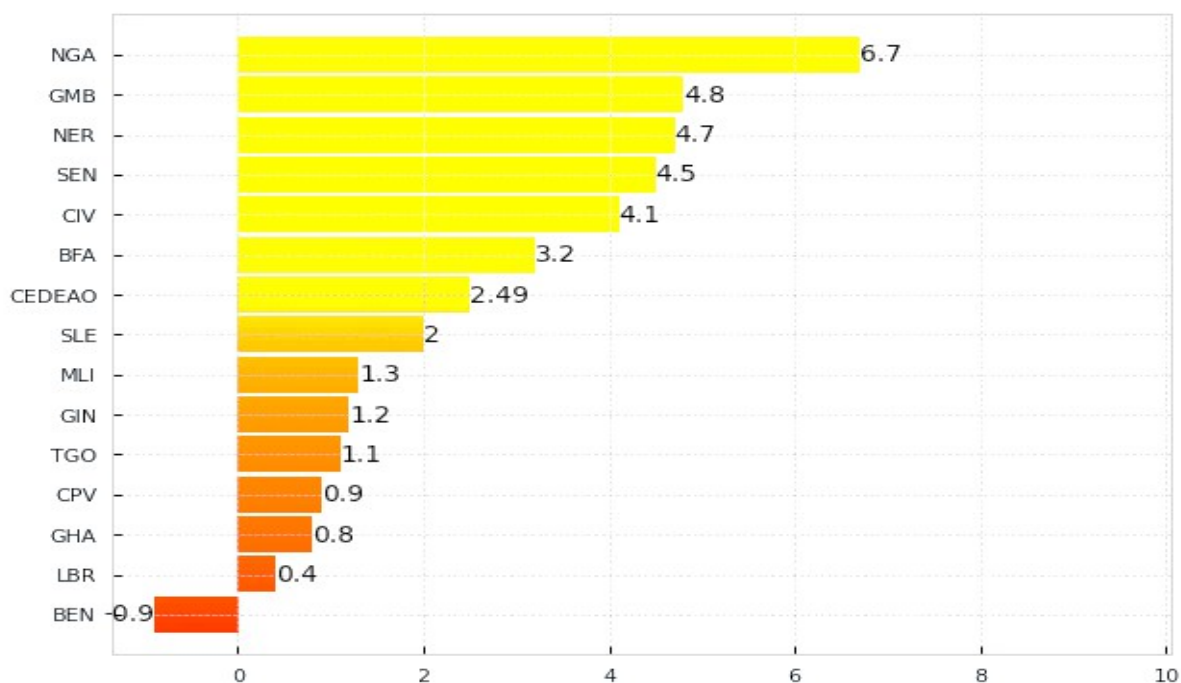
all Member States except Benin, with reductions ranging from 0.4 percentage points in Liberia to 6.7 percentage points in Nigeria (Graph 1.6).

**Graph 1.5:** Gender gap in access to primary education, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

**Figure 22.6:** Change in the gender gap in access to primary education between 2017 and 2021



Source :

- *Secondary education*

*While the objective of universal education has been achieved for most Member States at primary level, the situation is not the same at secondary level.* Despite the changes observed, secondary school enrolment rates are still low in several Member States, and for both sexes. In 2021, only a third of Member States (Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Ghana, Cabo-Verde and Gambia) had gross enrolment ratios at secondary level above 50%, with a higher probability of girls accessing secondary education than boys. The differences in GER were 18.8 percentage points in The Gambia; 7.33 percentage points in Cabo-Verde; 0.33 percentage points in Ghana; 8.55 percentage points in Senegal and 4.3 percentage points in Burkina-Faso.

**Graph 1.7:** Gross enrolment ratio in secondary education by gender in ECOWAS, 2021

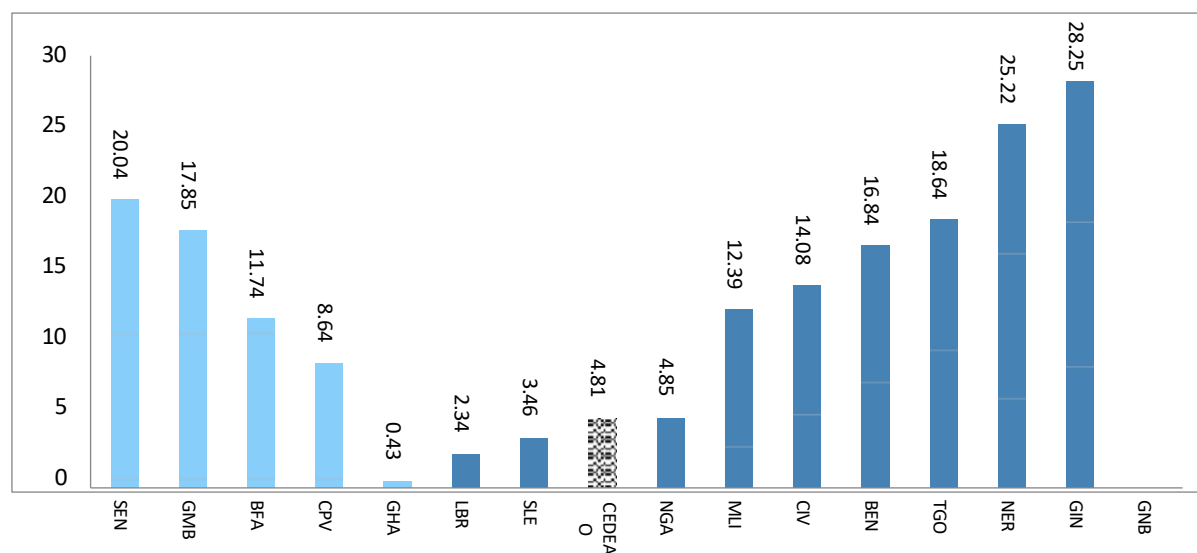


Source :

*However, the region is well on the way to achieving parity in access to secondary education, although significant disparities remain in several Member States.* Over the period from 2017 to 2021, the parity gap improved significantly across the region as a whole, with a reduction in the gender gap of up to 22 percentage points in Gambia, with the exception of Cabo-Verde, which saw a slight increase of 1.2 percentage points (Figure 1.9). In all the Member States for which data were available in 2021, parity in access to secondary education has been achieved.

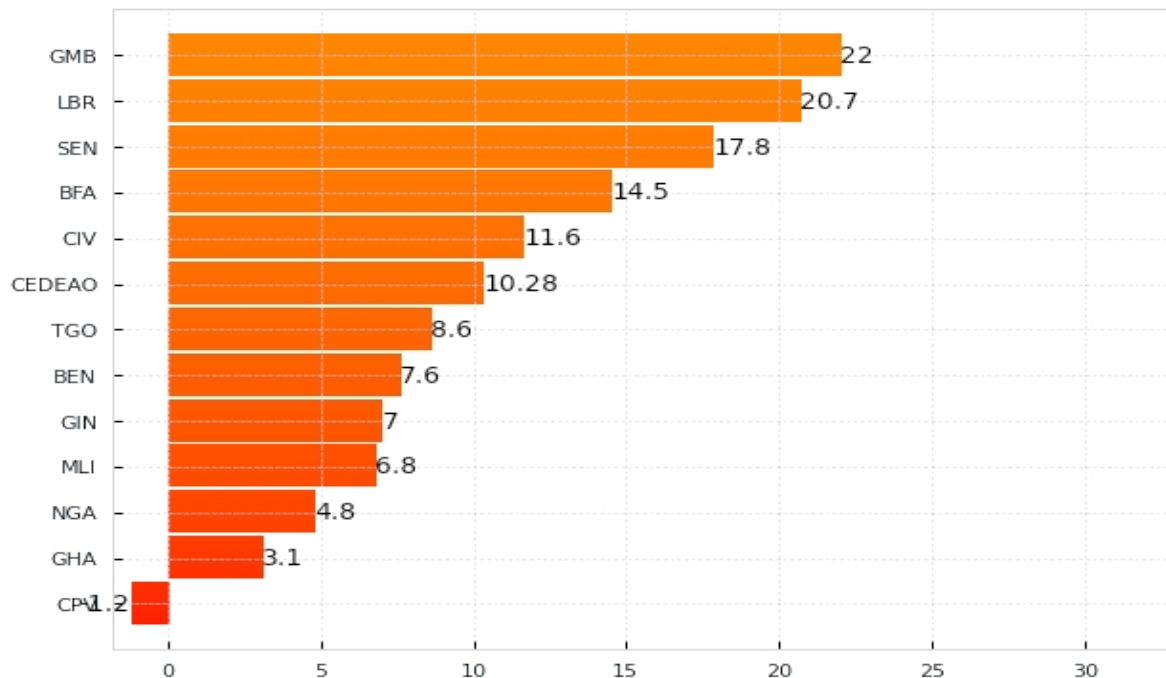
secondary education has been achieved in only five (05) of them, and better still, the parity gap has shifted in favour of girls in the States concerned (graph 1.8). These are Senegal (20.04%), Gambia (17.85%), Burkina Faso (11.74%), Cape Verde (8.64%) and Ghana (0.43%).

**Figure 1.8:** Gender gap in access to secondary education, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

**Graph 23.9:** Change in gender gaps in access to secondary education between 2017 and 2021

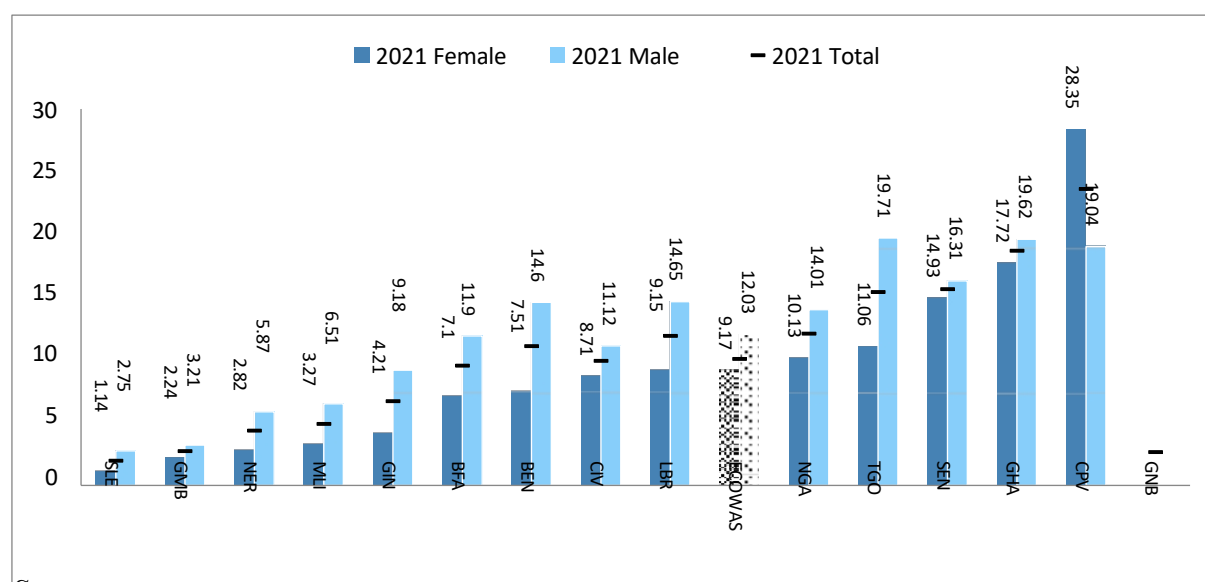


Source :

*The results achieved in terms of girls' enrolment in primary and secondary education have been boosted by the adoption and implementation of various policy reforms* making primary education free and compulsory for all children and, in some countries, extending free education for girls to lower and upper secondary education, as is the case in Benin, for example. Other additional actions to encourage girls' enrolment have been initiated, such as increasing the resources allocated to schools, increasing the coverage of educational provision, raising awareness in favour of girls' education, particularly in rural areas, and institutionalising the collection of sex-disaggregated data to monitor progress and formulate evidence-based policies (ECOWAS, 2022).

### - Tertiary education

**Figure 1.10:** Gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education by gender in ECOWAS, 2021

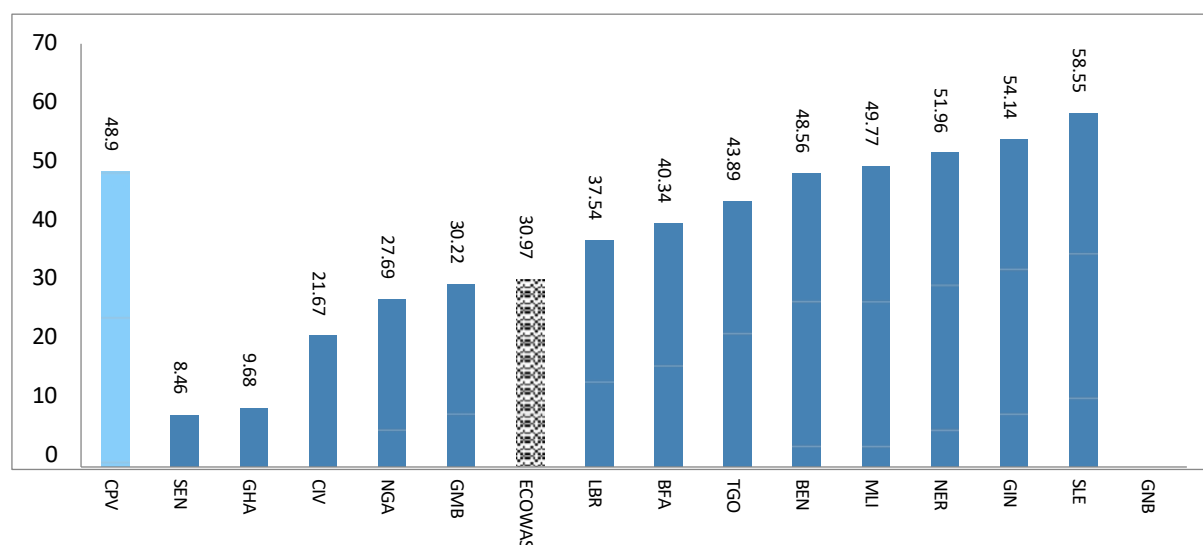


Source :

*Access to tertiary education remains at an even lower level and is very uneven across the region.* In 2021, the gross enrolment rate in tertiary education was 10.08% on average in the region. Enrolment rates are equally low in the Member States, ranging from 1.96% in Sierra Leone to 23.62% in Cape Verde. Furthermore, with the exception of Cabo-Verde, women are significantly less likely than men to achieve tertiary education across the region as a whole, with enrolment gaps ranging from 0.97 percentage points in The Gambia to

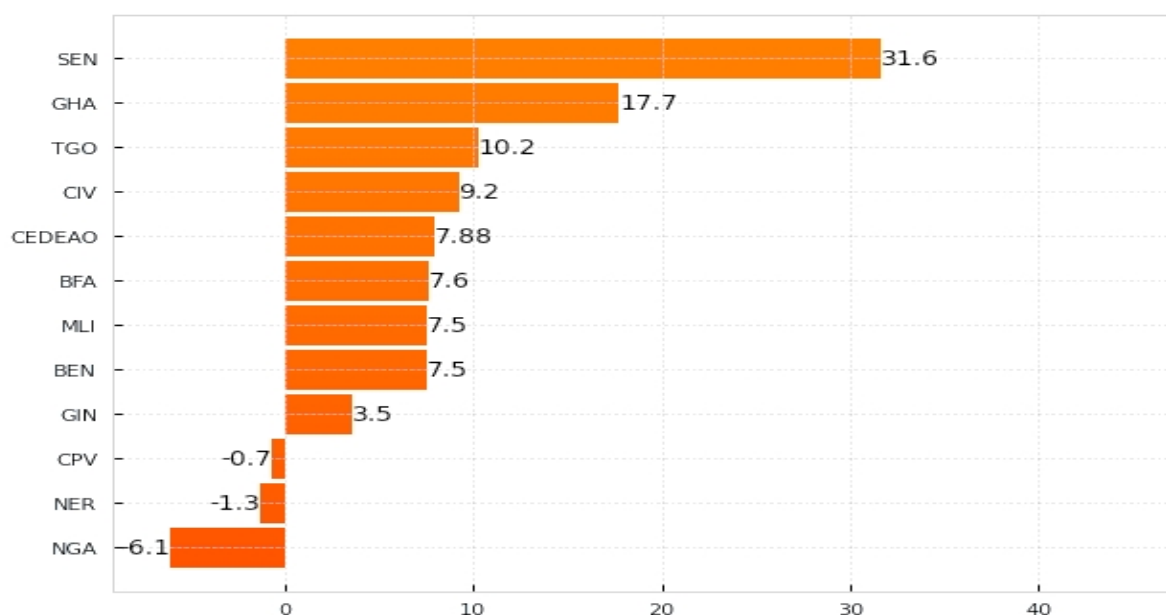
Gambia to 8.65 percentage points in Togo. In Cabo-Verde, the gap was 9.31 percentage points higher for women.

**Graph 1.11: Gender gap in access to tertiary education, ECOWAS 2021**



Source :

**Figure 24.12: Change in gender gaps in access to tertiary education between 2017 and 2021**



Source :

Across the region as a whole, despite the significant improvement observed in most states over the period 2017 to 2021 (Figure 1.12), **gender disparities in access to tertiary education are still very pronounced and a great deal of effort needs to be made if the parity target is to be achieved.**

Only Cabo-Verde has managed to close the gap

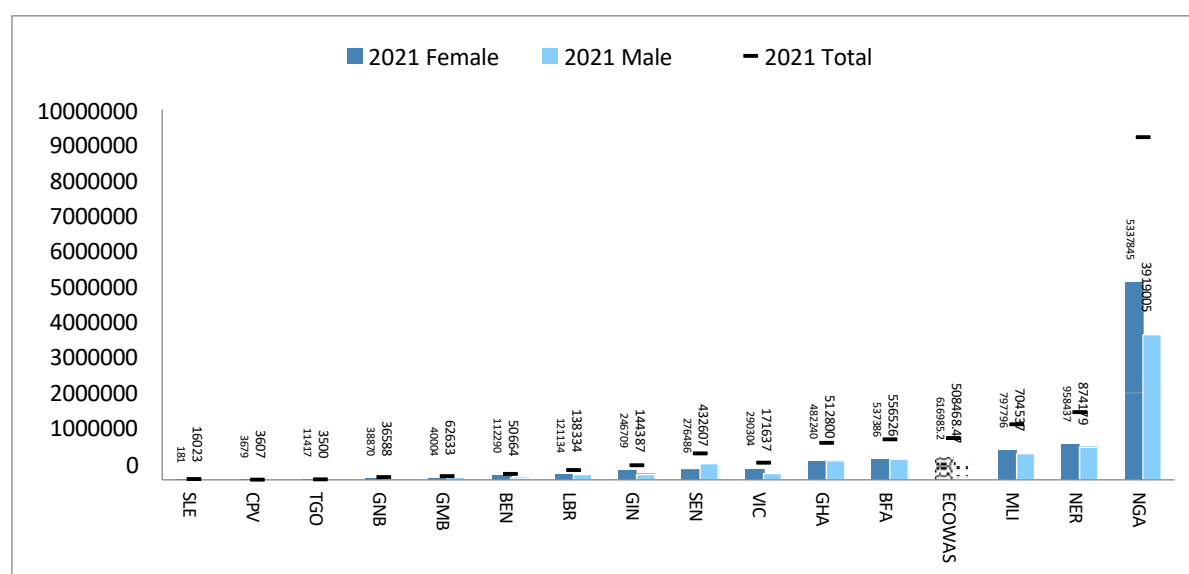
and even better at reversing the trend. The gender gap in access to tertiary education has narrowed considerably, reaching 48.9% in favour of girls. Some countries, however, such as Senegal and Ghana, are close to achieving parity, with 91.54% and 90.32% respectively. For the other Member States, the gaps are still very large, reaching over 50% in Niger, Guinea and Sierra Leone (Figure 1.11).

### 1.1.1.2. Out-of-school children in primary education

*Definition of the indicator:* The number of children of primary school age not attending school corresponds to the number of children in the official primary school age group who are not enrolled in school. It is obtained by subtracting the number of pupils in the theoretical age group corresponding to primary education enrolled in primary or secondary education from the population of the same age group.

*Source of definition:* UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

**Graph 1.13:** Children of primary school age not attending school (thousands), ECOWAS 2021

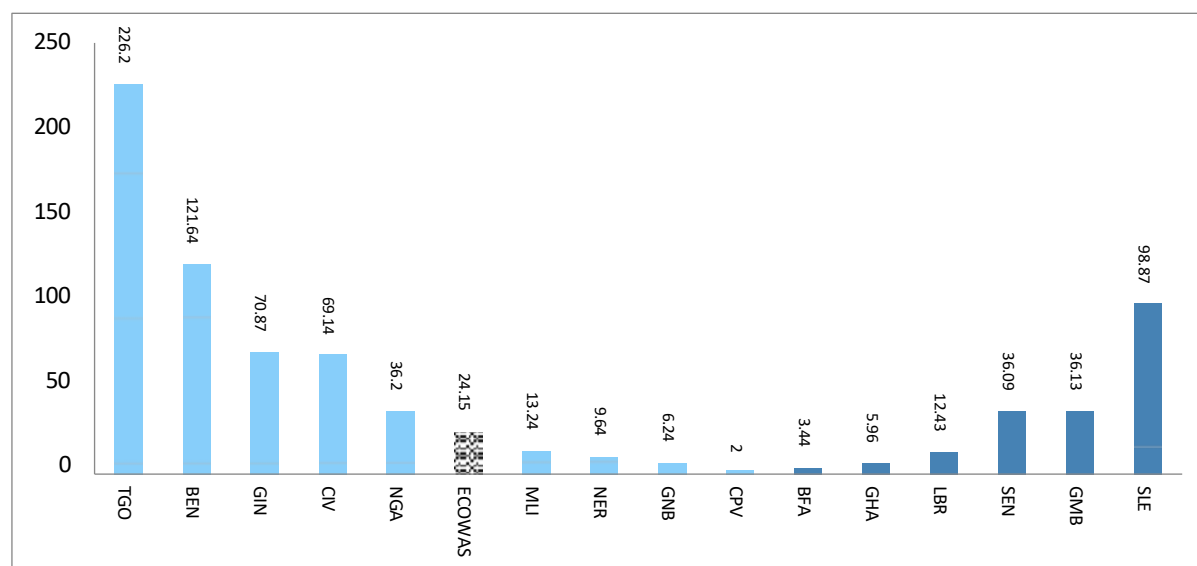


*Source :*

***Despite significant progress towards parity in access to education, many children, mostly girls, continue to be excluded from educational opportunities.*** At regional level, an average of 1,125,648 children of school age do not have access to primary education. Nigeria holds the record for out-of-school children, with an estimated 9 million out-of-school children, 58% of whom are girls. More than 1 million children are also affected in Mali, Niger and Burkina-Faso, of whom

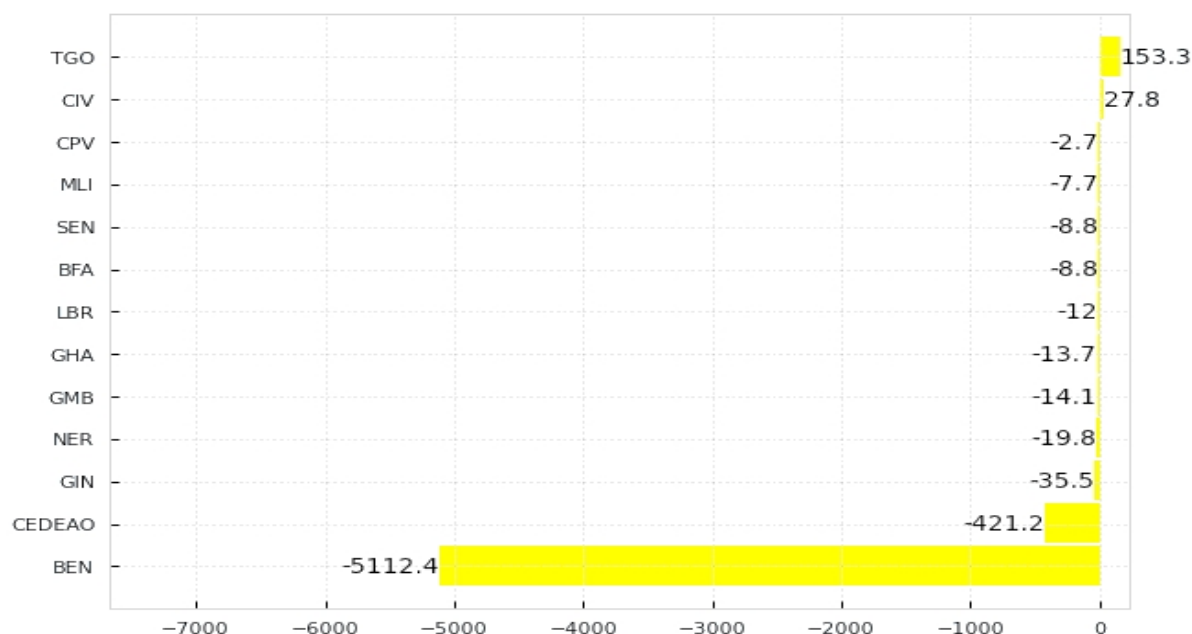
respectively 53%, 52% and 49% are girls. The increase in girls' access to education has nonetheless helped to reverse the gender gap in out-of-school enrolment in several Member States, including Burkina-Faso, Ghana, Liberia, Senegal, Gambia and Sierra Leone. While Cabo-Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Niger and Mali are gradually moving towards parity, the gender gap remains very wide in the rest of the countries, exceeding 100% in Benin and Togo (Figure 1.14).

**Graph 1.14:** Gender gap, out-of-school primary-age children, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

**Graph 25.15:** Change in gaps, primary-age children not in school, 2017 to 2021



Source :

The persistence of gender inequalities in access to education is fuelled by a range of factors linked to discriminatory social norms and institutions, which affect girls and boys differently and limit the exercise of the right to education for girls and young women. ***Poverty, especially when combined with a low social perception of the value of educating girls and a preference for sons, is a barrier to girls' schooling.*** In situations of economic hardship, some families give priority to sending boys to school, because of the norms that define traditional gender roles and the low perception of the social and economic benefits of educating girls compared to boys (Amili & Di Paolo, 2019). In Benin, for example, the Analyse de la Situation des Enfants (SiTAN, 2017) shows that 43% of girls compared with 36% of boys from the poorest households do not attend school. In the same context, Soglo (2023) has shown that poverty reduces by 58% and 37% the chances of a child from a poor household headed by a woman and a man, respectively, attending school.

***Child labour, including the disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic and care work, also limits girls' access to education and has a negative impact on their performance at school.*** According to the Gender and Social Institutions Index (GSII) country report for Burkina Faso, the time spent on domestic work and unpaid care work is around 4 hours a day for girls aged 15 to 17, while it is around half an hour for boys (OECD, 2018). In Senegal, this time is estimated at an average of 4 hours a day for women and girls, compared with 20 minutes for men and boys (ANSD et al., 2022).

***In addition, early and unwanted pregnancies, harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation, gender-based violence in the school environment, and disability are obstacles to girls' schooling and are major causes of school drop-out.*** In West Africa, two out of five girls are married before the age of 18, and the region has one of the highest proportions of women aged 20 to 24 reporting a birth before the age of 18 (28%) and the highest proportion of births before the age of 15 (6%) (Hospital & Kallon, 2016). For girls aged between 15 and 19, the highest proportions of early pregnancies are observed in Niger (40%), Mali (36%), Guinea (28%) and Guinea (28%).

Burkina-Faso (25%)<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the majority of girls who have been pregnant in the region do not attend school because of discrimination against them (Hospital & Kallon, 2016). Some countries, such as Senegal, Sierra Leone and Ghana, have therefore adopted reforms to make it easier for pregnant girls to return to school after giving birth. In the case of Ghana, the reform helped 10,869 pregnant girls return to school between 2017 and 2020 (ECOWAS, 2022). Furthermore, for pupils with disabilities, the school environment, including curricula, teaching methods and materials, infrastructure and equipment, is generally not adapted to their needs and contributes to reproducing and reinforcing stigmatisation and violence against pupils with disabilities, particularly girls (UNGEI, 2020). In addition, girls are more exposed to acts of gender-based violence in and around schools, including sexual violence, harassment and exploitation, perpetrated by both pupils and teachers (UNESCO, 2020).

***Furthermore, girls' access to education is much more complex in contexts affected by fragility, conflict and violence.*** It is estimated that girls in these contexts are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school and 90% more likely to miss out on secondary education than those living in more stable contexts (Bentaouet Kattan & Murad Khan, 2023). West Africa, and the Sahel region in particular, is characterised by a succession of crises, including food insecurity, armed conflict, instability, displacement and climate change, all of which have an impact on access to and quality of education, but also on the psychological well-being of pupils (Diamond 2022; OCHA, 2021; UNICEF, 2019). An upsurge in acts of violence against pupils, teachers and schools has been observed in some countries in the region, including Burkina-Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria (UNICEF, 2019). These situations of conflict and crisis further reinforce social gender norms and exacerbate girls' risk of violence and sexual abuse, making them more likely to be kept at home and thus deprived of the right to education (Diamond, 2022; Goulds, 2020). It is estimated, for example, that in the Sahel, four million girls have dropped out of school due to insecurity and 600 women and girls were abducted from their schools in Nigeria in 2018, to be married off, used as bait or become domestic servants (ECOWAS, 2022).

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<sup>2</sup>World Bank Data Bank

***In addition to social norms, there are a number of factors related to the provision of education that also represent obstacles to girls' schooling.*** These include the direct and indirect costs of education, particularly secondary and tertiary education; the low quality of teaching; accessibility problems due to the inadequacy and remoteness of schools, especially in rural areas (UNICEF, 2021); and the low representation of women in the teaching profession and as school managers (Diamond, 2022). The lack of gender-specific health measures and infrastructure to meet girls' safety and hygiene needs further affects girls' well-being and success at school (ECOWAS, 2022).

***Finally, the recent COVID-19 crisis has somewhat exacerbated gender inequalities in access to education, thereby risking undermining efforts to advance gender equality in education.*** Indeed, the impacts of the pandemic have led to an increase in violence against women and girls, with negative consequences for their health and well-being (Diamond, 2022). For young women, particularly those in tertiary education, the impacts of COVID-19 have resulted in an increase in the time spent on domestic and care tasks, reducing the time available for academic activities (IESALC, 2021). For girls, in addition to the increased domestic responsibilities, the economic difficulties caused by the crisis are likely to lead to an increase in cases of early marriage and pregnancy and violence against girls, as observed following the closure of schools during the Ebola crisis (Diamond, 2022; IESALC, 2021).

### ***1.1.2. Quality of education***

In addition to universal access to education, the quality of teaching and learning also represents an important pillar in achieving the goal of education for all. The quality of education received has a strong influence on how long children stay in school, their school attendance and their academic performance, and has positive long-term socio-economic repercussions (UNESCO, 2005). The quality of education is assessed here on the basis of indicators of learner results, which make it possible to assess the performance of the education system. These include completion and repetition rates. Universal access to basic education is not limited to enrolment, but also implies the possibility for all girls and boys to successfully complete a full cycle of education (Lewin, 2015).

#### ***1.1.2.1. Completion rate***

*Definition of the indicator:* The completion rate is the percentage of children or young people aged 3 to 5 above the expected age for the last year of each level of education who have completed that year. The expected age for the last year of each level of education is the age at which pupils would enter the class if they had started school at the official primary entrance age, had studied full time and had progressed without repeating a year or skipping a year. It is obtained by dividing the number of people in the age group concerned who have completed the final year of the given level of education by the total population of the same age group.

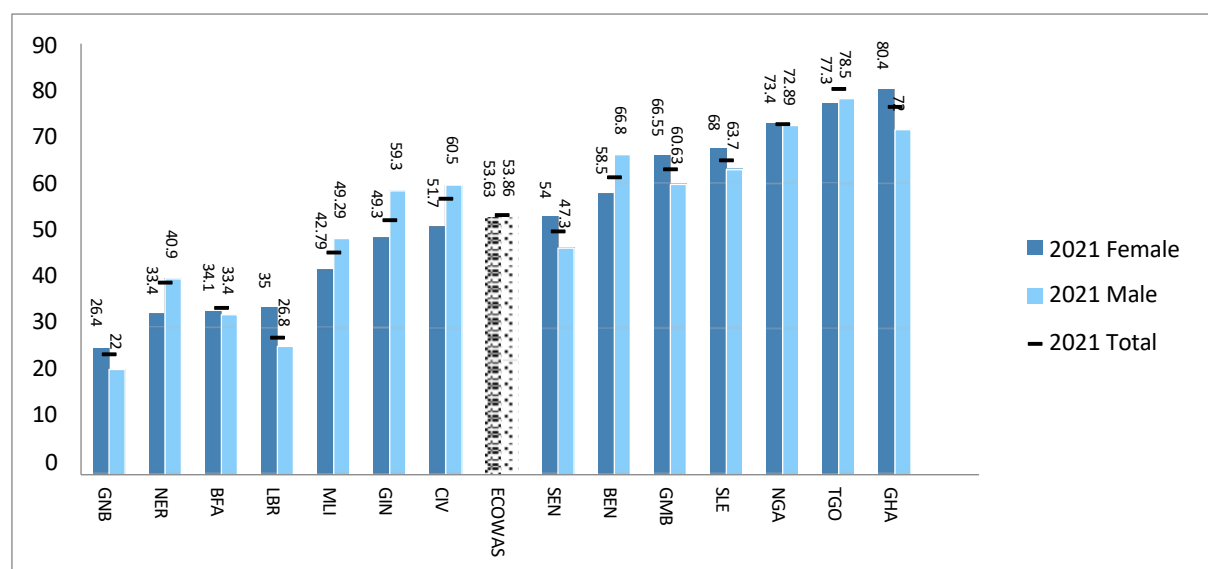
*Source of definition:* UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

#### - **Primary school completion**

***While access to primary education has improved significantly, completion levels remain low in several Member States.*** Across the region as a whole, on average one pupil in two (54.17%) completed primary education in 2021, with an almost equal distribution between girls and boys (53.63

% and 53.86 respectively). However, these regional averages mask major differences between Member States. Less than half of pupils have completed primary education in a third of Member States, including Guinea-Bissau (25.1%), Liberia (28.6%), Burkina-Faso (34.8%), Niger (40.1%) and Mali (46.37%).

**Graph 1.16:** Primary school completion rate by gender, ECOWAS 2021

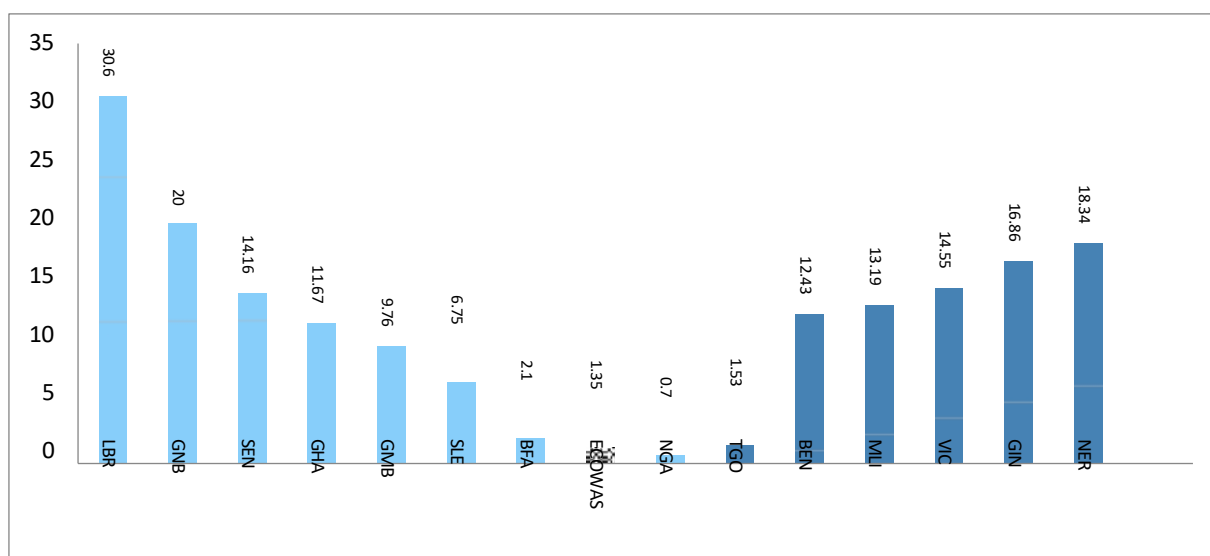


*Source :*

Completion levels are higher in the other Member States, ranging from 50.8% in Senegal to 80.5% in Togo. There are also slight differences in completion rates for girls and boys.

completion rates for girls and boys. Gender differences in completion rates range from 0.51 percentage points in Nigeria to 8.8 percentage points in Côte d'Ivoire, and are in favour of girls in several countries (graph 1.16).

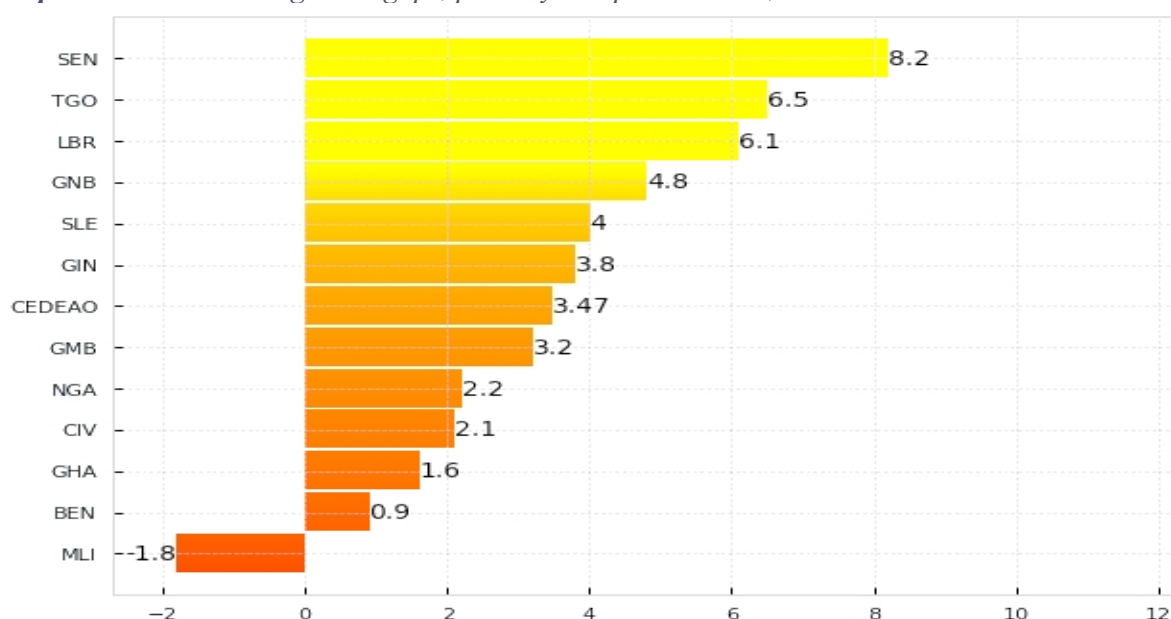
**Graph 1.17:** Gender gap in primary school completion, ECOWAS, 2021



Source :

**Graph 26.18:** Trends in gender gaps, primary completion rates, 2017 to

2021



Source:

**Overall, the gender gap in primary school completion has been closed in the region, although disparities persist in some Member States.** More than

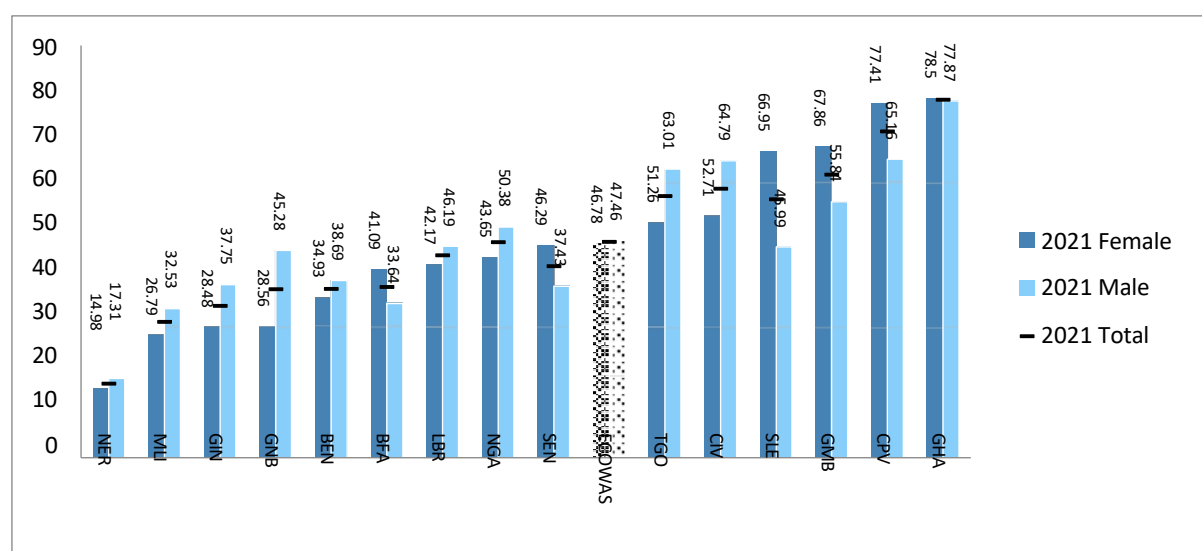
Half of the countries for which data is available have achieved parity in primary school completion (graph 1.17). The gaps in favour of girls have widened in these countries, ranging from 0.7% in Nigeria to 30.6% in Liberia. The gender parity gap remains in favour of boys in Togo (1.53%), Benin (12.43%), Mali (13.19)

Côte d'Ivoire (14.55%), Guinea (16.86%) and Niger (18.34%). These gaps have also improved for all the countries compared with their level in 2017, except in the case of Mali, where the gaps have increased by 1.8 points (Figure 1.18).

#### - Lower secondary completion rate

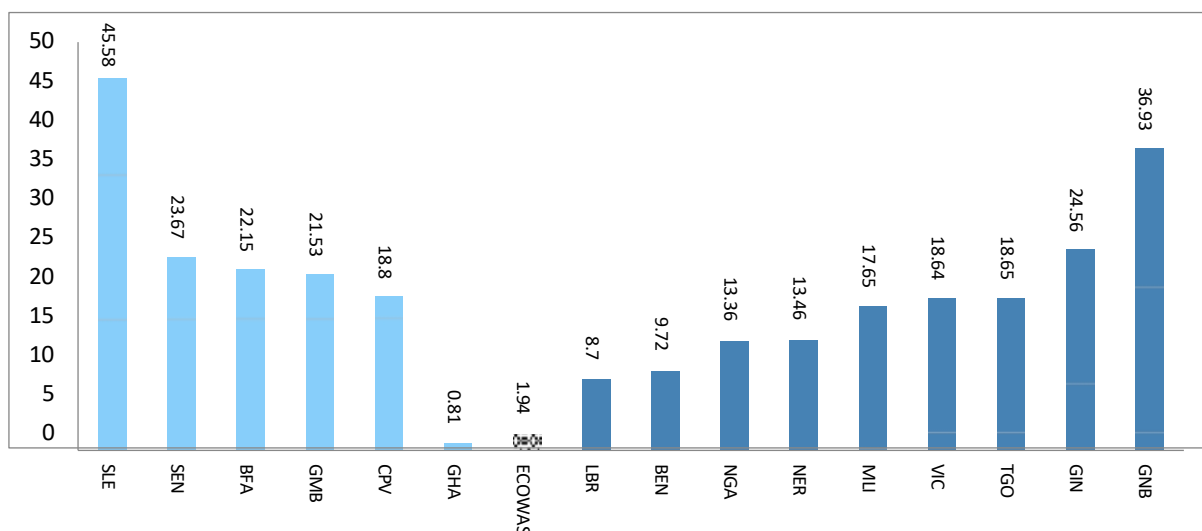
*As with primary education, completion rates in secondary education remain generally low, particularly in the first cycle.* In general, less than half the pupils (47.11%) who reached secondary level managed to complete even the first cycle. Completion rates for girls and boys are almost similar at regional level (46.78% and 47.46%), but there are significant disparities between Member States. Girls outperform boys in lower secondary completion in some Member States, while in others completion rates are higher for boys, with gaps ranging from 2.33 percentage points in Niger to 16.72 percentage points in Guinea-Bissau (graph 1.19).

**Graph 1.19:** Lower secondary completion rates by gender, ECOWAS 2021



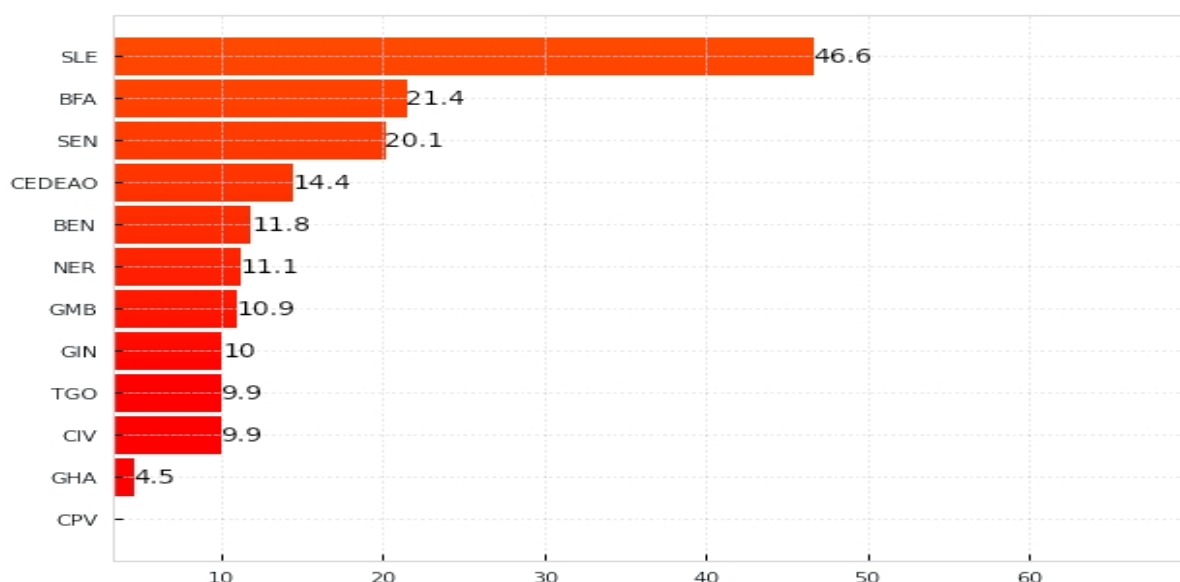
Source :

**Graph 27.20:** Gender gaps in lower secondary completion, ECOWAS, 2021



Source :

**Figure 28.21:** Change in gender gaps, lower secondary completion rate, 2017 to 2021



Source :

*In terms of parity, six (06) Member States have managed to reverse the trend in lower secondary completion rates for girls and boys, although considerable progress has been made across the region as a whole. On average, 98% of the gender gap in lower secondary completion has been closed by 2021, and there has been sustained progress over the period 2017-2021 for all countries (Figures 1.20 and 1.22). Gaps have widened in favour of girls in Ghana (0.81%), Cabo-Verde (18.8%), Gambia (21.53%) and Burkina-Faso (22.15%),*

Senegal (23.67%), and Sierra Leone (45.58%). For the other countries, the residual gap towards parity remains to the disadvantage of girls, ranging from 8.7% in Liberia to 36.93% in Guinea-Bissau.

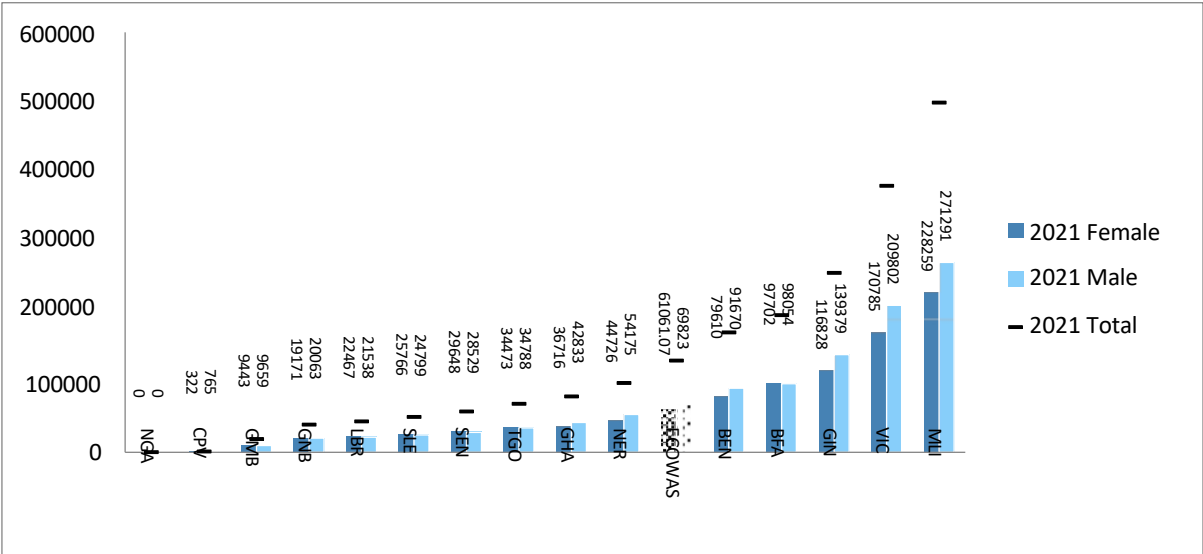
### 1.1.2.2. Repetition in primary education

*Definition of the indicator:* The repetition rate in primary education corresponds to the number of pupils enrolled at the same level as the previous year as a percentage of all pupils enrolled in primary schools. It is obtained by dividing the sum of repeaters at all levels of primary education by the total enrolment in primary education and multiplying the result by 100.

*Source of definition:* World Bank DataBank

**Boys are more likely to repeat a year in primary education in the majority of Member States.** The number of repeaters is higher among boys than girls throughout the region, with the exception of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Senegal (graph 1.22). Similarly, the highest numbers of repeaters are found in Mali (499550), Côte d'Ivoire (380587), Guinea (256207), Burkina-Faso (195756) and Benin (171280).

**Graph 1.22:** Repetition in primary education by gender (in thousands), ECOWAS 2021

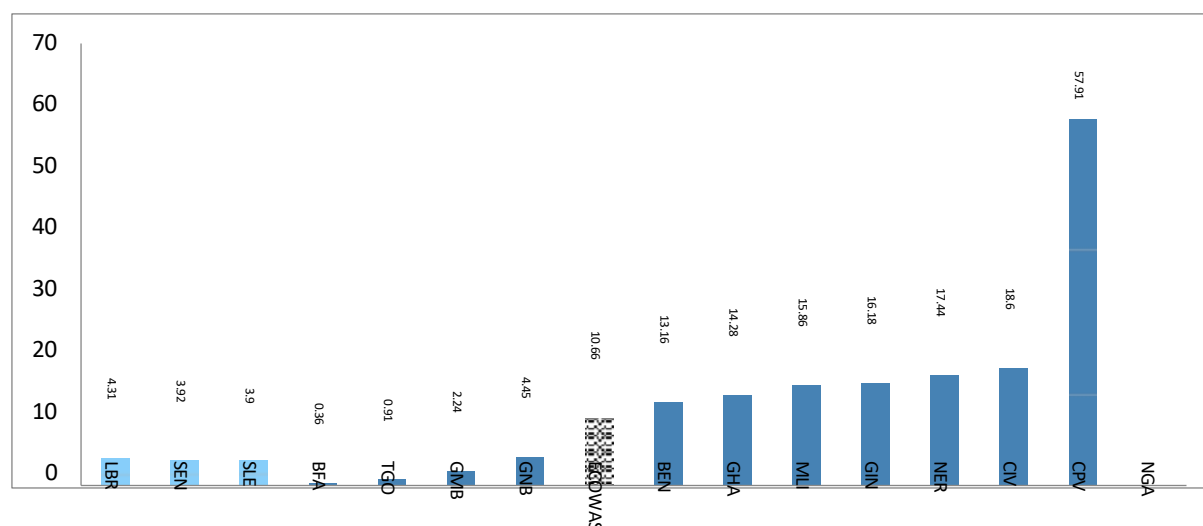


Source :

The gap towards parity has widened considerably in favour of girls in these states, reaching 57% in Cabo-Verde. However, for the States for which information is available for both years, a decline in progress towards parity is observed between 2017 and 2021 in several States, with the gaps widening over the period, ranging from 0.6 points in Togo to 10.3 points in Cabo-Verde

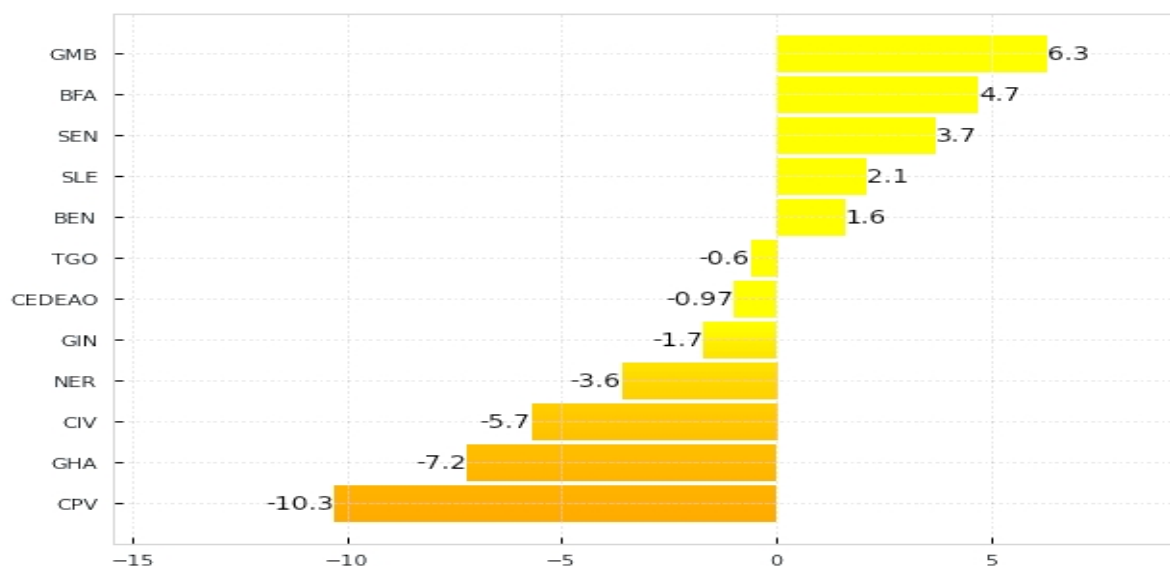
in Cabo-Verde (graph 1.24). On the other hand, there was an improvement in Benin (1.6 percentage points), Sierra Leone (2.1 percentage points), Senegal (3.7 percentage points), Burkina Faso (4.7 percentage points) and Gambia (6.3 percentage points).

**Graph 1.23:** Gender gap, repetition in primary education, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

**Graph 29.24:** Change in gender gaps, repetition in primary education, 2017 to 2021



Source :

***Inequitable gender norms, as well as the factors relating to the provision of education mentioned above, also contribute to maintaining gender disparities.***

***This is because they have a negative impact on girls' school results and are factors in their dropping out of school.*** These factors are compounded by the inadequacy and poor quality of teachers, the lack of school facilities and the use of teaching practices such as repeating a year. Repetition in particular is a widespread educational practice in education systems, particularly within ECOWAS, although its application may vary from one country to another. It is seen by some as a solution to pupils' poor academic results and a means of avoiding the accumulation of learning difficulties throughout schooling (Kyereko et al., 2022). Repetition is based on the idea that promotion to the next grade would disadvantage pupils who have performed poorly in a given school year (Hungu, 2010). However, its effectiveness as a means of helping pupils overcome their difficulties at school is also being questioned, in that its practice is likely to reinforce socio-economic inequalities, affect pupils' self-esteem, reduce motivation to study and lead pupils to drop out (Ndaruhutse et al., 2008; OECD, 2014).

### ***1.1.3. Professional qualifications***

The constant evolution of the labour market and the new needs that arise from it are leading to a diversification of training programmes in tertiary education and an evolution of fields of study. This diversification is leading to a variety of educational pathways and profiles for students and graduates. This diversity is also supported by the increasing numbers of girls and women at different levels of education, particularly in tertiary education. However, strong gender disparities are generally observed in the profiles of students and graduates. These disparities, added to the quality of students' educational pathways and their profiles at the end of training programmes, have an impact on their transition from school to work and their prospects on the labour market.

#### ***1.1.3.1. Proportion of female graduates from tertiary education programmes***

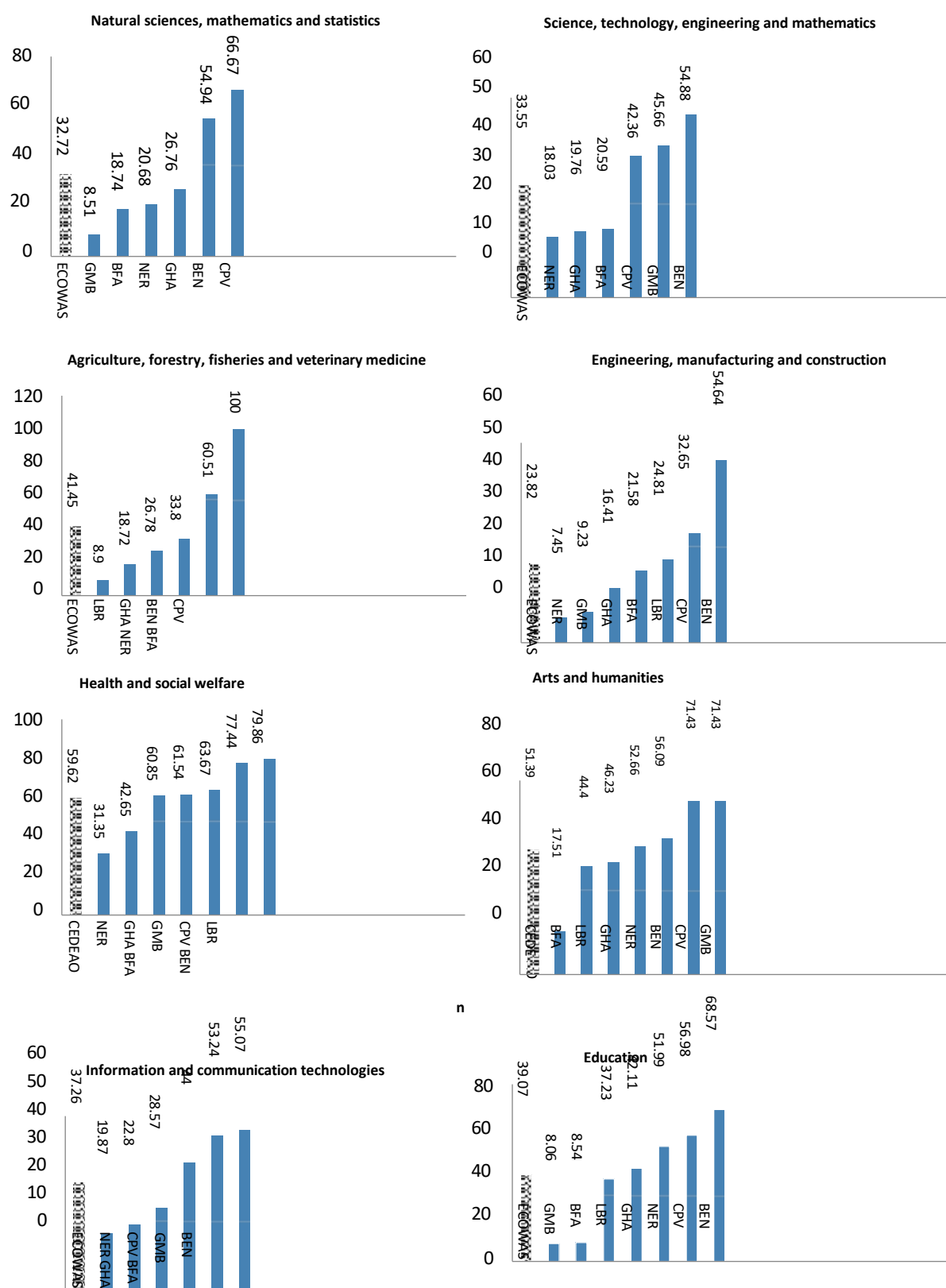
*Definition of the indicator:* The proportion of women graduates in a given field of tertiary education is the number of women graduates expressed as a percentage of the total number of graduates in the given field of tertiary education. It is calculated by dividing the number of female tertiary graduates in a given field of education by the total number of graduates in the same field, and multiplying the result by 100.

*Source of definition:* World Bank DataBank

***Some fields of study are still dominated by men, which perpetuates inequalities on the labour market and affects learning opportunities and career prospects for women.*** For all the countries for which data is available, the average number of graduates was male-dominated in most of the fields of study considered, particularly in the sciences. Women were in the minority in fields relating to engineering, manufacturing and construction (23.82%), natural sciences, mathematics and statistics (32.72%), science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) (33.55%), agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary medicine (41.45%), ICT (37.26%) and education (39.07%), while they were in the majority in health and social care (59.62%) and arts and humanities (51.39%). However, there were significant differences between Member States. In Benin and Cabo-Verde, women were in the majority in all the fields considered (with the exception of engineering, manufacturing and construction and ICT) (Figure 1.25).

***The diversity of graduate profiles and the gender differences observed in the distribution of enrolments in the various fields of study reflect to some extent the differences in the aspirations of women and men.*** These aspirations are particularly influenced by sexist stereotypes about professions and functions, as well as social perceptions about the distribution of roles between women and men in private and professional life that girls and boys face at home, at school or in the community (OECD, 2016). These stereotypes also determine career choices and significantly influence the development of academic, professional and personal life in general (Encinas-Martín & Cherian, 2023).

**Figure 1.25: Proportion of female higher education graduates by field of study, ECOWAS 2021**



Source :

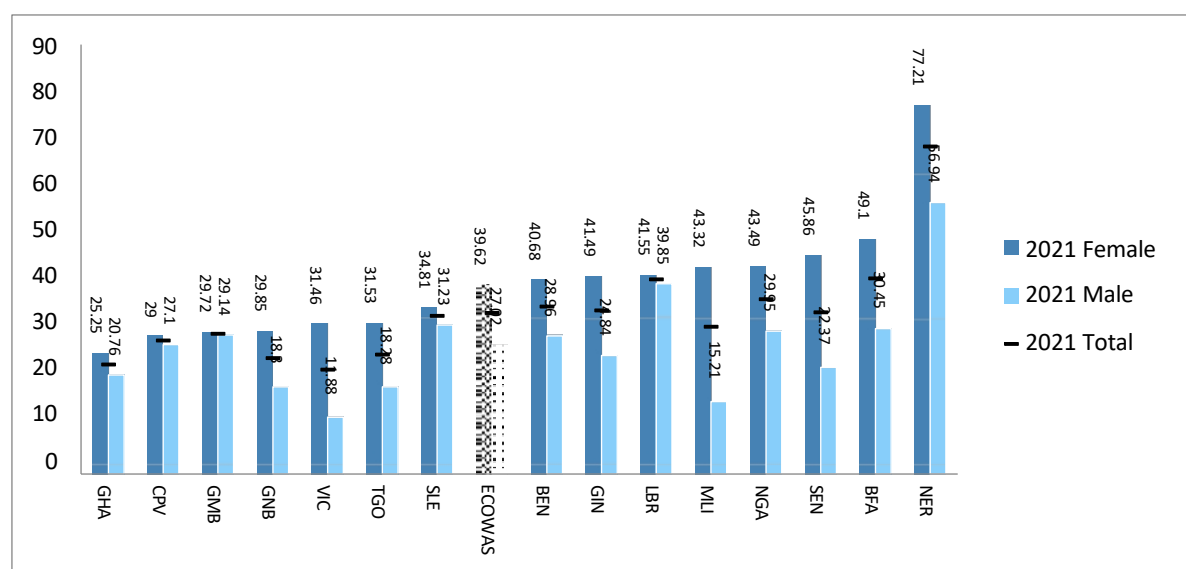
### 1.1.3.2. Proportion of young people neither in employment, education or training

**Definition of the indicator:** The proportion of young people who are neither in education, employment nor training (also known as the "NEET rate") indicates the number of young people who are neither in education, employment nor training as a percentage of the total population of young people aged 15 to 24. The indicator is calculated by subtracting from the total population of young people aged 15 to 24 the number of young people in the same age bracket who are in employment or not in employment but in education or training, then dividing the result by the total population of young people in that age bracket and multiplying by 100.

**Source of definition:** International Labour Organisation Statistics Institute (ILOSTAT).

**In general, young women are more likely to be disengaged, socially excluded, or failing to acquire skills or experience in the labour market.** On average, 1 in 3 young people in the 15-24 age group (33.74%) were unemployed and not in education or training across the region. Moreover, 39.62% of young people in this situation were women, who were therefore more affected than men (27.02%). The situation in the region is much less favourable when compared with the situation in Africa as a whole, where the NEET rate is estimated at 20.8%, with a gender gap of 10 percentage points (25.9% for women and 15.8 % for men) and sub-Saharan Africa (20% NEET) (ILO, 2020).

**Figure 1.26:** Proportion of young people not in employment, education or training, ECOWAS 2021

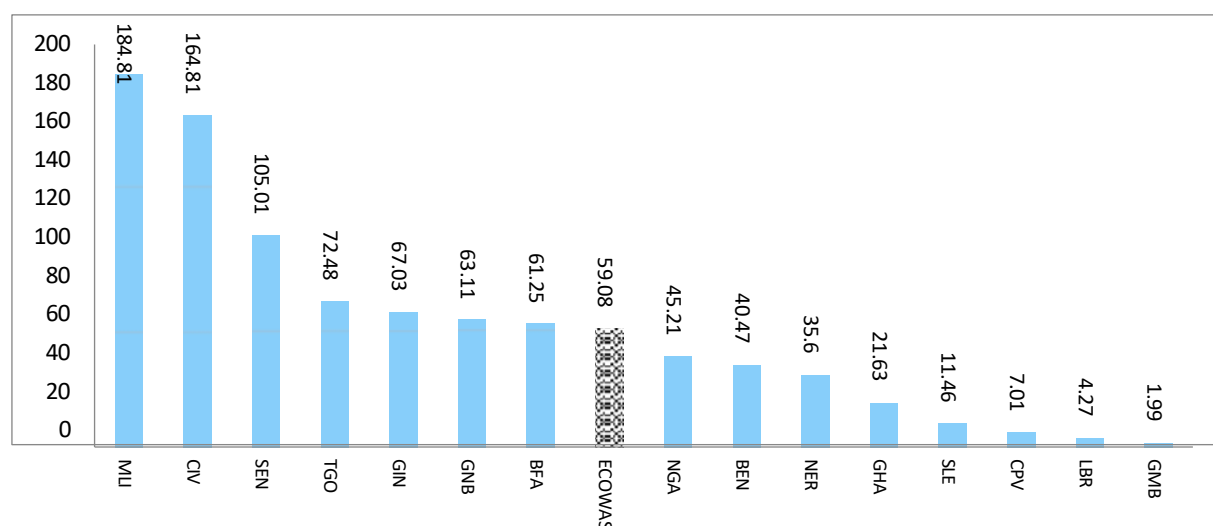


Source :

The trend is similar across all Member States, although the proportions and levels of gender differences vary considerably. NEET rates are highest in Niger (68.66%), Burkina-Faso (41%), Liberia (40.78%) and Nigeria (36.65

%). Between 40% and 49% of young women and between 15% and 40% of young men were NEETs in Benin, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Burkina-Faso (Figure 1.26), while 77.21% and 56.94% respectively were NEETs in Niger. There has also been an increase in the NEET rate over the period from 2017 to 2021, reaching almost 18 percentage points in Benin, 10 percentage points in Guinea and Nigeria and 2.3 percentage points in Mali. In contrast, rates fell by 13 percentage points in Côte d'Ivoire, 4.56 percentage points in Gambia, 3.41 percentage points in Cabo-Verde and 1.62 percentage points in Senegal over the same period.

**Graph 1.27:** Gender gap, NEET rate, ECOWAS 2021



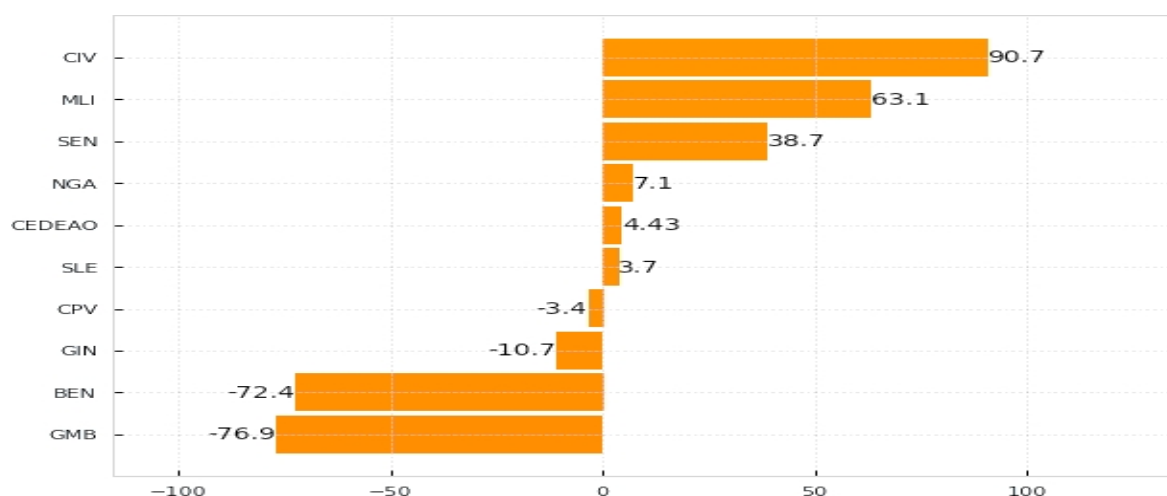
Source :

***Furthermore, the disparities between women and men in terms of inactivity are still very pronounced in the region, and no Member State has yet managed to close the gap to parity.***

However, some Member States are close to achieving parity, notably Gambia, Liberia and Cabo-Verde, where at least 90% of the gaps have been closed. Less than 50% of the gaps have been closed in Burkina-Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea and Togo, while the residual gap exceeds 100% in Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali (graph 1.27). In addition, there is an upsurge in gaps over the 2017-2021 period in some countries, particularly Gambia, Benin, Guinea and Cabo-Verde, while in others the gap is expected to widen.

the situation has improved in Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Senegal, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire (Figure 1.28).

**Graph 30.28:** *Change in gender gaps, NEET rate, 2017 to 2021*



Source :

#### **1.1.4. Representation in the teaching profession**

As the main provider of education, teachers are the most important factor at school level influencing the quality of student learning (Chetty et al., 2014). Therefore, ensuring quality learning for every learner requires teachers to have the required pedagogical skills and academic qualifications. Gender equality in teacher participation is also important to ensure inclusive and equitable education (UNESCO, 2023). Female teachers are likely to shape the school environment, combat gender bias in education and therefore influence the educational experience of pupils, especially girls (Bentaouet Kattan et al., 2023).

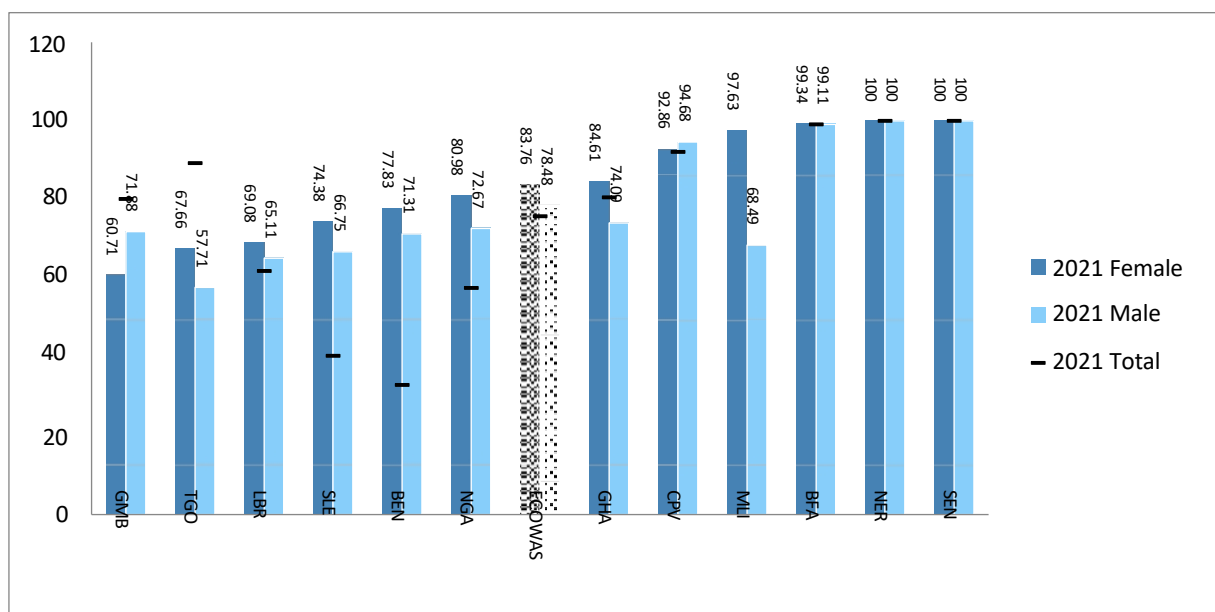
##### **1.1.4.1. Proportion of qualified teachers in secondary education (1<sup>st</sup> cycle and 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle).**

*Definition of the indicator:* The proportion of qualified teachers at a given level of education is the percentage of teachers at that level of education who have received at least the minimum organised initial and in-service teacher education required to teach at the relevant level in a country, during a given academic year. It is calculated by dividing the number of teachers at a given level of education, in a given school year, who have received at least the minimum organised initial and in-service teacher training required to teach at the relevant level in a country.

It is calculated by dividing the number of teachers at a given level of education in a given academic year who are trained by the total number of teachers at that level of education in that academic year.

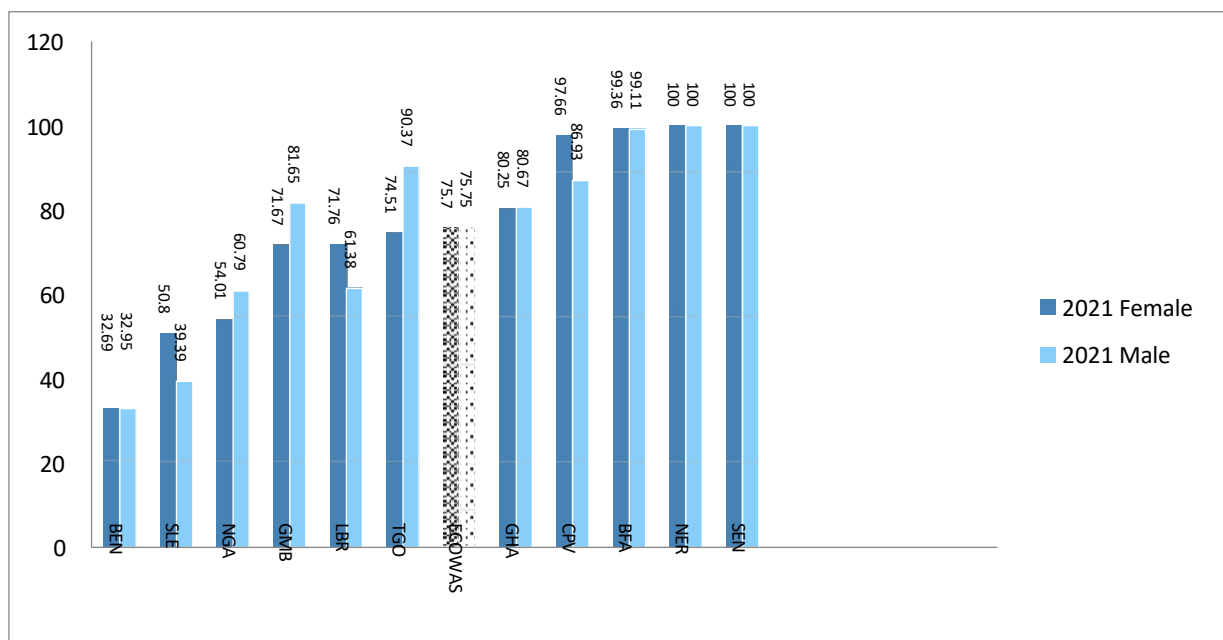
Source of definition: UNESCO Institute for Statistics

**Figure 1.29:** Proportion of qualified teachers in lower secondary education, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

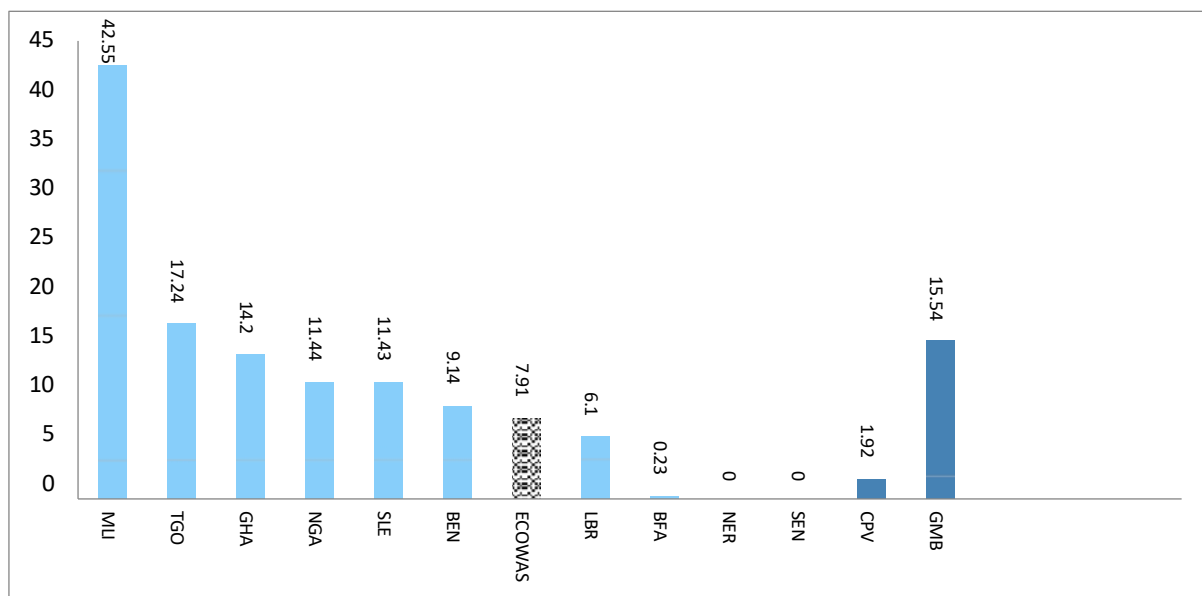
**Graph 1.30:** Proportion of qualified teachers in upper secondary education, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

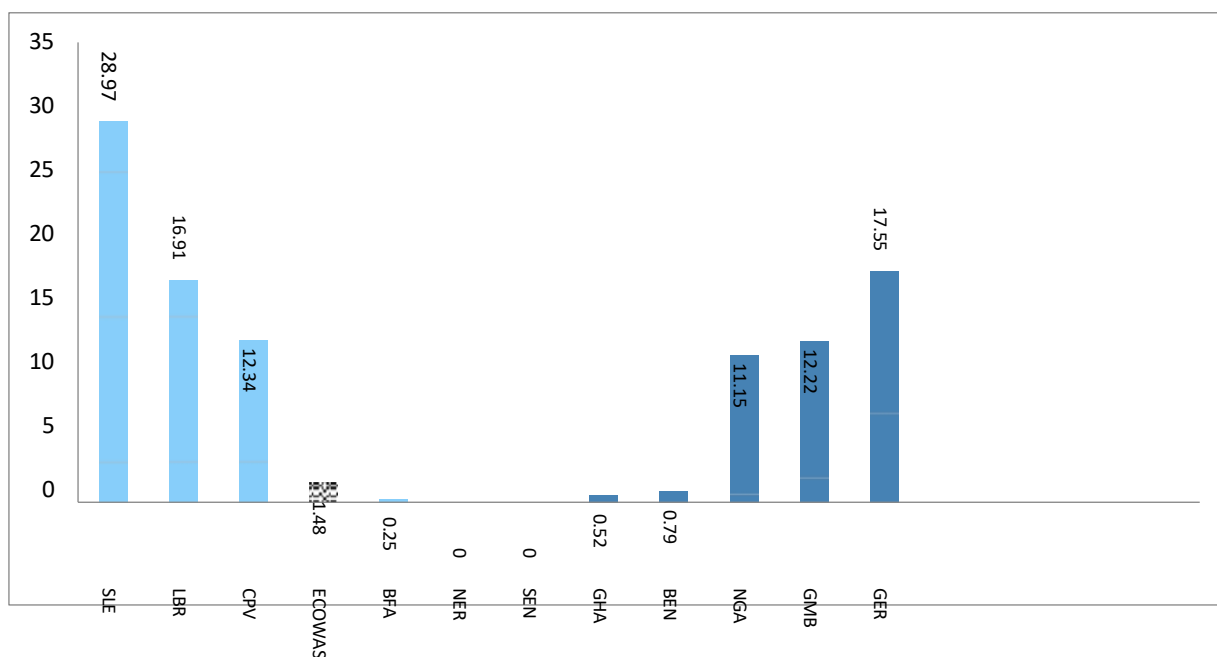
***Teacher training, particularly at secondary level, appears to be generally gender-sensitive.*** Regionally, 76% of teachers in both lower and upper secondary education have the minimum qualifications required. The proportion of qualified teachers was the same for women and men at upper secondary level (75.7%), while it was higher for women (83.76%) than for men (78.48%) at lower secondary level.

**Figure 1.31:** Gender gap, qualifications of <sup>lower</sup>secondary teachers



Source :

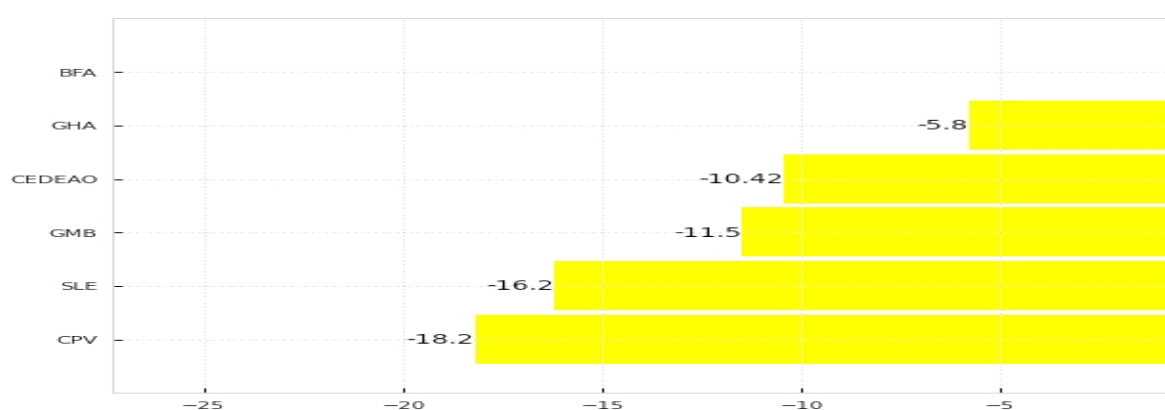
**Figure 1.32:** Gender gap, qualifications of teachers in <sup>upper</sup>secondary education



Source :

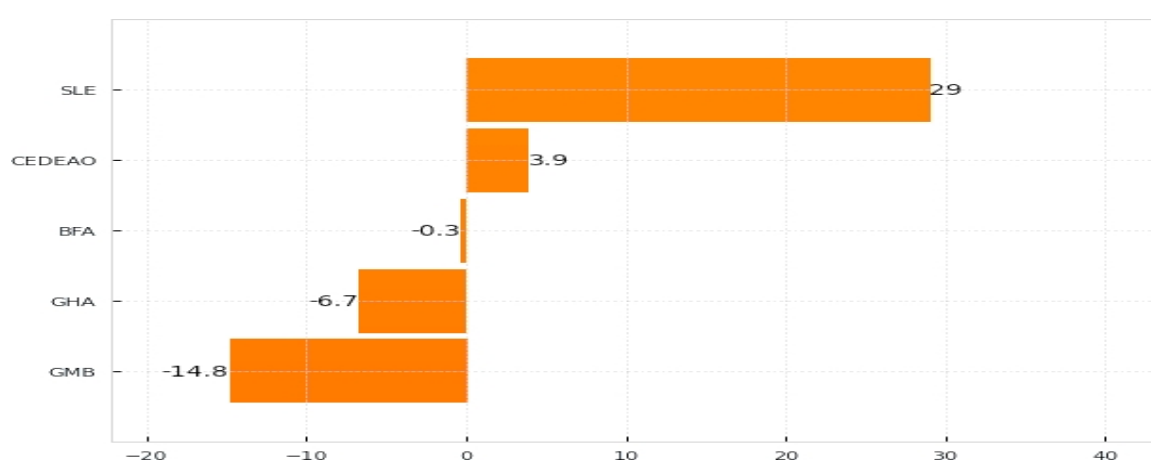
***Progress in terms of parity in the qualification of secondary school teachers has been very significant throughout the region, and most Member States have managed to close the gender gap.*** The gender gap in terms of qualifications was in favour of female teachers at lower secondary level in Mali (42.55%), Togo (17.24%), Ghana (14.2%), Nigeria (11.44%), Sierra Leone (11.43%) and Benin (9.14%), Liberia (6.1%) and Burkina-Faso (0.23%) and for the second cycle, in Sierra Leone (28.97%), Liberia (16.91%), Cabo-Verde (12.34%) and Burkina-Faso (0.25%), while perfect parity is observed in the case of Niger and Senegal (graphs 1.31 and 1.32). However, this progress has not been sustained for all Member States, some of which have seen an increase in the level of gaps in 2021 compared with 2017 (Graphs 1.33 and 1.34).

***Figure 31.33: Change in gender gaps, percentage of qualified teachers in lower secondary education, 2017 to 2021***



Source :

***Figure 32.34: Trends in gender gaps, percentage of qualified teachers in upper secondary education, 2017 to 2021***



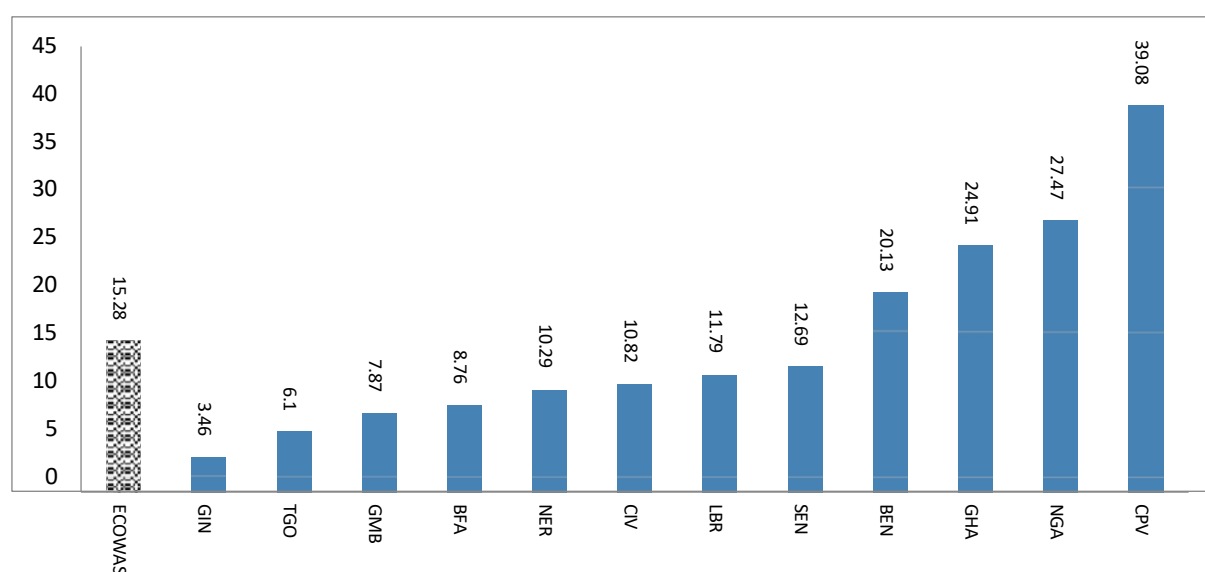
Source :

#### 1.1.4.2. Percentage of female teachers in higher education

*Definition of the indicator:* The percentage of female teachers at a given level of education is the number of female teachers at the given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the total number of teachers (male and female) at the level of education in a given school year. It is calculated by dividing the total number of female teachers at a given level of education in a given school year by the total number of teachers (male and female) at the same level in that school year and multiplying the result by 100.

*Source of definition:* UNESCO Institute for Statistics

**Graph 1.35:** Proportion of female teachers in tertiary education, ECOWAS 2021



*Source :*

**Gender inequalities exist in the recruitment of teachers at tertiary level, with women in the minority in the teaching force in all Member States.** Generally speaking, the teaching profession at tertiary level is characterised by very low female participation. At regional level, women account for an average of only 15% of the teaching workforce. The situation is even less favourable in two-thirds of the Member States for which data is available, where the proportion of female teachers was between 3% and 13% (Figure 1.35). The proportion of female teachers was highest in Cabo-Verde (39.08%), while it was between 20% and 28% in Benin, Ghana and Nigeria. For some states, the proportion of female teachers fell

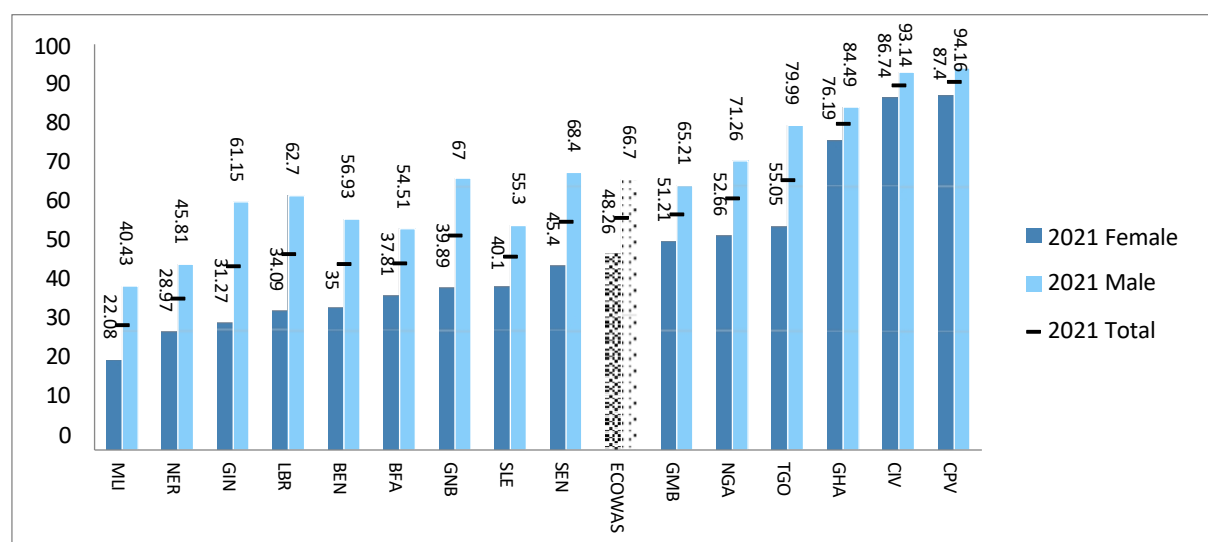
over the period from 2017 to 2021, most markedly in Benin (7 percentage points) and Senegal (4 percentage points).

### 1.1.5. Adult literacy

*Definition of the indicator:* The adult literacy rate is defined as the percentage of the population aged 15 and over who can both read and write and understand a short simple text about their daily lives. In general, "literate" people are defined as those who can not only read and write, but also count, i.e. make simple arithmetic calculations. It is calculated by dividing the number of people aged 15 and over who can read and write by the total number in the age group, and multiplying the result by 100.

*Source of definition:* UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

**Graph 1.36:** Adult literacy rate (15 years and over), ECOWAS 2021

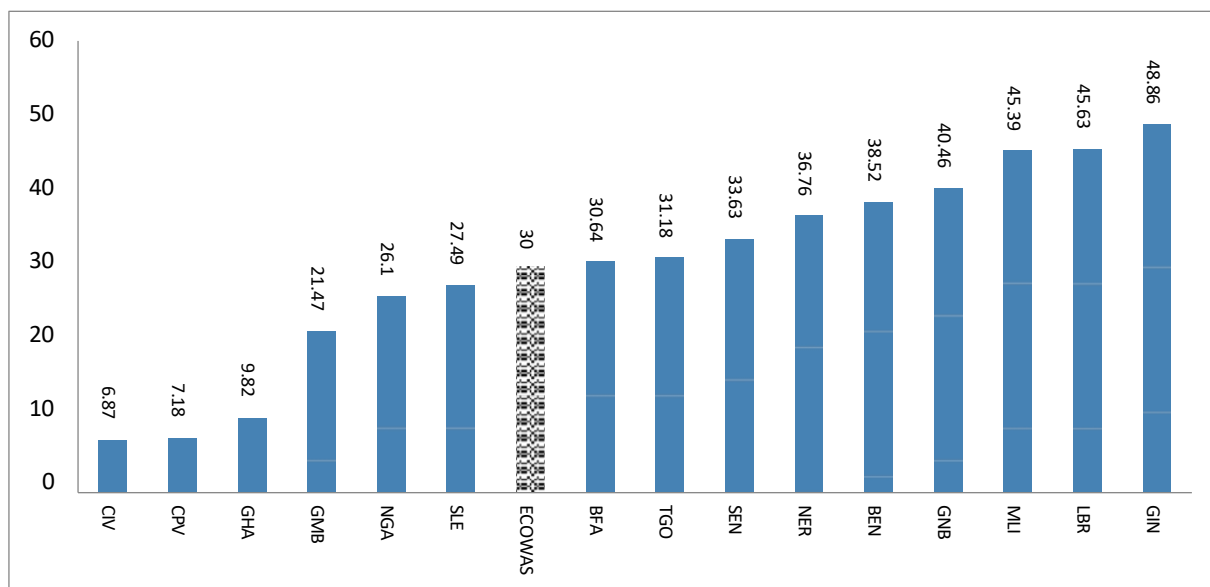


*Source :*

**Progress in literacy is also being made in the region. However, progress is slow, gender disparities are still pronounced in several Member States, and the majority of illiterate adults are still women.** At regional level, the adult literacy rate rose significantly between 2017 and 2021, from 47.28% to 57.21%. This increase was effective in all Member States, with the exception of Mali, where the literacy rate fell by around 7% over the period (from 33% in 2017 to 30.76% in 2021). Literacy levels have reached high proportions in the majority of the states concerned, and have more than doubled in Côte d'Ivoire, rising from 43.91% to 89.89%. Despite the observed increase, the rates

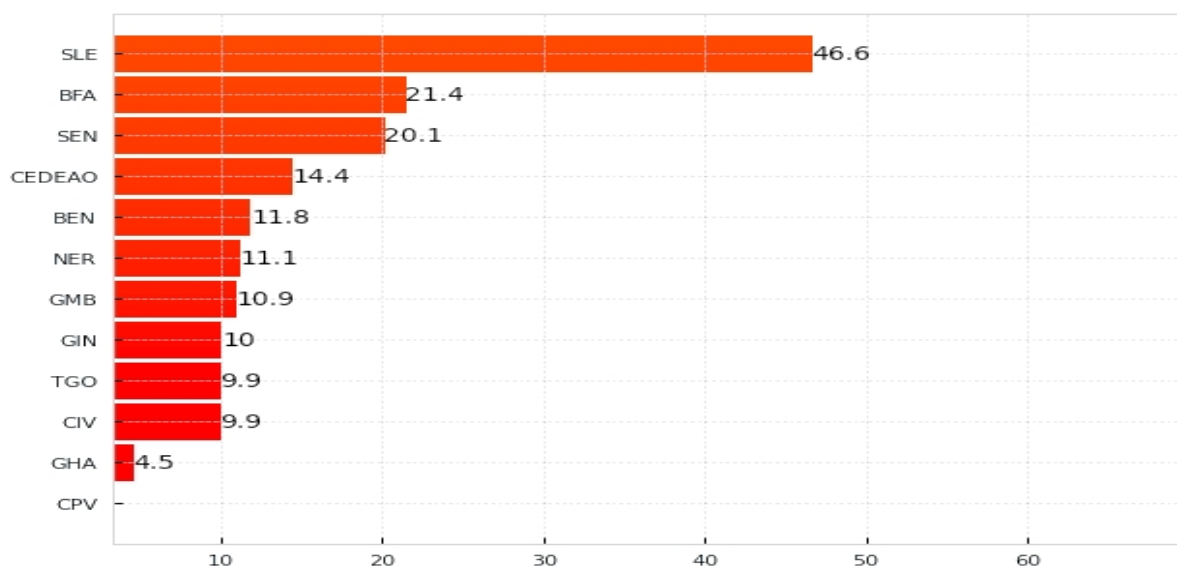
Literacy rates for men are well above those for women in all Member States. The gap in literacy rates between women and men was on average 18% at regional level (48.26% and 66.7% respectively). At Member State level, the gap ranged from 6.4% in Côte d'Ivoire (86.74% for women and 93.14% for men) to almost 30% in Guinea (31.27% for women and 61.15% for men) (Figure 1.31).

**Graph 1.37: Gender gap in literacy, ECOWAS 2021**



Source :

**Graph 33.38: Change in gender gaps, adult literacy rate, 2017 to 2021**



Source:

*No Member State has achieved parity in literacy, which implies that more needs to be done in this respect to achieve it.* The consistency of the progress made between 2017 and 2021 has made it possible to close 70% of the gaps in adult literacy parity across the region. At least 90% of the gaps have been closed in Côte d'Ivoire, Cabo-Verde and Ghana, at least 70% in The Gambia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, and for the remaining Member States, the parity gap ranges from 30% in Burkina-Faso to around 49% in Guinea (Figure 1.37).

## ***1.2. Leadership and decision-making***

The active participation of women, on an equal footing with men, at all levels of decision-making and political engagement is essential to achieving equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy, and to integrating their perspectives and experiences into decision-making processes (Mlanbo & Kapingura, 2018). Its importance is all the more justified by the will shown at global level and set out in a series of commitments. Among others, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action call for the adoption of measures to promote women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making. At continental level, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights also includes provisions to promote greater and more effective representation and participation of women at all levels of decision-making.

In the specific case of the ECOWAS region, several regional legal frameworks have been adopted to promote women's political participation and representation. Among others, Article 11.1 of the Supplementary Act on Equal Rights for Women and Men for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015, commits member states to taking measures to eliminate discrimination and ensure equal representation in decision-making positions in both the public and private spheres. The 2003 African Charter on the Rights of Women recognises equality between women and men at all levels of the development and implementation of development policies and programmes. The 2001 ECOWAS Additional Protocol also emphasises the equal participation of women in electoral processes, the development and implementation of government policies, the holding of public office and the exercise of public functions at all levels of governance.

These commitments have given rise to various actions at Member State level with the aim of promoting women's right to equal participation. However, despite the recognition due to it, this objective still seems difficult to achieve. Women continue to be under-represented in decision-making, not only in politics but also in business and in communities (Women Deliver, 2018). Discriminatory laws and practices, gender inequalities in the labour market, social prejudices about women's ability to lead and difficulties in reconciling private and professional life are just some of the reasons why women are under-represented.

The 'Leadership and decision-making' domain examines the power wielded by women in economic and political decision-making. Its indicators assess the extent to which women are represented in decision-making and management positions in business, government and political institutions (table 2).

**Table 4:** *Measurement framework for the "Leadership and decision-making" domain*

Sub-domains	Concepts measured	Indicators	Source of data
Managerial leadership	Representativeness in management within companies	Proportion of women in management positions	
		Proportion of men in management positions	
		Proportion of women in middle and senior management positions	
Political leadership	Representation in government and political institutions	Proportion of women in ministerial positions	
		Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments	

### **1.2.1. Managerial leadership**

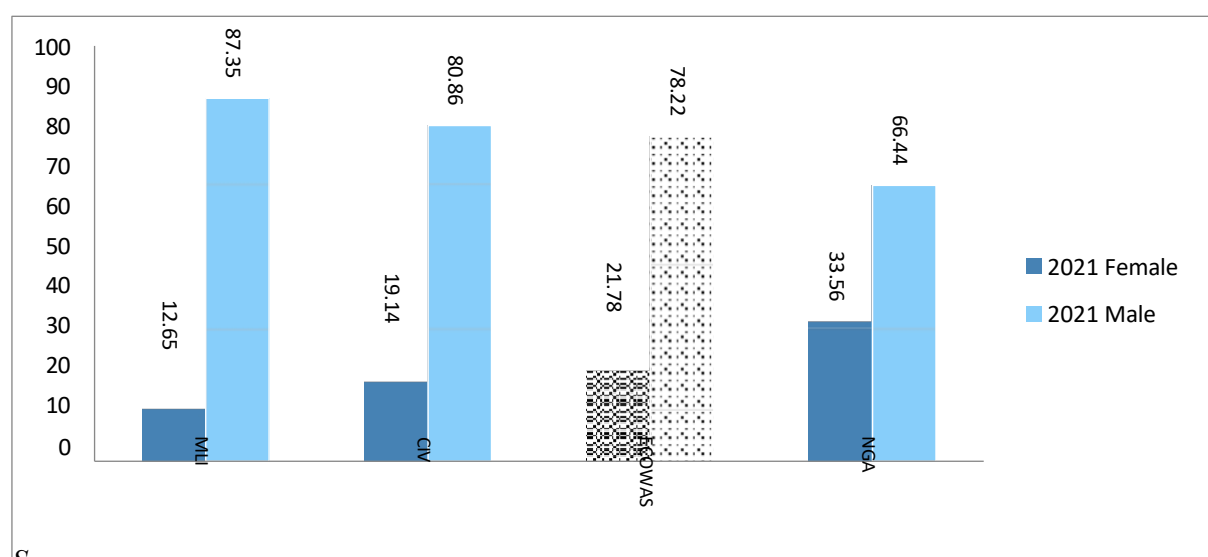
Beyond the benefits for women themselves, gender equality and workforce diversity within companies is seen as an important driver of productivity, growth and innovation (ILO, 2019). Despite the fact that women's entry into the labour market has progressed, most of them continue to face professional discrimination in the workplace. They remain under-represented in strategic positions within companies, especially when it comes to senior hierarchical positions.

hierarchical positions. The indicator of the proportion of women in managerial positions is used to assess the participation of women in company management teams and structures.

*Definition of the indicator:* The proportion of women in management positions corresponds to the number of women managers as a percentage of total managers. Two measures are used jointly for this indicator, namely the proportion of women in managerial positions and the proportion of women in senior and middle management (excluding junior managers).

*Source of definition:* ILOSTAT

**Graph 2.1:** Proportion of women and men in managerial positions, ECOWAS 2021

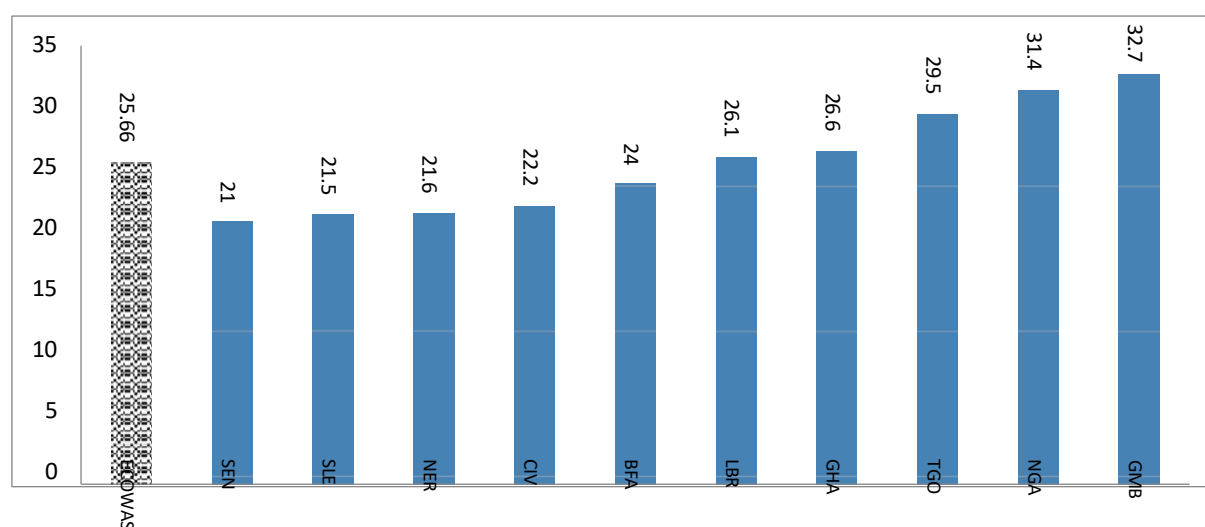


Source: -

***Despite the increase in women's level of education and participation in the labour market, very few of them manage to break through the glass ceiling that limits their access to senior positions of responsibility within companies. Even so, broader data is needed to provide a better picture of the representation of women in these positions.*** Evaluation of women's participation in management positions in the ECOWAS region is somewhat limited due to the unavailability of data on the measures concerned. However, for the Member States for which data is available, it is generally noted that women are largely in the minority in management positions within companies. They accounted for only 12.65% of management positions in Mali, 19.14% in Côte d'Ivoire and 33.56% in Nigeria (graph 2.1.) and occupy

between 21% and around 33% of middle and senior management positions (graph 2.2).

**Figure 2.2:** *Proportion of women in middle and senior management, ECOWAS 2021*



Source :

### **1.2.2. Political leadership**

Women's political participation is a human right, a driver of inclusive growth and development, and an essential condition for democratic governance (OECD MENA, 2018). Despite the growth in the number of women active at high levels of political power, significant inequalities continue to be observed, particularly with regard to their equitable participation and leadership in political and public life. Despite actions at global level calling for an end to these disparities, and the qualitative and quantitative progress made in increasing women's participation and representation, women continue to be sidelined from the governance structures that define legislative and political priorities. This under-representation of women is reflected in the predominance of men in ministerial positions, parliaments and various levels of political power (IDEA International, 2013). Yet it is clear that involving women in the legislative process and empowering them in senior government positions is essential for the effective consideration of women's issues and for changing gender dynamics (Ballington et al., 2011). Various factors have been identified as barriers to women's participation in political life. These include cultural norms, structural barriers, issues of mobility and safety, unpaid care work, and a lack of political participation.

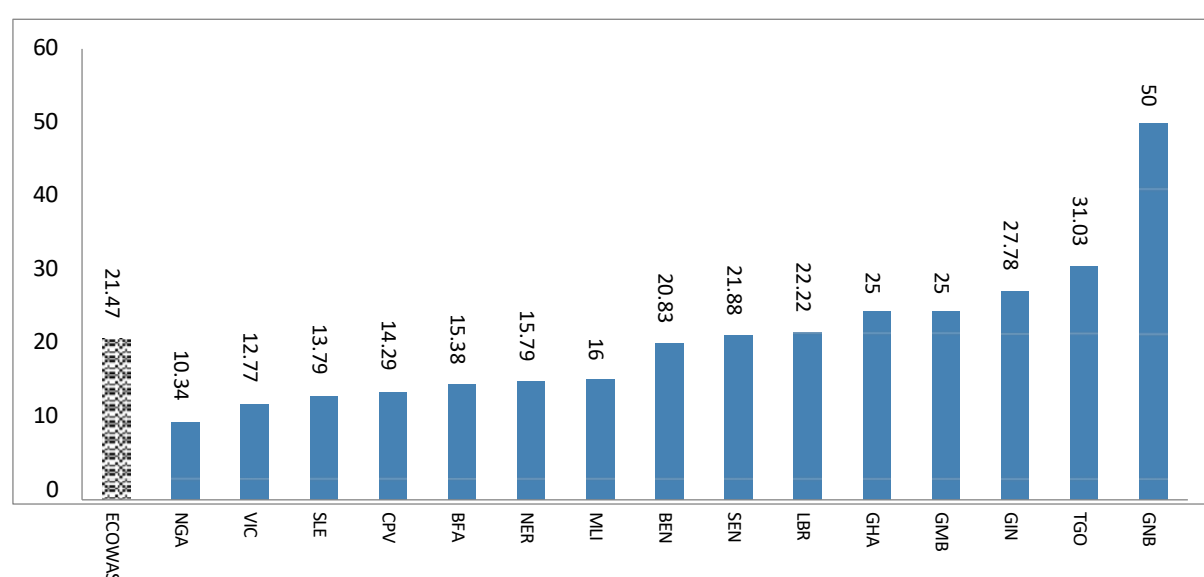
security, unpaid care work including childcare, discriminatory laws and lack of financial resources and networks as well as gendered institutions; to which gender bias and violence against women in politics are added (UN Women, 2018).

### **1.2.2.1. Proportion of women in ministerial positions**

*Definition of the indicator:* This indicator refers to the proportion of women holding ministerial or equivalent positions (including deputy prime ministers) within the government. Prime Ministers/Heads of Government are included when they hold ministerial portfolios. Vice-presidents and heads of government or public agencies are excluded.

*Source of definition:* World Bank Gender Data Portal

**Graph 2.3:** *Proportion of women in ministerial positions, ECOWAS 2021*



*Source :*

***The participation of women in ministerial positions has improved, but not on an equal footing with men.*** On average, women accounted for only 21.47% of ministerial posts in the region in 2021. This corresponds to an increase of 4.34 percentage points compared to the proportion in 2017. However, there are marked differences between countries. While Guinea-Bissau achieved equal participation (50%) in ministerial positions in 2021, the proportion of ministerial positions managed by women was lower in eight (08) Member States, compared with the regional average (Graph 2.3). Worse still, the level of representation of women in these positions in 2021 was lower than in 2017 in a third of Member States.

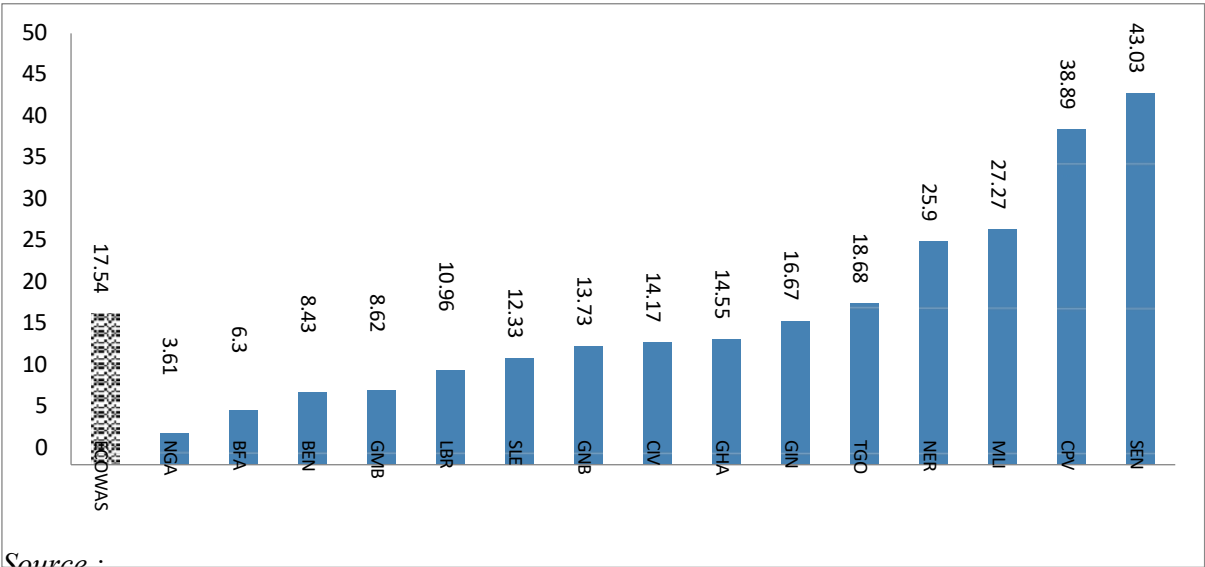
These include Niger (0.41 percentage points), Nigeria (1.66 percentage points), Côte d'Ivoire (8.13 percentage points), Cabo-Verde (10.71 percentage points) and Mali (8.2 percentage points).

**1.2.2.2. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments**

*Definition of the indicator:* The proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments is the number of seats held by women in the single or lower houses of national parliaments, expressed as a percentage of all seats held. It is obtained by dividing the number of seats held by women by the total number of seats.

*Source of definition:* World Bank Gender Data Portal

**Graph 2.4:** Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments ECOWAS 2021



Source :

**Women's participation in legislative bodies is also not on an equal footing with men.** At ECOWAS level, only 17.54% of national parliamentarians were women in 2021, an increase of 2.59% compared to 2017. The proportion was even lower in two-thirds of the Member States, and none of the countries had equal representation (Figure 2.4). The highest proportion of women MPs was in Senegal (43.03%), followed by Cabo-Verde (38.89%), Mali (27.27%) and Niger (25.9%). There have also been significant developments in the ECOWAS Member States. Between 2017 and 2021, ten (10) of the fifteen Member States saw an improvement in women's participation in parliament, up to

15.28 percentage points in Cabo-Verde, 18.43 percentage points in Mali and 8.94 percentage points in Niger. On the other hand, the situation deteriorated or stagnated in other countries such as Guinea (-5.26 percentage points), Burkina (4.72 percentage points), Nigeria and Gambia (around 2 percentage points).

### ***1.3. Gender-based violence***

Gender-based violence is a violation of human rights and a persistent global problem that transcends all socio-economic categories and groups. At ECOWAS level, important measures have been adopted by Member States to combat violence against women in all its forms, protect women's rights and eliminate all discrimination against them. These measures are part of the implementation of the commitments made by the States, in particular those relating to the "declaration on zero tolerance of sexual and gender-based violence and the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls at all times and in all circumstances in the ECOWAS region". They include the adoption at regional and national levels of gender strategies and strategies to combat gender-based violence, as well as the adoption of laws to criminalise the perpetrators of abuse. Despite this commitment, gender-based violence remains a reality in the region. The indicators in the 'Gender-based violence' domain (table 3) provide an overview of the extent of the different types of violence suffered by women and the extent to which these acts of violence are reported.

***Table 3: Measurement framework for the "Gender-based violence" domain***

<i>Sub-areas</i>	<i>Concepts measured</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of data</i>
Prevalence	Extent of violence	Proportion of women who have been victims of physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months (% of women aged 15 and over who have ever been in a relationship)	
		Proportion of women who have experienced violence by an intimate partner (% of women aged 15 and over who have ever been in a relationship)	
		Prevalence of female genital mutilation (%)	

Severity	Consequences of acts of violence	Proportion of women who have suffered injuries as a result of domestic violence (% of never-married women aged 15-49 who have experienced physical or sexual violence)	
		Proportion of women who have never sought help to stop the violence and who have never told anyone about it (% of never-married women aged 15 to 49 who have ever been physically or sexually abused)	
Reporting	Reporting acts of violence	Proportion of women who have never sought help to stop the violence, but who have told someone (% of women aged 15-49, married in their lifetime, who have already experienced physical or sexual violence)	
		Proportion of women who have sought help to stop physical or sexual violence (% of women aged 15-49 who have been married in their lifetime)	

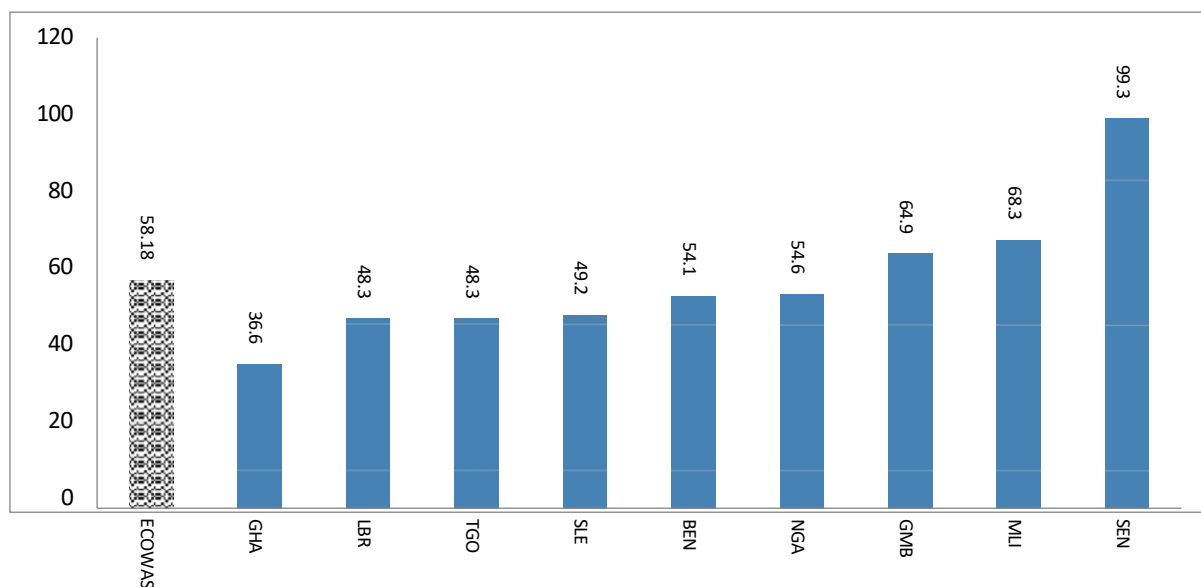
### **1.3.1. Prevalence**

#### **1.3.1.1. Proportion of women victims of physical and/or sexual violence**

*Definition of the indicator:* The proportion of women who are victims of physical and/or sexual violence is the percentage of women aged 15 to 49 who have been in a couple and have experienced physical or sexual violence or both at the hands of a current or former intimate partner during their lifetime.

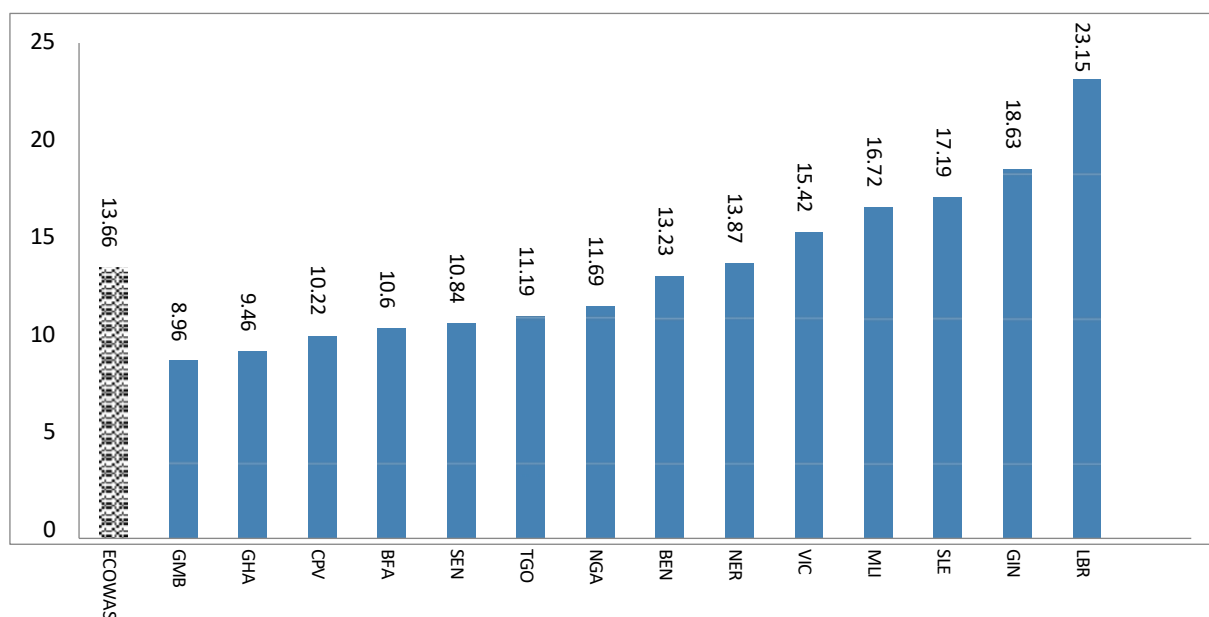
*Source of definition:* World Bank Gender Data Portal

**Figure 3.1:** Proportion of women who have ever experienced violence by an intimate partner (women aged 15 and over who have ever been in a couple), ECOWAS 2021



Source :

**Graph 3.2:** Proportion of women (aged 15 and over who have ever been in a relationship) who have been victims of physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

In the region as a whole, and for the ECOWAS Member States for which data are available, it is estimated that 58% of women aged between 15 and 49 who have been in a relationship have been subjected to sexual and/or physical violence at least once by an intimate partner during their lifetime, and almost 14% of these forms of violence occurred during the previous 12 months. At country level, the prevalence of women who have been victims of domestic violence in the course of their lives is as follows

of their lives varies from country to country (graphs 3.1 and 3.2), ranging from 36.6% in Ghana to 99% in Senegal (graph 3.2). Over the previous 12 months, Liberia had the highest prevalence of violence (Figure 3.2).

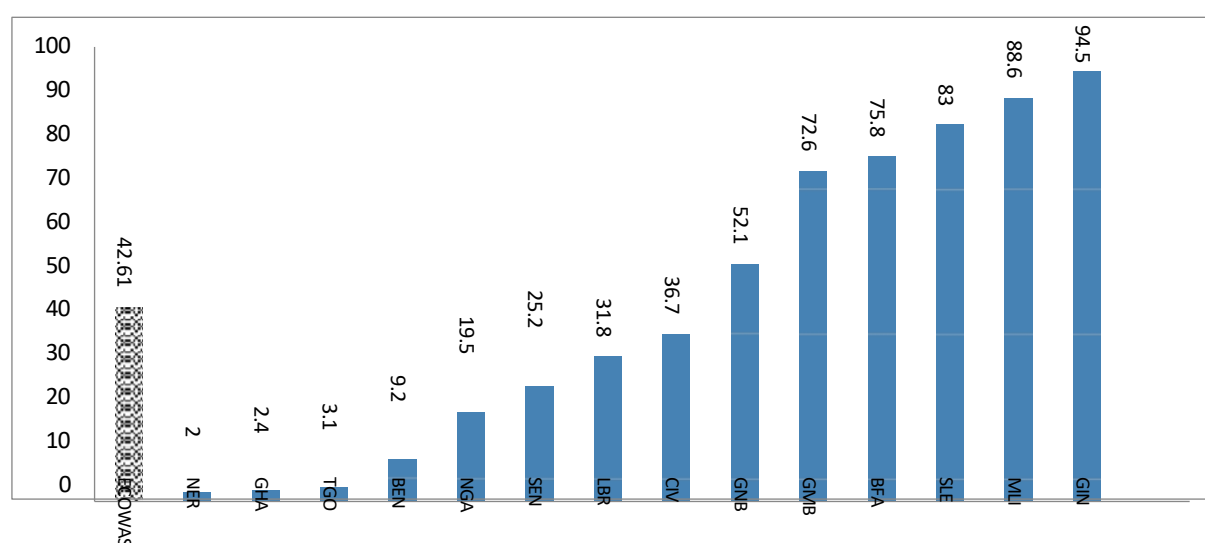
### **1.3.1.2. Prevalence of female genital mutilation**

*Definition of the indicator:* The prevalence of female genital mutilation represents the percentage of women aged 15 to 49 who have undergone partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other lesions of the female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons.

*Source of definition:* World Bank Gender Data Portal

On average, almost 43% of women aged between 15 and 49 have undergone female genital mutilation in the region. However, this regional prevalence masks huge disparities between countries. The practice of female genital mutilation is almost universal in some countries, such as Gambia, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Mali and Guinea, whereas it affects only 2% to 3% of women in Niger, Ghana and Togo (Figure 3.3).

**Figure 3.3:** Proportion of adult women (15-49) who have undergone female genital mutilation



*Source :*

### **1.3.2. Severity**

#### **- Proportion of women who suffered injuries as a result of domestic violence**

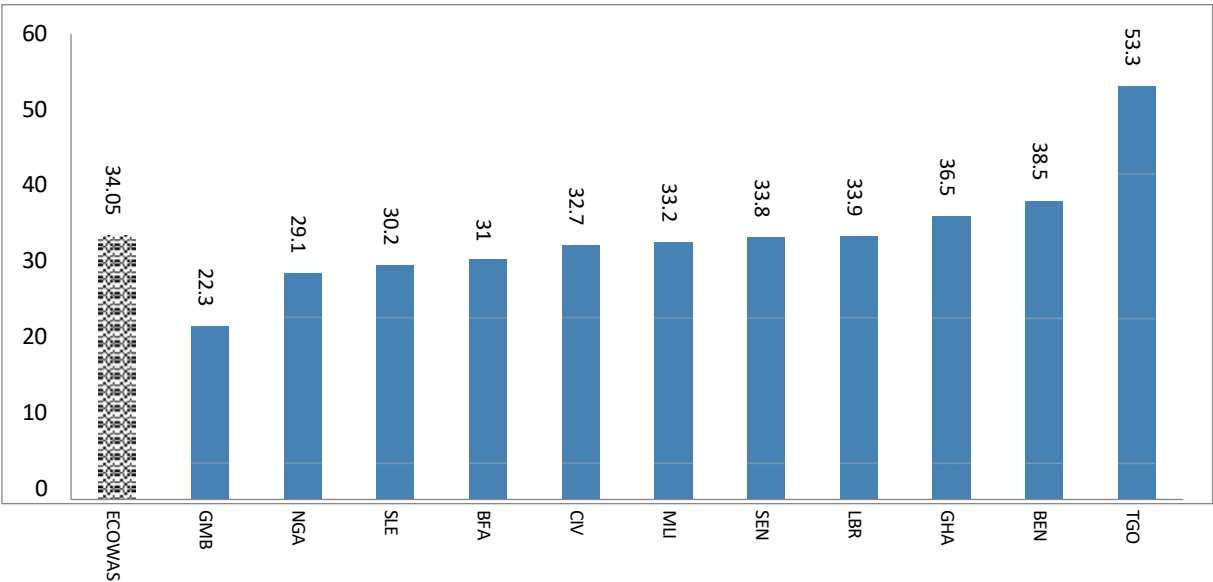
*Definition of the indicator:* Percentage of women aged 15 to 49 who have been married at least once and who have already suffered physical or sexual violence at the hands of their partner and who have

suffered one or more of the following injuries: deep wounds, broken bones, broken teeth, eye injuries, sprains, dislocations or burns, cuts, bruises or aches.

*Source of definition:* World Bank Gender Data Portal

Violence in all its forms can have serious physical, mental, sexual and reproductive consequences for victims, affecting their health and well-being with long-term repercussions. In all the countries for which information is available, 34.05% of women, or around 1 in 3 women, who are victims of intimate partner violence have suffered injuries. A similar distribution can be observed within countries, except in Togo where the proportion concerns more than half of victims (53.3%) (graph 3.4).

**Figure 3.4:** *Proportion of women (aged 15 to 49) who have suffered injuries as a result of domestic violence*



*Source :*

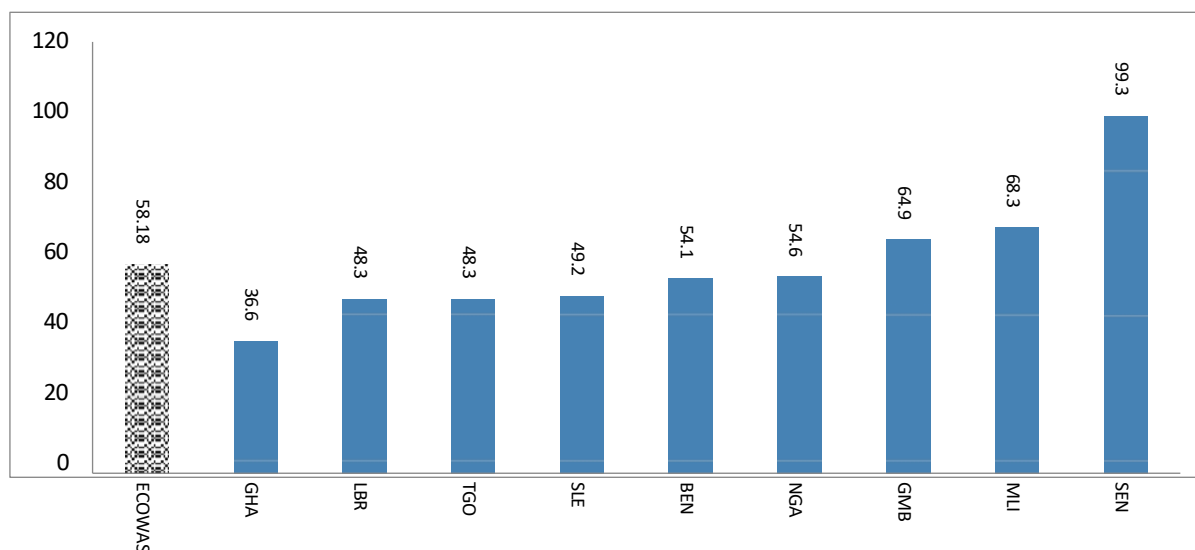
**1.3.3. Denunciation**

**1.3.3.1. Women who have never asked for help to stop the violence and who have never told anyone about it**

*Definition of the indicator:* Percentage of women aged 15 to 49, married at least once, who have ever been subjected to physical or sexual violence and who have never sought help to end the violence and who have never told anyone about it.

*Source of definition:* World Bank Gender Data Portal

**Graph 3.5:** *Proportion of women who have never asked for help to stop the violence, and who have never told anyone about it (% of women aged 15 to 49 who have been married in their lifetime)*



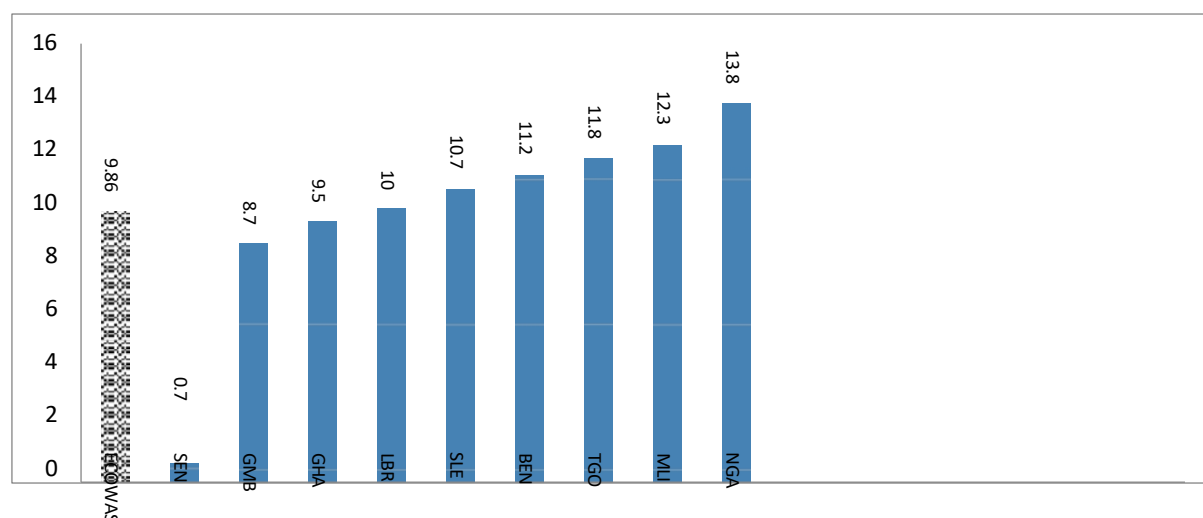
*Source :*

### ***1.3.3.2. Women who never sought help to stop the violence, but who told someone***

*Definition of the indicator:* This indicator provides information on the percentage of women aged between 15 and 49, who have been married at least once and have already experienced physical or sexual violence, who have never sought help to put an end to the violence, but who have told someone about it.

*Source of definition:* World Bank Gender Data Portal

**Graph 3.6:** Proportion of women who have never asked for help to stop the violence, and who have told someone (% of women aged 15-49 who have been married in their lifetime)



Source :

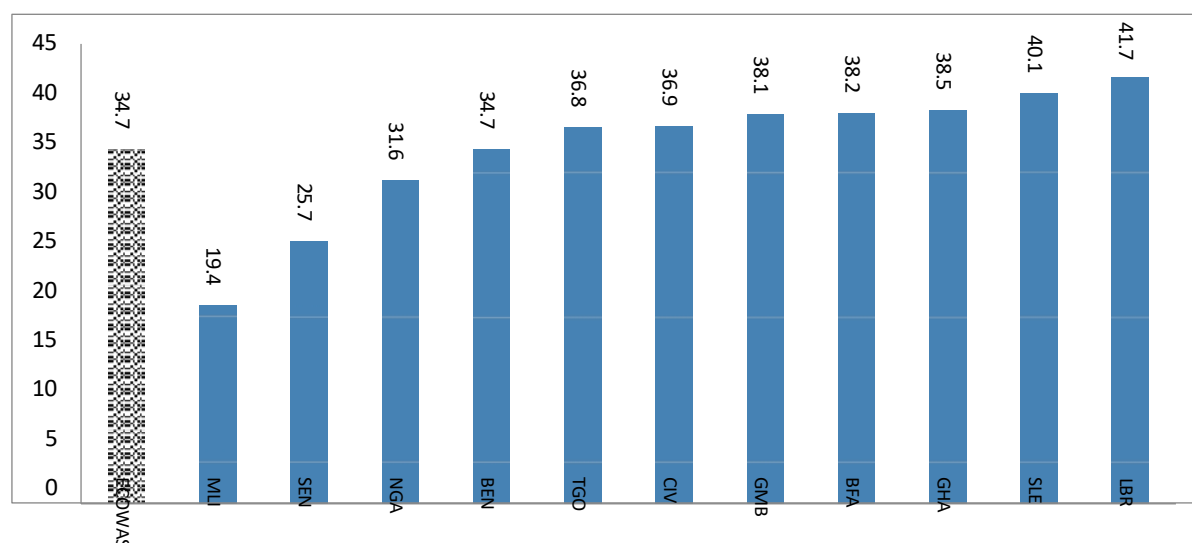
### 1.3.3.3. Proportion of women who have sought help to end physical or sexual violence

**Definition of the indicator:** The proportion of women who have sought help to end physical or sexual violence is the percentage of never-married women aged 15-49 who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence and who have sought help to end the violence.

**Source of definition:** World Bank Gender Data Portal

In general, only 35% of women who have experienced violence have sought help from a third party in one form or another (graph 3.7), 10% have not sought help but have talked about it (graph 3.6) and 58% have told someone but have not sought help. The proportion is more or less similar in most ECOWAS Member States, but there are significant differences in a few countries. For example, in Senegal, almost all (99%) of the women victims of violence had never asked for help and had never spoken about it (graph 3.7) and the proportion of those who had asked for help was at least 40% in Liberia and Sierra Leone and between 19% and 26% in Mali and Senegal.

**Figure 3.7:** Proportion of women who have sought help to stop physical or sexual violence (% of women aged 15-49 who have been married in their lifetime)



Source :

#### 1.4. Health

Measuring gender inequalities in health is an essential pillar for understanding the complex dynamics that shape individual well-being. It allows us to identify the specific disparities that persist in health experiences and outcomes between men and women. The analysis of gender inequalities in health is based here on the exploration of four sub-areas: health and HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health, child health and mortality, highlighting specific areas requiring attention in order to achieve gender equality goals. The indicators that make up these sub-domains offer a unique perspective on measuring gender inequalities in health. These indicators include condom use and knowledge of contraceptive methods, which play a crucial role in the management of reproductive health, life expectancy at birth, causes of death, under-5 mortality rate, adult mortality rate, HIV incidence and knowledge, malnutrition in children (Table 4).

**Table 4:** Measurement framework for the "Health" domain

Sub-domains	Concepts measured	Indicators	Source of data
Health and HIV		Cause of death, by non-communicable diseases, people aged 15-59, (% of the population aged 15-59)	
		Incidence of HIV, women aged 15-49, (per 1,000 uninfected people aged 15-49)	
Sexual and reproductive health		Correct and complete knowledge of HIV/AIDS, 15-49 year olds, (2 means of prevention and rejection of 3 misconceptions)	
		Condom use at last high-risk sexual intercourse sexual intercourse, adults (% aged 15-49)	
		Knowledge of a modern method of contraception (% of aged 15-49)	
Child health		Percentage of children under 5 not suffering from stunted growth	
		Under-5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	
Mortality		Adult mortality rate (per 1,000 adults)	
		Life expectancy at birth, (years)	
Marriage		Average age at first marriage (years)	
		Married for the first time before the age of 18 (% people aged 15 and over)	

#### **1.4.1. Health and HIV**

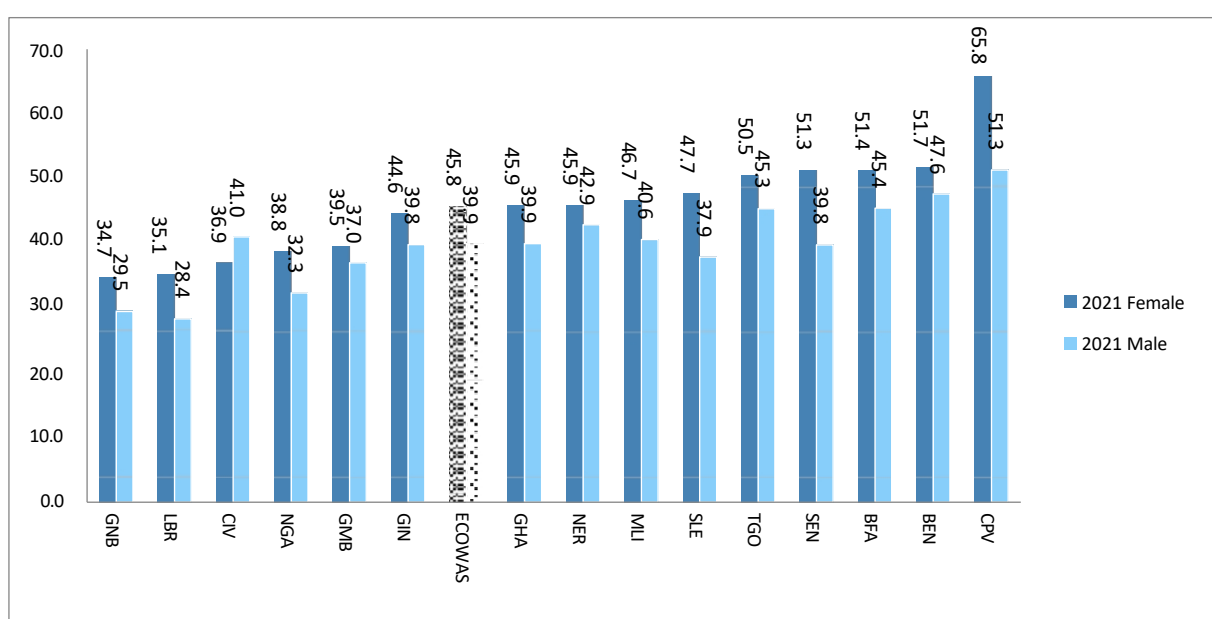
##### **1.4.1.1. Cause of death, by non-communicable disease**

*Definition of the indicator:* The cause of death corresponds to the proportion of all deaths attributable to underlying causes. Non-communicable diseases include cancer, diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, digestive diseases, skin diseases, musculoskeletal diseases and congenital anomalies.

Source of definition: World Bank Open DataBank

The issue of causes of death linked to non-communicable diseases is a major public health challenge in Africa. Non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory conditions and diabetes, have emerged as a growing concern, affecting men and women disproportionately on the continent. According to data from the World Health Organisation (WHO), these diseases are set to become the leading cause of death in Africa by 2030.

**Graph 4.34:** Causes of death from non-communicable diseases in the population aged 15-59 by gender, ECOWAS



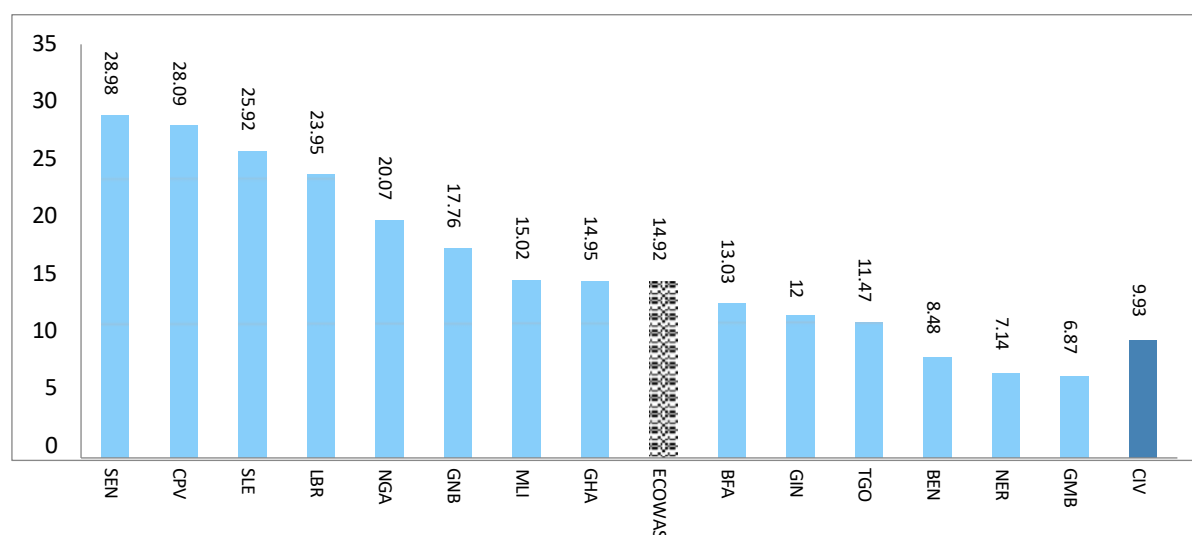
Source :

Regionally, 45.8% of deaths in women and 39.9% of deaths in men were due to a non-communicable disease, a difference of 5.9 percentage points more for women. The trend is similar across countries, with higher prevalence among women, with the exception of Côte d'Ivoire, where it was higher among men (41%) than women (37%) by 4 percentage points (graph 4.1).

The aim is obviously to reduce deaths from disease in both women and men; the gender differences in death rates partly reflect gender differences in access to quality health care specific to these diseases. Considerable progress has been made in reducing these gaps, and has

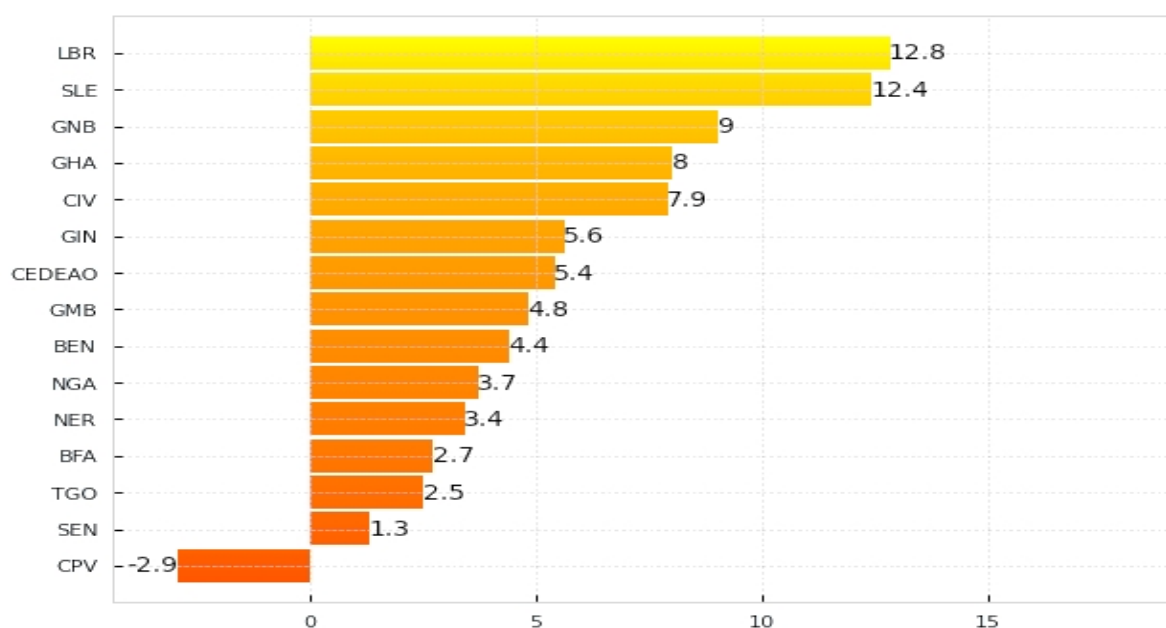
85% by 2021 at regional level (graph 4.2). At national level, these gaps have been reduced by at least 70% in four (04) countries (Senegal, Cabo-Verde, Sierra Leone and Liberia) and by at least 80% in the remaining eleven (11) countries by 2021. This progress has been sustained over the period 2017 and 2021, with a reduction in the gender gap in all countries except Cabo-Verde (graph 4.3).

**Graph 4.2:** Gender differences, causes of death from non-communicable diseases in the population aged 15-59



Source :

**Figure 4.3:** Change in gender gap, causes of death from non-communicable diseases in the population aged 15-59, 2017-2021



Source :

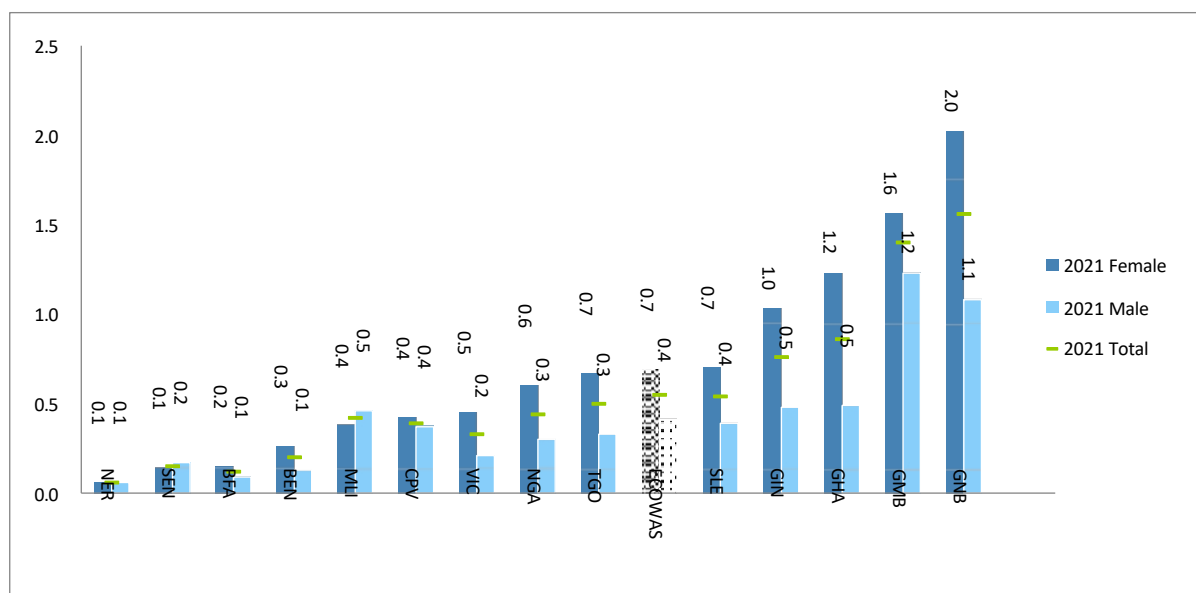
### 1.4.1.2. Incidence of HIV/AIDS

*Definition of the indicator:* This indicator refers to the number of new HIV infections among the uninfected population aged 15-49, expressed per 1,000 uninfected persons in the year preceding the period.

*Source of definition:* World Bank Open DataBank

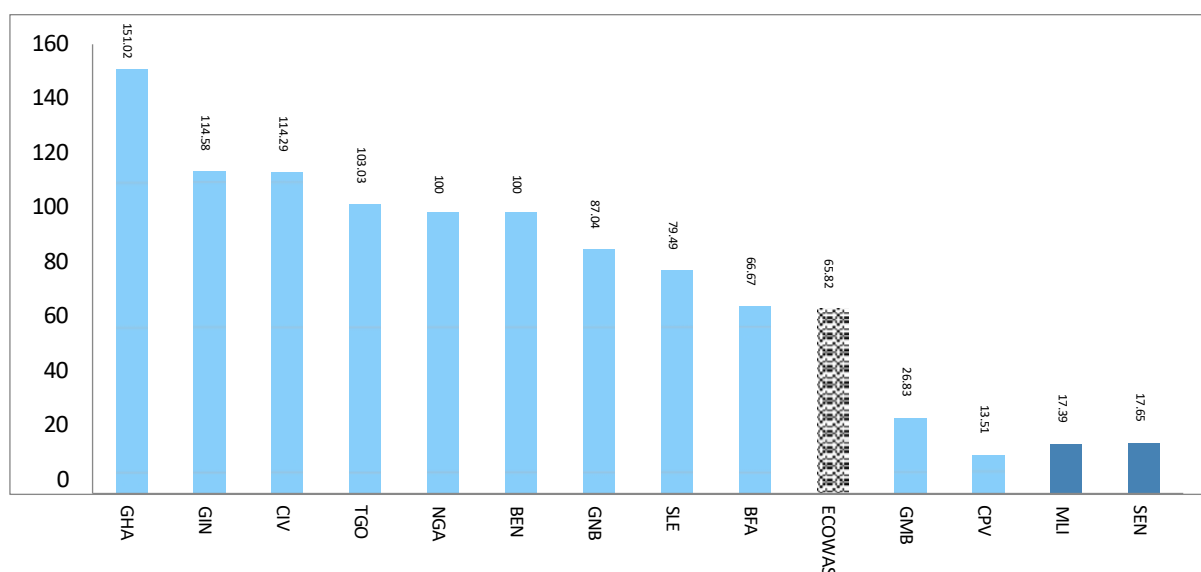
The issue of HIV/AIDS is of crucial importance in the African context in general. Alarming statistics from the African Union (2021) reveal a worrying reality in terms of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS on the continent, and in particular for women, who are proving to be the most affected. Women account for more than half of all HIV carriers in Africa, accounting for 63% of all cases and 60% of new infections among people aged 15 and over. However, contrary to the general trend on the continent, the situation is much better in the ECOWAS region. HIV/AIDS prevalence is low in the region for both men and women, although it is generally higher among women, with the exception of Mali, where prevalence is higher among men, and Niger, where it is similar for both sexes (graph 4.4). In 2021, the proportion of new HIV infections among people aged 15-49 will average 0.7% for women and 0.4% for men.

**Graph 4.4:** Incidence of HIV/AIDS in the population aged 15-49 by sex, ECOWAS 2021



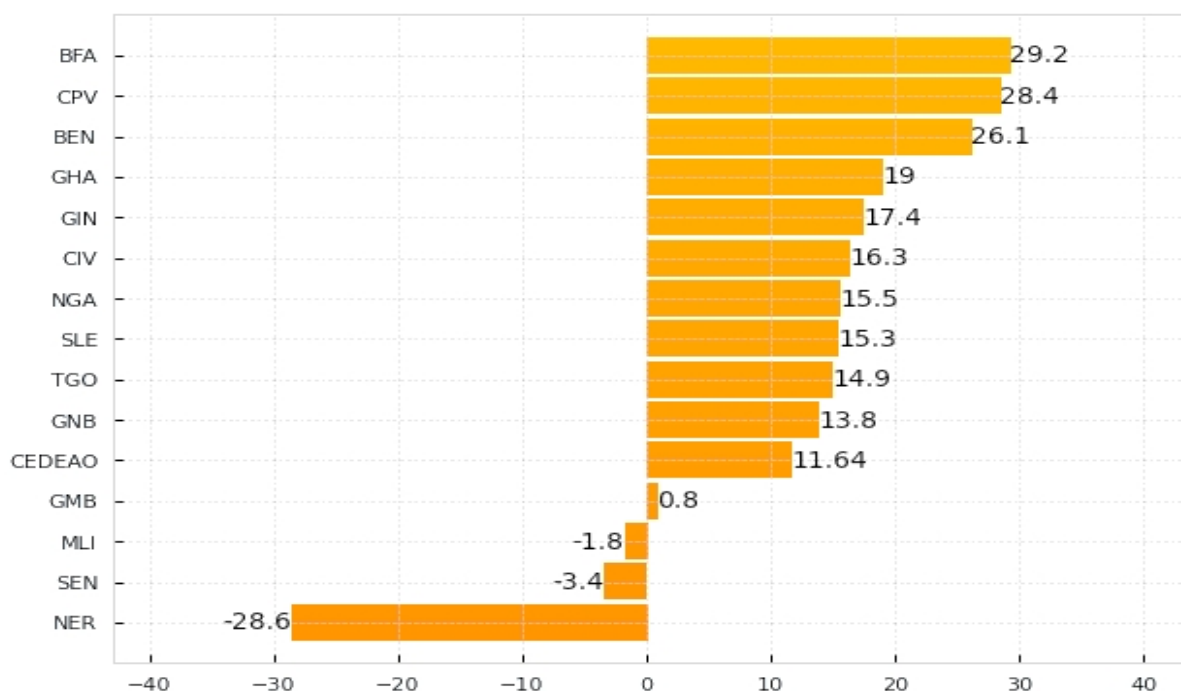
Source :

**Graph 4.5: Gender differences, incidence of HIV/AIDS**



Source :

**Graph 4.6: Change in gender gaps, HIV/AIDS incidence, 2017-2021**



Source:

At the level of ECOWAS Member States, slight disparities are observed. The incidence of HIV/AIDS varied between 0.1% in Niger and Senegal and 2% in Guinea-Bissau for women, while it varied between 0.1% in Niger, Burkina-Faso and Benin and 1.2% in Gambia for men, with the highest rates observed in Guinea, Ghana, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. Gender differences in prevalence were very pronounced

in the majority of ECOWAS member states, reaching 100% or more in Benin, Nigeria, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Ghana (Figure 4.5), although they have been considerably reduced in most countries over the period 2017 to 2021 (Figure 4.6).

### ***1.4.2. Sexual and reproductive health***

#### ***1.4.2.1. Correct and complete knowledge of HIV/AIDS***

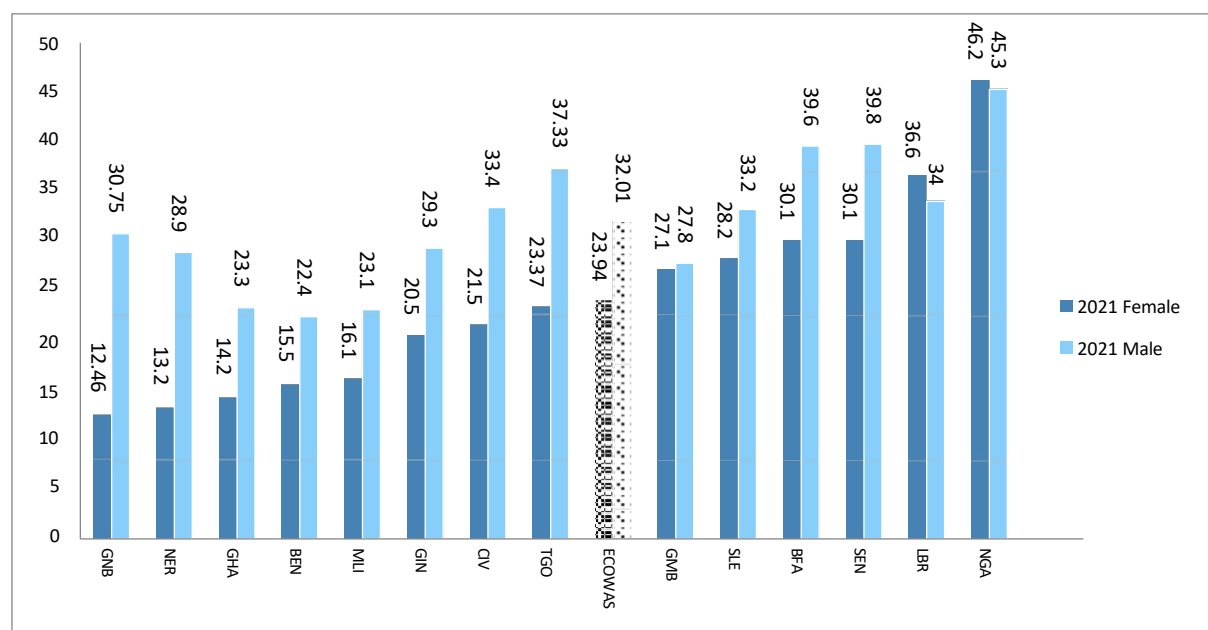
*Definition of the indicator:* Knowledge of HIV is the percentage of people (women or men) surveyed who correctly identify the two main means of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV (use of condoms and limiting sexual relations to one faithful and uninfected partner), who reject the two most common local misconceptions about HIV transmission and who know that an apparently healthy person can be infected with HIV.

*Source of definition:* World Bank Gender Data Portal.

Gender differences in HIV prevalence can, in part, be explained by differences in women's and men's knowledge of the disease. In general, there is a relatively low level of knowledge about HIV across the region, with higher proportions of men than women. Overall, the percentage of people with correct and complete knowledge of HIV was 23.9% for women and 32% for men, an average difference of 8 percentage points in favour of men. There were some variations between ECOWAS Member States. The percentage of men with correct knowledge was higher than that of women in almost all countries, except in Nigeria where the percentage of women (46.2%) was slightly higher than that of men (45.3), a difference of around 1 percentage point.

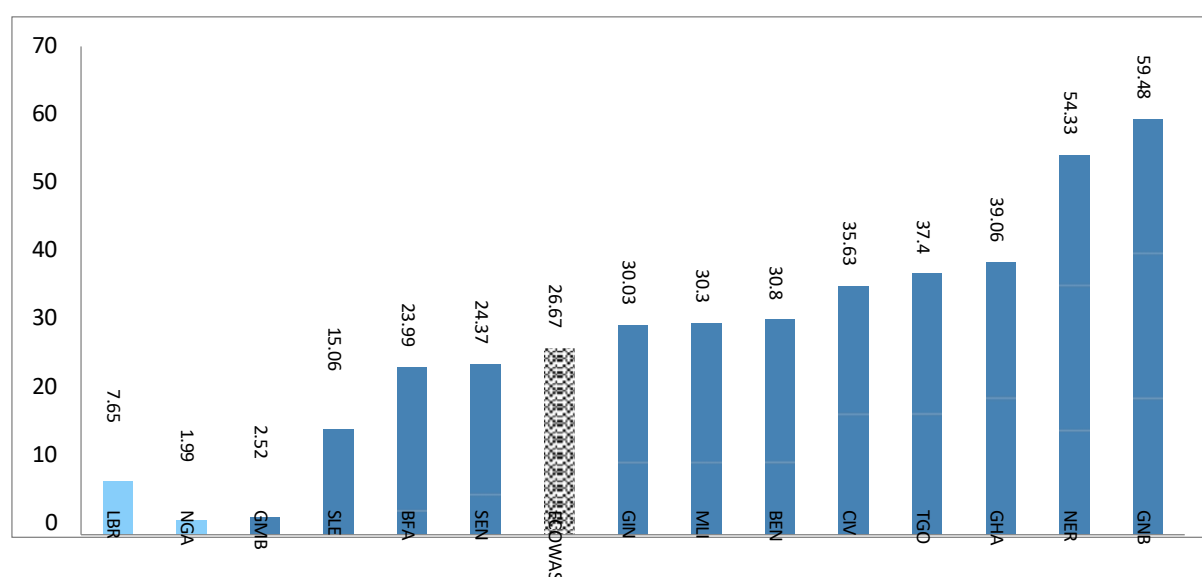
The highest levels of knowledge among women are found in Nigeria (46.2%), Senegal (30.1%), Burkina Faso (30.1%) and Liberia (36.6%). By contrast, the countries with the lowest levels include Guinea-Bissau (12.5%), Niger (13.2%), Ghana (14.2%), Benin (15.5%) and Mali (16.1%). The percentage of men with correct and complete knowledge reached at least 22% in all countries, with the highest proportion in Nigeria (Graph 4.7).

**Graph 4.7:** Percentage of people aged 15-49 with correct and complete knowledge of HIV/AIDS, by sex, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

**Graph 4.8:** Gender gaps, correct and complete knowledge of HIV, ECOWAS 2021

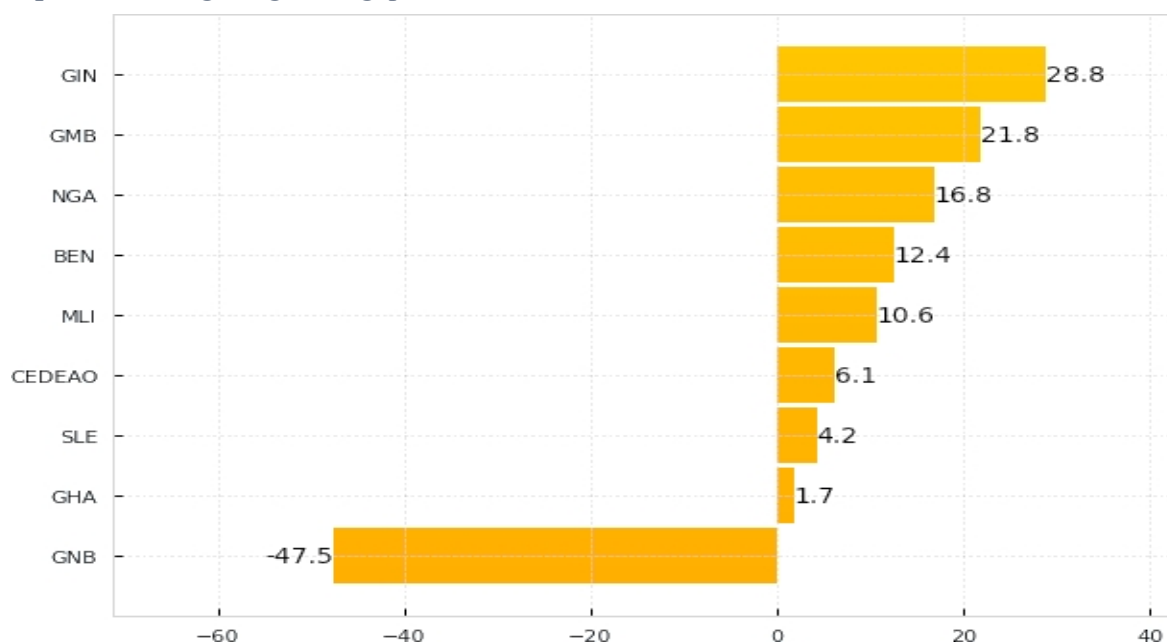


Source :

In addition to the generally low level of knowledge about HIV, gender gaps in this knowledge are still significant in the majority of countries, although there has been a downward trend over the period from 2017 to 2021 (Graph 4.9). In 2021, while more than 90% of the gaps have been reduced in Nigeria, the Gambia and Liberia, and at least 85% have been reduced in Nigeria, the Gambia and Liberia, the gender gap in knowledge about HIV remains high in most countries.

in Sierra Leone, and more than 50% in Niger and Guinea Bissau (Figure 4.8).

**Graph 4.9:** Change in gender gaps, HIV/AIDS incidence, 2017-2021



Source:

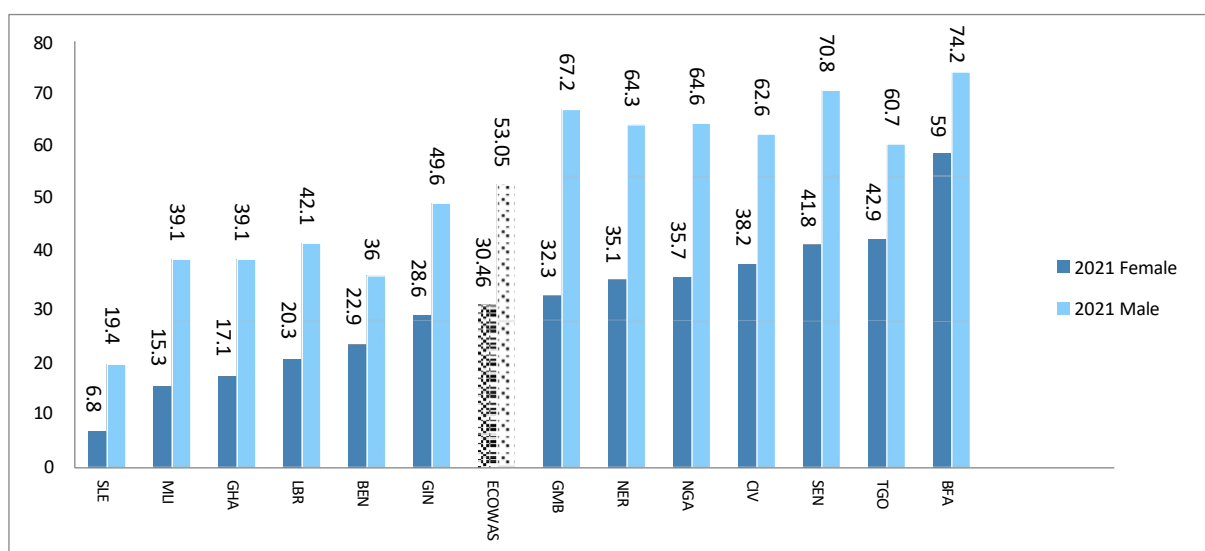
#### 1.4.2.2. Condom use at last high-risk sexual intercourse

*Definition of the indicator:* Condom use at last high-risk sex is the percentage of the population (female or male) aged 15-49 who used a condom at last sex with a non-marital, non-cohabiting partner in the last 12 months.

*Source of definition:* World Bank Gender Data Portal

Condoms play a fundamental role in preventing sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, and are also an essential means of controlling family planning. Estimates for 2021 suggest higher condom use among men than women in the region. On average, 30.5% of women compared with 53.1% of men used a condom the last time they had high-risk sex, a difference of 22.6 percentage points in favour of men.

**Graph 4.10:** Condom use at last high-risk sexual intercourse in the population aged 15-49 by sex, ECOWAS 2021

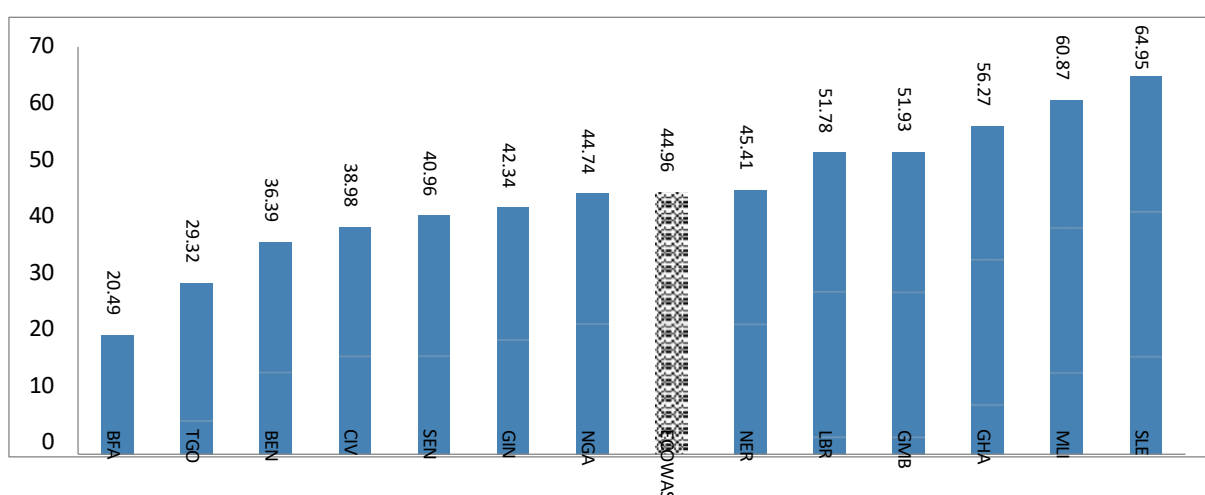


Source :

These regional trends conceal major disparities between countries. Burkina, Togo and Senegal had the highest proportions of condom use among women (59%, 42.9% and 41.8% respectively). By contrast, condom use was very low in Sierra Leone (6.8%), Mali (15.3%) and Ghana (17.1%), and between 20

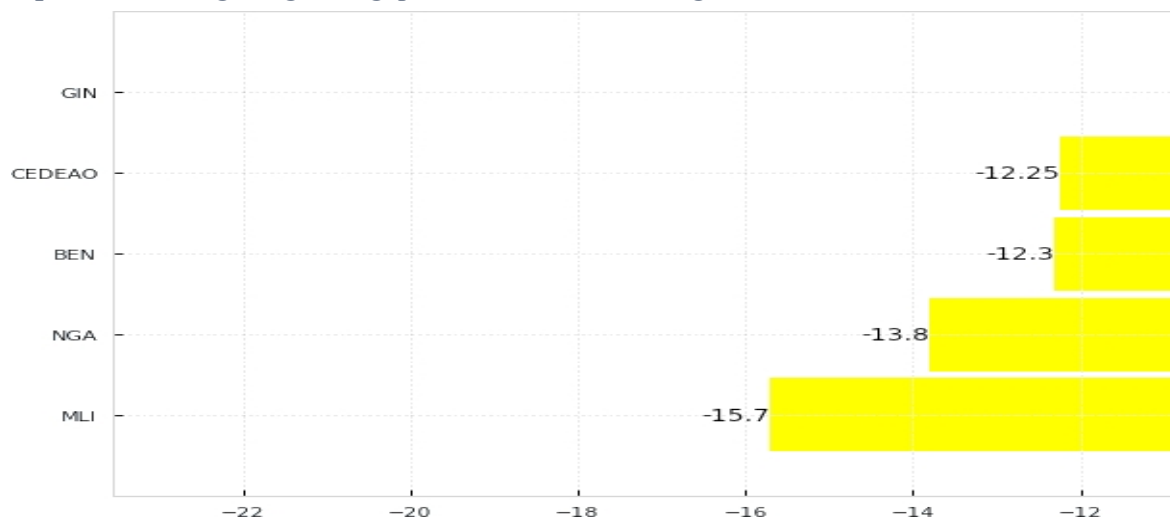
38% in the other countries. In the case of men, apart from Sierra Leone, which had the lowest level (19.4%), the percentage of condom use was at least 39% in Mali and Ghana and reached a minimum of 70% in Senegal and Burkina Faso (Figure 4.10).

**Graph 4.11:** Gender gap, condom use at last high-risk sex, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

**Graph 4.12:** Change in gender gap, condom use at last high-risk sexual intercourse, 2017-2021



Source:

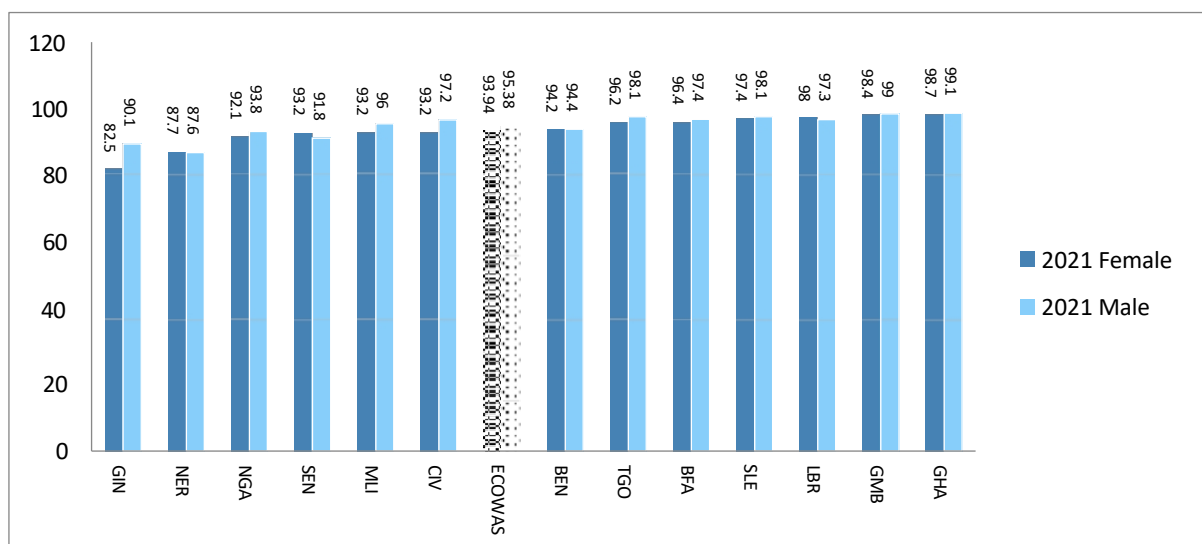
#### 1.4.2.3. Knowledge of modern methods of contraception

*Definition of the indicator:* This indicator refers to the percentage of women or men currently married or in union aged between 15 and 49 who are aware of a method of contraception. Modern methods of contraception include female and male sterilisation, contraceptive pills, intrauterine devices (IUDs), injectables, implants, male and female condoms, the diaphragm, contraceptive foam and jelly, the female condom, the lactational amenorrhoea method (LAM), the normal days method (NDM) and emergency contraception. Traditional methods include periodic abstinence (rhythm, calendar method) and withdrawal.

*Source of definition:* World Bank Gender Data Portal

Knowledge of modern contraceptive methods is a key indicator for assessing the autonomy of individuals, particularly women, in making decisions about their reproductive health. Family planning and access to contraceptives are essential elements in guaranteeing the fundamental right to self-determination and control over fertility.

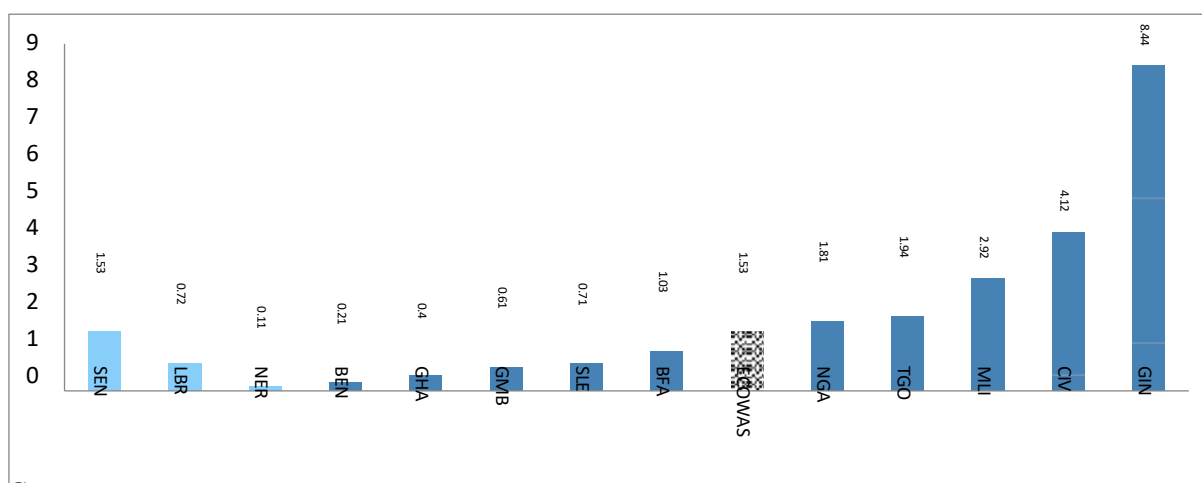
**Figure 4.13:** Percentage of 15-49 year olds with knowledge of modern contraceptive methods by sex, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

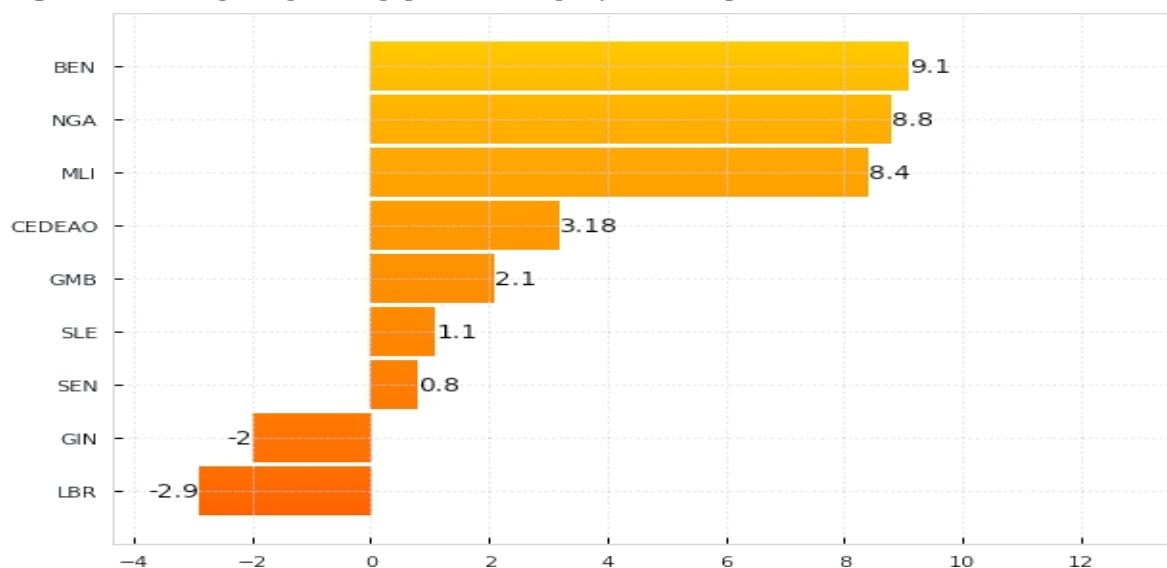
At ECOWAS level, the overall level of knowledge of modern contraceptive methods is very high, with only slight differences between the sexes and between countries. Across the region as a whole, on average 93.94% of women and 95.38% of men had knowledge of modern contraceptive methods. It should be noted that these regional averages do not include Guinea-Bissau and Cabo-Verde. The proportion of men with such knowledge was 1.44 percentage points higher. The distribution is almost similar across ECOWAS member states. The percentage of women with knowledge of modern contraceptive methods ranged from 82.5% in Guinea to 98.7% in Ghana, while it was between 87.6% in Niger and 99% in Gambia and Ghana (Graph 4.13).

**Graph 4.14:** Gender gap, knowledge of modern contraceptive methods, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

**Graph 4.15:** *Change in gender gaps, knowledge of contraceptive methods, 2017-2021*



*Source:*

In 2021, gender differences in knowledge of contraceptive methods were at relatively lower levels than in 2017, except in Guinea and Liberia, where they increased slightly, and were closed by more than 90% in all countries (Figures 4.14 and 4.15).

### **1.4.3. Child health**

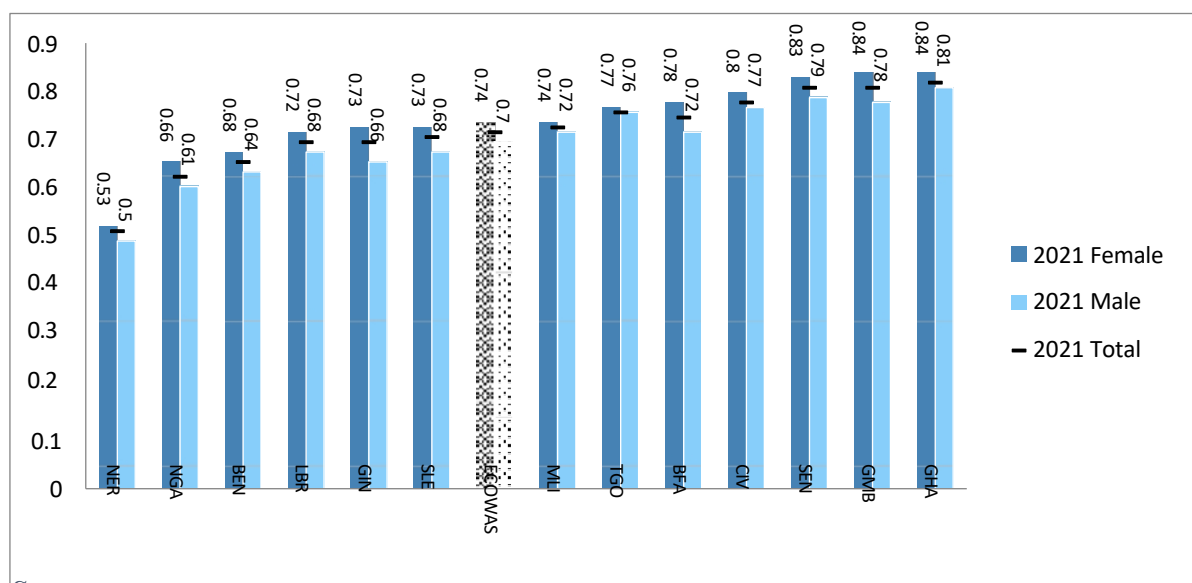
#### **1.4.3.1. Proportion of children under 5 who are not stunted**

*Definition of the indicator:* The percentage of people who are not stunted is calculated by subtracting stunting rates from 1.

*Source of definition:* World Bank Gender Data Portal.

According to statistics for 2021, 72% of children under 5 in ECOWAS are not stunted. There is a slight variation in distribution between countries. The proportion of non-stunted children was at least 70% in the majority of countries for which data is available (10 out of 13 countries), with the highest proportions in Ghana (82%), Senegal and Gambia (81%). The proportions were lower in Benin (66%), Nigeria (63%) and Niger (52%). These statistics suggest that a sizeable proportion of children in this age group are stunted (from 18% in Ghana to 48% in Niger).

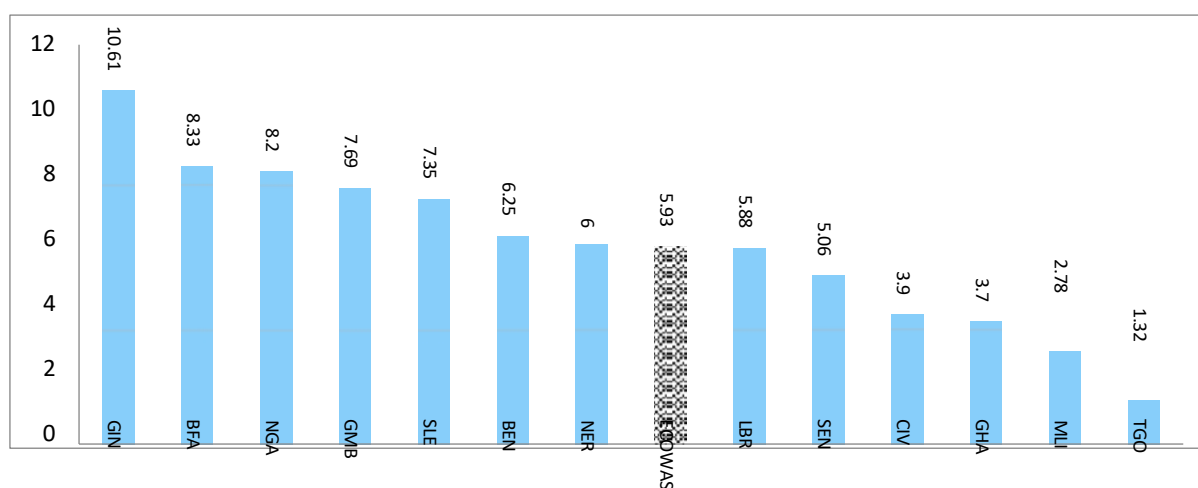
**Graph 4.16:** Proportion of stunted children under 5 by sex, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

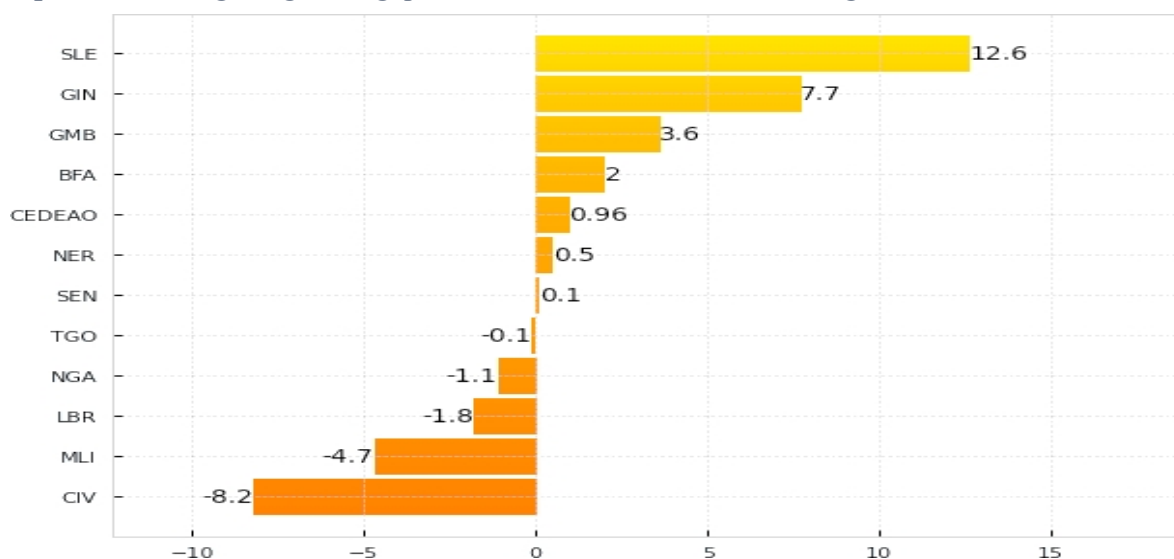
Some gender disparities are also observed at the level of ECOWAS Member States, and the proportions were slightly higher for girls than for boys in all countries. At regional level, the proportion of children without stunting was on average 74% for girls and 70% for boys, a difference of 4 percentage points more for girls. The gender gap ranged from 1 percentage point in Togo (girls 77%, boys 76%) to 7 percentage points in Guinea (girls 73%, boys 66%) (Figure 4.16).

**Graph 4.17:** Gender gaps, children under 5 without stunting, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

**Graph 4.18:** Change in gender gaps, children under 5 without stunting, 2017-2021



Source:

Similarly, significant progress has been made on gender equality in nutritional health. By 2021, at least 90% of the gender gap in child growth has been closed in all countries except Guinea (Figure 4.17). However, there has been a remarkable change in these gaps since 2017. The gender gap has improved in some countries by as much as 12.6 points in 2021 compared with 2017, while it has widened further in others, with an increase of 8.2 points in 2021 compared with 2017 in Côte d'Ivoire (Figure 4.18).

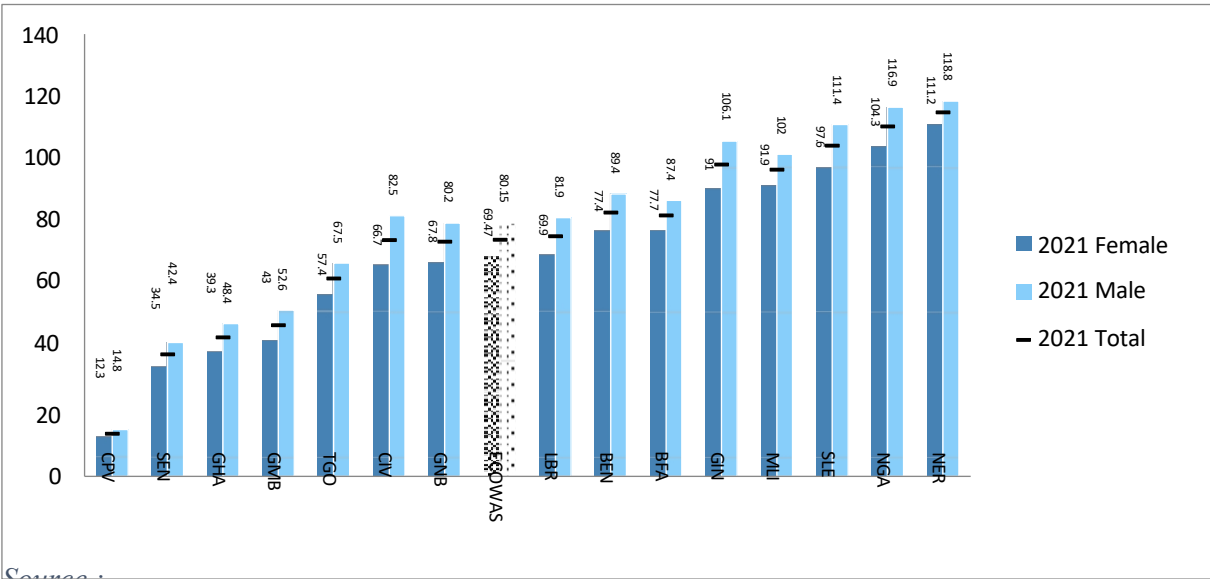
#### **1.4.3.2. Under-5 mortality rate**

*Definition of the indicator:* The under-five mortality rate is the probability per 1,000 that a newborn child will die before reaching the age of five, taking into account the age-specific mortality rates of women in the year specified.

*Source of definition:* World Bank Gender Data Portal.

The estimates describe a fairly critical health situation for the under-5s. At regional level, the mortality rate for children under 5 was estimated at 74.95% in 2021. Across the region as a whole, boys are more likely than girls to die before their fifth birthday. The mortality rate was 80.15% for boys compared with 69.47% for girls, a difference of 10.68 percentage points.

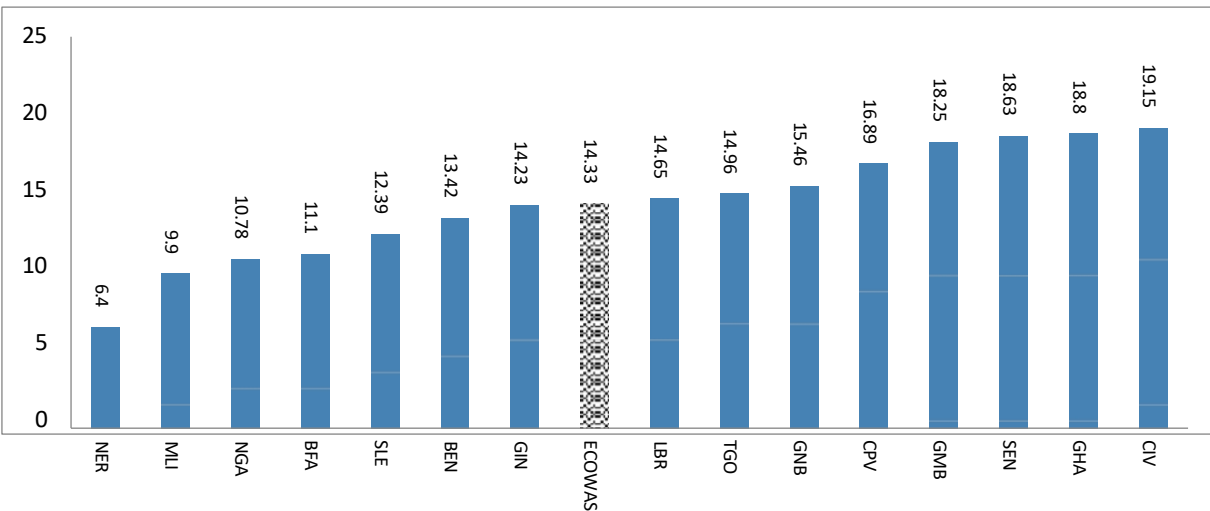
Graph 4.19: Under-5 mortality rate by gender, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

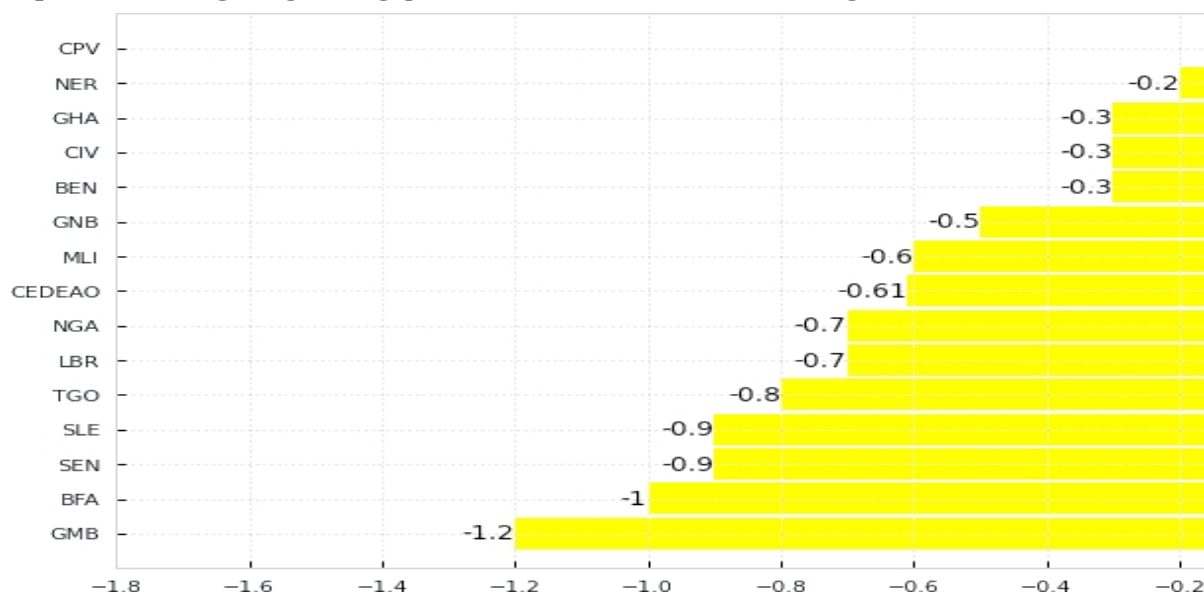
Regional trends mask major disparities between ECOWAS Member States. While the mortality rate is only 13.5% in Cabo-Verde, it exceeds 100% in Sierra Leone (104.7%), Nigeria (110.8%) and Niger (115.2%). For the other countries, the under-5 mortality rate fluctuates between 38% in Senegal and 97% in Mali. The differences in mortality rates between the sexes were also in favour of girls in all the countries, although the magnitude varied somewhat. The gender gap was at least 10 percentage points in nine (09) of the countries and reached 15 percentage points in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, while it was only 2.5 percentage points in Cabo-Verde.

Graph 4.20: Gender gap, under-5 mortality, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

**Graph 4.21:** Change in gender gaps, children under 5 without stunting, 2017-2021



Source:

We also note that significant progress towards parity in terms of child health has been made in all countries. At least 85% of the gender gap has been closed in all countries by 2021, with the highest proportion in Niger and Mali (Figure 4.20). However, progress has slowed compared with 2017, resulting in a slight increase in the gender gap (Figure 4.21).

#### **1.4.4. Mortality**

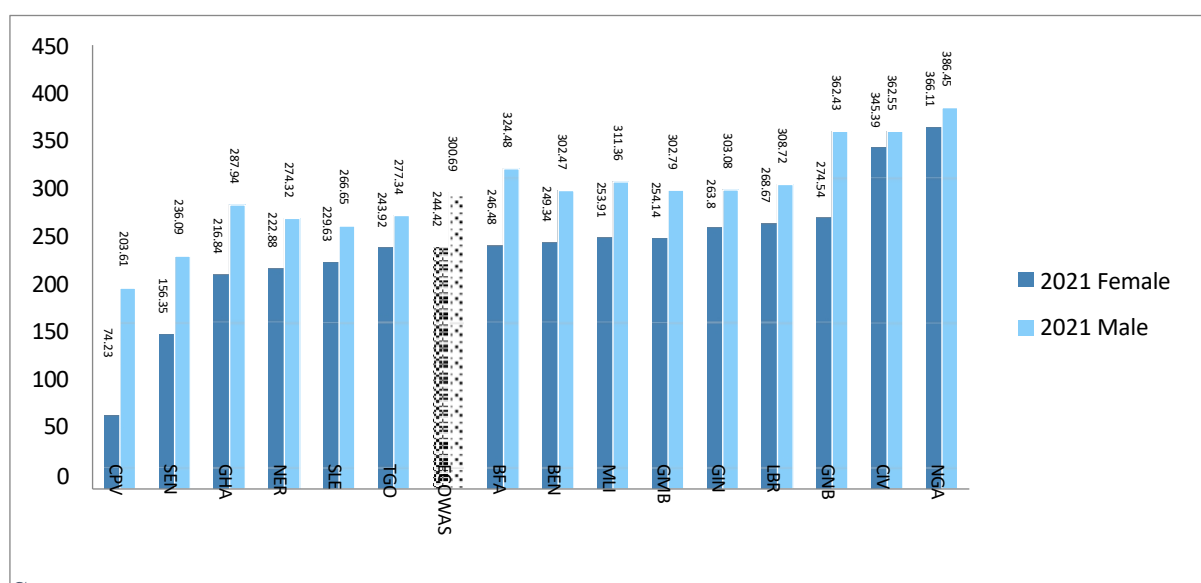
##### **1.4.4.1. Adult mortality rate (per 1000 adults)**

*Definition of the indicator:* The adult mortality rate is the probability of dying between the ages of 15 and 60, i.e. the probability that a person (female or male) aged 15 will die before reaching the age of 60, if subjected to the age-specific mortality rates of the specified year between these two ages.

*Source of definition:* World Bank Gender Data Portal.

Adult mortality is a key indicator of the overall health of a population, and can reflect living conditions, access to healthcare and socio-economic dynamics. In the ECOWAS region, the number of deaths per 1000 adults is estimated on average, according to the statistics considered in 2021, at 244 deaths among women and 301 deaths among men, i.e. a difference of 57 more deaths among men.

**Graph 4.22: Under-5 mortality rate by sex, ECOWAS 2021**

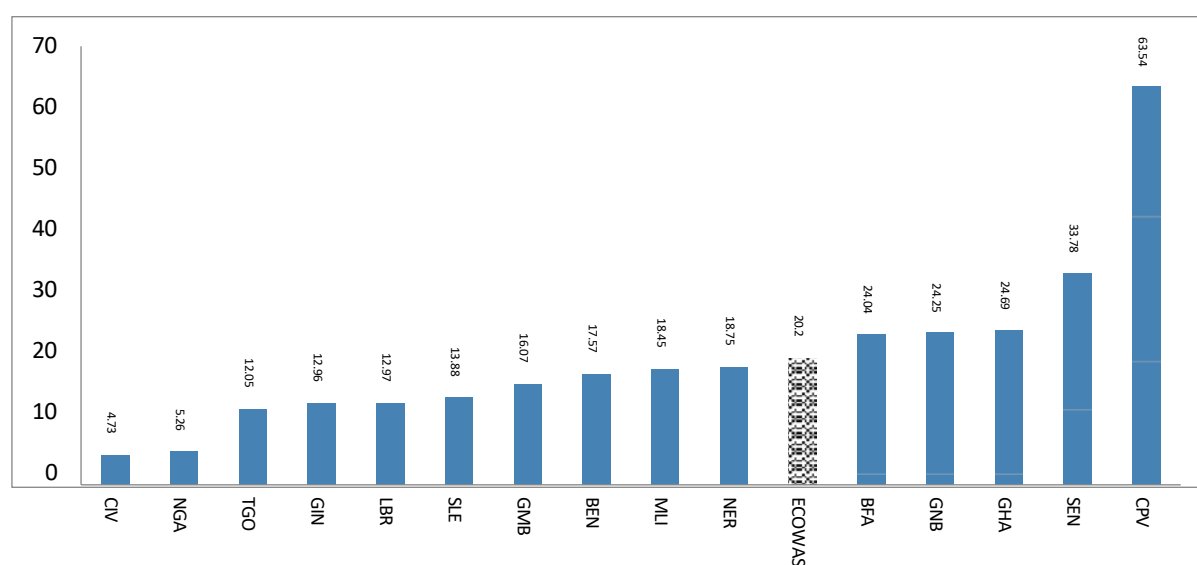


Source :

The situation is slightly better in some countries than in others. In fact, just over a third of countries have mortality rates below the regional average for both women and men, as opposed to two-thirds whose national averages are higher than the regional averages (graph 4.22). Furthermore, in all countries, adult men were significantly more likely than women to die before the age of 60. The difference in mortality between the sexes ranged from at least 20 more deaths for men in Nigeria to 129 more deaths in Cabo-Verde. Cabo-Verde has the lowest mortality rate among adult women (74 deaths per 1000 adult women).

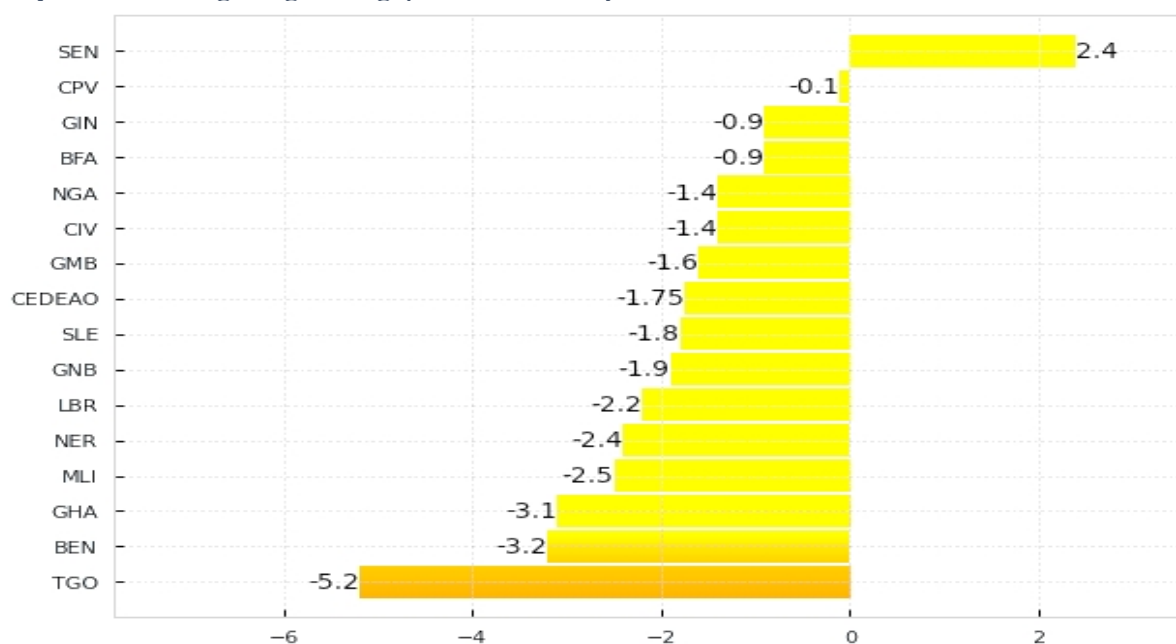
As the mortality rate is an indicator of population health, the gender gap in this area has been considerably closed. For the region as a whole, 80% of gender gaps have been closed by 2021. On average, 95% of the gaps have been closed in Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria, at least 80% in Togo, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Benin, Mali and Niger, and at least 75% in Burkina-Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Ghana and Senegal. However, the gap is even more pronounced in Cabo-Verde, where only 36% of the gaps have been closed (Figure 4.23). The level of progress in reducing gender gaps in health has, however, regressed in 2021 when compared to the 2017 level for all countries except Senegal, where gaps have narrowed by 2.4 percentage points more than in 2017 (Graph 4.24).

**Graph 4.23: Gender gaps, adult mortality, ECOWAS 2021**



Source :

**Graph 4.24: Change in gender gap, adult mortality, 2017-2021**



Source :

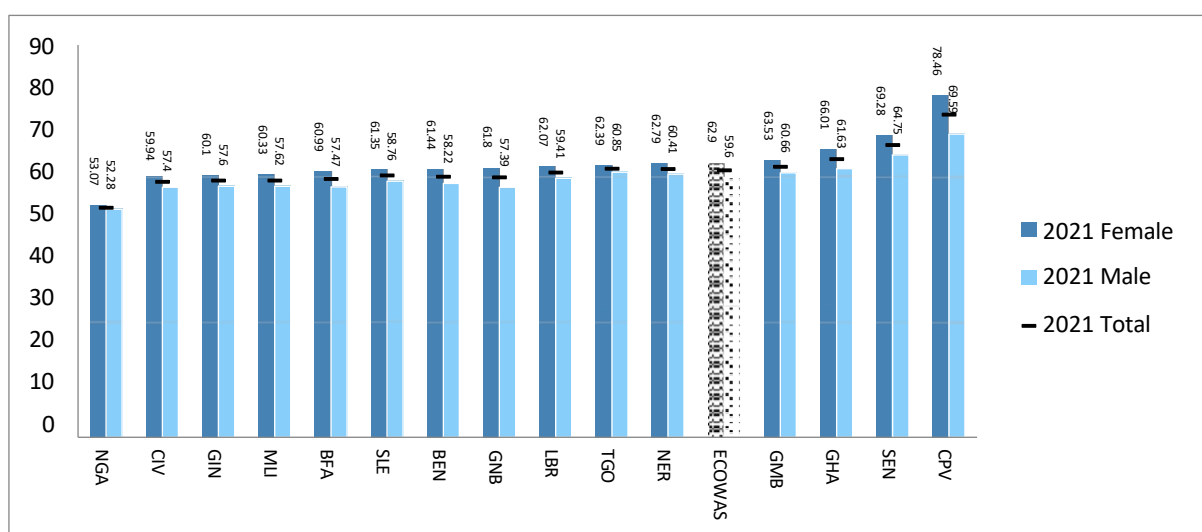
#### **1.4.4.2. Life expectancy at birth**

**Definition of the indicator:** Life expectancy at birth indicates the number of years a newborn baby would live if the mortality rates prevailing at the time of birth remained the same throughout its life.

**Source of definition:** World Bank Gender Data Portal

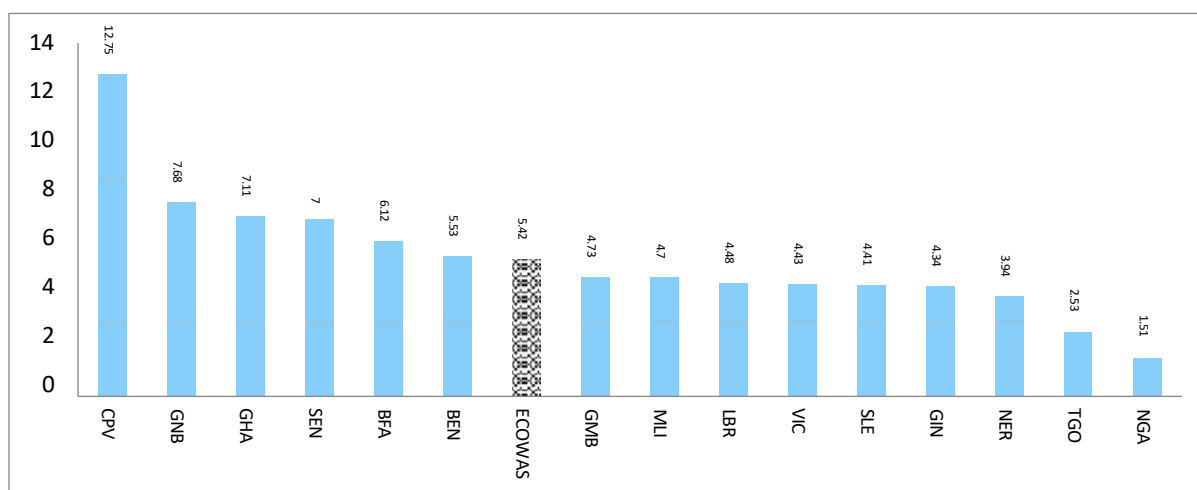
Life expectancy at birth is another indicator that reflects the quality of life and health of a population. It remains at relatively average levels in all ECOWAS member states. At regional level, life expectancy was 61 years on average, according to the statistics for 2021. Life expectancy was higher for women than for men by 3 years (63% versus 60% respectively). The trend is virtually the same for all countries, although there are some differences. Life expectancy was around 52.68 years in Nigeria, and was 0.79 years higher for women than for men; while it was 74 years in Cabo-Verde, with a gap of around 9 years in favour of women (Figure 4.25).

**Graph 4.25:** Life expectancy at birth by sex, ECOWAS 2021



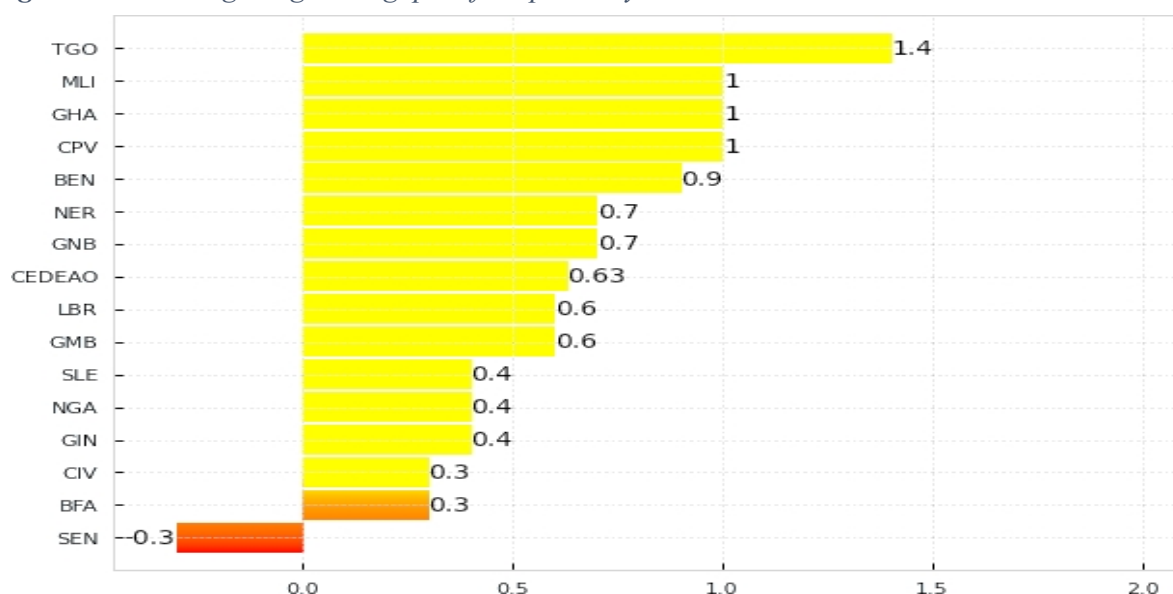
Source :

**Graph 4.26:** Gender gap, life expectancy at birth, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

**Figure 4.27: Change in gender gaps, life expectancy at birth, 2017-2021**



Source:

Progress in equality has been significant between 2017 and 2021. Gender gaps have been reduced by at least 95% in the majority of countries (Figure 4.26). At least 90% of the gaps have been closed in Benin, Burkina-Faso, Senegal, Ghana and Guinea-Bissau. The gap remains slightly higher in Cabo-Verde than in the other countries, and has been closed by around 87%. These gaps have improved slightly in 2021 compared to 2017, except in Senegal, where a slight increase in gaps is observed (Figure 4.27).

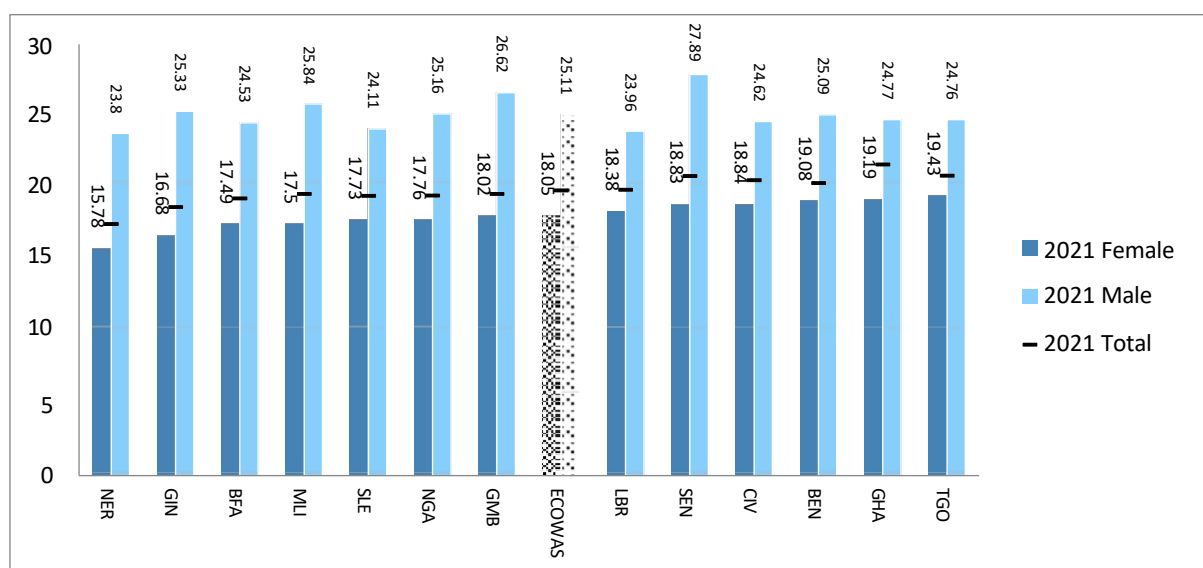
#### **1.4.5. Child marriage (included in GBV)**

##### **1.4.5.1. Age at first marriage**

*Definition of the indicator:* This indicator refers to the average age at which women/men aged 15-49 married for the first time or lived with a consensual partner. It is calculated as the difference between the date on which a woman (or man) began living with her first spouse or partner and the woman's (or man's) date of birth in the past single years.

*Source of definition:* Guide to Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) statistics.

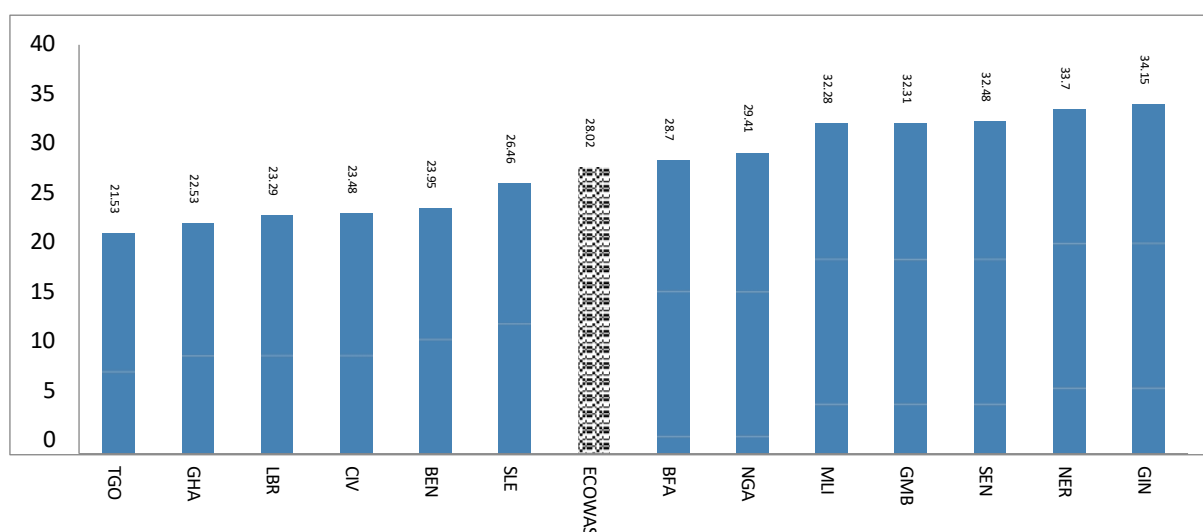
**Graph 4.28:** Average age at first marriage by sex, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

However, the situation varies from country to country according to gender. In all countries, women marry earlier than men. At regional level, women enter a union on average 7 years earlier than men (18 years versus 25 years respectively). The difference is 5 years on average in Togo and 9 years in Senegal. The average age at first marriage for women ranges from 15.78 in Niger to 19.43 in Togo, while for men it fluctuates between 23.8 in Togo and 27.89 in Senegal (Figure 4.28).

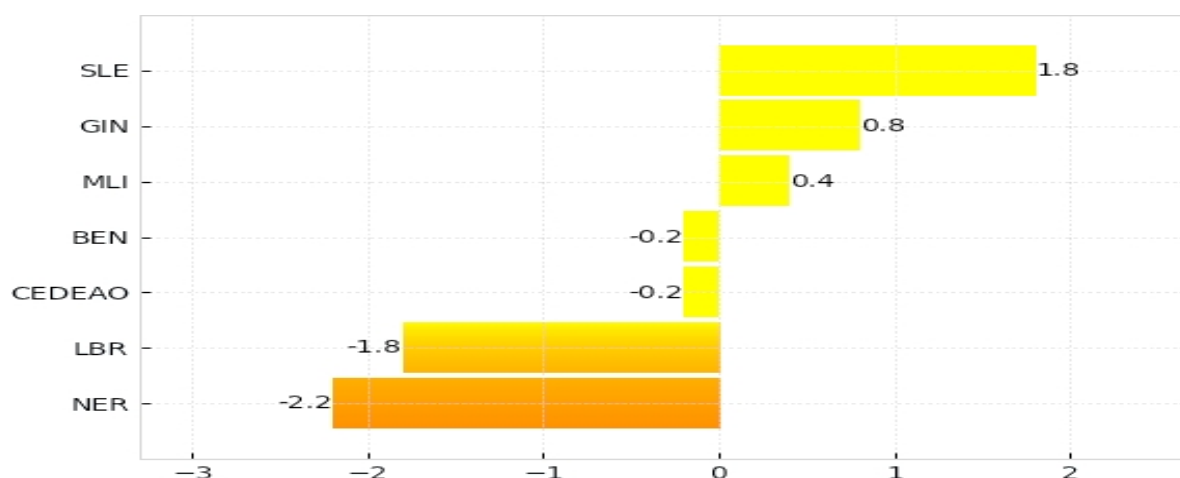
**Graph 4.29:** Gender gap, life expectancy at birth, ECOWAS 2021



Source :

The measures taken by all countries to combat early marriage, particularly for girls, have led to significant progress in reducing the disparities between girls and boys in terms of marriage.

**Figure 4.30:** Change in gender gaps, age at first marriage, 2017-2021



*Source:*

On average, 70% of gender disparities have been closed in the region as a whole by 2021. The residual gap towards parity in age at first marriage ranges from 21.53% in Togo to 34.15% in Guinea (Figure 4.29). The gaps have widened more in 2021 than in 2017 in some countries, such as Liberia (1.8 percentage points) and Niger (2.2 percentage points), while they have improved slightly in Mali, Guinea and Sierra Leone (Figure 4.30).

#### **1.4.5.2. First marriage before the age of 18**

*Definition of the indicator:* This is the percentage of women/men aged 15-49 who married for the first time or lived with a consensual partner before the age of 18. It is obtained by dividing the number of women/men aged 15 to 49 who married for the first time before the age of 18 by the total number of women/men aged 15 to 49 who married for the first time before the age of 18. /men aged 15 to 49 and multiplying the result by 100.

*Source of definition:* Guide to Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) statistics.

### **1.5. Employment and income**

The employment and income domain measures the extent to which women and men have equal access to employment, their working conditions and the structure of their income.

income. The interest in analysing this area lies in the fact that the elimination of all forms of discrimination and segregation promotes equal access to economic resources and is also a means of eliminating poverty. Participation in the labour market is also one of the main means of promoting women's economic empowerment, which covers dimensions other than employment and income, in particular participation in household decision-making and access to economic resources. Several ECOWAS strategic documents, in particular ECOWAS Vision 2050, the Supplementary Act on Equal Rights for Women and Men for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS Area and the ECOWAS Integrated Human Capital Development Strategy (2020-2030), place considerable emphasis on this area. For example, the elements relating to the second and third thematic areas of the Integrated Regional Human Capital Development Strategy concern respectively the sub-areas of participation in the labour market and entrepreneurship.

In order to gain a better understanding of the ECOWAS situation in relation to the employment-income area, 18 indicators grouped into five sub-areas have been compiled. Table 5.1 below provides the measurement framework for this domain in the index.

Analysis of the indicators in this area shows that women's relatively high rate of employment and entrepreneurship contrasts with their low capacity to save and access loans to finance their economic activities, resulting in their greater vulnerability (84.3%) than men (70.3%). This stems from the fact that women were under-represented in paid employment (14.6% compared with 27.2%) and had an average income (\$371.3 PPP) less than three quarters of that of men (\$496.45 PPP) in 2021. In 2021, significant disparities existed between the two sexes in almost all the indicators in this domain, with the exception of unemployment (6.7%), informal employment (8.0%) and youth employment (9.2%), for which the lowest parity gaps at regional level were recorded.

**Table 5:** Measurement framework for the "Employment and income" domain

<i>Sub-domains</i>	<i>Concepts measured</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of data</i>
<b>Entrepreneurship</b>		Self-employment (% of employment for each sex) (estimated using ILO model)	
		Share of women business owners (% of total business owners)	
		Share of women sole proprietors (% of sole proprietors)	
		Savings to start, run or expand a farm or business (% of each sex aged 15 and over)	
		Loans to start, run or expand a farm or business, women (% aged 15 and over)	
<b>Labour force participation</b>		Labour force participation rate (% of total population aged 15 and over, by gender)	
		Employment/population ratio by gender and age (%) Gender: (young people, adults): 15+ (%)	
		Incidence of part-time employment by gender -- Common definition (%)	
		Employment in agriculture (% of employment by gender) (estimated by ILO model)	
		Employment in industry (% of employment by gender) (estimated by ILO model)	
		Employment in services (% of employment) (estimated by ILO model)	

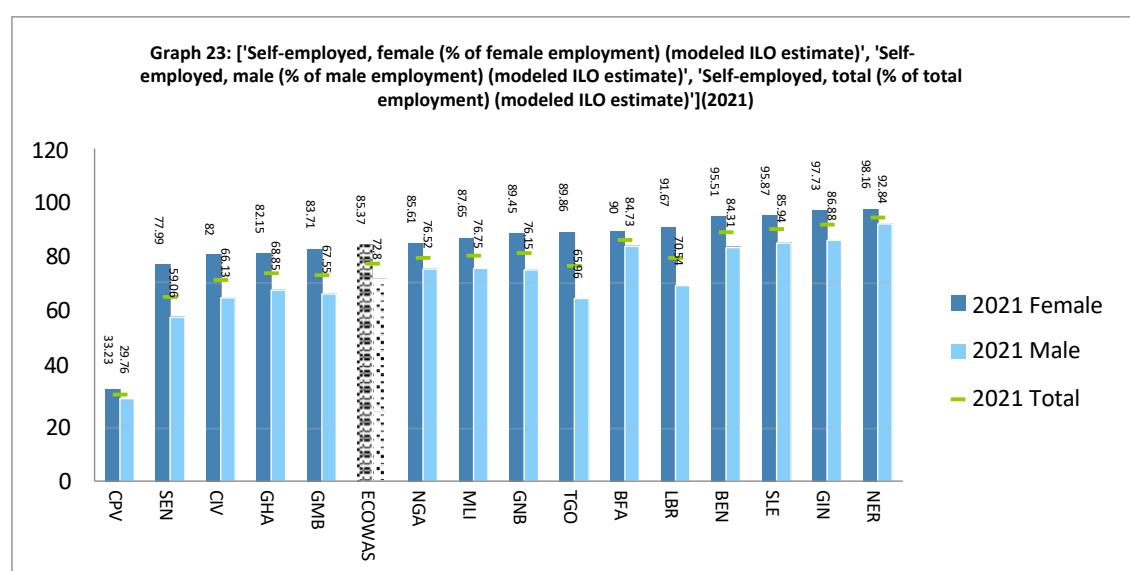
<i>Sub-areas</i>	<i>Concepts measured</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Data source</i>
		Employment informal (% of total non-agricultural employment)	
		Indicator 8.3.1 - Proportion of informal employment of informal employment in total employment by gender and sector (%) (aggregate) : Total	
		Female unemployment (% of female labour force) (estimate using ILO model)	
		Youth employment by sex, age (thousands): 15-29 Employment status (aggregate) : Total	
		Employed workers (% of employment) (ILO model estimate)	
<b>Job quality</b>		Vulnerable employment (% of employment) (ILO modelled estimate)	
<b>Segregation</b>		Average monthly earnings of employees by gender Activity (aggregate) : Total Currency: 2017 PPP \$	

### 1.5.1 Proportion of self-employed workers

This indicator is obtained from estimates by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and corresponds to the proportion of self-employed workers of each sex in relation to all workers of that sex. According to this definition, self-employed workers are those whose remuneration depends directly on the profits from the goods and services they produce, and who can be broadly divided into four main categories: employers, own-account workers, members of producers' cooperatives and contributing family workers.

**In 2021, women were more preponderant among the self-employed and worked mainly in vulnerable jobs in the informal sector.** The proportion of self-employed women was systematically higher than that of men in all countries, with an ECOWAS average of 85.4% for women and 72.8% for men. Moreover, in 10 of the 15 ECOWAS countries, the score recorded by women is higher than the regional average. Cape Verde (33.2%), Senegal (78.0%), Côte d'Ivoire (82.0%), Ghana (82.2%) and Gambia (83.7%) are the five countries where women scored below the regional average. Women were more vulnerable (84.3%) than men (70.3%). In addition, they were over-represented in the informal sector (90.6% and 84.1% respectively for women and men), which is an additional factor favouring their vulnerability.

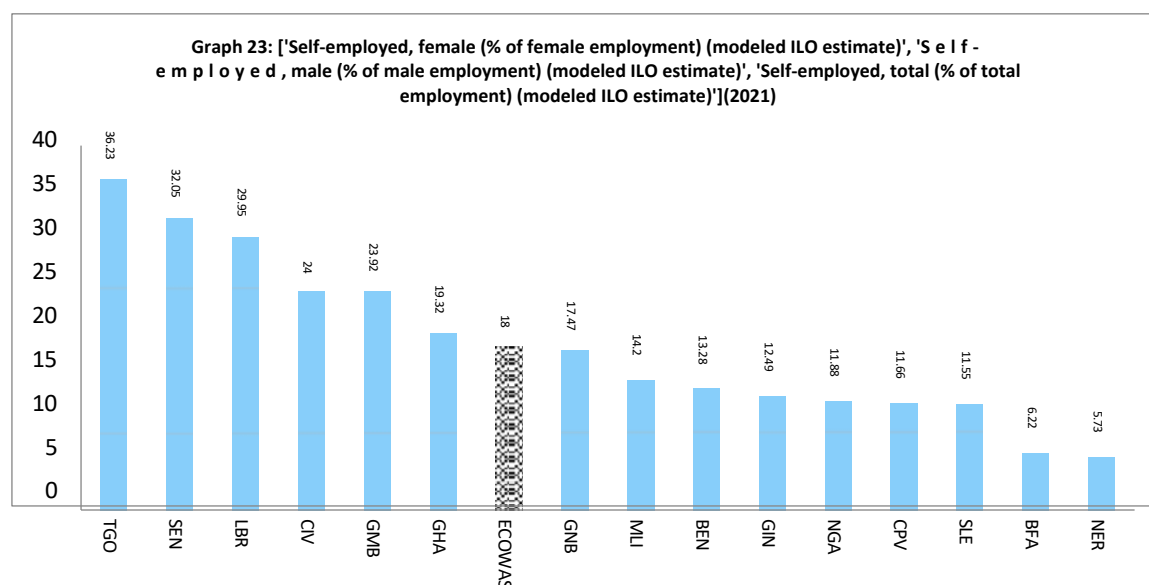
**Figure 5.1.** Proportion (%) of self-employed workers by gender in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

The scores recorded by women and men in 2021 at ECOWAS level correspond to a relative gap of 18 percentage points between the two sexes. The disparity between countries in terms of the self-employment gap between men and women is considerable, ranging from less than 6 percentage points in Burkina Faso and Niger to 36 percentage points in Togo, reflecting an over-representation of women across all ECOWAS countries.

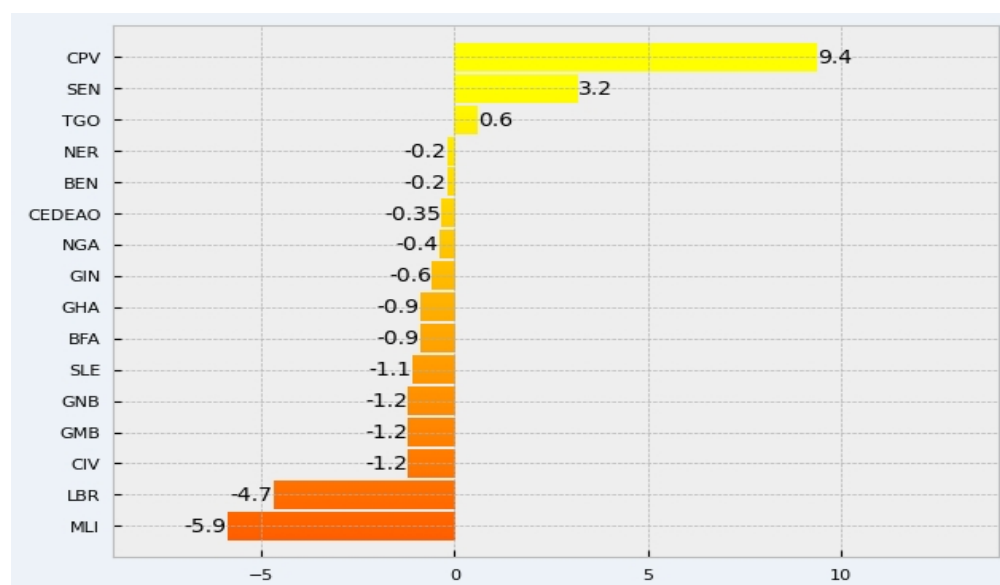
**Graph 5.1:** Gaps (in %) between men and women in relation to self-employment in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

**A slight reduction in the gender gap in self-employment has been recorded at regional level and in most countries, which requires additional efforts by Member States to achieve parity.** From 2017 to 2021, there was a very small reduction in gender inequality in self-employment in ECOWAS (-0.35%). This trend towards improvement in inequality between men and women was recorded in all countries except Cape Verde (9.4%), Senegal (3.2%) and Togo (0.6%), where an intensification was observed. However, the improvement observed remains slight, not exceeding 1% for most countries. To be more effective, this reduction in gaps should also take into account the essentially informal nature of economies and the vulnerability of jobs, of which women are the main victims.

**Figure 5.3:** Evolution of the gaps (in %) between men and women in relation to self-employment in ECOWAS countries from 2017 to 2021



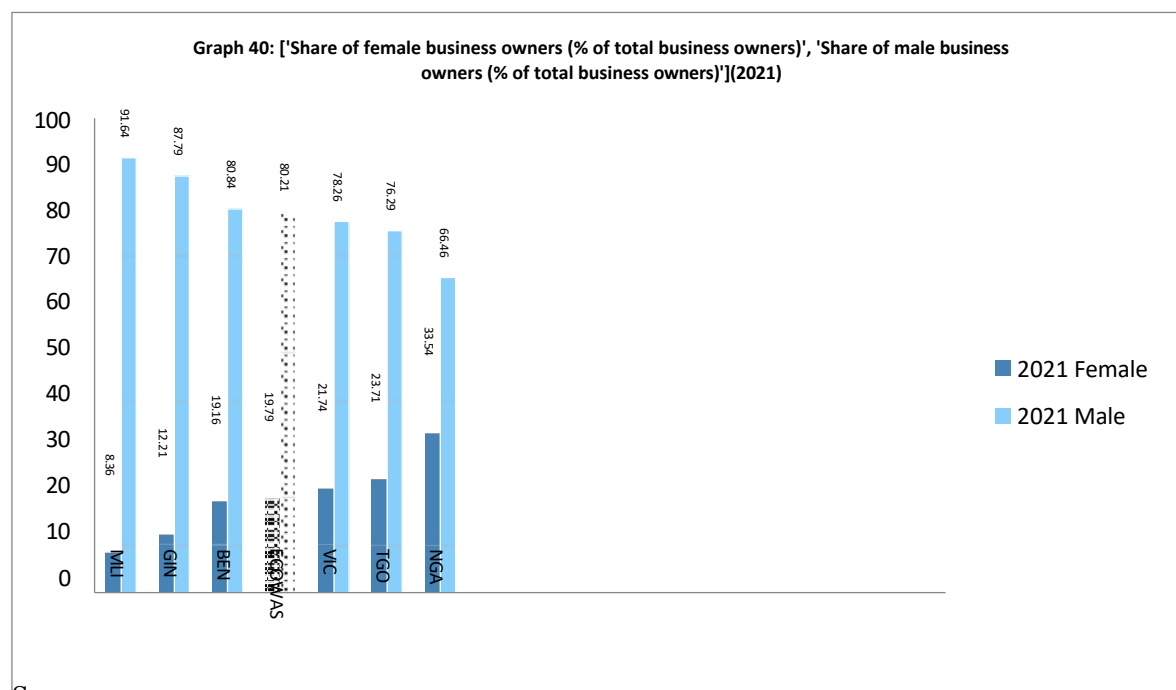
### 1.5.2. Share of women business owners

According to the World Bank, the share of women-owned businesses is the proportion of women owners of newly registered limited liability companies in relation to the total number of owners of newly registered limited liability companies in the economy during the calendar year. This indicator makes it possible to analyse the distribution of businesses between the two sexes in order to understand the extent to which men or women are more likely to be business owners. This indicator is only available for six of the 15 Member States.

**A very low presence of women among the owners of limited liability companies in all the countries for which data was available, due in particular to their relatively low scores compared with men in secondary and tertiary education and in literacy.** In 2021, the share of businesses owned by men (80.2%) at ECOWAS level is around four times higher than that of women (19.8%). This over-representation of male business owners is observed across all six countries for which data was available. This poor performance by women could be due to a number of socio-economic factors, including the fact that they are lagging behind in education and literacy. Indeed, despite the progress made in access to primary education, their score in higher levels of education, particularly secondary education (46.8%), was relatively lower than that of men (47.5%), which could have an impact on their ability to access higher education.

This could have an impact on their ability to access these high positions of responsibility in companies. Their literacy score (45.4%) was also much lower than that of men (68.4%).

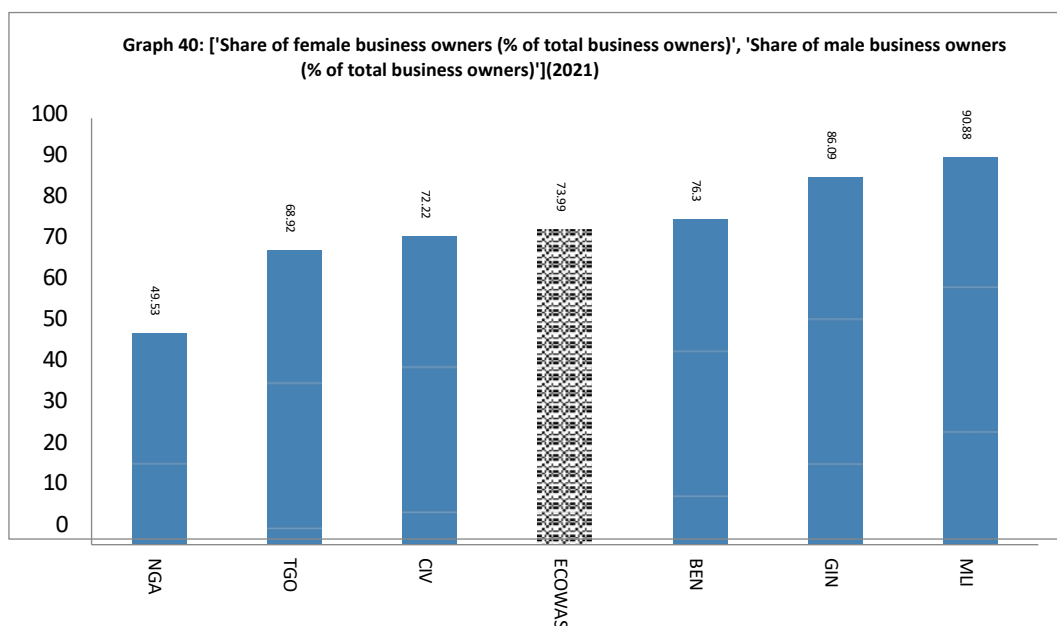
**Graph 5.4:** Share (in %) of women business owners in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

An analysis of the gender gap shows that the relative gap at ECOWAS level is 74.0%. The magnitude of this gap was very high in all the countries analysed. In Nigeria, where the smallest gap was recorded, women's scores were around half (49.5%) those of men.

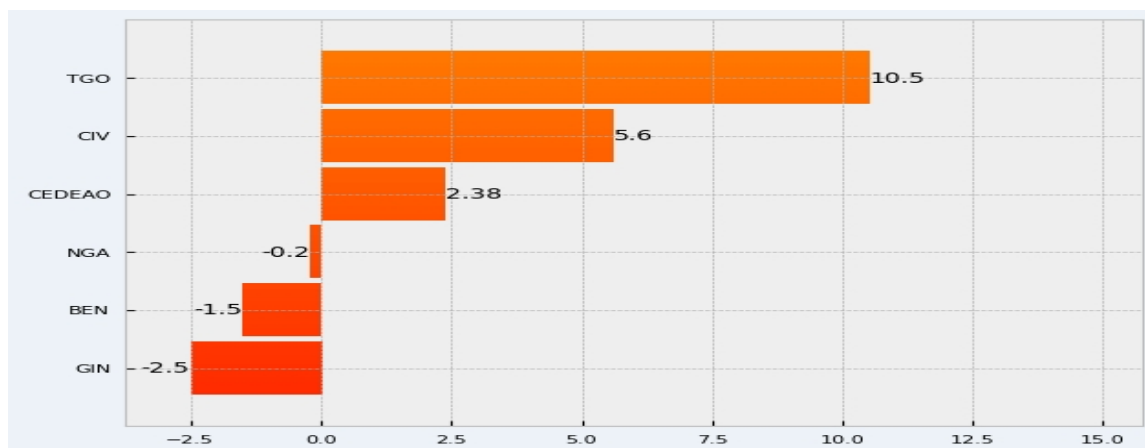
**Figure 5.5:** Gaps (in %) between men and women in the share of business owners in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

**Unlike the other member states, three had made very little progress in reducing the gender gap.** Between 2017 and 2021, the gender gap widened further, reflecting an intensification of inequalities at ECOWAS level (2.3%), as well as in Togo (10.5%) and Côte d'Ivoire (5.6%). On the other hand, in the other countries analysed, a reduction in the gaps was more likely between 2017 and 2021.

**Figure 5.6:** Change (in %) in the gender gap in business ownership in ECOWAS countries from 2017 to 2021



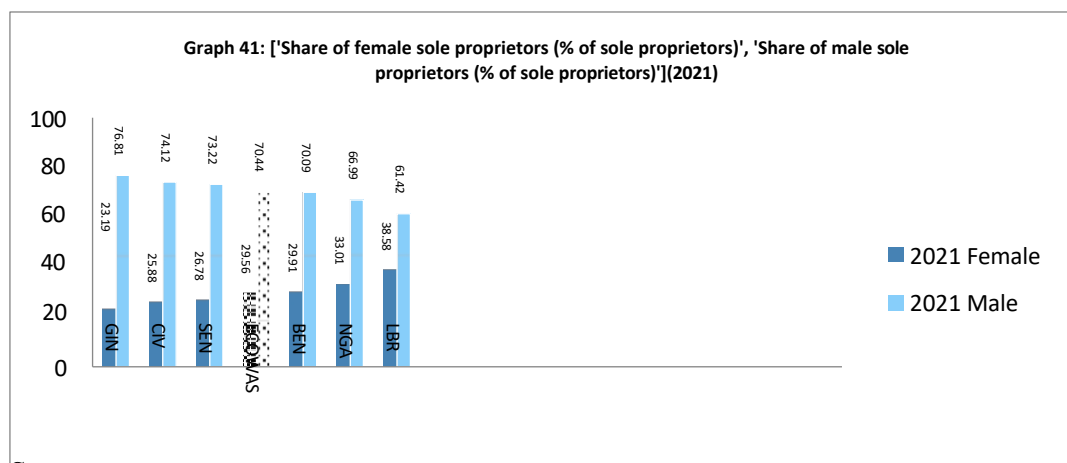
Source :

### 1.5.3. Share of women entrepreneurs

This indicator makes it possible to analyse the distribution of sole proprietorships between the two sexes in order to understand to what extent they are more likely to be owned by men or women. According to the World Bank, "the share of women sole proprietors is the proportion of newly registered women sole proprietors out of the total number of newly registered sole proprietors in the economy during the calendar year. A sole proprietorship is a business entity owned and managed by a single individual who is inseparable from the business and personally liable". This indicator is only available for six of the 15 Member States.

**A very low share of women owning sole proprietorships across all six Member States for which data was available, mainly due to their low ability to save or access loans to finance their businesses.** In 2021, women were less likely than men to be sole proprietors of businesses. At ECOWAS level, the share of women and men owning their own businesses was 29.6% and 70.4% respectively. This under-representation stems from a number of socio-economic factors, in particular their low capacity to mobilise financial resources to set up or develop their own business. The proportion of women who were able to save and those who had access to loans to develop their businesses (19.0% and 11.54% respectively) were lower than those of men (22.1% and 13.3% respectively).

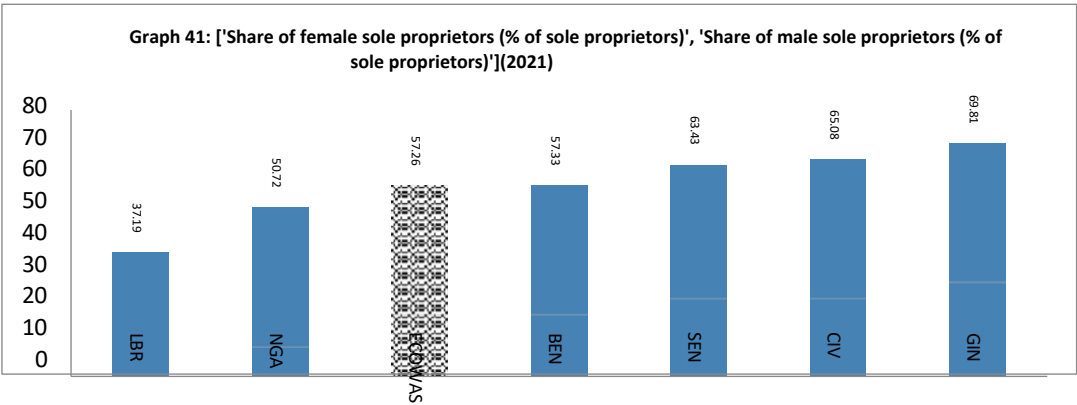
**Graph 5.7:** Share of women entrepreneurs in ECOWAS countries in 2021 (%)



Source :

The gender gap will be around 57 percentage points in 2021. Analysis of the gender gap also shows very wide disparities between countries. The smallest gap was recorded in Liberia (37.2%) and the largest in Guinea (65.1%), reflecting the poor performance of Member States in resolving inequalities between men and women in entrepreneurship.

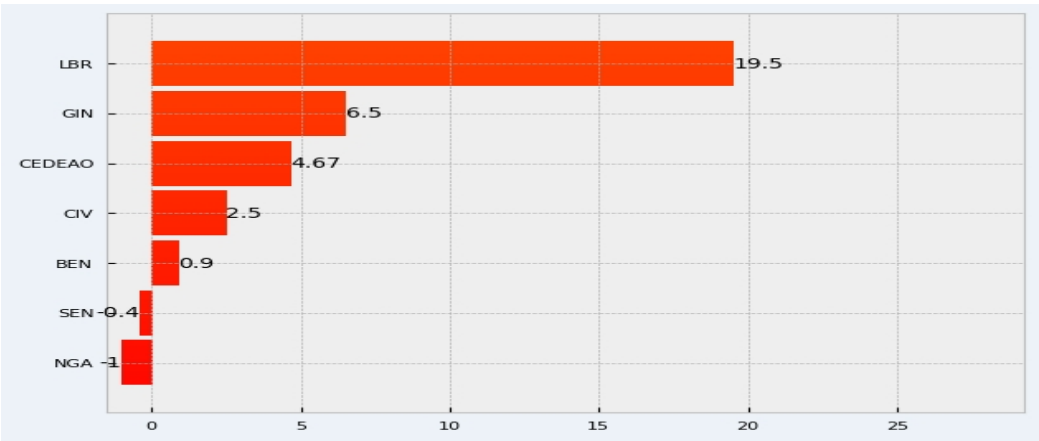
**Figure 5.8:** Gender gaps in entrepreneurship in ECOWAS countries in 2021 (%)



Source :

From 2017 to 2021, inequalities between the sexes increased more in ECOWAS (4.7%) and in all countries except Senegal (-0.4%) and Nigeria (-1.0%), which recorded a very small reduction in inequalities between the sexes.

**Figure 5.9:** Change in gender gaps (in %) for sole proprietors in ECOWAS countries from 2017 to 2021



Source :

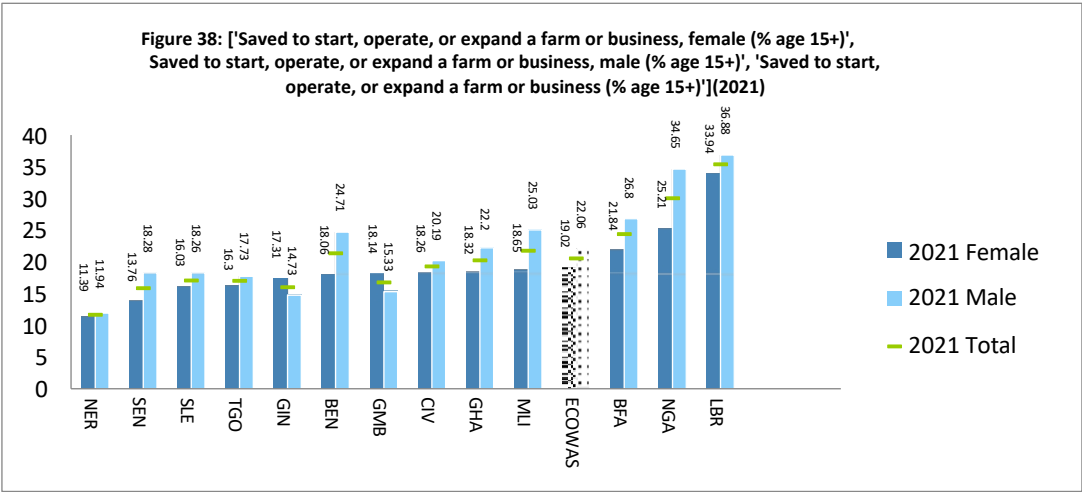
#### **1.5.4. Proportion of people who have saved to start, run or develop a farm or business**

Building up savings to start, run or expand a farm or business is an important indicator in gender analysis of entrepreneurship, as women are often the least likely to save due to their often precarious financial situation.

This indicator measures the percentage of the population aged 15 and over of each sex who say they have saved or set aside money in the past year to start, run or develop a farm or business (source: Global Findex database).

**Relatively lower rate of saving for entrepreneurial activities among women in almost all member states, due in particular to their low incomes and the informal nature of their economic activity.** In 2021, the proportion of people who had saved for entrepreneurial activities in ECOWAS was relatively low, with scores of 19.0% for women and 22.1% for men. The lowest and highest scores were recorded in Niger (11.9% and 11.4% respectively for men and women) and Liberia (36.9% and 33.9% respectively for men and women). These results partly illustrate the low presence of women in the management and ownership of companies. In the specific case of women, this low capacity to save may be due to their relatively low level of income (\$371.3 PPP) compared with that of men (\$496.45PPP), which may not encourage them to save. The fact that women predominate in the informal sector is an additional factor in the vulnerability of their jobs, as they may earn low and irregular incomes that are not conducive to building up savings.

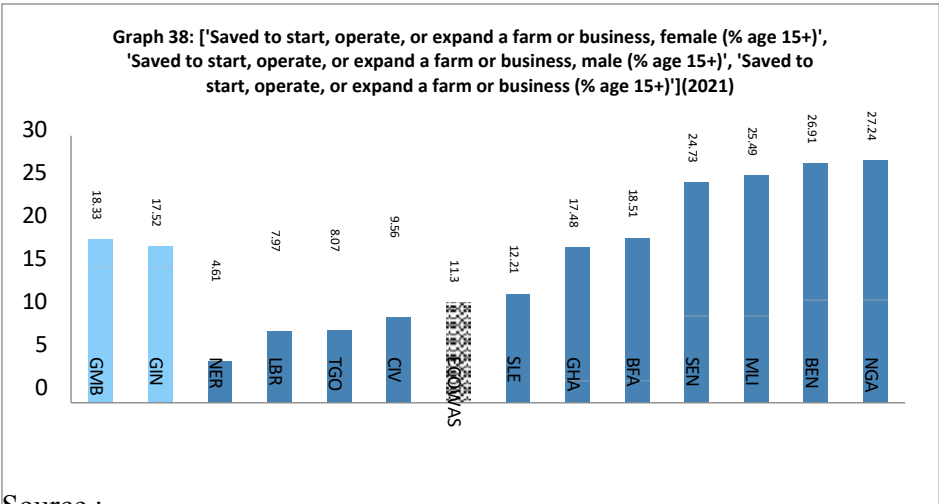
**Graph 5.10:** Proportion (%) of people who have saved to start, operate, or expand a farm or business by gender in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

In 2021, the proportion of savers carrying out their economic activities was almost always higher for men, with a relative gap of 11.3 percentage points across all ECOWAS countries. The Gambia (18.3%) and Guinea (17.6%) were the only countries in which the gender score gap was in favour of women. This evidence also highlights the inadequacy of the results of the various projects and programmes put in place to facilitate and increase women's financial autonomy.

**Graph 5.11:** Gaps (in %) between men and women in savings for setting up, running or developing a farm or business in ECOWAS countries in 2021



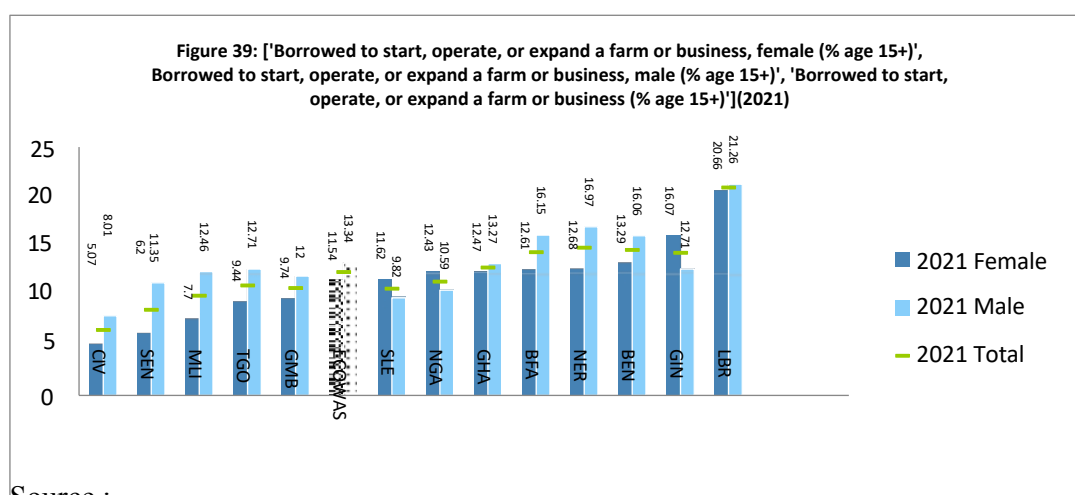
Source :

### 1.5.5. Proportion of people who have borrowed money to start, run or develop a farm or business

This indicator measures the level of access to loans by men and women to finance their farms or businesses. It corresponds to the percentage of people aged 15 and over of each sex surveyed who said they had borrowed money to start up, run or develop a farm or business in the past year.

**In addition to women's low capacity to save for their entrepreneurial activities, they had less access to loans to start up or develop their economic activities.** In 2021, access to loans to finance entrepreneurial activities was relatively low (13.3% and 11.5% respectively for men and women) within ECOWAS, where around one in ten people of each sex had access. There was a very wide disparity between member states, with the lowest score for both sexes in Côte d'Ivoire (21.6% and 20.7% respectively for men and women) and the highest in Liberia (21.3% and 20.7% respectively for men and women). This poor access to loans was an obstacle to female entrepreneurship. This poor access to loans to undertake an economic activity is thought to be due to the fact that women were mainly active in the informal sector.

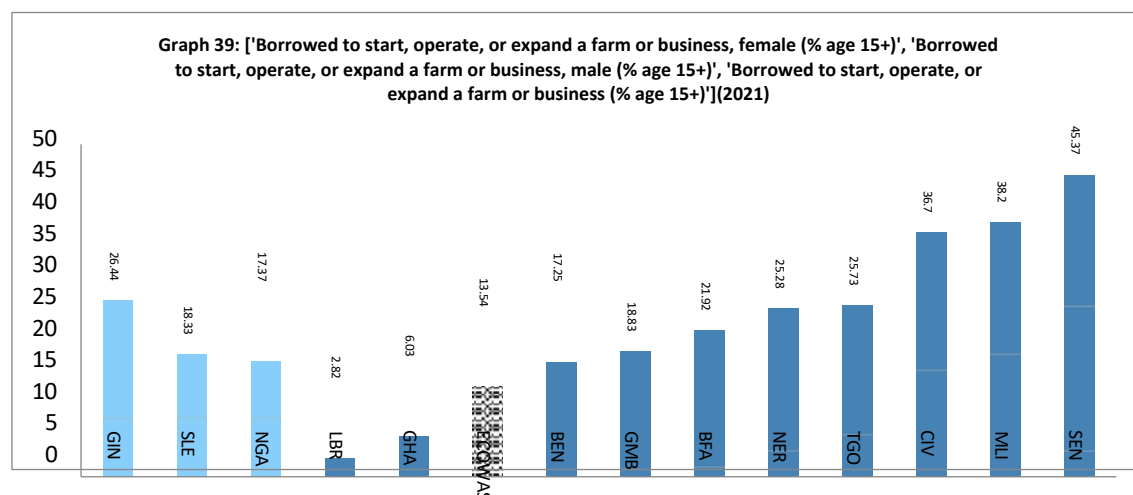
**Figure 5.12:** Proportion (%) of people who have borrowed money to start, operate, or expand a farm or business, by gender in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

An analysis of gender gaps shows that men were over-represented in access to loans in all ECOWAS countries with the exception of Guinea (26.4%), Sierra Leone (18.3%) and Nigeria (17.4%) where women predominate. In addition, the lowest gender gaps were recorded in Liberia (2.8%) and Ghana (6.0%).

**Figure 5.13:** Gaps (in %) between men and women in borrowing money to start, operate, or expand a farm or business in ECOWAS countries in 2021



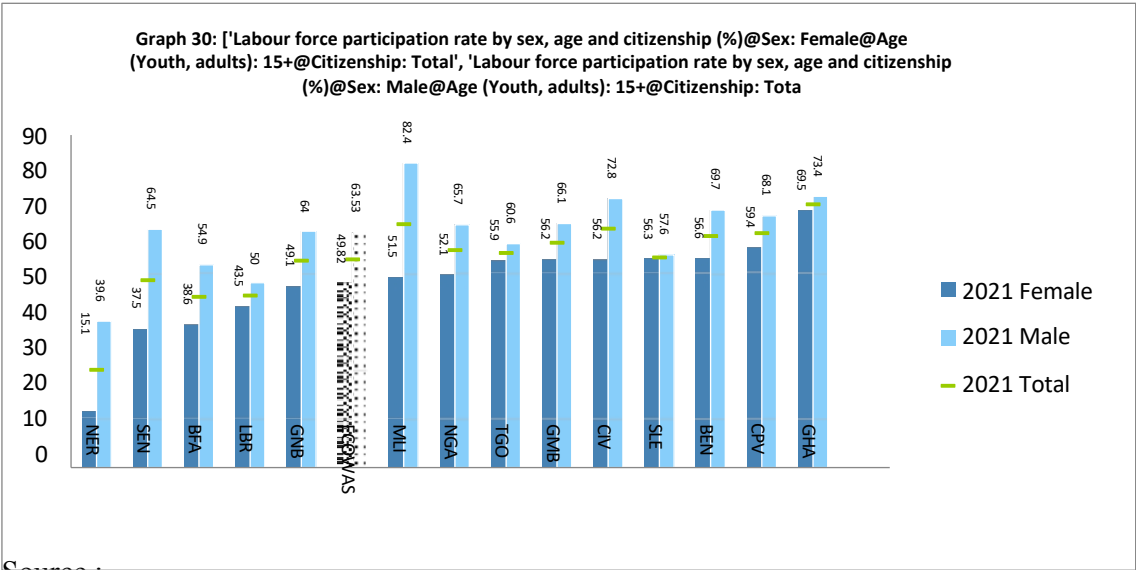
Source :

### 1.5.6. Labour force participation rate

The labour force participation rate represents the proportion of the working population in relation to the population of working age. This indicator measures the size of each gender's labour force (comprising all employed and unemployed people) in relation to its working-age population.

**Women's participation in the labour market was relatively lower than men's across all ECOWAS countries and the gap to achieve parity was relatively high.** In 2021, the labour market participation rate was systematically higher for men in all countries, with a regional average of 63.5% for men and 49.8% for women. For men, this rate varied between 39.6% (Niger) and 82.4% (Mali), while for women it varied between 15.1% (Niger) and 69.5% (Ghana).

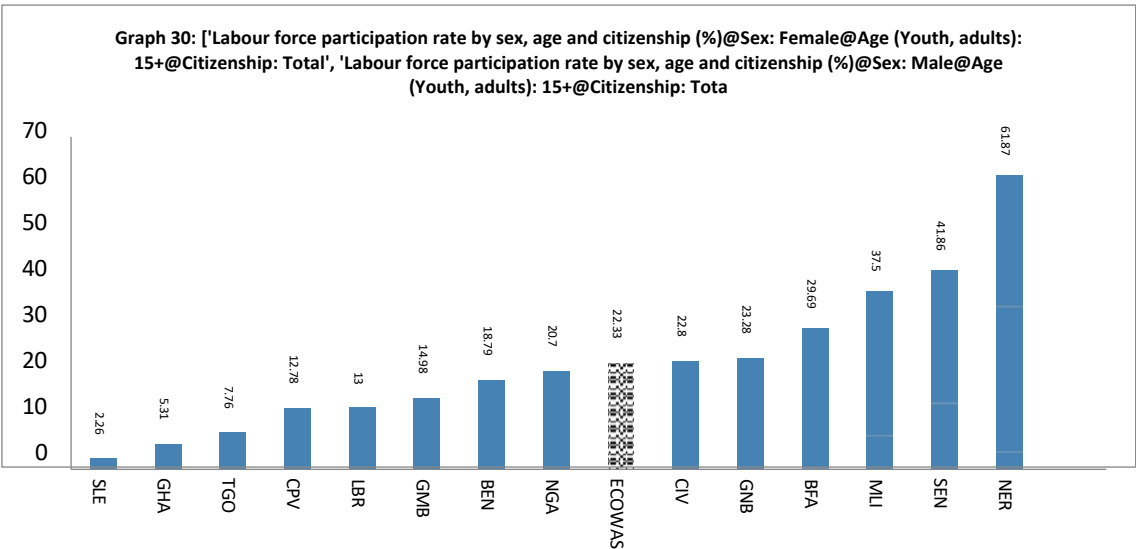
**Graph 5.14:** Labour force participation rate (%) by sex in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

In addition, the gender parity gap in labour market participation at ECOWAS level was 22.2 percentage points. In about a third of Member States, notably Burkina Faso (29.8%), Mali (37.5%), Senegal (41.9%) and Niger (61.9%), these gaps were greater than 25%.

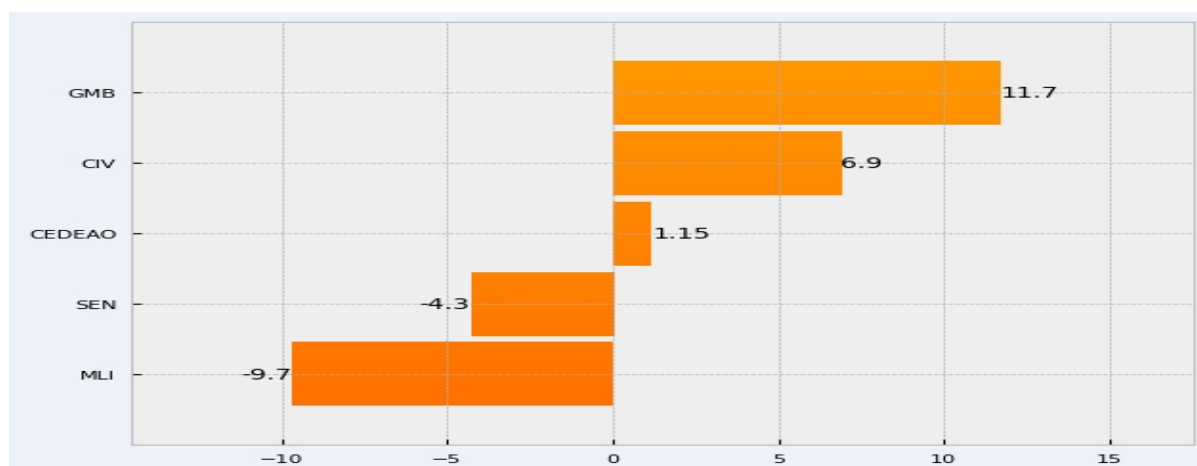
**Graph 5.15:** Gaps (in %) between men and women in labour market participation in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

**Overall, the gaps in participation in the labour market had increased more at regional level and in most countries.** An analysis of the evolution of these gaps shows that between 2017 and 2021, Mali (-9.7%) and Senegal (-4.3%) have made efforts to reduce them, while in Gambia (11.7%) and Côte d'Ivoire (6.9%) the gaps have widened further, reflecting the poor performance of these two countries in terms of women's participation in the labour market.

**Figure 5.16:** Change in gender gaps in labour market participation in ECOWAS countries between 2017 and 2021 (%)



Source :

### 1.5.7. Employment rate

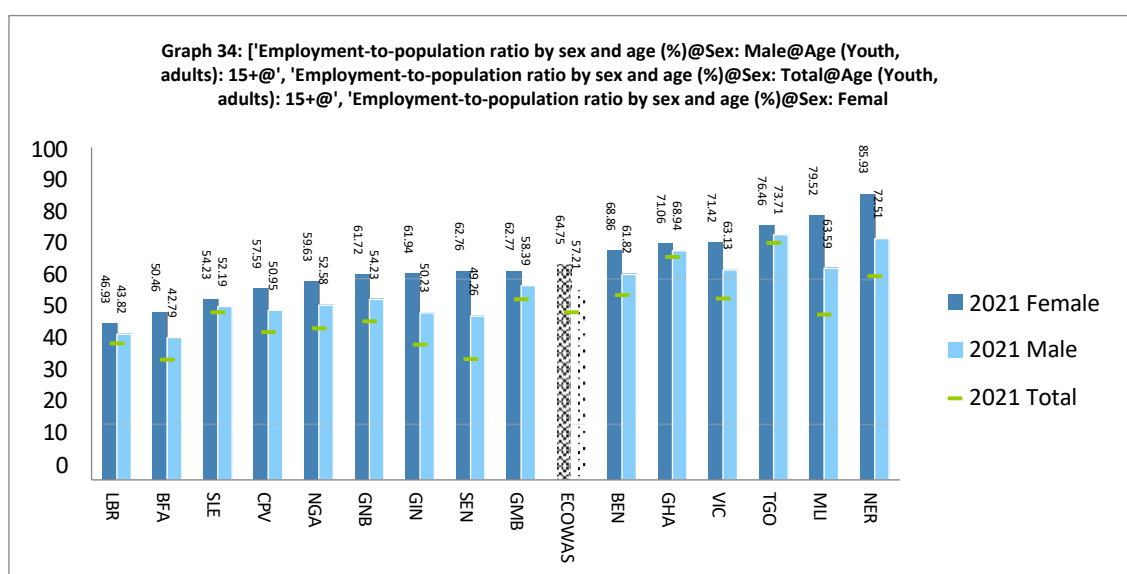
According to the ILO, the employment-to-population ratio (hereafter referred to as the employment rate) is the number of people in employment as a percentage of the total working-age population. It indicates the extent to which a country provides jobs for people who want to work. A high ratio means that a large proportion of the working-age population has a job.

**In contrast to the labour market participation rate, the employment rate is relatively higher for women in all ECOWAS countries, reflecting the fact that women are less exposed to unemployment than men.** On average, most men (57.2%) and women (64.8%) of working age were in employment in 2021. The structure of this employment rate varies considerably from country to country. Whatever the country considered, the score recorded by women was systematically higher than that of men in 2021, reflecting a better integration of women than men on the labour market. The lowest value of this indicator for women was recorded in

Liberia (46.9%) while the highest was in Niger (86.9%). In addition, the lowest and highest employment rates for men were recorded in Burkina Faso (43.8%) and Togo (73.7%) respectively.

Women's low exposure to unemployment is thought to be due to their over-representation in self-employment<sup>3</sup>, informal activities<sup>4</sup> and vulnerable jobs<sup>5</sup>, most of which pay them relatively lower monthly wages (PPP\$371.3) than men (PPP\$496.5).

**Graph 5.17:** Employment rate (in %) by gender in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

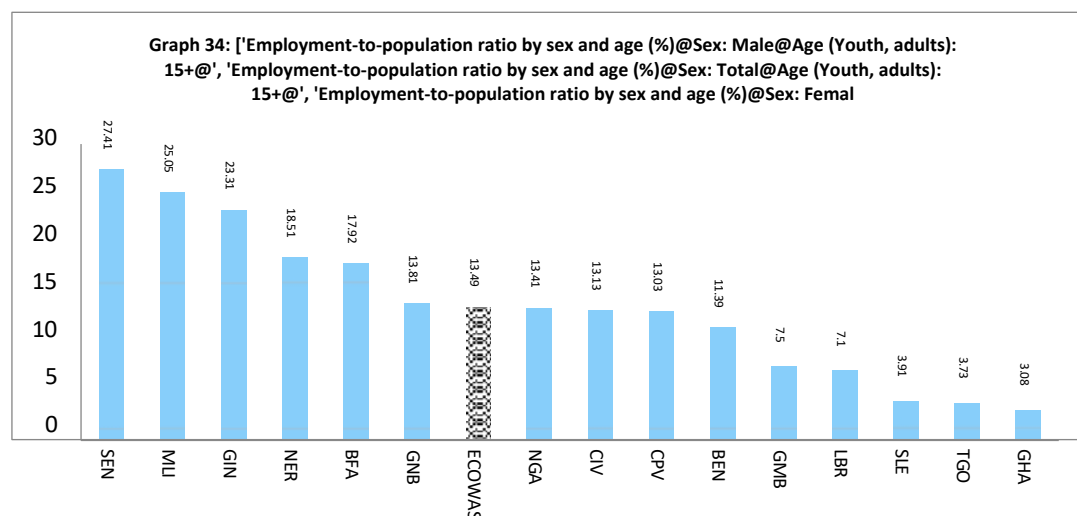
In 2021, the average gap in the employment rate between men and women in ECOWAS was 13.5%, with very wide variations between countries.

<sup>3</sup>85.4% and 72.8% respectively for women and men

<sup>4</sup>90.6% and 84.1% respectively for women and men

<sup>5</sup>84.3% and 70.3% respectively for women and men

**Graph 5.18:** Gaps (in %) between men and women in the employment rate in ECOWAS countries in 2021

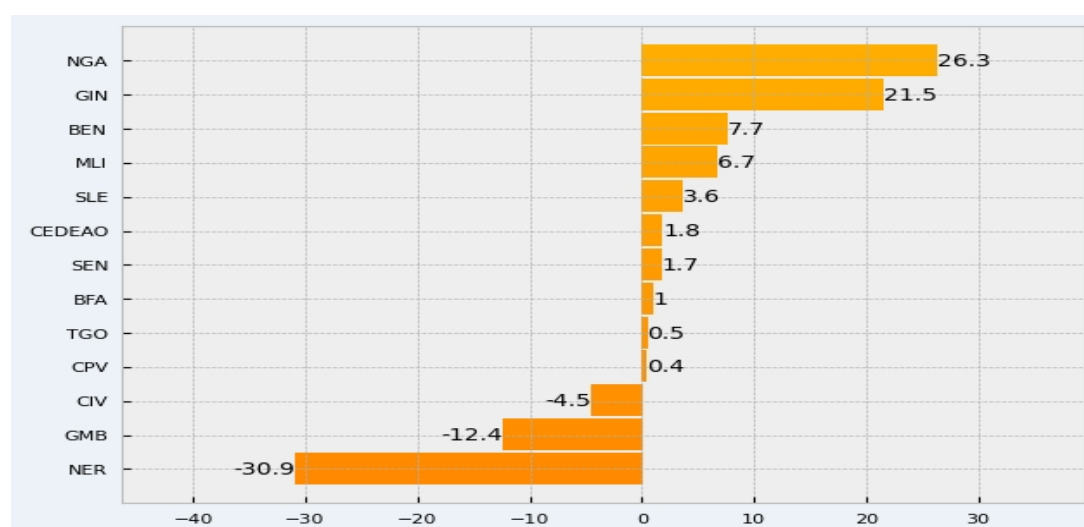


Source :

**Inequalities in the employment rate had widened to the detriment of men in most countries.**

With the exception of Niger (-30.9%), Gambia (-12.4%) and Côte d'Ivoire, which have made significant efforts to reduce the gap between men and women in terms of employability, inequality in the other countries has increased further, reflecting a backward step by these countries in terms of achieving parity in the employment rate of people of working age.

**Figure 5.19:** Change in the employment rate gap (in %) between men and women in ECOWAS countries from 2017 to 2021



Source :

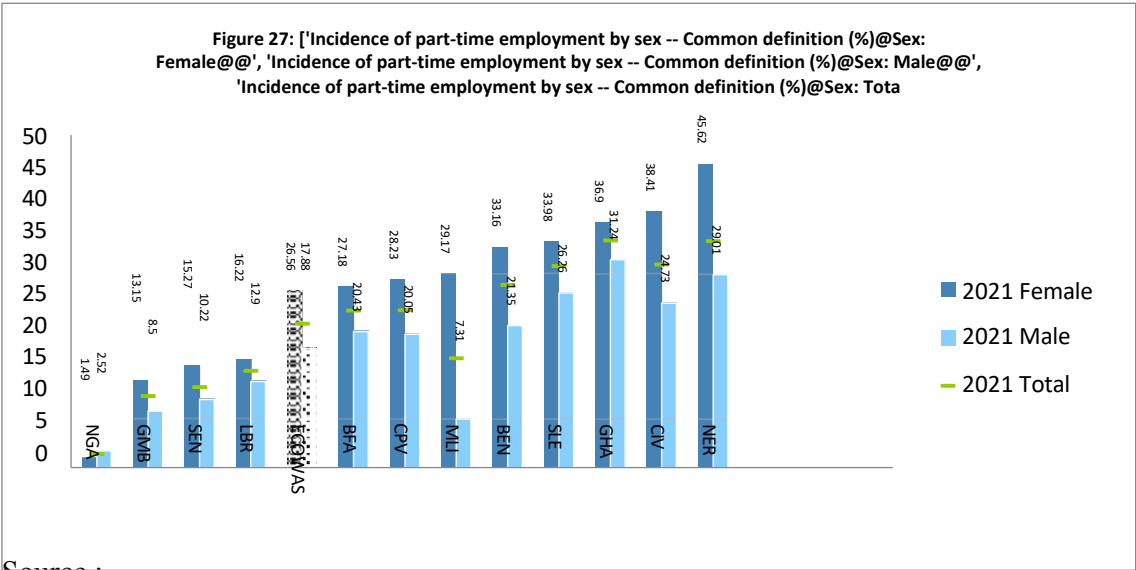
### **1.5.8. Part-time employment rate**

The incidence of part-time employment, also known as the part-time employment rate, represents the percentage of part-time jobs. According to the ILO approach, part-time employment is based on a common definition of less than 35 hours of actual weekly work.

**The rate of part-time employment is relatively higher for women in almost all countries, with gaps of up to 300%, due to socio-cultural factors that attribute most unpaid domestic work to women.** With the exception of Nigeria, the rate of part-time employment is essentially higher for women. On average in ECOWAS, this rate was 26.6% and 17.5% respectively for women and men in 2021. This result is hardly surprising insofar as West Africa is the region in which socio-cultural factors assign most unpaid domestic work to women, forcing them either not to participate in the labour market or to divide their time between domestic and income-generating work. In addition, West Africa is also one of the regions with the highest fertility rates in the world. This factor could also force a large proportion of women to invest a lot of time in maternity or unpaid care for their young children (under the age of six). Building crèches and childcare facilities in or near workplaces could significantly reduce the time women spend on childcare, thereby increasing the time they spend in work.

An analysis of this indicator across countries shows that recourse to part-time employment was an uncommon phenomenon among workers in Nigeria, which recorded the lowest rates for both men and women. The Gambia, Senegal and Liberia also had relatively low rates of part-time employment compared with the other countries.

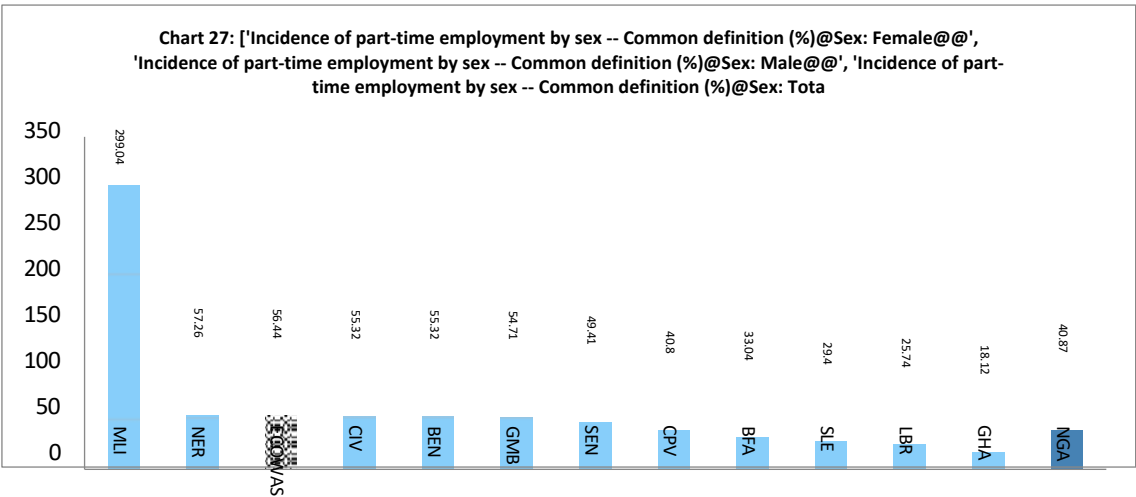
**Graph 5.20:** Part-time employment rate (in %) by gender in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

The average amplitude of the gaps between the two sexes is very high overall in ECOWAS, where the score for women is 56.4% higher than that for men. In Mali, where the highest absolute gap was recorded, women's part-time employment rate was three times higher than that of men.

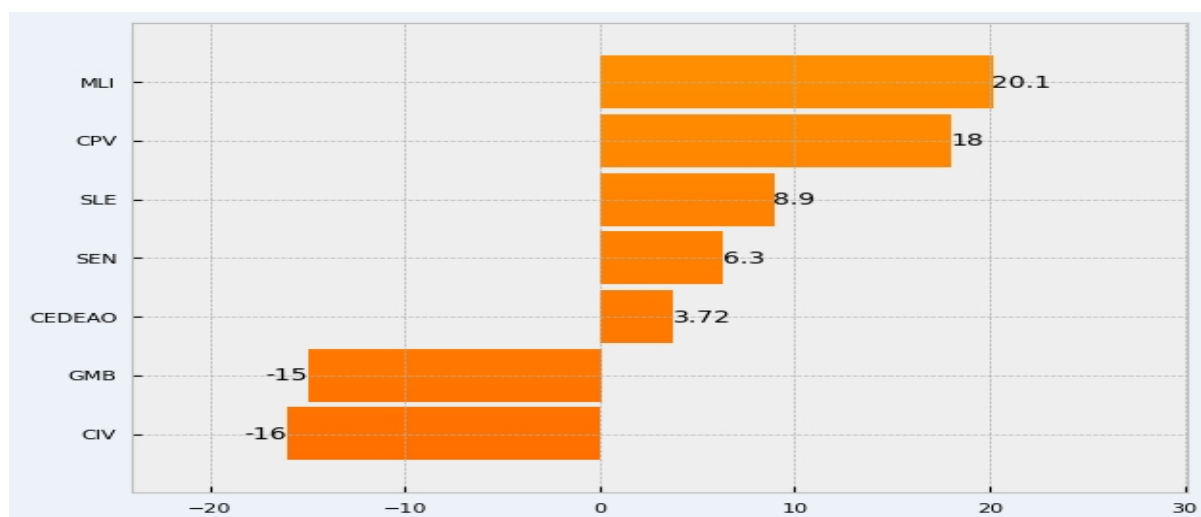
**Graph 5.21:** Gender gaps in part-time employment in ECOWAS countries in 2021 (%)



Source :

**The gender parity gap had widened in almost all countries, by up to 20%.** Between 2017 and 2021, the gender gap widened further in all countries except Côte d'Ivoire (-1.6%) and Gambia (-1.5%). The gender gap increased by an average of 3.2% in ECOWAS, reflecting an intensification of inequalities in relation to this indicator.

**Graph 5.22:** Change in the gap (in %) in part-time jobs held by men and women in ECOWAS countries between 2017 and 2021

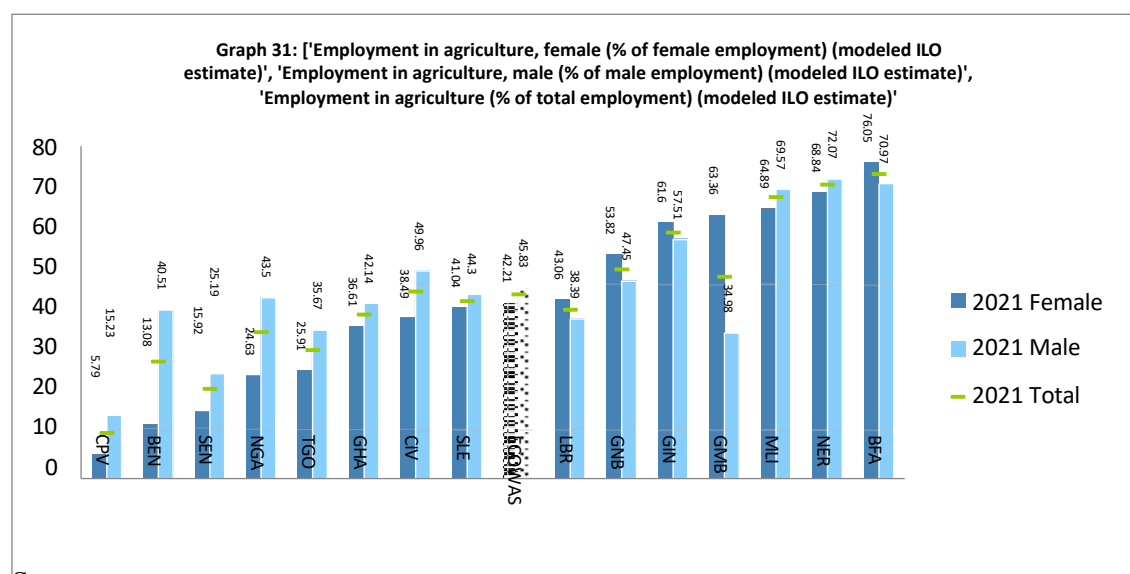


### 1.5.9. Proportion of jobs in agriculture

Employment in the agricultural sector is measured by the proportion of jobs in this sector in relation to the total number of jobs held by people of each sex. According to the ILO, the agricultural sector includes farming, hunting, forestry and fishing.

**The agricultural sector was essentially dominated by men, and the gender parity gap has almost been closed in Niger.** At ECOWAS level, men (45.8%) were on average more dominant than women (42.2%) in the agricultural sector in 2021. This preponderance was observed in all countries except Burkina Faso, Guinea, Gambia and Liberia, where women were over-represented. There was also great variability in the structure of this sector in terms of the gender of workers in the Member States. For women, the lowest scores were recorded in Cape Verde (15.2%) and the highest in Burkina Faso (71.0%), while for men the scores ranged from 15.2% in Cape Verde to 72.1% in Niger.

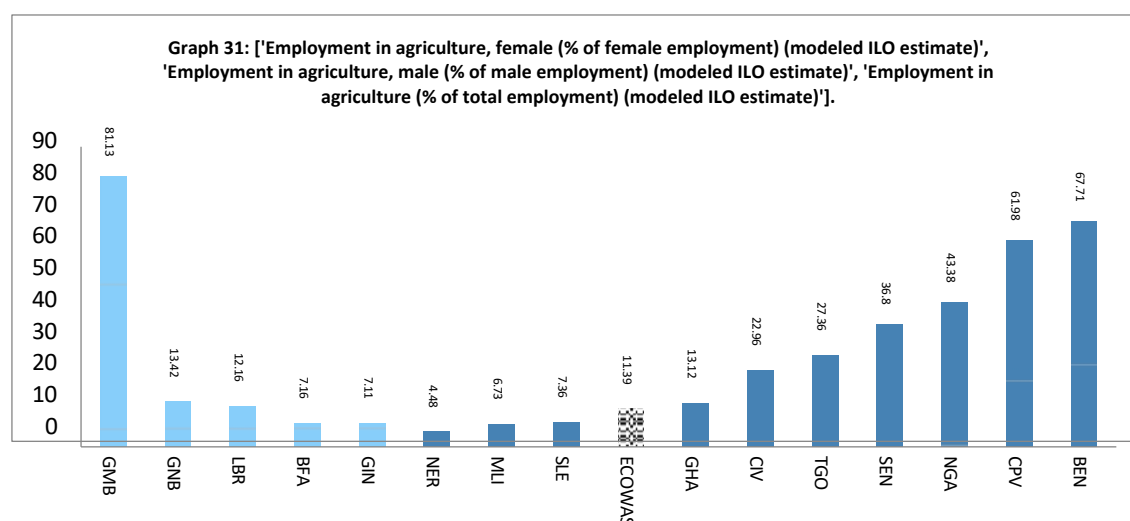
**Graph 5.23:** Employment in agriculture by gender in ECOWAS countries in 2021 (%)



Source :

The gap for achieving parity at ECOWAS level, in terms of the proportion of employment in the agricultural sector, was 11.4% in 2021. This gap varied widely across countries, with the lowest gaps recorded in Niger (4.5%) and Mali (6.7%) and the highest gaps recorded in Gambia (81.1%), Benin (67.7%) and Cape Verde (62.0%).

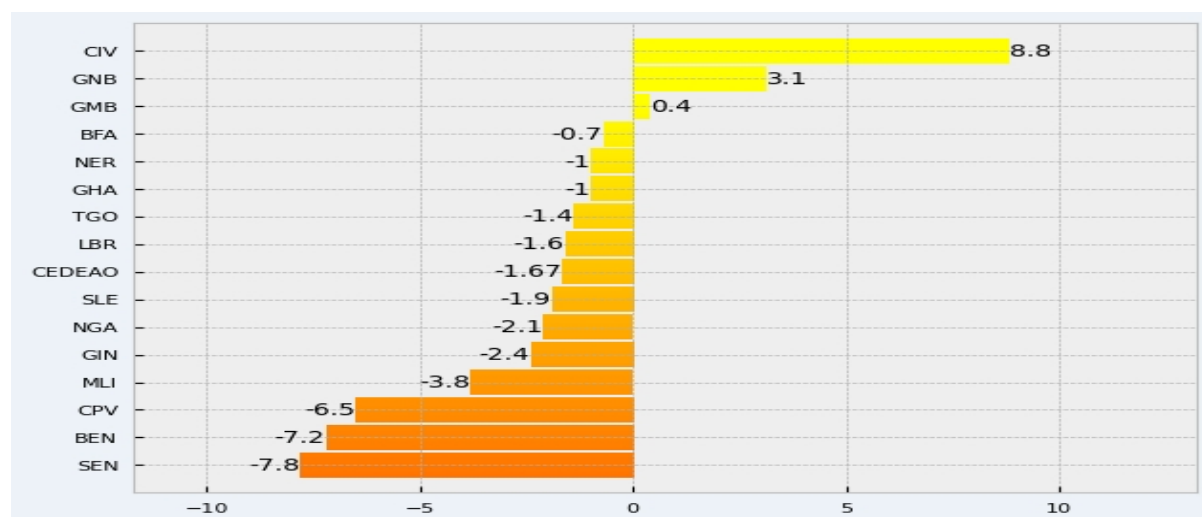
**Graph 5.24:** Employment gaps (in %) between men and women in the agricultural sector in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

**Most Member States had made significant efforts to reduce gender gaps in order to achieve parity.** With the exception of Côte d'Ivoire (8.8%), Guinea-Bissau (3.1%) and Gambia (0.4%), these gaps have narrowed in the other countries, reflecting the progress they have made in achieving gender equality in jobs in the agricultural sector.

**Figure 5.25:** Change in the gap (in %) in jobs held by men and women in the agricultural sector in ECOWAS countries between 2017 and 2021



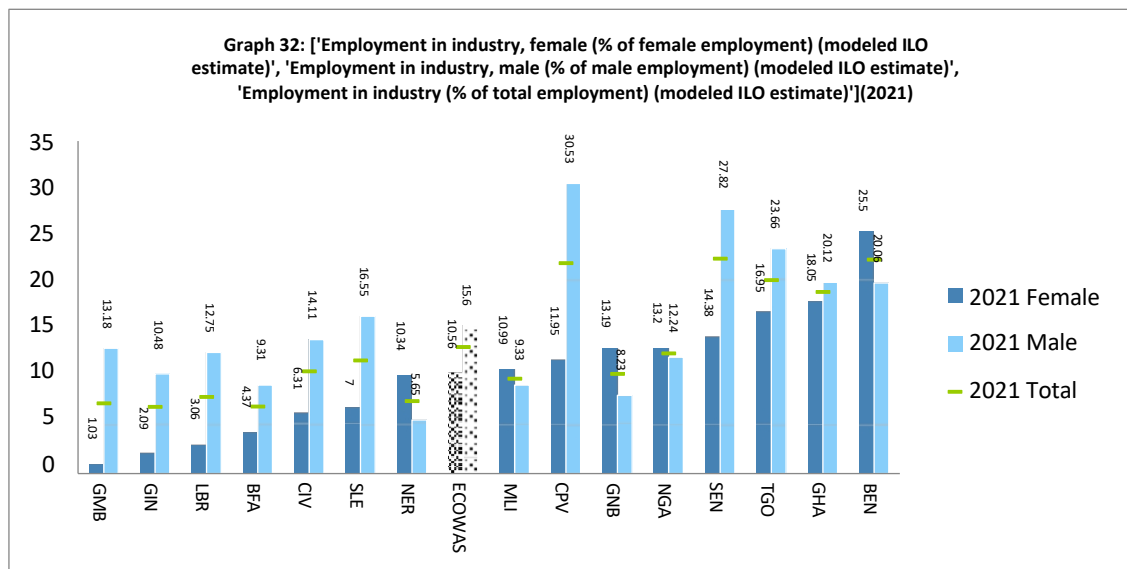
Source :

### 1.5.10 Proportion of jobs in the industrial sector

The indicator measuring jobs in industry is defined as the proportion of jobs in this sector in relation to the total number of jobs held by people of each sex. According to the ILO classification, this sector includes mining and quarrying, manufacturing, construction and utilities (electricity, gas and water).

**There is a very strong predominance of men in the industrial sector in most Member States.** In 2021, jobs in the industrial sector were much more occupied by men (15.6%), who were five percentage points more numerous than women (10.6%). There were wide variations in this statistic across the Member States. Scores for women ranged from 1.0% (Gambia) to 25.5% (Benin), while scores for men ranged from 5.7% (Niger) to 30.5% (Cape Verde).

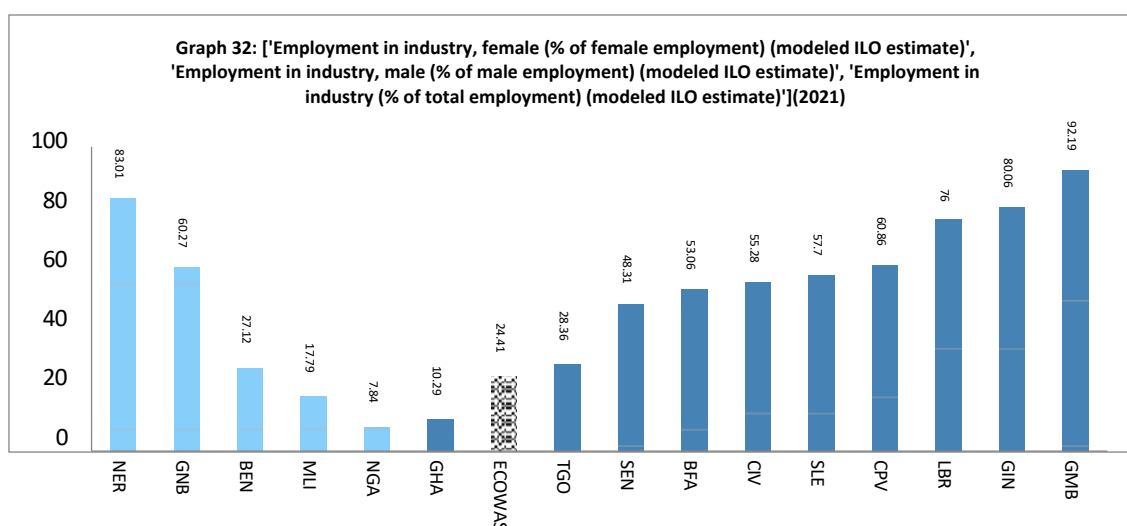
**Figure 5.26:** Proportion of employment (in %) in the industry sector by gender in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

The average gender parity gap in ECOWAS is 24.4%, reflecting the disparity between the sexes. In contrast to the other countries, in Niger (83.0%), Guinea Bissau (60.3%), Benin (27.1%), Mali (17.8%) and Nigeria (7.8%) there was an over-representation of women compared to men.

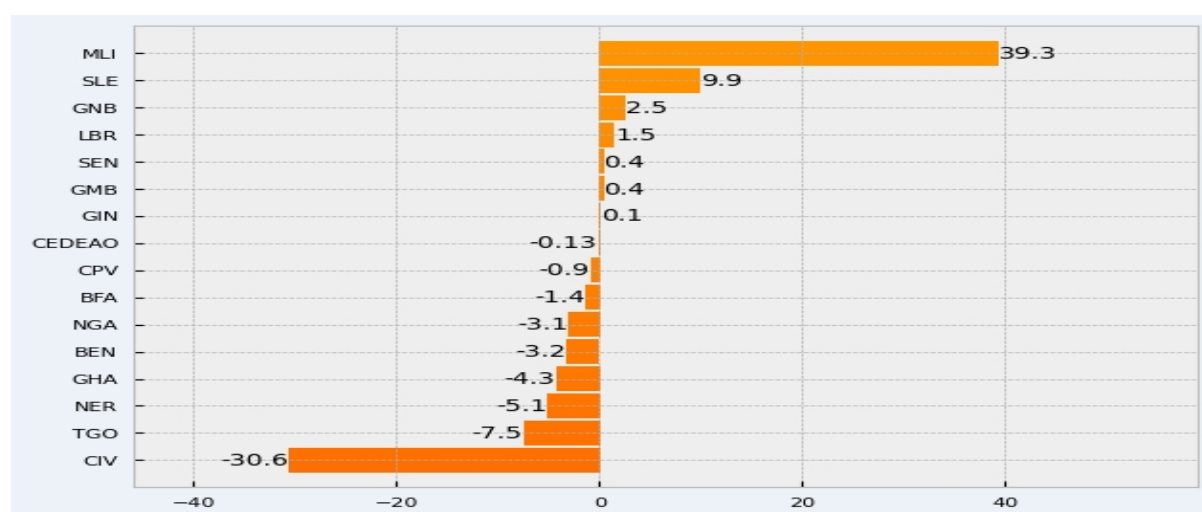
**Figure 5.27:** Gaps (in %) in employment between men and women in the industrial sector in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

**A reduction in the parity gaps recorded in the majority of Member States.** From 2017 to 2021, progress had been made in eight of the 15 Member States in reducing inequalities between men and women. The greatest progress was made in Côte d'Ivoire (-30.6%), Togo (-7.5%) and Niger (-5.1%), where the gap was reduced by more than five percentage points. At the level of ECOWAS (-0.1%), the reduction in the gap remains marginal, which implies that additional efforts need to be made to close the parity gap, which remains very high, to the disadvantage of women, who are mainly concentrated in informal and vulnerable jobs.

**Figure 5.28:** Change in the gap (in %) between men's and women's jobs in the industrial sector in ECOWAS countries from 2017 to 2021



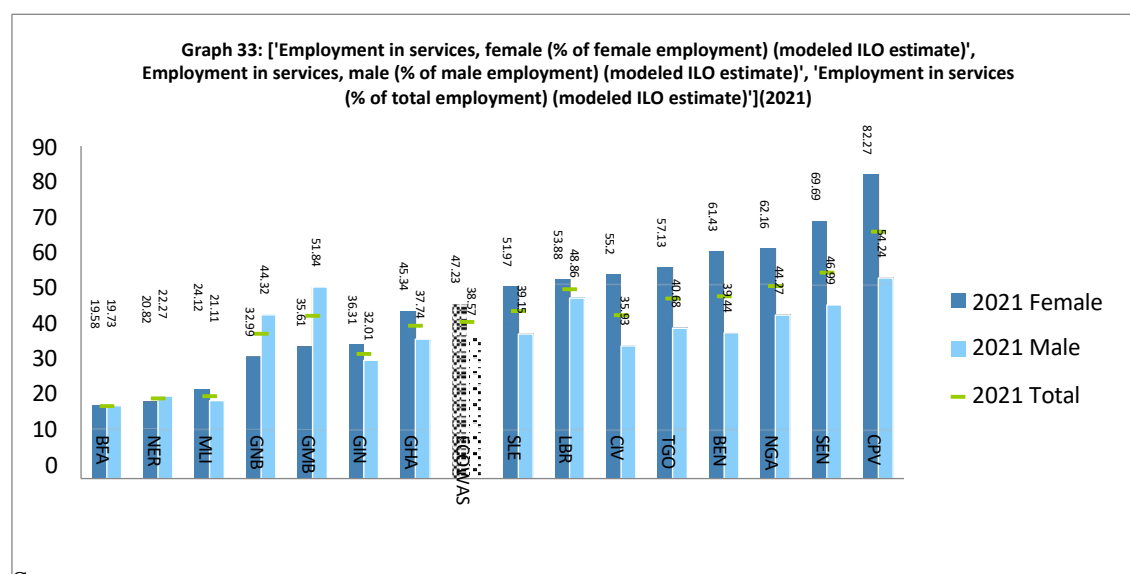
Source :

### 1.5.11. Proportion of jobs in services

The measure of jobs in services for a given gender is the proportion of jobs in services in relation to the total number of jobs held by people of that gender. According to the ILO, the services sector includes wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels, transport, storage and communications, finance, insurance, real estate and business services, as well as community, social and personal services.

**An over-representation of women in services, where Burkina Faso had almost closed the parity gap.** On average, women (47.2%) were more predominant than men (38.6%) in this sector in ECOWAS in 2021. The gender structure of this sector varies considerably across countries.

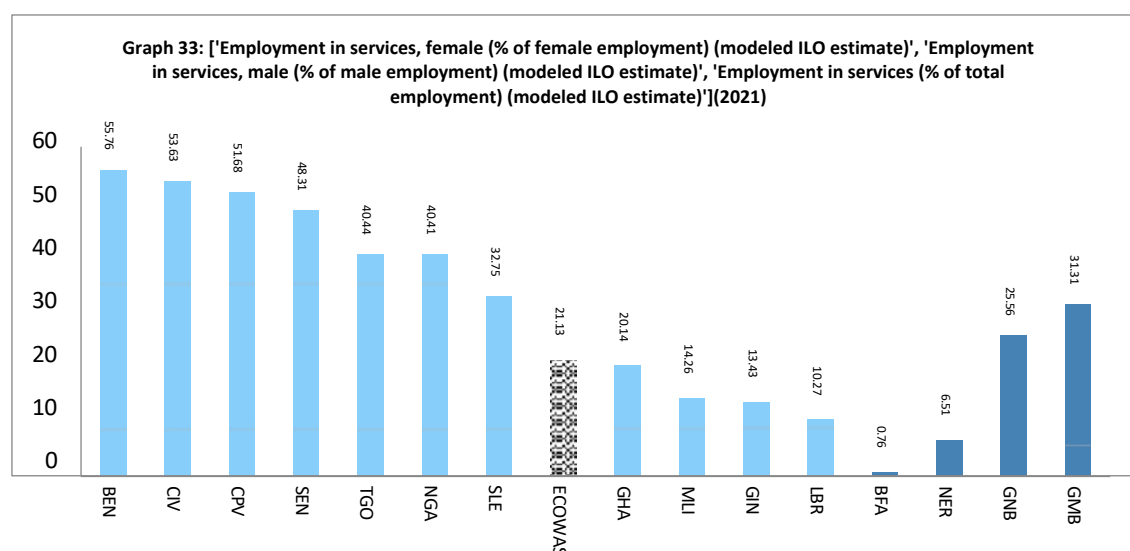
**Figure 5.29:** Employment in services by gender in ECOWAS countries in 2021 (%)



Source :

An analysis of the gender gap shows that Burkina Faso (0.8%) is the only country where gender equality was almost achieved. Furthermore, in Gambia (31.3%), Guinea Bissau (25.6%) and Niger (6.5%) the service sector was dominated by men, while in all the other countries women were more predominant.

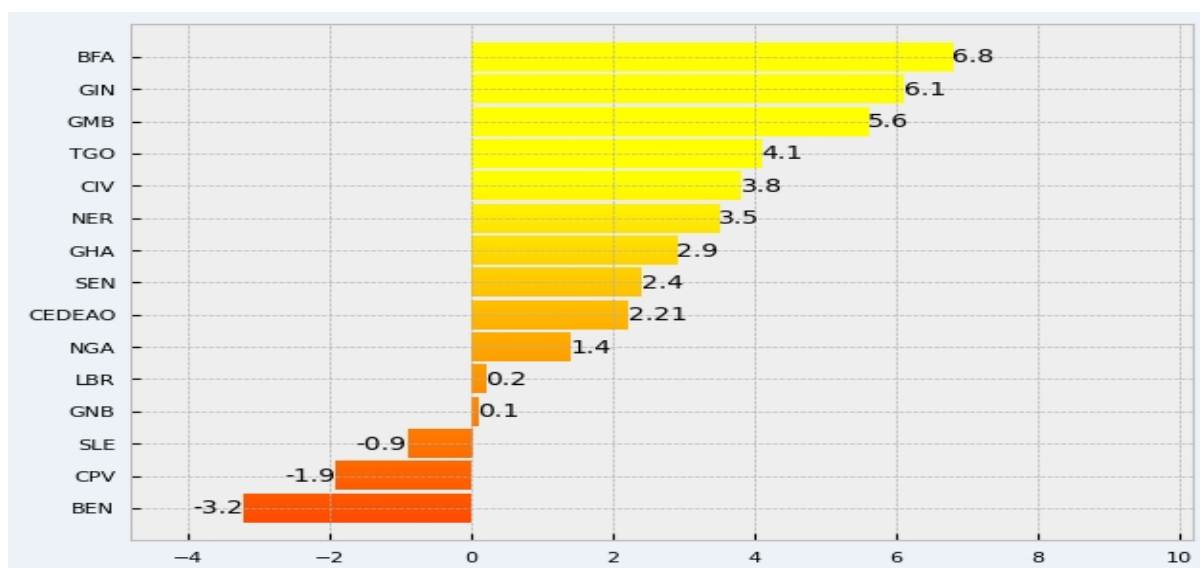
**Figure 5.30:** Gaps (in %) between men's and women's employment in the services sector in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

**The gender parity gap had widened in favour of women in most Member States.** From 2017 to 2021, efforts were made in Benin (-3.2%), Cape Verde (-1.9%) and Sierra Leone (-0.9%) to reduce the gender gap. In Guinea-Bissau (0.1%) and Liberia (0.2%), the gaps remained almost constant between the two years, while in the other countries the inequalities widened, reflecting their poor performance in achieving gender equality on this indicator.

**Figure 5.31:** Change in gaps (%) in jobs held by men and women in the services sector in ECOWAS countries from 2017 to 2021



Source :

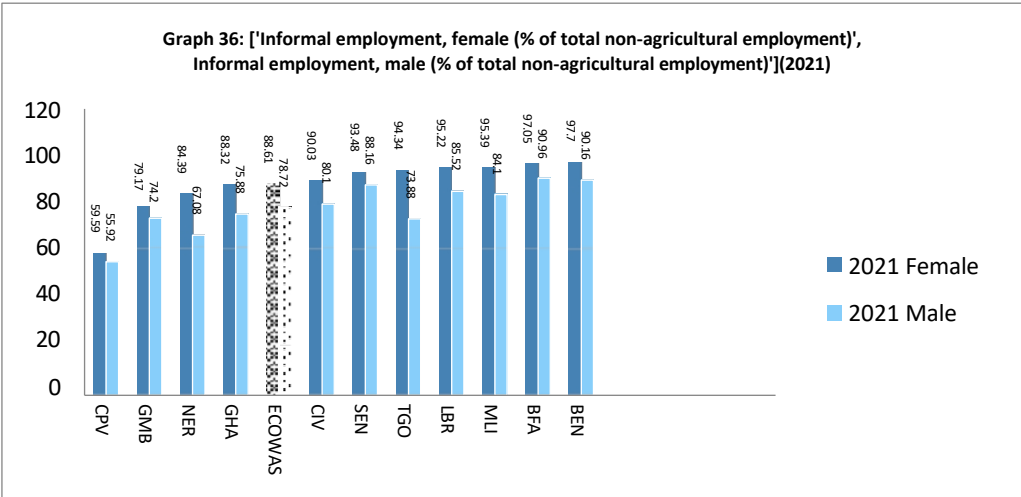
#### 1.5.12. Proportion of informal jobs in relation to non-agricultural jobs

Jobs in the informal economy are measured as a percentage of total non-agricultural employment. These are essentially all jobs in unregistered and/or small-scale private enterprises that produce goods or services for sale or barter. According to the ILO classification, these jobs include self-employed street vendors, taxi drivers and homeworkers of all sizes.

**The informal sector was predominantly female in all ECOWAS Member States, with gaps exceeding 25% in Togo.** In 2021, women were more present in the informal sector in ECOWAS, with a regional average score of 88.3% compared with 78.7% for men. This over-representation of women was recorded in the majority (seven out of 11 countries for which data is available) of Member States. Benin (97.7% and 90.2% respectively for women and men) and Burkina (97.1% and

and 91.0% respectively for women and men) recorded the highest proportions for both sexes. The over-representation of women in the informal sector, which includes insecure jobs such as self-employed street vendors and home workers, would appear to be a limiting factor for them in developing their activities, given the poor access of these types of employment to financial services, particularly banking services.

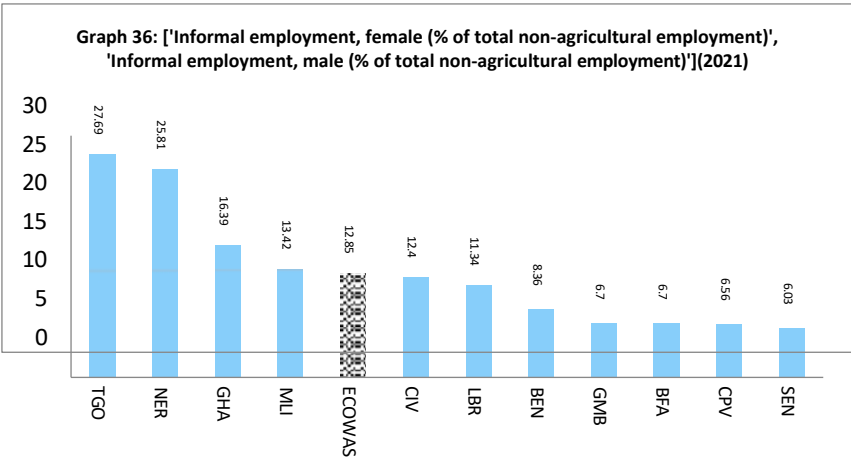
**Figure 5.32:** Proportion of informal employment compared to non-agricultural employment by gender in ECOWAS countries in 2021 (%)



Source :

The gender parity gap was relatively high. It ranged from 6.0% in Senegal to 27.7% in Togo, giving a regional average of 12.9%.

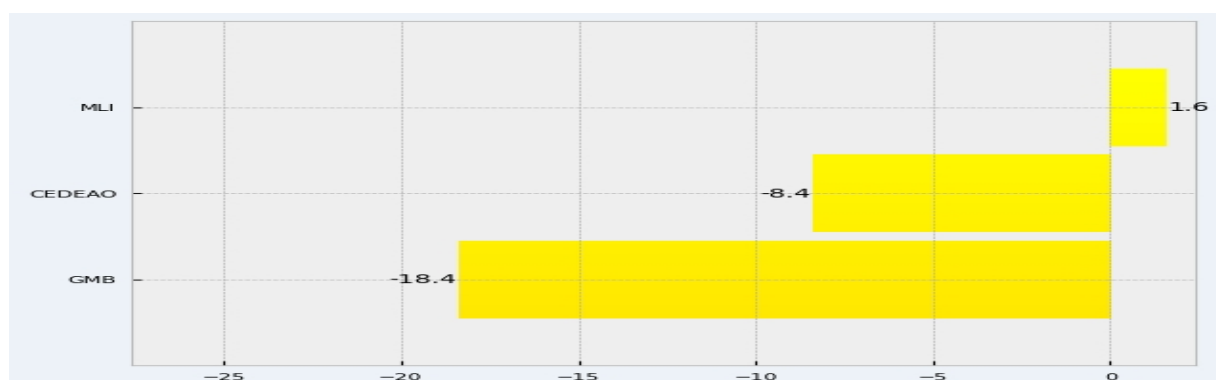
**Graph 5.33:** Gaps (in %) between men's and women's employment in the informal sector in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

Unlike Mali, the Gambia had made significant progress in formalising its economy. As the informal sector is often characterised by precarious working conditions and the vulnerability of workers, governments will have to make further efforts to reduce informality in their economies.

**Figure 5.33:** Change in the gap (in %) between men's and women's jobs in the informal sector in ECOWAS countries from 2017 to 2021



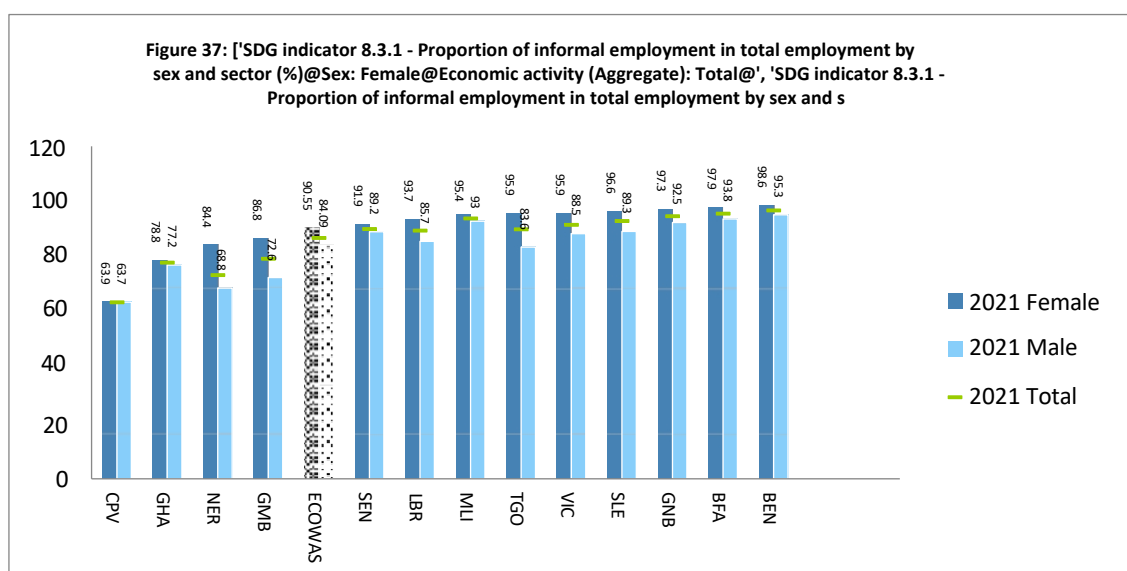
Source :

### 1.5.13. Proportion of informal jobs in total employment

This indicator reflects the share of informal employment in total employment. According to the ILO, employment comprises all persons of working age who, during a specified brief period, were in paid employment or self-employment.

**Employment in ECOWAS was mainly informal, with a preponderance of women in all member states except Cape Verde, where parity was achieved.** In 2021, employment in the various ECOWAS countries was essentially informal. On average, 90.6% of employed women and 84.1% of employed men worked in the informal sector. The scores recorded in two-thirds of the countries were higher than those for the region as a whole, indicating the scale of this sector in the ECOWAS economy.

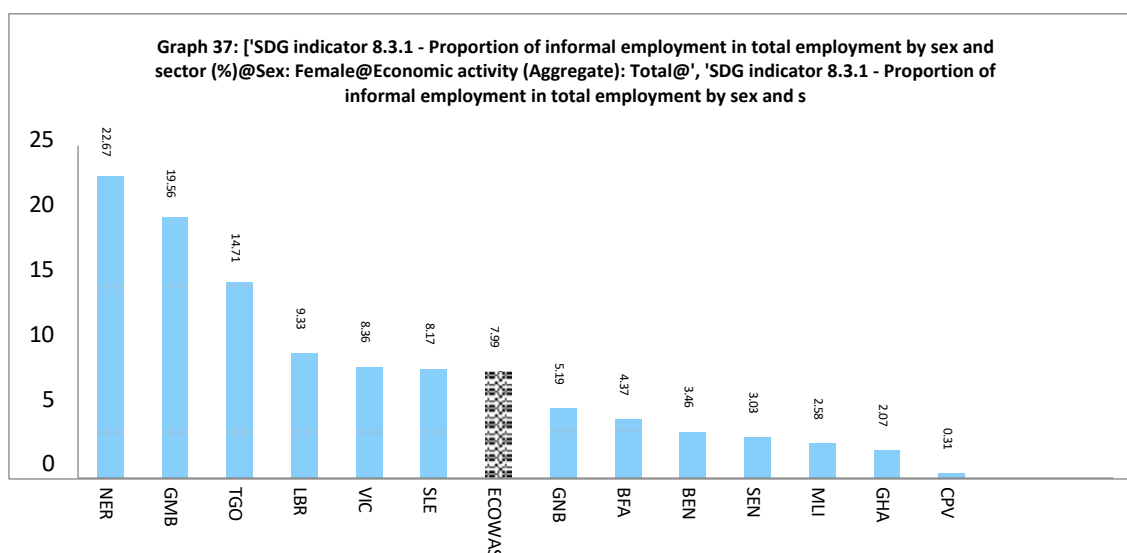
**Graph 5.34:** Proportion (in %) of informal jobs in total employment by gender in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

Apart from Cape Verde (0.3%), where parity was observed, the other countries were characterised by an over-representation of women in the informal sector. The size of the gaps varied greatly between countries, with a maximum score of 22.7% in Niger and a regional average of 8.0%.

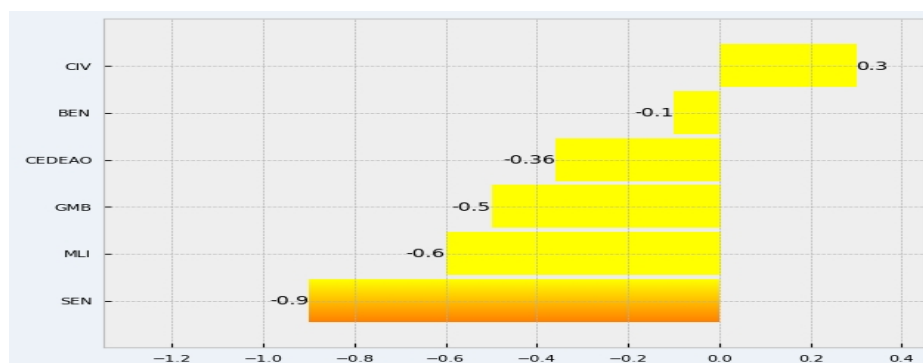
**Graph 5.35:** Gaps (in %) between men's and women's employment in the informal sector in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

Almost all the countries for which data were available recorded a relatively small fall in these gaps (less than 1%) between 2017 and 2021.

**Figure 5.36:** Change in the gap (in %) between men's and women's employment in the informal sector in ECOWAS countries between 2017 and 2021



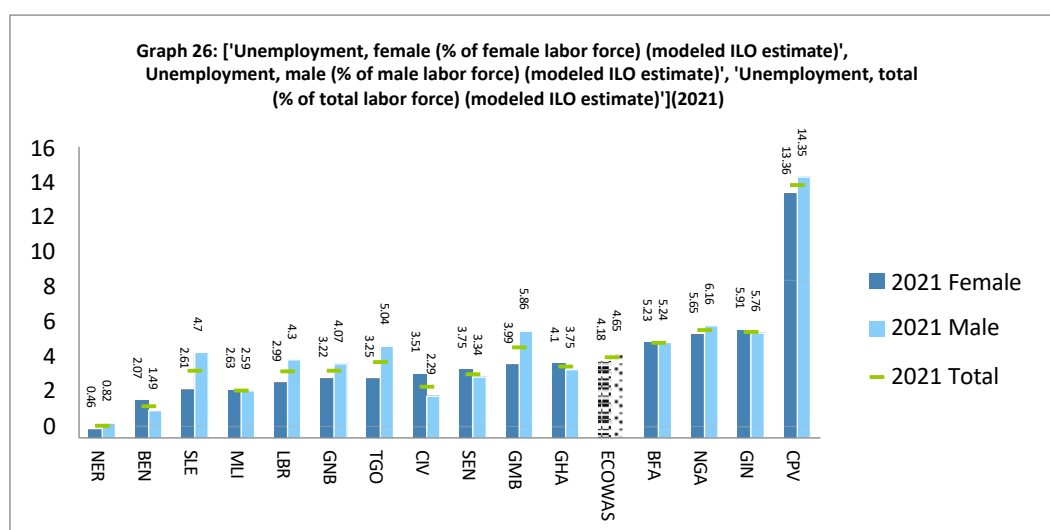
Source :

#### 1.5.14. Unemployment rate

The unemployment rate corresponds to the proportion of the working population who are unemployed but available and looking for work.

**The unemployment rate is relatively low, affecting women less because of their high level of participation in entrepreneurial activities and informal employment.** The unemployment rate is relatively low, with scores below 6% in all ECOWAS countries except Cape Verde, where the score for each gender (13.4% and 14.4% respectively for women and men) is around three times higher than the average for the region (4.2% and 4.7% respectively for women and men).

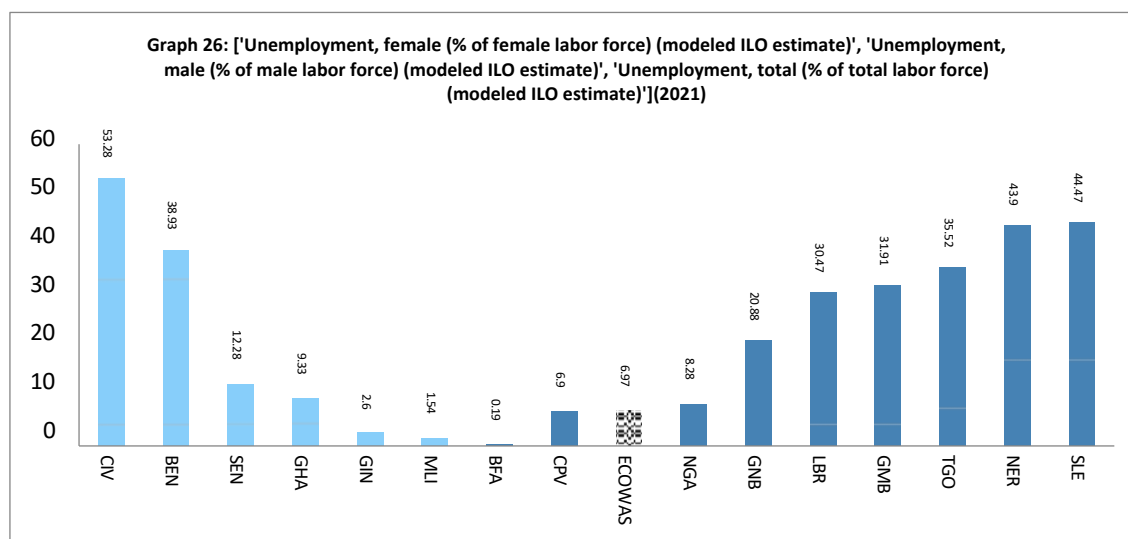
**Graph 5.37:** Unemployment rate (in %) by gender in ECOWAS countries in 2021



Source :

Burkina Faso (0.2%) and to a lesser extent Mali (1.5%) and Guinea (2.6%) are the Member States that have almost closed the gender parity gap.

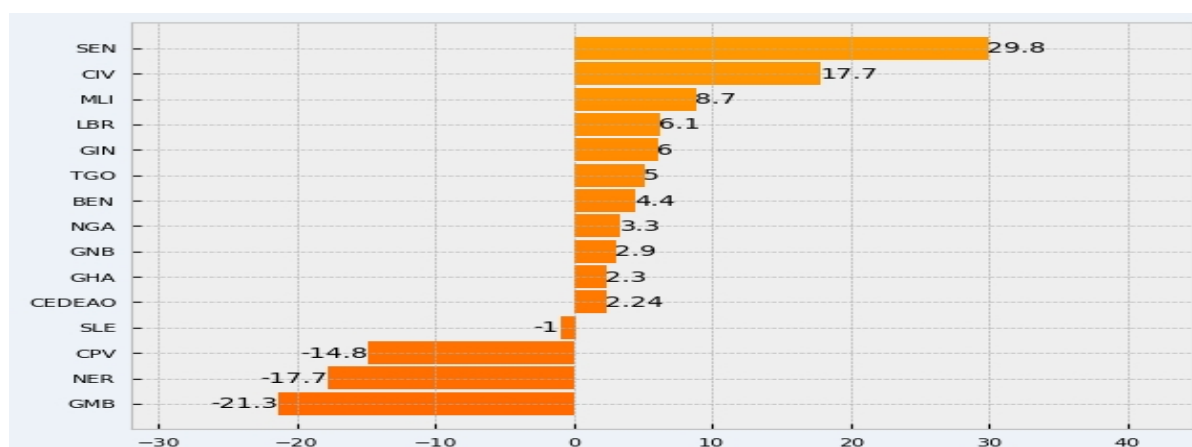
**Graph 5.38:** Unemployment rate differentials (in %) for men and women in the ECOWAS countries in 2021 (in %)



Source :

**Gender gaps had increased considerably in most Member States.** From 2017 to 2021, gender disparities had increased by an average of 2.2% at regional level. In addition, Senegal (29.8%) and Côte d'Ivoire (17.7%) were the Member States in which the gaps for achieving parity in unemployment had increased the most.

**Graph 5.39:** Change in unemployment rate gaps (in %) between men and women in ECOWAS countries between 2017 and 2021



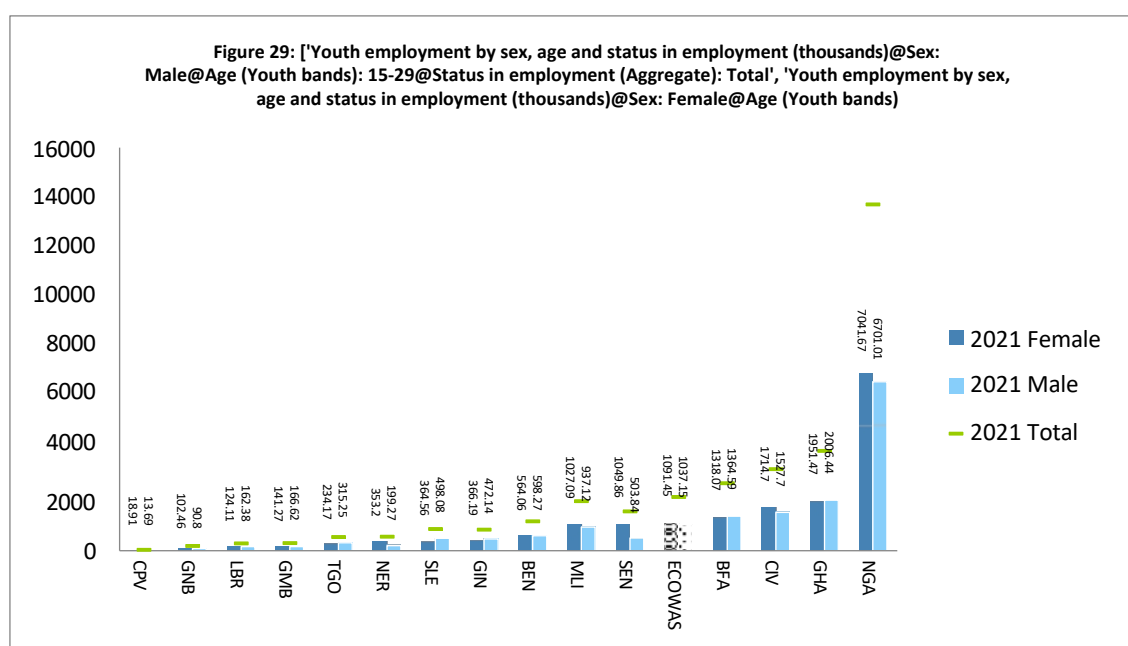
Source :

### 1.5.15. Employment of young people aged 15-29

This indicator measures the number (in thousands) of 15-29 year olds in employment, i.e. all persons in this age group who, during a specified short period, were in paid employment or self-employment.

**On average, young people aged 15-29 in employment were mainly women, who are over-represented in the majority of Member States.** These statistics confirm the general trend of over-representation of women in the employed population in ECOWAS in 2021.

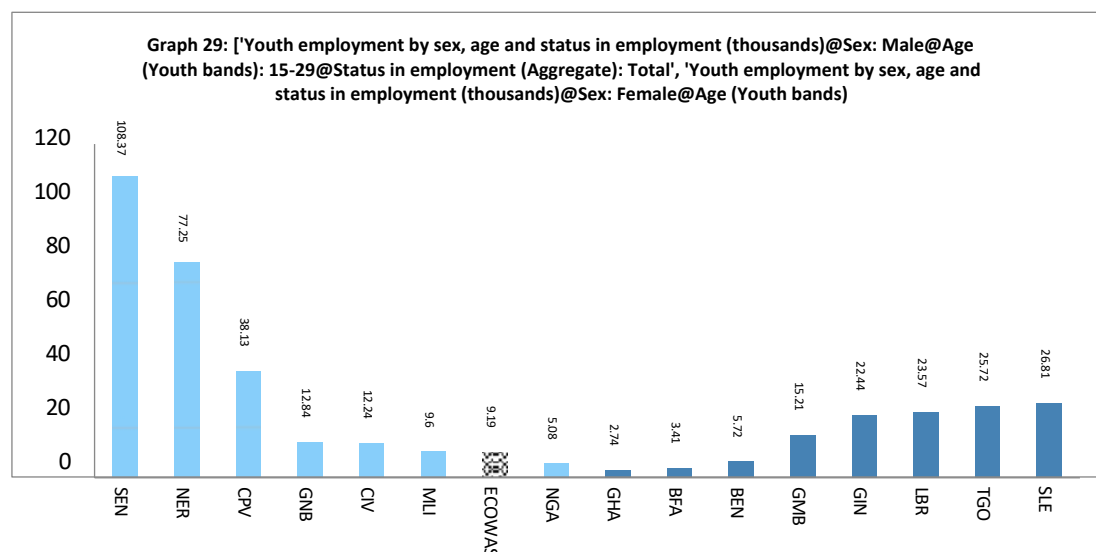
**Graph 5.40:** Youth employment by gender in ECOWAS countries in 2021 (numbers in thousands)



Source :

This over-representation of women was observed in about half of the ECOWAS countries, with the highest scores recorded in Senegal (108370), Niger (77250) and Cape Verde (38130).

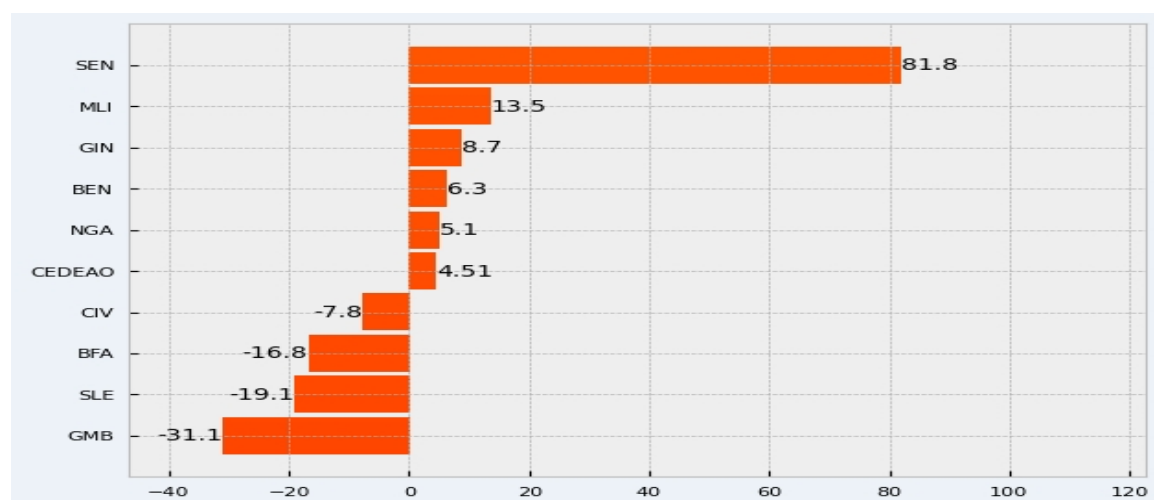
**Figure 5.41:** Gender gaps in youth employment in ECOWAS countries in 2021 (numbers in thousands)



Source :

**On average from 2017 to 2021, the parity gap had widened further in favour of women.** Indeed, the relative advantage of women aged 15-29 in the labour market had become greater at regional level. In addition, Senegal (81.8%) and Mali (13.5%) were the Member States in which gender disparities had increased by more than 10%. The Gambia (31.1%), Sierra Leone (19.1%) and Burkina Faso (16.8%), on the other hand, recorded a clear reduction in this disparity.

**Figure 5.42:** Change in the employment gap (in %) between men and women aged 15-29 in ECOWAS countries between 2017 and 2021



Source :

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