

## Work And Equalities Institute

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Responses of women workers' organisations  
to crisis: examining the case of domestic  
workers during the COVID-19 pandemic in  
Mexico

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# Today

Key features of domestic work in Mexico and DWOs

Methodology

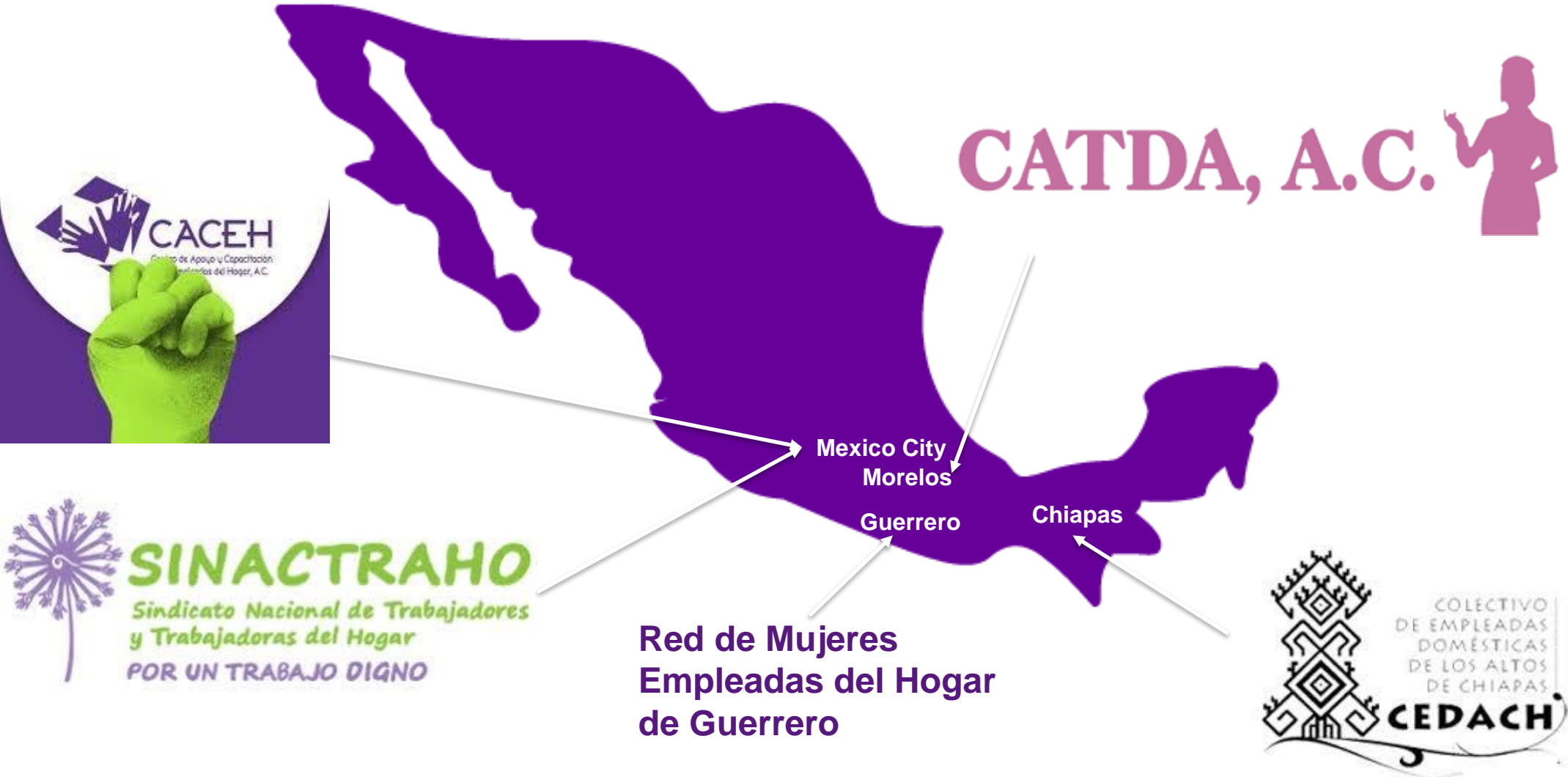
Impact of crisis and DWO's responses

Concluding remarks

## Pre-pandemic background

- Paid domestic workers: workers who provide household services such as cleaning, cooking, gardening, driving and caring for children, the elderly and sick family members
- 2.2 million domestic workers: 94% women; 10% of women works as a domestic worker
- **99% without access to social security; 0.8% has a written contract**
- **Low wages:** 42% of domestic workers receive less than the minimum wage; wages 19% lower than informal workers in other sectors
- **Violence and harassment:** 19% of workers report being mistreated or abused by their employers
- **Recent law and regulatory reforms**
  - 2019: Incorporation of domestic workers into the national social insurance scheme (IMSS); pilot test
  - 2019: Amendment of Chapter XIII of the Federal Labour Law; more labour rights but not ALL rights
  - 2019-2021: Ratification of Convention No. 189 on Domestic Work (C189); in force since 2 July 2021

# Domestic workers' organisations (DWOs)



# Methodology

Qualitative case study approach:

- **Qualitative content analysis of newspaper articles**
  - 69 online articles from 45 national and local newspapers
  - 28 February - 31 December 2020
- **Semi-structured interviews** with DWOs' leaders and social allies
  - 11 interviewees; 7 organisations
  - December 2020 - March 2021

Research Questions

- **What was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on domestic workers?**
- **How did DWOs support workers in the sector?**

## Impact of COVID-19 pandemic

### Massive job loss

- March to July 2020: 732,000 workers lost their jobs from (33% reduction) (ECLAC, 2021)

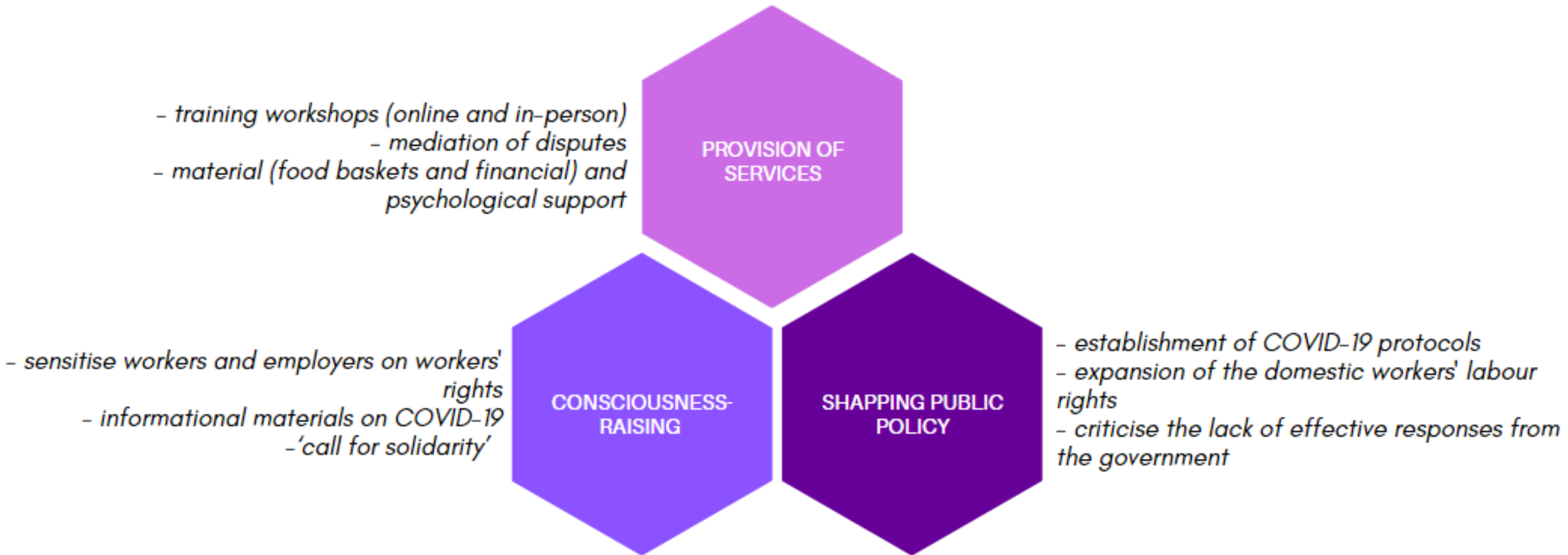
### Worsening of working conditions and employment relations

- 'Suspension' and dismissal without compensation
- Wages drastically reduced or longer working hours for the same wages
- Intensification of work
- Forced quarantine imposed by employers
- Increasing violence and harassment

### Government responses

- National government: Loan available to domestic workers enrolled in the social insurance scheme (1%)
- Local governments: few municipalities offered some type of support (mainly food baskets) to the vulnerable population (among them domestic workers)

## Domestic workers' organisations responses to the crisis



## Concluding remarks

- In a context of insufficient government measures to support informal workers, DWOs' responses were the main form of support that many domestic workers received during the pandemic
- Limitations: geographical coverage, financial, membership...
- Situation in Mexico is not isolated – global South and organizations of women in the informal economy



## References

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