



REPORT

BREAKING THE MOULD:

changing belief systems and
gender norms to eliminate violence
against women in Latin America
and the Caribbean

ENOUGH
TOGETHER WE CAN END VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



OXFAM

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America and the Caribbean



This report was commissioned by Belén Sobrino.

Authors: Damaris Ruiz and Anabel Garrido Ph. D
with the contributions of Eva Fernández in data analysis.

Translation and English editing: Natalia Leeland, CGS Translations, and Kathryn O'Neill.
Design and layout: Rocío Castillo
Communications and production team for this report: Tania Escamilla and Annie Thériault.

Cover picture: Danna Iriel Valencia is 21 years old and lives in La Paz, Bolivia. Thanks to her perseverance against the macho culture in her country that determines that girls shouldn't practice extreme sports, Danna is one the first women skaters in La Paz.

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ISBN 978-1-78748-304-0

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to acknowledge the contributions of the team at the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO, in Spanish): Pablo Vommaro, Rita Alves Oliveira, Karina Batthyany, Carmen Beramendi, Amparo Marroquín, and the national teams for their compilation and processing of the information contained in this report.

Specifically, in the case of Bolivia, the authors acknowledge the work of Coordinadora de la Mujer and Diagnosis in compiling and processing initial data for the report.

The authors also thank:

Simon Ticehurst, Asier Hernando, Andrea Costafreda, Ana Maria Martínez, Raquel Checa, Thomas Dunmore, Tania Escamilla and Monica Bau, for their contributions.

Representatives of Oxfam's Regional women rights and gender justice group in Latin America and the Caribbean for their revisions and contributions to the report.

LATFEM, specially Agustina Paz Frontera and Florencia Alcaraz for the joint work.

Nayeli Yoval, director of REDLAC, and Rachel Marcus, Senior reseracher of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) for their revisions and comments.

All the people that agreed to include their life stories in the full report.

Contents

FOREWORD	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	10
INTRODUCTION. MALE VIOLENCE IS CLOSE TO HAND	30
CHAPTER 1.	
Major trends in violence against women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean: a culture of impunity	33
1.1. Legislative breakthroughs and gaps: from rhetoric to reality	33
1.2. The persistence of violence against women: 1831 women killed in one year	38
CHAPTER 2.	
Conceptual framework and research methodology	45
2.1. Oxfam's understanding of violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean	45
2.2. What are harmful belief systems and gender norms, and how are they created, internalized and transformed?	45
2.2.1. Belief systems and gender norms	45
2.2.2. How belief systems and gender norms are created and internalized through socialization	48
2.2.3. Transforming belief systems and gender norms: 'all bodies' can be transgressors	49
2.3. Methodology	51
CHAPTER 3.	
Challenges in transforming belief systems and gender norms that reinforce violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean	
3.1. Distorting mirrors	57
3.2. Augmented mirrors	63
3.3. Worn or outdated mirrors	70
3.4. Giving new meaning to beliefs and behaviours	77
CHAPTER 4.	
Trends and alternatives for transforming belief systems and gender norms	
4.1. Regional trend: use of the media, campaign messages and influential figures for young people	81
4.1.1. Trends in the use of the media by young people: creating networks	81
4.1.2. Awareness of campaigns	82
4.1.3. Influential people when taking a decision as a couple	82
4.2. Building critical citizenship for social transformation	85
4.2.1. Breaking the silence on male violence against women: an eye on social impunity	85
4.2.2. The breakdown of public spaces as male-dominated places: a (re)appropriation of the streets by women	87
4.2.3. Breaking down gender stereotypes: new ways of being a woman	88
4.2.4. Weaving networks: the generation of sisterhood networks for women	88
CHAPTER 5.	
Conclusions and recommendations	
5.1. Conclusions	91
5.2. Recommendations. Eradicating violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean is possible	92
GLOSSARY	94
NOTES	96
ANNEX	100

Foreword

Latin America and the Caribbean is the most unequal region in the world, and violence against women the most extreme expression of inequality between women and men. The region is also the most violent in the world, with the highest incidence of violence against women. As this report notes, of the 25 countries with the highest rates of femicide/feminicide, 14 are in Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2016, a total of 1831 women were killed, up from 1661 in 2015.

Since the adoption of the Belém do Pará Convention in 1994, feminist organizations have led efforts to achieve policies and legislative frameworks for preventing, punishing and eradicating violence against women and girls. The problem is not so much the lack of understanding or absence of legislation or policies, but rather the huge gaps in implementation. To this is added political, legal and social impunity – simultaneously the cause and consequence of violence against women.

There is obviously a need to continue pressuring world leaders (most of whom are still men) to overcome the lack of political will to tackle violence against women and to assign and spend more resources on preventing and eradicating such violence. Social mobilization is an essential means to contribute to social transformation, as evidenced by the *#NiUnaMenos* (*#NotOneLess*) movement and others, which have mobilized hundreds of thousands of women, men and children on the issue of femicide/feminicide.

Violence against women is deeply rooted in patriarchal culture, which is perpetuated by and through belief systems and gender norms. These frequently reinforce violence against women, often aggravating and entrenching or even legitimizing such violence. We have deliberately sought to understand how these belief systems and gender norms play out among the younger population. Young men and women are eager for change and have, in many cases, responded indignantly to current political scenarios and the repeated paradigm of inequality, discrimination and exclusion. They are thus a key political element in building new paradigms to challenge the status quo in society. They must necessarily emerge to critically transform the way such belief systems and gender norms are constructed.

The report aims to contribute to debates in the Latin America and Caribbean region, using the metaphor of mirrors to show how belief systems and gender norms shape how we think and what we do. But it is also a call for action, not only for feminist and women's organizations and networks but also for those who can help shape opinions: the independent press, journalists from traditional and alternative media, radio and television presenters who are committed to human rights, and the world of YouTubers, Facebook and Twitter users – all key actors in transforming belief systems and gender norms.

The report should give cause for personal and collective reflection. Which of the mirrors do we see ourselves reflected in? Which of the beliefs and behaviours in the distorted, augmented or worn/ outdated mirrors are we repeating and must seek to change? Let us reflect critically and act politically against existing inequalities between women and men that generate and sustain this scourge of violence against women and girls.

The analysis and proposals contained in this report constitute one of the central benchmarks for reaffirming our commitment to strengthening support for feminist, women's and youth organizations. At the same time, they provide us with a clear indication of the active role we must play in helping to build alternative and progressive belief systems and gender norms.

Oxfam's commitment is to put the rights of all women and girls to a life free from violence centre stage in our programmes and campaigns, and this will be one of our priorities in the coming years. We will consolidate our efforts in terms of investment, work with feminist and women's organizations (at country and regional levels), and build links to promote spaces for multi-stakeholder dialogue.

Simon Ticehurst

Oxfam Regional director for Latin America and the Caribbean

To eliminate violence, first we need to understand it

When we think about violence against girls, women and all other female identities, we quickly come to the conclusion that although common sense tells us that such violence is due to isolated disorders ('brutes' or 'psychopaths') or criminal trends (an 'epidemic', a 'wave of feminicides'), this is but a placebo to calm our anxieties. In truth, the problem goes much deeper and is much harder to resolve: it is both a social and a human rights problem.

We tend to say that violence against women and girls is a cultural problem that will be solved through education. When those of us who carry out research on the issue, or are specialist journalists or concerned activists, come up against one such case – or one such individual – we are suddenly beset by a whirlwind of questions: what can they be thinking and feeling in order to act in such a way? In this sense, we believe that this report goes to the very heart of the issue: the belief systems (at the individual, family, community and institutional levels) and gender norms which young people internalize from an early age – many of which may later turn into the cruellest of realities, steeping us in despair. In other words, *Breaking the Mould*, makes us think about what we can do to weaken such harmful beliefs and norms, and promote alternative, progressive gender norms that will allow us to build freer lives and more fair and equal societies and communities.

But this is not all that is relevant in this report. We are pleased to see the links made between violence against girls and women, and diversity and economic violence – so pressing in our region of Latin America. Understanding violence against women without understanding racial and financial inequalities is an impossible task and would lead to the wrong conclusions.

Violence against women is an undeniable fact in the Latin America and Caribbean region, rooted in the centuries-old machismo culture. This report is based on quantitative and qualitative research with young men and women aged 15–25 in eight countries. The report states that 7 out of 10 young women and men consider violence against women to be a serious problem in their country. Awareness of the problem has led millions of people – activists and the general public – to demonstrate on the streets throughout the continent, to promote actions in the workplace, in schools, and in the community more widely. Moreover, important progress has been made in the past decade in terms of legislation and national plans (see *Chapter 1*) to address male violence against women. But this is not enough: although young people in the region generally believe that women endure inequalities compared to men, around 60 percent of young men and young women consider such inequalities to be minimal.

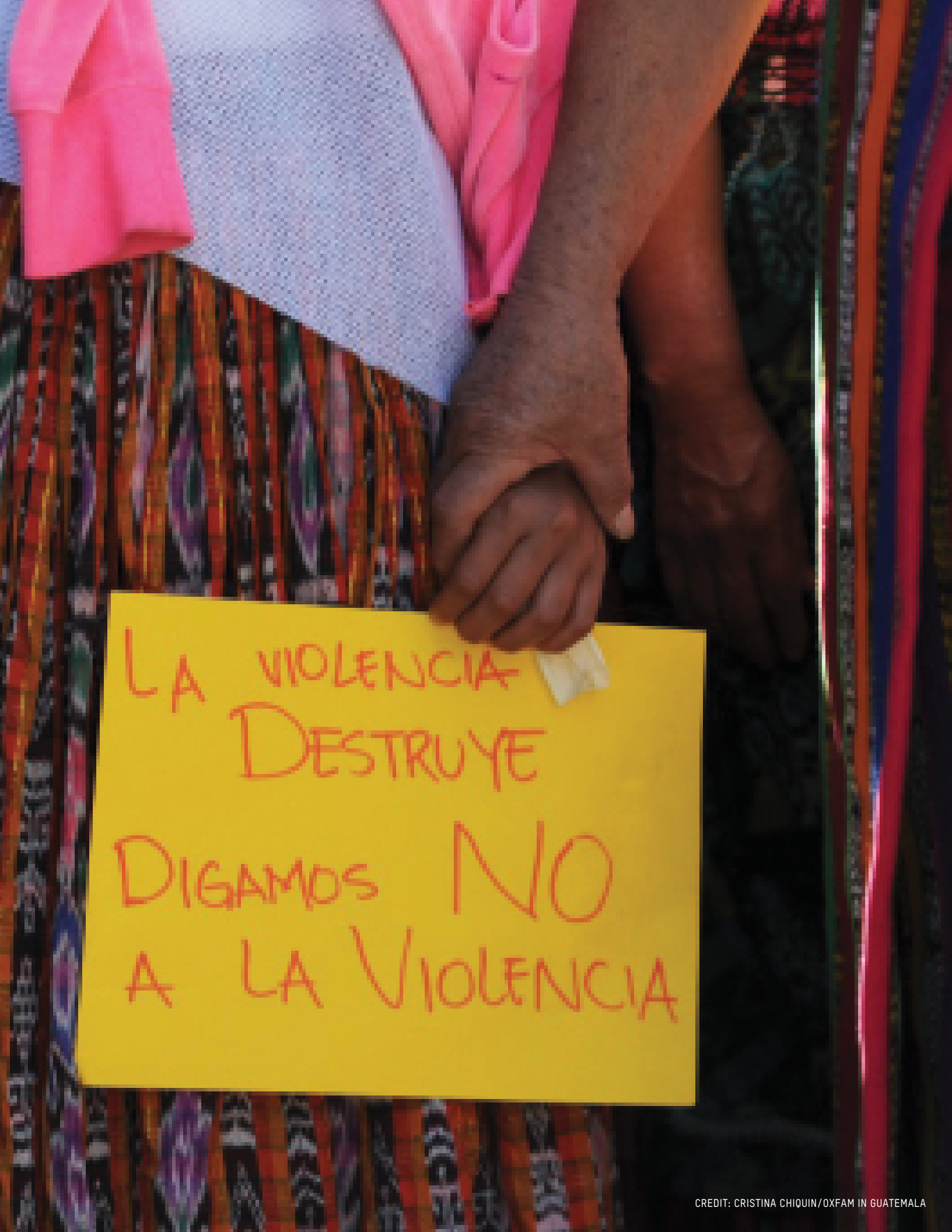
'Ever since I can remember, my father beat my mother. We used to hide so that we didn't have to see her suffering,' says Aura Gonzales, an 18-year-old girl from Guatemala. What are the belief systems and gendered social norms that Aura has been exposed to throughout her life? *Chapter 2: Conceptual framework and research methodology* sets out the concepts that enable us to understand how these symbolic frameworks which allow violence to take place with impunity are constructed – and perhaps deconstructed.

In *Chapter 3*, the report analyses the eight most harmful belief systems and gender norms prevalent among the population surveyed. It does this using the metaphors of three mirrors: **distorted mirrors, augmented mirrors and worn/outdated mirrors**. This chapter is particularly important for learning about the symbolic structures that we look to in Latin America and the Caribbean – a valuable insight which will serve to inform campaigns and educational materials to end violence against women, as will the strategies proposed in *Chapter 4* for promoting new trends and alternative belief systems and gender norms.

Those strategies are particularly relevant to us as activists in the *Ni Una Menos* (Not One Less) movement. We understand that the mobilizing power of social networks makes it possible to create new narratives and, language that old and young generation understand (albeit not always successfully) and get people out on the streets to demand freer lives and fairer societies – something we have been able to evidence in every call we have put out for the *Ni Una Menos* campaign and every call for the International Women's Day strikes. Awareness-raising happens very quickly on social networks, where a common language is used; and consensus is then brought about face-to-face – at assemblies and on the streets – so that the voices of women calling for an end to violence are made public and widely heard.

Ni Una Menos is what we demand in all the activities we carry out. In order to cut the patriarchal chains that prevent this ambition from being realized, we need adequate platforms, and for this reason we created LatFem as a platform for feminist communications. But tools for spreading ideas are also essential, and that is where this report becomes invaluable in supporting the continuum of feminist narratives that will allow others to access that which official, patriarchal norms seek to make invisible.

María Florencia Alcaraz
Agustina Paz Frontera
(LatFem and Ni Una Menos)

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a bright yellow rectangular sign. The person is wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt and a colorful, patterned skirt. The background is filled with numerous vertical ribbons in various colors, including red, blue, green, and orange, creating a vibrant and textured backdrop. The sign has handwritten text in red ink.

LA VIOLENCIA
DESTRUYE
DIGAMOS NO
A LA VIOLENCIA

1.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

In Latin America and the Caribbean, 1831 women died at the hands of men in 2016, and three out of ten women have suffered male violence during their lives¹. In recent years, countries in the region have made significant progress in tackling the problem by adopting national laws to protect women. Today, 16 Latin American and Caribbean countries have laws in place punishing violence against women, and 15 have incorporated femicide/feminicide as a specific crime.

This legislative progress is a significant step forward. But gaps in implementation allow a culture of impunity for men who commit violence against women and girls. Without adequate financing and effective means to prevent, report and punish violence against women, the problem will not go away.

Male violence must be prevented and eradicated. To do this, one of the main challenges is to change the harmful belief systems and gender norms that are used to justify violence against women. It also means recognizing that beliefs and behaviours built on a patriarchal system that is also sexist and racist are part of the structural causes of inequality that feed violence against women.

This report provides insights into the prevalence of belief systems and gender norms among young women and men in the region. It looks in depth at the most entrenched beliefs and behaviours among the younger population and provides ample evidence that we must challenge

and change the prevailing belief systems and gender norms if we are to make real progress in guaranteeing the right of all women and girls to a life free from violence.

The results of our research are alarming. In our sample across eight countries, 56 percent of men and 48 percent of women aged 20–25 know a female friend who has endured male violence in the past 12 months – a clear indication that this problem is rife. Moreover, six out of ten young people believe that women do not escape violent relationships because the man threatens to kill them. Five out of ten women consider that violence against women is normal.

SO, IS IT NORMAL?

The perception that male violence against women is normal is one of the key problems in tackling the issue. The normalization of violence pervades our discourse, our conversations, the way we relate to others, and also the sources of mass knowledge and public policies. This normalization is fuelled by beliefs and behaviours that are deeply engrained, not only among young people in their families and social circles, but also within public institutions – beliefs and behaviours that are reinforced through daily practices.

Male violence has become normalized to the extent that 86 percent of young women and men in the region would not interfere if a male friend hit their female partner, and 25 percent consider that their friends would not do anything if an assault occurs in a public space such as the street, a park or a disco. The situation in

Nicaragua is alarming, with four out of ten young men reporting that they know a friend who hits his female partner. In the **Dominican Republic**, three out of ten young people state that their male friends hit their female partner.

Although 84 percent of young women and men believe that violence against women is a product of inequalities, they believe that solving the problem is not up to them. Two-thirds (67 percent) believe that the state should be responsible for reducing the consequences of male violence.

Women get used to being beaten and defend their aggressors... So it is best not to get involved.' (Man, focus group, Bolivia).

This indifference in the face of violence is all the more worrying if we consider that almost 62 percent of young men (15 to 19) in the region justify sexual violence due to men having drunk too much alcohol, while 72 percent blame women because of the clothes they wear.

As for sexuality, there is also a highly normalized belief system regarding pleasure and sexual desire, with 87 percent of young men and women aged 15–25 believing that men have greater sexual desire than women. This portrays women as incapable of feeling either desire or pleasure, and firmly establishes their enjoyment as secondary to a man's desires.

Moreover, a very high percentage of young people also deny women's right to make decisions about their own bodies: 72 percent of young people aged 15–25. Likewise, 77 percent of young women and men agree that all women should be mothers. In **Bolivia**, for example, we found that 61 percent of

men aged 20–25 believe that when a mother works outside the home, the children suffer abandonment.

I think every woman is a mother, even if she doesn't have any children.' (Woman, focus group, Cuba).

WHAT OXFAM IS DOING TO CHANGE HARMFUL BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS

Oxfam has been working with feminist and women's organizations to eradicate male violence through specific programmes and campaigns for around 20 years. We have been supporting the agendas of feminist and women's organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean through stand-alone programmes on women's rights, working on initiatives for the eradication of all types of violence against women, the economic rights of women, transformative leadership and participation of women, and campaigns led by feminist organizations in 9 of the 13 countries in which we work.

Much progress has been achieved since 2017. We have committed to going beyond a funding role in the campaign ***Enough! Together We Can End Violence Against Women and Girls***ⁱ, which focuses on young women and men aged 15–25 to transform the belief systems and gender norms which reinforce violence against women. This campaign is being implemented in eight countries, led by feminist and women's organizations, young activists and Oxfam.ⁱⁱ

As part of Oxfam's role in the campaign, this report helps to identify and analyse the belief systems and gender norms that fuel violence against women and girls in the region. We hope it will focus attention on this pernicious problem, which reproduces beliefs and behaviours, particularly among young people, and which entrenches social impunity for male

ⁱ ¡Basta!, is the Campaign name for the Latin America and Caribbean region. ¡Basta! involved 8 countries in the region (Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua). ¡Basta! is part of Oxfam's Global Campaign, Enough: Together we can end violence against women and girls, involving 35 countries worldwide.

ⁱⁱ See Annex 1, of the full report for a list of the 53 organizations participating in the Enough campaign in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

violence. Oxfam has had the support of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) in the management of the national research teams for collection and processing of data in seven countries, while data collection in Bolivia was coordinated by Oxfam, Coordinadora de la Mujer and, Diagnosis.

The research findings are based on analysis of 4731 surveys carried out with young women and men aged 15–25 in March and April 2017, together with reflections derived from 47 focus group discussions and 49 in-depth interviews carried out in June and July 2017.^{III} The report provides an overview of regional trends, as well as a comparative analysis across **Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Dominican Republic** – the eight countries involved in the Enough campaign.

As well as information collected at country level, the report uses other key sources of insights on belief systems and gender norms, such as regional discussions convened by Oxfam, with broad participation from the feminist movement, and particularly the regional conference, ‘Resistance and alliances in the face of inequalities and violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean’, held in Medellín, Colombia, in March 2016. The report also reflects the processes for Enough campaign design in the various countries and on a regional level, which have provided platforms for debate and collaboration between partner organizations, young people, and Oxfam teams.

We trust that the analysis provided by this research will be useful for all actors working to eradicate violence against women and girls in the region, and that it will also help to improve coordination between the various programme and campaign strategies seeking to achieve change. In this sense, the report should be central to the design of country campaigns, and a tool for collaboration between feminist and women’s organizations, young people and Oxfam.

BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS: HOW TO IDENTIFY THEM?

In this report, we use the concept of belief systems and gender norms to explain that the beliefs and behaviours that constitute them are deeply entrenched in the system that produces, reproduces and sustains violence against women. Language also plays a significant role, with discourse and repetition or replication (of both discourse and actions) shaping our ways of seeing, hearing, thinking and doing. Chauvinistic, sexist and racist beliefs and behaviours are replicated at the personal, group and society levels.

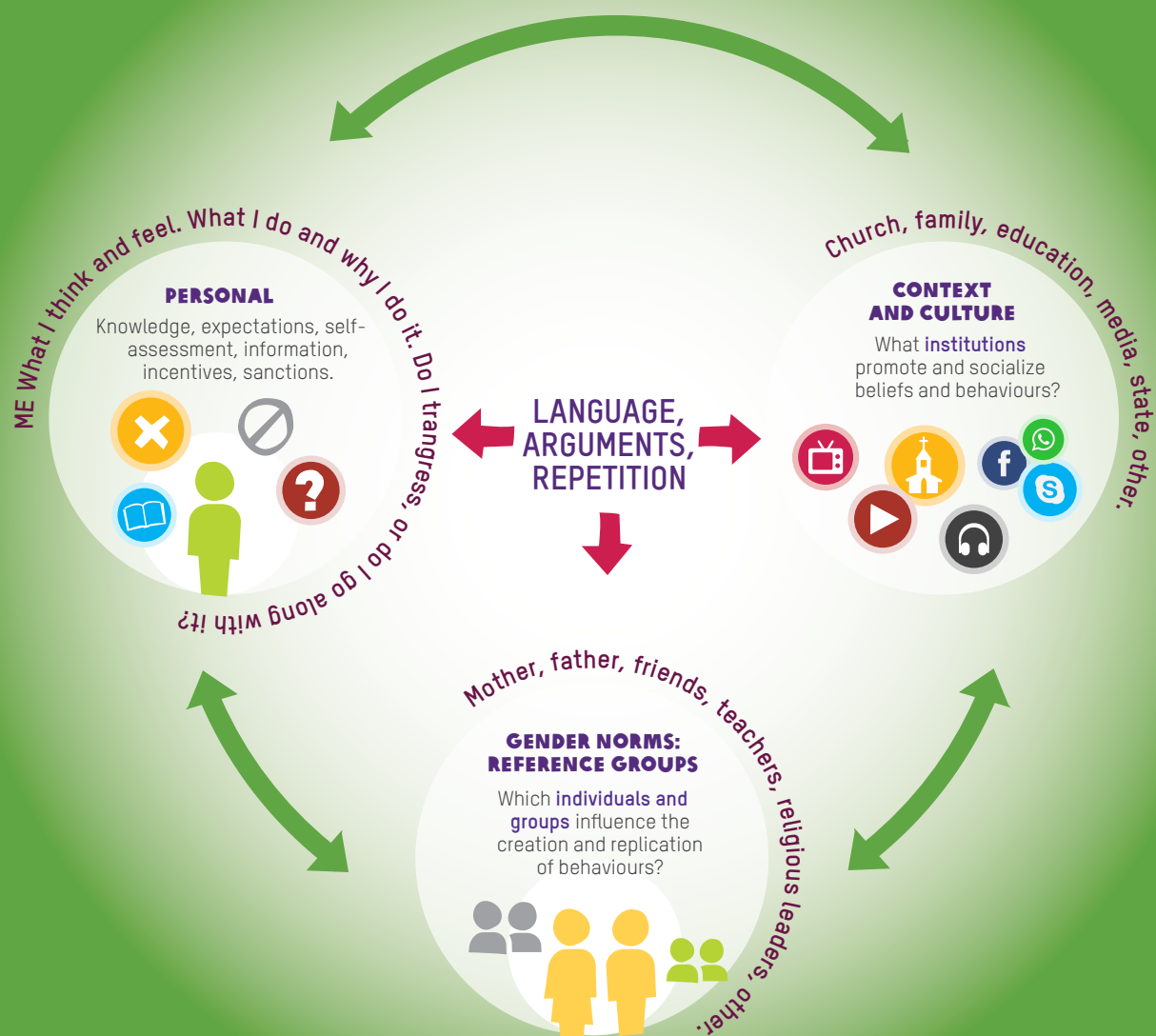
The concept of gender norms stresses the importance of institutions or reference groups that have the power to determine which behaviours are appropriate for women and men, and which are not. These reference groups include friends, teachers, artists or musicians, parents, religious leaders, social networks or sports personalities, among others.

^{III} Of the survey sample, close to 90 percent were young urban women and men, with a clear majority being students. Also, in the case of Bolivia, there are some differences due to the fact that the study was carried out earlier, between September and December 2016, and not all the questions used in the other seven countries were included.

FIGURE 1.

UNDERSTANDING BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

BELIEF SYSTEMS



SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON STUDIES AND WORKSHOPS FOR DESIGN OF THE ENOUGH CAMPAIGN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN.

The concept of belief systems takes into consideration the elements that determine gender norms (reference groups and behaviours), but also places context and culture in a central role, where certain institutions have acted to build and define structures which, in effect, serve to regulate what people should think, believe and do. Such institutions (family, church, markets, the media and educational institutions) have the power to dictate rules and deny the interests of certain groups (Figure 1). They thus succeed in institutionalizing gender-based inequalities by encouraging girls and boys, men and women, to internalize the roles prescribed to them by society^{2 3}. These institutions also tend to have

substantial influence on the implementation of public policies.

It is important to stress that male-dominated, sexist and racist belief systems and gender norms, with their associated beliefs and behaviours, can be transformed. All of us can play a part in promoting alternative belief systems and gender norms, through individual as well as collective action. Changes at a personal level are vital, while bearing in mind that it is essential that any transgression of beliefs or behaviours must have an influence on the group: we must influence those whose power and control over consciences and behaviours has entrenched inequality.

2.

BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS FUEL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: EXPLORING THE BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURS OF YOUNG WOMEN AND MEN

The report identifies **eight belief systems and gender norms** that fuel violence against women in the region. The accompanying beliefs and behaviours for each belief system and norm are described, showing both the regional trend and a comparison across the eight countries studied, highlighting the country or countries with the highest prevalence. These belief systems and gender norms are related to control of women's bodies and sexuality and are rooted in the construction of a subordinated femininity and a hegemonic masculinity.^{iv} The persistence of such beliefs and behaviours has a direct correlation with social impunity for perpetrators of violence against women and girls.

For the analysis, we have used the metaphor of three mirrors: **distorting mirrors**, **augmenting mirrors** and **worn/outdated mirrors**. We consider belief systems and gender norms as representing mirrors in which men and women are obliged to see themselves, behaving in such a way as to ensure compliance with the gender stereotypes prescribed for them throughout their lives.

Distorting mirrors are the belief systems and gender norms associated with direct control over women's bodies in relation to one of the

strongest champions of hegemonic masculinity: male virility. **Augmenting mirrors** are beliefs and norms associated with expressions of control, but in relation to romantic love and the obligations of a concept of sexuality that leaves no room for anything other than compulsory heterosexuality. The main aspect of **worn/outdated mirrors** is the standardization of certain forms of violence and the provisions that have become entrenched as the attributes of a 'good woman'.

DISTORTING MIRRORS: FROM MALE VIRILITY AND SEXUAL DESIRE TO CONTROL OVER WOMEN'S BODIES

Belief systems and gender norms in distorting mirrors are supported by beliefs and behaviours associated with desire, but only inasmuch as it relates directly to male virility. Women should not experience sexual pleasure and must be monogamous; their bodies should always be available for satisfying a man's sexual desires, and subject to male scrutiny; and they should be denied all capacity for taking their own decisions (Figure 2).

One of the strongest belief systems and gender norms evident in the region is the construction of **male virility**. The link with violence is reflected in young people's beliefs that men cannot control

^{iv} Dominant male attitudes that determine what attributes men should have, such as control, strength, success or sexual desire.

FIGURE 2.**THE THREE BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS OF DISTORTING MIRRORS,
WITH THEIR ASSOCIATED BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURS**

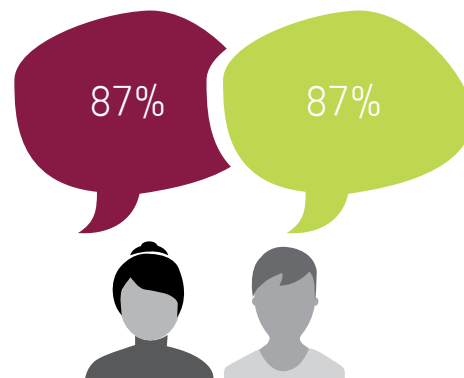
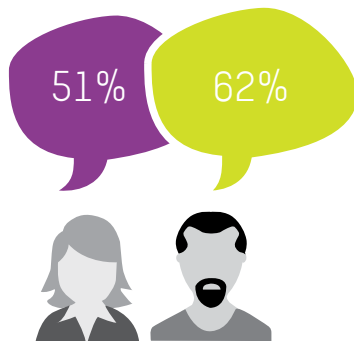
The numbers in parenthesis are the age ranges of the people that answered to each associated belief and/or behaviour.



A REAL MAN MUST HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS WHEN HE WANTS AND WITH WHOEVER HE WANTS; NOT SO FOR WOMEN.

- It is common for a man who is drunk to beat or force a woman to have sexual relations (15-19).

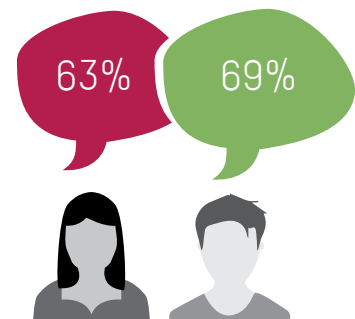
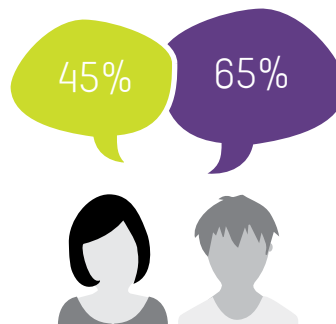
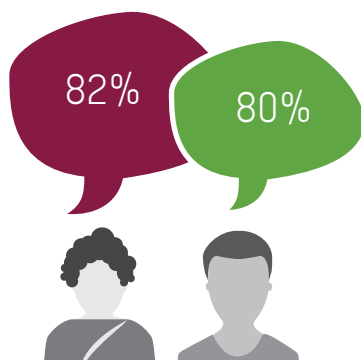
- Men have greater sexual desire than women (15-19).



- Men can have sexual relations with whoever they want, women cannot. What they think their friends believe (20-25).

- Women sometimes act hard to get for having sexual relations, saying NO when they really mean YES (15-19).

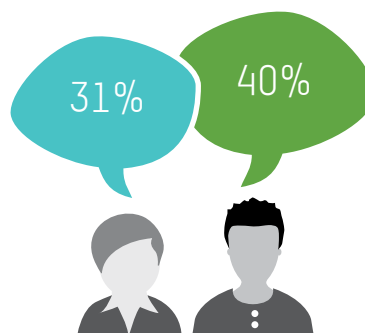
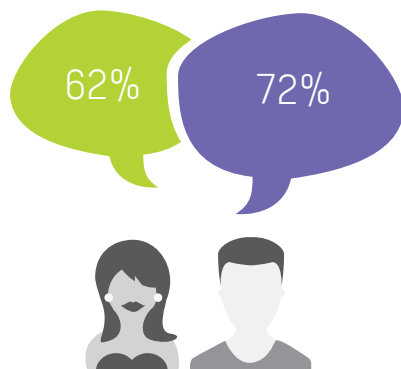
- Men get angry if their partner does not want to have sexual relations. What they think their friends believe (20-25).



MEN SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARISE, WOMEN TYPICALLY GIVE GROUNDS FOR THIS.

- A decent woman should not dress provocatively, nor walk alone on the streets late at night (15-19).

- If a woman gets drunk, then a man can have sexual relations with her, even if she is not conscious (15-19).

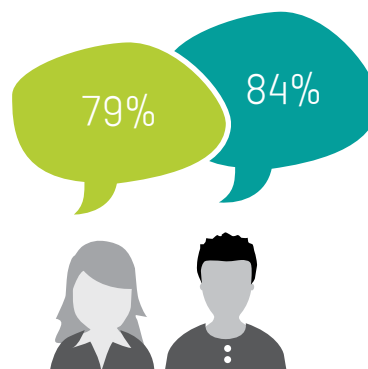
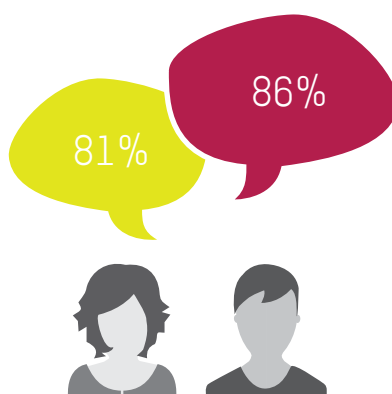
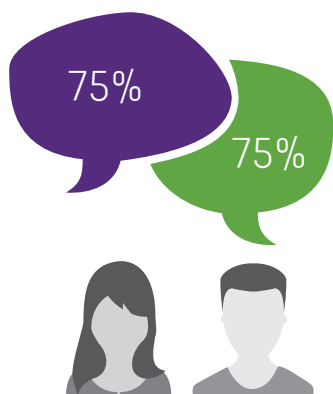


WOMEN'S BODIES SHOULD ALWAYS BE CONTROLLED, AVAILABLE AND CRITICISED

- It is normal for a man to compliment a woman on the street. What they think their friends believe (20-25).

- It is safer for women if a man accompanies them on the street. What they think their friends believe (20-25).

- It is not appropriate for a woman to end an unwanted pregnancy (15-19).



themselves, and that women must comply with men's sexual desires even if they do not want to, thus assuming that women are passive bodies, devoid of desire, and forbidden from freely experimenting with their own sexuality. Most of the beliefs and behaviours linked to male virility are especially prevalent among young men, followed by women.

The research finds that women are often blamed for male violence because of the way they dress, for being out on the streets late at night, or for drinking alcohol. Seven out of ten young men aged 15–19 believe that *a decent woman should not dress provocatively, nor be out on the streets late at night*; six out of ten women of similar age share this belief. The countries with the highest prevalence of this belief among young men aged 15–19 (blaming women because of the way they dress) are **El Salvador** (85 percent) and **Guatemala** (75 percent).

Another belief used to justify sexual violence – that *when women say NO, they actually mean YES* – is much higher among men aged 15–19, at 65 percent. Among young people aged 20–25, 87 percent believe that *men have greater sexual desire than women*. As such, 77 percent of young people believe *it is normal for men to have sexual relations with more than one woman, but wrong for women to do the same*. The **Dominican Republic, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala** and **Nicaragua** are the countries with the highest prevalence of this belief among men and women aged 15–19.

Sexual harassment in the street curtails women's use and enjoyment of public spaces. The seriousness of this type of violence affects and restricts the development and self-sufficiency of young women in particular. Among young people 75 percent accept this type of harassment as normal. **Cuba** (75 percent) and **Dominican Republic** (84 percent) have the highest percentage of men aged 15–19 who say their male friends believe they have the right to shout call out compliments to women.

'A compliment is like poetry; a woman has to like it. In other words, something that you say to make her feel attracted to you. So, if you then said something else that might be considered a bad word, that would not be a compliment.' (Man, focus group, Dominican Republic).

Appropriation and control over women's bodies extends to sexual and reproductive rights, with 72 percent of young people believing it is wrong for a woman to end an unwanted pregnancy. **El Salvador** is the country with the highest prevalence of this belief, at 95 percent (young men) and 87 percent (young women)

AUGMENTING MIRRORS: VIOLENCE THAT GOES UNSPOKEN AND CONTROL THAT BECOMES NATURALIZED – ROMANTIC LOVE

These two belief systems and gender norms are underpinned by beliefs and behaviours that increase men's control over women (Figure 3). The study shows that high percentages of young



women and men do not regard control over mobile phones and social networks as violence. Nor do they regard as violence men controlling who women relate to, how they should dress, when and how they can move about in public spaces, or the imposition of heterosexuality as a norm.

Augmenting mirrors reinforce the practices of *romantic love* and *heterosexuality* as the only socially acceptable form of sexuality. More than

half of these beliefs and behaviours are highly prevalent among young women and men aged 15–25.

One of the beliefs that strengthens male power over women is the construction of romantic love. The belief that *he who loves you, cares for you* is fed by ideas that distort and pervert romantic relationships, with control over women becoming normal ⁴. In this interpretation, jealousy becomes evidence of love.



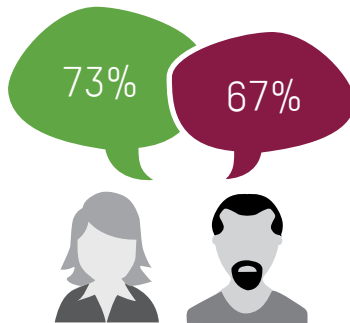
CREDIT: YAMIL ANTONIO/OXFAM IN BOLIVIA

FIGURE 3.**THE THREE BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS OF AUGMENTING MIRRORS, WITH THEIR ASSOCIATED BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURS**

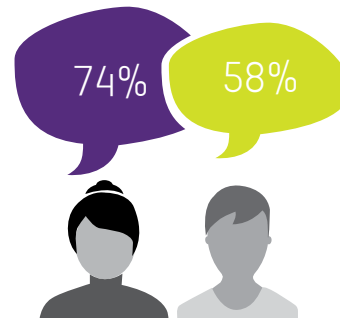
The numbers in parenthesis are the age ranges of the people that answered to each associated belief and/or behaviour.

**LESBIAN AND TRANSGENDER PRACTICES MUST BE KEPT PRIVATE**

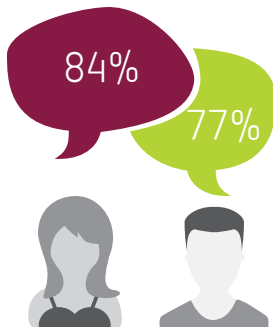
- Lesbians should not show their sexual orientation in public. What they believe their friends believe (20-25).



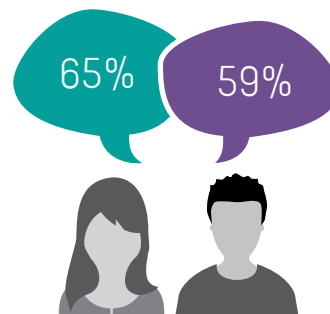
- It is NOT normal for people who are born with male genitalia to dress as women (15-19).

**MEN MUST CONTROL WOMEN**

- Checking your partner's mobile phone is not violence. What they think their friends do (15-19).



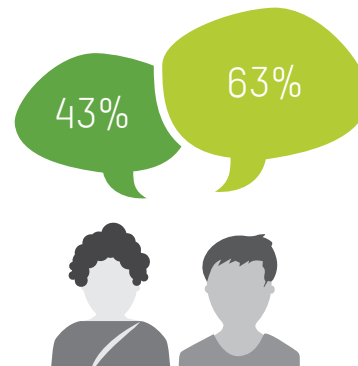
- Controlling your partner's social networks is not violence. What they think their friends do (15-19).



- Telling your partner what clothes to wear. What they think their friends do (20-25).



- Jealousy is an expression of love (15-19).



ROMANTIC LOVE: «I GET JEALOUS BECAUSE I LOVE YOU» ^{5,6}

Throughout history, love has been depicted in different ways, building up certain models that are presented as natural and therefore impossible to modify. Often, the emotional ties created between men and women are based on dependency and the promise of loyalty within the relationship, with the premise that love and suffering go hand-in-hand.

Women are encouraged to endure all kinds of male abuse in the name of love. The relationship is idealized and a yearning for romantic love places all priority on the object of your love, changing attitudes and setting aside friendships and even studies, work and ambitions. Romantic love promotes heterosexual, monogamous love, which is limitless in time and assured through marriage.

The relationships we experience throughout our lives can be wonderful experiences that fill us with energy. But it is essential that young women and men can put romantic love in context and build equal relationships.

Across the region, six out of ten young men aged 15–19 believe that *jealousy is an expression of love*, a belief that is echoed in all the countries studied. In **Dominican Republic**, 76 percent of men aged 15–19 justify jealousy as an expression of love, followed by **Honduras** at 65 percent. This belief is less widespread among women aged 20–25.

Additionally, 80 percent of young people in the sample state that their male friends monitor their partner's phone, and 62 percent of young people (15–19) say their male friends monitor their girlfriend's social networks. **Colombia** and **Nicaragua** have the highest percentage of women aged 15–19 stating that their male friends check their partner's phone.

Public spaces as a means for social control also restrict expressions of diverse sexual options. Across all eight countries, seven out of ten young people state that their friends believe lesbians should keep their sexual orientation private. Countries with the highest levels of lesbophobia are **Honduras, Nicaragua** and, **Dominican Republic**.

'Sometimes I would be on the bus with my partner and people would say "What a waste of women", or "You haven't had a proper shag; if I had been with you, you wouldn't be this way." That is really awful.' (Woman, focus group, El Salvador).

Moreover, six out of ten men aged 15–19 believe that it is not normal for people who are born with male genitalia to dress as women. **Dominican Republic** and **El Salvador** are the countries with the highest levels of transphobia.

WORN/OUTDATED MIRRORS: MALE OPPRESSION AND THE ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD WOMAN

The three belief systems and gender norms in this mirror are underpinned by beliefs that leave women open to male violence due to the

importance given to certain conservative attributes used to typify what constitutes a 'good woman' (Figure 4). Most of these beliefs are strongly entrenched among young people aged 20–25.

FIGURE 4.

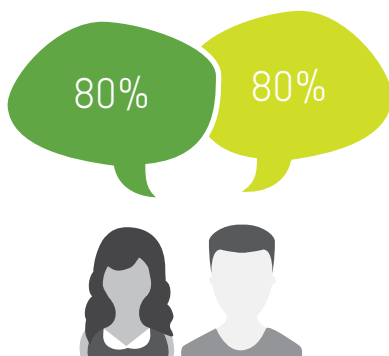
THE THREE BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS OF WORN/OUTDATED MIRRORS, WITH THEIR ASSOCIATED BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURS

The numbers in parenthesis are the age ranges of the people that answered to each associated belief and/or behaviour.

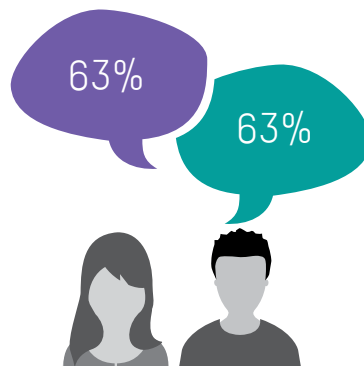


A MAN HAS THE RIGHT TO CORRECT OR DISCIPLINE THE BEHAVIOUR OF WOMEN AND FOR THAT HE CAN USE ANY TYPE OF VIOLENCE. THERE ARE REASONS WHY WOMEN ENDEURE VIOLENCE:

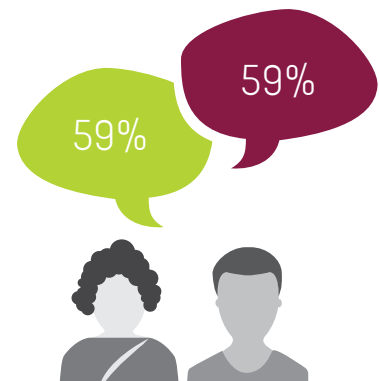
- Women endure violence for the shake of their children (20-25).



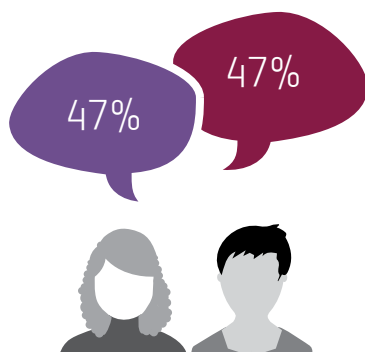
- Women do not escape violence because the men threaten to kill them (20-25).



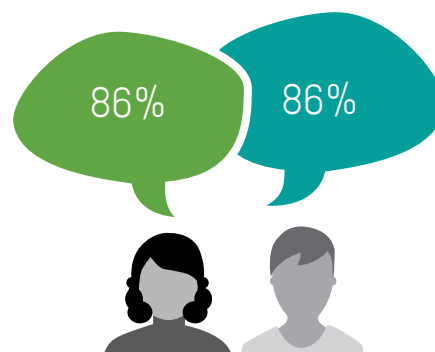
- Women endure violence because of financial dependency (20-25).



- Women do not escape violence because they believe that it is normal (20-25).



- No one should interfere in fights between couples (20-25).

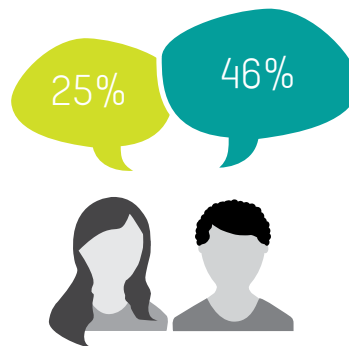


MEN SHOULD BE THE PROVIDERS, AND WOMEN CAREGIVERS, MAKING ONLY COMPLEMENTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

- Where possible, it is better for the man to be the family breadwinner and for the women take care of the children (15-19).

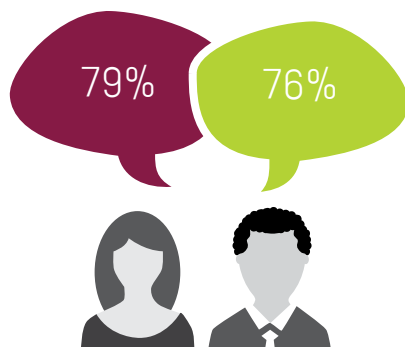


- In the event of firing someone, it is best to keep the man's job because they usually generate most of the family income (15-19).



ALL WOMEN SHOULD BE MOTHERS

- All women should be mothers. What they think their friends believe (15-25).



One of the most pervasive perceptions among young people is the normalization of male violence due to men's inherently violent nature, which they use to subjugate women. Among young people aged 15–25, 50 percent of women and 38 percent of men believe that women endure violent relationships because they believe violence in a relationship with a man is normal, while 61 percent of women and 55 percent of men (of the same age group) believe that women do not leave violent relationships because the man threatens to kill them.

'Women fear they may be killed. That is why they do not speak out.' (Woman, Nicaragua).

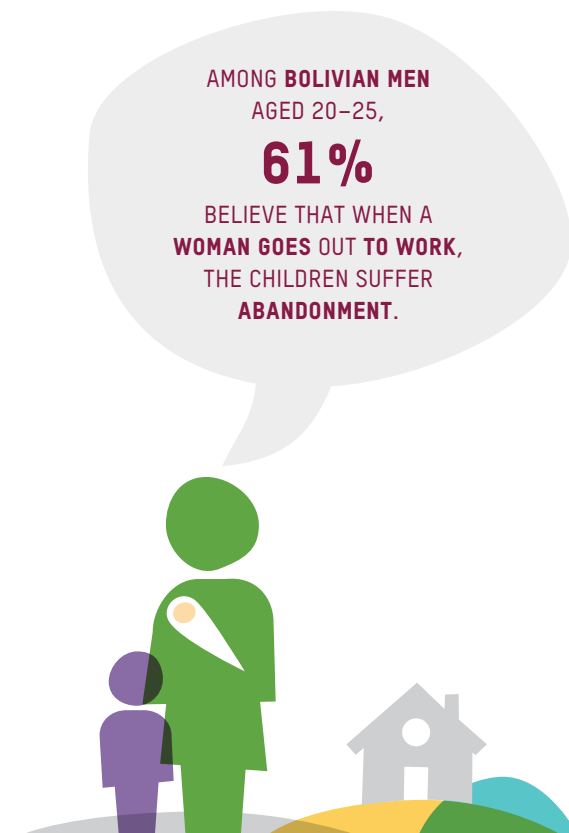
Fear of the threat of death is very high among women and men aged 20–25 in **Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Guatemala**, while **Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia and Honduras** have the highest percentage of young people who believe that *women endure violence in a relationship with a man because they consider it normal*.

In the 15–25 age group, 86 percent of men and women state that their friends believe it is better *not to get involved in arguments between couples*. Social indifference sets the scene for social impunity. Violence against women within a relationship is considered a private matter to be resolved in private, and this belief is also accepted and replicated in public spaces. **Honduras** (young men aged 15–19) and **Guatemala** (women aged 15–19) have the highest prevalence of young people stating that their friends (both male and female) believe that *no one should interfere in arguments between couples*. Conversely, **Cuba** is the country where the highest percentage of young women and men would consider getting involved if they witnessed a situation of violence.

Of the young people participating in the survey, 77 percent believe that all women should be mothers – a belief which is consistent with a

culture that idealizes motherhood. The idea of compulsory motherhood is most prevalent among young people aged 15–25 in **Cuba** and **Dominican Republic**.

Care duties are widely perceived as the exclusive responsibility of women, whereas men should be the sole providers for the family. Among men, 56 percent of those aged 15–19 state that it is better for the man to be the family breadwinner and for the woman to take care of the children; 46 percent of younger men (aged 15–19) also believe that in the event of firing someone, it is best to keep the man's job, with **Dominican Republic** having the highest percentage of young men who believe this (61 percent) and **Honduras** (62 percent) a close second. In **Bolivia**, 61 percent of men aged 20–25 believe that when a mother works outside the home, the children suffer abandonment.



3.

**THE PATH TO SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION:
YOUNG PEOPLE AGAINST MALE VIOLENCE**

The right of women to a life free from violence has been one of the main priorities on the feminist agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean. The figures contained in this report point to enormous challenges, but also identify potential paths for transforming beliefs and behaviours that produce, reproduce and entrench violence against women. It is revealing that the most critical voices belong mainly to young women aged 20–25.

Eight out of ten young women and men believe that violence against women is rooted in the widespread inequalities that exist in the region, while seven out of ten believe that violence is a serious problem that the authorities should do something about.

Young people recognize that violence exists and should be addressed, essentially by the state. The urgent challenge is to raise awareness of the fact that young people themselves can play a key role in transforming the belief systems and gender norms that fuel male violence.

Strategies put in place by feminist and women's organizations in the region are the main drivers for change, through mobilization, political advocacy and networking that is sustainable in the long term.

The media still has a major influence on public debate in the region. The surge in internet and smartphone use has facilitated access to information and entertainment through social networks, which have themselves become leading platforms for information, communication and mobilization, enabling interaction and the creation of change processes. They have empowered a

growing movement of 'cyberfeminists' who use social networks to gain visibility and speak up against male violence, through advocacy and mobilization. Such activism has given rise to campaigns with massive impact on a global level, in the media, among the population as a whole and in the political agenda. In **Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua**, social media networks (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc.) are the most common source of information for young people, mainly among those aged 20–25.

Protests on the streets are used to denounce violence, with face-to-face political action, while social networks facilitate cyberactivism, which boosts wider connections for social transformation. Both street action and cyberactivism are essential and complementary elements for breaking the mould that perpetuates male violence.

Many young women and men are already building alternative realities. The region must take significant steps towards a culture free from male violence and, in order to achieve this, young people must take the lead, with actions that challenge ways of thinking, change the conservative discourse, drive sustained action and encourage people from all backgrounds to commit to this call for change.

This in no way means that legal consequences in cases of violence against women should not be pursued. The courts and legal systems still have a vital role to play in ending male impunity and the culture of violence. Significant legislative progress has been made in the region, but there are also significant gaps in implementation. But it is not

only the legal system and young people who have a responsibility to build alternative belief systems and gender norms to challenge male violence; families, friends, teachers, civil society organizations, opinion writers and journalists also have a key role to play.

Oxfam's commitment is to strengthen our programmes on women's rights in the countries in which we work and to prioritize the transformation of belief systems and gender norms. One of our tools for doing this is the Enough campaign, which continues to strengthen the work of feminist organizations, in collaboration with young women and men, working with influencers, journalists and feminist communicators, and driving an ethical approach to news broadcasting.

ERADICATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IS POSSIBLE

Upholding the right of all women and girls to a life free from violence should be an absolute priority in our society and for our governments. We should celebrate the legislative progress that has been made. But we must continue to demand that governments apply all relevant laws, guarantee access to the justice system for women who have experienced violence, ensure that adequate budgets are provided for building capacity within our institutions and among public officers, ensure that women are not re-victimized, and contribute, through new messages and knowledge, to the transformation of belief systems and gender norms that sustain, normalize and create impunity for the violence endured by millions of women in the region. We must urgently look at ourselves and our societies and challenge beliefs and behaviours which have been instilled in us from a very early age.

Some of the actions and recommendations for the various sectors of society contained in this report are:

1. We need to give visibility to **families that are challenging** belief systems and gender

norms and engage these mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers as active participants in processes and programmes to transform such belief systems and norms.

2. **Friends, both male and female**, can have a huge influence in building alternative belief systems and gender norms, and rejecting all expressions of violence against women. Action in terms of daily practices, conversations, jokes, gestures, language used or the images we share is highly relevant.
3. **People responsible for education** within the family and in the education system must rethink the language used in communications, in private conversations and in public spaces. We must all scrutinize our behaviours, because this is what **builds our culture**. Education systems can make an enormous contribution to building alternative belief systems and progressive gender norms.
4. It is essential that we continue to promote processes which enable **young women** to grow in confidence and become agents for change in their own lives and in their community. Women and girls must overcome their fears and sense of helplessness. Reappropriating or 'taking back' their own bodies is fundamental to this. Solidarity among women is one of the great challenges in overcoming violence.
5. **Young men** must build alternative models of masculinity and engage in spaces for reflection that allow them to rewrite the prevailing discourse and show that there are other ways of being men that are not based on subordinating women. Male allies must take responsibility for the transformation of belief systems and gender norms and challenge criticism for going against the machismo culture. A major step towards this

is men recognizing their privileged position, as well as the damage that sexism and racism causes not only to women but also to men themselves. It involves challenging the existing complicity between men, and never protecting anyone who uses violence against women.

6. Campaigns and mobilization of civil society

offer great potential for change, as long as they are accompanied by sustained processes. Campaigns should work with people that young men and women can identify with.

7. Journalists and opinion writers working for traditional and alternative media, as well as freelancers, YouTubers, Facebook users, bloggers, Twitter users, and television and radio presenters all have a central role to

play in promoting alternative belief systems and progressive gender norms.

Some immediate actions include:

- Providing more spaces for joint work with feminist organizations.
- Taking on the recommendations set out in this report for addressing violence against women.
- Signing the Media Compact launched by UN Women in March 2016.

Finally, it is important to add that failure to bring legal proceedings to bear in cases of violence against women encourages repeat behaviours and undermines public confidence in the judicial system. Legal institutions and systems continue to play a leading role in ending impunity and the culture of male violence against women.



Violence **IS NOT** the fate
of **WOMEN**.

If **WE** do nothing, we become
part of the **PROBLEM**.

Enough to violence against
women!



Introduction:

MALE VIOLENCE IS CLOSE TO HAND

Research by Oxfam in Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic shows that among young people aged 20–25, 56 percent of women and 48 percent of men know a woman in their closest circle who has experienced male violence (physical or sexual) in the past 12 months.

Sixty-four percent believe that death threats are the main reason why women are unable to leave a violent relationship.

7 out of 10 young women and men consider violence against women to be a serious problem in their country. However, around 60 percent of young people believe gender inequalities are minimal.

In countries where a culture of machismo persists, violence against women and girls is likely to continue or even increase. The results of Oxfam's interviews with young people in the Latin America and Caribbean region show a complex scenario: most young people see violence against women and girls as a social problem, but at the same time consider it a normal part of everyday life.

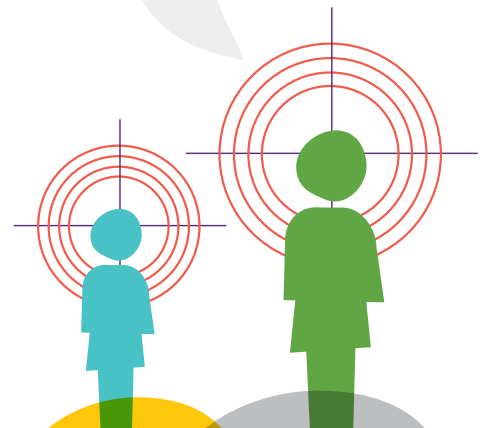
There has been significant progress in the region in adopting national laws that punish men who perpetrate violence against women. However, lack of funds, access to justice and political will make it difficult for real change to happen.

Oxfam's commitment to eradicating violence against women is evidenced through country programmes on women's rights and in our Regional Influencing Strategy. One of the priorities in our action framework is the worldwide campaign 'Enough: Together we can end violence against women and girls' ^v, which is being implemented in eight countries in the region, together with feminist and women's organizations. The main focus of the campaign

**THREATS: 1831 FEMINICIDES
IN LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN (2016).**

64%

**OF YOUNG PEOPLE (20-25)
BELIEVE THAT DEATH THREATS
ARE THE MAIN REASON WHY
WOMEN CANNOT LEAVE VIOLENT
RELATIONSHIPS**



^v Basta!, is the Campaign name for the Latin America and Caribbean region. Basta! involved 8 countries in the region (Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua). Basta! is part of Oxfam's Global Campaign, Enough: Together we can end violence against women and girls, involving 35 countries worldwide.


is to change belief systems and gender norms among young people aged 15–25. (This report is a translation of the Spanish original, in which the key term used to describe these belief systems is ‘imaginario social’ – that is, a set of values, institutions, laws, and symbols common to a particular social group through which people give meaning to and define the whole of their society. In this report, we use ‘belief systems and gender norms’ to most closely reflect the terminology of the original Spanish report.)

Oxfam hopes that this report and the research on which it is based will contribute to achieving the right of all women to a life free from violence. Collection and processing of information has been coordinated by Oxfam and the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) in seven countries, and by Oxfam and Diagnosis in Bolivia, through 4,731 surveys carried out among young women and men aged 15–25, in March and April

2017. A total of 47 focus group discussions and 49 in-depth interviews were carried out between June and July 2017.^{vi}

The report is structured as follows: chapter 1 summarises the main trends with regard to violence against women in the region and impunity for perpetrators of violence; chapter 2 discusses the conceptual framework for the research and explores belief systems and gender norms in the Latin American context and, describes the methodology used for the research; chapter 3 presents the eight most problematic beliefs and gender norms in the region and chapter 4 describes how some women and men (as organizations and individuals) are using social media to challenge these. The report closes with recommendations addressed to those responsible for educating people and informing opinions, as well as families, friends and young women and men themselves.

^{vi} Among the surveys carried out, close to 90 percent were young urban women and men, with a clear majority being students. Also, in the case of Bolivia, there are some differences due to the fact that the study was carried out earlier, between September and December 2016, and not all the questions used in the other seven countries were included.

A woman in a yellow cap with a logo is holding a white sign with Spanish text. She is in a crowded street with many people, including a group of schoolgirls in blue uniforms and tan skirts. The background shows buildings and a clear sky.

POR EL
BIENESTAR
DE TODOS
LUCHA CON ELLA

Chapter 1.

MAJOR TRENDS IN VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: A CULTURE OF IMPUNITY

1.1.

LEGISLATIVE BREAKTHROUGHS AND GAPS: FROM RHETORIC TO REALITY

Latin America and the Caribbean has made significant legislative progress in recent years and has succeeded in putting violence against women and girls on the political agenda.^{vii}

Some of the most significant and binding international commitments for countries in the region include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW, and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará).^{viii} This legal framework is complemented by jurisprudence from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

The 10th and 11th sessions of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean resulted in the Quito and Brasilia

agreements on the need to adopt specific measures to eradicate violence against women, girls and adolescents, and especially femicide/feminicide.^{ix}

The Belém do Pará Convention urges countries ‘to include in their domestic legislation penal, civil administrative and any other type of provisions that may be needed to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women and to adopt appropriate administrative measures where necessary’.⁷

A series of national laws for the protection of women who are subjected to violence, known as ‘first generation laws’, have been passed since the 1990s. Comprehensive regulations, or ‘second generation laws’, have been approved in nine countries: **Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Venezuela**.⁸ These broaden the types of violence covered by legislation, transfer punishment from the civil to the criminal jurisdiction, place greater emphasis on measures

^{vii} Although some references to the situation of violence against girls are included here, this research focuses primarily on violence against women.

^{viii} The signatories of the Convention of Belém do Pará are: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, St Kitts and Nevis, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela.

^{ix} The 10th session was held in Quito from 6–9 August 2007, the 11th in Brasilia from 13–16 July 2010.

to support women who have experienced violence through prevention, attention, protection and reparation.⁹ Second generation laws include an end to mediation and conciliation between victim and aggressor, tougher sanctions for perpetrators, and due diligence by government.¹⁰

Of the eight countries included in this research, **Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Honduras** have first generation laws only.¹¹ In Honduras, three amendments were introduced to improve the law, and a translation provided in three indigenous languages in 2015 (Tawahka, Garifuna and Miskito) to broaden access. In **Cuba**, Decree Law 175 and Law 87 of 1999 included sexual harassment and violence by a family member in the Criminal Code (Table 1). The **Dominican Republic** has only one first generation law. In 2011, however, several public institutions and social organizations developed a proposal for an organic law for the prevention, attention,

punishment and eradication of violence against women, which is still pending.

Of the countries that have made legislative progress, **Bolivia** adopted Law 348 of 2013, 'Comprehensive law on ensuring a life free from violence for women', and Law 243 of 2012, on 'Combating harassment and political violence against women'. It is the first country in the region to have a specific law punishing violence against women candidates and elected officials (Table 1).

In 2013, **Colombia** adopted Law 1639, which strengthened measures for the protection of women victims of acid attacks, and in 2014, adopted Law 1719, which included measures to facilitate access to justice for victims of sexual violence, especially in the context of armed conflict. Nicaragua approved Law 896 of 2015 against the trafficking of persons (Table 1).

- x Considers the fact of being the spouse and the relationship between offender and victim up to the fourth degree of consanguinity or second degree of affinity as an aggravating factor for criminal responsibility.
- xi The National Plan of Action following the fourth UN Conference on Women contains measures 66 and 67 on gender and violence against women. It was formulated in 1997 and is currently still in force.
- xii This plan, launched in 2011 by the Ministry for Women and the National Commission for Preventing and Combatting Domestic Violence (CONAPLUVI), is little-known and few details exist on its implementation.

TABLE 1.
LEGISLATION AND NATIONAL PLANS TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

	LEGISLATION	NACIONAL PLANS
BOLIVIA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political State Constitution (2009), recognizing the basic right to the prevention and punishment of violence (Art. 15, II and III) Law 243 of 2012, on combating harassment and political violence against women. Law 348 of 2013, on ensuring a life free from violence for women. The Code of the Criminal Justice System (2017) includes femicide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Plan for Equal Opportunities: 'Women Building the new Bolivia to Live Well' (2009–2020). Comprehensive Public Policy on 'A life of dignity for women'. Supreme Decree 3106 (March 2017).
COLOMBIA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law 294 of 1996, on domestic violence. Law No. 1257 of 2008, on violence against women anywhere. Law 1639 of 2013, on protection of women victims of acid attacks. Law 1719 of 2014 on access to justice for victims of sexual violence, especially in the context of armed conflict. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Public Policy on Gender Equity, CONPES 161 of 2013. Comprehensive Plan for ensuring a life free from violence for women (2012–2022).
CUBA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law 1761 of 2015, Rosa Elvira Cely, on classification of femicide. The Penal Code, Law 62 of 29 December 1987, as amended by Decree Law 87 of 1999, increases the penalties for crimes causing bodily harm or going against the normal development of sexual relations, family, children and youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Plan of Action following the fourth UN Conference on Women (PAN).
EL SALVADOR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law 902 of 1996, on combating domestic violence through Decree 520 of 2010, Special integrated law on a Life Free from Violence for Women. Law on equality, equity and the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women, Decree 645 of 2011. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Policy on Women's Access to a Life Free from Violence (2014–2015). Plan of Action for the National Policy on Women's Access to a Life Free from Violence (2014–2015).
GUATEMALA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act for the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Domestic Violence, through Decree 97 of 1996. Law on the Dignity and Integral Promotion of Women, Decree 7 of 1999. Law 22 of 2008, on Femicide and Other Forms of Violence Against Women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women (PLANOVII) (2004–2014).
HONDURAS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law on Domestic Violence, Decree 250 of 2005 and 35 of 2013; last amended in 2014. Law on Equal Opportunities for Women, 2000. Femicide is included in the Criminal Code (Art. 118.A). Decree 23 of 2013. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Plan on Violence Against Women (2006–2010). National Plan on Violence Against Women (2013–2022).
NICARAGUA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law 203 of 1996, reforms and additions to the Criminal Code for the Prevention and Punishment of Domestic Violence, last amended in 2014. Law 648 of 2008, on Equal Rights and Opportunities. Law 779 of 2012, comprehensive law on Violence Against Women. Law 896 of 2015, against people trafficking. Decree 42 of 2014, Regulations for Law 779, Comprehensive Law on Violence Against Women and reforming Law 641 Criminal Code, Law reforms to the law 779. Comprehensive Law against violence toward women and of reform to the Law 641 The Penal Code and Law 406, Code of Criminal Procedure of the Republic of Nicaragua. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Policy on Women's Access to a Life Free from Violence (2014–2015). Plan of Action for the National Policy on Women's Access to a Life Free from Violence (2014–2015). National Plan of Action on Violence Against Women, Children and Adolescents (currently being developed). National Plan for combating Violence Against Women (2015–2020).
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law 24 of 1997, amending the Criminal Code and the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents, including domestic or intra-family violence as a crime. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> II National Plan for Equality and Gender Equity (PLANEG II) (2007–2017). Strategic Plan for the Prevention, Detection, Care and Punishment of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, launched in 2011 by the Ministry for Women.

SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON DATA FROM UN WOMEN.

Another international commitment following the International Conference on Population and Development, which took place in Cairo in 1994, was the adoption of legislation on comprehensive sex education. Latin America and the Caribbean as a region has an adolescent fertility rate of 73.2 per 1,000, much higher than the world average of 28.9 per 1,000.¹²

This figure means it is the region with the second highest rate of adolescent fertility, surpassed only by Africa (103 per 1,000).¹³ However, only five countries come close to complying with public policies to guarantee comprehensive sex education: **Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, Uruguay and Brazil.**¹⁴ **Cuba** is making progress in this direction, through its National Programme for Sex Education and Sexual Health (PRONESS), which is coordinated by the National Centre for Education and Sexual Health with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Among the most significant legislative developments is the categorization of the killing of women because they are women. Femicide/feminicide has been incorporated into the law largely thanks to advocacy by feminist organizations,¹⁵ supported through investments (financial and technical resources) by international development aid/ cooperation agencies, working with governments and civil society groups in the region.¹⁶ Among the

countries that have enacted laws classifying femicide/feminicide as a crime are **Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru.** In **Argentina**, the killing of women is categorized as aggravated homicide.

Although legislative and regulatory progress has been significant, effective implementation is hindered by various obstacles, described in more detail below.

• Insufficient budgetary resources

Lack of funds is a common issue in all the countries of the region. The new laws have not been accompanied by sufficient budgets for implementation. The Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI) stressed, in the *Second Hemispheric Report on Implementation*, that governments have not met their commitments to provide the necessary funding to prevent violence against women.¹⁸

In the **Dominican Republic**, the lack of effective and transparent budgets is a first hurdle for providing support to women who have experienced male violence.¹⁹ The lack of resources in **Bolivia** is also an obstacle, although the regulatory decree aims to improve funding to the various country districts.²⁰ **Honduras** has a national plan against violence, but does not have the resources for its implementation.²¹ Without resources, policy intentions are not enough. Moreover, there is a significant lack of information to enable monitoring of budgets for preventing and responding to violence against women in the region.

Countries that have made progress in including budgets in laws and policies on gender equality are **Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru**, according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).²² It should also be noted that there is a commitment in certain countries to incorporate a methodology for reporting on public spending on

The terms 'femicide' and 'feminicide' are used interchangeably in the region's legislative frameworks. They establish the classification of crime for the murders of women committed by men for reasons of gender. This conceptualization has allowed the real scope of the problem to become more visible and has gained the attention of public authorities.¹⁷ In this report, both terms are used

gender equality. This is the case in **Brazil, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Puerto Rico** and the **Dominican Republic**.²³

• **Weakness in information systems and coordination mechanisms**

Poor systems for collecting information and recording data on cases of violence against women are a common constraint in all countries in the region. Information on violence against women is scarce and not harmonized (with countries often using different criteria), which prevents comparisons between countries, and thus masks the true extent of the problem.²⁴

In **Bolivia**, the source of official information is a survey by the National Institute of Statistics (first carried out in 2016) on prevalence and characteristics of violence against women.²⁵ Femicide figures are provided by the Attorney General's Office, but the ability to report on the resolution of judicial processes is practically nil; monitoring of violence in the form of political harassment is carried out by the Association of Women Councillors of Bolivia (ACOBOL).²⁶ However, by law, the official body responsible for providing public figures is the Plurinational System for Prevention, Attention, Punishment and Eradication of Gender-based Violence (SIPPASE) under the Ministry of Justice. However, institutional weakness prevents it from carrying out its duties.²⁷

In **Guatemala**, the law against femicide and other forms of violence against women created a National System of Information on Violence against Women. However, this system has been losing ground since 2012 due to lack of funding, as the country's National Institute of Statistics does not consider that this is priority information.²⁸ In the **Dominican Republic**, lack of standardized instruments makes it difficult to compile information.²⁹

Linked to the above, deficiencies in coordination between the various governmental actors are

a barrier to an integral information system. The lack of and/or inadequacy of mechanisms for coordination between institutions addressing violence against women is one of the main challenges in all countries in the region.

Financial resources may facilitate greater coordination between institutional actors, but this is not the only area of weakness. In the **Dominican Republic**, public health and education have no mechanisms for prevention, identification and support for women experiencing male violence.³⁰ In Guatemala, lack of coordination between institutions makes it difficult to provide evidence in legal proceedings on sexual violence.³¹

• **Lack of political will**

Challenges for implementation of laws are determined by the absence of a commitment to gender equality policies. The countries of the region show marked variation here, in terms of what they do and what they do not do.

• **Cultural patterns**

One of the main challenges in all countries in the region is recognizing that 'machismo' behaviours are a determining factor in failure to implement laws to protect women from violence.³² In **Bolivia**, for example, inadequate attention to victims of violence is partly due to the 'lack of understanding of the situation of women, and the fact that victims are either not believed or their suffering is not taken into account'.³³ It is also significant that, in general, both men and women prosecutors 'fail to issue measures for protection as required by law, because they consider that beatings and other acts of violence should be resolved within the home'.³⁴ In many cases this encourages reconciliation between the perpetrator and the woman concerned and only serves to perpetuate violence.

Since 2012, government policy in **Guatemala** has incorporated the concept of violence

and promotes measures for conflict resolution rather than implementation of the Criminal Code.³⁵ Comprehensive support is not provided to women victims of sexual violence, and they are denied emergency contraception as it is considered a form of abortion.³⁶ In **El Salvador**, feminicides have often been registered as social violence. There are significant awareness gaps among those responsible for punishing such killings.³⁷

In summary, the main challenges for implementation of the legal frameworks for combating violence against women are weaknesses in institutional coordination, lack of financial resources, and inadequate design of budgetary policies. Thus, despite essential and significant legislative developments, these have not been sufficient to eradicate violence against women.

1.2.

THE PERSISTENCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: 1831 WOMEN KILLED IN ONE YEAR

Every year, approximately 60,000 women and girls are killed throughout the world.³⁸ Of the 25 countries with the highest rates of femicide/

femicide, 14 are in Latin America and the Caribbean. The number of gender-related killings of women and girls is alarming: in 2016 alone, a total of 1831 gender-related killings of women and girls were recorded in 16 countries of the region.³⁹

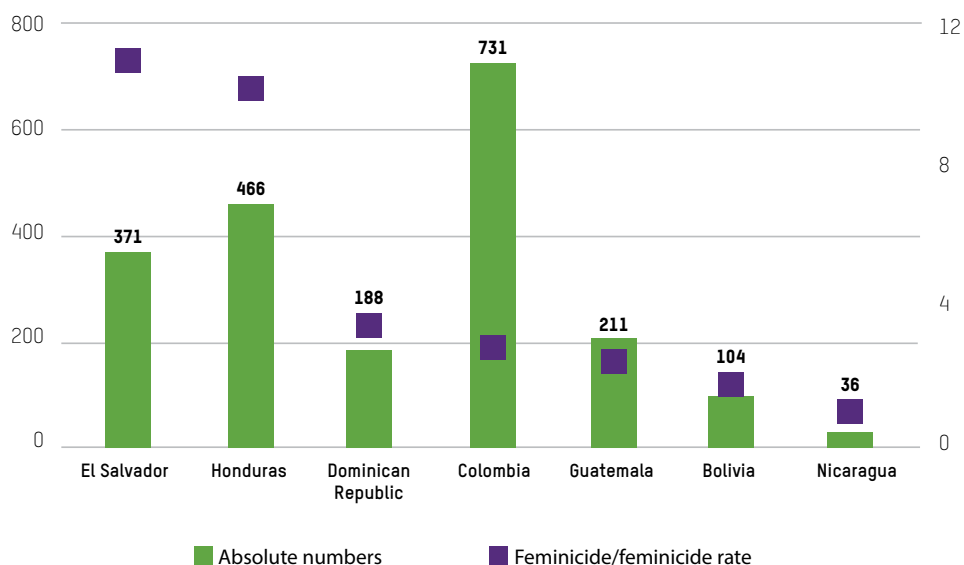
Femicide/feminicide rates allow us to make comparisons based on country population.^{xiii} Thus, a country with a higher population (Colombia) and the highest number of feminicides in absolute terms has a lower rate than other countries (Figure 1). The countries with the highest femicide/feminicide rates are **El Salvador** and **Honduras**, with 11 and 10.2 women killed respectively for every 100,000 women. These are followed by the **Dominican Republic** (3.5), **Colombia** (2.9) and **Guatemala** (2.5). **Bolivia** (1.9) and **Nicaragua** (1.1) are the countries with the lowest rates, while **Cuba** has no available data (Figure 1).

Violence against women is commonplace. According to our research with young people aged 15–25, most have female friends who have experienced physical or sexual violence in the past year. This is especially so among young women and men aged 20–25 (Figure 2).

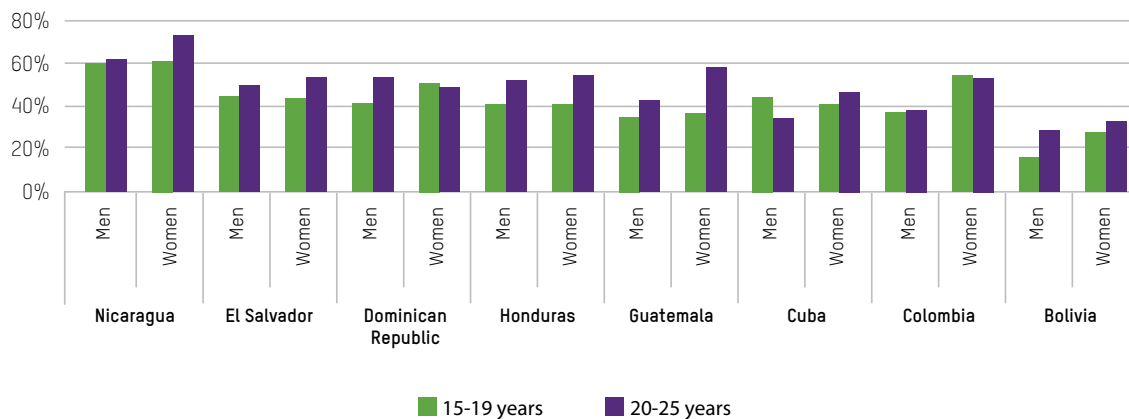
^{xiii} Femicide/feminicide rates give a comparative view of the various countries, showing the average absolute number of femicides/feminicides divided by the female population, for every 100,000 inhabitants. The rates have been calculated according to the data obtained from the ECLAC database. CEPALSTAT (2017). ECLAC database: <http://interwp.cepal.org/sisgen/ConsultaIntegrada.asp?idIndicador=2503&idioma=e>

FIGURE 1.**FEMICIDES/FEMINICIDES RECORDED IN 2016**

(ABSOLUTE NUMBER AND RATE PER 100,000 WOMEN)



SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON DATA FROM ECLAC AND THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF LEGAL MEDICINE AND FORENSIC SCIENCES OF COLOMBIA.

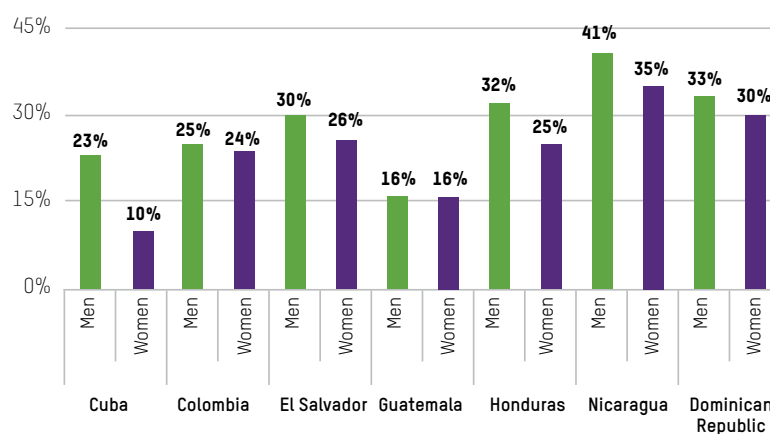
FIGURE 2.**YOUNG PEOPLE WITH FEMALE FRIENDS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS**

SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON DATA FROM CLACSO-OXFAM.

Nicaragua is the country with the highest percentage of young people recognizing that violence is close at hand. Here, 63 percent of men and 75 percent of women aged 20–25 reported knowing female friends who have been subject to male violence. In **Bolivia**, although the percentage is lower, it is significant that 16 percent of young people aged 15–19, and 28 percent of women, know female friends who have experienced male violence in the past 12 months.

Across the eight countries involved in the study, a quarter of all young people point out that their male friends beat their female partners. In **Nicaragua**, it is alarming that 4 out of every 10 young men know a friend who beats his girlfriend; in the **Dominican Republic**, 3 out of every 10 young people admit that violence is tolerated (Figure 3).^{xiv}

FIGURE 3.
PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A MALE FRIEND WHO BEATS THEIR PARTNER



SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON DATA FROM CLACSO-OXFAM.

The basis for this justification is that 62 percent of young men and 55 percent of young women believe that insults traded during arguments between couples are normal (Figure 4). Verbal abuse is considered normal mainly by young men: by 68 percent of young men in **Guatemala** and 66 percent of young men in the **Dominican Republic**. In **Cuba** and **Nicaragua**, women are more likely to consider insults between couples as normal (68 percent and 64 percent respectively) (Figure 4).

Psychological violence (such as verbal abuse) is usually a precursor of physical violence.

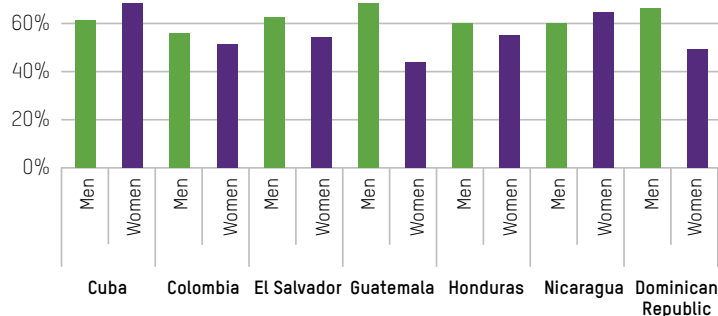
^{xv} In the Latin America and Caribbean region, 7 out of 10 women over the age of 15 who were married or in a relationship reported experiencing psychological violence in that relationship, and 4 out of 10 reported being subject to psychological violence in the past 12 months, according to a survey conducted by Bolivia's National Institute of Statistics in 2016.⁴¹

^{xiv}
^{xv}

Bolivia is not included in the graph due to the fact that no questions were asked regarding the behaviour of friends. Acts of emotional abuse included insults, lack of respect, humiliation, intimidation or threats of various kinds (bodily harm, taking away their children, abandonment or denying financial support).

FIGURE 4.

PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO CONSIDER IT NORMAL FOR COUPLES TO INSULT EACH OTHER DURING ARGUMENTS



SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON DATA FROM CLACSO-OXFAM.

In **Cuba**, limited availability of national data on violence against women hinders analysis of the extent of the problem.^{xvi} Nevertheless, existing data indicate that, between 2006 and 2009, 88.5 percent of those who attended Women and Family Counselling Centres were women, half of whom reported their partners as aggressors. Psychological violence is the most widespread form of abuse, and 68.1 percent of cases take place within the home.⁴²

Violence against women is also perpetrated by strangers and in public spaces. In Bogotá (Colombia), 60 percent of young women aged 18–29 had experienced harassment on public transport in 2013.⁴³ In **Bolivia**, 60 percent of women have been the target of comments of a sexual nature that have made them feel uncomfortable, 31.3 percent indicated that they had been groped, 22.9 percent reported having been physically

assaulted and 6.2 percent reported having been raped. There is a standardization of harassment on the streets, in the form of so-called compliments and/or wolf whistles, which are considered commonplace behaviour by 75 percent of young people in the region.

All these forms of violence affect women's lives and their autonomy, but gender inequality is aggravated by other forms of discrimination, based on income, race (see Box 1), ethnicity or sexual orientation and other identities. It is therefore necessary to consider all forms of discrimination that cut across gender and place women at different levels of disadvantage. It is also important to note that women are not a homogenous group; they experience 'different realities defined by structural factors that interact with gender, such as income levels, educational level, age of first pregnancy, ethnicity and race'.^{xvii}

^{xvi} A National Survey on Gender Equality was undertaken in 2017, including data on violence within relationships. This information will be available in 2018 and is an important step forward to understanding the magnitude and extent of the problem in the country.

^{xvii} Levels of empowerment refers to the different economic levels that act as steps to economic power, using the metaphors of 'sticky floor', 'broken stairs' and 'glass ceiling' referring to diverse economic inequalities between women in response to specific obstacles and challenges. See: M. Mansukhani (coord.) (2017). Progress of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean 2017. Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights. Panama: UN Women.

RACISM AND VIOLENCE⁴⁵

Racism is a practice that becomes visible mainly through individual behaviours, such as insults, name-calling, or aggression; it is, however, supported by learning patterns of unequal relations, by structures and institutions which reproduce prejudice, expressions or laws that perpetuate differences under a certain hierarchy. Arguments legitimizing racism use ethnic diversity and skin colour by dividing social groups into 'us' and 'them'. Colonialism established a global ideal of beauty which enshrined white people and discriminated against those who did not meet this standard, positioning the first as the dominant group and the latter as inferior. 'Ever since the Spanish invasion we have been made to think that we are the servants, working for those who are considered beautiful' (woman, focus group discussion, [Guatemala](#)).

Structural racism paints both the indigenous population and Afro-Americans as inferior, subordinate beings, whose demand for recognition and traditions is a problem for development. This argument is used to justify their isolation and curtail their rights and serves to perpetuate the violent behaviours they suffer.

In particular, indigenous women have been considered as bearers of culture, and have long been made invisible, disqualified and treated as sexual objects in an attempt to rob them of their knowledge and their ability to work. This discrimination and undervaluing of their culture continues today; they are stigmatized as 'servants' or 'vendors', paid lower wages and denied access to public places if wearing their traditional dress (among other forms of discrimination). All of this is also reflected in the re-victimization they suffer within public institutions, which has meant that indigenous women do not report the violence they are subjected to because their rights are not upheld by the public justice system. 'It is not easy to identify the men because they do not wear traditional dress, and therefore all racial and patriarchal discrimination is borne by the women' (man, focus group discussion, [Bolivia](#)).

Despite the changes that have been taking place in the region in recent decades to address the inequalities and violence suffered by indigenous peoples – such as the recognition of collective identity and of cultural, social, political and economic rights – racial stereotypes still persist. Young people born in the midst of this process of recognition of differences still echo racist arguments, albeit in a more subtle manner, and thus perpetuate racist violence. It is therefore essential to continue to target such arguments and practices with the aim of eradicating discrimination and violence and promoting equal relationships and respect for differences.

For example, impoverished women, lesbians, young women, transgender, indigenous women or women of African descent suffer greater discrimination, which in turn increases structural gender inequality.

Impoverishment is related not only to economic conditions, but also to use and availability of time. The burden of unpaid care and domestic work falls mainly on women, who perform daily tasks that generate no income but consume much of their time.^{xviii}

In **Colombia**, families in some indigenous populations (such as the Wayuu) were reported to have forced young adolescent girls to marry men they did not know for financial considerations.⁴⁶ Embera families also performed female genital mutilation (FGM) on young and newborn girls.⁴⁷ In **Bolivia**, between 2003 and 2008, indigenous women reported experiencing higher levels of physical or sexual violence.⁴⁸

Violence suffered by lesbians and transgender people is part of male violence against women and heterosexual culture. Discrimination based on gender identity is also evident in the lack of policies challenging cultural patterns.

The conservative and religious discourse prevalent in the region, and which considers recognition of such rights as *gender ideology*, creates frameworks which tend to justify hate crimes committed against lesbians or transgender people.⁴⁹ For example, the **Dominican Republic** reported cases of discrimination against lesbians in health care centres, where they were not provided with the necessary means for prevention of sexually transmitted infections.



Young people aged 15–19 in Honduras and the Dominican Republic are the most lesbophobic, with 70 percent of Hondurans and 67 percent of Dominicans claiming that lesbians should hide their sexual orientation in public places. Also, they believe it is not normal for people who are born with male genitalia to dress as women. Data compiled by Oxfam evidences the persistence of male violence towards women in the region. Moreover, the normalization of discriminatory behaviour and attitudes among young people is one of the most important drivers of inequality.

^{xviii} The average number of hours per week spent on unpaid work, considering 10 countries in the region, is 13.72 hours for men and 39.13 hours for women. ECLAC (2017). 'Total Work Time'. Gender Equality Observatory. <https://oig.cepal.org/es>, last accessed 21 December 2017.



AURA GONZALES, GUATEMALA

My greatest ambition is for all young people to have a voice

«My name is Aura Gonzales. I come from a family of eight: my parents, three brothers and two sisters. I am the fifth child. I am 18 years old and belong to a youth organization in the municipality of Santa María Cunén (Quiché, Guatemala). In my village, I am the leader of a group of young people from the Barrio San Juan area, in which we promote actions such as awareness-raising, prevention, support and speaking up about violence, so that women can lead a life free from violence.

When I was 8, my father had a drinking problem and he used to beat my mother and my brothers and sisters. Ever since I can remember, my father beat my mother. We used to hide so that we didn't have to see her suffering. When I was 9, I started to work at a neighbour's house doing chores, and earned 10 quetzals (\$1.36) per day. I stopped going to school every day and so did not pass the year. I decided to study in the evenings and keep my work in the mornings. That was how I was able to pass all the elementary grades. When I was 13, my father used to work on the farm, but he didn't contribute to household expenses. To cover all our needs and look after my brothers and sisters, my mother used to work chopping wood, doing household chores, washing clothes or working in the fields. At 14, I managed to get a job at a shop in the town of Uspantán, Quiché, and gave the money I earned to my mother to contribute to family expenses. When I was 16, my mother received an invitation from the IXMUCANÉ association for one of her daughters to take part in a training programme for young people, and she chose me. I received training on issues such as citizen participation, local power and empowerment of women. I gradually began sharing my knowledge with other indigenous women and young people in the public schools and communities of Cunén.

The main problems facing young people and indigenous women in their communities are violence in all its forms, discrimination, work exploitation and racism, in addition to the huge inequalities that indigenous people have to live with compared to people of mixed race. One of the ways in which we can fight against such problems is informing women and young persons in the communities of their rights. I believe that change is in the women themselves; they simply have to decide to act.

At the age of 17 I completed my basic studies, and, taking advantage of the fact that I was studying, IXMUCANÉ requested the programme director for a space in which I could pass on my knowledge to my peers. Unfortunately, none of the municipal, department or national governments takes action to mitigate these problems, which are not considered a priority. However, I feel that personally I've had many changes in my life and my greatest ambition is for all young people to have their own voice, so that nobody decides for them, and to be proud to be indigenous».



Chapter 2.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1.

OXFAM'S UNDERSTANDING OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The underlying drivers of violence against women are the unequal power relations between men and women, which place men in a superior, privileged position simply because they are men.

We do not speak of 'domestic violence' or 'intra-family violence' because these are 'concepts that define the space in which violence takes place, without specifying that women are the main victims (in their role of wife, mother, sister, grandmother, etc.)'.⁵¹ Moreover, they are terms that do not take into account other spaces and forms of violence that women face.

The concept of male violence refers to the multiple mechanisms that are used to exclude those who do not conform to the heterosexual norm. All bodies that defy this imposed order are subjected to control mechanisms.⁵²

Violence against women is a breach of human rights. It occurs between couples and in family relationships, in the home, on the streets, in schools, workplaces, parks, public transport, markets and recreational spaces.

The levels of vulnerability that heterosexual norms, misogyny and racism expose women

to depend on the conditions in which each woman lives. It is therefore essential to carry out an analysis on intersectionality in order to denounce and make visible the additional discrimination endured by women who are black, indigenous, rural, young, unemployed, displaced, migrant, lesbian, transgender or impoverished.^{xix}

Impunity underpins male violence against women. Femicides/feminicides, sexual abuse, sexual harassment in the street and the denial of economic rights put in place a system that reminds men and women of their different place in society.⁵³

2.2.

WHAT ARE HARMFUL BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS, AND HOW ARE THEY CREATED, INTERNALIZED AND TRANSFORMED?

2.2.1. BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS

The study of social norms has rapidly gained ground in recent years, with much of the literature generated in English-speaking Western countries using specific theoretical frameworks.⁵⁴ The feminist movement in Latin America and the Caribbean has also analysed the impact of belief systems and gender norms on the prevalence of violence against women at three levels (the personal, the group, and the context/culture) (Figure 5).^{xx}

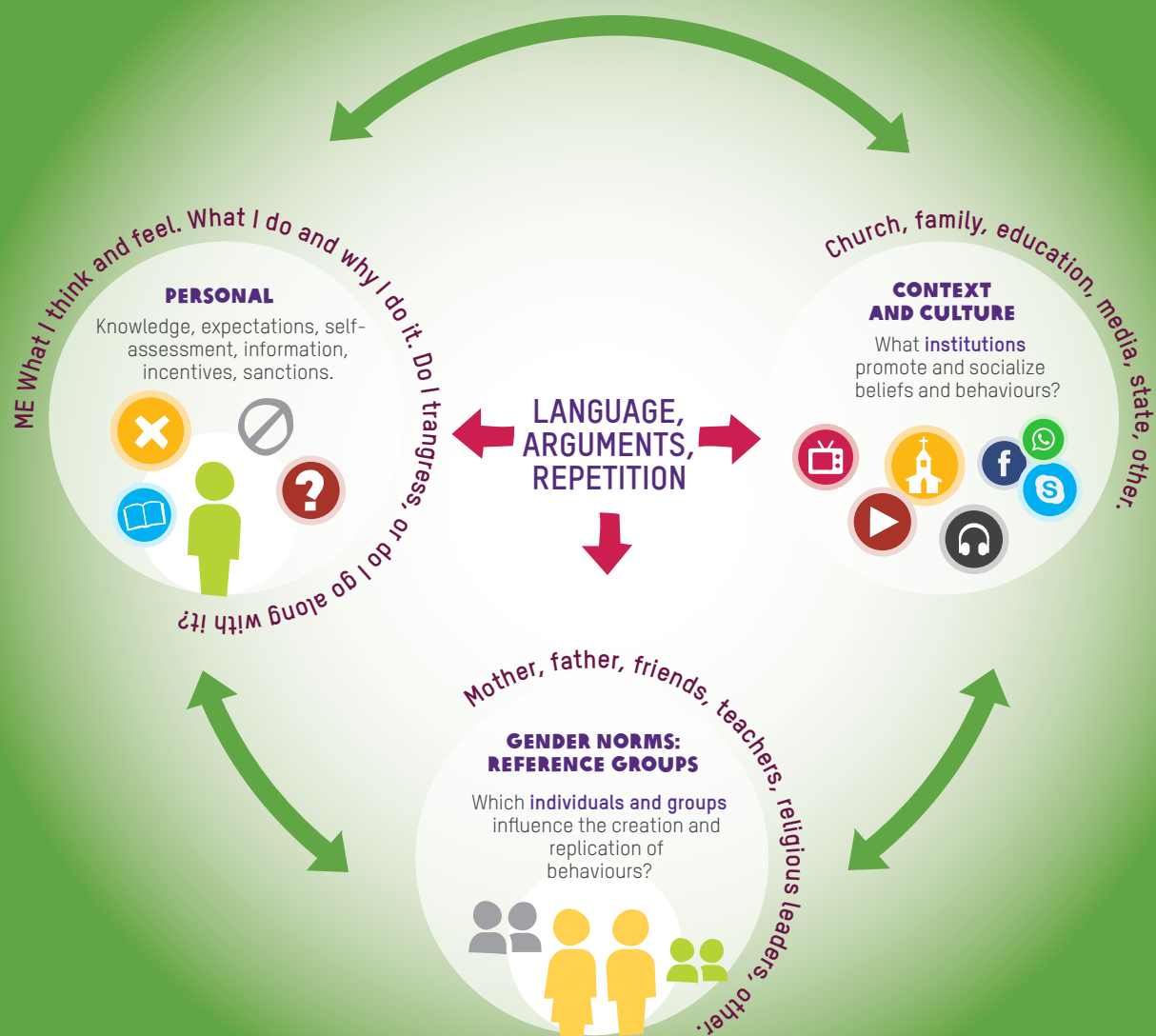
^{xix} The assumption that heterosexuality is the only alternative, which is imposed as a way of life for men and women to the exclusion of all other options that are not heterosexual.

^{xx} A workshop was held in March 2016 in Medellín (Colombia), where 60 women from countries of Latin America and the Caribbean had the chance to reflect on belief systems and violence against women.

FIGURE 5.

UNDERSTANDING BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

BELIEF SYSTEMS



SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON STUDIES AND WORKSHOPS FOR DESIGN OF THE ENOUGH CAMPAIGN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN.

«For feminists and women's organizations, it has been a challenge to work on the transformation of harmful belief systems. This is a key issue for cultural, social and political transformation, given that when referring to belief systems and social norms, we are addressing the mechanisms devised by tradition that have an impact on everyday life. This is why it becomes an urgent challenge for women's organizations and feminist movements, and also for the state, to build proposals emerging from everyday situations, since that is where the different scenarios of inequality and violence against women are forged and established».

Clara Inés Mazo, Colombian Feminist. Regional meeting of feminist networks 'Resistance and alliances in the face of inequalities and violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean' held in Medellín, March 2016, organized by Oxfam.

Some studies^{55 56} claim that belief systems about gender take into account the elements that determine social norms (reference groups and behaviours), but also that context and culture play a key role, where historically certain institutions have acted to build structures that regulate what one should think, believe and do.

Such institutions (the family, the church, markets, media, education systems) have the power to dictate rules, deny the interests of certain groups, and get individuals and groups to interact with society without actually thinking why and how they are doing so. They thus succeed in getting established inequalities accepted through feelings of submission, guilt and fear, and tend to have substantial influence on the implementation of public policies. The church, the media and education systems are based on a sense of tradition and what is considered an unquestionable duty.

One of the better examples is the power of religious fundamentalism, which primarily,

through more conservative churches, has huge influence on the narrative, discourse and positioning of public officials and the executive leadership of private companies. This is reflected in the content and mechanisms for implementation of public policies and programmes that impose a sole truth, deny diversity in all its forms, impose the subordination of women, rigid family models and motherhood, and reject abortion and homosexuality.⁵⁷ In almost all countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, churches have led the anti-rights movements and have played a significant role in the criminalization of abortion and the prohibition of comprehensive sex education.⁵⁸

It is important to note that social norms place the focus of attention on reference groups, which determine what individuals think and do. People assume that they can be punished if they do not act as expected in their reference group or, conversely, that by acting as expected they will be rewarded.⁵⁹

By using the two concepts of belief systems and gender norms (see Table 2), we are highlighting the main references from the analysis and proposals of the feminist movement in the region, as well as taking up the contributions from analysis by the academic community.

TABLE 2.
KEY CONCEPTS AROUND BELIEF SYSTEMS AND SOCIAL NORMS⁶⁰

SOCIAL NORM	A pattern of behaviour influenced by a desire to conform to the social expectations of a particular reference group.
DESCRIPTIVE NORM	Refers to common or typical behaviour – what it is believed people do. For example: «Women sometimes play hard to get, they say NO, when they really mean YES».
INJUNCTIVE NORM	Refers to expected behaviour – what everyone should do. For example: «All women should be mothers».
GENDER NORM⁶¹	Social norms that relate specifically to gender differences. Gender norms are the informal rules and shared social expectations that distinguish how people are expected to behave on the basis of gender (e.g. women and girls should do most housework).
REFERENCE GROUP	A social group whose opinions are important for the person deciding how to behave.
BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES	Regulate what people say and guide actions, setting down both feelings and desires, and ways of thinking. ⁶² Their creation and social application are influenced by powerful institutions in society.

FUENTE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (ODI), CORNELIUS CASTORIADIS⁶³ AND REFLECTIONS ON THE FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGNING THE ENOUGH CAMPAIGN IN LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGION.

2.2.2. HOW BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS ARE CREATED AND INTERNALIZED THROUGH SOCIALIZATION

In the construction of masculinity and femininity lies the deepest roots of the *creation and socialization* of belief systems and gender norms which are structured to reinforce unequal gender relations, where men enjoy a system of privileges that places them in a dominant position over a group (women) that has been identified as opposite or inferior.⁶⁴

The belief system on masculinity presents a male stereotype that is rarely affectionate but is harsh, self-absorbed, without the capacity for empathy and with exaggerated expectations in regard to his manhood as the central element of sexuality. Many men, however, feel that they do not fit this stereotype.⁶⁵ This compels them to act under the permanent scrutiny and evaluation of their peers, reconfirming their capacity for resistance, aggression, and dominance and control over women. Similarly, many women live

with the frustration of having to comply with the ideal standards required by belief systems and gender norms.

This *hegemonic masculinity* is based on a patriarchal ideology which proposes: a male parent-provider figure who exercises power over the children and women in his household; a self-sufficient, rational figure capable of imposing his will; subordination of anyone they consider different to them; and, lastly, the heteronormativity that imposes heterosexual relationships as the norm.

Subordinated femininity is formed on a representation of femininity based solely on the ideal of beauty and perfection – that the female body is for others, who control and regulate what women feel, think and experience, including in their reproductive capacity and their sexuality. Moreover, it engrains the idea of women as dependent and needy, desirous of male protection.⁶⁶

Hegemonic masculinity and subordinated femininity are created and socialized through at least four key aspects: language, actions, reiteration, and the support of influential voices within society. Such influence is the result of control of consciousness and indoctrination promoted by social elites, in which the church plays a central role by deeming certain beliefs and behaviours as natural or unquestionable.

2.2.3. TRANSFORMING BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS: 'ALL BODIES' CAN BE TRANSGRESSORS

We can all help to bring about alternative beliefs, attitudes and practices. As the North American philosopher and gender theorist, Judith Butler, noted, 'all bodies, even those subjected to power, have in themselves the possibility of transgressing and breaking away from the norm that creates them in the first place'.⁶⁷

Establishing a norm requires constant repetition to maintain its effects and force.⁶⁸ Thus, a central starting point for the transformation of belief systems and harmful social norms is to adopt mechanisms similar to those which institute the norm to undermine the strength of normalization. Butler⁶⁹ proposes building alternative belief systems and norms by constructing a different discourse and implementing associated actions repeatedly.

LGBTI (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) groups fight for their rights and, though the situation is as yet far from ideal, their activism is a good example of how belief systems and gender norms can be transformed. They have managed to engrain an alternative discourse in different spheres of society, which are also now part of proposals from the academic community, human rights groups and the feminist movement. A vital step has been ensuring that the relevant groups and their discourse are permanently visible in public spaces.

FIGURE 6.**SOME OF THE ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED BY SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER ACTORS FOR TRANSFORMING BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS**

Recognize, analyse and make visible the way in which the systems of power are structured simultaneously on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, class, colour, race, ethnicity, territorial origin, age, or education to reaffirm domination and discrimination.



Work with stakeholders at all levels; diverse bodies as lead players; policies and legal frameworks to support new gender norms; clearly identify the specific population group and context to be influenced.

New individual attitudes; public debates on alternative beliefs and gender norms; evidence what is gained with the belief system and gender norm; establish and create social ownership of the sanctions and rewards related to the alternative belief and gender norm.

Use evidence and testimonials. Research for training.

SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON ANALYSIS FROM THE EQUALITY INSTITUTE, ODI AND DESIGN WORKSHOPS FOR ENOUGH CAMPAIGN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN.

Changing belief systems and gender norms is a slow and complex process, but it is crucial in order to eradicate all forms of violence against women. Some of the most relevant starting points are: knowledge of the context and the population groups we want to work with; identifying the beliefs and behaviours we want to influence; defining alternative belief systems and gender norms; and generating a sustained debate at different levels (community, national, regional and international) and between multiple actors, in which individuals who do not conform to imposed standards play a prominent role.

2.3.

METHODOLOGY

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH METHODS USED THROUGH THE ENOUGH CAMPAIGN
IN LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

This report has been prepared within the framework of the Enough campaign, an international Oxfam initiative to influence the transformation of belief systems and harmful gender norms. The campaign, entitled Enough: Together we can end violence against women and girls, is being flexibly implemented from a networking and multi-stakeholder perspective, linking local, regional and global processes. Individual countries decide the focus of the campaign, the specific target group, its local name, and even whether or not to use the Oxfam brand. The campaigns at the national level co-create with feminist and women's organizations and complement other existing initiatives.⁷¹ Eight countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are taking part in the campaign and are included in this report, with feminist and women's organizations taking a leadership role and young people being the priority focus.

Some of the main events feeding into the report were the regional discussions convened by Oxfam, with broad participation from the feminist movement in the region, particularly the Regional Conference 'Resistance and alliances in the face of inequalities and violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean' held in Medellín, **Colombia**, in March 2016.⁷²

Also feeding into the report were the processes for campaign design in the various countries and on a regional level. Between March and November 2017, workshops were held to design national campaigns, providing platforms for debate and collaboration between Oxfam and feminist, women's and youth organizations. In February 2017, the first regional meeting with feminist organizations of participating countries was held in Ciudad Antigua, **Guatemala**, to agree campaign aims and priorities for the regional component.

RESEARCH PHASE

Oxfam and its partners conducted an initial review of literature on belief systems, gender norms and violence against women in the region. The sources and data on violence were validated by the eight countries included in the report. This phase facilitated the design of the conceptual framework and provided an overview of the situation of violence against women in the region.

Quantitative and qualitative information was also compiled and analysed in this phase:

- Compilation of quantitative information through 4,731 surveys in the eight participating countries, namely **Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua** and the **Dominican Republic**. At least 400 surveys per country were carried out online; however, in **Bolivia** and **Cuba**, surveys were carried out face-to-face, and in **Nicaragua** a combination of methods (online and face-to-face) was used. The survey contained 22 standard closed-ended questions, and a few country-specific questions to capture the particular cultural or national context^{xxi}.

xxi

In seven out of the eight countries, the surveys were conducted during March and April 2017. However, in Bolivia they were carried out between September and December 2016.

- Compilation of qualitative information through 47 focus groups with young people and 49 in-depth interviews with experts on the issue (journalists and a number of other influencers).^{xxii}

In all countries except **Bolivia**, compilation and processing of information was coordinated by CLACSO, with national research teams working with Oxfam in-country, under the leadership of the Oxfam regional platform. In **Bolivia**, there were some peculiarities due to the fact that the survey was carried out earlier (September to December 2016), and not all questions that were addressed in the other seven countries were considered.

The sample comprised women and men aged 15–25 years, of which 51 percent were aged 15–19 and 49 percent were aged 20–25. Of the total sample, 55 percent were women, 44 percent were men, and 1 percent were transgender men and women and others. It is important to note that 87 percent said they lived in urban areas, 70 percent classed themselves as of medium social standing, and 78 percent were students. Of these, 37 percent were secondary school students and 50 percent university students.

Dividing the sample by age and gender, alongside the country comparisons, has been key in highlighting specific issues and evidencing which particular beliefs, attitudes and gender norms are

more prominent in a particular country and among a particular group (whether by age or gender).

The report identifies eight belief systems and gender norms that sustain violence against women in the region. To do this, in the first instance we analysed the most significant harmful beliefs and gender norms in each country, then compared these across the eight countries to determine which were most common. When conducting this analysis, only the countries with the highest values were included. (The breakdown by country is available on request.)

We have decided to use the metaphor of three mirrors to organize these harmful beliefs and gender norms. Chapter 3 provides details of specific beliefs and behaviours; it gives a regional average, an indication as to the groups for which that behaviour is most significant, and the countries in which it is strongest.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the report reflects on the ways in which masculinity and femininity have been constructed; there is no intention to place women at one extreme and men at the other, much less to reinforce the idea of women versus men. We are all the product of an androcentric system that has determined our beliefs and behaviours. The challenge is to question and change the belief systems and gender norms that perpetuate violence against women.

^{xxii} The focus groups and in-depth interviews were conducted between June and July 2017.

Chapter 3.

CHALLENGES IN TRANSFORMING BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS THAT REINFORCE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Prevalent belief systems and harmful gender norms among women and men aged 15–25

This chapter analyses the eight most harmful belief systems and social norms that prevail in the population studied (see Table 3). For the analysis, we use the metaphors of three mirrors: *distorting mirrors*, *augmenting mirrors* and *worn (or outdated) mirrors*. We consider belief systems and gender norms as representing mirrors in which men and women are obliged to see themselves, believing and behaving in such a way as to ensure compliance with the gender roles prescribed for them throughout their lives.

The belief systems and gender norms for each mirror are sustained by beliefs and behaviours – ‘I believe’ and ‘what I think my friends believe’; behaviours reveal ‘what I do’ and ‘what I think my friends do’. We also present some positive beliefs, which signal the potential to reassign the meaning of the three mirrors.

By specifying which of the groups in our sample shows the strongest belief or behaviour at any time, we are in no way indicating that

the incidence is much lower among the other groups.

- *Distorting mirrors* are beliefs, attitudes and norms associated with direct control over women’s bodies in relation to one of the strongest champions of hegemonic masculinity – male virility.
- *Augmenting mirrors* include beliefs, attitudes and norms that are also expressions of control, but in relation to romantic love and expressions of sexuality that leave no room for anything other than compulsory heterosexuality.
- The main aspect of *worn (or outdated) mirrors* is the standardization of certain forms of violence and entrenched ideas about which attributes make a good woman, which exploit women’s bodies and how they use their time, and which are wholly incompatible with life.

TABLE 3.**EIGHT BELIEF SYSTEMS BASED ON GENDER NORMS, WITH THEIR ACCOMPANYING BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURS****DISTORTING MIRRORS**

BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS	BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURS THAT SUSTAIN THEM	GROUPS WITH THE HIGHEST FIGURES, REGIONAL AVERAGE
1 Men should take advantage of all the opportunities that arise, women typically give grounds for this	A decent woman should not dress provocatively, nor walk alone on the streets late at night	Men 15-19 years: 72%
	If a woman gets drunk, then a man can have sexual relations with her, even if she is not conscious	Men 15-19 years: 40%
2 A real man must have sexual relations when he wants and with whoever he wants; not so for women	Women sometimes act hard to get for having sexual relations, saying NO when they really mean YES	Men 15-19 years: 65%
	It is common for a man who is drunk to beat or force a woman to have sexual relations	Men 15-19 years: 62%
	Men get angry if their partner does not want to have sexual relations. What they think their friends believe	Men 20-25 years: 69%
	Men can have sexual relations with whoever they want, women cannot. What they think their friends believe	Men and Women 20-25 years: 81%
	Men have greater sexual desire than women	Women and Men 15-19 years: 88%
3 Women's bodies should always be controlled, available and criticised	It is safer for women if a man accompanies them on the street. What they think their friends believe	Men 20-25 years: 87%
	It is normal for a man to compliment a woman on the street. What they think their friends believe	Women 20-25 years: 78%
	It is not appropriate for a woman to end an unwanted pregnancy	Men 15-19 years: 84%

AUGMENTED MIRRORS



BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS	BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURS THAT SUSTAIN THEM	GROUPS WITH THE HIGHEST FIGURES, REGIONAL AVERAGE
4 Men must control women	Checking your partner's mobile phone is not violence. What they think their friends do	Women 15-19 years: 84%
	Controlling your partner's social networks is not violence. What they think their friends do	Men 15-19 years: 58%
	Telling your partner what clothes to wear. What they think their friends do	Men 20-25 years: 59%
	Jealousy is an expression of love	Men 15-19 years: 63%
5 Lesbian and transgender practices must be kept private	It is NOT normal for people who are born with male genitalia to dress as women	Men 15-19 years: 62%
	Lesbians should not show their sexual orientation in public. What they believe their friends believe	Women 20-25 years: 73%

WORN/OURDATED MIRRORS



BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS	BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURS THAT SUSTAIN THEM	GROUPS WITH THE HIGHEST FIGURES, REGIONAL AVERAGE
6 A man has the right to correct or discipline the behaviour of women and for that he can use any type of violence. There are reasons why women endure violence:	Women endure violence for the sake of their children	Men and Women 20-25 years: 80%
	Women endure violence because of financial dependency	Men and Women 20-25 years: 59%
	Women do not escape violence because they believe that it is normal	Men and Women 20-25 years: 47%
	Women do not escape violence because the men threaten to kill them	Men and Women 20-25 years: 64%
	No one should interfere in fights between couples	Men and Women 20-25 years: 86%
7 Men should be the providers, and women caregivers, making only complementary contributions	Where possible, it is better for the man to be the family breadwinner and for the women take care of the children	Men 15-19 years: 56%
	In the event of firing someone, it is best to keep the man's job because they usually generate most of the family income	Men 15-19 years: 46%
8 All women should be mothers	All women should be mothers. What they think their friends believe	Men 15-19 years: 79%



SOFÍA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

«I like helping people»

Now aged 21, Sofía has had to survive social inequalities and gender-based violence from an early age. At the age of 7 she was raped repeatedly by a teacher at the school: «He used to take me to a small room, he groped and kissed me, he took out his penis, and touched my private parts; I did not move and then he gave me “lechita”» (a small pot of milk provided by the government as part of the food programme in state schools). She never reported these abuses, and did not even tell her mother or father; her case went unnoticed and is not included in the yearly average of 6,000 complaints of sexual offences at the national level, according to data from the Office of the Attorney General.

In her silent world, the girl was marked by this atrocious imposition on the privacy of her body, which caused her to have low self-esteem: «I felt very bad when I realised that he did not have to do that to me, and I used to say to myself: how can a man do something like that to a girl? I felt uncomfortable, despised». Her submission and low self-esteem had an impact in her adolescent years, in a hostile family and community environment where she was sexually exploited: «My life changed a bit. Then I sold myself; if someone gave me money, I let them “do things” [to me]. It was all the same to me, I was isolated. Men called me on my cell phone or sent me WhatsApp messages and we would meet up. I did it out of necessity».

Fearful after receiving threats from one of her exploiters, Sofia took part in a programme to help young people and attended a leadership workshop as part of that programme, which alerted her to the danger she was in; she realised she was a victim of sexual exploitation, and decided to put an end to it. She dedicated herself to her studies, and graduated with honours. Later on, she took part in training sessions for young people run by two national non-government organizations (NGOs) on sex education and prevention of violence against women, and these contributed to the process of personal empowerment. This allowed Sofia to end a violent relationship she had with a young man who lived abroad and enjoy a new relationship in which she has set her own limits on her body and her life.

Today, Sofía educates others on family hygiene, working directly with children and their parents. She provides training on sex education and prevention of sexually transmitted infections to young people, and holds a certification in the use of ‘training of trainers’ methodology. «My greatest satisfaction is seeing changes in the lives of the children and young people I work with as a result of the programme and the training; I am proud to see them improve!». This work has allowed her to pay for her medical studies at the state university. ‘I chose this career because I like helping people».



3.1.

DISTORTING MIRRORS

Distorting mirrors refers to the beliefs and behaviours that distort relations between men and women, in which *male virility* is assumed as the central attribute of hegemonic masculinity

[see Figure 7]. Moreover, women's bodies are considered to be always available for men and for the purposes of reproduction, without their own desires and without sexual freedom.

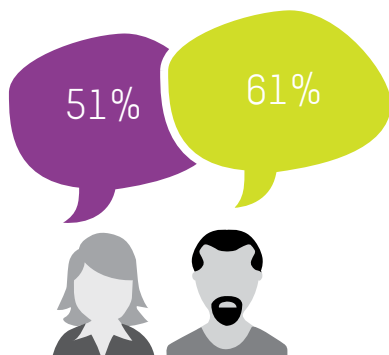
FIGURE 7.**THE THREE BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS OF DISTORTING MIRRORS, WITH THEIR ASSOCIATED BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURS**

The numbers in parenthesis are the age ranges of the people that answered to each associated belief and/or behaviour.

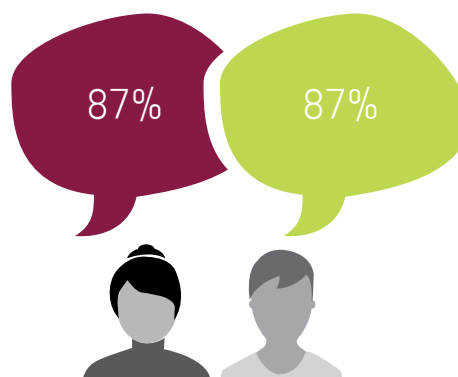


A REAL MAN MUST HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS WHEN HE WANTS AND WITH WHOEVER HE WANTS; NOT SO FOR WOMEN.

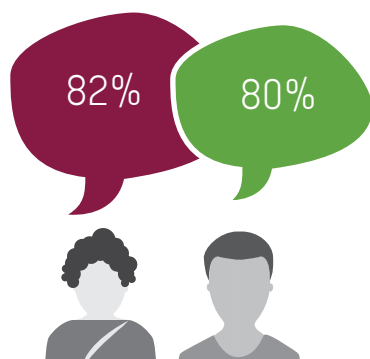
- It is common for a man who is drunk to beat or force a woman to have sexual relations (15-19).



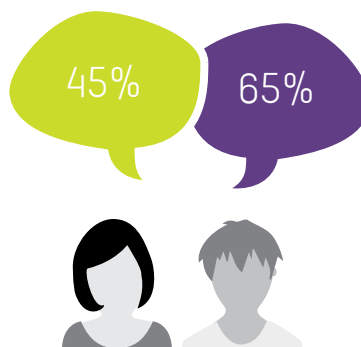
- Men have greater sexual desire than women (15-19).



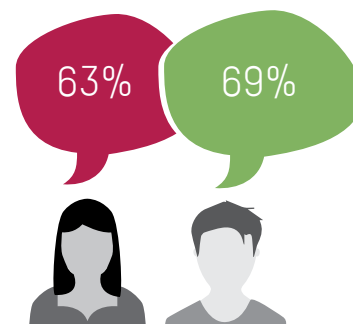
- Men can have sexual relations with whoever they want, women cannot. What they think their friends believe (20-25).



- Women sometimes act hard to get for having sexual relations, saying NO when they really mean YES (15-19).



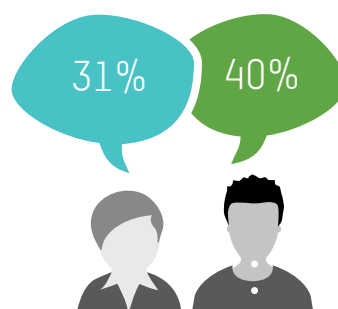
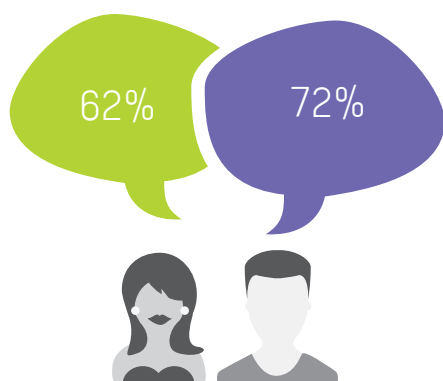
- Men get angry if their partner does not want to have sexual relations. What they think their friends believe (20-25).



MEN SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARISE, WOMEN TYPICALLY GIVE GROUNDS FOR THIS.

- A decent woman should not dress provocatively, nor walk alone on the streets late at night (15-19).

- If a woman gets drunk, then a man can have sexual relations with her, even if she is not conscious (15-19).

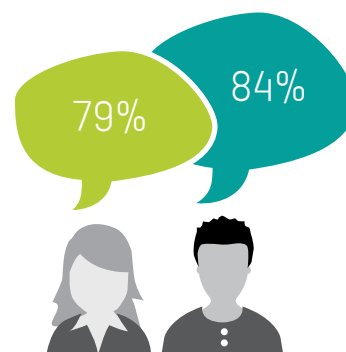
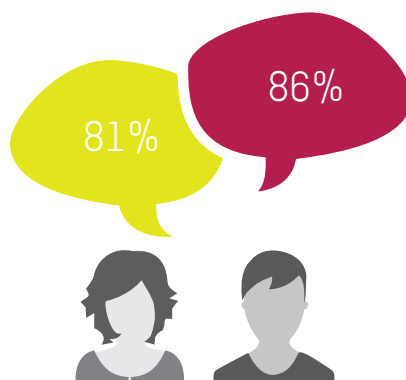


WOMEN'S BODIES SHOULD ALWAYS BE CONTROLLED, AVAILABLE AND CRITICISED

- It is normal for a man to compliment a woman on the street. What they think their friends believe (20-25).

- It is safer for women if a man accompanies them on the street. What they think their friends believe (20-25).

- It is not appropriate for a woman to end an unwanted pregnancy (15-19).



«Men should take advantage of all the opportunities that arise, women typically give grounds for this» and «A real man must have sexual relations when he wants and with whoever he wants, not so women» are two elements of a belief system that privileges men and places women in a position of subordination with respect to exercising a sexuality that justifies abuse of power against women. These are beliefs that perpetuate the idea that women are to stay only within intimate circles.⁷³

These beliefs are especially prevalent among men aged 15–19, followed by women of the same age group. Men believe they have the authority and the right to act in certain ways in relation to women's bodies, including getting angry if their partner does not want to have sex. This belief, which justifies sexual violence (the assertion that when women say «no», they actually mean «yes»), is highest among men aged 15–19 (reaching 65 percent).

The belief that women who experience violence are the guilty party – whether because of how they dress, because they walk on the streets alone at night or because they have drunk alcohol – is especially worrying. In addition, it is argued that *if men drink, they cannot control themselves*.

Assertions that *men have greater sexual desire than women*, and that they *can have sexual relations with whoever they want, while women cannot*, are some of the most significant features of *hegemonic masculinity* (see Figure 8).^{xxiii}

The beliefs that follow from this first set of assertions – that (1) *a decent woman should not dress provocatively, nor walk alone on the streets late at night because she may be raped or harmed*, and (2) *if a woman gets drunk, then a man can have sexual relations with her, even if she is unconscious* – justify violence against

women and put the blame on women for not conforming to gender norms.

Blaming women for the clothes they wear is a strongly held view in **El Salvador** (85 percent of males aged 15–19) and in **Guatemala** (75 percent), followed by the **Dominican Republic** (72 percent) and **Honduras** (68 percent). In **Colombia, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua** and the **Dominican Republic**, 40 percent of men aged 15–25 believe that sexual violence is justified where women have had one or a few alcoholic drinks:

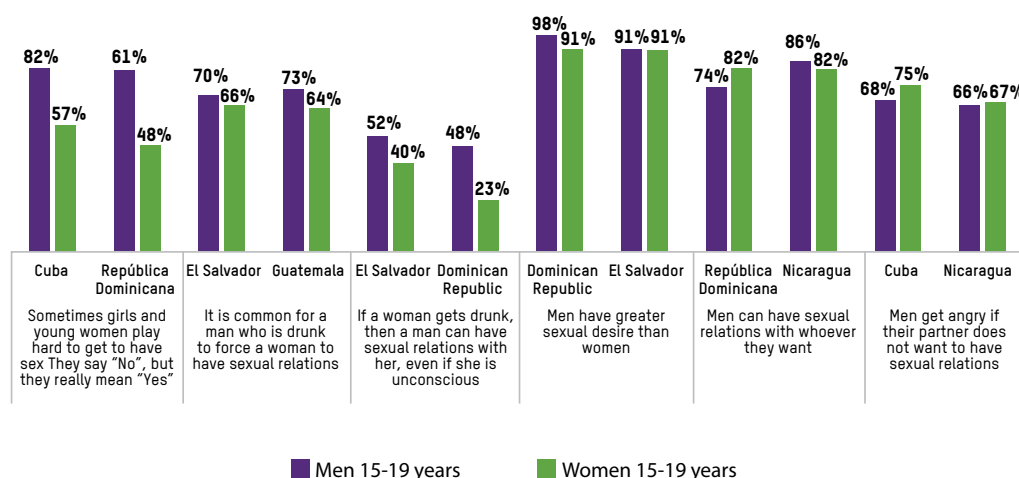
Sometimes it's good not to allow them to be in the pubs or bars... Women start drinking and there are men who are perverts and that's when rapes occur, and after rape come abortions... (Man, focus group discussion, Honduras).



^{xxiii} Hegemonic masculinity: Dominant male attitudes that determine what attributes men should have, such as control, strength, success or sexual desire.”

FIGURE 8.**MANHOOD AS A DETERMINANT OF HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY**

(FOR EACH BELIEF AND BEHAVIOUR OF WOMEN AND MEN AGED 15–19, THE TWO COUNTRIES WITH HIGHEST PREVALENCE ARE SHOWN)

**SOURCE:** COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON THE SURVEYS CARRIED OUT BY OXFAM AND CLACSO.

The notion that «women's bodies should always be controlled, available and criticised» legitimizes **sexual harassment** in the street to reinforce the idea that the *only bodies that can move freely in public places are those of heterosexual men*.

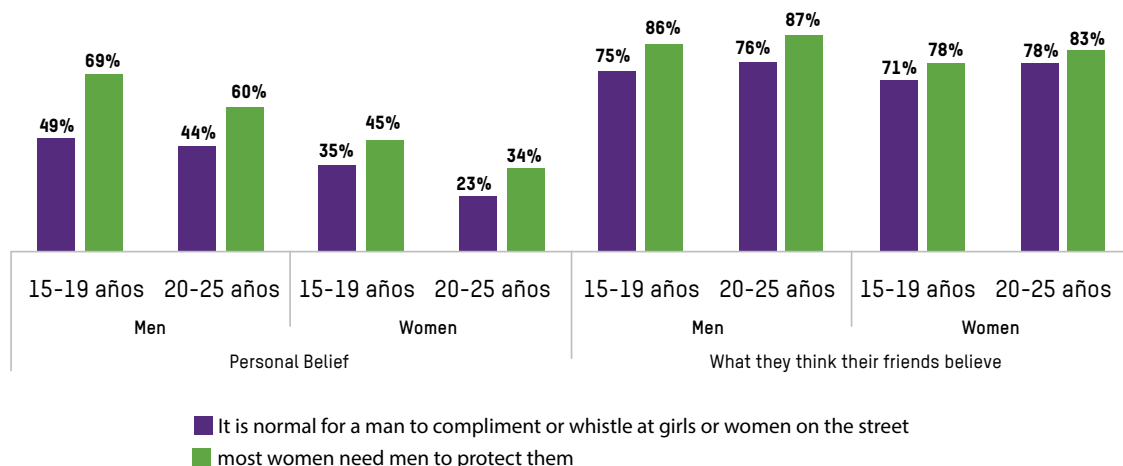
As for the belief that *it is normal for a man to compliment a woman on the street*, Figure 9 shows that 78 percent of women aged 20–25 accept this type of harassment on the streets as normal. The percentage values for this belief across the eight countries in our studies are very similar. **Cuba** (75 percent) and the

Dominican Republic (84 percent) have the highest percentage of men aged 15–19 years who admit that their friends believe they have the right to wolf whistle at women or comment on their bodies.

A compliment is like poetry; a woman has to like it. In other words, something that you say to make her feel attracted to you. So, if you then said something else that might be considered a bad word, that would not be a compliment. (Man, focus group discussion, Dominican Republic).

FIGURE 9.**SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE STREET, PROTECTION OF WOMEN**

(PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO CONSIDER IT NORMAL FOR MEN TO CALL OUT COMPLIMENTS AND PERCENTAGE WHO CONSIDER THAT WOMEN MUST BE PROTECTED BY MEN)



FUENTE: ELABORACIÓN PROPIA A PARTIR DE LAS ENCUESTAS LEVANTADAS POR OXFAM Y CLACSO.

Sexual harassment, in the form of compliment or whistle, in the street curtails women's use and enjoyment of public spaces. The seriousness of this type of violence restricts the development and self-sufficiency of young women in particular.

The main victims of harassment, both on the streets and on public transport, are young women, according to ECLAC. In **Bogotá, Colombia, 6 out of every 10 women have been sexually assaulted on public transport.**⁷⁵ Despite the fact that even going out on the street already implies challenging the obstacle of physical aggression, only 8 percent of Colombians aged 15–25 believe that the situation of women is worse than that of men.

I believe that everything arises from the fact that men see us as sexual objects and as the persons they need to fulfil their sexual needs. And so, they start letting us know how they see us physically and what they would do to us. I don't believe it is wrong if you see a pretty girl on the street and you think she's pretty, but actually saying it exceeds the limits because it is uncomfortable... We've all had that happen to us and it is quite

ugly, it makes you feel afraid and I feel it is very serious because it is not given all the importance it should have. (Woman, focus group discussion, Colombia).

**PAYING COMPLIMENTS
AND WOLF-WHISTLING A
WOMAN ON THE STREET IS
CONSIDERED NORMAL FOR**

 **77%**
OF CUBAN MEN

#

#

#



In other countries, young women aged 20–25 believe that the situation of women with regard to access, use and enjoyment of public spaces is worse than that of men. In **Guatemala** and **Nicaragua**, 66 percent and 54 percent of women respectively identified street harassment as a barrier to their freedom.

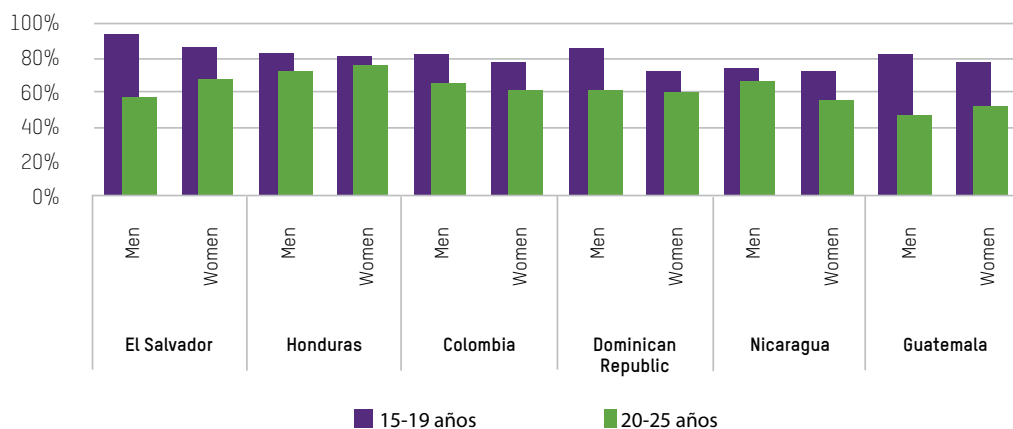
Among men aged 20–25, 87 percent confirmed that their friends believe it is much better if a woman is accompanied by a man, be it a friend, boyfriend, father or male relative. On the one hand, they admit that young women do not enjoy full autonomy. However, there are those who believe that *the situation of women with regard to access, use and enjoyment of public spaces is not so bad*. The assumed safety afforded by the company of a man is directly linked to the belief that women need

protection and cannot move about freely because they are in constant danger of being abused. Many people in the Latin America and Caribbean region reject violence against women, but do not support the voluntary termination of an unwanted pregnancy, and do not regard this as a form of violence that limits women's autonomy and development.

Figure 10 shows just how widely held is the view that women should not end unwanted pregnancies, especially among men aged 15–19, followed by women in the same age bracket.

El Salvador is the country with the highest percentage of young men and women (aged 15–19) who believe it is not appropriate for a woman to end an unwanted pregnancy, at 95 percent and 87 percent respectively.

FIGURE 10.
IT IS INAPPROPRIATE FOR A WOMAN TO END AN UNWANTED PREGNANCY^{XXIV}



SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON SURVEYS CARRIED OUT BY OXFAM AND CLACSO.

3.2. AUGMENTED MIRRORS

We describe the second group of belief systems and gender norms as **augmented mirrors** because these are the ones that result in permanent monitoring to control women's bodies (see Figure 11). These mirrors assume

that every aspect of women's lives should be controlled – who they relate to and how, how they should dress, when they can move about in public spaces. Augmented mirrors reinforce the practices of *romantic love* and *heterosexuality* as the 'mainstream' form of sexuality and therefore the only socially acceptable form.

^{XXIV} There are no figures for Cuba because abortion has been legal since 1965, and the question was not asked in Bolivia.

FIGURE 11.

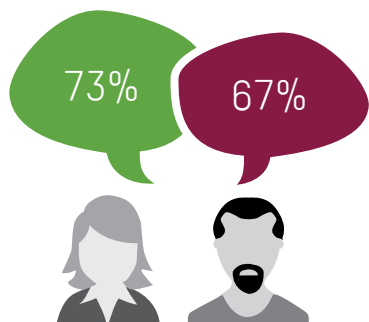
BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS IN **AUGMENTED MIRRORS**, WITH THEIR ASSOCIATED BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURS AND THE GROUPS IN WHICH THEY ARE PREVALENT.

The numbers in parenthesis are the age ranges of the people that answered to each associated belief and/or behaviour.

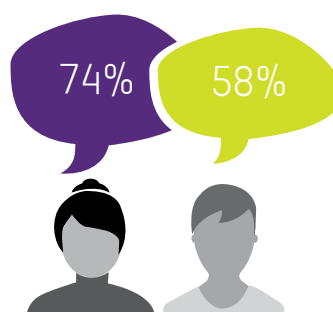


LESBIAN AND TRANSGENDER PRACTICES MUST BE KEPT PRIVATE

- Lesbians should not show their sexual orientation in public. What they believe their friends believe (20-25).

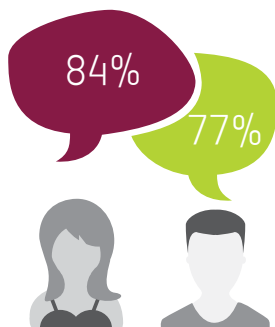


- It is NOT normal for people who are born with male genitalia to dress as women (15-19).



MEN MUST CONTROL WOMEN

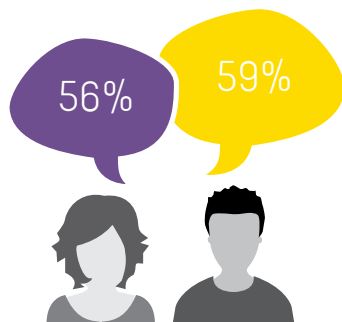
- Checking your partner's mobile phone is not violence. What they think their friends do (15-19).



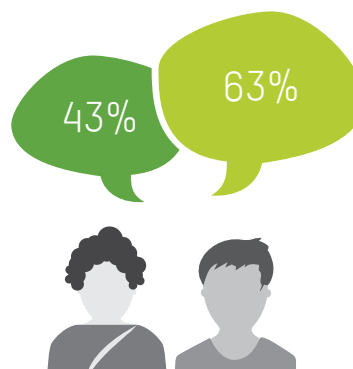
- Controlling your partner's social networks is not violence. What they think their friends do (15-19).



- Telling your partner what clothes to wear. What they think their friends do (20-25).



- Jealousy is an expression of love (15-19).



SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON SURVEYS CARRIED OUT BY OXFAM AND CLACSO.

The belief that he who loves you, cares for you is fed by beliefs that distort and pervert romantic relationships (see Box 3). Notions of romantic love serve to justify men exercising control over women.

FROM ROMANTIC LOVE TO EGALITARIAN LOVE RELATIONSHIPS ^{77,78}

Throughout history, love has been depicted in different ways, building up certain models that are presented as natural and therefore impossible to modify. Often, the emotional ties created between men and women are based on dependency and the promise of loyalty within the relationship, with the premise that love and suffering go hand-in-hand.

Women are encouraged to endure all kinds of male abuse in the name of love. The relationship is idealized and a yearning for romantic love places all priority on the object of your love, changing attitudes and setting aside friendships and even studies, work and ambitions. Romantic love promotes heterosexual, monogamous love, which is limitless in time and assured through marriage. This idea of romantic love has been influenced by poetry, music, stories, myths, religious models, traditions and myriad other beliefs – all of which serve to reinforce the idea that there is only one true love, one other half, one soulmate.

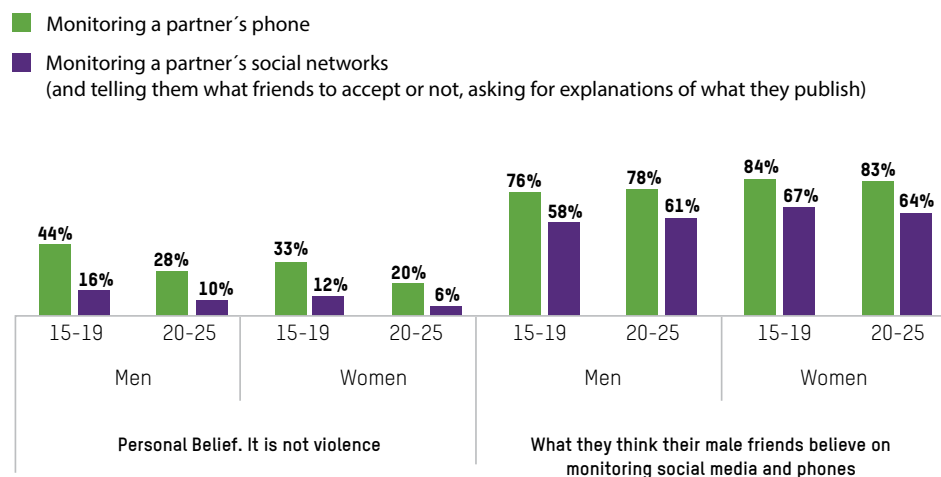
And so, the search is on for the perfect partner. ‘Love is that which makes you give everything regardless of the situation, giving without expecting anything in return’ (woman, focus group discussion, [Bolivia](#)). One conflict arising in these types of relationships is jealousy, which is understood as evidence of love. ‘It is better to have the same circle of friends, because they would not be jealous of any male friends and this would avoid problems and arguments; there is more security’ (woman, focus group discussion, [Bolivia](#)).

To prevent potential loss, strategies are put in place to control, monitor or ban certain activities or friendships. Competition between women increases, with constant suspicion of those who may ‘steal’ their partner, and thus friendships are abandoned to keep the relationship going. ‘I stopped doing many things, I like going out a lot; but I stopped going out with certain people, friends, to keep up my relationship; because I am not going to lose my love for something like that’ (woman, focus group discussion, [Bolivia](#)).

The relationships we experience throughout our lives can be wonderful experiences that fill us with energy. But it is essential that young women and men can put romantic love in context and build equal relationships.

More women than men report that their male friends control their partners by monitoring their phones and telling them what clothes and make-up to wear. Among men aged 15–19, 63 percent consider jealousy a demonstration of love, compared to 43 percent of women in the same age.

Regarding *mobile phone monitoring*, 44 percent of men aged 15–19 believe that checking their partner’s phone does not constitute violence, while 33 percent of women in the same age group share this belief (Figure 12).

FIGURE 12.**CHECKING YOUR PARTNER'S PHONE AND CONTROLLING THEIR SOCIAL NETWORKS IS NOT VIOLENCE**

FUENTE: ELABORACIÓN PROPIA A PARTIR DE LAS ENCUESTAS LEVANTADAS POR OXFAM Y CLACSO.

Checking a partner's phone is not considered to be as unacceptable as checking their social networks. Among men aged 20–25, 28 percent consider that monitoring their partner's phone does not constitute violence, while only 10% of men in the same age bracket believe that controlling social networks does not constitute violence. These figures change significantly when asked what they believe their closest male friends do: 84 percent of women aged 15–25 believe that their male friends check their girlfriend's phone, but only 65 percent believe that they monitor their social networks:

If you ask for the password or for the phone and [she] doesn't give it to you, you get angry and say that you don't trust her, that she's probably seeing somebody else. You start thinking things. (Man, focus group discussion, Nicaragua).

The notion of romantic love is boosted by technology. For a man, controlling his partner's phone is part of his sense of ownership over her. **Colombia** and **Nicaragua** have the highest percentage of women aged 15–19 stating that their *male friends check their partner's phone*. As regards *control of social networks*, **Nicaragua** and **El Salvador** are top of the list when it comes to men controlling their girlfriend's phone use.

Even now, in the 21st century, people (men more so than women) still say: « I get jealous because I love you». All manner of abuses are committed against freedom and the right to privacy in the name of *romantic love*.⁷⁹

The belief that *jealousy is an expression of love* is prevalent throughout the region. Jealousy ranks highest in the **Dominican Republic**, where 76 percent of men aged 15–19 justify not wanting

their girlfriend to look at an actor or do any work with a male partner. This is followed by **Honduras**, at 65 percent. This belief is less widespread among women aged 20–25:

I think that when a man makes a scene out of jealousy, it is because that person is interested [in her] and is calling attention to how much he loves her. (Woman, focus group discussion, Cuba).

The belief that lesbian practices should be kept private points to a lesbophobic culture. A positive sign in the face of such prejudice is that there are high levels of acceptance of the rights of lesbians and trans women among youth in the region.⁸⁰

For example, more than 80 percent of the youth in our sample believe that *transgender women have equal rights*. However, 70 percent of young men and women believe that *lesbians should keep their practices private*. The countries with the highest percentages of lesbophobia are the **Honduras, Nicaragua and Dominican Republic**:

Sometimes I would be on the bus with my partner and people would say ‘What a waste of women’, or ‘You haven’t had a proper shag; if I had been with you, you wouldn’t be this way’. That is really awful. (Woman, focus group discussion, El Salvador).



^{xxv} Las personas transgénero tienen una identidad de género diferente del sexo que se les asignó al nacer (OACDH, s. p.) (<https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Transgender-Factsheet-Esp.pdf>).



ANITA GUERRERO, NICARAGUA

«What you don't talk about doesn't exist»

«What you don't talk about doesn't exist», says Anita Guerrero, a young lesbian aged 25 who four years ago decided to speak out about her sexual orientation and tackle discrimination with information, organization and active participation in all kind of activities to raise the profile of the LGBT community in Nicaragua.

Telling her parents that she liked a woman was a big step in this process, a step that she took though it frightened her to do so, but which has been her motivation to keep reaffirming her identity and her rights. «My parents are no different from other parents, they also went through a process of not knowing what lesbian and sexual diversity meant; but they lived through it in another way, they wanted to know and opened their minds to understand», says Anita.

It has also been a long process for her, not only to get her family's acceptance, but also because being a lesbian in Nicaragua is not easy. As she says: «I'm not afraid to walk hand-in-hand with my partner, but I am aware that there are places where I can't risk being verbally or physically abused for expressing my affection for a woman; some women have been submitted to sexual abuse as a way of putting them right. This type of violence means that we can't just walk quietly on the streets without feeling fear; it is frightening to think that you may not get home alive one day».

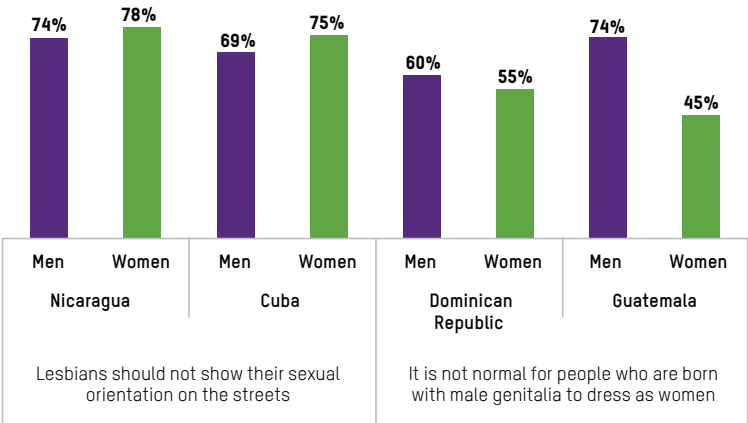
But fear has not dented her desire to move forward; on the contrary, it has made her work with various organizations and take part in marches, demonstrations and workshops; she does this because she feels that is what she wants to do, and also «because one day I want to be a citizen with all the rights I deserve as an inhabitant of this world».



The assertion that *it is NOT normal for people who are born with male genitalia to dress as women* is a transphobic belief that is much more marked among men aged 15–19 years (62 percent) than among women (50 percent) (Figure 13). Men stated that they do not consider sexual relationships between men normal based on perceptions of sexuality as driven by sexual organs rather than the right to self-perception of trans people:

«I respect every individual’s decision, but it is not normal, because God created man and woman; if there are two men together it makes me feel uncomfortable», «I feel disgust if I see two men together, but seeing two women together is normal. (Participants in a focus group discussion, Guatemala).

FIGURE 13.
NON-HETEROSEXUAL PRACTICES SHOULD BE KEPT PRIVATE



SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON SURVEYS CARRIED OUT BY OXFAM AND CLACSO.

In the Latin America and Caribbean region, heterosexuality is seen as the norm; heterosexism has no place for subjects other than heterosexuals, rejecting or dominating any others (see case study, Malú Cano, **Cuba**).



MALÚ CANO, CUBA

«I don't regret who I am, nor the life that I have lived, though it has been very hard»

«I was the first child, and male. My parents and grandparents worshipped me. My father was in the merchant navy, and in those days having a parent with such a position was a privilege because he could bring me the best toys. But that was not what I wanted. From a very young age I always knew what I wanted. But my father was very chauvinistic and conservative on all issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. When I started secondary school, the changes were more obvious, because I had more feminine traits and expressions, I was maturing and surer of what I wanted. Then I met two transvestite boys, I began to go with them and in seventh grade I already dressed as a woman. I suffered a lot of psychological abuse. My father, my family, the boys in the neighbourhood and at school rejected me».

When he saw her dressed as a woman, her father threw her out of the house and never again had anything to do with her. «It was very hard. I didn't know anything about life and it was only thanks to a transvestite who took me in that I did not have to sleep on the street. From there I grew up in a very violent world, with people from a bad environment. But they opened their doors for me, and for that I am eternally grateful to them».

Malú was 15 years old when she travelled to conquer Havana. Like most trans women, she worked as a prostitute in order to survive. When she looks at herself in the mirror, she sees a very courageous person who has always looked forwards despite having lived through so much adversity and abuse. «Getting to the National Council for Sex Education (CENESEX) was very valuable, as I started to relate to people who didn't judge me for who I was. They gradually showed me how it was possible to be different and how to organize my life. I think that is why I have also been the leader of Trans Cuba for so long. I have been in the group for 14 years and people identify me as their leader, people like me. I do not work officially for CENESEX, but I get here at 8 in the morning and stay as long as necessary, just like any other staff member. Maybe that's why I'm recognized as part of the institution. I think that I will never stop. My optimism has saved me».



3.3.

WORN OR OUTDATED MIRRORS

Worn or outdated mirrors are those that reinforce beliefs which normalize certain forms of violence, exploit women's capacities and

time use, insist on presenting the contributions of women as something secondary, and define motherhood as the core of female identity.

FIGURE 14.

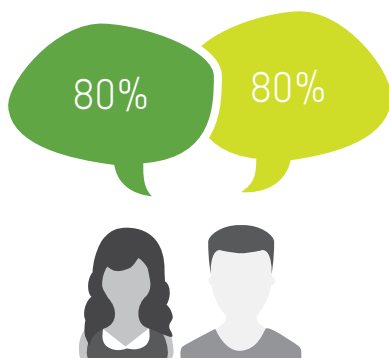
BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS IN WORN OR OUTDATED MIRRORS, WITH THEIR ASSOCIATED BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURS AND THE GROUPS IN WHICH THEY ARE PREVALENT

The numbers in parenthesis are the age ranges of the people that answered to each associated belief and/or behaviour.

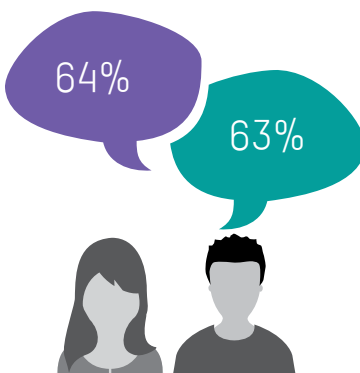


A MAN HAS THE RIGHT TO "CORRECT" OR DISCIPLINE THE BEHAVIOUR OF WOMEN AND FOR THAT HE CAN USE ANY TYPE OF VIOLENCE.
THERE ARE REASONS WHY WOMEN ENURE VIOLENCE

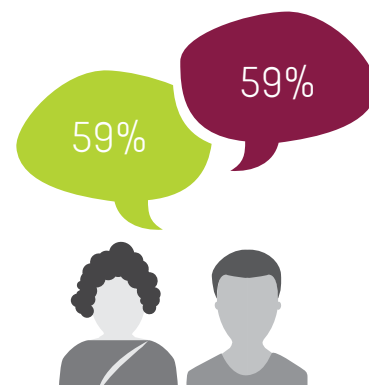
- Women endure violence for the shake of their children (20-25).



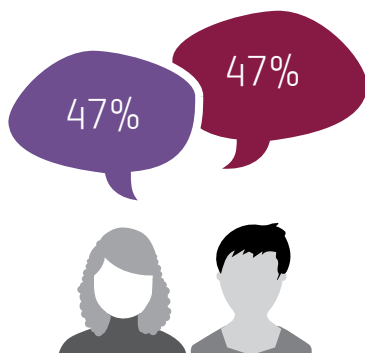
- Women do not escape violence because the men threaten to kill them (20-25).



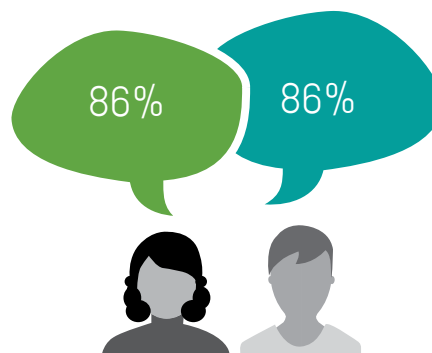
- Women endure violence because of financial dependency (20-25).



- Women do not escape violence because they believe that it is normal (20-25).

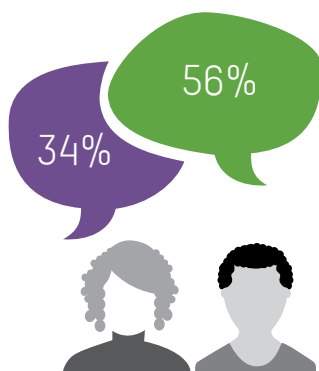


- No one should interfere in fights between couples (20-25).

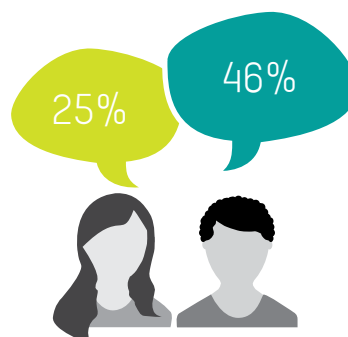


MEN SHOULD BE THE PROVIDERS, AND WOMEN CAREGIVERS, MAKING ONLY COMPLEMENTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

- Where possible, it is better for the man to be the family breadwinner and for the women take care of the children (15-19).

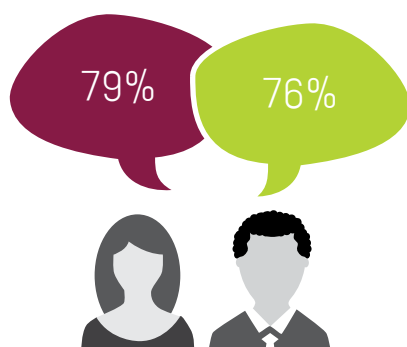


- In the event of firing someone, it is best to keep the man's job because they usually generate most of the family income (15-19).



ALL WOMEN SHOULD BE MOTHERS

- All women should be mothers. What they think their friends believe (15-25).



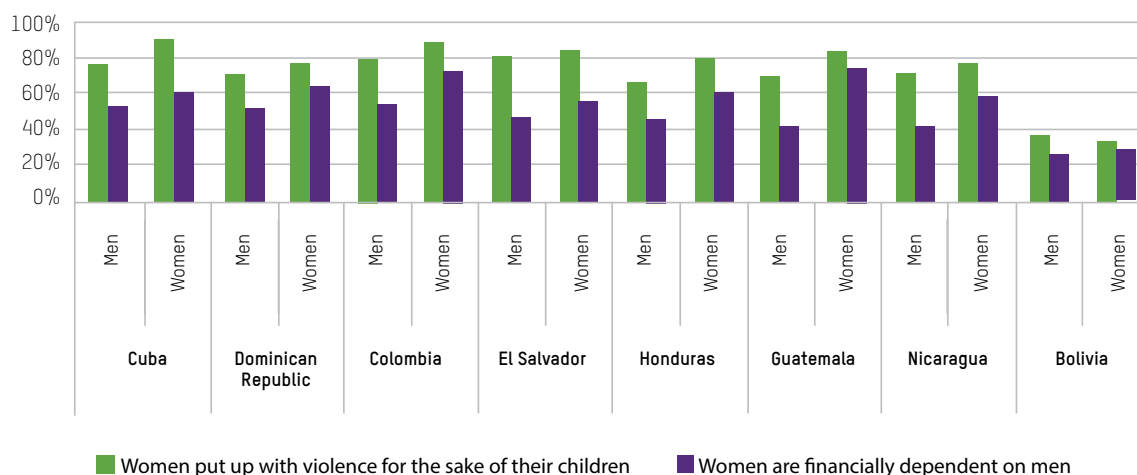
In the belief systems and gender norms of worn or outdated mirrors, the focus is on beliefs about why women do not escape violence (Figure 15) and why care work is a responsibility only of women – linked to the belief that men are always the providers/breadwinners and that they should therefore always have priority for paid employment.

More than 90 percent of *men and women believe that men should have the same responsibilities as women in the home*. However, it is evident that this belief is only true on a rhetorical level.

In fact, the belief under worn or outdated mirrors that *a man has the right to correct or discipline a woman's behaviour and that, to do so, they can use any form of violence* sets the scene for resignation in the face of abuse. Nevertheless, figures show that a large proportion of young men and women state that violence is unacceptable.

The survey shows that one of the main reasons why women cannot escape violence is their lack of financial autonomy, given that 'due to their predominantly domestic work, they tend to depend on men'.⁸¹

FIGURE 15.
REASONS WHY WOMEN DO NOT ESCAPE VIOLENCE



SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON SURVEYS CARRIED OUT BY OXFAM AND CLACSO.

In almost all countries, the belief that *women endure violence for the sake of their children* is very high and bears some relation to the *financial dependency* that prevents women escaping violence. In **Cuba**, 90 percent of women state that they endure a situation of violence for the sake of their children, while women in

Guatemala and **Colombia** emphasize financial dependency as a major factor perpetuating violence against women:

From my point of view, economically (women) are tied to men. (Man, focus group discussion, Guatemala).

It is very worrying that *violence is perceived as normal*, as this suggests that women are there to be censured, disciplined, victimized and subordinated.⁸² Among men and women, 61 percent of women and 55 percent of men stated that women do not escape violence because *the man threatens to kill them* (Figure 16). These beliefs are striking, given the increase in the number of femicides/feminicides in the region.

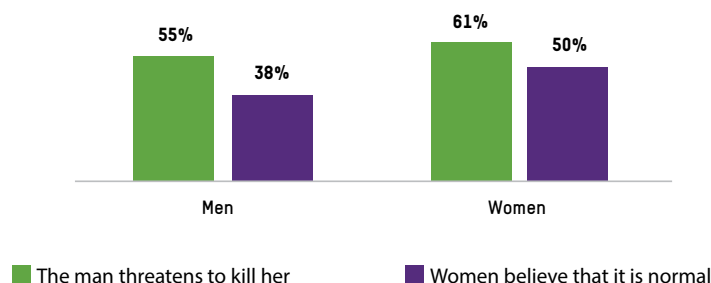
The killing of individual women also acts as a collective threat to other women. Femicides are the tip of the iceberg of other forms of male violence. Of all male respondents, across both age groups and all eight countries, 60

percent stated that their close male friends shout at their partner, and 40 percent that they humiliate and undervalue them.

The belief system that leads women to believe that *violence is normal* and that the *man threatens to kill them* is very entrenched among young women. Such beliefs have been driven, to a large extent, by macho ideas that see violence against women as inevitable and promote an aggressive masculinity:

Women fear they may be killed. That is why they do not speak out.' (Woman, focus group discussion, Nicaragua).

FIGURE 16.
OTHER REASONS WHY WOMEN DO NOT ESCAPE VIOLENCE^{xxv}



SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON SURVEYS CARRIED OUT BY OXFAM AND CLACSO

Among women and men aged 20–25 years, many believe that women do not escape violent relationships because of the threat of death and because women believe it is normal to endure violence. These beliefs are most prevalent in the **Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Guatemala. Guatemala, Colombia, El Salvador and Honduras** have the highest proportion of young people who consider that violence against women is normal:

Sometimes it is due to threats, but there are times when women are masochists – for example, they have the opportunity to go but they return.' (Woman, focus group discussion, República Dominicana).

Nicaragua is the country with the largest proportion of men (53 percent) aged 20–25 years who would simply stand by in the event of a woman

^{xxv} On the issue of threat of death, all eight countries are considered. In the belief that women feel that enduring violence is normal, Bolivia is not included.

being beaten, consistent with the belief that *if my friend beats his partner I shouldn't get involved, it is his own life*. In **Honduras**, 52 percent of young men aged 15–19 think that *no one should interfere in arguments between couples*. In **Guatemala**, 96 percent of women aged 15–19 believe their male and female friends share this belief.

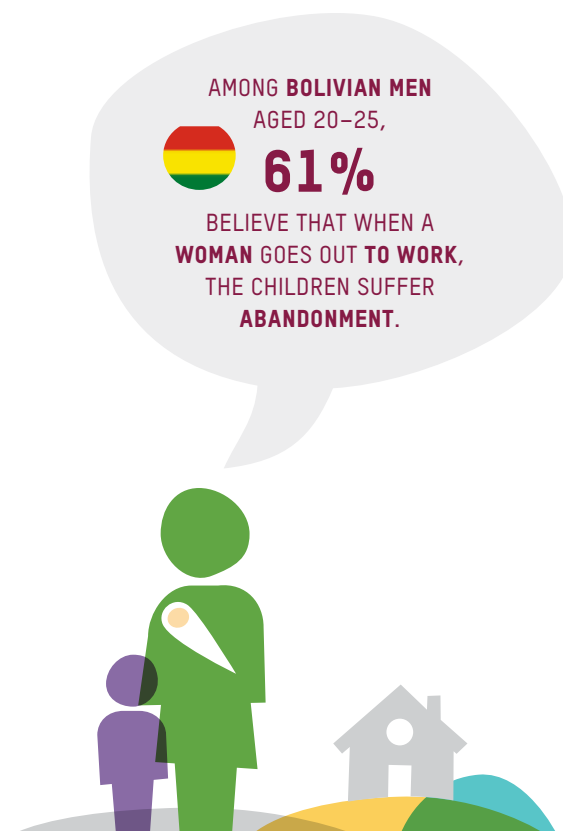
Cuba is the country where the highest percentage of young women and men aged 15–25 years would consider getting involved if they witnessed a situation of violence. It would therefore appear that the attitude of 'don't get involved' is giving way to 'get involved' when it comes to male violence. A new alternative social norm, indicating that 'it is wrong not to get involved', appears to be emerging.

This issue was addressed by one of the mixed-sex focus groups in **Guatemala**, in which men dominated the conversation.^{xxvi}

Their comments tended to justify violence against women, arguing that it is a private matter, and that it is not a good idea to get involved because of the potential risks and the fact that women almost always return to the relationship or regret having reported their partner:

Women get used to being beaten and defend their aggressors... So it is best not to get involved.' (Man, focus group discussion, Bolivia).

Figure 17 shows that the belief that *whenever possible, it is better for the man to be the family breadwinner and for the woman to take care of the children* is much more prevalent among men aged 15–19 (56 percent) than among women of the same age (34 percent). In **Bolivia**, 61 percent of men aged 20–25 years believe that when a mother works outside the home, the children suffer abandonment.

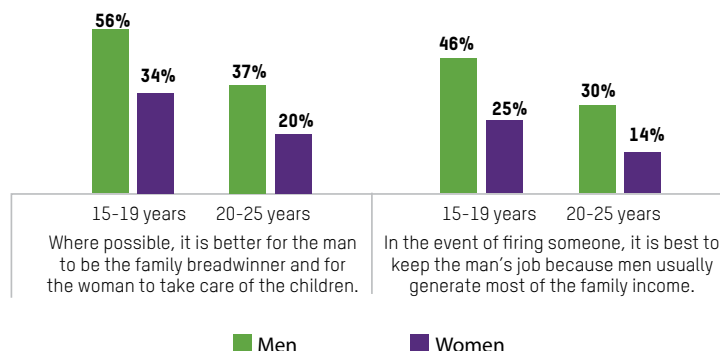


Across all eight countries, 46 percent of young men aged 15–19 believe that in the event of firing someone, it is best to keep the man's job because they usually generate most of the family income. Thus, the belief that women are the caregivers and men the providers leads to the idea that men should have priority in employment.

In the **Dominican Republic**, 65 percent of men believe it is better that they should provide for the family and that women take care of the children. This is followed by 63 percent in **Honduras**, 54 percent in **Guatemala**, and 52 percent in **Nicaragua**. This belief, together with women's lower representation in trade unions, could be a factor in the higher female unemployment rate in the region.

^{xxvi} Observation made by the team compiling information from the field in Guatemala.

FIGURE 17.
WOMEN AS CARERS, MEN AS PROVIDERS



SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON SURVEYS CARRIED OUT BY OXFAM AND CLACSO.

I'm not going to put a gun to your head so that you cook for me or clean the house; no, of course not! But I believe it is your duty, your responsibility to clean and cook; my duty is to work to keep you.' (Young man, rural area, focus group discussion, República Dominicana).

When asked how many of their male and female friends believe that all women should be mothers, there were no significant differences between men and women. However, figures were highest among women aged 20–25 years – a time in life when social pressures on the ideal of motherhood become much greater. Of the total number of women in this age range, only 9 percent said they actually had children.

Among women aged 15–25 years, 79 percent stated that their male and female friends believe that all women should be mothers, while among men, 76 percent of those aged 15–25 also reflected this social pressure on the concept of compulsory motherhood. This belief is very much entrenched among the young population of the region, which is consistent with a culture that idealises motherhood. **Cuba** and the **Dominican Republic** have the highest figures for this belief:

I think every woman is a mother, even if she doesn't have any children.' (Woman, focus group discussion, Cuba).

The beliefs that *it is better for men to be the main family breadwinner and for women to take care of the children*, and that *it is always best for men to take on paid employment* are very marked among men aged 15–19 years. This is followed by women of the same age group, though with a lower percentage. *Motherhood* has a strong connection with the belief system that sees *women as caregivers*.





JONATHAN VIVAS, EL SALVADOR

«Young people changing sexist roles»

Jonathan Vivas is 20 years old, and studies Social Communication at the Central American University (UCA) José Simeón Cañas in San Salvador, while keeping a tight agenda both within and outside his studies, showing that he is a hunter of dreams. He was born in San José Guayabal, a municipality in the department of Cuscatlán, in the country's central region. From there he takes the bus very early every day to get to university.

During the week, he divides his time between his second-year social communication studies at the UCA, social work activities at the Ministry for the Environment, working as an activist in several local organizations, youth manager in a political party, and domestic chores, which include caring for his grandmother and supporting his three brothers aged 9, 13 and 16.

Jonathan has been living with his grandmother since he was 3 months old. At 17, his mother became pregnant with Jonathan and she had to face the difficulties of being a single mother in a precarious family situation and, years later, a life with a man who subjected her to many forms of violence.

At the time, Jonathan decided to go back with his mother, but a life of constant abuse also affected him and his sister. His mother stopped working, and this exacerbated the family crisis, so he once again left. Years later, his mother emigrated to the United States, looking for other alternatives, and he currently receives remittances from her.

Adolescence was a critical moment in Jonathan's life, in which he took important decisions. He enrolled in the local school, where he was lucky to receive school meals – an essential support for keeping up his education.

His own life experience awoke in him the need to **change the rules of the game**. «Ever since I was at school I was always questioning what seemed to me to be unfair, and this led to my interest in learning more about how the political, economic and social systems of countries work, and wondering why there are people who have fewer opportunities than others. Many young people like me go through hard times which I would not like anyone to have to go through».

For Jonathan, justice needs to be put into practice. His desire to work for human rights and his social commitment led him to study social communication at the UCA. «Language for me is a powerful tool with which to communicate the truth. It is up to us young people to break the status quo that traditionally imposes (sexist) roles on women and men and creates a culture of domination over women that is unfair», he says



3.4.

GIVING NEW MEANING TO BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURS

We have identified certain beliefs that could provide an alternative pathway to *giving a new meaning to the beliefs and behaviours* analysed here.

It is very revealing that the signs of new meanings for some beliefs are much more evident among women aged 20–25 (Figure 18). These are mostly women who describe themselves as middle class, urban, and have several years of education.

FIGURE 18.

POSITIVE BELIEFS EMERGING AMONG WOMEN AND MEN ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON SURVEYS CARRIED OUT BY OXFAM AND CLACSO.

A very high percentage of young people (including many women) recognize that violence exists. The most commonly recognized forms of abuse are blows and shouting (97 percent), being undervalued, and humiliation (99 percent) (Figure 18). However, most young people would do little or nothing if faced with a situation of violence.

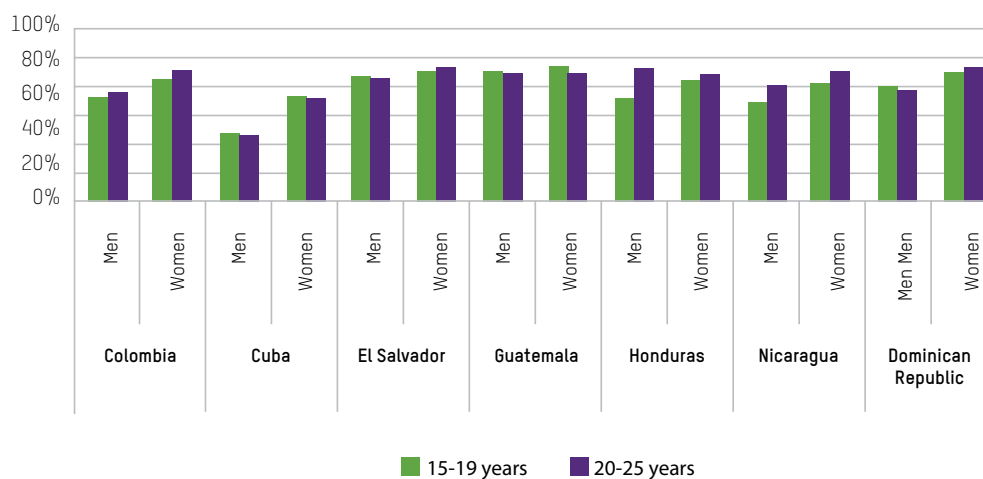
The majority (63 percent of men and 72 percent of women) state that *violence against women is a serious problem that the authorities should do something about* (Figure 18). In other words, they recognize that violence exists and believe that the state should act, but they have no awareness that they themselves can also contribute to



eradicating violence against women. This is why it is crucial that the process does not stop at merely recognizing the problem, but that this awareness is translated into action.

The belief that *violence against women is rooted in inequality* is widespread, although certain differences are evident. The perception of inequality is greater among women aged 20–25, with 90 percent as the regional average. Figure 19 shows a breakdown by country.

FIGURE 19.
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS A PRODUCT OF GENDER INEQUALITIES



SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON SURVEYS CARRIED OUT BY OXFAM AND CLACSO.



JERSON GONZALES, COLOMBIA

«Demilitarize life and “depatriarchalize” our minds!»

Jerson is a young man aged 26 who was born and raised in the working-class neighbourhoods of Medellín (one of the most violent and unequal cities in Colombia). «My mother has been an activist since the age of 16, a community leader, a left-leaning feminist-antimilitarist; my father is a more liberal manual worker, very Catholic but very respectful of individual freedoms. I am the youngest of 5 children (2 women and 3 men)», he says.

He grew up in economic and social hardship. «I grew up surrounded by bullets, which marked the lives of many children and determined the youth of many others. This territorial context and the harsh reality of my life led me to decide that I did not want to conform to the hegemonic logic of reproduction, and for this reason at age 19 I had a vasectomy. This was my way of showing my disagreement with the idea of masculinity and men as providers». Ever since he was a child, Jerson has been committed to social causes and community processes, and to building his identity as a young anti-militarist and anti-patriarchal man.

«My mother’s activism has caused our family dynamics to differ from the norm, but I have to say that it was my father who taught me to question my hegemonic roles as a man with an education in ways that even he could not begin to imagine would drive my deconstruction as an adolescent, as a man».

He works at Corporación Con-vivamos, a community organization established in the 1990s, at a time when drug trafficking was at its height in the city of Medellín, led by Pablo Escobar and mirroring the war being waged in the Colombian countryside.

«We have contributed to the building of a decent quality of life, with social justice. I started in the organization at the age of 8, attending a crafts workshop to make textiles with chaquira (indigenous designs), a way in which to build new models of relationships between boys and girls».

«Whilst my first role model for what I today consider and experience as “other masculinities” is my father, I have to say that it is in the organization where I can politicize and express this reality, and where, without knowing it, I was deconstructing not only macho culture but the idea of patriarchy that I was supposed to take on. I think this is also part of the legacy that the organization brings to young men like me who grow up in the framework of the pressures and belief systems that sustain gender-based violence».



CHO
OSO
IA
LAS!

Respeto
para Todxs
IGUALDAD
para Todxs

Chapter 4.

TRENDS AND ALTERNATIVES FOR TRANSFORMING BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS

4.1.

REGIONAL TREND: USE OF THE MEDIA, CAMPAIGN MESSAGES AND INFLUENTIAL FIGURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The media still has a major influence on public debate in the Latin America and Caribbean region. The surge in internet and smartphone use has facilitated access to information and entertainment through social networks. Ethical use of the media is increasingly relevant for the prevention of violence against women.

4.1.1. TRENDS IN THE USE OF THE MEDIA BY YOUNG PEOPLE: CREATING NETWORKS

Social networks are the most common sources of information for young people in **Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua** and the **Dominican Republic**, mainly among those aged 20–25 years. Young women are the biggest users of applications (apps).

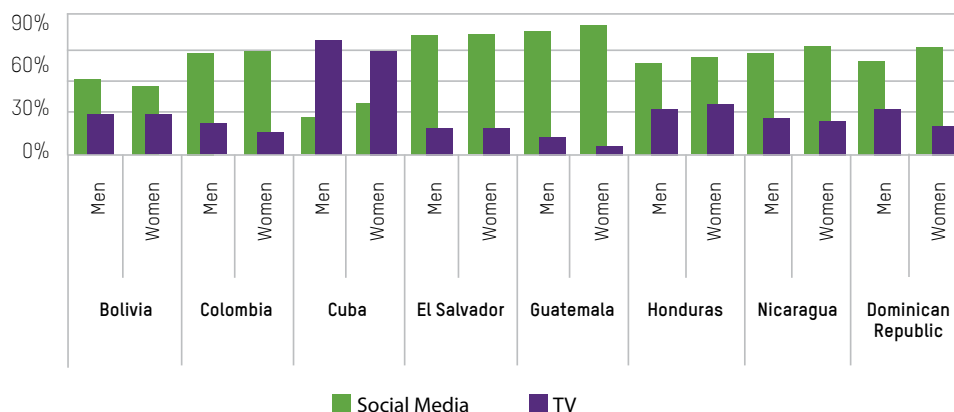
In **Guatemala**, social networks are the primary means of communication for 78 percent of men and 83 percent of women. In **Bolivia**, use of social networks falls to 48 percent among men and 44 percent among women (Figure 20).^{xxvii}

Television has lost some of its former influence and is now the second source of access to information for young people, with a slightly higher percentage among younger men. In the case of **Cuba**, given the limitations on internet access, TV is still the primary source of information for 73 percent of men and 66 percent of women. However, social networks still prevail as the second most common option, albeit at lower figures (25 percent among men and 33 percent among women) (Figure 20).

xxvii

The surveys conducted in Bolivia focused the question on the media used to access information on bullying or violence, which is why the figures differ significantly from the trends in the other countries.

FIGURE 20.
MEDIA MOST FREQUENTLY USED FOR ACCESSING INFORMATION



SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON DATA FROM CLACSO-OXFAM.

4.1.2. AWARENESS OF CAMPAIGNS

In the 20–25 year age group, 68 percent of men and 77 percent of women recall seeing some messages on the prevention of violence against women, although this varies significantly between countries. **Cuba** and **Honduras** have the lowest percentage (50 percent), and **Colombia** and **Nicaragua** the highest (80 percent). Moreover, 73 percent of women report having seen adverts on violence against women, compared to 63 percent of men. The trend changes in **Cuba**, with 54 percent of young men and 37 percent of young women having seen such messages or adverts. Among those aged 20–25, 80 percent claim to recall seeing such messages, though this falls significantly to 65 percent among those aged 15–19.

Awareness messages were primarily seen on social networks (60 percent), followed by television (44 percent), in line with the general trend on sources of information young people use. Newspapers rank third (37 percent) when it comes to seeing campaign messages (Figure 21).

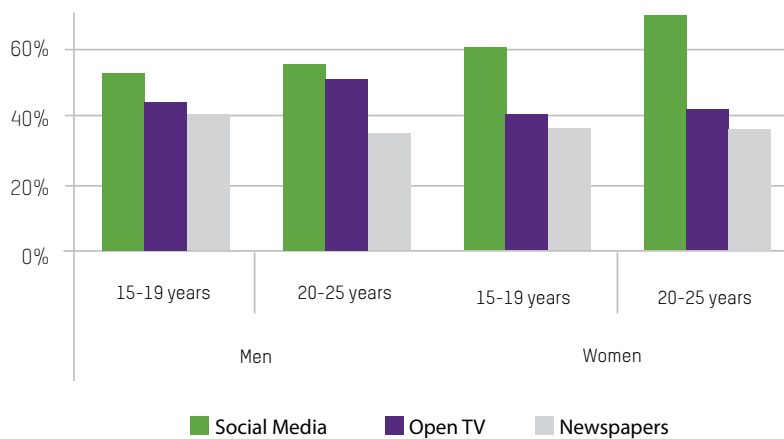
The references to campaign messages on eradication of violence against women as recalled by young people are weak and based mainly on coverage of women who have been killed. But they reveal a resistance to address male violence against women as a specific harmful gender norm. For example, 63 percent of men and 55 percent of women believed that «violence should be treated in general, not just violence against women».

4.1.3. INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE WHEN TAKING A DECISION AS A COUPLE

Although young people are increasingly connected through social networks and therefore exposed to people outside their family, the closest family circle still has significant weight in the decisions people make about relationships. The mother is the most influential person for 81 percent of men and 83 percent of women (Figure 22). This is followed by the father (68 percent of men and 62 percent of women), brothers and sisters (50 percent of men and 50 percent of women), friends (male and female) for more than 40 percent of young people, and other family members (around 30 percent).

FIGURE 21.

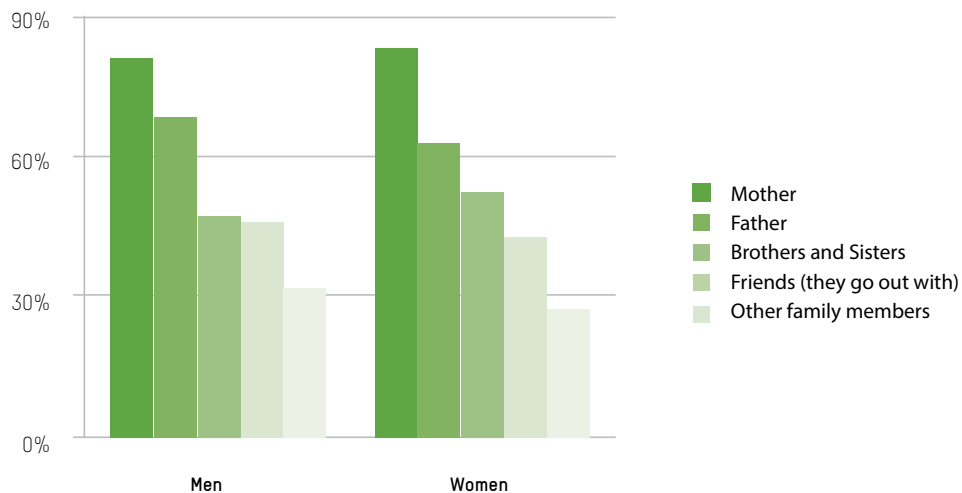
SOURCE OF MEDIA FOR SEEING OR HEARING MESSAGES ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
(REGIONAL AVERAGE)



SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON DATA FROM CLACSO-OXFAM.

FIGURE 22.

MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSONS
(REGIONAL AVERAGE)



SOURCE: COMPILED BY THE AUTHORS BASED ON DATA FROM CLACSO-OXFAM.



CHRISTIAN EGÜES, BOLIVIA

«Violence affects all of us as citizens»

Christian is a student and activist at the San Isidro Cultural Centre (Bolivia), and one of the main spokespersons for the campaign ACT: Stop violence. «Since I started with the campaign, it has helped me to open my mind, my heart and my soul (or whatever you want to call it) to more everyday paradigms, such as control and jealousy» he says.

«I think the campaign uses an interesting approach. We don't talk of violence simply to denounce it, and we don't want to turn women into victims once again. The campaign aims to focus on something different, a more integrated approach, involving third parties. In other words: the bystander, the friend, the neighbour who knows that his/her colleague is enduring violence yet does nothing about it. But you as a person can do something about it. You can accompany, act, stop the violence. We want society to punish violence and violent people. We know that we won't solve the lives of women with this campaign, and we also cannot guarantee that a person who uses violence will go to jail. But what we can do, as citizens, is to look around us and act. The issue of violence is not only a matter for the state, the police or the public prosecutor, it is also up to us as citizens to fight against the violence and macho culture prevalent in our society.

Violence happens gradually, and we must not brush it aside. It may seem trivial to be asked for your Facebook password, that someone controls what you wear, if you talk with male friends, or female friends in the case of boys; but that can quickly change to shouting, to blows, to abuse and even, in the medium or long term, to femicide.

I feel that this campaign has a fresh vision and greater possibilities for ways of working. For example, I would love to speak of violence in same-sex couples or other types of couples. I feel it is important that this campaign also allows us to speak from that perspective, because the campaign messages challenge relationships in general».



4.2.

BUILDING CRITICAL CITIZENSHIP FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Changing belief systems and gender norms is a complex and long-term process that requires different strategies to ensure that work can be done directly with key groups. But it also calls for strategies that allow us to reach larger audiences in a more comprehensive manner.

Developing such strategies requires leadership from feminist organizations, as well as work with young women and men, and the participation of journalists, the international development sector, private companies, churches and the state.

Establishing partnerships between regional and global organizations achieves a multiplier effect.⁸³ Activism has been able to build a social movement driving change in belief systems. The setting up of community radio stations and campaigns for raising awareness has succeeded in incorporating feminist demands.⁸⁴

Social networks are a viable alternative due to their horizontal structure, and the fact that they are not as hierarchical as traditional media. The creation of spaces for debate on violence against women shows how they can be used as a platform for mobilization.

There is a growing movement of *cyberfeminists* «who individually or collectively try out new forms of communication to denounce violence against women and globalise solidarity actions».⁸⁵ Social networks are not tools for social transformation in themselves, and have, in some cases, become yet another means for controlling women; but they can nevertheless generate new narratives. Hashtags, memes and musical, audiovisual and/or artistic productions make up a series of campaigns that strive to do away with patriarchal norms.^{xxviii}

4.2.1. BREAKING THE SILENCE ON MALE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: AN EYE ON SOCIAL IMPUNITY

Among the hashtags on femicide which have had the greatest impact in Latin America and the Caribbean are #NiUnaMenos (Not One Less), #BastaDeFemicidios (Stop Femicides), #NiUnaMás (Not One More), #VivasNosQueremos (Better Alive), #BastaDeViolencia (Stop Violence), #Micaela or #MiércolesNegro (Black Wednesday). These messages have mobilized society to urge regional institutions and governments to eradicate violence against women.

The hashtag #NiUnaMenos led to a massive mobilization against femicide in Argentina on 3 June 2015, and is one of the messages which has had the greatest impact. Illustrators also became essential allies for raising campaign profiles (see Figure 23).

xxviii

Hashtags work like labels to link a message to a particular context of debate using the hashtag symbol to group together all the publications on the same idea. Memes are any image, visual text, or multimedia compilation, usually conveying humour, which are memetically replicated over the network, hence their name.

FIGURE 23. ILLUSTRATION FOR THE MARCH #NIUNAMENOS, ARGENTINA 3 JUNE 2015

SOURCE: LINIERS (2015), ROMINA LERDA (2016).

Songs are also used to denounce violence against women. The Reggaeton group Chocolate Remix wrote a song called *Not one less*.⁸⁶ Rapper Diana Avella sings: 'But I was born a woman in a world made for men,/ full of balls, of trousers/ of blows and abuse'.⁸⁷ And Mare Advertencia Lírika, in her song *Uncomfortable (Feminist Manifesto)*, refers to the need for women to enter politics: 'We got tired of waiting in the shadows,/ we no longer walk behind anyone, now we walk alongside each other/ let them through, because these women will no longer take a step back/ Not one less! No more killings!'⁸⁸

The issue of sexual harassment has also been brought to the fore with the hashtags #MeToo/ #YoTambien and #MiPrimerAcoso/ #MyFirstAbuse, encouraging women to speak out.

In **Guatemala**, debate raged on social networks about the cover of *Look* magazine, published on 3 July 2017, which featured a tall woman with white skin in the centre, surrounded by indigenous women (Figure 24). Violence and racism is implicit in the image, with the white woman occupying centre stage and indigenous women as informal vendors or carers. It carried the caption 'Changing Guatemala through fashion'.

Following the controversy generated on social networks, mainly Twitter and Facebook, the magazine's editorial committee withdrew the cover and published an apology two days later.

FIGURE 24. COVER OF *LOOK* MAGAZINE, GUATEMALA, JULY 2017

FUENTE: LOOK MAGAZINE, JULIO DE 2017.

4.2.2. THE BREAKDOWN OF PUBLIC SPACES AS MALE-DOMINATED PLACES: A (RE)APPROPRIATION OF THE STREETS BY WOMEN

Belief systems and gender norms dictate public spaces as largely dominated by men, and that women should think twice about entering such spaces. It is in this context that the #ViajoSola (ITravelAlone) hashtag emerged as a message denouncing the beliefs that limit freedom of movement for women (Figure 25).

FIGURE 25. GRAPHICS TEXTS FOR #VIAJOSOLA



SOURCE: TRAVENGE (2016), HEGUY (2016) AND GONZÁLEZ PASCUAL (2016).

Las Morras and *Las Hijas de Violencia* are two groups formed by Mexican women who use videos to denounce and advocate against street harassment. *Acción Respeto* is an initiative that aims to break down the perception of wolf whistles as a compliment.

Las Morras challenges belief systems by answering back and facing up to bullies, saying that they do not want to listen to any comments they might have about them.⁸⁹

Las Hijas de Violencia addresses street harassment through performance arts. When they are harassed, they shoot a confetti gun and

sing 'sexist punk'. This action is transformative because it creates a reversal of roles, where women stand up to men and take back public spaces, giving the message that 'we definitely know that we are not going to change the world, but our world has certainly changed'.⁹⁰

In Latin America and the Caribbean, women are more likely to experience sexual harassment in the street and lack of security on public transport in certain neighbourhoods and at certain times of day. Because of this, mobile apps have been created so that women can call taxis driven only by women.^{xxix}

^{xxix} These types of services and apps can be found in Argentina (She Taxi), Bolivia (Warmi Taxi), Brazil (Femi Taxi), Paraguay (Lady Driver), Peru (Bequeen) and Mexico (Laudrive).

Similar to these are *Ángela te protégé* in Argentina and *Safetipin* in Bogotá.^{xxx} Using geolocation tools, these apps provide information about unsafe areas (in the case of *Safetipin*), or send information to personal contacts regarding location so that women can go out and get back home safely (*Ángela te protégé*).

4.2.3. BREAKING DOWN GENDER STEREOTYPES: NEW WAYS OF BEING A WOMAN

The proliferation of feminist groups and messages delivered through popular culture (including music) shows different ways of being a woman. The Mexican rap singer *Mare Advertencia Lirika*, of Zapotec origin, incorporates the defence of indigenous women and urges a break from the standards of beauty imposed on women: 'Stop swallowing sexist trash!/ Now stop thinking that the best is whoever dresses best!/ Drop those magazines! For they control your life/ because you were born free and you became a slave to fashion.'

There are also calls for a non-macho education for men. Chilean singer *Bellona MC* urges parents to:

Exert influence on your daughter so she will not become a servant, so that she demands equality, and does not give up her life looking after the man who will then abuse her and offend her, while she pretends to be forever happy. Teach your son to love and to respect, for women should be valued above all things, for there are no macho men or higher beings, and let him never forget that it was a woman who gave him his values.

Even young girls can play their part: @ramo_iko on Instagram launched the campaign #alos12anossepuedecambiarelundo (#youcanchangetheworldat12), challenging the stereotypes that depict girls as princesses (Figure 26).

FIGURE 26.

CAMPAIGN #ALOS12ANOSSEPUEDECAMBIARELMUNDO



SOURCE: <[HTTP://LATFEM.ORG/ALOS12SEPUEDECAMBIARELMUNDO/](http://LATFEM.ORG/ALOS12SEPUEDECAMBIARELMUNDO/)>

Patriarchy is not only a binary and hierarchical construction; it also excludes various ways of loving. Ecuadorian singer CayeCayejera makes the following criticism in her songs: 'Rigid genders, perfect mechanism, fixed desires and pleasures, total stereotype. The wild side, blackmail, boycott, sabotage to patriarchy all lie in the margins.'⁹³

Two Reggaeton groups, Chocolate Remix and Torta Golosa, have emerged under a new genre of 'Lesbian Reggaeton'.⁹⁴ Their songs speak of female pleasure, and lesbian and trans sexuality.

4.2.4. WEAVING NETWORKS: THE GENERATION OF SISTERHOOD NETWORKS FOR WOMEN

There are several support networks for victims of violence against women, such as #EstoyAcá (I'm here) or #NoCallamosMas (Silent no longer),

^{xxx}

This is a free app created in India to offer greater security for women in cities. The information collected by the app is passed on to the police as ultimate guarantor in providing security in insecure areas. The first Latin American country to be included in this application is Colombia, initially for the city of Bogotá, but the idea is to expand this tool to the whole region. <http://safetipin.com/myCiti#>

which share personal stories of violence through Twitter and Facebook.⁹⁵ A series of sisterhood relationships are also promoted.^{96 97}

Building support networks for the various narratives of women in the region is one of the most powerful elements of transformation, because they question fundamental beliefs and gendered norms. It is in this context that LatFem, a feminist journalism initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean, emerged to become a source of free information on the web.⁹⁸ It conveys feminist stories from the region, not only

generating informative content but also acting to promote cyberfeminist campaigns.⁹⁹

In **Colombia**, (e)stereotipas was formed as an online space through which to break down stereotypes and create 'a community which will allow the empowerment of young feminists'.¹⁰⁰ Some of the most important campaigns are #MiPrimerAcoso (MyFirstAbuse) and #8MCambiaElSistemaconunmeme (Change the system with a meme) (Figure 27), which was a call to identify how the 8th March (International Women's Day) has become depoliticized.¹⁰¹



PATRICIA LÓPEZ, GUATEMALA

«I had to unlearn in order to learn again, heal in order to start again, and reflect in order to build»

«My name is Patricia López Pérez, and I'm 20 years old. My story is perhaps not as impressive or striking as others, perhaps it should be somebody else writing their story and not me. But perhaps it is my duty to do it for them, for the women who cannot, could not, and will not be able to do so. Because in Guatemala we cannot think, speak and feel freely.

My parents are from a town called Concepción Chiquirichapa, but we have been living in San Juan Ostuncalco (Guatemala) for 21 years. I have 1 brother and 2 sisters, and none of us learned to speak Mam, our mother tongue, the language spoken in our village. Twenty-one years ago, my parents took the decision (or circumstances forced them to do so) to speak only in Spanish so that when we went to school we would find it easier and "learn" better. And so it happened that I grew up speaking a language that wasn't mine, and gradually I forgot that.

As the years went by, I began to get involved in the activities of some organizations. I started by learning about children's rights. I remember that as a child I liked to participate in this, and perhaps at the time it did not mean so much to me, but all that has made me what I am today, has shaped my opinion about the system, my determination to keep and recover what was denied me, to defend and support the fight of indigenous peoples demanding a peace that was taken from us more than 500 years ago.

I confess that at some point in my life I wanted to be someone else, I looked in the mirror and wondered what it would be like if I was different, if the colour of my skin was different, my eyes, my face, if I had been born in a different family. I felt guilty for thinking this, but today I know that it was only the result of colonization and the racism and discrimination that exists within society. We are led to believe that beauty is in well-dressed women with white skin and clear eyes. And so I looked in the mirror and compared myself with them, cast aside my güpil and my corte (traditional tunic and skirt) and changed it for a pair of jeans and a blouse, thinking that I looked more beautiful that way. I felt more comfortable and more accepted using these clothes and forgot my traditional dress; when I did use it, I felt bad and used any excuse not to do so.

My struggle began as an internal struggle regarding what I wanted to be, what society had made me believe I had to be, and what I could have been. I had to unlearn in order to learn again, heal in order to start again and reflect in order to build. I am still in the process of doing this. Today I still like getting involved, just like when I was a little girl, with the big difference that now I am aware of who I am and who I want to be. Today I speak of myself as a Mam, I belong to the Mayan peoples, I am a young woman fighting for the rights of indigenous peoples».



Chapter 5.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.

CONCLUSIONS

In Latin America and the Caribbean, despite recent important legislative advances, there are vast gaps in implementation of existing legal frameworks and alarming levels of cruelty perpetrated by men against women. To this is added a context of impoverished economic models, fragile democracies and states that generally govern for elites, thus further entrenching women's vulnerabilities.

At the same time, feminist networks are leading the construction of new paradigms. An intersectional analysis evidencing the close links between heterosexism, sexism, racism and other dimensions of discrimination has been crucial for this. But much remains to be done.

Through this report, Oxfam seeks to shine a light on the unequal power relations that exist between young men and women, and to analyse how belief systems and gender norms serve to perpetuate violence against women. It also provides a conceptual framework on belief systems and gender norms that links the mainstream analysis carried out by the academic community with proposals from feminist networks in Latin America and the Caribbean.

For young women and men aged 15–25 years, the issue of violence against women is a reality that cannot be ignored and must be condemned. Nevertheless, many still feel that the problem belongs to those who experience it and that the state should assume responsibility instead. These belief systems and gender norms are consistent with the male-dominated, sexist and racist culture engrained in our societies. The characteristics used to build the idea of what is

feminine and what is masculine are defined by opposition. Both young men and women seem to have accepted these prescribed roles and responsibilities – men from a position of privilege, women from a position of subordination.

The behaviours and attitudes supported by harmful belief systems and gender norms are much more marked among men aged 15–19 years, followed by women of the same age group. Women in the 20–25 year age group seem to be more questioning of the hegemonic rationale, and this could represent an opportunity for driving alternative behaviours. It is important to note that most of these women have no children, live in cities, describe themselves as middle class, and have completed secondary education.

One of the belief systems and gender norms that is most prevalent in the region *is the construction of masculine virility*, which links directly to the exercise of men's sexuality, as heterosexuals. The link to violence is reflected in cases where young people believe that men cannot control themselves, that women must comply with the sexual expectations of men even if they do not want to, and where it is assumed that women are passive objects who should not experiment freely with their own sexuality.

It is alarming to note that there is a persistent belief that violence is a private matter in which others should not interfere. This idea is what sustains impunity for violence perpetrated by men against women. The *control* men exercise over women's bodies and women's sexuality leaves women in a situation of oppression. These forms of control are justified by notions of romantic love and what is socially accepted as the idea of a 'good woman'.

There is an urgent need to build alternative belief systems, norms and realities. We need to take action against these harmful belief systems and gender norms, change the conservative discourse, drive sustained action, and engage stakeholders from all sectors in building a world where women can live free from violence in their everyday lives.

Oxfam's commitment is to strengthen our programmes on women's rights and address the transformation of harmful belief systems and gender norms as a priority. One of our tools for this is the Enough campaign, which continues to co-create with feminist organizations, in collaboration with young women and men, to work with influencers, journalists, and feminist communicators, and to drive an ethical approach to news broadcasting.

5.2.

RECOMMENDATIONS: ERADICATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IS POSSIBLE

1. We need to give visibility to *families that are challenging* existing belief systems and gender norms and engage these mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers as active participants in processes and programmes to transform belief systems and gender norms.
2. *Friends, both female and male*, can have a huge influence in building alternative belief systems and gender norms, and rejecting all expressions of violence against women. Action on daily practices, conversations, jokes, gestures, language used or the images we share is highly relevant.
3. *People responsible for education* within the family and in the education system must rethink the language used in communications, in private conversations and in public spaces. We must all scrutinize our behaviours, because this is what *builds our culture*.
4. It is essential to continue to promote processes which enable *young women* to grow in confidence and become agents for change in their own lives and in their community. Women and girls must overcome their fears and overcome the discourse of helplessness. Reappropriating or 'taking back' their own bodies is fundamental to this. Solidarity among women is one of the great challenges in overcoming violence.
5. *Young men* must build alternative models of masculinity, and engage in spaces for reflection that allow them to rewrite the prevailing discourse and show that there are other ways of being men that are not based on subordinating women. Allies must take responsibility for the transformation of belief systems and gender norms, and challenge criticism for going against the machismo culture. An important step towards this is recognizing their privileged position, as well as the damage that sexism and racism causes not only to women but also to men themselves. It involves challenging the existing complicity between men, and never protecting anyone who uses violence against women.
6. *Campaigns and mobilization of civil society* are a great potential for change, as long as they are accompanied by sustained processes. Campaigns should work with celebrities or other high-profile people that young men and women can identify with.
7. *Journalists and opinion writers working for traditional and alternative media, as well as freelancers, YouTubers, Facebook bloggers, Twitter users, and television and radio presenters* all have a central role to play in promoting alternative belief systems and gender norms.

Education systems can make an enormous contribution to the transformation of belief systems and gender norms.

Some immediate actions include:

- Providing more spaces for joint work with feminist organizations.
- Taking on the recommendations for addressing violence against women.
- Signing the Step it Up for Gender Equality Media Compact launched by UN Women in March 2016.^{xxxI}

Finally, it is important to add that failure to bring legal proceedings to bear in cases of violence against women encourages repeat behaviours and undermines public confidence in the judicial system. Legal institutions and systems continue to play a central role in putting an end to impunity and the culture of male violence against women.



xxxI

'The Step it Up Media Compact aims to be a mutually beneficial agreement through which valued media partners are invited to scale up their focus on women's rights and gender equality issues through high-quality coverage and editorial decisions, complemented by gender-sensitive corporate practices.' www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/step-it-up/media-compact

Glossary

- **BELIEF SYSTEM.** Patterns that regulate beliefs and guide the actions of members of different societies by determining ways of feeling, desiring and thinking.
- **EXPECTED BEHAVIOURS.** The attitudes that society, reference groups or individuals expect of people according to their social characteristics such as gender or age.
- **FEMINICIDE/FEMICIDE.** The violent death of women by reason of gender, whether it occurs within the family, in an intimate or any other interpersonal relationship, in the community, or whether perpetrated or tolerated by the state or its agents, through action or omission.
- **GENDER.** The different roles, behaviours or attitudes assigned to women and men in different societies.
- **GENDER IDEOLOGY.** A term used mainly in conservative Catholic circles to disqualify the claims of the feminist and LGBTI movements, which they affirm go against traditional family models and the 'natural' differences between women and men.
- **GENDER NORM.** Shared beliefs and informal rules about what is considered appropriate behaviour for men and women.
- **HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY.** Dominant male attitudes that determine what attributes men should have, such as control, strength, success or sexual desire.
- **HETEROSEXISM.** Norms that establish how men and women should behave by imposing heterosexuality as the only accepted norm and limiting gender identity to just two options.
- **INTERSECTIONALITY.** The consideration, when analysing inequalities, of all the biological, social and cultural characteristics that make up a person, such as ethnicity, age, gender and sexual orientation.
- **PATRIARCHY.** A political, economic and social system based on hierarchical relationships that allows men to dominate women.
- **REFERENCE GROUP.** The group of people whose opinions are important to someone taking a decision on how to behave; a group of people this person can identify with, is similar to, or wants to belong to.
- **ROMANTIC LOVE.** The idealization of love through a model of relationships based on control, dependency and subordination of one of the partners, which perpetuates inequalities between women and men by limiting individual freedoms.
- **SEXUALISED HIERARCHY/HIERARCHY BETWEEN THE SEXES.** The unequal structure based on power relationships where men dominate and women and other genders are subordinated.
- **SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE.** Indirect violence that is exercised by the dominant group, and accepted and exercised in turn by the dominated group.

- **TRANSFORMING GENDER NORMS.** Changing accepted rules that allow the emergence of new roles, belief systems or behaviours.
- **TYPICAL BEHAVIOUR.** What a person does or how he or she behaves, based on what is commonly done or what society dictates people 'should' do.
- **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.** Any act of violence that causes or may cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty.
- **WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT.** The process by which women reinforce their individual and collective capacities, through greater participation in decision -making and access to resources; the aim is autonomy for women.

Notes

- 1 Figures on the 1831 killings in the region are taken from the ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory (<https://oig.cepal.org/es/indicadores/feminicidio>). The figure stating that 30 percent of women in the region have suffered violence throughout their lives is taken from the World Health Organization (WHO) (2013) Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. WHO: Rome.
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- 97 www.facebook.com/NO-ME-CALMO-NADA-401751606669780/
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- 101 <https://estereotipas.com/quienes-somos/>
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=vl-B7lY5PBE

Annex

Organizations that are part of **Enough! Together we can end violence against women and girls**, in Latin America and the Caribbean region.

COUNTRIES	ORGANIZATIONS
 Dominican Republic	1. Núcleo de Apoyo a la Mujer (NAM) 2. Centro de Estudios de Género de Intec 3. Instituto de Investigación y Estudios de Género y Familia de la UASD
 Cuba	4. Centro Oscar Arnulfo Romero, OAR
 Colombia	5. Corporación Con-vivamos 6. Corporación Casa de la Mujer 7. Centro de Promoción y Cultura CPC 8. Funsarep 9. Fondo Lunaria Mujer 10. Corporación de Mujeres Ecofeministas COMUNITAR 11. Centro de Formación y Empoderamiento para la Mujer “Ambulua”
 Nicaragua	12. El Programa Regional Feminista, La Corriente 13. Grupo Venancias 14. ASODEL
 Honduras	15. Asociación de Mujeres Defensoras de la Vida (AMDV) 16. Organización Intibucana de Mujeres “Las Hormigas”
 Bolivia	17. Coordinadora de la Mujer 18. Colectivo Rebeldía
	Youth organizations: 19. Fortaleza; 20. Proyecto Punto O, 21. Colectivo Wiñay Wara 22. Visión Juvenil 23. U – Kiss 24. Rompiendo Esquemas 25. Rajem: 26. Winter Institute: 27. Red Virus:

COUNTRIES	ORGANIZATIONS
	28. Siempre Latente: 29. Sonrisas Escondidas: 30. Pendiente: 31. Centro Cultural San Isidro: 32. Red Tú Decides: 33. Red Amanecer: 34. LiterARTE
 Guatemala	35. Majawil Qij 36. Centro de Paz Barbara Ford 37. Asociación de Mujeres Mayas Kaqla 38. Movimiento de Mujeres Indígenas TZ'UNUNIA' 39. Grupo Guatemalteco de Mujeres GGM 40. REDNOVI 41. UDEFEGUA 42. Proyecto Miriam 43. Asociación de Mujeres en Solidaridad 44. TIERRA VIVA 45. Ixmukané 46. Fe y Alegría 47. AMUTED 48. PRODESSA
 El Salvador	49. El Movimiento Salvadoreño de mujeres 50. Asociación de Mujeres Tecleñas 51. Federación Democrática internacional de Mujeres 52. Fundación Justicia de Género.
Regional Level	53. Red Latinoamericana y Caribeña de jóvenes por los Derechos Sexuales (RedLAC) 54. LATFEM, Periodismo Feminista

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The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press.

Published by Oxfam GB for Oxfam International under ISBN 978-1-78748-303-3 in July 2018.

Oxfam GB, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2JY, UK.

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