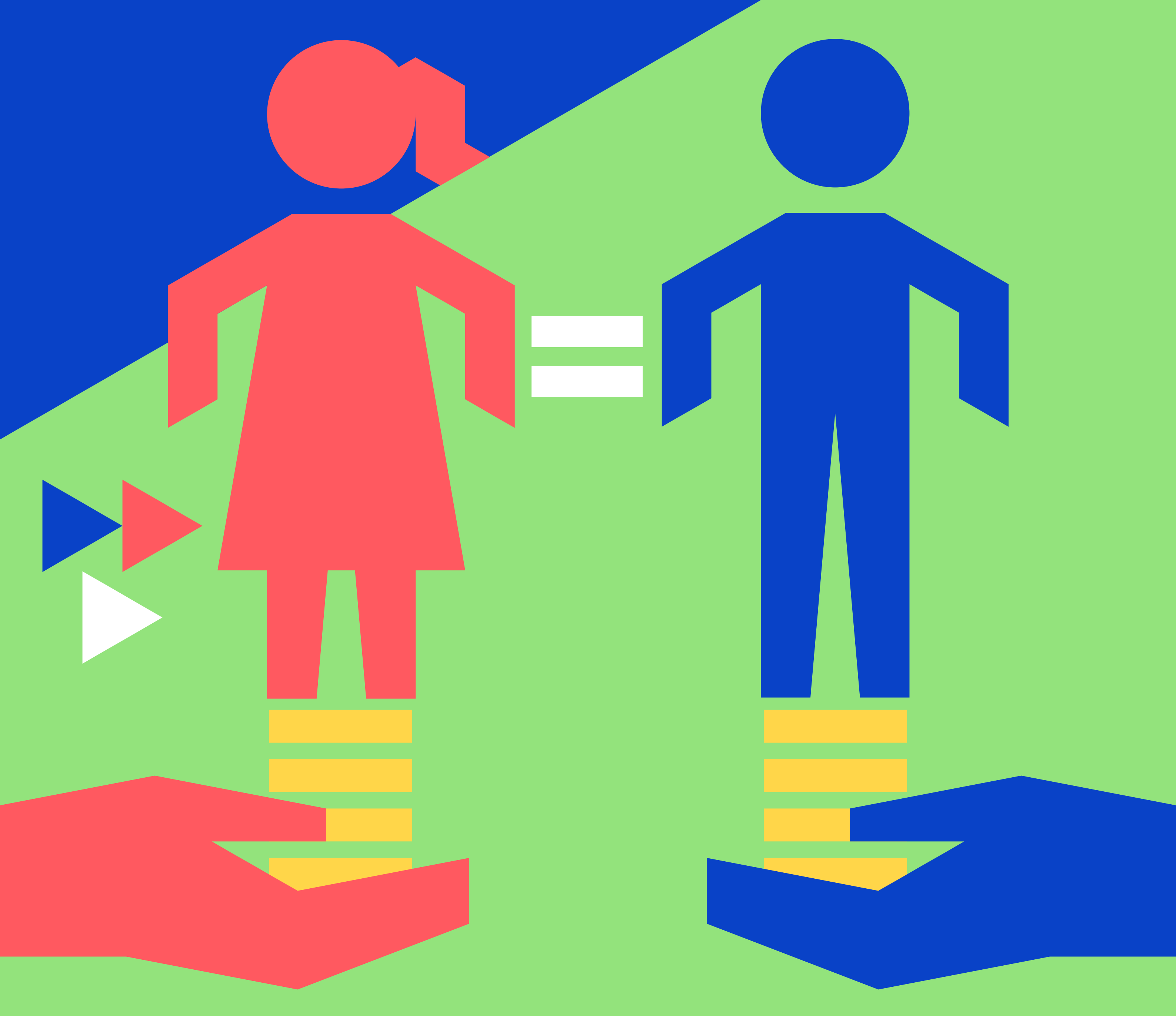
International Labour Organization

Towards Pay Equity

A Comprehensive Response to the Gender Pay Gap



Towards Pay Equity

A Comprehensive Response to the Gender Pay Gap

ISBN: 9789220430064 (web PDF)

DOI: https://doi.org/10.54394/UJMT6226

Also available in French: *Vers l'équité salariale, Une réponse globale à l'écart de rémunération entre femmes et hommes*, ISBN 9789220430071 (web PDF); ***and in Spanish***: *Hacia la equidad salarial: Respuesta integral a la brecha salarial de género*, ISBN 9789220432501 (web PDF).

Photo credits
Chapter 1: page 11 © ILO, page 12 © ILO; chapter 2: page 19 © iris; chapter 3: page 25; © ILO; chapter 4: page 29 © ILO; chapter 5: page 34 © ILO; chapter 6: page 35 © ILO, page 41 © ILO; chapter 7: page 43 © ILO, page 47 © ILO; chapter 8: page 51 © ILO; chapter 9: page 55 © ILO; chapter 10: page 61 © ILO; chapter 11: page 65 © ILO

Acknowledgment

This guide was authored by Emanuela Pozzan, under the overall supervision of Sukti Dasgupta and Chidi King. It incorporates extensive contributions from numerous ILO colleagues, including Lauda Addati, Syed Mohammad Afsar, Paz Arancibia Roman, Javier Barbero, Véronique Basso, Valentina Beghini, Christina Behrendt, Patrick Belser, Deepa Bharathi, Francesca Biasiato, Florance Bonnet, Claudia Callegari, Jae-Hee Chang, Maria José Chamorro, Elena Dedova, Vladimir Ganta, Sophie Lambert, Elva Lopez Mourelo, Aya Matsuura, Martin Oelz, Rafael Peels, Ira Postolachi, Irini Proios Torras, Esteban Tromel, Verena Schmidt, Rosalia Vazquez-Alvarez, and Lisa Wong. Much appreciation also goes to EPIC governments that have kindly provided additional information. This guide finds inspiration on Clemente Pignatti's research and was made possible through the generous support of the French Government, Ministry of Labour, Health, Solidarity and Families, within the framework of the France–ILO Partnership.

▶ Preface

The gender pay gap remains a stark reality in today's world of work. Global estimates indicate that women in wage employment earn on average 20 per cent less than men, and the gap is wider for women with children, women in low-income households, women wage workers in the informal economy and women in managerial and leadership positions in some high-income countries. Moreover, the gender pay gap is often compounded by intersecting and overlapping forms of discrimination. Women who face additional barriers – such as those related to race, disability, ethnicity, migration status or others – experience even wider pay gaps compared to women not subject to such discrimination. While progress over the last decades has been slow and incremental, the issue is gradually gaining more visibility and attention at the global, regional and national levels. Equal remuneration for women and men for work of equal value is a fundamental principle and right at work and enshrined in the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), of the ILO. Closing the gender pay gap has become even more urgent now as the world of work undergoes rapid and substantial transformations – changes that risk further widening existing gender pay inequalities but also offer new opportunities to promote greater equity.

Closing the gender pay gap and ensuring fair remuneration for women as well as men is both a social justice goal and an economic necessity. Doing so enhances productivity by expanding workforce participation, attracting diverse talent and reducing turnover. Since those most affected are often low-wage earners, narrowing pay gaps can raise household incomes, boost purchasing power and fuel economic growth. Socially, greater pay equity strengthens fairness and social cohesion. Pay equity also bolsters public finances, as higher employment and earnings among women increase tax and social security contributions while reducing poverty and pressure on social protection systems. Yet gender pay gaps persist, driven by complex and evolving structural, economic and societal factors that vary across countries and between country-income groups. Addressing them requires targeted, context-specific policies consistent with both the ILO's fundamental Conventions concerning the elimination of discrimination, namely the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).

Over the past decade, several initiatives have brought greater attention to the issue of equal pay for work of equal value. These include the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which call for reducing the gender gap in average hourly earnings (SDG indicator 8.5.1); the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC), launched in 2017 and coordinated by the ILO, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and UN Women to accelerate efforts to close gender pay gaps in line with SDG target 8.5; and the ILO Global Coalition for Social Justice, which supports progress towards the SDGs, including gender equality in pay. In addition, in July 2025, G20 countries endorsed the new Brisbane-eThekwini Goal, which reaffirms their commitment to reducing the gender gap in labour force participation by 25 per cent by 2030, and introduces a new target to reduce the gender wage gap by 15 per cent by 2035, with a review in 2030 to consider raising the target to 35 per cent by 2035. These multilateral efforts are complemented by a growing number of national and regional initiatives aimed at narrowing gender pay gaps through measures such as promoting pay transparency, encouraging objective job evaluations and tackling gender-based discrimination in the workplace.

This guide builds on the 2013 ILO Equal Pay Guide, and it incorporates the latest insights on achieving equal pay for work of equal value. While the core principles and many examples from the first edition remain relevant, this edition responds to growing attention from governments, employers' organizations and workers' organizations concerning the need for a comprehensive, integrated approach to closing the gender pay gap. The guide proposes a new Theory of Change supported by an ILO Intervention Model. It highlights recent developments in measurement, legislation and the use of modern technology. It also explores the growing role of measures such as pay transparency and wage policies in promoting alignment with ILO living wage principles. The guide adopts a life-course perspective, recognizing how disproportionate care responsibilities and career interruptions contribute to reduced employment opportunities and labour market attachment, limited work experience, and the accumulation of pay gaps over time – ultimately leading to the gender pension gap. It also reflects on the need to better capture gender earning gaps within the informal economy.

While primarily intended for governments, employers' organizations and workers' organizations, this guide also speaks to civil society, the private sector and academia. Above all, this guide seeks to help keep the call to action on pay equity high on the global agenda – reinforcing a shared sense of urgency and renewing collective commitments to close the gender pay gap for all, everywhere.

Sukti Dasgupta	**Chidi King**
Director	Chief,
Conditions of Work and Equality Department	Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch

▶ Contents

Note on terminology

The provisions of the Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100) and Recommendation (No. 90), 1951, and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111) and Recommendation (No. 111), 1958, provide an important basis for understanding the key principles and concepts for addressing the gender pay gap.

- **Discrimination** is defined, for the purposes of Convention No. 111, as:
  - (a) any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation;
  - (b) such other distinction, exclusion or preference which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation as may be determined by the Member concerned after consultation with representative employers' and workers' organisations, where such exist, and with other appropriate bodies (Art. 1).

  Discrimination can be:

  direct – when someone is treated less favourably explicitly or implicitly because of one or more prohibited grounds; or

  indirect – when an apparently neutral situation, regulation or practice results in unequal treatment of persons with certain characteristics. Indirect discrimination occurs when the same condition, treatment or criterion is applied to everyone, but results in a disproportionately harsh impact on some persons on the basis of specific protected characteristics (ILO 2012, paras 744–745).

- **Value of work** refers to the worth of a job for the purposes of determining remuneration free from discrimination (ILO 2012, para. 674). Under Convention No. 100, to establish whether different jobs are of equal value, there must be an examination of the respective tasks involved. This examination must be undertaken based on entirely objective and non-discriminatory criteria to avoid an assessment being tainted by gender bias. Measures for the objective evaluation of jobs can be taken at the enterprise, sectoral or national level, in the context of collective bargaining, as well as through national wage-fixing mechanisms.[1]

- **Equal remuneration/pay[2] for equal work (equal pay)** means that men and women performing the same or substantially similar jobs must receive the same remuneration. This concept targets direct discrimination – where one gender is paid less for identical or similar work – and is an important but limited concept for addressing pay inequality. On its own, it is limited to directly comparable roles, often in the same establishment or enterprise, which often leaves broader systemic gender pay gaps unaddressed.

- **Equal remuneration/pay for work of equal value (pay equity)** addresses the limitations of the narrower “equal pay for equal work” concept and covers situations where men and women perform jobs that are of an entirely **different nature, but which are nevertheless of equal value**. This latter concept is key in tackling systemic issues such as occupational segregation and the undervaluation of jobs in which women predominate in comparison with those mainly performed by men when determining wage rates. At the core of this principle is the notion of “work of equal value”, which needs to be assessed through **objective job evaluations**, applicable within a given establishment or enterprise and free from gender bias or stereotypes and discrimination. However, Convention No. 100 also allows for a much broader comparison – beyond a given establishment or enterprise – to be made between jobs performed by men and women in different places or enterprises, or between different employers (ILO 2012, para. 697). Measures for the objective

1 CEACR, General Observation – Convention No. 100, adopted 2006, para. 7.

2 In this guide terms “remuneration” and “pay” are used interchangeably.

evaluation of jobs can be taken at the enterprise, sectoral or national level in the context of collective bargaining, as well as through national wage-fixing mechanisms.[3] Member States have flexibility in determining how to carry out these evaluations, either through the authorities responsible for the determination of rates of remuneration or through social dialogue when such rates are determined by collective agreements (Convention No. 100, Art. 3(2)).

- **Remuneration** includes the ordinary, basic or minimum wage or salary and any additional emoluments whatsoever payable directly or indirectly, whether in cash or in kind, by the employer to the worker and arising out of the worker's employment (Convention No. 100, Art. 1(a)).

3 CEACR, General Observation – Convention No. 100, adopted 2006, para. 7.

1

Closing the gender pay gap demands a whole-of-society response

The gender pay gap remains a persistent reality worldwide, with women in wage employment earning, on average, about 20 per cent less than men. As the world of work continues to evolve, there is growing recognition that the gender pay gap is a multifaceted issue and that achieving pay equity requires more dedicated policies based on a comprehensive understanding of the diverse factors shaping women's and men's earnings across a variety of contexts. Even though primarily shaped by individual countries' economic structures and gender norms, the factors underlying the gender pay gap often manifest in similar ways across income levels. In low- and middle-income economies, the high prevalence of informal and precarious employment – where social protection, care policies and services, collective bargaining and minimum wage coverage are limited – exacerbates women's exposure to income insecurity and undervaluation of their work. In high-income economies, similar dynamics appear within the formal labour market through gendered occupational segregation, the undervaluation of care and education jobs, unequal representation in leadership roles and the unequal sharing of unpaid care responsibilities. In both cases, these structural patterns reflect persistent gender norms that influence both labour market participation and pay outcomes. As such, reducing the gender pay gap requires a comprehensive approach in all contexts – one that combines formalization and enforcement of labour standards with policies that promote equal opportunities, redistribute unpaid care work and ensure fair valuation of work across all sectors.

Moreover, intersecting forms of discrimination further widen the gender pay gap. Women with disabilities, belonging to racial or ethnic minorities, and migrant women are particularly vulnerable to compounded wage inequalities. Although data remain scarce and are often not up to date, workers with disabilities are less likely to participate in the labour market and earn, on average, 12 per cent less per hour than others – three quarters of which cannot be explained by factors such as education, age or occupation. In low- and lower-middle-income countries, this disability wage gap rises to 26 per cent, with nearly half unexplained. Women with disabilities face an additional gender pay gap of around 6 per cent in developed countries and 5 per cent in developing countries (Ananian and Dellaferrera 2024). Similarly, migrant workers in high-income countries earn about 12.6 per cent less than nationals, with women migrants experiencing a double wage penalty – an estimated 20.9 per cent gap compared with male nationals (ILO 2020).

Addressing the complexities of the gender pay gap requires **well-designed, integrated and multifaceted policies and interventions implemented through coordinated efforts**, guided by and consistent with the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), and other relevant international labour standards. An important first step is producing empirical evidence measuring and unpacking gender pay inequality and identifying its root causes, taking into account the given economic context. This evidence should then inform the development of guidelines, tools and policies that engage governments, employers' organizations and workers' organizations, as well as businesses and society at large, so that they can work together in a strategic and concerted manner. This guide proposes a **new ILO Theory of Change and Intervention Model** (see figures 1 and 2), presenting a set of mutually complementary and reinforcing elements to address the gender pay gap. These include:

- robust measuring methods;
- national legislation and enforcement mechanisms;
- objective job evaluations and tools;
- wage policies;
- social dialogue;
- gender-responsive labour inspections;
- labour and social protections and formalization of the informal economy;
- the elimination of gender-stereotypes and restrictive social norms; and
- the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC).

▶ Figure 1. Theory of Change to achieve equal pay

IMPACT

Women and men enjoy equal opportunities and treatment in employment and pay – including equal pay for work of equal value – contributing to economic justice and inclusive, equitable workplaces

CAUSAL PATHWAY

IF:

- Equality principles are embedded in institutions, education, and work systems
- Gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms are actively addressed and neutralized in society and at work
- Robust legislative frameworks guarantee non-discrimination, equal opportunities and equal treatment at work
- International labour standards are fully implemented
- Everyone has equal access to justice in cases of discrimination or inequality
- Violence and harassment at work is prevented and addressed
- Pay transparency legislation is used to promote equity
- Wage policies and objective job evaluations are used to reduce pay gaps
- Social dialogue – with collective bargaining at its heart – as well as information sharing, consultation and workplace cooperation are practiced
- Gender-responsive labour inspection systems are strengthened
- Macroeconomic policies prioritize inclusive growth, creating fiscal space for social protection and care policies and services
- Care leave policies are comprehensive and accessible, and unpaid care work is recognized and valued
- Disaggregated data (by sex, gender, race, disability and so on) is collected and analysed to inform policymaking processes
- Countries commit to global initiatives like the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC)

THEN:

- Women's representation will grow across sectors and occupations, raising their overall wage share and boosting incomes for lower-income households
- Purchasing power among women will increase and support household well-being, drive consumption and strengthen sustainable economic growth
- Employers will attract diverse talent, reduce turnover, boost morale and potentially increase labour productivity
- Children's health and education outcomes will improve, boosting countries' human capital in the long run

OUTCOMES

Better pay equity governance	More inclusive and productive workforce	More equal and prosperous economies

ACTIVITIES

Better pay equity governance	More inclusive and productive workforce	More equal and prosperous economies
▶ Promote robust data and measurement ▶ Apply international labour standards ▶ Advance national legislation on non-discrimination, pay equity, pay transparency, minimum wage, living wages, prevention and elimination of violence and harassment at work ▶ Adopt gender-responsive labour inspections in all sectors ▶ Promote social dialogue in all its forms ▶ Apply objective job evaluations	▶ Promote workplace policies based on non-discrimination, equality in pay, dignity and respect ▶ Address occupational segregation ▶ Orient women towards STEM skills and careers ▶ Value feminized jobs and sectors ▶ Support formalization processes	▶ Provide adequate financing for social protection and public care policies and services (maternity, paternity, parental leave, childcare and long-term care) ▶ Promote awareness and advocacy to eliminate gender stereotypes and restrictive social norms ▶ Engage men and boys and mobilize civil society, social partners and the media to forge a culture of women's rights and gender equality

INPUTS

- Capacity-building of national institutions and labour market actors
- Development and dissemination of knowledge and data
- Diagnostics and continued monitoring and evaluation of the gender pay gap in the population
- Awareness-raising and advocacy

CHALLENGES

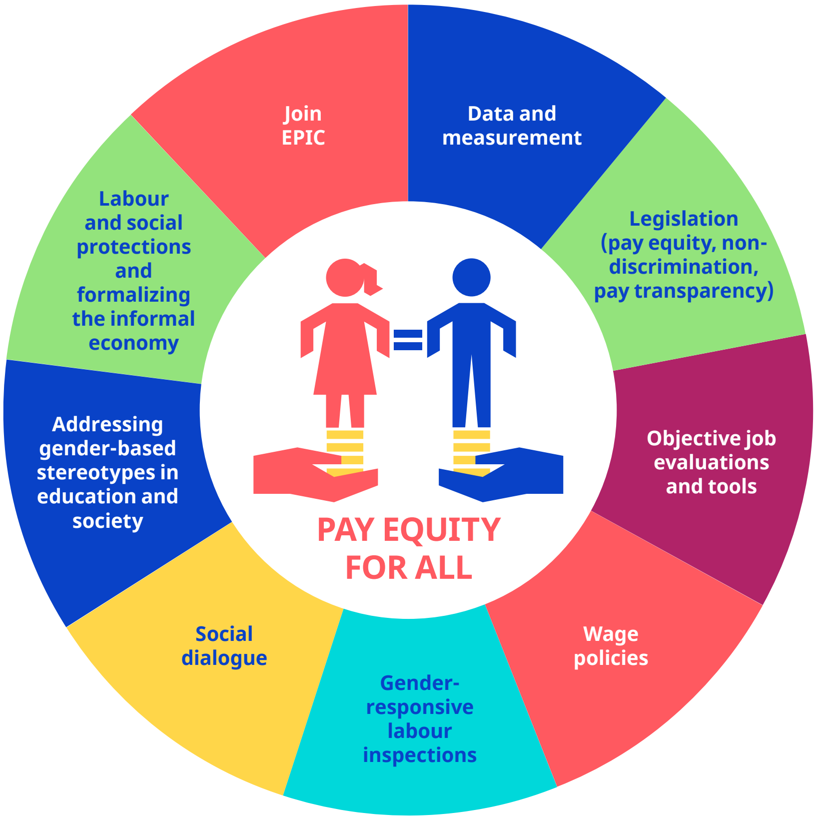
- Persistent segregated labour markets
- High prevalence of informal economy
- Perceived high costs of closing the gender pay gap
- Limited space for social dialogue
- Discriminatory laws and workplace practices
- Unequal power relations between women and men
- Heavy burden of unpaid care work
- Weak institutional and political commitment
- Underrepresentation of women in leadership
- Persistent gender stereotypes and restrictive social norms
- Limited capacities of labour inspectorates

Once the terms and guiding principles around equal pay are clearly understood, it is essential to adopt a comprehensive, structured approach to effectively close the gender pay gap, guided by relevant international labour standards. At the core of this approach is the use of robust measurement methods to accurately assess and monitor pay inequalities. This intervention model emphasizes the integration of key elements such as:

- adopting or strengthening national legislation addressing pay equity, non-discrimination and pay transparency – supported by strong compliance mechanisms;
- applying objective job evaluation methods and tools;
- implementing adequate wage policies and strengthening gender-responsive wage setting mechanisms;
- fostering social dialogue;
- ensuring gender-responsive labour inspections;
- strengthening social protection – included as a measure to close the gender pay gap and the gender pension gap while also supporting the transition of workers from the informal to the formal economy;
- strengthening care services;
- addressing gender stereotypes and restrictive social norms; and
- leveraging global partnerships such as the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC).

Together, these components create a systemic framework for achieving substantive equality in pay.

▶ **Figure 2. ILO's intervention model for closing the gender pay gap and promoting equal pay for work of equal value**



A note to the reader: This guide is intended to be an online living document to capture developments and new learnings in real time. This guide provides a comprehensive overview of the key elements – along with explanations and illustrative examples – needed to address the gender pay gap with a long-term perspective. However, given the complexity and technical nature of the issues discussed, each area may require additional specialized expertise. The ILO, with over a century of experience in the world of work and a dedicated mandate on pay equity, stands ready to offer high-quality technical support on any of these topics as needed.

2

Equal remuneration in international labour standards

The principle of equal remuneration for women and men for work of equal value has been central to the ILO since its inception in 1919, when it was first recognized in Part XIII of the Treaty of Peace of Versailles, which sets out the Constitution of the ILO. Equal remuneration is now part of the ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and two of the ILO's ten fundamental Conventions, which, along with their respective accompanying Recommendations, are of key importance as a normative framework for its realization:

- The **Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100) and Recommendation (No. 90), 1951**, establish the principle of equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value. This principle extends beyond equal pay for the same, identical or similar jobs, as it also requires equal remuneration for work performed by women and men that is entirely differently but nevertheless of equal value.

- The **Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111) and Recommendation (No. 111), 1958**, provide for the adoption and implementation of a national policy to promote equality of opportunity and treatment with a view to eliminating discrimination based on sex and other characteristics in all aspects of employment and occupation – including remuneration, recruitment, promotion and training.

The realization of equal pay for work of equal value is closely linked to the effective implementation of all five mutually reinforcing Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and their related Conventions. Freedom of association and the effective recognition of collective bargaining,[4] the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour,[5] the effective abolition of child labour,[6] the elimination of discrimination in respect to employment and occupation,[7] and the right to a safe and healthy working environment[8] together create the enabling conditions for equality and fair remuneration. And in combination with the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention 1970 (No. 131), these instruments help create the enabling conditions for inclusive wage setting and equality in the workplace. Furthermore, several Conventions promoting gender equality and others specifically covering sectors where women are highly represented – and where systemic factors such as discrimination, occupational segregation and the undervaluation of female-dominated work contribute to pay inequities (see box 1) – are also important to addressing the gender pay gap. At the same time, significant gender pay gaps are also documented in male-dominated sectors, often linked to barriers to career advancement and unequal pay practices.

4 As per the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

5 As per the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105).

6 As per the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

7 As per Conventions Nos 100 and 111.

8 As per the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187).

▶ Box 1. Key ILO technical Conventions supporting gender equality in the world of work

- The **Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention,** 1981 (No. 156), and the **Maternity Protection Convention**, 2000 (No. 183), help address the structural discrimination and wage penalties women face in employment due to caregiving roles and reproductive responsibilities.
- The Convention on **Violence and Harassment in the World of Work,** 2019 (No. 190) plays a key role, recognizing the impact of gender-based violence and harassment on women's access to decent work, retention in the labour market and career progression, while also addressing unequal gender-based power relations that may contribute to perpetuating wage disparities and occupational segregation.
- The **Nursing Personnel Convention**, 1977 (No. 149), and the **Domestic Workers Convention,** 2011 (No. 189), address decent work deficits in two typically highly feminized and undervalued occupations.
- The **Home Work Convention**, 1996 (No. 177), the **Migration for Employment Convention (Revised)**, 1949 (No. 97), the **Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention**, 1975 (No. 143)**,** and the **Indigenous and Tribal Peoples** Convention, 1989 (No. 169), re-state the principle of equal treatment in employment for home workers, many of whom are women, as well as indigenous peoples and migrant workers.

National legislative frameworks and enforcement mechanisms play an essential role in the realization of the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the effective implementation of international labour standards. Employers' and workers' organizations have a key role to play in these processes, as they help shape national policies to best reflect the realities of the labour market.

In addition to ILO instruments, several other international instruments recognize the principle of equal pay for work of equal value:

- Universal Declaration for Human Rights (1948)
- European Social Charter (1961)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (“Maputo Protocol”, 2003)

3

Comprehensive and effective equal pay legislation

Why it matters

National legislation plays a vital role in advancing pay equity by providing a clear and consistent framework that supports employers in meeting their responsibilities and supports workers in understanding and claiming their rights. While many countries have adopted anti-discrimination laws that prohibit pay discrimination between men and women, these are often grounded in broad principles of equal treatment across various aspects of employment. Such laws are important, but ultimately insufficient on their own.

> The EPIC Pay Equity Legal Database provides legal and policy information on pay equity legislation, transparency measures, minimum wages, collective bargaining and more for 188 countries and territories.

To make meaningful progress, it is essential to go beyond the concept of "equal pay for equal work" by fully implementing the principle of "equal pay for work of equal value", as enshrined in ILO Convention No. 100. This approach allows for the comparison of jobs that are different in content but equivalent in terms of effort, skill, responsibility and working conditions. It is a critical tool for addressing structural inequalities, including the persistent undervaluation of female-dominated occupations and the gender stereotypes that contribute to pay gaps.

Guiding principles and practical steps

Value, clarity and precision are essential when drafting or revising legislation to support the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. The following steps can guide lawmakers to build effective, enforceable frameworks that employers and workers can apply in practice.

> A narrow definition of remuneration can leave out key components where gender-based disparities often exist, such as bonuses, benefits and transportation.

1. **Clearly define "remuneration":** Include a comprehensive definition of remuneration in the legislation for the purposes of the application of the principle. This should go beyond base wages to cover all direct and indirect forms of compensation – such as bonuses, allowances, in-kind benefits and other financial rewards – in line with ILO Convention No. 100.

2. **Recognize the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in law and specify what constitutes "work of equal value":** Set out objective criteria to assess the value of work, including: (i) skills and qualifications; (ii) responsibility; (iii) effort; and (iv) working conditions. Legislation should allow flexibility for employers and workers, through social dialogue, to adapt these criteria to specific contexts.

> Without clear and objective criteria, it is difficult to assess whether two different jobs are being equally valued.

3. **Promote objective job evaluation:** Legislation should include the use of objective job evaluations and, where possible, provide guidance, tools and references on how these evaluations should be conducted. Social dialogue should be promoted in designing and implementing these systems to ensure credibility and buy-in.

> Job evaluation tools help identify undervalued work, especially in female-dominated sectors.

4. **Ensure broad coverage across all workers:** Ensure the legislation applies to all sectors and categories of wage employment. Avoid excluding part-time, temporary or informal workers, among which women workers often constitute a majority.[9]

> Excluding certain worker categories – like domestic workers, public employees or informal workers – undermines the goal of pay equity, especially where women are overrepresented (ILO 2012).

5. **Effective enforcement and remedies:** Legislation should clearly define employer obligations in relation to non-discrimination in pay supported by practical compliance measures, such as record-keeping or reporting. Workers should have access to appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms and remedies in cases of discrimination. To address cases of discrimination, measures such as penalties for non-compliance and incentives for progress on pay equity could be considered. These incentives may include improved access to public procurement opportunities or public resources for human and capital investment particularly designed to attract small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to advance on the path toward gender pay equity (see table 1 below).

6. **Encourage or require social partners' participation:** Legislation increasingly encourages or requires social partners – that is, employers' and workers' organizations – to take active roles in promoting equal pay for work of equal value, as also promoted by ILO Convention No. 100. For example, pay transparency legislation offers social partners the opportunity to collaboratively identify and address discriminatory practices. Legal provisions that explicitly state the obligation to reflect the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in wage-setting processes and collective agreements must ensure the active involvement of social partners. Their involvement is also important in raising awareness and addressing gender stereotypes.

> The EU Pay Transparency Directive explicitly emphasizes the involvement of social partners in the implementation and monitoring of pay transparency and equal pay measures.

Guidance from the ILO supervisory bodies

Countries that have ratified Conventions Nos 100 and 111, and other relevant ILO Conventions, benefit from the continuous guidance of the ILO's Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) and the Committee on the Application of Standards. These bodies are entrusted with reviewing Member States' national laws and practices with a view to assessing their compliance with the Conventions they have ratified. Tripartite constituents involved in law reform or the development of other measures to promote equal pay for women and men for work of equal value can draw on guidance provided by the supervisory bodies. The supervisory bodies' comments addressed to specific countries, including in relation to examples highlighted throughout this guide, can be accessed through the ILO's NORMLEX database.

Snapshot of practice

In **Jordan**, the 2019 Amendment to Article 2 of the Labour Law No.8 (1996) introduced an explicit definition of wage discrimination as "unequal pay for workers of work of equal value, without any gender-based discrimination". This shift from the previous "equal pay for equal work" framing aligns the law more closely with ILO Convention No. 100.

9 The ILO General Survey on the Fundamental Conventions states that Convention No. 100 applies to all workers, both formal and informal and in the public and private sectors (ILO 2012, para. 658).

In **Madagascar**, article 83 of the Act No. 2024-014 of 14 August 2024 issuing the Labour Code provides that "for equal work that requires the same level of qualifications, or for work performed under equal conditions, or for work of a different nature but nevertheless of equal value, remuneration shall be equal for all workers, without any discrimination based on one or more of the grounds listed in Article 7 of this Act". Article 7 of the Act lists the following prohibited grounds of discrimination: race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national origin (which covers distinctions experienced by nationals based on their country of birth, ancestry or origin), social origin, health status, disability, trade union membership, age, lifestyle and family situation.

In 2023, Ukraine adopted a **Strategy to Reduce the Gender Pay Gap** and its action plan. Supported by the ILO, the strategy addresses three key drivers of the gender pay gap: the **motherhood penalty**, **horizontal occupational segregation**, and **gender-based discrimination**. Accordingly, it sets out three strategic objectives:

- aligning the national legal framework with international labour standards contributing to achieving pay equity;
- creating an enabling environment to eliminate horizontal segregation; and
- implementing policies that support work–family balance.

Mongolia's 2021 Labour Law reflects the principle of equal remuneration for employees performing work of equal value, and requires that wages be calculated using a transparent and easily understood method. The term "salary" in the law includes basic salary, allowances, additional wages, vacation pay and bonuses. The "Method for implementing the principle of equal remuneration for employees performing work and duties of equal value" is set out in Resolution No.2 (2022). In addition, Resolution No. 06 (2022) on "Wage Determination" provides guidance to all types of employers to ensure the application of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

In **Pakistan's Province of Balochistan**, the Payment of Wages Act (2021 Act No XIII of 2021) ensures equal remuneration for "the same work, similar work, or work of equal value", and provides a definition for each. The Act also defines job appraisals as objective assessments used to determine wage differences without regard to sex, thereby supporting enforcement of pay equity. At the National Governmental level, a tripartite national plan of action to address pay equity was agreed in 2025.

In **Peru**, Law No. 28983 (2007) guarantees equal pay for work of equal value and requires all levels of government to adopt measures preventing gender-based discrimination in employment, including in access, training, promotion, working conditions and pay. Law No. 30709 (2017) reinforces this by prohibiting wage discrimination and requiring employers to define job categories and functions, adopt and communicate transparent salary policies, and maintain updated job and function charts and corresponding pay scales. Supreme Decree No. 002-2018-TR mandates objective job evaluations to define pay differentials, requiring roles to be grouped using criteria such as tasks, skills and job profiles. To support implementation, the Ministry of Labour and Employment Promotion issued a reference guide[10] on non-discriminatory job evaluation methods (Ministerial Resolution 145-2019-TR).

In **Spain**, Royal Decree 902/2020 enshrines the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, requiring equal remuneration for men and women performing jobs with equivalent functions, qualifications and conditions. It mandates job evaluations, pay registers and pay audits free from gender bias. Under Royal Decree 901/2020, companies with 50+ employees must implement equality plans outlining measures to ensure equal treatment and to address unjustified gender pay gaps through transparency and accountability. A tool has also been developed to support enterprises in conducting their evaluations (further explained in box 3 in Chapter 5 below).

10 *Guía Metodológica para la Valoración Objetiva, sin Discriminación de Género, de Puestos de Trabajo y Elaboración de Cuadros de Categorías y Funciones*.

▶ Table 1. Examples of legal provisions for employer compliance

Types of obligations	Description	Country examples
Job evaluations	Assess if different roles are of equal value (skills, responsibility, effort, working conditions)	Canada, Czechia, France, Iceland, Mauritius, Nepal, New Zealand, Peru, South Africa, Spain
Pay audits	Regularly audit payroll data of disparities	France, Iceland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden
Pay equity plans	Establish a framework to identify and correct wage disparities	Brazil, Canada, Japan, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Spain
Record-keeping	Maintain transparent records on wages, bonuses, and evaluations	Canada, Chile, Germany, Iceland, Israel, New Zealand, Peru, Spain
Training	Train human resources (HR) and managers on pay equity laws	Brazil, Canada, Iceland
Reporting	Submit required pay equity reports	Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Iceland, Israel, South Africa, Spain
Corrective action	Address and adjust any discovered disparities	Brazil, Canada, France, Iceland, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Spain
Worker/trade union involvement	Consult with employees or trade unions when designing pay equity plans, setting job-evaluation frameworks and preparing annual reports	Brazil, Canada, France, Republic of Korea, Spain, South Africa
Transparency/ disclosure	Disclose results of audits/salary transparency reports publicly	Australia, Brazil, France, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Peru, Republic of Korea, Spain

Note: Details of legislation are available in the EPIC database.

4

Robust measuring methods and data requirements

Why they matter

Understanding and addressing the gender pay gap[11] requires data and methods that provide robust and representative estimates of pay differences between women and men wage workers in the population. In its generic form, the gender pay gap measures the distance in pay between men and women relative to men's pay. For example, if men earn *on average* 10 coins and women earn *on average* 8 coins, the gender pay gap *using averages* will be equal to 20 per cent.

> Measuring the gender wage gap contributes to monitoring progress towards gender pay equality – as designed in **SDG indicator 8.5.1**, which tracks the gender gap in average hourly earnings of female and male employees.

The use of an average value is just one of many ways of summarizing the wage distributions of women and men (separately). In practice, estimates of the gender pay gap can rely on other equally acceptable summary measures, such as the median, the threshold value at any given decile, or the average pay within deciles.[12]

Guiding principles and practical steps

There are several ways to estimate gender pay gaps, each of which has its advantages and disadvantages.

- The **raw gender wage gap** is simple, transparent and has been widely used to compare wage gaps across countries and over time. It consists of summarizing the wage distributions of women and men separately, using the mean (or average) wage ("raw mean gender wage gap") or the median wage ("raw median gender wage gap"), and estimating the difference between men's and women's summary measures relative to that estimated for men. Hence, it provides a measure of the degree to which women's average or median wage falls short of the average or median wage of men.

- The **factor-weighted gender wage gap** provides a more robust method to measure difference in pay between women and men by eliminating the impact of composition effects in the measure; although in essence, it continues to be a raw gender pay gap measurement (see ILO 2018a). Women and men are generally not evenly distributed across the wage distribution, and the gendered composition of wage workers in a given labour market can potentially skew the wage gap results. To address this issue, the more refined factor-weighted gender wage gap metric groups women and men wage workers with respect to a set of factors that are thought to play an important role in the wage determination process, in particular by education level, age, working time modality and institutional sector.[13] Women and men wage workers will be far more homogenous within each of the groups that result from combining these four factors, and therefore, composition effects ought to be largely eliminated. The factor-weighted (raw) gender pay gap is arrived at by first estimating the gender pay gap within each of the resulting subgroups, followed by estimating the weighted sum of all of the subgroups' gender pay gaps, where the weighting corresponds to the proportional representation of each subgroup in the population. As is the case with the raw gender pay gap, the factor weighted gender pay gap can be obtained using either the mean or the median as a summary measure of wage scales.

---

11 The term "gender pay gap" is often interchanged with the term "gender wage gap". Although they both refer to earnings gaps between women and men, "gender wage gap" is more frequently used when referring to the difference between women and men in hourly wages; whereas "gender pay gap" is more generic and frequently used when referring to the difference in weekly or monthly earnings. When the comparison is between monthly or weekly earnings the gap (that is, the gender pay gap) accounts for both difference in hourly wages and difference in working time.

12 A wage decile is any one of the ten parts that divides a sorted wage dataset (wage distribution) into ten equal parts, each part containing 10 per cent of the represented data. Excluding the extreme values of the wage distribution, the deciles identify nine specific thresholds as the top values in each decile.

13 Other factors can be used to group women and men in homogenous groups with respect to the wage determination process. However, the factors "age" and "education" combined are often thought of as those that best capture the human capital of individuals; whereas working time and institutional sector (that is, employment in the public or private sector) are sufficient to identify behavioural choices that identify the participation outcome of women and men in the labour market.

Whichever method is used to estimate gender pay gaps, there is always a need to select between the mean or the median to summarize wage scales and to compare the pay of women and men. The median is less affected by extreme values in the wage distribution, but because it is one single location value, it is insensitive to the shape of the wage distribution and cannot capture the wage structure in the population. By contrast, the average (or mean) uses all the available data, but it is sensitive to extreme values (particularly outliers at the top end of the wage scale), and can therefore produce biased estimates of the more likely wage range across the distribution. In practice, it is recommended that empirical evidence include both mean-based and median-based gender pay gaps. It is important to highlight here that the factor-weighted gender pay gap method provides mean and median gender pay gaps that are more comparable than those produced by the classic method.

Another key choice when measuring pay difference between women and men is whether to use **hourly** wages or earnings based on some specific time period – for example, **weekly or monthly** earnings. The hourly wages measure isolates differences in pay rates, whereas weekly or monthly earnings reflects both pay rates and hours worked, thereby combining wage inequality with disparities in working time. Considering that women are more likely than men to work in part-time employment, particularly in response to care responsibilities, the gender pay gap using weekly or monthly earnings is often higher than what is estimated using hourly wages.

Estimating (overall) gender pay gaps is useful as a first step towards grasping an overall sense of gender pay inequality, as well as providing a simple method to compare the evolution of gender pay inequality between periods and across countries. In addition, **decomposition techniques** can help reveal the underlying drivers of the gender wage gap. These techniques separate the portion of the gender wage gap that can be **explained** by observable differences, such as education, age, occupation or sector, from the portion that remains **unexplained**, which is often used as a proxy for gender-based discrimination and/or the undervaluation of women's work. However, caution is required, as the unexplained portion may overstate the discriminatory component when it reflects unobserved variables not captured in standard surveys, including, for instance, gender stereotypes and bias.

Despite the insights offered by wage measures, they cover only a part of the labour force – namely, wage and salaried employees. In much of the world, especially in low- and middle-income countries, non-wage workers (such as own-account workers, employers and contributing family workers) make up a majority of the workforce, and particularly the majority of working women (ILO 2024a). Excluding these workers from earnings gap analyses leads to a significant underestimation of gender inequalities in the world of work.

- The **gender labour income gap** has been developed by the ILO to address these limitations. This measure captures differences in total earnings from all forms of work, including both wage employment and self-employment. Gender disparities in total labour income are often more than twice as large as those observed in wages alone, especially in low- and lower-middle income countries, where women are disproportionately represented in low-productivity, informal or non-wage work. However, data are scarce, as many labour force surveys do not collect earnings for non-wage workers in countries and regions where these are in a majority (ILO 2024a).

Each measure is crucial for policy. While raw gender or factor weighted pay gaps are useful to check overall trends, to compare countries or for broad public advocacy, a more complete and policy-relevant analysis is needed. This would include estimating pay gaps at different deciles of the wage distribution, using decomposition techniques to identify the explained and the unexplained components of the gender pay gaps and to estimate the impact of a policy change (for example, the change in formal vis-à-vis informal employment) on the overall gap or on the different estimated gaps across the wage distribution. This detailed analysis is vital for: monitoring and evaluating progress at the country level; providing guidance to policymakers on effective equal pay laws; and designing targeted policies, such as those addressing occupational segregation. Additionally, evaluating the indirect effects of wage and social protection policies – like minimum wage, care and formalization policies – and improving gender-disaggregated data are essential for comprehensive gender pay gap measurement and formulating an effective response. Ultimately, measuring gender gaps in the labour market requires a comprehensive approach.


RIGHT PRICE

5

Effective and objective job evaluation methods and tools

Why they matter

Job evaluations are a practical tool for governments, employers and workers to give effect to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. When well-designed and implemented, they help address gender-based discrimination, including the unequal distribution of women and men across sectors and roles.

Objective job evaluations are used to assess the value of a job based on its content – not on who performs it. They focus on the requirements of the role (such as qualifications and skills) and the demands it involves (like effort, tasks, responsibilities and working conditions). It is important to distinguish job evaluations from performance appraisals, which assess how well an individual employee meets their specific goals. Job evaluations do not evaluate individual performance.

Guiding principles and practical steps

Different methods[14] of job evaluation exist, and depending on the size and characteristics of an establishment or enterprise, some methods may be more suitable than others. Comparisons can also go beyond the same establishment or enterprise, as the principle of equal pay for work of equal value allows for much broader comparisons to be made between jobs performed by men and women in different places or enterprises, or between different employers (ILO 2012, paras 697–699). In any case, to be effective, job evaluations must be **objective and free from gender bias**.

- **Objectivity** ensures consistency and comparability across job functions within an enterprise or establishment, enabling meaningful comparisons by occupation, across similar companies and within a given sector, without being influenced by the person performing the role, including the sex of that person.
- Job evaluations need to be part of a **plan with a structured process** that builds in consultations with workers and their representatives. Often this plan includes the following steps:
    - Identifying all job functions within an enterprise or establishment, and determining which are female-dominated and which are male-dominated;
    - Selecting or adapting a job evaluation method;
    - Developing tools for data collection and gathering data on job content (for example, job profiles, questionnaires, interviews);
    - Analysing the results to identify key factors;
    - Determining the relative value of jobs;
    - Estimating wage gaps between jobs of equal value;
    - Taking corrective measures where unjustified pay gaps are identified (ILO 2008).

Simply put, determining the value of a job function involves:

1. **identifying the factors** to be used in the evaluation process;
2. **assigning points to each job function** based on the presence or importance of each factor; and
3. **summing the points** attained by each job-function – if necessary, using weights to reflect their relative importance within the enterprise.

> Many governments provide employers with tools and tutorials on how to conduct objective job evaluations. For instance, the Government of **Canada** provides a wide range of tools to support employers implementing the Pay Equity Act, including the 2024 Pay Equity Plan.

14 For example, non-analytical methods whereby jobs are evaluated on judgment by comparison or ranking and analytical methods using a predetermined set of factors and subfactors.

The total point value is then used to compare earnings of job functions with similar total values, enabling an assessment of pay equality within the enterprise. In medium and large enterprises, factors may be further broken down into sub-factors (see table 2), but the overall nature and process of the valuation remain consistent. An example comparing the value of a residential social care officer and an ICT support staffer is offered in the Annex to this guide.

Table 2. Factors used to evaluate the value of a job function

Factor: *Skills, knowledge and qualifications* acquired through formal or informal education, training and experience	**Factor: *Efforts* can be physical, intellectual or emotional**
Sub-factors: ▶ Mental and physical skills and abilities ▶ Social/interpersonal/communication skills and abilities, including soft skills (teamwork, problem solving, leadership and so on)	**Sub-factors:** ▶ Physical effort, for example, heavy lifting of machinery, products or people ▶ Mental effort, for example, extensive concentration, multi-tasking ▶ Emotional effort, for example, caring for children, long-term ill persons or persons with disabilities
Factor: *Responsibility* for people, data, resources, equipment and so on	**Factor: *Working conditions* can be both physical or psychological**
Sub-factors: ▶ Responsibility for people/clients/service recipients ▶ Responsibility for human resources ▶ Responsibility for confidentiality ▶ Responsibility for data ▶ Responsibility for materials and financial resources	**Sub-factors:** ▶ Physical environment, for example, heat, noise, health hazards, risks of accidents ▶ Psychological conditions, for example, stress, loneliness, time pressure

In some countries and enterprises, the establishment of **Pay Equity Committees** within enterprises to oversee pay equity evaluations has proven valuable. The Committee should contain representatives from both the employer and worker sides and have gender balance. Through the Pay Equity Committee an enterprise can:

- Enhance fairness and transparency, which **builds trust** among employees.
- Bring diverse perspectives by including representatives from **HR, management, legal and employee groups** to consider different experiences and concerns.
- Increase **credibility and legitimacy**, thereby improving reputation internally and externally. Regulators, auditors or labour boards may see the company more favourably if there is a formal process with oversight.
- Help identify systemic inequities, as the Committee can look beyond individual pay discrepancies to **spot patterns or structural issues** (for example, certain roles consistently being underpaid due to gender, race or other characteristics). In doing so, the Committee can move beyond the symptoms (that is, the presence of pay gaps) to identify the root causes and address them.
- Support compliance with pay equity legislation. For example, Canada's Pay Equity Act requires participatory processes in pay equity evaluations (Canada, Canadian Human Rights Commission 2019; ILO 2008)

Job evaluations are often **difficult for small businesses and informal employers** due to limited resources and incentives. Rapid changes in job content – driven by technology and new work arrangements – add complexity and cost, requiring regular updates. While job evaluations are conducted to a some extent in low- and middle-income countries – such as Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa – they are mostly undertaken in high-income countries, in large enterprises and in the public sector, ultimately limiting global impact. In order to be broadly effective, they must be part of a wider policy response. **Technologies like AI can support** this process, but safeguards are needed to prevent gender bias and to reinforce fairness.

▶ **Box 2. Spain's approach to objective job evaluations**

Further to Spain's Organic Law 3/2007 for the effectiveness of equality of women and men, Royal Decree 902/2020 establishes clear principles for conducting **objective job evaluations**, including:

- **Adequacy:** Only factors relevant and actually present in the job are considered.
- **Totality:** All aspects of the job must be evaluated without ignoring or undervaluing any.
- **Objectivity:** Evaluations must be based on clear, bias-free criteria, avoiding gender stereotypes.

Based on these principles, the Government of Spain, in collaboration with trade unions and employer organizations, developed a national job evaluation tool (Spain, Ministry of Equality 2022), which assesses jobs using a set of factors and sub-factors across four areas:

1. **Nature of tasks:** Includes physical, mental and emotional effort; supervisory responsibilities; and autonomy.
2. **Educational requirements:** Specifies minimum education level needed.
3. **Professional and training conditions:** Includes knowledge (for example, digital skills, diversity management, knowledge of foreign language, experience); skills (for example, dexterity, thoroughness, ability to come up with ideas and solutions); and social skills (such as communication and emotional skills).
4. **Working conditions and performance-related factors:** Covers both physical and psychosocial work environments.

Each factor is rated on a scale from 0 (not applicable) to 5 (very high), with examples provided to guide evaluators. The evaluation tool also flags risks of undervaluing work typically performed by women. After completing the evaluation, the tool calculates a total job value using preset weights and generates summary reports – such as rankings or groupings of jobs by value – supporting transparent, bias-free pay structures.

Snapshots of practice

In **Switzerland**, companies and organizations with over 50 employees can use Logib, a free tool from the Federal Office for Gender Equality (FOGE), to conduct objective job evaluations. Employers input individual-level data (for example, age, sex, education, job function, wage and responsibility levels) and requirements for each function (rated from "very low" to "very high") covering qualifications, autonomy and job demands. Using regression analysis, Logib estimates pay gaps between women and men, controlling for job value factors. If the pay gap exceeds 5 per cent, the tool flags significant gender pay inequality. Logib supports both ex-post analysis of gender pay equality and ex-ante creation of transparent, gender-neutral wage structures. For companies and organizations with fewer than 50 employees, FOGE offers Argib, which scores job functions and compares pay for jobs with similar scores, flagging significant pay differences. To encourage use, Swiss companies bidding for public contracts must prove no gender wage discrimination using Logib or Argib.

In **Czechia**, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs provides employers with a set of government-backed tools to promote pay equity. These include a customized version of Switzerland's Logib tool, adapted to reflect Czech national legislation and labour market conditions. The tool enables employers to carry out gender-neutral pay analyses by inputting company data to assess whether men and women receive equal pay for work of equal value. It relies on objective criteria such as qualifications, autonomy and job functions' demands to assign a score, which is then compared to the score of other job functions and against actual wages. In addition, the Equal Pay Calculator allows individuals to compare their earnings with national benchmarks using anonymized labour force data, drawing on variables such as occupation, education, region and company size.

The **Canadian Province of Ontario**'s Pay Equity Office offers a structured, seven-step toolkit (2024) designed to help small businesses comply with the province's Pay Equity Act by conducting a complete pay equity analysis. This practical guide walks employers through the steps of identifying and grouping job classes; determining their gender predominance; evaluating roles based on skills, effort, responsibility and working conditions; and comparing compensation to ensure fairness between female and male job classes. The process is self-managed and supported by resources such as job evaluation tools and instructional videos, making it especially accessible for small businesses. By following these steps, organizations can promote equitable compensation practices and align with global standards for workplace fairness.

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) of the Government of **Australia** provides a *Gender Pay Gap Analysis Guide* (2025) that helps employers to plan and execute a pay and composition analysis. The WGEA also offers an online Gender Pay Gap Analysis Masterclass supporting employers to learn about collecting and cleaning data for pay equity analysis, calculating the gender pay gap and identifying the most common drivers that contribute to the gender pay gap (see box 3).

The Government of **New Zealand** has an online gender pay gap toolkit that helps employers to gather pay data, enter it into an online tool to calculate the gender pay gap, and complete the self-assessment questionnaire to help the entity take corrective measures where needed.

▶ Box 3. Advancing pay equity through industrial and legislative reform in Australia

In recent years, Australia has taken significant steps to address systemic gender inequality in pay, particularly in female-dominated sectors such as early childhood education, health support and social services. These reforms combine legislative change and broader equality measures aimed at reshaping how work is valued and paid across the country.

A key turning point came with the **Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Secure Jobs, Better Pay) Act 2022**, which embedded gender equality as a core objective of the Fair Work Act, ensuring it must be considered in all wage-setting and industrial decisions made by the Fair Work Commission (FWC). Importantly, the Act also amended the **Modern Awards and Minimum Wages Objectives**, requiring that gender equality be considered when the FWC makes decisions to eliminate the historical undervaluation of work in female-dominated sectors and to ensure equal pay for work of equal or comparable value.

Building on this foundation, the FWC launched a major review into five industry awards covering sectors that are female-dominated. These awards – covering health professionals, community care, children's services, Aboriginal health workers and pharmacy – were identified as being historically undervalued due to gendered assumptions about the nature of care and support work.

By **April 2025**, the FWC had formally found evidence of gender-based undervaluation across all five awards. The first major outcome was a **14.1 per cent wage increase for pharmacists**, to be implemented progressively from 2025 to 2027. Further decisions for the remaining sectors are expected throughout 2025 and 2026. The FWC is currently consulting with trade unions, employers and other stakeholders to finalize wage increases and revised classification structures.

In addition to wage-setting reform, the Secure Jobs, Better Pay legislation reduced the barriers to accessing **multi-enterprise bargaining** to assist and encourage employers and their employees who may, for various reasons, find it difficult to bargain at the single-enterprise level. The female-dominated and award-reliant early childhood education and care sector saw the first supported bargaining multi-enterprise agreement under the Secure Jobs Better Pay legislation. The agreement provided a **15 per cent wage increase** over two years.

Sources: Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Secure Jobs, Better Pay) Act 2022; Australia, Fair Work Commission, n.d.; AEU 2025; ACTU 2024.

Employers' and workers' organizations also actively support their members to address the gender pay gap through tools and awareness-raising. Some examples are included in table 3.

▶ Table 3. Examples of tools from employers' and workers' organizations

Employers' organizations	Workers' organizations
▶ Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA): *Guide 3: Promoting Equality in the Workplace* (2013) ▶ Indonesian Employers Association (APINDO): *Code of Practice for Employers on Promoting Equality and Preventing discrimination at Work in Indonesia* (2013) ▶ China Enterprise Confederation (CEC): *Employers' Guide on Promoting Equal Opportunity and Treatment and Preventing Discrimination at Work in China* (2011)	▶ IndustriALL Global Union: *Pay Equity Toolkit* (2023) ▶ IUF: *Pay Equity Toolkit* (2023) ▶ ETUC: *Negotiating for Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value: ETUC Checklist* (2022) ▶ ETUC: *Tools to Dismantle the Gender Pay Gap* ▶ Irish Congress of Trade Unions, *Gender Pay Gap Reporting: Guidance for Unions on Closing the Gender Pay Gap and Bringing the Issue into Collective Bargaining* (2022) ▶ EPSU and ETUI: *Pay Transparency and Role of Gender-neutral Job Evaluation and Job Classification in the Public Service* (2021)

6

Pay transparency policies

Why they matter

Pay transparency policies and tools are increasingly being used across countries to reduce gender pay inequalities. The key rationale is that **improving access to pay-related information** helps address information asymmetries between employers and workers, making it easier to detect and correct gender-based pay discrimination (ILO 2022a).

- From the **employer's perspective**, transparency tools support efforts to identify and address gender pay gaps, improving both the functioning and reputation of the organization, as well as organizational performance.
- From the **worker's perspective**, transparency policies empower workers and workers' organizations by providing the information needed to negotiate salaries fairly and challenge potential discriminatory pay practices.
- From the **government's perspective**, these policies help to identify when, where and how to target gender pay inequalities.

Research shows that well-designed pay transparency policies can significantly reduce gender pay gaps and have positive effects on increased workforce retention, morale and commitment to the company, as well as improved reputation vis-à-vis consumers (Stofberg, Bussin and Mabaso 2022; Psico-smart 2024).

In **Austria**, **Denmark**, **Canada** and the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, transparency policies have led to measurable reductions in the gender pay gap (Böheim and Gust 2021; Beddensen et al. 2023; Baker et al. 2023; Duchini et al. 2020).

In the **United States of America**, bans on asking about salary history have increased the share of employers who post wage ranges in job listings – leading to higher wages for women (Bessen et al. 2024).

Some common critiques of pay transparency legislation refer to the costs associated with compliance and administrative burdens for employers, privacy concerns in relation to the individual contracting, and the potential to lower men's wages (ILO 2022a). However, when pay transparency measures are well-designed, tailored to national contexts and accompanied by guidance, they deliver positive outcomes while keeping the risks manageable.

Guiding principles and practical steps

While pay transparency interventions can take different forms (see box 4), some core principles guide both the intent and structure of transparency frameworks – regardless of whether it is legally mandated, a voluntary corporate initiative or a trade union-negotiated agreement.

▶ Box 4. Examples of pay transparency measures

- Allowing employees to request and access information on pay levels in their enterprise.
- Requiring employers to disclose individual pay information to employees.
- Requiring employers to disclose an advertised position's salary to prospective employees, either during the interview process or in job advertisements.
- Prohibiting employers from requesting an employee's or prospective employee's salary history.
- Creating an independent body to provide employers with equal pay certification if they meet certain requirements around gender-neutral pay.
- Obliging enterprises with a certain threshold level of employees (for example, 50) to publish information on gender and pay within their organization.
- Carrying out regular audits on gender and pay in enterprises with a minimum threshold level of employees.
- Undertaking regular pay assessments in enterprises with the involvement of employee representatives.
- Promoting the discussion of equal pay and pay audits during collective bargaining.

Source: ILO 2022.

1. **Adopting clear requirements:** This involves establishing standardized formats for what information needs to be shared (for example, salary ranges, compensation structures and pay equity data); how frequently it should be reported; and who is responsible. Requirements may be proportional to the organization's size, industry and regulatory environment.

2. **Engage social partners:** The involvement of social partners is essential for the effective implementation of pay transparency measures. In many countries,[15] transparency legislation includes provisions for consultation between employers' and workers' representatives, along with legal obligations to inform and consult workers' representatives and to integrate pay transparency data into collective bargaining processes (ILO 2022a). Overall, the engagement of social partners fosters trust between employers and employees, strengthens the legitimacy of transparency efforts, and supports collaborative

In **Belgium**, works councils or trade union delegates examine the pay analysis report to assess whether the enterprise has a gender-neutral salary policy. Works councils may suggest appointing a workers' mediator.

In **Lithuania**, enterprises with more than 20 employees must discuss the equal opportunity programme with a works council.

In **Luxemburg**, pay transparency is part of enterprise-level social dialogue. The Labour Code requires managers to inform and consult workers' and equality representatives, providing sex-disaggregated data on hiring, promotions, transfers, layoffs, pay and training (ILO 2022a).

15 For more examples, see ILO (2022a), page 12.

problem-solving when pay disparities are identified. Social partners can contribute at various stages, including:

- Drafting or approving pay transparency reports and reviewing internal job evaluation systems, thereby ensuring accuracy and acceptance.
- Ensuring gender-neutral job classification and progression frameworks, and thereby helping to safeguard fairness in career paths and promotions.
- Co-developing training programmes to educate staff and managers on the principles of pay equity, how to interpret pay data, and legal rights under transparency laws.

> Transparency is important for fairness and accountability, but it must not come at the cost of breaching **privacy laws or exposing sensitive business data**. A balance must be struck between openness and protection.

For instance, in **Iceland**, a collaborative Equal Pay Certification was developed jointly by trade unions, employers' confederations and government officials to prevent salary discrimination and enable certification. In many countries, employers' organizations support businesses, especially SMEs, in meeting their transparency obligations and implementing equity strategies. Likewise, through social dialogue, campaigning, and collective agreements, trade unions have contributed to secure legislative gains and more equitable workplace policies that support equal pay for work of equal value in practice (ITUC 2023). In **Nordic countries**, trade unions have long played an educational role in helping workers understand wage systems and challenge inequities. In **Germany**, the 2017 Transparency in Wage Structures Act grants employees the right to information about their compensation and leverages works councils – part of the social partner infrastructure – for enforcement.

3. Ensure compliance: Incentives, action plans and penalties play a significant role in promoting compliance with pay equity standards. While financial penalties are common, many jurisdictions use non-financial measures – such as public disclosure measures, mandatory action plans or equal pay audits – to achieve broader impact. Employer certifications for gender equality serve as additional incentives, encouraging organizations to assess and correct pay disparities (OECD 2023).

> The **United Kingdom's** approach of publicly disclosing companies' gender pay gaps – and highlighting noncompliance – has proven highly effective. In 2023, the number of firms that failed to report their data dropped by 71 per cent, down to just eight companies, despite no fines being issued. This suggests that public accountability alone can drive significant compliance (James 2024).
>
> In **Italy**, companies that complete their equality report and meet specific gender-equality criteria – including equal pay for work of equal value – can apply for Gender Equality Certification. Certified firms receive a 1 per cent reduction in employer social security contributions (up to €50,000 annually) and are granted "award scores" in public tender processes or funding applications (IOE 2023).

4. Leverage digital tools: New technologies can help enterprises fulfil their reporting tasks more quickly and at a lower cost, and they can also create a format and reporting criteria that are uniform across companies and over time. The use of digital tools also makes the reporting process more efficient, transparent and replicable. This is particularly important for small businesses, which may lack internal HR capacity. In addition, sophisticated data analytics tools can also go beyond simple gender comparisons to look at pay disparities across multiple demographic axes, including ethnicity, disability status and age. The effectiveness of technologies and AI depends on safeguards that control for gender and other bias and ensure fairness (ILO 2022a). These safeguards should be implemented in consultation with workers' representatives

Snapshots of practice

In **Brazil**, Federal Decree No. 11,795/2023 was enacted to implement the Equal Pay Act (Law No. 14,611), requiring private companies with 100 or more employees to submit biannual reports to the Ministry of Labour and Employment. Reports must include detailed employee-level data – such as job titles and functions (aligned with the Brazilian Classification of Occupations), and a breakdown of all forms of remuneration, including salaries, bonuses, commissions, overtime, night shift premiums, severance payments, vacation pay, tips and any other legally or collectively bargained earnings. In addition, companies must disclose their diversity and inclusion measures, covering areas like career and compensation plans, promotion criteria, hiring incentives for women, leadership gender balance and family care support. Reports are due in February and August, and published by March and September. Non-compliance may result in fines of up to 3 per cent of the company's payroll, capped at the equivalent salaries of 100 employees. In cases of proven pay discrimination, employers must compensate the affected employee, pay fines of up to ten times the corrected salary and submit a gender pay equity action plan within 90 days. This plan must include corrective measures with timelines, pay equity training, and engagement with trade unions or worker representatives. In 2025, Brazil published its third Report on Pay Transparency, and a dedicated management committee is being established to oversee the rollout of the National Plan for Equal Pay.

In 2023, the **European Union** adopted the Pay Transparency Directive, requiring Member States to implement measures ensuring pay transparency by June 2026. Key provisions include mandatory disclosure of salary ranges in job postings, a ban on inquiries about applicants' pay history, and the right for employees to access information on their own pay and average pay for comparable roles. Employers with 100 or more staff must regularly report gender pay gap data, and where a gap of 5 per cent or more cannot be objectively justified, a joint pay assessment with employee representatives is required. The Directive also introduces standardized criteria for job evaluation and career progression, along with enforcement mechanisms and penalties for non-compliance (OECD 2023).

Since introducing its Gender Equality Index in 2019, **France** has steadily increased compliance. In 2024, all companies with 50 or more employees were required to publish a gender equality score. The index works on a point system to calculate an enterprise's score from 0 to 100 points, with 100 points representing the absence of a gender pay gap within an enterprise. Enterprises that do not reach the threshold of 75 points have a period of three years to reach that minimum point requirement. In this event, employers must negotiate with employee representatives on improvement measures. Enforcement includes fines up to 1 per cent of the enterprise's payroll for noncompliance, along with formal notices for inadequate action plans – or the absence of any. These measures have helped ensure progressive improvement in compliance (Smith-Vidal and De Pelet 2024).

In **Finland**, the Collective Agreement for State Civil Servants and Employees – negotiated between trade unions and the State Employer's Office – includes provisions promoting pay transparency. Employees can request information about the pay and components of colleagues performing similar work when pay discrimination is suspected and the data is necessary to assess it. Trade unions support this right by helping employees request and interpret the information. The agreement aligns with Finland's Act on Equality between Women and Men, which reinforces the right to pay comparisons in suspected cases of gender-based discrimination.

In **Ireland**, the Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021 requires employers to publish information relating to gender pay gaps within their organizations. Reporting obligations commenced in 2022 for employers with more than 250 employees, and were extended in 2024 to include those with more than 150 employees. In 2025, the reporting requirement started to apply to employers with more than 50 employees. A centralized reporting database is being developed that will allow employers to register their accounts and report.

In 2025, the Government of **Zambia** implemented the Public Sector Pay Policy to address long-standing inequalities and inconsistencies in salaries and conditions of service across State institutions. The policy introduces more transparent, efficient and gender-responsive mechanisms for determining emoluments.

▶ Box 5. Expanding the scope of pay equity beyond gender

In addition to gender pay gap reporting, attention is increasingly turning to other forms of pay inequality, supported by pay transparency measures and the use of disaggregated pay data (when available). Several countries are exploring or implementing measures that require or encourage the collection, reporting and analysis of pay information by ethnicity, race and disability, reflecting a broader commitment to equity and inclusion in the workplace. For instance:

In **Brazil**, equal pay legislation adopted in 2023 requires companies with 100 (one hundred) or more employees to publish semiannual reports on pay transparency and remuneration criteria. The report is prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Employment based on company-provided data on the remuneration of women and men, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, nationality, and age, allowing for an intersectional analysis of gender pay disparities. See Law No. 14.611, 2023, section 5.

Canada Equi'Vision: An Employment Equity Tool includes data on women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities.

The **EU Pay Transparency Directive** relies on the concept of intersectionality by acknowledging that an "intersectional approach is important for understanding and addressing the gender pay gap". The Directive also states that in the context of gender-based pay discrimination, it should be possible for courts, equality bodies or other competent authorities to take a combination of grounds of discrimination into account in the compensation, penalties, and monitoring and awareness-raising.

The **UK Government's Disability Confident scheme** encourages companies to commit to inclusive hiring and retention practices, including tracking disability pay gaps. Also in the United Kingdom, some employers voluntarily report ethnicity pay gaps using frameworks like the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's *Ethnicity Pay Reporting Guide*.

7

Adequate wage policies

Why they matter

Minimum wages – whether set by law or through collective agreements – are among the most common labour market tools worldwide (ILO 2020). When well-designed and broadly applied, they can compress wage distributions from the bottom up, helping to reduce overall wage inequality and contributing to narrowing the gender pay gap (ILO 2018b). This effect is particularly relevant for gender equality, as women are overrepresented in low-wage jobs, and therefore benefit from the effective implementation of statutory or negotiated minimum wages. To be effective, such policies must avoid direct or indirect discrimination – such as lower wage levels or lack of coverage in female-dominated sectors like domestic work and agriculture (ILO 2018a).

Guiding principles and practical steps

Minimum wage policies can be effective in reducing the gender pay gap, while safeguarding employment and enterprise sustainability, when designed and implemented to maximize benefits.

Adequate level: Minimum wage policies must be carefully calibrated. If set without regard to economic factors, they risk unintended consequences, such as job losses, reduced working hours, increased informality or additional strain on businesses, especially among small businesses. For these reasons, the ILO Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131), emphasizes that wage-setting should balance workers' needs with economic factors through the full and effective participation of the representatives of organizations of employers and workers. Yet in many countries, minimum wages remain below poverty lines (ILO 2020) and fail to ensure a decent living, as captured in the concept of a **living wage**. In this regard, the ILO key principles of wage-setting processes include promoting incremental progression from minimum wages to living wages (see box 6).

Box 6. The concept of a living wage and its gender equality dimension

The concept of a living wage is:

- the wage level that is necessary to afford a decent standard of living for workers and their families, taking into account the country circumstances and calculated for the work performed during the normal hours of work;
- calculated in accordance with the ILO's principles of estimating the living wage;
- to be achieved through the wage-setting process in line with ILO principles on wage setting (ILO 2024b)

Wage policies, including minimum wages and discussions around living wages, can play an important role in reducing gender wage inequalities, especially as women are overrepresented in low-paid jobs. When wage-setting frameworks are designed with attention to gender equality and non-discrimination, they can enhance women's labour force participation and address the historical undervaluation of women's work.

For analytical and policy purposes, living wage estimates may help highlight the gap between prevailing wage levels and what is required to meet workers' and their families' basic needs.

Methodological choices in such estimates – especially those related to needs such as food, housing, transport, healthcare, and particularly care such as childcare – are particularly relevant from a gender perspective. Given women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, factoring care needs and the cost of care services into living wage calculations is essential for informing wage policies that promote women's access to decent work.

At the same time, the ILO's normative framework focuses on minimum wage fixing as set out in the ILO Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131). The 2024 ILO Meeting of Experts on Living Wages confirmed that while the concept of a living wage can be a useful benchmark for dialogue, it is not a binding standard. Instead, progress should come through strengthening statutory minimum wages and collective bargaining processes.

Operationalizing wage adequacy, therefore, should take place within the broader wage-setting institutions – minimum wage mechanisms and social dialogue, including collective bargaining – while ensuring consistency with the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

Source: ILO 2024c.

- **Gender-responsive policy design:** Minimum wage systems should be carefully designed to account for their differential impact on men and women. This includes analysing gender-disaggregated data during policy formulation and ensuring that minimum wage rates do not inadvertently reinforce existing gender inequalities (for instance, by setting lower wages for sectors with predominantly female workers or excluding female-dominated occupations such as domestic work from their coverage) (ILO, n.d.)
- **Simplicity and transparency:** While most countries have established a minimum wage through legislation, the structures of these

In many countries, minimum wage laws exclude certain workers, such as agricultural and domestic workers. In 2020, 25.8 million **domestic workers** were entirely excluded from minimum wage coverage – despite a minimum wage being in place – while 6.5 million more work in countries where the statutory minimum wage for domestic workers is lower than for other workers (ILO 2021a). These exclusions contribute to the gender pay gap and require a gender-responsive approach to minimum wage policy to ensure fair and inclusive protection for all workers, especially those in vulnerable or informal jobs.

systems vary widely. Some countries apply a single economy-wide rate, while others differentiate based on sector, occupation, age or other labour market characteristics. Although tailored systems can address specific market conditions, a simpler and more transparent minimum wage structure – ideally with a single universal rate or with limited, clearly justified variations – offers several advantages. Simplicity enhances clarity and predictability for employers and workers, promotes higher compliance (particularly in countries with limited administrative capacity) and reduces the risk of indirect discrimination. Complex or disaggregated wage systems can disproportionately disadvantage women when sub-minimum wages are applied to sectors or occupations where women are overrepresented. Ensuring a straightforward and equitable wage structure can therefore strengthen both gender equality and legal enforceability (Rubery 2003; ILO 2017).

- **Regular and inclusive adjustment mechanisms:** Periodic reviews of the minimum wage, involving social dialogue with representative employers' and workers' organizations, help ensure that wage levels remain adequate over time and responsive to cost-of-living changes without threatening jobs or enterprise survival (ILO 2022b).
- **Strengthen compliance and enforcement:** Effective enforcement of minimum wage laws is critical to reducing the gender pay gap, with research showing significantly greater impacts where enforcement is strong (Bargain, Doorley and Van Kerm 2019). Without it, especially in sectors with informal or low-paid work (where women are overrepresented), the benefits remain largely theoretical. Strengthening compliance requires a gender-responsive, multi-faceted approach: public awareness campaigns; stronger workers' and employers' organizations; and more robust labour inspections and grievance systems. Efforts must focus on sectors with high female employment and low compliance (ILO 2013; Bargain, Doorley and Van Kerm 2019).

Even when minimum wage laws apply universally, weak enforcement limits their impact. **Informal workers**, who often earn below the legal minimum wage and in some countries are in large part women, tend to have high gender income gaps. While minimum wages may influence informal wages indirectly (the "lighthouse effect"), they are not enough to close the gap alone (ILO 2020). In economies with large informal sectors, complementary measures – like supporting the shift to formal employment – are also needed (ILO 2025a).

Snapshots of practice

In **Costa Rica**, the minimum wage for domestic workers is set at a level that is 40 per cent lower than that for other unskilled occupations. However, Resolution CNS-RG-2-2019 of the National Wage Council, issued on 24 June 2019, established a gradual process to eliminate this wage gap. The plan aims to align the minimum wage for domestic workers with that of unskilled occupations over a 15-year period, ending in 2034. A midterm review of the country's socioeconomic and labour conditions is scheduled for 2025 to assess the feasibility of shortening this timeline.

In **Egypt**, a major global producer of jasmine – a key ingredient in perfumes – the Government, jasmine processors and trade unions reached a landmark agreement in July 2025 on the sector's first-ever living wage, following ILO-facilitated tripartite consultations. The agreed monthly wage of 9,309 Egyptian pounds (approximately US$191), based on the ILO's living wage methodology, will be implemented gradually. This initiative, supported by the Fair Labor Association and leading fragrance houses, aims not only to ensure decent pay for jasmine pickers – mostly women and children harvesting at night – but also to reduce reliance on child labour by improving household incomes. The ILO provided technical expertise, data analysis and a road map for phased implementation, helping foster effective social dialogue and sustainable progress in the sector (ILO 2025b).

In **Kenya**, regulations on wages amended in 2024 set monthly minimum wage for domestic workers at 16,113.75 Kenyan shillings (approximately US$129), but many low-paid workers – especially women – earn as little as US$50 per month. Trade unions have focused on raising awareness about the value of women's work and are pushing for full enforcement of minimum wage laws, including clear inclusion in domestic workers' employment contracts (Pillinger 2023).

In **Mauritius**, cleaners – primarily women – working in public schools were earning as little as US$42 per month in 2017. The Confederation of Public and Private Sector Workers (CTSP) organized hunger strikes and other mobilization efforts to demand better conditions, which led to the introduction of a national minimum wage in January 2018. This wage-setting mechanism is overseen by the National Wage Consultative Council, which includes representatives of workers and employers. As a result of continuous negotiation, in 2023 the national minimum wage for the lowest categories of workers started at 12,075 rupees (US$257) for 45 hours of work per week (IndustriAll 2017; ITUC 2023).

In **Namibia**, minimum wage legislation has been used as a tool to reduce gender pay inequalities. Initially, minimum wages applied only to selected sectors – such as security, agriculture, construction and domestic work. To promote wage growth and address inequality, the Government announced in 2024 the introduction of a national minimum wage of N$18 per hour, effective January 2025. This reform followed extensive consultations with social partners and was implemented gradually to ensure wages supported adequate living standards while remaining sustainable for businesses. The new national minimum wage aligns with broader development goals, including the Harambee Prosperity Plan (2021–2025), and was developed with technical support from the ILO. Importantly, it also raised existing sectoral minimum wages. For example, the minimum wage for domestic workers – previously set at N$9.03 – will increase incrementally to N$12 in 2025, N$15 in 2026 and N$18 in 2027. This phased approach aims to protect employment while ensuring that domestic workers progressively reach wage parity with other sectors.

Panama approved a National Plan for Wage Equality (2022–2025) as a measure to reactivate the country after the COVID-19 pandemic. The Plan built on Executive Decree No. 74, which set the new minimum hourly wage rates, according to economic activity, occupation and company size, throughout the country.

South Africa introduced a minimum wage for domestic workers in 2002 through the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and through broad consultations amended Sectoral Determination 7, which governed the minimum conditions of employment for domestic workers, including the maximum ordinary working hours (45 per week), daily rest periods and mandatory rest days. This updated framework set different minimum wages based on hours worked and the region of employment, with rules on wage payments and capped deductions (for example, a maximum deduction of 10 per cent if accommodation is provided, which has to meet basic standards). In 2018, South Africa adopted the National Minimum Wage Act, shifting to a unified wage structure that replaced sector-specific rates. Domestic workers, initially earning less than other sectors, saw their wages progressively increased until reaching full parity with the national minimum wage.

In **Spain**, raising the minimum interprofessional wage is recognized as a key policy tool to combat inequality and advance gender equality, by addressing the root causes of economic insecurity and fostering inclusive growth. Reflecting this commitment, on 11 February 2025, the Council of Ministers approved a further increase in the minimum wage through Royal Decree 87/2025, which pays further attention to domestic workers, among others. This decision was the result of consensus reached at the dedicated Social Dialogue Table with Spain's two main trade union confederations – the Workers' Commissions (CCOO) and the General Workers' Union (UGT).

8

Social dialogue

Why it matters

Social dialogue – with collective bargaining at its heart,[16] as well as information sharing, consultation and workplace cooperation – is a powerful tool for promoting equal pay for work of equal value and reducing the gender pay gap. By fostering trust and mutual understanding between employers and workers, social dialogue helps shape national policies and workplace practices that reflect both business needs and workers' realities. It can address both direct and indirect discrimination by enabling the negotiation of equitable wages and working conditions. Both tripartite and bipartite social dialogue, particularly collective bargaining, are crucial mechanisms to operationalize wages, playing a critical role in raising the wages of the lowest-paid workers – often women – and thus help narrow gender pay gaps (ILO 2022c).

Social dialogue also creates space for wider solutions to support gender equality, such as flexible work arrangements, parental leave, and transport and caregiving support. These measures not only benefit gender equality, but also improve retention, employee satisfaction and productivity while supporting the reduction of the gender pay gap.

Guiding principles and practical steps

To fully harness the potential of social dialogue in promoting equal pay for work of equal value, certain conditions need to be in place. The ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work are rights and enabling conditions that are necessary for the realization of the strategic objectives of the ILO.[17] Furthermore, protecting, promoting and respecting the right of freedom of association and the effective recognition of collective bargaining have a particular importance in enabling the attainment of these strategic objectives, notably in relation to social dialogue and tripartism (ILO 2024d).

- **Inclusive and representative participation:** Employers' and workers' organizations need to be well represented and equipped to integrate gender equality into their agendas. Ensuring diversity and gender balance among representatives creates a platform where different perspectives are heard and addressed. Employers' and workers' organizations can also play a role in advocating for pay equity and supporting the dissemination of knowledge on the topic.

- **Gender-sensitive agenda setting:** Issues related to gender equality should be integrated into the core agenda of social dialogue, not treated as isolated topics. This would require adopting a gender lens across all discussions on wages, working conditions, job classifications and the promotion of policies to identify and eliminate both direct and indirect discrimination.

- **Transparency and data-driven dialogue:** Effective social dialogue depends on access to reliable gender-disaggregated wage data and workplace statistics. Transparency in sharing this data enables informed discussions, helps identify pay gaps and tracks progress over time. Without evidence-based dialogue, efforts to address inequalities risk remaining symbolic rather than substantive.

- **Capacity-building and awareness:** Employers' and workers' organizations should be equipped with the knowledge and skills to understand gender pay issues and their root causes. This

> In contexts with large informal economies, many women workers remain outside formal bargaining structures, limiting their access to pay equity discussions. Similarly, the rise of diverse forms of work and remote employment demands more inclusive and **flexible dialogue models** that cater for the representation of **all** workers.

16 Collective agreements between employers and workers are included in Convention No. 100, Article 2, as means to apply the principle of equal pay for work of equal value together with other means discussed above – for example, national laws or regulations, legally established or recognized machinery for wage determination, or a combination of these various means.

17 The ILO's strategic objectives under the Decent Work Agenda are: promoting employment; developing and enhancing social protection; strengthening social dialogue and tripartism; and respecting, promoting and realizing fundamental principles and rights at work.

includes training on gender biases in job evaluation, wage setting and career progression, as well as awareness of legal frameworks supporting equal pay and more broadly supporting women's participation in the labour market.

- **Commitment to joint problem solving:** Social dialogue should foster a collaborative approach where employers and workers jointly design practical, context-specific solutions – such as gender-neutral job classifications, pay equity frameworks, wage policies, flexible working arrangements and parental leave policies – that promote equality and meet the needs of the workforce and business realities.
- **Continuous engagement and monitoring:** Promoting equal pay is an ongoing process that requires sustained dialogue and regular monitoring. Establishing mechanisms for follow-up, evaluation and adaptation ensures that agreements translate into real changes and that emerging challenges are addressed promptly.
- **Supportive legal and policy environment:** For social dialogue to be impactful, it should be supported by a framework of strong labour laws and policies that mandate equal pay and prohibit discrimination, as well as the provision of training for social partners. Social partners should advocate for such frameworks and for advancing pay equity further, by shaping tailored solutions and advocating for progressive policy reform (ILO 2022c; ILO 2022a; OECD 2021a).

Snapshots of practice

In **Belgium,** most of bipartite joint committees have included a clause on non-discrimination of women in their sectoral collective agreements. In 2018, employers' and workers' organizations in the healthcare sector developed a job evaluation and classification scheme that sets the wages for the sector. Under this scheme, each function is described, weighted and subsequently assigned to job categories on the basis of the activities and tasks performed, aiming at a gender-neutral wage payment system (ILO 2023a).

In **Brazil**, the Government is promoting social dialogue to advance pay equity by launching a collective bargaining booklet designed to encourage the inclusion of equal pay provisions in trade union agreements and sector-wide collective agreements. This initiative aims to facilitate the integration of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value into workplace negotiations, strengthening its implementation through ongoing dialogue between employers' and workers' representatives (EPIC 2025).

In 2022, the Government of **Chile**, the Central Organization of Chilean Workers and 16 public sector trade unions agreed on measures to reduce the gender pay gap. A bipartite committee was formed to review pay gap data and launch pilot projects in three public institutions using the ILO's gender-neutral job evaluation method. This built on earlier efforts, including a 2017 pilot launched after an agreement with the National Association of Public Employees (ITUC 2023).

In **Colombia**, on 18 July 2025, the Ministry of Labour issued Resolution 3462, which establishes measures to ensure the effective recognition of collective bargaining in the domestic work sector. In line with the ILO Domestic Workers' Convention, 2011 (No. 189), the Resolution also mandates the creation of a tripartite social dialogue table, providing a formal mechanism for negotiation between employers, workers and the State with the view to improving working conditions for domestic workers. This Resolution is a key supporting step in implementing the labour reform adopted in June 2025 (Ley 2466 de 2025) – which requires all domestic-work employment contracts to be written and registered, specifying wages and other core working conditions, and strengthens protections on working time, overtime pay and dismissal.

In **Denmark**, some sectoral agreements include commitments to the review and adoption of gender-neutral job classification systems, "with the aim of guaranteeing the absence of direct and indirect discrimination between women and men", as well as making provision for the availability of gender-disaggregated wage-related data "for use in consultation and information to employees on pay differences between men and women at the enterprise". For example, a sectoral agreement in food services established principles of pay transparency between workers and set out dispute resolution procedures and remedies for equal pay claims (Hayter and Bastida 2024).

In **Italy's** banking sector, the National Collective Labour Agreement (CCNL Credito) – negotiated between trade unions (such as FABI and FISAC-CGIL) and the employers' association (ABI) – includes provisions to monitor and promote gender equality, including pay equity. At the company level, equality committees are formed with trade union and management representatives to track gender indicators, including pay gaps in comparable roles. These committees can access anonymized gender-disaggregated salary data, can request detailed pay information, review salary structures and propose corrective actions. While individual employees may not directly access colleagues' pay information, trade unions can act on their behalf, enabling indirect access to pay comparison and redress mechanisms (ABI 2023)

In 2017, a collective agreement in **Portugal's** footwear sector restructured the wage scale to ensure equal base pay across production-related jobs, where women are the majority. The new structure classified work into ten degrees and further into professional categories, some with three pay levels (first being highest, third being lowest). Wage increases were applied as percentages based on these levels, effectively equalizing base wages and addressing gender pay gaps. Workers in lower-paid, female-dominated roles like sewing, finishing and assembly assistance saw average wage increases of 5.3 per cent from 2016 to 2017, while middle and senior management saw no increases (ILO 2023a).

9

Gender-responsive labour inspections

Why they matter

Labour inspection systems play a vital role in addressing gender wage inequalities through both direct and indirect mechanisms in line with the ILO Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81). First, labour inspectors can identify and address cases of gender wage discrimination by reviewing company wage data and organizational structures, and recommend corrective actions to close the gender pay gap. Second, even when not directly targeting wage discrimination, labour inspectors contribute more broadly to enforcing labour laws and protecting workers' rights, which can have important implications for women's earnings, particularly in low-wage sectors. For example, improved compliance with minimum wage laws – often facilitated by inspections – can significantly benefit women, who are overrepresented among low-paid workers (ILO 2022d).

Guiding principles and practical steps

For these direct and indirect effects of labour inspection to materialize, it is important that a series of conditions are met. Taken together, these measures enable labour inspectors to act, not only as enforcers of the law, but as agents of change in promoting gender equality in the world of work.

Labour inspectors' role in enforcing gender equality legislation: For labour inspectors to meaningfully contribute to reducing gender wage inequalities, their mandate must explicitly cover all areas of labour legislation relevant to gender equality across the entire employment cycle – from recruitment and hiring, through promotion and career progression, to termination and severance. This includes the enforcement of equal pay for work of equal value, compliance with pay transparency laws, and the protection of rights related to maternity, paternity and other family or care-related leave, as well as gender-responsive occupational safety and health (OSH) measures and the prevention and handling of violence and harassment. Inspectors must be well-versed in these legal provisions and equipped to act in cases of non-compliance. For this reason, it is essential that labour inspectorates are adequately resourced and that labour inspectors receive adequate capacity-building to strengthen gender-responsiveness in their work (ILO 2023b).

Strengthening preventive and proactive roles: In addition to enforcement, labour inspectors play a proactive and preventive role. This includes raising awareness, consulting with companies and offering guidance on objective job evaluations and the use of pay transparency tools. Inspectors can also review company structures – such as the gender composition of the workforce overall and by job category – to detect systemic imbalances, such as the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles (ILO 2023b).

Applying a gender lens to wage compliance and enforcement: When assessing minimum wage compliance, inspectors should examine whether bonuses, allowances or in-kind benefits are distributed equitably, with attention paid to whether certain forms of compensation disproportionately benefit men or women. They should also consider whether working time arrangements, travel requirements or other job-related factors have gender-differentiated impacts on take-home pay. Enforcement tools should be strengthened, including complaint handling mechanisms, sanctions and requirements for corrective actions – such as pay audits, policy revisions or the renegotiation of discriminatory wage-setting practices (ILO 2023b).

Promoting gender parity in labour inspector recruitment: Ensuring gender equality within labour inspection starts with improving the representation of women among inspectors. While most countries have no legal barriers preventing women from serving as labour inspectors, the profession remains male-dominated in many contexts. Some countries, like **Denmark**, actively promote the recruitment of women, but fair representation of women in labour inspection remains the exception rather than the norm (ILO 2022d).

Snapshots of practice

In **Portugal**, the labour inspectorate (ACT) plays a key role in enforcing equal pay for work of equal value. Under Law No. 60/2018, which establishes measures to promote equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, the Strategy and Planning Office of the Ministry of Labour provides ACT with information on enterprises' social activity submitted by employers (Employment Records). Based on this information, if pay disparities are identified, companies are required to submit a pay gap assessment plan to the ACT outlining how the company will address these disparities. Failure to address the pay disparities – or failure to justify the pay gap – may result in penalties. In 2025, based on data from the Employment Records, ACT launched a national inspection campaign and issued corresponding notifications to approximately 4,000 companies (Portugal, ACT 2025).

In 2024, **Mexico's** Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare introduced a Gender-Focused Protocol for Labour Inspections to help inspectors identify workplace gender discrimination. The protocol includes a checklist of documents to review and a structured questionnaire for interviewing employees – up to 15 employees per inspection in firms with 105+ workers. Key questions address experiences of discrimination, including in relation to wages, violence and harassment, or pregnancy-related hiring practices. If concerns are raised, inspectors follow up with further inquiries. The protocol is used in both scheduled and unannounced inspections.

In **Iceland**, labour inspections play a key role in enforcing equal pay for work of equal value through the country's mandatory equal pay certification system. Labour inspectors are responsible for verifying whether companies with 25 or more employees hold valid certification under the national Equal Pay Standard, which requires employers to demonstrate that their wage-setting practices are free from gender bias. During inspections, they review pay structures, job classifications and internal evaluation criteria to ensure compliance. If discrepancies are found, inspectors can trigger corrective actions or impose daily fines until compliance is achieved, reinforcing the legal obligation to uphold pay equity.


steinel

10

Labour and social protections and formalizing the informal economy

Why it matters

Social protection can contribute significantly to reducing the gender pay gap by providing income security during periods of unemployment or life events like maternity, caregiving, disability, illness and old age, as well as by ensuring effective access to healthcare without financial hardship and protection against unfair treatment and discrimination at work. Social protection helps individuals stay connected to the labour market, improves skills development and job matching, and facilitates the transition from the informal to the formal economy. Especially for low-income households, social protection can also enable access to transport, quality childcare and long-term care services, education and skills development – critical enablers of women's labour force participation. To maximize these benefits, social protection systems must be gender-responsive by applying a rights-based life-course approach, and must reduce poverty and inequality and promote equality of opportunity and treatment (ILO 2023c; Razavi et al. 2024; ILO and OHCHR 2025).

Care policies and the gender pay gap

In 2023, 708 million women were outside of the labour force due to care responsibilities, compared to just 40 million men (ILO 2024a).

Care policies are closely related to social protection. When **well-designed, they help close the gender pay gap by addressing the unequal share of unpaid care work** – a major driver of pay inequality – and by supporting women as care recipients, including those requiring long-term care. Globally, women perform up to three times more unpaid care work than men (ILO 2018c), limiting their ability to work full-time, pursue leadership roles or access better-paid jobs.

The ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), safeguard women's income security during maternity and protect against discrimination based on maternity and caregiving responsibilities. **Paternity and parental leave policies – especially when they are non-transferable, equally and adequately paid, and financed by social protection – help reduce the motherhood gap** in employment and wages, while also encouraging men's active involvement in caregiving. Access to affordable, quality early childhood education and care is critical to enabling women, especially mothers, to remain in or return to the workforce. In its absence, many women reduce their working hours, exit employment all together, or opt for occupations that are lower paid, but offer better work–family balance arrangements – thereby reinforcing income disparities (ILO 2019). Public investment in care services boosts female labour force participation and reduces wage inequality (ILO 2022e).

Social protection and the gender pension gap

As a long-term consequence of the gender pay gap, the gender pension gap – the difference in average retirement income between men and women aged 65 and above – is estimated at 30–40 per cent globally (Lane 2018). In the European Union, over half of Member States report a gap of 30 per cent or more (Eurostat 2021). Largely **due to lower labour force contribution rates, gendered employment patterns and gender pay gaps**, pension coverage gaps are also significant: globally 60.1 per cent of working-age men have legal coverage in contributory schemes, compared to 44.1 per cent of women (ILO 2024f), and only 29.1 per cent of women contribute to pension schemes versus 40.9 per cent of men, with even lower rates in low-income countries. Just 49.2 per cent of women over retirement age receive contributory pensions, compared to 63.2 per cent of men (ILO 2024f). Women – especially single or widowed women – face a higher risk of poverty in old age.

The gap is driven by multiple factors, including women's lower labour force participation, lower lifetime earnings due to persistent gender pay gaps, shorter or more fragmented employment histories often linked to career breaks or part-time work for caregiving, and a higher risk of informal employment. These result in lower pension contributions and benefits that are only partially offset by measures to enhance gender equality in contributory schemes, such as care credits, minimum pension guarantees and unisex mortality tables, as well as tax-financed social pensions (ILO 2024f). **Addressing the gender pension**

gap requires analysing labour market dynamics; working conditions, including pay equity; care policies; and pensions schemes to ensure that gender-responsive pension schemes are part of universal social protection systems (Razavi et al. 2024; OECD 2021b; Canada, Ontario Pay Equity Office 2024). In this context, good practice includes avoiding different pensionable ages for women and men – which can limit women's ability to accumulate adequate entitlements; using unisex mortality tables to ensure fairness in benefit calculations; and eliminating discriminatory rules such as those requiring or incentivizing women to withdraw pension savings upon marriage, which jeopardize their long-term income security and autonomy (Razavi et al. 2024). It also includes building and maintaining universal social protection systems that ensure adequate protection to care workers in all types of employment and recognizing unpaid care work, including through care credits in social insurance (ILO 2024g).

Labour and social protections and formalizing the informal economy

Both men and women earn less in informal employment than in formal jobs. Women earn even less than their male counterparts in the informal economy, and thus face a higher "informality penalty" than men. Across the world, informal wage workers earn, on average, 56 per cent of formal workers' wages. Informal workers – either wage or non-wage workers – are also twice as likely to be poor than formal workers. Men in informal jobs earn 58 per cent of men's wages in formal jobs, while women earn only 52 per cent compared to their counterparts in the formal economy (ILO 2023d). While the root causes of the gender pay gap in the informal economy are multifaceted – including labour market structures, limited educational opportunities for women, excessive caregiving responsibilities and entrenched gender norms – these are further compounded by the lack of legal and social protections and the lack of access to capital and social services. However, **strategies to address informality and promote the transition to the formal economy do exist**, and addressing these gaps requires an integrated approach in line with ILO Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204).

Such strategies include:

- Extending **labour and social protections** by reforming legal frameworks to close existing gaps and ensuring their effective implementation, with the goal of achieving universal access to comprehensive, sustainable and adequate social protection and inclusive labour protection for all, without discrimination.
- Improving access to **education and skills training** and the recognition of prior learning.
- Promoting **enabling business environments and productivity ecosystems** that foster sustainable enterprises and competitiveness, as well as women's entrepreneurship.
- Extending **social security to workers in the informal economy** and ensuring adequate protection for workers in all types of employment (ILO 2021b).
- Enhancing the availability, accessibility, affordability, adequacy and quality of **care services**, while promoting a more equitable sharing of care responsibilities between men and women. These measures help facilitate the transition to formal employment for individuals with care responsibilities and support the formalization of workers within the care economy.

Employers' organizations and workers' organizations, alongside social and solidarity economy actors and grassroots organizations, have played a critical role – within their respective spheres of influence – in organizing, mobilizing and supporting informal economy workers, particularly women. In an increasing number of countries, employers' and workers' organizations have extended membership and services to workers and economic units in the informal economy, and in some cases, formed alliances and partnerships with informal economy organizations. Contributions from these organizations and those in the informal economy have included expanding access to social insurance, healthcare, childcare and training opportunities. These organizations have actively advocated for policies that promote pathways to formality and have equipped informal economy workers – especially women entrepreneurs – with training in business skills, financial literacy, digital tools and occupational safety and health. They have also facilitated market access for informal micro-entrepreneurs. These efforts have often led to increased and more stable earnings for women in the informal economy (ILO 2025c).

Guiding principles and practical steps

A wide range of international labour standards and resolutions[18] provide a framework for countries to build comprehensive, rights-based and sustainable social protection systems with care at their core. The ILO 2024 Resolution concerning decent work and the care economy outlines guiding principles to address deficits in care leave policies and services and to advance gender equality with particular attention to the care sector. Some principles to apply:

- **Extend social protection through a combination of contributory and non-contributory schemes across the life course and close the gender gap in social protection coverage:** Combine both types of support to ensure universal social protection systems, including social protection floors, in line with international social security standards. This involves:
  - extending social insurance to those not yet sufficiently covered, especially women, including informal workers; and
  - fostering formal employment and sustainability, complemented by non-contributory schemes that reach disadvantaged groups and address structural gender inequalities over a lifetime (Razavi et al. 2024).
- **Ensure adequacy and inclusiveness of benefits:** Design benefits that are sufficient to meet real needs – especially those that most concern women, such as care – and ensure they are accessible to all, including the self-employed and those in highly-feminized sectors and occupations, in order to reduce gender gaps in income security (Razavi et al. 2024).
- **Build gender-responsive social protection systems** that meet the realities of women's work patterns and recognize time spent out of paid employment. Social protection systems should value societal contributions made during periods of life transitions for both women and men, including periods outside the labour force and career breaks to care for families (for example, through care credits in pension schemes or cash-for-care benefits), and remove barriers to restoring missed contributions. Transitioning from employer liability approaches for maternity, paternity, sickness, employment injury and unemployment benefits avoids discriminatory effects for women and other carers and generates more equitable results. Design systems that can quickly scale and adjust to crises or changing needs, using innovative tools to reach those in need (Razavi et al. 2024).
- **Ensure comprehensive care across the life course**: Care leave policies and services, and associated labour protections and benefits, should address all types of care needs – beyond just maternity – throughout an individual's life, including paternity, parental leave, childcare and long-term care (ILO 2022e; Razavi et al. 2024).
- **Ensure care is accessible, affordable and high-quality**: Care leave, benefits and services must be well-designed, publicly funded, widely available and meet quality standards to support both families and gender equality in the labour market (ILO 2022e).
- **Promote men's involvement in care**: Design incentives that encourage men to share household and care responsibilities and enter care-related occupations, thereby helping to reduce gender gaps in unpaid work, reduce occupational segregation and support a more equal society (ILO 2022e). Care services should be anchored in a highly valued, qualified and increasingly diverse workforce, with guaranteed access to fundamental principles and rights at work, labour protection and social security, as well as adequate working conditions and pay.

18 Of relevance:
Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102);
Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183);
Social Protection Floors Recommendations, 2012 (No. 202);
Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204);
Resolution concerning a global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis (2021).

- Promote the transition from the informal to the formal economy: This requires integrated strategies that address decent work deficits, particularly for women and groups in vulnerable situations. Key elements include extending social security, improving legal recognition of informal workers, providing high-quality care services, and enabling access to skills, finance and markets in line with ILO Recommendation No. 204. Formalization is not merely a legal process but a pathway to equality, inclusion and sustainable economic development.

Snapshots of practice

In **Anand District in India's Gujarat State**, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is supporting women to access social protection, showing how this can directly improve the earnings of women in the informal economy. Through its network of community-run childcare centres, SEWA has enabled women agricultural workers – particularly in the tobacco sector – to remain in paid employment by reducing the burden of unpaid care work. With safe, affordable childcare available throughout the working day, many women have been able to work longer hours or take on more consistent jobs, leading to increased and more stable incomes. SEWA has also helped women gain legal recognition through worker identity cards endorsed by employers and local authorities. This formal acknowledgment has improved women's bargaining power and, in many cases, led to higher wages. Additionally, by organizing self-help groups and improving access to microcredit, SEWA has reduced women's reliance on high-interest informal loans, allowing them to retain more of their earnings and invest in small enterprises (ILO 2024h).

In **Mexico**, the Women's Welfare Pension is a new social protection initiative designed to enhance the economic independence and well-being of women aged 60 to 64. It provides formal recognition of the significant, often unpaid contributions women have made through care work, domestic responsibilities and community engagement – roles that have historically gone unacknowledged in economic policy. This programme recognizes the multiple burdens that many women have carried throughout their lives – combining paid employment, domestic labour and caregiving responsibilities – frequently without access to contributory social security mechanisms. Beginning in 2025, eligible women will receive a bi-monthly transfer of 3,000 pesos. Upon reaching the age of 65, they will automatically transition to the Welfare Pension for Older Adults, ensuring continuity of support (Mexico, Government of Mexico, n.d.).

In the **Republic of Moldova**, childcare provision was reformed in 2022 to expand coverage to children below 3 years of age through alternative services. New legislation improved care leave policies and introduced three private childcare options: (i) work-based services; (ii) home-based nurseries; and (iii) individual nanny care. The reform aimed to formalize informal providers, such as nannies, and establish quality and safety standards. It also included incentives for employers to set up childcare centres for their staff (ILO 2025d).

In **Namibia**, all employed women earning a basic wage are entitled to paid maternity leave under the national social insurance scheme (maternity, sickness and death) fund managed by the Social Security Commission. Financed by a 1.8 per cent wage contribution – shared equally by employers and workers – the scheme offers 100 per cent wage replacement up to 12 weeks for eligible women with at least six months of contributions. Self-employed individuals can opt in by paying the full contribution.

In the **Republic of Korea**, long-term care insurance is mandatory, and provides benefits for individuals aged 65+ and for younger people with serious conditions. It also offers a wide range of services, such as home and institutional care, as well as cash benefits to trained family caregivers, helping reduce unpaid care work – often carried out by women (Tessier, De Wulf and Momose 2022; Razavi et al. 2024).

Oman's introduction of paid paternity leave under the Social Protection Law (Royal Decree No. 52/2023) represents a significant advancement in recognizing and supporting men's role in caregiving. As of 2024, all employed fathers – both Omani and non-Omani – are entitled to seven days of fully paid, job-protected paternity leave financed through social insurance. This policy enables fathers to be present during the critical early days of their child's life and promotes a more balanced redistribution of care responsibilities between women and men, which is essential for achieving gender equality in both family and work life.

Romania has made significant progress in strengthening its social protection system. In 2024, it reformed minimum-income benefits, substantially increasing coverage and tripling total spending. The Government has also advanced national strategies for long-term care, disability, homelessness and Roma inclusion – focusing on greater central co-financing to local authorities, improved coordination, digitalization, and enhanced prevention and activation measures. To support gender equality in the labour market, Romania implemented the EU Work–Life Balance Directive in 2023, doubling the non-transferable parental leave period for fathers from one to two months. Access to early childhood education has also expanded, with compulsory schooling now starting at age four, updated curricula and increased central funding. In 2023, a major pension reform (Law No. 360/2023) was adopted, equalizing the retirement age between men and women, indexing it to life expectancy and improving benefit progressivity. The reform raised current and future pensions while maintaining long-term financial sustainability (OECD 2025a).

Sweden pioneered paid parental leave for both parents in 1974 – financed through a universal parental insurance – with the view to promoting gender equality and responding to labour demands. The policy expanded over time, and in 1995, a non-transferable month for each parent was introduced, boosting fathers' involvement in childcare. By 2017, only 18 per cent of fathers had not taken any leave; by 2019, 20 per cent of couples shared leave equally. The other Nordic countries – **Norway**, **Iceland**, **Denmark**, and **Finland** – followed with similar policies to support shared caregiving and work–life balance. Reserved, non-transferable leave for fathers, introduced in the late 1990s, further boosted men's participation and helped shift societal attitudes towards caregiving (ILO 2025e).

11

Tackling gender stereotypes in society and at work

Why it matters

Gender stereotypes are socially constructed and often shape expectations, opportunities and career outcomes from early on, guiding girls and boys towards different study choices, careers and workplace behaviours, reinforcing both horizontal and vertical segregation. Even though women have achieved important educational attainments, they still lag behind in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields where the most in-demand and highest paying jobs are found. As a result of occupational segregation, women are often overrepresented in lower-paid fields like education and care and underrepresented in higher-paid sectors – contributing to the gender pay gap (ILO 2019).

Gender stereotypes also influence workplace perceptions and expectations, at times disadvantaging women in hiring, promotions, task assignments and performance evaluations. This creates a cycle where men may receive more rewards and advancement, widening the pay gap (ILO 2008). Additionally, societal expectations around parental roles and caregiving still place primary responsibilities on women, impacting their professional choices and often leading to reduced worked hours and slower career progression (ILO 2024e).

Guiding principles and practical steps

- **Recognition of gender stereotypes as structural:** The gender pay gap reflects deeply rooted gender stereotypes and biases embedded in social norms and institutional practices. Addressing these issues requires a multi-layered approach, guided by Convention No. 111, that supports tackling inequality at the societal, institutional, legal and interpersonal levels.

- **Early intervention and education choices:** Stereotypes begin early, often shaped by parental expectations (Ronchi and Smith 2021). Interventions in primary education and parental engagement are vital to breaking perceptions of roles and professions shaped by gender norms. These stereotypes also affect both the type (academic versus vocational) and field of study individuals undertake, with women underrepresented in high-return technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sectors like manufacturing and electrical work (World Bank, UNESCO and ILO 2023). At the same time, it is essential to improve equal pay and recognition in predominantly women-dominated caregiving professions, and to encourage (young) men to enter these occupations (OECD 2025b).

- **Incentives and role models:** Addressing stereotypes requires a combination of financial incentives, like scholarships for women in male-dominated fields, and non-financial measures such as mentorship, coaching and exposure to female role models and leaders – which are proven to improve academic outcomes and retention in STEM (Riley 2024) as well in managerial and leadership positions. Access to information about expected earnings can also help shift study choices (Gassier et al. 2022).

- **Broader societal reforms:** Education systems should promote diverse and inclusive role models. Media and public campaigns can challenge stereotypical portrayals and highlight balanced representations of men and women across professions and caregiving roles. Comprehensive care policies and services, including shared parental leave and accessible childcare, are essential to reducing the motherhood penalty and shifting cultural norms around caregiving (UNESCO 2022)

- **Workplace action:** Employers are well positioned to help address gender stereotypes and biases embedded in workplace regulations and practices. Effective measures include reviewing hiring, promotion and pay processes for bias; implementing structured and transparent procedures; and tracking gender-disaggregated data – practices many employers have long embraced. Regular pay audits and increased transparency further promote fairness. Additionally, ongoing unconscious bias training, inclusive leadership development and flexible career pathways are essential to levelling the playing field. Supporting women in male-dominated fields through mentorship and active allyship also helps dismantle gender stereotypes and ultimately reduces occupational segregation (ILO 2019).

Snapshots of practice

In **Australia**, the organization Our Watch offers practical tools for parents to promote gender equality and fight gender-based violence. The website offers a range of resources, including informative articles, actionable tips and discussion prompts, organized to explain the concept of gender stereotypes and their impact; guide parents through actions they can take to reduce the presence and influence of gender stereotypes in everyday life; and provide practical advice for parents to address gender stereotypes at home (Brussino and McBrien 2022).

In **Québec, Canada**, primary schools are required to teach students how to recognize gender stereotypes in society and media and to understand their impact on identity formation. Similar efforts include reviewing educational materials[19] to promote gender equality and increasing the visibility of women in non-traditional roles. Parental engagement is equally important (Brussino and McBrien 2022).

In **Türkiye**, Karsan – a commercial vehicle manufacturer – partnered with local authorities in Bursa and the ILO (with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) to launch an Electric Vehicles Laboratory. At least 50 per cent of trainees are women, promoting female participation in tech-focused vocational training. Graduates receive internship and job placement opportunities, with some women also receiving scholarships. The programme includes awareness-raising on equality and violence and harassment to foster a supportive learning environment.

Addressing gender stereotypes through media and public campaigns

Germany's Equal Pay Day Campaign: Led by BPW Germany with government support, Germany's Equal Pay Day raises awareness of the gender pay gap through public engagement and policy dialogue. In 2025, the campaign focused on pay transparency under the motto "Because it's worth it – Pay Transparency Now!", aligning with the upcoming transposition of the EU Pay Transparency Directive (see Chapter 4 above). Activities included expert events, public outreach and educational resources aimed at challenging stereotypes and promoting legal reform.

Equal Pay Day in Australia: Coordinated by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), Equal Pay Day in Australia marks how far into the new financial year women must work to earn what men earned the previous year – highlighting the gender pay gap and its systemic causes, such as occupational segregation and undervaluation of women's work. The campaign distinguishes between legally mandated equal pay and the broader gender pay gap. Recent themes like "What's Missing Matters" (2023), "It Doesn't Add Up" (2024) and "How Does Your Employer Measure Up?" (2025) have used creative messaging and tools – such as workplace pay gap calculators – to drive awareness and accountability. The WGEA also offers resources like a Data Explorer dashboard and the *WGEA Action Planning Playbook* to help make the campaign a driver of both public engagement and practical change.

#LevelThePayingField campaign in Ontario, Canada: Led by the Ontario Pay Equity Office, the #LevelThePayingField campaign is a digital initiative aimed at raising awareness of Canada's gender wage gap. Using short videos, infographics, expert interviews and educational tools, it explores the systemic causes and real-world impacts of pay inequality. Its central message – "Progress is being made, and yet the gap persists" – calls for continued action. A key feature is the award-winning *Level the Paying Field* podcast and video series, now in its third season, which examines how gender bias in pop culture – from music and film to sports and gaming – shapes perceptions of women's work and value. Featuring researchers, athletes and artists, the series challenges stereotypes and promotes equity in media and the workplace.

Equal Pay Movement in Brazil is a multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at mobilizing businesses, workers and civil society in a collective commitment to promote equal pay in the workplace. By joining the movement, participants signal their active support for a fairer, more inclusive labour market.

19 UNESCO (2009) provides guidelines on how to design gender-balanced textbooks.

Pay Up Campaign in the United Kingdom: UNITE the Union has actively tackled gender wage inequality, especially among low-wage workers, through its Pay Up campaign and its *Action Pack on Equal Pay*. The guide outlines how to identify and address both direct and indirect pay discrimination, including job segregation and caregiving responsibilities. UNITE has used equal pay audits and job evaluations to expose inequalities – leading to pay increases for women in sectors like food and drink and metal manufacturing. In one case, skilled women were reclassified and received higher pay after being found to earn less than men doing lower-value tasks (Pillinger 2023).

12

Join the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC)

Why it matters

Closing the gender pay gap is a complex challenge that calls for global cooperation and shared solutions. It requires bringing together different voices and experiences to make pay equity a reality for everyone, everywhere. It is with this goal in mind that the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) was established in 2017 by the ILO, UN Women and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

What is EPIC?

EPIC is an initiative driven by the ultimate goal to reduce the gender pay gap and make equal pay for work of equal value a reality across all countries and sectors. EPIC engages with governments, employers, workers and their organizations, the private sector, civil society and academia to take concrete steps to accelerate progress on closing the gender pay gap and achieving pay equity in line with SDG target 8.5. By raising awareness, sharing practical knowledge, promoting innovation and scaling-up effective initiatives, EPIC supports stakeholders at all levels in translating the principle of equal pay for work of equal value into concrete results. EPIC serves as a platform for collaboration, offering tools, evidence and successful strategies to inspire and support national and sectoral efforts towards pay equity. For more information, visit the EPIC website at: https://www.equalpayinternationalcoalition.org/en.

▶ Table 4. Joining EPIC

<table>
<tr><th>Who can join?</th><th>What will you gain by joining EPIC?</th></tr>
<tr><td>Joining EPIC is open to:
▶ governments
▶ employers and employers' organizations
▶ workers' organizations
▶ civil society organizations
▶ academic and research institutions
▶ private sector companies
▶ international and regional organizations</td><td>▶ Access to a global network of experts and practitioners.
▶ Access to knowledge sharing on policies, practices and tools that work.
▶ Access to opportunities to participate in EPIC events, technical exchanges and joint initiatives.
▶ Visibility for your organization's commitment and actions on equal pay.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">How can you join?</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">1. Reach out to at epic@ilo.org to submit an expression of interest, highlighting:
▶ Your entity and its role.
▶ Your entity's commitment to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.
▶ Any relevant initiatives, projects or areas of interest in reducing the gender pay gap.
▶ At what level your engagement will be (for example, sharing knowledge, implementing measures, scaling innovations).
2. Wait for the EPIC Secretariat to follow up to discuss your engagement and next steps.</td></tr>
</table>

13

Looking ahead: Turning guidance into action

This guide was developed in response to the recognition that, despite increased efforts over the past decades, the gender pay gap remains high and persistent, visibly showing that inequality between women and men in the world of work continues to require the attention of policymakers and institutions. While the issue has gained significant momentum, more coordinated and sustained action is urgently needed.

The guide emphasizes that the gender pay gap is complex and deeply rooted in labour market structures, and further sustained by norms and stereotypes grounded in society. Reducing the gender pay gap to a minimum requires a comprehensive, integrated approach involving diverse policies, tools and stakeholders. As societies and workplaces evolve, so too must the strategies that aim to reduce gender inequalities in the world of work. Approaches must adapt to reflect new forms of work and social structures as well as emerging inequalities and new opportunities offered by the fast-evolving digitalization and technologies both within and outside of the labour market. This guide aims to highlight key areas of evolution, such as improved measurement methods and tools; greater recognition of the role of wage policies, social protection and care policies; and a deeper understanding of discrimination. The gender pay gap not only reinforces gender inequality in today's workforce, but also has long-term effects beyond the workplace – contributing to future gender pension gaps and deepening inequality among older generations.

Now is the time for action. Governments, employers, workers' organizations and other stakeholders must act with renewed commitment. By investing in data and transparency, strengthening institutions (especially care systems), fostering inclusive dialogue and joining EPIC, real change can be a reality.

This guide is a living document. The ILO welcomes contributions, insights and good practices at gedi@ilo.org.

References

ABI (Associazione Bancaria Italiana). 2023. "National Collective Bargaining". https://www.abi.it/en/le-persone/i-contratti-nazionali/.

ACTU (Australian Council of Trade Unions). 2024. "Press Release on Christmas Pay Rise for 16,000 Early Childhood Educators", 14 November 2024. https://www.actu.org.au/media-release/christmas-pay-rise-for-16000-early-childhood-educators/.

AEU (Australian Education Union). 2025. "Press Release on Negotiating for Better Wages across the Early Childhood Sector", 24 February 2025. https://news.aeuvic.asn.au/negotiating-to-win-in-early-childhood/.

Ananian, Sevane, and Giulia Dellaferrera. 2024. "A Study on the Employment and Wage Outcomes of People with Disabilities", ILO Working Paper No. 124. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/WP124_web.pdf.

Australia, Fair Work Commission. n.d. "Gender-based Undervaluation – Priority Awards Review". https://www.fwc.gov.au/hearings-decisions/major-cases/gender-undervaluation-priority-awards-review.

Baker, Michael, Yosh Halberstam, Kory Kroft, Alexandre Mas and Derek Messacar. 2023. "Pay Transparency and the Gender Gap". *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 15 (2): 157–183.

Bargain, Olivier, Karina Doorley and Philippe Van Kerm. 2019. "Minimum Wages and the Gender GAP in Pay: New Evidence from the United Kingdom and Ireland". *Review of Income and Wealth* 65 (3): 514–539. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/roiw.12384.

Bennedsen, Morten, Birthe Larsen and Jiayi Wei. 2023. "Gender Wage Transparency and the Gender Pay Gap: A Survey". *Journal of Economic Surveys* 37 (5): 1743–1777. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/joes.12545.

Bessen, James, Erich Denk and Chen Meng. 2024. "Perpetuating Wage Inequality: Evidence from Salary History Bans". *The Journal of Economic Inequality* 22 (3): 709–733. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10888-023-09610-9.

Böheim, René, and Sarah Gust. 2021. "The Austrian Pay Transparency Law and the Gender Wage Gap", IZA Discussion Paper No. 14206. https://docs.iza.org/dp14206.pdf.

Brussino, Ottavia, and Jody McBrien. 2022. "Gender Stereotypes in Education: Policies and Practices to Address Gender Stereotyping across OECD Education Systems", OECD Education Working Paper No. 271. https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2022/05/gender-stereotypes-in-education_a6f2df0e/a46ae056-en.pdf.

Canada, Canadian Human Rights Commission. 2019. *Promising Practices for Forming a Pay Equity Committee*. https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/sites/default/files/documents/promising-practices-for-forming-a-pay-equity-committee.pdf.

Canada, Ontario Pay Equity Office. 2024. *Understanding the Gender Pension Gap in Canada*. https://payequity.gov.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/PEO_Understanding-the-Gender-Pension-Gap-in-Canada-EN-1.pdf.

Duchini, Emma, Stefania Simion and Arthur Turrell. 2020. "Pay Transparency and Cracks in the Glass Ceiling", Warwick Economics Research Paper Series No. 1311. https://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/id/eprint/144528/1/WRAP-pay-transparency-cracks-glass-ceiling-Duchini-2020.pdf.

Education International. 2013. "Ghana: A 2012 EI Country Study Report". https://www.ei-ie.org/en/item/21246%3Aghana-a-2012-ei-country-study-report.

EPIC (Equal Pay International Coalition). 2025. "Press Release on Brazil Advances Equal Pay Agenda with Strong Legislative Framework and New Initiatives in 2025", 4 April 2025. https://www.equalpayinternationalcoalition.org/en/whats_new/brazil-advances-equal-pay-agenda-strong-legislative-framework-and-new-initiatives-2025.

Eurostat. 2021. "Closing the Gender Pension Gap?". Eurostat News (blog). 3 February 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20210203-1.

Gassier, Marine, Rachael S. Pierotti, Léa Rouanet and Lacina Traore. 2022. "Addressing Gender-Based Occupational Segregation: Experimental Evidence from the Republic of Congo", World Bank Gender Innovation Lab Brief. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/352141647327119360/pdf/Addressing-Gender-Based-Occupational-Segregation-Experimental-Evidence-from-the-Republic-of-Congo.pdf.

Hayter, Susan, and Malena Bastida. 2024. "Collective Agreements: Advancing a Transformation Agenda for Gender Equality?". In Making and Breaking Gender Inequalities in Work, edited by Mia Römmar and Susan Hayter. 137–159. Cheltenham and Geneva: Edward Elgar and ILO. https://www.elgaronline.com/edcollbook-oa/book/9781035337477/9781035337477.xml.

ILO. 2008. *Promoting Equity: Gender-neutral Job Evaluation for Equal Pay – A Step-by-Step Guide*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_norm/%40declaration/documents/publication/wcms_122372.pdf.

———. 2011. *General Survey concerning Social Security Instruments in Light of the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization*. ILC.100/III/1B. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_norm/%40relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_152602.pdf.

———. 2012. *Giving Globalization a Human Face: General Survey on the Fundamental Conventions concerning Rights at Work in Light of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008*. ILC.101/III/1B. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_norm/%40relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_174846.pdf.

———. 2013. *Equal Pay: An Introductory Guide*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/%40publ/documents/publication/wcms_216695.pdf.

———. 2017. "Economic Impacts of Reducing the Gender Gap", What Works Research Brief No. 10. https://www.ilo.org/media/422531/download.

———. 2018a. *Global Wage Report 2018/19: What Lies behind Gender Pay Gaps*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_650553.pdf.

———. 2018b. *Minimum Wage Policy Guide: A Summary*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/%40publ/documents/publication/wcms_570376.pdf.

———. 2018c. *Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_633135.pdf.

———. 2019. *A Quantum Leap for Gender Equality: For a Better Future of Work for All*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/%40publ/documents/publication/wcms_674831.pdf.

———. 2020. *Global Wage Report 2020–21: Wages and Minimum Wages in the Time of COVID-19*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_762534.pdf.

———. 2021a. *Making Decent Work a Reality for Domestic Workers: Progress and Prospects Ten Years after the Adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_protect/%40protrav/%40travail/documents/publication/wcms_802551.pdf.

———. 2021b. *Extending Social Security to Workers in the Informal Economy: Lessons from International Experience*, second edition. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_protect/%40soc_sec/documents/publication/wcms_749431.pdf.

———. 2022a. *Pay Transparency Legislation: Implications for Employers' and Workers' Organizations*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_protect/%40protrav/%40travail/documents/publication/wcms_849209.pdf.

———. 2022b. *Global Wage Report 2022–23: The Impact of Inflation and COVID-19 on Wages and Purchasing Power*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_protect/%40protrav/%40travail/documents/publication/wcms_862569.pdf.

———. 2022c. *Social Dialogue Report 2022: Collective Bargaining for an Inclusive, Sustainable and Resilient Recovery*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/%40publ/documents/publication/wcms_842807.pdf.

———. 2022d. *Guidelines on General Principles of Labour Inspection*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_dialogue/%40lab_admin/documents/genericdocument/wcms_844153.pdf.

———. 2022e. *Care at Work: Investing in Care Leave and Services for a More Gender Equal World of Work*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_838653.pdf.

———. 2023a. *A Review of Wage Setting through Collective Bargaining*. h ttps://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_protect/%40protrav/%40travail/documents/publication/wcms_883353.pdf.

———. 2023b. *Labour Inspection Guide in Preventing and Handling Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Violence in the Workplace*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/Gender%20Sensitive%20Labour%20Inspection%20Guide_EN.pdf.

———. 2023c. "Aligning Skills Development and National Social Protection Systems", Global Accelerator Discussion Paper. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_protect/%40soc_sec/documents/publication/wcms_900970.pdf.

———. 2023d. *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Update*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_protect/%40protrav/%40travail/documents/publication/wcms_869188.pdf.

———. 2024a. *Global Wage Report 2024–25: Is Wage Inequality Decreasing Globally?* https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/GWR-2024_Layout_E_RGB_Web.pdf.

———. 2024b. *Report of the Meeting of Experts on Wage Policies, including Living Wages (Geneva, 19–23 February 2024)*. GB.350/POL/1. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_norm/%40relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_915989.pdf.

———. 2024c. *Meeting of Experts on Wage Policies, including Living Wages: Conclusions*. MEWPLW/2024/7. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_norm/%40relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_918126.pdf.

———. 2024d. Resolution concerning the third recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work. ILC.112/Resolution IV. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/ILC112-Resolution%20IV-%7BRELMEETINGS-240620-001%7D-Web-EN.pdf.

———. 2024e. "The Impact of Care Responsibilities on Women's Labour Force Participation", ILO Brief, October 2024. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/GEDI-STAT%20brief_formatted_28.10.24_final.pdf.

———. 2024f. *World Social Protection Report 2024–26: Universal Social Protection for Climate Action and a Just Transition*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/WSPR_2024_EN_WEB_1.pdf.

———. 2024g. Resolution concerning decent work and the care economy. ILC.112/Resolution V. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/ILC112-Resolution%20V-%7BRELMEETINGS-240620-001%7D-Web-EN_0.pdf.

———. 2024h. "Press Release on SEWA Showcases Gender Equity through Formalization in Gujarat", 6 September 2024. https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/sewa-showcases-gender-equity-through-formalization-gujarat.

———. 2025a. Resolution concerning the general discussion on addressing informality and promoting the transition to formality for decent work, ILC.113/Resolution IV. https://www.ilo.org/resource/record-decisions/resolution-concerning-general-discussion-addressing-informality-and.

———. 2025b. "Press Release on ILO Study Paves Way for Revising Wages of Egypt's Jasmine Pickers", 22 July 2025. https://www.ilo.org/resource/article/ilo-study-paves-way-revising-wages-egypt%E2%80%99s-jasmine-pickers-0.

———. 2025c. *Innovative Approaches to Addressing Informality and Promoting the Transition to Formality for Decent Work*. ILC.113/Report VI. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/ILC113-VI-AP-FORMALIZATION-%5B250131-003%5D-Web-EN.pdf.

———. 2025d. *Programme to Support the Transition to the Labour Market of Women on Childcare Leave*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/NEW_Report%20A4%20%28ILO%29%20Transition%20to%20the%20labour%20market%20of%20women%20on%20childcare%20leave%20in%20RM%20%28web%29%208%2B.pdf.

———. 2025e. "Closing the Gender Gap in Paid Parental Leaves: Better Parental Leaves for a More Caring World of Work", ILO Care Economy Brief No. 1. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-10/Closing%20the%20gender%20gap%20in%20paid%20parental%20leaves.pdf.

———. n.d. "What Are Gender-responsive Employment Policies?". https://www.ilo.org/resource/article/what-are-gender-responsive-employment-policies.

ILO and OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights). 2025. "Right to Social Security", Fact Sheet No. 39. https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/OHCHR-ILO-Fact-Sheet-39-Right-to-Social-Security.pdf.

IndustriAll. 2017. "Press Release on Cleaners in Mauritius Gain Hard-Earned Victory", 3 November 2017. https://www.industriall-union.org/cleaners-in-mauritius-gain-hard-earned-victory.

IOE (International Organization of Employers). 2023. "Italy: Modalities and Criteria to Benefit from the Contribution Exemption for Private Companies that Achieve Gender Equality Certification". *Industrial Relation and Labour Law Newsletter*, February 2022. https://industrialrelationsnews.ioe-emp.org/news/article/italy-modalities-and-criteria-to-benefit-from-the-contribution-exemption-for-private-companies-that-achieve-gender-equality-certification.

ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation). 2023. "Trade Union Action to Promote Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value", ITUC Policy Brief. https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/en__equal_pay_v5.pdf?30104/763329f1e69bfa3ec43729e5e1deb9ecaae59531f98e9a9fb8df1058388f4ecd.

James, Nicola. 2024. "Number of Companies Failing to Report Gender Pay Gap Dropped in Past Year by 71%". *Littler Insights* (blog). 19 July 2024. https://littler.co.uk/insights/number-of-companies-failing-to-report-gender-pay-gap-dropped-in-past-year-by-71.

Lane, Stephanie. 2018. "The Scary Facts behind the Gender Pension Gap". *World Economic Forum: The Agenda Weekly* (blog). 7 March 2018. https://www.weforum.org/stories/2018/03/retired-women-less-money-pensions-than-men/.

Mexico, Government of Mexico. n.d. "Pensión Mujeres Bienestar". https://programasparaelbienestar.gob.mx/pension-mujeres-bienestar/.

OECD (Organisation for Economic-Co-operation and Development). 2021a. *Pay Transparency Tools to Close the Gender Wage Gap*. https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2021/11/pay-transparency-tools-to-close-the-gender-wage-gap_38af4a31/eba5b91d-en.pdf.

———. 2021b. *Towards Improved Retirement Savings Outcomes for Women*. https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2021/03/towards-improved-retirement-savings-outcomes-for-women_8c6b33e1/f7b48808-en.pdf.

———. 2023. *Reporting Gender Pay Gaps in OECD Countries: Guidance for Pay Transparency Implementation, Monitoring and Reform*. https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2023/06/reporting-gender-pay-gaps-in-oecd-countries_82110f1a/ea13aa68-en.pdf.

———. 2025a. *OECD Reviews of Labour Market and Social Policies: Romania 2025*. https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2025/06/oecd-reviews-of-labour-market-and-social-policies-romania-2025_e63230e7/f0532908-en.pdf.

———. 2025b. "Gender Gaps in Paid and Unpaid Work Persist", OECD Policy Brief, 15 September 2025. https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2025/09/gender-gaps-in-paid-and-unpaid-work-persist_de465299/25a6c5dc-en.pdf.

Pillinger, Jane. 2023. *Pay Equity Toolkit*. IndustriAll Global Union. https://admin.industriall-union.org/sites/default/files/uploads/images/publications/GenderPayGap/UPDATED/englishpayequity.pdf.

Portugal, ACT (Authority on Working Conditions). 2025. "Press release on Balanço das diferenças remuneratórias entre mulheres e homens | Ação inspetiva nacional, nova notificação da ACT", 7 January 2025. https://portal.act.gov.pt/pages/noticia.aspx?ID=1584.

Psico-smart. 2024. "Salary Transparency: Effects on Employee Morale and Organizational Trust". Psico-smart Blog (blog). 28 August 2024. https://blogs.psico-smart.com/blog-salary-transparency-effects-on-employee-morale-and-organizational-trust-168300.

Razavi, Shahra, Ian Orton, Christina Behrendt, Lou Tessier, Veronika Wodsak, Krithi Dakshina Ramaswamy and Alix Machiels. 2024. "Making social Protection Work for Gender Equality: What Does It Look Like? How Do We Get There?", ILO Working paper No. 132. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/wp132.pdf.

Riley, Emma. 2024. "Role Models in Movies: The Impact of Queen of Katwe on Students' Educational Attainment". *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 106 (2): 334–351. https://direct.mit.edu/rest/article/106/2/334/109267/Role-Models-in-Movies-The-Impact-of-Queen-of-Katwe.

Ronchi, Maddalena, and Nina Smith. 2021. "Daddy's Girl: Daughters, Managerial Decisions, and Gender Inequality", Job Market Paper, 27 October 2021. https://csef.it/wp-content/uploads/M_Ronchi.pdf.

Rubery, Jill. 2003. "Pay Equity, Minimum Wage and Equality at Work", ILO InFocus Programme Working Paper No. 19. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_norm/%40declaration/documents/publication/wcms_decl_wp_20_en.pdf.

Smith-Vidal, Sabine, and Laetitia De Pelet. 2024 "Gender Equality at Work: Where Does France Stand?". *Morgan Lewis Lawflash* (blog). 5 April 2024. https://www.morganlewis.com/pubs/2024/04/gender-equality-at-work-where-does-france-stand.

Spain, Ministry of Equality. 2022. *Guía técnica para la realización de Auditorías Retributivas con perspectiva de género*. https://www.igualdadenlaempresa.es/asesoramiento/herramientas-igualdad/docs/guia_AR_GENERO.pdf.

Stofberg, Rosanna, Mark Bussin and Calvin M. Mabaso. 2022. "Pay Transparency, Job Turnover Intentions and the Mediating Role of Perceived Organizational Support and Organizational Justice". *Employee Relations* 44 (7): 162–182. https://www.emerald.com/er/article-pdf/44/7/162/612115/er-02-2022-0077.pdf.

Tessier, Lou, Nathalie De Wulf and Yuta Momose. 2022. "Long-term Care in the Context of Population Ageing: What Role for Social Protection Policies?". International Social Security Review 75 (3–4): 19–45. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/issr.12306.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). 2009. *Promoting Gender Equality through Textbooks: A Methodological Guide*. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000158897_eng.

———. 2022. "#HerEducationOurFuture #BreakTheBias: Challenging Gender Bias and Stereotypes in and through Education – The Latest Facts on Gender Equality in Education", Factsheet. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380827.

Unison. 2018. “Job Evaluation Model Role Profiles”. https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2018/06/Job-Evaluation-Model-Role-Profiles.pdf.

World Bank, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and ILO. 2023. *Building Better Formal TVET Systems: Principles and Practice in Low- and Middle-Income Countries*. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099071123130516870/pdf/P175566037a5e20650a657068b5152205bf.pdf.

Annex
Comparing a residential social care worker and an ITC Support staff using the point-factor method

Profession	Residential Social Care Worker		ITC Support 1	
Purpose of the role	▶ Work as part of a multi-disciplinary team around at risk children/service users in a residential setting; those placed in the looked after system; those in respite situations. ▶ Contribute to the assessment, planning and review process of residential placement plans, behaviour management plans, care plans or risk assessments ▶ Responsible for providing a range of services to children, people and families within agreed care plans		▶ To contribute to the delivery of an effective ICT support service throughout the school to respond to identified need, ensure continuity of service and achieve planned reporting objectives and deadlines.	
Sub-factor	**Score (0–100)**	**Rationale**	**Score (0–100)**	**Rationale**
Knowledge	**60**	Knowledge of the procedures for a range of tasks, some of which are relatively complex	**60**	Requires a range of technical ICT knowledge/ skills with hardware and software to support ICT services. Knowledge and skills equivalent to national qualifications level 3
Mental skills	**39**	Interpret information or situations; solve varied problems or develop solutions or plans over the short term	**39**	Skills for analysis of a variety of ICT issues; monitors and reports on system integrity and security
Interpersonal and communi-cation skills	**52**	Developed interpersonal caring or training skills to meet clients' needs; developed advisory, guiding, negotiating or persuasive skills to encourage others to adopt a partic-ular course of action; exchanging orally or in writing sensitive information with a range of audiences	**26**	Communicates with staff and pupils as part of ICT technical support to solve issues and provide IT-related information and assistance
Physical skills	**26**	Dexterity, coordination or sensory skills; some demand for precision	**26**	Keyboard skills for data processing
Initiative and independence	**8**	Working within recognized procedures, some room for initiative; may involve responding independently to unexpected problems and situations	**26**	Makes decisions on routine issues relating to system procedures and issues. More difficult issues referred upwards
Physical demands	**30**	Light physical effort, limited requirements for standing, walking	**20**	Working sometimes in confined and awkward spaces with short periods of greater effort, for example, moving IT equipment.
Mental demands	**30**	Medium periods of concentrated mental attention; lengthy periods of concentrated sensory attention	**20**	Work in IT support is regularly interrupted, although this does not normally require switching from one activity to another. Short periods of concentrated mental attention
Emotional demands	**40**	Deal with vulnerability and challenging behaviours; regular significant emotional effort	**10**	Exposure to emotionally demanding situations is infrequent
Responsibility for people	**39**	Considerable direct impact on the well-being of individual, or groups of, people through an assessment of needs and implementation of appropriate care or welfare	**26**	Provides internal ICT user support service
Responsibility for supervision	**13**	Limited or no direct responsibility for other staff	**13**	May demonstrate own duties to new or less experienced staff

Sub-factor	Score (0–100)	Rationale	Score (0–100)	Rationale
Responsibility for financial resources	**13**	Limited or no direct responsibility for financial resources	**13**	No financial responsibili-ties
Responsibility for physical resources	**26**	Handling and processing of manual or computerized information	**39**	Responsible for sup-porting and maintaining ICT systems and services
Working conditions	**30**	Considerable exposure to people-related behaviours, including verbal or physical aggression	**10**	Work normally in an office or similar environment
TOTAL SCORE	**406**		**328**	

Simplified from Unison 2018.

This comparison highlights that the primary value drivers for residential social care workers are their social and interpersonal skills, along with the emotional demands of the role. By contrast, the value of ITC support staff is primarily driven by technical knowledge and cognitive skills. While care-related roles often score highly when assessed fairly using compensable factors, they are frequently paid less than STEM-related jobs. This discrepancy persists despite the fact that, even though many STEM roles require more formal qualifications, they involve fewer physical or emotional demands and have a less direct impact on human well-being.

ILO Headquarters:

Route des Morillons 4
CH-1211, Geneva 22
Switzerland

www.ilo.org

Funded by

MINISTÈRE
DU TRAVAIL
ET DES SOLIDARITÉS
Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité