

WOMEN EMPLOYMENT STUDY FOR BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



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Abbreviations

ALMPs	Active Labour Market Policies
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BHAS	BiH Agency for Statistics
BD	Brčko District
BEEPS	Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women – CEDAW
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease in 2019
ERP	Economic Reform Program
EPSR	European Pillar for Social Rights
EU	European Union
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EC	European Commission
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
GBD	Gender-based discrimination
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Development Agency)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ICT	Information and communication technology
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
LAPE	Local Action Plan for Employment
LEP	Local Employment Partnerships
LEA	Labour and Employment Agency
LGBTIAQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Intersex, Asexual, and Queer
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PES	Public Employment Services
RS	Republika Srpska
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WB	World Bank
VET	Vocational Education and Training

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I Executive summary

This study aims to present the state of play in the labour market in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), with particular emphasis on gender. The study focuses on gender gaps in the labour market, followed by recommendations tailored to close those gaps.

The most significant decline in the real growth rate in BiH was recorded in the second quarter of 2020, and the most affected sectors were: industry, trade, transportation, accommodation and food services, arts, entertainment and recreation, and other services. A low growth rate was recorded in almost all sectors, except for agriculture, which exhibited a negative trend in growth until the end of the third quarter of 2021, as did real estate activities. The main sectors leading growth in 2021 were trade, transport, accommodation, and food service activities (9% in Q1 2021), financial and insurance activities (4.3% in Q3 2021), including manufacturing (3.4% in Q3 2021).

Since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared and containment measures introduced, the unemployment rate in BiH increased from the first quarter of 2020 to the second quarter of 2021. Notably, based on the data available from the Agency for Statistics in BiH (BHAS 2021), women of all ages were particularly affected compared to men. Unemployment in BiH, despite the continuation of the positive trend from the previous period, is still primarily structural and high, particularly for women, making them exposed and more vulnerable to adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and containment measures imposed by governments in BiH, even in the aftermath of the crisis. Prior to the pandemic, women's labour market participation was steadily improving. Over time, the gender gap for the working-age population has continued to narrow (by more than 3% from 2018 to 2019). During the pandemic, the labour force participation of women aged 15 and older decreased by 2 percentage points, while for men, it decreased by 0.8 points but almost recovered by the third quarter of 2021. Labour force participation for women 15 and older is recovering significantly slower than for men. Quarterly data for the 15-64 age group show that labour force participation reached its record level of 72.1% for males in the third quarter of 2021 and 46.8% for females in the second quarter of 2021. However, for the 15-64 age group, the gender gap was most prominent in 2021 (24.76%). Despite significant improvements in recent years, the employment rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still 12.3% below the lowest employment rate in the European Union. The employment rate of women is significantly lower than that of men during the pandemic period. The gender gap in part-time employment/work across age groups is negative in favour of women.

Immediate government responses alleviated the initial labour market shock in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures included social security subsidies and wage subsidies. However, most measures that were introduced did not consider the different needs of women and men, nor were they recognizing and addressing existing gender gaps. Although rising numbers of women registered as jobseekers in 2020 implied the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to widening gender gaps in the labour market, no actions were taken to close these gaps and advance gender equality in BiH. Responses by key institutions suggest that gender was not considered a relevant criterion in the development of measures such as wage and contribution subsidies which aimed to tackle the socio-

changes in the effectiveness of employment policy are possible at the level of local governments, with a particular focus on the integration of women into the labour market.

Areas of strong social challenges where additional policies and interventions are relevant for achieving gender equality in the labour market, are the elimination of gender stereotypes through the improvement of education policies that empower girls and young women to pursue careers in professions in which women are typically under-represented. More specific challenges related to employment policy are concerned with the modernization and coordination of the PES system and improvement of its efficiency at all administrative levels. It is of importance to improve monitoring of the PES, followed by measures that address the burden of care roles in households and increase women entrepreneurship. In addition, an important challenge for governments at all levels, is to strike a balance between active and passive measures, giving priority to ALMPs that address vulnerable groups of women such as women from rural areas, single mothers, women with disabilities, women over 50 years of age, Roma women and LGBTIAQ+.

At different administrative levels, governments in BiH undertook policy responses to the pandemic, addressing issues of social assistance, reduced worktime, enterprise development, wage subsidies and income replacement for the self-employed, social insurance, combatting of violence against women and girls in COVID-19 response plans, loan guarantees and collection and use of additional data (UNDP, 2021)⁷. Out of 14 measures noted in UNDP's tracking tool for assessment of gender-sensitivity of measures taken during COVID-19 policy response in 2020 and 2021, six measures have been evaluated as gender-sensitive, one of which was supporting women in unpaid care roles and the other five were measures addressing violence against women and girls. However, key measures targeting economic security including labour market measures aimed at improving women's access to paid work and trainings, fiscal and economic measures that channel support to women dominated sectors of the economy, and social protection measures that target women as main beneficiaries have not been tailored through gendered lens, thus being evaluated as gender neutral. As Hrelja-Hasečić (2021) argues in a review of the budget and policy measures through a gendered perspective, most measures undertaken by governments in BiH did not consider the different needs of women and men after the pandemic was declared, nor did they recognize existing gender gaps, particularly in the labour market. Therefore, no actions were taken for closing those gender gaps and advancing gender equality during the pandemic. These findings imply that gender was not considered by governments as a relevant criterion in the process of developing measures to address the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Considering the complex administrative structure in BiH and the lack of jurisdiction at the central level in many fields, governments, governmental institutions, and agencies at different administrative levels have tailored, coordinated, and implemented recovery measures targeting the labour market. These governing bodies include entity-level governments and governments of BD, ministries of finance in both entities and Directorate for Finance within Government of BD, entity-level ministries of entrepreneurship, Labour and Employment Agency at central level, entity-level employment institutes, cantonal and local governments, and others. Despite the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on operational activities of public employment services, efforts have been made in the implementation of pre-pandemic reforms for the institutional strengthening of employment services in BiH, with an aim to create preconditions for the successful implementation of active measures (LEA BiH, 2020)⁸. In the latest reports by LEA BiH and Employment Institutes in FBiH, RS and BD, it is stated that active labour market policy measures during the COVID-19 pandemic have been targeting women entrepreneurs, Roma women, single parents, and victims of violence in FBiH (EI FBiH, 2020)⁹; and women victims of domestic violence and war torture in RS (EI RS, 2020)¹⁰. However, inconsistencies in practices for collecting, evaluating, analysing and utilizing gender-disaggregated data in the labour market in BiH hamper the process of creating objective and detailed understanding of conditions in the labour market and thus lead to policymaking that is frequently lacking a gender perspective.

This report for BiH offers an insight into the state of play and the nature and size of the gender gaps in the labour market. It is structured in seven chapters: I) State of Play of the BiH labour market; II) COVID-19 Recovery; III) Governance of Employment Policies and Institutional Strengthening; IV) Public

7 United Nations Development Programme. 2021. COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker. Available at: <https://data.undp.org/gendertacker/> (Accessed 13 January 2022)

8 LEA 2020. Plan o smjernicama politika tržišta rada i aktivnim mjerama zapošljavanja u Bosni i Hercegovini za 2020. godinu.

9 EI FBiH 2020. Izvještaj o radu Federalnog zavoda za zapošljavanje. Available at: <https://fzzz.ba/ckFinderFiles/files/Izvjestaji/Izve%C5%A1tajo%20radu%202021%20bos.pdf> (Accessed 22 December 2021)

10 EI RS 2020. Izvještaj o radu i poslovanju JU Zavod za zapošljavanje Republike Srpske. Available at: http://www.zzzrs.net/dokumenti/izvjestaj_2020.pdf (Accessed 22 December 2021)

Employment Services; V) Active Labour Market Policies; VI) Women Entrepreneurship and VII) Good Practices in Employment Policies. This report has been prepared within the framework of a regional analysis of women employment in the Western Balkans labour market.



3 Methodology

This report has been prepared based on a mixed method approach, used to delve deeper into the labour market in BiH, its developments, and issues from a structural and gender perspective. The methods used to complement data collected included qualitative and quantitative methods.

Qualitative methods

Qualitative methods are used to provide a more in-depth analysis of the statistical data available and those to be collected through this study. Three types of qualitative methods are used to provide relevant information for the study:

Desk research

The core activity of the desk research was the review of the existing public data and reports.

The qualitative desk research was focused on:

- Collection of statistical data on employment, education, labour market from institutes of statistics, Gender Equality Indexes, EU reports, WB reports, UN reports, ILO reports and other international publications.
- Review of policy-level practices in the economy, institutional setting and governance of the sector and labour policies, assessed through gender-sensitive lenses.

One on one interviews

In-depth interviews with key stakeholders were arranged based on a mapping of stakeholders conducted by the research team at the beginning of the research work. The in-depth interviews focused on gaining a better understanding the data collected through desk research and quantitative methods, reform processes and current active policies in BiH labour market. The interviews had open-ended questions and structured questions based on the topic at hand.

Below is the list of categories included in the stakeholder mapping:

Group 1 – Government officials

Group 2 – Development Governmental Agencies

Group 3 – Academia and independent experts

Group 4 – CSOs directly related to the employment issues

Specific interview guides were prepared. These Research Guides were adapted to the context of the WB economy, organisational structures operating within the governance framework and were translated when needed to avoid language barriers.

Quantitative methods

The report employed statistical data and their analysis, from public, independent and governmental sources. The Q3 2021 is the cut off period for the Study.

Limitations of the Study and research methods:

- The relatively low level of availability of gender-segregated data publicly available is considered a crucial limitation of the study.
- The level of responsiveness, including availability, timeframe and extent of data, has affected the overall availability of data in the report and its cut-off date.
- Key data on employability, active enterprises and economic growth in BiH economy were published in December 2021, as preliminary data, and further data processing will be carried out before publication of all indicators. Nonetheless, efforts were made to obtain such data, and to record and analyse developments up to the third quarter of 2021.

komisija, 2016)¹². Women politicians who are candidates in the elections are less visible in the media than their male colleagues. A report by the Center for Election Studies (2017) has shown that the share of the total media representation of women candidates in the local elections in 2016 was only 10%. This illuminates the fact that women are neglected by the media and that they do not have equal access to the public through the channels of their political parties. Attitudes towards gender equality are generally marked by stereotypes and beliefs related to the dominant social roles of men, and gender attitudes which lead to and tolerate gender-based violence (Dušanić, 2012). Women are primarily perceived as mothers, nurturers and housewives and it is only after women fulfil those social expectations, that they can pursue careers. This role of a woman is predominantly perceived to be „naturally given“ determined by her biological traits (Spahić-Šiljak, 2019). These attitudes were expressed by women participating in a study conducted in BiH and Kosovo*¹³, as follows: „ (the) main role of a woman is in her household and in the private domain where she exerts the role of a wise but quiet teacher, that expresses the dominance in a way that does not challenge the social norms nor questions the male authority and position“ (Spahić-Šiljak, 2012¹⁴).

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed that the time women spend on unpaid work is at the forefront of difficulties women face in the labour market. During the pandemic, unpaid work in the household became even more demanding, as the care services from other sectors (e.g., education, social welfare and healthcare) migrated from the public to the private domain. Kindergartens and schools were closed due to containment measures, thereby shifting responsibilities from schools and kindergartens to families, particularly to mothers (Bašić, 2020). A study on the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on human rights from a gender perspective conducted by OSCE Mission in BiH (OSCE, 2020) has shown that female managers and female entrepreneurs reported being overburdened with unpaid work at home, related particularly to increased childcare and supporting their offspring in online schooling.

Quality healthcare services are not available to all women. As BiH is a complex society in terms of its administrative governance structure, there are stark differences between sexual and reproductive health regulations and regulations in different administrative units, insufficient medical staff in rural areas, and limited access to high-quality women's health services, particularly for women from vulnerable groups who are not covered by health insurance. Particularly vulnerable to such difficulties are women with low income from rural areas. High transportation costs to urban centres make it more difficult to access rights and services (Zagorac, 2020). Difficulties faced by women in exercising their right to health care particularly affect those from marginalized groups, of which women with disabilities (Džever et al. 2020).

Although gender-based discrimination (GBD) in BiH is regulated and prohibited by the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination, only small proportion of GBD cases have been reported and formally sanctioned under the Gender Equality Law and Law on Prohibition of Discrimination. Consequently, there is a lack of judicial practice that could help in the interpretation and application of these laws. A 2019 study on GBD in labour and employment (Gačanica, 2019), showed that the awareness of GBD is extremely low, referring to both employees as well as employers. This issue is present in the

12 Centralna izborna komisija (2016). Ovjerene kandidacijske liste za sudjelovanje na lokalnim izborima 2016. From: http://www.izbori.ba/Documents/Lok_Izbora_2016/Politicki_subjekti/Pregled_ovjerene_liste_za_web-hrv.pdf

13 * This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

14 Spahić-Šiljak, Z. (Ed). (2012). Contesting female, feminist and Muslim identities: Post-socialist contexts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. Center for interdisciplinary postgraduate studies, University of Sarajevo.

identification, reporting and processing of GBD. A serious obstacle to identification of GBD is the failure to effectively document cases of GBD at the judicial institutions, coupled with lack of statistical data. The extremely complex system of jurisdiction in BiH and the considerable number of laws at different levels make the legal framework governing GBD in the field of labour and employment fragmented and inconsistent in practice. Women are often unable to take maternity leave for one year as stipulated by law or return to the same job after maternity leave or exercise their right to work part-time. What makes women more susceptible to such gender-based discrimination in the labour market is their parental role, and a pregnancy that occurs when employed. Employers try to avoid their responsibilities in two main ways: by offering only fixed-term contracts to women and requiring women to accept illegal employment in jobs which are not registered, so no workers' rights can be exercised.

In the concluding observations of the Sixth Periodic Report on the Implementation of the CEDAW Convention in BiH (2019), the Committee has expressed concern about the inconsistent reporting of cases of gender-based violence, including domestic violence. This mainly happens for the following reasons: social stigma and distrust of women and girls in law enforcement agencies; the fact that judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers, health workers and staff from centres for social protection working with victims of gender-based violence do not have adequate expertise; low rates of prosecution and convictions in cases of non-physical violence against women, such as psychological violence, and the lack of gender disaggregated data on all forms of gender-based violence.

The participation of women in influential positions in politics is far from satisfactory, despite the efforts and achievements made since 2013, when the Election Law was synchronized with the Gender Equality Law and a gender quota was introduced. As a result of this synchronization and gender quota, in the 2014 General election there was an evident increase in the participation of women candidates for the Representative House (40.9% of total candidates) and Parliament of FBiH (43.6%). Regardless of a rising trend in representation of women in governance, progress is slow and insufficient for substantial changes in women's active participation in politics in BiH. Political parties in BiH, characterized by patriarchal structures and masculine norms of behaviour, only formally fulfil the prescribed gender quota.

Gender is recognized as one of the more common form of discrimination in economic terms, and although there is a solid body of legislation addressing discrimination and equality issues, implementation and enforcement is still inconsistent (Ortlieb et al. 2019). Regardless of women's rights to own property, in practice, women own a significantly smaller share of land and other property than men in BiH (USAID, 2016). Women face greater obstacles in accessing loans, as the financial exclusion of women is still striking, with considerably fewer women having a bank account or formal savings than men. There is also a difference in the purpose of loans, with more women borrowing for education, health, and other immediate needs and men borrowing for business. Gender (in)equality is evidenced in entrepreneurship, as women/men's ratio for total entrepreneurial activity and entrepreneurial opportunity is unfavourable for women entrepreneurs in BiH. The Gender Action Plan BiH for the period 2018-2022 defines priority areas for action, with a particular focus on work, employment, and access to economic resources, and clarifying the obligations of the responsible ministries/institutions and promotion of the institutional mechanisms for gender equality, as well as cooperation with other actors (e.g., international, non-governmental and other civil society organizations) (Gavrić and Ždralović, 2019).

4.1.2 Analysis on the State of Play

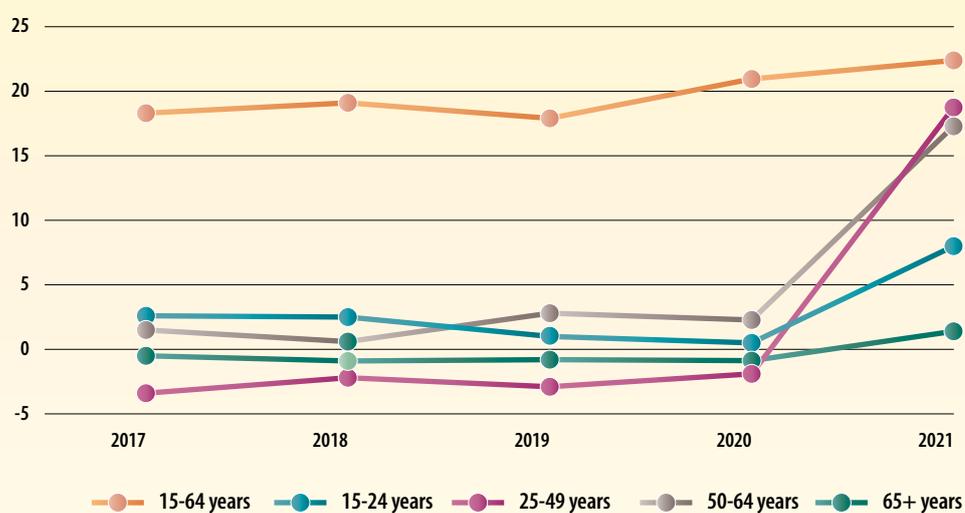
The second part of this chapter provides a detailed analysis of the state of affairs in the following areas: gender gaps in the labour market, labour force participation in different sectors of the economy, gender wage gaps and gender care gaps in BiH.

4.1.3 Key labour market indicators and gender gaps

This subchapter provides an overview of the various characteristics of the labour market in BiH (activity rate, employment, unemployment, self-employment) and an overview of the composition of the economy and the gender wage gap. The position of women in BiH is unfavourable, and the reasons for such position are multifaceted, including inadequate childcare facilities, an education system that reinforces the traditional roles of men and women, gendered work roles, and a lack of resources and information about employment or self-employment opportunities (Somun-Krupalija, 2011). Factors leading to women's low employment status, as well as their high unemployment, also include "loss of a job or unequal treatment in hiring due to their role as mothers; lower pay compared to men for the same work; cultural coding of women to take less demanding jobs, working part-time, and choice of occupations that are considered typically female and lower-paid" (USAID, 2019). Finally, unequal opportunities and treatment in the workforce, inadequate social services to compensate for women's heavy household and family workloads remain pervasive and persistent. However, there have been some positive changes affecting women's participation in the workforce, such as gender equality legislation, legal prohibition of gender-based violence and harassment, and institutionalization of gender mainstreaming in government agencies (Somun-Krupalija, 2011).

From 2017 to 2021, the highest labour participation rate was recorded for women from the working-age population (25 – 49 years). For this age group, the labour participation rate was ranging from 60.30% in 2017 to 62.57% in 2021. Younger women from age groups 15 – 24 years have significantly lower labour participation rate, which was 23.40% in 2017, gradually improving to 29.9% in 2019, and then decreasing again after the pandemic was declared in 2020 and 2021 (27.6% and 24.67% respectively). During the COVID-19 pandemic in BiH, the labour force participation of women aged 15 and older decreased by 2 percentage points, while for men, it decreased by 0.8 points but almost recovered by the third quarter of 2021. Labour force participation for women 15 and older is recovering more slowly than for men. **At the end of the third quarter of 2021, labour force participation of women from this age group was 40.2%.** Positive trends can be seen concerning the working-age population (25-49 years), as labour force participation reached its record highest level of 89.2% for men and 62.8% for women in the third quarter of 2021. **Quarterly data available for 2020 and 2021 for the 15-64 age group imply that labour force participation reached a record level of 72.1% for men in the third quarter of 2021 and 46.8% for women in the second quarter of 2021.**

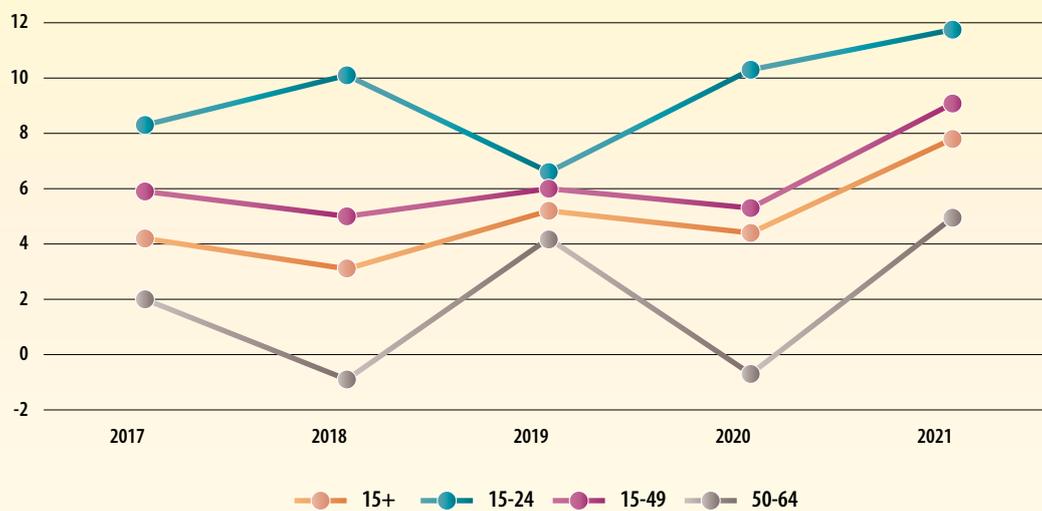
Figure 1 shows the difference between women and men labour force participation over the last five years, i.e., from 2017 to 2021. Since complete data for 2021 were not publicly available and to facilitate interpretation, the average of three quarters was used, so the results of this analysis should be observed with some caution, especially given the presence of seasonal influences on participation rates. The data shows that the overall participation gap narrowed between 2017 and 2019 (by more than 3% from 2018 to 2019), **however, during the pandemic there has been a widening of this gender gap in**

Figure 3. Gender gaps in employment rates by age (2018-2021)

Source: BHAS (2021)

The gender gap in employment for age group 15-64 has decreased from 19.1% in 2018 to 17.9% in 2019. The turning point in the gender employment gap was the period of the pandemic, when it increased, reaching its highest level of 22.9% in third quarter of 2021. Broken down by age groups, the gender gap in employment in the third quarter of 2021 was 12.4% for 15-24 age group, 27.9% for 25-49 age group and 28% for 50-64 age group. Each age group experienced a large increase in their gender employment gap in 2020.

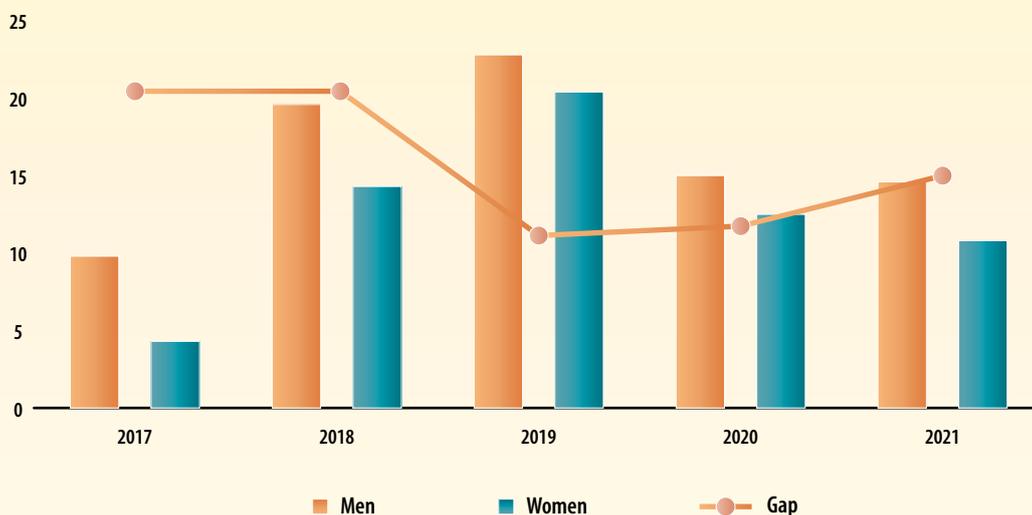
The employment rate by education level and age groups of women and men in the labour market in BiH was analysed for the period 2017 - 2021. The data are presented on an annual basis. **A large gender employment gap is visible in all observed years for the low and medium levels of education** (primary school and less and secondary school and specialization), since 2020, the gaps have widened significantly. Comparing people only with completed primary education and less, the gender gap increased from 32.4% in 2017 to 43% in 2021. For people with secondary education and specialization, the gender gap was much smaller compared to that for the lower education level. Comparing 2017 and 2021, the gender gap was 15.3% and 21.6%, respectively. **Finally, a negative gender employment gap was recorded for those with university education, reaching a value of 3.1% in 2021.**

Figure 5. Gender gap in unemployment by age group (2018-2021)

Source: BHAS (2021)

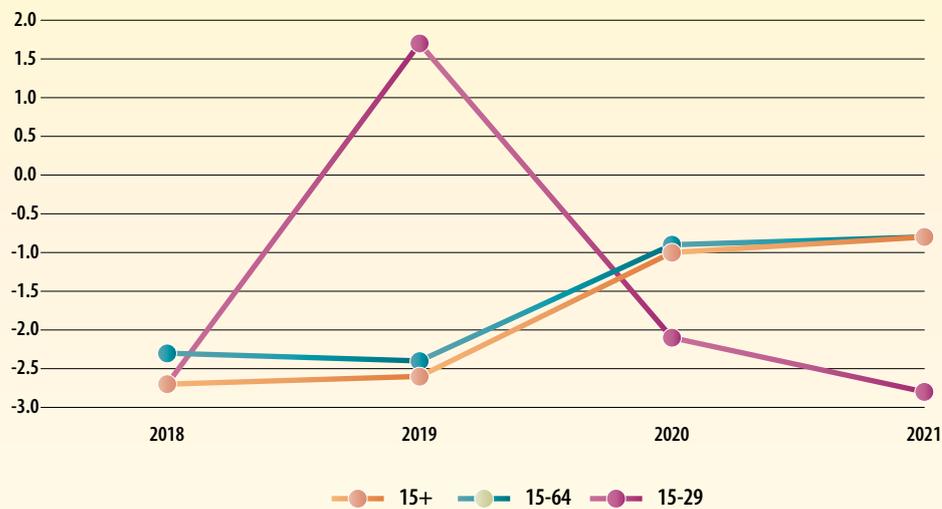
Prior to the pandemic, the gender gap in unemployment slightly increased for all age groups except for age group 15-24. Compared to 2018, the gender gap for this age group declined by 3.5 percentage points in 2019. After the state of emergency was declared in the first quarter of 2020, the gender gap in unemployment for 15-24 age group increased again, to continue to rise in 2021 to 11.75%. A significant increase in the gender gap in unemployment in 2021 is also evident in age groups 15+ (7.80%), and 15-49 (9.08%) with highest values over the observed period of time from 2017 to 2021, for all age groups.

Regarding the overall structure of employment, it is significant that self-employment is generally relatively low, accounting for 4.57% of total employment of women and 10.8% for men in 2021 (Figure 6). Unfortunately, the pandemic has led to a reduction in the number of self-employed persons, particularly amongst women and there has been no development to support women's entrepreneurship in the BiH economy.

Figure 6. Self-employment rate yearly gender gap (2017-2021)

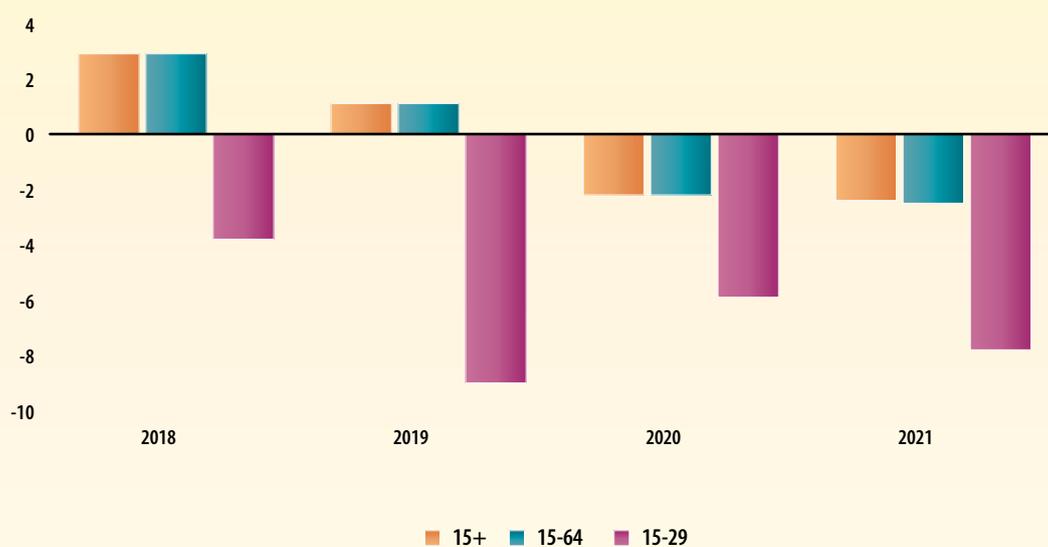
Source: BHAS (2021)

The gender gap in part-time employment/work across age groups is predominantly negative, as more men are employed as part-time workers in most years and age groups. The only exception is for age group 15-29 in 2019, when gender gap was positive, implying more women ages 15-29 were engaged as part-time workers. The share of women as part-time workers in 15+ age group was increasing in 2018 and 2019 (8.7% and 10.3% respectively) to decrease during 2020 to 5.5% and continued decreasing to 3.7% in 2021. A similar trend was recorded for men, with an increase in part-time employment in 2018 and 2019 (6% and 7.7% respectively) and a decrease in the pandemic years to 4.5% in 2020 and 2.9% in 2021.

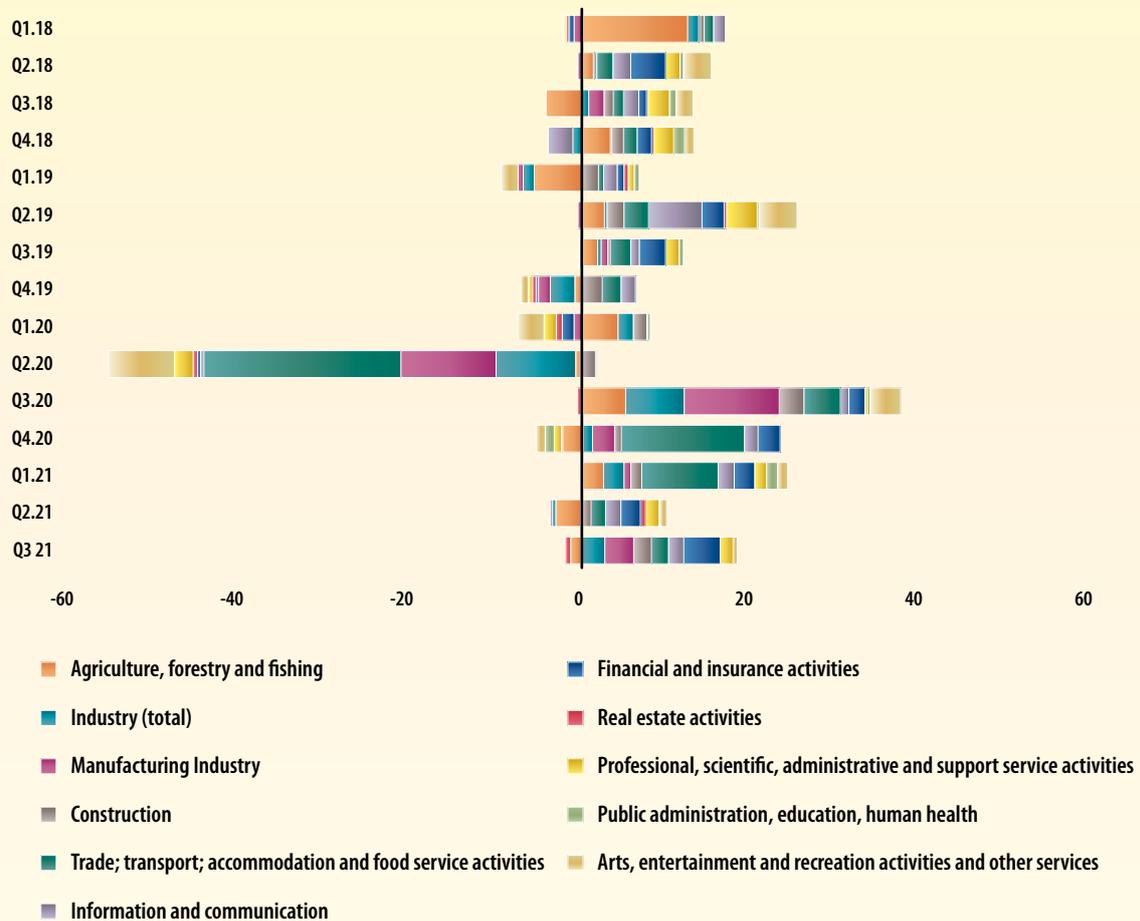
Figure 7. Gender gap in part-time work (2018-2021)

Source: BHAS (2021)

The gender gap in temporary employment has changed from 2018 to 2020 and decreased in 2021. Over time, it was mainly men and women with a low level of education who accepted temporary work. The opposite is also true: the higher the level of education, the lower the engagement in temporary work, especially among men.

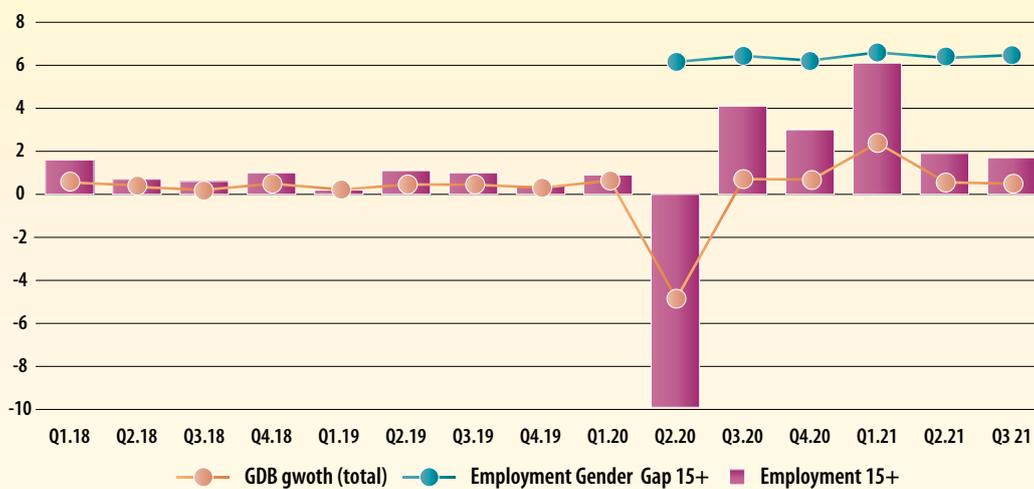
Figure 8. Gender gap in temporary employment (2018-2021)

Source: BHAS (2021)

Figure 10. Quarterly real growth rate, by sector (2018-2021)

Source: BHAS, 2021

The main sectors leading growth in 2021 were trade, transport, accommodation, and food service activities (9% in Q1 2021), financial and insurance activities (4.3% in Q3 2021), including manufacturing (3.4% in Q3 2021). While industry and manufacturing returned to a positive real growth rate in Q3 2021, agriculture, forestry, fishing, and real estate contracted.

Figure 11. Trends in employment, gender gap and real GDP growth (2018 – 2021)

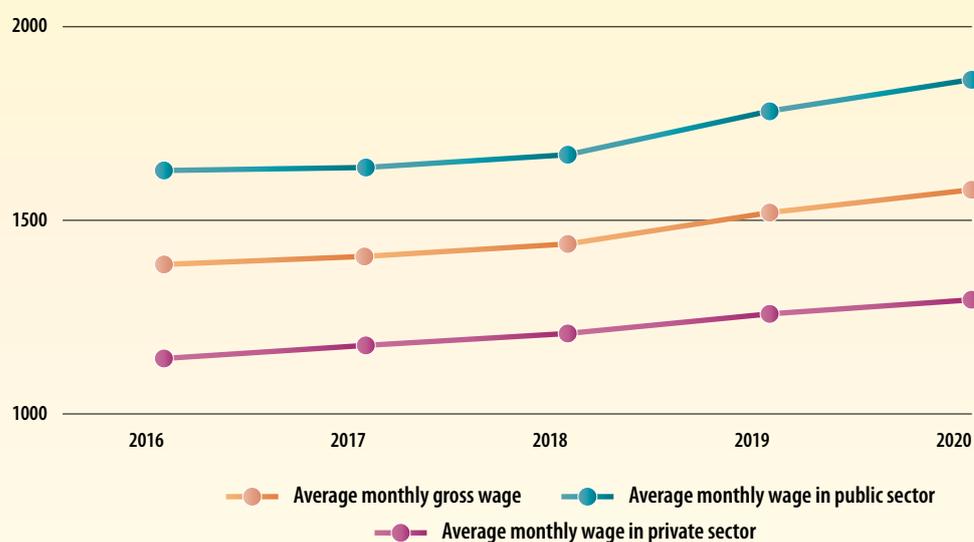
Source: BHAS (2021)

The employment rate, the gender employment gap, and GDP growth have been analysed. It is not possible to draw firm conclusions from the comparison of these three indicators because quarterly data on the employment rate and the gender employment gap is not available. Based on the data, it is impossible to identify a clear relationship between GDP growth and employment in B&H. There is no similar trend in the gender gap in employment.

We have further analysed the data related to the gender gap in the share of employment by the economic sector for persons over 15 years of age. Not surprisingly, the biggest gender employment gap is found in economic sectors traditionally dominated by men, such as agriculture, forestry and fishing, construction, information, and communication (the recorded discrepancy is much lower than in the previous economic sectors), and manufacturing. Women dominate in public administration, education, health care, trade, transportation, accommodation and food, arts, entertainment and recreation, and other services.

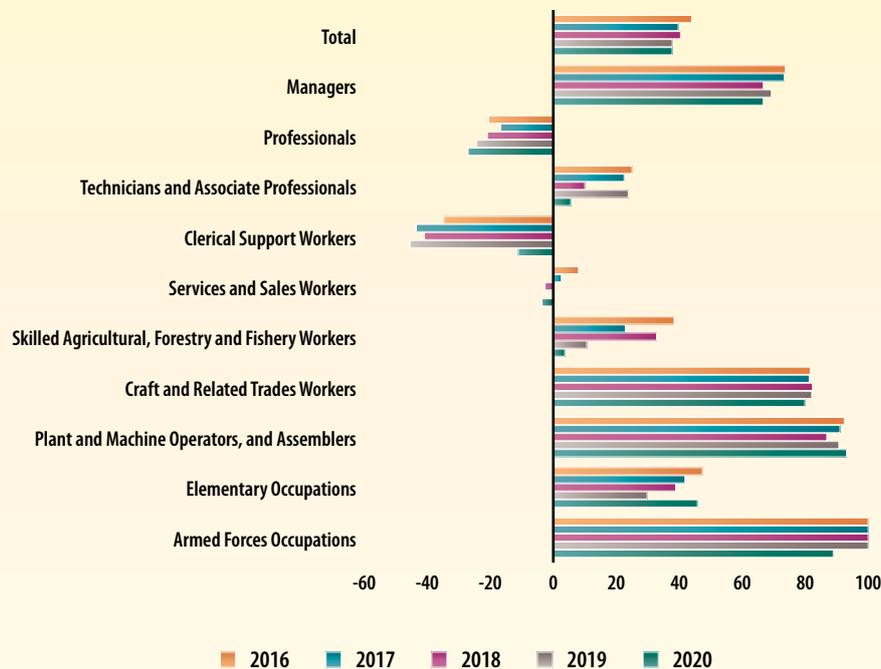
4.1.5 Gender pays gap developments

Wage trends in BiH demonstrate an overall increase in the average gross monthly wage, whether in the public or private sector in 2016-2020. The public sector accounts for about one-third of total employment in BiH (EIS, 2015) and pays on average significantly higher wages. Although there is no accurate data on the employees in the public enterprise subsector, we estimate that it is about 70,000 employees, nearly half of the total employment in agriculture (EIS, 2015).

Figure 12. Trends in average monthly wage in BAM (2016 – 2020)

Source: BHAS (2021)

According to the 2018 Global Gender Gap Index, inequality in estimated earnings between men and women in BiH was the highest in the region. Bosnia and Herzegovina ranks 105th out of 149 economies included in the analysis from WEF (USAID, 2019). Although men are still favoured, gender equality is slightly better when comparing wage levels for comparable work. With an equal pay score of 0.64, BiH ranks 77th globally, outperforming Serbia and Croatia among its neighbours (USAID, 2019).

Figure 13. Gender pay gap by occupational group (2016-2020)

Source: BHAS, 2021

The gender pay gap by specific occupations was analyzed using available data from 2016 to 2020. Figure 11 illustrates gender pay gap in different occupations over a period from 2016 to 2020. The horizontal axis represents the gender pay gap in percentages. The values on the positive horizontal axis reflect the gender pay gap in favour of men, while negative values reflect gender pay gap in favour of women. Overall, there is a pronounced gender pay gap; with men being paid 37.8% more than women in 2020. The most pronounced gender pay gap is among armed forces, plant and machine operators and assemblers, and craft and related trades workers. This observation is expected given that these occupations consist of men predominated tasks. Women working in the service and sales occupations earned on average 3.6% more than men in the same occupation in 2020. In the same year, men professionals and clerical workers earned on average 27% and 11% less than women professionals and clerical workers, respectively. The gender pay gap for managerial positions is also pronounced. Such finding is not surprising, as women in managerial positions in BiH are usually employed at lower managerial levels such as administration or heads of departments, where they earn significantly less than men. This occurrence was previously reported by Selimović et al. (2020)¹⁹ in a study of women engagement in managerial positions in public-owned enterprises in FBiH. This suggests that many managers in BiH face a glass ceiling, an invisible barrier that prevents them from climbing the corporate ladder to higher-paid managerial positions.

19 Selimović, J., Kovačević, J., Veselinović, Lj., Šestić, M., Kurtić, E., Mahmutćehajić, F. And Izmirlija, M. (2021). Women Representation and Engagement in State-owned enterprises in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – The Gender Analysis Report. School of Economics and Business at University of Sarajevo.

The gender pay gap reflects a wide range of inequalities that women face in access to work, career advancement and pay, and is a broader concept than pay discrimination (European Commission, 2021). It may include sectoral segregation, unequal division of paid and unpaid work, pay discrimination, but much of the gender pay gap remains unexplained. Early research found that women and men were paid similarly in high- or low-paying jobs. However, the number of men employed was higher in all other pay grades, with the most significant difference observed in the 401-500 KM pay scale, where there were three men for every woman employed, and women received a total of 46% of what men earned (Somun-Krupalija, 2011).

4.1.6 Recommendations

- Raise awareness among government, employers, and unions about the legal framework and its impact on the public and private sectors, particularly with regard to transparent and equal employment practices, gender discrimination in job postings and interviews, and discrimination in the workplace.
- Training and education programs in schools aimed at breaking-down gender stereotypes in employment, attracting more women to non-traditional occupations, and providing more general training for hard-to-place groups of people through formal educational institutions.
- Educational programs for employment agencies, business associations, and government institutions to raise awareness of the unequal distribution of work in the family.
- Harmonizing the enrolment policies and curricula of educational institutions with the needs of the labour market and enabling better cooperation between educational institutions, public employment agencies, and employers in the design of enrolment policies
- Enabling gender-disaggregated data collection for all major aspects of the labour market, especially for paid and unpaid care work and entrepreneurship, for which there is no data in BiH.
- Enable the collection of data on informality in the labour market, starting with the composition of the informal labour market itself.

these measures, gender has not been considered as a relevant factor, although specific banking policy measures can be assessed as *gender positive*, in practice if not in design such as the instructions by banking agencies to commercial banks and micro-credit organizations to approve particular measures to support clients who have been facing aggravated circumstances due to COVID-19 pandemic (Hrelja-Hasečić, 2021). The summary of banking policy measures in BiH is presented in Table 2.

Table 3. Direct Income Support Packages during COVID-19

Measure	Level	Impact
Price controls	FBiH RS BD	Control of prices of specific goods and services in both entities
Social security subsidies	FBiH	Subsidies for each employee of BAM 244.9 (FBiH)
Wage subsidies	FBiH RS	Salary contributions for all employees in the formal sector (from March 2020 until one month after the end of the state of emergency) of BAM 245 per employee (FBiH); BAM 58 million allocated for coverage of total salary contributions in April 2020 and coverage of taxes for citizens most affected by COVID-19
Vouchers	RS	Vouchers to citizens that can be used to co-finance accommodations anywhere in RS of a minimum three-night stay
Paid absence from work for childcare	FBiH RS	In both entities, one of the employed parents, including single-parent households, with children up to ten, could be released from work during the crisis period as a justified and paid absence.

Source: OECD (2021), Women in Business, OSCE (2020)

Direct income support packages provided direct support to individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures included price-fixings, social security subsidies, wage subsidies, vouchers, and paid absence from work for childcare. Such efforts have had a positive effect on gender equality, but this positive effect was again coincidental. No gender-segregated forecasts of the impact of these measures was undertaken by governments, nor was there any indication that gender monitoring was conducted, as gender was not taken into consideration as a relevant factor in the process of tailoring direct income support measures (Hrelja-Hasečić, 2021).

4.2.4 Policy Responses to Labour Market Developments

Immediate government responses alleviated the initial labour market shock in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. In RS, a Compensation Fund of BAM 58 million was established to cover minimum wages and related contributions for approximately 70,000 workers in the most affected industries in April and May 2020. This measure was extended after May 2020, but only to cover taxes and contributions and not the minimum wage (UN, 2020).

A similar measure was introduced in FBiH, with funds of BAM 90 million for covering salary contributions of BAM 245 per employee in the formal sector, from March until one month after the state of emergency (Hrelja-Hasečić, 2021). This measure provides subsidies for minimum wages, but only for companies in which a decrease in turnover of 20% or more was recorded compared to the turnover in the same month in 2019. The company could claim its right to a subsidy under the condition that it had settled the contributions and personal income tax payable by February 2020.

Government responses in the labour market through subsidies to the cost of labour appear to have been in preventing a large increase in unemployment by covering minimum wages and/or contributions in the enterprises and sectors most affected by the lockdown and its consequences. The nature of such responses is short-term and lacked a broader and co-ordinated social protection perspective, it neglected informal workers and many women supporting their families (UN, 2020), and other vulnerable groups in the labour market such as persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, LGBTIAQ+, and other marginalized groups in the labour market and society.

4.2.5 Gender Sensitivity of Policy Responses

The gender mainstreaming institutions in BiH, namely, the Agency for Gender Equality of BiH and the Gender Centres of FBiH and RS, responded timely after the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March 2020 with a rapid gender analysis of COVID-19's impact and the formulation of sets of recommendations in different priority areas (Hrelja-Hasecic, 2021).

Notwithstanding these recommendations by the Agency and Gender Centres, an assessment of the immediate response measures by governments implies that the latter did not adopt a gender-sensitive approach to drafting measures in both entities (Hrelja-Hasečić, 2021). Although the rising numbers of women registered jobseekers in the labour market in 2020 implied the pandemic has contributed to widening gender gaps in the labour market, no targeted women employment programs have been introduced. This has been confirmed in communication with experts and representatives from government institutions and ministries who participated in this research. In addition to the lack of awareness of the worsening gender gaps in the labour market, no consideration was given to how the adopted measures would affect women-owned enterprises. Furthermore, the proposed criteria for economic recovery did not include enterprises launched in 2020, as such companies could not register a revenue decline in the previous year. As a result of these limitations the economic recovery measures did not recognize the difficulties women entrepreneurs faced in applying for support. Women-owned enterprises frequently lacked the time and human resources required to gather the necessary documentation to apply for recovery programs. Under COVID-19 pandemic circumstances, the additional burden of care for family and household hampered the implementation of these administrative tasks, preventing many women business owners from timely applying for government support.

Limited support programs for mitigating the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic were tailored exclusively for women, such as:

- FBiH Chamber of Commerce and FBiH Gender Centre introduced “Support Program for Women Affected by Coronavirus - Implementation of Online Business” in 2020. The program aimed to empower and support women whose business activities were jeopardized by the

4.2.7 Mid-term and Long-term Policy Developments

Economic and social disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic may have lasting effects on employment, income, and working conditions. At the same time, there are significant differences across economies in the labour market and social policy responses deployed to help mitigate these effects. In that sense, understanding how the pandemic affected labour markets in the developing world is crucial as governments and other actors continue to develop responses (Khamis et al., 2021)⁴³. Employment impacts can be severe and risk long-lasting effects if responses are not swift and comprehensive (Carranza et al. 2020)⁴⁴.

In Republika Srpska, the Employment Strategy of Repbulika Srpska 2021 – 2027 was developed and adopted. This Strategy is focused on strategic objectives of increasing the employment of a more productive labour force by harmonizing supply and demand in the labour market, increasing the internal mobility and availability of labor; improving the functioning of the labour market, and promoting social dialogue and improving social inclusion to ensure equal opportunities. In addition to implementing active measures from the Action Plan that follows the Employment Strategy, there are complementary employment measures of other bodies and institutions. The adopted action plan includes vulnerable target groups, such as children of war veterans, injured and disabled war veterans, and demobilized veterans of the Army of Republika Srpska.

In FBiH, the draft of the Employment Strategy has been developed. Preparing the draft of the Employment Strategy included vertical coordination and harmonization of responsibilities and processes between the relevant institutions at different levels of government in FBiH. In formulating the draft of the Employment Strategy, efforts were made to harmonize the document with the Development Strategy of FBiH for the period 2021-2027. The draft of the Employment Strategy addresses the promotion of self-employment and improvement of skills, promoting the capacity of private sector companies to open formal jobs, ensuring the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the labour market through more effective active labour market policies, strengthening labour market governance and increasing policy implementation capacity. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasis in the draft of the Employment Strategy was placed on mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market, including measures for stimulating labour demand, promoting employment opportunities by improving labour market conditions, active employment support, creating an effective and inclusive public employment services, promoting social dialogue and ensuring effective implementation of labour regulations throughout FBiH, as well as addressing high unemployment and inactivity, especially of young people, women, long-term unemployed, and other vulnerable groups in the labour market (FBiH, 2020)⁴⁵. It should be noted that at the time of this report, the draft of the Employment Strategy of FBiH has not yet been adopted.



43 Khamis, Melanie., Daniel Prinz, David Newhouse, Amparo Palacios Lopez, Utz Pape and Michael Weber. 2021. The Early Labor Market Impacts of COVID-19 in Developing Countries: Evidence from High-Frequency Phone Surveys. World Bank, Washington, DC. License: Creative Commons

44 Carranza, Eliana, Indhira Santos, Matteo Morgandi, Michael Weber, Thomas Farole, Truman Packard and Ugo Gentilini. 2020. Managing the Employment Impacts of The COVID-19 Crisis: Policy Options For Relief And Restructuring. World Bank, Washington, DC.

45 FBiH 2020. Strategija zapošljavanja u Federaciji Bosne i Hercegovine 2021 – 2027. Available at: <https://parlamentfbih.gov.ba/v2/userfiles/file/Materijali%20u%20proceduri%202021/Prijedlog%20Strategije%20zapo%C5%A1ljavanja%20u%20Federaciji%20BiH%20-%20bosanski%20jezik.pdf> (Accessed 15 January 2022)

In alignment with the Employment Strategy in Republika Srpska and the draft of the Employment Strategy of FBiH, the planned activities of the employment services in BiH in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis will largely be conditioned by the contingencies caused by the pandemic. The period ahead will be marked primarily by initiatives to stabilize economic conditions, and the labor market. This means employment services in BiH will have to tailor specific labor market policies to prevent and remedy the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market. With that regard, the most critical employment services activities will focus on two essential activities: supporting persons who lost jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic and developing active employment policies and measures reflecting the current financial realities and needs in the labour market. Such efforts include job placement, counseling and employment, and self-employment support programs⁴⁶.

4.2.8 Recommendations

- Ensure gender-disaggregated data are regularly published and analysed through gender-sensitive lenses in the process of tailoring measures at all administrative levels in BiH.
- Consistently implement and enforce regulations related to gender equality,
- Increase budget allocations to address gender-responsive budgeting at all administrative levels in BiH.
- Define support programs in governmental and non-governmental institutions to promote women's equality in the labour market.
- Together with wage subsidies, it is essential to strengthen and modify active labour market policies in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly policies focused on women in entrepreneurship, intermediation services, and skills training.
- Support informal workers through household-level interventions by updating PES registries with information on characteristics which might be a cause of future discrimination by employers (e.g. women from minority groups such as ethnic and religious minorities, LGBTIAQ, women with disabilities, and so on). This requires collecting gender-disaggregated information on potential beneficiaries, their identities, and location.
- Initiate a broad social dialogue involving relevant stakeholders and social partners such as women NGOs, international organizations focused on gender equality, and worker unions when designing measures for alleviating the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

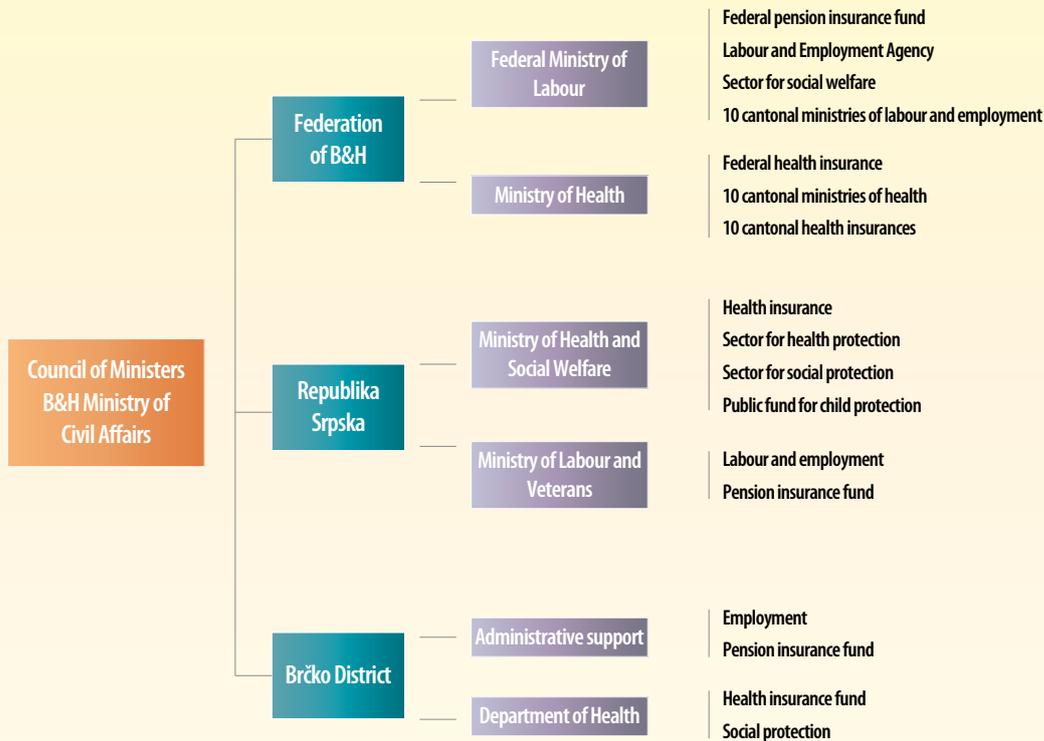
4.3 Governance of Employment Policy and Institutional Strengthening

In BiH, activities have been initiated to strengthen the mediating role of the employment services. Labor market policies need to target increasing the efficiency of the BiH labour market, which means focusing on active policy measures and services aimed at shortening the duration of unemployment and continuously raising overall competitiveness. Emphasis also needs to be placed on developing human resources and administrative capacities in creating and providing new services and ensuring the leading position of public employment services in the labour market. The PES continues to implement the already started reforms aimed at strengthening employment services in BiH and creating the preconditions for the successful implementation of active measures (LEA, 2020).

4.3.1 An Overview of the Governance of Employment Policy

In analysing the design and implementation of employment policy in BiH, it is essential to understand the governance structure of governmental labour market structures. The complex administrative system in BiH creates complexity within the institutional setup of the governance of employment policy. Within RS, functions and responsibilities for employment policy are centralized at the entity level. However, in FBiH responsibility for several functions related to employment policy is decentralized to the cantonal level, as illustrated in the figure below. With that regard, there are BiH-level institutions in charge of labour and employment, namely the Ministry of Civil Affairs and LEA; institutions at entity level in FBiH (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and Federal Employment Institute) and Republika Srpska (Ministry of Labour and War Veterans, Labour Inspectorate and Employment Institute); institutions at regional level (in FBiH there are ten cantonal ministries in charge for labour and employment and in Republika Srpska there are six regional offices) and offices at local/municipal level (in FBiH 74 offices and Republika Srpska 63 offices). This complex structure results in a total of 178 institutions responsible for labour market administration under the jurisdiction of entities and Brčko District.

By the provisions of Article III of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the entities have jurisdiction to regulate the field of labour and employment. By the defined jurisdiction, the area of labour legislation is within the jurisdiction of the entities and the Brčko District of BiH, and their legislative bodies are responsible for passing laws and bylaws in the field of labour legislation. The Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina is accountable for performing tasks within the jurisdiction at the BiH-level, related to establishing basic principles for the coordination of activities, harmonization of plans of entity authorities, and defining the strategy at the international level, in the field of labour, employment, social protection and pensions. The structure of employment-related policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina is complicated as several levels of responsibilities exist for implementing employment policy and developing employment strategies. The current system of labour administration is fragmented, with functions assigned to different administrative levels with little coordination both horizontally and vertically.

Figure 16. Employment governance in BiH

Source: Adapted from O'Higgins (2014)

LEA has the following core responsibilities: represents the Agency in the field of employment in the areas within its competencies, cooperates with agencies, institutions and international organizations competent in these fields; meets international obligations undertaken in the field of employment in coordination with the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina; monitors the application of international standards and policies in the area of work and participates in their implementation in cooperation with entity employment services and the Employment Service of BD; co-ordinates activities in domestic and international projects in the field of employment which are to the interest of BiH and cooperates with entity employment services and the Employment Service of BD in their implementation; and proposes to the Council of Ministers, through the line ministry of BiH, long-term, medium-term and annual plans for labour market policy guidelines and active employment measures in BiH together with entity employment services and the Employment Service of BD.

4.3.2 Legal and Policy Framework

Jurisdictions that directly or indirectly relate to labour legislation in BiH are at the level of the entities (FBiH and RS) and BD. In FBiH, specific competencies in the field of labour and social law are in the exclusive jurisdiction of the entity, others in shared or joint jurisdiction, and some in the exclusive jurisdiction of the cantons. This further complicates the normative framework for the establishment of uniformly regulated labour and social legislation in the political-territorial unit of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Purišević and Kržalić).

Table 4. Overview of legislation on employment in BiH

BiH		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on Work in BiH Institutions 26/04 • Law on Amendments to the Law on Labour in BiH Institutions (Official Gazette BiH 07/05) • Law on Amendments to the Law on Work in BiH Institutions (Official Gazette BiH 48/05) • Law on Amendments to the Law on Work in BiH Institutions (Official Gazette BiH 60/10) • Law on Amendments to the Law on Work in BiH Institutions (Official Gazette BiH 32/13) • Law on Amendments to the Law on Work in BiH Institutions (Official Gazette BiH 93/17) • Law on Gender Equality (Official Gazette BiH 102/09) • Law on Prohibition of Discrimination (Official Gazette BiH 59/09) 		
FBiH	RS	BD
Labour Law of FBiH (Official Gazette of the FBiH 62/15)	Labour Law of the RS (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 1/2016)	Labour Law of Brčko District of BiH (Official Gazette of Brčko District of BiH, No. 19/2006 consolidated text, 19/2007, 25/2008, 20/2013, 31/2014 and 1/2015)
Law on Pension and Disability Insurance of FBiH 2018	Law on Contributions (Official Gazette of RS, No. 114/2017)	
Strike Law of FBiH (Official Gazette of the FBiH 14/00)	Law on Civil Servants (Official Gazette of RS, No. 118/2008, 117/2011, 37/2012 and 57/2016)	Law on Public Administration of Brčko District of BiH (Official Gazette of the BRČKO DISTRICT OF BIH, No. 19/2007, 2/2008, 43/2008, 9/2013 and 48/2016)
Law on Employment of Foreigners (Official Gazette of FBiH 8/99)	Law on Occupational Health and Safety of RS with Rulebook	
Law on the Employees' Council (Official Gazette of the FBiH 39/04)	Law on Records in the Field of Labour and Health Insurance (Official Gazette of RS, No. 18/1994 and 64/2006)	Law on Strike (Official Gazette of the Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, No. 3/2006)
Law on Mediation in Employment and Social Security of Unemployed Persons (Official Gazette of the FBiH 41/01)	Law on Health Care (Official Gazette of RS, No. 106/2009 and 44/2015)	Law on Health Care in Brčko District of BiH (Official Gazette of the Brčko District of BiH, No. 38/2011, 9/2013, 27/2014 and 3/2015)
Law on Amendments to the Law on Mediation in Employment and Social Security of Unemployed Persons (Official Gazette of the FBiH 24/05)	Law on Pension and Disability Insurance (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 134/2011, 82/2013, 96/2013 - Decision US I 103/2015)	Law on Health Insurance of Brčko District of BiH (Official Gazette of Brčko District of BiH, No. 1/2002, 7/2002, 19/2007, 2/2008 and 34/2008)
Law on Occupational Safety (Official Gazette of FBiH 22/90)	Law on Income Tax (Official Gazette of RS, No. 60/2015 and 5/2016 - amended)	

Since 2011, the RS has adopted three strategic documents focused on employment and the labour market. The Employment strategy for the period 2021 – 2027 was adopted under significantly changed circumstances compared to previous periods, primarily due to the adverse effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which as previously analysed has had a significant impact on socio-economic trends. The strategy is based upon four strategic goals: (i) increasing the employment of a more productive labour force by harmonizing supply and demand in the labour market; (ii) increasing internal mobility and availability of labour; (iii) improving the functioning of the labour market and social dialogue and (iv) improving social inclusion to ensure equal opportunities. Each goal has its priorities and measures that will be implemented through annual action plans. At the same time, the Government of RS adopted the Action Plan for Employment in RS for 2022. To implement the Employment Action Plan, the Government provided funds for BAM 14 million. The implementation of active employment measures determined by this Action Plan and the provided financial resources supports the employment of 3,670 persons.

As for BD, the Government has adopted the Strategy for Development of BD for 2021 – 2027. One of the priority areas defined in the Strategy is developing the labour market. This priority is becoming more pronounced and essential if the negative consequences of the migration of skilled labour to EU member states are to be reduced. On the other hand, active employment measures, while maintaining an orientation towards harder-to-employ categories, should be more targeted towards women and young people. Within this priority, the following steps have been defined as follows: (i) professional training of unemployed persons actively seeking employment; (ii) employment program for unemployed persons from the categories of hard-to-employ and women; (iii) harmonization of the labour market and the education system through improved career guidance and counselling and (iv) support for self-employment in the economy.

4.3.3 Current Progress of Employment Policy

The latest ERPs for BiH have contained several employment and VET measures. In the ERPs for periods 2019 – 2021, 2010-2022, and 2021-2023 the critical reform measures have included increasing labour market efficiency through creating a supportive legal environment to strengthen the role of employment mediation and effective employment policy, and training programs, vocational training, and development of adults with a focus on women to facilitate their integration into the labour market. In ERPs 2021–2023, one of the crucial measures targeting the labour market is to increase the efficiency of the labour market through harmonizing legislation with European legislation and strengthening employment policies through strengthening the placement role of the PES. The inclusion of this latter measure represents a continuation of ongoing reforms in the PES.

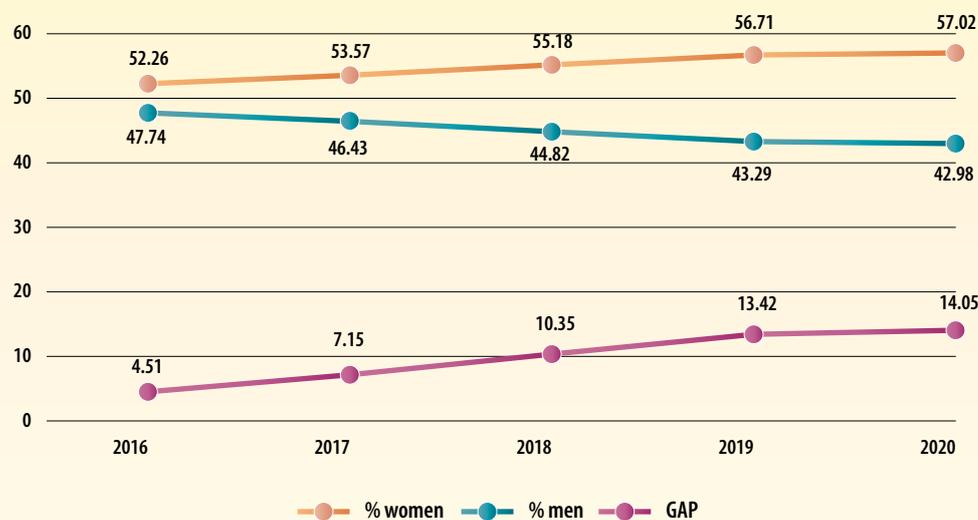
Enforcement of labour, health and safety, and employment laws should create fair and secure working conditions for workers. Also, the implementation of strategic documents and projects in employment should increase the employment rate. The adoption of the Law on Amendments to the Labour Law, which contains provisions related to the organization of work and certain rights and obligations from employment in FBiH, should also have an impact. Another significant breakthrough was that PES in RS has been released from having to service health insurance by separating active job seekers from those persons registered only to exercise their right to health insurance and other rights whose exercise is conditioned by unemployment status. By separating active from passive jobseekers, the placing role of

PES in RS has been strengthened with the purpose of speeding up the placement of persons actively seeking employment and improving cooperation with employers.

Although ERPs for 2019–2021, 2010–2022, and 2021–2023 outline the importance of social protection and inclusion, unemployment remain the most severe economic and social challenge in BiH. Its effects directly affect the unemployed and their families, but they equally weaken the economy and society. Despite recent positive trends, unemployment in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still primarily structural and high. Regardless of recent improvements in employment policy, BiH is faced with many challenges, as its administrative structure hampers improvements in both entities and BD, particularly in the domain of improved integrating women and vulnerable groups into the labour market. The COVID-19 pandemic has made women and marginalized groups more exposed and vulnerable to the adverse effects of the pandemic and the containment measures imposed by governments in BiH. It follows that, employment policies should explicitly include gender sensitive and inclusive ALMPs as mechanisms for improved integration of vulnerable groups to the labour market in BiH.

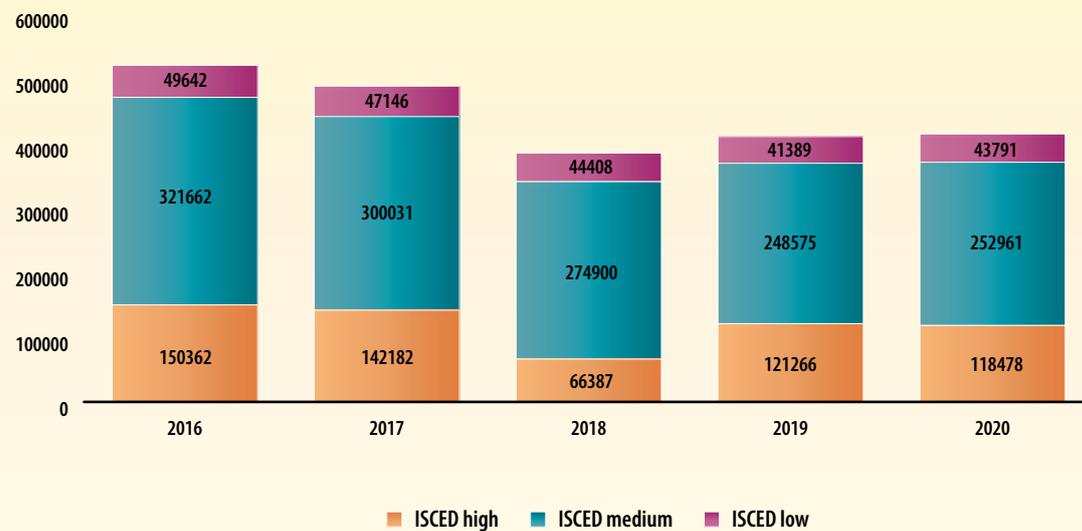
4.3.4 Recommendations

- Gender-responsive budgeting has not resulted in the sustainable application of gender equality principles in the labour market. Addressing this failure needs to become a top priority in employment and related policies.
- The current system of governance is fragmented and complex. Lack of a cohesive approach to employment policy has put people, especially young people, women, Roma, and people from other vulnerable groups, at exceptionally high risk of long-term unemployment and inactivity. It is necessary to consistently implement ALMPs explicitly targeted to vulnerable groups in the labour market in both entities and BD.
- Develop mechanisms for monitoring and analysis of the state of play in the labour market, including employment trends, and unemployment by gender for informed decision-making in the domain of gender-sensitive employment policies.
- Strengthen and develop entrepreneurship through financing and co-financing of self-employment programs.
- At the level of BiH, well-functioning coordination and consultation mechanisms to contribute to the ERP process should be established to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of policy implementation.
- Some measures to promote employment and social welfare are not credible as they lack funding. It is essential to ensure budgetary allocations to implement effective labour market policies, with a particular focus on the gender dimension.

Figure 19. The gender gap in registered jobseekers (2016-2020)

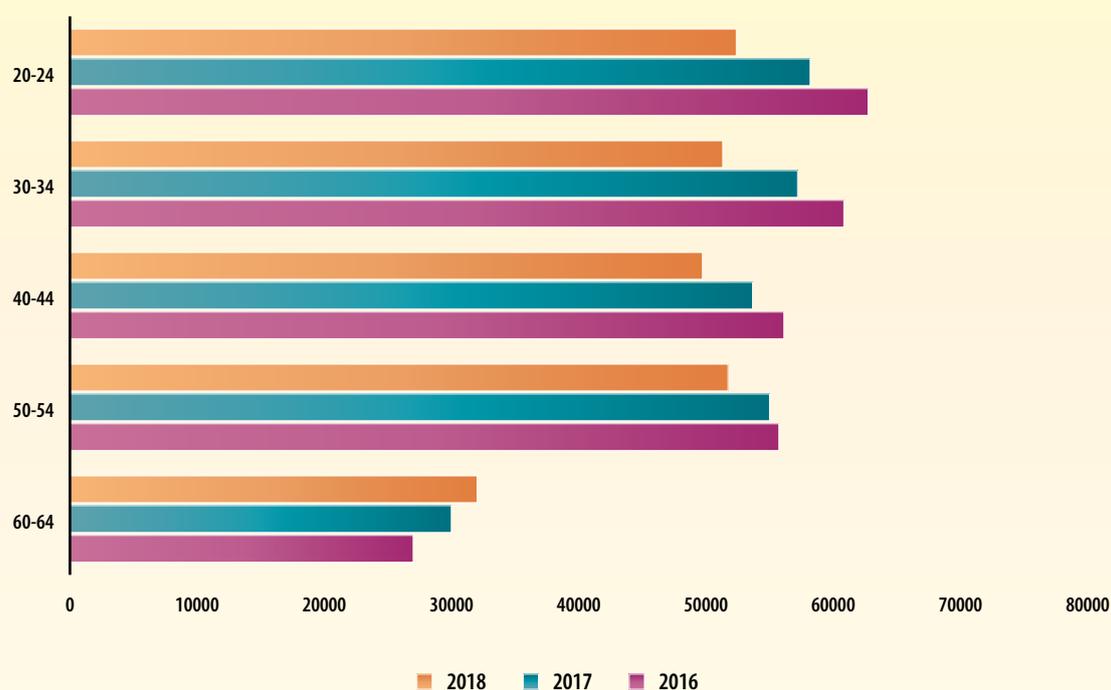
Source: LEA, 2021

The compilation, publication and monitoring of gender disaggregated data are considered to be a PES priority and assist the addressing of the gender disparities in the labour market. Where available, such data show there is a significant gender gap in registered jobseekers in BiH. Over the timespan from 2016 to 2020, there has been a steady increase in the number of female registered jobseekers, while the number of male registered jobseekers has been declining for the same period. The highest gender gap was recorded in 2020, which could also be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it should be noted that the positive trend in female jobseekers may also be attributed to factors other than a pandemic, including changing structural and socio-cultural barriers to entering the labour market. During interviews with representatives and experts it has been evident that men are typically considered to be the “first choice” of employers, being perceived as more employable than women. Overall, women have a lower rate of activity in the labour market than men, particularly those with a lower level of education and of an older age. What makes women more susceptible to this gender-based discrimination in the labour market is their parental role and possibility of becoming pregnant when in employment.

Figure 20. Administrative data on registered jobseekers by education/qualification 2016-2021

Source: LEA, 2021

Gender disaggregated data by education and age were not readily available, and hence we cannot draw inferences on the status of women of differing ages and educational backgrounds. A closer look at the administrative data on registered jobseekers illuminates that over 60% of job seekers were at ISCED medium level, with completed secondary vocational education. In contrast, job seekers with tertiary education (ISCED high level) represent only 9.5% to 10.5% of all registered job seekers from 2016 to 2021. When comparing data from 2019 and 2020, there is a noticeable increase in the number of registered jobseekers, particularly those with tertiary education and secondary vocational education, with an increase of 2,402 and 4,386 registered jobseekers, respectively. Compared to total working age population in 2016, the total number of registered job seekers represented 20.9% of total working age population. In subsequent years, the share of registered job seekers in total working age population started declining, from 20.3% in 2017 to 14.2% in 2020.

Figure 21. Administrative data on registered jobseekers by age 2016-2018*

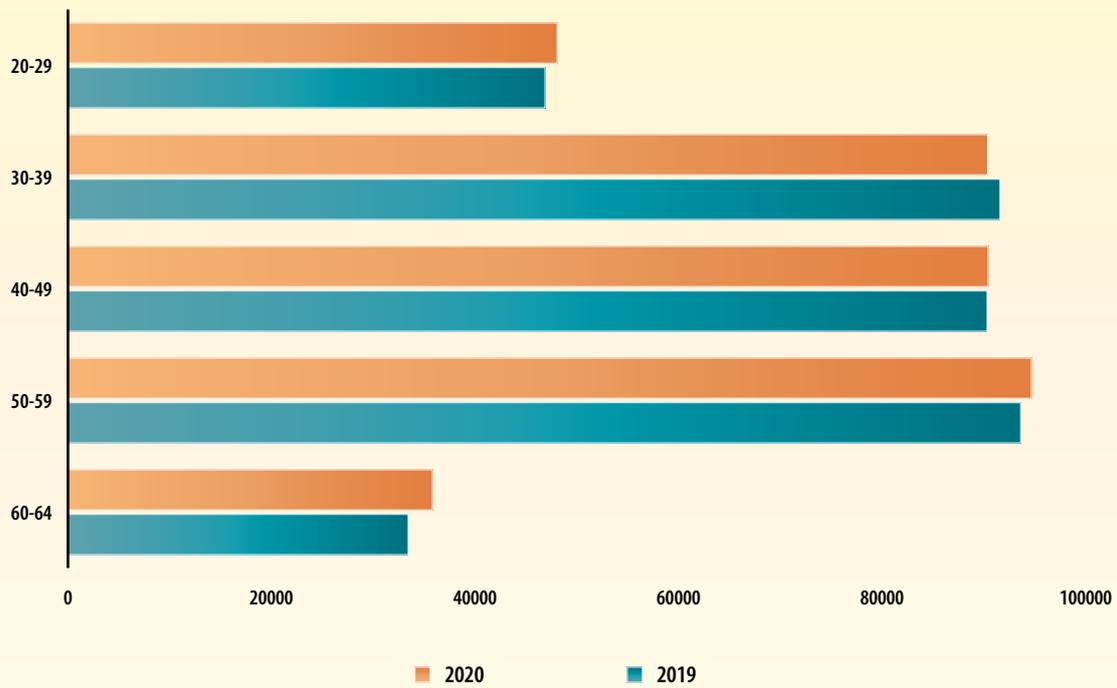
Source: LEA, 2021

Note: * for 2016, data available only for FBiH and Republika Srpska, excluding Brčko District

Before 2018, registered jobseekers aged between 25 and 29 were the predominant age group of jobseekers on the PES registries in BiH. This share has since fallen, and by 2020, this group of registered jobseekers represented 12.82% of the total number of registered jobseekers.

However, it is advised that data illustrated in figures 21 and 22 should be interpreted with caution, as there were no data available for Brčko District in 2016, and since 2019 the age groups in official reports and statistics have been redefined (e.g., age groups 20 – 24 and 25 – 29 have been merged into one group 20 – 29). Data for 2019 and 2020 show the predominance of registered jobseekers aged 50 – 59 years which are the jobseekers with the poorest prospects of being placed in employment.

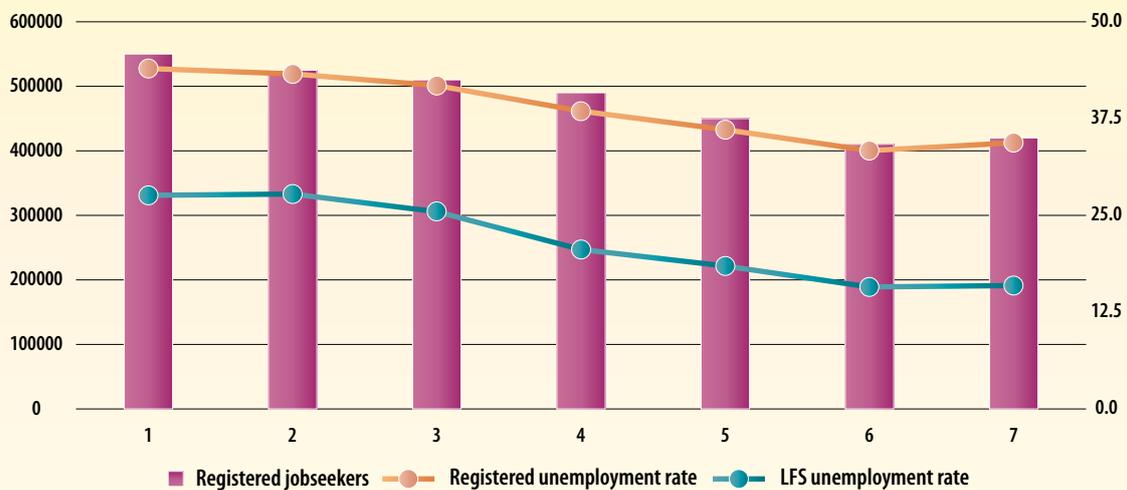
Figure 22. Administrative data on registered jobseekers by age, 2019 - 2020



Source: LEA, 2021

Figure 23 illustrates the discrepancy between registered and official unemployment ranging from 15.5% in 2015 to 18.4% in 2020. Such a high discrepancy between different unemployment rates indicates that some persons register just to be eligible for unemployment cash benefits and are not actively looking for a job. This discrepancy also arises because persons registering for unemployment benefits qualify for health insurance (UNDP, 2020). Other persons may meet all the unemployment criteria but are looking

Figure 23. Discrepancies between registered unemployment (PES) vs. LFS unemployment



Source: data provided by LEA, 2020

for a job independently, so they are not registered with the PES. The PES in BiH has been overwhelmed by their responsibility to pay health insurance for the unemployed, which incentivises both some inactive and informally employed to register as unemployed. These people must go to an employment office every six months. This practice burdens the frontline PES staff, who are left with little time to carry out their placement role in matching vacancies with job-seekers. The employment institutes and offices in BiH, at all levels, are generally overloaded with activities that fall into the category of passive measures. Hence, relevant activities of these institutes and offices, such as career advising, motivating jobseekers, and assisting workers wishing to change the job, are not possible in a situation of work overload in the domain of passive measures (Bench-learning report for BiH, 2018).

4.4.3 The role of PES on Labour Market Employability and Integration

In 2020 measures were planned to strengthen the placing role of employment services in BiH, as part of a continuing reform process. Emphasis was also placed developing ALMPs and the PES's human resources and administrative capacities to provide new services, (LEA, 2020). However, COVID-19 pandemic and containment measures introduced by governments in BiH required reorganization of the operational process in employment institutes and offices in BiH, which significantly impacted their work in 2021. The essential activities of employment institutes and offices in BiH were focused on two critical activities:

- given the significant increase in persons who lost their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic, and especially the number of new beneficiaries was planned to increase the budgetary allocations for benefits;
- development of a portfolio of active employment policies, reflecting the current financial possibilities and the needs of the labour market, with particular emphasis on mediation, counselling, and employment and self-employment support programs.

Box 1. Promoting the employment of persons from vulnerable groups

Both entities FBiH and RS have their own laws that regulate the rehabilitation, training, and employment of persons with disabilities. These laws also provide the legal basis for the establishment of funding for professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities. General and specific conditions for employment of persons with disabilities have been determined under these laws. In RS, a minimum of 40% disability, and 70% physical disability must be proven; while in FBiH the minimum disability is 60% and 70% for physical impairment and reduced working ability. By amending this law in FBiH, employers are required to employ at least one person with a disability for every 16 employees. If they do not fulfil this requirement, they are obliged to pay a special contribution to the Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities monthly. This contribution amounts to 25% of the average gross salary in FBiH. The laws applicable in the RS stipulate similarly, implying that in case the employer does not employ one person with a disability for every 16 employees, the employer is obliged to pay a monthly contribution to the Fund in RS in the amount of 0.2% of the paid gross salaries of all employees.

4.4.4 Recommendations

- As there are no consistent practices in reporting gender-segregated data in RS and BD, improving this reporting should be considered imperative for the PES to accurately identify vulnerable groups of women and provide them with suitable support in finding employment. Data on the number of vacancies, the number of those filled by the PES and the gender of those placed by the PES should be published and used to assess the effectiveness of local PES offices.
- It is of importance to improve self-employment programs for those starting their own business throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although such programs exist in FBiH (Women Entrepreneurship Program implemented in 2018, 2019, and 2020), similarly targeted programs should be considered for introduction in RS and BD.
- Self-employment programs should mainly target women in rural areas where agriculture is the dominant activity and areas with the highest informal employment rate. Women in rural areas do work, but this work is frequently not formalized. Consequently, they do not enjoy the benefits from registration of their activities and paying contributions to health insurance and social welfare.
- There should be greater participation of women in training and retraining programs, particularly for those groups of women over 40, who do not have qualifications or belong to occupations for which there is no demand in the labour market. Such programs, courses, and retraining programs would enable these groups of women to acquire skills and competencies which could aid them in finding jobs.

4.5 Analysis of the Active Labour Market Policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina

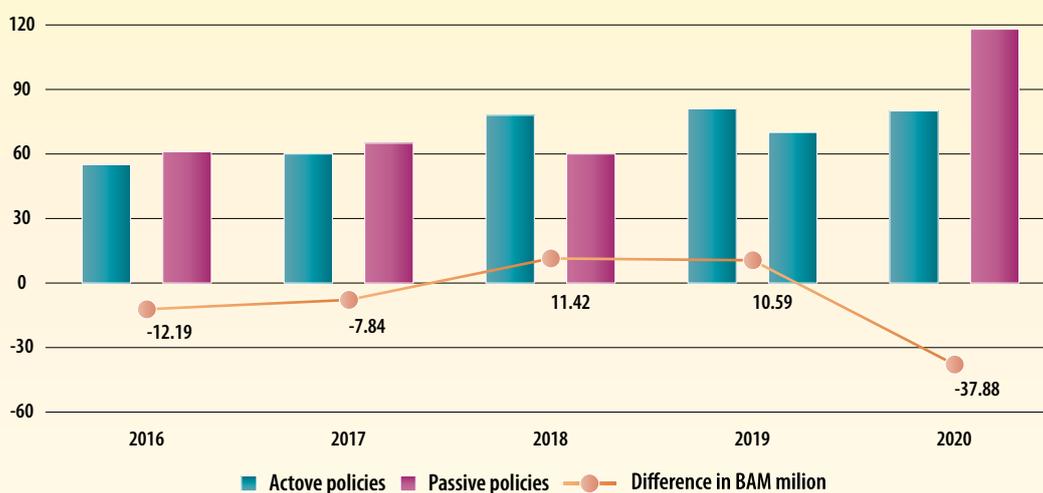
This chapter provides an overview of the strategic and legal framework for ALMPs, and policies that are implemented in the entities and BD. In addition, the chapter offers an insight into the gendered perspectives of ALMPs implemented in BiH.

4.5.1 Strategic and Legal Framework on Skills Development and Employment in BiH

The primary strategic documents that create a framework for ALMPs in FBiH and RS are the Strategies for Employment for both entities for 2021-2027. In BD, however, ALMPs are conceptualized under the Development Strategy of BD. The strategic framework in both entities addresses the harmonization of supply and demand in the labour market and improving levels of employment and the quality of jobs. It promotes the inclusion of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the labour market. Furthermore,

both at the central and local levels. Finally, one of the strategic objectives should indeed be focused on social inclusion, labour integration, and protection of persons who, for several objective reasons, are not in an equal position with other persons in the labour market.

Figure 24. Active vs. passive measures expenditures in million BAM, 2016 - 2020



Source: Development Report BiH 2020, LEA, 2020

According to the Development Report BiH (2020), more than BAM 193 million was spent on active and passive employment measures in BiH in 2020, an increase of almost BAM 40 million compared to the previous reporting period. This increased expenditure was largely the result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as passive allocations account for a significant share of increased spending. There have been substantial changes in passive measures during pandemic COVID-19 as BAM 115.5 million were spent, amounting to almost BAM 44 million more than in 2019. When analysing recent data, in 2016 and 2017 more funds were allocated to passive measures, whilst 2018 and 2019 more was spent on active measures. The pandemic significantly affected the pattern of spending, with in 2020 expenditure on passive policies exceeding that on active ones by almost BAM 38 million.

4.5.2 Analysis of the Active Labour Market Policies in BiH

Measures related to employment support and rehabilitation are still the most popular type of ALMP in both entities, followed by activities supporting start-ups and entrepreneurship (Development Report BiH, 2020). This overview of the different ALMPs in FBiH, RS, and BD, offers an insight into the structure of such measures, which are mainly concentrated around (a) employment incentives such as wage and contribution subsidies and (b) self-employment. Employment incentives can quickly improve the situation, as the unemployed are, at least temporarily transferred from the records of the employment institutes to new jobs. Nonetheless, these measures have a modest impact or can even negatively affect the long-term position of beneficiaries in the labour market. In addition, self-employment funds are inconsistent and have a negative trend in both entities and BD. Training and retraining measures have generally been neglected, despite their potential to address skills mismatch in the labour market.

Table 5. Overview of approved ALMPs in FBiH 2018 - 2020

Type	ALMPs in FBiH	Target jobseekers	Short description
Internship	First job experience (young, educated persons, with tertiary education)	Young unemployed persons up to the age of 30	Provides opportunities for young persons to attain first job experience in the field of their previous education specialism
Wage subsidies	Women employment	Unemployed women	Efficient integration of women into the labour market and reduction of their unemployment rate
	Opportunity for all - the possibility of extended co-financing	Unemployed persons with work experience	Efficient integration into the labour market
	Contribution 500	Unemployed persons	Efficient integration in the labour market and prevention of long-term unemployment, through subsidies for employers in the private sector through refunds of contributions up to BAM 500 per month
	Periodic/seasonal employment	Unemployed persons registered as jobseekers	Enable integration in the labour market, preventing long-term unemployment and aiding employers in attracting labour force in line with their seasonal needs
Wage subsidies	Looking for Employer	Unemployed persons registered as jobseekers	Enable integration in the labour market, prevent long-term unemployment, and increase the motivation of persons for actively seeking jobs
	New Opportunity	Vulnerable unemployed persons aged 40+, persons registered as unemployed for at least 12 months, persons without qualifications	Enable integration in the labour market for persons in a vulnerable situation
	Recruitment of demobilized war veterans	Unemployed war veterans	Co-financing the employment of war veterans registered as jobseekers to help integrate them into the labour market
	Roma employment program	Unemployed Roma persons	Integration of vulnerable groups into the labour market

Community works	Public works	Unemployed persons registered as jobseekers	Mitigating consequences of unemployment and integration of persons in the labour market through temporary employment
	Aid for those in need	Unemployed persons registered as jobseekers	Mitigating consequences of unemployment and integration of persons in the labour market through temporary responsible employment in communities
Self-employment	Youth entrepreneurship	Unemployed persons registered as jobseekers	Encourage registered jobseekers through providing funds for starting own business for at least 12 months and employing other registered jobseekers for at least six months
	Women's entrepreneurship		
	Entrepreneurship for all		
	Entrepreneurship for demobilized veterans		
	Second chance		
	Self-employment of Roma persons		
On-the-job training	Preparation for work - Training for employment	Unemployed persons registered as jobseekers	On-the-job training in an employers workplace for various occupations with an aim to employ the trainees for a period of up to 12 months post-training

Source: Annual Reports of Employment Institute in FBiH, 2018-2020

This list indicates that the authorities prefer a reactive, short-term approach, which helps to temporarily decrease unemployment as one of the burning social issues by using subsidies instead of exploiting the significant long-term potential of other active measures. In this sense, the existing ALMP portfolio mainly seeks to address the problems of cyclical unemployment. In contrast, the possibility of such efforts solving the problem of structural unemployment is minimal.

Table 6. Overview of approved ALMPs in RS 2018 - 2020

	ALMPs in RS	Target jobseekers	Short description
Internship	Employment support program for young people with a university degree in apprenticeship	Young unemployed persons with tertiary education	Provide opportunities for young persons to attain first job experience in the field of their education
Training	Training and retraining program in a verified institution	Unemployed persons registered as jobseekers	Enable easier integration in the labour market by improving the match between their skills and those in demand in the labour market

On-the-job training	Training and retraining program at the employer	Unemployed persons registered as jobseekers	On-the-job training for various professions to retain the trainees in employment
Wage subsidies	Program for financing the employment of children of war veterans "Together to work."	Children and youth of war veterans from RS	Enable easier integration of vulnerable groups in the labour market
Wage/contribution subsidies	Roma employment support project in RS	Unemployed persons from Roma communities	Enable easier integration of vulnerable groups in the labour market
	Program of employment and self-employment of target categories in the economy	Unemployed persons registered as jobseekers	Enable easier integration of vulnerable groups in the labour market
	Employment support program in the economy through the payment of taxes and contributions	Unemployed persons registered as jobseekers	Enable easier integration in the labour market; contribute to reducing the unemployment rate
Self-employment	Entrepreneurship development encouragement program for young persons under 35 STARTUP	Unemployed persons as registered jobseekers with a focus on youth, and vulnerable groups	Enable easier integration of vulnerable groups in the labour market; intensify partnerships with local communities to support self-employment of previously unemployed persons
	Program for financing self-employment of children of war veterans "Together to work."		
	Program to support the partnership in the implementation of active employment and self-employment policies within local communities		

Source: Source: Annual Reports of Employment Institute in RS, 2018-2020

Employment creation policies often replace regular employment with subsidised jobs that would have been created anyway, even without financial support. However, employers would rather wait for employment incentives to reduce their employment costs than advertise a vacancy once a need has been identified (Sarajlić, 2020). When assigning priorities in spending on employment measures, ALMPs are not considered as a priority as they are mainly financed from the PES's budget only after allocations are made to cover its operating costs and passive measures costs. The total workforce coverage of the ALMP programs in BiH is only 1%, for comparison in OECD countries for which data are available it is about 4% (Analitika Policy Memo, 2014).

Table 7. Overview of approved ALMPs in BD 2018 - 2020

	ALMPs in BD	Target jobseekers	Short description
Training	Labour market preparation program	Unemployed persons registered as jobseekers	Courses in different areas for which jobseekers demonstrate an interest (e.g., English language, German Language, Informatics, Web design, Business analytics for entrepreneurs)
	Labour market and education system harmonization program - career guidance and counselling	Young unemployed persons with secondary or tertiary education	The program aims to match employers with a qualified workforce; improve cooperation with employers and education institutions; to decrease the number of long-term unemployed persons
Wage subsidies	Employment program for unemployed persons from the category of hard-to-employ from the active records of the Employment Institute of the Brčko District	Long-term unemployed jobseekers; jobseekers without job experience; unemployed youth; unemployed persons over 50 years of age; persons with disabilities; children of war veterans; civil victims of war	The program enables easier integration of vulnerable groups in the labour market
	Employment of unemployed persons from the Roma community	Unemployed persons from Roma communities registered as jobseekers	The program enables easier integration of vulnerable groups in the labour market
One-time assistance	One-time assistance to unemployed persons in the records of the Employment Institute	Unemployed persons registered as jobseekers	One-time assistance in the amount of BAM 100 aims to alleviate the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic
Self-employment	Self-employment program in the Brčko District of BiH	Unemployed persons registered as jobseekers	The program aims to co-finance business ventures with positively evaluated business plans and reduce the number of unemployed persons in BD.
	Self-employment program in agriculture in BD	Unemployed persons registered as jobseekers who started or considered starting self-employment in agriculture	The program aims to develop agriculture through the self-employment of registered jobseekers

Source: Annual Reports of Employment Institute in BD, 2018-2020

Currently, human resource capacities of the PES are insufficient, which reduces the possibilities for appropriate implementation of the ALMP program. E.g., in FBiH, the provision of employment services is significantly reduced by the pressure put on counsellors by those individuals registering merely to collect benefits. In 2019 the ratio of counsellors to registered unemployed was 1: 2,000, significantly above the international average frequently used as a reference for assessing the quality of employment

Table 9. Percentage of expenditures on training and skills development programs in total ALMP expenditures in FBiH, RS, and BD, 2018 - 2020

Entity	2018	2019	2020
FBiH	0.45	1.31	1.17
RS	1.46	0.49	n/a
BD	2.06	0.70	1.70

Source: Author's calculation based on available data from Annual reports of employment institutes 2018, 2019, 2020

In contrast to expenditures on self-employment that range between 12.18% to over 50% of total ALMP expenditures, the funds for training and skills development programs remain significantly lower, with maximum of 2.06% of total ALMP expenditures, indicating that such programs are under-developed, under-represented and not recognized as effective measures for tackling unemployment and reducing skill shortages. However, no formal evaluation has been undertaken to provide support for such a conclusion.

Despite the severe impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the labour market, the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina did not increase the usage of ALMPs as instruments for tackling the crisis outcomes, and the expenditure on ALMPs decreased in 2020. ALMPs have not been used more intensively or more creatively as a means of combating the adverse effects of the COVID-19 crisis, while partial data suggests a contraction in ALMPs budgets in 2020 (Development Report BiH, 2020; ESAP report for BiH 2021). There is no system for monitoring the overall demand and supply of labour, which further complicates the management of active employment policies and the harmonization of the education system and the labour market. For active policies to be adequately planned, employment services must be “liberated” from their current responsibilities for some aspects of social policies (Development Report BiH, 2020).

4.5.3 Gender and Vulnerability Dimensions of ALMPs in BiH

ALMPs are particularly valuable for women, enabling young women to gain essential skills and work experience, providing non-traditional work opportunities, and for adult women facilitating their re-entry into the labour market after breaks resulting from childbirth and child-rearing (Kring, 2017). Evidence from numerous studies suggests that the ALMPs can have a high impact on women's employment (Bergemann and van den Berg, 2008, Card, Cluve and Weber, 2018, Dengler, 2019).

In BiH, women's high economic inactivity rate presents a challenge for implementing ALMPs (RCC, 2021), regardless of their positive impact on women as beneficiaries. Overview of ALMPs in both entities and BD from 2018 to 2020 reveals that although there are some improvements, ALMPs are not gender-sensitive and provide only limited incentives for mobility and inclusion of women in the labour market, particularly those women from vulnerable groups. Table 10 illustrates the percentage of women beneficiaries of ALMPs on programs that are not exclusively targeted towards women. The rate of women in non-targeted ALMPs remains below 50%, with somewhat better trends in RS. Gender-segregated data on the participation of women in non-targeted ALMPs was not available in Annual reports of Employment Institute in BD.

Table 10. Average % of women included in ALMPs that are not exclusively targeted towards women (women employment and women entrepreneurship measures excluded)

	2018	2019	2020
FBiH	38.57	35.03	n/a
RS	45.22	41.48	44.39

Source: Author's calculation based on Annual reports from employment institutes in FBiH, RS, and BD, 2018 - 2020

Since 2018, targeted gender measures have been introduced in FBiH, namely the Women Employment and Women Entrepreneurship programs. The total annual expenditure of Women Employment program was approximately BAM 3,285,000 in 2018, BAM 4,6123,000 in 2019 and just BAM 1,839,000.00 in 2020. This significant decline in funds for the Women Employment program was a result of the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The total number of women beneficiaries of this program from 2018 to 2020 was 3,143. A Women Entrepreneurship program was also launched in 2018. Annual expenditure for this program was approximately BAM 908,000 in 2018, which was significantly increased in 2019 to BAM 1,708,000 and in 2020 to BAM 1,724,000. This program's total number of beneficiaries was 830 from 2018 to 2020. The number of beneficiaries declined in 2020 to 296 in contrast to 2019, when 325 women entrepreneurs benefited from this measure. Although these two programs represent an important step towards improved integration of women in the labour market, coverage of these programs remain low and the monitoring of outcomes unsatisfactory. When compared to the total number of 29,459 beneficiaries of ALMPs in FBiH over three years, only 13.48% represent women entrepreneurs and women beneficiaries of the Women Employment program.

In RS, from 2018 to 2020 there were no exclusively targeted ALMPs on the integration of women in the labour market. However, women have been included in other ALMPs. The average percentage of women beneficiaries of ALMPs in RS in 2018 was 45.22%, in 2019 41.48% and in 2020 44.39%. The highest representation of women in ALMPs was in a Program of employment and self-employment of target categories in the economy. This program aimed to stimulate jobs and integration into the labour market of persons who lack up to 3 years of insurance to acquire the conditions for a pension, women victims of domestic violence and women in rural areas, and self-employed persons. An interviewed representative from LEA has explained that this program was especially important for women from rural areas. Agriculture is one of the sectors where there is the highest informal employment. Many women in rural areas do work, but their work is frequently not formalized. By accessing such ALMPs, they can exercise the right to a pension. A high percentage of women beneficiaries (over 60% in the period from 2018 to 2020) was covered in a program of support for young people with a university degree in apprenticeship status. Once again there is no systematic data available on the outcomes of these programs.

Vulnerable groups, including persons from Roma communities, persons with disabilities, war veterans, and civil victims of war, have been included in ALMPs. However, the scope of these programs is limited, and the coverage is sparse. In FBiH, there was no gender-segregated data on programs that target vulnerable groups of jobseekers, including war veterans. The program of integration of persons from Roma communities in FBiH was implemented only in 2018 when 49.09% of beneficiaries of this program were women. In subsequent years, this program was not continued. In RS, a program supporting persons from the Roma community was implemented in 2018, 2019, and 2020. In 2018, 60.42% of

beneficiaries were Roma women, but this proportion declined in 2019 to 18.97% and then rose again to 50% of beneficiaries in 2020. BD has also introduced programs for supporting persons from the Roma community, persons over 50 years of age, and persons with disabilities. However, gender-segregated data were not available to further analysis of the gender structure and the impact of these ALMPs.

4.5.4 Recommendations

- It is of utmost importance to regularly collect and publish gender-segregated data on beneficiaries of ALMPs and their outcomes post-participation.
- Emphasis should be placed on training programs in various domains that would strengthen the competitiveness of unemployed women in the labour market, which, in addition to supporting educational reforms, can have a positive effect on reducing structural unemployment and the occupational crowding of women employees.
- Increase and improve career guidance programs combined with training measures and opportunities for timely career reorientation after job loss, these policies can contribute to reducing the occurrence of long-term unemployment.
- Conduct rigorous studies on the size, characteristics and causes of women unemployment in BiH to inform adequate and effective policy-making.
- Women employment programs should be targeted towards women who, after giving birth, found themselves in a situation where they do not have the knowledge and skills needed for employment.
- Consistent and transparent evaluation of ALMPs by gender and vulnerability.
- Scale-up capacities of PES for implementation of active measures.
- Scale-up programs and budgets targeted towards women in rural areas and women from disadvantaged social groups, including women with disabilities, Roma women, women over 50 years of age, and women civil victims of war and victims of violence.
- Develop where not present and scale up existing entrepreneurship programs for unemployed women, particularly those who are hard to employ.
- Implement ALMPs targeted towards women, for a minimum of three consecutive years.
- Intensify cooperation with care services in BiH, to address the burden of care as an obstacle to inclusion of women in the labour market, particularly amidst and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To publicly disseminate positive case studies and success stories of women in the mass and social media to encourage women to apply to specific ALMPs targeted at women empowerment and entrepreneurship.

-
- Enable ALMPs to become more gender-sensitive (e.g., including measures that provide training schedules that allow effective management of family responsibilities; introduce affirmative action such as quotas for women beneficiaries in ALMPs).

The most recent SME Policy Index for the Western Balkans and Turkey (OECD, 2019)⁶⁰ outlines scores for BiH of 3.23 for entrepreneurial learning and 3.26 for women's entrepreneurship. These scores are around the regional average (3.43 and 3.12, respectively). The scores indicate that BiH has improved in both sub-dimensions since the previous assessment conducted in 2016. The score for Policy on women's entrepreneurship has also improved since 2016. Still, the report highlights the need for more intensive coordination involving all the relevant institutions and exchanging good practices and know-how. Inclusion of women's entrepreneurship within the broader economic policy landscape remains weak, and women's business development needs to become integrated within the comprehensive financial plans at all levels of government. The prerequisite for such actions is to collect systematic gender-specific data on SME support and monitoring. However, the lack of reliable statistical data on women's entrepreneurship is a massive issue for monitoring and informed policy-making in this specific domain. There is no centralized database at the central level (Palalić et al. 2020)⁶¹.

Apart from governments and governmental institutions with jurisdictions over women's entrepreneurship, non-government organizations (NGOs) are essential stakeholders in the development and support of women's entrepreneurship (e.g., the BiH Association of Women Entrepreneurs and the Women's Entrepreneurship Council in the RS provide information on financial aid, training, good practice, and networking opportunities) (OECD, 2019).

4.6.2 State of Play of Women's Entrepreneurship in BiH

Women in ex-Yugoslavia were empowered to join the labour market as they were incentivised to access free education and guaranteed jobs, though the latter were mainly in public companies. Women enjoyed social benefits, free health care, maternity leave, day-care centres, etc. However, during the transition to a market economy access to social benefits was lost. Many women were displaced during the war, becoming refugees or widows. In recent years many women have recognized small businesses as an alternative way to provide for their families and to generate income, hence starting microenterprises and relying on microfinance as their only source of capital (Palalić et al. 2020).

There is no single database or unified statistics on the extent of women's entrepreneurship in BiH. The only reliable data can be found in the World Bank Group Enterprise Surveys. This suggested that women own 25% of all businesses, which is under the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) average of 32%. (World Bank Group, 2019).

The few research studies on women's entrepreneurship in BiH are limited in scope (Palalić et al. 2020)⁶². However, several independent reports present an overview of women's entrepreneurship in BiH. The survey-based report from 2019 illustrates that the most pronounced barriers women face when starting their business in BiH are difficulties in accessing finance, severe corruption, and a weak economic

60 OECD 2019. SME Policy Index: Western Balkans and Turkey 2019: Assessing the Implementation of the Small Business Act for Europe, SME Policy Index <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/g2g9fa9a-en.pdf?expires=1642361728&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=D30048C65A0F8CA3B6F54BF473522C39> (Accessed 16 January 2022)

61 Palalić R., Knezović E., Branković A., Bičo A. (2020) Women's Entrepreneurship in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In: Palalić R., Knezović E., Dana LP. (eds) Women's Entrepreneurship in Former Yugoslavia. Contributions to Management Science. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-45253-7_2

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environment. Furthermore, reports also emphasizes that access to EU funds is quite difficult, which leads to few applications to start a business. This is even more pronounced for women without tertiary education or women who do not speak the English language, especially when considering that 47% of women entrepreneurs who participated in this research had only completed secondary education (Arslanagić-Kalajdžić et al., 2019). Another survey-based study from 2018 conducted among 255 women entrepreneurs reports that the most prominent barriers for women starting their businesses are lack of savings, the difficulty of accessing external finance, cost of business registration, high-interest rates, lack of information on regulations on how to start a business, weak economic environment, restrictive government regulations, lengthy bureaucratic procedures, high tax rates and corruption (Husić-Mehmedović et al. 2018).

The recent statistical records show that 38,239 active entrepreneurs submitted financial reports for 2020 in BiH (BHAS, 2021). Compared to previous years, the number of enterprises increased from 2018 (Table 11). Furthermore, no data is available prior to 2018 or to show the structure of active enterprises by gender.

Table 11. Active enterprises in Bosnia and Herzegovina during 2018-2020

	2018	2019	2020
Total	35,490	35,077	38,239

Source: BHAS (2021c)

The data show that a significant number of entrepreneurs (69%) in 2020 operate businesses in wholesale, retail, and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, manufacturing (13%), professional, scientific, and technical activities (9.2%), other services (8.4%), construction (6.0%) and transportation and storage (5.6%) (BHAS, 2021). In 2020, micro-enterprises represented the largest share of the total number of classified enterprises (74.0%), followed by small enterprises (17.7%) and medium enterprises (5.8%), while the share of large enterprises is only 1.0%. The classification of enterprises by turnover shows that 90.9% of enterprises generate less than BAM 4 million annually, while 5.8% of enterprises generate turnover between BAM 4 and 20 million. Only 1.6% of enterprises had a turnover of BAM 20 million and more.

Gender-segregated data has been available for women entrepreneurs in RS since 2016. The Chamber of Commerce of RS collects specific data on women entrepreneurs. However, most institutional registers that monitor businesses cannot extract data only for women-owned companies.

The highest percentage of businesses owned by women in RS, 97.23%, are micro-businesses that employ nine employees. These businesses are most often in the service sector, including trade (4,508 firms), catering and hotel business (1,609 businesses), other services (1,587 firms), and in the manufacturing industry (946 firms), and professional, scientific, and technical activities (837 businesses). Women are co-owners of companies primarily in wholesale and retail (247 firms), processing (135 firms), and agriculture, forestry, and fishing (97 businesses) (Government of RS, 2019).

Many challenges remain for entrepreneurship in BiH, particularly for women's entrepreneurship. As findings from World Competitiveness Report imply, the most difficult challenges will be overcoming restrictive and excessive regulations, shortening the time for starting a business, growing innovative companies, and improving vocational training.

4.6.3 Conclusion and Recommendations

- All governments and relevant institutions need to engage in monitoring and evaluating policies and measures targeting women's entrepreneurship.
- Initiate the development of a Strategy for Women's Entrepreneurship in FBiH.
- Establish high-quality inter-sectoral databases focused on women entrepreneurship and commission research on identifying obstacles to starting ventures.
- Redesign the regulatory and policy framework for entrepreneurship to become more gender-sensitive in a way to advance women's position in entrepreneurship.
- Improve access to gender-sensitive financial services through the increased participation of women entrepreneurs in both generic and targeted programs.
- Introduce government procurements favouring women entrepreneurs.
- Improve representation of women entrepreneurs, improving their visibility in public and promote women's associations in social dialogue on relevant matters in doing business.
- Develop ALMPs in all levels of governance that target women entrepreneurs; such policies should be grounded in rigorous and objective situational analysis and consultations with relevant social partners.
- Introduce ALMPs at all administrative levels with an emphasis on self-employment, education, and training programs that support women entrepreneurs to start their businesses in all sectors, particularly in those in which women are under-represented.
- Create a centralized platform related to start-ups where start-ups, investors, educational institutions, accelerators and incubators, students, and other interested parties could meet and exchange information.
- Introduce specialized educational programs in secondary and tertiary levels of education and life-long learning programs focused on women's entrepreneurship and the development of leadership skills.

4.7 Good Practices and Case studies

Title: Support for Local Employment Partnerships

Abstract of the good practice: This chapter overviews good practices and case studies within the project “Support to Local Employment Partnerships (hereinafter: LEP) in Bosnia and Herzegovina” funded by the European Union with EUR 4 million and implemented by the ILO. The project was launched in March 2016 as a part of the EU Program for local development and employment and ended in April 2019. The project aimed to support the development of partnerships and increase employability by retraining unemployed persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project was focused on socially vulnerable categories of the population, including women, youth, minorities, returnees, internally displaced persons, and the hard-to-employ. LEP was an official partnership of key actors in the local labour market, which through negotiations and joint action, found solutions to increase formal employment. In that sense, different responsibilities were distributed between the partners. The key partners in the program were municipalities, the PES, educational institutions, employers, NGOs and other relevant institutions.

Profile: This partnership enabled partners to understand better, assess, and meet the real needs of the local labour market by identifying different interests and identifying links to increase formal employment. In addition, the project enabled negotiation between all partners to find the best solutions to increase formal employment at the local level and reduce the risk of duplication of activities carried out independently by different actors. The project drew attention to the hard-to-employ categories of the population, finding specific solutions for their inclusion in the local labour market, and enabling the pooling of financial and human resources to implement programs to increase formal employment. The LEP project proved that effective and efficient transfer of all possible powers to the lowest administrative level of local communities is possible. The project also demonstrated that local governments have the capacity to address employment issues, as 27 municipalities participated; 143 organizations participated as members of the supported LEPs; 1,584 persons were trained and obtained higher qualifications; 517 persons were placed in employment, of which 34% were women; 187 persons became self-employed; 19 LEPs created innovative teaching models and curricula, and 13 LEPs ensured the future sustainability of partnerships (ILO, 2019). The project continued as LEP II in 2021. The total indicative available budget allocated is EUR 3,2 million, and it will lead to a minimum of 20 local employment the partnerships. Two case studies from LEP Phase I will be elaborated on in below: one in RS and the other in FBiH. No LEP initiatives were implemented in BD.

Context – Case Study in RS: The project “Partnership for Competitiveness and Quality Jobs” in the municipality of Prnjavor was implemented from June 2017 to January 2019. The project’s total value was EUR 186,627.92, and the LEP contributed 10.54% of the funding. Project partners were the Agency for Company Development Eda, Municipality of Prnjavor, Employment Institute of RS, Employment Office Prnjavor, Vocational School Center “Ivo Andrić” Prnjavor, and companies Trivas d.o.o. Prnjavor and Topling d.o.o. Prnjavor. Through improving the matching of the supply of and demand for skills, providing both the young and female unemployed with those skills in demand in the labour market. This training together with the promotion of active job-seeking, assisted participants’ employment in the metal processing, wood processing, food processing, and leather and footwear manufacturing industries. 41% of the training participants were women. Project activities related to employment



5 Recommendations for gender equality in the labour market

Identifying and addressing inequalities and improving conditions in the labour market for all persons are prerequisites for building an inclusive, and functional society that delivers employment which will drive the social welfare and economic growth in an economy. For this to happen, relevant stakeholders from different institutions, organizations, and sectors, must be included as partners in the dialogue and processes that encompass relevant measures and actions to make gender equality a reality in all spheres of life, particularly in the domain of labour.

5.1 Recommendations addressing gender gaps in the labour market

1 Legal and regulatory framework

- Ensure that gender-segregated data are collected and made available to the public by all public institutions, government -owned enterprises, and other bodies, as stipulated by the Law for Gender Equality in BiH.
- Engage in the process of revision of the labour legislative framework to assure gender equality principles are included.
- Ensure employers in both public and private sectors comply with the provisions of the Law for Gender Equality and the Law for Prohibition of Discrimination in BiH.
- Regulate informal employment to address poor working conditions and social insecurity.

2 Governance, functions, and human resources

- Mainstream gender equality in the process of conceiving, planning, approving, executing, monitoring, analysing, and auditing budgets, with a view to re-prioritizing social policies and infrastructures.
- Coordinate the contributions of many institutions to strengthening statistical capacity, data production, and analysis through innovative methodologies and technologies.

- To address and assess the gender gap in unpaid work, introduce an annual Time Use Survey.
- Develop a new gender-sensitive and multidimensional analysis of poverty.
- Redesign and upgrade business registries to include gender-segregated data on entrepreneurs.
- Publicise the negative impact of women's lower labour market participation on their earnings, pension gaps, and retirement savings as well as on their economic independence.
- Step up efforts to address the gender inequality dimension of poverty in all policies and measures to reduce poverty, particularly in rural areas. Adopt gender mainstreaming in the preparation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the impacts of policies on women and men.
- Review and increase the maternity benefits in all administrative units.
- Put intersecting inequalities at the forefront of the measures, giving particular attention to, inter alia, age, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, family composition as the factors impacting the unfavourable social status of women.
- Combat precarious employment by focusing on full employment as the central objective of economic policy (e.g. introducing bridging programs to transition precarious workers to full time employment), upgrading the rewards from work by ensuring a growth in the minimum wage and introducing flexible working arrangements, reaffirming fundamental rights of workers and extending labour standard coverage to vulnerable groups
- Engage stakeholders from the educational sector, governments, and NGOs to take part in a dialogue about the importance of inclusive education in addressing stereotypes, and traditional gender roles that exacerbate gender inequalities and poverty later in life.

3 Policies, programs, and budgets

- Encourage private, government-owned companies and public employers to endorse flexible working arrangements and family-friendly measures in the workplace for both women and men, for example by means of certification schemes and/or financial measures.
- Scale up ALMPs that focus on trainings with an aim to match skills of workers with those in demand in the labour market.
- Introduce rigorous monitoring and evaluations of implemented ALMPs in order to track the effectiveness of implemented measures and to make evidence-based decisions on ALMPs that need to be revised, abandoned or introduced.
- Increase the funds devoted to social infrastructures and services, promote public-private partnerships, and make such services more affordable for everyone.
- Invest in social infrastructure to support households' care for children and other dependents.
- Map those sectors where the gender wage gap is more prominent to develop informed and targeted policies to boost women's participation in the labour market

- Promote and facilitate women entrepreneurs' increased access to finance through means such as guarantee funds, close the funding gap at the start-up stage.
- Develop fiscal measures that will incentivize women to start businesses in high-wage sectors in which they are under-represented.

4 Entry points for civil society

- Engage women's organizations, human rights organizations, and social partners in decision-making related to labour market policies.
- Improve cooperation of employment governance with the civil society and educational institutions in capacity-building activities of PES staff, to ensure human resource development is aligned with the needs of beneficiaries, particularly vulnerable groups, and trends in the labour market.



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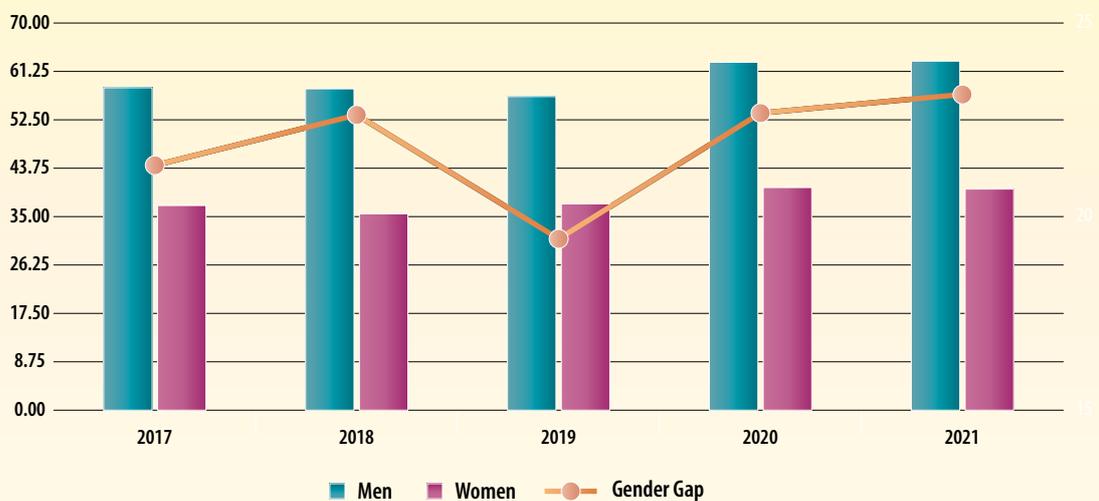
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7 Appendices

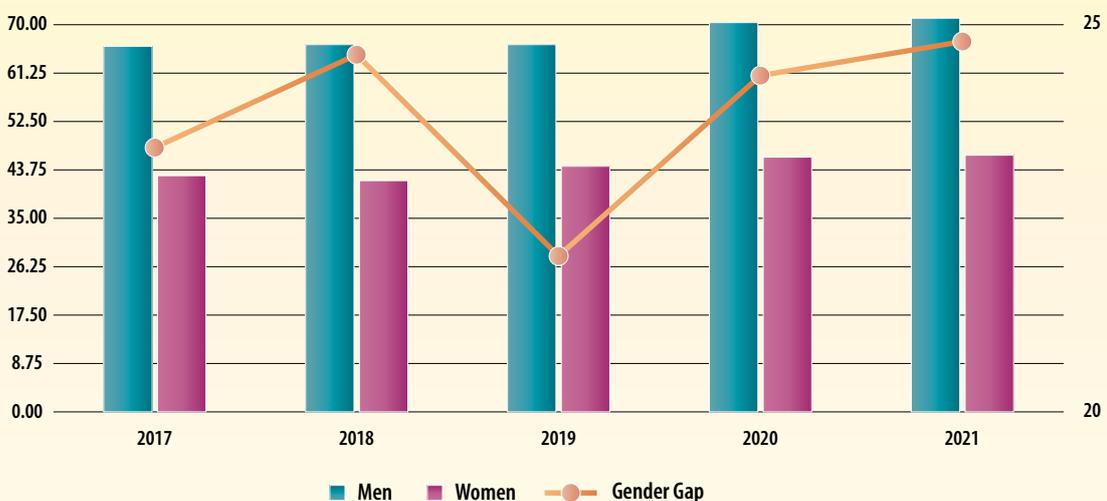
7.1 Statistical Appendix of the Study

Figure 26. Annual labour force participation 15+ years (2017-2021)



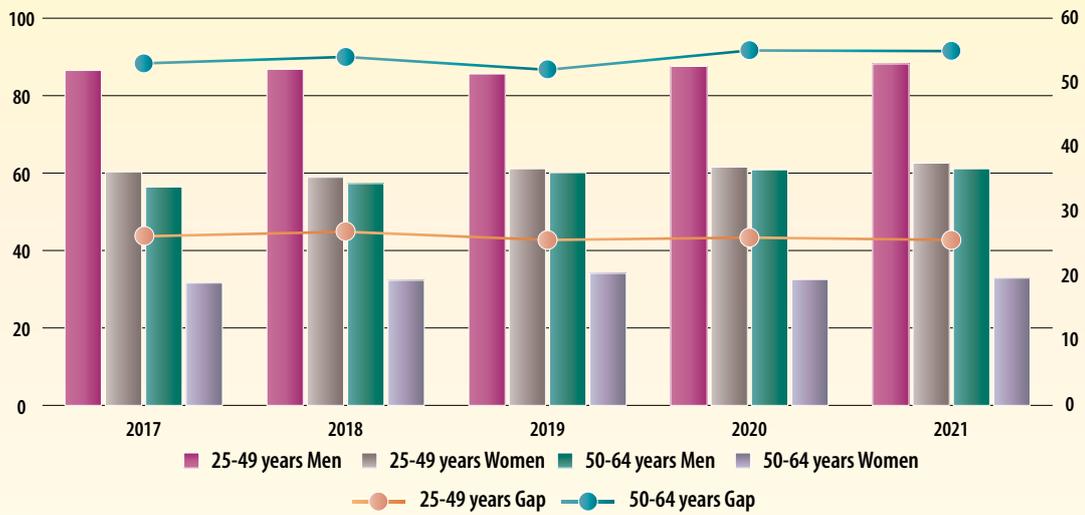
Source: BHAS (2021)

Figure 27. Annual labour force participation 15-64 years old (2017-2021)



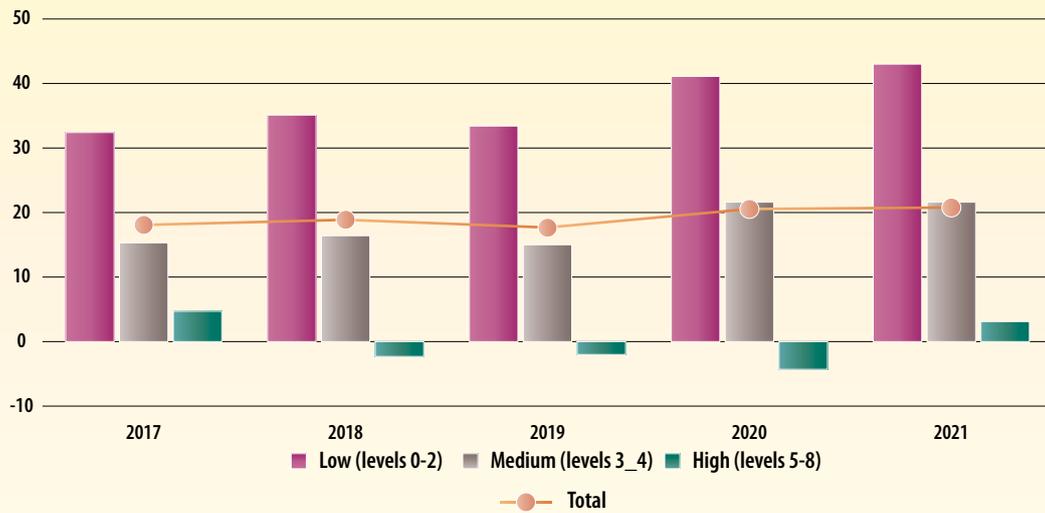
Source: BHAS (2021)

Figure 28. Annual labour force participation 25-49 and 50-64 years old (2017-2021)



Source: BHAS (2021)

Figure 29. Annual employment gender gap 20-64 years old (2017-2021)



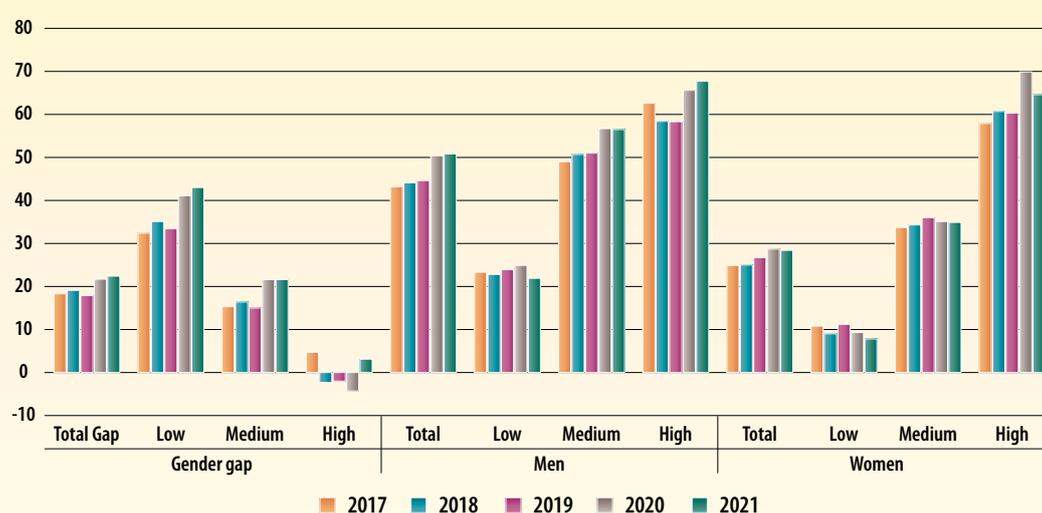
Source: BHAS (2021)

Table 16. Yearly and Quarterly employment of 15 – 89 years old by education and gender (2018-2021)

Education	Gender Gap				Men				Women			
	Total	Low	Medium	High	Total	Low	Medium	High	Total	Low	Medium	High
2017	18.3	32.4	15.3	4.7	43.2	23.3	49.0	62.6	24.9	10.8	33.7	57.9
2018	19.1	35.1	16.4	-2.3	44.1	22.8	50.7	58.4	25.0	9.0	34.3	60.7
2019	17.9	33.4	15.0	-2.0	44.6	23.9	51.0	58.3	26.7	11.2	36.0	60.3
2020	21.7	41.1	21.6	-4.3	50.4	24.9	56.7	65.6	28.7	9.3	35.1	69.9
2021	22.4	43.0	21.6	3.1	50.8	21.9	56.5	67.7	28.4	7.8	34.9	64.9
1Q20	21.7	41.1	21.6	-4.3	50.4	24.9	56.7	65.6	28.7	9.3	35.1	69.9
2Q20	21.6	40.9	21.0	-0.7	50.7	26.0	56.7	65.5	29.1	9.8	35.8	66.2
3Q20	19.5	39.7	17.8	2.1	51.4	25.5	56.3	67.5	31.9	11.7	38.5	65.4
4Q20	21.0	41.3	19.9	3.1	51.0	23.7	56.3	68.6	30.0	9.6	36.3	65.5
1Q21	22.7	42.8	22.1	3.1	50.0	20.8	55.9	68.6	27.3	7.2	33.9	65.5
2Q21	21.7	42.0	20.7	2.5	50.2	21.4	56.0	67.4	28.6	8.2	35.3	64.9
3Q21	22.9	44.3	22.0	3.7	52.1	23.5	57.6	67.1	29.2	7.8	35.6	63.4

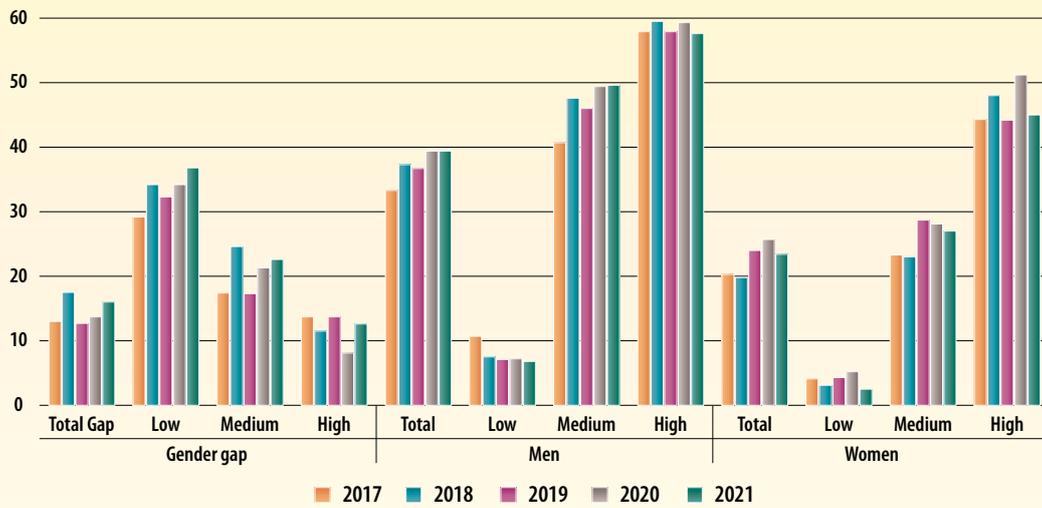
Source: BHAS (2021)

Figure 30. Annual employment and gender gap for 15+ years old (2017-2021)



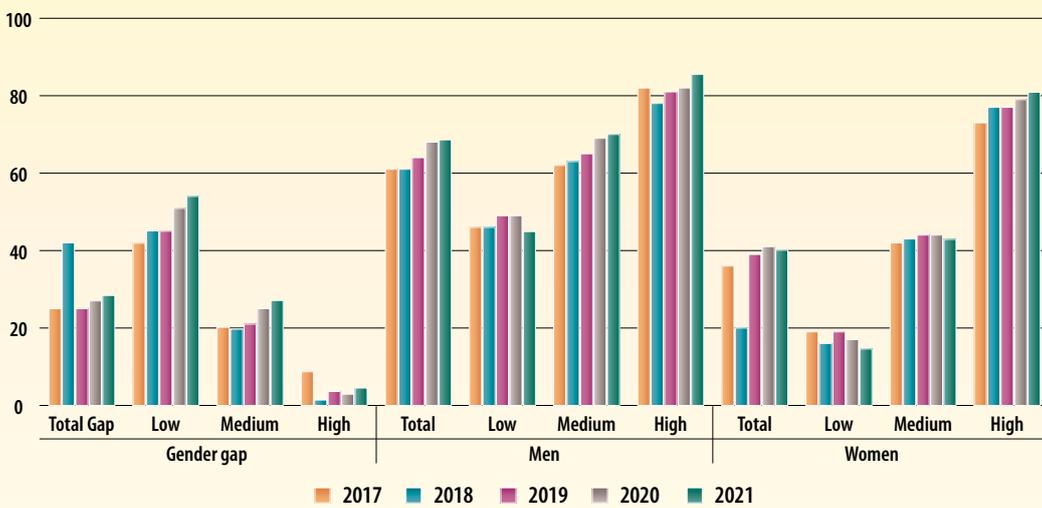
Source: BHAS (2021)

Figure 31. Annual employment and gender gap for 15-29 years old (2017-2021)

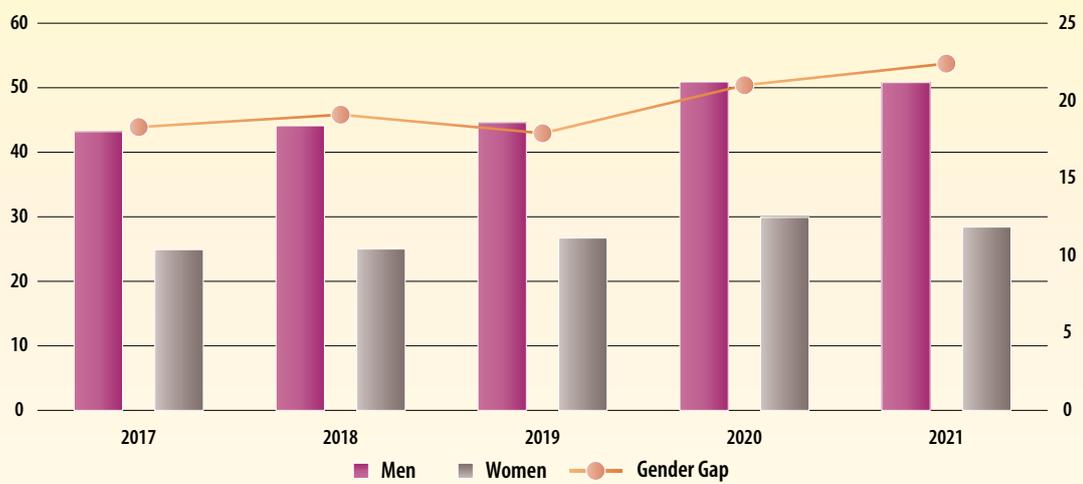


Source: BHAS (2021)

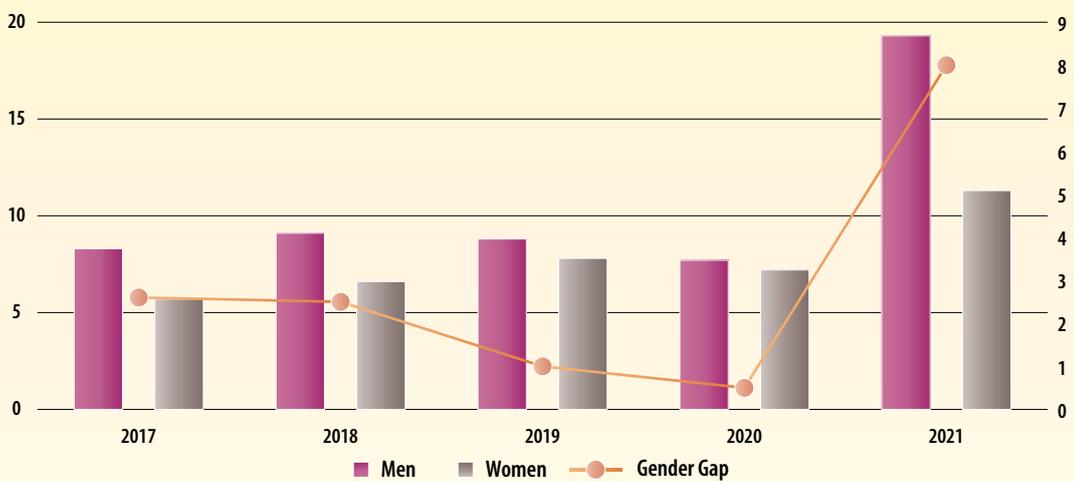
Figure 32. Annual employment and gender gap for 30-64 years old (2017-2021)



Source: BHAS (2021)

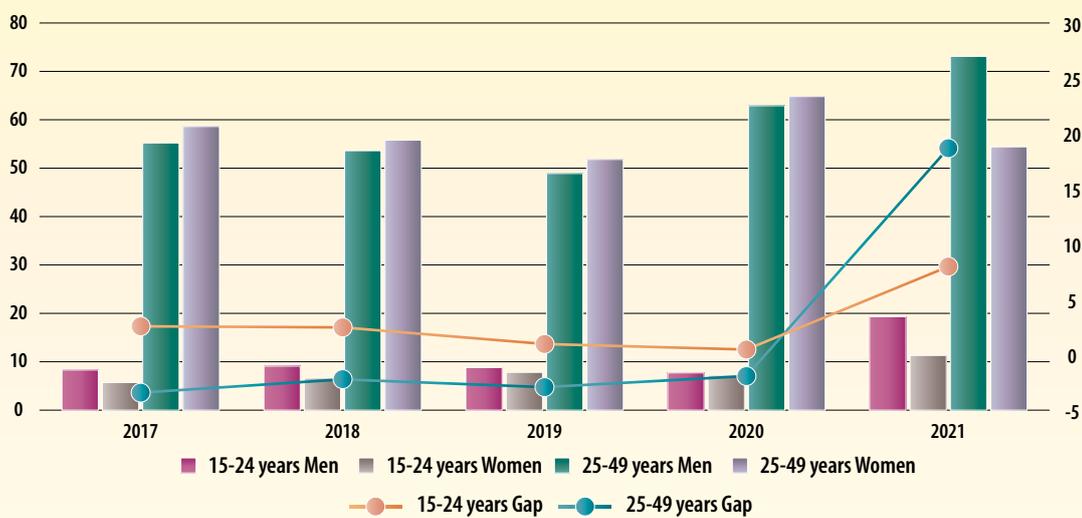
Figure 33. Annual employment and gender gap for 15-64 years old (2017-2021)

Source: BHAS (2021)

Figure 34. Annual employment and gender gap for 15-24 years (2017-2021)

Source: BHAS (2021)

Figure 35. Annual employment and gender gap 15-29 and 25-49 years old (2017-2021)



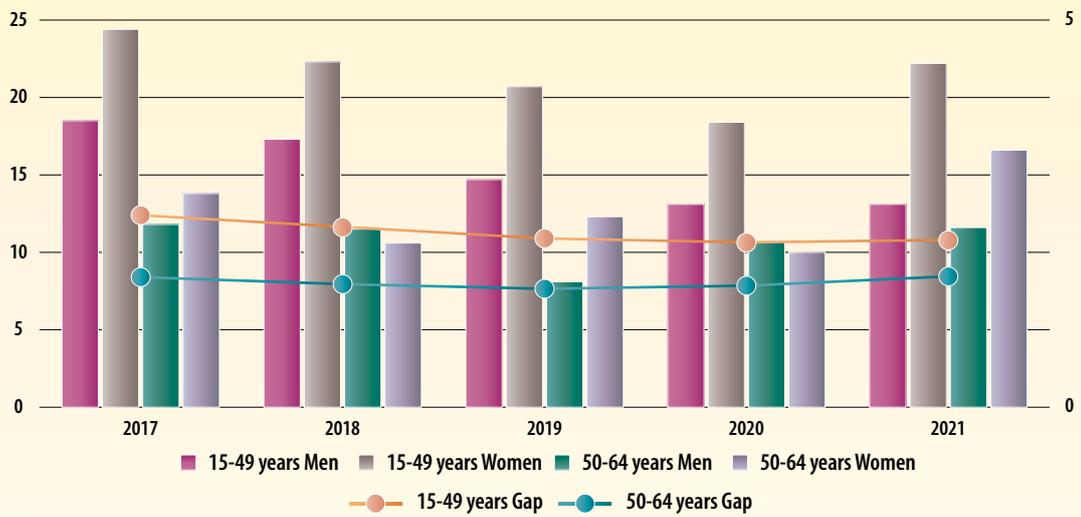
Source: BHAS (2021)

Figure 36. Annual unemployment 15+ years old (2017-2021)



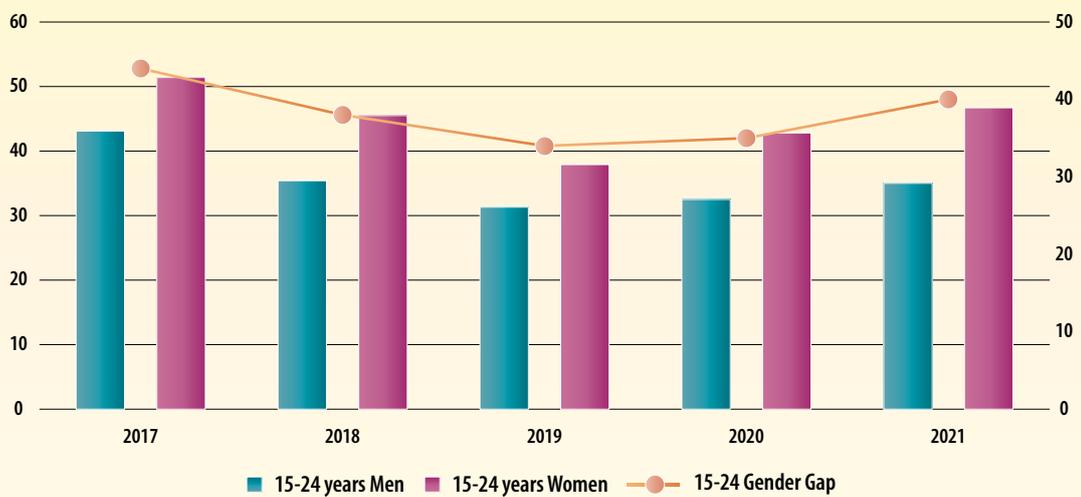
Source: BHAS (2021)

Figure 37. Annual unemployment 15-49 and 50-64 years old (2017-2021)



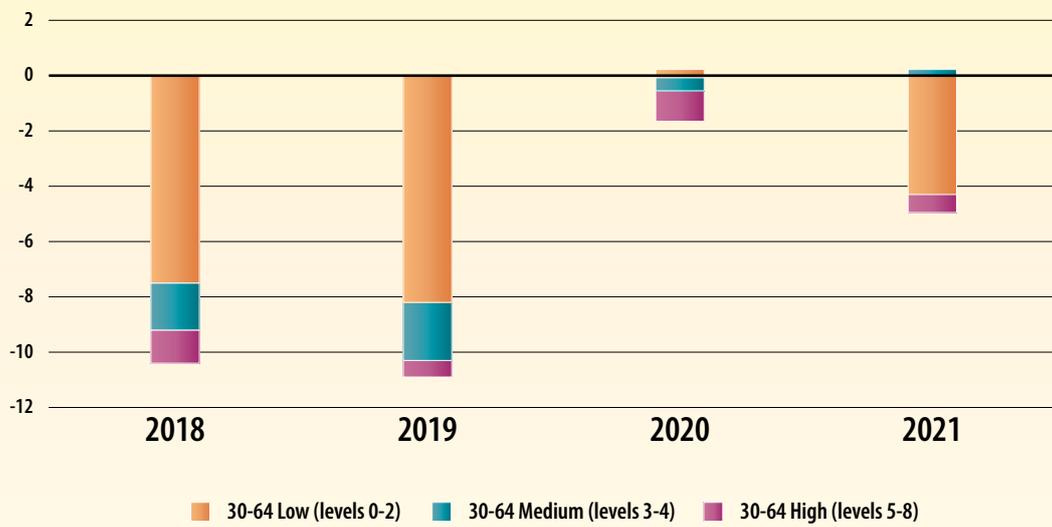
Source: BHAS (2021)

Figure 38. Annual unemployment 15-24 years old (2017-2021)



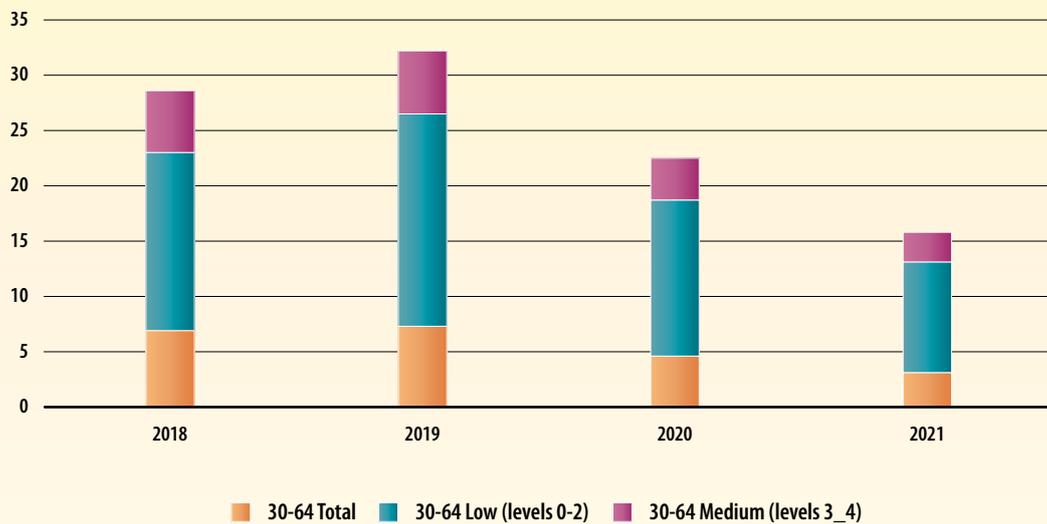
Source: BHAS (2021)

Figure 39. Share of part-time employment 15+ years old

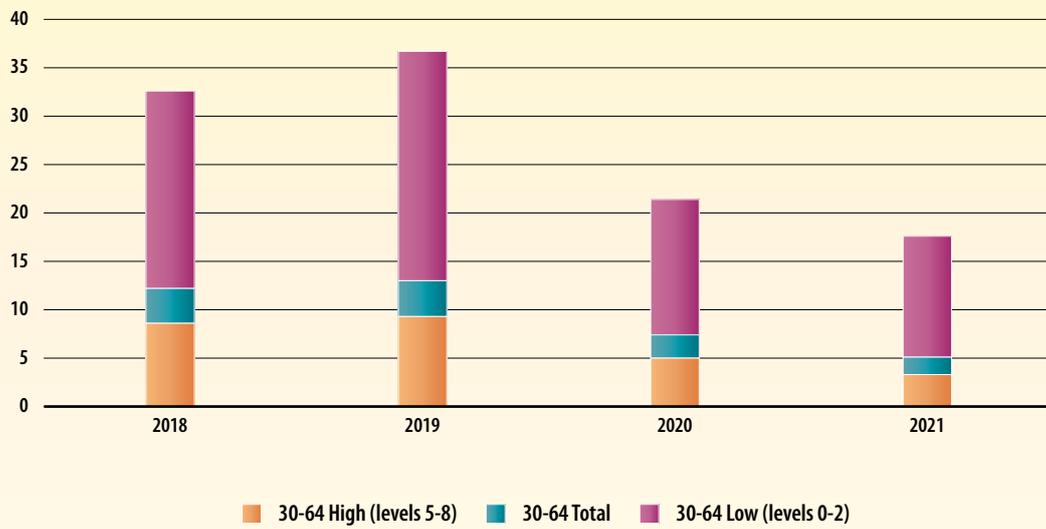


Source: BHAS 2021

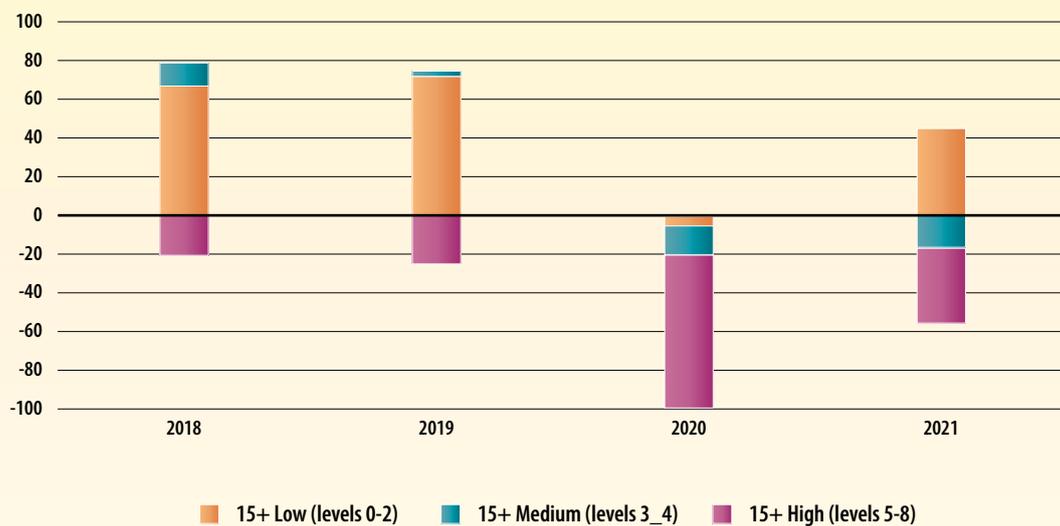
Figure 40. Share of part-time employment 15-64 years old



Source: BHAS 2021

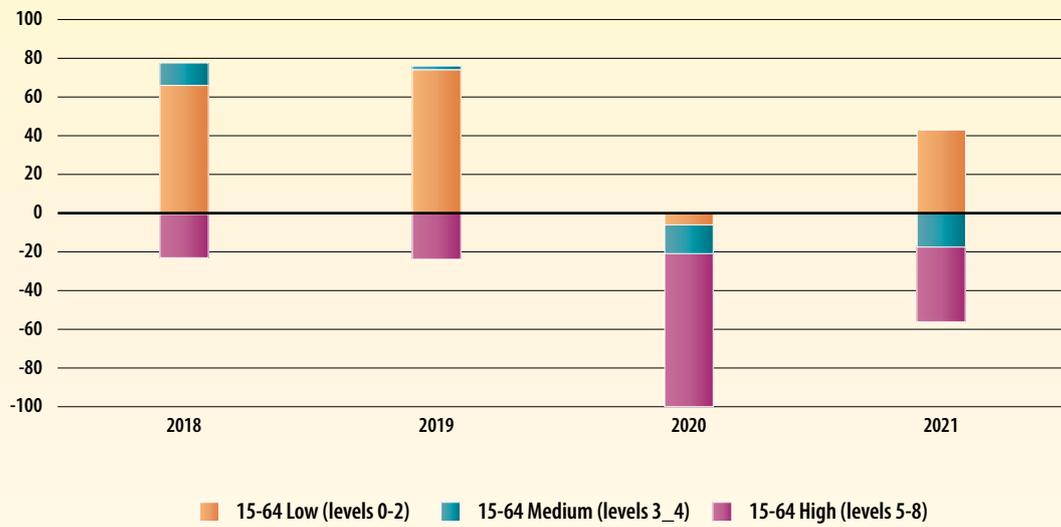
Figure 41. Share of part-time employment 15-29 years old

Source: BHAS 2021

Figure 42. Share of temporary employment 15+ years old

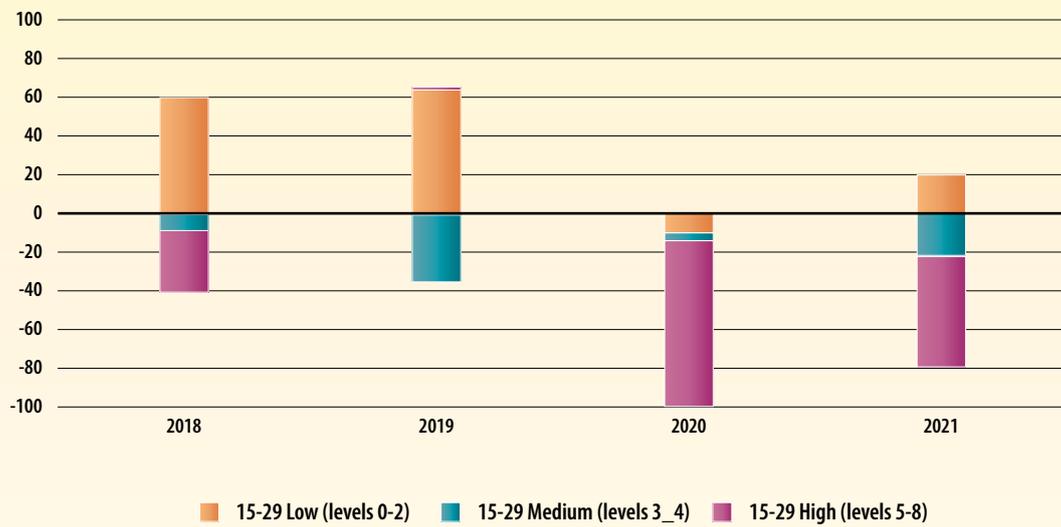
Source: BHAS 2021

Figure 43. Share of temporary employment 15-64 years old



Source: BHAS 2021

Figure 44. Share of temporary employment 15-29 years old



Source: BHAS 2021



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