

13.5 Tools to promote diversity and inclusion in the public service

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is a culturally diverse region, with numerous ethnicities, languages, and social groups. Such plurality should be reflected in a diverse and inclusive public workforce to ensure that policies and services address the varied needs and perspectives of all groups. A diverse public workforce also brings innovative ideas to the public sector, as well as different perspectives on policy challenges. However, achieving diversity and inclusion in the public workforce requires targeted recruitment policies and working conditions to attract under-represented groups. Governments can proactively adopt measures to encourage those undertaking recruitment to actively seek diverse talent pools, such as quotas or gender-balanced shortlists, or to adjust processes for those with health conditions or disabilities. Likewise, organisations should offer an appealing work environment for these minorities once recruited. This can range from implementing changes in organisational culture, to providing training or internship programmes with an inclusive perspective or providing incentives that attract and encourage diversity in the workplace.

Governments can use targets and policies for specific under-represented groups. Targets are the strongest mechanism as they set specific measurable objectives. Targets for the share of people with disabilities in the whole public service are used by 10 out of the 15 surveyed LAC countries (67%), close to the share of OECD countries (73%). Five LAC countries (33%) have targets for gender balance across the whole public service, while two (13%) have targets for gender balance only at the senior levels of the public administration. This is below the share of OECD countries with gender balance targets (42% for the whole administration and 21% only for senior levels). In addition, two LAC countries (13%) have policies (but no targets) to achieve a gender-balanced workforce in central government, similar to OECD countries (12%). To favour the inclusion of young candidates, four countries (29%) have targets across the whole central administration, a larger share than for OECD countries (18%). In line with the diverse populations of the region, four LAC countries (29%) have targets for the share of indigenous peoples in the whole public service and three for ethnic minorities (21%), which compares positively to OECD countries (12% and 18%, respectively) (OECD, 2021). Ecuador makes the most use of targets to address diversity in their public workforce, with hiring targets for the entire central administration for all listed under-represented groups, while Mexico tends to favour policies over targets (Figure 13.8).

Diversity in the public workforce can also be increased by using tools that facilitate or promote the participation of a range of candidates during recruitment. In the LAC region, 10 out of 15 countries (67%) facilitate the recruitment of candidates from under-represented groups by adjusting the processes to medical

conditions or disabilities, 8 have established quotas (53%) and 4 have gender-balanced shortlists (27%). Peru uses a wide range of these tools to increase the participation of under-represented groups, and Chile has strategies to coach women to participate in recruitment process of senior level positions and has adapted their recruitment platforms to allow candidates to input their preferred names and gender identity (Figure 13.9).

Proactively attracting workers from under-represented groups also requires governments to adopt strategies to internally adapt and respond to their needs. The use of these strategies varies across countries in the LAC region. Eight of the surveyed LAC countries (53%) try to attract under-represented groups by managing organisational cultural change (i.e. values, expectations and rules) while six (40%) use communication strategies to increase applications from diverse groups. Peru has special internship programmes; Chile provides leadership coaching under its Women+ program and El Salvador has specific mentoring and coaching for candidates from under-represented groups (Figure 13.10).

Methodology and definitions

Data were collected through the 2022 OECD-IBD Public Service Leadership and Capability Survey completed by 15 LAC countries. Respondents were senior officials in central government human resource management (HRM) departments, and the data refer to HRM practices in central government.

Disability is understood as a multidimensional and dynamic phenomenon, including the person's physical and/or mental impairments, the functional limitations arising from them and the interaction with the society and the environment. Ethnicity is understood as sharing culture: practices, values and beliefs that characterise those belonging to a community.

Further reading

IDB (2022), "Women leaders in the public sector of Latin America and the Caribbean: Gaps and opportunities", *IDB Monograph*, Washington, DC, <http://dx.doi.org/10.18235/0004597>.

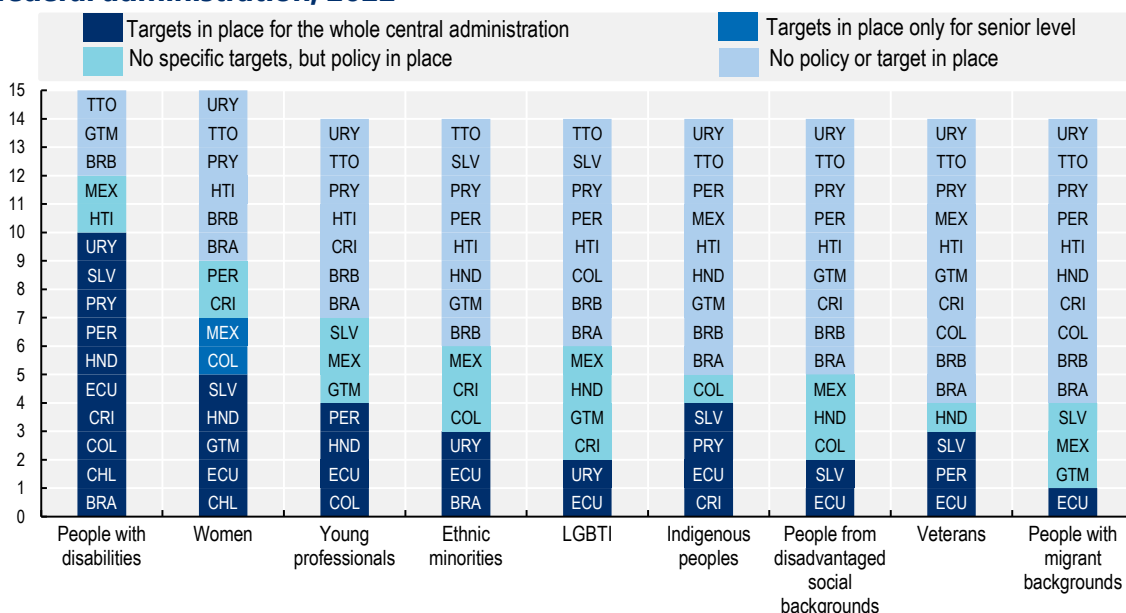
OECD (2023), *Public Employment and Management 2023: Towards a More Flexible Public Service*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5b378e11-en>.

OECD (2021), *Government at a Glance 2021*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/1c258f55-en>.

Figure notes

Figure 13.8. Data for Chile are only available for: people with disabilities and women.

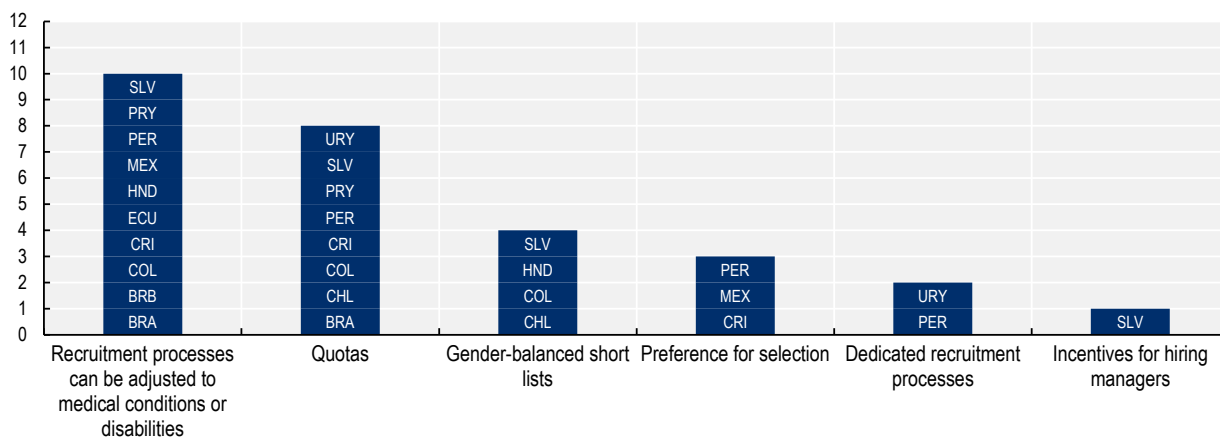
Figure 13.8. Policies and targets to improve the representation of specific groups in the central/federal administration, 2022



Source: OECD-IDB (2022), Public Service Leadership and Capability Survey.

StatLink <https://stat.link/igwbyd>

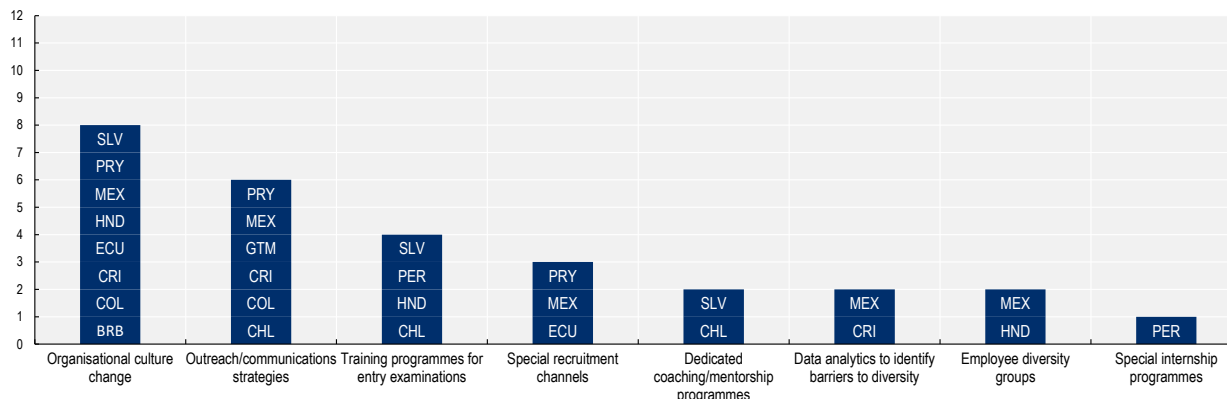
Figure 13.9. Tools used to increase the participation of under-represented groups in recruitment processes, 2022



Source: OECD-IDB (2022), Public Service Leadership and Capability Survey.

StatLink <https://stat.link/s8izx9>

Figure 13.10. Tools used to proactively attract under-represented groups, 2022



Source: OECD-IDB (2022), Public Service Leadership and Capability Survey.

StatLink <https://stat.link/z67imf>



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