

# Foreword

The OECD review of *Gender Equality in Costa Rica* is the fourth in a report series focussing on Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) countries. Previous reports covered Chile, Peru and Colombia. This review puts gender gaps in education and on the labour market labour in Costa Rica into comparison with other countries in the LAC region, and in the OECD. The review analyses the factors that contribute to unequal employment and economic outcomes, including the uneven distribution of unpaid work. It discusses how existing policies and programmes in Costa Rica contribute to improving gender equality.

Closing gender gaps in paid and unpaid work is not only a moral and social imperative but also a central part of any successful strategy for stronger, more sustainable and more inclusive growth. The COVID-19 crisis led setbacks to gender equality around the world due to lost employment and economic opportunities for women, which faced a higher burden of domestic and care work, and increased violence. It highlighted that without more tailored and effective policies for a more equal sharing of unpaid work, progress to close gender gaps in labour force participation, earnings and financial security will continue to be sluggish.

Gender equality has long been a policy priority for the OECD. Building on an extensive body of work, the OECD Gender Initiative examines existing barriers to gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship. It monitors the progress made by governments to promote gender equality in both OECD and non-OECD countries and provides good practices based on analytical tools and reliable data. The OECD actively promotes policy measures embedded in the 2013 and 2015 OECD Recommendations on Gender Equality in Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Public Life. These include measures to ensure access to good quality education for boys and girls, policies to improve the gender balance in leadership in the public sector and providing fathers and mothers equally with financial incentives to use parental leave and flexible work options. The OECD was also instrumental in defining the target adopted by G20 Leaders at their 2014 Brisbane Summit to reduce the gender gap in labour force participation by 25% in 2025. The OECD continues to work closely with G20 and G7 Presidencies on monitoring progress with reducing gender gaps.

The flagship publications such as the 2023 report *Joining Forces for Gender Equality* assess policies to promote gender equality in different countries. These reviews have informed novel policy initiatives like *NiñaSTEM PUEDEN*, which the OECD and the Mexican Ministry of Education jointly launched. The OECD's online Gender Data Portal has become a leading global source for statistical indicators on female education, employment, entrepreneurship, political participation, and social and economic outcomes. The OECD Development Centre's *Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)* measures discrimination against women in social institutions across 180 countries.

*Gender Equality in Costa Rica* puts forward a comprehensive policy strategy to achieve greater gender equality in the country. The first part of the report reviews the evidence on gender gaps in economic and educational outcomes and on the related possible drivers, including gender-based attitudes and the distribution of unpaid work. The second part develops a comprehensive framework of policies to promote an equal distribution of paid and unpaid work between men and women and to increase women's labour income.

The objectives of *Gender Equality in Costa Rica* align with Goal 5 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals for a better and more sustainable future for all, which contemplates achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Goal 5.4 states the importance to “Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate”.

# Acknowledgements

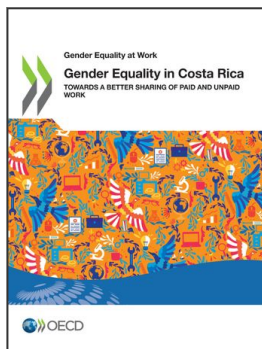
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The report was prepared by a team composed by Alessandro Goglio (project leader), OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, Sofia Blamey Andrusco and Angela Ciceri, OECD Global Relations and Co-operation Directorate and Melissa Zumaeta, Senior Consultant on Social Protection and Labour Market Policies. Magdalena Burtscher, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, finalised the report and coordinated the publication process. Stefano Scarpetta, Director of the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Directorate, Mark Pearson, Deputy Director, Angelica Salvi del Pero, Senior Advisor, and Monika Queisser, Senior Counsellor and leader of the OECD Horizontal Project on Gender Equality (all Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs), as well as Andreas Schaal, Director of OECD Global Relations, provided strategic oversight for the project. Monika Queisser and Willem Adema (Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs), Pierre De Boisséson and Carolin Beck (OECD Development Centre), members of the OECD Working Party on Social Policy, and partners from the Costa Rican Ministry of Foreign Trade and National Institute for Women provided helpful comments to the draft report.

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