



Build back fairer. A Gender-responsive Employment Recovery

1st BRICS Employment Working Group Meeting

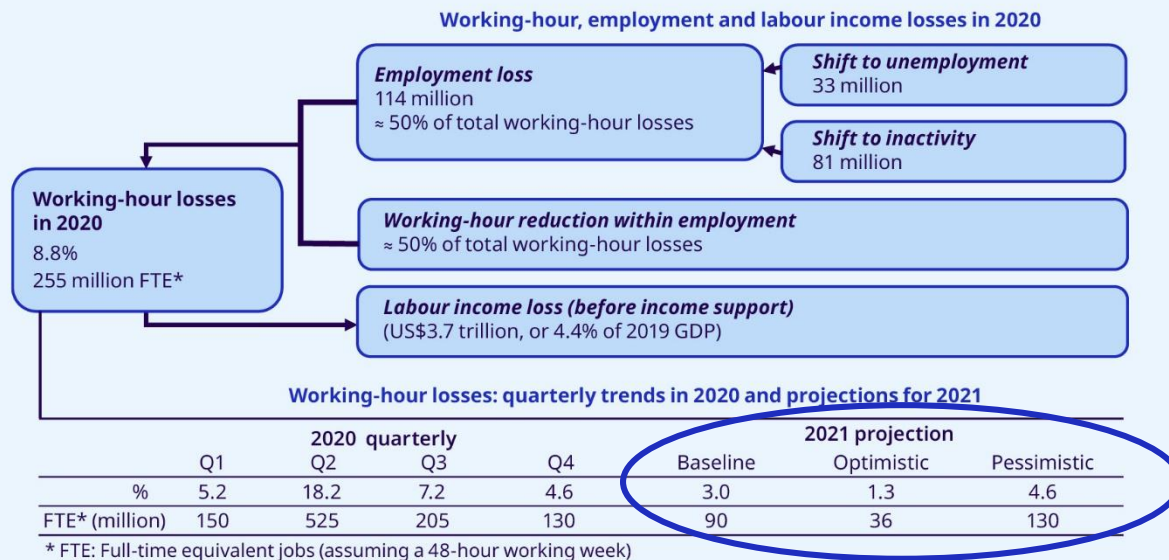
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Wednesday 12 May 2021



The COVID-19 pandemic has led to severe employment losses, and a grim scenario

► Figure 1. Estimates of the working hours, employment and labour income lost in 2020, and projections for 2021

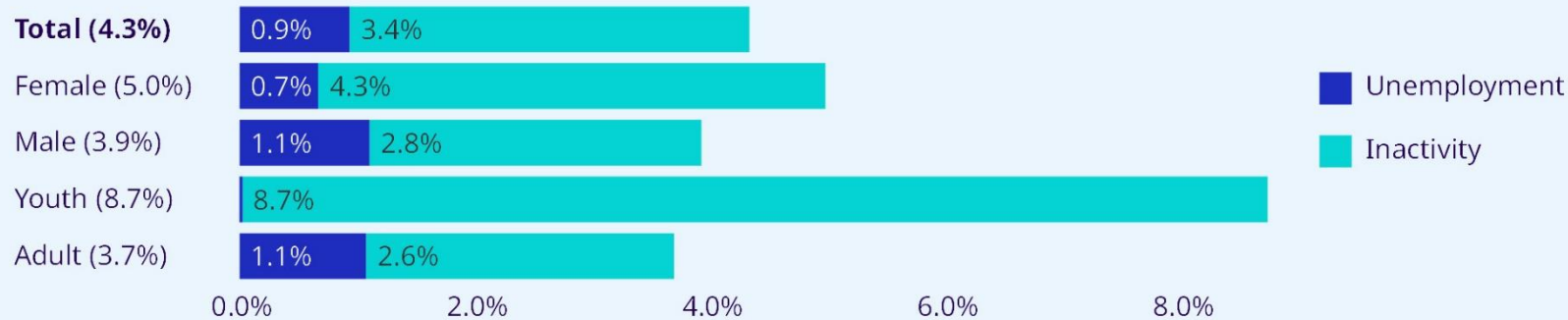


Working-hour losses in 2020 relative to 2019 are estimated at 8.8%, or 255 million full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs

Global labour income is estimated to have declined by 8.3 per cent in 2020 relative to 2019. In monetary terms, global labour income fell by an estimated US\$3.7 trillion in the same period. This corresponds to 4.4 per cent of global GDP in 2019.

Women have been hit harder, and the pandemic has increased gender inequalities in the labour market

► **Figure 8. Decomposition of employment losses into changes in unemployment and inactivity, by sex and age, world, 2020 (percentage)**



Note: The two bars in each row show the difference in, respectively, unemployment and inactivity (withdrawal from the labour force) in 2020 as a percentage of employment in the “no pandemic” scenario. The total of the bars in each case is the difference in employment compared to the “no pandemic” scenario. The percentages inside parentheses that appear after the names of the demographic groups indicate the employment loss for each particular group. Youth = aged 15–24 years; Adult = aged 25+ years.

Source: ILO estimates.

Women have lost relatively more jobs than men, and they have withdrawn from the labour market in higher proportions than men.

The crisis has exacerbated gender inequalities in the labour market.

Young women's employment has declined more, especially in middle-income countries

Average (sample) change in employment, 2020Q2 (year-on-year) (%)



- Certain sectors (accommodation & food service, retail) where women and young workers found badly affected, specially in developing countries.

▶ **The COVID-19 crisis has disproportionate impacts on women, exacerbating existing gender inequalities in BRICs**

The COVID-19 crisis lays bare the deep gender inequalities in labour markets

- ▶ Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, large numbers of women continued to be excluded from the labour market.
- ▶ Gender inequalities amongst the employed – women in lower pay.
- ▶ Three quarters of all unpaid care work were provided by women.

Women's employment was at higher risk than men's due to the sectoral structure of employment

- ▶ Women are overrepresented in service sectors severely impacted by the crisis, like domestic workers, and tourism-related activities. Female-dominated, labour-intensive segments of manufacturing, such as garments, are also experiencing job losses.
- ▶ Across sectors, women's employment is at higher risk when they are in informal employment.

▶ **The COVID-19 crisis has disproportionate impacts on women, exacerbating existing gender inequalities in BRICs**

Women make the vast majority of frontline workers, putting them at higher risk of contagion

- ▶ The overwhelming majority of health and social workers are women (more than 70%)
- ▶ Women continue to work in trying circumstances, in education and as “essential workers”

Gender inequalities in unpaid care work have further exacerbated

- ▶ This crisis has increased care demands within households at an unprecedented scale.
- ▶ New emerging evidence shows women who remain in employment are juggling work and care, with their care obligations forcing them to cut down on paid working hours or to extend total working hours (paid and unpaid) to unsustainable levels.

▶ Past crises offer some cautionary lessons for women's employment in BRICs

- ▶ **Lesson 1:** Gender is a rationing mechanism when jobs are scarce during a crisis - so need to be vigilant.
- ▶ **Lesson 3:** More unpaid care work during crisis - Women's greater unemployment or inactivity exacerbates traditional gender roles and works against redistribution.
- ▶ **Lesson 4:** Public expenditure cuts have deleterious effects on women as workers and as beneficiaries of public services.
- ▶ **Lesson 5:** Women are left behind in recovery policies.

► Policy priorities to build back fairer

- **Prevent women from losing their jobs**, maintain women's attachment to the labour force, and establish mechanisms for women to re-enter employment as early as possible if not, through fiscal stimulus packages, employment retention benefits and public employment services.
- **Avoid premature fiscal consolidation** and expand social protection.
- **Invest in care**, as care service provision increases resilience, creates women's (and also) men's decent employment and supports welfare-enhancing care provision. Covid-19 has much learnings in this regard.
- **Focus on gender-responsive employment policies for medium to long term recovery**, including macroeconomic policies, sectoral policies, active labour market policies, skills policies for creating decent (formal) employment for all.