

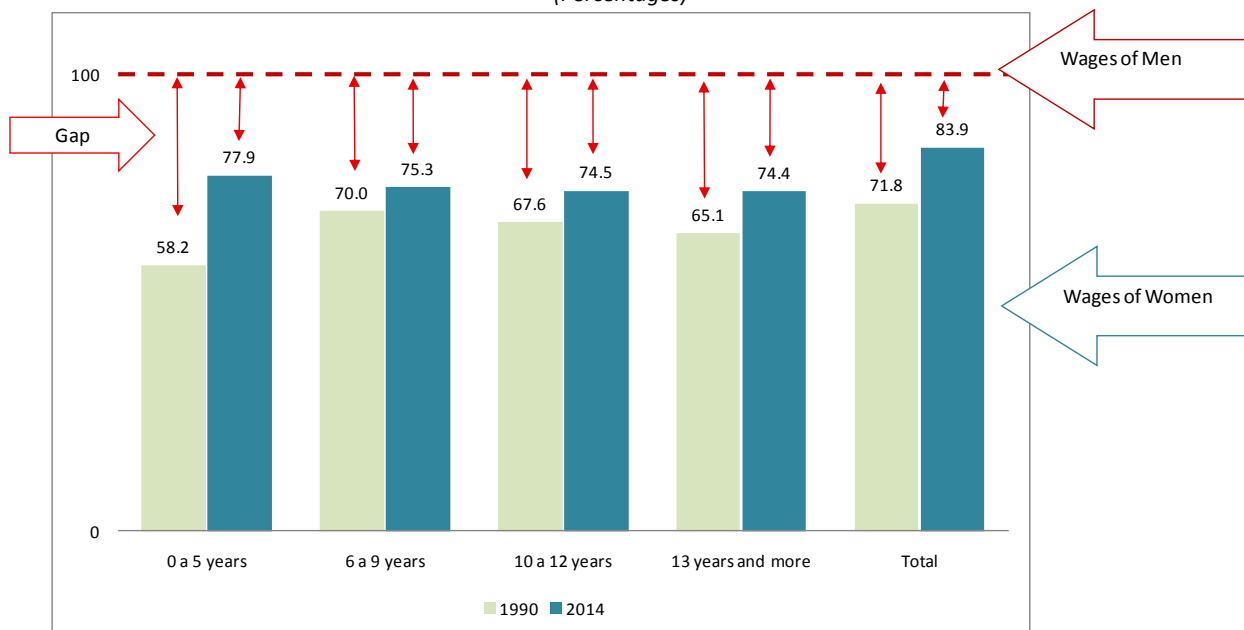


## The wage gap persists between men and women

The gender wage gap, reflecting discrimination and inequality in the labor market, has declined in the region in recent decades, although insufficiently. It remains an important obstacle to women's economic autonomy, and to overcoming poverty and inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The decrease of 12.1 percentage points between 1990 and 2014 of the wage gap represents progress towards equal pay between women and men in Latin America. However the salary of women is still only 84 percent of the amount men earn. This situation demonstrates differences depending on the educational level of the employed persons.

**Latin America (weighted average of 18 countries): Proportion of the average wage of urban salaried women aged 20 to 49, who work 35 hours or more per week, compared to the wages of men with the same characteristics, by years of schooling, 1990 and 2014**  
(Percentages)



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Statistics Division, Social Statistics Unit, on the basis of special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries.

The highest decrease in the wage gap (19.7 percentage points) was observed in the group of women with the lowest education level, those with 0-5 years of schooling. This is due to two factors. Firstly,

advances in legislative measures towards the formalization and regulation of paid domestic work, setting minimum hourly wage rates and establishing maximum times of the working day. Secondly, the increase of minimum wages and its use in several countries to homogenise the increase in income of employed persons without qualification.

For women with the highest education levels (13 years and more of education) the gap decreased by 9.3 percentage points. The inclusion of women in areas such as science and technology, telecommunications and large companies, may be contributing to improve the situation, even without creating equality: the gap between women and men is still 25.6 points, showing that the investment in education and vocational training of women has not impacted their earnings in line with those of men with the same training.

In the intermediate levels of education (6 to 9 years and 10 to 12 years of schooling) the wage gap has not substantially modified.

**Earning the same as men under equal conditions is a woman's right, and a requisite for her autonomy as well as for the achievement of gender equality.**

### **Main measures to address the gender wage gap:**

- Promote spaces for collective bargaining and active participation of female workers, which in many cases has allowed the wage increase and the reduction of inequality between men and women.
- Improve minimum wages since the implementation and improvement of these promotes the advancement of equality in sectors with lower remuneration and where more women are employed.
- Implement labor market regulations that ensure higher co-responsibility of care through instruments such as paternity leave, recognition of caring responsibilities of both female and male employees, and collective and corporate solutions in order to give both, men and women, equal training opportunities, promotions, overtime, and other work commitments that improve payroll.

***“Without gender equality, sustainable development is neither development nor sustainable”***

**Division for Gender Affairs, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean**

<http://www.cepal.org/en/work-areas/gender-affairs>

