

LACGIL

Gender Innovation Lab

TURNING KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION

Childcare and Women's Work

Evidence shows a [positive link](#) between access to childcare and women's employment in LAC. Yet, access to childcare is still limited and hampering women's entry into the labor market. In fact, childcare at home was one of the main reasons [women workers were 44% more likely than men](#) workers to stop working after COVID-19 hit. Here, we share new research findings on childcare and women's work and actions that can remove barriers to women's economic participation.

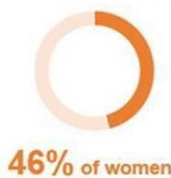
How has COVID-19 affected childcare and women's work?

In Chile, a [LACGIL policy brief](#) shows that after the onset of the pandemic, **9% of women but only 0.7% of men didn't work** because they needed time to care for children or sick family members. ([HFPS](#) first round, LCR POV)



A complementary [LACGIL study](#) featured in a recent [webinar](#) found that in Chile:

% labor force participation 1 year into pandemic



40% of households with young children are **not using formal childcare**, but would if childcare is convenient, affordable, and high quality

A June 2021 survey of households with children aged 0 to 6 – as part of a forthcoming LACGIL study in Honduras – finds that:

Among the employed before first lockdown, % of those leaving their jobs to care for kids



60% of women (among those not working) cite **housework** as main reason for not working

What are policy options stemming from the childcare work by the LACGIL and the WB more broadly?

Strengthen enabling environments to deliver affordable, convenient, and quality childcare. In [Chile](#), for instance, actions can include (i) changing the current law and mandating firms to provide childcare benefit to women and men employees and (ii) exploring financing alternatives to expanding access to quality childcare, e.g., involving non-state actors.



Support policies that help distribute childcare responsibility among the household, community, market, and the state, thereby transforming cultural norms. For example, in [Uruguay](#), the LACGIL leads a behavioral intervention to increase fathers' take-up of parental leave and change how fathers and mothers spend their time.

Promote childcare through operations, analytics, and policy engagement. For example, WB's Resilient and Inclusive Housing [project](#) in Colombia aims to increase women's availability to paid work by 60% through activities that free up women's time, e.g., offering access to childcare centers. Also, POV GP [analytical work](#) aims to improve the regulatory framework and childcare provision in Mexico. [IFC's Tackling Childcare](#) advances employer-supported childcare and a [WB's report](#) highlights policy goals for quality, affordable childcare for all families.



The Latin America and the Caribbean Gender Innovation Lab (LACGIL) supports impact evaluations and inferential studies to find out what works to close gender gaps in human capital, economic participation, social norms, and agency. The LACGIL works in partnership with units across the World Bank, aid agencies and donors, governments, non-governmental organizations, private sector firms, and academic researchers. This work has been funded in part by the [World Bank Group's Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality \(UFGE\)](#), a multi-donor trust fund administered by the World Bank to advance gender equality and women's empowerment through experimentation and knowledge creation to help governments and the private sector focus policy and programs on scalable solutions with sustainable outcomes. The UFGE is supported by generous contributions from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.

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