

# Reshaping beliefs to promote higher female labor participation in Chile

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## Summary

- Over the last 30 years **the female labor participation rate (FLPR) in Chile has been consistently increasing, but there is still a significant gender gap remaining**, mostly explained by married and low educated women.
- **Cultural factors influence women's decisions to work** and, currently, there are no specific policies aimed at tackling them. **Women that are married or have low education seem to have “sexist” reactions towards women work.**
- **Specific interventions that change women's beliefs can impact their actions by motivating them to join the paid work force.**
- **An informational and motivational campaign as well as gender discussions in the secondary school curriculum could impact beliefs** in the short run, ultimately leading to movements in the FLPR and adjustments in the social norms and preferences in the long run.

## What you will find in this document

- 1 Some preliminary findings on Chile's FLPR
- 2 Why is female labor participation important?
- 3 What are the determinants of female labor participation and how do cultural factors interact?
- 4 How do we measure the impact of cultural factors on behavior?
- 5 What are the key findings of the survey?
- 6 How could policy help to tackle cultural factors to incentivize more female labor participation?
- 7 Policy 1: Informational Campaign
- 8 Policy 2: Gender discussions in schools

## 1 Some preliminary findings on Chile's FLPR

Chile stands out as a country within a **strong path of development** but, when comparing its FLPR to regional peers with similar GDP per capita, **the Chilean gender disparity is higher.**



Over the last 30 years, **the FLPR** has been consistently increasing, **from 35% in 1990 to 53% in 2010**, but the growth had a major slowdown since then and **its currently at 58%.**



The growth of the FLPR has been driven by the **inclusion of women that are married, have low education or have children.** Still, there is a remaining **gender gap of 27%**, mostly explained by the first two groups.



## 2 Why is female labor participation important?

Fostering opportunities to include women in the labor force has several benefits for women's independence and personal development as well as for the economic development of Chile:

### Economic Outcomes

Potential productivity increase, average increase of GDP of 5-10%, considering the demographic bond (Wodon et al., 2018)

### Social Development Outcomes

Women's multidimensional development (Pande et al., 2016).  
Breaks poverty vicious cycle.  
Poverty and income inequality reduction (Contreras et al., 2005)

### Health Outcomes

Potential personal and children's health benefits (Bennet et al., 2015)

### EQUALITY

Gender equality in Latin America and in Chile

## 3 What are the determinants of female labor participation and how do cultural factors interact?

There are many policies aiming at increasing the **female labor participation** by tackling some of these observable issues but none of them focus directly on **cultural factors**:

### Barriers to entry

Supply and demand side factors, **regulations**, etc.

### Demographics

Age, marital status, children

### Cultural Factors

### Social and human capital

**Education**, experience, social connections, **poverty** and **vulnerability**

#### 05 | Social Norms

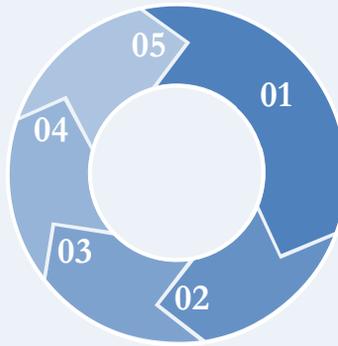
Standards describing desirable behavior or average beliefs held by a group regarding women's work, shaped through practices and adopted by the community (Bernhardt, 2018)

#### 04 | General Equilibrium

Female Labor Participation Rate

#### 03 | Individual Actions

Women's decision to work



#### 01 | Beliefs

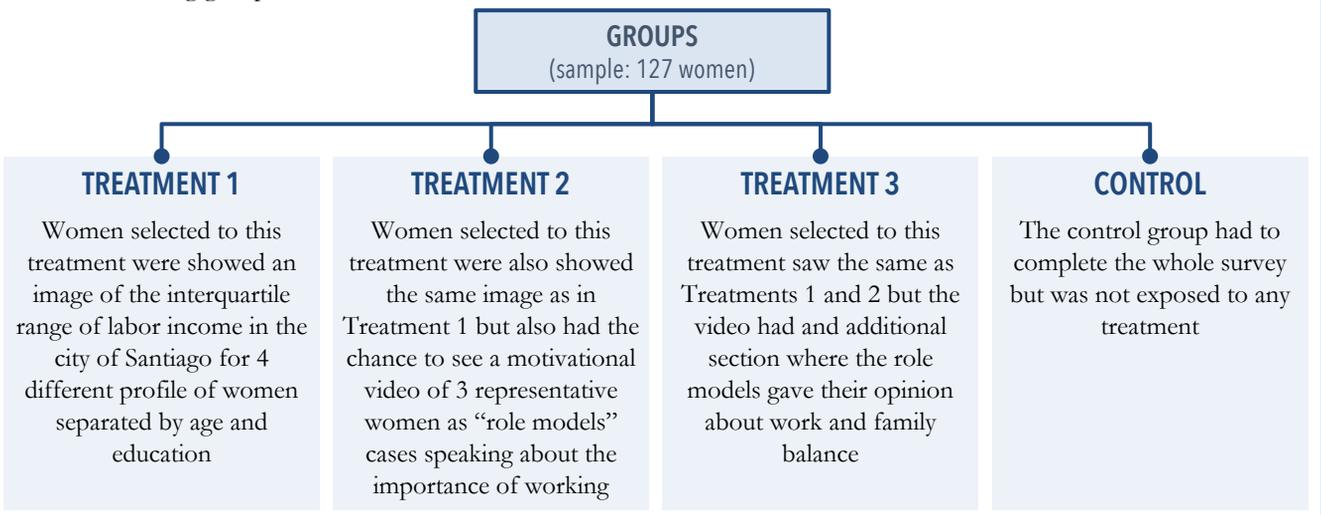
Women's positive or negative evaluation of particular behaviors: (1) their role in society or outside the house, (2) what other people think on women's role, including their partner, family and community, (3) their own capabilities at work, and (4) the economic returns to labor

#### 02 | Preferences

Women's disposition to work, which is influenced by expectations and the behavior, beliefs, and outcomes of other people (social preferences)

## 4 How do we measure the impact of cultural factors on behavior?

A survey was carried out in Santiago (Chile) to understand the beliefs influencing women's decisions to work and analyzed the effect of an intervention in those beliefs to predict a potential change in behavior by assigning women into one the following groups:



## 5 What are the key findings of the survey?

a

Which characteristics best represent women whose beliefs are more conservative towards women's work?

Women that are married, have low education or didn't have a working mother seem to have more sexist responses than the overall sample.

b

Can information and motivation update women's beliefs?

The results indicate that the different treatments had significant effects in updating some women's beliefs.

c

Which groups of women are more affected by the treatments?

Treatments have a larger effect on women that are sexist, non-single, have low levels of education, or/and didn't have a working mother.

d

How do men's beliefs affect women's decisions?

Married women's decision to work is now less influenced by the husband's income but still men's beliefs influence women and they are much more sexist, having negative consequences over women's decisions to work.

## 6 How could policy help to tackle cultural factors to incentivize more female labor participation?

Taking into account that women's beliefs about their own abilities and on their role in society are important constraints to female labor supply, two possible policy concrete actions are recommended:

### 1 Informational Campaign

A public campaign would **raise awareness about the most relevant beliefs** affecting women's desire to participate in the labor market.

It should provide information and motivation about women's economic returns to labor, their capabilities and how to manage a family-work balance by **showing stories of different women and men** so they can see themselves represented and feel encouraged by the others' success.



### 2 Gender Discussions in Schools

The incorporation of **gender equality discussions to the secondary school curriculum** of public and voucher schools of the country would articulate and strengthen the current educational framework by including discussion on topics such as gender stereotypes, gender roles at home, women's employment outside the home and harassment.



## 7 Policy 1: Informational Campaign (continues in next page...)

Key success factors:



### DESIGN

Focus groups to test and define the exact message of the campaign as well as the distribution channels to enhance its impact



### TARGETING

Content should be specifically directed to the targeted groups (married and low educated women, as well as men)



### EVALUATION

Learning instances to strengthen the impact of the campaign by analyzing the link between beliefs and women's actions, as well as potential external barriers to those actions

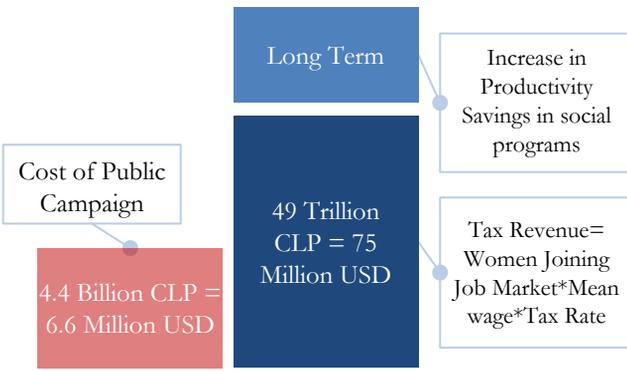
## 7 Policy 1: Informational Campaign

What is the cost-benefit analysis of this policy?

### FISCAL ANALYSIS

Cost

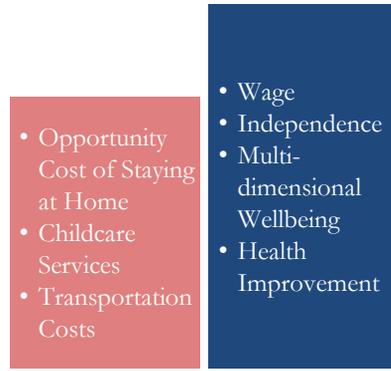
Benefit



### SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Cost

Benefit



The policy is highly cost-effective as the benefits largely outset the costs. Calculations suggest an increase of up to 6 percentage points in the FLPR from this type of policy.

## 8 Policy 2: Gender discussions in schools

Key success factors:



### EVIDENCE

According to evidence of similar programs in other countries, students are young enough to have malleable beliefs but mature to be able to reflect on issues (Dhar et al., 2018)



### PILOTING

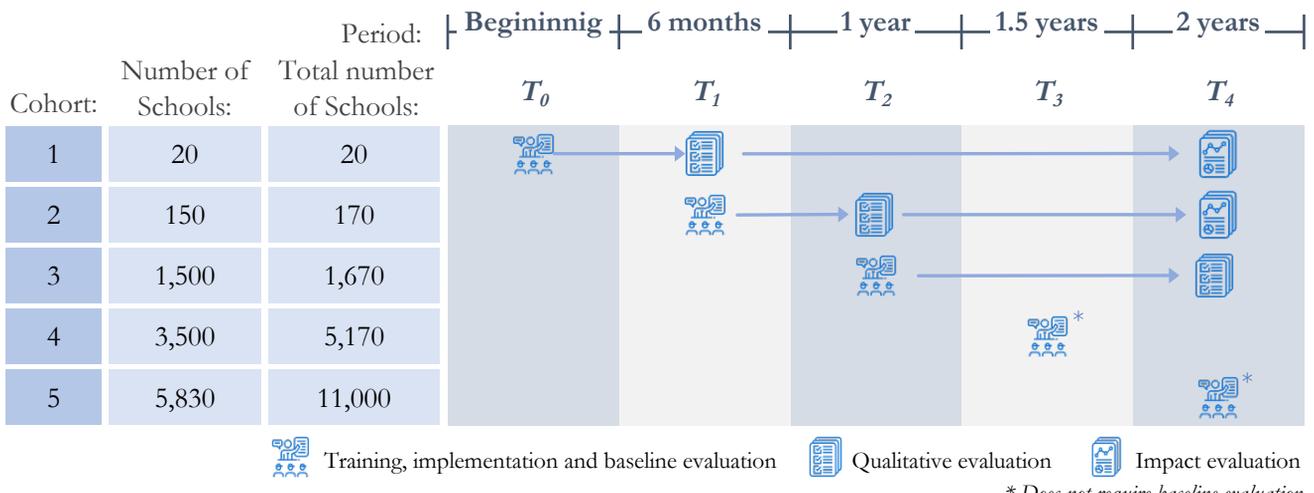
Implementing the program in 20 schools of Santiago and running a randomized control trial evaluation will give valuable information to improve the program effectiveness



### SCALING UP

The scale up process of the program all along the country should have 5 phases in a 2-year time frame and it should always be closely tied to evaluation and monitoring

Implementation and evaluation strategy:



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