

JAMAICA GENDER ASSESSMENT



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Acknowledgements

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Acronyms

ALMP	Active Labor Market Programs
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRD	Chronic Respiratory Disease
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
CVD	Cardiovascular Disease
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FLFP	Female labor force participation
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitoring
HLO	Harmonized Learning Outcomes
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILO	International Labor Organization
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
JSE	Jamaica Stock Exchange
JSLC	Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions
JWHS	Jamaica Women's Health Survey
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LAYS	Learning-adjusted years of schooling
LFS	Labor force survey
LMI	Labor market information
NEET	Not in education, employment, or training
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
RADA	Rural Agricultural Development Authority, Jamaica
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SP	Social Protection
SWTS	School to Work Transition Survey, ILO
TEA	Total early-stage entrepreneurial activity
UMI	Upper middle-income countries

UNDOC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
US	United States of America
WBG	World Bank Group
WBL	Women, Business and the Law
WDR	World Development Report
WEF	World Economic Forum

INTRODUCTION



Despite Jamaica's noted progress in various areas of gender equality, equal access to economic opportunity is still a distant goal. The short- and long-run income loss stemming from gender inequality in labor markets in Jamaica has been estimated to be 11.9 and 13.0 percent, respectively (2011 data) (Teigner and Cuberes, 2016). The implications of economic inclusion for women have become more important given that the country's current demographic challenges require investments in human capital that will effectively translate into better economic opportunities for women.

Jamaica is characterized by two distinctive and somewhat puzzling phenomena. A reverse gender gap exists in enrollment at all levels of education, as girls tend to have higher educational attainment than boys. Economic hardships, aspirations not clearly framed around success in education and work, and scant opportunities are some of the factors explaining boys' higher dropout rates and poorer learning outcomes. Women also tend to outperform men across various health outcomes. For instance, men register one of the highest homicide rates in the world and are more likely than women to die from non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Yet, at the same time, the opportunities to transform investments in education and health into economic activities remain limited for Jamaican women and girls. Women experience lower labor inclusion and entrepreneurship rates, higher unemployment, and lower earnings. This gap is already evident in the transition to the labor market, as the share of women who are neither in education, employment nor training (NEET) is higher, as is the unemployment rate of young women vis-à-vis men. Men, on the other hand, are more likely than women to engage in vulnerable and informal jobs.

Jamaican women earn lower salaries than men in most sectors and occupations, but the earnings gap disappears after accounting for the number of hours worked. On average, Jamaican women earn lower salaries than men regardless of their level of education, age, sector of employment or their household composition—that is, the number, sex, and ages of household members. The levels of experience, educational attainment and training tend to narrow the earnings gender gap, whereas differences in the sector of occupation widen it. Nonetheless, the earnings gender gap not only disappears, but reverses once the number of hours worked is accounted for. This is an indication that the differences observed in earnings are partly explained by women's ability to dedicate more time to paid work.

To some extent the country's progress in international rankings reflects the disconnect between endowments (especially education) and economic opportunity for Jamaican women as compared to men. While the score and ranking in the UNDP Gender Inequality Index,¹ embracing various dimensions of gender equality, have

1 Limitations as discussed on the Gender Inequality Index FAQ: "Like all composite measures, the GII has some limitations. First, it does not capture the length and breadth of gender inequality. For example, the use national parliamentary representation excludes participation at the local government level and elsewhere in community and public life. The Index misses other important dimensions, such as time use. Asset ownership, gender-based violence and participation in community decision-making are also not captured, mainly due to limited data availability."

improved over time, Jamaica's score in the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI),² which places more emphasis on economic aspects, has declined in recent years. This is mostly due to deteriorating labor market indicators for Jamaican women, a key index component (Table 1). For example, Jamaica scored 0.77 in GGGI's economic participation and opportunity field, revealing women are 23 percent less likely than men to enjoy equal economic participation and opportunities. That same year, Jamaica scored 0.62 in estimated earned income, which suggests a gender pay gap of approximately 38 percent, and signaling that on average, women's income was an estimated 38 percent lower than men's income.

Table 1: Gender equality in Jamaica in international perspective

	Ranking		Score	
	2006	2020	2006	2020
Global Gender Gap Index	25	41	0.735	0.701
Economic participation and opportunity	7	24	0.767	0.738
Educational attainment	1	1	1	1
Health and survival	82	65	0.976	0.97
Political empowerment	65	69	0.197	0.098

Source: World Economic Forum: <https://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2020/dataexplorer/#economy=JAM>

Notes: The WEF Gender Gap Index includes measures of economic participation (labor force participation rate, wage equality, estimated earned income for legislators, senior officials and managers, and professional and technical workers), educational attainment (literacy rate and enrolment rates across all levels), health and survival (sex ratio at birth and healthy life expectancy) and political empowerment (women in parliament, ministerial positions and years under a female head of state). GGGI's highest possible value is 1, reflecting the absence of gender gaps.

Women's agency in Jamaica has improved in many respects, but there are concerns about the institutional mechanisms for gender equality and regarding gender-based violence. Jamaica's legal and institutional arrangements promote gender equality in many areas, including ensuring women's access to justice and property. However, enforcing such regulations remains a challenge due to feeble institutional coordination, coupled with budgetary and human resources constraints that persist across sectors. Moreover, additional efforts are required to reduce barriers to work for women and ensure equal pay for equal work, guarantee equal access to credit, and prevent and penalize sexual harassment at the workplace. Beyond the legislative framework, norms assigning gendered roles to women and men constrain economic

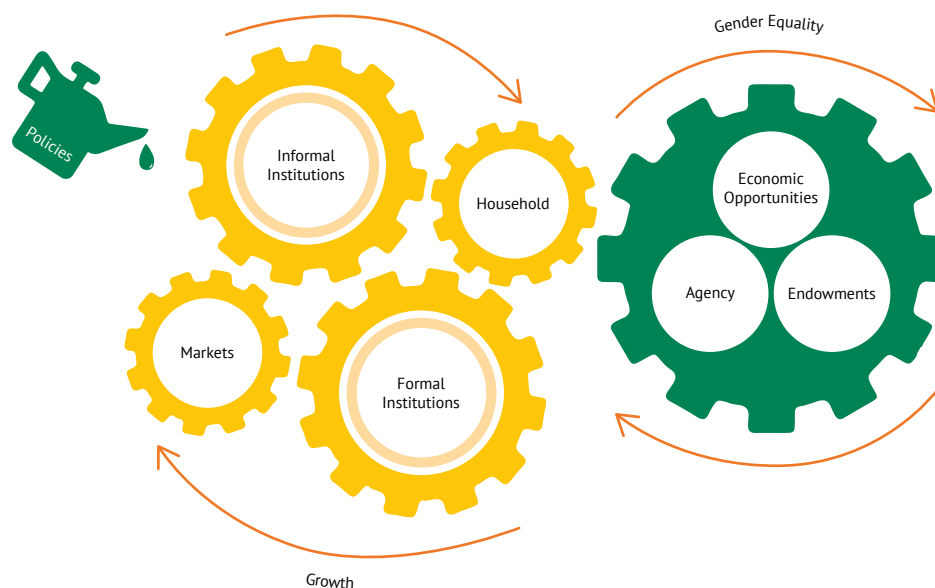
² Limitations as discussed on the Global Gender Gap report 2022: "Limitations on data availability continue to prevent the GGG index from reflecting gender gaps across the full spectrum of gender identities. The analysis thus remains focused on assessing gender gaps between women and men across the economic, educational, health and political outcomes."

participation. For example, 70 percent of Jamaicans believe that women should take care of house and family. Importantly, one in every four Jamaican women have experienced physical violence from a male partner and nearly half have experienced controlling behaviors.

The COVID-19 pandemic has gender-differentiated impacts in Jamaica. While the number of confirmed cases is higher among women, for every 10 female fatalities there were 15 male ones. Women reported higher incidence of mental health issues, such as anxiety, distress and depression compared to men. School closures have deteriorated already poor educational outcomes, particularly among boys and adolescent pregnancy appears to be on the rise. The pandemic has worsened the unequal distribution of household and caregiving activities in Jamaica, as well as labor market outcomes—particularly for young women who experienced the highest unemployment rates on record.

This assessment focuses on the drivers of the two phenomena described above. First, the reverse gender gaps in education and health, and second, the differences between women and men in access to economic opportunity. For that purpose and using the WDR 2012 framework (Figure 1) (World Bank, 2012a), the report examines some of the factors behind (1) the underperformance of Jamaican boys and young men in education and health; (2) the extent to which Jamaican women's ability to access economic opportunities is determined by their accumulation of health and education (endowments), and their capacity to make choices and act upon them (agency), as well as the barriers they face vis-à-vis men. The framework is based on the premise that outcomes across the three areas of endowments, economic opportunity and agency are the result of the interaction between formal (legal and policy framework) and informal (social norms) institutions, household decisions and markets. Ultimately, the objective is to contribute to inform policy reforms in this area.

Policy efforts in Jamaica should address the different areas of persisting barriers to gender equality, from addressing gender differentials in human endowments to ensuring equal access to economic opportunities and shifting patriarchal gender norms. Eliminating endowment gender gaps will require tackling adolescent pregnancy and maternal mortality; promoting healthy lifestyles; addressing reverse gender gaps in school enrollment, completion, and performance; improving the quality of education; and facilitating the transition from school to work. Reducing disparities in economic opportunity will necessitate improving access to affordable, high-quality childcare, parental leave policies, and flexible work arrangements that promote a redistribution of childcare; addressing gender segregation in employment; and improving the business environment for entrepreneurs. Finally, increasing women's agency will require a battery of interventions to reduce gender-based violence, as well as interventions that can shift gender norms, aspirations, and ensure enforcement of the law.

Figure 1: The WDR framework

Source: WDR 2012

This report is structured along three main areas, namely endowments, economic opportunity, and voice and agency. The first chapter assesses observed early-life gaps in health and educational outcomes, such as adolescent pregnancy and educational enrollment and attainment, as well as maternal and reproductive health. Emphasis is placed on the reverse gender gaps observed in educational outcomes. Chapter 2 describes how improved endowments have or have not translated into economic opportunities for Jamaican women, more specifically their labor market and business engagement, access to assets and persisting poverty. Chapter 3 covers gaps in agency or decision making as reflected in political participation, gender norms, and gender-based violence. The last chapter presents key take-aways and policy guidance to address the main barriers identified.

In addition, three cross-cutting issues are examined in this assessment, namely migration, the impact of COVID-19, and disaster risk management. First, migration trends and its gender implications in Jamaica are analyzed in the chapter on economic opportunities. Second, all chapters examine COVID-19-specific impacts based on the WBG High Frequency Surveys (HFS) or recent reports based on qualitative evidence. Finally, given that Jamaica is the world's third most exposed country to multiple climate-related hazards, such as flooding and landslides, with over 96 percent of the country's income and population at risk from two or more hazards, the assessment also presents implications for disaster risk management from a gender perspective.³

³ GFDRR (2022), Jamaïque, World Bank, accessed on 1/21/22 <https://www.gfdr.org/fr/jamaïque>

CHAPTER 1: ENDOWMENTS



Human capital accumulation in Jamaica is generally skewed in favor of girls. Women's health outcomes have improved over time with increases in life expectancy and better access to healthcare. For men, health outcomes tend to be poorer. Men are more likely to die from chronic and non-communicable diseases, and face one of the highest homicide rates in the world in connection with gang violence. For women of reproductive age however, low sexual and reproductive health outcomes remain a challenge. Among adolescents specifically, teenage pregnancy represents a major public health issue with lasting repercussions. Regarding education, Jamaica reached gender parity in primary school. However, boys fare worse than girls. Enrollment, attainment, and performance are systematically lower among boys than girls across all levels, leading to what has been called a "crisis in the education of boys". Young people also face specific challenges in the transition to work, particularly young women. The country's unfolding demographic trends call for increased and better human capital investments of both men and women.

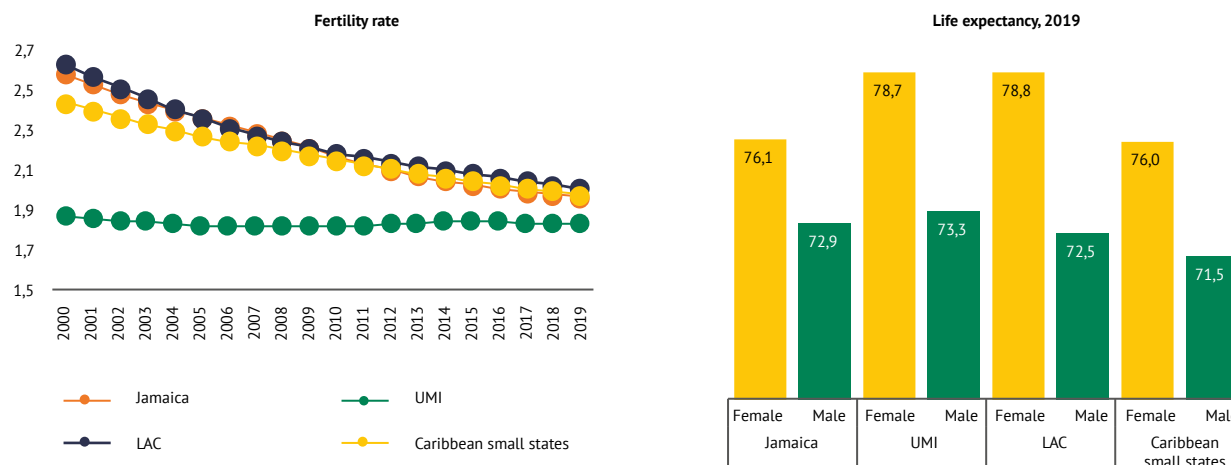
1.1. Health

1.1.1. Demographic trends

Substantial declines in fertility and increases in life expectancy in recent years have positioned Jamaica among the so-called late dividend countries (World Bank, 2016a).⁴ Jamaica's total fertility rate has dropped from 2.58 births per 1,000 women in 2000 to below replacement rates (1.98) in 2018 (Figure 2, left-hand panel). At the same time, life expectancy for women has increased from 74 years in 1990 to 76 in 2019. In contrast, it remains unchanged among men (72.4 in 1990 to 72.9 in 2019) (Figure 2, right-hand panel). This pattern is largely explained by the already high life expectancy among Jamaican men in the 1990s, but also indicates that their health outcomes did not improve at the same pace of women's - or men's in other countries - over this period.

⁴ Usually upper-middle income countries with declining fertility rates, below replacement rates (2.1 births per woman), and rapid aging processes ahead.

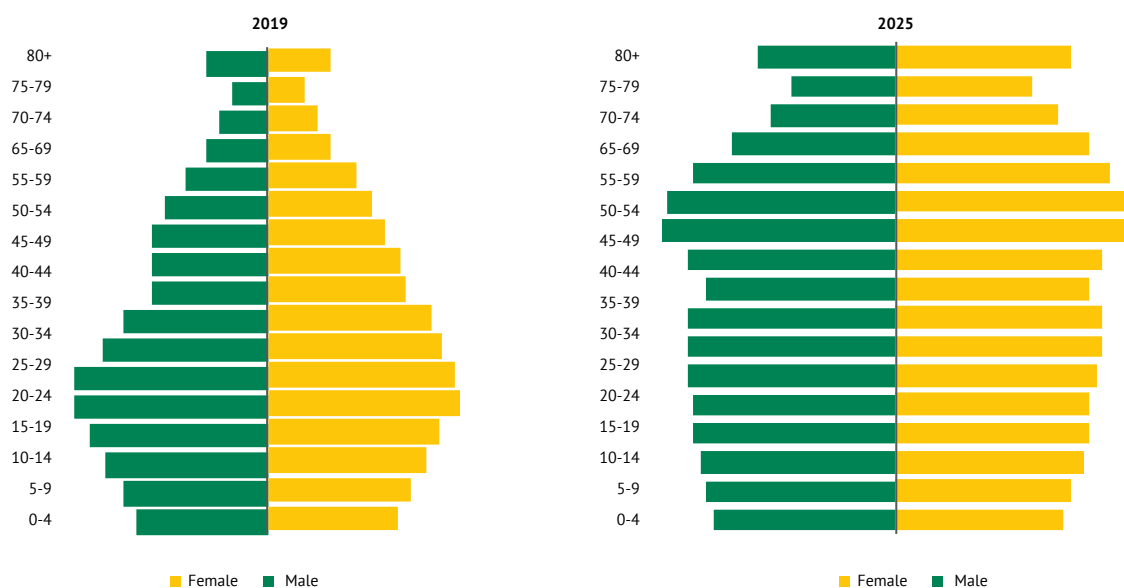
Figure 2: Fertility and life expectancy



Source: World Development Indicators, accessed August 2021

Jamaica stands to benefit from a youth bulge, but unfolding demographic trends are likely to translate into rapid population aging in coming decades (Figure 3). Against this backdrop, realizing the second demographic dividend, mostly driven by savings and human capital, will be crucial for the country's development (World Bank, 2016). This would entail continued sustainable and cost-effective investments in men's human capital, without dis-investing in women's, and encouraging women's labor force participation.

Figure 3: Age structure, projections



Source: STATIN (2019) and UN Population Division (Projections for 2050)

Welfare systems will need to be adapted to meet the needs emerging from population aging, especially accounting for gender gaps (World Bank, 2016). Ex-ante disparities in access to formal work and social protection between Jamaican men and women (see next chapter), the surge in the share of aging population, the incidence of NCDs, and increasing female life expectancy may translate into greater risk of poverty for older women in the absence of adequate pension schemes. Also, preventing the accumulation of gendered inequalities over life, by tackling gender gaps in education, employment, care, earnings, and pensions, will be crucial to foster gender equality among an aging population.

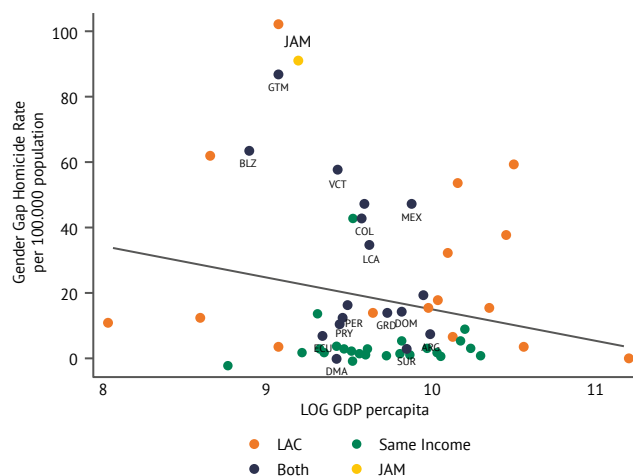
1.1.2. Mortality, morbidity, and violence

The evolution of Jamaica's health indicators reflects the epidemiological transition observed in other Caribbean countries. However, HIV/AIDS - a communicable disease - has become a serious public health concern, simultaneously with increased prevalence of lifestyle-related chronic diseases, such as hypertension, diabetes, and obesity. Moreover, gender differences can be observed in mortality and morbidity trends in Jamaica. Men are more likely than women to die from NCDs such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory diseases. They are also at a higher risk of contracting some communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tend to engage in risky behaviors, such as smoking, drinking or drug abuse in larger numbers than women (World Bank, 2017). Men are also more likely than women to die during natural disasters. This is contrary to the global pattern where women, especially poor women, are typically worst affected (Bose-Dunker et.al., 2021). Further analysis is needed to understand the drivers of these reported patterns in Jamaica.

Jamaica registers one of the highest intentional homicide rates for men in the world. The prevalence of homicides among men –102.5 deaths per 100,000 men in 2017– is the second highest in Latin America, after El Salvador (115.9), as well as among structural peers with data availability.⁵ Indeed, Jamaica's homicide rate for men is much higher than expected given its income level (Figure 4). After a substantial decline from 109.6 to 76 deaths per 100,000 men between 2005 and 2015, the rate has risen in recent years; 9 out of 10 homicides in Jamaica are linked to organized or gang crime and affect men both as perpetrators and victims (UNDOC, 2019; World Bank, 2015).⁶ Moreover, men's homicide rate in Jamaica is 9 times than that of women (11).

⁵ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/VC.IHR.PSRC.MA.P5?locations=JM>

⁶ World Bank (2015). Gender Norms and Youth Violence in Jamaica: Trends and Recommendations

Figure 4: Income per capita and men's homicide rate

Source: Prepared by the authors based on WDI.

Box 1: Homicide and gang violence in Jamaica

The early rise of gun and gang violence is linked to the establishment of political partisan violence in the 1940s and 1950s, which created the perfect space for urban violence that allowed organized crime and drug gangs to flourish in the 1980s and 1990s. The legitimacy of institutions such as the police has been systematically called into question, while their focus has been increased emphasis on paramilitary activity to maintain order rather than on prevention (UNDOC, 2019). Indeed, Jamaican youth largely see authorities as a source of violence (World Bank 2015). In recent years, the decline in cocaine revenues appeared to have a destabilizing effect leading to the proliferation of smaller criminal groupings and increased conflict between them (UNDOC, 2019).

Successive administrations have deployed important efforts to curtail gang violence and organized crime in the country. Their focus has been on the punitive or repressive response to these events. Key legal reforms included the passage of the Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organizations) Act, also known as the 'Anti-Gang' Act in April 2014, as well as the Dangerous Drugs (Amendment) Act 2015 (the 'Ganja Law') that came into force on 15 April 2015. A recurring tool in recent years has been the declaration of a state of emergency in the worst affected areas, granting security forces temporary additional powers. In 2021, the government announced substantially larger resources would be allocated to the Plan Secure Jamaica 2016-2023 which focused on six strategic objectives to end crime and violence in the country. These include strengthening the national security architecture and the criminal justice system, but also enhancing youth and community development.

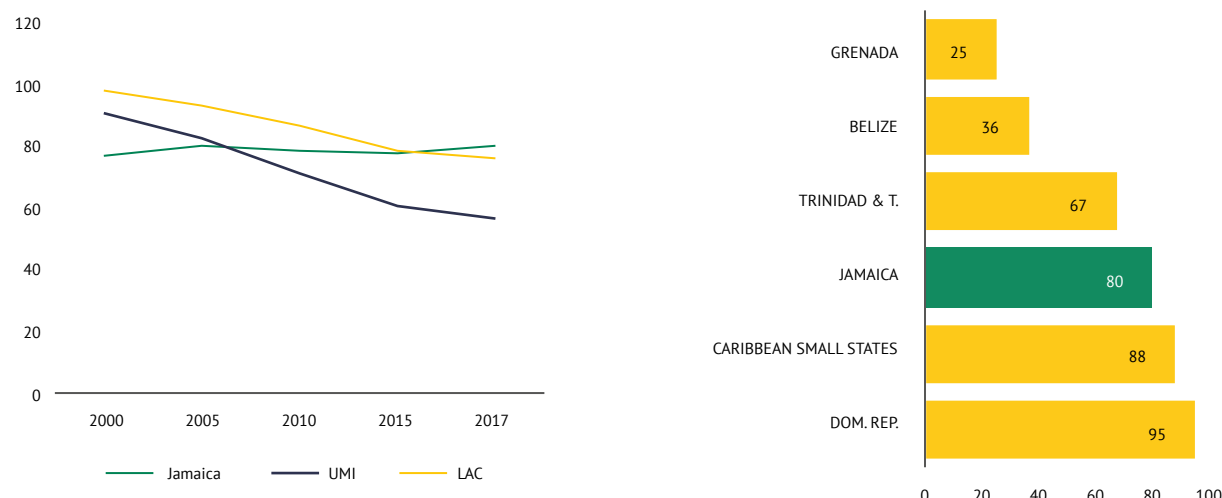
More men than women die during natural disasters in Jamaica. The global literature shows that in developing countries, women are more likely than men to die in a disaster, especially if they are poor (Bose-Dunker, et.al, 2021). In Jamaica, however, only 6 out of 10 reports on disaster impacts break down casualties by sex (PIOJ, 2001-2017). Sex-disaggregated data reveals 64 percent of casualties are men. Further analysis is needed to understand the drivers of the reported patterns in Jamaica (Natalicchio, 2022).

Like in other countries, COVID-19 has gender-differentiated impacts in Jamaica. While the number of confirmed cases is higher among women (Global Health 50/50),⁷ for every 10 female fatalities there were 15 male ones. Similarly, 2.8 percent of infected men died from COVID-19 complications, compared to 1.82 percent of women. Such gendered mortality gap may be explained by both physiological and behavioral factors, including comorbidities and risky behaviors, and gender differences in immune response. Additionally, women generally reported higher incidence of mental health issues, including higher rates of anxiety, distress, and depression compared to men. HFPS data show that on a 0 to 1 scale indicator for five mental health issues, men scored 0.17, compared to 0.21 for women.

Maternal mortality remains high in Jamaica (Figure 5). The maternal mortality rate has remained stagnant since 2000 and, at 80 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2017, it was slightly higher than the LAC average, above most of its regional peers' in the Caribbean and above the average UMI country for that year. This discrepancy is related to conditions such as pre-term birth complications and obesity-related cardiovascular disease. Young adolescents also face a higher risk of pregnancy-related complications and deaths than older women (McCaw-Binns et al., 2018; McGowan et al., 2018; Kanguru et al., 2017; World Bank, 2017).⁸

7 <https://globalhealth5050.org/the-sex-gender-and-covid-19-project/the-data-tracker/?explore=count%26country=Jamaica#search>

8 <https://obgyn.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1471-0528.15154>; <https://www.mhtf.org/2018/01/29/in-jamaica-obesity-is-linked-to-higher-risk-of-maternal-death/>; <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0188677>

Figure 5: Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births, 2017

Source: World Development Indicators, accessed August 2021

Notes: modeled estimate

Overall coverage of maternal health services is high, but quality challenges persist.

In 2011, the last year for which data are available, 97.7 percent of Jamaican women had access to prenatal care which was in line with the LAC and UMI averages for 2017. In addition, most births were attended by a skilled professional, 2018 data reveal. However, the quality of services, including weak surveillance and monitoring and a shortage of midwives and nurses, who migrate in large numbers in search of better jobs, has been identified as a major related challenge (UNFPA 2017).⁹ Anecdotal evidence suggests that the poor quality of health care services is partly attributable to delays in receiving the required care resulting from staff shortages or lack of adequate facilities and supplies. Other factors include delays in seeking appropriate medical help due to costs, poor education or limited information, and difficulty reaching adequate health facilities due to distance or poor infrastructure.¹⁰ Disasters further aggravate these factors.

Natural disasters in Jamaica increase the risks of diseases, illnesses, and injuries, which fall disproportionately on women, given their role as caregivers. The report on Hurricane Ivan (PIOJ, ECLAC, UNDP, 2004) indicates that “(it) may have impacted many people across the island but the group that seems to be the most affected may be Jamaica’s women and children”. A recent focus group study on climate change, disaster risk management (DRM) and gender in Jamaica, found that Jamaicans resort to improvised clinics run by nurses in their communities, when available, to elder midwives, and to traditional medicines and practices. Given already high maternal

⁹ <https://caribbean.unfpa.org/en/news/country-brief-jamaica>

¹⁰ <https://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/news/20180817/maternal-deaths-mainly-caused-delays>

mortality, pregnant women run even greater risks when deliveries are carried out in such improvised clinics and treated with traditional medicine after delivering (such as arrowroot porridge) (Ramesar, 2021).

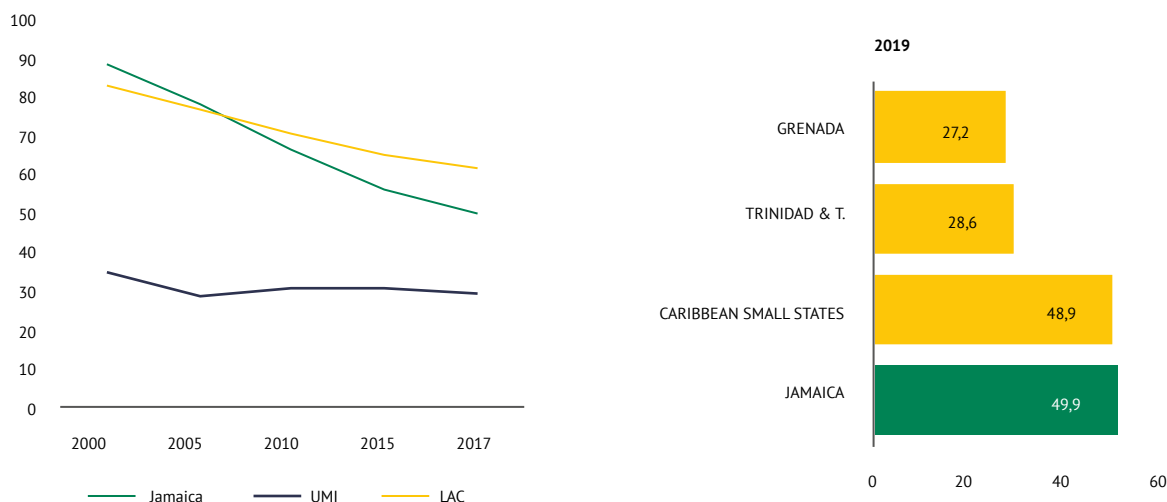
Like in other countries, the COVID-19 pandemic has posed unique challenges for Jamaican pregnant women. A recent survey found around 6 percent of respondents reported having needed maternal health services during the pandemic. All received general medical care when required, including women demanding maternal health services. Nevertheless, pregnant women appeared to be more vulnerable to develop serious symptoms associated with COVID-19 and requiring ventilation and intensive care. In October 2021, the health authorities reported an increase in the number of pregnant women giving birth with COVID-19 who were hospitalized in serious condition.¹¹

1.1.3. Adolescent fertility

Jamaica is characterized by rapidly declining but still high rates of teenage pregnancy for its level of income. At 49.9 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19, adolescent fertility in Jamaica is below the LAC average (61.2 per mille), but considerably higher than the rate for UMI countries (29.5 per mille) (Figure 6). Although the country has seen a faster decline relative to other LAC countries in recent years, early pregnancy remains a challenge and the leading cause of girls' early school dropout (World Bank, 2021). Teenage pregnancy is more prevalent among girls from low socioeconomic status, rural areas, and inner-city communities, where poverty and crime are frequent. This phenomenon is more common among low-income single-parent and extended-family households. These characteristics are also shared by the populations that suffer the most during disasters (Kennedy, 2017).¹²

11 <http://radiojamaicanewsonline.com/local/more-pregnant-women-new-mothers-becoming-seriously-ill-with-covid-19>

12 https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/dasmine-kennedy_final_20171101_web.pdf

Figure 6: Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19)

Source: World Development Indicators, accessed August 2021

Teen childbearing in Jamaica is explained by a range of individual, household, and institutional factors. McFarlane et al. (2019) find that individual and household-level factors, such as parental control and interaction, intergenerational transmission of teenage pregnancy, and experiences of sexual abuse, increase the risk of teenage pregnancy in Jamaica. At the institutional level, key drivers include inadequate access to sexual and reproductive health services for young women, and the lack of youth-friendly health services and adequate sexual education (McFarlane et al., 2019; UNFPA, 2017).¹³ Moreover, many of the programs offering sexual and reproductive health information, services and treatment to adolescents do not reach nationwide, resulting in disparate access to services (Russell- Brown, 2016; UNICEF, 2017). The role of the strict legislation on abortion should also be considered in this area, and, more broadly, that of the sexual and reproductive health and the agency of Jamaican women.

School closures and economic hardship linked to the COVID-19 crisis may increase adolescent pregnancy. Around one percent of surveyed Jamaican households reported a female family member under 18 years of age became pregnant during the pandemic. School-aged mothers, usually excluded from school, may face even greater obstacles to access education and are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and sexual violence.

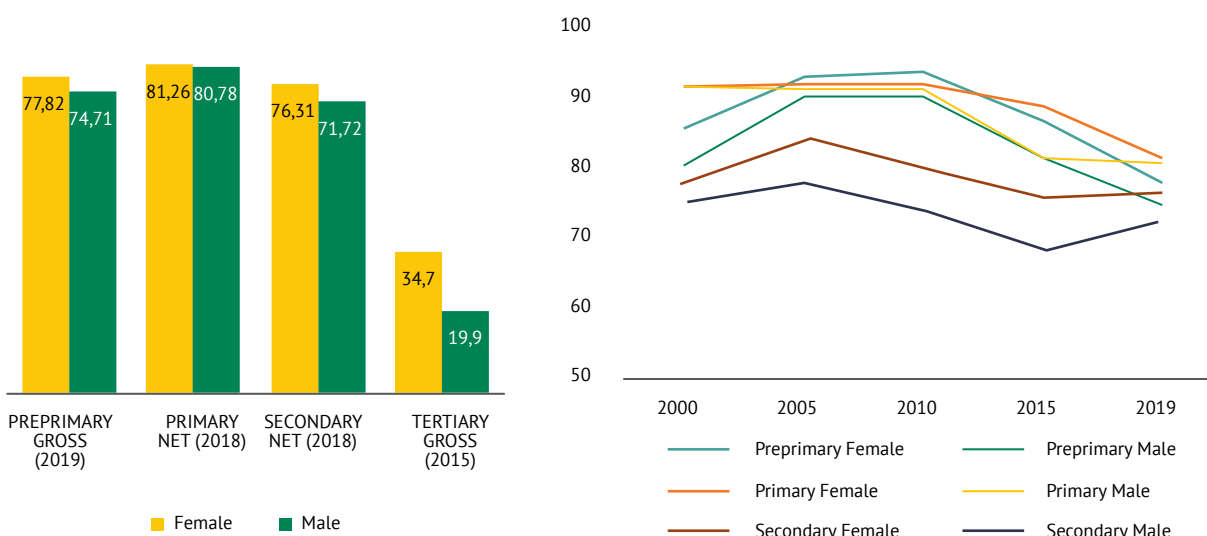
13 <https://caribbean.unfpa.org/en/news/country-brief-jamaica>

1.2. Education

1.2.1. Enrollment and literacy

Jamaica shows consistent reverse gender gaps in education – low school enrollment, higher dropout rates, and underachievement among boys. Despite improvements in the early 2000s, Jamaica has experienced declining enrollment rates for both boys and girls at all levels but tertiary since 2010 (Figure 7). Still, female enrollment remains substantially higher than male students' at the secondary and especially tertiary levels, despite significantly lower overall enrollment at this level. Since 2015, secondary school enrollment has remained stable for girls and slightly increased for boys, while tertiary enrollment started sliding in 2013. Literacy rates are also higher among Jamaican women than men. This pattern contradicts that observed in other LAC and UMI countries, where men tend to have higher literacy rates than women but is similar to that of other Caribbean countries.

Figure 7: Enrollment rates



Source: World Development Indicators, accessed August 2021

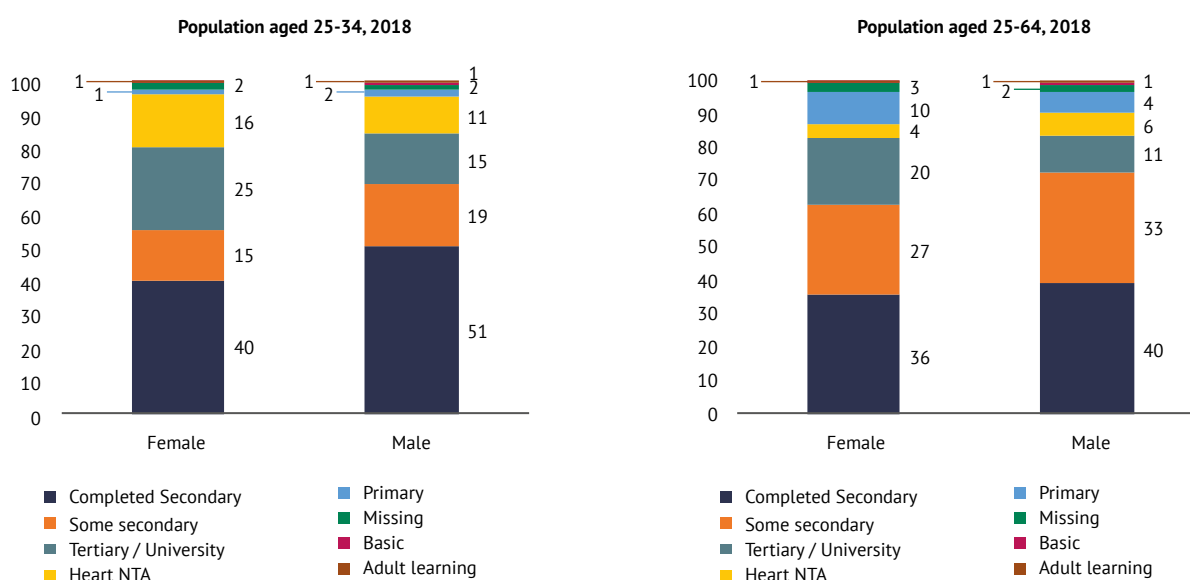
Notes: Data for primary 2005: from 2004; data for tertiary 2005: from 2002. Data for preprimary 2010: from 2009; data for secondary 2010: from 2011; data for primary 2019: from 2018; data for secondary 2019: from 2018.

1.2.2. Attainment

Educational attainment has improved among the new generations, especially for women. The educational attainment of the young workforce (aged 25-34) is higher than that of the overall Jamaican workforce (aged 25-64) (Figure 8). This pattern is more pronounced among women, which is partly explained by the growing gender

disparities in education. In particular, 25 and 16 percent of the female population between ages 25 – 34 attained tertiary education or post-secondary technical training, respectively, compared to 20 and 4 percent for women ages 25-64. Men, on the other hand, are less likely to attain either level, regardless of age group. For example, 15 percent of men ages 25-34 completed tertiary education, compared to 25 percent of women and 11 percent in the broader age group. Technical and vocational education is even less common among either group, with 11 and 6 percent of men completing this type of training, respectively.

Figure 8: Educational attainment



Source: World Bank based on Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions, 2018

Vulnerable young men are more likely to drop out of school and join the workforce prematurely. Jamaican men from the lowest socioeconomic status, and those living in rural areas are significantly less likely to attain post-secondary or tertiary education (World Bank, 2021).¹⁴ Boys living in low-income urban settings often drop out of school because getting a degree is not necessarily considered a guarantee for future employment. As such, incentives for young men to move from secondary to tertiary schooling are low. In the western end of the country, lucrative regulated (agriculture) and non-regulated industries (“lotto scamming”) are seen as ways to make quick money and have been associated with higher dropout rates among young men (UNICEF, 2015).

Male dropout rates, particularly among vulnerable children and in rural areas, are driven by economic circumstances and lack of interest in school. According to the Survey of Living Conditions, young men who dropped out before 11th grade (last

¹⁴ World Bank (2021). Public Expenditure Review of the Education Sector in Jamaica.

year), reported “money problems” and “no interest in school” as the main reasons for leaving school (Figure 9). It must be however noted that lack of interest is likely to be only a symptom of other underlying issues such as poor school quality, low value of education given the labor market prospects, or in connection with the influence of peers and/or family. More specifically, 53 percent stopped attending in 10th grade and 34 percent in 9th grade. In contrast, the main reason among girls was “pregnancy” and “money problems”.

Although education is free in principle, the costs associated with attending school are high, especially in secondary school, which suggests that there may be room to increase the progressiveness of education spending. School meals and transportation are households’ main cost drivers (World Bank, 2021).

Figure 9: Reasons for dropping out of school before grade 11 (% 17–21-year-olds not attending school), 2017



Source: World Bank based on Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions, 2017

Failure of the school system to provide an enabling environment has also been cited as a reason for Jamaican boys’ disengagement in school.¹⁵ Classroom methodologies and the presence of female teachers can make education more appealing to girls. Additionally, the gap between male and female teachers has grown over time and is recurrently referred as one of the factors behind boys’ disengagement.¹⁶ Prevailing toxic manliness discourse that leads boys to reject school success as “womanly” can

15 <https://www.summaedu.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/4.-PPT-Christopher-Clarke-Jamaica-Webinar-GEM-2020-LAC-Sesión-5-Género-2019-09-26.pdf>
<https://www.unicef.org/jamaica/media/1536/file/Survival-Staying-Schooled-in-Rural-Jamaica-2018.pdf>
<https://www.ungei.org/sites/default/files/Achieving-gender-equality-in-education-dont-forget-the-boys-2018-eng.pdf>

16 <http://www.jta.org.jm/article/more-focus-gender-teaching-needed-says-jta-president>

also be considered a contributing factor,¹⁷ together with the lack of relevant male role models (Clarke, 2004; Grant, 2017) (a more in-depth discussion on masculinity and social norms is presented in Chapter 3).

At the tertiary level, despite higher enrollment rates, women are underrepresented in STEM fields and ICT– key areas for the development of the digital economy. A recent study (GoJ, 2018) found that despite gender parity in ICT enrollment rates at secondary level, and better female performance in the CSEC IT examination, a gap to the detriment of women can be observed in this field at the tertiary level, where the ratio of men to women is approximately 3:1. Men are also over-represented in ICT innovation, as shown by the disproportionate ratio of men to women (9:1) who compete for the National Innovation Awards.¹⁸

Furthermore, the returns to higher education by occupational skill level are lower for women than for men. The probability that a woman gets a high-skilled job increases by 8 percent after completing secondary education, while the likelihood of landing in a low-skilled job decreases by 10 percent (Table 2). For men, earning a secondary education degree increases their chances of getting a high-skilled job by 13 percent but it does not change their likelihood of getting a low-skilled job. For both genders, having a tertiary degree decreases the chances of landing a low-skilled job (by 10 percent for men and 25 percent for women) and increases the chances of having a high-skilled job (by 43 and 39 percent, respectively). However, tertiary education does not impact women's likelihood of landing a medium-skilled job, whereas for men it decreases those chances by 18 percent (World Bank, *forthcoming*).

Table 2: Effect of completing secondary and tertiary education on skill level of employment, by sex

	Gender	Skill level of occupation		
		Low	Medium	High
Effect of finishing secondary education (compared to not finishing secondary)	Male	0%	-12%	13%
	Female	-10%	2%	8%
Effect of finishing tertiary education (compared to not finishing tertiary)	Male	-25%	-18%	43%
	Female	-39%	0%	39%

Source: World Bank, *forthcoming*

Notes: Based on multinomial logit model with outcome categories of occupational skill with educational attainment dummies, a female dummy, and interaction between female and educational attainment dummies as predictor variables. Base educational category is not finishing secondary. Male values are estimated marginal effects (taken at variable means) of the educational dummy for landing on given skills category; female values are the sum of the marginal effects on educational and female-educational attainment interaction dummies. Most coefficients had p-values < 1%. Based LFS 2016, April. Skill level categories are ILO classification which maps occupations into skill levels.

17 <https://moey.gov.jm/educators-urged-to-help-rescue-boys-from-toxic-masculinity/>

18 <https://www.mset.gov.jm/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/An-Examination-of-Gender-Balance-in-ICT-at-Educational-Institutions-in-Jamaica-MSET.pdf>

1.2.3. Performance

Learning outcomes remain low for both girls and boys. Jamaica has not recently taken part in any international assessments, such as PISA or TIMSS, preventing comparisons with its peers. However, both the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate's (CSEC) results and the World Bank Harmonized Learning Outcomes (HLO) point to poor performance and acquisition of learning standards by Jamaican students overall (World Bank, 2021). Jamaica obtained one of lowest HLO scores in the Caribbean region, second to last after Guyana.

Boys underperform girls at different levels and in most educational outcomes. Jamaican girls tend to over-perform in English and underperform in Math in secondary education (World Bank, 2021). The systematic underperformance of boys compared to girls, together with lower enrollment rates and attainment levels, has been labelled as a crisis in the education of Jamaican boys, which is also associated to young men high crime rates and illegal activities.¹⁹

1.2.4. The NEET phenomenon

The share of youth who are not in education, employment, or training (NEETs) in Jamaica is high, especially for women. In 2016, 28 percent of Jamaica's young population were NEET. The share of young women NEETs was higher than young men's (30 and 25.4 percent, respectively),²⁰ pointing to persisting important barriers faced by both men and women when transitioning from school to work. ILO data reveal almost 38 percent of young people in the labor force are unable to secure jobs while unemployment spells are particularly long. Job searching for some 40 percent of unemployed youth lasts longer than one year. Female youth face greater difficulties to access the labor market, owing to family responsibilities and lack of prior experience.²¹

Gender norms around the role of women and men in society and the social context can also be potential drivers for the NEET phenomenon (Machado and Muller, 2018). While there is no in-depth analysis of NEETs in Jamaica, evidence at the regional level suggests that NEET youth are clustered in the lower income levels, and they often have not completed secondary education (De Hoyos et al., 2016). The negative consequences of the NEET phenomenon extend beyond the individuals themselves as it hampers social mobility and the accumulation of human capital, ultimately impairing economic growth and poverty reduction efforts.

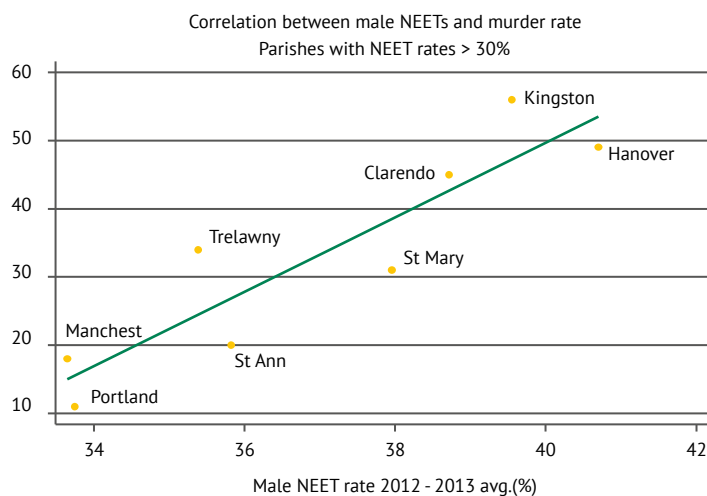
19 <https://www.thecommonwealth-educationhub.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Handbook-of-Strategies-Enabling-Boys-to-Learn.pdf>

20 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_537211.pdf

21 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms_651781.pdf

Gang membership and violence predominantly affect adolescent boys, despite recent increases in girl gang membership. In Jamaican inner-cities, where crime concentrates, children and adolescents are exposed to extreme forms of violent crime, which can increase the likelihood of social and psychological problems—including aggressive behaviors – later in life (World Bank, 2015). High-school girls in some parts of the country also regard violence as a major concern. This has implications in terms of aspirations, motivation, and safety. Cases of sexual violence may go unreported due to fear or because victims do not realize such experiences constitute sexual abuse. Media contents seemingly contribute to this trend by normalizing violence and making it look acceptable (World Bank, 2015). Although it is difficult to determine the direction of causation, the NEET phenomenon in Jamaica is associated with high levels of violence (Figure 10). Parishes with the highest rate of NEETs, such as Kingston, Hanover, or Clarendon, also register the highest murder rates. On the other hand, homicides are less common in parishes with lower NEET rates.

Figure 10: Association between murder and male NEETs in Jamaica



Source: World Bank 2019

Box 2: Challenges in school-to-work transition for young people in Jamaica

The International Labor Organization (ILO) conducted the School-to-Work Transition Survey (SWTS), a longitudinal study that gathered information among young people aged 15-29 in several LAC countries, including Jamaica where it has been implemented since 2013. The survey deems the school-to-work transition to end when young people find regular or “stable” employment, as defined by the terms of the employment contract (written or verbal) and its duration (must be over 12 months). A job satisfaction variable is also considered.

In Jamaica, only 1 in 3 young people between the ages of 15 and 29 have fully transitioned, compared to about half in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru. Additionally, there are marked gender differences. A larger proportion of men (41.6 percent) than women (29.3 percent) fully transition in Jamaica, while the opposite was true for those “in transition” (35.5 and 47.1 percent, respectively). Because the proportion of women who are unemployed and not economically active is larger, so is the proportion deemed to be “in transition”. There was no significant gender gap in the group of young people whose transition has not yet started. This may be put down to the definition used, as people who are inactive but say they wish to work in future are deemed to belong to the “in transition” group. This could well be the case of many women engaged in care work who hope to participate in the labor market in the future.

The median duration of transition into the first regular job is also greater for Jamaican women than men. This period is estimated to be on average 50 months (4 years) for a young Jamaican adult, compared to 6 months in Peru and 20 in Brazil. When looking at the median duration, the transition is estimated to take men 17.4 months, compared to 48.3 months for women.

Source: ECLAC and ILO (2017). Employment situation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

1.2.5. The impact of COVID 19

The COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately affecting Jamaican students with weak school attachment. Recent estimates indicate that Jamaica could lose one year in learning-adjusted years of schooling (LAYS) (from 7.1 to 6.1 LAYS) due to the pandemic, and undergo lifetime earning losses totaling US\$5.5 billion. These losses would affect disproportionately more students with weak attachment to school, those from rural areas or low-income households, as well as young men. In addition, the COVID-19 related economic crisis has had significant negative effects on household wealth, increasing the strain on lower income families to sustain their children's education (World Bank, 2021).

Unplanned school closures and the transition to remote learning have affected girls' and boys' education differently. A recent study by the Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CAPRI) suggests that girls are more likely to be given increased unpaid care work looking after younger siblings in the household, and engaging in other domestic chores, which limit the time available for remote learning and schoolwork. Meanwhile,

school closures increase the possibility of more boys becoming detached from positive social institutions and puts them at greater risk of becoming NEETs. Focus group discussions with teachers also reveal that boys tend to be more disengaged in the online classroom, perhaps due to the lack of structure and the absence of a teacher monitoring or directly interacting with them (CAPRI, 2021). Disengagement leaves boys more exposed to negative influences and exacerbates dropout and absenteeism rates.

Final remarks: As shown in this chapter, Jamaica has made significant progress to narrow gender gaps in health and education in recent decades. However, important challenges remain, particularly in terms of increasing reverse gender gaps. While maternal mortality rates remain high, men are significantly more likely than women to die from NCDs and male homicide rates—largely in relation to gang violence—are among the highest in the world. This analysis also showed worrisome trends in terms of education. Boys are much more predisposed to dropping out of school than girls and they also exhibit poorer learning outcomes. To a lesser extent, teenage pregnancy also poses a challenge in Jamaica. In addition, the overall large number of Jamaican youths who do not work nor study and the large share of women in this group suggest that women face specific barriers in transitioning to work. The next chapter will explore this hypothesis in more detail. More broadly, it will analyze whether the gains made by women in health and education are translating into improved economic outcomes for women.

CHAPTER 2: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



Jamaican women have achieved greater educational attainment vis-à-vis men although this has not translated into gender equality in the labor market. Indeed, women register lower rates of labor market participation and higher unemployment than men. When they work, women tend to segregate into the least productive and lower paid economic sectors. Women's earnings tend to be lower than men's, even when accounting for observable characteristics. The intersection between family formation and labor market decisions, as well as the prevalence of gender norms that relegate women to the domestic sphere, play a key role in explaining the discrepancy between educational and labor market outcomes among Jamaican women. On the other hand, despite gender gaps in entrepreneurship, Jamaica performs better than its regional peers. The share of Jamaican women engaged in entrepreneurial activities is comparatively high, while the share of women in middle-management positions is one of the highest worldwide.

2.1. Labor force participation

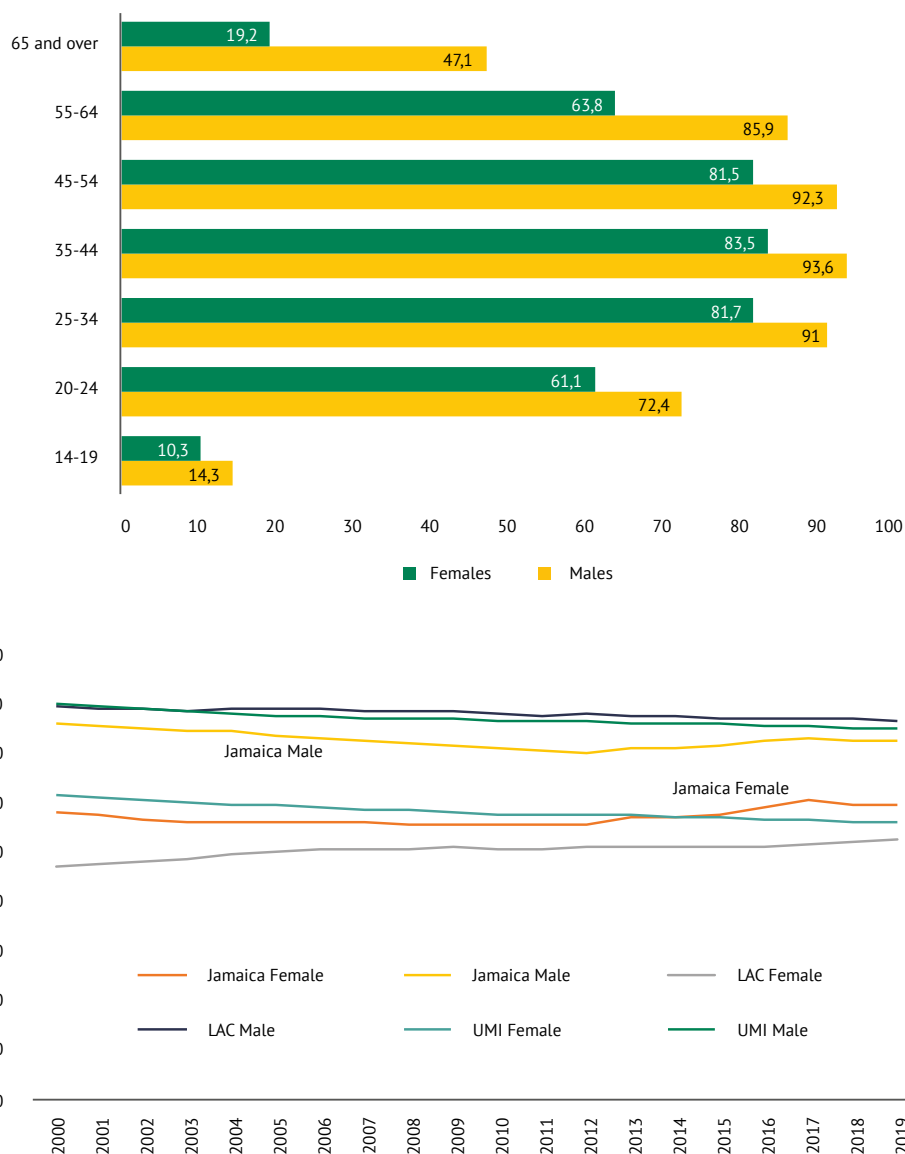
Jamaican women's labor force participation remains significantly lower than men's.

In 2019, 60.3 percent of working age women were actively participating in the labor market. Meanwhile, the gender gap in labor market participation, at 13 percentage points, was below average UMI and LAC countries' (Figure 11). This is partly explained by the fact that female labor force participation is relatively higher in Jamaica, but also because men's share in the labor market tends to be lower compared to regional and structural peers.

The gender gap in labor force participation also varies by age group. Young people's participation in the labor force (women and men ages 15-24) is lower than the regional average and has slid since 1996. Moreover, the gender gap is narrower than among older cohorts. Only 31 percent of women aged 15-24 were in the labor force in 2019, compared to 38.3 percent of men in the same age bracket. In contrast, the gender gap among older people (ages 55+) widens to 27.9 percentage points, a gap that may be related to the fact that before 2016, women used to retire at a younger age than men, with retirement ages at 65 and 70 years old, respectively (ILO 2018).²²

22 ILO (2018). Gender at Work in the Caribbean. According to Women Business and the Law, retirement ages were equalized in 2016.

Figure 11: Labor force participation by age and sex



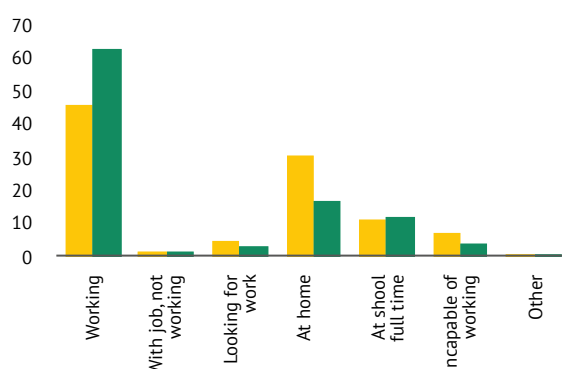
Source: World Development Indicators, accessed August 2021

2.2. Time use

Women in Jamaica have less time to spend on paid work, compared to men partly due to the unequal distribution of household and caregiving chores. Unpaid care and domestic work take 18.1 percent of their daily time while men's share is 8.2 percent. Moreover, 45.2 percent of women report paid work as their main activity, compared to 62.7 percent of men. The share of women who reported staying at home was twice the

share of men (Figure 12). The uneven distribution of household chores and caregiving responsibilities remains as one of the major barriers to women's participation in the labor force.

Figure 12: Main activity last week, 2018



Source: JSLC 2018

Natural disasters affect time use patterns, disproportionately impacting Jamaican women's workload and their health outcomes. Gendered roles make women responsible for fetching water for the home. In Jamaica, women typically carry home around 17-35 percent more liters of water daily than men (Vassell, 2009). During disasters, especially in rural areas, women may need to travel longer distances to fetch water for their family, potentially creating health problems (Pouramin et al., 2020). Women also face an increased risk of harassment and violence while traveling to and from a water collection point (Sommer et.al., 2015).

Disaster-related interruption of educational and childcare services in Jamaica also has a disproportionate effect on women, due to their role as caregivers. Disruption in education or childcare services often lead to increased women's workload and levels of stress. For example, Hurricane Ivan severely damaged 1,000 public schools in Jamaica and over 204,000 school children were affected (Spencer et.al., 2016), reducing school attendance (Raeburn, 2013). During Hurricane Dean, 1,237 children and their caregivers were affected by damage to 19 residential childcare facilities, six of which were run by government (PIOJ, 2007).

Strengthening family policies, such as shared parental leave and the provision of child subsidies, could help to promote women's participation in the labor market. In Jamaica, women are entitled to 12 weeks of maternity leave, but only eight are paid,²³ making it harder for low-income women to benefit from this provision.²⁴ In addition,

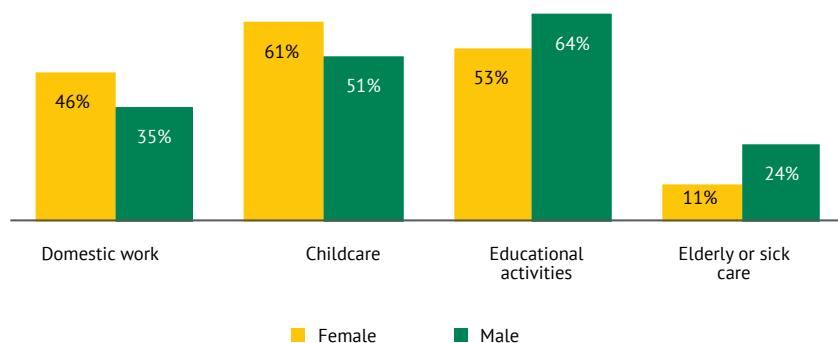
²³ ILO Convention No. 183 states that maternity leave should not be less than 14 weeks.

²⁴ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---sro-port_of_spain/documents/publication/wcms_651948.pdf

fathers are not entitled to legal paternity leave, which is left entirely to the discretion of the employer,²⁵ a provision (or lack thereof) that affects women's ability to access economic opportunities, as shown by previous studies in various countries.^{26, 27}

The COVID-19 pandemic and related containment measures have worsened the gendered distribution of household and caregiving tasks in Jamaica. Data from the WBG High Frequency Phone Survey (HFPS) show that 45 percent of women reported an increase in the time devoted to household work during the pandemic, compared to 35 percent of men. Moreover, female respondents reported longer times spent in education and schoolwork accompaniment for children. This pattern has been observed in many other countries around the world, partly due to social norms that relegate women to the domestic sphere,²⁸ but figures for Jamaica are among the highest in the LAC region. A recent survey conducted in the Caribbean shows that, on average, women are more likely to take over most household chores, while 11 percent of male respondents reported not engaging in domestic work at all (IDB, 2021).²⁹

Figure 13: COVID-19 and changes in time use



Source: HFPS 2020

Improving the provision of affordable quality childcare could expand Jamaican women's participation in the labor force. The 2003 Early Childhood Commission Act set up the Early Childhood Commission (ECC) with a view at improving the quality of early childhood care, education, and development. The ECC, an agency under the Ministry of Education, coordinates and ensures the effective implementation of all

25 For example, in 2021 the National Commercial Bank Jamaica (NCB) introduced paternity leave upon birth or adoption of a child. Employees can take advantage of paternity leave up to three times per year.

26 Amin, M., Islam, A., and Sakhonchik, A. (2016). Does paternity leave matter for female employment in developing economies? Evidence from firm-level data. *Applied Economics Letters*, 23(16), 1145-1148.

27 Roy, S. (2019). Discriminatory Laws Against Women: A Survey of the Literature. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*, (8719).

28 Cucagna, E., and Romero, J. (2021); Del Boca et al. (2020); Farré, L., Fawaz, Y., González, L., and Graves, J. (2020); ; Sevilla, A., and Smith, S. (2020).

29 <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Mind-the-Gender-Gap-A-Picture-of-the-Socioeconomic-Trends-Surrounding-COVID-19-in-the-Caribbean-with-a-Gender-Lens.pdf>

early childhood-related activities, and development plans and programs. In Jamaica, early childhood education is delivered through approximately 2,800 day-care centers, infant schools, infant departments, nurseries, and basic schools. But there is room for improvement as these institutions only offer services to children below the age of six and for a maximum of six hours per day, which does not cover the working hours for full-time working parents. The lack of flexibility in childcare services limits the number of hours that one (or both parents) can devote to paid work or implies that full-time working parents must find costlier alternatives to institutionalized childcare. Furthermore, care facilities' hours may not meet the schedules of parents working outside regular working hours, including those in the tourism and entertainment sectors, the two industries employing most Jamaicans, and particularly women.

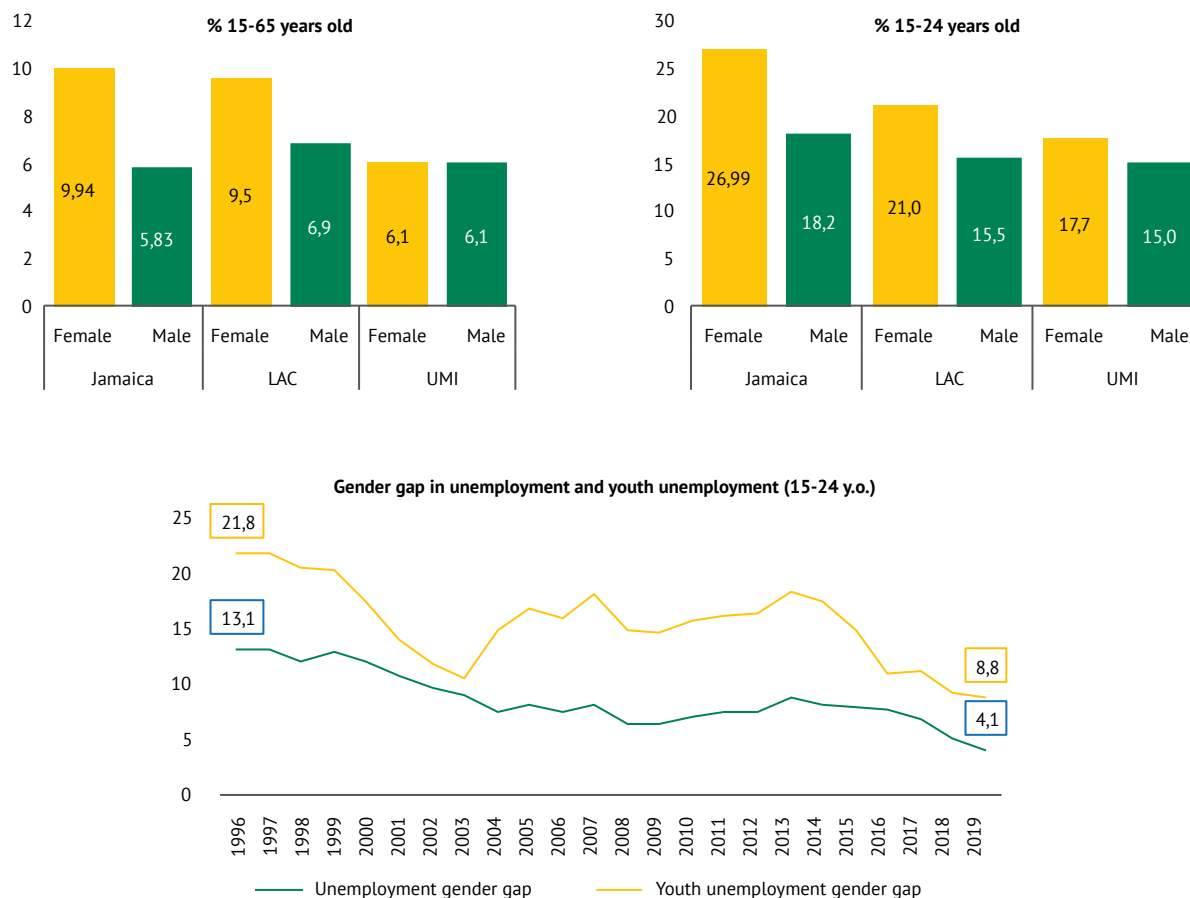
2.3. Unemployment

Like the trend observed in the LAC region, unemployment rates are higher among Jamaican women than men. In 2019, the unemployment gender gap among the working age population was 4.64 percentage points, and almost 10 percentage points among the youth (Figure 14). Even though the unemployment gender gap has decreased since 1996, Jamaican women, particularly female youth, were significantly more likely to be unemployed than the average women in LAC and UMI countries in 2019. National economic conditions and occupational sex segregation may be some of the factors behind the gender differences in unemployment. Women also remain unemployed longer than men, who are also more likely to find employment during an economic upturn than women, suggesting that discrimination by employers may be also contributing to this trend.³⁰ Indeed, Jamaica lacks legislation to avoid gendered job discrimination with potential differential impacts on disaster response and recovery between men and women, as women might be the first to be fired and last to be hired.

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted employment in Jamaica, particularly for women. After the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, unemployment rates by October 2020 had risen to 8.7 and 13.2 percent for men and women, respectively. Young adults experienced greater job losses, with unemployment rates reaching record levels of 23.8 and 33.9 percent for men and women, respectively. Women's jobs have been harder hit by the pandemic because of their concentration in sectors most affected by the crisis, such as trade, hotel and restaurant services, and education. Importantly, these job losses appeared to have recovered one year later, as by October unemployment rates had gone back to pre-pandemic levels. Nonetheless, the gender gap persists.

30 Seguino, S. (2003). Why are women in the Caribbean so much more likely than men to be unemployed? *Social and Economic Studies*, 83-120.

Figure 14: Unemployment rates



Source: World Development Indicators

2.4. The quality of work

Jamaican women tend to work fewer hours than men who more often work in vulnerable and informal jobs. Around 50 percent of employed men work more than 40 hours a week, while only 30 percent of employed women do. On average, women work 39 hours per week, while men work 43 hours a week. The gap in working hours is larger among individuals without a degree (4 hours) compared to men and women who completed tertiary education (2 hours). Importantly, Jamaica shows a reverse gender gap in terms of informal and vulnerable work.³¹ At 30.6 percent, the share of women who hold a vulnerable job is not only lower than men's share, but also below the regional average (33.8 percent in 2019) (Figure 15). Women are less likely than men to be informal workers (43 vs. 54 percent), but the opposite is true when

³¹ Defined as the sum of contributing family workers and own-account workers.

looking at employers in the sector (69 vs. 65 percent) (Table 3). The share of informal self-employed workers is 39.8 for men and 29.3 for women in 2017, in line with LAC countries' average.

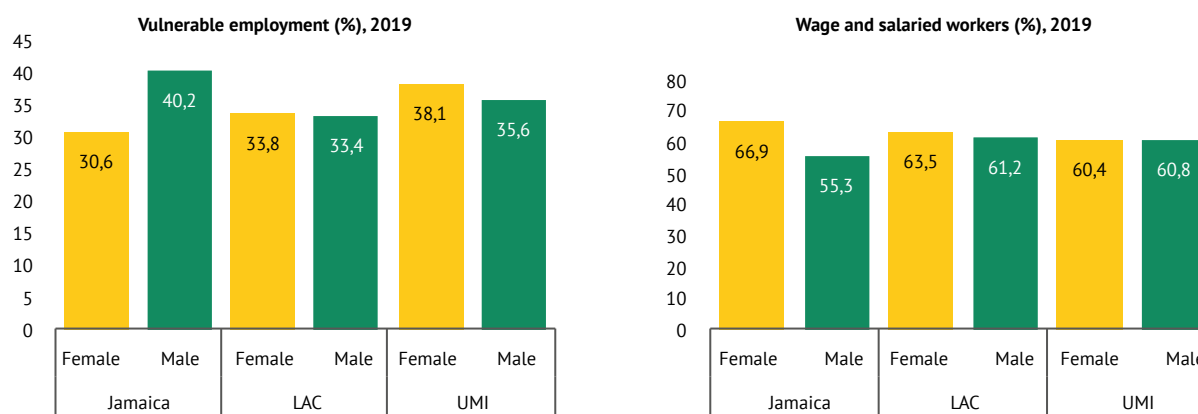
Table 3: Informality by labor market segment

		Percent among employed individuals in informal sector
Workers	Male	54
	Female	43
Employers	Male	65
	Female	69
Education	Did not finish first cycle (9 th grade)	84
	Finished up to second cycle (11 th grade)	45
	Attained tertiary degree	9

Source: World Bank, forthcoming. Based on 2019 Q4 Jamaica LFS.

Notes: Own-account workers not included as they are defined as informal. Informal sector defined using STATIN definition.

Figure 15: The quality of employment



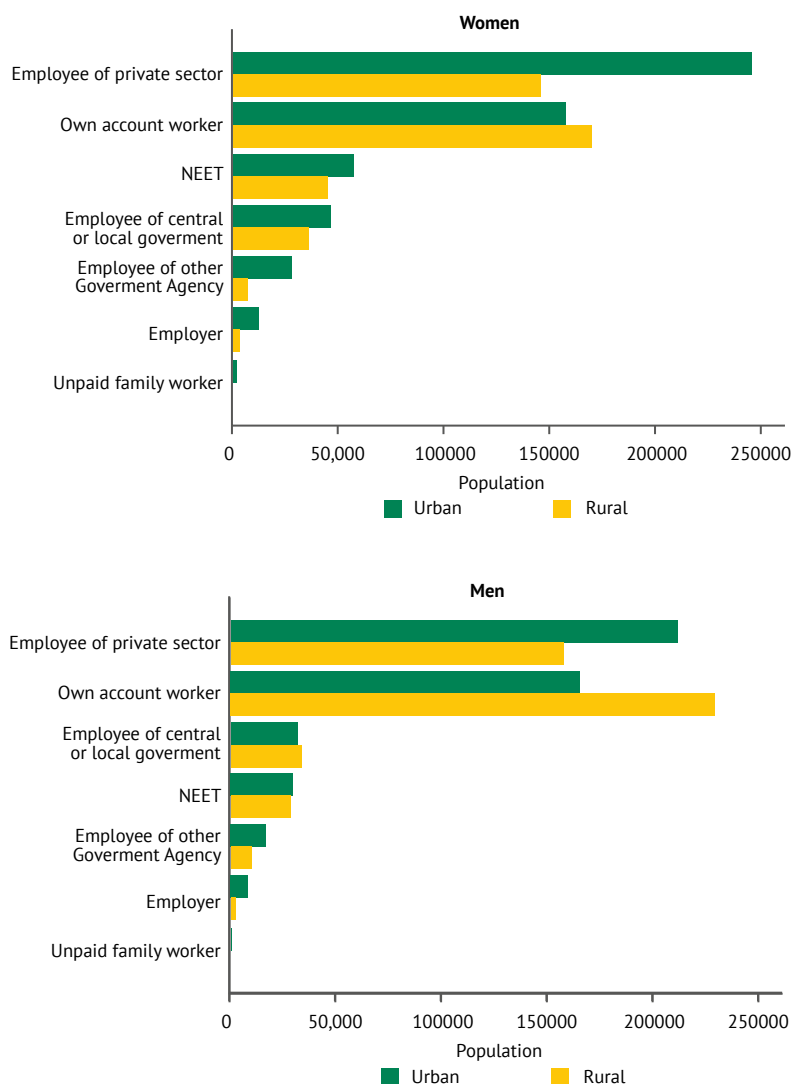
Source: World Development Indicators, accessed August 2021

Note: ILO modeled estimations. Vulnerable employment refers to the sum of contributing family workers and own-account workers.

Gender differences in labor market integration in Jamaica are marked between urban and rural areas (Figure 16). In urban areas, women make up a larger share of private sector and government workers. This is a distinctive feature of the Jamaican labor market, which could be linked to the fact that women are more likely than men to enroll and complete tertiary education. The second largest category is own-account work, which is typically informal. The number of women and men in this category

is similar for both sexes in urban areas, but men's share in rural own-account work is substantially higher than women's share. The number of people who are not in education, employment or training is greater in urban areas, and women are more likely than men to be found in this category.

Figure 16: Labor market integration in rural and urban areas



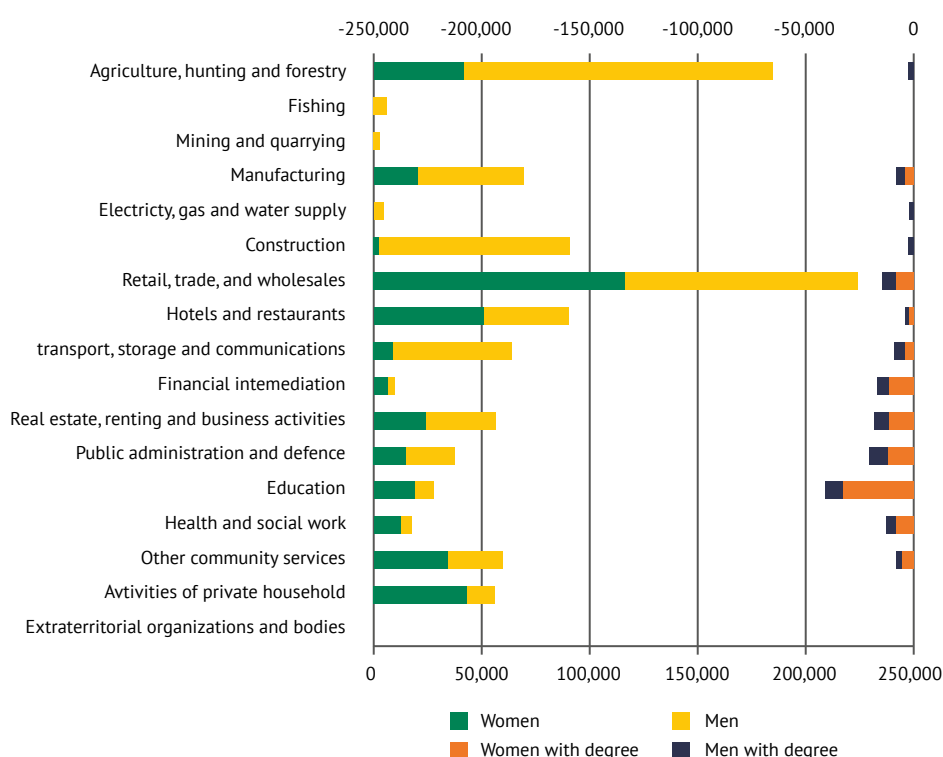
Source: Jamaican Survey of Living Conditions (2018). Author's calculations.

Note: Calculations for individuals aged 15-64.

As in other countries across the region, Jamaican women fill principally low productivity and lower-paid sectors and occupations. In 2019, wholesale, accommodation, education, and various recreation services, the least productive sectors in the Jamaican economy, employed 73 percent of Jamaican women workers (Figure 17). In contrast, men are more likely to be employed in the most productive

sectors such as mining and transport.³² Educational choice, stereotypes, and market discrimination explain occupational segregation in Jamaica.^{33,34} Other factors include the disconnect between labor demand and supply, poor quality of available jobs, and lack of economic diversification. Finally, the unequal distribution of household responsibilities may also contribute to sectoral segregation. Women, particularly mothers, tend to choose lower paying jobs that are more flexible in terms of hours of operation, location, and mobility so they can also take care of household tasks.

Figure 17: Sectoral segregation by sex and level of education



Source: World Bank, based on Labor Force Survey.

Although women predominate in lower-ranking positions, Jamaica ranks among the world's countries with greater representation of women in middle management posts. In fact, Jamaican women are over-represented in overall service job categories, like sales and clerical work forces. Moreover, their share of professional and management posts is relatively high compared to other countries. For instance, Jamaica recently registered the largest share of women in management positions not only in the region

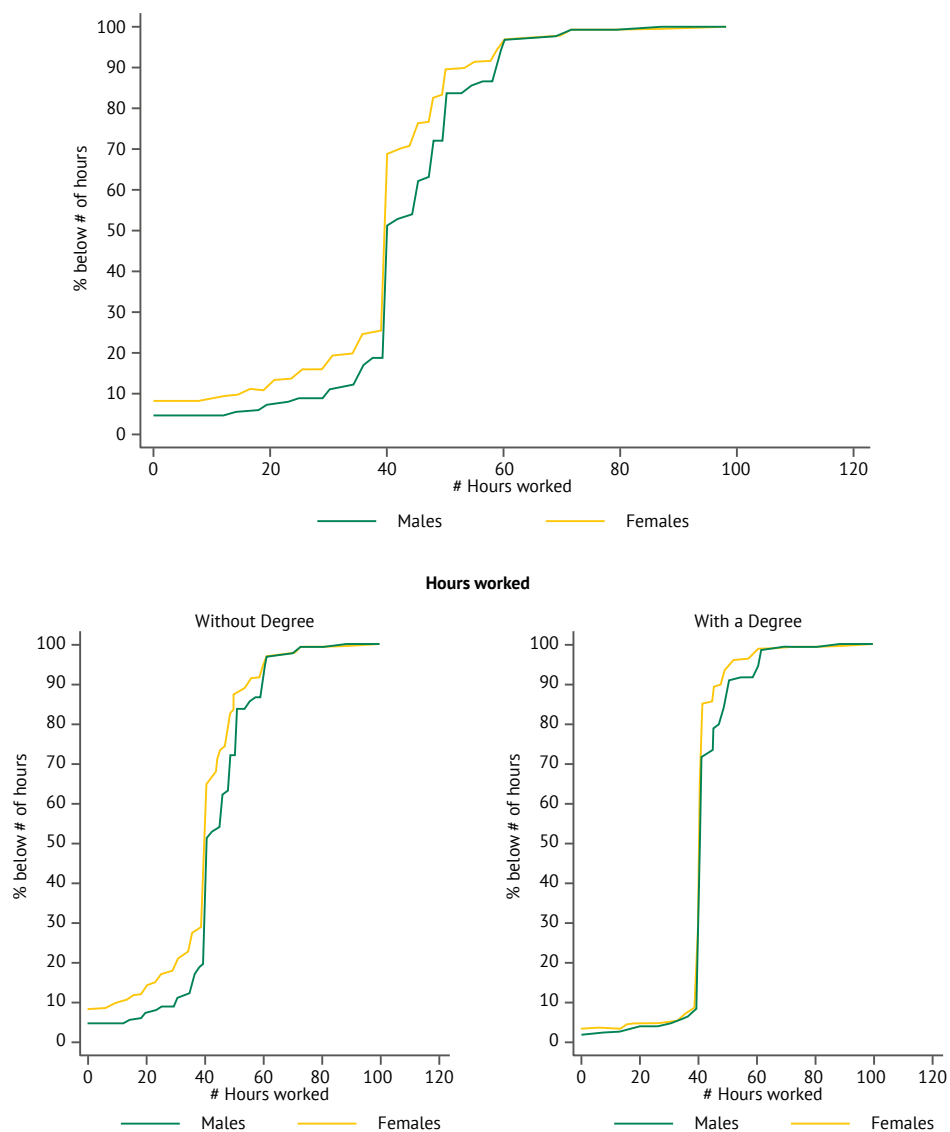
32 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---sro-port_of_spain/documents/publication/wcms_651948.pdf

33 https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/Policy_briefs/ECE_WG-1_34.pdf

34 <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/31510/Gender-Based-Employment-Segregation-Understanding-Causes-and-Policy-Interventions.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y>

but also in the world: 59 percent, followed by Colombia and Belize, where women's representation is above 50 percent (ILO 2018).³⁵

Figure 18: Hours worked. Distribution by sex and level of education

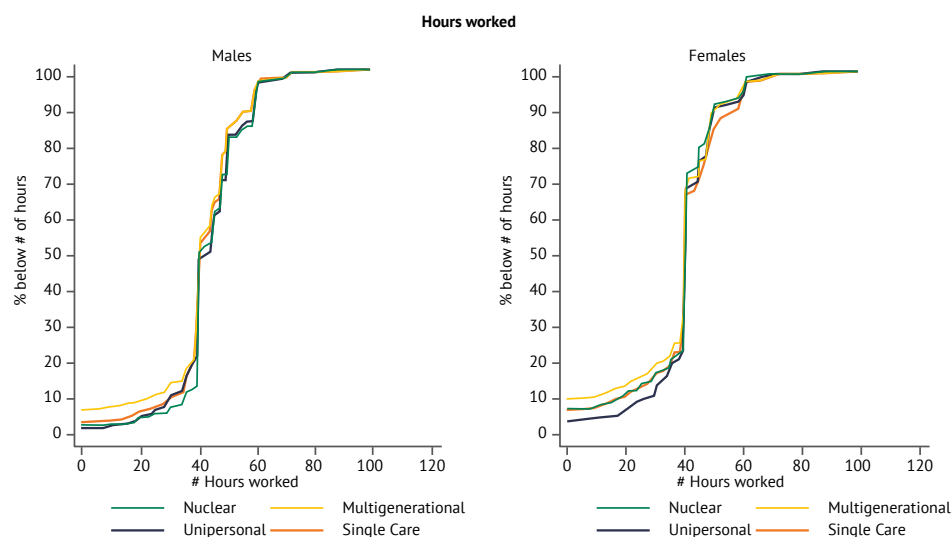


Source: World Bank based on 2016 LFS.

35 https://www.ilo.org/public/spanish/dialogue/actemp/downloads/events/2017/lima_conf/wibm_fullreport_2017_sp.pdf

Family structure plays a crucial role in explaining Jamaican women's access to paid work.³⁶ Women face more restrictions to access the labor market when they are members of multigenerational households. Women in unipersonal households (3.6 percent) are less likely to be unemployed than women living in nuclear (7.2 percent) and single caregiver households (6.8 percent), while women in multigenerational households (9.6 percent) are almost three times as likely to be unemployed compared to women living alone. Nonetheless, the type of household does not affect men's undertaking paid activities, except for those in multigenerational households, who show higher unemployment rates. The number of hours spent in paid work also varies across type of household (Figure 19). For instance, in nuclear households, men work on average 44 hours weekly, while the figure for women is 38; but the gender gap in hours worked drops to three hours in multigenerational, unipersonal, and single caregiver households. This pattern may be explained by the composition of the household itself. For instance, adult relatives may provide care for household children, potentially increasing mothers' ability to work for pay.

Figure 19: Hours worked. Distribution by type of household



Source: World Bank based on 2016 LFS.

36 Five types of households are defined using the relationship to the household head: nuclear, multigenerational, unipersonal, female single caregivers, and male single caregivers. Nuclear households consist of a head, their spouse, and children (if any). Unipersonal households consist of one member only (any age). Single caregiver households consist of one adult aged 18-64 living with children and/or elderly members. They do not have a partner or that person does not live permanently with them. The female and male category is defined by the sex of the single caregiver. Multigenerational households consist of extended households and those that include parents, siblings, grandchildren, in-laws, and other relatives.

2.5. The gender wage gap

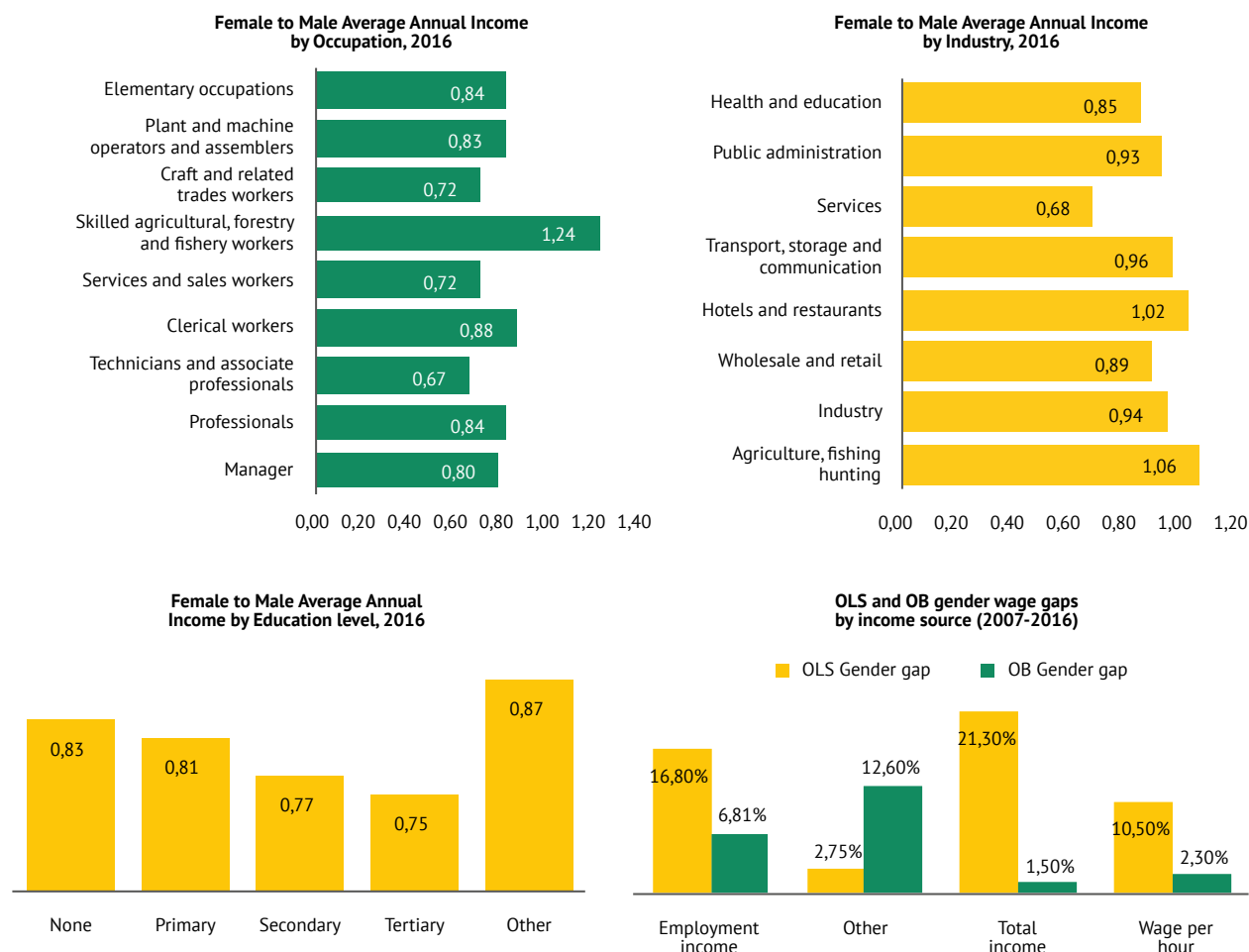
Jamaican women earn lower salaries than men in most sectors and occupations.

Women's average annual income is below men's across most sectors and occupations, except for agriculture, fishing, and hunting, and hotels and restaurants (Figure 20). For instance, in the services industry, women earn only 68 percent of men's yearly incomes, and among technicians and associate professionals, they earn on average two thirds of the salary men receive. On the other hand, the reverse earnings gap in the hotels and restaurants sector may be explained by women's overrepresentation in these activities, which may offer opportunities for career progression and leadership roles.

The gender gap in salaries widens as the level of education rises. On average, Jamaican women earn 19 percent lower salaries than men. Among individuals with no education, women earn 83 percent of men's annual income. The remuneration of women with tertiary education decreases to 75 percent of men's remuneration. Different educational and professional choices, horizontal and vertical labor market segregation, gender-based discrimination, the lack of legislation mandating equal remuneration for work of equal value, and the unequal division of paid work and family responsibilities between women and men can explain the persistent gendered wage gap.

The gender gap in employment income persists after controlling for individual, household, and sector characteristics. On average, Jamaican women earn 16.8 percent (2016 data) lower salaries than men, after accounting for observable characteristics including education, age, sector of employment, type of household. When looking at other (non-wage) income, the gap widens to 27.5 percent, and it is 21 percent when considering all sources of income. This suggests that other non-observable factors, such as discriminatory practices, may be driving the earnings differentials. Results are also consistent when analyzing gender differences in labor force participation and employment. Women are approximately 14 percentage points less likely to participate in the labor market (and to be employed) than men with similar characteristics.

Figure 20: The earnings gap



Source: LFS 2016

Note: The analysis of earnings gaps includes information from the 2007-2016 LFS.

Jamaican women receive lower returns than men for their training and experience.

A more rigorous exercise (Box 3) reveals that human endowments, including education, experience, and training, among others, narrow the gender gap in annual earnings to 6.8 percent (Appendix C). Nonetheless, the analysis of drivers of the earnings gap shows that women receive lower returns than men for their training and experience. If women had the same returns to human capital as men, their wages as well as other sources of income would be higher. The employment income of women would increase 12.8 percent if they had the same returns perceived by men. Experience, education, and training narrow the gender gap, whereas differences in sector of occupation tend to widen it. Indeed, data on gender differences in employment income by sector reveal the gap is considerably narrower in industries where women account for between 25 to 50 percent of the workforce. This may suggest that women who enter male dominated fields earn, on average, similar wages to their male counterparts. The

individual's family structure is another factor that explains the gap in employment income observed in Jamaica, in line with previous studies revealing women with children are penalized with lower salaries, an effect not observed among men (ILO 2019).

Box 3: Understanding the drivers of the gender wage gap in Jamaica

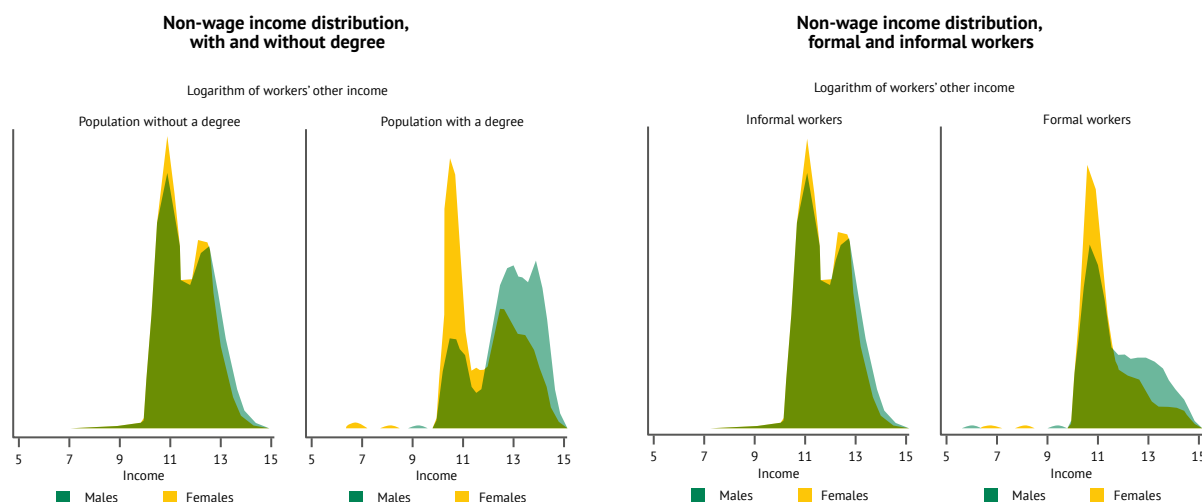
A Blinder-Oaxaca (BO) decomposition model allows to better understand the drivers of the gender wage gap. A BO decomposition allows to breakdown outcomes that can be explained by group differences in underlying characteristics, such as education and experience, and outcomes attributable to differential treatment between groups. This model is often used to measure discrimination, but also subsumes the effects of group differences in unobserved predictors. The analysis is conducted pooling data from the 2007-2016 JLFS. Consistent with previous wage gap studies, the dependent variable in the analysis is the log transformed income, which is used to address the skewness present in earnings data. Independent variables include education, experience (proxied by age), structure of the household, sector of work, and formality. The household structure, education level, and sector of work are proxied by categorical variables whose effects are consolidated into a single coefficient. Appendix B presents a description of the decomposition variables and Appendix C contains the results of the decomposition.

The gender gap widens for non-wage income but nearly vanishes when looking at total earned income. On average, men's non-wage income is 12.6 percent higher than that of women. When compared to women, men are more likely to report an additional source of income (and higher incomes). Importantly, the overall gap appears to be driven by differences in non-wage income among formal workers and among degree-holders (Figure 21). However, when all sources of income are combined, the gap in earnings drops to 1.5 percent. In both cases, the sector of employment narrows the gender gap, as does the level of education and training.

The earnings gender gap disappears after accounting for the number of hours worked. When the analysis focuses on hourly wages, the gender wage gap not only disappears, but reverses, indicating that hourly wages are on average 2.4 percent lower for men. This is an indication that the differences observed in annual earnings are partly explained by women's ability to dedicate more time to paid work. This is consistent with the evidence for countries such as Colombia,³⁷ showing that women not only work fewer hours than men, but they are also more likely to hold part time jobs due to care and housework responsibilities. Although education, training, and experience narrow the wage gender gap, the effect of the family structure—probably captured through the number of hours worked—ceases to be significant.

37 <https://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/notas-estadisticas/oct-2021-nota-estadistica-brecha-salarial-de-genero-en-Colombia.pdf>

Figure 21: Non-wage income distribution



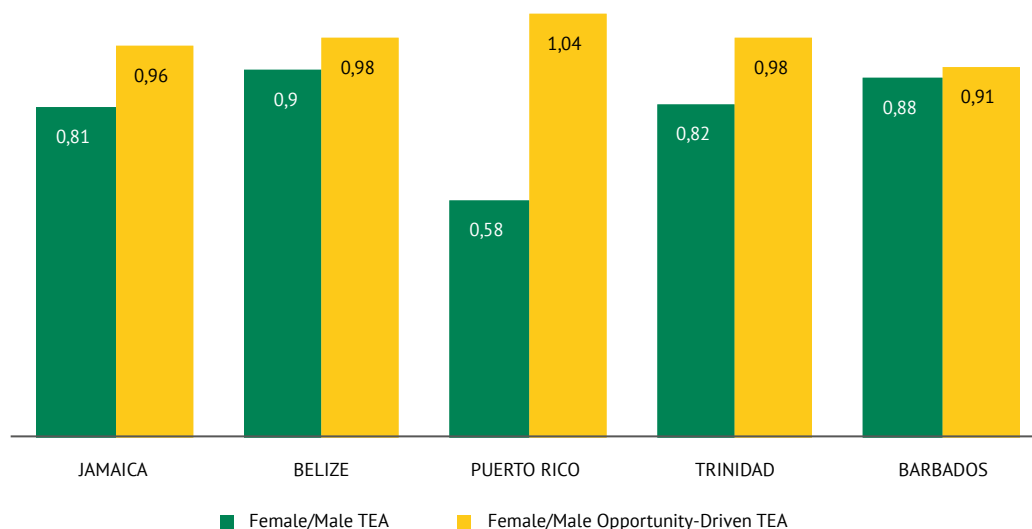
Source: Authors' calculations based on LFS (2016).

2.6. Entrepreneurship and access to assets

Like in other regional countries, entrepreneurial activity in Jamaica is weaker among women than men (Figure 22). A recent ILO/UN assessment³⁸ of female entrepreneurship in Jamaica shows that fewer women than men are business owners (ILO/UN 2021). In fact, the 2018 Jamaica Establishments Survey shows that 35.2 percent of businesses are led by women (World Bank, forthcoming). Furthermore, Jamaican women engage more in opportunity-driven (as opposed to necessity-driven) entrepreneurial activity vis-à-vis men.

In Jamaica, woman-led businesses tend to be smaller, concentrate in less profitable sectors, and hire more women employees than man-led businesses. Businesses led by men have, on average, 16.9 employees while businesses led by women have, on average, 13.2 employees (World Bank, forthcoming). Also, the share of businesses with no employees is higher among women than men business owners. Women (ILO/UN, 2021) tend to hire more female employees, on average. In fact, 71.5 percent of employees in woman-led businesses are women, in contrast to 46.5 percent in man-led businesses (2018 Jamaica Establishments Survey; World Bank, forthcoming). By sector of operation, women are more likely to open wholesale and retail businesses (73.9 percent) or in agriculture (19 percent). Among men employers, manufacturing and construction are the most common sectors to engage in enterprise (World Bank, forthcoming).

38 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---sro-port_of_spain/documents/publication/wcms_773071.pdf

Figure 22: Ratio of female to male entrepreneurial activity

Source: GEM, Global Entrepreneurship Monitor

Note: Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) Rate: Percentage of 18-64 population who are either a nascent entrepreneur or owner-manager of a new business. Hence, the Female/Male TEA ratio is the percentage of female 18-64 population involved in TEA, divided by the equivalent percentage for their male counterparts. The Female/Male Opportunity-Driven TEA Ratio is the percentage of females involved in TEA who (i) claim to be driven by opportunity as opposed to finding no other option for work; and (ii) who indicate the main driver for being involved in this opportunity is being independent or increasing their income, rather than just maintaining their income, divided by the equivalent percentage for their male counterparts.

Jamaican women and men entrepreneurs face similar barriers to operate their businesses. Recent analyses based on the 2018 Jamaica Establishments Survey shows no significant gender differences in terms of common challenges faced by men and women entrepreneurs (Table 4) (World Bank, forthcoming). Market demand for the final product and access to finance are the two most important barriers to entrepreneurship. Most Jamaican women entrepreneurs started their business in their peak reproductive years, have secondary/technical education or above, and were married or in union. Women's main motivations for starting a business included wanting leadership, autonomy, and economic empowerment. Most women entrepreneurs (96 percent) sold most of their products or services in community and parish markets (ILO/UN 2021).

However, women entrepreneurs face challenges related to gender roles, social norms, and the business environment. In a recent ILO study (2021),³⁹ Jamaican women entrepreneurs reported the lack of an enabling environment that supports their need to balance work and family caregiving responsibilities; limited access to affordable and gender-sensitive financial and non-financial services; markets and technology; and limited time to participate in business networks due to family responsibilities

39 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---sro-port_of_spain/documents/publication/wcms_773071.pdf

as main challenges to operate their businesses. Additionally, the lack of female participation in business organizations and policy dialogue as well as the unequal representation at the highest levels of decision-making limit improvements to the business environment for women entrepreneurs. Significant improvements may be needed to promote female entrepreneurship such as integrating gender perspectives in the policy dialogue, strengthening the legal environment, increasing access to key resources such as skills, training, and finance, and improving access to information and communication technologies (ICT), markets and business opportunities.

Table 4: Barriers to entrepreneurship

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Market demand for final product	38.0	39.5	38.5
Access to finance (general) or monetary support to expand business	20.3	19.8	20.1
Physical space related	6.8	9.5	7.7
Specific equipment	4.4	4.3	4.4
Infrastructure and amenities	4.1	3.7	4.0
Favorable policy: tax, ease of registration, etc.	3.7	3.1	3.5
Ability to market, advertise or manage business	6.2	6.5	6.3
Access to supplies/inputs	3.0	2.6	2.9
Adequate labor supply	6.5	4.7	5.9
Crime control	2.2	1.4	1.9
Favorable macro factors	2.5	2.6	2.5
Other	2.1	2.3	2.2
Total	100	100	100
Number of establishments	5,933	3,072	9,005

Source: 2018 Jamaica Establishments Survey

Jamaican women face restrictions to formally access productive assets that can be used as collateral. Women account for a significant share of the farmers, yet compared to men, they have less access to land, networks, information, and decision-making in farmer organizations. Jamaica's Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) records 30 percent of registered female farmers hold 11 percent of the cultivated land, while 70 percent male farmers own the remaining 89 percent (FAO 2020).⁴⁰ Importantly, PIOJ's report on hurricane Michelle flood rains and landslides (October 2001) holds that "the general acreage owned and accessed by women in the affected

40 <https://www.fao.org/3/ca4726en/CA4726EN.pdf>

parishes is, in many cases, smaller than the average household's, thus further limiting their capacities to withstand external shocks." Although Jamaican women are increasingly venturing into produce processing, limited access to and control of resources represent more difficulties in accessing training, improved technology, market information, and agricultural inputs, such as fertilizer and irrigation, to improve production, which often depend on tenure of property (FAO, 2020).

Jamaica's gender gaps in financial services access have narrowed, compared to other Caribbean nations. In 2014, the latest year for which there is data for Jamaica, 79 percent of men and 78 percent of women ages 15 and above held an account with a financial institution. However, only 54 percent of women reported holding funds to cover an emergency, compared to 66 percent of men. Indeed, the share of women who reported having saved to start, operate, or expand a farm or business was 8 percentage points lower than that of men (21 and 29 percent, respectively). And the difference increases to 11 percentage points when asked about retirement savings for old age (38 vs. 27 percent for men and women, respectively) (Global Findex, 2017).⁴¹

2.7. Poverty

Households in Jamaica have distinctive characteristics in terms of their demographic composition. At the national level, most households are multigenerational (62 percent), followed by nuclear (15 percent), single female caregiver (10 percent), unipersonal (10 percent), and single male caregiver (3 percent) households. Although they tend to be smaller than other structures, households with a female single caregiver are larger compared with families consisting of a male single caregiver. At the same time, children in female single caregiver households account for 50 percent of all members, 14 percentage points above the share they represent in multigenerational and in male single caregiver households. This entails higher dependency rates with fewer members of working age or in the labor market.

Poverty strongly correlates to unemployment in Jamaica, particularly for female single caregivers. The risk of experiencing poverty for the average Jamaican household increases from 8.8 to 12 percent when the household head reports to be unemployed. Nevertheless, poverty rates vary widely by family structure (Box 4). For example, the share of households below the poverty line is higher for female single caregivers than any other household type when the head of household is unemployed (Table 5). Moreover, the risk of poverty for nuclear and multigenerational households increases by around 2 percentage points when the head of household loses their job, but the change is close to 7 percentage points for female single caregivers in the same scenario. Importantly, female single caregivers have been, for the last twenty years, the second largest group in terms of contribution to poverty. In 2018, female single

41 World Bank, 2017. The Global Findex Database.

caregiver households represented 11 percent of the poor, the second largest group among the poor after multigenerational households (15 percent).

The relationship between unemployment and poverty in Jamaica may be explained by the composition of each household type. A key aspect is the availability of working age adults who can provide for the household when the head is unemployed, and/or the number of dependents. Households with unemployed heads also tend to be smaller. Among male single caregivers, the share of poor households diminishes with unemployment—a less intuitive finding. This finding may be explained by the small sample size, as this is a very atypical family structure in Jamaica. Overall, these findings suggest that single caregivers experience different levels of vulnerability that depends on the sex of the head as well as the households' demographics.

Box 4: Applying a gender lens to poverty measurement

The common approach to measuring poverty assigns all individuals within a household the same poverty status as the household. While gender gaps are pervasive in many dimensions of wellbeing, most poverty metrics use the household as the unit of analysis to determine the poverty status of individuals. This is partly explained by household survey data limitations. Some dimensions of wellbeing, including monetary poverty, access to services, among others, are measured at household level. Hence, information on differences between individuals living in the same household, such as by gender or age, are muted (World Bank, 2018).

A common approach to analyzing the gender dimensions of poverty is to examine whether female-headed households are more vulnerable to poverty than male-headed households. Analyses based on headship, however, have been criticized because the concept hides substantial differences between the types of households in which individuals live, such as income transfers from male migrant workers and the distribution of care for elders and children, among others (Lampietti & Stalker, 2000; Milazzo and van de Walle, 2017; Quisumbing et al., 2001; Rosenhouse, 1989).

In the absence of individual-level data to measure the monetary poverty of individuals, it is thus critical to distinguish between different types of households to understand the links between gender inequality and poverty. Some studies classify households according to the number of earners, their sex, and the share of their contribution to the household income (Fuwa, 2000; Grown and Valodia, 2010). Others employ a demographic classification based on the composition of the household according to the sex and age of adults, elderly, and children. Gender gaps are also pervasive in other dimensions of welfare, such as education or health, which can be condensed into multidimensional poverty indices for individuals, as in UNDP's Global Multidimensional Poverty Index.

Box 4: Applying a gender lens to poverty measurement

Building on a growing body of literature, this chapter analyzes gender differences in poverty risk beyond the traditional comparison of the sex of the household heads. Households are categorized by demographic profiles according to the number and sex of members. Each household in the dataset falls into one of the mutually exclusive categories for each profile type as follows:

- Male single caregiver: One male adult living with children of his/her own below the age of 18; and/or children of others; and/or one or more elderly.
- Female single caregiver: One female adult living with children of his/her own below the age of 18; and/or separated children; and/or one or more elderly.
- Nuclear: Married or cohabiting couple (at least one of whom is over the age of 18, not disabled and/or elderly) with children (below the age of 18) of their own and/or children of others.
- Multigeneration with children: Includes extended family households, households of siblings.
- Unipersonal: One person who lives alone.

Table 5: Share of poor households by employment status of household head

Household type	Share of HH below poverty line		Household average size	
	Employed head	Unemployed head	Employed head	Unemployed head
Nuclear	8.3	8.4	3.3	2.0
Multigenerational	11.9	13.1	4.3	3.4
Unipersonal	4.1	12.7	1.0	1.0
Female single caregiver	6.8	13.5	2.7	2.7
Male single caregiver	7.3	2.6	2.4	2.7

Source: JSLC (2018). Authors' calculations.

The demographic makeup of poor and non-poor households varies widely across household types. The share of working age population not working, or studying is similar for poor and non-poor households in Jamaica (Table 6). However, further disaggregation by household type reveals that nuclear and male single caregivers have the lowest share of inactive members, even when they live below the poverty line. In contrast, the proportion of members not working or studying increases ostensibly for unipersonal and female single caregiver households, particularly when they are poor. A similar pattern emerges when looking at the share of dependents in each household type.

Table 6: Share of members not working or studying in poor and non-poor households

Household type	Share of members not working or studying		Share of dependents	
	Non-poor	Poor	Non-poor	Poor
Nuclear	3	0.5	34	41
Multigenerational	6	8	33	39
Unipersonal	11	26	20	41
Female single caregiver	29	50	57	63
Male single caregiver	20	13	53	56

Source: JSLC (2018). Authors' calculations.

Income and job losses linked to the COVID-19 pandemic have translated into higher poverty rates, particularly for female single caregivers. World Bank projections based on GDP per capita growth estimates point to a 10 percent increase in the poverty rate (23 percent in 2020).⁴² In the Caribbean, close to half (48 percent) of single women reported a worsening diet compared to 42.5 percent of single men. Also, Jamaican single women were the sub-group that reported the highest incidence of persons going to bed hungry (36 percent). Financial resilience also appears to be lower among women in Caribbean countries, which places them in a more vulnerable position in the face of shocks (IDB, 2020).⁴³

Several reports suggest that female-headed households in Jamaica are hard hit by natural disasters. They were over-represented among persons reporting damage after Hurricane Ivan (PIOJ, ECLAC, UNDP, 2004). Of those household heads who reported their houses destroyed, 48 percent were women. Severe and minor damage were reported by 57 percent and 54 percent, respectively (JSLC 2012). Earlier reports of flooding and landslides (ECLAC, 2002) mention that “anecdotal evidence suggests that additional stress was caused in female headed households as (the floods) damaged or destroyed additional sources of income, such as livestock, and in particular chickens”. These households typically have less resources to repair damages to their houses. Not only do they have less access to financial resources, but also lack the skills to do the repairing themselves.

42 <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/e408a7e21ba62d843bdd90dc37e61b57-0500032021/related/mpo-jam.pdf>

43 <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/english/document/Mind-the-Gender-Gap-A-Picture-of-the-Socioeconomic-Trends-Surrounding-COVID-19-in-the-Caribbean-with-a-Gender-Lens.pdf>

2.8. Migration

The migration profile for Jamaica shows greater outmigration than immigration, with women representing half of the stock of international migrants. Over the last decades, and although the number of outmigrants has declined lately, Jamaica has been characterized by large outmigration flows, particularly into the UK, the USA and Canada (IOM, 2018). As a result, for almost every Jamaican living on the island, one lives abroad (Caribbean Policy Research Institute, 2017). Women accounted for around half of the total outmigration stock (49.2 percent) in 2019, a figure that has remained stable for the last two decades (IOM, 2018). Indeed, female labor migration is a common phenomenon in Jamaica. In fact, most emigrants into the USA and Canada between 2006 and 2015 were women (IOM, 2018).

Outmigration can be an important factor for development, including in terms of gender equality. The Jamaican diaspora's total contribution through remittances, investment, philanthropy, exports, and tourism market accounts for 28 percent (US\$4 billion) of Jamaica's national output annually (Caribbean Policy Research Institute, 2017). In addition, migration towards gender-equal countries appears to promote gender equality in the home country (Ferran and Tuccio, 2015).⁴⁴ Similarly, migration to countries with high levels of female political empowerment leads to higher female parliamentary shares in sending countries (Lodigiani and Salomone, 2015).⁴⁵ Hadi (2001)⁴⁶ also suggests that households with female migrants are more concerned with the education of their daughters.

Jamaicans, particularly women, rely on loans and gifts from family, including remittances from abroad, during emergencies. A national survey of remittance recipients conducted by the Bank of Jamaica in 2010 found that out of 2072 remittance recipients interviewed, 75 percent were women and 25 percent men. Most of the interviewees were single (60 percent), 34 percent were married or lived with a partner, and 6 percent were in the "other" category, including divorcees and widows (Ramocan 2010).

Women outmigrants, especially if they are undocumented, are more vulnerable to exploitation, stigma, and discrimination. One of the outcomes of such heightened vulnerability is human trafficking, mostly affecting women and children. Human trafficking remains a major issue in Jamaica, where over 90 percent of all trafficked persons are women. Secondly, large outmigration flows of women result in motherless

44 Ferrant, G., & Tuccio, M. (2015). South-South migration and discrimination against women in social institutions: A two-way relationship. *World Development*, 72, 240254.

45 Lodigiani, E., & Salomone, S. (2015). Migration-induced transfers of norms. The case of female political empowerment. University Ca'Foscari of Venice, Dept. of Economics Research Paper Series No, 19.

46 Hadi (2001); International migration and the change of women's position among the left-behind in rural Bangladesh; *International Journal of Population Geography* 7(1):53 – 61.

households and so called “barrel children.”⁴⁷ This has been identified as a relevant trend with mixed impacts in terms of the care of children and the elderly left behind in Jamaica (IOM 2018). In addition, gender can also be a fundamental factor in understanding environmental migration and disaster displacement (ECLAC, 2021).

Brain drain is another important consequence of outmigration in Jamaica. A large share of the educated women who cannot find good quality jobs in Jamaica migrates in search of better opportunities abroad. The health sector has been especially affected by brain drain. A study by Mullan (2005) reveals the percentages of medical school graduates from a source country who are now working in Australia, Canada, the US, or the UK. Jamaica was the leader at 41.4 percent. Furthermore, it is estimated that two thirds of Jamaica’s nurses have emigrated (Salmon et al., 2007). According to Lofters (2012), some health professionals leave the country due to the lack of professional opportunities, the lack of benefits, and some to get further medical training that is either not available at all in Jamaica, or not available at high quality.

The process of internal environmental migration in Jamaica is highly differentiated along gender lines. Women play an important role in agricultural production in Jamaica, which is one of the most vulnerable sectors to natural hazards and environmental degradation. For example, it has been reported that droughts and water shortages put additional pressure on women and girls, as they are traditionally responsible for water collection for domestic use. In addition, women in rural areas have more limited access to formal work, land ownership and finance, which makes their livelihoods particularly insecure in the face of climate related events. The degradation of rural livelihoods due to natural hazards has been a key driver of rural-to-urban migration. Those women who manage to migrate may find it more challenging to find jobs and adequate housing in urban areas and face unsafe conditions and limited social support (ECLAC, 2021).

47 Coined by University of the West Indies lecturer Dr Claudette Crawford-Brown, this term refers to children who, given that their parents have migrated, receive material resources in place of emotional support and direct care.

Final remarks: Improvements in Jamaican women’s economic positioning are captured by the comparatively higher shares of women entrepreneurs and women in middle management posts. However, gender gaps in access to economic opportunity are wide in Jamaica. Even though the distribution of human capital is skewed towards women and girls, many Jamaican women remain excluded from the labor market. For those who work, the earnings tend to be lower, which may prove a disincentive for many inactive women to join the labor market. These gaps appear to be explained by the lack of opportunities, labor market discrimination, and their role as main caregivers for their families. Men, on the other hand, are more likely found in vulnerable and informal employment. All these challenges cost Jamaican society dearly, not only as wasted human capital investments, but also in terms of the opportunity costs of misallocating a large share of the population. Achieving gender equality in access to economic opportunity in Jamaica requires significant effort. This includes ensuring access to childcare services, making sure that investments in education translate into equality of opportunity. Finally, it is important to bring about a fairer gender balance in the distribution of care and household tasks, and to guarantee equal access to productive resources. Constraints in agency prevent women from making free decisions and inhibit investments in their education and health, which are essential for ensuring equal economic opportunity. Given the relevance of agency in narrowing down existing disparities between men and women in Jamaica, the next chapter focuses on this topic.

CHAPTER 3: AGENCY



The agency of Jamaican women—or their capacity to make decisions and act on them—has progressed over the years as shown by growing numbers of women in higher decision-making roles, especially in the judiciary and private sectors. Areas for further improvement include the eradication of GBV and strengthening institutional structures to foster gender equality. As many as 1 in 4 women report having experienced physical abuse in their lifetime, and one-fifth reported sexual abuse during childhood. Patriarchal norms with regards to the social roles of women vis-à-vis men persist, especially among the most vulnerable women. Additionally, the country has made significant strides to foster gender equality in the law, but there is room for improved coordination by the institutions from all relevant sectors to implement the laws and policies aimed at narrowing gender gaps. Agency is also largely shaped by informal institutions, such as attitudes and social norms, which are reinforced by formal institutions, i.e., laws and policies.

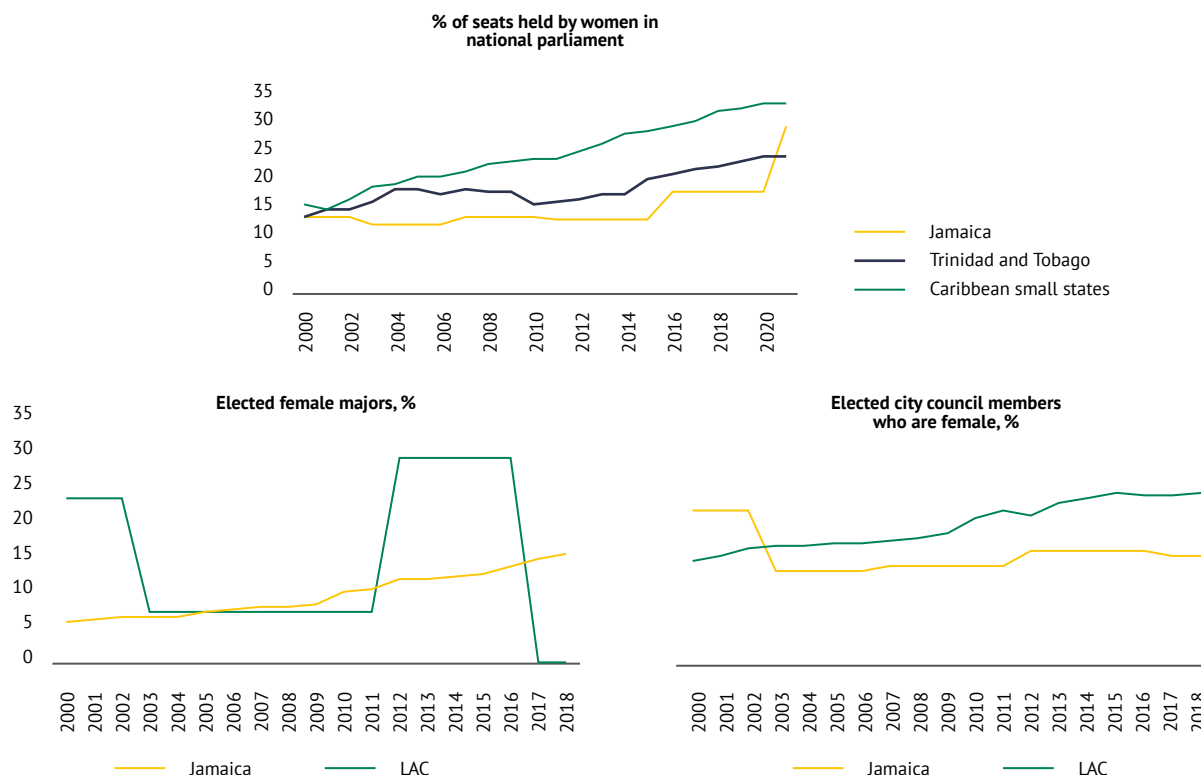
3.1. Representation in decision making

The number of women at the highest levels of political power has increased significantly while some gender inequalities prevail. Jamaican women's political representation at the national level has improved in recent years, particularly when compared with the average Latin American country and Caribbean small state (Figure 25). Both the House of Representatives and the Senate have recorded their highest number of women in the island's history. In the House of Representatives, 28.6 percent of the 63 elected members are women, a 50 percent increase from the 12 female members prior to the 2020 election. Further, for the first time, both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives are women.⁴⁸ In the Senate, eight or 38 percent of senators are women.⁴⁹ However, men predominantly exert control over the resources and determine access to public finances in public bodies (EU, 2020).⁵⁰

48 <https://www.loopjamaica.com/content/juliet-holness-appointed-deputy-speaker-house>

49 <https://jis.gov.jm/record-number-of-women-in-senate/>

50 https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/gender-evaluation-2020-final-report-volume-4_en.pdf

Figure 23: Women's representation in decision making

Source: ECLAC, accessed in April 2021; data for share of female MPs for 2021 from IPU.

Notes: Data for 2021 in first graph is not available for Caribbean small states and LAC.

While Jamaica does not have a quota system, its national gender policy has laid down a desired target of 30 percent women in decision-making positions (EU, 2020; UNDP, 2015). Despite continued calls from international and civil society organizations to mandate a quota, and the already manifested intention of the government back in 2016 to establish it, Jamaica has yet to mandate a minimum share or number of women in public institutions or electoral/party lists. Nonetheless, the 30 percent commitment from 2011 has almost been reached, 10 years later.⁵¹

Women's representation in Jamaica's judiciary exceeds the regional average. In 2018, 68.2 percent of judges in the supreme or highest court were women, compared to 32.1 percent for the average LAC country. According to consultations carried out with civil society, local academics, and government representatives, this may be explained by women's overrepresentation in the field of law, which can be more attractive to women especially with children as it offers relatively higher earnings

51 https://www.latinamerica.undp.org/content/rblac/en/home/library/womens_empowerment/where-are-the-women--jamaica-case-study.html; https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/gender-evaluation-2020-final-report-volume-4_en.pdf

than other female-dominated sectors along with more flexibility to exit and re-enter the workforce (Baker, 2002).

Compared to other countries across the region, Jamaican women are well represented in decision making in the private sector. The latest available data (2010) reveals women tend to be under-represented in business management and ownership. Only 24.1 percent of firms were led by a female manager, and 38.2 percent included women owners (Enterprise Survey, accessed August 2021). Still, Jamaica performs above the Caribbean average. Indeed, the country reports the highest proportion of women managers in the world at 59.3 percent (ILO, 2017),⁵² though they are more likely to hold junior or middle management positions, rather than top posts (Table 7). Women occupied 17.4 percent of board directors' seats of the 53 companies listed on the Jamaica Stock Exchange (JSE) in 2012, but ten of the companies had no women on their boards at all (ILO, 2015).

Table 7: Women in management

	Junior management	Middle management	Senior management	Top executive
Antigua and Barbuda	37	38	46	25
Bahamas	45	25	25	10
Barbados	25	23	20	2
Belize	21	20	27	8
Dominica	2	23	50	19
Grenada	32	50	40	20
Guyana	28	25	26	20
Jamaica	50	50	40	33
Saint Kitts and Nevis	14	4	0	0
Saint Lucia	28	25	32	18
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	24	17	11	4
Suriname	30	30	25	10
Trinidad and Tobago	37	50	33	20
Subregional median	30	30	30	10

Source: ILO Caribbean Company Survey, 2017

52 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---act_emp/documents/publication/wcms_645941.pdf; https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_316450.pdf

3.2. Gender-based violence

One in every four Jamaican women (25.2 percent) has experienced physical violence from a male partner, while almost half (47.3 percent) of ever-partnered women have been subject to controlling behaviors. The higher their education, the less likely they are to experience intimate partner physical violence (IPV). In addition, physical violence appears to be more severe among women with no education or only primary schooling, and among those with vocational education (Figure 24). Women who started living with their partner at a younger age (early cohabiters) are more likely to experience IPV, as well as women who have been pregnant (30 percent compared with 14.3 percent among women who have not been pregnant). Young women between 15 and 24 years old are more vulnerable to sexual violence (STATIN, 2016).⁵³ GBV entails a significant economic cost to society—not only due to increased health and social system demands, but also because of productivity losses among survivors and their families.⁵⁴ Even though there has been no local estimation on the cost of GBV in the country, The World Bank estimates that violence against women costs countries on average around 1.2–3.7% of GDP. Survivors of GBV and their children tend to experience worse educational and health outcomes (especially mental health) over their lifetime. As a result, they see their opportunities for economic and social participation severely constrained.⁵⁵

The sexual abuse of girls is a pervasive challenge in Jamaica. According to Jamaica's Injury Surveillance System, between 2014 and 2017, 20 percent of all child visits to public hospitals were due to sexual assault, and approximately 40 percent of female child visits are a consequence of a sexual assault. Also, one-fifth of Jamaican women reported sexual abuse as children. Women were equally likely to be victims of sexual violence regardless of education, age, employment status or union status. In most cases, the perpetrators of violence against girls were persons known to the victims (friends, parents, or siblings). Around 14 percent of respondents had their first sexual experience before the age of 15, which constitutes statutory rape since the legal age of consent is 16. Among women who reported first having intercourse at an age below 15, almost one-third (32.8 percent) reported that this experience was forced (STATIN, 2016).⁵⁶

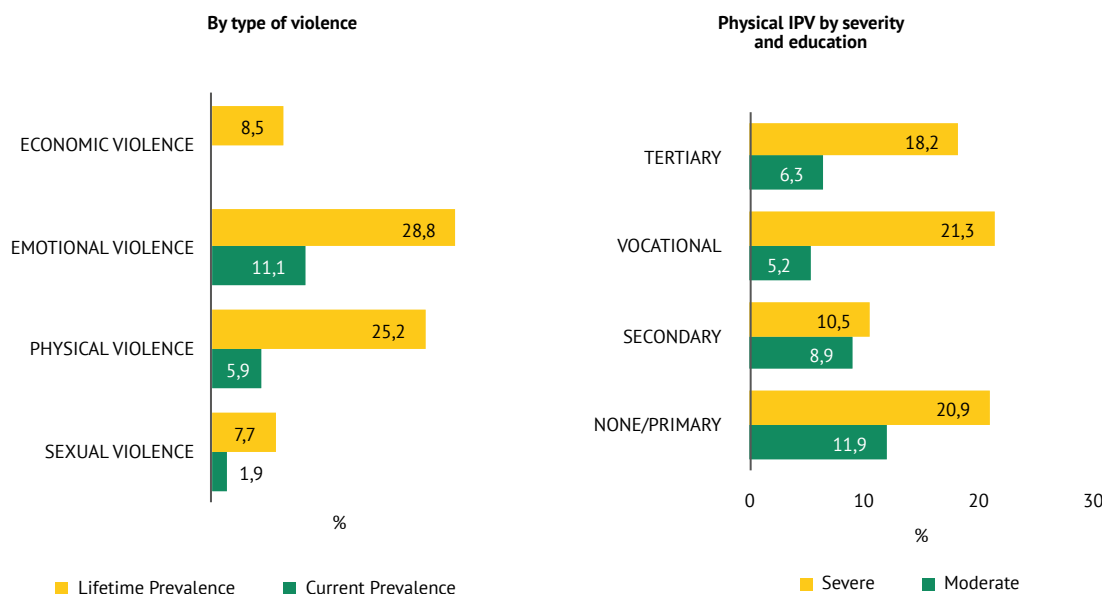
53 <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/americas/jamaica/2016/jamaica>

54 <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/21092/929630REVISED00tor0Brief0APRIL02015.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y>

55 <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/21092/929630REVISED00tor0Brief0APRIL02015.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y>

56 <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/americas/jamaica/2016/jamaica>

Figure 24: Prevalence of IPV



Source: Women's Health Survey, 2016, STATIN, IDB, UN Women

Strong beliefs about masculinity are key drivers of GBV in Jamaica. Traditional views of masculinity and femininity are entrenched in Jamaican society with over 70 percent of women agreeing that men are 'natural' household heads, and almost one-third (30.9 percent) stating that violence between a man and a woman was a private matter (WHS, 2016). This thinking exists alongside and can be juxtaposed against less traditional views of gender roles. Women do not believe that men were entitled to beat women if they act contrary to gendered expectations. Women almost universally believe that men and women should share authority in the home, and that women should be free to spend their earnings as they wish. Taken together, this data suggests that while some traditional beliefs are still widely held, women are rejecting other, more openly oppressive aspects of gender stereotyping previously embraced by society.⁵⁷

Survivors of GBV in Jamaica have experienced mental health issues and they often face stigma and rejection from their community and family. Over one-third (35.5 percent) of Jamaican women who have experienced violence reported problems with their overall health – compared with 27.9 percent of those who have not experienced it. Around 12.2 percent of survivors either had suicidal thoughts or had attempted to kill themselves, more than double the share of women that were not abused. Survivors were also more than twice as likely to drink alcohol and almost three times more prone to using recreational drugs at least once per week. Nearly one-fifth of women

⁵⁷ Rapid Situation Analysis of Gender Based Violence in Jamaica, 2020

reported that the violence left them unable to concentrate on their work, while around 15 percent reported having their work disrupted by their partners. Moreover, children of abused women were four times more likely to drop out of school (STATIN, 2016).⁵⁸

The institutional response to GBV in Jamaica remains uneven and insufficient.

Although most women reported telling someone of their abuse, almost two-thirds (63 percent) of the survivors did not seek help, and those who did, turned to the police (32.1 percent) or to the health care system (11.8 percent). However, over one-third (39.1 percent) of the women who sought help reported that they did not receive any support. Among those who reported the abuse to the police, only 7.8 percent received support. Most women receiving help did so from their friends (18 percent) and family members, namely, fathers (15.1 percent), mothers (14.2 percent) and siblings (13.4 percent) (STATIN, 2016).⁵⁹

The government of Jamaica (GoJ) has made important strides to lay out the legal and institutional framework for GBV prevention and response. The Domestic Violence Act (1994, amended in 2004) provides redress and protection to victims of domestic violence, allowing the courts to issue protection orders. It however does not define domestic violence which leads to uncertainty about how to interpret crime statistics. The Act also does not distinguish intimate partner violence from general intra-family violence. The Sexual Offences Act created the offence of grievous sexual assault, which includes non-consensual sexual act (STATIN, 2016).⁶⁰ In 2017, the government launched a 10-year National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence in Jamaica (NSAP-GBV) 2017-2027. The plan focuses on five interlinked priority areas, namely, prevention, protection (psychosocial and health), intervention, legal procedures and protocols for data collection.

However, important gaps remain with regards to formal institutions that contribute to perpetuating GBV. The GoJ has identified serious gaps in its institutional capacity to monitor and address gender-based violence, starting with data deficiencies (STATIN, 2016).⁶¹ Recent empirical evidence indicates that important challenges persist to ensure equal access to justice by female (and male) survivors of GBV in Jamaica. These include delays in court, lack of resources and poor infrastructure, inconsistencies in law enforcement based on the background and perception of the victim, socio-economic discrimination, and scant knowledge of basic rights (EU, 2020).⁶²

The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have increased the risk of experiencing GBV in Jamaica. Although Jamaica's largest residential facility for victims of domestic

58 <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/americas/jamaica/2016/jamaica>

59 <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/americas/jamaica/2016/jamaica>

60 <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/americas/jamaica/2016/jamaica>

61 <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/americas/jamaica/2016/jamaica>

62 https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/gender-evaluation-2020-final-report-volume-4_en.pdf

violence reported a reduced number of calls to its hotlines during the pandemic, this is believed to be related to the heightened inability of victims to report owing to the constant presence of the abuser, and the need to concentrate on getting food.⁶³ There are also concerns about greater risk of sexual and other forms of abuse among children during the pandemic. UNICEF Jamaica (2020) found between January and June 2020 the National Children's registry received over 1,000 reports of sexual abuse for investigation. Meanwhile, the Pediatric Association of Jamaica identified a 70 percent increase in the cases of child sexual abuse since the onset of the pandemic.⁶⁴

3.3. Child marriage

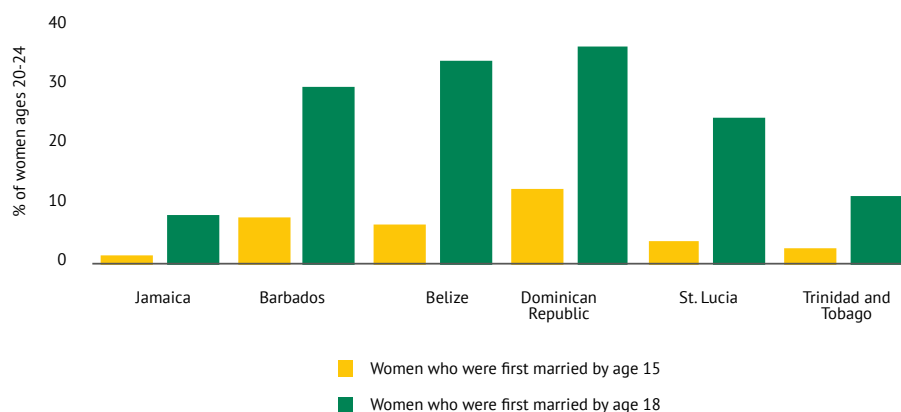
Child marriage in Jamaica is low compared to regional standards while early cohabitation is increasingly common. Jamaica records the lowest share of women who first married between the ages of 15 and 18 (Figure 25), compared to its regional peers which show some of the highest rates of child marriage in LAC. However, the share of girls that cohabit with men remains high. Early unions most often are informal partnerships in which a girl lives with a partner, outside of formal marriage (UNICEF).⁶⁵ These are known as “common-law” or “visiting relationships” and tend to be more common among rural and lower socio-economic status women.

Jamaica is characterized among Caribbean countries by its long history of visiting relationships, in which couples are sexually active but live separately. It also shows even higher rates of never-married adults (Waite, 2015). A 2015 study estimated that 33 percent of Jamaican fathers of newborns were in visiting relationships, compared to 16 percent of fathers who were reportedly married, and 47 percent who were in common-law unions (Gray et al., 2015). Visiting relationships are likely to entail childbearing and eventually evolve into cohabitation. Despite of the differences between early forced marriages, cohabitation, and visiting relationships, they all affect young girls' livelihoods and limit their right to childhood.

63 <https://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/lead-stories/20200412/domestic-abuse-caution-experts-wary-gender-based-violence-during-covid>

64 <http://radiojamaicanewsonline.com/local/child-sexual-abuse-cases-increase-by-70-since-covid-19>

65 <https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/8256/file/Profile%20of%20Child%20Marriage%20in%20LAC.pdf>

Figure 25: Share of women 20-24 who first married by age 15 to 18

Source: WDI, accessed August 2021

Early cohabitation increases the likelihood of experiencing GBV and is linked to prevailing patriarchal social norms. Women and girls under the age of 19 who entered a live-in or cohabitation partner relationship at a younger age were at a greater risk of experiencing intimate partner violence in their lives, compared to those who entered such relationships at 19 or older (45 percent compared with 24.5 percent). Nationwide, respondents who started cohabiting at a younger age also reported a higher rate of being physically abused, at 16 percent versus 5.9 percent. In addition, women who had entered living arrangements with male partners when they were 18 years or younger were found to be more likely to believe that a woman's role is to take care of her home (STATIN, 2016).

Child marriage and early cohabitation are likely to have increased with the COVID-19 pandemic. The closure of schools has brought an increased risk of girls getting pregnant, with the accompanying detrimental effects on their education, and on their life prospects. Qualitative evidence from focus groups discussions conducted by CAPRI in 2021 suggests that teenage pregnancy has increased since school was disrupted by the pandemic.⁶⁶

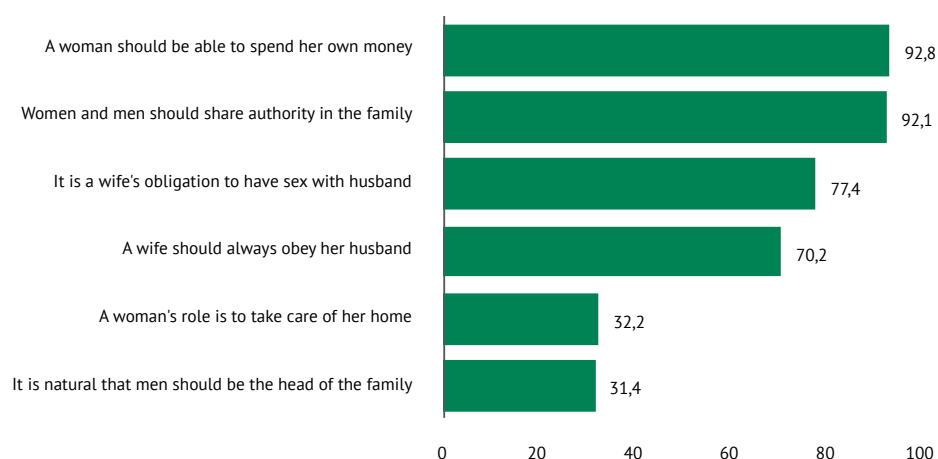
3.4. Patriarchal social norms

Traditional beliefs around women's roles are deeply entrenched in Jamaica, relegating women to the domestic sphere and often condoning GBV. Over 90 percent of respondents reported believing that women should spend their own money and share authority with the men in the household (Figure 26). Although this indicates

⁶⁶ https://www.capricaribbean.org/sites/default/files/public/documents/report/time_out_the_impact_of_covid_on_education.pdf

the prevalence of liberal views on gender norms, it coexists with around a 70 percent of the population indicating that a wife should always obey her husband and is obligated to have sex with him. Also, more than 30 percent of respondents believe that women should take care of the house and family, and that it is natural for men to be the heads of the household. Gender norms interfere with the types of jobs that women can or cannot do, as there is a clear social expectation that they will be the main caregivers for their families.

Figure 26: Women's attitudes towards gender roles and IPV (2016)



Jamaican women from low-income and rural backgrounds are more prone to expressing traditional beliefs with regards to the roles of women and men in society. More than one-third of women in rural areas (35.6 percent) believed that a woman should always obey her husband, compared with 29.5 percent of urban women. Similarly, women having attained higher levels of education tend to show more liberal attitudes towards gender equality. Women with tertiary level education were less likely to embrace traditional roles for women, such as taking care of the home (50.9 percent) and obeying their husbands (16.8 percent). Almost half of the women with primary education believed that a wife should always obey her husband, and 85.6 percent felt it was a woman's duty to take care of their homes. Interestingly, the views of older and younger women are generally aligned, which could be an indication of the lack of change in this area (STATIN, 2016).

Although violence against women in Jamaica is not generally condoned, rural and less educated women hold more traditional views around gender-based violence. There are varying levels of belief regarding the need to tolerate violence to keep the family together. Around 8 percent of rural women and 18 percent of women with primary education, compared with 4 percent of urban women and 4 percent of those with tertiary education. Close to one-fifth of rural women and those with primary education believe that rape is usually the result of the victim's careless behavior. In

contrast, women who earned their own income were less likely to justify violence against women by their male partners (STATIN, 2016).

Traditional ideas around toxic masculinity can also be linked to violence inside and outside the household, posing a risk for women's agency. While gender norms can pair the idea of “manhood” with being a risk-taker and the family provider, in low-income and poor contexts, this can be expressed through alternative, toxic avenues like violence or criminal behavior (Dunn and Sutherland, 2009). This aggressive masculine identity is associated with the high cases of homicide and gang violence in Jamaica, which create traumatic experiences for both male and female youth (World Bank, 2015). In relationships, norms around gender roles and violence can perpetuate power imbalances between men and women, and further increase the likelihood of intra-partner violence if the norms are unmet (WHO, 2010).

Gang violence in Jamaica is driven by various and often gender-related factors, including the lack of opportunities among young men. Community and societal contributing factors include poverty, inequality, youth unemployment, weak institutions, urban migration, and drug trafficking (Ellsberg, 2017; World Bank, 2015). The lack of economic opportunities and positive role models for young men from vulnerable backgrounds is associated with masculinity discourses extolling violent or illicit behaviors. Family or individual factors which create an environment of aggressive masculinity include family detachment, paternal absence, limited participation in education, and violent experiences (World Bank, 2015)

3.5. Formal institutions

Jamaica has made progress in strengthening the legal framework and international commitments for the promotion of gender equality over the last decades. The country is signatory to the CEDAW since 1984, and of the Convention of Belem do Para since 1994.⁶⁷ Jamaica is also part of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality.⁶⁸ With regards to national legislation, the Employment Act (2014) established flexible work arrangements and repealed previous legislation restricting women from working at night. Other relevant laws include the Property Act (2004) that establishes equal rights for spouses, and the Maintenance Act (2005). As a result, the country obtained

67 The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belem Do Para) defines violence against women, establishes that women have the right to live a life free of violence and that VAW is a violation of human rights.

68 2005-2015: Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality, renewed in 2017-2020 as the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment, provides a framework for all Commonwealth country members to promote the advancement of gender equality with a focus on gender, democracy, peace and conflict, human rights and law, poverty eradication and economic empowerment, and HIV/AIDS.

the maximum score in the Women, Business, and the Law (WBL)⁶⁹ assessment in 3 of the 8 dimensions (Figure 27).

The country has also implemented important policies to foster gender equality. For instance, the Vision 2030 Jamaica National Development Plan includes a commitment to eliminate any form of gender discrimination by identifying and addressing constraints to women's empowerment (FAO, 2020). In addition, the GoJ launched the National Policy for Gender Equality (NPGE) in 2011, with the aim of ensuring the principle of equality between women and men. The NPGE outlines Jamaica's commitment to addressing the long-term systemic forms of discrimination (GoJ, 2011). The policy is being revised this year. The Bureau of Gender Affairs (BGA) is the national mechanism and agency that advocates for and supports the implementation of the NPGE.

However, there is room for improvement with regards to the legal framework for gender equality. According to WBL, the areas of employment and care should be a priority in the years to come. While the Jamaican legislation does not prohibit discrimination in hiring based on gender, it does not ensure equal remuneration for work of equal value, and it does not prohibit discrimination in access to credit based on gender. With regards to having children, the country does not offer paid leave to fathers or shared parental leave, while maternity leave benefits are limited,⁷⁰ and periods of absence from work due to childcare are not accounted for when calculating pension benefits. In addition, there is a disconnect between paper and reality, which indicates the persistence of enforcement challenges.⁷¹ The OECD's SIGI also highlights persistent constraints in the areas of political empowerment, and health and survival.

Figure 27: Women, Business and the Law



Weak institutional structures also constitute a barrier to gender equality. The main entity for the promotion of gender equality in Jamaica is the Bureau of Gender Affairs,

⁶⁹ Limitations as discussed on Women, Business and the Law 2022, Appendix A: "Women, Business and the Law acknowledges that equal opportunities for women in business and the workplace depend on an interplay of economic, social, and cultural factors. WBL also recognizes it solely focuses on the ways in which the formal legal and regulatory environment determines whether women can work or open their own businesses. Even though such assumptions may come at the expense of specificity, they also ensure data comparability across economies."

⁷⁰ Women should be employed full-time by the same employer during one year before being eligible.

⁷¹ It must be noted that the WBL analysis is focused on economic rights, and thus it leaves out a lot of relevant rights domains such as sexual and reproductive rights, rights to education, etc.

an office within the Ministry of Culture, Entertainment, Gender and Sports. The Bureau is under-resourced, with limited capacity and ability to influence policy making. In addition, and although different policies and plans recognize gender as a relevant cross-cutting issue on paper, much remains to be done to effectively mainstream gender across sectors and levels of government. There is a clear lack of institutional coordination while budgetary and human resources constraints persist across sectors. Furthermore, a results-based approach is not yet in place, and there is no adequate targeting and monitoring (World Bank, 2020).

Despite the differential impacts of natural disasters on gender, Jamaica's DRM and climate change policies do not include gendered policy outcomes and indicators.

DRM and climate change policies usually do not go beyond statements about the importance of assessing the specific needs of women in DRM activities. They do not provide details about relevant strategies and actions to fulfill gender-specific commitments. Furthermore, there is no consideration of GBV in disaster settings, provision of psychosocial services to GBV survivors, and special measures for ensuring a safe environment for women and children living in shelters. Also, importantly, the extent of participation of women in DRM and climate change policy making is not documented. There is no evidence that women's organizations are involved in the design, adoption and implementation of DRM or climate change policies (Natalicchio, 2022).

Specific dimensions of gender equality are often treated as isolated issues. A recent review conducted by the World Bank (2020) evidences no clear overarching link between GBV and other related policy areas, such as poverty or public health, and between generalized crime and violence against women and girls (VAWG). This has reinforced the idea that VAWG is a private issue. It has also meant that efforts to eliminate VAWG have not directly benefitted from the resources allocated to national and citizen security programming through initiatives such as the Zones of Special Operation (ZOSO). As a result, while the GOJ has allocated over \$40 billion to address crime, there is no particular mention of GBV within that overall allocation (PIOJ, 2021).

The limited technical capacity within CSOs has hindered the effective integration of gender equality and VAWG principles in their programs, processes, and activities.

Further, there is a critical need to strengthen inter-sectoral coordination within and between institutions and with CSO actors, to harmonize gender-responsive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Notwithstanding the good work being done by the NGO community to raise awareness and understanding of the systemic drivers of GBV, and provide services for survivors, gaps remain in their services, resulting from weak institutional infrastructure caused by insufficient capital, limited human resources, inadequate technical expertise, lack of comprehensive knowledge of issues, harmful hetero-normative beliefs systems and normalized behavior patterns (World Bank, 2020).

Final remarks: As shown here, Jamaica has made significant strides towards gender equality in political representation and in decision-making positions, but there is room for improvement. In particular, by fostering women's participation in political structures at the local level for instance through quotas. Similarly, nearly 25 percent of women report experiencing physical abuse in their lifetime, while sexual abuse, particularly of young women, prevails. Patriarchal norms with regards to the social roles of women vis-à-vis men persist, especially among the most vulnerable women. When it comes to the legal and institutional arrangement, Jamaica has made important strides to promote gender equality, but there is room for improvement. Guaranteeing women's rights and promoting gender equality in practice will require Jamaica to strengthen its institutional capacity to enforce the legislation already in place, protect women and men from violence, and foster change in gender norms around the role of women and men in society.

CHAPTER 4: THE WAY FORWARD



4.1. Conclusions

Jamaica is characterized by two phenomena. First, boys and men lag girls and women in human endowments. They are more exposed to violence, show poorer health outcomes, and perform relatively worse in terms of educational outcomes at all levels. These gaps are substantial and require attention. Second, women's greater accumulation of human capital -in the form of educational attainment and better health outcomes vis-à-vis men- does not translate into gender equality in the labor market, while they see their decision-making capacity severely constrained. With the purpose of further uncovering these trends and the drivers behind them, this assessment reviewed the status of, and barriers faced by, women and men in Jamaica along the dimensions of endowments, economic opportunity, and agency.

Women's sexual and reproductive health remains an area of concern. Adolescent pregnancy and maternal mortality are high compared to regional peers'. In particular, adolescent pregnancy is the main reason why Jamaican girls drop out of school. Young men, on the other hand, tend to drop out of school due to economic reasons, because they do not see the value of education, and lack aspirations clearly framed around success in formal education and work.

The barriers for women to engage in paid work start with the transition from school to the labor market. They are over-represented among the youth who do not study or work (NEETs) partly due to family responsibilities, lack of opportunity, and lack of aspirations framed around success in education and work. The labor force participation of women in Jamaica is much lower than men's, largely in connection with their disproportionate role in unpaid household and care work. However, men face disadvantages that should not be overlooked. When they do transition into the labor market, men are more likely than women to hold informal and vulnerable jobs.

Significant gender wage gaps persist after controlling for individual, household, and sectoral factors. There is horizontal and vertical segregation, with women being more present in the least productive activities. Nevertheless, wage differentials disappear when accounting for working hours, suggesting that it is women's inability to engage in full time jobs that explains some of the differences in earnings. Rural women engaged in agriculture and farming is a growing activity among Jamaican females, but they face particular challenges associated with gaps in access to land and other productive assets.

Compared to other countries in the Caribbean, Jamaican women perform particularly well in terms of entrepreneurship, and in access to finance, although gender gaps persist. Jamaica is one of the countries in the world with the highest share of female business managers, although the presence of women is higher in middle range (and not top) positions. Likely because of their shorter working lives and lower income, women in the peak reproductive years and in old age show higher

poverty rates than men. For the remaining age groups, men are more likely to be in poverty. Households with only female income earners tend to be the poorest.

Despite recent advances, the agency of Jamaican women remains poor, as evidenced by the persistence of the most extreme form of gender-based discrimination—violence against women. The prevalence of patriarchal social norms, especially among the most vulnerable population, represents a key constraint to women's empowerment. A large share of Jamaican women believe that it is more natural for men to be the heads of the household, that they owe them obedience, or that GBV is a private matter.

Finally, formal institutions can help to reinforce traditional views and gaps across all dimensions of welfare. The legal framework for gender equality in Jamaica is quite developed, but there is room for improvement, particularly when it comes to paid work and parenthood.

4.2. Policy recommendations

This Gender Assessment focuses on key issues for effective action to narrow gender gaps and promote women's empowerment in Jamaica. The main priorities have been identified in two stages. First, a long list of recommendations was drawn from the diagnostics presented in this assessment. Second, these recommendations have been narrowed down to a list of priority areas based on consultations with World Bank sector experts. The final list of priorities has been validated by key Government counterparts and development partners working on gender issues in Jamaica (see appendix A for more details).

Recommended actions are organized according to priority objective and policy area (Table 8) around three pillars: (1) Invest in building the human capital of women and (especially) young men; (2) Expand, support and promote the productive role of women; and (3) Increase women's capacity to make decisions and act on them. Clear and comprehensive implementation plans would be needed for these policies, as gaps in implementation can hamper reform effectiveness.

The objectives under **Pillar 1** include: **1.1 Improve access to quality sexual, reproductive and maternal health services**; and **1.2 Improve educational outcomes of boys and girls, and reduce the incidence of NEET phenomenon**, especially among women.

The policy recommendations to improve access to sexual, reproductive and maternal health services revolve around preventing teenage pregnancy and improving the quality of these services, while encouraging women's use. Keeping girls in school and offering young people information and education on these issues, as well as access to adapted services, training, safe spaces and economic support for young women are some of the actions suggested to prevent teenage pregnancy. In

terms of improving the quality of health services, recommended measures focus on strengthening mechanisms for services provision and improving the capacity of staff and facilities while addressing barriers such as cost and transportation.

In order to improve educational outcomes, it is recommended to increase educational enrollment among boys, ensuring that both boys and girls (also pregnant girls) stay in school, and to ease the transition from school to work, especially among women. Specific actions to attain these include raising awareness about the benefits of education, strengthening financial support and incentives (particularly through PATH), as well as existing initiatives such as the Gender Ambassadors. It is also important to eliminate exceptions to the legal right to return to school, provide remedial or second chance programs and expand access to programs targeting at-risk youth, among others.

The following objectives have been identified under **Pillar 2: 2.1 Facilitate women's access to labor market and quality employment and reduce vulnerability** (of women and men); and **2.2 Expand access to productive assets and entrepreneurial activity for women**.

Policy areas to facilitate women's access to labor market and quality employment and to reduce vulnerability refer to improving family policies, ALMPs and SP, diminishing gender segregation in employment, and easing the burden of caregiving on women. Recommended actions include implementing shared parental leave, providing child benefits and leave to care for sick relatives, and developing the necessary regulations to make legal provisions effective in this area. Equally important is to improve employment services and LMI systems targeting vulnerable women, as well as labor market intermediation services, expand the coverage of free quality childcare among vulnerable families, introduce unemployment insurance, and expand the coverage of social protection mechanisms to the informal sector.

With regards to expanding access to productive assets and entrepreneurship by women, policy recommendations focus on improving the potential for expansion and higher productivity of female-led companies and increasing access to productive assets especially among female farmers and food producers. Specific actions in this area include addressing gender gaps in access to the digital economy and in access to assets that facilitate homeschooling and telework the poor, offering comprehensive packages that bundle life skills, business training and cash grants for women entrepreneurs and ensuring that women farmers and food producers have control and ownership of their land (e.g., through land titling and co-titling, adaptation loans).

Lastly, the objectives under **Pillar 3** include: **3.1 Eradicate gender-based violence** and **3.2 Improve the institutional framework and the availability of data**.

Eradicating gender-based violence (GBV) will require strengthening the response system and its effectiveness to assist and support survivors and continuing efforts

to prevent GBV, based on the Spotlight program.⁷² Recommended actions focus on continuing efforts to integrate GBV in the regular training curriculum of first responders, improving the capacity of existing centers to provide counselling to survivors, strengthening efforts to clarify misunderstandings bundling GBV with other types of violence in institutions, strengthening the links of GBV and social norms with safety net targeting and responses (i.e., PATH) and establishing strategic communication interventions in youth engagement initiatives (e.g., Cadet Force, Boy Scouts) to address gender norms that condone GBV.

In terms of improving the institutional framework for gender equality, proposed policies emphasize the importance of building the capacity of institutions and improving the availability and use of gender data. Recommended actions to build institutional capacity include for instance exploring and expanding gender budgeting and ensuring effective mainstreaming of gender equality, continuing offering training to public officials on these tools and ensuring consonance between legislation and policies. With regards to data, it would be important to establish regular data collection on GBV and favor the use of administrative data on this phenomenon, as well as improving data sharing procedures. Finally, implementing a monitoring and evaluation agenda of government programs will be crucial to improve institutional learning.

Table 8: Matrix of policy priorities and recommendations

Pillar 1: Invest in building the human capital of women and (especially) young men			
Objective 1.1: Improve access to quality sexual, reproductive and maternal health services			
Recommended policy	Recommended actions	Timeline	Responsible agencies
Policy 1: Prevent adolescent pregnancy (by enhancing knowledge, improving access to services and empowering young women).	1: Keep girls in school by addressing gender-related barriers to completion, particularly money problems.	Long term	Ministry of Health Ministry of Education, Youth and Information
	2: Expand access to programs for vulnerable adolescent women that offer skills training, safe spaces, and economic support.		
	3: Strengthen youth-friendliness of sexual and reproductive health and family planning services.		
	4: Adopt school-based peer educational and information programs & implement social norm and awareness raising mass (and social) media campaigns geared both girls and boys.		
	5. Offer comprehensive sexual education – and prevent that it is misconstrued.		

⁷² The European Union/United Nations Spotlight Initiative is a global, multi-year partnership, from 2020 – 2023 to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. The Spotlight Initiative focuses on 6 pillars that are strategically aligned throughout the life of the program: 1. Legislative and Policy framework; 2. Strengthening institution; 3. Prevention and Social Norms; 4. Delivery of Quality Essential Services; 5. Data Availability and Capacities; 6. Supporting the Women's Movement.

	1: Strengthen connection b/w maternal health and PATH conditionality for pregnant and lactating women.		
Policy 2: Improve the quality of sexual, reproductive and maternal health services and encourage women’s use	2: Evaluate <i>maternity homes</i> for young pregnant women.	Medium/long-term	Ministry of Health
	3: Strengthen the role of the <i>centers for adolescent women</i> (Women Center of Jamaica Foundation).		Hospitals and health centers
	4: Improve quality control, monitoring and surveillance mechanisms of services.		Ministry of Labor and Social Security
	5: Improve the capacity of health staff and facilities (e.g., training, additional nurses and midwives, supplies, etc.) and address cost and transportation related barriers.		
Objective 1.2: Improve educational outcomes of boys and girls, and reduce the incidence of NEET phenomenon, especially among women			
Policy 1: Increase educational enrollment among boys and ensure that both boys and girls (also pregnant girls) stay in school	1: Raise awareness about economic benefits of school for boys and make the school culture more attractive to them.	Short/medium/long-term	
	2: Implement an Education Management Information System to identify students at risk of dropping out and enable schools to intervene (counseling, tutoring).		
	3: Strengthen financial support and incentives for families to keep at-risk boys and girls in school (subsidies, CCTs - PATH).		Ministry of Education, Youth and Information
	4: Increase (and equalize) benefit of scholarship under PATH to better reflect the opportunity cost of attending school.		Ministry of Employment and Social Security
	5: Eliminate exceptions to the legal right of girls to return to school.		Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports
	6: Evaluate the “Reintegration of School-Age Mothers into the Formal School System” and explore expansion.		Schools
	7: Strengthen the role of the Gender Ambassadors program.		
	8: Train the police to adequately interact with youth.		
Policy 2: Ease the transition from school to work, especially among women	1: Expand access to programs targeting at-risk youth for soft-skill training, mentorship and role models (e.g., ‘Big Brothers/Big Sisters’ programs), and economic opportunity empowerment (see section on health).	Short/medium/long-term	
	2: Continue promoting the presence of women in STEM fields – usually associated with higher productivity and pay jobs – and ensure that this is reflected in their employment outcomes.		Ministry of Education, Youth and Information
	3: Promote the presence of boys in non-traditionally male fields of study (e.g., nurses).		Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports
	4: Equip young women but also men to become entrepreneurs and opt for careers in new fields.		Coordination with the private sector
	5: Shift social norms from an early age through information, education and awareness raising school-based programs.		
	6: Provide remedial or second chance education programs for over-age young women and men who want to complete their formal education or job training.		

Pillar 2: Expand, support and promote the productive role of women				
Objective 2.1: Facilitate women's access to labor market and quality employment, and reduce vulnerability (of women and men)				
Policy 1: Strengthen family and employment policies	1: Implement shared parental leave with incentives for fathers.	Medium/ long-term		Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports Ministry of Finance
	2: Provide a child allowance to parents and child subsidies.			
	3: Provide leave to care for sick relatives.			
	4: Prohibit gender-based discrimination in employment.			
	5: Mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value.			
	6: Establish legal entitlement for parents to benefit from flexible working arrangements.			
	7: Develop the necessary regulations to enforce legal provisions.			
Policy 2: Target women through ALMPs and SP	1: Improve job placement/ES and LMI systems catering to the needs of vulnerable women (case management linked to SP programs).	Short/ medium-term		Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) Human Employment and Resource Training Trust/ National Service Training Agency (HEART/NSTA)
Policy 3: Address gender segregation in education and employment	1: Improve labor market intermediation services and school-based career guidance services to provide information on sector-specific profitability and attract boys and girls to non-traditional fields.	Medium/ long-term		Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports
	2: Offer financial incentives (PATH) for girls to choose STEM fields of study/work.			Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology
	3: Design and promote apprenticeships in higher paying occupations.			Human Employment and Resource Training Trust/ National Service Training Agency (HEART/NSTA)
Policy 4: Ease the burden of caregiving on women (and fathers)	1: Improve the coverage of free quality childcare, especially among vulnerable families.	Medium/ long-term		Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) Ministry of Education, Youth and Information
	2: Evaluate the effectiveness of the existing ECC quality assurance system based on the degree of compliance.			The Early Childhood Commission Local ECE service delivery - Jamaica Early Childhood Association (JECA)
Policy 5: Strengthen access to social protection	1: Introducing unemployment insurance. 2: Account for time dedicated to childcare in pension benefits, creating a special fund and making contributions to it on behalf of caregivers. 3: Expand the coverage of social protection mechanisms to the informal sector.	Medium/ long-term		Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MLSS) Ministry of Finance

Objective 2.2: Expand access to productive assets and entrepreneurial activity for women

Policy 1: Improve the potential for expansion and higher productivity of female-led companies	1: Address gender gaps in access to the digital economy and in access to assets that facilitate homeschooling and home office by the poor.	Medium/long-term	Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports
	2: Offer financial products less reliant on collateral by using psychometric testing to replace traditional requirements.		Ministry of Employment and Social Security
	3: Offer comprehensive packages that bundle life skills and business training, cash grants for women entrepreneurs.		Ministry of Finance
	4: Promote access to mentorship and networks for female entrepreneurs.		
Policy 2: Expand access to productive assets especially among female farmers and food producers	1: Ensure that women farmers and food producers have control and ownership of their land - land titling and co-titling, adaptation loans.	Medium/long-term	Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports
	2: Ease access to technology, market information and agricultural inputs for women farmers and food producers.		Ministry of Industry, Trade, Agriculture and Fisheries
	3: Prohibit discrimination in access to credit based on gender.		

Pillar 3: Increase women's capacity to make decisions and act on them

Objective 3.1: Eradicate gender-based violence and early cohabitation

Policy 1: Strengthen the response system and its effectiveness to assist and support survivors	1: Continue efforts to include GBV in the regular training curriculum of first responder's professions, (police, health workers) – e.g., standard operating procedures, handling of survivors and referral.	Short/medium term	Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports
	2: Improve the capacity of existing centers to provide counselling to survivors (providing resources, professionalizing, formulating internal procedures and engaging with communities).		Ministry of Health
	3: Continue improving the coordination between agencies and service providers, including Ministry of Health, police, Ministry of Women, etc.		Ministry of National Security
Policy 2: Continue efforts to prevent GBV based on Spotlight (especially through economic empowerment)	1: Strengthen efforts to clarify general misunderstanding that bundles GBV with other types of violence in institutions.	Medium/long-term	Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS)
	2: Strengthen links of GBV and social norms to social protection safety net targeting and responses, in particular through PATH.		Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports
	3: Establish strategic communication interventions in youth engagement initiatives (e.g., Cadet Force, Boy Scouts) to address gender norms that condone GBV.		Ministry of Employment and Social Security

Objective 3.2: Improve the institutional framework and availability of data			
Policy 1: Build the formal capacity of institutions in charge of gender equality	1: Explore and expand gender budgeting.		
	3: Ensure effective mainstreaming of gender equality at all levels and sectors.		Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports
	4. Continue offering training and information to public officials on these tools. Offer training to tackle gender norms.	Short/medium-term	Ministry of Finance
	5: Continue strengthening coordination mechanisms to promote gender equality across agencies.		Ministry of Health
Policy 2: Improving the availability and use of data	6. Ensure consonance between legislation and policies, for instance in the area of GBV and health.		Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS)
	1: Expand efforts to collect sex-disaggregated data and to conduct the necessary analysis to understand trends in gender gaps, drivers and barriers.		Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports
	2: Establish regular data collection on GBV to assess changes, drivers, impact of COVID, Spotlight initiative. Improve arrangements to improve the quality and use administrative data on GBV and data sharing procedures.	Medium/Long-term	Ministry of Education, Youth and Information
	3: Implement a monitoring and evaluation agenda of government programs to improve institutional learning.		Local governments and schools

4.3. Knowledge gaps

This assessment also identifies several knowledge gaps that would require further analysis or research. These include:

- What are the barriers to the effective functioning of the institutional framework for gender equality?
- How is the NEET phenomenon in Jamaica different from that in other LAC countries?
- What are the factors behind the large (and increasing) share of female NEETs?
- What modalities and characteristics of childcare are most valued in rural vis-à-vis urban areas?
- Why are women in Jamaica more likely to be entrepreneurs than women in other peer countries?
- Why are women in Jamaica more likely to occupy middle management positions than women in other peer countries?
- How do gender roles and norms affect women's participation in the labor market, particularly in terms of sectoral sex segregation?

Appendix A: The consultation process for the assessment

Consultations to sustain this assessment sought to elicit feedback from country experts on key gender issues in Jamaica and priority policy recommendations. In May 2021, during the first round of consultations, the team sought inputs based on an initial analysis of existing data that described the main gender gaps in regards of endowments, economic opportunity, and agency. The process helped build a base for dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders. As part of this consultation process, the team presented the results of initial data analyses in a series of virtual meetings and gathered feedback from interested parties.

A second round of consultations sought to gather feedback from World Bank sector specialists and country experts on priority policy recommendations based on key gender gaps highlighted in the assessment.

A total of five virtual sessions were held in each round of consultations to discuss findings and prioritize policy recommendations, involving more than 20 participants from government and civil society organizations, academia, and development partners in Jamaica.

Appendix B: Variables definition

Type	Variable	Description
Dependent	Employment income (continuous)	Income earned from remunerative work as an employee
	Other sources of income (continuous)	Income from activities other than employment
Independent	Age (continuous)	Number of years
	Education level (categorical)	Highest educational attainment classifies individuals into seven categories: no schooling (base), incomplete primary, complete primary, incomplete secondary, complete secondary, incomplete tertiary and complete tertiary.
	Training (binary)	Dummy variable equivalent to 1 if the individual received training
	Formality status	Dummy variable equivalent to 1 if the individual is a formal worker
	Sector of work (categorical)	Dummy variables equivalent to 1 for each sector of work included in the survey: Agriculture, hunting and forestry (base) Fishing Mining and quarrying Manufacturing Electricity, gas and water supply Construction Wholesale and retail trade Hotels and restaurants Transport, storage and communications Financial intermediation Real estate, renting and business Public administration and defence Education Health and social work Other community Activities of private households as employee Extraterritorial organizations
	Family Structure (categorical)	Dummy variables equivalent to 1 for each type of family: Nuclear (base) Multigenerational Unipersonal Female single caregivers Male single caregivers
	Household size	Total number of household members
	Dependants	Total number of dependents defined as individuals under 18 or above 64 years of age

Appendix C: Blinder-Oaxaca Decomposition

	Employment income	Other income	Total income	Hourly wage
OLS Gender Gap	0.168***	0.275***	0.213***	0.105***
OB Gender Gap	0.068***	0.126***	0.015*	-0.024***
Decomposition				
Endowments	-0.104***	-0.139***	-0.206***	-0.120***
Coefficient	0.128***	0.264***	0.154***	0.079***
Interaction	0.054***	0.001	0.067***	0.017
Endowments				
Age	-0.001***	0.001	0.000	-0.002***
Sector	0.025*	-0.135***	-0.077***	0.017
Training	-0.036***	-0.011***	-0.039***	-0.039***
Education level	-0.105***	-0.006*	-0.080***	-0.103***
Family structure	0.013***	0.002	0.008*	0.006
Formal worker	0.000	0.011***	-0.018***	0.000
Coefficients				
Age	0.149***	0.056	0.086***	0.083***
Sector	-0.049	0.017	-0.091***	0.089**
Training	0.032**	0.013	0.030***	0.029*
Education level	-0.008	0.020**	-0.010	0.015
Family structure	0.015	-0.037	-0.037*	0.023
Formal worker	0.007	0.015***	-0.014**	0.005
Observations	76,352	56,259	125,131	76,242
R square	0.338	0.130	0.328	0.330

Source: World Bank based on 2007-2016 JLFS.
 Note: *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01

Appendix D: Indicators, data sources and availability

Dimensions	Indicator	Data Source	Year ⁷³
Human Endowments			
Health	Fertility rate	WDI (based on UN Population Division, national census reports and other statistical publications, Eurostat: Demographic Statistics, UN Statistical Division, U.S. Census Bureau: International Database, and Secretariat of the Pacific Community: Statistics and Demography Programme)	2018
	Life expectancy	WDI (based on WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group, and the UN Population Division)	2019
	Age structure	Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN)	2019
	Age projections	UN Population Division	2019
	Intentional homicides	UN Office on Drugs and Crime's International Homicide Statistics	2017
	Share of youth not in education, employment or training (NEETs)	International Labour Organization (ILO)	2016
	Maternal mortality rate	WDI (based on WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group, and the UN Population Division)	2017
	Adolescent fertility rate	WDI (based on UN Population Division)	2019
Education	School enrollment rate	WDI (based on UNESCO Institute for Statistics)	2019
	Reasons for dropping out of school before grade 11	Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (JSCL)	2017
	Returns to education	Based on Labor Force Survey	2016-2017
	Educational attainment	Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions	2018
	Reasons for dropping out of school before grade 11		
Economic Opportunity			
Labor force participation	Labor force participation	WDI (based on ILOSTAT)	2019
	Retirement age	ILO	2018
Time use	Main activity last week (unpaid care and domestic work)	JSCL	2018
	Change in time on unpaid care and domestic work during the pandemic	High Frequency Phone Survey (HFPS)	2020
Unemployment	Unemployment rates	WDI (based on ILOSTAT)	2019

⁷³ The report used the most recent data available at the time of research and writing. Data for more recent years may be available.

Dimensions	Indicator	Data Source	Year ⁷³
Quality of work	Share of employees in informal sector	LFS	2019 Q4
	Share of vulnerable employment	WDI (based on ILOSTAT)	2019
	Share of wage and salaried workers	WDI (based on ILOSTAT)	2019
	Labor market integration in rural and urban per sex	JSLC	2018
	Sectoral segregation	LFS	2019 Q4
	Hours worked	LFS	2016
The gender wage gap	Annual Income	LFS	2016
	Earnings gap	LFS	2007-2016
Entrepreneurship and access to assets	Ratio of female to male entrepreneurial activity	Global Entrepreneurial Monitor (GEM)	2016-2017
	Share of female-led businesses	Jamaica Establishments Survey	2018
	Barriers to entrepreneurship	Jamaica Establishments Survey	2018
	Share of people with an account with a financial institution	Global Findex Database	2014
	Access to land and other productive resources	FAO	
	Retirement savings	Global Findex Database	2017
Poverty	Share of household below poverty line	JSLC	2018
	Impact of natural disasters by sex of head of household (e.g. Hurricane Ivan)	JSLC	2012
Migration	Destination of outflow migrants	IOM	2018
	Annual economic contribution of diaspora members as a share of national output	Caribbean Policy Research Institute	2017
Agency			
Representation in decision making	Share of seats held by women in national parliament	IPU	2020
	Share of elected female majors	ECLAC	2018
	Share of elected city members	ECLAC	2018
	Share of female managers	ILO Caribbean Company Survey	2017

Dimensions	Indicator	Data Source	Year ⁷³
Gender-based violence	Share of young women between 15 and 24 years old vulnerable to sexual violence	STATIN	2016
	Share of women who reported first having intercourse at an age below 15	STATIN	2016
	Prevalence of IPV	Women's Health Survey, STATIN, IDB, and UN Women	2016
	Number of reports of sexual abuse	UNICEF Jamaica	2020
Child marriage	Share of women 20-24 who first married between the ages of 15 and 18	WDI (based on UNICEF Data; Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), AIDS Indicator Surveys(AIS), Reproductive Health Survey (RHS), and other household surveys)	2011
	Report of being physically abused by type of relationship	STATIN	2016
Patriarchal social norms	Women's attitudes towards gender roles and IPV	STATIN	2016
Formal institutions	Women Business and the Law	World Bank	2021

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