

ECOSOC

Developing measures to close the gender pay gap



Forum:	ECOSOC
Issue:	Developing measures to close the gender pay gap
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Introduction

A problem that has been ongoing for the past decades but has ultimately been reduced is the gender pay gap. Depending on the country and its progression rates, women have been able to attain higher incomes and better-paying jobs. Nonetheless, women still earn less money than men while doing the same job. For example, efforts to reduce pay disparity in the United States still have a long way to go to close the gender pay gap. Additionally, the gender pay gap in the EU is 13%, while women must work 1.5 extra months to make up for the difference.

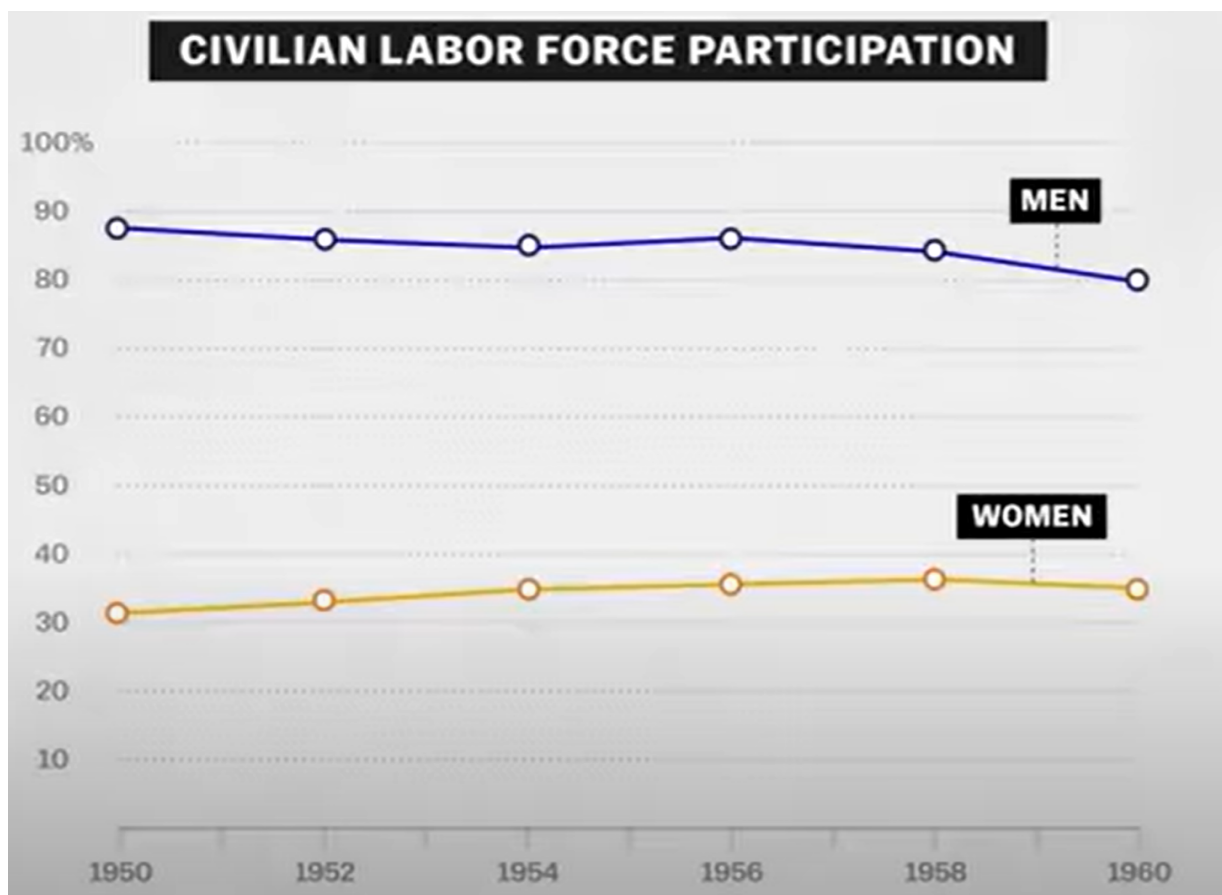
Moreover, on average, women earn €0.87 for every €1 earned by men, and unfortunately, the gap decreased by only 2.8% in 10 years (European Commission, 2022). According to the 2023 Global Gender Gap Index, no country has yet achieved full gender parity. However, the top nine countries (Iceland, Norway, Finland, New Zealand, Sweden, Germany, Nicaragua, Namibia, and Lithuania) have closed at least 80% of their gap, where significant improvement can be seen. On the other hand, gender parity in the labour market remains a significant challenge. Not only has women's participation in the labour market globally slipped in recent years, but other markers of economic opportunity have been showing substantive disparities between women and men. While women have (re-)entered the labour force at higher rates than men globally, leading to a slight recovery in gender parity in the labour-force participation rate since the 2022 edition, gaps remain wide overall and are apparent in several specific dimensions. Nevertheless, the question is, 'Why were women paid less, and why are women still paid less?' - mainly due to lower education rates, lower workforce participation, 'feminine' jobs, the fact that it was perfectly legal to discriminate in the past, and



cultural norms. Nonetheless, many countries' vast body of research shows that overt pay discrimination only potentially explains a small part of the gender pay gap.

Not long ago, most women, did not work outside the home, meaning they were most commonly less educated than men and had not even gone to college. 70% of women had medical jobs in either factories or schools. However, nowadays, the pay gap between men and women worldwide looks slightly different depending on how it is measured. It is important to note that over a century has passed since women began to advance in the workforce. However, despite the enormous strides that women have achieved towards wage equality at work, there is still an 18% gender pay discrepancy nationally.

Nonetheless, we owe brave organizations and individuals for the advancement that has taken us to this point in the long and difficult fight for wage equality.



Civilian labour force participation graphed data throughout 1950 till 1960

Definition of Key Terms

Gender pay-gap

The average difference between the income for men and women who are working and thus the difference between average hourly earnings.

Pay equity audits

An analysis that can show leaders where pay inequalities exist within the company and which factors, such as gender, may influence compensation.

Universal Health Coverage

Means that everyone has unhindered access to the complete spectrum of high-quality health services they require whenever and wherever they need them.

SDG5 Agenda

2030 was the date set by the Sustainable Development Agenda, which UN Member States agreed in 2015, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

General Overview

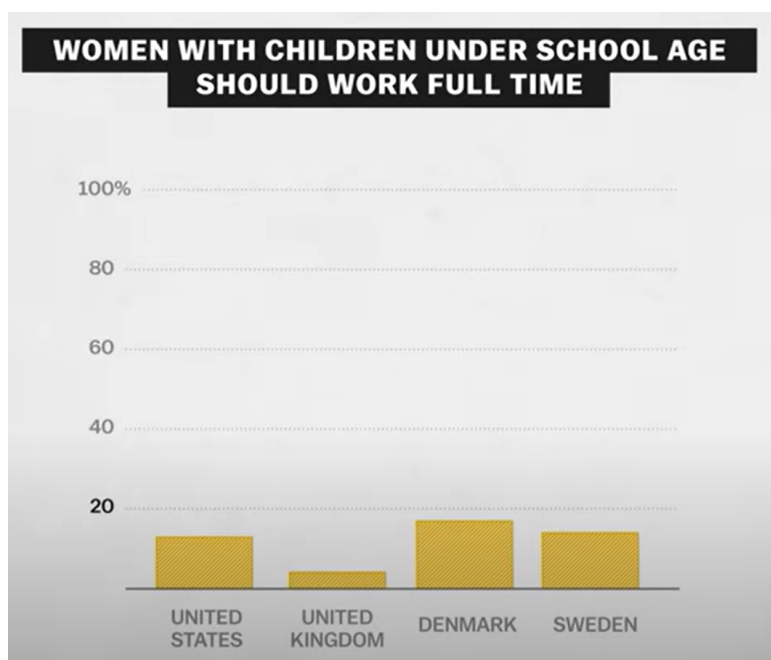
Although the gender wage disparity stretches back to the dawn of civilization, it became a political issue in the United States in the 1860s under the slogan "Equal Pay for Equal Work." Women's rights campaigners Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were among the movement's most ardent supporters. In their journal, *The Revolution*, and other writings, they argued for closing the wage disparity. Even though this has influenced the issue, positions in the financial sector (advisors, insurance agents, loan officers), manual labour positions (plumbing, truck driving, welding), and judicial workers are some of the sectors where the gender wage gap continues to be bigger than in other sectors. Social workers, paralegals, biological scientists, exceptional education instructors, and other professions are among those where women frequently earn salaries comparable to their male colleagues and thus more open to all genders. On the other hand, it is



evident that women are still discriminated against in the labour workforce, which needs to be changed to have equal pay for equal work.

Gender pay-gap because of societies expectations

In addition , despite improvements in gender and income disparity over time, women frequently earn less than men, and there are still higher degrees of inequality in the wage gap regarding race and occupation. The majority of politicians, commentators, and academics concur that the gender pay gap still exists even though more and more women are continuing to work full-time. There are still ongoing discussions on the magnitude and causes of the disparity. Due to societal norms and expectations dating from the past, women have been seen as caregivers within the family. As a consequence of this, many women were forced to drop their jobs due to their 'assigned' role as mothers. The earnings of women with and without kids have been compared, and a significant difference was seen. Some mothers do not see this as a problem because they want to spend time with their children, and they do not mind if that means less money, but some prefer an equal work and life balance. This does vary with the choices made, but some women do not even have these choices in the first place.



Neber, Kleven et al. 2018 study

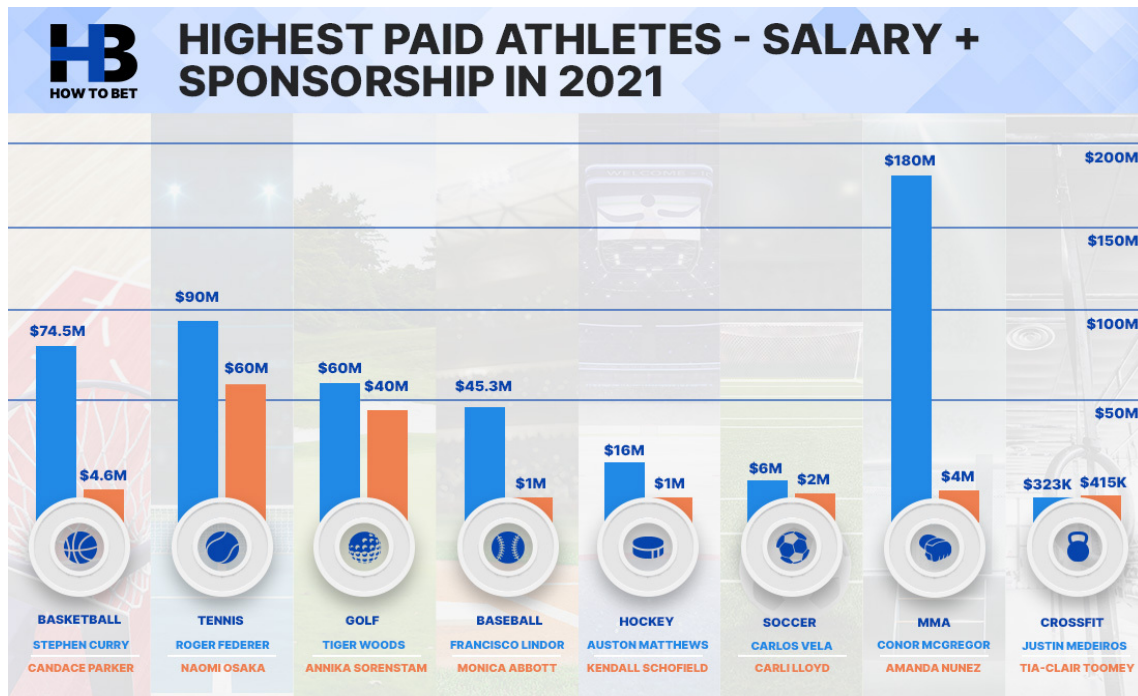
Gender pay-gap in sports

Men have historically been given preference over women when it comes to participating in sports since women were thought to be 'inappropriate' in that environment. Even though women's participation has increased over time, gender bias persists in many facets of sports.

One of the most blatant forms of discrimination is the wage gap, which persists in the sports industry, where women are paid substantially less than men. The shocking pay disparity between India's highest-paid men's and women's cricket players illustrates inequality. For instance, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) pays Smriti Mandhana 68.5 thousand US dollars annually, 7% of Virat Kohli's yearly income of 952,000 US dollars. There are many other examples in other sports like tennis. Profit is frequently used as justification for the wage disparity in sports. The claim is that male players produce higher returns than female players do. Several factors are considered while evaluating the financial advantages of sports, including ticket sales, sports merchandise, and endorsements, among others. This, however, depends on the audience and fan base, which are influenced by sports' androcentric orientation. Due to societal constraints, women joined sports significantly later than males. The 'entertainment value' of women's sports has decreased. However, men's sports have always been supported, which has helped it spread internationally and attract more investment. Most sports fans and viewers are men, which is significant because systemic barriers frequently prevent women from watching sports. These barriers include a lack of access to physical and financial resources, problems with mobility, and a fear of violence when attending sporting events. Moving past these explanations for the salary gap and focusing on fixing societal issues is necessary because the revenues made by men's sports are firmly rooted in the misogynistic system.

The disparity between men's and women's physical characteristics is another justification for the wage gap in sports. According to this argument, men should be paid more since they are "stronger" and can compete more successfully in sports than women. Although it may be true that men are faster and more robust than women, these are the only two physical characteristics that matter in sports. Hence this fact alone cannot justify paying men more than women. There may be other areas where women excel, such as balance and flexibility, but this does not necessarily mean that women are compensated more than men in sports that demand these skills.





Highest paid athletes- salary and sponsorship in 2021, can be used to assess involvement of women.

Gender pay-gap in the health and care sector

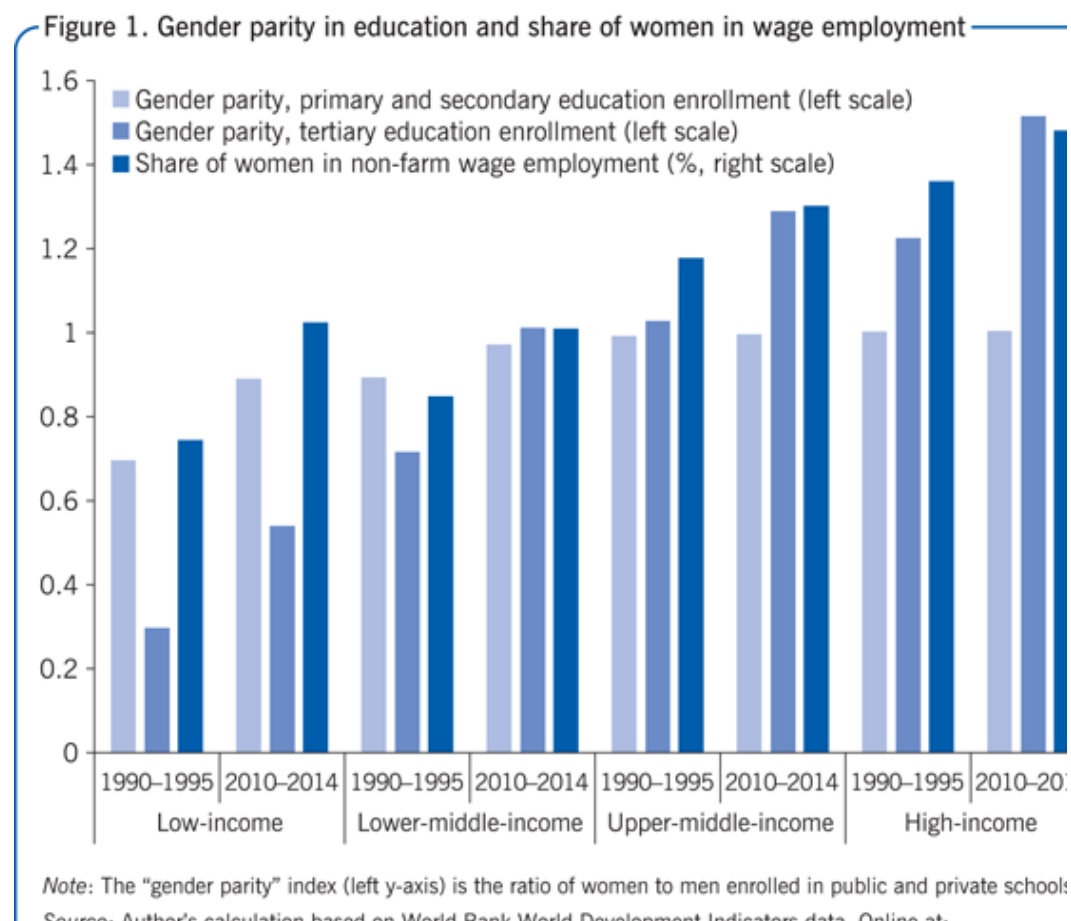
The health industry, where 67% of wage workers are women and where there is a strong potential for the expansion of decent jobs, has a crucial role in advancing the SDG5 agenda and women's economic empowerment. Focusing on this is especially crucial after the recent pandemic, where many obstacles were met. In addition, evidence indicates that the employment impact of COVID-19 in the sector disproportionately affected workers at the low end of the pay scale, most of whom are women.

The key to attracting and keeping all workers in the health and care sector is to examine the gender pay discrepancies in the industry and use this evidence to achieve equal pay for equal work across the board. This is essential if we want to address the global shortage of healthcare professionals and attain Universal Health Coverage. One of the leading causes of the lower pay for both men and women in the health and care sector is the high level of feminization in that industry. It contributes to the economy's overall persistent gender wage discrepancy. One of the leading causes of the lower pay for both men and women in the health and care sector is the high level of feminization in that industry. It contributes to the economy's overall persistent gender wage discrepancy.



Gender pay-gap in political leaderships

Similar to the lack of female business leadership, there are also gender gaps in political leadership. While there has been an increase in the number of women in positions of political power worldwide, gender parity is still a long way off, and there are significant regional differences. By the end of 2022, 2.12 billion people—or around 27.9% of the world's population—would reside in nations with female heads of state. While this metric was not changed between 2013 and 2021, 2022 saw a substantial improvement. The percentage of women serving in parliaments has also recently shown a good trend. Only 18.7% of parliamentarians worldwide in the 76 nations with reliable statistics in 2013 were female.



Gender parity in education and share of women in wage employment.



Major Parties Involved

South-Korea

Among OECD members, South Korea was determined to have the biggest gender wage discrepancy. The salary gap for a full-time position in South Korea in 2021 was the biggest among the 37 nations evaluated, coming in at 31.1%.

Israel

The gender pay gap in Israel is significantly wider than the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average and has been growing over the past ten years. According to this report, the gender pay disparity for workers in the beginning of their careers, when people are simultaneously starting and growing their families, is 33%.

Iceland

In 2004, the pay gap in Iceland was about the same as it was in the US, but in the years that followed, Iceland's gender pay gap shrank to where today women in Iceland make about 90 cents on every dollar a man does.

Rwanda

After the devastating genocide, men's population decreased by a large number, leaving more than half of the population being women. The government had to implement new laws in order for women to step into jobs they would have never had otherwise. Moreover, the World Economic Forum puts Rwanda's pay gap at 86 cents a dollar.

European Commission

Addressing the gender pay gap and its roots is one of the key objectives of the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025. They have also presented a proposal on pay transparency to ensure that women and men in the EU get equal pay for equal work or work of equal value. A part of their pay transparency proposal includes the European care strategy to ensure quality, affordable and accessible care services across the European Union and improve the situation for both care receivers and the people caring for them, professionally or informally.

United States of America



The gender pay gap in the United States has a long way to go, despite efforts to close it. While it was against the law to pay women less than men for the same work prior to the Equal Pay Act of 1963, in 2018 women made 81 cents for every dollar produced by males, while Black and Hispanic women paid even less per dollar when compared to white men.

Timeline of Key Events

The fight for wage equity has been long and difficult, and the advancement that has gotten us to this position is due to courageous groups and people. Here are the events that resulted in the improvements in how women are treated in the workplace today.

Date	Description of event
1889	Clementina Black and The Women's Trade Union Association- Black travelling around England for years to make speeches trying to persuade women to join trade unions. Was also involved in the formation of an organisation that tried to urge customers to put pressure on employers who paid very low wages to women, which led to further boycotts and protests.
1906	The National Federation of Women Workers- The NFWW was established by Scottish suffragist Mary Macarthur, out of frustration that existing trade unions were not open to female members. The organisation raised funds and supported very successful strikes due to Mary Macarthur's ability to attract wide support amongst newspapers.
1914	



- 1939 Women's work rights during World War One- The involvement of women in the workplace during The First World War drastically changed perceptions of their role in society. During the war years, women undertook jobs normally carried out by men and proved they could do the work just as well.
- Women's work rights during World War Two- When Britain went to war again, previously forbidden job opportunities opened up for women. When women began to enter the industrialised workforce and the weapon industry, previously dominated by men, women's segregation began to diminish because of a labour shortage.
- 1944 The 1944 Education Act and equal pay for teachers and civil servants- After the war ended, the report of the Royal Commission had recommended that female teachers and civil servants should be awarded equal pay. The Education Act of 1944 stated that women teachers would no longer be forced to leave their jobs when they married.
- 1968 Ford sewing machinists strike of 1968- The strike started when women sewing machinists at Ford's Dagenham plant were informed that their jobs were graded in Category B (less skilled production jobs), instead of Category C (more skilled production jobs). In addition, they would be paid 15% less than the full B rate received by men.
- 1975 Sex Discrimination Act and Equal pay Act- The Equal Pay Act prohibited any less favourable treatment between men and women in terms of pay and conditions of employment. It was based on the Equal Pay Act of 1963 in the United States. It has now been mostly superseded by the Equality Act 2010.
- 1988 Julie Hayward's fight for pay equality- Julie Hayward started as an apprentice cook, working in the Cammell Laird shipyard in Birkenhead. When she and her fellow apprentices completed their training, the three men in the group were categorised as craftsmen, while she was deemed a labourer. Being promoted to the title of craftsman included a raise, while being a labourer had no such perks.
- Tackling the pay gap issue now means examining cultural factors. For example, the kinds of roles predominantly carried out by women and how valuable women's contributions



Present day in the workplace are perceived to be. One of the main issues is the way we have historically valued work done by women compared to work done by men.

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- Equal Pay for Equal Work adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women, 14 April 1952 (E/CN.4/661)
- Women and political participation, 10 February 2004 (A/RES/58/501)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 12 February 2008 (A/RES/62/433)
- Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women a full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, 4 February 2009 (A/RES/63/425)
- Women in development, 22 December 2015 (A/RES/70/219)

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

The United Nations and many other organizations have been committed to implementing solutions for the gender pay gap, further building on the proposed and passed resolutions. Governments, employers, and workers' organizations recognize that closing gender pay gaps is more important than ever. Over the past few years, increasingly more governments are proposing transparency measures and information sharing to address gender wage gaps. According to recent research, depending on how they are put into place, pay transparency measures can effectively identify compensation differences and reduce broader gender inequalities in the labour market.



Two countries, Iceland and Rwanda, have almost closed their wage gaps in just a few decades. Two cases show what will happen when women are almost paid the same as men. Rwanda is one of the least economically developed nations, and until just a few decades ago, women were denied many fundamental rights, like speaking in public. After violence broke out, the Rwandan population was 60 percent to 70 percent women. The shortage of men meant that women had to step into the workforce in huge numbers. The new government realized that to rebuild Rwanda, needed women, so they implemented a host of new policies to get more women into positions of power. This included men and women having equal rights and women being granted at least 30 percent of posts in decision-making roles in the government. Another country, Iceland, implemented many laws regarding maternity leave, allowing men to have paternal leave as much as women.

Meanwhile, women have been among the worst affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, including income security, representation in hardest-hit sectors, and gendered division of family responsibilities. This, in turn, has negatively impacted their employment and threatened to reverse decades of progress made toward gender equality.

Possible Solutions

As countries emerge from the pandemic, taking action to address gender equality setbacks is not only relevant and timely but also critical for an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient recovery. Moreover, it is essential to keep in mind that solutions are implemented in order to have an outcome of equal pay being for equal work and not to make a reverse discrimination towards men, thus creating solutions that are balanced for all genders. One of the solutions could include a work-life balance directive which makes it easier for both parents to combine family and caring responsibilities with paid work.

Gender balance on corporate boards would also be a huge leap towards closing the gender pay gap which could help adopt new rules in order to improve the gender balance on corporate boards which will set the aim of a minimum of around 40% of non-executive members of the under-represented sex on company board, as an example. Another simple way companies can remedy the gender pay gap is to conduct pay equity audits which stimulates all employees of equal experience and in similar roles are paid the same – no matter their gender.

Unionizing workplaces would also help to reduce the gender pay gap as according to research from the Economic Policy Institute, women working in unions earn an average of 94 cents to the



dollar when compared to men, while non-union women earn only 78 cents to the dollar. This might occur due to unions frequently pushing for more fair pay practices, such as standardised wages, pay transparency, and grievance processes for instances of discrimination. Women can also obtain associated perks like schedule flexibility and paid leave by working in unionised environments.

In conclusion, it is not impossible to narrow the gender pay gap, but this will require a lot of commitment and collaboration between countries and their governments in order to successfully achieve equality.

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- V. [9 Strategies For Narrowing The Gender Pay Gap - Money Under 30](#)

