

SUMMARY

STATUS OF WOMEN

---

AND MEN REPORT

---

PRODUCTIVE

---

EMPLOYMENT AND

---

DECENT WORK

---

FOR ALL

---



A Gender Analysis of Labour Force Data and Policy Frameworks in Six  
CARICOM Member States

UN Women is the UN organisation dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of UN Women, the United Nations or any of its affiliated organisations.

Author: Margaret Griffiths  
Content Editor: Isiuwa Iyahan  
Copy Editor: Sharon Carter-Burke  
Layout Editor: Jerome Agostini

# SUMMARY

For women and men to benefit equitably from economic growth, there must be recognition of the disparities between them, and robust evidence-based policies to eradicate any inequalities. These disparities are evidenced by the unequal wage rates between women and men, which are seemingly resistant to equal pay for equal work laws; the sectors of employment women are clustered into; the categories of skilled or unskilled work they are engaged in; and the highly unequal level of care work (responsibility for children and the elderly) they carry. Women's higher educational attainment does not seem to make a difference.

This report provides a gender analysis of the labour force in six CARICOM Member States (Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago) and insight into progress made with regard to achieving gender equality in the world of work.

The statistics in this report are derived from analysis of the raw data from each country's labour force survey (LFS) or equivalent. All the data relate to 2017.

## Key findings

- In all six countries, women tend to be more highly educated than men, but it seems the economy is not taking full advantage of the available human resources. Conversely, many women are not reaping the full potential benefit of their education.
- In all countries, the employment rate is lower for women than it is for men.
- In all countries, the unemployment rate is higher for women than it is for men.
- Occupational sex segregation is evident in all countries. Women are most strongly over-represented in the clerical category. Men are more likely to work with machines, tools and objects and women with and for people.
- In some of the countries, women account for a relatively high proportion of managers. In St. Lucia, they appear to account for more than half. However, except for Jamaica and Guyana, women comprise the majority of managers working in one-person establishments. This is important, because such managers are presumably not managing people and should perhaps not be classified as managers at all.
- In all countries, the rate of employment increases with increasing education. However, a constant pattern across countries is that the employment rate is lower for women than for men at each of the three levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary). The gender difference in this respect tends to be smaller for those with tertiary education than for those with only primary education.
- As women tend to be more highly educated than men, we would expect women's earnings, on average, to be higher than those of men. This is not the case. The female hourly rate is less than 100% of the male rate in all countries except in Barbados (where the rates are the same) and Jamaica. Women's earnings, once disaggregated by educational level, are lower than those of men, revealing that women do not receive the same reward for education that men do.
- Women are more likely than men to be employed by government. This is expected, as women account for the majority of teachers and nurses in most countries, and also of clerical workers.
- Men are noticeably more likely than women to be employed if there are children under five in their household. Those of peak productive age, who are the most likely to be employed, may also be those most likely to be fathering and thus living with young children. The same logic does not apply so readily to women. Although women in this age group are most

likely to bear and have young children living in the household, their disproportionate responsibility for caring for them will limit the extent to which they can engage in economic work.

The labour force represents all those available to do economic work, whether or not they have such work. The labour force participation rate represents the proportion of the working-age population that is either employed or unemployed. The unemployment rate is calculated as the number of unemployed people as a proportion of the labour force (i.e. employed and unemployed combined).

Men are noticeably more likely than women to be part of the labour force across all the countries. This is expected, given women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work. Women's greater longevity also contributes to the pattern, but the pattern remains if analysis is restricted to the population aged 15–64 years.

## Demographics

### Age

There are huge differences in the relative size of the population aged 15 and above across the six countries. Despite this, the female proportion of the working-age population is similar across countries. In all six, women account for a little over half of the population.

In terms of the proportion of the working-age population aged 65 and above, in all countries except Grenada the pattern is as expected, with women more likely than men to be in this group. Shares of older people affect labour statistics as a high share tends to reduce overall labour force participation and employment.

The share of the female population aged under 15 ranges from 16% in St. Lucia to 27% in Guyana. The proportions are important from a gender perspective. A higher proportion of children is likely to place a heavier unpaid care work burden on the working-age population, and on women in particular. While older people may also need care, the need is generally less intensive than in respect of children.

### Households with and without children

For the four countries for which the calculation is possible, women are many times more likely than men to live in households that contain no other adults but do contain at least one child under 18 – that is, there is a predominance of single-female-headed households with children. This indicates the extent to which women are more likely to bear responsibility for children, both for caring physically and emotionally for them and for providing for them financially.

Countries in which children under 15 constitute a larger proportion of the population are also those in which women and men are more likely to live in a household with a very young child. As before, women are noticeably more likely than men to be in such households. However, the working-age population in this case will often be living with other adults as well as the children. They may not, therefore, bear the full – or even any – responsibility for caring and/or providing for them. However, the fact that women are more likely to be in such households points to the greater likelihood that they will bear these responsibilities.

### Marital status

Many women bear, rear and care for children outside of a formal marriage, or even outside an ongoing relationship. Beyond childcare needs, social expectations may be placed on women and men in a formal relationship as to their expected roles. Across the four countries for which data are available, though, a larger proportion of men than women have never been married. This is because men tend to marry later and because women are more likely to outlive their partners and thus, as widows, be in the “other” category.

### Nationality

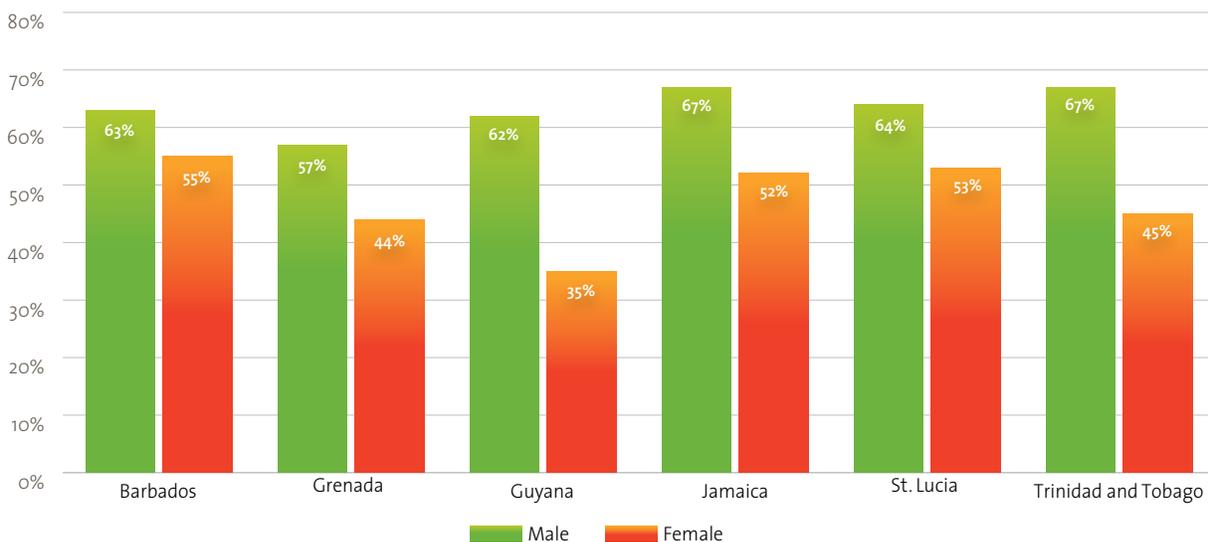
In most countries, less than 10% of the working-age population consists of non-nationals. These percentages are too small to allow for reliable analysis of the labour force situation of non-natives compared with natives. Estimates suggest the non-native proportion of the population may be slightly higher for women than for men. If reliable, this may reflect greater out-migration among native men compared with native women rather than greater in-migration of non-native women compared with non-native men.

## Work status

### Employment

For the six countries, the proportion of working-age men employed in each country ranges from 57% to 67%. For women, the range is from 35% to 55%.

**FIGURE 1.**  
**Employment rate by sex, 2017**



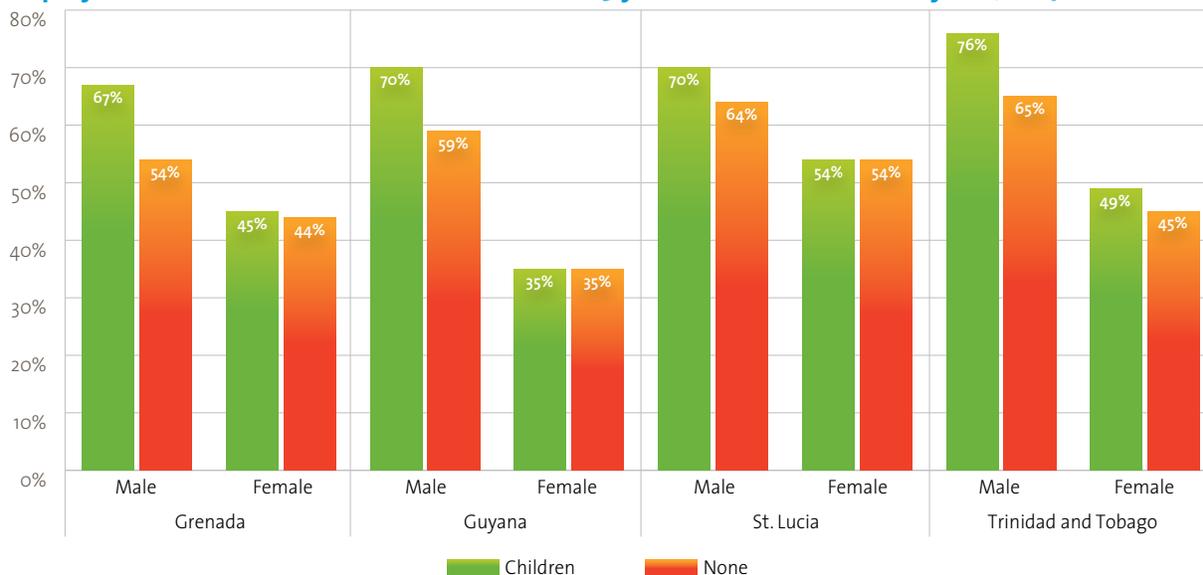
Source: Calculations by Debbie Budlender using datasets

**In all countries, the employment rate is lower for women than for men. The gap is especially large in Guyana, followed by Trinidad and Tobago. The gap is smallest in Barbados.**

The employment rate is higher for men in all age groups except in St. Lucia, where there is no gender difference among teenagers. All countries except St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago have a marked difference between young women and young men. In Guyana, young men are nearly twice as likely as young women to be employed. This may owe, in part at least, to the fact that young women are persevering longer in education.

FIGURE 2.

Employment rate of adults with children under 5 years in the household by sex, 2017



Source: Calculations by Debbie Budlender using datasets

**Men are noticeably more likely than women to be employed if there are children under five in their household. Those of peak productive age, who are the most likely to be employed, may also be those most likely to be fathering and thus living with young children. The same logic does not apply so readily to women. Although women in this age group are most likely to bear and have young children living in the household, their disproportionate responsibility for caring for them will limit the extent to which they can engage in economic work.**

## Unemployment

The six countries use two different ways of defining unemployment. The strict definition, specified by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), requires that the person has taken active steps to find employment during a specified recent period. The ICLS subsequently agreed that countries could use the alternative “relaxed” definition in which the requirement of work-seeking is dropped if the situation warrants it. This was introduced in acknowledgement that in some countries the job market is not sufficiently developed to allow for the expectation that everyone who wants a job will look for one. Use of the strict rather than the relaxed definition produces a lower unemployment rate.

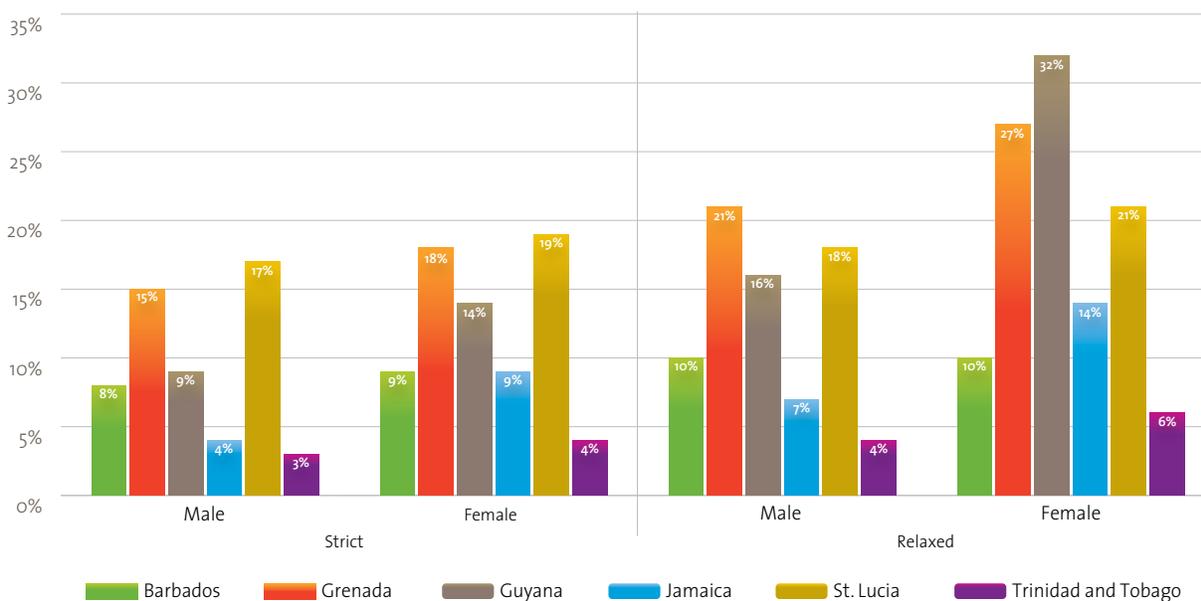
The relaxed definition tends to be more gender-sensitive because in many countries women are more likely than men to be discouraged workers, often because of other responsibilities – such as housework and childcare – that increase the opportunity cost of looking for work. In this situation, the strict definition would undercount the extent to which women would like to do paid

work but cannot find it. For the six focus countries, all but Barbados and Jamaica have a larger relative gap between the two rates for women than for men.

The 19th ICLS in 2013 recommended use only of the original strict definition and the introduction of two new concepts to describe those covered only under the relaxed definition. However, in 2017, three of our six countries were still using the relaxed definition (Grenada, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago). We thus continue to use the two measures. The analysis utilizes the relaxed definition so as to facilitate comparison across countries. This choice does not affect analysis that focuses only on the employed, as the definition of employment is the same across the strict and relaxed approaches.

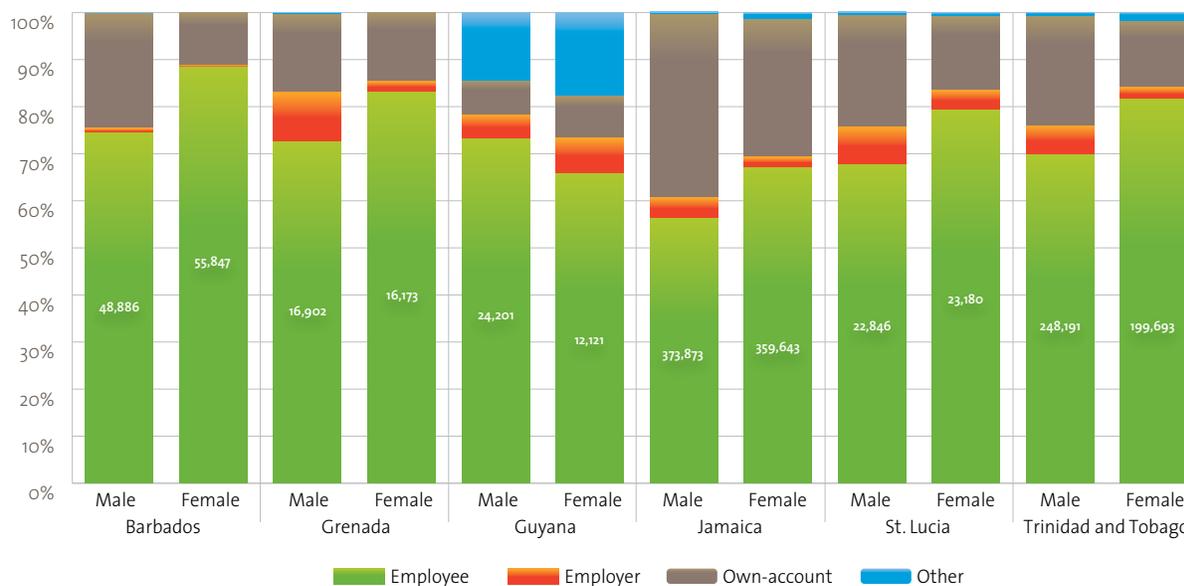
**Regardless of which definition of unemployment is used, the unemployment rate for women is higher than the rate for men.** The difference between the male and female rates is largest in Guyana, where the relaxed rate for women is 32% – that is, almost a third of women who would like to work do not.

**FIGURE 3.**  
Strict and relaxed unemployment rate by sex, 2017



Source: Calculations by Debbie Budlender using datasets

**FIGURE 4.**  
**Status in employment by sex, 2017**



Source: Calculations by Debbie Budlender using datasets

## Status in employment

The different contractual arrangements under which a person works will have an influence on the level and type of power the person exercises in the workplace, as well as the level of risk in terms of variable earnings. The main categories are employees, employers and own-account workers, with the latter two making up the combined category of the self-employed.

Across all six countries, more than half of all employed women and men are employees. **In all countries except Guyana, women are more likely than men to be employees.**

Guyana also has a much larger proportion of both women and men who are not employees, employers or own-account workers (primarily unpaid family workers in a range of industries). Guyana is also the only country in which women are more likely than men to be employers. However, because far fewer women than men in Guyana work, in absolute terms there are more male than female employers.

Jamaica has the smallest share of employees among men but by far the largest proportion of own-account workers. Almost half of the male own-account workers in Jamaica are in agriculture whereas the female own-account workers are more likely to be traders.

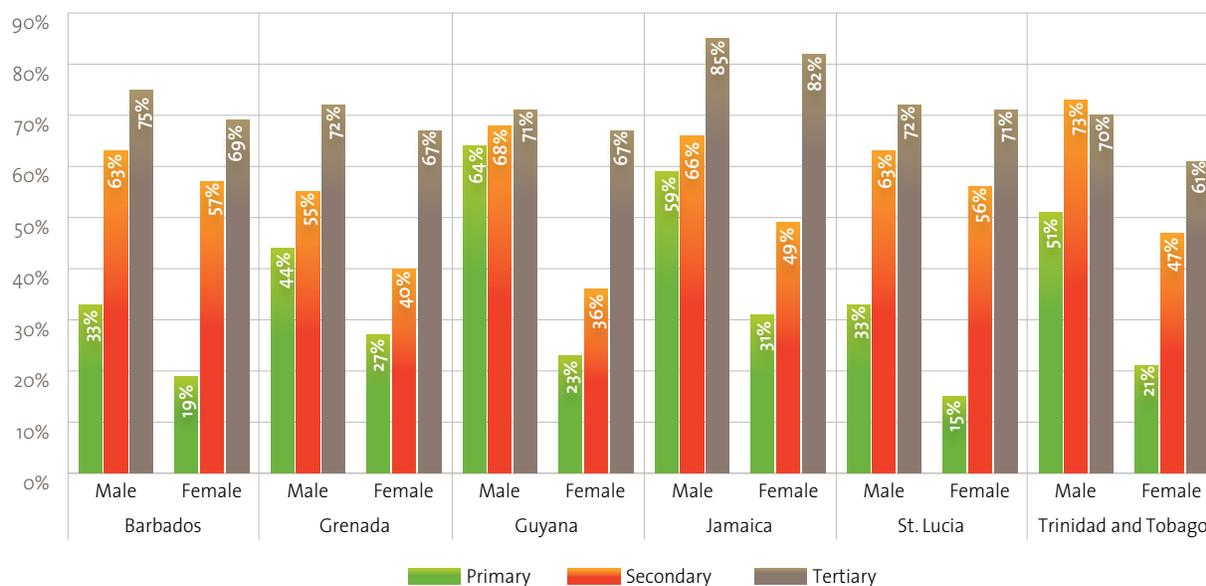
## Hours of work

In addition to whether a person engages in economic work or not is the question of how much they engage. In particular, hours worked per day or week can differ substantially between workers in a single economy.

Among women in all six countries, the hours of work are always lower for the 50–64 age group than for those aged 20–49. This pattern is found even though women in the latter group are likely also to spend more hours on unpaid care work. For men, the patterns for the two age groups differ across countries.

Men in households that include one or more children under five tend to work longer hours than men in households without young children. The pattern is most clear for Grenada and Guyana. For women, the pattern is less clear.

**FIGURE 5.**  
**Employment rate by level of education and sex, 2017**



Source: Calculations by Debbie Budlender using datasets

## Education

In all six countries, women are more likely than men to have tertiary education. Those who stay longer in the education system are likely to begin doing economic work later, but, once employed, one would expect them to have better jobs with higher earnings.

In all cases, the rate of employment increases with increasing education. Another constant pattern is that the employment rate is lower for women than men at each of the three levels of education. The gender

difference in this respect tends to be smaller for those with tertiary education than for those with only primary education.

**Given that, as noted above, women tend to be more highly educated than men, it seems the economy is not taking full advantage of the available human resources. Conversely, many women are not reaping the full potential benefit of their education.**

## Occupation

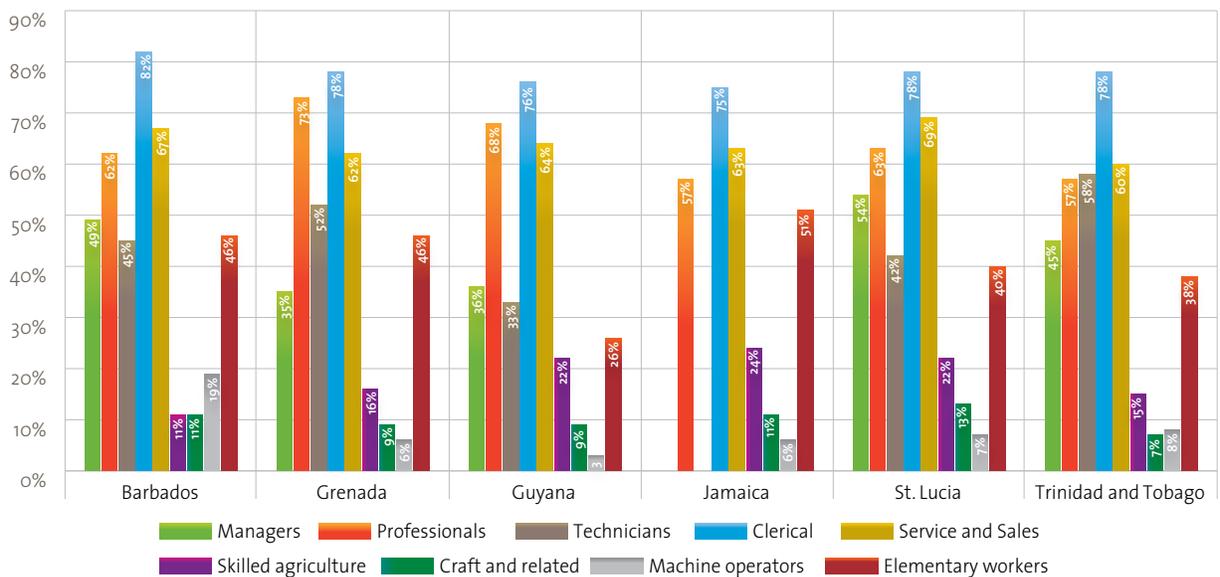
Men and women generally cluster in different jobs. As a result, while there may not be explicit discrimination in the sense of women and men in the same job having different earnings, the level of remuneration may differ for the jobs in which women and men cluster. If this happens, it will result in implicit, or indirect, discrimination.

Clear gender differences exist in all occupation categories, as do strong similarities across the six

countries in the occupational profile. **In all six, women are most strongly over-represented in the clerical category.** They also account for well over half of all jobs in the professional and services and sales work categories. Women are least well represented in craft and related trade workers and plant and machine operators.

**At base, men are more likely to work with machines, tools and objects and women with and for people.**

**FIGURE 6.**  
**Women as a share of total employed in occupation, 2017**

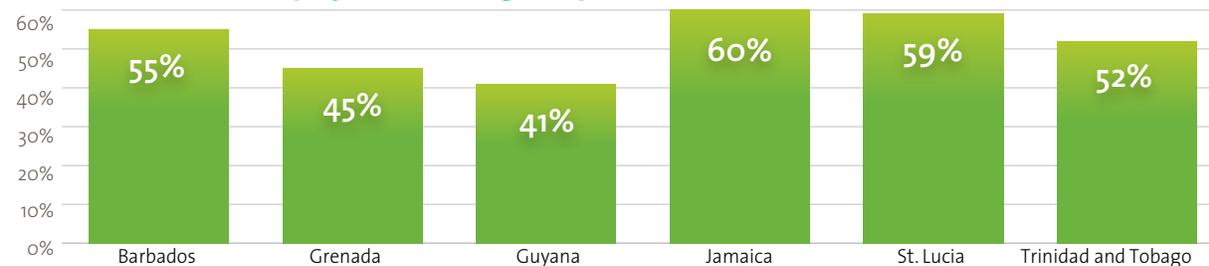


Note: Jamaica has fewer bars because it uses a non-standard classification.

Source: Calculations by Debbie Budlender using datasets

**In some of the countries, women account for a relatively high proportion of managers. In St. Lucia, they appear to account for more than half.**

**FIGURE 7.**  
**Female share of all employees in managerial positions**

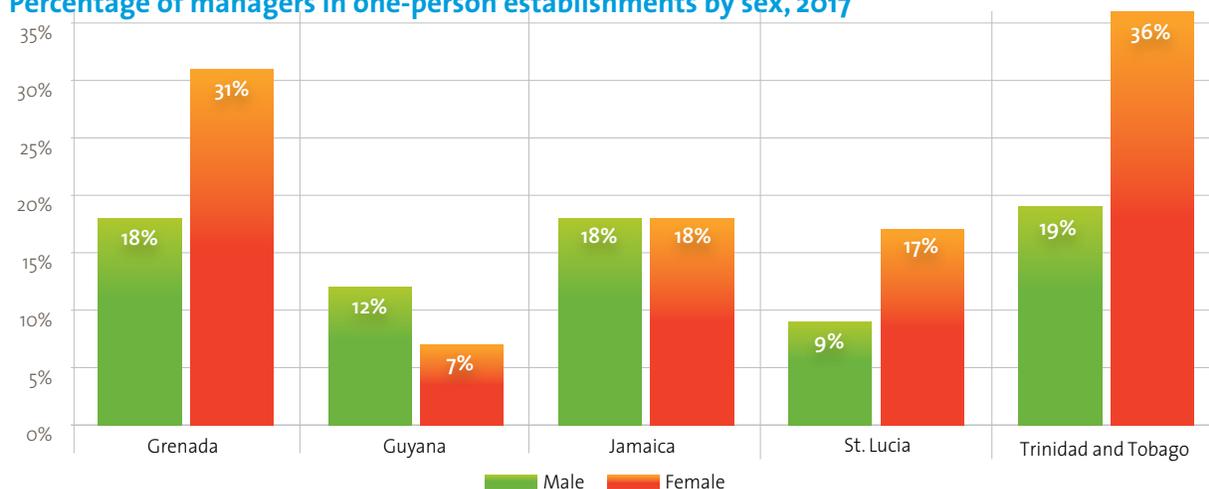


Source: Calculations by Debbie Budlender using datasets

**Within this, we need to look at what percentage is reported to be working in one-person establishments. This is important as such**

**managers are presumably not managing people and should perhaps not be classified as managers at all.**

**FIGURE 8.**  
**Percentage of managers in one-person establishments by sex, 2017**



Source: Calculations by Debbie Budlender using datasets

In Grenada, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, women managers are much more likely than men managers to be in this anomalous position. The opposite pattern holds for Guyana, one of the countries with the lowest reported levels of female managers. The phenomenon is equally likely for male and female managers in Jamaica. If these managers – both women and men – were reclassified, the female percentage of managers for Grenada, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago would be lower than the previous figure.

In four of the six countries, women account for more than half of all employees in managerial positions. It is only in Grenada and Guyana that women account for fewer than half. More in-depth research would be required to

find out whether the women managers are adequately compensated in comparison with men managers.

For all countries, the majority of workers in skilled jobs have tertiary education. In all countries except Trinidad and Tobago, fewer than 5% of skilled workers have only primary education. At the other end of the spectrum, the unskilled category has the highest proportions of workers with primary education or less. Nevertheless, in all countries, there are some workers with tertiary education who are in elementary jobs – that is, those whose jobs are associated with very basic skill and education. Barbados performs worst here, with about 15% of all workers in the unskilled category having tertiary education.

## Sector

To simplify analysis, we cluster all industries other than trade, manufacturing, agriculture and accommodation into the “other” category. We use the accommodation (and food) services industry as a proxy for tourism. Unfortunately, the classification Trinidad and Tobago uses does not include a separate category even for accommodation and food services. The four chosen industries account for a little under 40% of all employed people in Barbados but over 50% in Guyana.

Men are more likely than women to be employed in agriculture. However, the relative size of this sector varies markedly, from a small percentage in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago to more than 40% in Guyana and Jamaica. In contrast, trade accounts for a visibly larger share of employed women than employed men. Nevertheless, in Guyana, the absolute number of men employed in trade is slightly higher than the number of women. The relative numbers of women and men employed explain this contradiction. Women are also far more likely than men to work in accommodation and food services in all countries for which this category is available, outnumbering them in both relative and absolute terms.

In absolute terms, there are more men than women in manufacturing across the six countries. However, manufacturing accounts for a marginally higher percentage of employed women than employed men.

## Earnings

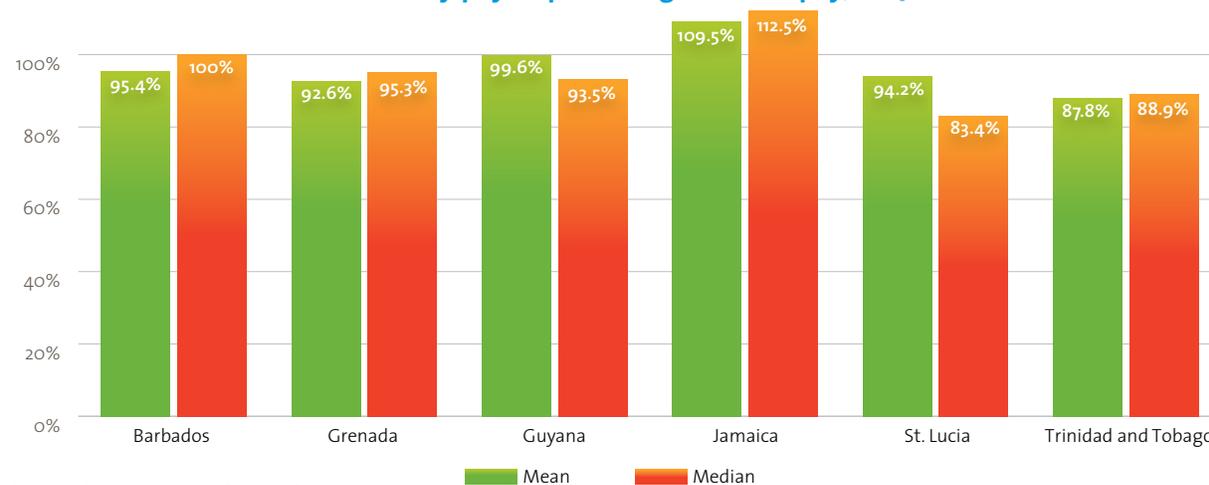
In most cases, questionnaires ask for gross earnings – a concept that is simpler for those who earn a wage or salary. Analysis is thus likely to be more accurate for employees than for the self-employed. It is also complicated by the fact that currencies differ. The focus here is therefore on patterns within countries rather than absolute amounts earned.

Additionally, if women are found to earn less, on average, than men in respect of total earnings, at least some of women’s disadvantage may be explained by the smaller number of hours worked. To control for this bias, the analysis focuses on earnings per hour.

**The female hourly rate is less than 100% of the male rate in all cases except the median measure in Barbados (where the rates are the same) and both the mean (the average) and median (the middle) in Jamaica. In Jamaica, women’s hourly earnings appear to be noticeably higher than men’s.**

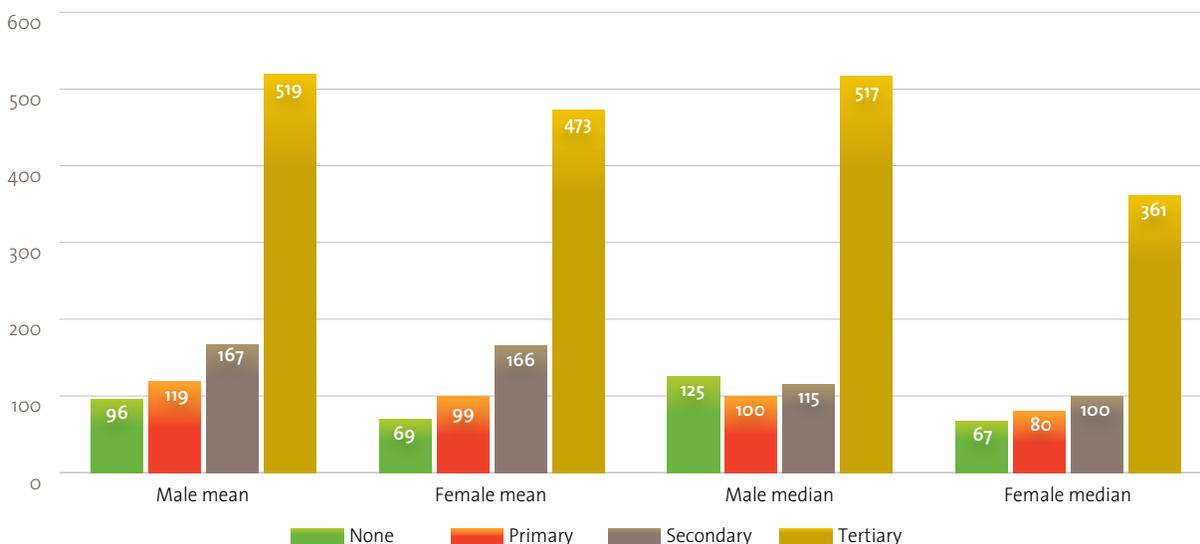
**For the other countries, the pattern is disturbing given that – as seen above – women tend to be more educated than men, and more educated women are more likely to be employed. We would therefore expect women’s earnings, on average, to be higher than those of men.**

**FIGURE 9.**  
**Mean and median of female hourly pay as percentage of male pay, 2017**



Source: Calculations by Debbie Budlender using datasets

**FIGURE 10.**  
**Hourly pay by level of education and sex, Jamaica, 2017**



Source: Calculations by Debbie Budlender using datasets

In Barbados, overall women earn more than men but they earn less when the analysis is carried out for each level of education separately. Women's relative disadvantage is then evident for both the mean and the median measure. Thus, once education is taken into account, women in Jamaica suffer a similar pay disadvantage to that of women in the other five countries.

**The fact that women's earnings, once disaggregated by educational level, are lower than those of men reveals that women do not receive the same reward for education that men do.**

## Employment by government

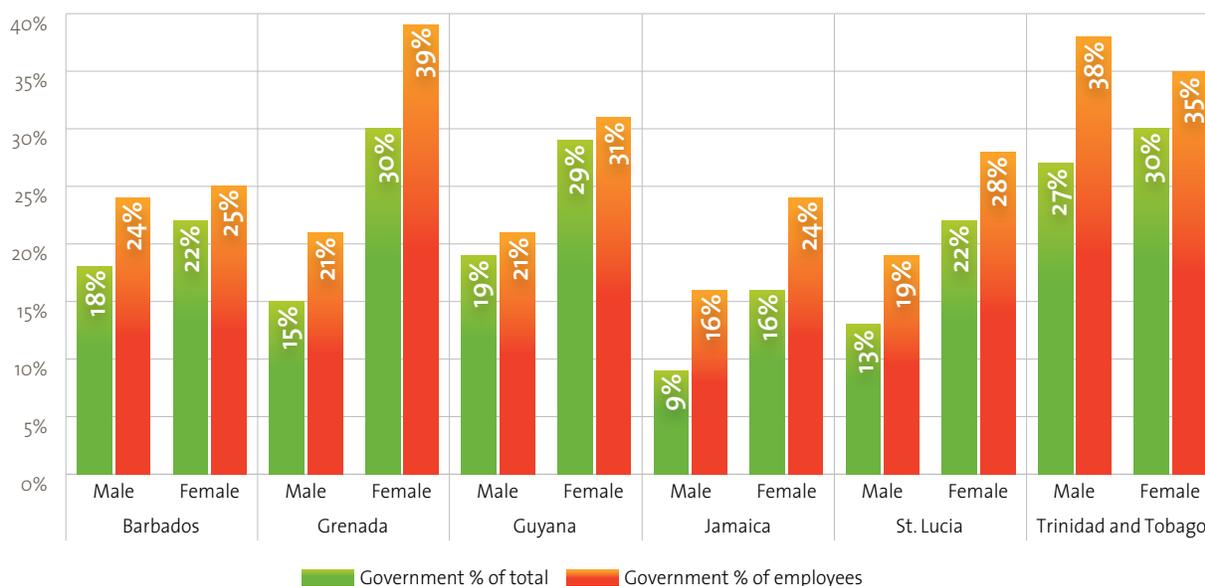
Government employment is generally likely to provide decent work – in the sense of adequate earnings, conditions of work and social protection. The percentage of employees working for government is therefore an important indicator of decent work.

**Women are more likely than men to be employed by government except in Trinidad and Tobago. This is expected, as women account**

**for the majority of teachers and nurses in most countries, and also of clerical workers.**

**In Trinidad and Tobago, 38% of all male employees work for government as against 35% of women. However, when non-employees are included, the female percentage is higher than the male one.** Trinidad and Tobago has the highest overall (women and men combined) level of government employment. Jamaica has the lowest.

**FIGURE 11.**  
**Government employment by sex, 2017**



Source: Calculations by Debbie Budlender using datasets

## Recommendations for national policy and planning

Despite significant investments in education in CARICOM, structural barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment persist:

- Women in CARICOM are more educated than men but are employed at lower rates.
- Gender pay gaps, although not as wide as in previous years, have proven resistant to equal pay legislation.
- Violence and harassment in the workplace hinder women's employment prospects and their productivity.

An overall broad recommendation for national policy and planning relates to the need for national gender equality policies. Most CARICOM Member States do not have such policies in place. Where they exist, alignment between these and national development plans is recommended. This will also help in achieving the targets in the Sustainable Development Goals, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Violence Against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action through robust and evidence-based policy and planning coordination.

Specific recommendations are outlined below.

- **Undertake research, data collection and analysis for evidence-based and gender-responsive policy and programme development** with a particular focus on the higher unemployment (and lower employment) rates of women and gender differences on the basis of ethnicity. Data are also needed on unpaid care work, as well as gender analysis of existing data on poverty and the labour force, in conjunction with time-use data.
- **Establish formal mechanisms for inter-ministerial and multi-sectoral dialogue on gender equality and decent work** between national gender machineries, ministries and agencies, national statistics offices, women's organizations, union representatives and private sector representatives, to promote/strengthen laws, policies and programmes.
- **Undertake gender-responsive legal, policy and service delivery reform** to reduce women's unpaid care work and institute zero tolerance for sexual

harassment and other forms of gender-based violence in the workplace. This includes a panorama of legal and policy frameworks, covering but not limited to parental leave, workplace violence, wage equality, subsidized childcare, flexible work schedules, training in new skills and establishing an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs.

- **Mainstream gender in poverty reduction and social assistance programmes.** Poverty reduction programmes need to pay attention to the different vulnerabilities of women and men throughout the lifecycle. A gender analysis of current active labour market programmes is recommended to assess if they are taking into account the specific needs of unemployed and underemployed women. Programmes to support the most vulnerable women workers, such as domestic workers, sex workers, rural women, temporary and night workers and those in the informal economy, should be reviewed to ensure they are correctly designed to address the needs of vulnerable workers.

Meanwhile, despite multiple similar gender trends across the CARICOM region, there are also differences across countries in the extent to which particular gender patterns are found, or even if they are found. Within countries, data show variations on the basis of age, class, ethnicity and living situation in terms of the nature of labour market engagement.

This diversity confirms that efforts to address this and other inequalities must be informed by an understanding of the particular patterns of gender inequalities in the labour market in each country, both to achieve gender equality and equity and to enable the country to take full advantage of the available resources in its population.

What is most striking are the structural inequalities that persist. Access to education alone will not address the gender inequalities in employment, wages, sexual harassment and other forms of violence in the workplace. Policies and laws, without a requisite commitment to monitor and implement, will be insufficient. What is required is a shift in norms towards widespread acceptance that the structural barriers to women's empowerment must be eliminated, for both women and men to enjoy, de facto, the full range of their rights. When women remain disadvantaged, a society continues to undervalue the full potential of all its people.



**UN Women Multi-Country Office - Caribbean**

UN House, Marine Gardens  
Hastings Christ Church, Barbados.

Tel: +1 246 467 6000

Fax: +1 246 437 6596

<http://caribbean.unwomen.org>

<http://www.facebook.com/unwomencaribbean>