

ITUC REPORT

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Gender (in)equality in the labour market: an overview of global trends and developments

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**Gender
(in)equality in the
labour market:
an overview of
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Introduction

International Women's Day (IWD), celebrated annually on March 8, reflects on women's political, economic and social accomplishments. It must be said that women have indeed made very significant process in all of these areas since the first IWD in 1911. Around the world, more women than ever now have access to higher education, greater equality in legislative rights and more rewarding opportunities in the labour market. Also, a greater proportion of women than ever before hold high positions in politics, trade unions, business and academia. This does not mean, however, that true gender equality has been achieved. Women are still oppressed in many parts of the world, and are often not enjoying equal pay for work of equal value, or equal rights. Furthermore, women's access to education, health care and paid work has still not reached the same level that men enjoy. This has consequences for their career opportunities because, even though the number of women in high-level positions has increased, there is still a long way to go before true equality is obtained.

In 2008, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) concentrated on the existing inequalities in remuneration between men and women, and published a report on the global gender pay gap. This year, the scope has been extended to not only include equal pay, but also the effects of the current global economic downturn on women's pay and employment. Furthermore, a special focus chapter has been included on the impact of violence against women on society. The independent research organisation Incomes Data Services has carried out this project on behalf of the ITUC.

The first chapter of the report looks at the gender pay gap in 20 countries, based on data from the WageIndicator database in 2007 and the first three quarters of 2008. This database has collected 300,000 individual surveys using a self-reporting internet-based questionnaire. Apart from pay data, the chapter also discusses male and female attitudes towards their wages and work-life balance. The next chapter looks at the effects of the current recession on women's pay and employment, discussing evidence from previous economic crises and how the 'lessons learned' from the past can be of use to counter the problems faced presently. Specific characteristics of the current slowdown are also presented, together with policy initiatives that attempt to combat the economic downturn while keeping the objective of gender equality in mind. The last chapter of part one of this report argues the case for international harmonisation of the gender pay gap definition, data collection, analysis and methodology. It draws on recent research on international labour statistics, conducted by the United Kingdom Office for National Statistics as requested by the United Nations Statistical Division.

Part two of the report analyses the topic of violence against women (VAW). It examines the difficulties around the definition of what constitutes VAW, from a legal (human rights) as well as a social and cultural perspective. It then

assesses the evidence that exists on the economic cost of VAW to society, and the implications VAW has on women's access to paid work. The analysis is based on a literature review.

It has to be mentioned that the existing research on the subjects included in this report is extensive. This report gives a snapshot overview of the core facts and figures, concentrating on a limited number of sources.

Summary of findings

- The average gender pay gap across the whole data set is 22.4 per cent and the median gender pay gap is slightly lower at 20.4 per cent. This is based on a sample of 300,000 individual self-reported surveys that were completed on the internet during 2007 and the first three quarters of 2008. The sample covers 20 countries.
- In the majority of countries, the gender pay gap widens with age. Furthermore, contrary to common belief, a higher level of education seems to widen the gap. This may be due to workplace discrimination, occupational segregation, or a higher proportion of women than men being employed in (often lower paid) part-time work or below their education level, perhaps because of the need to combine work with care responsibilities. Another explanation is the general widening of the pay distribution at the top end.
- Trade union membership has a positive influence on wage equality. In almost all countries, the gap between male and female earnings is smaller for those who are trade union members compared to employees who are not a trade union member. This is even more the case when there is a trade union representative in the workplace. Collectively-negotiated agreements in the workplace also have a narrowing effect in the majority of countries.
- Although it is too early to assess the impact of the current recession on the gender pay gap, there is evidence that economic downturns negatively affect women's position in the labour market, especially in less economically developed parts of the world. As well as economic arguments, gender-related socio-cultural values have also to be taken into account when trying to explain this trend. A strong focus on the gender implications of economic crises, as well as gender mainstreaming in the development of policy initiatives, is necessary when attempting to counter the recession. Furthermore, an emphasis on collective bargaining and the importance of trade union membership will strengthen women's position in their job as well as in the wider labour market.
- In order to improve international comparisons between male and female pay, concepts and methods around labour statistics have to be harmonised. Furthermore, the new concept of 'work statistics', as proposed by the UN Review of Labour Statistics, will be a useful addition to the current set of employment statistics. These work statistics include unpaid work such as activities in the household and care responsibilities for the family, and are therefore particularly useful to assess women's employment levels and to measure the relationship between female employment and household poverty.
- Violence against women (VAW) is a human rights violation which negatively affects a woman's physical and mental well-being. As a consequence, it has a direct and detrimental impact on the victim's access to paid work. Research

into the cost implications of VAW is complicated, because there is no international consensus on what constitutes VAW. Cultural and contextual circumstances, as well as the methods to define, measure and present the results, differ from country to country. Nonetheless, it is clear that the costs of VAW to both the victim and also to society as a whole are high, and that international guidelines and standards are necessary to conduct coherent research that is internationally comparable and can support local, national and international policy-making and action to tackle VAW.

PART I

Pay and employment

Chapter 1. The gender pay gap 2008: WageIndicator results

This chapter looks at the differences in male versus female wages in selected countries, using data gathered by WageIndicator. WageIndicator is an internet-based, self-reporting salary survey through which people can compare their pay to that of other people with similar jobs¹. For this report, we have drawn on data collected during 2007 up to and including September 2008 in 24 participating countries, comprising data from 300,000 survey responses. Where the response rate was too low, the variance was too high, or where no data existed (since not all countries have integrated every question into their online survey), the results have been omitted. Other low response rates (i.e. less than 50 but more than 10) are featured to show the results rather than to draw any firm conclusions. Finally, for some breakdowns (e.g. pay by age), the number of observations for some countries is small in relation to the size of their total population. Where this is the case, the results should be treated with caution.

We will first discuss the sample profile as well as the responses to some attitudinal questions around people's satisfaction with their work-life balance, before moving on to a discussion of the gender pay gap in selected countries.

Sample profile

Country

The sample includes data from 24 countries in total, and 20 out of those 24 have been included in gender pay gap calculations. France and Guatemala have been excluded because of their relatively low response rate, and Colombia and Belgium because of the large standard deviations in the gross pay figures.

WageIndicator has just started up in some countries while it is already more established in others, and as a result response rates between countries vary considerably. The countries included in this report are (with the number of total responses for each country in brackets): Argentina (21,074), Belgium (14,253), Brazil (35,152), Chile (945), Colombia (460), Denmark (1,083), Finland (13,060), France (132), Germany (49,018), Guatemala (143), Hungary (2,269), India (4,608), Italy (533), the Republic of Korea (7,288), Mexico (8,437), Netherlands (79,588), Paraguay (441), Poland (6,974), Russian Federation (9,061), South Africa (9,041), Spain (11,896), Sweden (2,643), United Kingdom (18,338) and the United States (2,299).

Overall, the WageIndicator sample is skewed towards a younger population with higher levels of education and, as a consequence, proportionally more highly

skilled and professional jobs than would be the case for the total working-age population in the participating countries. This can at least partly be explained by the nature of the survey. The instrument of an online, self-reporting questionnaire is likely to draw an internet-literate audience, i.e. people who have access to (and who are familiar with the use of) a PC and the internet at home and/or at work.

Gender

Overall the sample is divided roughly equally between male (58 per cent) and female (42 per cent) respondents, with a typical ratio of 60:40 in favour of men. The exceptions are India, where male respondents make up 85 per cent of the sample, and Italy, where 73 per cent of respondents are male. Female respondents make up the majority in just three countries, Finland (52 per cent), Hungary (52 per cent) and South Africa (60 per cent).

Age

The make-up of the sample is relatively young, with the majority of respondents between 25 and 44 years of age, followed by those between 16 and 24 years.

Education

The education levels are based on the International Standard Classification of Education system² that allows users to compare education levels across countries. More explanation on these rankings can be found in the Appendix. The general pattern across the sample is for more male respondents to be at both the lower and upper levels of education while slightly more women are educated to the middle (to upper) levels. The majority of individuals are educated to either post-secondary, non-tertiary standard, or the first stage of tertiary education. Germany has a relatively high number of respondents educated only to the basic level, and also in Russia the majority of respondents have an education level that is lower than average.

Hours of work

The majority of respondents work full-time and most country samples contain 80 per cent or more respondents with full-time hours of work. The exceptions to this are Korea (68 per cent) and the Netherlands (73 per cent).

The highest proportions of full-time workers are in India (99 per cent), South Africa (96 per cent), Poland (94 per cent), the Russian Federation (94 per cent) and Hungary (94 per cent). The highest proportions of part-time workers are in the Republic of Korea (32 per cent), the Netherlands (27 per cent) and Paraguay (20 per cent).

A breakdown of hours of work by gender shows that generally male respondents are more likely to work full-time (between 80 and almost 100 per cent) than female respondents. These calculations are based on the number of hours of paid work undertaken by survey respondents who are categorised as 'employees'. Unpaid (female-dominated) activities, such as care responsibilities or household tasks, have not been taken into account. The highest proportions of female part-time workers are found in the Netherlands (50 per cent of women), Korea (38 per cent), and Belgium (26 per cent). The highest levels

of disparity between hours of work for men and women (with men working full-time and women part-time) are seen in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany, while Poland, the Russian Federation and Colombia demonstrate a more homogeneous pattern in the distribution of working hours between male and female workers.

Public, private and not-for-profit sectors

Overall, the private sector accounts for the largest proportion of both male and female respondents, with figures ranging between 60 and 80 per cent in each country. The exceptions to this are Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Mexico, Poland and the United Kingdom, where a relatively large proportion (more than 20 per cent) of respondents work in the public sector. Female workers make up a particularly large share of public sector employees in some countries, such as in Denmark (33 per cent), Finland (39 per cent), Hungary (34 per cent), Poland (46 per cent), and the United Kingdom (36 per cent). The opposite is the case in India, with 90 per cent of both male and female respondents being employed in the private sector. The not-for-profit sector shows a mixed picture, employing a very small proportion of employees in some countries (up to 2 per cent) while accounting for between 6 and 9 per cent of the survey respondents in other countries.

NACE industry classification³

The breakdown by broad industry sectors shows the level of industrial segregation in each country, with the general public sector, healthcare and education being female-dominated. Typically, between 20 and 35 per cent of women in each country are employed in these sectors compared to 10 to 20 per cent of male workers. The opposite pattern emerges when looking at the agriculture, manufacturing and building sectors. Overall, most people (men and women) are employed in the commercial services industry, accounting for between 30 and 40 per cent of respondents in most countries.

Trade union membership

Across all countries, the majority of both male and female respondents are not members of a trade union. The highest proportions of trade union membership are in Finland (87 per cent), Brazil (68 per cent) and Belgium (67 per cent). The lowest proportions are found in South Africa (7 per cent) and Korea (8 per cent).

Attitudinal questions

Apart from pay figures, this year's report also takes a more in-depth look at questions that try to capture people's attitudes towards collective agreements, job prospects, and satisfaction levels among respondents with regard to their wages, work, and work-life balance. We will look at variations in gender and between countries in particular.

Importance of coverage by collective agreement

When asked if it was important to be covered by a collective agreement, between 65 and 80 per cent of all respondents across countries agreed. Russia, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States have a relatively

low proportion of respondents saying they think this is important. However, research from the US trade union centre AFL-CIO indicates that around 53% of non-union members want to become members⁴. Furthermore, in Sweden and the Netherlands the gender differentiation is quite striking. In these two countries, around 1.5 times as many women as men recognise the importance of being covered by a collective agreement.

Job prospects

With the economic outlook deteriorating, the survey has this year also concentrated on the analysis of questions relating to job security. Some countries have a low response rate, and therefore these results have to be treated with a degree of caution. Focusing on the outcome for countries with a good response rate, between 4 and 12 per cent of respondents across the sample think that their job will become redundant in the next few years, with women being slightly more pessimistic than men. Pessimism is most widespread in Spain, with 10 per cent of men and 12 per cent of women thinking they will be made redundant. Belgian employees are most optimistic, with 4 per cent of men and 7 per cent of women thinking they will lose their job. Moreover, a significant minority of between 15 and 30 per cent of respondents expects to have changed employer in a year's time, with women being slightly more negative than men, especially in Denmark. In Italy, over two-thirds of male workers expect to have a different employer in a year, compared to three-quarters of women. It should be noted that many of these responses were made during 2007, prior to the full extent of the global economic crisis on the labour market becoming apparent.

Satisfaction with wages

Naturally, people would always like to earn more than they actually do at any given point in their career, but it is interesting to look at the variations from country to country and between men and women. Between 20 and 30 per cent of respondents say they are satisfied with their wage, with overall more men being satisfied than women. Between 35 and 50 per cent of respondents are dissatisfied, and between 25 and 35 per cent are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. South Africa and Spain are the countries with the highest proportion of dissatisfied workers: respectively 58 and 54 per cent of men are unhappy with their wages, and the figures for women are even higher at 63 and 62 per cent. A large gender difference exists in Finland, where 28 per cent of men are satisfied with their pay compared to 21 per cent of women, with a similar result for Germany (27 versus 21 per cent). Least dissatisfied with their pay are the Dutch and Swedish (both 34 per cent), as well as respondents from the United States (32 per cent). Moreover, in these latter three countries the gender differences were very small. It furthermore should be noted that the US data includes a relatively high proportion of managerial staff.

Family-friendly policies

This year's survey also looks at the extent to which employees in selected countries benefit from family-friendly policies, such as their employers contributing to day-care for children. The overall proportion of employees in receipt of such a contribution is low, with typically between 0.5 per cent and 4 per cent receiving this benefit. There are some clear differences in gender

though, for example in Mexico, where 3 per cent of men say their employer contributes to day-care for children compared to 9 per cent of women. Furthermore, the Netherlands proves to be the positive outlier, with 11 per cent of both men and women stating that their employer contributes to childcare.

In addition to this specific family-friendly policy, the survey also asked participants how they cope with the combination of work and family life. Overall, between 40 and 50 per cent of respondents say that they find it tough. Perhaps not surprisingly, women are more likely to say that they have difficulty in juggling work and family life than men, with between 34 and 40 per cent of men saying so in most countries, compared to between 43 and 57 per cent of women. Belgium (38 per cent of men compared to 51 per cent of women) and Hungary (36 per cent of men versus 57 per cent of women) are the clearest examples of gender difference. Polish respondents seem to cope better, with around 28 per cent of both male and female respondents saying that they find it difficult to strike the right balance between work and family life. The same, relatively low, figure applies to Dutch male workers, while their female counterparts seem to find it more problematic, with 43 per cent saying so.

Satisfaction with work-life balance

The question that follows from the above is how satisfied workers are with their work-life balance. Overall, between a fifth and a quarter of all respondents are dissatisfied. Hungary, the Russian Federation, Spain and the United States are at the upper end of this scale, with around a third of survey participants stating they are dissatisfied. Around a third of respondents across all the participating countries are neutral, and between 40 and 50 per cent of respondents in most countries say they are satisfied. The highest proportion of workers that are satisfied with their work-life balance is found in the Netherlands (63 per cent), followed by in Denmark (53 per cent) and Finland (51 per cent).

Moving on to people's satisfaction with their life in general, the overall satisfaction levels are between 60 and 70 per cent, while between 10 and 20 per cent are either indifferent or dissatisfied. Countries at the positive end of the spectrum are Argentina, Chile, Poland, the Russian Federation and Spain, with satisfaction levels of around 75 per cent. The negative extreme is Korea, with only 45 per cent of respondents saying they are happy with their life as a whole. The survey did not find much differentiation between men and women for this question, although in the majority of countries the proportion of women being dissatisfied is a little higher than the proportion of men.

The Gender Pay Gap

This report uses the gender pay gap definition put forward by Eurostat, which describes it as 'the difference between average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees and of female paid employees as a percentage of average gross hourly earnings of male-paid employees'⁵. We will first give an overview of the pay gap as calculated by WageIndicator, and then compare these results for a selection of countries with the figures provided by Eurostat and some other official sources.

The gap according to WageIndicator

In the main global gender pay gap table below, we have set out the gender pay gap between the earnings of men and women at the mean (average) and median pay levels. The detailed tables in the appendix also show the interquartile ranges.⁶ We then look at the gender pay gap broken down by more specific variables. These tables show the mean and median figures. The median is included because it represents the middle of the distribution, i.e. half of the scores are above and half are below this figure. It is therefore less sensitive to outliers (extreme values) than the mean. On the other hand, the average pay gap can be a useful measure to look at because, especially when looking at variations in earnings between men and women, it is important to include the high and low salaries in the calculation.

Generally, if the mean and median are in close range of each other, and we have a normal distribution, we can be reasonably sure that we have a good estimate of the true value of the pay gap in the sample group. If the mean and median are far apart, this may reflect the influence of a few outliers, such as a small number of highly paid men or women. In that case, it is more reliable to look at the median pay gap, because the median corrects for these outliers. The 'valid N' column shows the valid number of survey respondents that has been included for every calculation.

The gender pay gap

Country of survey	Mean pay gap (%)	Median pay gap (%)	Valid N
AR Argentina	29.0	26.1	N=15200
BR Brazil	38.5	34.0	N=20848
CL Chile	17.0	21.0	N=370
DK Denmark	12.1	10.1	N=839
FI Finland	19.6	18.3	N=10710
DE Germany	20.4	20.0	N=40066
HU Hungary	18.3	21.1	N=1609
IN India	29.4	6.3	N=3093
IT Italy	17.3	23.9	N=339
KR Korea, Rep.	24.0	13.7	N=2316
MX Mexico	36.1	29.8	N=4595
NL Netherlands	17.7	19.2	N=56363
PY Paraguay	11.1	19.6	N=150
PL Poland	22.1	22.4	N=5566
RU Russian Federation	13.8	14.5	N=5068
ZA South Africa	33.5	33.0	N=7211
ES Spain	23.0	24.8	N=9031
SE Sweden	12.5	11.0	N=1848

UK United Kingdom	19.8	9.0	N=12049
US United States	31.8	20.8	N=395

Overall gender pay gap

The average pay gaps for the 20 countries for which we had sufficient pay data range from 38.5 per cent in Brazil to 11.1 per cent in Paraguay. The average pay gap results are lower for Denmark (12 per cent), Sweden (13 per cent) and the Russian Federation (14 per cent) and less so for Argentina (29 per cent), Mexico (36.1 per cent) and South Africa (33.5 per cent). The figures for Chile, Italy, Paraguay and the USA are based on fairly small samples and should be treated with caution.

For the majority of countries, both the average pay gap and the median pay gap are quite closely related, indicating that the survey average is probably a good estimate of the true average pay gap for the population. However, in the UK, India and Republic of Korea the pay gap based on the average wage and the pay gap based on the median wage vary considerably. For example, the average pay gap in India is 30 per cent which falls to just 6 per cent on the median measure. The UK sample contains a large numbers of lower-paid male employees and a relatively large population of women in professional roles, which goes some way in explaining why the average pay gap (20 per cent) and the median pay gap (9 per cent) vary so considerably. The average pay gap in the WageIndicator results is close to the official pay gap figure of 17 per cent for the UK.

Gender pay gap broken down by age bands

Country of survey	Age bands	Mean pay gap (%)	Median pay gap (%)	Valid N
AR Argentina	16-24	11.2	12.4	N=2067
	25-34	22.1	24.4	N=7728
	35-44	27.2	32.0	N=3443
	45-54	30.9	34.1	N=1524
	55-64	27.7	36.3	N=407
BR Brazil	16-24	23.2	22.5	N=4567
	25-34	31.1	34.3	N=10791
	35-44	31.7	40.7	N=3874
	45-54	37.1	44.8	N=1355
	55-64	35.7	44.0	N=230
DK Denmark	16-24	27.9	15.2	N=65
	25-34	10.5	13.7	N=271
	35-44	9.1	13.5	N=256
	45-54	5.9	3.7	N=191
	55-64	12.6	11.5	N=55

FI Finland	16-24	10.8	9.7	N=836
	25-34	16.7	18.2	N=4424
	35-44	21.0	23.8	N=3087
	45-54	25.3	27.6	N=1773
	55-64	27.1	29.1	N=580
DE Germany	16-24	9.0	10.5	N=2542
	25-34	14.0	13.9	N=13856
	35-44	19.4	20.0	N=13231
	45-54	23.0	22.1	N=8051
	55-64	22.6	21.2	N=2289
HU Hungary	16-24	23.0	2.5	N=121
	25-34	15.6	10.8	N=699
	35-44	24.9	28.7	N=377
	45-54	24.1	11.1	N=289
	55-64	23.6	25.8	N=121
IN India	16-24	31.9	38.0	N=327
	25-34	3.1	20.8	N=2226
	35-44	6.0	40.9	N=461
	45-54	No data	No data	No data
	55-64	No data	No data	No data
IT Italy	16-24	No data	No data	No data
	25-34	30.9	15.8	N=153
	35-44	23.2	14.8	N=128
	45-54	No data	No data	No data
	55-64	No data	No data	No data
KR Korea, Rep.	16-24	-0.9	2.1	N=281
	25-34	11.9	10.0	N=1404
	35-44	9.6	32.6	N=512
	45-54	40.1	51.3	N=101
	55-64	No data	No data	No data
MX Mexico	16-24	9.9	15.8	N=834
	25-34	24.7	30.7	N=2428
	35-44	36.7	49.8	N=974
	45-54	30.4	36.3	N=297
	55-64	56.5	55.6	N=55
NL Netherlands	16-24	3.2	-0.5	N=6333
	25-34	9.4	8.0	N=19354
	35-44	16.9	18.6	N=16879
	45-54	24.5	24.3	N=10477
	55-64	25.7	27.2	N=3244

PL Poland	16-24	18.6	15.7	N=313
	25-34	20.8	20.9	N=2710
	35-44	23.8	24.1	N=1126
	45-54	23.3	20.5	N=957
	55-64	21.1	18.8	N=423
RU Russian Federation	16-24	10.7	11.0	N=1222
	25-34	16.0	15.3	N=2619
	35-44	13.6	10.3	N=797
	45-54	-4.4	-5.7	N=275
	55-64	No data	No data	No data
ZA South Africa	16-24	38.6	24.1	N=859
	25-34	25.7	27.8	N=3862
	35-44	32.0	30.1	N=1750
	45-54	44.3	43.9	N=627
	55-64	39.1	58.8	N=103
ES Spain	16-24	20.9	16.1	N=830
	25-34	21.7	21.5	N=5109
	35-44	23.6	25.7	N=2287
	45-54	29.7	30.1	N=695
	55-64	41.4	39.9	N=105
SE Sweden	16-24	9.2	10.8	N=65
	25-34	8.0	9.9	N=802
	35-44	10.8	15.1	N=702
	45-54	20.9	22.4	N=233
	55-64	17.6	27.6	N=45
UK United Kingdom	16-24	12.4	10.6	N=1776
	25-34	8.1	15.0	N=4640
	35-44	8.4	23.9	N=2979
	45-54	9.6	20.1	N=1913
	55-64	16.1	25.5	N=701
US United States	16-24	No data	No data	No data
	25-34	11.0	23.0	N=140
	35-44	25.6	39.3	N=102
	45-54	29.5	36.7	N=85
	55-64	No data	No data	No data

Gender pay gap by age

An analysis of the gender pay gap by age shows that, overall, the pay gap widens by age as shown by data in Argentina, Brazil, Finland, Germany, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the US.

The general assumption is that the gap in earnings between men and women widens with age, since more senior roles are linked to experience and skills, which in turn is linked to longer service. Men often have more years of service

than women, since the latter still tend to play the key role in caring for the family. Women may therefore not be in paid employment for a number of years. However, Denmark, India and the Russian Federation show a different picture, with the gap between men's and women's earnings narrowing with age.

The data for Hungary and Poland shows a fairly consistent gap in wages across all age bands. The data for South Africa and the UK shows larger pay gaps at both ends of the spectrum e.g. larger pay gaps between the youngest category of workers and again for the oldest category of workers. There is insufficient data to provide a breakdown of the gender pay gap by age for Italy.

Gender pay gap broken down by education level

Country of survey	Education level	Mean pay gap (%)	Median pay gap (%)	Valid N
DK Denmark	"Basic education"	11.2	15.2	N=217
	"Post secondary non-tertiary education"	10.3	13.2	N=337
	"First stage of tertiary education"	14.9	16.1	N=278
	"Second stage of tertiary education"	No data	No data	No data
FI Finland	"No education"	13.9	13.1	N=68
	"Basic education"	19.2	14.5	N=479
	"Lower secondary or 2nd stage of basic education"	17.9	17.1	N=2468
	"Post secondary non-tertiary education"	22.4	22.6	N=5370
	"First stage of tertiary education"	17.8	20.9	N=2179
	"Second stage of tertiary education"	11.5	10.3	N=144
DE Germany	"No education"	-13.7	3.5	N=260
	"Basic education"	17.1	21.7	N=5377
	"Lower secondary or 2nd stage of basic education"	14.4	12.9	N=12335
	"Upper secondary education"	21.4	21.6	N=4947
	"Post secondary non-tertiary education"	18.2	16.4	N=4920
	"First stage of tertiary education"	20.4	20.4	N=5101
	"Second stage of tertiary education"	16.3	20.6	N=900

IT Italy	"Basic education"	No data	No data	No data
	"Lower secondary or 2nd stage of basic education"	No data	No data	No data
	"Post secondary non-tertiary education"	42.8	26.2	N=132
	"First stage of tertiary education"	13.4	12.2	N=143
	"Second stage of tertiary education"	No data	No data	No data
NL Netherlands	"No education"	-11.3	12.2	N=95
	"Basic education"	22.7	17.2	N=788
	"Lower secondary or 2nd stage of basic education"	17.0	19.1	N=10570
	"Upper secondary education"	18.7	18.2	N=3009
	"Post secondary non-tertiary education"	17.0	16.7	N=19655
	"First stage of tertiary education"	20.2	22.7	N=21663
	"Second stage of tertiary education"	18.8	22.3	N=583
PL Poland	"Basic education"	No data	No data	No data
	"Lower secondary or 2nd stage of basic education"	-13.1	24.5	N=135
	"Post secondary non-tertiary education"	11.4	10.5	N=561
	"First stage of tertiary education"	22.7	24.5	N=3860
	"Second stage of tertiary education"	34.3	38.0	N=181
RU Russian Federation	"No education"	No data	No data	No data
	"Basic education"	19.4	20.2	N=111
	"Lower secondary or 2nd stage of basic education"	12.4	12.7	N=1636
	"Upper secondary education"	14.4	10.5	N=2391
	"Post secondary non-tertiary education"	16.6	17.7	N=764
	"First stage of tertiary education"	20.9	25.1	N=144

ES Spain	"No education"	55.5	39.7	N=35
	"Basic education"	24.2	27.0	N=731
	"Lower secondary or 2nd stage of basic education"	17.8	20.5	N=406
	"Upper secondary education"	26.2	22.8	N=1783
	"First stage of tertiary education"	26.2	26.5	N=3068
	"Second stage of tertiary education"	24.9	17.8	N=305
UK United Kingdom	"No education"	No data	No data	No data
	"Basic education"	-17.6	15.5	N=87
	"Lower secondary or 2nd stage of basic education"	14.1	24.1	N=687
	"Post secondary non-tertiary education"	19.2	19.0	N=589
	"First stage of tertiary education"	12.7	20.6	N=1037

Gender pay gap by educational background

When we look at the relationship between education and the gender pay gap, the data indicates that, contrary to common assumption, a higher level of education appears to have a negative impact. Examples of this pattern are Poland, Spain, Germany and Denmark. This may be an indicator of workplace discrimination, but may also be linked to the types of work that men and women do (occupational segregation). Also, some highly educated women may be employed in jobs below their educational level due to family commitments. In addition, the data includes both full-time and part-time workers which can influence the gender pay gap calculations, since part-time work is often lower paid.

In the UK, the Russian Federation and Netherlands, it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions about the relationship of education level to the gender pay gap.

Gender pay gap broken down by public/private/not for profit sector

Country of survey	Public/Private/NFP sector	Mean pay gap (%)	Median pay gap (%)	Valid N
AR Argentina	Private sector	27.4	31.6	N=12704
	Public sector	16.3	15.9	N=1878
	Not-for-profit	23.2	20.8	N=337

BR Brazil	Private sector	33.8	36.9	N=16450
	Public sector	32.0	37.8	N=2361
	Not-for-profit	22.8	25.2	N=797
DK Denmark	Private sector	10.2	13.2	N=562
	Public sector	6.1	5.5	N=158
FI Finland	Private sector	15.0	15.6	N=6844
	Public sector	20.3	19.5	N=3253
	Not-for-profit	15.3	13.6	N=496
DE Germany	Private sector	19.7	19.9	N=30372
	Public sector	14.3	13.2	N=4266
	Not-for-profit	14.6	12.7	N=2092
HU Hungary	Private sector	27.1	27.0	N=802
	Public sector	11.4	9.6	N=403
	Not-for-profit	-25.9	7.8	N=84
IN India	Private sector	3.6	25.2	N=2583
	Public sector	17.0	44.0	N=175
	Not-for-profit	No data	No data	No data
	Government sector	No data	No data	No data
IT Italy	Private sector	30.6	20.8	N=264
	Public sector	3.1	-3.9	N=57
	Not-for-profit	No data	No data	No data
KR Korea, Rep.	Private sector	17.3	24.7	N=1635
	Public sector	18.7	16.4	N=164
	Not-for-profit	-23.8	17.6	N=120
	Government sector	20.9	16.5	N=72
	Public corporation	-12.2	23.8	N=94
MX Mexico	Private sector	29.9	36.2	N=3268
	Public sector	28.1	35.1	N=977
	Not-for-profit	18.3	20.4	N=184
NL Netherlands	Private sector	19.5	19.0	N=35551
	Public sector	17.0	19.1	N=6020
	Not-for-profit	17.4	17.8	N=2999
PL Poland	Private sector	21.2	23.9	N=3117
	Public sector	19.9	16.1	N=2200
	Not-for-profit	20.2	12.8	N=99
RU Russian Federation	Private sector	15.5	13.3	N=3568
	Public sector	14.0	10.0	N=636
	Not-for-profit	-7.4	-20.1	N=128
ZA South Africa	Private sector	35.5	34.0	N=3780
	Public sector	27.2	30.3	N=666
	Not-for-profit	5.0	16.8	N=193

ES Spain	Private sector	25.5	24.2	N=7360
	Public sector	22.4	26.8	N=1294
	Not-for-profit	10.6	17.9	N=180
SE Sweden	Private sector	11.5	12.5	N=1179
	Public sector	9.0	7.4	N=234
	Not-for-profit	4.1	11.7	N=20
UK United Kingdom	Private sector	10.7	22.0	N=7420
	Public sector	7.8	13.7	N=3439
	Not-for-profit	4.8	14.0	N=708

Gender pay gap by sector

The data shows that the gender pay gap in the private sector is generally wider than it is in the public sector, though not always. In the case of South Africa, India and Finland, the gap is wider in the public sector. The data for Mexico and the Republic of Korea shows little difference between the gender pay gap in the private and public sectors. The narrowest or even positive average pay gaps overall are in the not-for-profit sector, for example in Hungary, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation.

Gender pay gap broken down by full-time/part-time hours

Country of survey	Fulltime hours	Mean pay gap (%)	Median pay gap (%)	Valid N
AR Argentina	No	20.4	21.8	N=2124
	Yes	26.6	29.9	N=13075
BR Brazil	No	25.9	23.1	N=1623
	Yes	36.3	39.7	N=16581
DK Denmark	No	14.3	10.8	N=99
	Yes	10.5	12.5	N=740
FI Finland	No	16.5	13.2	N=475
	Yes	18.2	19.3	N=1234
DE Germany	No	7.0	3.6	N=3973
	Yes	18.6	18.1	N=36092
HU Hungary	No	-2.0	29.5	N=48
	Yes	21.6	17.3	N=1561
IN India	No	No data	No data	No data
	Yes	7.4	29.8	N=3077
IT Italy	No	No data	No data	No data
	Yes	24.4	17.0	N=324
KR Korea, Rep.	No	8.8	11.8	N=515
	Yes	15.2	24.1	N=1801
MX Mexico	No	13.5	7.6	N=390
	Yes	30.2	37.2	N=4205
NL Netherlands	No	23.3	24.6	N=11860
	Yes	20.9	18.2	N=44502

PL Poland	No	-2.7	6.6	N=176
	Yes	22.9	22.1	N=5390
RU Russian Federation	No	-6.5	3.0	N=182
	Yes	15.2	14.1	N=4886
ZA South Africa	No	42.1	29.2	N=190
	Yes	32.8	33.4	N=7021
ES Spain	No	26.8	12.2	N=724
	Yes	23.7	21.8	N=8307
SE Sweden	No	5.4	2.4	N=92
	Yes	13.0	12.8	N=1756
UK United Kingdom	No	26.0	10.3	N=976
	Yes	6.6	18.0	N=11073
US United States	No	No data	No data	No data
	Yes	22.4	31.7	N=383

Gender pay gap by hours of work

A look at the pay gap between men and women working full-time hours and men and women working part-time hours shows that, generally, the gap is wider for full-time workers.

The incidence of part-time work influences the gender pay gap, since women are typically more likely to work part-time hours and part-time work is often lower paid. However, the gap in earnings between men and women who work part-time hours is generally smaller than that between men and women working full-time hours. Possible explanations of this may be faster progression for men than for women, particularly if women have had time off work to have, or care for, children. Another explanation is occupational segregation, with more women in lower-paid full-time work than men.

Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK – where there is a high incidence of part-time work – are exceptions to this rule. The pay gap in these countries is widest for part-time workers.

In South Africa, there is also a higher pay gap for part-time workers than full-time workers. However, it has to be taken into account that the sample for this country is skewed in favour of women (60:40) and that there are very few part-time workers of either gender.

Gender pay gap broken down by broad industry categories

Country of survey	NACE industry sector	Mean pay gap (%)	Median pay gap (%)	Valid N
AR Argentina	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	25.7	29.8	N=3234
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	29.0	29.7	N=3221
	Commercial services	25.4	28.9	N=5253
	Public sector, Health care, Education	16.2	15.6	N=2212
BR Brazil	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	30.5	35.2	N=4422
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	33.0	33.6	N=4475
	Commercial services	34.4	38.2	N=6019
	Public sector, Health care, Education	30.0	31.2	N=4554
DK Denmark	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	-0.1	-0.8	N=268
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	14.0	11.6	N=280
	Commercial services	20.9	28.3	N=176
	Public sector, Health care, Education	11.0	9.2	N=112
FI Finland	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	11.8	9.9	N=2852
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	11.1	9.0	N=1758
	Commercial services	18.8	21.6	N=2998
	Public sector, Health care, Education	20.9	21.7	N=3053
DE Germany	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	16.7	14.9	N=16331
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	17.5	16.4	N=8215
	Commercial services	21.7	24.5	N=9024
	Public sector, Health care, Education	20.0	19.0	N=6491

HU Hungary	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	16.5	22.4	N=450
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	15.0	-4.0	N=366
	Commercial services	25.4	20.1	N=472
	Public sector, Health care, Education	8.5	13.0	N=276
IN India	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	No data	No data	No data
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	No data	No data	No data
	Commercial services	-1.6	25.7	N=2263
	Public sector, Health care, Education	21.7	2.0	N=111
IT Italy	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	30.1	23.9	N=108
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	42.2	30.1	N=67
	Commercial services	14.3	18.1	N=108
	Public sector, Health care, Education	6.4	2.1	N=50
KR Korea, Rep.	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	7.6	24.2	N=690
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	18.1	16.4	N=318
	Commercial services	15.1	19.5	N=979
	Public sector, Health care, Education	18.7	30.0	N=319
MX Mexico	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	33.6	40.0	N=946
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	30.2	27.7	N=1039
	Commercial services	29.7	36.8	N=1425
	Public sector, Health care, Education	25.9	34.0	N=813

NL Netherlands	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	16.9	14.6	N=16369
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	21.0	20.0	N=12831
	Commercial services	22.9	22.8	N=15938
	Public sector, Health care, Education	20.7	22.9	N=11225
PL Poland	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	16.1	15.7	N=1264
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	19.6	17.8	N=806
	Commercial services	25.4	28.6	N=1677
	Public sector, Health care, Education	16.7	14.8	N=1751
RU Russian Federation	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	11.2	9.1	N=1194
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	14.9	12.1	N=1312
	Commercial services	15.1	16.2	N=1618
	Public sector, Health care, Education	9.4	9.3	N=428
ZA South Africa	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	35.8	39.4	N=1343
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	23.9	27.3	N=1140
	Commercial services	34.5	33.3	N=3491
	Public sector, Health care, Education	30.7	28.3	N=920
ES Spain	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	22.2	17.0	N=2374
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	25.5	21.2	N=2177
	Commercial services	24.4	26.2	N=2954
	Public sector, Health care, Education	26.5	27.8	N=1369
SE Sweden	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	9.5	9.6	N=357
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	8.6	6.6	N=362
	Commercial services	10.2	12.7	N=898
	Public sector, Health care, Education	11.3	11.3	N=231

UK United Kingdom	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	5.2	22.8	N=2876
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	6.5	18.7	N=2604
	Commercial services	13.0	21.6	N=3846
	Public sector, Health care, Education	17.8	22.4	N=2403
US United States	Agriculture, Manufact., Building	14.0	34.4	N=73
	Trade, Transport, Hospitality	4.1	31.6	N=66
	Commercial services	22.8	31.8	N=164
	Public sector, Health care, Education	32.9	44.7	N=92

Gender pay gap by broad industry category

Analysis of the gender pay gap by four large industry groups shows that, contrary to the assumption that the pay gap is smaller in the public sector than in agriculture and manufacturing, due to a larger population of female employees in the former category, data for the majority of countries indicates the opposite. In Argentina, Finland, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Spain, Sweden, UK and the US the gender pay gap is wider in the public sector than in the manufacturing, agriculture and building sector. Furthermore, the data for Brazil and Poland show little variance in the gender pay gap between these two broad industrial classifications. Overall the widest pay gaps are in commercial services, which include banking, marketing and other sectors typically more heavily populated by male workers.

Gender pay gap broken down by trade union membership

Country of survey	Member of a trade union	Mean pay gap (%)	Median pay gap (%)	Valid N
AR Argentina	No	27.9	30.0	N=3949
	Yes	17.0	21.0	N=2201
BR Brazil	No	34.6	40.2	N=4556
	Yes	33.6	35.6	N=8654
DK Denmark	No	9.5	11.9	N=215
	Yes	2.9	1.1	N=138
FI Finland	No	12.9	14.8	N=929
	Yes	19.0	19.3	N=7037
DE Germany	No	21.6	20.6	N=9638
	Yes	12.7	10.8	N=6498
HU Hungary	No	24.5	23.5	N=334
	Yes	2.5	12.5	N=249

IT Italy	No	23.3	20.8	N=106
	Yes	20.3	10.7	N=41
KR Korea, Rep.	No	16.0	24.2	N=2112
	Yes	-10.0	24.2	N=204
MX Mexico	No	32.3	38.5	N=772
	Yes	20.2	28.0	N=312
NL Netherlands	No	22.7	21.6	N=18184
	Yes	14.2	10.9	N=11218
PL Poland	No	26.3	25.2	N=1964
	Yes	16.3	17.8	N=578
ZA South Africa	No	31.4	32.2	N=4252
	Yes	23.0	18.4	N=277
ES Spain	No	22.7	26.2	N=1906
	Yes	20.2	22.5	N=1745
UK United Kingdom	No	11.0	21.5	N=4490
	Yes	6.5	6.8	N=2131

Influence of trade union membership

The data indicates that trade union membership has a positive influence on the gender pay gap, with the exception of Finland where the average pay gap for non-union members is smaller than for trade union members. The strongest positive relationship between trade union membership and wage equality is in the Republic of Korea and Hungary, the weakest relationship is in Brazil.

Gender pay gap broken down by collective agreement coverage in the workplace

Country of survey	Workplace covered by a collective agreement	Mean pay gap (%)	Median pay gap (%)	Valid N
AR Argentina	No	29.0	30.9	N=6151
	Yes	22.7	25.0	N=3514
BR Brazil	No	32.9	35.1	N=4214
	Yes	32.6	35.7	N=7426
DK Denmark	No	10.5	5.9	N=182
	Yes	9.1	10.9	N=514
DE Germany	No	18.3	17.8	N=17864
	Yes	19.0	19.4	N=17051
HU Hungary	No	26.5	18.1	N=921
	Yes	8.7	14.9	N=492

NL Netherlands	No	24.3	23.6	N=14282
	Yes	16.2	14.9	N=37532
	Yes, but I myself am not covered	21.3	30.5	N=276
ZA South Africa	No	36.3	30.9	N=2358
	Yes	27.0	29.8	N=1951
ES Spain	No	21.4	21.3	N=2213
	Yes	24.6	23.5	N=4675
UK United Kingdom	No	13.0	23.9	N=7132
	Yes	-0.1	8.8	N=2535
US United States	No	25.8	27.8	N=143
	Yes	41.7	31.9	N=90

Influence of collective bargaining agreement

The data shows that in the majority of countries the pay gap is smaller in workplaces that are covered by a collective agreement. This is most apparent in Hungary and the UK where the pay gap falls considerably between workplaces with collective agreements and workplaces without collective agreements. In the case of Germany and Spain the pay gap is marginally wider in workplaces with collective agreements, and in the United States the results show a widening gap in workplaces covered by a collective agreement. However, it has to be pointed out that the USA sample is rather small relative to the working age population, and includes a relatively high proportion of professional and managerial staff as well as a high level of gender segregation among those who are members of a trade union, which makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusions. Also, other US research in this field shows a different picture, with a substantial advantage in pay and conditions of work for women who are union members and covered by collective agreements.

Gender pay gap broken down by trade union representation in the workplace

Country of survey	TU representative in the workplace	Mean pay gap (%)	Median pay gap (%)	Valid N
AR Argentina	No	24.5	24.3	N=8260
	Yes	25.1	28.0	N=5393
DK Denmark	No	5.5	10.2	N=54
	Yes	-2.3	-10.1	N=96
IT Italy	No	32.9	20.5	N=106
	Yes	1.3	-0.6	N=138
PL Poland	No	24.6	29.9	N=2121
	Yes	21.4	17.5	N=1945
ES Spain	No	21.8	17.9	N=3786
	Yes	21.2	21.7	N=3782
UK United Kingdom	No	10.8	21.2	N=7339
	Yes	1.5	12.6	N=3198

Influence of trade union representative in the workplace

An analysis of the gender pay gap broken down by the presence of a trade union representative in the workplace shows a positive relationship. The gap between men and women's earnings is smaller in workplaces where there is a trade union representative, compared with those workplaces without a trade union representative. The exception to this trend is Argentina, where the pay gap is marginally wider in workplaces with a trade union representative. Spain shows ambiguous results, with a slightly lower average pay gap for workplaces with a trade union representative, but a slightly wider gap when looking at the median figure.

Chapter 2. The impact of the recession on women's employment

In order to understand the current economic crisis and how it affects the position of women in the labour market, it is valuable to take a closer look at previous economic downturns and their implications. Before we do this, though, we will first briefly discuss the different consequences the recession has on women's employment in developing versus developed countries.

The evidence in this field of research is scattered, which makes it difficult to draw general conclusions. Instead, we have adopted the approach of discussing case-studies from various countries.

The developing versus the developed world

The impact of an economic downturn on women's position in the labour market in developing countries is often stronger than in more economically developed parts of the world. It is widely accepted that the negative consequences of recessions in developed countries impact overall more strongly on male than on female employment levels, while in developing countries women workers are more prone to be made redundant than male workers. The explanation, researchers argue, is partly due to the production and gender employment structures and partly because of the prevailing socio-cultural values in each country.

Research shows that '(I)n advanced countries, men are often employed in cyclically unstable industries or industries in long-term decline (de-industrialisation), while women tend to be employed in more stable service industries. In many semi-industrial countries, however, women tend to be employed in labour-intensive manufactured export industries which are more prone to fluctuations'⁷.

The economic and financial systems of developing countries are particularly vulnerable to global economic downturns. Firstly there are the 'contagion effects' with regard to a fall in the exchange rates for the currencies used in these countries, which can hardly be influenced even when a proper macro-economic framework is in place. Secondly, the developing world is hit hard by the effects of a global recession, for example because of falling commodity prices, a decline in development aid and in the value of remittances from relatives abroad, and the contraction of exports⁸. Examples of export cuts affecting women in particular are the African textile industry, where 90 per cent of jobs in the sector are taken up by low-skilled and low-educated women, and the Asian textile, food processing, and electronics manufacturing industries. Furthermore, a large proportion of women in Asia and Africa are employed in agriculture and food production. When food prices rise (as has happened in recent years) and less food is exported, it has a substantial impact on female employment in countries where a large share of the population (and indeed a specifically large proportion of women) is employed in this sector⁹. All these developments can therefore have a profound impact on female employment levels and household incomes.

Variations in gender-related socio-cultural values across the world also play an important part in the understanding of how a recession affects women's positions in the labour market differently across the globe. The idea of the male breadwinner is still a widespread stereotype, but more so in developing countries than in developed ones. The attitude of employers to regard women mainly as 'secondary income earners' is then often used as an excuse to fire them first in difficult economic times¹⁰. The fact that women in developing countries are also much less likely than men to be a member of a trade union, and therefore have a weaker position in the workplace, only reinforces this trend¹¹.

Evidence from previous recessions

Female-dominated sectors particularly sensitive to fluctuations

Research has shown that during the 1997-1999 Asian crisis, a higher proportion of (mainly low-educated) women than men lost their jobs, with many redundancies taking place in export-sensitive industries such as the manufacturing of clothing, food processing, and in retail. All of these were female-dominated industries¹². More evidence from job segregation along gender lines is found in low-paid informal work and domestic employment sectors, which both more often employ female than male workers. The high rate of women employed in these areas is another explanatory factor of the disproportional sharp decline in the real wages of women workers during economically tough times. More people are forced into informal work and homework during an economic downturn, which leads to increased competition for this type of work and consequently to downward pressure on wages. Moreover, benefits or other forms of government support hardly exist in these sectors, which negatively impacts on a woman's income when she loses her job.

Examples of this phenomenon are Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, all of which provide evidence that women's income decreased more drastically than that of men in the 1990s crisis because of sharp contractions in sectors in which women were over-represented, such as the casual and domestic employment sectors. Additionally, the majority of Asia's migrants who were forced to leave some of the countries hit by the crisis, were women¹³.

Care responsibilities and an inadequate social safety net

Women often pick up the care responsibilities that arise from the lack of a social safety net. In particular in developing countries, social security systems are often weak or even absent¹⁴. In addition to their role as wage earners and food providers, women also become the main carers for their families, which puts additional stress on not only the women but the whole family, especially on children¹⁵. One article argues that '(...) women are observed to bear the stress of being caught in a pincer movement: the amount of caring and unpaid household duties may increase when family members become unemployed or sick, while the economic pressures increase for women to undertake paid labour to contribute to the family income, no matter how poor the remuneration and disagreeable or degrading the activity'¹⁶.

Counter examples from past recessions: Argentina and the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, research on the recession between 1990 and 1993 shows that it was mainly the male-dominated professions such as manufacturing and construction that were affected by the economic decline. Sectors with a bias towards a largely female workforce, such as retail, fast food, pubs and restaurants, hairdressing, cleaning and catering, all showed relatively stable employment levels. More precisely, the employment level for men decreased by 8.8 per cent between 1990 and 1993, while female employment over the same period declined by 2.5 per cent. Furthermore, the ILO unemployment rate for women of working age in the third quarter of 1993 had risen by 1 per cent since 1990 (from 7 to 8 per cent) while the unemployment rate for men increased by 5 per cent during these three years (from 7 to 12 per cent)¹⁷.

The case of the Argentinean economic crisis (1999-2002) shows that the poorer households suffered most, with the household income of the poorest 10 per cent decreasing by 41 per cent, compared to a 23 per cent decline in household income for the richest 10 per cent of households¹⁸. Interestingly, research on the Argentinean crisis shows that it was mainly male-headed households that were hit hardest, experiencing a 6 per cent larger decline in household income than female-headed households. This may again have to do with the predominantly male-dominated sectors that were hardest hit by the crisis, such as construction and business, while the crisis had less of an impact on public sector roles in which a large share of female workers were employed.

Considering the above, there is patchy evidence that women are affected disproportionately in times of economic and financial crisis, especially in developing countries. However, it is difficult, if not impossible, to come up with a definitive set of causes, consequences and solutions. As one source of literature puts it, this is partly because of the limited evidence available, and partly because of the regional differences in how the downturns have been experienced in various countries over the last decades¹⁹.

The current recession

A recently published United Nations report on the current financial crisis²⁰ reiterates some of the conclusions drawn from previous recessions around socio-cultural values and the presumptions regarding the position of women in the labour market, as described above. It thus shows that the 'lessons learned' from the past are, sadly enough, still relevant with regard to the analysis of the gender impact of the present global economic downturn. For example, the authors of the report remark that '(W)omen bear the brunt of the crisis because of the paradigm of the male bread-winner that prevails all over the world across cultural divides (...). When job retrenchment takes place, the tendency is to protect employment for men and compromise on women's jobs. But women's incomes are essential for family survival, especially when they are heads of households and/or in poor families. They cannot afford to stop working so they end up in jobs with much worse and often unacceptable conditions'²¹. The report also points out that, in many countries, a woman is still responsible for

the largest share, if not all, of the care responsibilities in the household. This means that there is less time available for them to take up paid work in the market economy.

The remainder of this section will concentrate on specific examples of the impact of the economic crisis on the position of women in labour markets in regions across the globe.

Latin America and the Caribbean

At its conference in December 2008, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) commented that unemployment among women in this region is likely to rise due to the financial crisis, especially because many of them work in industries that are responsive to economic fluctuations, such as commerce, manufacturing, financial services, tourism and domestic services. The Commission also foresees an increase in social inequality, informal employment and a lack of social protection²².

United States of America

In the USA, women make up the majority of low-wage workers and are more likely than men to live in poverty (36 versus 26 per cent). The poverty rate for single female-headed households is the highest of all demographic groups. Moreover, more women than men hold sub-prime mortgages, and women are more likely to fall into the 'poverty trap' - which is getting larger in the current economic crisis. Figures underline that it is difficult to get out of this situation: after a decade around 60 per cent of families in the lowest salary bracket has been unable to get out of this situation, stressing the absence of economic mobility²³.

The United Kingdom

The effects of the current economic downturn on women workers in the UK are a topic of discussion, with some arguing that the fall in employment levels for male full-time workers has been much sharper than for female full-time workers (1.2 per cent for men and 0.5 per cent for women during the second and third quarter of 2008²⁴), while others argue that UK women will be hit harder in this recession than in previous ones. Reasons for this latter argument are that jobs are being lost all across the economy (especially in the retail and hospitality sectors) instead of mainly in manufacturing and construction, more women nowadays are in paid employment than was the case in previous recessions, and more households than ever are now headed up by a female who is also the primary wage earner in that household. Furthermore, women take home more than men in over a fifth of couples²⁵, reinforcing the significance of the drop in household income if the female partner is made redundant.

The way forward

Policy measures

More flexible working opportunities in order to combine care duties more easily with paid work, a more accessible benefits system, stimulating macro-economic fiscal and monetary policies, and a better representation of women in key roles

so that they can help to influence and shape local, national and international pay and employment policies. These are only a few of the many policy initiatives suggested in the literature. A small selection of these propositions is discussed more in-depth below.

Firstly, taking a closer look at developing countries, one of the consequences of rising unemployment levels and less capital inflow from investors is that governments will have less revenue at their disposal. This means a decrease in government social spending, which in turn can lead to reduced services in the fields of health care, education and transport. Additionally, food aid and other forms of international government development aid may be reduced because the money is being used to revive the economies in the donor countries. The same applies to private humanitarian groups. However, strengthening the official development assistance, such as the provision of loans from multilateral financial institutions, will have a long-term positive impact on the development of these less developed economies, and particularly on the welfare of women. A contribution written for the UN panel on the global financial crisis illustrates this point by emphasising the need to keep up support for long-term development objectives in the social services, such as in the care sector, in order to reduce the pressure on unpaid work which is mainly carried out by women.

A second set of suggestions comes from the International Monetary Fund. In its working paper, published shortly after the macroeconomic crisis in Argentina in the 1990s, the organisation proposes social interventions to help households cope with an economic downturn. Investments in social safety nets and public works programmes are put forward as possible solutions, as well as greater labour market flexibility which, proponents argue, allows better and easier access to jobs, particularly for women. Others, however, would say that such flexibility measures have often been encouraged by the IMF and World Bank primarily in order to increase employers' ability to hire and fire workers, and that these policies would not necessarily be in the interests of female or male workers. In any case, any proposals for flexibility should be considered extremely carefully. The first priority has to be to establish an efficient, transparent and well-coordinated public administration apparatus, which is equipped to initiate and support the other interventions²⁶.

Thirdly, a specific 'women's agenda' that influences international financial reform can also be part of the solution. From a gender perspective, women-friendly government fiscal policies and measures to avoid deep fluctuations in economic activity may be desirable. In developing countries, controlled capital inflow and outflow could be integrated into normal economic policy, in order to attract capital from investors who are committed to support a country's development strategy in the long run, such as certain Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). At the same time, this would mean resisting the highly volatile capital injections (although perhaps profitable in the short-term) that characterises much overseas investment in developing countries²⁷. In addition, some researchers suggest that, apart from measures on the national level, the international community should aim for a 'trend increase in the rate of growth of real world aggregate demand, production and employment on a sustainable

basis... Such policies will benefit both women and men, but women will derive greater advantage from the greater stability generated by such policies'²⁸. The same authors recommend that other forms of wage and employment discrimination (e.g. gender discrimination on the basis of cultural arguments) against women may be addressed through complementary (inter-) national policies. Women themselves, they add, must play an active part in formulating such policy frameworks.

Finally, among the recommendations from the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) are suggestions to redefine fiscal pacts to ensure resources for public policies, the implementation of new policies to prevent the loss of paid jobs, as well as greater efforts to prevent expenditure on social policies from dropping, especially policies relating to the strengthening of gender equality. Other proposals put forward by ECLAC include the reinforcement of official development aid and the strengthening of regional integration processes 'as an opportunity in light of the current crisis'²⁹.

More women in boardrooms

A gender-balanced senior management team may be beneficial to an organisation's performance³⁰. In the current economic climate, female representation in senior positions has therefore once again become a much-discussed issue, as various recently published articles on this topic suggest.

The 'Female FTSE Report 2008' is one such publication. It looks at the number of women in UK boardrooms of FTSE-listed companies and points out that the global financial crisis is a new opportunity to appoint more women to the boards of organisations operating in the financial sector, in order to obtain better gender balance in these largely male company boards. The authors also mention the example set by Norway, which has set a mandatory quota for 40 per cent of corporate board positions to be held by women. This has become effective as of 31 January 2008³¹. Similar initiatives are taking place across Europe. In Spain, companies have until 2015 to implement a policy which requires women to fill between 40 and 60 per cent of all boards and executive-level positions. Germany has introduced 'soft quotas' to promote gender equality³². Iceland, hit particularly hard by the current crisis, has recently appointed female CEOs to head up its two newly created nationalised banks, New Landsbanki and New Glitnir.

Trade union membership

A US study conducted by the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) shows that, controlled for other variables, union representation significantly improves women's pay and benefits: on average their pay is 11.2 per cent higher than that of their non-union counterparts³³. This is even more so the case for women employed in so-called 'low-wage occupations' (such as cashiers, food preparation workers, child-care workers, cleaners, nurses and teaching assistants) in the USA³⁴: unionised women in such jobs earn a median salary which is some 30 per cent higher than the median salary of a non-unionised colleague. The study concludes that women demonstrably benefit

from collective bargaining, and that this is the case across the whole spectrum of occupations. The WageIndicator results in this report support this statement, with the gender pay gap in many countries being considerably smaller when women are a member of a trade union and/or are covered by a collective agreement.

Chapter 3. Standardising the gender pay gap definition

In last year's ITUC Global Gender Pay Gap Report the complexities and obstacles in calculating the gender pay gap in an internationally comparable manner were explored³⁵. The report drew specific attention to issues such as differences in the calculations and measures of earnings across the globe, the (lack of) availability of earnings data and large enough sample sizes, the type of employee that is used (i.e. part-time and/or full-time, and how these concepts are defined from country to country), and the wide variety in the collection method of earnings data. It called upon an internationally agreed definition of the gender pay gap, as well as for harmonised research methodologies to calculate it, in order to stimulate and support internationally coordinated actions to close the gap.

These recommendations from last year's Gender Pay Gap Report are reinforced by a recently published international review of labour data, which was conducted by the UK Office of National Statistics on behalf of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) in 2007. This UN Review of Labour Statistics looks at the indicators of labour market statistics, among other things, and mentions 'issues of overlap, lack of coherence and comparability'³⁶ in its conclusions. One of the causes for this is the wide range of organisations involved in international labour statistics, such as the OECD, Eurostat, the IMF, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the World Bank, and the ILO. The authors of the report point out that these agencies 'produce indicators of labour statistics for countries internationally, but each with slightly different definitions, timescales, coverage and remits'³⁷.

The widely used KILM (Key Indicators of the Labour Market) dataset, which is produced by the International Labour Organisation, is found to be the most comprehensive source (even though the response rate of the survey, which went out to 232 countries worldwide, was just 50 per cent). However, it requires updating and has incomplete meta-data on sources and collection methods. This is also due to the fact that some countries are not able to supply the data in the required format and time period. Collecting data and producing reliable statistics in countries with less developed economies is also a problem. Even in developed countries, cross-country analysis of labour market statistics is difficult because of 'incomplete coverage, contradictory results, difficulties and limitations in describing labour market dynamics, and the absence of links between labour market statistics and other social and economic statistics'³⁸.

Moreover, the study points out that even though internationally agreed definitions are used widely, the interpretation of these definitions differ from country to country and from organisation to organisation.

In order to tackle these issues, the Review puts forward the following recommendations:

- Harmonisation of concepts and methods (e.g. definitions of employment, full-time and part-time work)

- Putting in place a coordinated system for providing technical assistance (e.g. statistical training as an integral part of statistical capacity building)
- Improvements to the existing system of setting international standards
- Setting up working groups to discuss the five priority areas for development work, being: 1) the changing structure of the labour force; 2) the non-observed economy and informal employment; 3) measurement of productivity; 4) child and forced labour; 5) globalisation
- Developing an updated version of the conceptual labour statistics framework (i.e. developing a set of key labour statistics indicators common to the OECD, ILO and Eurostat).

Interestingly, the UN Review remarks that one of the challenges is to provide a coherent and comprehensive definition of 'employment'. The employment definition is primarily based on the (largely economic) notion that the activities carried out by the employed person contribute to the production of goods and services. This excludes statistics that deal with unpaid non-market services, such as the non-observed economy and informal employment. The Review therefore proposes to include the new concept of 'work statistics', which then will include 'unpaid work in the family and the wider community' (in addition to 'employment statistics'). This could be used for the purpose of social analysis. As the Review's authors put it: '(T)he relationship between unpaid family work and paid employment, particularly for women, is key to understanding the matching of jobs with people'³⁹. Additionally, extending the use of family and household statistics, and linking these to employment and labour market topics would, for example, enable researchers and policymakers to undertake cross-country comparisons of the relationships between female employment and household poverty. To quote the authors, '(M)ainstreaming household and family analysis would give a more complete view on how to improve women's employment levels, would help to get a handle on unpaid and informal work and would assist in the measurement of poverty through assessing links between female employment and household poverty'⁴⁰.

PART II

Who Bears the Cost? Violence against women and its impact on society

The Cost of Violence Against Women: A literature review

Violence against women (VAW) occurs in every country of the world to a greater or lesser degree, with numerous serious consequences for the women themselves as well as for society more generally. Gender-based violence is perhaps the most widespread and socially tolerated of human rights violations and reflects and reinforces inequalities existing between men and women. It is detrimental to the health, dignity, security and autonomy of its victims, while seriously inhibiting their chances of a normal life and the opportunity to participate fully in the workforce. From a trade union perspective, VAW is not only a violation of human rights, but also a type of violence which has a direct and detrimental impact on a woman's access to paid work (e.g. because the victim can not fully participate in the labour market due to the mental and physical consequences of the abuse) and, as a consequence, on her income and on society as a whole.

Nevertheless, despite the prevalence of the problem, VAW as an area of research is relatively new and has only gained serious attention in the last few decades or so. There are multiple reasons for the only recent focus on VAW, but perhaps the most important one is that, since most violence occurs in the domestic environment, societal attitudes have historically viewed it as a private matter and therefore as something that was inappropriate to intrude or intervene in. More recently, however, in most countries this view has changed or at least diminished to a certain degree. Major global studies have emerged from organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), The World Bank, Amnesty International and the United Nations.

Impetus behind research into VAW

If we consider that the United Nations' First World Conference on Women took place as recently as 1975, we are closer to understanding why the issue has only gained relatively recent attention. In fact, it was not until 1993 that a generally agreed definition emerged in the shape of the United Nations' Declaration on the Elimination of VAW (resolution 48/104, 1993)⁴¹. Impetus for action against VAW was maintained with the 1995 Beijing Declaration⁴² made at the United Nations Fourth Conference on Women, and still continues to gain momentum.

Definition

The 1993 definition says that:

“Violence against women” means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

The resolution in its entirety expands on this statement. The definition was later recalled by the United Nations in its 2003 Elimination of Violence Against Women resolution (2003/45)⁴³, in order to include economic exploitation.

Economic focus

Like the definition, most research initially focused on the prevalence of VAW and the consequences for individuals themselves, while the wider economic effects have only emerged as a specific research area in the last 20 years. Despite the relatively recent attention, the economic consequences appear to be an area of growing interest and importance, with an increasing number of smaller studies focusing on the problem from this angle. Whatever the approach taken though, one feature shared by all research into VAW is the recognition of the numerous difficulties involved in researching such an emotive and sensitive issue.

Complexities of VAW

As research has emerged and evolved, it has continued to recognise these many obstacles. Most early studies particularly considered the question of what exactly constitutes VAW. Does it include psychological as well as physical and sexual violence, for example? Moreover, other challenges have been recognised, such as how best to encourage women to speak about their, often very traumatic, experiences and how to account for the differences in what they themselves consider appropriate and inappropriate behaviour from men. After all, with global studies in particular, the cultural and contextual differences found in the different countries can be substantial, with some cultures even viewing certain types of violence as a normal part of daily life.

The box below, adapted from a 1994 World Bank report, The Hidden Health Burden, helps deal with some of these questions, summarising how gender violence affects women throughout their life cycles.

Gender Violence Throughout the Life Cycle (Source: The World Bank, 1994)⁴⁴

Phase	Type of violence present
Prenatal:	Battering during pregnancy; coerced pregnancy; deprivation of food and liquids; sex-selective abortion
Infancy:	Female infanticide; emotional and physical abuse; differential access to food and medical care for girl infants

Childhood:	Child marriage; genital mutilation; sexual abuse by family members and strangers; differential access to food and medical care; child prostitution
Adolescence:	Rape and marital rape; sexual assault; forced prostitution; trafficking in women; courtship violence; economically coerced sex; sexual abuse in the workplace
Reproductive age:	Abuse of women by intimate partners; marital rape; dowry abuse and murders; partner homicide; psychological abuse; sexual abuse in the workplace; sexual harassment; rape; abuse of women with disabilities; legal discrimination
Old age:	Abuse and exploitation of widows

What the box shows is that women are at risk of violence throughout their life cycles, but what it does not show is another important cycle – the one in which violence is transmitted across generations.

Problems with measurement

Even with an agreed definition, because of the nature of the problem, studies on VAW have encountered numerous other difficulties which the WHO 2005 multi-country study summarises. It explains: “(...) previous studies used differences in the way violence was defined, measured and presented. For example, some studies of partner violence include only physical violence, while others may also include sexual or emotional violence. Some studies measure lifetime experiences of violence, whereas others include only experiences in the current relationship, or in a defined period. Studies also differ in other important respects, such as the definition of the study population (for example, in terms of the age range and partnership status of the women), the forms of violence considered, the range of questions asked, and whether measures were taken to ensure privacy and confidentiality of interviews. Such factors have since been shown to greatly affect prevalence estimates by influencing a woman’s willingness to disclose abuse. These methodological differences between studies have made it difficult to draw meaningful comparisons or to understand the similarities and differences in the extent, patterns, and factors associated with violence in different settings.”⁴⁵

In addition to these problems, other studies have highlighted issues including:

- A lack of data collection on certain types of VAW such as sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence and other traditional practices harmful to women; non-spousal violence; violence related to exploitation; forced marriage; and forced labour
- The importance of question-framing and design and their effect on reporting rates
- Ensuring that the safety of the victims being surveyed are not further abused for talking about their experiences to interviewers and concern over the

confidentiality of data both during the interview and in its storage.

Population-based surveys most effective

Considering all these issues, the consensus is that the most effective method to explore the problem is via population-based surveys. Such surveys offer the advantages of large sample sizes, efficiency of data collection, standardisation of measurement instruments and the possibility of being generalised to the national population. One drawback, however, is their cost, which has led organisations such as Oxfam to propose sharing the expense by engaging in joint projects with other organisations, who are also focused on tackling the problem. Indeed, many of the large multi-country studies have already engaged in this approach.

Previous studies and prevalence on VAW

Most recent reports are aware of such problems, and endeavour to address them, learning from the pitfalls detected in earlier research. But what does the combined knowledge from such reports tell us about the prevalence of VAW? Before considering this, it is perhaps best to note that, as Oxfam concedes in its 2006 book 'Ending Violence Against Women'⁴⁶, the true frequency of violence against women is still unknown. Even with this qualification, however, the various studies focusing on the problem provide significant evidence illustrating the scale of the problem. Of the various surveys, it is the multi-country reports in particular that are the most useful when considering the problem from an international perspective.

One of the most comprehensive among these is the 2005 WHO survey examining VAW in 10 countries⁴⁷. Its findings on the occurrence of physical and sexual violence from an intimate partner according to different locations are illustrated in the table below.

Prevalence of physical and sexual violence against women by an intimate partner by site* (Source: WHO)

Site	Physical violence		Sexual violence		Physical or sexual violence or both		Total number of ever-partnered women
	Ever (%)	Current (%)	Ever (%)	Current (%)	Ever (%)		
Bangladesh city	39.7	19.0	37.4	20.2	53.4	30.2	1,373
Bangladesh province	41.7	15.8	49.7	24.2	61.7	31.9	1,329
Brazil city	27.2	8.3	10.1	2.8	28.9	9.3	940
Brazil province	33.8	12.9	14.3	5.6	36.9	14.8	1,188
Ethiopia province	48.7	29.0	58.6	44.4	70.9	53.7	2,261
Japan city	12.9	3.1	6.2	1.3	15.4	3.8	1,276

Namibia city	30.6	15.9	16.5	9.1	35.9	19.5	1,367
Peru city	48.6	16.9	22.5	7.1	51.2	19.2	1,086
Peru province	61.0	24.8	46.7	22.9	69.0	34.2	1,534
Samoa	40.5	17.9	19.5	11.5	46.1	22.4	1,204
Serbia and	22.8	3.2	6.3	1.1	23.7	3.7	1,189
Thailand city	22.9	7.9	29.9	17.1	41.1	21.3	1,048
Thailand province	33.8	13.4	28.9	15.6	47.4	22.9	1,024
Tanzania city	32.9	14.8	23.0	12.8	41.3	21.5	1,442
Tanzania province	46.7	18.7	30.7	18.3	55.9	29.1	1,256

*At least one act of physical or sexual violence in the 12 months prior to the interview

The table highlights that VAW not only differs across countries but in some cases it varies within the same country, depending on whether the location is in the city or within a province. This illustrates further the complexity of the problem and underlines the need for broad-based, large-scale surveys. Another study, the United Nations 2006 report on all forms of VAW, mirrors this diversity reporting that the prevalence of physical assaults on women by a male partner varied from 1 per cent in a US study in 1995-96 to between 19 per cent and 67 per cent found in a 1997 study of the Arab population in Israel⁴⁸.

Examining the scope of the problem across the globe, Amnesty's website reports that at least one out of every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise been abused in their lifetime. The UNFPA further explains that "systematic sexual violence against women has characterised almost all recent armed conflicts and is used as a tool of terror and 'ethnic cleansing'⁴⁹.

Why economic costs?

It is now evident that VAW is a major global problem, but why specifically consider it also from an economic perspective? Analysing the costs of VAW is useful because it shows its financial impact on businesses, the state, community groups and individuals. Moreover, it not only emphasises the pervasiveness of such violence, but also provides important information for specific budgetary allocations for programmes to prevent and redress violence against women. At the same time, it demonstrates that much more should be invested in early intervention and prevention strategies, rather than allowing such violence to continue unabated⁵⁰.

The economic argument does not disagree with earlier perspectives, but

it rather provides another dimension from which to view the consequences resulting from male violence⁵¹. In addition, by defining the problem in financial terms, it is hoped that 'hard' economic facts will hold greater sway over those in charge of policy decisions. After all, as well as the desire to end VAW and improve social justice, it is undeniable that financial considerations also play a significant part in the decisions made by governments and other bodies such as NGOs.

Methods of measuring costs

A 1999 seminar given at a Council of Europe conference provided a review of the methods used to calculate the costs of VAW, explaining that the early studies mainly examined the costs of medical care relating to intra-family assault and homicide. Later, more ambitious pieces of research have started to combine the prevalence rates of violence and the subsequent outcomes with estimates of the related costs⁵². Many of these costs are shown in the table below, based on 2004 research from the UK. The table is useful as it highlights the different ways in which VAW is a cost to society.

Who bears the costs? A UK example. (Source: Walby, 2004)⁵³

Type of cost	State	Individual victim	Employers	Total cost (£ millions)
Criminal Justice System	1,017			1,017
Health care:				
Physical	1,208	12		1,220
Mental health	176			176
Social services	228			228
Housing and refuges	130	28		158
Civil legal costs	159	152		312
All services	2,918	192		3,111
Employment		1,336	1,336	2,672
Sub-total	2,918	1,528	1,336	5,783
Human costs		17,082		17,086
Total (£ millions)	2,918	18,610	1,336	22,869

Other findings on economic costs

The table above illustrates that costs are significant, and other studies reinforce these findings. For example, a US report estimated VAW costs \$0.9 billion a year in lost productivity alone⁵⁴ while in Sweden, the estimated costs are between SEK 2,695 and 3,300 million each year⁵⁵. One problem, however, is that these amounts are the result of financial estimates, themselves based on estimates of the prevalence of VAW, and therefore can never be totally accurate. Nevertheless, they at least serve to provide an indication of the magnitude of the problem in financial terms and a powerful tool to argue for action to curb the problem.

Further evidence of the size of VAW in economic terms in different countries is given in the table below⁵⁶. The table illustrates, not surprisingly, that the value

of estimates are dependent on the types of violence measured and the types of costs included. Again, it illustrates some significant amounts.

Summary of Economic Costs of Violence Against Women Studies, 1991-98

Country/ region and researcher(s)	Total cost estimate (USD)	Year	Type of violence	Types of costs included in the estimate
New South Wales, Australia, NSW Women's Co- ordination Unit	\$1,000,000,000	1991	Domestic violence of women at various stages	Individual, government, employer and third party – health care, legal, criminal justice, social welfare, employment, childcare and housing
Queensland, Australia, Sunshine Coast Interagency Research Group	\$40,000,000	1993	Physical abuse, psychological abuse, rape, sexual assault of women	Victims, public/ community and other individuals – housing and refuge, social security, health care and criminal justice
New Zealand, S. Snively	\$625,000,000	1994	Family violence including threats of violence on women and children	Individual, government, third party and employer medical care, social welfare and assistance, legal and criminal justice and employment
Canada, T. Day	\$1,000,000,000	1995	Physical and sexual abuse of women	Health costs – medical, dental and psychiatric care, paid and unpaid work loss, housing and refuge, long-term costs
Canada, Greaves, Hankivsky & Kingston-Riechers	\$2,750,000,000	1995	Physical violence, sexual assault, rape, incest, child sexual abuse	Individual, government and third party – social services & education, criminal justice, labour & work, health & medical

Canada, Northern Territory, Office of Women's Policy	\$6,500,000	1996	Physical, sexual and psychological domestic violence – effects on women and children	Individual, community and other costs – crisis support, police, housing, financial, medical, childcare, legal services, employment
Netherlands, Korf, Meulenbeek, Mot & Van Den Brandt	\$194,000,000	1997	Physical and sexual domestic violence against women	Police and justice, medical, psychosocial care, labour and social security
Hackney, UK, Stanko, Crisp, Hale & Lucraft	\$8,000,000	1997	Physical and sexual abuse of women and children	Police, civil justice, housing, refuge, social services and health care
Switzerland, Godenzi & Yodanis	\$290,000,000	1998	Physical, sexual and psychological abuse of women and girls	State costs, medical treatment, police and justice, victim-related support, support and counselling, research

Research in less developed countries is not so widespread, but does exist. For example, an Indian survey shows that for each incidence of violence, women lose an average of 7 working days⁵⁷, while in Managua, Nicaragua and Santiago, Chile all types of violence reduces women's earnings by US\$29.5 million (c.1.6 per cent of 1996 GDP) and US\$1.56 billion respectively (more than 2 per cent of 1996 GDP)⁵⁸.

Work and income implications

VAW has strong implications on a woman's access to paid work and, as a consequence, on her opportunities to earn an income. Violence can either occur at the workplace itself or at home. Both types will impact on women's position in the labour market. The American federation of trade unions, AFL-CIO, puts forward several suggestions to prevent VAW. Apart from laws and regulations, specific measures can be taken to prevent workplace violence, such as :

- The environmental approach (e.g. adjust lighting, tv cameras, mobile phones for field personnel)
- The organisational/behavioral approach (e.g. developing programs, policies, work practices and training)

- The behavioral approach (e.g. training staff to anticipate, recognise and respond to conflict and potential VAW)⁵⁹.

Moving forward

Whatever the location, it is now clear that the costs associated with VAW are significant. While important progress has been made, there is still a long way to go, so where next for research and policies associated with VAW? Consensus among organisations such as WHO, the United Nations and Amnesty International falls into the following areas:

- Building on current evidence
- Improving research methods and creating agreed standards of measurement
- Greater collaboration from interested parties
- Lobbying governments to incorporate legislation on VAW into their national frameworks
- Assessing the effectiveness of current prevention methods.

Building on current evidence

VAW is an issue that is far from being fully understood, so it is important to build on current evidence regarding the scope and types of violence in different settings, especially in developing countries. For many countries, records kept by the police and the courts are often weak and uneven. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen these recording and processing systems, in order to enable them to produce reliable statistics with comprehensive national coverage. The best route is via the state so that all actors – law enforcement, education, judiciary, health and social services, the community, and women’s services – collect data in the same way.

Even more preferable, however, is to utilise population-based surveys with broadly-defined samples, behaviour-specific questions, detailed discrete time frames and multiple opportunities for women to disclose information. In addition, to ensure comparability with other studies, any new research needs to refer to guidelines from organisations such as the International Research Network on VAW (IRNVAW) which provides national and international recommendations for best practice. Better research into the incidence of VAW will mean that it is easier to estimate the associated costs, providing more evidence that can be used to argue for action.

Also important is to ensure the safety of women who are surveyed, with studies needing to follow the WHO Ethical and Safety Guidelines for Researching Domestic Violence against Women⁶⁰. These concern the confidentiality of data both during the interview and in its storage, providing guidance on specialised training to interviewers and information on available sources of support for the women involved.

Ultimately though, the best possible outcome would be to achieve a position

where well-designed surveys on VAW are included in existing national statistical systems so that the issue is regularly monitored. This would keep it at the forefront of governmental and public awareness. Where costs prevent poorer countries from following this route, experts recommend the inclusion of a number of questions or a module on VAW as part of their broader household surveys, as in the existing Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), which are conducted in numerous countries⁶¹.

Influencing policy

Further and improved evidence is no doubt welcome, but ultimately the aim must be to actually influence governments and international bodies, so that policies are put in place that help to eradicate VAW. One way to do this is to lobby governments to incorporate the UN's recommendations on legislation concerning VAW⁶², while supporting moves to increase education, employment and other opportunities for women and girls. Improving self esteem and negotiating skills, and reducing gender inequalities in communities, will also assist in eradicating this serious problem.

Recommendations

Gender pay gap

The research for this report has shown that there is still a long way to go before wage equality between men and women is achieved. The report has looked at the pay gap from various angles, such as education, age and sector, and the gender pay gap is still clearly present in almost all cases. Internationally-defined indicators and methodologies to calculate the gap are necessary to produce statistical evidence which is comparable from country to country. However, what is probably needed most is bold action by politicians and policy makers to eradicate the inequality in wages. This can be achieved through equal pay audits and job evaluation exercises in the workplace, and various other national and international policies targeted at obtaining gender pay equality. Making women aware of the benefits of trade union membership, trade union representation in the workplace, and collective agreements, are also important tools in the efforts to close the gap.

Economic downturn

Policy initiatives that aim to stimulate the economy would benefit from the integration of a gender perspective. Gender mainstreaming of economic policy making could include, among other things, more flexible working opportunities, more and better investment in social services and social support initiatives, and international financial reform that aims for sustainable, long-term economic growth instead of short-term profit seeking which may lead to deep fluctuations in economic activity. To help such initiatives succeed, a better representation of women in key roles at all levels is important. Only then can they actively participate and exercise influence in the formulation of new policies.

Violence against women

It is clear from the evidence currently available that the cost implications of VAW are high. Women who are victims of violence have to cope with the mental and physical consequences, which create obstacles for them to fully participate in the labour market and earn an income. More research into this topic is needed to understand the scope of the problem. In order to do this successfully, research methods have to be improved and agreed standards of measurement need to be created. Guidelines published by the International Research Network on VAW can be used to ensure international comparability and to guarantee that quality standards are met. Furthermore, the World Health Organisation's Ethical and Safety Guidelines for Researching Domestic VAW can be used to protect the women that are surveyed. Ideally, well-designed surveys on this subject would ultimately be included in existing national statistical systems, so that the issue is regularly monitored. The results of this research can then be used to influence governments. Apart from lobbying national governments and international institutions for new legislation, other measures to reduce gender inequalities should also be taken into account, such as initiatives to improve and increase women's access to education, health, and employment. In this respect, not only governments but also other stakeholders such as trade unions, employers' representations and Non-Governmental Organisations, have an important role to fulfil.

Appendix: Explanation of ISCED education levels

The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) is an instrument suitable for compiling statistics on education internationally.

Basic

This level begins between 5 and 7 years of age, is compulsory in all countries and generally lasts from four to six years.

Lower secondary education

Teaching is typically more subject-focused than at the previous level. Usually, the end of this level coincides with the end of compulsory education.

Upper secondary education

This level generally begins at the end of compulsory education. The entrance age is typically 15 or 16 years. Entrance qualifications (end of compulsory education) and other minimum entry requirements are usually needed. The typical duration of this education varies from two to five years.

Post-secondary non-tertiary education

These programmes straddle the boundary between upper secondary and tertiary education. They serve to broaden the knowledge of upper secondary graduates. After completions, students can go on to the next level or opt for direct labour market entry.

Tertiary education (first stage)

Entry to these programmes normally requires the successful completion of post-secondary level. This level includes tertiary programmes with academic orientation (type A) which are largely theoretically based and with occupation orientation, and programmes of type B, which are typically shorter than type A programmes and geared for entry into the labour market.

Tertiary education (second stage)

This level is reserved for tertiary studies that lead to an advanced research qualification (Ph.D. or doctorate).

Endnotes

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3 Based on the statistical classification of economic activities Nomenclature des Activités Economiques (NACE), as used by the European communities.

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