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Comparative Study on Gender-Inclusive Part-Time Work Policies

Advancing Equity and Empowerment in the Philippines' Labour Market

Research Report | November 2024

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Executive summary

This report, led by the Global Institute for Women's Leadership (GIWL) at the Australian National University (ANU), focuses on comparing legislative frameworks on part-time work in the Philippines to those across comparator and best practice countries –Indonesia, Vietnam, Australia, and the Netherlands. The research was undertaken in 2024 in partnership with Investing in Women. It is intended to provide insights for the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) in updating the 2023 – 2028 Philippine Development Plan and support the ongoing drafting of *Trabaho Para Sa Bayan* (TPB) or *Jobs for All* Masterplan, aiming to promote gender equality within the Philippine's labour market. In the context of this aim, part-time work policy can be viewed as one avenue (among many) for increasing women's economic participation.

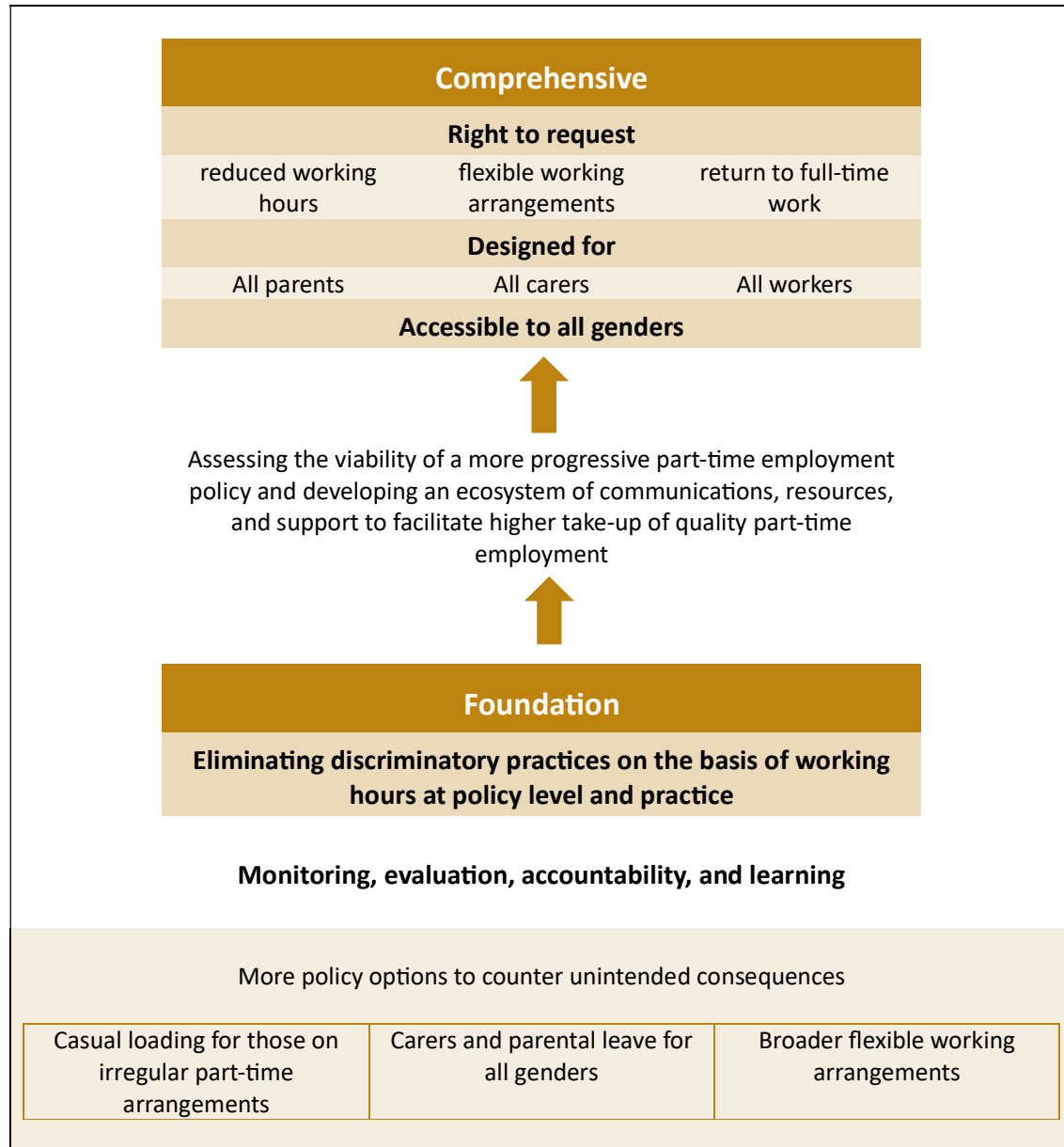
The Philippines has a legislative framework that clearly articulates the rights and entitlement of part-time workers. However, little is known about how part-time policy in the Philippines translates into implementation, nor the extent to which discriminatory legislative frameworks and practices have been eliminated. Take-up of part-time employment in the Philippines is low, at 32% for women and 29% for men (2022), with the Philippines grappling with a relatively low women's labour force participation rate at 47% (2023). Further, only 27% of part-time working arrangements taken by women were among employees in government and private sector (January 2023), with the majority of arrangements undertaken by those who were self-employed or in unpaid working arrangements. This indicates that the take-up of part-time work is most common across the informal economy – a part of the economy marked by lower-quality employment and poorer working conditions. Across the comparator countries studied, the Netherlands and Australia emerge as leading best practices in part-time legislation, with features such as clear legislative frameworks and translation from policy into action, with enforcement, monitoring, and evaluation in place. These cases provide avenues for improvements in legislation in the Philippines and form the basis of this report's recommendations.

To ensure that the part-time work policy is an effective avenue for increasing women's economic participation, the Philippines should consider the following steps, as illustrated in **Figure ES1**.

- (a) Ensuring no discrimination on the basis of working hours, both at the policy and implementation level.
- (b) Developing an ecosystem of communications, resources, and support that effectively translates policy into actions.
- (c) Adopting a more comprehensive legislative framework, such as introducing the right to request reduced working hours.
- (d) Continued monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning in tracking the take-up of part-time employment with data disaggregated at gender, sectoral, and occupational levels at the minimum, and to consider broader intersectionalities.
- (e) Ensuring that other broader gender-equality policies are in place (i.e., carers' leave available for all genders, parental leave), promoting a more equal distribution of caring responsibilities across all genders.

Complementing this, broader gender equality policies should also be considered to avoid unintended consequences leading to a more gendered nature of part-time employment and perpetuating existing gender norms.

Figure ES1. Key policy actions recommended to enhance quality part-time employment in the Philippines



1. Introduction

Gender disparities in labour force participation persist worldwide. Women tend to have lower labour force participation than men, and this gap is more prevalent in developing countries.¹ Women's low labour force participation hampers the attainment of broader gender equality outcomes, which is important for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth and development. Increasing women's labour force participation is an important policy goal for the Philippines. The Philippines has been grappling with a persistent gender gap in labour force participation for the past three decades, with women's labour force participation rate at 47% compared to 73% for men (2023).

While there are many approaches to increasing women's labour force participation, no single strategy is likely to be fully effective if enacted in isolation. Some approaches may require changes in legislation (e.g., through guaranteeing equal opportunities and implementation of flexible working arrangements that allow individuals to balance their work and other responsibilities) or the introduction of additional government policies (e.g., provision of childcare subsidy, parental leave). Different strategies might require changes in organisational policies (e.g., gender-equitable practices in promotion and hiring) or broader efforts to change social norms (e.g., social and public campaigns dismantling stereotypes that designate unpaid domestic labour as primarily the responsibility of women). This report focuses on part-time work policy as one avenue for change.

This report has been prepared by the Global Institute for Women's Leadership (GIWL) at the Australian National University, in partnership with Investing in Women, for the Government of the Philippines through the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA). It aims to provide relevant insights for NEDA in updating the 2023 – 2028 Philippine Development Plan and ongoing drafting of the *Trabaho Para Sa Bayan* (TPB) or *Jobs for All* Masterplan. These national planning documents are crucial to promoting gender equality within the labour market to generate more high-quality jobs for people in the Philippines.

In this report, we present the research findings from a 2024 comparative study of part-time work legislation as part of efforts to increase women's economic participation in the Philippines. We compare the current legislative framework in the Philippines to Indonesia and Vietnam – two neighbouring countries with similar contexts; and Australia and Netherlands – two countries representing best practices in terms of comprehensive legislative frameworks and high take-up of part-time employment by women.

To ensure that part-time work policy is an effective avenue for increasing women's economic participation, the Philippines should consider the following steps:

- (a) Ensuring no discrimination on the basis of working hours, both at the policy and implementation level.
- (b) Developing an ecosystem of communications, resources, and support that effectively translates policy into actions.
- (c) Adopting a more comprehensive legislative framework, such as introducing the right to request reduced working hours.

¹ Daniel Halim, Michael B O'Sullivan, and Abhilasha Sahay, "Increasing Female Labour Force Participation," World Bank Group Gender Thematic Policy Notes Series: Evidence and Practice Note (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2023), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/6dcecd3-27ec-49a5-acbf-4f81fef32d8a/content>.



- (d) Continued monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning in tracking the take-up of part-time employment with data disaggregated at gender, sectoral, and occupational levels at the minimum, and to consider broader intersectionalities.
- (e) Ensuring that other broader gender-equality policies are in place (i.e., carers' leave available for all genders, parental leave), promoting a more equal distribution of caring responsibilities across all genders.

Complementing this, broader gender equality policies should also be considered to avoid unintended consequences leading to a more gendered nature of part-time employment and perpetuating existing gender norms.

The findings and recommendations presented here are intended to inform policy decisions to help close the persistent gender gap in labour force participation and drive inclusive, sustainable economic growth in the Philippines.



2. Research questions and methodology

This report aims to address three main research questions:

1. How does the current policy and legislative framework regarding part-time work in the Philippines compare to Indonesia, Vietnam, Australia, and the Netherlands?
2. What are the processes undertaken by different countries to develop and implement policy and legislation on part-time work, and what are the key factors influencing the success or failure of these policy and legislative reforms in improving women's participation in the labour force?
3. Drawing on global best practices (i.e., Australia and the Netherlands), what are the key opportunities for improvement in the Philippines' part-time work policy and legislation to better support women's labour force participation?

Given the above research questions, our research is geared towards understanding part-time employment policy and legislative frameworks, acknowledging that part-time arrangements usually sit under broader flexible working arrangements. In each country, regulatory frameworks may provide broader guidelines on what flexible working arrangements may mean in practice. For example, Australia's Fair Work Ombudsman provides three broad examples as changes in (1) hours of work (i.e., reduction in working hours, changes to start/finish time); (2) patterns of work (i.e., job sharing, splitting the shifts); and (3) location of work (i.e., working from home or other off-site locations).² Hence, flexible working arrangements cover elements beyond changes to part-time employment arrangements, that warrant additional consideration beyond the limitations of this report.

For this report, we conducted a comprehensive desk review of the existing part-time employment policies and legislative frameworks in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Australia, and the Netherlands. These were drawn directly from key documents and information provided on the websites of government agencies relating to relevant laws and government directives in each country. We also referred to academic and grey literature (reports from local and international organisations). Finally, we drew from publicly accessible data on part-time employment in the Philippines and the comparison countries to provide a descriptive analysis setting the context of the countries under study.

3. Setting the context

3.1 General labour market characteristics in five countries

Table 1 provides a snapshot of the labour market characteristics of the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Australia, and the Netherlands. Across all five countries, the Philippines had the lowest women's labour force participation at 47% in 2023, followed by Indonesia (53%), the Netherlands and Australia (62%), and Vietnam, which stood out as the country with the greatest women's labour force participation at 69%. Men's labour participation rate in 2023 was generally above 70% in all

² Fair Work Ombudsman, "Requests for Flexible Working Arrangements," accessed September 7, 2024, <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/fact-sheets/minimum-workplace-entitlements/requests-for-flexible-working-arrangements>.

countries, indicating a gender gap in labour force participation, with the most significant gender gap found in the Philippines (26 percentage points) and Indonesia (29 percentage points).

Table 1. Key labour market statistics for the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Australia, and the Netherlands

	Philippines	Indonesia	Vietnam	Australia	Netherlands
Women's labour force participation (2023)	47%	53%	69%	62%	62%
Men's labour force participation (2023)	73%	82%	78%	71%	71%
Women's part-time employment rate (2022)	32%	48%	23%	59% (2020)	77% (2023)
Men's part-time employment rate (2022)	29%	34%	19%	36% (2020)	48% (2023)
Women's informal employment rate (2023)	-	83%	65%	27% (2021)	3% (2022)
Men's informal employment rate (2023)	-	80%	70%	26% (2021)	12% (2022)

Note: The labour force participation rate for each gender is defined as a percentage of the population ages 15+ for each respective gender, based on a modelled ILO estimate. The part-time employment rate for each gender is defined as a percentage of total employment for each gender. The share of informal employment for each gender is defined as a percentage of total employment in a broad sector for each respective gender. The indicators are sourced from World Development Indicators (2024), World Bank, <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>, and ILOSTAT, <https://rshiny.ilo.org/dataexplorer/>.

Part-time employment rates for women and men in the Philippines were higher than those in Vietnam but lower than those in Indonesia, Australia, and the Netherlands. In 2023, the Netherlands' women's part-time employment rate was the highest in the world, at 77%, and close to 50% of men in the Netherlands worked part-time.³

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) data on part-time employment rates in **Table 1** cover all kinds of part-time employment, including workers in the formal and informal economy. Further disaggregation of part-time employment into formal and informal employment requires additional information in terms of the characteristics of (1) the organisations the employees work for, which allows identification of the formal or informal sector; and (2) the extent to which the employment relationship is subject to national labour legislation. When applying those two definitions, the ILO reported that Australia and the Netherlands have a relatively low share of informal employment

³ Please note that the International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines part-time work more broadly as regular employment in which working time is substantially less than normal working hours. However, as we will see later in Table 2, the exact definition of part-time employment may differ across countries.

among women and men: 27% and 26% in Australia and 3% and 12 % in the Netherlands.⁴ From this, we can infer that a significant proportion of part-time employment in these countries is likely a formal part-time employment arrangement.

In contrast, most employment in Indonesia and Vietnam is informal employment. In these contexts, most part-time working arrangements are also in the informal economy. Those working in informal working arrangements often have weaker protections and poorer working conditions – which would also impact on part-time workers.

Contrasting with these four countries, there was no data reported by the ILO on the proportion of informal employment in the Philippines. However, informal employment was estimated to have accounted for 56% of total employment in the Philippines (2017), following similar definitions mentioned above.⁵ Of those in informal employment, 60% were men, and 40% were women, based on data averaging the periods between 2008 and 2017. With such a composition, part-time employment in the Philippines is also likely to be highly characterised by informality, similar to Indonesia and Vietnam.⁶

3.2 The landscape of part-time work in the Philippines

The Philippines ranked relatively high in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index in 2024, at 25th. However, women's labour force participation in the Philippines is the second lowest among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries after Myanmar.

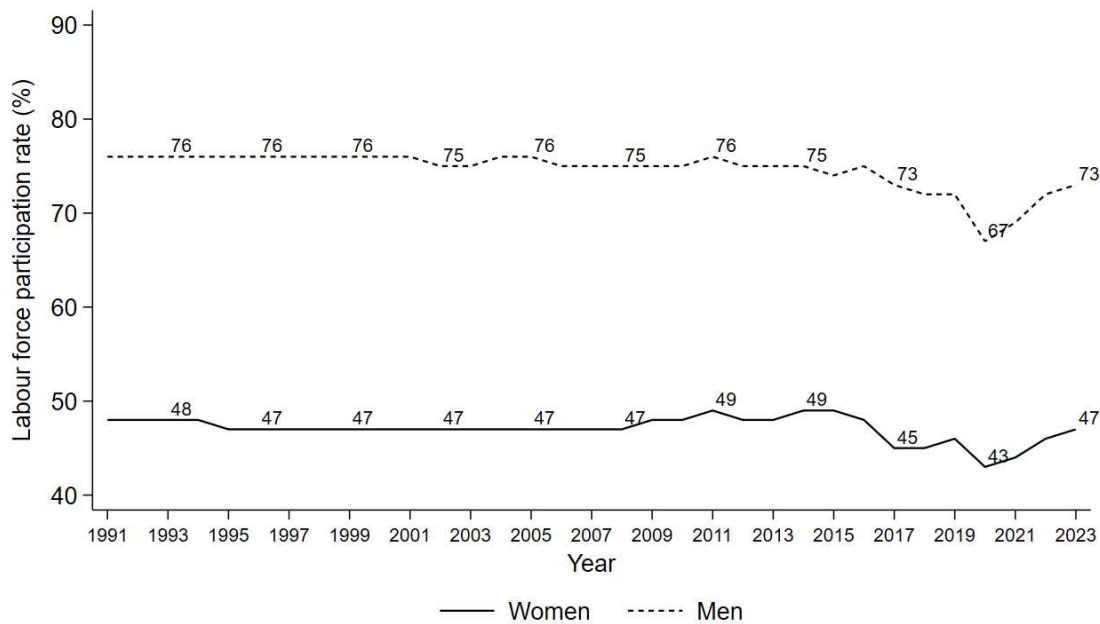
Figure 1 shows the labour force participation rates for women (solid line) and men (dotted line) in the Philippines from 1991 to 2023.

⁴ UN Statistics, "Indicator 8.3.1," September 21, 2020, <https://unstats.un.org/wiki/display/SDGeHandbook/Indicator+8.3.1>.

⁵ Maria Lourdes Gonzales, "Size of the Informal Economy in the Philippines," <https://www.ilo.org/resource/size-informal-economy-philippines>.

⁶ More detailed information on part-time employment take-up by formal/informal economy, sector, and gender will require access to and further analysis of each country's respective microdata from their labour force survey, which is beyond the scope of this research.

Figure 1. Labour force participation rates among women and men in the Philippines

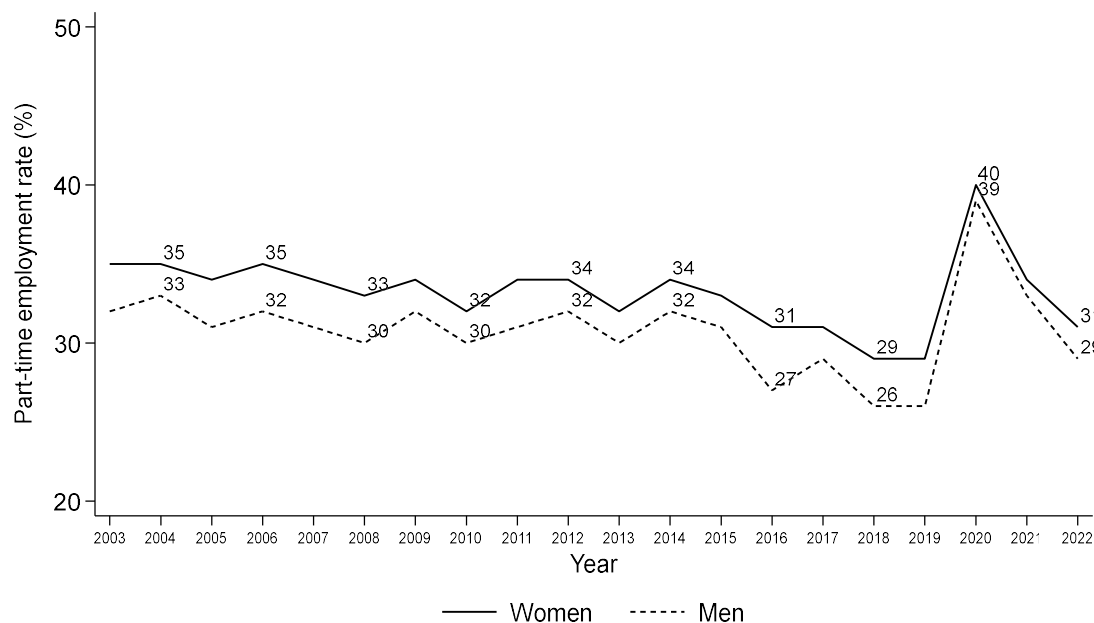


Note: The labour force participation rate for each gender is defined as a percentage of the population ages 15+ for each respective gender, based on a modelled ILO estimate. The indicators are sourced from World Development Indicators (2024), World Bank, <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>.

Figure 1 indicates that labour force participation for women in the Philippines has stagnated below 50% for over 30 years.⁷ Covid-19 significantly affected both men's and women's labour participation rates in the Philippines, dropping to 67% for men and 43% for women in 2020. Nevertheless, the decline was temporary, with both labour force participation returning to their pre-Covid-19 trajectory by 2023.

⁷ Based on World Development Indicators (2024) data, World Bank, <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>.

Figure 2. Part-time employment rates for women and men in the Philippines



Note: Women's and men's part-time employment rates are defined as a percentage of employment for each respective gender. The indicators are sourced from World Development Indicators, World Bank, <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>.

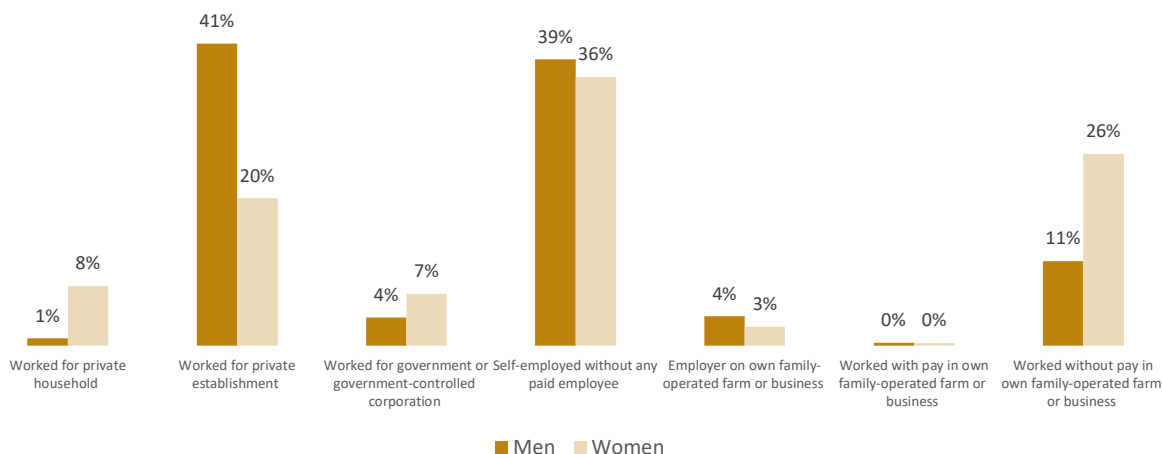
Figure 2 shows part-time employment rates for women (solid line) and men (dotted line) in the Philippines from 2003 to 2022. The Philippines' part-time employment rate sat at 31% for women and 29% for men in 2022. The part-time rates for women and men peaked in 2020 at 40% for women and 39% for men, likely due to reduced working hours adjustment brought about by Covid-19. Women on part-time employment in the Philippines, on average, worked for 19.8 hours per week, while men worked for 22.5 hours in 2022.⁸ Monitoring under-employment rates is relevant in this context, as it shows to what extent those working part-time want and are available to work additional hours. The Philippines' under-employment rate was 7% for both women and men in 2022. In comparison, the under-employment rate is lower in Indonesia (5% for women and 6% for men) and Vietnam (around 2% for women and men).⁹

From the Philippines' Labour Force Survey micro-dataset, we investigated the landscape of part-time employment in the Philippines by providing a snapshot from January 2023. **Figure 3** shows different types of employment based on classes of workers, as defined by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), with part-time workers being defined as those who work below 40 hours per week, following PSA's definition.

⁸ The indicator is based on part-time workers aged 15 and above, sourced from annual Wages and Working Time Statistics available from ILOSTAT, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/>.

⁹ The time-related underemployment rate is calculated as a percentage of the total number of people in employment, available from ILOSTAT, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/>.

Figure 3. Part-time employment in the Philippines by gender and classes of workers, January 2023



Note: Calculation based on the Labour Force Survey micro-dataset from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). For each class of workers for each gender, it is as a percentage of total part-time workers aged 15 years old and above who work between 1 to less than 40 hours per week. Hence, the total percentage for all six classes of workers amounts to 100% for each gender. Analytical weight is used at any point of aggregation, as provided by the micro-dataset.

As in **Figure 3**, women had a higher percentage of part-time employment as unpaid workers¹⁰ (26%) and workers for private households¹¹ (8%). These two types of employment are likely part of the informal economy and are not subject to employment regulation. A significant percentage of part-time employment was in self-employment, either with or without any paid employees (39% for women and 43% for men). Among women working part-time, 20% worked for private establishments¹², and 7% worked for government or government-controlled corporations. Men were twice as likely to work part-time for private establishments (41%) and half as likely to work for the government (4%). While most workers under these two classes are likely to be part of the formal economy, only those working for private establishments are subject to the Philippines Labour Code.¹³

Figure 4 further disaggregates government and private sector part-time employment based on standard occupational groupings. Please note that the shares of women and men working part-time in the government sector were very small, as shown in **Figure 3**; hence, as a caveat, further disaggregation for the government sector relies on a much smaller sample size.

¹⁰ They are typically member of the households who assist in day-to-day operation of own-family operated farm or business, and do not receive any wage for their work. They may receive cash allowances or meals as incentives; however, these are not counted as employment compensation.

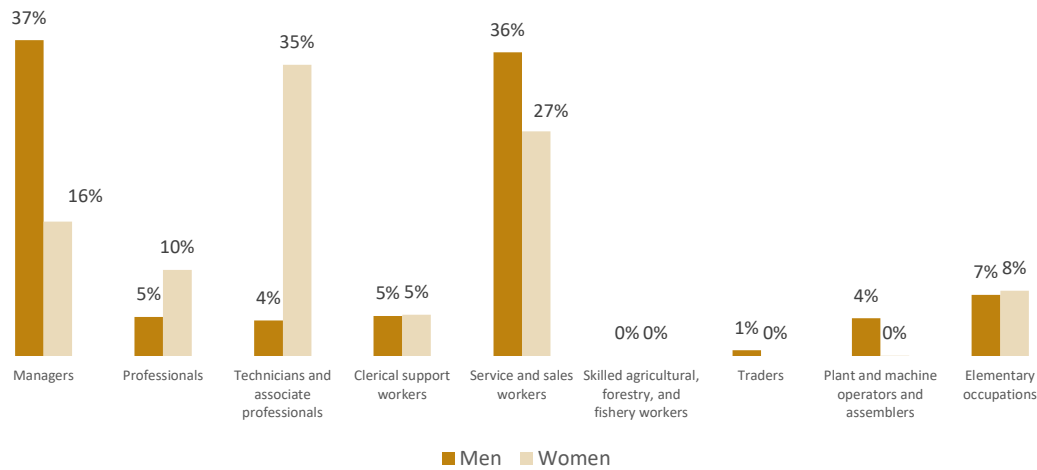
¹¹ For instance, as domestic helper, household cook, gardener or family driver.

¹² This includes those who work for private industry, as well as those working for other organisations such as religious groups, missionary, unions, non-profit organisations, and those working in the embassies or consulates of foreign government and international organisations.

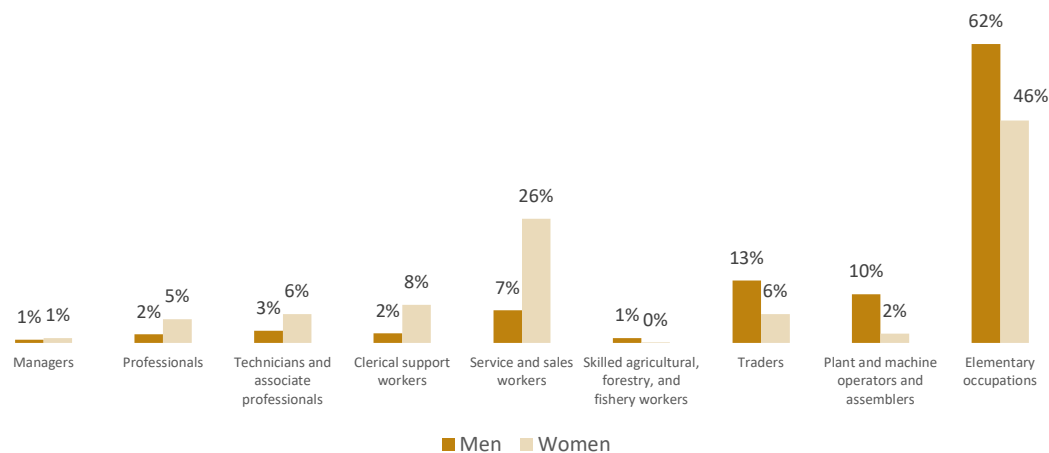
¹³ Within part-time employment in the private establishment, 74% were men and 26% were women. In the government, 57% of those who worked part-time were women, and 43% were men.

Figure 4. Part-time employment in the Philippines by gender and occupation, January 2023

Panel A. Government or government-controlled corporations



Panel B. Private establishments



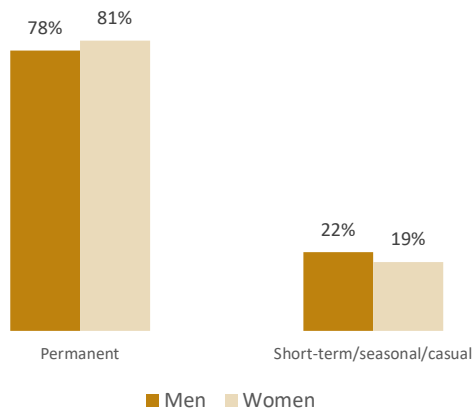
Note: Calculation based on the Labour Force Survey micro-dataset from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). For each type of occupation for each gender, it is as a percentage of total part-time workers aged 15 years old and above who work between 1 to less than 40 hours per week. Hence, the total percentage for all types of occupations amounts to 100% for each gender. Analytical weight is used at any point of aggregation, as provided by the micro-dataset.

Figure 4 demonstrates that, among men, more than one in three part-time workers in the government sector worked as managers (37%), more than twice as many as women (16%). This might highlight more constrained opportunities for women part-time workers to hold leadership positions in the government. More women than men worked part-time in the government sector in professional (10% vs 5%) and technical (35% vs 4%) roles. In Panel B of **Figure 4**, more women part-time workers in private establishments were in higher-skilled occupations, occupying positions as managers, professionals, and technicians (12% altogether). This might be related to women's higher educational attainment than men's. Contrary to the government sector, part-time employment in private establishments largely required low skills, with 62% of male part-time workers in elementary

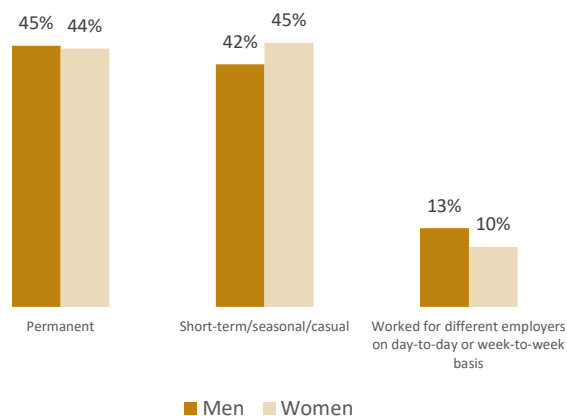
occupations performing simple and routine tasks, often requiring handheld tools and physical effort, and for women, it was 46%.

Figure 5. Part-time employment in the Philippines by gender and contractual employment arrangements, January 2023

Panel A. Government or government-controlled corporations



Panel B. Private establishments



Note: Calculation based on the Labour Force Survey micro-dataset from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). For each type of contractual employment arrangement for each gender, it is as a percentage of total part-time workers aged 15 years old and above who work between 1 to less than 40 hours per week. Hence, the total percentage for all types of occupations amounts to 100% for each gender. Analytical weight is used at any point of aggregation, as provided by the micro-dataset.

Figure 5 provides a further breakdown in terms of the type of contractual employment arrangement for those who worked for the government (Panel A) and private establishments (Panel B). **Figure 5** shows that most part-time employees in the government were on permanent arrangements lasting one year or longer. Part-time employees in private establishments were hired on a mix of permanent and short-term/seasonal/casual employment arrangements, lasting for less than a year, with relatively negligible differences between men and women. About 10% of part-time workers in private establishments worked for different employers or customers on a day-to-day or weekly basis. Overall, part-time employment in the government tends to be of high quality, with most were engaged on a permanent contractual basis and in higher-skilled occupations.

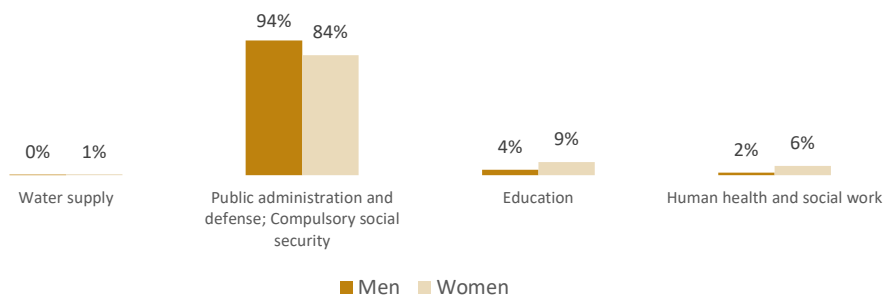
Figure 6 provides a sectoral breakdown of part-time employment by gender for the government (Panel A) and private establishments (Panel B). Most of the part-time workers in the government sector, as shown in Panel A of **Figure 6**, fell under public administration (94% for men and 84% for women), with the remaining part-time workers in the education and health sectors. Panel B of **Figure 6** shows that close to 40% of men working part-time in private establishments worked in the agricultural sector, 22% in construction and 11% in the transportation and storage sector. Agriculture was also the dominant sector for women part-time workers (32%), followed by whole and retail trade (17%), accommodation and food services (13%), and manufacturing (12%).



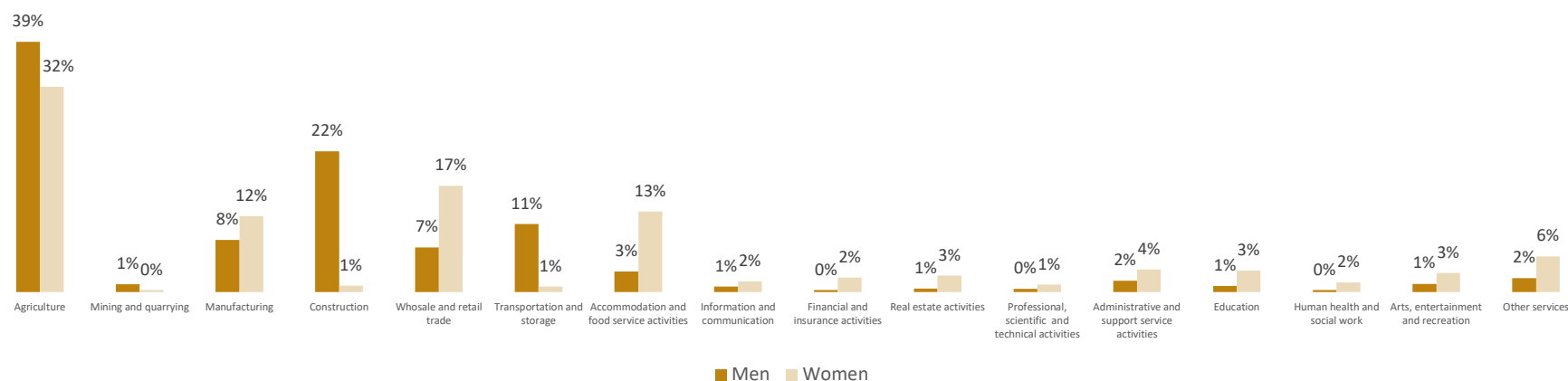
Figure 7 provides the geographical distribution of part-time workers in the government (Panel A) and private establishments (Panel B) across the regions in the Philippines. For part-time employment in both the government and private establishments, generally, the proportions for both men and women were higher in Region IV-A Calabarzon, and relatively spread out across other regions.

Figure 6. Part-time employment in the Philippines by gender and sector, January 2023

Panel A. Government or government-controlled corporations



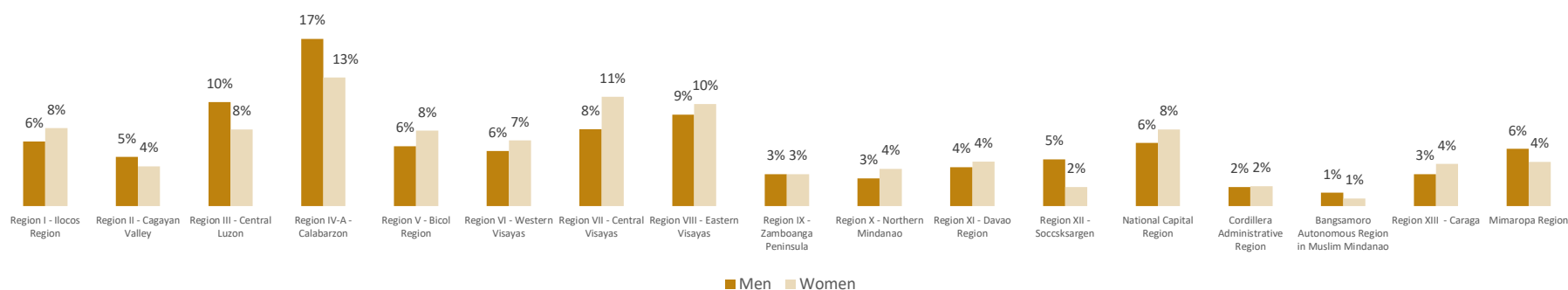
Panel B. Private establishments



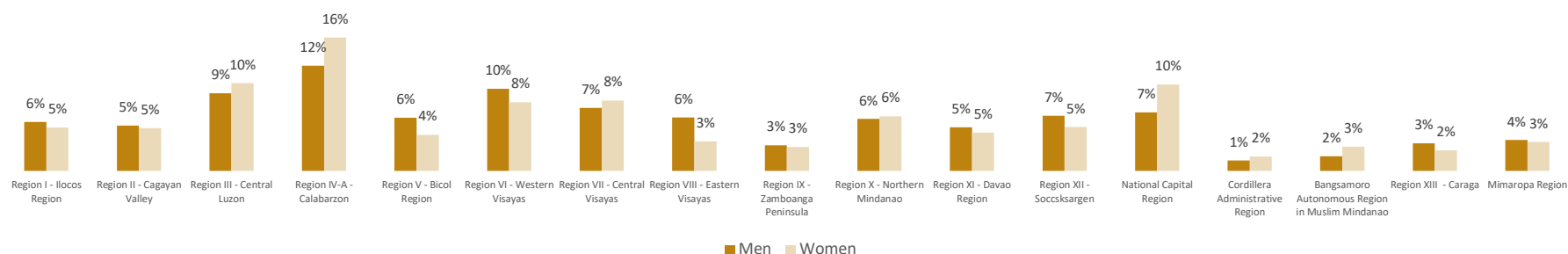
Note: Calculation based on the Labour Force Survey micro-dataset from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). For each sector for each gender, it is as a percentage of total part-time workers aged 15 years old and above who work between 1 to less than 40 hours per week. Hence, the total percentage for all sectors is 100% for each gender. Analytical weight is used at any point of aggregation, as provided by the micro-dataset.

Figure 7. Part-time employment by gender and regions, January 2023

Panel A. Government or government-controlled corporations



Panel B. Private establishments



Note: Calculation based on the Labour Force Survey micro-dataset from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). For each region for each gender, it is as a percentage of total part-time workers aged 15 years old and above who work between 1 to less than 40 hours per week. Hence, the total percentage for all regions is 100% for each gender. Analytical weight is used at any point of aggregation, as provided by the micro-dataset.

One of the key factors inhibiting women's participation in the labour force in the Philippines is persistent gender norms and social stereotypes invoking a sense of duty for women to look after their children and family.¹⁴ Women shoulder more unpaid care and domestic work responsibilities, allocating almost one-fifth (19%) of their day to unpaid care and domestic work, nearly three times as much as men's contribution (7%).¹⁵ Given the slow-changing nature of gender norms, part-time working arrangements may be preferred by women as a means to stay in the labour force and balance paid work and family responsibilities. The 2021 Women Work and Childcare Survey by the World Bank reported that women living in urban areas and with higher education are more likely to favour an arrangement where the woman works part-time and the man works full-time relative to women living in rural areas and with lower education.^{16,17} As we will discuss later in the subsequent sections, a singular focus on enhancing part-time work opportunities may, therefore, have unintended consequences of perpetuating existing gender norms. As such, broader gender equality policies and interventions should be in place, enabling all genders to share caring and economic responsibilities equally.

4. Part-time policies and legislative frameworks across five countries

4.1 Key legislation and definitions of part-time employment

Table 2 provides a brief summary of the key legislative framework governing part-time employment and how part-time employment is generally defined in each country.

Table 2. Key legislative framework governing part-time employment and definition of part-time employment

Country	Key legislative framework	Definition of part-time employment
Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labour Code of the Philippines DOLE's Explanatory Bulletin on Part-time Employment 	<p>DOLE's Explanatory Bulletin on Part-time Employment quoted ILO's definition of part-time work as "a single, regular or voluntary form of employment with hours of work substantially shorter than those considered normal in the establishment."</p> <p>It also cited that "the two most common and acceptable forms" of part-time work in the Philippines are (1) four hours of</p>

¹⁴ Nadia Belhaj Hassine Belghith, Benjamin Aaron Lavin, and Hannah Frohman Lapalombara, "Overcoming Barriers to Women's Economic Empowerment in the Philippines" (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2021), <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099830103012227161/P173002056f08e0a909afd0d7c9f381c4d3>.

¹⁵ Taylor Hanna et al., "Forecasting Time Spent in Unpaid Care and Domestic Work" (New York: UN Women, 2023), <https://data.unwomen.org/publications/forecasting-time-spent-unpaid-care-and-domestic-work>.

¹⁶ Belghith, Lavin, and Lapalombara, "Overcoming Barriers to Women's Economic Empowerment in the Philippines."

¹⁷ Nevertheless, the proportion of both men and women whose opinion indicate preferences for the woman to stay at home and the man to work full-time remain large (Belghith, Lavin, and Lapalombara 2021).

		work per day or (2) two full days per week.
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Law 13/2003 • Job Creation Law 11/2020 	<p>None of the stipulated laws define part-time employment.</p> <p>Part-time employment is generally defined as employment that is less than full-time hours. For statistical reporting purposes by Statistic Indonesia (BPS), it is usually defined as those working less than 35 hours per week.</p>
Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Code of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam 	<p>Less than the usual hours as prescribed by labour laws, of which the Labour Code makes a reference encouraging employers to apply 40-hour workweeks.</p>
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair Work Act 2009 	<p>Fair Work Ombudsman website defines less than 38 hours per week but having regular hours each week.</p>
Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustment of Working Hours Act 2000 • Prohibition of Discrimination by Working Hours Act 2012 • Working Hours Act 2022 • Working Hours Decree 2024 • Work and Care Act 2024 	<p>For statistical reporting purposes for Eurostat's labour force survey, less than 35 hours per week.¹⁸</p>

In the Philippines, part-time employment receives little mention in the country's Labour Code. It is only fully discussed in the Department of Labour and Employment's (DOLE) Explanatory Bulletin on Part-time Employment issued in 1996. This is similar to Indonesia, where the term 'part-time employment' is not mentioned in the country's main labour law. However, unlike the Philippines, Indonesia has no accompanying regulation governing part-time employment.

This contrasts with best practices in countries such as the Netherlands, which have more targeted regulatory frameworks governing part-time employment through multiple regulatory acts supporting one another. For instance, in Australia, the Fair Work Act explicitly mentions different types of employment, including part-time employment. Notably, only in Australia, the definition of part-time employment encompasses both the threshold of hours and their regularity to differentiate part-time from casual employment.¹⁹ Australia's National Employment Standards also outline the minimum entitlements for all employees, including those working part-time. In Vietnam, the Labour Code has a

¹⁸ OECD, "The Definition of Part-Time Work for the Purpose of International Comparison," OECD Labour Market and Social Policy Occasional Papers (Paris: OECD, 1997), <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/132721856632>.

¹⁹ Fair Work Ombudsman, "Part-Time Employees," accessed October 18, 2024, <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/starting-employment/types-of-employees/part-time-employees>.

dedicated section on part-time employment, providing a formal definition of part-time employment and the entitlements of part-time workers.

The explicit mention of part-time employment in the respective country's main labour regulations signals the government's acknowledgement of and support for diverse work arrangements. The availability of more extensive legislative frameworks governing part-time employment, such as in the Netherlands, shows the government's commitment to providing equal protection and opportunities to those opting for part-time work arrangements and ensuring quality part-time employment.

Nevertheless, the legislative frameworks in any one country typically only cover employment in the formal economy, which generally covers most workers in a developed country setting such as Australia and the Netherlands.²⁰ Given the Philippines, Indonesia, and Vietnam have a sizeable informal economy, as mentioned in Section 3.1, the labour laws and regulations only cover a relatively smaller fraction of total workers in the respective countries.²¹

4.2 Wages

Legislative frameworks in the Philippines, Australia, and the Netherlands stipulate the pro-rata equivalent of a full-time worker's wage for the same work. However, this is not the case in Indonesia and Vietnam. All countries guarantee minimum wages; however, only Australia, the Netherlands, and Vietnam have introduced *hourly* statutory minimum wage. The Philippines' minimum wage is set at daily and monthly rates, which may not benefit part-time workers working irregular hours. Like the Philippines, Indonesia's minimum wage is set on a monthly basis. However, the government released a regulation in 2021 that provided a guideline for calculating the hourly wage. It is based on a monthly salary divided by 126. The denominator of 126 is based on the multiplication of 29 hours per week²² by 52 weeks, which is then divided by 12 months. This calculation results in a more generous payment, instead of based on pro-rata equivalent, for example, using 35 hours per week threshold. This scheme will likely benefit part-time workers, especially those in casual arrangements. This casual loading is standard in Australia and is an entitlement for casual employees to higher per-hour pay to compensate for any lost benefits or leave entitlements only accessible to full- or regular part-time workers.

Generally, in all countries, part-time workers are entitled to a proportional adjustment of their wages comparable to full-time workers. However, this entitlement is less guaranteed in practice. Only in the Netherlands does pay equity extend to part-time employees in principle and practice, with the average gap in hourly pay rate when compared to a full-time worker being negligible in the Netherlands.²³ In developing countries, enforcement is usually weak, and the framework stipulated

²⁰ See Table 1.

²¹ As a further caveat, certain groups are excluded from the coverage of the respective country's main labour regulations. For instance, the Philippines' Labour Code does not apply to government employees, who are governed by civil service regulations.

²² The figure 29 hours per week is based on median working hours of both full-time and part-time workers in Indonesia, as stipulated in Indonesia's Government Regulation No. 36/2021 concerning wages.

²³ Colette Fagan et al., "In Search of Good Quality Part-Time Employment," 2014.

in the countries' main labour regulations tends only to cover formal sector workers, while the majority of their people work in the informal sector.²⁴

4.3 Benefits entitlement

Clear pro-rata benefit entitlements for part-time workers are only found in the Philippines, Australian, and the Netherlands' main labour regulations. Benefits typically include a range of paid leaves, overtime, and employer's contribution to the social security system.²⁵ **Table 3** provides information on the length of various types of statutory paid leaves across five countries, as stipulated in their respective employment regulations.

Table 3. Statutory provision of paid leaves

Country	Annual leave	Sick leave	Carer's leave	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave
Philippines	5 days (service incentive leave)		None	105 days; an additional 15 days for single parents	7 days; an additional 7 days as a transfer from paid maternity leave	7 days for single parents
Indonesia	12 days + 3 days for the worker's marriage	100% of pay for the first 4 months, and 75% of pay in subsequent 4 months; 1-2 days period leave	Up to 11 days, with a specific number of days depending on family circumstance ²⁶	3 months + 3 months under special conditions ²⁷ 100% of pay for the first 4 months, 75% of pay for the 5 th and 6 th month	2 days + 3 days by agreement	None
Vietnam	12 days	30 – 60 days per year, depending on the length of the employee's contribution to the social insurance fund (at 75% of pay)	Up to 20 days if a child is under 3 y.o, or 15 days if a child is between 3-7 y.o. (at 75% of pay)	6 months	5 days for normal delivery, 7 for surgical delivery, 10-14 days for twin births	None

²⁴ Gordon Betcherman, "The Challenges of Regulating the Labor Market in Developing Countries," World Bank Blogs, August 26, 2021, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/jobs/challenges-regulating-labor-market-developing-countries>.

²⁵ The extent of type of benefits covered by social security system differs across countries.

²⁶ Workers in Indonesia are entitled to 2 days of personal leave for marriage of worker's child; 2 days for son's circumcision; 2 days for child's baptism; 2 days for wife giving birth or having a miscarriage; 2 days for death of worker's spouse, child, child-in-law, parents or parents-in-law; 1 day for death of worker's other household members.

²⁷ Special conditions include when mothers have been diagnosed with health issues, health disorders, and/or postpartum complications; and/or when children are born with health issues, health disorders, and/or complications.

Australia	4 weeks	10 days		None	None	20 – 26 weeks depending on the year the child is born, and accessible to both parents
Netherlands	4 weeks	70% of pay during the first two years of illness	70% of pay	16 weeks; 20 weeks for multiple births	7 days + up to 5 weeks at 70% of pay within the first 6 months	26 weeks per child under 8 y.o. with 9 weeks at 70% of pay if taken within the first year of birth

Table 3 shows that the Philippines has the most limited statutory annual and sick leave provisions according to its Labour Code. While in practice employers in the Philippines offer longer paid annual and sick leaves, having the statutory provisions at a limited length may inadvertently encourage employers to meet only the minimum requirement, which may create more constraints for the employees to balance their work and other family responsibilities.

Beyond part-time work policies, for any regulatory framework intended to promote gender equality in employment, specific provisions need to allow *all genders* (including men) to balance their work with caring responsibilities. This can be in terms of providing carer's leave, of which all the countries, except the Philippines, stipulate this provision in their main labour regulations, though with varying degrees, as shown in **Table 3**. The availability of *parental* leave, instead of the typical maternity and paternity leave, has the potential to support more women staying in the labour force and promote the sharing of childcare responsibilities between parents. However, the broader parental leave provision is only found in the Netherlands and Australia.

The source of payment through which the maternity leave is paid also matters in ensuring business support. Maternity leave in the Philippines and Vietnam is paid through the social security system, where employers and employees pay monthly contributions each month. In Australia and the Netherlands, the federal government pays the statutory maternity/paternity/parental leave payment using some means-testing criteria. It is only in Indonesia that the maternity leave payment is primarily borne by employers, which can have unintended consequences of discouraging businesses from employing women. Indeed, such was the case when Indonesia's employers' association strongly objected to the initial draft of the Mother and Child Welfare Law with a more generous allocation of maternity and paternity leave, citing the potential negative impact on businesses' performance.²⁸

²⁸ The Jakarta Post, "Mother and Child Bill Gets Mixed Reviews - Thu, July 7, 2022," The Jakarta Post, accessed September 9, 2024, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/paper/2022/07/18/mother-and-child-bill-gets-mixed-reviews.html>.

Table 4 provides information on other entitlements typically regulated in each country's labour regulation, which generally apply to all workers regardless of their working hours.²⁹

Table 4. Other entitlement benefits extended to part-time workers

Country	Other entitlement benefits
Philippines	<p>13th Month pay Part-time workers are entitled to 13th month pay. This is equivalent to one-twelfth of their total earnings during the calendar year.</p> <p>Contribution to Social Security System (SSS), National Health Insurance Program (PhilHealth), and Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF) contribution SSS's monthly contribution rate is 9.5% of the employee's monthly salary credit for the employer, while the employee contributes the remaining 4.5%. SSS benefits cover protection against sickness, disability, maternity, retirement, and death benefits. The PhilHealth monthly contribution rate is 5% based on an employee's basic monthly salary, and the calculated monthly premium is split equally between an employee and employer. HDMF employee's contribution will be between 1-2% depending on the employee's salary bracket and 2% for the employer's contribution. All contribution rates are applied to all workers, regardless of their working hours.</p>
Indonesia	<p>13th Month pay Workers are entitled to 13th month pay, most commonly termed a Holiday Allowance (<i>Tunjangan Hari Raya</i>, THR), regardless of their working hours, to be disbursed at most 7 days before the preferred holiday period (usually Eid al-Fitr or Christmas).</p> <p>Contribution to health and social security insurance (BPJS Health and BPJS Employment) Employer's contribution rate for BPJS Health is 4% and 1% for the employee, calculated based on the employee's monthly, with some caps. The social security scheme of BPJS Employment covers old age protection, working accident, life insurance, and pension benefits, with the employer contributing 0.24% - 1.74% for working accident, 0.3% for life insurance, 3.7% for old age benefits, and 2% for pension benefits. Employee's contribution is 2% for old age and 1% for pension benefits.</p>
Vietnam	<p>13th Month pay There is no legal document regulating the 13th month pay in Vietnam; however, in practice, most employers provide a 13th month salary as a Tet bonus.</p> <p>Contribution to social insurance, health, and unemployment insurance Social insurance covers sickness, maternity, occupational diseases, accidents, retirement, and death benefits. Employee's contribution is 8% and 17.5% for the employer. Health insurance contribution for the employer is 3%, while it is 1.5% for the employee.</p>
Australia	<p>13th Month pay There is no legal document related to the provision of 13th month pay.</p> <p>Contribution to the National Health Scheme (Medicare) and superannuation The Medicare levy is 2% of the worker's annual income, with levy exemption for those below the relevant low-income thresholds. A 1-1.5% surcharge applies to high-income taxpayers not covered by private health insurance providing basic hospital cover. Employer's superannuation guarantee contribution is 12%.</p>

²⁹ To reiterate it further, only in the Philippines, Australia, and in the Netherlands is there more clarity in terms of pro-rata entitlement basis for part-time worker employment benefits in their respective country's main labour regulations.

Netherlands	<p>13th Month pay 13th month pay is not regulated by law. However, the collective labour agreement may state this compulsory provision.</p> <p>Contribution to social security and health insurance The contribution is calculated on the basis of a fixed percentage of pay; hence, it applies to all workers regardless of their working hours. Employee contribution to statutory health insurance is around EUR 1,768, and employer's contribution of 6.57% based on the worker's pay.</p>
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Despite these additional protections and entitlements listed in **Table 4**, in practice, some of the existing procedures may inadvertently discourage part-time employment. For example, in the case of Indonesia BPJS Employment, the agency in charge of collecting employers' and employees' contributions assumes that all employees, regardless of their working hours, have worked full-time and calculates their monthly contributions and benefits accordingly.³⁰ In Vietnam, stipulations around eligibility for social insurance payments in a given month tend to disadvantage part-time workers, with the following requirements: (1) having a work contract that is at least one month long; (2) reporting less than 14 non-working days in a month; and (3) earning their respective regional monthly minimum wage. Part-time workers can voluntarily contribute to social insurance if they wish to receive benefits but are subjected to higher contribution rates with fewer benefits.^{31,32}

4.4 Job security and protection against workplace discrimination

In all five countries, the security of tenure for part-time workers is protected under their respective main labour regulations. **Table 5** provides a brief summary of probationary periods and protection against unjust dismissal apply to all workers, taken from their respective labour regulations. Similarly, some forms of anti-discriminatory regulatory frameworks are in place, prohibiting any discrimination in the workplace to ensure that every worker is entitled to an equal opportunity in their employment.

Table 5. Probationary period and dismissal law

Country	Probationary period	Dismissal law
Philippines	Allows for a maximum probationary period of six months, after which, the employee is considered to be a regular employee.	Termination must be for just or authorised cause, which will require payment of severance compensation, and proper procedures must be followed.

³⁰ Ippei Tsuruga, Simon Brimblecombe, and Alexander Landry, "Unemployment Insurance in Indonesia: Challenges and Recommendations" (Jakarta: International Labour Office, 2023), <https://www.ilo.org/publications/unemployment-insurance-indonesia-challenges-and-recommendations>.

³¹ Monthly rate for employees contributing to voluntary social insurance is 22% of wages, in comparison to 10.5% for those contributing towards compulsory social insurance. This 22% will also only grant them pension and life insurance benefits, not covering sick leave, maternity leave, work-related accidents and occupational diseases, unemployment and health insurance.

³² ASL Law Firm, "(Vietnam) Voluntary Social Insurance Is Less Attractive Compared to Compulsory Social Insurance - Not Only Because of the Higher Contribution Rate," *Lexology*, June 23, 2023, <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=eaf1dc27-be83-4614-a49e-22bebe7c26a6>.

Indonesia	Indefinite-term part-time workers can undergo a probationary period, but it cannot exceed three months. In contrast, fixed-term part-time workers cannot be placed on probation, ensuring they receive immediate employment rights from the start.	The same termination rules apply to all employees, including part-time, ensuring fair treatment in cases of dismissal.
Vietnam	The probationary period must not exceed the number of days mandated by the government, which is: - Up to 180 days for managerial positions - Up to 60 days for positions requiring professional or technical qualifications at the university level or higher. - Up to 30 days for positions requiring intermediate-level technical or vocational qualifications - Up to 6 days for other types of jobs	Employees are protected against unfair or illegal dismissal and are to be compensated for lost wages in terms of severance or redundancy payment, depending on the nature of the termination.
Australia	An employer typically decides on the length of the probation period, often between 3 to 6 months.	Employees are protected against unlawful termination and receive their remaining entitlements in their final pay, which may include redundancy pay if the employee has been made redundant.
Netherlands	A maximum probationary period of two months for permanent contracts and usually shorter for fixed-term contracts, regardless of the employees' working time.	A similar dismissal law applies to all workers regardless of working time.

4.5 Specific frameworks to ensure quality part-time employment

While all five countries, to a certain extent, have regulatory frameworks to ensure that part-time workers receive equal protection and entitlement comparable to full-time workers, only Australia and the Netherlands ensure quality part-time working arrangements. In Australia and the Netherlands, the government puts institutional arrangements in place to ensure policy translation into action, guaranteeing workers' protections and entitlements, regardless of their working hours. In its first attempt to regulate part-time employment practices, the Netherlands set the groundwork by issuing the Prohibition of Discrimination by Working Hours Act in 1996. It established the Equal Treatment Committee to supervise compliance with the Act.³³

Furthermore, Dutch employers must provide at least four weeks' notice of changes to working schedules (except for a very limited number of sectors, where they must provide at least four days' notice).³⁴ Advance notice of changes in working hours provides employees the time to coordinate and adjust their schedules given their other personal and family responsibilities.

³³ Jelle Visser et al., "Part-Time Employment in the Netherlands: From Atypicality to a Typicality," *Employment Policy and the Regulation of Part-Time Work in the European Union: A Comparative Analysis*, 2004, 190–223.

³⁴ The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, "Arbeidstijdenwet (ATW)," BWBR0007671 § (2022), art. 4:2, https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0007671/2022-08-02/0#search_highlight0.

In the Netherlands, *all* workers have the “right to request” part-time work arrangements, which then evolve into a statutory right for flexible working arrangements.³⁵ The right to return to full-time work is also protected.³⁶ In Australia, *all* workers, including full-time, part-time, and casual workers, have the right to request flexible working arrangements, provided they have been continuously working for the same employer for at least 12 months, and there are changes to their circumstances as listed in the Fair Work Act.^{37,38} This entitlement is available to Australian employees of *all* genders to balance their work and family commitments. However, businesses in both countries can refuse this request on account of reasonable business grounds.^{39,40} In both countries, employees should be given the required notice of any changes in working hours, and their leave and other entitlements owed should be paid out.

4.6 Specific frameworks targeted to women

The Philippines promulgated the Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act 9710) in 2009, providing a comprehensive women’s human rights law that seeks to eliminate discrimination against women in the workplace, especially those from marginalised groups. Section 22 of the Act stipulates women’s right to decent work, acknowledging the need for support services that enable women to balance their family and work responsibilities. Vietnam’s Labour Code also has a specific chapter⁴¹ related to provisions applicable to women and assurance of gender equality. The clauses highlight the need to support women to “harmoniously” combine working and family lives. Though both regulatory approaches intend to support women’s economic participation, they are still skewed towards assuming that women hold greater caring and domestic responsibilities in the household.

In Indonesia, the latest Mother and Child Welfare Law 4/2024 elaborated more on the right of working mothers to access maternity leave,⁴² opportunities and access to decent breastfeeding facilities during working hours, as well as affordability and proximity to childcare services. The responsibilities of fathers to care for the mothers and their newborns are also stipulated, although they are framed only during their time accessing paternity leave, which may also reinforce gender norms and stereotypes limiting women.

³⁵ The Flexible Working Act was first issued in 2016, as a replacement and extension of the Adjustment of Working Hours Act.

³⁶ OECD, *Part-Time and Partly Equal: Gender and Work in the Netherlands* (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019), https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/part-time-and-partly-equal-gender-and-work-in-the-netherlands_204235cf-en.

³⁷ This includes workers who are pregnant, the parent or have responsibility for the care of a child who is of school age or younger, a carer, 55 or older, have a disability, experiencing family and domestic violence or caring for or supporting an immediate family or household member who requires care or support because they are experiencing family and domestic violence.

³⁸ Fair Work Ombudsman, “Requests for Flexible Working Arrangements.”

³⁹ The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, *Arbeidstijdenwet (ATW)*.

⁴⁰ Fair Work Ombudsman, “Requests for Flexible Working Arrangements.”

⁴¹ Chapter X in Vietnam’s Labour Code also covers clauses on maternity protection and employment security for employees after maternity.

⁴² See Table 3 for more details.

In best practice cases, the regulatory frameworks allow employees of all genders to balance domestic responsibilities, such as caregiving and paid work,⁴³ without making assumptions about who does most of the care work. This can help to break down gendered assumptions that women, for instance, shoulder the primary burden of caregiving. Australia has more detailed legislations promoting gender equality in the workplace, such as the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012, which led to the establishment of the Commonwealth government agency, Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), and the Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Closing the Gender Pay Gap) Bill 2023. The Workplace Gender Equality Act requires employers with 100 or more employees, including the Commonwealth public sector, starting from 2023, to report annually against six gender equality indicators. This includes the availability of working arrangements such as part-time work and its further disaggregation by different roles, making it possible to track the progress in terms of workplace gender equality, which is crucial for informing further policymaking.

4.7 Specific frameworks targeted at vulnerable groups

The Philippines, Netherlands, and Australia offer provisions targeted to support single parents' engagement in the workforce.⁴⁴ In the Philippines, the Solo Parents' Welfare Act grants single parents the right to flexible working hours or varying arrival/departure times from work and additional parental leave. The 2022 amendment allows the family members of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) to qualify as single parents and single parents in the low-income bracket to receive a monthly subsidy of PHP 1,000. Similar income support from the government is also provided for parents who cannot work full time in Australia under Parenting Payment Single and Partnered schemes. Australia also provides additional protection for workers at risk of family violence with 10 days of paid family and domestic violence leave each year, and it is explicitly specified that this leave is not pro-rated for part-time or casual employees.

In the Netherlands, although single mothers are not entitled to additional maternity leave, another person, such as a family member, can also apply for parental leave if they help raise the child.⁴⁵ Those whose earnings are below the social minimum (the lowest income needed to live a "decent life") during parental leave are entitled to a supplementary benefit⁴⁶, providing indirect support to women from low socio-economic status backgrounds.⁴⁷ All these protections apply to all workers, including part-time workers.

⁴³ Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, "Wet flexibel werken (WFW)," BWBR0011173 § (2022), <https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0011173/2022-08-02>; The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, Arbeidstijdenwet (ATW).

⁴⁴ We do not find any such provisions in Vietnam and Indonesia.

⁴⁵ Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, "Wet arbeid en zorg (WAZO)," BWBR0013008 § (2022), <https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0013008/2022-08-02>.

⁴⁶ This applies to everyone, not only the single parent.

⁴⁷ Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, "Toeslagenwet (TW)," BWBR0004043 § (2024), <https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0004043/2024-07-01/0>.

5. Connecting the dots: Part-time legislative framework and the take-up of part-time employment

The following section provides more descriptive statistics and explanations related to part-time employment in the five countries beyond what has been described in Section 3. Though we cannot establish the causal impact of the institutionalisation and implementation of the part-time legislative framework on the actual take-up of part-time employment, we provide some perspectives on their potential association.

Despite no specific or explicit provision of part-time employment in Indonesian labour law, women's part-time employment rate in Indonesia (48%) is higher than in the Philippines (32%) and Vietnam (23%), as indicated in **Table 1**. However, the high uptake of part-time employment among women in Indonesia masks an underlying precarity as most women work as family workers in the agricultural sector, often without basic employment protections. According to Indonesia's Labour Force Survey (2021), a quarter of women's part-time workers were waged workers. Yet, information on the proportion of workers in the formal versus informal economy was missing. This suggests that part-time employment is not common practice in Indonesia, especially in the formal sector, which limits the possible impact of any changes in the legislative framework.

The take-up of women's part-time employment in Vietnam in the formal sector is similarly low.⁴⁸ This is perhaps not surprising as their legislative framework around part-time employment, as shown in Section 4, lacks a level of detail and comprehensiveness, allowing for part-time employment to take off. Neither country prioritises advancing opportunities for part-time employment to promote more women's labour force participation, as described further in **Box 1**.

⁴⁸ However, we lack the access to Vietnam's Labour Force Survey microdata to further verify this conjecture.

Box 1. Indonesia and Vietnam's government policy approaches related to part-time employment

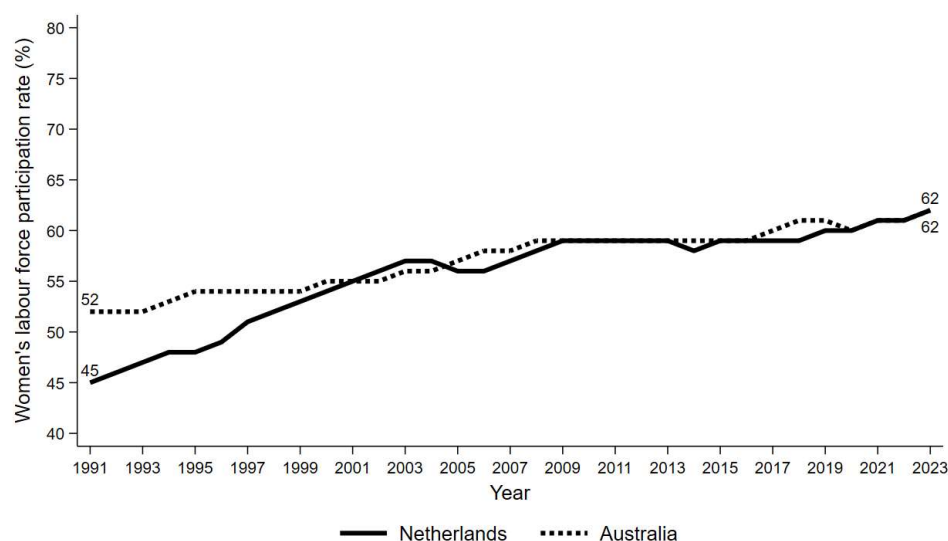
Under Indonesia's main employment law (Labour Law 13/2003 and Job Creation Law 11/2020), there is no mention of part-time employment arrangements. The latest government regulation 36/2021 on the calculation of hourly wages, which is more generous than the calculation based on a pro-rata basis, is expected to benefit part-time workers. However, the regulation was proposed as a means to provide more flexibility for businesses and workers, instead of promoting the take-up of part-time employment among women.

For Vietnam, support for part-time employment in the regulatory framework has been relatively modest, with a specific article and clauses on part-time employment first appearing in Vietnam's Labour Code in 2012, providing definition and entitlement for part-time employees. This includes a clause that an employee "may negotiate" part-time employment with the employer when entering into an employment contract. In Vietnam's Labour Code, the latest clauses on gender equality also include the provision that "employers are encouraged to enable both male and female employees to ... widely apply the systems of flexible working hours, part-time work, or outwork."

Vietnam's government leverages other policy tools to boost women's participation in the workforce. This is done through (1) providing tax incentives for employers employing a large number of women, and (2) developing plans and measures to provide childcare facilities in areas employing a large number of women, and for employers to assist the government or cover the childcare expenses incurred by employees.

In contrast, part-time work policy and legislation in the Netherlands and Australia have generally been considered successful in promoting women's participation in the labour market. In many countries, women who have young children withdraw from the workforce entirely; the option of part-time work helps retain women in the labour force. **Figure 8** shows women's labour force participation in the Netherlands (solid line) and Australia (dotted line) from 1991 to 2023.

Figure 8. Women's labour force participation rates in the Netherlands and Australia

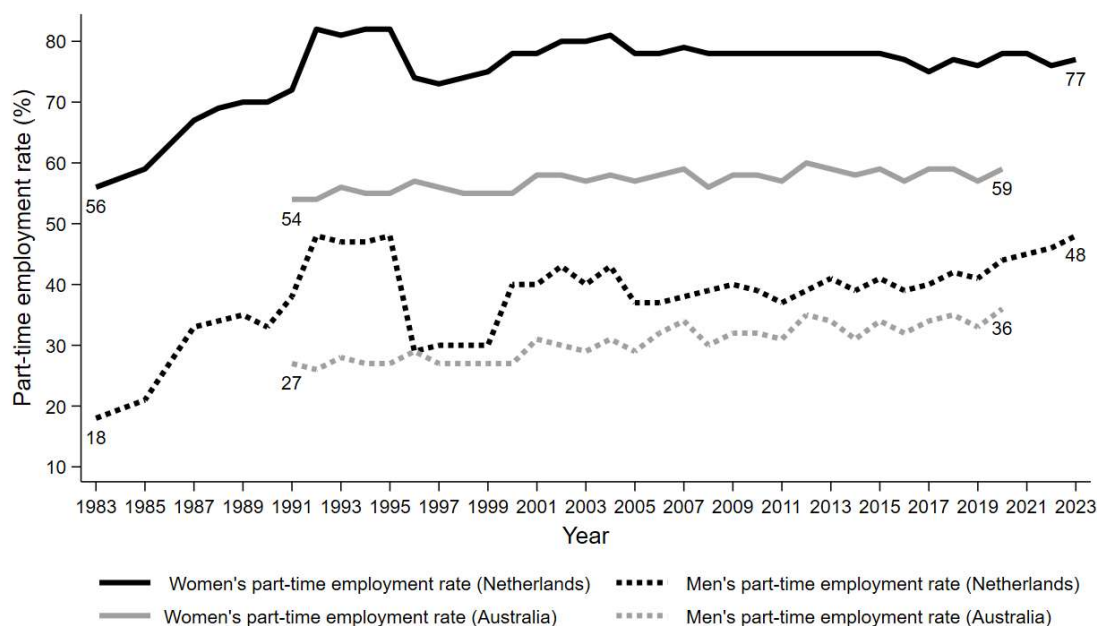


Note: Women's labour force participation rate is defined as a percentage of the female population ages 15+, based on a modelled ILO estimate. The indicator is sourced from World Development Indicators, World Bank, <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>.

As in **Figure 8**, in both countries, women's labour force participation has been increasing since the 1990s, from 45% for the Netherlands and 52% for Australia in 1991 to 62% for both countries in 2023.

Figure 9 shows the part-time employment rates in both the Netherlands and Australia for women (solid line) and men (dotted line).

Figure 9. Part-time employment rates for women and men in the Netherlands and Australia



Note: Women's and men's part-time employment rates are defined as a percentage of their respective female or male employment. The indicators are sourced from World Development Indicators, World Bank, <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>.

Figure 9 demonstrates that part-time employment rates among women in the Netherlands rose from 56% in 1983 to 77% in 2023. Meanwhile, in Australia, the increment was much smaller, from 54% in 1991 to 59% in 2023. In both countries, the part-time employment rate among men increased in the same period, at a faster rate in the Netherlands, from a mere 18% in 1983 to 48% in 2023, and at a slower rate in Australia, from 27% in 1991 to 36% in 2020. Nevertheless, men's part-time employment rates in both countries were still significantly lower than women's, suggesting the gendered nature of part-time work. A combination of structural changes in the economy and labour market and legislative frameworks governing part-time employment contribute to mainstreaming part-time work arrangements in Australia and the Netherlands.

For the Netherlands, a key characteristic of its part-time work is decent and quality work, with the difference in working conditions, required skills, and sectors being relatively minimal between full and part-time workers.⁴⁹ Thus, the growth of women's participation in the labour market in the Netherlands can be attributed significantly to how part-time work policies and legislation have been designed and implemented.⁵⁰

For Dutch women, having the option to work part-time has had important benefits for economic independence and empowerment, boosting the overall gender equality in the country.⁵¹ Indeed,

⁴⁹ Fagan et al., "In Search of Good Quality Part-Time Employment."

⁵⁰ OECD, *Part-Time and Partly Equal*; Fagan et al., "In Search of Good Quality Part-Time Employment."

⁵¹ OECD, *Part-Time and Partly Equal*.

Dutch women report high satisfaction with the part-time working arrangement, and the hourly gender wage gap between men and women is negligible.⁵² However, because the part-time workforce is dominated by women, the monthly and overall wage gap between men and women is persistently larger than the European average.⁵³ This limits women's economic independence over the long term as their lower salaries result in lower retirement savings than men's. Additionally, women's high take-up of part-time employment has been linked to their relatively low representation in management positions compared to neighbouring countries (which are still mostly available only on a full-time basis⁵⁴). Dutch women tend to switch from full-time to part-time jobs once they have children, and few return to full-time jobs,⁵⁵ meaning that the proportion of full-time employed women in the population has changed very little despite policy reform.⁵⁶

Furthermore, a lack of policy discussion regarding access to training and professional development opportunities means that part-time workers face limitations due to their shorter working hours which disincentivise businesses from investing in further skill development. Data from Australia and the Netherlands shows that only approximately one in ten managers worked part-time (7% in Australia in 2023 and 12% in the Netherlands in 2014).

Finally, evidence of tensions in part-time work policy and legislation suggests that current approaches have not fully addressed underlying social norms surrounding the division of paid and unpaid labour and the value placed upon care. Dutch women continue to perform up to a third more domestic and caregiving work than men, as many women who work part-time are mothers who have reduced their hours to care for children or family.⁵⁷ This gender gap in unpaid caregiving work is high compared to other European countries with a lower uptake of part-time work. It has important implications for gender equality in the future whilst also contradicting the egalitarian attitudes towards paid and unpaid work expressed by the population surveys.⁵⁸

6. Policy processes and lessons learnt from countries with best practices in their part-time work policies

All five countries stipulate basic principles for providing protections to part-time workers. However, they differ in the degree of comprehensiveness, the implementation of their legislative frameworks,

⁵² Wil Portegijs, Sebastian Alejandro Perez, and Marion van den Brakel, "Wie zorgt er voor de kinderen?," *Emancipatiemonitor: 2018*, December 14, 2018, <https://digitaal.scp.nl/emancipatiemonitor2018/wie-zorgt-er-voor-de-kinderen>.

⁵³ PricewaterhouseCoopers, "Nederland blijft achter als het gaat om fulltimebanen vrouwen," PwC, accessed August 14, 2024, <https://www.pwc.nl/nl/actueel-en-publicaties/themas/economie/nederland-blijft-achter-als-het-gaat-om-fulltimebanen-vrouwen.html>; OECD, *Part-Time and Partly Equal*.

⁵⁴ Lena Hipp and Stefan Stuth, "Wishes and Reality Managers and Part-Time Work: A European Comparison," 2014, <https://bibliothek.wzb.eu/articles/2014/f-18973.pdf>.

⁵⁵ Rate of transition from part-time into full-time employment is much higher for men than women and more frequent for younger, more highly educated and highly skilled workers.

⁵⁶ Visser et al., "Part-Time Employment in the Netherlands: From Atypicality to a Typicality."

⁵⁷ OECD, *Part-Time and Partly Equal*.

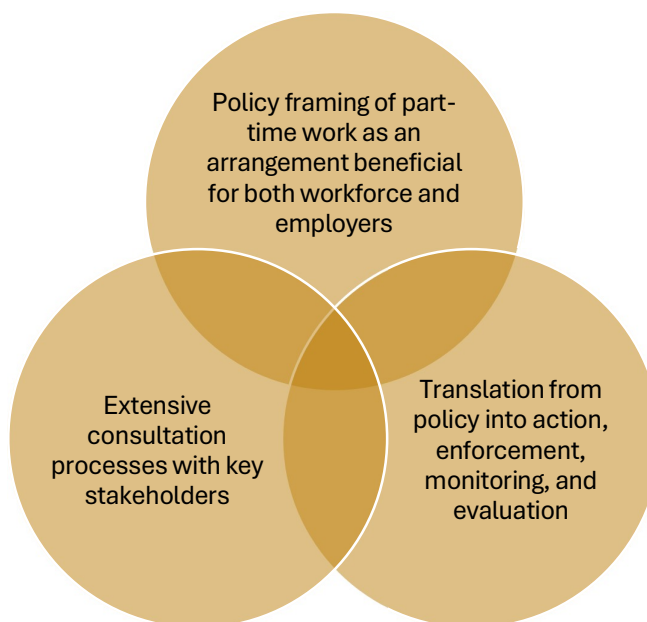
⁵⁸ OECD.

and how they leverage part-time work to advance women's labour force participation, as discussed in Section 4.

The Netherlands and Australia emerge as best practices countries with legislative frameworks and policies that not only provide basic protections for part-time workers but also ensure quality part-time employment and allocate resources to enforce, monitor, and evaluate their implementation. All these aspects are lacking, especially in Indonesia and Vietnam, where even the pro-rata basis of entitlements for part-time workers is not explicitly articulated in their main labour regulations and are insufficient in the Philippines.

The following sub-sections provide more details of the Dutch and Australian policy approaches that could be adapted in the context of the Philippines. **Figure 10** summarises the key success factors of the policy process adopted by the Netherlands and Australia: policy framing part-time work as an arrangement beneficial to *both* the workforce and employers; extensive consultation processes with key stakeholders; and translation from policy into action, enforcement, monitoring and evaluation. Each element is interconnected and should be seen as processes reinforcing one another.

Figure 10. Key success factors in part-time work policy process



6.1 Policy framing of part-time work as an arrangement beneficial for both the workforce and employers

In the Netherlands, the rise of part-time employment was initially driven by the late entry of married women into the labour force who adopted this working arrangement in response to a lack of childcare facilities and support. As such, the high initial take-up of part-time employment in the

Netherlands was driven more by bottom-up drivers rather than any targeted policy interventions.⁵⁹ Meanwhile, in Australia, part-time working arrangements grew in popularity as the demographic characteristics of the workforce shifted to include more women, but also young people pursuing education, and older workers approaching retirement. Part-time work allowed these groups to combine work with different non-work activities.⁶⁰

In both countries, changing economic conditions also provide a business case for part-time work arrangement, with employers realising the potential of part-time employment to more flexibly respond to changes in labour demand, with part-time employment typically rising during cyclical downturns.⁶¹ With both countries transitioning into more services-oriented economies, creating large employment in the service sector that requires long and irregular hours, there is a strong demand for part-time employment.

Thus, policy framing of part-time work in both countries is geared towards ensuring quality part-time employment opportunities benefitting both employees and employers. Both governments took a gradual approach in the introduction/implementation of their part-time employment legislative framework. In the Netherlands, as seen in **Box 2**, the incremental approaches in late 1990s and early 2000s set the foundation to 'normalise' part-time employment in the Netherlands and cement the Netherlands as a policy leader in Europe on this issue.

⁵⁹ Visser et al., "Part-Time Employment in the Netherlands: From Atypicality to a Typicality."

⁶⁰ Joanna Abhayaratna et al., "Part-Time Employment: The Australian Experience," Staff Working Paper (Productivity Commission, 2008).

⁶¹ Abhayaratna et al.

Box 2. Gradual approaches undertaken by the Netherlands' government in the early introduction of the part-time legislative framework

The Prohibition of Discrimination by Working Hours Act came into effect in 1996, developed from existing Dutch anti-discrimination law. In labour relations, the purpose of The Prohibition of Discrimination by Working Hours Act was to prohibit unequal treatment on the grounds of differences in working hours. The Act led to the addition of Article 7:648 of the Dutch Civil Code, forbidding employers to discriminate between employees on the basis of differences in working hours. This was extended to include government employers through the incorporation of Article 125g of the Central and Local Government Personnel Act. Temporary and permanent contract workers benefit from similar protections with Article 7:649 of the Dutch Civil Code. It promoted part-time work to employees by making it less likely that they would face unfair or discriminatory treatment by employers for choosing this type of employment.

The Adjustment of Working Hours Act came into effect in 2000. It gave employees the legal right to request an increase or decrease in working hours, and obliged employers to honour these requests unless they could demonstrate that doing so would cause serious problems for business. This law effectively promoted part-time work by making it easier for full-time employees to reduce their hours.

Source: Havinga (2002); Visser (2002); Visser et al. (2004)

From the perspective of the workforce, regulatory frameworks should not only provide basic protections, but also allow quality jobs, so that part-time work is not a 'lesser option' to full-time work, and so that professional growth is possible. This is the case for the Netherlands, where part-time work is not confined to low-skilled jobs only, as in many countries. Indeed, more than 25% of highly skilled workers in managerial, professional, and technical occupations in the Netherlands work part-time, and this is more than twice the OECD average.⁶²

Providing public information towards the benefits of part-time work arrangements may also help to solicit broader support from the key stakeholders. For example, WGEA in Australia provides policy and strategy guidance for flexible working arrangements (FWA), laying out the importance of FWA for workplace gender equality and FWA benefits to employers.⁶³ In practice, making the business case for part-time work arrangements or any other labour market policies promoting gender equality in economic participation is necessary to convince employers to be onboard with the policy change. This may be a greater challenge in countries where part-time employment opportunities are still low, such as the Philippines. The subsequent sub-section on the consultative approach will be relevant to address potential opposition or backlash to the proposed legislative changes in part-time employment.

⁶² OECD, *Part-Time and Partly Equal*.

⁶³ WGEA, "Policy and Strategy Guidance: Flexible Working Arrangements" (Canberra: WGEA, May 2024), <https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Policy-and-strategy-guidance-flexible-working-arrangements.pdf>.

6.2 Extensive consultation process with key stakeholders

Another factor allowing stakeholder buy-in in both the Netherlands and Australia has been extensive consultation throughout the policymaking process. Governments in both countries initially faced resistance, especially from the unions (see more details for the Australian case in **Box 3**). This was also the case in the Netherlands, and the unions' turning point was the decline of union membership, which undermined the confidence and resources of unions to resist part-time work.⁶⁴ Hence, unions began to embrace part-time work, even advocating for stronger rights for part-time workers, which was eventually enacted in 2000.⁶⁵

The Dutch government has aimed to reach voluntary agreements with businesses, trade unions, and civil society before any significant changes occurred.⁶⁶ This generally incentivises stakeholders to stay ahead of legislative changes and become early adopters of the proposed policies. It also allows the Dutch government to gauge key stakeholders' concerns and possible resistance and respond with appropriate evidence and arguments.

Extensive consultation also encourages changes to be pre-emptively adopted before any policy is implemented, effectively allowing for a "trial period" before legislative reform. This was the case for part-time work in the Netherlands, with collective labour agreements around part-time work being widespread before the passing of the relevant legislation. Australian part-time work policy has also benefited from extensive consultation with key stakeholders, and the Fair Work Commission provides an institutional venue for ongoing dialogue between employers, employees, and government. By contrast, Vietnam and Indonesia have more centralised and government-led policymaking processes, allowing fewer opportunities for input from key stakeholders to be considered.⁶⁷ Furthermore, Vietnam does not have any independent union⁶⁸, and there is no *de facto* legal framework to create labour unions or ways for workers to enforce labour rights.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Jelle Visser, "The First Part-Time Economy in the World: A Model to Be Followed?," *Journal of European Social Policy* 12, no. 1 (2002): 23–42.

⁶⁵ Visser; Visser et al., "Part-Time Employment in the Netherlands: From Atypicality to a Typicality."

⁶⁶ Visser et al., "Part-Time Employment in the Netherlands: From Atypicality to a Typicality."

⁶⁷ A case in point was when the government of Indonesia attempted to enact various revisions to their existing Manpower Law in 2020 without public consultation, which created a major backlash.

⁶⁸ The Vietnam General Confederation of Labour as an umbrella organisation for all trade unions is closely aligned with the Communist Party of Vietnam.

⁶⁹ Human Rights Watch, "Vietnam; False Claims on Labour Rights," May 8, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/05/08/vietnam-false-claims-labor-rights>.

Box 3. Early unions resistance in part-time employment in Australia

During the 1970s and 1980s, unions had concerns that the increase in part-time work would undermine the continued growth of full-time employment. These concerns resulted in industrial and institutional measures which limited the number of part-time workers in the economy. However, these concerns moderated in the 1990s and 2000s, particularly due to a growing number of workers expressing their preference for part-time employment – for example, to facilitate returning to work from maternity leave or to provide a transition to retirement.

Employers have a more supportive view of part-time workers. They welcomed the increased flexibility and productivity afforded by part-time employment and leveraged the fact that this working arrangement could meet the changing preferences of workers. During the 1970s and 1980s, employers attempted to increase the flexibility of working hours by applying to tribunals to liberalise access to part-time employment arrangements. In response, industrial tribunals allowed part-time employment provisions in awards where they were seen as meeting the needs of industries and not undermining full-time employment.

Policy process

- Unstandardised treatment of part-time workers; conditions and definitions varied according to industry-specific awards. No formal definition of casual employment, part-time employment definitions varied depending on the award.
- In 1987 and 1988, the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission made two National Wage Case decisions directly addressing part-time workers. Hence, part-time employment started to be defined vis-à-vis policy.
- In 1996, the Federal Workplace Relations Act was passed in Parliament. For the first time, this specifies regulations relating to part-time employees and stipulates that no type of employment can be treated preferentially to another.
- In 2009, the Fair Work Act standardised the treatment of part-time and full-time workers.

Hence, the part-time work policy trickled up from industrial tribunals to national commissions and finally into Acts of Parliament. It was not until the involvement of the Commonwealth that standardisation could be achieved.

Source: Abhayaratna et al. (2008)

6.3 Translation from policy into action, enforcement, and monitoring

In terms of ensuring policy implementation, relevant authorities governing part-time employment in Australia have built influence through active information dissemination and outreach. The websites of the Fair Work Commission and the Ombudsman provide many resources for employers and employees alike, which clearly and simply outline their rights and obligations, covering not only part-time employment but also other types of employment.

In the Netherlands, the Labour Authority continues to be active in enforcing legislation surrounding working conditions. This includes awareness-raising campaigns and materials surrounding themes

relevant to the part-time work policy and legislation, such as working conditions, working hours, rest breaks, minimum wage, and holiday allowance. The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights also continues to handle discrimination complaints, including those relating to labour, specifically the rights of part-time workers to equal treatment. Active and visible enforcement and monitoring mechanisms ensure that part-time work legislation moves beyond the policy to efficient implementation. Moreover, part-time work policy and legislation provide minimum standards for employers to meet. Still, a degree of flexibility is maintained through collective labour agreements formed between employers and unions within companies or sectors. Dutch union presence has been historically strong. Consequently, a collective labour agreement covers around 80% of Netherlands employees.

In Australia and the Netherlands, at the very minimum, statistics on part-time employment are made publicly available and accessible, and this information is disaggregated by gender. In Australia, mandated reporting on gender equality indicators by employers with at least 100 workers and more to WGEA includes detailed information on the number of workers in part-time work arrangements by gender, managerial level, and their incidence of promotions, appointments, and resignations. WGEA also makes this data publicly available for download on their website and regularly publishes reports synthesising their findings. WGEA's latest report found that part-time employment among women in the Commonwealth public sector was 17% in 2022, and 30% in the private sector.⁷⁰ The report indicated that the acceptance and promotion of flexible ways of working in the Commonwealth public sector may allow the workers to keep their full-time hours while balancing caring and other responsibilities.⁷¹

In contrast, gender-disaggregated statistics on part-time employment in Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines are not widely available. This often requires access to the microdata and own-analysis of their respective labour force surveys. It is not surprising that the public discourse on part-time employment in these countries is relatively limited.

6.4 Linking part-time employment policy with broader agenda of gender equality

Despite the success of the Netherlands and Australia in having relatively high take-up of part-time employment and labour force participation among women, both countries are still grappling with narrowing workplace gender gaps. While the hourly gender wage gap is relatively small in the Netherlands, the country has a large gender gap in working hours. This contributes to the Netherlands having one of the largest gender gaps in monthly earnings among OECD countries and associated gender gaps in pension income. Its share of women in managerial positions has also been low at 27%, well below the OECD average of 33%.⁷² Australia also shares the same challenges with a 23% gender pay gap, and despite having a high share of female managers overall (at 40%), the

⁷⁰ WGEA, "Commonwealth Public Sector Gender Equality Scorecard: Key Employer Results from 2022," June 2024, <https://www.wgea.gov.au/publications/Commonwealth-public-sector-gender-equality-scorecard>.

⁷¹ WGEA (2024) further cited the 2022 APS Census where 55% of employees work from home or in hybrid work arrangements, and 26% access flexible hours of work.

⁷² OECD, *Part-Time and Partly Equal*.

country has a more pronounced gender gap at higher levels of managerial seniority.⁷³ In both countries, women still shoulder a higher proportion of unpaid care and domestic work, with Australia's gender gap in unpaid work being considerably above the OECD average.⁷⁴

Both countries have attempted to address these persistent challenges. For example, Australia enacted specific Acts to promote gender equality in the workplace and close the gender pay gap. WGEA, as a mandated government agency, continues to provide resources for the public to better understand gender equality issues and for businesses to take action in improving equality in the workplace, with the information curated for different types of businesses (i.e., pay equity for small businesses) or across various themes (i.e., building a business case for gender equality, employee consultation, flexible work, etc.). WGEA's role in collecting and analysing workforce data and public dissemination of their findings also helps in steering public conversations and gaining public support in advancing gender equality in the workplace. For example, WGEA analysis showed a "promotion cliff" for part-time workers, with the data showing a large gap in promotional opportunities for part-time workers, calling for more part-time employment opportunities at the managerial and executive levels.⁷⁵

Both countries also attempt to tackle gender norms through policy, such as parental leave. In 2020, the Dutch government implemented leave reform extending paternity leave to an additional five weeks of paid leave at 70% of earnings instead of the initial 7 days.⁷⁶ Quasi-experimental studies evaluating the impact of leave programs reserved for fathers show promising results, with increased leave take-up and fathers' engagement in unpaid work.⁷⁷

The Australian government has also been engaging in public awareness campaigns to change gender stereotypes, for example, through a joint public-private campaign called the "Equilibrium Man Challenge" to promote acceptance of men engaging in flexible working arrangements.⁷⁸ WGEA also continues promoting flexible working arrangements to be adopted by workplaces, with more organisations recognising flexible work as a critical enabler for gender equality in the workplace. These examples show that the government can promote workplace gender equality in multiple ways other than just through part-time employment policies.

⁷³ OECD, "Fully Realising the Economic Potential of Women in Australia," OECD Economics Department Working Papers (Paris: OECD, 2024), <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/3470e5d8-en>.

⁷⁴ OECD, "Caregiving in Crisis: Gender Inequality in Paid and Unpaid Work during COVID-19" (Paris: OECD, December 13, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1787/3555d164-en>.

⁷⁵ WGEA, "New Data Shows Australian Workers Face a 'part-Time Promotion Cliff,'" November 15, 2023, <https://www.wgea.gov.au/newsroom/New-data-Australian-workers-part-time-promotion-cliff>.

⁷⁶ Justus van Kesteren, Iris Klinker, and Arjan Heyma, "Paternity Leave and the Household Income Share of Mothers: Evidence from the Netherlands," Discussion Paper, August 22, 2022.

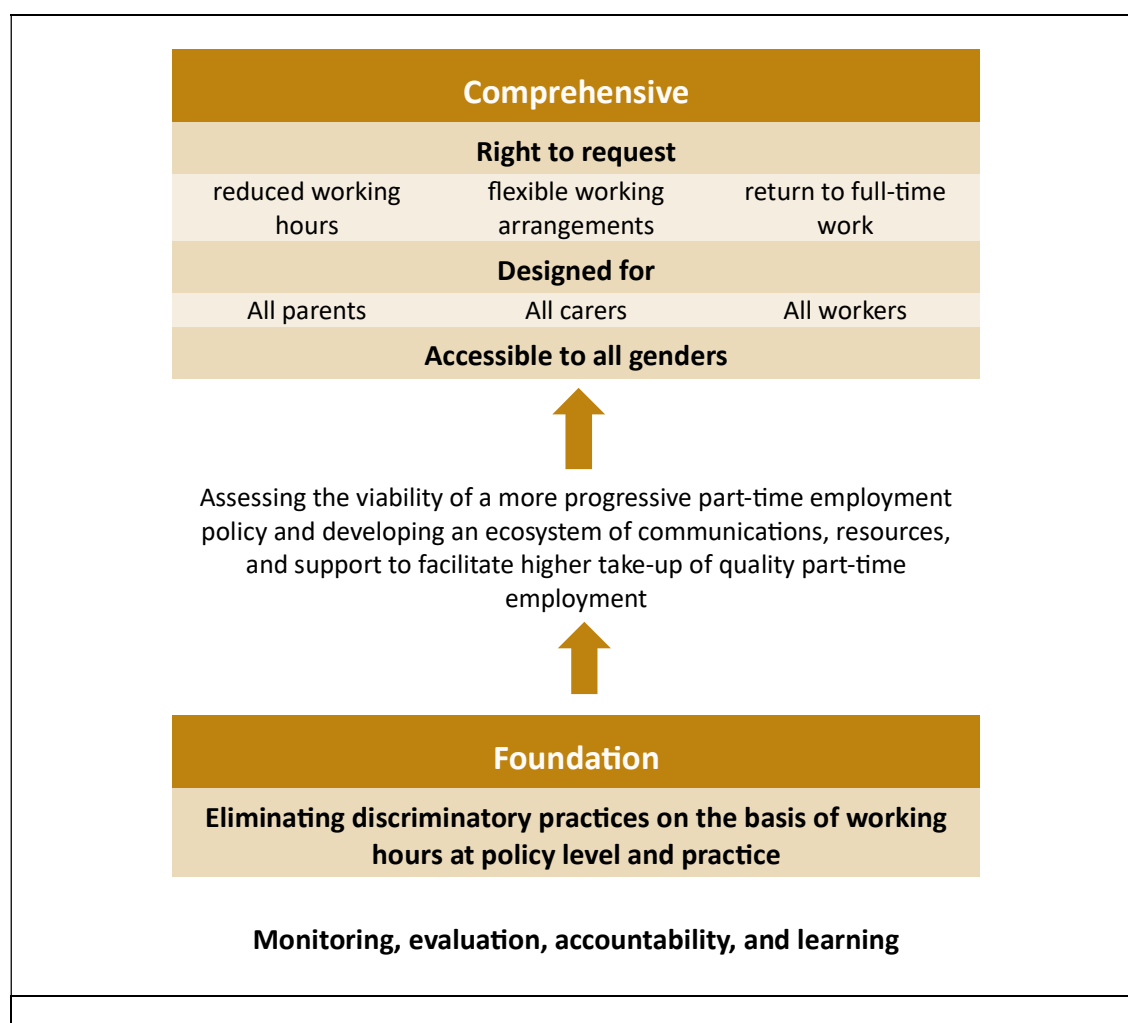
⁷⁷ OECD, *Part-Time and Partly Equal*.

⁷⁸ OECD.

7. Key opportunities for improvement in the Philippines' part-time work policy and legislation to better support women's labour force participation

While the Philippines has made strides in incorporating part-time employment arrangements in its legislative framework, there remains a substantial gap between policies and practices that needs to be addressed. Below are some of the policy considerations in the context of the Philippines, as illustrated in **Figure 11**, noting that any changes in the labour regulations will apply mostly to selected formal sector workers.⁷⁹

Figure 11. Key policy actions to enhance quality part-time employment in the Philippines



⁷⁹ For instance, the Philippines' Labour Code covers employees in all (for profit or not for profit) establishments, excluding government employees, managerial employees, field personnels, family workers, domestic helpers, persons in the personal service of another, and workers who are paid by results as determined by the Secretary of Labour in appropriate regulations.

More policy options to counter unintended consequences		
Casual loading for those on irregular part-time arrangements	Carers and parental leave for all genders	Broader flexible working arrangements

7.1 Understanding *de jure* vs. *de facto* of part-time employment policies and practices in the Philippines

While the existing part-time legislative framework in the Philippines provides assurance of equal protection and entitlement on a pro-rata basis to part-time workers (*de jure*), little is known about whether they hold in practice (*de facto*). Hence, it is pertinent that the government collects more data and conducts further research to understand any gaps between policies and practices. For instance, this may include assessing the extent to which part-time workers *actually* receive their basic entitlement of pro-rata benefits as stipulated in the regulatory framework, in terms of their basic salary, leave allowance, overtime pay, 13th-month salary, employees' and employers' contributions to social security, and other relevant employment aspects. The existing Labour Force Survey can be expanded to accommodate these questions as a means for verification and other qualitative measures to understand the reasons behind any deviations. Further analysis across intersectional backgrounds (e.g. rural/regional location, sector, socio-economic status, disability, sexuality etc.) and employment arrangements may provide further insights to prioritise the provision of any additional support to certain groups or more strategic enforcement going forward.

7.2 Ensuring policy translation into action

The reasons behind deviations in part-time policy and implementation may vary by country and can be attributed to both intended or unintended non-compliance with the existing legislative framework.

If employers purposely fail to follow stipulated regulations, then there should be a statutory arrangement to deal with discrimination cases on the grounds of working hours.⁸⁰ DOLE should also continue its active role in enforcing the part-time employment legislation.

If there is a lack of awareness and understanding of employers' obligations and opportunities regarding stipulated regulations, then more can be done to provide publicly accessible information. For instance, Australia's Fair Work Ombudsman website provides bite-sized information on part-time workers' entitlements, including examples of how pro-rata basis calculations should be applied in terms of leave and other entitlements.⁸¹ By making this information widely accessible and available,

⁸⁰ In the Netherlands, the responsibility to supervise the compliance with the ban on discrimination based on working hours was extended to the existing Equal Treatment Committee which already was assigned the task of dealing with other cases of discrimination (i.e., on the grounds of race, sex, etc) (Visser et. Al. 2004).

⁸¹ See <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/starting-employment/types-of-employees/part-time-employees>.

employers will have more support in implementing the policy, and employees will better understand their rights.

The main objectives of these first two recommendations are to identify and eliminate any loopholes in the existing policy and implementation for any discrimination based on working hours.

7.3 Understanding the appetite and providing the required support to enable the growth of part-time working arrangements

Before making any further changes to the existing part-time legislative framework, the government may seek consultation or conduct additional research with employers, employees, and unions to understand any latent demand for part-time working arrangements. The success stories of high part-time employment take-up in the Netherlands and Australia have been driven more by intrinsic demographic, labour market, and structural economic changes, rather than solely the attempts of government policies.

With women having higher levels of education relative to men, and more of these women favouring working part-time relative to full-time⁸², there may be a latent supply of higher-skilled workers willing to work part-time. Through this exercise, the government may identify certain employers that may benefit from accessing the higher-skilled pool of part-time workers. Or the government may learn more about the extent of demand from employers to create more part-time work opportunities, use part-time work arrangements to meet the changing demand for products or services, or operate longer business hours.

This consultation opportunity will also allow the government to probe further to what extent the employers and other stakeholders may need additional support. For instance, this may include ensuring employers have part-time work systems and processes, such as properly re-scoping roles according to part-time hours and equipping managers with the skills to support their part-time team members.⁸³ These resources can be made available through DOLE or other relevant government agencies. For example, in Australia, WGEA makes these resources publicly available with several toolkits tailored for employees, managers, and executives to ensure the successful implementation of flexible working arrangements in the workplace.⁸⁴

7.4 Providing more comprehensive clauses on part-time work arrangement

As another step, the Philippines may also consider adopting a certain degree of statutory right to request reduced working hours. For instance, depending on the readiness of the relevant stakeholders in the Philippines' context, a starting point may be to provide the right to request to work part-time instead of the full-fledged right to request flexible working arrangements as in Australia, or the right to return to full-time work in the Netherlands. As mentioned previously,

⁸² Belghith, Lavin, and Lapalombara, "Overcoming Barriers to Women's Economic Empowerment in the Philippines."

⁸³ Governance Institute of Australia, "Why Part-Time Work Is an Important Diversity Lever," accessed September 7, 2024, https://www.governanceinstitute.com.au/news_media/why-part-time-work-is-an-important-diversity-lever/.

⁸⁴ See <https://www.wgea.gov.au/flexible-work> for more details.

flexible working arrangements cover broader working arrangements, with reduced working hours as one of the options.

With a relatively low women's labour force participation rate in the Philippines and women tending to leave their employment upon marriage and childbirth, the Philippines may consider an option of providing the "right to request" the reduction in working hours during or after maternity leave and to eventually extend this right to carers or all workers in general. However, specific provisions should also be made to allow the return to full-time work once one's circumstances change. Otherwise, requests for reduced working hours are likely to be highly gendered, with women disproportionately taking up this opportunity. There should also be provisions governing reasonable grounds for refusal by employers, as stipulated in the Adjustment of Working Hours Act in the Netherlands.

For those workers under irregular part-time arrangements, the Philippines government may also consider adopting casual loadings as in Australia or hourly wage rate calculations as in Indonesia to compensate for fewer benefits afforded to casual workers and lower job certainty. This approach may be helpful to avoid the possibility of more employers opting for casual rather than fixed-term or permanent contractual arrangements, lowering the quality of available part-time jobs.

7.5 Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

Implementing effective monitoring and evaluation systems to track the progress of the part-time work policy requires feedback. At this stage, publicly accessible information in the Philippines is limited to the uptake of part-time employment at the aggregate level. To better track the impact of any changes in part-time employment policies, the legislative framework would require more detailed breakdowns. The following two metrics, disaggregated by gender, could be considered:

- Number of part-time employees covered under the existing Labour Code
- Disaggregation of part-time work across sectors and occupational profiles

More detailed data on part-time employment take-up will be important to identify policy implementation success and, if not, what additional measures should be introduced. Any tendencies or trends showing a more gendered division of part-time employment, which may exacerbate workplace gender inequality, should be countered by necessary policies. This may include women dominating part-time workers in low-skilled jobs or low-level roles. As mentioned above, WGEA analysis revealed a "promotion cliff" for part-time workers, pointing to a large gap in promotion opportunities for part-time workers, calling for more part-time employment opportunities at the managerial and executive levels.⁸⁵ In Australia, the WGEA regularly collects gender equality indicators from employers and publicly makes these data available, while in the Netherlands, this is part of the Eurostat Labour Force Survey's regular data collection.

An additional point to note is that if changes in the employment legislative framework are geared towards allowing more flexible working arrangements more generally, other corresponding indicators should also be tracked. For instance, the Labour Force Survey data can be used to monitor the uptake of alternative working locations or time patterns. Data should also be disaggregated by gender and the types of employment covered in the legislative framework. This will generate further evidence to what extent alternative policy options, such as broader flexible working arrangements,

⁸⁵ WGEA, "New Data Shows Australian Workers Face a 'part-Time Promotion Cliff.'"

may work more effectively in improving women's economic participation relative to focusing solely on part-time working arrangements.

7.6 A multi-pronged approach to increasing women's labour force participation

Encouraging greater uptake of part-time work is only one approach to improving women's economic participation in the Philippines. Other policy instruments to be considered are gender-neutral carer's leave and parental leave, signalling that all genders (including men) have the need to balance their work and family responsibilities, and challenging the existing gender norms whereby women bear the most domestic and caring responsibilities. These additional sets of leaves should be available to all workers, regardless of their working hours, with part-time workers receiving their pro-rata entitlements. Having a more comprehensive allocation of leaves for caring responsibilities and considerations for more comprehensive policies on flexible working arrangements may help more women advance their economic participation and potentially lead to less gendered part-time employment outcomes.

The Philippines can learn from Sweden, the first country to introduce paid parental leave for mothers and fathers. When introduced, the initial policy uptake was low amongst men. To combat this, Sweden introduced reserved months (colloquially known as "daddy months") - part of parental leave reserved for each parent on a 'use it or lose it' basis. In other words, both parents would get access to leave, but one parent's leave could not be used by the other parent, which encouraged both parents to use their full leave and, in this case, to increase the take-up of parental leave among men. The latest introduction of additional paternity leaves in the Netherlands also showed promising results, with higher and longer paternity leave take-up among fathers.⁸⁶

8. Concluding remarks

This report has provided a comparative analysis of key legislative frameworks and policies related to part-time employment in the Philippines, vis-à-vis comparator countries, Indonesia, Vietnam, Australia, and the Netherlands. It highlights the key factors differentiating the Philippines from the best practices cases and offers key policy considerations for the Philippines' government going forward. Any efforts to improve women's economic participation require a multi-pronged approach, as women face multiple and complex constraints. Policy reforms that address these various constraints, such as comprehensive part-time employment legislative frameworks allowing people of *all genders* to balance work with their other responsibilities, parental leave provisions, and public campaigns reshaping gender norms, have more potential to increase women's economic participation in the long run.

⁸⁶ van Kesteren, Klinker, and Heyma, "Paternity Leave and the Household Income Share of Mothers: Evidence from the Netherlands."

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