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▶ UN Women - ILO Joint Programme Synthesis Report

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► Overview

This study synthesizes the results of the analysis of the gendered employment impacts of the COVID-19 crisis in Argentina taking as inputs the diagnostic studies developed as part of the technical assistance provided to government authorities, employers', and workers' organizations, under the UN Women-ILO Joint Programme, to assess and identify policy options to promote a transition to employment-intensive, care-centered and equitable economies for women and men in the long term.

Among other inputs, the policy tool developed by the ILO's Employment Department *Assessing the gendered employment impacts of COVID-19 and supporting a gender-responsive recovery* has been applied to the country context for this work.

The study is part of the Joint Programme of UN Women - the United Nations organization dedicated to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment - and the ILO - the UN agency specializing in advancing social justice and promoting decent work - entitled *Promoting decent employment for women through inclusive growth policies and investments in care*.

The initiative is part of the UN Framework for Immediate Socio-Economic Response to the Covid-19 pandemic and highlights the joint work of UN agencies and countries in crisis contexts to achieve a gender-equal future. It is a joint effort to support governments and social partners in

the implementation of gender-sensitive policy responses, both during the pandemic and in the recovery phase.

Argentina is one of five countries in the world and the only one in Latin America to be part of this joint initiative, whose objectives are: 1) to build consensus for the adoption of economic policies aimed at inclusive growth with gender equality and more and better jobs for women; 2) to contribute to the adoption of sectoral policies that reduce occupational and sectoral segregation and improve women's access to decent work opportunities; and 3) to ensure investments in the care economy, so as to ensure their financing and implementation.

The report uses a qualitative methodology of analysis of secondary statistical data and review of diagnostic studies carried out to account for both the characterization of the economy and the composition of the productive structure in terms of gender.

The results of the document articulated with the development and application of policy tools linked to the situation of the Covid-19 pandemic contribute to raise awareness of gender gaps in women's employment in strategic and critical productive sectors; as well as to develop baseline information to serve as a basis for generating concrete actions to adopt a comprehensive employment policy with a gender perspective to create decent employment for women.

► Acknowledgements

This study was prepared by Cecilia Lavena, project officer from the ILO Country Office for Argentina-, under the UN Women-ILO Joint Programme.

The report received technical supervision by Valeria Esquivel –employment policies specialist at ILO (Geneva) and global coordinator of the UN Women-ILO Joint Programme, *Promoting decent employment for women through inclusive growth policies and investments in care*, whom we thank for her significant contributions and comments.

► Glossary of terms

ADIMRA:	Association of Metallurgical Industrialists of the Argentine Republic	CETyD:	Training and Studies on Work and Development	INTA:	National Institute of Agricultural Technology
AFIP:	Federal Administration of Public Revenues	CIECTI:	Argentine Center for Scientific and Technological Information	MECON:	Ministry of Economy and Public Finance
ANSES:	National Administration For Social Security	DNEIyG:	National Directorate of Economy, Equality and Gender	MDP:	Ministry of Productive Development
ATP:	Emergency Work and Production Assistance Program	DNU:	Decree of Necessity and Urgency	MINCYT:	Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
AUE:	Universal Pregnancy Allowance	ECLAC:	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	MMGYD:	Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity
AUH:	Universal Child Allowance	ENDEI:	National Survey of Employment Dynamics and Innovation	MTESS:	Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security
AUHD:	Universal Disabled Child Allowance	EPH:	Permanent Household Survey	MiPyME:	micro, small or medium business
BCRA:	Central Bank of the Argentine Republic	ETP:	Job Training Program	NEA:	Argentine Northeastern Region
BICE:	Argentine Development Bank	IFE:	Emergency Family Income	NOA:	Argentine Northwestern Region
BO:	Official Gazette	ILO:	International Labour Organization	NRA:	Non-refundable contributions
CAEM:	Argentine Chamber of Mining Entrepreneurs	INDEC:	National Institute of Statistics and Census	OECD:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
CEP XXI:	Production Studies Center	INET:	National Institute of Technological Education	OPSSI:	Permanent Observatory for Software and Information Services
CESSI:	Chamber of the Argentine Software Industry				

PEI:	Independent Employment Program
PIL:	Labor Insertion Program
REPRO:	Productive Recovery Program
REPRO II:	Productive Recovery and Sustainability Program
SePyME:	Secretariat of Entrepreneurs and SMEs
SIPA:	Argentine Integrated Pension System
SSI:	computer software and services
UIA:	Argentine Industrial Union
UN Women:	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNCTAD:	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNSAM:	National University of San Martin

► 1. Introduction

The UN Women - ILO Joint Programme is based on the premise that gender equality or inclusive growth and decent work for all cannot be achieved without explicitly addressing the factors that impede women's access to productive employment, and that achieving gender equality requires the development and implementation of gender-equitable inclusive growth policies.

The concept of inclusive economic growth is based on the discussions on pro-poor growth whose initial objective was the reduction of poverty and income-based inequality¹. Therefore, income redistribution among households through public policies is central in the discussion on inclusive growth. Then, the perspective switches from a look focused exclusively on households – proper of heterodox economy – to pay attention to the functional distribution of income² between factors (capital and labour) and the power relations in the productive processes within the world of work (Manzanelli, Amoretti and Basualdo 2022). In this way, if income is distributed unequally based on production, this inequality will be replicated among households generating inequality in household income. Hence the importance of observing what happens with the contribution of income to aggregate income at the country level, and with the income distribution between capital and labor within the productive processes. Consequently, strategies to reduce inequality will not only depend on job creation but also on wage policies.

There is recognition that economic growth is intrinsically a gendered process, in the sense that it is based on and reproduces gender

inequalities. Economic development brings with it differential impacts for women and men, making gender inequalities a central feature of the functioning of the economic system that cannot be ignored. Unless the gender dimensions of inclusive growth are made explicit, gender equality is included as a policy objective, and unless inclusive growth policy frameworks are put in place to promote decent work for women (not just by increasing women's labor market participation) and improve their well-being (by improving their access to highly productive sectors), growth is unlikely to benefit women and men equally (Seth 2019).

Policy strategies to promote inclusive growth include economic policies at the macro level and sectoral policies, including investments in the care economy, which must be aimed at creating decent employment for women and men and must contribute to close existing gender gaps in employment, income and working conditions (Elson and Seth 2019; ILO 2018a).

For this to happen, it is not enough to address supply-side constraints to women's employment, as increasing women's labor market participation does not necessarily guarantee that there are enough jobs to absorb their labor. The dynamics of the incorporation of women into the labor market in low-productivity activities and the concentration of a greater proportion of women in low-paid jobs in the service sector, illustrates how the relationship between employment of women and the labor income share can be negative³ (Braunstein and Seguino 2018). Demand-side policies that stimulate employment and more inclusive growth, address sectoral and

occupational gender segregation, and reduce and redistribute unpaid care work, will play a key role in improving labor market outcomes for women (Esquivel 2017).

The ILO has done extensive work on the relationship between gender inequalities and macroeconomic and sectoral policies, focusing especially on the participation of women in the labor force (ILO 2018b), the gendered impacts of structural transformation (Kucera and Milberg 2000; Dasgupta and Verik 2016; Esquivel 2019), and the impacts on employment of investment in care services (ILO 2018c). These contributions indicate that the configuration of macroeconomic and sectoral policies favorable to employment and gender equality are specific to each country and differ depending on the structure of the economy, the degree of global integration, gender and ethnic inequalities, and the distribution of paid and unpaid care work (Seguino 2019a). Likewise, studies highlight that there is a link between gender inequality and growth and that achieving gender equality and inclusive growth objectives will depend on the policies that are adopted, and on the introduction of gender equity as a policy goal and throughout the public policy cycle.

This document will present the UN Women and the International Labor Organization (ILO) Joint Programme policy framework to accelerate progress towards gender equality, and a more sustainable and inclusive growth process at the country level.

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- 1 James Galbraith, for example, wrote in 2012 “Inequality and Instability: A Study of the World Economy Just Before the Great Crisis” and has other publications that revolve around the issue of inequality. Robert Kuttner, the Economic Policy Institute, Edward Wolff, et al. Gabriel Kolko, *Wealth and Power in America*. Wade, R.H. “Global Trends in Income Inequality” (2011) and “Why has income inequality been on the sidelines of public policy for so long?” (2012).
 - 2 A study by the Centro de Investigación y Formación de la República Argentina (CIFRA) recorded that the contribution to GDP of wage earners -formal and informal- was 43% of the total in 2021, a number close to the worst income distribution the country has ever had (Manzanelli, P.; Amoretti, L. and Basualdo, E., 2022).
 - 3 If women’s wages are systematically lower than men’s, or if women have less power than men to negotiate wages with capital, as more women enter the labor force, the labor share of income will fall.

► 2. Conceptual framework

The UN Women and ILO Joint Programme proposes to explicitly address the factors that undermine women's access to productive employment as a way to achieve gender equality through the application of equitable inclusive growth policies. This recognition stems from the fact that economic growth is intrinsically a gendered process, and gender inequalities, which intersect with and deepen other dimensions of inequality, are obstacles to shared prosperity; the core of "inclusive growth". It is not just a question of identifying differential behaviors between men and women, but of understanding the differential impacts, not necessarily positive (Esquivel 2017), for women and men.

Policy frameworks to promote inclusive growth include economic policies at the macroeconomic level and sectoral policies (including investments in the care economy). These policies must be aimed at creating decent employment for women and men and must contribute to closing the existing gender gaps in terms of employment, income and working conditions. And in this sense, they must begin by identifying inequalities as a central component of the functioning of the economic system, and thus design strategies that include gender equality as a policy objective.

In the late 1980s, analyses began to identify gender impacts on macroeconomic policies, pointing out that the deterioration of basic public services (health, education) and the increase in poverty had especially affected women (feminization of poverty) (Chant 2015), directly and indirectly. In other words, women tried to compensate for the drop in the provision of basic public services and the drop in their income through more

unpaid domestic and care work (Esquivel 2015). Macroeconomic policies (fiscal, monetary, trade) have gender impacts that are observed in the differential location of women and men in the productive structure and can undermine policy objectives by reinforcing inequalities¹. In other words, the impacts of the crisis on the balance of payments vary by sector, and are differential in industrial employment, in public employment or in employment in the services sector. Although the impacts in the service sector (where most women are concentrated, and where the increase in women's activity tends to offset the unemployment of men) are lower, the lack of decent work opportunities for women increases the incidence of informality among them. These facts reinforce the idea that macroeconomic policies are not gender neutral and cannot be separated from social policies.

In addition to the gender impacts of macroeconomic policies, there are gender impacts on growth. Economic growth is intrinsically a gendered process, in the sense that it builds on, and can deepen, gender disparities in access to decent employment opportunities. Addressing the limitations women face when entering the labor market (i.e., regulatory discrimination and inequality of opportunities, among others) is itself a way of inclusion in the growth process. But this does not mean that growth is inclusive. If women enter jobs with low wages, and with little wage bargaining power, then growth is supported by gender differences². Seguino's contributions (Seguino 2020; Seguino 2019b) highlight that gender differences in education, health, unpaid care work, employment and wages have consequences that are transmitted both

through the supply side of the economy (through labor productivity) and through the demand side (through business spending, exports, savings, and balance of payments).

The orthodox view focuses on the characteristics of the female labor force and the restrictions women face when they seek to enter the labor market, but not on the characteristics of occupations once women find employment. In this sense, it is argued that gender equality in obtaining better educational credentials and participation in the labor market contributes to growth, since the greater human capital of women would increase the average productivity of workers, impacting growth positively³ (Esquivel 2018). But for the greater productivity of women to be transformed into growth, women need to be employed, namely, there must be aggregate demand to employ them, which implies that the relationship between the greater productivity of women and growth is mediated by macroeconomic performance. And then, this encourages us to think of inequality between women and men as separated from other dimensions of inequality, thinking about public policies in terms of equal opportunities (Esquivel 2017). The persistence of women in the service sectors, and the difficulties in accessing decent occupations even with the required educational credentials points to the persistence of sectoral and occupational segregation. This segregation is exacerbated by a higher activity rate for women, which is why, if demand levels are not considered, the working conditions of women and men may worsen.

For economic growth to benefit women and men equally, it is necessary to make the gender dimensions of inclusive growth explicit and establish policy and financing frameworks aimed at promoting decent work for women and men while improving their well-being equitably and comprehensively. This implies contemplating the impact of inequality in macroeconomic terms, integrating demand and supply analysis, and in sectoral terms, considering the relationship between gender and productive structure. Likewise, including gender equality as a macro policy objective can help guide public investment in care services from a development perspective (Esquivel 2018).

As expressed in multiple documents that analyze the COVID-19 crisis at a global level (ILO 2020a), this latest economic crisis differs from previous ones due to its depth and scope, since it directly impacts the world of work, economies, and deepens the pre-existing structural inequalities at the time of the crisis. In this crisis, the consequences of the loss of human lives, the increase in unemployment, underemployment and inactivity levels, the loss of labor income, the closure of companies (large, medium, and small) have a differential impact, exposing inequalities in general, and gender gaps, in particular (ILO 2021a).

The effect is differential for women and men depending on their conditions to access paid work, the relative fragility of their employment situation (informality), the productive sector in which they are employed, the dynamics of income, and on access to care services, given the distribution of care responsibilities within households (ILO 2021b).

Furthermore, on this occasion, women's jobs faced a relatively greater risk than men's due to the loss and deterioration of working conditions. Around the world, women have been the first to lose their jobs due to the economic crisis induced by the COVID-19 pandemic⁴ (more pronounced than during the Great Recession). This is largely due to the impact of the lockdowns that affected sectors, including manufacturing and services, in which women are overrepresented and where they often work in informal working conditions. Furthermore, the deepening of gender gaps in the time dedicated to unpaid care work, the limited access to social protection systems and the resurgence of violence and harassment have made it difficult for women to keep their jobs, compared to men (ILO 2021c).

Women have also been the last to recover their jobs, and they continue to face barriers to insert themselves in the most dynamic sectors of the economy and with better salaries. This is because gender gaps persist in the quality of employment. What the global analyzes highlight is that even before the pandemic, jobs with a high concentration of women were characterized by low wages, long working hours, few career advancement opportunities, and health and safety risks in the workplace, as well as violence and

harassment in the workplace (ILO 2021c). When the pandemic hit, these trends exposed women workers to greater risk of being laid off, suffering a significant reduction in their working hours, and/or suffering a further deterioration in their working conditions. For most women, the demands for unpaid care within the household increased considerably. This has led women who were still working to reduce paid working hours or extend working hours (paid and unpaid) to unsustainable levels (Braunstein and Seguino 2018).

Hence the importance of counteracting the gender effects of the COVID-19 crisis and creating the necessary conditions to support decent job creation for women. For this, it is essential to place gender equality at the center of emergency and recovery efforts, through the design and implementation of gender-responsive employment policies, including macroeconomic, sectoral and labor market policies⁵.

Macroeconomic policies, both monetary and fiscal, must continue to boost aggregate demand, paying special attention to women's employment and income (UN Women-ILO 2021a). Sectoral policies must continue to support the sectors affected by the isolation measures and the general contraction of consumption and investment, particularly in those sectors where women prevail (UN Women-ILO 2021b).

In Argentina, there were multiple measures adopted to contain the emergency response and move towards recovery, making visible and meeting the objective of closing structural gaps in the labor market and income (Ernst and López Mourello 2020), achieving equal access to the most dynamic sectors of the economy and advancing towards growth with equity (Marzonetto et al. 2022). However, gender gaps and horizontal (productive/industrial sectors in which women continue to participate to a lesser extent than men while others continue to be highly feminized) and vertical segregation (in occupations of lower hierarchy, stability and average income) persist in the labour market (ILO 2022a; ILO 2022b).

A gender sensitive recovery, which contributes to achieving the definitive closure of gender gaps, should prioritize employment policies with a gender perspective, encourage women to access and remain in hierarchical positions in the most dynamic sectors of the economy; and make investments in care infrastructure.

This document is based on the diagnostic documents elaborated under the UN Women-ILO Joint Programme (Argentina component) through the support of activities provided during year 2021-2022 to the Gender Cabinet of the Secretariat of Industry and Productive Development of the Ministry of Economy and the Undersecretary of Planning, Studies and Statistics in the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security.

Next, a first section will be presented on the evolution of the main economic and labor market indicators considering the situation before and after the pandemic and the gender structure of Argentina's economy. A second section focuses on the sectoral perspective and shows an analysis of employment levels based on gender, considering the same timeframe with respect to the pandemic crisis. Then, a systematization of public policies that were implemented at the sectoral level with a gender perspective for the inclusion of women in the post-pandemic recovery is presented. The document ends with a summary of final considerations regarding policies with a gender perspective in Argentina and the experience of implementing the UN Women-ILO Joint Programme.

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- 1 From a policy standpoint, reducing macroeconomic vulnerability implies recalibrating growth strategies to reduce extreme dependence on exports. And this implies generating domestic demand by increasing household income and consumption and boosting business investment. Clearly, consumption is likely to increase if a larger share of national income goes to poorer households, which also ensures a more inclusive growth model. Some of the policies that can strengthen fiscal capacity include debt relief mechanisms, trade, finance and tax policy reforms. In the long term, however, the focus should be on increasing fiscal space, including finding ways to mobilize additional domestic revenues.
 - 2 As more and more women have entered the labor market in contexts where productivity growth has been low and many women are concentrated in low-paying service sector jobs where they have little bargaining power, there is downward pressure on the proportion of the workforce.
 - 3 Smart economics" argument: "gender equity is good not only for women but for the economy. Policies associated with improving women's productivity (via education) and increasing their labor participation rate (via provision of care services and access to credit) would result in increases in overall GDP (Esquivel 2018).
 - 4 Adams-Prassl et al. (2020: 1-33) warn that gender gaps persist even controlling for job characteristics. Merteihikian & Gonalons-Pons (2022: 1-12) conclude that increases in gender inequality in the United States during the pandemic were largely concentrated in households with children, but also relate in part to gender differences in labor market jobs prior to the pandemic and to the higher prevalence of women in lower-income jobs relative to their partners.
 - 5 Seminar: Gender-responsive employment policies for a job-rich and fair recover, January 31, 2022. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/empolicy/events/WCMS_834924/lang--en/index.htm

► 3. Map of the gender structure of the economy and the labor market pre- and post-pandemic

3.1 Statistical description of the Argentine economy

The pandemic breaks out in Argentina in a context of strong economic contraction and deepens a general crisis. In a context marked by a high level of inflation, the gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 2 percent year-on-year in 2019 and aggregate demand had fallen by 5.9 percent, due to the depression in domestic demand. In this process of depressed economic activity, the financial account deregulation model, established as a public policy before the pandemic, facilitated the processes of profit-taking, capital flight, and public borrowing in foreign currency (UN Women 2023).

Before the pandemic, given the impossibility of re-financing the debt acquired with private creditors, Argentina began an indebtedness process with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The stock of debt in dollars went from representing 39 percent of GDP in 2017 to 69 percent in 2019. In addition to the complicated macroeconomic scenario of exclusion from financing markets, the beginning of 2020 added the paralysis of the economy due to the restrictions posed by the COVID-19 health emergency, the drop in tax collection, the growing indebtedness together with the financing crisis, and annual inflation of 53 percent at the end of 2019 (INDEC 2020).

As a result of the pandemic, economic activity in Argentina fell 26 percent between February and April 2020, when lockdown modalities were more stringent, and gradually recovered as containment measures and cessation of activities were lifted for some productive sectors and regions. In 2020, GDP fell 9.9 percent, almost the largest contraction in the country's economic history, and higher than

the average for Latin America and the Caribbean, the most affected region on the planet at that time (ECLAC 2020a). At the end of 2020, GDP closed with a negative balance and exports fell by 17.7 percent. The economic prospects depended, to a large extent, on the result of the renegotiation of the sovereign debt.

The pandemic crisis impacted Argentina through several transmission channels (ECLAC 2020b): drop in foreign trade, drop in private consumption, drop in investment, increase in the informal exchange rate, putting pressure on the weakening of the local currency.

► Foreign trade: In 2018, Argentina had a trade openness ratio of around 30 percent (UNCTAD 2020), with an emphasis on agricultural exports and low economic complexity. Consequently, in relative terms, the impact of the fall in foreign trade was expected to be lower than in other countries in the region, although the concentration of exports in agricultural commodities and manufactured products of agricultural origin -63.8 percent of the total - implied greater vulnerability to falling prices, especially for soybeans, wheat, and corn (UN Argentina 2020). In addition, two thirds of exports went to trading partners affected by COVID-19, such as Brazil, the European Union, the United States of America and Chile, China and other Asian countries (Dragún et. al 2019). In 2020, exports fell 17.7 percent (INDEC 2021).

► Private consumption was significantly affected by social distancing measures. In 2020 it showed a drop of 13.7 percent while the public consumption did so at 1.9 percent (Ernst and

López Mourelo 2020). The impact on supply and demand was added to a financial shock as liquidity problems emerged associated with the drop in consumption, putting companies (especially micro, small and medium-sized ones) at risk.

- Investment had a collapse of 13 percentage points during 2020 (Ernst and López Mourelo 2020; INDEC 2021). The main cause: fear of an economic slowdown and lack of financing that would slow down investments, except for key industries, such as food, pharmaceuticals,

and medical equipment. Global volatility and uncertainty, coupled with apprehensions about sovereign debt renegotiation, led to capital outflows. Although exchange controls were in place, the informal exchange rate continued to rise, exerting upward pressure on the foreign exchange markets that weakened the peso (local currency) savings market.

The economy in general and industry in particular experienced record low activity in a context of two consecutive years of recession (Ernst and López Mourelo 2020) (Table 3.1).

► **Table 3.1. Global Supply and Demand, Argentina. 2018-2022.**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022		
	Year-on-year change				1Q	2Q	3Q
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)*	-2.5	-2.2	-9.9	10.4	6.0	7.1	5.9
Gross Domestic Product by sector of activity - Manufacturing Industry	-4.8	-6.2	-7.7	15.9	4.8	7.7	6.4
Private consumption	-2.2	-6.1	-13.7	10.0	10.9	10.7	10.2
Public consumption	-1.9	-6.4	-1.9	7.1	5.0	5.3	-0.1
Gross Fixed Capital Formation	-5.7	-16.0	-13.0	33.4	10.6	18.8	14.0
Consumer prices (CPI) * *	47.6	53.8	36.1	50.9	55.1	64.0	94.8(**)
Exports (real goods and services)	-0.6	9.8	-17.7	9.2	8.9	9.3	-4.6
Imports (real goods and services)	-4.5	-18.7	-18.5	22.0	26.8	23.1	21.0

Source: INDEC (2022a). Technical Reports/Vol. 6, N°25. National Accounts. Activity level progress report. Third quarter of 2022. Ministry of Economy, INDEC. (Table 2. Global supply and demand. Quarterly values. Percentage variation with respect to the same period of the previous year). https://www.indec.gob.ar/uploads/informesdeprensa/pib_12_2282F1943D37.pdf

Note: At the time of writing this report, data for 2022 are reported by quarter.

(*) Year-on-year change National CPI. (**) Year-to-date compared to previous year for year-on-year change. For quarterly information it is inter-annual % variation same quarter previous year. (***) Inter-annual variation of the CPI (December 21/22: 94.8).

See: INDEC (2023). Technical Reports/Vol. 7, N°1. Price index. Consumer Price Index. Ministry of Economy, INDEC (Table 2. Consumer Price Index. Variations in December with respect to the same month of 2021, according to divisions. National total and regions) https://www.indec.gob.ar/uploads/informes-deprensa/jpc_01_23891D383E4F.pdf

During 2021 the economy began a recovery trend, GDP and exports grew by 10.4 percent and 9.2 percent correspondingly, in a scenario of high inflation (50.9 percent). Although the GDP grew during 2021, the recovery was accompanied by the deepening of structural inequalities, which

were evidenced in the worsening of socio- labour indicators. Furthermore, the recovery in production after the pandemic, although fast, was heterogeneous, the pace and magnitude of the reactivation of activity responded to various factors.

The global pandemic of COVID-19 hit the country in the midst of the economic and social emergency unleashed by the negative effects of the balance of payments and debt crisis of 2018-2019, going through a recession of more than two years and starting from record inflation levels since the early 1990s (BCRA 2020).

The government's responses to avoid a major health and social crisis included having preventive and mandatory social isolation¹, which began on March 20, 2020 and was renewed under different modalities during the following months and until November 2021. Political responses also included various measures aimed at maintaining employment and income in both the formal and informal sectors.

During Mauricio Macri's administration (2015-19), the IMF granted Argentina a credit of 57 000 million dollars in the midst of a currency crisis, of which the country received some 44 000 million. When Alberto Fernández took office in December 2019, his administration renounced the pending sections.

During 2020, after restructuring some 66 000 million dollars of debt with international private creditors², the government began negotiations with the IMF to replace the 2018 stand-by agreement with an agreement of extended facilities and extension of payment terms.

The previous high levels of indebtedness³, added to the worsening of the economic situation because of the pandemic, required a request for help to activate financing instruments with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). On March 3, 2022, Argentina signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the IMF⁴ in which it requested support for the Debt Refinancing Project between the Argentine Republic and the IMF to address the country's balance of payments needs contemplating the worsening of the economic situation because of the pandemic. The gender perspective was included among the pillars of the understanding, highlighting the assurance that adequate fiscal resources are directed at reducing gender inequities by strengthening the budget system with a gender perspective⁵.

During the third quarter of 2022, GDP reached 5.9 percent and exports fell by -4.6 percent, in a scenario of high inflation (94.8 percent year-on-year, 5.1 percent monthly for the month of December 2022 nationwide).

Next, a status report of the main indicators of the labor and income market will be presented according to their gender structure, comparing their evolution before and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.2 Statistical description of the gendered employment structure of the economy

Within the framework of the UN Women – ILO Joint Programme, a series of diagnostic studies were developed to describe the main indicators of the labor market according to its gender structure that serve as the basis for the preparation of this section along with other multiple sources of information (Romero 2022; Geri 2023).

In the Argentine workplace, there are still marked gender gaps that place women at a disadvantage compared to men⁶ (ILO 2022a; ILO 2022b). Before the pandemic, there were gender gaps in the labor market and income, and asymmetries in the distribution of unpaid care work⁷ (among other inequalities). The COVID-19 pandemic caused an unprecedented care and economic crisis, widening structural inequality gaps around the world. Its impact was deeper and more lasting for women, particularly the young (ILO 2021d).

As will be developed in this section, the main labor market indicators broken down by sex show that, even though progress has been made in relation to the presence of women in employment, there is still a long way to go to reverse one of the main structural problems of the country: gender inequality in the world of work (ILO 2022a).

The effects of COVID-19 on the labor market in Argentina began to be felt in the first quarter of 2020. During the first quarter of 2020, the activity rate was 47.1 percent; the employment rate at 42.2 percent. Activity (INDEC 2022b)⁸ and employment (INDEC 2022b)⁹ rates increased with respect to the

previous quarter, as did underemployment and job-demanding occupation rates (INDEC 2022b)¹⁰.

During the first quarter of 2020 around 1.4 million people were actively looking for a job with an unemployment rate of 10.4 percent. This figure indicates an increase with respect to the previous quarter, and with the same quarter of the previous year, reflecting the first impacts of the crisis. Unemployment growth was higher in the case of women, which resulted in an unemployment rate of 11.2 percent, compared to 9.7 percent for men (Table 3.2).

Likewise, the increase in the number of underemployed and employed applicants increased other forms of pressure on the labor market. In the first quarter of 2020, the pressure of labor supply on the market reached 28.3 percent, that is, almost 3 out of 10 active people did not work and were actively looking for a job (open unemployment) or worked more than 35 hours a week and were in some form of job search (employed applicants).

The slowdown in economic activities caused by the isolation forced by the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the generation of income among informal workers, creating greater vulnerability to poverty in households. Since 2019, the rate of unregistered workers increased to reach 35.8 percent of total wage earners at the beginning of 2020.

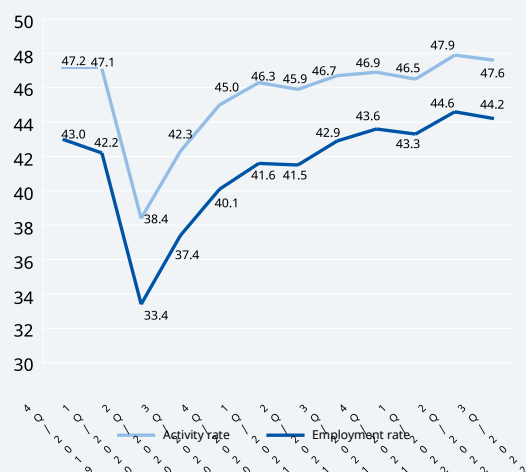
The greatest impact of the pandemic on the employment rate occurred during the second quarter of 2020, when the employment rate stood at 33.4 percent, 9.6 p.p. (percentagepoints) less than at the end of 2019. Starting in the third quarter of the year, as the health crisis was gradually overcome, the employment rate recovered steadily until the end of 2021. The unemployment rate, which was high at beginning of the pandemic (8.9 percent in 4Q2019), grew to 13.1 percent in the second quarter of 2020, and then recovered to 11.7 percent in the third quarter that same year. In the fourth quarter of 2021, the unemployment rate was at levels below those at the start of the crisis.

During the fourth quarter of 2021, employment indicators recovered the levels prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Activity and employment rates increased with respect to the previous quarter, as did underemployment and job-demanding occupation. People with registered work as a whole (salaried and self-employed) recovered from the contraction of the pandemic during 2021.

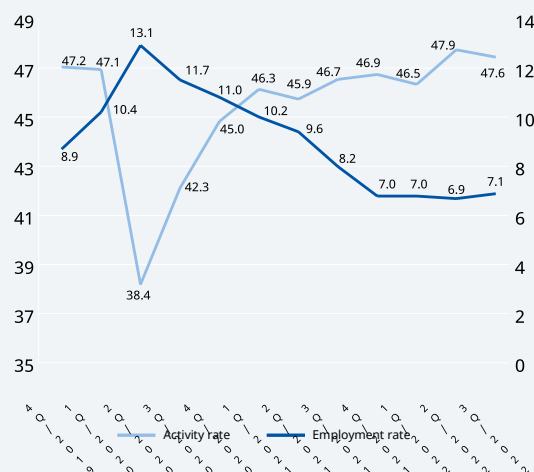
Towards the third quarter of 2022, the trend towards increased levels of activity and employment continued to grow and recovered beyond the levels prevailing before the pandemic, as well as underemployment and job-seeking occupation (Figure 3.1).

► **Figure 3.1. Labor market indicators in Argentina. Activity rate, employment rate, unemployment rate. Total population. Pre-pandemic and Post-pandemic recovery: 4Q 2019-3Q 2022.**

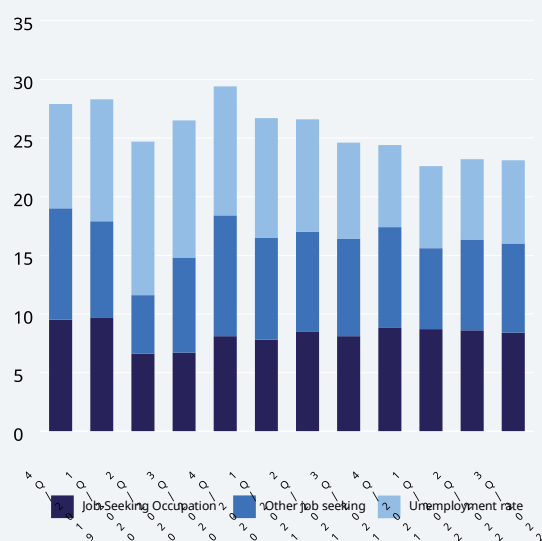
Panel A. Activity rate and employment rate



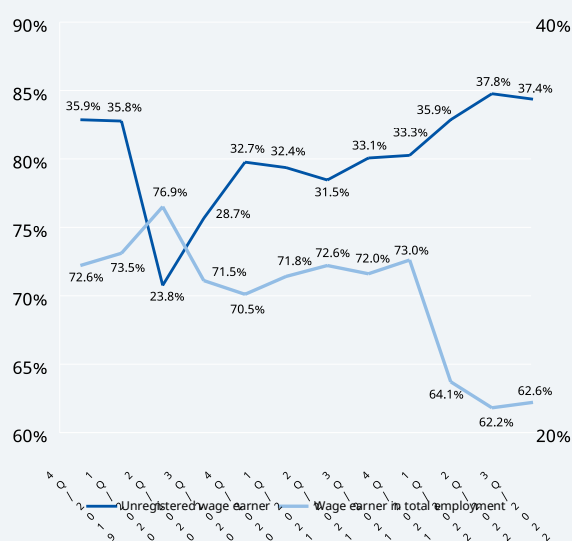
Panel B. Activity rate and unemployment rate



Panel C. Pressure on the labor market



Panel D. Unregistered employees



Source: EPH-INDEC. Labor market and Income Report, based on EPH-INDEC. See: <https://www.indec.gob.ar/indec/web/Nivel4-Tema-4-31-58>

3.2.1 Employment levels disaggregated by gender and age. 2019-2022. Argentina.

The participation of women in the labor market (those who are employed or looking for a job) experienced a severe decline throughout the world, particularly in Latin America (ECLAC/ILO 2022a). In Argentina, the activity rate for women fell from 49.4 percent in the fourth quarter of 2019 to 41.2 percent in the second quarter of 2020, the lowest since 2002. The employment rate of women decreased from 44.7 percent between the fourth quarter of 2019 to 35.6 percent in the second quarter of 2020 (Table 3.2).

At the beginning of 2021, the activity rate for women reached 49 percent, half a percentage point below the first quarter of 2020. It was not until the third and fourth quarters of 2021 that there was evidence of a strong recovery in activity, reaching 50.4 percent (activity rate 5 p.p. above 3Q2020) and 50.3 percent (activity rate 2.7 p.p. above 4Q2020) respectively; an all-time record for activity, with the return to face-to-face education in schools and vaccination programs against COVID-19. In the same period, the employment rate¹¹ for women reached 43 percent, one percentage point below the first quarter of 2020 (ILO 2022c). The recovery of the employment rate for women occurred towards the third and fourth quarters of 2021 when it exceeded pre-pandemic levels: 45.9 percent (employment rate 6.5 p.p. above 3Q2021) and 46.4 percent (employment rate 4.5 p.p. above 4Q2021) (Table 3.2). This improvement was associated with the return to face-to-face education in schools and the expansion of vaccination programs against COVID-19 (ILO 2022a; ILO 2023a). In Argentina, on average for the period 2017 and 2021, the employment rate of men has been 27 percent higher than that of women, the greatest impact on the employment rate occurred during the first semester of 2020. This gap persisted, although with some fluctuations, during the years 2020 and 2021 (Romero et al. 2023).

The changes imposed by the pandemic in daily activities, as well as productive ones, had an impact on the organization of care strategies in society and within households. Those who were most affected by the restrictions on mobility and the closure of care spaces were women who are mothers,

impacting the economy of women in charge of girls and boys. Before the pandemic, only 32 percent of women in households with children under the age of six were actively participating in the labor market, and the remaining 68 percent of women were inactive. It was only in the second quarter of 2021 that women in charge of girls and boys managed to recover the level of activity prior to the pandemic and the gap with men who also live in households with children under 6 years of age was more than 13.4 p.p. (percentage points) (ILO 2023, 26).

At present (third quarter of 2022), women still register lower activity rates than men (51.1 percent compared to 70.3 percent), as well as employment (47.1 percent compared to 65.3 percent), which translate into marked gender labor gaps for both indicators: from 19.2 p.p. (percentage points) in the first case and 18.6 p.p. in the second. Even though these gender disparities persist, it is important to highlight that the activity and employment rate of women for the third quarter of 2022 not only maintained levels prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also far exceeded them, reaching record values (activity rate 9.9 pp above 2Q2020) (ECLAC/ILO 2022a).

Specifically, in the first quarter of 2022 the activity rate for women reached 50.2 percent, implying a year-on-year increase of 1.2 p.p. (49 percent in the first quarter of 2021). While, in the case of men, this rate stood at 68.6 percent, decreasing 1.1 p.p. compared to the same period in 2021 (which was 69.7 percent in the first quarter of that year). For its part, the employment rate registered year-on-year growth for both women (from 43 percent in 2021 to 46 percent in 2022) and men (from 63.8 percent in 2021 to 64.6 percent in 2022), although representing a greater increase in percentage terms for the former (3 p.p. vs. 0.8 p.p.).

In percentage terms, the withdrawal and subsequent return to the labor market was similar between men and women (Table 3.2), although the fall was slightly greater, and the recovery was less for women (INDEC 2022b). The evolution of these rates for the first quarters of the years between 2019 and 2022 show that both the activity and the employment of women are far from equaling those of men. While when comparing the first quarters of each year, men register values above 60 percent in both rates, for all the periods analyzed, the activity

rate for women managed to reach 50 percent in 2022 and the employment rate is still at 4 p.p. to do so (Figure 3.2).

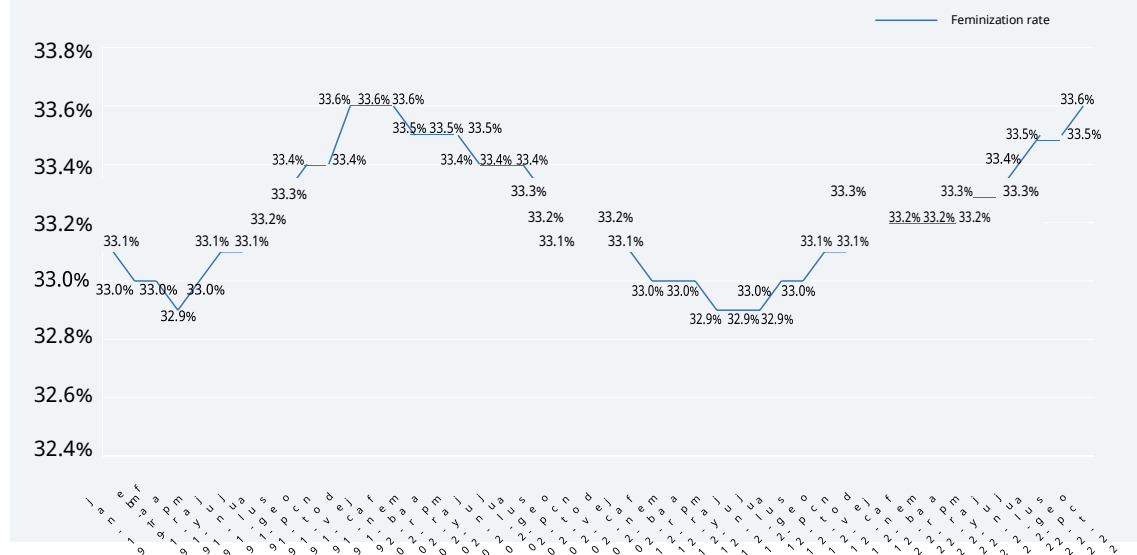
These figures seem to indicate that, within the framework of the process of exit from the pressing economic context installed by the health crisis, women are gradually improving their situation in the labor market, even if it is still not equal to that of men (Table 3.2, Figure 3.2).

Participation of women in private employment

With regard to the participation of women in private employment at the national level, according

to data from the CEP XXI for October 2022, women held 2,134 thousand salaried jobs (CEP XXI 2023). This figure shows that female participation in private employment is now much lower than male participation, as it is equivalent to 34 percent of the total salaried positions in the sector. However, hand in hand with the end of the pandemic, this indicator has grown steadily and has even exceeded the values of previous years. Likewise, at the beginning of 2022, more than 29 thousand positions for women and 2.6 thousand for men were created, according to information from CEP XXI (2023) if the percentage of participation is compared with the year 2019 (Figure 3.3). By the end of 2022, female participation in registered private employment reached pre-pandemic levels in more than two years.

► **Figure 3.3. Share of women in private sector wage and salary employment. January 2019 to October 2022.**



Note: Data refer to salaried jobs registered in the private sector; they do not include occupational categories such as self-employed and employers.

Source: CEP XXI based on SIPA-Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security.

The adoption of a federal reach makes it possible to account for the specific and heterogeneous nature of the insertion of women in the labor market at the provincial level (ILO 2023a). Although in all the country's provinces women occupy more than 20 percent of salaried jobs in the private sector, in more than half of them they do not reach 30 percent and in none they exceed 40 percent.

Gender inequalities also find expression in unemployment rates. The unemployment gaps widened with the pandemic; throughout 2020, the unemployment rate for women exceeded 10 percent, a high figure considering the restrictions on actively seeking employment. The unemployment rate for men went from 8.4 percent in the fourth quarter of 2019 to 10.2 percent in the fourth quarter of 2020. While the unemployment rate for women increased by 2.4 p.p. going from 9.5 percent to 11.9 percent between the fourth quarter of 2019 and the fourth quarter of 2020.

Towards the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021, the unemployment gap between men and women widened from 1.7 p.p in the fourth quarter of 2020 to 3.8 p.p. in the first quarter of 2021.

The recovery of activity for women during this period implied an increase in their unemployment: the proportion of women seeking employment increased, but not the number of employed women. This trend changed at the end of 2021 where the gap narrowed until it reached a difference of 1.3 p.p. in the last quarter of 2021 (Table 3.2). In the fourth quarter of 2021 it fell to 7.7 percent. This fall is related to a transition to employment and not to leaving the labor market (inactivity) (ILO 2023a; Con 2022).

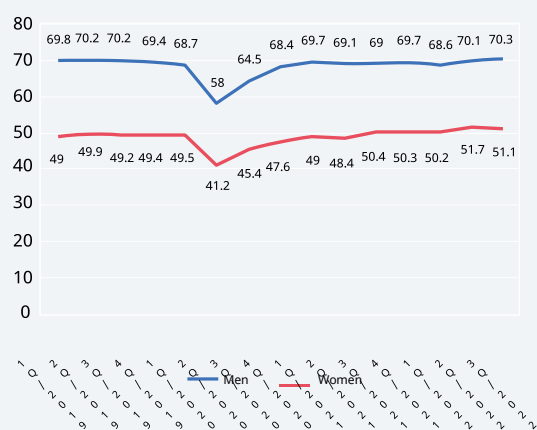
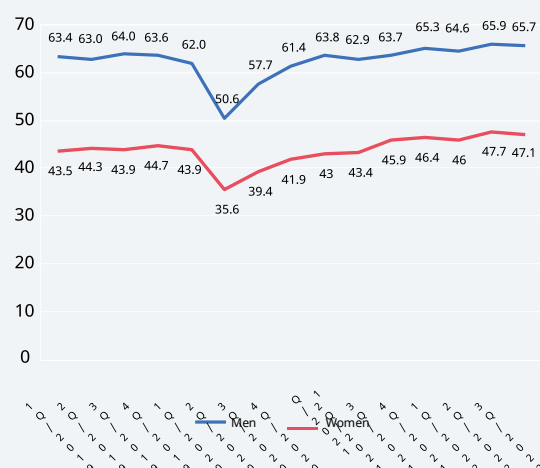
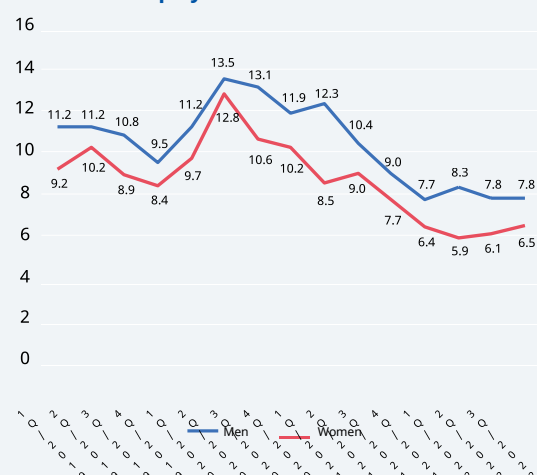
In the first quarter of 2022, as in previous periods, there are more women (8.3 percent) compared to men (5.9 percent) who do not have a job even though they are available to work and are actively seeking employment). This translates into the existence of a gender gap of 2.4 p.p. for this indicator (Table 3.2).

► **Table 3.2. Labor market indicators, Population 14 years and older disaggregated by gender: Pre-and post-pandemic: 4Q 2019- 3Q2022.**

	Activity rate (14 years and			Employment rate (14 years and			Unemployment rate (14 yearsover) over)		
	Men	Women	Gap	Men	Women	Gap	Men	Women	Gap
4Q/2019	69.4	49.4	20.0	63.6	44.7	18.9	8.4	9.5	-1.1
2020	64.9	45.9	19.0	57.9	40.2	17.7	10.8	12.4	-1.6
1Q/2020	68.7	49.5	19.2	62.0	43.9	18.1	9.7	11.2	-1.5
2Q/2020	58.0	41.2	16.8	50.6	35.6	15.0	12.8	13.5	-0.7
3Q/2020	64.5	45.4	19.1	57.7	39.4	18.3	10.6	13.1	-2.5
4Q/2020	68.4	47.6	20.8	61.4	41.9	19.5	10.2	11.9	-1.7
2021	69.4	49.5	19.9	63.9	44.7	19.3	7.9	9.9	-2.0
1Q/2021	69.7	49.0	20.7	63.8	43.0	20.8	8.5	12.3	-3.8
2Q/2021	69.1	48.4	20.7	62.9	43.4	19.5	9.0	10.4	-1.4
3Q/2021	69.0	50.4	18.6	63.7	45.9	17.8	7.7	9.0	-1.3
4Q/2021	69.7	50.3	19.4	65.3	46.4	18.9	6.4	7.7	-1.3
2022	69.4	51.0	18.4	65.3	46.9	18.4	6.0	8.1	-2.1
1Q/2022	68.6	50.2	18.4	64.6	46.0	18.6	5.9	8.3	-2.4
2Q/2022	70.1	51.7	18.4	65.9	47.7	18.2	6.1	7.8	-1.7
3Q/2022	70.3	51.1	19.2	65.7	47.1	18.6	6.5	7.8	-1.3

Source: Labor Market and Income Report, based on EPH- INDEC. See: <https://www.indec.gob.ar/indec/web/Nivel4-Tema-4-31-58>.

Despite this, the female unemployment rate decreased in a greater proportion than that of men (4 p.p. vs. 2.6 p.p.) with respect to the same period for the previous year (Figure 3.2). Although at the beginning of 2022, there were more women than men who did not have a job (even if they were available for work and actively looking for a job), the female unemployment rate decreased by 2.6 p.p. between the second quarter of 2021 and the second quarter of 2022.

► **Figure 3.2. Labor market indicators in Argentina by gender. 2019-2022. Argentina.****Panel A. Activity rate****Panel B. Employment rate****Panel C. Unemployment rate**

Source: EPH-INDEC. Labor Market and Income Report, based on EPH-INDEC. See: <https://www.indec.gob.ar/indec/web/Nivel4-Tema-4-31-58>

In turn, both in the case of women and men, the unemployment rate that showed the greatest decrease was that corresponding to the age group of 14 to 29 years. In the first case, the rate fell 8.1 p.p. (decreasing from 24.9 percent to 16.8 percent), and in the second it decreased 5.6 p.p. (reducing from 17.0 percent to 11.4 percent) (INDEC 2022b) (Figure 3.4).

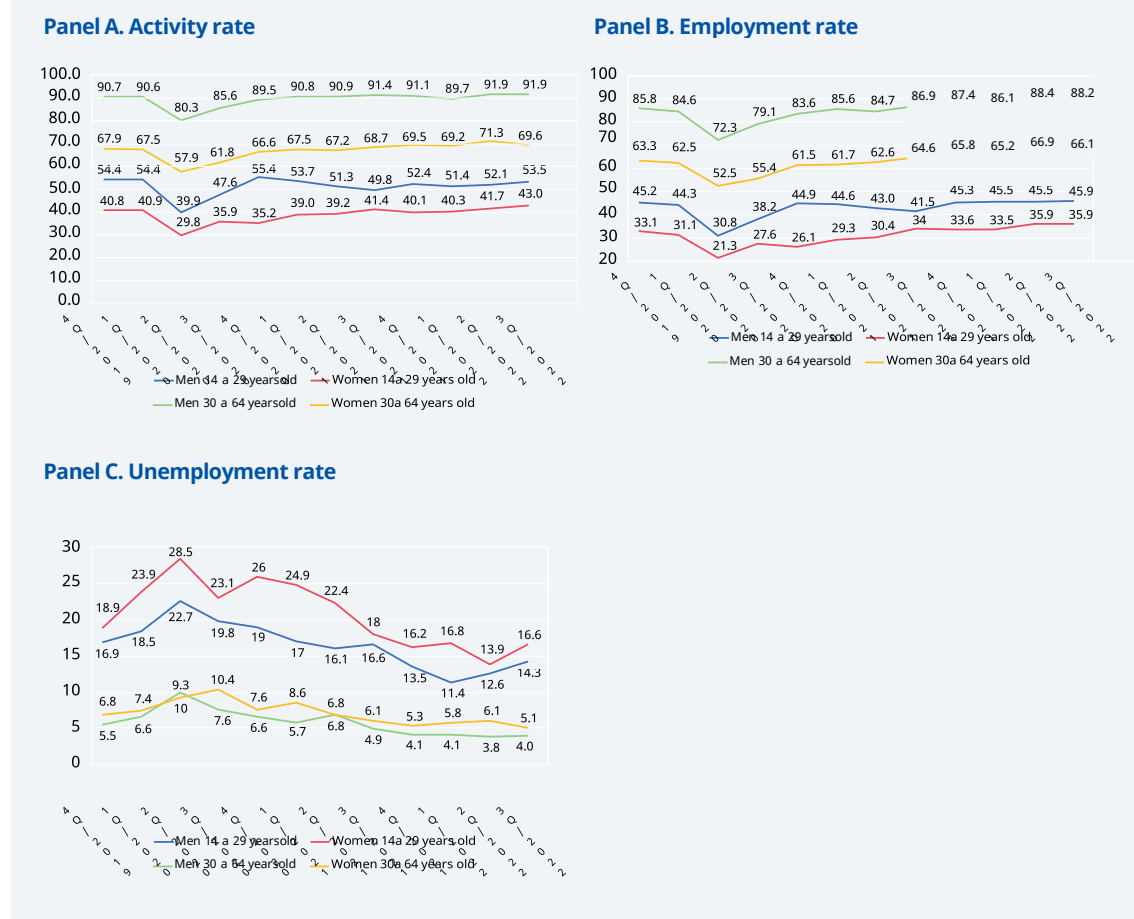
In the case of young women, their labor participation fell more than 10 percentage points in the pandemic: from 40.8 percent to 29.8 percent, between the fourth quarter of 2019 and the second

of 2020. Towards the fourth quarter of 2020, it was still 5.6 p.p. below the level of 2019 and had even fallen compared to the previous quarter (Figure 3.4). The low participation of young women in the labor market closed 2020 with 35.2 percent and began to grow at the beginning of 2021. It only recovered its 2019 levels in the third quarter of 2021 (41.4 percent). The gap in the activity rate between young women and men reached its peak in the fourth quarter of 2020 with a difference of 20.2 p.p. The gap in the employment rate between women and men reached its peak in the first quarter of 2021 with a difference of 23.9 p.p.

Regarding the unemployment rate of young women, during the pandemic, those under 30 years of age were the age group most affected by unemployment. In the second quarter of 2020, almost one in three young women was looking for and not finding a job. With the reopening of activities, unemployment gradually fell, although the gap between women and men, especially

among young people, reached its maximum point in the first quarter of 2021 (7.9 p.p.). By the fourth quarter of 2021, the increase in employment and the decrease in unemployment, the gender gap in the unemployment rate was 2.7 p.p. for those under 30 years of age and 1.2 p.p. among the adult population (Figure 3.4).

► **Figure 3.4. Labor market indicators in Argentina by gender and age. 2019-2022. Argentina.**



Fuente: EPH-INDEC. Labor Market and Income Report, based on EPH- INDEC. Véase: <https://www.indec.gob.ar/indec/web/Nivel4-Tema-4-31-58>

Scope of informal employment disaggregated by gender and age

Informal jobs in Argentina were the most affected by the cessation of activity imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The drop in the employment rate and its consequent recovery was explained by the dynamics of the informal sector, particularly

by the behavior of independent workers and unregistered wage earners (who do not contribute to the social security system). This can be seen in the sharp drop in the proportion of unregistered wage earners that occurred between the fourth

quarter of 2019 (12 points) and the second quarter of 2020. Subsequently, with the recovery, in the fourth quarter of 2021 the rate of unregistered wage earners reached the pre-pandemic level.

According to the ILO definition¹², in the fourth quarter of 2019, 46.5 percent of employment in Argentina was informal. Between the fourth quarter of 2019 and the second quarter of 2020, the informality rate dropped to 35.9 percent (10.5 points) because job loss was higher among informal workers. With the reactivation of economic activity, informal employment recovered and by the fourth quarter of 2021 it had still lower levels than at the start of the pandemic (Romero et al. 2023)¹³.

It is women who structurally present a higher degree of labor informality and who, consequently, were most affected, given that both the policies to prohibit dismissals and those to subsidize employment (and unemployment) were directed primarily at the formal sector (ECLAC/ILO 2021). It was in the informal sector where the most jobs were lost in the second quarter of 2020 and in which the least have been recovered since then.

The high and persistent rate of labor informality among the adult and young population indicates that it is a structural problem, just like the gender gap. The differences observed in the informality rate by age group and gender reveal an uneven impact of the pandemic. The reduction of the gap between women and men in the context of the pandemic crisis is due to the loss of jobs and not to an improvement in employment conditions as happened in other periods.

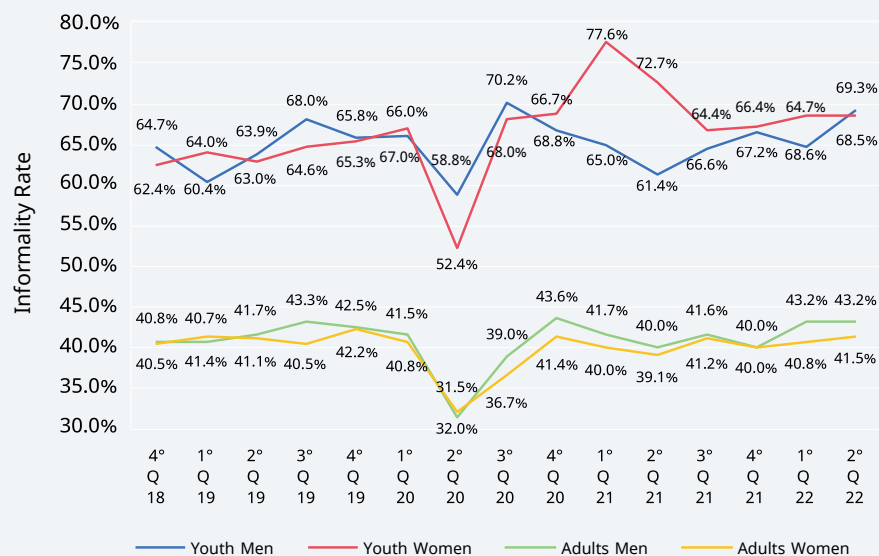
The sharp drop in employment in the second quarter of 2020, which mainly affected young women, was led to a greater extent by the loss of employment among young informal workers (ECLAC/ILO 2022b, 36). The pandemic had a greater impact on informal work, which translated into a recovery of youth employment in informal jobs (increase in the rate of informal employment). Although differences between young men and women persisted, informality rates were close to 67 percent in the fourth quarter of 2021, almost 30 p.p. above the informality rates observed in the adult population (Table 3.3, Figure 3.5).

► Table 3.3. Informality rate. Young and adult population by gender. 2019-2022.

Informality rate	Youth (18 a 24 years old)		Adults (25 years old +)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
4° Q 19	65.8%	65.3%	42.5%	42.2%
1° Q 20	66.0%	67.0%	41.5%	40.8%
2° Q 20	58.8%	52.4%	31.5%	32.0%
3° Q 20	70.2%	68.0%	39.0%	36.7%
4° Q 20	66.7%	68.8%	43.6%	41.4%
1° Q 21	65.0%	77.6%	41.7%	40.0%
2° Q 21	61.4%	72.7%	40.0%	39.1%
3° Q 21	64.4%	66.6%	41.6%	41.2%
4° Q 21	66.4%	67.2%	40.0%	40.0%
1° Q 22	64.7%	68.6%	43.2%	40.8%
2° Q 22	69.3%	68.5%	43.2%	41.5%

Note: The informality rate refers to the total number of employed persons (salaried and self-employed). The ILO's calculation of labor informality requires the availability of micro data from the EPH. For this reason, and given that this information is not yet available for the first quarter of 2022, the graph is limited to the fourth quarter of 2021. Source: ECLAC-ILO based on EPH. See: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---ilo-buenos_aires/documents/publication/wcms_850988.pdf

► Figure 3.5. Informality rate (all employed). Young and adult population by gender.



Note: The informality rate refers to the total number of employed persons (salaried and self-employed).

Source: ECLAC-ILO based on EPH. See: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---ilo-buenos_aires/documents/publication/wcms_850988.pdf

The people displaced from their jobs during the crisis went mainly into inactivity. In fact, the restrictions on movement and the development of many economic activities, in addition to the income transfer policies applied by the Government (mainly Emergency Family Income - IFE), explain why the destruction of jobs has translated into an increase in inactivity and not in open unemployment (INDEC 2022b).

The fall in employment and its subsequent recovery is mainly explained by the dynamics of the informal sector, particularly by independent workers and unregistered wage earners (who do not contribute to the Social Security System). This is observed in the sharp fall (12 pp) in the proportion of unregistered wage earners that took place between the fourth quarter of 2019 and the second quarter of 2020. Subsequently, with the recovery, in the fourth quarter of 2021 the rate of unrecorded wage earners reached pre-pandemic levels (INDEC 2022b).

In turn, the impact of the crisis was different for each job category. While employment in the formal sector remained more stable, informal jobs showed greater fluctuations. Between the fourth quarter of 2019 and the second quarter of 2020, employment in the informal sector fell by 40 percent, while that of the informal sector varied by 7 percent.

The very pronounced loss of informal jobs was temporary, and these recovered quickly during the following quarters. In fact, throughout the second half of 2020, informal employment led the employment recovery, growing 58 percent while formal employment remained stable. On the contrary, between the fourth quarter of 2020 and 2021 the recovery of formal employment was stronger (15 percent formal, 4 percent informal).

This differential behavior between formal and informal workers and between the different labor categories can be partly explained by the type of policies applied to mitigate the impact of the crisis. Registered wage earners were covered by measures such as subsidies from the Emergency Work and Production Assistance Program (ATP) and the Productive Recovery and Sustainability Program (REPRO), credits at a subsidized rate, prohibition of layoffs and suspensions. Also, a segment of informal salaried workers was covered by the ATP

and REPRO (salaried workers who contribute to social security and work in establishments with less than five workers). On the other hand, the rest of the employed and unemployed workers were protected mainly through assistance through income transfers, Emergency Family Income (IFE) and the expansion of the Social Security System, which were not intended to preserve jobs.

Due to the particularities of this crisis, the informal sector did not fulfill its role as a “refuge” activity, since the economic activities that concentrate informal workers were among the most affected by the crisis.

3.2.2 Quality of employment disaggregated by gender and age. 2019-2022. Argentina.

The growth in activity and employment rates, together with the expansion of formal employment, occurred in a context of contraction in the purchasing power of labor income. Although wages increased during the period, they did so at a rate below inflation. According to the study by Romero et al. (in progress) (ILO 2023a), it is also possible that the increase in the activity rate that occurred during 2021 responds to a strategy of households that need to compensate for the loss of income caused by inflation.

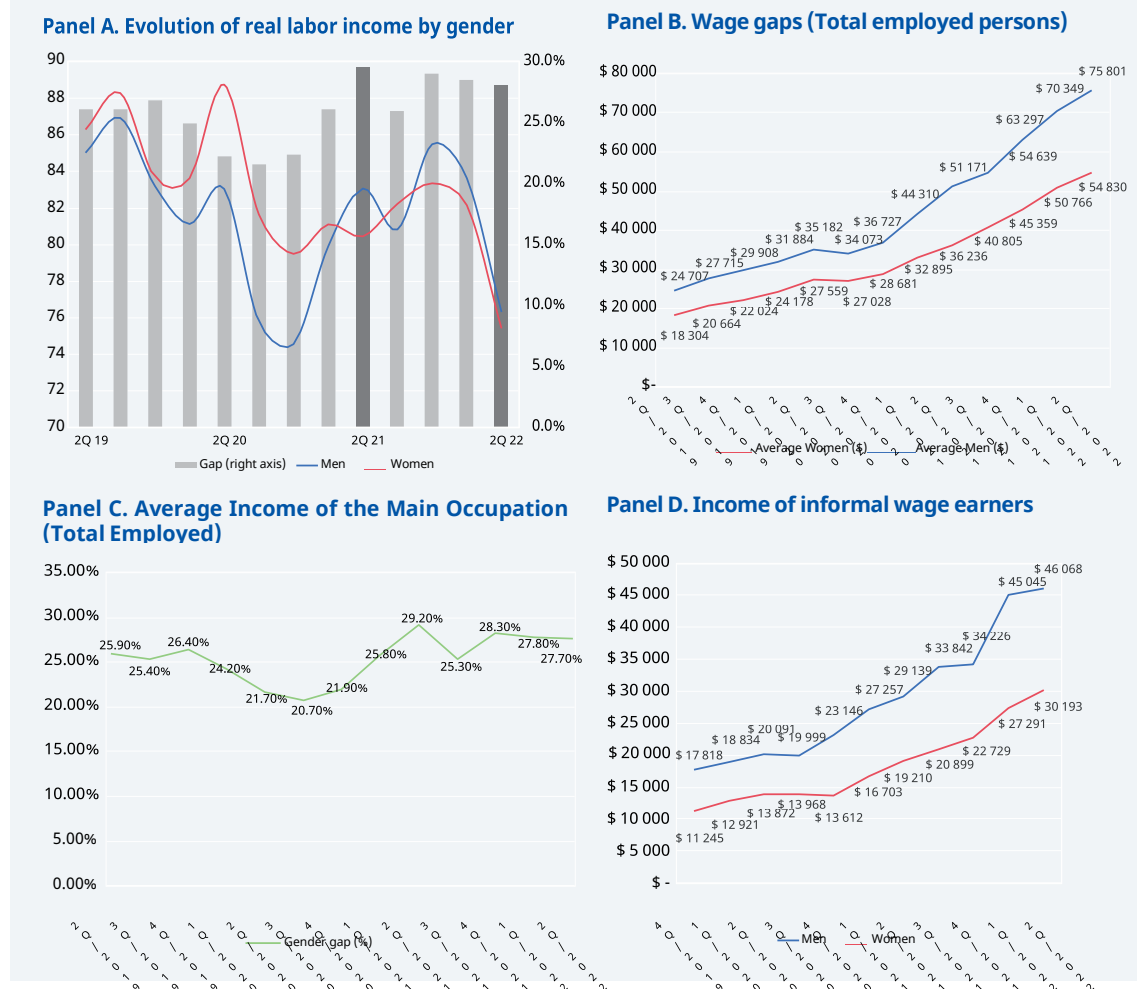
Income from the main occupation (wages of the employed population) fell at a similar speed and importance for men and women, even though men earned more than women in the last quarter of 2019. With the recovery from the first quarter of 2021, remunerations were favored more quickly and improved even more in the following quarter for men. On the other hand, women had a milder and slower reactivation, and towards the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022 their remunerations had not yet recovered their pre-pandemic values (Figure 3.6, Panel A). According to data from INDEC, the gap between women and men in their income from the main occupation¹⁴ reached 28.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2021 (Figure 3.6, Panel B and C).

The slower reactivation of wages for women is possibly due to greater underemployment, and also to the informality that falls on them due to the type

of activities in which they tend to be employed and, also reinserted to a certain extent¹⁵. The income gap deepened among women informal wage earners,

reaching 33.5 percent at the end of 2021 and reaching 39 percent by the first quarter of 2022¹⁶ (Figure 3.6, Panel D).¹⁷

► **Figure 3.6. Gender gap of average income from main occupation. Total 31 urban agglomerates. Second Quarter 2019 - 2022²⁵.**



Source: EPH-INDEC. Labor Market and Income Report, based on EPH-INDEC. See: <https://www.indec.gob.ar/indec/web/Nivel4-Tema-4-31-58> The graph in panel A was prepared as part of the production of statistical information and served as input in the preparation of the ECLAC-ILO Bulletin, "Labor situation in Argentina. Youth employment and transition to labor formality," Vol. 1, no. 1, 2022. See: https://www.ilo.org/buenosaires/publicaciones/WCMS_850988/lang-es/index.htm

Note: Gender gap: represents the disparity between men and women in terms of monetary income from work. It shows the distance between women's and men's income and is calculated as the quotient between the difference between the average income of men and women and the average income of men. The source of information is the EPH-INDEC. No adjustments were made for hours worked.

3.2.3 Unpaid care work

The gender gaps that are evident and persist in the participation of women and men in the Argentine labor market is fundamentally a result of the greater participation of women in unpaid work. According to data from the First National Survey on the Use of Time at the national level (INDEC 2022c), the participation rate of women aged 14 years and over in unpaid work -which includes domestic work, care and support to other households or volunteers- is 91.7 percent, a figure that drops to 75.1 percent in the case of men.

83.8 of people aged 14 and over do unpaid work and, on average, spend 5.18 hours per day. When broken down by gender, the participation of women in the different forms of unpaid work is always higher than that of men, both in domestic work (90.0 percent compared to 69.1 percent), and in the care for household members (31.4 percent compared to 20.3 percent) and support to other

households, the community, and volunteers (9.3 percent compared to 6.1 percent). Regarding the workload, the greatest difference between men and women is observed in care work: while men spend 3.30 hours a day, women almost double that time (6.07 hours) (Figure 3.7).

This greater dedication to unpaid work by women translates into greater difficulties in reconciling their family, personal and work responsibilities, as well as less availability of time to assume commitments associated with work in the market, which translates into access to worse working conditions and, ultimately, lower wages (Figure 3.7, Panel C).

Regarding work in the occupation and related activities, the participation of women is lower than that of men (37.7 percent compared to 55.9 percent). Likewise, there is a difference in the workload of women's participation in the occupation: while men spend 9.06 hours per day, women spend 7.34 hours per day (Table 3.5).

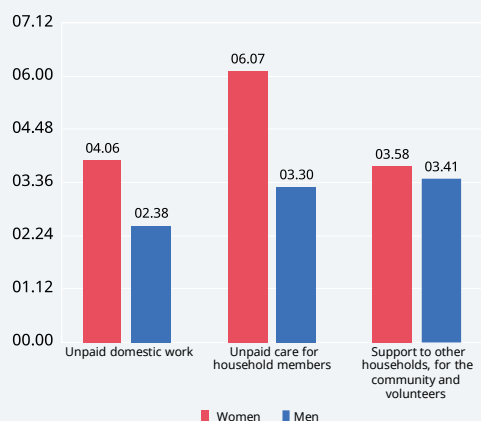
► **Table 3.5. Time per participant (with simultaneity) and percentage of population performing total work, in occupation work and in unpaid work, by sex and age groups.**

	Total work	Work in occupation and related activities	Unpaid work	Total work	Work in occupation and related activities	Unpaid work
	Use of time by participant			Percentage of participation		
Total	09.00	08.27	05.18	92.9	46.4	83.8
Women	09.20	07.34	06.31	94.7	37.7	91.7
Men	08.38	09.06	03.40	90.9	55.9	75.1

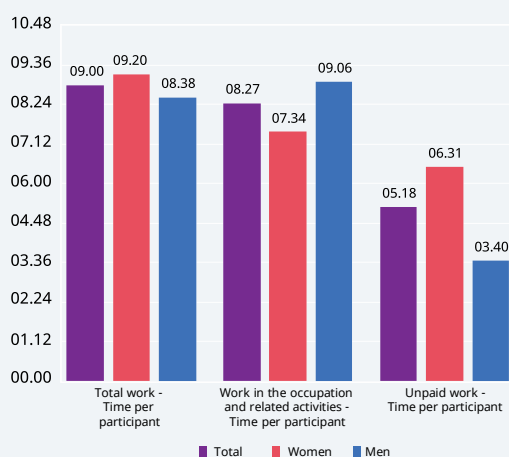
Source: INDEC (National Institute of Statistics and Census) (2022). National Time Use Survey 2021. Preliminary results. * Population 14 years old and over. Year 2021.

► Figure 3.7. Main indicators of Time Use and Unpaid Care Work

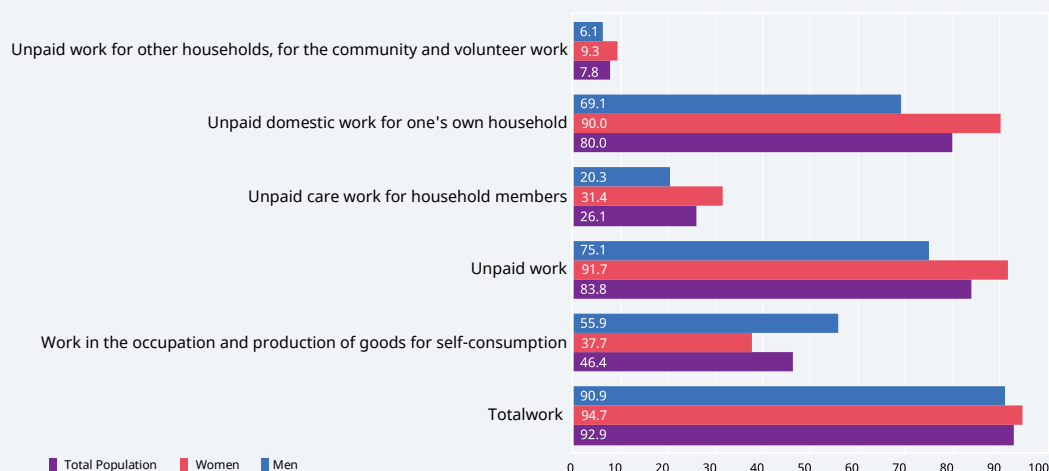
Panel A. Gap in hours of Unpaid Care Work for women and men (average hours per day)



Panel B. Time spent on total work, in the occupation, related activities and Unpaid Care Work by women (average hours per day)



Panel C. Participation rate in the TDCNR of women and men (percentage of people performing the activity)



Source: INDEC, National Time Use Survey (Encuesta Nacional de Uso del Tiempo (ENUT 2021) https://www.indec.gob.ar/ftp/cuadros/sociedad/enut_2021_resultados_definitivos.pdf

Notes: (*) Work in occupation: productive activities linked to the labor market in exchange for remuneration or benefits. (**) Unpaid work: productive activities of households for their own members, and support activities for other households, for the community and voluntary. (***) Time per participant: total time spent on each activity divided by the total number of people who participated in the activity. This calculation can be made on the total time with or without simultaneity and is expressed in total minutes or in hours:minutes. (****) Time with simultaneity: time spent on an activity, regardless of whether another activity was carried out simultaneously. That is, if there is only one activity in the time range, the total time is assigned to that activity; if there are two activities in the time range, the total time (without splitting) is assigned to both. The sum of time with simultaneity in each diary may exceed 24 hours. It is expressed in total minutes or in hours:minutes.

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- 1 DECNU-2020-297-APN-PTE - Provisions. Decree 297/2020- Preventive and Mandatory Social Isolation. Available at: <https://www.boletinoficial.gob.ar/detalleAviso/primera/227042/20200320>
 - 2 Available at: [Argentina logra con éxito reestructuración de deuda | Las noticias y análisis más importantes en América Latina | DW | 31.08.2020](#)
 - 3 As of December 31, 2019, the Argentine economy recorded a net international creditor investment position at market value of US\$ 117 579 million, US\$ 2 325 million lower than in the previous quarter. Total gross external debt at market value reached US\$ 227 370 million. Towards the second half of 2020, total gross external debt stock with debt securities at residual face value was estimated at US\$ 270 825 million, US\$ 3 849 million lower than in the previous quarter, particularly due to exchange rate effects on debt denominated in other currencies against the dollar. Towards the post-pandemic recovery period. At the end of the second quarter of 2021, the stock of total gross external debt with debt securities at residual face value was estimated at US\$ 269 158 million, US\$ 324 million lower with respect to the previous quarter. This reduction is mainly explained by a lower recording of general government debt (mainly due to redemptions of short-term instruments and transactions of financial instruments in the secondary market) and of Other financial corporations, partially offset by increases in debt levels recorded by the Central Bank, by Deposit-taking corporations and by the sector composed of Non-financial corporations, households and Non-profit institutions serving households (NPISHs). Available at: <https://www.indec.gob.ar/indec/web/Institucional-Indec-InformesTécnicos-45>.
 - 4 Available at: <https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/LOI/2022/ARG030322.ashx>
 - 5 This budget system was introduced in fiscal year 2021 and identified that 15 percent of national spending was allocated to policies that contribute to closing gender gaps (IMF Memorandum: 18).
 - 6 Synergies with OSF Project: ILO (2022a) (2022b); Con, M. (2022) ; Kalos, M. (2021).
 - 7 In the case of women who continue to work in paid employment, their increased caregiving obligations force them to reduce paid working hours or extend the number of working hours (paid and unpaid) to unsustainable levels.
 - 8 The activity rate measures the economically active population over the total population aged 14 years and older. Information extracted from INDEC (2022b).
 - 9 The employment rate employment rate is calculated as a percentage between the employed population and the total reference population. Information extracted from INDEC (2022b).
 - 10 The applicant underemployment rate is calculated as a percentage between the applicant underemployed population and the economically active population. The job seeker rate is calculated as a percentage between the job seeker population and the economically active population. Information extracted from INDEC (2022b).
 - 11 In Argentina, women have suffered losses in employment and income, due to their over-representation in the sectors most affected by the pandemic, their employment status in those sectors, and because they are the ones who mostly perform unpaid care tasks. The recovery in the employment rate was greater for men, since the economic activities that led the recovery have a higher proportion of male employment: manufacturing and construction.
 - 12 The ILO definition of informal jobs encompasses not only unregistered wage earners, but also all jobs that - in law or in practice - are not covered or are insufficiently covered by formal agreements.
 - 13 The strong growth in activity and employment rates, together with the expansion of formal employment, occurred in a context of a contraction in the purchasing power of labor income. Although labor incomes increased during the period, they did so at a lower rate than inflation. It is also possible that the increase in the activity rate that occurred during 2021 responds to a strategy of households needing to compensate for the loss of income caused by inflation (Romero et al. 2023).
 - 14 The income from the main occupation is that which is received from the occupation that takes the most hours, whether it is a salaried job or self-employment. Information extracted from DNEIyG (2022).
 - 15 Accessible web platform that shows data on the differences between men and women and gender-based budgeting prepared within the framework of Project ARG-20-01-OSF (OIT) in coordination with the National Directorate of Economy, Equality and Gender (DNEIyG) of the Ministry of Economy. The platform and reports are available to the public and the data can be downloaded at: <https://presupuesto-genero.argentina.gob.ar> It was launched on October 19, 2022. Available at: <https://youtu.be/RbyZ1hEgqo>.
 - 16 However, according to a CEPXXI (2020) report based on the EPH, the differential productive insertion of men and women does not seem to be a factor with explanatory weight when it comes to understanding the gender wage gap. The results of the study do not rule out the possibility that women could be entering the productive sectors in which they are less disadvantaged with respect to their income.
 - 17 The income from the main occupation is the income received from the occupation that takes the most hours (in the case of having more than one occupation), whether it is a salaried job or self-employment (self-employed or employer).

► 4. Analysis of gender-based employment levels in different sectors

The ILO Monitor's classification on COVID-19 classifies the sectors of activity according to the type of risk in the face of the pandemic, considering the degree of exposure of productive activities according to the following dimensions: closure and drastic drop in production, loss of jobs and reduction of working hours (ILO 2020b).

Based on the repercussions observed on a global scale, the ILO's classification applies with some adjustments to the case of Argentina (Romero et al. 2021). The sectors most affected by the crisis (high, medium-high risk) are the most vulnerable

to changes in the economic cycle. These sectors concentrate 60 percent of total employment, which accounts for the severity that the pandemic has had on the world of work. In addition, these are strongly feminized sectors (Ernst et al. 2020, 18).

Commerce and industry are the sectors with the greatest weight in the Argentine economy and concentrated 1.12 and 1.15 million salaried jobs registered in 2019 respectively, considered high risk according to the ILO's classification during the pandemic, of which 35.4 and 18.1 percent were women (Table 4.1).

► **Table 4.1 Classification of the branches of activity according to the degree of risk to COVID-19. Feminization rate (In percentages). Year 2019.**

Degree of Risk	Branch of activity/Productive Sector	FeminizationRate (%)	Registered salaried jobs bysector
Low	Education	73.1	490 317
	Human health and social services	72.1	311 924
	Water and sanitation	11.9	56 322
	Electricity and gas supply	17.0	65 735
Medium	Financial and insurance activities	50.5	225 185
	Agriculture	12.0	358 755
	Mining	11.1	98 826
	Construction	5.9	449 677
High	Accommodation and food services	45.8	285 031
	Real estate activities	38.8	60 019
	Arts and cultural services	38.8	89 380
	Commerce (retail and wholesale)	35.4	1 128 349
	Manufacturing industries	18.1	1 155 745
	Transport, storage and communication	10.8	485 798

Source: Data from CEP-XXI based on SIPA.

Note: The data correspond to registered jobs according to where the employment relationship takes place; they refer to salaried jobs registered in private sector companies and do not include occupational categories such as self-employed and employers. Gender indicators, Argentine labor market, annual average. The feminization rate is the proportion of women out of the total number of salaried workers in companies. See: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/produccion/cep/tableros-interactivos>

4.1 Characterization of the sectoral impact on the employment levels of women during the pandemic and after the pandemic

Within the framework of the UN Women - ILO Joint Programme, a series of diagnostic studies were developed to describe the sectoral impact on the levels of employment of women during the pandemic that serve as the basis for the preparation of this section together with multiple other sources of information (Romero 2022; ILO 2023a; ILO 2023c; Geri 2023) ¹.

Gender inequalities in the world of work, in addition to being verified in the levels of

participation of women and men in the labor market, are expressed in their unequal insertion in different productive sectors (ILO 2023a; ILO 2023c). In Argentina, when the changes in the composition of employment by branch of activity are analyzed, women are distributed in activities traditionally considered “feminine”, associated with qualities culturally attributed to them -such as care, empathy, sensitivity, delivery and service, among others (Romero 2022; ILO 2023c). This is a dimension that explains the fact that women are overrepresented in the tertiary sector linked to the production of services intended to meet people’s needs, which are linked in a certain way to the reproductive tasks that have historically been assigned to them as a consequence of the traditional sexual division of labor².

Other dimensions that explain this distribution are the barriers to entry and the lower qualification

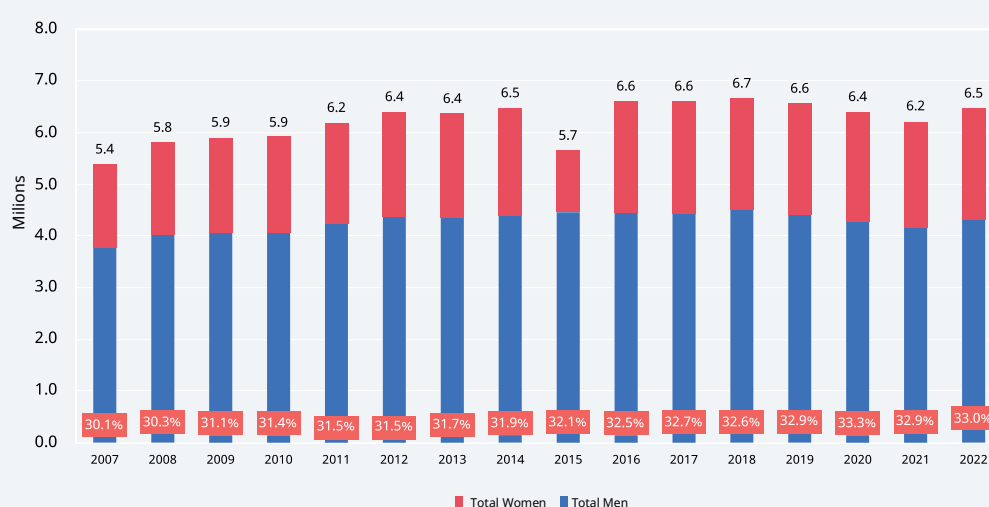
requirements that affect this overrepresentation. In this way, horizontal segregation (UNDP 2011) finds expression in the feminization rates³ of the different branches of activity. This point will be developed in detail later (Figure 4.1, Figure 4.2 in the Annex).

Before the pandemic, the impact assessments carried out by ECLAC and the ILO indicated some economic sectors at greater risk in terms of the volume of production and employment as a result of the measures adopted to curb contagion (ILO 2023c, 8)⁴. This high impact was indicated in highly feminized sectors, such as commerce, manufacturing, tourism and domestic service (ECLAC 2021). On the one hand, the sectors that drove the recovery of employment and economic activity were industry, commerce, and business services; associated with the dynamism of production⁵. On the other hand, jobs in sectors related to hotels and restaurants, domestic service, characterized by a high rate of feminization - and to a lesser extent construction, characterized by a low rate of feminization - continued with low levels of activity and employment.

During 2019, the feminization rate went from 33 percent to 33.3 percent, that is, the productive structure was modified because of the sectoral composition towards the branches in which women have, structurally, greater participation (CEP XXI 2021b). Feminized branches such as health and education increased their participation in employment in 2019, while masculinized branches such as industry and construction shrank.

In general, registered salaried employment in private companies broken down by gender between 2007 and 2021 shows an increase of three percentage points (p.p.) in the feminization rate (proportion of women out of the total number of salaried people in companies): 30 percent to 33 percent. This increase corresponds to the incorporation of almost 400 000 women to the formal payroll, increasing the total number of registered female wage earners to more than two million. In said period, formal salaried employment expanded at an annual rate of 0.8 percent, and the rate of feminization grew at an annual cumulative rate of 0.6 (Figure 4.1).

► **Figure 4.1. Formal salaried jobs occupied by gender (in millions) and feminization rate (in percent) in Argentina, 2007-2022.**



Source: Data from CEP-XXI based on SIPA. see: [Microsoft Power BI](#)

Note: Data refer to salaried jobs registered in private sector companies; they do not include occupational categories such as self-employed and employers.

In the informal labor market, more young women than young men joined the informal market during 2021 (Romero 2022). Although the weight of informal work fell significantly in 2020 (the year with the greatest intensity of the pandemic) since unregistered jobs contracted (16.1 percent less than the previous year), the number of workers was similar to 2009 levels, the year in which output and employment contracted as a result of the international economic crisis (CEP XXI 2021c). The percentage of young informal women grew during the economic recovery process in 2021, which shows that, after the pandemic crisis, women entered the labor market in conditions of greater vulnerability (see Table 3.4 previous section).

Between the second half of 2019 and the first half of 2020, the feminization rate continued to increase and reached a peak of 33.5 percent, because of the pandemic and the effect of the sectoral composition (CEP XXI 2021b)⁶. The sectors most affected by the contraction in activity were construction, domestic service, commerce, tourism, hotels and restaurants.

Then, between the second half of 2020 and the first half of 2021, the drop in the feminization rate was due to the fact that the recovery of formal employment was more driven by masculinized branches such as industry and construction. And, in turn, because the hotel and restaurant sector -one of the hardest hit by the pandemic- continued to lay off staff in the first half of 2021, and it is more feminized than average (CEP XXI 2021a, 10).

The post-pandemic recovery of productive activity in the different productive branches was heterogeneous between sectors; "The pace and magnitude of the reactivation of each one responded to various factors, including the speed of the reopening of establishments, changes in consumption patterns derived from the pandemic, incentives from the public sector, the evolution of relative prices and the cost in dollars of some goods (particularly durable ones)" (CEP XXI 2021b, 2).

The sectors that particularly boosted the creation of jobs (wage earners in the registered private sector) compared to the period prior to the pandemic were the manufacturing industry and real estate, business, and rental services. The manufacturing industry, the sector that contributed the most to GDP growth, explained half of the increase in

salaried jobs in the private sector in the same period (ECLAC/ILO 2022b,15). There were other sectors where the recovery of economic activity was slower, given the gradual improvement in the health situation with less recovery in the number of jobs compared to 2019. Towards the end of 2021, the service sectors associated with tourism and cultural and recreational activities still showed a significant retraction in the number of salaried jobs in the private sector compared to the pre-pandemic period. The subsequent recovery of the employment rate was greater for men than for women, because the economic activities that led the recovery have a higher proportion of male employment: manufacturing and construction.

When analyzing the sectoral composition of Argentine employment in companies, considerable differences are observed between women and men. In 2020, the feminization rate rose to 72.8 percent in companies in the education sector, 72 percent in health services, and 46.4 percent in scientific and technical services. On the other hand, it registered very low values in sectors such as construction (7.1 percent), oil and mining (11.5 percent) and agriculture and fishing (11.8 percent), in line with the international experience (Esquivel 2019b). In this sense, a greater insertion of women was observed in firms in the service sectors (linked to the areas of education and health) and a low participation in most of the tradable goods (primary and industrial sectors) and within the non-tradable ones and tradables in the electricity, gas and water supply, construction, transport and storage sector (CEP XXI 2021b).

Regarding average participation of women in the private sector, during 2022 women represent 72.8 percent of the salaried jobs registered in education and 72 percent of those linked to health and social services (Annex: Figure 4.2). On the other hand, men are concentrated to a greater extent in the primary and secondary sectors, in which women are underrepresented. So much so that, considering the average for 2022, women represent less than 20 percent of the salaried positions registered in the private sector in the following branches: industry; electricity and gas supply; agriculture and fishing; transportation and storage; water and sanitation; and construction (Annex: Figure 4.2). This indicates the persistence of horizontal segregation in the different branches of activity.

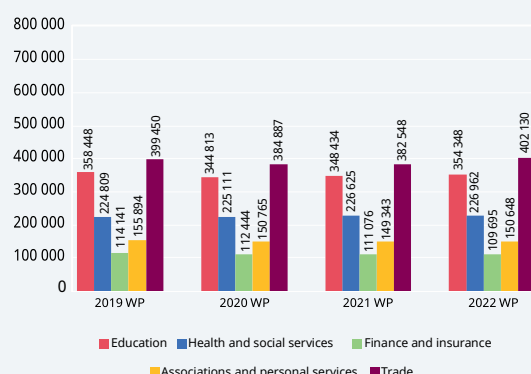
The comparison of the average feminization rates for 2021 and 2022 shows that the most feminized branches during and after the pandemic continue to be education and health and social services; both with values that have remained unchanged between periods. Likewise, although the weight of formal positions held by women decreased slightly in an activity traditionally masculinized such as construction (0.2 p.p.), it increased in other branches such as accommodation and gastronomy (1.6 p.p.) and information and communications (0.6 p.p.). There were also increases of 0.5 p.p. in administrative activities and support services, and trade; of 0.4 p.p. in industry, agriculture and fishing,

oil, and mining; and 0.2 p.p. in transport and storage, and water and sanitation (Annex: Figure 4.2, Table 4.2).

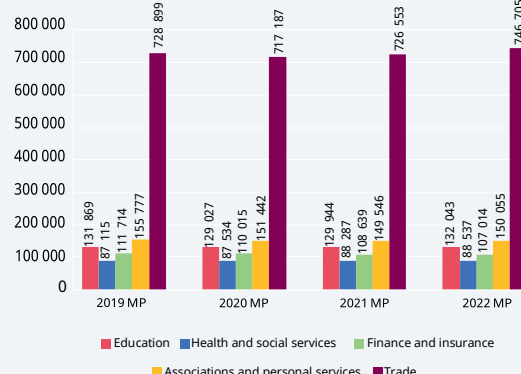
Sectors characterized by a high participation of women have been especially affected by the pandemic. Highly feminized branches such as health and education increased their participation in employment between 2019 and 2020, while masculinized branches such as industry and construction decreased. Employment also increased in the commerce sector and is characterized by a significant presence of women (Figure 4.3).

► **Figure 4.3. Evolution of registered salaried jobs by gender, sector with higher women/men ratio. Years 2019-2022.**

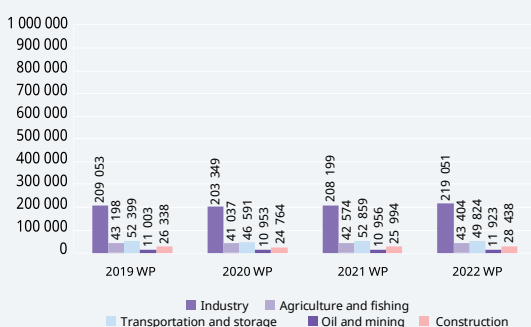
Panel A. Evolution of registered salaried jobs. Women. 2019-2022. Sectors with the highest proportion of women.



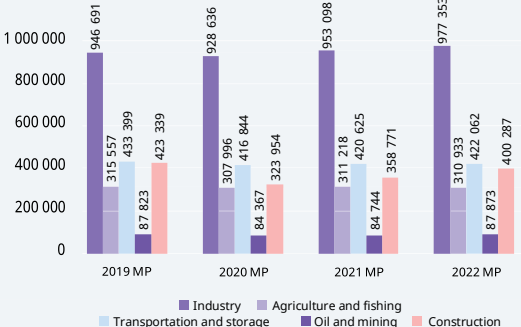
Panel B. Evolution of registered salaried jobs. Men. 2019-2022. Sectors with lower proportion of men.



Panel C. Evolution of registered salaried jobs. Women. 2019-2022. Sectors with lower proportion of women.



Panel D. Evolution of registered salaried jobs. Men. 2019-2022. Sectors with the highest proportion of men.



Source: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/produccion/cep/tableros-interactivos>

Note: FR=Feminization rate; WP=Wage-earning positions occupied by women; MP= Salaried positions held by men; TP= Total salaried positions. Years 2019-2021 the data on positions correspond to 1/12 of the respective year for 2022 to 1/6.

Regarding the feminization of the branches of activity, the overrepresentation of women in some of them is related to the working conditions they offer (ILO 2023a). Specifically, the activities that are feminized, despite being essential for the productive valuation (care activities) have a low social value (Esquivel 2019a), grant lower salaries and offer worse working conditions than those with a greater presence of men (ILO 2018a). In short, women tend to find themselves inserted in lower quality jobs and have a greater participation than men in the informal economy⁷.

The data presented show that, in Argentina, women still face a marked situation of occupational, horizontal and vertical segregation, which places them in a position of inequality compared to men (ECLAC 2022c). The horizontal and vertical segregation mechanisms that operate on the labor market reproduce lower quality working conditions for women in practically all branches of activity. This situation worsened even more with the pandemic.

Barriers to women's participation and less access to quality jobs depend on various factors on which it will be necessary to move forward in order to sustain women's access to and permanence in decent work (Con 2022):

- The mechanisms and processes of unequal selection that women face in their participation, permanence, and promotion in the labor market in general.
- The sectors where women are inserted and the dynamics of labor productivity as well as the promotion strategies and incentives for already feminized activities and reinsertion policies in strategic sectors with better working conditions.
- The way in which care tasks are organized within homes in addition to, the scope of care policies.

Within the framework of the UN Women-ILO Joint Programme, a qualitative methodology was developed to identify barriers to the insertion of women in the employment of firms that produce goods/industrial and knowledge-based services. Given the need to move forward in eliminating barriers to the participation of women in decent employment from sectoral policy strategies, the causes of these barriers in three productive sectors were identified.

The following section presents the main results of the study carried out in support of the Gender Cabinet of the Ministry of Industry and Productive Development in the Ministry of Economy for the design of strategies and tools to promote decent employment and reduce gender-based occupational and sectoral segregation during the recovery phase of the pandemic (Geri 2023).

4.2 Women in strategic sectors with high productivity and low female participation

Dynamism, productivity and women in sectoral employment in the post-pandemic

The Argentine productive structure is characterized by a high degree of heterogeneity⁸, which will need to be taken into account to generate quality employment within the framework of a virtuous structural process in the post-pandemic recovery phase. The comparison of the COVID-19 crisis with other past recessions in Argentina in terms of duration and intensity⁹ shows that, for most sectors, the intensity of the impact of the pandemic has been comparable to that the Convertibility crisis.

As indicated by the data presented in the previous sections, and the multiple reports on the evolution of the productive sectors in the face of various crises, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted all branches of activity (CEP XXI 2021c; ILO 2021a; ILO 2019). However, crises bring about changes in the sectoral structure, in which value added and employment are expected to be reallocated from low-productivity sectors¹⁰ to high-productivity sectors, positively affecting aggregate growth, both directly and indirectly through changes in sectoral productivity (ILO 2019).

In the case of Argentina, productivity growth is explained not so much by structural change (reallocation of labor and production capital from the production of primary goods to manufacturing and then to services), but by the intrasectoral productivity improvements. The pandemic crisis "caused intrasectoral productivity improvements, since the economy was faced with the need to produce with labor restrictions due to confinement measures or mobility restrictions" (ECLAC/ILO 2022a, 23)¹¹.

The processes of structural change brought about by crises lead to changes in the composition of employment that are not gender neutral and can deepen segregation based on gender in sectoral employment (Esquivel 2019a). In other words, there are sectors such as construction and transportation

in which men predominate, and the education, health, and social services sectors in which women predominate.

Likewise, there is a certain prevalence of women in sectoral employment associated with the levels of development of the productive structure of each country and its sectoral conditions¹². Such is the case of Argentina, as highlighted in the previous section (ILO 2023a; CEP XXI 2021b)¹³.

The structural change brought about by the pandemic crisis will have a positive impact on women if the inequality gaps are closed in their different dimensions and with regard specifically to their participation and permanence in the most dynamic productive sectors. This requires an increase in the demand for decent employment opportunities for women during the recovery phase given that, on the one hand, women tend to be overrepresented in sectors with low productivity and remuneration, typically less dynamic, with lower growth than others during the processes of structural change. And at the same time, they are overrepresented in sectors with low productive chains such as the hospitality sectors.

In Argentina, women have suffered loss of employment and income, due to their excessive representation in the sectors most affected by the pandemic, given their employment status in said sectors and because they are the ones who carry out the majority of unpaid care tasks (ILO 2021; Romero et al. 2023).

In high-productivity sectors where job creation occurs, barriers to the entry and permanence of women persist (Sonzogni et al. 2021), which tend to be reinforced during periods of crisis, in which gender operates as a rationing element for good jobs (ILO 2019) (for example, in activities related to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)).

Demand-driven policies that stimulate employment, inclusive growth, and address occupational and sectoral segregation are key to women's access to the labor market (Esquivel 2017; ILO 2021c). In some cases, there is evidence about the determinants of the differential gender composition of the productive branches, associated with conditioning factors on the supply side

(gender norms, educational credentials, skills, the possibility of reconciling family responsibilities, personal preferences, etc.). In other cases, the possible explanations are also associated with the evolution of demand in the different sectors, with processes of structural change in which greater productive complexity is associated with greater masculinization, and with gender as a mechanism for rationing positions in markets with high unemployment or informality rates.

Previous studies carried out using the sectoral perspective in Argentina show that gender inequalities are present in most economic sectors, pointing out that the integration of the gender perspective cannot be carried out in isolation and requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account the process of feminization of employment and the heterogeneity of the labor market (Novick et al. 2008).

Considering the existence of this heterogeneity of the Argentine productive structure, through supporting the Gender Cabinet of the Secretariat of Industry and Productive Development of the Ministry of Economy, strategic sectors were identified for the diagnosis and elaboration of policy proposals for the inclusion of women in dynamic sectors during the recovery phase of the pandemic¹⁴. The 2020-2030 productive development strategy (Secretary of Industry and Productive Development, Ministry of Economy)¹⁵ considers the following sectors to be strategic for the incorporation of women: Mining (metallic), different subsectors of Industry, among which are metalworking stands out; and the Knowledge Economy, such as the development of software and video games.

A qualitative study (ILO 2023c) was carried out based on the underlying context that women's activity rates are observed mainly in some sectors such as domestic work in private homes, education, health, and social and personal services. Although the percentage of women in the manufacturing industry is significant, the greater or lesser presence of women varies depending on the occupational categories. In a study carried out by the Ministry of Science and Technology (2021) based on the ENDEI Survey, which analyzes participation by gender and sector, it is noted that the industrial sectors where more women participate are: 'Textiles and

clothing' (with a feminization rate of 37 percent), 'Pharmaceutical' (34 percent), 'Chemical and petrochemical' (24 percent). And the sectors with the lowest insertion, with rates around 10/11 percent, are: 'Automotive', 'Machinery and equipment' and 'Steel and metallurgy'.

In all the sectors studied, the qualitative study¹⁶ identifies difficulties for the insertion of women, and policy actions and proposals implemented to reverse labor segregation and achieve economic recovery by incorporating women into the Argentine growth model. Although the persistence of horizontal segregation is not limited exclusively to the analyzed productive sectors, it is highlighted in the study that it is closely linked to the tasks and jobs in which men and women perform within businesses. In these, women tend to work in areas related to human

resources, corporate social responsibility, and communication, while men tend to work in the areas of operations and sales and research and products, and in general management¹⁷. These inequalities have historical and cultural causes regarding the roles of women and men, which are reflected both in the sectors that make up the productive network and in their internal organizational structure.

At the time of the study, the three sectors analyzed presented very different evolutionary paths in terms of the incorporation of women and the activities that have been carried out by sector, but, in all of them, change strategies of greater or lesser impact were observed.

The main results specific to each productive sector analyzed are summarized below.

Main barriers detected in the strategic sectors under study

► Box 1.1 Metalworking Industry Sector

The metal-mechanic industry comprises a heterogeneous set of manufacturing activities whose main inputs include steel products and non-ferrous metals throughout the entire production chain. At the same time, it encompasses the production of a wide range of goods that are key to the development of the rest of the economic activities (it is part of various value chains and productive sectors, providing inputs and final goods for production, consumption and investment).

In Argentina, the metal-mechanic industry brings together more than 24 000 establishments, they are small and medium-sized companies of primarily national capital (88 percent), with a predominance of companies with up to nine employees on average, with a prominent role in the aggregation processes of the regional economies. However, larger companies with more than 50 employees also operate in the sector.

In each subsector of the metal-mechanic industry, almost 70 percent of the productive establishments, are concentrated in the manufacture of elaborate metal products, metal products for structural use and other products, manufacture of parts, pieces, accessories for motor vehicles, engines and bodies and production of machinery and equipment for general use. The metal-mechanic industry represents almost 20 percent of industrial employment, involving more than 300 000 directly employed. This makes it the second industry that generates employment after the food and beverage sector. Likewise, it is characterized by having a high presence of qualified human resources (in medium positions, more than half are engineers, technicians, or qualified operators). The motorcycle manufacturing subsector had 17 companies and an average of 3 700 workers before the pandemic. All these sectors are dynamic, with a high multiplier effect on the productive structure and capacity to export, and low female insertion¹⁸.

Most of the companies, 82 percent, present a female participation that does not exceed 25 percent, while only 6 percent of the companies present in their payroll a proportion of women that reaches or exceeds 50 percent (ADIMRA 2021). Regarding the positions held by women in metallurgical companies, the ADIMRA study reveals that 39 percent of women who serve in companies do so in the administrative sector. And that only 11 percent hold managerial positions.

In addition to observing the behavior in the industry, a report carried out by INET (2021) shows that women who follow technical orientation at the secondary level with industrial orientation are 27.6 percent. The study disaggregates data by sector and finds that women's participation in industrial orientations is even lower (19.1 percent), with agricultural and services orientations being the most chosen among women.

People interviewed highlight the following barriers to the entry, permanence and progress of women in the sector:

- The technologies/machinery incorporated in the industrial activity constituted a barrier to entry, but this ceased to be a difficulty for the incorporation of women in the sector;
- Specialized training in technical educational completion continues to be a barrier to the entry of women, and once they enter the job position in the sector, the lack of job training makes it difficult for them to rise to the job market, and the primacy of a predominantly male corporate culture;
- Women receive lower wages than men in the activity, and they mentioned as an impediment that they are not given the possibility of working overtime;
- In the case of SMEs, there are barriers to making adjustments that ensure decent working conditions (safety and health at work) for women.
- Prevalence of stereotypes, assigned roles and gender biases in the sector linked to the promotion of women.

Source: ILO (2023c).

► **Box 1.2 Knowledge economy sector**

The knowledge-based services (KBS) sector – in which the area of computer software and services (SSI) stands out – has grown rapidly in the Latin American and Caribbean region, and in Argentina. It is a dynamic activity with high export potential and a strong need for labor. At the same time, it has a high turnover due to important demand, and with competition from abroad, that was accentuated after the pandemic¹⁹.

The STEM sector is predominantly made up of SMEs with a greater number of small than medium-sized companies, oriented to tasks of low to medium complexity. The previous Ministry of Productive Development, in its Productive Panorama Report of January 2021, indicated that in 2020 employment in the knowledge economy resumed its year-on-year growth, with the computer industry standing out with a year-on-year increase of 4.3 percent. Employment increased by 1.1 percent and there were 355 255 workers, 3 754 more than in October 2019. Based on the interviews carried out with CESSI²⁰, it is reported that the sector has 1 800 companies (500 directly and 1 300 associated with poles or local cluster) and employ between 124 000 and 132 000 people. CESSI reported that the industry is made up of 115 000 professionals, of whom, according to data from the Permanent Observatory for Software and Information Services (OPSSI), 30 percent are women. In the recent survey carried out by the Argentine Center for Scientific and Technological Information (CIECTI) (Baum et al. 2021), it was pointed out that almost three quarters of the IT workers interviewed are men and slightly less than a quarter are women. A professional in the technology industry in the software sector earns an average of 5 times more than the country's minimum vital and mobile wage²¹. The average income of men is 43 percent higher than that of women and is manifested in all age categories.

The COVID19 pandemic accelerated the process of digitalization of the economy and activities, generating the rapid and effective need to turn everything “towards digital” transforming the value chain and deepening the demands on the technology industry. The health emergency also implied a significant growth in global services “offshoring” (transfer of part of the production process to a third country), a segment in which Argentina has a solid competitive position and resources available to grow. For all these reasons, the software industry continues to grow at a sustained pace since the creation of Law 25 922 on Software Promotion enacted in 2004 and recently replaced by Law 27 506 on the Knowledge Economy Promotion Regime.²²

The people interviewed highlight the following barriers to the entry, permanence and progress of women in the sector:

- Prevalence of social and family stereotypes in the entry of women to technological or scientific activities from childhood to the entry to a specific training and then, towards the accreditation to access a job in the sector; women enter the sector, but in “soft” occupations;
- The biases regarding access to specialized education and obtaining training credentials in science and technology affect women with lower incomes, who in turn are the least inserted in productive activity;
- Job searches are gender-biased, as are hiring processes in which gender is especially highlighted ;
- In the workplace, a sexual division of labor persists. Men are generally the ones who occupy the positions of architects or developers and women occupy what several interviewees called “care tasks”, within the industry, management analysis and design;
- In the case of the video game subsector, the sexual division of labor prevails, the people interviewed highlight men are more involved in programming and women in art. Furthermore, there are mentions of discrimination at the entrance of women in the subsector based on stereotypes that identify women as “non-users” or unaware of the field of videogames;
- There is a gender-biased wage gap in the sector, which deepens inequality in the same tasks.

Source: ILO (2023c).

► **Box 1.3 Mining sector (metalliferous)**

The mining sector is a traditional sector in the field of natural resources that acquired an important development from the 90s. During 2021, the sector stood out for its great dynamism, with a 7.6 percent rise in direct formal employment (+2 400 jobs), exceeding 30 000 direct formal jobs in its different segments (metal, non-metal, coal and direct support services), reaching the highest figure since there is a record (CEP XXI 2022 web²³). In 1991, the Argentine Chamber of Mining Entrepreneurs (CAEM) was created given the industry's need to have a federal representative entity that would cover the entire spectrum of activity.

In Argentina there are about 724 mining companies, most of them SMEs. Of the total, 680 companies correspond to the mining and quarrying segment, 41 to the metal sector and 3 to the solid fuels sector. It is estimated that more than 90 percent of mining companies are Small and Medium-sized (SMEs) that concentrate 40 percent of employment in the mining sector. The remaining 60 percent of employment is in the payroll of large companies with more than 100 employees. However, these proportions vary significantly depending on the mineral segment produced by each company. The sector that explains the expansive dynamics in the last decade has been metal mining, which accumulates an annualized increase of 8.2 percent, higher than the 4.9 percent registered by non-metallic minerals and application rocks.

The provinces of Salta, Jujuy, Catamarca, San Juan and Santa Cruz the large metalliferous projects (copper, gold, silver and lithium) are concentrated, with a significant participation in exports: oscillating between 4 percent and 5 percent (3, 3 to 4.9 million dollars) of the country's total foreign sales during the second decade of the 2000s. Although the activity presents an incipient development in regional terms, it also poses an immense potential for the development of suppliers around the copper and lithium chains aimed at meeting the demands of the energy transition. This sub-item represented 84.6 percent of the sector's sales in 2019 and 68 percent of formal employment (16.7 thousand jobs, with an indirect multiplier coefficient of 1.32). In turn, the ratio of purchases of goods and services as intermediate inputs represented 56.4 percent of its total sales. Non-metallic mining, for its part, specializes in the extraction of salt, rocks, stones, sand, clay and certain minerals for the manufacture of fertilizers and the agglomeration of peat. This subheading represented 15.4 percent of the sector's sales in 2019 and 32 percent of formal employment (Schteingart and Allerand 2021).

About the feminization of the sector, indirect jobs present greater feminization (14.3 percent) compared to the direct jobs generated in the mining activity (10.2 percent)²⁴. However, the study carried out showed very interesting proposals and a general strategy for the incorporation of women in the sector. The activity is currently in the transition process towards greater female participation. There are still tensions within the sector between conscious and unconscious gender preconceptions (ILO 2017) and the growth of the activity.

Gender stereotypes are maintained that hinder women's access to mining employment. More opportunities are often offered to men than to women, since it is assumed that the latter are the ones in charge of domestic and care work, even though this is not the case. One of the biggest problems that the activity has in relation to the incorporation of women is related to the fact that the tasks are carried out in long hours, with weekly or biweekly rotation of positions in the deposits, and at a distance from homes. This makes it difficult to articulate family life with work, a circumstance that occurs for both genders but that is still more visible in the case of the incorporation of women. However, very interesting and innovative experiences have been found in the matter, especially at the hands of multinational companies (based on the protocols of the Headquarters).

The people interviewed highlight the following barriers to the entry, permanence and progress of women in the sector:

- There are myths about the participation of women in the mines because they "bring bad luck". Although sometimes the care that women could bring to work in the mines is valued, allowing the reduction in the risks of accidents in the workplace.

- Mining activity is a hostile environment and where women require permanent validation of their work, women perceive the need to constantly demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- There are barriers to entry due to incompatibility of work in the mines with care responsibilities at home (7x7, 14x14 labor regime), and after entering the world of work in relation to decision-making in companies and other related institutions to the activity, as well as in the management of human resources (self-exclusion in calls).

Source: ILO (2023c).

The people interviewed in the qualitative study express that women experience horizontal (“sticky floors”²⁵) and vertical (“glass ceilings”²⁶) segregation in the workplace and in the different sectors of their specialty. This is due to the scarce female presence in the activity and due to the gender stereotypes they face when trying to access, maintain and promote themselves in a job position, as well as when obtaining positions of responsibility and making decisions that have a greater impact on the activities of the metal-mechanic industry, in the scientific and technological field and in metal mining.

Addressing supply-side constraints is not enough to close the gaps in women’s labor force participation,

as increasing women’s labor market participation does not necessarily guarantee that there are enough jobs to absorb their labor. The qualitative sectoral analysis shows that despite presenting similar educational credentials than men, obstacles persist when it comes to incorporating more women into employment in metal-mechanic, information technology and software development, and metal mining industries.

Based on the interviews analyzed, the qualitative study proposes recommendations for the development of comprehensive strategies specific to the productive sectors under study that can be summarized in the following in Table 4.3.

Recommendations for developing comprehensive strategies in the strategic sectors under study

► Table 4.3 Recommendations for developing comprehensive strategies in the strategic sectors under study

For government authorities

- Improve institutional articulation within the public sector and with the private sector for the design and implementation of comprehensive policy strategies.
- Advance in general legislation and collective bargaining. The necessary modification is to move forward with changes in the Labor Contract Law (law 20 744). The disparity up to now in force in terms of family and maternity leave makes it difficult for women to integrate and threatens family co-responsibility, which should ensure family and work articulation. The bill sent to the National Congress (still without parliamentary treatment) to create a comprehensive care system, includes the modification of the maternity/paternity leave chapter with the aim of creating a more equitable employment scheme. The proposal focuses on including in the Labor Contract Law the paradigm changes that, in matters of family, equal marriage and gender identity, were introduced in the modifications of the family chapter in the Civil and Commercial Code of the Nation; the Equal Marriage Law and the Gender Identity Law, in order to move from a maternalist perspective to a norm that conceives parental co-responsibility from its articles, and from a binary perspective to one that takes diverse identities as subjects. The central axis of gender inequality, which is that of maternity, especially due to the leave regime, could be reduced not only by the approval of the law but by flexible and open business strategies that include maternity as a “social fact” and not as a “cost” variable.
- Promote collective bargaining for the inclusion of lactation spaces so that pregnant people of maternity age can carry out daily tasks or special mechanisms are adopted, such as in the mining model (the “roster”). Collective bargaining should include the provision of care spaces for children under 3 years of age in companies with more than 100 workers. In line with the regulation of art. 179 of the Labor Contract Law.
- Design and strengthen policies for mid-level technical training and university-level specialties for women. Such is the case of the SBC sector, and in the rest of the sectors, expand training in digital skills, since it is a permanent challenge linked to the introduction of digital technology in the workplace and the fact that women are the ones who are seen to be most segregated.

Private sector/firms

- Explicitly include the call for women in personnel searches. To the extent that they are not “neutral”, they exclude women from the calls.
- Advance the issues of workforce management from a flexible point of view, which includes diversity.
- Consider diversity for promotions, establishing that shortlists must contain at least one woman.
- Invest in the adoption of adequate infrastructure, so that this lack does not constitute an obstacle for the incorporation of women.
- Generate diverse fields and not facilitate “endogeneity” in the groups.
- Train men and women equally; and, especially in leadership and management tasks.

Employers' Organizations

- Generate training and training actions in leadership and management within business chambers so that a greater number of women can reach decision-making positions, and from there also favor more diverse spaces.

- Continue with the development of gender and inclusion spaces within the business chambers.
- Implement, together with workers' organizations, protocols for action in the event of gender violence in accordance with ILO Convention 190 and, at the same time, work together to incorporate more women in each of the industries.

Workers' organizations

- Encourage the participation of women within the organization, in particular, and favor their inclusion in the management spaces of the institutions.
- Support participation so that maternity is not an impediment to the participation of women in unions, for example, holding meetings during work hours.
- Request the implementation -through collective bargaining- of clothing adapted to the bodies of women and diversities.
- Develop, through collective bargaining, clauses that allow -if necessary for various reasons- the placement of pregnant people to other positions.
- Encourage technical skills training/training courses for women in order to help reduce the participation gap within industries and generate more egalitarian work spaces.

Source: ILO (2023c).

The metal-mechanic sector has been developing strategies to reduce the gap in the participation of women in companies, however, these actions are particular to each company, so it will be necessary to carry out a comprehensive policy articulated jointly with business chambers, unions and the State (Secretary of Industry and Productive Development-Ministry of Economy, Education and Labor, Employment and Social Security) so that the actions that are developed in the post-pandemic context have a greater permeability, greater articulation, and can manage to increase female participation in the sector.

In the case of the knowledge economy sector, the qualitative study verifies that, although different strategies have been developed to reduce the gap in women's participation in companies, these actions are not yet of a general nature. The main difficulty in this industry - even though it should be an opportunity - is that we are facing a growing industry, with increasing international demand and little state regulation. This is manifested in recent studies on the subject, which analyze the segmentation of the sector between those who work only for the local market and those who do so abroad. The recommendation also resides in designing and applying joint strategies between

the Business Chambers, Unions and the State so that the actions that are developed in a particular way achieve greater articulation, and can achieve the objective of increasing female participation in the sector.

In the case of mining, it is a sector that is in a process of transition towards greater female participation, in this process there is a tension between preconceptions and the growth and dynamism of the activity, and the strategy of the multinationals to move towards the inclusion of gender and diversity. As in the rest of the sectors under study, the development of comprehensive strategies is required to promote the participation of women without gender differentiation within the productive activity.

In all sectors, it is recommended that the increase in women's participation in productive activity be of quality, that is, that it provide certain requirements so that there is no differentiation around gender within the industry.

The next section will address the analysis of public policies with a gender perspective during the pandemic, with a focus on sectoral policies.

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- 1 Synergies with OSF Project: ILO (2022a) ILO (2022b); Con (2022); Kalos (2021).
 - 2 This concept refers to the differentiated insertion and participation of women and men in the existing division of labor, which attributes to the former the responsibility for unpaid reproductive work linked to the private domestic space and associates the latter with the paid productive work that takes place in the public space. Although the traditional sexual division of labor has been disrupted by the massive entry of women into the labor market, authors such as Hochschild (1989 in Wainerman 2007) have called the fact that this phenomenon has not been accompanied by a greater participation of men in unpaid reproductive work a “stagnant revolution”. See: Gamba (S. B.), Dictionary of gender and feminism studies, Buenos Aires, Biblos, 2009; Rodríguez Enríquez, Op. Cit.; Wainerman (C.), “Conjugalidad and paternity: A stalled revolution?”, in Gutiérrez (M.A.), comp. Gender, families and work: ruptures and continuities. Challenges for political research, Buenos Aires, CLACSO Books.
 - 3 The feminization rate is the proportion of women out of the total number of wage earners.
 - 4 ILO COVID and the world of work portal. Available at: [https:// www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/lang--en/index.htm)
 - 5 Synergies with OSF Project.
 - 6 The evolution observed in the rate of feminization of the Argentine labor market can be understood as a product of two factors: 1) the Argentine productive sectors may have incorporated a greater proportion of women, regardless of the relative weight of each one - female employment effect; 2) the Argentine productive structure may have shifted towards branches in which women have a structurally higher participation - sectoral composition effect (CEP XXI 2021b).
 - 7 According to INDEC data for the fourth quarter of 2021, 35.7 percent of salaried women were not registered compared to 31.3 percent of salaried men. According to ECLAC-ILO data, the informality rate is even higher since the calculation includes self-employed women (DNElyG, 2022).
 - 8 The document notes that “in the sectors with higher productivity the average income is higher, although their capacity to generate direct employment is limited and therefore they show a low share in total employment, with the exception of public administration and real estate and business services. Secondly, the disarticulation of the productive sectors explains the weakness of the productive network to drive employment in the face of increased production in a given sector” (Schteingart et al. 2021: 8-9).
 - 9 Downward phases of the economic cycle are considered to be those periods with six or more negative monthly variations of the trend-cycle. In the recovery, the general criterion is six consecutive increases after the recessionary phase. “In both crises, the hardest hit sectors were the textile and automotive sectors. While in the first of these sectors the crises were marked by the contraction of domestic demand, the second was also significantly influenced by its important international insertion, particularly the simultaneous crisis in Brazil during 2020 due to COVID-19. The metal industry was also strongly impacted by the pandemic and showed similar results to the automotive industry in the international crisis of 2008/2009, since it also depends, directly and through it, on foreign demand. In addition, the oil sector (demand in the sector) was also influenced by the drop in international prices. Food and beverages and chemicals were characterized by recessionary phases of lesser relative affectation both at the time of convertibility and the crisis of 2008-9 and the pre-pandemic (early 2020), which was accentuated by the one caused by COVID-19. In the case of the pandemic, after sharp declines in the second quarter of 2020, most sectors have experienced rapid recoveries. At the beginning of 2021, the entire industry was still well below its production levels prior to the onset of the last recessionary phase - pre-pandemic.” (CEP 2021c: 4)
 - 10 According to a report by ECLAC/ILO (2022a, p. 23) most sectors of activity registered very moderate increases in productivity (the ratio between GDP and the number of people employed) between 1990 and 2021 in the region.
 - 11 “For the region as a whole, the decomposition of labor productivity indicates the almost inexistence of contribution through structural change, while intra-industry changes are the ones that explain productivity growth,” (ECLAC/ILO, 2022a: 31) Available at: https://www.ilo.org/americas/publicaciones/WCMS_847153/lang--es/index.htm
 - 12 The increase in the feminization of the labor force is explained in relatively similar parts by the female employment effect and by the sectoral composition effect. “While 1.3 p.p. of the increase in female participation is due to the hiring of more women in each productive sector, the shift in sectoral composition toward branches that typically employ more women explains the remaining 1.6 p.p. of increase.” (CEP XXI 2021b: 5).
 - 13 To increase both the amount of direct and indirect employment, “a greater productive density is required, which allows for a greater pulling power of the different productive sectors. Likewise, since the most capital-intensive sectors (or, if you will, those with higher relative productivity) are the ones with the best labor conditions in terms of formalization and wages, it is also necessary that the transformation of the productive structure implies an increase in the productivity of the different sectors and, in turn, that those with higher relative productivity can be dynamic and demanding of employment.” (Schteingart, 2021: 48).
 - 14 These productive sectors were selected both for their potential to include women in the post-pandemic recovery and for their importance in terms of the country’s development (subsectors: auto and motorcycle parts, software and video games, metalliferous mining).

- 15 Available at: https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/2021/09/es%20strategia%20para%20el%20desarrollo%20productivo%20-2020-2023_0.pdf
- 16 Through the generation of primary data and the collection of secondary data, the qualitative study investigated the perception of obstacles perceived by each of the actors in the sectors under analysis (Metalworking, Knowledge Economy and Mining) for the insertion of women in employment. Through this combination of methodologies, the evolutionary processes of women's incorporation and the strategies for the treatment of this problem were identified in each of the following areas: in the activity of the chambers, in the companies and in the unions. This methodology makes it possible to include in the analysis the perspective of the different actors involved, and even the specific difficulties in each sector, and, in particular, their perceptions and subjectivities. Thus, the interviews with chamber leaders, company managers in the selected sectors, union leaders and workers in these sectors are interwoven with the information and studies that emerge from national statistics and from reports and studies by international organizations. The interview guides used are semi-structured and are adapted to the type of interlocutor and sector. Thus, the issue of the obstacles to women's insertion in strategic sectors comes from direct and indirect sources. Recent developments in research on social issues, given their complexity, increasingly propose the use of triangular methodologies, combining ethnographic techniques, quantitative and qualitative approaches, and the use of records and secondary and/or administrative sources. In the case of this study, which deals with a subject in process and constant transformation, we sought to obtain a dynamic and prospective image, which can only be achieved with a methodological design that combines different research techniques.
- 17 ILO (2019).
- 18 The study indicates that, in spite of this, the visibility of women who work professionally in traditionally masculinized branches and occupations -for example, in the mining, naval, metalworking or metallurgical industries- promotes the rupture of gender stereotypes that naturalize the existence of "masculine" and "feminine" activities in the workplace.
- 19 The Argentine technology industry is one of the sectors of the economy that has demonstrated, in the last 30 years, the highest level of global expansion in the most demanding markets. For this reason, it is considered a strategically important sector for the country's economic development. According to the Chamber of Software and Computer Services Companies of Argentina (CESSI), from 2010 to 2019 the Argentine technology industry increased foreign exchange earnings by 56 percent, increased the volume of exports to the United States by 48 percent and presented an employment growth of 49 percent (CESSI 2021). According to data from the knowledge-based services business chamber, Argencom (2020), before the pandemic, the knowledge industry was Argentina's third largest exporter after soybeans and the automotive sector. In 2019 exports in what refers to the knowledge economy reached 6,088 million dollars and a job creation of more than 115 percent compared to 2000. Although during these two decades there were periods of higher and lower growth, job creation remained sustained. In Torrez, J. (2021). Diagnosis on the incidence and participation of women in the labor force of the technology industry. Unpublished document prepared in the framework of the activities of Project ARG-20-01-OSF (ILO), in articulation with the National Directorate of Economy, Equality and Gender (DNEIyG) of the Ministry of Economy.
- 20 Available at: <https://cessi.org.ar>
- 21 Available at: www.cessi.org.ar/ver-noticias-91-mil-pesos-promedio-al-mes-los-salarios-en-el-mundo-it-de-los-mejores-en-la-argentina-2566
- 22 REGIME FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY. Law 27570: Law No. 27,506. Modification. OFFICIAL GAZETTE OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC - REGIME FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY - Law 27570. See: [BOLETIN OFICIAL REPUBLICA ARGENTINA - RÉGIMEN DE PROMOCIÓN DE LA ECONOMÍA DEL CONOCIMIENTO - Ley 27570](http://www.boletinoficial.gob.ar/ver-noticias-91-mil-pesos-promedio-al-mes-los-salarios-en-el-mundo-it-de-los-mejores-en-la-argentina-2566)
- 23 CEP XXI Open Community Information System on Mining Activity in Argentina (SIACAM) Available at: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/produccion/cep>
- 24 CEP XXI based on AFIP and the National Directorate of Mining Information and Transparency. Available at: [Microsoft Power BI](https://www.microsoft.com/powerbi)
- 25 The term "sticky floor" was coined in 1992 by Catherine Berheide in a report for the Centre for Women in Government. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/11/22/business/at-work-and-now-the-sticky-floor.html>
- 26 The metaphor was first used by feminism in reference to barriers in the careers of high-achieving women. It was coined by Marilyn Loden during a speech in 1978. Marilyn Loden On Feminine Leadership. Pelican Bay Post. May 2011

► 5. Gender responsive public policies during the pandemic and in the post-pandemic recovery

Faced with the COVID-19 pandemic¹, Argentina, along with other countries in the region, began a process of economic recovery (ILO 2021c). During 2020, efforts focused on cushioning the unequal impact of the pandemic, taking care of health, income, and work. In 2021, the purpose was to move towards recovery with a gender perspective considering the federal perspective (ILO 2022b). During 2022, an attempt was made to strengthen the initiatives developed during the emergency, to start a recovery process with a gender perspective, and a territorial and federal reach (Abeles and Villafañe 2022; ECLAC 2022).

According to international precedents, the exit from the economic crises prior to the pandemic, which have prevented a further recession worldwide, was possible in those countries with strong macroeconomic and labor market stimulus policies; the adoption of solutions based on dialogue to achieve efficiency and speed in the implementation of policies, and the consideration of the macroeconomic situation – strength of the labor market and fiscal space of the countries (Islam and Verick 2010; ECLAC 2020c).

The policy evaluation studies carried out within the framework of the UN Women-ILO Joint Programme in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Argentina highlight the importance and relevance of adopting comprehensive employment, macroeconomic, sectoral and industrial policies (ILO 2023a; 2023c), which address occupational and sectoral segregation and improve women's access to decent employment opportunities.

In macroeconomic terms, the analysis of the fiscal stimulus measures prepared within

the framework of the UN Women ILO Joint Programme includes an evaluation of the fiscal effort made by the government of Argentina to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the general population and in women (UN Women 2023). The study analyzes the policies related to support programs and maintenance of employment, income and production.

In particular, the case of Argentina and the public policy responses that involved fiscal efforts in response to the crisis were analyzed from a gender and feminist perspective. The proposed methodology contemplated the following lines to determine the potential of the measures adopted to reduce gender gaps and strengthen the autonomy of women: livelihood measures (employment and working conditions, for micro-enterprises or SMEs led by women), social protection (contributory social protection and social assistance), health (protection, income support and licenses for employed people, aimed at supporting and caring for women who have experienced situations of gender violence), food security, public infrastructure and housing .

The objective of the measures was aimed, fundamentally, at preserving the sources of work, income and avoiding the closure of companies. The fiscal effort of the assistance and containment package, which reached 6.6 percent of GDP in the face of the pandemic, contributed to moderating the impact of the pandemic on gender gaps (ILO 2022a). According to the report developed within the framework of the Joint UN Women-ILO Programme, of the total of 132 measures identified in the analysis, the stabilization and incentive measures for the economy that could have a positive impact in terms of gender in a more

restrictive set² involved an estimated fiscal effort of 650 million pesos, equivalent to 2.37 percent of GDP in 2020, and 520 billion pesos, equivalent to 1.11 percent of GDP in 2021.

In Argentina, the first confinement measures to contain the circulation of the virus were implemented during the month of March 2020, generating an impact on the labor market and the economy in general (Elbert et al. 2022). We reduce the analysis to a particular look at employment and income, and sectoral policies implemented since the beginning of the pandemic that allowed sustaining levels of formal employment and mitigating the negative impacts on wages and household income (Annex II: Table 5.1).

The study highlighted that most of the measures were aimed at livelihoods of the population (37 percent), while 28 percent were allocated to social protection. These two key areas concentrate 65 percent of the total implemented measures. The rest were distributed among the areas of infrastructure and housing, health (15 percent) and food security (5 percent). Likewise, the report gives an account of the transmission channels through which gender inequality is filtered in stabilization measures and fiscal stimulus. In the case of policies under the livelihood axis (labor policies and labor market) in 68 percent of the cases labor segregation occurs.

The authors concluded that “the concentration of resources in a limited number of measures implemented in 2020 were central to addressing the emergency,” and among these measures were those that compensated for the loss of income in the informal or independent sectors where women’s participation in activities were mainly concentrated (IFE Emergency Family Income³), and registered jobs and wages were protected (Emergency Work and Production Assistance Program - ATP⁴). In addition, the maintenance of previously created employment assistance programs continued and the coverage of the Potenciar Trabajo Program⁵ was expanded.

In terms of employment and employment policies⁶, the emergency policies for COVID-19 were added to a variety of active labor market policies already existing in the country, among which are: Productive Recovery Program (REPRO), Labor Insertion

Program (PIL), Job Training (EPT), the Youth Plan with More and Better Jobs, the Independent Employment Program (PEI), Training and Employment Insurance, and the Self-Managed Work Program. In 2021, the national government tended to focus its policies on the productive sectors most affected by the crisis and with a greater focus on job creation. The ATP Program was replaced by the Productive Recovery and Sustainability Program (REPRO II)⁷.

As highlighted by the evaluation carried out by Méndez Santolaria et al. (2022)⁸, the main employment protection program during the pandemic (the ATP) was a key subsidy to companies to sustain jobs and the wages of their workers. For women, “the relatively progressive nature that was granted by grading the support based on the salary level of male and female workers may have had a greater differential impact on female workers, who are overrepresented in occupations that pay less income” (Méndez Santolaria et al. 2022, 19).

In relation to sectoral policy, the sectorial, territorial and macroeconomic perspective mainly prioritized the health, tourism, agricultural and industrial sectors in the Norte Grande of the country, and support for production and supply⁹ (Prevaje Program¹⁰, Incentive for new labor relations in agriculture and industry in the Norte Grande¹¹). Likewise, the incorporation into the ATP program of non-critical sectors but affected by the pandemic due to their exposure to contagion, such as the health sector, and other critical sectors such as accommodation and food services, both with feminized employment rates, represented without doubts support for the payment of salaries for positions held by women, avoiding falls in income levels or possible layoffs¹².

It also pointed out that the measures linked to reinforcing existing income transfer programs also contributed to closing gender gaps, given the feminization of these transfers¹³.

The UN Women-ILO Joint Programme generated synergies to support the study by Romero et al. (2023) developed for the ILO Employment Department. The research, still ongoing, produced an evaluation of the impact of policy measures in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic on informal employment in Argentina, focusing on the analysis of the following policies aimed at supporting

companies, employment and sustaining income: Emergency Assistance Program for Work and Production (ATP), Family Emergency Income (IFE), Productive Reconversion Program (REPROII), assistance to independent workers (ATI), financial support for MSMEs (credits), prohibition of collective suspensions of work.

According to the authors, in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, Argentina has successfully addressed the application of specific policies to protect employment, the survival of companies and the income of workers in the most affected sectors and groups of workers. The political strategy focused on the protection of labor relations, including the prohibition of dismissals and a set of policies designed to allow the preservation of employment in a context of contraction or even lack of economic activity.

To assess the achieved impact of employment and protection policies for companies and workers' income¹⁴, the authors develop two scenarios, first, isolating the performance of each policy measure, and then, as a whole, to show the impact of the strategies¹⁵. As a result of the analysis of different scenarios, the preliminary results indicate that the programs and policies implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic can produce immediate positive impacts on different variables; however, these effects are not maintained over time since the financing source assumed for the additional spending of the programs was the inflation-generating monetary issue. In this case, inflation worked like a tax and, therefore, caused recessive effects with a negative impact on investment and, paradoxically, the performance of the policies in due time could have negative impacts on the target population they seek to protect.

In fact, considering the average effects for the 2020 and 2021 biennium, the initial positive effects could be somewhat offset by other dynamics that are not so evident *a priori*.

In the preliminary impact analysis¹⁶, the authors present the following findings in terms of gender:

- The ATP program has positive impacts on GDP (average years 2020-2022). Greater availability of resources for employers (due to subsidies) that makes it possible to partially preserve the

investment. The spending pattern of formal workers also has positive effects on demand. Both effects contribute to GDP growth.

- The REPRO II program shows the best impact in terms of employment: with an increase of 0.34 percent in employment in relation to a scenario without policies. However, these results should be read carefully as the average captures values for year 2020 and 2021 while most of the REPRO II costs occur in year 2022. This is an important difference with the ATP. Although they are essentially the same policy, their effects are distributed differently over time. In terms of gender, there are no significant changes induced by this policy at the sectoral level. In other words, women's employment moves in a similar direction and proportion to total employment.
- The IFE improves income distribution; however, it does not show positive effects on GDP, employment or other macroeconomic variables. The greater consumption of the poorest household (basic basket) is detrimental to less investment in the economy which does not allow setting a path of recovery.
- Regarding gender, again the ATP program has the best impact in terms of employment for women with an increase of 0.04 percent while employment for men decreases 0.23 percent. Over the duration of the program, women's employment increased more than total employment. However, in 2021 it decreased at almost the same rate as total employment. This is due to the sectoral impact of this program.

When the application of all the policies as a whole is analyzed (ATP, REPRO II, IFE, Credits to SMEs, assistance to independent workers), a recessive impact is observed (the immediate benefits of the policies in 2020 are outweighed by costs in subsequent periods). This is so because, although in the short term these policies relieve society, in the long term they have an impact on vital aspects of the economy such as investment.

The authors maintain that these average results for the 2020-2021 period are balancing the immediate benefits of the policy itself, alleviating the complex context of the pandemic with its consequent future costs that are mainly oriented

towards the future inflationary tax and the lack of capital investment.

As a preliminary result of the analysis, the authors observe that the set of policies evaluated eased the fall in GDP and employment in 2020¹⁷, but also overloaded the recovery in 2021. The consolidated result for those two years is an almost neutral effect on GDP, negative on employment and investment, and positive on income distribution. In terms of employment, all the policies have positive impacts in the first years and negative ones during the last year.

As observed from the result of the analysis of policies at the macroeconomic level and policies aimed at sustaining employment and companies (Mendez Santolaria et al. 2022, Romero et al. 2023 preliminary results), within the process of the economic conditions deteriorated by the health crisis, women are on the way to improving their situation in the labor market, even if they have not yet managed to match that of men.

The preliminary analysis¹⁸ by Romero et al. (2023) highlights that policies applied in isolation have moderate effects on macroeconomic variables, but the effects increase when individual measures are integrated into a strategy of articulated measures. In terms of employment and gender, when considering the policies analyzed separately, the one that had the most significant impact on women's employment was the Emergency Assistance Program for Work and Production (ATP) focused on sustaining formal labor relations through salary subsidies, reduction of tax contributions, as well as credits for companies, especially SMEs; thus, serving salaried workers, self-employed workers and companies.

Next, an analysis of the policies implemented with a gender perspective at the sectoral level that seek to incorporate the gender perspective in the different productive activities will be presented, taking into account the persistence of structural economic problems (linked to inflation and the impact on salaries), as well as the myths that persist about the work of women that become barriers to access to dynamic sectors with better salaries.

5.1 Policy alternatives with a sectoral and territorial focus for a gender-responsive employment recovery

As part of the work carried out within the framework of the UN Women-ILO Joint Programme, support was given to the Gender Cabinet of the Secretariat of Industry and Productive Development to follow up on the diagnosis of productive policies with a gender perspective, taking into account progress in implementation of policy strategies developed within the framework of the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on the productive and sectoral scope of Argentina (ILO 2023a). As highlighted above, demand-side policies that stimulate employment and more inclusive growth, and address sectoral and occupational gender segregation, play a key role in improving labor market outcomes for women in the most dynamic sectors of the economy.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its significant impact on women's employment, it is considered that employment policies, including macroeconomic, sectoral and labor market policies, should place gender equality at the center of emergency and recovery efforts to avoid long-term damage to women's employment prospects and to rebuild a better and more dignified life. The ILO (2017)¹⁹ indicates the following principles for a strategy to be considered as a gender mainstreaming when applied to the design and comprehensive implementation of public policies: establish adequate and reliable mechanisms to monitor the progress made; identify problems and diagnose disparities due to gender; do not assume that there are indifferent problems for gender equality; systematically conduct gender analysis; have political will and allocation of adequate resources; consider the development of policies for women or affirmative action; consider the need for units or coordinators for gender issues.

Within the framework of a process of institutionalization of the gender perspective, at the beginning of the pandemic, in the sphere of the national public administration, the Argentine government created the Gender Cabinet in the current Secretariat of Industry and Productive Development at the Ministry of Economy²⁰ with the objective of opening a specific area aimed at

mainstreaming the gender perspective in national productive policies, as well as accompanying their provincial equivalents in the execution of that objective (Ministry of Productive Development 2022). In this way, the agenda of the Gender Cabinet and the political decision to advance in the design and implementation of productive policies with a gender perspective, allowed the creation of a Productive Development Plan with a Gender Perspective in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic²¹, which initially contained 39 public policy initiatives.

For the design of the initiatives that make up the Plan, conceptual and methodological tools were adopted, distinguishing 4 types of gender-sensitive policies according to the following inclusion criteria: affirmative action for women with a gender perspective, and gender mainstreaming²². These initiatives were arranged in seven axes within the Productive Development Plan with a gender focus²³, namely: i) Strengthening of egalitarian work environments; ii) Professional development of women and diverse identities; iii) Eradication of gender-based violence; iv) financial inclusion with a gender perspective; v) Comprehensive actions for equality in the productive field; vi) Training to promote equal opportunities; and, vii) Production of information on productive development with a gender perspective.

During 2021, this process escalated rapidly, reaching a total of 79 initiatives with a gender focus by the end of the year, distributed among all the Secretariats of the Ministry of Productive Development and the Advisory Cabinet Unit (currently the Secretariat of Industry and Productive Development of the Ministry of Economy), more than doubling the initiatives with which the Plan began.

In this way, the Gender Cabinet was established as an institutional space in charge of guaranteeing that the productive development of Argentina included in its guiding principles equal opportunities, treatment and results for all people; attending to eliminate gender gaps (Ministry of Productive Development 2021). During 2021, \$7 850 million Argentine pesos were mobilized in actions with a gender perspective, representing 68 percent of the estimated resources in a gender perspective for 2021 (Ministry of Productive Development 2022).

In mid-2022, as part of the support of the Joint UN Women-ILO Programme for the Gender Cabinet, which began at the end of 2021, the first survey of initiatives to mainstream the gender perspective in productive policies at the national and subnational levels of government (provinces) was updated²⁴.

As a result of the study, the specific ways in which the gender perspective is being thought of and incorporated into provincial productive policy initiatives have been systematized since 2020, the year the pandemic broke out and in its subsequent phase. And, on the other hand, the study has contributed to investigate the forms that gender institutions are gradually acquiring within the productive portfolios, as well as the gender composition of the teams that comprise them²⁵.

As can be seen from the Second Federal Diagnosis Report on Productive Policies with a Gender Perspective, during 2022, 101 gender-sensitive productive policies were implemented in the total productive portfolios of 23 provinces of Argentina (ILO 2023a).

In the first place, the advances in achieving gender mainstreaming within the provincial productive portfolios are highlighted in terms of the gender composition of the people who work in the provincial production portfolios, distinguishing between employees and civil servants²⁶. In this sense, it appears that most of the provinces have reached gender parity among their staff. Only in 8 (eight) production portfolios remains a greater presence of men than women, which implies a quantitative masculinization of the endowment of employed people. Regarding the presence of men and women occupying civil servant roles within these productive portfolios, it is identified that a little less than half of them register gender parity (9 of 21). Within the provincial production portfolios, the teams that make up the gender institutional spaces/areas are made up mostly or almost exclusively of women.

The accentuated feminization of these gender spaces may be due to the persistence of a belief that gender issues are issues that concern women -which translates into a lack of interest on the part of many men to integrate these spaces. Even so, this overrepresentation of women can also be read as an indication that the women who make

up these spaces have been the main promoters of the introduction of the gender perspective in these portfolios²⁷.

Second, the study inquired about the advances related to gender institutionalization within the provincial industrial portfolios, given the key nature that this has in gender mainstreaming processes²⁸. In what is one of the most notable findings of this study, almost half of the provincial industrial portfolios (11 out of 23) have their own space -whether formalized or informal- intended to incorporate and promote the gender agenda in local productive policy. Almost all these spaces (8 out of 11) are institutionalized. Additionally, a province is in the process of establishing its own space.

In addition, the study made it possible to investigate the participation of the provincial industrial portfolios in gender spaces in collaboration/articulation with other institutional

actors, whether multi-actor, multi-sectoral, inter-institutional and/or inter-provincial. From the results it can be deduced that the majority of them (17 out of 23) participate in spaces of these characteristics, which pursue different objectives. In some provinces, their production portfolios are part of spaces, mostly councils, but also tables and committees, convened by the gender areas of the provincial governments. These bring together representatives of all the departments and local decentralized organizations with the aim of making possible a real gender mainstreaming throughout government management, as well as in the elaboration of public policies in the province. To a lesser extent, gender alliance spaces were also identified, intended, for example, to participate in the design of provincial budgets with a gender perspective and to generate a network that allows accompanying and supporting portfolio employees who are going through a situation of domestic or partner violence (Box 5.1).

► Box 5.1 The NOA Roundtable

Among the gender spaces in alliance, the experience of the NOA Roundtable on production and gender is noteworthy. This space is made up of gender referents from the provinces that make up the NOA and holds periodic meetings in which it seeks to share, exchange and articulate initiatives and experiences in the management of gender-sensitive industrial policies to improve and enhance them. In this way, the reflections and learnings that derive from the participation in this Roundtable are shared with the territories of each of the provinces, driving new initiatives at the provincial level that are nourished by shared successes and good practices and respond, many times, to a joint strategic agenda that seeks to coordinate the efforts of each of the provincial industrial portfolios in pursuit of equality. From the participation and exchanges that take place in this space, for example, some portfolios have identified the need to institutionalize their gender spaces within them.

Source: ILO (2023a).

The results obtained in the mapping of gender-sensitive policies promoted by the provincial production portfolios during 2022 indicate the existence of 101 (one hundred and one) gender-sensitive productive policies. The mapping respects the regional division criteria adopted in the First Federal Diagnosis²⁹, while highlighting, for some dimensions of the analysis, the specificities of the provinces that comprise them³⁰.

The results of the mapping account for the diversity of gender-sensitive industrial policies implemented at the federal level during the recovery from COVID-19, the best practices, lessons learned and the main strategies at the national level. In this sense, the results make it possible to better identify gaps in the application of policies and address gender limitations in industrial policy at the territorial and federal levels, as well as social dialogue between key actors in the implementation of gender-sensitive sectoral policies.

Based on the contributions made by the provincial industrial portfolios, the results give an overview of the articulated efforts -local and national- destined to contribute to the elimination of gender gaps that hinder the achievement of the substantive equality in the productive strategy of the country³¹ (Annex II: Table 5.2).

In terms of gender, in none of the provinces that make up the NOA region does the feminization rate exceed 30 percent. There is evidence of a marked proportion of women employed in traditionally feminized branches such as education and health, and social services, with feminization rates in the private sector that exceed 60 percent. However, women do not manage to represent 20 percent of the positions in the private sector in the region in electricity and gas supply, oil and mining, agro-fishing, industry, water and sanitation, transportation and storage, and construction. In the last year, the productive activities that have gained the greatest impetus from the hand of national employment promotion strategies are the industrial sector, particularly the textile and footwear industry, the knowledge economy sector, renewable energy (solar energy, largest solar park in South America, lithium extraction and medical cannabis), tourism and services, mining, and alternative flour crops. The people interviewed highlight a greater visibility, participation and leading role of

women in these different activities and point out that these advances were possible thanks to the joint effort of national and provincial public policy focused on reversing gender inequalities, through concrete actions to increase and/or formalize the participation of women in decent employment in the sector. An increase in the incorporation of women in traditionally masculinized roles -such as the management of heavy machinery- and branches of activity -such as mining- is visible. And 24 different gender-sensitive policy initiatives are systematized in the NOA region (Annex II: Table 5.2).

In the provinces that make up the NEA region, women barely exceed 30 percent of the registered salaried jobs (in one of the provinces of the region). The proportion of women in formal private employment in the average of the four provinces that make up the region reaches 26 percent. In terms of the sectoral composition of registered salaried employment in the private sector according to gender, women have a greater labor insertion, with rates that exceed 50 percent in service sectors such as education, health and social services, and associations and personal services. Their participation does not reach 10 percent in branches such as industry, oil and mining, transportation and storage, agriculture and fishing, and construction. In the last year, the productive activities with special impetus were the growth of the forestry and aquaculture industry, citrus and horticultural production, the development of industrial sectors and the knowledge economy and new technologies. The people interviewed highlight the visibility of a change towards a greater participation of women in the regional productive sphere, visible in the framework of productive enterprises with greater representation in the leadership of women's business organizations. And 16 different gender-sensitive policy initiatives are systematized in the NEA region (Annex: Table 5.2).

In the provinces that make up the Cuyo region, women barely exceed 30 percent of the registered salaried jobs (in one of the provinces of the region). The proportion of women in formal private employment in the average of the four provinces that make up the region reaches 28 percent. In terms of the sectoral composition of registered salaried employment in the private sector according to gender, women are inserted mainly in the health and social services sector with a rate of 70 percent

and in associations and personal services with a rate of 60 percent. In the meantime, the proportion of women in formal employment decreases notably in activities such as water and sanitation, oil and mining, transportation and storage, and construction; all of them with feminization rates that do not reach 10 percent. In the last year, the productive activities with special impulse for women's participation were the growth of the photovoltaic energy activity, copper extraction, the fruit and vegetable activity, the development of sectors of the knowledge economy and information technologies, and tourism. The people interviewed perceive a growing participation of women in the productive sphere of the region, however, their presence remains a challenge, occupying positions in middle and high command within the productive units that make up their productive networks. The survey reports 19 different gender-sensitive policy initiatives in the Cuyo region (Annex: Table 5.2).

The feminization rate of all the provinces that make up the Central region for registered salaried work exceeds 30 percent on average. Among the branches that present a higher proportion of women occupying registered salaried positions in the private sector in the region, education and health and social services stand out, with rates of feminization that exceed 70 percent. However, in branches such as water and sanitation, transportation and storage, and construction, the feminization rate decreases, registering values below 10 percent. In the last year, the productive activities that have gained the greatest momentum include the development of the agricultural and automotive machinery sector, the knowledge industry with a focus on the application of technology in industrial development, the cultivation and production of medicinal cannabis, and non-traditional sector such as blueberry production. The people interviewed perceive positive changes in favor of women as a result of the initiatives promoted in terms of equality, making visible a greater presence of women in the business union leadership, and leading companies in the textile and commercial sectors. The survey reports 24 different gender-sensitive policy initiatives in the Central region (Annex: Table 5.2).

The average feminization rate for the private sector in the provinces that make up the Patagonia region indicates great heterogeneity. On the one

hand, provinces whose rates exceed 30 percentage points and others that are below this average at the regional level are identified. Education and health and social services are the branches the highest concentration of women in registered salaried jobs in the private sector with feminization rates that exceed 70 percent, followed by finance and insurance with a feminization rate close to 60 percent. In the last year, the productive activities with the greatest momentum are food production, the petrochemical industry and the knowledge economy (software), as well as tourism with the support of reactivation policy initiatives at the national level (Pre-trip Program), and sheep production, medical cannabis, and textile industry, renewable energy (green hydrogen, clean energy), mining (export of gold and silver). The people interviewed mention that the inclusion of women in the regional labor and productive sphere is undergoing a process of transformation towards equality, mentioning that it will take a longer term to achieve equity. However, they highlight an accentuated participation of women leading new ventures and micro-enterprises, participating in fairs and training in the management of productive enterprises. The survey reports 18 different gender-sensitive policy initiatives in the Patagonia region (Annex: Table 5.2).

As a result of the survey, gradual but sustained changes are identified in the level and quality of women's participation in their respective productive scenarios, highlighting the importance of public policy that seeks to accompany and accelerate these changes.

Even so, the access of non-binary and binary transgender workers to productive activities is even less than in the case of women, setting up a challenge in terms of inclusion and equity.

In the same way, the advances are reflected very clearly in the gender institutional framework that has been achieved within a large part of the portfolios. The existence of these instances, spaces and gender areas denotes greater internal legitimacy of the gender perspective and agenda, in the same way that it is auspicious for gender mainstreaming.

Likewise, the results of the survey make it possible to give visibility to the wide range of initiatives that

the different productive portfolios are promoting at the local level to break down barriers and advance towards gender equality in the productive sphere. For example, in terms of target population, types of policy instruments that they use, productive units that they reach, among others.

Within the framework of the survey carried out, it was inquired about the reasons why the productive portfolios of the different regions of the entire country promoted gender-sensitive policies. In general, the people interviewed highlight the following motivations for the design and implementation of policies with a gender perspective in the local productive structure during the pandemic:

- Have the support of the provincial and national authorities when incorporating a gender perspective in the agenda of their portfolios,
- The need to increase the access and participation of women in traditionally masculinized sectors -such as industry-, as well as seeking to guarantee that they are part of programs considered priority or strategic by the provincial governments,
- Increase the participation of women in certain sectors -such as agriculture- which led them to generate a “direct incentive” to promote it,
- Having positive evaluations of gender-sensitive policies already implemented, motivated the need to give them continuity over time, launching new editions,
- Political conviction and decision linked to the importance of incorporating a gender

perspective in its management and initiatives, adding to the increase in female civil servants who accompany this agenda as a great engine of these initiatives,

- Need to satisfy the demand of a sector of the population in particular, work with international organizations; the existence of women in provincial management who “pull the agenda” of gender; and, the incorporation of the gender perspective as one of the transversal strategic lines of the provincial government management, among the great motivations that have motivated the creation of these initiatives.

Regarding the set of elements that contributed favorably in the provincial industrial portfolios to the process of designing and/or implementing gender-sensitive policies, the people interviewed highlighted among the main supports/facilitators for the creation of these initiatives, the local political decision to adopt the gender equality agenda and make it effective by adapting it to the provincial realities, as well as the impulse that the National Government has been giving to this issue. In the same way, the articulations with other actors and institutions seem to be a key factor when designing and/or implementing gender-sensitive industrial policies; given that most of the portfolios generate alliances for this purpose (Annex II: Table 5.3).

The findings of this federal survey and mapping of industrial policies with a gender perspective in Argentina account for the efforts of local industrial portfolios to close gender gaps in the productive structure of the regions that make up the country in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 1 With the registration of the first cases of covid-19, the Argentine government determined the sanitary emergency on March 12, 2020 through decree 260/2020 and established the preventive and mandatory social isolation (ASPO) on March 20, 2020 through decree 297/2020. These measures implied the general closure of activities and the prohibition of movement, exempting only persons considered as “essential” due to the work activity they performed (health services, transportation, food production/supply, security, among others). On June 8, 2020, the preventive and mandatory social distancing (DISPO) was implemented, which made the previous measure more flexible. Although the national vaccination campaign began in December 2020, during 2021 some mobility and activity restrictions were activated again, especially in the first half of the year, to control a new wave of contagions.
- 2 This set of measures responds to the following selection criteria -measures adopted with the potential to positively affect gender inequality gaps-, namely: Emergency Family Income (IFE); Package of bonuses for the Universal Child and Pregnancy Allowance (AUH and AUE); Package of Measures of the Potenciar Trabajo; Package of Bonuses and expansion of the benefits of the Tarjeta Alimentar; Package of measures for food production and support to community and school canteens; ATP; Programa Jóvenes y MiPyMES; Assistance program for people with disabilities; Bonus package for retirees and pensioners; Package of measures to prevent and eliminate gender violence; Incentives for health workers; Package of measures for infrastructure in vulnerable sectors; Package of measures for the construction of care infrastructure; El Barrio takes care of El Barrio program.
- 3 Available at: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/economia/medidas-economicas-COVID19>
- 4 DECNU-2020-332-APN /1/4/2020) Link: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/justicia/derechofacil/leysimple/covid-19-asistencia-de-emergencia-al-trabajo-y-la-produccion-atp>
- 5 Available at: https://www.argentina.gob.ar/desarrollosocial/potenciartrabajo?gclid=EAiaIQobChMI8oaZy7Hq-gIVKidM-Ch2zTgOGEAAAYASAAEgLe3vD_BwE The expansion included the payment of half of the minimum wage in social and labor projects with four hours of work per day in exchange for more than one million headlines (1Q2022).
- 6 Employment policies aim to intervene in the conditions necessary to generate employment. Employment policies (labor market policies) aim to reduce unemployment and underemployment by favoring training and/or professional retraining according to the demands of the productive system through instruments to intervene in the labor market. On the labor supply side, labor orientation programs, job training and participation in labor intermediation processes. On the labor demand side, programs to generate incentives for the hiring of workers in companies or providing support for the generation of self-employment initiatives. ILO Convention 122 on Employment Policy (1964), Recommendation 122, ILO (1964). Recommendation 169, ILO (1984).
- 7 Available at: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/trabajo/repro> Included minor salary payments for companies with declining turnover and the health sector.
- 8 UN Women (2023, 79-80).
- 9 Available at: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/economia/politicatributaria/covid19/trabajoyproduccion>
- 10 Available at: <https://previaje.gob.ar/> This is a program that subsidizes expenses in gastronomy, hotels, transportation, among others, with the purpose of sustaining and fostering employment and promoting the recovery of the tourist activity in the country, one of the most affected by the pandemic.
- 11 Decree No. 191/21 (B.O. March 24, 21). Available at: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/economia/igualdadygenero/nuevo-regimen-de-promocion-de-empleo-en-el-norte-grande-con-perspectiva-de> The Program included a reduction in employer contributions over three years with decreasing percentages and with greater benefits for women and diversities.
- 12 “As a counterpoint, it is worth noting the differential treatment of ATP beneficiaries according to the type of occupational category, which is more beneficial for salaried workers than for self-employed workers, where women are over-represented. It also highlights the discriminatory treatment against cooperative enterprises, which is also a negative feature from a feminist point of view that considers these alternative forms of productive organization especially powerful for generating more equal and horizontal labor relations. The discontinuation of the ATP and its replacement by a much-reduced version (the REPRO II) accounts for the existing fiscal tensions to sustain this measure over time, even adapting it as a mechanism of recovery rather than containment.” (UN Women, 2023: 80):
- 13 Available at: <https://www.anses.gob.ar/tramite/programa-alimentar> The Program provides a lump sum for the purchase of food; extraordinary bonuses for the population benefiting from social protection and established programs.
- 14 As mentioned above, these measures included, mainly, subsidies for the payment of wages, reductions in contributions to the social security system (ATP and REPROII), collective suspensions and an intense social dialogue that allowed for the timely implementation of these measures. Loans to finance working capital were also part of the policy responses. On the other hand, when it was not possible to protect labor relations, in the case of informal labor, the strategy sought to preserve workers’ income through income transfers (IFE).

- 15 A recursive-dynamic multisectoral CGE model was constructed, and the necessary data sets were prepared for its calibration, which considered an adequate representation of labor market heterogeneity. The final versions of the SAM and SAE Argentina 2018 presented in this report were produced, as well as a literature review on modeling labor informality and gender gaps in a CGE framework. The latter is essential to find and follow the most adequate representation of the Argentine labor market behavior considering formal/informal jobs and male/female employment based on differentiated costs (taxes and wages). The development of the labor market module in the CGE model was the central task of the research, as well as the design and testing of scenarios for simulations.
- 16 Impacts are measured as the difference between the effects of the crisis on the economy when mitigating policies on employment, business and income are implemented and the effects of the crisis itself in the absence of such policies.
- 17 It is important to note that all policies have a negative impact in terms of investment as a percentage of GDP. This is mainly explained by the fact that the financing of such policies implies inflationary costs in the following period. In this model, inflation works as a tax and, therefore, there are recessionary effects with a negative impact on investment.
- 18 However, the overall evaluation of this strategy is in progress, as this draft does not discuss some remaining measures (mainly the prohibition of layoffs and suspensions).
- 19 Definition of gender mainstreaming: <https://www.ilo.org/public/spanish/bureau/gender/newsite2002/about/defin.htm>
- 20 Ministerial Resolution No 584/2020. Available at: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/produccion/gabinete-de-genero>
- 21 The Plan's initiatives were structured in 7 cross-cutting areas that contribute to improving the conditions for the insertion and participation of women and non-binary identities in the productive framework; the strengthening of work environments free of gender-based violence; the promotion of education and training actions; the promotion of financial inclusion with a gender perspective; and the production of information on productive development with a gender perspective.
- 22 The definition of gender mainstreaming follows the following conceptualization: Rodríguez Gustá (2008).
- 23 See website of the Gender Cabinet of the Secretariat of Industry and Productive Development of the Ministry of Economy, retrieved from: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/produccion/gabinete-de-genero/79-iniciativas-para-el-desarrollo-productivo-con-perspectiva-de-genero> [date of consultation: November 9, 2022].
- 24 Carried out by the Gender Cabinet of the Secretariat of Industry and Productive Development of the Ministry of Economy and constitutes the direct antecedent of this study. Even so, its results are not strictly comparable, although they can be taken as indicative to make a comparison with the new ones, given that the methodology and data collection instruments used were not the same in both measurements.
- 25 For more information on the methodological design adopted in the study see Cavalo (2022): Annex A. Methodological considerations.
- 26 Two provinces could not be included in this analysis for different reasons. On the one hand, the production portfolio of the province of Entre Ríos was prevented from sharing this information since, at the time of this study, it was in the midst of a restructuring process. On the other hand, the province of Formosa provided this data, but without distinguishing between those who hold official positions and those who are employees of the Ministry. Even so, in the latter case, the grouped data, without making a distinction by hierarchy, indicate the existence of parity, with 47.75 percent of women and 52.25 percent of men in its staff.
- 27 The study highlights the importance of the hinge situation represented by achieving a gender institutional framework within the production portfolios insofar as, as pointed out by several interviewees, it represents the crystallization of a commitment to gender equality, the legitimization of this agenda and the generation of installed capacity, which contributes to mainstreaming the gender perspective in management and in provincial production policies.
- 28 Gender mainstreaming -one of the main concepts that emerged at the IV World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995)- refers to the equality strategy that consists of integrating a gender perspective transversally into all stages, procedures and decisions that take place in an organization and/or make up an initiative -including diagnosis, design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation
- 29 Gender Cabinet, Ministry of Productive Development (2021). Federal Diagnosis of Productive Policies with a Gender Perspective (December). Buenos Aires.
- 30 Northwest Region (NOA): La Rioja, Catamarca, Jujuy, Salta, Tucumán and Santiago del Estero. Northeast Region (NEA): Corrientes, Misiones, Formosa and Chaco. Cuyo Region: San Juan, Mendoza and San Luis. Central Region: Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Santa Fe and Entre Ríos. Patagonia Region: Tierra del Fuego, Santa Cruz, Chubut, Río Negro, Neuquén and La Pampa.
- 31 The findings of this survey have made it possible to update and deepen the First Federal Diagnosis of Productive Policies with a Gender Perspective, carried out between 2020 and 2021.

► 6. Final remarks

Within the framework of the UN Women-ILO Joint Programme, “Promoting decent work for women through inclusive growth policies and investments in the care economy”, the ILO provided technical advice and advisory support to the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Economy (Gender Cabinet of the Secretariat of Industry and Productive Development, former Ministry of Productive Development, in charge of implementing industrial policy) to develop a series of diagnostic studies and adapt the employment policy tool to identify policy entry points to integrate gender into development strategies; assess the potential of selected sectors to expand employment opportunities for women; and adopt recommendations to address gender-based job segregation.

This document takes as its starting point the implementation of the Policy Tool developed by the ILO Employment Department to: a) identify policy entry points to integrate gender into development strategies; b) assess the potential of selected sectors to expand employment opportunities for women; and c) adopt recommendations to address job segregation based on gender (UN Women-ILO 2021b).

Likewise, it uses as inputs for the analysis a series of documents resulting from research, promotion, and social dialogue activities, prepared as part of the support provided by the ILO to government authorities, strengthening their capacities to design and implement sectoral and inclusive employment policies.

Through the activities to support the generation of information with a gender perspective, carried out between 2021 and 2022 by the ILO¹, the government

counterpart adapted policy tools at the local level in an innovative way; systematized data with a gender perspective on labor matters, the use of time and care, violence and health; identified evidence of existing gender gaps and proposed strategic productive sectors for the design of gender-sensitive sectoral policies that promote inclusive and equitable growth. 7 diagnostic studies and 3 reports (a total of 10 documents) were prepared².

In addition, the synergies between Project ARG-20-01-OSF, the UN Women ILO Joint Programme and the ILO Country Office in Buenos Aires have made it possible to provide support for the organization of four meetings of the Federal Roundtable on Economic Policies with Meetings held online (1) and in person (3) between 2022 and 2023. Public officials at the national and provincial levels expressed great interest in the political dialogue after the pandemic and were willing to present and exchange experiences during both meetings.

The Federal Roundtable constitutes a space for exchange and dialogue between women from different jurisdictions in Argentina, who usually do not share spaces for policy formulation or converge in meeting places. Based on the support provided, government authorities have specific technical knowledge for the design of gender-sensitive public policies. Finally, support for the design and implementation of the Open Budget Platform with a Gender Perspective and Gender Gaps, launched on October 19, 2022³, has made it possible to generate information that serves as a technical input for government agencies in order to strengthen the design of employment, macroeconomic and sectoral policies that promote the insertion of women in strategic sectors of the economy at the

federal level, and give sustainability to gender-sensitive social dialogue.

Like no other before it, this crisis has exposed deep-rooted gender inequalities that, added to other inequalities, impact labor markets. As in other parts of the world, in Argentina the COVID-19 crisis has affected men and women differently, depending on the sector in which they work, the fragility of their employment situation, their access to employment and social benefits.

In this sense, an integral panorama of pre-existing gender inequalities in the Argentine labor market has been presented here as a framework to reflect on the way in which women and men, in the different economic sectors, are affected by the risks related to job loss, and the deterioration of working conditions pointing to the degree to which the pandemic has exacerbated gender inequalities in the labor market.

In addition to considering the gender effects on employment of the COVID-19 crisis at the country level, the employment and sectoral policies identified in the systematization of the diagnoses prepared have been identified and the need for continuity has been reinforced while strengthening policy options that aim to promote a transition to employment-intensive, care-focused economies that are equitable for women and men in the long term. In order for the recovery to take into account the gender perspective (gender-responsive), the ILO indicates four political priorities: prevent women from losing their jobs; avoid premature fiscal consolidation; invest in care; and focus on gender-sensitive employment policies (ILO 2020a).

This document systematizes the employment and sectoral policy measures adopted in the context of the emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic, adapted to specific structures based on gender and the socioeconomic context of Argentina, seeking to reflect on the alternatives to support the achievement of employment outcomes that are equitable for women and men during and after the crisis.

Of the employment and sectoral policies implemented in the short term, the diagnoses carried out highlight the measures to suspend dismissals (to sustain the paid employment

of women), the measures to protect women doing care work ("Registered" Program), and the adaptation of measures during the recovery phase to improve safety and strengthen the rights of essential workers and others who continued to work or returned to work.

Likewise, Argentina's emergency response is in line with guaranteeing the continuity of programs to preserve employment and support income, specifically such as the measures of the Emergency Assistance Program for Work and Production (ATP), the social protection measures addressing paid and unpaid care work, and prioritizing women as beneficiaries (UNDP and UN Women 2020).

The materials produced under UN WOMEN- ILO Joint Programme have contributed to raising awareness on gender issues, dissemination of information and application of active labor market policies aimed at reducing segregation and providing integrated public employment services (supply and demand) and equally benefit women and men.

Under UN WOMEN- ILO Joint Programme, a series of research, advocacy and social dialogue activities have been carried out that have provided technical contributions that strengthen the capacities of ILO constituents in the design and application of policies on sectoral and inclusive employment⁴. The diagnostic studies and the tools designed served as technical inputs through conclusions, recommendations, and practical tools for integrating the gender perspective, to reinforce the design and implementation of inclusive employment policies and sectoral policies for women. This was possible through the identification of strategies in the most dynamic sectors of the economy in the context of the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the mapping of sectoral policies at the federal level and specifically those oriented towards gender mainstreaming in the economic, industrial and local policy, and as a guide for the design and implementation of productive projects sensitive to gender for the business, medium, small and cooperative sectors⁵.

The knowledge and training products adapt the political tools to the recovery strategy from COVID-19 and serve as technical input to strengthen the design and implementation of inclusive employment policies and sectoral policies for

women, identifying the trends of previous economic crises in Argentina and the differences between the impact of previous crises and the COVID-19 pandemic on the employment rates of women in Argentina⁶.

In terms of implementation of gender-sensitive public policies, the enactment of the Knowledge Economy Law No. 27 570 (B.O. 10/7/2020⁷) encourages the incorporation of women in the technology sector and grants incentives to the incorporation of women to the sector, as well as their training in the discipline. Similarly, the adherence of the Ministry of Mining (in the Ministry of Economy, former Ministry of Productive Development) to the Gender Parity initiative and the creation of a National Social Mining Plan⁸ point to the visibility of the gender perspective applied to mining. Another example is the Program for the promotion and inclusion of women in the automotive transport activity (MTESS)⁹. At the regional level, the Regime for the Promotion of Employment Generation for the Norte Grande Decree No. 191/21 (B.O. 03/24/21¹⁰) also constitutes progress in terms of the benefits it grants to companies for the hiring of women, trans, transvestite and transgender workers in the region.

Long-term strategies are expected to promote the just transition towards an economy that generates employment and is equitable for women and men. In this sense, the documents

prepared under the UN Women-ILO Joint Programme also highlight the need to continue proposing considerable fiscal support to boost aggregate demand and the generation of decent employment, as well as sectoral measures to support the sectors affected.

During the economic recovery phase and in the medium term, the challenge of promoting decent work for women will require explicit political will to include women in high-productivity sectors such as the manufacturing industry, make investments to expand work in the care sectors, and offer a dynamic and pro-employment policy.

The diagnostic documents prepared under UN Women-ILO Joint Programme, "Promoting decent work for women through inclusive growth policies and investments in the care economy", constituted inputs to generate consensus on the strategies that it will be necessary to implement and sustain to achieve gender equality in the world of work for women beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, setting as a goal the promotion of inclusive growth in Argentina.

Likewise, they strengthened the capacities of government authorities and employers' and workers' organizations, key actors to achieve equitable changes in terms of gender equality with a view to structural transformation and the generation of decent employment in the long term.

1 In addition to the support provided to the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security, synergies were created between the UN Women and ILO Joint Program and Project ARG/20/01/OSF - Economic Policies to Accelerate Gender Equality in Argentina whose main objective was to support economic policies, whether macroeconomic, sectoral, labor market or social protection, to accelerate gender equality in Argentina.

2 Five diagnostic studies and three reports (reference documents) were prepared and used internally by MECON on the following topics: 1) "Conceptual proposal for a web platform showing data on gender gaps and budgets with a gender perspective and a database with economic indicators of gender inequality"; 2) "Women in the labor market in Argentina. Differential impact of COVID during the crisis and recovery"; 3) "Diagnosis and public policy tools for an equitable recovery"; 4) "Analysis of different possible alternatives for income transfer policies and recommendations for their design with a gender perspective"; 5) Progress report on the design of public policies to accelerate gender equality in Argentina"; 6) "Strategic communication for equality: Follow-up and projection of the Federal Roundtable on Gender-Sensitive Economic Policies"; 7) "Methodological proposal for the identification of productive sectors with potential to generate decent employment for women"; 8) "Participation of women in the labor force of the technology industry and recommendations for the design of an inclusive policy". With the support of the Project, 2 diagnoses were published and presented and disseminated at the closing panel of the face-to-face meeting of the Federal Roundtable on Economic Policies with a Gender Perspective in August 2022. Series Contributions for the design of economic policies to accelerate gender equality in Argentina: (1)

Economic recovery with a gender perspective (2) Guidelines for a sustainable and inclusive development strategy. The 5 diagnostic studies were discussed and validated by a wide audience of political and social actors (government officials, representatives of employers' organizations, representatives of workers' organizations, researchers and CSOs, and other UN Agencies).

- 3 Available at: Presupuesto abierto con perspectiva de género y diversidad (argentina.gob.ar) and Lanzamiento <https://youtu.be/RbyZ1hIEqro>
- 4 During 2022, the ILO country team led the implementation of activities aimed at providing technical advice and advisory support to the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Economy (Gender Cabinet of the Secretariat of Industry and Productive Development, former Ministry of Productive Development, in charge of industrial policy implementation) to develop a series of diagnostic studies and adapt the employment policy tool to identify policy entry points for integrating gender into development strategies; assess the potential of selected sectors to expand employment opportunities for women; and adopt recommendations to address gender-based occupational segregation.
- 5 The following studies were conducted by the ILO, their findings were presented and discussed with government counterparts, representatives of employers' and workers' organizations throughout 2022: (1) "Argentina's productive structure to promote decent employment and reverse women's occupational segregation"; (2) "Women's labor insertion in three strategic productive sectors in Argentina. Diagnosis and recommendations for developing inclusive sectoral policies"; (3) "Update of the federal diagnosis of productive policies with a gender perspective in Argentina"; (4) "Guide for incorporating the gender perspective in the Argentine productive framework"; (5) "Impact of COVID-19 on gender gaps in the Argentine formal labor market".
- 6 The UN Women-ILO Joint Program provided technical and financial support to the National Directorate of Economy, Equity and Gender of the Ministry of Economy for the development of a training course on guidelines for the design of economic policies to accelerate gender equality in Argentina, based on the report published by the ILO: Publication: Aportes para el diseño de políticas económicas para acelerar la igualdad de género en la Argentina: Lineamientos para una estrategia de desarrollo sostenible e inclusivo (Contributions for the design of economic policies to accelerate gender equality in Argentina: Guidelines for a sustainable and inclusive development strategy). The course strengthens the capacities of government authorities to build consensus on the importance of incorporating/strengthening the gender perspective in the policy process and to enhance inclusive growth and promote decent employment in Argentina. Furthermore, the information shared in the training module is based on empirical studies that identify best practices in the implementation of gender-responsive industrial policies worldwide, which will inform policy debates and strengthen the policy process towards the adoption of employment and industrial policies that support gender-equitable inclusive growth. The course was launched on April 17, 2023 and was attended by 130 women officials from across the country.
- 7 Modified by the Regime for the Promotion of the Knowledge Economy | [Argentina.gob.ar](https://argentina.gob.ar)
- 8 Available at: Access to the National Social Mining Plan | [Argentina.gob.ar](https://argentina.gob.ar)
- 9 Available at: Program for the Promotion and Inclusion of Women in the Motor Transport Activity | [Argentina.gob.ar](https://argentina.gob.ar)
- 10 OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER REPUBLIC OF ARGENTINA - EMPLOYMENT GENERATION PROMOTION REGIME IN THE NORTE GRANDE - Decree 191/2021 Includes the provinces of Catamarca, Chaco, Corrientes, Formosa, Jujuy, La Rioja, Misiones, Salta, Santiago del Estero and Tucumán. Available at: https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/2021/06/otg_nuevo_regimen_de_promocion_de_empleo_en_el_norte_grande_con_perspectiva_de_genero.pdf

► Annex I: Methodology

This report synthesizes the main results that are part of the technical support provided to the Argentine government authorities, within the framework of the Joint Programme “Promote decent employment for women through inclusive growth policies and investments in the care economy” led by UN Women and ILO, to adapt and customize public policy tools and contribute to developing a national employment policy with a gender perspective in Argentina.

The analysis uses a qualitative methodology for the analysis of secondary statistical data and a review of the diagnostic studies carried out to account for both the characterization of the economy and the composition of the productive structure in terms of gender, the impact of the crisis of the COVID-19 in women and men, and the policies developed to support a recovery with a gender perspective.

Base documents that served as input for the development of the summary document:

- ILO (2022a). Contributions for the design of economic policies to accelerate gender equality in Argentina: Economic recovery with a gender perspective. Author: María José Castells. Buenos Aires, ILO Country Office for Argentina. Prepared within the framework of Project ARG-20-01-OSF (OIT) in coordination with the National Directorate of Economy, Equality and Gender (DNEIyG) of the Ministry of Economy. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/buenosaires/publicaciones/WCMS_852768/lang-es/index.htm
- ILO (2022b). Contributions for the design of economic policies to accelerate gender equality in Argentina: Guidelines for a sustainable and inclusive development strategy. Author: María José Castells. Buenos Aires, ILO Country Office for Argentina. Prepared within the framework of Project ARG-20-01-OSF (OIT) in coordination with the National Directorate of Economy, Equality and Gender (DNEIyG) of the Ministry of Economy. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/buenosaires/publicaciones/WCMS_852769/lang-es/index.htm
- Con, M. (2022). Women in the labor market in Argentina. Differential impact of COVID during the crisis and recovery. Buenos Aires, ILO Country Office for Argentina. Document prepared within the framework of the activities of Project ARG-20-01-OSF (OIT) in coordination with the National Directorate of Economy, Equality and Gender (DNEIyG) of the Ministry of Economy. Unpublished.
- Geri, M. (in preparation). Impact of COVID-19 on gender gaps in the Argentine formal labor market of workers in a dependency relationship. Buenos Aires, ILO Country Office for Argentina. Document in the process of being prepared within the framework of the UN Women-ILO Joint Programme in coordination with the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security.

- ILO (2023a). Updating of the federal diagnosis of productive policies with a gender perspective in Argentina. Author: Lucia Cavalo. Buenos Aires, ILO Country Office for Argentina. Prepared within the framework of the UN Women-ILO Joint Programme in coordination with the Gender Cabinet of the Secretariat of Industry and Productive Development of the Ministry of Economy. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---ilo-buenos_aires/documents/publication/wcms_872217.pdf.
- ILO (2023b). Guide to incorporate the gender perspective in the Argentine productive framework. Author: Leticia Cortese Rodriguez. Buenos Aires, ILO Country Office for Argentina. Prepared within the framework of the UN Women-ILO Joint Programme in coordination with the Gender Cabinet of the Secretariat of Industry and Productive Development of the Ministry of Economy. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---ilo-buenos_aires/documents/publication/wcms_872216.pdf
- ILO (2023c). The labor insertion of women in three strategic productive sectors of Argentina. Diagnosis and recommendations for developing inclusive sector policies. Authors: Marta Novick (coordinator), Alejandra Vives, Marianela Sarabia, and Elisa Epstein. Buenos Aires, ILO Country Office for Argentina. Prepared within the framework of the UN Women-ILO Joint Programme in coordination with the Gender Cabinet of the Secretariat of Industry and Productive Development of the Ministry of Economy. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---ilo-buenos_aires/documents/publication/wcms_872215.pdf
- UN Women (2023). Fiscal stimulus policies with a gender perspective in Argentina during the COVID-19 pandemic. UN Women-ILO Joint Programme; Buenos Aires. Authors: Noelia Méndez Santolaria, Noemí Giosa Zuazúa, Brenda Brown and Corina Rodríguez Enríquez. <https://lac.unwomen.org/es/digital-library/publications/2023/03/politicas-de-stimulo-fiscal-con-perspectiva-de-genero-en-argentina-durante-la-pandemia-del-covid19>
- Web Platform on Budgeting with a gender perspective and gender gaps: <https://presupuesto-genero.argentina.gob.ar/brechas>
- Romero, L. (2022). Study on the Argentine productive structure with a gender perspective to promote decent employment and reverse occupational segregation for women. ILO Country Office for Argentina. Document prepared within the framework of the UN Women-ILO Joint Programme in coordination with the CEP XXI of the Secretariat of Industry and Productive Development of the Ministry of Economy. Unpublished.
- Romero, C.; Red, S.; Ramos, M.P.; Merchant, J.; and Ojeda, L. (in preparation process 2023). Impact evaluation of policy measures in response to COVID-19 on informal employment in Argentina. Support from the Joint Programme to the Department of Employment, OIT.
- Wasserman, M. (2022). Document: Analysis of different possible alternatives for income transfer policies and recommendations for their design with a gender perspective. Buenos Aires, ILO Country Office for Argentina. Document prepared within the framework of the activities of Project ARG-20-01-OSF (OIT), in coordination with the National Directorate of Economy, Equality and Gender (DNEIyG) of the Ministry of Economy and the ILO. Unpublished.

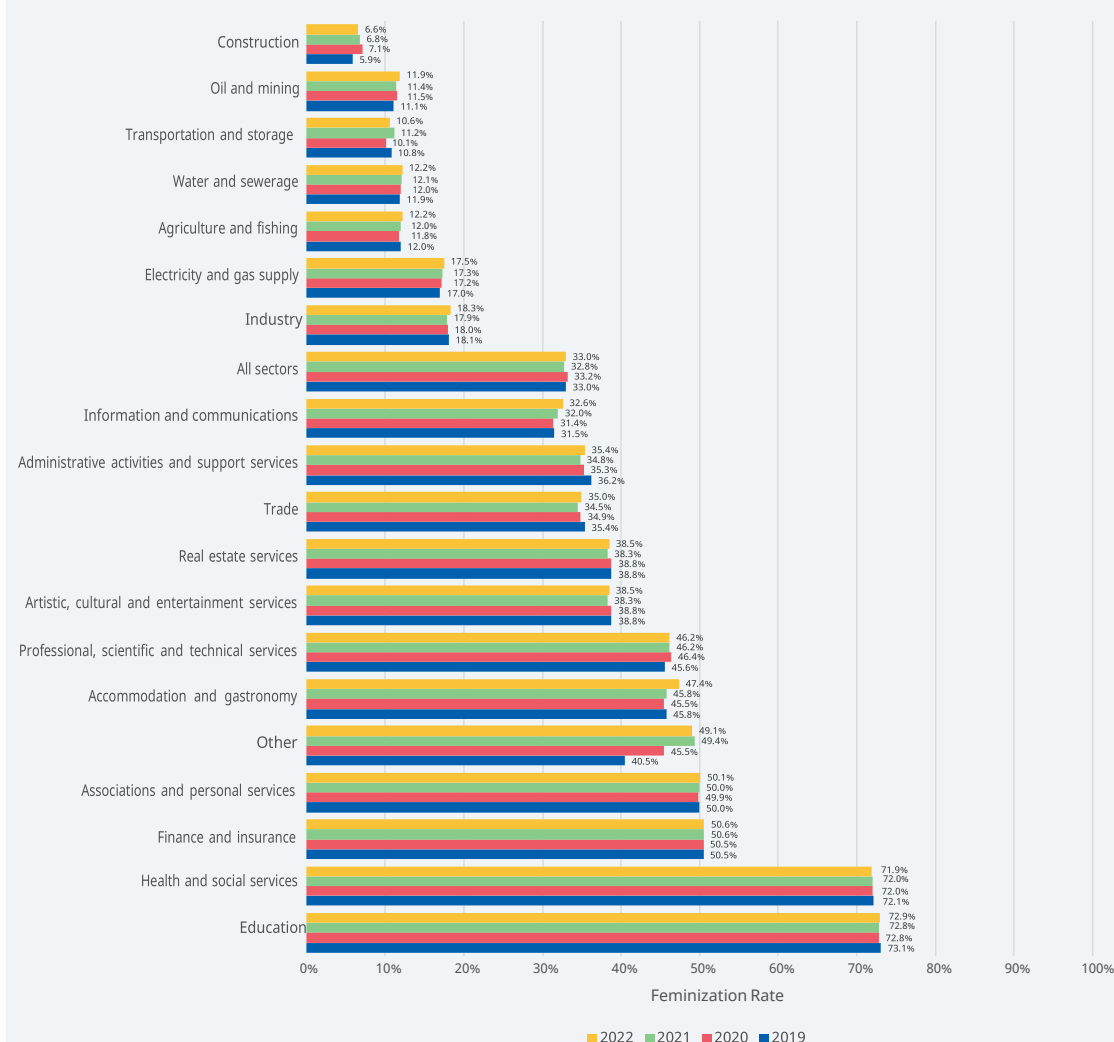
Documents of the UN Women-ILO Joint Programme

- UN Women-ILO (2021a). How to evaluate fiscal stimulus packages from a gender perspective. Policy Tool. Date: March 2021. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_766991.pdf

- UN Women- ILO (2021b). Assess the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on women and men, and support a gender-sensitive recovery. A policy tool at the national level. Date: March 2021. Policy Tool. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_778847.pdf
- UN Women- ILO (2021c). A Guide to Public Investments in the Care Economy. Policy Support Tool for Estimating Care Deficits, Investment Costs and Economic Returns. Date: March 2021. Policy Tool. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_767029.pdf
- ILO (2020d). "Rapid Diagnostics for Assessing the Country Level Impact of COVID-19 on the economy and Labor Market – Guidelines". ILO technical note. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_743644.pdf

► Annex II: Tables and Figures

► **Figure 4.2. Feminization rate by branch of activity. Average years 2019 to 2022 for the private sector¹.**



Source: CEPXXI based on AFIP. Data corresponding to registered salaried jobs according to where the employment relationship takes place. The bars are organized according to the average of the selected years.

See: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/produccion/cep/tableros-interactivos>

► **Table 4.2 Evolution of the feminization rate by branch of activity (letter level). Jobs in the sector. 2019-2022.**

Branch (Letter)	2019 FR	2019 WP	2019 MP	2019 TP	2020 FR	2020 WP	2020 MP	2020 TP	2021 FR	2021 WP	2021 MP	TP	2022 FR	2022 WP	2022 PV	2022 PT
Education	73.10%	358 448	131 869	490 317	72.80%	344 813	129 027	473 840	72.80%	348 434	129 944	478 378	72.90%	354 348	132 043	486 391
Health and social services	72.10%	224 809	87 115	311 924	72.00%	225 111	87 534	312 645	72.00%	226 625	88 287	314 912	71.90%	226 962	88 537	315 499
Finance and insurance	50.50%	114 141	111 714	225 855	50.50%	112 444	110 015	222 459	50.60%	111 076	108 639	219 715	50.60%	109 695	107 014	216 709
Associations and personal services	50.00%	155 894	155 777	311 671	49.90%	150 765	151 442	302 207	50.00%	149 343	149 546	298 889	50.10%	150 648	150 055	300 703
Accommodation and gastronomy	45.80%	130 487	154 544	285 031	45.50%	115 420	138 394	253 814	45.80%	105 262	124 543	229 805	47.40%	125 591	139 644	265 235
Professional, scientific and technical services	45.60%	80 406	95 967	176 373	46.40%	76 926	88 854	165 779	46.20%	77 526	90 452	167 978	46.20%	81 181	94 402	175 583
Other	40.50%	7 611	11 163	18 744	45.50%	7 445	8 903	16 348	49.40%	7 490	7 669	15 159	49.10%	8 214	8 516	16 730
Artistic, cultural and leisure services	38.80%	34 644	54 736	89 380	38.80%	31 917	50 438	82 355	38.30%	29 867	48 082	77 949	38.50%	32 005	51 132	83 137
Real estate services	38.80%	23 316	36 703	60 019	38.80%	21 125	33 283	54 408	38.30%	19 656	31 680	51 336	38.50%	19 598	31 278	50 876
Trade	35.40%	399 450	728 899	1 128 349	34.90%	384 887	717 187	1 102 075	34.50%	382 548	726 553	1 109 101	35.00%	402 130	746 705	1 148 835
Administrative activities and support services	36.20%	180 969	318 373	499 342	35.30%	174 352	319 152	493 504	34.80%	178 999	355 190	514 189	35.40%	190 553	347 398	537 951
Information and communications	31.50%	70 972	154 212	225 184	31.40%	70 464	154 118	224 582	32.00%	76 253	162 041	238 294	32.60%	81 128	167 403	248 531
Industry	18.10%	209 053	946 691	1 155 744	18.00%	203 349	928 636	1 131 985	17.90%	208 199	953 098	1 161 297	18.30%	219 051	977 353	1 196 404
Electricity and gas supply	17.00%	11 190	54 544	65 734	17.20%	11 191	53 927	65 118	17.30%	11 375	54 526	65 901	17.50%	11 494	54 336	65 830
Agriculture and fishing	12.00%	43 198	315 557	358 755	11.80%	41 037	307 996	349 033	12.00%	42 574	311 218	353 792	12.20%	43 404	310 933	354 337
Water and sewerage	11.90%	6 822	50 500	57 322	12.00%	6 877	50 667	57 544	12.10%	7 072	51 360	58 432	12.20%	7 245	52 106	59 351
Transportation and storage	10.80%	52 399	433 399	485 798	10.10%	46 591	416 844	463 435	11.20%	52 859	420 625	473 484	10.60%	49 824	422 062	471 886
Oil and mining	11.10%	11 003	87 823	98 826	11.50%	10 953	84 367	95 320	11.40%	10 956	84 744	95 700	11.90%	11 923	87 873	99 796
Construction	5.90%	26 338	423 339	449 677	7.10%	24 764	323 954	348 718	6.80%	25 994	358 771	384 765	6.60%	28 438	400 287	428 725
Total		2 141 150	4 352 925	6 494 075		2 060 431	4 154 738	6 215 169		2 072 108	4 256 968	6 309 076		2 153 432	4 369 077	6 522 509

Source: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/produccion/cep/tableros-interactivos>.

Note: FR=Feminization rate; WP=Wage-earning positions occupied by women; MP= Salaried positions held by men; TP= Total salaried positions. Years 2019-2021 the data on positions correspond to 1/12 of the respective year for 2022 to 1/6.

► **Table 5.1 Main measures to sustain the impact of COVID-19 on employment, income and production. Argentina.**

Policy Group	Policy Sub Group	Name	Implementing Agency	Financing	Status	Beneficiaries
Income protection Protection of formal labor relations	Monetary cash transfers (conditional and non-conditional)	Emergency Family Income (IFE) (Ingreso Familiar de Emergencia (IFE), in Spanish)² Emergency Family Income (IFE) I, II and III (Ingreso Familiar de Emergencia (IFE) I, II y III, in Spanish)³ People who are unemployed, work in the informal economy, are single taxpayers registered in categories “A” and “B”, social single taxpayers, and workers in private homes and beneficiaries of social plans (AUH, AUE and PROGRESAR). Direct transfer of \$10 000 for registered self-employed workers with lower income (mo-no-taxpayers of the first categories (A and B), whether informal workers or workers in private homes): 3 payments made during 2020. In the case of domestic workers, it also includes those who are registered. It also includes self-employed workers registered in the lowest categories of the mono-tax system.	National Social Security Administration (ANSES, in Spanish)	General Revenues On average, 8.8 million pesos in benefits were granted in each payment round. Total amount (in millions of pesos in 2020, first 2 rounds of payments) 265 171.32	Completed Three rounds of payments: March, June, August 2020 Start date: 3/23/2022	Coverage of 9 million people ⁴ (persons with at least 2 years of residence in Argentina, between 18 and 65 years of age). Included formal self-employed workers (registered) and informal workers (unregistered). According to Kaplan and Delfino (2021) ⁵ : 55.7% women beneficiaries; 44.3% men beneficiaries
Sustaining formal employment Business support Income support	Payroll subsidy. Reduction of employer social security contributions. Subsidized zero-rate loans.	Emergency Assistance Program for Work and Production (ATP) (Decree 332/2020 and 376/2020) (Programa de Asistencia de Emergencia al Trabajo y la Producción (ATP), in Spanish)⁶ This is an emergency benefit aimed at companies and individuals who work there, based on 3 benefits: 1. payment of a complementary salary allowance to companies that carry out activities considered critical and whose turnover has registered a drop with respect to 2019 (Decree No. 332/20) (from 1.25 up to 2 Minimum Vital and Mobile Wages per male and female employee, although it is important to note that these are amounts that were changing over time). 2. Those who accessed the ATP were also granted an additional benefit of postponement or reduction of up to 95 percent in the payment of employer contributions. 3. Granting of zero-rate loans at no cost for self-employed workers, single-employed workers and self-employed workers. And extension of unemployment insurance.	Ministry of Labor (MTESS in Spanish), National Social Security Administration (ANSES, in Spanish) and Federal Public Revenue Administration (AFIP in Spanish)	General Revenues, Social Security and Others Total amount (in millions of pesos in 2020 under ATP supplementary salary concept): 242 122.52	Completed Period: 1/4/2020 to 12/31/2020 (9 months) In November 2020 the program was migrated to REPRO II (MTESS) ⁷ . During 2021 the latter completely replaced it. The ATP ⁸ achieved a population coverage of around 37 percent of total registered salaried employment (2.2 million male and female beneficiaries). In turn, 85 percent of the beneficiaries received between 50 and 100 percent of their salary through the program, with a maximum benefit ceiling of two minimum wages (\$33 750) (CETyD-UNSAM, 2020) ⁹ .	Formal workers (both in the private and public sectors) Formal self-employed workers (registered) Companies had to comply with a series of requirements. Segment of companies or workers making contributions to the social protection system. Formal self-employed workers (registered). At the beginning it reached a coverage of 234 000 companies and more than 2 million people employed, but after the mandatory isolation period some companies stopped receiving the payment of complementary salary allowance. Between May and August 2020, the ATP benefited 338 000 companies (60 percent of the country's employer firms), covering 42 percent of private sector employees at a cost of 0.7 percent of GDP for the payment of the subsidy (Romero et al. (2023) with information provided by the MTESS). The sectors that benefited most from the program were commerce (17.28 percent), health (15.21 percent), real estate (10 percent) and restaurants (6.88 percent).

► **Table 5.1 Main measures to sustain the impact of COVID-19 on employment, income and production. Argentina. (Cont.)**

Policy Group	Policy Sub Group	Name	Implementing Agency	Financing	Status	Beneficiaries
Employment support	Subsidy to companies for the payment of salaries	Productive Recovery and Support Program (REPRO II) (Resolution 938/2020 and Resolution 1027/2020) (Programa de Recuperación y Sostenimiento Productivo (REPRO II) Resolución 938/2020 y Resolución 1027/2020, in Spanish)¹⁰. From an individual and fixed amount (\$9 000) paid to the workers, on account of the payment of the remunerations to be paid by the employers adhered to the program (Resolution 938/2020 and Resolution 1027/2020). The amount of the assistance will be equivalent to fifty percent (50%) of the total remuneration of each active worker up to a maximum of fifty percent (50%) of the value of the Minimum Living and Mobile Wage in force at the time of requesting the assistance. In order to receive the allowance, workers must not have a total remuneration higher than three (3) times the Minimum Living and Mobile Wage in force. (*) Together with the REPRO II program, an assistance to self-employed workers for different productive sectors was implemented. Resolution 201/2021. The Program implied the granting of a fixed amount to specific sectors (14 productive activities) of \$22 000 Argentine pesos as assistance.	Ministry of Labor (MTESS in Spanish)	Year 2020: 820.90 million pesos Year 2021: 26 159.92 million pesos Year 2022: 2 500.50 million pesos. Romero et al. (2023) with information provided by MTESS (in millions of 2018 pesos).	Ongoing Replaced ATP Start date: 12/11/2020	Formal workers (both in the private and public sectors) Year 2020: 66 027 women, 129 344 men received the benefit. Year 2021: 2 180 657 women, 2 021 680 men received the benefit. Year 2022: 306 783 females, 185 209 males received the benefit. Romero et al. (2023) with information provided by MTESS.
Sustaining formal employment	Provisions on employment protection legislation, including dismissal	Prohibition of dismissals¹¹ (without just cause and due to lack or reduction of work and force majeure) and suspensions (due to lack or reduction of work and force majeure, except those agreed individually or collectively that include non-remunerative payments to workers). DNU 329/2020 and its extensions 487/2020, 624/2020, 761/2020, 891/2020 and 39/21. Suspensions agreed on a tripartite basis and wage reduction agreements. Paid suspensions with a floor of 75% of salary, within the framework of the CGT-UIA agreement approved by the Ministry of Labor. Temporary limits to labor suspensions.	Ministry of Labor (MTESS in Spanish)	Other	Completed Start date: April 2020 Ended: July 2022	Formal workers (both private and public sector)

► **Table 5.1 Main measures to sustain the impact of COVID-19 on employment, income and production. Argentina. (Cont.)**

Policy Group	Policy Sub Group	Name	Implementing Agency	Financing	Status	Beneficiaries
Business support	Incentives to support production and supply	Loans for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) ¹² for the payment of salaries at a maximum fixed rate of 24% for one year, with a grace period of three months. Credits to guarantee production and supply (Central Bank credit lines with an annual fixed rate of 26%). BICE MiPyMES loans (loans with a fixed annual rate of 19 percent in pesos). Support for cooperative enterprises and research institutions (loans with a fixed rate of 12% and NRA).	Ministry of Productive Development* (currently the Secretariat of Industry and Productive Development), Secretariat of Small and Medium Enterprises and Entrepreneurs (SEPYME) BICE Central Bank	Year 2020: 150 697.75 million pesos Year 2021: 76 608.75 million pesos Year 2022: 57 529.25 million pesos. Romero et al. (2023) with information provided by MTESS (in millions of 2018 pesos).	Ongoing	Formal workers (both in the private and public sectors) Year 2020: 17 lines of credit; 627 415 small and medium-sized enterprises. Year 2021: 24 lines of credit; 336 509 small and medium-size enterprises. Year 2022: 38 lines of credit; 25 806 small and medium-sized enterprises.
Business support	Incentive to support productive sectors with a focus on employment generation	Employment Promotion Regime in the Norte Grande (Decree 191/20) (Catamarca, Chaco, Corrientes, Formosa, Jujuy, La Rioja, Misiones, Salta, Santiago del estero and Tucumán) (Régimen de Promoción del empleo en el Norte Grande (Decreto 191/20), in Spanish) ¹³ . Creates an incentive for labor relations in agriculture and industry through the reduction of employer contributions (over three years with decreasing percentages and with greater benefits for women and diversities) in force for companies that hire women and trans persons (trans, transvestite, and transgender population).	Ministry of Labor, * Federal Public Revenue Administration, Ministry of Economy (MECON, in Spanish) Industry and Productive Development Secretariat		Ongoing	Formal workers
Sustaining formal employment Business support Income protection	Transition to formal economy	Registered Program (Programa “Registradas” in Spanish) ¹⁴ Created to promote access to and permanence in employment of female domestic workers, guarantee their rights and financial inclusion, and advance towards gender equality. The main objective of the program is to reduce informality in the sector of female domestic workers, guarantee their access to and permanence in registered employment and encourage their access to banking services.	Ministry of Labor* Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity (MMGyD, in Spanish)	General Revenues	Ongoing Effective through December 31, 2023	Workers of private households within the general regime either within or outside a Collective Labor Agreement (construction personnel; agricultural workers; and persons employed in domestic service). Workers of the private sector, SMEs and holders of the Potenciar Trabajo (Decree 841/2022) published in the Official Gazette.

► Table 5.1 Main measures to sustain the impact of COVID-19 on employment, income and production. Argentina. (Cont.)

Policy Group	Policy Sub Group	Name	Implementing Agency	Financing	Status	Beneficiaries
Sustaining formal employment Business support Income protection	Tax subsidies/ incentives	Pre-trip (2021 and 2022) (Pre-viaje 2021 y 2022, in Spanish) ¹⁵ This is a tourism pre-sale program that reimburses 50 percent of the value of a trip in credit for travel to destinations in Argentina. In its three editions, the program benefited 6 million people, with an economic impact of close to \$200 billion for the tourism sector.	Ministry of Tourism*		Ongoing	Other. Tourism sector.
Labor relations provisions		COVID as an occupational disease Declaration of COVID-19 as an occupational disease (in the case of workers excluded from social isolation, which requires coverage by the ART).	Ministry of Labor*		Ongoing	Formal workers (both private and public sector)
Labor relations provisions		Differential treatment to employers corresponding to health-related activities, with respect to employer contributions (95 percent reduction) to the Argentine Integrated Pension System (SIPA) and to the Tax on Credits and Debits to Bank Accounts and other Transactions (Decree No. 300/20).	Ministry of Labor*		Ongoing	Formal workers (both private and public sector)

► Table 5.1 Main measures to sustain the impact of COVID-19 on employment, income and production. Argentina. (Cont.)

Policy Group	Policy Sub Group	Name	Implementing Agency	Financing	Status	Beneficiaries
Income protection	Monetary cash transfers (conditional and non-conditional)	Universal Child Allowance (AUH) (Asignación Universal por Hijo/a (AUH) in Spanish) Universal Pregnancy Allowance (Asignación Universal por Embarazo – AUE in Spanish) Based on the family allowance scheme that has been consolidated in the country in the last decades, an income reinforcement was granted to families with dependent sons, daughters or minors (Family Allowances of the Simplified Regime for Small Taxpayers (RS) that have paid taxes in categories A and B and non-contributory in its different modalities: Universal Child Allowance (AUH), Universal Disabled Child Allowance (AUHD), and Universal Pregnancy Allowance (AUE)). One-time extraordinary allowance equivalent to the amount of \$15 000 for persons who in April 2021 have received the Family Allowances paid in February 2021 to the taxpayers of the Simplified Regime for Small Taxpayers (RS) who have paid taxes in categories A and B (Decree No. 261/2021). Extraordinary one-time subsidy equivalent to the amount of \$15 000 for people who in April 2021 have received the Universal Child Allowance for Social Protection paid in February 2021 and/or the Pregnancy Allowance for Social Protection paid in March 2021 as Beneficiaries. Extraordinary bonus for retirees/pensioners who received a single minimum pension benefit (March 2020). Extraordinary allowance for retirees. The bonuses to minimum pensions and the updating of the indexation formula improved income, avoiding an increase in poverty among adults and containing gender gaps (given the higher proportion of women who receive minimum pensions). Special bonuses for health workers (DNU 315/2020), security and defense workers (DNU318/2020). It granted the payment of an incentive allowance for the effective rendering of services, of a non-remunerative nature.	National Social Security Administration	General Revenues	Completed	Informal workers (unregistered) Families with dependent children or minors with family allowances of the simplified regime in categories A and B and non-contributory in its modalities of AUH, AUHD and AUE. Formal workers (both private and public sector)

► Table 5.1 Main measures to sustain the impact of COVID-19 on employment, income and production. Argentina. (Cont.)

Policy Group	Policy Sub Group	Name	Implementing Agency	Financing	Status	Beneficiaries
Income protection	Monetary cash transfers (conditional and non-conditional)	Work Enhancement (Potenciar Trabajo in Spanish) A benefit - Complementary Social Wage (50 percent of the minimum living and mobile wage) - is paid to people belonging to the Popular Economy, targeted according to their socioeconomic condition (Resolution 121/2020 APN MDS). It is granted to people of working age who undertake to work four hours a day in exchange for a non-refundable lump sum. During the pandemic, four extraordinary bonuses (year 2020) were paid to its holders. During 2021, the number of holders foreseen in the 2021 budget was increased from 870 thousand to 970 thousand through the line Potenciar Inclusión Joven (Empowering Youth Inclusion).	Ministry for Social Development National Social Security Administration		Ongoing Decree 711/2021: Training, Employment and Labor Intermediation Programs, modifications to the Potenciar Program to associate it with registered salaried jobs.	Popular Economy Workers Special quota for women in situations of gender violence or victims of trafficking by interview with a social worker (Resolution 1868/2021).
Income protection	Monetary cash transfers (conditional and non-conditional)	Alimentar Card/Food Program (Tarjeta Alimentar/Programa Alimentar, in Spanish) ¹⁶ Fixed amount for the purchase of food granted to mothers or fathers with children up to 14 years of age (inclusive) who receive the AUH. Also to pregnant women from 3 months of age who receive the pregnancy allowance, people with disabilities who receive the AUH. Mothers with 7 children or more who receive non-contributory pensions. Coverage was extended to almost 4 million beneficiaries, expanding the age range (from 0 to 6 years old to cover 0 to 14 years old). The amounts of the card were also increased.	Ministry for Social Development National Social Security Administration		Ongoing	Informal workers (unregistered)

Source: Own elaboration based on CETyD-UNSAM, 2020. See: <http://noticias.unsam.edu.ar/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CETyD-Politicas-sociolaborales-en-tiempos-de-Covid19.pdf> Other sources: Ernst et al. (2020); Medidas Económicas COVID-19/ Argentina.gob.ar: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/economia/medidas-economicas-COVID19#:~:text=En%20el%20marco%20de%20la,empleo%20y%20garantizar%20el%20abastecimiento>; Other policies: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/coronavirus/medidas-gobierno/otras>

Note: * corresponds to sectoral policy strategies.

Other strategies include: Vademecum of Free Essential Medicines and reimbursement to vulnerable sectors; National Program for the Recognition of Periods of Contributions for Care Tasks, which made it possible to compute one to three years of contributions for each daughter or son for women of retirement age and thus expand access to more than 150 thousand beneficiaries. Transvestite Trans - Diana Sacayán Quota Law, which institutionalizes the 1 percent quota for transvestites in State jobs, adds tax incentives for their hiring in the private sector and facilitates access to credit, among other benefits; Public Telephone, Internet and Television Service, and Universal Basic Benefit for 15 million people. PROCREAR housing credits with a 20 percent quota for women heads of household with minor children and without co-owner; Reprofitting of debts that AUH holders and retired women had contracted with the National Administration of Social Security (ANSES).

► **Table 5.2 Main characteristics of the initiatives with a gender perspective in the productive framework implemented in the provinces according to the survey carried out. Year 2022.**

REGION	Target population	Production units (*)	Policy Instruments	Branch of activity	Joints/Alliances	State of PublicPolicy	Total Initiatives
Northwestern Argentina - NOA (La Rioja, Catamarca, Jujuy, Salta, Tucumán and Santiago del Estero)	13 initiatives targeting women and non-binary identities. 10 initiatives focused on the general population (although they have a gender component to address inequalities in the participation of women and people with non-binary identities in the local productive fabric). 1 initiative without definition	13 small enterprises 11 SMEs 4 large companies 1 Chamber + 50 percent of policies/ initiatives reach unregistered ventures	Range of combined public policy instruments associated with the delivery of NRAs. 10 associated with the delivery of Non-Refundable Contributions NRA, 9 associated with technical assistance 9 associated with training 9 associated with credit support To a lesser extent: 3 associated with dissemination/advisory actions, 2 associated with stakeholder coordination, and 2 associated with support for the preparation of technical reports.	Oriented to all branches of activity, although predominantly: Mining (women) Sugarcane, citrus and metal-mechanic industry (young women) Health and Culture (women and people with non-binary identities)	17 articulations with other provincial agencies 8 with SMEs or small producers 6 with government agencies of the federal government 5 with business organizations 4 with universities 3 with civil society organizations 5 are planned and/or promoted without having established alliances	20 in execution (started between 2020-2021) 2 in design 2 under evaluation	24
Northeastern Argentina - NEA (Corrientes, Misiones, Formosa and Chaco)	12 initiatives with a focus on women, men and people with non-binary identities 3 initiatives targeting women and people with non-binary identities 1 initiative targets people with non-binary identities	14 small enterprises 12 SMEs 7 large companies 1 Chambers 4 initiatives reach non-registered enterprises	8 associated with the delivery of Non-Refundable Contributions (NRA) 13 associated with technical assistance 13 associated with training 5 associated with credit support To a lesser extent: 2 associated with dissemination/advisory actions, 2 associated with stakeholder coordination, and 1 associated with support for the preparation of technical reports.	4 services 4 manufacturing 3 agribusiness 6 in others (including trade and the knowledge economy) 6 policies declared as general/ not focused on a particular branch	15 articulations with other provincial agencies 4 with SMEs or small producers 3 with business organizations 1 with civil society organizations 1 without alliances with others	15 in execution (started between 2020-2021) 1 under evaluation	16
Cuyo (San Juan, Mendoza and San Luis)	16 initiatives are not segmented by gender identity 2 initiatives targeting women 1 initiative targeting women and people with non-binary identities	16 for SMEs and 14 for small enterprises. 5 for large companies 2 for chambers of commerce 6 initiatives reach unregistered enterprises.	4 associated with the delivery of Non-Refundable Contributions NRAs 8 associated with credit support 5 associated with technical assistance 5 associated with training 4 associated with tax benefits 3 associated with dissemination/ advice, 2 associated with support for preparing technical reports, 2 associated with coordination with stakeholders and 5 associated with other instruments.	12 policies declared as general/ not focused on a particular branch 2 agribusiness 1 manufacturing 1 services 1 mining 5 other branches: the knowledge economy is highlighted	10 business organizations and 8 others -including private financial institutions and professional councils. 5 SMEs and small producers, 5 national government agencies and 4 international organizations. To a lesser extent, state agencies of the province (3), universities (2) and workers' organizations (1). 5 are carried out without generating alliances with other actors.	12 under execution (2 started in 2021) 5 in design stage 2 in evaluation stage	19

► **Table 5.2 Main characteristics of the initiatives with a gender perspective in the productive framework implemented in the provinces according to the survey carried out. Year 2022.**
(Cont.)

REGION	Target population	Production units (*)	Policy Instruments	Branch of activity	Joints/Alliances	State of Public Policy	Total Initiatives
Center (Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Santa Fe and Entre Ríos)	18 initiatives are not segmented by gender identity 1 initiative targeting women only 5 initiatives targeting women and people with non-binary identities	19 for SMEs and 10 for small companies 8 for large companies 6 for chambers of commerce 3 are not destined to any of these productive units 4 are for unregistered enterprises	7 associated with the delivery of Non-Refundable Contributions NRAs 4 associated with the granting of loans 1 associated with the granting of loans 6 associated with technical assistance 11 associated with training 7 associated with stakeholder coordination 5 associated with dissemination/ advice 2 associated with support for the preparation of technical reports	9 policies declared as general/ not focused on a particular branch 7 agribusiness 8 manufacturing 1 energy 4 mining 5 other branches: knowledge economy, science, technology and innovation, transportation and logistics	11 business organizations 11 SMEs and small producers 8 trade union sector (workers' organizations) 16 universities 15 provincial government agencies 5 civil society organizations 3 national government agencies 2 international organizations and 1 other	19 under execution (5 started in 2021, 8 started in 2022) 1 in design stage 4 in evaluation stage	24
Patagonia (Tierra del Fuego, Santa Cruz, Chubut, Rio Negro, Neuquén and La Pampa)	5 initiatives are not segmented by gender identity 9 initiatives targeting women only 2 initiatives targeting women and people with non-binary identities 2 initiatives targeting women and men	9 for SMEs and 13 for small enterprises 6 for large companies 2 for chambers of commerce 10 for unregistered companies	3 associated with the delivery of NRAs 4 associated with the granting of loans 6 associated with technical assistance 10 associated with training 7 associated with dissemination/ advice 5 associated with coordination with stakeholders 2 associated with support for the preparation of technical reports	12 initiatives declared as general/ not focused on a particular industry 3 agribusiness 2 manufacturing 2 services	12 provincial government agencies 8 SMEs and small producers 7 national government agencies 7 civil society organizations, universities and business organizations 2 workers' organizations 2 international organizations 2 initiatives without established alliances	16 under execution (5 started in 2021, 5 started in 2022) 2 in design stage	18

Source: ILO (2023a).

Note: (*) a policy/initiative may target more than one productive unit.

► **Table 5.3 Facilitators, barriers and future recommendations.**

Region	Facilitators/supporters of gender-sensitive policy design	Barriers/difficulties to the design of gender-sensitive public policies	Recommendations
Northwestern Argentina - NOA (La Rioja, Catamarca, Jujuy, Salta, Tucumán and Santiago del Estero)	Support from provincial authorities and public officials, generally “young people”, meaning “political will/ decision”. Articulation/partnerships with local institutional actors and between provinces of the region (crystallized in the NOA Roundtable). Accompaniment of the Gender Cabinet of the Secretariat of Industry and Productive Development of the MECON.	Budgetary constraints. Slow and complex administrative and bureaucratic procedures. Resistance from some social actors with traditional/ conservative views. Need to strengthen gender training within the portfolio teams. In some cases, insufficient number of women in senior positions within the portfolios to contribute to advancing the agenda.	Continue with training and strengthening the learning process of decision-makers. Evaluate the programs and policies implemented based on surveys and evidence that allows them to obtain feedback to move forward and improve their work. Having a gender budget is key to continue investing in more gender-sensitive productive policies and points out that, potentially, a regulation or norm that establishes the urgency of addressing these issues would be of vital importance. From the productive portfolios of the NOA, it is perceived that those priority sectors or branches of activity in which it would be important to implement new policies of this type are those that have traditionally been more masculinized (such as industry, agriculture and construction). They consider that it is not only a matter of placing emphasis on increasing women’s participation, but also of improving the conditions and quality of such participation. One of the interviewees mentions with special emphasis the need to work with women in situations of special vulnerability: rural and indigenous women. Priority areas of activity: Prioritization of women and people with non-binary identities, especially in agribusiness, manufacturing and services. Possible alliances: Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education, INTA, Chambers, UIA, SMEs and entrepreneurs, ILO, UN Women.
Northeastern Argentina - NEA (Corrientes, Misiones, Formosa and Chaco)	Work teams within the ministries and women officials who promote the gender perspective within the productive portfolios. Articulations with other actors such as federations, financial entities, municipalities and provincial gender areas. Technical support provided by the Gender Cabinet of the Secretariat of Industry and Productive Development of the MECON.	Resistance or difficulties, on the part of actors with conservative/ traditional views involved in masculinized activities, to understand persistent gender gaps and support the gender agenda.	Deepen and strengthen the design and implementation of gender-sensitive productive policies through training. Continue training decision-makers within public agencies and territorial technical teams. Provide workshops to help provide knowledge on technological tools and on management and administration, for example, for women who lead productive enterprises. In this sense, it is proposed to provide technical assistance for the marketing and dissemination of products. Offer leadership training programs, courses on technological tools and educational scholarships. Strengthen initiatives for access to credit in order to continue promoting the participation of women in the productive network. Priority areas of activity: industry and agriculture and, within the latter, the livestock and tea (tea and yerba mate) sectors. Possible alliances: the productive sector as a whole, represented mainly by business and industrial chambers - chamber of women entrepreneurs - as well as family businesses; provincial public agencies - especially the Ministries of Labor and Agriculture - and the Provincial Institute of Statistics and Census; universities and the national government.

► Table 5.3 Facilitators, barriers and future recommendations. (Cont.)

Region	Facilitators/supporters of gender-sensitive policy design	Barriers/difficulties to the design of gender-sensitive public policies	Recommendations
Cuyo (San Juan, Mendoza and San Luis)	Accompaniment and support of all branches of the provincial governments in the implementation of the gender agenda. Incorporation of a gender perspective as part of the formal requirements established by international organizations for their initiatives and the granting of funding. Articulations with other actors, such as chambers, foundations and women's organizations. Positive results of the policies that contribute to their continuity.	Cultural resistance linked to the traditional views of some actors -such as the private sector.	Positive evaluation of the initiatives because they note a great adhesion of women to the initiatives; they note that they are contributing favorably to the reactivation of the provincial economy after the pandemic; or they identify incipient changes in family economies due to the promotion of greater economic independence on the part of women, mainly in rural areas. Regarding the opinions on how to deepen and strengthen the design and implementation of gender-sensitive productive policies from now on, the representatives of the productive portfolios of the Cuyo region converge in emphasizing the need to carry out a significant cultural change in order to implement and design effective policies with a gender perspective. They understand that in order to strengthen this line of action it is necessary to concentrate the efforts of decision-makers, achieve greater clarity in the understanding of what gender-focused policies mean and where they are aimed at, and at the same time, strengthen the participation of women as a key element in the processes of transformation of the productive matrices. Priority areas of activity: Continue strengthening productive initiatives with a gender perspective are those that have traditionally been headed by men, and which represent a substantial contribution to local economies and are constitutive of their productive matrixes: industry and agriculture. Possible alliances: balance between the valuation of the private and public sector, when thinking about possible articulations; articulations that must be made with a multiplicity of actors - business, industrial (especially in the metal-mechanic branch) and trade chambers, as well as provincial government agencies expressed in other Ministries (such as finance and treasury). In addition, the educational system is mentioned as playing a leading role.
Center (Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Santa Fe and Entre Ríos)	Political decision on the part of provincial and ministerial authorities regarding the importance of ascribing and incorporating a gender perspective in management. Existence of provincial gender areas that accompany the portfolios and guide them in strengthening gender mainstreaming. Articulations with other public and private sector actors and institutions that make initiatives possible, such as: universities, financial entities, chambers of commerce, among others. National and international regulations on equality and women's human rights that provide concepts and conceptual frameworks for policies.	A largely masculinized productive fabric in many of its sectors in which sexist attitudes prevail. Conservative cultures rooted in some territories that offer resistance to the changes promoted by the portfolios. To a lesser extent, difficulties linked to budgetary issues.	Need to strengthen the work with people of non-binary identities to increase their participation in the productive structure, and generate development opportunities to attract young people. Develop strategies to measure and monitor the impact of productive policies with a gender perspective. The institutionalization/full formalization of gender-sensitive policies and the continuity of political support to implement them are highlighted as necessary. They also consider that time is needed to collect information and to be able to follow up and measure initiatives. At the same time, training, discussions, meetings and joint working groups are considered a priority. Priority areas of activity: industry, in terms of technological development and the knowledge industry, and mining. Possible alliances: the provincial government level and the national state as fundamental to coordination. Emphasis on industrial poles and parks and companies, cooperative associations and cooperative workers, civil society and feminist movements.

► **Table 5.3 Facilitators, barriers and future recommendations. (Cont.)**

Region	Facilitators/supporters of gender-sensitive policy design	Barriers/difficulties to the design of gender-sensitive public policies	Recommendations
Patagonia (Tierra del Fuego, Santa Cruz, Chubut, Rio Negro, Neuquén and La Pampa)	Provincial government efforts committed to the gender agenda, which promote the “mandate” of incorporating a gender perspective in all ministries. Accompaniment and technical support from international organizations specialized in women’s human rights. Articulated work with local actors and organizations that provide capillarity and scalability to the initiatives (municipalities, chambers, foundations, etc.). Institutionalization of gender within the productive portfolio, which facilitates the incorporation of a gender perspective in policies.	Difficulties in the communication/ dissemination of initiatives that hinder reaching the target audience. Shortage of people exclusively dedicated, within different agencies, to promoting the gender agenda. Insufficient statistical information to provide a robust diagnosis of the gender situation in the provincial productive sphere and to guide the design of policies. Cultural barriers that prevent -at least in principle- some women from becoming aware of persistent gender inequalities, which in some cases makes it difficult for them to feel challenged by initiatives.	Continue to deepen and strengthen the design and implementation of gender-sensitive policies, valuing the opportunities for exchange because they contribute to the broadening of experiences in the work on gender-sensitive policies and at the same time allow them to establish nourishing dialogues with other government agencies. The need to continue working with SMEs and the possibility of providing greater dissemination of the initiatives being promoted. And the need to promote the evaluation and monitoring of initiatives, including the creation of indicators for follow-up tasks. Priority areas of activity: hydrocarbon activities, fishing, mining, agriculture, and technological development, as well as greater participation of women in leadership positions in large companies. Possible alliances: the provincial government level (Ministry of Labor) and the national government as fundamental to coordination. Emphasis on provincial financial institutions and gender areas, the education system, oil and energy companies, public-private alliances.

Source: Own elaboration based on ILO (2023a).

Note: (*) a policy/initiative may be aimed at more than one productive unit

- 1 Gender segregation is often studied using the dissimilarity index (DI), also called Duncan's index (see, for example, an estimate in (UNDP/ILO 2019). The DI compares the distribution of employed women across economic sectors with that of men (i.e., 10 percent of female workers are employed in agriculture, compared to 2 percent of male workers). If women and men were in the labor force in equal numbers this would also say something about the degree of feminization of the sectors (i.e., whether women employed in agriculture are more or less than men employed in agriculture). But the larger the difference in of women and men in employment, the less informative is the DI index. ILO/UNDP (2019). Horizontal gender segregation in the labor markets of eight Latin American countries: implications for gender inequalities. Prepared by CIEDUR- Espino, A. and De los Santos, D. (researchers). Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/documents/publication/wcms_715929.pdf
- 2 Decree 2020-310-APN-PTE, March 23, 2020. Ministry of Economy: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/2022/09/dneig-ingresofamiliardeemergencia-analisisydesafios.pdf>
- 3 Wasserman, M. (2022).
- 4 See: <https://datos.gob.ar/dataset/jgm-ingreso-familiar-emergencia>
- 5 Kaplan, L. J., & Delfino, A. (2021).
- 6 The Emergency Assistance Program for Labor and Production (ATP) (Decree 332/2020 (B.O. 01/04/2020) and amended by Decree 376/2020 (B.O. 21/04/2020), within the framework of DNU 260 (B.O. 12/03/2020), complements the measure of suspension of layoffs for formal salaried employment, based on the payment of a complementary salary allowance to companies that carry out activities considered critical and whose turnover has registered a drop with respect to 2019. In terms of number of companies, 255,000 companies were included in the first ATP payment, 253,000 in the second and 220,000 in the third. As there was some turnover of beneficiary firms, in total there were 328,000 firms entering at least one ATP in the first three payments. Most benefits went to workers in Commerce and Industry, with 21 percent and 22 percent respectively, followed by Tourism and Gastronomy (11 percent) and Health (10 percent, while the remaining sectors represent 36 percent of the total benefits. In: Mera, M., Karczmarczyk, M. and Petrone, L. (January 2021). Also see: Programa de asistencia de emergencia al trabajo y la producción | Argentina.gob.ar Méndez Santolaria et al. (2022) mention that two specific groups were excluded from the program's coverage: part of the informal wage earners who could not access the ATP because their employers did not register them fiscally and could not access the IFE; and work cooperatives.
- 7 Resolution 938-2020 as amended.
- 8 CEP XXI (2020). Productive Panorama. September 2020. See: https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/2021/09/informe_de_panorama_productivo_-_septiembre_2020.pdf
- 9 CETyD-UNSAM (2020). "Políticas Sociolaborales en tiempos del COVID-19. Cobertura y desafíos futuros", 2 de junio de 2020. Disponible en: <http://noticias.unsam.edu.ar/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CETyD-Politicassociolaborales-en-tiempos-de-Covid19.pdf>
- 10 Available at: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/trabajo/repro>
- 11 This is a policy implemented to protect formal salaried employment during the pandemic by prohibiting dismissals without just cause and dismissals and suspensions for reasons of lack or decrease of work and force majeure. This measure prevented a drop in formal employment in Argentina, which is usually the adjustment variable in economic crises. Resolution 397/2020: <https://www.boletinoficial.gob.ar/detalleAviso/primera/228461/20200430>
- 12 Available at: https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/linea_sueldos_-_instructivo_mipymes_1.pdf
- 13 Castells (2022b). See: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/economia/igualdadygenero/nuevo-regimen-de-promocion-de-empleo-en-el-norte-grande-con-perspectiva-de>
- 14 Programa Registradas was created in October 2021 to promote access and permanence in employment of female domestic workers, guarantee their rights and their financial inclusion through various lines of work. Available at: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/economia/igualdadygenero/registradas-mas-empleos-y-mas-derechos-para-trabajadoras-de-casas> This is an incentive for formalization and permanence in employment - the national government pays a portion of the worker's salary up to 15,000 Argentine pesos for 6 months on account of the payment made by the employer. It grants an incentive to the hierarchization of labor relations between female domestic workers and their employers, who are obliged to keep their jobs for four months after the end of the benefit. Promotes the financial inclusion of domestic workers with the opening of an account and access to bank benefits for each worker enrolled in the program.
- 15 Measures taken by the Ministry of Tourism and Sport in response to COVID-19. Available at: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/turismoydeportes/medidas-en-turismo-frente-al-covid-19#3> Available at: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/noticias/un-millon-de-turistas-disfrutaran-previaje>
- 16 Resolution 26/2020: Alimentar card. Resolution 1549/2021 Programa Alimentar. Available at: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/normativa/nacional/resoluci%C3%B3n-1549-2021-355822/texto>

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