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## Multidimensional Poverty Index with a focus on women

A proposal for Latin America and the Caribbean

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This paper aims to draw attention to the need to create an innovative measure that allows us to delve into women's poverty and its specificities. Only by performing an accurate analysis of women's multidimensional poverty will it be possible to respond to their specific needs, identify the bottlenecks that prevent them from escaping poverty and make policy recommendations that are gender-sensitive in that regard. This paper presents a proposal for a Multidimensional Poverty Index with a focus on women in Latin America and the Caribbean, including results for 10 countries: Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Dominican Republic, and Uruguay. Estimates show that 28 percent of women in the analysed countries are multidimensionally poor. Uruguay and Chile exhibit the lowest incidence, below 10 percent, while in Honduras and El Salvador, more than 62 percent of adult women are multidimensionally poor.

### Background

Conventionally, poverty measures have focused on income or consumption. However, numerous studies demonstrate that income is just part of the defining characteristic of poverty.<sup>2</sup> Food insecurity, unemployment, inadequate housing, poor sanitation, lack of healthcare and limited access to education are important dimensions of

poverty. There is now a global recognition of the importance of having a comprehensive measure of multidimensional poverty that captures the multiple deprivations faced by the poor and provides information related to the intensity and composition of poverty.

In that context, UNDP and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) have been systematically computing a global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) since 2010 through the Alkire and Foster methodology.<sup>3</sup> This is an international measure that gathers information on more comprehensive multidimensional poverty in over 100 developing countries. It complements traditional monetary poverty measures by capturing deprivations in health, education and standard of living that a person faces simultaneously. Parallel to the Global MPI, there are several country-level experiences of national MPIs. In the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region, 12 countries have developed a national MPI.

The overrepresentation of women in poor households is a well-documented phenomenon in the LAC region.<sup>4</sup> This acts as a barrier to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as it limits women's economic, bodily, and decision-making autonomy. However, it must be noted that the integration of a gender lens in poverty analysis is still limited and has mostly accounted for traditional monetary approaches to poverty.

Due to the historic patterns of sexual division of labour, women continue to bear the greatest burden of unpaid domestic and care work, which reduces their opportunity to participate in the labour market and penalizes them when they do participate.<sup>5</sup> On average, women earn less than men and they face more restrictions to access financial and digital assets even if they have a similar income to men.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, limitations to their physical autonomy, including sexual and reproductive rights and gender-based violence, generate effects on their economic autonomy, since those phenomena limit their capacity to continue developing their human capital and generate their own income—leading to decreased productivity levels, increased out-of-pocket expenses and work absenteeism, as well as limits to ownership and control over assets.<sup>7</sup> Finally, the ways women participate in decision-making processes, both within their households and in their communities, are key factors in understanding women's poverty. Resources, as will be shown later, are not allocated equally within households or within communities, and the voice and agency that women have during decision-making processes are important factors to analyse, as women may not have equal access to manage and control their families', communities' or even their own incomes and assets. Thus, unfair, discriminatory treatment of women based on their gender limits their autonomy in several spheres.<sup>8</sup>

As reviewed by Ilkkaracan and Memiş (2021),<sup>9</sup> the phenomenon of the feminization of poverty has

been widely discussed, and the feminist critiques of currently used poverty measures are multifaceted. As a starting point, analysing poverty disaggregated data by the gender of the household head is a misleading approach:<sup>10</sup> such analysis is not only affected by the assumption of equally shared poverty in the household, but it also depends on the definition of head of the household, which can vary from country to country. In some countries, the percentage of female-headed households is extremely low, and therefore such disaggregation is not relevant for the analysis. In addition, studies have shown that intra-household allocation of consumption expenditures is uneven,<sup>11</sup> dependant on income-earning status,<sup>12</sup> and that conventional poverty rates substantially underrate women's poverty risk.<sup>13</sup>

The 2021 Global MPI Report (2021)<sup>14</sup> provides introductory elements to include a gender-sensitive analysis in the traditional household-based measurements. These analyses include multidimensional poverty observed by gender of the household head and gender gaps measured within different household indicators. Notwithstanding, this primary analysis has many limitations. First, most data gathered when computing MPIs are considered aggregated at the household level, and as stated earlier, these approaches usually underestimate women's poverty. In addition, the very design of the MPI does not account for some of the structural causes that drive women into poverty and prevent them from escaping it. For this reason, the proposal of an MPI with a focus on women, which will be further explained below, considers several dimensions that have been selected to better understand women's poverty and its root causes.

In the same way that an exclusive focus on monetary resources misses out on the crucial aspects of women's impoverishment,<sup>15</sup> the Global MPI, as conceived today, does not account for many of those crucial aspects either. According to Sen's capability approach to poverty, being healthy, well nourished, sheltered and educated are the main dimensions taken into consideration for the measurement, as they are considered key for participating in society and leading a dignified life. Nevertheless, these dimensions don't cover other structural barriers that limit women's autonomy and are intrinsically intertwined with the poverty they experience.

From a gender lens, eradicating poverty requires not only improving standards of living, educational achievements, and health indicators. The structural barriers that women face must be addressed as well by redistributing, reducing and recognizing unpaid care work; guaranteeing equal access to decent

work and equitable wages, land and property, financial services, digital and productive assets and social protection; guaranteeing a life free of violence; providing access to sexual and reproductive health care; expanding women's voice and agency; promoting their participation in decision-making processes in different spheres; and transforming discriminatory practices and biased social norms.

This paper aims to draw attention to the need to create an innovative measure that allows us to

delve into women's poverty and its specificities. Only by performing an accurate analysis of women's multidimensional poverty will it be possible to respond to their specific needs, identify the bottlenecks that prevent them from escaping poverty and make policy recommendations that are gender sensitive. Three broad methodologies are recommended for doing this.<sup>16</sup> Specifically, this paper proposes a Multidimensional Poverty Index with a focus on women for Latin America and the Caribbean.

## Multidimensional Poverty Index with focus on women for Latin America and the Caribbean: Methodological considerations

The Multidimensional Poverty Index with a focus on women was designed using the Alkire and Foster method, which uses a counting approach to identify the poor by assessing the simultaneous deprivations an individual may face. In other words, based on a set of indicators defined to measure the different dimensions of poverty, the MPI counts the number of deprivations a person faces simultaneously and classifies this person as poor if the proportion of deprivations is greater than the cut-off point defined for that purpose.

In a first stage, a literature review, and an analysis of the underlying causes of female poverty for women in LAC was undertaken to identify the main dimensions to be considered. The primary findings showed that violence, which can be physical, emotional/psychological, sexual or economic, not only threatens the lives, personal integrity and health of women but also affects women's decision-making autonomy and their participation in education and formal labour activities; it may also result in losses including income and assets. The physical autonomy of women, which refers to their ability to make decisions about their own health (SDG3), especially sexual and reproductive health (SRH), has been shown to be negatively correlated with poverty. Poor women have less access to SRH and face greater difficulties in exercising their reproductive rights, which, consequently, makes them less likely to finish tertiary and university education and more likely to be unemployed or hold precarious and informal jobs.

Regarding labour, evidence shows that women are concentrated in certain occupations and sectors of activity generally marked by less recognition, greater instability, and lower wages. This is due both to gender discrimination and, in many cases, to the need for women to have flexible jobs that allow them to fulfil their reproductive roles and

assume a greater care burden.<sup>17</sup> The latter is also linked to the dimension of education, as evidence shows segregation of careers by sex. Without specific technical education or training in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics, for example, women are excluded from some employment sectors that could provide higher economic returns. Gender disparities are also seen in access to information and communication technologies (ICTs). Even though in Latin America there are relatively small differences in Internet access and mobile phone ownership between men and women, it has been shown that a higher proportion of men, compared to women, use the Internet for work-related activities and administrative or government procedures, and these factors are aggravated when, in addition, the lack of digital skills and their use affect women to a greater extent.<sup>18</sup>

Related to women's labour participation is the unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work that has been shown to exist between women and men.<sup>19</sup> In all LAC countries for which data are available, women's unpaid work time is much greater than that of men. On average, women in the region spend three times more time on unpaid work than men. This overload of time devoted to unpaid work acts as a barrier to women's participation in the labour market and to accessing economic resources under the same conditions as men, thus, not allowing them to reach the same degree of autonomy.<sup>20</sup> Finally, unfair and discriminatory treatment of women based on sex, sexual orientation or gender identity are factors that contribute to limiting women's decision-making power. Their participation and representation at the different levels of state power and in different decision-making spaces are essential for their opinions to be heard and considered in the definition of public policies that address female poverty.

The latter considerations led to the decision to choose women as the unit of identification for this MPI proposal. This allows for analysing individual characteristics and identifying differences in poverty profiles within women by age or place of residence, for example.<sup>21</sup> Also, based on the main findings, an ‘ideal’ or first best option for an MPI with a focus on women was made around five dimensions: Health and violence, Education and access to ICTs, Work, Housing and access to basic services, and Economic rights and participation. This first best option for an MPI has 21 indicators and assumes that all the information needed to measure the different aspects of female poverty through the proposed indicators is available within the same data source. (See Annex 1 for the full list of indicators.)

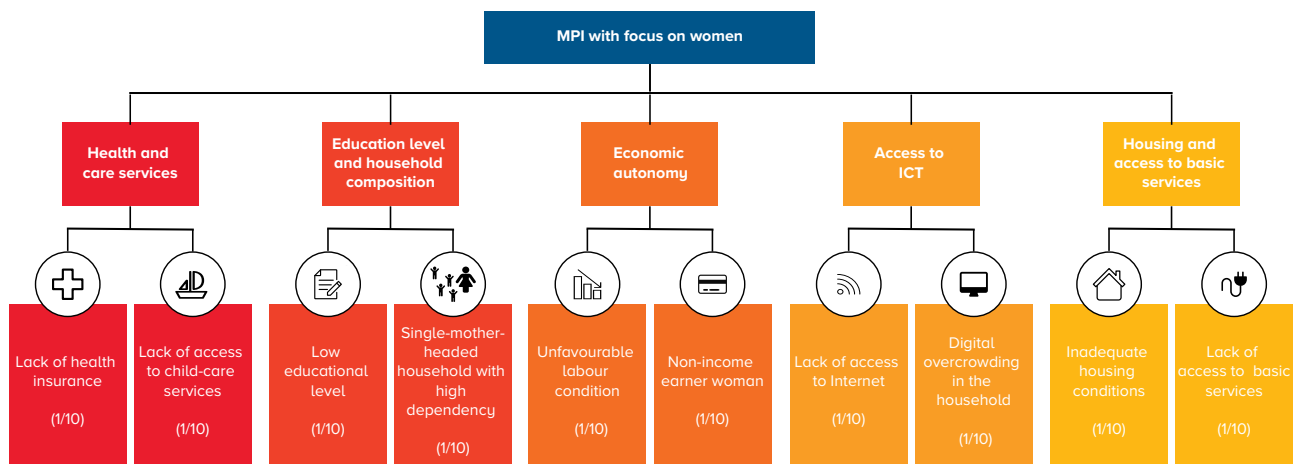
A second stage comprised a process of reviewing the availability of information for estimating these indicators in household living standards surveys, the data sources that best responded to finding this information. Considering the objective of having a comparable measure for a set of countries in the region, the process of selecting the indicators required that the information be available in all household surveys for the selected countries. Ten countries from different subregions in LAC were considered for the

comparable version of the MPI with a focus on women: Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Dominican Republic, and Uruguay.<sup>22</sup>

Of the total 21 indicators initially proposed, only 13 were available, fully or partially, in all household surveys (see Annex 1).<sup>23</sup> Of those 13 indicators, only three related specifically to childhood and youth. Hence, it was considered more appropriate to dismiss these indicators and to focus only on adult women (18 years old or older).<sup>24</sup> In conclusion, the practical or feasible MPI that constitutes the proposal of this paper considers women over 18 years of age as the unit of identification and analysis and uses as data source the household living standards surveys circa 2019.

At a final stage, to have a balanced measure, meaning having the same or similar number of indicators in each dimension, and considering the available information, the selected indicators were adjusted and rearranged, as can be seen in Figure 1. The MPI with a focus on women is composed of 10 indicators and five dimensions: i) Health and care services, ii) Education and household composition, iii) Economic autonomy, iv) Access to ICTs, and v) Housing and access to basic services.

Figure 1: MPI with a focus on women for Latin America and the Caribbean



Source: Own elaboration.

Under the assumption that all dimensions have equal importance in the context of well-being for women, following the human rights approach, an equal weight of 20 percent was assigned to each dimension, and a nested-weights approach was used for the indicators, meaning the same weight was assigned to each indicator within each dimension.

In the Alkire and Foster method, two cut-off points are established to measure multidimensional poverty: a deprivation cut-off and a poverty cut-off point (*k*) to determine who is multidimensionally poor. The deprivation cut-off point refers to the criteria considered to determine whether a woman faces deprivation in each of the indicators. Table 1 presents the deprivation cut-off points, which were defined considering both empirical and normative parameters.

**Table 1: Deprivation cut-off points and weights assigned to each indicator**

Dimension	Indicator	Deprivation cut-off point	Weight
1. Health and care services	1.1 Lack of health insurance	A woman with no health insurance	10%
	1.2 No access to child-care services	Women who belong to households where children between 0 and 5 do not receive care services or do not attend school or pre-school* *If there are no children 0-5 in the woman's household, she is not deprived in this indicator	10%
2. Education and household composition	2.1 Low educational level	A woman who did not reach a minimum educational level according to her age - Women 19 to 30 who do not have a complete secondary education (9 years), - Women 31 to 59 who do not have a complete primary education (6 years) - Women 60 or over who are illiterate or do not have at least one year of formal education	10%
	2.2 Single-mother-headed household with high dependency	Single-mother-headed household with three or more dependent members (non-income producers) for each income producer member	10%
3. Economic autonomy	3.1 Unfavourable labour condition	A woman out of the labour force due to the need of carrying out unpaid domestic or care work; or a salaried woman who does not reach the minimum wage or is a self-employed worker with no social security (informal); or a woman unemployed or underemployed due to insufficient hours	10%
	3.2 Non-income earner	A woman with no income of any kind	10%
4. Access to ICT	4.1 Lack of access to Internet	A woman with no access to the internet at home	10%
	4.2 Digital overcrowding in the household	A woman living in a household where there are three or more people per computer, tablet or cell phone	10%
5. Housing and basic services	5.1 Inadequate housing conditions	A woman who lives in a household where there is overcrowding (three or more people per bedroom) or living in a dwelling without walls or roof, or where the walls or roof are made of waste material or floor is dirt	10%
	5.2 Lack of access to basic services	A woman who lives in a household with no access to electricity or solar panel or whose household uses unhealthy cooking fuel (kerosene, firewood or charcoal); or whose household drinking water comes from unprotected well, shallow well, river, stream, lake, ponds, stream, rainwater or other source, tank car, or who lives in a house that does not have a pipe inside it; or whose household does not have a bathroom for exclusive use, or has no adequate sewage system (septic tank, sewer network) or does not have adequate garbage disposal (garbage collection service or burying the garbage)	10%

Source: Own elaboration.

The cut-off point ( $k$ ) selected to identify multidimensionally poor women has a value of 40 percent, which is, in other words, the minimum share of deprivations a woman must face simultaneously

to be considered multidimensionally poor.<sup>25</sup> Hence, a woman needs to be deprived in two or more dimensions to be considered multidimensionally poor.

## Results of the MPI with a focus on women for Latin America and the Caribbean

As can be seen in Table 2, close to 28 percent of women in the analysed LAC countries are multidimensionally poor. The intensity of poverty, understood as the average deprivation share among poor women, is 47.9 percent. This means that, on average, poor women experience deprivation in almost five out of the 10 indicators that compose the MPI. Results are presented exclusively for women, as the selected indicators correspond to a conceptual analysis of structural causes of women's poverty.

Large differences are observed among the countries of study. On one side, Uruguay and Chile exhibit the lowest incidence and intensity of poverty. In Uruguay, 4.6 percent of adult women are multidimensionally poor; the percentage is 9.6 for Chilean women. In both countries, poor women face an average deprivation share of 43 percent. On the other side, in Honduras and El Salvador, more than 62 percent of adult women are among the multidimensionally poor and, additionally, experience a higher intensity of poverty (poor women face an average 55 percent of deprivations).

In the middle are countries like Dominican Republic, Colombia, and Mexico, with incidences of around 24 percent and intensity of 46 percent. A higher level is observed in Panama, where 34.4 percent of adult women are multidimensionally poor and face an average deprivation share of over 50 percent. In Bolivia, although the intensity of poverty among poor women is the same as for women in Panama, the incidence is 22.5 percentage points more (56.8 percent).

The adjusted incidence, or MPI ( $MO$ ),<sup>26</sup> which captures not only how many adult women are

multidimensionally poor but also the intensity of the poverty they experience, is shown in the last three columns of Table 2. To interpret the results, consider that if every woman in a country were poor and, at the same time, experienced every possible deprivation considered in the index, the adjusted incidence would have a value of 1. When considering this adjusted indicator, the ordering of the countries holds the same: Honduras has the highest adjusted incidence (0.35) and Uruguay the lowest (0.02). However, while Honduras has an incidence almost 14 times higher than Uruguay, it has an adjusted incidence even higher (17 times higher), because it also captures the fact that poor women in Honduras simultaneously experience more deprivations.

Differences are even higher when results are disaggregated by urban/rural area. In the LAC countries selected for analysis, while 19.2 percent of urban women experience multidimensional poverty, this percentage is almost three times higher for rural women (58 percent). Although in all countries, rural women are more exposed to multidimensional poverty, the rural/urban gap varies across the region. In Uruguay, Dominican Republic, Bolivia, El Salvador and Honduras, the rural incidence is nearly double the urban one, and in Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Panama, it is tripled. Colombia has the largest urban/rural gap (nearly 58 percent of rural women are multidimensionally poor, and only 14 percent of urban women are). It is worth noting that almost 90 percent of rural women face multidimensional poverty in Bolivia, Honduras, and El Salvador. Also, the intensity of poverty for rural women in Honduras and El Salvador is the highest, at 58 percent.

Table 2: MPI with focus on women—Incidence, Intensity and Adjusted incidence, circa 2019

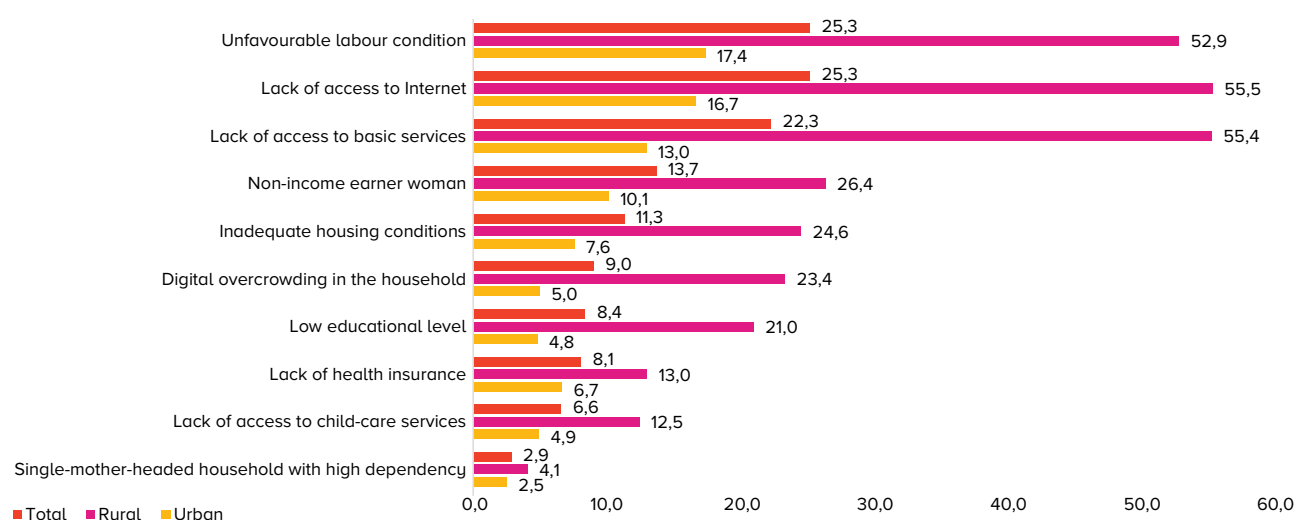
Country	Incidence (H)			Intensity (A)			Adjusted incidence (MO)		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
Uruguay	4.6%	4.4%	8.5%	43%	43%	43%	0.02	0.02	0.04
Chile	9.6%	8.0%	21.2%	43%	42%	43%	0.04	0.03	0.09
Costa Rica	11.0%	7.8%	20.7%	47%	46%	48%	0.05	0.04	0.10
Dominican Republic	21.5%	17.6%	40.8%	46%	45%	47%	0.10	0.08	0.19
Colombia	23.4%	14.4%	57.9%	48%	47%	50%	0.11	0.07	0.29
Mexico	27.4%	19.6%	54.2%	45%	45%	46%	0.12	0.09	0.25
Panama	34.3%	22.9%	64.2%	52%	48%	57%	0.18	0.11	0.36
Bolivia	56.8%	44.2%	89.2%	52%	50%	55%	0.29	0.22	0.49
El Salvador	62.8%	47.3%	91.3%	54%	51%	58%	0.34	0.24	0.53
Honduras	63.2%	46.3%	87.8%	55%	51%	58%	0.35	0.24	0.51
Selected countries	27.8%	19.2%	58.0%	48%	46%	50%	0.13	0.09	0.29

Source: Authors' estimates based on the selected countries' household surveys.

Understanding the type of deprivations that constitute multidimensional poverty for women is crucial for guiding public policy. For example, 25.3 percent of poor women in the LAC countries selected for analysis are deprived of favourable working conditions, which means they are either out of the labour force because they are dedicated to unpaid domestic and care work, or they are working informally, underpaid (their income is less than the

minimum wage), underemployed, or unemployed. This is also the main deprivation for urban poor women. For rural women, the highest deprivation faced is lack of access to the Internet (55.5 percent), followed by lack of access to basic services<sup>27</sup> (55.4 percent). Notwithstanding, unfavourable working conditions are still substantially high for rural women (52.9 percent experience this deprivation), double the incidence for urban women.

Figure 2: Share of women who are multidimensionally poor and deprived in each indicator in the countries selected for analysis, total and by rural/urban area, circa 2019



Source: Authors' estimates based on the selected countries' household surveys.

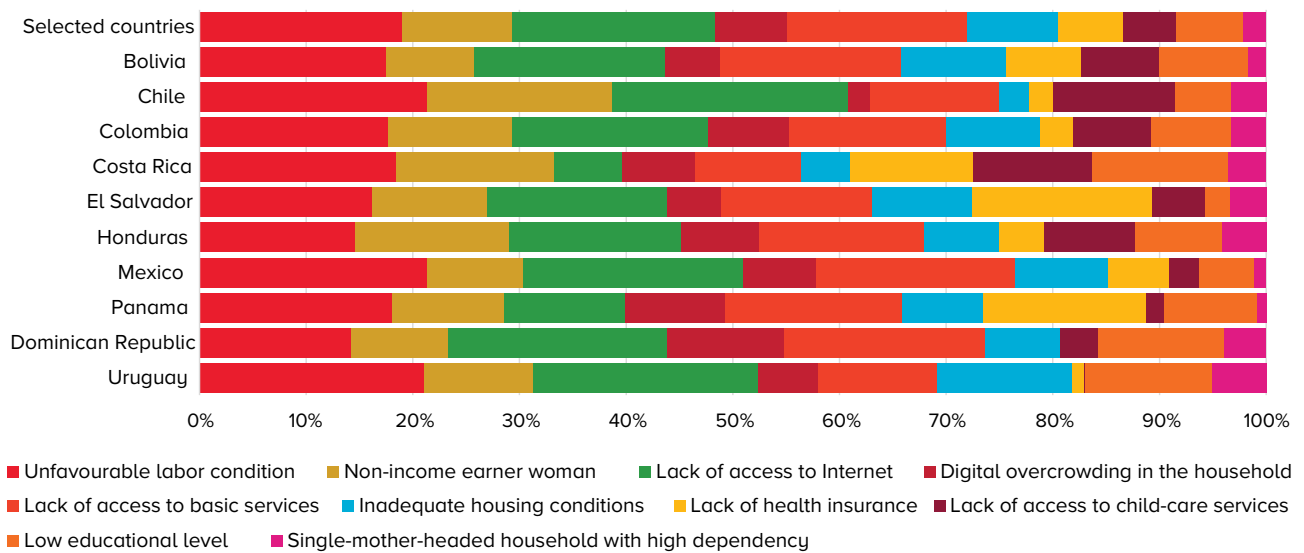
The greatest urban/rural gaps are observed in the digital overcrowding<sup>28</sup> and low educational level<sup>29</sup> indicators. The proportion of poor rural women facing digital overcrowding in the household is 4.7 times higher than that of urban women. And while 4.8 percent of poor urban women face a low educational level, 21 percent of rural women do. At the regional level, 8.4 percent of adult poor women have a low educational level.

Regarding the indicators with the lowest deprivation rates, 6.6 percent of women in poverty belong to households where children up to age five lack access to child-care services (close to 12 percent in rural areas and 5 percent in urban areas). The least frequent deprivation is that related to household composition: women belonging to female-headed households where the head of household has

children under her care but does not have a partner and there is high economic dependency (three or more people per income-earner in the household). As can be seen at the bottom of Figure 2, about 3 percent of multidimensionally poor women experience that deprivation.

Both the incidence and deprivation rates help to explain the relative contribution of each indicator to the aggregated result of multidimensional poverty (M0). The indicators that contribute most to explaining multidimensional poverty in adult women are unfavourable working conditions, lack of access to the Internet and lack of access to basic services (Figure 3). These indicators explain more than half of multidimensional poverty for adult women in the countries selected for analysis in the region.

**Figure 3: Contribution of deprivation in each indicator to overall multidimensional poverty, circa 2019**



Source: Authors' estimates based on the selected countries' household surveys.

## Final reflections

Recognizing the relevance of the gender perspective in understanding multidimensional poverty is of vital importance. Generally, MPIs allow governments to monitor poverty reduction, complement monetary poverty measures, improve policy targeting, make informed decisions on budget allocation and evaluate policy. This policy brief aims to draw attention to the need to further discuss these poverty measures and study how well they depict women's poverty and its specificities. In that line, gender-sensitive MPIs will allow governments to design and implement policies that

focus on overcoming the specific barriers women and girls face in escaping poverty and exercising their rights, enabling better use of available resources and greater progress in closing gender gaps and eradicating global poverty.

For this, three recommendations, which are not mutually exclusive and can complement each other, are put forward. These are: (i) the development of a specific Multidimensional Poverty Index with a focus on women; (ii) the inclusion of new questions in household surveys to include gender-sensitive



indicators relevant to multidimensional poverty that are not currently measured in national MPIs, as well as the integration into national MPIs of poverty-relevant gender-sensitive indicators that are already collected in household surveys at the national level; and (iii) the analysis of the national MPIs from a gender perspective, through the disaggregation of the indicators by gender of the population or by gender of the head of household.

The first of these proposals, which contemplates the creation of a specific MPI for women, is considered the most effective for obtaining a complete overview of women's poverty and better targeting of public policies for poverty reduction. In this sense, this document provides a methodological contribution that includes a complete proposal of dimensions, indicators, questions, weights and thresholds for an MPI that focuses on women. Likewise, it presents results for 10 countries in the LAC region.

The results of this measure have the value of being comparable between countries and in time, as they are based on basic questions typically gathered by household surveys. Notwithstanding, an in-depth analysis of women's multidimensional

poverty at the country level should adapt the measure to include dimensions and indicators that were excluded from this practical version of the MPI for reasons of data availability and comparability purposes. We also recommend tapping other data sources available to governments, such as administrative records from various institutional sectors, as well as considering the possibility of aligning information from different official surveys and other sources when tracing is available. In particular, a national MPI that focuses on women should be accomplished using indicators on sexual and reproductive health, time use, violence against women and girls, access to financial services and participation and decision-making in the household.

Last, it is necessary to guarantee an intergenerational and intersectional approach when designing a gendered MPI that recognizes the linkages among different forms of discrimination influencing higher levels of deprivation for some groups of women. Information disaggregated by age, ethnicity,<sup>34</sup> disability, geographic area, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, immigration status, nationality, income and age of dependents, among other criteria, must be collected.

### Key Insights for the Operationalization of UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy 2022–2025

Building MPIs that focus on women can be an asset for the operationalization of UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy 2022–2025. They can be used to diagnose and recommend policies towards achieving universal and gender-responsive social protection systems, expanded access to essential services, digital and financial assets, and care services. A key lesson from this exercise is that more sophisticated analysis is needed to address the complexities of gender inequalities. The tool presented in this brief can contribute to fulfil that need.

Specifically, MPIs that focus on women can collaborate to generate better data and analysis for policymaking in the framework of Signature Solution 1 (Poverty and inequality). Worldwide, national MPIs are currently used to measure the effectiveness of social policy that aims to eradicate poverty, as well as to target populations that need support. MPIs that focus on women can help governments understand women's poverty in their countries, as well as better design and target their interventions. The presence of UNDP country offices and their close collaboration with governments and other stakeholders can facilitate the dialogue and coordination for national-level implementation of this specific MPI focused on women.

Designing MPIs focused on women during this time of multidimensional crises can be an opportunity, first, to put forward key issues such as unpaid care work and gender-based violence, which have been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, it can contribute to the conversation about the relationships among bodily autonomy, decision-making and economic autonomy from an empirical perspective at a time when women's rights are facing backlash in different parts of the world. This tool can help promote transformation and structural changes for gender equality, envisioning the future towards resilient and equitable development.

## Annex 1: Proposal of an ideal MPI for women in LAC

Dimension	Indicator	Deprivation	Available in all household surveys
1. Health, child-care and violence	1.1 No health insurance or no access to prenatal care	A woman with no health insurance or a woman who had a pregnancy in the last 5 years and had less than 4 prenatal checkups, or was not indicated to take vitamin supplements during pregnancy	Partial
	1.2 No access to child-care services	Women who belong to households where children between 0 and 5 do not receive care services or do not attend school or pre-school	Yes
	1.3 Child marriage and teenage pregnancy	A woman who joined in marriage or civil union before the age of 18 or who had at least one pregnancy before turning 20	No
	1.4 Violence against women and girls	A woman who has suffered some type of violence: physical, sexual, psychological, as a child, workplace harassment or discrimination based on her sex or gender in the last 12 months	No
2. Education and access to ICT	2.1 Low educational level	A woman who did not reach a minimum educational level according to her age - Women 19 to 30 who do not have a complete secondary education (9 years), - Women 31 to 59 who do not have a complete primary education (6 years) - Women 60 or over who are illiterate or do not have at least one year of formal education	Yes
	2.2 Non-attendance to formal education	A woman between 5 and 18 who is not attending school and has not finished secondary education	Yes
	2.3 Educational lag	A woman between 7 and 18 who is attending school but has a school lag of two or more years	Yes
	2.4 Access to Internet and Communication Technologies (ICT)	A woman older than 7 who does not have access to the internet or if her household does not have at least one computer, cell phone, or tablet	Yes
3. Work	3.1 Excess time spent on unpaid care or domestic work	A woman who spends more than 5 hours a day caring for another person or doing unpaid domestic work	No
	3.2 Non-compliance of working conditions or underemployment due to insufficient hours	Salaried working woman 18 or older who does not reach the minimum wage or is a self-employed worker with no social security (informal) or is underemployed due to insufficient hours	Yes
	3.3 Long-term unemployment	A woman 18 or older that has been unemployed for 12 months or longer	Yes
	3.4 Uninsured worker	A working woman with no social security	Yes

Dimension	Indicator	Deprivation	Available in all household surveys
4. Housing and basic services	4.1 Inadequate housing or damaged from natural disasters	A woman who lives in a dwelling where there is overcrowding (more than two people per bedroom) or where there are no walls or no roof, or walls or roof are made of was material or floor is dirt, or dwelling has been damaged by natural disasters in the last 12 months.	Yes
	4.2 No access to electricity or use of unhealthy fuel for cooking	A woman who lives in a dwelling with no access to electricity or solar panel or whose household uses unhealthy cooking fuel (kerosene, firewood or charcoal)	Yes
	4.3 No access to drinking water	A woman whose household drinking water comes from unprotected well, shallow well, river, stream, lake, ponds, stream, rainwater or other source, tank car, or who lives in a house that does not have a pipe inside it.	Yes
	4.4 Lack of adequate sewage and disposal of solid wastes	A woman whose household does not have a bathroom for exclusive use, or has no adequate sewage system (septic tank, sewer network) or does not have adequate garbage disposal (garbage collection service or burying the garbage)	Yes
5. Economic rights and participation	5.1 Ownership, control, and access to assets	A woman who owns a land or house informally, or is socially prevented from accessing land, house, or means of production in her own name because of her sex, or is an elderly woman without a pension.	No
	5.2 Unbanked	A woman 18 or older without a bank account, or a woman underage member of a household in which no woman has a bank account.	No
	5.3 Participation and decision-making in the household	A woman who does not have decision-making power over: household expenses and management of own or household income, own health and that of their dependents, or own education and that of their dependents	No
	5.4 Equal treatment	A woman who in the last 12 months has been treated unfairly or discriminated against outside of her home for being a woman or because of her sexual orientation or gender identity	No
	5.5 Secure environment	A woman without access to comfortable, safe, and efficient private or public transportation; or whose commuting time to work/educational center is greater than two hours; or if she lives on a street without public lighting, or has been subjected to street harassment, or who perceives restrictions of mobility due to insecurity	No

## Endnotes

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- 2 One seminal example is Amartya Sen's 1980s development of the capability approach, which poses that the focus when analysing human welfare should be on the actual capability of a person to achieve well-being. This approach has been highly influential in establishing alternative poverty and development measures, such as the Human Development Index.
- 3 Alkire and Foster (2008). 'Counting and Multidimensional Poverty Measurement', OPHI Working Paper 7, University of Oxford; Alkire, S. and Jahan, S. (2018). 'The New Global MPI 2018: Aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals', HDRO Occasional Paper, United Nations Development Programme. Retrieved from: <https://hdr.undp.org/content/new-global-mpi-2018-aligning-sustainable-development-goals>.
- 4 According to ECLAC's calculations, for every 100 poor men in the LAC region, there were 113 poor women circa 2019. See: <https://oig.cepal.org/en/indicators/feminity-index-poor-households>
- 5 See, for instance, Folbre, N. (2018). 'The Care Penalty and Gender Inequality', The Oxford Handbook of Women and the Economy; and Jee, E., Joya, M., and Murray-Close, M. (2019). 'Motherhood Penalties in the U.S., 1986–2014', Journal of Marriage and Family, 81(2): 434–449.
- 6 UNDP (2019). El Mercado Laboral Femenino en América Latina: Análisis de Sus Características por Estrato Social y Desafíos en Materia de Política Pública. Retrieved from: [https://www.latinamerica.undp.org/content/rblac/es/home/library/womens\\_empowerment/el-mercado-laboral-en-america-latina-analisis-de-sus-caracteris.html](https://www.latinamerica.undp.org/content/rblac/es/home/library/womens_empowerment/el-mercado-laboral-en-america-latina-analisis-de-sus-caracteris.html)
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- 14 Corsi, M., Botti, F. & D'Ippoliti, C. (2016). 'The Gendered Nature of Poverty in the EU: Individualized Versus Collective Poverty Measures', Feminist Economics, 22(4): 82–100.
- 15 OPHI-UNDP (2021). Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2021: Unmasking Disparities by Ethnicity, Caste and Gender. Retrieved from: [https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/UNDP\\_OPHI\\_GMPI\\_2021\\_Report\\_Unmasking.pdf](https://ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/UNDP_OPHI_GMPI_2021_Report_Unmasking.pdf)
- 16 İkkaracan, I. & Memiş, E. (2021). 'Poverty.' In Berik & Kongar, The Routledge Handbook of Feminist Economics, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- 17 These are: (i) the development of a specific Multidimensional Poverty Index focused on women, which may or may not require the inclusion of new questions in household surveys to include gender-sensitive indicators relevant to multidimensional poverty and that are not currently measured in national MPIs; (ii) the integration into national MPIs of poverty-relevant gender-sensitive indicators already collected in household surveys at the national level; (iii) the analysis of national MPIs from a gender perspective through the disaggregation of indicators by gender of the population or gender of the head of household.
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- 22 When choosing the household as the unit of identification, the measure of deprivations requires using averages or combining information on household members to produce household-level deprivations. Hence, using the household as the unit of identification may hide the situation of women.
- 23 These countries were selected considering they represent different subregions of LAC, they have national MPIs, except for Bolivia, and survey data was available for the Regional Hub. The total population of these countries (254 million) represents close to 38 percent of LAC's estimated population in 2023 (665 million).
- 24 It was difficult to find comprehensive information related to violence, reproductive and sexual health, social participation, time spent in unpaid care or domestic work and access to financial, land or productive assets.
- 25 All countries in LAC set the age of majority at 18. This is the age at which a person gains the legal status of an adult.
- 26 Two statistical criteria were used for selecting the cut-off point k. First, the incidence results for the region were estimated and analysed for every k-threshold, finding a change in concavity at threshold k = 40 percent. Second, an analysis of stochastic dominance of first and second degree was conducted for the countries of study using national and urban/rural area estimates. The stochastic dominance of the first degree corresponds to the analysis of the incidence (H) estimates and the second degree to the analysis of the adjusted incidence (M0).
- 27 The adjusted incidence, expressed as M0 in the Alkire and Foster method, is the result of multiplying the incidence of multidimensional poverty (H) by the intensity (A). Thus, M0 = H\*A.
- 28 A woman faces deprivation of access to basic services if either of the following conditions is present: i) lack of access to electricity or use of an inadequate fuel for cooking, ii) lack of access to drinkable water, iii) inadequate solid waste disposal.
- 29 A household is considered digitally overcrowded when there is a ratio of three persons or more per digital device (laptops, tablets, and mobile phones).
- 30 Low educational levels are defined dynamically in relation to age: women between 18 and 30 years old who do not have a complete pre-secondary education (nine years); women aged 31 to 59 who have not completed primary education (six years); and women aged 60 or over who cannot read or write, or alternatively who do not have at least one year of approved formal education, are considered as having low educational level.
- 31 The 2021 Global MPI report includes this type of disaggregation. More information available at: <https://hdr.undp.org/content/2021-global-multidimensional-poverty-index-mpi>