

AI and the Global Labour Market

How generative AI may transform work worldwide, which occupations face the greatest pressure, and what the evidence can responsibly claim

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The answer in one paragraph

The strongest current global evidence does not show that most jobs will be taken by AI. It estimates that 24% of global employment—about 838 million jobs—is potentially exposed to generative AI, while 3.3% falls in the highest exposure category. Clerical and administrative work faces the clearest pressure, alongside selected finance, software, media, data, and customer-contact roles. Exposure is much higher in high-income economies and among women. The most likely near-term outcome is transformation of tasks and skills, although partial automation can still reduce demand in some occupations.

Executive Summary

- **24% of global employment is potentially exposed.** That represents about 838 million jobs in the ILO-NASK global model.
- **3.3% is in the highest exposure gradient.** Exposure signals task-level technical potential; it is not a forecast of layoffs.
- **Clerical support is the clearest pressure point.** Data entry, bookkeeping, payroll, general office work, typing, and related information-processing roles dominate the highest-exposure group.
- **The global divide is structural.** Exposure reaches 34% in high-income economies versus 11% in low-income economies, reflecting different occupation mixes and digital intensity.
- **Women face higher exposure.** 28% of women's employment is exposed versus 21% of men's employment worldwide.
- **Change does not mean universal loss.** WEF expects global structural trends to create 170 million formal jobs and displace 92 million by 2030, a net gain of 78 million; this is an employer outlook for all macrorends, not AI alone.

24% global employment exposed	838M potentially exposed jobs	3.3% highest exposure	34% vs 11% high- vs low-income
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Decision-useful conclusion

Focus on task redesign, worker involvement, complementary skills, and transition protection in clerical and highly digitized cognitive work. Monitor real employment outcomes instead of treating exposure scores as job-loss probabilities.

1. What ‘at risk’ means

Term	Plain-English meaning
Potential exposure	AI could perform or assist some current tasks if adopted.
Highest exposure	A large share of current tasks scores highly and task variability is relatively low.
Transformation	The job remains, but tasks, skills, staffing, or working conditions change.
Displacement	A current job is removed or a worker loses the role; exposure alone does not establish this.
Industry risk	Depends on the industry's occupation mix, adoption, demand, institutions, and country context.

Responsible framing

This report uses ‘at risk’ to mean at risk of task change, workflow redesign, reduced demand, or a difficult transition. It does not mean that every exposed occupation will disappear.

Why the distinction matters

Most occupations are bundles of tasks. AI may automate drafting, classification, search, scheduling, calculation, or customer interaction while other tasks still require accountability, physical presence, tacit knowledge, negotiation, empathy, or human judgement.

2. Data and method

Source	Period	Coverage	Role
ILO-NASK WP140	2025	Global exposure by region, income and sex	Controlling source
ILO task workbook	2025	3,265 tasks / 427 ISCO occupations	Occupation detail
IMF	2024	Broader AI exposure and complementarity	Definition check
WEF Future of Jobs	2025	Employers in 55 economies	2030 outlook context
ILO gender brief	2026	Harmonised evidence across 84 countries	Latest gender update

Method in one sentence

ILO-NASK scores tasks within internationally comparable ISCO-08 occupations, assigns occupations to four exposure gradients, and applies those categories to harmonised labour-force estimates for more than 140 countries.

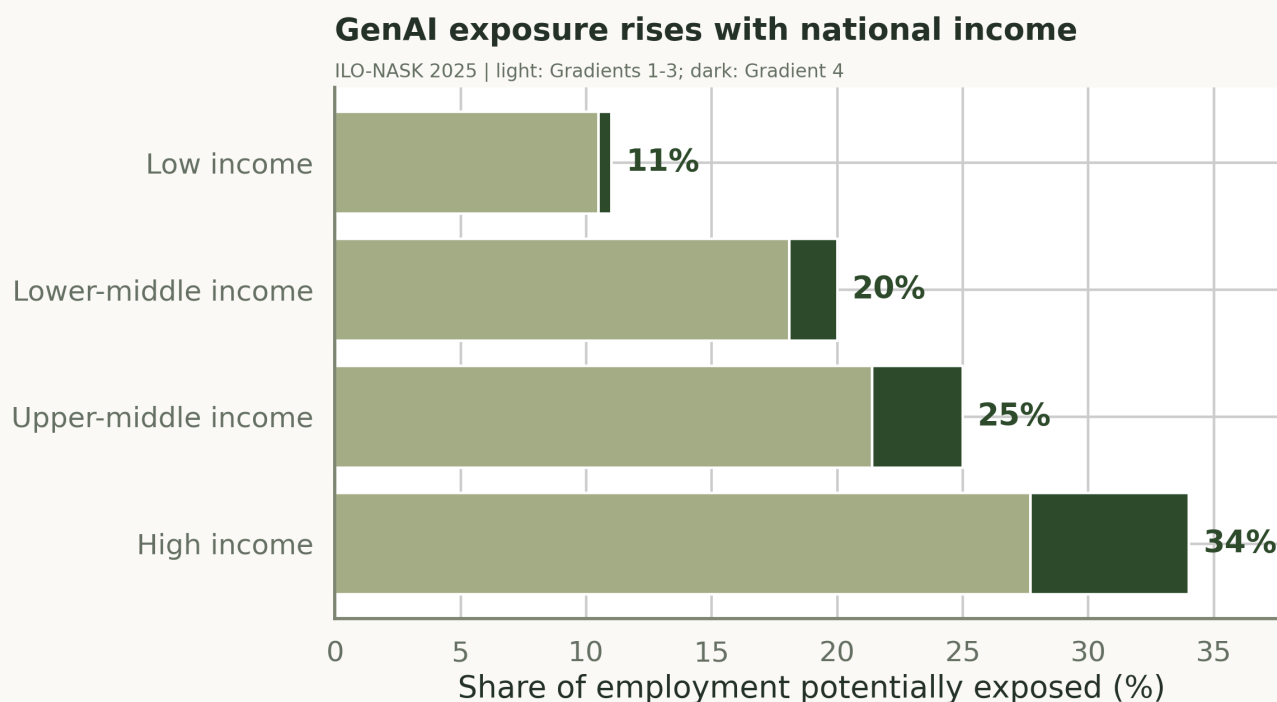
Why this is global

ISCO-08 provides a common occupational denominator across national labour markets. The project therefore avoids using a U.S. occupation system as if it represented the rest of the world.

Evidence rule

ILO is the controlling exposure source. IMF and WEF appear only as separately labelled benchmarks because they measure different technologies, populations, and outcomes.

3. Exposure rises with national income



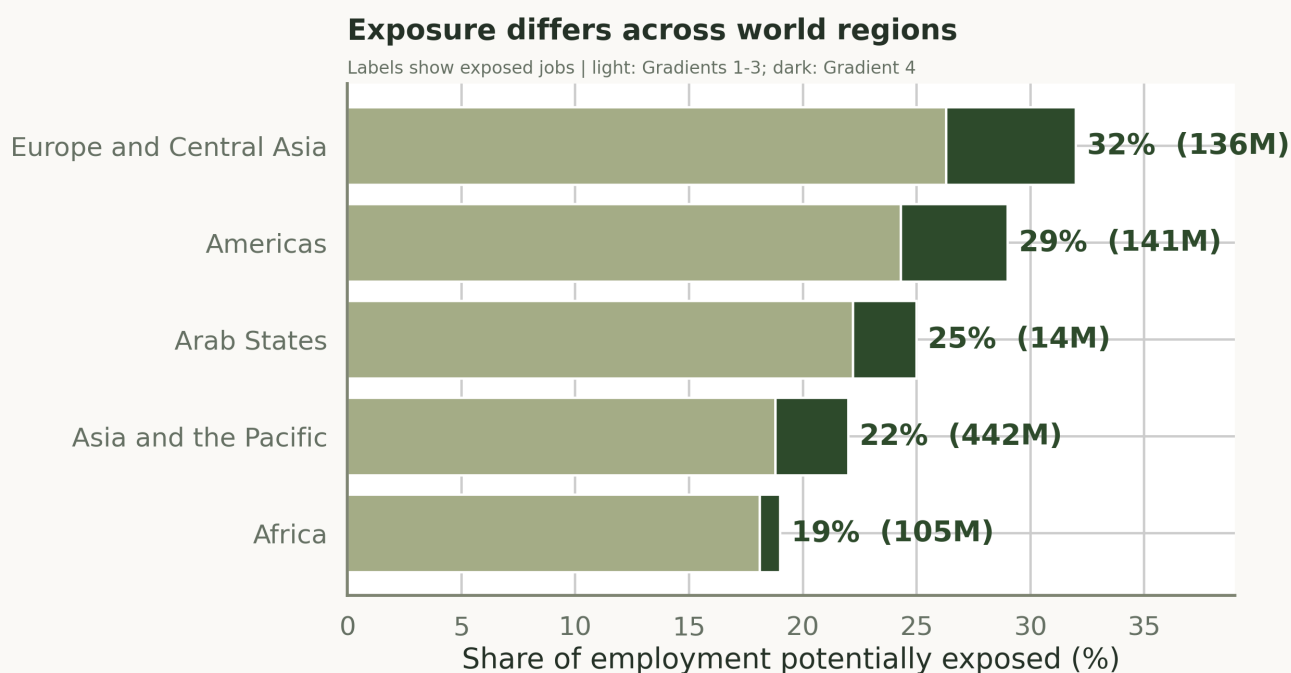
High exposure also means high opportunity

High-income economies have more clerical, professional, financial, software, and other digitised jobs. They face more immediate technical exposure, but also have better infrastructure and greater capacity to deploy AI productively.

Low exposure is not automatically safe

Low-income economies may experience slower direct disruption, yet electricity, broadband, cost, and skills gaps can prevent workers and firms from capturing productivity gains. The policy problem is therefore different, not absent.

4. Regional exposure differs



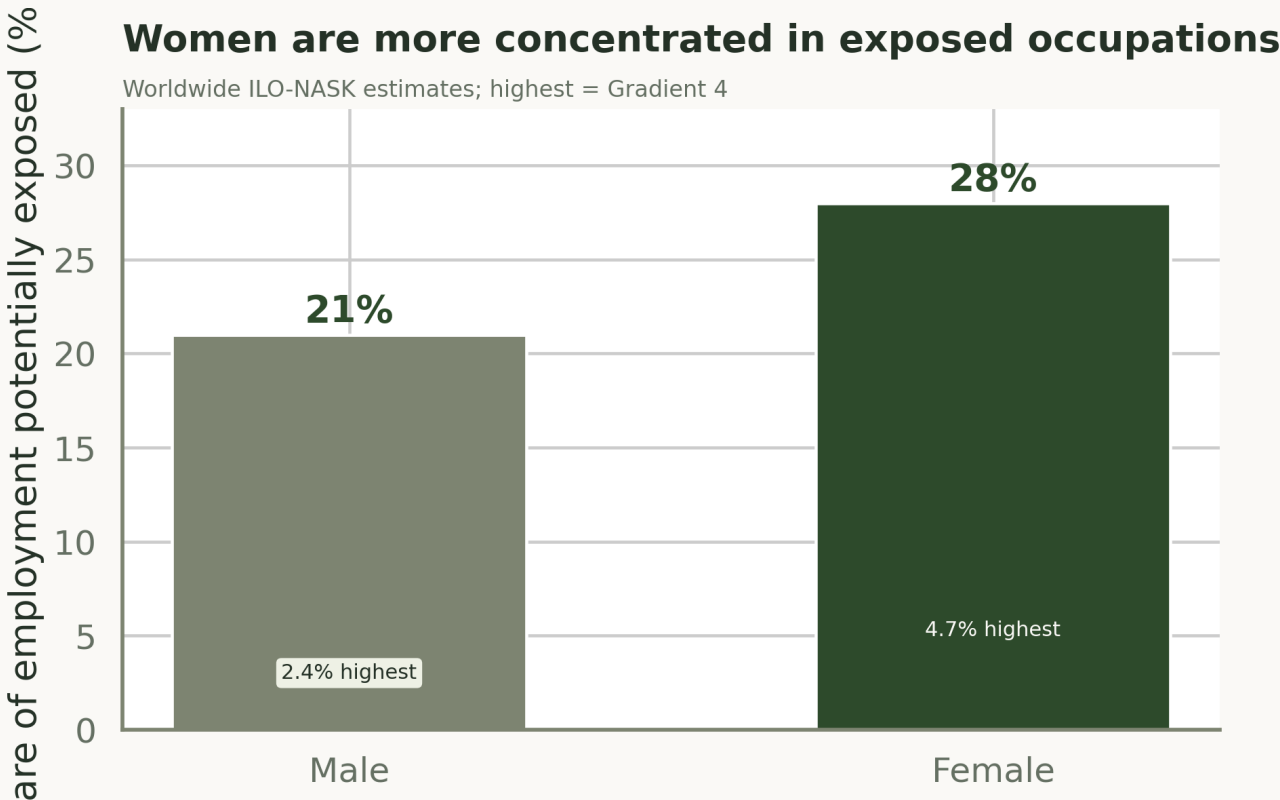
The regions with the highest shares

Europe and Central Asia has the highest exposed share at 32%, followed by the Americas at 29%. Asia and the Pacific has a lower share at 22%, but the largest absolute number of exposed jobs—about 442 million—because of its much larger workforce.

How to use this finding

Percentage exposure helps compare labour-market structure; exposed job counts help plan the scale of training and social protection. Both are needed.

5. Women face greater exposure



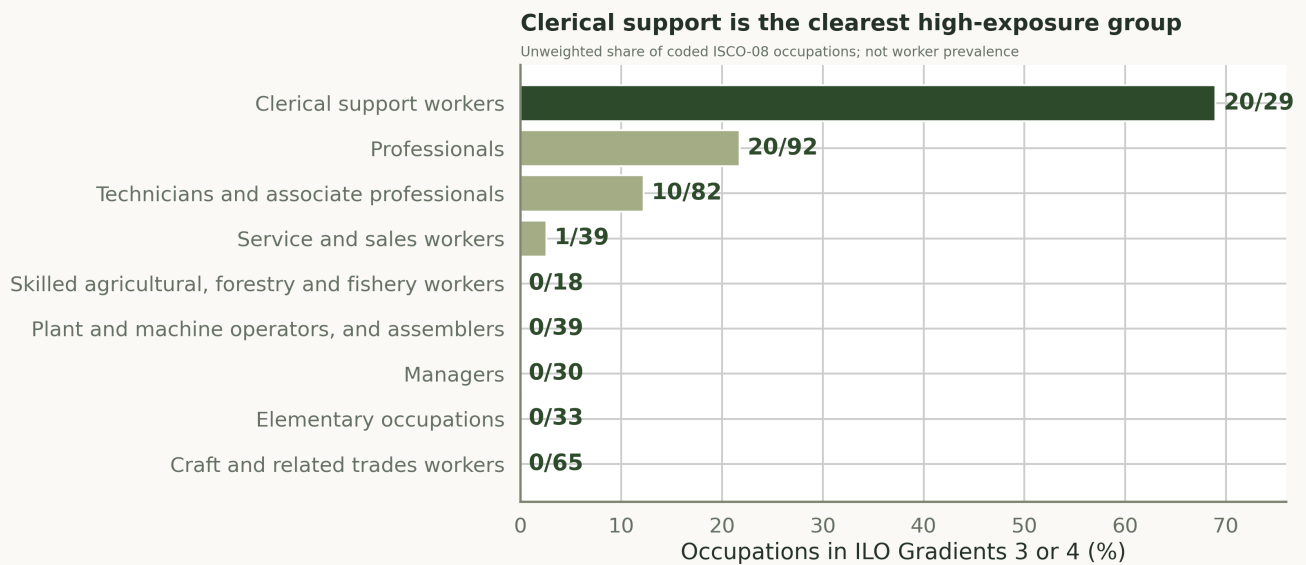
The gap is concentrated in higher exposure

Worldwide, 4.7% of women's employment is in Gradient 4 versus 2.4% of men's. In high-income economies the difference widens to 9.6% versus 3.5%.

Latest 2026 context

An ILO brief covering 84 countries reports that female-dominated occupations are almost twice as likely to be exposed as male-dominated occupations (29% versus 16%). Occupational segregation—not an inherent difference between workers—drives the pattern.

6. Which jobs are most at risk?



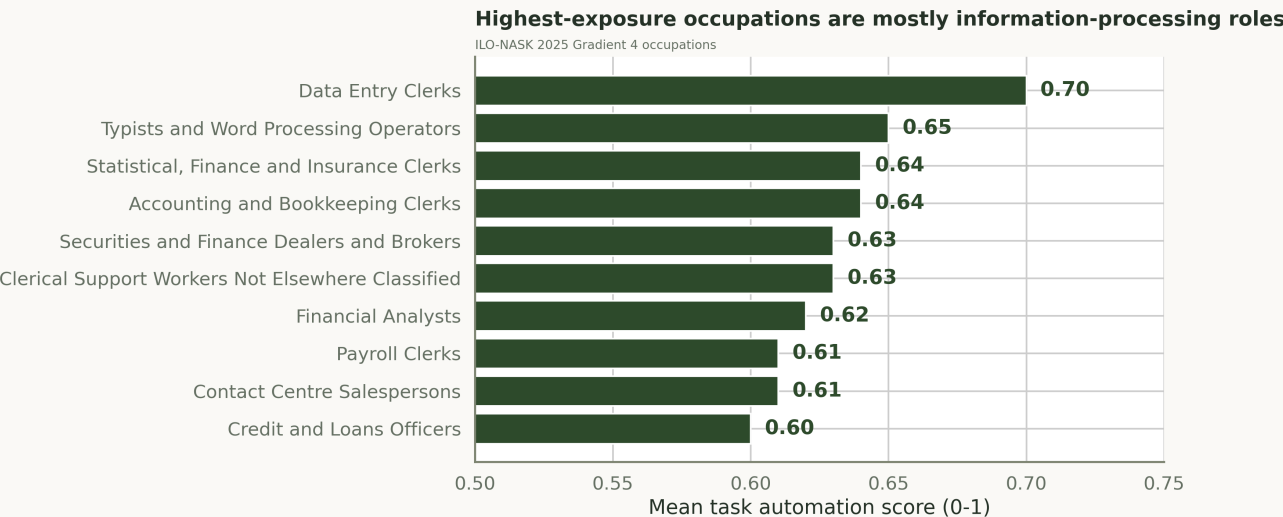
Clerical support is the clearest global answer

In the ILO workbook, 20 of 29 clerical-support occupations (69.0%) are in Gradients 3 or 4. This is an unweighted share of coded occupations, not a share of all workers.

Beyond clerical work

Selected finance, software, media, translation, analysis, and customer-contact occupations also score highly because their work is digital, language-heavy, and information-intensive.

7. Highest-exposure occupations



Industry family	Exposed functions and occupations
Business & administration	Office clerks, data entry, payroll, personnel, bookkeeping
Finance & insurance	Analysts, brokers, credit officers, accounting and finance clerks
Information, media & software	Web, multimedia, programming, language and content tasks
Professional services	Accounting, analysis, documentation, research and translation
Contact centres & retail services	Customer information, scripted sales, scheduling and transactions

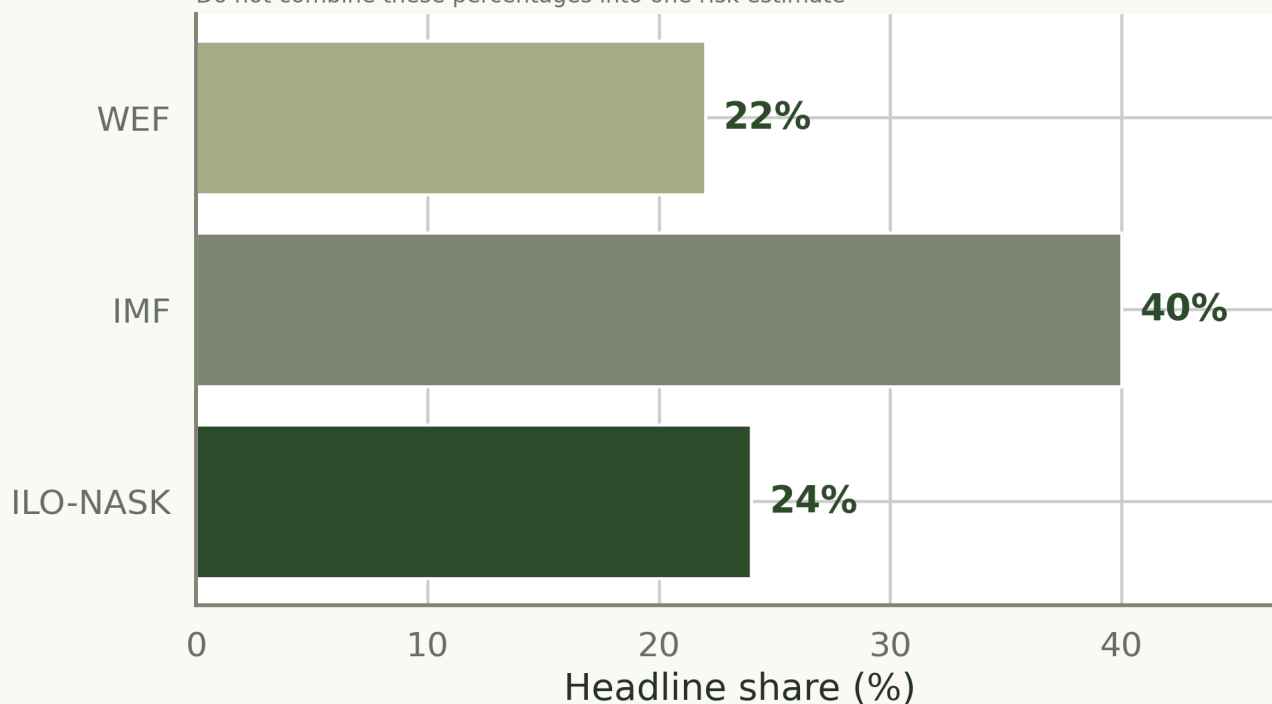
Industry interpretation

A global industry is most exposed when it employs many people in these occupations. Because comparable worldwide occupation-by-industry employment weights are not available here, this report does not manufacture a universal industry ranking. It identifies the occupational functions that place industries under pressure.

8. Why global estimates differ

Different global studies answer different questions

Do not combine these percentages into one risk estimate



source	technology_scope	measure	interpretation
ILO-NASK	Generative AI	Potential occupational exposure	Global employment; transformation is more likely than replacement
IMF	AI broadly	High occupational exposure	Different occupation index; not directly comparable with ILO
WEF	All macrotrends	Formal-job churn expected by employers through 2030	170M created, 92M displaced, net +78M; not an AI-only estimate

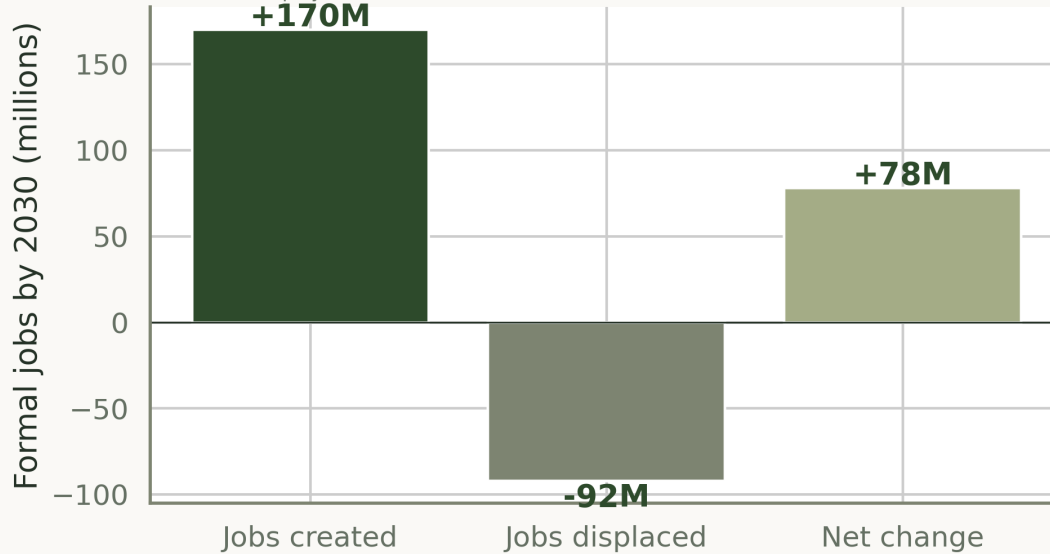
Do not average the headlines

ILO's 24%, IMF's roughly 40%, and WEF's 22% refer to different concepts. Their disagreement is informative: results depend on the technology definition, task model, complementarity assumptions, population, and forecast horizon.

9. Job creation and displacement can happen together

Global labour-market change includes creation and displacement

WEF 2025 employer outlook; all macro trends, not AI alone



What the WEF outlook says

Across all structural macro trends, surveyed employers expect 170 million formal jobs to be created and 92 million displaced by 2030, a net gain of 78 million. Technology is one driver alongside demographics, the green transition, economic uncertainty, and geoeconomic change.

What it does not say

It does not forecast that AI alone will eliminate 92 million jobs. Employer expectations can change, and the survey covers about 1.2 billion formal jobs rather than every worker worldwide.

10. Data quality and limitations

check	observed	expected	status
ILO task rows	3265	3265	PASS
Unique ISCO occupations	427	427	PASS
Duplicate occupation-task keys	0	0	PASS
Missing final 2025 task scores	0	0	PASS
Figure 20 evidence rows	20	20	PASS
Gradient 4 occupations	13	13	PASS

Main limitations

- The ILO results are a static early-2025 snapshot of technical potential, not observed job losses.
- Adoption depends on electricity, broadband, skills, price, workplace design, regulation, and social acceptance.
- Global employment estimates rely on harmonised surveys and hierarchical imputation rather than a census of every worker.
- Occupation scores do not automatically support worldwide industry rankings.
- The ILO exposure total does not include future occupations or jobs created by AI.
- Partial task automation may still reduce labour demand even when an occupation does not disappear.

11. Recommended actions

- 1. Employers:** map tasks inside exposed jobs, redesign work with employees, and define where human review and accountability remain mandatory.
- 2. Governments:** expand broadband, digital access, lifelong learning, portable benefits, and transition support tailored to country income and labour-market structure.
- 3. Education providers:** combine AI fluency with domain expertise, critical evaluation, communication, collaboration, and judgement.
- 4. Worker organisations:** participate in technology procurement, job redesign, monitoring, and decisions about productivity gains and job quality.
- 5. Analysts:** track vacancies, wages, hours, layoffs, job-to-job moves, adoption, and task change over time; do not treat an exposure index as the outcome.
- 6. Communicators:** say 'jobs exposed' or 'jobs likely to be transformed,' not 'jobs taken by AI,' unless direct causal evidence supports the claim.

A responsible headline

About one in four jobs worldwide is potentially exposed to generative AI. Clerical and highly digitised cognitive work faces the strongest pressure, but managed transformation—not automatic replacement—is the central labour-market challenge.

12. Sources and further questions

Primary sources

- ILO-NASK: Generative AI and Jobs, Working Paper 140 (2025)
- ILO: Generative AI and jobs, 2025 update
- ILO: Gen AI, occupational segregation and gender equality (2026)
- IMF: Gen-AI and the Future of Work (2024)
- World Economic Forum: Future of Jobs Report 2025

Further questions

- Which exposed occupations are already experiencing changes in vacancies, wages, hours, or layoffs?
- Which tasks are automated, augmented, newly created, or shifted to other workers?
- Which country policies help exposed workers move into growing roles without losing income or job quality?
- How do AI adoption and outcomes differ between formal and informal employment?

Validation status

Share with caveats. The project is reproducible, source-backed, globally framed, and suitable for a portfolio, classroom, or informed discussion. It is not a forecast of individual job loss and should not be used for hiring, dismissal, or career decisions.