

# CLOSING THE GAP?

2025 ANALYSIS OF GENDER  
PAY GAPS IN UK-BASED ORGANISATIONS  
ACTIVE IN GLOBAL HEALTH



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Cover image:

**A MAN'S WORLD**

*Liverpool, UK - 2022*

**Seldjan Behari**

Encircled by men, a woman becomes both subject and symbol of the quiet endurance demanded of women in male-dominated environments, and of the persistent inequities that continue to shape the world of work.

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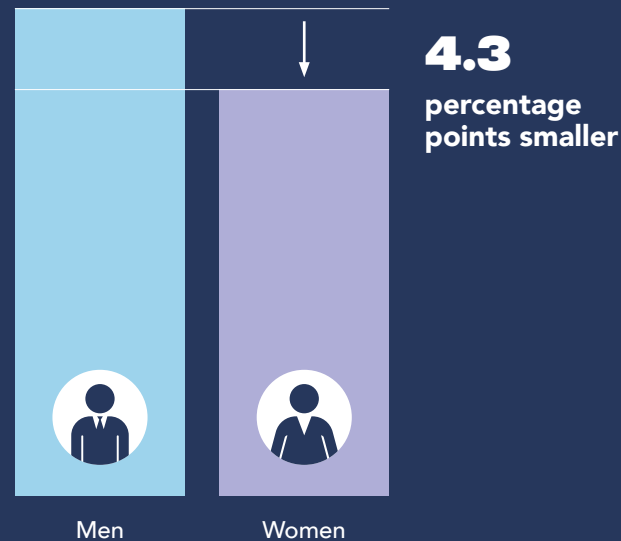
# SNAPSHOT

Gender Pay Gap data for 45 UK-based organisations active in global health

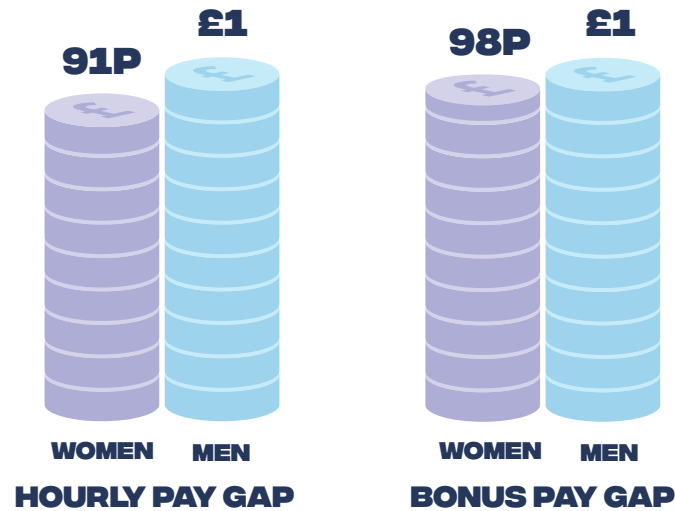
## PAY GAPS SMALLER UNDER WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

Using eight years of data from our Gender & Health Index, we find that on average from 2017/18-2024/25, organisations with a woman CEO have a smaller median gender pay gap than those led by men.

Median hourly gender pay gap in organisations led by women are:



## 2024/2025 GENDER PAY GAP



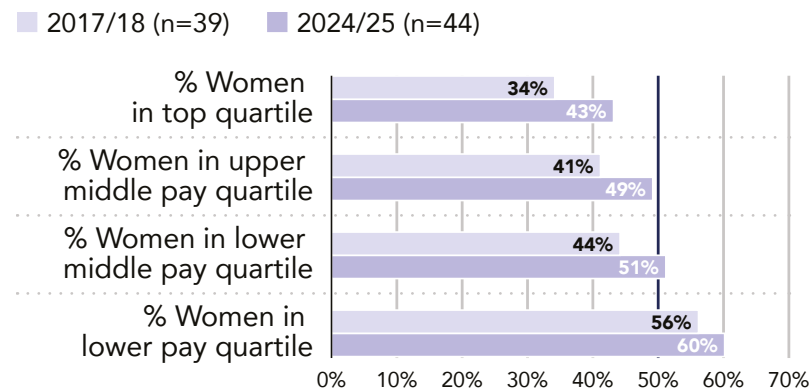
### WOMEN STILL EARN LESS, BUT THE GAP IS NARROWING

The median gender pay gap for **hourly pay** was on average **8.7% in men's favour**, meaning women earned 91p for every £1 earned by men.

The median gender pay gap for **bonus pay** has narrowed substantially since reporting began (from 10.93% in 2017/18 to 1.68% in 2024/25), but progress remains uneven across organisations.

## WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION HAS INCREASED ACROSS QUANTILES

While women make up more of the workforce in the lowest pay quartile, the data since 2017 show progress toward parity in the top quartile.



**10**  
OUT OF  
**45**

organisations reported their ethnicity pay gaps since 2023

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our findings show that over the past eight years, organisations led by women CEOs in the global health sector are associated with smaller median gender pay gaps on average than those led by men. Although progress towards closing the gender pay gap is slow and uneven, these findings offer hope – in that they suggest that organisations with women leaders may be more likely to have processes in place to address structural pay inequalities, warranting further exploration in both research and policy discussions.

## THE GENDER PAY GAP

### A stark measure of inequality: the gender pay gap

2025 marks three decades since the world made landmark commitments to achieving gender equality,<sup>i</sup> yet the gender pay gap remains a defining feature of most economies.<sup>1</sup> Globally, women earn on average 77 cents for every dollar earned by men,<sup>1</sup> and progress in closing this gap has been slow and uneven. Of the 190 economies assessed in the World Bank's 2024 Women, Business and the Law report, 92 still lack legal provisions mandating equal remuneration for work of equal value and only 35 have pay transparency or accountability mechanisms – leaving over 80% of economies without effective tools to monitor and redress pay inequality and pay gaps.<sup>1</sup>

Since 2018, Global Health 50/50 has tracked policies, practices and commitments to gender equality, fairness, and inclusion, and the distribution of power and privilege across around 200 organisations active in global health.<sup>2</sup>

This report presents evidence on gender pay gaps across 45 organisations active in global health. The analysis draws on data from the United Kingdom (UK), where employers with 250 or more staff have been legally required since 2017 to publish annual gender pay gap data.<sup>3</sup> As we noted in a 2023 Global 50/50 report, **The Space Between**, this requirement has led to increased transparency around pay gaps.<sup>4</sup> Still, the mean gender pay gap across all reporting organisations in the UK has decreased by just 2.2% since 2017.<sup>5</sup> At that rate, the gender pay gap will not be closed for another 40 years.<sup>ii</sup>

We publish this report in a context marked by a backlash against gender justice and evidence of increasingly regressive views about women's roles and leadership.<sup>7,8</sup> The Reykjavik Index for Leadership<sup>iii</sup> – which measures perceptions of women and men as leaders across 23 economic sectors – recorded its lowest level of confidence in women's leadership in 2024/25 since reporting began in 2018, with the youngest age cohort (aged 18-34), particularly men, holding the least progressive views.<sup>8,9</sup> iv Our findings highlight the urgent need for advocacy,

action and accountability to gender justice, fairness and equity across all levels of the global health sector.

### Our findings

Analysing UK data on the gender pay gap from 45 global health organisations, we found that on average across the past eight years, organisations with a woman CEO have smaller median gender pay gaps on average than those led by men. The duration of women's leadership matters: those organisations with a woman CEO for at least five of the past eight years have smaller median gender pay gaps on average and are predicted to close the gap four years earlier than those mostly led by men. Organisations with a woman CEO for all of the past eight years are predicted on average to close their gender pay gap by 2027/28 – nine years earlier than organisations led only by men for this period.

Our finding of a significant relationship between the gender of the CEO and the size of the gender pay gap is particularly important for organisations active in global health, where men continue to hold positions of power and



## A CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

Scotland - 2023

Lauren McLaughlin

Neon words flicker between 'Mother', 'Other', 'Her', and 'Me', exposing how expectations around care continue to shape women's identities, choices, and career trajectories.



decision-making. The 2025 Global Health 50/50 Report found that 39% of CEOs in non-profit organisations are women (only 1% more than in 2018), and just 22% of for-profit companies are led by women.<sup>10</sup> v Of the 44 organisations which reported their gender pay gaps in 2024/25, just 16% have women CEOs.

Overall, the median gender pay gap among organisations active in global health decreased on average from 15.2% in 2017 to 8.7% in 2024/25, a reduction of 6.5%, and below the UK average of 13.1% in 2024/5. However, progress is uneven: five organisations saw an increase in their gender pay gap by a median 2.7% since 2017/18.

In 2023, we joined calls for the mandatory reporting of ethnicity pay gaps, recognising that gender equality cannot

be fully achieved without addressing the intersectional dynamics of race and ethnicity. While the UK Government launched a consultation on ethnicity and disability in early 2025, legislation has yet to materialise. As a result, we find that since 2017/18 fewer than a third (13/45) of organisations in our sample have published ethnicity pay gap data and only six organisations reported pay gaps for other factors, such as sexuality and disability.

### About the Report

This Report begins with an overview of what the gender pay gap measures, how it differs from equal pay, and the underlying reasons for the gap, followed by a look at the UK context and measures put in place by the UK government to close the gap.

Part Two presents findings on gender pay gaps as reported to the UK government across 45 organisations active in global health. Part Three provides an overview of ethnicity pay gap reporting in the health sector.

Part Four draws on **Global 50/50's resource pages** to present actions organisations can take to narrow the gender pay gap – from policies on flexible working and parental leave to mentorship programmes for women and ethnic minorities.

**PART 1.**

# THE GENDER PAY GAP: WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT PERSISTS

**THE NATURE THAT  
INHABITS US**

*Santiago de Chile - 2020*

**Tamara Merino**

Bathed in morning light, a mother holds her child close — a tender reflection on care, motherhood, and the unequal weight of unpaid labour that continues to limit women's opportunities and advancement in the world of work.



# WHAT IS THE GENDER PAY GAP?

## UNEQUAL GENDER NORMS FUEL THE GENDER PAY GAP

### Defining the gender pay gap

The gender pay gap measures the difference in earnings (e.g. hourly pay) between men and women – regardless of roles or seniority – across a workforce.<sup>11</sup> It reflects the distribution of men and women across different levels of an organisation rather than individual instances of pay discrimination.

**THE GENDER PAY GAP IS NOT THE SAME AS EQUAL PAY**

In this way, it differs from equal pay, which in the UK and other countries, is a legal requirement that people in similar roles and performing work of equal value are paid the same, regardless of gender and/or race, ethnicity, and disability.<sup>4,12 vi</sup>

Unequal pay can contribute to the gender pay gap, but the gap itself is the outcome of deeply embedded and gendered social, cultural and economic structures. These structures shape career pathways across the life course, influencing who has access to education and training, recruitment and promotion practices, and how different types of work are valued.

### Inequalities in paid and unpaid work

Places of work are not neutral, but spaces where inequalities (class, gender, racial, disability, other) are produced and reproduced.<sup>13</sup> Hierarchies, cultures and reward systems often reflect and are based on masculine ideals of work and leadership. The model of the “ideal” worker – “unencumbered” by care responsibilities and available at all times – remains embedded in organisational norms.<sup>13</sup> Those who do not conform to these expectations are often viewed as less ambitious or less suitable for promotion.

The gendered division of labour inside and outside paid work also contribute to the gender pay gap. In the UK, women continue to shoulder a disproportionate amount of unpaid work.<sup>14 15</sup>



WOMEN SPEND ON AVERAGE 48 MINUTES MORE TIME ON UNPAID WORK PER DAY – OR 5.5 HOURS PER WEEK – COMPARED TO MEN.<sup>15</sup>

Office for National Statistics (ONS) analysis of time use in the UK finds on average, among people in employment (aged 16-64 years):



doing unpaid household work<sup>vii</sup>, and



on unpaid care<sup>viii</sup> per day<sup>15</sup>



On becoming a parent, these gaps widen significantly. The so-called “motherhood penalty”<sup>16</sup> refers to the reduction in earnings and slowing of career progression experienced by women when they become parents, while men often benefit from a “fatherhood premium” (a phenomenon in which men’s wages and career opportunities increase after becoming fathers).<sup>17</sup> A study on time use in the UK between 1992 and 2019 found that in the 2010s, women in heterosexual partnerships increased their housework by 4.35 hours per week after having one child, whereas fathers with one child increased their time on housework by only 0.75 hours.<sup>18</sup> Women’s employment also drops by around 20% in the first few years after childbirth, and for mothers who remain in paid work, weekly hours fall by an average of 15 hours compared with pre-birth levels, regardless of which parent is the higher earner.<sup>14</sup>

**As a result, in England, ONS analysis shows that five years after the birth of their first child, mothers’ monthly earnings are on average £1,051 per month lower than in the year before birth – meaning a loss of more than £65,000 over this time period.**<sup>19</sup>

Many women also take extended periods out of the workforce to care for family members,<sup>20</sup> and while flexible and part-time work arrangements are essential for caregiving, they can also reinforce inequalities if these roles are lower paid and/or offer limited career advancement.<sup>21</sup>

### Compounding pay gaps over the life course

In the UK, gender pay gaps are narrow among workers in their twenties but widen sharply from the age of 40.<sup>22</sup> This reflects both the long-term impact of caregiving and the cumulative advantage enjoyed by men who are more likely to remain in continuous employment.

These norms and structures (see Table 1) contribute to what are often referred to as “sticky floors” and “glass ceilings.”<sup>4</sup> Sticky floors keep women in lower paid, lower status jobs with limited opportunities for progression, while glass ceilings act as invisible barriers to senior leadership. The gender pay gap provides one measure to assess just how sticky the floors are and how impenetrable the glass ceilings.

**Table 1. Summary of factors involved in the persistence of gender pay gaps<sup>23</sup>**

<b>CAREER BREAKS</b>	Affect earnings levels through impact on the number of weeks worked but also by negatively impacting career development.
<b>WORK INTENSITY</b>	Part-time work often pays less per hour than full-time work and reduces overall annual earnings.
<b>HORIZONTAL SEGREGATION</b>	Women are more likely to work in lower paid positions than men.
<b>VERTICAL SEGREGATION</b>	Many women do not make it to leadership positions.
<b>DISCRIMINATION</b>	Discrimination against women persists in hiring and pay.

# MEASURING THE GENDER PAY GAP



## WHY MEASURE THE GENDER PAY GAP?

### Mandatory reporting

Gender pay gap reporting helps to “illuminate inequalities and drive positive change”<sup>27</sup>, such as by informing target-setting and the development of policies to reduce the gap (see **Part 4 of this Report**).<sup>28 ix</sup>

Only 20% (35/190) of economies have pay transparency or other accountability mechanisms in place that can contribute to narrowing the gender pay gap.<sup>1</sup> One such approach is mandatory gender pay gap reporting. Introduced in Italy in 1991, it is now widely implemented across the OECD,<sup>24 x</sup> and is associated with a reduction in the gender pay gap across a number of countries, including Canada, Denmark and the UK.<sup>25,26</sup>

## MEASURING THE GENDER PAY GAP IN THE UK

### Mandatory reporting since 2017

Gender pay gap reporting helps to “illuminate inequalities and drive positive change”<sup>27</sup>, such as by informing target-setting and the development of policies to reduce the gap (see **Part 4 of this Report**).<sup>28</sup>

In the UK, the government has mandated annual gender pay gap reporting for public and private employers with more than 250 employees since 2017.<sup>29,30</sup> The law has driven transparency on the gender pay gap and provided valuable information on inequality to employers and employees.

Employers are required to report their gender pay gaps to the UK Government and on their own websites. The Equality and Human Rights Commission enforces compliance with gender pay gap reporting; failure to comply can result in unlimited fines, though, to date no fines have been issued.<sup>3</sup> Required data includes:

- Percentages of men and women employees in each hourly pay quartile
- Mean and median gender pay gap for hourly pay
- Percentages of men and women receiving bonus pay
- Mean and median gender bonus pay gap

### Upcoming legislative reforms

At the end of 2024, the UK Government introduced the **Employment Rights Bill**, proposing new obligations for employers with more than 250 employees. These include the development and publication of Equality Action Plans outlining steps to address gender pay gaps.<sup>31</sup> **The Bill** would also extend pay gap reporting requirements to include outsourced and contract workers. While the Bill had

*“Women in Global Health has 65 chapters in 60 countries in all six WHO regions of the world. In too few of these do governments make gender pay gap reporting mandatory. This new report from Global 50/50 demonstrates that mandatory reporting helps to close the gap, and it provides invaluable guidance and resources that can equip organisations to close their pay gaps. It is time to make pay transparency the norm, not the exception.”*

Magda Robalo Correia e Silva,  
Interim Executive Director,  
Women in Global Health

not yet passed as of November 2025, it signals a shift from requiring organisations to report pay gaps to also requiring action to close them.

### Reporting pay gaps beyond gender

In the UK, discrimination and disparities faced by ethnic minority employees are well-documented, and evidence has shown that the gender pay gap widens for certain ethnic groups.<sup>32,33 xi</sup> There have been sustained calls for mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting, and at the start of 2025, the UK Government launched a consultation on mandatory ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting under the proposed Equality (Race and Disability) Bill.<sup>34</sup> However, at the time of writing, such reporting remains voluntary.

### THE GENDER PAY GAP IN THE UK

#### Pay gaps widest among older and higher paid populations

Mandatory reporting has resulted in increased transparency on the gender pay gap. The provisional estimate for the UK median for 2025 is 12.8%,<sup>35</sup> slightly lower than in 2024, where the UK median gender pay gap stood at 13.1%.<sup>36</sup> The size of the gap for different groups, however, varies widely. For example, data from 2024 show that the gap among people aged 18-21 in fulltime employment was -0.5%, compared to 13.5% among people over 60.<sup>36</sup> The widening of the gap is particularly stark between 30-39 year olds (4.4%) and 40-49 year olds (9.1%) – most likely due to the “motherhood penalty”. The gender pay gap is the largest in the highest paid percentile of fulltime employees (90th percentile) at 15.5%, compared to the lowest paid percentile at 2.7%.<sup>36</sup>

**13.1%**  
2024 UK MEDIAN GENDER  
PAY GAP

### EQUALITY OF GENDER

Lomé, Togo - 2021

David G Somado Komi

In Lomé, a brother studies while his sister cooks — a quiet yet powerful reflection of how unequal expectations continue to limit girls' access to education and future opportunity.





**PART 2.**

# FINDINGS: GENDER PAY GAPS IN UK-BASED ORGANISATIONS ACTIVE IN GLOBAL HEALTH

**TAKE A BREAK ZOE**

*UK - 2020*

**Maisie Broadhead**

Framed in quiet light, a nurse pauses amid exhaustion and resolve.



**DIVE FURTHER INTO GENDER PAY GAP  
DATA USING OUR INTERACTIVE DASHBOARD**





# METHODS

## PAY GAP DATA FOR ORGANISATIONS ACTIVE IN HEALTH

### Collection and analysis of the data

We collected and analysed data from the [UK Government Gender Pay Gap Service website](#).<sup>37</sup> Organisations are required to use the same methods to measure and report gender pay gaps, facilitating analysis and comparison of data.

We utilise pay gap data in two forms: median (the middle value of a set of numbers) and mean (the average value of a set of numbers). The median figure is useful in showing the 'middle' pay gap and dismissing major outliers that can skew results. At the same time, we take a feminist approach to our analysis by including outliers (organisations with very large pay gaps in favour of men, and in some cases, of women) acknowledging how extremes may reflect gendered inequalities, by additionally presenting the mean.

### About the global health sample

Global 50/50 assesses the policies and practices of around 200 organisations active in global health. Forty five of these organisations have reported over the period 2017/18-2024/25 to the UK Government because of their presence in the UK and are thus included in

this Report. These organisations range from NGOs to pharmaceuticals and consultancy firms and other types of private sector companies that have an interest in global health policy (see [Annex 2](#)). The sample does not include the traditional healthcare workforce.

We assessed the 2024/25 data reported by organisations in April 2025. Forty four of the 45 organisations in our sample reported their gender pay gaps in 2024/25. We also compared this to the earliest reported data – for 39 organisations, 2017/18 data was available.

We also drew on eight years of data on the gender of the CEOs of these organisations, allowing us to examine the relationship between gender pay gaps and women's leadership.

Among the 44 organisations that reported in 2024/25, 26 are private sector companies, seven are NGOs and non-profits, six are consultancies, three are faith-based organisations, one is a bilateral/multilateral organisation and one is a philanthropic organisation.

Of those 44 organisations, 41 were required to report (i.e., they have more than 250 employees), one did not report and three opted to report (**International Planned Parenthood Federation, Plan International and World Vision**).



***“In health research and policy, who leads determines whose knowledge counts and whose priorities shape the agenda. When women lead, accountability and inclusion follow. Global 50/50’s evidence linking women’s leadership to smaller pay gaps confirms what we see in practice: decolonising global health begins with representation, and inclusive leadership builds fairer, more effective systems for all.”***

**Catherine Kyobutungi,  
Executive Director, African Population and  
Health Research Center (APHRC)**

# HOURLY GENDER PAY GAP

## SOME PROGRESS IN CLOSING THE HOURLY GENDER PAY GAP IN 2024/25

In 2024/25, across the 44 organisations, the median gender pay gap for hourly pay was on average 8.7% in men's favour. The median gap ranged from -12.4% (in favour of women) to 28.2% (in favour of men). In other words, women worked for free from 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024 until the end of the year.

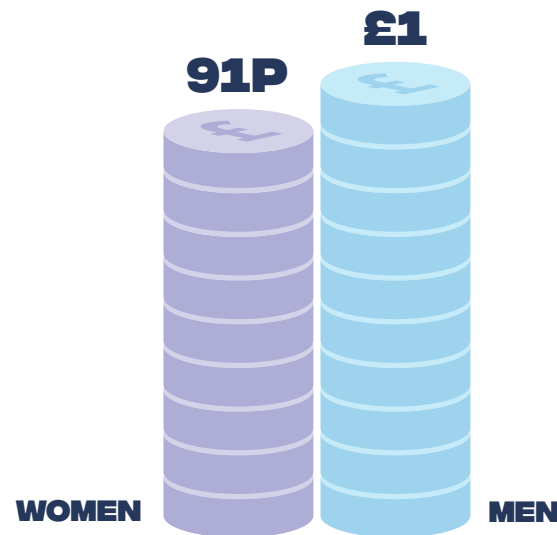
The mean gender pay gap was close to 10%, and the gap ranged from -11.4% (in favour of women) to 27.7% (in favour of men).

In 34 of the 44 organisations, the median pay for men was higher than for women.

In four organisations, the median pay was higher for women, and similar in six organisations ( $\pm 2\%$ ).

**FIGURE 1 2024/25 Median hourly gender pay gap**

**91p paid to women for every £1 paid to men**



In the 39 organisations which reported their gender pay gaps in both 2017/18 and 2024/25:

**FROM 2017/18 TO 2024/25, THE MEDIAN GENDER PAY GAP DECREASED IN 34 ORGANISATIONS (34/39; 87%) BY AN AVERAGE 8.2 PERCENTAGE POINTS**

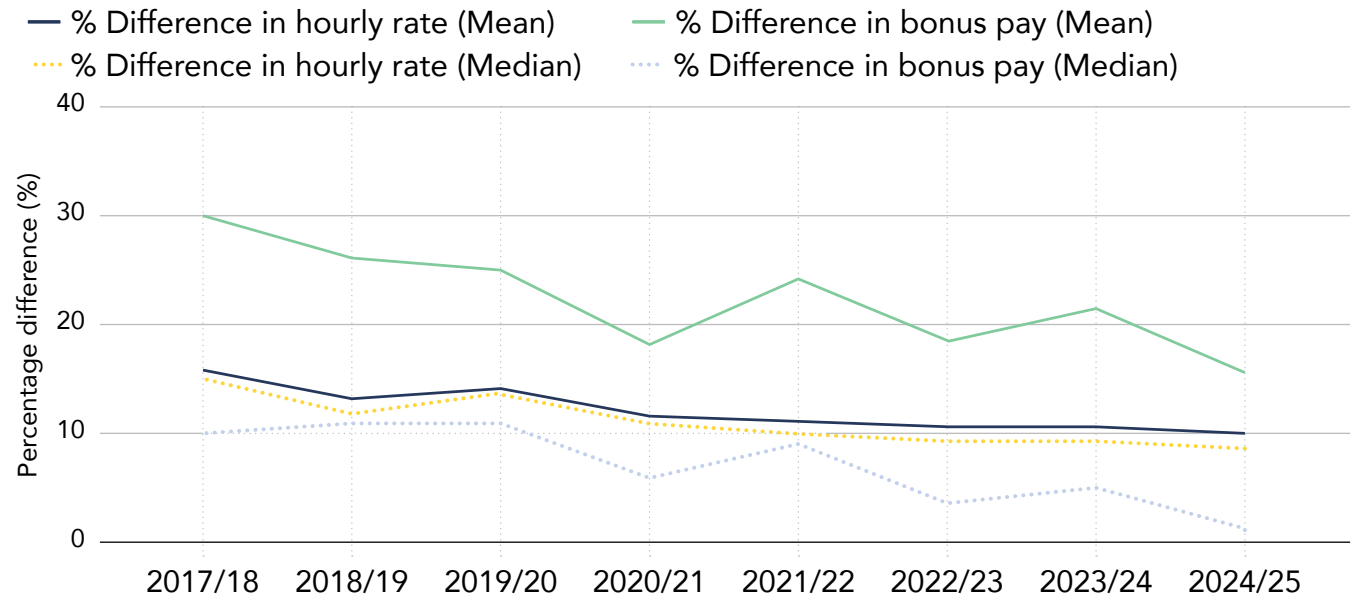
**...AND INCREASED IN FIVE ORGANISATIONS (5/39; 13%) BY AN AVERAGE 4.6 PERCENTAGE POINTS.**

Between 2017/18 and 2024/25, the average median gender pay gap decreased from 15.2% to 8.7%, a reduction of 6.5% (figure 2). For the mean gender pay gap, there was a slightly smaller decrease of 5.7% from 15.7% to 10%.

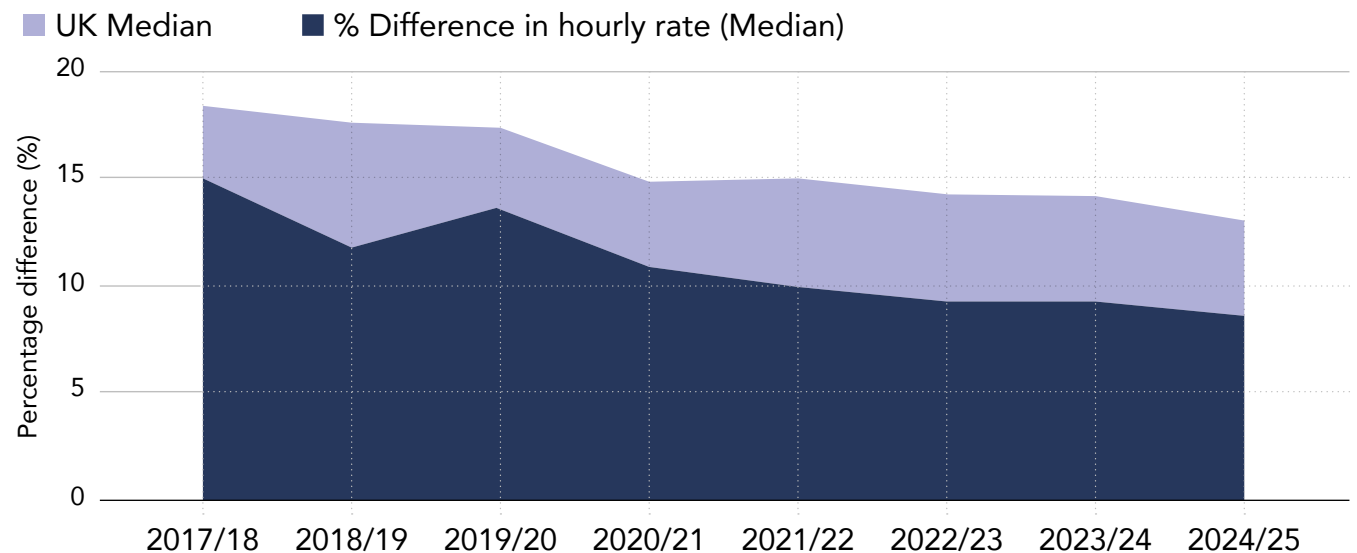
Five organisations however saw an increase in their gender pay gap by an average 4.6% since 2017.

The UK median gender pay gap fell from 18.4% in 2017 to 13.1% in 2024. Organisations in the health sample perform better than the UK median (figure 3). Together the 44 organisations assessed had a smaller median gender pay gap (8.7%) on average than the 2024 UK median gender pay gap.

**Figure 2 Hourly pay and bonus pay gaps among reporting organisations in the UK (2017/18 to 2024/25)**



**Figure 3 UK median gender pay gap compared to organisations in the health sample (2017/18 to 2024/25)**



**DIVE FURTHER INTO GENDER PAY GAP DATA USING OUR INTERACTIVE DASHBOARD** →

# WOMEN ACROSS THE PAY QUARTILES



## PERSISTENCE OF 'STICKY FLOORS' AND 'GLASS CEILINGS'

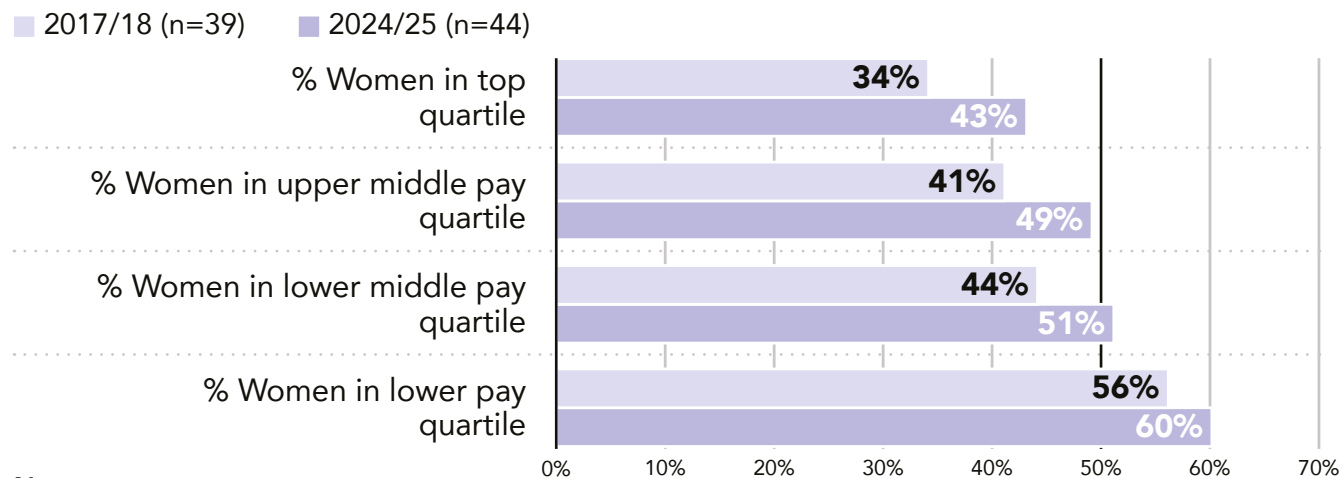
### Women's representation across the pay quartiles, 2017/18-2024/25

While women remain over-represented in the lowest pay quartile (59.5%), the data show progress toward parity in the top quartile (43.5%) since 2017.

Across the 44 organisations, in terms of representation, there is movement towards equality in the top pay quartile (43.4%). The upper middle (48.8%) and the lower middle (51.4%) pay quartiles are close to equality, while things have become more unequal in the lowest (59.5%) pay quartile in 2024/25 (figure 4).

Compared with 2017, there is an increase in women's representation across all quartiles, including senior levels, even as "sticky floors" persist at the lower end of the pay scale.

**Figure 4 Percentage of women across pay quartiles (2017/18 and 2024/25)**



**Note:**  
Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number

***"The 2025 Global Health 50/50 Gender Pay Gap Report confirms what we see across our programs: when women lead, pay gaps close and organizations perform better. Pay equity isn't a side project—it's a leadership choice. Investing in women leaders and the ecosystems around them builds cultures where everyone can thrive."***

Amie Batson,  
President, WomenLift Health



# GENDER BONUS GAP

## NARROWING GAPS BUT UNEVEN PROGRESS IN 2024/25

**The gender bonus gap has narrowed substantially since reporting began, but progress remains uneven across organisations.**

In 2024/25, 38 of the 44 reporting organisations distributed bonus pay to employees (up from 35 organisations in 2017). The median percentages of women and men receiving bonus pay were very close (90.7% for women and 91% for men).

The median gender bonus pay gap was 1.7% on average, while the mean gender bonus pay gap was 18.4%. The median gap ranged from -270.3% (in favour of women) to 59.1% (in favour of men).

Between 2017/18 and 2024/25 the average median gender bonus pay gap declined by 9.2 percentage points – from 10.9% to 1.7% – and the mean gender bonus pay gap fell by 15 percentage points (from 33.4% to 18.4%).

Median:

**98P**

earned by women for every  
£1 earned by men

Mean:

**82P**

earned by women for every  
£1 earned by men

Among the 38 organisations reporting bonus data in 2024/25, 28 had a median gender bonus pay gap in favour of men, nine organisations in favour of women, and one showed no difference.

Of the 35 organisations that reported their bonus pay gaps in 2017/18 and 2024/25:

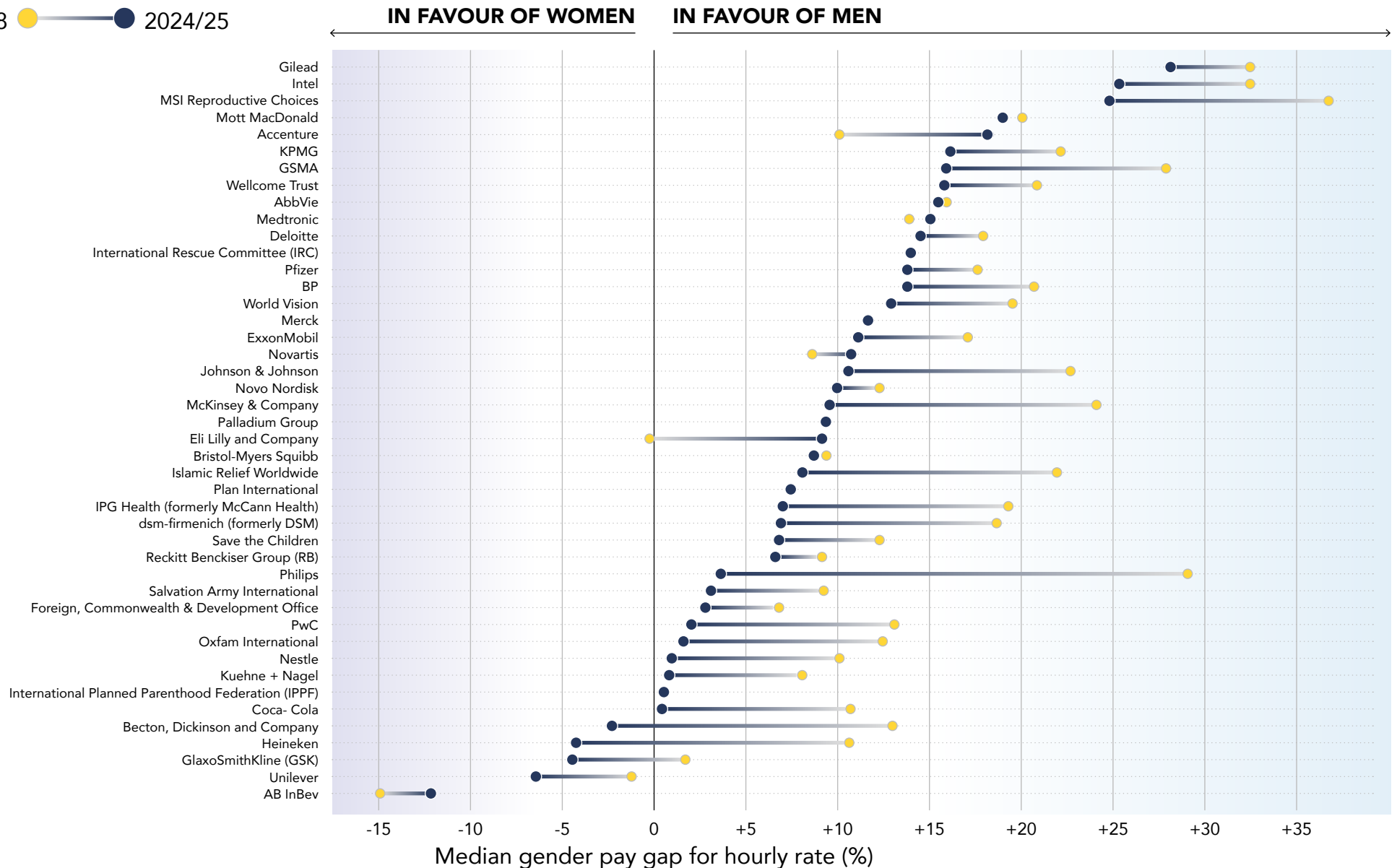
**FROM 2017/18 TO 2024/25, THE MEDIAN GENDER BONUS PAY GAP DECREASED IN 26 ORGANISATIONS (26/35; 74%) BY AN AVERAGE 24.3 PERCENTAGE POINTS**

**... AND INCREASED IN EIGHT ORGANISATIONS (8/35; 23%) BY AN AVERAGE 31.1 PERCENTAGE POINTS.**

**Figure 5 Median gender hourly pay gaps (%), 2017/18 and 2024/25**

Data from 44 organisations with a presence in the UK and active in global health. Positive values indicate pay gaps favouring men

2017/18 ● 2024/25



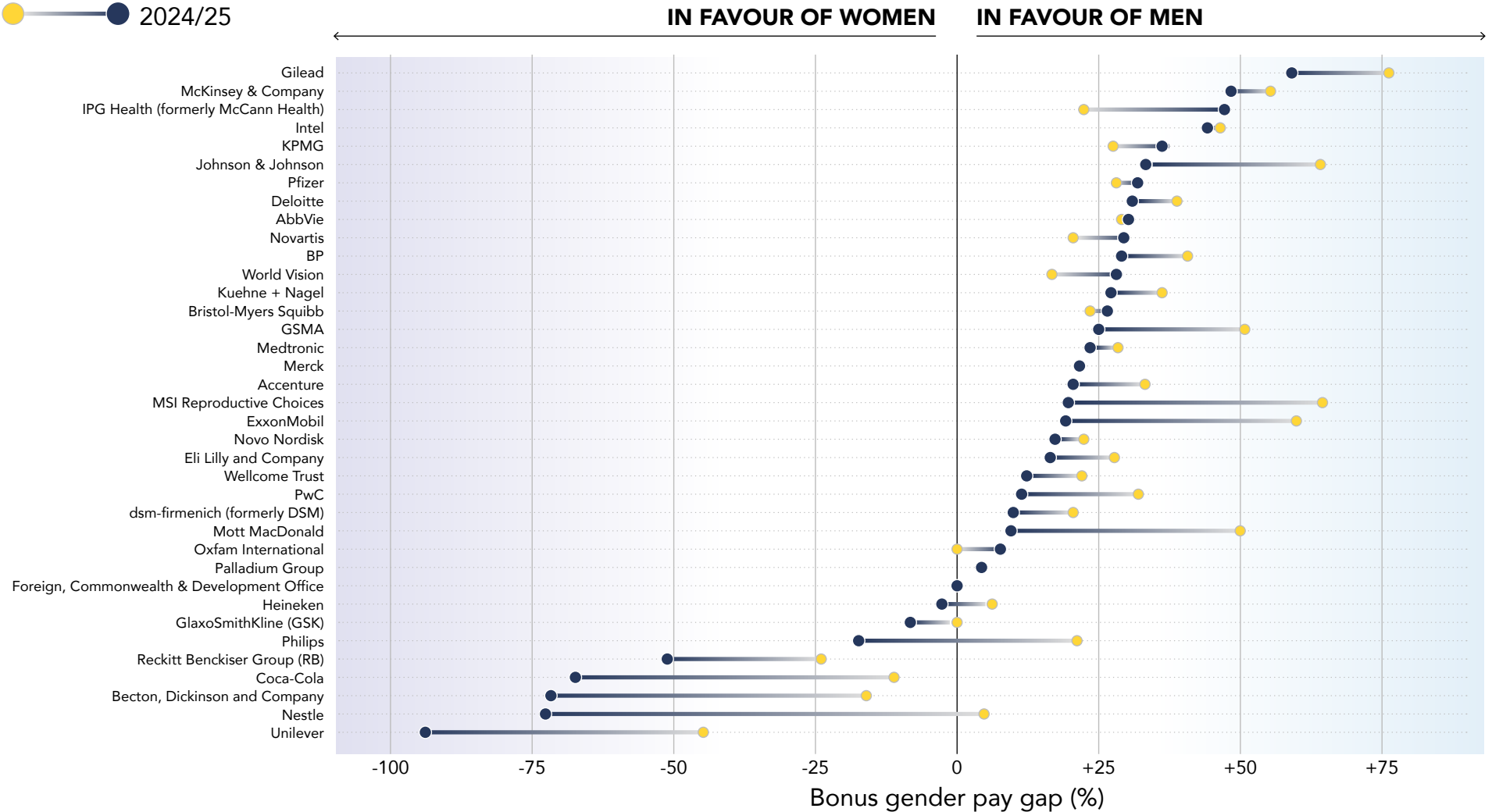
**Note:**

Médecins Sans Frontières has been excluded as the organisation was not required to report its gender pay gap in 2017/18 or 2024/25

**Figure 6 Median gender bonus pay gaps (%), 2017/18 and 2024/25**

Data from 37 organisations with a presence in the UK and active in global health. Positive values indicate pay gaps favouring men

2017/18 ● 2024/25



**Note:**

Eight organisations have not been included in this visualisation. AB InBev was included in the analysis, however, has been excluded as it is a large outlier (2017/18: -492%, 2024/25: -270.34). Médecins Sans Frontières has been excluded as the organisation was not required to report in 2017/18 or 2024/25. Six organisations do not pay bonuses: International Planned Parenthood Federation, International Rescue Committee, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Plan International, Salvation Army International and Save the Children



# WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

## BLUE HOUSE

Jodhpur, India - 2020

Sanjay Joshi

In Jodhpur's blue house, women gather in spaces of mutual support — reflecting the long-standing “kitty party” networks that enable women to build financial independence and community beyond formal economies.

## WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND GENDER PAY GAPS

### Eight-year analysis of CEO gender and gender pay gaps

Using eight years of data from our Gender and Health Index and Reports, we find that on average across this period, organisations with a woman CEO have a smaller median gender pay gap than those led by men.

We compared the median gender pay gap reported each year and the gender of the CEO that year. The analysis indicates that, even when controlling for year, organisation size (number of staff), and profit status (non-profit versus for-profit), **the presence of a woman CEO is associated with a 4.3 percentage point smaller median hourly gender pay gap compared to organisations led by men.**<sup>xii</sup>

While these findings do not indicate causation i.e., that having a woman CEO reduces the gender pay gap, they do align with existing research on the positive impact of women's leadership on organisational outcomes (see Box 1). These findings offer evidence that organisations with women leaders may be more likely to have processes in place to address structural pay inequalities, warranting further exploration in both research and policy discussions.





## BOX 1. WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND THE GENDER PAY GAP

Recent research has demonstrated the positive impact of women's leadership on organisational culture, gender pay gaps and the career aspirations and progression of other women.<sup>38</sup> A scoping review on the impact of women's leadership in organisations across low-and-middle income countries found that in 87% of studies, women's leadership was associated with an improvement, increase, or benefits to the outcomes assessed, including financial performance, organisational culture, and influence on other women's careers and aspirations.<sup>38</sup> In Welsh housing associations, women-led service-providers were found to be more likely to have a lower gender pay gap than those led by men,<sup>39</sup> while research across National Health Service (NHS) foundation trusts found that the increase in women CEOs coincided with a narrowing of the gender pay gap across the NHS.<sup>40</sup>

These findings may reflect the culture of the type of organisations that facilitate women's leadership. Organisations led by women may already have more inclusive workplace cultures, with policies that promote gender equality, fairness and inclusion, or may be reflective of shifts in the political economy that enable such progress. Importantly, the nature of leadership matters. **Feminist principles of leadership**, which explicitly address power and inequality, are key to transforming workplaces that maintain "sticky floors" and "glass ceilings".<sup>41</sup> As Hawkes and Baru argue, achieving equality requires not only "smashing the glass ceiling" but that we "rebuild the whole house according to a more feminist blueprint."<sup>41</sup>

To explore how women's leadership might relate to gender pay gaps over time, we identified organisations with a woman CEO for at least five of the past eight years. Comparing the gender pay gap over time between these organisations (n=4; 32 observations) and those with men

CEOs for at least five years (n=40; 320 observations)<sup>xiii</sup> revealed a consistent trend: **organisations with women in leadership have lower median gender pay gaps on average in almost every year from 2017/18 to 2024/25.**

**Figure 7 Gender pay gaps over time disaggregated by CEO's gender**



**Note:** the lines represent fitted trends which present overall patterns in the data. For more details, please see Annex 2.

## ORGANISATIONS WITH A WOMAN CEO FOR AT LEAST FIVE YEARS ARE ON AVERAGE PREDICTED TO CLOSE THEIR GENDER PAY GAP FOUR YEARS EARLIER THAN THOSE LED BY MEN

Based on data from our sample, if the 45 organisations in our sample maintain the same rate of progress, we predict that on average organisations that have had a woman as CEO for at least five of the past eight years will close their gender pay gap by 2031/32, while those with mostly men CEOs will close their gender pay gap by 2035/36 (figure 8).

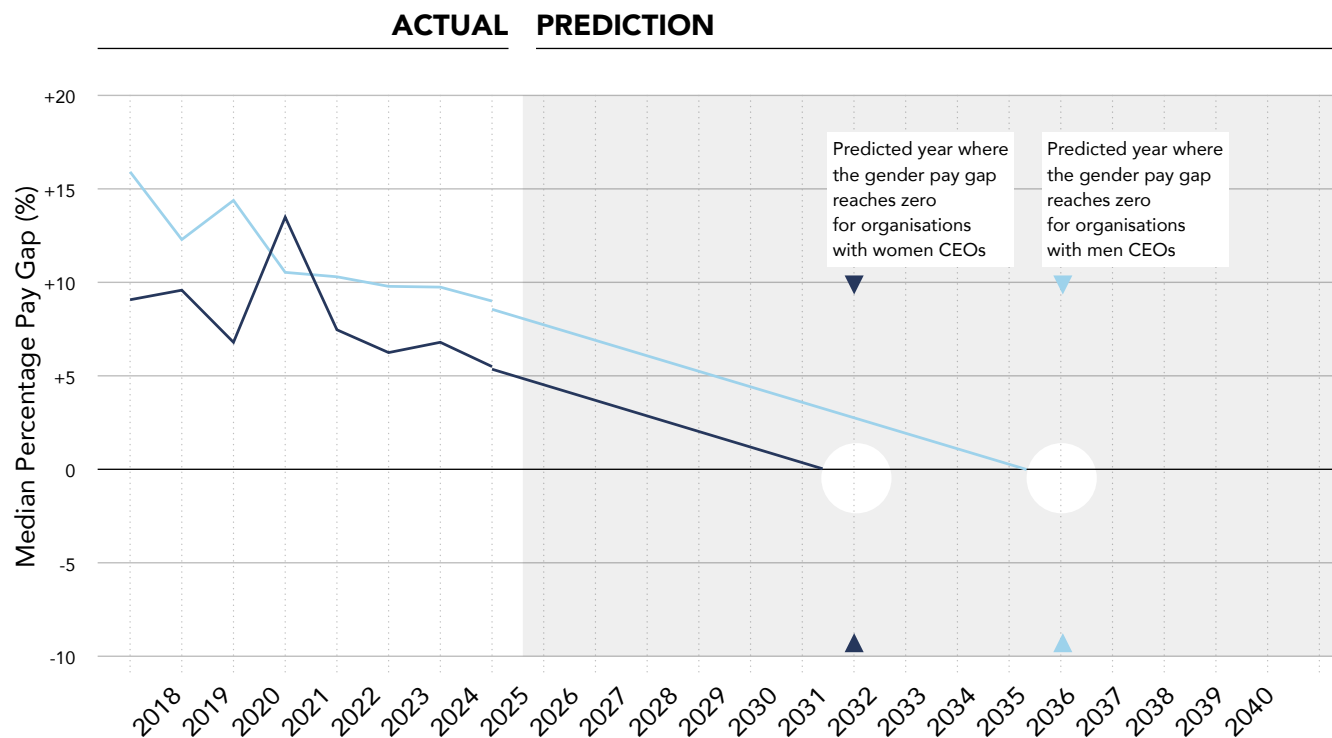
Organisations with a woman CEO for all eight years since reporting began (n=2; 16 observations) had a median gender pay gap of 1.6% over the period and would close their gender gap by 2027/28 on average, if the same rate of progress is maintained.

Boxes 2 and 3 present examples from Save the Children and GSK, both of which have had women CEOs over the past eight years. The example from Save the Children in Box 2 shows the actions they have taken to narrowing the gender pay gap, while GSK's example highlights the importance of an inclusive workplace culture.

### Figure 8 Years to close the gender pay gap

Split by the gender of the organisation's CEO over time

Men CEOs for at least 5 years    Women CEOs for at least 5 years



### BOX 2. SAVE THE CHILDREN'S ACTION ON CLOSING PAY GAPS<sup>42</sup>

As part of its "Free to Be Me"<sup>43</sup> diversity and inclusion strategy, Save the Children UK has taken concrete steps to address gender and ethnicity pay gaps. The organisation:

- Introduced a checklist to help review the salaries offered to new starters to make sure they do not perpetuate gender and ethnicity pay gaps
- Set up an equal pay working group, which meets monthly
- Introduced a pay review where ethnicity and gender pay gaps are prioritised<sup>42</sup>

### BOX 3. GSK UK: FOSTERING AN INCLUSIVE AND FAIR CULTURE TO CLOSE THE GENDER PAY GAP<sup>44</sup>

"Building a high-performing organisation with an inclusive culture and a commitment to equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination for all employees supports strong business performance and better health outcomes for patients. At GSK, we're creating an inclusive environment where people can feel a sense of belonging, be themselves, and have their differing perspectives and characteristics valued."  
- GSK UK Gender Pay Gap Report 2024<sup>44</sup>

**PART 3.**

# MONITORING THE ETHNICITY PAY GAP

**MOTHER**

*Lima, Peru - 2019*

**David Martín Huamani Bedoya**

After the loss of her husband, Ana sits at her desk managing her own finances for the first time — a portrait of resilience and the often-unseen transition toward women's financial independence and self-determination.



# ETHNICITY PAY GAPS

## VOLUNTARY REPORTING OF ETHNICITY PAY GAS

### Data availability and limitations across 45 organisations

#### Few employers voluntarily report ethnicity pay gaps.

Only 13 of the 45 organisations report ethnicity pay gaps on their websites. This included five NGOs, three private for-profit companies, four consulting firms and one philanthropic trust.

All 13 organisations reported pay gaps between ethnic minority and white employees. Nine organisations had data from 2024/25, one organisation reported for 2023, and three organisations reported pre-2023.

Reporting of granular pay gap data between ethnic groups may not be feasible if the presence of some groups in the organisation is small, as this may inadvertently reveal salary or other information about those individuals.<sup>xiv</sup> Data availability on employee ethnicity will also affect its accuracy: nine of the 13 organisations reported their ethnicity disclosure rates (the percentage of employees who voluntarily share their ethnicity information), which ranged from 53% to 97%.

**5**

reported pay gaps  
for specific ethnic  
minority groups

**10**

reported percentages  
of ethnic minority  
employees across  
pay quartiles

**6**

reported pay gaps  
for factors other than  
gender and race,  
e.g. sexuality and  
disability

## Measuring ethnicity pay gaps

Out of the 13 organisations, we collected data from the 10 that reported ethnicity pay gaps from 2023 onwards. For one organisation, data is from 2023, for the remaining nine, it is from 2024.

**8**

organisations had median ethnic  
minority-white pay gaps that favoured  
white employees.

**2**

organisations had pay gaps that favoured  
ethnic minority employees.

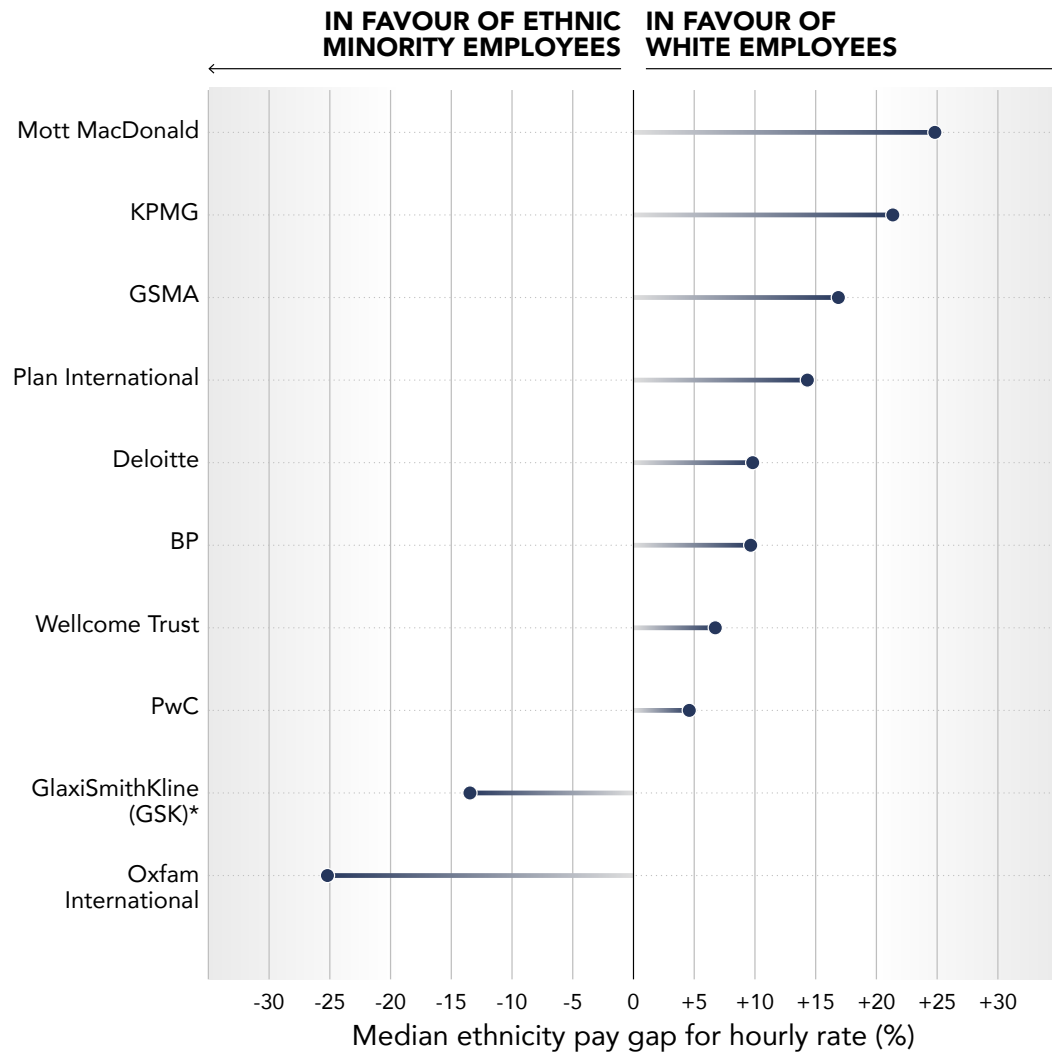
**5**

organisations reported ethnicity bonus  
gaps and all 5 had median bonus gaps that  
favoured white employees.



**Figure 9 Median ethnicity pay gaps for hourly pay (%), 2024/25**

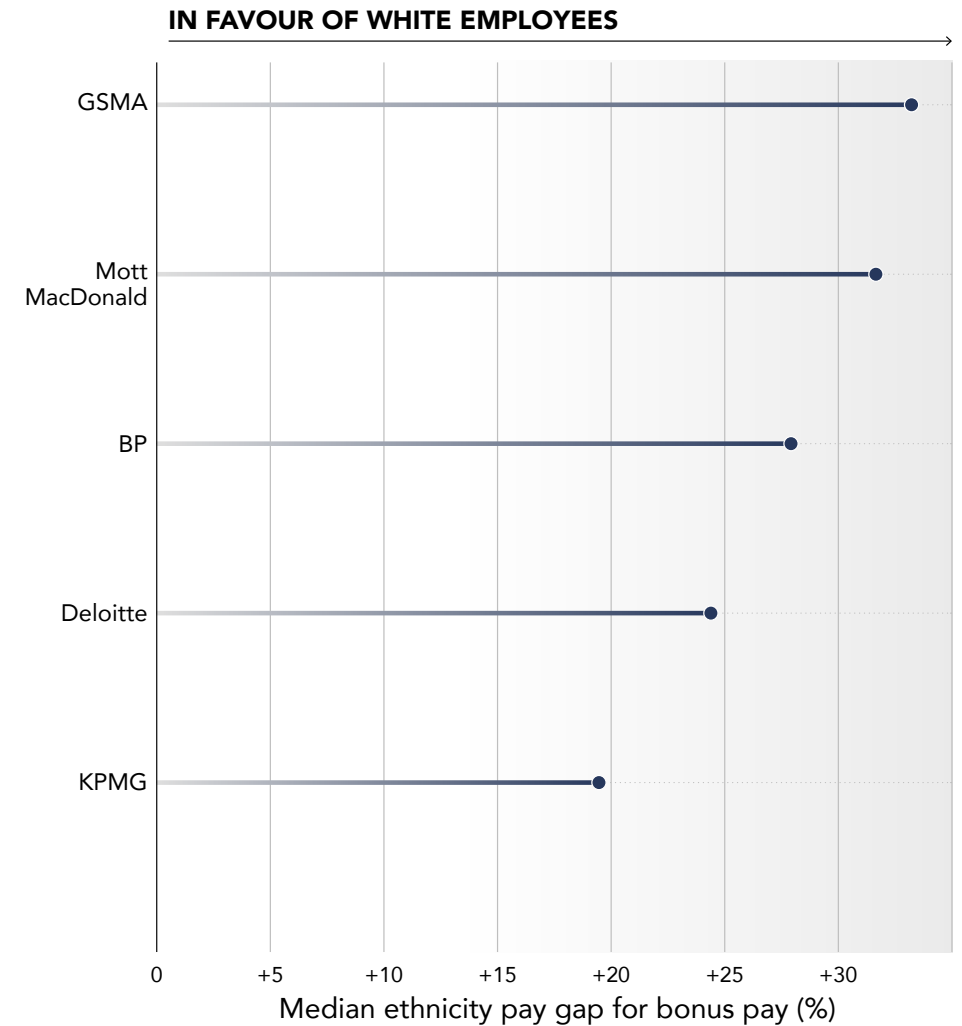
Data from 10 organisations with a presence in the UK and active in global health. Positive values indicate pay gaps favouring white employees



\*2023 data used

**Figure 10 Median ethnicity bonus pay gaps (%), 2024/25**

Data from five organisations with a presence in the UK and active in global health. Positive values indicate pay gaps favouring white employees



## PART 4.

# TAKING ACTION TO CLOSE THE GENDER PAY GAP

### ANYONE CAN FLY

*Horipur, Kushtia,  
Bangladesh 2019*

#### Jibon Malaker

A woman gazes out from a train window as a bird takes flight above — a poetic meditation on movement, freedom, and the quiet persistence of women imagining lives beyond constraint.



# ACTIONS TO CLOSE THE GENDER PAY GAP

PRACTICAL TOOLS, GUIDANCE, AND RESEARCH TO HELP ORGANISATIONS TAKE STEPS TO NARROW GENDER AND OTHER PAY GAPS CAN BE FOUND ON GLOBAL 50/50'S WEBSITE.



## ADVANCING GENDER JUSTICE THROUGH PAY GAP REPORTING

### From reporting to action

Employers active in global health, who often work to advance gender justice, in their programmatic work, have an opportunity to lead by example in building gender equal, fair and inclusive workplaces. Even in countries without legislative requirements, organisations can publicly report pay gap data as a first step toward closing the pay gap.

But reporting alone is not enough. To advance an agenda for gender justice, pay gap reporting should inform targeted action. These data can help organisations identify areas that need attention, inform target-setting and the implementation of policies to reduce pay gaps.

*The Lancet Commission on Gender and Global Health (LCGGH)* recommends that organisations:<sup>45</sup>

- Undertake regular gender pay audits and publish results.
- Report gender-disaggregated workforce data by profession and pay level.
- Develop and monitor indicators of progress toward gender justice for performance, promotion, and appointments across the public sector and international organisations in health.

## SUMMARY OF GUIDANCE FROM THE UK GOVERNMENT AND THREE ORGANISATIONS ACTIVE IN GLOBAL HEALTH ON HOW TO CLOSE THE GENDER PAY GAP

Organisations active in global health publish action plans to narrow gender pay gaps, and the table below summarises key actions from three organisations in our sample, as well as the UK government. Links to the action plans are available on our website [here](#).

### RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION

- Advertise roles widely and encourage managers to identify potential candidates internally, including those who may not have applied.
- Use work sample tests and structured interviews to reduce bias and ensure merit-based recruitment and promotion.
- Ensure selection and promotion panels include diverse gender representation.
- Publish salary ranges and indicate whether pay is negotiable to support fairer salary discussions.

### FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES AND FLEXIBLE WORKING

- Offer shared parental leave and ensure equal pay for maternity, paternity, and adoption leave to promote shared caregiving.
- Encourage shared parental leave by raising awareness among all employees, providing guidance on entitlements, and offering enhanced shared parental leave pay at parity with maternity benefits.
- Address gender imbalances in caring responsibilities by running campaigns or provide resources to normalise shared care and flexible working among men and women.

### FLEXIBLE AND HYBRID WORK OPTIONS

- Ensure part-time roles, job-sharing, and hybrid models are available to support career continuity and progression.
- Monitor promotion and pay decisions to ensure flexible and remote workers are not disadvantaged.
- Encourage leaders to model flexible working and normalise it across all levels of seniority.



***“We know that what gets measured gets prioritised. The 2025 Global 50/50 Gender Pay Gap Report reminds us that transparency is power: when organisations report, analyse, and act on gender pay gaps, they take a stand for fairness. Data must be the starting point for policies that dismantle barriers to women’s leadership and drive genuine gender justice at work.”***

Ravi Verma,  
Executive Director of International Center  
for Research on Women (ICRW) Asia

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#### **PAY TRANSPARENCY**

- Publish salary scales and conduct annual review of pay ranges, as well as regular pay audits.
- Communicate how salaries are determined and make sure decisions are transparent.
- Include gender pay equity in pay as a management performance indicator.

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#### **ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

- Adopt feminist, fair and inclusive leadership principles that challenge structural inequalities and centre transparency, equity and care.
- Provide regular training on power, privilege, and unconscious bias to all staff and managers.
- Encourage employee networks – such as employee affinity groups and mentoring groups to promote retention and advancement of women and minority groups.
- Appoint senior managers to develop and deliver fair and equitable strategies.

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#### **WORKPLACE SAFETY AND WELLBEING**

- Ensure comprehensive anti-sexual harassment policies – this should include training on anti-harassment for all employees.
- Implement safe reporting channels.
- Provide employee assistance programmes and counselling options, for example.

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#### **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

- Include gender equality and inclusive leadership in performance reviews.
- Set performance goals (time-bound and measurable) for improving gender representation in senior management and closing gender pay gaps.

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#### **CAREER PROGRESSION**

- Make sure all employees have fair access to learning and development opportunities.
- Pair junior staff (women, under-represented groups) with senior mentors for guidance and career advancement.
- Offer women’s leadership and inclusive leadership programmes.
- Establish career guidance and coaching opportunities, particularly for parents and carers.
- Commit publicly to targets for women in senior and decision-making roles.

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Sources: Plan International,<sup>46</sup> Mott Macdonald,<sup>47</sup> PwC,<sup>48</sup> and the UK Government.<sup>49</sup>



# ANNEX 1. LIST OF ORGANISATIONS

## GENDER PAY AND BONUS GAP ANALYSIS

AB INBEV UK LIMITED  
Abbvie Ltd  
Accenture (UK) Limited  
Becton, Dickinson U.K. Limited  
BP P.L.C.  
Bristol-Myers Squibb Pharmaceuticals Limited  
Coca-Cola Europacific Partners Great Britain Limited  
Deloitte MCS Limited  
DSM Nutritional Products (UK) Limited  
Eli Lilly And Company Limited  
Exxonmobil Chemical Limited  
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office  
Gilead Sciences Europe Ltd.  
GlaxoSmithKline Services Unlimited  
Gsm Association  
Heineken UK Limited  
Intel Corporation (UK) Limited  
International Planned Parenthood Federation  
International Rescue Committee, U.K.  
IPG Health Medical Communications Limited  
Islamic Relief Worldwide  
Johnson & Johnson Medical Limited  
KPMG LLP

Kuehne + Nagel Limited  
Mckinsey & Company, Inc. United Kingdom  
Medecins Sans Frontieres (UK)  
Medtronic Limited  
Merck Sharp & Dohme (UK) Limited  
Mott Macdonald Limited  
MSI Reproductive Choices  
Nestle UK Ltd  
Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Limited  
Novo Nordisk Limited  
Oxfam  
Palladium International Limited  
Pfizer Limited  
Philips Electronics UK Limited  
Plan International (UK)  
PriceWaterhouseCoopers Services Limited  
Reckitt Benckiser Healthcare (UK) Limited  
Salvation Army Trustee Company  
Save The Children International  
The Wellcome Trust Limited  
Unilever UK Limited  
World Vision UK

## ETHNICITY PAY GAP ANALYSIS

BP P.L.C.  
Deloitte UK  
GlaxoSmithKline Services Unlimited  
GSM Association  
International Rescue Committee, U.K.  
KPMG LLP  
Medecins Sans Frontieres (UK)  
Mott Macdonald Limited  
Oxfam  
Plan International (UK)  
PriceWaterhouseCoopers Group  
Save The Children International  
The Wellcome Trust Limited

# ANNEX 2. METHODS

## REGRESSION ANALYSIS

To test the relationship between the gender of the CEO and the median hourly pay gap, we deployed ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, controlling for year, organisation size, and profit status. We used gender pay gap data from the UK Government gender pay gap reporting service. We collected data on the gender of the CEOs of the organisations in the Global Health 50/50 sample from 2018 to 2025 as part of our annual assessment. The regression model found strong association between the gender of the CEO and the median gender pay gap. This coefficient is statistically significant ( $p = 0.0091$ ), suggesting a robust relationship within the sample. The regression model also showed that organisation size is strongly associated with the gender pay gap. Organisations, particularly those with 250-499, 500-999 and 10,000-19,999 employees had significantly higher pay gaps than the other organisations (1,000-9,999 and 20,000+), even when controlling for

other variables. Profit vs non-profit status, however, was not a statistically significant predictor of the gap in this model ( $p = 0.22$ ).

The model explains approximately 59.9% of the variance in the gender pay gap ( $R^2 = 0.599$ ), with a highly significant overall fit ( $F(9, 307) = 50.98, p < 2.2e-16$ ), indicating that the included variables account for a substantial portion of the variation observed across the dataset.

To understand the effects of women's leadership more deeply, we also examined the gender pay gap over time between organisations which had a woman CEO for at least 5 years in the eight year time period ( $n=4$ ; 32 observations) and those with men CEOs for at least five years ( $n=40$ ; 320 observations) during the same time period. This analysis excluded one organisation which had an even split. The fitted lines indicate the overall decline of the median gender pay gap over time as estimated from the data. A similar analysis was also

carried out for organisations which had a woman in leadership for the entire duration of eight years ( $n=2$ , 16 observations).

## ABOUT THE GLOBAL HEALTH 50/50 SAMPLE

The sample includes organisations actively involved in global health and those organisations that aim to influence global health policy even if this is not their core function. Inclusion of an organisation does not signify Global 50/50's endorsement of its activities, nor that Global 50/50 considers the organisation to be contributing to advancing population level health in a positive direction. Organisations in the sample have been identified as having demonstrated an interest in influencing global health and/or global health policy.<sup>50</sup> For more information about the research framework and methods, please visit our website [here](#).

## ENDNOTES

- i From the 1995 Beijing Declaration to the 2014 G20 Summit in Brisbane, global commitments have repeatedly affirmed the right to equal pay for work of equal value. The ILO's 2021 Resolution on Inequalities in the World of Work renewed calls to close gender pay and pension gaps and strengthen accountability mechanisms.<sup>5</sup>
- ii PwC's projection assumes a linear rate of change, however, ONS data show year-on-year variation, meaning the actual time frame to close the gap is likely to differ.
- iii The Index runs from 0 to 100. A score of 100 means that across society, there is common understanding that men and women are equally suited to leadership, in all sectors.
- iv For example, in the UK, young men scored 13 points lower than men aged 55-65 and 6 points lower than young women of the same age.<sup>6</sup>
- v Senior management bodies and 29% of boards had gender parity, compared to 40% of senior management bodies and 57% of boards with more men than women.<sup>7</sup>
- vi In the UK, under the Equality Act 2010, "men and women in the same employment performing equal work must receive equal pay, unless any difference in pay can be justified."<sup>1</sup>
- vii Includes domestic housework activities (such as cooking, cleaning or doing the laundry), caring for pets, shopping and household administration (such as paying bills). Also includes "Do It Yourself" (DIY) tasks, gardening and volunteering, unless presented separately.
- viii Includes caring for children and doing tasks such as making meals and feeding, washing and dressing, playing with children, reading with children, and helping with homework. Also includes helping, caring for or looking after adults.
- ix Some studies find that the narrowing of the pay gap following the introduction of mandatory reporting is due to a reduction in men's wages rather than an increase in women's pay.<sup>3,4</sup>
- ix As part of the European Union (EU) Pay Transparency Directive (2023/970) member states have until 2026 to make the main elements of the directive into national law, including pay reporting on gaps between female and male workers for employers with at least 100 employees.<sup>2</sup>
- x Some studies find that the narrowing of the pay gap following the introduction of mandatory reporting is due to a reduction in men's wages rather than an increase in women's pay.<sup>3,4</sup>
- xi ONS data indicate that Black, African, Caribbean, or Black British employees have consistently earned less than White employees between 2012 and 2022,<sup>8</sup> and Fawcett Society research shows that Black and minoritised women experience the compounded effects of both gender and ethnicity pay gaps.<sup>9</sup>
- xii We employed ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, controlling for year, organisation size, and profit status, to better isolate the association between the gender of the CEO and the median hourly gender pay gap.
- xiii One organisation was excluded from the analysis because its leadership was evenly split between men and women.
- xiv The UK ethnicity pay gap reporting guidance published in 2023 suggests a minimum category size of 5 to 20 for internal use, and 50 for publication.

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## IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS

The following are the descriptions of all images included in this Report. Images also contain hover-over captions, but please note this feature may not work across all software.

- P1 A woman in a floral dress sits expressionless among a group of men in suits and hats. While the men appear animated and confident, she remains still and detached — a visual metaphor for the endurance and inequities faced by women in male-dominated workplaces.
- P6 A grid of four photographs showing a pink neon sign that alternates between the words “Mother,” “Other,” “Her,” and “Me,” highlighting the shifting roles and identities associated with motherhood.
- P7 A woman dressed in white sits in warm sunlight holding her young child, both framed by the shadows of a window grid.
- P11 A sepia-toned photograph shows a teenage boy and girl in school uniforms inside a small, cluttered courtyard. The boy sits in a plastic chair writing in a notebook balanced on a small table, while the girl stands behind him stirring a pot over a stove. Household items surround them — buckets, baskets, and cooking utensils.
- P12 A woman dressed in nurse’s scrubs sits at a small table holding a phone and a mug, her stethoscope draped around her neck. She gazes thoughtfully out of a window, surrounded by books and papers.
- P20 Inside a weathered blue-walled house, two women sit apart but visible to one another through a doorway. The woman in the foreground, dressed in a green sari, sits on a stone staircase reading a newspaper. In the adjoining room, another woman in bright pink clothing and a floral skirt sits on a similar staircase, drinking tea.
- P23 A black-and-white photograph shows a woman with curly hair sitting at a desk covered in papers, facing a laptop. Behind her are shelves of books and a large portrait on the wall. The woman appears calm and reflective, captured in a moment of work and quiet autonomy following personal loss.
- P26 A black-and-white photograph shows a train with square windows. Inside, a woman wearing a headscarf looks out of one window while a man rests with eyes closed in another. Above the train, a bird flies across the sky, its shadow cast on the roof.

