Intersectionality (noun)
/ˌɪnˌtɛrˈsɛkʃənələdē/
“The complex and cumulative manner in which the effects of different forms of discrimination (such as those based on race, class and gender) combine, overlap or intersect.”

In other words, whether you are born a boy or a girl, where you live, what kind of work your parents do, which ethnic group you belong to, among other characteristics, determine your chances in life to a great extent.

Averages do not tell the whole story. As these examples of intersectional analysis show, when inequalities combine or overlap, women at these intersections experience acute disadvantage.

By signing up to the 2030 Agenda, governments committed to ‘leave no one behind’. This commitment means they must invest in data and innovative research and analysis that make visible the needs of women and girls facing overlapping forms of discrimination. Using these data, inclusive evidence-based policies and programmes are needed that redress past injustices, combat stigma and stereotyping and ensure the voices of excluded women and girls are heard. In doing so, it will be possible to move the promise to leave no one behind from rhetoric to reality.

In Nigeria, 49.4% of women and girls aged 20 to 49 reported no say in decisions related to their own health care, own earnings or in large household purchases. In the Philippines, 13.7% of women and girls aged 15 to 49 reported no say in decisions related to their own health care, own earnings or in large household purchases.

In Kenya, 73.3% of the poorest rural households have no access to improved water sources compared to 4.5% of the richest urban households. In Iraq, 25.4% of young women in the poorest households in the Kurdistan region gave birth before the age of 18 compared to 0.8% of Kikuyu women in the richest urban households.