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Conversation between
Melinda Gates &
Kristalina Georgieva

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WEDNESDAY, October 14, 2020

12:30PM - 1:15PM, Virtual

Conversation between Melinda Gates & Kristalina Georgieva

Sponsored by the IMF's Communications Department, Research Department, and Gender Group

CCOVID-19 anywhere is an obstacle to the recovery everywhere. Overcoming the pandemic requires investments—in testing, therapeutics, and vaccines—and global cooperation. Join this conversation on how to pave the way for an inclusive recovery.



Aoyagi, Chie. 2020.

[“Guilt, Gender, and an Inclusive Recovery: A Lesson from Japan.” *IMFBlog*, September 9.](#)

Japan’s voluntary month-and-a-half shutdown of the economy in April due to COVID-19 has had a higher cost for women than men. A key reason: a “guilt gap” between women and men, where women often feel compelled to take on more professional sacrifices.

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. 2020.

[“A Gender Lens on the Foundation’s COVID-19 Response.” *Gender Equality Toolbox*, April.](#)

The purpose of this document is to provide investment makers at the foundation with a quick guide to integrating a gender lens in our response to COVID-19. This document was prepared by the Stanford University Global Center for Gender Equality in partnership with the Gender Equality COVID Response Workstream. It summarizes overarching gender issues as well as specific issues that relate to the four key components of the foundation’s COVID response, along with key actions to be included in investments across our COVID workstreams. While it was developed with Gates Foundation employees working on COVID-19 response in mind, the four key components of the foundation’s COVID response and the gender integration opportunities therein are applicable to all those working in global health and development.

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. 2020.

[“After Low-Income Women Lose Their Jobs in the COVID-19 Economy, What Happens to Them?” *The Optimist*, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.](#)

In the last decade, as the Ethiopian government has moved toward industrialization, tens of thousands of women have made the journey to the factories of Hawassa, a large city in the country’s south. For these women, a job sewing clothes has been a rare chance at a formal job and a steady paycheck. Hawassa Industrial Park employed nearly 30,000 workers, many of them rural women whose only other employment opportunities were informal, subsistence-level work. Yet before there was even a single confirmed COVID-19 case in Hawassa, before any government-ordered lockdowns, thousands of these women were put on leave. Half a world away, garment orders—from blue jeans to prom dresses—had been canceled, and factory work slowed.KPMG. 2017.

Bloom, David E., Daniel Cadarette, and Daniel L. Tortorice. 2020.

[“An Ounce of Prevention: Our Approach to Vaccine Finance is Ill-Suited to Addressing Epidemic Risk.” *Finance & Development* 57 \(3\): 54–57.](#)

The world faces a sustained threat of outbreaks and epidemics. In many locations, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rage, while in others, any lapse in control could spark a swift resurgence. Beyond COVID-19, the potential emergence and spread of other known and unknown pathogens represent another less immediate, but no less material, element of risk.

Brussevich, Mariya, Era Dabla-Norris, and Salma Khalid. 2020.

[“Teleworking is Not Working for the Poor, the Young, and the Women.” *IMFBlog*, July 7.](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic is devastating labor markets across the world. Tens of millions of workers lost their jobs, millions more out of the labor force altogether, and many occupations face an uncertain future. Social distancing measures threaten jobs requiring physical presence at the workplace or face-to-face interactions. Those unable to work remotely, unless deemed essential, face a significantly higher risk of reductions in hours or pay, temporary furloughs, or permanent layoffs. What types of jobs and workers are most at risk? Not surprisingly, the costs have fallen most heavily on those who are least able to bear them: the poor and the young in the lowest-paid jobs.

Coutinho, Lester, Jeffrey Smith, and Violaine Mitchell. 2020.

[“During COVID-19, Women’s Health Care Must Be an Essential Service: A Conversation with Three Experts.” *The Optimist*, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.](#)

For a deeper dive, The Optimist spoke with three experts on women’s health care—particularly as it’s delivered in low- and middle-income countries.

Gates, Bill. 2020.

[“When a COVID-19 Vaccine Is Ready, This Group Will Make Sure the Whole World Can Access It.” *The Optimist*, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.](#)

You’ve probably been hearing about the race to develop a vaccine for COVID-19. There are dozens

of potential candidates being researched. One might be ready as soon as next year. I wanted to put the development of a COVID-19 vaccine in a bit more context: Where do vaccines come from? And once they're developed, how do they get where they need to go? The story is more complex than you might think. I explain more (with the help of some interesting charts and graphs) in the video.

Gates, Bill, and Melinda Gates. 2020.

[COVID-19: A Global Perspective: 2020 Goalkeepers Report.](#) Washington, DC: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

As we write, COVID-19 has killed more than 850,000 people. It has plunged the world into a recession that is likely to get worse. And many countries are bracing for another surge in cases. In past editions of the Goalkeepers Report—almost every time we have opened our mouths or put pen to paper, in fact—we have celebrated decades of historic progress in fighting poverty and disease. But we have to confront the current reality with candor: This progress has now stopped. In this report, we track 18 indicators included in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In recent years, the world has improved on every single one. This year, on the vast majority, we've regressed. And so this essay has two goals. First, we analyze the damage the pandemic has done and is still doing—to health, to economies, and to virtually everything else. Second, we argue for a collaborative response. There is no such thing as a national solution to a global crisis. All countries must work together to end the pandemic and begin rebuilding economies. The longer it takes us to realize that, the longer it will take (and the more it will cost) to get back on our feet.

Gates, Melinda. 2020.

["Sexist and Incomplete Data Hold Back the World's COVID-19 Response."](#) The Optimist, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

How many women have died of Covid-19? How many women have lost their jobs in the economic crisis it created? And how many have had to stop working because schools and day cares have closed and now have to take on unforeseen and added child care responsibilities? I don't know the full answer to any of these questions. No one does. When it comes to the pandemic and its effect on women, too often we just don't have the numbers.

Gates, Melinda. 2020.

["The Pandemic's Toll on Women: COVID-19 Is Gender-Blind, But Not Gender-Neutral."](#) *Foreign Affairs*, July 15.

It began as a mysterious disease, a novel coronavirus soon designated SARS-CoV-2. As countries shut down their economies to slow its spread, it became a global recession as well. Then, in April, the United Nations warned of another dimension to the emergency—a "shadow pandemic" of violence against women raging behind closed doors.

Georgieva, Kristalina, and Gita Gopinath. 2020.

["Emerging Stronger from the Great Lockdown."](#) *Foreign Policy*, September 9.

The managing director and the chief economist of the International Monetary Fund lay out a strategy for sustained recovery. For more than six months, the world has grappled with the severe health and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Global economic activity collapsed in the second quarter of 2020, when about 85 percent of the global economy was in lockdown for several weeks. As the International Monetary Fund (IMF) first stated in its April World Economic Outlook, this is without historical parallel.

Georgieva, Kristalina, Stefania Fabrizio, Cheng Hoon Lim, and Marina M. Tavares. 2020.

["The COVID-19 Gender Gap."](#) *IMFBlog*, July 21.

The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to roll back gains in women's economic opportunities, widening gender gaps that persist despite 30 years of progress. Well-designed policies to foster recovery can mitigate the negative effects of the crisis on women and prevent further setbacks for gender equality. What is good for women is ultimately good for addressing income inequality, economic growth, and resilience. Why has COVID-19 had disproportionate effects on women and their economic status? There are several reasons.

Gurara, Daniel, Stefania Fabrizio, and Johannes Wiegand. 2020.

["COVID-19: Without Help, Low-Income Developing Countries Risk a Lost Decade."](#) *IMFBlog*, Aug 27.

While the COVID-19 crisis is sending shockwaves around the globe, low-income developing countries (LIDCs) are in a particularly difficult position to respond.

LIDCs have both been hit hard by external shocks and are suffering severe domestic contractions from the spread of the virus and the lockdown measures to contain it. At the same time, limited resources and weak institutions constrain the capacity of many LIDC governments to support their economies.

Madgavkar, Anu, Olivia White, Mekala Krishnan, Deepa Mahajan, and Xavier Azcue. 2020.

[“COVID-19 and Gender Equality: Countering the Regressive Effects.” McKinsey & Company, July 15.](#)

What is good for gender equality is good for the economy and society as well. The COVID-19 pandemic puts that truth into stark relief and raises critically important choices. As COVID-19 continues to affect lives and livelihoods around the world, we can already see that the pandemic and its economic fallout are having a regressive effect on gender equality. By our calculation, women’s jobs are 1.8 times more vulnerable to this crisis than men’s jobs. Women make up 39 percent of global employment but account for 54 percent of overall job losses. One reason for this greater effect on women is that the virus is significantly increasing the burden of unpaid care, which is disproportionately carried by women. This, among other factors, means that women’s employment is dropping faster than average, even accounting for the fact that women and men work in different sectors.

Mundel, Trevor. 2020.

[“A Conversation with Trevor Mundel: Ensuring Affordable COVID-19 Vaccine Doses Reach Low-and Middle-Income Countries.” The Optimist, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.](#)

In August 2020, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance announced a new collaboration with the foundation and the Serum Institute of India (SII), one of the world’s largest vaccine manufacturers. The deal will accelerate the manufacture of 100 million doses of eventual COVID-19 vaccines and make them available at an affordable price for low-and-middle income countries.

Suzman, Mark. 2020.

[“Embedding the “Streetlight Moments” in Our Mission.” The Optimist, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.](#)

One of my colleagues at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation occasionally has what she calls “streetlight

moments.” Early in her career as an economist, Anja Langenbucher, our Europe office director, joined a team working to rebuild post-war Kosovo. While the team was pleased with their plans, the lone gender expert was not. “The streetlights” she kept saying, “are too far apart.” While the dark spaces between the streetlights illuminated an economical approach to city planning, only the gender expert recognized that they would make the streets more dangerous—especially for women.

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