

# Gender equality and social norms interventions in the LAC region

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## LACGIL

Gender Innovation Lab

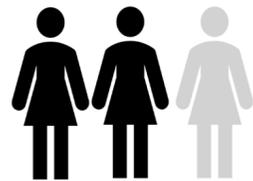




# Outline

- 1. Gender Equality in LAC and the influence of social norms**
- 2. Main approaches in interventions**
- 3. Insights from experimental evidence in the region**

# Social norms are a component behind main gender gaps in LAC



Gender gap in school enrollment has **disappeared in primary education** and **reversed in secondary** for many countries, however...

**1 in 3** young women are not in school, employment, or training

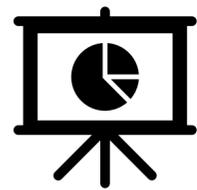
Adolescent pregnancy prevalence is the **second highest in the world**



Average labor participation of women increased from 44% in 1990 to 57% in 2018, but...

Women's labor participation rate is still more than 20 percentage points lower than men's in many LAC countries

# There has been progress towards gender equality in LAC, but challenges remain (cont.):



The gap between men and women in entrepreneurship is smaller than in other regions, but...

Women-led enterprises are frequently unable to grow, 60% stuck in the informal sector



Legislation specifically addresses domestic violence almost in all countries in the region, but...

Physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner, ranges from 17% to 53.3% in countries with available data

Acceptability of violence against women by partners is widespread: for example, agreement with the acceptability of wife-beating varies from 2.9% (Jamaica 2008/9) to 38.2% (Ecuador 2004)

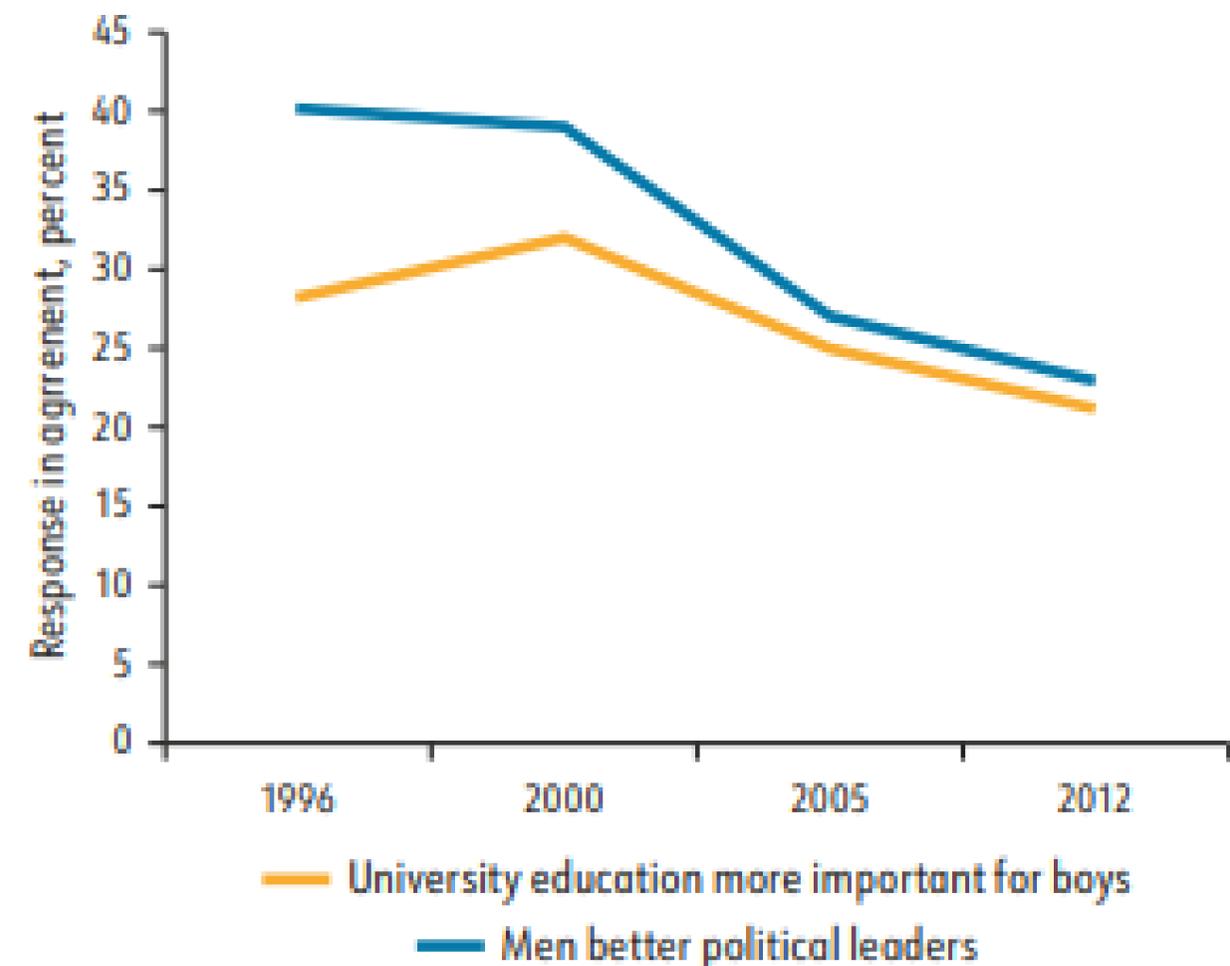
# Social norms around women's participation in paid work: Example of Mexico

**FIGURE 4.3** Indicators of Agreement with Gender-Related Statements, by Gender, 2012



Source: World Bank calculations from World Values Survey Association 2012.  
 Note: Figure shows the mean value of responses to each indicator. Survey covers adults aged 18 years and older.

**FIGURE 4.4** Change in Agreement with Selected Gender-Related Statements, Mexico, 1996 - 2012



Source: World Bank calculations from World Values Survey Association 2012.  
 Note: Figure shows the mean value of responses to each indicator. Survey of adults aged 18 years and older.

# Understanding and shifting social norms to tackle gender inequalities

Importance of **attitudes**, **social norms** and **beliefs** in justifying and perpetuating gender inequality and VAW is recognized, but...

...there is often confusion in the definitions and implications for the design and evaluation of interventions.

...difficult to measure social norms change.

...rigorous evaluations are scarce.

# Main approaches in interventions in LAC

1. Shifting social expectations not just individual attitudes → Media entertainment; public campaigns
2. Activating and reinforcing new norms and behaviors → Working with adolescents and youth, school as a vehicle to change attitudes, engaging boys and men
3. Providing incentives → Mainly cash transfers but some innovation (Access to reproductive health covered by social health insurance for adolescents)
4. Establishing and enforcing laws → Influencing shifts to “good equilibrium”
5. Publicizing the changes

# 1. Insights from interventions in LAC

## Example Mexico

### *Social coordination mechanisms*

- Field experiment in Mexico → Radio dram increased rejection of VAW and support for gender equality (Arias, 2019)
- Effects are driven by social coordination mechanisms facilitated by the communal delivery of public information (Arias, 2019)

## 2. Insights from interventions in LAC

### Example Costa Rica and Mexico

*Identification of different mechanisms encouraging participation in male-dominated fields: role modeling, mentoring*

- Exposure to non-traditional role models → Build women's capacity in STEM and entrepreneurship (OECD, 2017; Laboratoria, 2019)
- Mentoring → Effects of male mentors on business performance and profitability of female-owned firms. (Iacovone et al, 2021)

# 3. Insights from interventions in LAC

## Example Bahia, Brazil

*The importance of the reference group*

- Using peer-led programs to improve school achievement and reduce teenage pregnancy
- The **reference group** is the group of people that matters to an individual's choices.
- Reference groups shift depending on the issue at hand, so it is important to identify at the program design stage the most influential reference group(s) for a particular behavior.

# Relevant reference group?

Experimenting with the selection of peer-educators:

1. Using information from a social network survey administered to all students in the sampled schools; it selects as peer educators the **most connected individuals** based on eigenvector centrality;
2. Based on the social network survey but selects the individuals that are most often nominated by the other pupils in the school as being **the “coolest” or most popular amongst them**;
3. Leaves it to the **teachers in each school to select their team of peer educators**, according to the pupils' attendance record, academic merit and perceived leadership skills. This is the current selection criteria.



# 4. Insights from interventions in LAC

## Example Uruguay

*Social norms as determinant of lack of information*

- In 2013, Uruguay implemented a part-time fully paid parental leave for private workers, to be shared between mother and father.
- Only 4.5% of fathers take the benefit, while 70% of eligible mothers do.
- According to survey, main factors related to this behavior are:
  - i. lack of information about the parental leave benefit;
  - ii. perceived financial costs associated with taking parental leave; and
  - iii. social norms dictating that childcare should be provided by the mother.

<b>Constraint</b>	<b>Share of people who ...</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Lack of information	don't know the benefit	17	5
Lack of information	don't know the duration of the benefit	62	27
Lack of information	don't know about its portability	42	22
<b>Economic costs</b>	consider that the benefit carries an economic cost	58	54
<b>Social norms</b>	believe that it is a mother's responsibility to take care of babies during the first year of life	33	0

# Thank you

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## LACGIL

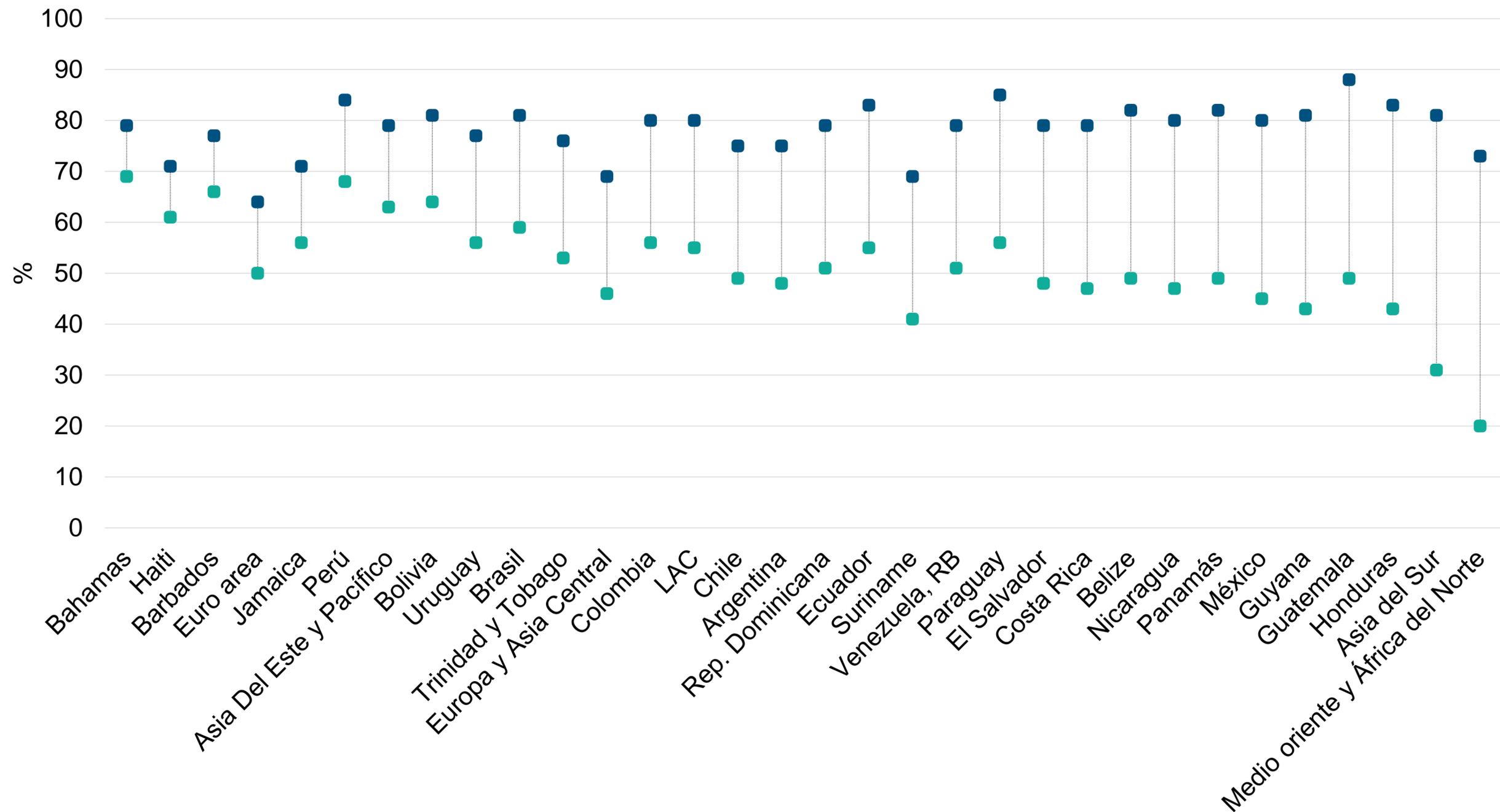
Gender Innovation Lab



<https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/latin-america-and-the-caribbean-gender-innovation-lab>

# Annex

# The difference in labor participation between men and women is still more than 20 percentage points in the majority of LAC countries



# LACGIL's Thematic Focus Areas



Remove barriers to human capital accumulation and the productive engagement of youth by addressing *NEET*



Remove barriers to participation and productivity of women in paid work and entrepreneurship



Understand how to address social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities and assess the success of interventions – particularly on VAWG



Understand the role of agency in effective interventions to increase gender equity



# Some LACGIL Projects

**Crime exposure in El Salvador** – Does the exposure to and intensity of crime in a violent country impact girls' and women's decisions regarding employment, education, migration, and entrepreneurship?

**Mapping of childcare programs and provision gaps in Honduras** – What kind of childcare programs are offered and what are the existing provision gaps in areas with higher employment opportunities for women in Honduras?

**Gender profit gaps in Central America and Mexico** - What determines wage/profit gaps between female- and male-owned firms?

**Crossovers in Mexico and Peru** - What are the drivers of and barriers to female participation in male-dominated sectors?

**Employer-sponsored childcare in Chile** - What can we learn about effects of employer-mandated childcare on women's employment and employers' productivity?

**Female entrepreneurship in Mexico** - Are soft-skills training and hard managerial skills training complementary with regard to sectoral barriers and high-potential business opportunities?

**Childcare provision and women's economic participation** – How does an updated legislation guarantying childcare service access to fathers affect female labor participation?

**Violence against women and economic empowerment in Brazil** – Do municipal characteristics predict a correlation between VAW and economic empowerment?

**Improve aspirations, educational attainment, and health through peer education in Brazil** - Can a peer-led program on reproductive health and goal setting improve high school students' educational attainment, self-esteem, and aspirations while decreasing teenage pregnancy rates?

**Building aspirations for the future in Brazil** – Can a participatory curriculum in secondary school increase girls' and boys' motivation to stay in school?

**Paternity leave in Uruguay**- How can behaviorally informed solutions encourage men to take paternity leave?

**Gender dynamics and urban poverty in Argentina** - How do gender dynamics perpetuate urban poverty in vulnerable communities?



## Social norm

Rule of behavior that people conform to because they believe that:

- Most other people in the group **do** conform to it
- Most other people in the group believe the **ought to** conform to it

Bicchieri (2016) and Heise (2013)

BOYS  
~~DON'T~~  
CRY

# Strategy and partnerships

Lab's activities focus on the **frontier areas of Jobs and Assets**, following the Bank-wide Gender Strategy

Emphasis on innovation in **critical areas** for the WBG twin goals: remaining gender gaps in **endowments**, enhancing **voice and agency**, and **engaging men and boys**

**Regional focus** on equitable economic opportunities and the life-cycle approach used to **identify both constraints and opportunities granting special attention to youth**

**Work in partnership** with aid agencies and donors, governments, non-governmental organizations, private sector firms, and researchers

## Snapshot

The intervention entailed increasing aspirations, encouraging educational attainment, building self-esteem and providing information about reproductive health.

Training was provided to peer educators, who then disseminated the information in their schools.

The impact evaluation will experimentally measure the effectiveness of three peer educator selection strategies: most connected in terms of network centrality; most popular or “cool” as identified by a student survey; and nomination by school staff.

## Link to LACGIL Focus Areas

- (i) Barriers to human capital accumulation and productivity
- (ii) Barriers to participation and productivity in paid work and entrepreneurship, and
- (iv) Understand and measure agency.

## Research questions

Can a peer-led program focused on reproductive health and goal setting improve educational attainment, self-esteem, aspirations, and at the same time decrease teenage pregnancy rates?

Does the impact of this intervention differ between female and male pupils?

What are the program heterogenous effects for other key baseline characteristics, like life expectations or sexual experience?

What selection criterion of peer educators maximizes the impact of the program?

## Contribution to knowledge

Evidence on the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving the aspirations of youths to increase their human capital investment (through education & fertility decisions) is scarce.

## MEXICO – Promoting Female Entrepreneurship: Innovative and large scale pilots

### Snapshot

Int.1: provide soft-skills training (personal initiative) bundled with hard managerial skills

Int. 2: identify and promote high-growth female entrepreneurs (through seed funding)

Int. 3: provide low-cost consulting services and access to technology for payment methods

### Link to LACGIL Focus Areas

(i) Barriers to human capital accumulation & productivity

(ii) barriers to participation and productivity in paid work & entrepreneurship

(iii) social norms

(iv) understand & measure agency.

### Research question

What is the complementarity of innovative soft-skills training and hard managerial skills training for women to break sectoral barriers and enter high potential business opportunities?

### Contribution to knowledge

Projects address issues affecting female entrepreneurs in Mexico and in LAC.

Women tend to have lower profitability than male entrepreneurs; they tend to be constrained in sectors with lower profitability and are unable to break into higher potential/profitability business activities; they are more likely to be informal and have limited access to technology.

It is unclear what the most successful training model is and previous work on supporting female entrepreneurs through training had mixed results.