REYKJAVÍK GLOBAL FOUNDATION × VERIAN

THE REYKJAVÍK INDEX FOR LEADERSHIP 2026

The measure of perceptions of equality for men and women in leadership. This report presents the 2026 findings.

G7 · ICELAND · KENYA · NIGERIA · AUSTRALIA

Resilience and pushback amid the backlash

REYKJAVÍK GLOBAL FORUM WOMEN LEADERS

verian

Presented at the Reykjavík Global Forum · November 2026

FOREWORD

A WORD FROM THE REYKJAVÍK GLOBAL FOUNDATION

When we launched the Reykjavík Index in 2018, we set out to measure something hard to see but decisive: whether societies believe women and men are equally suited to lead.

This year's results tell a story of resilience. Despite a global backlash against gender equality, the G7 average has risen for the first time since 2019, with recoveries in Japan, the United States and the United Kingdom, and young men's scores rising in five of the seven G7 countries. Democratic societies are pushing back.

But resilience is not progress. The Index remains below its 2018 level, and no country has reached 100. Young people are our greatest concern: 18–34 year-olds are the least likely to see women and men as equally suited to lead. Kenya shows how quickly gains can be reversed; Nigeria's four-point rise shows how quickly they can be made.

Our special report on violence against women and girls is a stark reminder of what is at stake. Almost nine in ten people say tackling it should matter to public authorities, yet fewer than one in four feel motivated to act themselves.

Perceptions shape who gets to lead. As leaders gather in Reykjavík, our call is simple: turn resilience into momentum, and make the Reykjavík Index a measure of history rather than a measure of inequality.

Hanna Birna Kristjánsdóttir, Chair and Co-Founder, Reykjavík Global Foundation
Senior Advisor, UN Women

A WORD FROM VERIAN

As we approach the close of the first decade of our international programme of work to measure how society views women and men in terms of their suitability to lead, two thoughts are front of mind. First, that we could not have anticipated how the geopolitical context for our work would change so significantly during these years. And second, that gender equity would be both a window on aspects of the geopolitical as well as a target of it. We did not foresee that our work would be prescient in its signalling of a backlash, of generational faultlines and democratic resilience. We were not clear either on how much prejudice society holds against men in the professional sectors that are seen as 'caring' or 'feminine'.

This year we see societal fortitude and the renewed drive for change in the data. We see an overall improvement in the G7 Reykjavík Index score, and signs of recovery in the USA and the UK. And in our special study on societal perceptions on violence against women and girls, we see a whole of society acknowledgement of the pervasiveness of this most wicked social problem and a deep desire for intervention. There is so much for us as a community of leaders to drive for.

Dr Michelle Harrison, Global President, Verian Group

CONTENTS

INSIDE THIS REPORT

SECTION 01 **About the Index** 4
What the Index measures, how the score is built and the 23 sectors

SECTION 02 **2026 at a glance** 5
Headline scores for the G7, Iceland, Kenya, Nigeria and Australia

SECTION 03 **Ten key findings** 6
The ten things to know about 2026

SECTION 04 **G7: resilience, pushback and a generation gap** 7
Trends, women and men, generations, sectors and comfort with women leaders

SECTION 05 **G7 country profiles** 13
Japan, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, the United States, Italy and Germany

SECTION 06 **Iceland: the global leader** 27
Why Iceland leads, and its 2026 results by gender, age and sector

SECTION 07 **Kenya: a reversal between women and men** 30
Women and men, sectors and what shapes views

SECTION 08 **Nigeria: a four-point rise** 33
Women and men, sectors, influences and comfort with women leaders

SECTION 09 **Australia: ahead of the G7** 36
Women and men, sectors and comfort with women leaders

SECTION 10 **Special report: violence against women and girls** 38
How G7 societies perceive violence against women and girls

SECTION 11 **Methodology and credits** 42
How the Index is calculated, fieldwork and credits

WHAT THE REYKJAVÍK INDEX MEASURES

The Reykjavík Index for Leadership is the measure of perceptions of equality for women and men in leadership. It is the first international measure of how societies perceive the suitability of women and men for leadership, and tracks how those perceptions change over time.

The Index runs from 0 to 100. **A score of 100 means that, across society, there is common understanding that women and men are equally suited to leadership in all sectors.** Any score below 100 indicates that prejudice persists. Our explicit goal is a world in which the Reykjavík Index score is 100.

The Index was launched in 2018 for the G7 countries and has been repeated every year since for the G7, plus additional countries. This 2026 report brings together results for the G7, Iceland, Kenya, Nigeria and Australia.

The Reykjavík Index for Leadership is a partnership between **Verian** and the **Reykjavík Global Foundation**. Research design, fieldwork management and analysis are by Verian. The 2026 findings were presented at the Reykjavík Global Forum in November 2026.

How the score is built

The Index asks people whether women or men are better suited to lead across many areas of society and the economy, from politics and business to science, the media and public services.

The score reflects how widely women and men are seen as **equally suited to lead**. A score of 100 would mean everyone sees them as equally suited everywhere; the further a country sits below 100, the more prejudice remains. Full details are in the Methodology section.

Who is in the 2026 Index

- **G7:** Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United States
- **Iceland**, tracked since 2022
- **Kenya** and **Nigeria**, compared with 2024 and 2025
- **Australia**, results for 2026



The 23 sectors

- ✓ Aerospace
- ✓ Architecture
- ✓ Automotive manufacturers
- ✓ Banking and finance
- ✓ Charity / not-for-profit
- ✓ Childcare
- ✓ Defence and police
- ✓ Economics and political science
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Engineering
- ✓ Fashion and beauty
- ✓ Food and drink manufacturers
- ✓ Foreign affairs and diplomacy
- ✓ Gaming
- ✓ Government and politics
- ✓ Healthcare and well-being
- ✓ High-tech, artificial intelligence
- ✓ Intelligence services
- ✓ International sports organisations
- ✓ Judiciary
- ✓ Media and entertainment
- ✓ Natural sciences
- ✓ Pharmaceutical, medical research

RESILIENCE AND PUSHBACK AMID THE BACKLASH

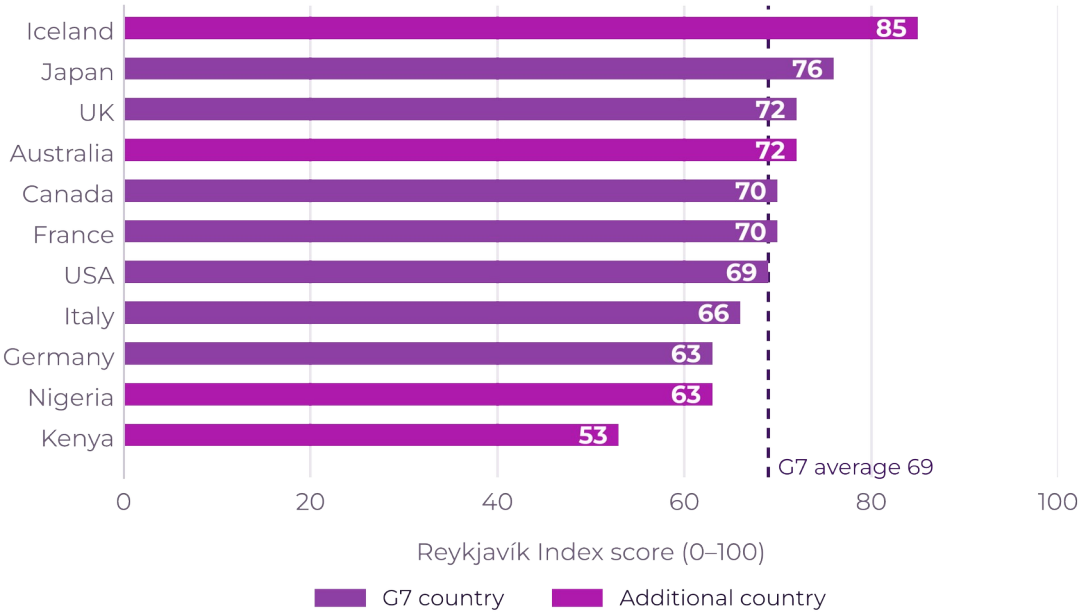
Despite a global backlash against gender equality and continued economic and political turbulence, **support for equality in leadership remains resilient**. The overall movement is modest, but the trend is one of slight improvement rather than decline, with **particularly positive momentum in the UK, the US and Japan**. **Iceland remains the global leader at 85.** More people now say they are very comfortable with women as heads of government and CEOs, and there is **evidence that democratic societies are pushing back against misogynistic narratives**, with young men's scores rising in five of the seven G7 countries.

THE MAIN WORRY: YOUNG PEOPLE

Young adults remain the least likely to see women and men as equally suited to lead. Across the G7, 18–34 year-olds score 65, nine points below 55–65 year-olds and five points below their own 2018 level. Young women's scores fall in four of the seven G7 countries, most sharply in Italy (70 to 56), and in Kenya young women drop from 63 to 50.

G7 AVERAGE	ICELAND	NIGERIA	KENYA
69	85	63	53
▲ 1 from 68 in 2025	▼ 1 from 86 in 2025	▲ 4 from 59 in 2025	▼ 3 from 56 in 2025

Figure 1 **Reykjavík Index scores, 2026**



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

Iceland is the global leader, 16 points above the G7 average and the only country above 80, although no country yet reaches 100 and Iceland's score eases for the fourth year running. Japan tops the G7 for the first time at 76; Germany is lowest at 63, level with Nigeria. Kenya falls three points to 53, driven by a sharp drop among women. Australia, also measured in 2026, scores 72, level with the UK and three points above the G7 average.

SECTION 03 · KEY FINDINGS

TEN THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT 2026

01 **Equality remains resilient amid the backlash**

Despite economic and political turbulence, the G7 average rises from 68 to 69, its first increase since 2019. The movement is modest, and the Index remains below 2018's 72, but the trend is one of slight improvement rather than decline.

02 **Iceland remains the global leader and role model**

At 85, Iceland is the highest-scoring country in the Index, 16 points above the G7 average, and has led every year since it was first measured. It has also topped the WEF Global Gender Gap Report for 17 consecutive years.

03 **Recoveries in the UK, the US and Japan**

Japan rises six points to 76, its highest score to date and the highest in the G7. The United States recovers four points to 69 and the UK two points to 72. Germany also gains three points, to 63.

04 **Democratic societies are pushing back against misogynistic narratives**

All three G7 age groups improve in 2026, and young men's scores rise in five of the seven G7 countries, with the largest gains in Japan (+6) and Germany (+5).

05 **More people are very comfortable with women leaders**

In the G7, 47% are now very comfortable with a woman as head of government (43% in 2018) and 49% with a woman as CEO of a major company (46% in 2018).

06 **Young people remain the main worry**

G7 18–34 year-olds score 65, against 74 among 55–65s, and five points below 2018. Young women's scores fall in four of seven G7 countries; in Italy young men now score nine points higher than young women.

07 **Women are more gender-equal than men in six of seven G7 countries**

G7 women score 72 and men 67. Germany is the only G7 country where men score higher (63 v 62).

08 **Sector stereotypes persist**

Childcare (46) and fashion and beauty (50) are the G7's lowest-scoring sectors, seen as female domains. Almost a third say a man is better suited to lead defence and police, or automotive manufacturing (31% each). In AI and high-tech, 15% favour a man and 9% a woman.

09 **Nigeria rises four points; Kenya sees a reversal**

Nigeria climbs to 63, with both women (66) and men (59) improving. Kenya falls to 53 as women's score drops from 62 to 49 while men's rises from 50 to 57.

10 **Fewer believe equality has already been achieved**

In Nigeria, the share saying equality has been achieved in politics falls from 54% to 36%, and in leadership from 63% to 47%: greater acceptance of women leaders alongside a sharper view of the gaps that remain.

SPECIAL REPORT: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Alongside the Index, a G7 special report finds that 85% believe all, most or some women and girls experience violence in their lifetime, and 88% say tackling it should be a priority or important for public authorities. But only 24% feel motivated to act themselves. Only around half (53%) think it is easy to report it. Young people feel most strongly that authorities should act. See Section 10.

SECTION 04

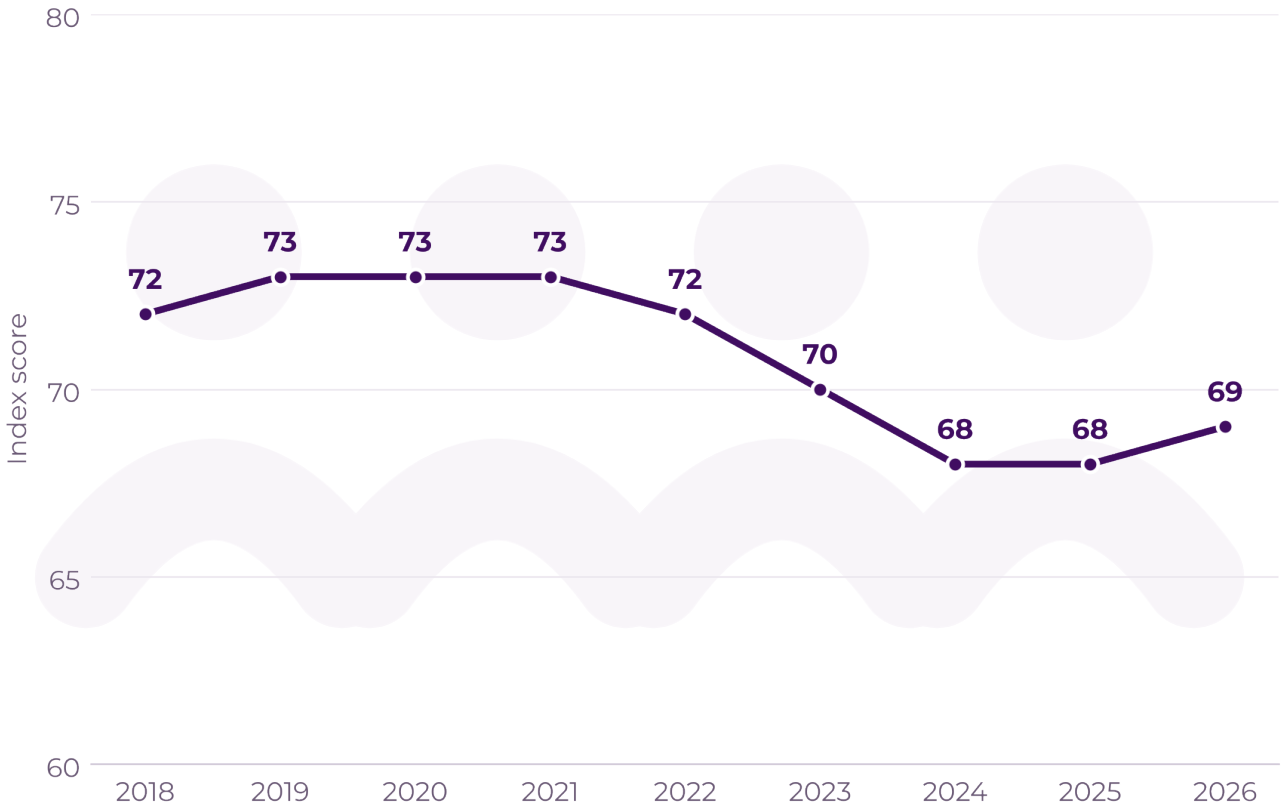
G7

Resilience, pushback and a generation gap

G7 AVERAGE	HIGHEST	LOWEST
69	76	63
▲ 1 from 68 in 2025	Japan, ▲ 6	Germany, ▲ 3

The G7 average rises by one point to 69 in 2026. It is the first increase since 2019, but the Index remains three points below its 2018 starting point of 72, and well short of the goal of 100. Support for equality in leadership is proving resilient in the face of a well-documented backlash: core values for equality and inclusion are standing firm, although this is not yet a full recovery.

Figure 2 G7 average Reykjavík Index, 2018–2026



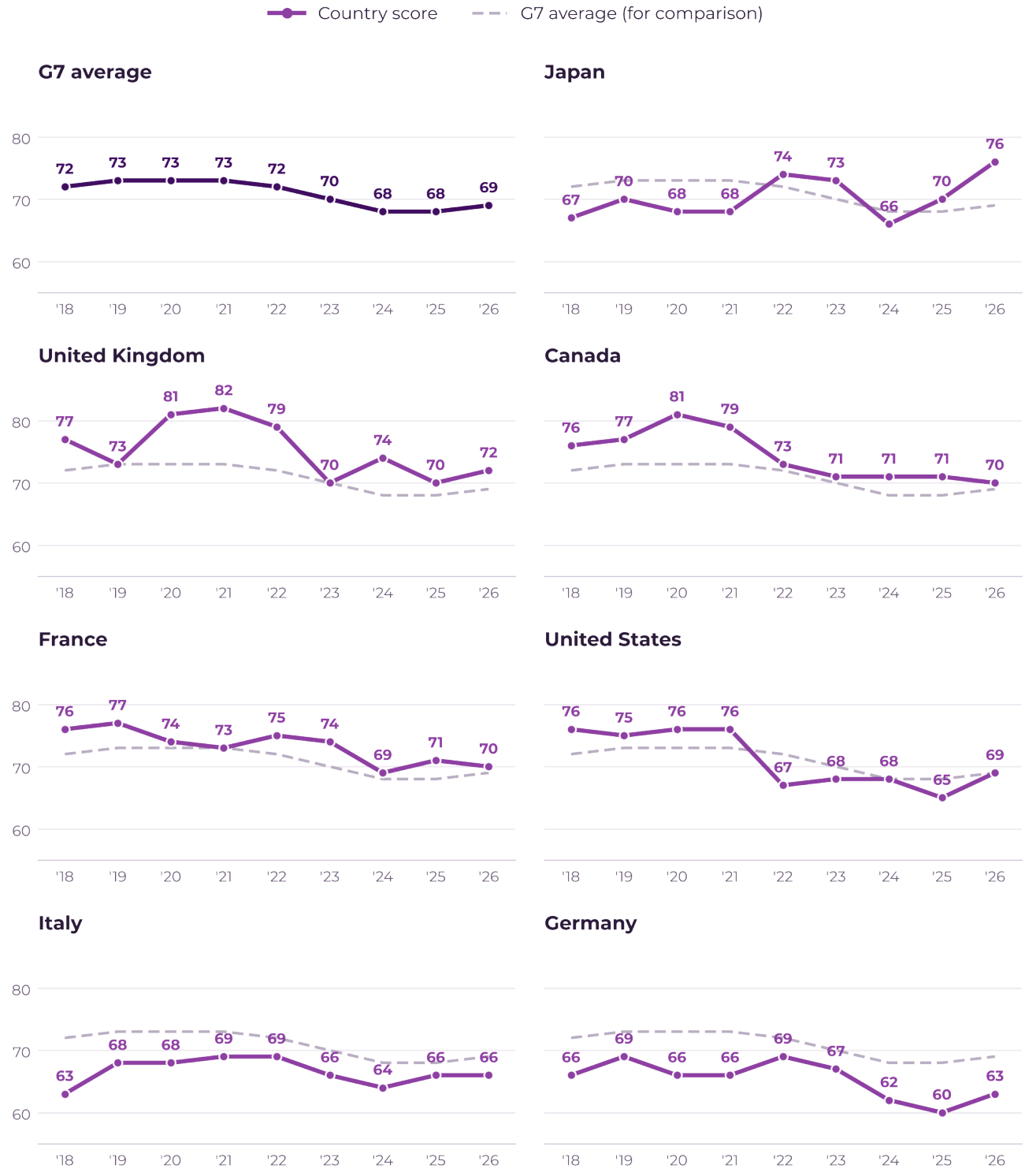
Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

Several countries show signs of resistance to setbacks on gender equality. **The United States recovers four points to 69**, Germany three points to 63 and **the UK two points to 72**: a recovery after several difficult years, though all three remain below earlier highs. **Japan's six-point rise to 76** is the largest in the G7 and takes it to the top of the group for the first time, but it follows a sharp fall in 2024 (from 73 to 66) and warrants separate consideration. Recovery is uneven: Canada and France each slip one point to 70 and Italy holds at 66, a reminder that progress is neither universal nor guaranteed.

COUNTRY BY COUNTRY

Each chart tracks a country's score since 2018 (purple) against the G7 average (grey dashed line), showing where scores have recovered, held steady or fallen back. Japan, the United States, the UK and Germany all end 2026 above where they were a year earlier.

Figure 3 **Reykjavík Index by G7 country, 2018–2026**

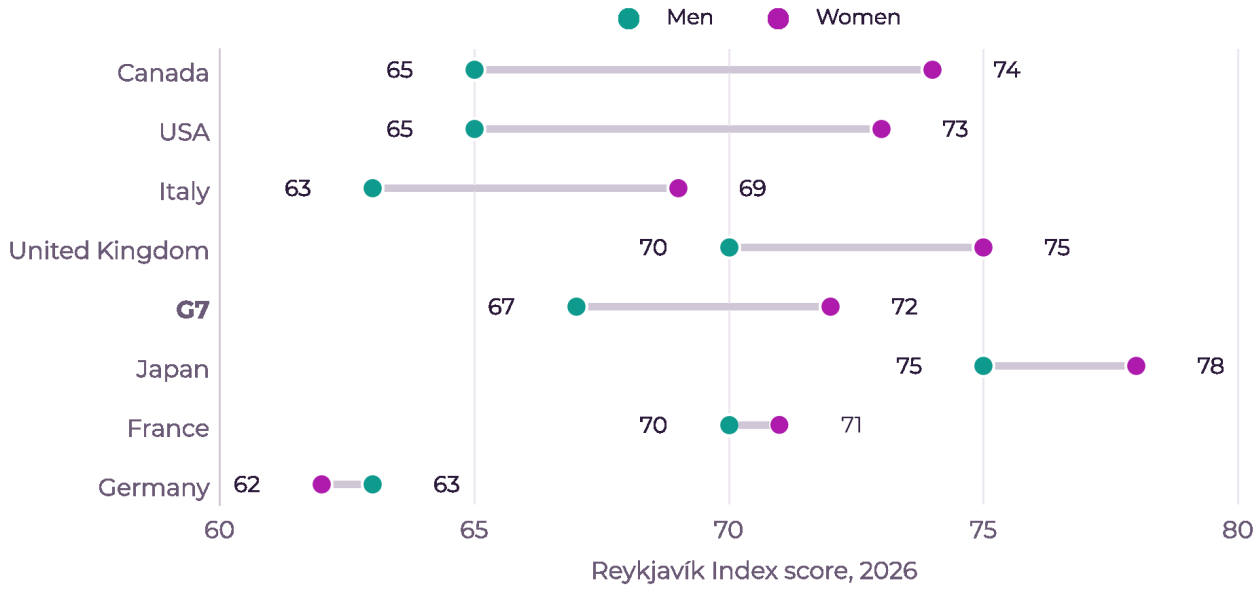


Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

WOMEN AND MEN

Women continue to hold more gender-equal views than men. G7 women score 72 and men 67, a five-point gap. The gap is widest in Canada (74 v 65) and the United States (73 v 65). **Germany is the only G7 country where men score higher than women**, by a single point.

Figure 4 Reykjavík Index by gender and country, 2026



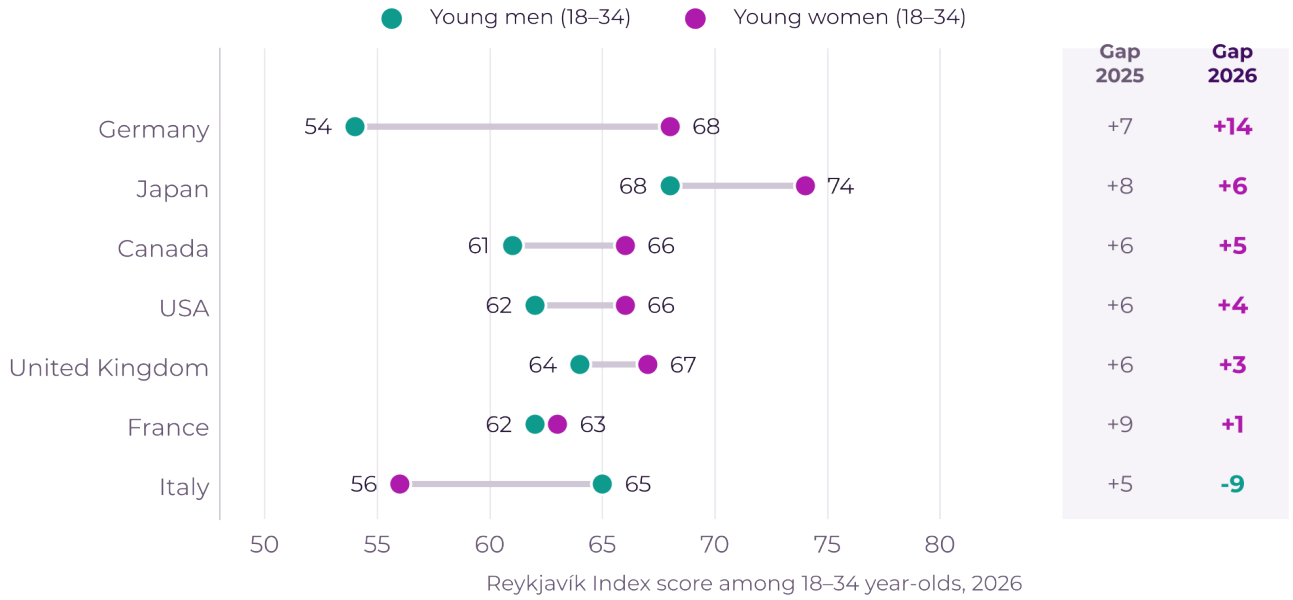
Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

Young women and young men

Among 18–34 year-olds, the gap between young women and young men narrows in Canada, France, Japan, the UK and the United States, most sharply in France, from nine points to one. But national trends diverge: in Germany the gap doubles to 14 points as young women's score climbs from 56 to 68, and in Italy it reverses: young women's score falls from 70 to 56, nine points below young men.

Figure 5 Young women and young men (18–34), 2026

Dots show the Index score of young women and young men in each country. The grey column shows the gap (young women minus young men) in 2025 and 2026: a minus sign means young men score higher.



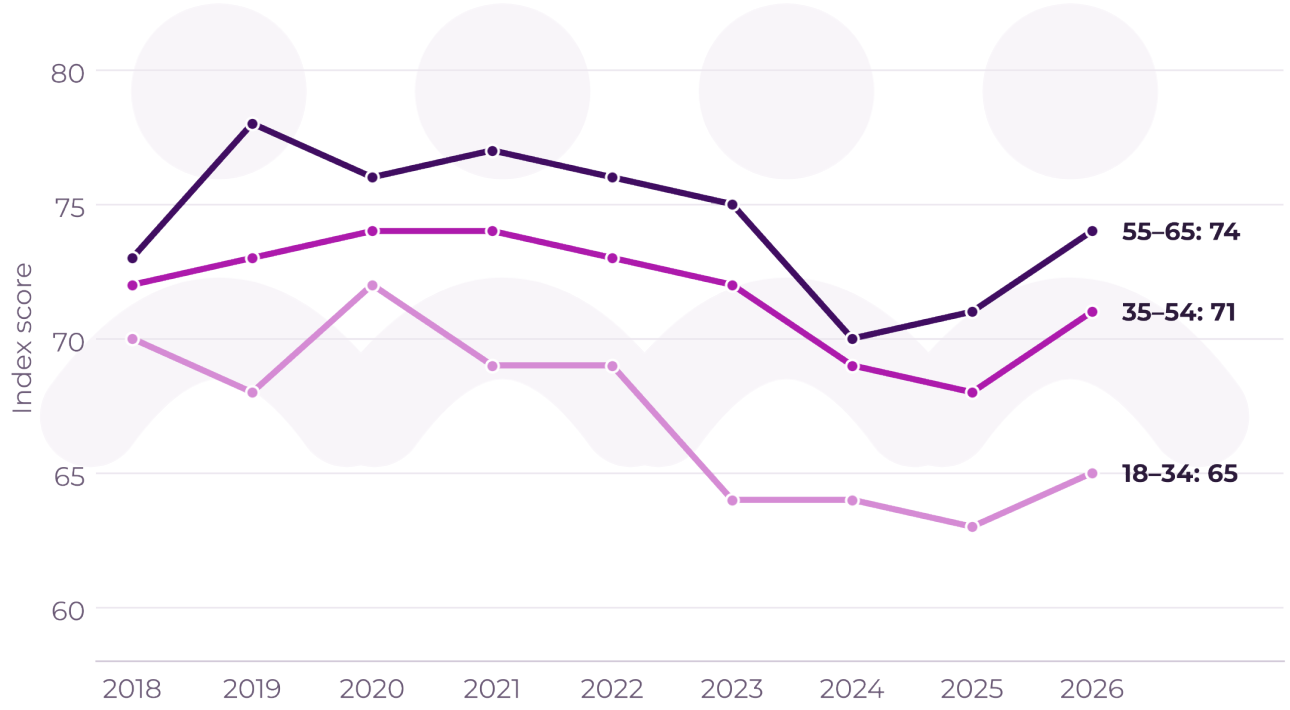
Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

GENERATIONS

Age remains one of the clearest dividing lines. **The youngest adults are the least likely to see women and men as equally suited to lead.** Among 18–34 year-olds the G7 score is 65, compared with 71 among 35–54s and 74 among 55–65s.

All three groups improve in 2026, and young men's scores rise in five of the seven G7 countries, evidence of pushback against misogynistic narratives, but also the nuance within this age group, and the enduring prejudices held by society regarding the suitability for men in the 'caring' sectors. The youngest group rises two points from its low of 63 in 2025, but remains five points below its 2018 level of 70; the gap between youngest and oldest has grown from three points to nine, and young women's scores fall in four of seven countries. 55–65 year-olds are the most gender-equal age group in every G7 country except Germany, where 35–54s score slightly higher (71 v 70).

Figure 6 G7 Reykjavík Index by age group, 2018–2026



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

THE MAIN WORRY

The next generation of leaders, employees and voters is less convinced than its parents that women and men are equally suited to lead. This year's rise among young men is an emerging sign of pushback against misogynistic narratives, but young women's scores fell in four of seven G7 countries. Closing the gap means engaging young people, young women and young men alike, where they form their views. The workplace is an opportunity: as younger generations move through their careers, workplaces can offer practical experience of fair opportunity and gender-equal leadership, so that equality is experienced in practice, not simply supported in principle.

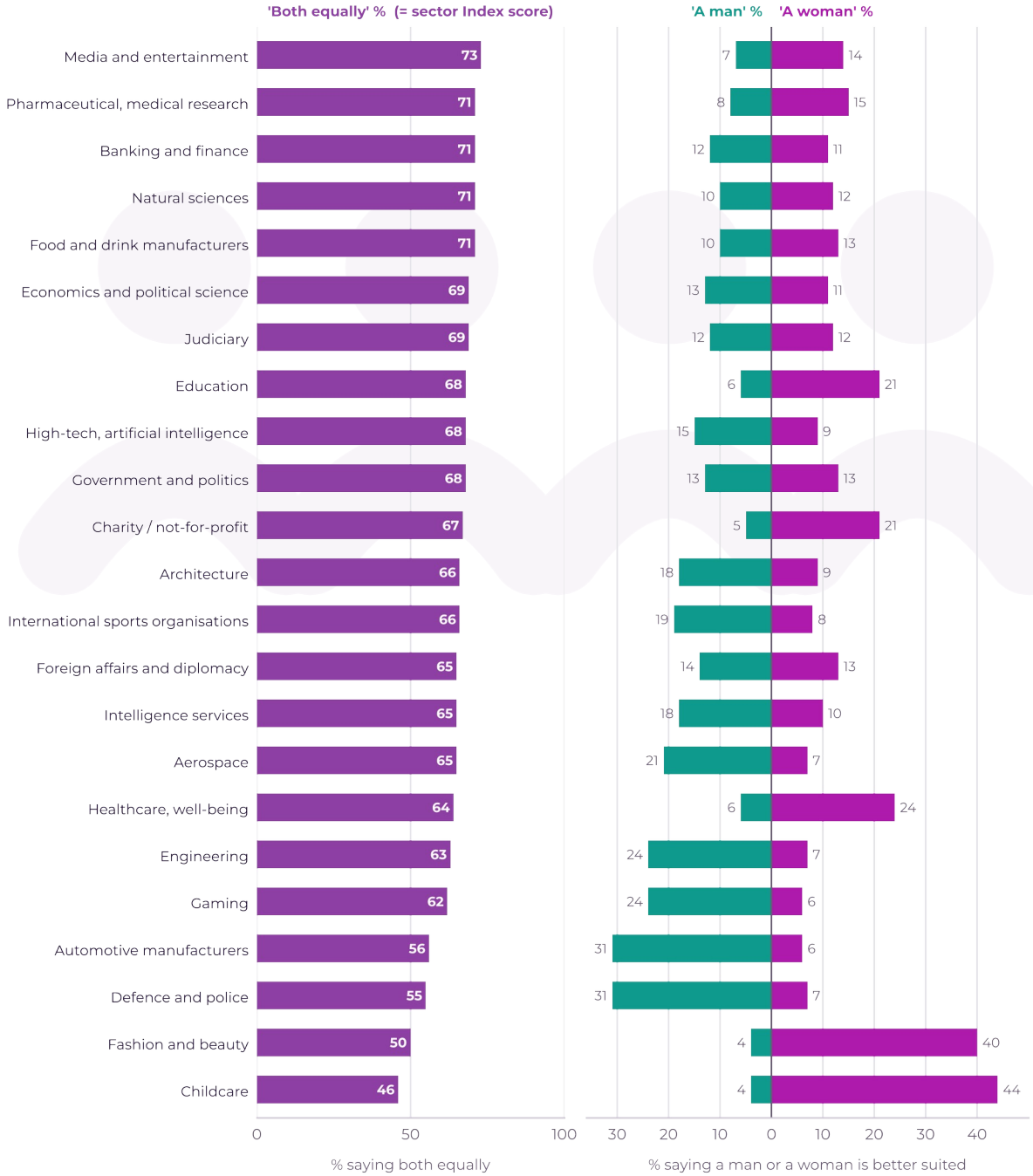
LEADERSHIP BY SECTOR

Perceptions of leadership remain strongly gendered by sector. **Media and entertainment** is the most equal sector in the G7 (73% 'both equally'), followed by pharmaceutical and medical research, banking and finance, natural sciences, and food and drink (71% each).

At the other end, **childcare (46%)** and **fashion and beauty (50%)** are seen by many as better led by women, while almost one in three say **defence and police** and **automotive manufacturing** are better led by a man (31% each). In high-tech and artificial intelligence, 15% favour a man and 9% a woman. Overall, the sector analysis shows that gender-based prejudice goes in both directions, and how important it is as a policy priority to also tackle the enduring prejudices against men.

Figure 7 Who is better suited to lead? G7 average by sector, 2026

Left: share saying women and men are equally suited to lead (the sector's Index score). Right: share saying a man or a woman is better suited.



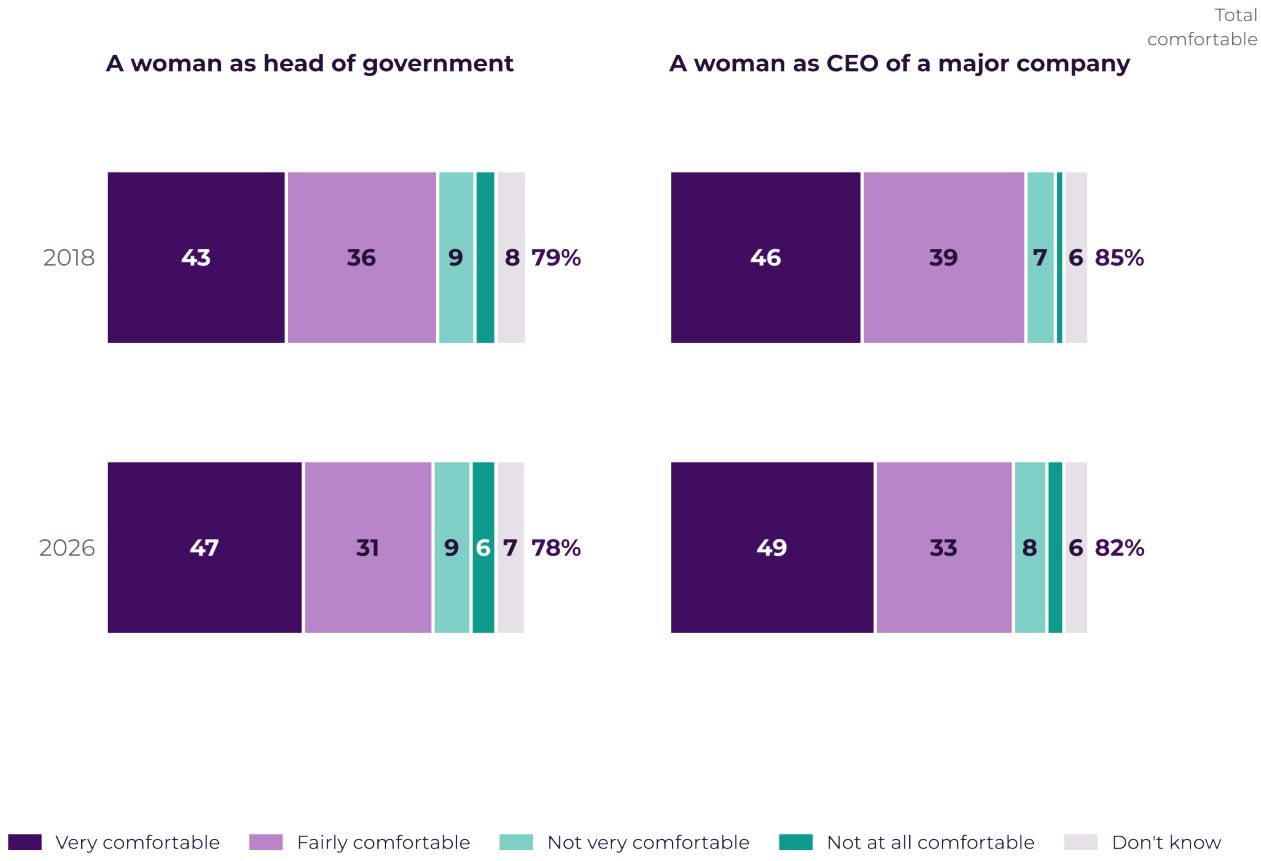
Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

COMFORT WITH WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Most people in the G7 say they would be comfortable with a woman in the top job. **78% would be comfortable with a woman as head of government** and **82% with a woman as CEO of a major company**.

The share who are 'very comfortable' has grown since 2018, from 43% to 47% for head of government and from 46% to 49% for CEO. But the share who are not comfortable has also edged up, to 15% and 12% respectively, suggesting views are becoming more polarised.

Figure 8 Comfort with a woman as head of government and as CEO, G7, 2018 and 2026



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Comfort with women at the very top remains high across the G7, and more people now say they are very comfortable with a woman leading the country or a major company than in 2018. But a small and slightly growing minority is not comfortable, a sign that views are becoming more polarised even as overall support holds firm.

SECTION 05 · G7 COUNTRY PROFILE

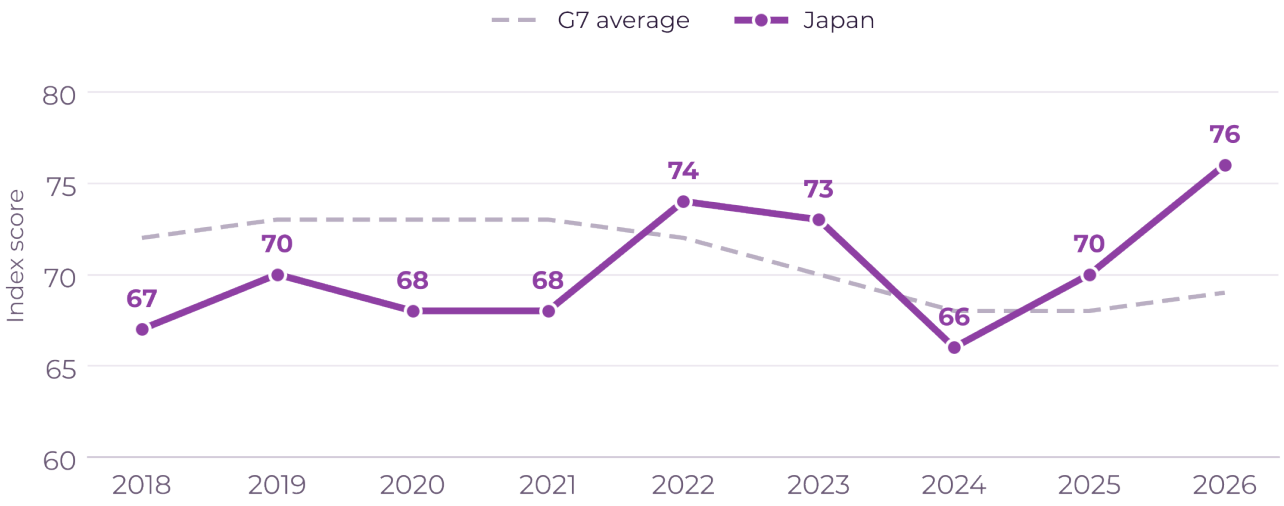
JAPAN

INDEX 2026	G7 RANK	WOMEN · MEN	AGE 18–34 · 55–65
76	1ST	78·75	71·79
▲ 6 from 70 in 2025	of 7 countries	Gap: +3 points	Gap: 8 points

Japan leads the G7 in 2026 with its **highest score since the Index began**, up six points to 76. Both men (75, up from 67) and women (78, up from 73) are more likely to see women and men as equally suited to lead, and the gap between them is just three points. The rise follows a sharp fall in 2024, from 73 to 66, so it warrants separate consideration rather than being read as part of a wider recovery.

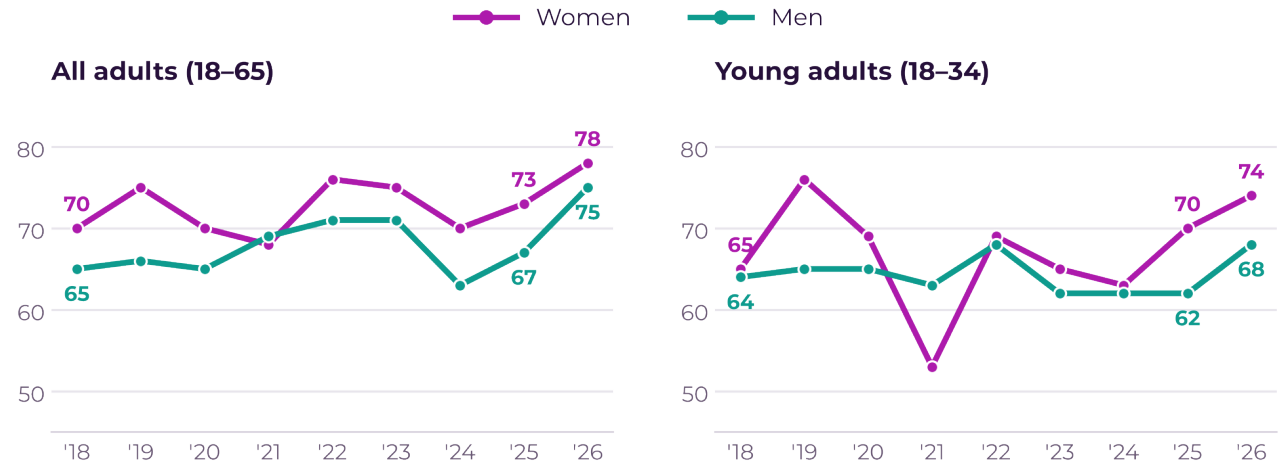
Young adults score 71, the **highest of any G7 country for this age group**, with young men rising from 62 to 68 and young women from 70 to 74. Older Japanese are more gender-equal still: 78 among 35–54s and 79 among 55–65s.

Figure 9 **Japan: Reykjavík Index, 2018–2026**



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

Figure 10 **Japan: women and men, all adults and 18–34 year-olds, 2018–2026**



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

LEADERSHIP BY SECTOR

Media and entertainment is Japan's most gender-equal sector (71%), followed by natural sciences and the judiciary (69% each). Few Japanese say a woman is better suited to lead, except in childcare (30%), fashion and beauty (25%) and healthcare and well-being (18%). **Defence and police and childcare are lowest (49% each)**, with 31% saying a man is better suited to lead defence and police. A man is also favoured in architecture (27%) and automotive manufacturing (25%).

Figure 11 Who is better suited to lead? Japan by sector, 2026

Left: share saying women and men are equally suited to lead. Right: share saying a man or a woman is better suited.

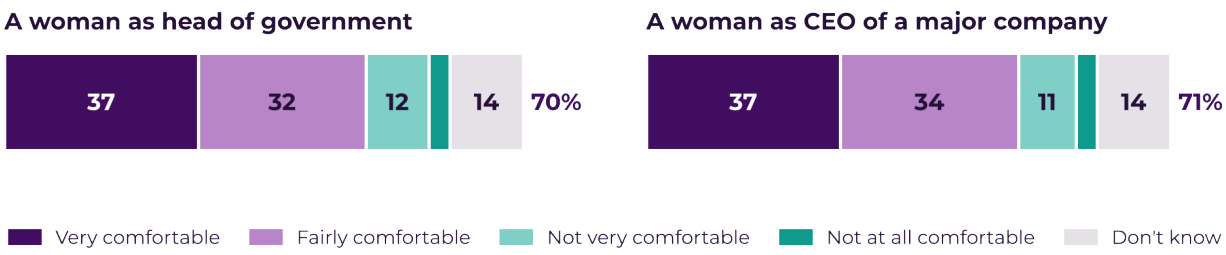


Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

COMFORT WITH WOMEN LEADERS

Comfort with women at the top is the lowest in the G7. 70% would be comfortable with a woman as head of government (37% very comfortable) and 71% with a woman as CEO of a major company (37%), against 78% and 82% across the G7. One in seven (14%) are unable to say.

Figure 12 Comfort with a woman as head of government and as CEO, Japan, 2026



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

SECTION 05 · G7 COUNTRY PROFILE

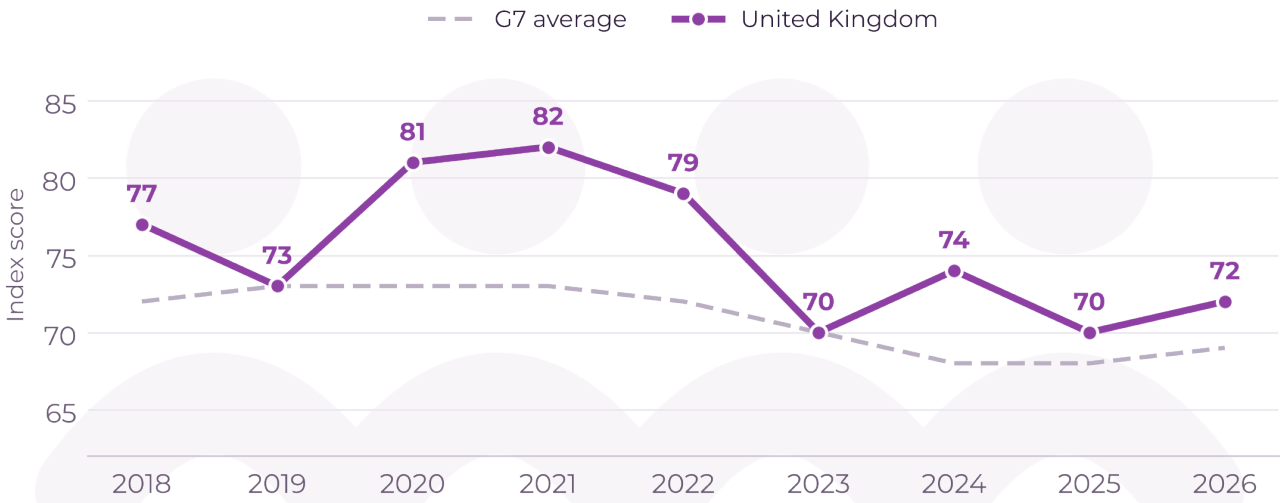
UNITED KINGDOM

INDEX 2026	G7 RANK	WOMEN · MEN	AGE 18–34 · 55–65
72	2ND	75·70	65·79
▲ 2 from 70 in 2025	of 7 countries	Gap: +5 points	Gap: 14 points

The UK **recovers two points to 72**, second in the G7 and three points above the G7 average, although still below its 2021 peak of 82. Women's score rises from 71 to 75 and men's edges up to 70.

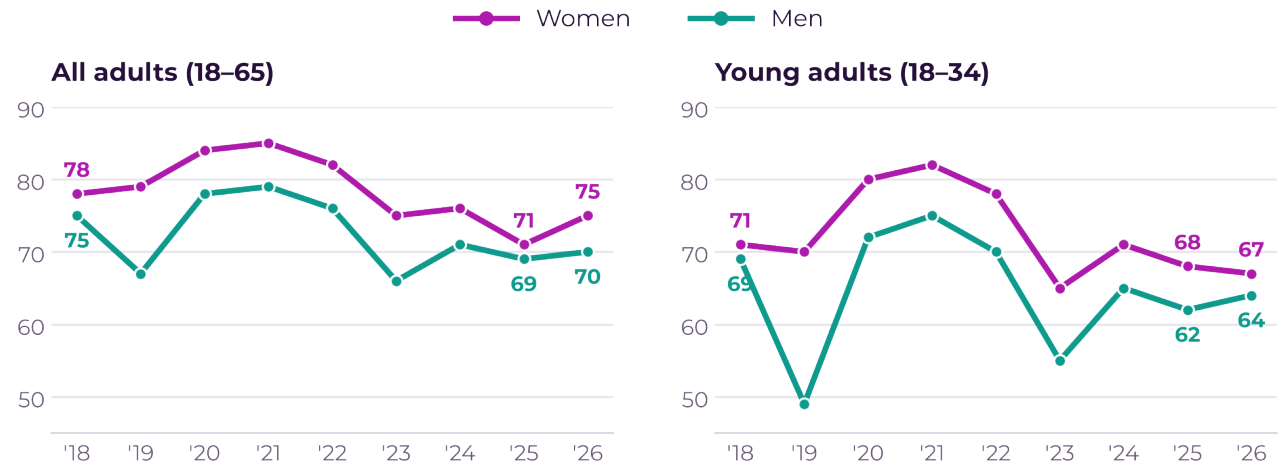
Among 18–34 year-olds, young men rise from 62 to 64 while young women dip from 68 to 67, narrowing the gap to three points. The generation gap is among the widest in the G7: 65 among 18–34s against 79 among 55–65s.

Figure 13 **United Kingdom: Reykjavík Index, 2018–2026**



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

Figure 14 **United Kingdom: women and men, all adults and 18–34 year-olds, 2018–2026**



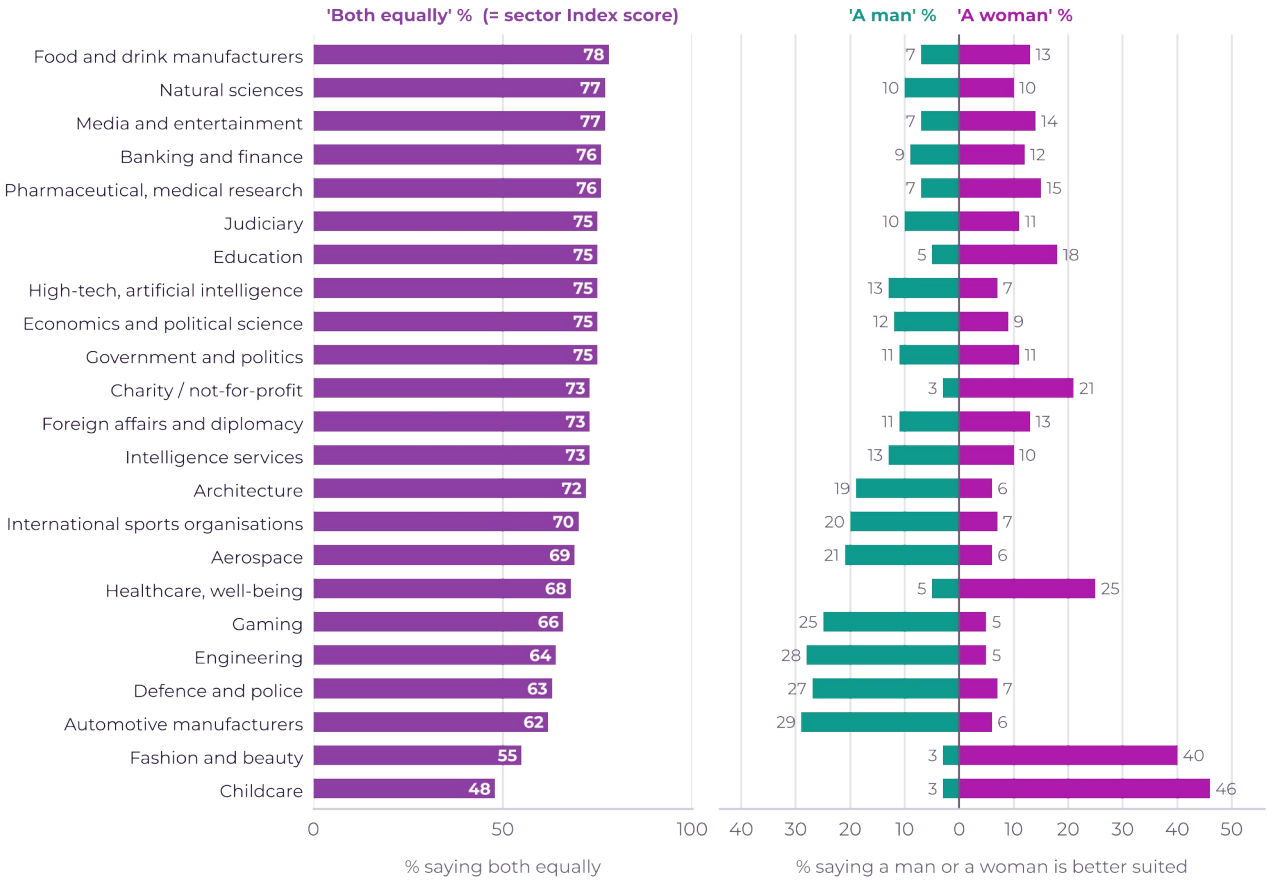
Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

LEADERSHIP BY SECTOR

Food and drink manufacturing is the UK's most gender-equal sector (78%), followed by natural sciences and media and entertainment (77% each). **Childcare (48%) and fashion and beauty (55%) are lowest**, with 46% and 40% saying a woman is better suited to lead. Around three in ten say a man is better suited in automotive manufacturing (29%) and engineering (28%), and 27% in defence and police.

Figure 15 Who is better suited to lead? United Kingdom by sector, 2026

Left: share saying women and men are equally suited to lead. Right: share saying a man or a woman is better suited.

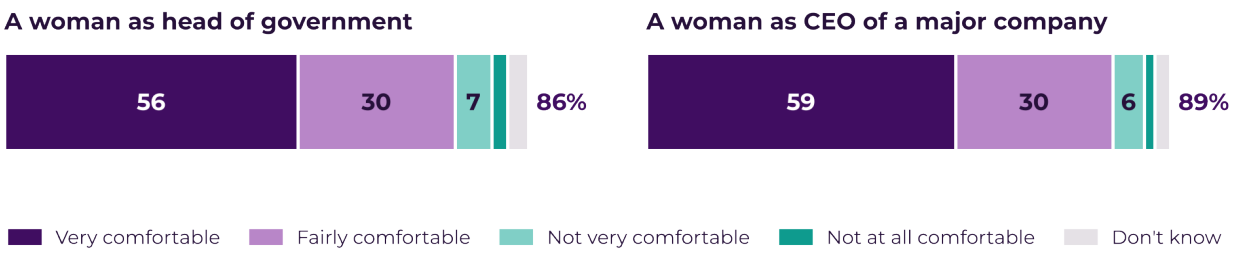


Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

COMFORT WITH WOMEN LEADERS

Comfort with women leaders is the highest in the G7. 86% would be comfortable with a woman as head of government (56% very comfortable) and 89% with a woman as CEO of a major company (59%). One in ten (10%) would not be comfortable with a woman leading the government.

Figure 16 Comfort with a woman as head of government and as CEO, United Kingdom, 2026



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

SECTION 05 · G7 COUNTRY PROFILE

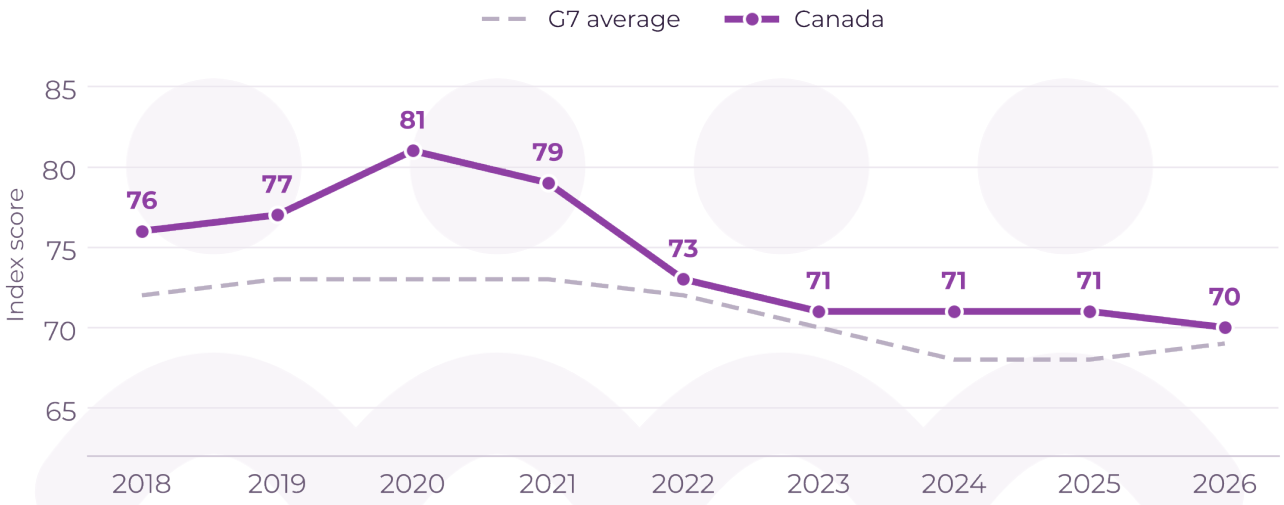
CANADA

INDEX 2026	G7 RANK	WOMEN · MEN	AGE 18–34 · 55–65
70	=3RD	74·65	64·74
▼ 1 from 71 in 2025	of 7 countries	Gap: +9 points	Gap: 10 points

Canada slips one point to 70, joint third in the G7 and well below its 2020 high of 81. The fall is driven by men, whose score drops from 69 to 65, while women hold at 74, leaving a **nine-point gender gap, the widest in the G7**.

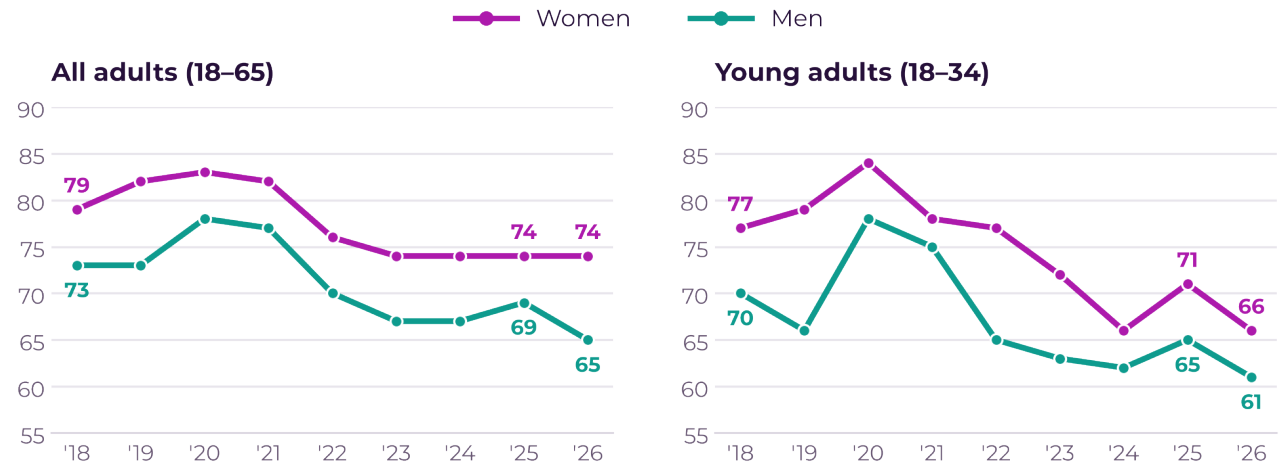
Young adults lose ground too: young men fall from 65 to 61 and young women from 71 to 66. The youngest group scores 64, ten points below 55–65 year-olds.

Figure 17 Canada: Reykjavík Index, 2018–2026



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

Figure 18 Canada: women and men, all adults and 18–34 year-olds, 2018–2026



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

LEADERSHIP BY SECTOR

Media and entertainment, pharmaceutical and medical research, and food and drink manufacturing share the top spot (75% each). Childcare (47%) and fashion and beauty (48%) are lowest, with 47% and 44% saying a woman is better suited to lead. Around one in three say a man is better suited in defence and police (32%) and automotive manufacturing (31%).

Figure 19 Who is better suited to lead? Canada by sector, 2026

Left: share saying women and men are equally suited to lead. Right: share saying a man or a woman is better suited.

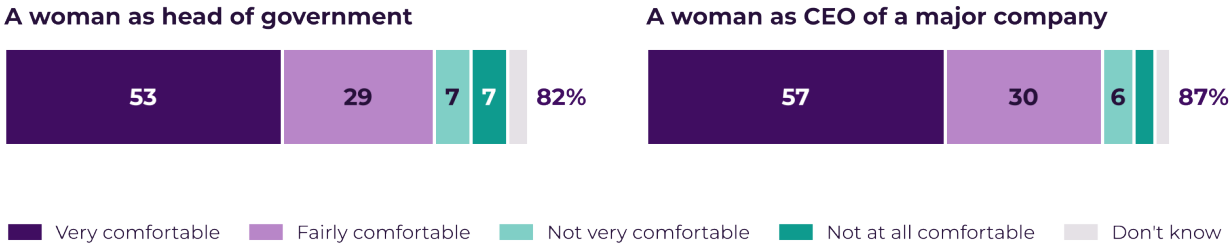


Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

COMFORT WITH WOMEN LEADERS

82% would be comfortable with a woman as head of government (53% very comfortable) and **87% with a woman as CEO of a major company** (57%), both above the G7 average of 78% and 82%. 14% would not be comfortable with a woman leading the government.

Figure 20 Comfort with a woman as head of government and as CEO, Canada, 2026



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

SECTION 05 · G7 COUNTRY PROFILE

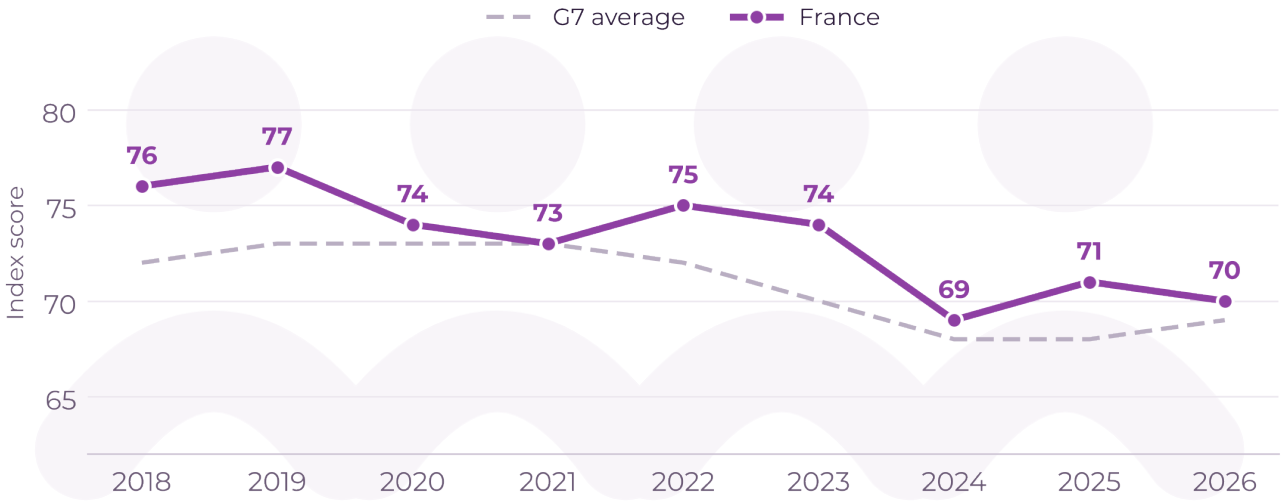
FRANCE

INDEX 2026	G7 RANK	WOMEN · MEN	AGE 18–34 · 55–65
70	=3RD	71·70	63·77
▼ 1 from 71 in 2025	of 7 countries	Gap: +1 point	Gap: 14 points

France slips one point to 70, joint third in the G7, and has drifted down from 76 in 2018. Men's score rises from 68 to 70 while women's eases from 73 to 71, leaving one of the smallest gender gaps in the G7.

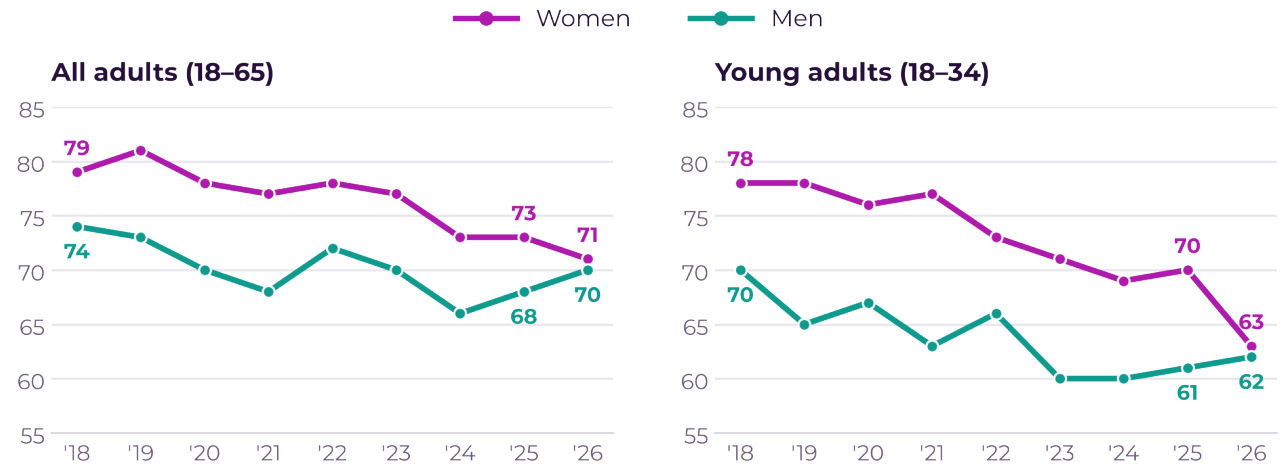
The striking change is among the young: **young women's score falls seven points, from 70 to 63**, almost level with young men (62). France and the UK share the **widest generation gap in the G7, 14 points**: in France, 63 among 18–34s against 77 among 55–65s.

Figure 21 **France: Reykjavík Index, 2018–2026**



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

Figure 22 **France: women and men, all adults and 18–34 year-olds, 2018–2026**



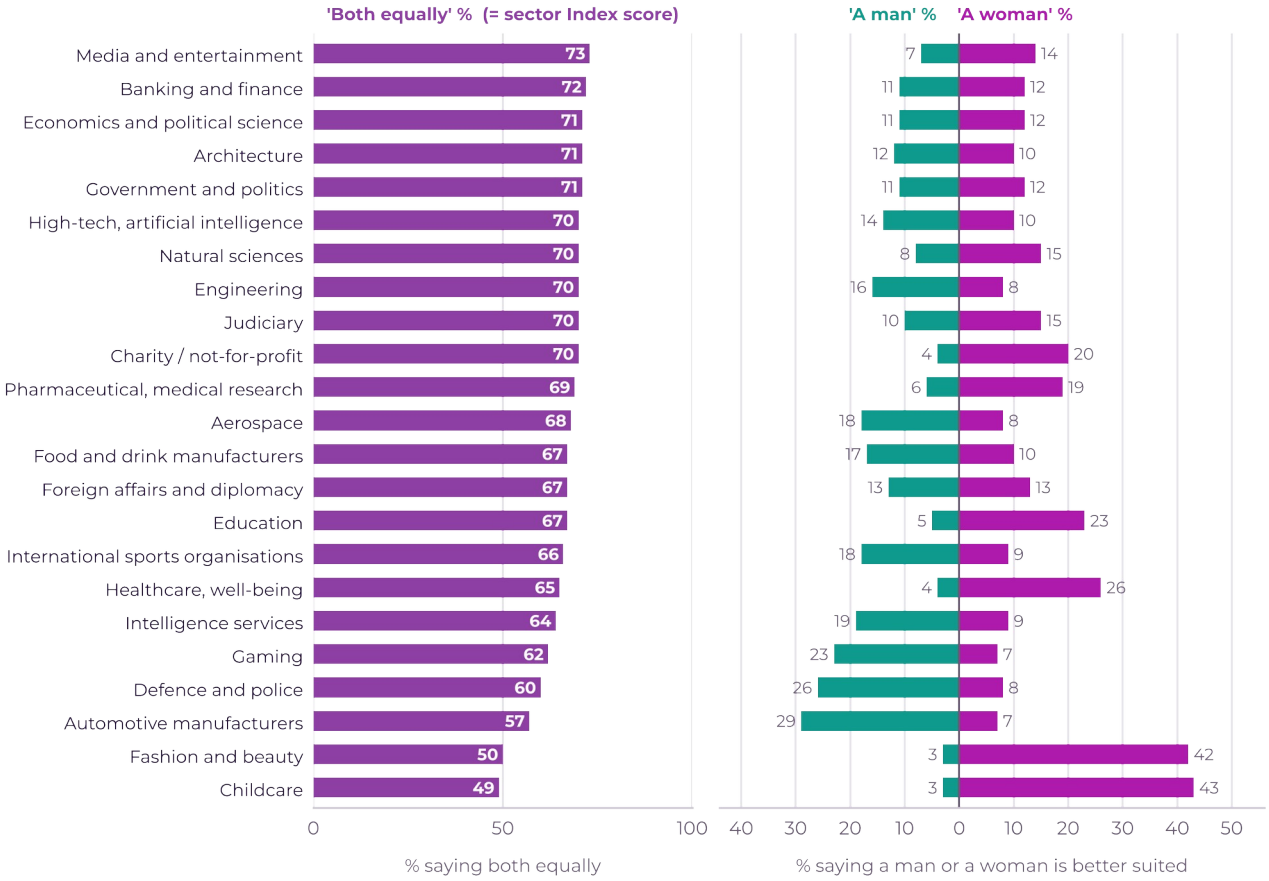
Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

LEADERSHIP BY SECTOR

Media and entertainment (73%) and banking and finance (72%) lead. Childcare (49%) and fashion and beauty (50%) are lowest, with 43% and 42% saying a woman is better suited to lead, while 29% say a man is better suited in automotive manufacturing and 26% in defence and police.

Figure 23 Who is better suited to lead? France by sector, 2026

Left: share saying women and men are equally suited to lead. Right: share saying a man or a woman is better suited.

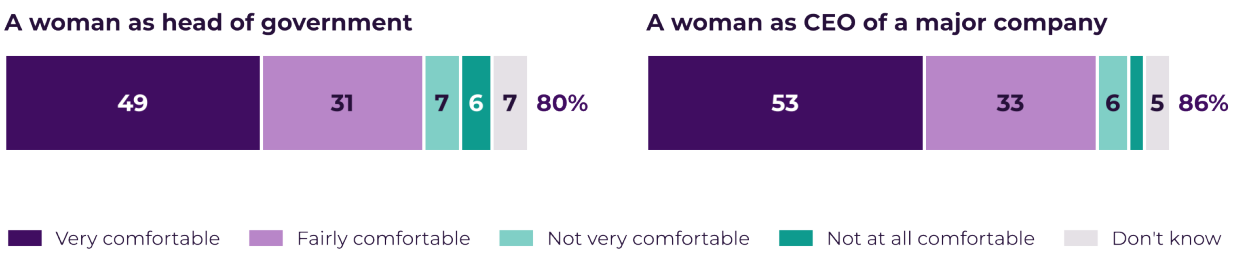


Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

COMFORT WITH WOMEN LEADERS

80% would be comfortable with a woman as head of government (49% very comfortable) and **86% with a woman as CEO of a major company** (53%), both slightly above the G7 average of 78% and 82%.

Figure 24 Comfort with a woman as head of government and as CEO, France, 2026



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

SECTION 05 · G7 COUNTRY PROFILE

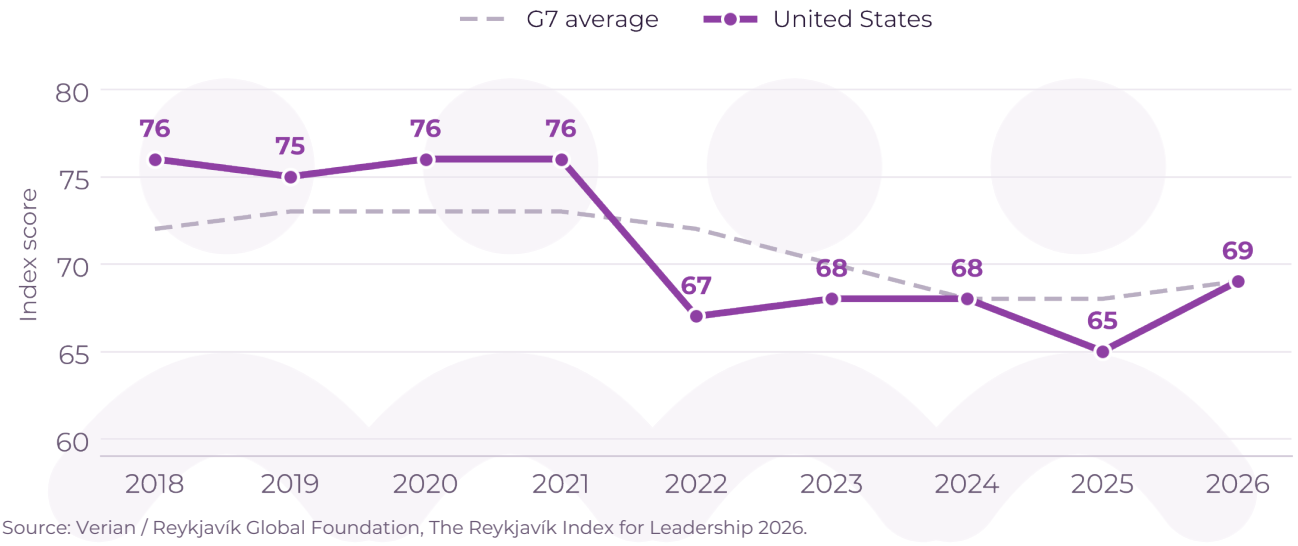
UNITED STATES

INDEX 2026	G7 RANK	WOMEN · MEN	AGE 18–34 · 55–65
69	5TH	73·65	64·76
▲ 4 from 65 in 2025	of 7 countries	Gap: +8 points	Gap: 12 points

The United States **recovers four points to 69**, from a low of 65 in 2025, though it remains below the 75–76 recorded from 2018 to 2021. Women drive the recovery, rising from 68 to 73, while men edge up from 63 to 65.

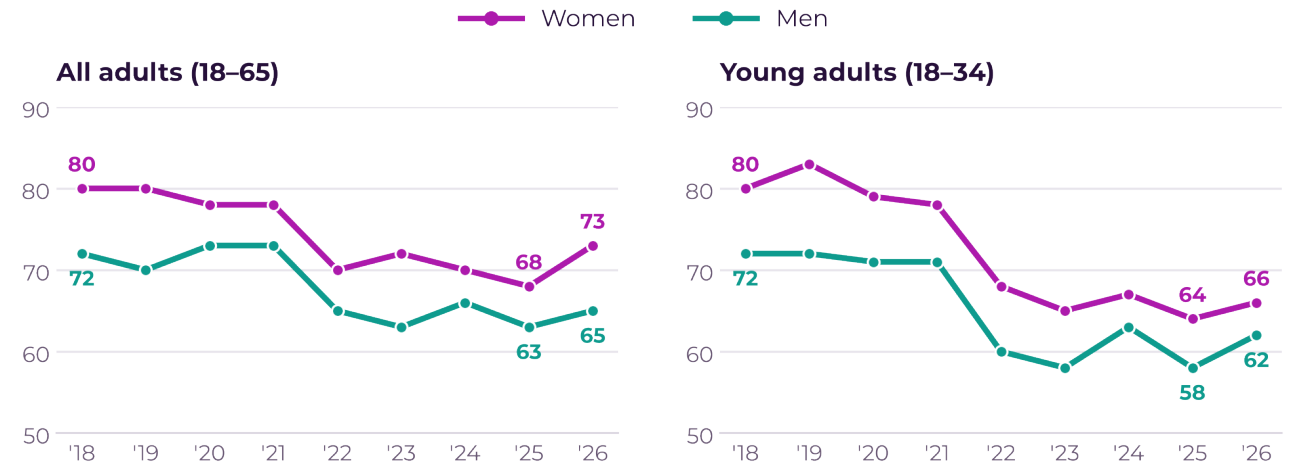
Young adults improve as well: young men rise from 58 to 62 and young women from 64 to 66. Scores rise steadily with age, from 64 among 18–34s to 76 among 55–65s.

Figure 25 United States: Reykjavík Index, 2018–2026



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

Figure 26 United States: women and men, all adults and 18–34 year-olds, 2018–2026



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

LEADERSHIP BY SECTOR

Media and entertainment (73%) and pharmaceutical and medical research (72%) lead. Childcare scores 42%, the lowest of any sector in any G7 country, with 47% saying a woman is better suited to lead, followed by fashion and beauty (49%). Around three in ten say a man is better suited in automotive manufacturing (31%) and defence and police (29%).

Figure 27 Who is better suited to lead? United States by sector, 2026

Left: share saying women and men are equally suited to lead. Right: share saying a man or a woman is better suited.

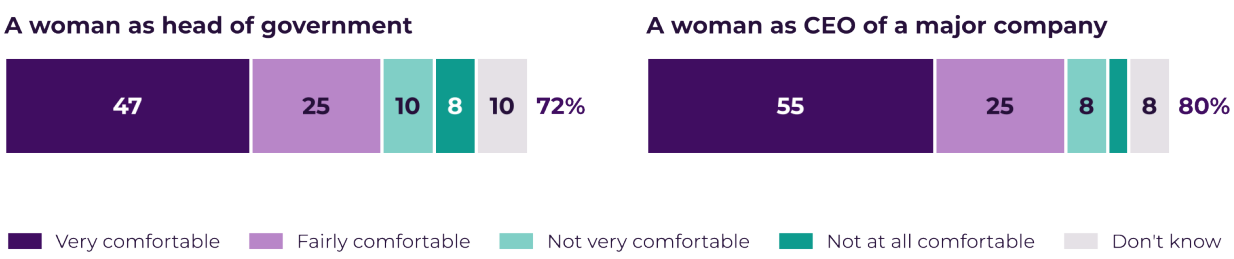


Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

COMFORT WITH WOMEN LEADERS

72% would be comfortable with a woman as head of government (47% very comfortable), below the G7 average of 78%, and **80% with a woman as CEO of a major company** (55%). Almost one in five (18%) would not be comfortable with a woman leading the government, joint highest in the G7 with Germany.

Figure 28 Comfort with a woman as head of government and as CEO, United States, 2026



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

SECTION 05 · G7 COUNTRY PROFILE

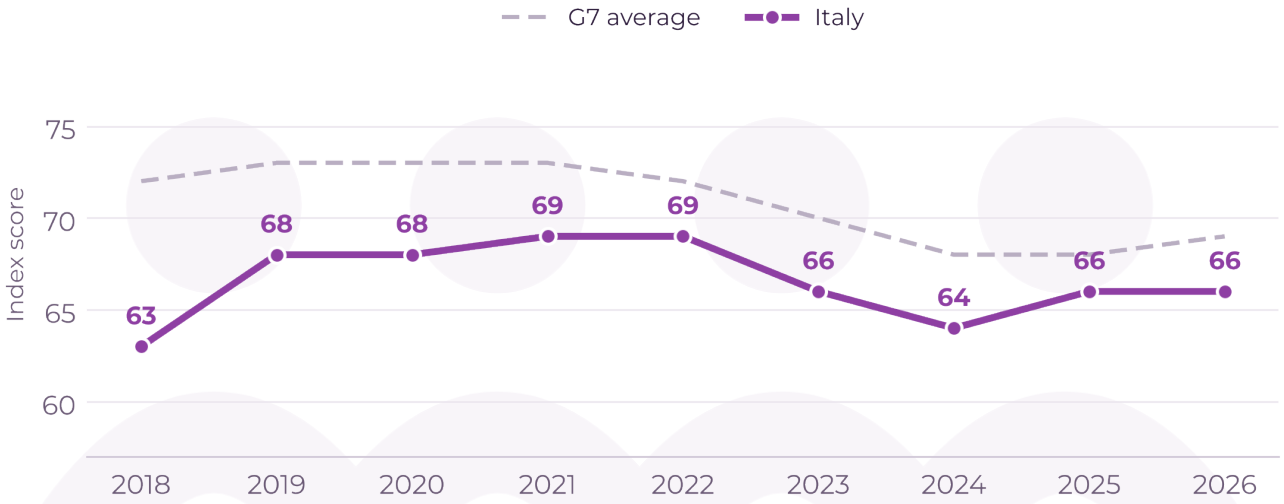
ITALY

INDEX 2026	G7 RANK	WOMEN · MEN	AGE 18–34 · 55–65
66	6TH	69·63	60·70
No change from 2025	of 7 countries	Gap: +6 points	Gap: 10 points

Italy holds at 66, sixth in the G7. Women's score rises from 67 to 69 while men's falls from 65 to 63.

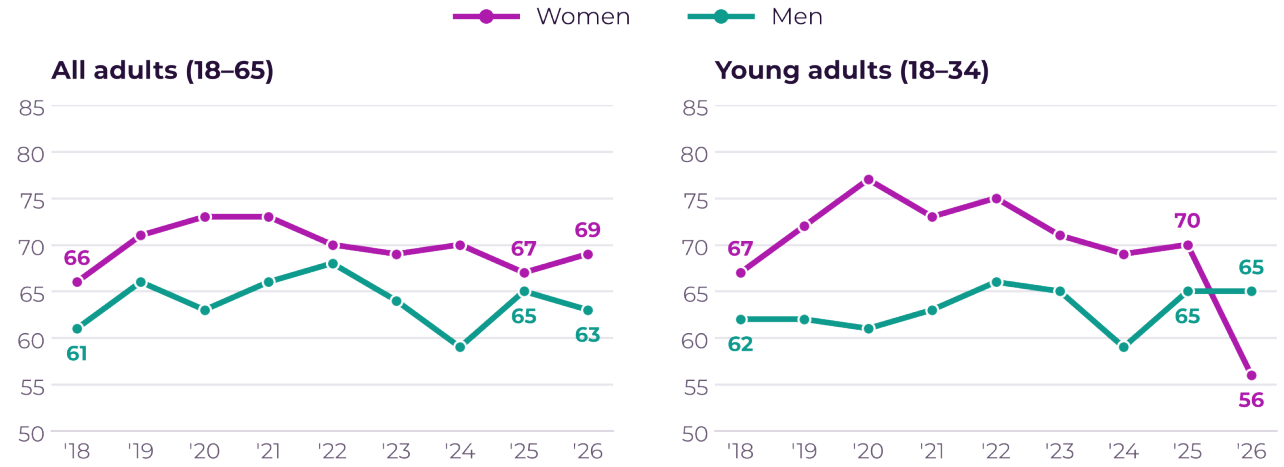
The major concern is among the young: **young women's score falls 14 points, from 70 to 56**, now nine points below young men (65), the sharpest reversal in the G7. Italy also has the lowest scores in the G7 among 18–34s (60) and 35–54s (61).

Figure 29 **Italy: Reykjavík Index, 2018–2026**



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

Figure 30 **Italy: women and men, all adults and 18–34 year-olds, 2018–2026**



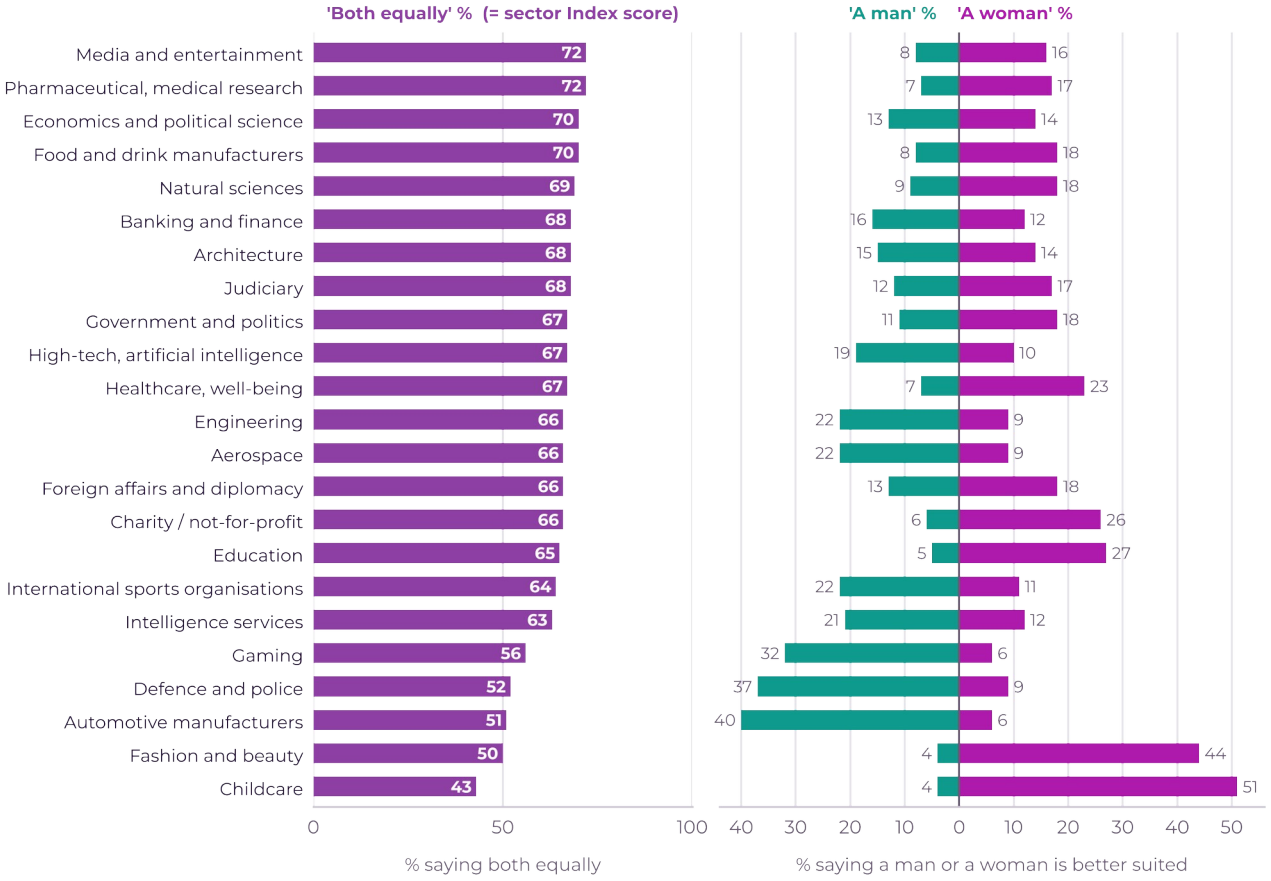
Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

LEADERSHIP BY SECTOR

Media and entertainment and pharmaceutical and medical research lead (72% each). Childcare is lowest (43%), and more say a woman is better suited to lead it (51%) than both equally; fashion and beauty follows (50%). Italy has the strongest male lean in the G7 for automotive manufacturing (40% say a man is better suited) and, with Germany, for defence and police (37%).

Figure 31 Who is better suited to lead? Italy by sector, 2026

Left: share saying women and men are equally suited to lead. Right: share saying a man or a woman is better suited.

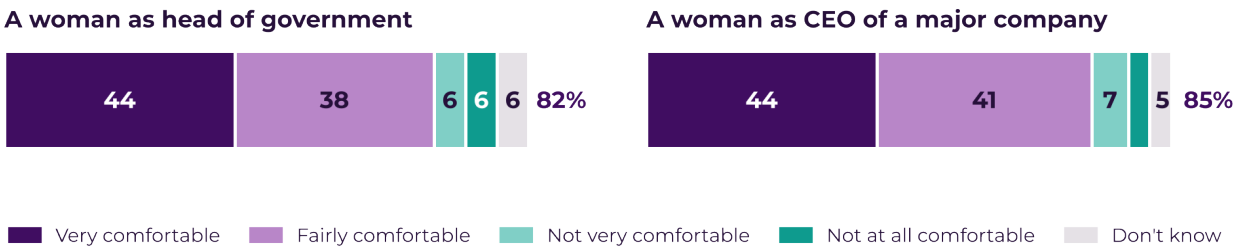


Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

COMFORT WITH WOMEN LEADERS

82% would be comfortable with a woman as head of government and **85% with a woman as CEO of a major company**, with 44% very comfortable in each case.

Figure 32 Comfort with a woman as head of government and as CEO, Italy, 2026



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

SECTION 05 · G7 COUNTRY PROFILE

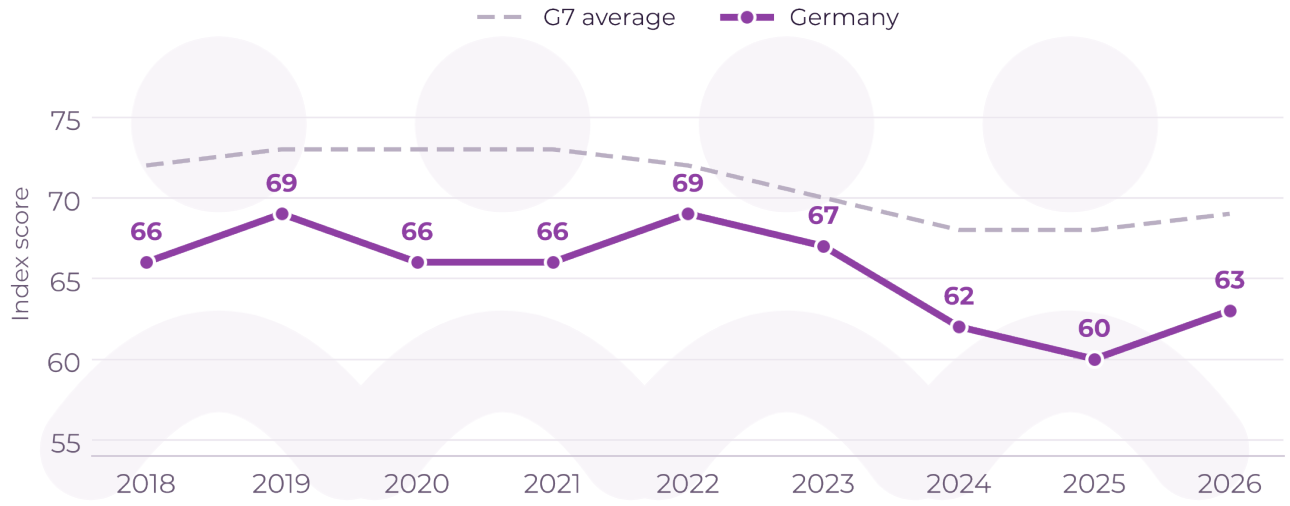
GERMANY

INDEX 2026	G7 RANK	WOMEN · MEN	AGE 18–34 · 55–65
63	7TH	62·63	61·70
▲ 3 from 60 in 2025	of 7 countries	Gap: −1 point	Gap: 9 points

Germany rises three points to 63 but remains the lowest-scoring G7 country. It is **the only G7 country where men (63) score higher than women (62)**: women's score has fallen from 73 in 2022, while men's has recovered from 58 in 2024.

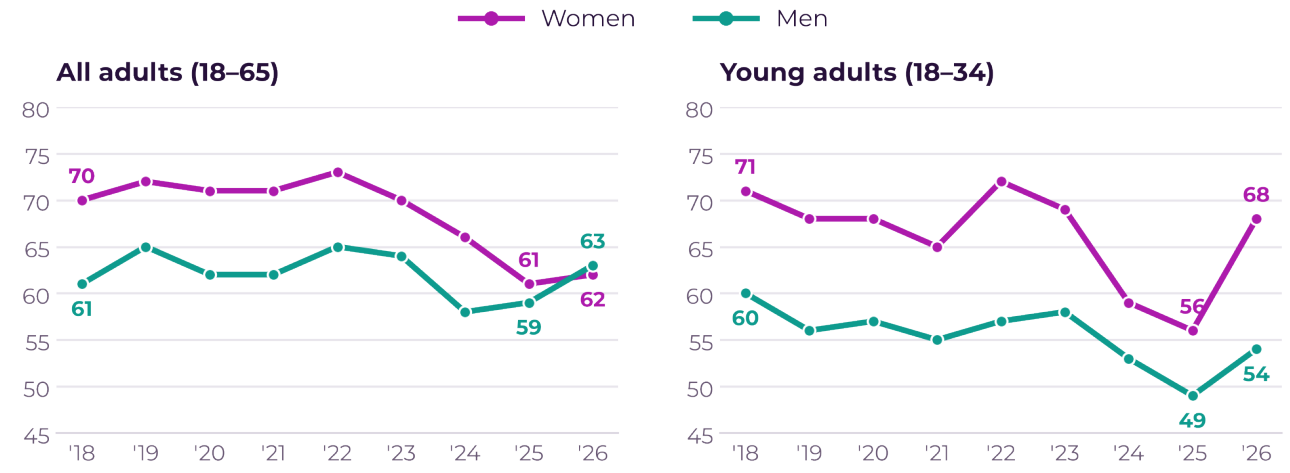
Among the young there is a strong rebound: **young women rise twelve points, from 56 to 68**, and young men from 49 to 54, although the gap between them doubles to 14 points. 18–34 year-olds score 61, against 71 among 35–54s.

Figure 33 **Germany: Reykjavík Index, 2018–2026**



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

Figure 34 **Germany: women and men, all adults and 18–34 year-olds, 2018–2026**



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

LEADERSHIP BY SECTOR

Media and entertainment, natural sciences and food and drink manufacturing lead, at 68% each, the lowest top score in the G7. **Fashion and beauty (43%) and childcare (46%) are lowest**: in fashion and beauty more say a woman is better suited (48%) than both equally. Germany has the strongest male leans in technical sectors: 37% say a man is better suited in defence and police, 35% in engineering and 34% in automotive manufacturing.

Figure 35 Who is better suited to lead? Germany by sector, 2026

Left: share saying women and men are equally suited to lead. Right: share saying a man or a woman is better suited.

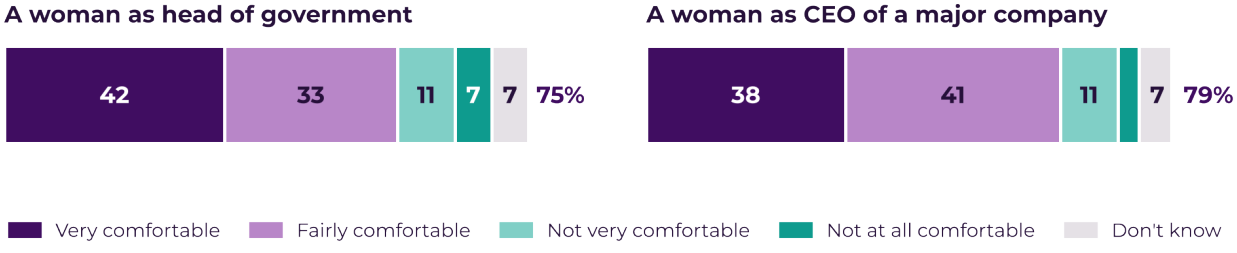


Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

COMFORT WITH WOMEN LEADERS

75% would be comfortable with a woman as head of government (42% very comfortable) and **79% with a woman as CEO of a major company** (38%), both below the G7 average. Germany is the only G7 country where fewer are very comfortable with a woman as CEO than as head of government, and 18% would not be comfortable with a woman leading the government.

Figure 36 Comfort with a woman as head of government and as CEO, Germany, 2026



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

SECTION 06

ICELAND

The global leader and role model

INDEX 2026	RANK	WOMEN · MEN	AGE 18–34 · 55–65
85	1ST	84·85	83·83
▼ 1 from 86 in 2025	of 11 countries measured	Gap: −1 point	No gap

NO.1 ICELAND IS THE GLOBAL LEADER

Iceland records the highest Reykjavík Index score of any country, **85**, and has led the Index every year since it was first measured. It has also topped the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report for **17 consecutive years**.

WHY ICELAND IS THE ROLE MODEL

Iceland shows what becomes possible when equality is built, over decades, into law, policy, leadership and everyday life. Its lead is not an accident: it is the result of sustained public pressure, political leadership and practical measures that share work, care and power between women and men.

1975

Women's Day Off: around 90% of Icelandic women stop work to show their value to society.

1980

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir becomes the world's first democratically elected woman president.

2009

Iceland tops the WEF Global Gender Gap Report for the first time, and has every year since.

2013

A 40% gender quota for company boards takes effect.

2018

Iceland becomes the first country to require employers to prove they pay women and men equally.

2021

Equal parental leave: six months for each parent, most of it non-transferable.

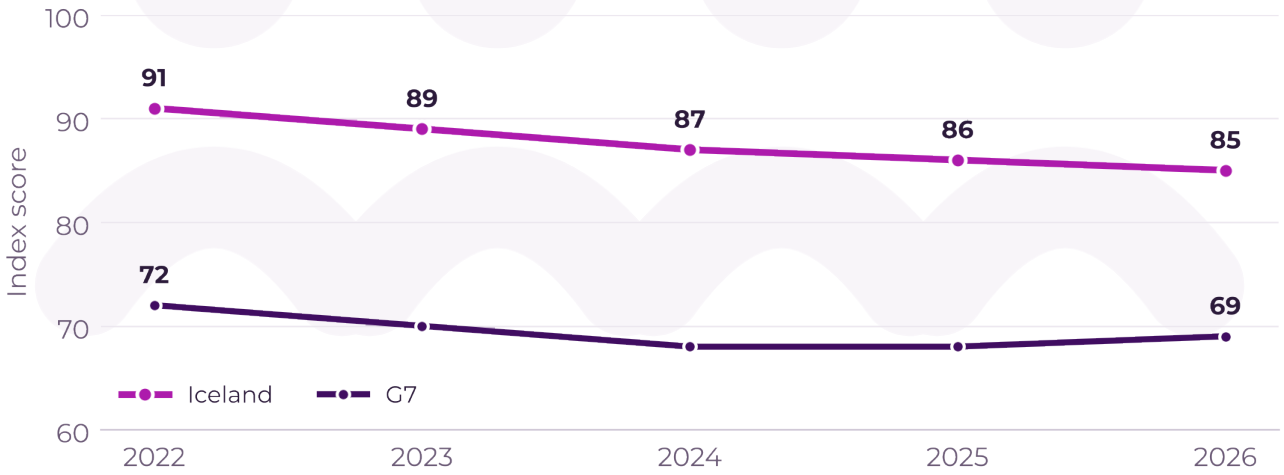
The Index shows the result. **Eight in ten Icelanders see women and men as equally suited to lead in most sectors**, and the conviction that gender equality matters goes hand in hand with a higher score (87, against 72 among those who do not see it as important). This is the foundation of the Reykjavík Global Foundation's work: showing the world what an equal society looks like, and how to get there.

ICELAND IN 2026

Iceland remains the global leader. At 85, it records the highest score of any country measured, sixteen points above the G7 average and nine above Japan, the highest-scoring G7 country. Eight in ten Icelanders see women and men as equally suited to lead in most sectors. Its score has eased each

year since it was first measured in 2022, from 91 to 85, a reminder that even the leader cannot take progress for granted.

Figure 37 **Reykjavík Index in Iceland, 2022–2026**

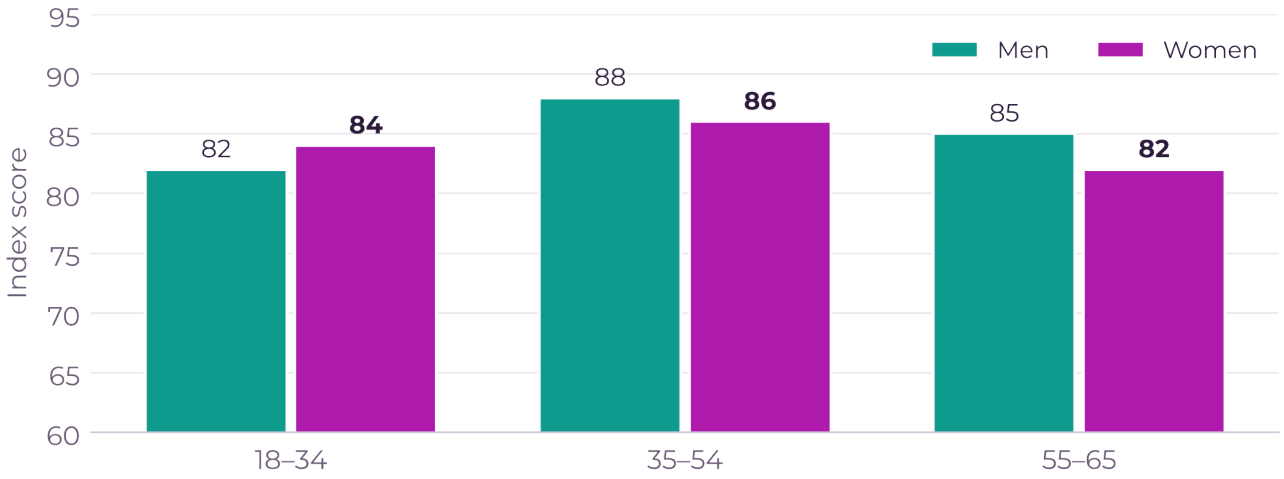


Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

Unusually, men (85) and women (84) are now almost level. In 2024 women scored 90 and men 84, so the narrowing reflects **a fall among women, not a rise among men**. Women's scores have fallen in every age group since 2024: from 89 to 84 among 18–34s, from 93 to 86 among 35–54s and from 87 to 82 among 55–65s. Men's have held or edged up: 82 among 18–34s (unchanged), 88 among 35–54s (from 86) and 85 among 55–65s (from 84).

By age, 35–54 year-olds are the most gender-equal (87, down from 90 in 2024), with 18–34s (83, from 84) and 55–65s (83, from 85) level. Young women (84) still score higher than young men (82), but men now score higher than women among 35–54s (88 v 86) and 55–65s (85 v 82).

Figure 38 **Reykjavík Index in Iceland by gender and age, 2026**

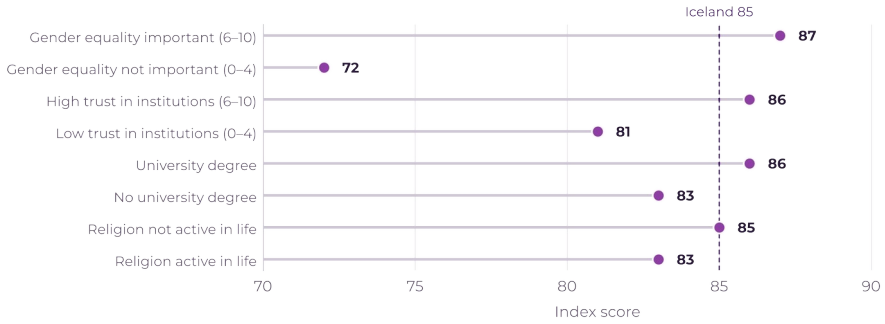


Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

WHAT SHAPES VIEWS IN ICELAND

The strongest divide in Iceland is attitude to gender equality itself. Those who consider gender equality important score 87, against 72 among those who do not, a 15-point gap, the same as in Kenya and almost twice Nigeria's. Trust in public institutions also matters: people with high trust score 86, compared with 81 among those with low trust. Education and religion make a smaller difference: 86 among university graduates against 83 among those without a degree, and 85 among those for whom religion is not an active part of life against 83 for those for whom it is.

Figure 39 Reykjavík Index in Iceland by attitudes and background, 2026



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

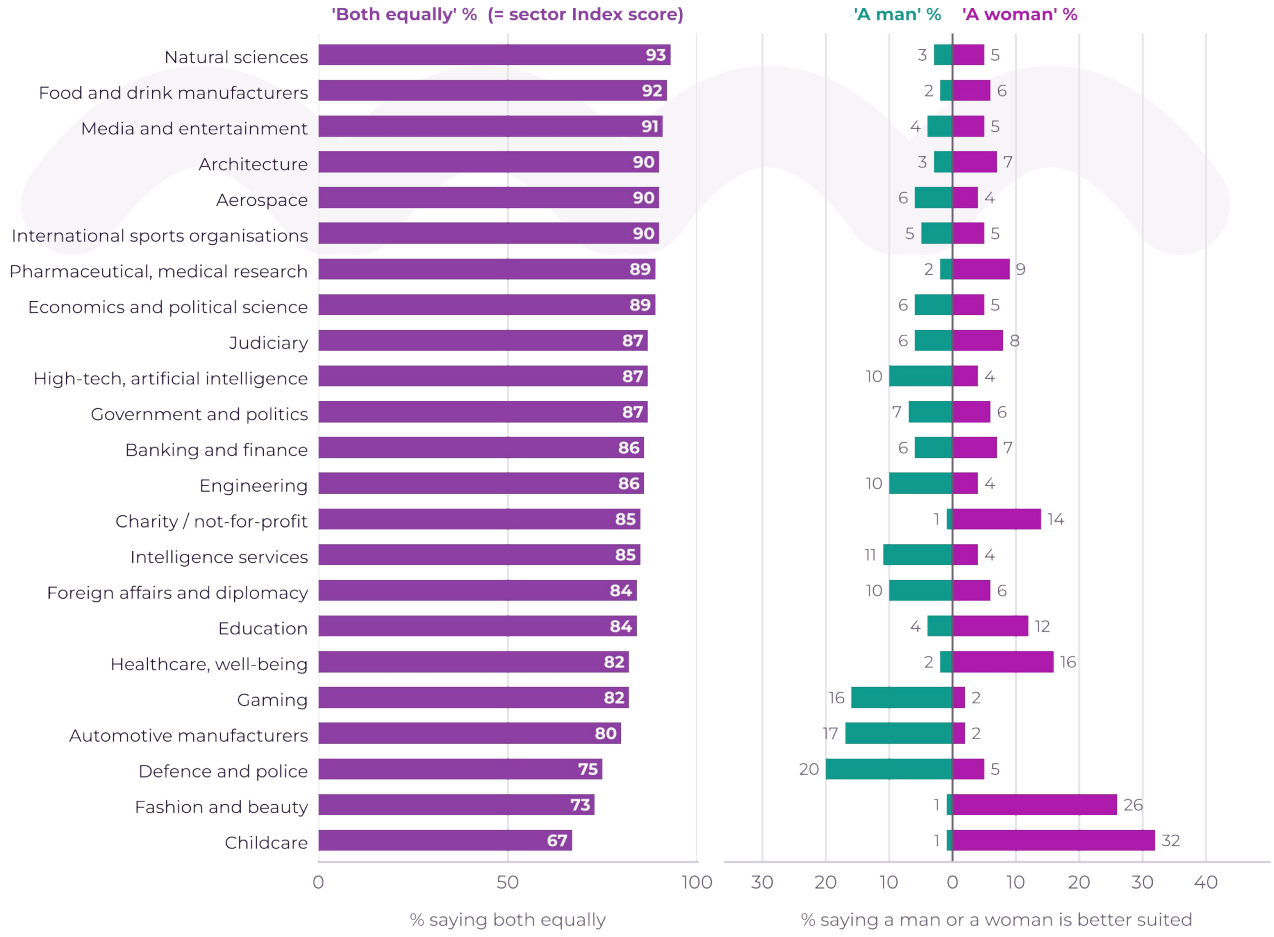
LEADERSHIP BY SECTOR

Nine in ten Icelanders see women and men as equally suited to lead in natural sciences (93%), food and drink (92%), media (91%), architecture, aerospace and international sports (90% each). Stereotypes remain in childcare (67% 'both equally'; 32% say a woman), fashion and beauty (73%; 26% a woman) and defence and police (75%; 20% a man).

Smaller leans remain elsewhere. A man is favoured in automotive manufacturing (17%), gaming (16%), intelligence services (11%), and high-tech and artificial intelligence, engineering, and foreign affairs and diplomacy (10% each). A woman is favoured in healthcare and well-being (16%), charity (14%) and education (12%).

Figure 40 Who is better suited to lead? Iceland by sector, 2026

Left: share saying women and men are equally suited to lead (the sector's Index score). Right: share saying a man or a woman is better suited.



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

SECTION 07

KENYA

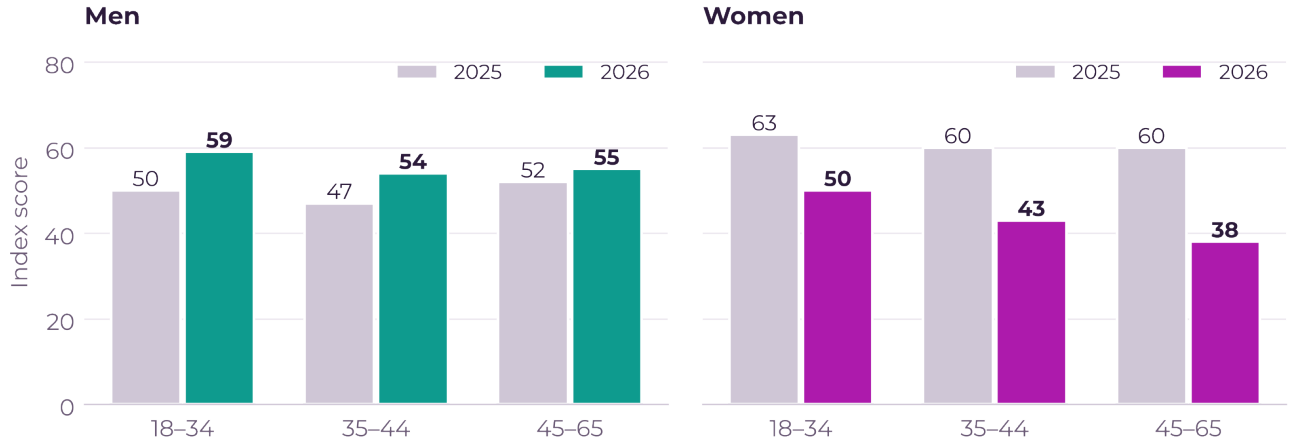
A reversal between women and men

INDEX 2026	RANK	WOMEN · MEN	AGE 18–34 · 45–65
53	IITH	49·57	55·47
▼ 3 from 56 in 2025	of 11 countries measured	Gap: −8 points	Gap: 8 points

Kenya's Reykjavík Index falls three points to 53 in 2026, from 56 in 2025 (52 in 2024), the lowest of the eleven countries measured and ten points behind Nigeria. The overall decline masks **a striking reversal between women and men**. Women's score falls from 62 to 49, while men's rises from 50 to 57. Men now score eight points higher than women; in 2025, women scored twelve points higher.

The divergence runs through every age group. Men's scores rise in all three, most among 18–34s, up nine points to 59. Women's scores fall in all three: young women drop from 63 to 50, and **women aged 45–65 fall most steeply, from 60 to 38**. The gap between women and men is widest in that oldest group, at 17 points.

Figure 41 **Reykjavík Index in Kenya by gender and age, 2025 and 2026**



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

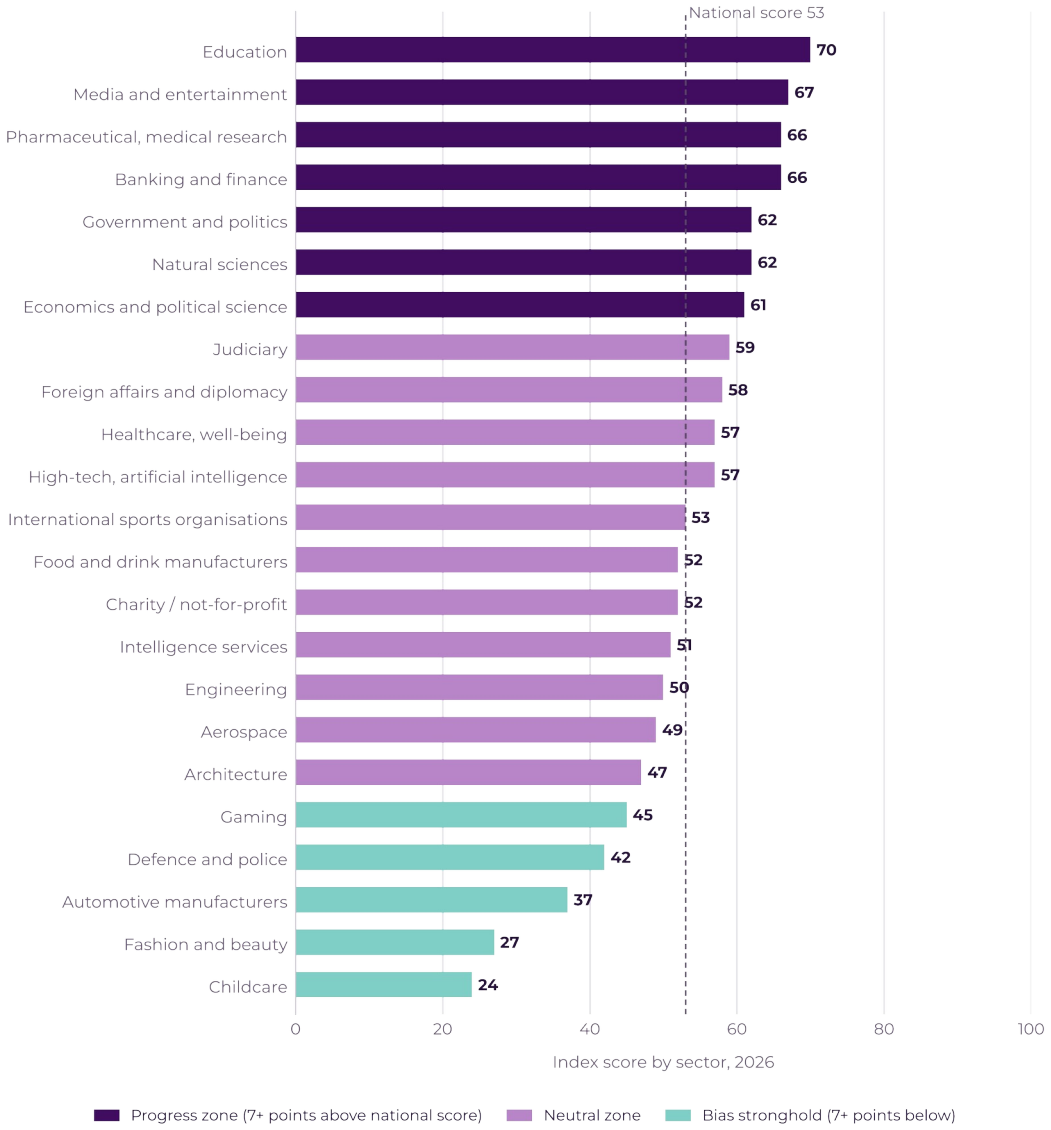
LEADERSHIP BY SECTOR

Education is Kenya's highest-scoring sector at 70, followed by media and entertainment (67), and pharmaceutical and medical research, and banking and finance (66 each). Yet all seven sectors in the progress zone score lower than in 2025, with economics and political science down most (−6). The sharpest falls are in technical fields: engineering drops 11 points to 50 and architecture 10 points to 47.

Childcare (24) and **fashion and beauty (27)**, each down seven points, remain the strongest bias areas, followed by automotive manufacturing (37, down six), defence and police (42) and gaming (45). Gaming is the only bias stronghold to improve, up three points. Stereotypes cut both ways: 70% say a woman is better suited to lead childcare and 68% fashion and beauty, while 51% favour a man for defence and police and 45% each for gaming and engineering.

Figure 42 Reykjavík Index in Kenya by sector, 2026

Progress zone: 7+ points above the national score. Bias stronghold: 7+ points below.



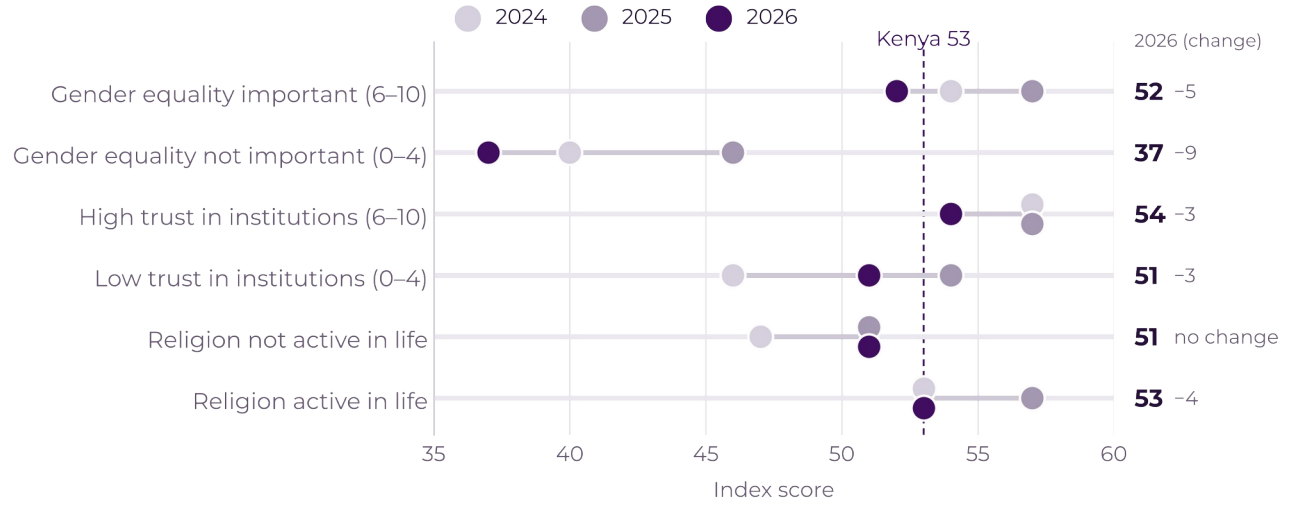
Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

WHAT SHAPES VIEWS

Kenyans who consider gender equality important score 52, against 37 among those who attach little importance to it, a 15-point gap. Even the first group scores low. Trust in public institutions makes little difference (54 v 51, both down three points). The gap linked to religion narrows from six points to two: those for whom religion plays an active part fall from 57 to 53, while others hold at 51.

Figure 43 Reykjavík Index in Kenya by attitudes and background, 2024, 2025 and 2026

Importance of gender equality and trust in institutions rated 0–10. 2026 score and change from 2025 shown on the right.



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

EQUALITY AND COMFORT WITH WOMEN LEADERS

Fewer Kenyans than in 2025 believe gender equality has already been achieved: at work (60%, down from 62%), in leadership positions (61%, from 65%) and in politics (59%, from 63%). In 2024 the figures were 50%, 53% and 54%. Women are less likely than men to say equality has been achieved in leadership (57% v 65%), and the gap is widest among 18–34s (55% v 69%).

Comfort with women in leadership remains high, but strong comfort has weakened. Around four in ten (42%) are very comfortable with a woman as head of government (43% in 2025), and around half with a woman as a government minister (50%, from 54%) or CEO of a major company (49%, from 54%). Strong comfort with a woman leading a small or medium-sized company is unchanged at 53%, the highest of the four roles.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Kenya's results reveal increasingly divergent perceptions among women and men. Men's views become more gender-equal, while women, especially older women, are less likely than in 2025 to see women and men as equally suited to lead. The decline now reaches even Kenya's most gender-equal sectors. Kenya's ten-point gap with Nigeria shows its position cannot be explained by a simple divide between African and G7 countries. Understanding this reversal is a priority.

SECTION 08

NIGERIA

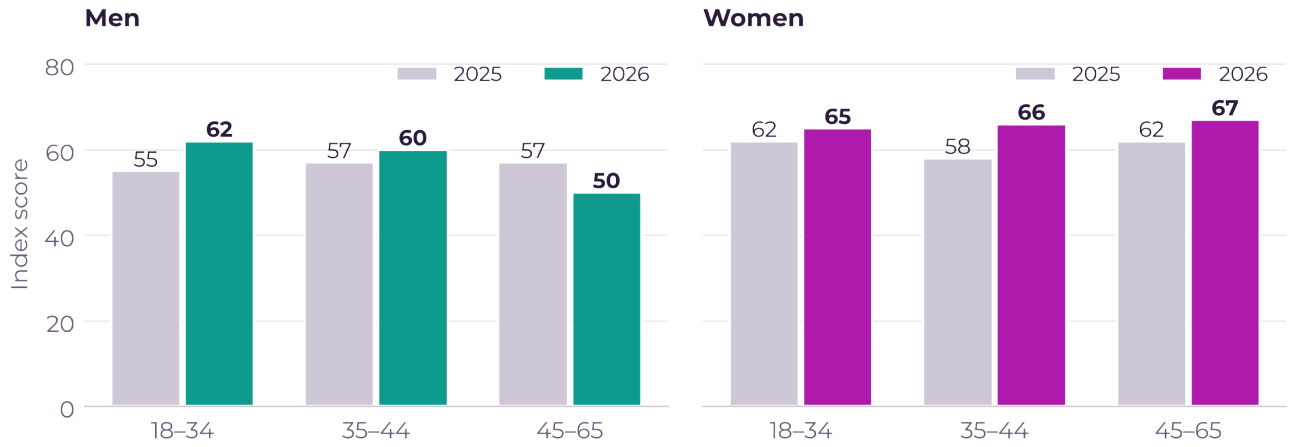
A four-point rise

INDEX 2026	RANK	WOMEN · MEN	AGE 18–34 · 45–65
63	=9TH	66·59	63·59
▲ 4 from 59 in 2025	of 11 countries measured	Gap: +7 points	Gap: 4 points

Nigeria's Reykjavík Index rises four points to 63, up from 59 in 2025 and 57 in 2024, one of the largest gains of any country measured in 2026. That puts it level with Germany and ten points ahead of Kenya. Both women and men record higher scores: women rise five points to 66 and men three points to 59, so the gender gap widens slightly from five to seven points.

Women's scores rise in every age group, most among 35–44s, up eight points to 66. Young women rise from 62 to 65, and women aged 45–65 from 62 to 67. Among men, 18–34s rise seven points to 62 and 35–44s three points to 60. The exception is **men aged 45–65, whose score falls seven points, from 57 to 50**. Women score higher than men in every age group: by three points among 18–34s but by 17 among 45–65s.

Figure 44 **Reykjavík Index in Nigeria by gender and age, 2025 and 2026**



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

LEADERSHIP BY SECTOR

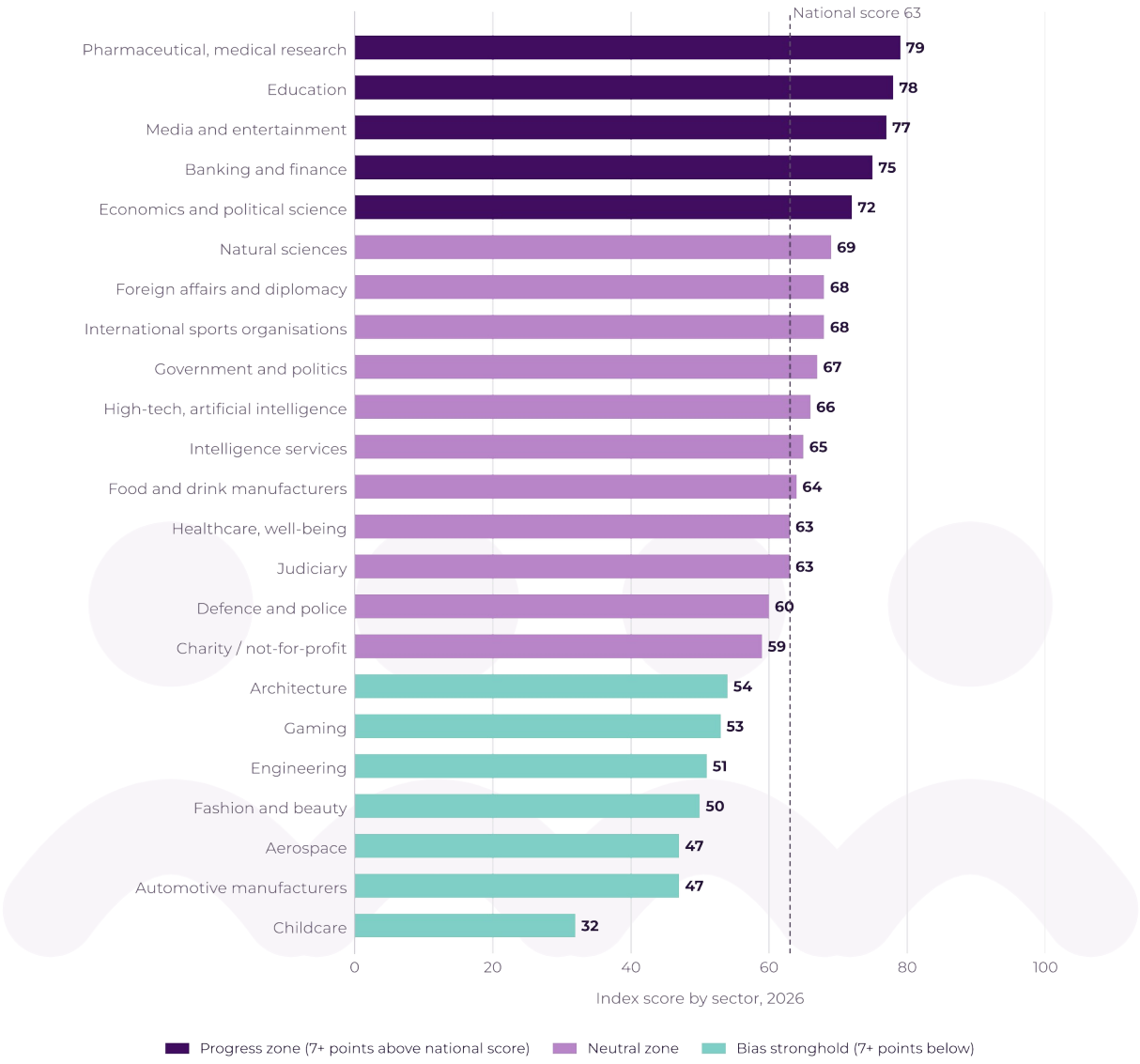
Progress is broad: 18 of the 23 sectors improve on 2025. **Pharmaceutical and medical research (79, up nine)**, education (78, up six), media and entertainment (77, up eight) and banking and finance (75, up two) record the highest scores, with economics and political science (72, up five) completing the progress zone. Outside the progress zone, the largest rises are in international sports organisations (up ten to 68) and defence and police (up eight to 60).

Strong stereotypes persist. **Childcare is by far the lowest-scoring sector at 32**, 47 points below pharmaceutical and medical research. Aerospace and automotive manufacturing both score 47, followed by fashion and beauty (50) and engineering (51). Stereotypes cut both ways: 65% say a

woman is better suited to lead childcare and 48% fashion and beauty, while 48% favour a man for automotive manufacturing, 47% for engineering and 46% for aerospace.

Figure 45 Reykjavík Index in Nigeria by sector, 2026

Progress zone: 7+ points above the national score. Bias stronghold: 7+ points below.



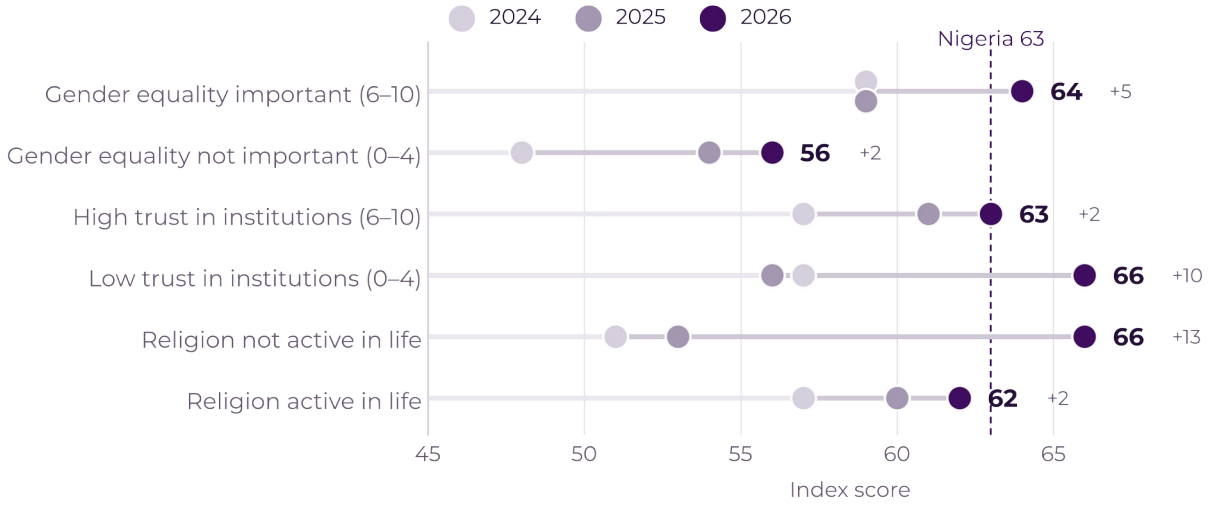
Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

WHAT SHAPES VIEWS

Scores rise in all six groups shown, and two traditional gaps reverse. Those for whom religion does not play an active part rise 13 points to 66, overtaking those for whom it does (62, from 60). Those with low trust in public institutions rise ten points to 66, ahead of those with high trust (63). Those who consider gender equality important score 64, against 56 among those who do not, and the gap widens from five points to eight.

Figure 46 Reykjavík Index in Nigeria by attitudes and background, 2024, 2025 and 2026

Importance of gender equality and trust in institutions rated 0–10. 2026 score and change from 2025 shown on the right.



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

EQUALITY AND COMFORT WITH WOMEN LEADERS

The rise in Nigeria's Index contrasts with a sharp fall in the share who believe gender equality has already been achieved: at work 47% (55% in 2025), in leadership positions 47% (63%) and **in politics just 36% (54%)**. In 2024 the figures were 62%, 64% and 50%. Fewer than half now say it has been achieved in any of the three. Unlike in Kenya, women are slightly more likely than men to say so, for example at work (50% v 44%) and in politics (37% v 34%).

Comfort with women in leadership remains high, particularly in business: around seven in ten are very comfortable with a woman leading a major company (66%, from 67% in 2025) or a small or medium-sized company (70%, from 69%). Strong comfort is lower, and falling, for political roles: 58% for a government minister (65%) and 50% for head of government (56%).

WHAT THIS MEANS

Nigeria is moving towards more gender-equal views of leadership, among women of all ages, men under 45 and across most sectors. At the same time, far fewer Nigerians believe equality has already been achieved, and strong comfort with women in political leadership has weakened. Greater acceptance of women's leadership is going hand in hand with a sharper view of the gaps that remain. Older men, the one group moving the other way, are a priority.

SECTION 09

AUSTRALIA

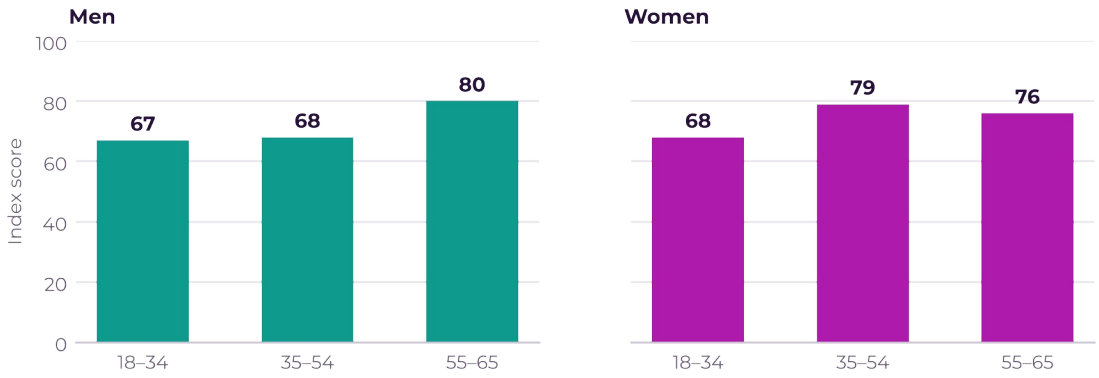
Ahead of the G7, with a generation gap

INDEX 2026	RANK	WOMEN · MEN	AGE 18–34 · 55–65
72	=3RD	74·70	67·78
3 points above the G7 average	of 11 countries measured	Gap: +4 points	Gap: 11 points

Australia scores 72 **in 2026**, three points above the G7 average of 69 and level with the UK. That places it joint third of the eleven countries measured, behind only Iceland (85) and Japan (76), and well ahead of Kenya and Nigeria.

Age shapes views more than gender. Among men, scores climb steeply with age, from 67 among 18–34s and 68 among 35–54s to **80 among men aged 55–65**, the highest of any group and a 13-point gap between the youngest and oldest men. Women aged 35–54 score 79 and those aged 55–65 score 76, but **young women score 68**, eleven points below the middle generation. As across the G7, the youngest Australians, women and men alike, are the least likely to see women and men as equally suited to lead.

Figure 47 Reykjavík Index in Australia by gender and age, 2026



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

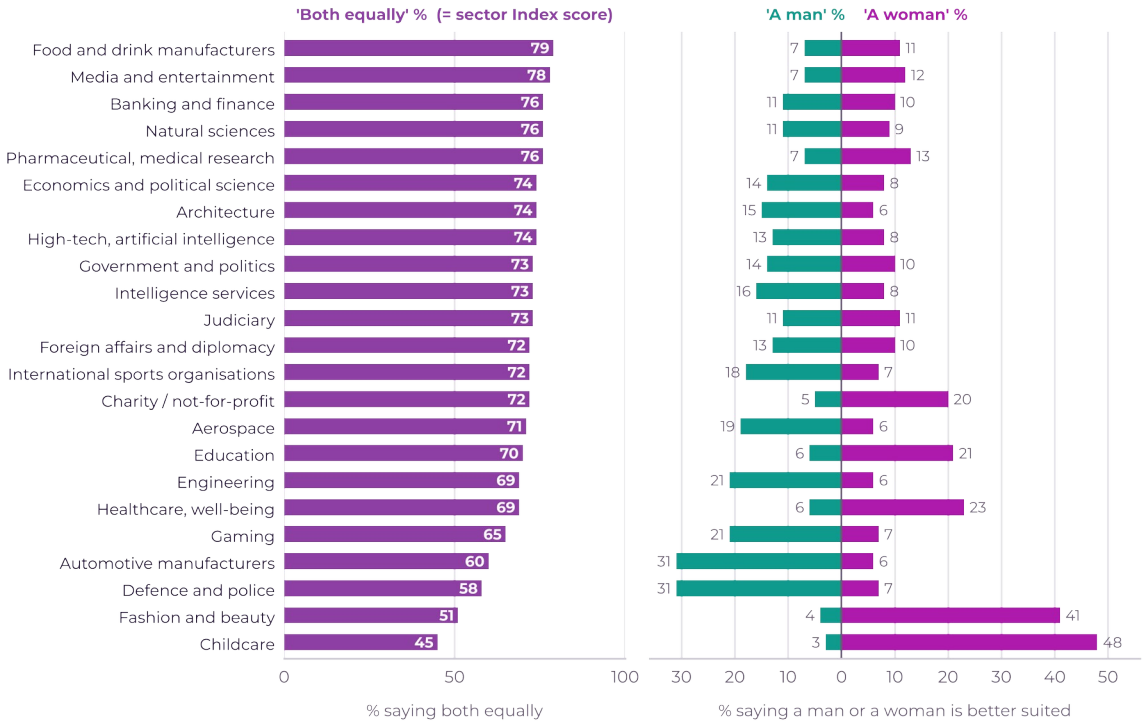
LEADERSHIP BY SECTOR

Most Australians see women and men as equally suited to lead across most of the 23 sectors. **Food and drink manufacturing (79%)** and media and entertainment (78%) top the list, followed by banking and finance, natural sciences and pharmaceutical and medical research (76% each).

Stereotypes are strongest in the same sectors as elsewhere. **Childcare is the only sector where fewer than half say 'both equally' (45%)**, with 48% saying a woman is better suited, followed by fashion and beauty (51%; 41% say a woman). At the other end, around three in ten say a man is better suited to lead in **defence and police and in automotive manufacturing (31% each)**, and around one in five in engineering and gaming (21% each) and aerospace (19%).

Figure 48 Who is better suited to lead? Australia by sector, 2026

Left: share saying women and men are equally suited to lead. Right: share saying a man or a woman is better suited.

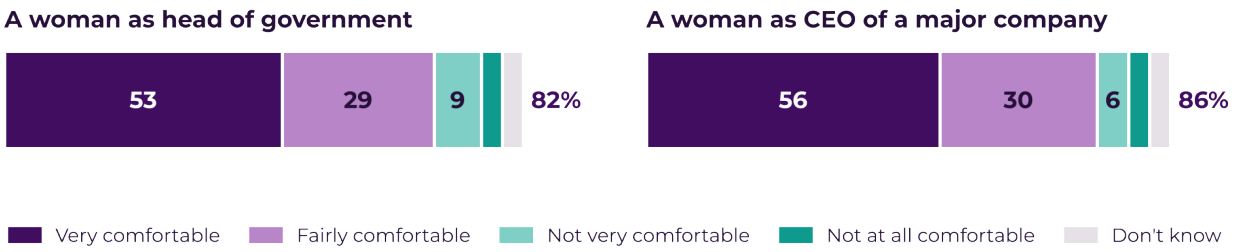


Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

COMFORT WITH WOMEN LEADERS

Comfort with women in the most senior roles is high, and higher than across the G7. **82% would be comfortable with a woman as head of government** (53% very comfortable), compared with 78% across the G7, and **86% with a woman as CEO of a major company** (56% very comfortable), compared with 82%. Around one in eight (13%) would not be comfortable with a woman leading the government, and one in ten (10%) with a woman leading a major company.

Figure 49 Comfort with a woman as head of government and as CEO, Australia, 2026



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Australia sits in the leading group of countries measured, with broad comfort with women at the top of government and business. But the pattern seen across the G7 holds here too: the youngest adults, women and men alike, are the least likely to see women and men as equally suited to lead, while men over 55 are the most likely. Progress will depend on closing that gap among younger Australians and on tackling the stereotypes that persist in care, fashion, defence and the automotive industry.

SECTION 10

SPECIAL REPORT

How societies perceive violence against women and girls

Alongside the 2026 Index, Verian and the Reykjavík Global Foundation asked people across the G7 how they perceive violence against women and girls (VAWG). The survey covered 7,221 people aged 18–65 in the seven G7 countries, online, from 18 August to 4 September 2026. Initial findings were presented on 21 September 2026, and the full special report was presented at the Reykjavík Global Forum on 16 November 2026.

RECOGNISE IT

85%

say all, most or some women and girls experience violence

WANT ACTION

88%

say tackling it should be a priority or important

READY TO ACT

24%

feel motivated to take action

VIOLENCE IS RECOGNISED AS WIDESPREAD

Violence against women and girls is understood to be prevalent across society. 85% believe that all, most or some women and girls experience violence in their lifetime, and 47% say all or most do. Young people see it as most widespread: **66% of 18–24 year-olds** say all or most women and girls experience violence, falling steadily with age to 35% of 55–65s. Women are more likely than men to say so (54% v 39%).

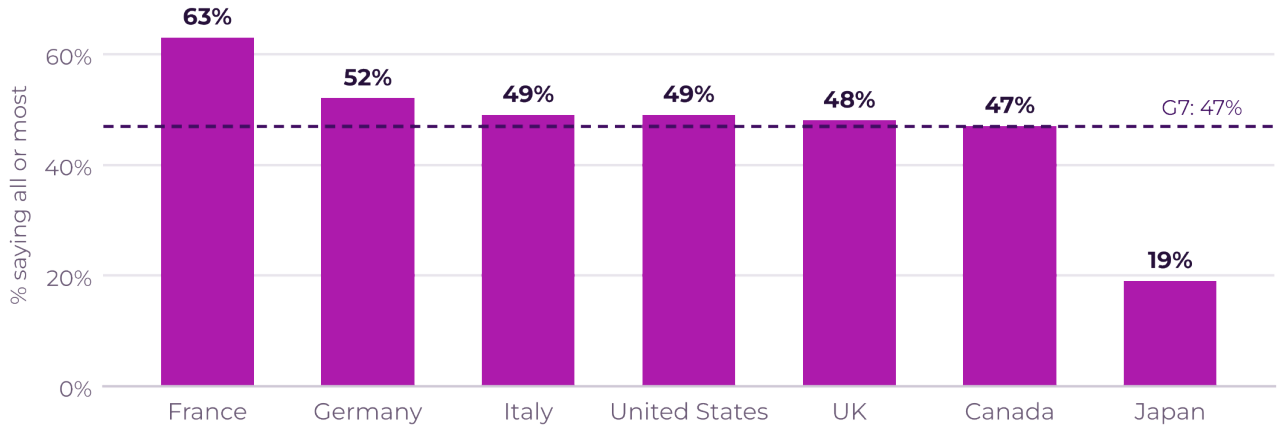
Figure 50 How many women and girls experience violence during their lifetime?



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, Reykjavík Index Special Report: How Societies Perceive Violence Against Women and Girls (September 2026). G7 total.

Perceptions vary across the G7. In France, 63% say all or most women and girls experience violence in their lifetime, including 13% who say all do. Around half say so in Germany (52%), Italy and the United States (49% each), the UK (48%) and Canada (47%). Japan stands apart: only 19% say all or most, and almost a quarter (23%) don't know.

Figure 51 Share saying all or most women and girls experience violence, by country



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, Reykjavík Index Special Report: How Societies Perceive Violence Against Women and Girls (September 2026).

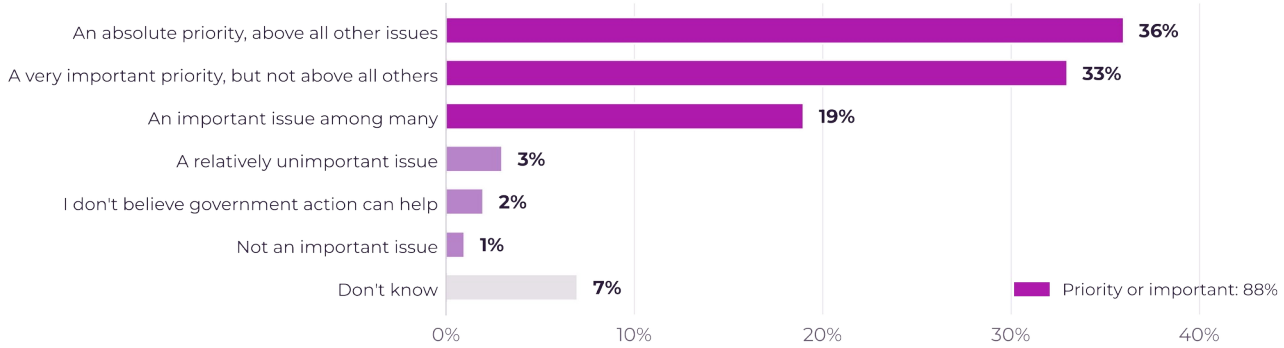
A MANDATE FOR ACTION

There is a clear public mandate. 88% say tackling violence against women and girls should be a priority or an important issue for public authorities: 36% say it should be an absolute priority, above all other issues, 33% a very important priority and 19% an important issue among many. Only 6% think it unimportant or that government action cannot help.

Women are more likely than men to call it an absolute priority (40% v 31%), while men more often say it is very important but should not take precedence over other areas (35% v 31%). Young people feel most strongly that public authorities should act: 40% of 18–24s and 39% of 25–34s call it an absolute priority, against 32% of 45–54s.

Italy places the greatest priority on tackling it: 49% say it should be an absolute priority, followed by France (43%) and the UK (42%), against 34% in Canada and Germany and 31% in the United States. Japan again stands apart, at 16%, with one in five (20%) unable to say.

Figure 52 What priority should public authorities give to tackling violence against women and girls?



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, Reykjavík Index Special Report: How Societies Perceive Violence Against Women and Girls (September 2026). G7 total.

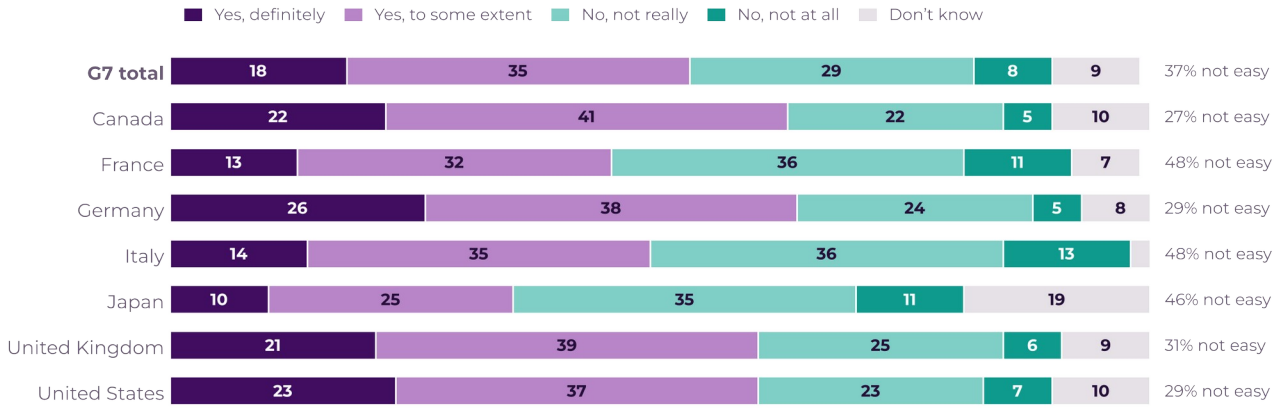
REPORTING REMAINS DIFFICULT

Only around half (53%) think it is easy to report violence against women and girls in their country, and just 18% say it is definitely easy. More than a third (37%) say it is not. **Women are more likely than men to see reporting as difficult (44% v 30%)**, as are 18–24 year-olds (45%).

Perceived barriers differ sharply between countries. Around half say reporting is not easy in Italy and France (48% each) and Japan (46%), against around three in ten in the UK (31%), Germany and the United States (29% each) and Canada (27%). In Japan, only 35% think it is easy to report.

Figure 53 Is it easy to report violence against women and girls today?

Share answering each option, by country (%). Right: total saying 'no, not really' or 'no, not at all'.



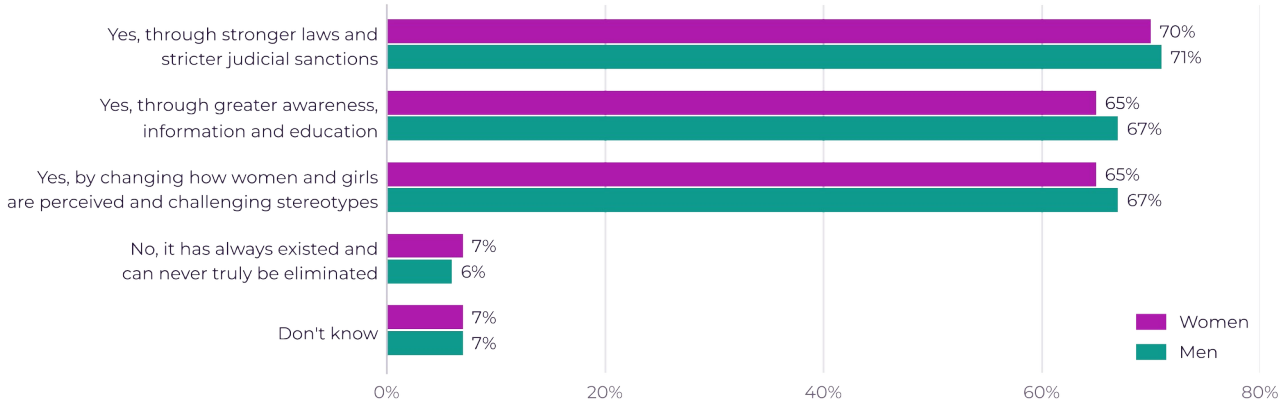
Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, Reykjavík Index Special Report: How Societies Perceive Violence Against Women and Girls (September 2026). G7 total.

CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

Perceptions are positive about the possibility of change among both women and men. Around seven in ten (70%) believe violence against women and girls can be tackled through stronger laws and stricter judicial sanctions, and around two-thirds through greater awareness, information and education (66%) or by changing how women and girls are perceived and challenging stereotypes (65%). Stronger laws (36%) and awareness (33%) are the most common first choices. Only 6% say it has always existed and can never be eliminated, and views barely differ by age.

Despite national differences, there is broad agreement on the drivers of change: outside Japan, support for stronger laws ranges from 69% in the United States to 75% in the UK. Confidence is notably lower in Japan, where 60% back stronger laws, 50% greater awareness and 18% don't know.

Figure 54 Is it really possible to tackle violence against women and girls?



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, Reykjavík Index Special Report: How Societies Perceive Violence Against Women and Girls (September 2026). G7 total.

FROM BELIEF TO ACTION

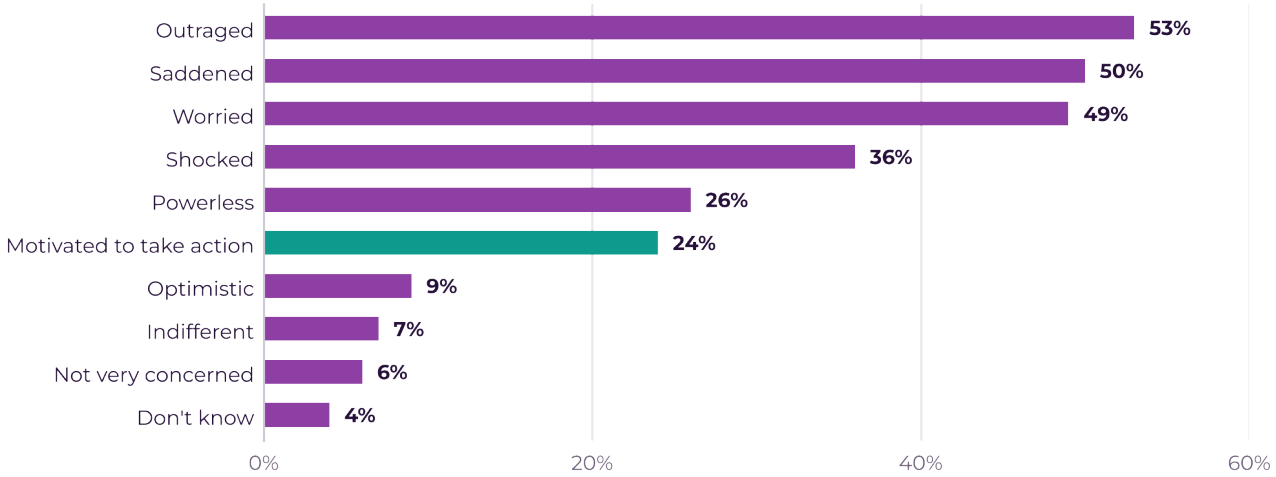
The issue provokes strong emotion: around half feel outraged (53%), saddened (50%) or worried (49%), and a third shocked (36%). But only around a quarter feel motivated to take action (24%: 23% of

women and 25% of men), and a similar share feel powerless (26%). Women are much more likely than men to feel powerless (32% v 20%).

Age pulls emotion and action in opposite directions. Outrage is strongest among the oldest, 61% of 55–65s against 46–48% of under-35s, while motivation to act falls, from 29% among under-35s to 19% among 55–65s.

National differences shape emotional responses more than willingness to act. Germans most often feel shocked (55%), Italians worried (63%) and outraged (59%), and Britons and Canadians saddened (63% and 60%). Motivation to act is highest in the United States (32%), Canada and the UK (29% each) and Italy (27%), and lowest in Japan (10%).

Figure 55 When thinking about violence against women and girls, you feel...



Source: Verian / Reykjavík Global Foundation, Reykjavík Index Special Report: How Societies Perceive Violence Against Women and Girls (September 2026). G7 total.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Violence against women and girls is a wicked social problem at a time of low public trust in institutions. The public recognises it, gives a clear mandate for action and believes change is possible. The challenge is to turn outrage into agency and build the next wave of momentum. Young people, who feel most strongly that authorities should act and are most motivated to act themselves, are central to that. It adds nuance to the wider Index story: younger adults record the lowest scores on gender-equal leadership, yet show particularly strong demand for action on violence against women and girls.

SECTION 11

METHODOLOGY AND CREDITS

HOW THE INDEX IS CALCULATED

The Reykjavík Index for Leadership is built on the question: "For each of the following sectors or industries, do you think men or women are better suited to leadership positions?" Respondents answer 'men', 'women', 'both equally' or 'don't know' for each of 23 economic and professional sectors.

A response of 'both equally' results in a point for that country within the Index; 'men better suited' and 'women better suited' do not. 'Don't know' responses are excluded. A country's Index score equals the average proportion selecting 'both equally' across the 23 sectors. This is a measure of the extent to which, across society, women and men are viewed as equally suitable for leadership.

Each country survey covers at least 1,000 working-age adults aged 18–65. In the G7 and Iceland, samples are weighted by gender, age and education. In Kenya and Nigeria, samples are weighted so that each country's gender and age profile matches the relevant population, and efforts were made to collect responses from all regions. Statistically significant differences between groups are calculated at the 95% level using the chi-square method. Where averages are shown (for example, the G7 average), each country's score is weighted equally, regardless of population size.

FIELDWORK

	G7	Iceland	Kenya	Nigeria
Sample	1,000 per country	1,000	1,075	1,082
Population	Adults 18–65	Adults 18–65	Adults 18–65	Adults 18–65
Weighting	Gender, age, education	Gender, age, education	Gender, age	Gender, age
Method	Web survey via online panel provider	Web survey via the SSRI online panel	Random digit dialling (telephone)	Random digit dialling (telephone)
Fieldwork partner	Cint (online panel)	Social Science Research Institute (SSRI), University of Iceland	Apex Research Solutions	Yucca Consulting
Fieldwork dates	20 August – 3 September 2026	18 September – 5 October 2026	10–28 August 2026	6–24 August 2026
Trend since	2018	2022	Compared with 2024 and 2025	Compared with 2024 and 2025

Kenya and Nigeria were also included in the 2024 Index, and in the 2020–21 Index using a different methodology; the 2020–21 results are not compared here. Australia: 1,009 adults aged 18–65, web survey via Pureprofile, weighted by gender, age and region; fieldwork July 2026.

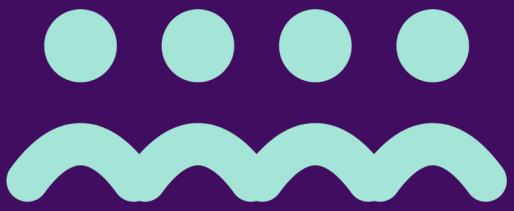
Section 10: separate Verian online survey of 7,221 adults aged 18–65 across the G7 (around 1,000 per country), 18 August–4 September 2026, with quotas for gender and age.

CREDITS

The Reykjavík Index for Leadership is a partnership between **Verian** and **Reykjavík Global Foundation**. Research, fieldwork management and analysis: Verian. Report design: Reykjavík Global Foundation.

The Kenya and Nigeria research was made possible with funding provided by the **Gates Foundation**.

© 2026 Verian Group and Reykjavík Global Foundation. All rights reserved. Please cite as: Verian and Reykjavík Global Foundation, The Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2026.



OUR GOAL IS A WORLD IN WHICH THE REYKJAVÍK INDEX SCORE IS 100.

A world where women and men are viewed as equally suitable to lead, across all sectors.

www.reykjavikglobal.com/reykjavikindex · www.veriangroup.com

The Kenya and Nigeria research was made possible with funding provided by the Gates Foundation.
© 2026 Verian Group and Reykjavík Global Foundation.