

# Research Report

# MUNISH '12



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<b>Forum</b>	Special Conference 2
<b>Issue:</b>	Promoting Gender Equality With Regards to Equal Pay
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## Introduction

Today many people are unaware of the level of discrimination against women that still exists, in many forms. One of these is the unequal pay between men and women performing the same jobs.

It was not long ago that all women worldwide were forbidden from having practically any occupation, excepting professions such as becoming a housewife, governess, or chaperone. However, this situation has changed dramatically over the course of the last century. In many countries there was a women's suffrage movement. Before World War 1 (WW1) only two countries had granted women the right to vote: New Zealand in 1893 and Australia in 1902. During WW1, due to the thousands of men who left to fight, many women had to take up jobs in factories, or other jobs that had been exclusively for men. The effect of that was that after the war, many more countries, such as The United States, The United Kingdom, Austria, Sweden, Poland, and the Netherlands, granted women suffrage, and the right to work where they want.

However, though much of the world made great advances in the fight against discrimination against women, the fight against discrimination against women worldwide is far from won. Today most women receive little or no education, and are forced to accept underpaid, unsafe jobs as a result of discrimination. Women represent 70% of the world's population suffering from poverty, and often lack basic human needs. This in turn leaves these women with no ability to defend themselves or fight for their rights. It is because of this that women are often manipulated and used as cheap labour.

Though there are many More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) where women are encouraged to achieve the same educational degrees as men, even there is often unequal pay with regard to gender. Though their situation in general is dramatically better than the situation of women in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs), the issue still exists.

## Definition of Key Terms

### **Suffrage**

The right to vote.

### **Gender-Responsive Budgets (GRBs)**

GRB is the term used to describe the use of public resources to advance and achieve gender equality and empowerment of women by the government.

### **Result Based Initiatives (RBIs)**

RBIs pilot innovative programs that support women's economic empowerment by covering a wide range of approaches, such as expanding women's entrepreneurship and giving them secure jobs.

### **Gender Segregation**

Gender segregation refers to the separation of the genders but also to the phenomenon of women tending to choose different jobs to men.

## General Overview

### Pay inequality in MEDCs and LEDCs

The issue of pay inequality between genders is important to both MEDCs and LEDCs, however the reasons and level of inequality varies between the two. In LEDC's many women are forced to accept jobs with a lower wage than their male counterparts and possibly unsafe conditions because of poverty (70% of the world's impoverished people are female) whilst in MEDCs women who are equally qualified and working the exact same jobs as their male counterparts find that their wages are up to 25% less than them. It is important to consider both the reasons for pay inequality with regard to gender in LEDCs and MEDCs when discussing this issue.

### Gender Segregation

Within MEDCs many, if not most, girls are given the opportunity to receive the same level of education as boys. However, despite that, the percentage of women in high executive roles is still small. Management professors from McGill University, the United States undertook a

study to discover why. It appeared that a phenomenon known as ‘gender segregation’ was to blame. ‘Gender Segregation’ describes the trend of women with the same level of education as men opting for jobs with lower wages. It showed that women were much less likely to apply for jobs in high-level finance or consulting than men, the jobs that are best paid. There were two reasons for this: firstly the motives involved in applying for a job. Women were more likely to consider work/life satisfaction more important when applying for the job, meaning that they were less likely to consider jobs with frequent trips away from home and hotel stays, such as the high paying finance and executive jobs. They were also less likely to apply for jobs they considered to have a ‘macho’ image, such as jobs in high-level finance and consultancy jobs.

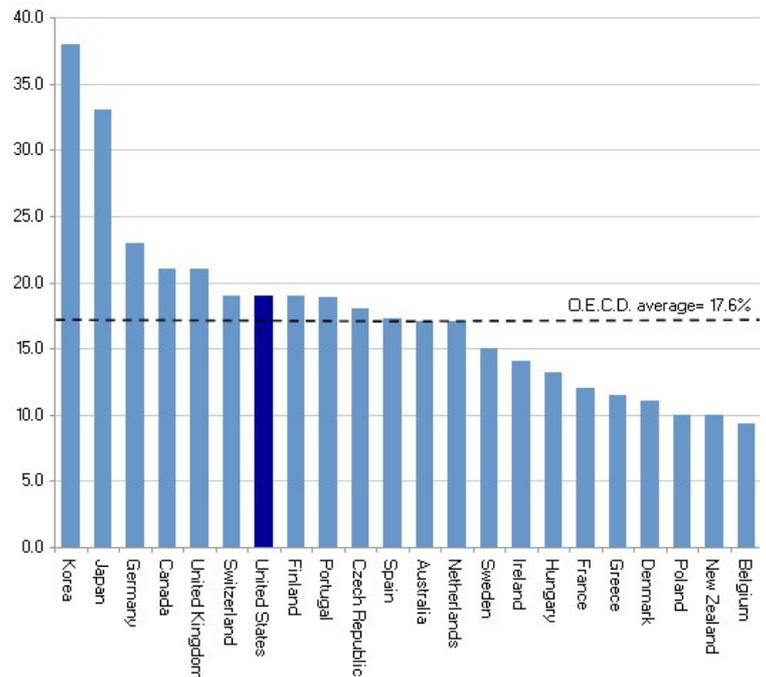
However, though this explains some of the overall pay inequality in MEDCs it still doesn’t explain the situation where female workers earn less than male workers performing the same job.

### Reasons for the wage gap

A study conducted by the University of Michigan has also been investigating reasons for the wage gap. It found that, in MEDCs at least, it could lie in the temperamental tendencies of male and female workers. According to the study, male workers are far more likely to ask, and more aggressively pursue pay raises and self-promotion.

However even considering gender segregation and the temperamental differences, an unexplained pay gap still remains. Another study concluded that much of the gender pay gap was caused by women’s tendency to work fewer hours and interrupt their work because of family duties. This can mean that employers often pay women a lower wage to ensure that they don’t suffer a loss because of it.

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



Pay gap between men and women in industrialized countries

### Women and poverty



Although gender segregation may be an important factor to consider for women in MEDC's, it is also important to consider the disproportionate amount of impoverished women versus impoverished men in LEDCs. Women represent 70% of the world's poor due to a variety of reasons such as a lack of education, a lack of health care and a lack of employment, caused by continuous discrimination. Due to their poverty they also lack access to some of the most basic human rights: clean water, medical care and safe employment to name but a few. Their poverty also makes them incredibly vulnerable, making them easy targets for violence and easily manipulated. This desperation means that they are not able to make their own decisions and are forced to accept unsafe, low-wage and insecure work. The average wage gap between men and women worldwide was 17% in 2008, representing the vast difference and it is estimated that 80% of women workers are in vulnerable employment in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The recent economic crisis has also taken a huge toll on women's wages, making a bad situation worse.

With the vast amount of impoverished women worldwide, it means women are easily manipulated. Poverty forces them to take jobs with wages far less than their male counterparts, in terrible conditions.

### Gender-responsive budgets (GRBs)

Once poverty and all that it entails is taken into account, it becomes apparent that for men and women to receive equal pay, it is crucial to take important issues such as education for girls and safer, more secure jobs for women into consideration. Women will only achieve equal wages if they are able to defend themselves and if discrimination against women stops. Many governments approach this issue using GRB initiatives (see Definition of Key Terms).

GRB initiatives have already been used to great effect in Bolivia, where many men have gone abroad to seek a living. The government financed a program that taught the women that remained to become carpenters or brick layers. These jobs gave the women the ability to learn a trade that would give them a reliable, better wage, and provide for them and their families. This made them less easily manipulated. In Morocco the GRB initiative provided for improving the education of women and vocational training. These are only two examples of how GRB initiatives have been used to strengthen gender equality and to close the wage gap between men and women.

### Results based initiatives (RBIs)

One of the reasons for the wage difference between men and women is the constant discrimination women face. RBIs work by trying to give women a more secure job, and a fairer wage. First a small initiative is set up that could be easily replicated on a larger scale, and improved, that will produce results in a short amount of time. Then the impact of the RBI is evaluated.

RBIs are a fairly new method of trying to improve women's standing in society, and of improving women's economic standing. However, they have already yielded results. RBIs have shown that: Teaching Cambodian women to track market trends could improve the yields from their handicraft business; Egyptian women could gain better working conditions, including closing the wage gap by making gender discrimination an important part of human resources; Kenyan women could use their traditional beadwork skills to increase their wages, give them a more secure job and teach them business skills.

### The benefits of gender equality

Gender equality at all levels, both with a regard to equal pay and not, does not only benefit the lives of women. Multiple studies have proven that in countries that have advanced with regard to women's equality and empowerment have also seen an improvement to the local or national economy. Ignoring women's abilities by forcing them into unsafe, low wage jobs means ignoring the abilities of roughly half the population. This practice means that not only the women, but the society as a whole suffers.

## Major Parties Involved and Their Views

### United Nations Women

United Nations Women works for equal rights and the empowerment of women. It's very involved with preventing violence against women as well as trying to achieve equal pay. They are involved with helping fund and supporting RBIs and GRBs.

### International Federation of University Women (IFUW)

The IFUW works on, among other things, closing the wealth gap between men and women. It places a great deal of focus on education for girls, and on teaching new skills to women to help find them better employment.

### The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF works to give all children – male and female – a better start in life and an education. Providing young girls with an education gives them better future prospects.

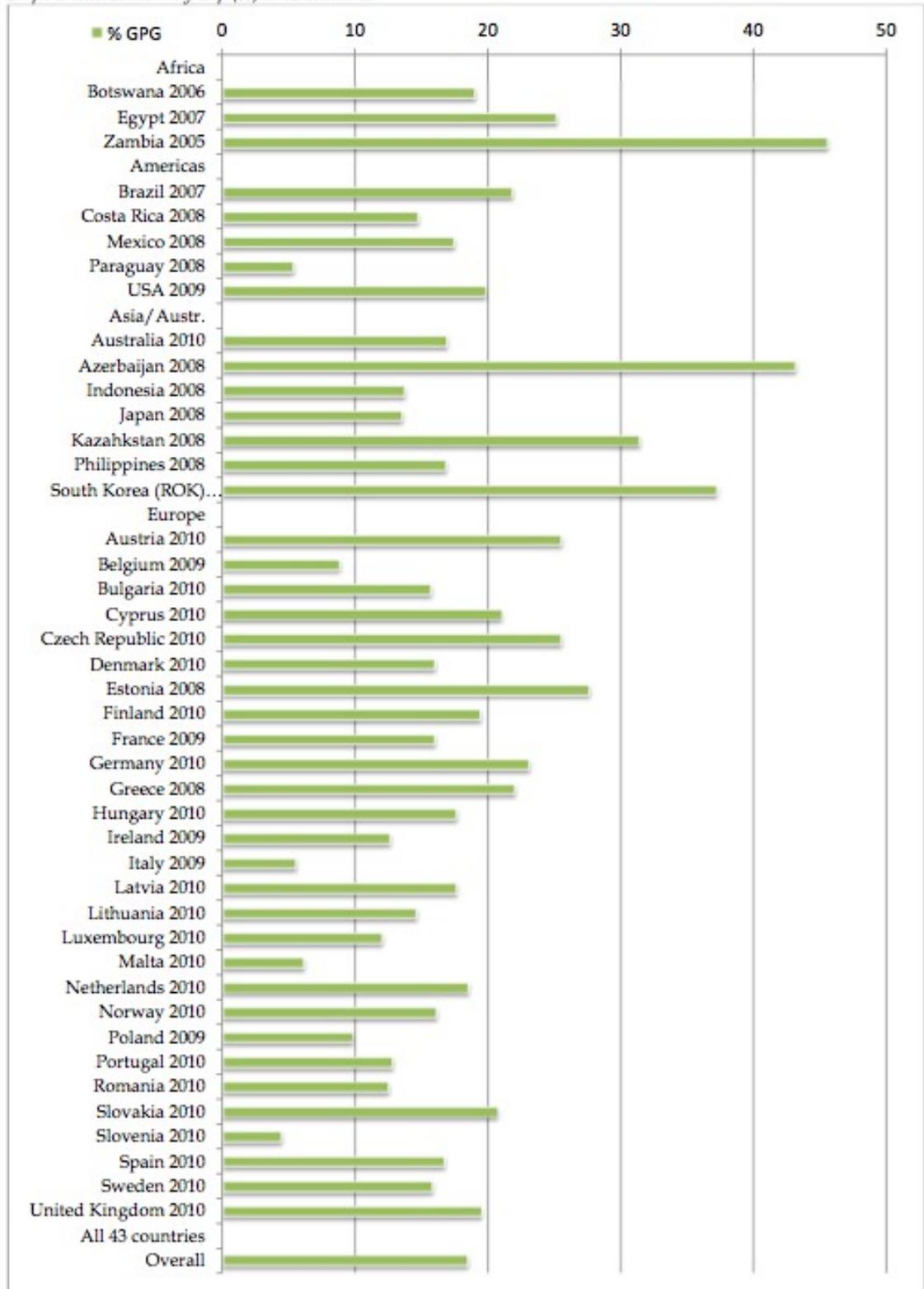
### The United States of America (USA)

The US is an example of a MEDC that has the issue of unequal pay with regard to gender. The issue is becoming steadily more important to politics within the US, with the issue becoming increasingly important to the upcoming elections. This issue has been well publicised within the US, and there have been several attempts to resolve it legally with legislation such as the Pay Check Fairness Act, but despite this the issue persists.

### South Korea

South Korea is the industrialized country with the highest average difference between men and women's pay. The pay gap has been calculated to be up to 30% different.

Graph 1 The Gender Pay Gap (%) in 43 countries



Confederation



## Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
March 8 <sup>th</sup> , 1975	UN first celebrates International Women's Day The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
December 18 <sup>th</sup> , 1979	(CEDAW) is first adopted by the UN General Assembly. CEDAW is a international agreement that affirms basic human right and equality for women worldwide
July 14-19 <sup>th</sup> , 1980	World Conference of the UN Decade for Women. Held in Denmark.
September 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 1981	CEDAW first entered into force.
1982	The United Nations Committee on the elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) first established.
September 4-15 <sup>th</sup>	The Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action form a global agenda for women's empowerment.
1995	Security Council adopt resolution on women peace and security.
October 31 <sup>st</sup> 2000	UN Women First Established
July 2010	

## UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 18 December 1979 (**A/Res/34/180**)
- Women, Peace and Security, 31 October 2000 (**S/RES/1325**)
- Resolution concerning the Promotion of Gender Equality, Pay Equity and Maternity Protection, International Labour Office Geneva, June 2004 (Link in Appendix I)
- Gender Equality Action Plan, Department for International Development, Africa Division 2009-2012 (Link in Appendix II)

## Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

It is hard to address the issue of promoting gender equality with regard to equal pay, without first addressing the whole issue of gender equality. For women to achieve equal pay, they first need to avoid getting becoming targets of discrimination and manipulation, which isn't easy.

Many NGO's and Governments try to approach this by trying to create more opportunities for women and girls to become educated within LEDCs. This can take the form of giving young girls primary school spaces, or teaching women a trade that can support them, such as carpentry or traditional handicrafts. Educating women and girls gives them a greater chance of finding a secure job, and makes it harder to take advantage of them and use them as cheap labour.

To aid initiatives such as better education, saving women from poverty, protecting women from violence and closing the wage gap, many governments have started using GRBs. These budgets though not designed specifically for aiding women, but to achieve equality between genders, have proved successful in helping women in many situations: from helping to close gender equality gaps in the government's poverty reduction strategy in Mozambique to increasing access to microcredit, family planning and maternal health practices in Morocco.

Another new initiative that has been used to improve women's overall situation is RBIs, which have prompted new businesses and economic empowerment for women. The effect of RBIs can be providing time saving technology to aid women working in handicraft to providing business support to women. The initiatives that merit the best results are continued, and can have extremely beneficial effects on women's economic empowerment.

However, within MEDCs a different approach is often taken. Efforts are often made by the government, such as passing laws that such as the Pay Check Fairness Act in the United States of America, or requiring businesses to be more open and transparent about the amounts they pay their employees with regard to gender. However, despite these efforts many countries, even those that have passed laws such as these, still have a distinct wage gap due to gender.

## Possible Solutions

It is important to consider, when trying to find a solution for this issue, that the situation of women in LEDCs and MEDCs varies greatly, and that the gender pay in LEDCs and MEDCs exist for different reasons. For women to achieve equal pay to men, they must have the same rights (suffrage, right to work in the same work places as men). Women will only be able to work in the same professions as men if they are equally qualified. Education also means that women are less likely to take unsafe, badly paid jobs. Therefore an important aspect of this issue is providing education for women. However, it will never be enough unless initiatives that provide education for girls receive governmental backing. A united force of charities, that have practice at organizing new schools and educational

initiatives, and the government, that has the ability to enforce and back these initiatives, could be successful in achieving this.

Another reason for pay inequity and much of women's poverty is general discrimination of women. Changing this will take time and can only be done slowly. Backing women's entrepreneurship and home businesses, things that are generally dismissed by many in some countries could receive backing, as some RBIs have already been doing. Charities and governments could also provide support for women wanting to enter fields that are normally occupied exclusively by men.

Governments that are willing to could also support gender pay equity and combat gender discrimination by passing laws based on the CEDAW. Other countries such as the US have made pay equity law with The Pay Check Fairness Act.

Another important factor in combating all discrimination against women including pay equity is the presence of women in government. It has been proven that the presence of women in government has resulted in more attention paid to all factors of discrimination against women and greater action against it. Granting women a more active station in the political running of a country is not only a right to be fought for, but also a method of fighting discrimination against women and achieving pay equity.

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## Appendix or Appendices

I:

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II:

<http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20100423085705/dfid.gov.uk/documents/publications/africa-gender-equality-action-plan.pdf>

