

Female labour participation has increased greatly among LAC countries in the past two decades. Nevertheless, gender gaps in the labour market persist, particularly in Central American countries. In addition to potential economic growth, a strong female labour force has complex welfare implications. For example, higher female labour force participation will increase the need for supplementary care, for both children and the elderly, but it also increases the contributions to the pensions systems.

Governments can play an important role in promoting openness and fairness in their own workforce. Policies to level the public sector playing field include equal pay rules, leadership training and mentor programmes for women, flexible work arrangements and providing formal childcare. Furthermore, the adoption of these policies leads to a public sector workforce that is more representative of the general population and more aware of citizen needs, thereby increasing the quality of services and boosting labour productivity as governments tap into a larger talent pool.

In LAC, on average, 50% of central government positions are filled by women. Although variance among countries is relatively small, this share is only higher than 50% in Argentina and Chile where it represents 56% and 55%, respectively. For OECD member countries the share is on average 57%. Between 2001 and 2010 the share of women in central government position increased by 2.7 percentage points in the OECD and 1.9 p.p. in LAC. It is important to note that the data does not demonstrate the extent to which women hold managerial leadership positions within general government (see section on “Women in politics”).

Although women now represent a larger share of general government employment in the region, women in the public sector, as a share of the women’s total labour force, decreased slightly in LAC countries during the past decade. Between 2001 and 2010, for instance, average employment of women in the public sector dropped from 13.3% to 12.7%, while the share of men employed in general government remained almost stable (+0.2 p.p.). This result can be explained by the fact that women in LAC countries have entered the labour market at a higher pace than men. Thus, the female labour force has increased

significantly more over the last decade. In contrast, the share of women employed in the general government in OECD member countries increased 1.8 p.p. between 2001 and 2010, while the number of males employed in the public sector decreased by 1.3 p.p.

Methodology and definitions

Data for women in the general government refer to 2001 and 2010 and were collected by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The general government sector comprises all levels of government, including all units of central, state or local government; all social security funds at each level of government; and all non-market non-profit institutions that are controlled and mainly financed by government units. The labour force comprises all persons who fulfil the requirements for inclusion among the employed or the unemployed.

Further reading

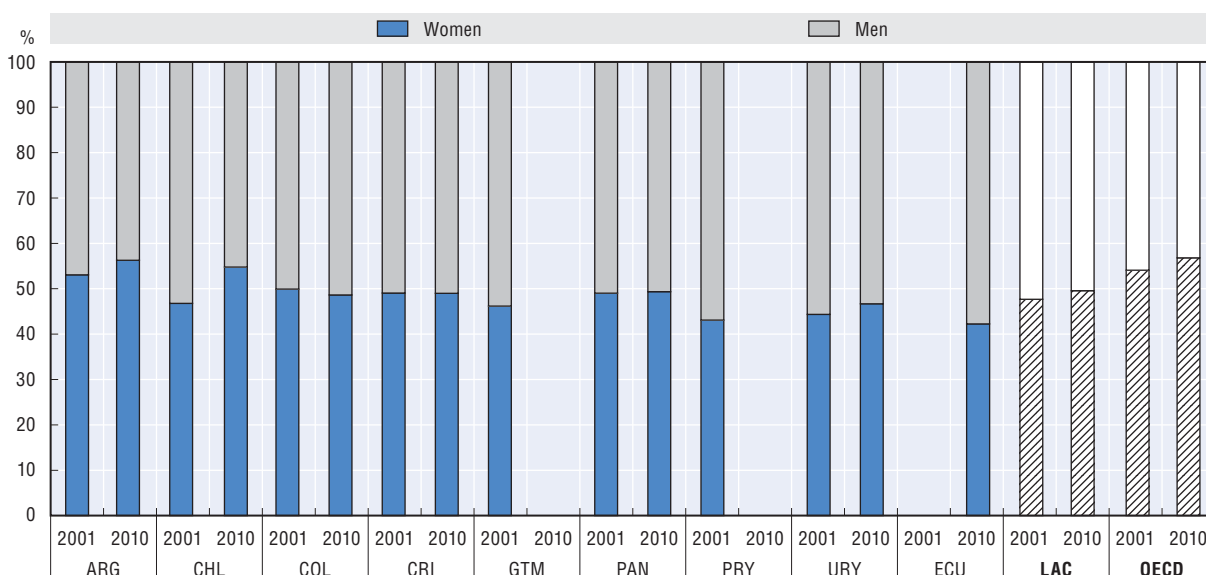
Elborgh-Woytek, K. et al. (2013), *Women, Work, and the Economy: Macroeconomic Gains From Gender Equity*, International Monetary Fund, Washington, DC.

OECD (2012), *Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264179370-en>.

Figure notes

3.3, 3.4 and 3.5: Data for Argentina are for 2003 and 2006, rather than for 2001 and 2010. Data for Panama are for 2002 and 2007, rather than for 2001 and 2010. Data for Uruguay are for 2006, rather than for 2010. Data for Brazil are for 2004 and 2009, rather than for 2001 and 2010. Data for Mexico are for 2009, rather than for 2010. Data for Peru are for 2004 and 2007, rather than for 2001 and 2010. Data for Ecuador are for 2000 and 2008, rather than for 2001 and 2010. Data for Guatemala are for 2004, rather than for 2001. Data for Paraguay are for 2002, rather than for 2001. For Peru, data for the labour force are from the National Institute of Statistics and comprise main cities and metropolitan Lima. With the exception of Colombia and Ecuador, data excludes population below 15 years.

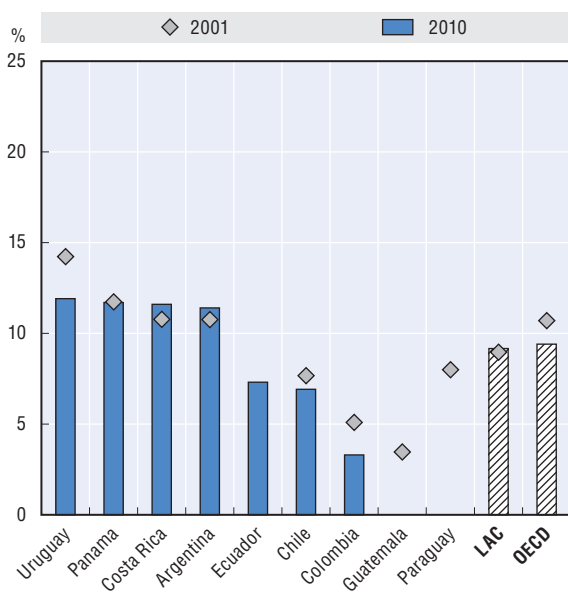
3.3. Share of general government employment filled by women and men (2001 and 2010)



Sources: International Labour Organization (ILO), LABORSTA (database).

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933090042>

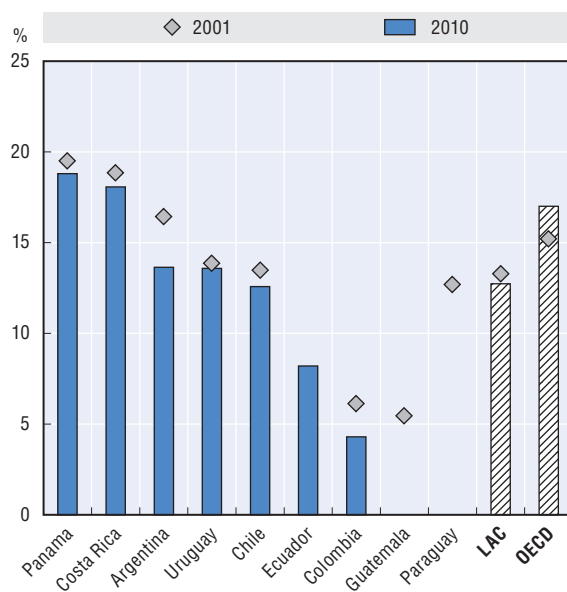
3.4. Employment of men in general government as a share of men's total labour force (2001 and 2010)



Sources: International Labour Organization (ILO), LABORSTA (database).

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933090061>

3.5. Employment of women in general government as a share of women's total labour force (2001 and 2010)



Sources: International Labour Organization (ILO), LABORSTA (database).

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933090080>



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