

# Women at Work in G20 countries: Progress and policy action in 2022

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## Executive summary

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The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic lost momentum in 2022, with employment and unemployment stabilising as interest rates were increased to contain sharp hikes in price inflation. These developments have not prevented almost all G20 countries from achieving further progress in narrowing the gender gap in labour force participation. Nevertheless, just over half of G20 economies for which regular data are available are on track to reach the Brisbane goal by 2025. Therefore, reinforced efforts will be required to reach this goal and tackle gender gaps in other labour market outcomes, especially in wages, which remain stubbornly large. Based on their self-reports, the majority of G20 countries have taken recent measures to increase women's labour force participation and to improve working conditions and earnings for women. Only a few countries reported measures to improve women's labour market security. Further policy action will be required to tackle persisting gender gaps in employment and entrepreneurship, promote appropriate investment in quality provision of services in the care sector, support women through multiple transitions, ensure work quality and progression for all women and address persistent discriminatory norms and practices, and focus on promoting the right mindset to advance gender equality.

### Future policy directions

Looking ahead, there is a need to accelerate the pace of action to reach the Brisbane target and promote better job quality for all women and men in G20 countries. Gender transformative measures that could help achieve these outcomes include:

1. Promote a systematic, intentional and integrated approach to addressing gender gaps.
2. Tackle persisting gender gaps in employment and entrepreneurship.
3. Promote appropriate investment in quality provision of services in the care sector.
4. Support women through multiple transitions.
5. Ensure work quality for all women and address persistent discriminatory norms and practices.

## 1. Introduction

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At their Brisbane summit in 2014, G20 leaders committed to reduce the gender gap in the labour force participation rate by 25 per cent by the year 2025 (the 25x25 target). Subsequently, G20 Labour and Employment Ministers agreed on the G20 Policy Recommendations to Reduce Gender Gaps in Labour Force Participation and Pay by Improving Women's Job Quality (Bad Neunahr, 2017)<sup>1</sup> as well as the G20 Roadmap Towards and Beyond the Brisbane Target to also ensure progress in improving the quality of women's employment (Catania, 2021)<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, this annual report prepared by the ILO and OECD for the G20 Employment Working Group under the Indian G20 Presidency 2023 reviews progress in achieving the Brisbane goal as well as recent developments in reducing gender inequality in other key labour market outcomes.

Prospects for further narrowing of often wide gender gaps in labour market outcomes continue to remain clouded by the uncertain economic situation. Interest rates have been raised substantially in virtually all G20 countries to contain sharp hikes in price inflation and economic growth has slowed. Real wages have declined with nominal wage increases falling behind inflation, putting pressure on household budgets, especially for low-income households. Despite these more sombre economic prospects, governments in cooperation with the social partners must continue to push forward with the G20's wide-ranging agenda to promote greater gender equality in the labour market.

In this context, the report begins with a review of how gender gaps in labour market outcomes have evolved during 2022. This is followed by an overview of recent key policy developments to improve gender equality in the labour market based on the self-reports on the Brisbane goal provided by G20 members. Areas for further policy action are identified in the concluding section.

## 2. Recent developments in reducing gender gaps in labour market outcomes

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This section begins with an overview of recent labour market developments and their impact on women and men and whether the setbacks of the COVID-19 crisis have been fully overcome even as a new cost-of-living crisis has hit G20 economies. The discussion then turns to a review of progress against the Brisbane goal for 2022 as a whole before reviewing progress in narrowing gender gaps in a broader range of labour market outcomes.

### Recent labour market developments

Just as G20 labour markets were recovering from the COVID-19 crisis, they were hit by a cost-of-living crisis with inflation accelerating in the first half of 2022 to levels not seen in decades. Nominal wage growth has lagged behind and consequently real wages have been falling. The combination of higher inflation, rising interest rates to contain this rise and falling real wages resulted in slower GDP growth in the second half of 2022 with a small uptick in a few countries in the first quarter of 2023.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the labour market recovery has proved to be resilient in most G20 economies. In Q1 2023, total hours worked were still above or close to pre-pandemic levels in most G20 economies with the notable exceptions of Japan and South Africa. Unemployment rates remained at or below pre-pandemic levels. A key issue is whether this resilience has benefitted both women and men and whether the labour market recovery has been sufficiently strong to put back on track progress towards the Brisbane goal.

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<sup>1</sup> G20. 2017. *Annex B: G20 Policy Recommendations to Reduce Gender Gaps in Labour Force Participation and Pay by Improving Women's Job Quality* (Ministerial Declaration, G20 Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting, Bad Neuenahr, 18-19 May). Toronto, University of Toronto.

<sup>2</sup> G20. 2021. *Annex 1: G20 Roadmap Towards and Beyond the Brisbane Target: more, better and equally paid jobs for women* (G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Declaration, Catania, 23 June). Toronto, University of Toronto.

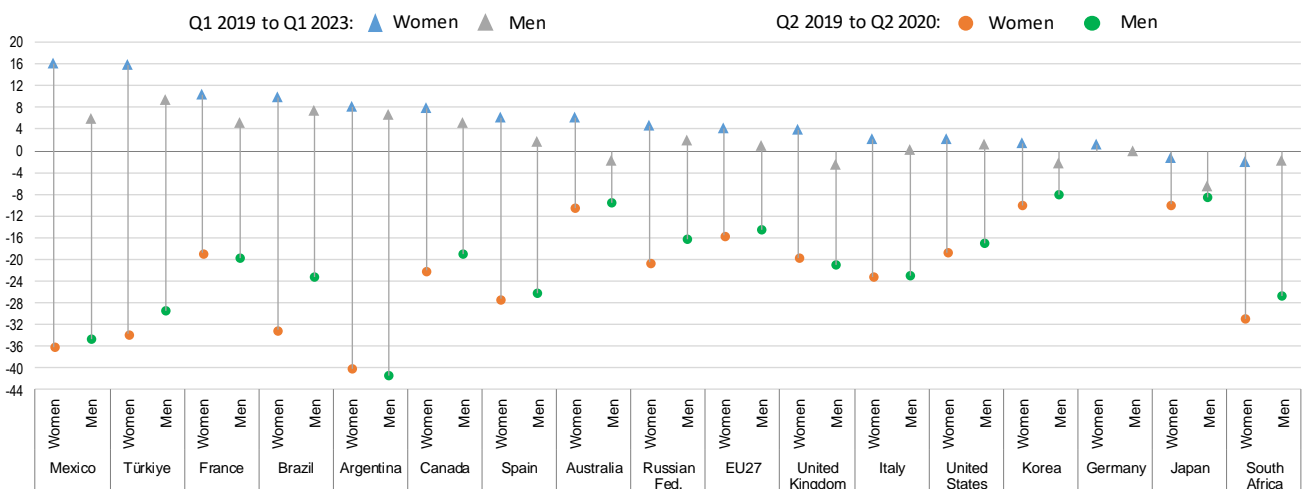
<sup>3</sup> See OECD (2023), *OECD Economic Outlook*, Vol. 2023 Issue 1, No. 113, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/ce188438-en>; and OECD (2023), *OECD Employment Outlook 2023*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/08785bba-en>.

## The impact of a slowing labour market recovery on women

As documented in last year's report (ILO-OECD, 2022), the strong labour market recovery from the depths of the COVID-19 crisis helped to reverse some of the disproportionately adverse impact of the crisis on women's labour market situation. This progress continued throughout 2022 and into 2023 despite the cost-of-living crisis. In Q1 2023, total hours worked by both women and men were higher than just before the pandemic in most of the G20 countries for which quarterly data are available (Figure 1). Moreover, **in most countries the bounce back in total hours worked was larger for women than for men**, reflecting a catching-up and stronger underlying trend growth for women than for men. However, in several countries, weaker economic growth in the second half of 2022 did mean that total hours worked were still below their pre-pandemic levels at the end of 2022, most notably in Japan and South Africa for both women and men.

**Figure 1. The recovery in working hours has been greater for women than men**

Change in total hours of work by gender (%)

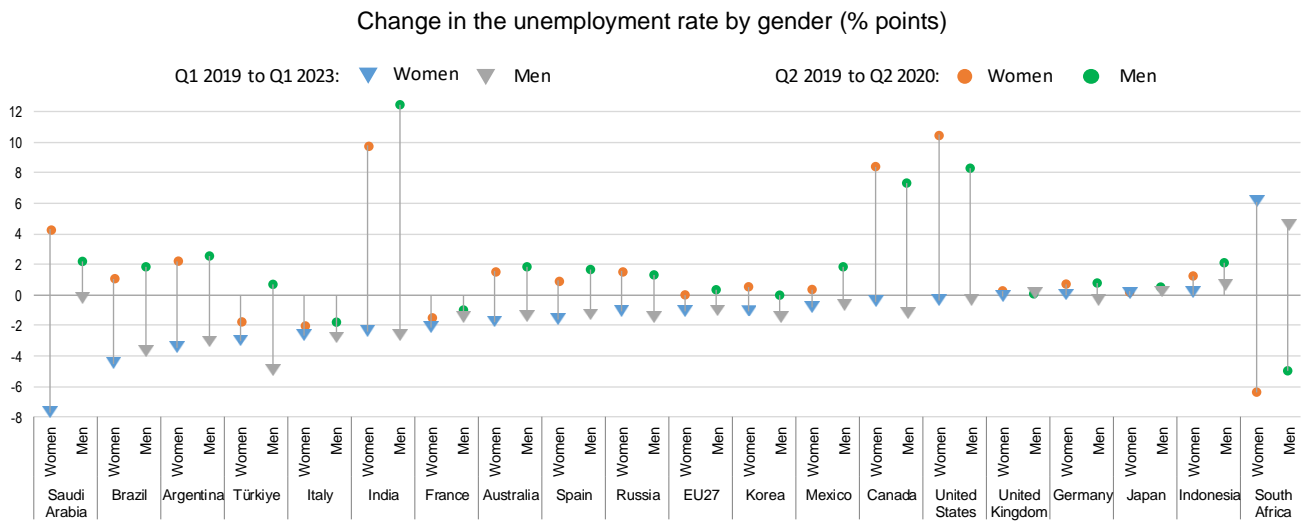


Note: The data for Argentina for Q1 2019 to Q1 2023 refer to Q4 2019 to Q4 2022.

Source: OECD calculations based on data from national labour force surveys.

Despite the substantial drop-in hours worked during the COVID-19 crisis, the impact on open unemployment was initially muted in many G20 economies, reflecting a sharp fall in participation rates and the introduction or expansion of job retention schemes on a massive scale, especially in the advanced G20 economies (Figure 2). In the subsequent recovery, unemployment rates quickly fell back to pre-pandemic levels or below, including in Canada, India and the United States where unemployment had initially risen considerably following the outbreak of the pandemic. South Africa is a notable exception where unemployment rates in the last quarter of 2022 were still above their levels of 2019. **The fall in unemployment during the recovery has been similar for both women and men** but generally reflected a larger bounce back in both participation and employment for women than men. Consequently, there was little change in the gender gap in the unemployment rate pre- and post-pandemic. A noticeable exception is Saudi Arabia where the gap has narrowed considerably although remaining large.

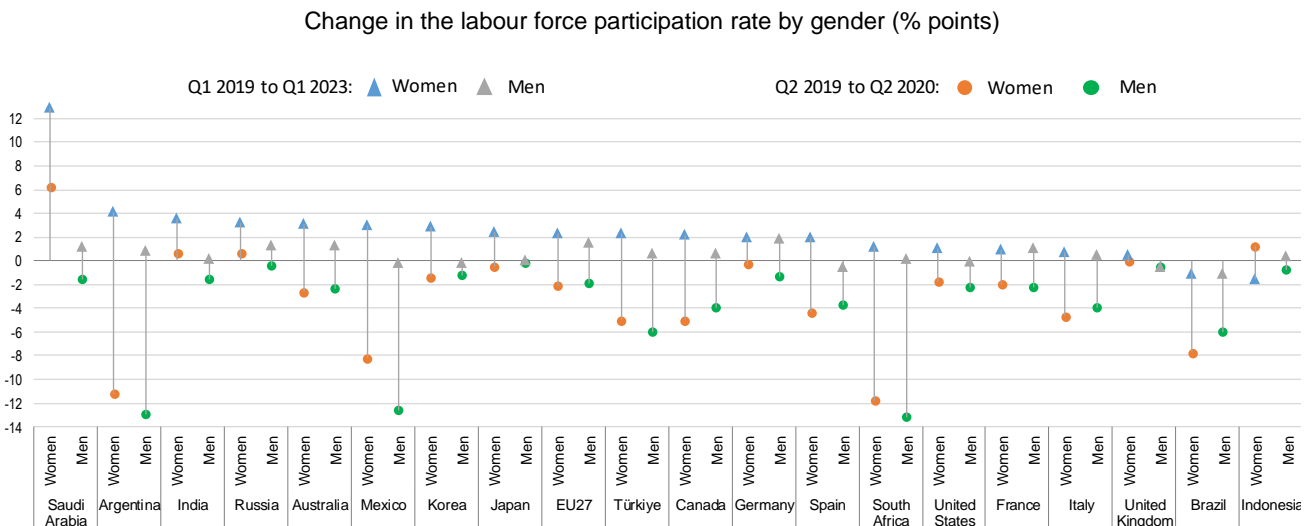
**Figure 2. The decline in unemployment has been similar for women and men**



Note: The data for Indonesia for Q2 2019 to Q2 2020 refer to Q3 2019 to Q3 2020. Persons aged 15 and over (16 and over for Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States) and urban areas only for India.  
 Source: OECD calculations based on data from national labour force surveys.

Labour force participation rates also rebounded in the recovery along with working hours, and, during the second half of 2022, proved to be resilient to the cost-of-living crisis. In Q1 2023, participation rates were back to or above their pre-pandemic levels in nearly all G20 countries where quarterly data are available, with a particularly strong recovery in Argentina, Mexico and South Africa (Figure 3). The rise has generally been greater for women than men, and consequently **some narrowing of the gender gap in labour force participation continues to be a hallmark of recent labour market developments in nearly all G20 economies**. In particular, the gap narrowed considerably in Saudi Arabia, although it still remains substantial.

**Figure 3. Labour force participation back to or above pre-pandemic levels**

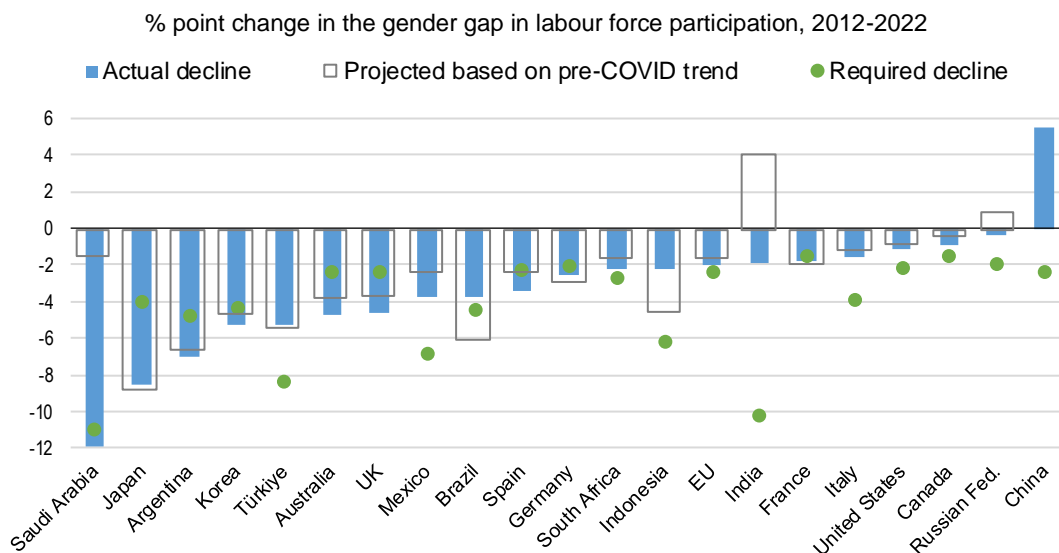


Note: The data for Indonesia for Q2 2019 to Q2 2020 refer to Q3 2019 to Q3 2020. Persons aged 15-64 (16-64 for Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States, and 15 and over for India and Saudi Arabia) and urban areas only for India.  
 Source: OECD calculations based on data from national labour force surveys.

## Progress in achieving the Brisbane goal

The COVID-19 pandemic initially set back progress in achieving the G20 Brisbane goal of narrowing the gender gap in labour force participation by 25 per cent by the year 2025. However, the strong labour market recovery has helped to make up lost ground. The declines recorded in the gender gap in labour force participation between 2012 and 2022 are now back in line for most G20 economies with their pre-pandemic trend decline (i.e. over the period 2012-2019) (Figure 4). This has been the result of a greater bounce back in participation for women than men during the recovery following a greater decline during the COVID-19 crisis. Brazil and Indonesia are notable exceptions where the observed decline in the gender gap remains well short of the pre-pandemic trend decline. Nevertheless, in the case of Brazil, the observed decline was not far off the decline required to meet the Brisbane target. The situation of China is also an exception where according to census data the gender gap in employment rates (data on changes in the participation are not available) actually widened between 2010 and 2020. On the positive side, labour force participation rates for women in Saudi Arabia have risen considerably since 2018, albeit from a low level, resulting in a steep fall in the gender gap that has exceeded the pre-pandemic trend decline and the decline required to meet the Brisbane goal. Nevertheless, despite most countries having successfully overcome the dampening impact of the pandemic on women's labour force participation, further progress will be required in several G20 countries. Overall, **in 12 G20 economies, the decline in the gender gap since 2012 is close to (within half a percentage point) or greater than the decline required to meet the G20 Brisbane goal.**

Figure 4. Progress in reaching G20 Brisbane goal has been set back by the COVID-19 pandemic



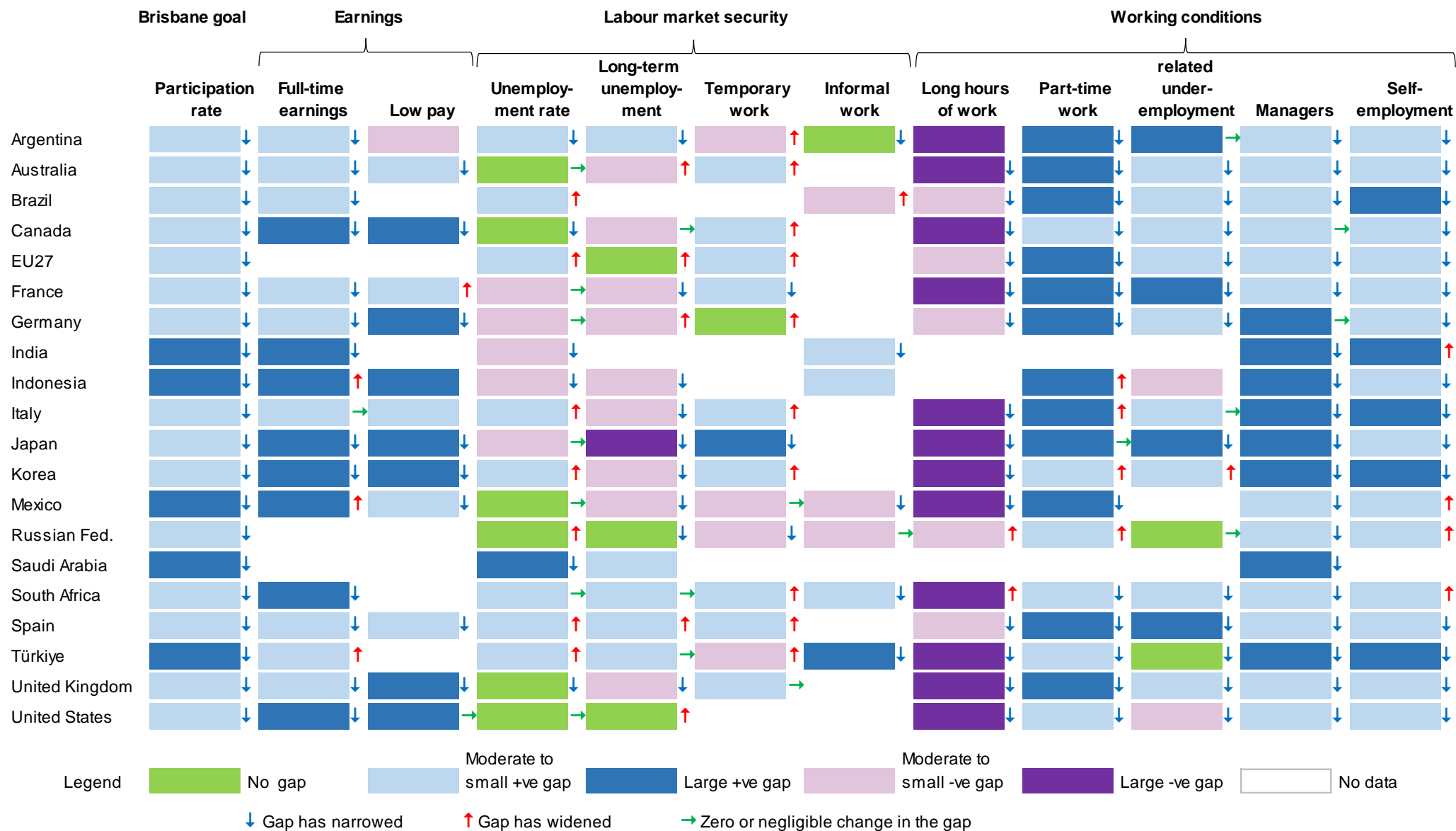
Note: **Actual decline**: observed change in the gender gap between 2012 and 2022 (2020 for China) for persons aged 15-64 (16-64 for China, the United Kingdom and the United States, 15 and over for Saudi Arabia); **projected decline**: extrapolation to 2022 of trend decline between 2012 and 2019; and **required decline**: pro-rata decline required by 2022 (2020 for China) to reach the target of a 25% decline by 2025. For China, the data refer the employment rate as labour force data from the 2020 census are unavailable, and the data for 2012 are interpolated estimates to calculate the actual and expected decline in the gender gap.

Source: OECD calculations based on data from national labour force surveys and, for China, census data.

## Progress in improving women's employment quality

In this section, gender gaps in job quality are assessed across G20 economies. The results are summarised in the dashboard in Table 1 and more detailed visualisations of these gender gaps can be found in Annex A. The indicators in the dashboard of gender gaps in employment quality are organised along the three key dimensions of the G20 Job Quality Framework: *i)* earnings, *ii)* labour market security and *iii)* working conditions. The dashboard indicates for each indicator whether the size of the gender gap for each country in 2022 (or the latest year available) is close to zero, small to moderate or large. Darker colours indicate larger gaps. The blue shading indicates a positive gap (poorer job quality for women than for men) and the purple shading indicates a negative gap (poorer job quality for men than for women). The arrows indicate whether the gender gaps have narrowed (down arrow) or widened (up arrow) since 2012.

Table 1. G20 dashboard of gender gaps in labour market outcomes, 2022 and changes since 2012



Notes: A positive gender gap indicates that either i) the participation rate, median earnings, employment share of managers or incidence of self-employment is lower for women than for men or ii) that the unemployment rate, the share of unemployment that is long term or the incidence of low pay, temporary work, informal work, long hours of work, part-time work or time-related underemployment is higher for women than for men. In the opposite case, the gender gap is negative. A moderate to small (positive or negative) gender gap for each indicator indicates that the gap is less than twice the standard deviation for all countries for which data are available. No gap indicates that gender gap is less than one-tenth of the standard deviation. See annex figures for further details of the definition of each indicator and additional notes.

Source: OECD and ILO labour force statistics databases. See figures in Annex A for further details.



## Earnings

Gender gaps in **earnings** and in the incidence of **low pay** remain substantial in several G20 countries (see **Figures A1** and **A3**). There has been some modest narrowing of these gaps since 2012 in most G20 economies where data are available. The gender pay gap tends to increase in most countries when adjusted for differences between men and women in their composition of employment by level of education (see **Figure A2**). For example, this can occur if a higher proportion of women who are working have university degrees than men. This will tend to lower the unadjusted gender pay gap relative to the adjusted measure, which corresponds to a weighted average of the pay gap at each level of education.

## Labour market security

In terms of the indicators of labour market security, the picture is more mixed. In some G20 economies, the **unemployment rate** and the incidence of **long-term unemployment** are lower for women than for men (see **Figures A4.A** and **A4.B**). Overall, the pandemic does not appear to have permanently damaged women's prospects more than men's of finding work after job loss or when entering the labour market. The gender gaps in the incidence of **temporary** and **informal work** provide additional indicators of whether employment insecurity is more pronounced for women than for men. In just over half of the G20 economies where data are available, the share of employees on temporary contracts is higher for women than for men, most notably in Japan. Moreover, these gender gaps have narrowed since 2012 in only a minority of countries (see **Figures A5**). The picture is also mixed across G20 economies with respect to gender differences in the incidence of informal employment (see **Figure A6**).

## Working conditions

**Working long hours per week** (50 hours and over) remains much more common for men than for women in nearly all G20 economies, with the notable exception of the Russian Federation where the incidence is equally low for both women and men (see **Figure A7**). However, the gender gap has narrowed substantially in most G20 economies with the incidence of long hours of work declining for both men and women, but generally somewhat more pronounced for men. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this decline, especially for men.

Working short hours of work, including **part-time work** and **time-related underemployment** risks exposing women disproportionately to lower earnings, a higher risk of poverty, few or no benefit entitlements (e.g. paid leave or health benefits), variable hours and unpredictable work schedules and limited opportunities for career development. These types of jobs are typically more prevalent among working women than working men in nearly all those G20 countries where data are available (see **Figures A8** and **A9**). This may reflect that, on average, women face greater time constraints than men with respect to their paid hours of work because of household work and other unpaid care activities. However, in the majority of G20 countries, the gender gap in the incidence of part-time work and time-related underemployment has narrowed since 2012.

One of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5.5) is to “ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political life”, and one of the indicators of progress is the proportion of women in managerial positions (SDG Indicator 5.5.2). However, women still account for far less than half of all **managerial jobs** in all G20 countries, ranging from a high of over 40% in Russia and the United States to 16% or less in Korea and India (see also **Figure A10**). Since 2012, their share has increased in most G20 countries, notably in Indonesia and Saudi Arabia.

**Self-employment** can be another important source of employment involving both a high degree of work autonomy and working-time flexibility, unless subordinate to one client in a dependent self-employed relationship or involving informal employment with little or no social protection. However, the share of all working women who are self-employed is lower on average across G20 economies by 7.5 percentage points than the share for working men (see also **Figure A11**). This gap has been narrowing in the majority of since 2012.

### 3. Policy Action

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This section presents policy measures taken in 2022 by G20 members to improve gender equality in the labour market and to ultimately achieve the Brisbane Goal. They are based solely on the annual national self-reporting templates<sup>4</sup> provided by all G20 members<sup>5</sup> in early 2023. This section is further divided into five policy areas: employment, earnings, labour market security, working conditions and COVID-19 specific measures on social protection, care support and safety of frontline workers. Areas for further policy actions are also identified in the concluding section.

#### I. Policy measures to increase women's labour force participation

This section reviews measures to address legal, regulatory, cultural and behavioural **barriers to women's labour force participation**, while also developing **new employment opportunities**.

*Strengthening national frameworks on gender equality.* In 2022, six countries reported having either updated or renewed their commitment under national strategies and plans on gender equality with the aim to work on a wide range of gender equality related issues. **Australia** established a Women's Economic Equality Taskforce to inform a new National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality with focus on closing the gender pay gap, addressing gender segregation and positioning women at the centre of policy and decision-making. With the Outline for Women's Development (2021-2030), **China** is enacting multiple measures to protect women's safety and health, support shared care responsibility, promote the participation of women in leadership and STEM positions and ensure equal pay for equal work. Within the National Plan of Action for Professional Equality between Women and Men (2021-2023), **France** aims to create conditions of equal access to jobs, address the gender pay gap, provide better support to pregnant women, parenthood and work-life balance and prevent and deal with acts of discrimination, violence, sexual and moral harassment. **Italy** introduced its first National Strategy for Gender Equality (2021-2026) based on five main priorities: employment, income, skills, time and power. The **Russian Federation** also approved a National Strategy of Action for Women for 2023-2030 with focus on women's education and participation in the digital economy through orientation to STEM skills, lifelong learning and advanced training opportunities, flexible working arrangements and entrepreneurship. **Türkiye** is updating the National Employment Strategy with a specific focus on increasing women's employment opportunities and removing barriers to women's access to education. The **United States** have also issued their first National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality (2021) that identifies ten interconnected priorities through an intersectional approach.

*Expanding women's share in STEM studies and occupations.* Common to six G20 countries is the focus on science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) education and employment opportunities with attention to digital skills and entrepreneurship. In 2022, **Australia** established a new Jobs and Skills Act to assess skills needs and priorities and advise on employment opportunities. Specifically related to the promotion of women's education and participation in STEM occupations, Australia implemented programs to raise awareness (e.g. *Women in STEM Ambassador*), provide scholarships and start-up grants aimed at promoting STEM-related entrepreneurship, breaking down gender stereotypes and removing systemic cultural barriers. In this line, **France** has also increased its support to promote women in the digital economy and encourage them to acquire digital skills through entrepreneurial initiatives such as *Social Builder* or the *Fondation Femmes@Numériques*. **China**, as part of its Outline

<sup>4</sup> The self-reports are based on [Annex D: Policy priorities for boosting female participation, quality of employment and gender equity](#) (Ministerial Declaration, G20 Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting, Melbourne, 11 September 2004).

<sup>5</sup> This paper is based on the self-reporting progress reports provided by Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, United Kingdom and United States, as well as the European Union that reported on the auxiliary indicators. The analysis puts mainly forward the measures implemented as of 2022 and existing programmes prior to 2022 that have been expanded in scope, breadth or prolonged.

(2021-2030) to support gender equality in employment and occupation, is promoting equal participation of women and men in STEM degrees and occupations. **Indonesia** provided vocational training programs that support the promotion of digital and green skills, as well as entrepreneurship. Similarly, the **Russian Federation** provided orientation programmes for women in technical and technological education and digital literacy training for 8 million women. Initiatives in **South Africa** focus on STEAM by bringing an additional element – arts – that leverages both hard and soft skills to solve problems. An example is the Girls Fly Programme Africa led by UNICEF South Africa that supports girls from rural areas to access education and career opportunities in STEAM fields, with specific focus on the aviation and space industry, through mentoring, skills development and entrepreneurship.

*Promoting women's entrepreneurship.* A number of countries continue to invest in women's entrepreneurship development through a wide range of measures including awareness raising, capacity building and training, mentoring, technical guidance on entrepreneurial management, facilitation of business licensing, financial incentives and social assistance (**Canada, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Russian Federation and Türkiye**). For instance, Mexico supported expanding export opportunities for Mexican businesswomen, through training and counselling services on certifications and procedures to access the North American and European markets. Within the agreement with the Public Investment Bank "Bpifrance", France supported the creation and growth of businesses run by women, increased financial support, and worked on eliminating gender stereotypes in the entrepreneurial system. The Russian Federation continues to promote women's entrepreneurship by expanding the competencies and skills of businesswomen and supporting their activities, through My Business centers, which conduct consultations and organize various educational events, such as seminars, round tables, and fora.

*Adopting an intersectional gender perspective.* In 2022, more countries are reporting on measures that take into consideration an intersectional approach to gender equality, with particular attention to migrant women. For instance, in **Argentina**, the public sector has an obligation to employ transvestites, transsexuals and transgender persons in a proportion of no less than 1 percent of their staff. **Australia** implemented the *Three E's to Freedom* program particularly focused on education, employment and empowerment of women from a migrant and/or refugee background, with attention to those experiencing or at risk of violence. In **Germany**, the *Strong in the Workplace* and *My turn* programs facilitated the integration of migrant women in the labour market, including Ukrainian mothers, through education and counselling. **Canada** has continued to fund projects tackling systemic barriers for women, with a focus on marginalized or underrepresented women, including indigenous women, black women, women of colour, women who are members of LGBTQ+ communities, and women living with disabilities or in rural or remote communities. The *Racialized Newcomer Women Pilot* continued supporting the improvement of employment outcomes for racialized women through work placements, mentorships, and employment counselling. In **South Africa**, the focus of the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities has been to promote an intersectional approach targeting women with disabilities. Throughout 2021-2022, the **United Kingdom** introduced measures to help and work with economically inactive ethnic minority women to identify issues and barriers to employment, through a range of financial mechanisms and by linking up with organizations that help women to join the labour market.

## II. Policy measures to improve the quality of women's earnings

This section reviews policies that promote **non-discriminatory practices at the workplace, including on pay and career progression** and enhancing **the female share of executive positions** in the public and private sectors.

*Advancing equal pay for work of equal value through proactive pay transparency measures.* Several G20 countries already have systemic pay transparency and reporting measures to fight stubborn gender pay gaps.<sup>6</sup> In 2022, **Australia** amended the Fair Work Act introducing an equal remuneration principle, prohibiting pay secrecy clauses in employment contracts. In addition, the embedded principles of job security and gender equality empowers the

<sup>6</sup> OECD (2023), *Reporting gender pay gaps in OECD countries: Guidance for pay transparency implementation, monitoring and reform*, OECD Publishing, Paris. and ILO (2022), *Pay transparency legislation: Implications for employers' and workers' organizations*.

Fair Work Commission to increase pay in low paid and highly feminized occupations and industries. In **Canada**, The Pay Equity Act established a proactive pay equity regime under which federally-regulated employers with 10 or more employees will have to examine their compensation practices and ensure that predominantly female occupations are equal paid as predominantly male occupations of equal value. Meanwhile, as of 2022, the Employment Equity Act requires federally-regulated employers with 100 or more employees to include aggregated wage gap information in their annual reporting on four designated groups: women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities. In 2022, **France** adopted a decree to improve measures to eliminate gender pay gaps in companies, relating to the Rixain Law on economic and professional equality, that requires companies with a score below 75 points to publish their objectives and implement corrective measures. In addition, **Japan** adopted the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace that obliges employers with 301 or more regularly employed workers to disclose information on wage differences between women and men.

*Upward revision of minimum wage.* Two G20 countries reported having enacted initiatives to increase national minimum wages. **Germany** increased the general statutory minimum wage to 12 euros per hour, benefitting about 6 million workers, 57 per cent of whom are women. The **Russian Federation** increased the minimum wage by 10 per cent, including for non-working pensioners, benefitting 4 million people.

*Bringing more women at the top.* In the spirit of increasing women in managerial and leadership positions, four countries have reported on new initiatives. In 2022, **Canada** launched a *50 – 30 Challenge* campaign to increase the representation and inclusion of diverse groups within their workplaces, while highlighting the benefits of giving all Canadians a seat at the table. Specifically, the Challenge asks that participating organizations aspire to gender parity (50 per cent women and/or non-binary people) and significant representation (30 per cent) of other equity-deserving groups. The **European Union** also adopted in 2022 the directive on “Women on Boards” that sets a target of gender balance among directors for large-listed EU companies of more than 250 employees. The companies are expected to reach 40 per cent of the underrepresented sex among non-executive directors or 33 per cent among all directors by 2026. In **Germany**, the Act on the Equal Participation of Women and Men in Leadership Positions in the Private and the Public Sector of the Federal administration established a compulsory 30 per cent quota of women and men on supervisory boards in listed companies and companies with equal codetermination rights and a target for the equal (50/50) participation of women and men in the management positions in public sector of the federal administration. In 2022, **Indonesia** launched the Rural Women's Leadership Technical Guidance to empower women leaders to take part in development initiatives at village level with the view to ensuring a gender perspective.

### III. Policy measures to improve women's labour market security

This section looks at measures implemented to **extend social protection**. As in previous years, measures on labour market security remain limited.

*Formalizing informal workers.* Few measures are reported on transitioning from the informal to the formal economy. **Argentina** has recently taken steps to formalize domestic workers by guaranteeing access to bank accounts free of charges for salary payments. **Mexico** has continued to improve the working conditions of domestic workers by reforming the Law of the Mexican Institute of Social Security that provides access to social security and benefits such as work risk insurance, illnesses, maternity, disability, and life and retirement to all domestic workers. As a result of this measure, as of 2022, 53,584 domestic workers joined the social security system. **Türkiye** is promoting registered employment and decent work conditions for home-based childcare workers and supporting their professionalization in this sector via training certification.

In addition, **Australia** has amended the Fair Work Act to limit the use of fixed term contracts for the same role beyond two years or two consecutive contracts which can exacerbate job insecurity. In **Indonesia**, a cash incentive programme for rural workers provides additional wages and income to reduce poverty.

#### IV. Policy measures to improve working conditions

This section discusses measures on access to **care leave policies and services** and promotion of **non-discrimination practices at the workplace**. Improving working conditions has been high on the policy agenda of many G20 countries, resulting in numerous policies ranging from improving flexible working arrangements, care leave policies and services while also working on preventing and eliminating violence and harassment at work.

*Promoting flexible working arrangements to reconcile work and care responsibilities.* **Australia** strengthened the right to request flexible working time, including for pregnant employees and employees experiencing family and domestic violence. In **Brazil**, a new Women Employment Program (Emprega + Mulheres) aims at inserting and maintaining women in the labour market through support early childhood parenting and making the work regime more flexible to support parenthood. The Outline for Women's Development in **China** (2021-2030) urges employers to implement flexible working time and create family-friendly working environments to encourage both women and men employees to shoulder family responsibilities. In **Türkiye**, the half-time working benefit allows only one parent to remain attached to their jobs while caring for young children after the end of paid and unpaid maternity leave for minimum 60 days with the possibility to extend it to 360 days in case of multiple births or child disability. In **Germany**, the *Success Factor Family* program aims at disseminating relevant information and best practices among employers on how work and family responsibilities can be balanced, and how and at what cost companies can be made more family friendly. In addition, the **United Kingdom** is in the process of reforming flexible working regulations with a commitment to make the right to request flexible working apply from day one of employment and develop enhanced guidance to support best practices.

*Strengthening care leave policies.* **Australia** strengthened the right to request an extension of unpaid parental leave up to 12 months. In **Germany**, with the Act on the implementation of the EU work-life-balance directive, which came into force in 2022, employers who do not comply with a parent's request to reduce or distribute working hours during parental leave are obliged to justify their decision. In addition, the Caregiver Leave Act and the Family Caregiver Leave Act were amended to entitle carers with a partial release from work with possibilities to request support by means of an interest-free loan. **Italy**, also following the implementation of the EU directive, introduced new regulations on maternity, paternity and parental leave, including an increase in the period eligible for compensation from 6 to 12 years of the child's age, the duration of parental leave of single parents and the first month of optional parental leave allowance from 30 per cent to 80 per cent of regular wage. **Japan** reformed and enforced a new Childcare Leave and Caregiver Leave Law that enables both men and women to manage work and childcare, by encouraging men to take up childcare leave. In **China**, a guidance on Further Improving and Implementing Active Maternity Support Measures was introduced in 2022 with the aim to develop a universal childcare service system, improve the maternity leave system and the benefit guarantee mechanism.

*Expanding affordable and quality childcare.* In 2022, several G20 countries have invested efforts in improving childcare policies and services. **Australia, Brazil, Canada, Saudi Arabia** and the **United Kingdom** have increased national investments in childcare to reduce out-of-pocket fees of families and to support the integration of women in the labour market. For instance, Canada-wide large investments of CAD 30 billion in Early Learning and Child Care aim at reducing childcare fees at an average of CAD\$ 10 a day by March 2026. In Saudi Arabia, the childcare subsidy program, Qurrah, provides support for childcare services, to enable working mothers to join the labour market and maintain their employment. **Italy**, the **Russian Federation** and **Türkiye** have introduced and provided childcare allowances to better reconcile work and family responsibilities. Under the Recovery and Resilience Plan, Italy foresees the creation of at least 264,480 new places for educational and early childhood care services (from 0 to 6 years old) by the end of 2025. Similarly, with the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act, the **United States** government authorised USD 39 billion for divided between Child Care Stabilization Grants and the Child Care Development Block Grant programs to help childcare providers stay open and provide subsidies to low-income families. **Mexico** promoted the right to breastfeeding at work by providing lactation rooms and **Argentina** provided childcare facilities to those attending vocational training courses.

*Preventing and addressing violence and harassment in the world of work.* More and more countries are making efforts to prevent, address and eliminate violence and harassment at work in line with the ILO Violence and Harassment



Convention, 2019 (No. 190) which was ratified by **Mexico** and the **United Kingdom** in 2022 and by **Canada** and **France** in 2023. Ahead of the ratification of C190, in 2022, France introduced a law to reinforce prevention of health issues at work, which also broadens and harmonizes the definition of sexual harassment in the workplace in the Labour Code with the one of the Penal Code. Canada has also endorsed in 2022 a ten-year National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence based on five pillars: support for victims, survivors and their families; prevention; responsive justice system; implementing indigenous-led approaches; and social infrastructure and enabling environment.

Several G20 countries are taking preventive measures to eliminate violence and harassment at work. In **Argentina**, following the roll-out of the action plan for the implementation of C190, tools for employers' organizations on the prevention and elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work have been rolled out through programs such as *Eradication of Violence and Workplace Harassment in the Cooperative Sector*. In **Australia**, the Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Legislation Amendment (Respect at Work) Act calls on employers to take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate sex discrimination, sexual and sex-based harassment, hostile workplace environments and victimisation, as far as possible. In **Brazil**, a new law obliges companies to create and maintain measures to prevent and combat sexual harassment and other forms of violence in the workplace. In **China**, the Outline for Women's Development (2021-2030) urges employers to strengthen labour protection and occupational safety and health, including preventing and stopping sexual harassment and improving relevant enforcement measures. In the **United States**, a new law on Ending Forced Arbitration of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment allows an employee alleging sexual assault or sexual harassment to pursue such claims in court, and via a class or collective action, even if they had agreed to arbitrate such disputes or waived the right proceed collectively before the claims arose.

Countries also invest in a set of tools and resources for employers and workers to address violence and harassment at work. **Australia** and **India** have provided on-line tools to raise knowledge and to register complaints relating to sexual harassment in the workplace.<sup>7</sup> Inspectors of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security in **Argentina** were trained on "Gender perspective and approach to gender-based violence in the world of work" in order to detect and prevent violence and harassment in the workplace. In **France**, a call for projects on prevention of gender-based violence at work was launched in September 2022, focusing on support systems, raising awareness and training of the actors concerned.

## V. Relevant emergency policy measures adopted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated crisis

In recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and building forward better, G20 countries have continued to implement and even introduce new measures to improve women's access to social protection, support them to cope with additional care needs and, to a lesser, extent protect frontline workers.

Regarding measures to improve social protection, several countries provided income support and insurance benefits to recipients affected by COVID-19 (**Australia, India, Japan, Russian Federation**), skills and employment programs (**Canada and Germany**) as well as emergency funding to support those experiencing gender-based violence (**Canada**). In 2022, Canada introduced a *Women's Employment Readiness Pilot Program* to provide pre-employment and skills development support for women facing multiple barriers, while Germany offered digital counselling and online courses to migrant mothers with a work permit.

Additional measures to support COVID-19 care-related needs have continued to be provided by G20 countries in the form of care leave (**Australia, Germany, United Kingdom**) or care benefits (**Canada, Japan, Mexico, Republic of Korea**). For example, Australia extended the absence days for childcare by an additional ten days in 2021-22 and reduced the cost of childcare for families impacted by COVID-19. Germany has provided additional support to employees who care for relatives in need of long-term care. Similar provisions were also in force in Japan that

<sup>7</sup> [Respect@Work](mailto:Respect@Work) | [Respect@Work](mailto:Respect@Work) ([respectatwork.gov.au](http://respectatwork.gov.au)) and <http://www.shebox.nic.in>

continued to provide paid leave system for family care, alongside the support of childcare facilities in the workplace. Mexico also continued to provide direct financial support for childcare and adequate care services, with increased allocated budget that benefited 342,160 children in 2022.

In relation to measures directed at frontline workers, **France** introduced a guidebook that replaces the National protocol to guarantee health and safety at the workplace in the context of the pandemic, while the **Russian Federation** adopted additional social benefits for health workers. The **Republic of Korea** expanded nursing staff in charge of training programs at public medical facilities and strengthened education for preventing human rights violations against nursing manpower.

## 4. Future policy directions

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From the analysis of the self-reported measures to achieve the Brisbane Goals on gender equality in the labour market by 2025, there is a clear trajectory of many G20 countries moving towards a whole-of-government approach with an intersectional lens to gender equality at work.

In the aftermath of COVID-19, increased attention has been given to investments in care with the view to better reconciling work with care responsibilities, through flexible working arrangements, care leave policies, benefits and services, with childcare as a priority. Moreover, tackling gender discriminatory norms, including gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace and the gender wage gap have been high on the policy agenda for many G20 countries. Increased efforts are also more evident than in previous years in relation to the promotion of an intersecting and inclusive approach to gender equality at work. Many G20 countries continue to support work on skills and entrepreneurship development in STEM education and occupations with special attention to digital skills.

However, gender gaps in employment and earnings persist. Women still dedicate a disproportionate amount of time on unpaid care- and housework, which limits their possibilities to fully engage in the labour market, especially once they become mothers. Factors such as lower employment rates, fewer hours in paid work compared to men, labour market segregation, and glass ceilings contribute to a stubborn gender wage gap.

Addressing gender inequalities would enhance growth, productivity, competitiveness and the sustainability of economies. As noted in Section 2, progress has been achieved in reducing the gender gap in labour force participation, but reinforced policy efforts will be required in several G20 economies to reach the Brisbane goal.

Looking ahead, there is a need to accelerate the pace of action to achieve the Brisbane target and better job quality for all women and men in G20 countries. The uncertainties in the current political, social and economic environment and pushbacks on women's rights call for sustained efforts in advancing social justice with gender equality at its heart. A systematic, integrated and intersectional approach to addressing gender gaps is essential for further progress. Gender transformative measures that could accelerate the pace of progress include:

1. **Promote a systematic, intentional and integrated approach to addressing gender gaps.** A mainstreamed approach should be adopted to incorporating gender equality considerations in all spheres of policy making. While countries should pursue specific gender policies, broader policies (economic, fiscal, financial, and structural reforms) have a critically important role to play to encourage female labour force participation and create quality employment. This requires an integrated and whole-of-government approach, by looking at gender equality across a whole variety of socio-economic, geographic, institutional, policy and sectoral factors and stakeholders. For this to be achieved, countries should work towards ensuring a better representation of women in policy making across all policy areas and sectors. Countries should also ensure collection of gender-disaggregated data, and a systematic use of relevant governance tools and the necessary administrative capacities.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This is discussed further in OECD (2023), *Joining Forces for Gender Equality: What is Holding us Back?*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/67d48024-en>.

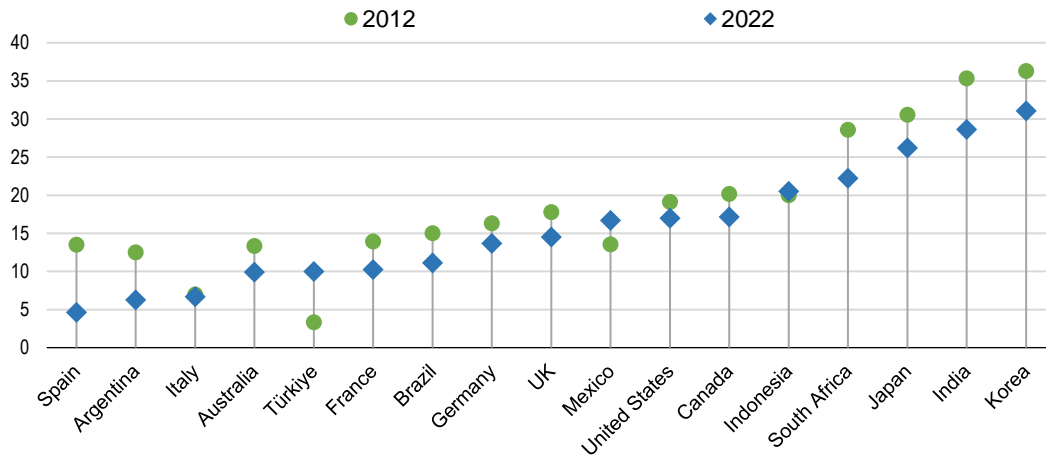
2. **Tackle persisting gender gaps in employment and entrepreneurship**, and to support widespread gender equality globally. In employment, further progress is needed to support gender equality in labour market participation, address vertical and horizontal labour market segregation and support job quality and access to flexible work opportunities, career progression and leadership positions in both the private and the public sectors. Addressing gender stereotypes and discrimination against women workers but also legal, technical and financial barriers is needed to enable women to be active in such sectors at their full potential. Governments could also strengthen the policy frameworks for women's entrepreneurship including through an increased use of tailored measures, such as accelerator programmes and growth-oriented finance.
3. **Promote appropriate investment in quality provision of services in the care sector**. This has the strong potential to expand decent work opportunities – especially for women – if adequate policies are in place to provide good working conditions for care workers. It would also strengthen the resilience of economies and societies and enable workers with family responsibilities to engage in employment. The policy package would include a mix of leave benefits, income security rights and services to enable the right to care and be cared for and to promote gender equality and decent work for care workers. The [ILO Care Policy Investment Simulator](#) helps in building tailor made care policy investment packages and advocating for increased investments in childcare-related paid leave (maternity, paternity and parental leave); breastfeeding breaks; early childhood care and education services; and long-term care services.
4. **Support women through multiple transitions**. Global transformations currently under way related to technology, demographic shifts and climate change require an approach that allows workers to keep up with demands for new skills including in AI. In leveraging the ongoing transformations there is a need to ensure that women, in their diversity, are not left behind. Efforts are therefore needed to ensure that all workers have access to lifelong learning, reskilling and upskilling, including digital and green skills. Closing the digital gender divide, especially in AI skills, must be accompanied by skills development policies, including policies to increase access of women and girls to STEM education and training while a wide range of gender responsive policies need to be part and parcel of any just transition initiative towards greener economies. In all these transitions, adequate gender-transformative social protection measures are essential to make it possible for women to transition from the informal to the formal economy and to engage in decent work, as they help promote employment and increase women's bargaining power.
5. **Ensure work quality for all women and address persistent discriminatory norms and practices** in pay, in leadership, in type of occupation, and in respect and dignity at work. Over the past years, several G20 countries have enacted new provisions to close the gender pay gap, to promote more women in managerial and leadership positions and to prevent, address and eliminate violence and harassment at work. Several G20 countries are members of the Equal Pay International Coalition ([EPIC](#)) that provides concrete support to closing the gender pay gap focusing on ensuring equal pay for work of equal value. Moreover, affirmative action measures are in place in many G20 countries to support women in breaking the glass ceiling, and more G20 countries are ratifying the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No.190) and enacting policies to address violence and harassment at work. These are all concrete steps that countries can take to advance work quality for women and address persistent discriminatory norms and practices.



## Annex A. Additional figures on gender gaps in employment quality

**Figure A1. Gender pay gaps remain substantial**

Difference in median full-time earnings between men and women as a % of the level for men, 2012 and 2022

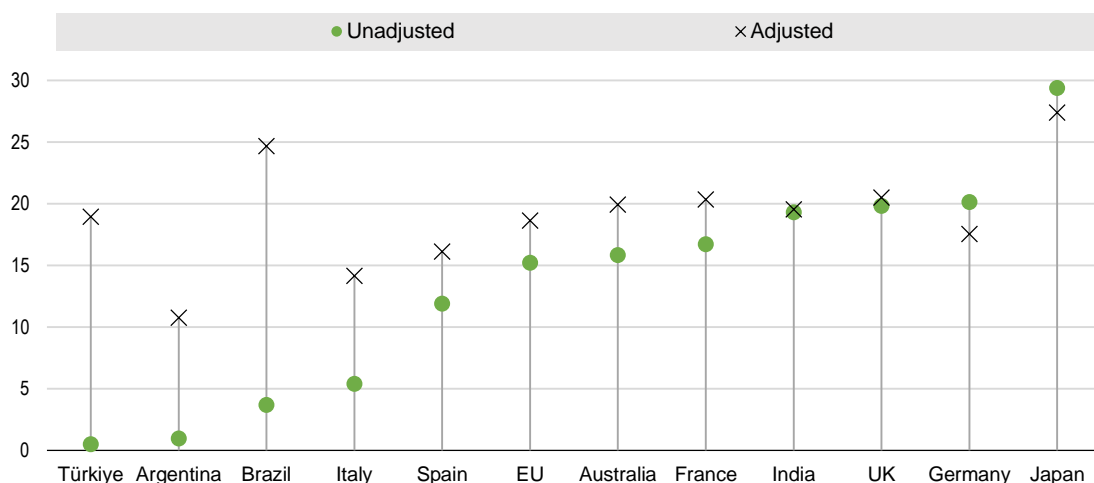


Note: The data refer to gross (monthly or weekly) earnings of full-time wage and salary workers. The data for 2012 refer to 2010 for Italy, Spain and Türkiye, and 2013 for South Africa. The data for 2022 refer to 2021 for Argentina, France, Germany, Korea and Spain, 2020 for Italy and South Africa, 2019 for Indonesia, and 2018 for Türkiye.

Source: OECD Earnings Distribution Database; Eurostat; and OECD estimates based on national labour force surveys for Argentina, Brazil, India, Indonesia and South Africa.

**Figure A2. The gender pay gap is even larger when adjusted for compositional effects**

Difference in mean hourly earnings between men and women as a % of the level for men, 2022

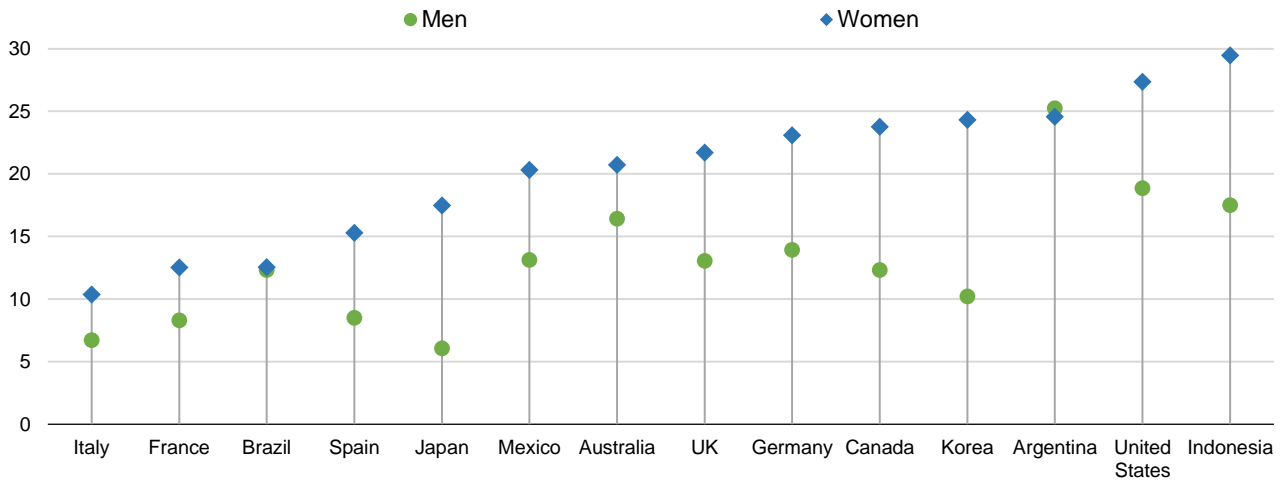


Note: The adjusted gender gap is calculated by weighting the gender difference in mean hourly earnings by broad level of education by the corresponding average of the gender shares of all employees at each level. The data for Japan and Saudi Arabia correspond to monthly total earnings (full-time workers only for Japan). The data refer to 2018 for EU countries, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Source: OECD calculations based on data from: for EU countries, Turkey and the United Kingdom, European Structure of Earnings Survey; Japan from administrative data; and, for the other countries, national labour force surveys.

**Figure A3. Women are at higher risk of low pay**

Share of workers by gender earning less than two-thirds of median earnings for all workers, 2022 (%)



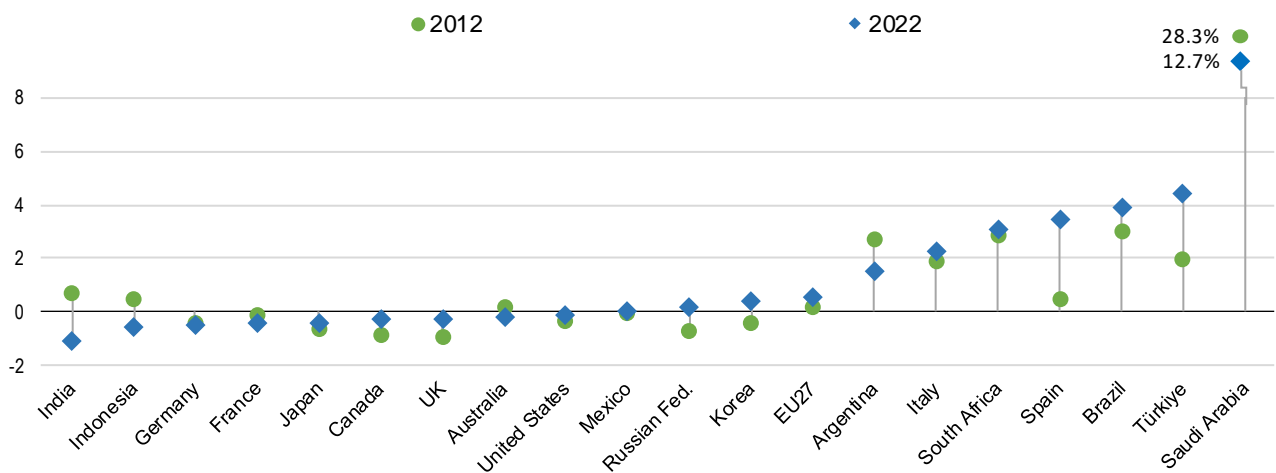
Note: The data refer to 2021 for Brazil, Canada, France, Korea, Spain and the United Kingdom and 2020 for Argentina, Germany, Indonesia and Italy.

Source: OECD Earnings Distribution Database; European Structure of Earnings Survey; ILOSTAT; and OECD estimates based on national labour force surveys for Argentina and Brazil.

**Figure A4. Gender gaps in unemployment vary across G20 economies**

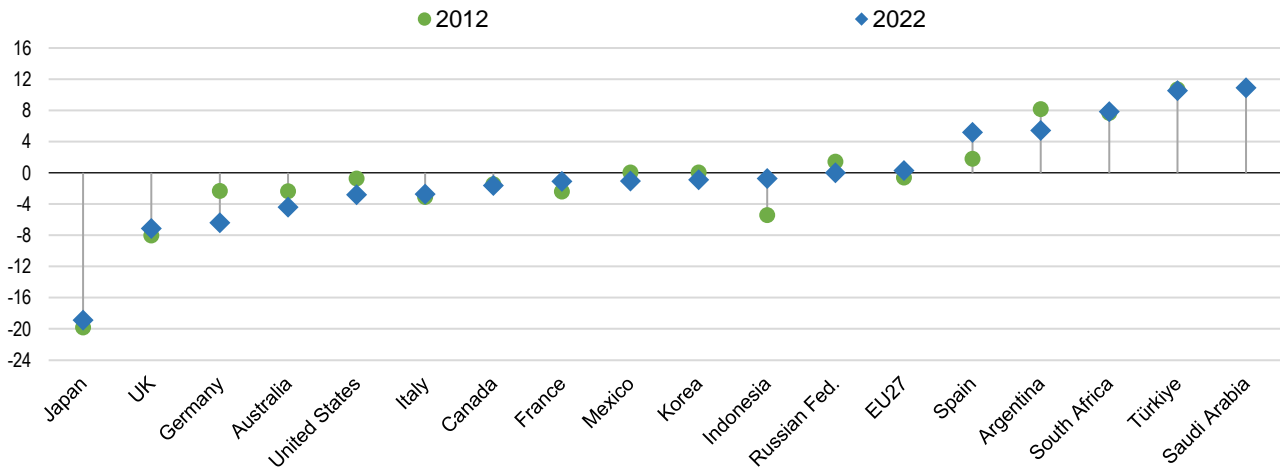
Difference between women and men, 2012 and 2022 (% points)

**A. Unemployment rate**



**Figure A4. Gender gaps in unemployment vary across G20 economies (cont.)**

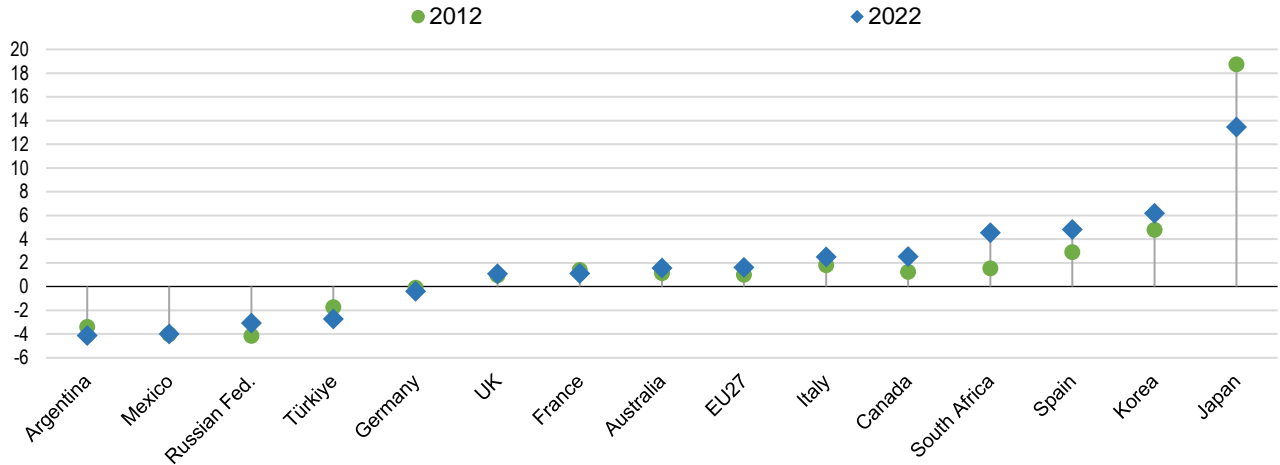
**B. Long-term unemployment (12 months or more) as a share of total unemployment**



Source: OECD Employment Database ILOSTAT and national labour force surveys.

**Figure A5. Temporary work is more common for women than men in many countries**

Difference between women and men in the share of employees on temporary contracts, 2012 and 2022 (% points)

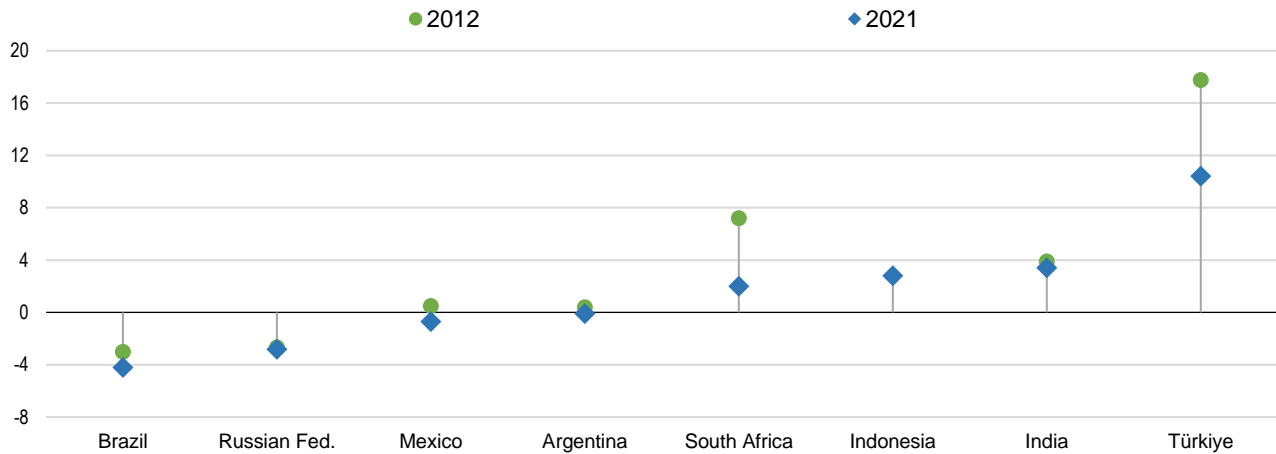


Note: The data for 2022 refer to 2021 for Argentina.

Source: OECD Employment Database and ILOSTAT.

**Figure A6. Gender differences in the incidence of informal employment are generally small**

Difference between women and men in the incidence of informal employment, 2012 and 2022 (% points)

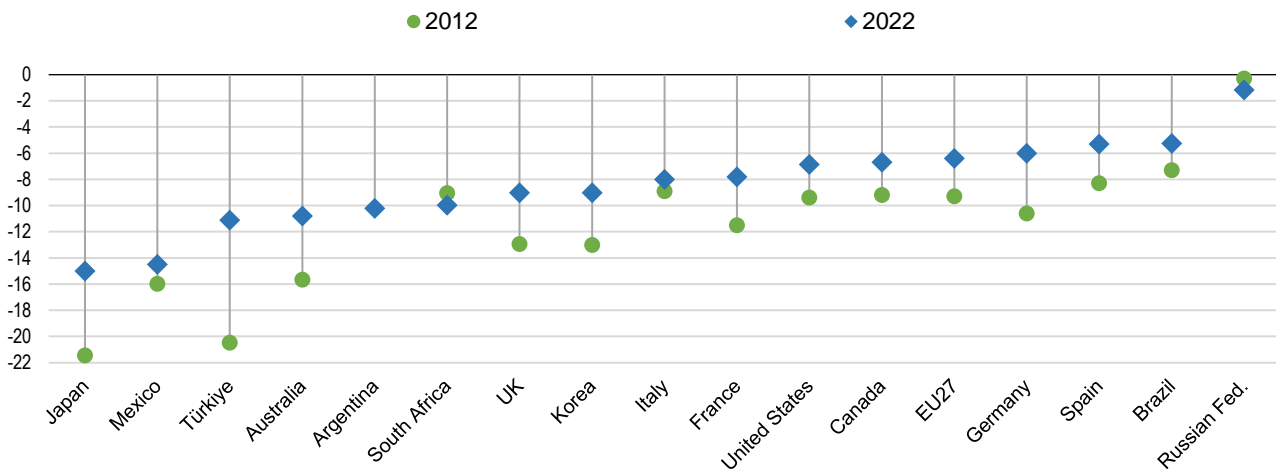


Note: The data for 2022 refer to 2021 for Argentina and India.

Source: ILOSTAT.

**Figure A7. Very long working hours are much more common for men than women**

Difference between employed women and men in the share who usually work 50 hours or more per week, 2012 and 2022 (% points)

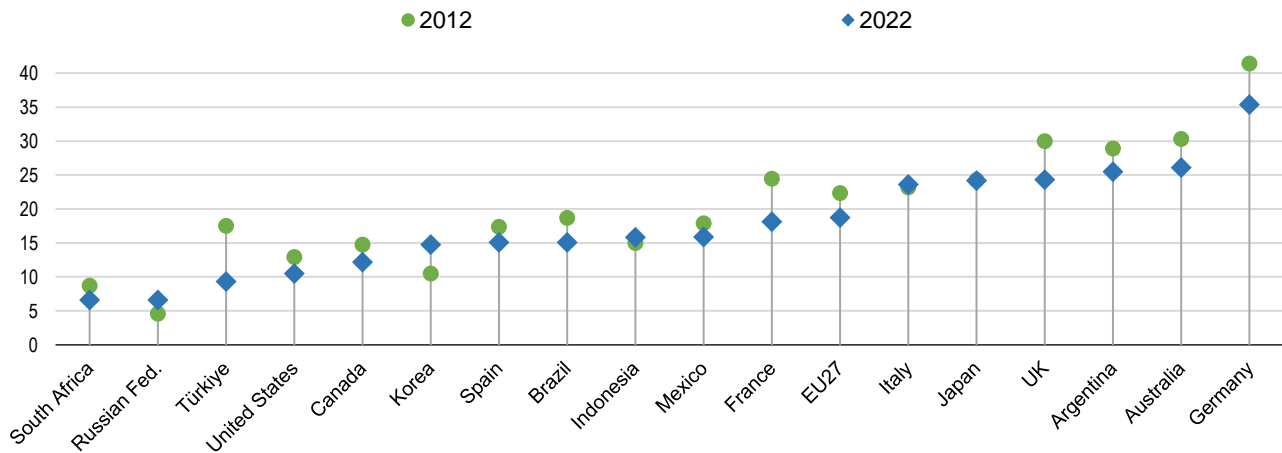


Note: The data for 2022 refer to 2021 for Brazil.

Source: OECD Employment Database and national labour force surveys.

**Figure A8. Women are much more likely than men to be working part-time**

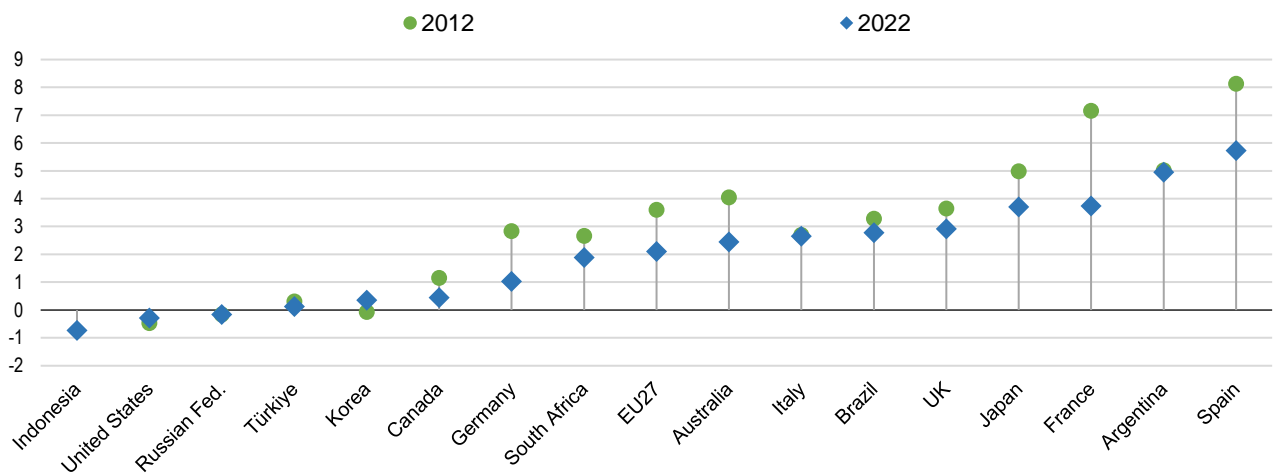
Difference between women and men in the employment share of part-time work, 2012 and 2022 (% points)



Note: The data for 2022 refer to 2021 for Argentina and 2020 for the Russian Federation.  
Source: OECD Employment Database, ILOSTAT and national labour force surveys.

**Figure A9. Women are more likely than men to be working fewer hours than wished**

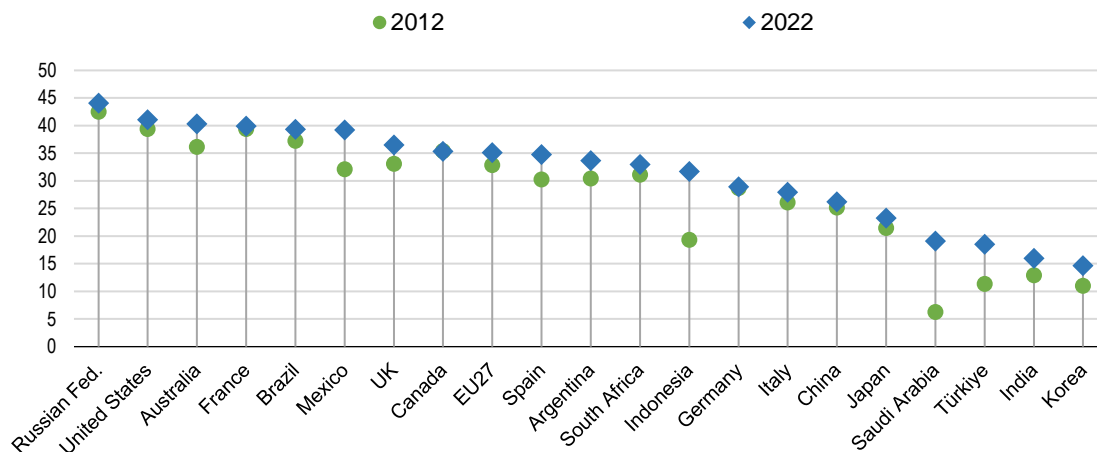
Difference between women and men in time-related underemployment as a share of total employment, 2012 and 2022 (% points)



Note: The data for 2022 refer to 2021 for Argentina and 2019 for the United Kingdom.  
Source: ILOSTAT.

**Figure A10. A small rise in the share of women in managerial jobs**

Share of women in total employment in management occupations (ISCO-08 Group 1), 2012 and 2022 (%)

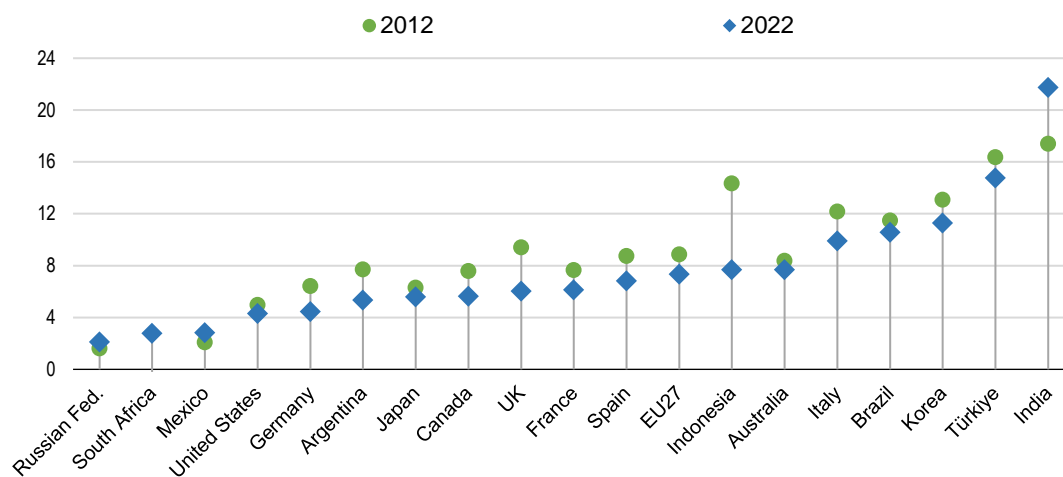


Note: The data for 2012 and 2022 refer to 2010 and 2020, respectively, for China. The data for Japan include all executives irrespective of their occupational status.

Source: National labour force surveys, EUROSTAT, ILOSTAT and, for China, census data.

**Figure A11. The gender gap in self-employment is narrowing slowly**

Difference between men and women in the employment share of the self-employed, 2012 and 2022 (% points)



Note: Self-employment refers to employers and own-account workers.

Source: ILOSTAT and national labour force surveys.