

Economic empowerment

## Time spent in unpaid work; total work burden; and work-life balance



## Key points

- On an average day, women spend about three times as many hours on unpaid domestic work and care work as men.
- Preliminary data from five developed countries on the activities of working parents during the Coronavirus-19 (COVID-19) pandemic show that while both women and men spent twice as much time on unpaid domestic work and care work during the pandemic, women still spent about two more hours per day than men on these activities.
- Gender inequality in the amount of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work is lowest in developed regions (where women spend twice as much time on domestic work as men) and the greatest in Northern Africa and Western Asia (where women spend more than seven times as much as men on unpaid domestic and care work).
- Compared to domestic work, there is less variance in the proportion of time spent on unpaid care work between the regions (around 50 minutes per day for women and 20 minutes per day for men, on average).
- In 65% of countries with comparable trend data disaggregated by sex and age category over the period 2001–2018, a small decrease has been observed in the time spent by women on unpaid domestic and care work relative to that spent by men.
- The value of unpaid work represents a substantial portion of gross domestic product (GDP) (20% to 60%) in selected countries producing estimates of the (economic) value of unpaid domestic and care work and volunteer work.
- On average, women spend about 38 more minutes per day on total work or the sum of paid and unpaid work than men, with far less variability across the regions than what is observed in terms of unpaid domestic work and care work.
- The highest proportion of countries that have ratified the ILO conventions on the reconciliation of work and family life are in developed regions, followed by a proportion of countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

## Unpaid domestic work and care work

Women continue to bear more responsibilities at home and perform most unpaid work, including taking care of children and other adult household members, cooking, cleaning and other housework.

Based on data from 89 countries for the period 2001–2018, using the latest available data and the broadest age category (people aged 15 and older) for each country, on an average day, women spend about three times as many hours in unpaid domestic work and care work as men — 4.2 hours per day for women compared to 1.7 hours per day for men.

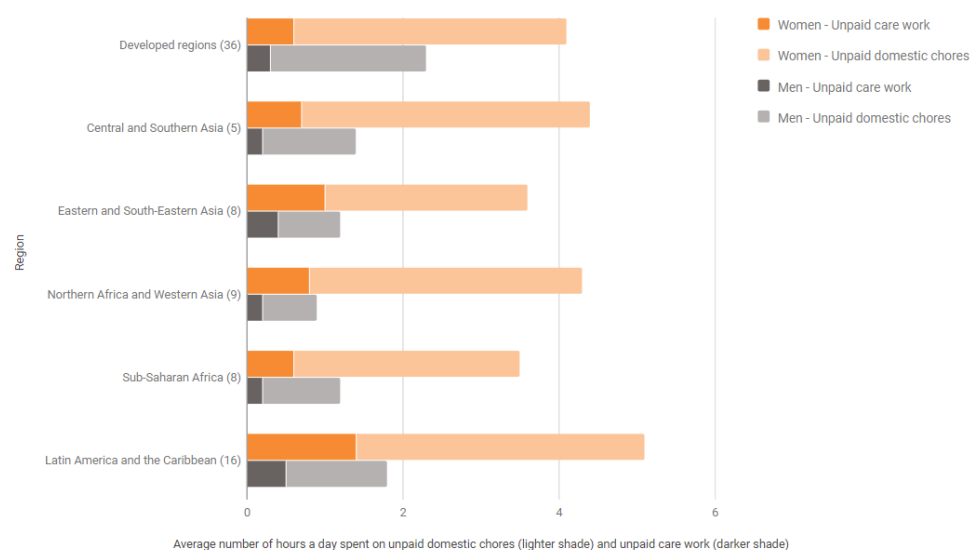
At the regional level (see figure I), countries in developed regions have the most equal distribution of unpaid domestic work and care work: women spend about 4 hours per day versus 2 hours per day for men, or twice as much time, on such activities. Countries in Northern Africa and Western Asia have the greatest level of gender

inequality in unpaid domestic work and care work: women in the region spend about 4 hours per day versus 54 minutes per day for men, or more than seven times as much.

In terms of gender differences between the amount of time spent on unpaid domestic work and care work across countries, the most egalitarian situation for women is in Sweden, where women do almost an hour more work per day than men (four hours per day for women versus three hours per day for men), and the least egalitarian situation is in Pakistan, where women spend 11 times more time on domestic work than men (almost five hours per day for women and less than half an hour per day for men).

In 24 out of the 37 countries (65%) with comparable trend data disaggregated by sex and age category over the period 2001–2018, a small decrease in the amount of time spent by women on unpaid domestic and care work relative to that spent by men has been observed in recent years.

**Figure I:** Amount of time spent by women and men on unpaid domestic work and unpaid care work in hours per day, averaged by region: 2001–2018 (latest available)



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

## Domestic work takes up the majority of time spent on unpaid work

Women in all regions worldwide spend a significantly higher portion of their day on domestic work, such as cleaning or cooking, totaling approximately 3.4 hours per day, while men spend, on average, 1.4 hours per day. In contrast, there is less variability between regions and by sex in unpaid care work devoted to caring for children or parents, although, on average, women still devote a higher percentage of their day to these activities than men (roughly 50 minutes per day for women compared to 20 minutes per day for men). These data suggest that, in general, women and men divide their time more equally in caring activities than they do in domestic ones, although this is not the case in all regions (see figure I). It should also be noted that caring activities are difficult to measure accurately as they often overlap with other activities.

At the regional level (see figure I), Developed Regions has the most equal distribution of unpaid care work (women spend about 38 minutes per day on unpaid care, men about 18), and Northern Africa and Western Asia

has the greatest gender inequality, with women spending more than six times as much time on unpaid care work than men (48 minutes per day for women and 12 minutes per day for men, on average).

At the country level, Honduras, where women spend about 26 minutes per day on unpaid care and men 20 minutes, presents the most egalitarian situation. The least egalitarian situation is in Qatar, where women spend 14 times more time on unpaid care work than men (approximately half an hour per day for women and two minutes per day for men, on average). Stories on the [income of the employed population and unpaid work time, time spent on unpaid work of young people](#) and [income poverty and time poverty](#) provide in-depth analysis of the amount of time spent on unpaid work in Latin America.

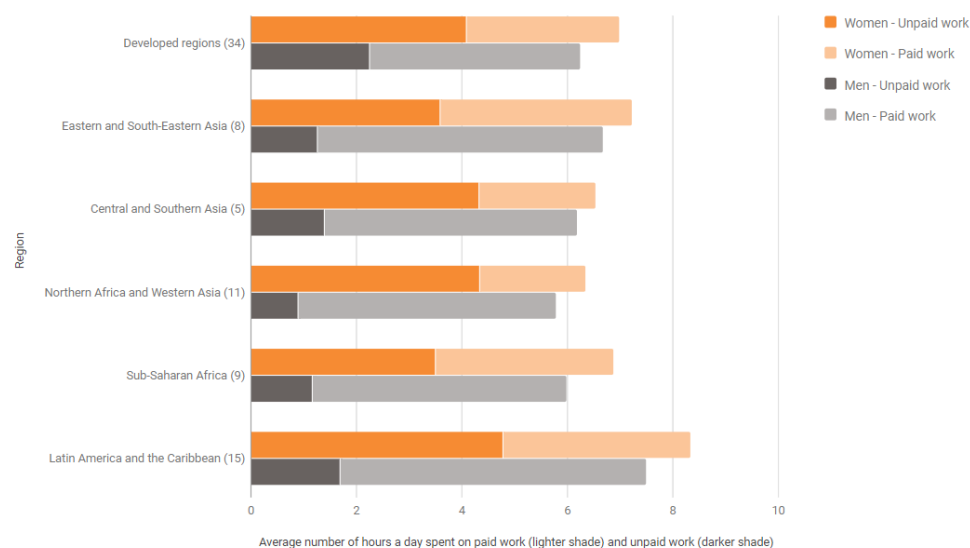
## Total work burden on women and men: similar hours, different tasks

The total work burden is the average number of hours spent per day doing both paid and unpaid work. Unpaid work refers to unpaid domestic work, care work as well as community or volunteer work, while [paid work](#) refers to work activities for which a person earns a payment or makes a profit. Based on data from 82 countries for the period 2001–2018, on average, women spend slightly under 7 hours per day and men about 6 hours and 20 minutes per day doing paid and unpaid work, resulting in women working 38 extra minutes each day.

At the regional level (see figure II), gender differences in terms of the total work burden are not large. The smallest gender differences were in Central and Southern Asia (where both men and women work about 6.5 hours, on average, with women working 21 extra minutes per day) and in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (where both men and women work about 7 hours, on average, with women working 33 extra minutes per day). The largest gender differences were observed in Sub-Saharan Africa, where women work almost 7 hours per day and men 6 hours per day, with women working extra 53 minutes per day. The composition of the total work burden differed by gender, however, with women in all regions spending more time on unpaid work and men spending more time on paid work.

Thus, although the gender gap in total work is minor, it is not a real indication of gender equality: as discussed above, despite indications of improvement over time, women still spend, on average, 3 times as many hours per day as men, and sometimes as much as 11 times more (in Pakistan), on unpaid work. These data indicate that men continue to spend more time than women in paid jobs, while women continue to spend more time at home performing unpaid care work and unpaid domestic work (see figure II). While the gender difference in the average amount of time spent on total work is not as dramatic as for unpaid work, it should not be ignored. Consistently working an hour more every day than one's partner can affect women's physical and mental health and well-being. [Colombia's story](#) on unpaid and paid work provides a country-level analysis of the situation.

**Figure II:** Total work burden in hours per day spent on paid and unpaid work by region and sex: 2001-2018 (latest available)



Source: UNDESA, Statistics Division, United Nations Portal on Minimum Set of Gender Indicators (accessed in June 2020)  
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/capacity-development/tools/tool/portal-on-minimum-set-of-gender-indicators/>

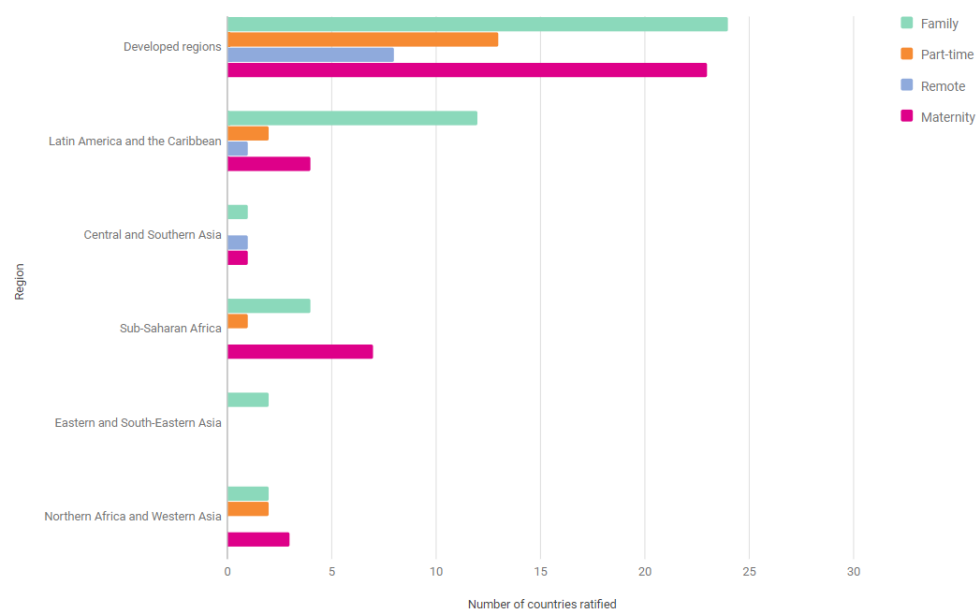
## ILO conventions on the reconciliation of work and family life

Giving women and men the opportunity to make a conscious decision about how much time to spend on caring for family members, domestic work and career development is important for gender equality. In the absence of provisions in the workplace that grant employees the flexibility to effectively combine paid work and unavoidable unpaid work, women and men may end up stuck in traditional gender roles. In this regard, there are four conventions adopted by ILO that address the reconciliation of work and family life: ILO Convention No. 156 (adopted in 1981) (Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention), which prohibits discrimination of workers based on their family status and calls upon employers to take the needs of such workers into account, including by providing childcare; ILO Convention No. 175 (adopted in 1994) (Part-Time Work Convention), which calls upon employers to provide the equivalent conditions to their part-time employees that are enjoyed by their full-time employees, such as social security, equal hourly wages and the bargaining rights; ILO Convention No. 177 (adopted in 1996) (Home Work Convention), created to improve the employment situation of homeworkers, or as more commonly called, remote workers, by advocating for their equal treatment with onsite employees, including remuneration and access to social security; and ILO Convention No. 183 (adopted in 2000) (Maternity Protection Convention), which advocates for the provision of maternity leave for pregnant and nursing women. Collectively, the ratification of these four conventions promotes gender equality as it allows people to continue to participate in the workforce to the degree that they desire regardless of their family obligations.

Overall, more countries in Developed Regions have ratified<sup>1</sup> the ILO conventions on the reconciliation of work and family life (see figure III), followed by a number of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Among countries in Central and Southern Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, very few have ratified the ILO conventions, while among countries in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) not one single ILO convention has been ratified. In terms of specific conventions, ILO Convention No. 156 (Workers with Family

Responsibilities Convention) has been ratified by 45 countries and ILO Convention No. 183 (Maternity Protection Convention) has been ratified by 38 countries. In contrast, ILO Convention No. 175 (Part-Time Work Convention) has been ratified by only 18 countries and ILO Convention No. 177 (Home-Work Convention) by only 10 countries. These data indicate that countries are more supportive of maternity leave and the equal treatment of employees, regardless of their family status, than the equality of part-time workers or remote workers with regular full-time onsite employees. These conventions should not be overlooked by countries since working part time or from home enables women to participate in the workforce when conventional full-time employment is incompatible with their family situation.

**Figure III:** Ratification of ILO conventions on the reconciliation of work and family life by region and convention: April 2020



Source: International Labour Organization (ILO), NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards (<https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/?n=NORMI:EXPUR:1:0>) (accessed in April 2020).

## Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is radically changing how people, particularly women, spend their time — sometimes with a negative impact on their well-being. The national statistical offices of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Italy have collected data on time use during the COVID-19 lockdown. In the United Kingdom<sup>2</sup> it was found that, although there is still a gender gap in unpaid work, with women continuing to do more unpaid household work and childcare than men, there was an observed increase in the proportion of men performing these tasks compared to the period before the pandemic. Thus, the gender gap in the average time spent on unpaid domestic and care work has been reduced during the pandemic (pre-COVID-19, just over two hours per day for men and almost four hours per day for women; during COVID-19, almost 2.5 hours per day for men and about 3.5 hours per day for women). Similarly, although men report spending more time on paid work than women, the gender gap has been reduced during COVID-19 (pre-COVID-19, about 3 hours and twenty minutes per day for men and over 2 hours per day for women, with men working an hour and six minutes more per day; during COVID-19, just under 3 hours per day for men and just over two hours per day for women, with men working 47 minutes more per day, on average). Both men and women reported having more free time for

entertainment and socializing during the pandemic, and the gender gap with regard to those activities was also reduced (with men still reporting spending more time on entertainment and socializing than women). The questions in the survey undertaken by Italy's National Institute of Statistics<sup>3</sup> were mainly qualitative (asking people if they spent the same/more/less time on certain activities compared to pre-COVID-19). Overall, 67.2% of respondents reported devoting more time to unpaid care work (both mothers and fathers) than prior to COVID-19. The story on the [lockdown and gender in Italy](#) provides more specific details at the country level.

While data from national statistical offices on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the use of time are still scarce, a recent survey done by the Boston Consulting Group in France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States of America found that since the advent of COVID-19 the amount of time spent on unpaid work has doubled for both working women and men who have children. Nevertheless, on average, women spent 15 hours more per week, or just over two hours more per day, on unpaid domestic and care work compared to men, a marked increase over the 10 hours or more per week (about 1.5 hours more per day) prior to the pandemic.<sup>4</sup> In early May 2020, a poll of 18 countries conducted by Ipsos,<sup>5</sup> revealed that women have taken on a lot more responsibility for household domestic work and care of children and family during the pandemic. Across the 18 countries, on average, women were 4% more likely than men to say that they strongly agreed that their care load had increased during the pandemic. Mexico had the largest gender gap in responses, with 53% of women strongly agreeing with the statement, compared to only 41% of men.<sup>6</sup> Additional data collected by the United Nations Entity on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) for six countries in Asia tells a similar story: unpaid domestic and care work has intensified during the pandemic, and women continue to take on the majority of it. In addition, women are also more likely than men to report that they are in charge of unpaid childcare, unpaid adult care and unpaid domestic work, while men tend to focus on tasks like shopping for the household, making repairs and playing with children, which, overall, are less time consuming.<sup>7</sup>

## The value of unpaid work represents up to 60% of gross domestic product (GDP) in selected countries

In addition to measuring time spent on unpaid domestic work, there is a strong argument for measuring its monetary value. Conventional statistics grossly understate the total contribution of women to the economy using traditional macroeconomic indicators, such as the gross domestic product (GDP), and do not account for unpaid work or unpaid household service work, about two-thirds of which are performed by women.<sup>8</sup> At the international level, it has been widely acknowledged<sup>9</sup> that proper recognition and valuation of unpaid household service work would help to uncover hidden aspects of the economy and raise vital policy issues that have long remained invisible.

While not many countries estimate the economic value of unpaid work, the results from the ones that do demonstrate the significant value of domestic work and care work. For example, the value of unpaid household service work conducted in Australia relative to GDP ranks second highest among all other economic activities in the country, and in 2006, the value of unpaid household service work ranged from \$416 billion to \$586 billion, representing 41.6% to 58.7% of national GDP for that year.<sup>10</sup> In the Republic of Moldova, it was found that, on average, the monthly value of unpaid household service work in 2014 was 4.1 billion Moldovan leu. For the whole year, the estimated value of unpaid household service work was 48.9 billion Moldovan leu or about \$3.5 billion, representing 43.6% of the national GDP in 2014.<sup>11</sup> In Switzerland, the monetary value of all unpaid household service work in 2013 was estimated at 401 billion Swiss francs (SwF), or 63% of the country's GDP for that year (estimated at about 635 billion SwF). Unpaid domestic work alone amounted to approximately 267 billion SwF (67% of the total value of unpaid work). Unpaid care work carried out at home were estimated at 93 billion SwF (23% of the total value of unpaid work) and formal and informal voluntary work at 41 billion SwF (10% of the total

value). Work done by women in Switzerland accounted for 60% of the total value of unpaid work overall: this percentage varied depending on the field of activity, amounting to 61% for unpaid domestic work, approximately 62% for unpaid care work and 52% for voluntary work.<sup>12</sup> In Latin America, it is estimated that the value of unpaid work is between 15.2% of GDP in Ecuador and 25.3% of GDP in Costa Rica.<sup>13</sup> The story about the situation of women and men in [Mexico](#) provides an in-depth analysis of the economic value of unpaid work.



# About the data

## Definitions

- **Unpaid domestic work:** Refers to unpaid activities related to the maintenance of the household, including food preparation, dishwashing, cleaning, upkeep of the home, laundry, ironing, gardening, caring for pets, shopping, installation servicing and repair of personal and household goods
- **Unpaid care work:** Refers to unpaid activities for the purpose of taking care of others, which includes childcare and care of the sick, older persons or disabled household members.
- **Total work burden of women and men:** Combines both paid and unpaid work
  - **Paid work:** Refers to work-related activities in formal or informal employment for pay or profit
  - **Unpaid work:** Includes both unpaid domestic work and unpaid care work (described above), as well as community or volunteer work related to domestic work or care.
- **ILO Convention No. 156 (adopted in 1981) (Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention):** Aims to promote equality of opportunity and treatment in the labour market for women and men with family responsibilities. The Convention applies to women and men workers with responsibilities for their dependent children or other members of their immediate family who need their care or support.<sup>14</sup>
- **ILO Convention No. 175 (adopted in 1994) (Part-Time Work Convention):** Recognizes the importance of productive and freely chosen employment for all workers, as well as the economic importance of part-time work.<sup>15</sup>
- **ILO Convention No. 177 (adopted in 1996) (Home Work Convention):** Aims to improve the employment situation of homeworkers (presently called remote workers).<sup>16</sup>
- **ILO Convention No. 183 (adopted in 2000) (Maternity Protection Convention):** Aims to improve the employment situation of mothers or expectant mothers.<sup>17</sup>

## Coverage

- **Unpaid care work:** Data are available for 89 countries<sup>18</sup> for the period 2001–2018 (the latest available year for each country was used): data presented for this indicator are expressed as a percentage of time spent per day on unpaid domestic work and care work (for a portion of the narrative, data were converted into hours spent per day).<sup>19</sup>
- **Total work burden:** Data are available for 82 countries for the period 2001–2018 (using the

latest available year for each country).<sup>20</sup> Data presented for this indicator are expressed as an average number of hours per day. Countries are organized by **regional groupings** under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators framework.

- **ILO Conventions:** ILO compiles a list of countries that adopt each convention and updates it regularly, including the dates of adoption and the dates they go into effect. The list is available on the website of the NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards.<sup>21</sup>

---

Footnotes

1. For the purpose of the present review, countries that have ratified the ILO Convention without it yet being in force are also included in the list of ratified countries.
2. Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Office for National Statistics, "Coronavirus and how people spent their time under lockdown: 28 March to 26 April 2020".
3. Government of Italy, National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), "Day-diary and activities during Coronavirus-19" (Italian original).
4. Krentz, M., Kos, E., Green, A. and Garcia-Alonso, J., "Easing the COVID-19 Burden on Working Parents", Boston Consulting Group, 21 May 2020.
5. Ipsos is a multinational market research company based in Paris.
6. Azcona, G., Bhatt, A. and Love, K., "Ipsos survey confirms that COVID-19 is increasing women's workload at home", United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), 9 July 2020.
7. United Nations Entity on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), Surveys show that COVID-19 has gendered effects in Asia and the Pacific, April 2020 (section on unpaid care and domestic work).
8. Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Guide on Valuing Unpaid Household Service Work, New York and Geneva, 2017.
9. UNDESA, Statistics Division, SDG Indicators, metadata repository.
10. Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Guide on Valuing Unpaid Household Service Work, New York and Geneva, 2017.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Repository of information on time use in Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago, 2019.
14. International Labour Organization (ILO) Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention.
15. ILO Part-Time Work Convention.
16. ILO Home-Work Convention.
17. ILO Maternity Protection Convention.
18. Countries collecting time-use statistics around the world use different methods, which may affect the comparability of data across countries. Ongoing methodological developments will improve data harmonization and international comparability: see United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, Demographic and Social Statistics: United Nations Expert Group on Innovative and Expert Ways to Collect Time-Use Statistics.
19. See also UNDESA, Statistics Division, Global SDGs Indicators Database, which presents metadata on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
20. Data for latest available year for each country for the period 2001–2018; some countries had data for earlier periods.
21. ILO, Normalex Information System on International Labour Standards.

## Unpaid work and income poverty in countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region [ECLAC]



## Key points

- Women in lowest-income households spend more time on unpaid work compared to women in highest-income households (39 hours versus 29 hours per week); in contrast, there is little difference in the amount of time men in both lowest-income and highest-income households spend on unpaid work, on average, less than one hour per day. For this reason, the gender gap in time spent on unpaid work is even wider in lowest-income households.
- In 2017, for every 100 men living in poor households in the Latin America, there were 113 women in the same situation, a ratio that remained stable over the period 2012–2017.

## Time poverty and income poverty: a vicious circle in countries in Latin America

Time-use data allow for the evaluation of public policies and programmes from an innovative perspective: an analysis of time-use data, based on household income per capita as a stratification variable in six Latin American countries, shows that women in lowest-income households spend more time on unpaid work than women in highest-income households. This is partly related to the size and dependency ratio of lowest-income households, which tend to have specific family structures.<sup>1</sup>

The differences in unpaid working time are significant: while women in the poorest households (quantile I, poorest 20% of households) spend an average of 39 hours per week on unpaid work, those in the wealthiest households (quantile V, wealthiest 20% of households) spend around 29 hours per week on unpaid work, an average of 10 hours less. Meanwhile, the differences in the amount of time spent on unpaid work between men in households in the poorest and wealthiest quintiles is not significant, generally less than one hour per day.

Data show that men's contribution to domestic and care work is generally independent of their socioeconomic stratum, and that the gender gap in time spent on unpaid work is wider and more unequal in lowest-income households.

Monetary poverty and lack of time sustain a vicious circle that is difficult to break without policies focused on strengthening women's economic autonomy. The burden of unpaid work that has historically been assigned to women hinders their access to the labour market and thus their ability to generate their own income; this situation is even more pronounced in households with children under the age of five.

In addition, women in poor households are unable to acquire goods and services that could save time on domestic and care work and there is a lack of quality public services that provide care for children, older persons and persons with disabilities and with chronic illnesses, a regressive situation that is set to worsen, given the ongoing demographic changes in the region, including a rise in the older population.

**Figure:** Time spent in unpaid work (in hours per week) by women and men aged 15 and older in selected countries in Latin America by income quintile: 2014, 2016 and 2017 (latest available)



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of the repository of information on time use in Latin America and the Caribbean (<https://oig.cepal.org/en/infographics/repository-information-time-use-latin-america-and-caribbean>).

**Note:** Q I denotes quintile I: poorest 20% of households and Q V denotes quintile V: the wealthiest 20% of households.

Poverty reduction measures in the region have not benefited men and women equally, nor have they advanced at the same pace. In general, poor households contain a higher proportion of women of ages at which productive and reproductive demands are the greatest. In 2017, for every 100 men living in poor households in the region, there were 113 women in the same situation.

Moreover, despite variations in the regional poverty level, the femininity index of poverty (the ratio of women to men living in poverty) remained relatively constant during the period 2012–2017, with values between 1.13 and 1.14, equivalent to 113 to 114 women for every 100 men.<sup>2</sup>

In the case of extreme poverty, the index has been equally stable, with a slight increase between 2014 and 2016, before falling in 2017, returning to a level similar to the 2012 level, that is, 1.16, representing 116 women for every 100 men.<sup>3</sup> The poverty suffered by women in Latin America is closely linked to the barriers they face in carrying out paid work.

The strong link between time and income means that lack of time worsens or reproduces poverty; for this reason, time-use analysis is fundamental to a more comprehensive and multidimensional management of this phenomenon.

## Related stories and further reading

- [Unpaid work and total work burden](#)
- [Youth "not in employment, education or training" \(NEET\) and unpaid work in Latin America](#)

## About the data

## Definitions

- **Unpaid work:** in this story refers to 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.<sup>4</sup>

## Coverage

Women living in six selected countries in Latin America.

## Availability

Data on the six selected countries in Latin America have been provided by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

## Footnotes

1. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Social Panorama of Latin America 2016, Santiago, 2017.
2. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Women's autonomy in changing economic scenarios, Santiago, 2019.
3. Ibid.
4. International Labour Organization (ILO), Department of Statistics (ILOSTAT), Unpaid work, subsistence production, unpaid care work and volunteer work.



Economic empowerment

## Mexico: economic impact of unpaid work on households



## Key points

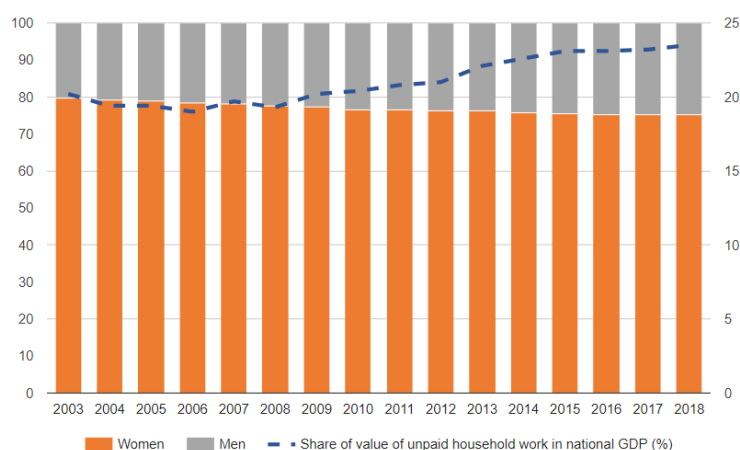
- The value of unpaid domestic and care work in Mexico increased from \$78.8 billion in 2003 to \$274.2 billion in 2018, accounting for 23.5% of Mexico's gross domestic product in 2018.
- In Mexico, women work a total of 10 hours a day, on average, while men work 8.1 hours. Women also dedicate more hours to unpaid domestic and care work, spending an average of 37.9 hours per week, while men spend 14.9 hours per week on unpaid domestic and care work.

## Economic valuation of unpaid domestic and care work

In the context of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995,<sup>1</sup> it is informative to examine the evolution of unpaid domestic and care work in Mexican households. In terms of monetary value, the contribution to the national GDP made by unpaid services provided by households, increased from \$78.8 billion in 2003 to \$274.2 billion in 2018. The value of unpaid domestic and care work expressed as a share of GDP, which remained above 20% over a 10-year span, accounted for 23.5% of GDP in 2018 (see figure I).

Although these unpaid activities are not traded in the economy, the estimate of their monetary value (23.5% of GDP in 2018) is comparatively larger than the GDP generated by sectors of the Mexican economy such as commerce (18.8%) and the manufacturing industry (17.3%). The value of unpaid work of Mexican women alone (who carry out 75.1% of the total unpaid work of Mexican households), represents 17.7% of the national GDP, a higher share than manufacturing. The dedicated story on [unpaid work and total work burden](#) provides more information on this subject.

**Figure I:** Proportion of unpaid domestic and care work undertaken by women and men and share of unpaid work in the gross domestic product of Mexico: 2003–2018



Sources: National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), *Unpaid Household Work: Satellite Account of Mexico 2018*, Mexico, 2019.

## Unpaid household work, by whom, for whom

By adding up the total of paid and unpaid work performed by the entire population, it is evident that Mexican women have a larger total amount of the workload compared to Mexican men, since for every 10 hours worked by women, men worked only 8.1 hours. Women dedicate more hours to unpaid domestic and care work: in 2018 they spent an average of 37.9 hours per week, which in some cases represented a second working day per week for women with a paid job, which, on average, took up to 41.3 hours a week. In contrast, men spent 53.6 hours on paid work and only 14.9 hours on unpaid domestic and care work.

In terms of specific unpaid activities, women also carried out the bulk of those tasks, food preparation being the activity that represented the highest burden, taking up 31.3% of the total amount of weekly time. Time spent on general health care provided to household members represented 18.2% of women's time per week, while also representing the most important economic contribution (see figure II).

**Figure II:** Distribution of weekly hours and economic value of unpaid domestic and care work done by women and men by type of function: 2018 (Percentage)



Source: INEGI, Unpaid Household Work: Satellite Account of Mexico 2018, Mexico, 2019.

Taking into consideration the average economic value of unpaid household work per person in 2018, each Mexican woman contributed the equivalent of \$2,959 annually to the household, a figure roughly equivalent to 1.8 times the national minimum wage (\$1,600). While women's contribution in terms of unpaid household work varies according to their sociodemographic characteristics, location and family composition (see table), their contribution is consistently larger than that of men. The dedicated stories submitted by [Colombia](#) and the [Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean](#) provide additional information on this topic.

In addition, in order to analyse the subject in detail, several studies have been carried out, including the measurement of unpaid domestic work relative to the population under age 12. Around 8.8 million girls and boys between ages 5 and 11 carry out unpaid household domestic and care activities. In 2018, girls spent an average of 4.2 hours per week on these activities, while boys spent 4.0 hours per week, which shows that socially assigned roles begin from as young as 5 years of age, when girls are charged with greater responsibility for domestic and care work than boys. In terms of monetary value, this means that each girl between the ages of 5 and 11 works for the equivalent of \$299 per year.

Another contribution derived from these studies is the simulator of the economic value of domestic and care work, a tool intended to contribute to the understanding of the economic importance of unpaid household work in contributing to the well-being of the household and its members, based on the acknowledgement of the value that individuals contribute through daily domestic and care work.

**Table:** Number of hours and annual economic value of unpaid domestic and care work done by women and men, by socioeconomic factors, education and age group: 2018

| Women   |   |                               |                                     | Men                             |   |   |                                 |                                     |                     |                                |
|---|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
|   |   |                               |                                     | National average                |   |   |                                 |                                     |                     |                                |
|   |   |                               |                                     | 2 049                           | Annual hours                                      | 750   |                                 |                                     |                     |                                |
|   |   |                               |                                     | 2 959                           | Annual economic value (\$)                        | 1 111   |                                 |                                     |                     |                                |
|   |   |                               |                                     | Urban                           | Rural   | Place of residence                                  | Urban                           | Rural                               |                     |                                |
|   |   |                               |                                     | 1 999                           | 2 220   | Annual hours  | 783                             | 641                                 |                     |                                |
|   |   |                               |                                     | 2 896                           | 3 175   | Annual economic value (\$)                          | 1 152                           | 977                                 |                     |                                |
|   |   |                               |                                     | With children under 6 years old | Without children under 6 years old                | Presence of children under age 6 in the household   | With children under 6 years old | Without children under 6 years old  |                     |                                |
|   |   |                               |                                     | 2 625                           | 1 790   | Annual hours  | 846                             | 712                                 |                     |                                |
|   |   |                               |                                     | 3 785                           | 2 589   | Annual economic value (\$)                          | 1 271                           | 1 048                               |                     |                                |
|   |   |                               |                                     | Single                          | Married or in-union                               | Separated, divorced or widowed                      | Marital situation               | Single                              | Married or in-union | Separated, divorced or widowed |
|   |   |                               |                                     | 1 142                           | 2 614   | 1 797   | Annual hours                    | 671                                 | 782                 | 902                            |
|   |   |                               |                                     | 1 655                           | 3 780   | 2 568   | Annual economic value (\$)      | 972                                 | 1 181               | 1 263                          |
| 12 to 19  | 20 to 39  | 40 to 59                      | 60 and more                         | Age group                       | 12 - 19   | 20 to 39  | 40 - 59                         | 60 and more                         |                     |                                |
| 1 114   | 2 407   | 2 283                         | 1 768                               | Annual hours                    | 641   | 810   | 755                             | 749                                 |                     |                                |
| 1 600   | 3 545   | 3 273                         | 2 448                               | Annual economic value (\$)      | 942   | 1,212   | 1 129                           | 1 071                               |                     |                                |
| Without education or incomplete primary education | Completed primary or incomplete secondary education | Completed secondary education | Some years of high school education | Level of education              | Without education or incomplete primary education | Completed primary or incomplete secondary education | Completed secondary education   | Some years of high school education |                     |                                |
| 1 997   | 1 904   | 2 292                         | 2 009                               | Annual hours                    | 590   | 653   | 759                             | 862                                 |                     |                                |
| 2 807   | 2 738   | 3 330                         | 2 936                               | Annual economic value (\$)      | 879   | 975   | 1 130                           | 1 269                               |                     |                                |

Source: INEGI, Unpaid Household Work: Satellite Account of Mexico 2018, Mexico, 2019.

## Unpaid health care, a support to the health system

In an analysis of data series from 2003 to 2018, there is an observable shift in the health services offered by the market to the household sphere. Although health services in Mexico have been increased to meet the needs of the sick, they have also been complemented, to a significant degree, by an increase in unpaid household care.

In 2018, the total amount of time spent in providing unpaid health care amounted to more than 5,656 million hours, 68.5% of which were spent within the household (on temporary care, preventive care and specialized care), and the rest as support to other households, either directly or through non-profit organizations providing health-care services. Within households, care for the chronically ill or those with disabilities took up 27.8% of the time. Of the total proportion of unpaid work, 69.0% was carried out by women and 31.0% by men; the majority of care provided by women within the household was specialized care, while men mainly handled preventive care.

The economic value of unpaid health care amounted to \$18.8 billion in 2018, equivalent to 1.6% of national GDP. Had families been obliged to hire a person to provide health care for their members in need, for every \$100 spent, about \$50 would have been spent on members with disabilities or chronic illness; \$22 to provide health assistance to members with a temporary health-related condition (flu, cough or headache) or on a preventive basis, and the remaining \$28 to help other households and/or as volunteer work for health-care related non-profit organizations.

Measuring and valuing unpaid household domestic and care work and acknowledging the greater burden of those activities on women than men, help to provide an integral view into the total contribution of women to the economy and the well-being of households in Mexico.

In this context, the national Supreme Court of Justice concluded that "the economic contribution of unpaid household domestic work represents monetary savings, because to obtain the same level of well-being in the household without doing such work would imply the payment of large amounts of money".

## Sources

- National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), System of National Accounts of Mexico. Unpaid Household Work Satellite Account of Mexico 2018, Mexico, 2019.
- INEGI, National Survey on Time Use (ENUT) 2014, Basic tables, Mexico, 2015.
- Mexico, Supreme Court of Justice, Direct protection in review 1754/2015 (Spanish original).

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Time spent on unpaid work:** Includes time spent on unpaid domestic chores such as cleaning or cooking; unpaid care work entails taking care of others, including childcare, help to other households and volunteer work.
- **Total work burden:** Total of time spent on paid and unpaid work.
- **Paid work:** Work-related activities in formal or informal employment, carried out for pay or profit.
- **Value of unpaid work:** Amount of money<sup>2</sup> that a particular unpaid activity (for example, childcare) would cost in the market. It can also be expressed as a share of gross domestic product (GDP).

### Coverage

Population carrying out unpaid work in Mexico: women aged 12 and older in selected population groups.

---

## 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, annexes I and II.
2. In all cases throughout the indicator, amounts of money are given in United States dollars (\$).

Economic empowerment

Colombia: total workload of women and men; discriminatory attitudes towards women in the workplace; and unemployment





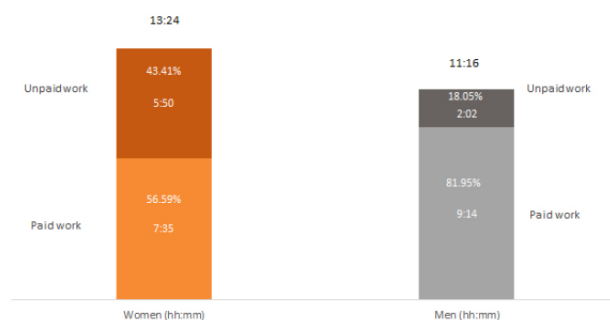
## Key points

- In Colombia, in 2017: employed women spent 2 hours and 8 minutes more than employed men in paid and unpaid work per day; in the population aged 10 years and older, women worked 2 hours and 10 minutes more than men — this gap persists across all age groups.
- While gender gaps in paid work for indigenous persons (1:32 hours, with women working 5:31 hours and men 7:03) and for Afro-Colombians (1:54 hours, with women working 6:54 hours and men 8:48) were similar to the gender gap in the total population (1:39 hours, with women working 7:35 hours and men 9:14), indigenous and Afro-Colombian women and men spent proportionately less time in paid work than women and men in the total population.
- Cultural norms and traditional gender roles contribute to the sexual division of labour, with older persons and people living in rural areas tending to agree with the following statement: "The head of the home must be the man", and with men agreeing more than women across all age groups (overall agreement: 37% of all women versus 47% of all men).
- Engagement in unpaid work impacted participation in the labour market by Colombian women and men. In the period 2009–2019, the unemployment rate among women was higher than that among men by at least 4.9 percentage points. The unemployment rate among women never fell into a single-digit number range during this time period.
- In Colombia, the unemployment rate among women was higher than that of men across all levels of education, although in 2019 the unemployment rate dropped to 5.5% for women with postgraduate education. Women aged 18–24 were most affected by unemployment and faced the largest gender gap.

## There is a gender gap in time use in Colombia

In 2017, the **total workload** of women in Colombia was 13 hours and 24 minutes per day, of which 56.5% was dedicated to paid work and 43.5% to unpaid work. The total workload of men was 11 hours and 16 minutes a day, 82% of which corresponded to paid work and 18% to unpaid work. In total, employed women worked 2 hours and 8 minutes more than employed men per day (see figure 1).

**Figure I:** Total time (in hours: minutes) spent daily in paid and unpaid work by employed women and men: 2016—2017 (Percentage)

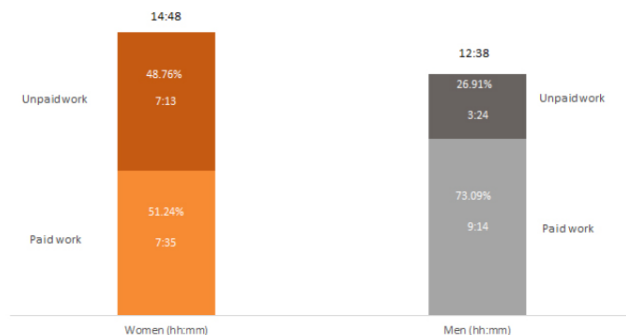


**Source:** National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Time Use Survey: 2016—2017 (correspondence with DANE on 12 March 2020).

**Note:** Paid hours include work accounted for in the System of National Accounts (SNA); unpaid hours include work activities not covered by the SNA: total workload takes as reference the employed population.

Similarly, among the working population aged 10 or older, Colombian women worked about 2 hours more than men. Women received remuneration for 51.2% of their total working time, while men were paid for 73.1% of their total working time (see figure II).

**Figure II:** Total time (in hours: minutes) spent daily in paid and unpaid work by women and men aged 10 and older: 2016—2017 (Percentage)

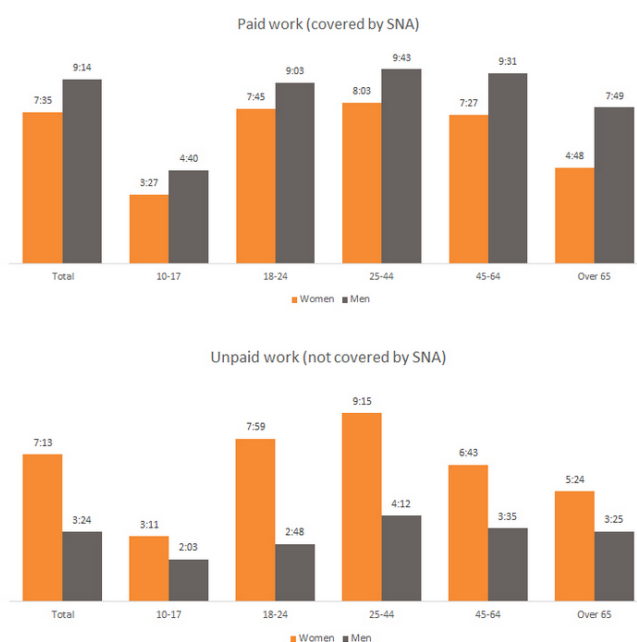


**Source:** National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Time Use Survey: 2016—2017 (correspondence with DANE on 12 March 2020).

**Note:** Paid hours include work accounted in the System of National Accounts (SNA); unpaid hours include work activities not covered by the SNA.

Data indicate that Colombian women have less time available for personal activities, including rest and study, and less paid hours, which affects their economic empowerment, their bargaining power inside the home and their well-being. This gap persists across all age groups (see figure III), resulting in a sexual division of labour<sup>1</sup> within households throughout the life cycle.

**Figure III:** Average time (in hours: minutes) spent daily in paid and unpaid work and related activities by age group and sex: 2016—2017



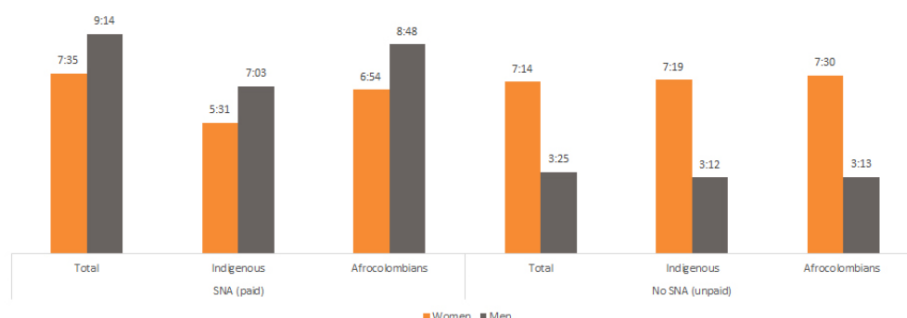
**Source:** National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Time Use Survey: 2016—2017.

**Note:** Paid hours include work accounted in the System of National Accounts (SNA); unpaid hours include work activities not covered by the SNA.

This sexual division of labour was also observed by ethnicity (see figure IV). In the case of Afro-Colombians, the gender gap in unpaid work hours per day (4:17 hours, with women working 7:19 hours and men 3:12) was 11.8% (27 minutes), which was greater than the gender gap observed in the total population (3:49 hours, with women working 7:14 hours and men 3:25).

Gender gaps in paid work for indigenous persons (1:32 hours, with women working 5:31 hours and men 7:03) and for Afro-Colombians (1:54, with women working 6:54 hours and men 8:48) were similar to the gender gap in paid work in the total population (1:39 hours, with women working 7:35 hours and men 9:14). Nevertheless, among indigenous persons and Afro-Colombians, both men and women spent proportionately less time in paid work than men and women in the total population.

**Figure IV:** Average time (in hours: minutes) spent daily in paid and unpaid work activities by ethnicity and sex: 2016—2017



**Source:** National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Time Use Survey: 2016—2017.

**Note:** Paid hours include work accounted in the System of National Accounts (SNA); unpaid hours include work activities not covered by the SNA.

## The division of labour between women and men is enabled by cultural norms and traditional gender roles

In order to measure perceptions about stereotypical gender roles among women and men in Colombia, the national Time Use Survey: 2016—2017 included five questions containing sexist statements. Understanding the prevalence of rigid gender stereotypes in the population is crucial for the formulation of policies to promote cultural change towards the elimination of **harmful social norms and discriminatory attitudes**.

The prevalence of the sexual division of labour is not surprising given that 65% of the population agreed that "Women are better for domestic work than men", and more than 35% thought that "A man's duty is to earn money; a woman's duty is to take care of the home and family". In answers to almost all such questions in the survey, a greater proportion of men than that women agreed with the sexist statements (see table).

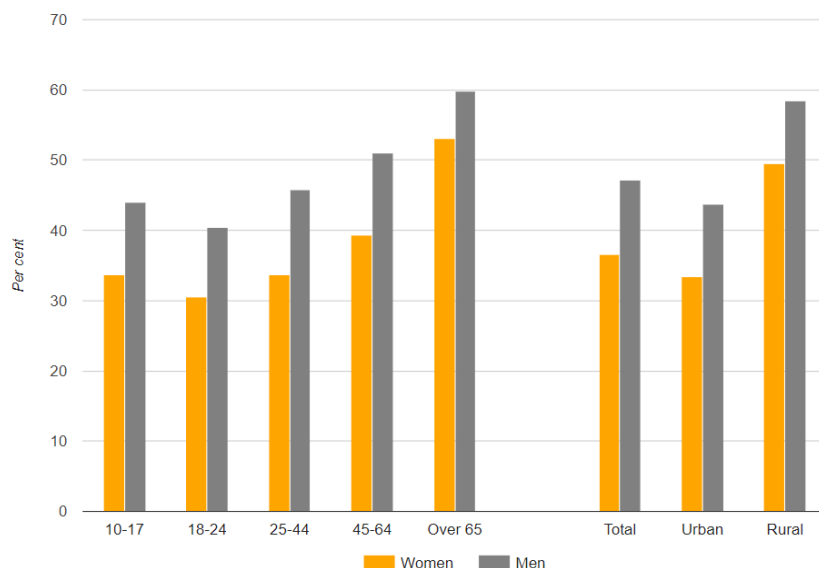
**Table:** Percentage of women and men in agreement with sexist statements

| Statements  | Women | Men |
|---|-------|-----|
| "A man's duty is to earn money; a woman's duty is to take care of the home and family"                      | 36%   | 41% |
| "Women are better for domestic work than men"   | 67%   | 69% |
| "A working mother can form a relationship as warm and safe with her children as a mother who does not work" | 60%   | 58% |
| "The head of the home must be the man"  | 37%   | 47% |
| "The husband must make the decisions related to the wife's life"  | 15%   | 22% |

**Source:** National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Time Use Survey: 2016—2017.

Furthermore, elderly people and people residing in rural areas tended to be more in agreement with the following statement: "The head of the home must be the man." To varying degrees, the proportion of men agreeing with that statement was higher than that of women across all age groups, but the proportion of men in agreement was above 40% in all cases (see figure V).

**Figure V:** Proportion of people in agreement with the statement “The head of the home must be the man” by sex and age group, in urban and rural areas: 2016–2017 (Percentage)

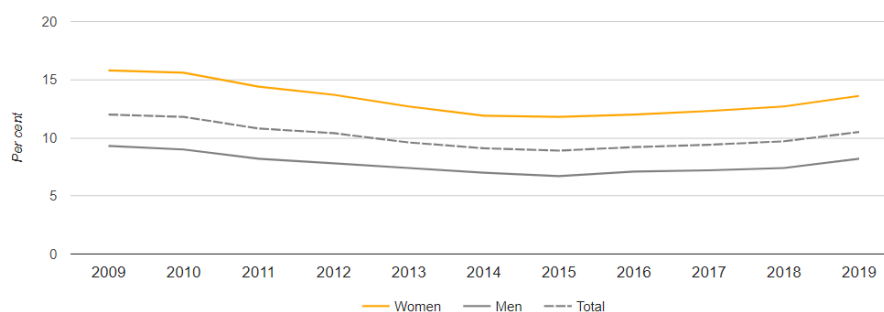


Source: National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Time Use Survey: 2016–2017.

## Decisions about which member of the household engages in unpaid work impact the labour market participation of women and men

Time is a scarce resource. During the entire period 2009–2019, the **unemployment rate** among women was higher than that of men, and the gender gap was measured, at its lowest, at 4.9 percentage points during the period 2014–2016. The overall unemployment rate among women did not fall into a single-digit number range during the entire period 2009–2019 (see figure VI).

**Figure VI:** Unemployment rate by sex: 2009–2019 (Percentage)

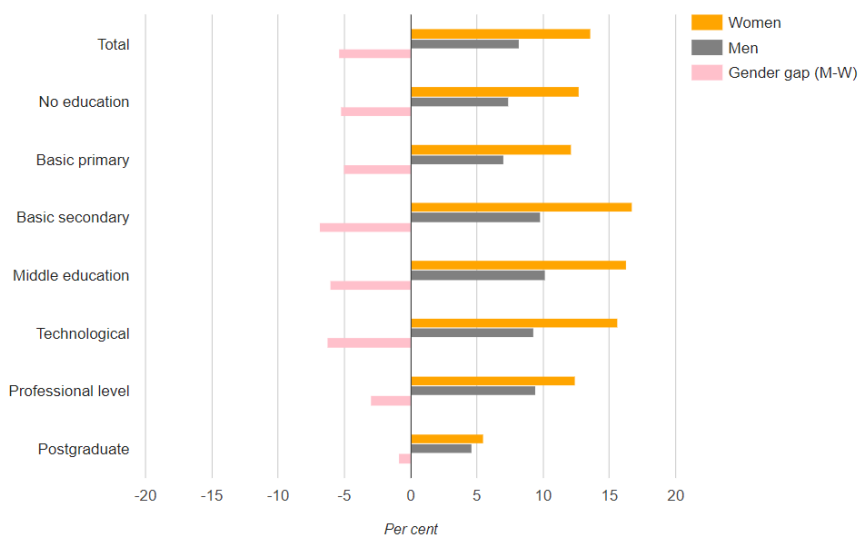


Source: National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Large-scale Integrated Household Survey (GEIH): 2009–2019.

Against this backdrop, younger women and women with middle level education were more affected by unemployment compared to men. Women have a higher unemployment rate than men across all levels of

education, although, in 2019, the rate dropped to 5.5% for women with postgraduate education (see figure VII).

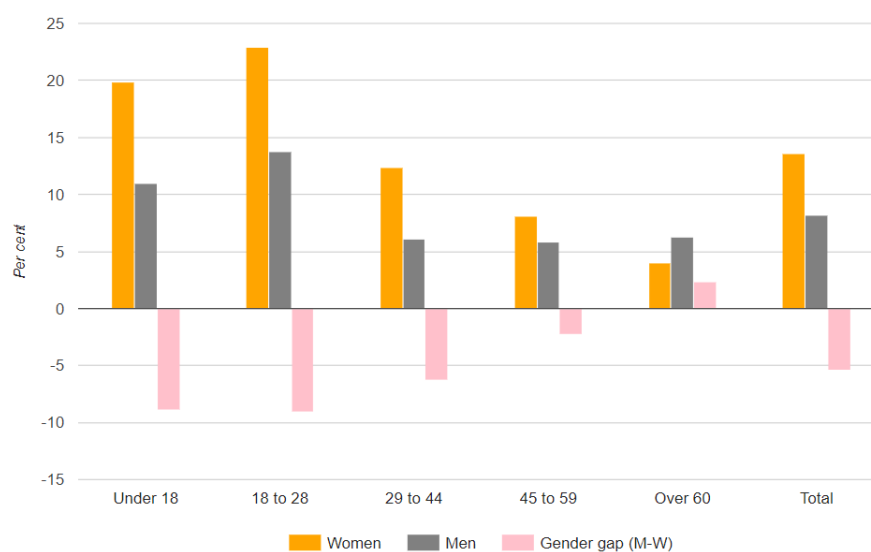
**Figure VII:** Unemployment rate by sex and education level, including the gender gap: 2019 (Percentage)



Source: National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Large-scale Integrated Household Survey (GEIH): 2009–2019.

Women aged 18–24 were most affected by unemployment, and that age group was also the one with the most significant gender gap against women in the rate of unemployment (see figure VIII).

**Figure VIII:** Unemployment rate by sex and age group, including the gender gap: 2019 (Percentage)



Source: National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), Large-scale Integrated Household Survey (GEIH): 2009–2019.

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Total workload by sex is the number of hours** spent by women and men in paid and unpaid work each day. 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.
- **Proportion of people in agreement with sexist statements by sex** measures female and male perceptions about traditional roles and sexist stereotypes through their responses to predefined statements about women and men.
- **Unemployment rate by sex** 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 unemployed during the reference period.

### Coverage and availability

Women and men in Colombia in various age groups, with available data pertaining to 2017 (total workload, attitudes) and the period 2009–2019 (unemployment). Data are further disaggregated by ethnicity (total workload), geographic location (for example, urban versus rural attitudes) and education level (unemployment).

## Footnotes

1. Work specialization within households has been a concept in economics since the proposal of the unitary family model by Gary Becker in his paper, "A Theory of the Allocation of Time" (*The Economic Journal*, vol. 75, No. 299, 1965), including the argument of efficiency, later criticized by a number of feminist economists, including Bina Agarwal in her paper, "Bargaining" and gender relations: within and beyond the household", Institute of Economic Growth, University of Delhi.



## Italy: behaviour and activities during the Coronavirus-19 lockdown: a gender approach

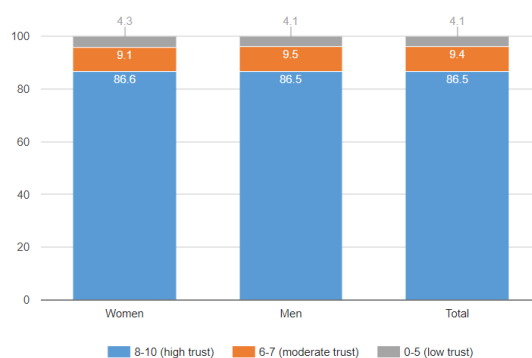


## COVID-19 lockdown in Italy: close-knit country and close-knit families

A feeling of strong cohesion characterized the mood in Italy during the lockdown phase of the COVID-19 epidemic in April 2020.<sup>1</sup> People reacted to the restrictions imposed during the lockdown in a consistent manner and no gender differences emerged in the behaviours adopted. The feeling of solidarity was primarily manifested in a strong and widespread trust in the central institutions engaged in the fight against the spread of COVID-19.

In response to the survey, on a scale from 0 (no trust) to 10 (maximum trust), the majority of citizens reported that they totally trusted medical staff (55.4%), paramedics (55.8%) and civil protection officials (50.8%), and over 80% of citizens responded within the scale from 8 to 10 in reply to the same questions.

**Figure I:** Proportion of people 18 and over by level of trust in the medical staff of the national health system by sex (on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 indicates no trust and 10 maximum trust): April 2020 (Percentage)



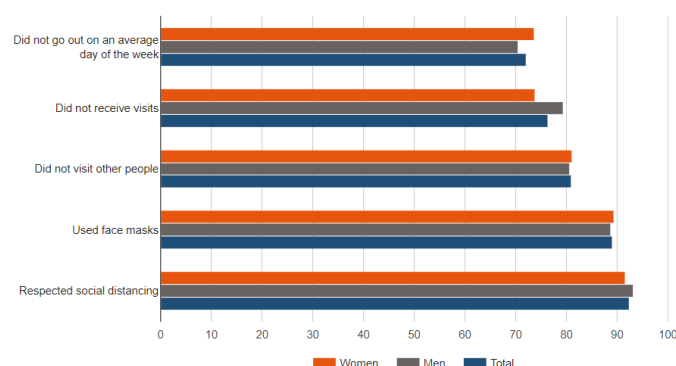
Source: National Statistical Institute (ISTAT), Survey on day diary and activities at the time of the Coronavirus (<https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/241013>).

Overall, the population showed a heightened sense of civic responsibility, as indicated by the data collected on behaviours (see figure II). The use of face masks was widespread (89.1%) throughout the entire country, regardless of local conditions of greater or lesser risk of contagion.

Guidance on social distancing was also respected by most people, regardless of age and gender; 92.4% of people stated that they consistently observed this rule. Importantly, the stay-at-home advisory to avoid the spread of the virus, with a view to protecting oneself and others, was followed by the vast majority of the population.

On an average day, 72% of the adult population did not go out at all, 22.7% went out once and only 5.2% twice or more. In this regard, for purposes of comparison, it must be remembered that, under normal conditions, 90% of the adult population make at least one trip outside the house during the day. People also stayed at home to protect loved ones from contagion: less than one-fifth of the adult population visited other people to bring them groceries, medications or to keep them company, and a low percentage of people received visits (23.6%). No significant gender differences were recorded.

**Figure II:** Proportion of the population aged 18 and over by level of compliance with selected rules aimed at reducing the contagion by sex: April 2020 (Percentage)



Source: National Statistical Institute (ISTAT), Survey on day diary and activities at the time of the Coronavirus (<https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/241013>)

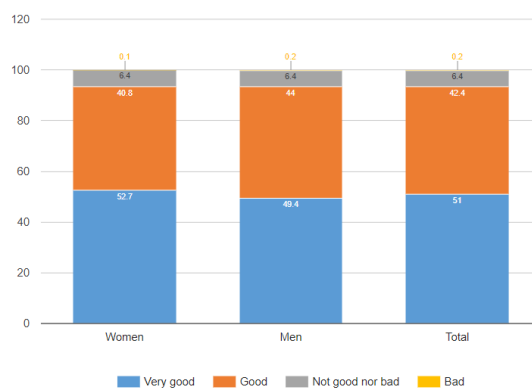
The family played a positive role in ensuring that the COVID-19 lockdown period was sustainable: in general, the family environment was described as a peaceful and positive (see figure III).

Among those living in households of two or more, 51% defined family relationships as excellent and 42.4% as good. From the survey data, it is clear that 9 out of 10 citizens were able to spend lockdown in a pleasant family context. Only 6.4% of respondents indicated that they could not define relationships as either good or bad, and almost no one (0.2%) gave a negative rating.

Relationships among household members during the lockdown remained unchanged for 81.3% of the population. For 15.6% of the population, family relationships improved, while only 2.6% reported that they had worsened. Most people reported that they found comfort in their families and devoted more time to relationships, and relationships between couples do not seem to have been negatively affected. In 86.1% of cases, people indicated that their relationships were as good as before the lockdown, while in 2.8% of cases people reported them to be as bad as they had been previously.

Overall, the situation remained stable: 8.6% of people living with a partner reported that their relationships had changed for the better, only 1.9% of people reported having experienced a period with more misunderstandings and 0.2% reported having major quarrels.

**Figure III:** Proportion of the population aged 18 and over by evaluation of family environment by sex: April 2020 (Percentage)



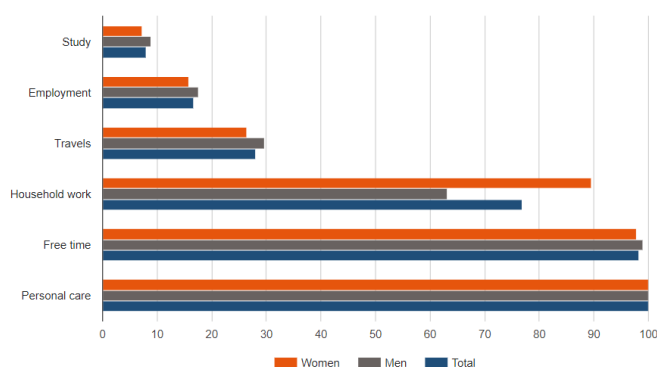
Source: National Statistical Institute (ISTAT), Survey on day diary and activities at the time of the Coronavirus (<https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/241013>)

## Gender differences in household work

The need to stay at home during the lockdown had a marked impact on the daily activities of a large part of the population. Many individuals had to change, cancel or reorganize planned activities, focusing their energies on work within the home, devoting time to matters that had been postponed or seizing the opportunity to express creativity and experiment with new activities: the variety of everyday chores and activities that occupied people during lockdown is rich and heterogeneous (see figure IV). Most people found that they had free time to devote to recreational activities, while more than three quarters had household and family-care activities to do; only 28% went out for a walk, went to work or went shopping for food. Work and educational activities engaged 16.7% and 8% of the population, respectively. No significant gender differences were recorded in daily activities, apart from unpaid household work.

While there is a pronounced and continuing gender gap in terms of unpaid household work in Italy (see figure IV), there has been a growing tendency in recent years for men and women to share domestic chores and childcare. During the lockdown, with couples spending longer periods of time together at home and the increased burden of childcare resulting from the closure of schools, domestic chores were shared to a greater degree, although not to such an extent as to obviate the gender gap in household responsibilities.

**Figure IV:** Proportion of people aged 18 and over by daily activities performed during lockdown by sex: April 2020



Source: National Statistical Institute (ISTAT), Survey on day diary and activities at the time of the Coronavirus (<https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/241013>)

Among many domestic chores (see figure V), the preparation of meals involved the largest proportion of the population (63.6%). Overall, there was a strong gender gap in this regard, with women more involved in this activity (82.9%, compared to 42.9% of men). However, in a third of households, meals were prepared by both sexes, without significant gender differences.

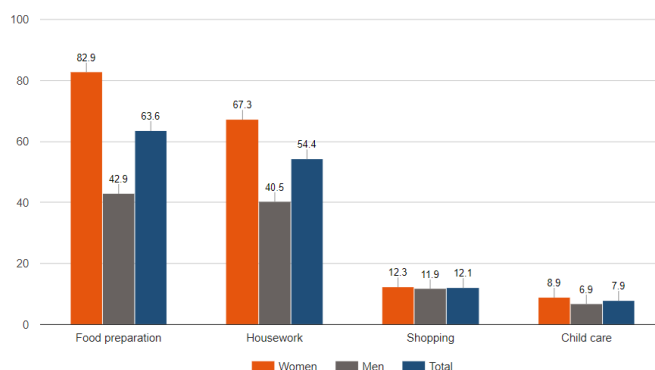
In addition, during the lockdown some gastronomic traditions were rediscovered, such as baking pizza, bread or cakes (53% of the population aged 18 and over). While the percentage was higher among women (69.6%), the percentage among men was also sizable (37.3%). The preparation of fruit jams, vegetables or family food packages also increased during the lockdown.

More than half of the population spent time on housecleaning (54.4%) and 40% reported that they spent more time doing housework than usual. The gender gap was also significant in this area (about 27 percentage points), although lower than that the gap seen in traditional time-use surveys (46 percentage points). The smaller gender gap can be explained by the fact that couples spent a significant amount of time together at home, had fewer work commitments and more opportunities to reconcile the responsibilities of work and family.

Among the usual household work activities, shopping during the pandemic involved fewer people (only 1 person out of 10), but it proved, once again, to be an activity more equally distributed between men and women. As was to be expected, about one in two people reported that they had spent more time shopping than they had done before the lockdown, mainly because of the queues.

During the month of April 2020, 85.9% of the population with children between 0–14 years (or 7.9% of the population as a whole) reported being involved in childcare activities. The constant presence of children in the home, and the need to monitor and assist them with distance learning, strongly affected the activities of both parents. Indeed, 67.2% of people involved in this activity indicated they spent more time than in the past on care work, with a very similar rate of increase for both sexes.

**Figure V:** Proportion of people aged 18 and over by household activities performed during lockdown by sex: April 2020 (Percentage)



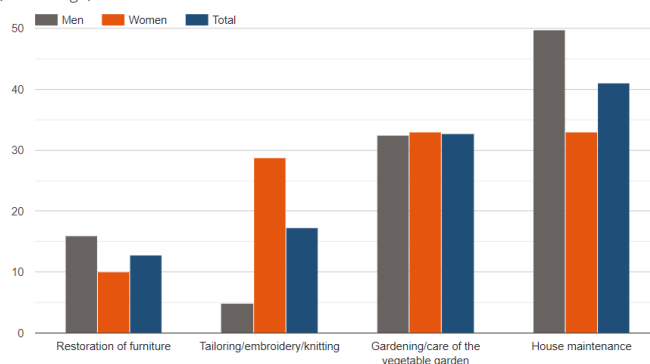
Source: National Statistical Institute (ISTAT), Survey on day diary and activities at the time of the Coronavirus (<https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/241013>)

## Gender differences in free-time activities

Enforced confinement encouraged a substantial share of population to spend part of their free time on activities such as house maintenance, board games and practicing artistic activities, including painting, singing and writing (see figure VI). Household maintenance activities engaged 41% of the population, and 22.3% carried out such activities on a weekly basis. Almost a third of the population devoted time to gardening or garden care (27% at least weekly); 17.3% of people sewed, embroidered or knitted (10.9% at least weekly); and 12.8% dedicated themselves to the restoration of furniture or household items (5.4% at least weekly).

Men were more active in activities related to do-it-yourself projects, such as the restoration of furniture or objects for the home (15.9% of men versus 10% of women) or in home-maintenance work (49.7% of men versus 33% of women). Women, on the other hand, were mainly involved in tailoring/embroidery/knitting activities (28.7% of women versus 4.9% of men). No gender differences were observed in gardening or in taking care of vegetable gardens. Taking into account the frequency of free-time activities practiced compared to 2015 (on a weekly basis), there was an increase of at least 50% overall, with the exception of sewing and embroidery, where the rate of participation remained stable.

**Figure VI:** Proportion of people aged 18 and over engaged in selected free-time activities by sex: April 2020 (Percentage)



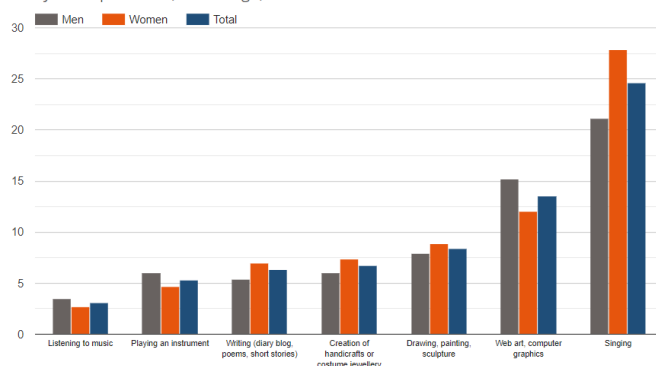
Source: National Statistical Institute (ISTAT), Survey on day diary and activities at the time of the Coronavirus (<https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/241013>)

During the lockdown, a significant proportion of the population devoted time to creative activities related to: music (singing, playing or listening to music); the figurative arts (drawing, painting, sculpture); writing; or the creation of handicrafts or costume jewellery (42.2% of the population aged 18 and over reported being involved in at least one of the above areas of creative activities). Singing was

reported to occupy the largest share (24.6%) of creative activities, especially among women (27.9% of women compared to 21.1% among men) (see figure VII).

If we consider the recreational activities performed at least on a weekly basis, a significant increase is observed compared to 2015. For example, the share of those who sang at least weekly was 2.6% in 2015, while it reached 15.9% during the lockdown.

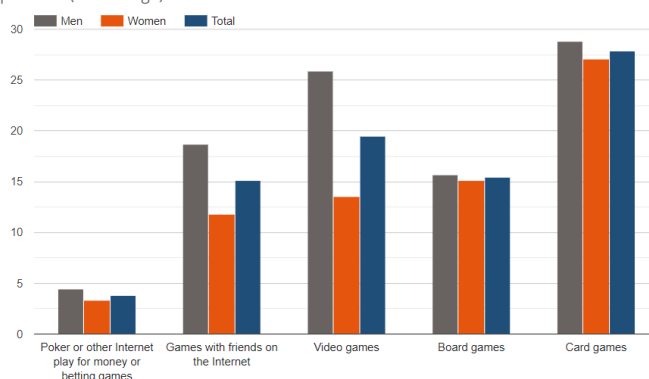
**Figure VII:** Proportion of people aged 18 and over engaged in selected free time activities during lockdown by sex: April 2020 (Percentage)



Source: National Statistical Institute (ISTAT), Survey on day diary and activities at the time of the Coronavirus (<https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/241013>)

Board games or other types of games were another activity reported to have occupied the time of 45% of the population aged 18 and over during the lockdown (see figure VIII). Card games and video games were the favourite choice. Gender differences were observed, with a higher proportion of men playing video games (25.9% of men versus 13.5% of women) and games with friends on the Internet (18.7% of men versus 11.8% of women), although this was not the case for other types of games.

**Figure VIII:** Proportion of people aged 18 and over engaged in selected games during the lockdown by sex: April 2020 (Percentage)



Source: National Statistical Institute (ISTAT), Survey on day diary and activities at the time of the Coronavirus (<https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/241013>)

## Related stories and further reading

- Time spent on unpaid work, total work burden and work-life balance

## Sources

- National Statistical Institute (ISTAT), Reazione dei cittadini al lockdown, Roma, 25 maggio 2020.
- Ibid., Fase 1: le giornate in casa durante il lockdown, Roma, 5 giugno 2020.
- Ibid., Rapporto annuale 2020 - La situazione del paese, Roma, 3 luglio 2020.

## About the data

### Definition

Behaviours and daily activities during the Coronavirus-19 (COVID-19) lockdown in Italy in April 2020

### Coverage

Population aged 18 and over living/resident in households in Italy (April 2020).

### Source

Survey carried out in Italy from 5–22 April 2020, providing estimates at the national level and covering three broad geographical areas with different levels of Coronavirus-19 (COVID-19) infection.<sup>2</sup>



---

## Footnotes

1. [More information about the survey is available at the linked website \(Italian only\).](#)
2. The survey, entitled "Day-diary and activities during Coronavirus-19", was aimed at gaining an understanding of how the pandemic changed people's habits and how they carried out their daily lives during the height of the pandemic in Italy.