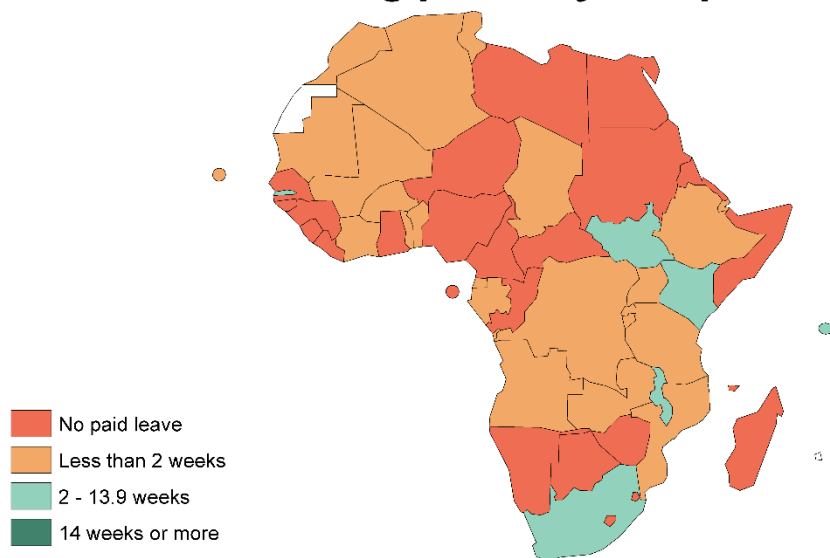


PAID PATERNAL LEAVE: FEASIBLE OPTIONS FOR BENIN

PAID PATERNAL LEAVE FOR FATHERS

BENIN IN CONTEXT

Is paid leave available to fathers of infants, including paternity and parental?



Source: Adult Labor Database, 2022

- In Benin, **new fathers have access to 3 days of paid paternity leave.**¹
- Benin numbers among **122 countries globally, 30 countries in the African Union, and 7 countries in Western Africa** with paid leave policies in place to guarantee fathers time off for infant caregiving.² This includes policies reserved for fathers, and policies that guarantee leave that can be shared between mothers and fathers.
- Paid infant caregiving leave for fathers is an active area of policy reform around the world, and particularly across the African continent. Since 1995, **the proportion of African Union (A.U.) countries³ that guarantee at least some paid leave for fathers of infants has more than quadrupled**—increasing from 7 countries in 1995 to 30 countries in 2022.

¹ Paid leave for fathers is made available through a 2005 collective agreement that covers most of the private sector.

² Findings presented in this brief reflect national laws in force as of January 2022.

³ WORLD Policy Analysis findings cover all 193 United Nations member states. Findings presented here for African Union (A.U.) countries are restricted to the 53 members of the A.U. that are members of the United Nations, and does not include policy data for Western Sahara.

LONGER DURATIONS OF LEAVE FOR FATHERS

- Gendered imbalances in infant caregiving leave durations can reinforce norms that caregiving is the primary responsibility of mothers and curtail economic opportunities available to women.
- Taking steps to guarantee mothers and fathers equal access to paid caregiving leave can be an important way to advance gender equality at work and home and strengthen the national economy. McKinsey has estimated that if countries across Africa achieved full gender parity, overall annual GDP would rise 34% across the continent by 2025—equivalent to \$3.89 billion in Benin.⁴ Globally, **45 countries guarantee at least 14 weeks of paid leave for both new mothers and fathers.**

AFRICAN COUNTRIES

- Currently, **six African countries (including one West African country – The Gambia) provide two weeks of paid leave to new fathers for infant caregiving:**
 - The Gambia Women’s Act (2010) states “In order to reinforce the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, every father is entitled to a reasonable period of time not exceeding ten working days as paternity leave with pay, for every child delivered for him.”
 - In Kenya, the Employment Act (2007; 2019) guarantees: “A male employee shall be entitled to two weeks paternity leave with full pay”
 - In Malawi, the Employment Amendment Act (2021) guarantees that “A male employee shall be entitled, once every three years, to at least two weeks’ paternity leave on full pay”
 - In Seychelles, a 2018 amendment to the Employment (Conditions of Employment) Regulations commits that “A male worker, resident in Seychelles, under a contract of continuous employment or for a fixed term or a part-time male worker, is entitled to paid paternity leave of 10 consecutive working days”
 - In South Sudan, the Labour Act (2017) provides “An employee is entitled, on each occasion that his wife is pregnant, to two weeks of paternity leave on full pay”
 - South Africa’s Labor Laws Amendment Act (2018) guarantees “An employee, who is a parent of a child, is entitled to at least ten consecutive days parental leave.”
- And **within the past five years, three A.U. countries have instituted legislative reforms to increase the duration of existing paternal leave:**
 - In 2018, Seychelles passed a reform to lengthen leave from 5 to 10 days of paternity leave
 - In 2020, South Africa enacted a reform to replace 3 days of family responsibility leave with 10 days of parental leave
 - In 2022, Equatorial Guinea passed a reform to lengthen paternity leave from 3 to 7 days

⁴ Authors’ calculation, based on: McKinsey & Company. (2019). The power of parity: Advancing women’s equality in Africa. Retrieved from: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/the-power-of-parity-advancing-womens-equality-in-africa>

MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

- Longer durations of paid leave for fathers of infants are not new in middle-income countries; **15 middle-income⁵ countries around the world guarantee mothers and fathers at least 14 weeks of paid leave** for infant caregiving – making this an area where reforms are feasible and one where Benin could become a regional leader by guaranteeing 14 weeks of leave for fathers to advance gender equality in infant caregiving.

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE ON THE IMPACTS OF LONGER LEAVES FOR FATHERS

GREATER ECONOMIC RETURNS, GENDER EQUALITY AND FAMILY BENEFITS

- In one study across 53 developing economies, mandating paid paternity leave was associated with a 6.8% higher proportion of women workers in private firms,ⁱ while another global study found that policy reforms that reserved at least two weeks of leave for fathers (or encouraged fathers' leave-taking) were associated with improved attitudes towards women's right to a job when jobs are scarce—among both women and men.ⁱⁱ
- Other empirical investigations across Europe and North America have found that introduction of longer leaves for fathers have been linked to a reduction in mothers' sick leave days from work,ⁱⁱⁱ increases in mothers' time in paid work,^{iv} improved likelihood of mothers in the labor force & increases to mothers' long-term earnings,^v fathers' increased time on unpaid housework,^{vi,vii,viii} increased time caregiving,^{ix,x} increased gender equality in caretaking for sick children,^{xi} and reduced conflict over household labor.^{xii}
- Additionally, studies have found that longer leaves for fathers correspond to fathers' increased satisfaction in their relationships with their children,^{xiii} and long-term beneficial impacts on children's school performance as teenagers.^{xiv}

ADDITIONAL KEY ELEMENTS OF LAW

ADEQUATE PAYMENT LEVELS FOR PATERNITY LEAVE

- Well-designed caregiving policies ensure that leave is remunerated at levels high enough that working parents can afford to take leave and still maintain the costs of daily living— including low-wage workers.
- Among the 30 A.U. countries that guarantee leave to new fathers, **Benin numbers among the 29 countries that remunerate paternity leave at 100% of the fathers' wages.**

JOB PROTECTION FOR PATERNITY LEAVE

- A prohibition of discriminatory dismissal during leave-taking is important support for new fathers—one that enables them to bond with their new infant, maintain stability in employment, and avoid loss of future income.

⁵ Data on country income group classification is from the World Bank (2020).

- 47 countries globally guarantee job protection through all of paternity leave, including 5 low-income and 18 middle-income countries.
- While Benin does not guarantee explicit job protection during 3 days of paternity leave, **8 countries in Africa (including 1 country in West Africa) guarantee job protection through all of paternity leave:** Angola, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, and Zambia.
- Workers are protected from dismissal during maternity leave in Benin, and future reforms to expand duration of paid paternity leave should ensure protection from discriminatory dismissal as well.

ⁱ Amin, Mohammad, Asif Islam, and Alena Sakhonchik. 2016. "Does Paternity Leave Matter for Female Employment in Developing Economies ? Evidence from Firm Data." World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 7588.

ⁱⁱ Omidakhsh, Negar, Aleta Sprague, and Jody Heymann. 2020. "Dismantling Restrictive Gender Norms: Can Better Designed Paternal Leave Policies Help? ." *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* 20(1):382–96. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12205>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Bratberg, Espen, & Naz, Ghazala. 2014. Does Paternity Leave Affect Mothers' Sickness Absence? *European Sociological Review*, 30(4), 500–511. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcu058>

^{iv} Patnaik, Ankita. 2019. "Reserving Time for Daddy: The Consequences of Fathers' Quotas." *Journal of Labor Economics* 37(4):1009–59. doi: 10.1086/703115.

^v Frodermann, Corinna, Katharina Wrohlich, and Aline Zucco. 2023. "Parental Leave Policy and Long-Run Earnings of Mothers." *Labour Economics* 80:102296. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2022.102296>.

^{vi} Kotsadam, Andreas, and Henning Finseraas. 2011. "The State Intervenes in the Battle of the Sexes: Causal Effects of Paternity Leave." *Social Science Research* 40(6):1611–22. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2011.06.011>.

^{vii} Tamm, M. (2019). Fathers' parental leave-taking, childcare involvement and labor market participation. *Labour Economics*, 59, 184–197. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2019.04.007>

^{viii} Patnaik, Ankita. 2019. "Reserving Time for Daddy: The Consequences of Fathers' Quotas." *Journal of Labor Economics* 37(4):1009–59. doi: 10.1086/703115.

^{ix} Wray, Dana. 2020. "Paternity Leave and Fathers' Responsibility: Evidence From a Natural Experiment in Canada." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 82(2):534–49. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12661>.

^x Tamm, M. (2019). Fathers' parental leave-taking, childcare involvement and labor market participation. *Labour Economics*, 59, 184–197. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2019.04.007>

^{xi} Duvander, Ann-Zofie, and Mats Johansson. 2019. "Does Fathers' Care Spill Over? Evaluating Reforms in the Swedish Parental Leave Program." *Feminist Economics* 25(2):67–89. doi: 10.1080/13545701.2018.1474240.

^{xii} Kotsadam, Andreas, and Henning Finseraas. 2011. "The State Intervenes in the Battle of the Sexes: Causal Effects of Paternity Leave." *Social Science Research* 40(6):1611–22. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2011.06.011>.

^{xiii} Haas, Linda, & Hwang, C. Philip. 2008. The Impact of Taking Parental Leave on Fathers' Participation in Childcare and Relationships With Children: Lessons from Sweden. *Community, Work & Family*, 11(1), 85–104. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668800701785346>

^{xiv} Cools, Sara, Jon H. Fiva, and Lars J. Kirkebøen. 2015. "Causal Effects of Paternity Leave on Children and Parents." *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics* 117(3):801–28. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjoe.12113>.