



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

Advancing Free Trade for Asia-Pacific Prosperity

POLICY PARTNERSHIP ON WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

January 2022



Healthy Women, Healthy Economies

COVID-19 AND GENDER: What's at Stake If We Don't Build Back More Inclusive and Invest in Women

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INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL EXPERIENCE

The pandemic is widening the gender gap, reducing **women's economic potential.**

Together, these effects could impact a woman's family planning decisions.

Depending on a woman's situation, she may have...

IMMEDIATE EFFECTS

More Unpaid Work

A woman is spending 31 hours a week taking care of children, compared to 26 hours before - **a 20% increase.** [3]

Fewer Jobs

A woman is more likely to lose her job and still be unemployed. Men have largely regained their lost jobs. In 2020, women were nearly **30% more likely** to lose their job than men. [4]

AS A RESULT WOMEN HAVE...

FLOW-ON EFFECTS

Less Money Saved

A woman is financially less secure. COVID-19 cost women at least \$800 billion in lost income in 2020, the size of Thailand and Viet Nam's GDP combined. [4]

A woman is more likely to generate a lifetime of lower savings and retire into poverty. [5] In the U.S., only **40%** of women planning to retire say they are saving for retirement, versus 58% of men. [6]

Fewer Job Skills

A woman is more likely to lose out on the "jobs of tomorrow". Women are more likely than men to drop out of the workforce, therefore missing out on digital transformation. Only two of the eight "jobs of tomorrow" have reached gender parity. [7]

OTHER EFFECTS

Less Access to Family Planning

A woman will have less access to contraceptives as government budgets for sexual and reproductive health services are diverted to combat the pandemic.

In the United States, a woman is **33% less likely** to have access to contraceptives. [8]

Fewer Pregnancies

A woman may hold off having children. During the pandemic, more than 40% of women in the U.S. changed their plans about when to have children or how many children to have, influenced by the pandemic's economic effects. [8]

More Pregnancies

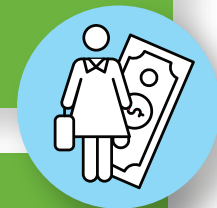
A woman may have unintended pregnancies. **21 million women** in Southeast Asia have an unmet need for modern contraception. [9]



Workforce Gap
A woman is almost **50% less likely** to be in the workforce compared to a man. [1]



Pay Gap
Even if a woman is in the workforce, she generally makes \$.84 to a man's \$1 for the same job. [2]



ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

SHORT-TERM

LONG-TERM

COVID-19 AND GENDER:

What's at Stake If We Don't Build Back More Inclusive and Invest in Women

ECONOMY-LEVEL EXPERIENCE

The pandemic is widening the gender gap, reducing economies' economic potential.

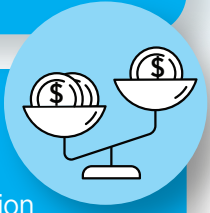
Workforce Gap

Closing the gender workforce gap could increase GDP by **35%** in economies where the gaps are largest. [10]



Pay Gap

Globally, economies would yield a \$172 trillion dollar dividend by closing the gender gap. [11]



Together, these effects could impact women's family planning decisions, which could lead to...

IMMEDIATE EFFECTS

More Unpaid Work

Unpaid work decreases women's ability to participate in the economy [12, 13], which leads to reduced economic output.

Fewer Jobs

Economies are losing GDP growth. Women's higher job loss compared to men could cost **\$1 trillion** in global GDP growth by 2030. [14]

AS A RESULT THERE ARE...

FLOW-ON EFFECTS

Less Resources for Economies

Economies have less resources for pensions, social security schemes, and tax revenue. [15]

These economic costs are not yet known.



AND

Fewer Digitally Skilled Workers

Women who leave the workforce and want to re-enter need re-skilling for the "jobs of tomorrow." [16]

Sex-disaggregated data tracking the impact of the pandemic on the widening of the gender digital divide is not currently available. This data needs to be collected to implement (and track the efficacy of) policies seeking to close the divide.



OTHER EFFECTS

More Unmet Family Planning Needs

Economies have less resources to spend on family planning services during crises as government budgets for sexual and reproductive health services are diverted to combat the pandemic.

During the Ebola epidemic distribution of family planning declined by as much as **65%** in some economies. [17]

More Debt

Economies may see a decline in births. This could harm the fiscal balances of economies with ageing populations.

A **1% rise** in the aging and aged population corresponds to a **5%-9% increase** in gross debt. [18]



More Economic Costs Due to Unintended Pregnancies

Economies may see a rise in births. If this rise is largely attributed to unintended pregnancies, then research shows there are associated economic costs.

Teen pregnancies (often unintended) in Latin American economies cost on average **\$1.2 billion** a year in lost earnings by mothers, lost tax revenue, and increased health care costs. [19]

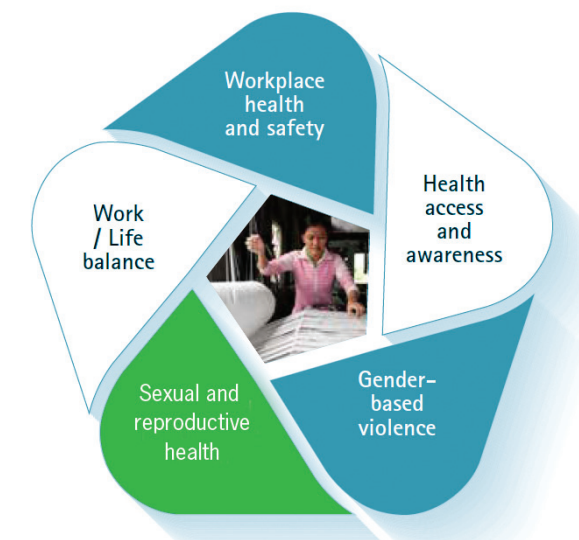
ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

SHORT-TERM

LONG-TERM

How to Build Back More Inclusive and Invest in Women

The **APEC Healthy Women, Healthy Economies Policy Toolkit** presents a menu of gender-specific policy options that economies may draw from to pilot, implement and scale up on a voluntary basis, choosing the actions appropriate for their economies. Below are examples of the options, categorized into 5 issues areas:



Workplace Health and Safety	Health Awareness and Access	Sexual & Reproductive Health	Gender-Based Violence	Work/Life Balance
<p>Strengthening the gender sensitivity of economy-level labor and safety and health laws and their application.</p> <p>Developing appropriate guidance to manage risks related to pregnant and lactating women.</p> <p>Training health care providers in early detection and diagnosis of workplace injury and illness more prevalent among women.</p>	<p>Identifying and using domestic and international data sets to determine health risks more prevalent among women. Identify sex-specific gaps in data sets.</p> <p>Integrating awareness of lifestyle-disease risk factors into government health communication strategies.</p> <p>Developing and strengthening targeted mechanisms and programs to ensure vulnerable women can gain awareness of and access to health services based on each member economy’s local legislation(s).</p>	<p>Assessing barriers to women’s access to health services and developing a comprehensive plan to address the barriers.</p> <p>Reducing financial barriers that prevent women from accessing services and supplies.</p> <p>Strengthening health care worker training, including training on providing high-quality, nondiscriminatory services and supportive supervision.</p>	<p>Developing, implementing, and monitoring clearly defined anti-sexual harassment legislation.</p> <p>Instituting regular training for workers, inspectors, union leaders, workplace safety officers, and HR personnel on gender discrimination and sexual harassment.</p> <p>Developing, implementing, and monitoring support mechanisms to address sexual harassment in the workplace.</p>	<p>Ensuring that women returning from maternity leave can return to the same job level; prohibiting termination of employment because of pregnancy.</p> <p>Establishing or strengthening sick and paid time off policies and ensure that they are applied consistently regardless of gender, sector, part or full-time status, or age group.</p> <p>Generating and collecting data that will inform policymakers and employers about the economic impact of more supportive family care policies.</p>

For more information about the **APEC Healthy Women, Healthy Economies Policy Toolkit**, please visit: <https://www.apec.org/healthywomen/Reports/Reports>

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Project Overseer thanks Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany as lead private sector partner of [APEC Healthy Women, Healthy Economies](#), and C&M International as Secretariat of APEC Healthy Women, Healthy Economies. In addition, the Project Overseer thanks the following experts for providing their insights, which were crucial in the development of this project:

Dr. David Bloom, Harvard University

Dr. Sophia Huyer, Women in Global Science and Technology

Ms. Sonia Jorge, Alliance for Affordable Internet

Dr. Olivia Mitchell, University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Pitchaya Sirivunnabood, Asian Development Bank Institute

Dr. Diego Wachs, London School of Economics

APEC PROJECT: PPWE 02 2020S

Produced by

Project Overseer: Chile

Project Co-Sponsors: New Zealand and the United States

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January 2022