GENDER at WORK in the CARIBBEAN

COUNTRY REPORT: Dominica
GENDER at WORK in the CARIBBEAN

COUNTRY REPORT: Dominica
Foreword

Despite the progress towards achieving gender equality in the world of work, considerable constraints remain. As a result, and as the Organization approaches its centenary in 2019, the Director-General launched the Women at Work Centenary Initiative. The initiative aims to better understand and address why progress on delivering on decent work for women has been so slow and what needs to be done towards securing a better future for women at work.

In March 2016, the ILO published the Women at Work – 2016 Trends Report, which presented in-depth analysis of the gender gaps in the world of work and explored the key policy drivers for gender transformative change. Taking this publication as a reference guide, the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean commissioned country studies to establish an up-to-date and comprehensive picture of five ILO member States: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica and Saint Lucia. This research is timely since at this juncture we do not have a comprehensive overview of the situation of women at work in the Caribbean. The findings of the report would provide information relevant for the implementation in the Caribbean of the “Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030”, adopted in October 2016. It will also contribute to SDG 5 on Gender Equality, SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 10 on Inequalities, as well as the UN Women initiative on 50 50 by 2030.

The goal is to widen our knowledgebase on gender dimensions in the world of work in the Caribbean and how they are currently addressed. It is our hope that this will help direct policy makers as they mainstream gender in decent work policies. The studies use existing data to address important questions such as: What are the gender inequalities in the labour market? What is causing them? Do we have the data we need to understand the realities? Where are the inequalities mostly concentrated in terms of sectors and groups of workers? Are there legal protection and policy issues that are to be addressed? How well have countries done in mainstreaming gender equality dimensions across policies? What institutions, measures, policies and laws exist which promote women’s labour force participation, including in non-traditional types of work, as well as in trade unions, political and social organizations and how well are they being used? What are the good practices that can be identified and possibly replicated?

This initial study is expected to then further inform and guide additional research into the situation of women and men at work and the obstacles to equality and economic empowerment.

I would like to acknowledge, with deep appreciation, the guidance provided by Dagmar Walter, Deputy Director, and Shingo Miyake, Specialist, Labour Law and International Labour Standards, ILO DWT and Office for the Caribbean, in supervising the project and preparing this publication. I would like to express special thanks to Caroline Allen who conducted the research and prepared the draft text, with the invaluable assistance of representatives of the Gender Ministries who provided the information relating to their respective countries. Finally, I am also grateful of all Specialists of ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean who have provided comments and inputs to the draft text.

Claudia Coenjaerts
Director
ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean
# Contents

Foreword iii  
Contents v  
Acknowledgements vii  
List of figures viii  
List of tables ix  
List of abbreviations x  
Introduction 1  

## Part One. Overview of gender at work in Dominica – Key trends and research findings 3  
1.1 Labour force participation 5  
1.2 Employment-to-population ratios, including proportion of informal employment 7  
1.3 Unemployment rates 7  
1.4 Division of labour, employment sectors and occupational segregation 8  
1.5 Gender wage gaps 11  

## Part Two. Institutional analysis 13  
2.1 National entity responsible for gender 13  
2.2 Ministry responsible for labour and employment 14  
   2.2.1 Ministry of Trade, Energy and Employment 14  
   2.2.2 Ministry of Justice, Immigration and National Security 15  
   2.2.3 Ministry of Commerce, Enterprise and Small Business Development 16  
2.3 Mechanisms to resolve disputes 17  
2.4 Government institutions concerned with economic development 18  
   2.4.1 The Growth and Social Protection Strategy (GSPS) 18  
   2.4.2 Dominica Export Import Agency (DEXIA) 18  
   2.4.3 Invest Dominica Authority (IDA) 19  
   2.4.4 Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries 19  
   2.4.5 Dominica Education Enhancement Project (DEEP) 20  
   2.4.6 Ministry of Tourism and Urban Renewal 20  
   2.4.7 Ministry of Kalinago Affairs 20  
2.5 Other organisations 20  
   2.5.1 Dominica National Council of Women (DNCW) 20  
   2.5.2 The Social Centre 21  
   2.5.3 The Kalinago Barana Autê 21  
   2.5.4 National Development Foundation of Dominica Limited (NDFD) 21  
   2.5.5 Trade unions and workers organisations 22  
   2.5.6 Employers organisations 22  
   2.5.7 Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) 23
2.6  Initiatives and tools for gender mainstreaming 23
2.7  Special considerations—Indigenous Women 26

Part Three. Legal and policy analysis 29
3.1  International conventions on gender and work signed by Dominica 29
3.2  Discrimination and equal opportunity 31
3.3  Maternity and paternity leave and parental policies 32
3.4  Equal remuneration for work of equal value 34
3.5  Work–family responsibilities, including state–provided child care services 35
3.6  Social protection 36
3.7  Tackling the issues of sexual harassment and gender–based violence 39
3.8  Policies and initiatives to stimulate entrepreneurship 41

Part Four. Discussion of the findings and the way forward for future research 45
4.1  A summary of the key findings 45
4.2  Areas of enquiry for the future 48

References 49
Ms Caroline Allen, PhD, undertook the research and authored the present reports, which are aimed at providing a comprehensive overview of the Gender at Work situation in the Caribbean. Drawing from her regional level work, she focused on five country studies – Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica and Saint Lucia. The findings and insights will allow for informed discussions with constituents and partners to take the subject forward in the countries concerned and beyond.

Ms Audrey Christophe, Research Assistant, provided research support while Ms Rawwida Baksh, PhD, provided information on the development of the Gender Policy.

We thank UN Women and other collaborators who shared literature, data and recommended additional sources of information.

Staff of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean (DWT/O-POS) contributed in various ways to this report. Managing the initiative from start to finish were Ms Dagmar Walter, Deputy Director, and Mr Shingo Miyake, Labour Law and International Labour Standards Specialist. Mr Diego Rei, Employment and Labour Market Specialist, provided extensive contributions with respect to statistical data. Other colleagues of the DWT/O-POS provided further technical inputs and administrative support.
List of figures

Figure 1. Labour force participation by age group and sex, (2013) 6
Figure 2. Employment by economic sector and by sex, (2001, 2011 and 2013) 9
List of tables

Table 1. Labour force participation by sex among youth ages 15–24 years, 2013 6

Table 2. Percentage of male and female employees by type of employment, 2013 9

Table 3. Average hourly ratings by occupation and sex, and gender pay gaps, 2008 11

Table 4. International /Regional Instruments ratified with gender policy implications 30

Table 5. Schedule of minimum wage in Dominica, 2008 35
List of abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABMTC</td>
<td>Accounting Business Management and Training Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AID Bank</td>
<td>Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASTP</td>
<td>Adolescent Skills Training Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEC</td>
<td>Business Enterprise Centres (Dominica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGA</td>
<td>Bureau of Gender Affairs (Dominica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNTF</td>
<td>Basic Needs Trust Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPFA</td>
<td>Beijing Platform for Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARICOM</td>
<td>Caribbean Community and Common Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARILED</td>
<td>Caribbean Local Economic Development Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBOs</td>
<td>Community-Based Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDB</td>
<td>Caribbean Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEACR</td>
<td>Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGA</td>
<td>Country Gender Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIM/OAS</td>
<td>Inter-American Commission of Women, Organization of American States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAIC</td>
<td>Dominica Association of Industry and Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAWU</td>
<td>Dominica Amalgamated Workers’ Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBGA</td>
<td>Dominica Bureau of Gender Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEEP</td>
<td>Dominica Education Enhancement Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEXIA</td>
<td>Dominica Export Import Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNCW</td>
<td>Dominica National Council of Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPSU</td>
<td>Dominica Public Service Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSSC</td>
<td>Dominica Social Security Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTU</td>
<td>Dominica Trade Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWT/O-POS</td>
<td>ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DYBT</td>
<td>Dominica Youth Business Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECLAC</td>
<td>Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDP</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship Development Programme (Dominica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESBU</td>
<td>Employment and Small Business Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GFPs</td>
<td>Gender Focal Points (Dominica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMS</td>
<td>Gender Management System (Dominica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMST</td>
<td>Gender Management System Team (Dominica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOCOD</td>
<td>Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>Invest Dominica Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDB</td>
<td>Inter-American Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDRC</td>
<td>International Development Research Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGDS</td>
<td>Institute of Gender and Development Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IICA</td>
<td>Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MESECVI</td>
<td>Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDFD</td>
<td>National Development Foundation of Dominica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGAC</td>
<td>National Gender Advisory Committee (Dominica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non–Governmental Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPAP</td>
<td>National Policy and Action Plan for Gender Equity and Equality (Dominica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTC</td>
<td>National Tripartite Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECS</td>
<td>Organization of Eastern Caribbean States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANCAP</td>
<td>Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBAF</td>
<td>Small Business Assistance Facility (Dominica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDS</td>
<td>Small Island Developing States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical and Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAIDS</td>
<td>Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNGA/HRC</td>
<td>United Nations General Assembly Human Rights Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNOHCHR</td>
<td>United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Women</td>
<td>United Nations Entity on Gender and the Empowerment of Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWI</td>
<td>University of the West Indies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAWU</td>
<td>Dominica Waterfront and Allied Workers’ Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>International Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

To mark the commitment of constituents of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to gender equality, and as the Organization approaches its centenary in 2019, the Director-General launched the Women at Work Centenary Initiative. The Initiative takes stock of the status and conditions of women in the world of work, and identifies action taken in response to gender inequalities found.

This Country Report is part of an ILO Project to take stock of the situation and identify the response to gender issues in the world of work in the Caribbean. It presents an initial assessment of gender at work in Jamaica, one of five countries initially included in the Project. The information presented is based on desk review research, policy documents and legislation.

An overview of gender at work in the five countries is presented separately in the Project’s Synthesis Report, which presents a literature review based on Caribbean research on gender at work. It summarizes the results and draws general findings from the five countries. Readers are invited to review the Synthesis Report alongside the individual country reports.

The information in this Country Report is based primarily on secondary sources of information, accessible via publications and the Internet. A wide variety of statistical, policy, national and multilateral agency reports, laws and academic studies were identified and reviewed. The aim of these country studies (and the Synthesis Report) is to provide a basis on which to engage with constituents and stakeholders to further refine and enrich the analysis and fill information gaps, as well as foster explicit gender equality actions in the world of work over the years to come.

The Dominica country report begins with an overview of the general features of gender at work in the Caribbean, based on a review of research literature (Part One). It is based mainly on quantitative data analysis.

The focus of Parts Two and Three is analysis of the institutional and legal response to gender at work issues, again comprising mostly qualitative information from reports, laws and academic studies. In the discussion of the findings in Part Four, there is an examination of the specific barriers to gender equality in the world of work in Dominica, and an evaluation of the actions taken to address them.

Dominica is one of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean. SIDS have been identified as facing development challenges resulting from small size, transport costs, coastal weather patterns, vulnerability to climate change, dependence on income from a small range of exports, and high dependence on imports to meet basic nutritional and other needs. These vulnerabilities are dramatically demonstrated in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, which hit Dominica on 18 September 2017. Economic impacts are likely to include depression of incomes and reconstruction expenditures for years to come. Such severe weather events affect not only expenditures on development programmes, but tend to have gender-specific impacts, such as loss of employment and absorption into physical reconstruction especially among men, and reduced ability to meet family needs and vulnerability to gender-based violence among displaced persons, especially among women.

Most of the work for the current assessment was conducted prior to the passage of Hurricane Maria. It is hoped that the information it contains could eventually be one of the many tools that may be employed for reconstruction of the island’s institutions.

Overview of gender at work in Dominica — Key trends and research findings

The Commonwealth of Dominica (Dominica) is an island with a population of some 73,000 people. The Census of 2011 gave a non-institutional population of 70,739, with the population having fallen in each census since 1981, when the non-institutional population stood at 73,795. Dominica is classified as having high human development, ranking 96th out of 188 countries in the Human Development Index in 2016. Life expectancy is estimated at 78.2 for women and 73.8 for men.

As with other English-speaking Caribbean countries, girls in Dominica generally outperform boys in education. For instance, girls comprise 57.5 per cent of those attaining GCE or CXC (secondary school examination) certificates, and women comprise 62.5 per cent of attendees at the tertiary education institution, Dominica State College. In addition, just as with other Caribbean countries, women comprise a substantial proportion of heads of households—39.2 per cent in 2011.

The adolescent fertility rate in Dominica stands at 40.3 per thousand females, aged 15–19 years. This statistic is comparable to the global average of 46.1, as well as that of the non-Hispanic Caribbean of 46.9. However, it is lower than the average for Latin America and the Caribbean (66.5), but more than twice as high as for the "more developed regions" (19.2). 10

Women’s health is a cause for concern at older ages, with women comprising the majority of people with a chronic disease, such as diabetes (65.5 per cent of people with diabetes are women) and hypertension (66 per cent of cases are women). Men are more likely than women to die at younger ages from heart disease, vehicular accidents, cancer and suicide. 11

Overall, there is a mixed picture regarding health, education and other social indicators in terms of their likely impacts on the world of work for women and men. On the one hand, high levels of life expectancy and education appear likely to offer advantages for women. On the other hand, levels of chronic disease and adolescent fertility among women may place a brake on their careers, while health issues such as accidents and heart disease may suddenly affect male participation. High female headship may challenge female labour participation in a context where there are few official facilities for child and elderly care and women perform the majority of caring and domestic tasks, as will be shown later.

The Commonwealth of Dominica often does not appear in large international compilations of national statistics such as those of the United Nations. CARICOM and UN Women are working with the Commonwealth of Dominica as one of four pilot countries in the Caribbean to improve the quantity and quality of gender equality indicators, in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This includes promoting the production of sex disaggregated data on the following indicators of economic activity:

- Indicator 3a — Labour force participation rate for persons aged 15–24 years, by sex
- Indicator 3b — Labour force participation rate for persons aged 15+ years, by sex
- Indicator 4 — Proportion of employed who are own-account workers, by sex
- Indicator 8a — Percentage distribution of employed population in agricultural sector, by sex and age
- Indicator 8b — Percentage distribution of employed population in industrial sector, by sex and age
- Indicator 8c — Percentage distribution of employed population in service sector, by sex and age
- Indicator 9 — Informal employment as a percentage of total non-agricultural employment by sex and age
- Indicator 10 — Youth Unemployment Rate for Persons aged 15–24 years, by sex
- Indicator 11 — Proportion of population with access to credit by sex

• Indicator 12 — Proportion of population owning land, by sex, by size of land parcel
• Indicator 13 — Gender gap in wages, by age
• Indicator 14 — Proportion of employed working part-time, by sex and age

The Government / CARICOM / UN Women Project is looking at a number of economic indicators as well as other gender equality indicators. The observations which follow were documented by those working on the Project. The most complete sex disaggregated data in CARICOM countries is for labour force participation and unemployment. Little or no information is collected or disaggregated for informal sector work, labour force participation by sector, and gender wage gaps.

Through partnership between the Commonwealth of Dominica Central Statistical Office, CARICOM and UN Women, data aggregation and collection were conducted to produce several of the indicators listed above, which were published in the Dominica Gender Equality Indicators Report, 2015. The sections below present results from this exercise along with data accessed from other sources. It is worth noting that other publicly accessible sources provide little recent data for Dominica, highlighting the usefulness of special exercises to generate data in small countries.

### 1.1 Labour force participation

The labour force participation rate is a measure of the proportion of a country's working-age population that engages actively in the labour market, either by working or looking for work; it provides an indication of the size of the supply of labour available to engage in the production of goods and services, relative to the population at working age.

In 2013, labour force participation in Dominica stood at 70.6 per cent for men and 59.5 per cent for women; thus indicating a higher rate of 18.7 per cent among men than women. CARICOM reports that women accounted for 46.7 per cent of nonagricultural employees in 2005. The following diagram shows that male labour force participation was higher than female activity in all age groups, except among 35–39 year olds and those over 84 years. After the age of 45–49 years, female labour force participation declines more rapidly among women than men, until they are very elderly.

---

12 UN Women: Synthesis report on the state of data to support the CARICOM gender equality indicators: Belize, Dominica, Grenada, and Jamaica case studies (Bridgetown, Barbados: UN Women, 2017).
16 Data quoted are from the 2013 Labour force survey. See CSO: Dominica gender equality indicators report, 2015 (Roseau, Dominica, CSO, Ministry of Finance, 2016).
17 CARICOM/RSD: Selected socio-economic indicators (Georgetown, Guyana, Regional Statistics Division, CARICOM Secretariat, undated).
In 2013, among youth aged 15–24 years, labour force participation among men was 51.3 per cent and among women was 42.4 per cent, a 21 per cent difference.  

The following table shows that youth non-participation is concentrated in the younger age group of 15–19 years. Unemployment is also higher among younger rather than older youth.
1.2 Employment-to-population ratios, including proportion of informal employment

Employment-to-population ratios for Dominica have not been reported in any of the datasets reviewed for this assessment, including the CARICOM and ILO collections.

According to Dominica’s Gender Equality Indicators Report, 2015, equal percentages of men and women in the non-agricultural sector were informally employed in 2011—2.9 per cent of men and 2.9 per cent of women. Data were drawn from the 2011 Informal Sector Census and the 2011 Population and Housing Census. The Informal Sector was classified as the conduct or operation of any form of business transaction or economic activity from a private dwelling, stall, or roadside. Excluded are the transactions of illegal substances, the activity of sex workers and the operations of flea market transactions.19 These exclusions may result in the neglect of important gender-related income-generating activities, albeit mostly illegal ones.

“Own account workers” are self-employed persons without paid employees,20 and sometimes are considered a proxy for informal employment. Figures for 2013 from a labour force survey show that 35.2 per cent of male employees and 20.2 per cent of female employees are own account workers,21 suggesting a substantial informal economy, and discrepancies with the Informal Sector and Population and Housing Censuses, which might be accounted for by the use of different measures.

1.3 Unemployment rates

The 2013 Dominica Labour Force Survey gives the rate of unemployment as 15 per cent for men and 19.5 per cent for women; with a rate of 17.0 per cent overall. Youth unemployment was more than double adult unemployment—39.6 per cent for men, 41.3 per cent for women and 40.4 per cent overall.22

Earlier surveys appear to indicate lower levels of unemployment, though the surveys used different methodologies and may not be comparable.

CARICOM gives an unemployment rate for Dominica of 11.3 per cent in 2011—the latest year for which data are available in the CARICOM database covering the period 2006–2015. Unemployment was found to be higher for men (12.3 per cent) than women (9.9 per cent).23 Data on unemployment was derived from the Population and Housing Census. The Country Poverty Assessment of 2008–2009 gave a rate of unemployment among youth aged 15–24 years almost three times as high as for adults—31.2 per cent. Unemployment was slightly higher among young women (32.4 per cent) than young men (30.8 per cent).24

19 CSO, 2016, ibid.
21 CSO, 2016, ibid.
22 CSO, 2016, ibid.
1.4 Division of labour, employment sectors and occupational segregation

In examining the division of labour between men and women, it is important not only to look at employment, but also at the balance between “productive” and “reproductive” work. According to traditions in many countries, men are supposed to work primarily in “productive” roles, mainly through employment, while women are supposed to be responsible for “reproductive” roles, caring for families and members of society less able to participate in “production”.

Reproductive activities refer to domestic duties as well as all those activities associated with the care, maintenance and social reproduction of the family. They include caring for children and other members of the family, cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing, etc. and participating in community and social activities. Reproductive work is generally unpaid or paid at a low rate, and the time taken to accomplish reproductive tasks reduces the amount of time available for employment.

There is a tendency to take for granted this aspect of the sexual division of labour; it is not often the subject of study or policy-making. The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN ECLAC) has promoted the conduct of time-use surveys to compare the allocation of time to employment, domestic chores, childcare and other matters between men and women. A seminar to provide training in time-use surveys was carried out by UN ECLAC in 2014, and Dominica was one of the countries that participated in the seminar. However, the current review did not find evidence that any time-use survey has been carried out in Dominica.

Interestingly, the collaborative pilot between the Central Statistical Office, CARICOM and UN Women identified a source of data on the number of hours spent on paid and unpaid domestic work. This data is available for the population aged 15 years and over in Dominica’s 2011 Population and Housing Census. It shows the average number of hours per week spent by men on unpaid domestic work was seven hours, while for women it was 16.1 hours – a 2.3-fold difference. When time spent on paid domestic work was added to unpaid time, the average number of hours increased to 7.12 for men and 16.78 for women – a 2.36-fold difference.

It is plausible that gender differences in labour force participation and employment can be partly explained by differences in time allocation to reproductive tasks by women than men.

The Dominica Gender Equality Indicators Report shows that in the employed population, there are proportionally more male than female own account workers and employers. This suggests a predominance of men in professions offering independence and authority over others. In contrast, while the numbers are small, there are fewer men than women among unpaid family workers.

---

27 S. Stuart: Situation of unpaid work and gender in the Caribbean: The measurement of unpaid work through time-use studies. (ECLAC, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 2014).
28 R. Aguirre and F. Ferrari: Surveys on time use and unpaid work in Latin America and the Caribbean. Experience to date and challenges for the future. (ECLAC, Santiago, Chile, 2013).
30 CSO, 2016, ibid.
Table 2. Percentage of male and female employees by type of employment, Commonwealth of Dominica, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Employee</th>
<th>Male Employee (%)</th>
<th>Female Employee (%)</th>
<th>Male / Female Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own account workers</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid family workers</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Commonwealth of Dominica Central Statistical Office (2016)

Figure 2 shows a high level of occupational differentiation between the sexes. Many more males than females work in agriculture and industry, while more females are employed in the services sector. The data show a decline in employment in agriculture and industry and an increase in employment in the services sector. This sectoral shift tends to favour the employment of women. The reduction in the contribution of agriculture to employment reflects the decline in the banana industry in the Windward Islands, especially since the loss of preferential access to the European Union market in the early 1990s.

The Caribbean Development Bank’s (CDB) Country Gender Assessment cites data on specific occupations by sex (technical and associate professionals, services and sales, etc.), from the 2011 Population and Housing Census. However, the data are not clearly presented, suggesting the need

34 Data from 2001 and 2011 are from the Population and Housing Census. Data from 2013 are from the Labour force survey. CSO, 2016, ibid.
to seek further information from the Central Statistical Office should additional data be required on
the sex distribution by occupation classification. A preliminary report of the 2011 Census is available
online but does not include data on occupation.

Other reports have stated that women are heavily represented in stable, professional jobs in the public
and private sector in junior and middle administrative positions; in healthcare and other “caring-
type” occupations such as nursing, midwives, teaching; or in unstable, low-skilled occupations
across agriculture and services such as domestic work. However, these positions often have
lower status and financial value and do not come with the best working conditions and work-related
benefits. There are also legal restrictions on the participation of women in mining, factories and
construction, while on the other hand, there is no legal restriction on women engaging in hazardous
or arduous work.

Dominica elected the first female head of Government in the Americas in 1980 in the person of
Dame Eugenia Charles, who remained in power for over 14 consecutive years. Women also have
served in such high level political posts as Ministers, Attorney-General and Speaker of the House
of Assembly. Nevertheless, the gender representation gap still exists in the political and decision-
making arena. For instance, of the 31 seats in the House of Assembly, only seven seats are held by

---

37 CARILED: A review of gender related challenges affecting local government and MSMEs in Dominica (CARILED, 2016).
National coalition of Dominican Women: Dominica CEDAW alternative information to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms
38 CARILED, ibid.; NCDW, ibid; R. Baksh and CDB, ibid.
40 Wikipedia: Eugenia Charles.
media/files/un%20women/vaw/country%20report/americas/dominica/dominica%20upw%20rep%20report.pdf
42 Wikipedia: House of Assembly of Dominica.
1.5 Gender wage gaps

The *Dominica Gender Equality Indicators Report* includes data on pay by occupation and sex from a survey in 2008. This shows the highest gender wage gap in professions where the majority of employees are male: craft and trade workers, and agricultural and fishery workers. However, the gender wage gap also is high among service and sales workers, the majority of whom are women. This suggests that equal pay for work of equal value may be far from being achieved in Dominica. One limitation, though, is that the data do not show the gender distribution of professions within each sector, so it cannot be said conclusively whether the differences are a result of the division of role and rank within sectors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Male (EC$/hr)</th>
<th>Female (EC$/hr)</th>
<th>Gap Difference*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislators and senior officials</td>
<td>36.31</td>
<td>34.03</td>
<td>6.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>26.71</td>
<td>24.41</td>
<td>8.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians and associate professionals</td>
<td>17.28</td>
<td>16.54</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>9.64</td>
<td>18.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service workers and shop and market sales workers</td>
<td>7.66</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled agricultural and fishery workers</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>44.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft and related trade workers</td>
<td>11.56</td>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>51.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant and machine operators and assemblers</td>
<td>9.51</td>
<td>7.47</td>
<td>21.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary occupations</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>11.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AVERAGE</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.02</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.65</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:

* Gap difference = Difference as a percentage of male pay = ((male pay - female pay)/male pay) x 100


It has been observed that even when they have equal education and years of professional experience, women still earn less than men in the labour market. Initiatives to secure equal access opportunities for economic empowerment and prevent discrimination in the workplace for women have been limited despite the State’s sustained spending on social sectors and development. There are deficits in mechanisms to monitor or enforce legal applications, as will be detailed in the following sections.

---

43 Data are from a 2008 Occupational wage survey. Cited from CSO, 2016, ibid.
44 CARILED, 2016, ibid.
46 NCDW: Dominica CEDAW Alternative information to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.
Institutional analysis

This section examines institutions concerned with work and gender in the Commonwealth of Dominica and analyses how they impact on gender equality and non–discrimination in the world of work.

2.1 National entity responsible for gender

The Bureau of Gender Affairs is the central national machinery responsible for the promotion and advancement of women and gender issues in Dominica. The Bureau was first established as a Women’s Desk in 1980 (only a couple of years after Independence in 1978), which was renamed the Women’s Bureau in 1982, following the global call made by the United Nations for integration of women in development.48

As in several Caribbean countries, the national machinery was established during the UN Decade for Women (1976–1985). When established, the Bureau reported to the Community Development and Social Affairs in Economic Development Unit within the Prime Minister’s Office. Since then, the Bureau has seen many changes in terms of its reporting line ministry. In 2009 the Women’s Bureau was renamed the Bureau of Gender Affairs (BGA), as recommended by the 2006 National Policy and Action Plan for Gender Equity and Equality in the Commonwealth of Dominica. This signalled the Bureau’s expanded focus from “women’s rights and empowerment” to “gender equality”, as well as attention to emerging male gender gaps and issues in the society (namely, in the areas of

education, health and violence). At present, it reports to the Ministry of Social Services, Community Development and Gender Affairs, presided over by the Honourable Catherine Daniel.

As of 2014, the BGA comprised a staff complement of five including a Director, Coordinator of Research and Programme Development, Field Officer, Secretary and Messenger. In addition, the temporary post of Data Registry Officer was supported by funding from UN Women.

The Bureau has the responsibility for institutional strengthening, gender planning and analysis, entrepreneurial development and advocacy. Thus, the focus of the BGA has been to support and monitor policy development, institutionalize gender mainstreaming, and oversee policy implementation in all Government agencies. The Bureau also focuses on improving women’s access to economic resources, as well as their participation in political affairs and decision-making.

In 2013, reviews were undertaken on the progress with the 2006 Gender Policy, and recommendations made for an updated policy. Results of this review will be presented in Section 2.6 of this Report, which looks at initiatives and tools for gender mainstreaming.

2.2 Ministries responsible for labour and employment

2.2.1 Ministry of Trade, Energy and Employment

The Ministry of Trade, Energy and Employment has responsibility for the formulation and the implementation of Dominica’s domestic and external trade policies. In December 2013, the Ministry launched the National Employment Programme (NEP), initially to assist micro and small enterprise development. Since then, the Agency’s mission has been expanded to include development and implementation of programmes for employment generation and job creation, as part of the Government’s ongoing efforts to address youth unemployment.

Stated Programme objectives are:

1. To increase employment opportunities within the short to medium term.
2. To increase the employability of the unemployed and underemployed through development of job skills and work experience.
3. To assist the public and private sector in building an experienced workforce.
4. To contribute to the community development around the island through direct injection of funds into the local economy.

50 Bureau of Gender Affairs, ibid.
54 R. Baksh: Review of the composition and terms of reference of the National Gender Advisory Committee (NGAC) (BGA, 2013b), unpublished.
Some of the existing programmes under the NEP include:

- **On-the-Job Training and Mentorship Programme**: To develop job skills and working experience for unemployed youth and to assist MSMEs in building their workforce.

- **Community Employment Initiatives**: To generate sustainable employment within communities by providing support through the village councils or community development groups, for community enhancement projects, capacity-building, skills development, and beautification projects. Projects may include community tourism, staffing for resource centres, landscaping and cleaning, painting, after-school classes for students, or any other business projects having the potential for direct employment within the community.

- **Graduate Internship Programme**: To provide an opportunity for recent university graduates to gain work experience and develop job-related skills for career development. Graduates are employed on Internships within the Public Sector, NGOs and Statutory Corporations for a one-year period. A special programme for the Kalinago Territory exists to engage university graduates on special projects within the Territory.

- **Education Mentorship Programme**: College graduates will be engaged on a part-time basis to provide after school classes and/or tutoring services within the communities.

- **Adult Education-to-Work**: Under the NEP, individuals who have received training in specific skill areas with the Adult Education Division are engaged for a one year period.

- **Marketing Assistance Programme**: To assist businesses in sourcing markets, increasing market awareness, generating publicity, and increasing sales.

The Government has reported an investment of more than $3.5 million into this initiative (the NEP) during the 2013–2014 financial year, which benefitted over 700 persons; thus, exceeding the initial target of 500 persons. However, sex disaggregation for the beneficiaries of the Programme is not available online. The Dominica Growth and Social Protection Strategy does not discuss gender issues as part of its presentation of details of the National Employment Programme.

### 2.2.2 Ministry of Justice, Immigration and National Security

The Division of Labour within the Ministry of Justice, Immigration and National Security is responsible for enforcing labour standards in Dominica across all sectors, including those where workers are not commonly unionized, such as the informal sector. The work of the Labour Division is informed by the Labour Standards Act Chapter 89:05 of the Revised Laws of Dominica. The Department is headed by the Labour Commissioner assisted by the Deputy Labour Commissioner, Labour Officers and other support staff. On the Division’s online platform, it states that the Department is in charge of Citizenship and Naturalization, work and residence permits, student and entry visas, as well as industrial relations, labour and productivity, recruitment of workers, trade disputes and Trade Union issues. Information is provided on procedures to follow in the event of a complaint against an employer. No mention is made of gender issues.

---

56 Ministry of Finance, 2014, ibid.
57 Ministry of Finance, 2014, ibid.
58 It also hosts 12 other ministry divisions: 1-Chambers of the Attorney General; 2-th Commonwealth of Dominica Police Force; 3-the Companies and Intellectual Property Office; 4-the Dominica Prison Service; 5-the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU); 6-the Fire and Ambulance Services Division; 7-the Immigration Division; 8-the Legal Aid Clinic; 9-the Magistrates’ Court; 10-the Office of Disaster Management (ODM); 11-the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP); and 12-the Registry Division.
2.2.3 Ministry of Commerce, Enterprise and Small Business Development

The stated Mission of Dominica’s Ministry of Commerce, Enterprise and Small Business Development is: “To create an enabling environment that supports, strengthens and promotes business development activities”. At the time of this Report, the Ministry is helmed by the Honourable Roselyn V. Paul.

The Ministry’s portfolio includes: 60

- Industries
- Factories
- Manufacturing
- Agro processing
- Small business
- Enterprise
- Private sector development

The Ministry has a Capital Programme which provides technical assistance; a Small Business Grant; and also supports the development of rural Business Enterprise Centres (BECs) 61 around the island. It is staffed by an Executive Officer and Business Development Officers who help applicants seeking assistance with starting a business. Business skills and related training are provided. 62 The BEC provides assistance with business plan development, manufacturing, financial packaging and lending, market research, disaster recovery and healthcare guidance.

The Ministry’s Rural Enterprise Programme helps business owner applicants for two years by providing skills training, business ethics and financial support to groups in rural communities, preparing them for launching their own small business. In 2017, the Ministry conducted training workshops to benefit persons who have received funding from the Ministry of Commerce, as well as those who are prospective recipients of resources from the Government of Dominica through the Ministry of Commerce. 63

In 2016, the Government Information Service (GIS) reported that there was a policy being drafted that would provide oversight to the framework within which small and medium sized businesses were operating in Dominica. 64 No mention of gender, or programmes focussing on women, was found in these online sources.

---

2.3 Mechanisms to resolve disputes

As indicated earlier, the Division of Labour within the Ministry of Justice, Immigration and National Security is responsible for industrial relations and trade union issues, as stipulated in the Labour Standards Act Chapter 89:05.\[^{65}\] In the event of a complaint against an employer, the labour division undertakes the following procedure:

- The division determines whether the matter is legitimate or not.
- If the case is considered legitimate, the Labour Division contacts the employer and discusses the matter.
- If the case is in conflict with the Labour Laws of the Commonwealth of Dominica, both parties are brought together to conciliation.
- If it cannot be resolved at the conciliation, it is referred to a Tribunal, which has its own authority and methods of settling the dispute.\[^{66}\]

The Tribunal referred to is the Industrial Relations Tribunal, as instituted by the Industrial Relations Act, 1986. According to Section 2 of the Act, the Tribunal deals with trade disputes, namely any dispute or difference between an employer and a bargaining agent connected with the employment or terms and conditions of employment, and any dispute or difference concerning the interpretation, application, administration or alleged violation of a collective bargaining agreement.\[^{67}\]

In the Caribbean, female workers generally are less likely to be unionized than men. Interestingly, patterns of sectoral segregation often are repeated within the trade unions, as women’s participation is higher in trade unions, in service and commercial industries.\[^{68}\] Available data regarding female representation in trade unions in Dominica dates back to 1999, when UN ECLAC stated that female trade-union presence in Dominica is the highest of the Latin America and the Caribbean. At that time, the Amalgamated Workers’ Union and the Civil Service Association were said to have a female membership of 50 per cent, followed by Saint Lucia, with 40 per cent.\[^{69}\]

The Labour Division hosts a Legal Aid Clinic. This Clinic was established to provide legal service to persons with low income. They offer legal assistance to specific target groups: women, disabled persons, and senior citizens. Cost depends on the revenue of the client. The Clinic’s attorneys deal with employment matters; family and maintenance matters (especially when there is a risk of violence, and children are in need of protection and family support); housing and land matters, among others, and they provide legal advice, advocacy and representation. In addition, the Clinic refers clients in need of counselling and other psychosocial services to the relevant social agency – such as the Welfare Division, Women’s Bureau, National Children’s Home and Dominica National Council of Women. There is documented evidence that the Clinic is short-staffed, with only three lawyers responsible for meeting the needs of the population.\[^{70}\] \[^{71}\]

---


\[^{66}\] Ibid.


\[^{68}\] OAS: Gender equality for decent work proposals for mainstreaming gender into labor and employment policies within the framework of the IACML, Report presented at the XV Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour, OAS Department of Social Development and Employment (Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 2007).

\[^{69}\] OAS Department of Social Development and Employment, ibid.


2.4 Government institutions concerned with economic development

2.4.1 The Growth and Social Protection Strategy (GSPS)
The Ministry of Finance is the primary Agency in charge of the country’s development strategy. 72 In that regard, the Ministry gives the impetus and direction to the broader development programme. In 2014, it issued its Growth and Social Protection Strategy (GSPS), covering the period 2014–2018, which presents the Government’s medium-term strategic framework for sustainable development and economic transformation. The GSPS includes a subsection on gender, which does not specifically address work-related issues, but does speak of “the ‘gendering’ of development planning and policy formulation and implementation”. 73

2.4.2 Dominica Export Import Agency (DEXIA)
The DEXIA is a public sector Agency attached to the Ministry of Trade, Energy and Employment. It was established in 1986 to oversee the development of Dominica’s export of agricultural and agro-processed products, as well as to function as a trade promotions agency. 74 Its focus is primarily on the export of agricultural and manufactured goods. Earlier in the Report, the data showed that the agriculture and manufacturing sectors employ mainly men, although women may be more involved in agro-processing, packaging and marketing activities. In its work to facilitate and promote trade at the Caribbean level, the Agency collaborates with the Dominica Hucksters Association, an Organization comprising mainly women, who are petty traders operating across national borders. 75

2.4.3 Invest Dominica Authority (IDA)

IDA is the entity responsible for attracting, facilitating and sustaining investment in the country. Its mandate is reinforced by the Investment Strategy and Action Plan, which makes no mention of gender issues. A search on IDA’s website yielded no information on initiatives relating to gender issues.

2.4.4 Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

The Division of Agriculture within the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has a mission to:

“...accelerate sustainable agricultural growth and development by developing, formulating and implementing policies and programmes which enhance competitiveness and productivity and facilitate greater responsiveness of our clients to manage change and to take advantage of new opportunities to improve food security and socio-economic transformation through the sustainable utilization/use of human, natural, financial, and other resources…”

Main projects undertaken include the Banana Accompanying Measures (BAM) (an EU funded Programme); the China Aid Agricultural Technical Cooperation Project; the Cocoa Rehab and Expansion Project, and the Support to Horticulture Programme. Gender issues are not mentioned in the online description of these programmes.

The Agricultural Investment Unit (AIU) was established in October 2008 to coordinate and execute the investment plan for the non-banana sector and to attract agro-entrepreneurs to invest in agriculture. It provides a credit scheme for an investment project in the areas of livestock and crop production, and fisheries development through the AID Bank. There was no indication in the online source of a consideration of gender issues in the work of this Unit.

In August 2006, the Bureau of Gender Affairs established a revolving loan fund at the National Development Foundation of Dominica (NDFD) to assist women’s agricultural small enterprise development. Women’s groups initiated through assistance provided by the BGA included: Delices Toloma Farmers; Morne Prosper Women’s Group; Penville Women’s Group; Beekeepers; Capable Women of Power; Western District Women’s Group; North Eastern Women’s Association; and the Golden Age Clubs. The CDB’s Dominica Gender Assessment (2014) reports that some of these groups are now well established, have received financial and skills-building support from other agencies, and are producing agro-processed products such as cassava flour and bread, seasonings and other products, for the local market.

79 Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, ibid.
2.4.5 Dominica Education Enhancement Project (DEEP)
The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development developed the DEEP Project (Dominica Education Enhancement Project), funded to the tune of US $4.0 million, to address inter-generational poverty through quality education. In financially supporting the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Programme, DEEP aims to graduate students with skills and sufficient knowledge, either to enter the job market, or continue on to the tertiary level and have enhanced earnings profiles.

2.4.6 Ministry of Tourism and Urban Renewal
The Ministry of Tourism and Urban Renewal is responsible for the sustainable development of tourism with a particular emphasis on the promotion and marketing of Eco-tourism and the development of related products. The Government has developed the country’s National Tourism Policy 2020 and Tourism Master Plan 2012–2022. The Dominica Country Gender Assessment pointed out that during stakeholders’ consultations for the development of these policies, the topic of gender equality was never raised. As a result, the usual occupational gender segregation persists. 82 Recommendations made in the assessment include the need for sex-disaggregated data collection and sensitization on the topics of equal pay for work of equal value in the tourism sector. 83

2.4.7 Ministry of Kalinago Affairs
The Ministry of Kalinago Affairs, created in 2002, is headed by the Member of Parliament for the Carib Territory, to assist the delivery of Government services, programmes and projects. The Ministry is behind many infrastructure development projects for the Territory; its objective is to reduce poverty through diversification of revenue. As such, the Ministry is focused on encouraging tourism-related business opportunities, as well as developing agro-processing industries with the construction of a modern cassava processing plant. A report on the work of the Ministry shows no focus on gender issues. 84

The evidence presented in this section suggests that gender has not been mainstreamed in the work of most agencies concerned with economic development, except when the BGA has been directly involved.

2.5 Other organizations
Several of Dominica’s non-governmental organizations, civil society bodies and trade unions do not have an online presence. The BGA may be consulted for updated information on the programmes of NGOs relating to gender.

2.5.1 Dominica National Council of Women (DNCW)
The DNCW was established in 1986 85 and is a national women’s NGO. The DNCW brings together local women’s groups and has representatives in many areas of the country. At a district level, they have appointed zonal representatives and assistants. DNCW has represented Dominican interests

---

83 CARILED, 2016. ibid.
at several international fora including the Beijing International Conference on Population and Development. DNCW provides counselling at the BGA, at their own headquarters and at the field level. There is a major focus on providing support for survivors of violence against women and girls, which will be described further in Section 3.7 of this Report. The DNCW has also undertaken projects for the empowerment of disadvantaged rural women.

2.5.2 The Social Centre

The Social Centre is an NGO with a focus on education of vulnerable groups in Dominica, which collaborates with UNICEF. It was founded in 1950 and is recognized as a key player in social and economic development initiatives. The Centre provides skills training for youth who have dropped out or have been expelled from school via its Adolescent Skills Training Programme (ASTP) and young offenders, under its From Offending to Achieving (FOTA) Programme.

The ASTP reaches roughly 30 young men and women. It began in 1986 to help girls who had left school because of pregnancy, and later included male school dropouts. The FOTA started in 2007, and involves apprenticeships, community work and skills training, with flexibility in attendance if one of the students finds work. Most FOTA participants are male.

The Social Centre also provides low cost day care for pre-school children and infants (Early Childhood Development Programme). Sometimes this is provided free of charge to teenage mothers who participate in the Programme.

2.5.3 The Kalinago Barana Autê

The Kalinago Barana Autê has been in operation since 2006 and serves as the focal point for tourism and heritage development in the Kalinago Territory. While the facility functions under the purview of the Ministry of Tourism and receives technical support from the Discover Dominica Authority, the Kalinago Barana Autê has played a critical role in the preservation and management of the cultural patrimony of the indigenous people of the Commonwealth of Dominica. Among the initiatives undertaken are the introduction of training in traditional thatching, canoe construction and craft development for Kalinago residents.

2.5.4 National Development Foundation of Dominica Limited (NDFD)

NDFD is a non-profit, non-government development institution serving the Micro, Small and Medium sized enterprises (MSME) in the Commonwealth of Dominica since 1981. They also function as a project management hub for national, regional and international agencies. Noteworthy projects include:

- Passion Development Project, funded by the Pan American Development Foundation; and
- South Eastern District Fisheries Facility, sponsored by the Inter American Foundation.

Since 1999 the NDFD have been the National Agency for the EU/CARIFORUM Agribusiness Research and Training Fund established by the European Union in collaboration with the Ministers of Agriculture of the CARIFORUM countries. (See Section 3.8 in this Report, for additional details).

---

87 C.F. Allen, 2009, ibid.
2.5.5 Trade unions and workers’ organizations

There are five trade unions in Dominica:

- Dominica Amalgamated Workers’ Union (DAWU)
- Dominica Trade Union (DTU)
- Dominica Waterfront and Allied Workers’ Union (WAWU)
- Dominica Public Service Union (DPSU)
- Dominica Association of Teachers
- Police Welfare Association

The Dominica Public Service Union was recognized as a registered Trade Union in 1961. It is the island’s largest public sector union, representing public sector workers. The Dominica Amalgamated Workers’ Union and the Dominica Waterfront and Allied Workers’ Union (WAWU), are affiliated with the International Trade Union Confederation. The Waterfront and Allied Workers Union has a women’s arm. The current President of the Dominica Association of Teachers is a woman, Mrs Celia Nicholas.

2.5.6 Employers organizations

The Dominica Employers’ Federation is the national employers’ organization, recognized as such by the local, regional and international communities of labour. It is a member of the International Organisation of Employers. In 2014, the Federation participated in the National Gender Equality workshop organized by the Ministry of Social Services, Community Development and Gender Affairs and CUSO International.89

The Dominica Association of Industry and Commerce (DAIC), established in 1973, is Dominica’s largest private sector association, responsible for the representation of private sector interests in Dominica. They have an interest in fostering economic growth and social development and partnered with the Cave Hill School of Business of the University of the West Indies in 2016 to offer Leadership training to Middle and Senior Level Managers.90 The Current President of DAIC is a woman.
2.5.7 Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)

The CDB is a financial institution providing financing social and economic programmes with the Caribbean. The CDB financed the 2014 Country Gender Assessment 91 and a number of projects mainly for infrastructure development, including roads and water projects. At present, the CDB is funding the Kalinago Territory Development Project—a multi-dimensional project to advance social and economic infrastructure, promote entrepreneurship and employment, and reduce poverty within the Kalinago Territory.

The CDB also has a Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF), which targets at risk communities (and in particular, the Kalinago community), as well as persons displaced as a result of the banana crisis, poor parishes and communities, and women and youth. 92 The BNTF is a skills training programme offering marketable skills in the area of management and leadership; it seeks to empower beneficiaries through building self-esteem. Country Gender Assessment results indicate, though, that the training course tends to perpetuate traditional gender roles. 93

2.6 Initiatives and tools for gender mainstreaming

Following the establishment of the Women’s Desk in 1980, the Government of Dominica developed a Policy Statement on Women and Development. This Policy Statement was the founding seed to the 2006 National Policy and Action Plan for Gender Equity and Equality (NPAP), which is the central tool for gender mainstreaming.

The NPAP aims to address “structural imbalances that threaten the concept of equality and equity” across all sectors in Dominica, and enable all Dominicans, irrespective of gender, to achieve their full potential. It was envisioned as being the central national instrument to reaffirm the Government’s commitment to gender equity and provide a structure for guiding the national process of gender mainstreaming. 94 Before the formulation of the Policy, the Bureau convened stakeholder meetings, conducted multi-sectoral gender sensitization workshops, and launched a media and public education campaign to support the policy-making process.

The Policy document outlines strategic areas in which gender issues arise, namely:

- The economy;
- Poverty reduction and social protection;
- Labour and employment (especially in the agriculture sector);
- Climate change;
- Sexuality and sexual and reproductive health;
- Gender-based violence;
- Education and human capital development; and
- Health and well-being.

The NPAP sought to integrate women’s and men’s concerns and experiences into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all political, economic and social policies and programmes. It included a section on the distribution of employment and occupational structure by sex, presenting the status of these at that time. 95

Following the adoption of the National Gender Policy, the Gender Management System (GMS) was established as a gender machinery to coordinate the implementation of the Policy. The GMS consists of:

- The Bureau of Gender Affairs (BGA) (see Section 2.1 for details)
- The National Gender Advisory Committee (NGAC)
- Gender Focal Points (GFPs)

The Gender Management System Team (GMST) was established to support the work of the machinery comprising of senior staffs of key Government Ministries, to facilitate the gender mainstreaming process across the Public Service. 96

The National Gender Advisory Committee was meant to act as an oversight and advisory body to the Ministry and GMST, and to monitor and report on the implementation of the NPAP. The NGAC was designed to include members of NGOs, CBOs and Civil Society bodies and youth organizations, trade union representatives, and the private sector — in issues related to gender and development. 97 In reality, the Committee was only initiated in 2012, six years after the NPAP was approved. 98 In the process of reviewing and updating the NPAP in 2013, certain recommendations were made as to the functioning of the Committee, to allow it to be the oversight body for the Gender Management System thereby eliminating the need for a separate GMST. The current status of the Committee is unclear. 99

The Gender Focal Points (GFPs) were conceived to be senior administrative/technical staff in all Ministries (namely, Permanent Secretaries, Senior Technocrats and Administrators), to facilitate gender analysis and the development of gender-responsive policies, plans, programmes and projects across the public sector. 100 In the years following the adoption of the NPAP, the system of GFPs was not sustained and GFPs were ‘missing’ from a number of Ministries, due to the repeated restructuring of Ministries as well as other processes of attrition. Additionally, GFPs had not been appointed to several of Dominica’s Statutory Bodies before the Government’s 2013 initiative to review implementation of the 2006 National Gender Policy.

The CDB Country Gender Assessment noted that inadequate budgets and dependence on external support have marginalized the role of the Gender Machinery and reinforced the perception, that achieving gender equality is the responsibility of the national gender machinery rather than the business of the whole governance process. The CGA also revealed inadequacies in the collection and
compilation of sex-disaggregated data and the conduct of gender-sensitive research and analysis, which inevitably affected the ability to properly inform policy-making, planning, programming and service delivery and promote equality and equity between men and women. 

In his review of a recent publication on gender which highlights Dominica’s gender policy in a chapter titled “Masculinities and the Practice of Dominica’s National Gender Policy”, Clarke (2017) observes that the implementation of the ambitious policy was stalled, in practice, as gender was “…understood simplistically as a synonym for men and women”, so that “hierarchical power dynamics and tensions are avoided, leading to a jeopardized equality or an equality stripped of its equity dimensions…”

Certainly, the above evidence suggests that gender mainstreaming across Ministries and Government agencies has had limited success, with the resource-constrained BGA being the instigator of most of the progress that has taken place in limited areas.

In 2013, the BGA, with support from UN Women, conducted a review of the NPAP, involving a wide consultative process and the drafting of an Updated National Gender Policy and Action Plan 2014–2024 by Consultant Rawwida Baksh. The evaluation concluded that the Bureau did not have the sufficient human resource capacity to bring a gender perspective to diverse areas of national development, and that: “…the process of developing other national and sectoral policies had not been sufficiently informed or guided by the National Gender Policy of the Bureau of Gender Affairs to effectively lead gender mainstreaming across the public/private sectors and civil society due to the lack of capacity and resources…”

Several recommendations were made in 2013 to support its institutional strengthening in the upcoming years, namely:

1. The need for the Bureau to have a semi-autonomous status. This would limit the negative impact of the Bureau’s possible changes of Ministerial portfolios.
2. Ensure that members of the National Gender Advisory Committee (NGAC), as well as Gender Focal Points, are appointed to all Ministries and parastatal bodies, and regular meetings of the NGAC and GFPs are held.
3. The need for the Bureau’s budget to be increased to EC$1.5 million per annum, which would enable it to properly lead or coordinate implementation of the updated NPAP.
4. Ensure adequate staffing. The following positions were recommended: (i) Director; (ii) Coordinator, Research and Development; (iii) Legal Officer; (iv) Research Officer; (v/vi) Field Officers (Male and Female); (vii) Project Assistant, Data Registry; (viii) Counsellor; (ix) Secretary; and (x) Messenger.

104 —: Review of the composition and terms of reference of the National Gender Advisory Committee (NGAC). Prepared for Ministry of Social Services, Community Development and Gender Affairs, GOCOD. (Roseau, BGA, 2013), unpublished.
5. Ensure the effective mainstreaming of gender in the Ministry of Social Services, Community Development and Gender Affairs – its policies, plans, budgets and programmes should promote equality between men and women. 106

The updated National Gender Policy includes recommendations on economic growth, labour and employment, among other areas. 107 Currently, it is unavailable online. Correspondence with Rawwida Baksh suggests that it may not yet have been adopted or implemented. 108 One reason for the delay could be a change in leadership of the BGA.

2.7 Special considerations — Indigenous women

Kalinagos are the Indigenous people of Dominica, representing four per cent of the population. Under Article 25(1) of the Kalinago Territory Act, 109 all land within the Kalinago Territory is under the “sole custody, management and control” of the Kalinago Council and Chief.

The Kalinago Territory is governed by the Kalinago Council which is elected every five years. The Council has the custody, management and control of the Territory. The Council’s main functions are to provide financial resources authorized by law, to be allocated towards various projects for infrastructural development and education, which would help to enhance and improve the quality and lifestyle of its people The Kalinago are also represented in the House of as part of the Salybia constituency. 111

The Kalinago society model follows a patriarchal system, according higher status to men. 112 Indigenous Women face double marginalization: firstly, because of gender; and secondly, because of their ethnic membership and territory location.

Unemployment in the Kalinago territory is higher than the rest of the country, with a mean income below the national mean. 113 Historically, the community has been involved in agriculture, practising both subsistence and commercial farming production for local and international markets. 114

Access to education and health are reported to be challenging. The costs of travel to secondary schools adds to the burden on families, many of which are headed by women. Over the years, support programmes have multiplied for Kalinago students including school feeding programmes,

108 From personal communication with Dr. Rawwida Baksh, Consultant.
transportation, and transition into higher education. The Ministry of Education also provides tuition for Kalinago students at the Dominica State College and awards scholarships to Kalinago students for study throughout the Caribbean. In addition, Kalinago were eligible for scholarships provided by the Barbados Government for indigenous students attending the University of the West Indies. Moreover, in 2011, the Dominican Bar Association admitted its first female Kalinago attorney, who received the Sir Arthur Lewis Indigenous Scholarship and who, in 2016, became the first indigenous magistrate.\footnote{115} \footnote{116} \footnote{117}

School dropouts and teenage pregnancies are high among Kalinago women, who are mostly involved in the informal sector in traditional crafts-making and sales,\footnote{118} generating insufficient income to draw them out of poverty and food insecurity. When women try to develop a small business, they often have challenges obtaining capital as they usually do not have the necessary collateral (namely, a certificate of titles) demanded by financial institutions.\footnote{119} This is directly linked to the fact that according to the Indigenous Act: "...the lands in the Territory is the property of the Kalinago Council and no individual can own land and/or be titled land is his or her name..." This has major implications for individual socioeconomic advancement.\footnote{120}

In 2002, the Government ratified the ILO's \textit{Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169)} (ITP) and voted in favour of the UN \textit{Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007}.\footnote{121}

Article 14 of Convention No. 169 states that: "...the rights of ownership and possession of the peoples concerned over the lands which they traditionally occupy shall be recognized..." Article 20, which deals with the general conditions of employment, promotes that: "Particular attention shall be paid to the establishment of adequate labour inspection services in areas where workers belonging to the peoples concerned undertake wage employment, in order to ensure compliance with the provisions of this Part of this Convention..."\footnote{122}

Article 22 of the UN Declaration states that particular attention should: "...be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous women and that States... should... "take measures to ensure that indigenous women enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination..."\footnote{123}
Indigenous’ rights also are addressed within ILO’s Decent Work Agenda, with gender equality and non-discrimination as crosscutting concerns to support indigenous and tribal peoples’ empowerment, as it is through decent work that indigenous people -- and in particular women -- will reach their potential and become active players in poverty reduction, sustainable development and climate change action.124 To that effect, ILO has supported the implementation of Convention No. 169; Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202); and the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation (No. 204).

While Indigenous women often play a vital role in securing income, they generally do not receive recognition for their labour and economic contributions. Statistical information on participation in employment and training, disaggregated by sex and ethnicity, is lacking in Dominica as a whole, but even more so for Kalinago women.

---

Legal and policy analysis

3.1 International Conventions on gender and work ratified by Dominica

Dominica has ratified 26 ILO Conventions, including all eight Fundamental Conventions internationally recognized as the “core labour standards”. Dominica has only ratified two of the four core gender equality Conventions, namely: the Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111).

However, the following Conventions with relevance to gender at work are yet to ratified:

- The Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156);
- The Maternity Protection Convention (No. 183); and
- The Domestic Workers Convention 2011 (No. 189).

Table 4 shows the general gender and employment-related Conventions ratified by Dominica.

---

These instruments afford women a wide range of economic, social and cultural rights, notably: the right to work, the right to health and social security, the right to education, the right to join an organization of their choosing, the right to housing, and the right to food. To be effective, however, these international and regional human rights instruments require that the guarantees embedded in them be implemented in practice.

It should be noted that since the ratification of the CEDAW Convention in 1980, the State has made a number of legislative and institutional reforms to existing legislation and has adopted new ones with implications for women and gender. Several of these reforms are detailed in the sections below.

- The Protection Against Domestic Violence Act No 22 of 2001 was passed.  
- Legal Aid Clinic was established which serves especially low-income women to include those affected by domestic violence and other family related conflicts.  

Table 4 | International / Regional Instruments ratified by the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica with gender policy implications  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Ratification Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Covenant on Civil and Political rights (ICCPR)</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women — “Convention de Bélem do Pará”</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


National Poverty Assessment was conducted in 2002 targeting rural poverty and women's needs for income.  

The National Gender Policy was introduced in 2006.  


Title by Registration 1998 Amendment Act, which influenced to some measure women's access to land and by extension would facilitate access to credit from financial institutions.  

The Dominica National Policy on Aging (2000), which is especially relevant to women, since according to census data, they outlive men and tend to be more economically dependent.

### 3.2 Discrimination and equal opportunity

The 1978 Constitution of Dominica is the highest Law of the land. The Constitution guarantees the protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms to all persons. Specifically, Sections 13(1), (2) and (3) of the Constitution prohibit discrimination by any person or authority on the basis of sex.

The Labour Standards Act 1977 (amended 1983, 1990, 1991) makes provision for maternity leave (Sections 17 to 23) and prohibits sex discrimination in pay (Sections 24 to 26). The Labour Contracts Act 1983 (amended in 1990) reiterates the prohibition of sex discrimination in pay (Paragraphs 10(a) and (b)) and states that employment contracts with female employees must include specification of maternity leave entitlement and pay during maternity leave (Section 5(2)). While providing important safeguards, these Acts do not clearly address critical elements of gender equality at work, such as discriminatory recruitment and promotion practices, and sexual harassment. The issues of maternity leave and sex discrimination in pay will be examined further, in Sections 3.3 and 3.4 of this chapter.

The safeguards provided by the Contracts Act do not apply to all workers. Notably, they do not apply in respect of the employment of a home assistant (Clause 2(3)(g)) or an agricultural worker (Clause 2(3)(h)). Domestic work is an important source of employment for poorer women, and it is notable that their employment is not protected in the same way as other workers. Agricultural work remains important in the Dominican economy as a means of livelihood and source of food security.

The Protection of Employment Act 1977, Chapter 89:02 covers conditions to protect workers subjected to termination of employment and under which they may receive redundancy benefits. Domestic workers are protected under Section 1, which covers conditions of termination, but Sections 2 and

---

136 Ministry of Community Development, Gender Affairs and Information, 2006, ibid.
3, covering redundancy benefit payments and the redundancy benefit fund, are not applicable to
domestic workers. The lack of protection of income under circumstances of redundancy adds to the
vulnerability of domestic workers, most of whom are women. 144

The achievement of substantive equality also is held back in Dominica by the fact that there are no
affirmative action quotas in respect of the number or proportion of women on corporate boards, in
Parliament, in Local Government, on candidate lists for Parliament or on candidate lists for Local
Government. 145 However, in Section13(4)(d) of the Constitution, allowance is made for laws that
accord “privilege or advantage” to address “disability or restriction” caused by discrimination. 146

On the other hand, legislation generally is gender neutral, so that women can legally do the following
in the same way as a man in Dominica, all of which facilitate opportunities for work and income-
earning: apply for a passport or national ID card; travel outside the country or her home; get a job;
sign a contract; register a business; open a bank account; own property; and choose where to live.
The Law also provides for the valuation of non–monetary contributions (such as child care and
domestic work) in divorce settlements. Sons and daughters, and male and female spouses, have
equal inheritance rights. Women’s testimony in Court is (in law) afforded equal weight to that of a
man. These rights may be taken for granted, but in some countries, women do not have all these
rights. Those regarding business, finance and property are important in facilitating access to credit
and entrepreneurship among women.

3.3 Maternity and paternity leave and parental policies

Under the Labour Standards Act, Sections 17 to 23, Maternity Leave is available for a period of 12
weeks to women who have worked for one year with their employer. The employer must pay the
woman a weekly wage that is not less than one–half of her normal weekly wage for a period of four
weeks, following the start of maternity leave. Women must be reinstated following the end of such
leave, in the same or similar job and at the same rate of pay. 147

The Labour Contracts Act states that a labour contract between an employer and a female employee
must set out the maternity leave to which the employee is entitled and the pay she should receive
during the period of her maternity leave. 148 149 Members of the medical fraternity have advocated
for an extension of the nine weeks mandatory post-partum leave, to enable exclusive breastfeeding
for six months, in line with international health recommendations. 150 Notably, the ILO’s Maternity
Protection Convention (No. 183) states that countries should provide at least 14 weeks of maternity
leave, and employers should adopt minimum standards to enable breastfeeding at work. The provision
of nursing breaks by employers is not required by Law, but is facilitated by some employers on a
discretionary basis. 151
Under the Social Security Act, maternity benefit is payable if woman has been insured for 30 weeks and had worked for 20 weeks of the most recent of those weeks. The daily rate of maternity benefit is 60 per cent of the average weekly insurable earnings of the insured person divided by six. A maternity grant of EC$200 may be paid to mothers who have paid or whose spouse has paid contributions for at least 26 weeks out of the past 52 weeks. The amount of the grant was reviewed in 2003 to permit an increase from EC$250 to EC$500 for each child born and is a one-time lump sum payment. In the case of a person indebted to the hospital, the amount can be deducted from the grant. Paternity Leave is not mandatory in Dominica. However, male public sector workers have been able to negotiate a collective agreement which provides paternity leave provisions between the main trade union (WAWU) and the Government, signed in December 2008.

152 Social Security Act, ibid.
155 Labour Standards Act, ibid.
3.4 Equal remuneration for work of equal value

The Labour Standards Act and the Labour Contracts Act seek to achieve equal pay for equal work between the sexes. Section 24 of that Act stipulates: “No employer shall establish or maintain differences in wages between male and female employees employed in the same business who are performing, under the same working conditions, the same or similar work or jobs requiring similar skill, effort and responsibility.” 156

The Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) is an ILO Body of independent legal experts responsible for monitoring the implementation of ILO Conventions by member States. With respect to the implementation of the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) by Dominica, the Committee indicated that the Provision of Section 24 of the Labour Standards Act does fully implement the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value, which requires consideration on equality, not only within the same job or occupation, but also across different occupations based on such factors as level of responsibilities or background required.

The UN Human Rights Council have also expressed concerns about the fact that the Labour Standards Act does not “give full legislative expression to the principle of equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value”. 157

The Labour Contract Act, Section 3, further provides that every employer, not later than fourteen days after assumption of employment, must enter into a labour contract with the employee detailing the terms and conditions of employment. It further states in Section 10(a) that employers shall not maintain wage differences only on the basis of sex. Section 10(b) qualifies this by saying that wage differences between male and female employees are permissible if they are based on factors other than sex. 158

Thus, the Legislation covers the same (or similar) work in the same business under the same working conditions; however, it stops short of addressing work of equal value in different businesses and under different working conditions. 159 Pay differentials due to occupational and workplace segregation by sex are therefore not addressed.

The Labour Contracts Act (Section 5.1) stipulates that minimum wages may be set by the Minister in respect of an occupation or category of employment.

In 2008, the Labour Standards (Minimum Wage) Order revised the schedule of minimum wages, as illustrated in Table 5. 160

---

156 Labour Standards Act, ibid.
158 Labour Contracts Act, ibid.
159 World Bank, 2016, ibid.
3.5 Work-family responsibilities, including state-provided child care services

The Commonwealth of Dominica has not yet ratified the *Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156)*.

According to the 2014 CDB Country Gender Assessment of Dominica:

> Employers (including the Government and private sector) do not provide childcare facilities, although some workplaces allow parents (often single mothers) to bring their children to the workplace after school. Traditionally, parents have relied on assistance from family and friends to care for pre-school children. However, factors such as increasing numbers of women in the labour force and migration have affected the capacity of the extended family and community to provide childcare. There has been an increase in day-care facilities and pre-schools, which are concentrated in the capital and towns. Government also provides a subvention for early childhood education. Where these options are not available, children are left unattended at home.\(^{163}\)

---


162 World Bank, 2016, *ibid*.

In Dominica, there is some subsidized childcare provision. Primary school education is also free and compulsory. However:

- Childcare payments are not tax deductible;
- The Government does not provide a child allowance to parents;
- Employers are not legally obliged to provide leave to care for sick relatives; and
- There is no law providing for flexible or part-time schedules.\(^{164}\)

The absence of policy in this area presents barriers to the participation of women in the workforce.

A research paper published by the OAS circa 2008 states that some 54 per cent of children of pre-school age had access to pre-schools and day care centres. Salaries for pre-school teachers and carers were very low – a fraction of the salaries of primary school teachers. Citing data from individual country reports prepared in 1999 for the *Education For All: Assessment 2000* process in the Caribbean, the Report notes that Dominica had the lowest expenditure on early childhood provision as a percentage of the national budget. Those monies were used to pay the salaries of the Assistant Education Officer and Training Coordinator, and fund grants and subventions for the following:

1. To assist a number of pre-schools approved by the Chief Education Officer with the payment of rent and salaries.
2. To provide educational materials and supplies for the training of pre-school teachers.
3. To monitor the operations of pre-schools throughout the State.\(^{165}\)

With regard to Legislation supporting the family unit and protecting the mothers and their children, the Government of Dominica does not have a Family Court to address issues such as maintenance, child custody, and gender-based violence in a comprehensive and integrated manner. The *Maintenance Act 1982* (Chapter 35:61), establishes that men and women have equal responsibilities for maintaining each other and their children. The Act has been amended to increase provisions to EC$75 a week for the maintenance of a child. Currently, magistrates can order payment of up to EC$300 for the maintenance of spouses.\(^{166}\) It has been reported that administrative issues have hindered the execution of the Act.\(^{167}\)

### 3.6 Social protection

Social protection is enshrined in the Constitution through three separate Acts:

1. The Social Security Act 1975 (revised in 1991);
2. The Labour Standards Act 4:2(b);\(^{168}\) and
3. The Pensions Act 1944 (Amendment 11, 1991).\(^{169}\)

---

\(^{164}\) World Bank, 2016, ibid.
\(^{165}\) S. Williams: *The state of early childhood provision in Dominica*, (OAS, 2008).
\(^{167}\) R. Baksh, 2014, ibid.
\(^{168}\) *Labour Standards Act*, ibid.
The *Labour Standards Act* Section 4:2(b) defines social benefits such as holiday pay, sick leave, job training, disability and old age benefits. The *Social Security Act 1975* establishes eligibility conditions for benefits established under the Act. It contains the entitlement, rate and duration of sickness benefit, maternity benefit, invalidity benefit, old age pension, survivors benefit, employment accident benefit, and death allowance. It also applies to self-employed persons. The Act was revised in 1991 and specifies how benefits will be extended to beneficiaries in the event of the death of the insured. The registered beneficiary can retain access to these benefits even if the insured remarried. The relationship need not involve marriage; it can be common-law, involving cohabitation. These provisions are advantageous to women (and some men) given instability in relationships and low rates of marriage.

The *Protection of Employment Act* Chapter 89:02 of the Revised Laws of Dominica provides conditions of termination and redundancy benefits and protection for all category of all workers. However, clause 2(4) states: “Part II and III does not apply to or in respect of the employment of a person as a domestic servant”. This means that domestic workers, who are predominantly female, are excluded from receiving redundancy benefits.

The Dominica Social Security Corporation (DSSC) oversees social insurance. The Scheme provides protection to insured persons (people who have contributed to the National Insurance Fund) in the event of certain contingencies. Benefits include sickness, old age pension, survivors, death, and maternity, unemployment due to redundancy, industrial accidents, occupational hazards and health care. The DSSC works a contributory scheme for employees, self-employed persons and voluntary contributors. Details of the various benefits are available in a guide document. Women tend to have less access to social insurance benefits than men as they tend to make smaller contributions to the fund. This is because they are less likely to be formally employed and their duration of employment is shorter than that of men.

Social protection also is administered through some Government Ministries and local non-governmental organizations. It includes financial aid assistance programmes such as the *Public Assistance Programme*, a means-tested temporary relief programme of the Social Welfare Division of the Ministry of Social Services, Family and Gender Affairs. It is directed at indigent persons and families, including single parent households, in which both parents are unemployed. The Programme offers financial help in the amount of EC$150 monthly for an adult and EC$127.50 monthly for a child, or until the child leaves secondary school. There is a family Allowance of EC$127.50 per child monthly, up to a maximum of EC$375 monthly. These small sums may do little to assist women who have restricted access to employment.
Given the longer life expectancy among women, social protection measures for the elderly are important in achieving gender equity. At present, there are six established Government–sponsored homes providing care for the elderly. In 2008 the Government established a monthly allowance Programme for centenarians of EC$500. Centenarians also receive a free supply of cooking gas for life. The Government adopted Universal Health Care for Older Persons in 2008. Persons over the age of 60 receive free medical care which includes all diagnostic and other tests, as well as hospitalization, surgical procedures, prescriptions and emergency and casualty visits.

The Yes We Care Programme commenced in 2009. This complements the Elderly Care Programme, providing personal home care to selected house-bound elderly and disabled persons who have no one to care for them. Currently, the Programme provides care for 198 persons; data are not disaggregated by sex.  

The portfolio of social protection also extends to education-based social programmes. The Education Trust Fund is a Programme of the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development established by an Act of Parliament No. 17 of 1981, providing financial assistance to the households of secondary school students with severe financial difficulties, who, without this aid, would be unable to continue their education. The Fund also provides a School Transfer Grant from EC$250 to EC$500 for children designed to assist students who are less fortunate moving from primary to secondary school.

---


The National Development Fund of Dominica runs a Ready Cash Facility to working individuals who have been employed for a year and who need financial assistance. The loan amount ranges from EC$1,000 to EC$5,000 to be repaid within a six to twelve-month period. The Facility does not require collateral and can be applied towards a number of expenses such as travel, purchase of school supplies, purchase of appliances or furniture, and educational expenses.  

Sex disaggregation of recipients was not available. However, this Facility is expected to be helpful to women on low incomes, given their major responsibility for basic household expenditure.

### 3.7 Tackling the issues of sexual harassment and gender–based violence

The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará), which Dominica ratified in 1995, recognizes in Article 3, that every woman has the right to be free from violence in both the public and private spheres, and details, in Chapter III, State’s duties to put in place measures to eliminate violence against women. In Article 9, it holds that States Parties have an obligation to consider the particular risk women face from discrimination and violence in their policies, whether because of sex, race, ethnicity, minor age, or because they are disadvantaged socio-economically.

In 2013, Dominica also ratified the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children. In 2014, the Government reported to the UN Human Rights Council that it was reviewing all legislation related to violence against women and children, with a view to strengthening the relevant provisions. The Government stated that resources were provided to protect women and children, in particular those who were victims of domestic violence. In 2011, a central registry on domestic violence was established in the Bureau of Gender Affairs, in which a record of all reported cases of domestic violence was stored. In 2014 the Government also reported that a national strategic plan on gender-based violence would be submitted soon for approval, but additional resources would be necessary for its implementation.

However, there is no sexual harassment legislation, with civil remedies or criminal penalties covering employment, education or public places in Dominica. The National Legislation regulates domestic and sexual violence via the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act. The perpetrator and the victim respectively, could be either male or female, so the Legislation is gender-neutral.

The Protection Against Domestic Violence Act 2001 addresses violence against men, women and children. Section 2 of the Act defines domestic violence in broad terms as: “…including physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological or financial abuse committed by a person against a spouse, child, [and] any other person who is a member of the household, dependent or parent of a child of that household…”

---

184 World Bank, 2016, ibid.
The Act provides for Protection, Occupation or Tenancy Orders. Protection orders remove the perpetrator from the home and prohibit contact. There is a specialized court procedure for domestic violence.

However, marital rape is not criminalized; rape perpetrators are exempt if they are married to the victim. In addition, in reviewing the implementation of the Act, the CDB Dominica Country Gender Assessment concludes that: “While the legislation gives the Court’s broad powers for protecting domestic violence victims, its effectiveness is undermined by the fact that domestic violence is still viewed largely as ‘a private matter’.”

As a result, protection orders are often not effectively executed, and often crimes are not prosecuted.

The Sexual Offences Act (1998) provides protection for victims of rape (defined in Part 1, Section 3(1)) by sexual intercourse—defined as penetration of the vagina, to any extent, by the penis (Section 2.2). Unlawful sexual connection entails a lower prison sentence (14 years as against 25 years) and involves vaginal or anal penetration by any body part or object without consent (Part 1, Section 4). The Act does not address fondling and touching of other parts of the body.

Under the Law, a person, male or female, under the age of 16 years cannot consent to sexual intercourse. Sexual intercourse with a minor aged 14 or younger entails a penalty of 25 years; while with a person 14–16 years, the penalty is 14 years (Part 1, Sections 7 and 8). The Act penalizes a person with a fine of EC$5,000 and imprisonment for five years if s/he: “…keeps, manages, assists or assists in the management of a brothel… lives wholly or in part on the earnings of prostitution… or… in any place solicit for immoral purposes.”

This is a substantial penalty against sex work, in which people, especially women, may engage, given difficulties in accessing other forms of employment.

The BGA and the DNCW are the two most prominent organizations addressing the issue of domestic violence. Other Government agencies (such as the Welfare Division) also offer counselling services, which may overlap with those of the BGA or the DNCW. The BGA delivers services such as counselling, guidance and referrals for survivors of domestic violence. Through the attachment of a legal aid, survivors are offered legal advice and assistance, and where and when necessary, some form of minimal financial and material support. In the absence of a full-time professional counsellor, the BGA has expressed the view that follow-up counselling is deficient.

The DNCW has a crisis intervention programme in operation, which includes a hotline system. It was reported that in previous years it used to provide temporary shelter to survivors of gender-based violence. However, due to financial constraints, this service was discontinued in 2014.

---

186 World Bank, 2016, ibid., p. 117.
187 R. Baksh, 2016, ibid., p. 56.
188 R. Baksh, 2016, ibid.
190 R. Baksh, 2016, ibid.
191 Sexual Offences Act, ibid., Sections 24 and 25.
192 Ministry of Community Development, Gender Affairs and Information, 2006, ibid.
A 2009 study found that the facilities for survivors consisted of a single room at their headquarters, and DNCW staff often worked to access temporary accommodation for survivors and their children in the homes of family members and friends of staff. At that time, there were four people working at the Organization, and DNCW received no Government funding. District Health Centres and the Hospitals also offer health care services for persons who may have been physically attacked.

Like other women in Dominica, Kalinago women experience domestic violence. Their remote location within the Kalinago Territory increases their vulnerability, as professional services such as lawyers and counsellors are not locally available within the Territory. Also, in the event that a complaint is lodged, women would have to travel close to ten miles to attend a Court hearing. It has been stated that many cases are not reported to the authorities for these reasons.

Lifeline Ministries is a faith based organization providing support to adults and children who are survivors of gender-based violence. With funding from the British High Commission and the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, and with collaboration from the DNCW, Lifeline also conducts training for victim supporters and facilitates support groups for women and girls.

The Caribbean Male Action Network (CariMAN) is a regional not-for-profit Organization, registered under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, which also has a Dominica Chapter. With the support of UN Women and UNFPA, they launched the Champions for Change Project in May 2010 in Barbados. This Project worked towards eradicating gender-based violence in the Caribbean. There is a related Project in Dominica.

The West Dominica Children’s Federation is an NGO with a Programme that focuses on the issues of alcohol and drugs, sexual abuse, unemployment, teenage pregnancy, and violence.

### 3.8 Policies and initiatives to stimulate entrepreneurship

The International Finance Corporation, in collaboration with the World Bank and the Caribbean Local Economic Development (CARILED), recently published two reports looking at entrepreneurship and gender. The 2013 Private Sector Assessment Report (PSAR) reviews the state of the private sector in Dominica; while the CARILED 2016 Country Study evaluates gender related challenges affecting Local Governments and Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises (MSMEs). These two reports, along with the Growth and Social Protection Strategy (GSPS) 2014 – 2018, and the Dominica Country Gender Assessment (CGA) Report were used as the main data sources to inform this section.

MSMEs can be a major source of income and employment and have the potential to support the development of economic growth, for example through agri-business and eco-tourism. The country’s
GSPS asserts that they are perhaps the “surest route to employment generation and poverty reduction”. Since 2011, the Government has been discussing the drafting of a Small Business Act that will help streamline and improve the legislative and regulatory framework for the operation and support of small businesses in Dominica. Information on the status of this initiative is not available online.

Field research done by CARILED, informs that over 3,020 small business owned by females are currently registered with Inland Revenue. Their on-the-ground work in two areas in Dominica—Woodford Hill and Soufriere Scott’s Head and Gallion (SSG)—provides some perspective. In SSG, most businesses were micro-enterprises, with the largest “small enterprise” employing 20 persons. Of the 25 most visible businesses, 80 per cent were operated by individuals over 35 years of age, and 60 per cent were owned by men. No business support services existed in the area. In Woodford Hill, most MSMEs fell within the service industry, with a minority in fishing, tourism, manufacturing and trade. Focus group discussions for the CARILED Study showed the reasons most women gave for venturing into entrepreneurship were subsistence-related (namely, to feed their family) as opposed to being driven by personal and social advancement desires and to increase their net worth.

Among the barriers identified to develop businesses in Dominica, both the PSAR and the CARILED identify access to finance as a major challenge. In the PSAR, 44 per cent of firms identified this as the biggest obstacle to doing business in the country. Credit is available through various banking institutions: Bank of Nova Scotia; Royal Bank of Canada; First Caribbean International Bank; the Cooperative Credit Unions, which have agricultural operations; and the AID Bank (the Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank).

While the PSAR identified this as being gender neutral, the CARILED study proposed that women face even more difficulties in obtaining financial assistance and credit due to the high requirements for collateral, notably through the mainstream banking system, making formal credit beyond the reach of many women. Consequently, even if men and women have equal access to loan facilities, men are more likely to succeed in securing such loans. As a result, some women turn to moneylenders and pay high interest.

The Dominica CGA revealed that the Agricultural, Industrial and Development (AID) Bank of Dominica requires substantial, fixed collateral as loan guarantees. Between 2011 and 2012, only 9.5 per cent of agricultural loans approved by the AID were for women. The CGA points to a clear difference of in male/female participation in the AID bank by sector. For example, 55 per cent of all loans approved for education were allocated to women clients, while the highest male participation rate (86 per cent) is in agriculture. These trends highlight that even in the allocation of loans, a gender bias is in effect.

202 Ministry of Finance, ibid.
203 CARILED, 2016, ibid.
204 CARILED, 2016, ibid.
206 CARILED, 2016, ibid.
207 CARILED, 2016, ibid.
As noted in Section 3.2 above, there are no legal restrictions on ownership of property (including land), by women, and inheritance laws do not discriminate on the basis of sex. However, in practice, women's ownership of property is constrained by their lower incomes and barriers to labour force participation.

Actions from the Government to stimulate MSMEs has been focused on providing credit and associated training. The Ministry of Community Development, Social Services and Gender Affairs, through the Bureau of Gender Affairs, has partnered with the National Development Foundation of Dominica (NDFD) to set up a loan facility for women. This is described above, in Section 2.4. 209 The NDFD also offers training and technical and managerial assistance to MSME business owners (with their business plans, financial and business statements, cash flow projections, VAT calculation, income tax and social security payments), and receives funding from the European Union through the European Commission Delegation to that effect. The French Cooperation also has made available a grant to assist in the establishment of the NDFD's Accounting Business Management and Training Centre (ABMTC), which addresses the need of technical support to the small and medium sized business sectors in the Commonwealth of Dominica.

NDFD also has received additional funds from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA). It has signed a Memorandum of Understanding, whereby the Foundation assists rural women in developing their micro-enterprises. This Project comprised three phases, including a needs assessment, training in business management (based on the assessment) and the disbursement of US$15,000 to be utilized to purchase equipment and raw materials for their business ventures. Twenty-two women received assistance, as of 2014, with funding worth over EC $39,000. 210

The Government’s Employment and Small Business Unit (ESBU) makes grants and soft loans available, encouraging and supporting the formation of MSME clusters that can benefit from joint sourcing of materials, corporate marketing, general training and other services. By June 2014, some 1,600 business persons had received small business subsidies and loans to the tune of EC$10.0 million. The distribution of these loans between the sexes was not stated. 211

The GSPS states that MSMEs face more problems than just access to credit and that access to growing markets, market intelligence, new technologies and appropriate training are often as important, if not more important than the financial constraints. 212 The strategy identifies the following additional support services as needed by business owners of MSMEs:

1. Training;
2. Business advisory/consulting services;
3. Market development services for both inputs and outputs, including market intelligence and facilitating linkages with buyers and suppliers;
4. Support facilities (e.g. business incubators); and
5. Product research and development.

210  National Development Foundation of Dominica (NDFD). 2014 Annual Report: Riding out the economic storm by empowering the MSME sector; (Roseau, NDFD, 2014)
211  Ministry of Finance, 2014, ibid.
212  Ministry of Finance, 2014, ibid.
An assessment of progress in establishing institutions to meet these needs is not available from the online sources reviewed.

Another Government initiative has been the Dominica Youth Business Trust (DYBT) within the Youth Division with its three-fold mandate to:

1. Train young people in micro- and small-business development;
2. Facilitate access to credit through a loan guarantee fund; and
3. Sustain a mentorship programme to provide continuous technical support.

For the fiscal year 2013–14, the GSPS Strategy Report documented that under its Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP), it trained some 226 people (107 males and 119 females) of which 64 are currently in business. Sixty-one EDP loans were granted to 27 men and 34 women. Under the Small Business Assistance Facility (SBAF), 249 persons (126 men and 123 women) were trained, of which 186 are currently in business. Forty-three SBAF loans have been granted to 24 men and 19 women. Employment generated by the two facilities amounted to a total of 245 persons. 213
Discussion of the findings and the way forward for future research

4.1 A summary of the key findings

Globally, a gap of 26 percentage points separates women and men in labour force participation – 76 per cent of men and 50 per cent of women are in the global labour force.\(^{214}\) For the Commonwealth of Dominica, statistics in 2013 revealed labour force participation to be higher for men (71 per cent) than women (60 per cent); a gap of some 11 per cent.

The smaller gender gap may be explained by several factors, such as the necessity for women to work outside their homes to support their families, resulting sometimes from relationship instability,\(^{215}\) and the fact that roughly 40 per cent of household heads are women. The participation of women may have been encouraged by the lack of formal barriers for women to work, register a business or to own and inherit property, and a Constitution that prohibits sex discrimination. The increase in the share of jobs in the services sector, and the decline in agricultural and manufacturing employment, has tended to favour the employment of women. The lower than global average participation of men

---


may be associated with the informal and unregistered nature of some economic activity. Higher rates of male participation in the informal sector is suggested by the finding that one-third of male employees and a fifth of female employees are own account workers. 216

In Dominica, the gender gap in labour force participation is nevertheless significant, and unemployment is higher among women than men. Despite higher educational achievements, women are paid less than men, even in occupations where they are the majority of employees. Within households, women spend more than twice as much time as men on unpaid domestic work. The vast majority of women-owned businesses are micro-enterprises.

A Gender Policy has been in place since 2006, and a gender machinery has been in place since the early 1980s. Activities to address gender inequality have been led by a small office, which has had changes to its line Ministry many times.

Notable contributions to the facilitation of equal opportunities in employment include:

- Development of domestic violence Legislation and hosting of facilities for counselling and referral;
- Collaboration with non-governmental organizations to provide support and advocate for vulnerable women;
- Collaboration with the National Development Foundation of Dominica to assist women’s agricultural small enterprise development;
- Labour legislation granting maternity leave and prohibiting sex discrimination in pay for men and women doing the same or similar work in the same business under the same working conditions;
- Establishment of a Legal Aid Clinic with a focus on addressing vulnerabilities of women involved in disputes;
- Development of gender-sensitive adolescent development and training programmes by The Social Centre;
- Ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);
- Adoption/ratification of Conventions such as:
  - The Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action (BPfA);
  - Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women—“Convenção de Belem do Pará”;
  - International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action on Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment of Women; and
  - ILO Conventions on Equal Remuneration (No. 100), and Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) (No. 111).

However, despite the existence of a Gender Policy presenting an architecture for gender mainstreaming, such mainstreaming has not been implemented sufficiently, nor has it been sustained. Gender Focal Points have not functioned continually in some Ministries, and those that do exist have not been able to exercise sufficient authority to see through the integration of gender considerations to development policy, or to make effective challenges to power hierarchies between men and women. The current national Growth and Social Protection Strategy (2014–2018) includes a section on gender, with a

recommendation that gender considerations be infused into development programmes. However, it does not specify mechanisms through which this might be achieved in the world of work.

Overall, a generally gender-neutral legislative stance -- consistent with being “gender-blind” to power differences -- has stalled progress in achieving substantive equality between men and women at work in Dominica. This can be seen in the following areas:

- Lack of sex-disaggregated data to monitor the status of men and women in all but a minority of organizations;
- Lack of legislation to achieve earnings equality between the sexes for work of equal value;
- Lack of affirmative action measures in politics or business;
- Absence of measures to facilitate working parents, such as state-supported child care covering working hours, financial incentives for childcare providers, tax deductions for childcare payments, provision of a children's allowance and legislation supporting flexible and part-time work, time off to care for sick relatives, and maternity or parental leave. As a step to improve the work prospects of working parents and especially women, it may be helpful for Dominica to ratify the ILO Convention concerning Workers with Family Responsibilities (No. 156);
- Lack of alignment of the duration of maternity leave and accommodations in the workplace for breastfeeding mothers with internationally recognized good practice. As a step to improve maternity provisions, it may be helpful for Dominica to ratify the ILO Convention concerning Maternity Protection (No. 183);
- The Law does not mandate non-discrimination based on gender in hiring. It is not prohibited for prospective employers to ask about family status;
- Poor working conditions for domestic workers, compounded by them having the lowest level of minimum wage and no eligibility for redundancy benefits;
- Lack of flexibility of most financial institutions in requiring ownership of expensive items, such as land or buildings, as collateral to secure loans;
- Ministries responsible for labour and economic development generally have little or no focus on gender in their programmes;
- Absence of programmes dedicated to addressing the double marginalization of Kalinago women; and
- Very low monetary value of, and bureaucratic difficulties in accessing, non-contributory public assistance for the poor.

Any scope for reducing gender inequality at work is hampered further by gaps in information and data to monitor the status of implementation of initiatives and policies (notably the 2006 Gender Policy and its 2013 update), and male-female differences in outcomes. Data is lacking on the numbers of male and female clients served by governmental and non-governmental organizations, the Employer’s Federation and trade unions, in their work to provide vocational training, work-related opportunities and stimulate and support entrepreneurship. Results of some surveys done are not accessible via the Internet, limiting their potential to guide policy and social action. Also critical is the lack of accessible longitudinal data to assess progress in reducing gender inequality on key indicators such as labour force participation, employment-to-population ratio, unemployment and wage rates.
4.2 Areas of enquiry for the future

The experience of Dominica illustrates the difficulty of mainstreaming gender by relying on a small unit within Government bureaucracy. The financial and human resource constraints of Dominica’s status as a Small Island Developing State provide part of the explanation of the difficulty. Nevertheless, greater political will and leadership can assist in making progress with regard to the issues highlighted above and achieving greater gender equality in the world of work. Gender equality should be recognized as an economic development issue as well as a human rights issue.

“Gender” refers to the ascription of different roles, rights, responsibilities and obligations to females and males. It leads to differences in economic, social and political status and attainment. Gender matters in national development for reasons of justice and economic attainment. In the economic sphere, justice concerns the equitable distribution of resources and the degree of inclusion and opportunity to share in wealth. Systematic discrimination against a sector of society, such as women or men, can stifle a people’s capacity to contribute to wealth generation. It leads to the inefficient use of human resources. It has been demonstrated that increasing the incomes of women has far-reaching effects, given their greater propensity to use their income to meet the needs of their dependents. 217 218

Acknowledgement of the strategic role of gender equality in work is needed in order to increase efficiency, boost economic growth and reduce poverty in Dominica. However, this is difficult to achieve with a “gender-neutral” stance, which does not acknowledge systemic differences in status and power between the sexes.

The sexual division of labour between “productive” and “social reproductive” work must be recognized, with greater sharing between the sexes of both roles, and greater economic value placed on social reproductive work by paying for it in line with its contribution to social and economic development.

Aguirre, R. and F. Ferrari. 2013. *Surveys on time use and unpaid work in Latin America and the Caribbean Experience to date and challenges for the future*. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (Santiago, Chile).


Department of Social Development and Employment. 2007. *Gender Equality for Decent Work Proposals for Mainstreaming Gender into Labor and Employment Policies within the Framework of the IACML*. Presented at the XV Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Organization of American States (OAS).


Stuart, S. 2014. Situation of unpaid work and gender in the Caribbean: the measurement of unpaid work through time-use studies. ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean. (Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago).


*Human Development Index Fact Sheet for Dominica.*

—. 2016. *Human Development Index Fact Sheet for Dominica.*


Available online at http://www.cepal.org/mujer/reuniones/mesa38/Dominica.pdf

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) / World Bank (Washington DC).
