



GENDER GAPS

IN ECUADOR AN OVERVIEW

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AN OVERVIEW



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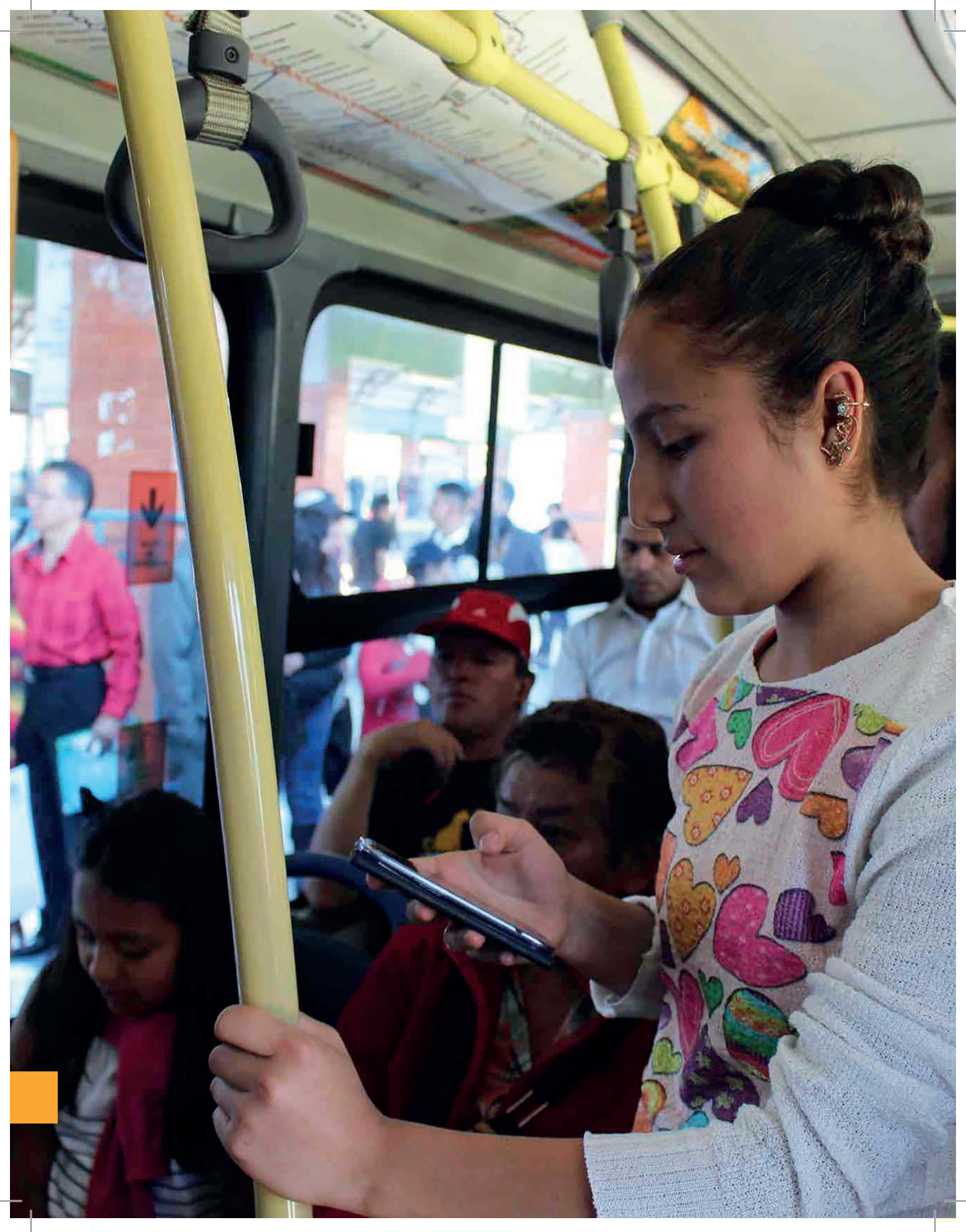
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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Closing the existing gender gaps will be required to boost shared prosperity and maximize poverty reduction efforts in Ecuador over the coming years. Gender inequities not only are unfair from an ethical and social perspective, but are also economically inefficient. Greater gender equality can raise overall productivity, improve development outcomes, especially of the next generation, and lead to more representative decision making.¹

According to a study by Teignier and Cuberes (2016), only the long-term average per capita income loss stemming from excluding women from labor markets amounted to 20.26 percent in Ecuador in 2011. Access to economic opportunities by women is particularly important in the context of a rapidly unfolding demographic transition characterized by the end of the demographic dividend and population ageing in the country.

This review of gender issues aims to uncover the main gender gaps in the country, and to identify potential policy recommendations that could help closing them in the coming years. The note is an input to the development of a Gender Action Plan for the Andean Countries under the Gender Analysis Work Program (P164267). As such the note lays out a descriptive overview of gender gaps in endowments, economic

¹ World Bank 2012

opportunities and agency – the explanation of the observed situation is outside the scope of this note.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The note applies the analytical framework devised by the WDR 2012 on Gender Equality and Development. Chapter 1 covers the legal and institutional framework and the issue of the agency of women – e.g. political repre-

sentation and violence against women, time use, and attitudes towards women; Chapter 2 provides an overview the situation with regards to the main endowments of health and education; and Chapter 3 deals with the existing gender gaps in economic opportunity – labor force participation and unemployment, the quality of employment, earnings, entrepreneurship and access to finance. The main sources of data used for the analysis are outlined below.

Sources of data for the analysis

- The World Development Indicators World Bank database has been used for the sections on health and education, entrepreneurship and access to finance.
- The SEDLAC (Socio-Economic Database for Latin America and the Caribbean) database has been used for the education and labor markets section, drawing on ENENMDU (see below).
- The ECLAC database has been used for political representation, femicide rate and legislation.
- The Labor force survey data – ENEMDU (Encuesta Nacional de Empleo, Desempleo y Subempleo) - has been used in the sections on education and labor markets.
- A dedicated survey - Encuesta de Relaciones Familiares y Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres 2011- has been used for the section on gender-based violence.
- Another dedicated survey - National Time Use Survey 2012 – has been used in the section on time use.
- World Values Survey data (last wave) have been used in the section on gender attitudes.
- Estimations from the UN have been used in the section on contraception use.

The review presented here is the result of the first stage in the assessment process. This note mainly reflects an initial descriptive exercise, and will be revised after the completion of stakeholder consultations in the countries; the results of such consultations will not only help identify additional literature and research on specific issues, but also help prioritize the key gender gaps to be addressed based on the way discussions on the issue are currently taking place in the country.

1.3 OVERVIEW FINDINGS

Ecuador has made substantial strides towards gender equality over the last decade (see Figure 3). As a result, the legal framework in this area is relatively developed.² No substantial gender gaps exist in education, with the exception of a reverse gender gap in attainment, and the political representation of women is comparatively high, especially since the intro-

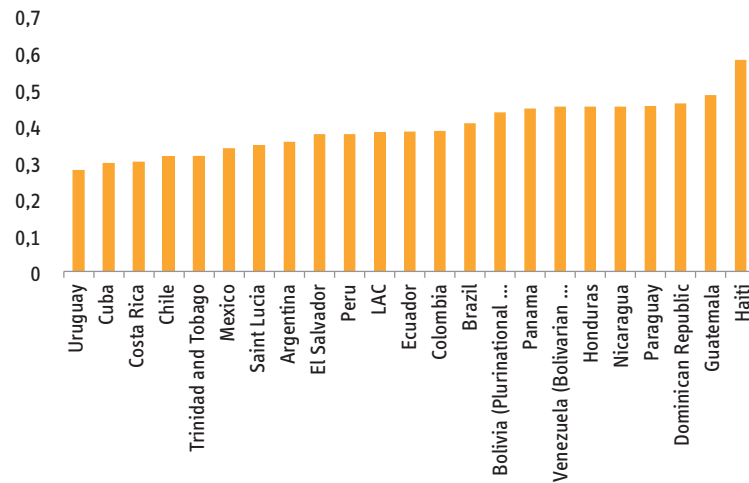
² WBL 2016

Figure 1: Key take-aways and priorities identified

KEY TAKE-AWAYS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED

- Maternal mortality rates are comparably high among indigenous and Afro descendent women.
- Teenage pregnancy is a major issue in the country – much above the regional average; over 1 in 5 girls in Ecuador are married at the age of 18.
- Educational disparities persist in rural areas and among indigenous populations to the detriment of women.
- Women are over-represented among the ni-nis (more than 1 in 4 women are in this situation) and informal workers (more than 2 in 5 female workers have an informal job).
- Violence against women appears to be a major issue although up-to-date data are not available, and access to justice remains a challenge (only 1 in 5 women victims reached out for institutional support).
- Patriarchal norms are still prevalent - regarding women's role as care givers instead of income earners and the lack of acceptance for divorce, for instance

Figure 2: Gender Inequality Index value 2015



Source: UNDP 2016
 ** 1 imparity, 0 parity

duction of parity (50 percent quota) in all candidate lists. The country has made much progress too in the area of health; maternal mortality rates, for instance, have decreased substantially, partly due to the expansion of coverage of maternal services in the country. In addition, a large share of women is engaged in entrepreneurial activities, while their access to financial products (e.g., bank accounts) is comparatively high. In line with these results, Ecuador registers a medium level of gender inequality in regional comparison. Ecuador ranks 89 out of 188 countries worldwide in the UNDP Gender Inequality Index³, at par with the LAC average, and out-

3 The UN Gender inequality index focuses on maternal mortality ratios, adolescent birth rate, share of women in parliaments, population with at least some secondary education, and labor force participation rates.

performing other Andean (LC6) countries such as Bolivia and Venezuela, although behind the best-performers - Chile and Peru (see Figure 2).

Despite the positive developments registered in recent years, some important challenges remain (see Figures 1 and 3).

According to the latest available data, domestic violence continues to be prevalent and victims are largely helpless, while these crimes most often end in impunity; however, up-to-date official data on the incidence of this problem are missing. Teenage pregnancy and child marriage are also widespread in the country, more so than in others in LAC. Patriarchal norms that reproduce gender stereotypes and relegate women to a submissive position with respect

to men are widespread. Gaps in access to economic opportunities are also notable – particularly with regards to the quality of jobs. The share of women engaged in informal jobs has reached levels similar to those observed in the beginning of the decade in recent years. In addition, the share of women ni-nis (15-24 years old) is much higher than that of men, and this gap is among the largest in LAC.

Moreover, certain groups of women, especially indigenous and afro-descendants, women with disabilities, and female migrants and refugees face multiple and

compounded disadvantages.⁴ As an example, sexual and reproductive health indicators and educational attainment are much poorer among indigenous and Afro-descendent women than among their white counterparts. At the same time, and despite the good performance of the country with regards to female political representation, minority women are not adequately represented in political institutions. In Ecuador a total of 21 percent of women are of indigenous, Afro-descendent or Montubio origin (Census 2010) (see below).

4 CEDAW 2015

Indigenous peoples and rights in Ecuador

The indigenous population is comprised by 16 groups in Ecuador. Around 71 percent of the IP, especially kichwam, concentrates in La Sierra, mostly in four provinces: Chimborazo, Pichincha, Imbabura y Cotopaxi. Around 19.6 percent of the IP population is located in the Amazonía, where the two most abundant nationalities are Kichwa and Shuar. There are 95.08 indigenous men per 100 indigenous women.⁵

Over a long period of time the rights of these populations were not effectively considered in Ecuador. Over the 80s, an indigenous social movement took traction, leading to the issue of indigenous rights making it to the top of the public debates in the country over the 1990s. As a result, indigenous rights were effectively recognized in the 1998 Constitution, and confirmed in the 2008 Constitution that describes Ecuador as a multination country. The growing social relevance of these movements has led also to the creation of the Council for the Development of Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador (CODENPE), with ministerial rank, the National Direction for Bilingual Intercultural Education or the Direction of Indigenous Health. Although women have contributed to that movement, their role has been more invisible until recent years.⁶

5 UN 2012

6 UN 2012

Some key takeaways from Consultations held in March 2018

After completion of a first draft of the gender notes for the Andean countries, consultations were held in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru with local stakeholders (CSO, academia, development partners) to gather insights, data and information on the key gender gaps and validate the information provided in the notes.

The following priorities emerged during those consultations:

- Gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, and the low quality economic opportunities were highlighted as priority areas.
- The importance of persistent and traditional social norms that identify the role of women in the home as caregivers and not as actively pursuing work and income was referred to strongly and multiple times as one of the drivers behind some of the most pervasive gender inequalities observed.
- More attention is needed to diminish inequalities between rural and urban women: In fact, national or regional average data may not speak to the many different realities of different women (intersectionality).

Knowledge gaps and areas to focus more:

- The impact of climate change and resulting migration on gender relations was raised in all three countries as one area where more evidence and knowledge is needed.
- Better use of data: Even if gender disaggregated data may be available in countries, statistical offices may not have the capacity to process and analyze it sufficiently. Valuable information hence remains underexplored.
- The importance of better data on gender-based violence, including the support in setting up a comprehensive information system between different service providers was also mentioned.
- Promoting women's economic opportunities may have positive preventive effect on gender-based violence – which as mentioned is among the key gender priorities in all the three countries visited.
- The importance of gender-sensitive infrastructure was also raised.

Figure 3: Main developments and persistent gender gaps in Ecuador

STATUS OF GENDER ISSUES IN LC6 COUNTRIES

EQUA

ENDOWMENTS	ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES	AGENCY
<p>• Maternal mortality rates have declined in connection with increased access to maternal services.</p> <p>• Contraceptive use has increased substantially and is now comparable to LAC averages.</p>	<p>• Women's access to financial products including credit is more limited than among men, although the share of women with an account is higher in Ecuador than in most countries in the region.</p>	<p>• Good legal framework for gender equality, ranking among the best performing countries in LAC in the SIGI Index.</p> <p>• Among the highest female representation in politics in LAC (quota of 45% in candidates lists).</p> <p>• Female representation at the local level is also comparably high</p>
SUCCESSES AND PROGRESS		
NEW AND PERSISTING CHALLENGES		
<p>• Maternal mortality rates are comparably high among indigenous and Afro descendant women who have not benefited from the overall decreases to the same extent.</p> <p>• Teenage pregnancy is a major issue in the country - much above the regional average, and increasingly so.</p> <p>• Small reverse gaps favoring girls in enrolment exist at primary and secondary levels.</p> <p>• Gender disparities (favoring men) in attainment at post-secondary levels.</p> <p>• Educational disparities persist in rural areas and among indigenous populations to the detriment of women.</p>	<p>• There have not been major improvements in female labor force participation over time, although FLFP rates and gender gaps are close to the LAC average.</p> <p>• Women are over-represented among the ni-nis (more than 1 in 4 women are in this situation), unemployed, informal and part-time workers.</p> <p>• The share of firms with female ownership and managers is lower than that of men and below the LAC average.</p> <p>• Women earn on average 14 percent less than men - partially explained by differences in endowments, discrimination and different types of occupations.</p>	<p>• Legal differences (certain jobs prohibited for women; married women without same rights to property as men).</p> <p>• Violence against women appears to be a major issue (>1 in 3 women experienced physical violence from a partner). Higher among afro-descendent and among indigenous women. Childhood exposure to violence highly correlated with victimization/becoming an abuser.</p> <p>• Only 1 in 5 women victims have reached out for institutional support - high levels of impunity, and stigma and lack of support among the victims.</p> <p>• Challenges to law enforcement/access to justice persist, particularly in remote areas and for indigenous women.</p> <p>• Female refugees are particularly vulnerable to violence, sexual exploitation and human trafficking.</p> <p>• Majority of unpaid work is carried out by women (40 h weekly comp. to 10 for men); gap increases in rural areas.</p> <p>• >1 in 5 girls in Ecuador are married at the age of 18.</p> <p>• Patriarchal norms still prevalent (regarding women's role as care givers instead of income earners and the lack of acceptance for divorce, for instance).</p>



CHAPTER 1: LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND THE AGENCY OF WOMEN

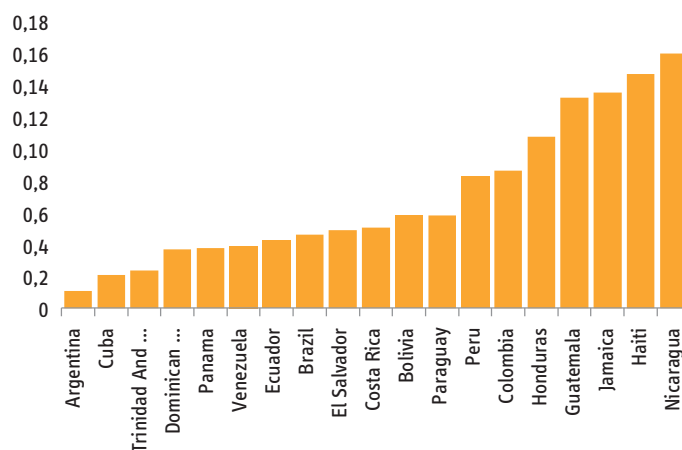
1.1 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Ecuador ranks low in the OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014 (SIGI) ⁷, almost at the level of some of the best performing countries in LAC. ⁸ Overall, Ecuador ranks 17 out of 108 countries worldwide. This indicates a comparatively very low level of institutional gender inequality across all categories included (son bias, restricted physical integrity and access to assets, discriminatory family code and restricted civil liberties). Indeed, Ecuador is one of the best performing countries in the LAC region, only behind Argentina, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, Panama and Venezuela, and above most other Andean (LC6) countries (see Figure 4 below).

⁷ The OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) is a cross-country measure of discrimination against women in social institutions (formal and informal laws, social norms, and practices). The index covers five dimensions of discriminatory social institutions, spanning major socio-economic areas that affect women's lives: discriminatory family code, restricted physical integrity, son bias, restricted resources and assets, and restricted civil liberties. The SIGI's variables quantify discriminatory social institutions such as unequal inheritance rights, early marriage, violence against women, and unequal land and property rights.

⁸ The SIGI comparison is included in this section because it has a strong focus on legal and institutional gaps.

Figure 4: Social Institutions and Gender Index value, LAC 2014



Source: OECD

** 1 imparity, 0 parity

Very few legal differences appear to exist between women and men in Ecuador.

Based on the Women, Business and the Law 2016 report Ecuador is one of the countries in the world and in LAC with fewer gender differences in the legislation. The country has signed all the most important international instruments for the protection and promotion of gender equality and has passed domestic norms to incorporate these commitments to the national legislation (see Annex 1). The key gaps highlighted for the country refer to the kinds of jobs that women can do – jobs in mining and that entail heavy lifting are for instance prohibited – and the distribution of decision making power in the marriage. In particular, married women do not have the same rights to property as

men.⁹ The last CEDAW recommendations also highlight the provision that the husband is in charge of the administration of the marriage’s common property as a central legal gap that needs to be addressed moving forward.¹⁰

Despite the advanced legal framework for gender equality in Ecuador, implementation challenges exist.

Although the CEDAW Committee praised the advancements in this area in its last (2015) recommendations, it also expressed concerns over the difficulties to apply the different laws at the local level, and especially in remote areas. Progress to make possible the application of these norms in the institutions in charge of their enforcement has

9 World Bank 2016

10 CEDAW 2015

been slow. Specialized judiciary units are not available in all territories, and indigenous women face particular constraints to access justice. Women who turn to justice in cases of violation of their rights are often stigmatized, and the police lack the necessary capacity to adequately enforce the existing legislation.¹¹

The National Council for Gender Equality is the maximum national authority in the area of gender equality. The Council is the specialized State mechanism to guarantee the rights of women and LGBT people as established in the constitution and international human rights instruments. The main objectives of the Council include: (1) gender mainstreaming in all State functions and public institutions, with a special incidence in social and cultural patterns, (2) formulating policies aimed at diminishing gender gaps and discrimination and (3) observing, following up and evaluating the fulfillment of women's and LGBT people's rights in the different state functions and public institutions. The Council is in charge of the implementation of the National Agenda for Women and Gender Equality 2014-2017 (see Annex 1).

Different sources indicate however that the Council is not adequately endowed to effectively pursue a real gender equality agenda. As an example, the budget allocated to gender equality has been diminishing in recent years. The mandate of the Council is not sufficiently clear, and coordination with civil so-

11 CEDAW 2015

ciety organizations is inadequate.¹² The Council remains removed from the decision making and execution line, and operates as an overseeing agency with very limited resources, rather than being an authentic ruling agency with capacity to effectively mainstream the gender agenda across different sector programs.^{13 14}

1.2 MANIFESTATIONS OF THE LACK OF AGENCY

1.2.1 Political representation

Ecuador is one of the best-performing LAC countries with regards to the political representation of women at the national level.

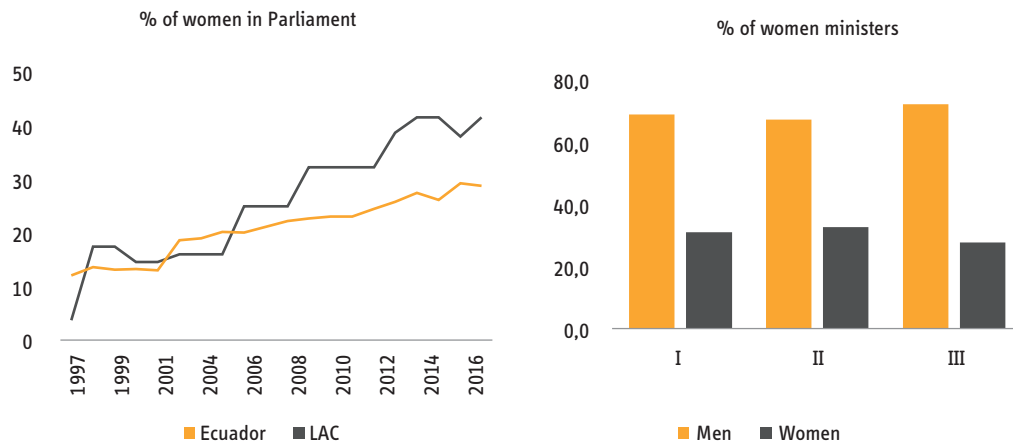
The share of women represented in the national parliament has grown from 3.7 percent in 1998 to over 40 percent in 2017 (see Figure 5, left-hand graph). This significant increase has

12 CEDAW 2015

13 UN 2016

14 International organizations also support the advancement of the gender agenda. For example, gender equality and women's empowerment are priorities for the Spanish Cooperation Agency for International Development (AECID) in Ecuador. Here, the organization has contributed to creating spaces of dialogue and reflection regarding indigenous women and their rights, as well as supporting the construction of monitoring systems of state spending with a focus on gender. The agency has also encouraged proposals on urban security that benefit women and girls and captured lessons learned and knowledge sharing on gender, among others. For example, AECID worked with UN Women on the global initiative "Safe Cities" that featured Quito as one of the program's pilot cities. During the pilot, the municipality amended local legislation to improve action against sexual harassment in public spaces. (AECID 2017)

Figure 5: National representation of women (%)



Source: ECLAC

** I: 2006-2009 II:2009-2013 III:2013-2017

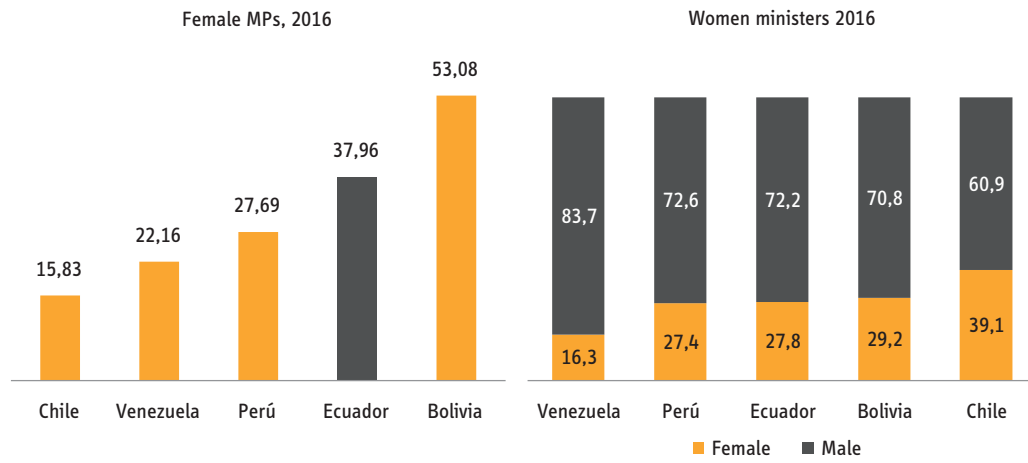
accelerated since the introduction of quotas in candidates' lists. Quotas generally strengthen the position of women in political parties, increase the number of capable, educated women with the necessary professional experience in the field of politics and management of states and have a symbolic function in terms of women's political participation.¹⁵ Women are also represented, although to a much lower extent, as heads of Ministries. The percentage of women appointed as ministers has increased from mandates 2006-2009 to 2009-2013, and then decreased slightly in 2013-2017, to below 30 percent (27.8) (see Figure 5, right-hand graph). Ecuador shows higher shares of women ministers than other Andean countries includ-

ing Venezuela and Peru, and also out-performs Chile in the share of female parliamentarians (see Figure 6).

In a similar fashion, women's representation in local institutions and top courts has increased notably over time. The share of women mayors has risen from around 5 to almost 14 percent over the last two decades, and has always kept above the LAC average (see Figure 7, left-hand graph). The representation of women in councilor positions has maintained at around 30 percent since the year 2000; only recently the LAC average has got closer to this percentage (see Figure 7, right-hand graph). Women judges in top courts reached almost 43 percent in 2016, a substantially higher share than that observed in most of the LAC region.

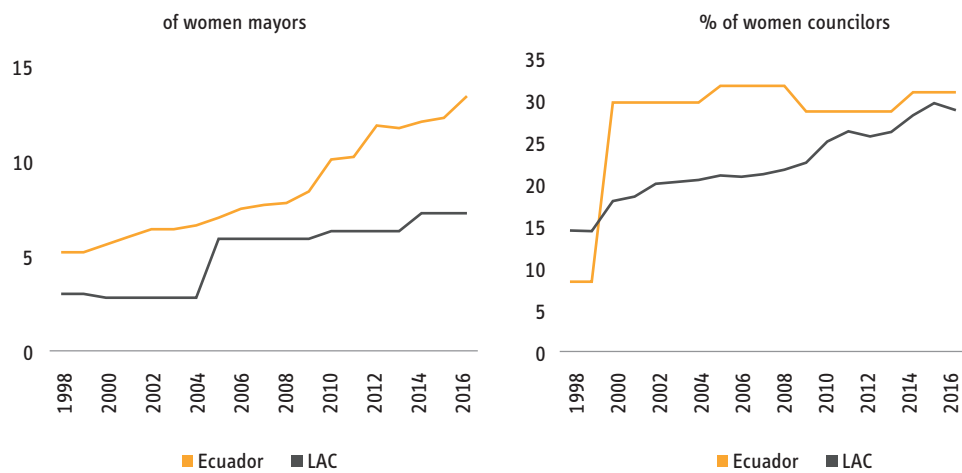
15 Poskočilová 2015

Figure 6: National representation of women in Andean countries (%)



Source: ECLAC

Figure 7: Local representation of women (%)



However, and as highlighted by various sources, minority women are not adequately represented in the main institutions in Ecuador.¹⁶ Indigenous women, in particular, have been generally and traditionally left out of political or leadership activities in some of their own indigenous communities and organizations; only exceptionally some indigenous women have reached representative positions within them, although disparities exist across indigenous groups. Despite the difficulty to calculate the proportion of indigenous women who become candidates or are elected in electoral processes given the lack of detailed data, it appears that their number has generally been scarce.¹⁷

This situation has improved in recent years. More women leaders and female leadership spaces are found in indigenous representative institutions and communities, while women's organizations are increasingly seen as spaces for capacity development and leadership strengthening among women. The increase in access to education by indigenous women and in rural-to-urban migration has contributed to this process. However, multiple obstacles to female participation remain, including economic dependency on the husband or constraints on time given their role as care givers. One factor that has contributed to their progressive inclusion in political institutions has been the constitution of Juntas Parroqui-

ales¹⁸ in rural areas with a high indigenous density.¹⁹

1.2.2 Violence against women

Femicide²⁰ is a concerning phenomenon in all LAC countries including Ecuador. An escalating number of violent female homicides committed by men in the last two decades have compelled Latin American countries to adopt specific measures to curtail this phenomenon, especially after the Convention of Belém do Pará, such as the inclusion of “femicide” as a specific aggravated crime in countries' legislation. Regardless of the difficulties in measuring and comparing the incidence of these types of crimes across countries, related to the lack of capacity, under-reporting, etc., the region appears to have one of the highest rates of femicide in the world. Despite its criminalization, femicide also appears to be an important social challenge in Ecuador. The rate of femicide in 2016, at 0.9 per each 100,000 women, was high compared to for instance 0.4 in Chile, 0.6 in Peru or 0.8 in Venezuela.²¹

Other forms of violence against women are also widespread in the country. It must be however noted that up-to-date official data on the incidence of this phenomenon do not

16 CEDAW 2015, UN 2013

17 UN 2012

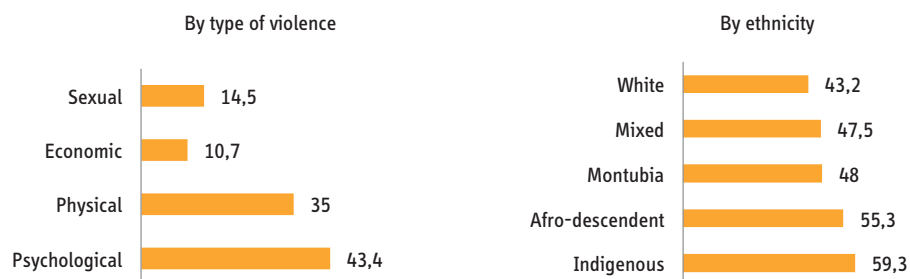
18 Municipal or community governments through which further decentralization of competencies has been effected.

19 UN 2012

20 Femicide is generally understood to involve the intentional murder of women because of their sex, and most usually by their current or former partners.

21 ECLAC

Figure 8: Ever experienced violence by partner, % of women, 2011



Source: Encuesta de Relaciones Familiares y Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres 2011

exist. According to the latest survey data (2011), as many as 35 percent of women report having ever experienced physical violence from their partners; the share goes up to 43.4 when considering psychological violence (see Figure 8, left-hand graph). Violence against women appears to be more common in the regions of the mountains and the Amazon basin than in the coast. Although the incidence of violence is similar in rural and urban areas, it is higher among indigenous and afro-descendent women (see Figure 8, right-hand graph). By age groups, violence from a partner is more common among the 40-49 year olds, followed by the 50-64 years old group.²²

Certain factors including the income level or educational attainment appear to be associated with the incidence of violence.

The incidence of violence tends to be lowest among women from the two wealthiest so-

cio-economic quintiles; it also decreases as the educational level attained by women increases (see Figure 9). Exposure to abuse in childhood is an important driver – both on the side of the abuser and the victim: Over 79 percent of the perpetrators experienced physical maltreatment during childhood, while 75 percent of the victims did. Violence was also more common among divorced, separated and widowed women, followed by women in couples and married, and increases with the number of children.

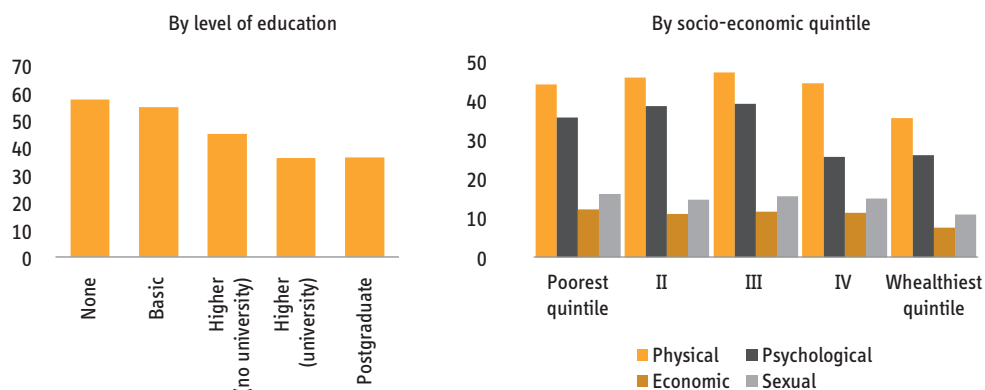
Violence against women and girls also appears to be high in public spaces in Ecuador.

The high rates of sexual harassment and violence in educational institutions, the oftentimes passive attitude of the police in these cases, and the high degree of impunity among perpetrators are of particular concern, as highlighted by the CEDAW Committee.²³

22 Quintana Zurita et al. 2014

23 CEDAW 2015

Figure 9: Share of women (married or in couple) who ever experienced any type of violence by spouse or partner



Source: Encuesta de Relaciones Familiares y Violencia de Género contra las Mujeres 2011

The situation of female refugees also calls for special attention in Ecuador. Ecuador is the LAC country hosting the largest number of refugees, mostly from Colombia. Female refugees are particularly vulnerable to violence, sexual exploitation and human trafficking. There is evidence that many of these women resort to survival sex due to their precarious living conditions.²⁴ In addition, according to the UN, more than 1,500 Venezuelans refugees have applied for asylum in Ecuador and over 62,000 are estimated to live in the country.²⁵

It must be noted that the measurement of violence offers particular challenges.

First, under-reporting is common across countries, in connection with fear of retaliation, stig-

ma, and distrust of institutions. In addition, changes in the number of registered cases can be related with an increase in the capacity of institutions or as a result of increases in reporting; indeed, in Ecuador the upward trend in violence incidence over time is likely due to the improved recording and reporting policy in the National Plan for the Eradication of Gender Violence Against Girls, Children, Youth and Women, which became effective in 2007.²⁶

The consequences of gender-based violence by a partner are multipronged and extremely negative.

Besides the often very serious physical harm resulting from gender-based violence from a partner, the emotional and psychological effects for women victims are also multiple and profound. Many women victims

24 World Bank 2011

25 UNHCR 2017

26 World Bank 2011

of violence reported being sad or depressed (76 percent) and anxious or scared (56 percent). The agency of women is seriously damaged as a result of violence by their partners, and many end up limiting their social interactions as a consequence: 28 percent reported not going out, and 24.6 percent stopped seeing their friends and families.²⁷

Most women victims do not search for assistance in Ecuador. Only one fifth of women victims have looked for institutional support, and only half of those initiated a legal procedure, although the number of cases reported to the police has increased over the years. Most women in this situation have turned to women's police centers²⁸, which may be an indication that these spaces are becoming a reference for them. Out of the total of cases taken to court only 10 percent ended in a condemnatory sentence, which suggests a high level of impunity.²⁹

The ineffectiveness of the institutional system to protect women victims is likely to dissuade many of them to take action. The CEDAW Committee alerts in its last recommendations about the lack of data in this area, and expresses its concern over the suspension of the National Plan to Eradicate Violence against Women in 2015 in the context of institutional

reforms, the lack of accelerated procedures to obtain restraining orders, the limited access to women victims to support mechanisms, and the lack of information on State measures.³⁰ The Government recently announced that it is working on a new plan.³¹

1.2.3 Attitudes towards women

Patriarchal social norms regarding the role of women vis-à-vis men are still widespread in the Ecuadorian society. Based on the World Values Survey (WVS) 2014 (results are for 2013 in Ecuador) over half of the participants believe that when a woman works for pay the children suffer, over a quarter that men make better political leaders than women, 64 percent that abortion is never justifiable and over 40 percent that divorce is never justifiable (see Figure 10). The CEDAW Committee indeed has recently expressed its concern over the prevailing social and cultural stereotypes in Ecuador, on which the different forms of discrimination against women and LGBT people are based.³²

27 Quintana Zurita et al. 2014

28 The Comisarías de la Mujer y la Familia are specialized police units that deal with intra-family and gender based violence cases.

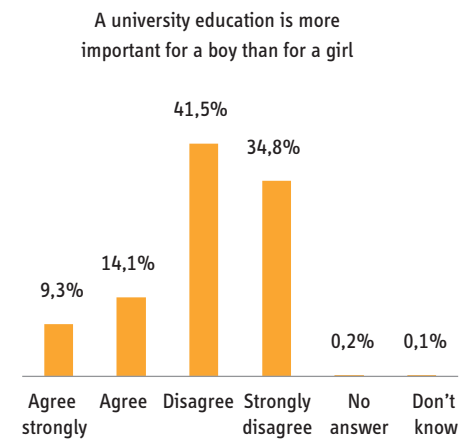
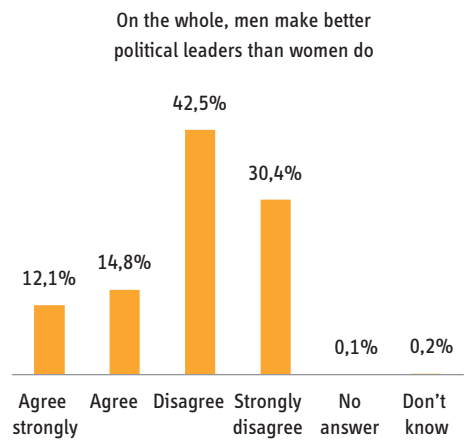
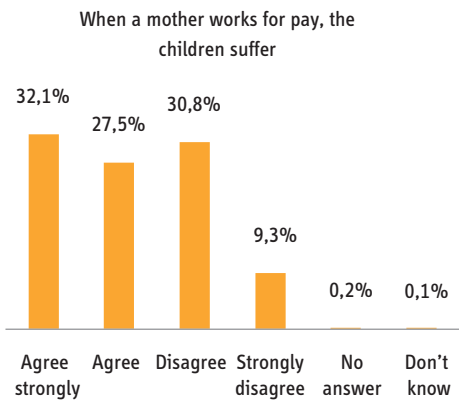
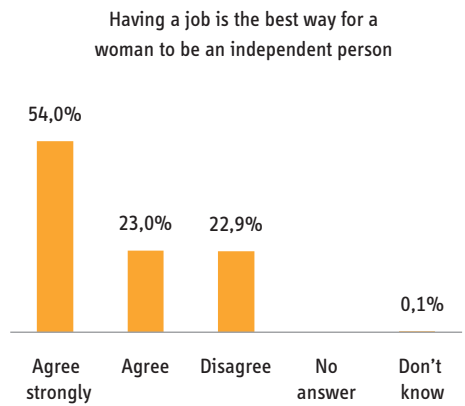
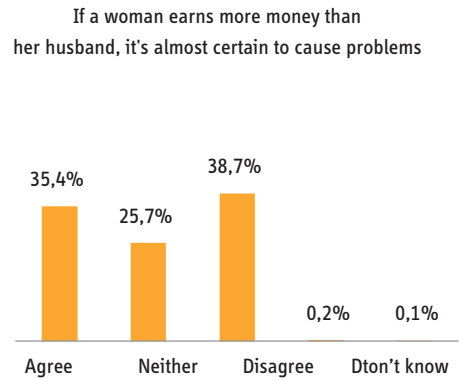
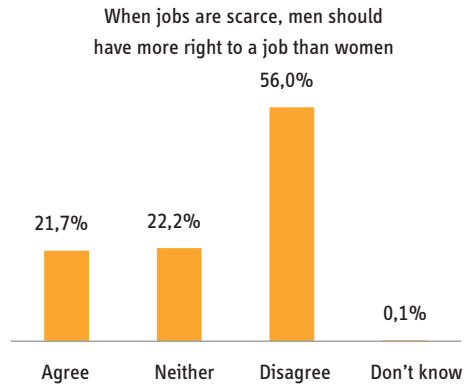
29 Quintana Zurita et al. 2014

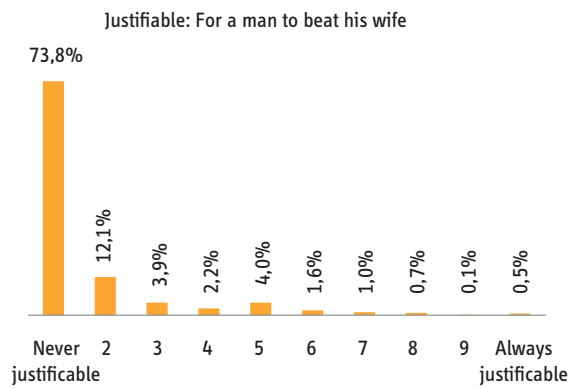
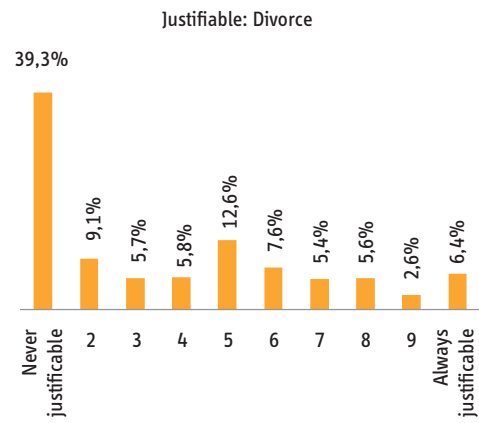
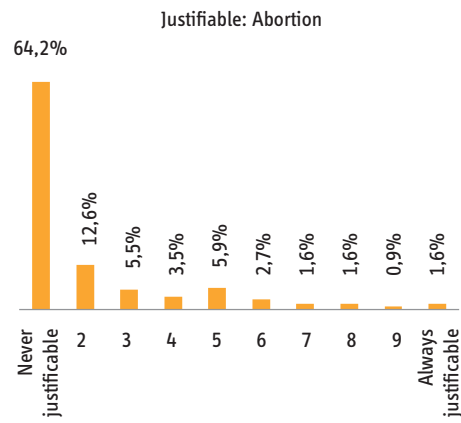
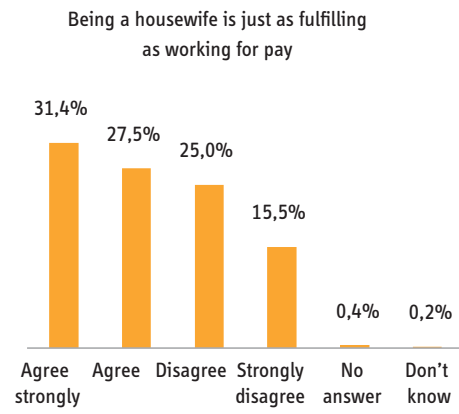
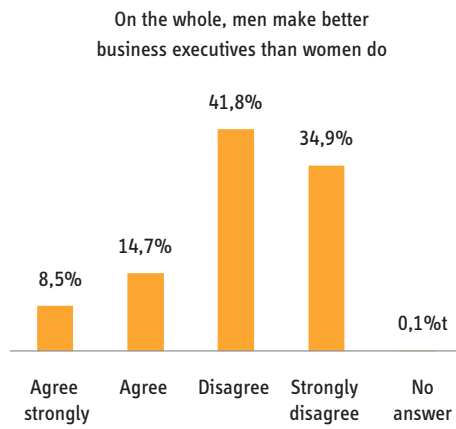
30 CEDAW 2015

31 <https://www.andes.info.ec/es/noticias/politica/3/ecuador-trabaja-en-un-plan-integral-para-erradicar-violencia-de-genero>

32 CEDAW 2015

Figure 10: World Values Survey responses on gender attitudes 2013





Source: WWS 2014



CHAPTER 2: ENDOWMENTS

2.1 HEALTH

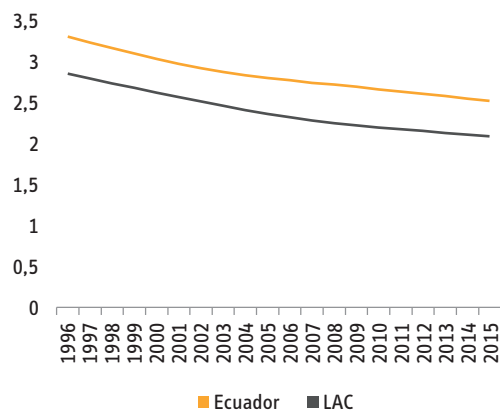
2.1.1 Life expectancy, mortality and morbidity

Life expectancy is higher for women than men and has been increasing steadily since 1996 for both groups; mortality rates are correspondingly higher among men than women. Women live on average around 5 years more than men in Ecuador – 78 years compared to 73 in 2015. This gap has slightly decreased over time: In 1996, the difference amounted to about 6 years. Female life expectancy in Ecuador is at par with the LAC average, while male life expectancy is slightly higher – 72 in LAC on average. Mortality rates are lower in Ecuador for both men and women than the LAC average, although the difference is small.

2.1.2 Fertility trends

The fertility rate in Ecuador is high compared to the LAC average (see Figure 11). The fertility rate has declined from over 3.2 births per women in 1996 to around 2.5 in 2015. The LAC average in 2015 was however much lower – almost 2. The higher fertility rates indicate that Ecuador finds itself at a comparatively earlier stage of the demographic transition marked by ageing

Figure 11: Fertility rate, total (births per woman)



Source: WDI

that all countries in the region are undergoing. Fertility rates are higher among indigenous and rural women.³³

2.1.3 Maternal mortality and access to health services³⁴

Maternal mortality rates are close to the regional average, although differences based on ethnicity exist. There has been a substantial decrease in maternal mortality since 1996 (see Figure 12, left-hand graph); Ecuador is as a result in the middle of the range for LAC in this

33 UN 2016

34 Poorly performing health services disproportionately affect women. Mothers and daughters often are responsible for caring for the elderly and children when they are sick. In the public system, the lack of an appointment system and frequent stock-outs lead to much loss of time, resulting in a disproportionate loss of productivity for women, as cited by the World Bank report.

area, and above other Andean countries such as Peru, Venezuela and Bolivia – although behind Chile (see Figure 12, right-hand graph). It must be however noted that maternal mortality rates are particularly high among indigenous women and adolescents.³⁵

The progress made in this area is likely to be associated with the almost universal access to maternal health services; again, ethnic minority women have more limited access. Almost all births in the country are attended by skilled staff, for instance, and Ecuador performs slightly better than the average LAC country in this regard. Yet access to these services appears to remain limited among indigenous and Afro-descendent women, whose different needs and ideas about pregnancy and delivery appear not to be properly respected.³⁶ In 2014 only 14 percent of indigenous women received the minimum five prenatal checkups.³⁷

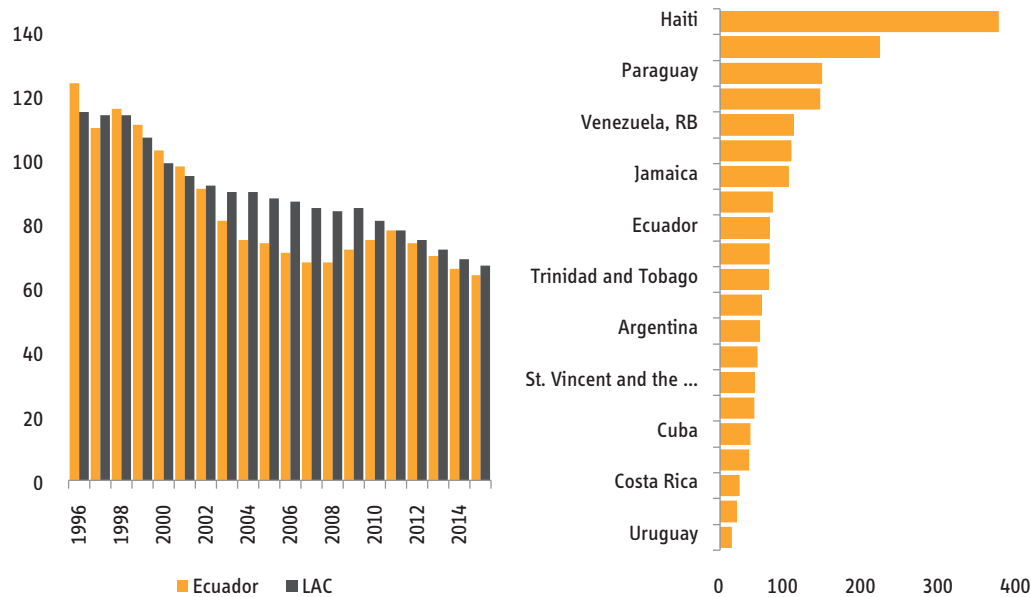
In addition, omission of sexual and reproductive health has significant economic costs. For example, a joint study conducted by UNFPA, Ecuador’s Ministry of Public Health and National Secretariat for Planning and Development, and the organization SENDAS found that the total cost of omitting sexual and reproductive health in Ecuador in 2015 was \$472.9 thousands of dollars. In addition, the cost of universal family planning coverage in 2017 ranged between \$44.9 thousands of dollars and \$73.7

35 CEDAW 2015

36 CEDAW 2015, UN 2016

37 UN 2016

Figure 12: Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 women), modeled estimate



Source: WDI

thousands of dollars.³⁸ The study also analyzed inequality with regards to access to sexual and reproductive health, which has contributed to poverty (as seen by different levels of maternal mortality in poorer vs. richer areas).

2.1.4 Contraceptive use and teenage pregnancy

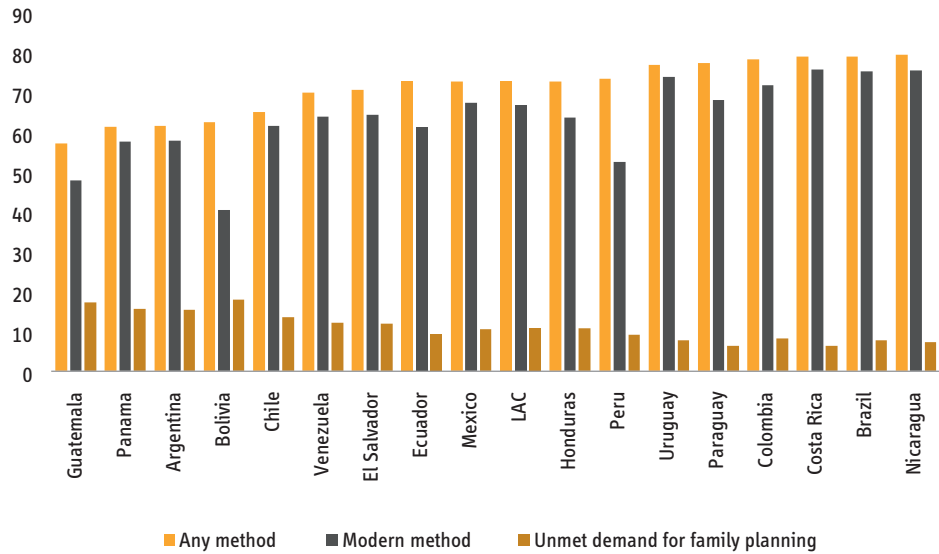
The prevalence of contraceptive use has increased significantly in the country, although it remains lower among ethnic minority women. In 2014 over 70 percent of women used some contraceptive method; this

38 UNFPA et al 2017

rate is at par with the average in LAC. The prevalence of modern contraceptives, at around 60 percent, was however below the regional average (Figure 13). The ENSANUT (2012) shows that the use of contraceptives by indigenous peoples was about 14 percent lower that year than the national average.

Despite the growing use of contraception, adolescent pregnancy remains a major issue in the country. Although the adolescent fertility rate has decreased slightly since 1996, it is much higher – and increasingly so – than the regional average (see Figure 14, left-hand graph). The gap with the region has

Figure 13: Contraceptive use prevalence LAC



Source: UN 2015⁴⁰

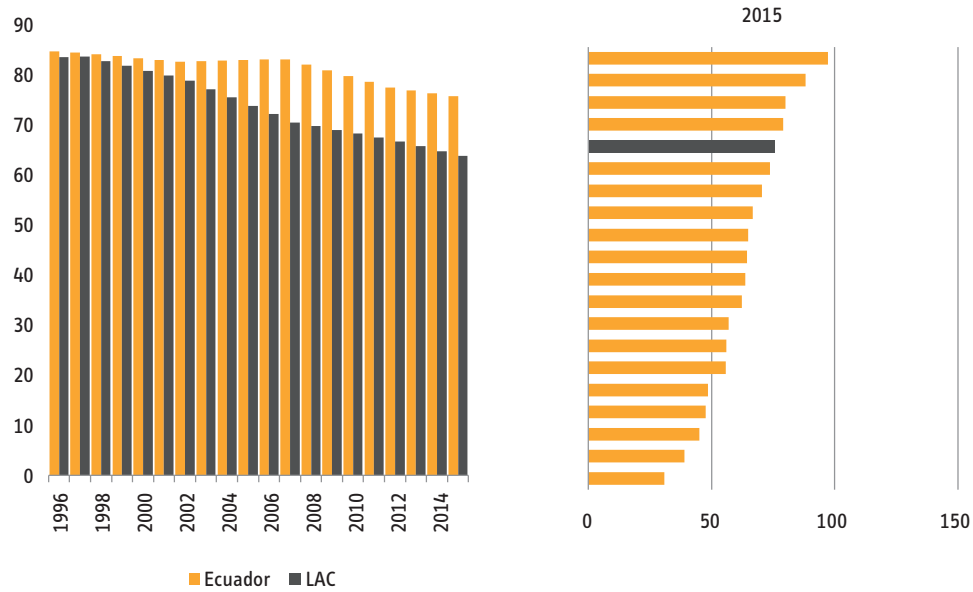
been growing over time. As a result, Ecuador is the Andean country with the highest teenage pregnancy rate, and among the first ones in LAC only behind Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Venezuela (see Figure 14, right-hand graph). Teenage pregnancy oper-

ates as a mechanism for the inter-generational transmission of poverty and vulnerability, as it can have direct impacts on the education and employment opportunities available to women (see below).³⁹

39 UN 2016

40 This report presents a concise, descriptive analysis of levels and trends in key family planning indicators from *Model-based Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators 2015* and the data set *World Contraceptive Use 2015*, representing 195 countries or areas. The Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat provides regular updates of the estimates and projections of family planning indicators as part of its contribution to global monitoring of progress on internationally-agreed targets to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health.

Figure 14: Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women)



Source: WDI

Teenage pregnancy in Ecuador

A World Bank study (2012) aimed to identify the reasons of the high and permanent incidence of teenage pregnancy in Ecuador. Almost all adolescents in Ecuador interviewed for the qualitative part say they were offered sexual education classes in school. However, the vast majority of interviewees claim that the quality of the information provided in school was insufficient and too narrowly focused. The information provided in school is perceived as too technical and not linked sufficiently to adolescents' realities; in addition, their families are not able to fill this gap.

The Ecuador study shows that traditional gender roles and stereotypes are highly prevalent among youths—these gender roles also clearly shape their life projects and aspirations. Thus, for both girls and boys, the predominant association with being a woman is being a mother. Most of the women interviewed explained that they did not have a concrete plan to

get pregnant, but when it happened they got used to the idea, which may be a reflection of lack of control over their lives or agency. In addition, many highlight that they knew the risks but were not able to connect them to their own lives; the decision was made without much forward-looking reflection or responsibility over the consequences. Some of them also considered pregnancy as a way to escape the constraints imposed by their families. The fact that they see this as their only option indicates that their opportunities, self-esteem or empowerment are very limited. The adolescents interviewed perceive their pregnancy as “normal”, since it is common in their environments, which entails that stigmatization costs are low.

Besides quality information (which itself is not always available, and supply of contraceptives, the effective use of contraceptive methods requires also the removal of barriers to effectively access them. One of the main barriers identified by adolescents in the study is shame and fear to purchase contraceptive methods. The personal interaction with an adult which will make it obvious to her or him that the adolescent is planning to have sexual intercourse is something they perceive as very uncomfortable. Adolescent mothers and parents in general heavily rely on their mothers for both emotional and material support.

Some of the interviewees describe the pregnancy as an event that impacted negatively on the realization of their life plans. Girls in particular refer to their pre-pregnancy life projects as something that got quickly and entirely replaced by being a mother. Most of the participants express happiness about being a parent; it seems it is easier for them to name costs related to early pregnancy than benefits. The main issues that are raised in this regard relate to a loss of free-time, a loss of time for themselves, living a life in function of a third person, the loss of friendship and of good relationships to their parents, and finally, the loss of their childhood. Similar to the girls interviewed for the study, boys feel the increased share of responsibility as a burden. In particular, they mention the loss of freedom. However, this new responsibility leads to a speed up in the maturation process—which some of them describe as positive.

Quantitative analysis confirms these findings. Being a woman and being married are positively correlated with the likelihood to be a mother. Interestingly, those adolescents with a more stereotyped view about gender roles and sexual relationship are at higher risk of becoming parents during adolescence. Conversely, being able to make decisions is positively associated with the probability of being teenage parents.

The risk of getting pregnant or having a baby during adolescence is higher among those who are living with only one parent. Moreover, the age their parents believe as ideal to have a baby is negatively correlated with the probability of getting pregnant or being a mother as adolescents. This variable might be considered as a proxy of parents' expectations and of the general quality of the domestic environments where they live. Remarkably, teenage parents are more likely to have friends who are teenage parents themselves or who experienced early pregnancy and childbearing as adolescents.

Source: World Bank 2012

Another study titled "Vidas robadas: entre la omisión y la premeditación" by Fundación Desafío in Quito conducted qualitative research on the high rates of adolescent fertility in Ecuador and vulnerability of girls to rape, pregnancy, and forced motherhood. The study highlights the physical, mental, and health related repercussions of pregnancy and maternity resulting from adolescent rape victims under the age of 14. The ability to exercise one's rights is also impacted.

One of the authors, Virginia Gomez, presented the findings of the report in Quito and discussed the report, which addresses the integral health of adolescent mothers, as well as the role of society and institutions in creating an environment where girls are being forced to assume a motherly role. The report also analyzes state's actions of omission (invisibility of girls and violence they suffer, as well as lack of comprehensive protection proposals for girls) and premeditation (inability of state to protect girls).

Source: Gomez et al 2015

Child marriage is also still common in Ecuador. Data from UNICEF indicate that 22 percent of girls under 18 years old are married in Ecuador, 4 percent under 15. The averages for LAC were higher - 5 and 23 percent in 2016.

As a measure to address this issue in 2015 the National Assembly approved a reform of the Civil Code and raised the legal minimum age from 12 for girls and 14 for boys, to 18 for both without exception.⁴¹

41 <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/ecuador/>

The impacts of child marriage

Child marriage has large impacts on a wide range of development outcomes for the girls who are married early, their children and families, and societies at large. Child brides are at greater risk of experiencing a range of poor health outcomes, having children at younger ages when they are not yet ready to do so, dropping out of school, earning less over their lifetimes and living in poverty compared to their peers who marry at later ages. Child brides may also be more likely to experience intimate partner violence, have restricted physical mobility, and limited decision-making ability. Most fundamentally, child brides may be disempowered in ways that deprive them of their basic rights to health, education and safety.⁴²

2.2 EDUCATION

2.2.1 Gender gaps in enrolment

Reverse gender gaps favoring girls exist in primary and secondary enrolment, while a slightly higher proportion of men than women are enrolled in tertiary education.

The net enrollment rates are only slightly higher among women than men at both the primary and secondary education levels. The share of women enrolled in tertiary education is higher than that of men, although the difference is small (see Figure 15).

However, it must also be noted that disparities between men and women – to the detriment of women – still exist in rural areas, and among indigenous populations. For instance 51 percent of indigenous girls are not enrolled in secondary education,

⁴² World Bank 2017

⁴³ and there is a significant gender disparity that favors males in secondary enrollment rates.⁴⁴ In addition, women still tend to specialize in larger numbers in traditionally female fields of study such as education, social work, health and economy and finances, while around three quarters of students in science and engineering are men.⁴⁵

2.2.2 Attainment/dropout and repetition

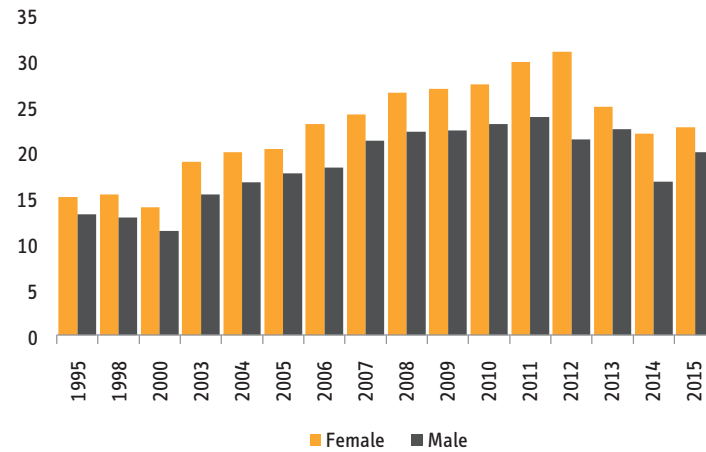
Reverse gender gaps are observed in completion. The gender gap in completion of primary education has been almost fully closed over time; in 2016 the proportion of women who completed this level of education was indeed a bit higher than that of men, although the difference is negligible. Gender gaps in completion of lower secondary education are

⁴³ UN 2016

⁴⁴ World Bank 2011

⁴⁵ UN 2016

Figure 15: Tertiary education enrolment rates, net



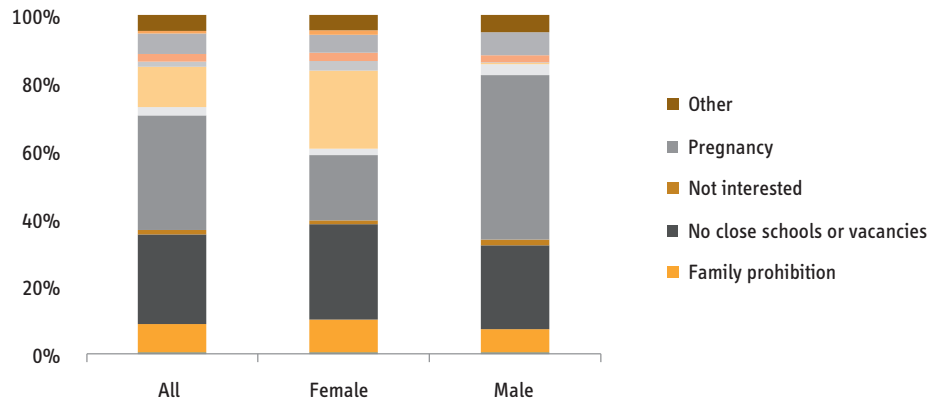
Source: SEDLAC, ENEMDU

also irrelevant, and to the advantage of women: The share of women completing this level of education in 2016 was 3 percent higher than that of men. A reverse gender gap in educational attainment at the post-secondary level also exists: 14.2 of women compared to 12.9 percent of men had post-secondary education in 2012.

However, the reasons for both boys and girls not to be in school are different. The main reasons not to be enrolled in education for boys in Ecuador in 2016 – other than hav-

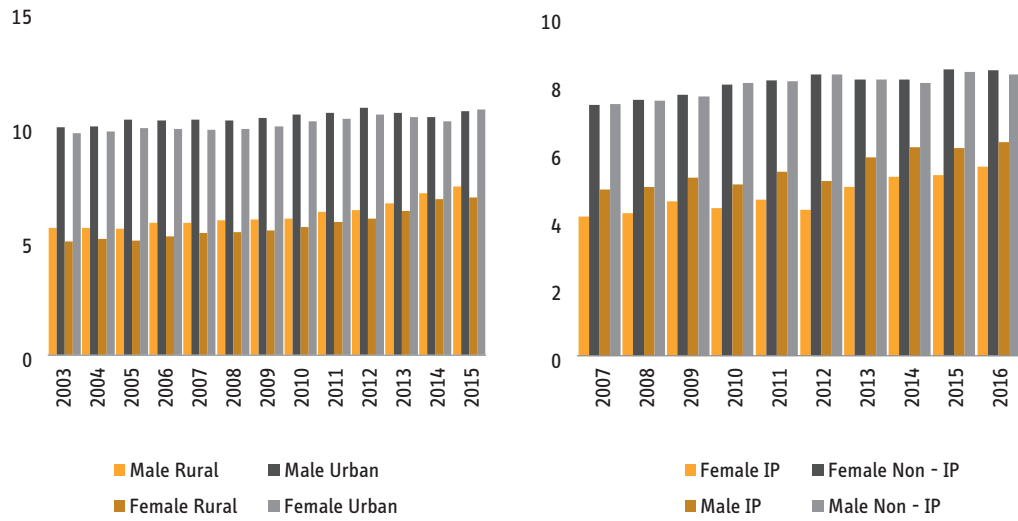
ing finished studies – were work and economic problems; for girls, dedication to household chores was as important as these two reasons (See Figure 16). Among women, family prohibition is also a reason, which does not appear for men. In addition, attainment in general seems to be much lower in rural areas, while the observed gender gap tends to be larger. The gender gap in educational attainment is also larger among indigenous peoples (see Figure 17). A certain overlap between the categories of rural and indigenous peoples is likely to exist.

Figure 16: Reasons not to be enrolled in education (basic and higher) 2016



Source: ENEMDU

Figure 17: Years of education, rural vs. urban – IPs vs. Non-IPs



Source: ENEMDU

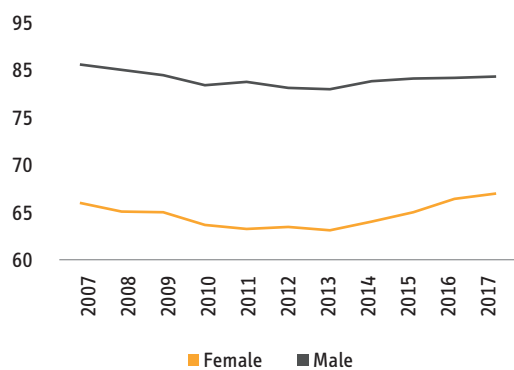
CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Women still participate in the labor market at a much lower rate than men in Ecuador, and this gap is comparatively large. In 2016, only around 55 percent of women were working or actively looking for a job compared to around 81 percent of men. This disadvantage has been constant for the last decade; differences have ranged from 25 to 31 percentage points, and only registered a decline from 2014 (see Figure 18). Female labor force participation rates are higher in Ecuador than in Chile, although they are below those of other Andean (LC6) countries such as Peru and Bolivia (see Figure 19).

There has been a recent increase in labor force participation among both women and men, which has helped to narrow the existing gender gap. Between 2007 and 2013 a drop in labor force participation among women and men was registered partly in connection with the 2009 economic crisis; this decline was especially pronounced among the youngest cohort, who was seeking to increase educational attainment with the purpose of investing in higher future incomes. In contrast to what was observed in the 2007-13 period, more people, in particular the young, the elderly and women, entered the labor force between 2013 and 2017 in connection with low oil prices.

Figure 18: Labor force participation in Ecuador

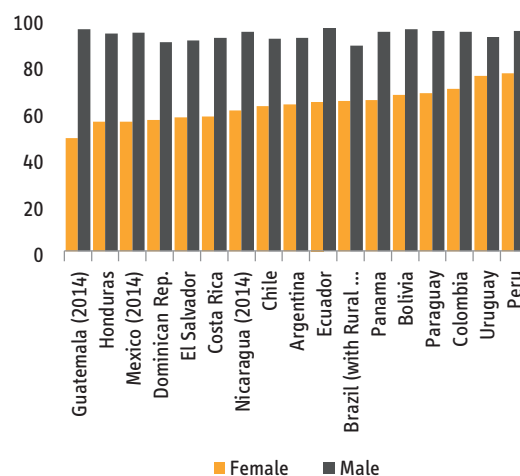


Source: ENEMDU 2007-2017

In particular, the group of 15 to 19-year-old and female workers increased their participation rate by more than 6 and 8 percentage points in this period, respectively. This resulted on a relative reduction in the labor force participation gap, from 30 to 25 percentage points. However, most of the women who joined the labor market did so through informal or precarious jobs.

Gender gaps are largest in urban areas and for older age cohorts. The labor force participation rate of women that were born 1976-79 was 63 percent when they reached age 36; this rate goes up to 71 percent for the same-age women who were born almost a decade later in 1984-87. In addition, there are more young rural women and men who are economically active than their urban young counterparts, most probably because the later tend to

Figure 19: Labor force participation in LAC 2015



Source: SEDLAC

be more often enrolled in the education system. The widest gap is found among urban men and women age 25-49 (31 percentage points).

Economic inactivity among women responds largely to unpaid domestic work and child-rearing activities. In 2017, about two thirds of inactive women reported being house-wives, while only a third was engaged in education (56 and 35 percent, respectively). On the other hand, the main reason for inactivity among men is education (77 percent) and the share who report performing domestic duties is minimal. In addition, in the case of women, participation in the labor force is further influenced by the presence of young children in the household. The higher the number of young children (age 6 or lower), the lower the

percentage of employed women. As the age of children increases, the percentage of working women increases as well and this pattern has not changed over the years. Male LFP, on the other hand, is mostly invariant to the presence of children, which suggest women are the ones bearing the care-taking activity.

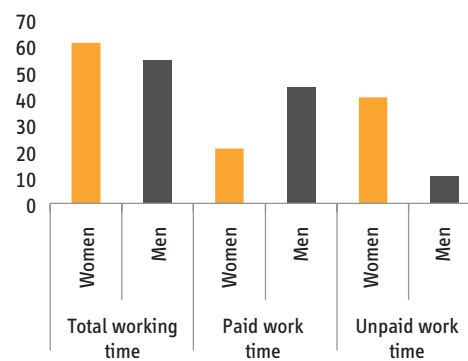
Indeed, a majority of unpaid work is carried out by women in Ecuador. The incorporation of women into the labor market has not been accompanied by a better distribution of caring and household chores, which imposes a burden on women's time and quality of life.⁴⁶ Women dedicate much more time than men to unpaid work: 40 hours compared to 10 per week on average in 2012; they also work for longer hours in total as a result (over 60 per week on average) (see Figure 20). This gap is even larger in rural areas, when there are children in the family, and among the lowest quintiles of income.

3.2 UNEMPLOYMENT AND QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT

The gender gap in unemployment rates has decreased since the 1990s, especially since the early 2000s. Unemployment rates have fluctuated for both men and women over the last two decades. However, they have always been higher among the latter. The gender gap in 2015 was not particularly large: It

46 UN 2016

Figure 20: Time use 2012, hours per week



Source: National Time Use Survey 2012

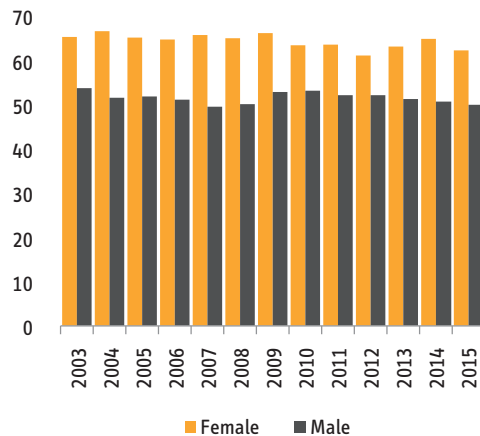
amounted to 2 percentage points, down from a peak of 14.6 percentage points in 2003. Low unemployment rates, however, tend to hide a higher incidence of informality (see below).

Women are more frequently found in informal jobs than men. Informality is widespread in the Ecuadorian labor market, but it is especially common among women: In 2015, around 50 percent of working men were engaged in these types of jobs compared to 62 percent of women (based on the SEDLAC definition⁴⁷, see Figure 21). According to the INEC definition⁴⁸ of informality, female workers have

47 SEDLAC definition: An individual is considered an informal worker if (s)he belongs to any of the following categories: (i) unskilled self-employed, (ii) salaried worker in a small private firm, (iii) zero-income worker.

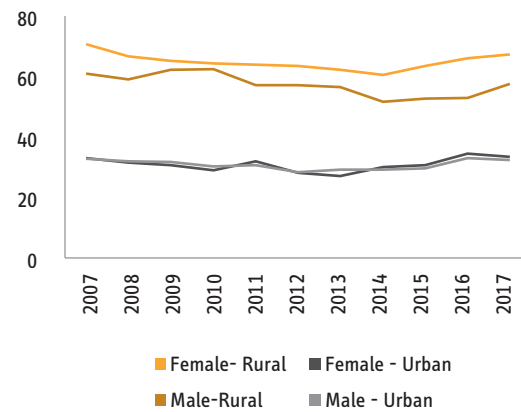
48 INEC definition: percentage of employed people working in businesses that lack the *Unique Registry of Contributors* (RUC), which is the national identification number for tributary obligations purposes.

Figure 21: Informality (share of workers in informal jobs, SEDLAC definition)



Source: SEDLAC

Figure 22: Informality (share of workers in informal jobs, INEC definition)



Source: ENEMDU, 2007-2017.

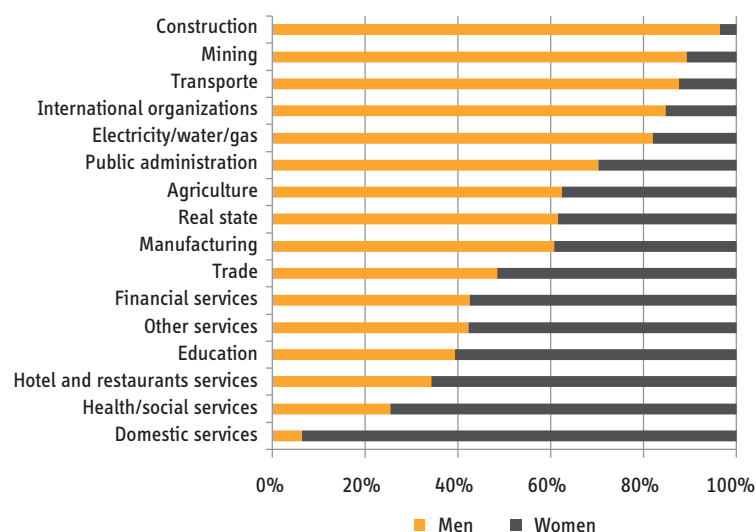
reached the same informality levels in 2017 as those observed at the beginning of the decade - i.e. more than two-fifth of female workers have an informal job.

Indeed, the increased female participation in the labor force observed after 2014 came along increased rates of informality and underemployment. Higher female informality appears to be driven by a sharp increase in informality among women in rural areas. Indeed, gender gaps in informality are irrelevant in urban areas (see Figure 22). Mainly two groups of individuals obtained an informal job between 2015 and 2016: (1) those that were inactive, and (2) those who switched from formal to informal jobs. Housemaids accounted for 55 percent of the first group, followed by students

(27 percent), and workers with disabilities (7 percent). Almost a fourth of total workers with “good quality” jobs moved to informality: More than half (54.9 percent) moved to a bad “quality” job and 40.8 percent were underemployed.

Women also tend to work for fewer hours. Women work on average 6.3 hours less than men per week, which may be an indication of their over-representation in part-time jobs or their higher likelihood to have particular types of more precarious contracts (e.g., occasional and temporary contracts). It must be noted that the willingness to change jobs is however higher among men than women: In 2015, 19.8 percent of men compared to 21.7 percent of women expressed a desire to change jobs or increase the amount of hours worked.

Figure 23: Share of employment by sector



Source: ENEMDU 2017

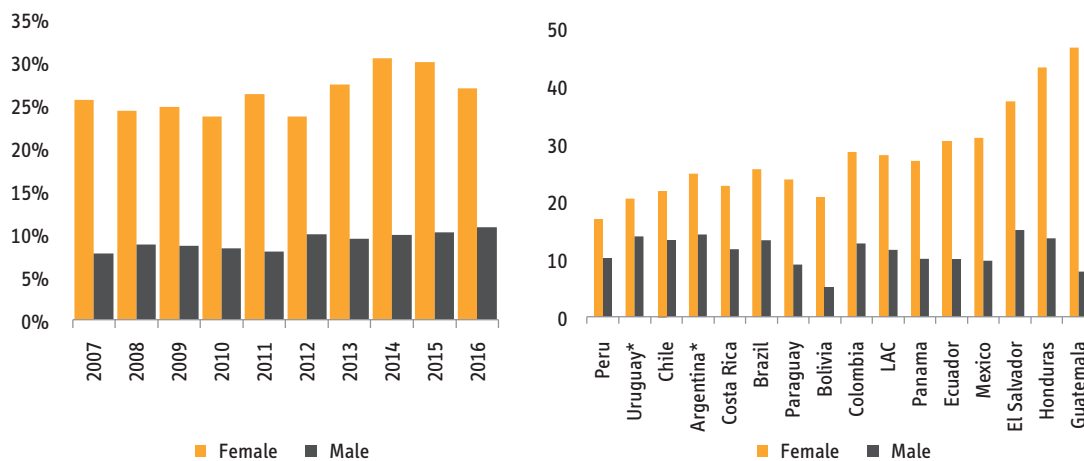
Gender segregation is high in Ecuador with regards to categories and sectors of occupations. Almost 25 percent of employed women are unpaid workers (in or outside the household) or perform domestic chores, as compared to 6.6 percent of men performing unpaid work. In addition, women clearly dominate in the sectors of “domestic service”, “health services and social work”, “hotel and restaurants” and “education”, and “services; while the representation of women in the traditionally male-dominated sectors of construction, transportation and manufacturing, and infrastructure is rather low (see Figure 23). Interestingly, and most likely as a reflection of increased education, there are more women than men performing “Professional” occupations; yet a lower

share are “technicians and associate professionals” and “managers”.

Women are disproportionately represented among the NEETS (*ni-nis*). Most of the population of young people who are neither working nor studying (*ni-nis*) is female; more than 1 in 4 women ages 15-24 years old is in this situation, compared to around 1 in 10 men in the same age group (see Figure 24, left-hand graph). Although this phenomenon can be observed in other countries in the region, the share of female *ni-nis* is above the regional average in Ecuador as compared to other Andean peers such as Bolivia, Chile or Peru (see Figure 24, right-hand graph).⁴⁹ The share of women

⁴⁹ De Hoyos et al. 2016: <http://www.bancomundial.org/es/topic/poverty/lac-equity-lab1/labor-markets/youth-outcomes>

Figure 24: Ni-nis: share of youth (15-24) not enrolled in basic/superior education and out of work



Source: ENEMDU; World Bank: <http://www.bancomundial.org/es/topic/poverty/lac-equity-lab1/labormarkets/youth-outcomes>
*urban

ni-nis has sharply increased in the period 2012-2014; one of the reasons for the discrepancies by sex in this indicator in LAC is teenage pregnancy; in Ecuador about 20 percent of pregnancies occur in women younger than 19.⁵⁰

3.3 ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ACCESS TO FINANCE

Female entrepreneurship is comparatively high in Ecuador, although the presence of women in the management of companies

50 World Bank, 2016b

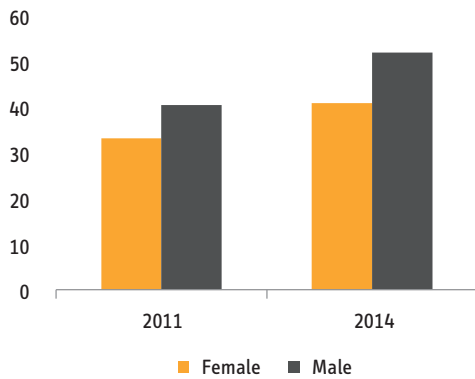
remains low. Ecuador registers one of the largest shares of women entrepreneurs in the world; according to recent research based on Global Entrepreneurship Monitor data, in Ecuador, as many as 31.9 percent of women are entrepreneurs.⁵¹ The gap in this regard between men and women is also comparatively small.⁵² However, the participation of women in firms' management in Ecuador appears to be low. In 2014 4 percent of employed men were managing a business, compared to only 1.7 percent of women.⁵³

51 <http://www.aston.ac.uk/news/releases/2017/july/surge-in-female-start-ups-narrows-enterprise-gap/>

52 Rubio-Bañón et al. 2016

53 UN 2016

Figure 25: Female/male with an account at a financial institution



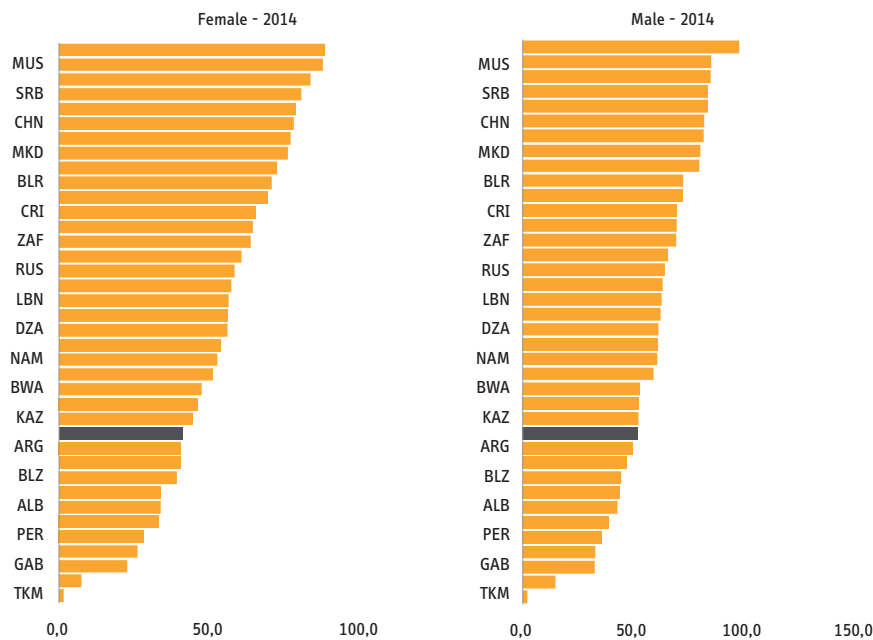
Source: WDI

Access to financial products including credit seems to be more limited for women.

As an example, and although the percentage of women with an account in a financial institution has increased between 2011 and 2014, it still remains low (See Figure 25). In 2014 only 40.8 percent of women had an account at a financial institution compared to 51.9 percent among men. Only 23 percent of businesses headed by women had access to a credit in 2014.⁵⁴ The share of male and female with an account is however not among the lowest in LAC (see Figure 26). Countries such as Argentina, Peru, Colombia or Mexico have much low-

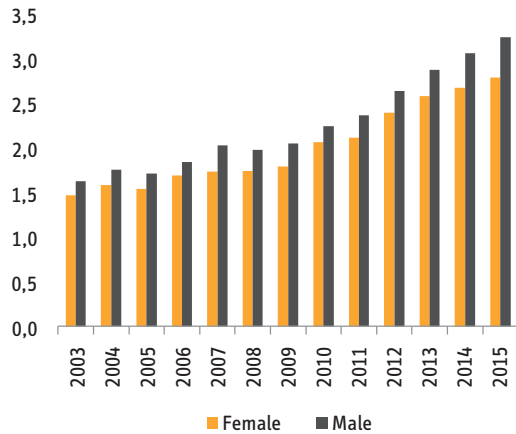
54 UN 2016

Figure 26: Female/male with an account at a financial institution LAC



Source: WDI

Figure 27: Labor income (hourly wages in dollar)



Source: SEDLAC

er shares of both men and women with an account in a financial institution.

3.4 EARNINGS

Women still have lower earnings than men in Ecuador. Nopo, using data from the Survey on Employment, Unemployment, and Underemployment found that in 2007, the hourly gender wage gap was 7.4 percent, which was significantly smaller than the indigenous earnings gap (44.9 percent). There are many factors behind the difference in earnings between men and women. Nopo identified the existence of a large “maid effect” (presence of many indigenous women working as maids), which contrasts with the “chief executive effect,” referring to the fact that mostly men rather than women are CEOs.

Thus, the maid effect highlights that women on average earn less than men (Nopo 2012).

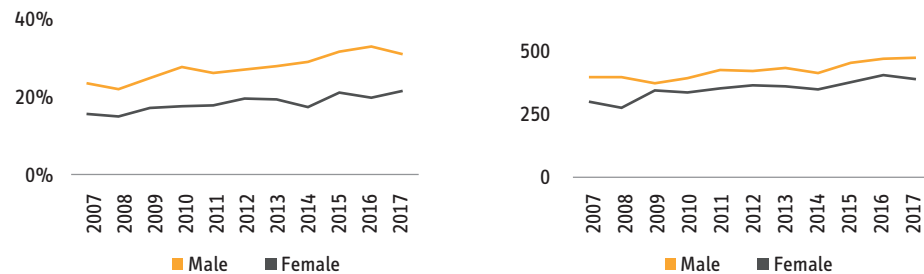
More recent analysis finds that in 2015, men’s hourly wages on average were 14 percent higher than those of women. The existing large gender gap in earnings has increased over time: In 2003 the difference in monthly income amounted to 10 percent (See Figure 27). The country however ranks favorably in this regard within the Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum; among other measures, it has included in the legislation the prohibition of gender discrimination in remuneration. According to a 2013 study around half of the ethnic and gender wage differentials in Ecuador appears to be explained by differences in endowments, while the other half may be related to discrimination (unexplained).⁵⁵ However, other sources indicate that the types of occupations where women concentrate may also have an effect.⁵⁶ The wage gap has become wider in rural areas.

Indigenous and Afro-descendent women have much lower mean incomes; however, gender gaps are not substantially different across ethnic groups. While the mean labor income of white females increased by 52 percent over the 2007-2015 period, the increase for indigenous females was only half (26 percent), and even smaller (21 percent) for Afro-Ecuador-

55 Canelas and Salazar 2013

56 http://www.banrep.gov.co/sites/default/files/eventos/archivos/Gender_and_Ethnic_Wage_Gaps_in_LAC.pdf, <http://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=download-File&recordId=3865295&fileId=3865298>

Figure 28: Contributory pensions

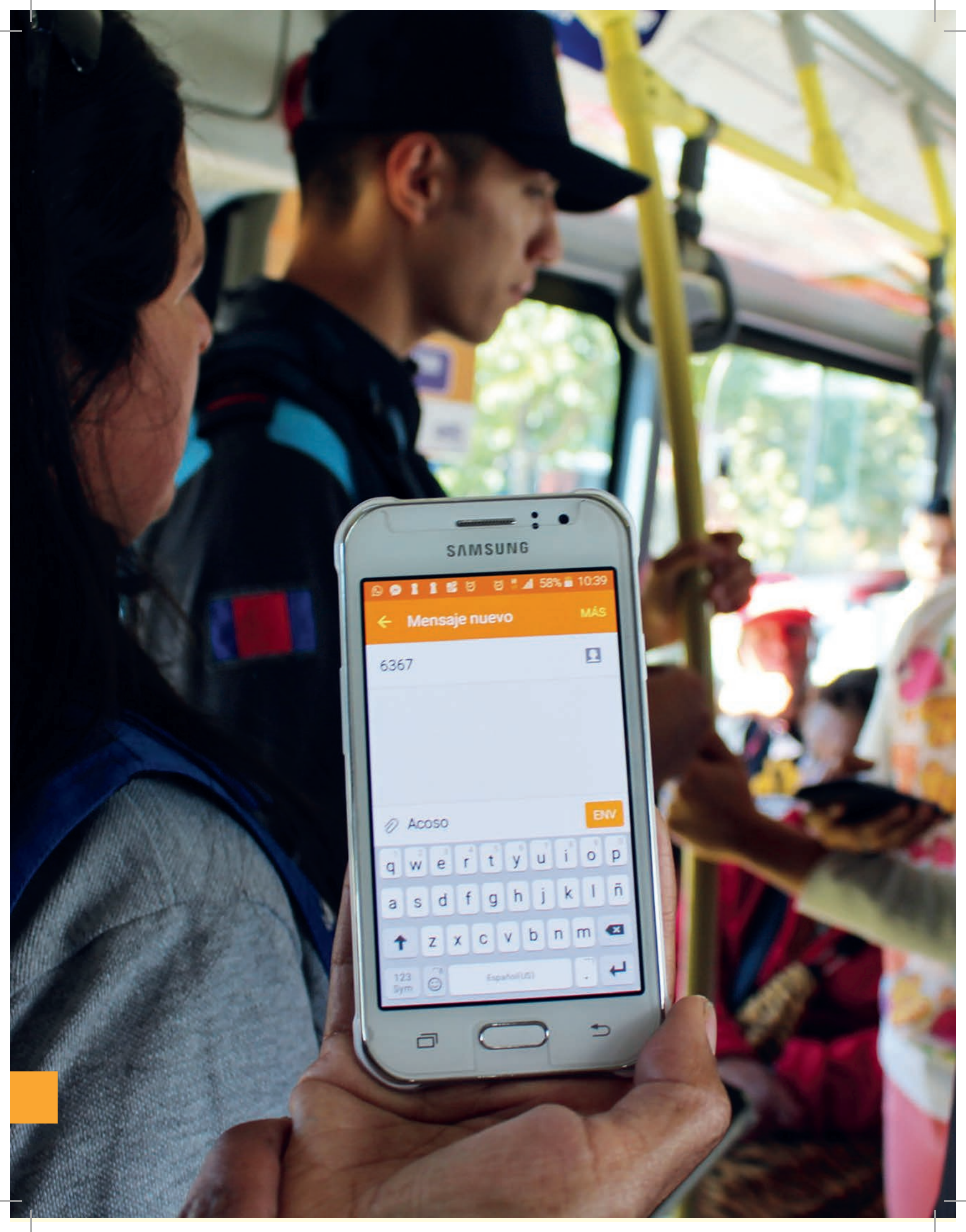


ian women. After 2015, however, due to the fall in oil prices, average hourly incomes dropped significantly among whites and mestizos, leading to higher gender gaps among these groups compared to Afro-Ecuadorians, and similar levels to those observed among indigenous peoples in 2017.

3.5 PENSIONS

Women have less access to contributory pensions and much lower earnings from pensions in Ecuador. As a result of their lower participation rates in the labor force, their

over-representation in informal work and the higher likelihood of discontinuity in their working lives, women in Ecuador have much lower access to contributory pensions: In 2017 only 21.6 percent of women vis-à-vis 30.9 percent of men had access to a contributory pension in the country. This share has increased over the last decade, although a substantial decline has been registered in 2016. Similarly, the real average earning from contributory pensions is much lower among women than men; the difference amounted to 18 percent in 2017 (see Figure 28).



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CONCLUSIONS

Main messages:

- Ecuador has made progress in the development of an adequate legal and institutional framework for gender equality but enforcement of the respective legislation remains a challenge at times. The country also stands out for the high level of female representation in political institutions but women from ethnic minorities remain poorly represented.
- Women are also engaged in entrepreneurial activities to a larger extent than in other – much developed – countries according to some sources, and have a comparatively high access to financial products – e.g., bank accounts.
- According to existing (2011) information, gender-based violence remains a pressing social issue; women still lack the adequate institutional support. In addition, Ecuador is the Andean country with the highest teenage pregnancy rate, and among the first ones in LAC. This phenomenon calls for particular attention.
- Important female disadvantages still exist among indigenous and Afro-descendent women, for instance with regards to sexual and maternal health, and in educational attainment.
- Female labor force participation rates remain lower than those of male, largely in connection with women bearing the brunt of unpaid domestic work and care tasks. The larger numbers of women in the labor market since 2014 have come along the increase in the representation of women in informal work.
- Informality is a challenge in Ecuador, especially affecting women. Largely as a result of this, women's access to con-

tributory pensions and their earnings from these benefits are much lower than those of men. Women are also over-represented among *ni-nis*.

- Patriarchal social norms are prevalent across different life spheres, underpinning the perpetuation of many of the gender gaps identified.

Knowledge gaps:

- It would be important to learn more about the types of problems that institutions face in the effective development and implementation of gender equality policies.
- There is no up-to-date official data available on the incidence of gender-based violence; this is a major information gap demanding attention. New data could help better understand the factors that prevent women's access to institutional support, as well as focus particularly on refugee women.
- It would be interesting to assess progress in the prevalence of traditional social norms and their associations with for instance high teenage pregnancy rates and violence against women, or women's constrained economic opportunity. Are norms changing

among younger population groups? Also, what is shaping these norms and what is their impact on women's internal drivers of agency – e.g., aspirations?

- It would be necessary to better understand the barriers that indigenous and Afro-descendent women face to access appropriate health services and to stay in education, learning from other LAC countries' experiences in this regard.
- Further analysis on what factors are behind the increase in FLFP in recent years, the disproportionate representation of women in informal work and among *ni-nis*, and the existing large wage gaps would also be very helpful.
- Although a large of women seem to be engaged in entrepreneurial activities in Ecuador, it would be useful to learn more about the types of activities that these women carry out vis-à-vis men, and the existing gaps in access to resources, productivity and growth potential, among other aspects. What explains the large share of women entrepreneurs in Ecuador compared to other countries?

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Annex 1: The legal and institutional framework for gender equality in Ecuador

Legal framework: International dimension

Different international treaties - ratified and incorporated to the national legislation - operate as the framework for the integration of gender equality in government policies in Bolivia. The most relevant include:

1. The **International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights**, ratified in 1969, which established the commitment of the State to ensure that women and men enjoy equal political and civil rights.
2. The **Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** and its Protocol were passed in 1980, and mandate that member states adopt the necessary measures to prevent, investigate and punish discrimination against women.
3. The Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Sanction and Eradicate Violence against Women - **Convención Belém Do**

- Pará**⁵⁷ - was approved in 1995, and recognizes that gender based violence constitutes a serious violation of human rights that the States need to prevent, punish and eradicate.
4. The **statute of Rome for the International Court** approved in 2002 recognizes any sexual aggression and trafficking as crimes against humanity.
 5. The UN **Convention against Organized Crime** approved in 2001 establishes the obligation of States to assist and protect the victims of trafficking.
 6. **ILO Conventions** – Convention 100 on equality of remuneration, 111 on discrimination, 156 on workers with family responsibilities, 183 on the protection of maternity and 189 on domestic workers.

Other international commitments are:

7. The **Beijing Platform for Action**⁵⁸ adopted in 1995 and the new related measures adopted in 2000.
8. The **Millennium Development Goals** approved in 2000 and the **Sustainable Development Goals** approved in 2015.
9. The **Action Framework of Dakar** on education adopted in 2000.
10. **Inter-American program on the promotion of the human rights of women and gender equality and equity** adopted in 2000 (OEA).
11. The **Mexico Consensus**⁵⁹ adopted in 2004.
12. The **Quito Consensus**⁶⁰, adopted in 2007.
13. The **Brasilia Consensus**⁶¹, adopted in 2010.

57 The Belém do Pará Convention entered into force on March 5, 1995 and was the world's first binding international treaty to recognize that violence against women constitutes a violation of human rights. As a legally binding treaty, the Belém do Pará Convention not only condemns violence against women as an assault on human dignity but also outlines states' obligations to eliminate it.

58 The Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, China, 1995), flagged 12 key areas where urgent action was needed to ensure greater equality and opportunities for women and men, girls and boys. It also laid out concrete ways for countries to bring about change.

59 Regional Consensus adopted after the Ninth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean held in Mexico City in June 2004. The governments of the region renewed their commitment to continue adopting measures aimed at the advancement of women's rights, incorporating a gender perspective into public policies, adopting proactive policies for job creation, recognizing the economic value of domestic work, guaranteeing sexual and reproductive rights, curtailing violence against women, or addressing HIV/AIDS, among others.

60 The Consensus followed the Tenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean held in Quito, Ecuador, in August 2007. The Consensus focused on two strategic issues: i) political participation and gender parity in decision-making at all levels, and ii) the contribution of women to the economy and social protection, especially in relation to unpaid work. Representative governments established specific measures to overcome gender discrimination in political participation, employment, education, health and the economy.

61 Government leaders agreed to facilitate women's access to new technologies, promote a democratic and non-discriminatory media, improve health and sexual and reproductive rights of women, and promote international and regional cooperation for gender equity.

Legal framework: National dimension

The main norms that guarantee the right to equality between men and women include⁶²:

- The Constitution (2008) - recognizes the right to equality and non-discrimination based on sex. In several of its dispositions the constitution makes references to gender equality, across relevant areas such as employment or education.
- Law on labor protection 1997 - establishes the obligation to hire a minimum share of female workers (20 percent) in public institutions.
- The Labor Code reformed in 2009 - establishes the paternity leave and benefit (10 days + 5 in cases of multiple deliveries).
- Law on the promotion of youth employment, the regulation of working times and unemployment insurance, 2016 - labor market reforms include the extension of maternal or paternal leave to nine months without remuneration.
- Law on labor justice and recognizing house work, reforming the Labor Code and related norms, 2015 - recognizes non-remunerated household work, incorporating women dedicated to such chores in the social insurance system, guaranteeing the right of women to retirement, widowhood, and disability pensions.
- Law reforming Social Insurance regulation 2010 - mothers will have the right to the necessary medical assistance over the pregnancy, delivery and post-delivery.
- Law on electoral process and political organizations 2009 - establishes the equal representation of women in all candidates' lists (50 percent quota) and in party directive bodies (the Constitution already established a 20 percent quota, further extended by law in 2000 to 45 percent).
- Reform to the Criminal Code 2014 - including the crime of femicide as the murder of a woman based on her sex.
- Regulation (Decreto Ejecutivo 620) to eradicate violence against girls, boys, teenagers and adult women 2007 - establishes the obligation of the State to guarantee the right to personal integrity, prohibiting any form of degrading procedure or those entailing any form of violence and to develop the necessary measures to prevent and sanction violence.
- Law 103 on Violence against women and in the family 1995 - aims to protect the physical and psychological integrity and sexual freedom of women and other members of the family, preventing and sanctioning intra-family violence.
- Law that reforms the Criminal Code (1998)

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to include the crime of sexual harassment in the education and labor market spheres - only LAC country that considers it as a crime.

- Criminal Code 2014 (arts. 147-150) - allows abortion in cases of danger for the mother or when the pregnancy is the result of rape and the mother is a person with disabilities.
- Law on Communication 2013 - prohibits discriminatory contents and sanctions discrimination based on gender identity and sex.
- The Judiciary function Code 2009 - establishes the creation of specialized justice institutions for cases of gender violence.
- Reform of the Civil Code in 2016 - raised the legal minimum age for marriage from 12 for girls and 14 for boys, to 18 for both without exception.
- Agenda Nacional para la Igualdad Intergeneracional 2017-2021-guarantees rights of all citizens and protects them from violence and discrimination throughout their lives, with a focus on girls and boys, adolescents, youth, and the elderly.⁶³

Policies:

The main policy in this area is the National Agenda for Women and Gender Equality 2014-2017. The Agenda proposes interventions to overcome gender gaps. The objective is to transform discriminatory social relationships, moving towards a State that guarantees real or substantive equality. This agenda is part of the Good Living National Plan, which among other objectives aims to promote equity and inclusion within diversity. The main pillars of the Agenda are outlined in Figure 29 below.

Figure 29: The pillars of the National Agenda for Women and Gender Equality 2014-2017

- First: Reproductive rights and the sustainability of life
- Second: A life free of violence
- Third: Education and knowledge
- Fourth: Health
- Five: Sports and spare time
- Six: Culture, communication and the arts
- Seven: Production and employment
- Eight: Environment
- Nine: Power and decision making

63 Consejo Nacional para la Igualdad Intergeneracional, https://www.igualdad.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2018/03/anii2017_2021_1_2_2018.pdf





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