



Regional Consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean
63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for
gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls

TRENDS, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT FOR DISCUSSION¹

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1. Introduction

The sixty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 11 to 22 March 2019. The theme of CSW 63 will examine ***Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.***

The 63rd CSW brings together three thematic areas, which are not always jointly considered, for policymaking. A growing body of evidence produced by feminist researchers and academia across the globe strongly indicates that these three thematic areas cannot be viewed in isolation. Coordinated and well-funded social protection, public services, and sustainable infrastructure are imperative to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment (SDG 5). In fact, they form the backbone of the 2030 Agenda: from health and wellbeing (SDG 3) to quality education for all (SDG 4), poverty eradication (SDG 1) to the reduction of inequalities (SDG 10), and decent work and inclusive growth (SDG 8) to combating climate change (SDG 13).

There are significant connections between these three areas which, when adequately addressed, have the potential to multiply positive impacts and work in tandem to improve women's lives, resulting in exponential gains for gender equality and women's empowerment. This is because social protection, public services and infrastructure are central to the way society organizes itself and prioritizes investments. This issue is key for the wellbeing of the society in general and for gender equality specifically. In many cases, social protection systems reproduce traditional gender roles, thus reinforcing gender inequality. Social protection systems, infrastructure and services are also very susceptible to insufficient funding and are thus very exposed to fiscal constraints during economic recessions.

Over the past few decades, Latin American societies have made significant advances in implementing social protection systems that support coverage, basic health and social security, reflecting better practices globally (Esping-Andersen, 1990). However, in the majority of countries such systems have not expanded their coverage to become universal, neither has the quality of the services fully address care needs, leaving care entirely to families and private provision. Moreover, in the region, countries built their social protection schemes using a mid-century western male-breadwinner nuclear family model as a key reference, reinforcing traditional power, sexual division of labor and values following patriarchal norms (Draibe & Riesco, 2006). Under this approach, care services are nonexistent or undervalued, and infrastructure is conceived to serve economic growth, in many cases neglecting basic needs. Therefore, often social protection systems, infrastructure and services are profoundly gender-blind in our societies.

With regards to social protection the eligibility criteria to access social protection –be it pensions, unemployment, job related accident or health insurance is -in most countries in the region- is based on the assumption that only formal paid work produces value, while unpaid care and home-based work does not. Therefore, while men usually work for wages and contribute to social security, and are entitled to certain forms of social security, including insurance, which protects them from exogenous and idiosyncratic shocks. Women often work in the private sphere and are not able to contribute to social security and benefit less from the social security or are entitled to access social security through their male counterparts (for example widows pensions, dependent health insurance or contributory family allowances (Arza, 2018; Esping-Andersen, 2009).

Similar patterns can be found in the way services are designed. For example, most education systems in the region provide a 4 to 5 hours daily coverage while a full work day for an average worker requires an

8-hour work schedule. Education services are not meant to balance the productive/reproductive demands of adults because it is assumed that one of the adults that contributed to bringing a new life into society will do it. Ample evidence² shows that responsibility of care for non-covered hours will most likely be placed on the shoulders of the women in the household.

While in recent years there have been important efforts in both contributory and non-contributory social protection programs and policies to recognize the value of women's unpaid work, in many cases current systems continue to reinforce the subordinate role of women and their prescriptive role in the sexual division of labor.

As it relates to infrastructure, certain investments tend to favor men and those in high socio-economic classes than women and those in lower socio-economic classes i.e investments on highways for private cars rather than bike lanes, gasoline subsidies instead of subsidies for public collective transport, business-oriented energy expansion infrastructures rather than household (network to household) oriented energy investments.

In short making social protection, public services and infrastructure investment work for sustainable development requires addressing the underlying biases that undermine women's empowerment and gender equality.

This document seeks to use a regional perspective, to foster gender equality and women's empowerment in the broader framework of sustainable development as set forth in the SDGs, through the transformation and creation of synergies between social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure and their interactions. As in previous years³, UN Women supported the development of this document to support the discussions among Ministers and Secretaries responsible for the Mechanisms for advancement of women and support the regional declaration for the CSW63 and the civil society organizations debate. Its content reflects the results of the Expert Group meeting convened by UN Women in New York, 13-15 September 2018. Following the structure of the Report of the Secretary-General for CSW63⁴. The document contains an introductory part describing the context and highlighting main risks and uncertainties confronted by the region, followed by the conceptual framework underlying social protection systems, public services and infrastructure as well as the potential synergies created among them. The document concludes with a set of recommendations in these three interrelated areas as drivers of change in the promotion of gender equality and sustainable development in the region and the achievement of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

² See for example CEPALSTAT:http://estadisticas.cepal.org/cepalstat/WEB_CEPALSTAT/Portada.asp

³ *Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work*, Background document for discussion presented at the CSW61 Regional Consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean (Panama February 2017) and *Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls* Background document for discussion presented at the CSW62 Regional Consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean (Santo Domingo, February 2018).

⁴Forthcoming. The Report of the Secretary General on CSW priority theme is normally published in January previous to each CSW.

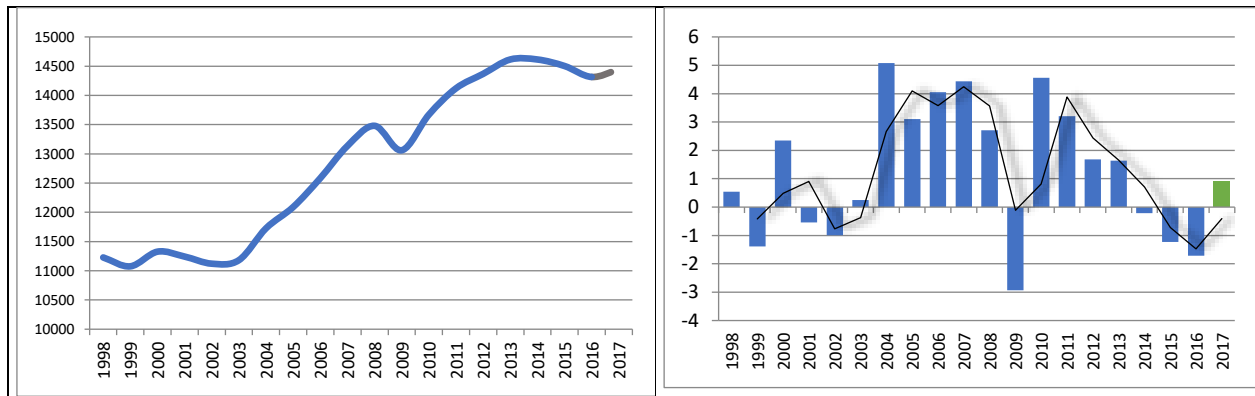
2. The context: Risks and uncertainties confronting the region.

Since the Beijing Platform for Action, which was adopted in 1995, Latin America and the Caribbean has come a long way in terms of women's rights, empowerment and well-being. In the region the feminist movement of the 60s, 70s and 80s paved the way to major advances in terms of gender equality. Governments responded positively throughout this period making Latin America and the Caribbean the region globally with the highest level of alignment with international standards and commitments, progressive legislations and access to rights, as well as innovative policy design and public investments. Structural trends regarding more women's control over reproductive choices, increased educational achievement and large gains in labor force participation and employment have also contributed to the improvement of Women's position in the region.

Over the last 25 years major advances in women's economic empowerment, political capacity and representation as well as physical integrity and autonomy have been achieved. Access to autonomous income through increased participation in the labor market, broader eligibility criteria for pensions and cash transfers in child-related benefits has meant that more women than ever before have access to their own income and some forms of social protection. Also, the gender education gap has become nonexistent in most countries, and women have on average more educational credentials, years in formal education and high school graduation rates than men. Maternal mortality rates are falling as women in rural places gain access to obstetric care, and at the same time increased access to modern contraception has resulted in increased reproductive choices for women. Indeed, the turn of the century, especially the late 1990s to 2008 was particularly positive for the region with regards to women's economic, political and physical autonomy and empowerment (UN Women, 2017).

In spite of these successes, there are recent trends in the region that are cause for concern. Following a period of economic prosperity, social progress and democratic strengthening, many countries are experiencing economic stagnation or downturns. This has resulted in fiscal constraints, social polarization, distrust in government and, in some cases, political crises. External factors such as falling commodity prices, protectionist tendencies, uncertainty about the sustainability of remittance flows and possible changes to immigration policies have further contributed to the present challenges (UN Women, 2017). In the name of austerity, many advances in the provision of social protection and the extension of public services are under threat of cutbacks, while economic inequality between and within countries increases. In fact, following a decade of significant decline, poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean is again on the rise and rural-urban stratification persists (ECLAC, 2018). Modest and more volatile growth in the region's economy is having an impact on families increasing levels of poverty and vulnerability. Slow economic growth has been proven to affect women's (and men's) income security, livelihoods and capabilities posing important challenges that social protection, public services and infrastructure will need to respond to

Graph 1a,b: Latin America and the Caribbean: Average GDP per-capita and growth rates 1998-2017



Source: Author based on world development indicators, World Bank and IMF projection for the region for 2017

On average growth rates in the region have been on the decline since 2004. This slump in growth rates has had an impact on labor market indicators increasing unemployment for both men and women and limiting the increase in employment and labor force participation rates. In contrast to the years between 2000 and 2010 where employment rates for women gained almost 6 percentage points and participation rates almost 10 percentage points, the years between 2012 and 2017 show mostly stagnant participation rates and a slight decrease in employment rates for men and women.

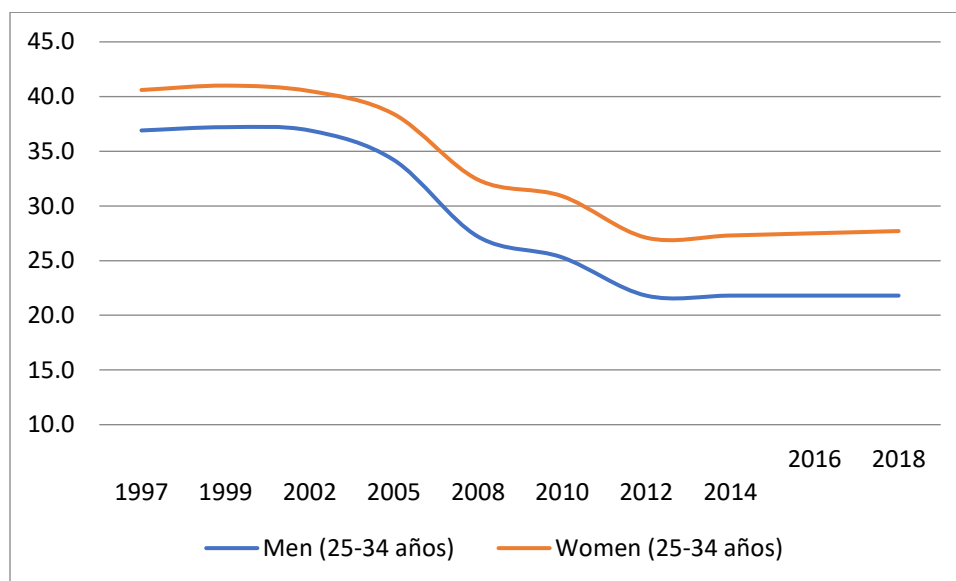
Table 1: Latin America and the Caribbean: Unemployment, participation and employment rates by sex

	2007	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2016 Average 3er Quarter	2017
Unemployment Rate	6,7	6,5	6,3	6,1	6,6	7,9	8,2	8,7
Men	5,4	5,4	5,4	5,3	5,7	6,9	7,2	7,6
Women	8,7	7,9	7,6	7,3	7,9	9,2	9,9	10,4
Participation rate	61,6	62,3	62	61,9	62	62	61,7	61,8
Men	75,8	75,8	75,5	75,3	75,2	75	74,5	74,4
Women	48,7	49,7	49,6	49,4	49,6	49,9	49,8	50,2
Employment rate	57,6	58,3	58,2	58,1	57,9	57,2	56,7	56,5
Men	71,5	71,7	71,4	71,3	70,9	69,9	69,2	68,9
Women	44,6	45,8	45,8	45,8	45,8	45,4	44,9	45

Source: ILO, 2017. Labor Panorama for Latin America and the Caribbean

After a successful period from late 1990 to 2015 where poverty and inequality rates both showed improvement, the last three years demonstrate either a full stop on the positive trends and in some cases increased levels of poverty and inequality. Graph 2 shows an example of such trends looking at sex and age disaggregated data. As can be seen the data for 2012 and 2014 show the end of the diminishing poverty trends with an increase in the gender poverty gap. The data for 2016 and 2018 are linear estimates assuming a similar economic context as in 2012 and 2014. The fact that some of the largest economies experienced a decrease in their economic performance in 2016/2018 means that the projection for these years probably underestimate actual poverty levels.

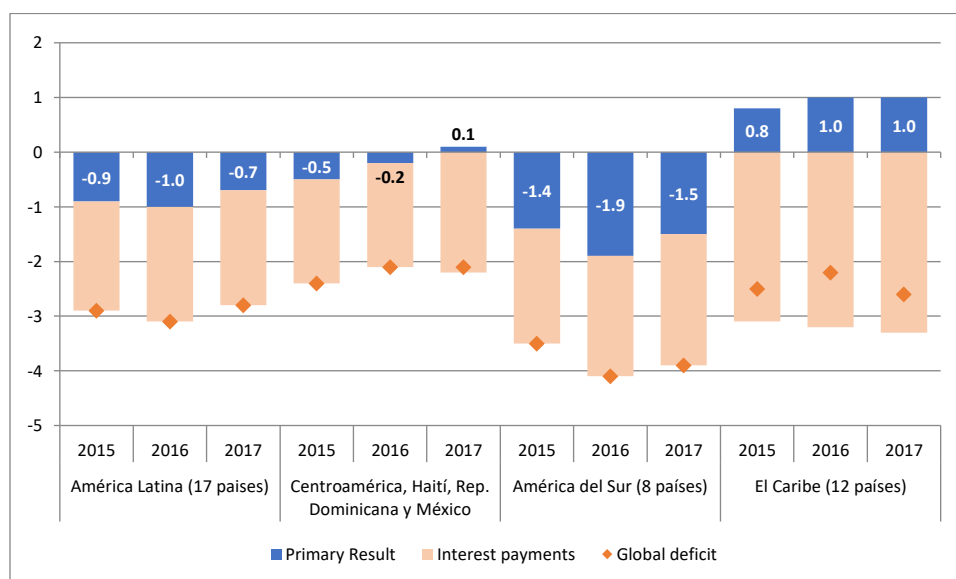
Graph 2: Latin America: Evolution of poverty rates by sex for selected age bracket



Source: Author based on ECLAC data (18 countries, weighted average), old poverty series. Years 2016 and 2018 are simple linear projections based on 2012 and 2014.

The economic reality, combined with increased interest rates, which affect external and domestic debt, also has effects on the fiscal capacity of states. The region has a complicated fiscal reality that requires either tax reforms, which will increase countries' capacity to fund social protection, services and infrastructure and creative, as well as the progressive reallocation of current fiscal resources. The alternative is not sustainable since it leads to austerity measures, which will jeopardize social protection and types of investments that need to be protected and expanded.

Graph 3: Fiscal situation in Latin America and the Caribbean and sub-regions: primary fiscal result, interest payments and final result



Source: ECLAC, 2017. Fiscal Panorama of Latin America.

These trends and conditions, while stressful and challenging, should not inevitably lead to divestment and retrenchment in gender responsive policies that protect and enhance gender equality. High levels of inequality in the region are strongly related not just to an unequal distribution of assets, but also to tax regimes that are weak, regressive or both. Public spending both between sectors and within sectors is neither effective nor gender-responsive. Tax reforms and the reallocation of public spending can go a long way in improving the lives of women and men who are worst off in the current scenarios. There are sufficient current and potential resources to finance gender-responsive social protection systems, public services and infrastructure. Political will and accountability is needed, as well as adequate design, monitoring and evaluation of gender sensitive investments and programs in social protection, services and infrastructure.

Yet the region is witnessing the rise of both an austerity consensus, and a return to market driven reforms, which could have an increased negative impact on an already diminished fiscal space. Of particular concern is an anti-gender equality ideology that seeks to strip away the hard-earned progress that feminists have made in extending equal opportunities to women affecting legal frameworks, policies and narratives in a reactionary and regressive fashion.

Despite these challenges, there is reason for hope and room for action. Ultimately governments must take responsibility for social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure whether in providing these themselves or in regulating and monitoring other parties that do so. This will ensure compliance with human rights principles and agreements, showing commitment with a progressive sustainable society where roles and responsibilities are balanced between women and men, as well as an elimination of harmful gender stereotypes, which are central part in forging new culture and accessing the full economic potential of women's participation.

The idea of social protection floors implies that a system, geared and articulated towards the universal provision of insurance against shocks and a guaranteed basic income and health care to prevent poverty and indigence, is needed. Furthermore, quality public services must be embedded within social protection systems for them to function at full capacity. Less accepted but equally important is sustainable infrastructure which is needed to provide women with access to basic welfare and to connect women to services, and to markets and resources.

3. The potential: Creating synergies between social protection, public services and infrastructure for gender equality and sustainable development.

Social protection broadly refers to programs and policies that pursue three broad objectives: a) policies and programs that seek to insure people from exogenous (economic crises, rapid increase in inflation or certain prices, natural disasters), and idiosyncratic shocks (life events) that can affect their well-being negatively, b) policies and programs that are meant to alleviate, reduce or suppress situations of poverty or extreme need and c) systems of non-contributory cash transfers that are meant to provide universal floors to categories of population other than those targeted because of poverty (i.e old age, family transfers, transfers to mono-maternal female headed households, etc) .

Usually we think of all such policies and programs as cash transfers that take place as people face shocks, life changing processes or events, or confront poverty. Yet in-kind social protection (e.g. XXX), access to subsidized employment and health insurance are also critical elements of the social protection framework

in many countries of the region. Building adequate social protection floors to enhance women's well-being, empowerment and autonomy requires expanding contributory access to insurance mechanisms and extending non-contributory cash transfer systems in a gender responsive way, which does away with the built-in biases that discriminate against women and instead recognizes the real set of risks and vulnerabilities women face in their real lives.

Social and public services can be divided into two broad categories: those meant at providing access to basic social services that support and promote human capacities organized through collective means (health, education, care), and those strongly related to physical infrastructure development and the delivery through those infrastructures of basic utilities that cover a wide range of uses and needs (water, energy, sanitation, housing). Requirements for mobility are met through a combination of collectively organized services (such as public transport) and physical infrastructure (roads, highway, bridges, walking lanes, etc). All such services require the development of physical, human and financial infrastructure that make possible the production and distribution of such services.

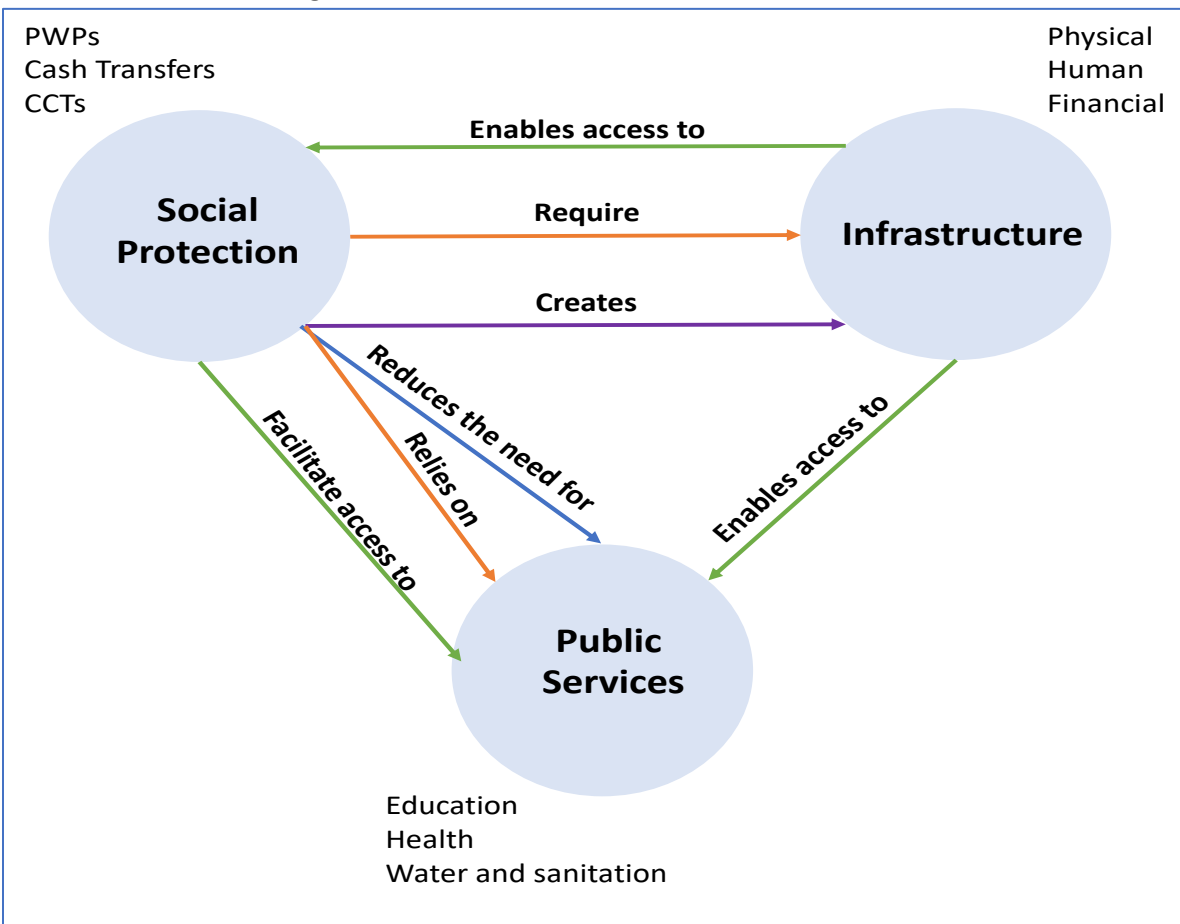
Social infrastructure can be broadly defined as the construction and maintenance of facilities that support social services. The way in which **infrastructure** is developed and the quantity and quality of each infrastructure option will affect the provision of the different services provided as well as the capacity to enact and sustain social protection systems. Decisions regarding Infrastructure investment and development are of importance because by their very nature they determine constraints and possibilities in the long term and have important sunk costs and effects in the future, which create dependencies regarding the access and types of services as well as the social protection mechanisms.

As previously stated, social protection, public services and infrastructure are not simply relevant to women's well-being and empowerment in and of themselves, but the three issues have large complementarities that can reinforce negative biases against women. Health care infrastructure for obstetric care can be of little benefit for lower income women if it is situated in urban areas that are hard to reach, with high mobility costs. Also, if access to physical and human resource infrastructure requires high copayments (financial structure) to finance its day to day delivery and costs and thus imposes high access costs, again they will be of little relevance for lower income women. The construction of highways that limit mobility of women from their houses to care centers or education centers for their children imposes huge time costs to access them. Subsidized child transportation would significantly reduce these costs. Investments in energy infrastructure that can only provide energy for light bulbs will have little impact on women's workload at home if they are not able to power other time saving appliances. Cash transfers for families with children provides resources to pay the cost of mobility that attending such centers may require, in turn attending such education centers helps create the human capital that eventually will constitute part of the human resource infrastructure.

The fact that for too long we have neglected these interconnections (and ways to measure them) implies that we have lost for too long a major analytical and explanatory framework to improve the quality of investment and policy design. In the case of gender this especially tragic. The built-in biases on each area multiply in their interactions the negative effects on women's well-being and empowerment. The opposite is also true: if we think strategically not just how each, but the three areas can work in tandem to improve women's lives, gains would also be multiplicative.

The following figure shows the relations and interaction between these three different areas.

Figure 1: Interconnections between three focus areas

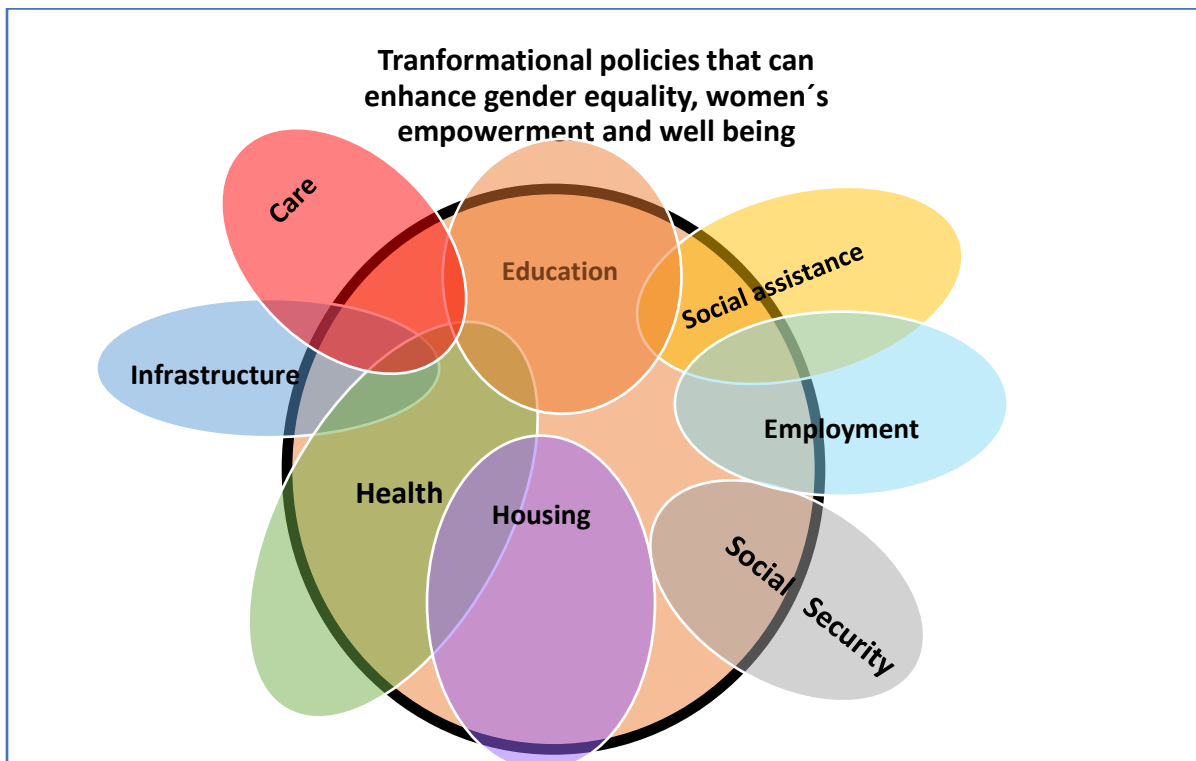


Source: Chopra, Deepta (2018) Initiating women's empowerment; achieving gender equality: Interlinkages amongst Social Protection, Infrastructure and Public Services

Another way to look at these different issues is to allow for more detail in order to see how they overlap in their potential to enhance gender equality, women's empowerment and well-being. It is not just that they are interrelated and interdependent, it is that in many cases they directly overlap in their functions. If women are to have access to income generating activities, care services, energy with adequate reach and quality, adequate public transport systems, social protection and adequate health protection then women will thrive. Figure 2 (next page) illustrates the overlaps and potential synergies that different areas can have on women's well-being, empowerment and autonomy.

In order to achieve gender equality attention to gender inequalities is needed and must be wired into social protection, public services and infrastructure from design through to implementation. In doing so we should support building resilience, transforming economies and realizing women's rights through integrated social investment strategies that combine social protection, public services and infrastructure.

Figure 2: Looking at interconnections and potentially positive overlaps in transforming areas of policy in social protection, services and infrastructure.



Source: Own elaboration.

A strategic way to approach the issue is to combine a rights-based approach gender responsiveness in the diagnosis, design, implementation and evaluation of such policies. As it is stated in the Report of the Expert Group Meeting on 'Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls'⁵:

"Human rights principles, including labor rights, should guide the design and implementation of social protection systems, public services, and sustainable infrastructure that benefit all women and men, including those who reside in countries where they are not citizens. These include the principles of substantive equality and non-discrimination advanced by the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the ILO Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and the recognition of multiple and intersecting inequalities articulated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In practice, this means attending to:

- Accessibility, which includes provision of information about available programs, services and infrastructure, as well as the physical accessibility of these;
- Affordability, which means that receipt of benefits and use of services and infrastructure is not prohibited by cost;

⁵ Convened by UN Women in New York, New York on the 13-15 September 2018 in preparation for the Sixty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 63)

- Adaptability, which means that programs, services and infrastructure are suited to meet different cultural values and technological barriers (including literacy);
- Gender-responsiveness, which means that programs, services and infrastructure do not rely on discriminatory gender norms, but rather recognize and aim to change their discriminatory outcomes (e.g. the unequal division of unpaid care work between women and men);
- Quality, which means that governments strive to ensure that programs, services, and infrastructure are appropriate and safe, and not stratified according to gender, social class, or geographical location, among other factors;
- Transparency, which means that all relevant information is made public and potential and current beneficiaries and service users have the right to access it;
- Participation, which means that citizens are able to influence the outcomes of decision-making processes through democratic means;
- Accountability, which means that authorities have clearly defined responsibilities, provide justifications for decisions taken, and that these are enforced;
- Progressive realization, non-retrogression, and utilization of maximum available resources, which means that governments have an obligation to take steps, to the maximum of their available resources, to realize economic and social rights; and that, to the extent possible, social protection, public services and sustainable infrastructure are publicly funded, publicly delivered and managed, and accountable to the public.”

The region lacks today an agreed normative framework based on the principles that covers and integrates the three focus areas under consideration (social protection systems, public services and infrastructure. While some progress has been achieved, there are persistent gaps and some major blind spots that still need to be addressed.

4. The reality: Progress alongside persistent gaps and blind spots

Women have gained significant access to social protection both of a contributory and non-contributory nature from the 1990s to 2012. Progress has stalled after that and major gender and socioeconomic inequalities among women persist (UN Women, 2017). Access to adequate services in health, education and also in public utilities such as electricity, sanitation and water has also improved between 1990 and 2011 (ECLAC, 2013). No data is available for a similar evaluation of the last seven years on a regional basis, but some country data suggests that while improvement continued, its rate decreased (ECLAC, 2013, ECLAC, 2017). Investment in infrastructure both physical and human have lagged making the previous gains fragile and insufficient to bridge major coverage gaps and in many cases of limited quality. The financial infrastructure and the fiscal basis of the previous gains also lagged. During the commodity boom such deficits were invisible because of increasing revenues due to high economic growth. As such context withered away the fragility of our tax structure and financing mechanisms for social protection and social and public services became evident (ECLAC, 2017). The drying up of resources for infrastructure investment accelerated (ECLAC, 2017).

In the Latin America and the Caribbean reality, socioeconomic, gender, generational, ethnic and territorial inequalities have metastasized a long time ago creating major vulnerabilities, inefficiencies and limits on the state capacity to deal with them. These inequalities are hard wired into the systems of social protection, infrastructure development and social and public services in the region. The good years that

span from the 1990s to the first decade of the 21st century had blind spots regarding each of these inequalities and their interaction. Neither social protection, nor public services neither infrastructure development and investment were able to make a significant dent in this fabric of inequality. That is not to say that no progress was achieved, but the evidence and recent trends suggest that they were not enough to turn the corner, or in other words to transform the political economy that created these problems in the first place.

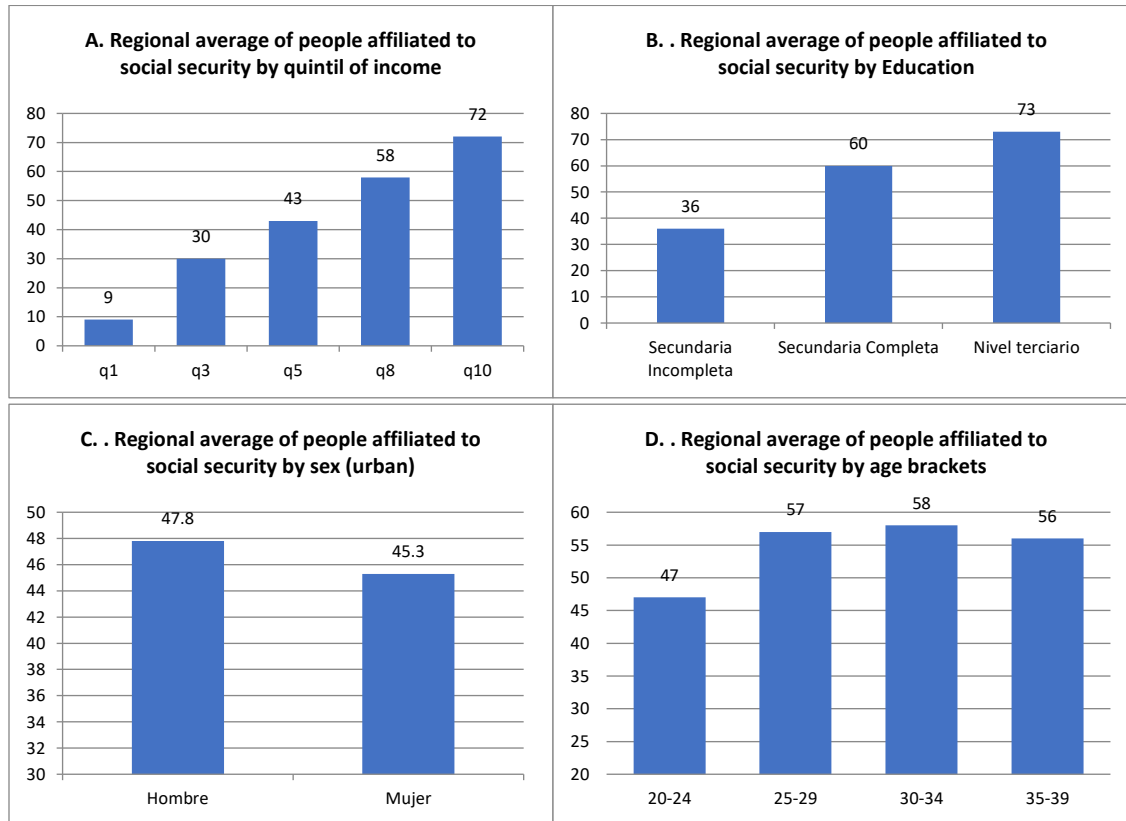
Social protection

Regarding insurance mechanisms the traditional contributory social security systems have a relatively stable set of programs that actually, at least legally, cover a wide variety of shocks and risks:

- Old age, survival and disability pensions: they are meant to
 - substitute wages when a person reaches old age and retires from gainful employment,
 - families loss -because of death a wage earner or a pension beneficiary- of income is partly replaced by cash transfer is given to other non-employed family members (usually widow or children),
 - workers find themselves in a situation of disability (due to age, health or accident related events)
- Unemployment insurance: payments are made based on a situation of unemployment, as a portion of previous wages
- Accident Insurance: Payment (many time lump sums, health costs or services free of charge, and sometimes wage support), which is given to workers that had accidents in their jobs
- Sickness leave and insurance: distributed while a person cannot attend their job because of a certifiable illness, leaves are granted, and payments are made as substitute of wages.
- Maternity, Paternity and Family leaves: The most extended program are maternity leaves and they entail both the right to take time of work due to pregnancy and childbirth and the right to receive either the full wage or a proportion of that wage during such leaves. Paternity leave, and leave to care for children, the elderly and other family members are far less developed.
- Family Allowances: Formal workers in many countries are entitled to usually flat rate payments when they have in their care children below a certain age (usually 18 years of age).
- Health Insurance: Formal workers have access to health services based on contributions to the social security systems.

As can be seen this is a powerful set of insurance mechanism for workers that cover a wide range of risks and potential shocks that most people will confront in their lives. Yet this, in its traditional contributory format only reaches people who work in the formal economy for wages and have a formal and stable contributory relationship with the social security system. In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean these systems show a number of problems. First and foremost, formal labor markets are small in the region, leaving a wide proportion of workers with none of these types of insurance.

Graph4 a,b,c,d: Latin America (18 countries): Coverage of persons aged 15 and more who are working by selected variables (in %)



Source: Own elaboration based on ECLAC. Non-Weighted regional average. Percentage of all employed 15 years or more. Own elaboration based on CEPAL, 2017. Data from circa 2015.

Secondly, in many countries of the region only a subset of these programs do actually exist. In effect unemployment insurance and contributory family allowances as national programs for all formal workers is present in less than half of the countries in the region.

Table 2: Contributory social insurance programmes in the region

	Family Allowances	Retirement, disability or widowhood Pension	Unemployment Insurance	Accidents Insurance	Sick insurance	Maternity Leave
Argentina	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bolivia	Yes	Yes	Restricted	Yes	Yes	Yes
Brazil*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chile	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colombia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Costa Rica	No	Yes	Restricted	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ecuador	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Salvador	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Guatemala	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Honduras	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
México	Yes	Yes	Restricted	Yes	Yes	Yes

Nicaragua	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Panama	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Paraguay	Restricted	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Peru	No	Yes	Restricted	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dominican Rep.	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Uruguay	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Venezuela	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Adapted from ILO, 2017

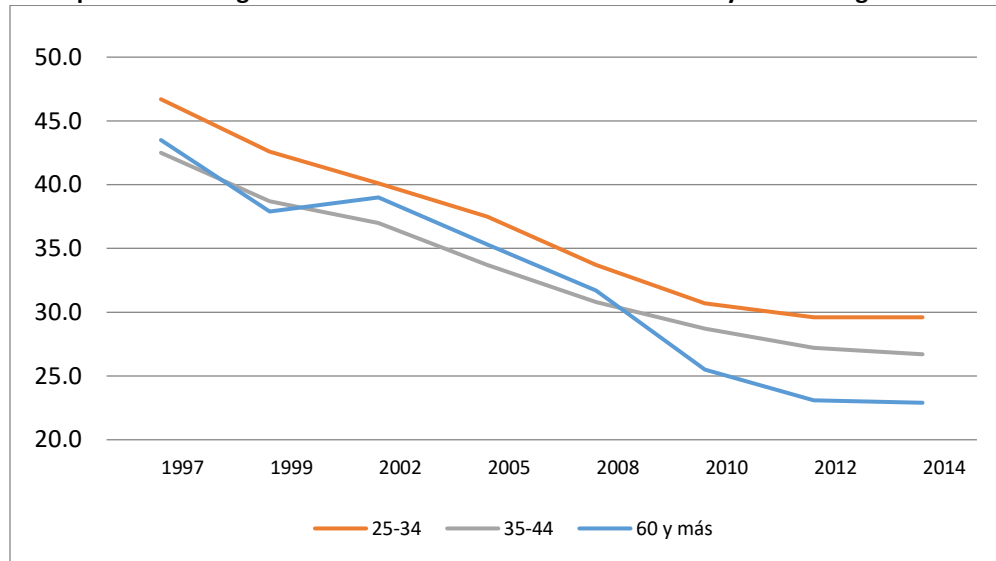
On average employed women have similar levels of contributory relationship with the social security system as men, however in the case of women this is less continuous and more interrupted. Furthermore, women's wages are lower and thus equivalent replacement rates usually imply lower levels of protection for women. Also, unemployment rates are higher for women than for men, so even those in the labor market will have less access to social security. Women work more in nonpaid labor (care and household activities) and less in paid activities. The participation rates of men and women, still differ markedly in the region. There are many aspects of women's lives that can constrain their access to contributory social insurance such as: rates and types of labor market participation, wage levels, maternity, and a shouldering a disproportionate amount of societies' nonpaid labor (Arza, 2018). Regarding labor market participation and despite an upward trend in the region women's average labor market participation rates are still substantially below men's. The average participation rate of women is 56.4 per cent compared to 84.7 per cent for men (population aged 25 and over, year 2015) (UN-Women 2017). And despite the fact that the gap in participation between men and women has been shrinking over the past two decades, it remains at about 28 percentage points. Labor market participation is also highly stratified by socio-economic status, which generates different scenarios of female empowerment across social strata (UN-Women 2017; Filgueira and Martínez Franzoni 2017).

Other forms of social protection can and are many times structured around non-contributory systems. In the region these are mostly targeted to the poor (or extreme poor) and cover only a fraction of the programs presented in contributory regimes:

- Cash transfer to families with children: while this is a relatively new feature in the region it is now widespread in the form of Conditional Cash Transfer Programs targeted to the poor or the extreme poor.
- Non-contributory pensions for old age have also expanded and are usually targeted to those with no contributory pensions or more likely to those with no contributory pensions who are also poor or below a certain income threshold.

These two forms of social protection have expanded significantly in the region increasing women's access to pensions and other sources of income. Combining increased rates of labor participation, increased access to family cash transfers and non-contributory or subsidized contributory pension regimes and some expansion in contributory coverage women with no income have decreased in the region in quite a substantive manner.

Graph 5: Percentage of women with no autonomous income by selected age brackets



Source: UN Women, 2017.

Both the expansion of cash transfers and pension reforms help us understand part of these gains. CCTs have expanded and cover today an important proportion of low income households. Pension reforms have increased coverage reaching women who without those reforms would have had no access to any old age and retirement support.

Yet most of these new non-contributory programs –especially those related to family cash transfers– confront distinct challenges in order to become major pillars of robust gender responsive social protection systems.

- They often lack the guarantees that come from legally enshrined rights. Presidential decrees (in some cases not even) are the fragile legal basis of many non-contributory programs.
- Extreme targeting and fragmentation: a choice of tailored made programs for specific and highly targeted population have made these programs less efficient and efficacious in combatting poverty and providing a real basic floor of social protection.
- Low level of benefits: in many cases the benefits provided by such programs are extremely low, making them more testimonial than substantive. The lack of legally grounded indexation criteria in many cases makes them prone to value erosion over time.
- Conditionality: Most of these programs have conditional clauses that reinforce traditional patterns of the sexual division of labor locking women into their traditional roles.

Overall such traits and problems imply that in most cases cash transfers to families fall short of covering even those in poverty and sometimes those in extreme poverty, the fiscal effort is extremely limited, and values of such cash transfers are quite low.

Table 3: Coverage, Fiscal effort and average estimated values of Cash Transfers in Latin America

	Coverage of Cash Transfers in individuals of poor households with minor child (% of total people in poor household with minor child)			Estimated Value of allowance by child minor in US dollars	Fiscal Effort
	In Poverty	In Extreme Poverty	In Medium Poverty	Typical Value of allowance by child	Expenditure as percentage of GDP
Argentina	42	43	42	94,8	0,68
Uruguay	85,9	91,3	85,4	45,6	0,39
Bolivia	76,9	80,7	72,9	28,9	0,2
Ecuador	64,1	71,8	58,3	50	0,66
Jamaica	57,1	65,1	52,1	s/d	0,35
Colombia	53,3	61,9	49,7	27,6	0,27
Brazil	52,4	65,9	41,9	32,7	0,5
Guatemala	49	64	43	13	0,06
Mexico	45,1	51,5	25,7	56,5	0,23
Panama	34,5	49,8	20,9	50	0,1
Peru	34,3	52,9	23,4	21,5	0,18
Dominican Rep.	32,8	38,4	30,8	25,1	0,43
Honduras	28,7	34	15,5	11,8	0,2
Costa Rica	24,2	23,1	24,7	42	0,17
Chile	21,8	25,1	20,1	45	0,15
El Salvador	11,1	16,3	9,2	30	0,24
Paraguay	11	18,2	5,2	26	0,22

* In the case of Argentina, coverage estimates are a proxy based on data from the social protection survey processed by CIPPEC, not for households living in poverty, but for households by income deciles. The value of coverage in the first quintile was considered as extreme poverty and the second decile as moderate poverty based on parameters of the year 2015 on incidence of poverty

Source: Robles, Rubio & Stampini, 2015, IADB para coverage, ECLAC for Databases of on line average noncontributory benefits and fiscal efforts. Data updated to 2017. <https://dds.cepal.org/bpsnc>

There are two additional large gender blind-spots in social protection in the region. The first one relates to social protection in the face of changing family arrangements over women's lifetimes. From the little comparable data that we have, less than 30% of women in mono-maternal households with children below the age of 18 in the region receive some form of transfer from the fathers (either child support or alimony payments). Both the legal frameworks and especially the enforcement mechanisms are lacking in the region. Also, in many countries in the region there are a large proportion of women who work but do not receive any income. We are not referring here to the unpaid work on care and household services that women usually do. These are women that work on small usually family-based enterprises in the rural or urban informal sectors of the economy but are classified as unpaid family workers.

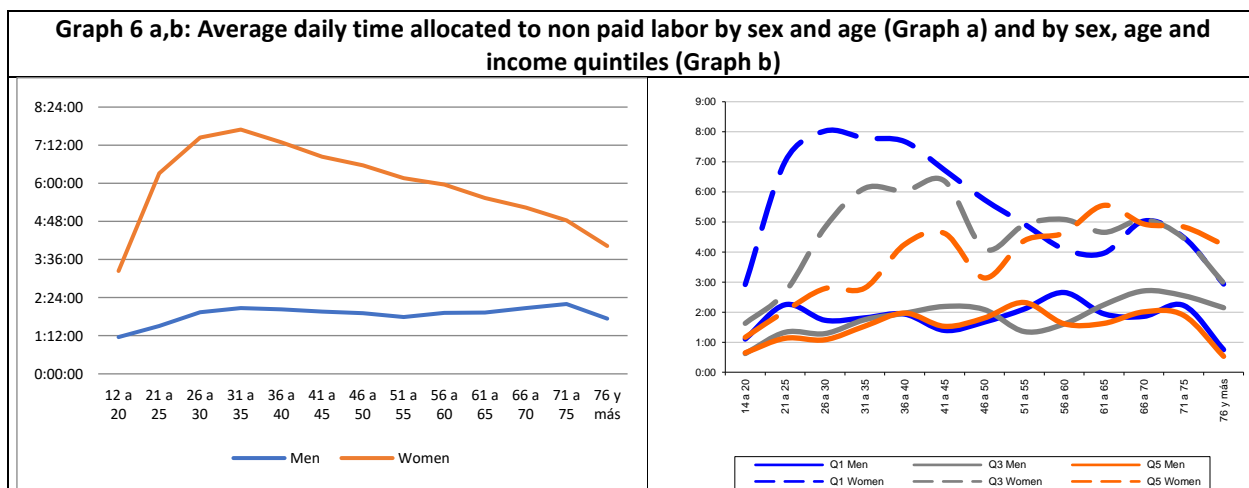
In sum, although social protection systems have improved in the last 25 years, most improvements have stalled in the last five years. Major gaps and gender-blind spots remain and have to be confronted in a scenario that has worsened in its economic, fiscal and political dimensions. Defending gains, promoting improvements and creating synergies with public services and infrastructure development will require both political will and technical capacity. Building the distributional coalitions, developing the design capacities and improving the monitoring, measurement and evaluation of our social protection programs is thus the task to embrace.

Public Social Services: Education; Health and Care

Public services include education, health services and care on the one hand, and basic access to utilities that provide energy, water and sanitation. In addition, public transport should be added as a basic service that provides mobility.

Education and health services are cornerstones for building and maintaining human capabilities, and have critical implication for women's well-being, autonomy and empowerment. As it is stated in Report of the Expert Group Meeting: "Women typically interact with public services more than men due to their roles as caregivers. Given this, we urge governments to adopt the principles of human rights and gender-responsiveness in designing and implementing public services, notably those related to health, education, child care, and elder care"

Indeed, use of time by men and women in the region show a precise combination of socioeconomic inequality, gender inequality and life-course patterns of care and unpaid work. Graph 6 shows the average time allocated to unpaid work by sex, income quintiles and age for a group of countries 10 year ago.

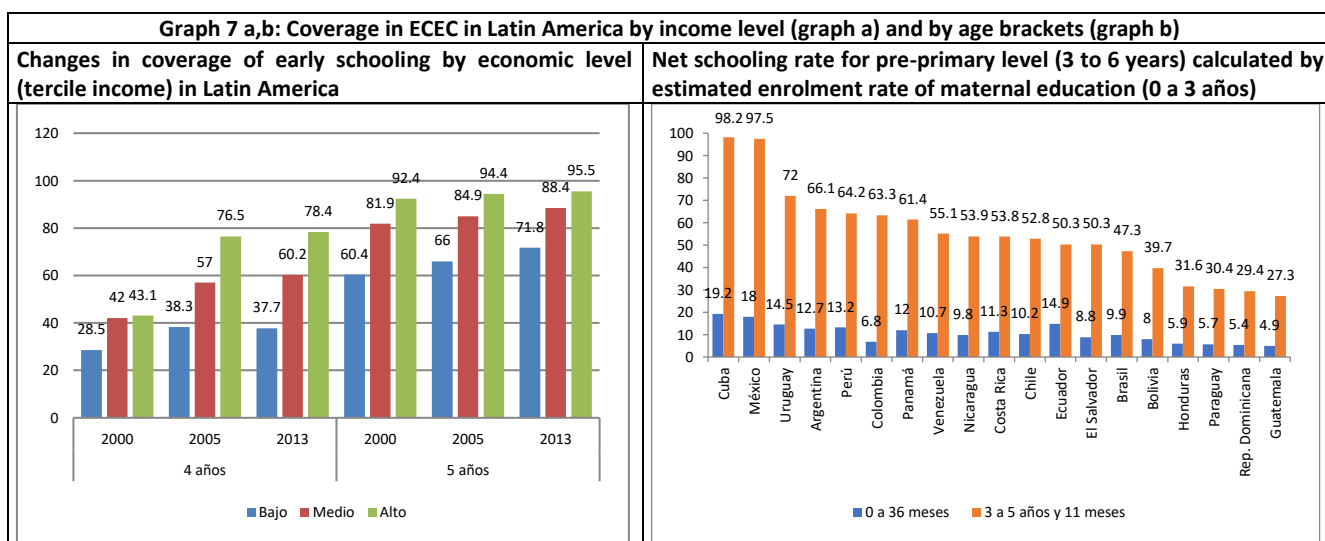


Source: UN Women, 2017 based on ECLAC microdata from Use of time survey, averages for 5 countries (graph 1), example of Uruguay (Graph2)

It is important to note that public service represents a large portion of women's employment in the region. Both in education and health women represent a large portion of workers. In the case of health care, they are also clearly overrepresented in the lower paying sectors of health care delivery.

While basic indicators of education show major improvements in women's access to both secondary schooling, graduation rates for secondary education and access to tertiary education, stratification in the options of tertiary education show a strong underrepresentation of women in STEM disciplines. In addition, class, ethnic and territorial inequalities persist and both men and women still confront very low rates of enrollment, progression and graduation after primary school completion. The quality of education measured through learning tests show that education systems have improved more in coverage than in learning. Part of such problems relate to underpaid teachers and trainers and staffing ratios that overburden workers and lead them to the burnt-out syndrome. This is also the case with health care and care worker.

Moreover, while care has increasingly taken center stage in the regional debates on policy innovation, it remains underdeveloped in practice, failing to deliver three interrelated benefits⁶. On the one hand public care services substitutes and complements family care of children and the elderly. Since such care, when placed in the family, falls mostly on the shoulders of women, publicly available care services would free part of women's time allowing them to increase time for paid work and leisure. Secondly, because care is a human intensive service it expands possibilities for women's employment. Thirdly early good quality childhood care has been proven to be extremely effective at improving human capabilities and combatting inequality (both because it levels human capabilities at the start of life and because it allows for the increasing participation of women in the lower quintiles, where the larger gaps persist). The region has advanced in ECEC, but large gaps do exist, and coverage remains highly stratified.



Fuente: SITEAL, 2015 y UNESCO, 2017

While access to health services have also improved in the region, yet major challenges remain. Regarding sexual and reproductive rights skilled birth attendance has allowed for major falls in maternal mortality, while access to modern contraception has also improved. The right of women to terminate unwanted

⁶UN Women (2015). Gender equality, child development and job creation: how to reap the 'triple dividend' from early childhood education and care services. Policy Brief N°2.

pregnancies has also somewhat improved, though abortion remains penalized in most countries of the region.

Access to health insurance remains low, and while some improvements can be identified, a large proportion of women, especially low-income women have limited or no access to quality tertiary level health attendance. A large part of the challenges confronting the region are related to underdeveloped infrastructure and investment in health. Furthermore, copayments and out of pocket spending for accessing medicine, treatments and insurance, still constitute a major barrier for women.

Table 4: Latin America: health expenditure structure by country, 2015 (as percentage of GDP)

Country	Total Expenditure in Health as percentage of GDP	Government Expenditure	Compulsory Contributive Insurance	Volunteer payment of Health Services	Pocket expenditure
		As percentage of total amount of expenditure in health			
Argentina*	9	33,5	45,2	8	13,4
Bolivia	6,04	40,3	28,7	5,1	25,9
Brazil	8,9	43,3	0	28,4	28,3
Chile	8,1	2,2	58,6	7	32,2
Colombia	6,2	11,8	59	10,9	18,3
Costa Rica	8,1	9,7	66,3	2,5	21,5
Ecuador	8,5	28,9	211,1	6,3	43,7
El Salvador	6,9	37,7	28,6	5,8	27,9
Guatemala	5,7	17,8	15,9	10,5	55,8
Haiti	6,9	11,8	0,9	50	36,3
Honduras	7,6	33	12,1	5,7	49,1
Jamaica	5,9	53,6	5,8	16,9	23,7
Mexico	5,9	23,8	28,4	6,5	41,4
Nicaragua	7,8	36,3	24	3,8	36
Panama	7	37,8	24,6	7,1	30,5
Paraguay	7,8	34,3	19,3	9,9	36,5
Peru	5,3	32,6	29,1	7,4	30,9
Dominican Rep.	6,2	27,6	20	8,7	43,7
Uruguay	9,2	27,7	42,2	13,9	16,2
Venezuela	3,2	20,3	27,4	6,5	45,8
Simple average	7	28,4	28,5	11,2	31,9

(*) for Argentina: official data from subsector and social security

Source: World Health Organization (WHO),

Sexual and reproductive health shows important improvements that impact on decreasing mortality rates and lower fertility level due to expanded access to modern contraception. Yet results show that such services fail to adequately reach women in rural areas and in situation of urban poverty. Service delivery and non-discriminatory and stigmatized obstetric, gynecological and contraception access still require major investment (UN Women, 2017).

Sustainable infrastructure: water, sanitation, energy and mobility.

Physical, human and financial Infrastructure can provide the basis for the adequate and egalitarian access to basic services such as the ones considered above. They are also critical in determining the adequate supply of drinking water, sewage and sanitation, energy and mobility. Both in rural areas and in the increasingly urbanized realities of the region major deficits remain, and many of those affect women's disproportionately, while in other cases it is the very design of investments and infrastructure that are biased against women. While the gendering of social protection and social services has had a relatively long track record in terms of gendering evaluation and design, the male-dominated spaces of infrastructure tend to be perceived as gender neutral when in reality they are not. While the social aspects of water and sanitation, energy, and transportation have been part of the developmental debate for quite a long time, the gendered social aspects of them have not.

An opportunity exists today to ensure that the infrastructure sector is gender responsive in the context of the low-carbon energy transition that is taking place towards renewable energy. The Paris Agreements and the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development are transforming the way infrastructure systems are being conceptualized, produced, distributed and consumed. Many gendered guidelines for the transformation of infrastructures are also positive for the environmental agenda.

For example, much of the debates on city planning and sustainability requires shifting mobility patterns. Shifting from highway and private car-oriented investments and subsidies to walkable infrastructures, biking and collective, public and affordable transportation benefits both the environment and women. Indeed, taxation policies frequently penalize public transport and reward private vehicle (car) ownership. In addition to the environmental costs, this policy choice has gendered costs: women are less likely to own a car than men and are more likely to rely on collective public transport. Moreover, women have specific mobility needs: they are more likely to "trip-chain," travel with young children or people with disabilities, and make trips in off-peak hours, characteristics that should be recognized in transit planning.

Opportunities to promote gender equality also exist in the management, accessibility, and use of water and sanitation infrastructure (SDG6). Women and girls bear a disproportionate responsibility as primary users, providers and managers of water and sanitation at the household level. Large-scale infrastructure investments, water allocations or water trading—remain largely gender-blind. Sustainable water and sanitation infrastructure must be designed with women's and the most marginalized persons' needs in mind. It is them that carry water, are responsible for small children's toilet use, and manage water in the household as they perform cleaning and cooking chores.

In the region towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century a significant portion of households had no adequate access to sanitation, drinking water, and energy and communication infrastructure. These deficits are more pronounced in households with children aged 14 or less which is a moment in the life-cycle of families and women were the burden of care and production of food and services through non-paid household work of women is highest. While there is a clear pattern of improvement across the region between the 2000s and 2011 major gaps persist.

Table 5: Proportion of children under the age of 15 in households without access to basic services

Country	Year	Access to drinkable water	Access to sanitation	Quality of Housing	Access to information and communication
Argentina (urban)	1999	2,0	8,0	22,9	-
	2011	1,3	2,1	20,7	-
Bolivia	1999	38,5	65,2	77,6	34,9
	2009	34,1	52,9	51,3	12,3
Brazil	1999	15,2	43,6	5,4	9,5
	2011	7,6	29,4	2,8	1,4
Chile	2000	9,9	13,7	12,1	12,9
	2011	6,0	3,5	7,0	1,7
Colombia	1999	7,8	20,2	31,9	21,1
	2011	8,8	14,6	24,6	4,9
Costa Rica	2002	9,4	8,4	9,3	8,2
	2011	10,5	4,8	3,9	1,0
Ecuador (urban)	2002	8,4	20,6	30,0	57,4
	2011	3,9	5,2	14,1	1,9
Ecuador	2011	11,7	20,9	23,8	7,9
El Salvador	1999	35,8	18,6	82,1	30,3
	2010	21,5	13,3	71,4	10,4
Guatemala	1998	22,0	68,7	74,3	46,7
	2006	13,6	56,3	67,6	22,7
Honduras	1999	15,8	51,1	54,0	37,5
	2010	15,7	25,0	44,4	12,9
Mexico	2000	18,2	29,2	37,6	10,2
	2010	8,3	13,2	22,4	4,1
Nicaragua	2001	17,7	53,1	73,4	44,6
	2005	18,9	50,2	62,7	38,4
Paraguay	2000	40,1	53,3	48,1	18,6
	2011	24,7	31,5	32,1	3,4
Peru	1999	36,7	47,2	63,6	82,9
	2011	26,8	26,4	53,3	9,4
Dominican Rep.	2002	41,6	46,2	14,0	10,0
	2011	30,2	32,8	11,0	4,4
Uruguay (urban)	1999	2,5	11,2	12,5	2,4
	2011	0,3	2,2	9,1	0,4
Uruguay	2011	1,4	2,6	9,2	0,8
Venezuela	1999	8,6	15,1	30,3	8,8
	2011	6,9	8,5	24,2	1,3
Latin America (14 countries)	2000	18,2	36,7	29,2	19,1
	2011	11,2	23,3	21,4	5,0

Source: ECLAC, 2013

One of the basic reasons behind these results relates to the high territorial inequality and the mirror image in terms of infrastructure investment. Indeed, these deficits are concentrated and clustered spatially in rural areas and in urban segregated areas where the poor live and dwell (ECLAC, 2017). The region presents inequalities between sub-regions where the richest region has 12 times the GDP per-capita of the poorest province (ECLAC, 2017). Also, the 1990s and early 2000s witnessed the intensification of a historical pattern in urban centers: high socioeconomic segregation and informal access to land in places where no facilities for sanitation and sewage exist, not electricity grids or where no piped water reaches.

If basic infrastructure and access to fundamental utilities remains a challenge for the region a more invisible but extremely critical deficit relates to infrastructure and services for mobility in general and in cities in particular. In Latin America and the Caribbean, women still spend many out of their day traveling on poor-quality transit systems and face strong financial and physical barriers to mobility. As income-generating (productive) trips are more valued than care-based (reproductive) trips, men usually get access to motorized transport – both mass and individual – before women, underpinning a gender imbalance. In addition, public insecurity and crime make mobility a risky undertaking after certain day hours in many neighborhoods. This particularly affects women as they are many times the preferred prey of petty and street crime and burglary, as well as sexual assault and molestation.

The majority of women in the large cities of Latin America walk and use informal transport and public transport and do so to a larger extent than men. Furthermore, women are more likely to be employed as part-time and informal workers than men, especially as domestic workers, so their destinations are not necessarily concentrated in the areas that cluster large and medium scale employment venues, but also residential areas. As they need to organize their days around their own work and their children's timetables, their travel times can be much earlier or later than the typical work day around which most transit is planned. Women make more trips associated with their reproductive work in maintaining the household. Women trip chain to a far larger extent than men. They are more likely to have multiple destinations even in the same trip. For example, while their ultimate destination might be the market or their job, on the way there, they will stop at day care or school to drop off a child, etc. It also means that women may need to use a number of different modes of public transport and may have to pay for each of these trips (if there is no tariff integration). In spite of this, urban infrastructure and transportation systems in our large cities favor highways, residential to downtown trips, private car transportation, and lack adequate investments in walking and biking infrastructures as well as flexible, affordable and integrated collective transportation. Thus, women face major challenges regarding the time needed for their mobility and adequate accessibility to work, services and markets.

A basic check list for the design and evaluation of infrastructure and transport systems for mobility

- Has the urban transport program or project identified male and female participants, clients and stakeholders?
- Has baseline data been collected and analyzed on gender relations, roles and identities within the urban environment and the use of transport?
- Has the urban transport program or project taken into consideration the analysis of gender relations, roles and identities and introduced a component or transport measure to address a gender issue?
- Has the urban transport program or project taken into consideration the analysis of gender relations, roles and identities and introduced a component or transport measure to address a gender issue?
- Has the urban transport program or project developed an indicator that measures gender specific outcomes and evaluate the effectiveness of the component or measure designed to address the above-mentioned gender issue?

- Has transportation planning been based on local conditions and specific and local needs of men, women, youth, elderly and the disabled?
- Have statistics and situations in developed countries been referenced and adapted to reflect the needs and resources in developing countries?
- Have jobs and social services been brought closer to men and women by developing accessible land use patterns. Has the issue of personal mobility and access of non-drivers, of which a majority are women and the elderly, been thought through?
- Have policy, planning or investment practices that favor automobile travel over other modes or lead to automobile dependency been avoided?
- Have the implications of policies and projects that degrade pedestrian and cycling conditions, such as new highways that divide existing communities or eliminate walkways been considered.
- Have measures been implemented to control vehicle traffic volumes and speeds, particularly in urban neighborhoods?
- Has the participation of various stakeholders in the transportation planning and decision making been facilitated?
- Has comparative advantage been given to traditionally socially and transport disadvantaged by applying full-cost pricing to automobile travel, road pricing, parking pricing and fuel taxes and distance-based charges?

Source: (Allen, 2018) Approaches for Gender Responsive Urban Mobility. GIZ/SUTP, pg. 39.

5. The way forward: Conclusions and recommendations

Social Protection Recommendations

Addressing gender gaps and biases in social protection

- Advance towards Universal Family Transfers or universal child grant for families with Children gradually suppressing narrow targeting and conditionalities.
- Provide targeted top-up to child grants for single female headed households.
- Review, redesign and improve enforcement and guarantees for single female headed household to receive child support from ex-partners.
- Provide social protection rights and schemes that recognize unpaid household work. While universal and non-conditional family allowances for women constitutes a natural tool, other social insurance mechanisms must be considered (i.e. care credits that recognize the unpaid work that women do and make access to pensions, health, sickness and accident insurance more accessible and equitable).
- Extend non-contributory social protection systems or subsidize people in low income and precarious jobs to access contributory systems. The goal is to protect workers in all forms of income generating activities. Also ensure portability of social security rights for migrant workers.
- Recognize invisible work performed by women in rural and urban areas (e.g. non-paid family workers) and provide contributory and non-contributory social protection mechanisms for them. Expand state-financed non-contributory benefits (e.g. in old-age, family benefits, parental leaves) and ensure their adequacy, reliability and regular indexation.
- Guarantee universal access to accessible, affordable, quality healthcare for all women and men providing a non-contributory or subsidized basic insurance floor to access tertiary health services for low income groups.

- Ensure that adequate mechanisms are in place and enforced to protect women in cases of family dissolution and widowhood (e.g. child support, pension rights, property).
- Ensure that shock-responsive social protection is gender-responsive in contexts of displacement, disasters and conflict.
- Comply with ILO recommendation 202 on social protection floors to guarantee basic universal access to all workers regardless of sex, nationality, race, employment status or immigration status.

Recommendations for the social protection policy cycle

- Ensure that social protection systems contribute to a more equal distribution of unpaid care work between women and men (for example through paternity leaves and parental leaves that encourage men to share in reproductive work, avoiding conditionalities that trap women in traditional unpaid roles).
- Avoid narrow targeting and seek programs with a universal legal basis, even if fiscal limits impose coverage sequencing to reach universality.
- Ensure women's income security during old age through contributory and non-contributory systems that provide adequate and rights-based benefits for all women and reduce gender gaps in access and benefit levels.
- Ensure that rights to benefits are clearly defined, transparent, and non-discretionary, address information barriers and institutionalize mechanisms for grievance and complaint that are accessible for all women beneficiaries and feed into program adaptation and redesign.
- Ensure substantive participation of women's machineries, women's rights groups, and women's chapters in trade unions in social dialogue concerning the design and evaluation of social protection systems and their components.
- Collect, analyze and report on gender-sensitive qualitative and sex-disaggregated quantitative data including time-use surveys and use both of these to inform the design, evaluation, and adaptation of social protection systems.

Recommendations for the sustainability of social protection systems

- Provide legal backing for gender-responsive social protection systems to ensure that they are rights-based, including the legal accessibility criteria, the definition of the value of cash transfers and their indexation criteria.
- Limit subsidies from general taxes to pay contributory benefits to high wage earners- that regressively benefit rich and high-income workers in formal employment.
- Limit privileges in terms of retirement age, replacement levels and indexation criteria to workers in high end jobs and civil service jobs and redistribute those resources towards the basic protection floor to all.
- Seek for redistribute ways to fund social protection systems such as progressive taxes and contributions. Move towards progressive spending on social protection that is more likely to benefit women.
- Protect the fiscal base that goes toward gender-responsive social protection, even in times of austerity.

Social Services: Education, Care and Health

Recommendations for gender-responsive public services

- Extend quality collective care services for children aged 0 to 3 years and extend coverage in preprimary schooling at 4 and 5 years of age.
- Extend the daily hours of care and school time for children 0 to 12 years old to reach a full average working day.
- Ensure provision of quality elder care and long-term care services that follow the principles of human rights and non-discrimination.
- Provide universal free of charge modern contraception with an emphasis on long term reversible contraceptive methods.
- Put measures in place that prevent institutional violence and abuse, including discrimination; denial of services; and forced procedures (e.g. coerced sterilization), and provide culturally sensitive obstetric care for ethnic minorities.
- Address geographical barriers to access in rural areas (including to reliable transport systems to access those services on a regular and emergency basis) and implement improvements through cooperation with the infrastructure sector.
- Take appropriate measures to ensuring the provision of basic social services in situations of natural disasters, emergencies and conflict.

Recommendations for public service workers' rights

- Invest in the growth of decent public services and care jobs, including health care workers, elder care workers and teachers, and enforce human rights principles and decent work standards in the context of public-private partnerships.
- Change laws, and enforce, reasonable expectations of staffing ratios to prevent work intensification and overburdening of care workers.
- Protect existing funding and expand the fiscal base to ensure adequate financing of decent work and quality care within the public services sector.
- Put mechanisms in place to ensure that work environments are free of sexual harassment and violence, including appropriate grievance mechanisms.
- Take concrete actions to improve the quality and safety of care sector jobs, following the principles of human rights and decent work, including the right to equal pay for equal work and the right to collective bargaining
- Recognize the specific vulnerabilities faced by domestic service workers and take concrete actions towards formalization of this sector.
- Recognize and take intergovernmental action to prevent or persecute the abuse of migrant care workers.

Recommendations for the financing and cost of public services

- Implement tax revenue or social insurance schemes to cover all household members through the life cycle.

- Create central funds to progressively distribute investment in social services infrastructure and human resources that reverts the territorial and sub-regional inequality in our countries.
- Ensure gender-responsive accessibility to public services across the life cycle, including simplification of eligibility requirements and bureaucratic procedures.
- Avoid flat copayments and provide universal access to public services free of charge at the point of delivery and with appropriately subsidized schemes for the most vulnerable populations.
- Guarantee that the relation between individual contributions in taxes and social insurance, and the eligibility criteria, values and replacement rates are designed in such a way as to render a progressive outcome taking into account gender and intersectionality in addition to income.

Infrastructure, basic utilities and mobility

Cross-sectoral recommendations for gender-responsive infrastructure

- Promote urban development policy that encourage the design of towns and cities taking into consideration the women's engagement in retail trade in the urban informal economy. Provide secure space in designated and fairly allocated markets that make adequate provision for vehicular and pedestrian transport, storage, security, electricity, water, refuse collection, and toilets--facilities that are developed in consultation with women informal workers and are therefore adequate in coverage, quality, and affordability.
- Integrate women's rights, including the rights of women with disabilities, from the outset in Smart Cities and Smart Mobilities planning processes.
- Collect and analyze data on access to and use of public space, energy, water and sanitation, and transportation that accounts for gender, geographical location, ethnicity and other contextually relevant factors, and that includes social audits, and use this data in all planning, evaluation, and adaptation processes.
- Promote and participate social dialogue with women's human rights defenders and indigenous women especially in the framework of conflict negotiations over large-scale infrastructure projects.

Recommendations for gender-responsive, sustainable transportation systems

- Prioritize investments in gender-responsive public transportation (that is also responsive to people with disabilities), including walking and cycling infrastructure. Ease taxation policies or subsidize public transport in order to increase the supply and make it more affordable in both urban and rural areas
- Plan infrastructure investments and develop collective transportation systems looking at women's mobility needs (work, care centers, education centers, health service, markets) and establish regulations that protect real women in real lives (reserved seats, increasing bus-frequency during off-peak hours, integrated tariffs for combined trips).
- Develop an affordability indicator to assess the share of household expenditure on transit and regulate transit fares according to gender-responsive assessments of passengers' price sensitivity.

- Implement routinized collection and analyses of qualitative and quantitative travel behavior data that is disaggregated by sex, location, and ability, as a mandatory step in transport planning decisions; and where possible, also disaggregate by activity and time-use.

Recommendations for gender-sensitive, sustainable energy systems

- Make gender-responsive investments in optimal levels of energy access, accounting for women's multiple roles and their specific livelihood needs (e.g. running water pumps and medium size electrical appliances).
- Subsidize and support connecting the general grid to concrete households
- Prioritize gender-responsive investments in developing and sustaining community energy systems (minigrids) and demand-side management to power households and communities.
- Adapt tariffs mechanisms and regulations to be gender-responsive, including tariffs to more effectively meet the needs of female headed households.
- Support women's participation and leadership in energy sectors and support tariff reductions and subsidy assistance providing incentives to women-led microenterprises and micro-independent power production.
- Improve access to clean cook-stoves that are designed in consultation with intended women users, to ensure their appropriateness and sustainability.
- Make gender-responsive investments in improving the sustainability and healthfulness of household energy consumption and production (e.g. through clean cookstove infrastructure).

Recommendations for gender-responsive, sustainable water and sanitation systems

- Ensure continuous piped water at the household level; until this is possible, ensure that placement of water sources are determined in consultation with intended women users, and in rural settings, prioritize "multiple use" sources that provide water for drinking, small plots and small herds.
- Integrate menstrual hygiene management (MHM) as a mandatory feature of all sanitation interventions, and as a feature of public education curriculum in order to break harmful social taboos.
- Ensure gender-responsive workplace protections for workers in the "back end" of the sanitation sector, including protections against violence and health risks, and improve conditions of this frequently dangerous and stigmatized labor to become "decent" work.
- Develop financial resources to invest in scaling up gender-responsive, de-centralized water-augmenting technologies that have proven to be effective and efficient (e.g. rainwater harvesting), and in the development of new gender-responsive, scalable water-augmentation technologies.
- Generate a fiscal base for gender-responsive investments in sustainable sanitation where current investments are not commensurate with need.

Enhancing women's employment opportunities and rights at work across the three areas

- Ensure women benefit equally from jobs in infrastructure and public services, including higher level (hiring practices, training) and entry into non-traditional / feminized sectors (e.g. engineering)
- Foster compliance with ILO covenant 189 on decent work for Domestic Workers and its implementation in national laws, decrees and enforcement mechanisms.

- Decent working conditions for public service workers in traditionally feminized and undervalued sectors -- health and safety, social protection, decent pay, particularly for frontline public service workers (including Community Health Workers)
- Create an enabling environment for organizing and collective bargaining in the workers of the three focus areas

Creating fiscal space for social investments across the three areas

Contracting fiscal policies and market-oriented sector reforms constrain the social welfare functions of the state, with dire consequences for social and environmental sustainability. Cutting back deficit financing of public expenditure, lowering the tax burden on private enterprises, and privatizing state enterprises and social services can undermine government action. The argument for such policies is that government spending is not only inflationary, but also tends to crowd out private investment. Yet public investment can also encourage private investment, for example, when the public provision of infrastructure, education and health care, makes private investment opportunities more attractive. This is especially true in developing economies, where market imperfections are extensive and where public goods are undersupplied by markets relative to what is socially or economically optimal because their social returns are greater than their private returns. Even if private returns, measured with respect to the growth of future incomes, are not high enough to provide full monetary compensation to households and business for the taxes required for an increase in public investment, such an increase may still be justified. This would be the case if the social returns to investment were sufficiently high to provide other benefits, possibly non-monetary, that households and businesses value.

Investment in public infrastructure, social services and social protection can not only increase the productivity of capital invested in private businesses, it can also raise the productivity of economic activities within households. This has important implications for gender equality. Non-market household production is critical for sustaining families and maintaining the quality of their lives. Such production includes direct care of other people, preparing meals, household maintenance, and fetching water and fuel. Women's unpaid labor produces the majority of these non-market services and goods. Therefore, public investments that raise the productivity of this labor have the potential to contribute to greater gender equality by reducing the time burden of unpaid work and at the same time improving the quality of such products and services.

In order to create the fiscal space to increase investments in gender enhancing social protection, services and infrastructure we recommend that governments:

- Develop methods and tools for gender-responsive evaluation and budgeting making clear the biases and potential benefits of shifting budget allocation both within and between sectors and policy areas.
- Protect strategic areas from cutbacks. These include care services and health and education with a gendered design, public transportation systems, rural investment in energy reach and capacity, network to household energy connection, sanitation and water for segregated urban slums and poor rural areas.
- Expand progressive taxation. Most countries in the region have space for expanding their tax base and making it more progressive. Taxing concentrated assets such as land and property, inheritance, personal rents and corporate rents are tools available in the region today that can be expanded and/or better enforced.

- Redirecting investments based on borrowing: The region borrows from international and domestic lenders and from financial multilateral institutions. Yet much of these projects are geared towards big infrastructure development serving mostly corporations and large enterprises. Increasing investment from borrowing in social infrastructure and in the last connection between broad systems of infrastructure and households (sanitation, drinking water, energy) should take center stage.

Improving data and evidence

- Institutionalize time use surveys as a standard periodic data collection tool integrated with household surveys.
- Sex disaggregated data on deficits in social protection schemes (pensions, unemployment insurance, sickness insurance, family transfers, etc). Sex disaggregated data should not stop at coverage. It must include also benefit gaps, risks covered, replacement levels, etc).
- Develop gender budgeting techniques and criteria across the three focus areas and in general.
- Foster studies that outline the costs of gendered biases against women and the benefits of reversing such biases as a basis for protecting and expanding adequate investment levels in gender egalitarian policies in social protection, infrastructure development and social services.

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