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## NEW STUDY REVEALS GENDER INEQUITY CONTINUES TO PERSIST FOR EMPLOYEES AROUND THE WORLD

### *Coqual's "Challenging Norms: A Global Analysis of Gender at Work" Finds Stark Differences Between Men and Women & Highlights the Unique Challenges of Transgender and Gender Diverse Professionals*

**NEW YORK, July 11, 2023** — Are corporations prepared for a gender revolution? Today, **Coqual**, a leading global think tank, released its new report, "*Challenging Norms: A Global Analysis of Gender at Work*," that examines gender equity at work in eight markets: Australia, Brazil, Germany, India, Japan, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The report finds that while there has been notable progress, achieving gender equity is still a challenge globally. Through an intersectional lens, the new research considers how race, class, caste, sexuality, and other identity characteristics complicate how gender is seen, experienced, and understood in employees' daily lives.

The study employed Coqual's rigorous mixed methodology with survey results from 5,481 full-time employed professionals who were at least 21 years old, as well as focus groups, Insights In-Depth® sessions, and expert interviews. The new report delves into three primary areas: gender and career advancement (promotions, professional networks, etc.); gender and social environment (microaggressions, stereotypes, etc.); and gender and caregiving (childcare, eldercare, etc.) and addresses the challenges that women face regarding pay, career mobility, prejudice in the workplace, and outdated cultural gender norms.

The report also highlights the unique experiences of transgender and gender diverse (TGD) professionals and unveils a major generational shift in how respondents understand gender identity and expression. To conclude, Coqual provides data-driven solutions and a new framework for organizational change that leaders can use to develop and execute their DE&I goals.

"All around the world, professionals from historically marginalized gender identity groups are still required to navigate exclusionary, inequitable, and hostile work environments that make it difficult to achieve their full potential," said Lanaya Irvin, CEO of Coqual. "Organizations must look beyond the binary and create more equitable workplaces through gender-inclusive policies, programs, and people management strategies. We hope this report helps leaders and allies create a braver, more gender-inclusive corporate landscape."

"We are proud to sponsor this important study that provides insights, data, and a new framework for companies to prepare for the future of the global workplace," said Shane Lloyd, Head of Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging and Societal Impact, Baker Tilly. "Women, transgender, and gender diverse professionals all face different challenges, and Coqual's new report provides actionable ways for companies to navigate the complexities of gender around the world."

### **Data By Country:**

#### **United States**

Women in the U.S. still face barriers to career advancement, as Coqual finds two-thirds of men (67%) say they have been promoted or considered for a promotion at their company in the last four years compared to only about half of women (53%). The study also highlights the importance of considering the intersection of race and gender, finding that 42% of Black women say they have often considered leaving their job in the past year. Additionally, the majority of transgender and gender diverse professionals (60%) say that gender non-conforming employees experience negative stereotypes and social interactions in the workplace, but only 39% of cisgender professionals agree. According to the report, nearly half of transgender and gender diverse professionals in the U.S. are often told that their gender non-conformity is just a phase (47%), more than half are misgendered (54%), and two in five (41%) are told that they make their colleagues uncomfortable because of their gender identity.

#### **United Kingdom**

Coqual finds that women in the UK perform significantly more childcare (65% vs. 54%) and housework (67% vs. 57%) on average than men. With so much time and energy expended on domestic labor, only 19% of women professionals say having children has helped their career compared to 46% of men who say the same. Coqual's report finds that barely one in five women professionals (21%) say they are very satisfied with their work-life balance compared to 40% of men. Nearly half of UK women surveyed (48%) say they have experienced gender-based prejudice in the workplace compared to 37% of men.

### **Australia**

Coqual reports the documented "motherhood penalty" and "fatherhood bonus" impacts Australian employees, finding that over half of women (54%) say that having children has hurt their career compared to 39% of men. Additionally, only a quarter (25%) of women say that having children has helped their career compared to 43% of men who say the same. Coqual's research shows that younger professionals' growing consciousness and understanding of gender issues may make them more keenly attuned to unacceptable behavior in the workplace. The study finds millennial and gen-Z professionals are over two and a half times (54%) as likely as baby boomer and silent generation respondents (20%) to say they have experienced prejudice related to their gender at work, while 39% of generation X respondents say the same.

### **Brazil**

Coqual finds that in Brazil, the intersection of race and gender continues to disproportionately impact women's lives in negative ways, as Preta (Black women) are 53% more likely to have experienced gender-based prejudice than Branca (White women). In Coqual's sample of transgender and gender diverse professionals, 70% say they have experienced gender-based prejudice at work. Furthermore, about one in five transgender and gender diverse employees say colleagues often misgender them (23%) and tell them that their gender non-conformity is just a phase (19%) or that they make their colleagues feel uncomfortable because of their gender identity (23%).

### **Germany**

The study finds that gender and heritage or country of origin are critical intersections to consider in Germany, which does not collect racial data at a national level. Coqual finds that more than half of women with non-German or multiple backgrounds (56%) say they have been passed over for promotions for colleagues who were less qualified compared to 19% of women with German backgrounds. Additionally, 41% of women born outside of Germany say that someone of their gender identity would never achieve a top position at their company. Underlying these feelings of career stall are frequent invalidations including facing dismissive stereotypes from colleagues significantly more often, such as being less credentialed (35%) and more junior than they are (32%).

### **India**

The Hindu caste system continues to dictate Indian social structure in countless ways. Coqual gives particular attention to highlighting the experiences of lower caste women, finding that nearly half of lower caste women (49%) say their social class background often has a negative impact on their professional experience and 55% say they have often considered leaving their jobs in the past year. A staggering 71% of lower caste women say they often change what they share about their family to fit in at work. The hierarchical structure of Indian society places heavy expectations on women to be wives and mothers. More than half of both lower caste women (65%) and upper caste women (51%) say that having children has hurt their career compared to 30% of lower caste men and 40% of upper caste men.

### **Japan**

Coqual finds a dramatic drop-off of women from entry-level to senior positions. Nearly three-quarters of women in the sample (73%) hold entry-level positions, 23% are from middle management, and only 4% hold senior management or C-suite positions. In contrast, men in the sample have more equitable representation, with 40% in entry-level positions, 45% in middle management, and 15% in senior management or C-suite positions. Eldercare is a growing focus in Japan. Cultural expectations around eldercare result in a burden of labor that inevitably falls on women.<sup>i</sup> At present, women agree significantly more than men that their eldercare responsibilities have hurt their careers (42% vs. 31%), and this discrepancy has the potential to worsen as seniors are predicted to make up more than a third (38%) of the population by 2060.<sup>ii</sup> Coqual finds that TGD professionals (52%) are significantly more likely than cisgender professionals (17%) to say they have been passed over for promotions for colleagues who were less qualified. Nearly half of LGB+ women surveyed (47%) say they have been passed over for a promotion in favor of someone who was less qualified.

## South Africa

Race is a critical factor to consider when assessing the experiences of South African professionals. Coqual finds that White professionals hold disproportionate leadership representation, with 37% of White men and 21% of White women compared to 20% of Black men and 19% of Black women in senior-level positions. TGD professionals also continue to face challenges at work. Coqual finds over half (58%) of TGD professionals have experienced gender-based prejudice at work compared to 35% of cisgender professionals. Additionally, more than a third (38%) of TGD professionals say their gender often or always negatively affects their professional experience compared to 15% of cisgender professionals.

To address gender bias and challenges, company leaders must look beyond the binary and create more equitable workplaces. The report outlines Coqual's new framework -- Define, Refine, Reimagine, to provide tangible solutions and guide leaders in advancing gender equity in their workplaces.

## Define, Refine, Reimagine

- **Define:** To cultivate a shared understanding of complex issues, companies must define the mission, vision, and purpose of any DE&I initiative. These efforts cannot succeed without clear definitions of key terms and leaders must become familiar with the ever-evolving language around gender identity. Key terms are especially vital with the growing interest and investment in company-wide self-identification campaigns. This first step requires an ongoing commitment to assessing sensibilities, sensitivities, and employee needs.
- **Refine:** Companies should continually assess the effectiveness of existing policies, programs, and procedures in generating equitable outcomes. Not every change has to be a radical one. While some efforts may need to be introduced for the first time, there are many existing efforts that can be refined rather than reinvented entirely. Companies can refine current efforts, norms, and policies to support career advancement for women and gender diverse professionals, as well as the daily demands of caregiving responsibilities for professionals around the world.
- **Reimagine:** The most successful companies proactively anticipate market trends and strategize accordingly, and Coqual suggests companies take the same approach when it comes to the needs of their employees. To prepare for the future of the global workplace, companies must reimagine leadership norms, gender, masculinity, and provide an infrastructure of support for TGD professionals.

**Methodology:** The primary sources of data for this research report consisted of a survey distributed across each of our eight markets; virtual focus groups; Insights In-Depth® sessions (a proprietary web-based tool used to conduct voice-facilitated virtual focus groups); and one-on-one interviews. This report incorporates a mixed-methods analysis of quantitative and qualitative methods. Through our qualitative methods, we reached more than 100 professionals, experts, and practitioners across our eight markets. We then deployed a web-based survey using a criterion sampling approach to reach 5,481 respondents, who were at least 21 years old and currently employed full-time in professional occupations.

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**About Coqual:** Coqual is a leading global, nonprofit think tank dedicated to helping leaders design diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplaces where every person belongs. Founded in 2004, Coqual provides in-depth research, thought leadership, and data-driven, actionable solutions for companies to address bias and barriers to inclusion for underrepresented populations in the workplace. Coqual's cutting-edge research and advisory services focus on gender, race, ethnicity, disability, veteran status and LGBTQ identities, and others—as well as the intersections among these groups. For more information, visit [www.coqual.org](http://www.coqual.org).

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<sup>i</sup> Guat Tin Ng, “Learning from Japanese Experience in Aged Care Policy,” *Asian Social Work and Policy Review* 1, no. 1 (2007): 36–51, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1753-1411.2007.00004.x>, Susan Orpett Long and Phyllis Braudy Harris, “Gender and Elder Care: Social Change and the Role of the Caregiver in Japan,” *Social Science Japan Journal* 3, no. 1 (April 1, 2000): 21–36, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ssjj/3.1.21>.

<sup>ii</sup> “Population Estimates: Monthly Report,” Statistics Bureau of Japan, March 2023, <https://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/jinsui/tsuki/index.html>; “Annual Report on the Ageing Society [Summary] FY 2019,” Cabinet Office, Japan, 2019, <https://www8.cao.go.jp/kourei/english/annualreport/2019/pdf/2019.pdf>.