



Internacional de la Educación
América Latina
IEAL



SUSTAINING THE FUTURE: EDUCATING AND PROVIDING CARE WITHOUT RESOURCES OR SUPPORT

The impact of the measures taken against the COVID-19 pandemic on female teachers in eight Latin American countries

EXECUTIVE REPORT

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THE FUTURE:
EDUCATING AND
PROVIDING CARE
WITHOUT RESOURCES
OR SUPPORT**



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Foreword

On the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the consequences of the measures taken by the region's governments to deal with this health emergency, the RED de Trabajadoras de la Educación (NETWORK of Female Education Workers) belonging to International Education for Latin America (EILA) proposed undertaking research into the situation of public education from a gender perspective. The proposed study was formulated with the objective of obtaining data and information on the working conditions of the distance education being performed using technological tools and platforms, and the context faced by female education workers in the scenario caused by the confinement measures.

The need for this research became evident in the early months of the pandemic. The increase in gender violence rates in the first stage of social distancing reported in the media raised questions about the consequences of the juxtaposition of domestic and work spaces, which placed women teachers and education workers in a vulnerable position. In addition to the responsibility of continuing pedagogical and teaching-learning processes without appropriate resources, equipment nor training in so-called "virtual education", women teachers have had to assume the responsibilities of the home to a larger extent.

These situations were expressed by colleagues in the RED de Trabajadoras de la Educación in the first videoconference meetings held in the first half of 2020. This caused the decision to be made to carry out research to determine the impact of the pandemic in the education sector from the perspective of female teachers and education workers within the trade union organizations affiliated to EILA.

Data and information that take into account the voice of women trade unionists are very important to the RED de Trabajadoras de la Educación and EILA. On making the decision to carry out this study, the Regional Office of EILA

and Gabriela Sancho, Coordinator of the RED, contacted the Centro Feminista de Información y Acción (Feminist Center for Information and Action, CEFEMINA), whose researchers assumed the task of planning and undertaking the research following the parameters established by the RED.

As the research process progressed during 2020 and 2021, early findings showed the need for some aspects to be explored in further depth. Given this circumstance, the decision was made to entrust CEFEMINA's researchers with a second part of the research focusing on evaluation and analysis of the impacts of the measures adopted during the pandemic on the labor rights of female teachers and education workers, as well as the care crisis evidenced in this context.

The RED de Trabajadoras de la Educación reaffirms its commitment to fight for gender equality and the strengthening of trade unions in the education sector. In the face of the setbacks for women at this juncture, we redouble our efforts to recover lost ground and continue progressing towards equality.

This research was carried out with the support of unions that form part of Education International: Lärarförbundet in Sweden, Utdanningsforbundet (UEN) in Norway, the National Education Association (NEA) in the United States and the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF-FCE). The RED de Trabajadoras de la Educación thanks these organizations, as well as the CEFEMINA researchers, the region's union leaders participating in the research, EILA affiliates who participated and collaborated in conducting surveys in each country, and especially the teachers and education workers who took time from their busy working days to provide the required information.

**Education International
for Latin America (EILA)**

Introduction

In August 2020, Education International Latin America (EILA) agreed to collaborate with the Centro Feminista de Información y Acción (Feminist Center for Information and Action, CEFEMINA) on a project studying the various ways in which the conditions experienced under the pandemic affect women teachers in Latin America. The objective of this is to discover the impacts of the pandemic and the measures adopted by governments in this context on unionized female teachers in El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Colombia, Peru, Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil.

To achieve this, a methodological strategy was defined that included interviews with union leaders, a review of diverse documentation and a survey applied to educators teaching during the pandemic. It was also agreed to include eight countries: three in Central America —Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica — and five in the south of the continent —Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina¹. This document is the product of this effort in which not only CEFEMINA and the regional coordination of the IEAL have participated. The participation of the Red de Trabajadoras de la Educación (Network of Female Education Workers), trade unions, federations and confederations affiliated to EILA in these eight countries has been essential to performing this study in conditions as adverse as those that we continue to live under as we work on completing this project.

The findings of this study show many similarities in the eight countries and a common reality: women teachers have upheld the right to education during the pandemic through commitment, will and initiative. Without a doubt, male teachers share in efforts alongside their female colleagues; nonetheless, the conditions under which female teachers perform their duties are marked not only by the fact of having to respond to the sudden and institutionally improvised change to non-face-to-face classes, but also, as has been the case in general for the rest of the women in Latin America, the need to meet an overwhelming load of care provision in their homes, multiplied by the permanent presence of the whole family

¹ In Peru and Colombia, it was not possible to carry out the survey because of the particular political situation in these countries.

under conditions of confinement, with the added challenge of houses not being adequately prepared to be places of work and study.

Since the findings are largely shared by the eight countries, conclusions in the executive summary are not presented on a national basis to avoid making this document repetitive, but rather are given in overview, with the information from each country being included in each national report.

The document consists of nine chapters, the first dedicated to the executive summary and the remaining eight to the country reports. The executive summary gathers the methodological information and the main findings, structured around the conclusions of the study. It also includes a section dedicated to opportunities for trade union action arising from analysis of the information collected.

Each country report begins with general information that allows understanding of the national context in which the pandemic arose, via information relevant to the objective of the research. A further section analyzes the results of the survey applied to teachers and includes parts of the interviews conducted with union leaders.

We hope that this document will be of great use to education unions, federations and confederations throughout the continent, especially those affiliated to EILA, as well as to the Red de Trabajadoras de la Educación (Network of Female Education Workers). Above all, we hope that this study will serve to assist recognition of the debt the region owes its female teachers, preventing our societies from returning to a normality without memory of what has come before.

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Executive summary

In August 2020, Education International Latin America (EILA) agreed to collaborate with the Centro Feminista de Información y Acción (Feminist Center for Information and Action, CEFEMINA) on a project studying the various ways in which the conditions experienced under the pandemic affect women teachers in Latin America. The objective agreed upon is:

To identify the impact of the pandemic and the measures adopted by governments in this context for unionized female teachers in El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Colombia, Peru, Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil.

Methodology

To carry out this study, information was collected through documentary analysis, interviews and a survey. The documents analyzed were generated by various sources and include information revealing the contexts from which each country has had to deal with the pandemic, the measures taken by the governments since the start of this crisis, the impact of these measures on the population and the responses that the organizations affiliated to EILA have made regarding different aspects pertinent to the objective of this study.

Twelve group interviews were conducted with women leaders of eleven trade union organizations belonging to EILA in the eight countries². Most of those interviewed belong to the Red de Trabajadoras de la Educación (Network of Female Education Workers), which is also part of EILA. In these interviews, in-depth exploration was made of aspects related to the conditions in which female teachers perform their work in this era and the impacts of the measures adopted against the pandemic, in particular in terms of changes in family

² The list of trade union organizations participating in this study can be found in Annex 1.

care provision and violence against women.

The survey explores these aspects and is aimed at female teachers who have taught during the pandemic. The questionnaire was presented to and approved by the participating organizations. Originally in Spanish, it was translated into Portuguese; in some cases language adjustments were made to improve understanding in particular countries. This is a self-administered online questionnaire that was applied separately in each trade union organization. A total of 2,802 teachers from seven trade union organizations affiliated to the EILA responded, completing the sample size defined for each case.

The organizations chose the sample such that each would have a composition similar to that of its affiliates in three particular aspects: the area where they practice teaching (rural and urban), state versus private schools, and educational level in which respondents work. Where applicable, another criterion was added: the representation of teachers working in indigenous areas or areas where indigenous and Afro-descendant populations are concentrated. In Colombia and Peru, the survey could not be applied because conditions to do so did not occur given the difficult political situation that these two countries are going through.

Findings and conclusions

1. The pandemic and the measures taken by governments deepened a pre-existing economic crisis in the region and exacerbated historical social and political crises that most of the countries included in this study are experiencing.

In the years leading up to the pandemic, Latin America had been approaching an economic crisis featuring a slowdown in annual growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), among other factors. Between 2014 and 2019, the region's economy (including the Caribbean region) grew on average by only 0.3% annually

(ECLAC, 2020). The situation is even more serious in Argentina, a country that since 2018 has undergone a contraction in production due to strong neoliberal policies during the Macri government. The labor market has also shown signs of deterioration in recent years, particularly since 2015, with rising unemployment rates and worsening employment quality (ECLAC-ILO, 2020).

The measures taken to deal with the pandemic exacerbated this trend, in particular the closure of face-to-face activities considered non-essential and confinement in the home. The region was not prepared for telework; industries and companies declined sharply and many closed down. ECLAC estimates that the GDP of Latin America and the Caribbean decreased by 7.7% in 2020 (ECLAC, 2020).

Unemployment rose sharply in the first months of the pandemic and, although jobs were subsequently recovered, in some countries the previous situation was not reached. Many governments have been permissive of companies, allowing them to dismiss or suspend staff without compensation or guaranteeing reinstatement under previously-held conditions, as well as shortening working days or making these more flexible. In most countries, these actions lack a regulatory framework and violate labor rights. Preliminary data has led to estimations of an increase in unemployment in 2020 of 2.6%. (ECLAC, 2020).

Women are particularly affected by the labor crisis, as they are concentrated in sharply affected occupations such as paid domestic work, commerce, restaurants and hospitality. In addition, many women left the workforce to care for their children, who remain at home given the closure of schools. In the second quarter of 2020, in Latin America and the Caribbean 18.1% of the jobs occupied by women were lost compared to the same quarter in 2019. For men, this loss was 15.1%. In the same period, 15.4% of women and 11.8% of men left the labor market (ECLAC, 2020).

The informal sector has been particularly affected by the inability of people to work in the street and to go out to provide and perform services. In addition,

those who are in informal employment face a greater lack of protection, as they do not have access to social security and measures such as severance pay or unemployment benefits. In Latin America, informal employment has a great weight and this sector has been more strongly impacted than that of formal employment. By 2016, 54.3% of women and 52.3% of men in Latin America and the Caribbean were working in this sector (ILO, 2018). It is estimated that about half of these jobs are at high risk during the pandemic (56.9% among women and 40% among men) (ECLAC, 2020). In the second quarter of 2020, the informal sector contributed the majority of the jobs lost. In this sense, Brazil, Paraguay and Costa Rica stand out with 76.8%, 74.3% and 72.5% of the total job loss respectively (ECLAC, 2020).

In short, the measures taken by governments in this crisis have deepened trends already deteriorating the labor market, such as high levels of unemployment, the growing precariousness of jobs and the violation of labor rights. The impact on the population has been immediate. The loss of jobs deprives large sectors of the population of an income on which they depend to live. The social protection measures that governments have adopted have been markedly insufficient towards neutralizing the social impact of the contraction of the labor market. These measures are generally narrowly targeted and ad hoc in nature, being of limited coverage, of short duration and often having been applied to the same groups already receiving state aid. In any case, in almost all the countries studied, people who lost their jobs have been treated as poor people requiring assistance, not as workers whose rights should be guaranteed. There is an exception in the measure of partially subsidizing employment in formal enterprises applied in Argentina through the Program of Emergency Assistance to Work and Production (ATP), which allows workers to retain employment (ILO, 2021).

In the period 2002 to 2014, in Latin America and the Caribbean the incidence of poverty and extreme poverty decreased, but in the years prior to the pandemic both conditions increased, going from 27.8% to 30.5% and from 7.8% to

11.3%, respectively (ECLAC, 2020). In the region, it is estimated that in 2020 poverty rose to 33.7%, while extreme poverty rose to 12.5%. Without state transfers these would have reached 37.2% and 15.8%, respectively (ECLAC, 2020).

Inequality, which decreased in previous years at the beginning of the century, has continued to decline, although more slowly. Between 2002 and 2014, the Gini coefficient on the regional level decreased on an annual average of 1.1%, while it fell by only 0.5 % between 2014 and 2019 (ECLAC, 2020). The measures taken during the pandemic have had the greatest effects on the most vulnerable sectors.

Another crisis that the measures taken during the pandemic have exacerbated is political in nature. ECLAC indicates that “since the end of 2019, the citizens of several countries have expressed their discomfort, discontent and dissatisfaction with the political system and its actors in large protest demonstrations demanding greater social justice” (ECLAC, 2020, p.14). There is a growing loss of confidence in state institutions and parties throughout the region. Corruption and the penetration of drug trafficking within state and political classes is becoming increasingly widespread. Direct attacks on democracy through open coups (Honduras) or covert ones involving legal falsity (Brazil, Peru, Bolivia). There is growing disrespect for the popular will, which is increasingly resistant to growing restrictions on social organization and social protest, with the open persecution of leaders from all sectors (Colombia).

With the exception of Argentina, the governments of the eight countries included in this study have used the pandemic as a pretext to increase previous levels of control and repression of the population and social organizations, increasing the criminalization of protest, and engaging in selective persecution, which in Colombia and Honduras has gone so far as to include the assassination of social leaders. Similarly, some governments have taken advantage of this to consolidate their authoritarian aspirations, using the army to impose curfews as well as to persecute and punish the population that does not comply with confinement (Honduras, El Salvador, Colombia). In El Salvador, in this

period the president succeeded in destroying the separation of powers and establishing himself as the only center of power. A similar situation has occurred in Honduras, where the pandemic favored a greater concentration of power on the presidential figure.

Despite this escalation of authoritarianism, control and repression, social organization and resistance continues. In Colombia, the protests that began at the end of 2019 are becoming more strident. In Peru, the previous coup was reversed with the election of a teacher as president. In this country, the sectors that concentrate power are attempting to render the elected government unviable, but the population remains alert and mobilized to defend against this. In Costa Rica, blockades paralyzing transport occur in the greater part of the territory. In many of these mobilizations, active participation of unions occurs. Massive demonstrations are being held in Brazil to denounce the Bolsonaro government's management of the pandemic. In Honduras, demonstrations denounced government corruption in the management of the pandemic, extractivist policies, and the Zones of Employment and Economic Development (ZEDE by its acronym in Spanish).

2. Governments have established non-face-to-face education in a hasty, improvised fashion, without counting on the resources necessary to the change and, in many cases, without strategies to guarantee the right to education and dignified work.

At the start of the pandemic, one of the first measures taken in all Latin American countries was the closure of schools and the continuation of educational processes by non-face-to-face means. This decision was made in the context of a region with great limitations towards shifting towards modalities involving virtual resources. The digital divides are remarkable and increase economic barriers of accessibility to education. In 2018, 60% of households and 67% of people in Latin America and the Caribbean have access to internet connectivity. 46% of children between the ages of five and twelve cannot engage in tele-education (ECLAC, 2020a).

One of the most significant digital divides is due to the difference in opportunities existing between rural and urban areas (33% and 66% of households with internet connectivity respectively). The greatest divide, however, is due to differences in household income. In Peru, the proportion of households in the first quintile³ with internet access is 4%, while in the fifth it is 46%. In El Salvador, these values are respectively 4% and 48%, in Paraguay 3% and 65%, in Colombia 22% and 85%, in Brazil 63% and 91% and in Costa Rica 58% and 91% (ECLAC, 2020a).

The use of virtual means for education in times of pandemic means competing at home with the rest of the family for resources essential to continuing with their activities. Housing is not designed to have spaces in which to work or study for long hours or full days. Families also do not have computers, tablets, smartphones or individual televisions for each person requiring them. For the lower income sectors, it is common not to have permanent internet service, and instead to acquire telephone connectivity according to each family's means.

Limitations of physical space, furniture, equipment and connectivity are common for teachers and students. The biggest problems have been with tablets and computers. With the exception of Brazil and Costa Rica, the lack of this equipment has affected more than half of the households of the teachers surveyed. The biggest problem occurs in Honduras, affecting 76% of those surveyed. Smartphone availability increases by around 10% in each country and remains a serious problem in El Salvador and among OTEP-A affiliates in Paraguay (insufficient for 55% and 67.1% respectively).

Internet connectivity has been good or very good for less than half of the respondents, except in the case of Costa Rica (57.3%) and Argentina (50.6%). Again, the problem has been greater in Paraguay, a country in which only 39% of UNE-SN teachers and 34.3% of OTEP-A teachers have enjoyed this quality of connectivity.

³ The first quintile is the 20% of the population with the lowest income. The fifth quintile is the 20% of the population with the highest income.

States did not have methodological proposals, pedagogical resources or materials for the shift to virtual or distance education. Teachers had to fill these gaps with little support from ministries of education. In some universities, there were specific experiences of virtual education, although these were, in general, used more as a complement than as an integral part of educational processes. Additionally, teachers lacked training in this modality, and the training provided since the pandemic has involved various challenges, including these being offered virtually to people who had little or no training in the use of these means.

Furthermore, states lacked virtual platforms that could be used for teaching. Teachers have generally resorted to Zoom to teach synchronous classes, WhatsApp to communicate with their students, and non-institutional applications and platforms to send materials. The few universities that had their own platforms at the beginning of the pandemic were also unable to use these because they were quickly saturated due to lack of preparation for the high demand they received.

Part of the improvisations have been the changing demands of education ministries with respect to the activities teachers must perform. In some countries, teachers have been required to submit reports that they did not previously make, sometimes with changes to the information to include, their periodicity and retroactive requests. This represents a significant workload. In El Salvador, at the beginning of April a protocol was enforced calling on teachers to go to schools to deliver food packages from the School Food and Health Program (PASE by the acronym in Spanish), without the provision of sanitary measures despite the expectation of crowds, which union intervention managed to stop.

The return to face-to-face education generally has been of the same improvised character. This has been announced at different times, and has even been commenced, although in some countries it has later had to be suspended due to the lack of appropriate sanitary conditions. In May 2020, EILA prepared a document establishing the conditions required for a return to schools. This

document proposes “a common minimum base for the region” that includes dialog with education sector organizations, mechanisms to listen to the proposals of the students, and guaranteed infrastructure conditions providing safe environments with ventilation and access to protective materials (EILA, 2020).

The lack of conditions for non-face-to-face education is even greater among the student body, especially for those who belong to families subject to multiple challenges, such as having lower incomes, not having physical conditions in their homes to be able to study, lack of equipment and internet connectivity, and loss of employment of all family members. Part of the costs of virtual education went to families, who have had to buy phones and mobile data, as well as educational materials. For some students, continuing their education during the pandemic has not been possible.

Around 70% of respondents in each country consider that the number of students leaving their studies has increased during the pandemic, except in the cases of Costa Rica, where this perception is shared by 51.6%, and Honduras, where it is shared by 82.2%. However, it is not always thought to have greatly increased and, in this regard, perceptions vary significantly. Between 20.8% (Costa Rica) and 51.4% (Brazil) of respondents consider the increase to be large and between 26.3% (Brazil) and 37.9% (El Salvador) believe it has not been a large increase.

During the pandemic, the measures taken by governments have caused the educational crisis in the continent to become more visible and acute. Non-face-to-face education has increased the expulsion of students from the system by adding new barriers to their retention. The quality of education under improvised modalities made without solid methodological support has deteriorated, despite the efforts of teachers. The support received from the ministries of education and university authorities has varied between countries, although in all countries it has been insufficient due to the lack of preparation and strategies to face the changes. In Paraguay, where conditions for con-

nectivity were a priori adverse, teachers describe a scenario of educational catastrophe leading to families totally giving up the educational year for lost, at least during 2020.

3. A significant part of state shortcomings in ensuring education in times of pandemic have been filled by teachers.

In some countries, the state has provided equipment to teachers or offered soft loans for its purchase, but this has not prevented more than 80% of female educators from paying for the purchase of equipment and internet connectivity from their income; they have frequently done so in proportions between 83.1% in Costa Rica and 94.4% in OTEP-A female educators in Paraguay. Female teachers have also covered the needs of their students, such as copies of work materials. Between 42.1% in El Salvador and 69.2% in Honduras have frequently done so.

The contributions of female teachers have not been solely economic. They have mainly involved professional commitment and personal effort, with which they have had to deal with the improvisations of education ministries and universities.

The lack of appropriate methodologies for non-face-to-face education has deteriorated student learning opportunities, triggering the need for individual consultations. Mothers and fathers have also demanded teachers' attention, with these former having been given the task of accompanying the study process of children and adolescents when they have not always had the preparation and the conditions to do so. Given the limitations that many households have faced in providing themselves with equipment and internet connectivity, students and parents have turned to teachers at whatever time they can manage to do so, including late at night. Work days have been extended even longer by the need to prepare classes, create materials and make reports, tasks that have often been done in the evenings after providing students and parents with individual attention. Work overload is the most frequently mentioned effect of telework suffered by the teachers consulted.

As the pandemic has drawn on, countries have attempted a return to face-to-face classes under different modalities, many of which include combining face-to-face and non-face-to-face teaching. Staggered returns are adopted, with smaller groups alternating the days they attend classrooms, or alternatively attendance is enabled only on some days of the week or only for certain groups. Bimodality, in any of its variants, further increases the demands on teachers, since it adds tasks to those already faced.

4. The actions taken by governments during the pandemic have had widespread affects on labor rights, in many countries exacerbating the prior trend towards their deterioration.

The education sector is one of the least affected by the massive layoffs and job losses during the pandemic. The majority of respondents have had job and salary stability. More than 90% in each country (values between 90.3% in El Salvador and 95.5% among members of UNE-SN in Paraguay) have maintained stable employment. During the period, with the exception of those in Honduras, more than 80% of the teachers have received full teaching salaries in timely fashion (values between 80.6% among OTEP-A affiliates in Paraguay and 94.3% in Costa Rica). In Honduras, only 14.1% were in this condition, while the vast majority, at 82%, received their salary in full although in a delayed fashion. More than 79% have maintained or increased their teaching income (values between 79.9% in Brazil and 95.1% in El Salvador).

This situation, however, may be threatened in the future. The loss of students as a result of the educational crisis and the difficulty of recovering their attendance once face-to-face classes return may become a pretext for reducing the number of teachers.

In any case, having contractual and salary security has not spared teachers and their families from facing strong deterioration in their finances. The purchasing power of the families of the female teachers surveyed is, in general, in-

sufficient to supporting their households. Before the pandemic, less than half was at that low point (between 42.2% in Costa Rica and 49.6% in Argentina), except in the case of Brazil, which slightly exceeds half (55.9 %). After a year of pandemic, the proportion of households with sufficient income to meet their needs has fallen significantly. This is at 41.5% in Brazil, 38% in Costa Rica, 31.7% in Argentina, 27.9% in El Salvador, 26.4% in Honduras, and 21.3% in Paraguay among members of UNE-SN and 16.9% among members of OTEP-A.

Other labor rights of female teachers have been openly and massively violated during the period of pandemic, as indicated by the participants in this study. More than 86% in each country reported non-compliance with the eight-hour working day as established in schedules (values between 86.3% in Brazil and 95.5% in Paraguay among UNE-SN affiliates). The right to disconnect is the next most frequently mentioned violated right with percentages above 68% (values between 68.7% in El Salvador and 89.4% in Argentina). The third most frequently cited right violated is the choice of work modality, with percentages generally higher than 64% in each country (except in Brazil at 43.4%). Disrespect for disability leave and trade union freedoms are mentioned in fourth and fifth place, with differences between countries. The first of these is at between 19.4% in Costa Rica and 43.4% in Brazil, while reduced trade union freedoms were reported at between 13.9% in El Salvador and 34.6% in Brazil.

With exceptions, telework and labor flexibility have been imposed without clear regulations or in a fashion contrary to existing ones, in a way that violates the basic criteria that could make these changes acceptable. In addition, some countries (Costa Rica, Paraguay and Honduras) have not recognized previously established wage increases.

5. Despite teachers' efforts, discourse critical of teachers has been strengthened.

The gaps in education that have become apparent and that have been exacerbated during the pandemic along with state failures in this period have been

attributed to teachers, not only because they are the visible face and the first line of contact with families, but, above all, because, in many countries, the strategies of attacking the rights of the population, and in particular labor rights, have seen public school teachers become the target of systematic attacks.

In Costa Rica, the pandemic has been used to reduce public employment rights. Permanent regulatory changes are being sought, while this sector is being placed as a source of financing for state expenditure during this period. Teachers have been accused of not working because they stay at home and the Costa Rican state has never communicated the enormous effort they must make to sustain education. Similarly, in Brazil, the public employment sector has been under permanent attack, with labor reforms already implemented seeking to weaken union organization among other objectives.

In Paraguay social networks comment that “teachers demand their pay without doing anything.” One politician openly said, “How much can teachers talk, since they are doing nothing? They don’t even have to go out to work.” In September 2020 in that country, in the midst of the pandemic the Ley de la Función Pública y del Servicio Civil (Public Servants and Civil Service Act) was presented, which, among other things, affects job stability and perpetuates the precarious situation of many people working for the public sector under contract, which, in practice, implies holding a contract for the provision of services.

6. Confinement measures, telework and study from home reveal and exacerbate the pre-existing crisis of care provision in the region and reinforce the gender division of labor, with the burden of care work falling on families, and within families, on women.

A common characteristic among the women teachers surveyed is that very few live alone (between 1.7% of those affiliated with UNE-SN in Paraguay and 10.7% in Brazil), with around half or more living with children and adolescents (values between 44.3% in Argentina and 58.4% in El Salvador). In addition,

some live in extended families with older adults (between 10.4% in Argentina and 35.2% in El Salvador). Additionally, in some households there are sick or disabled people (between 2.7% in Argentina and 16.4% in El Salvador). The presence of adult men is not widespread (between 17.7% in Honduras and 54% in Brazil), nor is the presence of other adult women (between 7.2% in Argentina and 35.5% in Brazil).

This composition of teachers' households indicates that there is significant demand on these for care provision and not many adults to assume this task. In Latin America, the gender division of labor is still deeply entrenched, as is the continued assignment of care tasks primarily to women, even when they hold formal employment.

Confinement during the pandemic together with education and telework have greatly increased the demands of care provision in homes. Dependent persons who were previously cared for during the day in care centers no longer receive said care and instead this must be provided at home. In addition, students who previously spent much of the day in educational institutions are now being taught in their homes, while people who worked in different places now remain in the home. With the presence of the whole family in the home, domestic tasks not related to direct care, such as preparing food, cleaning, tidying, washing and ironing also skyrocket.

More than 40% of the respondents say that the time they devote to domestic work not including the care of dependent people has increased (between 44.3% in El Salvador and 61.6% among those affiliated to OTEP-A in Paraguay). The time spent caring for dependents has also increased for many (between 27.3% in Brazil and 44% in OTEP-A affiliates in Paraguay). Non-dependent adults have also demanded more attention from the female teachers (between 20.8% among UNE-SN members in Paraguay and 31.5% in Brazil). The most significant increase in the demand on teachers' time has been providing the educational accompaniment of children and adolescents, which has been

experienced by the majority of respondents in all countries (between 50.2% in Costa Rica and 76.2% in Paraguay among members of OTEP-A).

Other adults in the home have increased their time spent doing housework and providing care, although in a much lesser proportion than that of the respondents, with this falling more to other women in the family (between 32.8% in Paraguay of UNE-SN affiliates and 59.3% in Brazil) than adult males (between 23.4% in Paraguay affiliated to OTEP-A and 43.3 % in Costa Rica).

To respond to this increased demand for care provision in homes, the teachers surveyed have had to sacrifice time spent on themselves. About two out of three have reduced the time spent on recreation (between 60.3% in Honduras and 75.4% in Costa Rica) and a similar proportion has also cut back time spent on rest during the day (between 59.6% among UNE-SN members in Paraguay and 70.7% in Costa Rica).

7. The efforts of female teachers to uphold students' rights to education have negatively affected their quality of life and exposed them to increased health risks, including their suffering COVID-19 contagion rates far higher than the official average rates.

The conditions under which women teachers work during the pandemic have a significant impact on their quality of life. Work overload is the most frequently mentioned effect of telework in all countries (values between 46.3% in Paraguay among members of OTEP-A and 73.2% in Brazil). In order to cope with this workload, female teachers are forced to carry out different activities simultaneously, something reported by a range from 34.3% of OTEP-A affiliates in Paraguay to 64.7% of respondents in Brazil. For about one in three, overwork has left no time to rest (values between 20.7% in Paraguay among OTEP-A affiliates and 36.7% of respondents in Brazil). A higher proportion than this mentions that they find it difficult to separate work and rest times (values between 32% in Paraguay among members of UNE-SN and 63.5% of respondents in Argentina).

The burden of teaching and care provision, as well as the adverse conditions in which they perform both these types of tasks, have had effects on teachers' physical and emotional health. More than half say they are exhausted and, in some countries, this claim is overwhelmingly common (87.3% in Costa Rica, 73.2% in Brazil). Stress and emotional tension are indicated by 42.5% of UNEP-SN affiliates in Paraguay and 64.3% of respondents in Costa Rica.

As a consequence of this deterioration in quality of life and physical and emotional well-being, the majority of teachers surveyed suffered some health problems in the period, except in Argentina (where 41.8% have experienced this). This is expressed in the rest of the countries at values between 51.8% (Costa Rica) and 64% (Paraguay among OTEP-A affiliates).

Included among these health-affecting situations are COVID-19 infections, which are significantly higher than the national rates declared by the states at the time of the survey. In Paraguay, 32% of OTEP-A affiliates and 25.9% of those belonging to UNE-SN indicate having been infected with the virus (national rate of 6.3%); in Brazil, this number stands at 21.8% (national rate of 8.6%); in Argentina this was 19.6% (national rate 10%); in El Salvador, 13% (national rate 1%); in Costa Rica 8.4% (national rate of 4.1%); and in Honduras to 19.1% (national rate of 2.6 %).

The reason why COVID-19 transmission rates among teachers are much higher than national ones may be due in part to the fact that official data show high under-registration, something that probably happens in El Salvador, where the union leaders interviewed denounce the unwillingness of the government to give real data, as well as in Honduras, where the Physicians' Association indicates under-registration occurs. However, this situation does not occur in Argentina or Costa Rica, without ruling out the possible occurrence of underreporting, although at not such a high rate. The main reason that can be noted from the information collected is that teachers have been more exposed than the general population to the risk of COVID-19 contagion because some of

them have maintained face-to-face activities, whether or not combined with non-face-to-face ones. In addition, in order to continue with their teaching duties, many have been forced to travel around to copy and deliver materials, and to visit the homes of their students. They have traveled via public transport, without adequate sanitary measures and without being considered an at-risk group that should be a priority for vaccination. In some countries, risks have been increased due to government decisions. The negationist attitude of the Bolsonaro administration in Brazil has led this to be one of the countries with the highest rates of contagion and death on the planet. Meanwhile in El Salvador, the Bukele government ordered the arrest of those not complying with confinement orders. These people were then held in groups in places that did not meet sanitary conditions, without being tested for contagion.

8. Teachers in Latin America share the widespread perception that the measures taken during the pandemic have fomented violence against women and the most frequent ways in which they have experienced this are related to the workplace and virtual activities.

The majority of teachers interviewed and surveyed agree that confinement measures have fomented violence against women within families (values between 69.3% in members of UNE-SN in Paraguay and 90% in Brazil). The union leaders interviewed say that this is because women and girls have been locked in their homes with aggressors while being isolated from those who can support them. In El Salvador, the teachers consulted indicate that the government does not give the real data on violence against women and femicide.

About half of the respondents consider that violence against women during the pandemic has particularly affected female teachers (values between 40.3% in Argentina and 57.3% among OTEP-A affiliates in Paraguay). The two expressions of violence against teachers during the pandemic that respondents most frequently mention are intimate partner and ex-partner violence (values between 48.2% in El Salvador and 70.6% in Brazil) and virtual harassment (values

between 36% among OTEP-A affiliates in Paraguay and 63.5% in Costa Rica). This is followed by workplace harassment (values between 14% in Paraguay and 42.4% in Costa Rica) and sexual violence (values between 7.7% in Paraguay among members of UNE-SN and 28.7% in Brazil).

In the pandemic period, between 20% (in Paraguay among members of UNE-SN) and 40.4% (in Costa Rica) of female teachers indicate that they have been the target of violence, with the most frequent forms of violence not coinciding with the perceptions previously reported. In all countries, the violence that teachers have experienced most frequently has not been perpetrated by partners or ex-partners, but rather has taken the form of virtual harassment (values between 10.4% in Paraguay among members of UNE-SN and 27.8% in Costa Rica). Workplace harassment is the second most marked expression of violence (values between 4.8% in Paraguay among members of UNE-SN and 14.6% in Costa Rica) and, in third place comes intimate partner and ex-partner violence (values between 5% in Honduras, Brazil and Argentina, and 10% in Paraguay among members of OTEP-A). It is noteworthy that, in all countries, teachers reported more frequent violence on the part of the authorities and the armed agents of the state (1.4% in Brazil and 3.3% in Honduras, and Argentina) than by organized crime (less than 2.3%), which seems to corroborate the tendency of some governments to increase repression and militarization during the pandemic.

Except in Argentina, most female teachers who experienced some form of violence did not seek help. In these countries, help was sought by 26% in Honduras, 40.7% in Brazil, while in Argentina the rate was at 52.9%. Among the reasons for not seeking help are victims not considering themselves to need it (values between 35.7% in El Salvador and 51.8% in Argentina, with the exception of Honduras at 18.7%), or considering that no one can help them (between 10.9% in Paraguay among members of UNE-SN and 22.1% in Costa Rica). Other reasons given stand out in some countries, such as in Honduras where 38.5% did not seek help because they do not trust the authorities. In all countries, pre-existing barriers (not knowing institutions, not having any nearby, not having economic

resources to be able to travel) have added to the limitations of confinement (not being able to leave the house because the aggressor is there, not leaving dependent people alone, not being able to circulate), which prevents more than 10% of teachers who have experienced violence from seeking help (values between 10.8% in El Salvador and 18.8% in Costa Rica).

People close by and family members have generally been the most sought after to request help from (values between 28.6% in Argentina and 56.2% in Honduras). State institutions have been less in demand for this purpose (values between 15.6% in Honduras and 33.3% in Paraguay among UNE-SN affiliates). It is worth mentioning that in some countries female teachers have turned to their unions, particularly in Argentina (47.6%) and Paraguay among OTEP-A affiliates (29.4%), the countries in which this was the most used resource.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, there have been specific calls from national organizations and international agencies for states to address the problem of violence against women and girls. The Committee of Experts of MESECVI (Follow-up Mechanism to the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women) produced a report on the situation of violence against women and girls during the pandemic, which includes recommendations for the states, which has guided national responses (MESECVI, 2020). The most frequently adopted measures in the countries included in this study aim at promoting the reporting of crimes and the protection of women and girls at risk of violence. Specialized violence courts and services are considered to be essential, the transit of women and girls to seek help has been authorized, and more receptive spaces have been set up. In Argentina, a new measure was implemented to assist women who could not seek help because they were under the close control of their aggressors: requesting a red face mask in pharmacies is a way to tell the person attending that help is required.

Opportunities for union action

Education unions and federations, particularly those that are part of the EILA, have played an important role during the pandemic in defending the right to education and decent work. Despite the fact that the measures adopted by the governments have made it difficult to organize and mobilize, guilds, unions, federations and confederations have developed alternative strategies to maintain their relationships and activities.

Trade union activism has also taken up virtuality. The unions have maintained contact with their affiliated members, as have federations and confederations with the groups that they form part of. They have issued and published numerous statements; they have taken the pulse of the working conditions and health of teachers; they have conducted national surveys to identify the conditions of teachers during the pandemic; they have carried out solidarity and support campaigns for the most excluded communities.

Education organizations have been particularly strident in identifying and denouncing situations that affect the right to education, the working conditions of teaching staff, and the risks to the health of the educational community, among others. They have formed part of the mobilizations that have remained active during the pandemic. In some countries they have achieved sitting down at negotiating tables with the authorities and, in particular, have made proposals on telework and non-face-to-face education. The experiences of this period are particularly valuable, allowing us to identify some opportunities for trade union action, not only for the situation of the pandemic, but also for the period that is to follow it:

- Systematization in each country and dissemination of the contributions made by teachers and the essential role they have played in upholding the right to education despite state ineffectiveness and the adverse conditions. This study, along with those carried out in some countries by trade unions, provides abundant information to confront the attacks on the image of tea-

chers that have been launched during the pandemic, as well as to refute the arguments that seek to diminish the labor rights of teachers. It provides forceful information that can be disseminated by different means, appropriate to each country and time. A regional outreach campaign can also be launched by EILA to serve as an umbrella for national and local actions.

- Systematization of the experiences of union activity, both that which is carried out within the organizations and those of political incidence, with the promotion on the regional level of a process of inter-learning for the collective appropriation of this experience. Education organizations have faced enormous challenges in this pandemic, leaving a wealth of experience in a wide range of fields. Learning, in general, has remained within the organization or at the national level. After a year and a half of pandemic, collecting these experiences and sharing them can have a multiplier effect on the actions of organizations, in particular, towards the defense of the education budget and progress towards adequate legislation on telework in the region. This is a task that the EILA can promote.

- Promotion within each education trade union and federation of policies of equality and co-responsibility in care work and promotion of the ratification in each country of ILO's Convention No. 156 on workers with family responsibilities. The pandemic has revealed the essential nature of care provision and the injustice in the way in which society organizes this. In this period, more than ever families have been left with the responsibility of meeting the care needs of all their members and more than ever this task has been placed on women. This study makes it clear that there is an urgent need for change. The goal must not be to help women to reconcile paid work and housework at home, because this maintains the unfair division of care provision. Rather, emphasis should be made on co-responsibility for care provision between men and women, as well as among families, states, businesses, and communities. This is an appropriate time for education organizations to consider what they can do to promote equality and co-responsibility on an internal level. It is also an

opportune time to push for the adoption of ILO's Convention No. 156 together with other trade union organizations.

- Promotion within each education union and federation of measures to prevent violence against women and to support teachers experiencing this, while promoting in each country the ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 on violence and harassment. This study shows that unionized teachers expect their organizations to respond to the violence they experience, especially since in the pandemic they have been subjected to workplace violence and cyberbullying (both linked to work and telework) more frequently than other forms of violence. Teachers' proposals are clear: first of all, legal representation for those who experience violence, but also awareness-raising and prevention campaigns and training within trade union organizations. The campaign launched by the EILA at the end of 2021 to promote the ratification of ILO's Convention No. 190 on violence and harassment in the workplace allows each trade union organization to strengthen its efforts in this field.

- Direct actions to international organizations, such as UNESCO, the OAS' Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and ILO, to demand and support their intervention in defense of the right to education and the work of teachers in the region and in each country. These bodies have the opportunity and competence to study the status of these rights, to identify and indicate problems, and to create proposals for states to restore rights and ensure that there are no setbacks to these. The IACHR, at the request of the organizations involved, may authorize hearings to receive national or multi-country reports on particular situations, in this case, on the right to education and respect for the labor rights of teachers.

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