



Building Forward Fairer:

Women's Rights to Work and at Work at the Core of the COVID-19 Recovery

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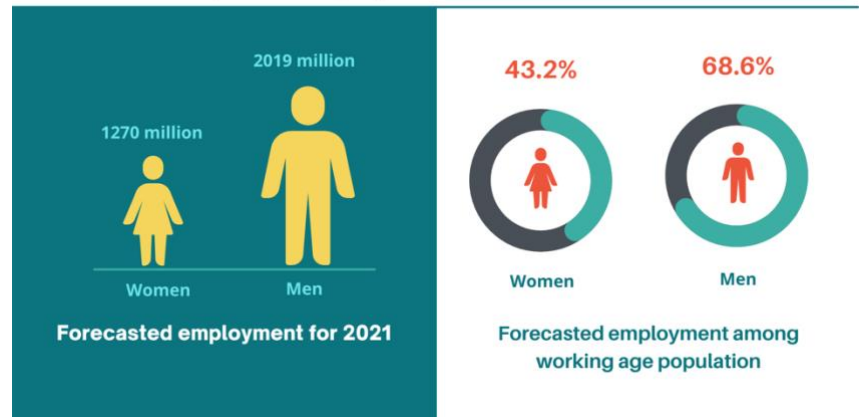
Introduction

Over 18 months into the COVID-19 pandemic, gender equality in the world of work has been set back years. Women have suffered disproportionate job and income losses, with reasons including their over-representation in the hardest-hit sectors, and many continue to work on the front line, sustaining care systems, economies and societies, while often also undertaking the majority of the unpaid domestic and care work.

The policy brief by the International Labour Organisation provides an outlook of where women stand in the labour market after more than a year into the COVID-19 pandemic and

confirms that women's employment has been negatively impacted in terms of both quantity and quality. It has also examined measures that governments across the world have adopted to mitigate the employment and income effects of the pandemic and also acknowledges that they are already leaving women behind. It also calls for gender-responsive policies, to make women's right to work and their labour rights a central feature of the COVID-19 recovery.

Projected Employment Statistics for 2021



Key Highlights

- Globally, between 2019 and 2020, women's employment declined by 4.2%, representing a drop of 54 million jobs, while men's employment declined by 3% or 60 million jobs.
- ILO forecasts show that globally, in 2021, women's employment is expected to rise by 3.3% compared to 2020 levels (41 million), while men's employment is expected to grow by 3% (59 million). Despite the higher projected employment growth rate, these numbers will be insufficient to bring women back to pre-pandemic employment levels, because of deeper employment losses experienced by women in 2020.
- Women's employment in 2021 is projected to be 1,270 million, while men's is forecasted
 - to reach 2,019 million. Only 43.2 per cent of the world's working-age women will be employed in 2021, compared to 68.6 per cent of working-age men.
- In the Americas, as a result of the pandemic, women's employment declined by 9.4% compared to a 7.0% decline for men, representing the largest decline across all regions.
- In 2021 in Asia and the Pacific the shock of the pandemic led women's employment to decrease by 3.8% compared to a decline of 2.9% for men. The number of men in employment is expected to rise by 3% by the end of 2021 as opposed to the forecasted 3.2% rise in women's employment in 2022 which will not compensate job losses during 2020 for women. The APAC region has historically had low female employment rates and this will lead to only 41.2% of women being in employment in 2021 compared to 71.4% of men.
- In Africa, men's employment experienced the smallest decline across all geographic regions with just over 0.1% drop between 2019 and 2020 while women's employment decreased by 1.9%. Recovery prospects for African women are particularly positive since their employment is expected to rise by 4.7% between 2020 and 2021 more than offsetting pandemic related job losses.
- During the pandemic, women have continued to provide essential work in the health and social work sector as well as other essential occupations often putting their own lives at risk and facing a double work burden that is longer shifts at work and additional care work at home.

- Across the world, women continue to earn 20% less than men and women experience further pay penalties when they belong to ethnic minorities or migrants or persons with disabilities. Globally domestic workers, largely consisting of women, earn 56.4% of the average monthly wages of other employees.
- Globally, in 2020, only 28.3% of managers and leaders are women. This figure has changed very little over the past 27 years.
- Globally, women made up just 27% of COVID-19 task force members.
- During the pandemic, women fared considerably better in countries that took measures to prevent them from losing their jobs and/or improve the quality of women's working conditions.
- It is imperative to undertake urgent policy measures such as promoting gender-responsive employment policies and investing in the care economy, to overall generate more jobs to contribute to the resilience of economies and societies, to ensure that women return to the labour market with decent work opportunities so economies can build forward fairer and mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19 on women's employment.

Read more: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_814499.pdf

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