



JAPAN

CITIZENS CALL FOR A GENDER-EQUAL WORLD : A ROADMAP FOR ACTION¹



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WHAT DO RESPONDENTS IN JAPAN THINK ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY?

- ➔ **The majority of respondents in Japan declare that gender equality is “important” to them personally (75 percent),** and few (eight percent) consider it unimportant. Those who consider gender equality important tend to be younger, with 91 percent of respondents aged 18 to 24 thinking it is important, compared to 75 percent of those aged 25 to 44, 68 percent of those aged 45 to 59, and 78 percent of those aged 60 and older. Japan is the only surveyed country where female respondents aged 18 to 44 express less interest than male respondents of the same age.
- ➔ **Fifty-six percent of respondents in Japan think gender equality in Japan is “better” now than it was 25 years ago.** Female respondents are more likely to say it is “worse” now compared to 25 years ago (14 percent) than male respondents (seven percent).
- ➔ **Most respondents (78 percent) think that the Japanese government “should do more” to promote gender equality,** 12 percent think it is doing “the right amount,” and three percent think it is doing “too much.”
- ➔ To advance gender equality in Japan, **43 percent of respondents think that the government should “reform laws to promote gender equality and end discrimination against women.”** This view is held more strongly by male (48 percent) than female respondents (39 percent).
- ➔ As to the reasons why women may not be equal to men in Japan, many factors are considered important, with few standing out as commanding widespread support. **The most agreed-upon reason for gender inequality is the unequal distribution of “unpaid care, domestic work, and parental responsibilities” between women and men (50 percent),** which rises notably among female respondents (60 percent). For male respondents the main reason is the “different employment opportunities between women and men” (52 percent).



¹ This country data sheet captures findings from a public perception survey on gender equality for Japan. This work is co-led by Focus 2030 and Women Deliver. The survey was executed through an online poll, conducted by Deltapoll, in 17 countries. Approximately one thousand respondents in each country were surveyed in July/August 2020. Demographic data collected included: gender, age, income level, education level, last vote in national elections (where applicable), ethnicity (where applicable), migrant status, and region of residency. In Japan, 1,000 respondents were surveyed, including 511 female respondents, 488 male respondents, and 1 respondent who identified “in another way”. Of the 1,000 respondents, 96 were aged 18 to 24, 291 were aged 25 to 44, 306 were aged 45 to 59, and 307 were aged 60 and older. Please see www.focus2030.org and www.womendeliver.org for more information.

² Text in italics and quotes reflect survey response options presented to respondents.



ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND RIGHTS

- ➔ Respondents in Japan rank promoting women’s economic justice and rights as the first area for the Japanese government to focus on to advance gender equality in the country, with 25 percent ranking “access to well paid jobs, equal pay, financial independence, and property rights” as their first choice. Sixty-five percent choose this as a top-three important area.
- ➔ In order to improve women’s broader economic opportunities and decision-making powers, “guaranteeing parental leave and childcare services” (47 percent) and “achieving equal pay for women and men” (40 percent) are seen as key measures for government action by respondents in Japan. The importance of gender pay parity is greater for older respondents, with 27 percent of those aged 18 to 24 citing pay parity as an important measure, compared with 48 percent of those aged 60 and older.
- ➔ Fifty-eight percent of female respondents in Japan have faced any one of the prompted common gender disadvantages in their life. Thirty-three percent have not had the “same access to promotion opportunities in [their] jobs as [their] male peers,” and 28 percent have not been “paid as much as [their] male counterparts.” In addition, 16 percent have had “difficulty accessing education and professional training compared with male peers or relatives.”
- ➔ For 67 percent of respondents in Japan, it is “unacceptable” “to let women do the majority of housework, childcare, and elderly care.” Additionally, “to ask a woman during a job interview whether she has, or would like to have, children,” is “unacceptable” for 57 percent of respondents, with more female respondents finding it “unacceptable” (61 percent) than male respondents (53 percent). The majority of respondents (75 percent) also believe it is “unacceptable” that “women earn less than men for the same work.”
- ➔ The economic impact of the pandemic has hit women and men differently in Japan. More female respondents are facing “unexpected financial hardship” (15 percent of female; five percent of male respondents) and spending more time doing “household work” (47 percent of female respondents; 29 percent of male) compared to male respondents. However, more male respondents have been unable to do “as many hours of paid work as [they] usually would” (22 percent compared to 15 percent of female respondents) and “have received unemployment benefits and/or other financial support from [their] government” (29 percent compared to 22 percent of female respondents).



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- ➔ Gender-based violence is the second most highly-ranked priority, with 24 percent of respondents choosing “end violence against women” as top priority. Fifty-six percent identify this as a top-three important area their government should focus on to advance gender equality.
- ➔ To end gender-based violence, 55 percent of respondents in Japan believe that the Japanese government should “increase accountability for [perpetrators of] physical and sexual crimes against women.” There is also support (48 percent) for government intervention to “address the unequal balance of power between women and men at home.” Thirty-six percent of respondents would like the government to “fund programs to support women who have experienced violence,” and 31 percent support “combatting the economic exploitation of women.”

- ➔ **A majority of respondents in Japan (62 percent) feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault or harassment** in some place or another. Female respondents feel more at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault than male respondents, with 66 percent of female respondents feeling at risk compared to 59 percent of male respondents.
- ➔ The most common situation respondents feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, is in *“places where [they] work or study,”* where 39 percent of female respondents and 37 percent of male respondents feel at risk. Additionally, 34 percent of respondents in Japan feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault *“in public places,”* with 39 percent of female respondents feeling at risk, compared to 29 percent of males.
- ➔ A large proportion of respondents in Japan (69 percent) believe it is *“unacceptable”* *“for women to always obey their partner,”* and 11 percent deem it *“acceptable.”* Fifty-one percent also believe that it is *“acceptable”* *“for women to refuse sexual intercourse with their partner,”* and the vast majority (82 percent) think it is *“unacceptable”* *“to whistle at a woman on the street or to touch a woman without her consent”*. Sixty-six percent also deem it *“unacceptable”* *“to tell or share a sexist joke about a woman with friends or on social media.”*
- ➔ Fourteen percent have had their *“freedom of movement restricted by a family member or partner.”*



FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AND LEADERSHIP

- ➔ **Feminist movements and leadership is respondents' third priority overall,** with 21 percent ranking *“improve women’s participation and leadership in politics, and cultural and social movements”* as top priority. Fifty-four percent identify this as a top-three important area.
- ➔ For 50 percent of respondents, the Japanese government should *“achieve equal representation of women in politics.”* Additionally, 45 percent of respondents think that their government should *“support women’s political leadership and participation,”* a view which is held more strongly among young respondents (60 percent), especially young male respondents (80 percent of those aged 18 to 24).
- ➔ The implementation of gender quotas in all political decision-making bodies is seen as a good way to advance gender equality in Japan for 56 percent of respondents, with 11 percent disagreeing (seven percent of female respondents and 15 percent of male respondents). Younger respondents (aged 18 to 24) are most supportive of gender quotas (70 percent) compared with other age groups (59 percent for those aged 25 to 44; 44 percent for 45 to 59; and 59 percent for 60 and older), with younger male respondents the most supportive of all (90 percent).



BODILY AUTONOMY AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

- ➔ **Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is ranked fourth**, with nine percent ranking “provide access to contraception and family planning, good maternal health, and sex education in schools” as top priority. Thirty-five percent identify this as a top-three important area.
- ➔ To advance women’s SRHR, **respondents believe the government should “increase access to accurate information including sexual education in schools” (52 percent) and “increase access to sexual health services” (43 percent)**. For both of these actions, more young respondents (aged 18 to 24) support them than any of the other age groups, with 89 percent in support of more “access to accurate information including sexual education in schools” and 74 percent in support of increased access to sexual health services.
- ➔ **Four percent of female respondents in Japan have had difficulty in their lives “accessing their chosen method of contraception,” rising to 17 percent among those aged 18 to 24**. Two percent have had “difficulty accessing abortion and post-abortion care” in their lifetime. Again, this is more pronounced (six percent) among those aged 18 to 24.
- ➔ During the Covid-19 pandemic, one percent of female and four percent of male respondents in Japan have had “difficulties accessing contraception and other sexual health services (including HIV testing and treatment).” This proportion is particularly high among males aged 25 to 44, of whom 23 percent have had “difficulties accessing contraception and other sexual health services.” Four percent of respondents in Japan have had “difficulties accessing abortion options and/or post-abortion care” during the pandemic. This rises to nine percent among young female respondents aged 18 to 24.



TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- ➔ **Technology and innovation for gender equality is respondents’ fifth priority for government action**, with six percent ranking “Invest in technology to improve women’s access to health services, education, and economic opportunities” as top priority. Forty-two percent identify this as a top-three important area.
- ➔ To promote the use of technology and innovation for gender equality, respondents believe the government should “provide equal opportunities for girls and women to study and work in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)” (41 percent), “increase safety of digital spaces for girls and women” (40 percent), and “invest in technology that helps deliver healthcare and other services virtually to girls and women” (36 percent).



FEMINIST ACTION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

- ➔ **The sixth most prioritized issue is feminist action for climate justice**, with one percent of respondents ranking *“promote women’s participation in climate change action”* as top priority. Six percent choose this as a top-three important area.
- ➔ To promote women’s participation in the response to climate change, 39 percent of respondents think that the Japanese government should *“promote the training and hiring of women in jobs related to climate change.”*



FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- ➔ **Sixty percent of Japanese respondents think that the Japanese government should increase funding for gender equality in Japan. In addition, 57 percent believe that the government should increase its funding for international projects and organizations fighting for gender equality around the world.**
- ➔ A higher proportion of younger respondents support funding for gender equality projects generally, whether domestically (78 percent among those aged 18 to 24, compared with 66 percent among those aged 60 and older) or abroad (83 percent among 18 to 24, compared with 59 percent among those aged 60 and older). This figure is even higher among younger men (aged 18 to 24), of whom 84 percent support increasing funding for gender equality projects domestically, and 80 percent support increased international funding.
- ➔ **Sixty-four percent of Japanese respondents “agree” that achieving gender equality is essential to end poverty in all countries, compared with six percent who “disagree.”**



WHAT ACTIONS ARE RESPONDENTS IN JAPAN WILLING TO TAKE?

- ➔ To encourage policymakers to tackle gender inequality around the world, 40 percent of respondents would be willing to *“promote gender equality in everyday conversations and interactions.”* Thirty-six percent of respondents would also *“vote in an election for a candidate supporting gender equality,”* this being slightly more common among female (40 percent) than male respondents (31 percent). Eighteen percent of respondents in Japan would *“sign a petition,”* and the same number (18 percent) would *“share information about gender equality on social media.”*



IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- ➔ Thirty-eight percent of respondents “agree” that the government’s response to support people through the Covid-19 pandemic in Japan has met the needs of women and men equally. Twenty-five percent of respondents “disagree,” rising to 30 percent of female respondents, compared with 19 percent of male respondents.
- ➔ Sixty percent of respondents in Japan “agree” that women should be involved in all aspects of the global Covid-19 response and recovery efforts, compared with eight percent who “disagree.”
- ➔ There is disagreement as to whether inequality between women and men will rise as a consequence of Covid-19. Overall, marginally more respondents “disagree” (28 percent) than “agree” (26 percent), but even more say “neither agree nor disagree” (38 percent).
- ➔ More female (35 percent) than male respondents (25 percent) have “experienced emotional stress or mental health issues” during the Covid-19 pandemic. Younger respondents (aged 18 to 24) have experienced greater levels of stress (57 percent) than older respondents (45 percent, aged 25 to 44; 17 percent, aged 45 to 59; and 19 percent, aged 60 and older).

This country data sheet is a supplement to Citizens Call for a Gender-Equal World: A Roadmap for Action, a global report on the findings from a 17-country public perception survey on gender equality. For the full report and all country data sheets, please visit: www.focus2030.org and <http://womendeliver.org/citizens-call-for-a-gender-equal-world/>.