

A deep dive into payroll data to find the true gender pay gap

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With more companies seeking to foster and protect workers' rights in global supply chains, the need for accurate information on working conditions is becoming ever more important.

This includes information on gender pay gaps in the factories and farms that supply supermarkets and high street shops worldwide. Yet, gender pay gaps are typically only monitored at national levels, which may be a poor predictor of what's happening in any given workplace. [The Anker Research Institute's](#) new report on gender pay gaps in global supply chains is an effort to start addressing this information gap.

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The detailed results provide a clear understanding of the variables we must prioritize as we move our work forward. This is the kind of thoughtful, innovative research needed in our industry.”

Wendy Savage, Patagonia's Senior Director, Social Impact & Transparency



Image of garment worker in Turkey

About the research.

The Anker Research Institute carried out studies in five countries (Bangladesh, Colombia, Morocco, Thailand, and Turkey) to test its new methodology for measuring the size and determinants of gender pay gaps at workplaces in global supply chains.

These studies involved independent analysis of payroll data for over 15,000 women and men working at 12

factories, farms, and packhouses in the garment and agri-food sectors, as well as over 350 interviews with workers, managers, and stakeholder organizations. The studies were sponsored by companies sourcing from these workplaces, and non-profit and UN organizations.

Headline findings.

There is considerable diversity in the size of gender pay gaps across the 12 workplaces. For the garment factories, the study found gaps in favour of men of 22% to 30% in Bangladesh and 4%

to 17% in Turkey, but small gender pay gaps in favour of women in Thailand. In Morocco, the study showed a small gap of 5% for a farm producing fresh produce but a much larger gap of 15% for a packhouse that it supplied. Meanwhile, two banana farms in Colombia both had gaps of around 10% despite the unionized farm having markedly higher wage levels than the non-unionized farm. Importantly, as result of this research we see that gender pay gaps at individual workplaces do not always directly reflect those reported at a national level.

There is also variation in the causes of the gender pay gap at each workplace. A common factor is occupational gender segregation and a tendency for jobs that are mostly done by men to pay more than jobs that are mostly done by women. Other direct determinants are gender differences in contract types, forms of pay, access to additional wage payments, and the amount of time worked. The underlying causes include discriminatory norms and gender stereotypes; informality in employment practices; lack of a structured approach to equal opportunities; weaknesses in worker representation and grievance mechanisms; and supply chain dynamics. Based on these findings, the report makes a series of recommendations for employers, workers, and other actors associated with global supply chains to reduce and eventually eliminate gender pay gaps, where they exist.

[To launch this report, we will be hosting a side session at the OECD Forum](#) on Due Diligence in the Garment and Footwear Sector that will take place on Friday, 23 February at 13.00 – 14.30 CET

“At Primark, we’ve committed to strengthening the position of women in our supply chain through skills development and addressing their barriers to progression by 2030. There is no doubt that tackling gender inequality in our supply chain requires collaboration and deeper engagement among both women and men. But we need to understand more about the local challenges to help the industry drive improvements. That’s why we were delighted to support the project. This in-depth research is an important step to help us understand more about wages in our supply chain. As a direct result, we intend to apply a gender lens to our work on Living Wage and we hope this research will encourage others to do so too.”

Frances Goodwin, Living Wage Lead, Primark

“Praise for this impressive work by the Anker Research Institute. Fairtrade International is pleased that the research it instigated led to pilots in various industries with support from various partners. I sincerely hope that companies that want to ensure that women in their own operations or supply chains receive fair and equitable remuneration will follow the recommendations in this report.”

Wilbert Flinterman, Senior Advisor Workers’ Rights and Trade Union Relations, Fairtrade International

Learn more about Anker Research Institute, Patagonia, Primark, and Fairtrade [here](#)

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