

# Inequality of Opportunity in Asia and the Pacific

## ARMENIA



“The Agenda [2030] includes Goals aiming to reduce inequalities of all kinds, within and between countries which will directly contribute to the enhancement of productive cooperation and regional development. We believe that unimpeded contacts and open borders, a free movement of goods and services, as well as equal, inclusive and non-discriminatory regional cooperation are the main prerequisites for the development of the economic connectivity and addressing inequality”

H.E. Mr. Sergey Manasaryan, Ambassador to China and Thailand  
74th Annual Session of UNESCAP

### Country Background

<b>2.9</b>	million, total population	<b>0.32</b>	GINI coefficient (income inequality)
<b>8,788</b>	GDP per capita, 2011 PPP \$	<b>0.16</b>	D-index (inequality of opportunity)
<b>29.8 %</b>	people in poverty (below the national poverty line)	<b>75</b>	years of life expectancy at birth
<b>1.9 %</b>	people in extreme poverty (below \$1.90 a day)	<b>11.2</b>	expected years of schooling at birth

Source: ESCAP, World Bank Open Data, UNDP

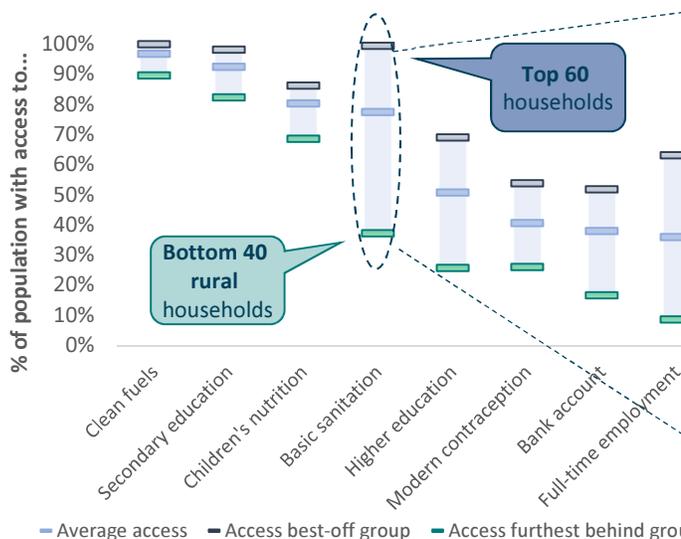
## Leaving no one behind by ensuring a level playing field

Inequality of opportunity refers to the unequal access to fundamental rights and services, required for individuals to sustain and improve their livelihoods.<sup>1</sup>

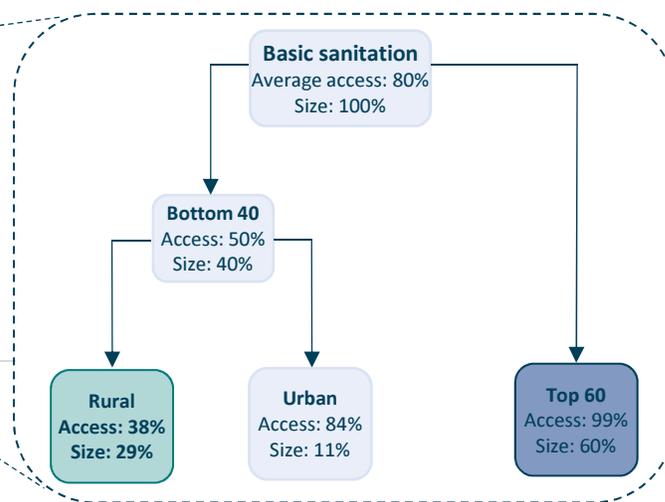
In Armenia, gaps exist between the *best-off* and the *furthest behind* groups in access to different opportunities. Access to basic sanitation and full-time employment are the most unequally distributed opportunities, with access gaps of at least 50 percentage points between the *best-off* and the *furthest behind* groups. Less than 20 per cent of people in the *furthest behind* group have access to bank accounts or are in full-time employment.

Identifying the characteristics of the *best-off* and the *furthest behind* group in access to basic sanitation reveals how almost all households belonging to the top 60 of the wealth distribution have access. This blue box represents the *best-off* group. The green box shows the *furthest behind* group with the lowest access to basic sanitation: households in the bottom 40 living in rural areas, where only 38 per cent have access.

**Figure 1. How wide are the gaps in access to opportunities?**

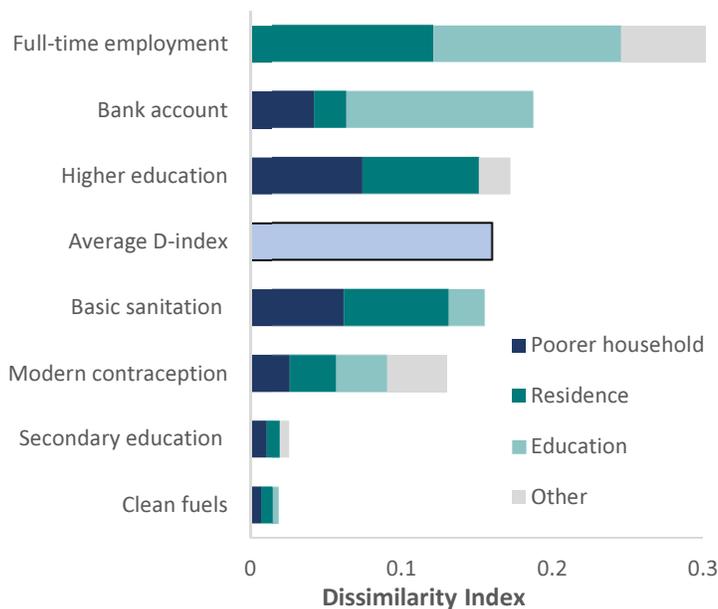


**Figure 2. Who are the furthest behind?**



Source: ESCAP calculations, using data from DHS 2015 and the Gallup World Poll

**Figure 3: Drivers of inequality in access to different opportunities**



**Household wealth, the place of residence and educational level are behind most of the inequality in access to opportunities.**

Other circumstances, however, also appear relevant in explaining unequal access to opportunities.

For example, women, single or separated people have limited access to full-time employment in Armenia. Also, inequality in secondary and higher education attainment is driven by gender, particularly being a woman. Finally, young women and those without children under the age of five in the household have lower access to modern contraception.

*Source: ESCAP calculations, using data from DHS 2015 and the Gallup World Poll*  
*Note: A Dissimilarity index (D-Index) is used to examine which circumstance contributes most to overall inequality among different population groups.*

## Key Takeaways

**In Armenia, the largest opportunity gap between the *best-off* and the *furthest behind* groups is in access to basic sanitation.** While 99 per cent of households in the top 60 of the wealth distribution have access to basic sanitation, only 38 per cent of households among the bottom 40 living in rural areas do. **Support initiatives aimed at changing the sanitation and hygiene culture across different societal agents is paramount in addressing basic sanitation inequalities.**

Less than 20 per cent of Armenians in the *furthest behind* group have access to bank accounts. Moreover, less than 10 per cent of people in the *furthest behind* group are in full-time employment. **To ease the school-to-work transition and develop specific policies and programs that promote access to decent full-time jobs, should be prioritized by policymakers.**

**Among all groups, inequality of opportunity is explained by distinct circumstances.** Living in rural areas appears as the most important circumstance shaping inequality in 3 out of 7 opportunities. **Since Armenians living in rural areas face unequal access to basic services, investing in a more even socioeconomic development of the country, both in urban and rural areas, is a must for ensuring equal opportunities.**

<sup>1</sup> The opportunities considered in this country brief are education, women's health, children's nutrition, decent employment, basic water and sanitation, access to clean energy, and financial inclusion. In Armenia, access to clean water, electricity and professional help during childbirth are universal. Therefore, these opportunities are not reported in the graphs.

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For more information and thematic reports on these data and analysis, please visit: <https://www.unescap.org/our-work/social-development/poverty-and-inequality/resources>

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