

Americas

QUARTERLY

**Luiza
Trajano,**
Fighting
Domestic
Violence
PAGE 60



THE ULTIMATE RECOVERY PLAN

**Closing the gender gap is the best way
to get Latin America's economies
and societies back on their feet**

Costa Rican Vice President
Epsy Campbell Barr,
one of our Top 5 "champions
of gender equality"



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IN A TIME OF ANXIETY, **FACTS** COMFORT.

IN A TIME OF MISINFORMATION, **FACTS** CORRECT.

IN A TIME OF DIVISION, **FACTS** UNITE.

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How to Close the Gender Gap by 2030

Five ideas for how Latin America can pursue the best post-COVID recovery plan possible: equality for men and women.

GIVEN THE ENORMOUS CHALLENGES FACING Latin America in 2020, achieving true equality between men and women by the end of this decade might sound impossible—or perhaps, like a dream that must be deferred.

But despite old *machista* stereotypes, it's an area where the region has already made significant progress in the last 20 years. Consider that women now hold a third of seats in Latin America's national legislatures, and about half in Mexico, Bolivia and Costa Rica. The U.S. number, by comparison, is just 24%. A broad measure by the World Economic Forum, which accounts for economic, health and educational disparities, puts Latin America's gender gap at 28.8%—down from 33% in the mid-2000s, and better than the global average. Today, there are more women than men in the region's universities.

That's a record to build on, and a tonic to the general feeling of hopelessness that permeates the region today. But as with so much else, progress is now being reversed due to the pandemic. Studies show women are doing an even higher percentage of unpaid household work like cleaning and childcare, forcing them to put professional opportunities aside. Some 15% of households report increased domestic violence since the pandemic started. Unemployment is rising faster among

women, and many are dropping out of school, damaging a whole generation's future.

This issue of *AQ* is a special report built around five recommendations to get the quest for gender equality back on track.

We start with a call to **improve access to financing for women entrepreneurs** (page 14), who currently account for just 23% of loan portfolios in Latin America despite being just as likely as men to start a business in many countries. **Enrolling more low-income women in STEM programs** (page 42) would open up tomorrow's most promising professional fields. **Improving protections for women against violence** (page 60) is a necessary condition for addressing many other challenges; so is **getting men to do their fair share of household work and caregiving** (page 50). And finally, this issue is full of inspiring stories of women who have succeeded against the odds, living proof of the need to **find new, creative ways to**

feature women as role models (page 28) so future generations can build on their example.

A recent McKinsey report put the economic dividend of gender equality in Latin America at some \$1.1 trillion. That would be a huge boost amid the greatest recession in modern memory, but there are more reasons than money to do it. Equality shouldn't have to wait.



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A dive into transnational crime and the challenges facing Latin America's security apparatus.



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Our Readers

Tell us what you think.

Please send letters to Brian@as-coa.org



Colombian Vice President Marta Lucía Ramírez (bottom right) joined LAVCA's Susana García-Robles (bottom left), Citi Honduras' Reina Irene Mejía (top left) and AQ's Roberto Simón for a discussion on women's economic inclusion hosted by AQ and the Citi Foundation.



Martha Bárcena
@Martha_Barcena

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Joe Biden and the Future of the Americas

americasquarterly.org/article/joe-bi... vía @amerquarterly

Translate Tweet



Joe Biden and the Future of the Americas

US policy towards Latin America should prioritize cooperation, rule of law and climate change, among other considerations, writes a former Biden advisor. americasquarterly.org



Sergio Fajardo
@sergio_fajardo

Ph.D. en Matemáticas. Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison. Ex candidato presidencial 2018. Gobernador de Antioquia 2012-2015. Alcalde de Medellín 2004-2007.

Escribimos para @AmerQuarterly una contextualización a América Latina de nuestra propuesta para que los estudiantes no se retiren de la educación por razones económicas generadas por la pandemia. Invitadas/os a leer:



Adriana Vega

@VeggaCer

Tweeting about all things trade & international. #NorthAmerican 🇲🇽🇺🇸🇨🇦
#TradeMatters 🌐 Gov Affairs @ Scotiabank.
Views my own.

Great compilation by @amerquarterly on why "Now is the time for bold—even radical—thinking" in LATAM: 5 Big Ideas for a Post-COVID Latin America



NEW AQ: 5 Big Ideas for a Post-COVID Latin America
From universal health care to a revival of hemispheric trade talks, it's time to be bold.
americasquarterly.org



Patricio Provitina

@pprovitina

Global affairs & Latin America analyst |
Contributor to Global Americans | Latinx
Immigrant 🇲🇽 + 🇺🇸 + 🇨🇦 | English / Spanish

Argentina is in dire need of reforming a deeply politicized justice system. What is Alberto Fernandez proposing? Will it be positive or negative?

Here the analysis from @nataliavolosin in @AmerQuarterly



Argentina Needs Judicial Reform. Don't Let Partisanship Get in the Way.
Criticism over the circumstances of the government's proposed reform could drown out more important questions about the reform itself.
americasquarterly.org



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@johncrabb_ Excellent summary here in @AmerQuarterly of how a Biden administration would operate in Latin America

@SeleeAndrew This article by @aliciabarcena in @AmerQuarterly opens an important debate in Latin America at how we can capture inequalities in a more dynamic way—and we tend to focus on what we can measure.

@mj_stott Does Mexico's @lopezobrador_ face a challenge from the left of his party? Interesting piece from @AmerQuarterly

@OliGGriffin Good piece from @SergioGuzmanE and @Cam_A_Wilson on challenges for Colombia's Ivan Duque in the second half of his presidency via @amerquarterly

@VickyMurilloNYC Covid19 as an opportunity for Latin America, @MauricioCard in @AmerQuarterly. Will the region take it?

@desapmex After spending months in Guerrero and Puebla, I gained a better understanding of the rural telecommunications infrastructure. Thanks to @AmerQuarterly for publishing my findings.

@benjamingedan "To be effective," @Jacobson_RS and @dan_restrepo write in @AmerQuarterly, and "not be an antiquated instrument of implicit U.S. hemispheric ownership, the IDB cannot be reduced to a mere tool of U.S."

panorama

LOOKING AT THE AMERICAS IN ALL DIRECTIONS

EDITED BY BRENDAN O'BOYLE



THE BIG PICTURE

In Mexico City, private school student Xareni, six, attends class online. For some 30 million students in Mexico's public schools, the government's remote education plan involves a combination of television programming and online instruction. But Xareni is among the lucky ones; distance learning is impossible for many. Official statistics show that just 56% of households have access to internet while 93% have a television. The challenge is greatest for the 3.2 million students who speak indigenous languages and live in rural areas, where internet connections are sparse.

HECTOR VIVAS/GETTY

QUOTES



“At the end of the day, the world is a single place. Generosity and solidarity is no longer voluntary, it is necessary.”

—Uruguayan President **Luis Lacalle Pou** at the 2020 CAF conference



“Either you’re the government, or you’re the opposition. You can’t be both.”

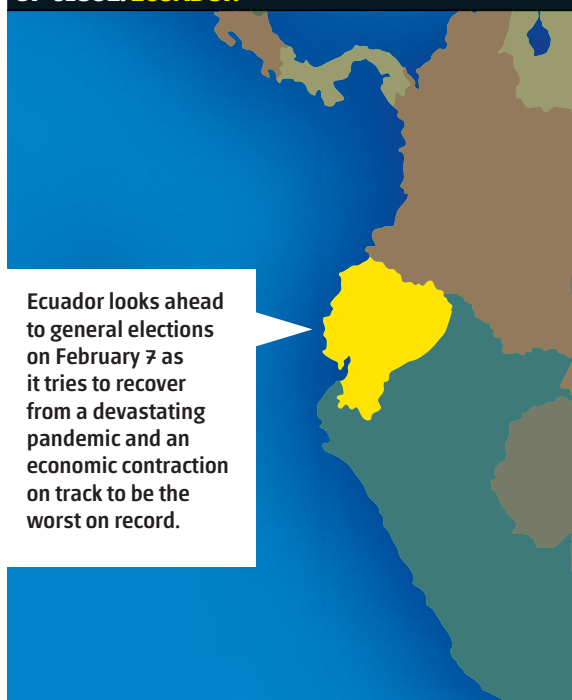
—Venezuelan opposition figure **Henrique Capriles** after his break with Juan Guaidó



“We are talking about a lost decade. We are going to recede 14 years in terms of poverty rates.”

—**Alicia Bárcena**, executive secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

UP CLOSE: ECUADOR

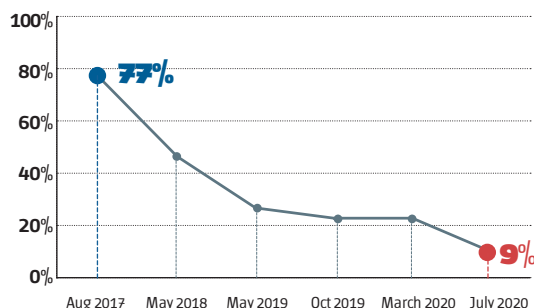


Ecuador looks ahead to general elections on February 7 as it tries to recover from a devastating pandemic and an economic contraction on track to be the worst on record.

ECONOMY A \$6.5 billion deal with the IMF announced in August—and a subsequent \$2 billion loan from China—gave Ecuador room to restructure over \$17 billion in bonds and to try to rebuild an economy lashed by lockdowns, a debt crisis and the drop in oil prices.

POLITICS Since Ecuador’s highest court upheld a prior corruption conviction, exiled former president Rafael Correa won’t get his wish to run for vice president alongside his candidate of choice, former government minister Andrés Arauz. Expect Arauz and businessman Guillermo Lasso, the runner-up in the 2017 election, to be among the lead contenders.

President Lenin Moreno’s presidency draws to a close with dismal approval among Ecuadorians.



SOURCE: CEDATOS

What’s Up



JAIR BOLSONARO’S POPULARITY

Despite overseeing one of the world’s most deadly COVID-19 outbreaks, Brazil’s president has never been more popular, with approval nearing 50% in some polls. A massive transfer of cash to the country’s poorest 30% has pushed poverty near historic lows, boosting Bolsonaro’s image in the process. But that could change as the transfer amount was cut in half, and the program expires at the end of the year.

What’s Down

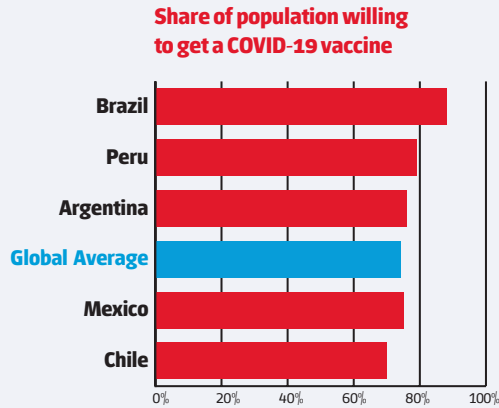


NORTHERN TRIANGLE VIOLENCE

A silver lining amid the pandemic? Recorded homicides have fallen significantly in Latin America’s most violent region, which includes Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, where the lowest murder rate in three decades may also be an effect of reported dealings between President Nayib Bukele and the MS-13 street gang.

FEATURED GRAPH

Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro made waves in late August when he said that "no one can force anyone to get a vaccine" for COVID-19. But Brazilians are actually more open to getting a vaccine than many of their neighbors, according to IPSOS polling.



SOURCE: IPSOS Global Advisor

STAT BOX

25%

Predicted drop in university enrollment in Colombia amid the pandemic

SOURCE: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana

20.7%

Deforestation alerts in the Amazon fell 20.7% in August compared to the same month in 2019.

But the **524 square miles** under alert represented the second worst result for August in five years.

SOURCE: INPE

AQ Q&A



María Espinosa

Human rights lawyer at Amazon Frontlines

How has the pandemic affected indigenous populations in Ecuador?

COVID-19 was brought to indigenous communities through contact with oil company workers who travel back and forth from oil sites to their homes in larger cities.

On top of that, a massive oil spill occurred in April, dumping more than 15,000 barrels of crude into the Amazon River. It has affected the lives of 27,000 indigenous people. Seventy percent of indigenous communities' food comes from the river, now contaminated, leaving communities with unsafe drinking water. This spill alters indigenous lives dramatically and reduces their chances of surviving the pandemic.

You are currently representing the Waorani indigenous group in the context of the oil spill. Where does the case stand?

Sadly, COVID-19 and lack of political will has stagnated the judicial process. The case was suspended twice in the last couple of months. But we are not just leading a fight in the courts. I have learned that fighting for indigenous rights through the judicial system is only one part of the battle. It needs to be complemented with activism to make the cause visible.

Do you see this case having a long-term impact?

The value of taking this case to court goes beyond a potential legal victory. This oil spill has united diverse organizations that normally work separately. Human rights defenders, environmentalists, the church and indigenous communities are coming together. This is really significant because we have achieved distinct levels of social mobilization in Ecuador.

—Leonie Rauls

COURTESY OF AMAZON FRONTLINES

Throwing Money at Anti-Corruption



A bill in Washington may create a special fund to support anti-corruption efforts worldwide. What's at stake for the region?

by Roberto Simon and Emilie Sweigart

The Countering Russian and Other Overseas Kleptocracy bill—or CROOK—in the U.S. Congress would create a multi-million-dollar fund to support “anti-corruption reformers” anywhere in the world. If approved, the executive branch will get wide discretionary powers to choose how, where and which entities, American or foreign, should get the funds.

Abigail Bellows, a former State Department official who helped draft the bill, argues that CROOK can provide a vital source of “flexible money” to be deployed when political transitions open a window of opportunity to improve the rule of law. The money would mostly come from the fines imposed on companies that violate the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA).

But what would that mean, in practice, for Latin America?

Venezuela would likely be a priority. For instance, Washington could allocate money to organizations investigating corruption by the Nicolás Maduro regime. But in other parts of Latin America, like Guatemala or Honduras, U.S. diplomacy and law enforcement agencies sometimes have different—if not opposing—objectives.

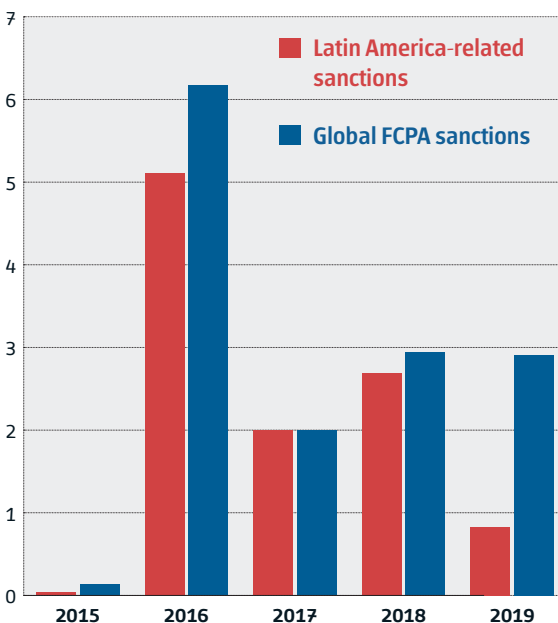
The CROOK bill says the fund should prioritize “countries that are strategic to the U.S. national interest,” tacitly recognizing that realpolitik considerations should take precedence. The anti-corruption aid would be, by design, politically selective.

More resources are crucial to advance anti-corruption efforts in developing democracies, such as Latin America's. But regardless of good intentions, Washington's actions in this area can also be counterproductive. In Brazil, for instance, reports that the FBI and the Lava Jato Task Force established collaboration channels that circumvented the Justice Ministry—which is illegal under Brazilian law—helped undermine the reputation of federal prosecutors in the legal community and beyond.

FCPA Sanctions in Latin America

Lava Jato has increased Latin America's share in the total of FCPA fines.

Billions of U.S. dollars



SOURCE: Foreign Corrupt Practices Act Clearinghouse

NOTE: Latin America-related sanctions involve at least one country from the region.

One idea to mitigate risks is using the new fund to boost rule of law initiatives at the Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank and other multilaterals. CICIG, Lava Jato and other cases in the region show that foreign aid and international collaboration against corruption are deeply affected by politics, national interests and public perceptions. More money could be welcome news, but it will likely make this dynamic even more complex.

Simon heads the AS/COA Anti-Corruption Working Group (AWG) and is politics editor at AQ
Sweigart is an AQ editor and researcher for AWG

5 IDEAS FOR CLOSING THE GENDER GAP

Achieving full gender parity in Latin America by 2030 is an audacious goal. In this issue, we've organized our feature section around five ideas that we believe are fundamental to helping us get there.

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DON'T FORGET ABOUT SILVIA

Even the most extraordinary talent
needs opportunity to thrive.

by Brian Winter

GUAXUPÉ, BRAZIL—She always dreamed big, maybe too big for this coffee and cattle town in the mountains of southeastern Brazil. So when she turned 18 and word came that a family friend in São Paulo needed a nanny, she jumped at the chance—and took the overnight bus south.

The years that followed were challenging, and for a while those dreams seemed to recede. She discovered a gift for taking care of children; but, cruelly, could not bear any of her own, miscarrying a dozen times before finally giving up. The monstrous city gave her opportunities, but some troubled times as well. When she got back on her feet and saved up a bit of cash, she opened a modest shop in her house, in what was meant to be the baby's room, selling elaborate, bejeweled skirts she designed and stitched herself.

The house suffered from water outages and chronic mold, and the fabric would often rot before she could finish her work. Her husband, a part-time metalworker and something of a recluse, complained constantly about the people coming in and out. And so the shop soon closed, another link in a growing chain of unrealized ambitions. But it was never in her nature to be bitter; it was a shrug, a rueful laugh, and on to the next thing. “*Fazer o quê, né?*” What are you gonna do? Back to working as a nanny or maid, she decided—at least for a while.



Silvia with the author
and his son, in 2015.



Silvia's cakes quickly became famous—and coveted—within the São Paulo expat community.

And that was how Silvia first came into our lives, around the time of her 42nd birthday, in early 2014. Working for an American-Brazilian family like ours, with two young kids who enjoyed exotic meals like sesame chicken and Frito pie and shouted across the apartment at each other in a mix of English and Portuguese, could be unsettling. But Silvia fit in right away and—in an auspicious sign of things to come—she immediately taught herself enough English to navigate the cookbook we kept on the shelf, making careful notes in pencil next to the recipes and doing the imperial-to-metric conversions herself. Five days a week, our house echoed with Silvia's sing-song voice, peeling laugh and the daily hiss of the pressure cooker, producing another batch of her delicious *feijão*.

One day, Silvia mentioned she had learned how to bake cakes while working briefly for a caterer, and had even sold a few to friends. Erica, my wife, asked if she might make one for our son's birthday.

Of course, Silvia said.

Well, could it be a Batman cake?

Show me some pictures of what you want, Silvia replied, and I'll do my best.

The final result was so sublime, so utterly perfect, that I heard Erica shout in delight—"Oh my GOD!"—from across the apartment. The cake featured a Batman logo and a dark, sinister skyline and, once we finally brought ourselves to cut it, we discovered it was delicious as well. It confirmed what we had already begun to suspect: We were in the presence of a true genius, someone blessed with God-given artistic talent and incredible craftsmanship.

A series of small miracles soon unfolded. In rapid succession, there was a cake with a blond girl sitting on her bed, green shamrock cookies with an edible elf, and—finally—an elaborate production with a train tunnel and airplanes that could only be described as our seven-year-old son's wildest dream come to life. People at our parties were rightly stunned, and word spread quickly. Silvia became an overnight sensation,

ERICA WINTER





**WE SPENT LONG HOURS
IN THE KITCHEN WHILE
WATCHING SILVIA
OBSESSIVELY LABOR
OVER HER CREATIONS
AND GROW EVER MORE
AMBITIOUS IN THEIR
SCALE AND DETAIL.**

selling cakes to the small anglophone expat community of São Paulo, with more business than she could possibly handle.

These were the best of times, for all of us. We spent long hours in the kitchen, swapping recipes and telling stories while watching Silvia obsessively labor over her creations and grow ever more ambitious in their scale and detail. She and Erica grew particularly close. Outside work, Silvia sometimes came with us to weekend piano recitals and soccer games and treated our children as if they were fully her own. But after only a year and a half together, in mid-2015 I received an offer for a fantastic job in New York. Our kids were reaching an age where we wanted them closer to family. It was time for the Winters to leave Brazil.

Breaking the news to Silvia was the hardest, and ended with all of us upset. Soon afterward, she took me aside and quietly asked, Can I come with you? I tried to explain that we could never afford help in the United States like we had in Brazil, that the economics were so dramatically different; that a visa would be impossible to get. It was the truth, but it sounded like a lie. She nodded with sad acceptance—*Fazer o quê, né?*—and began searching for a new job.

One afternoon, as we were packing our things, I asked Silvia if she had thought about making cakes full time, or even opening a shop. She smiled and said her sister and several friends had encouraged her to do so. But she couldn't work out of her own home—that had failed once before—and she didn't have money to do anything else. When I asked if she might consider applying for a loan at a bank, she threw her head back and laughed, like it was the funniest thing she'd ever heard.

"Ah, Senhor Brian, they'd never give money to somebody like *me*."

And so Silvia found another job as a maid, with an expat family of friends around the corner. Even before we left, she seemed diminished somehow, like a light in her was going out. Her posts on Facebook tried to maintain a happy face: "Sad today, but we have to move forward! God in control alwaysssssss!!!" On my return visits to Brazil for work, I often went to see her. She looked thin, gaunt. Once, I asked if she was still baking cakes. "Who has the time for that?" she shrugged. "Maybe one day."

“SHE DISCOVERED THIS GIFT”

YEARS LATER, it remains incredibly difficult, perhaps impossible, for me to describe our relationship with Silvia. Certainly, there’s nothing in the modern U.S. experience that quite captures it. She was our employee, it’s true. She was also our friend—and somehow more than that, too. I have wondered if, in the long Brazilian tradition of *domésticas* and *babás*, maids and nannies, people come into your house and you spend long days together and share your lives and sometimes they become as much a part of your family as an aunt, cousin or sister. I know there are issues of class and power—“Senhor Brian”—and race and history wrapped up in all of this. Or ... maybe it was actually none of these things. Maybe Silvia was just one of those magical souls who come into your life, and it was as simple as that. What I can say, without hesitation, is that the bond the five of us forged was greater than any label, or even our limited time in Brazil. We knew we had a relationship that would last forever.

So you can imagine our grief when, in 2017, we received word that Silvia had suddenly passed away. There were no details, only some cryptic posts from her friends and family on Facebook. Erica exchanged a few texts with her sister, Luciana, but didn’t learn much. We needed to know more.

Several months later, I made the five-hour drive from São Paulo to Guaxupé, Minas Gerais, and met her sister and mother at a *churrascaria* for lunch. The mood was bright and jovial; we were all happy to be talking again about Silvia. Over *picanha* and pasta, they laughed and told me how Silvia would take the overnight bus home just to attend family parties, dance until 2 a.m. and then go straight to the bus terminal and head back to São Paulo. I showed them some pictures of us together, and of her cakes. They oohed and aahed in delight.

“She discovered this talent, this gift, she didn’t know she had,” Luciana said. “She wanted to do something with it, maybe come back here. It would have been great, you know? But she couldn’t figure out how. ... And then she ran out of time.”

Inevitably, the conversation turned to the end. They didn’t know much either. They said Silvia had gone into an urgent care facility on a Thursday morning, and died around 3 a.m. the next day. The cause, according to the death certificate: colon cancer. She was 45. “If she knew she was sick, she didn’t tell any of us,” Luciana said. “We had no idea.”

As we left the restaurant and lingered on the sidewalk outside, her mother, who had been so quiet, so stoic the whole time, took my hand in hers and gave it a reassuring pat. “*Ela amava vocês*,” she said with a big smile. “She loved you guys.” We loved her too, of course. But to this day, I still can’t shake the feeling that we failed Silvia; that we could have—should have—done more to try to help her. I play out countless alternate timelines in my mind in which we try to move heaven and earth to get her a U.S. visa; in which we rally our friends to put together a small loan with some starter capital for a shop. But that’s all gone now. The only thing left, I suppose, is to try to help create a world where factors like gender, race and class no longer prevent such magnificent talent from being fully realized. Where “somebody like *me*” is not a liability, but an asset.

Winter is the editor-in-chief of AQ



Silvia’s sister and mother with the author, in Guaxupé.

IDEAS FOR
CLOSING THE
GENDER GAP

Access to Financing

BREAKING BARRIERS

How to improve access to credit for women entrepreneurs—and why it's important.

by Ernesto Torres Cantú

DIVERSITY ACROSS GENDER, race, culture and ethnicity drives innovation and progress. That's why organizations are increasingly focused on ways they can improve representation and inclusion. Many of these efforts have moved the needle toward a more equitable society. But obstacles remain.

As societies respond to COVID-19, women have found themselves disproportionately without work or the social protections provided by the formal sector. In the same way the pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities, it has also forced us to address them. Right now, financial opportunities for women need to be a priority.

Entrepreneurship is a proven way of supporting women in vulnerable situations, giving them access to financial freedom and improving their families' economic prospects. Women invest the majority of their earnings in their own communities at a higher rate than their male counterparts. They spend more of their income on their families' health, education and general well-being,



JUAN MABROMATA/AFP/GETTY



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OFERTA!!!
NUEVO LANZAMIENTO!!!

TRAER
BOLSAS
POR FAVOR
LA HUERTA

HACEMOS
ENVIOS A
DOMICILIO

Patagonia
Cielo

Lincoln

A grocery store
owner in Buenos
Aires adapts to
the pandemic.



Ernesto Torres Cantú is CEO of Citi Latin America, responsible for all businesses in the 22 countries where Citi is present in the region. Cantú is a member of Citi's Executive Management Team. Prior to his current role, he served as CEO of Citibanamex from 2014 to 2019.

promoting future economic gains and inclusive growth. In turn, strengthening women's economic buying power directly leads to stronger local economies.

The good news is that over the last several years, the number of women-owned small and medium enterprises (SMEs) has grown across the hemisphere. A 2015 study by the McKinsey Global Institute found that global GDP could increase by \$28 trillion by 2025 if women were able to participate in the labor market at the same rate as men. While the gains since then have yet to be measured at a global scale, several markets in the region have made strides in terms of gender equity and entrepreneurship. Public data from the International Labor Organization and UNESCO show that women in Ecuador, Colombia and Brazil are nearly as likely to launch entrepreneurial ventures as men. Despite this, it is important that we look at what challenges—and possible solutions—lie ahead.

THE SHORTFALL

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN have the highest number of self-employed women in the world. Yet only 30% of female-led SMEs that apply for a loan are approved, and often with very high collateral requirements and rates. According to a study by First Round Capital, women receive less than 3% of venture capital funding worldwide, with minority women even further behind. A study conducted in Chile by the Inter-American Development Bank found that men are more likely to receive loans than women, despite the information on their loan applications being the same. As the region continues to fight COVID-19 and entrepreneurs apply for loans to keep their businesses afloat, this type of bias can have severe implications for the future of gender equity in the region.

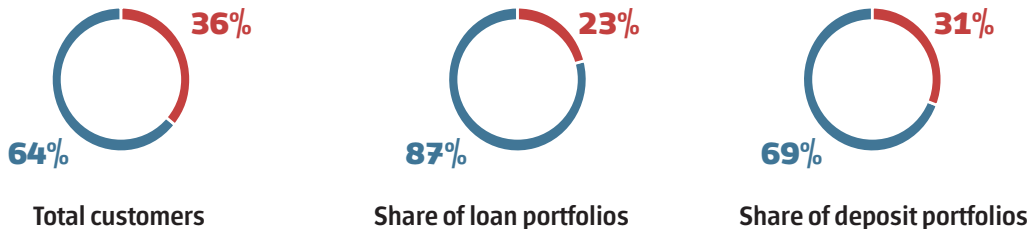
Women in the region often lack formal credit history, and having little to no access to collateral constrains their ability to apply for credit. Blanket and gender-neutral regulatory measures tend to widen the gap in outcomes, putting women in a more disadvantaged position than men in starting or managing businesses. For example, they may be less able than men to afford long and expensive registration procedures due to low wages and time demands.

According to the World Bank, the majority of female-led businesses are in the retail and service sectors, which are less profitable than other industries. Lower wages also make it difficult for banks to approve the loans required to jumpstart a business. As a result, women's in-

Feeling Left Out

Women are underrepresented as a share of customers at financial institutions in Latin America.

— Women
— Men



SOURCE: GROWING AS EQUALS, IDB INVEST 2018

ability to get funding from traditional sources means they are more likely to tap into their savings and personal credit to fund their ventures or borrow money from family and friends to finance their startup. A study by INCAE Business School showed that while a majority of men said they closed their business due to low profitability, the majority of female entrepreneurs cited difficulty in obtaining financing as the downfall of their business. Even when women do seek business loans, they tend to receive less capital, pay higher interest rates, and put up more collateral than their male counterparts. The obstacles facing women entrepreneurs need to be addressed openly, alongside efforts to eliminate entrenched cultural barriers based on gender and societal norms.

WHAT CAN BE DONE

WHILE WOMEN ARE INVOLVED in a range of entrepreneurial activities, many tend to be concentrated in micro, small and medium businesses because of lack of collateral and capital, limited access to technical assistance, and the absence of women leaders in decision-making positions. Opening a bank account is a key stepping-stone in accessing financial services, including credit that can lead to otherwise unattainable economic opportunities.

As an institutional bank operating in most of the region, Citi focuses on providing technical and advisory assistance, as well as lending support, to those

providing services directly to SMES. Together with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (IDFC, formerly OPIC), we've provided over \$536 million in financing to 58 inclusive businesses in 27 countries, reaching over 1.4 million entrepreneurs, 87% of whom are women. In the Dominican Republic, Citi and the IDFC agreed to extend a mid-term loan to Banco Adopem de Ahorro y Crédito to support the growth of a portfolio benefiting 14,000 women-led enterprises. In Paraguay, the IDFC and Citi agreed on two loan facilities (one for \$150 million to Banco Regional and another for \$100 million to Banco Sudameris) for small and medium enterprises, with a focus on women-owned businesses. Increasing women's capital and access to collateral is also tied to gender pay equity. That is why we committed to not only close the gap in pay between men and women at Citi, but also to make our pay gap public to ensure full accountability.

Citi has also made a global commitment together with IDFC and the Ford Foundation for a \$100 million loan guarantee facility that will enable us to provide early-stage financing in local currency to companies that expand access to products and services for low-income communities in emerging markets. We have committed to actively seek out opportunities to invest in businesses that are led or owned by women and minority entrepreneurs.

However, focusing on credit alone is not enough. A key factor in leveling the playing field is making sure



A manager gives instructions at a Rio de Janeiro office.

we open channels to another variable in the success of entrepreneurial ventures: access to networks.

As a global bank, we have seen firsthand how crucial and effective these networks can be. Women-led SMEs are a major component of global supply chains. Companies in a position to play a part in network production can serve as a resource to the SMEs in their supply chain as part of their duty as corporate citizens, from financing to inventory management. Citi is committed to procurement from women-owned businesses, especially from firms located in developing markets. In 2019, we worked with partner organizations to identify businesses around the world that have registered as women-owned to evaluate their capabilities.

Building networks also means taking an internal look at organizational structures. Increasing the number of women in top management positions within the banking sector can provide diverse perspectives on reform, and help educate on biases and reduce them. The challenges women face in accessing finance and

decision-making must be addressed in financial-sector reforms. Here, representation goals are important, particularly in senior management positions, which is why we made a public commitment to increase our representation of female senior leadership to 40% by 2021. The announcement of Jane Fraser, currently Citi's president and CEO of global consumer banking, to succeed as CEO in February, is an important milestone in continuing to break barriers.

The current state of the world provides an opportunity to implement overdue changes. It is evident that the growth of female entrepreneurship is beneficial to all. Nevertheless, to truly unleash its potential we must first identify and recognize the obstacles that many women still face. As the global economy becomes increasingly diversified, we must be relentless in driving change that enables women to navigate financial markets, connecting the dots between financial capabilities, access to capital and their rightful role in the global economy. ●

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Let's Get Creative: Innovative Ways to Finance Women

by Maria-Noel Vaeza



Maria-Noel Vaeza is the regional director of UN Women for the Americas and the Caribbean. She joined UN Women from the UNOPS headquarters in Copenhagen. She has held posts at the UN Development Program and multiple positions in Uruguay's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She was also the alternate representative of Uruguay to the World Bank Board of Directors.

THE EVIDENCE IS CLEAR: Investing in women is good business. If women in every country were to play an identical role to men in markets, McKinsey Global Institute calculates as much as \$28 trillion, or an extra 26%, could be added to global GDP by 2025.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, one of the most entrepreneurial regions in the world, we also have one of the highest failure rates for female entrepreneurs. Without funding, women-owned businesses are unable to grow beyond the category of a microenterprise or move out of the informal economy, and this has an impact on economic growth.

Closing this gap depends not only on governments adopting favorable public policies but also on fostering an enabling environment with the active engagement of the corporate sector. There is an opportunity for the private sector to advance equality by incorporating a gender lens in innovative financing. This lens can help identify avenues for developing social and financial value, including innovations in fields in which women are traditionally underrepresented.

It is crucial that the profitability and impact of new financing mechanisms or investment vehicles that are relevant to the needs of women are, in fact, made visible.

To build the supply side, we must also expand and strengthen training and mentoring of women entrepreneurs, to get them ready to compete for opportunities. For example, international financial institutions

GUSTAVO DANTAS

can expand targeted credit lines for banks that offer training for women.

Peer-to-peer networks are very effective, but we need to strengthen investor networks. The European Union has their online platform, Wegate; the World Bank's private-sector investment arm, IFC, has We-Fi; and UN Women is developing a proposal for a financial initiative to increase women-led innovation and business ventures between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union.

And finally, we must increase the participation of women as investors. Today, numbers from the IFC show that women-led business received a meager 7% of all private equity and venture capital investments. A recognition of the crucial role of women investors as agents of change and their impact in the economy is also needed. And research shows firms where there is gender balance among investment officers actually have higher returns.

Coupled with existing barriers, the COVID-19 crisis is having a disproportionate impact on women and girls. If we don't act now, the overrepresentation of women in the informal sector means existing inequalities, especially the lack of access to productive resources, will increase, deepening the gender gap.

It is crucial that we do not allow the current economic and social crisis to move gender equality to the back burner, because now—more than ever—it is essential to invest in women. ●

The Gender Gap in Entrepreneurship Is Wide

Lack of funding keeps women out of business



SOURCE: IDB

Investors Are Not Taking a Chance on Female Founders and Leaders

Share of venture capital and private equity investments in women-led businesses



SOURCE: IFC/Oliver Wyman



Feature Role Models

THE MANY FACES OF GOOD MENTORSHIP

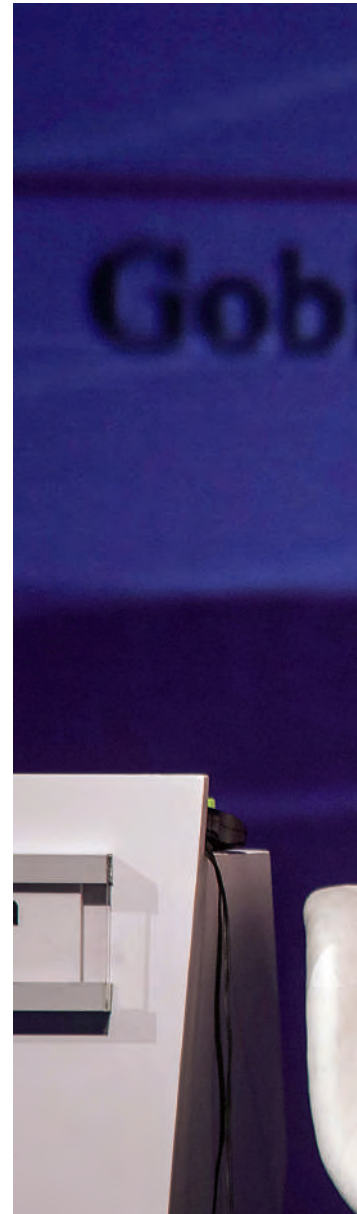
Early in our careers, people help us in unexpected ways—even if we don’t ask them to.

by **Susan Segal**

IN 1979, AT AGE 23, I was hired by Citibank right out of business school and immediately sent to Caracas as an international trainee. I had two years of high school Spanish under my belt, hardly any belongings, and no earthly clue about how a bank was supposed to work, in Venezuela or anywhere else.

Upon arrival, I left my bags at the hotel and proceeded directly to Citibank’s office to meet the human resources team, who would help me find an apartment, buy a car and so on. As I waited, I heard a voice: “Hello, my name is Theresa. Please come into my office so we can get to know each other!” Without realizing it, I had found my first mentor.

In those days, we didn’t call them that; the concept of mentorship didn’t exist, at least not the way it does today. But Theresa would prove to be the first of three people who were absolutely critical to guiding and supporting me in the first decade of my career and professional life. Though so much has changed in the last 40 years, I think there are some lessons and universal truths that still apply—about people helping each other, how these relationships take root, and how women benefit from strong mentors.



Susan Segal is the CEO of Americas Society/Council of the Americas



GUILLERMO GUTIERREZ/BLOOMBERG/GETTY

Theresa helped me decide where to live and how to prioritize my work. Just as critically, she guided me on who to trust—which can be so tough in a foreign country. Though she was six years older than I and far more advanced in her career as Citi’s regional treasurer, we forged a unique bond. During the two years we overlapped in Venezuela, we drove together to the office and back almost every day, discussing every aspect of our days, and we became peer mentors around business and life. The trust and deep friend-

ship we built in those early years only grew as our families became intertwined, and we continued to support each other throughout our lives in a very important way, driving us both to understand the meaning of true friendship.

Also in Venezuela, I encountered another person who would have an impact on my career in innumerable ways: Bill Rhodes, my first boss and the regional head for Northern Latin America. Even after I left Citibank for a competitor institution, our paths would



Segal shares the stage with Arcos Dorados' executive Paula Bellizia at an event for AS/COA's Women's Hemispheric Network, which celebrates mentorship.

continue to intersect. In August 1982, Mexico advised its creditors that it could not meet its debt obligations, which immediately triggered a huge crisis that would reverberate throughout Latin America—and lead to one of the biggest debt restructurings ever.

Bill was appointed chairman of the advisory committee to restructure the debt. I was appointed by my employer at the time, Manufacturers Hanover Trust, to sit on the committee on our behalf. Thanks to our prior relationship and his knowledge that I could get things done, Bill allowed me to take a leadership role on the committee. I don't think Bill gave me advice in those years; what he gave me was *space*. And that was just as important at the time.

The biggest break in my career came from my third mentor: John McGillicuddy, then Manufacturers Hanover Trust's chairman and CEO. When I was 30, John took a chance and appointed me to run the entire sovereign debt restructuring department of the bank. It was amazing empowerment and gave me the opportunity to spend huge amounts of time with him and other members of the senior management team.

In retrospect, John's confidence in me surely exceeded my own. But what was critical—and unusual at the time—was that he never stopped to think about gender or age. He focused instead on a person's ability to carry out the position successfully and help save the bank (or add value, in today's terms). He was also

incredibly supportive during both of my pregnancies, reaching out to visit and telephoning me from Tokyo to congratulate me on the birth of my daughter. If there was anything negative around the experience, it was that I believed John's kind personality was representative of the company as a whole—but I should not have mistaken it for the institution. As I learned later in my career, institutions have little loyalty to employees, even if the employees have strong loyalty to the institution.

What to take away from all this?

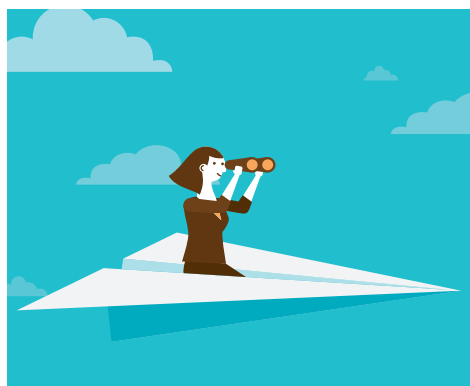
Well, even today, I feel that going out and searching for a mentor is not always the right approach. The best mentors are often the relationships that take root organically; you build them and develop a mutual respect—and yes, sometimes a friendship—over time. If you're lucky, you find people you can believe in and who believe in you.

The second lesson, at least for me, is that you end up crossing paths with people over the course of your career in ways you never expected. Bill, for example, has been a friend for four decades now, including my tenure at the Americas Society—first as a board member and then as president and CEO. I suppose we are drawn to people who share common interests and believe in us in ways we don't always understand. Maybe that's not how everyone would define a mentor; but life leads you in unexpected directions. ●

YOU MUST SEE, TO WANT TO BE

5 ways to increase the visibility of professional women.

by Margaret Rose Grigsby



History is full of unsung female heroes, from Cuba's 19th century writer Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda y Arteaga to Ángela Ruiz Robles, pioneer of the e-book, to today's outstanding women from all walks of life. But outside sports and show business, we seldom identify the women who excel in other disciplines—even though we know how important role models are in professional life. Here are five steps institutions and organizations can take to make sure women get the visibility they need to thrive—and inspire others to follow.

1 Communication skills. Women will not fully leverage visibility opportunities unless they are good at communicating. Enroll women in training to build confidence in presentation abilities, practice and improve their communication and delivery skills, including presence, storytelling and persuasion, as well as, when needed, media skills. In this COVID-19 era, provide training for effective online communication, webinars, podcasts, teleconferencing platforms, etc.

2 Projects. Offer qualified women opportunities to lead high-visibility projects at different levels of the organization in all types of functions. Encourage them to pursue these opportunities and fully recognize their roles. An essential step is to identify high-potential young women and give them the necessary support to thrive in high-visibility projects. Ensure qualified women have the right combination of mentors and sponsors who have the organizational clout to effectively help them. Ensure achievements are featured in the organization's communication channels and outside channels.

3 Public Recognition. Encourage women from all areas and levels of the organization to apply for industry or company awards and recognition. Ensure they have the proper support at the application level. If they receive a recognition, depending on institutional culture, ensure their achievements are featured in the organization's communications channels.

4 Networking. Provide women with access to high-quality networking opportunities. Whenever possible, promote their participation in high-visibility roles such as speakers, panelists or presenters. Encourage their participation in conferences, events, customer briefings, cross training, as well as online and offline professional communities and groups. Support and encourage membership in professional organizations.

5 Representation. Numerous studies indicate that gender stereotypes about intellectual ability emerge early. Girls are constantly faced with references that associate brilliance and genius with men more than with women. Parents as well as teachers need to constantly show girls examples of brilliant women alongside those of men. Furthermore, it is important to look closer to home for role models. Parents can facilitate casual encounters of their daughters with accomplished female friends and acquaintances. At schools and in community circles, invite outstanding women, particularly young women, to talk to and with students.

Grigsby is professor of leadership and marketing at INCAE Business School

AQ TOP 5

CHAMPIONS OF GENDER EQUALITY

Americas Quarterly highlights five distinguished individuals who have used their careers to help close the gender gap.



**Epsy
Campbell
Barr**
COSTA RICA



**Miguel
Fontes**
BRAZIL



**Mabel
Bianco**
ARGENTINA



**Yalitza
Aparicio**
MEXICO



**Susana
Garcia-
Robles**
ARGENTINA

Epsy Campbell Barr

The politician breaking barriers for women of African descent.

by Brendan O'Boyle

IN 2018, Costa Rica's Epsy Campbell Barr became the first Black woman in the Americas to be elected vice president—despite the fact that Afro-descendant women comprise up to 17% of the region's population.

Her historic election alongside President Carlos Alvarado followed three unsuccessful presidential bids, one right after Costa Rica's first female president, Laura Chinchilla, left office with an approval rating under 20%. When asked if she, as a woman, was judged for Chinchilla's performance, Campbell said, "That's how gender discrimination works."

"When a woman makes a mistake, it's every woman's mistake. It doesn't work that way with men."

Campbell, 57, began her career as a human rights and environmental activist and an economist researching women's inclusion. As vice president, she has led a working group to try to close the gender pay gap, and also launched a program offering credit to rural women working in conservation. The granddaughter of Jamaican immigrants to Costa Rica, Campbell also led several organizations, including the Network of Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Latin American Women, which she co-founded in 1992 to highlight the unique struggles of Black women.

"We've come a long way," Campbell told *AQ*. "Many feminist women have learned that one can't talk about sexism without talking about racism."

Campbell entered politics in 2002, and after nearly two decades and two congressional terms, she still faces the difficult standards women in politics are held to.



“Everything down to what we wear is a topic of debate.”

Campbell said she’s committed to connecting the struggles for racial justice and gender equality, pointing to what she sees as a “deep transformation” emerging globally in the wake of the murder of George Floyd in the United States.

“In the same way that it’s not just Afro-descendants demanding racial justice,” said Campbell, “we need more men committed to the fight for women, understanding that a new social pact includes them too.”

An economist by training, Campbell sees women’s inclusion as central to development.

O’Boyle *is a senior editor at AQ*



Miguel Fontes

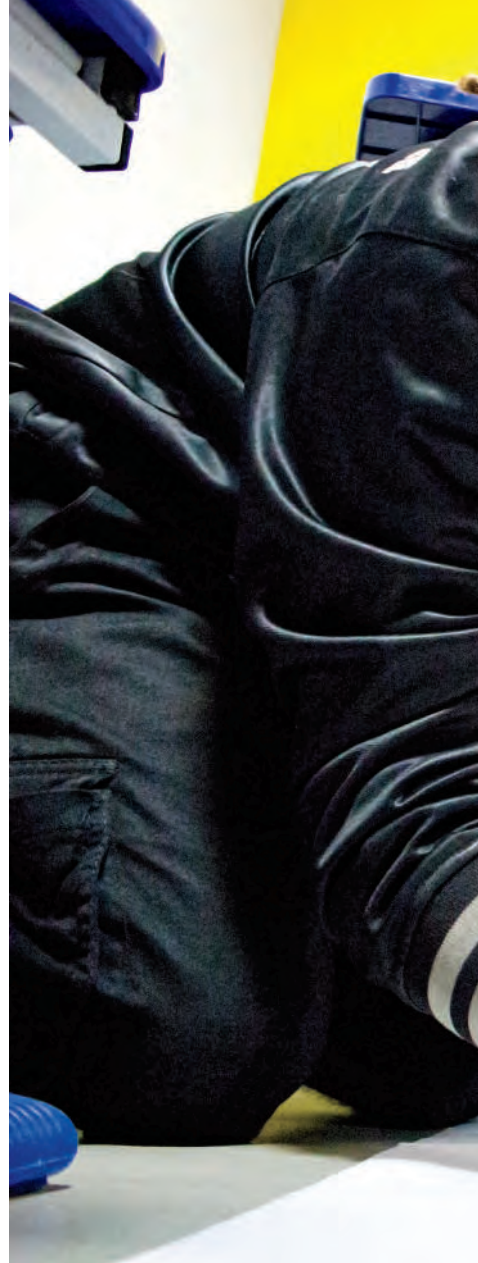
The man promoting a rethink of masculinity.

by Mariana Reina

MIGUEL FONTES IS A *machista*. He'll tell you that himself. He will also say this isn't good for your health.

After almost a decade working on projects related to HIV/AIDS prevention, drug awareness and youth development, Fontes said it became clear there was a strong gender component at the root of these public health issues. It was then, in 1997, that he decided to co-found Instituto Promundo in Rio de Janeiro along with Gary Barker, a PhD in developmental psychology.

Promundo helps men rethink masculinity through workshops, training programs and campaigns. Fontes, a 51-year-old native of Brasília, highlighted that every man



Two Brazilian men take part in Promundo's Rethinking Gender workshop.



is a *machista* to a certain degree and this affects communities, families and individuals. Studies have found Promundo's programs help reduce gender-based violence and also lead to greater division of caregiving and household work in families.

"Men never have time to think about how we were educated and what masculinity is," said Fontes, who serves as Promundo Brazil's executive director. "We are not born violent or *machista*—this is acquired and learned throughout our lives."

Fontes, who has a PhD in international public health from Johns Hopkins University, emphasized that the negative implications of the prevailing macho culture

extend beyond women; they are reflected in men's shorter life expectancy and higher rates of stress-related coronary diseases and incarceration.

Promundo now operates in five countries and its methodology has been replicated in more than 60 countries in partnership with governments, businesses and international organizations.

"Gender equality is key to changing the world," said Fontes. "Women have been telling us [men] about our role in perpetuating gender inequality—and it's time we listen."

Reina is the production editor at AQ

Mabel Bianco

The Argentine doctor on the front lines of women's health.


by Katie Hopkins

WHEN A BILL TO LEGALIZE ABORTION was rejected by Argentina's Senate in 2018, the margin was just four votes. Though disappointing for reproductive rights activists, the historic vote reflected decades of education and advocacy, much of it led by Dr. Mabel Bianco and the Foundation for Studies and Research on Women (FEIM), which she founded in 1989.

"All my life, I have been working to change the law on abortion," Bianco, 79, told AQ. The abortion fight, however, is just the tip of the iceberg of Bianco's four decades in activism and scholarship. Named by the BBC as one of the 100 most influential women in the world in 2019, the epidemiologist has been a pioneer for gender equity in health ever since she was one of just three women in her medical internship in the 1960s.

Bringing visibility to issues like violence against women, birth control and HIV/AIDS, Bianco has led task forces and studies, including pioneering studies on breast cancer and maternal mortality. She has held multiple positions at Argentina's health ministry and has been a consultant for the World Health Organization, the UN and the Pan-American Health Organization, among others. Meanwhile, FEIM educates young people on public health and lobbies legislators.

Her policy proposals, however, have often found



Bianco has leveraged medicine, civil society and government to advocate for women's health.



COURTESY OF FEIM

strong adversaries, including the Catholic Church and a legislature that until recently was dominated by men. The passage of a gender quota in 1991 (see page 82) saw more women elected to Argentina's Congress, and Bianco's advocacy saw new results: the approval of a 2002 law that promised universal access to contraceptives and a 2015 law promising universal HIV anti-retroviral treatment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the urgency

of equitable public health care, but it has also shifted priorities. It could be 2021 before Congress debates abortion again. But Bianco has no plans of backing down from the fight, nor letting the pandemic slow FEIM's education initiatives.

"We lost two years ago," Bianco said. But "I'm waiting and I'm fighting."

Hopkins is an editorial intern at AQ



Aparicio at
the Oscars
in 2019.

RICK ROWELL/GETTY

Yalitza Aparicio

The actress-turned-advocate fighting for marginalized women in Mexico.

by Benjamin Russell

MEXICO CITY—Yalitza Aparicio's star turn in the 2018 film *Roma* gave the 26-year-old from Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca, an unexpected platform from which to highlight the challenges facing her community.

Suffice to say she's made the most of it.

Since auditioning for the movie on a whim and earning an Oscar nomination for best actress, Aparicio has become a powerful voice for the marginalized and underserved—especially indigenous women.

She has spoken at the UN on the need to protect indigenous languages, written on racism in *The New York Times*, and supported campaigns for reproductive rights.

But the fight for legal protections for domestic workers—95% of whom in Mexico are women—is particularly close to Aparicio's heart.

"At the beginning I took it as a personal issue, because my mother was a domestic worker," Aparicio recently told PBS. "But I realized that she wasn't the only woman who was unaware of what she was deserving of by law."

Aparicio's advocacy—and her role in *Roma* as Cleo, a live-in maid—are part of a broader push

to raise awareness. In July, Mexico ratified ILO 189, which sets minimum labor standards for domestic workers. Of the country's 2.4 million domestic workers, fewer than 1% have social security, according to NosotrxsMX, an NGO. Few have access to formal credit—and amid COVID-19 are especially vulnerable.

"They have two choices: give up their jobs, or run the risk of being infected," Aparicio said in a message for the UN, where she's a goodwill ambassador. "(We need to) ensure domestic workers' right to stay healthy without falling further into poverty."

Aparicio's latest project is a YouTube channel that mixes personal stories with serious discussion of issues facing Mexico. In one video, Aparicio talked about indigenous women she admires, including Yásnaya Elena Aguilar, a Mixe linguist, and Nancy García, Aparicio's co-star in *Roma* who now runs a program promoting gender equality in sports.

"I'm not alone," Aparicio said in the video. "There are so many others—we just need to make sure we get to know them."

Russell is AQ's correspondent in Mexico City

Susana Garcia-Robles

The investor helping women go after their dreams.

by **Brendan O'Boyle**

THROUGHOUT HER LIFE, and after two decades developing Latin America's venture capital industry, Susana Garcia-Robles has learned that women's empowerment is not something you talk about—it's something you do.

Growing up in Argentina with two sisters raised by their mother and grandmother, “nobody ever told me there was such a thing as advocacy for women,” Garcia-Robles told *AQ*. Rather, “my mother just said, ‘You’re going to get to where you want—just go for it.’”

It was a “visionary” manager at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) that showed young Garcia-Robles what empowerment looks like in practice.

“My boss was somebody who allowed me to spread my wings,” she said. “He never told us to advocate for women. He put it into action.”

Garcia-Robles spent 21 years at the IDB's Multilateral Investment Fund—now known as IDB Lab—advising governments and investing in seed and venture capital funds all over Latin America. What she saw was an investment ecosystem that was failing women entrepreneurs. In 2012 she

decided to commission a pioneering study on the challenges for high-growth women entrepreneurs in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The findings pointed to a clear problem: Women lacked the professional networks that successful entrepreneurs need to grow. Garcia-Robles then co-founded WeXChange, a platform under the IDB umbrella that connects women entrepreneurs with mentors, investors and other entrepreneurs. In 2019, she partnered with Marta Cruz of Argentina's NXTPLabs to create WeInvest for women investors.

Just as the coronavirus began disrupting the global economy, Garcia-Robles left the IDB in March to join the investment firm Capria and the Latin America Venture Capital Association as executive advisor. And she's optimistic that women entrepreneurs—and the “holistic view” they bring to the table—will be vital to bringing Latin America out of these crises.

“Women are good with having less money and making miracles,” Garcia-Robles told *AQ*. “We just have to highlight them.”

O'Boyle is a senior editor at *AQ*



Garcia-Robles
leads a breakout
session on funding
startups at a
conference in 2019.

IDEAS FOR
CLOSING THE
GENDER GAP

More Low-Income
Women In STEM

CODE BREAKERS

Organizations like Laboratoria are helping working-class women join the insular world of computer programming.

by Mitra Taj

LIMA—Anais Olivares was always pretty resourceful. Growing up in Nueva Esperanza, an overcrowded low-income suburb on the outskirts of Lima, she had to be.

Without an internet connection in the house, Olivares did homework by adding five soles (about \$1.50) at a time of data to a cellphone and using it as an intermittent—and not very reliable—personal hotspot. Other times she'd use the Wi-Fi connection at her uncle's, repaying him by fixing up old, broken-down laptops he hoped to resell.

The result was that Olivares spent a lot of time on YouTube learning how to fix old computers, fostering a skill set and an interest that would, ultimately, pay dividends.

"I think I was always looking for a way to get out of that box of being a woman and having to be a *señorita*," Olivares told *AQ*.

Olivares' mother sacrificed to pay her way into a short-track graphic design program at a technical college. But after graduation, potential employers said she needed to learn several software programs she just wasn't familiar with. Under pres-



Students learn programming skills during a Laboratoria bootcamp in Lima.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LABORATORIA

sure to help support her family, Olivares was looking for any kind of steady job when she came across Laboratoria—a nonprofit that trains young women, mostly from disadvantaged backgrounds, in computer programming.

A six-month boot camp at Laboratoria helped Olivares adapt her skills to a demanding job market, and eventually get work as a programmer at a telecommunications firm. Men outnumber women in programming fields in Latin America by nine to one, but Olivares is not alone—and Laboratoria is part of the reason why.

Started in 2014 by Peruvian tech entrepreneur Mariana Costa Checa, the organization's primary goal is to bridge the tech gender divide, based on the belief that all women—and not just those from elite universities—can thrive in the male-dominated tech industry if given the chance.

“We unleash or find talent in tech (in places that are) otherwise considered unreasonable,” Karen Kelly, Laboratoria’s regional partnerships manager, told *AQ*.

The emphasis on low-income students is fundamental to Laboratoria’s approach. Enrollees only pay tuition if they get a job within six months of graduat-



More than 1,600 women have finished the Laboratorio program since 2014.

ing, and then do so gradually over two years. The organization lends laptops to students in need and helps them prepare for job interviews and negotiate salaries.

More than 1,600 women like Olivares have graduated from Laboratorio's boot camps as web developers and user-experience designers. All told, more than 80% of students successfully finish the program, and nearly the same percentage get a job in a relevant field within six months. Some are hired right away by tech companies, banks, startups or multilateral institutions across the region. Laboratorio has won praise from former U.S. President Barack Obama and received funding from Microsoft, Google, BlackRock and USAID. From its base in Peru, the organization has expanded into Brazil, Mexico, Colombia and Chile and now, after going virtual during the pandemic, is doubling down on plans to reach women remotely.

Laboratoria is part of a broader push to support a generation of female programmers in Latin America that is shrugging off gender stereotypes to seize opportunities in some of the region's fastest-growing fields.

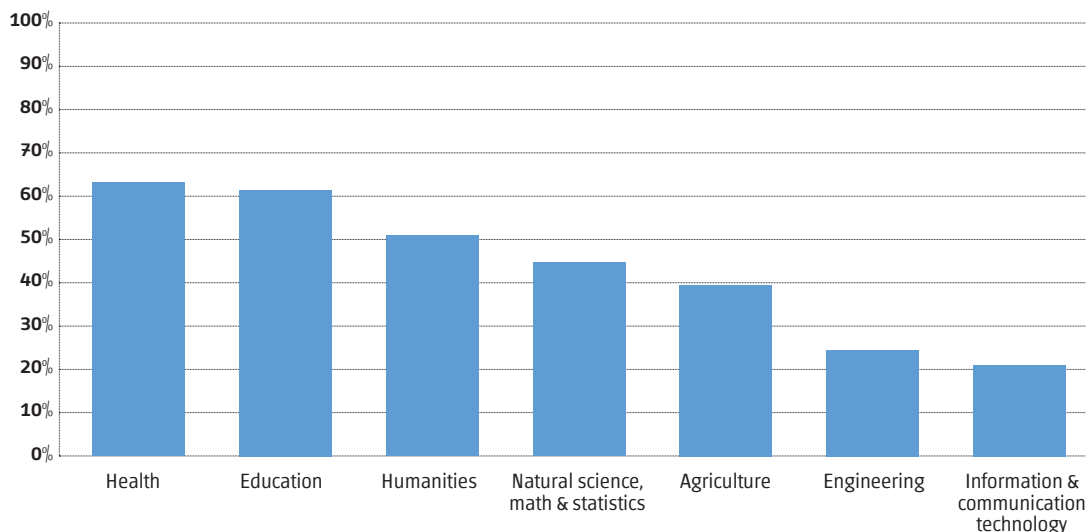
When the organization started its coding bootcamps in Peru in 2014, just 7% of web programmers in the country were women, according to a poll by the Peru Mozilla community. Four years later, that figure had risen to 17%. Crucially, programming jobs often pay well even for those workers without university degrees—creating an opportunity for women who may not have had access to higher education.

Fabiola Leon-Velarde, the head of CONCYTEC, a government agency that promotes science and technology in Peru, said policymakers should take note. Latin America suffers from a shortage of nearly half a million IT professionals, according to the International Data Corporation, and women make up a disproportionate share of “*ni nís*”—young people who are neither studying nor working and who could benefit from alternatives to university education.

“Women offer huge possibilities in tech,” Leon-Velarde told AQ, blaming sexism for limiting their potential. “This is a discipline that we’re going to need so much as digital communication technology takes over.”

Fewer Women than Men Choose Technology Careers

Share of female students per college major in Latin America



SOURCE: UNESCO 2019

COVID-19 complicates the picture—but may also offer opportunities for women who want to follow in Olivares’ footsteps. Laboratoria’s graduates have had a harder time finding jobs during the current turmoil, but Kelly believes demand for web developers could rise in the future as the pandemic pushes more companies and industries to digitize.

The broader benefits of bridging the tech gender divide are hard to overstate. Providing equal opportunities for programming work will help ensure that women get a fair share of the spoils of the tech boom, but it’s also key to building a digital world with less of a male bias, experts say.

Mariel Quezada, a Laboratoria graduate from Chile, works for an app that lets consumers compare prices for pharmaceuticals. She said her male colleagues tend to overlook how different users might experience a product, leading to tweaks that make it accessible for more people.

“I’m always debating little things like the size of the font,” Quezada told *AQ*.

Ultimately, Laboratoria’s bootcamp is almost as much about personal transformations as it is about professional ones. Since working in telecommunications and later for a consultancy and a bank, Olivares

has passed on new job opportunities to return to Laboratoria as a coach to help future students.

“Laboratoria forms a lot of women who want to change the world—their world and the world around them,” she said. “It might sound ambitious but that’s what it’s about.”

Students are encouraged to experiment, collaborate and take criticism and mistakes in stride. The goal is to teach them the “soft skills” needed to contribute as professionals and leaders, said Kelly. Laboratoria is now using the same techniques to offer classes to companies that want to foster a culture of continuous learning, using revenues from the service to offset its program costs.

“The first month is really, really hard because you have to change your internal chip,” said Lesly Muñoz, a new graduate who turned to Laboratoria after struggling to find a job with her psychology degree. “For so long I’d convinced myself that I couldn’t learn things in tech or engineering, but really I couldn’t learn them only because I thought I couldn’t. That change in mentality is the most important thing about Laboratoria.”

Taj is an independent reporter based in Lima.



What Has Changed for Latin American Women in STEM?

The picture is mixed, a longtime observer says.

by Emilie Sweigart

OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS, more Latin American women have joined certain scientific fields, especially biology and mathematics. However, according to UNESCO, the number of female computer science graduates declined across the region from 2000 to 2015. Since 2001, psychologist and coordinator of UNESCO's Women, Science and Technology in Latin America Program, **Gloria Bonder**, has been working with teachers and institutions to understand—and fight—that trend.

AQ: What is the focus of your research?

Gloria Bonder: I wanted to find out why there are so few women in STEM. Then the question became: Who are the women who choose those careers? They tend to come from progressive families, but face frequent discrimination and harassment in male-dominated environments.

Now I think that much more work is needed on the prejudices that cause men to repress their sensitivity. Just like women, men also have to free themselves from the patriarchy.

AQ: What changes have you noticed in Latin America over the past 20 years?

GB: Women have entered more tech fields, with the exception of engineering and computer science. Some things are difficult to change, such as opportunities for women to access decision-

making spaces. Female engineers are hired as managers or in human resources instead of tech positions. It is a trend not to take advantage of what they know.

AQ: What can be done to address prejudices against women in STEM?

GB: As a researcher and a professor, my path forward is to do more research and develop educational programs that help raise awareness and bring about change. I developed a computer program for science teachers called Alice in the Land of Science and Technology. It showed that science and technology can be areas for discovery, invention and creativity. A project named Gender Sensitive STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) Education works with high school science teachers, asking them to reflect on their own stereotypes and unconscious biases.

AQ: How did you first become involved with women in STEM?

GB: My mother was a mathematician, and I was surrounded by people from these fields. I'm interested in analyzing the obstacles to full equality for women and how we can overcome them.

Sweigart is an editor at AQ

Other Initiatives That Support Women in STEM

by Leonie Rauls

chicas en tecnología

Chicas en Tecnología, Argentina

Chicas en Tecnología was started by a group of female tech professionals to offer free coding and entrepreneurship programs for girls between the ages of 13 and 17. The students team up to develop applications that address problems in their communities, with female experts in technology and business helping them develop the apps and providing inspiration and motivation for the girls. Alumni join #ComunidadCET, a network of mentors and business partners, to support them in future projects. In 2019, more than 4,100 girls participated in the program, developing over 200 apps, including ones that improve mobility for people with disabilities, decrease paper consumption in schools, and even help inform their communities about different political parties.



Fellowship program for indigenous women with PhD in STEM, Mexico

Coordinated by the federal government's Center for Investigations and Advanced Studies in Social Anthropology (CIESAS), this program has funded 12 women in the last two years developing post-doctoral projects such as studying the impact of climate change on indigenous communities, developing more efficient agricultural practices, and researching cancer treatments. Post-doctoral candidates present their projects in a yearly forum, which has become a support network for indigenous women working in STEM. CIESAS has several other programs, and in the past 20 years more than 200 scholarships were awarded to students from 38 indigenous groups, of which 40% were women.



Observatorio STEM, Bolivia

Founded in 2018 with support from UNICEF, Observatorio STEM set out to measure the state of science and technology education in Bolivia. The research uncovered opportunities to improve women's employment and led to the creation of a program where professional women teach programming skills to young mothers. With an entirely female team, Observatorio operates under the motto "Working with women for women." Guely Morató Loredó, the organization's director, told AQ, "Training young mothers in a feminine environment helps break gender stereotypes and inspires young girls to dedicate themselves to STEM careers." The program is still in the pilot stage, but Loredó said its reach goes beyond employment for young mothers, as it creates role models who will give young girls confidence to pursue careers in STEM fields.



Programa Valentina, Guatemala

Named after Valentina Tereshkova, the first female to travel to space, this 100% women-led and women-run high-impact technology company aims to create economic opportunities for women aside from migrating north. Valentina combines technology skill building, such as teaching data analysis and project management training, with job placement in the technology sector. After taking a personality test to identify participants' strengths, the women go through a six-week training program focused on technological and soft skills. Valentina has certified 660 women since its founding in 2017 and uses an analytics platform to match skill set and job openings. Jessica Hammer, the company's CEO, told AQ, "Valentina simply helps women see their potential."

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Men in the region spend far less time doing laundry and other household tasks.



IDEAS FOR
CLOSING THE
GENDER GAP

Get Men to Do Their Share

COME ON, GUYS

Men must do a greater share of household work for gender equality to become a reality.

by Hugo Ñopo

ONE OF THE BIGGEST HURDLES women face when it comes to professional opportunities lies at home. We—husbands, fathers, sons and brothers—are largely responsible for the inequality that stems from our own behavior in the household. And we do this to the people we love!

Women and girls carry out three-quarters of the tasks needed for the everyday functioning of Latin American homes, according to data compiled by the United Nations. This can reach peaks as high as 86% as in Guatemala.

That, in turn, has consequences for women's job opportunities. Partly because so much of their day is consumed by domestic work, women in Latin America are twice as likely as men to work part-time jobs. More than half of Latin America's female labor force works in the informal sector, which often gives them the flexibility they need—but at a considerable cost.

Broadly speaking, when it comes to the search for gender equality in the region, we've made some significant progress over the last five decades. Nowadays, more Latin American women graduate from

Women Still Do Most of the Work at Home



Relative share of unpaid household work performed by women



SOURCE: CEPAL

university than their male counterparts. Although not all countries have progressed equally, the gaps in labor participation and salary have been reduced. It is when it comes to the division of tasks at home that we’ve had alarmingly little change.

Paying bills, stocking up groceries and utensils, providing warm food, keeping the house clean, helping kids with school work, taking care of the elderly, it is a long and varied list of activities for a home to function normally.

In an ordinary week, unpaid domestic tasks add up to slightly more than two days of work. These two days will result in fewer opportunities for women to join outstanding professional teams, fewer promotion opportunities, lower salaries and less time to study.

During the pandemic, a UN Women survey showed that while the amount of domestic and unpaid care work increased, the unequal division of labor persisted, taking many women to a breaking point.

And the hindrance for women lies not only in the overflow of domestic work but also its unpredictability.

When a child must be taken to an emergency doctor’s appointment or the schoolteacher sets an appointment with parents or the elderly require special care when they fall ill, it is generally the woman who takes up these tasks. This constitutes a vicious cycle between household responsibilities and work flexibility that affects careers and jobs at all levels, from high-income executives to informal street vendors.

BREAK THE CYCLE

IT IS NECESSARY AND URGENT to better distribute the workload of unpaid domestic work.

The key in this challenge we face is culture—which is both good news and bad news. The good news is that culture changes; the bad news is that it does not change overnight. This, however, must not distract us from the need to work toward this goal.

There are arguments besides fairness that support the better distribution of household labor. Internationally, it has been found that in homes where men are involved in daily activities, children have more emotional stability, better academic performance and better health. Fur-



A father and his baby at a parade in Oaxaca, Mexico.

thermore, in homes with a better balance in household labor, women have greater purchasing power, which results in a bigger investment in family needs such as food, clothing and housing. That is exactly the reason why most conditional cash transfer programs target women as recipients. Moreover, here is an infallible argument: Partners with a better understanding of the equal distribution of domestic work report having a better sexual life.

The lack of female representation in careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics has an origin in the roles that are defined at a young age about what is expected of girls and boys. Without no-

ting, we establish at home a culture that normalizes differences between genders, even though they do not correspond to differences in kids' abilities.

We have tried to find solutions to gender inequality in the workplace. We have placed the burden of this task upon governors and legislators, while ignoring the domestic role we play. One need not be an activist to change the world.

We can start building equality in the proximity of our homes, with our families, the people we love.

Ñopo is lead researcher at Group for the Analysis of Development (GRADE)

IDEAS FOR
CLOSING THE
GENDER GAP

Get Men to Do Their Share

WHEN CHILDCARE TRANSFORMS MOTHERS' CAREERS

The examples of Chile and Colombia can help others in the region, but don't expect one-size-fits-all solutions.

by **Leonie Rauls** and **Roberto Simon**

Children participate
in a gym class
at a reopened
kindergarten
in Medellín.





HOW CAN A MOTHER with a young child work without proper childcare available? The pandemic has reinforced how critical this question is for everyone, from families to companies and governments. In Latin America, the challenge may be new to some parents who could afford private daycares or had access to good public options, and now spend hours on Zoom classes with their young kids. However, for millions of others across the region—particularly among lower-income families—the drastic impact on mothers’ careers of a lack of access to early education is not at all a new story.

Economists and education experts have been debating how to expand early education in Latin America for decades. Most of them agree on one critical point: Given Latin America’s enormous socioeconomic and cultural diversity, we shouldn’t be thinking in terms of

a one-size-fits-all model for the region. “Each country has to develop their own responses and initiatives according to their unique characteristics,” Lucía Scuro, a social affairs officer at ECLAC, told *AQ*.

However, the region can learn from two countries that, in very different ways, successfully expanded childcare services: Chile and Colombia. Their examples provide useful lessons and expose the trade-offs that policymakers inevitably face.

Chile managed to expand childcare coverage by 130% in two years, from 2005 to 2007, when President Michelle Bachelet first came into office and rolled out Chile Crece Contigo (Chile Grows with You). Bachelet wanted to attain universal preschool coverage for four- and five-year-olds and give access to public kindergarten programs for children under three from the 40% poorest households. The only condition to enroll a child: The mother had to be working, studying or searching for a job.

The administration increased investments in public childcare services four-fold starting in 2006. New public centers were opened and staffed with professionals who had at least a five-year university degree in education.

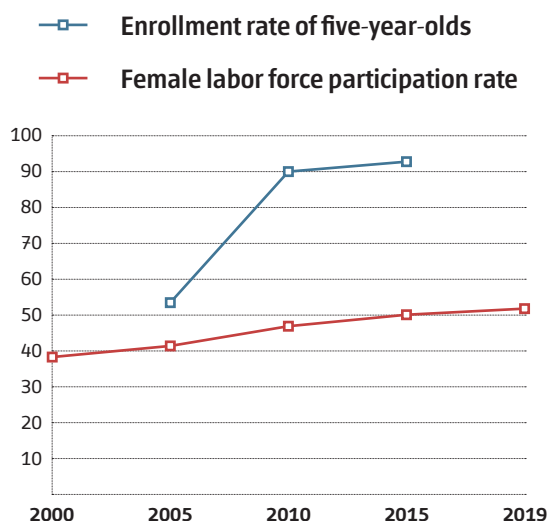
Chile saw a dazzling transformation. From 2006 to 2009, the number of public kindergartens surged from 700 to more than 4,000, while attendance in free daycares grew about five-fold. Early childhood education is still not fully universal in Chile, but today nearly 96% of five-year-olds attend preschool.

But Chile’s strategy was based on a centralized and formal public model that is unlikely to gain the same traction in larger, poorer Latin American countries. With higher governance capacity, development levels and fiscal space, the Chilean government dedicated more than \$10 billion to the childcare program in the first two years alone. Very few in the region can afford that.

Plus, the expansion in early education did not immediately translate into more mothers joining the la-

Access to Childcare and Mothers’ Careers Go Hand in Hand

As the Chilean government expanded its public daycare program, more women entered the labor force.



SOURCE: OECD DATA, WORLD DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS



A girl at a Bachelet rally in 2006. In two years, Chile expanded daycare coverage by 130%.

bor force. The professional benefits to women came only later. The initial program had certain rigid characteristics that made it hard for mothers to enter the job market, such as incompatible schedules between full-time working hours and daycare opening hours. Researchers found that the female labor supply significantly increased only after centers kept their doors open for longer hours. The share of female workers went from 38% to 52% over a decade.

Experts agree that the investments in early childhood education helped this progress. But the delayed effect had one main reason: Boosting mothers' careers was not the focus of policymakers who designed the program, but a secondary policy goal.

"For childcare programs to have a positive effect on mothers, gender equity needs to be in the policy design, so that it becomes part of the goal of the program," Merike Blofield, a professor of political science

at the University of Miami, told *AQ*.

Silke Staab, a research specialist at UN Women, argues that the "more logical" path for most governments is to build on existing programs.

LEVERAGING RESOURCES

COLOMBIA MOVED DECISIVELY in the direction Staab recommended. Instead of creating a formal structure for early education, it decided to leverage existing—and more informal—care services, typically provided by immediate and extended family members and friends. Starting in the mid-1990s, the government began regulating a home-based care system by training and certifying caregivers and offering them a stipend to help cover costs.

The system expanded childcare coverage dramatically. The program, called Hogares Comunitarios de Bienestar (Community Well-Being Sites), currently

GOOD IDEAS ARE NOT ENOUGH—AND IN SOME CASES THEY CAN LEAD TO PERNICIOUS OUTCOMES, UNDERMINING MOTHERS' CAREERS.

serves more than 1.7 million children, making Colombia the country with the greatest coverage for newborns to four-year-olds in the region. Research indicates that the program, with more flexible hours, increased by 25% the likelihood that mothers would work outside the home.

Blofield, from the University of Miami, points out that this type of “convenient childcare” allowed mothers to find better jobs with regular hours, sometimes moving from the informal to the formal economy. It also created employment opportunities for women—including mothers—with lower levels of education. Childcare providers are only required to have a high school degree and take a 40-hour training course before opening a center. Currently, around 80,000 women are employed in the public childcare service program.

However, this more informal system comes with high social and economic costs. Up until 2014, caretakers earned less than half the minimum wage with no benefits. It took more than 20 years of social pressure before the Colombian Constitutional Court ruled that care workers must receive the minimum wage. Today caretakers still earn approximately 28% of the average public sector monthly wage.

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

THE EXAMPLES OF Chile and Colombia show how certain characteristics, like convenience and continuity, are critical for the uptake of services, easing the childcare burden on mothers. Across Latin America, these initiatives inevitably depend on some degree of policy experimentation, with risks involved. Good ideas are not enough—and in some cases they can lead to pernicious outcomes, undermining mothers' careers.

Take the case of Argentina, for example. In 2009, the government introduced a Universal Child Allowance, a stipend given to low-income mothers with the goal of helping provide for and improve the quality of childcare. The program currently covers around

30% of children in the country, making it one of the largest social assistance benefits in Latin America.

Yet according to some experts, the evidence suggests that the program actually creates disincentives for women to enter the labor force. Researchers found that married women who receive the stipend are 25% less likely to join the labor market. The causes of the problem are the “relatively large amount” targeting mothers, explains Santiago Garganta, from the National University of La Plata. The aid may also reinforce gender stereotypes related to caregiving. The program assumes that mothers bear the responsibility of being the primary caregivers.

Chile also had a misfire prior to Bachelet's program. In 2002, the government passed a law mandating large employers to provide and finance daycare services. A few years later, however, researchers found that women hired in those firms received starting wages on average 9% to 20% lower than their counterparts. In other words, the program became a wage penalty for mothers.

Continuing to measure social policies' impact on women can help policymakers avoid these traps when designing new policies. Also, technology will likely play an increasingly larger role in bridging the gap between early education and mothers' careers.

Uruguay has recently developed an app to nudge parents to take their children to centers instead of using family arrangements for childcare. Mercedes Mateo Díaz, an education specialist at the IDB (Inter-American Development Bank), urges other governments in the region to explore these tools moving forward.

According to Díaz, apps can be particularly useful to break cultural pressures for mothers to stay home raising their children. She argues that, again, the key is not to see childcare as a standalone policy. “Governments must have a vision of integrated care.”

Rauls is an editorial intern at AQ
Simon is the politics editor for AQ

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Protections Against Violence

IT'S ALSO HER BUSINESS

How the head of one of Brazil's largest retail chains is targeting domestic violence.

by Cecilia Tornaghi


IN 2017, LUIZA TRAJANO—an entrepreneur who turned a small-town mom-and-pop shop into Magazine Luiza, one of Brazil's largest retailers—received a dire message from her team: A store manager had been stabbed to death by her former partner, while her eight-year-old son slept in the bedroom.

“It hurt, and I thought to myself, could I have done something? And I pledged that her death would not be in vain.”

Trajano was already a vocal advocate for women's rights. Four years prior, she had founded a nonpartisan organization, Grupo Mulheres do Brasil, to foster initiatives supporting equal rights and the fight against domestic violence. “I had participated in debates and panels—thought it was an incredibly important topic, but I had never felt it as something close to home,” Trajano told *AQ*.

Within days of the femicide, her company had assembled an employee advisory group—a committee with lawyers, prosecutors and NGOs working in the field. Magazine Luiza also launched Canal Mulher (Woman Channel), an internal hotline for employees, with trained staff ready to activate a support system, including access to

RODRIGO CAPOTE/BLUOMBERG/GETTY

A portrait of Luiza Trajano, a woman with dark, wavy hair, wearing a black off-the-shoulder top and a long gold necklace with clove-shaped pendants. She is standing behind a glass railing in a modern building with large windows in the background.

Luiza Trajano ,
chairwoman of Magazine
Luiza, has implemented a
comprehensive program
to help employees,
and even customers,
who are victims of
domestic violence.

5 Steps for Companies to Help Fight Gender Violence

Magazine Luiza compiled a manual to help other companies support employees.

1 Build a committee.

HR and Communications can lead, but this should include employees from every area and all levels of seniority. Consider including external partners, such as NGOs and specialists from academia and government.

2 Communicate.

Everyone in the company should know you are starting a program to provide support for employees who experience gender violence. Raise the issue of gender and domestic violence frequently. Involve top leadership in this communication and make it clear that employees can count on the company for support.

3 Create a hotline.

Build a tool where employees can safely report instances of suspected gender violence. Make sure to involve professionals who can give support without passing judgement, and guarantee confidentiality.

4 Offer help.

This can be as simple as having ready information on how to report gender violence to local authorities, what are the public services available to them, which organizations can offer support. Include psychological support to help victims break the cycle of violence, when appropriate.

5 Follow up.

Appoint a dedicated professional—either from the company or a partner organization—who can stay connected and monitor each case.

mental health professionals, authorities or legal support—and even relocation when needed.

Getting buy-in from staff was a major priority if Canal Mulher was going to work. “The next day after we created this hotline I was on TV Luiza (the company’s internal live channel) talking to all staff, as I do weekly. And I called on the male employees to help us. The response was incredible,” said Trajano.

“We receive calls from victims’ colleagues, because they know we will not push them to go public or anything, we will just protect them.”

Since its launch in 2017, Canal Mulher has provided support for 420 women, getting them out of danger. “One employee we had to relocate to another state in the middle of the night,” said Trajano.

The next step was to figure out what employees knew about harassment. Leaders and managers across Magazine Luiza were asked to meet with their teams and ask them direct questions: what they thought harassment was, how they felt about it, what kind of workplace they’d like to have.

They garnered 18,000 responses that were then tallied in a report by a research provider, and became the basis for staff training.

“One main finding was that calling (harassment) a joke or ‘just playing’ was very common,” said Trajano. “And we’d ask them, what if it was your daughter?”

The pandemic has sent the project into overdrive, with Magazine Luiza increasing its reach to help customers in abusive households. The company’s app, which counts 26 million registered users, has a button that enables users to call Brazil’s police hotline while pretending to be shopping online.

Trajano said the simple fact that a company has a clear policy can already be a deterrent to criminal behavior. “We had concrete cases of men showing up in stores to harass their partner, but they’ve now disappeared.” And harassment, inside or outside work, is cause for immediate dismissal of employees, something Trajano called “not negotiable.”

While legislation, public policy and law enforcement are needed to combat and punish domestic violence, Trajano’s experience shows that the private sector can play a critical role. And she wants fellow C-suite leaders to take action.

“It doesn’t cost much to maintain a system. I felt like I had to call fellow leaders and show them the impor-



The Magazine Luiza shopping app has a button that connects directly with Brazil's police hotline for domestic violence.

tance of a company having an internal tool.” And she did, but kept it a surprise. Invitations for a guided tour of LuizaLabs, the company’s digital innovation arm, were sent to 200 CEOs. “Everyone wants to see the Lab,” said Trajano, smiling.

“I invited them for breakfast, but there were also party favors,” said Trajano. The committee assembled to develop actionable initiatives had put together a manual with five steps companies can take to protect their employees. Each CEO received a copy of the manual, and a talk by Maria da Penha, a survivor in honor of whom Brazil’s domestic violence law is named.

“But I also did show them the lab,” Trajano said, laughing.

Trajano said taking action is not only a humanitarian issue, but also improves the work environment for men and women, and helps improve the relationship with customers as well. “Since the pandemic especially, people are searching for companies that are socially responsible,” she said.

“And we are available to help,” Trajano offered. “We have helped many other companies in Brazil build their system. We all have responsibility over this.”

Tornaghi is the managing editor at AQ

The Rising Role of Women in the Hemisphere's Militaries

Women are key to making security stronger for everyone.

by Amb. Jean Manes and Adm. Craig Faller



The Guatemalan Female Engagement Platoon walk towards the Centro de Entrenamiento de Operadores de Paz (CREOMPAZ)

IDEAS FOR CLOSING THE GENDER GAP



GETTY

IT'S A MESSAGE WE SHARE and have heard loud and clear from our partners around the hemisphere: If you want to be a successful minister of defense or chief of security, you have to recruit the best talent, while also addressing both structural and cultural challenges to advance that talent. This means taking advantage of all segments of society—especially women. It is absolutely necessary to fully integrate women into defense and security forces to be successful in the 21st century—to be professional, ready for any mission, and legitimate in the eyes of the population.

The U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), which is responsible for security cooperation and engagements in Central America, South America and the Caribbean, is committed to advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) strategy. WPS provides an essential engagement opportunity to strengthen relationships with our partners. Our efforts include supporting women's empowerment and ascension within the defense and security forces, meaningful participation at the decision-making table, protection from violence, and access to humanitarian assistance resources. Achieving gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the keys to overcoming structural and cultural challenges in the region. Our goal is clear: a more secure, prosperous and free hemisphere, which is only possible when women have an integral role in building this future.

Twenty years ago this October, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), which addresses how the world deals with conflict, gender roles and stability efforts. The resolution's logic is: Men, women, girls and boys are affected differently by conflict. This resolution, and a follow-on series of UN resolutions, have established that women should participate at all decision-making levels of international peace, security and defense to more effectively promote stability and recovery after conflict. The WPS initiative brings the UNSC resolu-



Ambassador Jean Manes is the civilian deputy to the commander and foreign policy advisor at the U.S. Southern Command. Manes was the U.S. ambassador to El Salvador from 2016 to 2019.



Admiral Craig Faller is the commander of the U.S. Southern Command. Faller graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1983 and earned a master's degree in national security affairs from the Naval Postgraduate School in 1990.

tion's logic to the forefront, and expands the themes that are already deeply rooted in national and international policy dialogue. For Latin America and the Caribbean, the wps agenda has guided a generation of trailblazers, researchers and peacekeepers to work tirelessly toward a safer and more secure hemisphere.

WHAT WE KNOW

Wps has taught us much about community health, stability operations, and the threats we face. We know that gender equality, along with whole of government solutions to economic governance and security challenges, makes countries and communities more stable and peaceful. We also know that places with significant gender gaps or fewer rights for women have a higher incidence of corruption and violence. Research shows that peace negotiations are 35% more likely to succeed when women are part of the process. Hard-won experience tells us that women are key to preventing conflict before it breaks out, and that their participation enables communities to curb escalating violence and defuse tensions between groups. Moreover, women peacekeepers foster greater trust within communities. Including gender perspectives during the planning and execution of these peacekeeping operations improves access to local populations and increases local support.

Many of the threats we encounter in the region exploit the value of women. For the last several decades, Colombian guerrilla groups have specifically targeted and recruited vulnerable women using tactics of coercion, manipulation, promises of better physical and economic living conditions, and leveraging familial ties. Before laying down its arms in 2017, the longest-standing group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), presented itself as a feminist and egalitarian organization, but actually fostered an environment where women confronted the same challenges, harassment and inequality that they might face in broader society. In addition to the threats women face from guerrilla groups, many of the trafficking networks across the region that move illicit drugs share a common physical and financial infrastructure with human trafficking networks—another threat against women and security.

To enhance capabilities and counter threats, USSOUTHCOM is implementing strategies to empower women and promote their equality across the hemisphere as integral to the broader goal of achieving professional defense and security forces that have strong value-based institutions. A gender perspective is opening up a new world



The October 2000 vote at the UN Security Council, which adopted a resolution on the need to increase the role for women in defense and security.

of opportunities to strengthen partnerships, provide innovative ways to solve old problems, and enhance our team for today's complex environments and battlefields. The command's WPS program employs subject matter experts who advise our key leaders and staff on the integration of gender perspectives in military domains across the continuum of defense and security sectors in our region. These gender advisors ensure we accurately represent the roles of women in our plans, operations and exercises, as well as encouraging our partners to implement changes that enhance the meaningful participation of women in decision-making processes.

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN

Across the Western Hemisphere, militaries and security forces are reaching the same conclusion: WPS matters to national and regional security. This is not a new phenomenon; in 1999, Mireya Perez of Chile became the first female general in Latin America. About the time UNSCR 1325 was going into effect, the Salvadoran armed forces opened its doors to female candidates; since then, more than 1,500 women have joined. Even before WPS, women in Jamaica and Guyana were breaking barriers. Aviation has been a particularly bright spot for the integration of women in Latin America and the Caribbean security spaces. Today, women from Brazil, Colombia and El Salvador, to name a few, fly combat aircraft. This year, the Brazilian Navy will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the integration of women; next year, Brazilian women

will continue to break new ground and be able to serve in combat roles in the Marine Corps (CFN in Portuguese) for the first time. Women are increasingly assuming prominent roles and conquering previously unthinkable spaces.

Since 2000, six of our partner nations have adopted WPS National Action Plans: Chile (2009), Argentina (2015), Paraguay (2015), Brazil (2017), El Salvador (2017) and Guatemala (2017). Many more have learned that women help prevent violence and provide security by fostering inclusive approaches such as trust-building, initiating dialogue and bridging divides. Making up over 50% of the population, women bring unique and necessary skills to security forces. In addition to serving in operations at home, Latin American female soldiers have supported peacekeeping missions across Africa, including operations on the border of the Central African Republic and Sudan.

For the USSOUTHCOM team, working alongside the courageous women service members throughout our region is a moving experience. These women share stories of struggle, commitment, challenge and triumph while serving their country and improving security for their children, their families and their communities.

Two particularly powerful instances highlight advancement in WPS. During a visit to a Colombian military base, the U.S. and Colombian senior leadership met with a group of 50 Colombian female soldiers. These women had the opportunity to share their successes and challenges with their top officers for the



U.S. soldiers help build a new school for the indigenous Wayuu people in Colombia.

first time. The energy in the room was electrifying as women lined up to tell their stories, and as the meeting was coming to an end, Colombian leadership wanted to continue. This engagement offers a valuable lesson to all military leaders: Recognize talent from the full human spectrum of your teams.

A second example of advancement in WPS occurred when USSOUTHCOM hosted a recent Caribbean Security Conference. In an audience of primarily male leaders, USSOUTHCOM held a WPS session with women leaders discussing their experiences. The dialogue on gender integration quickly turned into our regional partners proudly sharing and highlighting their WPS efforts. The Jamaican Chief of Defense Staff, Lieutenant General Rocky Meade, was the first to stand and share how he implemented structural changes in recruitment and promotion and the benefits that he had personally witnessed as a result. Other chiefs of defense (CHODs) were quick to jump in and give their

examples. One CHOD proudly cited that the top five graduates in a recent recruitment class were women. Another CHOD commented that the average dropout rate for basic training in his country is about 15%, but zero percent for women. He emphasized, “Women who start are committed; they do not give up and will fight to the end.” Women understand what is at stake and that their successes or failures affect the prospects of other women assuming these roles.

At USSOUTHCOM, we know that military units are better and stronger when they are integrated. We know that when we invest in a woman, she changes not only her own life, but also lives within her family, community, unit, institution and country. While structural changes to recruitment, training and promotion systems are critical, professionalization also entails empowering and elevating talented women across the defense and security sectors. This is our job as senior leaders.

SPC. JUSTIN CARRILLO

WHEN WE HAVE THE SECOND, THIRD, TENTH WOMAN IN A KEY POSITION, WHEN IT STOPS BEING REMARKABLE ... THEN WE WILL HAVE ACHIEVED TRUE GENDER EQUALITY.

WHERE WE ARE GOING

Moving into the new decade, USSOUTHCOM will charge forward to advance the 2019 United States Strategy on Women, Peace and Security and U.S. Secretary of Defense 2020 Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan. We will lead the way, improve our readiness and professionalism, and compete against myriad threats facing our shared hemisphere. We still have much progress to make in the United States, which is why highlighting women breaking barriers is so critical. Being the first is never easy, but it does pave the way. When we have the second, third, tenth woman in a key position, when it stops being remarkable, and when it is finally viewed as enhancing the combat effectiveness of our forces, then we will have achieved true gender equality.

As we evolve, USSOUTHCOM will continue to strongly encourage partners to implement policies, plans and structural changes that enhance women's meaningful participation in decision-making processes related to peace and security. In the military, we talk about domains—land, sea, air, space and cyber—but the most valuable one is the human domain. The people in our partners' militaries—women and men—are working hard to build a more secure, prosperous, and free hemisphere. Our inclusivity and diversity throughout the ranks enhances decision-making, accelerates our multinational integration, and delivers forces capable of winning against any adversary.

There is a global competition afoot between the forces of democracy and those that favor kleptocracy and authoritarianism. In this struggle, WPS has become a venue to learn from our partners and also to find shared values and continue to build trust. As the most powerful military in the world with a long history of integration, the United States has an essential role to play in assisting partner nations to create greater equality in their workforce, while resisting

the tide of authoritarianism.

The Western Hemisphere is our shared home. In the United States, we share culture, values, economic ties, close proximity and an appreciation for democracy with most neighboring nations. Our futures are linked, and our shared desire for peace and security warrants a shared responsibility for action.

Professional defense and security forces play a vital role in sustainable security in our shared neighborhood. When trying to achieve sustainable security, it is imperative that a nation's defense and security forces be legitimate and respected. Defense and security professionals who are both respected by their population and ready for all contingencies embrace the rule of law and respect for human rights, as well as a commitment to the ethical use of force, full integration of women in our forces, and the vital role of noncommissioned officers. Truly professional defense and security forces are ready across the entire spectrum of potential missions, from exercises to combat to peacekeeping.

At USSOUTHCOM, we work with militaries across Latin America and the Caribbean to build professional forces that partner with the United States to improve security in the Western Hemisphere. USSOUTHCOM will continue to pursue operations, activities and investments that improve the readiness and professionalism of our U.S. military and the security forces of our partner nations. We have found that professional forces demonstrating inclusion and support for women are a key attribute of democracy and are vital to winning today's competition. This month, we celebrate 20 years of progress and lead the way into the next chapter of WPS in our region. We do not do it alone. We do it with many of our partners as they share our conviction that women enable a more secure, prosperous and free hemisphere. *¡Trabajamos Juntos y Avanzamos Juntos!* ●

Protections Against Violence

Having Strong Gender Violence Laws Isn't Enough

A roadmap for achieving real results.

by Rosa Celorio

AN ACTIVE WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT has formed in Latin America to fight some of the world's highest rates of gender violence. Thanks in large part to their efforts, many countries have adopted comprehensive legislation meant to prevent, investigate and sanction such crimes.

Unfortunately, having good laws is not enough. Effective enforcement is just as important, and this is an area where Latin America continues to fall short.

The status quo is clearly unacceptable. Women in Latin America experience daily physical, psychological and sexual violence, and in 2020 the problem has only gotten worse. The International Rescue Committee has recorded an alarming increase in reports of gender-based violence since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Venezuela and other countries.

Meanwhile, Latin America has also seen a wave of recent campaigns and protests where women of all ages, races and social classes are denouncing the prevalence of the problem of femicide and other forms of gender-based violence, demanding a better state response and more accountability for perpetrators for these crimes.

More can be done.



RICARDO CEPPI/GETTY IMAGES



Women protest
against
femicide in
Buenos Aires
amid the pandemic.

BENCHMARK LEGISLATION

UP UNTIL TODAY, there have been three noteworthy waves of legislation in Latin America. The most significant occurred during the 1990s and involved legislation to combat domestic and intra-family violence. These first-generation laws are still relied upon by at least 24 Latin American and Caribbean countries. After 2000, a more comprehensive set of second-generation laws expanded the protection for women against all forms of violence. These were followed by the promulgation by about 18 Latin American states of laws to criminally sanction femicide, feminicide and gender-based motivated killings.

One of the most emblematic laws in the region was created when a domestic violence survivor, Maria da Penha Maia, litigated her own case after suffering an excruciating pattern of physical and psychological abuse by her partner. The case languished before judicial authorities in Brazil for 17 years without resolution until it was brought to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The comprehensive Maria da Penha law passed in 2006, but its origin exemplifies what many domestic violence victims in Latin America go through, including the impunity of their cases before the institutions of justice.

This law in Brazil and many others across the region have been lauded as important steps forward, but femicides and acts of violence against women continue to occur in Latin America and are not close to slowing down.

WHAT IS MISSING?

ACLOSE LOOK AT THE EXPERIENCE of implementing these laws to date in Latin America reveals pieces that are urgently needed.

Some have been highlighted by the body at the Organization of American States entrusted with the follow-up to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará). Obstacles include the social tolerance of these crimes; low state investment in policies, programs and services to address gender-based violence; the weakness of the administration of judicial institutions and their limited presence across the national territory; the need for more coherent data collection efforts; and the lack of uniformity in the terminology used in legislative text.

One of the most crucial pieces is stronger mechanisms for reporting crimes. Especially in the era of COVID-19 lockdowns and confinement, services to report violence should be considered “essential,” including shelters and family courts. The Colombian and Chilean governments have allowed victims to report crimes via WhatsApp and Argentina recently allowed victims

Bolivian women march against violence in El Alto.



15%
of Latin American women reported increased violence in their households amid the pandemic

SOURCE: IDB/CORNELL CORONAVIRUS SURVEY



to report domestic violence in pharmacies.

However, all this is in vain if women do not have clear and thorough information on how and where to report crimes, as well as where to seek shelter and legal services. Government campaigns to disseminate information in both rural and urban areas are paramount, especially in the online realm through social media. Peru, along with the United Nations Development Program, for example, spearheaded a campaign with the collaboration of more than 300 institutions to raise awareness about gender violence by promoting the use of purple masks.





Collecting data to inform legislative and public policy making is another pressing priority. Statistics on gender violence rates and complaints can help policy-

makers assess the scope of violence against women, and design effective strategies that match its prevalence.

Additionally, addressing social stereotypes of women and the tolerance of gender-based violence are important preconditions to seeing any reduction in violence. Latin America is still affected by the sexism, discrimination and patriarchalism that fuels gender-based violence. Our understanding of women's experiences should reflect the intersectional range of risks women face due to their race, ethnic background, economic position and age.





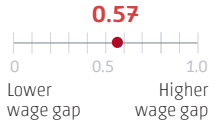
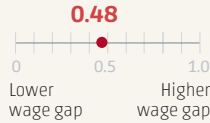
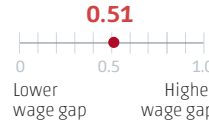
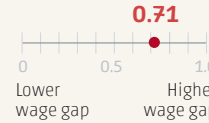
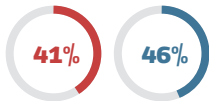



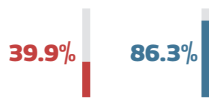
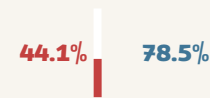
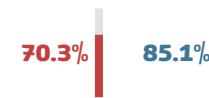
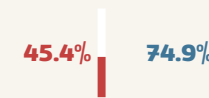
Celorio is the associate dean and a lecturer for International and Comparative Legal Studies at The George Washington University Law School

A Country-by-Country Overview

	ARGENTINA 	BRAZIL 	CHILE 	COLOMBIA 
When is abortion legal?	<div>✗ On request</div> <div>✓ When a woman's health is at risk</div> <div>✓ In cases of rape</div> <div>✓ When a woman's life is at risk</div>	<div>✗ On request</div> <div>✗ When a woman's health is at risk</div> <div>✓ In cases of rape</div> <div>✓ When a woman's life is at risk</div>	<div>✗ On request</div> <div>✗ When a woman's health is at risk</div> <div>✓ In cases of rape</div> <div>✓ When a woman's life is at risk</div>	<div>✗ On request</div> <div>✓ When a woman's health is at risk</div> <div>✓ In cases of rape</div> <div>✓ When a woman's life is at risk</div>
Perceived wage gap (survey of business leaders by World Economic Forum)	<div>0.53</div> <div>0 0.5 1.0</div> <div>Lower wage gap Higher wage gap</div>	<div>0.49</div> <div>0 0.5 1.0</div> <div>Lower wage gap Higher wage gap</div>	<div>0.51</div> <div>0 0.5 1.0</div> <div>Lower wage gap Higher wage gap</div>	<div>0.53</div> <div>0 0.5 1.0</div> <div>Lower wage gap Higher wage gap</div>
Parental leave stipulated by law (days)	<div>women men</div> <div>90 days 2 days</div>	<div>women men</div> <div>120 days 5 days</div>	<div>women men</div> <div>126 days 5 days</div>	<div>women men</div> <div>126 days 10 days</div>
Adults with bank accounts (percentage)	<div>50% 45%</div>	<div>68% 73%</div>	<div>71% 77%</div>	<div>41% 49%</div>
Percentage in formal labor force	<div>50.7% 72.7%</div>	<div>54.2% 74.1%</div>	<div>51.8% 74%</div>	<div>57.3% 80.9%</div>
"Special" treatment	<p>Argentina's labor code restricts women from being hired for jobs considered "dangerous" or hazardous to their health.</p>	<p>Women cannot be hired for jobs that require them to move 40 to 55 pounds (of anything) by hand at one time.</p>	<p>According to Chile's civil code, husbands are the head of household and are responsible for a couple's finances.</p>	<p>Colombian labor law prohibits women from being hired for industrial painting work.</p>

Who in Latin America is putting up roadblocks to women's success? Where are women's rights best protected?

AQ looks at how women fare in eight countries in the region.

GUATEMALA 	MEXICO 	PERU 	VENEZUELA 
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On request <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When a woman's health is at risk <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In cases of rape <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When a woman's life is at risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On request <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When a woman's health is at risk <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In cases of rape <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When a woman's life is at risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On request <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When a woman's health is at risk <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In cases of rape <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When a woman's life is at risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On request <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When a woman's health is at risk <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In cases of rape <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When a woman's life is at risk
 <p>0.57</p> <p>Lower wage gap Higher wage gap</p>	 <p>0.48</p> <p>Lower wage gap Higher wage gap</p>	 <p>0.51</p> <p>Lower wage gap Higher wage gap</p>	 <p>0.71</p> <p>Lower wage gap Higher wage gap</p>
<p>women men</p> <p>84 days 2 days</p>	<p>women men</p> <p>84 days 5 days</p>	<p>women men</p> <p>98 days 10 days</p>	<p>women men</p> <p>182 days 0 days</p>
 <p>41% 46%</p>	 <p>33% 39%</p>	 <p>34% 51%</p>	 <p>70% 77%</p>
 <p>39.9% 86.3%</p>	 <p>44.1% 78.5%</p>	 <p>70.3% 85.1%</p>	 <p>45.4% 74.9%</p>
<p>In Guatemala, women are only to perform work that is "appropriate to their age, physical condition, and intellectual and moral development."</p>	<p>Though not required by law, a World Bank study found that many financial institutions require women to have a male co-signer to receive a loan.</p>	<p>Women are given priority in the custody of female children in divorce cases.</p>	<p>Scored zero in the World Bank's assesment of legal guarantees for women's access to credit.</p>

SOURCES: Center for Reproductive Rights (abortion); World Bank 2019 (parental leave); World Bank 2017 (financial inclusion); World Economic Indicators 2019 (labor participation); World Development Indicators 2019 (employment). Data for Guatemala from 2017. Data for Venezuela from 2012; World Economic Forum survey of about 100 business leaders per country 2019 (wage gap); World Bank, UN Women (special treatment).

SHE DARED TO BE A CANDIDATE

Two decades before fellow Salvadoran women could vote, Prudencia Ayala became the first woman to run for president in Latin America.

by Isabel Castillo



Ayala in 1920: Proud to be a "humble Salvadoran Indian."

THE 1931 PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST in El Salvador is usually remembered for being the first competitive election in the country's history. The triumph of Arturo Araujo, a prominent landowner, seemed to inaugurate an era of greater democratization. Until it didn't: After only nine months, a military coup overthrew Araujo and brought El Salvador back to a path of strongmen and repression (including a shocking peasant massacre in 1932), all common features of Central American politics at the time.

However, the 1931 Salvadoran elections were also historic for another, less remembered reason: It was the first time in Latin American history that a woman, Prudencia Ayala, decided to run as a presidential candidate.

It is hard to exaggerate how much Ayala, a writer and one of the most innovative early feminists, was ahead of her time. Her bid for the presidency—which was eventually blocked by the Supreme Court—took place two decades before women were even allowed to vote in El Salvador. Ninety years later, only one other woman has ever run for the highest office in the country.

Ayala had another characteristic that made her stand out in the highly stratified and conservative Salvadoran establishment of the time: She was indigenous—or, in her own words, “proud to be a humble Salvadoran Indian.”

Born in the state of Sonsonate in 1885, Ayala was of working-class origins, largely self-taught as her parents could afford to send her to school only until second grade. At age 10, she moved with her mother to Santa Ana, near the Guatemalan border. The city was an effervescent political hub and home to the so-

called unionist movement, which sought to integrate Central American countries into one federation—an idea that she came to enthusiastically embrace. As a young and single mother, Ayala started her writing career in journalism and her criticism of the Salvadoran establishment landed her in prison.

In 1920s El Salvador, women were barred from voting and feminist organizations were incipient. But they found innovative ways to engage in politics, as an infamous episode in 1922 illustrates. On Christmas Day, in the middle of a presidential campaign, a group of women of all ages and social classes marched in San Salvador in support of the opposition candidate. Above all, they called for the end of the dynastic governments headed by the Meléndez-Quiñones family. As a response to the parade, President Jorge Meléndez—the third member of the family to consecutively hold the presidency—unleashed the armed forces and paramilitary groups against the demonstrators, killing several women and injuring many more.

“CIUDADANO” IS ALSO FEMALE

AGAINST THIS BACKDROP, by the turn of the decade Ayala had become a well-known figure in the political debate as a prominent advocate of Central American unionism and a critic of U.S. intervention in the region. She was also a strong promoter of women's rights and greater participation in public affairs. Living in Guatemala, Ayala decided to move from writing to political action: She began planning her presidential candidacy with the support of the Unionist Party.

When launching her bid for the presidency, Ayala developed a 14-point program, emphasizing probity

During her campaign, Ayala was ridiculed, masculinized, her indigenous features exaggerated in comic strips.

and the fight against corruption. It also included support for workers' rights and political rights for women, so they could cease to be de facto second-class citizens. She called on women to take part in the campaign, speaking at numerous conferences and giving interviews. Ironically, however, most women seemed to support Araujo, from the Labor Party. Perhaps by departing from dominant women-as-mother views, the challenge to the status quo was too great even for the female electorate. But the press did pay attention. Some journalists acknowledged the justice of her demands, although coverage of her campaign mostly had a sensationalist tone—some nicknamed her “Prudencia, *la loca*.”

To claim her right to run for president, Ayala appealed to a common argument used by female suffragists at the time: Although formally male in Spanish, the noun “*ciudadano*” in the constitution was gender-neutral, also applying to women. The Council of Ministers, formed by the government cabinet, rejected this claim, and the Supreme Court reaffirmed the decision based on procedural grounds.

After months campaigning in legal limbo, she finally dropped her candidacy and recognized her defeat, bitterly declaring, “By not being qualified as citizen, I am left without nationality, appearing in the world of men as an inhabitant of planet Earth.”

THE “PROUD INDIAN”

AYALA'S POOR AND INDIGENOUS BACKGROUND greatly challenged societal norms. In fact, during her campaign she was repeatedly ridiculed, masculinized, her indigenous features exaggerated in comic strips, and shamed for abandoning her rightful place in the home.

But being indigenous also made her unique compared to other women who were fighting for political participation across Latin America at that time. Take, for instance, Matilde Hidalgo de Procel, who in 1924 caught Ecuador's institutions by surprise when registering to

El Salvador's 1922 Christmas Day massacre: Several women marching against the Meléndez-Quinones dynasty were killed.



vote. Like Ayala, she claimed the 1906 constitution referred to gender-neutral *ciudadanos*, which only required being over 21 years old and literate to be able to vote. The local council, not knowing how to reply, elevated the consultation to a national Council of State, which unanimously agreed that there were no legal impediments. Later that year, Hidalgo and a few other women voted in the legislative elections. Hidalgo helped make Ecuador the first country in Latin America to enfranchise women.

Hidalgo represents a more common profile among early feminists in the region. Born into a middle-class liberal family, she circumvented all kinds of barriers to receive a formal education and became the first female physician in Ecuador. Other prominent feminists in the region were also the first women in their respective professional fields. Paulina Luisi, founder of the National Council of Women in 1916 and the leader of the Uruguayan women's movement, was also the first female doctor in her country. Brazil's Bertha Lutz,

who was instrumental in securing voting rights for women in 1932, was a prominent zoologist and scientist. Both Luisi and Lutz had in common being from European immigrant families. And they also shared the international stage in the Pan-American context, where many women came together in a transnational feminist movement.

Ayala was born poor, non-white and never received higher education. Despite her championing the cause of Central American unionism, she lacked the international networks of her fellow Brazilian and Uruguayan feminists. In many ways, Prudencia Ayala was the exception among these exceptional women.

THE LAST BARRIER TO FALL

DESPITE THE ACTIONS OF Ayala, Hidalgo, Luisi, Lutz and many other Latin American women, extending political participation, including voting rights, to female citizens was generally resisted by male elites. Some men feared po-

litical participation would remove women from their “rightful place” (the home and the family). Others thought women would vote en masse for their opponents. Therefore, powerful political parties kept delaying suffrage extensions and most Latin American countries only enfranchised women in the decade following the end of World War II.

“The field of action of women is in the home. The function that nature has commended her is a strictly conservative function: conservation of the species, of the home, of the family and its traditions,” claimed Peruvian legislator Manuel Bustamante de la Fuente when voting against women’s suffrage in a failed reform attempt in 1931. On the other side of the political spectrum, Luis Alberto Sánchez of the APRA party said the proposal to enfranchise women responded to “the

fundamental need to prop up with a strong contingent of feminine voters the subsistence and entrenchment of the ideals and aspirations of the conservative spirit.” These common arguments point to the obstacles faced by Latin American suffragists.

When it finally came, change was slow, as other formal and informal limitations remained in place. Countries like Brazil, Peru and Guatemala kept literacy requirements for voting—which disproportionately affected indigenous and Afro-descendant women from rural areas.

In other words, women with a similar background to Prudencia Ayala were the last citizens allowed to vote in Latin America. Only when Brazil ended the restriction for illiterate people to vote in 1985—54 years after the Ayala campaign in El Salvador—did formal constraints on women’s suffrage end in the region.

4 Inspiring Women’s Rights Leaders from Latin American History by Katie Hopkins



Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

As a teenager, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz was already well-known among elites in colonial Mexico for her writing prowess. Born in 1647 in the outskirts of

today’s Mexico City, she became a nun at 21, and would forever be considered one of the great Spanish baroque authors. Her letters and poems challenged social norms, including the hypocrisy of Mexico’s patriarchal society, the unrealistic standard for women—and, indirectly, the church she pledged to serve. Sor Juana was a loud and passionate champion of women’s education, a taboo idea in the Inquisition-dominated Spanish colony.

“Have they not a rational soul as men do?” she famously questioned. The tension between her progressive ideals and her role as a nun came to a head in 1693, forcing her to sell off her vast book collection and turn her attention to charity work. Sor Juana became a reference for the feminist movement in the country and beyond, and she is memorialized on Mexico’s 200-peso bill.



Maria Quitéria

Dubbed the Brazilian Joan of Arc, Maria Quitéria fought for Brazil’s independence from Portugal in 1822—170 years before women were

officially allowed to join the military. A native of the state of Bahia, Quitéria found a way to circumvent the restrictions on women in the armed forces, dressing up as a man. She did so against the wishes of her father, who eventually revealed her true identity to the army. According to legend, despite the revelation, military leadership allowed Quitéria to remain in the army, as she had already proved herself an asset in battle. The first Brazilian female soldier ended her career at the rank of lieutenant, but the tales of Quitéria’s bravery catapulted her to a near-mythic symbol of Brazil’s independence. The Maria Quitéria Medal was created in 1953, 100 years after her death, and to this day is awarded to civilians and members of the military who contribute to the defense and security of Brazil.

Ayala would not come to exercise the right to vote and she would never see other women run for office in her home country. When leaving the campaign in 1930, she stated, “I depart grateful of the politicians that have paid attention to the justice I demand from the law. ... Joy seizes my hope in the next electoral future.” However, as El Salvador descended again into authoritarianism, the limits to her political activities increased. The causes of Ayala’s premature death in 1936 remain uncertain. She was then ignored or erased from history books for decades, only to be reclaimed more recently by feminist movements in El Salvador and beyond as a symbol of freedom, justice and endurance.

Castillo is a researcher at the Center for the Study of Political History at Adolfo Ibáñez University

Ayala was ignored or erased from history books for decades, only to be reclaimed more recently by feminist groups.



María Teresa Ferrari

When María Teresa Ferrari graduated from medical school in 1911, higher education for women was not formally restricted in

Argentina, but generalized gender discrimination made it a rarity. Similar barriers blocked Ferrari’s initial attempts to become a professor: The university cited physical and psychological “concerns” to disqualify her. Nevertheless, Ferrari advanced and, over the next decade, cemented herself as a pioneer and innovator in the field of obstetrics and gynecology. Gender discrimination had very practical consequences in her field: Although the patients were women, the treatments were developed only by men. Some of the techniques she introduced became the backbones of modern OB/GYN practice in Argentina and beyond. In 1927, Ferrari became the first woman university professor in Latin America, according to some sources. She later created the Argentina Federation of University Women to expand Argentine women’s access to higher education and academic research.



Xica Manicongo

Under both the Portuguese Inquisition and slavery, Xica Manicongo pushed the boundaries of gender and sexuality in colonial Brazil. Manicongo was

the earliest recorded Black trans woman in Brazil, according to descriptions in official documents from that era. Enslaved to a shoemaker in the city of Salvador, Manicongo openly lived as a woman during the late 16th century—a time when trans and queer people were deemed deviant and evil by religious authorities. Local officials demanded that Manicongo dress as a man, but she repeatedly refused to obey the orders. Eventually, demands turned to threats and Manicongo was forced to choose between execution or a cisgender identity. She changed her appearance as a result, but reportedly never renounced her gender identity. Baptized under the name Francisco, Manicongo is now affectionately referred to as Xica by activists and historians to honor the identity she struggled to express. Today, she is celebrated as a powerful symbol of resistance for the LGBTQ+ community in Brazil and beyond.

HOW TO MAKE QUOTAS IN POLITICS WORK

If done right, quotas can dramatically boost women's numbers in Congress and beyond.

by **Jennifer M. Piscopo**

IN 1991, ARGENTINE WOMEN began to transform electoral politics in Latin America—and around the globe. Thanks to feminist activism, and last-minute support from a president seeking a public relations win, the Argentine Congress passed the modern era's first gender quota law. Today, more than 70 countries have laws that require political parties to nominate certain percentages of women to their tickets. Latin America remains in the vanguard, with such quotas in every country except Guatemala and Venezuela.

It wasn't, however, without a fight.

Latin America's redemocratization in the 1980s had overwhelmingly benefited men. Women had led pro-democracy movements, but were marginalized once electoral politics returned. Only about 5% of legislative seats in the first post-transition elections were won by women.

Regionwide, the needle hardly moved in subsequent years. Throughout the 1990s, women averaged less than 10% of the region's lower or unicameral legislatures. In 1997, upon introducing Peru's quota law, Congresswoman Luz Salgado remarked that "a patriarchal and machista political culture is responsible for the fact that of 2013 parliamentarians, only 84 have been women." Rather than wait for gender bias to disappear with

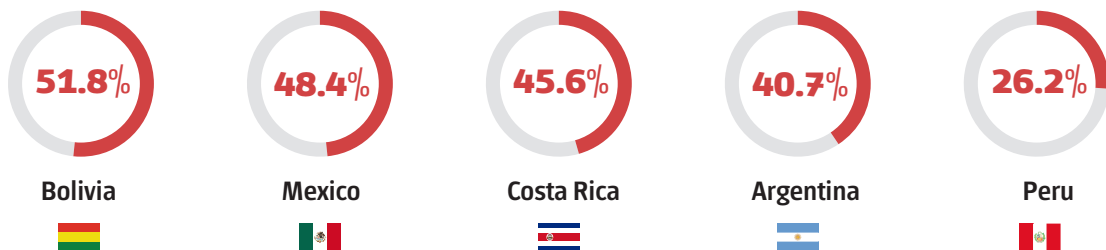
Congresswoman
Luz Salgado, seen
in 2012, lobbied for
Peru's first gender
quota in 1997.





Share of Women in Congress

Quotas are common, but results are mixed.



SOURCE: INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

time, women sought quotas to fast-track their access to elected office.

Gender quotas have helped advance that goal. In 2020, women hold 30% of seats in Latin America's lower or single chambers and 28% in the senates. In Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Mexico, women constitute nearly half the legislature.

The road has not been easy. Men legislators often acquiesced, but wrote laws with loopholes, allowing party leaders to look like good feminists while paying few electoral costs. But women kept the pressure on, gradually strengthening gender quotas.

The big lesson from these 30 years is that just having a quota is not enough—the design of the quota itself matters tremendously.

First, thresholds must be high. Most countries began with quotas set at 20% or 30%, but the new benchmark is gender parity, or 50%. Eight countries—Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama—currently require gender balance among legislative candidates. Peru will apply parity in the 2021 elections.

Second, quotas must match electoral systems. Latin American countries use different forms of a party list system. Rank-ordered lists of candidates are usually closed (voters select the list as-is) or open (voters can move candidates up or down). Many initial quota laws lacked rules about list order, letting political parties relegate women to the lists' bottom. Now, the gold standard is "vertical parity," a 50% gender quota alternating men's and women's names down the list. Such

mandates work especially well in closed-list systems, but the principle translates easily. In Mexico, for instance, 300 lower-house members are elected in single-seat constituencies, and the 2016 electoral law says political parties cannot nominate women "exclusively" to losing districts.

Third, give parties little wiggle room. For example, Mexico's first quota law—passed in 2002—didn't apply to parties selecting candidates via internal primaries (rather than nomination by the party leader). The loophole closed in 2011, when women lawyers, journalists, activists and politicians sued and won. Until recently in Costa Rica, parties would often implement vertical parity, but always starting with a man. The election agency now requires "horizontal parity," meaning that women lead half of all lists presented by parties.

Finally, sanctions and enforcement are critical. Quota laws typically rely on electoral authorities to ensure that parties do not just fill the quota, but follow the rules about ballot order and district assignment. Authorities must remain vigilant to shenanigans. Take Mexico in 2018: Parties in the state of Oaxaca attempted to fill the quota with fake transgender candidates—men who dressed as women, but had never done so until their nomination.

"Political parties are the most creative when it comes to breaking the rules," said María del Carmen Alanís, former chief magistrate of Mexico's federal electoral court. "The electoral tribunals have compelled them to comply."



NOTES: UPPER AND LOWER CHAMBERS CALCULATED TOGETHER WHERE APPLICABLE

The combination of strong design and strong enforcement separates Latin American countries into two groups. Those that implement gender parity and enforce the law—Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico and Nicaragua—elect an average of 46% women to their lower or single chamber of congress. By contrast, countries with weak or no quotas elect an average of 22% women. This group includes Colombia and Uruguay, which have thresholds below 40%, and Honduras and Panama, which have open-list systems and no placement mandates. While Brazil has a gender quota law dating back to 1995, electoral authorities largely look away. A low 30% gender quota, half-hearted enforcement and open lists place Brazil dead last among Latin American countries in electing women to congress.

By contrast, top performers have extended gender parity well beyond the legislature. In 2009, Bolivia and Ecuador reformed their constitutions to mandate gender parity for all government branches. Mexico followed in 2019, rewriting the constitution to require gender parity for the executive, judiciary and all state organs. Feminists campaigned using the hashtag #ParidadEnTodo (parity in everything).

Viewing gender parity as a democratic best practice resonates throughout the region. In 2019, when Chile's widespread protests over corruption and inequality prompted calls for a constitutional convention, women demanded a constitutional assembly with gender parity. They marched, wrote op-ed pieces, drafted bills and staged protests inside congress—and

won. If Chileans choose a citizens' constitutional convention in the October 2020 referendum, the electoral formula will guarantee gender balance not just among candidates, but among the representatives. Evoking women's exclusion from Chile's 1990 democratic transition, their rallying cry is #NuncaMasSinMujeres (never again without women).

Of course, Latin America has not eliminated sexism in politics. Alanís notes that while laws have changed and electoral authorities have prevented injustice, political parties' patriarchal culture remains intact. Even in Costa Rica, which boasts vertical and horizontal parity, Congresswoman Nielsen Pérez Pérez described a "political culture and political leadership dominated by men." She lists obstacles women face, like more care work, less access to parties' campaign funds and gender-based harassment and violence.

Latin America cannot rest on its success, but the gains remain undeniable. Argentina's 1991 quota law transformed electoral politics. Today, record numbers of women hold legislative office because of that law and the work of women activists to transform hollow promises into real changes. If Latin American countries continue to design and implement smart quota laws, even more women can secure a seat at the table.

Piscopo is associate professor of politics and affiliate faculty of Latino/a and Latin American Studies at Occidental College and a leading expert on women and electoral politics

Out of control

Unbalanced

Sensual

Bipolar

EMOTIONAL

Severe

TEMPERAMENTAL

“IS SHE A SERIOUS CANDIDATE?”

Women running for office still face barriers almost unimaginable to men, but innovative tools can help.

by **Betilde Muñoz-Pogossian and Flavia Freidenberg**

Words Sometimes Used to Describe Latin America's Women Politicians

Some media outlets portray female candidates with terms rarely used for their male counterparts. These are some of them.

SOURCES: Confidencial Colombia, ISTOÉ, Noticias, PanAm Post

WHEN ENTERING PUBLIC LIFE, Jessica Ortega—a Mexican politician with the Movimiento Ciudadano party and a mother—repeatedly faced the same question: Can she really be these two things at the same time? Her private life became a public matter to many around her, including both party colleagues and opposing forces. “Women like me, who have decided to participate in the political life of our country but who have also decided to have children and start a family, are socially stigmatized,” Ortega told *AQ*.

She is certainly not alone. Gender stereotypes are one of several reasons why women in Latin America and the Caribbean remain politically underrepresented. Today, only two heads of state and a mere 15.5% of mayors and 27.3% of councilmembers are women. Although the Americas are second only to the Nordic countries, with 31.8% representation in their legislatures, that is far from the 50% they represent in the population and in the pool of registered voters.

Women who run for office face questions almost unimaginable to male candidates, have a harder time securing campaign funds and deal with misogynistic stereotypes—frequently from their colleagues.

Interviews with female politicians and campaign managers from throughout the region afforded us a better understanding of why it is still so hard for women to run for office in Latin America. Yet some innovative solutions can help female candidates become more competitive.

QUESTIONS FROM ALL SIDES

ONE OF THE FIRST BARRIERS that candidates confront is the public perception of female leadership and whether a woman can actually get elected. In Latin America, fewer than one out of three citizens say they strongly reject the idea that men make better political leaders than women. Female politicians “face more resistance and prejudice from citizens regarding their leadership capacity” than their male counterparts, noted Argentine political consultant and women’s leadership expert Virginia García-Beaudoux.

Potential voters also have to overcome “the view that a woman has no chance of winning or ruling a country,” said Armando Briquet, a Venezuelan campaign expert who has worked with several female legislative, gubernatorial and presidential candidates across Latin America. The notion that women are less capable of winning can easily become a self-fulfilling prophecy. “Since she ‘can’t win,’ many vote for other options even if they like her candidacy,” Briquet said.

The greatest resistance to women in politics often comes from their own parties. Placement on party lists is a determining factor for electoral success. Daniela Chacón, former vice mayor of Quito, noted that all too often women are the “second in the list”—like herself—because “you have to follow party guidelines.”

In some cases, sexism is very explicit. When running for the Honduran Congress, Johana Bermudez’s highly effective campaign caused her to jump from the 227th place on her party list to fourth based on her number of votes. A colleague of hers—who had fewer academic accomplishments and less experience—had

gone from 200th place to second. “No one asked him questions about how he did it. Instead, my own party colleagues started asking me ‘Who did you pay, *Doctora*? Who did you sleep with, *Doctora*?’ Why? Because they cannot conceive that a woman in the party could achieve these results based on her charisma, talent, discipline and organized work.”

Unequal and sexist media coverage often reinforces these perceptions. The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) found that out of 22,000 articles analyzed in 2015, women were covered as news subjects in only 24%. According to the GMMP’s Latin American report, “Women were represented mainly in traditional roles, social and health issues,” and the media identified women with family relationships three times more than they did men. “We are evaluated based on gender roles: if we are good mothers, wives or daughters, our physical appearance, our personal relationships,” Mexican Congresswoman Martha Tagle told *AQ*.

Female candidates also face barriers to financing their campaigns. In August 2019 we conducted a regionwide online poll via the Latin American Political Reform Project where, unsurprisingly, almost 50% of the male and female politicians surveyed said there is a gender gap in the distribution of campaign funding within parties. They also observed that women have more limited access to financing networks compared to men, frequently pulling from their personal funds or relying on donations from their families.

LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD

IN RECENT YEARS, Latin America has experimented with mechanisms to correct women’s political underrepresentation. Public financing is one of the most powerful policy tools available. Panama, Mexico, Costa Rica, Colombia, Brazil and Honduras have allocated funds for women’s leadership training. The Brazilian government indirectly finances women’s campaigns by providing free airtime specifically for female candidates at the federal level. Additional state funding goes to Chilean and Costa Rican political parties that manage to get women elected.

Crowdfunding, or online fundraising for women



Ones to Watch: These up-and-coming politicians are some of the region's most influential female legislators. Tabata Amaral (left) entered Congress at the age of 25 and is a prominent figure in Brazilian politics. Juanita Goebertus (center) received the most votes ever for a female representative when she was elected to Colombia's lower house of Congress. Eva Copa (right) is the president of the Bolivian Senate and a MAS party leader.

candidates, has emerged as an alternative to targeted public financing. In the 2018 Mexican elections, leaders from government, academia and civil society launched a fund that covered all legal and administrative fees for women candidates who faced gender-based attacks.

Others have successfully targeted gender bias in the media. Training programs can help journalists become aware of their prejudices. In 2017, the National Electoral Institute of Mexico, along with civil society organizations, trained journalists to avoid personal questions, stereotypes and double standards so they could cover women and men equally.

Female candidates and their campaign managers must realize the obvious: Being a woman can actually

be a comparative advantage when running for public office. This can reduce incentives for women to “masculinize themselves” in the attempt to deflect discrimination. Fair electoral contests in Latin America depend on normalizing women running as women.

Muñoz-Pogossian is the director of social inclusion at the Organization of American States. Opinions are her own.

Freidenberg is a researcher at the Legal Research Institute of the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

They are both coordinators of the network @RedPolitologas #NoSinMujeres.



Cultura

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Argentine TV's New Normal

The pandemic is forcing the country's film and television industry to get (even more) creative.

by Jordana Timerman



Walking past theater posters in Buenos Aires. Many shows have gone online due to covid-19.

BUENOS AIRES—One of the stranger TV shows to dominate Argentina’s pandemic airwaves is *Bienvenidos a Bordo* (*Welcome Aboard*), a game show in which taxi drivers compete for prizes ranging from a giant pile of candy to a brand-new cab.

The show is simultaneously delightful and heart-breaking—the small talk with contestants a demonstration of national resilience and a reminder of crushing economic crises past and present. Corny or not, it’s hard not to feel that the show—and TV in general—meets the changing definition of “essential.”

As Argentine media expert Pablo Méndez Shiff put it, “We’d be worse off without it.”

Bienvenidos a Bordo, broadcast by the free-to-air El Trece, has survived—and thrived—because it’s been able to adapt to the COVID-19 landscape: Contestants compete on an open-air stage, and their only interaction with the host is on a Zoom-style screen.

But not all of the country’s film and TV industry—long viewed as a regional leader—has been so lucky.

After six months of lockdown, unemployment among actors is at a record high 90%. The country’s

largest narrative content producer, with more than 300 employees, is on the brink of closure. And a group of leading actors recently launched a plea for government assistance.

There's an old trope in Argentina about how crises are opportunities—the idea even has its own portmanteau: *oportu-crisis*. If that idea holds true, Argentina's audiovisual industry is rife with possibility.

And there are, in fact, those who believe the industry could make use of the COVID-19 crisis. So long as it's willing to get creative.

Part of the reason is that Argentina's film and TV industry, despite its reputation, was already facing obstacles before the pandemic began. Productions were ordered to halt in March, but there was actually only one fiction TV series shooting at the start of the quarantine.

Like everything else in Argentina, the industry's pendulum swings in sync with the country's notoriously volatile economic cycles. The industry took a hit during Argentina's 2001 economic crisis, then recovered to a degree under the Kirchner administrations, which poured money into public television.

Funding fizzled under former President Mauricio Macri's government, which pared down culture budgets, alongside other austerity measures, amid an economic downturn. The combination of government policy and a difficult economy gradually choked off both public and private productions.

Some advocates now hope that the challenge from COVID-19 could prompt the industry to change, making better use of public funds and exploring new ways of delivering and promoting content. Argentina's long-standing financing system, which taxes movie theaters and TV channels and uses those funds to subsidize domestic productions, is one area some say is ripe for reform.

On several counts, the tax has been a success, sheltering the industry from competition and allowing productions to move forward based on more than just immediate commercial viability. But in a country where yearly inflation can top 50%, actual payouts for such projects can take years. By the time subsidies are paid out, the original budgets are far off base from current prices, or set in devalued pesos that are insufficient to pay back costs incurred in dollars.

The lag can be devastating for small producers, and also ends up diminishing the return on state funds. Observers say that streamlined public financing is necessary to keep the system viable.

A potential silver lining is that economic downturn and currency devaluation make Argentina a cheap place for



Drive-in theaters, like this one in Buenos Aires, have popped up around the country.



international productions. A strong pool of local technical talent and Buenos Aires' European-looking streets make the country a popular destination for commercial shoots. This may also be part of why Netflix this year announced plans to open offices in the capital and invest heavily in local production. In recent years, the city has implemented policies, including streamlined permitting, to make it a welcoming location for international crews.

Still, the pandemic has forced industry workers to get creative. Federico Suárez, an ad producer, recently spent two full days directing a Bolivian beer commercial from his Buenos Aires living room—the “new normal” for the Argentine audiovisual industry. “Remote directing in slippers,” he quipped ruefully. The dis-

tance means there is no risk of contagion, but it can still be frustrating for a producer obsessed with details.

“I’m trying to manage that anxiety of not being on set,” Suárez told *AQ*. He conceded that he’s among the lucky ones who have managed to work from home, while many peers are unemployed or “escaping” the country toward places with looser lockdowns, namely Uruguay or Europe.

In the meantime, while filmmakers, actors and producers like Suárez continue to adapt, Argentines will look for new distractions on screen—and more escape hatches like *Bienvenidos Abordo*.

Timerman is a freelance reporter in Buenos Aires and she edits the *Latin America Daily Briefing*

Film



Pamela Mendoza plays Georgina, an indigenous woman whose personal tragedy speaks to the wider costs of Peru's internal conflict in the 1980s.

FILM

Song Without a Name

by Carlos Aguilar

CRIES FLOOD A CLANDESTINE clinic in the Peruvian highlands. An indigenous Quechua woman, Georgina (Pamela Mendoza), is forcefully separated from her newborn daughter. What follows is a tragedy repeated untold times in the tumult of Peru in the 1980s, dramatized here in spellbinding black-and-white by first-time director Melina León.

Informed by real-life cases of child smuggling during Peru's internal conflict with the Shining Path and other guerrilla groups, *Song Without a Name* (*Canción sin nombre*) depicts the country's macro issues through the lens of its despondent protagonist's personal trag-

edy. Rampant inflation suffocates the economy just as the guerrillas intensify their attacks, terrorizing the population and recruiting impoverished young men as scapegoats.

Georgina and husband Leo (Lucio Rojas), a humble couple who survive by selling potatoes, begin a fruitless search for answers after a medical organization in Lima helps Georgina give birth but then kidnaps her baby. Realizing she is not the only mother grieving, Georgina finds a determined ally in novice journalist Pedro (Tommy Párraga), whose sexual orientation also makes him a target.

Sorrowful but not defeated, Mendoza's expressive



Song Without a Name

DIRECTED BY
Melina León

WRITTEN BY
**Melina León and
Michael J. White**

STARRING
**Pamela Mendoza,
Tommy Párraga,
Lucio Rojas**

COUNTRY
Peru

AQ'S RATING: 9/10



portrayal asserts that Georgina is not a passive spectator of her own misfortune. Comparable to Yalitza Aparicio's turn in Alfonso Cuarón's *Roma*, but conveying more decisive agency, Mendoza harnesses her character's raging pain as an inextinguishable fuel to aid her search.

Song Without a Name is visually precise and at times astonishing, as cinematographer Inti Briones brings a modest grandeur to the film's boxy 4:3 aspect ratio. Extreme wide shots of Georgina and Leo walking to their isolated abode or entering an imposing government building impart a sense of perceived powerlessness and are reminiscent of the work of legendary Mexican cinematographer Gabriel Figueroa.

León and co-writer Michael J. White enrich their succinct but textured plot with traditional indigenous events and dances that speak to the unity and cultural resistance of these communities. At the mercy of both institutional power and the armed groups fighting it, people like Georgina are caught in the crossfire.

Song Without a Name thus captures the human and the political with distinctive formal style, and reveals León as an inspired writer-director. Her film is a chant made of alluring images, giving voice to a tragically unsung lullaby.

Aguilar is an independent critic and filmmaker based in Los Angeles

Music



AQ's Fall Playlist

by Sebastián Zubieta

Our last playlist of 2020 features a group of Brazilian performers who met a difficult year head-on, finding creative ways to share their music—and their message—amid pandemic and political upheaval.

YOUTUBE

A Banda Mais Bonita da Cidade (The Prettiest Band in the City)

BRAZIL

When COVID-19 stopped A Banda Mais Bonita da Cidade's concert plans in their tracks, the Curitiba-based indie group responded by offering fans a dreamy reprieve from "the new normal." Much more than just an online concert, *Superlive*, performed *ao vivo* on the band's YouTube channel in July and now available to stream, is a magical interplay of live and recorded music, shadows and light, projections and fresh faces. After a successful decade on the tour circuit, helped along by the success of the band's viral video hit "Oração," this inventive project promises to bring the group's minimalist style to new audiences.

A Banda specializes in thoughtful covers of everything from classics like Zé Ramalho's countercultural anthem "Admirável Gado Novo" to current Brazilian indie hits like Labaq's prayerful "Quiçá." The setup for *Superlive* is simple, but visually stunning. Lead singer Uyara Torrente stands in one corner, holding an old-fashioned microphone, opposite keyboardist Vinícius Nisi. Between the two, images of the remaining band members, and a host and the guests are projected on the wall. A spinning disco ball and two loosely focused spotlights give the all-black-and-white performance a mysterious but inviting quality.

The long list of featured young artists includes Labaq (performing her own song), cellist Fernanda Koppe and dancer Flávia Pereira in pandemic-appropriate confinement live from her apartment hallway. There are also spoken-word introductions and interventions by rappers, singers and activist poets such as Jaqueline and Isis Odara. True to the moment, a political undercurrent is never far from the surface. Images of recent protests come alongside a version of Dominguinhos' "Pedras Que Cantam," which calls on listeners to stay alert until the day when, poetry exhausted, rocks start flying.

Superlive is itself an act of poetic resistance: against abandonment in the face of the pandemic, against misogyny, against racial violence. It is a pan-Brazilian cry for a future when, as Uyara and Labaq sing, "the Tietê River will be beautiful to behold."

Mônica Salmaso

BRAZIL

A scaled down but equally imaginative response to the pandemic comes from singer Mônica Salmaso, who early on found herself isolated in a rural part of São Paulo state. Looking for a creative outlet, Salmaso turned to Instagram to create a series of low-tech (she is by her own admission "technologically impaired") but delightful duets, trios and sometimes larger ensembles featuring a who's who of Brazilian artists alongside her killer swinging voice. The production is unpretentious, using Zoom squares arranged in order to allow an asynchronous dialogue between her and her guests, with shared glances that seem to transcend the isolation. Salmaso's main intention with the series is to maintain a connection with her peers and her audience, and in that she has succeeded, racking up millions of well-deserved views in the past few months.

Zubieta is director of the music program at Americas Society



A Banda (bottom left, top right) and Salmaso have connected with fans and fellow artists in new ways during the pandemic.

Books

America through Foreign Eyes

Reviewed by Gregory Weeks



by Jorge G. Castañeda
Oxford University Press
Hardcover, 320 pgs

HOW THE U.S. VIEWS itself inevitably informs its foreign policy. In *America through Foreign Eyes*, academic and former Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda turns a sympathetic outsider's eye on Americans to offer an intriguingly positive interpretation of where the country is headed. (I will use the term Americans here as he does, while recognizing the debate that surrounds it.)

Castañeda's book revolves around the idea of exceptionalism, that distinctly American sense of being different and superior. In doing so, it also offers clues to what drives key elements of U.S.-Latin America affairs—and how that relationship may evolve in the years ahead.

Castañeda writes that as a diplomat he never heard high-level U.S. policymakers refer to exceptionalism in conversation. Their lens was always security and perceived U.S. interests. As his book lays out, however, the idea of exceptionalism is central to understanding both domestic and foreign policy. It is based fundamentally, he writes, on hypocrisy and a willingness to ignore inconvenient facts. As Americans we are equal, yet we discriminate; we are the model for democracy, but we put up barriers to voting; we promote tolerance while remaining rigidly conservative in myriad ways. There are many such examples.

In a nicely turned phrase, Castañeda writes that exceptionalism is “a home-baked peculiarity, and it is largely self-deluding, though no doubt immensely self-gratifying.” This leads us logically to U.S. policy toward Latin America.

To Castañeda, the “last hurrah” of exceptionalism is the post-Cold War era. He seems to do his best to view it in glass-half-full terms, even when describing disaster. For example, he notes that since America has so little sense of its own history, foreign policy-makers in turn ignore the history of other countries. Combine that with hypocrisy and you get U.S. immigration and drug policy, two keys to its relationship with Latin America.

Both of these have been abject failures for years. Yet Castañeda still sees a pragmatist streak in U.S. policymaking that gives him cause for optimism. On immigration, for example, he writes that “the pragmatic approach ... will persist in the United States, even if moments of hysteria may suggest otherwise.” The essential pragmatism to which he refers in this case is the recognition that the U.S. needs immigrant labor.

On this score, I am less convinced about how influential the pragmatists are these days. Too many people believe there is an immigrant “invasion” and that mass incarceration and expulsion are good policy choices. Castañeda sees the seeds of change in demography, particularly the policy effects of the growth of the nonwhite population. We can hope. But even in his own 2008 book, *Ex Mex: From Migrants to Immigrants*, Castañeda lamented that former President George W. Bush “allowed his right wing to dominate the agenda.” This is a persistent problem, and one that is unlikely to go away.

Castañeda also explains how pragmatism and hypocrisy enter into U.S. drug policy through its com-

mitment to wage war in Latin America and elsewhere even while accepting considerable drug use at home, at least for whites. In short, though U.S. policy does not achieve its goals, policymakers are determined to maintain beatings until morale improves.

Castañeda does not specifically say so, but the same pattern holds for Cuba. Even if demography is at work, since “Republican Cuban-Americans in Dade County, Florida, are passing from the scene,” an obviously failed Cuba policy remains a cornerstone of the Republican Party. President Donald Trump’s reversal on Cuba proved that even commonsense policy shifts can be rolled back, regardless of demography. We could easily also include Venezuela policy, which Castañeda mentions only in passing as a failure because of U.S. “indifference.”

Despite all this, Castañeda remains optimistic and writes of the ability of U.S. culture to absorb foreign influences, which presumably should increase understanding and empathy. There will be resistance, of course. The “constant reinvention of culture” has been accompanied by a smoldering and sometimes explosive resentment.

Castañeda concedes this point, mentioning the “paralysis of American society” that “impedes the country’s international engagement.” That paralysis, as he repeats several times, stems from the voting power of non-college-educated white males. That will change over time, he writes. But demography can be a slow business.

What Americans need, Castañeda believes, is to “acknowledge the decline and end of their difference with the rest of the world.” That means ceasing to consider themselves exceptional, something entirely alien to current political culture. Demography will change the way we look—literally—and could change foreign policy as well. But will it mean we imbibe less of exceptionalism in schools, churches, at home and everywhere else? Castañeda thinks so, despite even the horrors of the Trump era. He believes in us more than many of us believe in ourselves. With luck, this foreign observer is showing us something we’re missing.

Weeks is associate dean and professor of political science at UNC Charlotte.

UPCOMING BOOKS

The latest in economics, history, policy and fiction from across the hemisphere

FICTION

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By María Negroni

Translated by Allison deFreese

October 6, 2020

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Paperback, 106 pages

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By Daniel Saldaña París

Translated by Christina MacSweeney

October 13, 2020

Coffee House Press

Paperback, 176 pages

NONFICTION

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LATIN AMERICA AT A GLANCE

Growth was already weak in Latin America before the pandemic, and the economic contraction since has been unprecedented. Large fiscal responses from governments have had mixed results on poverty rates, which have increased across the region.



GDP GROWTH

2020 (projected)	-10.3%	-5.8%	-6.1%	-6.0%	-4.9%	-8.2%	-2.6%	-10.0%	-10.3%	-24.0%
2021 (projected)	4.5%	3.5%	4.4%	4.3%	4.8%	1.9%	3.9%	3.4%	8.0%	-0.1%
2022 (projected)	2.0%	2.5%	2.6%	3.3%	4.9%	1.6%	3.5%	2.2%	3.8%	1.5%

PROJECTIONS CURRENT AS OF SEPTEMBER 2020.



ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Inflation	43.5%	2.5%	2.8%	2.7%	1.5%	-0.2%	N/A	3.4%	1.5%	20,000%
Unemployment Rate	12.5%	14.2%	11.9%	17.0%	N/A	7.5%	N/A	5.8%	10.5%	14.2%
Gov. Deficit as % of GDP	-8.1%	-15.7%	-10.2%	-7.9%	N/A	-4.5%	N/A	-5.0%	-9.7%	-21.5%
Fiscal Stimulus as % of GDP	5.0%	8.6%	6.8%	9.6%	N/A	N/A	3.4%	0.6%	7.0%	N/A

FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES ANNOUNCED BY GOVERNMENTS AS OF JUNE 2020.



POVERTY INDICATORS

Poverty Rate (projected, end-2020)	37.5%	26.9%	15.5%	34.1%	24.7%	32.7%	51.6%	49.5%	25.8%	N/A
Increase from 2019 (percentage points)	10.8	7.7	5.7	5.1	4.4	7.0	3.0	7.6	9.3	N/A



PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL RATING

President	Alberto Fernández	Jair Bolsonaro	Sebastián Piñera	Iván Duque	Luis Abinader	Lenín Moreno	Alejandro Giammattei	Andrés Manuel López Obrador	Martín Vizcarra	Nicolás Maduro
Approval	46%	50%	20%	48%	N/A	9%	30%	59%	60%	N/A

SOURCES: GDP growth forecasts; Inflation rate; Unemployment rate; Government deficit: Bloomberg (September 2020); Announced fiscal stimulus: World Bank (June 2020); Projected poverty rate and percentage point variation from 2019: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (July 2020). **NOTE:** Figures rounded to one decimal place.

PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL: Argentina, Management & Fit (August); Brazil, PoderData (September); Chile, Plaza Pública Cadem (August); Colombia, Invamer (August); Ecuador, Cedatos (July); Guatemala, Consulta Mitofsky (July); Mexico, El Financiero (August); Peru, Ipsos (August). **NOTE:** Figures rounded to nearest percentage.

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