

Social Trends in Travel & Tourism Employment

THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19



In partnership with:



SEPTEMBER 2024

Introductory letter

For a brief moment in 2020, the world witnessed the near halt of travel. Hotels stood empty, and airports fell silent, placing a huge strain on those working in the industry, their families and the global economy. The pandemic highlighted Travel & Tourism as not only a critical source of employment but also as an engine for upward mobility, a force for peace and a driver of progress worldwide.

The world is getting back to travel, and the growth opportunities are enormous. Travel and Tourism is a major contributor to the global economy, with the industry on pace to expand \$15 trillion of the global GDP by 2034.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has played a large part in driving the growth of tourism, both on a global level in my role as Chair of UN Tourism's Executive Council and domestically. Like the global trends highlighted in the report, we have invested in particular in the three key areas identified in this report; youth employment, female employment and high wage jobs. A fundamental pillar of Vision 2030, tourism plays an increasingly important role for Saudi Arabia and its people. Just five years after the launch of our first-ever international tourist visa, we celebrated our 100 millionth traveler, a key goal of Vision 2030 achieved seven years ahead of schedule. This remarkable feat was achieved through careful investment in infrastructure, destinations, heritage sites, and the protection of our natural wonders. But above all, it was made possible by investing in people.

This year alone, the Kingdom spent almost \$100 million to help Saudi citizens develop tourism-specific skills and provided more than 300k training opportunities for tourism related jobs. Some have trained as local tour guides, acquiring deep knowledge of our nation's rich history and landscapes. Others are becoming entrepreneurs, focusing on creativity, leadership and digital skills.

Another major issue facing the industry and humanity is sustainability – which is at the heart of Vision 2030 and the Kingdom's tourism strategy. Initiatives such as the Saudi Green Initiative focus on reducing carbon emissions, promoting renewable energy and enhancing biodiversity. This not only helps to protect our planet, but also the livelihoods of the growing number of people employed in the tourism sector. In 2023, Saudi Arabia recorded the fourth largest capital investment in Travel & Tourism, growing at a faster pace than the Middle East average. The Kingdom was also among the fastest countries to recover from the pandemic, with Travel & Tourism's 2023 GDP contribution up 29.1% compared to pre-pandemic levels and against the global average of - 4.1%. These investments are not just leading to economic growth but also serving as a catalyst for social progress. Saudi Arabia is on the pathway to creating one million new jobs in the tourism sector by 2030, with opportunities reaching women, young people and minority groups.

The World Travel & Tourism Council should be commended for its global leadership and tireless efforts to reenergize and spearhead the uptick in the global tourism industry in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are proud to partner with them.

This report by the World Travel & Tourism Council is both timely and important. The data it provides, together with many global examples of creative approaches being taken, demonstrate the power of Travel & Tourism to not only strengthen economies, but to truly transform lives. We can all play our part in realizing this.

H.E. Ahmed Al-Khateeb Minister of Tourism, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Foreword

There are few better routes out of a tough start in life than a good job. Work can be an escape from poverty, crime, hunger and social isolation. Every government wants to give their citizens the best possible chance to earn a living and contribute to a strong national economy. It is a critical part of inclusive growth, underpinning the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Yet even today, we know that job opportunities are not spread evenly within the workforce. Too many struggle to access education, high wages and fair terms of employment. Some candidates face outright discrimination based on age or gender. Others live remotely and are cut off from towns and cities where work is concentrated. And even where jobs are easy to come by, too many are poorly paid, with tough working conditions, long hours and few chances to progress.

This is why workforce data is so critical. The Travel & Tourism sector is uniquely positioned to drive change; in 2023 it made up 9.1% of the global economy and supported 1 in 10 jobs. Many of these are relatively well-paid, secure roles with abundant opportunities to progress and build a career, particularly in emerging and developing economies. Jobs in travel also come with a chance to see the world, to learn languages, to experience other cultures and to work with wildlife and nature.

But without data, it's impossible to get an accurate picture of our sector's social footprint. This report is designed to fill the gap. It pays particular attention to the participation of women and young people in the workforce. We know that tourism employs a higher share of young people than other sectors, especially in hospitality. These might be summer jobs – as tour guides, restaurant workers or hotel staff – with the benefit of a low bar to entry and lots of flexibility. These roles can also be a critical first step on the career ladder, offering opportunities for those who otherwise struggle to access formal qualifications.

Less well-understood is the gender balance of Travel & Tourism. In 2022, the sector directly employed around 42 million women around the globe – just under 40% of the workforce, which is roughly the same gender split as the overall economy. Women remain underrepresented in developing economies and senior positions, although progress is steadily being made. And while tourism is a critical employer worldwide, our research reveals that it is a uniquely important source of income in places where women have fewer choices to begin with. Wages are difficult to compare from one country to the next, because differences in pay have to be considered relative to the wider economy. Even so, it is good to see that Travel & Tourism accounts for a significant share of high-wage jobs in low-income countries, where secure employment is needed most. Travel & Tourism remains a disproportionately important driver of development. This does, however, bring to light a crucial gender disparity, because women tend to be underrepresented in the workforce of lower income economies. Development policies should therefore go hand-in-hand with efforts to support women's employment and career progression, such as maternity pay and affordable childcare.

Across every single data point in this report, one fact remains constant: in times of economic crisis, underrepresented groups and low-wage earners bear a disproportionate share of the burden. When the pandemic struck in 2020, women, young people and the least well paid were the first to be laid off. This inequality is not just a moral problem, but an economic one too. To stay competitive, businesses need to hire from the widest possible pool of talent and governments must provide appropriate incentives and support to ensure this does not happen again. Countries grow faster and are more productive when they have a strong workforce. And for governments, unemployment and job insecurity go hand-in-hand with crime, higher welfare spending and a lower tax base.

Public policies can help. This report contains examples of initiatives that have helped countries to strengthen their workforce and ease the impact of the COVID crisis on those most affected. These include training colleges, microfinance schemes, tax policies and reforms to make it easier for women to access loans. The countries featured range from the Netherlands to Kazakhstan, Paraguay and Rwanda. Above all, progress begins with the right data: we hope this report helps companies, governments and those working towards the SDGs to have the benchmark they need to drive change.

At the World Travel & Tourism Council, we want our sector to be a model to others. Employment is not only part of economic progress, but shapes society too. A working labour market is one in which nobody's potential is wasted, and where women and young people feel they have a stake in the future. We hope this research can help to guide the way.





Julia Simpson

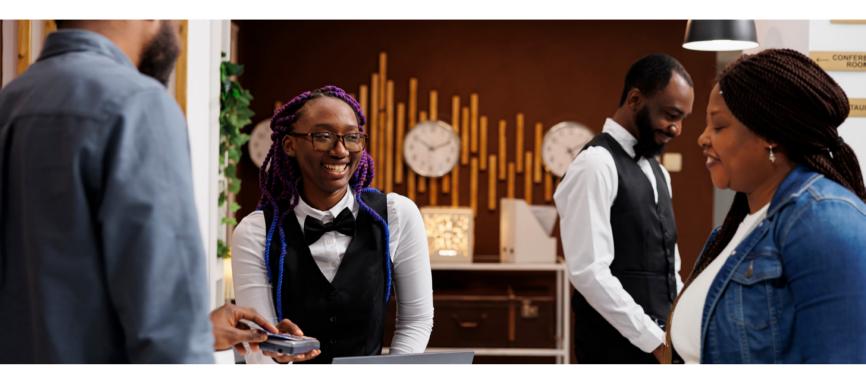
Julia Simpson President & CEO, World Travel & Tourism Council

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Executive Summary

The Travel & Tourism sector has huge potential to generate positive social impacts through its employment footprint, particularly in the jobs it offers to under-represented groups. Travel & Tourism is a major contributor to the global economy and workforce, representing 9% of world GDP and 1 out of every 10 jobs in 2023. The sector's employment impact contributes to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in low- and middle-income countries by generating high-wage jobs and supporting employment of minority groups. This report assesses employment across 185 countries and seven sectors contributing to Travel & Tourism across 2019-2022, providing an overview of how COVID-19 affected employment patterns across age, gender and wage levels. It shows that women and youth were disproportionately affected by the crisis, highlighting the needs to develop policies for resilient employment across the sector that can protect vulnerable groups moving forward. Key findings are summarised in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1. Key findings



Across the entire Travel & Tourism sector, the number of jobs the sector supports is continuing to recover towards the prepandemic peak.



However, the share of **Travel** & **Tourism jobs classified** as high-wage has increased since 2019 across all regions and income groups.



While job losses were experienced across the Travel & Tourism sector during the pandemic, **young workers and female workers were disproportionately impacted** compared to other groups.

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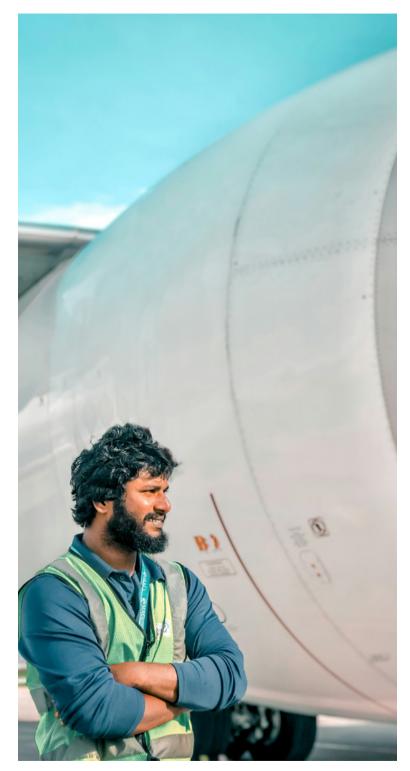
Travel & Tourism's contribution to youth and female employment remains below 2019 levels and has recovered more quickly in some regions than others In 2022, the Travel & Tourism sector directly employed 16.1 million young people and 42 million women, and nearly 35 million direct Travel & Tourism jobs were categorised as high-wage.

The Travel & Tourism sector has contributed towards a higher share in youth employment and high-wage jobs, and similar share of female employment, compared to the rest of the economy worldwide, demonstrating its potential as a key sector for sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development.

However, the global pandemic jeopardised the social benefits of Travel & Tourism and revealed the vulnerability of jobs to external economic conditions, particularly the jobs held by women and young people. While job losses were experienced across the Travel & Tourism sector during the pandemic, young and female workers were disproportionately impacted compared to other groups. This is because young people and women are more likely to work in sectors that were heavily hit by pandemicrelated restrictions such as hospitality, be on hourly or informal contracts, or have other commitments outside of work.

Building the Travel & Tourism sector's resilience to global shocks is essential to securing positive social outcomes. Employment policies, implemented either by national governments or by Travel & Tourism service providers, can provide security for vulnerable employees during hard times. Countries with social safety nets, job protection schemes, or vocational training programmes have seen employment of young people and women recover more quickly after 2020. Lower employment of young people and women is a systemic issue and achieving change requires collaboration. The findings highlight the need for policies to support training and education, workforce entry, and employee retention.

With an enabling policy environment, Travel & Tourism employment can support positive social outcomes beyond its employment footprint. Measuring Travel & Tourism's global footprint can provide a broad understanding of the social impact of Travel & Tourism and help reinforce progress across several socio-economic dimensions.





. Travel & Tourism and society

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Travel & Tourism plays a significant role in the global economy, contributing to 9.1% of world GDP and one out of every 10 jobs in the world in 2023*. It therefore has a large impact on social outcomes through employment opportunities. Measuring these impacts allows us to understand how Travel & Tourism contributes across different countries and cultures, assessing where impacts provide the greatest economic outcomes. This report focuses on the social impacts derived from direct Travel & Tourism employment. The analysis covers 2019-2022, a period in which COVID-19 devastated the sector. It therefore provides insight into how crises affect different demographics and wage categories in Travel & Tourism employment.

Travel & Tourism supports sustainable development by creating employment for young workers and female workers and by offering high-wage jobs, especially in developing countries. This report analyses the social impact of Travel & Tourism for these groups and investigates the extent to which the sector creates high-wage jobs across economies. Travel & Tourism has a significant role to play in the achievement of the United Nations Social Development Goals (SDGs) through this employment activity (Box 1).

Box 1: The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out global priorities for increasing prosperity, ending poverty, protecting the planet, and improving lives¹. The 17 goals span topics from inequality and hunger to environmental protection. They were adopted by UN member states in 2015, with the aim of achieving them by 2030. Progress has been made against many of the targets but needs to accelerate for most of the Goals and in most countries.

The Travel & Tourism sector supports several of the UN SDGs through its economic contributions and employment support. This report assesses the impact of Travel & Tourism on four key SDGs.



* This includes direct and indirect employment impacts.

1.1 Why is it important to measure social impacts?

Tracking Travel & Tourism's social impacts provides a holistic picture of its role in countries' economic, social, and cultural landscapes. Moreover, it allows us to evaluate how Travel & Tourism's impact differs across countries and cultures. For example, relatively well-paid, stable, and traditional economy jobs offered by Travel & Tourism are particularly impactful in countries where average incomes are very low or insecure, and workforce participation of women is below average. Similarly, the extent of decent and stable job opportunities for young people can strongly influence a country's likely future path for human capital development, and long-term economic growth.

1.2 What social impacts are measured?

This report focuses on employment impacts of Travel & Tourism for different groups of people. Travel & Tourism's employment impact includes direct, indirect, and induced jobs supported by the sector, as summarised in Fig. 2. However, this report focuses on direct Travel & Tourism employment, as this is the channel for which the sector has the most control over its social impact.

The rest of the report will be structured as follows:

- Section 2 briefly reviews Travel & Tourism's economic context, covering pandemic-related impacts and recovery.
- **Section 3** discusses the Travel & Tourism sector's contribution to youth employment.
- **Section 4** considers the Travel & Tourism sector's contribution to female employment.
- **Section 5** introduces 'high-wage' jobs and the Travel & Tourism sector's contribution to high-wage job creation.
- **Section 6** summarises the sector's progress towards social development and concludes.

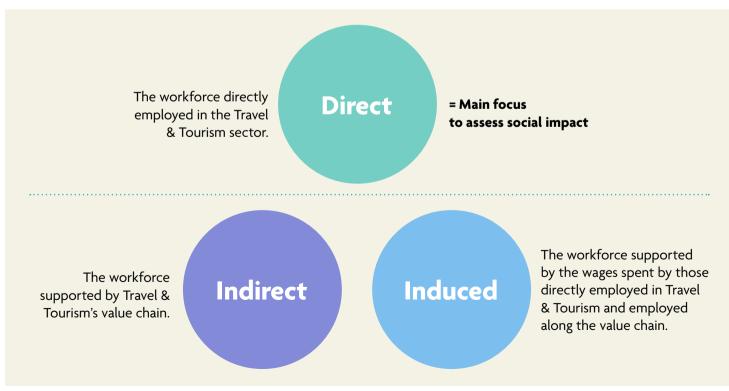


Fig. 2. Channels of employment impact



2. Travel & Tourism's pandemic recovery

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Travel & Tourism sector was heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this impact differed across the industries that make up the sector. The employment profiles of these constituent industries meant that pandemic impacts varied across social groups. Notably, the hospitality, accommodation, and food industries, which employed many young people and women, had the highest job losses.

The Travel & Tourism sector was more heavily affected by the pandemic than the economy overall (Fig. 3). In 2020, the sector's contribution to GDP fell by almost 50%, while the overall economy declined by less than 4% annually. This report studies the 2019-2022 period. The strongest effects were felt in 2020-2021 due to widespread lockdowns, with recovery beginning in 2021-2022 in most regions. Travel & Tourism employment remained 8% below 2019 levels in 2022, while economy-wide employment has remained relatively constant over the period. Despite this, the sector still accounted for a substantial portion of overall employment in 2022 (9.0%, compared to 10.3% in 2019).

2.1 Sectoral difference in pandemic recovery

Different sectors of the economy experienced different patterns of pandemic impact and recovery. Travel & Tourism experienced a slower recovery and a larger drop in GDP and employment than sectors such as technology due to lockdowns and restrictions on movements of people. These sectoral differences in pandemic recovery can be further disaggregated into the effects on the individual industries that contribute to broader economic sectors (illustrated for Travel & Tourism in Fig. 3).

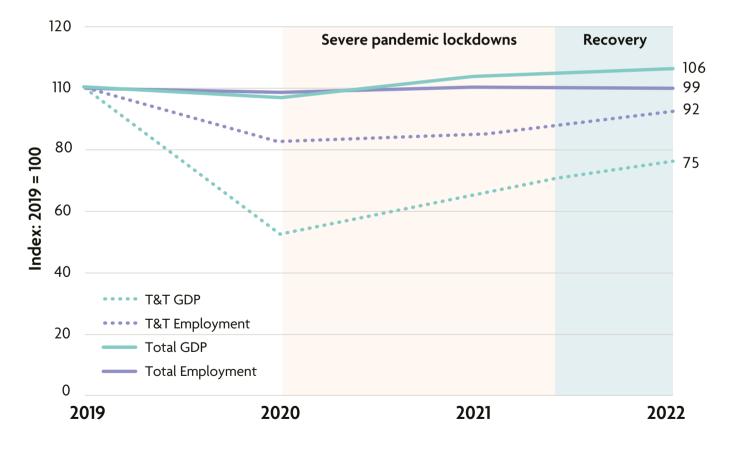
The employment profiles of Travel & Tourism's constituent industries meant that pandemic impacts varied across social groups. For example, the hospitality, accommodation, and food industries, which employed many young people and women, had the highest job losses². Almost half (49%) of employees in the hospitality industry were women in 2022, a higher share than in any other industry within Travel & Tourism. Similarly, women-led businesses in hospitality reported a higher probability of falling into arrears during the pandemic³. This disproportionate impact is not just in Travel & Tourism but reflects a worsening job market for young people and women more generally. This analysis considers how differing impacts across industries affected the Travel & Tourism employment for these under-represented groups.

2.2 Interpreting our results with Pandemicrelated distortions

This report presents results for 2019-2022, a period of unprecedented disruption and uncertainty induced by the pandemic and subsequent recovery, including in some cases distorted figures and delayed reporting of statistics.

A clearer picture of social trends will only be possible several years in the future, when data on Travel & Tourism spending, and industries' employment impacts, are available for a number of years after the peak of the pandemic in 2020.

Fig. 3. Overall employment and GDP supported by the Travel & Tourism sector (indexed to 2019) by year





3. Youth employment in Travel & Tourism

CHAPTER SUMMARY

At a global level, Travel & Tourism is a significant employer of young people (15-24 years old), comprising a greater share of direct youth employment than the global economy overall. However, youth employment in Travel & Tourism was heavily hit during the pandemic. While direct youth employment is recovering, in 2022 it remained below 2019 levels across all regions and has not recovered as much as for older workers. Young people may be more vulnerable to job losses because they are more likely to work on temporary or casual contracts or because they are potentially more likely to work entry-level jobs.

Key findings

- Travel & Tourism directly employed **16.1 million young people** in 2022, 15% below its 2019 levels.
- However, youth employment supported by Travel & Tourism is continuing to recover from the pandemic, with an **annual rise of 11%** in 2022.
- The majority of direct youth employment in Travel & Tourism is in the hospitality industry, which was the most affected industry by COVID-19.
- While job losses were experienced across the Travel & Tourism sector **during the pandemic, young workers** were more affected than other age groups.
- Travel & Tourism's direct youth employment recovered more quickly in Europe and high-income countries than in other regions.
- Some countries experienced growth in direct youth employment in Travel & Tourism between 2019-2022, including Qatar, UAE, and Grenada.

Travel & Tourism supports economic activity and jobs in countries at different levels of development and with diverse age profiles. Quality job opportunities for young people are important for youth empowerment and long-term economic growth, especially in countries with growing populations⁴. This section discusses Travel & Tourism's role in sustaining employment opportunities for the global labour force of young people, defined as those aged 15 to 24.*

Youth employment is a significant contributor to SDG 10 (Box 2), by reducing the inequalities between young people and other members of the workforce. Alongside reducing inequalities, youth employment in Travel & Tourism may facilitate the sector's readiness for emerging social and environmental challenges pioneered and championed by the young⁵.

This analysis considers employment impacts across several different metrics to present a full picture of Travel & Tourism's social impact across youth employment. Fig. 4 illustrates these categories.



Box 2: SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and between countries

SDG 10 aims to reduce disparities in living standards between countries. These disparities

have arisen over the course of history, but divergence has accelerated over recent decades and particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reducing inequality within countries is also central to SDG 10. Disparities related to differences in income, gender, age, or other characteristics are harmful to economic prosperity, social development, and individuals' sense of self-worth.

The Travel & Tourism sector supports SDG 10 by stimulating high-quality, well-paid jobs across a broad range of sectors and countries. Employment by age and gender are two important indicators of the sector's contribution to SDG 10.

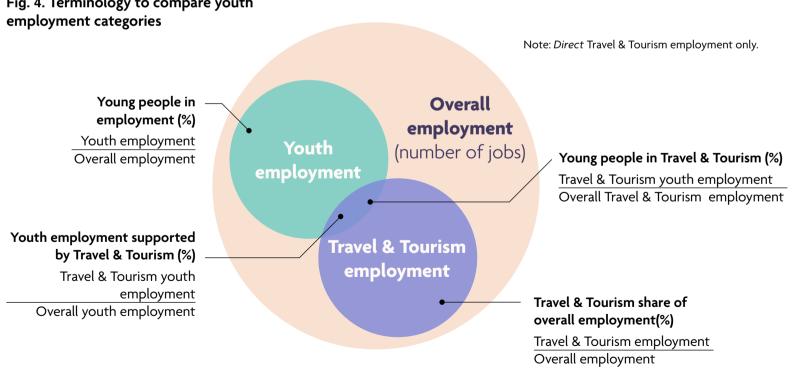


Fig. 4. Terminology to compare youth

* Many countries publish labour statistics disaggregated among different age bands. This age range is selected for our study as it facilitates comparisons across the broadest possible range of countries.

3.1 Global trends

Travel & Tourism youth employment continues to climb back towards its 2019 peak (Fig. 5). Travel & Tourism directly employed 16.1 million young workers in 2022, 15% below the 2019 peak. However, Travel & Tourism's youth employment has recovered since 2020, with a year-on-year increase of 11% in 2022.

Young people make up a greater share of direct Travel & Tourism employment than in the global economy overall, but this share has fallen since 2019. The share of youth employment fell slightly between 2019-2022 across both Travel & Tourism (from

15.7% to 14.7%), and the wider economy (from 13.4% to 12.7%), as young people were more heavily hit by job losses.

Travel & Tourism direct job losses linked to the disruptions over 2020 and 2021 were slightly more concentrated among young people, as seen in Fig. 6. This is because young people are more likely to work in sectors such as hospitality that were more heavily hit by pandemic-related restrictions.

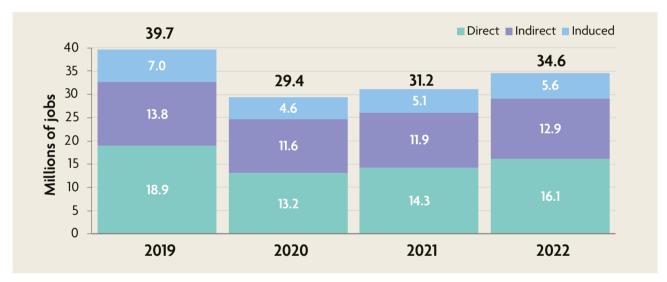
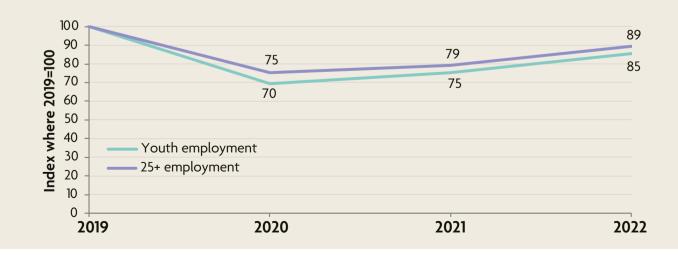


Fig. 5. Overall Travel & Tourism youth employment (millions of jobs), by impact channel and year

Fig. 6. Youth and 25+ direct employment in Travel & Tourism, by year (indexed to 2019)



Note: All employment refers to *direct* Travel & Tourism jobs.

3.2 Trends by region and national income level

Travel & Tourism's direct contribution to overall youth employment has recovered more quickly in Europe and highincome countries (see Fig. 7). Travel & Tourism's contribution to overall direct youth employment has already exceeded prepandemic levels in Europe and is continuing to recover across all other regions. This could be because of labour policies in specific countries. For example, in Europe, losses were lower to start with in part due to job protection schemes in these countries, as discussed in Box 3. Looking at the *share* of youth employment supported by Travel & Tourism, Europe and high-income countries outperform their regional counterparts, which may be due to job protection schemes as well as sectoral differences. **Travel & Tourism directly employs a greater share of young people than the economy overall in all regions apart from Africa** (Fig. 8). In many countries, the Travel & Tourism sector is an important source of job opportunities for young people. The Travel & Tourism sector is also relatively high-paying in most countries resulting in higher retention of employees. However, in much of Africa, agriculture remains the main employer of young people.

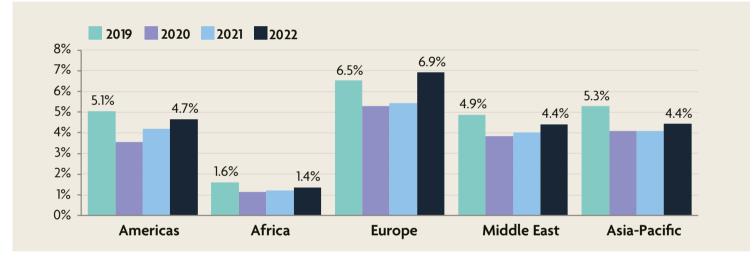
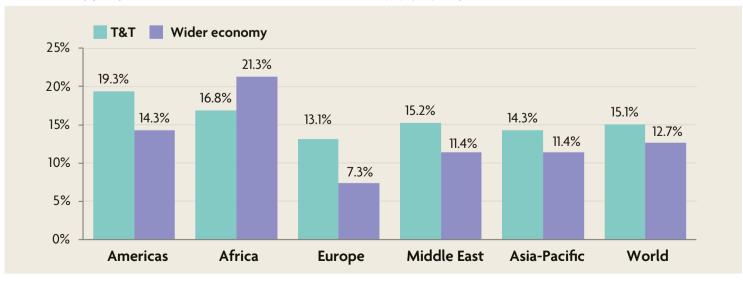


Fig. 7. Youth employment supported by Travel & Tourism (%), by region



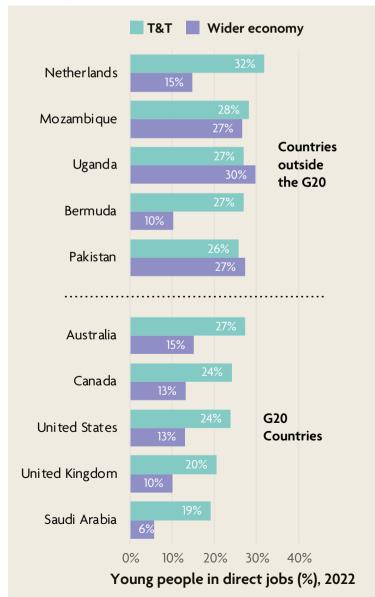


Note: All employment refers to direct Travel & Tourism jobs.

3.3 Trends by country and industry

An important measure of impact is the youth share of Travel & Tourism employment. (Fig. 9). In 2022, among the G20 countries, the top performers include Australia (27%), Canada (24%) and the US (24%). Saudi Arabia demonstrates the largest differential (13pp) between youth directly employed in Travel & Tourism compared to youth employed in the wider economy. Outside the G20, the share of young people in Travel & Tourism employment was highest in the Netherlands^{*} (32%), Mozambique (28%) and Uganda (27%). The Netherlands' case study is further discussed in Box 3.

Fig. 9. Young people in Travel & Tourism versus the wider economy (%), top 5 non-G20 countries and top 5 G20 countries, 2022



Disaggregating overall Travel & Tourism employment by industry and age shows that young people are most represented in the hospitality industry. Young people account for the largest share of overall direct workers in the hospitality industry and the lowest share in the public services industry (Fig. 10). The youth share of direct employment in each sector is partially determined by qualification requirements, which young people are less likely to have due to their age and experience. For example, the UK's Office for National Statistics reports that the qualification index score was the lowest in industries with high youth employment such as hospitality (2.33) and highest in industries like public services (3.14) where young people are least represented⁶.

Box 3: Youth employment and Travel & Tourism training in the Netherlands

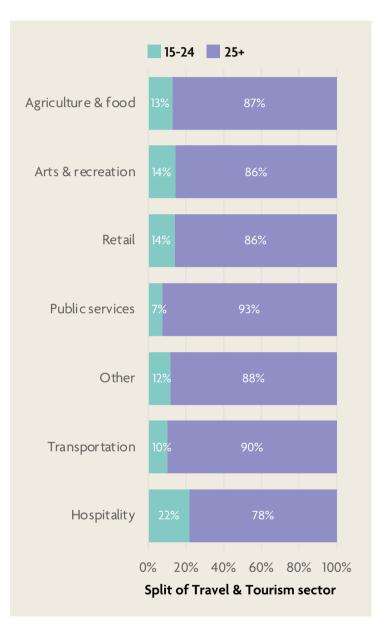
The Travel & Tourism sector is a significant employer of young people in the Netherlands. Almost a third (32%) of workers in the Netherlands' Travel & Tourism sector are aged between 15 and 24, compared with 14.8% of young workers in the wider economy in 2022 (see Fig. 9).

One reason for this is the Netherlands' age-dependent minimum wage. Wages start at \leq 3.46 per hour for workers aged 15 and increase to \leq 11.51 per hour for workers aged 21 and older. Employers are therefore incentivised to hire younger staff due to their lower minimum wage. While this may increase the overall employment of young people in the sector, it does raise the question of the quality of work and income earned by young people. To address this, the Netherlands has a strong social safety net with measures in place to support those at risk of falling into poverty⁷.

Moreover, many young people are likely to take on temporary or flexible positions alongside their education. These opportunities often arise in Travel & Tourism, given the nature of work in industries such as hospitality, which may have hourly shifts in restaurants or accommodation. The Institute of Entrepreneurship Development, a digital innovation hub, says the Travel & Tourism sector also offers opportunities for unskilled labour, which is particularly important for young people with no previous job experience or relevant qualifications⁸.

Note: All employment refers to *direct* Travel & Tourism jobs. * The Netherlands is a member of the EU, which participates in the G20 as a regional bloc. The Netherlands is also invited to G20 meetings but is not a formal member.

Fig. 10. Travel & Tourism direct employment by industry and age group (%), 2022



Box 4: Travel & Tourism's Transformation in Saudi Arabia

A blueprint for economic diversification, Vision 2030 is transforming Saudi Arabia's Travel & Tourism landscape, placing the sector as a key industry for local employment and opportunity. The Kingdom's sizable investment in the sector, which in 2022 ranked 4th in international standings (\$US39.4 bn), has provided abundant new opportunities for young Saudis outside of traditional industries⁹. This transition has driven a career shift amongst younger generations towards Travel & Tourism¹⁰. In a 2020 survey by the Red Sea Development Company, 91% of the young respondents expressed interest in a Travel & Tourism career, showcasing the optimism for the Kingdom's sector. For comparison, 77% of the respondents were interest in a traditional petrochemical career¹¹. This is evident from the employment figures too. In 2022, despite a drop during COVID-19, the number of young workers in Saudi Arabia that were directly employed by the sector was 71% higher than the 2010 value as opposed to 30% higher for youth employment in the wider economy.

Financial enablement like the Tourism Investment Enablers Program and New Tourism Law, promises to deliver 1 million new jobs in the sector by 2030. Economic opportunities will benefit local communities by placing a heavy focus on localising services and establishing new training programmes ^{12,13}.

Developments in Heritage Tourism have coupled economic growth with the desire to preserve tradition, welcoming new business opportunities for regional communities. The radical transformation of bygone cities like AlUla and Diriyah have seen many young Saudis engage in locally run, family businesses¹⁴.

Nurturing a skilled workforce for the sector's expansion, Saudi Arabia announced the 2027 opening of The Riyadh School of Travel and Hospitality. The school will offer 50+ vocational programmes across professional education, higher education and career advancement, covering disciplines in 10+ subsectors. The school will support skills development not only for the Kingdom's workforce but also for the global sector. Positioned to be at the forefront of change, the school confirms the Kingdom's commitment to skill development and belief in the prosperity Travel & Tourism futures can bring¹⁵. In 2019, nearly 60% of young people directly employed in Travel & Tourism worked in the hospitality (accommodation and food) industry, compared to 40% of older workers. The industrial profile of Travel & Tourism youth employment meant young workers experienced more job losses due to pandemic restrictions than their older colleagues. Hospitality was the Travel & Tourism industry most heavily hit by pandemic-related job losses, with a 38% reduction in jobs between 2019 and 2020. Moreover, across all Travel & Tourism industries, young people may be more vulnerable to job losses because they are more likely to work on temporary or casual contracts or because they are potentially more likely to work entry-level jobs¹⁶.

Travel & Tourism's direct youth employment remains below 2019 levels in all regions. However, the share of young people in Travel & Tourism employment is recovering or has even exceeded 2019 shares in some countries. For example, the proportion of young people in Travel & Tourism in Australia increased from 26% in 2019 to 27.4% in 2022, whilst in the Netherlands it marginally increased from 31.6% in 2019 to 31.9% in 2022. At a global level, youth employment has recovered more slowly than for older workers, as shown in Fig. 6. The disproportionate impact and slower recovery deserve further policy attention.







4. Female employment in Travel & Tourism

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The female share of Travel & Tourism employment is on par with that of the wider economy, though it tends to be higher in high income countries, where Travel & Tourism jobs are often relatively lower paid, and lower in middleand lower-income countries, where such jobs represent formal sector, higher wage opportunities. Importantly, efforts to increase the share of female employees in the sector should be paired with progress on other indicators such as parity in pay and job quality to achieve meaningful progress towards gender equality. Travel & Tourism job losses for women during the pandemic were slightly heavier than those for men due to the nature of roles occupied by females. In 2022, direct female employment in Travel & Tourism remained below 2019 levels.

Key findings

- Travel & Tourism directly employed **42 million women** in 2022, 13% below its 2019 levels.
- However, female employment supported by Travel & Tourism is continuing to recover, with an **annual rise of** 11% in 2022.
- While job losses were experienced across the Travel & Tourism sector during the pandemic, female workers were slightly harder hit than their male counterparts.
- Travel & Tourism's contribution to female employment remains below 2019 levels across all regions and country income categories, and is recovering fastest in Europe and the Americas.
- Despite pandemic challenges, some countries experienced growth in female employment in Travel & Tourism, including Grenada, Croatia, and El Salvador.

The Travel & Tourism sector contributes to gender equality by supporting employment opportunities for women (Box 5). This is particularly important in countries that typically have a male-dominated labour market. Increasing the share of women in the workforce can support development in lower-income countries by increasing economic diversification, improving social and health outcomes as well as reducing income inequality¹⁷. For example, formal job opportunities for women in Travel & Tourism have direct benefits such as household poverty reduction and improved wellbeing of all household members as well as in the broader community¹⁸.

Travel & Tourism jobs for women can have impacts beyond female employees' livelihoods. Female employment can contribute to a sustainable Travel & Tourism sector that supports human rights, social protection, and the reduction of inequality. While this report focuses on the Travel & Tourism sector's direct contribution to female employment, Travel & Tourism can also contribute to progress in other aspects of gender equality, including reducing the gender pay gap, genderbased discrimination and promoting female entrepreneurship and leadership. This analysis considers employment impacts across several different metrics to present a full picture of Travel & Tourism's social impact across female employment. Fig. 11 illustrates these categories.



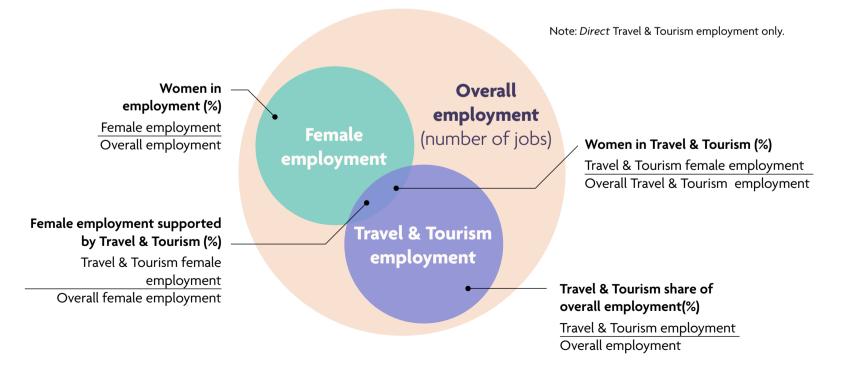
Box 5: SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Gender equality is a fundamental human right, and a necessary step to achieving a peaceful,

prosperous, and equal world. Securing gender equality means improving access to equal healthcare, reducing gender-related violence, increasing political representation, improving parity in the labour force, and creating shared value through women's empowerment.

The Travel & Tourism industry supports SDG 5 by supporting quality job opportunities for women.

Fig. 11. Terminology to compare female employment categories



4.1 Global trends

Travel & Tourism directly employed 42 million women in 2022 (Fig. 12), 13% below the 2019 peak. The female share of Travel & Tourism employment (39.3%) was slightly lower than the wider economy (39.9%) in 2022 but is continuing to recover towards its 2019 peak of 40.1% (Fig. 13).

Female direct employment was harder hit by the pandemic compared to male employment (Fig. 14). Travel & Tourism direct job losses linked to the disruptions over 2020-2021 were slightly more concentrated among women. Female Travel &

Tourism employment returned to 87% of its 2019 peak in 2022, while direct overall Travel & Tourism employment returned to 89% of its 2019 peak. This is partly because women are more likely to work in sectors that were more heavily hit by pandemic-related restrictions (explored further in Section 4.3). In addition, the pandemic and lockdowns increased the burden of childcare and other unpaid care work, which disproportionately fell to women. For example, a pandemic-related study showed that women on average account for 75% of unpaid care work globally¹⁹.

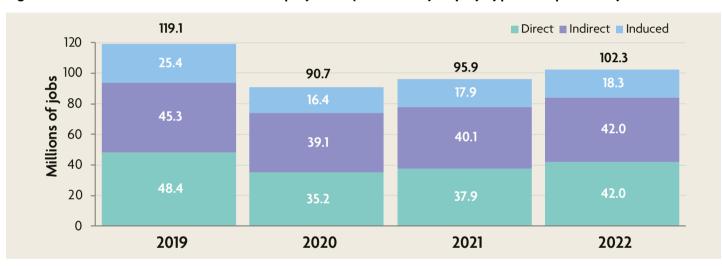
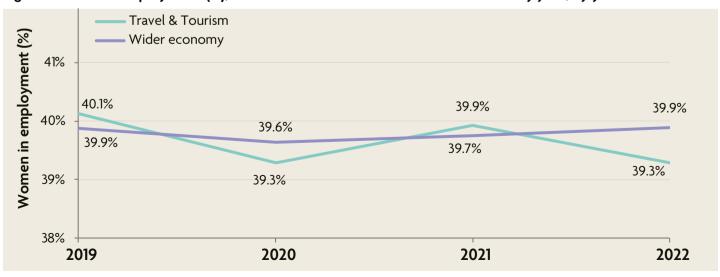


Fig. 12. Overall Travel & Tourism female employment (millions of jobs), by type of impact and year

Fig. 13. Women in employment (%), direct Travel & Tourism versus wider economy jobs, by year



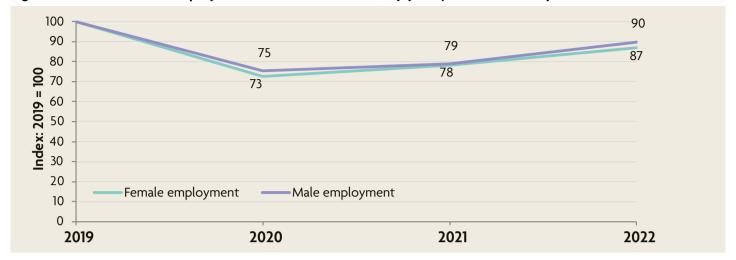
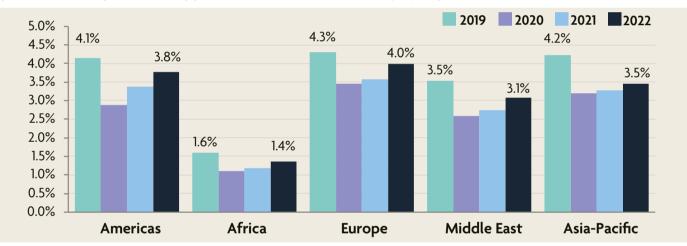
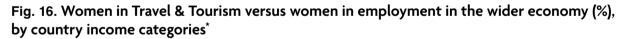
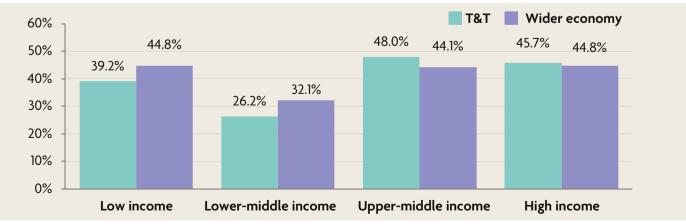


Fig. 14. Female and male employment in Travel & Tourism, by year (indexed to 2019)









Note: All employment refers to *direct* Travel & Tourism jobs.

4.2 Trends by region and national income level

Female employment supported by Travel & Tourism has seen a faster recovery in Europe and the Americas. The Asia-Pacific region remains the dominant Travel & Tourism market supporting direct female employment in absolute terms, due to the large overall Travel & Tourism workforce. However, in Europe and the Americas, Travel & Tourism's contribution to female employment has grown more quickly since 2020 than in other regions (Fig. 15). This may be partly driven by faster economic recoveries in these regions.

Travel & Tourism also employs a greater share of women than the economy overall in high and upper-middle income countries (Fig. 16). However, Travel & Tourism jobs tend to be relatively lower paid in high income countries (relative to average wages). Conversely, in low- to middle-income countries, employment in Travel & Tourism typically represents high quality and higher-wage opportunities in the formal economy. This parallels the trends observed in youth employment in the previous section. Men are more likely to get these sought-after jobs due to structural gender inequalities²⁰.

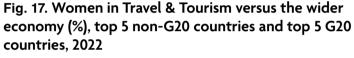
4.3 Trends by country and industry

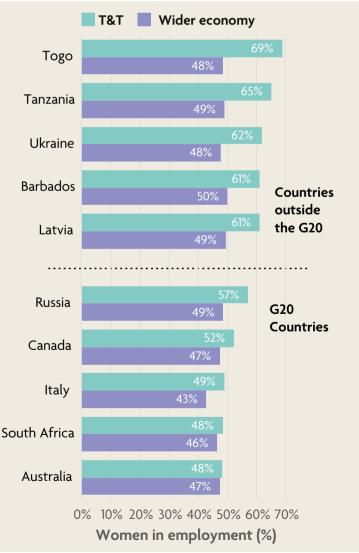
As the sector recovered in 2022 with the return of travellers, the number of jobs supported by Travel & Tourism continued to rebound too. The sector's direct female employment rose by 11.1% globally, which was slightly slower than the growth in male employment. However, in many countries, the rate of annual recovery of female employment outpaced that of male employment. For instance, in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Vietnam, female employment grew 30.1pp, 28.8pp, and 27.4pp faster than male employment respectively. Among the G20 countries, the greatest difference was in Saudi Arabia where female employment grew by 28.2% while male employment grew only 6.7%. The country's growth rate for female employment in the sector was also highest in the Middle East and 5th highest among the G20 countries, behind the UK (60.7%), India (43.2%), South Africa (31.4%), and Türkiye (30.1%).

In some lower-middle and low-income countries, women are increasingly being represented in the Travel & Tourism workforce, contributing to gender equality (Fig. 17). In 2022, the countries with the highest concentration of women in direct Travel & Tourism jobs were in Africa and Europe, as seen in the top five countries list in Fig. 17.

Higher female employment in Travel & Tourism in lowermiddle and low-income countries can contribute to broader gender-related outcomes (Box 6), such as increased female entrepreneurship or leadership (Box 7). A recent report by UN Tourism finds that women are more likely to lead in tourism business associations and governance bodies compared to other sectors^{21,22}.

In some countries, the Travel & Tourism sector directly supports a notably greater share of women than the wider economy. In Paraguay, the female share of direct Travel & Tourism employment (60%) was much greater than the female share of employment in the wider economy (42%). The 18-percentage point differential between Travel & Tourism and economy-wide female employment is significantly higher than its peers in South America, as further discussed in Box 7.





^{*} The World Bank's classification of income groups is adopted. This classifies countries as being low, lower-middle, upper-middle-, or high-income countries based on thresholds of per capita income.

Box 6: Rise in female employment in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan experienced the fastest growth in female employment in Travel & Tourism of any country between 2019-2022, albeit from a low baseline. The female share of employment in Travel & Tourism was previously well below the global average - and the average across Kazakhstan's wider economy - but increased faster than any other country in this study. This can largely be attributed to a repeal in 2021 of a 1930s Soviet law banning women from 229 professions—including transportation—resulting in a longterm correction to gender inequality in the workplace²³. Female employment in Kazakhstan's Travel & Tourism sector grew by 1.9% per year between 2019 and 2022.

The uptake in female Travel & Tourism employment can also be attributed to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges in Kazakhstan, which prepare women and men to join the sector²⁴. The development of tourism services has also led to the active involvement of women in the sector. For example, a 2021 study found that two-thirds of workers in resort areas were women, and in a third of destinations women accounted for 70% or more of the workforce²⁵.

Box 7: Travel & Tourism female employment and entrepreneurship in Paraguay

Tourism is a major employer in Paraguay. In 2022, the Travel & Tourism sector contributed 4.2% of GDP and supported one in every 17 jobs. More than half (60%) of Travel & Tourism jobs are held by women.

Female employment in the Travel & Tourism sector has contributed to both the quantity and quality of jobs available to women in Paraguay. One example is the Mbaracayú Forest Reserve, supported by the Global Nature Fund. The reserve promotes eco-tourism while supporting the livelihoods of rural families who rely on agricultural production in the area. As part of the programme, a group of young rural and indigenous women from different communities in the reserve are being trained in sustainable practices to produce the South American herbal drink 'yerba mate'²⁶.

Beyond specific projects, there are many institutional enablers that have contributed to the increase in female entrepreneurs in the tourism sector. For example, as part of Paraguay's post-pandemic recovery, the Ministry of Women's Affairs submitted a request to the national agriculture bank to support female entrepreneurs in the tourism sector, making requirements more flexible and creating a specific line of credit²⁷. This is part of the wider policy environment which includes education and awareness of women's employment in the Travel & Tourism sector²⁸. For example, the *Posadas Turísticas* programme in Paraguay has resulted in 95% of posadas (inns) being owned by women²⁸.

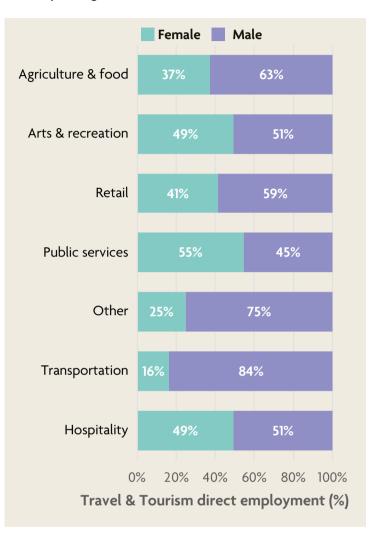
Despite significant progress, there are still barriers to women's employment in the Travel & Tourism sector and society at large. For example, women are underrepresented in positions of leadership, with women only occupying 15% of the existing political representative positions economy-wide in Paraguay²⁹.

Our analysis highlights countries where Travel & Tourism contributes significantly to female employment, but it is important to recognise the complexities in identifying 'best performers'. Increasing the share of female employees should be paired with progress on other indicators such as parity in pay and job quality to achieve meaningful progress towards gender equality. Without addressing these issues, an increase in female employment may inadvertently perpetuate gender imbalances in other areas or mask underlying structural issues within overall employment.

Of the various sub-industries within Travel & Tourism, public services has the highest share of women in direct Travel & Tourism jobs (Fig. 18). The gender balance of direct Travel & Tourism workers is closest to parity in the arts & recreation and hospitality sectors (49% female and 51% male) and the furthest from parity in the transport industry (16% female and 84% male).

The composition of the Travel & Tourism workforce contributed to a disproportionate impact of pandemicrelated restrictions on women. In 2019, 52% of women working in Travel & Tourism worked in hospitality, compared to 36% of male workers. Hospitality was the Travel & Tourism industry most heavily hit by pandemic-related job losses, with a 38% reduction in jobs between 2019 and 2020.

Across all industries, the number of women working in Travel & Tourism remains below 2019 levels in all regions and country income categories. This is due to the disproportionate number of job losses among female Travel & Tourism employees illustrated in Fig. 14. This outsized impact deserves further policy attention. Fig. 18. Travel & Tourism direct employment (%), by industry and gender, 2022





5. High wage jobs supported by Travel & Tourism

Chapter Summary

To understand Travel & Tourism's potential for driving sustainable socio-economic development, it is important to consider the quality of the jobs it creates in addition to the quantity. Pay levels are a useful, if not perfect, indicator. The share of direct Travel & Tourism jobs that are in highwage industries is highest in low and lower-middle income countries, demonstrating the sector's high potential to drive sustainable socio-economic development in those countries.

Key findings

- The number of high-wage jobs supported by Travel & Tourism continues to recover to its 2019 peak with nearly **35 million direct Travel & Tourism jobs categorised as high-wage** in 2022.
- However, the number of direct high-wage jobs supported by Travel & Tourism is still 2% below its 2019 level.
- The share of Travel & Tourism jobs classified as highwage increased between 2019 and 2022 across all regions and income categories.
- Despite pandemic challenges, some countries experienced growth in the number of high-wage jobs supported by Travel & Tourism, including Madagascar, Cyprus, and Singapore.

It is important to consider both the quantity and the quality of jobs created by Travel & Tourism. Of course, pay is just one component of overall job quality, and should be considered alongside factors such as working hours, health and safety, and job satisfaction³⁰. Even when considering wages alone, the global nature of this analysis makes comparison difficult, since international wage data is limited.^{*} The nature of direct Travel & Tourism jobs varies at different levels of economic development: in richer countries, typical Travel & Tourism jobs (e.g. hospitality, retail, transport) may represent more 'entry-level' opportunities that are typically less well paid. In developing nations, the same industries may represent valuable and scarce 'formal' jobs that are sought-after and better paid. Findings on the relative wage of direct Travel & Tourism jobs must therefore be interpreted with the local economic context in mind.

This study assesses quality by considering whether jobs are 'high-wage' compared to the national average. If an industry's average wage is roughly in the top third of earnings in a country (above the 65th percentile), then that industry is classified as high-wage. The share of Travel & Tourism-linked employment that falls within these industries is defined as its high-wage employment. The intention is to assess the relative quality and desirability of Travel & Tourism jobs in a broadly consistent manner across countries, albeit through a relatively crude measure. This measure

aims to capture decent and stable work, as per SDG 8 (Box 8), and to control for international differences in earnings patterns so that jobs and industries that might be considered desirable in any given country are identified. However, these high-wage industries encompass different industries and wage levels (and standards of living) in each country.

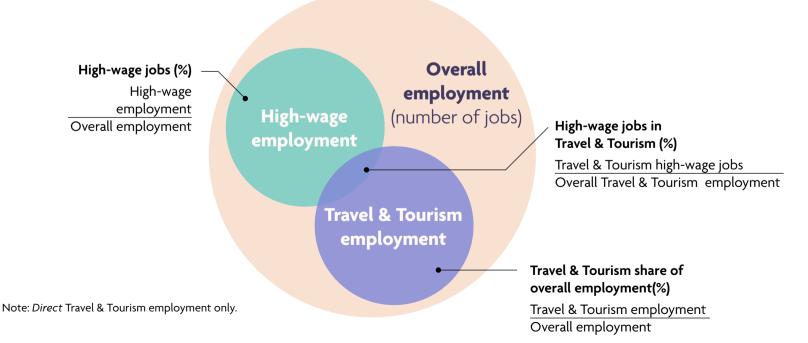
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Box 8: SDG 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all

Sustained and inclusive growth can drive progress by improving living standards and reducing poverty. Decent work – employment that is productive, fulfilling, and delivers a fair income – is a cornerstone to achieving prosperity. Travel & Tourism supports growth by delivering economic value to countries, which is distributed across a broad range of related industries. Moreover, it supports employment in high-wage jobs.

This analysis considers high-wage employment impacts across several different metrics, discussed in Fig. 19.

Fig. 19. Terminology to compare high-wage employment categories

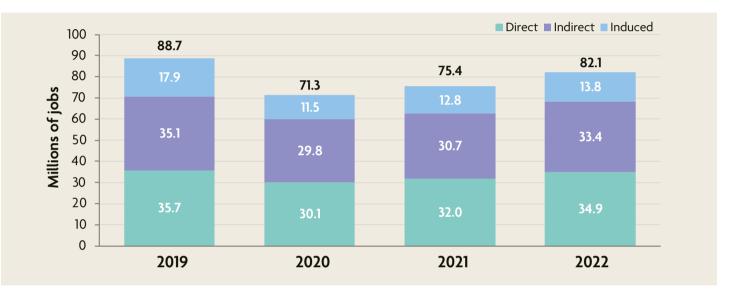


* Earnings data do exist in most parts of the world, but consistent analysis is complicated by wide variations in the sources, methods, timeliness, concepts, and coverage of such data. Currency fluctuations, differences in price levels and purchasing power all also confound breakdowns that seek to be truly international in scope.

5.1 Global trends

Travel & Tourism-linked employment in high-wage jobs is continuing to recover towards its 2019 peak. Nearly 35 million direct Travel & Tourism jobs were categorised as high-wage in 2022 (Fig. 20), only 2% below the 2019 pre-pandemic peak, and with an annual rise of 9% in 2022.

Fig. 20. Travel & Tourism high-wage employment (millions of jobs), by channel of impact and year



5.2 Trends by region and national income level

The share of direct Travel & Tourism jobs classified as highwage increased between 2019 and 2022 across all regions (Fig. 21). Industries classified as high-wage tended to be less heavily hit by pandemic-related job losses, as discussed in Section 2.1. Globally, about 33% of Travel & Tourism jobs were in high-wage industries in 2022, up from 30% in 2019.

The increase in the share of high-wage jobs reflects pandemicrelated changes in tourism spending, rather than increases in the wages of Travel & Tourism workers. Fluctuations reflect industry changes during the pandemic, with more employment concentrated in higher-wage industries with remote working options like professional services, compared to lower-wage industries like hospitality. The share of direct Travel & Tourism jobs that are in high-wage industries is highest in low and lower-middle income countries (Fig. 22). Since 2019, the share of direct Travel & Tourism jobs in national high-wage industries has increased across all income categories, with the largest increase in lower-middle income countries.

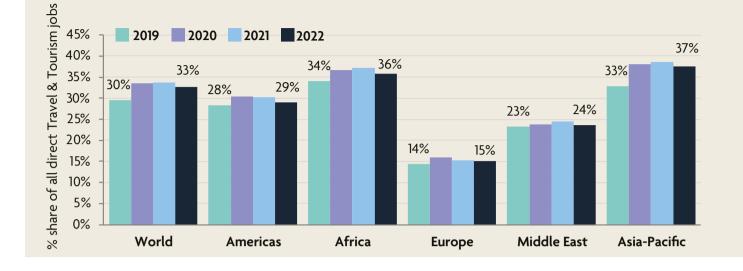
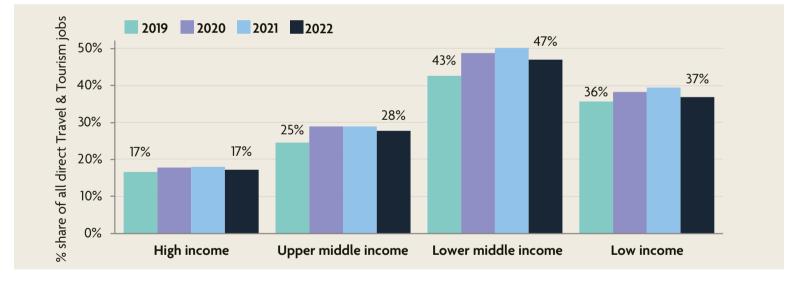


Fig. 21. High-wage direct Travel & Tourism jobs (%), by region

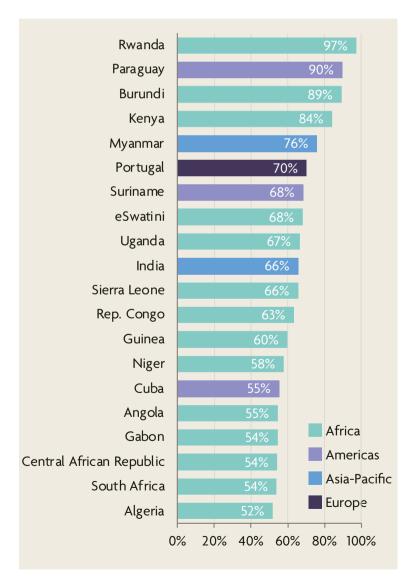
Fig. 22. High-wage direct Travel & Tourism jobs (%), by country income categories



5.3 Trends by country and industry

Africa has the largest share of direct Travel & Tourism jobs classified as high-wage. Most of the top 20 countries with the largest share of direct Travel & Tourism jobs in high-wage industries in 2022 were in Africa (Fig. 23). Rwanda has the highest share, at 97%, which reflects both the national income context, as discussed above, and the important role of Travel & Tourism in Rwanda's economy. This is discussed further in Box 9: High-wage Travel & Tourism employment as an enabler of socio-economic development in Rwanda.

Fig. 23. Top 20 countries with the highest share of highwage direct Travel & Tourism jobs (%), 2022



Box 9: High-wage Travel & Tourism employment as an enabler of socio-economic development in Rwanda

Rwanda has the largest share of high-wage jobs within Travel & Tourism of any country in our study. Three sectors accounted for nearly two-thirds of direct Travel & Tourism employment: transportation, hospitality, and arts and recreation. The average wage in these industries was nearly double that of Rwanda's economy overall.

In line with the findings of this study, the World Bank reported that Travel & Tourism generates a higher proportion of formal sector jobs than other sectors and is a major source of Rwanda's foreign exchange earnings³¹. This has been partly driven by the Rwandan government's strategy to use Rwanda's position as a biodiversity hotspot to attract high-value eco-tourists, whose spending can support high-wage jobs and deliver benefits to the broader economy, such as infrastructure development³².

The high-wage jobs that Travel & Tourism brings provide opportunities for social mobility, especially for underrepresented groups including young people and women³³, and workers with varied backgrounds, skills, and qualifications³⁴.



6. Conclusions

The Travel & Tourism sector has the potential to generate significant social benefits by creating jobs for underrepresented groups and offering high-wage job opportunities. A higher share of Travel & Tourism jobs are held by young people, and those classed as high-wage, compared to the wider economy. A broadly similar share of Travel & Tourism jobs goes to women as compared to the wider economy (see Fig. 24).

However, the share of Travel & Tourism jobs going to young people and women fell during the pandemic, because these groups are more likely to hold insecure jobs (see Fig. 25). More than half of all young workers and 49% of women directly employed by Travel & Tourism are employed in the hospitality industry, which commonly offers hourly or informal contracts and was hit particularly hard by pandemic restrictions. While the shares of youth and female employment in the Travel & Tourism sector have recovered since 2020, they are yet to return to prepandemic levels.

The social impacts in this report are interconnected. Travel & Tourism jobs in high income countries tend to be relatively low-paid (compared to average wages), while in low- to middle-income countries, the sector offers relatively high quality and well-paid opportunities in the formal economy. Overall, this is a positive finding. However, it also means that low- to middle-income

countries generally have lower female and youth employment in the Travel & Tourism sector. Women and young people tend to have fewer qualifications than their counterparts and are less likely to obtain highly sought-after roles. This complexity demonstrates the challenges of understanding, and improving, the social impacts of Travel & Tourism, especially following the global pandemic.

The pandemic demonstrated the need for resilience in Travel & Tourism employment. Fig. 25 shows that underrepresented groups and lower-wage earners bore a disproportionate share of the Travel & Tourism sector layoffs during the pandemic. Developing policies for resilient employment across the sector can further protect vulnerable groups. Geographical differences in recovery rates for youth and female employment demonstrate the benefits of such policies.

Governments and businesses can design policies to support positive social outcomes of Travel & Tourism employment. Several countries provide insight on how to build resilience and maximise Travel & Tourism's social benefits. For young people, policies include employment opportunities alongside education and programmes to reduce domestic inequality, as seen in the Netherlands. Vocational training programmes can support young people and women to develop skills that are specific in the Travel & Tourism sector, as seen for women in Kazakhstan (Box 6). For women, this includes improving their access to better quality jobs; better promotion of women's education and training; access to microfinance; and provision of attractive childcare and maternity protection^{35,36}. Specific attention should be paid to eliminating discriminatory wage gaps and ensuring the quality of work opportunities for women. Finally, governments can ensure the Travel & Tourism sector provides opportunities for 'high-wage' jobs in the formal economy, contributing to poverty alleviation. This can be achieved through national Travel & Tourism strategies or government-led sustainable tourism projects, as implemented in Rwanda.

Moving forward, the Travel & Tourism sector can magnify its contributions to sustainable development by identifying interactions between its social impacts. Progress across social impact channels can have 'ripple effects', meaning Travel & Tourism can contribute to multiple SDGs simultaneously³⁷. For example, job creation in the Travel & Tourism sector, especially in high-wage industries, creates an opportunity for Travel & Tourism destinations to ensure a higher share of young people and women are securing high-wage jobs.

Measuring and tracking Travel & Tourism's social impacts can further reinforce progress. This report provides valuable insights into quantifiable social impacts that highlight both where progress is being made in aligning to SDGs and where further support is needed. Better data collection, analysis, and measurement over time can help policymakers monitor and evaluate Travel & Tourism's broader social impacts.

Travel & Tourism contributes to global social progress and economic equality through its employment of underrepresented groups and the secure and the high-wage jobs it can offer. Understanding these social impacts and boosting their resilience will support sustainable growth within the Travel & Tourism sector and across the wider economy. Fig. 24. Youth, female, and high-wage employment shares in Travel & Tourism and the global economy (%), 2022

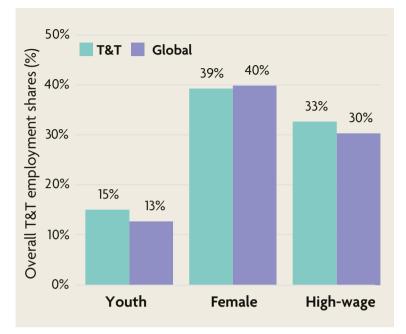
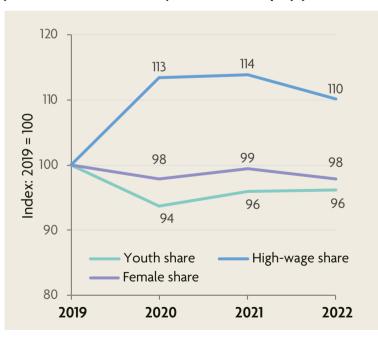


Fig. 25. Shares of young people, women, and high-wage jobs in Travel & Tourism (indexed to 2019), by year



Glossary of terms

Several shorthand terms are used for conciseness and simplicity. These terms are defined below.

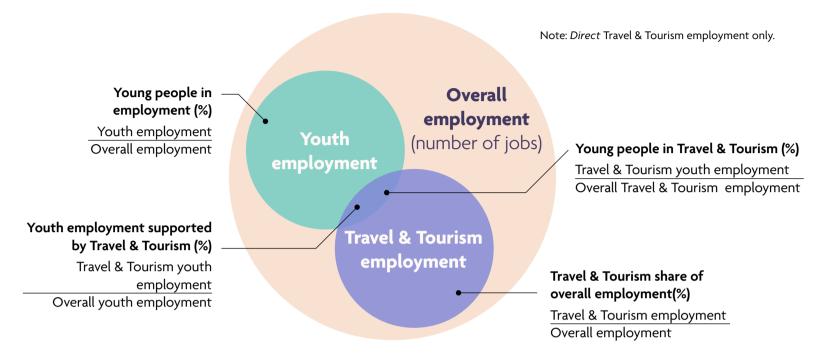
Shorthand used	Precise definition
Travel & Tourism GDP	Travel & Tourism's contribution to overall GDP. This includes the contribution of Travel & Tourism's direct economic activities to GDP (direct) as well as the indirect contribution of the economic activities which support Travel & Tourism's supply chain (indirect).
Travel & Tourism employment	The employment supported by Travel & Tourism spending. This includes direct and indirect employment. On each measure of employment throughout this report, the channels considered are specified.
Travel & Tourism share of overall employment (%)	Travel & Tourism employment as a percentage share of overall employment in a country/ region.
Youth / young people	For the purposes of this study, 'youth' or 'young people' refers to those aged between 15 to 24 in line with the International Labour Organization definition.
High-wage industries	'High-wage' industries are defined as those in which average wages are roughly in the top third of earnings in a given country (i.e., above the 65th percentile).
Country income categories	The World Bank's classification of income categories is adopted. This classifies countries as being low, lower-middle, upper-middle-, or high-income countries based on thresholds of per capita income.
Pandemic-related impacts	While most pandemic-related lockdowns and travel restrictions have eased, the impacts of the pandemic on the Travel & Tourism sector have lingered. As such, pandemic-related impacts over the 2020-2022 period are examined. This is the period when some of these impacts were the strongest globally.
Travel & Tourism sector and industries	The Travel & Tourism sector refers to all economic activities that contribute to Travel & Tourism GDP, which may occur across several different industries. There are seven industry breakdowns: hospitality, transport, public services, retail, arts & recreation, agriculture & food, and other industries.
Young people in employment (%)	Youth employment as a percentage share of overall employment in a country/region.

Youth employment supported by Travel & Tourism (%)	Travel & Tourism youth employment as a percentage share of overall youth employment in a country/region.
Young people in Travel & Tourism (%)	Travel & Tourism youth employment as a percentage share of overall Travel & Tourism employment in a country/region.
Travel & Tourism youth employment	The number of young people employed in Travel & Tourism.
Women in employment (%)	Female employment as a percentage share of overall employment in a country/region.
Female employment supported by Travel & Tourism (%)	Travel & Tourism female employment as a percentage share of overall female employment in a country/region.
Women in Travel & Tourism (%)	Travel & Tourism female employment as a percentage share of overall Travel & Tourism employment in a country/region.
Travel & Tourism female employment	The number of women employed in Travel & Tourism.
High-wage jobs (%)	High-wage employment as a percentage share of overall employment in a country/region.
High-wage jobs in Travel & Tourism (%)	Travel & Tourism high-wage jobs as a percentage share of overall Travel & Tourism employment in a country/region.

Shares of employment

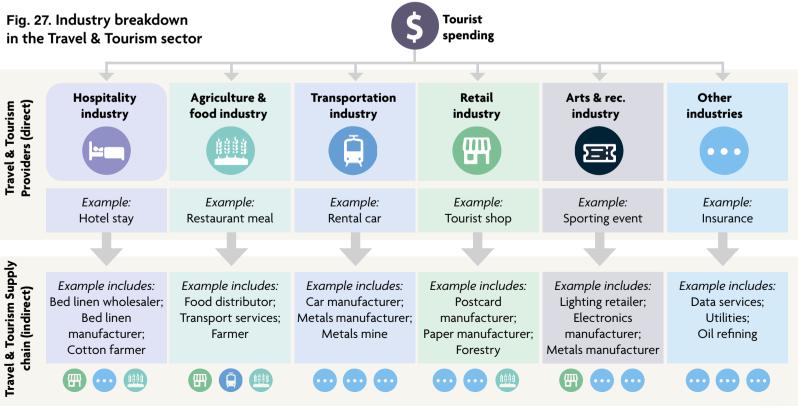
This report considers employment impacts across several different metrics to present a full picture of Travel & Tourism's social impact across young people, women, and high-wage jobs. Each section has an illustration differentiating the different shares of employment. Fig. 26 illustrates these categories for youth employment.

Fig. 26. Terminology to compare youth employment categories



Sectors and industries

Throughout this report we use the terms 'sector' and 'industry' to refer to groups of economic activity at different levels of aggregation. Fig. 27 illustrates how these terms are related.



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