



Gender-Based Violence and Harassment Prevention:

The Role of the Private Sector in
Latin America and the Caribbean



Environmental, Social
and Governance

**Cataloging-in-Publication data provided by the
Inter-American Development Bank**

Felipe Herrera Library

Gender-based violence and harassment prevention: the role of the private sector in Latin America and the Caribbean / Michelle Muhringer Shayer, Veronica Alvarez Perez, Paula Castillo, Maria Cecilia Acevedo.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographic references.

1. Violence-Sex differences-Latin America.
2. Violence-Sex differences-Caribbean Area.
3. Harassment-Prevention-Latin America.
4. Harassment-Prevention-Caribbean Area.
5. Intimate partner violence-Latin America.
6. Intimate partner violence-Caribbean Area.
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Acknowledgements

This publication **Gender-Based Violence and Harassment Prevention: The Role of the Private Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean** was prepared under the direction of Michelle Muhringer Shayer, Environmental and Social Lead Officer at IDB Invest, Veronica Alvarez, Consultant at IDB Invest, and Laura Bull, Head of Studies and Head of Latin America at The International Centre for Hydropower (ICH). The publication could not have been done without the contributions from Paula Castillo, Strategy, Planning, and Knowledge Officer at IDB Invest; Maria Cecilia Acevedo, Strategy, Planning, and Knowledge Officer at IDB Invest; Mariana Wiesel Beltrame, Counsel at IDB Invest; Daisy Ramirez, Counsel at IDB Invest; Diana Bogotá, Counsel at IDB Invest; Roumelia Pryce, Counsel at IDB Invest. Brand and Creative Direction David Peña, Designed by Greta and David Peña, Communications and Marketing Officer at IDB Invest.

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- Stephanie Oueda, Head of Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Advisory Services Division at IDB Invest
- Julia Miguez Morais, Senior Social Specialist at IDB Environmental and Social Solutions Unit
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Source: Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad



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- Kristela Dávila, Sustainability Manager at the Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad (ICE) and the Reventazón Hydroelectric Plant
- Marilu Mazurechen, Social Responsibility and Community Relations at Klabin and Puma II Project
- Caio Amaral Santos, Communication, Social Responsibility and Community Relations at Klabin and Puma II Project
- Nicholson y Cano Abogados - Argentina
- Dias Carneiro Advogados - Brazil
- Mariana Belisario Carone Advogados - Brazil
- Alessandri Abogados- Chile
- Gómez-Pinzón Abogados - Colombia
- BLP Abogados - Costa Rica
- Arias Abogados - Guatemala
- Flor & Hurtado Abogados - Ecuador
- Hart Muirhead Fatta - Jamaica
- Kuri Breña Sánchez Ugarte y Aznar Abogados - Mexico
- Miranda & Amado Abogados - Peru

Acronyms

GBVH	Gender-Based Violence and Harassment
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
IPV	Intimate partner violence
ICH	International Centre for Hydropower
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
EPM	Empresas Públicas de Medellín
ICE	Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad
STD	Sexually transmitted disease
WVH	Workplace violence and harassment
PS	IFC Performance Standards
IDB Invest	Private sector arm of the Inter-American Development Bank Group
GRAT	Gender Risk Assessment Tool
IFC	International Finance Corporation
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, among many others.

Definitions

Child	Any person under the age of 18 years. ¹
Coronavirus Disease	COVID-19, a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. ²
Discrimination Against Women	Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. ³
Domestic Violence	Any violence between family members and/or current/former intimate partners. ⁴
Economic Violence	Any act or behavior which causes economic harm to an individual. Economic violence can take the form of, for example, property damage, restricting access to financial resources, education, or the labor market, or not complying with economic responsibilities, such as alimony. ⁵
Femicides, Feminicides	Femicide is generally understood to involve intentional murder of women because they are women, but broader definitions include any killings of women or girls. Femicide is usually perpetrated by men, but sometimes female family members may be involved. Femicide differs from male homicide in specific ways. For example, most cases of femicide are committed by partners or ex-partners, and involve ongoing abuse in the home, threats or intimidation, sexual violence, or situations where women have less power or fewer resources than their partner. ⁶

¹ Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment: Emerging Good Practice for the Private Sector (2020). International Finance Corporation, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, CDC Investment Works.

² COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (2020). United States Food and Drug Administration. <https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-frequently-asked-questions>

³ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979). New York, 18 December 1979. United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx>

⁴ Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment Emerging Good Practice for the Private Sector (2020). International Finance Corporation, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Commonwealth Development Corporation. https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/f1645167-7eff-439b-922b-7656c75320ab/GPN_AddressingGBVH_July2020.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=nddokiS

⁵ European Institute for Gender Equality (N/A). Glossary & Thesaurus. <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1096>

⁶ Understanding and addressing violence against women: Femicide (2012). World Health Organization. https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77421/WHO_RHR_12.38_eng.pdf?sequence=1

Gender	The socially constructed roles, attributes, opportunities, and relationships that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. ⁷
Gender-Based Violence and Harassment	The term “violence and harassment” in the world of work refers to a range of unacceptable behaviors and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment; the term “gender-based violence and harassment” means violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender, or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately, and includes sexual harassment. ⁸
Intimate Partner Violence	One of the most common forms of violence against women and includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and controlling behaviors by an intimate partner. Intimate partner violence occurs in all settings and among all socioeconomic, religious, and cultural groups. ⁹
Perpetrator	A person who commits or threatens to commit GBVH. ¹⁰
Sex	Refers to the external physical differences that act as a marker upon which male or female sex is assigned at birth. ¹¹
Sexual Exploitation	Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, threatening, or profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another ¹²

⁷ Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment: Emerging Good Practice for the Private Sector (2020). International Finance Corporation, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, CDC Investment Works.

⁸ Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), (2019). International Labor Organization.

⁹ Understanding and addressing violence against women: Intimate Partner Violence (2012). World Health Organization. https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77432/WHO_RHR_12.36_eng.pdf?sequence=1

¹⁰ Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment: Emerging Good Practice for the Private Sector (2020). International Finance Corporation, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, CDC Investment Works.

¹¹ Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment: Emerging Good Practice for the Private Sector (2020). International Finance Corporation, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, CDC Investment Works.

¹² Fighting against sexual exploitation and abuse (N.d.). World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/about/ethics/sexual-exploitation-abuse>

<p>Sexual Harassment</p>	<p>Any unwelcomed sexual advance, request for sexual favor, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behavior of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. While typically involving a pattern of behavior, it can take the form of a single incident. Sexual harassment may occur between persons of the opposite or same sex. Both males and females can be either the victims or the offenders.¹³</p>
<p>Sexual Violence/ Sexual Assault</p>	<p>Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic or otherwise directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.¹⁴</p>
<p>Survivor</p>	<p>A person who has experienced GBVH and survived. The terms “victim” and “survivor” are often used interchangeably. “Survivor” is the term generally preferred in the psychological and social support sectors.¹⁵</p>
<p>Transgender</p>	<p>An umbrella term used to describe a wide range of identities whose appearance and characteristics are perceived as gender atypical – including transsexual people, cross-dressers, and people who identify as a third gender.¹⁶</p>

¹³ Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority (2008). United Nations Secretariat. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/238/36/PDF/N0823836.pdf?OpenElement>

¹⁴ Understanding and addressing violence against women: Sexual Violence (2012). World Health Organization. https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77434/WHO_RHR_12.37_eng.pdf?sequence=1

¹⁵ Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment: Emerging Good Practice for the Private Sector (2020). International Finance Corporation, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, CDC Investment Works.

¹⁶ Free & Equal (N/A). Definitions. United Nations. <https://www.unfe.org/definitions/>

<p>Workplace Violence and Harassment</p>	<p>In the world of work, [the term] refers to a range of unacceptable behaviors and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment.¹⁷</p> <p>The term also includes instances when domestic and intimate partner violence blends with work life.</p>
<p>Victim</p>	<p>A person who has experienced GBVH. “Victim” is a term more often used in the legal and medical sectors.¹⁸</p>

¹⁷ Violence and Harassment Convention (2019). International Labor Organization. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C190

¹⁸ Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment: Emerging Good Practice for the Private Sector (2020). International Finance Corporation, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, CDC Investment Works.



Source: Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad

Introduction

Development projects in the private sector can have different impacts on the communities that surround them, as well as on their employees. Be it positively or negatively, women, men, and people that identify with other genders, experience the effects in a different manner.

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has one of the highest rates of gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) in the world, with intimate partner violence (IPV) being the most prominent.¹⁹ Adding to that, the Regional Information Network on LGBTI Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean²⁰ reports that between 2014 and 2019 more than 2,900 LGBTQI+ people have lost their lives due to violence in the region. These findings likely represent only a fraction of the actual cases of violence against LGBTQI+ people due to underreporting and a lack of information. As an institution committed to the sustainable growth of the region it is important to work together with private sector partners in addressing the fact that in LAC, women and members of the LGBTQI+ community, like transgender people, are more likely to experience violence and harassment because of their sex, gender or gender identity.

GBVH, whether it happens in the workplace or at home, not only has effects on the



This publication aims to provide IDB Invest clients with an overview of how women, girls, and transgender people can be affected by violence.



person living through it, but also on their colleagues, employers, and communities. The workplace might become an insecure and unproductive environment with increased presenteeism,²¹ lower quality of services, and higher turnover, where employers face reputational and legal risks, and communities perpetuate gender inequalities. Sustainable economic growth and a balanced distribution of projects' positive results cannot be fully achieved

in a context where there is gender-based violence and harassment.

This publication aims to provide IDB Invest clients with an overview of how women, girls, and transgender people can be affected by violence in the realm of development projects and share examples of preventative measures that address those risks. A robust gender plan foresees continuously screening for risks and contextual changes, and the constant update of measures.

The unprecedented effort of collecting a database for countries' legal and support framework allows for a more accurate analysis of how regional context aggravates risks of GBVH. It also sheds light on the information gaps that still exists on the matter and intends to indicate possible public partner collaboration opportunities.

A strong leadership from the private sector can bring about significant changes, and combating gender-based violence and harassment can propel communities and regions one step further to achieving the sustainable development goal of gender equality.

¹⁹ For more information on IPV around the world visit: https://www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/media_corner/Prevalence_intimatepartner_WHOSStudy.pdf

²⁰ Prejudice Knows No Bounds, Sin Violencia LGBTI <https://sinviolencia.lgbt/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Executive-Summary-Prejudice-knows-no-bounds.pdf>

²¹ Workers who are physically at work, but are not fully functioning and may not be able to fully perform their duties, according to Addressing Gender Based Violence and Harassment – Emerging Good Practice for the Private Sector - 2020 by CDC, EBRD, IFC.

GBVH in Private Sector Projects

Women, girls, and members of the LGBTQI+ community are most likely to be at risk of gender-based violence, both physically and psychologically, and this is a latent risk in private sector projects.


Due to traditional gender roles and lingering *machismo* in the region, certain phenomena can make them more vulnerable to experiencing GBVH, including but not limited to: inherent discrimination in legislation and how it is enforced at a national and/or subnational level; lack of leadership positions at a community and/or societal level; cultural barriers that lead to an overwhelming participation of men in consultation and engagement gatherings; preponderance of networks of organized crime in LAC that engage in human trafficking where it is most common that women and girls are victims of sexual exploitation; and lower levels of formal education and lack of technical skills that exclude women or transgender people from being considered in the recruitment process. Some examples of risks that can lead to increased GBVH, both for the workforce and for the community hosting the project, are the following: ²²

- Mass migration of workers and the installation of workers' housing in small towns without adequate infrastructure and capacity to absorb a lot of people at the same time.
- No specific consideration of certain groups (mothers, young professionals, students, members of informal community associations, members of the LGBTQI+ organizations, people with disabilities, representatives for the elderly, and civil society organization that deal with GBVH prevention) in consultation and engagement gatherings.
- Remote and isolated site locations, including where lodging facilities and/or transportation is required.
- Failing to separate worker lodging facilities, restrooms, and locker rooms by gender, as well as not providing adequate lighting and locks on doors.
- Having a reduced number of female workers when lodging facilities and/or transportation is required.

- Lack of female security personnel that might interact with employees or that may perform inspections.
- Absence of a formalized policy, code of conduct and/or ethics code that prevents discrimination (due to a person's gender, gender identity, sexual preferences, race, religious beliefs, ethnicity, economic background and any other factor) and gender-based violence and harassment; and the failure to distribute, publicize and train personnel on these policies.
- Not counting with an anonymous, continuously monitored, easily accessible grievance mechanism where those reviewing it are properly trained to receive GBVH complaints. Must be accessible externally for the community and internally for the workforce.
- Failure to evaluate allegations of GBVH complaints with a balanced committee of diverse members and representatives from various divisions within the company, or failing to hire independent, experienced, and specialized investigators.
- No dissemination of awareness campaigns that include GBVH, such as IPV and domestic violence, as well as STDs and family planning to workers and the community.
- Excluding women in consultation on the relocation of the community as well as in the financial compensation when resettlement is necessary.
- Isolated jobs, such as janitors, domestic care workers, hotel workers, and agricultural workers; undocumented jobs or temporary work visas; working in shifts where women are the small minority; work environments where there are clear disparities between employees.

²² See IDB Invest Gender Risk Assessment Tool: <https://www.idbinvest.org/en/download/9838>

IDB Invest's Commitment



Clients are required to implement effective measures to avoid, prevent, and mitigate potential gender-based risks.

Gender risk management is among IDB Invest's institutional commitments, both within the organization and the projects being financed. As established in its Environmental and Social Sustainability Policy,²³ clients are required to implement effective measures to avoid, prevent and mitigate potential gender-based risks and impacts that can occur to the workforce and to the communities where they operate.

Understanding how diverse gender identities are impacted differently by projects, as well as how they can be barred from taking advantage of the opportunities, allows IDB Invest to put on a more inclusive lens when screening for risks. The Sustainability Policy is aligned with the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) Performance Standards (PSs) to further identify and manage a client's environmental and social impacts. Gender risks are present throughout the Performance Standards, either directly or indirectly.

At IDB Invest, all high-risk investments are subjected to a special analysis during due diligence, when the Gender Risk

Assessment Tool (GRAT)²⁴ is used. The purpose of the GRAT is to understand and map the ways in which different genders are affected by a project or a company by analyzing the client's workforce and the surrounding community. On violence, the GRAT focuses on the context in which the project/company is located, asking questions on whether the location is riskier for women and girls due to social conflicts or heightened violence, and if there is regional or local data available on GBVH, sexual exploitation, and IPV.

The table on [Legislation and Support Framework](#) can be used as a source of national information, to be granularly complemented by data collected from the project's area of influence. **It is important to emphasize that local engagement with different stakeholders**, such as community-based organizations, health service institutions, judicial and law enforcement entities, educational and religious groups, and community-based associations, **is fundamental to build a more comprehensive scenario.**

²³ See IDB Invest's Environmental and Social Sustainability Policy, page 8: https://idbinvest.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/idb_invest_sustainability_policy_2020_EN.pdf?_ga=2.72086867.1553080142.1603744286-2034440955.1597168745

²⁴ See IDB Invest's Gender Risk Assessment Tool: <https://www.idbinvest.org/en/download/9838>

What is the business case?

Fostering gender equality is not just right, it brings growth to economies and profitability to firms. By achieving the full potential of women in the workplace, economies can be more productive and equitable. **It is estimated that the “gender dividend” or gains in human capital wealth from gender equality nears US\$172 trillion globally, or US\$24,586 per person – which represents about twice the value of global GDP.²⁵**

Women’s economic empowerment makes sense from a business perspective. A recent study by the consultancy firm McKinsey & Company,²⁶ examining more than 1,000 large companies in various countries, found that businesses in the top quartile for gender diversity were 25 percent more likely to have above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile. The highest-performing companies on both profitability and diversity had more women in line roles (that is, owning a line of business) than in staff roles on their executive teams. On the other hand, companies in the bottom quartile for both gender and ethnic diversity were 27 percent more likely to underperform compared to the industry average.





Women are still far from achieving their full economic potential.

Women's economic potential is closely related to key social enablers, including legal protection, physical autonomy, and security. Women represent 60% of the total graduates of tertiary and university programs, but only 30% in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics majors. While maternal mortality has declined 50% since 1990, rates remain high in Haiti, the Bahamas, Barbados, Guatemala, and Bolivia.²⁷ Regarding financial inclusion, on average, 45% of women own a bank account, compared to 53% of men.

Women are still far from achieving their full economic potential. While female participation in the workforce has significantly improved in LAC, reaching 68% in 2020, it is still below male participation (93%).²⁸ Furthermore, women tend to have more informal jobs than men. For each hour worked, women's earnings in the region are on average 13%-17% below those of men of the same age, education, and economic status.²⁹

²⁵ World Bank Group, 2020. How large is the gender dividend? Measuring selected impacts and costs of gender inequality.

²⁶ McKinsey & Company, 2020. Diversity Wins.

²⁷ PAHO, 2019.

²⁸ ILO, 2020. Modeled estimates.

²⁹ ECLAC, ILO, 2019. Employment Situation in Latin America and the Caribbean. Evolution of and prospects for women's labour participation in Latin America; Bando, Rosangela. 2019. "Evidence-Based Gender Equality Policy and Pay in Latin America and the Caribbean: Progress and Challenges." *Latin American Economic Review* 28(10): 1-23

Moreover, 4 out of 5 female workers are employed in low-productivity sectors, and working in isolated or confined spaces, or having to work in close contact with different people (hotels, offices, medical centers, or harvest seasons in rural areas) might increase the risk to violence.³⁰ In addition to paid labor, women face additional burden, as they dedicate triple the time than men to unpaid care and domestic work.³¹

Even though one in three women in the world are subject to GBVH, many countries still do not have comprehensive protection systems in place for them, and social norms perpetuate this problem in some places. **Particularly, Latin America has the highest rate in the world of violence against women,³² and in Central America, two of every three women killed are victims of femicide.³³**

GBVH has high social and economic costs to all, including businesses. Among the many negative effects, GBVH interferes with women's and transgender people's full and equal participation in the workforce and realization of economic potential. Violence affects physical and mental health and well-being, leading to stress, anxiety, loss of self-esteem and motivation, hindering career advancement and even resulting in job loss. For businesses, GBVH occurring at home, at work or in

the community increases liabilities, harms local relationships, causes reputational problems, creates occupational safety and health risks, and reduces productivity.

Specifically, businesses are affected through increased absence from work, distracted/non focused work, higher turnover, and increased outlays on employer-provided healthcare, among others.³⁴ Additionally, GBVH in the workplace has important reputational risks for companies. **It has been shown that sexual harassment claims have a greater effect on a company's reputation than other forms of misconduct like fraud.³⁵**

GBVH has high social and economic costs to all, including businesses.

Financial exclusion can exacerbate the risk of GVBH. In some cases, a person might stay in an abusive and violent relationship out of fear of not being able to provide for oneself, or endure sexual harassment to keep a job opportunity, for example.

Economic empowerment is key to prevent risks, but it also needs to be considered as a potential trigger for IPV, since it might change the power dynamic in a family. To address gender inequality in a holistic manner implies factoring in all those elements. Nevertheless, it is recommended that a company invests in local capacity-building which could assist potential employees in overcoming barriers such as access to formal educational levels or technical skills that exclude women or local community members from being considered in the recruitment process, as well as to influence subcontractors in doing the same. Announcing job openings in an inclusive way (i.e. dissemination platform, language used, etc.) is also important.

³⁰ ILO, 2019. Acelerar la participación laboral femenina es crucial para la impulsar economía de América Latina y el Caribe.

³¹ UN Women, ECLAC, 2020. Care in Latin America and The Caribbean During the Covid-19. Towards Comprehensive Systems to Strengthen Response and Recovery.

³² The region has the highest rate of non-couples related sexual violence in the world and the second highest rate of violence by partners or ex-partners (WHO, 2013).

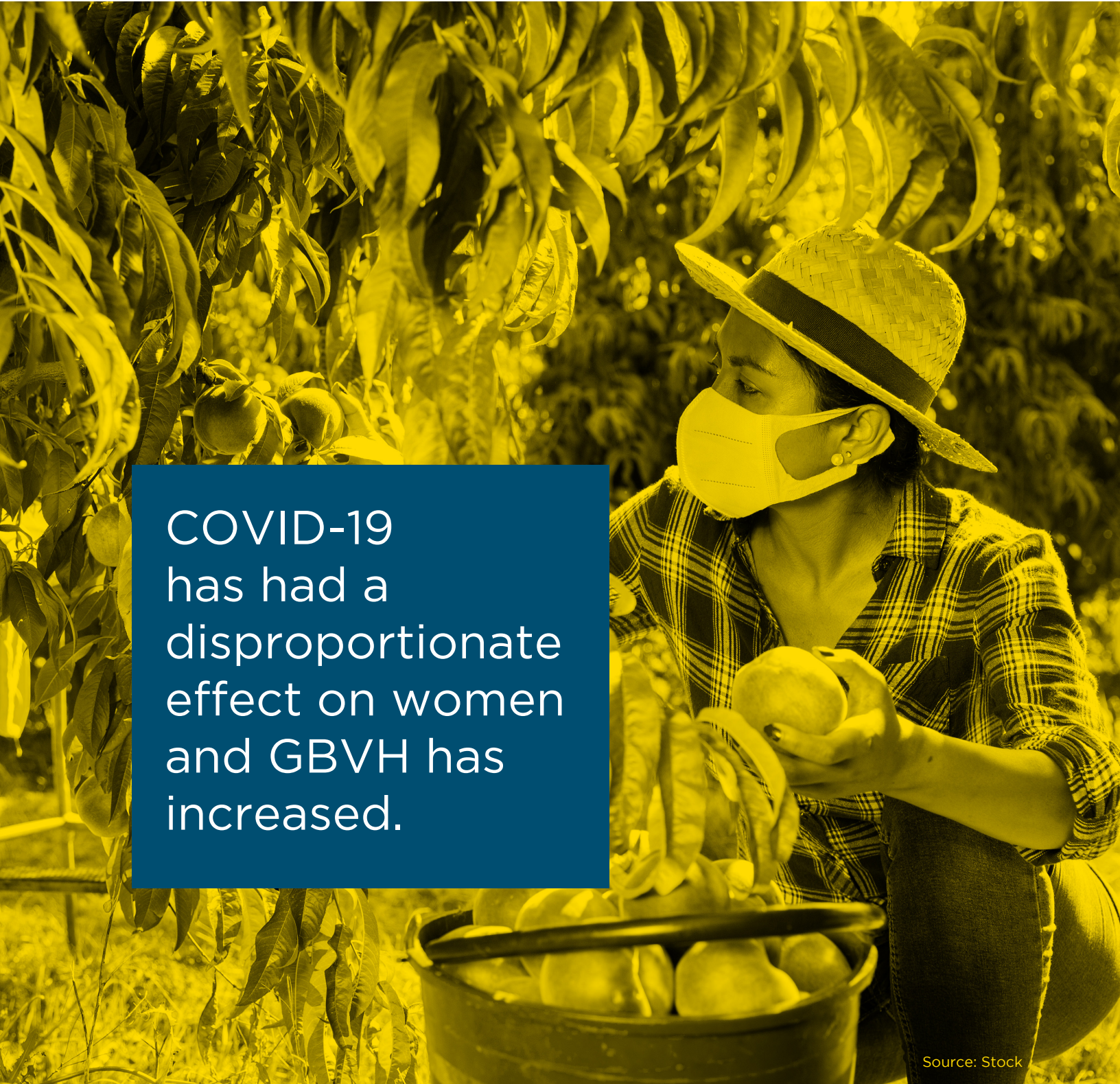
³³ UNPD, 2017. From Commitment to Action: Policies to End Violence Against Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. Regional Analysis Document.

³⁴ IFC, N/A. CASE STUDY: Addressing Gender based Violence with companies in Papua New Guinea; BSR, 2017. Yes, It's Your Business: The Private Sector Must Address Gender-Based Violence.

³⁵ Harvard Business Review, 2018. Research: How Sexual Harassment Affects a Company's Public Image.



Source: Stock



COVID-19
has had a
disproportionate
effect on women
and GBVH has
increased.

Source: Stock



GBVH during the COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 has had a disproportionate effect on women and GBVH has increased. In addition to working in sectors more affected by the economic contraction and having jobs at higher risk of COVID-19³⁶ the care work performed by women has significantly increased as a result of the pandemic. The temporary closure of care and education centers and pressure on the health systems, together with the increased time and activities in the home, has increased care work exponentially, particularly for women.

Moreover, national lockdowns and self-isolation measures have increased stress and economic hardship, which in many cases has led to a rise in GBVH. This is reinforced by the fact that women and girls' victims of violence now spend more time in the places where they are being abused. As lockdowns and mobility restrictions were put into effect, it was reported that calls received by emergency helplines for women in Chile and Mexico, for instance, increased by more than 50%.³⁷

Likewise, violence against women and girls on the internet is likely higher, as the increased use of technology to access information, education, work and services, among others, leads to greater exposure of victims in the networks.³⁸ In Colombia, during stay-at-home measures, the cases of sexual violence towards women, children, and adolescents increased in comparison to 2019 data.³⁹ In Brazil the number of feminicides in the two first months of lockdown was 1% higher than the same period of 2019, and although the number of calls to GBVH hotlines increased by 27%,⁴⁰ restriction in mobility led to a decrease of 25.5% in number of formal complaints registered at local police stations.

³⁶ IMF, 2020 "Outlook for Latin America and the Caribbean: Pandemic Persistence Clouds the Recovery". Annex 2: Latin American Labor Markets during COVID-19.

³⁷ United Nations, 2020. Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Latin America and the Caribbean.

³⁸ OAS, 2020. COVID-19 en la vida de las mujeres Razones para reconocer los impactos diferenciados.

³⁹ Boletín de respuesta institucional para el abordaje integral de las violencias por razones de género (contra niñas, niños, adolescentes y mujeres) durante el aislamiento preventivo obligatorio 25 de marzo al 21 de abril (2020). Medicina Legal. <https://www.medicinalegal.gov.co/documents/20143/522189/Violencias+contra+las+mujeres%2C+la+pandemia+histo%C81rica+I.pdf>

⁴⁰ <https://www.worldbank.org/pt/country/brazil/publication/brazil-addressing-violence-against-women-under-covid-19>

The Context of GBVH in Latin America and the Caribbean

To have a clear baseline on how women, girls and transgender people can be disproportionately affected by development projects, it is important to first have an understanding of local laws and regulations, as well as of the possible support frameworks that exist in the countries hosting projects. According to a recently launched publication by IFC, CDC Group and EBRD⁴¹, “GBV risks tend to be higher where there is increased gender inequality and gender stereotypes are strong and widespread; Intimate Partner Violence is prevalent and legislation on GBV is weak; poverty and discrimination are high (increasing vulnerability to exploitation) and corruption amongst local authorities is widespread and in contexts that are fragile and conflict afflicted.”

The table below on the [Legislation and Support Framework](#) provides a snapshot of the local context in ten countries in LAC. It is important to remember that further information is required to have a thorough understanding of the community that surrounds the project. It is strongly recommended that a

baseline is developed by engaging with local stakeholders as well as collecting secondary local data. In many cases, the legislation and support framework of a nation does not necessarily represent the safety that women, girls, or transgender people have in the country because these are not always enforced or applied as they are.

Due to disparities in standards and reporting, numbers of cases and the data collection’s timeframes among countries should not be used as a point of comparison.⁴² More than exact numbers or a comprehensive list of policies, the data highlights common challenges for the LAC region, while indicating opportunities for increased harmonization.

Some consistent positive results can be seen in all ten countries: Specific treatment and additional support measures are offered to victims⁴³ of gender-based violence and free access to justice and legal aid is guaranteed by law.

Other common aspects of almost all countries researched are: The legal system foresees the existence of protective measures that help deescalate the risk of continuous violence, such as restraining orders and shelters to victims of gender-based violence. Discrimination is considered a crime in almost all countries, the same being true for gender-based violence.

Not all countries consider femicide as an aggravating form of homicide, which can leave room for legal defenses that allege attenuating circumstances such as defense of honor and acting under violent emotions to justify a lesser sentence. Compared to homicide, femicides, in most cases, carry a harsher sentence.

Although most national public policies incentivize private companies to develop programs to support survivors of gender-based violence, it is uncommon to see tax exemption opportunities that could scale up those initiatives.

Countries sometimes lack the resources to effectively implement some of the commitments established in international treaties and it is not unusual to see subnational entities having similar difficulties. National coordination is necessary to achieve progress on some GBVH measures – starting by standardizing and collecting data, a

perceived challenge in all the countries researched.

One common negative finding is lack of information of violence committed against transgender people. Some countries are debating, in a judicial level, the protection framework necessary for this group, as well as specific provision for combating discrimination, sexual violence and hate crimes suffered by them.

⁴¹ Addressing Gender Based Violence and Harassment – Emerging Good Practice for the Private Sector, supported by IFC, EBRD and CDC. https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/f1645167-7eff-439b-922b-7656c75320ab/GPN_AddressingGBVH_July2020.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=nddokiS

⁴² For more accurate explanation, please visit the links in the table.

⁴³ Victim is the preferred term in legal and medical sectors, and is often found in legislation language.



Source: Stock

LEGISLATION AND SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

	Argentina	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Costa Rica	Ecuador	Guatemala	Jamaica	Mexico	Peru
Femicide cases	252 (2019)	1,326 (2019)	163 (2019)	291 (Jan-July 2020)	11 (Oct 2020)	67 (2019)	400 (2019)	102 (2019)	4,291 (2015 - Sep 2020)	166 (2019)
IPV cases	N/A	266,310 (2019)	Data not available	11,947 (Jan-Apr 2020)	8 (Oct 2020)	7,217 (2004)	8,595 (January - October 2020)	N/A	1,005,109 (2015 - Sep 2020)	18,842 (2019)
Sexual exploitation cases	6,049 (2008 - 2019)	N/A	37 (2019)	188 (2020)	43 (2020)	295 (2014- 2016)	191 (2019)	11 (2019)	2,092 (2012 - 2017)	148 (2019)
People trafficking cases	14,505 (2019)	100 (2019)	267 (2011-2019)	79 (Jan-Oct 2020)	69 (2020)	332 (2017-2019)	340 (2019)	43 (2020)	2,768 (2015 - Sep 2020)	1,304 (2019)
Sexual violence cases	21,342 (2019)	61,175 (2019)	28,132 (2018)	5,398 (Jan-April 2020)	12,348 (2019)	7,217 (2004)	278 (2019)	1466 (2019)	875,877 (2016 - Sep 2020)	16,945 (2019)
Sexual harassment cases	12,708 (2018)	12,604 (2019)	N/A	4,999 (2019)	N/A	4,348 (2014-2016)	N/A	N/A	27,433 (2016 - Aug 2020)	1,128 (2019)
Law differentiates femicide from other homicides	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Law specifies GBV in the workplace	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Law protects women and girls from being trafficked or becoming sex slaves	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Measures to prevent escalating violence	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Compulsory notification by health systems of IPV cases	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Compulsory notification by health systems of sexual violence cases	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Compulsory legal prosecution for GBV cases	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Compulsory notification by health systems of underage pregnancies	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
Compulsory notification by health systems of sexual violence to underaged people	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Specific treatment available for GBV cases	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legislation considering transgender women equal to cisgender women in GBV cases	N/A	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
Life expectancy of transgender women	35-41 years	35 years	35 years	35 years	N/A	35-41 years	N/A	N/A	29-35 years	N/A
Public policies for free shelter for IPV cases	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public policies for financial support and labor reinsertion to women at risk	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes
Public policies to prevent GBV	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public policies to prevent IPV	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public policy to support mental health of IPV and GBV survivors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public policy for GBV and IPV prevention in schools	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	No	Yes
Criminalization of IPV	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Criminalization of GBV	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Criminalization of discrimination	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free access to the judicial system for GBV cases	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free access to the judicial system for IPV cases	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tax exemption for companies that invest in GBV or IPV prevention programs	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Governmental body for GBV or IPV prevention	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
GBV treaties and conventions signed and ratified	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Protective systems of sexually exploited children and adolescents and info on how these work	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Case Studies

This section presents examples of public and private sector responses to contextual challenges and how GBVH risks are being assessed and mitigated.

Brazil

Brazil is a large country of more than 200 million people, where the most significant gender inequalities are related to political empowerment and economic opportunity.⁴⁴

Women's literacy and enrollment rates are at least as high as those of men. 60% of Brazilian women have a tertiary education degree or are currently enrolled in a university or similar; 83% at least have secondary education attainment and at least 95% are enrolled or have finished primary education, yielding a literacy rate for women of 94.4% (compared to 93.0% for men).⁴⁵

There are important inequalities surrounding economic and political opportunities for women. Regarding economic opportunity, the worst performance area for Brazil is wage equality for similar work. Out of 153 countries, Brazil ranks 130 on this

Brazil has the highest violence rate against transgender population in South America.

dimension with a score of 3.52 out of 7 (where 7 is the best score).⁴⁶ Women's labor market outcomes are, in general, worse than those for men: 14.46% of the female labor force is unemployed vs. 11% of men, and the female to male ratio proportion of unpaid work per day is 4:27.⁴⁷ Relatedly, one-third of women do not have access to accounts in financial institutions.⁴⁸ In politics, there is only one woman per 10 men in ministerial positions and only 15% of parliament positions are occupied by women.⁴⁹

Regarding occupational choice, only 7% of women graduates choose a career in the manufacturing, engineering and construction area, and less than a fifth of firms report having female top managers. The World Economic Forum scores Brazil with a 3.98 (out of 7, where 7 is the best score) regarding gender parity in tech roles.⁵⁰

A third of women report having experienced GBVH at least once during their lifetime and the national helpline indicated that from the 85.412 violence reports registered in 2019, 30.541 were perpetrated by intimate partners.⁵¹ The University of Sao Paulo established an initiative to monitor violence data, including GBVH cases.⁵² Feeding from subnational information systems, it is common for the researchers to find gaps in data collection and lack of consistency of indicators. Some Brazilian states classify GBVH victims according to race: 73% of women killed

in the first semester of 2020 were afro descendants. Brazil has the highest violence rate against transgender population in South America, according to Non-Governmental Organizations,⁵³ even with considerable underreporting of cases.

⁴⁴ United Nations, World Populations Prospects: The 2019 Revision.

⁴⁵ UNESCO, UIS Education Statistics Data portal and Human Development Report.

⁴⁶ Global Gender Gap Index, World Economic Forum (2020).

⁴⁷ International Labor Organization (ILO), ILOSTAT and OECD, Gender, Institutions and Development Database (GID-DB).

⁴⁸ Findex database, World Bank 2017 (most recent data).

⁴⁹ Inter-Parliamentary Union (situation as of 1 of September of 2019).

⁵⁰ World Economic Forum, Executive Opinion Survey (EOS) 2018-2019.

⁵¹ OECD (2017) Gender, Institutions and Development Data - base (GID-DB).

⁵² <https://nev.prp.usp.br/projetos/projetos-especiais/monitor-da-violencia/>

⁵³ <https://antrabrazil.org/assassinatos/>



Puma Project II - Klabin

Company: Klabin S.A.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main activity: Producer and exporter of packaging paper, cardboard, corrugated packaging, and industrial bags. As well as cellulose solution to the market of short fiber, long fiber, and fluff.
Project: Puma II Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase: Implementation - as of December 2020. • Industry: Production of packaging paper, cardboard, corrugated packaging, and industrial bags

Background: Founded in 1899, Klabin, a private company, is the largest producer and exporter in its industry in Brazil. As an organization, it sees diversity, and sustainability overall, as a key strategy for business. Although their number of female employees is increasing, with a significant amount of job creation projected for when the implementation phase of Puma II is finished, Klabin has a total of 13% female employees, 10% in Puma II. They are mostly allocated in the coordination, supervisory and specialist positions, none of them are managers or directors in the Puma II Project.

Actions taken and results: Following a strategic approach to diversity, Klabin has implemented a diversity and employee promotion policy and the creation of a diversity committee, affinity groups and a people’s commission. Through this initiative, the company has promoted the inclusion of women in the short list of pre-

selected candidates for the attraction, selection and review process, as well as training the teams involved on diversity.

Klabin also adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and adapted them to their own growth plan, calling them the KODS, for their acronym in Portuguese. These include plans with their own objectives that establish the values the company will deliver to society, gender equality among them. Klabin has also voluntarily adhered the UN Women Empowerment Principles to its internal business strategy, continuously reinforcing their ethical conduct and integrity principles.

An example of this commitment is their internal Integrity and Ombudsperson Channel, an internal grievance mechanism monitored by an external entity, committed to impartiality, confidentiality, and continuously trained to receive all

types of grievances. Similarly, Klabin has the Talk to Klabin (Fale com a Klabin) program that takes on the cases related to GBVH in the community.

For the discussion of actions and debates focused on gender equity and women empowerment, a group housed under the Diversity and Affinity Groups Committee, called “K Entre Nós”, or Between Us, is rapidly expanding to other units within the company. For example, in one of the Puma II Project units in Ortigueira, a corporate internal program was created (named Puma II Project for Women) after significant increases in reports of GBVH were noticed. The program aims to consolidate their policy to confront GBVH, not only within the scope of the project, but also in the municipalities located in the area of influence of the project. It includes initiatives to raise awareness and tackle any type of violence against women; involves the participation of all employees of the project, both from Klabin and their contracted companies, the municipal public authorities and actors from networks that confront violence, such as health and education

services, secretariats for social assistance, the military and civil police, the public ministry, as well as members from the local community.

The actions taken to target GBVH within this initiative included joint campaigns with the local governments on sensitization of leaders and employees with actions to foster dialogue, aimed at groups of men and women; technical training for information multipliers, employees of the Puma II Project, employees of Klabin’s Ombudsman and Integrity Channel and selected employees of city halls to deal adequately with cases of gender-based violence; support for the creation of a governmental “Reception and Affection Group,” a prepared and trained team with knowledge in empathy, compassion, assertive and non-violent communication, so that they can have a welcoming attitude towards women victims of violence; in addition to institutional support and consolidation of partnerships to strengthen the network to confront violence.



To catalyze their impact in the communities where they operate, Klabin makes sure to include a gender perspective when mapping and analyzing their area of influence. Their main objective is to monitor environmental and social impacts on the municipalities, and to analyze and act on the impacts attributed to the migration of workers and people in search of jobs.

They rely on more than 50 indicators that monitor education, finance, social action, and health and safety. Within the social actions, Klabin focuses on the occurrence of GBVH, which they monitor monthly. With the data collected, Klabin goes a step further by composing baselines for regional planning actions and programs, public policies, and private investments, setting the stage for more partnerships in the communities where they operate. They can measure their progress by using a social progress index that covers categories such as gender, equity, freedom, and inclusion. They plan to extend this measuring system to all municipalities where Klabin operates around the country.

Since the implementation of the measures, Klabin has seen an increase in women in their workforce by two percentage points

each year, a change of 1% per period. As a result, they observed greater retention of employees coming back from maternity leave, demonstrating greater stability, and reinforcing their actions focusing on gender and diversity.

Overall, Klabin perceived a cultural transformation, both in the company and in the communities where they operate after the measures were implemented. In the company, there has been greater participation in employee engagement surveys and the efforts to have a more welcoming, respectful, and healthy work environment continue. In the communities, Klabin has noticed a rise in GBVH reports, not necessarily due to increased violence, but as a result of increased knowledge and awareness in the region. Survivors are now informed of what GBVH is and where they can make a report, they are more empowered to report and trust the appropriate organizations to combat violence



Klabin makes sure to include a gender perspective when mapping and analyzing their area of influence.

Challenges faced: Klabin began the process of implementing their measures knowing that talking about any type of violence, specially GBVH, is a complex and sensitive task. However, they found that talking about violence against women and girls, sexual violence and other cases of abuse - both at the corporate and local levels - was even more delicate than they expected and cultural barriers were strong. To overcome them, Klabin has worked in establishing effective communication, articulating their actions in a sensitive way and respecting the differences among people and communities as a whole, in order to demystify and promote an honest and informed discussion of these topics.

Klabin found that the more studies and initiatives they implemented, the more results they obtained in actions directed toward protecting, denouncing, and attending GBVH cases, and ultimately removing more people from situations of violence. They went through important movements to transform their organizational culture in terms of gender equity, with the support from senior management and the engagement of leaders in the application and effectiveness of actions.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Puma II Project for Women came to a halt, yet Klabin was able to continue the dissemination of a major anti-harassment campaign through their existing channels by offering virtual trainings to their employees on confronting GBVH in their new work environment. There were no significant changes in the local context but a rise in the numbers of GBVH complaints was observed after the communication efforts increased, which shows that sharing content and sensitization are key to foster confidence in reporting. New updates to their grievance mechanism are planned to improve the experience of users that need to complain about sexual harassment.

Klabin acknowledges that **the first step to successfully implement its program was to be more informed about the country's context surrounding GBVH country context and complementing it with the local baseline.** Engaging with an ample range of stakeholders and getting their top management to buy-in were also fundamental.



Source: Klabin



In the last 15 years, Colombia has made progress towards gender parity, but women still earn less for similar work.

Source: Empresas Públicas de Medellín



Colombia

In the last 15 years, Colombia has made progress toward gender parity and efforts were particularly notable along educational attainment.⁵⁴ Economic participation and opportunity lag in comparison to education and health equality measures between women and men.

Colombia has closed its gender gaps regarding educational attainment and health. Women's enrollment in primary, secondary and tertiary education exceed those rates of men (at 93.2% vs. 92.7%; 80.2% vs. 74.9% and 59.7% vs. 51.1%).⁵⁵ Healthy life expectancy for women, at 69.8 years, exceeds that of men at 64.4.⁵⁶

Colombians have never had a female head of State, despite having achieved gender parity in other leadership positions such as legislators, senior officials, and managers. There is a striking difference between appointed government officials and those chosen by popular vote: while more than half of ministerial positions are occupied by women, less than a fifth of the parliament is.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Global Gender Gap Index, World Economic Forum (2020).

⁵⁵ UNESCO, UIS Education Statistics Data portal and Human Development Report.

⁵⁶ World Health Organization (WHO), Global Health Observatory database.

⁵⁷ International Labor Organization (ILO), ILOSTAT, and Inter-Parliamentary Union (situation as of 1 of September of 2019).

On the other hand, a stark contrast to the educational attainment data, women still earn less for similar work. Among 153 countries, the World Economic Forum ranks Colombia in the 122nd position regarding wage equality.⁵⁸ with a score of 3.75 out of 7 (where 7 is best). Relatedly, the female to male ratio of unpaid work per day is 3:86.⁵⁹ In parallel, less than half of adult women have access to bank accounts, but this ratio has doubled during the last ten years.⁶⁰

There are important differences in occupation across genders and smaller percentages of young women choose technology-related careers. While a third of men choose STEM careers, only 14% of women do. Concurrently, only 10% of women graduate from engineering careers. The information and communication technology areas are chosen by 2% of female professionals.⁶¹

A third of women report having experienced GBVH at least once during their lifetime.⁶² A third of Colombian adult women report having experienced physical and/or sexual IPV, and more generally, 37.4% report gender-based

violence during their lifetime. A sample of 7.6% report having experienced sexual IPV in their lives, and 32.3% physical IPV. In a single year, 18.3% of women report being affected by physical and/or sexual IPV.⁶³

⁵⁸ World Economic Forum, Executive Opinion Survey (EOS) 2018-2019.

⁵⁹ OECD, Gender, Institutions and Development Database (GID-DB).

⁶⁰ Findex database, World Bank 2017 (most recent data).

⁶¹ UNESCO, Education indicators.

⁶² OECD (2017) Gender, Institutions and Development Data - base (GID-DB).

⁶³ PAHO (2019) using data from 2015 (most recent data).



Source: Stock

Ituango Hydroelectric Project – Empresas Públicas de Medellín

<p>Company: Empresas Públicas de Medellín (EPM)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main activity: Provision of electricity services: Generation, transmission, and distribution. Design and construction of electroenergetic and hydroelectric projects.
<p>Project: Ituango Hydroelectric Project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase: Construction • Industry: Electricity generation

Background: EPM, a public Colombian company founded in 1955, is responsible for the Ituango Hydroelectric Project, the largest in the country, will have a capacity of 2,400 MW upon completion. EPM considers sustainability as a forefront for business, still it has yet to close gender gaps in its Board of Directors, with one woman out of eight men, and in its leadership positions, with three women out of 19 men. In the Ituango Hydroelectric Project, 6,500 people constitute the workforce in construction, where 83.51% are men and 16.49% are women. The project estimates that once it reaches its operations and maintenance phase, 20% of the workforce will be composed of women. Positively, most of those hires have come from the area of influence of the project and surrounding

areas. Employees, including those hired from subcontractors, are regularly trained on topics ranging from professional to personal development skills, such as: teamwork, the risk of alcohol and drug consumption, listening skills, stress management, and life at home, including the provision of psychological support when it is needed.

Actions taken and results: To promote a respectful, dignified, and fair treatment in the workplace, EPM hired experts to implement its policy on human rights where an emphasis has been made on committing to no tolerance to violence. As part of an industry generally dominated by men, EPM is member of COCIER, a working group in the Colombian energy

sector, where they sit in the team focused on gender and opening more space for women in the industry. Currently, EPM is implementing the Sello Equipares strategy, which is an initiative with a gender approach promoted by the Ministry of Labor and aims to identify and close labor gaps through the implementation of affirmative actions on this issue. Its application entails analyzing different levels of the management of human talent and communications, identifying which opportunities can be acted upon to close gender gaps. Furthermore, EPM has a team dedicated to diversity, inclusion, and gender equity with members that range from the Board of Directors to employees, and has implemented an

organization-wide grievance mechanism for the reporting of any misconduct or the intention of causing harm to or among employees. This practice serves as a path for women or any employee to denounce, anonymously, any type of GBVH they witnessed or experienced themselves.

Making the existence of a grievance mechanism known to every employee, discourages possible perpetrators to act.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, EPM has increased its actions in a virtual manner to provide its employees with the tools to handle the new normality at home. Although no complaint of GBVH has been received since the pandemic started, prevention measures were implemented, such as:



Source: Empresas Públicas de Medellín

options on how to use internal and external communication lines for grievances; a tool to measure the identification of, or possible risk of violence; and the promotion of psychological support for all employees was reinforced. Since EPM has recently implemented these measures, it is still in the process of monitoring and supervising its effect on gender diversity, inclusion, and the prevention of GBVH.

While implementing its analysis on the area of influence, EPM identified gender disparities in the Ituango Hydroelectric Project surrounding communities. To mitigate risks and further contribute to the development of the communities, the company entered in a partnership with local government and hospitals to provide voluntary services and primary care for underaged residents. Under this partnership, children and adolescents receive different types of trainings, recreational activities, and sports, led by professionals in nursing and psychology.

To contribute to the narrowing of gender gaps and GBVH prevention in the community specifically, EPM, through the partnership, provided trainings on sexual and reproductive rights, family planning and pregnancy prevention methods, life skills, the risks of using psychoactive substances, parental control and childcare, which was attended by equal numbers of men and women (totaling around 51.5 thousand people). Once the trainings began, EPM realized the need to provide individualized trainings for families, which directly resulted in the support of children,

adolescents and entire families in regards to the management of social risks that could be found in the community and affect everyone's personal development. **Additionally, women received trainings on gender equality, women's rights, GBVH and how to access local support systems.**

The company proactively mapped 16 different community organizations that serve women and offered support in capacity building to strengthen their financial and communication strategies and increase productivity. Additionally, EPM established a partnership with local financial institutions, the Municipal Agriculture Secretariat, and the hydroelectric project itself to provide these organizations with access to credit. The company continues to routinely monitor the community through the analysis of secondary data complemented by stakeholder engagement, to identify existing or emerging social risks so preventative and mitigation actions can be developed.

Challenges faced: Although the initiatives implemented have had the support of the Board of Directors, senior management and has been welcomed by employees, the presence of gender biases and a highly masculinized workforce pose challenges. Country and local culture have crystallized preconceptions about masculine and feminine roles that are not easy to be deconstructed, and **it takes time to communicate the message of the importance of gender equality.**



It takes time to communicate the message of the importance of gender equality.



Source: Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad



Costa Rica has achieved gender parity for literacy rates but not for economic participation.

Costa Rica

Gender equality has been improving in Costa Rica during the last ten years and the Gender's Equality Report 2020 lists Costa Rica in the top five nations in Latin America and the Caribbean.⁶⁴ Women's health and education outcomes score better than those in the sphere of economic participation and opportunity both in absolute but also in relative terms (i.e. compared to other nations), despite improvements in the latter during the last fifteen years.

Costa Rican women's educational attainment is equal or better than men's, and health expectancy is higher for women than for men.⁶⁵ The country has achieved gender parity regarding literacy rates (at 97.9% for women vs. 97.8% for men), enrollment in primary education (96% for both); enrollment in secondary education (84.3% vs. 80.7%) and tertiary education, (60.7% vs. 50%). At 72.7 years, women's life expectancy exceeds that of men, at 69.1 years.⁶⁶

In contrast, women's economic participation lag educational and health parity outcomes. Both women at the top and in technical positions are less represented than men and earn less income per similar work.⁶⁷ During the last 50 years, only once

Costa Rica has had a female president, and only a third of legislators, senior officials and managers are women.⁶⁸ Despite the fact that enrollment in secondary and tertiary education exceeds those of men, only half of adult women participate in the labor market, while four out five men do, ranking Costa Rica in the 112th position among 153 regarding gender parity on economic participation and opportunity.⁶⁹ Finally, less than two-thirds of women have a banking account, while 75% of men do.⁷⁰

Not only are women's wages lower for similar work on average, but occupational choices differ significantly among women and men. Women's educational attainment in technology and related areas are below those of men. Only 8% of women graduate from STEM areas compared to 27% of men, and only a fourth of professionals graduating from engineering, manufacturing, and construction professions are women.⁷¹

Zooming in on the topic of GBVH, **more than a third of Costa Rican adult women**

report having experienced physical and/or sexual IPV, and more generally, 36% report gender-based violence during their lifetime.⁷² A percentage of 15.3% women report having experienced sexual IPV ever in their lives, and 33% physical IPV. In a single year, 7.8% of women report being affected by physical and/or sexual IPV.⁷³

⁶⁴ Global Gender Gap Index, World Economic Forum (2020).

⁶⁵ UNESCO, UIS Education Statistics Data portal and Human Development Report.

⁶⁶ World Health Organization (WHO), Global Health Observatory database.

⁶⁷ World Economic Forum, Executive Opinion Survey (EOS) 2018-2019.

⁶⁸ International Labor Organization (ILO), ILOSTAT, and Inter-Parliamentary Union (situation as of 1 of September of 2019).

⁶⁹ International Labor Organization (ILO), ILOSTAT, Modelled Estimates by the World Economic Forum (2020).

⁷⁰ Findex database, World Bank 2017 (most recent data).

⁷¹ UNESCO, Education indicators.

⁷² OECD (2017) Gender, Institutions and Development Data - base (GID-DB).

⁷³ PAHO (2019) using data from 2003 (most recent data).



Source: Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad

Reventazón Hydroelectric Plant – Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad

<p>Company: Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad (ICE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main activity: Comprehensive electricity solutions and services.
<p>Project: Reventazón Hydroelectric Plant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase: Operation • Industry: Electricity generation.

Background: Since 1949, the year of its creation, ICE has been committed to fostering sustainability through its actions. A public company, ICE contributes to 64% of Costa Rica’s electricity and through its Reventazón project it has the capacity of generating 305 MW. In a traditionally male oriented industry, ICE has been able to reach gender parity in its Board of Directors. It also appointed a female executive president for the first time in its history, as well as in general management and operations management positions. However, a gender gap persists at a corporate level, of the 5,130 employees, 86% are men and 14% women, a trait that reflects a trend in the electricity industry in LAC. The most notable gap in the company can be observed in the technical and professional positions where only 1% and 28% are women, respectively.

Actions taken and results: After opening up the space for discussions and analysis on existing barriers that limit professional and personal development for women, as well as monitoring cases of sexual harassment in the company, ICE, in 2003, launched its institutional policy on gender equality. This operationalized the company’s guidelines and commitments, such as their work with men and masculinities to promote gender equality. As of 2015, ICE has also worked in the promotion of LGBTQI+ rights by declaring the company a space free from all types of discrimination and updated their institutional regulations. This resulted in an institution-wide policy on human rights in 2019 and a transformation in their existing programs on equality into a Corporate Gender and Human Rights Program. The program focuses on four strategic areas: research, advisory services, trainings, and communication.

At the operational level, ICE has made many efforts focused on incorporating women into different phases of the work cycle through campaigns that attract, hire, train, and promote them to leadership positions. In the case of Reventazón, for example, the company hired 300 women, 89 of which occupied construction jobs, most of them without previous experience, who were able to work in different phases of construction after undergoing training. It was an unprecedented move in the energy industry in Costa Rica. Likewise, ICE adopted a more inclusive language, vigorously prohibiting racist and sexist practices, resulting in a decrease in reported cases of sexual abuse and harassment.

The incorporation of women in the construction work of the project, mostly from the communities located in the project's area of influence, resulted in a series of benefits to both them and their families. It promoted upward social mobility and inclusive economic development, by having access to a duly paid, steady job, with all the social guarantees, being subject to credits, making their own decisions, all within the framework of women empowerment.



Source: Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad

In addition to the above, ICE made work hours flexible and established alliances with higher education centers so that employees can be trained and certified in the area of specialization where they work, as well as in occupational health and safety. By strengthening their skills and training, employees can be part of the internal eligibility registry for future work once the project is completed.

Since the implementation of all these actions, sexual abuse and harassment cases have decreased. **The effects can be seen further in ICEs relationship with the local community, one that focuses on creating alliances, building solutions and agreements with civil society organizations.** The community was able to receive trainings on local development, literacy, and land acquisition, among others. The knowledge acquired directly contributed to the empowerment of women and LGBTQI+ individuals, decreasing vulnerability to GBVH. To ensure participation of women in engagement meetings and trainings, ICE adjusted schedules, provided childcare onsite and offered transportation when needed.

Challenges faced: Although measures have been taken, ICE still faces challenges on its path to the promotion of gender equality and the prevention of GBVH. *Machismo* is still found nationwide and is a risk for the organizational culture, along with resistance to the support of LGBTQI+ human rights. Gender biases persist in the

presence of stereotypes that condition the positive institutional practices and hinder achievement of equal rights and opportunities for different genders. Unconscious gender biases can still be seen in different phases of the work cycle, including attraction of personnel, selection, recruitment, trainings, and promotions. **Profound changes might take time.**

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, ICE established virtual meetings with its employees, providing them the space to express new feelings of uncertainty regarding working from home, where an emphasis was made on the fact that women are the ones carrying the burden of both professional and domestic life. Male employees were encouraged to assume the responsibility of sharing domestic and childcare tasks, not only during the pandemic but as a general practice.



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Conclusion

Promoting gender equality and preventing gender-based violence and harassment has clear benefits: businesses where women and transgender people aren't discriminated against and are safe can decrease costs with litigation, increase employee retention, build a positive reputation, develop strong relationships with communities and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals.

Despite the progress achieved in the last decades, there is still a long path toward gender equality and gender-based violence and harassment prevention in Latin America and the Caribbean. **The COVID-19 Pandemic has aggravated inequalities, undoubtedly leaving the women, girls, and transgender people of LAC more vulnerable,** making it important to build from the lessons learned so positive change can happen.

One crucial avenue towards this goal is to better understand how both formal institutions (i.e. local legislation, support frameworks, and public policies) as well as social norms and cultural behaviors, shape gender disparities. Proactive

initiatives within private sector projects, taking into consideration those aspects of the institutional and social context, can improve gender equality. Preventing and mitigating gender risks in development projects has never been more important, therefore **protecting different genders in order to promote equality** continues to be a core approach at IDB Invest and the projects financed.

