

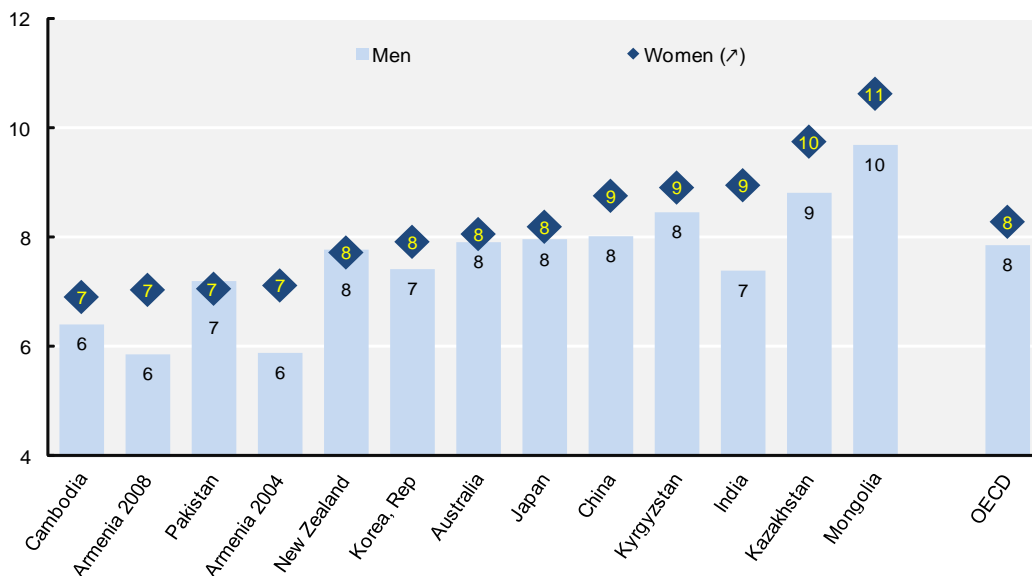
Society at a Glance

Asia/Pacific 2011

This second edition of *Society at a Glance: Asia/Pacific* includes comparative data for 36 countries and economies, across five areas, including equity; health; and social cohesion. The report includes a special chapter on how people spend their time in the Asia/Pacific Region, based on data for 13 countries.

Women in Asia/Pacific tend to work longer hours than men, except in Pakistan and New Zealand. People work the longest in Mongolia, where women work on average almost 11 hours a day and men 10. People in Cambodia and Pakistan have the longest amount of free time. People spend most of their free time on personal care, which includes sleeping and eating. In all countries, excepting the Republic of Korea, people dedicate at least half of their free time to sleeping. People sleep the most in China, at 9 hours.

Total hours worked (paid and unpaid) in an average day, by country and gender



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There are vast differences in **GDP per capita** across the region, which includes some of the richest as well as some of the poorest countries in the world. The Asia/Pacific OECD have relatively high GDP per capita, as do Brunei, Singapore and Hong Kong (China), with an average of around USD 33,000. Other countries with very low GDP per capita include Timor, Nepal, Bangladesh and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, with an average of only USD 440. Differences in GDP per capita within the Asia/Pacific region are much greater than within the OECD. Poorer countries tend to grow at a faster rate than richer ones, says the report.

Fertility rates tend to be much lower in richer countries (Hong Kong (China), Republic of Korea, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand), emerging economies excepting India (China, Thailand, Viet Nam, and Indonesia) or in countries of the former Soviet Union (Armenia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Kyrgyzstan). In these countries the average is 1.9. High rates of over 4 are found in Pakistan and the Pacific Islands - Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Samoa. Unlike the OECD, the majority of countries and economies in the Asia/Pacific group have fertility rates in excess of replacement.

Almost half of the population living in Asia/Pacific countries and economies is **poor**, and one fifth is extremely poor. More than 80% of the poor of the region live in Bangladesh, India and China. Poverty levels are the lowest in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. Despite important disparities in the pace of poverty reduction, poverty rates decreased in all the Asia/Pacific countries and economies over the last decade. Declining poverty was more rapid in countries with higher GDP growth.

Income inequality is high in Asia/Pacific countries and economies compared to the OECD. The Gini coefficient is the most unequal in Indonesia, India, and Hong Kong (China). In India the Gini is as high as 54, which is 50% higher than the OECD average of 31. In countries and economies like Hong Kong (China), Singapore, Papua New Guinea or Bhutan, society tends to be extremely polarized between rich and poor. In countries with the fewest inequalities, such as Armenia, Kazakhstan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Timor-Leste, and Lao People's Democratic Republic, the richest 10% have around six times higher income than the poorest 10%. Over the last decade, income inequality increased in most countries, while big declines took place in the three former Soviet republics of the Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Average **social spending** in the Asia/Pacific region is only 5% of GDP, one quarter of the average across the OECD as a whole. Nine Asia/Pacific countries and economies spend less than 2% of GDP on social spending, with Papua New Guinea the lowest, at only 0.30% of GDP. Countries and economies with higher social spending tend to be those with lower amounts of absolute poverty.

The average **suicide rate** is close to 12 per 100,000. However, disparities in suicide rates are huge. In Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka and Lao People's Democratic Republic, suicide rates are more than six times higher than the rates of Brunei, Philippines and the three countries of the former Soviet Union. Average suicide rates increased across Asia/Pacific countries and economies. In the Republic of Korea, suicide rates almost tripled mostly due to economic downturn, weakening social integration and the erosion of the traditional family support base for the elderly. In most countries, excepting Kazakhstan, New Zealand and Australia, suicide rates are higher among the older people, who seem to be at particular risk in Chinese populations (China, Hong Kong (China), Macao (China), Singapore), and the Republic of Korea.