

Regional Policy Dialogue on Women’s Economic Empowerment: recognising, redistributing and reducing unpaid care and domestic work

Latin America and the Caribbean

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Background

Care and domestic work contribute to human well-being and to overall economic development through nurturing people who are fit, productive and capable of learning and creativity. It produces and reproduces the labour force on a day-to-day basis and over generations for the market, but conventional analyses of employment and labour markets tend to ignore it altogether. According to UN Women’s Report *Progress of Women In Latin America And The Caribbean 2017. Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*, in the Region women spend more than three times as much time as men on unpaid care and domestic work¹. Women’s disproportionate responsibility for this kind of work limits their opportunities—whether in education, work, political participation or rest and leisure—and presents an obstacle both to their economic empowerment and the enjoyment of their rights on equal terms with men. Greater progress requires a fairer distribution of unpaid care and domestic duties between women and men, as well as the promotion of responsible fatherhood. The need to address the burden of unpaid care work for achieving gender equality and women’s economic empowerment was recognised explicitly in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 5.4.

Moving from the “why this is important” to “how can we drive change” is the question confronting both governments and the development community. To help answer this question, the OECD launched an inclusive Policy Dialogue on Women’s Economic Empowerment. The overall objective of this initiative is to generate data, evidence and inclusive policy guidance for policy makers and development partners in the four policy domains identified in SDG 5.4, social protection, public services, infrastructure and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household. By framing the policy analysis and guidance within these four domains, this initiative aims at bridging the gap between knowledge and the capacity to translate it into practical policy solutions.² This initiative capitalizes on the OECD’s extensive work and expertise on gender equality and women’s empowerment, including: the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) which examines how gender inequality is shaped by discriminatory social institutions; the OECD Time-use database to better understand how women and men allocate their time to paid and unpaid work and leisure;

1 Regional average calculated from the latest national time-use surveys data, available at CEPALSTAT: Bases de Datos y Publicaciones Estadísticas. http://estadisticas.cepal.org/cepalstat/WEB_CEPALSTAT/Portada.as.

² See full Concept note here: <http://www.oecd.org/development/gender-development/OECD-First-Policy-Dialogue-Womens-Economic-Empowerment.pdf>.

and the DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker allows for tracking of aid flows to women's economic empowerment. The first OECD Policy Dialogue meeting took place in January 2018 at the OECD headquarters in Paris bringing together 150 participants from governments, multi-lateral organisations, civil society, the private sector and foundations. This meeting offered a forum for participants to share experiences, discuss challenges and identify knowledge gaps to define the scope of future OECD analytical work and case studies.

Building on that experience and the recommendations from the Dialogue, the OECD in partnership with UN Women and the Government of Uruguay, is organising a regional Policy Dialogue on Women's Economic Empowerment in Latin America and the Caribbean, aiming at creating a community of practitioners, researchers and advocates from all over the world to identify effective policies and practices to address women's unpaid care and domestic work and promote gender equality. It is expected that the meeting will provide context-specific policy recommendations for governments and development partners working to address unpaid care work by recognising, redistributing and reducing³ it and explore the linkages with women's economic empowerment and well-being.

Objectives

The objectives of the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Policy Dialogue on Women's Economic Empowerment are:

- **Place care at the core of the social, economic and political agendas, at the national and regional levels** – as a central and transversal axis in public and private policies across the region to create awareness, consensus and alliances around its relevance.
- **Share, exchange and learn** from local, national and regional experiences on how to address unpaid care and domestic work and promote women's economic empowerment and social welfare.
- **Present and discuss new research and findings** around initiatives to recognise, redistribute and reduce unpaid care and domestic work, and pave the way towards effective implementation.
- **Strengthen alliances and synergies** within the community of practitioners working to achieve SDG 5.4 and promote women's economic empowerment.
- **Identify new entry points to care** in national agendas.

³ Elson, D. (2017). *Recognize, Reduce, and Redistribute Unpaid Care Work: How to Close the Gender Gap*. *New Labor Forum*. Volume: 26 issue: 2, page(s): 52-61.

Structure

The Regional Policy Dialogue on Women’s Economic Empowerment, focused on the recognition, redistribution and reduction of unpaid care and domestic work, will take place over two days and is structured in an open session in the morning of Day 1 and closed working thematic sessions in the afternoon of Day 1 and the morning of Day 2.

