OECD Project Towards Better Sharing of Paid and Unpaid Work in four Latin American countries

Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Peru

Motivations

A strong set of policy reforms are needed to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in Latin American countries:

- Despite rising over the past 15 years, the participation rate of Latin American and Caribbean women in the labour market remains at about 50% – nearly 25 percentage points lower than for men and some 10 percentage points below the OECD average.
- Social norms towards work and care play an important role in explaining the low level of female labour market participation. The gender gap in the time spent on non-remunerated activities such as childcare, eldercare, and care of others is particularly large. A recent analysis by ECLAC shows that even when women are the sole providers of household income, they spend more time than men on unpaid work – a pattern that is typical across OECD countries.
- Consequently, women face difficulties to stay in education and tend to drop out of the labour force, especially those assuming care responsibilities early and living in low-income households.
- Significant heterogeneities affect labour markets in the region, reflecting a strong concentration of employment in relatively low-productivity sectors. For example, women are over-represented in care-related jobs.

Objective

To analyse gender gaps in educational, social, and (formal and informal) employment outcomes with a focus on women’s disproportionate responsibility for unpaid work. The main output will be four country studies on Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Peru. A summary discussion of lessons learned and policy insights will complement these country reports. The project benefits from funding provided by the European Commission through the Regional Facility for Development in Transition.

Approach

The analysis will be embedded in an international perspective based on good practices and relevant policy developments in OECD countries.

Examples of key questions that will be addressed are as follows:

- What drives gender gaps in national economic outcomes?
- How do partners within families allocate time to work within and outside the home and how do these patterns vary with the age of children?
- How do work arrangements differ between partners – e.g. dual earner families or single earner families?
The review process will benefit from an as open and inclusive dialogue, involving policymakers and other stakeholders. Such an intense dialogue process will allow acquiring well-informed views about what the main policy barriers to gender equality in labour market outcomes are and how policy can help. It will also allow mainstreaming gender priorities in public policy, as well as assessing what synergies exist between different policies and how these may be better exploited to foster gender equality.

A thorough review of relevant indicators will guide the analysis and reveal which policy areas require particular attention. Out of an acknowledgement that women with different backgrounds face very different obstacles, key statistics such as maternal employment rates, within-household differences in work hours and others will be disaggregated whenever possible across dimensions such as age of children, rural/urban areas and socio-economic backgrounds.

Building on recent OECD analysis and drawing together the evidence from each report, a strong case will be made for reducing gender gaps. This will include through analysing the gains of reduced gender gaps in labour market participation for women, their families and the economy as a whole.

A comprehensive set of policy recommendations will be derived. Particular attention will be paid to tailoring the recommendations to the realities of each country. To this effect, each recommendation will be discussed and agreed upon with the country. This will ensure that the OECD analysis appropriately discusses the challenges ahead, while also acknowledging the progress achieved.

OECD experience suggests that inclusive dialogue approaches can be very effective in leading towards balanced assessments of the key challenges and policy priorities. The process will start with a fact-finding mission of the OECD team, facilitated by a contact point in the country. A questionnaire will be sent to the country before the fact-finding mission.

Timeline

The reviews of Chile and Peru have started with OECD visits to the countries in the first quarter of 2020. Visits to Colombia and Costa Rica should take place later in the year. Typically, the initial steps of a review process involve the identification of the country’s contact point, the preparation of the questionnaire and the fact-finding mission. The exact timeline is determined in strict consultation with the country.

Contact points

Alessandro Goglio
e-mail: alessandro.goglio@oecd.org
Telephone: +33 1 45 24 75 71

José Antonio Ardavin
e-mail: jose-antonio.ardavin@oecd.org
Telephone: +33 1 45 24 17 83