

# Unveiling barriers to women's access to decent work in Peru.



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## Abstract

Peru suffers from a serious gender inequality problem in the labor market that cannot be understood by considering employment rates alone. Rather, it is also necessary to analyze the conditions under which women participate in the labor market. This study seeks to identify economic, legal, and socio-cultural barriers that women face in accessing decent employment. We use formal work as an indicator of decent employment and add an innovative non-precarious employment indicator that is relevant in the Peruvian context given that less than 25% of employed women work in the formal sector. This indicator considers the following minimum acceptable working conditions: at least the minimum legal salary and a legally defined maximum number of working hours. The study provides a comprehensive view of the barriers by using a mixed methodology that includes an econometric estimation of barriers and interviews and focus groups with working and non-working women. The results show that the main barriers that hinder access to decent work in Peru are related to gender stereotypes both in the household (where household and care tasks are entrusted almost exclusively to women) and in the labor market (where women face discrimination and sexual harassment). Given that women need to take care of their children, and given the lack of care services available, many of them end up taking low-quality jobs.

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## I. Introduction

Peru suffers from a serious gender inequality problem in the labor market. Labor indicators show that women are at a disadvantage compared to men in many dimensions: women participate less than men in the labor market, and, when they do participate, they generally take precarious jobs or lower-quality jobs than men do. Similarly, they are over-represented in certain “feminized” and low-productivity sectors or occupations, while they are under-represented in other workspaces with better conditions, such as those linked to STEM careers or high-level management positions. In addition, women receive lower wages than their male counterparts, even when they have the same training and work experience.

The female labor situation in Peru is a complex problem that cannot be understood by considering participation or employment rates alone. Rather, it is also necessary to analyze the conditions under which women participate in the labor market. For instance, if we consider only the female labor market participation rate, Peru is at 60% and positioned above the world average (45%) (Banco Mundial, 2022). However, a more exhaustive analysis reveals that in general, these women’s participation is characterized by precarious employment conditions: wages below the legal minimum, excessive working hours, and no access to social security, among others. Women work in more precarious jobs and have a higher informality rate. According to National Statistics Institute of Peru (INEI, 2022), in 2020, 58.1% of women were in vulnerable employment, versus 47.4% of men. Similarly, although informality is high for both men and women, it is higher for women: in 2020, 77.3% of working women held informal jobs, versus 73.9% of men.<sup>1</sup> This is why it is key to identify and analyze the barriers that women face in accessing decent jobs in Peru.

The concept of decent work that was developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) focuses on the conditions that accompany a job. Decent work is understood to be “productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity” (ILO 1999) for men and women. From this understanding, different interpretations of what decent work is and how it can be measured have emerged. This

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<sup>1</sup> INEI, "Peru: Gender Gaps 2022. Progress towards equality for women and men."

is because the breadth of the concept generates a wide range of possibilities for how to estimate decent work. Furthermore, differences in data availability from one country to the next imply that there is no universal indicator. Hence, the measurement of decent work currently remains a challenge.

Several studies have been carried out to address this issue and to identify barriers to accessing decent work. As women are at a disadvantage compared to men, much of the literature focuses on them. This body of literature shows that the main barriers that hinder women's access to decent work can be broadly grouped into the following categories: economic, legal, and sociocultural. Economic barriers refer to the economic characteristics of the territories in question (poverty rate, predominant activity, and level of occupational segregation, among others). Legal barriers refer to regulations and laws that perpetuate gender inequality in the world of work. Sociocultural barriers encompass the social norms that relegate women to the domestic/reproductive sphere.

The main objective of this study is to identify and analyze the Peruvian-specific barriers that hinder women's access to decent jobs in light of the economic, legal, and sociocultural barriers identified in the literature. We also provide policy recommendations to help overcome the main barriers and improve women's labor conditions in the country.

This research investigates decent work by looking at two proxies that are relevant to the Peruvian context and have appropriate data available: formal work and non-precarious work. The first one is considered a relevant proxy of decent work since being a fully formal worker in Peru implies having significant work benefits governed by law such as the minimum wage, the maximum number of working hours permitted, and access to social protections, among other labor rights. Nevertheless, the proportion of economically active individuals in Peru who work in fully formal conditions and have all those benefits is very small (25%), and even less for women (23%) (INEI, 2022). Because of this situation, this study incorporates a second, much less strict, indicator that we name non-precarious work. This indicator considers a smaller number of work benefits but includes minimum acceptable working conditions,

particularly receiving at least the minimum legal salary and respect for the maximum number of working hours permitted by law. While the first proxy is closer to the ideal conditions advocated for by international organizations such as the ILO, the second one corresponds to a more realistic aspiration for the population of a country like Peru that has a vastly informal and precarious labor market.

To meet its research objectives, this study uses a mixed methodology approach that combines quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative approach consists of an econometric analysis of the factors associated with formal and non-precarious work for women. The qualitative approach, on the other hand, consists of conducting semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders such as policy makers and civil society representatives as well as focus group discussions with different segments of women, from those who are unemployed to those that work in the formal sector. The qualitative approach makes it possible to delve deeper into the barriers identified in the quantitative work and address barriers that cannot be studied quantitatively due to a lack of data.

This study contributes to the existing state of the art in three ways. First, although there is plenty of literature on different aspects of women's labor market situation, such as estimating the wage gap, estimating determinants of employment, or investigating a particular barrier, there are few studies, and even fewer specific to Peru, that look into the barriers that women face in accessing decent jobs. Second, we propose to look at the issue of job quality in a different way. Generally, studies on the topic consider job formality or income as indicators. Given the Peruvian reality of high informality, this study proposes to complement its analysis by considering another more flexible (less strict) indicator of a quality job: the non-precarious job. Finally, we attempt to provide a more integrated approach by using a mixed methodology that enables us to delve deeper into our quantitative findings and at the same time consider aspects that the data does not cover.

The remainder of this document is structured as follows. Section 2 contains a review of the relevant literature. Section 3 presents the analysis framework used for this study. Section 4 describes the methodology used. Section 5 briefly discusses the

institutional framework and key labor indicators related to women's labor rights in Peru. Section 6 presents the study's quantitative and qualitative results. Finally, Section 7 provides an integrated analysis of the main results and concludes this work.

## **II. Literature review**

This section aims to identify the main factors associated with women's ability to access quality jobs. We focus on studies from developing countries, especially (when possible) ones specific to Peru.

There is an abundance of quantitative literature on factors associated with women's labor market outcomes. In general, the literature identifies three groups of factors associated with women's ability to access employment: individual factors, family factors, and contextual factors. In the individual factors category, several studies have demonstrated the relevance of age, education, and marital status. Age is non-linearly associated with employment and its quality: initially, the relationship is positive, but past a certain point, it becomes negative. Education is strongly positively related to work access and quality of work. Living with a partner (married or cohabiting), however, is negatively associated with employment opportunities and conditions.

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP 2018) provides recent evidence of the U-shaped relationship between age and job quality. Their study of 33 countries in Asia and the Pacific measures the effects sociodemographic variables have on access to decent work using full-time employment as a proxy for said work. Regarding age, their results show that younger and older people are less likely to be employed full time. The negative relationship between age and work is related to employers' assumption that older people are less productive (especially in jobs that require physical effort). This relationship may be stronger for women because they may take on new care activities that limit their economic participation (Posadas and Vidal Fernandez, 2013). Alcázar and Laszlo (2023)



show that in Peru, older women tend to leave the labor force earlier than older men.

Women's employment outcomes are positively correlated with their educational level because it (along with their work experience) determines their accumulated human capital (ESCAP, 2018). Educational attainment is key to both men's and women's labor market results, but its importance is greater for women. Gonzales and Jain-Chandra (2015) find that in developing countries, an additional year of education reduces the gender gap by 6.1 percentage points. Also, there is literature that indicates the return on education is higher for women than for men (Dougherty, 2005). As for Peru in particular, a study by Alcázar et al. (2020) on the factors associated with being "left behind" in terms of obtaining decent work finds that women are more heavily penalized than men for having fewer years of education.

Pregnancy is also a relevant variable when it comes to women's access to quality employment for several reasons. Pregnancy can discourage employers to hire women because it may generate present and future labour costs. On one hand, pregnancy may create current costs due to work absence permissions for health check-ups and may be perceived to decrease productivity (Anker and Hein, 1985). On the other hand, pregnancy implies future costs associated with maternity leave (ibid.). Additionally, pregnancy can limit the accumulation of human capital, especially if it occurs at a young age (Alcázar & Lobatón, 2006). UNFPA (2021) shows that the interruption in accumulation of human capital has long-term negative consequences on the employability of women in Peru and thereby contributes to gender inequality.

When it comes to the family factors that explain women's labor market participation and conditions of employment, one of the most thoroughly discussed ones is motherhood. Having children implies time restrictions for women, since they are generally the ones who bear the burden of care activities. In fact, many women end up feeling the need to prioritize job flexibility over job quality to reconcile their care activities and their work needs (Berniell, Berniell, De la Mata, Edo, & Marchionni, 2021). Sarfraz et al. (2021) studied the determinants of women having decent work in five developing countries in Southeast Asia and found that the number of children under 5 years of age is inversely related to the probability of accessing a decent job. Lavado

(2017) makes a big contribution to this discussion with a study on maternity penalties affecting Peruvian women's labor market participation and earnings. His results show that having a child under 6 years of age implies less labor market participation and that the effect is even greater if the child is under 3 years of age. On the contrary, having a child over 7 years of age implies greater labor market participation, and the effect is even greater if the child is over 13 years of age. As for the estimation of income, Lavado's results show that women with children earn up to 16% less per month than women without children.

The lower labor market results of women with children correspond in part to them having less free time or a less flexible schedule due to the difficulties they face in reconciling childcare and a job. Various studies have shown that in this scenario, there is a strong positive relationship between access to childcare and mother's employment (Contreras, Puentes and Bravo, 2012; Dang, Hiraga and Viet, 2019). Boyd and Rentería (2016) provide evidence of this relationship in the Peruvian context. Also, there is evidence of the role of childcare for infants and school-aged children on mother's quality of jobs. Berthelon et al. (2020) use panel data to estimate the causal effect of school schedule reform on mothers' job quality. The authors found that an increase in full-day schooling increases wages, the likelihood of full-time employment, and the likelihood of contract-based employment.

Like formal care services, informal care services are important in helping to ease the friction between mothers' work and family spheres. Some studies show that the presence of co-resident relatives can help improve mothers' labor market results provided that they act as possible caregivers and help alleviate these divergent demands. Aragao and Villanueva (2021) found that in Peru, there is a strong positive association between the presence of a family co-resident and mothers' employment and working hours. Furthermore, they found that the association is stronger if the relative is female. Álcazar and Laszlo (2023) highlight the formal care crisis that exists in Peru and has led to a high rate of informal care, which is provided mainly by other women in the household who do not work for pay, i.e., grandmothers or older daughters.

Studies also support the place of residence being a key factor in women's labor market outcomes. In the empirical literature, one of the approaches most commonly used to measure this is to include a dummy variable to specify whether a woman lives in an urban or rural area. Because rural areas are generally characterized by low physical capital endowment and a predominance of low productive activities, studies agree that being a woman who lives in a rural area implies having a lower probability of accessing a decent job. Safraz et al. (2021) use labor force survey data from Pakistan and corroborate that urban women are more likely to obtain decent work.

Although there is still little empirical literature on the subject, more and more studies are proving that culture, which encompasses formal and informal institutions, social values, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions, is a crucial factor in women's labor market participation and trajectory. Luci et al. (2012) investigate why women in developing countries often end up in "bad jobs". The authors use the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), which measures social discrimination against women, to estimate the correlation between social discrimination against women and gender gaps in 44 developing countries and find that social institutions have an important impact on the quantity and quality of jobs held by women.

Contreras and Plaza (2015) conducted an empirical study that confirms cultural factors have an impact on women's employment in Chile. In addition to the classic variables that are generally considered, the authors include machismo and other cultural values as explanatory variables in their analysis of female labor force participation. The authors use data from the 2002 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP)<sup>2</sup> for this. Their results show that machismo and conservative values are strongly associated with female labor force participation in Chile. More conservative women exhibit lower participation rates. The authors conclude that the existence of these cultural factors (as a group) counteracts the positive effects of education and experience.

However, it is important to mention that the literature recognizes that it is not

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<sup>2</sup> In 2002, Chile was one of three Latin American countries included in the survey. The International Social Survey Program was a cross-sectional survey of the population over 18 years of age.

easy to include culture as an explanatory variable of women's labor market results, given the potential problem of endogeneity that doing so entails. Culture does influence women's labor market participation, but women's participation can also gradually shape cultural patterns. Empirical studies address this in different ways. Some authors simply consider cultural values to be so important that they should be included in analyses. This is the case for Codazzi (2018), who conducted a study on Brazilian women's employment. On the other hand, some other authors address the issue by considering how long it takes for effects to materialize. This is the case for Contreras and Plaza (2015), who maintain that culture influences women's labor market results in the short term, while the effect of women's work performance on social norms and customs occurs only over the long term. Based on this hypothesis, the authors conclude that although the direction of causality of these variables cannot be unraveled, the results can be considered "short-term" effects. Finally, some authors try to solve the endogeneity problem by including an instrumental variable. Moricono and Rodríguez (2021) address the potential endogeneity of the grandmother cohort non-traditional norms variable by exploiting institutional variation in countries' reproductive health laws when the grandmother cohort was 20 years old. They base their method on the argument that laws liberalizing reproductive health, in particular access to the contraceptive pill, increased women's awareness and thus favored less stereotyped gendered norms (Goldin and Katz, 2002).

Women may also face legal barriers when it comes to accessing quality jobs. In some countries, a patriarchal culture that relegates women to reproductive activities within the home is legally supported. Drawing on a large and novel panel data set of gender-related legal restrictions for 143 countries for the period 1960-2012, Gonzales and Jain-Chan (2015) analyze the relationship between patriarchal legal restrictions faced by women and women's labor market participation. First, the author finds that female labor force participation is higher in countries with no legal discrimination against women. Second, he finds, through an econometric analysis, that the existence of equal legal rights for both genders is statistically significant and positively associated with smaller gender gaps in labor market participation. For example, when fertility and

education are controlled for, the results show that guaranteed legal equity reduces the gender-based labor market participation gap by 1.3 percentage points.

### **III. Analytical framework**

The objective of this study is to identify, analyze, and address the main barriers that women face in accessing decent employment in Peru. However, as we have previously discussed, decent work – as it is officially defined by ILO – is complex in terms of both its conceptualization and its operationalization. Decent work is an integrative concept that incorporates goals associated with the creation of jobs, the promotion of labor rights, the defense of social protections, and the promotion of social dialogue.

Quantitative studies on decent work have considered different approaches to it, depending on the reality of each specific context, the attributes prioritized to determine the quality of a job, and the availability of data. In this study, we use two indicators – formal work and non-precarious work (See Figure 1) – as proxies of decent work.

We chose formal work as a proxy because it is a type of work that, by definition, is carried out in compliance with labor legislation. This implies that formal work incorporates a series of labor rights, such as the legal minimum wage, a legally defined maximum number of working hours, and social protections, as well as other attributes included in the ILO's definition of decent work. We use the INEI's definition of formality<sup>3</sup> and consider the following categories of women to be informal workers: (i) employers and self-employed workers whose production unit belongs to the

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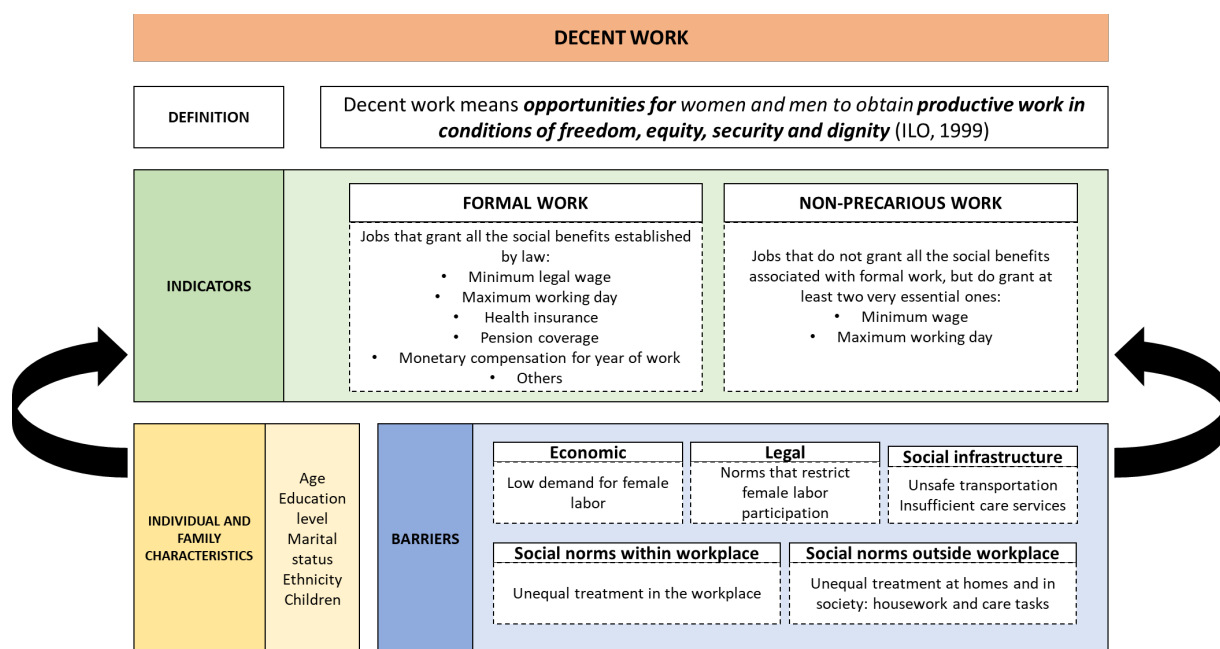
<sup>3</sup> Formal employment is defined by INEI according to the worker's occupation category: (i) employers and self-employed workers whose productive unit belongs to the formal sector, and (ii) employees with social security financed by their employer.

informal sector, (ii) wage earners who do not have employer-funded social security, and (iii) unpaid family workers.

In addition, we chose non-precarious work as a less strict proxy that covers a larger employed population (formal as well as non-precarious informal workers). We consider this important because more than 70% of workers in the Peruvian labor market are informal. Non-precarious work is understood to be employment that has two essential characteristics: (i) a labor income at least equal to the legal minimum wage, and (ii) a total number of working hours that does not exceed the maximum permitted by law. Using the non-precarious work indicator enables us to identify not only formally employed Peruvian women, but also the group of Peruvian women who, despite not enjoying all the benefits of a formal job, do work in "minimally acceptable" conditions. Non-precarious work is a more realistic aspiration in the Peruvian context in the short and medium term, and an adequate intermediate step for the country on the road to ensuring decent work for its entire population.

The study "Women's access to decent work in Peru: Addressing country-specific barriers" is part of a larger international study led by the Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP) and identifies five types of barriers to obtaining decent work: (i) economic, (ii) legal, (iii) social infrastructure, (iv) social norms within the workplace, and (v) social norms outside the workplace (see Figure 1). We classify the barriers identified during our literature review by those types.

**Figure 1: Decent work conceptualization and barriers**



As mentioned before, the literature shows that several factors influence both women’s labor market participation and their working conditions. First of all, women’s labor market results are usually associated with their individual and family characteristics. Age, education level, marital status, and ethnicity are some of the individual variables that are commonly associated with women’s work. Family characteristics like the size of the family, the presence of children, and the socioeconomic level of the household also influence workplace women’s employment conditions.

Another type of factors that have an impact are economic barriers. The economic context of the place of residence, such as the poverty rate and the size of the economy, of course has a major influence on the quantity and quality of women’s employment opportunities. The structure of the labor market (the predominant type of activity or the levels of occupational segregation) may also influence women’s employment outcomes.

Furthermore, there are legal barriers that can hinder women’s access to decent work. A legal framework that puts women at a disadvantage or does not protect them from gender inequality discourages some women from participating in the labor market at all. For those women who do enter the labor market, it perpetuates the non-decent conditions in which they work as those conditions are protected by law.

In addition to the economic and legal factors mentioned above, sociocultural factors also play a central role in women's ability to access decent work. Sociocultural factors that affect women's participation in the labor market include certain stereotypes, social norms, and gender roles that restrict women's value to activities related to the home and reproduction. They are determining factors for both the supply of female labor (women's decision to look for work) and the demand for female labor (employers' decision to hire women and the working conditions they offer them).

Social infrastructure (public programs and infrastructure) may also have a crucial impact on women's participation in the labor market. The literature has clearly pointed out that the availability of childcare facilities contributes to women's labor market participation by giving them more time for activities outside the home. This increase in free time also allows women who were already working to access full-time positions that have a greater probability of being decent jobs. Another social infrastructure service that has positive effects on women's labor market results is access to job training. Women with more human capital are not only more likely to be employed, but also more likely to obtain decent jobs.

#### **IV. Methodology**

This study uses a mixed methodology that combines quantitative and qualitative techniques to gain a better understanding of the barriers considered. The quantitative analysis made it possible to characterize women in the Peruvian labor market and identify some relevant characteristics associated with quality jobs. A subsequent econometric analysis made it possible to quantify the weight of each factor, or barrier. The qualitative analysis, for its part, enabled us to delve deeper into the quantitative findings and better explain how the factors act as barriers. The qualitative analysis also made it possible to assess a series of factors that could not be quantified due to a lack of data. This is particularly important for the Peruvian context, as the existence of



cultural factors has been recognized in the literature, but there is no data available about them.

This section outlines the methodological approach used in this study. First, it describes the quantitative method applied, along with the datasets, variables, and econometric specifications considered. Then, it describes the qualitative data collection techniques used, along with the participants involved and the ethical considerations taken into account. Table 1 summarizes the research methods used and specific research objectives set for each barrier dimension, or type.

**Table 1: Research methods employed, by research dimension**

Dimension	Specific Research Objectives	Research Methods
Economic	Determine the impact women's socio-economic context has on their access to decent work	- Secondary quantitative data
Legal	Identify flaws of the legal barriers in the legal framework that failed to address gender discrimination and protection of women in the workplace	- Interviews - Grey literature review
Social infrastructure	Explore the extent to which women's access to public daycare service and other social infrastructure, such as secure transportation, facilitates their access to decent work	- Secondary quantitative data - Interviews - Focus groups
Social norms outside the workplace	Identify how gender roles affect women's access to decent work	- Secondary quantitative data - Interviews - Focus groups
Social norms within the workplace	Explore gender discrimination within the workplace	- Interviews - Focus groups

#### 4.1. Quantitative approach

We first used quantitative data from the Peru National Household Survey (ENAHO) for the period 2010-2020 to characterize the female labor force in Peru and compare it to the country's male labor force. Then, we conducted an econometric analysis to identify the main factors that influence or contribute to quality labor results for Peruvian women. We studied the weight of these factors in (i) the probability of

accessing a formal job, and (ii) the probability of accessing a non-precarious job (formal or informal). The econometric analysis also sought to explore whether the barriers are heterogeneous between different groups of women. For this quantitative analysis, we used the ENAHO database for 2019. We carried out a cross-sectional analysis for 2019, the last year before the pandemic.

#### 4.1.1. Data

We used data from the ENAHO, which has been conducted by Peru's National Institute of Statistics and Information annually since 2003. It is nationally representative and includes urban and rural areas, all 24 of the country's departments, and the Constitutional Province of Callao. The sample used in the survey is probabilistic of areas, stratified, multistage, and independent in each department.

The ENAHO provides information about dwellings and households as well as their members. We specifically used the "employment and income" and "characteristics of household members" modules for both the labor force characterization step and the econometric analysis.

For the purposes of our study, we restricted the population to women between the ages of 17 and 65. The lower age threshold is the age at which people normally have their compulsory basic education completed and are ready to enter the labor market, while the upper age threshold is the age at which people are legally entitled to retire.

It is important to mention that all women who met the age criterion were included in the study, regardless of their employment status, meaning that our dataset considered employed women, as well as unemployed and inactive women. Unemployed and inactive women were included to respond to the objective of assessing barriers that affect those who do not try to access jobs at all.

#### 4.1.2. Econometric approach

To calculate the weight of factors associated with Peruvian women's access to decent work, this study takes into consideration the vast amount of literature documenting the existence of an endogeneity problem in labor decisions that leads to

selection bias (Heckman et al., 2000; Blau et al., 2021). Indeed, data on women who occupy decent jobs is observable only for women who are working. However, the fact that a woman is working may be due to a personal preference to participate in the labor market (self-selection) or to other unobserved variables or barriers to accessing decent work.

To overcome this potential issue, we use the Heckman extension proposed by Van de Ven and Van Pragg (1981). This extension, known as Heckprobit, is applied to models in which the dependent variable is dichotomous rather than continuous. Heckprobit makes it possible to obtain an overview of the different factors that reduce the probability that a woman obtains a decent job, i.e., the factors that act as barriers to accessing said jobs.

The proposed model can be expressed by the following equation (the output equation):

$$\Pr(FADW_i) = f(\beta_0 + \beta_1 D_i + \beta_2 X_i + \beta_3 Z_i + \mu_i)$$

where  $FADW_i$  is a dummy variable that indicates whether or not a woman has access decent work. As mentioned earlier, we use two proxy variables for decent work:

Formal work: This is a “strict” proxy for decent work. It includes dependent workers who enjoy all the work benefits established by law and all independent workers who comply with their tax obligations.

Non-precarious work: This is a less strict proxy for decent work. It includes all (dependent and independent) formal workers and informal workers who receive at least the legal minimum wage per hour worked and do not work more than the legally maximum hours.<sup>4</sup>

As for the other terms in the equation, we include a set of variables that approximate the woman in question’s individual characteristics ( $D_i$ ), a set of variables

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<sup>4</sup>This non-precarious variable has been constructed to take into account two criteria: labor income and hours worked. A worker is considered non-precarious if they receive an acceptable minimum hourly wage for each hour worked. To calculate this, we divide the legal minimum wage by the maximum number of hours that the law permits a person to work in a month (192 hours). The acceptable minimum wage per month results from adding to the legal minimum wage an amount equivalent to what it would cost to have health insurance, contribute to a pension plan, and have paid vacation.

that represent the economic environment ( $X_i$ ), and a set of variables that represent the social norms that exist outside the workplace ( $Z_i$ ). Finally,  $\mu$  represents the error term. Table 2a lists the variables used in the regression and their respective definitions.

The corresponding selection equation used in this study is the following:

$$\Pr(FLFP_i) = f(\beta_0 + \beta_1 Individual_i + \beta_2 Familiar_i + \beta_3 Contextual_i + \beta_4 Instrumentals + \mu_i)$$

where  $FLFP_i$  is a binary variable that has a value of 1 if a woman participates in the labor market and 0 otherwise (if she is unemployed and inactive in the market). According to this equation, a woman's probability of participating in the labor market (in any kind of job) is impacted by individual factors, family factors, and contextual factors. The selection equation includes the same variables as the output equation plus a few more: the sector variable, the potential caregiver variable, and the instrumental variables that are required by the model.

In accordance with the Heckprobit methodology, the selection equation contains the following two instrumental variables: the head of the household and the district unemployment rate. These variables were chosen because other studies indicate they theoretically affect job access but may not influence job type. On one hand, being the head of the household increases the probability of working more than the quality of employment does because the head of the household's main concern is to obtain resources and be their family's main economic provider, regardless of the quality or their job. On the other hand, the unemployment rate indicates only that jobs are available, without regard for their quality. Table 2b lists the variables used in the selection equation and their respective definitions. Also, Annex 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the variables included in the selection equation as well as those included in the output equation.

The suitability of the proposed model was evaluated by considering i) the significance and sign of the estimated coefficients associated with the variables considered, and ii) the significance and sign of the rho parameter. The independence of the equations was also tested to determine whether there was sampling bias.

**Table 2a: Variables included in the decent work regression (output equation)**

Variable		Type	Definition
<b>Dependent variables</b>			
Decent work, Proxy 1	Non-precari-ous work	Binary	1 when the person has a non-precari-ous job 0 otherwise
Decent work, Proxy 2	Formal work	Binary	1 when the person has a formal job 0 otherwise
<b>Independent variables</b>			
INDIVIDUAL FACTORS	Age	Continuous	The woman's age in complete years
	Age squared	Continuous	The woman's age squared. This variable seeks to test the non-linearity of the relationship between age and work
	Education	Continuous	Years of education
	Marital status	Binary	1 if the woman cohabits with a partner (married or living together) 0 otherwise
ECONOMIC FACTORS	Area	Binary	1 if the woman lives in an urban area 0 if she lives in a rural area
	Sector	Binary	1 if the woman works in the trade or services sector 0 otherwise
SOCIAL NORMS, GENDER-BASED ROLES IN THE HOUSEHOLD	Children under 5	Binary	1 if there is at least one child 5 years or younger in the household 0 otherwise
	Children 6-11	Binary	1 if the youngest child in the home is between 6 and 11 years old 0 otherwise
	Children 12-16	Binary	1 if the youngest child in the household is between 12 and 16 years old 0 otherwise
	Elderly people	Binary	1 if there is an elderly person (75 years or older) in the household 0 otherwise
	Potential caregiver	Binary	1 if there is a woman in the household who is between 12 and 75 years old and not working 0 otherwise

**Table 2b: Variables included in the participation equation (selection equation)**

Variable	Type	Definition
<b>Dependent variable</b>		
FLFP	Binary	1 when the woman works 0 otherwise (unemployed or inactive)
<b>Independent variables</b>		
Age	Continuous	The woman's age in complete years
Age squared	Continuous	The woman's age squared. This variable seeks to test the non-linear relationship between age and work
Education	Continuous	Years of education
Marital status	Binary	1 if the woman cohabits with a partner (married or living together) 0 otherwise
Area	Binary	1 if the woman lives in an urban area 0 if she lives in a rural area
Children under 5	Binary	1 if there is at least one child 5 years or younger in the household 0 otherwise
Children 6-11	Binary	1 if the youngest child in the home is between 6 and 11 years old 0 otherwise
Children 12-16	Binary	1 if the youngest child in the household is between 12 and 16 years old 0 otherwise
Elderly people	Binary	1 if there is an elderly person (75 years or older) in the household 0 otherwise
Potential caregiver	Binary	1 if there is a woman in the household who is between 12 and 75 years old and not working 0 otherwise
<b>Instrumental variables</b>		
Head of household	Binary	1 if the woman is the household head 0 otherwise
Local unemployment rate	Continuous	The female unemployment rate at the district level
<b>Control variables</b>		
Region	Categorical	1 if the woman lives in the Costa region 2 if the woman lives in the Sierra region 3 if the woman lives in the Selva region 4 if the woman lives in Lima Metropolitana

## 4.2. Qualitative approach

The qualitative research component of this study served two purposes. First, it sought to complement and enhance the quantitative analysis by providing inputs to understand how the associated factors act as barriers to accessing decent jobs. Second, it aimed to explore other dimensions that the quantitative component does not address, particularly legal barriers and social norms within the workplace.

Two qualitative data collection techniques were used to meet the research objectives: semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Each targeted a particular type of respondents<sup>5</sup>. The interviews were conducted with government officials from relevant public bodies (e.g., the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations), representatives of civil society organizations (NGOs, women workers' associations and unions), and experts in the field. In addition, we interviewed women who were beneficiaries of Cuna Más (the public daycare service in Peru). These latter participants were selected randomly from the district with the greatest number of Cuna Más daycares. We conducted a total of 17 interviews: 7 with public officials, 3 with civil society representatives, 3 with experts, and 4 with Cuna Más beneficiaries.

We also conducted in-person focus group discussions with women to obtain their perspectives and opinions. We formed heterogeneous groups of women who were i) employed in the formal sector, ii) employed in the informal sector, iii) self-employed in the informal sector, and iv) unemployed. Four different focus group guides were designed. Additionally, a short survey was administered at the beginning of each focus group session to gather some relevant socioeconomic information about the participants. All focus groups were conducted in Lima, the capital of Peru, and targeted women from low- to medium-income backgrounds. Given the nature of our qualitative research, this component did not aim to generalize our qualitative findings, but rather explore potential factors and mechanisms that affect women seeking to access decent work in vulnerable urban contexts. The selection criteria and the final number of participants per group are displayed in Table 3.

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<sup>5</sup> The interview and focus group guides are available upon request.

**Table 3: Focus group characteristics and participation<sup>6</sup>**

#	Group	Selection Criteria	N
1	Women employed in the formal sector	- Medium and low income - With a signed contract for at least 1 month - 18 to 50 years old	5
2	Women employed in the informal sector	- Medium and low income - Employed without a contract for at least 1 month - 18 to 50 years old	8
3	Women self-employed in the informal sector	- Low income - Self-employed in the informal sector for at least 1 month - 18 to 50 years old	8
4	Unemployed women	- Low income - With no income in the last month or only income from casual work - 18 to 50 years old	7

Qualitative data was collected in accordance with the strict standards and procedures set out in GRADE’s ethical protocol. This implies that participants’ privacy, consent, confidentiality, dignity, and integrity were ensured in all research activities in compliance with Canada’s Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. Participants were asked to consent to participate and were informed of the purpose of the interview or focus group and that their participation was completely confidential. Furthermore, they were reminded that their participation was voluntary. Finally, they were also asked for permission to record the interview or focus group discussion.

## V. The situation for women in Peru: Persistent gaps despite legal progress

### 5.1 Institutional framework: Many legal efforts but little impact

Peru has signed international agreements that aim to promote and protect women’s labor rights. The country signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1981 and ratified ILO Convention

<sup>6</sup> Participants were recruited using a snowball technique in which former participants referred new ones. In addition, a recruiter was hired to ensure that groups were diverse in terms of geography and age.



No. 183, which aims to protect working mothers in the workplace, in 2016. Furthermore, Peru has passed a legal framework that seeks to eradicate discrimination against women in all its forms and protect women's labor rights. It has approved laws that protect mothers against arbitrary dismissal and provide a total of 98 days of maternity leave (Law No. 30367, Law No. 26644, and Law No. 30709). The country's legislation also protects the labor rights of women who are victims of violence (Law No. 30364) and prevents and punishes sexual harassment in relationships of authority or dependency in the workplace (Law N° 27942).

Consequently, Peru's institutional framework stands out in different indices related to female labor force participation. The country obtained the highest score in the region (95) in The World Bank's Women, Business, and the Law 2021 index, which measures how laws and regulations affect women's economic opportunities. The country is also in the highest quintile of countries globally and in sixth place regionally in terms of how favorable the country legislation is for women according to the Women's Workplace Equality Index (Morrison, 2021).

Despite the above, women in Peru still face major barriers when it comes to accessing decent work. This is due in part to the fact the abovementioned laws target only a very small percentage of the population given the high informality rate in the Peruvian labor market. It is also partly due to the fact that these regulations are rarely enforced, even in formal spaces. This issue was frequently emphasized in the interviews with public officials and the focus group with formally employed women.

According to the public officials interviewed, the National Superintendence of Labor Inspection and the regional governments in charge of addressing workplace sexual harassment have been found to have limited capacity to respond to formal complaints. In addition to the limited coverage of the laws, because of the small size of the formal sector and enforcement issues, some laws and programs aimed at addressing women's labor rights are significantly flawed in their design. For one, while Peru provides 14 weeks of maternity leave (Law No. 26644) and 10 days paternity leave (Law No. 30807), these labor benefits are still less than what other more progressive legislation in Latin America provides.

Another shortcoming of the Peruvian legislation that protects women's rights is that it transfers all the economic cost of its implementation to employers. For instance, businesses are responsible for paying working women while they are on maternity leave, as well as covering the cost of implementing lactation centers, which discourages companies from hiring women, or incentivizes them to give women short-term contracts.

For its part, the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion introduced the Cuna Más daycare program. Although the program is intended to contribute to the integral human development of infants, it has been found to have positive impacts on women's employment outcomes (Boyd & Rentería, 2016). Despite this, the program's coverage is still very limited, as it reached only 58,688 children in 2022. On top of that, as we show later, its design still poses some barriers to mothers' labor market integration.

Lastly, the Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion offers a series of employment services such as labor market intermediation, vocational orientation, work skills certification, and capacity-building services. However, these services do not follow a proper gender-based approach. This Ministry has recently introduced an initiative to connect its employment services with existing public services which protect women's rights and are relevant to promote women's access to decent work, such as daycare and community strategies to prevent and address gender-based violence <sup>7</sup>. The logic behind this is that it is important not only to provide employment services but also to address other fundamental barriers that hamper women's access to decent work such as childcare responsibilities and sexual harassment in the workplace.

## **5.2 Gender-based labor market gaps in Peru: Key indicators**

Women's struggle to access decent jobs in Peru is reflected in the country's labor indicators. For example, the female activity rate and female employment rate in

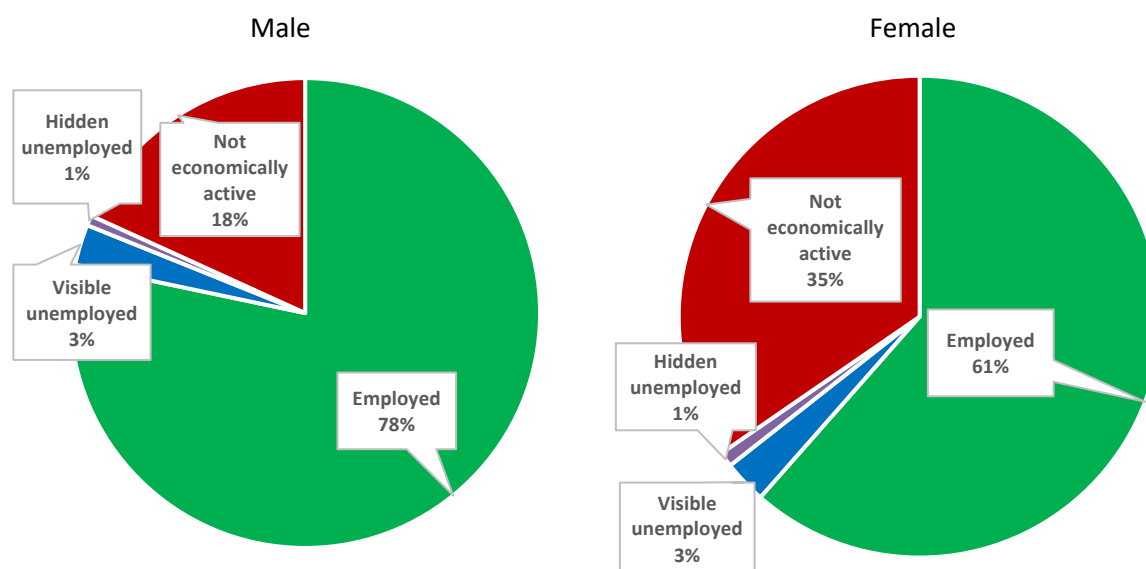
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<sup>7</sup> Particularly Wiñay Warmi, a strategy that was implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion in 2022 and part of 2023.

the country are lower than their corresponding male rates.<sup>8</sup> Except for in 2020, these rates have remained relatively steady and above 60% for the last decade. Nevertheless, despite the fact that Peru’s employment rates are relatively high compared to those of other developing countries, they hide the complex problems that women face in the labor market.

The distributions of economically active and non-active working-age men and women differ significantly (see Figure 2)<sup>9</sup>. Both male and female unemployment rates are low, likely due to the fact that Peruvians are forced to accept any work activity that enables them to obtain an income (informal jobs, precarious jobs, or self-employment) considering that the poverty rates are high and there is a lack of social protections. However, a higher percentage of working-age women (35%) than men (18%) do not belong to the labor force. In other words, a greater proportion of women are not actively seeking employment.

**Figure 2: Distribution of the working-age population (male and female), 2019**



**Source:** ENAHO (2019).

**Note:** Visible unemployment: People who are actively looking for work and cannot find it. Hidden unemployment: People who are not actively looking for work but say they would like to work when asked.

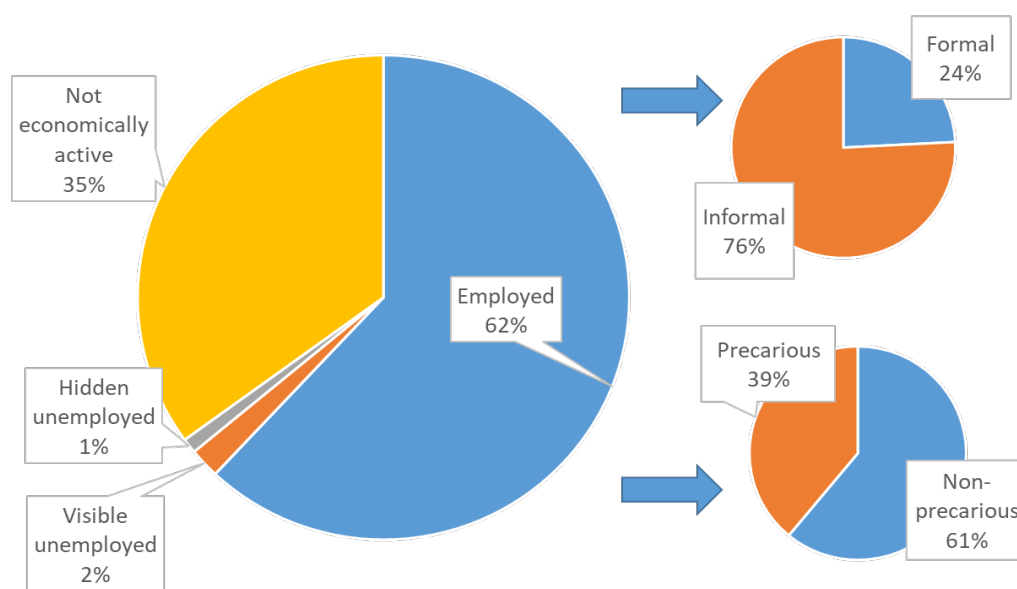
<sup>8</sup> The female activity rate is the proportion of women of working age who are economically active (working or seeking work). The female employment rate is the proportion of women of working age who are working.

<sup>9</sup> In this study, working age is considered to be 14 years and older as established by Peruvian legislation. As we explain below, we consider a different age range in our estimations.

The gender-based differences continue when we analyze the composition of the inactive populations. In line with the literature review, a significant difference here is that a higher proportion of women (58.5%) than men (49%) who neither work nor are looking for work do household chores.

The situation of employed women and men also vary significantly. Nevertheless, to analyze this, we have to look beyond employment indicators to consider the conditions under which women are employed. In Figure 3 below, we show the distribution of the working-age female population by type of work: formal vs informal and non-precarious vs precarious. We understand precarious work to be formal or informal jobs that pay an acceptable minimum hourly wage. As it is shown in Figure 3, although 62% of working-age women were effectively employed in 2019, 76% of them had informal jobs and 39% had precarious jobs.

**Figure 3: Distribution of working-age women including those working precariously, 2019**

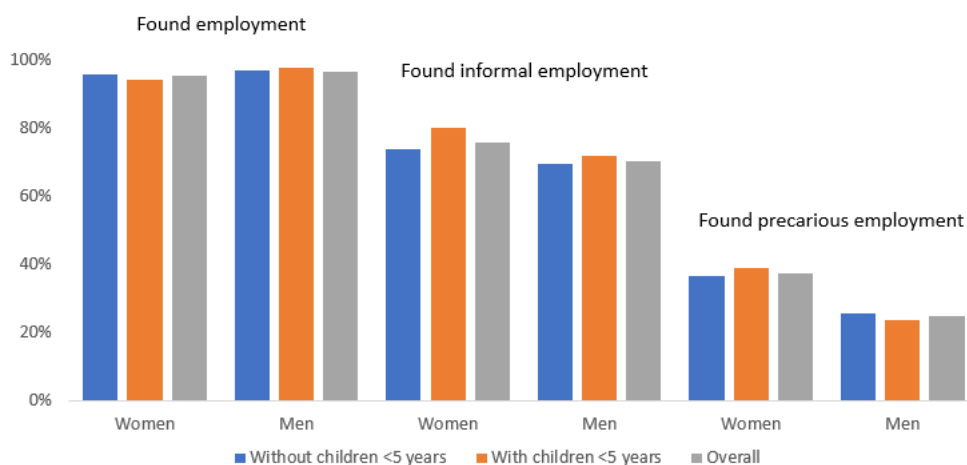


Source: ENAHO (2019)

Notably, deviations from decent work (not working, working informally, working precariously) seem to be associated with certain characteristics that are specific to

women. First, having children under 5 years old in the home is associated with lower labor participation and lower job quality for women. Figure 4 shows that women’s informality rate is higher if there is a child under 5 years old in the household: the informality rate of women with no kids at home is 74%, whereas that of women with children at home is 80%. While the same pattern can be observed for men, the difference is smaller for them. Similarly, the rate of precarious employment is higher among women with children (41%) than women without children (38%). Conversely, the rate of precarious work is lower among men with children under 5 years of age than men without children.

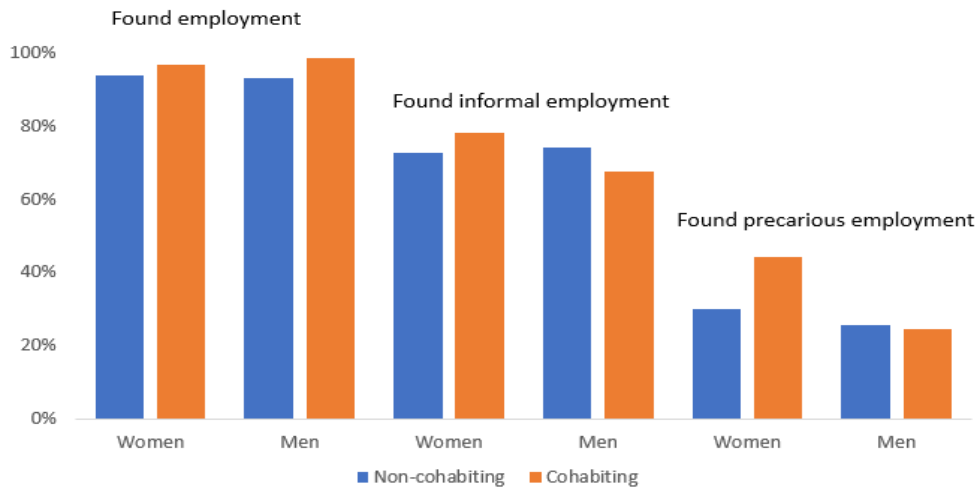
**Figure 4: Percentage of women and men who found employment, informal employment, and precarious employment, by parental status, 2019**



Source: ENAHO 2019.

Another characteristic related to lower-quality employment among women is cohabiting with a partner. Figure 5 shows that 73% of women who do not live with a partner work informally, whereas 78% of those who live with their partner do so. When we look at work precariousness, cohabiting worsens women’s employment outcome. While 31% of non-cohabiting women work precariously, 46% of cohabiting ones do. For men, the opposite is observed – 74% of men who do not live with a partner work informally, whereas 68% of men who live with their partner do so. Similarly, 28% of non-cohabiting men and 26% cohabiting men are precariously employed.

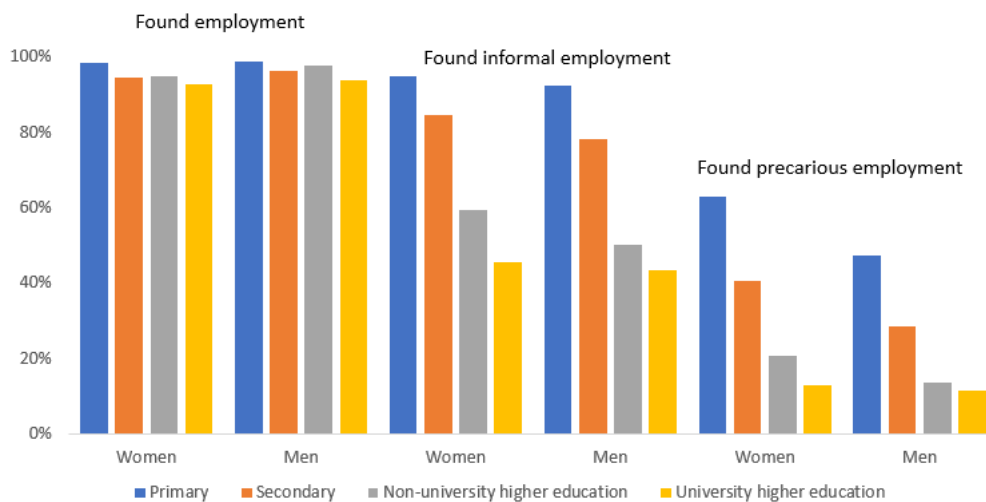
**Figure 5: Percentage of women and men who found employment, informal employment, and precarious employment, by cohabiting status, 2019**



Source: ENAHO 2019.

As expected, educational level is also related to the type of employment that women are able to access. Figure 6 shows that women with a lower educational level end up in informal or precarious employment to a greater extent than those with more education. Moreover, it seems that the “penalty for poor education” is much stronger for women than men. Among those with higher education, the informality rate for women (46%) is only 2 percentage points higher than it is for men (44%). However, among those with secondary education, the difference is 7 percentage points (85% for women versus 78% for men).

**Figure 6: Percentage of women and men who found employment, informal employment, and precarious employment, by education level, 2019**



Source: ENAHO 2019.

As mentioned earlier, we have thus far looked at only descriptive statistics. Econometric and qualitative results are presented below to be able to delve deeper into this analysis.

## **VI. Results**

### **6.1 Quantitative results**

As is explained in the Methodology section, we use a two-stage process proposed by Van de Ven and Van Pragg (1981) to estimate the barriers that impact women's access to decent employment. Although the objective of this study is to analyze the barriers that Peruvian women face in accessing decent work, it is important to not lose sight of the fact that part of the problem affecting the female labor market is participation itself. In this sense, it is relevant to discuss the results of the first stage of the model, the selection equation, presented in Annex 2. The Likelihood Ratio statistic test of independence shows that the null hypothesis that the equations in the first and second stages are independent has a significance level of 1% and can therefore be rejected, so a two-stage estimation model is most appropriate.

It is also interesting to discuss the value of the rho parameter. For the regression with non-precarious work as the dependent variable, the rho parameter is significant and positive (0.945). The same is true for the regression in which the dependent variable is formal work (0.964). The fact that rho is significant implies that the null hypothesis that  $\rho = 0$  is rejected, which means that the residuals of the equations used in the two stages are not correlated. It is therefore acceptable that we use a sample selection model with this data. On the other hand, the fact that rho is positive means that women with certain characteristics (maybe education, age or place of residence) are more likely to participate in the labor market and, in turn, tend to have greater access to formal or non-precarious work.

In accordance with the literature, we found that age and education are positively

related to labor market participation. In addition, our results corroborate the hypothesis that a quadratic relationship exists between age and labor market participation, which evidences the vulnerability of the youngest and the oldest. We also found that being the head of the household is positively associated with women's labor market participation.

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, gender roles tend to attribute housework and care tasks to women, which ultimately ends up decreasing their participation in paid activities. Our results show that having a partner and living in a household with dependent persons (young children or older adults) decreases women's probability of working. Bear in mind that affordable care services are scarce in Peru.

Local factors also affect women's employment. The district-level unemployment rate has a negative relationship with women's probability of working. In areas with high female unemployment rates, women (men too, but probably to a lesser extent) struggle to find a job. Living in the capital (Lima Metropolitana) also decreases women's probability of working. Lima Metropolitana is characterized as historically having an unemployment rate that is higher than the national average.

It is important to note that rurality is positively correlated with greater labor market participation. This may be explained by what we emphasized earlier, that in Peru, the female labor market problem is more a matter of quality than quantity: poor women do work, but, as we have seen, they do so under poor conditions. Indeed, as can be observed below, being rural is associated with a higher probability of working but with a lower probability of working in a decent job.

Table 4 presents the average marginal effects of the two econometric models proposed – (i) one with the proxy formal work for decent work is formal work and (ii) the other with a less strict proxy for decent work, the non-precarious work (both formal and informal) – based on the second stage of national estimations for 2019.

When it comes to individual characteristics, age and education level are positively related to women accessing decent jobs. The non-linear relationship between age and work is observed again. Thus, older, and more educated Peruvian



women are more likely to obtain a decent job for both indicators (formal work and non-precarious work). As can be seen in the table, age and education have relatively similar effects on obtaining formal and non-precarious work. One year more of age increases the probability of having decent work by either 2.3% or 3.8% depending on the decent work indicator considered, whereas one additional year of education increases it by either 2.6% or 2.7% depending on the indicator considered. These similar effects for formal work (proxy 1) and non-precarious work (proxy 2) reveal that the youngest, oldest, and least educated face higher barriers even to obtain minimally decent work (the non-precarious work defined in this study).

As for the economic dimension, rurality stands out as an important barrier. As it is noted above, being rural increases women's probability of working. However, it decreases their probability of having a formal job by 7.5% and having a non-precarious job by 11.9%. This is because in rural areas, women tend to dedicate themselves to agricultural activities that do not have the attributes of decent work, although some women do participate in productive employment activities.

Social norms and gender roles also hinder women's access to decent jobs. As can be seen above, having a partner decreases women's probability of working. Table 4 shows that it also reduces the probability of having a formal job (by 2.6%) and the probability of having a non-precarious job (by 12.5%). The presence of young children and older adults also affects women's obtainment of decent jobs. The care tasks women assume reduce even their chances of having a decent job (non-precarious work). The presence of children under 5 years of age decreases the probability of having a non-precarious job by 2.2%, while the presence of older adults reduces it by 2.8%. The effect children have on accessing decent work is greater the more stringent the decent work indicator is. Thus, although the presence of children between 6 and 11 years old does not decrease the probability of accessing non-precarious work, it does decrease the probability of accessing formal employment (by 1.7%).

As Alcázar and Laszlo (2023) documented, in Peru, most caregiving is informal (performed by relatives, typically older daughters or grandmothers). Our results support this and show that the presence in the home of a potential caregiver, that is,

an unemployed or inactive woman between 12 and 75 years old, in the home increases women’s probability of accessing a decent job – by 0.7% if we consider formal work and 2.5% when we look at non-precarious work.

**Table 4: Estimates of women’s probability of accessing decent work  
Average marginal effects, national estimates, 2019**

		FADW 1: Formal	FADW 2: Non-precarious
<b>Output equation (second stage)</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL</b>	Age	0.023*** (0.001)	0.038*** (0.001)
	Age squared	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)
	Education	0.027*** (0.000)	0.026*** (0.001)
	Marital status (1=married or cohabiting)	-0.026*** (0.004)	-0.125*** (0.006)
<b>ECONOMIC</b>	Rural	-0.075*** (0.004)	-0.119*** (0.007)
	Economic sector (1 = trade or services)	-0.047*** (0.003)	-0.136*** (0.005)
<b>SOCIAL NORMS OUTSIDE THE WORKPLACE</b>	Children under 5	-0.012*** (0.004)	-0.022*** (0.005)
	Children 6-11	-0.017*** (0.003)	-0.001 (0.005)
	Children 12-16	-0.020*** (0.004)	0.001 (0.005)
	Elderly people	-0.013** (0.005)	-0.028*** (0.009)
	Potential caregiver	0.007** (0.003)	0.025*** (0.005)
	Observations	27,854	27,854

Standard errors are in parentheses. \*\*\* = p<0.01, \*\* = p<0.05, \* = p<0.1

Because the Peruvian reality differs significantly in urban and rural areas and the rurality variable significantly affects women’s probability of obtaining decent work, separate estimates were made for the urban and rural samples. The results of these regressions are presented in Annex 3.

Table 5 presents the marginal effects estimates for the separate samples. First, it is observed that the model adjusts better to the urban area since some of the variables are not more significant for the rural sample. Furthermore, the variables

included seem to have greater explanatory power in the urban regressions, as some of them have marginal effects that are greater in the urban environment than in the rural one. Second, it should be noted that, unlike the national estimates, care tasks lose relevance in explaining access to decent jobs in rural areas. This may be because in rural areas, parents generally work in agricultural activities and children often accompany them. Care tasks do not affect the probability of having a non-precarious job in rural areas like they do in urban areas. Third, it is also important to highlight that the economic sector is an important variable for explaining access to decent work in urban areas. In rural areas, however, its explanatory power is quite low: while the marginal effect is between 8% and 16% in urban areas, in rural areas, it is less than 3%.

**Table 5: Estimates of women's probability of accessing decent work  
Average marginal effects, estimates by area, 2019**

Output equation (second stage)		(1) FADW 1: Formal		(2) FADW 2: Non-precarious	
		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
<b>INDIVIDUAL</b>	Age	0.033*** (0.001)	0.008*** (0.001)	0.046*** (0.001)	0.025*** (0.002)
	Age squared	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.001*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)
	Education	0.037*** (0.001)	0.011*** (0.000)	0.026*** (0.001)	0.022*** (0.001)
	Marital status (1=married or cohabiting)	-0.038*** (0.005)	-0.011*** (0.004)	-0.122*** (0.007)	-0.143*** (0.010)
<b>ECONOMIC</b>	Economic sector (1 = trade or services)	-0.080*** (0.005)	0.008** (0.004)	-0.161*** (0.006)	-0.025*** (0.008)
<b>SOCIAL NORMS OUTSIDE THE WORKPLACE</b>	Children under 5	-0.016*** (0.005)	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.028*** (0.007)	-0.004 (0.009)
	Children 6-11	-0.022*** (0.005)	-0.006* (0.003)	-0.003 (0.007)	0.008 (0.008)
	Children 12-16	-0.026*** (0.005)	-0.007** (0.003)	0.004 (0.007)	0.004 (0.008)
	Elderly people	-0.017** (0.008)	-0.005 (0.006)	-0.033*** (0.011)	-0.015 (0.016)
	Potential caregiver	0.006 (0.005)	0.012*** (0.004)	0.020*** (0.005)	0.023** (0.009)
Observations		17,330	10,524	17,330	10,524

Standard errors are in parentheses. \*\*\* = p<0.01, \*\* = p<0.05, \* = p<0.1

## 6.2 Qualitative results

The focus group discussions and interviews shed light on important nuances in the barriers that hinder women's access to decent work. The responses gathered suggest that gender-based norms play a significant role in the difficulties women experience accessing decent work. They also highlighted other important contributing factors such as a lack of accessible daycare services and flaws in the legislation protecting women's labor rights.

In what follows, we present the focus group and interview findings organized by barrier. Annex 4 summarizes the focus group findings to highlight the main similarities and differences among the different groups of women (unemployed, independent workers, and formal and informal workers). One important observation to note from our findings is that interviewees and focus group participants emphasized that although they consider public transportation to be unsafe and inefficient, none of them regard this issue as a barrier to commuting to work. Therefore, this barrier has not been included in this section.

Additionally, it is also important to reiterate that these findings were obtained exclusively from women from urban areas of Lima. Moreover, they correspond to labor barriers that stem from being female and do not address other structural labor market challenges related to Peru's highly informal labor market in general.

### 6.2.1 Gender-based norms hinder women's probability of accessing decent work

Gender-based norms, through many different channels, constitute one of the main barriers hindering women's access to decent work in Peru. First, according to focus group participants and interviewees, care duties, such as taking care of children and other vulnerable relatives, are unevenly distributed within households, with women often taking on most of those tasks. This, in turn, limits the amount of free time they have and their chances of obtaining a job, especially a formal one.

This issue was highlighted by women in all the focus groups, especially the unemployed women. Most of the participants in this last group had worked in the past.

However, according to their testimonies, they stopped working once they had children to take care of. While this was generally due to the fact that they did not have somewhere to leave their children or someone to help them with caregiving, some of them also indicated that taking care of their children became their priority. This last reason was especially mentioned among those participants who don't trust other caretakers, such as relatives or even their partners, to keep their children safe or promote their development. For example, one unemployed focus group participant said:

*You have to prioritize your children because it is not the same if you leave them with someone else or other caretakers, they don't teach them well or provide good care as you would do.*

In some cases, women felt conflicted because they wanted to take care of their children and, at the same time, to progress in other aspects of life. One formally employed focus group participant had this to say:

*I have this thought that I should be with my daughter for at least the first 5 years of her life, but there is also this other side as a woman that wants to progress, I want to have other things because I want to be an example for my daughter.*

In any case, most of the unemployed focus group participants expressed their willingness to join the labor market again once their children are older and more independent. In fact, none of these "unemployed women" have been completely out of work over the years. They pointed out that sometimes they take on casual, informal jobs, even if they are paid very little. Even when women were "unemployed", they still tended to take on casual jobs now and then, mostly to cover some personal purchases and avoid having to ask their partner for money. One unemployed focus group participant expressed the following:

*It is difficult to tell my daughter's father, "Hey I am not working, I need clothes, or I need this for me". It is a little more complicated because it is no like if that is your money, but if it is your money you go to the supermarket, you buy and there is no one that tells you "Hey that's my money, you bought with my money".*

Being unevenly responsible for children was also considered a barrier to decent

employment by employed and self-employed focus group participants. However, while these women were often the main people responsible for their children, they used some strategies to be able to continue working. In general, these women seemed more confident in leaving their children with other caretakers; and in some cases, especially for the women with formal jobs, they seemed to have more supportive relatives around them. One informally employed focus group participant said:

*My mom used to take care of my child. I worked back then; I have always worked.*

In the case of self-employed women, some of them took their children with them to work. This was possible because their work usually consisted of very small informal businesses where they could both, look after their children and, for instance, sell their products. A self-employed focus group participant stated:

*I live in [District A] and for me, it is easier to bring my child here [District B] because I work here and from here, I go back to my house with him at 5 pm in the afternoon.*

Some studies suggest that women themselves might internalize care responsibilities on top of being unevenly assigned them (Ñopo and Miro Quesada, 2022; Contreras and Plaza, 2015). This was also highlighted in key interviews. Government officials and NGO representatives mentioned they have found in their work that women resist changing roles and stick to the idea that they should be the main or even sole person responsible for taking care of their children.

When it came to household chores, the story was similar. Women in the focus groups mentioned they were usually the main ones responsible for these tasks. And while some of them asked their partner for some help with these responsibilities, this happened only occasionally since their partners “would do a poor job”. As one self-employed focus group participant put it:

*We as women are like this, working mothers, we are not only dedicated to our businesses (...) We have a heavy load with the family. We wash, cook, clean.*

Some women even mentioned that asking their male partner for help with these tasks can cause discomfort or rejection between them or with their family members in general because they consider these tasks to be “for women”. This was particularly

more frequent among unemployed women, who also mentioned that suggesting that a man should help with these tasks can provoke mockery from the family. An unemployed focus group participant said:

*He [her partner] is 'machista' Even to his children he teaches them that. He tells my son 'You must have your family and give them groceries, never money'. I used to ask my son to do the dishes, 'that is for women' my partner told him.*

### 6.2.2 Adequate and sufficient care services are unavailable in the country

In the context that women's role as the primary child caregiver prevents them from re-entering the labor market, public daycare services constitute an important mechanism to minimize the impact of motherhood in women's labor exclusion. In Peru, public daycare service is mainly provided by Cuna Más, a public program that aims to contribute to the integral human development of children between 0 and 3 years old.

There is some evidence that the Cuna Más daycare service has helped women's employment outcomes (Boyd & Rentería, 2016). In this vein, all the program beneficiaries who were interviewed said they were grateful for the program since it provided them with a safe place to leave their children and extra time to work. Despite this, this public service was not designed to address the issue of women's labor market integration, and, hence, even beneficiaries of the service face challenges trying to access decent work. For instance, Cuna Más daycares close at 4 p.m., which is not late enough for women to participate in a full-time job, which often ends at 5 or 6 p.m. This was noted by some focus group participants, including one self-employed woman who said:

*From sunrise to sunset. It [daycare service] must be from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.... It has to be all day.*

This issue was also pointed out by the Cuna Más beneficiaries who were interviewed, who mentioned that the time frame of this public service would not allow them to have a proper full-time job. One interviewee also pointed out that not only was the service's closing time an issue, but its opening time was as well. This beneficiary

mentioned that she had found a part-time cleaning job at a school, but that her start time was 8 a.m., the same time she had to drop her son off at the Cuna Más daycare. Because of this, she had arrived late to work multiple times.

Furthermore, since the service is meant only for families in extreme poverty, its coverage is very limited. According to Morrison (2021), the program cares for only 7% of children between 0 and 3 years old. Women in the focus groups also pointed out there was a lack of available daycare service. In addition, both the focus group participants and the academic expert interviewees revealed that some mothers have a certain degree of mistrust about the quality of public daycare services. One unemployed focus group participant had this to say:

*I have looked for Cuna Más daycares, but they are not in my area. I would like to ask them about their work method in Cuna Más and see their spaces. Because there are some things that have happened that are very frightening....*

Conversely, the Cuna Más beneficiaries interviewed spoke positive about the program. They all perceived that it delivers high-quality service and were very happy with the care and food that it provided for their children. In fact, some said one of the main reasons they leave their children in these public daycares was that they were confident their children would be well taken care of. Other focus group participants also mentioned that they left their children in these daycares to have time to work.

On the other hand, while private alternatives to the Cuna Más daycare service do exist, they tend to be unaffordable for low-income women. This was the case for self-employed and employed focus group participants, who indicated that although they were interested in using daycare services, the services usually cost more than what they could pay. An unemployed focus group participant stated:

*The idea is that it [the daycare service] should be public, it should not have a very high cost because there is no point in working only to pay for childcare services.*

According to the experts and Cuna Más officials interviewed, even though it is possible to open a new public daycare facility if a community requests one, it is usually quite difficult to implement it because communities usually do not have a communal area or some type of basic infrastructure where a daycare center can be implemented.



These interviewees mentioned that there are not only infrastructural requirements involved in opening a new daycare facility, but also organizational ones. Moreover, even if communities fulfill these requirements, they are not guaranteed access to the service since the program can open only a limited number of establishments in line with its programming targets and budget.

Finally, another important barrier hindering women's access to decent work is the limited care services that are available for school-aged children and other vulnerable family members. This problem was particularly highlighted by the Cuna Más beneficiaries. These interviewees were worried about where they were going to leave their children when they turned 3 years old and could no longer attend the Cuna Más daycare. Schools, especially preschools, close at a time of day (often midday) that impedes mothers from taking on full-time formal work unless there are other women in the household who can care for the children after school. This was pointed out by almost all the women who participated in the focus groups.

Furthermore, according to the experts interviewed and focus group participants, the issue of women's care role extends beyond motherhood. It was also mentioned in interviews and focus groups that women also tend to be in charge of taking care of other vulnerable family members such as members who have disabilities, are old or are sick.

### 6.2.3 Gender-based norms in the labor market negatively affect women's job opportunities and labor conditions

Interviewees and focus group participants also voiced they were affected by gender-based norms in the labor market, where they usually have fewer job opportunities and poorer labor conditions. They experience this as early as during the hiring process. Women in both formal and informal jobs said they have been discriminated against during job interviews, when they were asked if they had children, how many children they had, or if they had a partner. An informally employed focus group participant commented:

*Always in the jobs I have applied to, I am asked about my age, and apart from my*

*age, if I have children or am pregnant, or if I have a live-in partner. Because they think that you are going enter to work and suddenly, since you live with your partner, you are going to get pregnant soon.*

And a formally employed participant said:

They ask you who are you leaving them [the children] with, if it is certain that they are going to take care of your child, how old is he or she. They ask you more about your children than about your experience.... Once I had to say, because I was worried about not finding a job, I had to say "No, I don't have children".

Young women mentioned that their age can also represent an issue when looking for jobs, either because they do not have enough work experience or because the employer fears that they could eventually get pregnant. This is in line with previous reports that have indicated that pregnancy has constituted a cause for dismissal or a barrier to promotion for women in Peru (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2019).

When it comes to equal pay, the experts and public officials interviewed pointed out that there are no effective mechanisms in place to ensure the legislation governing this issue is properly enforced. In this regard, some focus group participants mentioned having experienced wage discrimination in the workplace. For example, a formally employed participant recounted:

*It is the end of the month, and they [her colleagues] ask, "hey, how much are you earning?" and I say "1300". So, I had one person that I trusted more, and I asked him "and how much are you earning?" "2500" . . . So, I do the same as them, there was no difference but "because you are a woman".*

Furthermore, an important finding from the focus groups was that discrimination sometimes takes the form of women doing more work than men for the same wage. The extra tasks are usually care-related or other types of activities that women stereotypically "would do better". An informally employed focus group participant mentioned:

*They hire us for one role, and we end up doing other things. In the restaurant, my role is to serve the customers, but there have been times that they have asked me*

*to enter at 8 a.m. to chop vegetables, arrange the restaurant, and at the end of the day the same.... They think that men will not sweep well, they will not clean up well.*

Finally, sexual harassment was a prevalent issue in the workplace. Both formally and informally employed focus group participants mentioned they had experienced sexual harassment many times in their jobs. An informally employed participant said:

*My boss tells me "Come, let's talk" and says, "I can give you permission... but you have to go out with me".*

And a formally employed participant recounted:

*I was working, and my colleague used to come and massage me although I did not want it and I was like "get off me". And it was not only his comments about my skirt or whatever, but he also got into my social media and zoomed in on my photos....*

Focus groups participants declared that they usually did not report when they experienced sexual harassment in the workplace because they did not know if the complaint would have any significant effect or, sometimes, they tried to report it and it did not work. AA formally employed participant recounted the following:

*I went to tell my supervisor about what happened to me, I cried with her for three hours in a cubicle with an anxiety crisis, I didn't confront him because he was a friend of the boss. I felt that I was going to lose. My supervisor believed me, she told me "You must tell the boss about this". When I went to tell the boss, he told me "If you open a procedure for harassment and they fire him, he will hate you more".*

As these quotes show, sexual harassment can come from the boss or colleagues; some women even mentioned that customers might also exhibit this kind of behavior. This was in line with the interview conducted with a representative from the Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion, who recognized that sexual harassment in companies remains an important problem and a factor in women quitting their jobs.

## VII. Integrated Analysis and Conclusion

In Peru, women are overrepresented in informal jobs and struggle more than their male counterparts do to secure basic decent work conditions, let alone formal jobs with all the social benefits. In light of this context, this research paper aimed to identify the context-specific barriers that Peruvian women face in accessing decent work.

This paper approached the concept of decent work through two proxies, the first being formal work, and the second being non-precarious work, which requires only that a job provide at least the legal minimum wage and have a maximum number of working hours within the limit set by law. Since only a small proportion of the Peruvian population can access formal jobs, the second proxy constitutes a more realistic short-term aspiration for many women who currently have precarious jobs.

This study's quantitative and qualitative findings show that gender-based norms are one of the most critical barriers to women accessing decent work. These norms differentiate roles by gender, which results in responsibilities such as household chores and care duties being unevenly distributed and mostly assumed by women, which in turn reduces the amount of time they have available to work and their opportunities to access decent jobs.

The quantitative results show that having a partner (by marriage or cohabitation) reduces women's probability of having a formal job by 2.6% and a non-precarious job by 12.5%. The burden of caring for vulnerable family members tends to fall mainly or exclusively on women. Our quantitative results show that having an elderly person in the household decreases women's probability of accessing decent work, whether it be formal work (-1.3%) or non-precarious work (-2.8%). Similarly, they show that the presence of children under 5 years old decreases women's probability of having a formal job (-1.2%). Furthermore, having children under 5 years of age at home even reduces women's probability of having a non-precarious job (2.2%). The presence of children over 5 years of age does not affect women's access to non-precarious work, but it does affect their access to formal work. In sum, home and family care tasks reduce women's probability of accessing a formal job by 8.8% and a non-precarious job by 17.5%.

Our qualitative findings echoed these results. Women in all the focus groups highlighted that having children present in the household had had a significant impact on their labor situation. Most unemployed women stated that they stopped working once they became mothers. A few participants were able to take on some economic activity, but they most often had informal, unstable or precarious jobs. Some self-employed women reported that they carry out the type of activity they do (e.g., informal commerce) because it responds to their need to work and take care of their children at the same time. A related finding from our quantitative estimations was that mothers can increase their chances to re-entering the labor market if they have a reliable alternative caregiver who can take care of their children or if they have access to quality daycare service. In that sense, our quantitative results show that the presence of a potential caregiver in the household has a positive impact on women's access to decent work.

The qualitative approach used sheds some light on the issue of public daycare services. According to interviewees and focus group participants, the current larger public daycare service, Cuna Más, was not designed to facilitate women's labor market participation. Not only are its operating hours problematic, but its coverage is extremely limited. Several focus group participants identified insufficient accessible to reliable daycare service as an important barrier to obtaining decent work. Some women reported that although private daycare centers are available, they cannot afford them. Moreover, women who had access to Cuna Más daycare highlighted that the service's schedule did not allow them to have a full-time job. Additionally, the study's findings suggest that another significant issue is the unavailability of daycare for children over 3 years old. This issue is particularly important because mothers interviewed said that the older their children get, the more comfortable they feel leaving their children with other caretakers. Nevertheless, existing daycare alternatives for children over 3 years old operate for even fewer hours per day than Cuna Más facilities.

In light of the above, one of the main recommendations that arise from this study is to work on addressing gender-based norms within the household and the need for expanded and improved childcare services, since childcare seems to be an important factor that facilitates mothers' access to decent work.

Regarding institutional barriers, the study suggests that even the minority of women who have been able to access formal jobs face important barriers. Although Peru has progressive legislation in place that protects women's labor rights in the workplace, the government has not been able to introduce effective mechanisms to enforce those laws, not even in the limited formal sector.

In this respect, our qualitative approach reveals that gender-based norms also seem to play an important role in discrimination against women. In particular, focus group participants mentioned that they had faced discrimination in their search for employment. Women declared they had been discriminated against because of their age and gender: employers assume that a woman of childbearing age will be less productive than a man of the same age because she will have to assume the burden of caring for her children. Focus group participants also mentioned that sometimes women earn less than their male counterparts do for the same work, and other times they do more work for the same salary. In addition, some women shared they had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. This was not specific to the formal or informal sector.

All these findings call for the Government to take a more active role in enforcing the existing legislation that protects women's labor rights. However, as mentioned earlier, it might also be relevant to reform some of the laws (e.g., the maternity leave policy) since they transfer their implementation costs to businesses, which deters employers from hiring women.

For Peruvian women, the existing economic structure is also a barrier to accessing decent work. Our quantitative results show that rurality is positively associated with working, but negatively associated with decent jobs. This is explained by the fact that in rural areas in Peru, almost all jobs are agricultural and informal, i.e., subsistence jobs. Similarly, working in the trade or services sectors decreases the women's probability of obtaining decent work. The reason for this is that informality abounds in these sectors.

One last important conclusion of this study is that the barrier weighting model proposed works, especially for urban areas. The variables lose significance when a

strictly rural sample is used. In Peru, employment in rural areas is characterized as basically agrarian and informal. Hence, the study of barriers to accessing decent work in rural areas would require further research.

Finally, we should mention some limitations related to our quantitative analysis. The Heckprobit model used has some advantages over other possible models, such as the logit or probit models, since it makes it possible to correct for selection bias. Nevertheless, it also has some limitations. First, for the estimation in the first stage, unemployed and inactive women are grouped together. This should be taken with caution because there could be some women in the inactive group who are unable to work or do not wish to work. Further analysis should consider excluding those women who cannot work. Second, the Heckprobit model requires that at least one explanatory variable in the selection equation (first stage) not be included in the output equation (second stage). However, considering Peru's labor market dynamics, it is extremely difficult to find a variable that explains labor market participation but is not a predictor of labor market participation in decent work. Third, this study deviates from the common approach of including all second-stage explanatory variables in the selection equation. This is because one of the variables considered relevant to explain access to decent work (the presence of a potential caregiver at home) does not make much conceptual sense when it comes to explaining the probability of working given that some Peruvian women with care responsibilities also work. Furthermore, given the definition used for a potential caregiver at home (a woman between 12 and 75 years old who does not work), including it in the first stage would generate a covariance in households where there are two or more women not working. In these households, in order to increase one unemployed woman's probability of working, the other should not work. Further research to assess these limitations may be needed.

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## Annexes

### Annex 1: Descriptive statistics

VARIABLES	(1) N	(2) mean	(3) Sd	(4) min	(5) max
Formal	26,062	0.223	0.416	0	1
Non precarious	26,062	0.562	0.496	0	1
Working	36,875	0.707	0.455	0	1
Age	36,910	39.57	13.86	17	65
Partner	36,910	0.575	0.494	0	1
Household head	36,910	0.196	0.397	0	1
Children under 5 in home	36,910	0.338	0.473	0	1
Children 6 to 11 in home	36,910	0.378	0.485	0	1
Children 12 to 16 in home	36,910	0.351	0.477	0	1
Elderly in home	36,910	0.0792	0.270	0	1
Urban	36,910	0.674	0.469	0	1
Working in Service Sector	27,867	0.345	0.475	0	1
District unemployment rate	36,910	0.0286	0.0262	0	0.290
Potential caregiver in home	36,910	0.490	0.500	0	1

## Annex 2: Heckprobit estimation of female labor participation, 2019

Associated Factors		(1) FADW 1: Formal	(2) FADW 2: Non-precarious
<b>Selection equation: FLFP (first stage)</b>			
<b>Pr(FLFP =1)</b>	Age	0.144*** (0.004)	0.145*** (0.004)
	Age squared	-0.002*** (0.000)	-0.002*** (0.000)
	Education	0.015*** (0.002)	0.015*** (0.002)
	Marital status (1=married or cohabitant)	-0.187*** (0.019)	-0.248*** (0.018)
	Household head (1= not being head)	-0.296*** (0.022)	-0.172*** (0.021)
	Local unemployment rate	-2.948*** (0.314)	-2.911*** (0.292)
	Rural	0.263*** (0.020)	0.212*** (0.019)
	Region = Sierra	0.192*** (0.018)	0.276*** (0.017)
	Region = Selva	0.022 (0.020)	0.115*** (0.018)
	Region = Lima Metropolitana	-0.042** (0.022)	-0.029 (0.019)
	Children under 5	-0.113*** (0.016)	-0.102*** (0.016)
	Children 6-11	-0.041*** (0.016)	-0.032** (0.015)
	Children 12-16	0.016 (0.016)	0.018 (0.015)
	Elderly people	-0.092*** (0.027)	-0.105*** (0.027)
	Constant	-2.117*** (0.074)	-2.267*** (0.072)
	Athrho	2.001*** (0.221)	1.781*** (0.108)
	Rho	0.964 (0.0155)	0.945 (0.0116)
	Observations	36,828	36,828

Standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

### Annex 3: Heckprobit estimates for decent work by area, 2019

		(1)		(2)	
		FADW 1: Formal		FADW 2: Non precarious	
<b>Selection equation: FLFP (first stage)</b>		Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
<b>Pr(FLFP = 1 )</b>	Age	0.148*** (0.004)	0.118*** (0.007)	0.151*** (0.004)	0.123*** (0.007)
	Age squared	-0.002*** (0.000)	-0.001*** (0.000)	-0.002*** (0.000)	-0.001*** (0.000)
	Education	0.024*** (0.002)	-0.003 (0.004)	0.024*** (0.002)	0.001 (0.004)
	Marital status (1=married or cohabitant)	-0.241*** (0.022)	0.056 (0.039)	-0.282*** (0.021)	-0.052 (0.038)
	Household head	-0.237*** (0.025)	-0.662*** (0.055)	-0.119*** (0.022)	-0.475*** (0.054)
	Local unemployment rate	-2.327*** (0.357)	-4.036*** (0.686)	-1.952*** (0.299)	-4.331*** (0.623)
	Region=Sierra	0.095*** (0.021)	0.347*** (0.038)	0.158*** (0.017)	0.573*** (0.036)
	Region=Selva	0.105*** (0.025)	-0.044 (0.041)	0.146*** (0.021)	0.204*** (0.038)
	Region=Lima Metropolitana	-0.076*** (0.022)	- -	-0.072*** (0.018)	- -
	Children under 5	-0.115*** (0.019)	-0.105*** (0.030)	-0.107*** (0.019)	-0.099*** (0.029)
	Children 6-11	-0.031* (0.019)	-0.050* (0.030)	-0.024 (0.019)	-0.036 (0.029)
	Children 12-16	0.026 (0.019)	0.029 (0.028)	0.031* (0.019)	0.017 (0.028)
	Elderly people	-0.092*** (0.031)	-0.111* (0.058)	-0.106*** (0.030)	-0.128** (0.056)

		-2.306***	-1.127***	-2.481***	-1.584***
		(0.086)	(0.150)	(0.083)	(0.147)
<b>DIMENSION</b>	<b>Output equation: decent work (second stage)</b>				
<b>Individual</b>	Constant	-2.306***	-1.127***	-2.481***	-1.584***
		(0.086)	(0.150)	(0.083)	(0.147)
	Age	0.134***	0.134***	0.131***	0.086***
		(0.005)	(0.015)	(0.004)	(0.007)
	Age squared	-0.001***	-0.001***	-0.001***	-0.001***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	
	Education	0.152***	0.184***	0.076***	0.074***
		(0.003)	(0.007)	(0.002)	(0.003)
	Marital status (1=married or cohabitant)	-0.156***	-0.167***	-0.346***	-0.452***
		(0.021)	(0.060)	(0.019)	(0.030)
	Economic Sector (1 = Trade or Services)	-0.326***	0.123**	-0.448***	-0.085***
		(0.020)	(0.056)	(0.016)	(0.030)
<b>Social Norms outside workplaces</b>	Children under 5	-0.065***	-0.066	-0.080***	-0.015
		(0.022)	(0.060)	(0.019)	(0.029)
	Children 6-11	-0.091***	-0.094	-0.010	0.027
		(0.022)	(0.058)	(0.019)	(0.028)
	Children 12-16	-0.109***	-0.120**	0.012	0.013
	(0.023)	(0.057)	(0.019)	(0.028)	
	Elderly people	-0.071**	-0.093	-0.094***	-0.053
		(0.033)	(0.106)	(0.031)	(0.055)
	Potential caregiver	0.025	0.189***	0.058***	0.076**
		(0.020)	(0.061)	(0.015)	(0.030)
	Constant	-5.267***	-1.127***	-3.070***	-2.688***
		(0.110)	(0.150)	(0.085)	(0.125)
	Athrho	2.194***	5.195	2.187***	1.906***
		(0.287)	(97.758)	(0.138)	(0.358)
	Observations	24,806	12,022	24,806	12,022

Standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

## Annex 4: Main results from the focus group with women

### Main results from the focus groups with women

Dimension	Unemployed	Self-employed in the informal sector	Informally Employed	Formally Employed	
<b>Discrimination outside the workplace</b>	<b>Care of children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women are in charge of taking care of their children.</li> <li>- Women do not ask their partners to share this responsibility. They consider their partner would not do a good job,</li> <li>- Mothers do not trust others to take care of their children for safety reasons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Despite working, some mothers still take care of their children.</li> <li>- Due to the flexibility of their jobs, some of them take their children to their workplaces.</li> <li>- Other mothers ask their relatives to take care of their children, often other women like their mothers or sisters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mothers are responsible for taking care of their children.</li> <li>- To be able to work, most of them ask their relatives to take care of their children, often other women like their mothers or sisters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mothers are responsible for taking care of their children.</li> <li>- To be able to work, most of them ask their relatives to take care of their children, often other women like their mothers or sisters.</li> <li>- Sometimes they also ask for support from their partners</li> </ul>
	<b>Household duties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women are in charge of doing the household chores.</li> <li>- Women ask their partners for help only occasionally.</li> <li>- They mention that society mocks men who do household chores.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women are in charge of doing all the household chores, in addition to their work.</li> <li>- They feel very tired from dealing with work and household responsibilities at the same time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women tend to do all the household chores.</li> <li>- They feel very tired from dealing with work and household responsibilities at the same time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women tend to do all the household chores.</li> <li>- Women ask their partners for help occasionally</li> </ul>
<b>Discrimination within the workplace</b>	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women felt that there was discrimination based on age, especially those above 50 years old.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women pointed out discrimination based on age (+40).</li> <li>- They have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment by clients, colleagues, and supervisors.</li> <li>- Additional care duties are assigned to women within the workplace.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women pointed out discrimination based on age, physical appearance, and for having children.</li> <li>- They have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment by clients, colleagues, and supervisors.</li> <li>- Additional care duties are assigned to women within the workplace.</li> </ul>	
<b>Social Infrastructure</b>	<b>Public Day care Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women expressed their need for formal public daycare services.</li> <li>- However, they express their concern and mistrust about the quality of these services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women are motivated to use these services since it is important for their children's development.</li> <li>- They avoid these services due to their high cost.</li> <li>- Difficulties to access these services due to their location and opening hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They mainly resorted to their relatives to the daycare of their children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They avoid these services due to their high cost.</li> <li>- They express their concern and mistrust about the quality of these services</li> </ul>
	<b>Public Transportation</b>	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women constantly face sexual harassment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women face sexual harassment constantly.</li> <li>- Long duration and distance of their trip to work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This dress code also complicates their access to public transport (e.g., heels).</li> <li>- Long duration and distance of their trip to work.</li> </ul>



### Main results from the focus groups with women

Dimension	Unemployed	Self-employed in the informal sector	Informally Employed	Formally Employed
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They also get tired due to the long duration and distance of their trip to work.</li> <li>- Issues with public transport do not deter them from working</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They also mention that public transport is insecure (theft).</li> <li>- Issues with public transport do not deter them from working</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Issues with public transportation do not deter them from working</li> </ul>
<b>Other Barriers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of knowledge on how to create a business and lack of financing options.</li> <li>- Lack of education: more precarious jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- it is difficult for them to access new sources of funding for new entrepreneurship.</li> <li>- They also lack education that would like to do, sometimes because of gender roles</li> <li>- Lack of digital education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women also mentioned discrimination based on their ethnicity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women also mentioned discrimination based on their education.</li> </ul>