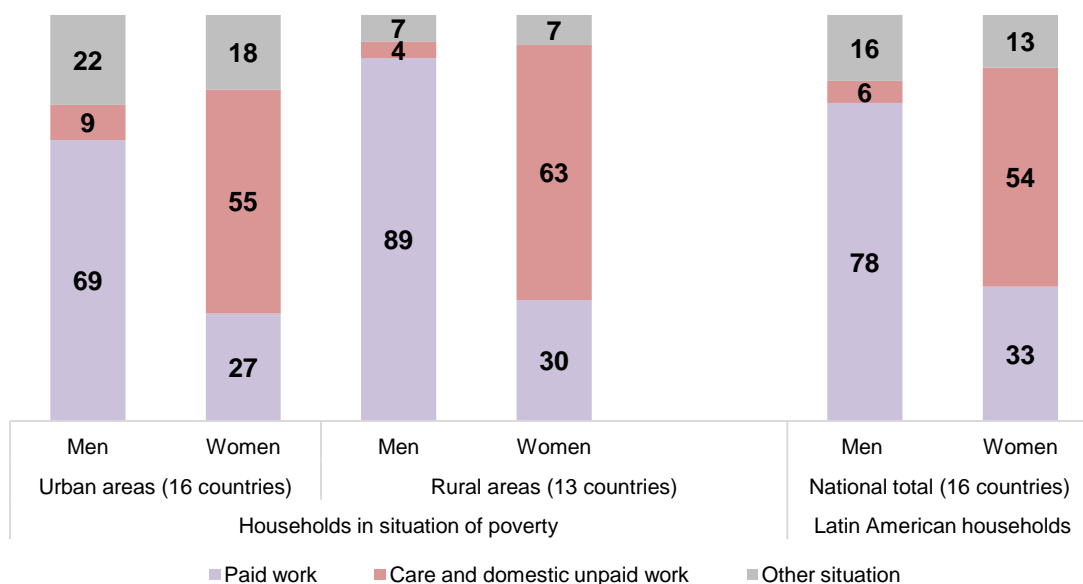




## Girl children and adolescents and the early construction of gender roles

One of the critical elements that explains gender inequality in the region relates to the current gender division of labour and the early segmentation of gender roles. Around 2013, 23% of girl adolescents between 15 and 17 years old did not attend school in Latin America (16 countries). Of those, 87% are working, either in the public or private sphere, whether receiving income or not: 54% are dedicated to unpaid care and domestic work and 33% are in remunerated employment. This situation is most prevalent for girl adolescents that live in rural areas and in households in situation of poverty. Between male adolescents of this same age that do not attend school, only 6% are dedicated to unpaid care and domestic work and the majority are inserted in the labour market.

**Latin America: Adolescents between 15 and 17 years old that do not attend school according to sex, main activity, poverty situation and area of residence, around 2013 (weighted average)**  
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC), based on special tabulations of the respective country's household survey data.

In nine countries of Latin America, time-use surveys allow for the identification of the average weekly hours that adolescents between 15 to 17 years old dedicate to non-remunerated work (Brazil,

Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Uruguay). In all cases, girl adolescents dedicate more hours to this type of work than male adolescents, and in five of these countries, this reaches 20 hours a week or more, half of a working week of 40 hours.

These figures demonstrate how non-remunerated care work and its unequal distribution obstructs access to education for girl children and adolescents, and alerts to the early hold of cultural patterns that perpetuate gender inequality in families, in school and in the community.

On the International Day of the Girl Child, it is fundamental to emphasise the need to consolidate specific information and analysis about their situation, to generate evidence for the design of policies that eradicate the barriers that affect girl children and adolescents in order to achieve their autonomy and exercise of rights, and assure their well-being in the present and the future. This is considered in the Regional Gender Agenda produced after almost 40 years of construction (please see: <http://conferenciamujer.cepal.org/13/en/documents/40-years-regional-gender-agenda>), engaging governments in the region to implement public policies in diverse sectors, including education, sexual and reproductive health, prevention of child and adolescent motherhood, action against all forms of gender violence and discrimination from childhood, as well as the participation of girl children and adolescents in decisions that affect them.

**Principal measures for combating the unequal gender distribution of work from childhood:**

1. Consolidate integrated care policies with a gender focus as a component of systems of social protection that make visible and improve the situation of girl children and adolescents that carry out care work.
2. Implement communication and education strategies to promote the social co-responsibility of care-giving between men and women and to dismantle the gender stereotypes from childhood, stopping school desertion for reasons connected to care work.
3. Consider, in particular, the situation of girl children and adolescents in poor households, with disabilities, from indigenous peoples or Afro-descendent.

**It is urgent to eradicate all forms of gender discrimination that begin in childhood.**

***“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>

<http://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/40180-ninas-adolescentes-america-latina-caribe-deudas-igualdad>

