

The coronavirus pandemic and its challenges to women's work in Latin America

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COVID-19, WORK, WOMEN, WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT, PERU

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MAIN ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19	Coronavirus disease-19
EAP	Economically active population
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LGTBI	Lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual and intersex people
TBI	Temporary basic income
UN Women	United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment.
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ABSTRACT

The coronavirus pandemic has spread throughout the world and Latin America has not been exempt from its health, economic and social impacts. The economic shutdown, as a result of a combination of stringent measures (self-quarantines, mandatory lockdowns, limited capacity in shops, factories and offices, border closures, etc.), is having a profound economic and social impact. In the labor market it has shocked both supply and demand. Within households, it has resulted in an increase in the unpaid workload, burdening women disproportionately, further reducing the time they can allocate to productive activities. The crisis' impacts and depth are felt differently by women and men. Therefore, generalized formulas must be avoided, since they can widen existing gender gaps. In this paper we explore the impacts of the crisis on employment in sixteen countries in the region. In addition, we analyze gender impacts through four lenses: young people, people living in poverty, people living in rural areas and heads of the family. We present a set of policy options aimed at integrating the gender approach into the entire cycle of the socio-economic response to the pandemic and the post-pandemic world. Emphasizing the need for cross-sectional solutions, we propose policies in three main areas: the home, work and the spaces between work and home. This will enable socio-economic recovery policies to not only soften short-term impacts, but also further equal opportunities for women and men in the medium and long terms.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has already affected people's lives in multiple levels, ranging from their incomes to the accumulation of human capital, consumption patterns, lifestyle, mental health and emotional well-being. Without a doubt, labor is among the most important aspects; it generates three-quarters of the income in Latin American households (the remainder comes from property rent and money transfers) (ILO, 2019). In this document we will focus precisely on the pandemic's impacts on labor, emphasizing how these impacts are linked to household dynamics.

Current home confinement conditions and the closure of multiple services, among them schools, place a huge limitation on work possibilities. Compounding this are the structural barriers women constantly face, both at home and in the labor market, which deepen the challenges brought by this crisis. Meanwhile, home confinement imposes an extra burden associated with unpaid care and domestic work, which is unevenly distributed, and overloads women and girls especially. There is the additional threat of an increase in domestic violence. Never before has the relationship between life at work and life at home been so evident.

The breakdown in global supply chains, border closures and operational closures of non-essential industries have had a cross-sectional impact on the productive fabric as a whole. It is estimated that due to this crisis, two thirds of the world's companies have already suffered

a moderate impact on labor productivity; a quarter of the companies have felt a negative impact. Figures follow the same trend in Latin America (Mercer, 2020). Once social distancing measures are lifted, a considerable number of work centers will have been forced to close and others to cut staff, with the consequent impact on household incomes.

We present here some estimates of the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment and salaries, based on household surveys for the 2018-2019 period in 16 countries in the region.¹ We have found that as a result of voluntary and mandatory confinements, 33% of women and 30% of men who were employed before the pandemic found themselves unable to go to work. Some of these people lost their jobs, while others left the economically active population. In the aggregate, this translated to a 22% loss of job income for women and 26% for men. We also find that intersectionality is very important if we are to understand the differentiated impacts of the crisis. Women in poverty, youths, heads of the family with dependent minors and people living in rural areas face stronger impacts than their male peers, in both employment and labor income.

Everything indicates that by the time these mobility restrictions are lifted, economies will have entered such a recession that there will be a significant reduction in job availability. Estimates from various multilateral organizations and international agencies reveal impacts that will be felt for several years, generating profound changes in the productive structure.

Female employment indicators from before the pandemic show a greater vulnerability than male employment, due to more informality, a higher incidence of part-time work, lower salaries, lower social protection

1 Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Paraguay, Dominican Republic and Uruguay.

and greater volatility in the face of fluctuations in the economy. Several of these factors, in turn, are linked to women's reduced time availability, due to their being burdened with unpaid care work. This situation could increase gender gaps in employment and salaries if the measures necessary to protect employment and income among more vulnerable women are not taken. In this document we explore to what extent this could be the case, proposing a set of policies that could contribute to women's economic recovery in Latin America and the Caribbean, and create conditions to further their resilience in this regard, in the context of the pandemic and for the post-pandemic world.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, care work in the home has become a significant burden, reducing the possibilities of having a job and looking for work. As is well known, care work falls disproportionately on women. Hence, paying attention to care work and its distribution is a key factor in the design and implementation of relief policies for households. This is why we propose a set of policies to further equality, both in the work sphere and outside of it.

In this document, we first present a brief overview of the conditions of female employment in the region prior to the pandemic. These are followed by estimates of short-term impacts, both on jobs and on people's salaries. We then explore some intersectionalities, presenting the differentiated impacts for women and men under four lenses (low-income, youths, people living in rural areas and heads of the family with minors). The document closes with a set of recommendations and suggestions for the path ahead regarding public policy, the business sector and households. The estimates in this document's initial sections are based on household or employment surveys of 16 Latin American countries with the most recent information available, gathered between 2018 and 2019. See Appendix 1 for details of the corresponding year and period in each country.

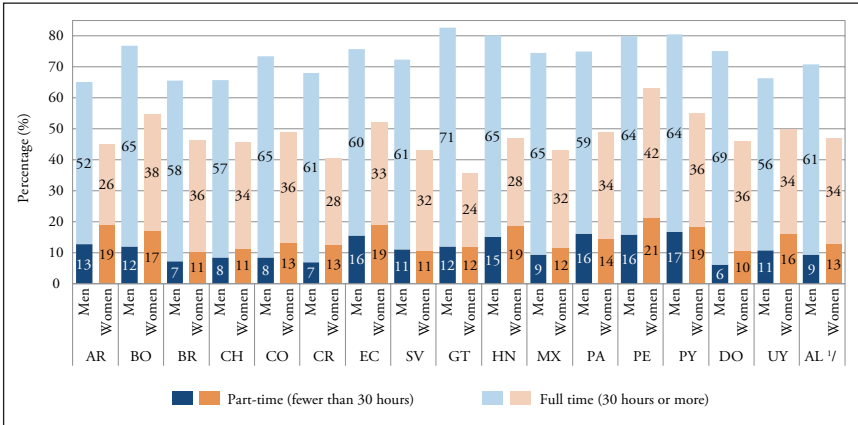
1. CONDITIONS PRIOR TO THE PANDEMIC

Although female labor insertion in Latin America and the Caribbean has increased over several decades – although with some heterogeneities –, it remains lower than men's (ILO, 2019b). About half of women are employed, compared with three out of four men. Compounding this employment gender gap is a significant gap in time allocation, and consequently on time availability for paid work. In this regard, part-time work (30 working hours a week or less) is higher in women than in men. In the region, one in four working women have part-time jobs, while this is the case for only one in eight men (Figure 1).

In the region, while men allocate most of their time to paid work, women spend most of their time doing unpaid work (ILO, 2019a). Thus, there is a correlation between gender gaps in employment rates, the fact that there are more women in part-time jobs and decisions that take place within households. Although these decisions are made outside the labor markets, they have consequences in it. They are associated with unpaid domestic and care work (particularly of minors, the elderly and people with special needs, among others), which largely takes place in the home.

For this reason, in order to reach a better understanding of the possibilities of women's labor insertion it is essential to pay attention to household composition. In Latin America and the Caribbean, women are heads of the family in 39% of households, while 26% are single-parent households in which women is head of the family. In

Figure 1
Latin America (16 countries): Employment rate by weekly working hours, by country - in percentage (circa 2019)



Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1).
 Notes: An Economically Active Population (EAP) aged 15 or older is considered.

AR: Argentina, BO: Bolivia, BR: Brazil, CH: Chile, CO: Colombia, CR: Costa Rica, EC: Ecuador, SV: El Salvador, GT: Guatemala, HN: Honduras, MX: Mexico, PA: Panama, PE: Peru, PY: Paraguay, DO: Dominican Republic and UY: Uruguay.

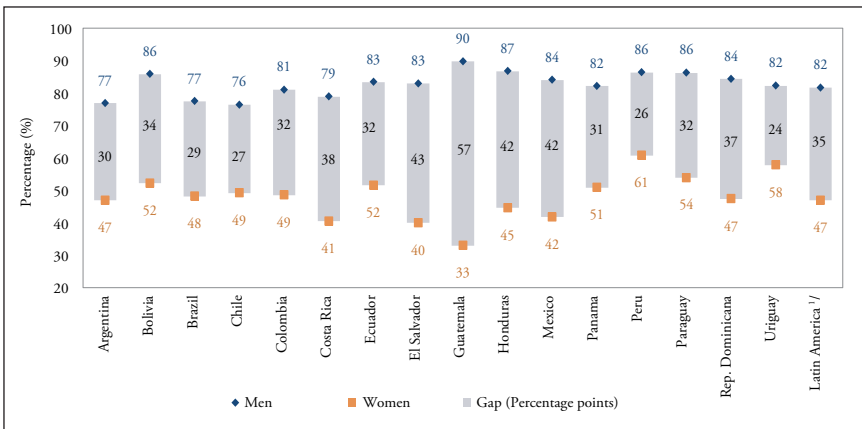
¹ / LA: Latin America. Weighted average. Weighting in household surveys corresponds to each country's local expansion factor.

contrast, 12% of single-parent households have a man as head of the family. Therefore, women's condition in the home and, especially, the presence of minors requiring care are key factors in women's active insertion and permanence in the workforce.

In Figure 1 we saw that the difference between female and male employment rates is 24 percentage points. This gap in all households in the region begins to widen with the addition of other variables related to the life cycle, such as the presence of minors (aged 6 or younger) in the household. In households with at least one child under 6, the gap reaches 35 percentage points. This can be explained by several

factors, but mainly by an increase in the proportion of men in the employed workforce (Figure 2). In households with no children there is a narrower gender gap in employment rates, which goes down to 20 percentage points (Appendix 2). Such an increase in employment rate gaps associated with the presence of children under 6 is greater in Central American countries, especially in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico.

Figure 2
Latin America (16 countries): Employment rate with children under 6 in the home, by sex, by country - in percentage (circa 2019)



Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1).

Notes: An EAP aged 15 or older is considered, and children aged 6 years or younger.

^{1/} / Weighted average. Weighting in household surveys corresponds to each country’s local expansion factor. In countries with quarterly surveys, the simple average is considered to obtain annual data.

Faced with this rift in employment gaps, affecting women to a greater extent, it is worth pondering the reason behind it, and exploring women’s situation in the labor market.

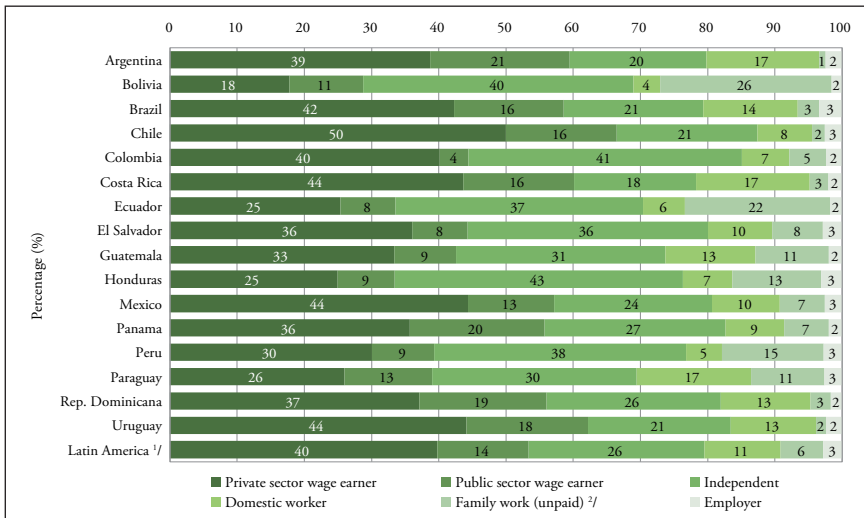
Women in the employed workforce are mostly salaried in the private sector (40%), followed by self-employed women (26%), public sector workers (14%), domestic workers (11%), unpaid family workers (6%) and employers (3%) (Figure 3). Men, by contrast, are mainly employed in the private sector (53%) and have a higher employer proportion (5%), while they are less employed in the public sector (8%) and even less so as domestic workers (1%). This already provides initial structural barriers for women's access to health insurance or social protection benefits, which are a characteristic of formal employment in the private sector.

Salaried employment is prevalent in half of the region's countries (Chile, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Panama and Dominican Republic). Independent work provides a livelihood for 4 out of 10 women in Honduras, Colombia, Peru and El Salvador. Meanwhile, women doing unpaid family work are a quarter of the employed female population in Bolivia and a fifth in Ecuador (Figure 3).

An important aspect of employment quality is access to social protection through retirement pensions. This provides autonomy and economic security; a decent income reduces women's risk of falling into poverty (ILO, 2019a). Our estimates find that only half of women contribute to pension insurance plans. They do not have access to other rights, such as maternity leave, unemployment insurance or, in some countries, health services, since they do not have formal employment contracts. We estimate that only half of salaried women in the private sector have written contracts. Even when they do, there are significant differences between fixed-term and indefinite term contracts. In the context of this crisis, short, fixed-term contracts will probably not be renewed. Therefore, the depth of the impacts of labor informality on the quality of employment – particularly women's employment – are multiple, and are closely linked to a greater exposure

to risk or a greater vulnerability in a crisis such as the one we are experiencing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 3
Latin America (16 countries): Female employed population by occupational category, by country - in percentage (circa 2019)



Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1).
 Notes: A 15 years or older EAP is considered.

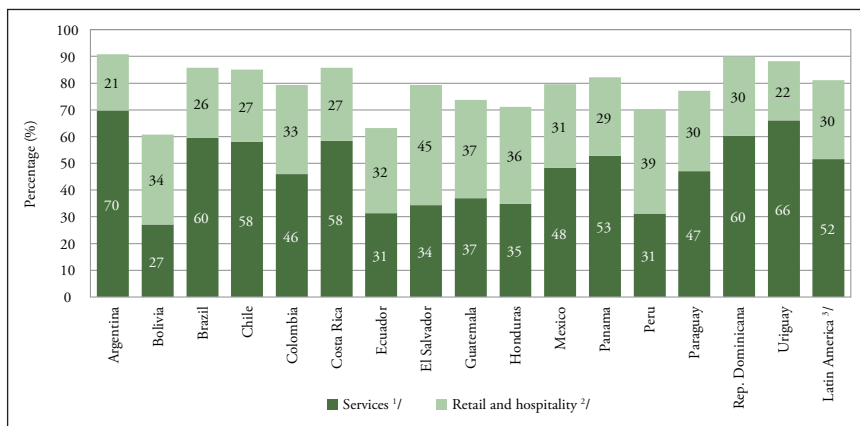
¹ / Weighted average. Weighting in household surveys corresponds to each country’s local expansion factor. In countries with quarterly surveys, the simple average is considered to obtain annual data.

² / Includes other categories not defined for Bolivia, Colombia, Honduras, Panama and Uruguay.

The degree of vulnerability increases when we take into account other variables, such as the industry with a concentration of female employment. The health and economic crisis associated with the stringent measures taken to control the spread of the outbreak have profoundly affected the retail and services sectors, where a very high

proportion of women is concentrated, resulting in a high risk of losing their presence in the workforce (ILO, 2020a; ILO, 2020b). This particularly affects women in Latin America, where eight out of ten work in the service industry, retail and hospitality (Figure 4). In Argentina, Dominican Republic and Uruguay nine out of ten women work in these sectors, mainly in the service industry.

Figure 4
Latin America (16 countries): Female employed population in the service and trade sectors by country - in percentage (circa 2019)



Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1).
 Notes: A 15 years or older EAP is considered.

1 / Activities included: electricity, gas and water; transportation, storage and communications; financial services for companies; community, social and personal services and unspecified service activities.

2 / Includes restaurants.

3 / Weighted average. Weighting in household surveys corresponds to each country's local expansion factor. In countries with quarterly surveys, the simple average is considered to obtain annual data.

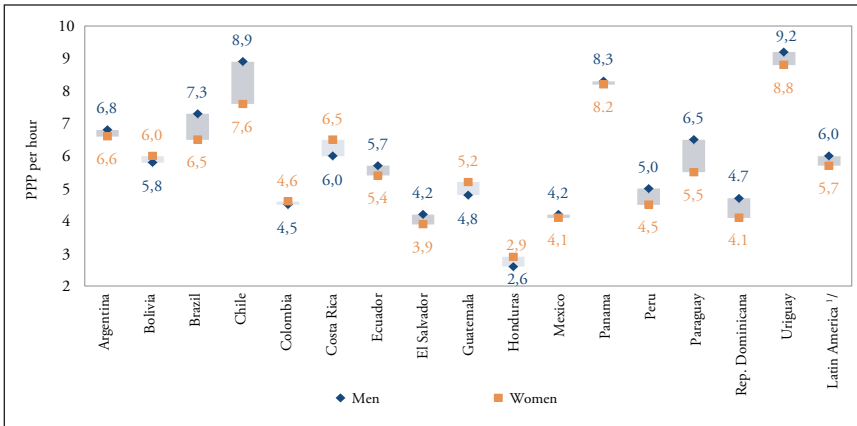
During this pandemic, occupational segregation is also taking its toll. Two segments of the labor market showing a remarkable increase

in the demand for labor are health and paid domestic and care work. Both are considered predominantly female fields; according to our estimates, seven out of ten workers in health and social care are women. They are in the front line of pandemic care, mainly as nurses, nursing assistants and reception staff, as well as carrying out other activities that entail a greater risk of contagion from exposure to fluids. However, this segment represents only 4% of the employed Economically Active Population (EAP). The situation is similar regarding domestic work, where nine out of ten employees are women. However, this segment represents only 5% of the employed EAP in the region's countries.

In addition to the marked gaps in full-time and part-time labor participation, as well as occupational segregation, there is also a persistent wage disparity. Since women spend fewer hours per week doing paid work, the gap in hourly earnings is narrower than the gap in monthly earnings. While the first is around 5%, the second reaches 19% (Figure 5). It is important to note that these gaps do not take into account the job characteristics that make people productive. When this is taken into consideration, gaps become much wider. For a more detailed analysis see ILO (2019a), which concludes that much of the work that needs to be done in order to address gender inequality must take place in the home, and that this applies throughout the entire income distribution.

The widest gaps are experienced by women in Chile, Paraguay and Brazil. In contrast, the narrowest gender disparities in hourly salaries are in Colombia, Mexico and Panama. However, as explained above, gender pay gaps are largely explained by women's lower time allocation to paid work. This opens the discussion regarding the importance of quantifying, acknowledging and reappraising the unpaid care work taking place in the home, since it allows both men and women to participate in the sphere of paid work. In any case, if this

Figure 5
Latin America (16 countries): Hourly labor income of the employed population by sex, by country - constant international dollars - PPP 2011 (circa 2019)



Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1); IMF (2020a).

Notes: A 15 years or older EAP is considered. Monthly labor income for the employed EAP's main activity is considered, excluding unpaid family workers and employed EAP without income. The PPP conversion factor and average inflation per country are considered.

^{1/} / Weighted average. Weighting in household surveys corresponds to each country's local expansion factor. In countries with quarterly surveys, the simple average is considered to obtain annual data.

social organization of care work did not exist, someone would have to pay for it.

We cannot bring to a close this section on conditions previous to the pandemic without addressing a serious problem affecting the lives of Latin American women: domestic violence. Even in regular times, in Latin America and the Caribbean one in eight women who have ever had a partner claims to have experienced physical or sexual violence in the last 12 months. This amounts to 19.2 million women

ages 15 to 49. In 2019, more than 3,800 women were murdered simply because they were women (UN Women, 2020b). Furthermore, one in twenty claims to have been subjected to sexual violence by their current or former partner in the same period (UNDP, 2017). During lockdown, with people confined to their homes, there are already worrying signs of a surge in domestic violence. Some preliminary statistics account for this. For example, in Argentina the average number of inquiries to the gender violence helpline increased 39% in March 2020. In Brazil a 50% increase in complaints was reported in Rio de Janeiro. In Bolivia more than 1,200 cases of violence against women had been reported in April 2020. In Colombia 12 women were murdered in a period of only 16 days, between March 20 and April 4, 2020; complaints increased by 51% during the first days of lockdown. In the Mexican state of Nuevo León there was a 30% increase in reported cases of family violence (UN Women, 2020b). The magnitude of this problem can be analyzed once the emergency comes to an end; in the meantime, concrete and urgent action is required in order to preserve women's lives and welfare.

2. POSSIBLE IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC ON EMPLOYMENT AND SALARIES, FOR PEOPLE AND HOUSEHOLDS

In order to slow down the spread of COVID-19, the region's governments adopted different social distancing measures between mid-March and June 2020, with the consequent restrictions on people's mobility and social interaction. These measures, which have varied from country to country, and which have been applied in differentiated ways, combine voluntary confinement, curfews, mandatory lockdowns, operational closures for non-essential industries and the shutdown of public works, among others.

In circumstances such as these, temporary contracts are the first to disappear. The cost of dismissal is lower, and in some cases, non-existent (ILO, 2019b), especially in the context of economic emergency decreed by governments. In most countries, people have taken pay cuts to avoid their contracts being terminated. To compensate – at least partially – for the impact of salary losses, alternatives to labor income have been established, such as: i) access to unemployment insurance, in countries where such an instrument exists, ii) early paid leave, iii) an expansion of cash transfer programs, iv) fiscal and financial relief, such as deferred payments for social security contributions or staggered tax payments, v) government cash transfers for formal employees and SMEs and vi) payment relief for essential public services, such as freezing electricity bills or subsidizing drinking water bills (UNDP, 2020c).

Among the measures taken to contain the epidemic, governments urged citizens to stay at home and the business sector to join

in this effort, especially in the case of non-essential activities. Non-essential economic sectors have slowed down their operations, since many cannot operate with their employees working from home. This has had a profound impact on shaping these industries' labor structures. Consequently, companies have been forced to either furlough their employees, grant them paid or unpaid leave or, in the worst cases, lay them off.

The sectors most affected by the crisis in the region include i) wholesale and retail trade; ii) car and motorcycle repair; iii) manufacture; iv) hotels and restaurants; v) real estate; vi) arts, entertainment and recreation and vii) transportation and storage and communication (ILO, 2020a; ILO, 2020b). The details of the policies implemented up to May 2020 can be reviewed in ILO (2020c) and the Global Tracker of Responsive Gender Socioeconomic Policies, developed by UNDP with the support of UN Women.² In the regional aggregate, in these non-essential activities just over 4 of every 10 workers are women (Appendix 3).

Given these measures, the key question is how many jobs were lost and how much income from work was lost during the pandemic. Based on the data from 2018 to 2019 for Latin America, we estimate that across different job categories there have been job losses, and consequently income losses. This is the case both in dependent work (with or without a contract) and independent work.³

Thus, in the aggregate, among those who have lost the possibility of working during the pandemic there are people with a temporary

2 See <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/covid-19-gender-dashboard.html>

3 In Costa Rica and Honduras there is no information on contract type; therefore, it is considered that the entire non-essential activities workforce is unable to work. In Paraguay, in the absence of more detail on the sectors, the non-essential activities considered are: manufacture, retail, hospitality, transportation and storage and communications.

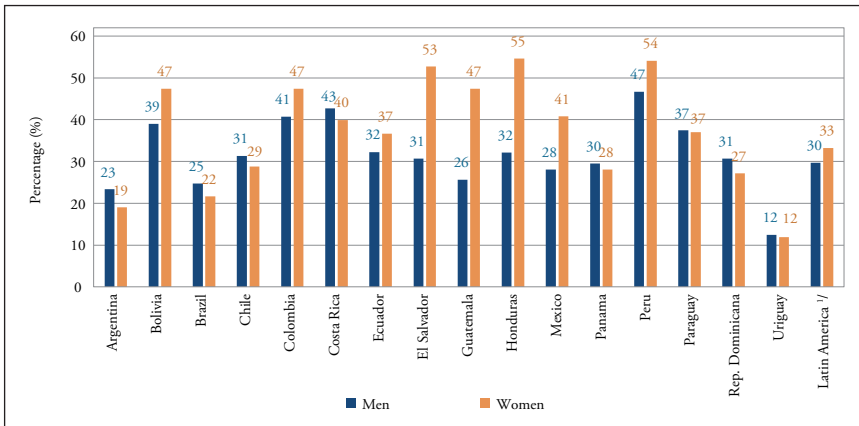
written contract, people working without a written contract in non-essential activities and people who work on their own and in unpaid, non-essential family activities.

Our estimate based on household surveys in the region's countries shows that 43 million men and 35 million women work in non-essential activities. This means that 33% of women and 30% of men in the EAP that was employed before the pandemic are either teleworking or unable to work during the pandemic. This increases the gender gap in the employment rate in the regional aggregate by 6 percentage points. In some countries, meanwhile, women bear the brunt of the crisis' impact, particularly in Peru, El Salvador, Guatemala, Bolivia and Colombia, where half of women are unable to work (Figure 6).

In total, 52 billion constant international dollars (PPP 2011) have been lost, 67% of which are generated by men (35 billion dollars) and 33% by women (17 billion dollars). This means that women have been unable to earn 22% of what they made before the pandemic, and men 26%. These differences, as noted above, are partly due to women's and men's time availability for paid work, which is lower for women. In some countries, women stopped generating income in a higher proportion than men; this was the case in Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru (Figure 7).

Once lockdowns lift, we will go back to work. However, we will find a completely changed labor market. The pandemic, due to its health impacts, as well as the months of confinement and restricted mobility it entailed, will have wreaked havoc on all aspects of social and economic life, with long-lasting effects that are shaking up the workplace. It is clear that as a consequence of a drop in economic activities, not all jobs will remain and the workplace will need to undergo changes in order to adapt to the crisis; these changes could be permanent. Among these changes is the widespread use of time and

Figure 6
Latin America (16 countries): Employed population unable to work due to the pandemic, by sex, by country - in percentage (circa 2019)



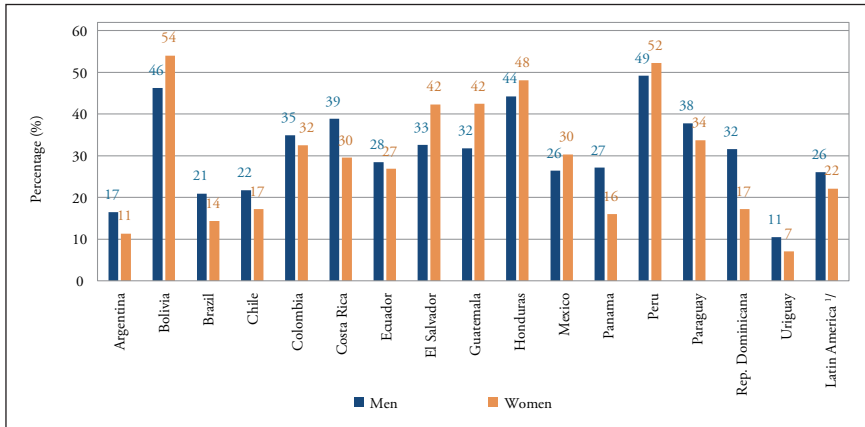
Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1).

Notes: An EAP aged 15 or older is considered.

¹ / Weighted average of the countries considered. Weighting in household surveys corresponds to each country's local expansion factor. In the quarterly surveys the simple average is considered for the annual data.

workspace flexibility measures, such as teleworking, the acceleration and transformation of the digital economy – and, in particular, platforms – and the use of new distributed manufacture methods, which could change the concept of large manufacturing factories forever. Therefore, a detailed analysis of the differentiated impacts between women and men is essential, since changes in the productive matrices of the region's economies could deepen gender inequalities already in place before the pandemic.

Figure 7
Latin America (16 countries): Wage bill loss among the employed EAP by sex, by country - in percentage (circa 2019)



Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1).

Notes: An EAP aged 15 or older is considered. The wage bill considers the monthly labor income by main activity of the employed EAP with income.

1 / Weighted average of the countries considered. Weighting in the household surveys corresponds to each country’s local expansion factor. In the quarterly surveys the simple average is considered for the annual data. Income is converted into constant international dollars (PPP 2011) of the year the information was gathered.

3. SOME INTERSECTIONALITIES: LOW INCOME, YOUTH, RURALITY AND HEADS OF THE FAMILY

Acknowledging labor market heterogeneity, we present below the differentiated effects according to four intersectional views: i) low-income women and men, ii) young women and men aged 15 to 24, iii) heads of the family (women and men) with young children (aged 6 or younger) and iv) women and men living in rural areas.

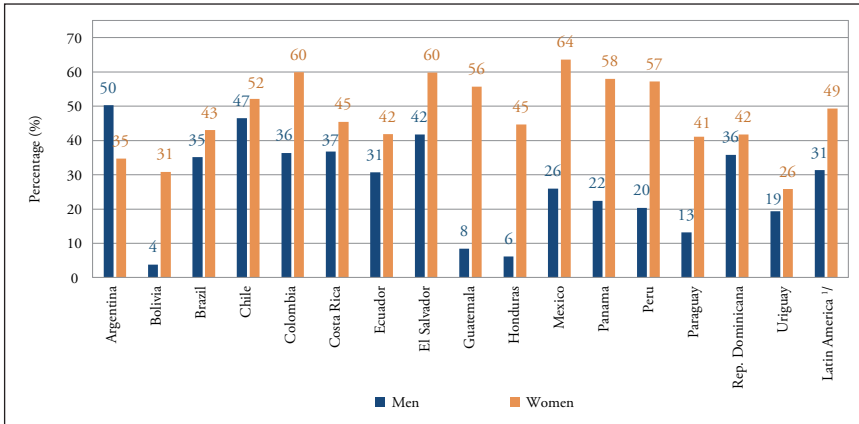
In each intersectional analysis we estimate the percentage of people who have lost their jobs – and consequently their income – during the pandemic, adding data at the regional level and observing the differences between countries. Then, we estimate post-pandemic job destruction in aggregate for Latin America.

COVID-19's economic impacts for low-income women

Before the pandemic, in Latin America and the Caribbean we estimated 10.7 million workers and 14 million women workers in the first decile of labor income in each country. During the pandemic, 49% of low-income women were unable to work compared to 31% of men, which translates to a gender gap of 18 percentage points between the sexes, or 3% if we take as a basis job loss in men. In Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia, Panama, Peru and Honduras, six out of ten women living in poverty have been left unable to work, with gaps between women and men fluctuating between 7 (Argentina) and 48

percentage points (Guatemala) (Figure 8). It is worth noting that this measurement does not refer to workers living in households below the poverty line (moderate or extreme). To facilitate comparison between countries, these are those that are in the lowest labor income decile in each country.

Figure 8
Latin America (16 countries): Employed population in income decile 1 unable to work due to the pandemic by sex, by country - in percentage (circa 2019)



Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1).

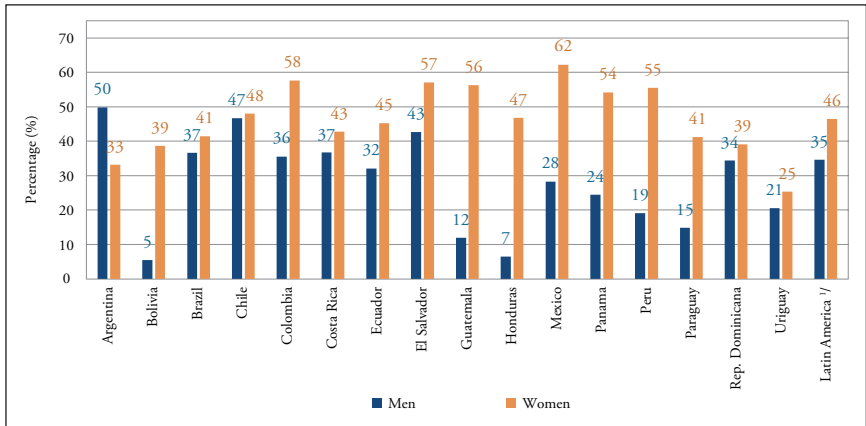
Notes: An EAP aged 15 or older is considered. For the deciles, labor income by main activity is considered, without taking into account workers without income.

^{1/} / Weighted average of the countries considered. Weighting in household surveys corresponds to each country's local expansion factor. In the quarterly surveys the simple average is considered for the annual data.

The same heterogeneous behavior can be seen on the impacts on income. 46% of low-income women stopped receiving a salary as a result of the crisis, compared to 35% of men. This is equivalent to a gap of 11

percentage points or 2.86% if we take as a reference men's lost income. In Mexico, Colombia, El Salvador, Peru and Guatemala the figures are higher to the detriment of women, with gaps fluctuating between 44 (Guatemala) and 4 (Uruguay) percentage points (Figure 9).

Figure 9
Latin America (16 countries): Loss in the wage bill of the employed low-income EAP by sex, by country - in percentage (circa 2019)



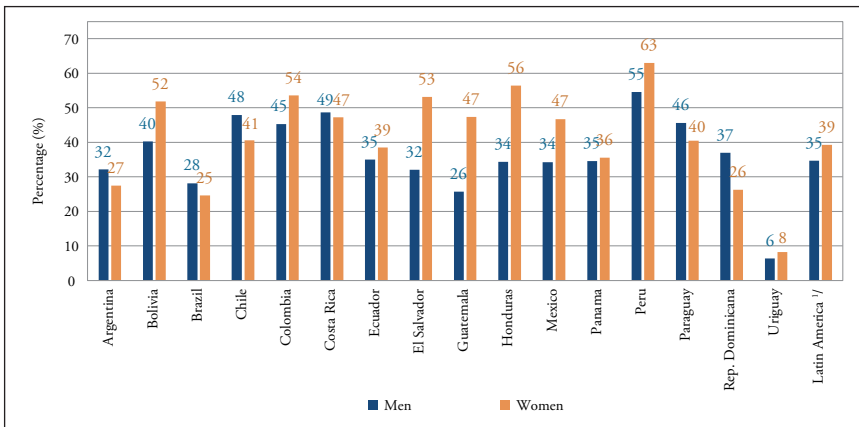
Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1).
 Notes: An EAP aged 15 or older is considered. The wage bill considers the monthly labor income by main activity of the employed EAP with income. For the deciles, labor income by main activity is considered, without taking into account workers without income.

^{1/} / Weighted average of the countries considered. Weighting in household surveys corresponds to each country's local expansion factor. In the quarterly surveys the simple average is considered for the annual data. Income is converted into constant international dollars (PPP 2011) of the year the information was gathered.

COVID-19's economic impacts on young women

It is estimated that in the region 37 million young people (aged 15 to 24) make up the Latin American labor force; that is, 23 million men and 14 million women. During the COVID-19 crisis 39% of young women lost their jobs, compared to 34% of men. When observing the differences between countries we can see that young women in Peru, Honduras, Colombia, El Salvador and Bolivia are the most affected in the region (Figure 10); the gender gaps related to job loss go from 65% (Honduras) to 20% (Colombia), based on young men's job loss

Figure 10
Latin America (16 countries): Young employed population
unable to work due to the pandemic, by sex,
by country - in percentage (circa 2019)



Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1).

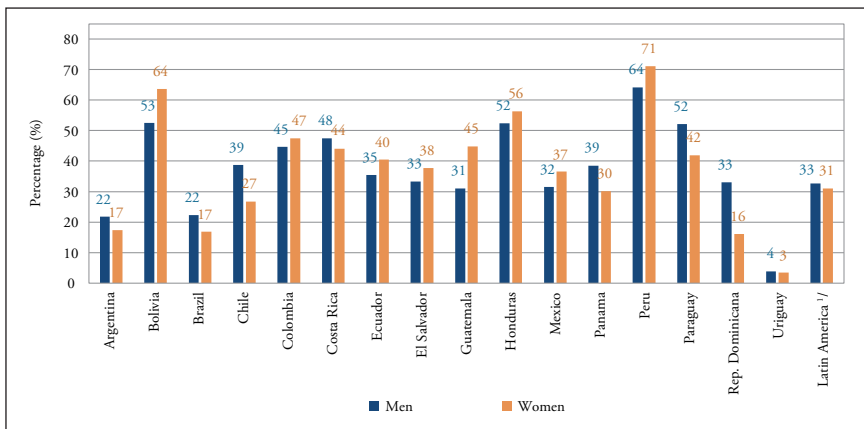
Notes: An EAP aged 15 or older is considered.

1 / Weighted average of the countries considered. Weighting in household surveys corresponds to each country's local expansion factor. In the quarterly surveys the simple average is considered for the annual data.

in those countries. This problem is particularly relevant for women of childbearing age, for whom insertion into the labor market becomes more difficult (Tribin et al., 2019), due to factors associated with the disruption of their career path, the burden of caring for minors and internal biases in their workplaces, among others.

On the other hand, impacts on income are less intense. During the pandemic, young women stopped generating 30% of the income they obtained before the crisis, and men 33%. Relevant differences

Figure 11
Latin America (16 countries): Loss in the wage bill
of the employed young EAP by sex,
by country - in percentage (circa 2019)



Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1).

Notes: An EAP aged 15 or older is considered. The wage bill considers the monthly labor income by main activity of the employed EAP with income.

¹ / Weighted average of the countries considered. Weighting in household surveys corresponds to each country's local expansion factor. In the quarterly surveys the simple average is considered for the annual data. Income is converted into constant international dollars (PPP 2011) of the year the information was gathered.

can be observed between countries, such as Guatemala and Bolivia, where the gender gaps in labor income widened, reaching a gender salary gap of 45% in Guatemala and 21% in Bolivia, based on the loss of salaries of young men (Figure 11).

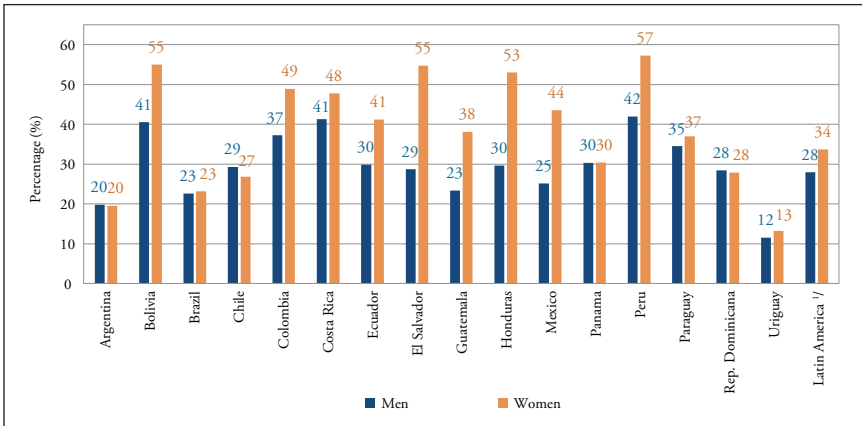
Economic impacts of COVID-19 for women heads of the family with minors

Being head of the family with minors under 6 years of age is an important factor; it reveals the structural barriers women experience as a result of their long working hours and the second shift awaiting them at home, in housework and care. These women are also likely to face greater difficulties regarding their insertion and permanence in the labor market (Alon and others, 2020), due to, among other factors, less time availability, information asymmetries and inefficient social support networks.

It is estimated that in the region we have 34.3 million heads of the family, of which 25.9 million are men and 8.4 million are women, with young children. Due to the pandemic's effects it is estimated that 34% of women heads of the family have lost their jobs, compared to 28% of men heads of the family. In Peru, El Salvador, Honduras and Bolivia this problem runs much deeper; more than half of women heads of the family with children under 6 years old have seen their ability to work limited (Figure 12).

We estimate that women stopped generating 24% of their labor income and men 27%; therefore, we can observe a gender pay gap in income loss of 3 percentage points or -11.11% to the detriment of men. The impacts on income are greater in women in Peru, Bolivia, El Salvador and Honduras, since gender gaps are between 34% and 36% (Figure 13).

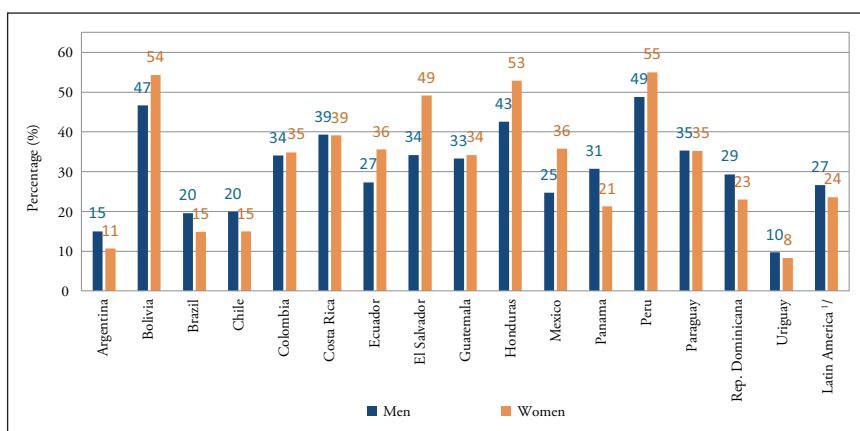
Figure 12
Latin America (16 countries): Head of the family employed population with young children unable to work due to the pandemic, by sex, by country - in percentage (circa 2019)



Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1).
 Notes: An EAP aged 15 or older is considered. Children aged 6 or younger at home are considered.

^{1/} / Weighted average of the countries considered. Weighting in household surveys corresponds to each country's local expansion factor. In the quarterly surveys the simple average is considered for the annual data.

Figure 13
Latin America (16 countries): Loss of the wage bill of the employed head of the family EAP with young children by sex, by country - in percentage (circa 2019)



Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1).
 Notes: An EAP aged 15 or older is considered. Children aged 6 or younger at home are considered. The wage bill considers the monthly labor income by main activity of the employed EAP with income.

¹ / Weighted average of the countries considered. Weighting in household surveys corresponds to each country's local expansion factor. In the quarterly surveys the simple average is considered for the annual data. Income is converted into constant international dollars (PPP 2011) of the year the information was gathered.

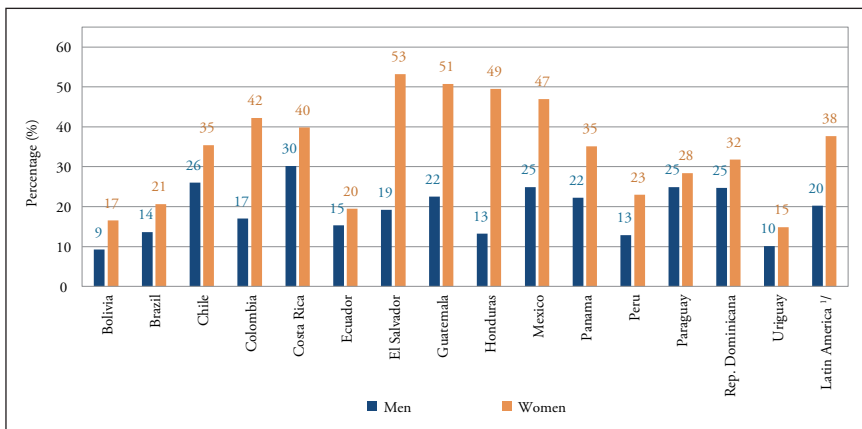
COVID-19's economic impacts for women in rural areas

In the region's rural areas, before the pandemic there were an estimated 40.9 million working men and 22.6 million working women. During lockdown 38% of women were left unable to go out to work, compared to 20% of men. In Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico) half of women in rural areas lost their source of

employment (Figure 14). This is equivalent to an employment gender gap of 90% to the detriment of women, based on men's job loss.

According to our estimates, women stopped generating 33% of the amount they earned before the pandemic, and men 23%. In Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, women stopped generating half of their labor income, which is why urgent policy responses are required to protect income in rural areas (Figure 15). Under this lens, the income gender gap stands at 43% to the detriment of women, based on the decrease in salaries for men.

Figure 14
Latin America (15 countries): Rural employed population unable to work due to the pandemic by sex, by country - in percentage (circa 2019)

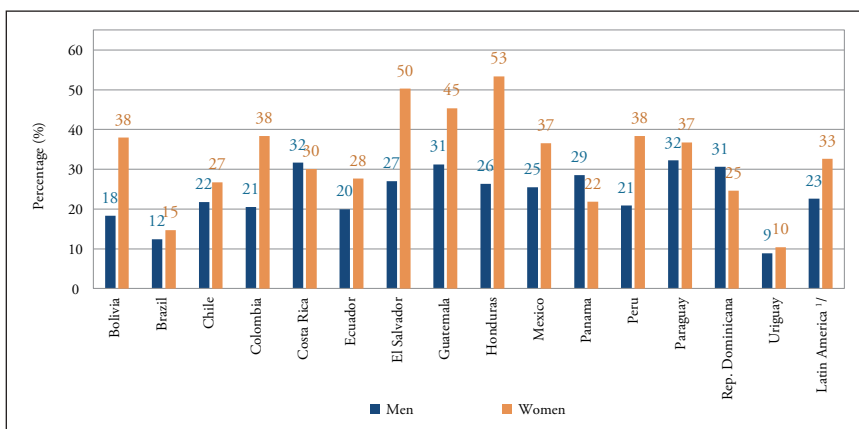


Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1).

Notes: An EAP aged 15 or older is considered. Children aged 6 or younger at home are considered.

¹ / Weighted average of the countries considered. Weighting in household surveys corresponds to each country's local expansion factor. In the quarterly surveys the simple average is considered for the annual data.

Figure 15
Latin America (15 countries): Loss of the wage bill among the rural employed population by sex, by country - in percentage (circa 2019)



Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1).

Notes: An EAP aged 15 or older is considered. Children aged 6 or younger at home are considered. The wage bill considers the monthly labor income by main activity of the employed EAP with income.

^{1/} / Weighted average of the countries considered. Weighting in household surveys corresponds to each country's local expansion factor. In the quarterly surveys the simple average is considered for the annual data. Income is converted into constant international dollars (PPP 2011) of the year the information was gathered.

4. PUBLIC POLICY CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We are only beginning to discern this pandemic's profound impact on employment, and consequently on household incomes; this is felt more intensely in poor, rural, single-parent and young households. Although there are not many noticeable short-term impacts regarding gender differences in employment and salaries, a future widening of these gaps, as a result of an unequal distribution of domestic responsibilities, is to be expected.

Governments already face various trade-offs in decision making. In order to make informed decisions, it is necessary to have the data and evidence necessary to carry them out, combining the crisis' variables: i) health, ii) economic and iii) social and care variables (UNDP, 2020c). In addition, efforts must be coordinated between government levels (national, provincial and local) in an articulated manner, and coalitions must be created among all actors (public, private, union and social) in order to leverage the experiences, resources and capacities to solve the crisis and build a sustainable, resilient and promising future.

According to the calculations, this crisis will have more acute impacts for some segments of women in situations of poverty and vulnerability. This is due, in the first place, to there being less jobs available to them and secondly, to their own lower availability of time to work. This second factor is linked to the disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic responsibilities, which has increased considerably during the pandemic. This increase mainly obeys two reasons: i) a

high proportion of people being forced to work from home, or furloughed, due to social distancing measures, and ii) the impossibility of accessing care services and paid domestic workers, since they are equally forced to stay at home. This results in new challenges superimposed onto existing ones; therefore, existing structural gender barriers put women at double or triple the risk.

Thus, we organize the challenges into three large groups, according to the area they affect: i) the home ii) the spaces between the home, study and work and iii) the workspace. In all of them governments have both a role and a responsibility, as is the case for the private sector and trade unions, as well as households and communities. This list of recommendations attempts to prioritize the challenges connected in any way to the pandemic, without neglecting others whose promotion is important in these circumstances, especially in the framework of a new economic reality. In the same way, we have tried to prioritize those for which we have quantitative evidence, while also adding others that, as experience has taught us, should not be neglected. In order to minimize the potential negative impacts we have been able to discern, we summarize below a series of key recommendations for the design and implementation of public policies for the pandemic and its aftermath.

i) In the home

We are already spending more time in our homes as a result of lockdowns and voluntary confinements, curfews and other measures of physical distancing with which we seek to contain COVID-19's expansion. This has already meant a significant increase in the burden of domestic and care work, as well as domestic and family violence.

Households now require more frequent cleaning and adapting spaces for new activities. Children need more support with school, while grocery purchases (which have increased in both volume and frequency) must now follow sanitary protocols. The elderly also require more care. A long list of additional factors increase the burden of unpaid care work.

Before the pandemic, according to ECLAC estimates (2020), women spent more than three times doing unpaid domestic and care work than men. In fact, unpaid work hours for women devoid of an income of their own exceed in 26% to 55% the amount of unpaid work hours of women who do have their own income. The former allocate an average of 46 hours per week to unpaid work, compared to the latter's 33 hours on average (UN Women, 2017). Although there is still no data allowing us to test the hypothesis of an increase in the burden of unpaid care during the pandemic, a significant increase is expected based on the starting point and the amount of time that people now spend teleworking. The possible gender-differentiated impacts could deepen the structural barriers associated with care affecting women.

In the absence of interventions aimed at promoting co-responsibility in care work and a better gender balance in the distribution of domestic chores, this is most likely to result in more hours of unpaid work for women. The absence of labor policies that enable a work-life balance not only reduces the number of hours that women have available for work, but also undermines their productivity for each working hour (ILO, 2019).

An increase of about 30% in domestic and partner violence cases is also estimated, as has been recorded in some countries, according to the cases reported to violence victim protection state helplines, compared to reporting statistics from before the pandemic (UN, 2020).

Lockdowns make it virtually impossible for women to break the cycles of violence, forcing them to live with their aggressors around the clock, without daily life allowing a temporary break in the dynamics. This is compounded by reduced access to public or private support networks, as an effect of social distancing measures. This has direct repercussions in many areas, ranging from physical and mental health to labor productivity, limiting the possibilities of preserving economic autonomy. Taking these considerations into account, we recommend a combination or package of policies, aimed at:

- **Promoting cash transfer programs (CTP) and social protection policies to ensure household income.** Cash transfer programs have been one of the main strategies to mitigate the impacts of the socio-economic crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic. It should be noted that almost all countries in the region have implemented this type of policy. From a gender perspective, it is recommended to: i) suspend all restrictions for cash transfer programs, ii) ensure the inclusion of women in situations of greater vulnerability as beneficiaries, iii) ensure alternative mechanisms that minimize mobility and avoid crowding, iv) promote complementary income generation programs for women and v) promote the participation of women's organizations in the design and implementation of CTPs and other measures (UN Women, 2020).⁴

4 As the rate of new COVID-19 cases accelerates, it exposes potentially devastating costs in job and income losses. Unconditional emergency cash transfers can mitigate the immediate worst effects of the COVID-19 crisis for poor or vulnerable households with no access to social protection. UNDP produced the following document, providing estimates for a Temporary Basic Income (TBI), a guaranteed minimum income above the poverty line for vulnerable people in 132 developing countries. UNDP: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/transitions-series/temporary-basic-income--tbi--for-developing-countries.html>

- **Promoting shared responsibility for caregiving and the redistribution of roles at home, aimed at achieving a more equal balance in housework.** This recommendation is only apparently simple. The unequal distribution of domestic and care work has a very long history. To a large extent, it is entrenched in Latin American mores, in the societal norms and patriarchal patterns prevailing in the region, and therefore it will not be eradicated overnight. In addition to the tasks assigned almost automatically to women before the pandemic are those pertaining to the new normal in the home (such as caring for babies and toddlers, tutoring girls and boys studying from home, the need for more frequent cleaning and so forth). However, this situation, with people confined to their homes, would be a good opportunity to make visible, quantify and acknowledge the importance of domestic and care work, which is usually invisible. An essential first step is raising awareness of current inequalities in the distribution of the burden of care work. A massive public outreach and educational campaign addressing this situation and encouraging changes in household management could prove to be very beneficial. Regarding domestic and care work, it is also important not to ignore the role played by paid domestic workers. In many countries the majority are migrants, many of them in an irregular situation, resulting in especially precarious employment conditions. It is essential to make progress on the regulation and protection of paid domestic work and care.
- **Providing households with the necessary sanitary equipment for safer work.** Health care equipment and medicines have become scarce and more expensive in some countries. Therefore, it makes sense to propose a policy to supply basic health and cleaning equipment to treat people at home, especially the sick,

thus preventing contagion among women, who are more active in care work during the crisis. A longer-term task is improving household infrastructure, since it is virtually impossible for overcrowded households, especially for those living in poverty and in peri-urban and rural areas, to meet the fundamentals of prevention, social distancing and regular handwashing.

- **Ensuring access to essential basic services, especially for women, particularly those in situations of greater vulnerability.** This includes several types of services. First of all, ensuring the supply of basic services such as drinking water, energy and gas, which are essential for subsistence and compliance with sanitary measures. Secondly, delivering groceries to households, following sanitary protocols. In the third place, providing reliable access to the Internet, which is progressively becoming an essential service for work, as well as allowing people to find relevant information to face the pandemic. Last but not least, within the basic services the products allowing the full exercise of sexual and reproductive rights must also be considered, such as antenatal and postnatal care, as well as the supply of menstrual products and contraceptives. For this, it is necessary to strengthen public services and health insurance coverage aimed at women's specific needs. This is particularly urgent in the case of women and men with HIV; it is necessary to ensure they receive health services and prophylactic kits in a safe manner, thus guaranteeing their health is properly protected.
- **Protecting women, children and other high-risk groups from exposure to intimate partner violence and domestic violence.** As we have seen, violence can exacerbate during lockdown. This puts women and children, as well as lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual individuals (LGBTI), at high risk. It is therefore

necessary to double down on the efforts aimed at strengthening surveillance, prevention and protection mechanisms. It is recommended to i) keep telephone and online helplines active, ii) strengthen care and protection centers for victims of gender-based violence, iii) provide ongoing training to police and medical staff to ensure they deal appropriately with these situations, iv) communicate safe reporting mechanisms and build clear service routes for victims, including articulation with services provided by social organizations, and v) strengthen community surveillance mechanisms in neighborhoods and remote rural areas, especially in foster homes and hotels for migrant persons. Hence it is crucial to promote a community approach to violent prevention and detection. This may entail strengthening shelters, as well as reinforcing other care measures, such as prioritizing cash transfers and active employment policies promoting the insertion of victims of violence into the workforce, in addition to providing essential services, since women who are victims of violence need a safe space and financial support outside the home. (UNDP 2020c)

- **Involving everyone in the protection of women, adolescents and girls.** It is important to make the safety of women, young people, adolescents and girls that are at risk of suffering acts of violence everyone's concern. To achieve this, it may be useful to increase access to information, public outreach campaigns and provide additional contact points for these services, in order to facilitate access and thus encourage victims of violence to report their cases. Additionally, it is important to mobilize communities; when community surveillance mechanisms generate early warnings, victim protection mechanisms can be more easily activated. If a victim is unable to report, the community should en-

sure their safety and communicate with the authorities. It is also important to pay attention to warning signs, especially among children, teenagers and youths, such as dropping out of school and behavior changes. During this time, with girls and teenagers spending more time doing domestic chores, they may neglect their school responsibilities, which in the medium term could lead them to drop out.

- **Promoting community integration among households, following health and safety protocols.** It is imperative to activate social and community mechanisms that alleviate the burden of care and, as mentioned above, reinforce the protection of women, adolescents and girls at risk of violence. Social and care infrastructure, community networks for mothers and gender violence early detection systems are all mechanisms that must be strengthened locally, both in urban and rural settings, bringing back the community activities that were in place a few decades ago. In addition to requiring adjusting urban mobility policies, this will entail wide public outreach regarding community care, as well as local arrangements between public and private care service providers.
- **Rendering visible what has been invisible, with objective and verifiable evidence.** Since domestic work is invisible, it is essential that national statistical systems continue to contribute to its visibility. For this it is necessary to continue gathering information and data – disaggregated by sex – on the situation of women at the home, looking into the diversity of existing family arrangements. Time use surveys and national accounts from a gender perspective have become increasingly necessary. In the short term, it is also important to estimate the pandemic's impacts on the distribution of household chores. This will contribute to the

design of interventions, both public and private, to address the differentiated impacts.

- **Quantifying the value and extent of the care economy and integrating it to the national accounts.** Unpaid domestic work has been systematically rendered invisible from national accounts systems, as if it were done by magic or by invisible hands. The scenario created by the pandemic means that now that we are at home, both women and men are feeling the burden of unpaid domestic work. This creates an opportunity to have an open dialogue with statistical institutes and the ministries of production and economy for its quantification and acknowledgment and for the integration of its value into national accounts. Even if housewives' contributions to the economy have not been perceived traditionally, it is care work that makes people's insertion into the labor market possible. Since it is clear that this work does have a value and that someone is paying for it, acknowledging its worth and appreciating the experiences women acquire through it can enable women's productive and labor inclusion. Work skills such as time management, domestic finances, cleaning and disinfection, cooking and gastronomy, among others, are a highly valued package of experiences in various industries; certification schemes for these skillsets would be an idea worth exploring.

ii) The spaces between the home, study and work

The pandemic has forced us to live online, and while this allows workers to transition instantly from home to work and vice versa, this condition is not universal. In order to reduce commuting times it is necessary to decongest mass transportation systems and restrict

private transportation, which is the main cause of congested traffic. Furthermore, a return to normality will bring an increased need for public and private transportation – both individual and mass – to go to and from the workplace. However, in order for people to fulfil their work responsibilities, systemic issues regarding care infrastructure, access to childcare facilities for minors, care services for the elderly and suitable business hours for goods and services providers (both public and private) must be addressed. It goes without saying that this must all comply to the sanitary measures required in the context of this pandemic. For this reason, it is essential to activate services that allow households and their members to better participate in the labor market. For this to be possible we recommend:

- **Reliable and safe public transportation in cities, ensuring it transports people, but not the virus.** The vast majority of people in Latin America living in cities use public transportation, especially women. It is the most cost-effective way to move around. At the same time, the public transportation network has also played a part in transmitting the virus in the world's main cities. For this reason, it is necessary to deploy logistical measures that reduce user density in transportation services and respect health protocols. It is worth noting that women's mobility patterns differ from men's; although they move between shorter distances, women take longer on average, since they use public transportation to a greater extent, instead of private means of transportation. They have more complex, less direct itineraries, since their mobilization is partly aimed at attending to care responsibilities (shopping for groceries, doing the school run, going to medical consultations, etc.). Therefore, it is crucial to incorporate gender analysis into the design of transportation,

security and city management policies for the pandemic and the post-pandemic world. A comprehensive list of policies and a combination of policies that may contribute to these goals is beyond the scope of this report. However, the following considerations should certainly be taken into account: i) improving the predictability of arrival times at bus stops, ii) designing smart policies to maintain social distancing, iii) implementing higher frequency express trunk lines, iv) improving the integration of various means of transport (not only subways, buses and feeder routes, but also bicycles and other less congestive means), and v) promoting and adapting bicycle infrastructure. Finally, it is worth noting that the pandemic has brought significant changes in mobility patterns, making it crucial to work in coordination with the public and private sectors in order to avoid congested transportation systems in the cities during the economic reactivation processes, either phased or total, and for a more efficient management of entry and exit time blocks by zones and sectors (productive and educational), among others.

- **Promoting a transportation network that better integrates all territories.** Improving transportation within cities is not enough; integration with the surrounding territories must also be improved. In our region, more than a third of the households live in city outskirts and there is a very fluid relationship between urban and rural life. In order to ensure access to healthcare or other emergency services it is crucial that the entire network functions reliably.
- **Strengthening childcare services, as well as care for the elderly and people with special needs.** Women's effective participation in the workforce requires structural solutions to the problem of care work. To this purpose, an urgent task is achieving an

equal distribution of the burden of care work in the home. As we have previously underscored, a more equitable distribution of chores is essential. Acknowledging that this cultural change will not happen overnight, short-term solutions must also be provided outside the home. Therefore, working simultaneously towards building a new and revamped model of masculinity – conscious, healthy and positive – is an imperative that will further the transformation of prevailing societal norms, based on patriarchal models, according to which men's masculinity and manhood are weakened when they do housework. Additionally, strengthening care support systems outside the home, including infrastructure, services and public, private and community providers, is absolutely essential for women to be able to enter the workforce. Nurseries and early childcare centers, as well as care for the elderly and people with disabilities, will be central to the redesign of social organization. For this to be possible, it is necessary – taking into account the sanitary measures required during the pandemic – to expand opening hours at existing centers, making them compatible with their users' working hours, as well as increasing their territorial coverage. This can be achieved by combining the private and supply of these services through a Care Service Providers Network deployed by a Comprehensive Care System, subsidizing access to their services for people with lower incomes.

- **Furthering the reopening of the education system and its training centers, to preserve and strengthen the human capital required today and in the future.** There is a high risk of dissipation of human capital during the pandemic, with long-lasting effects for the post-pandemic world. This is a consequence of physical distancing measures aimed at protecting health, com-

bined with low internet connectivity in remote villages and cities as well as peri-urban areas, along with limited access to computers and tablets for online training and, finally, weak digital abilities in some population segments, where it often does not go beyond using smartphones and social network platforms. This dispersal will be felt more markedly among vulnerable groups, widening existing gaps.⁵ Public policy packages must take into account several aspects. Among others, i) the need for universal and democratic access to internet connectivity, with cross-subsidies for service coverage and access to equipment, ii) skill development to build increased capacities, approached from a life cycle perspective, from early childhood⁶ to advanced adulthood; iii) development of enhanced capabilities, allowing people to carry out productive activities. Beyond their direct impact on children, adolescents and youths – who will be able to continue to grow academically – these measures will also facilitate women’s return to the workforce, freeing them from some of their care responsibilities at home. Likewise, it will be necessary to adapt school schedules or certain extracurricular programs, and articulate in-person and virtual care services, appropriately balancing educational and health objectives (see recommendations on urban public transportation above).

5 See UNESCO Interactive Map (2020) of the impacts of COVID-19 on education <https://es.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>

6 See the Lego Robots for Kids Program at <https://www.lego.com/en-gb/categories/robots-for-kids>

iii) At work

Finally, focusing on the purpose of this report, we should keep in mind there are many policy options for the work sphere. Here we list some that have the potential to facilitate women's better participation in the workforce, taking advantage, as much as possible, of their productive potential. In this sense, this list can be seen as a set of enabling factors for women's entry and permanence in the labor market. Not all of these recommendations are relevant to all economic sectors, nor to the companies that comprise them, nor to all company sizes. Therefore, it is recommended that governments and companies⁷ adopt these measures with an exploratory approach, in iterative cycles of human-centered design (prototyping, testing, assessment and scaling) as policy packages, gradually testing and expanding them according to their success and what is learned along the way. There are no universal recipes or one-size-fits-all solutions.

For the government:

- **Promoting the extension of employment policies for the formal sector to informal workers in general and paid domestic workers in particular.** As this document demonstrates, it is essential to acknowledge the fact that the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis are a consequence of an existing and unfair

7 To support the business sector in this transition, UNDP has developed a set of instruments based on the Seals of Gender Equality in the Workplace. See www.selloigualdadgenero.org and <http://americalatinagenera.org/newsite/index.php/es/iniciativas-destacadas/empresas-por-la-igualdad>.

sexual division of labor that contributed to women's over-representation in informal work, precarious labor and part-time jobs and small companies (and also among the self-employed population) in most countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Women's insertion in these types of jobs allows them to reconcile paid work with care responsibilities. However, they entail, in addition to a double work shift, greater job insecurity and negative impacts on their work trajectories, as well as thwarting their professional development. In turn, this results in most women not belonging to contributory social security programs. A high proportion of women do not have access to the usual benefits of formal employment. During an emergency, the fundamental task is protecting those who need it the most; this means making sure no woman is left behind, especially those deprived of the benefits of belonging to the formal work sphere.⁸ In the medium term, it is necessary to ensure a universal social protection floor (income, health, pensions and care), regardless of labor insertion type and modality. Finally, promoting social protection within a framework of universality, rather than through access to formal employment, will advance gender equality and women's empowerment. Adopting and implementing the ILO Convention 189⁹ for the regulation of domestic work will lead to the establishment of necessary measures for the health care of both domestic workers and their employers.

8 When disaggregating the data, the evidence shows that the women in the highest situation of vulnerability are poor women and older adults, female heads of the family, young people, people with indigenous or African ancestry and migrant and refugee women.

9 Convention 189: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/es/?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:2551460

- **Ensuring women's inclusion in employment reactivation policies, with the ultimate objective of confronting the crisis without leaving anyone behind.** In the first place, as has already been documented, and as has also been the case within the context of this pandemic, female leadership has proven to be effective during a crisis.¹⁰ In times like the ones we are living in, women can be very effective in managing crises, facing uncertainty and addressing multiple objectives. Secondly, this will serve to better capture women's specific needs and strategic interests, making it possible to estimate gender gaps both in the effects of the crisis and the depth of its impacts, as this paper reveals. In order to effectively include women, it is advised to incorporate them in social dialogues through plural representation, as well as implementing initiatives promoting gender equality in the labor market.¹¹ Additionally, the government, companies and trade unions can collaborate with women's organizations to analyze the extent of the impact on gender and search for solutions in their own spheres.
- **Protecting people, their incomes and their jobs, regardless of the contractual modality of the workforce.** The protection of workers and of each and every job during the pandemic, including those derived from temporary closures, is a priority. However, the stressful circumstances affecting companies' viability vary

10 See Avivah Wittenberg-Cox (2020). "What Do Countries With The Best Coronavirus Responses Have In Common? Women Leaders". Accessed June 29, 2020 at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/avivahwittenbergcox/2020/04/13/what-do-countries-with-the-best-coronavirus-reponses-have-in-common-women-leaders/#4d3146ed3dec>

11 The Seal of Gender Equality in the Workplace for the Private Sector supported by UNDP, the Principles of Women's Empowerment promoted by UN Women and the United Nations Global Compact, the We Empower or Win-Win Program in Latin America, developed in partnership between the European Union, the ILO and UN Women. See <https://www.empowerwomen.org/en>

across industries, and according to company size. These times require the support of the private sector for employment protection measures, such as reduced working hours, furloughs and early paid leave. Several countries in the region have adopted policies to support the private sector, with the aim of protecting incomes through temporary cash transfer schemes, taking into account a gender analysis. As we have seen, these policies could take the shape of grants or loans to protect the households that have been more severely affected by the crisis, including cash transfers to women in domestic violence situations.

For the private sector:

- **Developing a Corporate Inclusive and Gender-Responsive Framework for Managing the COVID-19 Crisis.**¹² i) Setting up a Crisis Committee led by senior management, with the plural participation of staff (including union members if possible), ensuring women's voices are heard. This can be either a new body or an existing one to which crisis management functions are assigned. ii) Developing a policy framework or strategy for managing the COVID-19 crisis, whose purpose is to adequately navigate the crisis, mitigate its effects – especially on the most vulnerable segments linked to the business and its value chain –, compensate for the disadvantages suffered by specific segments and build resilience to future shocks and crises. This should address both impact actions in the workplace, impact actions in the value chain and solutions to share with the community. iii) Formulating a

¹² See www.businessforsustainabledevelopment.org.

COVID-19 Crisis Management Action Plan with results, goals, indicators and specific activities associated with each area, with responsible units, times and allocated budgets. For this, it is essential to execute the action plan and to implement improvements along the way as required, as well as measuring its progress, identifying opportunities for improvement and planning continuous improvement actions.

- **Ensuring greater labor flexibility for all working people, not only women.** In order to ensure that joint responsibility for household chores, care work and increased domestic work does not burden women disproportionately, equal opportunities measures that benefit all staff must be adopted. Likewise, it is crucial to work with men, focusing on elements that shape a new, conscious and healthy masculinity, one in which they begin to assume their domestic responsibilities. This will hardly change in the short term. Therefore, successful workplaces will be the ones that manage to adapt and co-create measures focused on their staff's strategic needs and interests. Among the recommended measures are adopting and regulating telework, allowing flexible hours and schedules, redesigning and adapting workspaces from a biosafety standpoint, taking into account women and men's specific needs and prioritizing results-oriented work schemes over process-oriented work.¹³ The transformation of cultural patterns and social norms is a task that must also concern the business sector, where

13 The agile methodologies may be useful in this regard. The Agile Manifesto was written by 17 critics of process-based production models in 2001 in Utah. The term 'agile methods' was coined as an alternative to software development with formal or traditional methodologies. Consulted at <https://agilemanifesto.org/iso/es/manifesto.html>. See also OBS Business School (2020). "Metodología agile: ¿Cuáles son los 12 principios de su modelo?", consulted on June 29, 2020, <https://obsbusiness.school/es/blog-project-management/metodologias-agiles/metodologia-agile-cuales-son-los-12-principios-de-su-modelo>

traditional gender roles must be challenged. Along with these measures, the opportunity to promote social co-responsibility for care work should be seized.

- **Offering tools for the development of the human capital unable to work from home during lockdown.** This includes virtual training and digital skills contributing to the occupational profile of workers forced to stay at home. In order to achieve this, it is recommended to establish alliances with work training systems and content providers. It is crucial to unfurl new human capital development schemes based on training cycles, as well as training workers for the new economic normality. Beyond proposing training in areas with effective demand in the immediate future, it is becoming ever more necessary to take into account the fact that jobs will incorporate digital tools in daily life. Therefore, digital literacy must be central to any business strategy aimed at developing labor competencies. Thus, the need to update knowledge must be addressed across people's different occupations.¹⁴
- **Offering care solutions in the workplace and adopting further measures to facilitate joint care responsibility.** i) Adopting paid and unpaid leave, both for mothers and fathers, and for issues other than maternity, paternity and parental leave. ii) Putting into practice care solutions supported by workers,¹⁵ directly

14 UNDP has developed a series of great alliances offering digital content for the development of digital, social-emotional and technical skills (among others, Coursera and HP Life).

15 See IFC (2020), *Childcare in the COVID-19 era: a guide for employers*. Accessed June 30, 2020 at <https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/2e12d33a-ce55-46b2-aae5-ee8304a6506a/202004-Childcare-COVID-19-Guide-for-Employers+B.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=ncQxRT9> and IFC (2019) *Tackling childcare: a guide for employer-supported childcare*, developed in partnership with UNDP together with around 30 organizations, Accessed June 30, 2020 at <https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/da7fbf72-e4d9-4334-955f-671a104877a7/201911-A-guide-for-employer-supported-childcare.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=mVHadh3>

or through third parties, including special care solutions, such as disability or sick leave. iii) Carrying out processes aimed at changing societal norms, promoting joint responsibility among staff and conscious and healthy masculinities.

- **Transforming societal norms and paying renewed attention to communication channels.** The greater flexibility required in the workplace must go hand in hand with a renovation of communication channels with people and other central actors across the value chain, including suppliers of goods and services. As has been widely documented, women resort less frequently than men to negotiating on their own behalf. In fact, there is evidence that they negotiate better on behalf of a third party than in favor of their own interests. It is therefore essential to open multiple communication channels with management, welfare and human resources departments and other institutional areas. This applies to matters related to salaries and promotions, but also to other working conditions, such as schedule and work space flexibility, as presented in the previous point, as well as opportunities for professional development.
- **Having access to information and evidence for good decision making.** Markets work best when information is available, and labor markets are no exception to this rule. It is essential to have more widely available labor market data, disaggregated by sex and other demographic variables. This includes not only information on the organizational policies to guarantee staff well-being during the pandemic, but also information on the effects of the crisis on staff and their family environment, geolocated job vacancies and the prospect of future jobs, among others. It also comprises more information on economic effects, the unequal care burden and barriers to accessing work resources. This will help government

workers in charge of policy design to more clearly identify which segments of the labor markets are a priority, leading to more accurate decision making within companies, facilitating the timely implementation of corrective actions.

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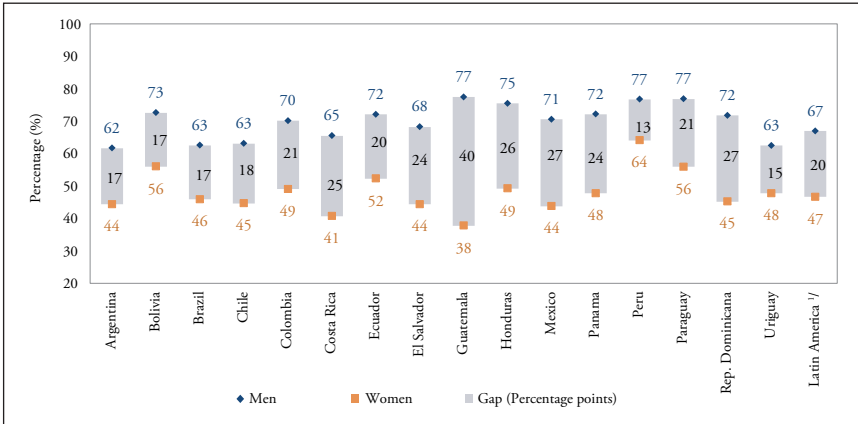
Appendix 1
**Latin America (16 countries): Description of household
and employment surveys by country, 2018 and 2019.**

Country	Survey	Year and period considered
Argentina	Encuesta Permanente de Hogares	2019, quarters I, II, III and IV
Bolivia	Encuesta de Hogares	2018, yearly
Brazil	Encuesta Nacional por Muestreo de Domicilios	2019, quarters I, II, III and IV
Chile	Encuesta Suplementaria de Ingresos de la Encuesta Nacional de Empleo	2018, yearly
Colombia	Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares	2019, database from January to December
Costa Rica	Encuesta Continua de Empleo	2018, quarters I, II, III and IV
Ecuador	Encuesta Nacional de Empleo, Desempleo y Subempleo	2019, quarters I, II, III and IV
El Salvador	Encuesta de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples	2018, yearly
Guatemala	Encuesta Nacional de Empleo e Ingresos	2019, 1st semester
Honduras	Encuesta Permanente de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples	2018, yearly
Mexico	Encuesta Nacional de Ocupación y Empleo	2019, quarters I, II, III and IV
Panama	Encuesta del Mercado Laboral	2018, yearly
Peru	Encuesta Nacional de Hogares	2019, yearly
Paraguay	Encuesta Permanente de Hogares	2018, yearly
Dominican Republic	Encuesta Nacional de Fuerza de Trabajo	2018, yearly
Uruguay	Encuesta Continua de Hogares	2019, quarters I, II, III and IV

Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys.

Appendix 2

Latin America (16 countries): Occupancy rate without the presence of young children in the home by sex, by countries - in percentage (circa 2019)

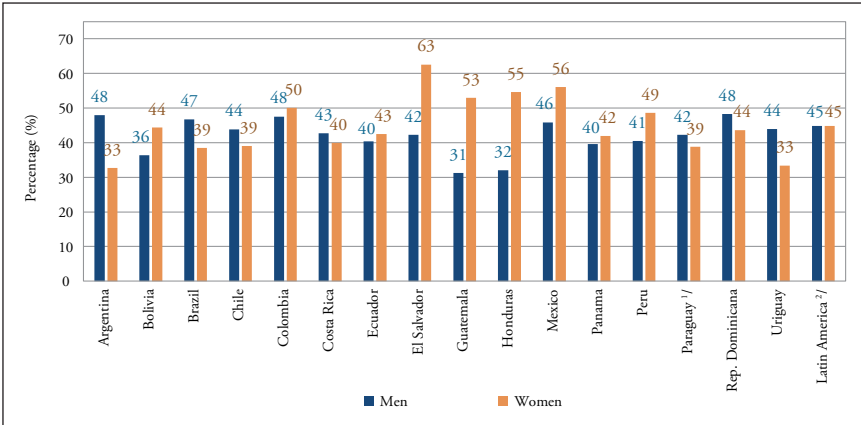


Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1).
Notes: An EAP aged 15 or older is taken into account. Young children aged 6 or younger are considered.

^{1/} / Weighted average of the countries considered. Weighting in household surveys corresponds to each country's local expansion factor. In the quarterly surveys the simple average is considered for the annual data.

Appendix 3

Latin America (16 countries): EAP employed in non-essential activities by sex, by country - percentage (circa 2019)



Source: Latin American Household and Employment Surveys 2018 and 2019 (see Appendix 1).

Notes: An EAP aged 15 or older is taken into account.

^{1/} / In Paraguay, there is no greater detail by economic activity. Therefore, manufacturing industries are considered; retail, restaurants and hotels; and transportation, storage and communications.

^{2/} / Weighted average. Weighting in household surveys corresponds to each country's local expansion factor. In the quarterly surveys the simple average is considered for the annual data.

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The coronavirus pandemic has spread throughout the world and Latin America has not been exempt from its health, economic and social impacts. The economic shutdown, as a result of a combination of stringent measures (self-quarantines, mandatory lockdowns, limited capacity in shops, factories and offices, border closures, etc.), is having a profound economic and social impact. In the labor market it has shocked both supply and demand. Within households, it has resulted in an increase in the unpaid workload, burdening women disproportionately, further reducing the time they can allocate to productive activities. The crisis' impacts and depth are felt differently by women and men. Therefore, generalized formulas must be avoided, since they can widen existing gender gaps. In this paper we explore the impacts of the crisis on employment in sixteen countries in the region. In addition, we analyze gender impacts through four lenses: young people, people living in poverty, people living in rural areas and heads of the family. We present a set of policy options aimed at integrating the gender approach into the entire cycle of the socio-economic response to the pandemic and the post-pandemic world. Emphasizing the need for cross-sectional solutions, we propose policies in three main areas: the home, work and the spaces between work and home. This will enable socio-economic recovery policies to not only soften short-term impacts, but also further equal opportunities for women and men in the medium and long terms.

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