

PROGRESS AND TRANSFORMATION:

RESULTS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL MEN AND GENDER EQUALITY SURVEY (IMAGES) IN BOLIVIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



ABOUT THIS STUDY

The International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES), conducted in Bolivia in 2019, gathers quantitative data from women and men ages 18 to 59 throughout Bolivia. Promundo-US coordinated the survey in partnership with the Center for the Generation of Information and Statistics at the Universidad Privada Boliviana (CEGIE-UPB) with financial support from the Embassy of Sweden in La Paz.

ABOUT IMAGES

IMAGES is a comprehensive survey of the realities, practices, and attitudes of men and women regarding gender norms, gender equality, policies, household dynamics, caregiving and paternity, intimate partner violence, violent discipline against children, sexual and reproductive health, and more in several countries. IMAGES was co-created by Promundo and the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) in 2008. To date, the IMAGES survey and surveys based on IMAGES have been conducted in more than 40 countries, with more planned or underway. The IMAGES surveys are generally accompanied by qualitative investigations to give the survey results context or to more deeply illuminate different facets of the realities of gender and masculinities. For more information, visit: www.promundoglobal.org/images.

AUTHORS

Kristina Vlahovicova (Senior Research Officer, Promundo-US)

Andrea Velasco Terán (Technical Consultant, Promundo-US)

Francisco Aguayo (President, Promundo-Chile)

Aapta Garg (Senior Programs Officer, Promundo-US)

Paola Montero (Associate Professor, Universidad Privada Boliviana)

Mauricio Chumacero (Director, Center for the Generation of Information and Statistics, Universidad Privada Boliviana)

Esteban Michel (Officer, Center for the Generation of Information and Statistics, Universidad Privada Boliviana)

FUNDING

Funded by and published with financial support from the Government of Sweden.



The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily represent those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

Blossom | Blossom.it – design

Rodriguez & Baudoin – production

RECOMMENDED CITATION

Vlahovicova, K.; Velasco, A.; Aguayo, F.; Garg, A.; Montero, P.; Chumacero, M.; Michel, E. (2022). Progress and Transformation: Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey in Bolivia. Washington, DC: Promundo-US.

PROGRESS AND TRANSFORMATION:

RESULTS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL MEN AND GENDER EQUALITY SURVEY (IMAGES) IN BOLIVIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2022





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The ideal of gender equality has yet to be fully realized in Bolivia. The country ranks 98th out of 162 countries in the Gender Inequality Index published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2020). It has the highest rates of intimate partner violence against women in Latin America (Bott et al., 2021), with an estimated 50.3% of women ages 15 and older who have experienced physical partner violence (INE & GiZ, 2017). Invisible labor contributions point to inequality in the home: women in Bolivia spend four times as many hours on unpaid care or household work as men do (Lundvall et al., 2015). Despite of measures adopted in recent years to explicitly “weaken the patriarchy”, women have higher rates of unemployment, work in less productive sectors, have higher participation in the poorly paid and precarious informal economy, and face a 50% pay gap compared to their male counterparts (Coordinadora de la Mujer, 2010).

Many of these problems are rooted in gender norms and power dynamics that shape people’s attitudes, behaviors, opportunities, and material realities. Promundo-US and the Center for the Generation of Information and Statistics at the Universidad Privada Boliviana (CEGIE-UPB) conducted the first International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) in Bolivia in 2019. The purpose of this national, representative survey is to deliver data and ideas that make sense of how gender and ideas about masculinity impact various

wellbeing and development indicators. IMAGES Bolivia reflects these realities based on the responses of almost 2,000 men and women ages 18 to 59, building evidence around attitudes and gender norms, violence, childrearing, and division of care work.

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE IMAGES BOLIVIA SURVEY





At first glance, a high number of men and women in Bolivia express progressive ideas about gender equality. Men and women reject the idea that progress toward gender equality threatens or undermines men's position or rights in society. More than 80% of men and women say that they disagree with statements like *“more rights for women means worse opportunities for men,”* or *“when women work, they are taking work away from men.”*

However, many express more conservative views about men's and women's roles at home. More than half of men and women (53% and 58%, respectively) think that a woman's most important job is to care for her home and cook for her family; and 4 in 10 people (22% of men and 18% of women, respectively) believe that men should have the final say in household decisions. Like men, women raised and socialized in patriarchal environments internalize and uphold these rigid gender roles and may do so even more strongly than men. 30% of women (versus 18% of men) agree that changing diapers and changing and feeding children are a mother's responsibilities, not a father's. Women's level of support for these inequalities (at their own expense) shows how strongly these gender norms have permeated communities. It also shows how women work to strengthen and preserve their authority in spaces where they have historically had it.

Both men and women express their support for equal representation in the Plurinational Legislative Assembly. More than 90% of men and women are in favor of Law 243, which ensures that men and women alternate in government positions and guarantees equal participation (50% men and 50% women) in government. Bolivia has been recognized as the first country in the region, and one of the first in the world, to achieve political gender parity through these laws. However, there are many people who question women's leadership capacity: 46% of men and 33% of women believe that women are too emotional to be leaders.

The majority of Bolivians report that they grew up without a model for male participation in the home. Less than one-third of men and one-quarter of women remember their father or another male figure contributing to domestic tasks in their home when they were children. Seventy percent of men and 77% of women report that their father (or other men who lived with them in their childhoods) never or rarely helped prepare meals, clean the house or bathroom, or wash clothes. 47% of men report that their father never or rarely took care of them or their siblings when they were children.

Seeing examples of gender inequality in childhood strongly influences men's beliefs and behaviors in adulthood. Twice as many men who grew up with men who did not participate

in household chores (versus those who did grow up with a positive role model) think that “a man shouldn’t have to do household chores.” Forty seven percent of Bolivian men also report that they are on the sidelines when it comes to care work, and rarely or never participate in the daily care of their own children.

The IMAGES data reveal the opposite pattern: involved fathers effectively pass the value of care work on to their children. Among men who say that their father participated equally in domestic tasks when they were children (i.e., they performed them just as often or more often than their mother), 86% participate equally or are wholly responsible for those tasks today (versus 13% of men who did not have this example of male involvement at home during their childhood).

Although most men are still not involved in the most demanding child rearing tasks, they do participate in ways that they find more accessible. Three out of four men do leisure activities with their children, such as playing with them or helping them with their schoolwork. Additionally, 88% of men say that they “*would prefer to spend more time with their children than working.*” Does that mean that they would like to be more involved in any care task, regardless of how fun or gratifying it is? This is still unclear and requires more research.

Women, however, have different views on men’s contributions to domestic and care work. Half of men state that they are active and involved parents, but women report that men really do less than they say. 53% of men say that they participate in the daily care of their children, while just 34% of women agree. 67% of men say that they are equally or wholly responsible for at least one care task that is traditionally considered “women’s work” (i.e., laundry, cleaning the house, cleaning the bathroom, and cooking for the family). Just 47% of women agree. In fact, with all the activities and tasks that were asked about, men seem to systematically underestimate

women’s role in terms of domestic and care responsibilities, while overestimating their own participation.

The majority of people in Bolivia say that they stand against intimate partner violence, but that contrasts with their assessment of what is acceptable and commonplace around them. Less than 15% of men and women agree with statements that justify violence, such as that a man is justified in hitting his partner if she is unfaithful, refuses to have sex with him, or when she deserves it. Nevertheless, it seems that these opinions are at odds with men’s and women’s stories about the realities of their environment and even what happens in their own homes. When asked about what is common or acceptable for others in their community (i.e., social norms related to violence), one in four men and women said that violence is tolerated in their community, and almost half said that violence is commonly practiced in their community.

Violence is a very common experience for many Bolivians in childhood and in their early relationships. 41% of men and 34% of women report that they were physically hurt by a caregiver in their youth. 15% of women report having been sexually assaulted in their youth, and 20% of women report that their first sexual encounter was forced or coerced. One in three men and women witnessed their father or another male partner commit violence against their mother. Almost half of those surveyed report having witnessed some form of psychological violence against their mother by their father or another romantic partner.

Harmful cycles of violence are passed down through generations. As seen in the IMAGES surveys conducted in other countries, the Bolivia survey shows that men who, as children, witnessed violence against their mother by their father or another male partner are three times more likely to use severe physical punishments with their own children as adults. Men who witnessed violence against their mother are also 3.5 times more likely to physically abuse their own partner in adulthood.

Those who were themselves subject to violence as children are 2.5 times more likely to use physical violence against their partners or wives.

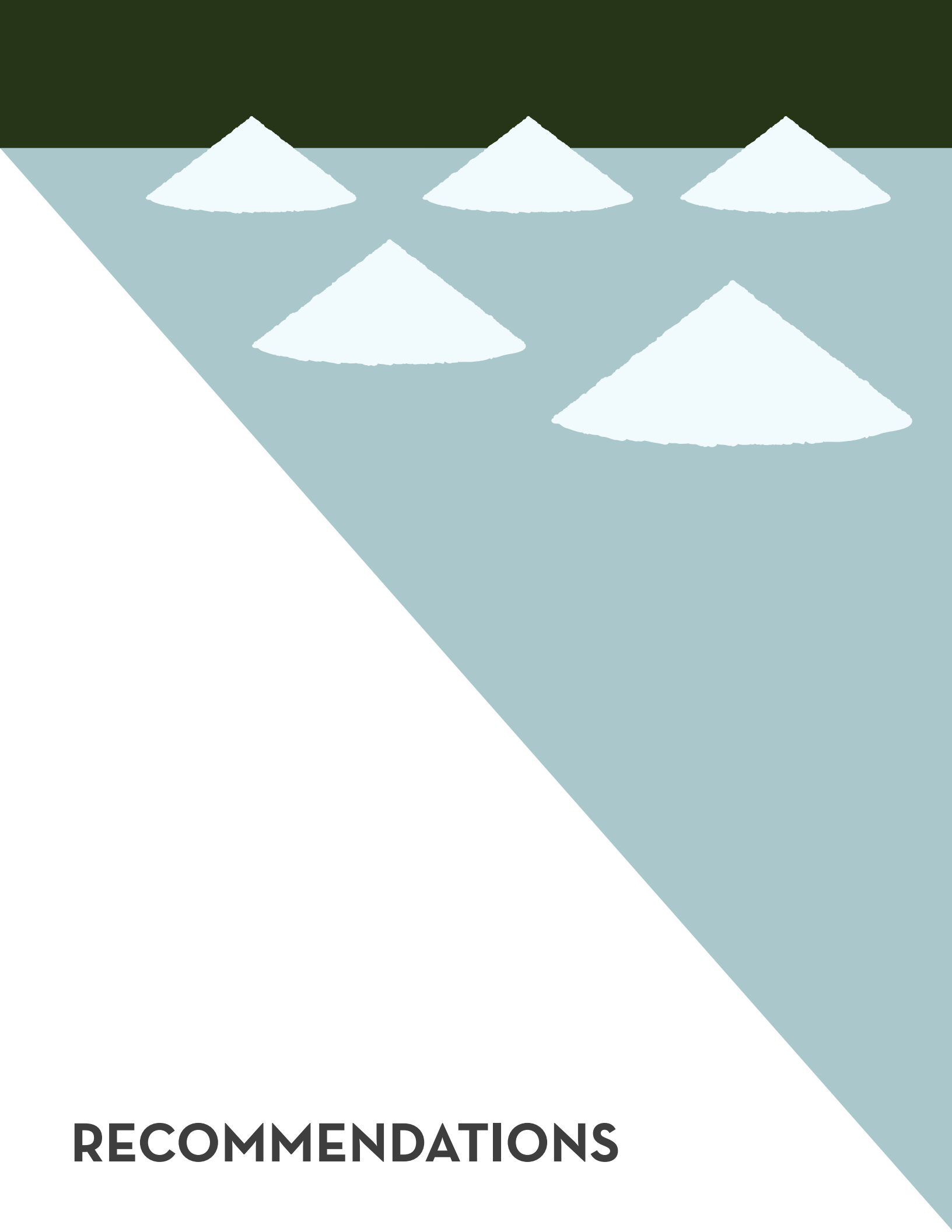
Controlling behavior by men in relationships is commonly reported. More than 60% of men admit to using at least one of the following controlling behaviors in their current or most recent relationship: they decide whom their partners can spend time with; they demand to know where they are at all times; when they want sex, their partners have to accept it; they are annoyed when their partners talk to other men; they make unilateral decisions that affect both their lives. Women report being subjected to these domineering tactics at a similar rate.

The IMAGES survey shows that a high percentage of men admit to committing intimate partner violence and high percentages of women admit experiencing it. 23% of men report having used physical violence against their partners (slapping, hitting, striking with a fist or object, beating, or burning on purpose). 32% of women report that they have been victims of this kind of violence. 44% of men admit that they have used emotional or psychological violence (including threats/intimidation, public humiliation, isolation from relatives and friends), while 51% of women report that they have experienced it. The IMAGES survey is not a violence survey designed to exhaustively examine this relationship dynamic, and therefore it is not the best source to determine its prevalence or incidence in Bolivia. However, the high number of men who admit to using various forms of violence is surprising—and this is the first time such data has been gathered from their perspective in Bolivia. An assessment of risk factors for using various forms of violence reveals that use of physical and emotional violence against women is greater among men who are older, have lower educational attainment, have less equitable attitudes about gender, and believe that their community is accepting of and turns a blind eye to violence.

There is a certain reluctance to deal with this reality in some quarters. Survivors of violence (especially sexual violence) are often blamed for the violence they experience. 26% of women say that if a woman does not defend herself, the assault cannot be considered rape. Similarly, 39% of men and 31% of women state that when a woman has been raped, it's important to know whether she has been with a lot of men or if she has a bad reputation. Many question whether rape exists in the context of marriage, demonstrating limited belief in women's bodily autonomy in the context of a relationship. Two out of five men and women say that rape doesn't exist within marriage, and one in three men say that a partner should be accommodating if a man wants sex.

There is palpable resistance to the mechanisms that hold perpetrators of violence accountable and provide protection for survivors. A high percentage of men agree that Law 348 (Law to Ensure Women a Life Free from Violence) is too hard on aggressors (52%), increases family conflict (53%), and that women use it to unfairly accuse men (70%). These percentages only reflect the responses of men who were aware that the law existed.

The impacts of violence are widespread; not only does it affect women and children, but it has negative effects for men themselves. Bolivian men who, during their childhood, witnessed violence against their mother at the hands of their father or another male partner are 3.3 times more likely to have problems due to alcohol consumption. Those who experienced violence during their childhood were 2.4 more likely to have family, social, or work problems due to their alcohol consumption in the past year. And both men who experienced violence and men who witnessed violence against their mother during childhood are twice as likely to meet screening thresholds for depression in mental health screenings. Showing men that using violence has consequences for their own health and wellbeing (as well as for women, girls, and boys) can help them understand its profound negative and permanent effects.



RECOMMENDATIONS



The IMAGES Bolivia findings highlight areas for promoting gender equality and making progress in Bolivia's objectives of eliminating violence against women and children. The following are recommendations to ensure that policies, programs, and public education campaigns aimed at both men and women contribute to this progress:

- **SUPPORT EXISTING GENDER-EQUITABLE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS, AS WELL AS THEIR PASSING DOWN TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS:** Many of the men surveyed declared that they were very supportive of gender equality. This provides a strong base to build on, by holding them accountable to the gender equality ideals they support and showing them concrete actions, they can take at home and in public to achieve this ideal.
- **FACILITATE POSITIVE ATTITUDE CHANGES IN INDIVIDUALS TO HELP TRANSFORM SOCIAL NORMS:** People's daily lives and behaviors are not necessarily reflecting the highly equitable beliefs they claim to have. Future interventions and initiatives should take a deeper social norms behavior change approach from the outset. Adding a behavioral science approach to initiatives for men can close the gap between their opinions in public and their actions in private.
- **ELEVATE CAMPAIGNS AND MESSAGING THAT SHIFT THE NARRATIVE AROUND GENDER EQUALITY:** In order to make room for the redistribution of care giving, messages or images about care or domestic work should stop showing exclusively mothers or women, and include positive images of male caregivers, as has been done previously with the campaign for active fatherhood in the La Paz cable car, sponsored by UNICEF and the Swedish Embassy. It is important to promote messaging that reinforces that all members of the family, including men, can and should be responsible for care giving.
- **ENSURE THAT PREVENTION OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE INCLUDES A STRONG FOCUS ON INTERVENTIONS FOR FATHERS, MOTHERS, AND COUPLES:** Data on the strong links between childhood exposure to violence and the increased likelihood of using violence against women and children in the future demonstrate the need for a more holistic approach to interfamilial violence. Investment in gender-transformative training programs for fathers and their partners that address intimate partner violence and violence against children is recommended. This will provide a path to breaking generational cycles of violence.

- **GENERATE DATA AND INVEST IN RESEARCH THAT HELPS IDENTIFY PROMISING PRACTICES:** The IMAGES survey highlighted a key challenge to transformational change—men’s high level of satisfaction with the current division of labor and their relationships. It begs the questions of whether men have any motivation or incentive to change their household dynamics. Data on men’s desires to spend more time with their children rather than work point out a path for policies (national and labor), e.g., promoting equal and non-transferable paternity leave.
- **REINFORCE TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE AT THE POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL** It is necessary to promote broader community awareness and support for laws and policies that reinforce women’s rights. Policy makers should ensure that the language, provisions, and parameters of pending and existing legislation do not reinforce existing norms, but rather support policies that are more transformative by design. This requires developing a deeper understanding of structural biases that reinforce gender inequalities within institutions, especially those that work with families, children, and women, and that work to transform spaces to promote shared responsibilities between men and women.

REFERENCES

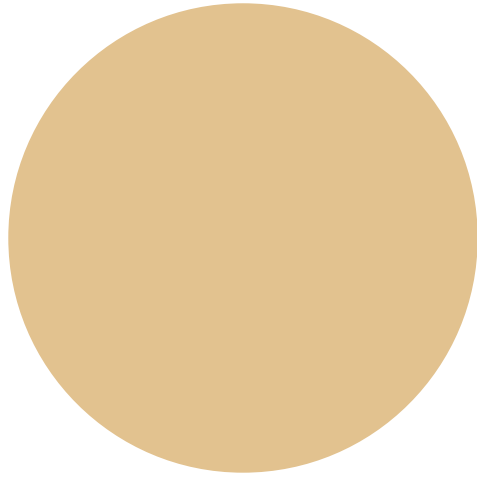
Bott, S., Guedes, A., Ruiz-Celis, A. P., & Mendoza, J. A. (2021). Intimate partner violence in the Americas: a systemic review and reanalysis of national prevalence estimates. *Pan American Journal of Public Health*, 45, e34. Available at: <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/53351>

Coordinadora de la Mujer (2010). *Informe Bolivia 2010 Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres y Justicia de Género*. La Paz. Available at: <http://www.coordinadoradelamujer.org.bo/web/index.php/publicaciones/1?PageNum=2>

Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas & Cooperación Alemana GiZ (2017). *Encuesta de prevalencia y características de la violencia contra las mujeres (EPCVcM)*. La Paz. Available at: <https://oig.cepal.org/es/documentos/encuesta-prevalencia-caracteristicas-la-violencia-mujeres-2016>

Lundvall, J. M., Garriga, S., Bonfert, A. T., Tas, E. O., & Villegas-Otero, M. (2015). Bolivia: Retos para avanzar en la igualdad de género y el empoderamiento de la mujer (No. 103087, pp. 1-56). The World Bank.

UNDP (2020). *Human Development Report 2020: Briefing note on the Plurinational State of Bolivia*. Available at: https://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/BOL.pdf



IMAGES International
Men and Gender
Equality Survey