

PANEL 1

Education, Gender Inequality and Sexual Diversity

The first panel of the **IV Regional Forum on Education Policy: Inclusion and Education in Post-Pandemic Times** addressed gender inequality and sexual diversity as factors that produce discriminatory practices, and therefore exclusion, within education systems. Here are some of the highlights of the diagnostic analyses and the recommendations of the specialists leading the panel: the researchers of the background papers of the regional edition of the GEM 2020 Report, Fanni Muñoz and Esther Corona, the feminist lawyer and member of CLADEM in Jalisco, Mexico, Guadalupe Ramos Ponce, and the head of the Women and Development Unit at the University of the West Indies Open Campus, Taitu Heron.

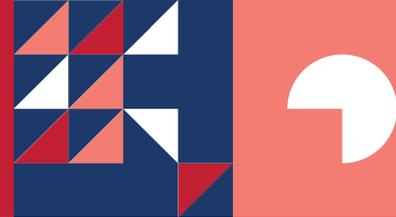
LAWS AND POLICIES

Some of the strategies that could be implemented within the framework of public policies for the educational inclusion of girls and adolescents are:

- **Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE)**, adhering to the commitments established in the Montevideo Consensus with a focus on gender, human rights, intersectionality, and respect for sexual diversity and gender identity, considering the right to make decisions in a free and responsible way, without coercion from conservative impositions.
- **Recognition of girls and adolescents as subjects of rights**, embodying the principle of the best interests of girls and the principle of progressive autonomy, and ensuring access to comprehensive sexuality education



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LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL
AND TRANSGENDER
STUDENTS IN

SEVEN
COUNTRIES

REPORTED FACING

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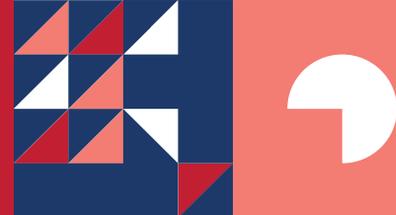
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with funding to establish programmes for the prevention of sexual violence, create accessible and affordable sexual and reproductive health services, and ensure access to justice for girls who are victims of sexual violence.

- **Adapting educational facilities to ensure inclusion.**
- **Guaranteeing gender-based access to justice and putting an end to impunity for child pregnancy.** Some examples are given from Peru, where the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP, acronym in Spanish) is the governing body for these matters, and from Mexico City, where gender identity is legally recognized so that trans people have the right to their self-perceived identity.
- A gender-based approach must be taken as a way of interpreting reality. In this sense, one way to promote its internalisation is by developing **media campaigns**. Valuable examples are those of “Niñas, No Madres” (Girls, Not Mothers), in Guatemala, and “Ni una menos” (Not one woman less), in Argentina.
- The implementation of a **multi-sectoral programme articulated with other sectors of the state** is recommended. The same goes for specific investments in the prevention and reduction of adolescent pregnancy for the eradication of child pregnancy. To achieve this, advocacy by ministries of education in the region is key for designing and pushing the approval of national strategies for comprehensive sexuality education and specific plans that prioritise sexual and reproductive rights and the prevention of adolescent pregnancy, in addition to fighting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

DATA SYSTEMS

Education is a right, but it is also a tool for change. To achieve this change, it is important to build data systems that denaturalise violence against the bodies of girls, women and LGBTIQ+ people.



That is why it is important to promote the study, systematisation and assessment of Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlighted the inequalities in the education system, as well as school dropout.

CURRICULA, TEXTBOOKS AND ASSESSMENTS

The results of the regional edition of the GEM Report suggest that educators and curriculum developers in Latin America and the Caribbean deliberately avoid tackling issues related to sexuality and sexual diversity with high school students in general. This not only excludes LGBTIQ+ students, but also causes indirect discrimination. The assumption of heterosexism that prevails in the CSE curricula also means that sexual expression and exploration beyond the heterosexual framework are considered "abnormalities" that should be controlled and repressed, rather than practices to be explored and allowed without disapproval nor judgment.

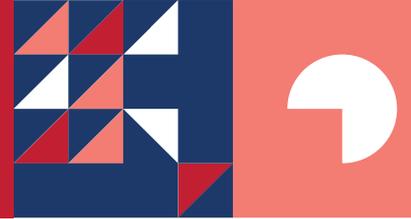
SCHOOLS

Forced child pregnancy is made invisible both in national population statistics and in government programs and resources. Within health services and education systems, it is not identified as a human rights issue related to violence. There are no protocols in schools to support, document and monitor the cases of girls who abandon their education due to pregnancy.

In Mexico, the most pressing need for trans children and adolescents is the social recognition of their gender. This includes being able to use a name that better fits their identity, IDs that reflect that identity and an appropriate response from the school system in terms of the use of services, facilities and socialization spaces. Some recommendations include: reviewing the binary reductionism of gender, sex and sexual orientation and their difference as individual and social experiences; acknowledging the



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concerns, doubts or loss of well-being associated with a trans identity; recognising the existence of bullying, harassment, aggression and violence, both from the faculty and the general school population, against people who do not conform to gender binary norms; adapting facilities to guarantee inclusion (e.g., bathrooms); and providing appropriate emotional and educational support to the impacted person and to their closest colleagues and friends.

TEACHERS, MANAGERS AND SUPPORT STAFF

It is essential to raise awareness on the use of a gender-based approach within the educational community with the help of civil society organizations that promote this approach.

STUDENTS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY

There is increasing evidence showing that family support is one of the most important factors in ensuring the health of trans children and adolescents.