



ITUC Frontline Poll June 2021

Changes to attitudes on
workers' rights as a result
of the global pandemic

JOB
CLIMATE-FRIENDLY JOBS
RIGHTS
SOCIAL PROTECTION
EQUALITY
INCLUSION

A New Social Contract for Recovery and Resilience

Publisher responsible in law:

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Methodology

This report summarises the results of a survey commissioned by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). The fieldwork was conducted by YouGov. Fieldwork was conducted between

the 1st and 15th of June 2021. The surveys were carried out online in ten countries with a total sample size of 12,242. The sample size for each country is as follows:

Country		N=
Australia		1056
Brazil		1008
France		1037
Great Britain		1674
India		1012
Indonesia		2131
Italy		1067
Japan		1000
Mexico		1000
USA		1257

Note: Sample sizes vary per country due to the standard survey samples in each region. All sample sizes are over 1,000 respondents, meaning they're significantly above the minimum requirement for statistical reliability.

The figures have been given an even weighting for each country to produce an “average” value.

The questionnaire was developed by the ITUC in consultation with YouGov. This report was prepared by Kate Whelan Consulting.

Introduction

In June 2021 the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) commissioned research to assess whether the public believe workers' rights are more, or less, important than prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The question was asked in ten countries, including Australia, Brazil, France, Great Britain, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico and the USA.

Respondents were asked the question "Thinking back to before the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020), do you think the following worker rights are more, or less, important now, or has there been no change?" for "the right to join a union", "the right to a decent minimum wage", "the right to strike", "the right to collectively bargain", "affordable access to healthcare", "access to unemployment benefits" and "paid sick leave".

The main findings of this research were:

- On average, across the seven workers' rights included in this survey, 44% of people believe they are more important now than before the pandemic.
 - The top three workers' rights where the largest number of people believe that they have *always been important* or are *more important now* are:
 1. Affordable access to **healthcare** (82% **as/more** important)
 2. The right to a **decent minimum wage** (79%)
 3. Paid **sick leave** (78%)
 - Excluding "the right to strike" (15%), less than 10% of respondents believe each of the workers' rights listed are *less* important than before.
-

Key Insights

On average, across the seven workers' rights included in this survey, 44% of people believe they are more important now than before the pandemic.

Almost three-quarters of people (73%) believe they have either always been important or are now more important (referred to as as/more).

More than half of people believe that workers' rights such as "affordable access to healthcare" (58%), "access to unemployment benefits" (53%), "the right to a decent minimum wage" (51%), and "paid sick leave" (51%) are more important than prior to the Covid-19 global pandemic.

Almost half (43%) believe that "the right to collectively bargain so workers can join together to get fairer wages and labour conditions" is now more important than prior to the pandemic. Significant proportions of the population also believe workers' rights such as "the right to join a union" (31%) and "the right to strike" (22%) are also more important now.

Additionally, 41% of these – or close to half of the population – believe that "affordable access to healthcare" is much more important than before. Around one in three believe that "the right to a decent minimum wage" (35%), "access to unemployment benefits" (33%), and "paid sick leave" (32%) are now much more important than before.

Across the seven workers' rights listed, at least 56% and as high as 82% of people believe they are as/more important than before. The top three workers' rights where the largest number of people believe that they have always been important or are more important now are:

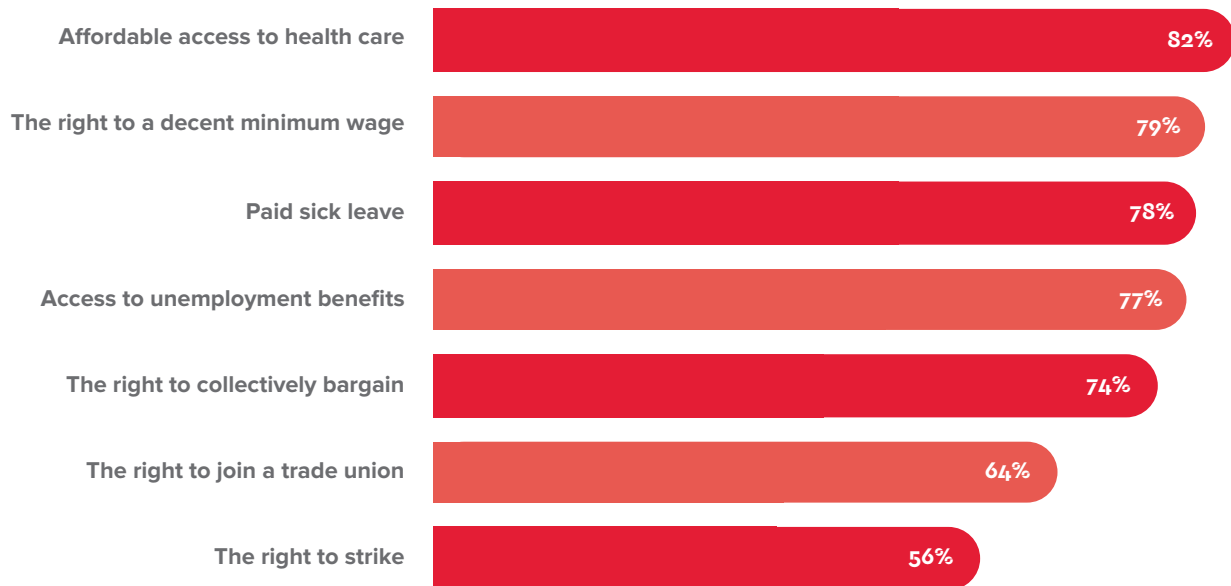
- 1. Affordable access to healthcare (82% as/more important)**
- 2. The right to a decent minimum wage (79%)**
- 3. Paid sick leave (78%)**

Followed by

- **Access to unemployment benefits (77%)**
- **The right to collectively bargain so workers can join together to get fairer wages and labour conditions (74%)**
- **The right to join a union (64%)**
- **The right to strike (56%)**

Excluding "the right to strike" (15%), less than 10% of respondents believe each of the workers' rights listed are less important than before.

"Are the following worker rights more, or less important now, or has there been no change?": Combined More/Still Important



"Are the following worker rights more, or less important now, or has there been no change?"

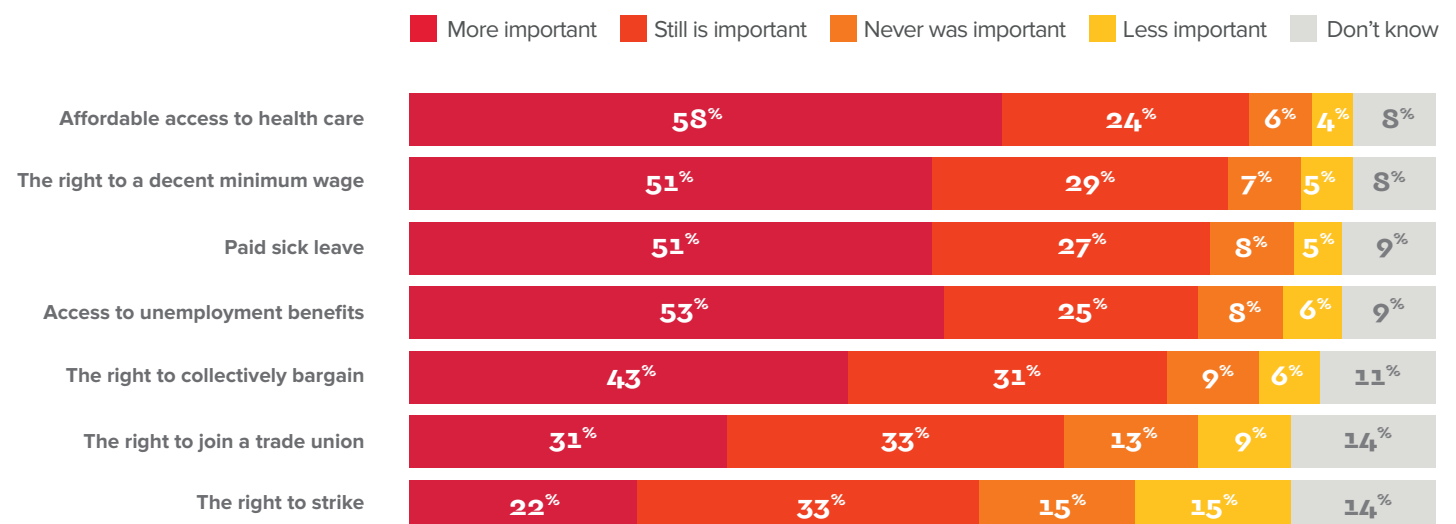


Figure 1: Question: "Thinking back to before the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020), do you think the following worker rights are more, or less important now, or has there been no change?" Combined "Much more important now than before" and "Slightly more important now than before" and "No change, this was important before and still is" ONLY N=12242

Figure 2: Question: "Thinking back to before the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020), do you think the following worker rights are more, or less important now, or has there been no change?" SCALE: "Much more important now than before" "Slightly more important now than before" (MORE IMPORTANT) "No change, this was important before and still is" (STILL IMPORTANT) "No change, this was not important before and still isn't" (NEVER IMPORTANT) "Slightly less important than before" and "Much less important than before" (LESS IMPORTANT), "Don't know" (DON'T KNOW) N=12242

Demographic Analysis

Gender

Across each of the workers' rights listed, there was very little difference between the genders.

On average, 43% of males and 45% of females believe each of the seven workers' rights listed is now more important than prior to the pandemic. 74% of males and 72% of females believe that these workers' rights are as/more important.

Paid sick leave (48% of males compared to 53% of females) was the workers' right with the largest difference between the genders (just 5%).

In terms of workers' rights being as/more important now, males and females differed by just 1% on each of the rights listed, excluding paid sick leave (76% of males compared to 79% of females).

Age

Although there were only slight differences between the age groups when looking at the combined as/more important figure, there were stark differences when looking at just the more important figure.

Across the seven workers' rights listed, the average combined as/more important figure was 72% for those aged under 35, 73% for those aged 35-54 and 74% for those aged 55+.

However, the average across the more important figure was 48% for those aged under 35, 45% for those aged 35-54 and 38% for those aged 55+.

For example, in terms of the right to join a trade union, 62% of those aged 55+, 64% of those aged 35-54 and 66% of those aged under 35 believe this is as/more important than before. However, just 23% of those aged 55+ compared to 38% of those aged under 35 and 31% of those aged 35-54 believe this is more important now.

These differences reflect the fact that older respondents were more likely than younger respondents to select "this was important before and still is". Likewise, younger respondents were more likely than older respondents to believe each workers' right is more important now than before the pandemic.

Regional Differences

There were some differences between the regions, with those in the Asia-Pacific being more likely to believe that five of the seven workers' rights listed are now more important than before.

Those in the Asia-Pacific region were more likely than the other regions or the global average to believe that the following are more important than before:

- **The right to join a trade union (37% compared to the global average of 31%)**
- **The right to a decent minimum wage (57% compared to the global average of 51%)**
- **The right to collectively bargain so workers can join together to get fairer wages and labour conditions (49% compared to the global average of 43%)**
- **Affordable access to healthcare (65% compared to the global average of 58%)**
- **Access to unemployment benefits (56% compared to the global average of 53%)**

Those in the Americas were more likely than the other regions of the global average to believe that the following are more important than before:

- **The right to strike (27% compared to 22%)**
 - **Paid sick leave (55% compared to the global average of 51%)**
-

Country Analysis

The right to join a trade union

Overall, almost two-thirds (64%) of people believe that “the right to join a trade union” is as/more important now. Of these, 31% believe it is more important. Just 9% believe it is less important, and 13% believe it was not important before and is not important now.

Those in India (42%) and Indonesia (45%) were the most likely to believe that the right to join a trade union is more important now. This was followed by Brazil (38%), Australia (30%) and Mexico (30%).

Those in Italy (27%) and the United States (28%) were slightly less likely to think that the right to join a union is now more important.

Just 18% of people in France, 21% in Japan and 22% in Great Britain believe the right to join a trade union is more important than before the pandemic; however, at least half believe that the right to join a union is as/more important (52% for France, 58% for Japan and 68% in Great Britain).

The right to a decent minimum wage

Over half (51%) of respondents to this survey believe that the right to a decent minimum wage is more important now than prior to the pandemic. 35% of these – or more than one in three – believe it is much more important than before.

A combined 79% believe that the right to a decent minimum wage is as/more important than before the pandemic.

Two-thirds of those in Brazil (67%) and Indonesia (66%) believe the right to a decent minimum wage is more important now than before the pandemic. A staggering 57% of those in Brazil believe that the right to a decent minimum wage is much more important than before.

Support is also high in India (62%), Australia (55%), Mexico (52%) and Italy (51%), with each of these countries having over half their population who believe the right to a decent minimum wage is now more important than prior to the pandemic.

France (33%), Japan (38%), Great Britain (39%) and the United States (41%) trail the other countries significantly in their likelihood to believe that the right to a decent minimum wage is now more important. However, at least 64% (France) and as high as 84% (Great Britain) believe that the right to a minimum wage is as/more important than before the pandemic.

The right to strike

Just under a quarter (22%) of people believe that the right to strike is now more important than before the pandemic. Only slightly less (15%) believe that the right to strike is less important now.

This makes the right to strike the workers’ right people are least likely to believe is more important than before the pandemic and the most likely to believe is less important.

However, over half (56%) of respondents across the ten countries included in this survey believe that the right to strike is as/more important than before the pandemic. Other than Indonesia (which at 38% differed significantly from the other countries), India (54%) and the United States (56%) were the countries with the lowest as/more important combined figure. The figures for these two countries, however, still equated to more than half their population who believe that the right to strike is as/more important than before.

Those in Italy were the most likely to believe that the right to strike is as/more important now (70%). However, more people in India (32%), Brazil (31%) and Australia (28%) believe the right to strike is now more important (compared to 26% in Italy). 23% in Mexico also believe

the right to strike is more important now.

Just 16% of people in Indonesia believe that the right to strike is now more important than before the pandemic, as do 16% in Japan, 17% in Great Britain, 19% in France and 23% in Mexico.

The right to collectively bargain so workers can join together to get fairer wages and labour conditions

Almost three-quarters (74%) of people believe that the right to collectively bargain is as/more important than prior to the pandemic. Of these, 43% – or nearly half – believe it is more important. Breaking it down further, 25% of people – or one in four people across these ten countries – believe that the right to collectively bargain is much more important than before.

Globally, just 6% believe the right to collectively bargain is less important now than prior to the pandemic.

Over half of those in Indonesia (59%), India (58%) and Brazil (57%) believe the right to collectively bargain is more important than before the pandemic. This is followed by Mexico (48%), Australia (42%) and Italy (42%), which also have large proportions of their population who believe that the right to collectively bargain is more important now.

The populations of France (24%), Japan (26%), Great Britain (29%) and the United States (35%) are far less likely to believe the right to collectively bargain is more important than prior to the pandemic. However, at least half (58% in France) and up to almost three-quarters (72% in the Great Britain) believe the right to collectively bargain is as/more important.

Affordable access to healthcare

41% – or nearly half – of respondents to this survey believe that affordable access to healthcare is much more important now than before, the most out of any

of the workers' rights listed. 58% believe it is more important, while a combined 82% believe that affordable access to healthcare is as/more important than before.

Globally, just 4% of people believe that affordable access to healthcare is less important now than it was prior to the pandemic.

Three-quarters of people in Brazil (75%), Indonesia (75%) and India (74%) believe that affordable access to healthcare is more important now than prior to the pandemic. This is followed by Australia, where 64% believe affordable access to healthcare is now more important, Mexico (59%) and Italy (58%).

As with many of the other workers' rights listed, the populations of France (35%), Japan (37%), Great Britain (44%) and the United States (48%) were considerably less likely to believe that affordable access to healthcare is more important now than prior to the pandemic. However, over half of the people in each of these countries believe that affordable access to healthcare is as/more important than prior to the pandemic (68% in France, 72% in the United States, 75% in Japan and 82% in Great Britain).

Access to unemployment benefits

One in three people (33%) believe that access to unemployment benefits is now much more important than prior to the pandemic. Over half (53%) believe it is more important, and over three-quarters (77%) believe access to unemployment benefits is as/more important than prior to the pandemic.

Just 6% believe that access to unemployment benefits is less important than prior to the pandemic.

67% of those in Brazil, 64% in India and 60% in Italy believe that access to unemployment benefits is more important now than prior to the pandemic. These countries are followed by Australia (59%), Indonesia (58%) and Mexico (55%), where over half of people believe that access to unemployment benefits is more important than prior to the pandemic.

France (35%), Great Britain (42%), Japan (43%) and the United States (46%) were again less likely than the other countries to believe that this workers' right was more important than prior to the pandemic. Again, however, these countries had high proportions of their population who believe that access to unemployment benefits is as/more important than prior to the pandemic: 66% in France, 69% in the United States, 76% in Japan and 80% in Great Britain.

Paid sick leave

Just over half (51%) of people believe that paid sick leave is now more important than prior to the pandemic. 32% – or almost one in three – believe it is much more important.

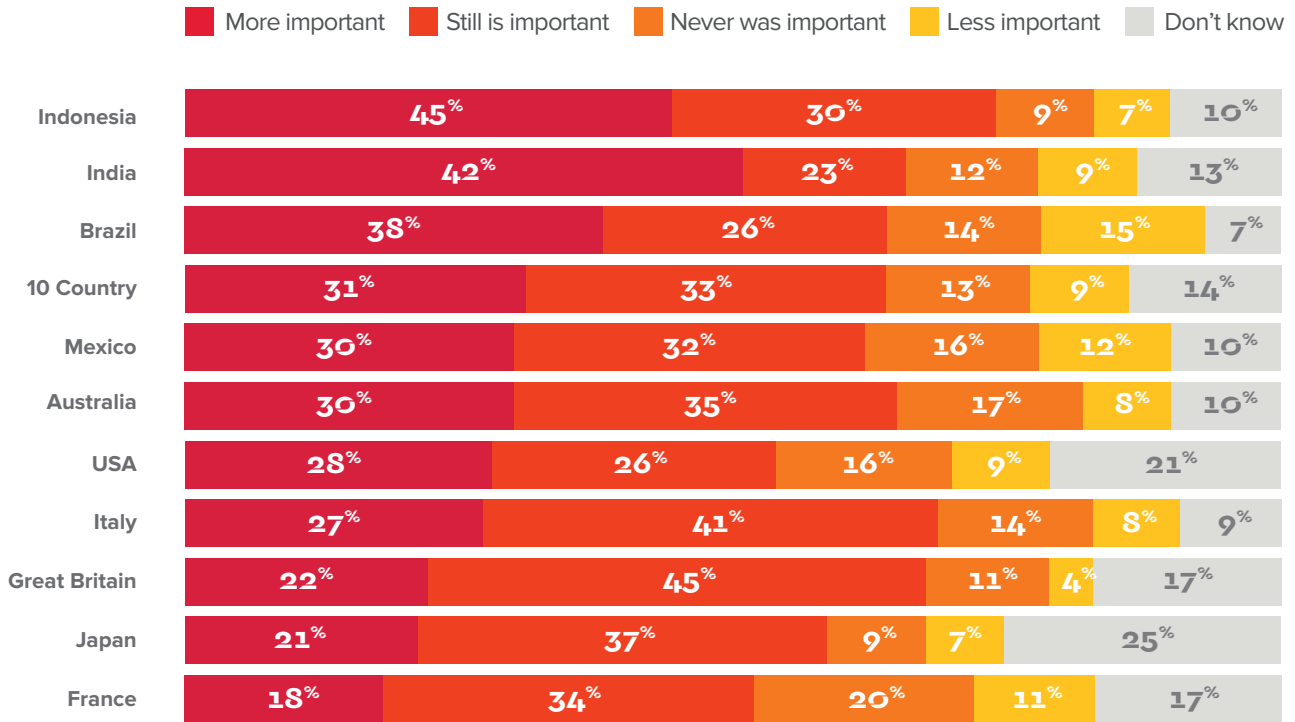
A combined 78% believe paid sick leave is as/more important than prior to the pandemic.

The populations of India (65%) and Brazil (64%) were far more likely than those in other countries to believe that paid sick leave is more important now than prior to the pandemic. This was followed by Mexico (56%), Australia (54%), Italy (54%), Indonesia (51%).

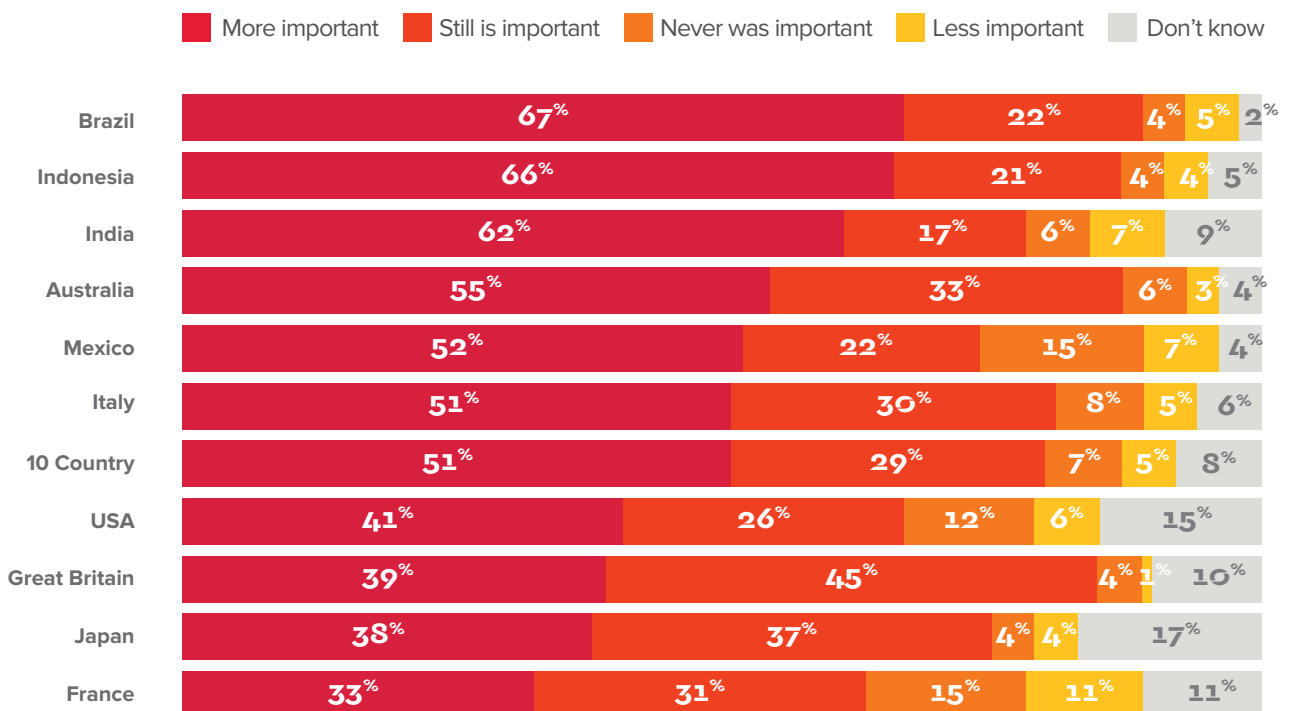
France (32%), Japan (40%), the United States (46%) and Great Britain (47%) were again the countries least likely to believe that paid sick leave is more important now than prior to the global pandemic. However, this still equates to at least one in three (France) and up to almost half (the United States and Great Britain). Additionally, these countries once again had large proportions of their populations who believe that access to paid sick leave is as/more important than prior to the pandemic: 66% in France, 70% in the United States, 74% in Japan and 83% in Great Britain.

“Do you think the following worker rights are more, or less, important now, or has there been no change?”

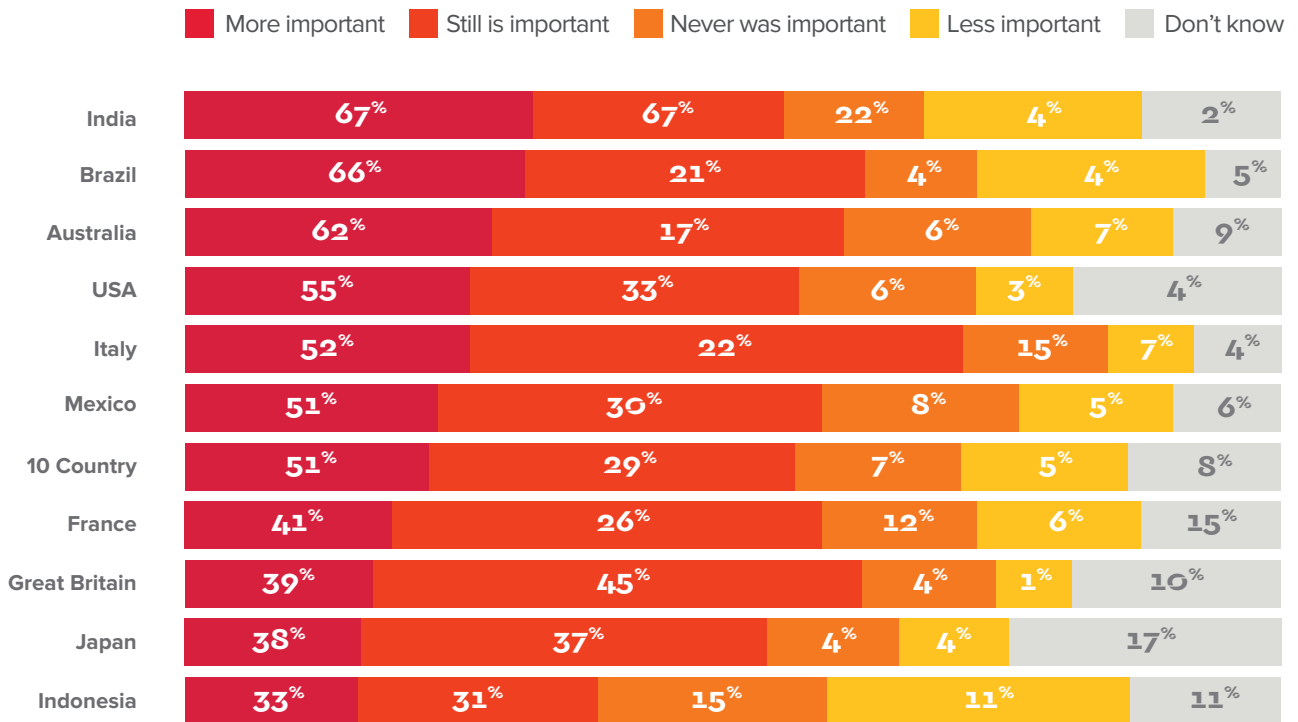
The right to join a trade union (3a)



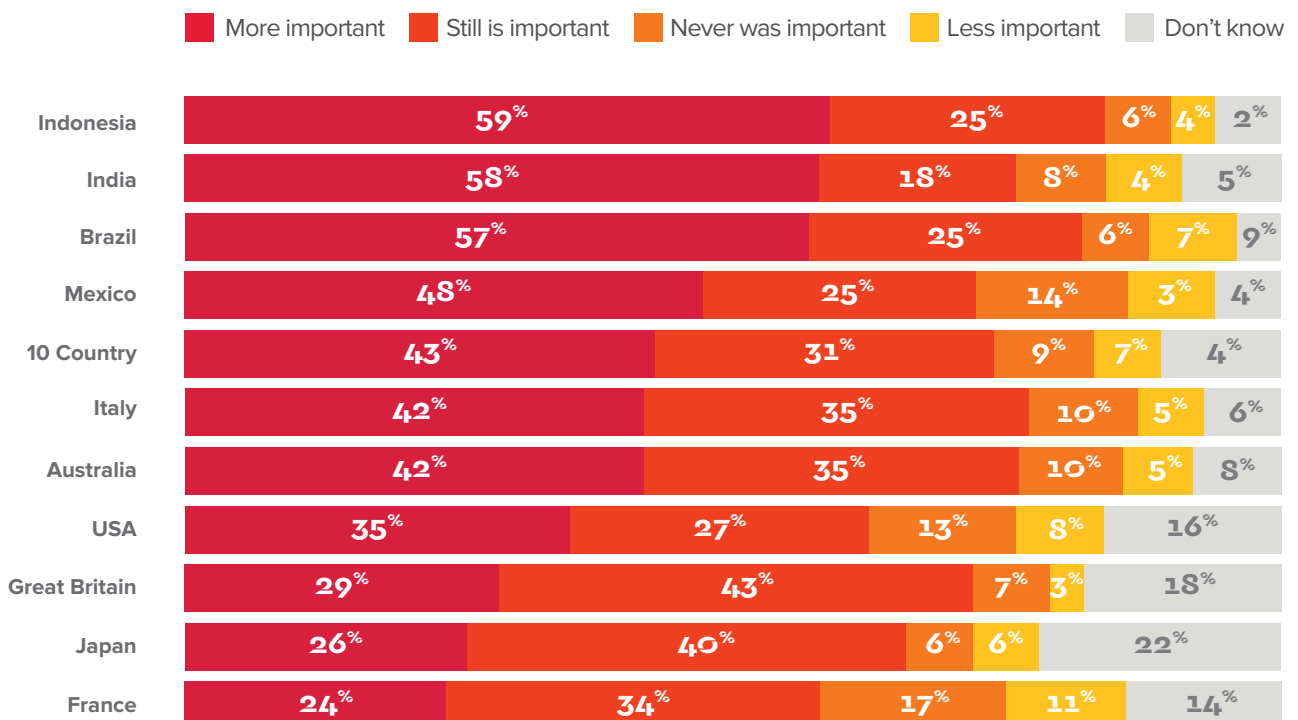
The right to a decent minimum wage (3b)



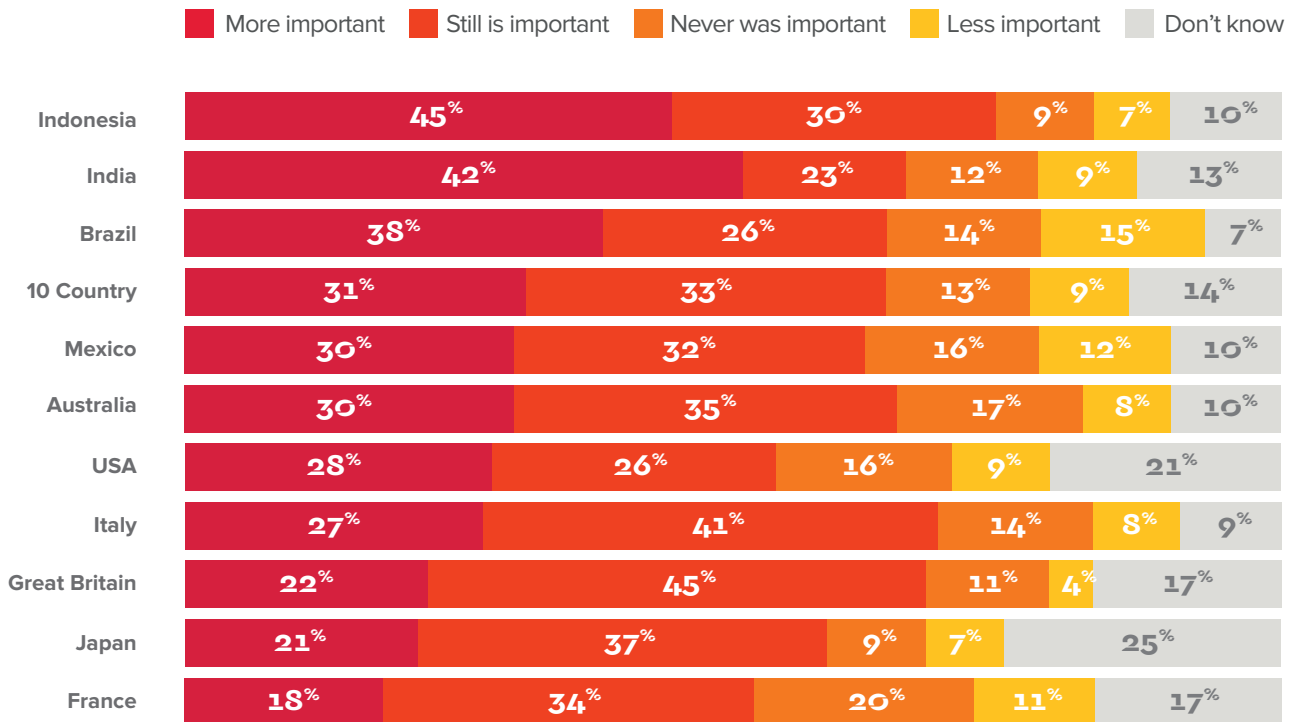
The right to strike (3c)



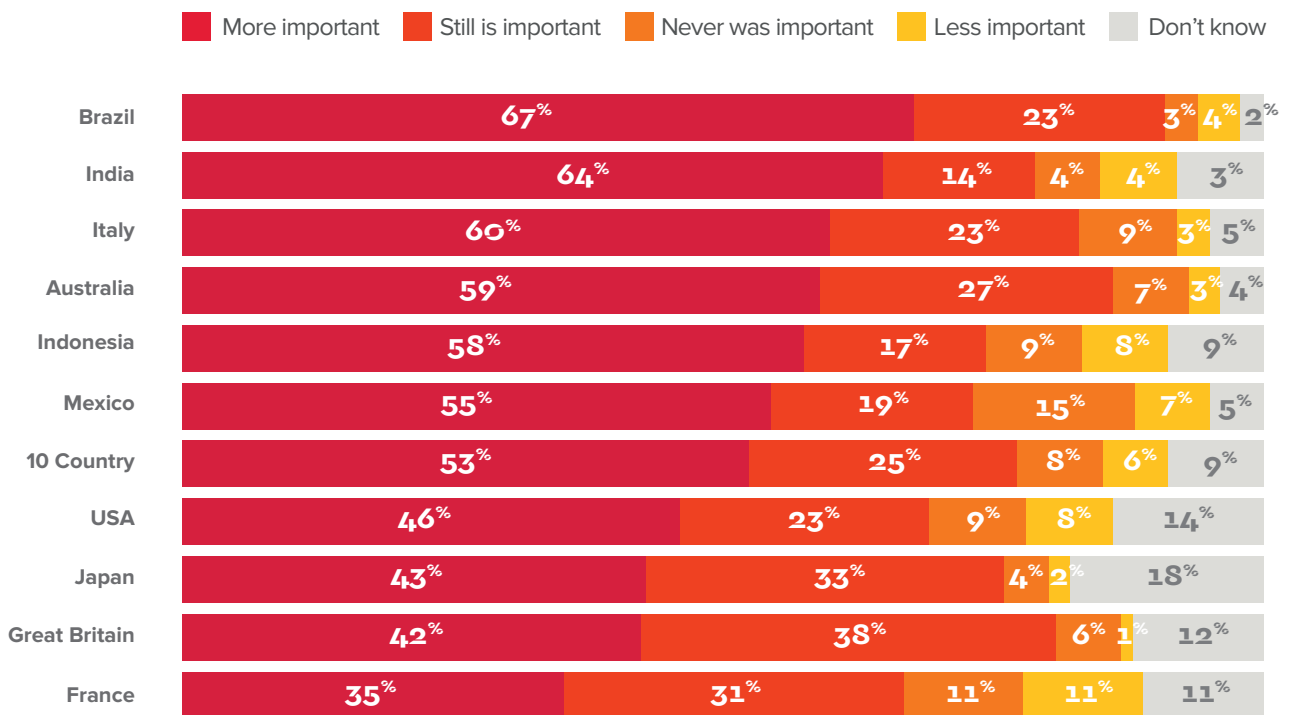
The right to collectively bargain so workers can join together to get fairer wages and labour conditions (3d)



Affordable access to healthcare (3e)



Access to unemployment benefits (3f)



Paid sick leave (3g)

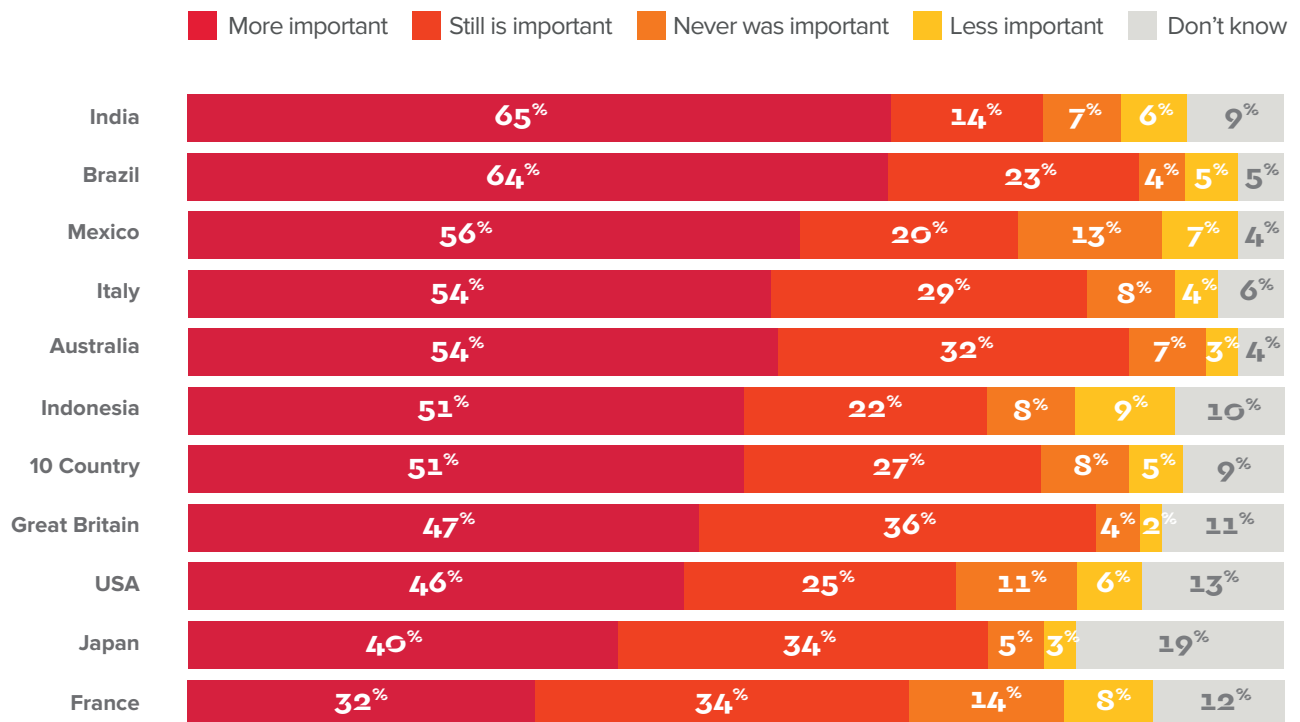


Figure 3: Question: “Thinking back to before the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020), do you think the following worker rights are more, or less, important now, or has there been no change?” SCALE: “Much more important now than before” “Slightly more important now than before” (MORE IMPORTANT) “No change, this was important before and still is” (STILL IMPORTANT) “No change, this was not important before and still isn’t” (NEVER IMPORTANT) “Slightly less important than before” and “Much less important than before” (LESS IMPORTANT), “Don’t know” (DON’T KNOW) N=12242 (Australia n=1056, Brazil n=1008, France n=1037, Great Britain n=1674, India n=1012, Indonesia n=2131, Italy n=1067, Japan n=1000, Mexico n=1000, USA n=1257)

Toplines

Key

AUS	BRA	FRA	GBR	IND	IDN	ITA	JPN	MEX	USA
Australia	Brazil	France	Great Britain	India	Indonesia	Italy	Japan	Mexico	USA

Q Thinking back to before the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020), do you think the following worker rights are more, or less, important now, or has there been no change?

The right to join a trade union	Total	AUS	BRA	FRA	GBR	IND	IDN	ITA	JPN	MEX	USA
Much more important now than before	17%	17%	24%	8%	14%	22%	25%	14%	8%	17%	18%
Slightly more important now than before	13%	13%	14%	10%	9%	20%	19%	13%	13%	13%	10%
No change, this was important before and still is	33%	35%	26%	34%	45%	23%	30%	41%	37%	32%	26%
No change, this was not important before and still isn't	13%	17%	14%	20%	11%	12%	9%	14%	9%	16%	16%
Slightly less important now than before	4%	3%	5%	6%	2%	5%	4%	3%	5%	7%	4%
Much less important now than before	4%	5%	10%	5%	2%	5%	3%	4%	2%	5%	5%
Don't know	14%	10%	7%	17%	17%	13%	10%	9%	25%	10%	21%
Net: More important	31%	30%	38%	18%	22%	42%	45%	27%	21%	30%	28%
Net: Less important	9%	8%	15%	11%	4%	9%	7%	8%	7%	12%	9%
Combined: More important/No change, this was important before and still is	64%	65%	64%	52%	68%	65%	75%	68%	58%	62%	54%

The right to a decent minimum wage	Total	AUS	BRA	FRA	GBR	IND	IDN	ITA	JPN	MEX	USA
Much more important now than before	35%	36%	57%	18%	27%	42%	49%	35%	18%	34%	30%
Slightly more important now than before	16%	19%	10%	15%	11%	19%	17%	16%	21%	19%	11%
No change, this was important before and still is	29%	33%	22%	31%	45%	17%	21%	30%	37%	22%	26%
No change, this was not important before and still isn't	7%	6%	4%	15%	4%	6%	4%	8%	4%	15%	12%
Slightly less important now than before	3%	1%	3%	6%	1%	5%	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%
Much less important now than before	2%	1%	3%	5%	1%	3%	2%	3%	1%	3%	3%
Don't know	8%	4%	2%	11%	10%	9%	5%	6%	17%	4%	15%
Net: More important	51%	55%	67%	33%	39%	62%	66%	51%	38%	52%	41%
Net: Less important	5%	3%	5%	11%	1%	7%	4%	5%	4%	7%	6%
Combined: More important/ No change, this was important before and still is	79%	88%	89%	64%	84%	78%	87%	81%	75%	74%	67%

The right to strike	Total	AUS	BRA	FRA	GBR	IND	IDN	ITA	JPN	MEX	USA
Much more important now than before	12%	15%	20%	10%	10%	17%	7%	16%	6%	12%	18%
Slightly more important now than before	10%	13%	11%	9%	7%	15%	9%	10%	10%	11%	8%
No change, this was important before and still is	33%	32%	31%	39%	44%	23%	22%	45%	37%	35%	30%
No change, this was not important before and still isn't	15%	17%	10%	14%	12%	13%	21%	13%	12%	18%	16%
Slightly less important now than before	8%	6%	8%	8%	3%	10%	16%	5%	6%	7%	3%
Much less important now than before	7%	7%	13%	7%	4%	10%	11%	3%	4%	7%	5%
Don't know	14%	10%	7%	13%	19%	13%	14%	8%	25%	10%	19%
Net: More important	22%	28%	31%	19%	17%	32%	16%	26%	16%	23%	26%
Net: Less important	15%	13%	21%	15%	7%	20%	28%	8%	10%	14%	9%
Combined: More important/ No change, this was important before and still is	56%	60%	62%	58%	61%	54%	38%	70%	53%	58%	56%

The right to collectively bargain so workers can join together to get fairer wages and labour conditions	Total	AUS	BRA	FRA	GBR	IND	IDN	ITA	JPN	MEX	USA
Much more important now than before	25%	22%	42%	12%	16%	32%	39%	24%	11%	25%	23%
Slightly more important now than before	17%	20%	15%	13%	13%	26%	20%	18%	15%	22%	12%
No change, this was important before and still is	31%	35%	25%	34%	43%	18%	25%	35%	40%	25%	27%
No change, this was not important before and still isn't	9%	10%	6%	17%	7%	8%	6%	10%	6%	14%	13%
Slightly less important now than before	3%	3%	3%	5%	2%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%
Much less important now than before	3%	2%	4%	5%	1%	3%	1%	3%	2%	3%	4%
Don't know	11%	8%	4%	14%	18%	9%	6%	7%	22%	6%	16%
Net: More important	43%	42%	57%	24%	29%	58%	59%	42%	26%	48%	35%
Net: Less important	6%	5%	8%	11%	3%	7%	4%	6%	6%	8%	8%
Combined: More important/No change, this was important before and still is	74%	77%	82%	58%	72%	76%	84%	77%	66%	72%	62%

Affordable access to healthcare	Total	AUS	BRA	FRA	GBR	IND	IDN	ITA	JPN	MEX	USA
Much more important now than before	41%	44%	65%	17%	29%	55%	60%	38%	17%	39%	37%
Slightly more important now than before	17%	20%	10%	18%	15%	19%	15%	20%	20%	20%	11%
No change, this was important before and still is	24%	27%	15%	33%	38%	10%	14%	25%	38%	18%	24%
No change, this was not important before and still isn't	6%	4%	4%	13%	5%	5%	3%	8%	4%	11%	9%
Slightly less important now than before	2%	1%	1%	5%	1%	3%	2%	1%	2%	4%	2%
Much less important now than before	2%	1%	2%	4%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	3%	3%
Don't know	8%	3%	3%	10%	12%	6%	4%	5%	18%	4%	14%
Net: More important	58%	64%	75%	35%	44%	74%	75%	58%	37%	59%	48%
Net: Less important	4%	2%	4%	9%	2%	5%	3%	4%	3%	8%	5%
Combined: More important/No change, this was important before and still is	82%	91%	90%	68%	82%	84%	89%	83%	75%	77%	72%

Access to unemployment benefits	Total	AUS	BRA	FRA	GBR	IND	IDN	ITA	JPN	MEX	USA
Much more important now than before	33%	37%	55%	15%	24%	41%	35%	37%	22%	33%	31%
Slightly more important now than before	20%	23%	13%	20%	18%	23%	23%	23%	21%	21%	15%
No change, this was important before and still is	25%	27%	23%	31%	38%	14%	17%	23%	33%	19%	23%
No change, this was not important before and still isn't	8%	7%	3%	11%	6%	6%	9%	9%	4%	15%	9%
Slightly less important now than before	3%	1%	2%	6%	0%	4%	4%	2%	1%	4%	5%
Much less important now than before	3%	1%	2%	5%	1%	3%	4%	1%	1%	3%	3%
Don't know	9%	4%	2%	11%	12%	8%	9%	5%	18%	5%	14%
Net: More important	53%	59%	67%	35%	42%	64%	58%	60%	43%	55%	46%
Net: Less important	6%	3%	4%	11%	1%	7%	8%	3%	2%	7%	8%
Combined: More important/No change, this was important before and still is	77%	86%	90%	66%	80%	78%	74%	83%	76%	73%	69%

Paid sick leave	Total	AUS	BRA	FRA	GBR	IND	IDN	ITA	JPN	MEX	USA
Much more important now than before	32%	35%	50%	16%	31%	45%	30%	32%	18%	35%	31%
Slightly more important now than before	19%	19%	15%	17%	16%	20%	21%	22%	22%	21%	15%
No change, this was important before and still is	27%	32%	23%	34%	36%	14%	22%	29%	34%	20%	25%
No change, this was not important before and still isn't	8%	7%	4%	14%	4%	7%	8%	8%	5%	13%	11%
Slightly less important now than before	3%	2%	2%	4%	1%	3%	4%	2%	1%	4%	3%
Much less important now than before	3%	1%	3%	4%	1%	2%	4%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Don't know	9%	4%	4%	12%	11%	9%	10%	6%	19%	4%	13%
Net: More important	51%	54%	64%	32%	47%	65%	51%	54%	40%	56%	46%
Net: Less important	5%	3%	5%	8%	2%	6%	9%	4%	3%	7%	6%
Combined: More important/No change, this was important before and still is	78%	86%	87%	66%	83%	79%	74%	82%	74%	76%	70%

