



► ILO Brief

October 2023

The benefits of investing in transformative childcare policy packages towards gender equality and social justice

Key highlights

- The widespread call for public investment in the care economy is grounded in multiple socio-economic benefits – including job generation with decent work; the reduction of intersecting inequalities, including gender inequalities; and improvements in health and well-being across populations – but also in **the high potential return on investment for economies and societies**.
- Progress in closing legal and implementation gaps in care leave policies and services has not been sufficient as, **currently, there exists a global average childcare policy gap of 4.2 years**, which acts as a structural barrier in the world of work, especially for women.
- It is estimated that **every dollar invested in closing the childcare policy gap could result in an average increase of US\$3.76 in global GDP by 2035**. Regional and income group ROI estimates show that closing the childcare policy gap yields benefits for everyone, everywhere.
- The investment benefit is not limited to the potential return on investment but also to the benefits related to gender equality. The investment in childcare-related leave and early childhood care and education (ECCE) services could **increase women's employment rate from a global average of 46.2 per cent in 2019 to 56.5 per cent in 2035, and reduce the global gender gap in monthly earnings from 20.1 per cent in 2019 to 8.0 per cent in 2035**.

► Persisting childcare policy gaps hamper the transformative agenda for gender equality and non-discrimination at work

Investing in care policies yields multiple benefits

The call for increased investments in the care economy is high on the international agenda (UN 2021a; UN 2021b; ILO 2021a; ILO 2019a). Recently, these demands have been backed by an increasing body of evidence showing that closing persisting gaps in care policies – in both law and practice – would not only accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, but also bring about socio-economic benefits in terms of job generation with decent work, reduction of gender and other

inequalities, and improvements in health and well-being (Ilkharacan et al. 2015; ITUC 2023; ITUC 2022; De Henau et al. 2016; ILO 2022a; ILO and UN Women 2021; ILO 2018a; UN ECLAC 2022; UN Women 2015).

There is a strong employment generation case for investing in integrated and transformative care policy packages. Investing in childcare-related leave (maternity, paternity and parental leave), breastfeeding breaks, early childhood care and education (ECCE) and long-term care services would generate 280 million jobs by 2030 and a further 19 million by 2035, for a total of 299 million jobs

(ILO 2022a; De Henau 2022). This job creation potential by 2035 would be driven by 96 million direct jobs in childcare, 136 million direct jobs in long-term care, and 67 million indirect jobs in non-care sectors. About 1.5 per cent of global GDP (without considering the influx of taxes resulting from increased formal employment) would be required to provide universal childcare of high-quality, over and above the current public spending of 0.3 per cent of global GDP.

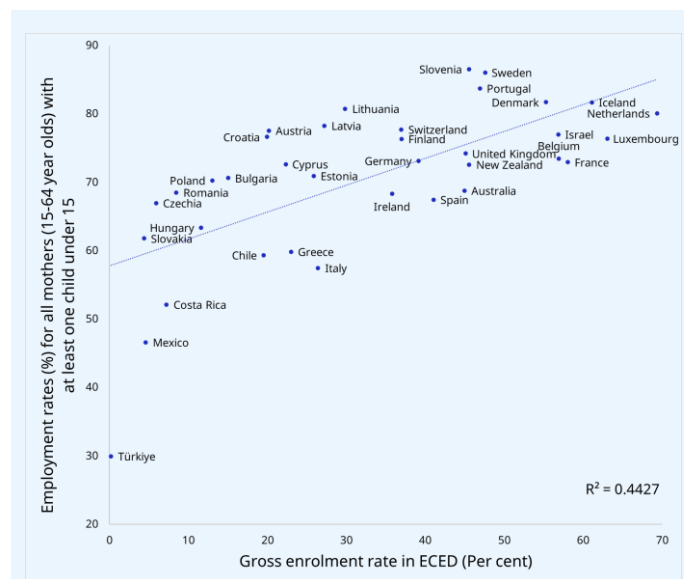
With childcare-related leave (maternity, paternity and parental leave), childcare services are essential elements of gender-transformative care policy packages (ILO 2022a). When designed to take into account the needs of the “care triad” (ILO 2018a) – children, parents (whether in employment or not), and early childhood care and education (ECCE) personnel – they offer multiple benefits by promoting child development, creating decent jobs, reducing parents’ unpaid care work, and promoting women’s employment and income (ILO 2022a; O’Donnell and Lombardi 2021; O’Donnell et al. 2022; UN Women 2019; 2021; Devercelli and Beaton-Day 2020).

Evidence shows a positive correlation between the employment-to-population ratios of women with young children and the number of children aged 0–2 years enrolled in early childhood education and development (ECED) programmes, as presented in figure 1. The presence of childcare services also contributes to reducing the “motherhood pay gap” – that is the gap in earnings between mothers and non-mothers – including through having more women in managerial and leadership positions (ILO 2019b). Children can also have better developmental outcomes when the countries they live in anchor a right to universal ECCE services into national legislation (figure 2).

Building on the data of the ILO Care Policy Investment Simulator (box 1),¹ this brief contributes to this body of evidence and argues that there is a compelling investment case in providing a gender-transformative policy package of childcare-related leave and universal and free ECCE services from birth to the start of mandatory primary education anchored in national law. It highlights the specific challenges that childcare policy gaps pose for parents in the world of work, as well as the benefits that these transformative investments generate in terms of

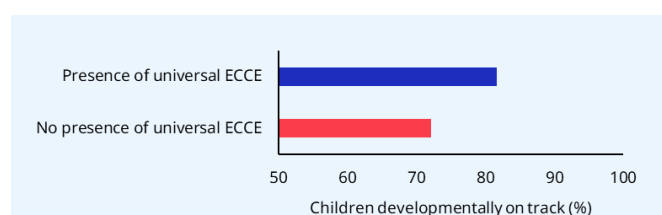
return on investment and women’s employment and earnings benefits. Regional and income-level analyses show that there are benefits worldwide.

► **Figure 1. Employment-to-population ratio of women with children (0–14 years) and gross enrolment rates in ECED programmes in selected countries, latest year with available data**



Note: 36 countries. Source: ILO calculations based on data from OECD Family Database.

► **Figure 2. Share of children developmentally on track by presence of universal statutory ECCE in national legislation, latest year with available data**



Note: 74 countries and territories. Children developmentally on track refers to children aged 36 to 59 months who have achieved the minimum number of milestones expected for their age group in at least three of the following domains: literacy–numeracy, physical development, and social-emotional development and learning, according to a UNICEF evaluation assessment. Source: ILO calculations based on ILO 2022a and UNICEF global databases (2022).

¹ The ILO Care Policy Investment Simulator is based on a macrosimulation study by De Henau (2022), which simulates the annual public investment required to provide adequately paid childcare-related leave and care services and the related employment effects, using input-output multiplier techniques. This work builds on and extends previous work by the ILO on routes towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and implementing social protection systems, including social protection floors (ILO 2018a; ILO 2021b; Bierbaum and Schmitt 2022). Methods and assumptions are also based on previous work by Ilkkaracan and Kim (2019) and De Henau and Himmelweit (2021).

► **Box 1. The ILO Care Policy Investment Simulator**

The ILO Care Policy Investment Simulator is the largest online care policy modelling tool developed to simulate the investment requirements and benefits present in filling national gaps in care services and childcare-related leave. Created to advance the ILO transformative agenda for gender equality and non-discrimination, the Simulator allows users to build tailor-made care policy investment packages for four care policies: (1) childcare-related paid leave; (2) breastfeeding breaks; (3) ECCE services; and (4) long-term care services. Results of the simulations include:

1. the investment requirements of the simulated policy packages;
2. the job generation impact;
3. the reduction in gender employment gaps;
4. the reduction in gender wage gaps; and
5. the return on investment (ROI) of closing the childcare policy gap, that is, the cost-to-benefit ratio of investing in two care policies: childcare-related paid leave policies and ECCE services.

ILO investment parameters are transformative, meaning they were selected to advance equality and promote human and labour rights as the only way forward when investing in the care economy. Hence, they are shaped by international labour standards and aim to provide decent work opportunities and reduce gender-based inequalities, as well as meet care needs.

Source: ILO 2023b; ILO, n.d.-a.

Across the world, the average duration of the childcare policy gap is 4.2 years

Despite the benefits of providing childcare policies for workers with care responsibilities, progress in closing legal and implementation gaps in care leave policies and services has not been sufficient. While legal improvements have been registered in the last decade in some countries, including those that have ratified ILO international labour

standards on maternity protection² and workers with family responsibilities³, major gaps in availability, access, adequacy and quality of leave policies and care services remain (ILO 2023a). Globally, the average duration of statutory paid childcare-related leave (maternity, paternity and parental leave combined) reserved to households is 6.1 months⁴ (or 0.5 years); while the average starting age of free and universal ECCE or mandatory primary school provided in national law is 4.7 years⁵. This legal mismatch results in an average legal “global childcare policy gap” of 4.2 years (ILO 2022b). Over this extensive period, parents lack care policy entitlements, and care needs are solely covered by unpaid care work or by family-paid care solutions, such as reliance on domestic workers who often lack labour and social protections (ILO 2022a).

Globally, 90.3 per cent of actual and potential parents (nearly 3.5 billion people) live in countries with a childcare policy gap. This gap and the number of parents lacking adequate childcare solutions would be even larger if only considering childcare-related leave that was adequately paid (that is, at a rate of at least 67 per cent of previous earnings) and paid by social insurance or public funds, as well as the actual availability of adequate, acceptable and affordable childcare services.

There is great variation in childcare policy gap periods across regions, income groups and countries. By region, Europe and Central Asia has the smallest average gap period, 18.4 months (1.5 years), because parental leave durations and ECCE services are largely available (ILO 2022a). The average gap period is 3.3 years in the Americas, despite the average starting age of free and universal ECCE being 3.6 years, mostly because of short leave provisions (3.2 months) (ILO 2022a). In Asia and the Pacific, the childcare policy gap is 4.4 years, because the region’s relatively longer leave packages (5.3 months) fail to cover the late entitlements to ECCE (4.8 years) (ILO 2022a). In Africa and in the Arab States, the childcare policy gap is almost 6 years, driven by very short leave durations and nearly non-existent ECCE service entitlements. These childcare policy gaps are burdensome for millions of actual and potential parents, who must find

² Maternity Protection Convention (No. 183) and Recommendation (No. 191), 2000.

³ Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156) and Recommendation (No. 165), 1981.

⁴ The average childcare-related leave available to households of 6.1 months is the result of almost 4 months (17 weeks) of paid maternity leave, 0.1 months (3.6 days) of paid paternity leave and 2 months (9 weeks) of paid parental leave. This average duration is based on 176 countries with available data and weighted by the reproductive age population (15–49 years).

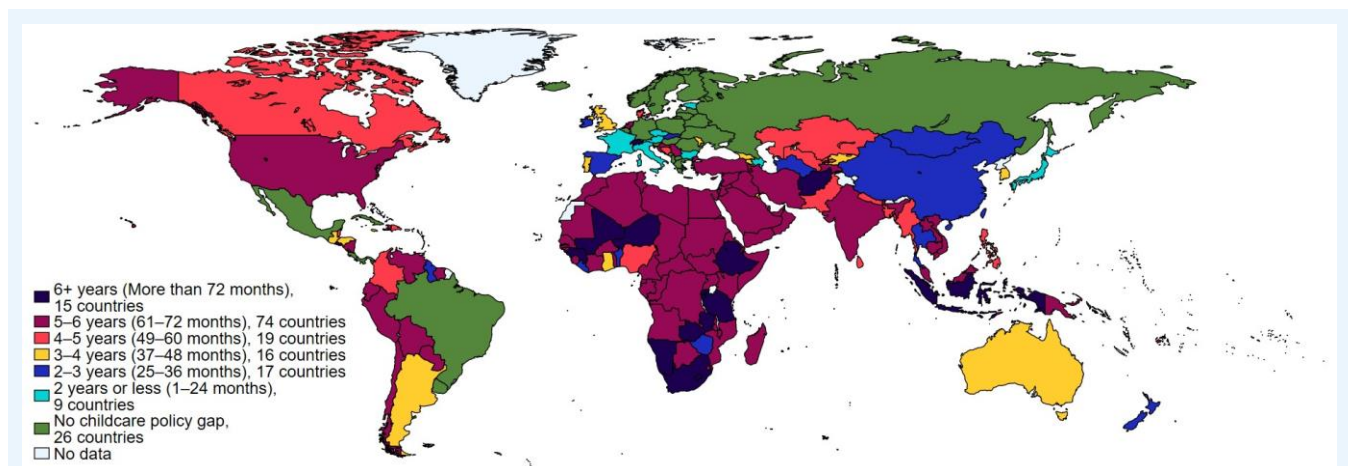
⁵ The average starting age in law of free and universal ECCE or mandatory primary school is based on 176 countries with available data and weighted by the reproductive age population (15–49 years).

their own care solution in the absence of public care policies (ILO 2022a).

The childcare policy gap is more than 5 years in 89 out of 176 countries, with 50.3 per cent of potential parents (1.9 billion) living in these countries. In only 26 out of 176 countries (representing 376 million potential parents) does legislation provide a continuum of statutory childcare provision through leave policies and universal ECCE services. Of these countries, 20 are in Europe and Central Asia and 6 are in the Americas (Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay).⁶ In Norway and Sweden, there is an overlap of a few months between the end of well-paid childcare-related leave (around 15 and 18 months, respectively) and children's entitlement to ECCE (12 months). Similarly, in Slovenia, ECCE entitlements start from the end of childcare-related leave (at around one year). In Mexico, Panama and Uruguay, statutory entitlements to universal and free childcare services start at childbirth, and at three months in Brazil. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Brazil and Uruguay have the highest percentage of coverage for children up to 3 years old, with a coverage rate that is around 30 and 50 per cent for this age range, respectively (ILO 2022b).

The childcare policy gap is a major structural barrier in the world of work for both women and men. Although guaranteeing legal provision does not always make these services universal or affordable in practice, this is an important step. When policies fail to deliver on sustainable and integrated care provision, inequalities at home, work and in society are cemented. This has detrimental impacts on women, children and families across the life course. The longer the care policy gap, the higher the amount of unpaid care work shouldered by parents, in particular mothers, and the more intense the so-called "motherhood penalties" in employment, pay, leadership and pensions, which perpetuate inequalities, poverty and social exclusion (ILO 2019b). Although the gap only assesses legal and not actual provision, it offers an important road map to guide countries in their journey towards strengthening national care policies. Identifying and progressively closing all care policy gaps – during the maternity period, for children, and for adults of working age and in old age who need care or support – through nationally designed and transformative care policy packages is central to investing in the care economy and allowing countries to build forward better (ILO 2022a).

► **Figure 3. Childcare policy gap in years, latest year with available data**



Note: 176 countries and territories. The lines on the map represent approximate border lines and do not imply any judgment on the part of the ILO concerning the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries. Source: ILO, n.d.-b.

⁶ The full list is: Albania, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, Ukraine and Uruguay.

► A positive return on investment (ROI)

Globally, every US\$1 invested in closing the childcare policy gap could result in an average increase of US\$3.76 in GDP by 2035

The investment case for closing the childcare policy gap becomes evident when looking at the return on investment (ROI) results in the new ILO Care Policy Investment Simulator. The ROI is defined as the US\$ increase in GDP per US\$ invested in childcare-related leave and ECCE (ILO, n.d.-a). The ROI estimates the cumulative lifetime earning benefits (labour income) resulting from mothers not opting out of employment prior to their first birth, thanks to the combined effects of childcare-related leave and ECCE policies that close the childcare policy gap. The ROI methodology builds on a macrosimulation of annual public investment requirements and employment benefits in 82 countries, representing 87 per cent of the world's employed population and 94 per cent of the world GDP (De Henau 2022), based on the empirical findings of Kleven et al. (2018; 2019). To determine an ROI estimate, the Simulator calculates the total investment requirements of providing childcare-related leave and ECCE to each child of a typical mother aged 25–54, in particular, 1 year of leave, 2 years of ECED, and of the remaining years of pre-primary until primary school entry. The GDP return is measured as the increase in earnings of mothers throughout their lifetime when a share of their unpaid care work shifts to government responsibility and the gender employment and wage gaps are reduced to just 20 per cent of fathers' earnings, which is based on data from countries with more transformative childcare policies and hence lower motherhood pay penalties (ILO 2023b).

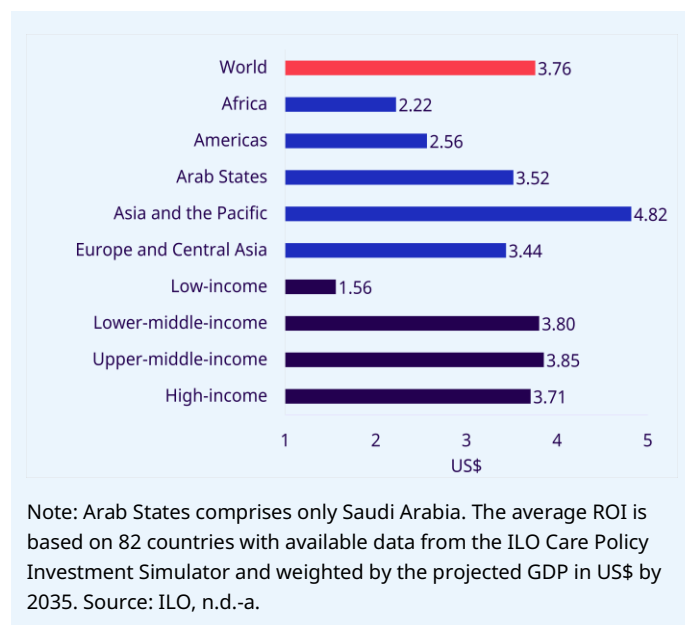
According to the ROI results using ILO default parameters for 82 countries (see Appendix A2 table A.2.1 and ILO 2023b), the ILO estimates that societies across the world could expect a positive economic benefit from an investment in care that provides publicly funded childcare-related leave and universal and free ECCE services. In this analysis, ROI is represented as a ratio, with an ROI value of 1 meaning that the economic benefits, in terms of lifetime earnings regained, exactly offset the total investments in childcare-related leave and ECCE services.

An ROI greater than 1 signifies that economic benefits exceed the total investment. By 2035, it is estimated that the return for every dollar invested in these care policies could translate to a GDP increase of more than US\$2 in 53 countries, while 22 countries could experience between US\$1 and US\$2 return from their investment. Only in 7 out of 82 countries is the ROI estimated to be below 1. Even in these cases, the investment case remains because of the resulting decent work in the care economy, along with improved health, educational, and developmental outcomes for children and more gender equality at work.

Regional and income group ROI estimates show that closing the childcare policy gap yields benefits for everyone, everywhere

Regional and income group analyses show that along with the benefits of meeting care needs, promoting decent work and reducing inequalities globally, most governments and societies – regardless of their income level and national circumstances – can expect to reap economic benefits from investing in closing childcare policy gaps. Figure 4 shows the ROIs anticipated in regions across the world. Across the Africa region, every dollar spent on childcare-related leave and ECCE services by 2035 would be approximately doubled (average ROI of 2.22). In some countries, such as Egypt and Morocco, the ROI would be greater than 3. In the Americas, the weighted average ROI is 2.56, with Argentina and Chile showing ROIs of 3.89 and 2.87, respectively. By 2035, the Arab States and Europe and Central Asia would display an ROI above 3. The region yielding the greatest benefits would be Asia and the Pacific with a weighted average ROI of 4.82. Several countries in Asia and the Pacific could expect an even greater ROI above 5, such as Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka.

► **Figure 4. Estimated ROI from closing the childcare policy gap by 2035, by region and income group**



Regional differences in the ROI results can be explained by differences in the current national care systems. Regional results yielding greater ROI are explained by countries with already comprehensive childcare-related leave and ECCE. Thus, a small additional investment is needed to close the childcare policy gap while still generating substantial socio-economic benefits. It should be noted that not any type of investment in childcare-related leave and ECCE services would yield the same high ROI estimates. In fact, a high ROI would be explained by a

more gender-transformative design of care policy packages, leading to improvements in the number and working conditions of the ECCE workforce as well as to reductions in inequalities in the distribution of unpaid care work and therefore a decrease in motherhood penalties in employment and earnings (ILO 2023b).

When looking at the results by income groups, closing the childcare policy gap in high- and middle-income countries would trigger the highest benefits, representing an ROI close to four. This high ROI could be explained by a large motherhood earnings penalty that could be substantially reduced with a relatively small additional investment on childcare-related leave and ECCE. This might be the case of some high-income countries with well-developed care systems, but which show a significant difference between employment-weighted earnings of mothers compared to those of fathers (for example, Estonia, Iceland) (ILO 2023b).

Six low-income countries display, on average, a positive although smaller ROI of 1.56, which can be the result of larger policy and implementation gaps; higher fertility, and hence higher childcare needs; higher ECCE worker costs relative to average wages; and higher overheads due to greater infrastructure and workforce gaps. In fact, closing the childcare policy gap would require a larger expansion as a percentage of their GDP, a reflection of the lower public spending schemes these countries start from, as well as the higher wages of qualified teachers relative to GDP per capita compared to higher-income countries (ILO 2023b; De Henau 2022).

► A compelling gender equality investment case

Investing in transformative childcare policies holds enormous potential for gender equality, particularly in reducing gender gaps in employment and earnings. When simulating investment in childcare-related leave and ECCE services, the ILO Care Policy Investment Simulator shows that, in 82 countries, of the total net employment creation in 2035, 84 per cent of new jobs would potentially go to

women, from which 95 per cent would be formal employment, on average (ILO, n.d.-a).⁷

Across all regions, women would take the largest share of employment increase. This is because direct employment effects in care are the main contributor to the increase, and women tend to dominate care sectors. Furthermore, the additional labour force participation – primarily from

⁷ The percentage estimates are based on 82 countries with available data from the ILO Care Policy Investment Simulator and weighted by the baseline employed population aged 15 and above in 2019. The employment generated reflects the creation of direct and indirect employment in ECCE and the induced employment effects of childcare-related paid leave. Unlike investment in ECCE services, paid leave does not create jobs directly, but it reflects increases in household consumption from the paid childcare-related leave (and related job protection and income security), which is expected to be consumed in the economy. It is assumed that the increase in consumption is generated by the protection and continuation of maternal employment and earnings (ILO 2023b; De Henau 2022).

women being able to substitute unpaid care work for paid employment – is a consequence of a care policy package that allows for the closing of childcare policy gaps and ensuring continuity in employment and earnings (ILO 2023b; De Henau 2022).

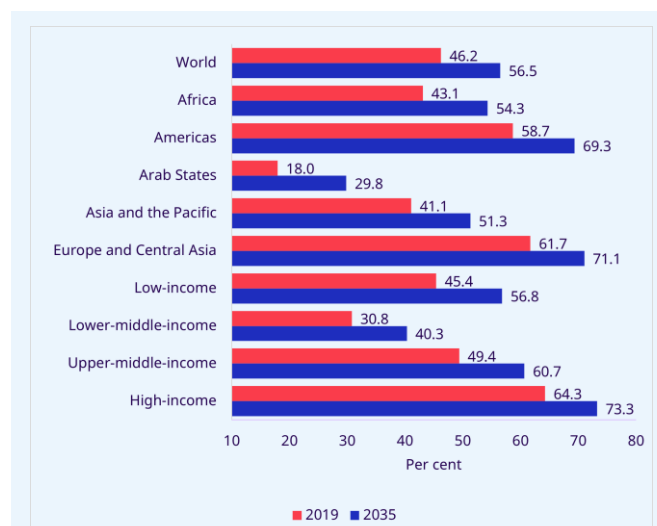
Finally, the effects of the investment in care would also reduce the differences in earnings and working conditions between men and women. This is because the ILO default parameters in the Simulator⁸ translate into a policy package with quality care jobs that have higher pay and better working conditions than the current reality for many workers. The Simulator assumes that women will benefit more from these improvements due to the high feminization rate in ECCE, and because new employment is predominantly generated among persons currently outside of the labour market due to care responsibilities (most of whom are women).

Closing the childcare policy gap is a transformative investment to promote gender equality in employment and wages

Figure 5 presents women's employment rate by region and income group for the reference year (2019) and the simulated results for 2035. It is estimated that women's employment rate would increase from a global average of 46.2 per cent in 2019 to 56.5 per cent in 2035. Such a large increase in women's employment rates is predicted to be fairly similar across regions and income groups, varying between 9 and 11 percentage points. Fiji, Kazakhstan and Nigeria will see the biggest increases in women's employment rate, above 13 percentage points.

Investing in closing childcare policy gaps could, on average, reduce the gender gap in employment rates by 3 percentage points by 2035. Low-income countries could see an average reduction in the gender employment gap of around 6 percentage points, while in middle-income countries the reduction would be 2 percentage points and 3 percentage points in high-income countries.

► **Figure 5. Women's employment rate by region and income group, 2019 (reference) and 2035 (simulated) (%)**

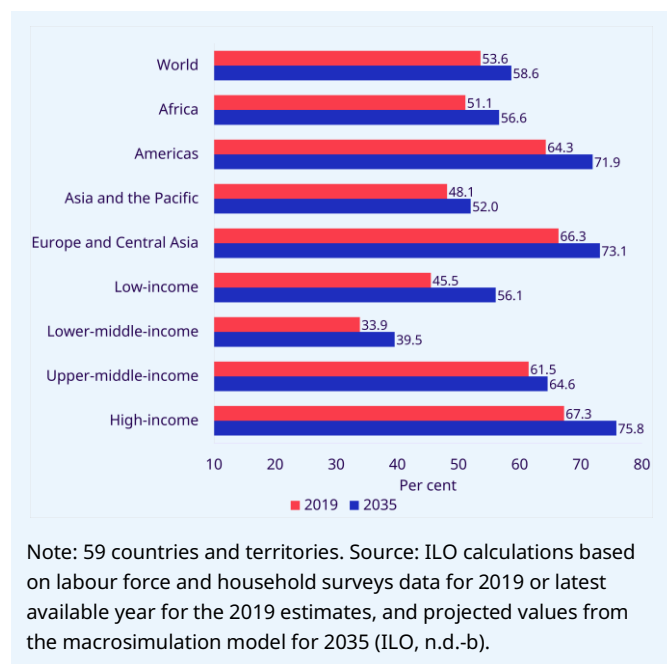


Note: 82 countries and territories. Arab States comprises only Saudi Arabia. Source: ILO calculations based on labour force and household survey data for 2019 or latest available year for the 2019 estimates, and projected values from the macrosimulation model for 2035 (ILO, n.d.-b).

Maternal employment is calculated as the employment-to-population ratio of women aged 25–54 years with a child under 15 years old. In 2019, the average maternal employment rate based on data for 59 countries was almost 54 per cent (figure 6). By 2035 the simulated maternal employment rate could reach almost 59 per cent from investing in childcare-related leave and ECCE services. The Americas could see the highest increase in maternal employment at 7.7 percentage points, led by Argentina and Mexico with simulated increases above 10 percentage points. Across the remaining three regions, the increase in maternal employment rates could vary between 3.9 and 6.8 percentage points.

⁸ See Appendix 2, table A.2.1 below and ILO 2023b.

► **Figure 6. Maternal employment rate (ages 25–54) with children aged 0–14 years by region and income group, 2019 (reference) and 2035 (simulated) (%)**



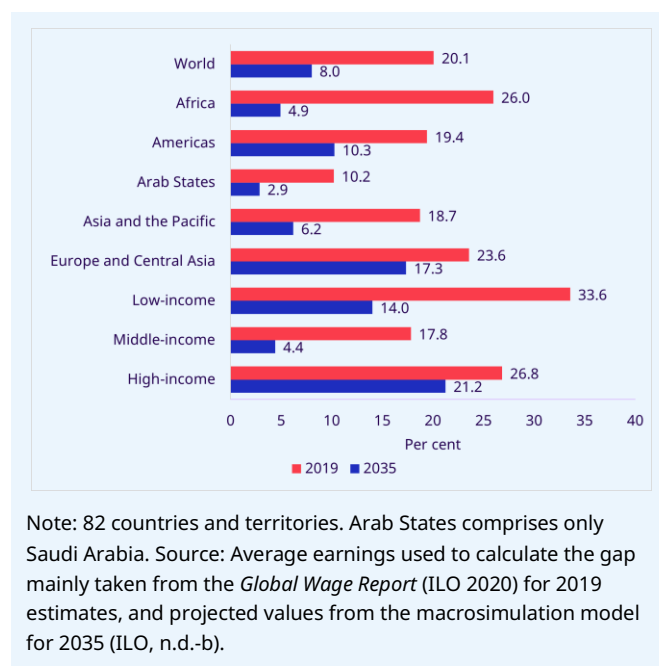
As to earnings, investing in childcare-related leave and ECCE services could result in an average reduction of the gender gap in monthly earnings by around 12 percentage points worldwide in 2035. This would decrease the average gender gap in monthly wages among the 82 countries from 20.1 per cent in 2019 to an average of 8.0 per cent in 2035.⁹

Figure 7 shows that there is significant variation across regions and income groups. Africa is the region that could experience the largest gains in women's earnings, since investing in childcare-related leave and ECCE could lead to a decrease of 21 percentage points in the gender gap in monthly wages in this region (26.0 per cent in 2019 down to a simulated 4.9 per cent in 2035). In other regions, the reductions in the gender gap in monthly wages would be second-greatest in Asia and the Pacific at 12.5 percentage points, followed by the Americas, where there would be a decrease of 9.1 percentage points. In the Arab States, the reduction would be 7.3 percentage points; while in Europe

and Central Asia the gender gap in monthly wages would drop from 23.6 to 17.3 per cent, a 6.2 percentage point reduction.

When looking at income groups, low-income and lower-middle-income countries would yield the greater benefits in reducing gender inequalities in monthly wages. In low-income countries, closing the childcare policy gap could lead to a 19.5 percentage point reduction in the gender wage gap, with a reduction from an average gender gap in monthly wages of 33.6 per cent in 2019 to 14.0 per cent in 2035. In middle-income countries, these investments could lead to a reduction of 13.4 percentage points, resulting in a gender gap in monthly wages of only 4.4 per cent in 2035. High-income countries would see an average reduction of 5.6 percentage points (figure 7).

► **Figure 7. Gender gap in monthly wages by region and income group, 2019 (reference) and 2035 (simulated) (%)**



The significant drop in the gender gap in monthly wages in certain regions and income groups is due to the large increase in female employment in direct care jobs with wages above average. In addition, there are around 14 countries – mostly middle-income countries – where the

⁹ Note that the 2019 (reference) and 2035 (simulated) gender gaps in monthly earnings are not adjusted for differences between men and women in the composition of their labour force characteristics, such as age, education and occupational concentration. Therefore, these wage gaps are not comparable to the more recently calculated adjusted wage gap compiled by the ILO in the *Global Wage Report 2018/2019* (ILO 2018b). Lack of detailed and accurate micro-data for most countries prevented the tool from calculating a factor-weighted gender pay gap. It would also have required calculating the changes in qualifications of those taking up the new jobs if shuffled within the existing labour market, through the use of probability-ranking matching methods, which the tool is not built towards.

investment to close the childcare policy gap results in a negative gender wage gap, which means that women would earn more than men on average. This is mainly the case in countries where the labour force participation of women (and sometimes also of men) was low, at around 30 per cent, in 2019. Then, because the backbone of the default policy parameters for the 2035 macrosimulation (see Appendix 2, table A.2.1 and ILO 2023b) rests in

ensuring decent care jobs, and with the majority of unpaid care work being done by women, the macrosimulation assumes that many women will take up those care jobs, with higher wages than on average. One way towards a more gender equal world of work is to break occupational segregation and promote higher participation of men in quality and adequately paid care jobs.

► Moving forward: Policy response

Investing in the care economy is essential to achieving the transformative agenda for gender equality and non-discrimination called for by ILO's tripartite constituents.¹⁰ The case for investing in closing the gap, not just in quantity but also in quality, has been made clear, if only through the multiple employment and earnings benefits it would entail, let alone the wider benefits such as health and well-being outcomes for children and society at large. To put these findings into action and to make investing in transformative care policies a reality, the way forward for governments, employers and workers and their representative organizations, the private sector, civil society, UN agencies, and other relevant stakeholders, such as academia and philanthropy, requires:

- Engaging in national social dialogues – with the voice and representation of those who provide and receive care – that are informed on an assessment of the existing policy and implementation gaps of national care systems; the care needs of target populations, especially those at high risk of discrimination and exclusion; and the investment case for gender-transformative care policies.
- Building fiscal, regulatory and technical capacity to design, finance and implement inclusive care policies, including maternity, paternity and parental leave and protections; care services; and care-related social protection benefits.
- Promoting the multiple benefits of investments in care policies and good-quality care jobs, including a better sharing of care responsibilities between

women and men and between families and the public, not-for-profit and private sectors, through national, community and awareness-raising, participatory research and data collection.

- Designing rights-based programmes, through social dialogue, that address the care needs of the most disadvantaged workers and the decent work deficits in care employment, particularly among childcare workers, including volunteers and the most precarious care workers, as well as domestic and migrant care workers, and all of the ways these intersect.
- Strengthening the capacities, outreach and coordination of employers' and workers' organizations with a view to improving the organization, representation and influence in decision-making of all care workers – both paid and unpaid – and care receivers, including the most marginalized and in the informal economy.

The new ILO Care Policy Portal and the Care Policy Investment Simulator are powerful tools to enable national stakeholders to engage in national dialogues better equipped with evidence that investing in care is not only just, but effective in achieving development goals. This is the first step to laying the foundations of a future with care for humans and care for the planet as a priority, and to build breakthrough pathways towards a better and more gender-equal world of work.

¹⁰ The *Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work* (ILO 2019) and the *ILO Global Call to Action for a Human-Centred Recovery from the COVID-19 Crisis that Is Inclusive, Sustainable and Resilient* (ILO 2021) are key instruments outlining ILO constituents' call to enable a more balanced sharing of family responsibilities; achieve better work-life balance and promote investment in the care economy.

► Appendix

Appendix 1. Lists of countries/territories by region and income group

► Table A.1.1. Countries/territories by regional grouping

Region	Countries/territories
Africa	Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania
Americas	Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Peru, United States of America
Arab States	Saudi Arabia
Asia and the Pacific	Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam
Europe and Central Asia	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

► Table A.1.2 Countries/territories by income grouping

Income group	Countries/territories
High income	Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong (China), Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America
Upper-middle income	Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Fiji, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Russian Federation, South Africa, Thailand, Türkiye
Lower-middle income	Bangladesh, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam
Low income	Ethiopia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda

Appendix 2. Main default childcare-related policy parameters

The estimates presented in this brief are a result of running the ILO Care Policy Investment Simulator using ILO default policy parameters for 2035. These default policy inputs are based on international standards and guidelines (when available) as well as intra-region good practices and evidence from the literature. In the online Simulator, the user can modify the value of the default policy inputs and build a tailor-made care policy investment package. The main default policy inputs for the childcare-related policies reviewed in this brief are summarized in table A.2.1. For more details see ILO 2023b.

► **Table A.2.1. ILO default policy parameters used to obtain results on childcare-related policies from the ILO Care Policy Investment Simulator**

Childcare-related paid leave default policy inputs	ECCE default policy inputs
• Paid weeks of maternity leave: At least 14 weeks of maternity leave paid at least at 67 per cent of previous earnings (equivalent to 9.38 weeks paid at a 100 per cent = 14 weeks x 67%) or 18 weeks at 100 per cent, as set out in the ILO Maternity Protection Convention (No. 183) and Recommendation (No. 191), 2000. • Paid weeks of paternity leave: Between 0.6 (equivalent to 3 days considering a 5-day work week) and 18 weeks paid at a 100 per cent rate. • Paid weeks of parental leave: Parental leave for both parents to reduce childcare policy gaps until statutory and effective access to universal ECED. Parental leave is paid at 67 per cent of previous earnings and is split equally between parents.	• % of children in ECED or pre-primary: • 0–2 years: 50%–60% enrolled. • 3–5 years: 90%–100% enrolled. • Hours per week per child (ECED or pre-primary): 40 hours for a full-time coverage for 52 weeks per year. • Number of children per early childhood educator/assistant with pedagogical qualifications: • 4–5 children aged 0–2. • 8–15 children aged 3+. • Pay of early childhood educators: 100 per cent of average primary teachers' wage to ensure a high quality of education.

Source: ILO, n.d.-a.

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