

## Women and men in the labour force



## Key points

- In 2020, worldwide, more men (74%) than women (47%) participated in the labour force. The global gender gap in labour force participation, which has narrowed only marginally over the past 25 years, is reported at 27 percentage points as of 2020.
- Across regions in 2019, the gender gap in labour force participation was the largest in Southern Asia (54 percentage points), Northern Africa (47 percentage points) and Western Asia (47 percentage points), where women's labour participation rates were below 30%.
- The gender gap in labour force participation was relatively narrow in sub-Saharan Africa and in developed regions, although for different reasons: in sub-Saharan Africa, economic necessity, brought about by poverty, pressures many women into seeking employment, whereas women in the labour force in developed countries enjoy educational levels equal to those of men and social norms that encourage their participation in paid work.
- Across all stages of the life cycle, men's labour force participation rates were higher than women's in all working-age groups, including youth and older persons. The largest gender gap in labour force participation is observed in the prime working age (25–54). That gap, which has remained relatively stable since 1995, is reported at 32 percentage points as of 2020.
- Depending on household type, the proportion of women actively engaged in the labour market varied greatly while that of men remained unchanged: 82% of women in prime working age in one-person households participated in the labour force, compared to 64% of women in couple-only households and 48% of women in couple households with children.

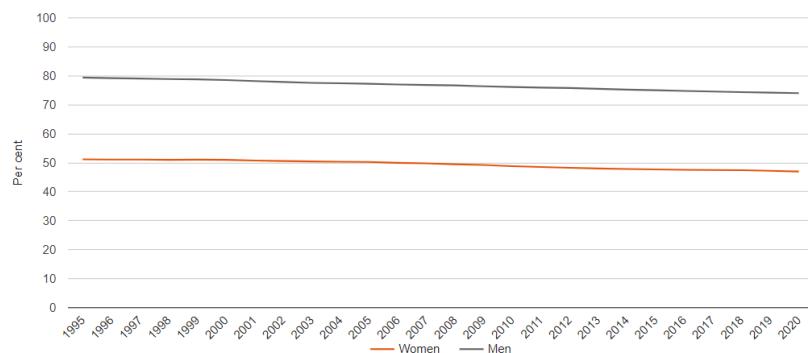
## Globally, the gender gap in labour force participation remains very large

Women and men in the labour force furnish, or are available to furnish, the supply of labour for the production of goods and services in exchange for pay or profit, thus achieving economic empowerment and earning an independent source of income. However, labour market behaviours relative to women and men continue to vary due to legal, systemic and/or attitudinal restrictions.

In 2020, men were much more likely (74%) than women (47%) to participate in the labour force in countries worldwide. Between 1995 and 2005, the labour force participation rate for women remained slightly over 50% and declined gradually to 47% in 2018, where it is projected to remain in 2020. Men's labour force participation rate declined from 79% in 1995 to 74% in 2018 and is projected to remain at that level in 2020 (see figure I).

The gender gap in labour force participation has narrowed only marginally, to 27 percentage points, over the past 25 years due to a slightly larger decline in the labour force participation rate of men compared with that of women.

**Figure I:** Labour force participation rate among people aged 15 years and older by sex: 1995-2020  
(Percentage)



**Source:** International Labour Organization (ILO), Department of Statistics (ILOSTAT), ILO modelled estimates and projections, 2020 (<https://ilo.org/resources/methods/ilo-modelled-estimates/>) (last accessed on 17 July 2020).

**Note:** 2019 and 2020 figures are projections.

## Women's participation in the labour force varies greatly across regions

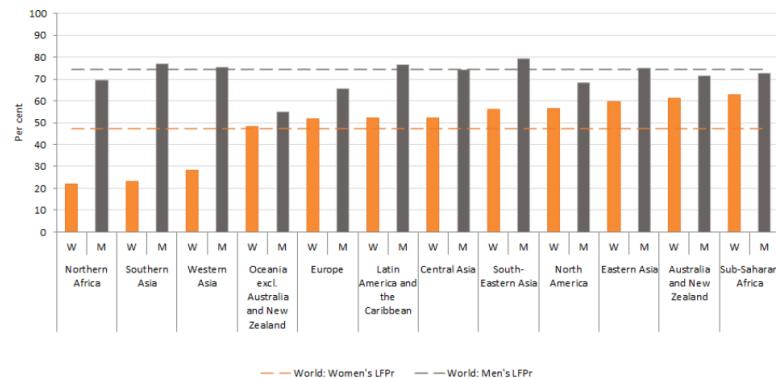
Large variations are found in women's access to the labour market, as well as in the gender gap, across regions at various stages of economic development (see figure II). In 2019, the gender gap in labour force participation was the largest in Southern Asia (54 percentage points), Northern Africa (47 percentage points) and Western Asia (47 percentage points), where women's labour force participation rates were below 30% (see figure II).

Nine out of ten countries where **discriminatory social norms** towards women in paid employment were reported to be the most prevalent were located in those three regions. Limits on **equal rights** for women and men and their freedom to work, namely legal frameworks requiring permission or additional documentation for women to work, existed in 8 out of 18 countries in Western Asia with available data.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, only 14% of countries in Southern Asia with available data made a 14-weeks minimum statutory **paid leave** period available to expecting mothers.

The gender gap in labour force participation may be relatively narrow in countries in both developing and developed regions, although for different reasons. In countries in developing regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa,<sup>2</sup> women's relatively high labour force participation rate compared with men's may be attributed to elevated levels of poverty and thus the economic necessity to work; in developed regions, such as Australia or New Zealand, women's high participation rate in the labour force compared with men's is a result of their near equal levels of **educational participation** and less restrictive social norms regarding the right of women to take part in paid work.<sup>3</sup>

Between 2000 and 2019, across all regions, the steepest decline in women's labour force participation was in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), where the rate fell by 17 percentage points, to 48%, and the highest increase was in Australia and New Zealand, where the rate rose by six percentage points, to 61%. During the same period, the Eastern Asia region, which had the largest regional share of the global labour force in 2019, registered an 8 percentage point decline, to 60% in the rate of women's labour force participation. An increase in women's labour force participation rates was also recorded in Latin America and the Caribbean (52%) and in Europe (52%).

**Figure II:** Labour force participation rate among people aged 15 years and older by sex and region: 2019 (Percentage)



**SOURCE:** ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates and projections, 2020 (<https://ilo.org/resources/methods/ilo-modelled-estimates/>) (correspondence in May 2020).

## Labour force participation is lower for women than for men across all working-age groups

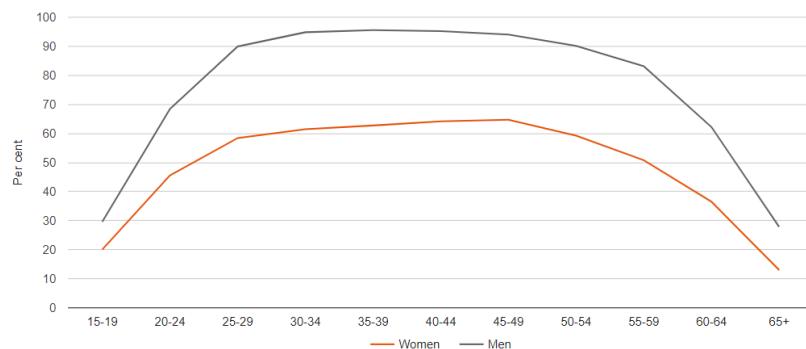
Across all stages in the life cycle, men's rates of participation in the labour force are higher than those of women, including among youth and older persons.

In 2020, worldwide, labour force participation among young women and men aged 15–24 was generally low, reflecting increased access to education and the lack of capacity of the labour market to absorb new cohorts of graduates. Labour force participation among older women and men aged 55–64 and above 65 was relatively low as well, reflecting retirement choices, access to social safety nets in later years, as well as retirement policies (see figure III).

While both women and men reached their peak levels of participation in the labour force during their prime working ages (25–54), data reveal that the largest gender gap in labour force participation is in this age group. The gender gap for this cohort has remained relatively stable, at 32 percentage points in 2020, compared with 31 percentage points in 1995.

Between ages 25–54, women's access to the labour market may be restricted owing to changes in household composition and the unequal distribution of **unpaid care work** in the household between women and men; women's participation rate shows a gradual recovery as mothers enter or re-enter the labour force as their children grow older and family responsibilities are reduced.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure III:** Labour force participation rate among people aged 15 and older by sex and age groups: 2020  
(Percentage)



**Source:** International Labour Organization (ILO), Department of Statistics (ILOSTAT), ILO modelled estimates and projections, 2020 (<https://ilo.org/resources/methods/ilo-modelled-estimates/>) (last accessed on 17 July 2020).

**Note:** 2020 figures are projections.

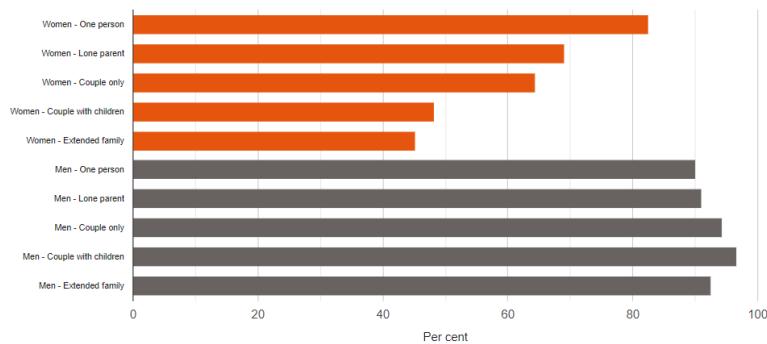
The rate of women's participation in the labour force during prime working ages varies greatly across household types while men's remains unchanged

Depending on the household type, the proportion of women actively engaged in the labour market varies greatly. In 2020, worldwide, women aged 25–54 in one person households had the highest labour force participation rate (82%) compared with women in other household types. When they marry and have children, however, women are more likely than men to exit the labour market (see figure IV).

Lone mothers with children under the age of six are more likely than women in couple or extended family households to participate in the labour force, possibly due to greater financial responsibilities. In couple-only households<sup>5</sup> and couple households with children,<sup>6</sup> women were considerably less economically active, participating in the labour force at rates of 64% and 48%, respectively, due to the different roles and responsibilities of women and men in unpaid domestic and care work, including domestic chores, as well as childbearing, child-rearing and childcare. In households with extended families,<sup>7</sup> the presence of additional adults might contribute to the burden of women's unpaid domestic and care work, further decreasing their rates of participation in the labour force.

For men, on the other hand, labour force participation rates remain high irrespective of household types. In 2020, worldwide, men aged 25–54 in one-person households had a lower labour force participation rate (90%) than men living in other household types. However, men who marry and have children are more likely to be in the labour force. In couple households with children, men's labour force participation rate was the highest (97%), denoting a supply of labour almost at full capacity.

**Figure IV:** Labour force participation rate among people aged 25-54 by sex and household type: 2020  
(Percentage)



**Source:** ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates and projections, 2020 (<https://ilo.org/resources/methods/ilo-modelled-estimates/>)  
(correspondence in June 2020).

The likelihood of women being in the labour force during prime working ages tends to decrease in most regions with each additional child aged under six while the rate of men's participation remains unchanged

The presence of children under age six contributes greatly to the gender gap in labour force participation in prime working ages. In 2020, across regions, the participation in the labour force of women aged 25-54 was more likely to decrease with each additional child under the age of six in both extended family and couple households (see table).

Across all regions, men aged 25-54, in contrast to women in the same age group, were almost equally or more likely to participate in the labour force given the presence of additional children aged under six.

In South-Eastern Asia, women in couple households left the labour force at dramatic rates with the birth of each additional child under the age of six: the labour force participation rate of women with three or more children aged under six in this household type stood at 32%, 40 percentage points lower than that of women living with no children aged under six.

However, in extended family households, the impact of the presence of additional children on the rate of women's labour force participation was less drastic, probably indicating the availability of help with childcare from other adults in the household. A similar pattern was observed in Latin America and the Caribbean, where the presence of additional children reduced women's labour force participation to a lesser extent in extended family households compared with couple households.

In Europe and Northern America, on the other hand, women in extended family households were less likely to participate in the labour force than women in couple households. It is possible that, in extended households, the presence of additional adults may represent an increase in the share of women's unpaid care work.

Table

**Labour force participation rate among people aged 25–54 years by sex, region and number of children under age six in couple and extended family households: 2020 (Percentage)**

Regions	Women and men aged 25–54 years	Household (HH) type	Presence of children under age six			
			None	1 child	2 children	3+ children
Central and Southern Asia	Women	Couple HH	29	26	22	22
		Extended family HH	31	25	22	20
	Men	Couple HH	98	99	99	99
		Extended family HH	95	96	95	96
Northern Africa and Western Asia	Women	Couple HH	29	27	22	21
		Extended family HH	38	31	24	20
	Men	Couple HH	91	97	97	97
		Extended family HH	88	91	92	92
Oceania (excl. Australia and New Zealand)	Women	Couple HH	58	52	53	54
		Extended family HH	54	57	55	51
	Men	Couple HH	64	57	59	59
		Extended family HH	56	58	54	56
Latin America and the Caribbean	Women	Couple HH	61	56	47	36
		Extended family HH	69	62	57	54
	Men	Couple HH	95	97	98	97
		Extended family HH	89	93	93	93
South-Eastern Asia	Women	Couple HH	72	63	48	32
		Extended family HH	76	71	65	60
	Men	Couple HH	96	97	97	97
		Extended family HH	91	93	93	93
Europe and Northern America	Women	Couple HH	78	70	63	46
		Extended family HH	75	68	60	42
	Men	Couple HH	95	96	96	94
		Extended family HH	85	89	90	84
Sub-Saharan Africa	Women	Couple HH	82	81	80	76
		Extended family HH	74	76	75	66
	Men	Couple HH	95	96	96	96
		Extended family HH	78	84	87	83

Source: ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates and projections, 2020 (<https://ilo.stat.ilo.org/resources/methods/ilo-modelled-estimates/>) (correspondence in June 2020).

## Country in focus: Iraq

In Iraq, where no regular labour force surveys are being held, the rate of women's participation in the labour force was 11% in 2017 according to national estimates, the lowest rate in the world after Yemen. The Government of Iraq has set an ambitious target of increasing women's participation in the labour force by five percentage points by 2025. If this target is met and continued for an additional decade, annual economic growth in Iraq is estimated to be boosted by 1.6 percentage points through 2035.<sup>8</sup>

## COVID-19

The gender gap in the labour force participation rate, which had narrowed slightly in the past 25 years, was still considerable and persistent prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic may exacerbate gender disparities in labour market outcomes, as well as the unequal distribution of **unpaid domestic and care work** among women and men.

The youth labour force participation rate fell significantly in countries around the world from February to April 2020 owing to the lockdown resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic: by 7.5 percentage points in the United States of America and 7.1 percentage points in Australia. The decline in the rate was less marked among adults aged 25 and above.<sup>9</sup>

In Canada, the rate of women's participation in the labour force fell to 59% in June 2020 (from 61.2% in June 2019). Men's labour force participation rate also fell, to 68.8% in June 2020 (from 70.2% in June 2019). During the same period, the decline in labour force participation was much higher among young women aged 15–24 (5.3 percentage points) than among young men in the same age group (0.2 percentage points).<sup>10</sup>

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Labour force participation rate by sex:** This indicator provides information on the proportion of the working-age population that is actively engaged in the labour market either as employed or unemployed persons. Employed persons include working-age individuals who were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit during a specific period of time. Unemployed persons include working-age individuals who were not in employment, available for work and actively seeking work during the reference period. The working-age population covers persons aged 15 years and older in order to facilitate international reporting and cross-country comparability.

Labour force participation (LFP) rate (%) = (employed persons + unemployed persons) / working - age population  
x 100 <sup>11</sup>

### Coverage

Working-age women and men in 188 United Nations Member States and territories.

### Limitations

Women's participation in the labour force does not necessarily mean that they have access to income through decent work: outcomes for women participating in the labour force may include unemployment, underemployment, informal employment, part-time employment and unpaid employment (for example, contributing family workers), as well as fewer hours, lower wages, vulnerable employment conditions and limited access to leadership positions.

Women in the labour force are more likely than men to go uncounted unless specific probing questions, capturing the number of women who work irregularly, for a few hours, at home and/or in unpaid employment, are integrated into surveys to measure their participation.

## Footnotes

1. [World Bank, Women, Business and the Law 2020, Washington, D.C., 2020.](#)
2. [ILO, World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Women 2018, Geneva, 2018.](#)
3. [ILO, World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Women 2017, Geneva, 2017.](#)
4. [ILO and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women \(UN Women\), The Impact of Marriage and Children on Labour Market Participation, Geneva 2020.](#)
5. Couple-only households consist of a household head and spouse (or partner).
6. Couple households with children consist of a household head, a spouse (or partner) and children.
7. Extended family household consist of a household head, spouse (or partner), children and other familial relative(s).
8. Source: [World Bank, open data, \(last accessed on 17 July 2020\); World Bank, Women's Economic Participation in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon, Washington, D.C., 2020.](#)
9. Sources: [United Nations, Secretary-General's Policy Brief: The Impact of Covid-19 on Women, 9 April 2020; ILO, Covid-19 and the world of work, 2020; ILO, ILO Monitor: Covid-19 and the world of work; updated estimates and analysis, 4th edition, 27 May 2020](#)
10. Source: [Statistics Canada, Labour force characteristics: monthly, seasonally adjusted and trend-cycle \(last accessed on 10 August 2020\).](#)
11. [International Labour Organization \(ILO\), Key Indicators of the Labour Market, ninth edition, Geneva, 2016.](#)

## Unemployment rate by sex, age and persons with disabilities



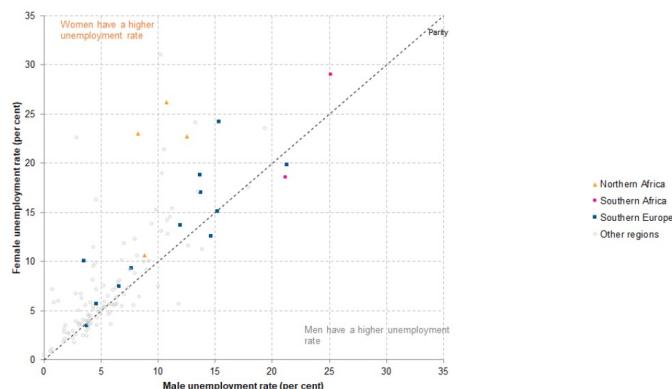
## Key points

- In 2019, the worldwide unemployment rate for women aged 15 and older (5.6%) was slightly higher than that for men in the same age group (5.3%).
- Women's unemployment rates were higher than men's in 85 out of 129 countries with available data between 2015 and 2019 (66%), with higher rates observed in Northern Africa, resulting in a 12 percentage points gender gap in unemployment.
- Overall, the age gap in unemployment appears more significant than the gender gap. In 2019, global unemployment rates for young women and young men were more than twice as high as those for the overall working age population and more than three times as high as those for the adult population aged 25 years or older.
- In 2019, unemployment among women was particularly pervasive in countries in Northern Africa (21.5%) and Western Asia (15.1%).
- Disability status is an exacerbating factor in unemployment both for women and men: in 68% of countries with comparable data, the unemployment rate was higher for persons with disabilities, and in 54% of countries the rate was higher for women.

## The unemployment rate is higher for women than men in most countries

In 2019, in 85 countries and territories among 129 with available data (66%), the unemployment rate for women was higher than that for men. This pattern was particularly evident in Northern Africa, where the gender gap in the unemployment rate amounted to 12 percentage points (see figure I).

**Figure I:** Unemployment rate among persons aged 15 years and older by sex: 2015–2019 (latest available)



**Source:** Global SDG Indicators Database (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>); ILO modelled estimates (last accessed on 10 August 2020).

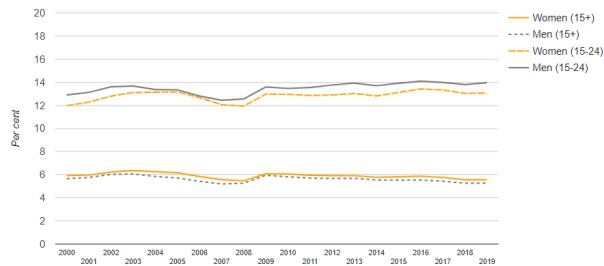
**Note:** Individual countries have been highlighted.

## During the period 2000–2019, unemployment among youth has been persistently higher than among the overall working-age population

In 2019, the unemployment rate for women aged 15 years and older was 5.6% worldwide, slightly higher than that for men in the same age group (5.3%). The proportion of unemployed among working-age women and men in the labour force has remained steady since 2000, with a slight increase observed between 2008 and 2009.

With regard to youth unemployment, since 2000, on average, young men aged 15–24 have been slightly more likely (14%) to be unemployed than young women (13%), although young women have faced a significantly higher incidence of not being engaged in education, employment or training (NEET),<sup>3</sup> which may indicate a level of discouragement about entering into the labour market and thus their exclusion from the count of unemployed persons. Overall, the age gap in unemployment appears more significant than the gender gap (see figure II). In 2019, unemployment rates for young women and young men were more than twice as high as those for the overall working-age population and more than three times as high as those for adult population aged 25 years or older. The difference between the unemployment rates for youth and total unemployment rates has been relatively stable since 2000.

**Figure II:** Unemployment rate among persons aged 15 years and older and youth aged 15–24 by sex: 2000–2019

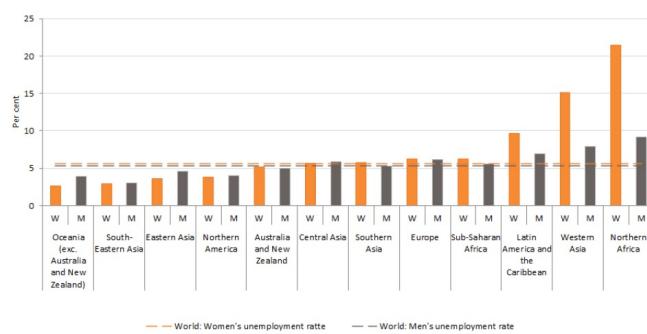


Source: Global SDG Indicators Database (last accessed on 17 July 2020).

### Unemployment rates are higher for women than men in many regions

In 2019, women were more likely to be unemployed than men in 7 out of 12 regions, and unemployment among women was particularly pervasive in Northern Africa (21.5%), Western Asia (15.1%) and Latin America and the Caribbean (9.6%) (see figure III). The gender gap was the highest in countries in Northern Africa (12 percentage points), where historically women's participation rate in the labour force has been considerably lower than men's over time.

**Figure III:** Unemployment rate among persons aged 15 years and older by sex and region: 2019

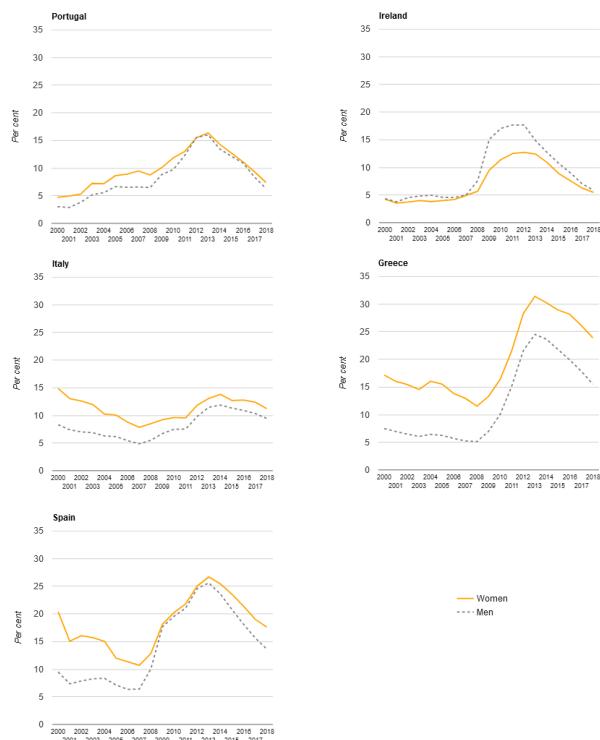


Source: Global SDG Indicators Database (last accessed on 17 July 2020).

### Sharper increases in unemployment among men was significant during and after the global economic crisis in 2008 in selected advanced economies in the Eurozone

Following the global economic crisis in 2008, unemployment rates among women and men experienced an immediate increase, including long-lasting negative effects that have levelled out over subsequent years. The increase in unemployment rates were generally higher for men, who dominated employment in severely impacted subsectors, such as construction, in particular in selected advanced economies in Europe, namely in Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain. In those countries, while unemployment rates among men increased at a faster pace than among women during and immediately after 2008, they also fell at higher rates in subsequent years (see figure IV).

**Figure IV:** Unemployment rates in selected countries in the Eurozone among persons aged 15 years and older by sex: 2000–2018



Source: ILO estimates, Global SDG Indicators Database (last accessed on 4 October 2019).

## Disability is an exacerbating factor in unemployment among women and men

In 40 out of 59 countries with latest available data (68%), the unemployment rate as of 2018 was higher for persons with disabilities.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, in 24 countries with available sex-disaggregated data since 2016, the unemployment rate was higher among women with disabilities than among those without disabilities in 58% of countries and among men with disabilities than those without disabilities in 71% of countries. In the Russian Federation in 2018, women with disabilities were three times more likely (15.3%) to be unemployed than women without disabilities (4.6%). The corresponding unemployment rate for men with disabilities was four times higher (19.4%) than for men without disabilities (4.8%).<sup>3</sup> Overall, among persons with disabilities, unemployment rates were higher for women than for men in 13 out of 24 countries with available sex-disaggregated data since 2016.

## Social protection

In 10 out of 17 countries with available sex-disaggregated data since 2016, the proportion of the population receiving unemployment cash benefits was higher among unemployed women than among unemployed men. In 2017, in the Islamic Republic of Iran, however, only 1% of unemployed women received unemployment cash benefits, compared with 12% of unemployed men.<sup>4</sup>

## Covid-19

During the recovery from the global economic crisis of 2008, unemployment rates went down worldwide, despite large disparities across regions. In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused abrupt and adverse changes in the labour markets, and "in fact, we can expect the biggest increase in global unemployment since World War II".<sup>5</sup>

"The pandemic is expected to have a devastating impact on global unemployment, which may reach an historic high in 2020, depending on the policies adopted. The eventual increase in global unemployment over 2020 will depend on how effectively policy measures preserve existing jobs and boost labour demand once the recovery phase begins."<sup>6</sup>

Preliminary estimates by the International Labour Organization indicate a significant rise in unemployment by approximately 13 million, or possibly by almost 25 million in a "high" scenario. For comparison, during the global economic crisis in 2008, the number of unemployed worldwide increased by 22 million.<sup>7 8</sup>

### Covid-19 and Northern America

The pandemic and the lockdown measures to prevent its contagion paralysed economies in developed regions, including countries in Northern America. Employed persons with the least "teleworkable" jobs were the hardest hit in the United States of America, where new claims for unemployment benefits increased by more than 10 million in just two weeks. In the United States, the unemployment rates among adult women and men aged 20 years and over were the same in July 2019 (3.3%); as of July 2020, the unemployment rate for women was 10.5% and 9.4% for men. The young are also likely to bear the brunt of the pandemic in Canada: in June 2020, the unemployment rate among young women was 27% (an increase from 11% in June 2019) and the unemployment rate among young men was 28% (an increase from 13% in June 2019).<sup>9</sup>

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Unemployment rate by sex, age and persons with disabilities:** This indicator provides information on the proportion of unemployed persons in the labour force and is one of the key measures of labour underutilization. Unemployed persons include working-age individuals who were not in employment, actively seeking and available for work during the reference period. The working-age population is usually defined as persons aged 15 years and older to facilitate international comparability.

Unemployment rate (%) = (unemployed persons) / (employed persons + unemployed persons) x 100.<sup>10</sup>

### Coverage

Working-age women and men in 129 United Nations Member States and territories (with latest available data between 2015 and 2019).

### Limitations

The unemployment rate is not a robust measure of the performance of the labour market, especially in developing regions where women and men, due to economic pressures to find work, may take up jobs that have vulnerable employment conditions.

Looking at the unemployment rate in isolation does not capture the situation of people outside the labour force who may still have some connection to the labour force.

Since 2013, the international statistical standards (19th ICLS) recommend reporting the unemployment rate as part of a wider set of measures of labour underutilization, to support more informed monitoring of labour markets and to shed light on differences in access to employment opportunities among women and men, youth and older age groups, and persons living in urban and rural areas.

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Footnotes

1. The [youth NEET rate](#) provides information about the proportion of youth (aged 15–24) not in education, employment or training as part of the total youth population.
2. UNDESA, Statistics Division, The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020, New York, 2020.
3. Global SDG Indicators Database; ILO modelled estimates (last accessed on 10 August 2020).
4. Source: Global SDG Indicators Database; ILO modelled estimates (last accessed on 10 August 2020).
5. [Global SDG Indicators Database, Sustainable Development Goal 8](#).
6. ILO, "Covid-19 and the world of work: updated estimates and analysis", 2nd edition, 7 April 2020.
7. ILO, "Covid-19 and the world of work: Impact and policy responses", ILO Monitor, 1st edition, 18 March 2020.
8. Source: UNDESA, Statistics Division, The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020, New York, 2020.
9. Sources: [UNDESA, Responding to Covid-19 and Recovering Better, Policy Brief Series, Spring/Summer 2020](#); United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, "The Employment Situation – July 2020"; United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, "The Employment Situation – July 2020" (seasonally adjusted labour force characteristics data); [Statistics Canada](#) (last accessed on 10 August 2020).
10. International Labour Organization (ILO), Key Indicators of the Labour Market, ninth edition, Geneva, 2016.

## Latvia: influence of the presence of children in the household on the employment of women and men



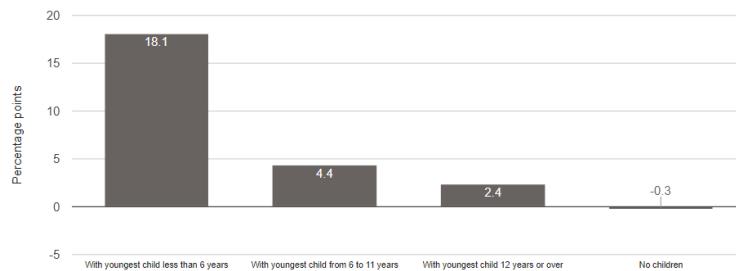
## Key points

- The most significant gender gap in employment rates in Latvia is recorded in households with small children (under age 6): in 2019, women's employment rate was 75.3%, compared with 93.4% for men, resulting in a gender gap of 18.1 percentage points (versus 33.1 percentage points in 2005). Regionally, the smallest corresponding gender gaps were recorded in Riga and Vidzeme.
- In significant numbers, more women than men take parental leave in Latvia: in 2019, men made up only 19% of parental benefit recipients, and their share has increased only slightly since 2015.
- In 2019, the gender employment gap in households with small children was 24.1 percentage points among people of other ethnicities (versus 16.1 percentage points among ethnic Latvians). In households with older or no children among people of other ethnicities, however, women were employed at a higher rate than men (6.3 percentage points).
- In 2019, women in Latvia earned 14.1% less than men. The largest pay gap was recorded in the population aged 25–34 and 35–44 (16.5% and 16.9%, respectively). Employed women with small children had lower monthly net earnings than employed men with small children: one out of four (25.6%) employed women with small children had net monthly earnings amounting to less than 450 euros (€) compared with 4.9% of employed men.
- Among women with small children, 12.9% were working part-time, compared with only 1.8% of men. The gender employment gap was also evident in households with older or no children, indicating that women were more intensively engaged in part-time employment regardless of household structure.

## Having small children in the household amplifies the gender gap in employment

In 2019, employment rates<sup>1</sup> of men and women aged 25–49<sup>2</sup> were 86.5% and 80.7%, respectively, revealing a gender employment gap of 5.8 percentage points in favour of men. The female employment rate in Latvia was 5.9 percentage points higher than the average among member States of the European Union and was the eighth highest among all member States. The largest gender gap in employment was observed in households with small children: the employment rate among women with children was only 75.3%,<sup>3</sup> compared to 93.4% among men, a gap of 18.1 percentage points (see figure I). Women's involvement in full-time unpaid care of children in the household was greater than that of men, and as a result their opportunities for employment were reduced. Among women working part-time in Latvia, 20% reported that looking after children or older adults was the main reason for choosing a part-time job, and 23.1% of all economically inactive women reported the same reason for not being in paid employment.<sup>4</sup> This pattern of employment among women with children is likely to lead to economic dependency upon family or friends, and can also result in income insufficiency in old age.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure I:** Gender gap in employment rates among persons aged 25-49, by age of youngest child in the household: 2019 (Percentage points)



**Source:** Eurostat, "Employment rate of adults by sex, age groups, educational achievement level, number of children and age of youngest child (%)", 20 April 2020 (last accessed on 9 September 2020) ([http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfst\\_hheredch](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfst_hheredch)).

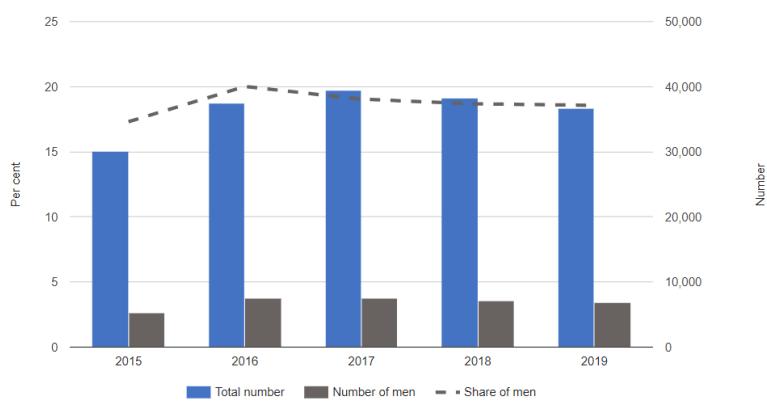
**Note:** The gender employment gap is calculated by deducting the employment rate of women from the employment rate of men.

## Women constitute a significantly larger share of people taking parental leave

While both mothers and fathers in Latvia are eligible for [parental leave](#),<sup>6</sup> benefits can reach up to 60% of the recipients' wages and recipients are insured against [unemployment](#), the majority of parental leave is taken by women. In 2019, the proportion of male parental leave recipients was only 19% (see figure II). Even though the share of men receiving parental benefits has slightly increased since 2015, there is still no available data about primary caregivers or the distribution of household tasks within couples.

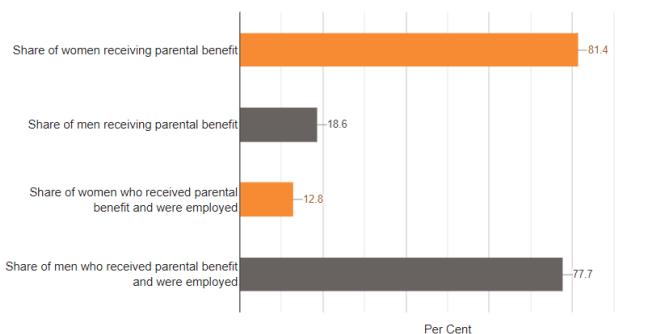
Parental leave, which can be for as long as 15 years (78 weeks), is paid from social insurance and can be taken by either parent. Latvian Government policy during the child's first year of life<sup>7</sup> is one of the most supportive in the world.

**Figure II:** Number and proportion of parental benefit recipients by sex: 2015–2019



**Sources:** State Social Insurance Agency, 2020. (correspondence with Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia on 25 May 2020).

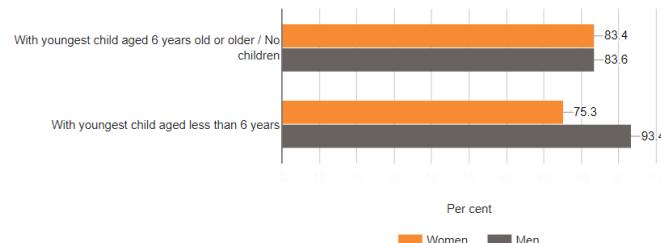
In light of the fact that 8 out of 10 men who receive parental leave benefits continue to work, it is possible that the share of families where women are the primary caregivers could be larger than shown from the data on parental benefit recipients (see figure III).

**Figure III:** Parental benefit recipients, by sex: 2019 (Percentage)

**Source:** State Social Insurance Agency, 2020 (correspondence with Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia on 25 May 2020).  
**Note:** Persons continuing to work receive 30% of the parental benefit.

### The gender gap in employment varies significantly depending on household structure

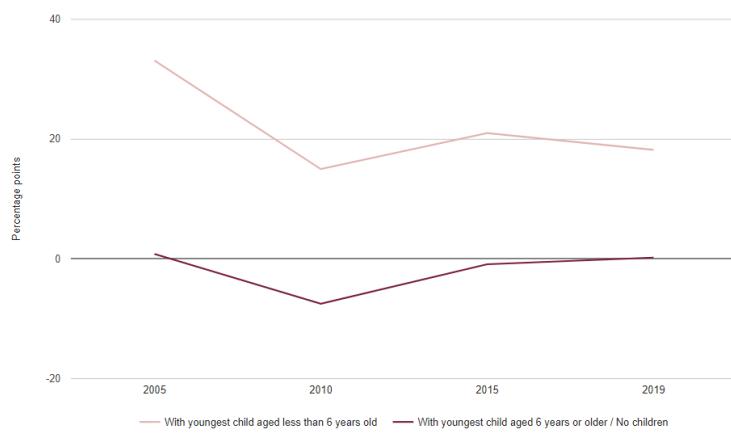
In 2019, employment rates of women and men in families with children aged 6 or older and in families without children were almost equal, 83.4% for women and 83.6% for men. However, in households with children under age 6, the employment rate of women (75.3%) was significantly lower and that of men (93.4%) significantly higher, resulting in a gender gap of 18.1 percentage points<sup>8</sup> (see figure IV).

**Figure IV:** Employment rate of persons aged 25-49 years by sex and age of youngest child: 2019 (Percentage)

**Source:** Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, national estimates 2020 (correspondence with Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia on 25 May 2020).

Analysis of the gender employment gap over time shows that it has not decreased since 2010 in households with children under age 6. In 2005, the gap was 33.1 percentage points and in 2010 it was more than halved, to 15 percentage points, and has remained mostly constant as of 2019. An opposite situation may be observed in households with children older than 6 or without children, where the gap has remained small, although during the economic crisis in 2010, it reached 7.5 percentage points, with an employment rate among women higher than among men (see figure V).

**Figure V:** Gender employment gap among persons aged 25-49 years, by age of youngest child: 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2019 (Percentage points)

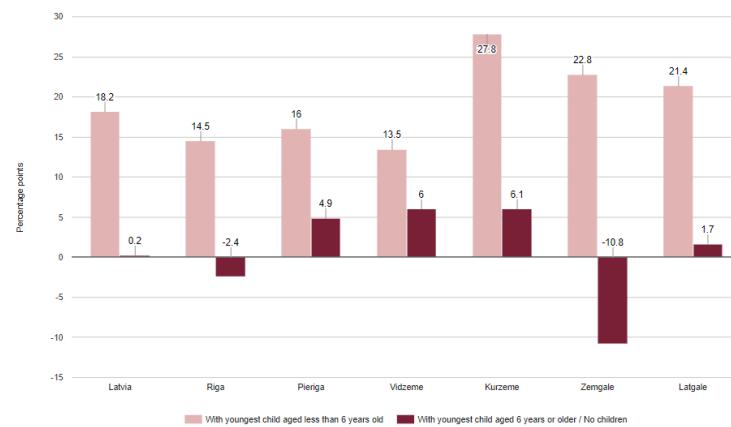


**Source:** Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, national estimates 2020 (correspondence with Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia on 25 May 2020).  
**Note:** Gender employment gap is calculated by deducting employment rate of women from the employment rate of men.

## Gender employment gap in households with or without small children varies across Latvia's regions and by ethnicity

Latvia's gender employment gap in 2019 in all households with youngest children aged 6 or over or no children was only 0.2 percentage points, showing a decrease over recent years. However, some discrepancies emerge at the subnational level. The smallest gender gap in households with small children was recorded in Vidzeme and Riga, the capital of Latvia, while the largest gap was observed in Kurzeme (27.8 percentage points). The gap in households with older or no children remained small in Riga (the employment rate of women was higher than that of men), and the largest gap was registered in Zemgale (10.8 percentage points, with the employment rate of women higher than that of men). However, with respect to households with children under age 6, the Zemgale region showed the second largest gender employment gap in the country, with an employment rate of men 22.8 percentage points higher than women's (similar to the trend observed since 2010) (see figure VI).

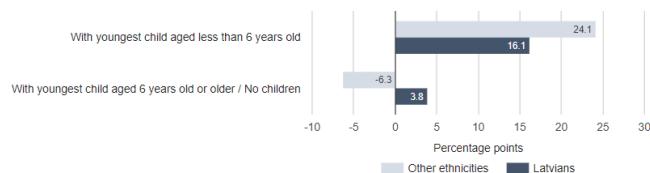
**Figure VI:** Gender employment gap among persons aged 25-49, by age of youngest child and region: 2019 (Percentage points)



**Source:** Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, national estimates 2020 (correspondence with Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia on 25 May 2020).  
**Note:** Gender employment gap is calculated by deducting employment rate of women from employment rate of men.

One third of the total population of Latvia aged 25–49 consists of people belonging to ethnicities other than Latvian. Analysis of the employment data by ethnicity shows that other ethnicities had lower employment rates both for women and men in comparison with Latvians, indicating possible inequalities in the labour market (for example, missing language skills; Latvian is a mother tongue only for 60.8% of the resident population of Latvia).<sup>9</sup> In 2019, the gender employment gap among ethnic Latvians was 16.1 percentage points in households with youngest children under age 6, compared with a gap of 24.1 percentage points among other ethnicities. In households with youngest children above age 6 or no children, the employment rate among women of other ethnicities was higher than that of men by 6.3 percentage points (see figure VII).

**Figure VII:** Gender employment gap among persons aged 25–49 years, by age of youngest child and ethnicity: 2019 (Percentage points)

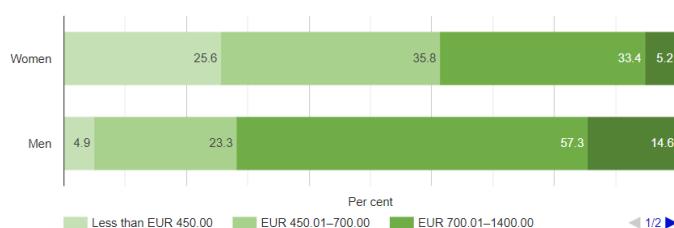


## Employed women with small children have lower monthly net earnings than men

In 2019, the **gender pay gap** in Latvia was smaller than the average gap within the European Union, with women earning 14.1% less than men in comparison with an average of 14.8% less in the European Union.<sup>10</sup> The largest pay gap was recorded among the population aged 25–34 and 35–44 (16.5% and 16.9%, respectively).

A significant gender pay gap was also found in households with small children: 25.6% of employed women with youngest children aged under 6 had monthly net earnings amounting to less than €450, compared with 4.9% of employed men<sup>11</sup> (see figure VIII).

**Figure VIII:** Distribution of employed persons in households with children aged under age 6, by sex and monthly net earnings: 2019 (Percentage)

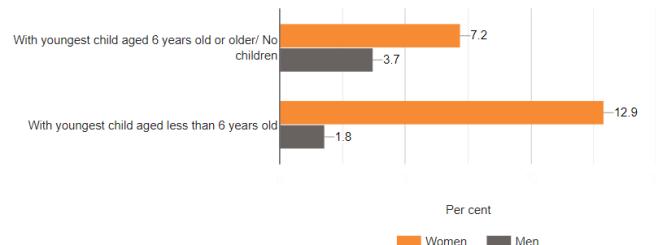


## The gender gap in part-time employment persists regardless of the household structure

Even though part-time jobs offer an opportunity to balance work and family life, a significant gender gap in **part-time employment** leads to unequal chances for equal pay. Among women with small children, 12.9% were working part-time,

compared with only 1.8% of men. The gap remained in households with older or no children, indicating that women were more engaged in part-time employment regardless of household structure (see figure IX).

**Figure IX:** Part-time employment as a share of total employment of persons aged 25-49 by sex and age of youngest child: 2019 (Percentage)



**Source:** Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, national estimates 2020 (correspondence with Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia on 25 May 2020).  
**Note:** Full-time employment in Latvia means a 40-hour working week.

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Employment rate of persons aged 25–49 with children under age 6, age 6 or older or no children, by sex in Latvia:** Employed persons are all persons who did any work for cash payment or compensation in goods or services during the reporting period. Persons who are temporarily absent from work on prenatal or maternity leave or on childcare leave are classified as employed if, after the end of such leave, return to their previous employment is guaranteed. Employment rate is the proportion of employed persons to the total population of the same age group, sex and household structure.<sup>12</sup>

### Coverage

Employed population in Latvia aged 25–49 by sex, household structure, ethnicity and region.

### Availability

Data from Eurostat database<sup>13</sup> and estimates from the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia.<sup>14</sup>

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## Footnotes

1. Employment rates are calculated based on Eurostat household statistics methodology in the European Union Labour Force Survey .
2. Employment rate refers only to people aged 25–49.
3. Women who are in temporary absence from work on the prenatal or maternity leave as well as on childcare leave are classified as employed if after the end of such leave return to their previous work is guaranteed.
4. Eurostat: databases lfsa\_igar and lfsa\_epgar.
5. Dubois, H. and Leončikas, T., "Social insecurities and resilience", Policy Brief, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), October 2018 (accessed 2020)
6. State Social Insurance Agency, Services for parents.
7. ILO, 2014. Maternity and paternity at work: Law and practice across the world, Geneva, 2014 .
8. The father's wage premium, which also exists in other countries, leads to a larger gender gap between parents than that among non-parents: to read more on the fatherhood premium, see xxGrimshaw, D. and Rubery, J., "The motherhood pay gap: A review of the issues, theory and international evidence", Working Paper No.1/2015, ILO, Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch, Geneva, 2015.
9. Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, "Indicators characterizing languages used by the population of Latvia.", 2017 .
10. Eurostat, Gender Pay Gap Statistics, 2020 .
11. In 2019, the minimum wage in Latvia was ₸430 (the net salary varies and is approximately ₸380).
12. International Labour Organization (ILO), Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization, adopted at the Nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians, 21 November 2013.
13. Eurostat database .
14. Government of Latvia, Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia .

## Youth not in education, employment or training (NEET)



## Key points

- In 2019, among youth aged 15–24 worldwide, 31.1% of young women and 13.9% of young men were not in education, employment or training. The gender gap in youth NEET rates has remained constant, at around 17 percentage points, since 2005.
- Across regions in 2019, while NEET rates among young men remained relatively constant, among young women the rates varied greatly, reaching above 40% in Western Asia and in Southern Asia. The gender gap in the NEET rate was relatively small in developed regions.
- The higher prevalence in the proportion of young women (more than three times higher than among young men) in Southern Asia who are not in education, employment or training accompanied with a relatively low youth unemployment may indicate a level of discouragement about entering into and participating in the labour market.
- Higher NEET rates among young women may prevent them from increasing their chances of future employability by gaining experience through employment or honing their skills through education or training.

## Background

The youth NEET rate is a useful complement to the youth [unemployment rate](#) in gaining a better understanding of the labour market dynamics affecting young women and men, including their potential contribution to sustainable development through employment. The NEET rate includes young persons who are outside the labour force and not engaged in education or training. For example, a low youth unemployment rate and a high proportion of NEET may indicate that young people are discouraged about entering the labour market. In the case of young women, a high relative NEET rate may also be linked to their disproportionate engagement in [unpaid domestic and care work<sup>1</sup>](#) and a lack of available social services to balance family life and other activities.<sup>2</sup>

## Current situation

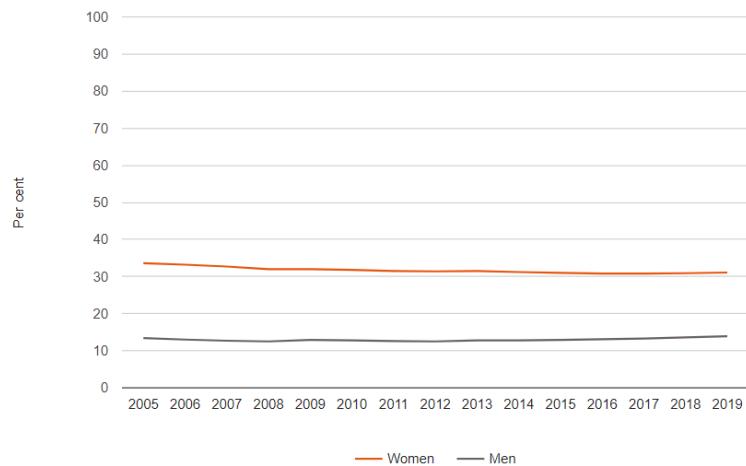
**The gender gap between the proportion of young women and young men not in education, employment or training has narrowed only slightly over the last 15 years, with the proportion of young women being more than twice that of young men**

In 2019, the proportion of youth aged 15–24 not in education, employment or training constituted 31.1% of the young female and 13.9% of the young male population, resulting in a gender gap of 17.2 percentage points. Since 2005, the NEET rate among young women has slightly decreased in all regions, with the exception of Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), while it has remained relatively stable among young men. Over the same period, the gender gap in the youth NEET rate has narrowed only slightly, by 3 percentage points (see figure I).

Among 111 countries and territories with latest available data between 2015 and 2019, the proportion of young women not in education, employment or training was the highest in Afghanistan (65.9%), Pakistan (54.9%) and Zambia (49.5%) and the lowest in Japan (3.5%), the Netherlands (4.2%) and Norway (4.6%). The proportion of young men not in education, employment or training was the highest in Kiribati (46.2%), Zambia (36.4%) and

Armenia (35.7%) and the lowest in Japan (2.2%), Singapore (3.1%) and Czechia (3.6%). The gender gap in the youth NEET rate was the highest in Afghanistan (47.6 percentage points), Bangladesh (34.8 percentage points) and Guatemala (39.6 percentage points).

**Figure I:** Proportion of youth (aged 15-24) not in education, employment or training (NEET), by sex: 2005-2019



**Source:** ILO estimates; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, Global SDG Indicators Database (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>) (last accessed on 3 August 2020).

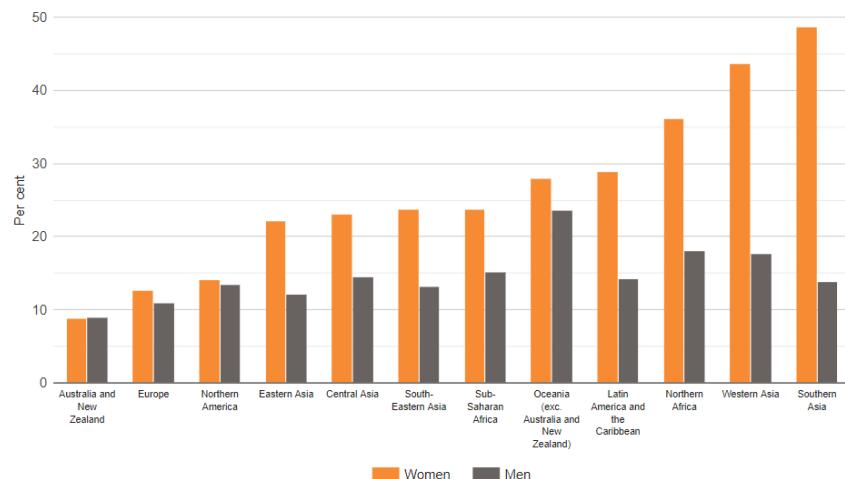
**Note:** Figures for 2019 are projections.

## The gender gap in the proportion of youth not in education, employment or training is significant in developing regions

Across regions, while NEET rates remained relatively constant among young men, ranging between 9% and 18%, except in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), those rates among young women varied greatly, reaching above 45% in Southern Asia (more than three times the rate among young men) and above 40% in Western Asia in 2019.

Overall, the proportion was higher among young women than among young men in all regions except Australia and New Zealand (no gender difference) (see figure II). NEET rates among young women were at least 10 percentage points higher than those among young men in South-Eastern Asia (10.5 percentage points), Latin America and the Caribbean (14.6 percentage points) and Northern Africa (18 percentage points), and the NEET gender gap reached 35 percentage points in Southern Asia and 26 percentage points in Western Asia. The gender gap was relatively small in Northern America (0.7 percentage points) and Europe (1.7 percentage points).

**Figure II:** Proportion of youth (aged 15–24) not in education, employment or training (NEET), by sex and region, 2019



**Source:** ILO estimates; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, Global SDG indicators Database (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>) (last accessed on 3 August 2020).

**Note:** Figures for 2019 are projections.

In 2019, the highest proportion of young women not in education, employment or training was in countries in Southern Asia (48.7%), where the unemployment rate for women aged 15–24 stood at 18.4%, similar to the overall youth unemployment rate of 18.8%. The relatively much higher prevalence of NEET than unemployment among young women in Southern Asia may indicate a level of discouragement about entering into and participating in the labour market.

Discriminatory **social norms** and **legal barriers** are likely to contribute to the youth NEET rate, preventing young women, in particular, from increasing their future employability by gaining experience through employment or honing their skills through education or training.<sup>3</sup>

## Country in focus: Armenia

In Armenia in 2017, while 3% of young women aged 17 were married, the share was 28% among young women not in education, employment or training of the same age. Among young men, however, the starting age for family formation did not seem to vary by NEET status: overall marriage rates among young men, whether in NEET status or not, were similar across the 15–24 age category.<sup>4</sup>

## Country in focus: Brazil

Youth NEET rates are different for young women and young men in **Brazil**, and further analysis reveals higher relative NEET rates among young women and young men who face distinct disadvantages owing to their geographic location or colour/race.

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Proportion of youth (aged 15–24) not in education, employment or training (NEET):** Proportion of youth (aged 15–24) who are not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET rate) among the total youth population. People are considered to be involved in education if they are enrolled in formal or non-formal education (with the exception of informal learning), as described by the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).<sup>5</sup> People in a non-academic learning activity, through which they acquire specific skills intended for vocational or technical jobs, are excluded as they are considered to be in training for the purposes of this indicator.

### Coverage

Young women and young men aged 15-24 in 150 United Nations Member States and territories.

### Data limitations

In the SDG framework,<sup>6</sup> youth comprises persons aged 15-24, although, as reported by ILO, many young women and men complete their education after the age of 24.<sup>7</sup> The gender narrative of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on the youth NEET rate includes individuals aged 25-29 in that region.<sup>8</sup>

## Footnotes

1. International Labour Organization (ILO), A quantum leap for gender equality: for a better future of work for all, Geneva, 2019.
2. A link between the educational attainment of women and men aged 15-24 and their respective NEET rates could not be made due to lack of disaggregated data on educational attainment for this specific age category.
3. ILO, Department of Statistics (ILOSTAT), "Share of youth not in employment, education or training (youth NEET rate)" (last accessed on 26 April 2020).
4. World Bank, Exploring the Diversity of Young People Not in Employment, Education or Training: The Gender Profile of NEETs in Georgia and Armenia, Washington, D.C., 2019. Owing to the lack of information on NEET rates for young women in Armenia aged 15 and 16 regarding their marital status, age figures for these data points were omitted.
5. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Institute for Statistics, International Standard Classification of Education: ISCED 2011, Montreal, 2012.
6. Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals, General Assembly resolution 71/313, annex.
7. ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market, ninth edition, Geneva, 2016.
8. Statement by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Brussels, June 2019.

## Measurement and status of young women and men in paid and unpaid work [ECLAC]



## Key points

- In Latin America and the Caribbean, 25.7% of young people aged 15–29 do not benefit from the main pillars of social inclusion, the education system and the labour market, and the majority are women (67.9%).
- In the region, 57.8% of women aged 15–29 who are not in employment, education or training (categorized as NEET) are engaged in unpaid care and domestic work (as are 66.1% of women aged 25–29), while most men aged 15–29 in the NEET category are unemployed (61.8%). Less than 25% of people aged 15–29 are studying or in training.
- Most young people in the region work: in general men are engaged in paid work while women in unpaid work, revealing a trend of early and unequal division of work by sex.
- In households with children under age 15, 39.9% of young women are in the NEET category, while 61.83% of young men are classified as unemployed.
- Time-use data for the 15–29 age group in countries in Latin America and the Caribbean show that women who are out of school and not in the labour market spend, on average, at least 23 hours per week on unpaid domestic work. These data contradict the notion that young people are inactive or unproductive members of society: young people spend a significant amount of time providing services but receive no payment and do not benefit from any form of social coverage.

### **Young women not in employment, education or training are engaged in unpaid care and domestic work<sup>1</sup>**

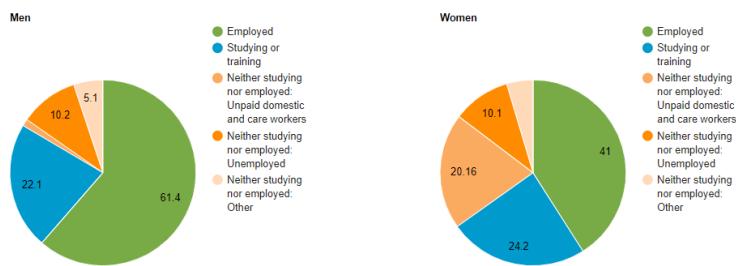
Young people aged 15–29 are in a critical period of transition from youth to the beginning of adulthood, an opportune time for the elimination of gender inequalities. Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have not yet succeeded, however, in ensuring that both young women and men have the same rights and opportunities in education, vocational training and labour market integration.

It is estimated that 25.7% of young people in the region between the ages of 15–29 do not benefit from the main pillars of social inclusion, the education system and labour market, and that most are women (67.9%). Target 8.6 of Sustainable Development Goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>2</sup> is aimed at the reducing the number of young people **not in employment, education or training**. With this in mind, there is an urgent need for information that explains the barriers to the integration of young women into the education system and their participation in the labour market.

The fact that girls and young women are expected to undertake heavy domestic work, resulting in long-lasting consequences for all aspects of their lives, was recognized in the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted in 1995.<sup>3</sup> In Latin America and the Caribbean, more than half of young women who are not in school or in employment (57.8%) spend their time on **unpaid care and domestic work**, while most young men in this situation (61.8%) are unemployed. Furthermore, less than one fourth of young people aged 15–29 in the region are studying or in training (see figure I).

A similar scenario is evident, and more prominent, among the subgroup aged 25–29, where 36.8% of women are outside the labour market and not in education or training and 12.4% of men are in the same situation. In this subgroup, a larger proportion of young women (66.1%) are engaged in unpaid domestic and care work, with a smaller proportion of women (3.7%) and men (3%) studying or in training. Regardless of the age group, a trend is clear: most of young people work and are either paid (mainly the case for men) or unpaid (primarily the case for women), showing a trend of early and unequal division of labour by sex.

**Figure I:** Activity status of young people aged 15–29 in the Latin America and the Caribbean region (17 countries): 2014–2018 (latest available year) (Percentage)



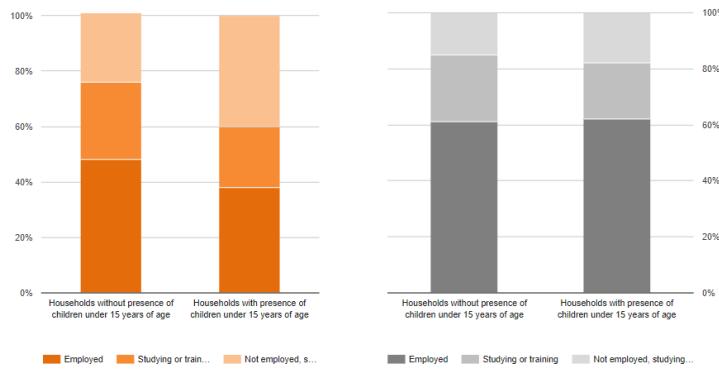
**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries.

**Note:** Data for Argentina, the Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay refer to 2018; those for Chile to 2017; and for Guatemala, Nicaragua and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) correspond to 2014.

Governments in Latin America and the Caribbean have identified the division of labour by sex and unfair social organization of care as one of the four structural challenges to the achievement of gender equality by 2030.<sup>4</sup> The social distribution of the burden of care continues to be unfair and unbalanced, with heavy implications in terms of the equality gap between men and women. According to the information gathered from time-use surveys, adolescent girls (aged 15–19) spend more hours per week on work, both paid and unpaid, than adolescent boys, which reflects the limited time available to adolescent girls for educational activities, leisure and recreational activities or sports and community participation. At the same time, [pregnancy and motherhood in adolescent girls](#) (around 13% of women ages 15–19 were mothers according to the last available census information) is another major obstacle to women's autonomy during their teen years and into early adulthood. This problem is rooted, *inter alia*, in cultural patterns that associate women with motherhood and the resulting search for social approval or inclusion by having children; the lack of national policies on [sexual and reproductive health education](#); the scarcity of specialized health services adapted to the needs of adolescent girls; and difficulties in addressing the power relationships in couples and making informed decisions about contraception.<sup>5</sup>

Data on the activity status of young people aged 15–29 show differences between men and women in households with children under age 15. Most young women living with children in their households are not engaged in employment, education or training (39.9%) while men living in households with children tend to be employed (61.3%) (see figure II).

**Figure II:** Distribution of activity status of the population aged 15-29 by presence of children in the household and by sex in the Latin America and the Caribbean region (18 countries): 2014-2018 (latest available year) (Percentage)

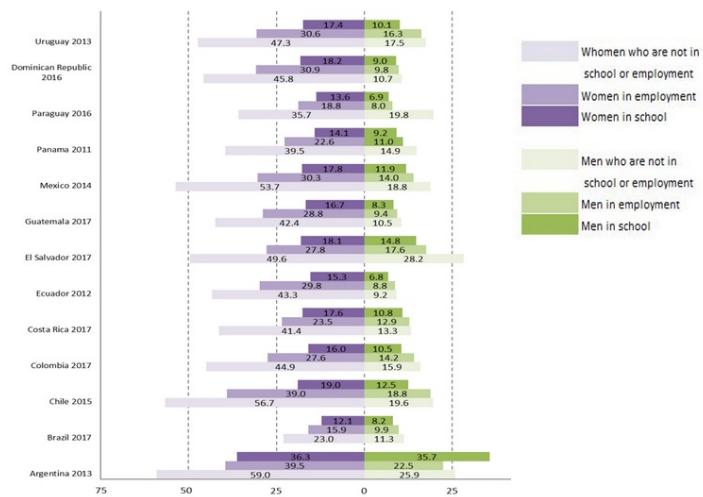


**Source:** ECLAC, on the basis of tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries.

**Note:** Data for Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay refer to 2018; those for Chile to 2017; and the dates for Guatemala, Nicaragua and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) correspond to 2014.

The time-use data for young people aged 15–29 show that in Latin America and the Caribbean, on average, women who are out of school and not participating in the labour market spend at least 23 hours per week on unpaid domestic work, confirming that they are not in school and not being paid for their work (see figure III). In Argentina, Chile and Mexico, for example, young women who are not engaged in employment, education or training spend more than 50 hours per week on domestic and care work.

**Figure III:** Unpaid work performed by young people aged 15-29, by sex, in Latin America and the Caribbean (13 countries): 2011-2017 (latest year available) (Percentage)



**Source:** ECLAC, data based on hours worked per week calculated from data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries.

**Note:** Considering the heterogeneous nature of data sources, comparisons between countries are not possible; the aim of figure III is to show the trends in gender gaps within each country.

The burden of household and care work limits the opportunities of young women to participate in educational activities, find income-generating work and take part in public life and decision-making. Furthermore, they are unable to devote time to build the skills that might help them to find good-quality jobs, making them even more vulnerable to poverty and a lack of access to assistance available through social protection mechanisms.<sup>6</sup>

Time-use data for this population contradicts the perception that young people are inactive or unproductive members of society. To the contrary, young people spend a significant amount of time providing services that are indispensable to the well-being of their families and the economy of their countries, although they receive no payment and generally do not benefit from any form of social assistance. This information is relevant to the formulation of policies with a gender perspective to ensure that young people, in particular young women ages 15–29, may take advantage of academic and professional opportunities that promote social and economic inclusion without being restricted by the demands of unpaid domestic and care work.

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Unpaid work:** Work done without payment, which is measured by quantifying the time a person spends on own-use goods production work, unpaid domestic work, unpaid care of household members or unpaid work for other households or for the community and/or volunteer work.
- **Paid work:** Work for which a person receives a payment (work for pay or profit).
- **People in training:** People who are primarily pursuing training, educational activities and vocational schooling.
- **NEET:** People who are not engaged in employment, education or training

### Coverage

Population aged 15–29 in the Latin America and Caribbean region.<sup>7</sup>

### Availability

Sex-disaggregated data is available on activity status and on unpaid work for 18 United Nations Member States for the period 2014–2018 (latest available year) and for 13 United Nations Member States for the period 2011–2017 (latest available year) in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

## Footnotes

1. Based on the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Social Panorama of Latin America 2016, Santiago, 2017.
2. "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", General Assembly resolution 70/1, adopted on 25 September 2015.
3. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), annex II, para. 71.
4. ECLAC, Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, Santiago, 2017.
5. ECLAC, Women's autonomy in changing economic scenarios, Santiago, 2019. ([back to text](#))
6. ECLAC, Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, Santiago, 2017.
7. Under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators framework, a young person is defined as being aged 15–24; however, for the purpose of measuring any possible mismatch in overeducation or undereducation, and in recognition of the fact that some young people remain in education after age 24, the upper age has been extended to 29 years for the present indicator. For more information, see the International Labour Organization (ILO) school-to-work transition survey, a household survey of young people aged 15–29, which describes this population group and the challenges it faces.

## Brazil: youth not in education, employment or training (NEET)



## Key points

- In Brazil, 23% of young people (30% of young women and 19% of young men) were not in employment, education or training (NEET) in 2018.
- Since 2012, there has been a 15% growth in the proportion of youth classified as NEET, with a much larger increase among young men (25%) than young women (8%), mainly due to an overall increase in unemployment during the same period.
- NEET rates varied across regions within the country, and are lower in more developed regions, including differences by colour/race. Black or brown women had a higher NEET rate (32%) than white women (24%), and double the rate recorded among white men (16%).

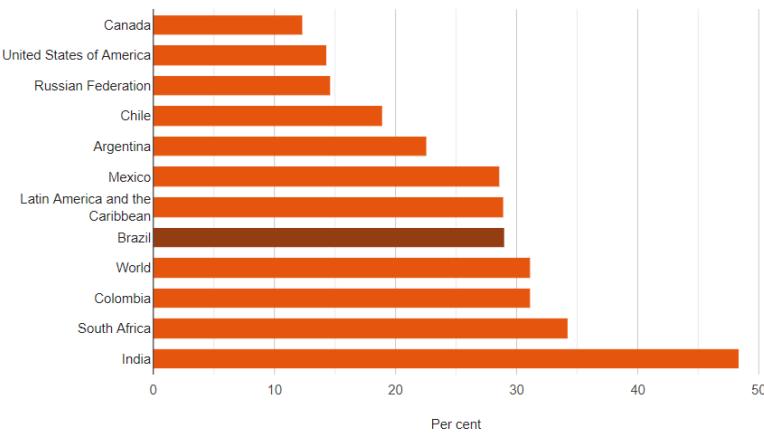
## Background

The proportion of young people who are not in employment, education or training (the "NEET rate") is an important indicator for addressing a broad set of vulnerabilities among youth, such as unemployment, early school leaving and a widespread sense of discouragement about finding paid work (so-called labour market discouragement).<sup>1</sup> From a gender perspective, this indicator is crucial for monitoring how upcoming generations of young women are being affected by the traditional challenges faced by women, namely the balance between paid work and unpaid domestic and care work at home, including, for this specific cohort, the impact of the NEET rate on their opportunities to attain higher educational and professional qualifications.

Almost one in four young people in Brazil were in the NEET group, with higher rates recorded for young women than young men

In 2018, there were around 32.4 million people in the youth population (aged 15–24) in Brazil; of that total, 7.3 million people (23%) were included in the NEET group. Young women comprised 49% of the youth population, but 59% of the NEET group. In addition, considering the NEET rate by sex, almost 30% of young women were not employed, engaged in education or training compared to 19% of young men. Estimates provided by the International Labour Organization (ILO) reveal that the Brazilian rate is similar to rates observed for young women globally, but that the rate in Brazil is higher than that in other countries in the same region, such as Argentina (23%) and Chile (19%) (see figure I).

**Figure I:** Proportion of women (aged 15-24) not in education, employment or training, by selected countries: 2018 (Percentage)



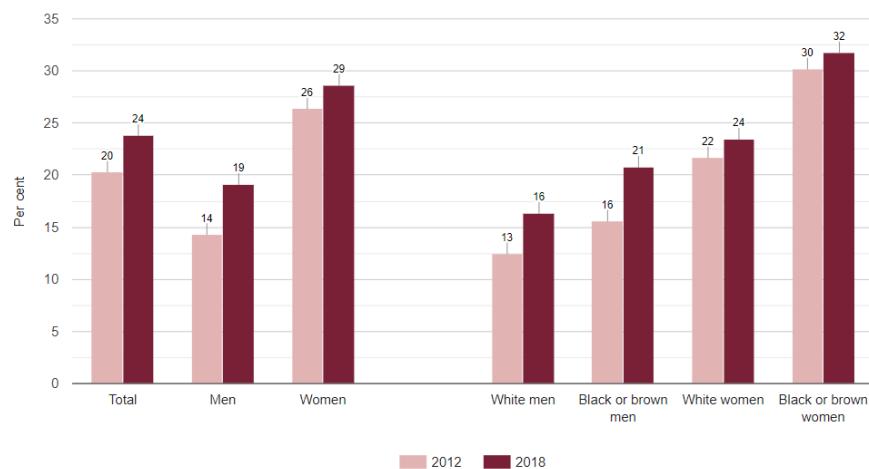
**Sources:** International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates; and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, Global SDG Indicators Database (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>) (last accessed on 3 August 2020).

**Note:** Data refer to 2018 with the exception of data for the Russian Federation (2016), global data (2019) and data for the Latin America and the Caribbean region (2019).

## NEET rates varied across regions and/or by colour/race

Because Brazil covers a huge territory, which is highly heterogeneous and socially unequal, further data disaggregation and analysis are crucial for gaining a better understanding of the NEET rate in the country. The difference in NEET rates among regions reaches up to 12 percentage points. In 2018, the proportion of NEET was 29% in the northeast (the least developed region of the country) and 17% in the southeast (a more developed region). In addition to regional differences, black or brown women had a higher NEET rate (32%) than white women (24%), and double that of white men (16%).

**Figure II:** Share of the population not in employment, education or training by colour/race and by sex in Brazil: 2012 and 2018 (Percentage)



**Source:** Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, Continuous National Household Sample Survey (2012 and 2018) (<https://www.ibge.gov.br/en/statistics/social/labor/16833-monthly-dissemination-pnadcl.html?=&t=o-que-e>).

There has been a 15% growth in the proportion of the NEET population since 2012,<sup>2</sup> with a higher rate of increase among young men (25%) than young women (8%), mainly due to an overall increase in unemployment during the same time period (unemployed individuals are considered to be part of the NEET group). The gender difference in NEET rates, which was 12 percentage points in 2012, had decreased to 9 percentage points in 2018, although it remained significantly higher for women (see figure II).

It is important to highlight that carrying out **domestic chores and caring for family** members is historically affected by traditional gender roles, which affect the entry and retention of women in the labour market. In Brazil, 93% of women and 80% of men over age 14 reported doing some unpaid domestic chores and unpaid care work activities in 2018. Moreover, the amount of this unpaid work done by women and men was also markedly different: on average, 21 hours a week for women and 11 hours for men. Among youth, the inequality in the distribution of this undervalued and unpaid work was even more unfavorable to women: 88% of young women reported carrying out such work versus 67% of young men.

## About the data

### Definitions

- **The proportion of youth (aged 15–24) in Brazil who are not in employment, education or training (also known as "the youth NEET rate"):** This indicator refers to young people in that age cohort who are not employed and who are outside the educational system, that is, not enrolled in formal/regular education or in training to gain entry to tertiary education or technical education or to obtain professional qualifications.

### Coverage

Youth population aged 15–24.

### Availability

Data are available from national and subnational indicators.

## Footnotes

1. International Labour Organization (ILO), Key Indicators of the Labour Market, ninth edition, Geneva, 2016.
2. Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, Continuous National Household Sample Survey (which replaced the previous National Household Sample Survey in 2012).

## Colombia: effect of the Coronavirus-19 pandemic on women



## Key points

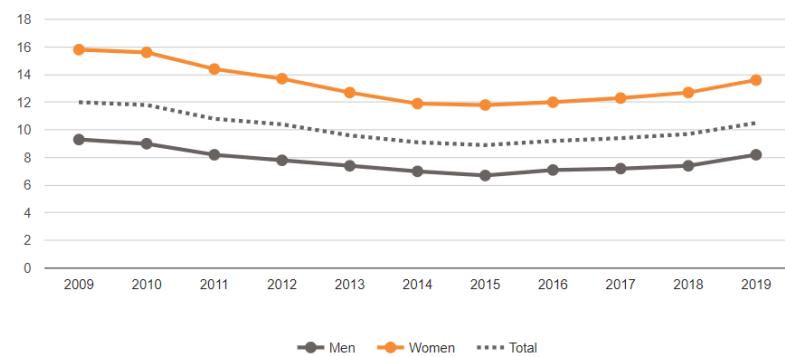
- The Coronavirus-19 (COVID-19) pandemic has had a major economic impact on women in Colombia, who represent 53.4% of the population employed in vulnerable sectors (excluding construction).
- In 2019, 79.4% of household enterprises operating in vulnerable sectors were owned by women.
- By the end of March 2020, 863,000 women and 721,000 men were no longer employed compared to March 2019.

## Impacts on the labour market

In the last 10 years, on average, the unemployment rate among women has been between 5 and 6 percentage points higher than the rate among men (see figure I): the average employment rate has been 46% for women and 69% for men, a difference of 23 percentage points.

These data indicate that the Colombian labour market had unbalanced outcomes for women and men even before the crisis generated by the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).

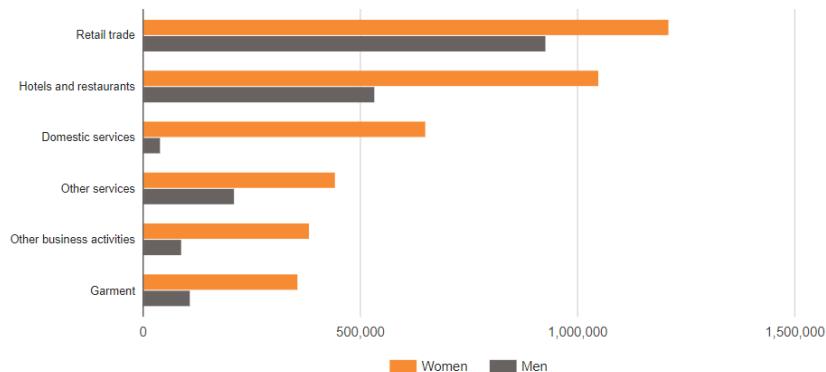
**Figure I:** Unemployment rate by sex: 2009-2019 (Percentage)



**Source:** Government of Colombia, National Department of Statistics (DANE), national integrated household survey (GEIH), 2019 (correspondence with the National Department of Statistics on 31 August 2020).

In cooperation with Javeriana University, the Colombian National Department of Statistics has identified 31 [economic sub-sectors](#)<sup>1</sup> that are considered vulnerable because they produce goods or provide services that are considered non-essential in times of economic crisis or because they cannot operate under the required social distancing mandate (for example, hairdressing shops, hotels and retail stores). In some of these sectors, including the retail trade, hotels and restaurants and paid domestic work, the majority of workers are women (see figure II).

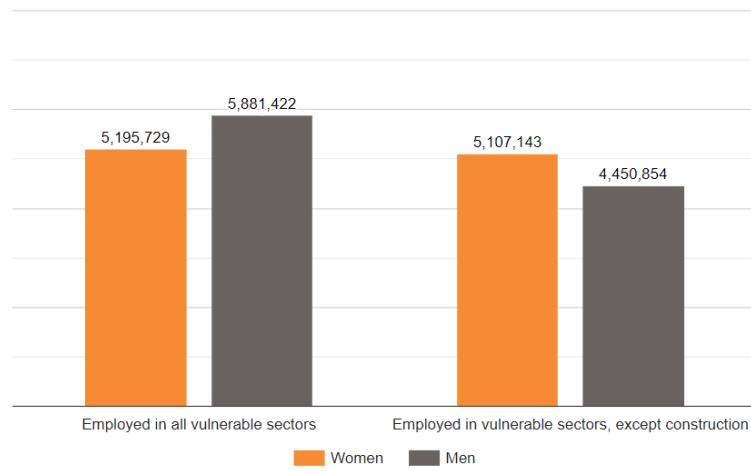
**Figure II:** Number of women and men working in selected vulnerable economic sectors with high prevalence of female workers: 2019



**Source:** Government of Colombia, National Department of Statistics (DANE), national integrated household survey (GEIH), 2019 (correspondence with the National Department of Statistics on 31 August 2020).

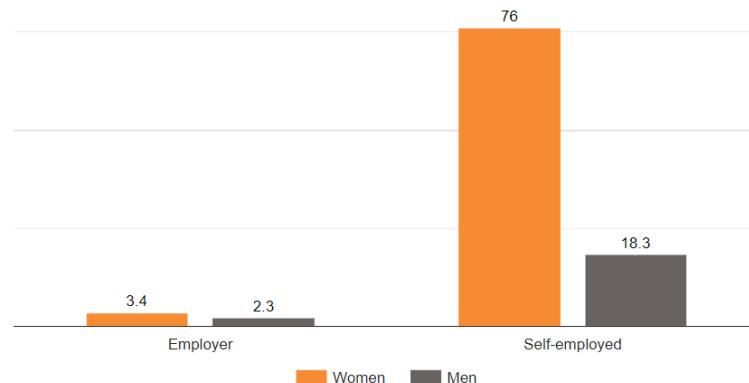
In 2019, over 5 million women and close to 6 million men were employed in vulnerable sectors, corresponding to 56.3% of all employed women and 45% of all employed men. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe economic impact on women, who make up more than half (53.4%) of those employed in vulnerable sectors (excluding the construction sector, which has seen minimal interruption) (see figure III).

**Figure III:** Number of women and men employed in vulnerable economic sectors (including and excluding construction): 2019



**Source:** Government of Colombia, National Department of Statistics (DANE), national integrated household survey (GEIH), 2019 (correspondence with the National Department of Statistics on 31 August 2020).

Hairdressing and other beauty-related businesses are considered to be part of the vulnerable economic sector – they were forced to close first, at the onset of the pandemic, and will reopen last. In 2019, there were 261,678 household enterprises in vulnerable economic sectors, 79.4% of which were owned by women, most of them self-employed (76%) (see figure IV).

**Figure IV:** Ownership of household enterprises by sex: 2019 (Percentage)

**Source:** Government of Colombia, National Department of Statistics (DANE), national integrated household survey (GEIH), 2019 (correspondence with the National Department of Statistics on 31 August 2020).

In the economically vulnerable sector, most household enterprises operate informally: 42% by delivery service, 33.9% from inside a home, 23.6% in premises and 0.3% in an uncovered site. In the same way, 78% do not have a tax registration identification and 88% do not have trade registration identification. For these reasons, many individuals in this sector may not easily be able to benefit from Government assistance provided during the pandemic.

As indicated in the first labour market report issued after the lockdown,<sup>2</sup> by 31 March 2020, 10 days after the lockdown, 863,000 women and 721,000 men were no longer employed (compared to March 2019).

Simultaneously, there was an increase in the economically inactive population of 1 million women and 0.7 million men (compared to March 2019). Most newly inactive women reported household chores as their main activity, compared to 42% of newly inactive men.

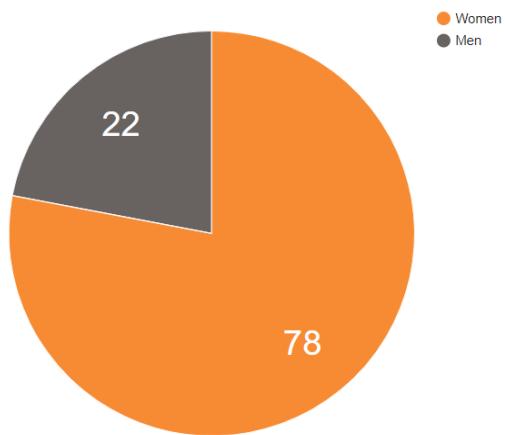
## Impacts of increased care burden

In Colombia, approximately 30 million people take care of other people in their homes, by cooking, cleaning, helping them to bathe or dress and providing general care. Inside the household, 78% of unpaid care and domestic work is done by women (see figure V).

The unequal distribution of unpaid care work inside the household decreases the time women have for study, paid work, self-care, rest and leisure.

In addition, women in nuclear households with children spend 10 hours per day on unpaid work, twice as much time as women in households without children. During the pandemic, the work burden of women with children has increased due to the temporary closure of schools and day-care centres, as well as the unavailability of paid domestic workers and paid care services.

**Figure V:** Distribution of unpaid care work between women and men in hours per year: 2016-2017  
(Percentage)



**Source:** Government of Colombia, National Department of Statistics (DANE), national time-use survey (ENUT 2016 - 2017)  
(<https://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/estadisticas-por-tema/pobreza-y-condiciones-de-vida/encuesta-nacional-del-uso-del-tiempo-enut>).

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Employment/unemployment rate:** Provides information on the proportion of women and men in the labour force in Colombia (aged 12 and above in urban areas and 10 and above in rural areas) who were employed/unemployed during the reference period.
- **Unpaid work:** Includes activities not included in the System of National Accounts (SNA), including the provision of unpaid domestic and caregiving services for the household and family members, as well as volunteer work for other households, the community or organizations.

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## Footnotes

1. Government of Colombia, National Department of Statistics (DANE) database .
2. Government of Colombia, National Department of Statistics (DANE), Labour Market, statistics (January—March 2020)

## Employment of women and men by economic sector



## Key points

- In 2020, employment in the agriculture sector continued to decline for both women and men, while their employment in the services sector kept on growing, engaging 59% of employed women and 45% of employed men, and resulting in a gender gap of 14 percentage points, a significant increase since 1995.
- During the period 1995–2020, women's employment in the industry sector has decreased slightly, to 16%, and increased to 28% for men, widening the gender gap in this sector to 12 percentage points.
- In 2019, the majority of women and men worked in the services sector. In four regions, Northern America, Australia and New Zealand, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean, more than 80% of employed women worked in the services sector in 2019.
- In three regions, agriculture remained the largest sector for women's employment (over 50%) in 2019: Southern Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand).
- With the movement of more women into jobs in the services sector, their share in that sector (45%) has surpassed their share in total employment (39%). Women's employment is concentrated in four services subsectors: human health and social work; education; private households<sup>1</sup> (usually referred to as paid domestic workers); and accommodation and food service activities.
- Globally in 2019, 79% of paid domestic workers were women, a slight reduction from 83% in 2015.
- Even before the onset of the Coronavirus-19 (COVID-19) pandemic in the first quarter of 2020, women made up over 70% of workers in the health sector and are now on the front lines in the battle against the pandemic, facing a higher risk of infection than men in the workplace.

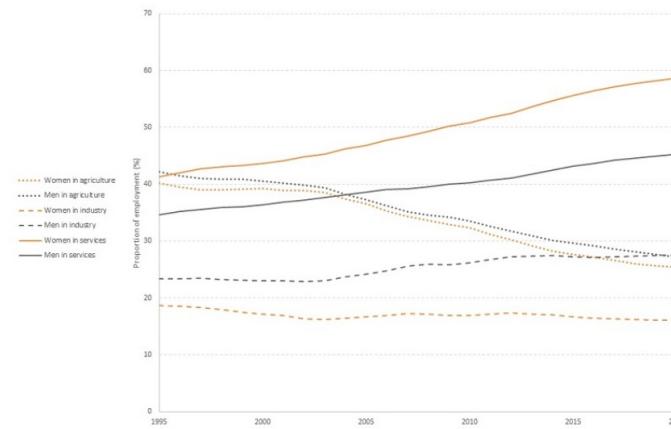
## Current situation

In 2020, worldwide, while the distribution of women and men employed across the three sectors of economic activity, agriculture, industry, and services, was not equal, the services sector was the largest source of employment for both, particularly for women: 59% of women and 45% of men were employed in the services sector, resulting in a gender gap of 14 percentage points, a significant increase since 1995.

Over the past 25 years, the agriculture sector has declined in prominence as source of employment. In 1995, 40% of women and 42% of men worked in the sector; by 2020, it employed only 25% of women and 27% of men. Despite the decline in terms of overall employment, the gender gap in the agriculture sector has remained unchanged at around two percentage points over the past 25 years. In the industry sector, in contrast, over the period 1995–2020, women's employment has slightly decreased to 16% and men's employment has increased to 28%, resulting in a widened gender gap of 12 percentage points (see figure I).

**For both women and men, employment in agriculture continues to decline while employment in the services sector keeps growing**

**Figure I:** Distribution of employed persons by economic sector of employment by sex: 1995–2020  
(Percentage)



**Source:** International Labour Organization (ILO), Department of Statistics (ILOSTAT), ILO modelled estimates, 2020 (data accessed on 2 April 2020) (<https://ilo.org/data/>).

**Note:** 2019 and 2020 figures are projections.

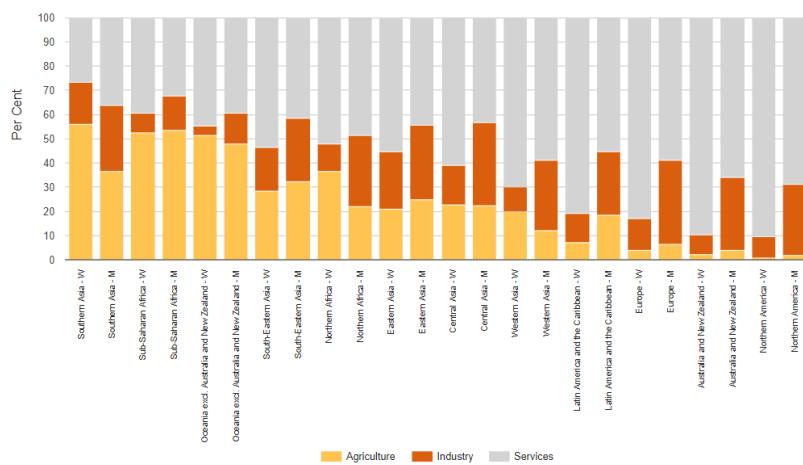
As of 2019, women worked predominantly in the services sector, while increasingly men were employed in the industry sector

In four regions, Northern America, Australia and New Zealand, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean, more than 80% of women were employed in the services sector in 2019. In those regions, the proportion of men employed in the services sector, while relatively high compared to the proportion of men working in agriculture and industry, was at least 20 percentage points lower than that of women (see figure II).

In 2019, agriculture remained the largest sector for women's employment (over 50%) in three regions, Southern Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand). In the following two regions, women were also more likely than men to be working in agriculture: there was a gender gap of 15 percentage points in Northern Africa and 8 percentage points in Western Asia.<sup>2</sup>

In 2019, in all regions, men were more likely to work in the industry sector than women, with a gender difference ranging from six percentage points in sub-Saharan Africa to 22 percentage points in Australia and New Zealand and Europe. The industry sector absorbed between 25% and 35% of men's employment in all regions except sub-Saharan Africa (14%) and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) (13%). The proportion of women employed in the industry sector was below 20% in all regions except Eastern Asia (24%).

**Figure II:** Distribution of employed persons by economic sector of employment by sex and region: 2019  
(Percentage)



**Source:** Calculated by UNDESA, Statistics Division, based on data received from ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, 2020 (data accessed on 5 May 2020) (<https://ilo.org/data/>) (correspondence with ILO on 5 May 2020).

Women's work was concentrated in four services subsectors: human health and social work; education; private households; and accommodation and food service activities

Over the past 25 years, more women have moved into jobs in the services sector, and by 2020 the proportion of women in that sector had surpassed their proportion in total employment. In 2020, the proportion of women among the total of people employed was 39% globally and 45% among those employed in the services sector, a minor increase from 42% in 1995.<sup>3</sup> Within the sector, women's work was concentrated in specific subcategories. Globally, women represented more than 50% of the work force in the following four services subsectors in 2020, in order of importance: human health and social work (70%), education (62%), private households<sup>4</sup> (57%) and accommodation and food service activities (54%).

In all countries, men tended to dominate work in other services subsectors, including: (a) 86% in transport, storage and communications; (b) 69% in public administration and defence; compulsory social security; and (c) 62% in real estate; and business and administrative activities.

Women were more likely than men to work in the most vulnerable jobs, with low pay, long hours and no social protections.<sup>5</sup> These unfavourable employment conditions are particularly prevalent for the women working in the private households subsector, who are most often paid domestic workers in **informal employment**. In 2019, worldwide, 4% of women and 1% of men were employed in this subsector, with the highest proportion of women reported at 18% in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand). Globally, 79% of employed persons in this subsector in 2019 were women,<sup>6</sup> slightly down from 83% in 2015.<sup>7</sup>

**Discrimination**, namely through legal frameworks, social norms and/or institutional structures, can restrict women's access to paid work in specific sectors, leading to gender segregation in employment. As of 2020, in 74 countries and territories with available data, aside from limitations imposed on pregnant, nursing and postpartum women, women were also broadly restricted from working in industry subsectors such as mining and quarrying; manufacturing; and construction.<sup>8</sup>

## COVID-19

Even before the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic, women were employed in subsectors that are on the front lines in the

## World's Women 2020

battle against the pandemic: women make up over 70% of workers in the health sector, facing higher infection risks than men in the workplace.

Moreover, women aged 15 and above accounted for more than their overall share in employment in two out of the four subsectors hardest hit by the pandemic: wholesale and retail trade (44%); and accommodation and food service activities (54%).<sup>9</sup>

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Percentage distribution of employed population by economic sector of employment by sex:** Provides information on women's and men's employment distributed across three broad sectors of economic activity: agriculture; industry; and services. Economic activities classified by the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC –Rev.4)<sup>10</sup> denote the characteristics of the economic unit in which a person works notthe specific duties or functions of the person's job.<sup>11</sup>

### Coverage

Employed women and men aged 15 and above.

### Availability

188 United Nations Member States and territories.

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## Footnotes

1. Includes activities of households as employers, activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies, arts entertainment and recreation and other service activities, with activities of households as employers taking up the largest share. ([back to text](#))
2. .
3. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics, New York, 2015 (United Nations publication, Sales No.E.15.XVII.8).
4. Includes activities of households as employers, activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies, arts entertainment and recreation and other service activities, with activities of households as employers taking up the largest share.
5. ILO, Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture, third edition, Geneva, 2018.
6. Calculated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, using data on employment distribution by economic activity and sex (correspondence with ILO on 18 June 2020) and data from ILOSTAT on employment by sex and economic activity (accessed on 18 August 2020).
7. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics, New York, 2015 (United Nations publication, Sales No.E.15.XVII.8).
8. World Bank, Women, Business and the Law 2020, Washington, D.C., 2020.
9. ILO, COVID-19 and the World of Work (last accessed on 18 August 2020). The proportions are calculated by UNDESA, Statistics Division, based on data retrieved from ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates (last accessed on 3 August 2020).
10. International Standard Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), Revision 4 (ISIC-Rev.4).
11. International Labour Organization (ILO), Key Indicators of the Labour Market, ninth edition, Geneva 2016.

## Gender segregation in occupations



## Key points

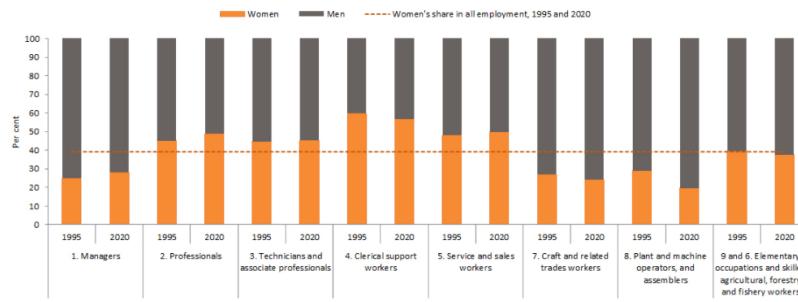
- Gender segregation in occupations persists both horizontally (across occupational groups) and vertically (within the same occupational group).
- Globally in 2020, women continue to constitute the majority of clerical support workers (57%) and men the majority of plant and machine operators and assemblers (80%).
- While the percentage of women among people employed has stayed constant at 39% since 1995, their representation in managerial level positions increased by only 3%, to 28%, as of 2020, and their representation in higher decision-making positions among managers was even lower.
- Gender roles and stereotypes contribute to the segregation of women and men in occupations: in general, more women work in occupations categorized as being home-based or caring, whereas men tend to work in areas such as information and communications technology (ICT), science and engineering.
- Since 2000, the transition from low-skilled to high-skilled jobs has taken place at a faster rate among women than men in all regions except sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania, excluding Australia and New Zealand.

## Gender segregation persists in various occupations

Globally in 2020, women and men were largely employed in different occupations (horizontal segregation) and in different positions within the same occupation or occupational group (vertical segregation). Relative to their share in overall employment (39%), women had a higher representation among clerical support workers (57%), service and sales workers (50%), professionals (49%) and technicians and associate professionals (45%). Men were more commonly employed as plant and machine operators and assemblers (80%), craft and related trades workers (76 %) and managers (72%). In the last category, women constituted only 28% of the total number of **managerial personnel**.

Over the past 25 years, while their share in total employment has remained constant, the proportion of women employed as clerical support workers, the most common occupation for women in 1995, has fallen by 3 percentage points while the proportion of women employed as managers has risen by the same percentage point level (see figure I), revealing a minor but important increase in women's representation in managerial positions.

**Figure I:** Distribution of employed persons by occupation and sex: 1995 and 2020



**Source:** Calculated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, based on data retrieved from the International Labour Organization (ILO) Department of Statistics (ILOSTAT): ILO modelled estimates (last accessed 2 April 2020).

**Note:** 2020 figures are projections.

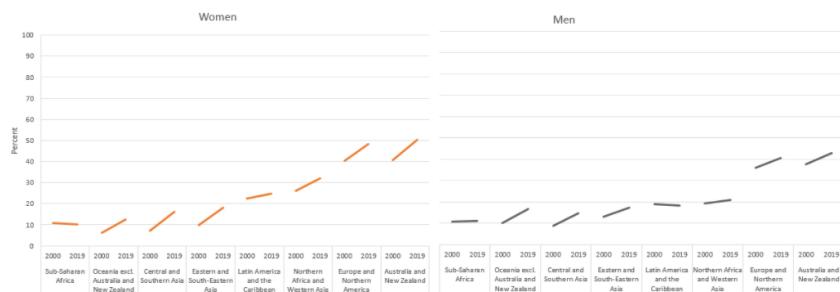
Transition to high-skilled jobs has taken place at a higher rate among women

## than men in most regions

The nine major occupational groups classified by ISCO-08 are also associated with three broad skill levels: level 1 (low); level 2 (middle); and levels 3 and 4 (high). While occupations at skill level 1 include simple and routine physical or manual assignments, occupations at skill levels 3 and 4 typically require problem-solving, decision-making and creativity, including complex technical and practical assignments in a specialized field. As employment has transitioned over the past 25 years between **economic sectors**, mostly from the agriculture to the services sector, certain lower-skilled jobs have been replaced with high-skilled ones calling for the skills of managers, professionals and technicians.

In all regions except sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), the proportion of high-skilled women workers has increased at a higher rate since 2000, surpassing, in 2019, the proportion of high-skilled men workers (see figure II); in Europe and Northern America, 48% of women work in high-skilled jobs (in contrast to 41% for men); as well as 50% of women in Australia and New Zealand (as opposed to 43% for men).

**Figure II:** Distribution of occupations at skill levels 3 and 4 (high), by sex and region: 2000 and 2019



**Source:** Calculated by UNDESA, Statistics Division, based on data for regional groupings under the Sustainable Development Goals received from ILOSTAT: ILO modelled estimates (correspondence with ILO on 5 May 2020)

**Note:** Occupations at skill levels 3 and 4 (high) correspond to ISCO-08 categories 1 (managers), 2 (professionals) and 3 (technicians and associate professionals).

## Gender segregation in occupations is closely linked to stereotypical gender roles

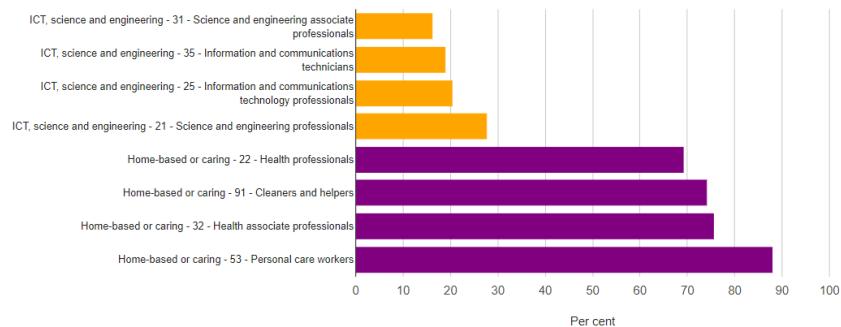
The segregation of women and men in different occupations is also associated with stereotypes about women, for example that they are more caring or more focused on activities based in the home. Across the 121 countries examined by ILO as of 2019 using the latest available data, the occupations most commonly held by women comprised personal care workers,<sup>1</sup> 88% of whom were women compared to 12% of men, and health professionals,<sup>2</sup> including general medical doctors and nurses, a broad category, within which women represented 69% of the total workers. In certain areas, gender-based occupational segregation reflects the difference between women and men in terms of their paths in education and vocational training, **including in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)**. High-skilled occupations in ICT, science and engineering were mostly occupied by men and women's representation remained minimal. As of 2019, only one in five ICT professionals were women and they represented only 28% of science and engineering professionals (see figure III).

Analysis of the data at detailed levels for different occupations reveals that there is vertical segregation, with women more concentrated in certain subcategories within the various occupations. Furthermore, in 2020, while women's representation in managerial positions only reached 28% globally, their level of access to higher decision-making positions in management remained at an even lower level. In 50 out of 78 countries with available data for the years from 2015 to 2019, the proportion of women holding senior and middle management positions, including as chief executive officers, senior officials and legislators, was lower than their overall share among managers.<sup>3</sup> The highest representation by women in managerial positions was reported in the Seychelles in 2015, at a time when women made up nearly half of all senior and middle managers (49%) while also holding almost half of overall managerial positions (48%).

Differences in the average earnings of women and men are partially the result of explained factors that combine gender inequalities in many areas, including across and within occupational groups. Gender segregation in occupations contributes to the **gender pay gap**, especially when there is a difference in the employment of women and men between low- and high-

paying occupations.

**Figure III: Women's share in employment by selected occupations (ISCO-08): 2019**



**Source:** ILOSTAT Blog. "These occupations are dominated by women"; computed by ILO using weighted average for 121 countries using the most recent annual data available.

**Note:** Based on latest available data as of 2019 for 121 countries, representing 63% of global employment: data for China and India were not available and the ILO weighted average is not a global figure.

## Covid-19

Women have been more negatively affected than men during the recession brought about by COVID-19 since many women work in economic sectors and occupations that have suffered severely from the pandemic. Specifically, the **unemployment rate** has been higher in occupations that could not be carried out remotely, through teleworking, and in the case of "social jobs" requiring human interaction, which have been rendered less secure because of pandemic-related restrictions.<sup>4</sup>

Most notably, women are on the front lines in the battle against the pandemic as they make up over 70% of workers in the health sector,<sup>5</sup> who face higher infection risks than men in the workplace.<sup>6</sup>

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Proportion of women in occupational groups:** Provides information on employment across different occupations, with a breakdown by sex. Occupations are classified into nine major groups by the International Standard Classification of Occupations 2008 (ISCO-08) based on skill levels and skill specialization requirements for specific jobs.

### Coverage

Employed women and men aged 15 and above.

### Availability

187 United Nations Member States and territories (2020).

### Limitations

The armed forces constitute a separate, tenth, major group under ISCO-08, although employed persons in this category are sometimes included in other ISCO-08 major groups in national data.

Employment estimates may vary with frequency of data collection across countries. Given that data collection may be conducted annually or monthly, seasonality could have an impact on employment figures and international comparisons.

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## Footnotes

1. Categorized under ISCO-08 major category 5. Service and sales workers and defined as those who provide care, supervision and assistance for children, patients and elderly, convalescent or disabled persons in institutional and residential settings.
2. Categorized under ISCO-08 major category 2. Professionals.
3. Data on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.5.2 do not provide specific information on the proportion of women employed exclusively in senior positions (excluding junior and middle management).
4. Source: [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\) Blog, 23 July 2020, "Unemployment in Today's Recession Compared to the Global Financial Crisis"](#) (last accessed on 3 August 2020).
5. Corresponding to the category Q. Human health and social work activities by the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC rev. 4).
6. Source: UNDESA, 2020, World Economic Situation and Prospects: June 2020 Briefing, No. 138: proportion calculated by the United Nations Statistics Division based on data retrieved from ILOSTAT: ILO modelled estimates (last accessed on 3 August 2020).

## Methodological note on gender equality in trade [UNCTAD]



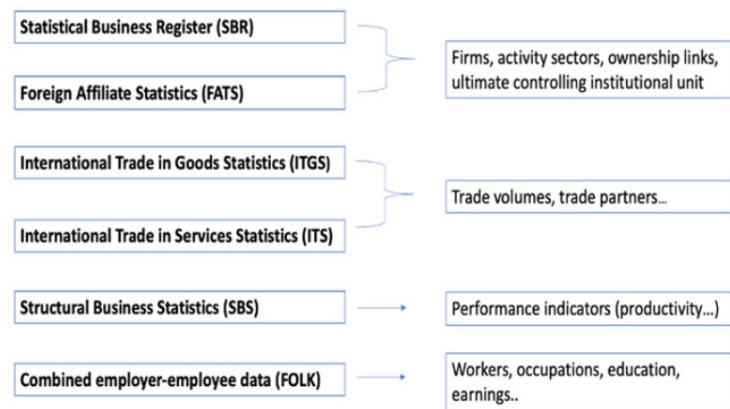
## Key points

- Gender inequalities in trade, particularly in multinational enterprises and foreign trading enterprises, can be analysed by linking microdata from multiple statistical sources available in many countries, based on individual and enterprise characteristics such as employment, education, jobs, businesses and trade.
- Based on results of a case study in Finland, women participate in trade less often than men, especially in higher paying occupations.
- In exporting and importing enterprises (two-way trading enterprises) in Finland, the share of women is significantly lower in high-paying occupations, such as managers (19%) and professionals (26%), leaving women less likely than men to be able to fully benefit from economic globalization.
- The gender pay gap in Finland tends to be larger in high-paying jobs provided by foreign multinationals and enterprises that trade internationally and the highest in multinational firms situated in knowledge intensive services.

## Background

This narrative provides a blueprint for linking business and social statistics in order to enable an analysis of gender inequalities in trade, particularly in multinational enterprises and foreign trading enterprises. The variables presented are drawn from statistical sources available for many countries, including statistical business registers, foreign affiliate statistics, international trade statistics, structural business statistics and combined employer-employee datasets (see figure I).

Merging data from official statistical datasets and registers enables the enrichment of gender analyses with economic aspects. Assessing gender equality, such as the gender pay gap, in the business sector is facilitated by the availability of indicators disaggregated by firm type and trading status. While most governments are committed to developing a gender-responsive trade policy, effective measures require country-specific indicators<sup>1</sup> in order to obtain a full understanding of gender inequalities in trade.

**Figure I:** Official statistical data sources and related variables for gender equality in trade analysis

**Source:** United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), 2020 (correspondence with UNCTAD on 28 May 2020), based on data from Statistics Finland ([https://www.stat.fi/index\\_en.html](https://www.stat.fi/index_en.html)).

## Microdata linking can improve analyses of trade and gender in Europe

Recent work on microdata linking<sup>2</sup> and trade in goods by enterprise characteristics<sup>3</sup> provide a good starting point for operationalizing trade and gender indicators using the UNCTAD conceptual framework<sup>4</sup> and indicators illustrated in a related Finnish case study.<sup>5</sup> The findings are in line with research showing that heterogeneous firms have an impact on gendered labour market outcomes,<sup>6</sup> specifically on the gender pay gap, especially if they are international trading<sup>7</sup> or multinational enterprises.<sup>8</sup>

## Case study from Finland

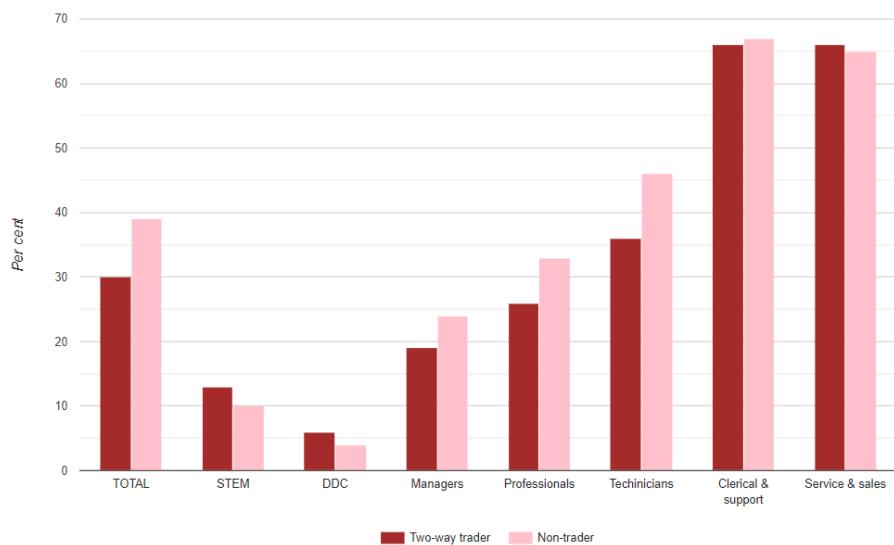
### **The share of women in high-paying occupations in exporting and importing (two-way trading) enterprises are significantly lower than in non-trading enterprises**

In Finland, the shares of women in different occupations in two-way trading and non-trading enterprises reveal that women participate in trade less often than men, especially in higher paying occupations (see figure II). Thus, women in Finland are less likely to be able to fully benefit from economic globalization. Overall, only some 30% of the workforce in two-way trading enterprises are women, compared to 40% in non-trading enterprises.

When merged, data also show that the **gender pay gap** in Finland tends to be larger in high-paying jobs provided by foreign multinationals and enterprises that trade internationally. Independent firms and those belonging to domestic groups provide more equal pay.<sup>9</sup>

More specifically, the largest gender pay gaps are found in multinational firms situated in knowledge intensive services compared to independent firms, domestic groups, domestic multinationals and foreign multinationals in three industries: manufacturing, knowledge intensive services and other activities. Data on the wages of women in these industries can help to direct policy attention and measures to address the largest gender pay gaps.

**Figure II:** Share of women in selected occupational groups, by two-way trading and non-trading enterprises: 2008—2016 (Percentage)



**Source:** Statistics Finland, 2020 ([https://www.stat.fi/index\\_en.html](https://www.stat.fi/index_en.html))(correspondence with UNCTAD on 28 May 2020).

**Note:** Data extracted from register-based variables over the period 2008—2016 allows for an in-depth analysis across large comprehensive linked datasets, with full coverage of data on individuals and firms, including variables ranging from individuals' education, occupation, income and gender to business activities, employee structures, wages and salaries, profitability and trade. Timeliness can be improved by using narrower datasets with selected variables only. Two-way trading refers to an enterprise that exports and imports. STEM refers to education on science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and DDC is its subset referring to deep digital competences.

## About the data

### Definitions

Gender equality in trade indicators measure the preconditions, outcomes and impacts of trade participation for women and men, taking into account their different roles as workers and entrepreneurs, producers and consumers. The indicators require microdata linking of employer and employee datasets to the trading status of enterprises and to various enterprise and individual characteristics to enable in-depth analysis.

### Coverage

Female and male employees and employers in domestic, foreign and multinational businesses and enterprises operating in Finland.

### Availability

Data provided by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and by Statistics Finland<sup>10</sup> for Finland only.

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## Footnotes

1. World Trade Organization (WTO), Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment, Buenos Aires, 2017 .
2. Eurostat, Micro data Linking — 2019 Edition, 16 December 2019 .
3. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Trade by enterprise characteristics data .
4. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Better data and statistics for gender-responsive trade policy, Policy brief No. 70, October 2018 .
5. Luomaranta H. et al., "The impact of multinational and trading enterprises on gender equality - case Finland", UNCTAD Research Paper No. 45 (UNCTAD/SER.RP/2020/4), May 2020 .
6. Card, D., Cardoso, A.R. and Kline, P., "Bargaining, Sorting, and the Gender Wage Gap: Quantifying the Impact of Firms on the Relative Pay of Women", The Quarterly Journal of Economics, vol. 131, Issue. 2, May 2016 ; Cardoso, A. R., Guimaraes, P. and Portugal, P., "What drives the gender wage gap? A look at the role of firm and job-title heterogeneity", Oxford Economic Papers, vol. 68, Issue 2, 2016 ; Gallen, Y., Lesner, R. V. and Vejlin, R., "The labor market gender gap in Denmark: Sorting out the past 30 years", Labour Economics, 56, 2019 .
7. Bøler, E. A., Javorcik, B. and Ulltveit-Moe, K.H., "Working across time zones: Exporters and the gender wage gap", Journal of International Economics, vol. 111, Issue C, 2018 .
8. Vahter P. and Masso, J., "The contribution of multinationals to wage inequality: Foreign ownership and the gender pay gap", Review of World Economics, vol. 155, Issue 1, February 2019 .
9. While similar findings have been made in Estonia
10. Statistics Finland : data could be calculated to different degrees in other countries depending on available statistical data.

Economic empowerment

## Status in employment



## Key points

- Over the past 20 years, the percentage of employed as wage and salaried workers worldwide has increased more rapidly among women than men (standing, in 2019, at 53% for both women and men). This change has not been matched, however, by a significant decline in the gender pay gap, and women have continued to make up the majority of workers engaged in part-time employment.
- In 2019, women continued to be more engaged as contributing family workers (18%) than men (7%) both globally and regionally, and particularly in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), where data show that 44% of employed women were contributing to family businesses. Worldwide, however, the proportion of women employed in this category has decreased by more than a third since 2000.
- In contrast, in 2019, a higher proportion of men (38%) were engaged in own-account activities than women (28%) both globally and regionally, in particular in countries in sub-Saharan Africa (54%).
- Larger gender differences between the proportions of women and men classified as own-account workers and contributing family workers, who often lack basic social protections and are subject to low income and difficult working conditions, were observed in developing regions than in developed ones. In particular, a significant gender gap (17 percentage points) in these types of employment was reported in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand).

## Background

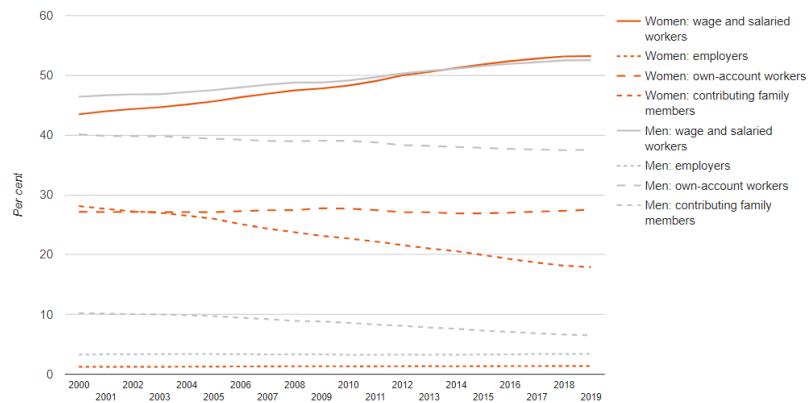
To understand the employment conditions and the position of women and men in the labour market, it is imperative to identify their status in employment, which entails classifying jobs with respect to the type of authority a worker exercises and the type of economic risk to which the worker is exposed.<sup>1</sup> This provides the statistical basis for analysing employment conditions in terms of level of security, protection and rights at work. Furthermore, the extent to which women are engaged in paid employment reflects their level of access to and integration into the monetary economy as well as their level of access to regular income and better working conditions.<sup>2</sup> This, in turn, could have a positive impact on their autonomy and financial independence within the household and enhance their personal development and **intra-household decision-making power**.

### Globally, around half of employed women and men are wage and salaried workers

Globally in 2019, wage and salaried workers constituted slightly more than half of all employed women and men (53%). Since 2000, the proportion of wage and salaried workers has increased at a higher rate among employed women, slightly surpassing the proportion observed among employed men in 2014 (see figure I). This faster growth has not been accompanied, however, by a significant decline in the **gender pay gap** and in 2019 the proportion of women engaged in **part-time employment** was higher than that of men.

During the period 2000–2019, the percentage of female and male employers remained very small and relatively constant, at around 3% for men and 1% for women, showing an increase of less than half a percentage point (0.5%). Data show that women remained more likely to be contributing family workers (18%) than men (7%), despite the downward trend by more than a third since 2000, while men remained consistently more engaged in own-account activities (38%) than women (28%) during the same time period (see figure I).

Data on status in employment and gender reveal different patterns in urban and rural areas. Globally in 2019, 71% of employed women and 70% of employed men were classified as wage and salaried workers in urban areas, compared with 31% of employed women and 33% of employed men in rural areas. Own-account workers accounted for the largest group in both women's and men's employment in rural areas, representing 38% of employed women and 53% of employed men in 2019.

**Figure I:** Distribution of employment by status in employment by sex: 2000-2019

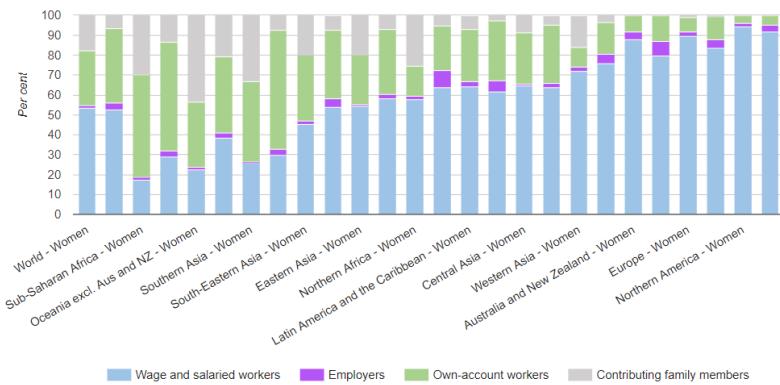
Source: ILO, Department of Statistics (ILOSTAT), ILO modelled estimates, 2019 (correspondence with ILO on 5 May 2020)

Across regions, large variations are found in terms of status in employment and gender

In developed regions, including Australia and New Zealand, Europe and Northern America, the vast majority of women and men were engaged in wage and salaried employment in 2019 (above 80%), with women more likely than men to be involved in this type of employment. In contrast, in sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) and Southern Asia, a smaller portion of both employed women and men (below 40%) were engaged in wage or salaried employment, with women less likely than men to be employed in this type of work, resulting in a gender gap of 16 percentage points in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), 11 percentage points in sub-Saharan Africa and 4 percentage points in Southern Asia. The percentages of women and men classified as employers were far from being at parity across all regions; for example, in Northern Africa, men were 4.5 times more likely than women to be employers (see figure II).

Women were more likely than men to work as contributing family workers in all regions. In 2019, the proportion of employed women who worked as contributing family workers was the lowest in Australia and New Zealand and Northern America (less than 1%) and the highest in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) (44%). Own-account workers made up a higher proportion of total men's employment than of total women's employment in all regions, with men most likely to be in this type of employment in sub-Saharan Africa (54%), where they were predominantly employed in the large agriculture sector, and least likely in Northern America (5%). Overall larger gender differences among individuals classified as own-account workers and contributing family workers, who often lack basic social protections and are subject to low income and difficult working conditions, were observed in developing regions than in developed ones, with these types of employment being more common among women than men by 17 percentage points in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), although, in a reverse trend, more common among men by 4 percentage points in Australia and New Zealand (see figure II).

The type of work done by individuals classified as employers and own-account workers is closely associated with that of entrepreneurs, who create employment for themselves and employment opportunities for others. Furthermore, the promotion of micro- and small-sized enterprises has also been identified as a strategy for advancing the economic empowerment of women, while reducing poverty and targeting gender equality. With these goals in mind, a methodology for measuring entrepreneurship from a gender perspective has been developed by the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality project.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure II:** Distribution of employment by status in employment by sex and region: 2019 (Percentage)

**Source:** ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, 2019 (correspondence with ILO on 5 May 2020).

## Country in focus: Cambodia

In Cambodia, the percentages of wage and salaried workers have increased remarkably since 2000, reaching 42% among employed women (a 33 percentage point increase) and 57% among employed men (a 38 percentage point increase). While this has been offset by a decline in the proportion of own-account workers among employed men (down from 54% in 2000 to 38% in 2019), the proportion of own-account workers among employed women increased from 40% in 2000 to 53% in 2019, diverging from the global trend.

## About the data

### Definitions

**Status in employment** provides information about the type of work relationship an individual has in their (main) job, taking into account the kind of the economic risk and authority experienced in that job.<sup>4</sup> In this narrative, the distribution of employment by categories of status in employment is based on the 1993 International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93),<sup>5</sup> under which: (a) wage and salaried workers are defined as all workers who hold paid employment jobs and whose renumeration does not directly depend on the revenue of the unit for which they work; (b) employers and own-account workers are defined as all workers who hold self-employment jobs and whose renumeration directly depends on the profits derived from the goods and services produced (i.e., while employers engage, on a continuous basis, one or multiple persons to work for them as employees, own-account workers do not engage any employees on a continuous basis to work for them); and (c) contributing family workers are defined as all workers holding self-employment jobs in market-oriented establishments operated by related persons living in the same household.<sup>6</sup> (United Nations Minimum Set of Gender Indicators 4, 5 and 6).

### Coverage

Employed women and men aged 15 and above.

### Availability

187 United Nations Member States and territories.

### Limitations

Classification by status in employment does not encompass more granular distinctions in working status, including those between casual or regular contracts, as well as contractual protections against dismissal.

In addition, results may be skewed owing to the fact that data on status in employment are usually derived from household surveys, which cannot possibly preclude respondents' bias, including the interpretation of the questions asked and the different perceptions of women and men, for example with regard to their role in a family business (i.e., as an own-account worker as opposed to a contributing family worker).

## International Classification of Status in Employment

While available data reported for status in employment are still categorized using the 1993 International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93), in 2018, at the twentieth International Conference of Labour Statisticians, the [2018 International Classification of Status in Employment \(ICSE-18\)](#) was adopted.

The new international standard, shown below, classifies jobs in employment for pay or for profit into 10 detailed categories aggregated according to two alternative classification hierarchies: type of authority (ICSE-18-A) and type of economic risk (ICSE-18-R). The hierarchy of type of authority provides a dichotomy between independent workers and dependent workers, given the nature of control workers can exercise over the economic unit for which they work. The hierarchy of type of economic risk provides a dichotomy between employment for pay and employment for profit, analogous to the traditional distinction between paid employment and self-employment used in the System of National Accounts.

## 2018 International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-18)

- Independent workers
  - A. Employers
  - B. Independent workers without employees
- Dependent workers
  - C. Dependent contractors
  - D. Employees
  - E. Contributing family workers

## International Classification of Status in Employment according to type of economic risk (ICSE-18-R)

- Workers in employment for profit
  - F. Independent workers in household market enterprises
  - C. Dependent contractors
  - E. Contributing family workers
- Workers in employment for pay
  - G. Owner-operators of corporations
  - D. Employees

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Footnotes

1. ILO, [Resolution concerning the International Classification of Status in Employment \(ICSE\)](#), Geneva, 1993.
2. ILO, A quantum leap for gender equality: For a better future of work for all, Geneva, 2019.
3. The [Evidence and Data for Gender Equality \(EDGE\) project](#) is a joint initiative of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).
4. International Labour Organization (ILO), Quick Guide on Measuring Economic Characteristics in the Population Census, Geneva, 2019.
5. ILO, [Resolution concerning the International Classification of Status in Employment \(ICSE\)](#), Geneva, 1993
6. International Labour Organization (ILO), Key Indicators of the Labour Market, ninth edition, Geneva, 2016.

## Women and men in informal employment by sector



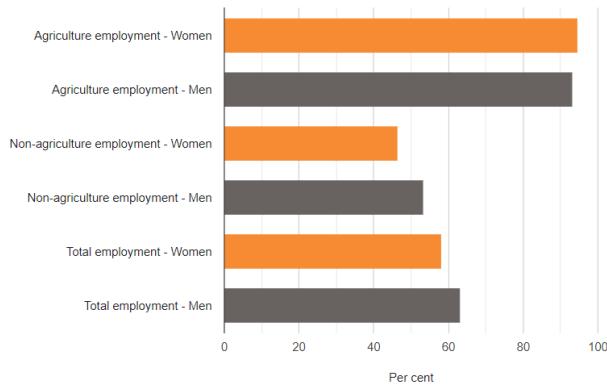
## Key points

- In 2016, the proportion of informal employment as a percentage of women's total employment worldwide was 58%, compared with 63% for men, although informal employment was more prevalent among women in 66 out of 119 countries (56%) with available data.
- The agriculture sector had the highest level of informal work, and informal employment was a larger source of employment for women than for men in that sector.
- The share of informal employment was significantly lower in developed regions, at below 25% of women's and men's total employment.
- The proportion of individuals classified as own-account workers and contributing family workers, who often lack basic social protections and are subject to low income and difficult working conditions, was higher among informally employed women (64%) than informally employed men (59%).
- Informal employment is more prevalent among youth and people at older ages, with little gender differences: globally, around three out of four young and older women and men work in informal jobs.
- With the attainment of higher levels of education, women and men are at lower risk of working in informal jobs, and women, in particular, once they complete secondary or tertiary education.
- The proportion of women informally employed as wage and salaried workers who worked reduced hours was higher than that of men (20% versus 12% for men), although men were more likely (10 percentage points) to have longer informal working hours than women.

Informal employment is an important source of employment for both women and men

In 2016, employed women and men working informally represented 61.2% of global employment, which means that they lacked access to decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.<sup>1</sup> The proportion of employed women with informal jobs was 58%, lower<sup>2</sup> than the corresponding proportion for men (63%). However, the level of women's participation in informal employment was higher than for men in 66 out of 119 (or 56%) countries with available data in the ILO microdata repository. Among the three broad economic sectors,<sup>3</sup> agriculture had the highest level of informal jobs, affecting almost all employment, with a slightly higher rate for women (95%) than for men (93%). Informal employment outside the agriculture sector was lower for both women (46%) and men (53%) (see figure I).

**Figure I:** Share of informal employment in agriculture, non-agriculture and total employment, by sex: 2016 (Percentage)



**Source:** UNDESA, Statistical Division, Global SDG Indicators Database (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>); ILO modelled estimates (last accessed on 12 August 2020) (<https://ilo.org/resources/methods/ilo-modelled-estimates/>).

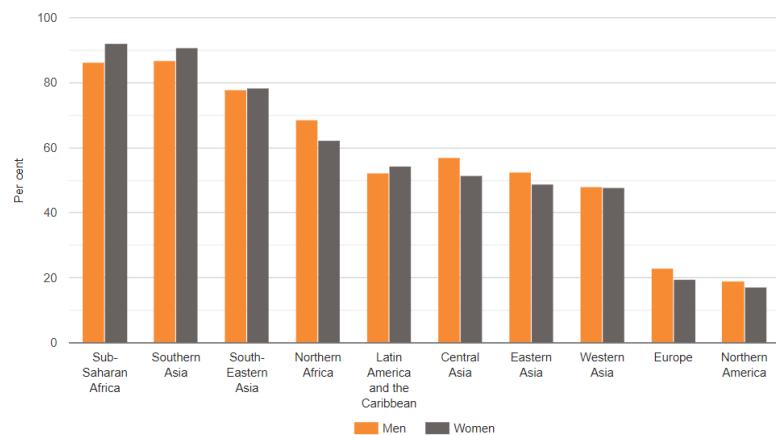
**Note:** Non-agriculture employment refers to employment in all sectors of economic activities except A. Agriculture, forestry and fishing, as classified by the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC -Rev.4) (<https://ilo.org/resources/methods/classification-economic-activities/>).

## The share of informal employment is higher in developing regions

In 2016, more than half of women and men were in informal employment in the following 6 out of 10 regions with data: sub-Saharan Africa (over 85%); Southern Asia (over 85%); South-Eastern Asia (over 75%); Northern Africa (over 60%); Latin America and the Caribbean (over 50%); and Central Asia (over 50%) (see figure II). Compared with other developing regions, informal employment was less prevalent among employed women in Western Asia, although women's overall **labour force participation** in the region was also much lower than the global average. The proportion of informal employment was significantly lower in developed regions, representing less than 25% of women's and men's employment, including in the non-agriculture sector, in Europe and Northern America.

In general, people do not work informally by choice, they are usually driven to take on such work as a result of insufficient social protection measures.<sup>4</sup> For example, sub-Saharan Africa, where informal work was prevalent both for women (92%) and men (86%) in 2016, was also **the region with the lowest proportion of people (3%) receiving unemployment benefits**.<sup>5</sup>

Informal employment was higher for women than men in four regions, resulting in a gender gap in most regions, most notably in sub-Saharan Africa (6 percentage points and up to 11 percentage points when excluding agriculture) and Southern Asia (4 percentage points, with higher rates of informal employment among women in the agriculture sector). Informal employment was higher, however, for men than for women in Northern Africa (6 percentage points and up to 18 percentage points when excluding agriculture) and was almost at parity in Western Asia.

**Figure II:** Share of informal employment in total employment by region and sex: 2016 (Percentage)

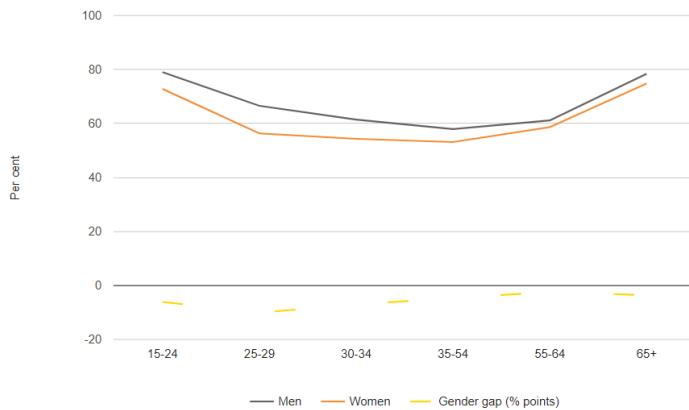
**Source:** UNDESA, Statistical Division, Global SDG Indicators Database (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>); ILO modelled estimates (last accessed on 12 August 2020) (<https://ilo.stat.ilo.org/resources/methods/ilo-modelled-estimates/>).

Among informal workers, a gender gap is visible among contributing family workers (more prevalent for women) and own-account workers (more prevalent for men)

Globally in 2016, women in informal employment worked in almost equal proportions as contributing family workers (28%), own-account workers (36%) and employees (34%), while men in informal employment worked chiefly as own-account workers (50%) and only marginally as contributing family workers (9%), resulting in a gender gap of almost 20 percentage points in this category of informal workers. Own-account and contributing family workers, who often lack basic social protections and are subject to low income and difficult working conditions, represented 64% of women's informal employment, compared to 59% of men's, indicating a greater shortage of decent work for women.

Informal employment is more prevalent among youth and at older ages, with little gender differences

According to ILO data from 2016, globally, the proportion of men in informal employment was higher than women's at all ages, with some variation at different stages over the life cycle. Young women and men aged 15–24 (75% and 78%, respectively) and older women and men aged 65 and above (73% and 79%, respectively) were most likely to work in informal jobs. Informal employment was less prevalent (lower than 60%) for both women and men aged 35–54. The gender gap in informal employment ranged from 6 percentage points among youth to 4 percentage points among older persons and was the smallest, at 2 percentage points, among women and men aged 55–64 (see figure III).

**Figure III:** Share of informal employment in total employment by sex and age group: 2016 (Percentage)

**Source:** ILO, Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture, third edition, Geneva, 2018  
([https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS\\_626831/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_626831/lang--en/index.htm)).

## Higher levels of education result in lower levels of informal employment

According to ILO data from 2016, both women and men without formal education were highly likely to end up working in informal jobs (96% of women without education were in informal employment, compared with 92% of men) (see figure IV). However, with increases in educational achievement, this risk was lower for both women and men, although there were certain gender differences. While informal employment was more prevalent among women than among men with no formal education, or only primary education, this trend was reversed for women with secondary or tertiary education, who were less likely than men with the same level of education to be working in informal jobs.

**Figure IV:** Share of informal employment in total employment by sex and highest level of education: 2016 (Percentage)

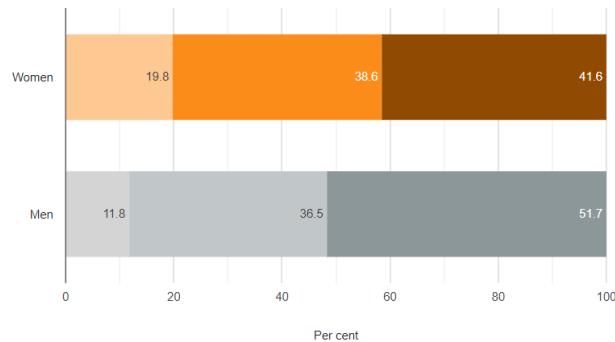
**Source:** ILO, Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture, third edition, Geneva, 2018  
([https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS\\_626831/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_626831/lang--en/index.htm)).

## Women and men informally employed as wage and salaried workers tend to work non-standard working hours

Women and men in informal employment usually work outside the standard weekly working hours.<sup>6</sup> In addition, in 2016, both women and men in informal wage employment worldwide working non-standard hours were more likely to work excessive hours,<sup>7</sup> and men were more likely to have longer informal working hours than women (10 percentage points). In the case of

those working reduced hours, the proportion of part time employment<sup>8</sup> among wage and salaried workers informally employed was higher, almost twice, among women than men (20% versus 12%, respectively) (see figure V). Informally employed women and men who work part time may face further ineligibility for social security benefits, compounding their vulnerability owing to lower wages and additional restrictions to their upward mobility in terms of careers and training opportunities.<sup>9</sup>

**Figure V:** Proportion of women and men in informal wage employment by number of hours worked per week: 2016 (Percentage)



**Source:** ILO, Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture, third edition, Geneva, 2018 ([https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS\\_626831/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_626831/lang--en/index.htm)).

The gender gap in informal employment is particularly significant among countries with the lowest gross national income per capita

Among 47 United Nations Member States and territories with available data since 2015 in the Global SDG Indicators Database (representing 11% of the global economy in 2019), the gender gap, that is, the difference between the proportion of women and men in informal employment, showed a higher proportion of informal employment among women than men in countries at earlier stages of economic development, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

### Country in focus: India

In 2018, 89% of both employed women and men in India held informal jobs. Moreover, when the agriculture sector was excluded, informal employment still represented 76% of women's jobs and 81% of men's.<sup>10</sup>

In 2008, India enacted the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act to address the high levels of informal employment, including among home-based workers. Despite the adoption of the act, national estimates produced by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation indicate a significant degree of informal employment in the country since 2010 (90% and 87% for employed women and men, respectively).<sup>11</sup> Despite the persistence of informal employment in India's labour market, conditions of work seem to have been improving, with the share of regular wage workers increasing from 14% during the period 2004–2015 to 23% during the biennium 2017–2018, at the expense of casual wage employment,<sup>12</sup> which is irregular and does not follow a continuous working cycle.

While women's employment in the informal sector is only slightly higher than men's in India, women were significantly more likely than men to be employed as informal workers in the formal sector.<sup>13 14</sup>

## Effectsofcoronavirus-19(COVID-19)

During economic downturns, informal employment may act as a buffer for people who have lost their jobs in the formal sector, although an increase in the informal labour supply may also decrease wages and trigger additional lay-offs within informal employment.<sup>15</sup> Recent ILO estimates suggest that workers in informal employment have been affected to a greater degree during COVID-19 than during past crises.<sup>16</sup> Limited opportunities for teleworkable jobs in developing regions, coupled with lack of employment benefits in informal employment, have created new challenges for women and men working in informal jobs.

According to the ILO baseline employment estimates for 2020, prior to the onset of COVID-19, while young women aged 15–24 years made up less than 39% of global youth employment, they accounted for more than their overall share in three out of the four subsectors hardest hit by the pandemic, namely: accommodation and food services (51%); real estate; business and administrative activities (44%); and wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (42%). Almost three quarters of young persons employed in these three hardest-hit subsectors were informally employed.<sup>17</sup>

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex:** provides information on the proportion of employed persons who, in their main jobs, informally hold either: (a) paid employment jobs not covered by social security systems or without entitlement to employment benefits such as annual or sick leave, severance pay or advance notice of dismissal; or (b) self-employment jobs in informal sector enterprises operated by them or by a related person living in the same household.

### Coverage

Women and men aged 15 and above in informal employment.

### Availability

Global and regional estimates for 2016 are derived from the International Labour Organization (ILO) microdata repository for 119 countries, representing more than 90% of the world's employed women and men aged 15 and above.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the Global SDG Indicators Database<sup>19</sup> has the latest available data disaggregated by sex for the period 2015–2019 for 47 United Nations Member States and territories.

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## Footnotes

1. International Labour Organization (ILO), Rules of the game: An introduction to the standards-related work of the International Labour Organization, Geneva, 2019.
2. These global results were mainly influenced by the results from China, where the gender gap in the share of informal employment in total employment was minus five percentage points.
3. Namely: agriculture, industry, and the services sectors.
4. Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), Social Protection for Informal Workers (last accessed on 25 August 2020).
5. UNDESA, Statistical Division, Global SDG Indicators Database (last accessed on 25 August 2020).
6. ILO, Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture, third edition, Geneva, 2018.
7. More than 48 hours per week.
8. Part time employment is defined as employment constituting less than 35 hours per week.
9. ILO, Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture, third edition, Geneva, 2018.
10. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, Global SDG Indicators Database, ILO harmonized estimates. (last accessed on 12 August 2020.)
11. Ibid.
12. International Labour Organization (ILO), Informal Employment Trends in the Indian Economy: Persistent informality, but growing positive development, Working Paper No. 254, Geneva, 2019.
13. ILO, Informal Economy in South Asia, Geneva, 2020 (last accessed on 17 August 2020).
14. Figures for India's informal employment in 2010 and in 2018 originate from two different sources, the National Sample Survey (2010) and the Labour Force Survey (2018). ([back to text](#))
15. Jütting, J. and De Laiglesia, J., Is Informal Normal ?: Towards More and Better Jobs in Developing Countries, Development Centre Studies, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Publishing, Paris, 2009.
16. International Labour Organization (ILO), ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work, fifth edition, Geneva, 2020.
17. ILO, ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work, fourth edition, Geneva, 2020.
18. See also International Labour Organization (ILO), Key Indicators of the Labour Market, ninth edition, Geneva, 2016.
19. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, Global SDG Indicators Database.

## Women and men in part-time employment



## Key points

- In 2019, women were more likely than men to work in part-time employment in 95% of countries with available data, with the highest proportions of women working part-time recorded in Liberia (94%), the Netherlands (75%) and Rwanda (62%).
- The largest gender gaps in part-time employment were recorded in the Netherlands (36 percentage points), Pakistan (33 percentage points) and Austria (32 percentage points).
- As of 2019, overall, part-time employment was more common in developed regions than in developing ones, and particularly for women in Western Europe (57%), Australia and New Zealand (56%) and Northern Europe (46%).
- Among the 20 countries with available data since 1995, all of which are located in developed regions, trends for part-time employment have been mixed both for employed women and men.
- Young women and men aged 15–24 were twice as likely than adult women and men to indicate that they would like to work more hours. In Northern Africa, the rate of women's time-related underemployment stood at 26%, compared with 14% for men.

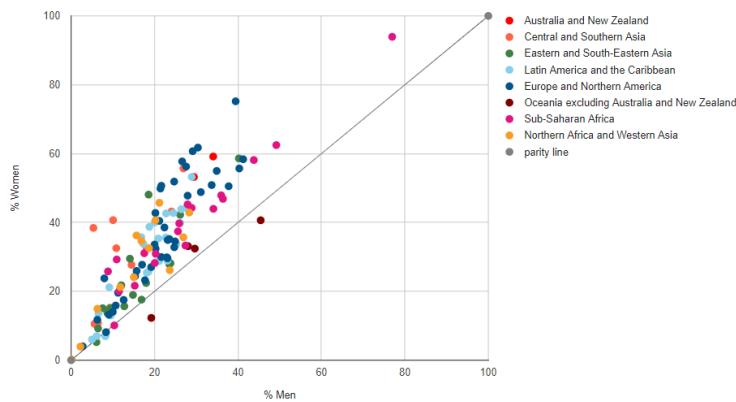
Part-time employment may offer an effective way to balance time spent on paid work, household responsibilities and childrearing, and being able to work for fewer hours is also seen as a means to increase employment levels, particularly among women.<sup>1</sup> In addition, part-time work facilitates the gradual entry into, participation in and exit from the labor market.<sup>2</sup>

Part-time employment comes at a cost for workers, however, as they oftentimes face difficult working conditions, including lower hourly wages and little job security, and receive less training and promotion opportunities than their full-time counterparts. They are also at a higher risk of falling into poverty and are less likely to have access to social protections, including [unemployment benefits](#).<sup>3</sup> In developed countries, some forms of part-time work are defined as non-standard work, with employment conditions similar to those described under [informal employment](#).<sup>4</sup> The proportion of part-time employment in informal wage employment was almost twice as high among women than among men, resulting in their greater exposure to the compounded vulnerabilities of part-time and informal employment.

Globally, as of 2019, women are much more likely to be engaged in part-time employment

Among the 127 countries with latest available data for 2015–2019, the highest proportions of women working part-time were recorded in Liberia (94%), the Netherlands (75%) and Rwanda (62%). Part-time employment was common among men in Liberia (77%), Rwanda (49%) and Tuvalu (45%). There was a higher proportion of women than men working part-time in 121 countries (95%), with the largest gender gaps reported in the Netherlands (36 percentage points), Pakistan (33 percentage points) and Austria (32 percentage points) (see figure I).

**Figure I:** Proportion of employed persons in part-time employment by sex and region: 2015-2019 (latest available) (Percentage)



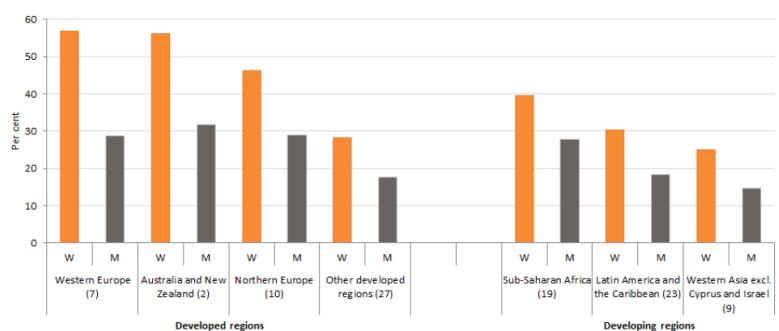
**Source:** International Labour Organization (ILO), Department of Statistics (ILOSTAT), ILO microdata repository (last accessed on 18 August 2020) (<https://ilo.stat.iло.org/data>).

**Note:** Data points represent country values and are colour-coded according to each country's respective regional grouping under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators framework (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/regional-groups/>).

## Part-time employment is more prevalent in developed regions

As of 2019, in all regions with available data, part-time employment was more prevalent among women than among men, with prevalence rates for women almost double those of men. Part-time employment was more common in developed regions than in developing ones, particularly for women in Western Europe (57%), Australia and New Zealand (56%) and Northern Europe (46%). Sub-Saharan Africa also recorded high proportions of women (39%) and men (28%) in part-time employment (see figure II). Among countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, where the proportion of women in part-time employment was prevalent, at 30%. Argentina had the highest proportion (53%) and also the largest gender gap (24 percentage points).

**Figure II:** Proportion of employed persons in part-time employment, by region and sex: 2019 (Percentage)



**Source:** Calculated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, using data retrieved from the ILO microdata repository (last accessed on 18 August 2020) (<https://ilo.stat.iло.org/data>).

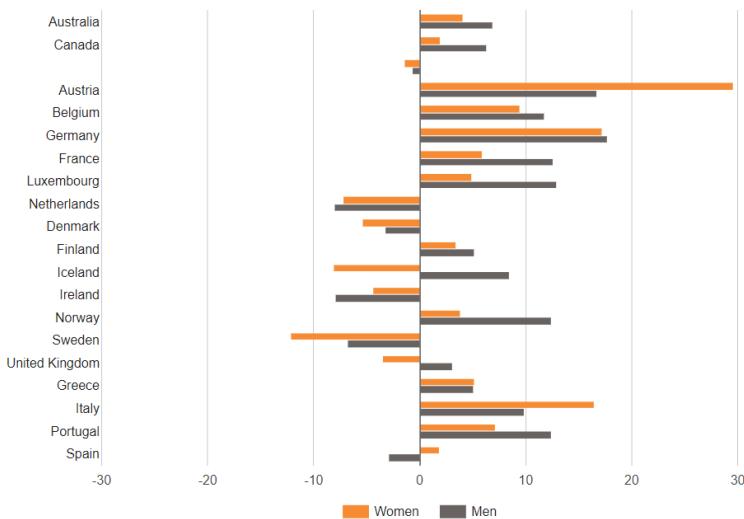
**Note:** Unweighted averages: data for the highlighted regions represent at least 50% of the regional population. The numbers in brackets indicate the number of countries with latest available data for the period 2015-2019. Data for other regions are not shown due to limited data availability. Other developed regions include countries in Northern America, Eastern Europe and Southern Europe, as well as Cyprus, Israel and Japan.

## Part-time employment shows a mixed picture since 1995

Among the 20 countries with available data since 1995, all of which are located in developed regions, trends for part-time

employment have been mixed both for employed women and men. In the majority of those countries, there has been an increase in the proportion of part-time employment in women's and men's total employment, notably by 30 percentage points for women in Austria and by 18 percentage points for men in Germany (see figure III). In general, the incidence of part-time work among employed women has decreased in Northern Europe, the Netherlands and the United States of America. As a point of reference, the proportion of part-time employment in women's total employment was 82% in the Netherlands in 1995.

**Figure III:** Percentage point change in the proportion of employed persons in part-time employment by sex: 1995–2019 (latest available)



**Source:** International Labour Organization (ILO), Department of Statistics (ILOSTAT), 2020 (data last accessed on 18 August 2020) (<https://ilo.org/ilostat/>).

## Time-related underemployment is higher among young women and men

Part-time employment is not necessarily a choice, and a significant number of people in part-time employment would prefer to work full-time. This is measured by the time-related underemployment rate,<sup>5</sup> which in 2019 was slightly higher at the global level among women (11%) than among men (10%). Young women and men aged 15–24 were twice as likely to want to work more hours (20%). In Northern Africa, where women's unemployment rate was the highest among all regions, women's time-related underemployment rate stood at 26%, compared with 14% for men.<sup>6</sup>

## Featured country: Switzerland

Similar to other countries in Western Europe, part-time employment is common for women in Switzerland, and further analysis into couple households with or without children reveals differences in employment between female and male partners working full-time and/or part-time.

## COVID-19

Prior to the onset of COVID-19, labour underutilization, in particular the combined rates of unemployment and time-related underemployment, was much higher, at 20%, among young women and young men than among adult women (9%) and adult men (8%), leaving youth more vulnerable to the shocks of the pandemic.<sup>7</sup>

## About the data

### Definition

- **Proportion of employed women and men working part-time:** This indicator provides information on the proportion of employed women and men whose working hours are fewer than those of comparable full-time workers. While the definition between part-time and full-time employment is decided by individual countries, for purposes of international comparability, throughout this narrative part-time employment refers to work involving less than 35 working hours per week.

### Coverage

Employed women and men.

### Availability

Data is presented for 127 United Nations Member States and territories with the latest available sex-disaggregated data for the period 2015–2019 and by regional groupings under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators framework.<sup>8</sup>

### Limitations

Countries have different definitions for full-time and part-time work, which may result in difficulties for purposes of international comparability. These definitions may use different age limits (lower and upper age limits and/or no upper age limit) or varying cut-offs based on the number of hours worked per week.<sup>9</sup>

## Footnotes

1. Hakim, C., Key Issues in Women's Work: Female Diversity and the Polarization of Women's Employment, second edition, Contemporary Issues in Public Policy, The Glass House Press, London, 2004; Thévenon, O., "Drivers of Labour Force Participation in the OECD", Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Social Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 145, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2013.
2. ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market 2015, chapter 6 (Part-time workers), Geneva, 2016.
3. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Employment Outlook 2010: Moving Beyond the Jobs Crisis, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2010.
4. Vanek, J. and others, Statistics on the Informal Economy: Definitions, Regional Estimates & Challenges, Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) Working Paper (Statistics) No. 2, April 2014.
5. Three criteria are used to define time-related underemployment: the term refers to employed persons who, in a short reference period, (a) wanted to work additional hours, (b) worked less than a certain hourly threshold set at the national level and (c) in a subsequent reference period, were available to work additional hours.
6. ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates (last accessed on 18 August 2020).
7. Source: International Labour Organization (ILO), ILO Monitor: Covid-19 and the world of work, fourth edition, May 2020 (last accessed on 18 August 2020).
8. Regional groupings under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators framework.
9. International Labour Organization (ILO), Key Indicators of the Labour Market, ninth edition, Geneva, 2016.

## Switzerland: employment models in couple households



## Key points

- In Switzerland, employment is unequally divided between women and men in couple households with children; it is rare that both parents work part-time or both full-time.<sup>1</sup> Most commonly, fathers are employed full-time and mothers are employed part-time. In the next most frequent situation, fathers work full time and mothers are economically inactive.
- In 2019, the highest proportion of couples in which both parents work part-time (10.5%) was recorded in couple households with youngest children under age 4. As children grow older, there is a decline in the number of households with mothers who are economically inactive.
- The proportion of couple households with youngest children between ages 4–12 in which both parents work full-time increased from 8.9% in 2010 to 12.4% in 2019.
- In 2019, the proportion of couples in which men are economically inactive or employed part-time and women are employed full-time (6%) was observed in couple households without children.
- In couple households with youngest children aged 0–3, the highest proportion of couples with both parents working full-time (19.6%) was recorded (cumulatively) between 2015–2017 in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, partly due to the more widespread availability of childcare facilities.

## Background

An equal share of paid and unpaid work between women and men contributes to gender equality. In the Sustainable Development Goal 5, target 5.4, of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development promotes "shared responsibility within the household and the family". The indicator on employment models in couple households contributes to the monitoring of SDG indicator 5.4.1 (proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location).

Balancing work and family life is challenging in all countries in the world. In Switzerland, it is increasingly rare that a single salary is sufficient to meet the financial needs of the household, and consequently both parents often need to work to support the family. Furthermore, many women have higher educational qualifications and do not want to abandon their careers. Work-life balance is therefore a very important issue for both women and men.

The fact that women, and mothers in particular, are increasingly engaged in paid employment should not obscure the fact that most work **part-time** and that some are in employment with a low work-time percentage (under 50%) when they have children in the home. In a majority of cases, men, particularly fathers, work full-time, and thus the burden of balancing work and family is usually borne by mothers.

Part-time work offers an effective way to balance time spent on household responsibilities and childrearing,<sup>2</sup> and it should be an equal opportunity for both women and men. While part-time work is also seen a way to increase employment levels, particularly among women, a part-time job, in particular a job with a work-time percentage of less than 50%, may entail precarious working conditions, insufficient social security coverage (for example, a lack of a pension fund) and fewer opportunities for further education and training and career advancement.

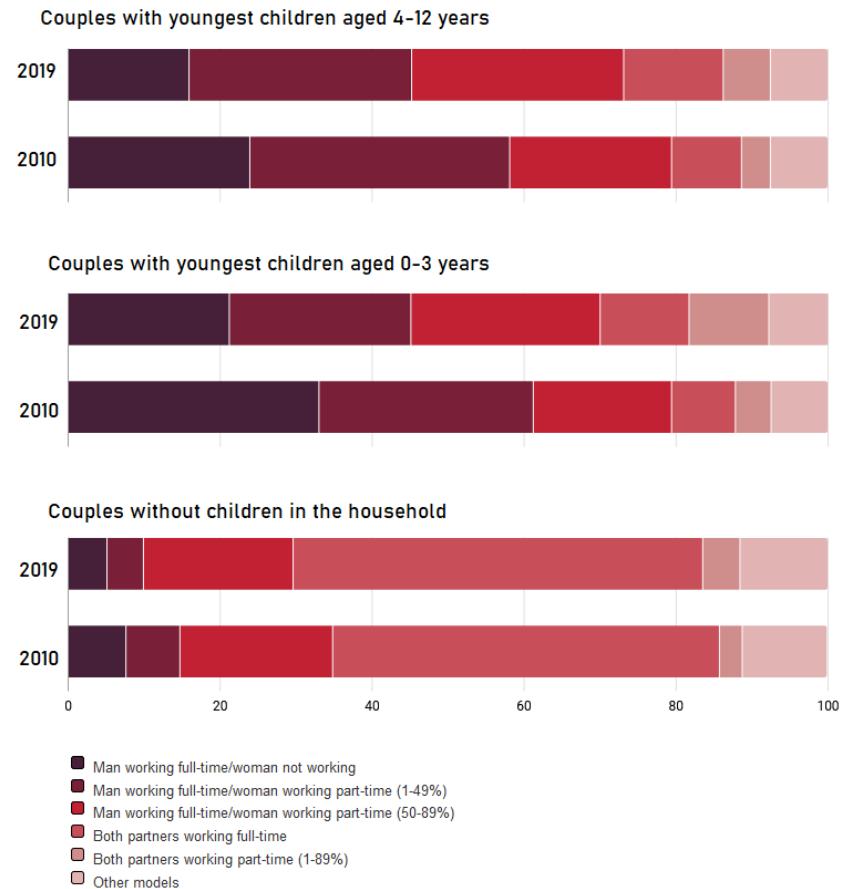
In Switzerland, women living in couple households bear greater responsibility for the domestic and family

workload, and this inequality extends also into the work arena, particularly for women with children. It is often the case that women reduce their working hours or give up their jobs, either temporarily or completely, when they have children. Most frequently, fathers are employed full-time and mothers part-time; to a lesser extent, fathers work in full-time employment and mothers are economically inactive.

As children grow older, a decline is seen in the number of households with mothers who are economically inactive and there is an observable increase in the number of households with mothers with a higher work-time percentage, that is, working part-time at 50% to 89% or working full-time. The proportion of couple households in which both partners work part-time is most common in families where the youngest child is under age 4 (10.5% of couple households). In a small share of couple households (3.5%), the man does not work or works part-time (at 1% to 89%) and the woman works full-time. This is more common when there are no children in the household (6%).

Although the share of fathers working part-time has increased slightly over the past 10 years, the proportion of couple households with youngest children aged 4–12 in which both partners work part-time is low (3.8 % in 2010, and 6.2% in 2019). Over the same time period, households with both parents working full-time increased from 9.2% to 13.1% (see figure I).

**Figure I:** Employment models in couple households by sex and age of children: 2010 and 2019 (Percentage)



**Source:** Government of Switzerland, Federal Statistical Office, Swiss Labour Force Survey, 2019 (correspondence with the Swiss Federal Statistical Office on 4 August 2020) (<https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/work-income/surveys/slfs.html>).

**Note:** Couple households with both partners aged 25-54: full-time employment refers to work-time percentages of 90% to 100%.

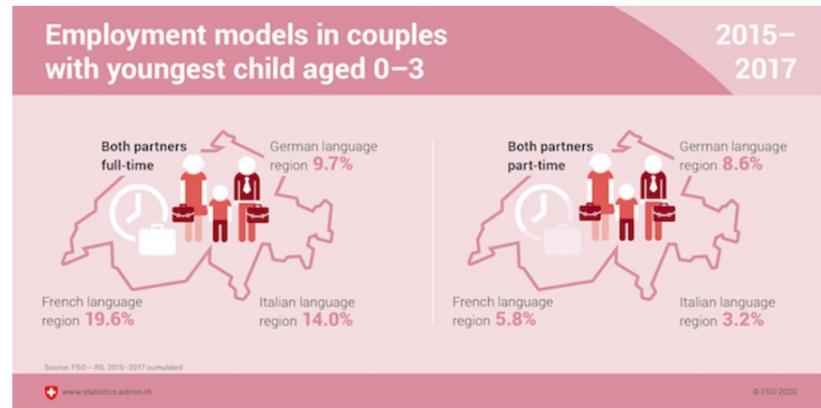
In cumulated data collected over three consecutive years for the annual structural survey, regional differences in the employment patterns of couple households with children are evident. The proportion of households with both parents working part-time is more common in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, and the proportion of households with both parents working full-time is more common in the French-speaking part of the country.

Taking only households with youngest children aged 0–3 into account, meaning that the youngest child is not of school age, regional differences remain. The highest proportion of households with couples working full time is in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, where, in one fifth (19.6%) of households with youngest children aged 0–3, both partners are employed full-time (see figure II). This is possible because of the greater availability of childcare facilities in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. In the German-speaking part of Switzerland, both parents are engaged in full-time work in only 9.7% of households with children ages 0–3.

In Switzerland, working parents often seek assistance from grandparents and neighbours, and use the services

provided by institutional childcare centres and out-of-school facilities to ease the burden on the household and to provide them with ways to achieve a better sharing of paid and unpaid work, as well as a better work-life balance. Childcare services in Switzerland are not always affordable, available in sufficient numbers or compatible with parents' work schedules.

**Figure II:** Employment models in couples with youngest children aged 0-3 by region: 2015-2017 (Percentage)



**Source:** Government of Switzerland, Federal Statistical Office, 2015–2017 cumulated (correspondence with the Swiss Federal Statistical Office on 4 August 2020) ([https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/search.html?dyn\\_search=Employment&dyn\\_tab=0&dyn\\_orderby=relevance](https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/search.html?dyn_search=Employment&dyn_tab=0&dyn_orderby=relevance)).

**Note:** Part-time employment refers to work-time percentages 1% to 89%, and full-time employment refers to work-time percentages 90% to 100%. The results are based on three consecutive annual structural surveys.

## Sources

- Government of Switzerland, Federal Statistical Office, "On the way to gender equality - Current situation and developments", 2019
- Government of Switzerland, Federal Statistical Office, "Employment models in couple households"
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Population and Gender Database, work-life balance, "Couples with both partners aged 25–49 by working pattern and age of youngest child"

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Employment models in couple households:** Measure (a) the participation in the labour market and (b) the work-time percentage of both women and men in the household.

### Coverage

Women and men aged 25–54 in couple households at the national and regional level.

### Availability

Data on employment models have been provided by the Federal Statistical Office of the Government of Switzerland.<sup>3</sup>

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## Footnotes

1. Full-time employment refers to work-time percentages of 90% to 100%.
2. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, *The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics*, chap. 4, New York, 2015.
3. Government of Switzerland, Federal Statistical Office.

## Japan: households with dual incomes and presence of women in non-regular employment

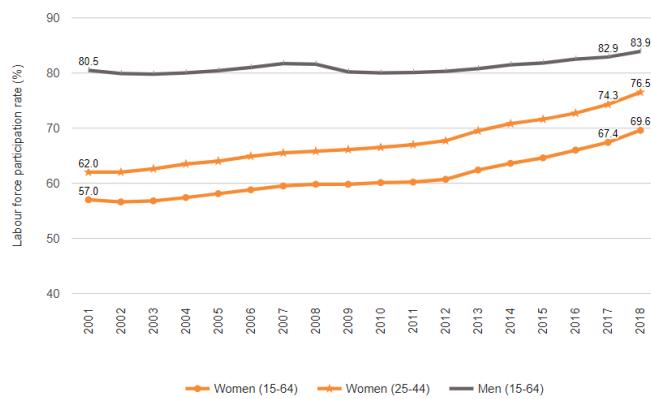


## Key points

- Labour force participation rates in Japan have increased since 2001, particularly among women aged 15–64 (70%) and 25–44 years (76%) as of 2018.
- During the period 1980–2018, the share of dual-income households doubled, while the share households with working men and economically inactive women declined by almost half.
- 55.3% of women in dual-income households work as non-regular employees; they constitute 68.1% of total non-regular employees as of 2019.
- Large gender gaps are observed in the responses of women and men aged 34–54 among their reasons for choosing non-regular work, including "working at a convenient time", "supplementing family income" and "handling housework, childcare and nursing care work."
- Although non-regular employment facilitates flexible working arrangements, it is one of the main factors contributing to the gender pay gap in Japan.

In 2015, the Government of Japan passed the "Act on the Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement in the Workplace"<sup>1</sup> to promote women's participation in the labour force. Data for 2018 show a significant increase in the female **labour force participation rate** since 2001, which reached almost 70% among all working-age women (ages 15–64) and 76% among prime-age working women (25–44) and resulted in a gender gap in participation of 14 and 8 percentage points, respectively. These data represent an improvement from 2001, when the gender gap for the two age groups was 23 and 18 percentage points, respectively (see figure I).

**Figure I:** Labour force participation rate by sex and age group: 2001-2018 (Percentage)



**Source:** <sup>1</sup>Government of Japan, Cabinet Office of Japan, Gender Equality Bureau, White paper on gender equality 2019, and Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Basic Tabulation of the Labour Force Survey, Tokyo, 2019 (correspondence with the Office of Director-General for Policy Planning on Statistical Standards, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, on 1 October 2020) ([http://www.gender.go.jp/english\\_contents/index.htm](http://www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/index.htm)).

The growth in the number of dual-income households since 1980 is evidence of progress in increasing women's participation in the labour force. Over this time period, the number of dual-income households doubled in size while the number of households with working men and economically inactive women fell at the same ratio (see figure II).

**Figure II:** Number of dual-income households and households with working men and economically inactive women: 1980-2018

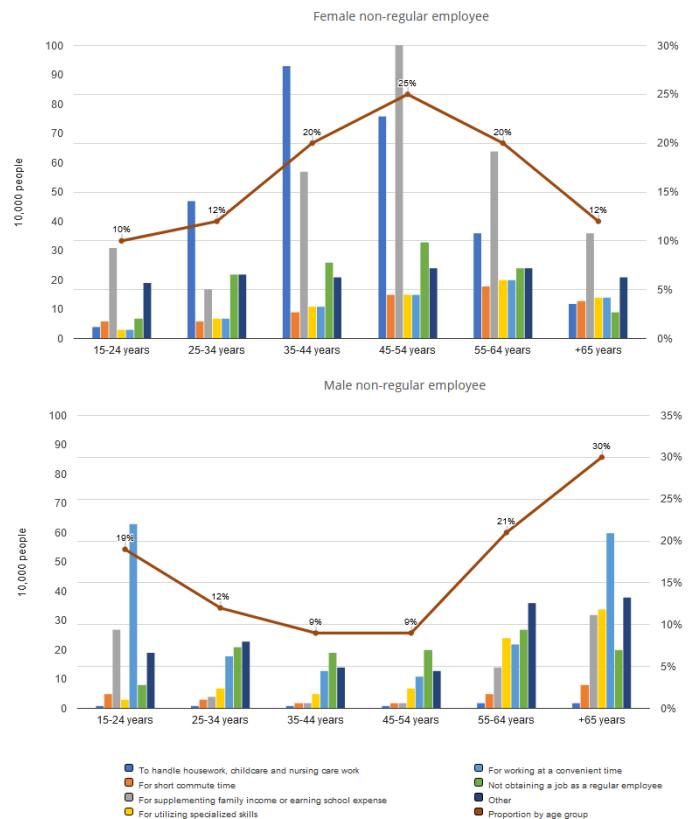


Sources: Government of Japan, Cabinet Office of Japan, Women and Men in Japan 2020, Tokyo, 2020 ([http://www.gender.go.jp/english\\_contents/pr\\_act/pub/pamphlet/women-and-men20/index.html](http://www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/pr_act/pub/pamphlet/women-and-men20/index.html)): data sourced from a specialized survey of the Labour Force Survey and calculated by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

Note: Households consisting of working men and economically inactive women refer to the households in which men are employed in a non-agriculture and forestry sector and women are not employed. Dual-income households refer to the households in which both women and men are employees in the non-agriculture and forestry sectors. Actual numbers in brackets for 2010 and 2011 are nation-wide results, excluding Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima Prefectures.

Statistics also indicate, however, that 55.3% of women in dual-income households work as non-regular employees.<sup>2</sup> As of 2019, 68.1% of the total number of non-regular employees were women.<sup>3</sup> While the proportion of female regular employees is increasing, it remains at around 44%. In addition, the non-regular employment rate demonstrates opposing trends by sex and age. While the proportion of male non-regular employees reaches the highest point among ages 65 and older (30%), female non-regular employees are generally younger, with the peak observed among those aged 45–54 (25%). Gender gaps are also recorded under "reasons for taking a non-regular employment" (see figure III). The majority of female employees aged 35–54 gave reasons including: "for working at a convenient time", "to supplement family income" and "to handle housework, childcare and nursing care work", with significant gender gaps among the reasons given by women and men in the same age group (see figure III).

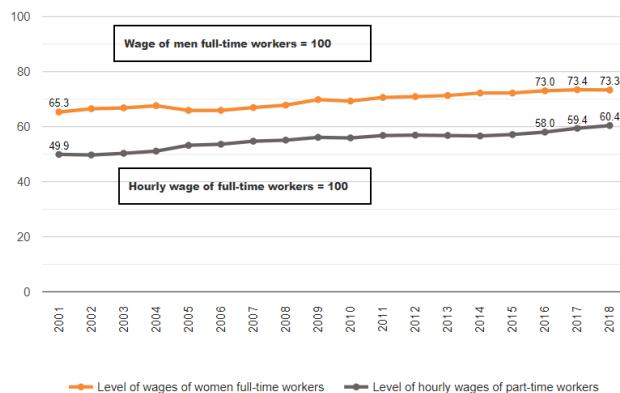
**Figure III:** Number and percentage of non-regular employees and reasons for taking non-regular employment, by sex and age group: 2019



Sources: Government of Japan, Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey (detailed tabulation) (correspondence with the Office of Director-General for Policy Planning on Statistical Standards, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications on 1 October 2020) (<https://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/roudou/errata.htm>).

While non-regular employment allows women to adopt a flexible working style, it is also one of the main factors contributing to the **gender pay gap** (see figure IV). Policies are being implemented to achieve gender equality in the workplace, including the adoption of a plan to promote the transition of working from non-regular to regular employment, the facilitation of **maternity and care leave** and the prevention of sexual harassment in the work place.

**Figure IV:** Gender pay gap and pay gap between full-time and part-time workers: 2001-2018  
(Percentage)



Sources: Government of Japan, Cabinet Office of Japan, Women and Men in Japan 2020, Tokyo, 2020 (correspondence with the Office of Director-General for Policy Planning on Statistical Standards, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, on 1 October 2020) ([http://www.gender.go.jp/english\\_contents/pr\\_act/pub/pamphlet/women-and-men20/index.html](http://www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/pr_act/pub/pamphlet/women-and-men20/index.html)); data sourced from the Basic Survey on Wage Structure and calculated by Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

## Sources

- Government of Japan, Gender Equality Bureau, Women and Men in Japan 2020, Tokyo, 2020
- Government of Japan, Gender Equality Bureau, White paper on gender equality 2019, Tokyo, June 2019
- Government of Japan, Statistics Bureau of Japan, Labour Force Survey, Tokyo, 2018

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Proportion of households with dual income:** Share of households in which both women and men work for pay or profit.
- **Proportion of non-regular employees:** Share of workers who are not classified as regular employees in the Japanese Labour Force Survey, and include, inter alia, part-time workers, Arubaito workers<sup>4</sup> and dispatch workers.

### Coverage

Women and men aged 15 and older who live in Japan, with certain exceptions (for example, residents who serve in foreign diplomatic missions).

### Availability

Data is derived from the Labour Force Survey, which is conducted monthly.

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Footnotes

1. [Act on the Promotion of the Female Participation and Career Advancement in the Workplace, Act No. 64, 4 September 2015.](#)
2. [Government of Japan, Portal of Official Statistics of Japan, Employment Status Survey 2017.](#)
3. [Government of Japan, Statistics Bureau of Japan, Labour Force Survey 2019.](#)
4. [Arubaito, refers to side-workers as a form of employment, Statistics Bureau of Japan, 1997, Employment Structure Survey: explanation of terms \(last accessed on 17 September 2020\).](#)

Economic empowerment

## Gender pay gap



## Key points

- A gender pay gap by five percentage points or higher was observed in 49 out of 58 (84%) countries with available data for the period 2014–2018. In most countries, women earn less than men, and the median gender pay gap for the 58 countries with available data was 12% in favour of men.
- Among 27 countries of the European Union with comparable trend data on the gender pay gap, a slight downward trend was observed overall during the period 2014–2018, with the average pay gap in the 27 reporting countries of the European Union decreasing from 15.7% in 2014 to 14.8% in 2018.
- A gap in earnings between women and men persists across all economic sectors. The median gender pay gap in the European Union was larger than 10% in 15 out of 17 economic sectors, most notably in the financial and insurance activities subsector.
- Even when a large number of explained factors are taken into consideration, pay differentials between women and men can be explained only to a certain degree. Gender pay gaps that cannot be explained may be caused by omitted variables and other factors not covered by available data, including discrimination.

## Background

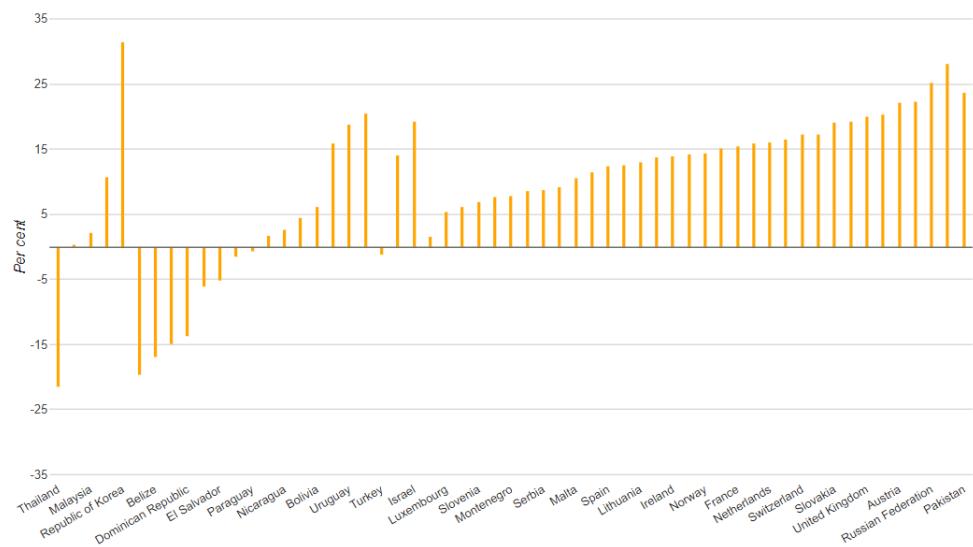
Gender pay gap is a global measure to assess progress in reducing the differences in average earnings of women and men, and it may result from a multitude of explained and unexplained factors. The explained factors combine: (a) the individual characteristics of women and men in the labour market; (b) the types of jobs they perform; and (c) the types of establishments or companies in which they work, and includes age, level and field of education, work experience, occupation, economic sector, type of contract and working time of employed women and men, as well as the age, size, legal status and private/foreign/state ownership of the establishments in which they work. Gender inequalities in most of these areas are associated with traditions and stereotypes (influencing the choice of education, professions and career paths of women and men) as well as difficulties in balancing work and family life, which often lead to part-time work and career breaks, mainly among women.<sup>1</sup>

## A notable gender pay gap is found in most countries with available data

A gender pay gap by five percentage points or higher was observed in 49 out of 58 (84%) countries with available data for the period 2014–2018. In most countries, women earned less than men, and the median gender pay gap for these 58 countries was 12% in favour of men. However, a gender pay gap in favour of women was found in Latin America and the Caribbean, where statistics on earnings were produced from a variety of data sources with discrepancies in coverage, scope and characteristics. In that region, in more than half the countries with available data for the period 2014–2018, men earned less than women. Among 33 countries in Europe with more comparable data on the gender pay gap during the same time period, women were generally paid less than men, with a gender pay gap in the region ranging between 2% and 28%. Six countries, namely, Austria, Estonia, Germany, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, had the

largest gender pay gaps in the region, amounting to more than 20%. Average hourly earnings of employed women and men differed the most in countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, although data were available for only five countries: the gender pay gap was calculated as 22% in favour of women in Thailand (with women earning more) and 31% in favour of men in the Republic of Korea (with men earning more) (see figure I).

**Figure I:** Gender pay gap by region: 2014—2018 (latest available) (Percentage)



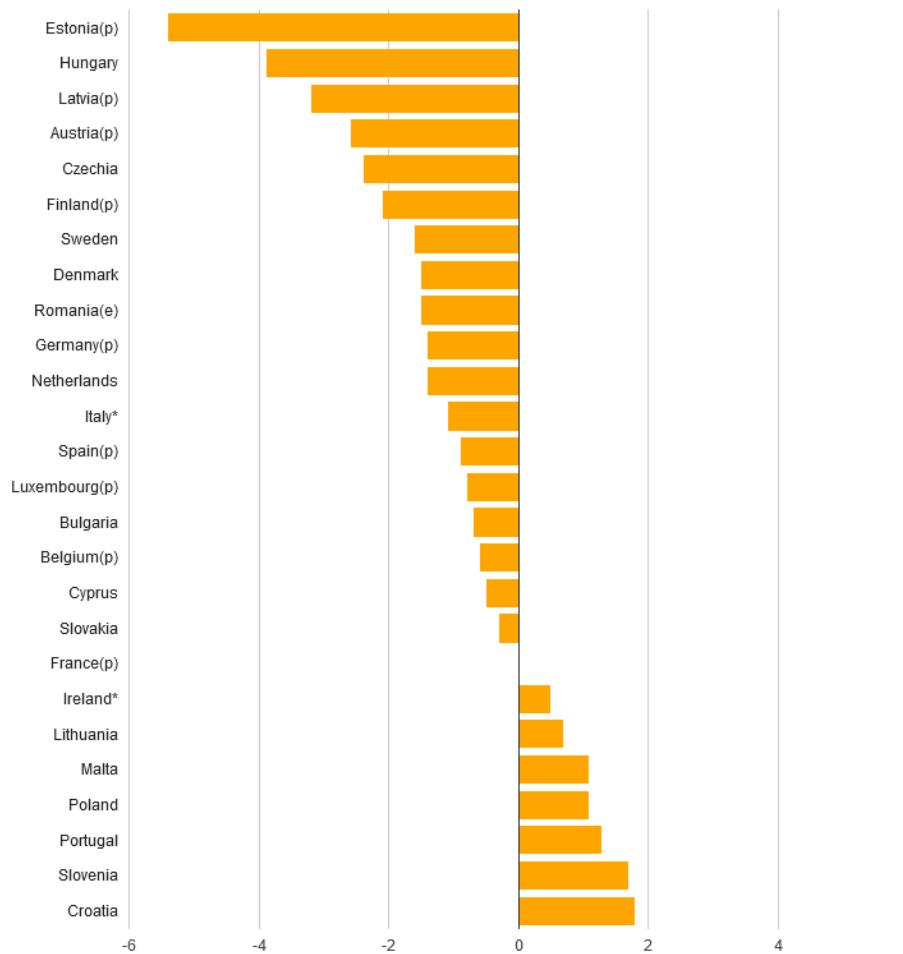
**Source:** Compiled by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, based on data accessed from the Global SDG Indicators Database (last accessed on 7 May 2020) (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>).

**Note:** Limited international comparability due to heterogeneity of data sources.

Countries in developed regions show a slight decline in gender pay gap

Among 27 member States of the European Union with comparable data on the gender pay gap, a slight downward trend was observed overall during the period 2014–2018, with the average pay gap in the 27 reporting member States decreasing from 15.7% in 2014 to 14.8%<sup>2</sup> in 2018. During the same period, 18 out of the 27 (67%) countries showed a decrease in the pay gap, with the largest decline in pay differences in Europe between women and men provisionally recorded in Estonia, where women were paid 28.2% less than men in 2014 and 22.7% less in 2018<sup>3</sup> (see figure II).

**Figure II:** Percentage point change in the gender pay gap in 27 member States of the European Union: 2014—2018



**Source:** Calculated by UNDESA Statistics Division, based on data retrieved from Eurostat on the gender pay gap in unadjusted form (last accessed on 31 August 2020) ([https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-datasets/-/SDG\\_05\\_20](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-datasets/-/SDG_05_20)).

**Note:** Reference year for data for Italy and Ireland is 2017. Greece does not have additional comparable data since 2014 and is excluded from the figure. Data for Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia, Luxembourg and Spain in 2018 are provisional. Data for Romania in 2018 is estimated.

## The gender gap persists across all economic sectors

A gap in earnings between women and men persists across all economic sectors, although significant variations are found from one industry to another. Based on 2014 data for 27 member States of the European Union, the median gender pay gap in the European Union was greater than 10% in 15 out of 17 economic sectors, most notably in the financial and insurance activities subsector.

As called for by the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted in 1995, women and men have the right to equal pay for

equal work or work of equal value. However, even when a large number of explained factors are taken into consideration, pay differentials between women and men can be explained only to a certain extent. Those that cannot be explained may be attributed to omitted variables and other factors not covered by available data, including gender discrimination.<sup>4</sup>

## The legal framework

Globally<sup>5</sup> as of 2020, 173 United Nations Member States and territories have ratified ILO Convention No. 100 (Equal Remuneration Convention), on equal remuneration for women and men workers.

With the aim of promoting equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, several countries in developed regions, including Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, have introduced legal or regulatory obligations for enterprises of varying sizes to publish sex-disaggregated data on wages.<sup>6</sup>

## Country in focus: Canada

In 2018, the gender wage gap stood at 13.3% in Canada, a decrease of 5.5 percentage points over 1998. Further analysis at the country level reveals that 39.7% of the gender wage gap in 2018 could be explained by women's and men's employment in different economic sectors.

## Country in focus: Switzerland

In 2017, the difference between the average gross hourly earnings of employed women and men stood at 17% of men's gross earnings in Switzerland.<sup>7</sup>

Following the enforcement of the revised Gender Equality Act in 2020, companies in Switzerland with 100 or more employees are required to conduct an equal pay analysis by 2021. A free-of-charge web application standard analysis tool named Logib has been developed to enable companies with 50 or more employees to carry out standardized and reliable pay equality analysis with a minimal administrative burden. It is estimated that Logib will be used by thousands of companies both in Switzerland and abroad.<sup>8</sup> Once anonymous data on employees' individual characteristics, workplace characteristics, working hours and payments are fed into the application, information on average payments to women and to men, as well as on the number of women in different wage quartiles, are produced in a simple manner, assisting the identification of possible gender pay gaps at the enterprise level.

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Average hourly earnings of employees, by sex, age, occupation and persons with disabilities:**

This indicator provides information on mean hourly earnings from paid employment of employees by sex and occupation. Earnings exclude employers' contributions on behalf of employees to social security and pension schemes and the benefits received by employees under these schemes, as well as severance and termination pay. This indicator is used to calculate the gender pay gap.

- **Gender pay gap:** Difference between the average hourly wages of men and women expressed as a percentage of the average hourly wages of men, as follows:<sup>9</sup>

$$[\text{Average hourly earnings of men} - \text{Average hourly earnings of women}] / [\text{Average hourly earnings of men}]$$

### Coverage

Employed women and men. Differences in coverage in terms of minimum age, working time and economic sectors may be observed across different data sources.

### Availability

58 United Nations Member States and territories (with latest available data for the period 2014–2018). Countries and territories are organized under the regional groupings of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators framework.<sup>10</sup>

### Limitations

Statistics on earnings are obtained from various data sources. Most countries in developing regions rely on labour force surveys or household income and expenditure surveys, while most countries in developed regions rely on establishment surveys. Cross-country comparisons of earnings data from different data sources are affected by type and age of workers covered, as well as by the exclusion of certain economic sectors. International comparability is hampered by differences across countries in the size criterion adopted in surveys or censuses. In addition, the average earnings of particular groups, including women, are affected by the different elements that make

up the groups and their characteristics. Furthermore, earnings reflected in SDG indicator 8.5.1 may omit earnings of part-time workers and/or of domestic workers, depending on the data source. This is particularly relevant given that women are more likely to hold part-time jobs and to work as domestic workers than men and that both part-time and domestic workers generally have lower hourly earnings.

## Footnotes

1. Leythienne, P., and Ronkowski, P., 2018, A decomposition of the unadjusted gender pay gap using Structure of Earnings Survey data, 2018 edition, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2018 .
2. Eurostat, 2020, Gender pay gap in unadjusted form (last accessed on 31 August 2020) .
3. Ibid.
4. Leythienne, P., and Ronkowski,P., 2018, A decomposition of the unadjusted gender pay gap using Structure of Earnings Survey data, 2018 edition, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2018 .
5. Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Sustainable Development Goal 16: Focus on Public Institutions, World Public Sector Report 2019, New York 2019 .
6. International Labour Organization (ILO), Convention No. 100 (Equal Remuneration Convention), 1951.
7. Source: Eurostat, 2020, Gender pay gap in unadjusted form (last accessed on 31 August 2020) .
8. Federal Office for Gender Equality, "Tackling the gender pay gap with digital solutions", webinar held on 19 August 2020..
9. Source: UNSD, 2020. Metadata file for SDG indicator 8.5.1. . Last accessed on 17 09 2020.
10. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, regional groupings under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators framework .

## Income and unpaid work in Latin America: intersection of gender and race inequalities [ECLAC]



## Key points

- In 2017–2018, indigenous women in countries with available data in the Latin America and the Caribbean region earned less than women and men of other ethnicities and racial groups, regardless of their education level. Income levels of men were higher in the region than those of women.
- Indigenous people tend to be part of larger households, with an average of 4.7 people per household, compared with an average of 3.9 for those who are neither indigenous nor Afrodescendents. The presence of children in the household often increases the hours of unpaid work, particularly for women.
- The gender gap in the amount of time spent on unpaid work is the largest among indigenous populations. Indigenous women are overburdened by unpaid work culturally assigned to them: in Ecuador and Mexico, indigenous women may spend up to six additional hours per week on unpaid work than non-indigenous women.

## Background

As stressed in the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, it is crucial to take measures to promote opportunities in the development process for women belonging to ethnic and racial minorities and for indigenous women in order to eradicate dimensions of poverty that affect them.<sup>1</sup>

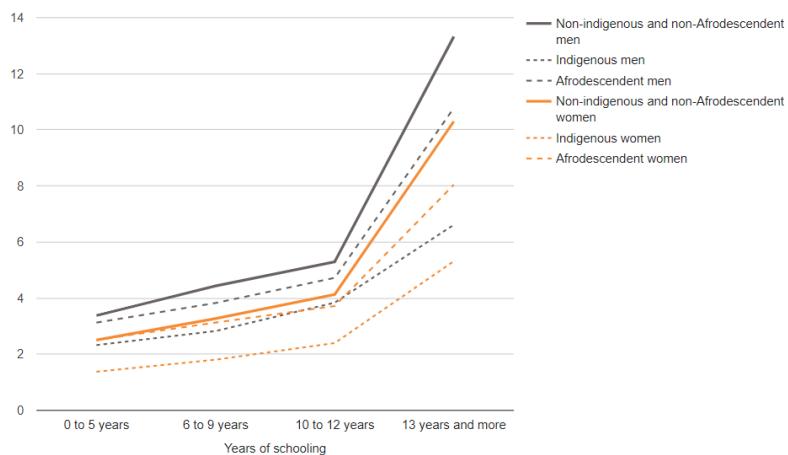
Given that patriarchal cultural patterns and racism are still prevalent in the Latin America and Caribbean region, the intersection of gender, race and indigenous background translates into different levels of income for women and men and people of different races with the same level of education.

## Current situation

### **Gender inequality intersects and is exacerbated by ethnic-racial inequalities<sup>2</sup>**

Data for six countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region for the period 2017–2018 on hourly labour income, disaggregated by sex, ethnicity and race and years of schooling, show that indigenous women have lower income levels, regardless of their education level (see figure I). Although academic achievement is associated with higher income levels,<sup>3</sup> other factors play an influential role, including gender: income levels are statistically higher for men than for women — a manifestation of gender inequality. The difference between the wages earned by the most highly educated women and those of their male counterparts is more pronounced when ethnicity and race are factored in: with 13 years of schooling or more, men who are neither indigenous nor Afrodescendents earn the highest incomes, followed by Afrodescendent men, non-indigenous and non-Afrodescendent women, Afrodescendent women, indigenous men and, lastly, indigenous women, who are the most disadvantaged.

**Figure I:** Hourly income of employed persons in the Latin American and Caribbean region aged 15 or older by sex, years of schooling and ethnicity/race: 2017-2018 (latest available) (International dollars)



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). 2020. Special tabulations of data retrieved from the following household surveys: Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios Contínua (Brazil, 2018), Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares (Colombia, 2018), Encuesta de Empleo, Desempleo y Subempleo (Ecuador, 2017), Encuesta de Mercado Laboral (Panama, 2018), Encuesta Nacional de Hogares - Condiciones de Vida y Pobreza (Peru, 2018), and Encuesta Continua de Hogares (Uruguay, 2018).

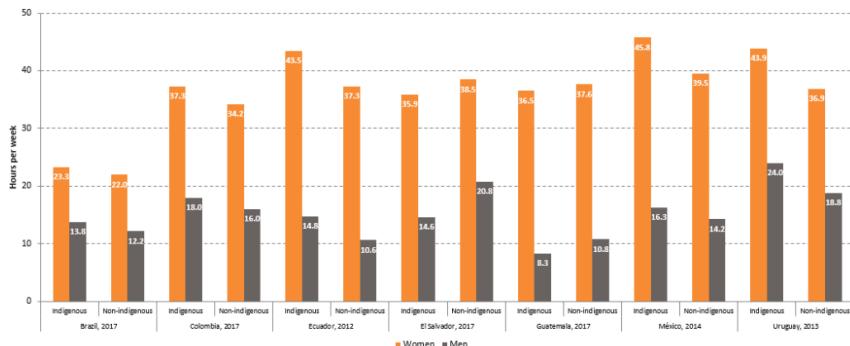
**Note:** In general, the categories could be associated with the educational levels defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The age 0-5 group would correspond to International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) level 1, the age 6-9 group to ISCED level 2, the 10-12 group to ISCED level 3 and the age 13 and older group to ISCED levels 5-8. The data for Brazil, Colombia, Panama, Peru and Uruguay refer to 2018 and the data for Ecuador correspond to 2017. To make monetary amounts from different countries comparable, currency conversions to international dollars have been made based on the purchasing power parities (PPP) (conversion rates between currencies that take into account both exchange rate and price level differences between countries).

In Latin America, the notions of race and ethnicity that are part of the political identity of Afrodescendents and indigenous people have made it possible to create the basis for these populations to self-identify in censuses and surveys, and thus to overcome the statistical invisibility that is another form of discrimination.<sup>4</sup> Data disaggregated by ethnicity and race have shown that average [fertility rates](#) for Afrodescendents and indigenous populations are statistically higher than national averages and that of the rest of the population.<sup>5</sup> Indigenous people tend to be part of larger households, with an average of 4.7 people per household, compared with an average of 3.9 for those who are neither indigenous nor Afrodescendents. The presence of children in the household often increases the hours of unpaid work of women, and also of men, although not by comparable levels.<sup>6</sup>

Traditionally, and from early ages, indigenous women, especially in rural areas, are expected to carry out numerous daily tasks that require a large investment of time, such as caring for members of the family and the community, providing households with basic supplies (fetching water or gathering firewood), caring for animals and collaborating on agricultural work. This burden of [unpaid work](#) limits women's ability to fully [participate in the labour market](#). In addition, as has been well documented, indigenous women, in particular, are overrepresented among the poor and have less access to productive resources and [land ownership](#).<sup>7</sup>

Time-use surveys show that the gender gap in terms of time spent on unpaid work is wider within indigenous populations in all countries in Latin America and the Caribbean with available data (see figure II). Indigenous women may spend up to six hours more per week on unpaid work than non-indigenous women, which is the case in Ecuador and Mexico. This underscores the importance of considering the strict gender division of labour in indigenous households, the need for care policies and basic infrastructure to support indigenous families, particularly those living in rural areas, and the barriers to women's economic autonomy. For further information on the intersection of gender, household type and unpaid work, the report on the [impact of unpaid work on the economy of Mexican households](#) provides in-depth analysis.

**Figure II:** Time spent on unpaid work by persons in the Latin America and the Caribbean region aged 15 and older by sex and ethnicity: 2012-2017 (latest available) (Hours per week)



**Source:** ECLAC, 2020, Special tabulations of data retrieved from the following time-use surveys: Módulo en la Encuesta Nacional de Hogares Continua (Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios Contínua o PNAD-C) (Brazil, 2017); Encuesta Nacional de Uso del Tiempo (Colombia, 2017); Encuesta Específica de Uso del Tiempo (Ecuador, 2012); Encuesta Nacional de Uso del Tiempo (El Salvador, 2017); Módulo en la Encuesta Nacional de Empleo e Ingresos (Guatemala, 2017); Encuesta Nacional sobre Uso del Tiempo (Mexico, 2014) Módulo en la Encuesta Continua de Hogares (Uruguay, 2013).

**Note:** In light of the heterogeneous nature of data sources, comparisons between countries are still not possible. The aim of figure II is to show gender differences within each country. In Brazil, indigenous people identified themselves in the survey in accordance with their colour or race. In Colombia, the population was selected according to the cultures, towns or physical features recognized as indigenous. In Ecuador, the population that self-identified as indigenous according to their culture and customs was selected. In Guatemala, indigenous people identified themselves in the survey. In Mexico, indigenous people identified themselves in the survey in accordance with their culture.

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Hourly income**: Average hourly income of employed persons.
- **Average time spent on unpaid work**: Work done without payment and is measured by quantifying the time a person spends on own-use goods production work, unpaid domestic work, unpaid care of household members and unpaid work for other households or for the community and volunteering.

### Coverage

Women and men aged 15 and older in paid and unpaid work in countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

### Availability

- **Hourly income**: Data analysis of hourly income (latest available), with data disaggregated by ethnicity/race and by years of schooling, from household surveys conducted in six countries: Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Uruguay (2017–2018).
- **Time spent on unpaid work**: Data analysis of time spent on unpaid work (latest available), with data disaggregated by ethnicity, from time-use surveys conducted in seven countries: Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico and Uruguay (2012–2017).

### Limitations

Although time-use surveys in the Latin America and the Caribbean region include questions that allow the self-identification of Afrodescendents, each question poses difficulties for analysis for various reasons, including: sample size (Uruguay); lack of cultural relevance of the questions and activities included in the questionnaires (Colombia and Ecuador); and the lack of measuring care as a component of unpaid domestic work (Brazil). With a view to ensuring that the information obtained describes time-use in Afrodescendent populations, race should be a focus of analysis from the design stage of measurement tools and methodologies.

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## Footnotes

1. Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, para. 58 (q).
2. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Women's autonomy in changing economic scenarios (LC/CRM.14/3), Santiago, 2019 and Social Panorama of Latin America 2016 (LC/PUB.2017/12-P), Santiago, 2017 .
3. ECLAC, Social Panorama of Latin America, 2019 (LC/PUB.2019/22-P/Rev.1), Santiago, 2019 .
4. ECLAC, The social inequality matrix in Latin America (LC/G.2690(MDS.1/2)), Santiago, October 2016 .
5. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Women's autonomy in changing economic scenarios (LC/CRM.14/3), Santiago, 2019; ECLAC, Situación de las personas afrodescendientes en América Latina y desafíos de políticas para la garantía de sus derechos, Santiago, 2017 ; ECLAC, Afrodescendent women in Latin America and the Caribbean: Debts of equality, Santiago, 2019 ; and ECLAC, Mujeres indígenas en América Latina: dinámicas demográficas y sociales en el marco de los derechos humanos, Santiago, 2013
6. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Women's autonomy in changing economic scenarios (LC/CRM.14/3), Santiago, 2019 .
7. ECLAC, Mujeres indígenas en América Latina: dinámicas demográficas y sociales en el marco de los derechos humanos, Santiago, 2013 .

## Canada: gender wage gap



## Key points

- Canada's gender wage gap was 13.3% in 2018, an improvement of 5.5 percentage points from 1998.<sup>1</sup>
- Between 1998 and 2018, 26.3% of the narrowing in the gender gap came from changes in women's and men's occupations.
- In 2018, 39.7% of the gender wage gap was due to the effect of women and men being employed in different industries, with three high-paying, male-dominated sectors driving the gap in wages: construction; manufacturing; and mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction. In addition, a significant portion of the gap (9.2%) was the result of women's higher rate of part-time work, which had lower average wages than full-time work.
- About two-thirds of the gender wage gap was driven by unexplained factors, including work experience, or unobservable factors, for example, gender-related biases.

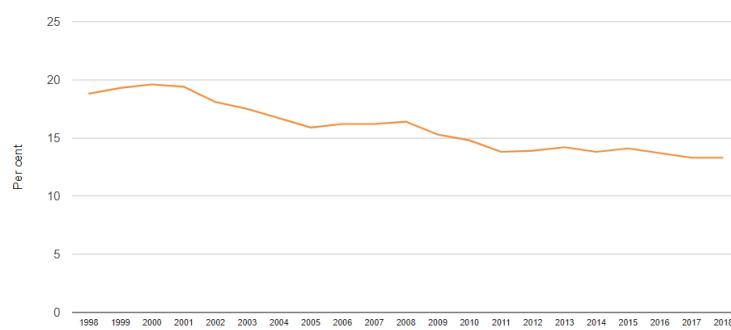
In 2018, women in Canada earned, on average, 87 cents for every dollar earned by men

In Canada, women in the core working ages (ages 25–54) earned an average of \$26.92 per hour in 2018, while their male counterparts earned \$31.05 per hour.<sup>2</sup> In other words, women earned \$4.13 (or 13.3%) less per hour, on average, than men, or \$0.87 for every dollar earned by men. Understanding the impacts of various factors on the gender wage gap, and its change over time, contributes to broader efforts to monitor the gender-based pay disparity in Canada, and could point the way towards relevant policy interventions.

The gender wage gap showed a long-term decline between 1998 and 2018

As of 2018, the gender gap in hourly wages among employees aged 25–54 was 13.3%, down 5.5 percentage points from 1998 (see figure).

**Figure:** Gender wage gap among employees aged 25–54 in Canada: 1998–2018 (Percentage)



**Source:** Pelletier, R., Patterson, M. and Moyser, M., The gender wage gap in Canada: 1998 to 2018, (online publication) October 2019 (<https://www.childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/19/10/gender-wage-gap-canada-1998-2018>).

**Note:** The difference between men's and women's average wages was found to be statistically significant, at a 95% confidence level in all years between 1998 and 2018.

Narrowing of the wage gap has been driven by changes in occupational

## distribution

More than half of the narrowing in the wage gap from 1998 to 2018 was attributable to human capital, job attributes, occupation and industry and demographics.<sup>3</sup> Changes in men's and women's occupations were the largest contributor, explaining 26.3% of the narrowing over the 20 years, as larger shares of women became employed in higher-paying occupations in legal, social, community and government services; education services; and business and finance.

Women's increased educational attainment relative to men's (12.7%), and the decline in the share of men in unionized employment (9.3%), also contributed notably to the narrowing of the wage gap.

Gender differences in industry, in particular the underrepresentation of women in the increasingly highly-paid construction sector, worked against the narrowing trend (8%) in the gender wage gap.

## The 2018 wage gap cannot be fully explained

The referenced study by Statistics Canada found that the largest explanatory factor behind the wage gap in 2018 (explaining 39.7% of the gender wage gap) was the fact that women were underrepresented in three high-paying and male-dominated sectors: construction; manufacturing; and mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction. Differences between the industries in which women and men are employed were also found to have been behind the gap in 1998.

The only other factor explaining the wage gap in 2018 (and in 1998) was women's higher rate of part-time work, which tended to pay less than full-time work. This factor accounted for 9.2% of the gap in 2018.

While the above-noted factors were important, they were partially offset by a variety of other factors. As a result, about two-thirds of the gender wage gap in 2018 was unexplained by human capital, job attributes, occupation and industry and demographics. This could be due to factors that were beyond the scope of the study (for example, work experience) or unobservable factors (including gender-related biases). This points to a continued need for analysis in this area, in order to better understand the gender-based wage disparity.

The Statistics Canada study focused on the overall wage gap between men and women in Canada, and differences may exist within population groups, including indigenous or immigrant populations. Future research on the wage gap for diverse population groups could prove valuable in understanding and addressing the wage gap.

## The legal framework: the Pay Equity Act (2018)

Pay equity, that is, equal pay for work of equal value to the employer, is a fundamental human right that has been protected under section 11 of the Canadian Human Rights Act since 1977. Under this Act, the burden to file complaints with the Canadian Human Rights Commission about gender-based wage inequality rests with employees.

In December 2018, the Canadian federal Government passed the first proactive pay-equity legislation in the country. Although the Pay Equity Act has not yet come into force, it requires that employers in federally-regulated sectors with an average of 10 employees in a given year develop pay equity plans for their workplaces and take action to address systematic disparities in wages.

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Gender wage gap** is the difference between the average hourly wages of men and women, expressed as a percentage of men's average hourly wages. The difference in gross hourly earnings between sociodemographic groups can be a partial indicator of the degree of inequality in the labour market. Average hourly wages may differ between some groups for a variety of reasons, including the level of educational attainment, work experience, industry of employment or occupation.

### Coverage

Paid employees aged 25–54 at their main job.

### Availability

The most recent data on the gender wage gap was made available by Statistics Canada.<sup>4</sup>

#### Footnotes

1. See [Statistics Canada, Center for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion, The gender wage gap in Canada: 1998 to 2018, October 2019](#).
2. [Statistics Canada, Employee wages by industry, annual, table no. 14-10-0064-01](#).
3. The study focused on [Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition](#), a well-known statistical method used to determine how much of a wage gap between two groups can be explained by various control factors.
4. [Statistics Canada, Average and median gender wage ratio, annual, table 14-10-0064](#).

## Maternity and paternity leave and related benefits



## Key points

- As of 2020, 38 States Members of the United Nations had ratified the Maternity Protection Convention (Convention No. 183) adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2000.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2020, of the 185 countries and territories with available data, 53% offer at least 14 weeks of maternity leave, an increase from 38% in 1994.
- As of 2020, 77% of the 185 countries and territories with available data had granted two thirds of women's previous earnings as maternity leave benefits.
- Of the 188 countries and territories with available data reviewed by the World Bank in 2020, 103 countries (55%) have provisions for paternity leave, an increase over the 30 countries (16%) that offered such leave in 1995. As reported by the World Bank, globally, the median length of paid paternity leave is five days, a low number when compared with the 56 days of paternity leave granted in some high-income member States of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

## Background

Maternity protection, which is a fundamental human right and a critical element of policies balancing the participation of women and men in family and work life, covers, inter alia: the prevention of exposure to health and safety hazards during and after pregnancy; entitlement to paid maternity leave and breastfeeding breaks; maternal and child health care; protection against discrimination in employment and occupations, including with respect to recruitment and dismissal; and the guaranteed right to return to the same position or an equivalent position after maternity leave.<sup>2</sup>

Maternity protection not only contributes to the health and well-being of mothers and their children, it also promotes gender equality in the workplace. Three conventions on maternity protection have been adopted by ILO, in 1919, 1952 and 2000: the most recent, the Maternity Protection Convention (Convention No. 183), stipulates that women should be entitled to no less than 14 weeks of maternity leave, with paid cash benefits amounting to at least two thirds of their normal earnings.<sup>3</sup>

## Current situation

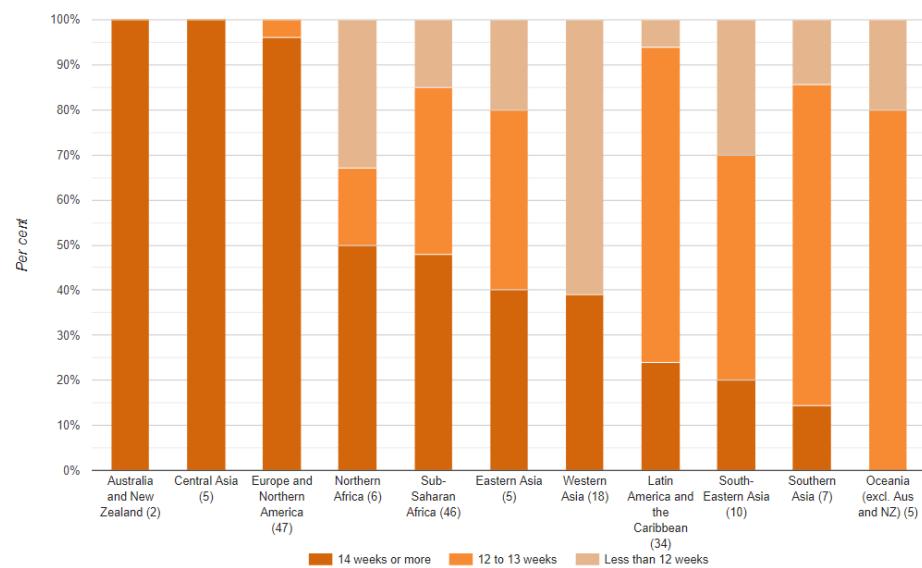
**Worldwide in 2020 over 50% of countries offer at least 14 weeks of maternity leave, a marked increase over the last 25 years**

As of 2020, 38 States Members of the United Nations in regions throughout the world had ratified the Maternity Leave Convention (Convention No. 183), 24 of them in developed regions: more than half (53%) of the 185 countries with available data offer 14 weeks minimum statutory maternity leave, specifying such leave in national laws and regulations, as recommended in Convention No. 183.

As of 2020, Australia and New Zealand and all countries in Central Asia offer at least 14 weeks of maternity leave. Almost all countries in developed regions have also followed the recommendation in Convention No. 183, with

the exception of Iceland (13 weeks) and the United States of America (12 weeks). Entitlement to maternity leave has been increased up to 52 weeks in five countries in Europe,<sup>4</sup> and up to 59 weeks in Croatia, since the adoption of the Maternity Protection Convention in 2000. It should be noted that in these countries, women's labour force participation has grown in recent years, contrary to the global trend. In contrast, less than a quarter of countries with available data in Latin America and the Caribbean (24%), South-Eastern Asia (20%), Southern Asia (14%) and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) (0%) offer 14 weeks or more of maternity leave (see figure I). Globally, the proportion of countries with available data offering a minimum of 14 weeks of maternity leave increased from 38% to 53% during the period from 1994 to 2020.

**Figure I:** Distribution of countries with maternity leave provisions by length of leave and by region: 2020



**Source:** Calculated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development (UNDESA), Statistics Division, using data from the United Nations Minimum Set of Gender Indicators (last accessed on 29 May 2020).

**Note:** Numbers in brackets denote the number of countries in the region with available data: calculations for Oceania (excl. Australia and New Zealand) include the following five countries in the region: Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

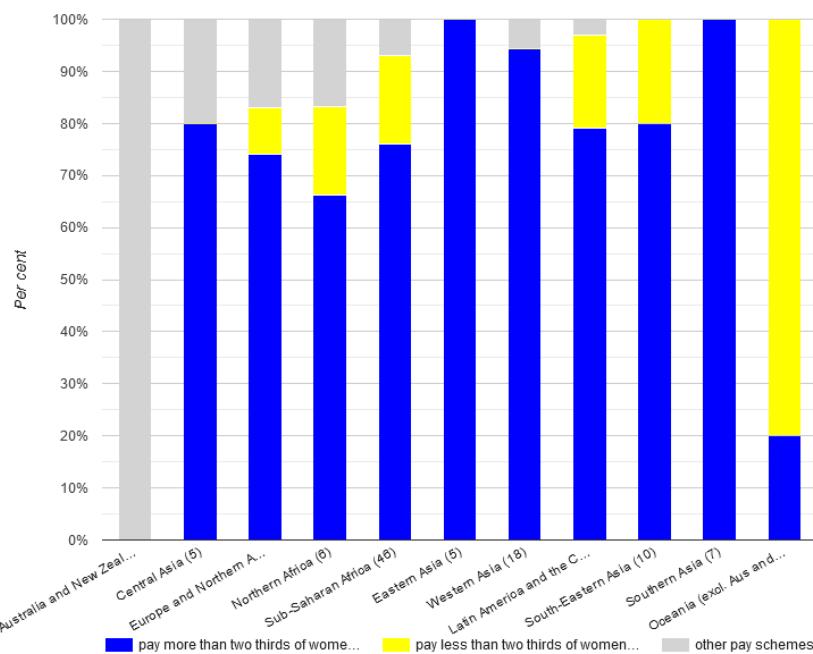
Four out of five countries grant at least two thirds of women's previous earnings as maternity leave payments as recommended by ILO Convention No. 183

According to ILO Convention No. 183, women should be granted paid cash benefits of at least two thirds of their previous earnings during maternity leave. In 2020, out of 185 countries with available information on maternity leave, 143 (77%) meet this criterion, including all countries in Eastern Asia and Southern Asia.<sup>5</sup> The proportion that meet the criterion is slightly lower in Western Asia (94%), South-Eastern Asia (80%), Latin America and the Caribbean (79%), sub-Saharan Africa (76%) and Northern America and Europe (74%). Some countries have other pay schemes with conditional benefits constituting a higher or a lower proportion of maternity leave payments than two thirds of women's previous income (see figure II).

Three countries, Lesotho, Papua New Guinea and the United States (except the State of California), did not have legal provisions to provide cash benefits for women on maternity leave. In Tunisia, cash benefits during maternity leave for employed women varied based on institutional and **economic sectors**: while women employed in the

agriculture sector received 50% of their flat-rate daily wage during maternity leave, payments amounted to the full salary for women working as civil servants.

**Figure II:** Proportion of countries providing women with paid cash benefits during maternity leave by type of cash benefits, by region: 2020



**Source:** Calculated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development (UNDESA), Statistics Division, using preliminary data from the United Nations Minimum Set of Gender Indicators (last accessed on 29 May 2020).

**Note:** Numbers in brackets denote the number of countries in the region with available data: calculations for Oceania (excl. Australia and New Zealand) should be interpreted with caution as data were available for only five countries in the region.

## Paternity leave is becoming more common

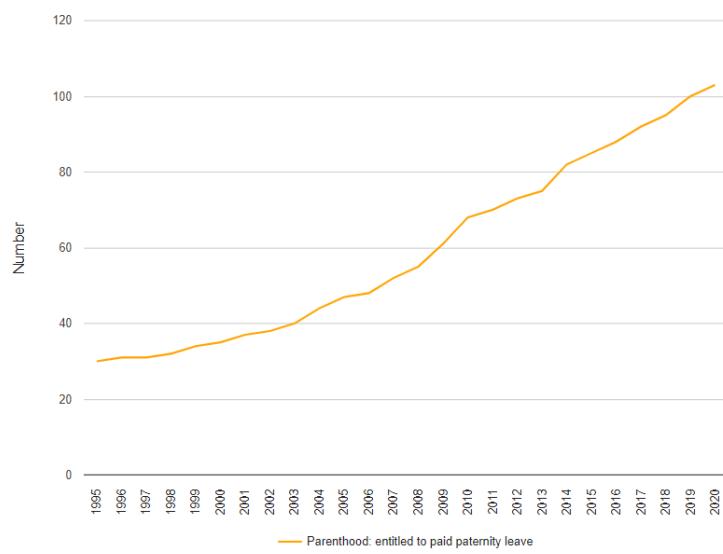
Many countries have adopted maternity and paternity benefits through legislation, benefitting both mothers and fathers. Paternity leave is a short period of leave for the father following the arrival of his child(ren), with the objective of encouraging fathers to assist in childcare and to attend to other family-related responsibilities. Paternity leave has become more common: in 2020, among 188 United Nations Member States and territories with available data worldwide, 103 countries (55%) had provisions on paternity leave, up from the 30 countries (16%) that provided such leave in 1995 (see figure III).

In 2020 in developed regions, new fathers are not entitled to paid paternity leave in Austria, Belarus, Switzerland, Israel, Montenegro, New Zealand, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia and Ukraine. Twenty-six countries in sub-Saharan Africa and 17 countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean do not mandate paid time off for new fathers. In 2020, the median length of paid paternity leave worldwide was five days, similar to the corresponding figures observed in countries in sub-Saharan Africa (3 days) and Latin America

and the Caribbean (5 days), a low number when compared with the 56 days of paternity leave provided in some high income member States of OECD.<sup>6</sup> The European Union work-life balance directive, which entered into force as of 1 August 2019, extends the length of paternity leave in EU member states to at least 10 working days.<sup>7</sup>

Paternity leave also has significant positive effects on women's employment, with an estimated increase of almost 7% in the proportion of women employed in private firms in developing regions when paternity leave is mandated.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure III:** Number of countries and territories with legislation on paid paternity leave: 1995–2020



**Source:** World Bank, 2020, Women, Business and the Law, time series (<https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/dataset/women-business-and-law>), 2020 (last accessed on 29 May 2020).

**Note:** Assessment based on 188 countries with available data.

## Institution in focus: United Nations

In 2019, the Chair of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) communicated his commitment to reviewing parental leave entitlements to balance participation of all United Nations staff, irrespective of gender, in family and work life. If endorsed by ICSC, the proposed gender responsive and family-friendly policies, such as paid parental leave for all parents, including those who adopt, foster or have children through surrogacy or assisted reproductive technology, would set the standards of inclusive participation, respect for diversity and work-life balance called for in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to promote a gender-equal world.<sup>9 10</sup>

## Social protection

In 2016, the proportion of mothers giving birth who were covered by maternity cash benefits stood at 41% worldwide. The proportion was above 90% in developed regions (94% in Europe and almost 100% in Australia and New Zealand and Northern America) but varied greatly among developing regions, ranging from 69% in

Northern Africa to 2% in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>11 12</sup>

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Length of maternity leave; Percentage of wages paid during maternity leave; Number of countries with paid paternity leave provisions:** These indicators provide information on maternity and paternity leave and related benefits.

### Coverage and availability

185 United Nations Member States and territories with available data under the relevant indicators of the United Nations Minimum Set of Gender Indicators;<sup>13</sup> and the paternity leave policies of 188 United Nations Member States and territories reviewed by the World Bank.<sup>14</sup>

## Footnotes

1. International Labour Organization (ILO) .
2. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development (UNDESA), Statistics Division, The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics, New York, 2015 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.15.XVII.8).
3. International Labour Organization (ILO), Maternity Protection Convention, No. 183, Geneva, 2000.
4. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
5. Not all of the countries that meet this criterion provided the minimum statutory maternity leave of 14 weeks.
6. World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, Washington, D.C., 2020.
7. European Commission, "EU Work-life Balance Directive enters into force", 2019 .
8. World Bank, "Does Paternity Leave Matter for Female Employment in Developing Economies?", Policy Research Working Papers, Washington, D.C., 2016.
9. Source: Letter to staff from the Chair of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) dated 20 December 2019 . (Last accessed on 27 July 2020).
10. Parental leave is a relatively long-term leave available to parents, allowing them to take care of children over a period of time usually following the maternity or paternity leave period (ILO, Maternity at work: A review of national legislation, second edition, Geneva, 2010). As of 2017, paternity leave for United Nations staff was provided for a total period of up to 20 working days, or up to 40 working days for internationally recruited staff members serving at a non-family duty station or in exceptional circumstances (ST/AI/2005/2 and Amendments 1 and 2).
11. Source: Global SDG Indicators Database . (last accessed on 27 July 2020).
12. The proportion of mothers with newborns receiving maternity cash benefits includes all women giving birth: estimates for Northern America, Australia and New Zealand and sub-Saharan Africa regions should be interpreted with caution as they are based on reported data coverage below 40% of the population.
13. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development (UNDESA), Statistics Division, United Nations Minimum Set of Gender Indicators .
14. World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, Washington, D.C., 2020.

Ratification of international agreements on equal renumeration and on equal rights in employment and discriminatory laws and regulations at the national level



## Key points

- As of 2020, 173 United Nations Member States and territories (93%) have ratified ILO Convention No. 100 on equal remuneration for women and men workers, and 175 Member States and territories (94%) have ratified ILO Convention No. 111 against discrimination in the field of employment and occupation.
- A number of least developed countries, small island developing States and territories and the United States of America have not ratified ILO Convention No. 100 and/or ILO Convention No. 111.
- National laws and regulations may not adequately protect women from discrimination in employment nor guarantee equal remuneration for women and men. As of 2020, in 33 out of 188 (18%) countries and territories with available data, laws do not "prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender" nor "mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value".<sup>1</sup> In 26 out of those 33 countries and territories discriminatory laws exist, despite their having ratified ILO Convention No. 100 and/or ILO Convention No. 111.

## Background

Over 60 years ago, the International Labour Conference adopted two international conventions aimed at promoting gender equality in employment, ILO Convention No. 100, in 1951, and ILO Convention No. 111, in 1958. By ratifying ILO Convention No. 100, countries declare their commitment to gender equality in the workplace and to the adoption of national policies that ensure "the application to all workers of the principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value",<sup>2</sup> including addressing the [gender pay gap](#) and eliminating biases determining the value of women's and men's work. By ratifying ILO Convention No. 111, countries declare their determination to ensure "equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation"<sup>3</sup> through the elimination of any direct or indirect discrimination, including on the basis of sex.

A number of least developed countries, small island developing States and territories and the United States of America have ratified neither ILO Convention No. 100 nor ILO Convention No. 111

Globally, as of 2020, 173 Member States and territories (93%) have ratified ILO Convention No. 100 and 175 Member States and territories (94%) have ratified ILO Convention No. 111 against discrimination in the field of employment and occupation.

A total of 14 Member States and territories have not ratified ILO Convention No. 100, including four least developed countries (Liberia, Myanmar, Somalia and Tuvalu), five small island developing States and territories (the Cook Islands, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Tonga and Tuvalu)<sup>4</sup> and one developed country (the United States of America). Four of those 14 Member States are in Western Asia and Northern Africa and five are in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand).

A total of 12 Member States and territories have not ratified ILO Convention No. 111, including two least developed countries (Myanmar and Tuvalu), five small island developing States and territories (the Cook Islands, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Tonga and Tuvalu) and two developed countries (Japan and the United States). Five

of those 12 Member States are in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) and five in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (see table).

**Table:** Member States and territories that have not ratified ILO Convention No. 100 and/or ILO Convention No. 111: 2020

Member States that have not ratified ILO Convention 100 on equal remuneration for women and men workers	Member States that have not ratified ILO Convention 111 on discrimination in the field of employment and occupation
Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, Cook Islands, Kuwait, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Myanmar, Oman, Palau, Qatar, Somalia, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America	Brunei Darussalam, Cook Islands, Japan, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Myanmar, Oman, Palau, Singapore, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America

**Source:** ILO, Information System on International Labour Standards (NORMLEX), Ratifications by country (last accessed on 31 August 2020) (<https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11001:0::NO:::>).

**Note:** Countries are colour-coded in line with the following regional groupings under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicator framework: Europe and Northern America, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania (excl. Australia and New Zealand), Northern Africa and Western Asia.

## National laws and regulations may not always ensure gender equality in employment

In several parts of the world, however, laws and regulations currently in force do not adequately protect women from discrimination in employment nor guarantee equal remuneration for women and men. As of 2020, in 33 out of 188 (18%) countries and territories with available data, laws neither "prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender" nor "mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value",<sup>5</sup> despite the fact that 26 of those countries and territories have ratified ILO Convention No. 100 and/or ILO Convention No. 111. Among these 33 countries and territories with discriminatory laws, Brunei Darussalam, the Marshall Islands, Myanmar, Palau and Tonga have ratified neither ILO Convention No. 100 nor ILO Convention No. 111.

Even when protective legislation exists, this does not always mean that women and men enjoy **equal rights** to/at work. **Discriminatory attitudes** on the part of both women and men towards women's employment may also contribute to unfair treatment of women and impede gender equality in employment.

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Qualitative indicator 1:** Whether International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 100 (Equal Remuneration Convention)<sup>6</sup> has been ratified or not.
- **Qualitative indicator 2:** Whether ILO Convention No. 111 (Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention)<sup>7</sup> has been ratified or not.

These qualitative indicators provide information about whether a country or territory has ratified ILO Convention No. 100 and/or ILO Convention No. 111.

### Coverage

187 United Nations Member States and territories (2020).<sup>8</sup>

### Availability

Data on the ratification of ILO Convention No. 100 and ILO Convention No. 111 is provided through the ILO Information System on International Labour Standards (NORMALEX).<sup>9</sup>

## Footnotes

1. The World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, table 1.1, Washington, D.C., 2020 (last accessed on 13 April 2020) .
2. ILO Convention No. 100, article 2 (accessed on 13 April 2020) .
3. ILO Convention No. 111, article 2 (accessed on 13 April 2020) .
4. For statistical purposes, Tuvalu is categorized as both a least developed country and a small island developing State .
5. The World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, table 1.1, Washington, D.C., 2020 (last accessed on 13 April 2020) .
6. International Labour Organization (ILO) Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (ILO Convention No. 100) .
7. ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (ILO Convention No. 111).
8. Countries and territories have been organized in regional groupings under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicator framework .
9. ILO, Information System on International Labour Standards (NORMLEX), Ratifications by country .

## Earnings of married women and men in employment by type of remuneration



## Key points

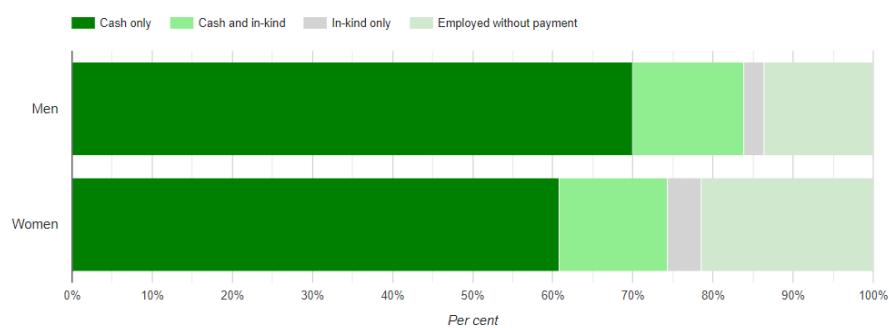
- Access to cash labor income was more limited for women (61%) than for men (70%) in developing regions, and even more limited for both women (57%) and men (64%) in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Access to cash labor income for women and men varied greatly across countries. The gender gap in cash-only labor income was higher than 10 percentage points in almost half (19) of countries with data.

## Access to cash labor income is more limited for women than for men in developing regions

In developing regions, women are less likely to be employed than men, and when they are employed, they are more likely to be in vulnerable jobs, for example, as **contributing family workers**. Compared to other jobs, these types of jobs are more often associated with irregular low income or no income at all, resulting in lower proportions of women receiving cash labor income. For instance, among 39 countries with available data in developing regions, 61% of married women aged 15–49 employed in the past 12 months were paid only in cash. The proportion of those paid only in cash among married men aged 15–49 and employed in the past 12 months was 70%, resulting in a gender gap of nine percentage points. An additional 14% of women and of men were paid in cash and in-kind, resulting in a gender parity among those with this type of earnings (see figure I).

A gender gap of similar magnitude was observed in sub-Saharan Africa, where 57% of married women were paid only in cash and 15% were paid in cash and in kind (vs. 65% and 16% of men, respectively).

**Figure I:** Distribution of married women and men aged 15–49 by type of earnings from labour in the last 12 months, developing regions: 2013–2018 (latest available) (Percentage)



**Source:** Calculated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, from data provided by ICF International, 2015; and Demographic and Health Survey Programme (DHS) STATCompiler (last accessed on 7 May 2020) (<https://www.statcompiler.com/en/>).

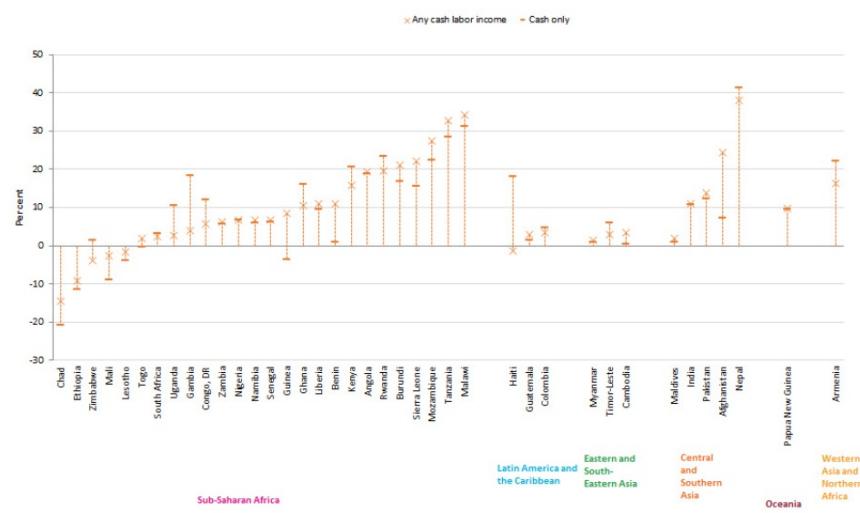
**Note:** Unweighted averages based on data from 39 countries in developing regions.

Across 39 countries in developing regions with available sex-disaggregated data for the period 2013–2018, the proportion of married women aged 15–49 who earned any cash labor income<sup>1</sup> in the past 12 months varied greatly, from 37% in Malawi to 99% in Haiti. For men, the proportion varied from 33% in Ethiopia to almost 100% in South Africa. In terms of cash-only labor income, Burundi had the lowest proportion among married women

aged 15–49 who were employed in the past 12 months (17%), and the Maldives the highest (97%). For men, the proportion varied from 23% in Ethiopia to 98% in South Africa. In particular, the gender gap in cash-only labor incomes reached a maximum of 41 percentage points in Nepal and was higher than 10 percentage points in almost half (19) of countries with data (see figure II).

The proportion of married women and married men aged 15–49 who earned any cash labor income in the past 12 months also varied by geographic location. Across 39 countries in developing regions with available sex-disaggregated data for the period 2013–2018, the proportion reached 87% for married women and 95% for married men in urban areas, resulting in a difference of 8 percentage points. The gender gap was larger (12 percentage points, on average) in rural areas, with 67% of married women and 79% of married men earning any cash labor income in the past 12 months.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure II:** Gender gap in any cash and cash-only labor incomes between married women and men aged 15–49 in selected countries in developing regions: 2013–2018 (latest available) (Percentage)



**Source:** Calculated by UNDESA, Statistics Division, from data provided by ICF International, 2015; and Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) Programme STATCompiler (last accessed on 7 May 2020) (<https://www.statcompiler.com/en/>).

**Note:** Any cash labor income includes the following types of income: (a) cash-only income and (b) cash and in-kind income.

## Countries in focus: Nigeria and Zambia

Both Nigeria and Zambia conducted two Demographic and Health Surveys, in 2013 and 2018. In Nigeria, while the proportion of married women and men aged 15–49 who earned any cash labor income in the last 12 months were equal, at 93%, in 2013, by 2018, the proportion of women earning cash income had decreased to 85% and, to a lesser extent, to 91%, for men. During the same period, a trend in the opposite direction was observed in Zambia, where the proportion of married women aged 15–49 who earned any cash labor income in the last 12 months increased from 63% in 2013 to 81% in 2018. For men, gains were relatively modest, with the proportion increasing from 83% in 2013 to 87% in 2018.<sup>3</sup>

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Married women and men aged 15–49 living in developing regions by type of earnings from labour in the last 12 months:** This indicator provides information about the type of earnings of married women and men, including renumeration in cash and in kind, payable for time worked or work done, as well as for time not worked, such as annual vacation and other paid leave or holidays.

### Coverage

Married women and men aged 15–49 in developing regions who were employed at any time in the last 12 months.

### Availability

39 United Nations Member States in developing regions (with latest available sex-disaggregated data for the period 2013–2018).

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## Footnotes

1. Any cash labour income includes the following types of labour income: (a) cash only; and (b) cash and in-kind.
2. Calculated by UNDESA, Statistics Division, from data provided by ICF International, 2015 (correspondence with the Demographic and Health Survey Programme on 31 August 2020); unweighted averages are based on data from 39 countries in developing regions.
3. Source: Demographic and Health Survey Programme STATcompiler (last accessed on 7 May 2020).

## Access to formal financial services



## Key points

- Since 2011, while levels of financial inclusion have been increasing at a steady rate for both men and women around the world, women's level of access was still behind that of men by 7 percentage points in 2017. This gender gap is more pronounced in developing regions, particularly in Western Asia and in Northern Africa, where the gap stands at 21 percentage points.
- Data collected through the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) project reveal that women entrepreneurs are less likely than men to fulfil their productive and innovative potential for a variety of reasons, including, notably, lack of access to formal financial services.
- In 2017, 45% of women 15 years and above worldwide had saved money in the past 12 months, compared with 52% of men in the same age group. Savings patterns of women and men also differed, with men saving formally and women in alternative ways.

## Background

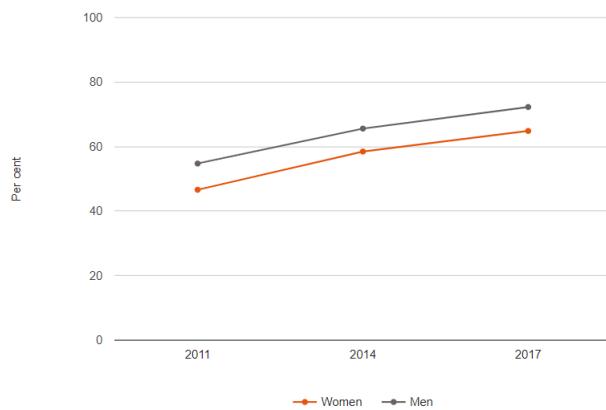
An account at a financial institution or through a mobile-money service gives people access to the formal financial systems and thus to an array of banking services and instruments. Addressing the persistent gender gap in account ownership would boost women's economic empowerment and improve gender parity in other dimensions.<sup>1</sup>

## Current situation

### The global gender gap in financial or mobile-money-account ownership persists

Women are lagging behind men in making use of financial services. In 2017, 65% of women worldwide had an individual or joint account at a financial institution, a bank, credit union, microfinance institution, cooperative or post office, or through a mobile-money service, compared to 72% of men. Despite the overall upward trajectory in financial inclusion for both women and men since 2011, a 7 percentage point gender gap has persisted globally (see figure I).

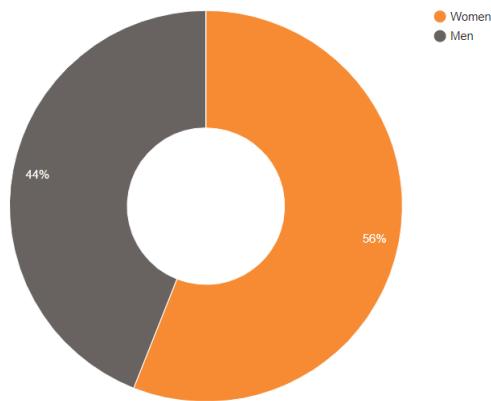
**Figure I:** Proportion of women and men aged 15 years or older with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider: 2011-2017 (Percentage)



**Source:** World Bank, Global Findex Database 2017 (last accessed on 26 June 2020) (<https://globalfindex.worldbank.org/>).

Women constitute a disproportionate share of unbanked individuals compared with men in 2017 (56% versus 44%, respectively) (see figure II).

**Figure II:** Share of women and men without access to formal financial services: 2017 (Percentage)

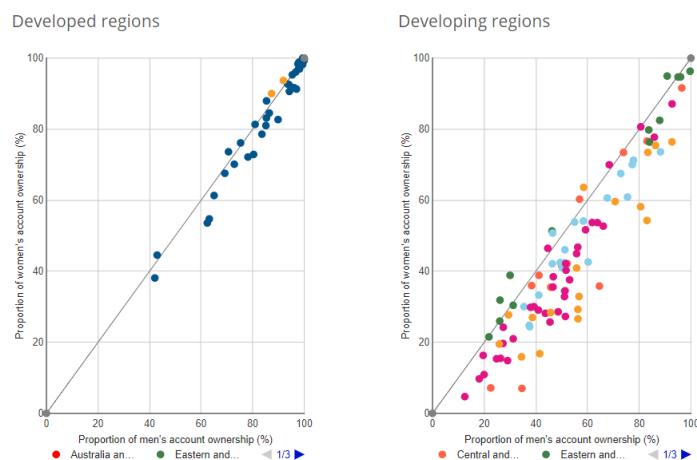


Source: World Bank, Global Findex Database 2017 (last accessed on 26 June 2020) (<https://globalfindex.worldbank.org/>).

The gender gap in financial or mobile-money account ownership is larger in developing regions

In 2017, the proportion of women in developing regions with financial or mobile-money accounts was lower than the proportion of men. Differences in account ownership between women and men were the highest in Western Asia (21 percentage points)<sup>2</sup> and Northern Africa (21 percentage points),<sup>3</sup> with a wide disparity among countries in those regions. Among countries in developing regions, the highest gender gap was observed in Jordan, where 27% of women and 56% of men had banking or mobile-money accounts, a difference of 30 percentage points. In developed regions, there was a less discernable gender gap in account ownership, on average (see figure III).

**Figure III:** Percentage point difference in account ownership between women and men in developing and developed regions: 2017



Source: Calculated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, based on data retrieved from the Global Findex Database 2017 (last accessed on 26 June 2020) (<https://globalfindex.worldbank.org/>).

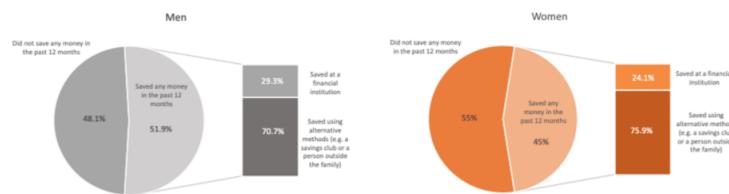
A bank account provides a secure avenue to save and borrow money, which opens up formal channels for women to invest in capital for their businesses and entrepreneurial activities, and for themselves, their families and their children. Findings of the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) project<sup>4</sup> reveal that women entrepreneurs are less likely than men to fulfil their productive and innovative potential due to a variety of factors, including lack of account ownership (including financial asset accumulation and ownership) and reduced access to external financing through formal channels. In Mongolia, where the proportion of women with financial or mobile-money accounts was four percentage points higher than that of men, data collected in 2016 under the EDGE project revealed that women entrepreneurs were more likely than men to register their businesses in public records (47% versus 32%, respectively)<sup>5</sup> and were exposed to less economic vulnerability as a result.

In addition, having a financial or mobile-money account increases women's economic freedom and **decision-making power in the home**, including managing the flow of earnings from employment and/or the stock of owned assets and deciding on major purchases. Furthermore, having a banking account connects women with far more agents in the economy, giving them access to and control over information, networks and payments, such as remittances, installments, wages, taxes and government cash transfers, through reliable and affordable payment systems.

## Saving patterns vary among women and men

Account ownership enables women to safeguard their savings in banks and other financial institutions, increasing their resilience to withstand possible exogenous shocks during different stages of the life cycle and to escape poverty. Globally, it is estimated that 45% of women aged 15 and above saved money in 2017, compared with 52% of men in the same age group. While a relatively higher proportion of men saved formally at financial institutions (29%), women tended to save money in alternative ways, including through semi-formal savings clubs or by entrusting savings to an individual outside the family (see figure IV).

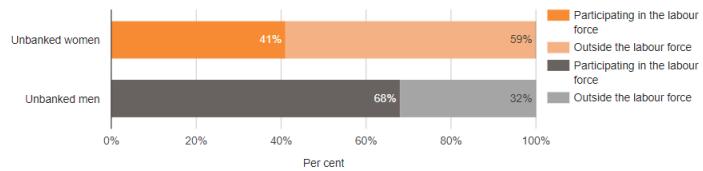
**Figure IV:** Proportion of women and men aged 15 years or older who saved (or did not save) money in the past 12 months, by method of savings: 2017



**Source:** Calculated by UNDESA, Statistics Division, from the World Bank Global Findex Database 2017 (last accessed on 26 June 2020 (<https://globalfindex.worldbank.org/>)).

In addition to the legal barriers that may restrict women's ability to have a banking account, structural differences can also help explain the gender gap in account ownership. The effect of gender on bank account ownership remains significant in developing regions, even after controlling for income, education, employment status, rural residency and age.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, in 2017, among adults without an account worldwide, women were less likely than men to participate in the **labour force** (41% versus 68%, respectively) (see figure V). In a study conducted in the State of Madhya Pradesh in India, it was found that boosting women's bargaining power by helping them to open bank accounts and understand the basic principles of banking and by advising them to deposit their public workfare programme wages into their own accounts rather than into those owned by male household heads, increased women's labour force participation rate in both the public and private sectors, particularly in the case of women who were least involved in the labour force prior to the State intervention and whose husbands were most opposed to them working.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure V:** Participation level in the labour force of women and men aged 15 and above without an account at a bank or other financial institution: 2017 (Percentage)



Source: World Bank, Global Findex Database 2017 (last accessed on 26 June 2020) (<https://globalfindex.worldbank.org/>).

## Country in focus: Turkey

Adult women with accounts at a bank or other financial institution may still face a gender bias in the use of financial services and instruments. In 2017, the gender gap in account ownership in Turkey remained considerable, at 29 percentage points. In a controlled experiment, fictional women-owned businesses received, ceteris paribus and independent of their credit riskiness, owing to a gender bias on the part of loan officers, 10% less in loan amounts, on average, compared to fictional men-owned businesses.<sup>8</sup>

## Legal frameworks

Women in Cameroon, Chad, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau and Niger cannot legally open a bank account in the same way as men do. In addition, women in 16 countries (10 in Western Asia) cannot legally travel outside their homes in the same way as men and may face obstacles to going into banks or other financial institutions.<sup>9</sup>

## About the data

### Definition

- **Proportion of women and men aged 15 and above with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider:** This indicator provides information on access to formal financial services. It measures the percentage of adult women and men aged 15 and above who report having an individual or joint account at a bank or other type of financial institution or using a mobile-money-service provider in the past 12 months. Other types of financial institutions include credit unions, microfinance institutions, cooperatives or post offices.

### Coverage

Women and men aged 15 and above.

## Footnotes

1. Holloway, K., Niazi, Z., and Rouse, R., "Women's Economic Empowerment through Financial Inclusion", Policy Brief, Innovations for Poverty Action, New Haven, 2017 .
2. Unweighted average for the region calculated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division.
3. Ibid.
4. Outputs and findings of the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) project, implemented by UNDESA, Statistics Division, in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
5. Results of the EDGE survey piloted in Mongolia in 2015 to measure entrepreneurship from a gender perspective.
6. Demirguc-Kunt, A., Klapper, L.F., and Singer,D., "Financial inclusion and legal discrimination against women: evidence from developing countries", Policy Research Working Paper, No. 6416, World Bank, 2013 .
7. Field, E., Pande, R., Rigol, N., Schaner, S. and Troyer, C., "On Her Own Account: How Strengthening Women's Financial Control Impacts Labor Supply and Gender Norms", Discussion Paper No. 2201, Cowles Foundation for Research in Economics, Yale University Press, 2019 .
8. Source: World Bank, Project appraisal document on a proposed loan, report No. PAD2768 .
9. Source: World Bank, Women, Business and the Law 2020, Washington, D.C., 2020 .

## Discriminatory attitudes towards women in paid employment



## Key points

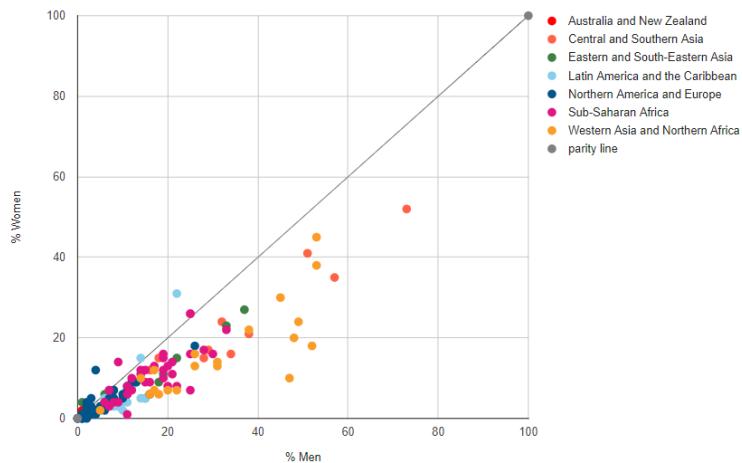
- Globally in 2016, men were more likely than women to disapprove of women's engagement in paid employment outside the home (20% versus 14%, respectively). Disapproval rates were higher among men than women in 111 out of 139 (80%) Member States and territories with available data.
- The gender gap increased when children were present in the household, swaying men's attitudes more negatively than women's: 25% versus 16%, respectively.
- Discriminatory attitudes towards women in paid employment outside the home were most prevalent both among women and men in Central and Southern Asia and Western Asia and Northern Africa. In developed regions, disagreement with women's paid employment outside the home was low both among men (5.5%) and women (3.8%).

## Men are less in favour than women of women's engagement in paid employment outside the home

Harmful social norms and discriminatory attitudes, especially when combined with a shortage of [protective legislation](#), can severely impede women's access to employment. In 2016, in 139 Member States, men were more likely than women to disagree that it was acceptable for women in their families to have a paid job outside the home if they wanted to do so (20% of men versus 14% of women, respectively). The gender gap increased when there were children in the household, swaying men's attitudes more negatively than women's: 25% of men versus 16% of women in households with children, respectively, disagreed with the above statement.<sup>1</sup> When asked, 29% of men and 27% of women stated that they preferred women in their families to stay at home rather than work at a paid job or to do both.

In 2016, disapproval of women in paid employment outside the home was more prevalent among men than women in 111 out of 139 (80%) Member States and territories with available data. Disapproval was five or more percentage points higher among women than men in only three countries: Haiti (nine percentage points), Slovenia (eight percentage points) and Togo (five percentage points) (see figure I).

**Figure I:** Attitudinal discrimination against women engaging in paid work outside the home by sex: 2016 (Percentage)

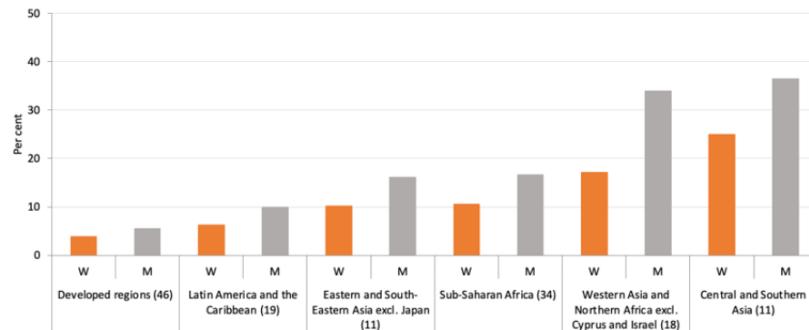


Source: Gallup World Poll, 2016 (last accessed on 9 April 2020) (<https://news.gallup.com/poll/201056/gallup-top-world-findings-2016.aspx>).

## Women's engagement in paid employment outside the home is more acceptable in developed regions

Across regions, significant variations are found in terms of discriminatory attitudes towards women in paid employment outside the home. These attitudes were most prevalent both among women and men in Central and Southern Asia and Western Asia and Northern Africa (see figure II), where women's **labour force participation rate** was also considerably low. In 13 out of 15 countries in those two regions the overall rate of disagreement with the statement was the highest. In developed regions, disapproval of women's paid employment outside the home was low both among men (5.5%) and women (3.8%), although men disagreed with the statement at a higher rate than women by five percentage points or more in Greece, Malta and Slovakia.

**Figure II:** Attitudinal discrimination against women engaging in paid work outside the home, by sex and region: 2016 (Percentage)



**Source:** Calculated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, using data retrieved from the Gallup World Poll, 2016 (last accessed on 9 April 2020) (<https://news.gallup.com/poll/201056/gallup-top-world-findings-2016.aspx>).

**Note:** Unweighted averages; data for the highlighted regions represent at least 50% of the regional population; the numbers in brackets indicate the number of countries with available data; developed regions include countries in Europe and Northern America, as well as Australia, Cyprus, Israel, Japan and New Zealand.

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Proportion of women and men who disagree with the statement: "It's perfectly acceptable for any woman in your family to have a paid job outside the home if she wants one":** This indicator provides information about the prevalence of discriminatory attitudes among women and men towards women engaging in paid employment outside the home.

### Coverage

Women and men aged 15 and older.

### Availability

139 United Nations Member States and territories (2016).

### Limitations

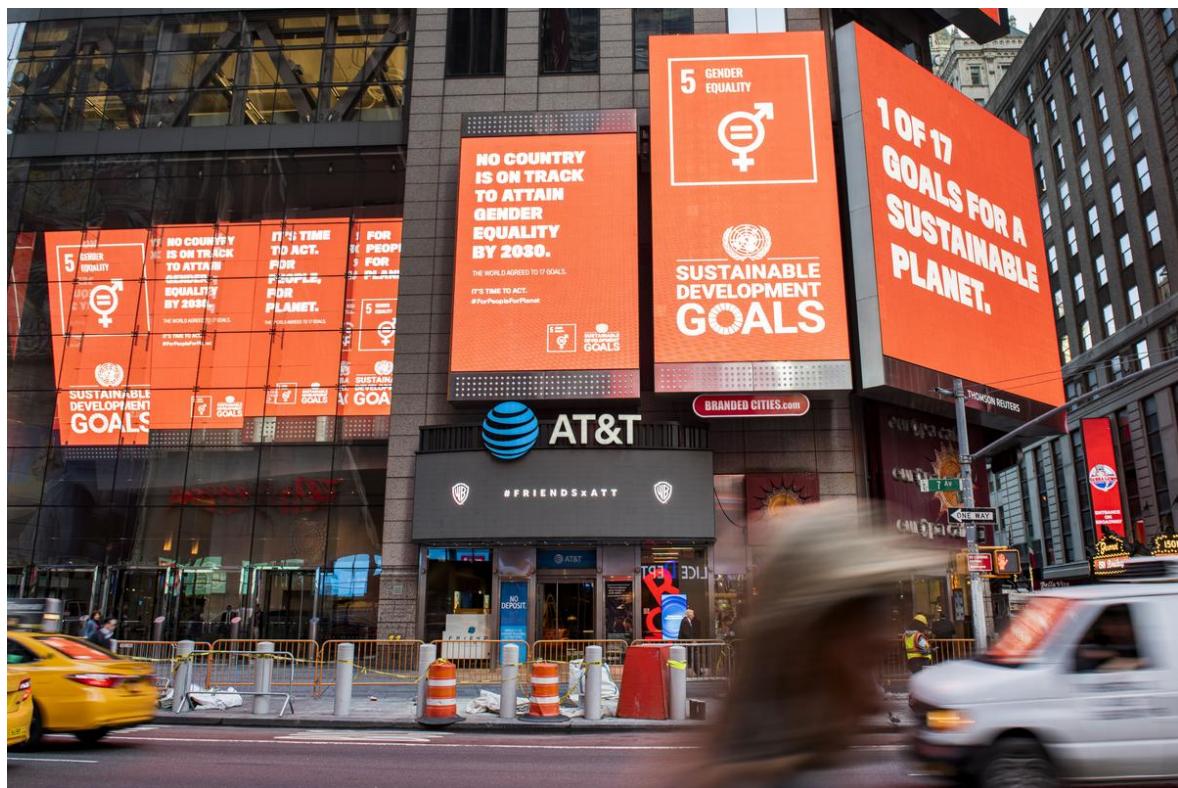
The sample size per country for the nationally representative Gallup World Poll (2016) was 1,000 individuals, except in large countries such as China and the Russian Federation, where the sample size amounted to at least 2,000 individuals. In some instances, the sample size was between 500 and 1,000. Administration of both face-to-face interviewing and telephone interviewing may have led to some mode effects.

## Footnotes

1. International Labour Organization (ILO) - Gallup, Towards a better future for women and work: Voices of women and men, 2017 .

Economic empowerment

## Protection of equal economic rights for women and men in selected issues under the law in developing regions



## Key points

- Globally, as of 2020, 180 out of 188 (96%) Member States and territories have at least one legal barrier restricting women's opportunities in economic structures, participation in productive activities and access to resources.
- In only eight countries in Europe and Northern America are women and men on an equal legal footing with respect to the full set of key topics assessed, which are structured around women's and men's interactions with formal laws and regulations during their economic life cycle.
- In countries in developed regions, legal gender gaps impeding women's rights are not significant, but in some countries in developing regions women have a fraction of the economic rights of men as a result of discriminatory laws and regulations that obstruct their economic empowerment.
- While countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have made tremendous progress in terms of women's legal rights over the last 25 years, women's legal rights are still far from being fully guaranteed in countries in Western Asia and Northern Africa.
- Although far from universality, significant gains (almost 30 percentage points) have been achieved in the adoption of protective legislation ensuring equal pay for work of equal value: in 1995, eight (6%) countries in developing regions legally required employers to pay women and men the same remuneration, by 2020, 48 (34%) countries had adopted such protective laws.
- Paid parental leave, available to both mothers and fathers, while unknown in national legislation in 1995, had been mandated by law in only seven countries (5%) by 2020.

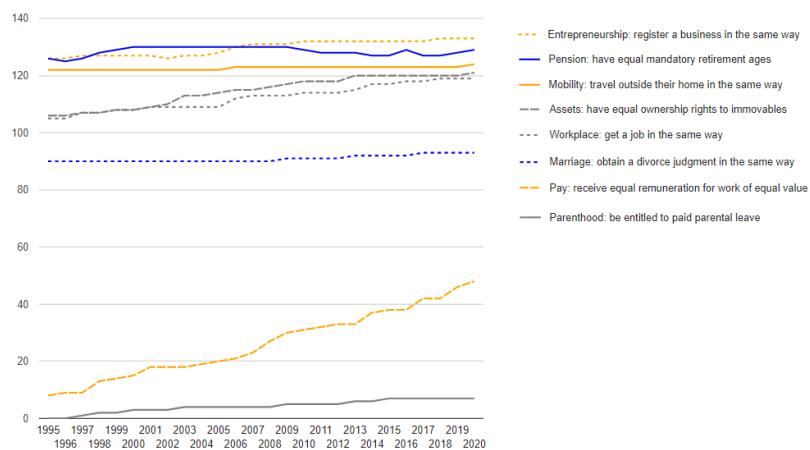
## Current situation

As of 2020, 180 out of 188 (96%) Member States and territories with available data have at least one legal barrier restricting women's opportunities in economic structures, participation in productive activities and access to resources.<sup>1</sup> In only eight countries in Europe and Northern America, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Latvia, Luxembourg and Sweden, are women and men on an equal legal footing with respect to the full set of key topics<sup>2</sup> assessed, which are structured around women's and men's interactions with formal laws and regulations during their economic life cycle. Research shows that while international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women<sup>3</sup> and women's political representation at the national level have played a role in closing legal gaps in women's economic rights, legal barriers have remained in a number of countries owing to conflict situations and weak rule of law.<sup>4</sup>

## Gender equality in national laws and regulations remains uneven among countries in developed and developing regions

While legal gender gaps are relatively small in developed regions, women in developing regions have a fraction of the economic rights of men due to discriminatory laws and regulations that impede their economic empowerment. However, in some Member States and territories in developing regions there have been positive changes in women's legal rights over the past 25 years, signifying an improved regulatory environment for women's economic independence (see figure).

**Figure:** Number of United Nations Member States and territories in developing regions with equal legal rights for women and men on selected issues: 1995—2020



**Source:** Compiled by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) Statistics Division, using data retrieved from the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law time series, 2020 (last accessed on 17 April 2020) (<https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/dataset/women-business-and-law>).

**Note:** Assessment based on 140 Member States and territories in developing regions with available data.

It appears that the number of Member States and territories in developing regions with equal legal rights for women and men on selected key issues has reached a plateau, at around 130 States, over the past 25 years. In countries in Western Asia and Northern Africa, the achievement of equal legal rights for women is significantly behind what has been realized in other regions. Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have made tremendous progress, catching up with developed regions in terms of women's legal rights.<sup>5</sup>

Though still far from reaching universality, significant gains have been achieved in terms of legislation to address the **gender pay gap**: by 2020, employers were legally required to pay equal remuneration for women and men who performed work of equal value in 48 (34%) Member States and territories in developing regions, compared with just eight (6%) in 1995. However, as of 2020, **paid parental leave**, available to both mothers and fathers, which, along with **maternity and paternity leave**, contributes to women's ability to return to work, has been mandated by law in only seven (5%) countries, Azerbaijan, Chile, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In light of the fact that in 1995 not one country in the world provided paid parental leave for both mothers and fathers, this increase shows minimal progress towards ensuring women's right to work.

## About the data

### Definitions

These indicators provide information on the number of United Nations Member States and territories with equal legal rights for women and men on selected issues and on the number of Member States and territories with legal barriers restricting women's opportunities in economic structures, participation in productive activities and access to resources. Only formal laws and regulations are taken into account; religious and customary laws are not considered unless they are codified. The implementation of laws is not measured by these indicators.

### Coverage

188 United Nations Member States and territories (140 in developing regions).<sup>6</sup>

### Availability

Data have been provided through the dataset of the Women, Business and the Law project of the World Bank.<sup>7</sup>

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Footnotes

1. [The World Bank, Women, Business and the Law project, Data Catalog, Washington, D.C., 2020](#).
2. The eight indicators covered by the Women, Business and the Law project are Mobility, Workplace, Pay, Marriage, Parenthood, Entrepreneurship, Assets and Pension. ([back to text](#))
3. [United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1249, No. 20378](#).
4. Hallward-Driemeier, M., Tazeen, H., and Bogdana Rusu, A., "Women's legal rights over 50 years: Progress, stagnation or regression?", [World Bank, Policy Research Working Paper 6616, Washington, D.C., September 2013](#).
5. [Ibid.](#)
6. Member States and territories have been organized by regional groupings under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicator framework.
7. [The World Bank, Women, Business and the Law project, Data Catalog, Washington, D.C., 2020](#).

## Equal rights of women to the ownership and control of land [FAO]



## Key points

- National legal frameworks from 15 countries show that women's land rights were often less protected than those of men. Only Colombia, Nicaragua, Portugal, Serbia and Sweden had high or very high levels of legal guarantees of gender equality in land ownership and/or control.
- Moreover, in countries where legal pluralism prevails, meaning that formal law coexists with personal or customary laws, women's land rights were even less protected.
- In 9 out of 10 countries with available data, relatively fewer women than men had ownership and/or secure tenure rights over agricultural land, with the largest gender gap observed in India (34 percentage points). Malawi was the only country with a higher proportion of women (47.1%) than men (41.3%) who held secure tenure rights over the agricultural land.
- The share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land ranged from 11% in Niger to 58% in Malawi.

## Background

Although data availability is still limited, there is evidence suggesting that greater gender equality in the distribution of land (ownership and/or control) has positive multiplier effects for the achievement of a range of key development outcomes, including food security and the welfare of households.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, secure control and ownership of land have a strong empowering effect on women: it reduces their reliance on male partners and relatives; increases their bargaining power within the household; and improves their chances of accessing a wide variety of productive resources and services, including information, technical assistance, access to markets and credit. The confidence gained from increased tenure security can further encourage women to undertake or expand their entrepreneurial activities, including by joining producer organizations and/or cooperatives.<sup>2</sup>

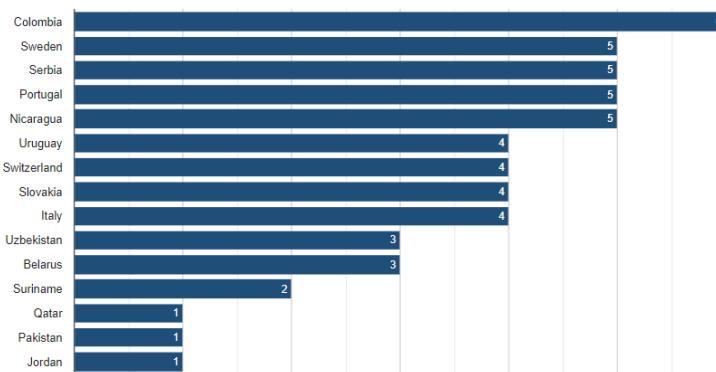
## Current situation

### **Women's land rights in national legal frameworks**

Legal provisions included in national legal frameworks from 15 countries representing various regions, as well as different religious and cultural traditions, show that women's land rights are often less protected than those of men. Only one third of reporting countries, namely Colombia, Nicaragua, Portugal, Serbia and Sweden, have provisions in their legal frameworks that demonstrate high or very high levels of guarantees of gender equality in land ownership and/or control (see figure I).

**One third of reporting countries have provisions guaranteeing gender equality in land ownership and/or control in their national legal frameworks**

**Figure I:** Level of guarantees in national legal frameworks of women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control in selected countries: 2020 (1=lowest; 6=highest)



**Source:** United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, Global SDG Indicators Database (last accessed on 12 May 2020) (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>).

In countries with multiple legal systems, that is, where formal law coexists with personal or customary laws, women's land rights are less protected

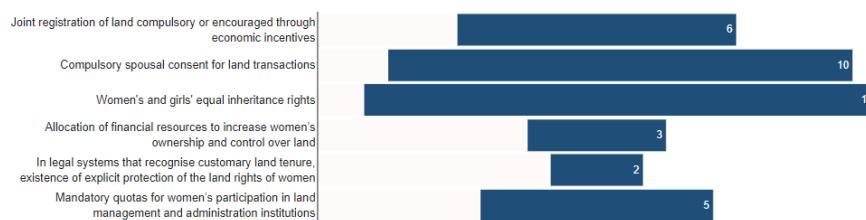
Moreover, in countries where legal pluralism prevails, that is, countries in which formal law coexists with personal or customary laws, women's land rights are less protected. For instance, in countries where some aspects of personal laws prevail over constitutional provisions, women's land rights are less safeguarded, particularly their inheritance or matrimonial rights. Formal laws in 60% of the countries reporting data on gender equality in land rights do not acknowledge customary land tenure systems, but in those that recognize customary laws, less than half protect women's land rights.

One key way to support the implementation of policies and laws and accelerate gender equality in land ownership and control is the adoption of temporary special measures, such as legal provisions that allocate financial resources for facilitating women's purchase of land or adopt mandates to foster women's participation in land governance institutions. Nevertheless, there is little evidence of the existence of such positive measures in national legal frameworks, and among the reporting countries, the existence of such positive measures is more the exception than the rule. Of the 15 countries reporting data, only Colombia has provisions that allocate financial resources with the purpose of increasing women's ownership and/or control of land (Proxy D). The situation is slightly better regarding the adoption of mandates in legal and policy frameworks to ensure women's participation in land management and administration institutions (Proxy F); one third of reporting countries have introduced this measure in law.

While, in general, women's and girls' inheritance rights tend to be protected in law, evidence shows that social and cultural norms constitute an important obstacle to their ability to claim to those rights.<sup>3</sup> About 80% of countries reporting data have legal provisions that guarantee equal inheritance rights for women and men, as well as girls and boys. However, in 77% of reporting countries, the consent of both spouses is required for land/property transactions (see figure II).

Although many countries have introduced legal provisions to promote gender equality since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, substantial progress is still needed to realize women's land rights in law and in practice.

**Figure II:** Number of countries fulfilling alternative variables to monitor Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.a.2: 2020



**Source:** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Statistical Database (FAOSTAT) 2020 (correspondence with FAO on 12 May 2020) (<http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#home>).

**Note:** FAO information note, "Realizing Women's Rights to Land in the Law", on SDG indicator 5.a.2 elaborates on these alternative variables (last accessed on 4 September 2020) (<http://www.fao.org/3/I8788EN/I8788en.pdf>).

## Gender gaps in ownership/tenure rights over agricultural land

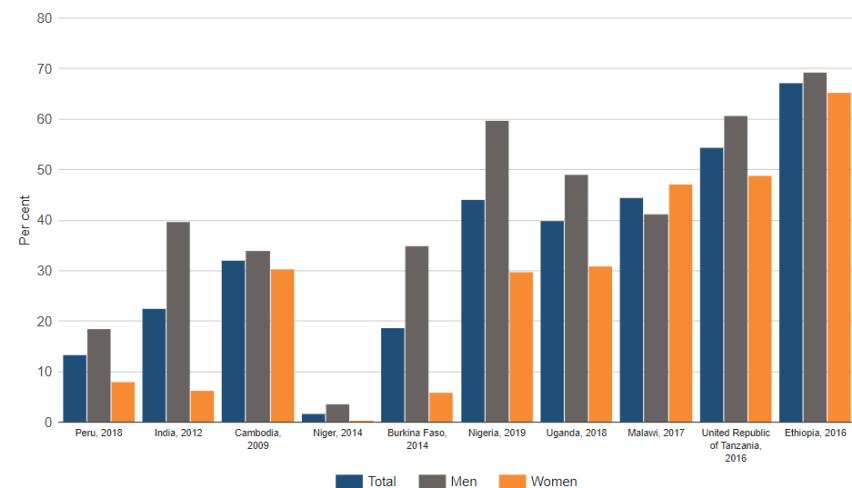
### Relatively fewer women than men have ownership and/or secure tenure rights over agricultural land

Available data on the extent of ownership/tenure rights over agricultural land remain scarce at the global level. Despite the limited data availability,<sup>4</sup> a recent study of 10 countries undertaken by FAO to analyse gender disparities in land ownership and/or secure tenure rights revealed that, in 9 out of the 10 countries, relatively fewer women than men had ownership and/or secure tenure rights over agricultural land (see figure III). Women in this situation are in a disadvantaged position compared to men, as land ownership is a key means of personal empowerment.<sup>5</sup>

Data on land rights in Nigeria and Uganda released in 2019 show that less than one third of women had ownership or secure tenure rights over agricultural land, whereas almost 50% of men in Uganda and 60% of men in Nigeria had those rights. In India, only 6% of women engaged in crop production had land registered under their name in 2012; for men, this share was close to 40%, revealing a gender gap of 34 percentage points in land registration. In Peru, 8% of the female agricultural holders had documents for land they owned or used in 2018, compared to 19% of male agricultural holders — a gender gap of 11 percentage points. In the Niger, data show a gender gap of three percentage points, with 0.3% of women having title to land they own solely or jointly, compared with 3.6% of men.

In 2014, only 6% of women in Burkina Faso owned or held use rights over agricultural land owned by their household, compared to 35% of men. In Ethiopia, however, the disparity was much smaller: in 2016, 65% of women had their name on certificates issued for household parcels, either exclusively or jointly, including the rights to sell it or use it as a collateral (compared to 69% of men). Among the countries assessed, Malawi was the only country with a higher proportion of women (47.1%) than men (41.3%) holding secure tenure rights over the agricultural land. While men in Malawi were more likely to have their names on legal documents, women were more likely to have the right to sell and/or bequeath their land.

**Figure III:** Percentage of women and men aged 18 and older in the agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by country: 2009-2019 (latest available)



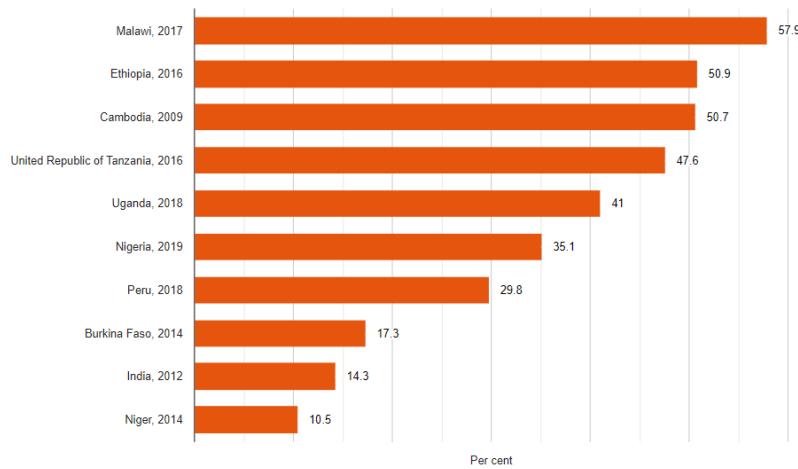
**Source:** UNDESA, Statistics Division, Global SDG Indicators Database (last accessed on 12 May 2020 (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>)).

**Note:** Variations may be observed in the set of questions in each survey analysed.

Many fewer women than men have their names on legally recognized documents

Moreover, from available data it is observed that the proportion of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land ranges from 11% in the Niger to 58% in Malawi (see figure IV). It is expected that ongoing efforts to collect data related to individual land tenure rights will provide further insight into the situation of women's rights to own land in all countries worldwide.

**Figure IV:** Proportion of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by country (Percentage)



**Source:** UNDESA, Statistics Division, Global SDG Indicators Database (last accessed on 12 May 2020 (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>)).

**Note:** Variations may be observed in the set of questions in each survey analysed.

## About the data

### Definition

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, indicator 5.a, directs countries to undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws. SDG indicator 5.a.2 looks at the extent to which the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control. SDG indicator 5.a.1 measures the extent to which women are disadvantaged in ownership/tenure rights over agricultural land. SDG indicator 5.a.1 is divided in two sub-indicators: (a) proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure.

### Methodology

#### Measurement of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.a.2

Indicator 5.a.2 measures the extent to which a country's legal framework supports women's land rights by testing that framework against six proxies drawn from international law and internationally accepted good practices, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,<sup>6</sup> which has been ratified by 189 countries, and the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of the Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests,<sup>7</sup> endorsed unanimously by the Committee of Food Security of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 2012.

The six proxies through which indicator 5.a.2 is monitored are as follows:

- A: Joint registration of land compulsory or encouraged through economic incentives.
- B: Compulsory spousal consent for land transactions.
- C: Women's and girls' equal inheritance rights.

- D: Allocation of financial resources to increase women's ownership and control over land.
- E: In legal systems that recognize customary land tenure, existence of explicit protection of the land rights of women.
- F: Mandate for women's participation in land management and administration institutions.

In the context of the reporting on the SDGs, in the case of SDG indicator 5.a.2, countries are classified according to the total number of proxies found in primary legislation or in primary and secondary legislation. Given that customary land tenure rules do not exist in all countries nor is customary law recognized (related to proxy E), for the purpose of computation, a two-scale (or dual) approach has been developed.<sup>8</sup>

## Measurement of Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.a.1

Based on the recommendations from seven field tests carried out under the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) initiative,<sup>9</sup> three proxies have been identified to measure ownership or tenure rights over agricultural land:

- 1. Presence of a legally recognized document in the name of an individual.
- 2. Right to sell.
- 3. Right to bequeath.

## Coverage

Data on the extent of the legal framework for 15 countries. All available data were collected and validated by the reporting countries. As custodian agency, FAO carried out the quality assessment and aggregation of results. Data on the extent of ownership/tenure rights over agricultural land focused on adults living in agricultural households, defined as households that had operated land for agricultural purposes and/or raised livestock over the past 12 months, regardless of the final purpose of production.

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## Footnotes

1. Dugarova, E., "Gender equality as an accelerator for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals". Discussion paper, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN-Women, expert consultation, New York, 2017 and Meinzen-Dick, R., Quisumbing, A., Doss, C. and Thies, S., "Women's land rights as a pathway to poverty reduction: A framework and review of available evidence", Agricultural Systems, vol.172, June 2019 .
2. Ibid.
3. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Gender and Land Rights Database ; OECD Gender, Institutions and Development Database (GID-DB) 2019 ; and OECD, Development Centre's Social Institutions & Gender Index (SIGI) .
4. Recognizing the importance of the matter, key survey tools, such as Living Standards Measurement Studies and the 50 x 2030 Initiative for data-smart agriculture, include questions on SDG indicator 5.a.1 to fully capture the gender dimension in securing tenure rights in line with the internationally agreed methodology.
5. Evidence for this was found in rural China: see Wenjing Han, Xiaoling Zhang and Zhengfeng Zhang, "The role of land tenure security in promoting rural women's empowerment: Empirical evidence from rural China", Land Use Policy, vol. 86, July 2019 and Allendorf, K., "Do Women's Land Rights Promote Empowerment and Child Health in Nepal?", World Development, vol. 35(11), November 2007 .
6. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 (resolution 34/180).
7. Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of the Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forest.
8. For countries where customary land tenure is not recognized in the legal framework (either through a statute or the constitution), regardless of whether it exists de facto or not, Proxy E is marked non-applicable and the country is assessed using the five remaining proxies.
9. The key principles of the methodology of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 5.a.1 were developed, tested and validated in the context of the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) initiative, jointly executed by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development (UNDESA), Statistics Division, and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), in collaboration with national statistical offices, the Asian Development Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank.

## Resource allocation within households and individual poverty [The World Bank]



## Key points

- Monetary poverty measures are typically based on consumption data for the household as a whole, rather than for individual household members. However, assumption of equal sharing is not supported by available data and there are significant gender gaps in resource shares within households in some countries.
- In Bangladesh and Iraq, women's estimated resource shares are significantly lower than those of men in households with at least one adult woman and one adult man.
- Gender differences in resource shares translate into gender differences in consumption poverty, with women being poorer than men in countries where they command a lower share of household consumption.

Measuring monetary poverty at the individual level is challenging and there are data gaps in individual consumption patterns of women, men and children living in the same household

How many women, men and children are poor? This is a seemingly straightforward question, but it has no straightforward answer. Monetary poverty measures are typically based on consumption and household surveys, which usually collect consumption data for the household as a whole rather than for individual household members. As a result, individuals are typically classified as poor or non-poor in accordance with the poverty status of the household in which they live, which is an obvious problem if there is inequality in consumption within the household. Measuring differences in consumption between women, men and [children living in the same household](#) is not an easy task for two main reasons. First, it is very expensive to collect person-level spending on private goods. For example, food is consumed individually, but monitoring individual food intakes is difficult. Second, there are goods with varying degrees of shareability within households, for example, the amount of space occupied in a common dwelling or the use of a shared vehicle. Ascribing a value to services from the use of such goods to each household member is not straightforward, and it is extremely difficult to directly observe the consumption flow to individuals within households.

Individual poverty rates can be estimated through assigned goods spending disaggregated for women, men and children within a household

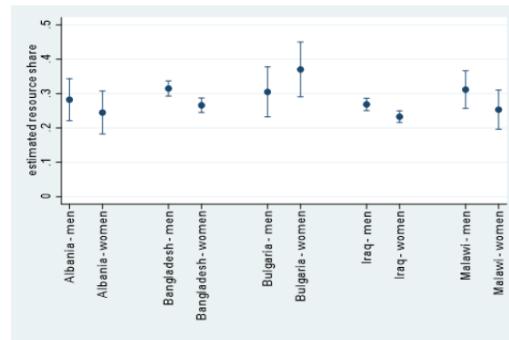
As a result of the data gap in individual consumption, researchers have long sought to estimate how resources are allocated within households by developing structural models of [household decision-making](#), based on available survey data, by "assigning" parts of household consumption to individual household members. Such structural models make assumptions on how households and individuals behave. Much of this research has sought to identify the resource share of each person in the household, defined as the fraction of household consumption attributed to a given person. The data requirements of the approach are modest: most methodologies rely on a single "assignable good", typically clothing, that is disaggregated among groups of women, men and children in most household surveys. The combination of this data and the structural model allows for the identification of resource shares of women, men and children in the household. Although the

model uses only data on assignable goods spending relative to total household consumption, the resulting resource shares measure each person's claim on total household consumption.

In Bangladesh and Iraq, women's estimated resource shares are significantly lower than those of men in households with adult women and adult men

In an effort to operationalize model-based estimates of intra-household resource allocation for poverty monitoring, the World Bank partnered with the Institute for Fiscal Studies on a joint project aimed at ascertaining whether or not these methods can be used to estimate intra-household differences in consumption using off-the-shelf national household survey data with consumption modules.<sup>1</sup> The proposed methods were applied to 12 countries on data for clothing, the assignable good, and resource shares and poverty rates of women, men and children were estimated in 5 countries: Albania, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Iraq and Malawi. The results show that equal sharing, that is, the implicit assumption underlying standard household-level poverty calculations, was rejected by the data, and that there are significant gender gaps in resource shares in some countries. Focusing on households that include at least one adult woman and one adult man, women's estimated resource shares are lower than men's in all countries, except for Bulgaria (see figure I). However, formal testing for gender differences shows that only in Bangladesh and Iraq are women's resource shares significantly different from men's. These gender differences in resource shares translate into gender differences in consumption poverty, with women being poorer than men in countries where they command a lower share of household consumption.

**Figure I:** Estimated resource shares in Albania, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Iraq and Malawi, by sex: 2003–2015 (latest available)



**Source:** Lechene, V., Pendakur, K., and Wolf, A., "OLS estimation of the intra-household distribution of expenditure", IFS Working Paper W20/06, Institute for Fiscal Studies, London, 2020 (<https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14748>) and supplementary material (correspondence with the World Bank on 15 May 2020).

**Note:** The vertical axis shows the share of household resources, both the point estimate and the confidence interval, that are allocated to women and men, holding other observable characteristics fixed at their mean. Estimates refer to a subset of households that include at least one adult woman and one adult man. Based on the Albania Living Standards Measurement Survey 2008, Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey 2015, Bulgaria Multitopic Household Survey 2003, Iraq Household Socio-Economic Survey 2006–2007 and Malawi Third Integrated Household Survey 2010–2011.

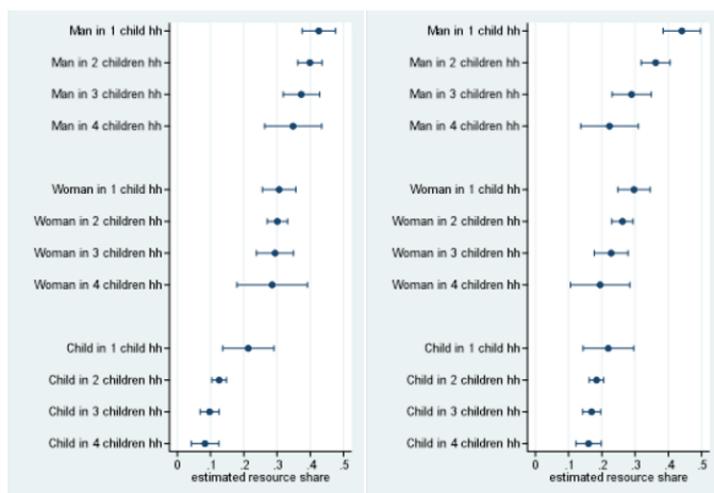
In Bangladesh, irrespective of the good assessed (food or clothing),

women's resource shares are smaller than men's, and this finding is consistent across households of different sizes (from 1–4 children)

To further validate the resource share estimates, a rare feature of the Bangladesh data was used, namely the availability of individual-level food consumption; this information was compared with the estimated resource shares based on food vis-à-vis those obtained from clothing (see figure II). Data show that, irrespective of the assignable good used (food or clothing), women's resource shares are smaller than men's, and this finding is consistent across households of different sizes (for example, differentiating between households with 1–4 children). However, children's resource shares in households with two or more children appear larger, and resource shares of adult women and men in such households are correspondingly smaller if food is used as the assignable good; this finding requires further investigation.

Overall, these results are encouraging and point towards the direction for next steps, that is, further validation of the estimated resource shares using field experiments, in order to move away from the unsatisfactory assumption of equal sharing and towards poverty measures that better reflect realities on the ground.

**Figure II:** Estimated resource shares in clothing (left) and food (right) allocated to women, men and children, by type of (1–4 children) in Bangladesh: 2015



**Source:** Lechene, V., Pendakur, K., and Wolf, A. "OLS estimation of the intra-household distribution of expenditure", IFS Working Paper W20/06, Institute for Fiscal Studies, London, 2020 (<https://wwwifs.org.uk/publications/14748>) and supplementary material (correspondence with the World Bank on 15 May 2020).

**Note:** The horizontal axis gives the percentage of household (hh) resources, both the point estimate and the confidence interval, that are allocated to a woman, man and to each child living in a household with 1–4 children, holding other observable characteristics fixed at their mean. The vertical axis are the types of individuals and household sizes. The share of household resources that goes to children has been divided by the number of children (based on the Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey 2015).

## Sources

- Dunbar, G. R., Lewbel, A., and Pendakur, K., "Children's Resources in Collective Households: Identification, Estimation, and an Application to Child Poverty in Malawi", American Economic Review, vol. 103, No.1, February 2013

- Lechene, V., Pendakur, K., and Wolf, A., "OLS estimation of the intra-household distribution of expenditure", IFS Working Paper W20/06, Institute for Fiscal Studies, London, 2020

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Resource share of an individual in a household:** Fraction of household consumption enjoyed by that person

### Coverage

Adult women and men and children within households in Albania, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Iraq and Malawi.

### Availability

Data are based on the Albania Living Standards Measurement Survey 2008, Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey 2015, Bulgaria Multitopic Household Survey 2003, Iraq Household Socio-Economic Survey 2006–2007 and Malawi Third Integrated Household Survey 2010–2011 (2003–2015, latest available data).

## Footnotes

1. The estimates, summarized in [Lechene, V., Pendakur, K., and Wolf, A., "OLS estimation of the intra-household distribution of expenditure", IFS Working Paper W20/06, Institute for Fiscal Studies, London, 2020](#), are based on a linear representation of a model proposed by [Dunbar, G. R., Lewbel, A., and Pendakur, K., "Children's Resources in Collective Households: Identification, Estimation, and an Application to Child Poverty in Malawi", American Economic Review, vol. 103, No.1, February 2013](#). They require the estimation of linear "Engel curves" for the assignable good, something that can be easily done with standard statistical software. An "Engel curve" relates the fraction of the household's budget allocated to a specific good to total household consumption. In addition, the linear representation has the advantage that it provides a simple pre-test to check some of the identifying assumptions underlying the structural model.

## Multidimensional child poverty [UNICEF]



## Key points

- Until the present time, very few differences between girls and boys have been recorded in the measurement of child poverty.
- The way to address gender differences in child poverty between girls and boys is to measure specific material shortcomings that are important for girls (for example, in menstrual hygiene management).
- In all six countries with latest available data for the period 2017–2019, estimated poverty among adolescent girls was higher than that among adolescent boys.

## Background

### **Children, in particular girls, are invisible and missing in household poverty estimates**

While it is well known that gender disparities go well beyond quantifiable issues,<sup>1</sup> it might be expected that estimates of child poverty would show a difference between girls and boys. However, during the last two decades of research and analysis of child poverty, no significant differences have been found. One explanation may be that some of the indicators traditionally used (for example, access to water and sanitation or overcrowding) apply to all children in a household, while individual-level material deprivation indicators may be selected without attention to which ones best capture gender disparities.<sup>2</sup> Finding appropriate indicators to differentiate the experience of poverty between girls and boys that both reflect the rights constitutive of poverty (material shortcomings) and are widely available across household surveys is challenging. Nevertheless, collecting this information is a priority, given its importance for policy design and focused interventions within households.

## Current situation

### **Few differences between girls and boys have been recorded in child poverty measurement**

Traditionally,<sup>3</sup> child poverty is measured at the level of the individual child (that is, it is not simply a disaggregation of a household-level estimate of poverty).<sup>4</sup> While the dimensions of poverty are matched to child rights, not all rights violations constitute child poverty.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, since all rights are equally important, all dimensions ought to be weighted equally. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF),<sup>6</sup> the child rights constitutive of poverty (that is, requiring directly and predominantly material resources to be fulfilled) are:<sup>7</sup> clothes, education, health, housing, information, nutrition, play, sanitation and water.

However, because clothes, information and play are usually not captured in household surveys and/or there are no internationally agreed criteria to establish thresholds of moderate and severe deprivation, they are not included in these estimates (nor in global reporting).

Some indicators, such as housing and water, are captured at the household level and then assigned to the individual child or children in the household. For these indicators, there is no gender difference as the number of girls and boys are fairly equal across all types of households.

It is a challenge that even among individual-based indicators (for example, health and education) there is no pronounced gender difference.<sup>8</sup>

There are at least four ways to address this challenge. One is to measure girls and boys separately. However, this raises comparability and aggregation issues. Another approach is to assign different thresholds or ladders for girls and boys for some indicators under the rationale that girls are differentially affected. For example, for purposes of safety, dignity and privacy, lower thresholds for overcrowding and sanitation could be used for girls. However, there are no internationally agreed criteria to establish these differentiated thresholds. A third alternative is to include additional indicators that are "gender-informed", that is, indicators that apply to both girls and boys but that are more likely to capture differences between them.

One way to address gender differences in child poverty is to measure specific material shortcomings that are important for girls (for example, menstrual hygiene

## management)

Including girl-specific indicators represents the fourth approach. If there are elements that girls (as girls) need to satisfy their rights, they should be measured — even if there are no equivalent (no “compensatory”) indicators to measure for boys. Menstrual hygiene management<sup>9</sup> is such an indicator, as it is specific to girls and cannot be measured for boys because they do not need it – and therefore cannot be deprived of it. However, not measuring it for girls would underestimate their material deprivation (and a violation of their right to sanitation)<sup>10</sup> for no good reason.

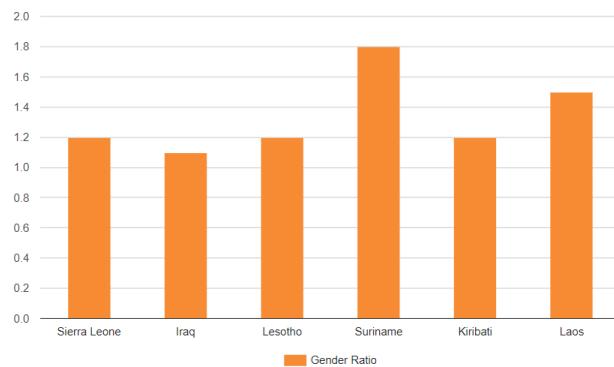
## Estimated poverty is higher among adolescent girls than adolescent boys in six countries with available data

Using the latest household surveys from the sixth round of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, an effort was made to implement the UNICEF recommendation that girl-specific indicators be included within the child poverty estimation. Menstrual hygiene management was measured, for the first time, and it has now been incorporated in UNICEF guidance on how to measure child poverty.<sup>11</sup>

Menstrual hygiene management has been included by adding a separate indicator in the sanitation dimension. The indicator comprises two elements, one is the availability of menstrual hygiene products and the other one is the availability of a secure and clean place to change.<sup>12</sup>

Available data for six countries show that the ratio of poverty among girls relative to boys (for children age 15 and older) is higher in all countries analysed (see figure). For example, in Suriname, the prevalence of poverty is 80% higher among girls than among boys, while in both Kiribati and Sierra Leone, child poverty is 20% higher among girls than boys.

**Figure : Poverty ratio among adolescent girls and boys (aged 15-17) in selected countries: 2017-2019  
(latest available)**



**Source:** United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNICEF estimates, based on Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, sixth round (<https://mics.unicef.org/faqs>).

**Note:** A ratio of greater than 1 indicates that girls' estimated poverty is higher than that of boys.

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## About the data

### Definitions

The indicator measures child poverty, specifically material shortcomings across a range of dimensions (each dimension is a right constitutive of poverty).

### Coverage

The indicator covers girls and boys under age 18.

### Availability

Data are available for six United Nations Member States and territories with latest available data for the period 2017–2019.

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## Footnotes

1. For example, the net enrolment rate at school can be at gender parity, but gender stereotypes may still be reproduced in that setting.
2. For example, immunization and stunting, which do not present significant differences between girls and boys in most countries.
3. At least since the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) commissioned the first estimate of child poverty across developing countries.
4. Sustainable Development Goal 1, indicator 1.2.2: "Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions"; conspicuously, the indicator is worded differently from other indicators in the SDG indicators framework. It does not call for disaggregation by "age and sex" instead, it mentions specifically multidimensional poverty of "men, women, and children". Moreover, a household-level estimate may omit children suffering material deprivations in families that are not counted as poor due to indicators related to adults. In some countries, this omission could be as high as 20%—30% of all children (or about half of all poor children).
5. [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\), Draft Guidelines: A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, Geneva, 2002](#) ; [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\), Human Rights Indicators: A Guide to Measurement and Implementation, United Nations, Geneva, 2012](#) .
6. [UNICEF, Measuring and monitoring child poverty, Position paper, March 2020](#).
7. Monetary income/consumption is not included, although there is a right to a minimum standard of living because: (a) it would introduce an indirect metric of poverty while all the other indicators measure deprivations directly; (b) children are not supposed to earn a living; and (c) depending on how the household surpasses the monetary poverty line, it may be harmful for children (with implications for child labour).
8. For instance: immunization under health; or school attendance under education. In the case of education, the majority of countries in the world have reached gender parity in primary school attendance, and parity is also close in secondary school in many countries. Thus, the observed differences in the education dimension are not strong enough to drive a wedge between girls and boys for overall child poverty estimates.
9. Management of hygiene associated with the menstrual process, including menstrual hygiene materials such as pads, cloths, tampons or cups, as well as having access to safe and convenient places to change in privacy.
10. Menstrual hygiene management could also be measured under health. However, there should not be a separate dimension labelled "girls" or "gender" as it would not be comparable to the other dimensions, all of which match a right.
11. [UNICEF, Measuring and monitoring child poverty, Position paper, March 2020](#) .
12. While these questions are asked of all adolescent girls and women aged 15–49, only the data for girls under age 18 are used for child poverty estimates. The two specific questions that are asked of respondents are: "Did you use any materials such as sanitary pads, tampons or cloth?" and "During your last menstrual period were you able to wash and change in privacy while at home?". Both are answered either yes or no. No deprivation occurs when both answers are "yes" while severe deprivations is established if both answers are "no". In the two intermediate situations there is moderate deprivation.

## Republic of Moldova: social protections and old age pensions



## Key points

- In the Republic of Moldova, women live longer than men (8.8 years more in 2018), oftentimes alone in financial deprivation and insecurity.
- In 2018, the proportion of women among the total population receiving any pension and receiving an old-age pension accounted for 64.5% and 70.6%, respectively.
- In 2018, old-age pension replacement rates for women (26.2%) and men (28.6%) were less than the minimum level required by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention (Convention No. 102) (at least 40%). The gender gap in the old-age pension replacement rate was more prominent among women and men aged 60–64 (2.6 percentage points) and the largest in districts in the southern part of the country.
- Seniors aged 75 and over rely significantly more on pensions as a main income source (96.6% for women and 97.6% for men) than the "younger" old, aged 60–65 (79.8% for women and 46.9% for men).
- The proportion of women receiving the "minimum amount" of old age pension decreased from 72.1% in 2017 to 52.4% in 2018 after a Government decision to adjust the minimum amount of the pension to the same level as the minimum income level guaranteed by the State.
- In 2018, women represented around half (50.3%) of pensioners with disabilities receiving disability pensions and slightly more than half (52.7%) of those receiving the minimum amount of disability pensions. Men represented 73% of those receiving the minimum amount of severe disability pensions.
- The rapid aging of Moldova's population and the high migration rates among its working-age population have put pressure on the pension system. In 2017, emigration rates reached a peak of 121 per 1,000 for men aged 25–29 and 87 per 1,000 for women aged 20–24.

## Background

The main purpose of State social protection systems is to offer social guarantees to the national population, both individuals and groups. Social protections provide non-discriminatory treatment and equal opportunities for all members of society, reducing the risk of poverty and social exclusion.<sup>1</sup> From the human rights perspective, social protection systems help to ensure an adequate standard of living, as well as necessary services and goods, providing dignity, autonomy, equality and non-discrimination, including gender equality.<sup>2</sup> For most older people, not all of whom are able to supplement their income through paid work, social protections are often the main means of ensuring economic security, helping them to meet essential needs.<sup>3</sup>

## Women live longer and are more exposed to the risks of poverty and social exclusion than men at older ages

Women in the Republic of Moldova live 8.8 years longer than men,<sup>4</sup> on average (2018). From both economic and social dimensions, women aged 60 and over are recognized as one of the most vulnerable groups because of their exposure, over a longer time span than men, to the risk of poverty and social exclusion.<sup>5</sup> The larger share of women among the elderly population, owing to their higher life expectancy, means that they are likely to live more years in financial deprivation and insecurity.

The gender gap in the standard retirement age in the Republic of Moldova was about 5 years until 1 July 2017 (age 57 for women and age 62 for men). Retirement ages are being raised annually and the age gap will be closed by 2028, after which time the retirement age will be 63 for both women and men.<sup>6</sup>

## More women than men are beneficiaries of old-age social benefits

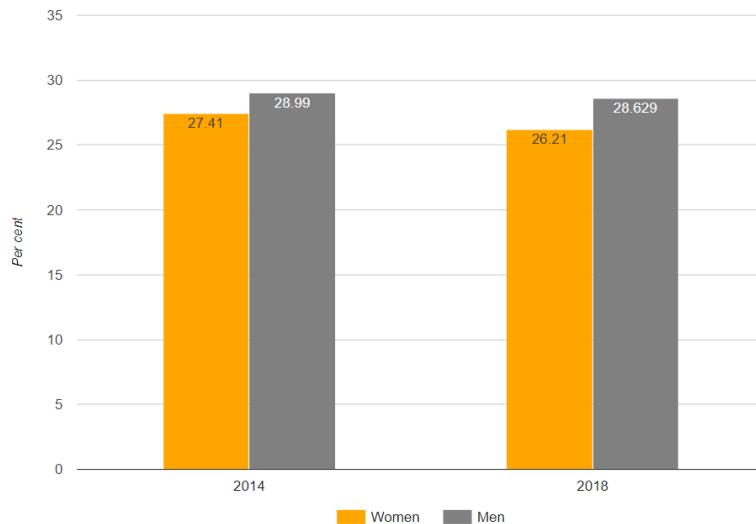
In 2018, the share of women receiving "any" pension<sup>7</sup> among total pensioners was 64.5% and their share among those receiving "old-age" pensions<sup>8</sup> was 70.6% (see figure VII b). While women were less likely than men to fulfil the eligibility requirements to obtain a State social assurance pension, they represented 65.1% of those benefiting from an elderly social allowance<sup>9</sup> in 2018.

## Women have a lower gross old-age pension replacement rate than men

The public pension system does not fully substitute for lost salary as people get older, and the low level of pensions exposes them to a higher risk of poverty; furthermore, there is a weak link between the level of income from the active period of individuals' lives with that in their post-retirement period.

The gross old-age pension replacement rate<sup>10</sup> (26.2% for women and 28.6% for men) is less than the minimum level required under the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention (Convention No. 102) (at least 40% for both men and women).<sup>11</sup> Older women often have shorter careers and lower wages than men, resulting in lower benefit entitlements. The difference in old-age pension replacement rates of men and women increased in the last 5 years, from 1.6 percentage points in 2014 to 2.4 percentage points in 2018, in favour of men, and this gap is more evident among men and women aged 60–64 (see figure I).

**Figure I:** Old-age pension replacement rate by sex: 2014 and 2018

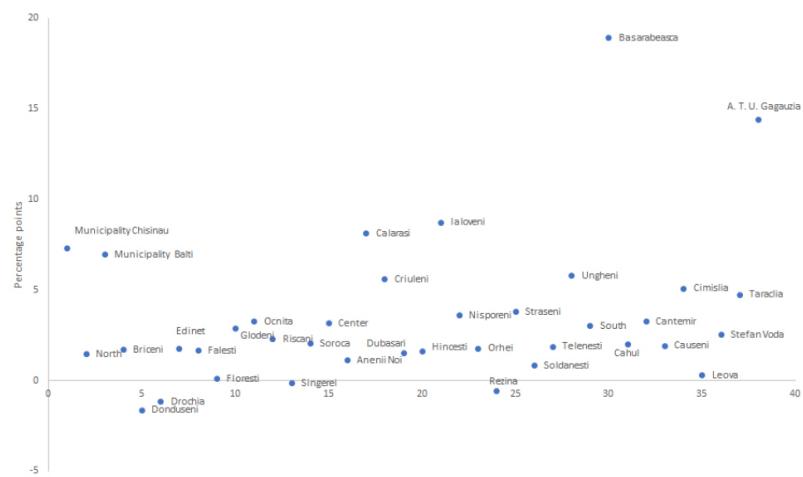


**Source:** National Insurance House, 2020 (correspondence with National Bureau of Statistics on 30 May 2020).

**Note:** The old-age pension replacement rate refers to the percentage of an individual's monthly salary earnings that is replaced by retirement income when they retire.

Across regions in the country, the biggest gender gap in the old-age pension replacement rate is registered in the southern part of the country (Basarabeasca, Autonomous Territorial Unit Gagauzia), as well as in the two most developed municipalities of the country (Bălți and Chișinău) and districts in the central region (Ialoveni and Călărași) (see figure II).

**Figure II:** Gender gap in old-age pension replacement rate by region and district: 2018 (Percentage point)



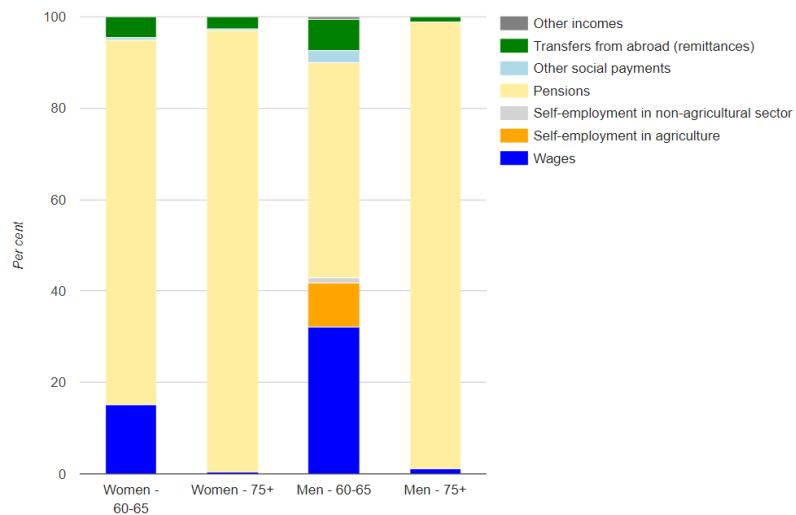
**Source:** National Social Insurance House, 2020 (correspondence with National Bureau of Statistics on 30 May 2020).

**Note:** The old-age pension replacement rate refers to the percentage of an individual's monthly salary earnings that is replaced by retirement income when they retire. The gender gap is calculated as the difference between the replacement rates of men and women. X-axis represents the districts and regions of development in the country (see <https://moldova.md/en/content/administrative-territorial-organization-moldova>). Y-axis represents the gender gap in old age pension replacement rate.

People aged 75 and over have a significantly lower income than the "younger" old, ages 60–65

Level of income represents an important factor that determines, *inter alia*, quality of life, including the ability of individuals to pursue or take part in a range of activities. Income inequality is pronounced among older persons, correlated with age, sex, health conditions, living conditions and area of residence (whether urban or rural).<sup>12</sup>

Pensions are the main income source for people aged 60 and over, representing 89.1% of the total income of women and 72.4% of men, which resulted, in 2018, in a gender difference of 16.7 percentage points. However, further disaggregation by age shows that pensions represent a lower share of main income for the "younger" old population, ages 60–65: 79.8% for women and 46.9% for men. Furthermore, in this age group, 15.1% of women have salary earnings compared to 32.2% of men. The most disadvantaged group in terms of income are people over the age of 75 who are solely reliant on a pension as their main source of income (96.6% of women compared to 97.6% of men) (see figure III). In the "younger" old age group, men generally have a larger number of income sources than women, who have fewer options in terms of income streams (pensions, wages or remittances), while "senior" old people, both women and men, mostly rely on their own resources and State support.

**Figure III:** Distribution of old population by main income sources, sex and age group: 2018 (Percentage)

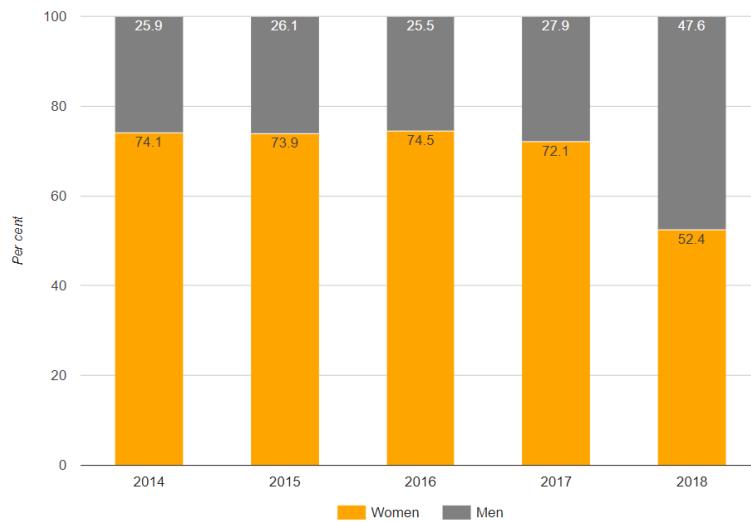
**Source:** National Bureau of Statistics, 2020 (correspondence with National Bureau of Statistics on 30 May 2020).

## Women's old-age pensions do not cover their minimum subsistence levels

The ability of older persons to live self-sufficient lives on their own resources can be measured by the ratio of the average monthly old-age pension to the minimum subsistence level<sup>13</sup> for pensioners (which is the same for women and men). While the amount of the old age pension has doubled for both women and men since 2008, the average amount of the old age pension for women is still not sufficient (96.6%) to cover basic needs relative to the minimum subsistence level for old-age pensioners; the average amount of the old-age pension for men exceeds the minimum subsistence level by 23.2%.

The most vulnerable pensioners are those receiving the "minimum" amount<sup>14</sup> of old-age pension, which covers 65% of the minimum subsistence level. During the period 2014–2017, women were more likely to receive the minimum amount of old-age pension than men (they represented over 70% of beneficiaries). Nevertheless, in 2018, in line with a Government decision, the minimum amount of the pension was adjusted to the same level as the minimum subsistence level guaranteed by the State, and the proportion of women among those receiving the minimum amount of old age pension decreased to 52.4%, compared to 47.6% for men (see figure IV).

**Figure IV:** Percentage of women among pensioners receiving the minimum amount of old-age pension: 2014-2018

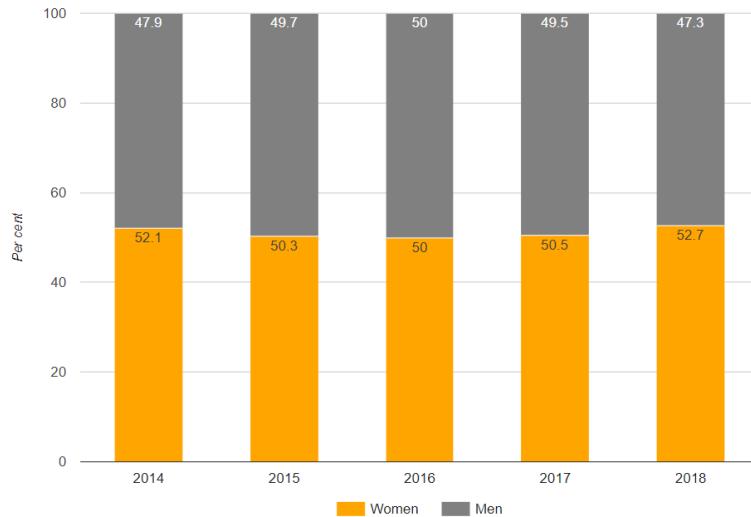


**Source:** National Social Insurance House, 2020 (correspondence with National Bureau of Statistics on 30 May 2020).

## Women with disabilities receive lower pensions and are more exposed to risks

Women represented around half (50.3%) of pensioners receiving disability pensions in 2018, and 52.7% of all those receiving the minimum amount of disability pension (see figure V). The average amount of women's disability pension covered 77.9% of the minimum subsistence level for old-age pensioners in 2018; for men, that percentage was 84.7%.

**Figure V:** Percentage of women among pensioners receiving the minimum amount of disability pension: 2014—2018

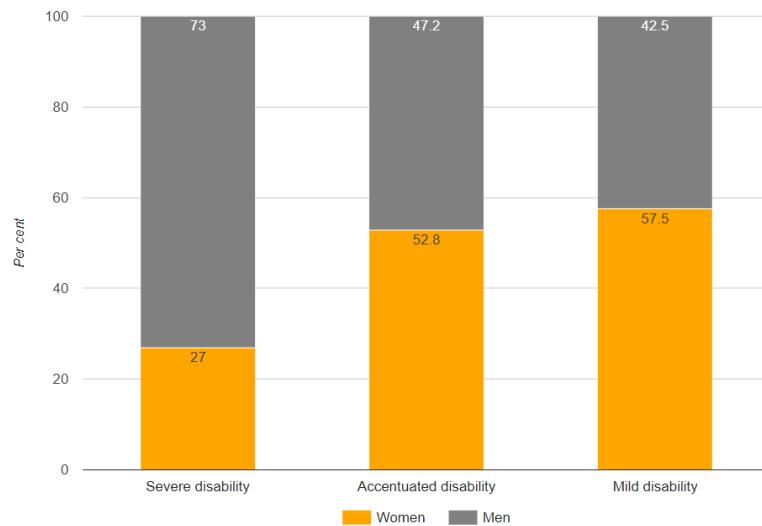


**Source:** National Social Insurance House, 2020 (correspondence with National Bureau of Statistics on 30 May 2020).

Women were more likely than men to receive the minimum amount of accentuated (52.8%) and mild disability (57.5%) pensions, while men were more likely (73%) than women (27%) to receive the minimum amount of the severe disability

pension (see figure VI).

**Figure VI:** Percentage of women among beneficiaries of the minimum amount of disability pension by type of disability: 2018



**Source:** National Social Insurance House, 2020 (correspondence with National Bureau of Statistics on 30 May 2020).

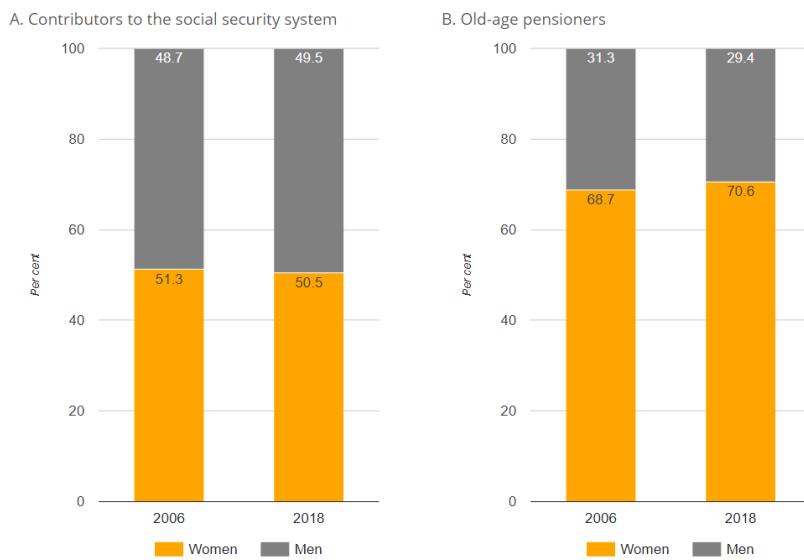
The livelihoods of older persons is insecure because of the low efficiency of the pension system

In 2019, social protection expenditures accounted for 11.1% of gross domestic product (GDP) and 33.6% of national public budget expenditures. Around 64% of social protection expenditures were spent on social protections for older people.

The Republic of Moldova is facing a weakness in terms of the sustainability of the social protection system, as evidenced in the continuous increase in the number of beneficiaries of pensions (an increase of 8.8% from 2010 to 2018), with a slight parallel increase in the number of contributors to the system (an increase of 5.4% from 2010 to 2018). Overall, the reduced financial capacity of the national social protection system has become more serious with the lowering of the ratio of its contributors to the number of pensioners (any type) benefitting from it (dropping from 1.34 in 2010 to 1.29 in 2018). The minimum required ratio, according to international practices, is 4 contributors per 1 pensioner.

Since 2006, women have become more dependent than men on the sustainability of the social protection system. While their contributions represent just over half of total contributions (50.5% for women and 49.5% for men), women comprise the majority of beneficiaries of old-age pensions (70.6% of women compared to 29.4% of men) (see figure VII).

**Figure VII:** Percentage of women among contributors to the social security system and among old age pensioners: 2006 and 2018



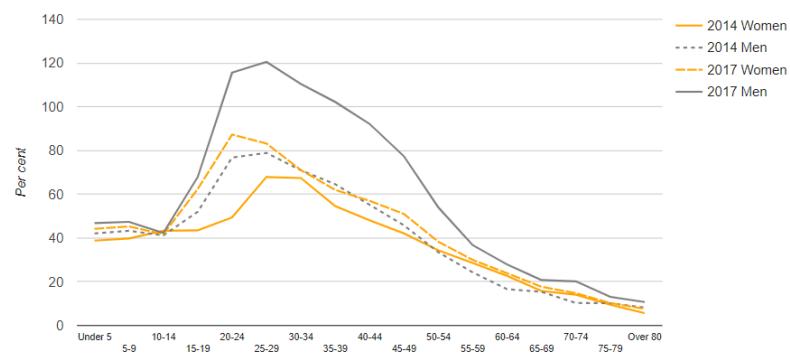
## High levels of migration weaken the actual and potential capacity of the social protection system

The high migration rate among the working-age population is an additional factor having a negative impact on the actual and potential capacity of the national social protection system, affecting people left behind and making it more difficult for migrants to access social security protections when returning home.

In the Republic of Moldova, migration, in general, and international migration in particular, have a distinctive age pattern. There are high migration rates among young-adults along with young children. During the period 2014–2017, migration rates (in both directions, immigration and emigration) increased: from 43 to 58 per 1,000, while there was a lower rate of increase in immigration, from 35 to 40 per 1,000, resulting in a yearly net negative migration balance, which increased from minus 9 per 1,000 in 2014 to minus 18 per 1,000 in 2017. In 2017, emigration rates reached a peak of 121 per 1,000 for men aged 25–29 and 87 per 1,000 for women aged 20–24.<sup>15</sup>

These high migration rates were also significant among young adults: in 2017, men aged 20–24 showed a negative migratory balance of minus 60 per 1,000 and women minus 45 per 1,000, meaning that the country lost about 6% of the male and 4.5% of the female population aged 20–24 in a single year (see figure VIII).

As a consequence, the financial stability of the public pension system has continued to erode, affecting confidence in the system.

**Figure VIII:** Emigration rates for women and men: 2014—2017

Source: Republic of Moldova, National Bureau of Statistics, 2020 (correspondence with National Bureau of Statistics on 30 May 2020).

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Gross old-age pension replacement rate**, calculated as the gross pension entitlement divided by gross salary earnings, measures how effectively a pension system provides a retirement income to replace earnings, the main source of income before retirement. The rate refers to the percentage of an individual's monthly salary that is replaced by retirement income when they retire.<sup>16</sup>

### Coverage and availability

Women and men, in particular older persons and people with disabilities, living in the Republic of Moldova (excluding districts from the east side of the Nistru river and Bender municipality).<sup>17</sup>

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## Footnotes

1. United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, Approaches to social exclusion in the Republic of Moldova: Methodological and analytical aspects, Chișinău, 2010.
2. Dávalos, M.E. et al., A human-rights based approach to the economic security of older people in Moldova, World Bank Group, Chișinău, 2017.
3. International Committee of the Red Cross, « What is economic security ? », June 2015.
4. The trend of women outliving men is often referred to as the feminization of aging.
5. United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova Profile of elderly women, Chișinău, 2016.
6. Republic of Moldova, national law on the public pension system (No.156, 1998), chap. V, Pension ages and contributions.
7. Ibid.: in the national public pension system the following categories of pensions are granted: (a) old-age (retirement) pension; (b) disability pension; (c) survivor's pension; (d) special pension (public pension established and paid according to the provisions of other laws); and (e) early retirement pension.
8. The right to an old-age (retirement) pension is granted if the conditions provided in national law No. 156 regarding standard retirement ages and the minimum contribution period of 15 years are met.
9. The right to an elderly allowance is granted by national law No. 499, 1999: a person who, upon reaching the standard retirement age, does not have the minimum contribution period required for an old-age (retirement) pension has the right to an elderly allowance.
10. Old-age pension replacement rate refers to the percentage of an individual's monthly salary earnings that is replaced by retirement income when they retire.
11. United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, Approaches to social exclusion in the Republic of Moldova: Methodological and analytical aspects, Chișinău, 2010. This indicator is calculated based on ILO Convention No. 102 on the minimum social security norms, which specifies that the minimum level of replacement of salary income by pension should not be less than 40%, for both women and men. For the economically developed countries, through ILO Convention No. 128, this replacement rate was raised to 45%, and subsequently, by ILO Recommendation 131, to 55%
12. United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova Profile of elderly women, Chișinău, 2016.
13. Minimum subsistence level represents the minimum cost of material goods and services necessary to satisfy basic needs, that is, those required to support health and maintain life. It is calculated by adding up the value of the food basket, expenditures for industrial goods and services, as well as mandatory medical and social contributions. The subsistence level is calculated for the main sociodemographic groups: children, working women and men and old-age pensioners, by place of residence (Law No. 152, 2012).
14. The minimum amount of pensions is established by the Government through the annual indexation of pensions for the following categories of pensions: old-age pension, severe disability pension, accentuated disability pension and mild disability pension (without differences by sex).
15. National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, informational note on revised population of the Republic of Moldova, including international migration, Chișinău, 2019. Emigration rates: emigrants departing the country of origin per 1.000 population in a given year.
16. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), OECD Data, Gross pension replacement rates, 2020 (last accessed on 15 September 2020).
17. Indicators herein are calculated using the proportion of the population with usual residence: **usual residence** refers to the place where a person has lived continuously for the majority of the last 12 months, not including temporary absences (inter alia, for purposes of recreation, holidays, visits to friends and relatives, business or medical treatments).