

GENDER EQUITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Reflections from Latin America and the Caribbean

EDITED BY

Gloria Nancy Ríos Yepes, Marisol Salamanca Olmos
and Laura Andrea Cristancho Giraldo



Gender Equity and Economic Development

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Contents

About the Editors	vii
About the Contributors	ix
Prologue	xiii
Preface	xix
Acknowledgments	xxi

Part I: Advances in Gender Equality as a Contribution to Growth and Development from Public Policies in Latin America

Chapter 1 Certification Mark as a Public Policy for Female Entrepreneurship in Colombia <i>Edel Rocío Lasso Silva, Martha Inés Moreno Medel and Lenyd Angélica Riaño Martínez</i>	3
Chapter 2 Perspectives on the Practical Implications of Gender Equality in Latin America <i>Johanna Rosalí Reyes-Reinoso and Angel Aurelio Morocho-Macas</i>	21
Chapter 3 Intersectionality is a Perspective That Invites Us to Link Geographical Spaces, Disciplines and Agendas <i>Maria Isabel Villada Gil and Yessica Alexandra Gómez Zuluaga</i>	35

Part II: Perspectives of Gender Equity in Different Socioeconomic Sectors in Latin America and the Caribbean

Chapter 4 Women in the Daily Grind Between Reproductive Labor and Paid Work in an Urban Poverty Area in León, Guanajuato, Mexico. Culture, Redistribution, and Recognition <i>Célica Esther Cánovas-Marmó</i>	67
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Chapter 5 10 Years of the Labor Market in Colombia for Women <i>José Mauricio Salazar Sáenz and Juliana Morad Acero</i>	85
Chapter 6 Gender Gap in Social and Financial Security: Effects of Government Support in Mexico for Women in Their Family Environment <i>Alfredo Omar Palafox Roca and Ángel Wilhelm Vázquez García</i>	99
Part III: Gender Equality as a Strategy from Productive Organizations	
Chapter 7 Gender Equity and Business Performance <i>Luz Esperanza Bohórquez Arévalo</i>	121
Chapter 8 Gender Equity in Educational Institutions: Strategies and Experiences in Mexico and Costa Rica <i>Jonathan Salas Segura and Leticia Téllez Hernández</i>	133
Chapter 9 Labor Income Gap in the Tourism Sector in Colombia: A Gender Equity Approach <i>Gloria Nancy Ríos Yepes, Tatiana Polanía Cerinza, Marisol Salamanca Olmos, Laura Cristancho Giraldo and Sebastián Chacón Marín</i>	149

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Prologue

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In anguish I cried out to the Lord and He answered me from space
in freedom.

(Victor [Frankl, 2024](#), from the book *Man's Search for Meaning*)

Gender inequality gaps continue to be a reality in Latin American and Caribbean countries, and they constitute a challenge for academia, companies and governments that seek to guarantee the right to substantive equality between women and men. Legally, the asymmetries also show an urgent need if progress is to be made on the issues of equity and justice for all the inhabitants of the region.

Inequality and asymmetries are maintained institutionally, that is, at a level of social reality that defines what is established, what is legally regulated and reproduced by culture, ideas, values and beliefs ([Schvarstein, 2010](#)). In this way, organizations materialize and reproduce those aspects instituted, so it is necessary to change the conditions in which academia, companies and government interact to generate spaces and public policies that reduce the sources of economic inequality: differences in the formation of human capital and discrimination ([Parkin, 2009](#)).

According to [UN Women for Latin America and the Caribbean \(2024\)](#), there are five areas to be developed to accelerate women's equality and rights: ending poverty and inequality; putting in place transformative financing to achieve gender equality; moving toward sustainable development and a care society; and, finally, supporting feminisms and movements that promote change. In this sense, UN Women directly involves the governments of the region through public policies to level the playing field in markets and not to evade the responsibility implied by a social contract without polarization. On the other hand, the reflection invites women to use their economic resources and education as weapons of economic and social empowerment. To demand equal treatment by gender but also by age or ethnic or racial group.

The conditions of women in the Latin American and Caribbean region, since the health emergency caused by COVID-19, have worsened. The organization considers that by 2030, 342 million women and girls could be in conditions of poverty, because they are at greater risk of economic exclusion. If the trend set by the UN

continues, most single-parent households in the region headed by women are at greater risk due to the double shift faced by women and the economic and educational lag of minors. The Latin American and Caribbean region represents the region with the highest percentage of single-parent households worldwide with 11% (UN Women, 2019). Hence, the importance of proposing changes in public policy to promote substantive equality and promote family correspondence in care from institutions: business, school-university, government agencies, among others.

Part of the circumstances that aggravate the situation by gender are violence and climate change. Although there are no international armed conflicts in the region, there are internal conflicts between different groups, including drug cartels whose operations are international in nature. These conflicts lead to forced migration processes and eventually lead to processes of political uncertainty.

According to the [Inter-American Development Bank \(IDB\) and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development \(OECD\) \(2021\)](#), the region has experienced changes in migration patterns, specifically derived from the crises in Venezuela and Haiti. In addition, changes in US policy pose risks to Mexican, Central American and Haitian migrants. This situation worsens the condition of women and other vulnerable groups, many of them in a condition of migratory transit in more than one nation-state. In the case of Haitians, for example, from the Northern Triangle of Central America to Mexico and, later, to the United States.

Thus, migratory processes aggravate the condition of these groups in various territories, especially the most vulnerable. This situation, in the case of women who, through substantive equality policies, begin to be considered subjects of government support through social security programs, subsidized services and tax exemptions, may not be as effective as the design of these policies suggests, due to social and economic factors that tend to have a greater impact on the most vulnerable groups. This is the case of people displaced by organized crime and increases in transaction costs due to floor rights or extortion of entrepreneurs.

Although income redistribution policies exist, it is expected that, worldwide, 75% of countries will maintain cuts in public spending by 2025 (UN, 2024, para. 7), due to global economic conditions, especially the increase in fuel and food prices.

Hence, the need for the following actors to be considered in the discussion on how to solve the problems of gender inequality and economic development:

- (a) Governments in charge of designing public policies and carrying them out through different levels of government and of providing safe spaces and managing monetary and/or fiscal support mechanisms.
- (b) The academy that investigates the conditions of the groups involved in the processes of change and that evaluates the progress of these policies with indicators. No less important is the process of education in gender equality.
- (c) The economic groups that interact in the markets and decide on the factors of production, including those that are the object of public policy.

The above actors find themselves in geopolitical conditions that are crossed by forced and unforced migratory processes and in most cases with subjects in an irregular condition. In addition, climate change has led to changes in living

conditions and production processes, as well as to take protective measures with increasing expenses for governments in the region. All of the above implies the need to coordinate efforts to achieve substantive changes in the living conditions of women and their families. Likewise, these processes of change are crossed by different technological and automation changes that imply labor modifications by gender and age group that must be evaluated from the perspective of women and those in vulnerability (due to poverty, social exclusion or discrimination).

Hence, we propose the importance of rescuing the proposals around gender equity, from *the other*: the subject of public policy, affirmative action and substantive equality. In the words of Segato (2013), we propose an “anthropology questioned, requested, demanded by the peoples who for a century served as its object” (p. 14). In other words, we propose an epistemic change on the subject of study or public policy, in this case on women and vulnerable groups, including members of the LGBTTTIQ+ community. Epistemic change supposes, as Vasilachis (2013) states, a new way of approaching the object and seeks to avoid and perpetuate epistemic violence through research and public policies.

Vasilachis (2013) proposes the epistemology of the known subject, which affirms that in every human being, regardless of their condition or gender, there is an essential identity and an existential identity. The first concerns the existence of an essential equality among human beings and, therefore, an equal capacity to know and contribute knowledge to the social sciences and to explain both the causes of gender disparities and to propose strategies to eliminate them. Existential identity, on the other hand, implies an individual condition related to the conditions of intersectionality that cross each human being.

If we start from the above, it is possible to consider the perspectives of women as subjects capable of proposing alternatives or novel proposals, based on their essential identity, from forms of economic organization other than for-profit organizations. We are talking about the set of organizations around the social economy or social enterprise, including cooperatives and mutual societies and those forms of cooperation with tradition and ethnic-cultural roots. Indigenous and Afro-descendant groups, as well as ethnic minorities, can combine new ways or strategies to face the processes of economic crisis and vulnerability to which the capitalist system exposes them.

Proof of this are the indigenous community-based organizations that include support networks in other indigenous communities with common cultural elements, either outside their original territory or in geographical spaces of different nation-states, without legal borders necessarily constituting an obstacle to cooperation. The case of the Maya and Apaches in the southern and northern regions of Mexico organized in support and cooperation networks in Guatemala and the United States, respectively, or the Wayúu nation in Colombia and Venezuela, are examples of support networks based on an ethnic identity, in a common territory within a country or region without borders between countries.

The backwardness accumulated through centuries of domination, first colonial and later, of the dominant capitalist mode of production, entrenched in the patriarchal system, has meant economic exclusion and greater poverty in the Latin American and Caribbean region compared to other regions in the world. This lag

is explained by the Eurocentrism in economic modernization policies: resuming the experiences of industrialization, trends in the sectors and technological processes by branches of economic activity, the orientation toward external demand of the economies of the region as exporters of products with little added value and the late industrialization processes, among others. Likewise, managerial strategies on work control and job insecurity increased by lax legislation, migratory processes and displacements due to economic conditions and armed conflicts, among others.

This lag poses new challenges for economic decision-makers: starting from new ideas and concepts to bring about substantive changes in people's lives, incorporating strategies that promote mutual aid, networking, community strengthening, family correspondence, while continuing to work on aspects of legislation, gender studies and transparency on women's conditions.

In this sense, we accept [Dussel's \(2002\)](#) proposal of the concept of transmodernity, which involves recovering the once autonomous forms of organization and life that were omitted in the European concept of modernity; likewise, as [Quijano \(2014\)](#) states, to reject the idea of race as the basis of a system of economic domination and social discrimination that leads to the invisibility and exclusion of millions of subjects with their own alternatives.

From the academy, it is necessary to take up the relevant aspects that break with the dominant idea of reason. Hence, new topics of interest are proposed both in Organizational Theory and related fields of Social Sciences and in Organizational Studies and Humanities, to work from a critical vision on issues related to power asymmetries, gender inequality, the ways of ideological legitimation of differences, among others ([Montaño, 2024](#)). This opportunity, from the construction of Critical Organizational Studies, means keeping in mind the objective of achieving gender equity and economic development, giving a glimpse of topics of study such as gender equity, its implications and market conditions for female entrepreneurship, decolonization based on exposing cultural practices in domestic labor markets and the study of democracy and equity in relation to women's organizational experiences and current legislation for the region.

The book that is now presented *Gender Equity and Economic Development: Reflections from Latin America and the Caribbean* offered by the Granacolombiano Polytechnic and the Metropolitan Autonomous University, Xochimilco unit (UAM-X), seeks to recover different proposals and reflections from academia, business and government that can contribute to identifying the main problems and propose alternatives from different actors that allow gender equality to be achieved.

The document is the product of the XVIII Seminar on Economics and IV International Symposium on Gender Equity that is organized annually through the Faculty of Business, Management and Sustainability. The School of Business and International Development of the POLI Groancolombiano, as well as the Department of Economic Production of the UAM-Xochimilco, proposes us to address this issue from the following lines of work:

- (a) Line of work number 1 focuses on public policies and intersectionality and involves the discussion on focused transfers, positive discrimination.

- (b) In line of work number 2, labor prospects are discussed, suggesting the need to reduce gender asymmetries through adjustments to labor legislation. A relevant aspect consists of the need to avoid inequality in treatment, discrimination based on gender, age, or ethnic/racial group.
- (c) Finally, line of work number 3 seeks to discuss strategies and experiences from productive organizations and the alternatives that may exist as part of compensation policies.

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Preface

This book is presented as a proposal for analysis and reflection on the dialogue established between *academia, organizations, and states*, identifying the advances in gender equality and economic development in different countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Achieving gender equality contributes to the construction of a more productive society in economic terms, reducing social gaps, increasing access to education, improving quality of life, and promoting greater female participation in the labor market, among others.

The content is developed in three lines of work: Part 1: Advances in Gender Equality as a Contribution to Growth and Development from Public Policies in Latin America addresses a vision from the perspectives and intersectionality of gender equity practices and public policies. The three chapters that make up this line analyze the experiences of gender equity in terms of the persistence of inequalities in social, economic, and political spheres, identifying strategies to promote gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean. The importance of understanding how these inequalities manifest themselves and what have been successful practices in different contexts is highlighted, while the role of intersectionality as a methodological and theoretical tool to consider various forms of oppression of women is reviewed, which has sparked debates on its conceptualization and application in various disciplines. Similarly, the impact of public policies on female entrepreneurship is reviewed, specifically in Colombia, with an emphasis on trademark registration as a strategy for positioning and business growth.

Part 2: Exploring Gender Equity in Latin America's Socioeconomic Sectors: Labor Market Insights and Contributions to Economic Development.

Chapter 4 analyzes the situation of women who perform reproductive work and family care in their homes, while working as domestic workers in other households, living in extreme poverty in León, Guanajuato, Mexico. The findings reveal the need for social redistribution and the lack of recognition that limits their personal and social development. Chapter 5 describes the transformation of the Colombian labor market in the last decade that has affected women in various ways. This chapter analyzes the evolution of labor participation, wages, and income, highlighting the differences by marital status and region. Despite the decrease in labor informality and the increase in educational levels, female labor participation and wages have decreased. It concludes with recommendations to improve gender equality in the labor market. Chapter 6, on the other hand, identifies gender differences in social and financial security during old age in Mexico,

highlighting that women's life expectancy is higher than that of men and that gender stereotypes expose them to economic risks; in this chapter, descriptive statistics are used to show the need for recent social programs for older women in Mexico.

In Part 3: Gender Equality as a Strategy from Productive Organizations, Chapter 7 raises the need to address more research related to gender equity, to provide studies that support the labor productivity of organizations, given that progress has been slow and is limited to implementing practices more due to regulatory issues.

Chapter 8 provides strategies and experiences that promote gender equity in educational institutions in Mexico and Costa Rica, highlighting the positive impact on female participation, opportunities, and their contribution to the development and competitiveness of educational institutions.

Chapter 9 aims to contribute to the identification of the factors that determine the labor income gap in the tourism sector in Colombia, from a gender equity approach for the period 2019–2023. It focuses on this sector, since after the pandemic, it is one of the sectors with the highest growth and with the highest proportion of employed women.

This book will be attractive to organizations, academia, teachers, researchers, and the academic community in general, due to the importance of addressing the issue of gender equity as a relevant factor not only in the growth and economic development of countries but also in the greater productivity it represents for organizations, in addition to contributing with literature that supports the practice of gender equality, presenting various strategies and experiences throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, which can have a positive impact on the reality of communities and organizations.

Acknowledgments

THANKS

“The first equality is equity.” (Victor Hugo)

Gratitude to all those researchers, organizations that have joined and trusted in this project, with the aim of adding voices in the search to recognize and implement gender equality.

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Part I

**Advances in Gender Equality as a
Contribution to Growth and Development
from Public Policies in Latin America**

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Chapter 1

Certification Mark as a Public Policy for Female Entrepreneurship in Colombia

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Abstract

This chapter examines public policies and their contribution to female entrepreneurship, with a focus on the registration of certification marks for their positioning and social, cultural, and economic legitimization. These policies, established by the national government, seek to include women in the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Colombia. In the year 2021, a law called “Creo en Ti” (I Believe in You) was passed, which seeks to strengthen and encourage the constitution, formalization, and sustainability of businesses to consolidate their participation in the market, improve their productive system, and achieve recognition in the areas of local, regional, and national economic growth and development. One of these incentives is the achievement of a distinctive sign through the creation of a certification mark. The objective is to analyze how public policies contribute to female entrepreneurship in obtaining this registration in Colombia and the strategies to strengthen and position their businesses. The methodological development is a mixed descriptive approach, which analyzes public policies on the subject. The sample includes female entrepreneurs of two projects, which meet the requirements to apply for the registration of a trademark. As a result, it is evident that although there are public policies that favor female entrepreneurship and the registration of their trademarks, women do not benefit adequately from them due to a lack of knowledge of these policies. For this

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reason, awareness raising and accompaniment in the registration process as a relevant intangible asset for their businesses is crucial.

Keywords: Female entrepreneurship; distinctive sign; brands; public policies; gender tourism; business

Introduction

In Colombia, it is very frequent that the economy of families is based on female entrepreneurship. These enterprises are the origin of family resources and sources of income generation, participating significantly in the country's gross domestic product (GDP). However, not all enterprises reach the brand certification process, which allows them to position themselves in the market. To understand this dynamic, we will start with the concept of female entrepreneurship, considering gender tourism and concepts such as women entrepreneurs and brand registration in the context of public policies. Statistical data on the participation of this type of entrepreneurship and its contribution to the labor market of Colombian companies will be used.

Female entrepreneurship in Colombia is a pillar for the economy, given the recognition given to women for the contribution of their business, bringing with it innovation, economic growth, and social and cultural development (Tourism Sector Plan 2022–2026). This generates a process of transformation, evidencing women achieve satisfactory results that enable them to obtain resources through good performance, innovation, competitiveness, and productivity of their undertakings, where their leadership and entrepreneurship, supported by technology, prevail; this generates a process of transformation, evidencing the participation of women in political, cultural, social, environmental, and economic spheres of the regions and decreasing gender gaps (Albornoz et al., 2019).

To identify research on female entrepreneurship, a review and analysis of different studies is presented, including research articles, doctoral theses, reflections, and documents of governmental and nongovernmental programs at national and international levels. This analysis will establish concepts such as female entrepreneurship, distinctive signs, brands, public policies, and gender tourism. The study showed that exclusion, poverty, and violence are social realities with a greater presence among women. For this reason, it is necessary to develop greater opportunities to overcome these problems, seeking empowerment, confidence, and management of each one through their enterprises. It is important to promote social capital in different population groups excluded due to ethnicity, age, disability, and other cultural forms that have predominated, demanding a change that contributes to the elimination of social gaps (Ramírez et al., 2017).

Generally, in emerging countries, leaders include in their government programs public policies that benefit women entrepreneurs who require some type of financing to launch their ventures. These ventures are usually of a social nature, offering solutions to social problems and contributing to minimize the

social imbalance of their environment, creating sustainable social value (Guzmán Vásquez & Trujillo Dávila, 2008).

Considering the above, the Colombian National Government establishes public policies that favor women's entrepreneurship. This can be demonstrated in the study called public policies for social entrepreneurship as a mechanism for women's inclusion in Latin America (Moreno et al., 2019), where it is mentioned that Colombia is the leader in the number of programs focused on female entrepreneurship, with 23 programs. Since the study conducted, the Colombian state has established new programs that favor this type of entrepreneurship, highlighting the one called #EllaHaceHistoria, presented by the Presidential Council for Women's Equity and Facebook, in commemoration of the World Day of Women Entrepreneurs. This program aims to "exalt the efforts of women entrepreneurs and train many others to encourage them to start their own business, in all departments of the country," focusing their training on digital marketing (Vice Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, 2019). Similarly, Bancóldex provides an exclusive credit line aimed at supporting women microentrepreneurs, called Empresarias Empoderadas, which seeks to benefit close to 20,000 Colombian businesswomen, with favorable financial conditions in terms and terms (Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, 2020b).

On the other hand, and due to the health situation that affected the entire world, the National Government invited entrepreneurs and businessmen, including women, to create innovative projects to counteract the effects of COVID-19 (Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, 2020a). During 2021, 307,679 productive units were created, and during 2022, there were 310,731 new companies (1% more than in 2021), where 62.5% correspond to enterprises led by women, mainly at the level of microenterprises, followed by small, medium, and large. This evidence shows the positive effects of public policies on female entrepreneurship (Confecámaras, 2023a).

Likewise, public policies have sought to strengthen rural women's entrepreneurship. Law 731 of 2002 established norms to improve the quality of life of rural women, prioritizing low-income women and establishing specific measures aimed at accelerating equity between rural men and women (Congress of Colombia, 2002). In the program "Generating sustainable income for rural women" (Ministry of Labor, 2022), the importance given by the leaders to rural women's entrepreneurship is highlighted, "in a joint effort with the union sector, we will bet on turning many rural women into entrepreneurs, within the framework of the gender approach, in the policy of peace with legality."

Finally, it can be evidenced that entrepreneurship, epistemologically, is an action that comprises the start of a business, assuming internal and external risks, with high expectations in the achievement of a business dream (Forero-Bernal & Durán-Duarte, 2019).

In worldwide statistical studies that will be shown later in this research, it is evident that the sanitary situation incentivized the need for trademark registration worldwide, since the trade of products and services turned to the use of technology. With the need to protect their trademark, entrepreneurs and businessmen carried out the respective process.

Another aspect to consider is how global tourism has become an important element of the economy and a catalyst for innovation and entrepreneurship, due to the demand for products and services with added value and competitive advantage. Together, tourism and intellectual property contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as 8 (Boost employment and decent work for inclusive and sustainable growth), 9 (Build sustainable infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization, and innovation), 12 (Implement sustainable consumption and production strategies), and 14 (Strengthen strategies for the sustainable development of marine resources) in order to create an ecosystem that contributes to investment in the sector (WIPO and UNWTO, 2021).

Latin America needs to strategically take advantage of its tourism potential, differentiating itself from other regions. In this sense, community-based tourism has evolved toward a form of business organization, which is possible given the implementation of strategies that promote democratic and solidarity-based employment habits. This seeks to improve the quality of tourism services, becoming a key factor in promoting decent work and consolidating brands and other distinctive signs, both individually and collectively, as added value to the community tourism system. Additionally, it contributes to optimizing costs and generating differentiating factors that boost commercial activities in economies of scale, considerably improving the safety of users (García, 2006).

Reviewing statistical data on the impact of the policy on the registration of trademarks in Classes 29, 30, and 31 in the International Classification of Goods and Services (NIZA), it is evident that the increase in the registration of trademarks has a significant increase in those related to agricultural products. It is observed that it went from 3,210 applications filed in 2019 to 4,132 in 2020, 4,114 in 2021, and with a growth of 72% in relation to 2019 with 5,518 (see Fig. 1.1).

Regarding the behavior related to tourism activities with classification NIZA 39 and 43 went from 2,429 applications filed in 2019 to 2,279 in 2020, having a slight decrease of 7.4% because it was one of the most affected sectors in the pandemic by COVID-19 worldwide; in 2021, it presented a slight increase of 14% compared to the previous year and 7.1% from the base year; but the year 2022 is really the boom year for this sector and where the impact is evident with a growth of 37.77% compared to 2019 with 3,903 applications filed as shown in Fig. 1.2.

It is worth mentioning that the statistical data presented above do not have information on how many of these records correspond to enterprises or companies led by women; it is expected that with the data required by Law 2125 of 2021, these results can be obtained later.

The national public policies that address entrepreneurship are the National Entrepreneurship Policy of the government of Juan Manuel Santos (2010–2018), which promotes the participation of women in entrepreneurship and business, by establishing training programmers, access to financing, and support for entrepreneurs, included in the document CONPES 4011 (National Planning Department, 2020). Similarly, the Government of Iván Duque (2018–2022), contemplated in the National Development Plan (National Planning Department, 2019), called Pact for Colombia and for Equity, strengthening entrepreneurship by legitimizing

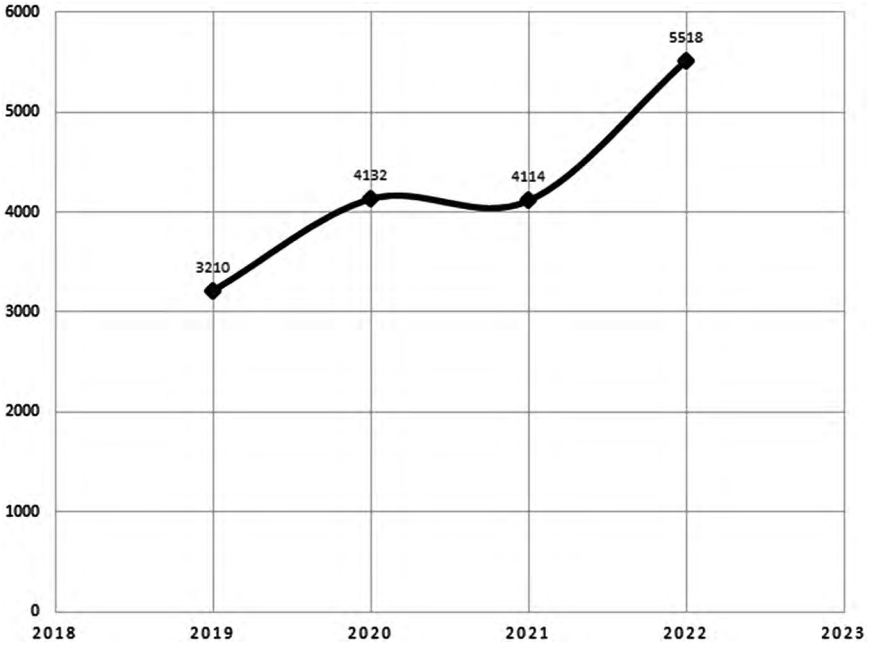


Fig. 1.1. Applications Filed by NICE Classification Filing Routes 29, 30, and 31. Source: Own production based on SIC intellectual property (IP) statistics (2023).

it and committed to the generation of public policies to strengthen female entrepreneurship, according to CONPES 4080 (National Planning Department, 2022) called Public Policy on Gender Equality for Women: toward the sustainable development of the country. The Plan de Gobierno “Colombia, potencia mundial de la vida” and Gustavo Petro’s policy of life and peace (2022–2026) (National Planning Department, 2023), committed to consolidating women’s empowerment as a factor for change, given women’s significant contribution to the country’s economic growth and development. Likewise, Law 2125 and its regulatory decrees are the baseline for the research. These initiatives seek to guarantee their rights, including a life free of violence, seeking a society free of stereotypes and with governance of this nature, and leadership on gender issues.

All the above focus mainly on Colombia’s commitment to contribute to the SDGs, business management, and sustainability. It is evidenced in the Cultural Tourism Policy through which it contributes to the fulfillment of the SDGs, highlighting Goal 5 (Gender Equality), through which it seeks to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, 2021). However, public policies generated in the plans and programs of the last three governments exalt the importance of female entrepreneurship by defining and regulating entrepreneurship and women’s businesses.

At the level of the Capital District of Bogotá, it is worth mentioning the public policy on women and gender equity PPMyEG 2020–2030 (Secretary of Planning

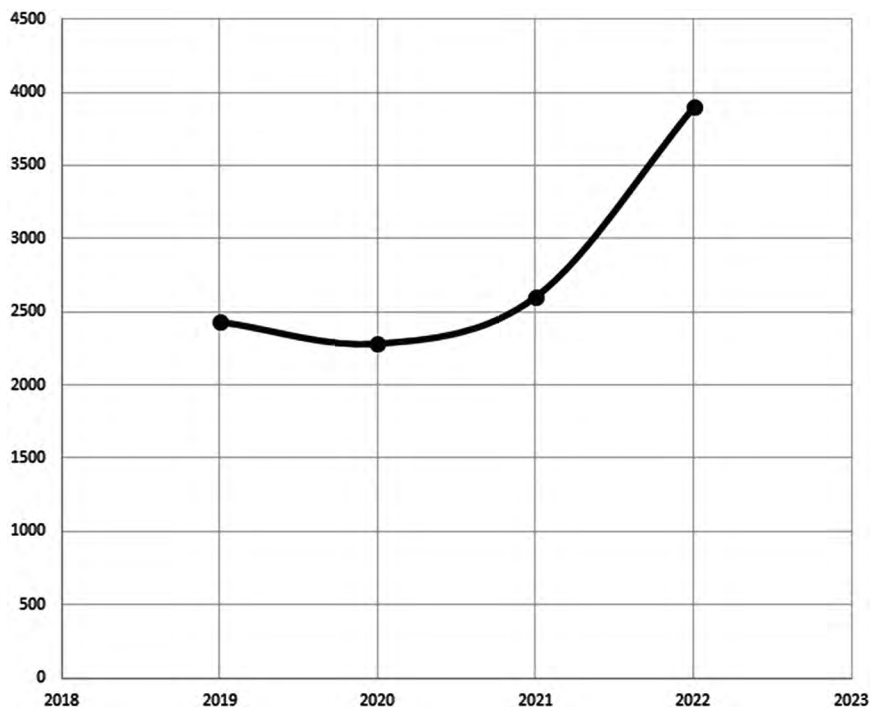


Fig. 1.2. Applications Filed By NICE Classification Filing Routes 39 and 43.
Source: Own production based on SIC IP statistics (2023).

of Bogotá, 2020), the implementation of which legitimizes women’s issues by incorporating them into the city’s public agenda. Its purpose is to ensure the recognition, protection, and restoration of women’s rights, considering the diverse realities and particularities of the regions. This initiative involves efforts to gradually and sustainably transform situations of gender discrimination, inequality, and subordination in public and private settings.

These policies are sometimes not sufficient to cover the social problems for which they were created, since women’s enterprises present greater risks, due to their limited administrative knowledge. They assume this risk by facing it with the collective interest of the entrepreneurs, seeking support from other women with the same needs. Once the change in their lives is evident, they take on the role of leaders for other women with the same difficulties, achieving a collective transformation (Castiblanco, 2013). Their success factors are similar to those of men; however, their concern for quality goods and services at competitive prices stands out, as well as for generating sources of employment. This leads to good results, as they also help other women, sometimes locked in their “glass ceiling to make decisions and grow” (Díaz-Fernández & Echevarría-León, 2016).