



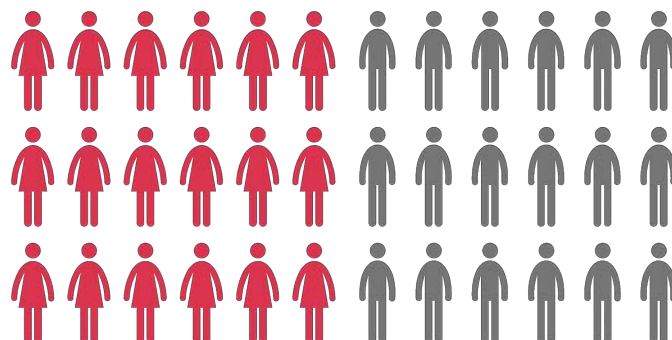
UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

Introduction to gender inequality

With women and children making up half of the global population, they are owners of half of the world's developmental potential.

However, gender inequality persists in all regions of the world, including Latin America and the Caribbean, and frustrate social progress.



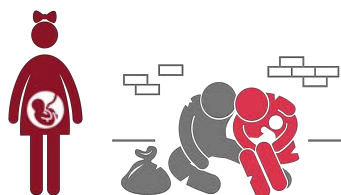
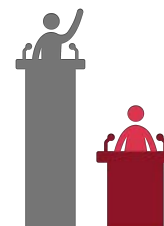
Ways in which inequality manifests itself

1. A much lower percentage of women are engaged in the labour market than men and those that find work are paid less than their male counterparts.



2. Women dedicate substantially more time to unpaid domestic chores and caregiving than men, three times more in some countries.

3. Women tend to account for less than 30% of publicly elected offices and major managerial posts in both the public and private sectors.



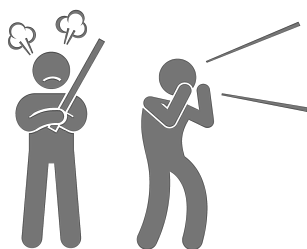
4. Teenage pregnancy rates remain high, a problem that is even greater among lower income and less educated women as well as those belonging to a minority ethnic group.

5. Femicides continue to be committed in Latin America at an alarming rate. In 2019, almost 5,000 women were killed in Latin America and four Caribbean countries simply because they were women.



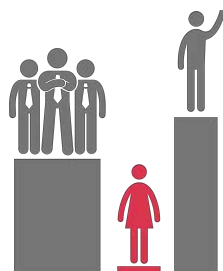
Barriers hinder women from fully exercising their human rights

1. Socioeconomic inequality and the greater prevalence of poverty among women.



2. Discriminatory and violent patriarchal cultural patterns that favor men's domination over women.

3. The sexual division of labour and the unfair social organization of care in which men are disproportionately compensated for socially recognized paid productive labor while in most cases there is no such compensation for the reproductive labour that is mainly shouldered by women.



4. The concentration of power that excludes women from decision-making in all spheres of their lives.



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

Women's autonomy

The different social inequality gaps between women and men demonstrate the close relationship between the promise of women's human rights and the extent to which they have achieved **autonomy on the level of three dimensions**.



1. **Physical autonomy**, which refers to the freedom to make decisions about their own bodies, their sexuality and reproduction and ability to exercise their right to a life free of violence

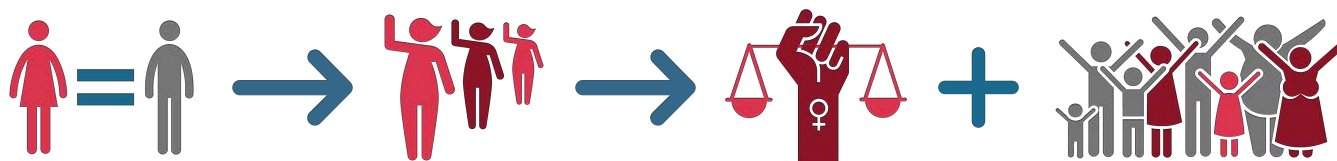


2. **Economic autonomy** as in the possibility to access and control their own assets and resources



3. **Autonomy in decision-making** in which women participate in determining issues that affect their lives, the lives of their families, their communities and society as a whole.

The promotion of gender equality through women and girls' empowerment is of fundamental importance for securing their human rights and promoting sustainable development in a healthy society.



This document contributes to the activities of the project “Leaving no one behind in Latin America and the Caribbean: strengthening institutions and social policy coherence and integration at the country level to foster equality and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”, financed by the eleventh tranche of the United Nations Development Account, and its implementation was coordinated by Simone Cecchini, Senior Social Affairs Officer of the Social Development Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Raúl Holz, Consultant of the same Division, and Humberto Soto de la Rosa, Social Affairs Officer of ECLAC's subregional headquarters in Mexico. More information on the project, including other relevant materials, can be found at: igualdad.cepal.org/en

Based on the text: S. Cecchini, R. Holz and H. Soto de la Rosa (coords.), A toolkit for promoting equality: the contribution of social policies in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/TS.2021/55), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2021.

ECLAC staff members Humberto Soto, Elsa Gutiérrez and Mustafa Al Gamal, with the support of consultants Susan Skinner, Gabriela Ibarra and Ericka Arambarri, participated in the preparation of the document. The support of the Documents and Publications Division for their guidance is gratefully acknowledged. Icons from "The Noun Project" platform and photographs from the Adobe Stock platform were used in the preparation of the contents, with the proper authorizations. Photographs from the United Nations have also been used.

The opinions expressed in this document, which has not been subjected to editorial review, are the sole responsibility of the authors and may not coincide with those of the Organization.

Copyright © United Nations, 2021
All rights reserved

Permission to reproduce all or part of this document should be requested from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Documents and Publications Division, publicaciones.cepal@un.org. Member States of the United Nations and their governmental institutions may reproduce this work without prior authorization. They are only requested to mention the source and inform ECLAC of such reproduction.