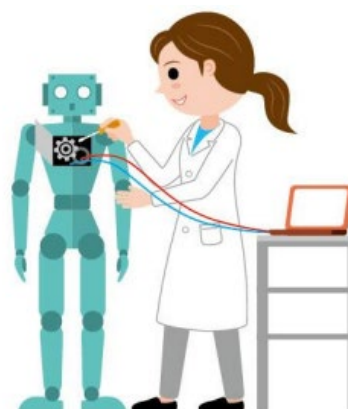




# The White Paper on Gender Equality 2026



July 2026

Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan

## [Composition of the White Paper 2026]

### 1. FY2025, Status of the Formation of a Gender Equal Society

\*Relevant statistics and reference data are presented by policy area in accordance with the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality

Special Feature: Relearning for Women's Work and Career Development, and Relearning for Men to Enrich Their Lives – The Current State of Relearning and Related Analysis –

### 2. Policies Related to the Promotion of the Formation of a Gender Equal Society

Part 1: Policies Implemented in FY2025 to Promote the Formation of a Gender Equal Society

Part 2: Policies to be Implemented in FY2026 to Promote the Formation of a Gender Equal Society

[Regarding the aggregate results]

Figures in this document may have been rounded to less than the stated unit. As a result, the total may not always equal the sum of its component figures.

## <Outline> Special Feature: Relearning for Women's Work and Career Development, and Relearning for Men to Enrich Their Lives – The Current State of Relearning and Related Analysis –

○ With regard to adapting to the digitalization of society, the proportion of women who feel unable to adapt to keep pace with digital changes increases with age. In addition, when examining participation in training and self-education activities by age group, a gender gap emerges from the late twenties onward, with women consistently showing lower participation rates than men across all age groups. On the other hand, it has also become clear that men tend to be more prone than women to loneliness and social isolation.

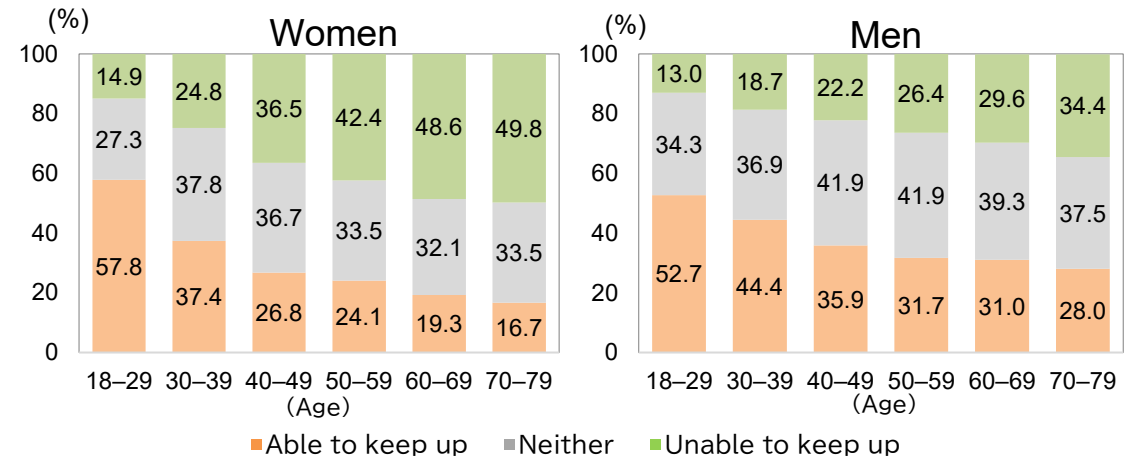
○ Amid these circumstances, changes in society such as the advance of longevity and the rapid progress in technology are expected to continue, making it important for people to engage in diverse forms of relearning. For example, efforts such as relearning for women in relation to work and career development, and relearning for men to enhance the quality and fulfillment of their daily lives, can contribute to richer and more rewarding lives.

○ Relearning contributes not only to individual growth, but also to the resolution of regional and social challenges and, ultimately, to Japan's economic growth, thereby contributing to the formation of a society that realizes diverse forms of well-being. It is desirable to continue efforts to develop an environment that promotes relearning.

○ A survey conducted by the Cabinet Office revealed that, even among those who are motivated, many people perceive various barriers to relearning, such as financial circumstances, time constraints, and lack of information, and have not been able to take action. It also became clear that there are differences between men and women in the tendencies of these barriers to relearning.

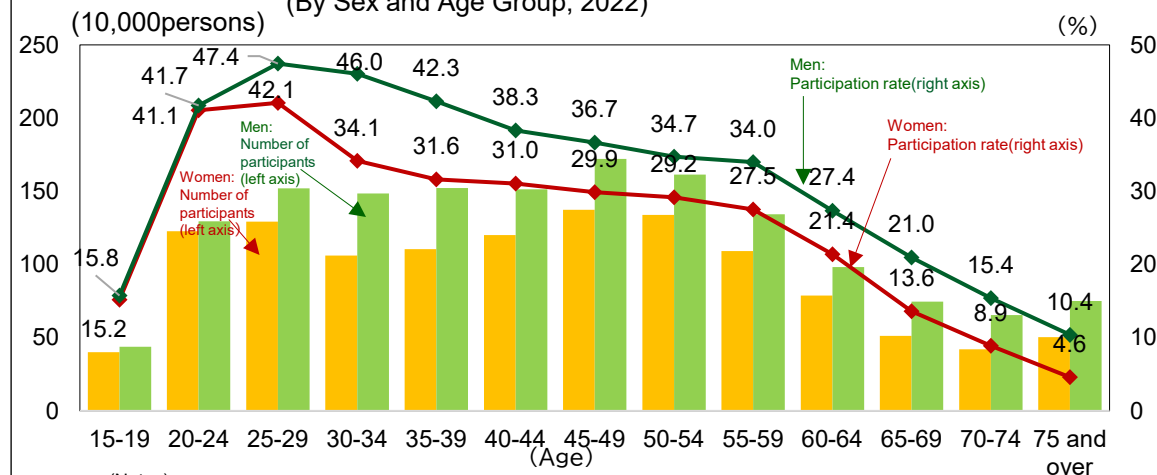
○ In addressing the barriers to relearning faced by those who are motivated to learn, it is also important for the government and other organizations to establish a supportive environment.

Figure SF-18 Public Awareness Regarding the Digitalization of Society (2025)  
<Adapting to changes brought about by the digitalization of society>



(Note) Prepared from the Digital Agency's "Awareness Survey on Digital Government Services" (December 2025).

Figure SF-20 Number and Proportion of Persons Who Participated in Training or Self-Education Activities  
(By Sex and Age Group, 2022)



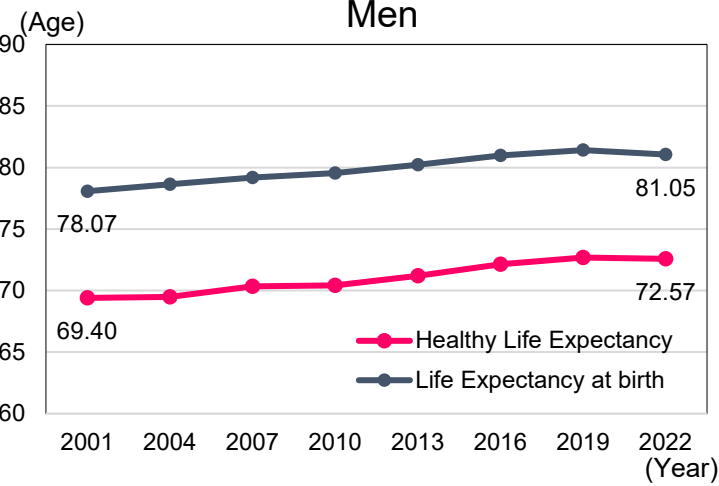
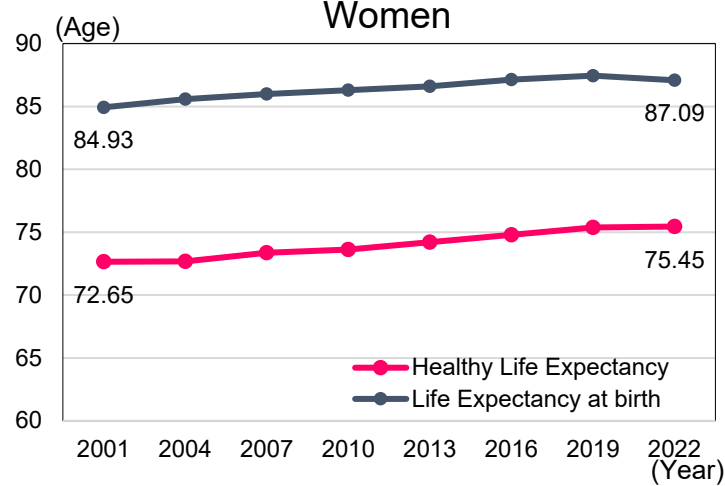
(Notes)

1. Prepared from the "2022 Employment Status Survey," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.
2. Persons for whom participation in training or self-education activities was unknown are excluded from the calculation of percentages.

# Section 1 Changes in Lifestyles and Social Structures in the Era of 100-Year Life(1)

- As life expectancy at birth continues to increase, healthy life expectancy is also rising, making learning increasingly important for enriching longer lives.
- Participation rates in learning, self-education and training have shown an upward trend in recent years, including among older adults.

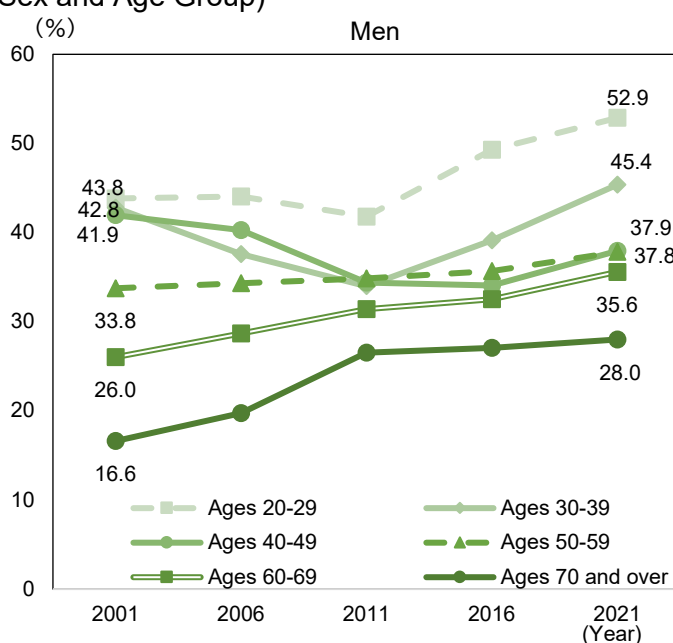
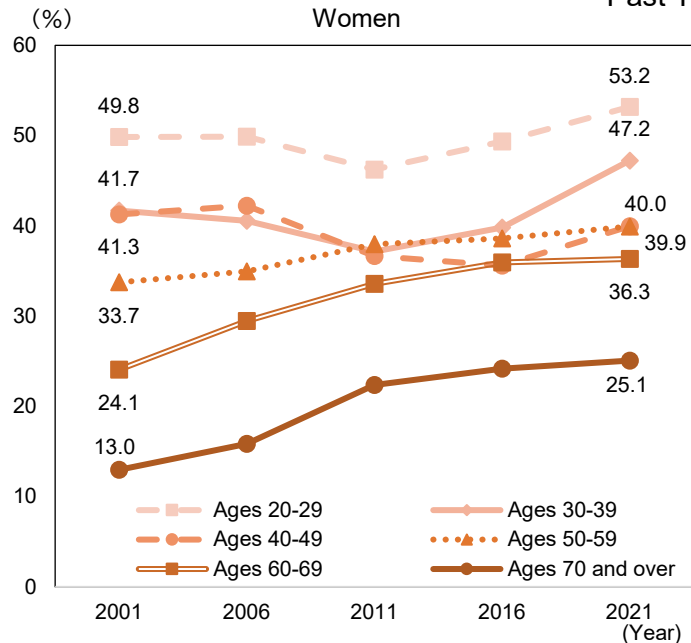
Figure SF-2 Trends in Healthy Life Expectancy and Life Expectancy at birth (By Sex)



(Notes)

- Life expectancy at birth figures are prepared from the "Abridged Life Tables for Japan 2024," Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.
- Healthy life expectancy figures are prepared from the "4th Promotion Specialized Committee of Health Japan 21 (the third term)," Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. Healthy life expectancy refers to the length of life that an individual lives without limitation in daily life activities due to health problems.

Figure SF-III Trends in Participation Rates in Learning, Self-Education, and Training During the Past Year (By Sex and Age Group)



(Notes)

- Prepared from the "Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.
- The participation rate refers to the percentage in the relevant age group population of those who participated in "Learning, self-education and training" during the past one year.
- "Learning, self-education and training" included club activities at school, but excluded worker training at the workplace, and study and research activities performed by children, pupils or students as schoolwork, such as study in class, preparation for class and review of lessons.

## Section 1 Changes in Lifestyles and Social Structures in the Era of 100-Year Life (2)

- According to estimates by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, there is a risk of labor supply-demand mismatches across occupations by 2040. Administrative occupations may witness a surplus of approximately 4.4 million workers, while shortages may emerge in professional occupations, including AI and Robotics Utilization Professionals(approximately 1.8 million workers), and in frontline occupations (approximately 2.6 million workers).
- According to survey results on ICT skills, women generally tend to have lower ICT skill levels than men among those aged 40 and over.

Table SF Projected Employment Structure in 2040 (Occupational Supply-Demand Mismatches)

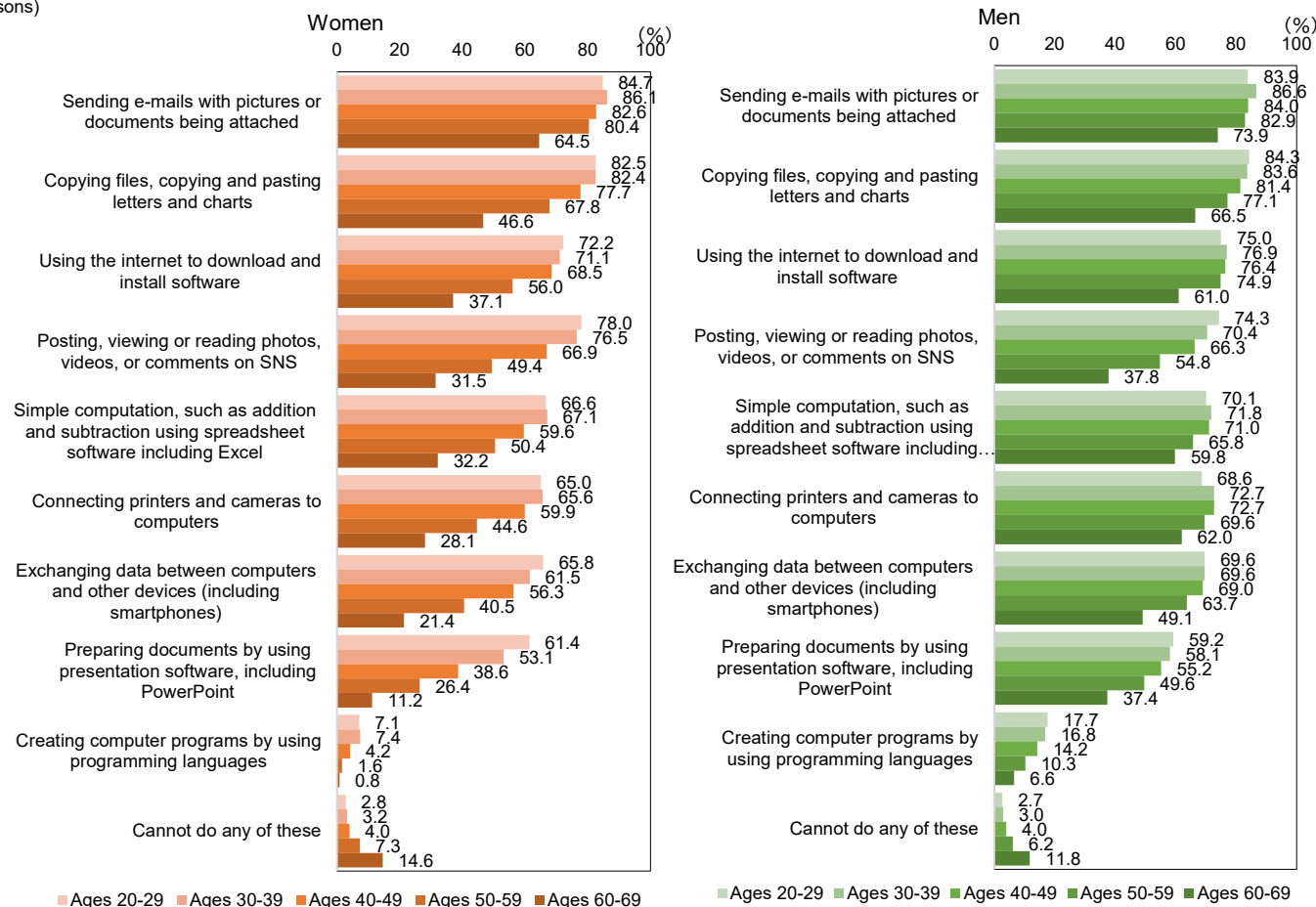
| Occupational Categories          | Professional Workers                                |      | Clerical Workers | On-Site Workers                         |      |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------|------------------|-----------------------------------------|------|
|                                  | Of Which: AI and Robotics Utilization Professionals |      |                  | Of Which: Manufacturing Process Workers |      |
| Supply-Demand Mismatches in 2040 | -181                                                | -339 | 437              | -260                                    | -206 |

(10,000 persons)

### (Notes)

1. Prepared from Estimation of the Employment Structure in 2040"(March 2026, 30th Meeting of Committee on New Direction of Economic and Industrial Policies, Industrial Structure Council Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry).
2. The occupational classifications are based on those used in the 2022 Employment Status Survey (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications). "Professional Worker" refers to professional and engineering workers. Of these, "AI and Robotics Utilization Professional" includes occupations such as machinery engineers and other data processing and communication engineers. "On-Site Worker" comprises occupations such as manufacturing process workers, construction and mining workers, and service workers. As only the major categories are shown, the total number of mismatches does not sum to zero.

Figure SF-19 ICT Skills (By Sex and Age Group, 2024)



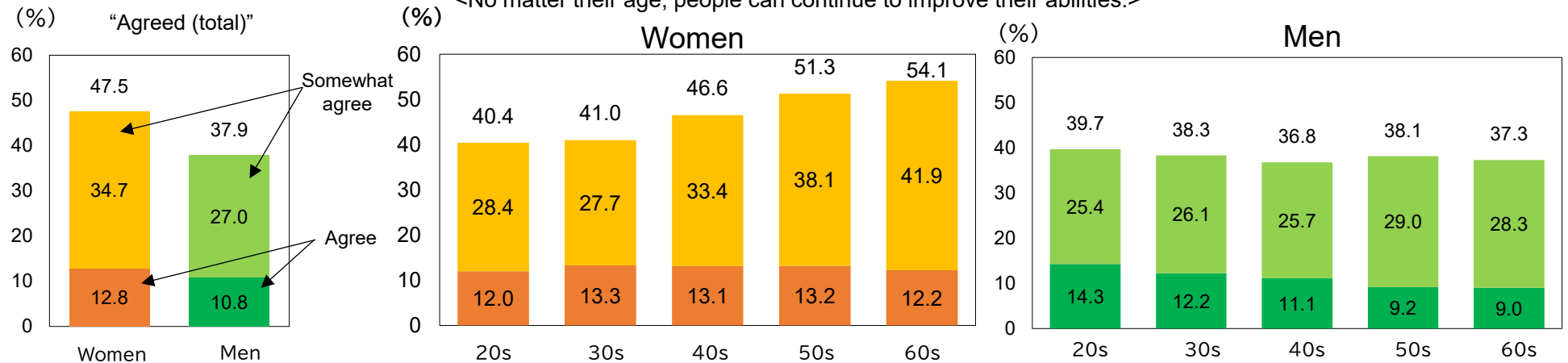
(Note) Prepared from the "2024 Communications Usage Trend Survey," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. Multiple responses allowed.

## Section 2 Enriching Life Through Relearning: Motivation and Barriers (1)

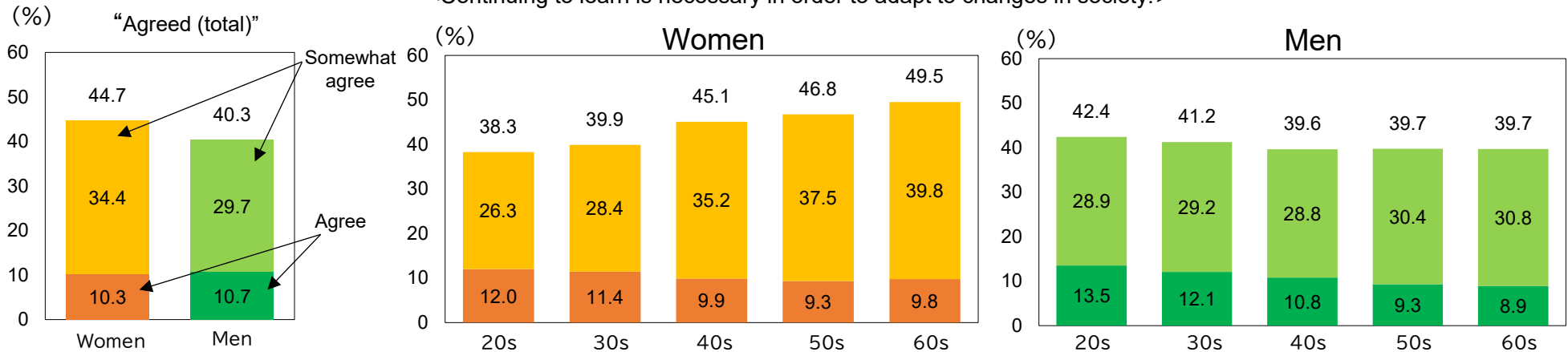
- Regarding attitudes toward learning, 47.5% of women and 37.9% of men agreed (total) with the statement, “No matter their age, people can continue to improve their abilities.” By age group, the proportion agreeing (total) increases with age among women. In contrast, no substantial differences are observed across age groups among men.
- In addition, 44.7% of women and 40.3% of men agreed (total) with the statement, “Continuing to learn is necessary in order to adapt to changes in society.” Here too, the proportion agreeing (total) increases with age among women. In contrast, among men, the proportion is somewhat higher among those in their 30s and younger.

Figure SF-24 Attitudes Toward Learning (By Sex and Age Group)

<No matter their age, people can continue to improve their abilities.>



<Continuing to learn is necessary in order to adapt to changes in society.>



(Notes)

1. Prepared from the “2025 Survey on Learning for Enriching Life,” Cabinet Office.

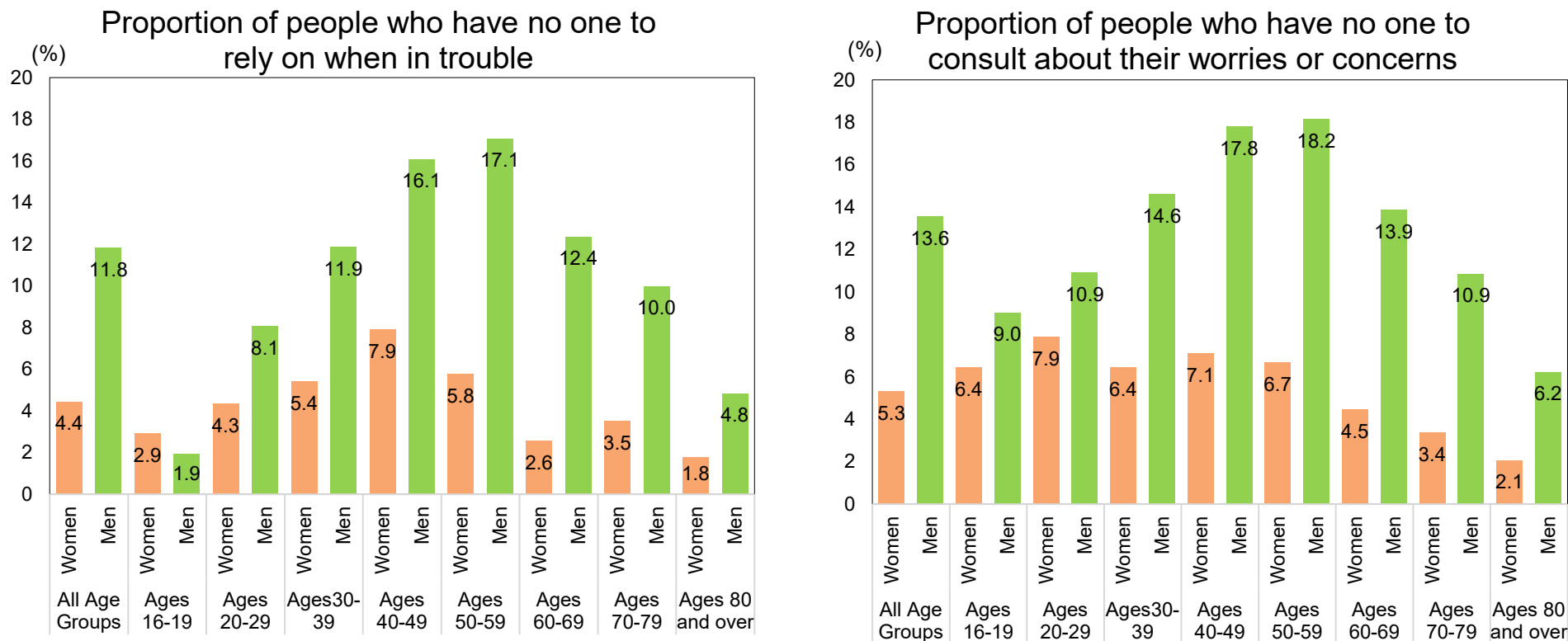
2. Respondents were asked: “For each of the following statements, please indicate the response that best reflects your thoughts and feelings.”

The response options were: “Agree,” “Somewhat agree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Somewhat disagree,” and “Disagree.” Only the responses “Agree” and “Somewhat agree” are shown.

## Section 2 Enriching Life Through Relearning: Motivation and Barriers (2) – 1

- Among those who responded that they “have no one to rely on when in trouble,” the proportion was higher among men than women in every age group except those aged 16 to 19. Furthermore, the proportion was also higher among men than women in every age group among those who responded that they “have no one to consult about their worries or concerns.”
- Looking at the relationship between sense of belonging and learning, among both men and women, those who had engaged in learning activities within the past year were more likely than those who had not to respond that they “think they have a role or a place where they belong” in their everyday lives. In addition, the gender gap among those who felt that they have a role or a place where they belong was smaller (Figure SF-36, p. 7).

Figure SF-13 Proportion of People Who Have No One to Rely on When in Trouble or to Consult About Worries and Concerns (By Sex and Age Group, 2025)



(Notes)

1. Prepared from the “2025 Nationwide Survey to Ascertain the Actual State of Loneliness and Isolation”, Cabinet Office.
2. The figures represent the proportion of respondents who answered “No” to the questions: “Do you have anyone you can rely on when you are in trouble?” and “If you have worries or concerns, do you have someone you can consult?”.

# Section 2 Enriching Life Through Relearning: Motivation and Barriers (2) – 2

Figure SF-36 Learning Within the Past Year and One’s Role or Sense of Belonging in Daily Life (By Sex and Age Group)  
<Think they have a role or a place where they belong at present>



(Notes)  
1. Prepared from the “2025 Survey on Learning for Enriching Life,” Cabinet Office.  
2. With regard to the present, respondents were asked: “At present, do you feel that you have a role or a place where you belong in your daily life? Please tell us how you feel.” The figures shown represent the combined proportion of respondents who answered “Agree” and “Somewhat agree.”  
3. Respondents who indicated that they had learned at least one of the six categories listed below during the past year were classified as “Learned within the past year,” while those who had not learned any of the categories were classified as “Not learned within the past year.”  
Work or career-related matters (including changing jobs and second careers); family and daily life matters (including housework, childcare, and caregiving); culture and general knowledge (including languages, arts, and history); community activities and social contribution activities (including community clean-up activities, neighborhood association activities, and volunteer work); health-related matters; other topics.

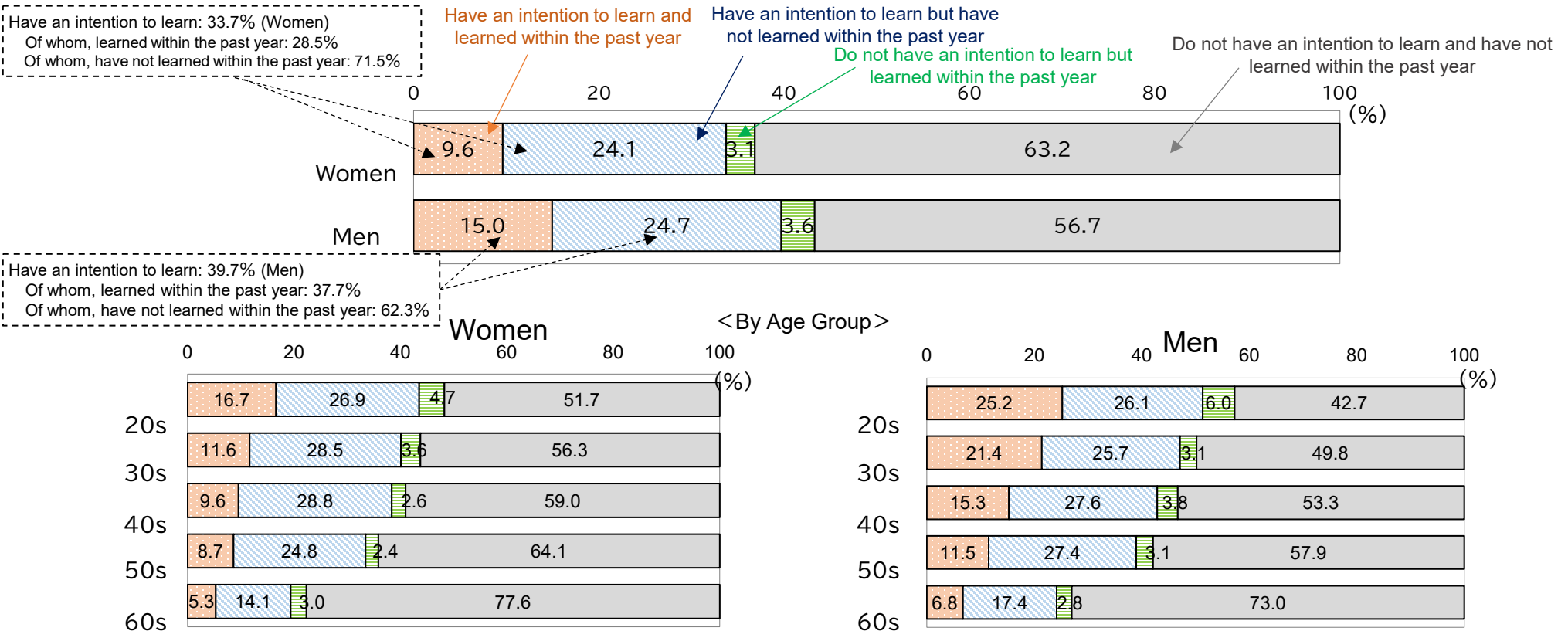
## Section 2 Enriching Life Through Relearning: Motivation and Barriers (3)

○ Regarding relearning related to work and career development, about 30% of women and about 40% of men reported that they “have an intention to learn.” However, among these individuals, about 70% of women and about 60% of men reported that they “Have an intention to learn but have not learned within the past year.”

○ By age group, among both men and women, the proportion of those who “Do not have an intention to learn and have not learned within the past year” tends to increase with age.

Motivation was assessed by asking respondents: “Would you like to learn about the following topics? The method of learning does not matter, whether it be reading books, studying on your own, searching the Internet, talking to experts, or taking courses.” Those who responded “Agree” or “Somewhat agree” to “work- or career-related matters (including changing jobs and second careers)” were classified as having an intention to learn.

Figure SF-25 Gap Between Motivation and Experience in Relearning Related to Work and Career Development (By Sex and Age Group)



(Notes)

1. Prepared from the “2025 Survey on Learning for Enriching Life,” Cabinet Office.

2. Motivation was assessed by asking respondents: “Would you like to learn about the following topics? The method of learning does not matter, whether it be reading books, studying on your own, searching the Internet, talking to knowledgeable people, or taking courses.”

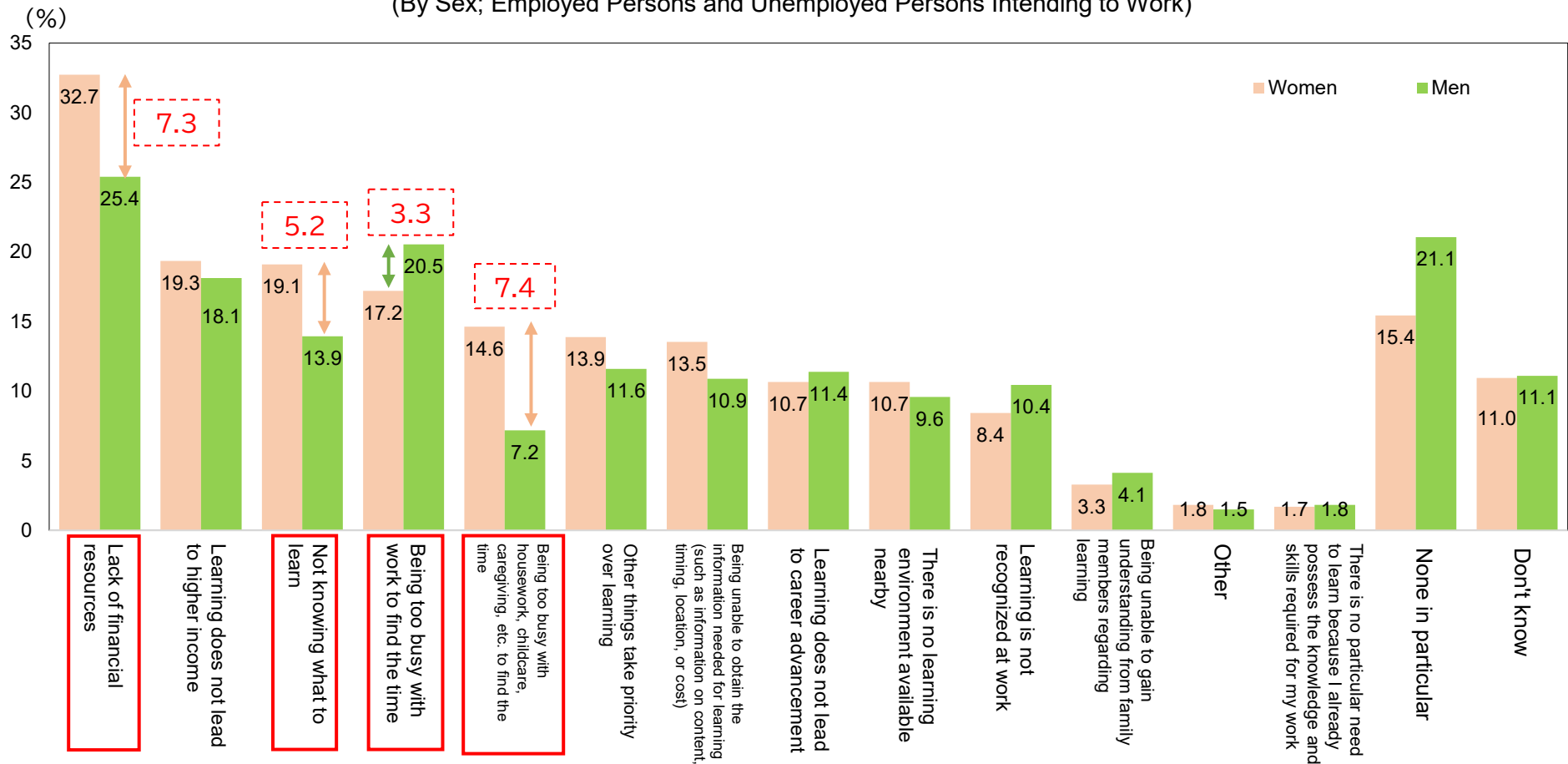
Respondents who answered “Agree” or “Somewhat agree” with respect to “work- or career-related matters (including changing jobs and second careers)” were classified as “Have an intention to learn,” while those who answered “Disagree” or “Somewhat disagree” were classified as “Do not have an intention to learn.” Respondents who answered “Don’t know” were excluded.

For learning experience, respondents were asked: “Have you learned about any of the following topics during the past five years? If you learned on one or more days (or occasions) during that period, please answer that you have learned. The method of learning does not matter, whether it be reading books, studying on your own, searching the Internet, talking to knowledgeable people, or taking courses.” Respondents who answered “Learned within the past year” were classified as “Learned within the past year.” Among all other respondents, those who answered either “Did not learn within the past year but learned within the past five years” or “Did not learn during the past five years” were classified as “Have not learned within the past year.”

## Section 2 Enriching Life Through Relearning: Motivation and Barriers (4)

- Regarding barriers to relearning related to work and career development, the most commonly cited barriers among women are “lack of financial resources,” “learning does not lead to higher income,” and “not knowing what to learn,” in that order. In contrast, among men, the most commonly cited barriers are “lack of financial resources,” “being too busy with work to find the time,” and “learning does not lead to higher income,” in that order.
- Examining gender differences, women are more likely than men to cite “lack of financial resources,” “being too busy with housework, childcare, caregiving, etc. to find the time,” and “not knowing what to learn,” while men are more likely than women to cite “being too busy with work to find the time.”

Figure SF-26 Barriers to Relearning Related to Work and Career Development  
(By Sex; Employed Persons and Unemployed Persons Intending to Work)



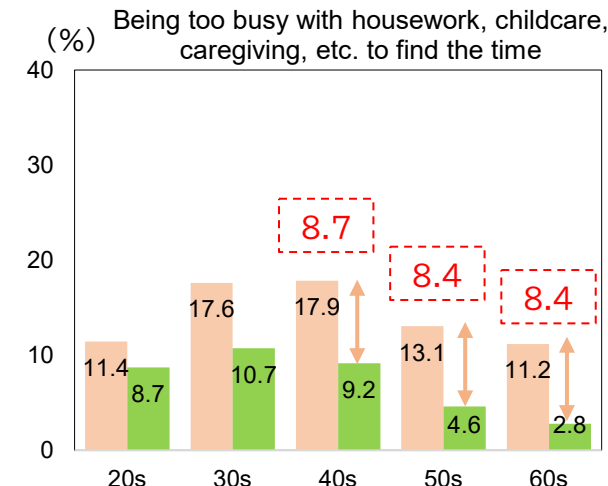
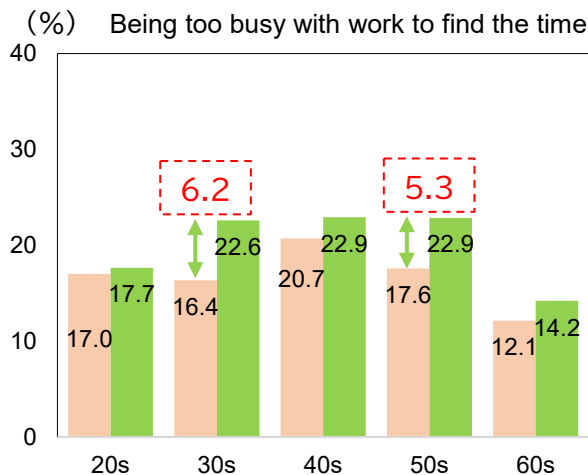
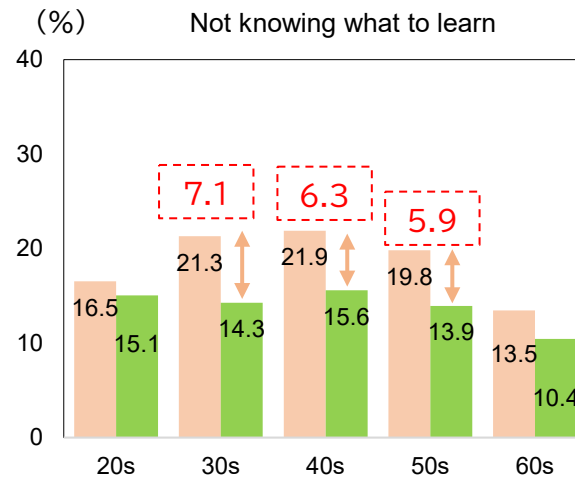
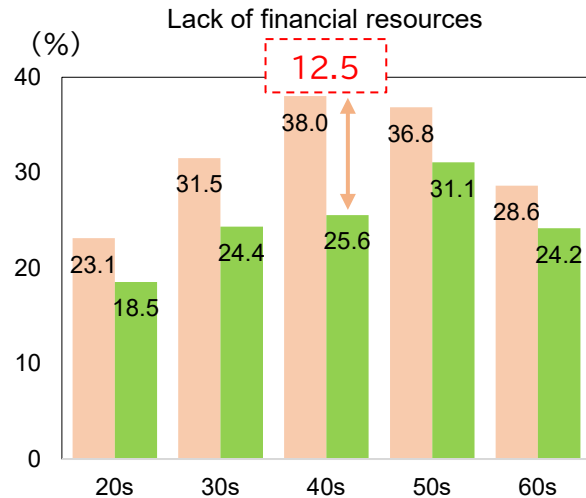
(Notes)

1. Prepared from the “2025 Survey on Learning for Enriching Life,” Cabinet Office.
2. Respondents were asked: “What challenges or difficulties do you face when trying to learn about work or career-related matters?” (Multiple responses allowed.)
3. The figures shown within the dotted boxes in the graph indicate the gender differences for items with relatively large gaps between men and women.

## Section 2 Enriching Life Through Relearning: Motivation and Barriers (5)

- For the barriers to relearning related to work and career development that show large gender gaps, the gaps by age group are as follows:
- For “lack of financial resources,” the gender gap widens up to the 40s, where it reaches its largest, and then narrows thereafter.
  - For “not knowing what to learn,” the gender gap is large among those in their 30s, 40s, and 50s.
  - For “being too busy with work to find the time,” the gender gap is largest among those in their 30s, narrows in their 40s, and then widens again in their 50s.
  - For “being too busy with housework, childcare, caregiving, etc. to find the time,” the gender gap is largest among those in their 40s, and a similarly large gap continues among those in their 50s and 60s.

Figure SF-26 Barriers to Relearning Related to Work and Career Development  
(By Sex and Age Group; Employed Persons and Unemployed Persons Intending to Work)



(Notes)

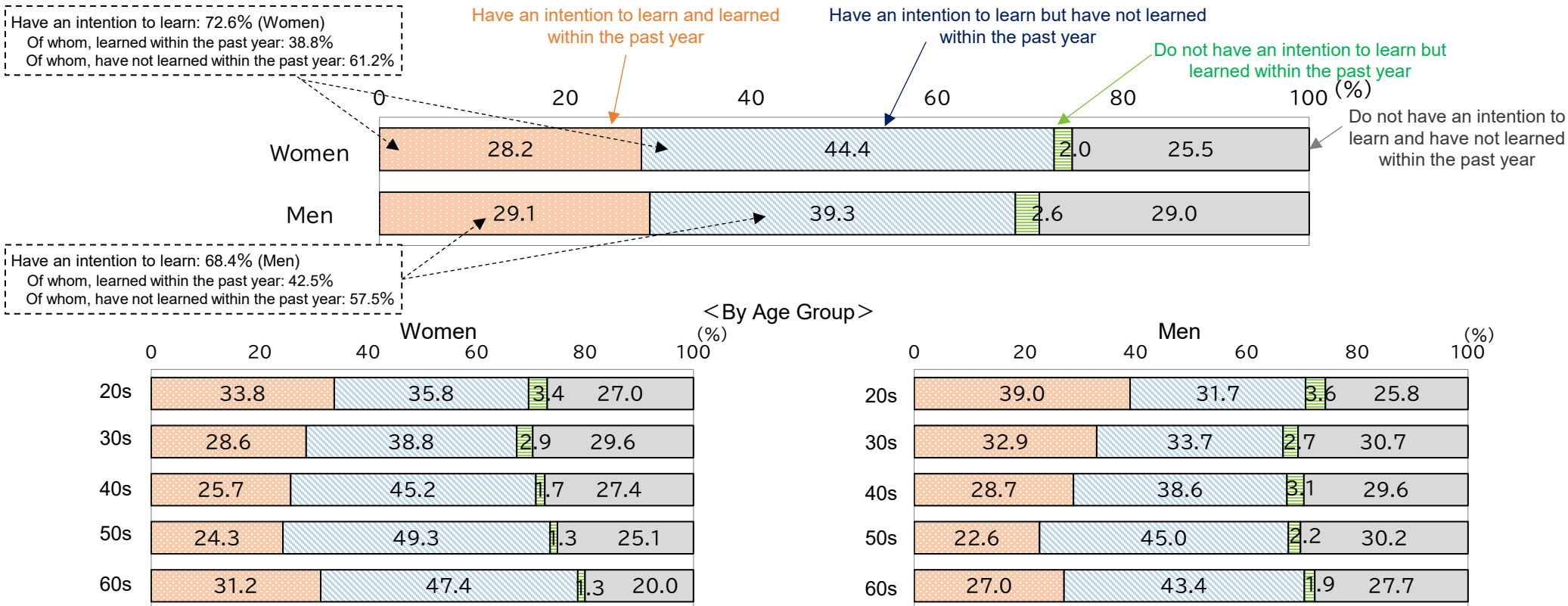
1. Prepared from the “2025 Survey on Learning for Enriching Life,” Cabinet Office.
2. Respondents were asked: “What challenges or difficulties do you face when trying to learn about work- or career-related matters?” (Multiple responses allowed.)
3. The figures shown within the dotted boxes in the graph indicate the gender differences for age groups in which the gap exceeds the average gender difference across all age groups.

## Section 2 Enriching Life Through Relearning: Motivation and Barriers (6)

○ Regarding relearning to enrich one's life, around 70% of both women and men reported that they “have an intention to learn.” However, more than half of these individuals “have an intention to learn but have not learned within the past year.”

“Relearning to enrich one's life” refers to learning in a wide range of fields other than learning related to work and career development, including family and daily life, culture and general knowledge, community activities and social contribution activities, and health-related matters.

Figure SF-27 Gap Between Motivation and Experience in Relearning to Enrich One's Life (By Sex and Age Group)



(Notes)

1. Prepared from the “2025 Survey on Learning for Enriching Life,” Cabinet Office.

2. In this survey, “relearning to enrich one's life” is defined as learning in the following areas, excluding “work- or career-related matters (including changing jobs and second careers)” : “family and daily life (including housework, childcare, and caregiving),” “culture and general knowledge (including languages, arts, and history),” “community activities and social contribution activities (including community clean-up activities, neighborhood association activities, and volunteer work),” “health-related matters,” and “other.”

3. Motivation was assessed by asking respondents: “Would you like to learn about the following topics? The method of learning does not matter, whether it be reading books, studying on your own, searching the Internet, talking to knowledgeable people, or taking courses.”

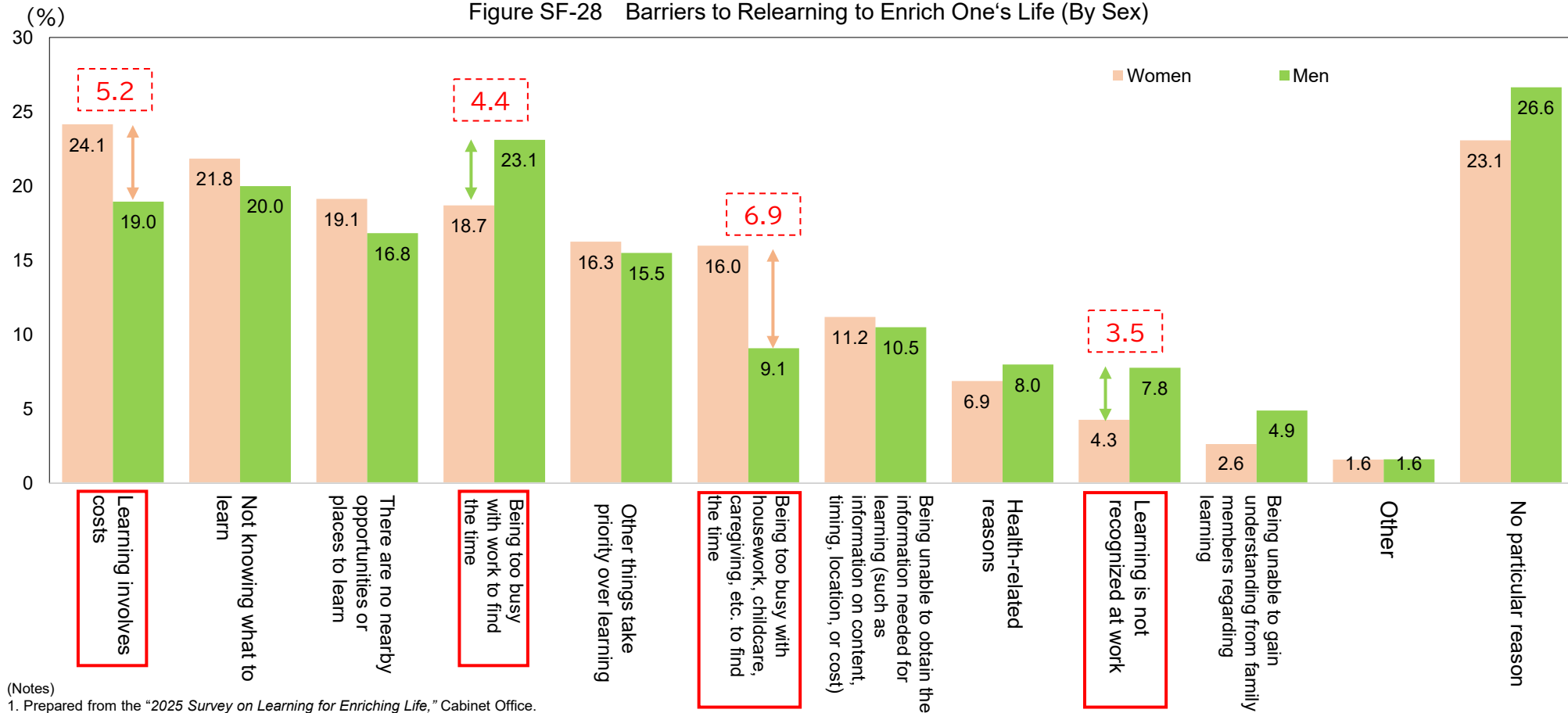
Respondents who answered “Agree” or “Somewhat agree” for any of the five categories listed in item 2 were classified as “Have an intention to learn.” Among all other respondents, those who answered “Disagree” or “Somewhat disagree” for any of the five categories were classified as “Do not have an intention to learn.” Respondents who answered “Don't know” for all categories were excluded.

Learning experience was assessed by asking respondents: “Have you learned about any of the following topics during the past five years? If you learned on one or more days (or occasions) during that period, please answer that you have learned. The method of learning does not matter, whether it be reading books, studying on your own, searching the Internet, talking to knowledgeable people, or taking courses.” Respondents who answered “Learned within the past year” for any of the five categories listed in item 2 were classified as “Learned within the past year.” Among all other respondents, those who answered either “Did not learn within the past year but learned within the past five years” or “Did not learn during the past five years” for any of the five categories were classified as “Have not learned within the past year.”

## Section 2 Enriching Life Through Relearning: Motivation and Barriers (7)

- Regarding barriers to relearning to enrich one's life, the most commonly cited barriers among women are "learning involves costs," "no particular reason," and "not knowing what to learn," in that order. Among men, the most commonly cited barriers are "no particular reason," "being too busy with work to find the time," and "not knowing what to learn," in that order.
- Examining gender differences, women are more likely than men to cite "learning involves costs" and "being too busy with housework, childcare, caregiving, and other responsibilities to find the time," while men are more likely than women to cite "being too busy with work to find the time" and "learning is not recognized by the workplace, etc."

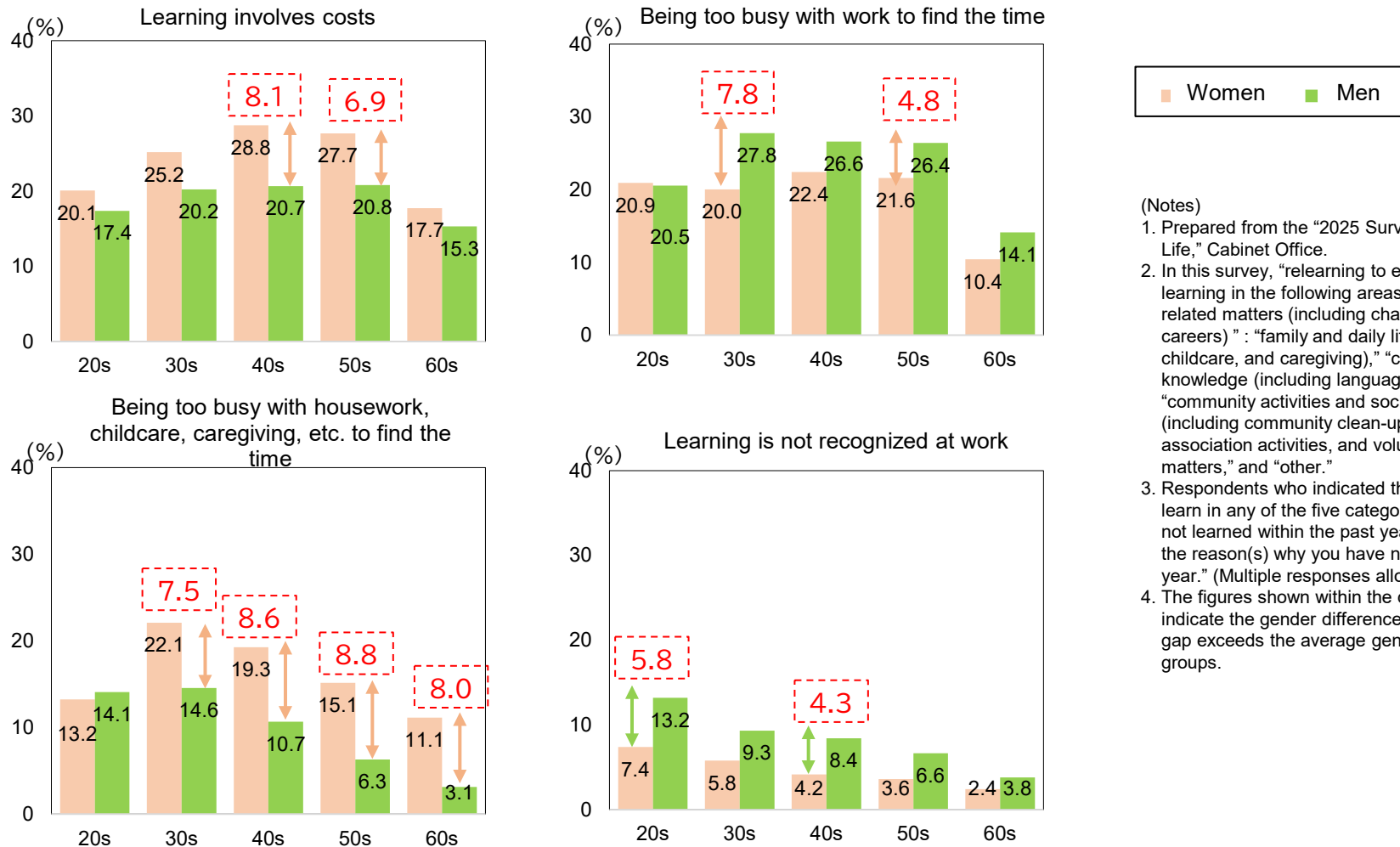
Figure SF-28 Barriers to Relearning to Enrich One's Life (By Sex)



## Section 2 Enriching Life Through Relearning: Motivation and Barriers (8)

- For the barriers to relearning to enrich one's life that show large gender differences, the differences by age group are as follows:
- For “learning involves costs,” the gender gap widens up to the 40s, where it reaches its largest level, and then narrows thereafter.
  - For “being too busy with work to find the time,” the gender gap is largest among those in their 30s, narrows in their 40s, and then widens again in their 50s.
  - For “being too busy with housework, childcare, caregiving, etc. to find the time,” the gender gap widens up to the 50s, where it reaches its largest level, and a similarly large gap continues among those in their 60s.
  - For “learning is not recognized at work,” the gender gap is large among those in their 20s and 40s.

Figure SF-28 Barriers to Relearning to Enrich One's Life (By Sex and Age Group)



(Notes)

1. Prepared from the “2025 Survey on Learning for Enriching Life,” Cabinet Office.
2. In this survey, “relearning to enrich one's life” is defined as learning in the following areas, excluding “work- or career-related matters (including changing jobs and second careers)” : “family and daily life (including housework, childcare, and caregiving),” “culture and general knowledge (including languages, arts, and history),” “community activities and social contribution activities (including community clean-up activities, neighborhood association activities, and volunteer work),” “health-related matters,” and “other.”
3. Respondents who indicated that they had an intention to learn in any of the five categories listed in item 2 but had not learned within the past year were asked: “Please tell us the reason(s) why you have not learned within the past year.” (Multiple responses allowed.)
4. The figures shown within the dotted boxes in the graph indicate the gender differences for age groups in which the gap exceeds the average gender difference across all age groups.

## Section 3 Promoting Relearning to Build a Society in Which Diverse Forms of Well-being Can Be Realized

### Changes in Social Conditions

■ **Changes in Industrial Structure**

- Improved productivity through the use of generative AI and other technologies
- Increased demand in growth sectors for professionals and individuals with STEM backgrounds

■ **Advances in Digitalization in Daily Life**

■ **Changes in Working Styles**

- Rising employment rates among older adults
- Women's economic empowerment, etc.

■ **Changes in Lifestyles in the Era of 100-Year Life**

- Longer lifespans and increasingly diverse life choices
- Issues of loneliness and social isolation among men, etc.

### The Significance and Benefits of Relearning for Enriching Life

■ **Relearning Related to Work and Career Development**

- Economic prosperity, including women's economic empowerment
- Providing talent to growth sectors that support economic growth and to key regional industries
- Reducing gender disparities and Promoting women's active engagement in professional life

■ **Relearning to Enrich One's Life**

- Building social connections, roles, and a sense of belonging for men in regions
- A fulfilling life and emotional well-being
- Developing human resources who can contribute to solving regional challenges

### Developing an Environment Conducive to Removing Barriers to Relearning

#### Relearning Related to Work and Career Development

■ Support that goes beyond simply offering courses, including ongoing, hands-on assistance (such as consultation services in entrepreneur development programs and matching support for network building and networking opportunities)

■ Provision of programs that can be balanced with work, childcare, and other responsibilities (such as online and on-demand options and childcare services)

■ Promotion of work style reform and the realization of diverse and flexible working arrangements

■ Provision of learning programs that take financial circumstances into consideration

■ Bridging introductory courses for acquiring foundational knowledge and more specialized learning

■ Support for learning opportunities (e.g., Manapass, Manabi DX, Educational Training Benefits, and Hello Training)

■ Raise awareness and facilitate understanding of both men and women

#### Relearning to Enrich One's Life

■ Proactive presentation of concrete relearning themes and learning opportunities tailored to regional challenges

■ Promotion of collaboration and cooperation among diverse initiatives within regions

○ The formation of a society in which everyone, regardless of gender, can realize diverse forms of well-being through the promotion of relearning