

Economic and Social Council Promoting gender equality with regards to equal pay



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Introduction

In the year of 2016, the society is aware of the issue of Gender inequality. Even though people raise awareness, they still do not recognize the level of discrimination women across the globe are facing. One of the most crucial points to mention hereby is the wide gender pay gap while accomplishing the same work, or jobs requiring equal qualifications and skills.

Women were always meant to carry out home- and family-related work, shaping gender segregation due to gender stereotypes. This meant that women were facing prohibitions in employment and occupation except a governess, housewife or chaperone. Mary Wollstonecraft was aware of the society's issue and with her publication of "A vindication of the rights of woman" in 1792; she set the beginning of the struggle to achieve equality of women. The end of World War I did not only mean the restructure of domestic and foreign affairs of countries but also the emancipation of the woman because dramatically casualties meant for states to employ women to accomplish men's work in order to recover from the WW1. In addition to that, in the majority of the countries women's suffrage movement has risen on a national level granting the right to vote, except in New Zealand in 1893 and in Australia in 1902. With the warranty of the women's voting right in The United States, Sweden, Poland, The Netherlands, The United Kingdom and Austria, women also received the right to choose an employment of their will.

Nevertheless, the issue of the inequality of women is still faced nowadays even though there have been made great achievements towards a better future. The majority of women do not have, or little, access to education meaning for them to accept unpaid and unsafe jobs. As a result women make up to 70% of the world's impoverished population, which lack basic needs. Thus, women lose the ability to fight for their rights and to defend themselves. Because women are forced under their will to provide well-being to their family, they are being used for cheap labor or manipulated.

Comparing More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) and Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs), women in MEDCs are encouraged to achieve



the same educational degrees as their male counterparts; they are still being unequally paid even though they perform the same work and are equally qualified as men. This differs severely from the situation of women in LEDCs. Thus, it is important to draw attention to the Gender Pay Gap in the difference between LEDCs and MEDCs.

Definition of Key Terms

Suffrage

The right to vote

Commission on the Status of Women

The CSW was established in order to promote women's rights, documenting the lives of women across the world while adapting gender equality and women's empowerment into the global standards.

Direct Discrimination

Women are treated less favorably than men at the workplace

Gender Pay Gap (GPG)

Difference between men and women regarding their pay in the gross hourly earnings of all employees, also referred to as the "unadjusted gender pay gap" because it does not include the impact of other factors such as the differences in education, labor market experience, hours worked, etc.

Gender-Responsive Budgets (GRBs)

An Initiative with the aim to promote equality between women and men by the government's budgets. It seeks to raise awareness of the effects that budgets have on both genders and hold the government's commitment gender equality. The pioneers of this initiative were Australia in the mid-1980s, Canada, South Africa in 1996 and the United Kingdom

Results Based Initiatives (RBIs)

The pilot innovative program supports the women's economic empowerment by means such as expanding women's entrepreneurship and giving them secure jobs.



Glass-ceiling

Workplace discrimination in regards of historical and cultural backgrounds

Gender-stereotypes

“are beliefs about the characteristics of males and females with components including personality, characteristics, physical attributes, roles, occupations,[...]”¹

Gender roles

The behavior, corresponding to a person’s gender, which is determined by prevailing cultural norms

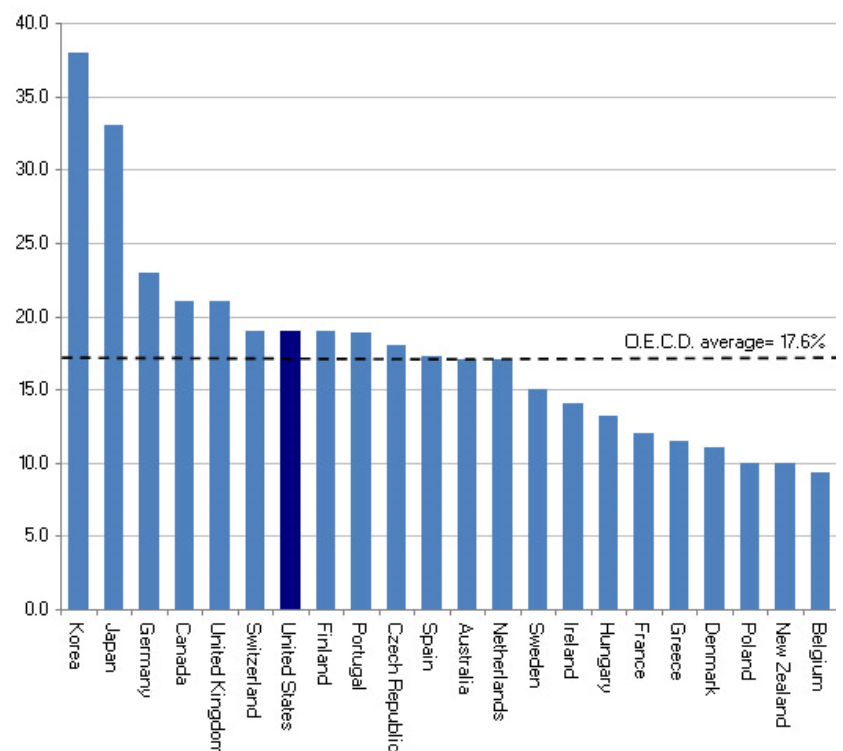
Millennium Development Goals (MDG)

The MDG encourage Member States to cooperate in order to seek a set of time-bound targets, which includes promoting Gender Equality, within 15 years, until 2015.

General Overview

As mentioned, women face unfair wage regarding their work compared to men. This means that women all over the world earn 77% (in the EU 84%) of what their male counterparts earn (comparable to the amount of money men earned 10 years ago). The below seen graph shows the average of 17.6% of the GPG made by the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in comparison to several Member States regarding Full-Time Workers. Korea is the country with the highest Gender Pay Gap of approximately 38% and Belgium

Percentage Gap Between Median Men's and Women's Wages, for All Full-Time Workers (2006 or Latest Year Available)



¹ Blakemore, Berenbaum and Liben, Taylor & Francis Group: **Gender Development**, New York 2009, S.7



with the lowest GPG with nearly 10%. This Gender Pay Gap leaves the female part of the society with an average earning of 11'000 \$ per year, whereas the men's reaches 21'000 \$ per year. As a result, many women have retreated from the employment world, which decreased the women's labor force participation from 1995 to 2015 by 2,8%, resulting into a current percentage of 63%.

In addition to that, the Gender Pay Gap widens as women have children and are obliged to balance work and family responsibilities. So nearly the majority are part-time workers resulting in negative impact on career progression, training opportunities and pension rights as well as unemployment benefits. Therefore, women spend more time carrying out care and domestic work, meanwhile men spend more hours in a workplace earning money. This leads to the fact, that women accomplish more working hours, paid and unpaid, compared to men significantly longer.

Nevertheless, women generally do better in school than men. In the EU, 83% of the female part of the society reaches at least upper secondary school, men only 77.6%, and make up 60% of the university graduates, primarily Bachelor- and Master-degrees. However this differs a lot from the issue most of the LEDCs are still facing. Many women lack in education, health care and employment caused by gender discrimination, which has its roots in the low wages women receive in comparison to men. Even though, the impact of the Gender Pay Gap in the course of a lifetime is challenged by lower pensions and risk of poverty in old age, where 21.7% of women in MEDCs are affected, they also make up 70% of the world's impoverished people regardless of their age. They are more vulnerable to manipulation and easy targets of violence. Yet, if women in LEDCs carry out a job, it means that they do not only face a wage difference but also terrible conditions, which often do not accord with the basic human rights.

Reasons for the Gender Pay Gap

Workplace

Within a workplace many women encounter discrimination and Gender segregation even though they often accomplish the same work or work of equal qualifications and skills leading to unfair pay. But many companies still practice policies that are not meant to discriminate however result in unequal distribution, which however are prohibited under the international law. Comparing both biological genders, they are affected by different workplace practices such as career development and training with several rewarding methods of employees through bonuses, allowances and

performance-related pay. Furthermore, glass-ceiling often prevents women from reaching higher positions.

Differences in job and working sectors

60% of the world’s employed women are located in the service sector. Nevertheless, working, categories dominated by women such as the health sector, where women occupy confront lower wages than sectors dominated by men. In contrast to a category mainly dominated by their male counterparts, women receive sometimes a higher pay as they make up 9% of global engineering sector. Furthermore women are under-represented in politics and economy as well as a small amount (12% of the world’s board seats) of senior positions especially at the top level. Graph II. shows the percentage of women occupying board seats in European Stock Index countries with the range of

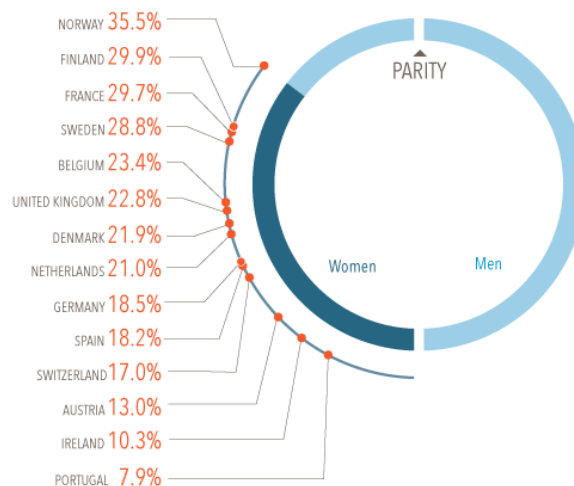
35.5% in Norway and 7.9% in Portugal.

This clarifies that the difficulty of women not holding board seats is very present in an union of mainly MEDCs.

Gender Roles and Traditions

Gender Roles and traditions shape the view upon man and woman among the society since the very early age. These may also influence the election of the educational path or other choices resulting in the formation of “typical feminine careers/sectors” and “typical masculine careers/sectors”. This may cause the undervaluation of women’s work and skills in some social spheres. In addition to that, Gender-Stereotypes can dominate above acquiring skills and competences; e.g. female nurses and medical technician regardless of their comparable levels of qualifications. Especially in LEDCs, women carry the heavy burden of accomplishing domestic and care work. This results for them be obliged to accept any job in order to maintain their families and, in their will, to assure their children a better future as education can have high costs.

WOMEN'S SHARE OF BOARD SEATS AT EUROPEAN STOCK INDEX COMPANIES



II.

Gender-Responsive Budgets (GRBs)



GRBs provide a linkage between economic and social commitments and policies through the government's budget. In addition and in return to that, the initiative helps governments and states into achieving gender equality and advancing women's rights. After poverty and other reasons have been taken into consideration, it is of high importance to tackle issues such as education for girls and the provision of more secure jobs as well as the improvement of access to resources and services in order to break the vicious circle of poverty.

The Gender-sensitive budget has been used with great effect in Morocco. The enrolment in education for children aged 6 to 11 has increased from 79.1% in 2000 to 93% in 2005, and for girls in rural areas from 66.1% in 2000 to 84.3% in 2005. Furthermore, the GRB has improved the access to drinking water in rural areas from 48% in 2001 to nearly a 100% in 2007, showing, that the GRB does not only enable the achievement to gender needs but also to basic human needs thus increasing the government's situation.

Results Based Initiatives (RBIs)

As previously mentioned, one reason for the Gender Pay Gap is the constant discrimination being faced by women all around the globe. The aims of the RBIs are to provide women a secure job as well as a fairer wage. At first, they are being started as a small initiative which can be easily replicated on a large scale and improve. This will show results with economic benefits for the participants, their families and communities in a small amount of time.

Afterwards, the RBI is evaluated which can then be applied to current and future projects.

The RBI can fairly improve a woman's current situation in the society and thus her economic standing. There have been published early results from the RBI. These suggested that Liberian women are able to improve the practices of the cassava production whilst providing food security; Peruvian women can improve their small businesses and access formal credits by using property rights; and Egyptian women are able to access better working conditions and career opportunities.

The initiative is being supported by the United Nations Women, the World Bank and the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)

Benefits in overcoming the Gender Pay Gap

Closing the Gender Pay Gap can reduce poverty levels and increase women's earning in course of a lifetime. Furthermore it creates a basis for the solving of financial and economic crisis, as women's involvement has increased during the crisis. Additionally, women's skills and talents which are, in some cases, under-utilized in the workplace could have great beneficial impact in order to help companies to tackle skill shortages, improve the



performance of businesses by means such as attracting and keeping the best and talented staff and thus resulting in a positive image towards the company's customers. Moreover can the creation of a positive working environment by building equality plans and strategies so employees feel more valued, confident and thus accomplish their work with productivity and innovation.

While raising awareness about this issue, women have raised their working life expectations. In consequence the companies are obliged to close possible Gender Pay Gap to attract the best talented resulting into a highly-motivated workforce for a better future.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

United Nations Women

UNW was created in 1976 by the United Nations General Assembly and its goals are among others equal rights as well as the empowerment of women. As it stands for the idea of promoting gender equality in order to achieve socio-economic ramifications, it is involved into the abolishment of the gender pay gap. Thus, it supports RBIs and GRBs and helping funds.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF is involved to give every child, female and male, a chance for a better future by providing education, which enhances a girl's future prospects and breaking the cycle of poverty. The NGO is working especially against discrimination, violence and the exclusion of girls from the educational sphere. Therefore, UNICEF supports governments in the reduction of gender inequality on a national, local and community level. Furthermore, the NGO empowers girls by supporting female role models and skill-based education.

United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI)

UNGEI is a partnership of organizations which works with UNICEF towards narrowing the gender gap in primary and secondary education. Furthermore, the NGO works into improving the learning outcomes of girls. In order to achieve this goal, UNGEI believes that the national citizens have to pressure their governments.

United States of America (USA)

The USA is an example for a MEDC being confronted by the issue of unequal pay between men and women. The importance of the issue is increasing in the US politics. Even though, the State has publicized the issue within the country very well and has made

attempts to solve the issue with legislations such as the Pay Check Fairness Act, the Gender Pay Gap persists.

South Korea

Despite being an industrialized country, it has the third largest difference between men’s and women’s pay, after Zambia and Azerbaijan, with nearly 38%.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
June 21st, 1946	The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is established
March 8th, 1975	UN firstly celebrates the International Women’s Day
December 18 th , 1979	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is being adopted by the UN General Assembly
September 3 rd , 1981	CEDAW enters into force
1975-1985	The UN decade of the woman
September 4 th – 15 th , 1995	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action shapes a global agenda for the empowerment of women
September 25 th , 2015	The SDG for 2030 have been dismissed by the General Assembly

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- Women, Peace and Security, October 31st, 2000 (**S/RES/1325**)
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2008-2013, UN Habitat, 2012
- Resolution concerning the Promotion of Gender Equality, Pay, Equity and Maternity Protection, International Labour Office Geneva, June 2004²
- United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, December 18th, 1979 (**A/RES/34/180**)
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, September 1995³

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- Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, September 25th , 2015 (**A/RES/70/1**)

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Whilst addressing the issue of the Gender Pay Gap, it is important to face the whole problem of gender inequality. The first step which needs to be taken so women can overcome the wage gap is to avoid them to suffer from discrimination and manipulation. Through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) steps towards this issue have been made. Nevertheless, these have not been effective on a large scale as the Gender Pay Gap persists today.

Education is being tackled by several NGOs and Member States such as UNICEF or UNGEI, especially in LEDCs. The spectrum reaches the enrolment of girls into primary schools to educating women a trade which can result in supporting them and their families such as carpentry or traditional handicrafts. Education provides women and girls having greater chances of a more secure employment as well as life. Furthermore, it protects them from carrying out cheap labor or being taken advantage of them.

Initiatives such as the GRB have resulted in the improvement of education, the protection of women from violence and poverty, and narrowing the gender pay gap. Thus, many Member States have started to implement this budget, even though it has been established in order to achieve gender equality in general. However, it has proven to show advantages to women in several situations from increasing the access to microcredits for family planning and maternal health to help closing the pay gap suffered globally. Furthermore, the pilot innovative program RBI is constantly increasing the economic dependence of women by aiding them in handicraft or supporting women in businesses.

Nevertheless, MEDC show a different approach to the issue. Through passing laws such as the Pay Check Fairness Act in the United States of America, MEDCs require businesses to open and show transparency of the amount they pay their employees regarding their gender. However, many companies have still not achieved the closing of the Gender Pay Gap.

Possible Solutions

When finding solutions to this issue, it is important to address and differ between MEDCs and LEDCs because of their different reasons to this issue and the different



situations the women are situated. This means that women should enjoy the same rights such as suffrage and the right to have an employment equally qualified to men. Thus, the education facilities and opportunities have to improve more.

Regardless if MEDCs or LEDCs, discrimination is a common origin of this issue and poverty. Many of these aspects have been covered by RBIs. Nevertheless, charities or NGOs could be encouraged to support women with the will to enter a field mainly dominated by men. In addition to that, Member States could pass laws based on the CEDAW, as the USA has made with The Pay Check Fairness Act.

Furthermore, the presence of women in the government can be increased. That way, more attention to all factors of discrimination against women can be achieved. Moreover, the increasing presence may grant the female part of the society more active participation in the political running of countries as a method to decrease discrimination and narrowing until abolishing the Gender Pay Gap.

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Appendix or Appendices

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- II. <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/statistical-overview-women-workforce>