



Analysis and proposals of women in the legal sector to promote gender equality in Guatemala

Final report

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“Gender equality has led large companies to rethink whether or not they are complying with it. Companies seek to be more inclusive as it favours their external image.”

Anonymised comment

“There should be more training on gender equality given its relevance at all levels of the firm, for both men and women. The problem of inequality is not just a problem for women.”

Anonymised comment

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the views of the participating institutions and/or affiliated organisations.

1. Message from the Law Society President

Overcoming barriers that prevent women from maximizing their potential in the legal profession is not only an imperative, but a shared responsibility for the future of the profession. For that reason, the Law Society is very proud to have supported this first, country-specific research project and the first report of its kind that is framed on the experiences, challenges, proposals, and potential solutions of women lawyers in Guatemala.

In spite of the extraordinary circumstances created by the pandemic, the Law Society, committed individuals, firms and institutions supported the successful completion of this research project, which shows the resilience and commitment towards achieving gender equality.

We have been privileged to hear from a wide range of women lawyers, at all stages of their careers, united by a shared desire to overcome pervasive and outdated barriers that threaten to hamper their futures. We cannot allow the progress made on gender equality to go backwards. It is our responsibility to continue that progress and to support other women lawyers around the world to break the glass ceiling, so that they can practice law and live their lives without fear of stigma, exclusion, or violence.

This report provides a snapshot of the experience of women lawyers in Guatemala in the hope that there is a clear and forward-looking pathway, for a brighter and more successful future. Many of the report's findings reflect previous research we have conducted in this area, including challenges that obstruct and prevent access to opportunities for women in law. The legal profession must act more assertively and lead by example, taking serious steps to bring about transformative changes. We all have a role to play in advancing this important work.

I. Stephanie Boyce
President
The Law Society

2. Message from UN Women Guatemala

In 2020, within the framework of a strategic alliance with the Law Society, together with the British Embassy in Guatemala, the firms Aguilar Castillo Love, BLP Legal and Dentons Muñoz, this research was developed with the main objective of generating evidence that would allow the design and implementation of measures to strengthen and improve the representation and participation of women in equal conditions in the legal profession.

This research was implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, which have generated new challenges that have also highlighted and exacerbated existing inequalities around the world. The crisis has also offered opportunities for organisational changes in different sectors, providing a platform for rebuilding, reactivating spaces, and transforming practices with women's rights at the centre, and advancing gender equality for the benefit of all.

For this analysis, the structural causes of gender inequalities – such as intersectional discrimination, unequal power dynamics, the culture of violence against women, gender stereotypes, among others – were taken as a point of reference. We also used an innovative methodological approach, based on dialogue and awareness-raising among the entities involved, as well as active listening with women lawyers who participated in the virtual consultation and in the dialogue roundtables.

This research makes a collective contribution to the implementation of General Recommendation No. 33 of the Committee of Experts of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination – CEDAW – on women's access to justice. This calls for promoting dialogue and increasing understanding of the negative effects of gender stereotypes and biases in the justice system, where, in the exercise of their functions, women lawyers and legal professionals can play a key role in advancing the promotion and protection of women's human rights.

The results present us with important challenges – we need to confront intolerance, sexism, and racism, and eliminate all forms of discrimination. It is necessary to continue deepening the analysis of the practice of the legal profession for women, including flexible work, gender pay gaps, unpaid work, and their participation and representation in decision-making spaces.

We must foster a work environment that embraces equality, eradicates prejudice and is inclusive, through concrete actions and solutions that contribute to the access and permanence of women in the labour market on equal conditions, as a basic right.

We acknowledge and reiterate our gratitude to the Law Society, the British Embassy in Guatemala, the firms Aguilar Castillo Love, BLP Legal and Dentons Muñoz for the strategic alliance that has allowed this research, the first of its kind in the country. We also thank the lawyers and legal professionals who participated in the different moments of consultation and dialogue whose opinions, experiences, ideas, and proposals have contributed to the construction of a proposal for relevant actions.

Achieving equality requires collective action. This is the time to take a step forward, so we invite you to lead by example, to transform organisational culture, and to foster diverse, inclusive, and egalitarian work environments.

Adriana Quiñones
Representative
UN Women Guatemala

3. Message from UNESCO

In the world, gender-based discrimination manifests itself in many ways, and impedes women's empowerment in the different spheres of their personal and professional development. Everything counts. In sectors where the doors are closed to women, societies lose out on quality of life and in ensuring transparent and democratic decision-making. But, in no other area is inequality as harmful as in the administration of justice.

The gender participation gap in the legal profession and the absence of a women's perspective in this area can lead to the reproduction of harmful patterns and biases that affect both men and women. The paradox is that this is a sector that is called upon to correct injustices!

For this reason, I commend the incredible work of the Law Society, and President I. Stephanie Boyce, international programmes manager Lizzette Robleto de Howarth, and the remarkable strategic alliance established with the British Embassy in Guatemala, the firms Aguilar Castillo Love, BPL Legal and Dentons Muñoz because they helped demonstrate, with data and evidence, the cost this has on Guatemalan Society.

Again, as they have done in other analyses, the Law Society offers concrete and intelligent proposals to advance gender parity. The main message we have shared at UNESCO is that having more women in any profession serves the dual purpose of respecting their rights, and leveraging their contributions, which improves the performance of the sector through increased diversity and more sensitive and open environments.

There is no doubt that this is a win-win equation, and in the case of the judicial sector, it is considered fundamental. Although the context matters, many of the recommendations are relevant to other locations, so I hope that the Law Society will continue to analyse these situations in other countries to achieve an international critical mass. You can count on my personal commitment and that of UNESCO in this important work!

Gabriela Ramos
Deputy Secretary General
UNESCO

4. Executive summary

To support efforts as to increase gender equality within the legal profession internationally, the Law Society launched the “International Women in Law” programme. This IWIL programme is implemented through research projects in various jurisdictions, with the support of various local, regional, and international stakeholders, including professional law societies, firms, and other institutions such as NGOs, UN Women, and embassies, among others.

Guatemala was the first country-specific research project, which methodologically consisted of three phases: the first phase was a national survey that obtained 93 responses; the second phase consisted of fourteen round tables with the participation of 94 Guatemalan women lawyers from different regions of the country; the third and last phase consisted of the preparation of this final report containing recommendations, considering the country’s context.

To better understand the issues, the final report considered it pertinent to implement a specific glossary, defining concepts such as gender equality, parity, self-care, gender pay gap, micro-machismos and microaggressions. It also introduces background information relating to the project’s methodology and the conditions of the practice of law in Guatemala. The report also provides statistical data about the situation of gender equality in the country.

The report explains the main factors that motivated the research: 1) to change traditional mindsets that prevents Guatemalan women lawyers from reaching their potential; 2) to create a more inclusive profession that reflects the reality and diversity in Guatemala; 3) to develop safe spaces for exchange and dialogue, recognising the experiences of women lawyers; 4) to generate more solidarity and joint work among women; and, 5) to eliminate discriminatory policies and legislation by strengthening the rule of law in Guatemala.

The report explores three aspects identified as obstacles to gender equality in the legal profession in Guatemala:

1. bias (conscious/unconscious);
2. lack of flexible work; and
3. the gender pay gap.

In terms of bias (conscious/unconscious), the report clearly outlines the presence of traditional mindsets on the role of women, which seriously limits their opportunities. Micro-machismos,

microaggressions, stereotypes, manipulation, and violence contribute to perpetuate this traditional role and foster discrimination and exclusion.

The report underscores the limited spaces for intergenerational dialogue and among women, which is necessary to generate solidarity and mutual support. The report highlights the need for changing mindsets concerning women’s biology, including motherhood, so that these are not perceived as an obstacle to their personal and professional development. It also calls attention to the fact that certain bad practices still persist during job interviews, such as inappropriate questions about a woman’s marital status, whether she has a family, or when she expects to have children.

The research underlines that smear campaigns against female lawyers, attacks to her reputation, credibility, and abilities are commonly of a sexual nature, with the aim of damaging her public and private persona and honourability, detracting attention from her intellectual capacity. It was also evident that harassment and violence continue to be experienced inside and outside the workplace, but usually go unreported for fear of personal and professional reprisals. This creates a feeling of isolation that affects the person’s mental and physical health. In addition, an important emphasis was placed on identifying and eliminating laws that enable discrimination, as well as implementing new anti-discrimination laws.

Regarding flexible working, the implementation of a flexible working culture is perceived as fundamental to increasing gender parity in the legal profession. However, prior to the pandemic, there was still a well-entrenched myth within the profession, which favoured presentism. Flexible working was viewed with scepticism and stigma due to organisational culture, lack of understanding of how it works, and lack of experience of how to introduce it. The availability of flexible working is directly related to the nature of the work, as well as the availability of a reasonable, and accessible technical and energy infrastructure. Flexible

working is impacted by the lack of professional and family conciliation, and the imbalance in the family responsibilities between partners, which mainly falls on women's shoulders.

Concerning the challenges of gender pay gap, lack of transparency was identified as the key factor in terms of remuneration. This aspect was also influenced by the lack of access to better jobs, bias, partiality and temporary contracts. Clientelism, or "cronyism", also persists; that is to say that positions are awarded to friends, despite the fact that other candidates might be better qualified and have better professional profiles.

The report presents a series of solutions, ranging from multiple interventions in education, legislative changes, awareness-raising campaigns, and actions that seek changes in individual and social mindsets. It also proposes ideas such as confronting micro-machismos and microaggressions in a unified, safe, structured, and systemic way, given the prevailing context in Guatemala. In addition, it is necessary to create spaces for sisterhood and safe spaces for reflection and dialogue in order to continue informing and learning from experiences. It is also necessary to invest time and efforts in self-care to reflect on the impact of micro-machismos and microaggressions, as to empower women lawyers to adopt coping strategies as well as strengthen their emotional intelligence.

The report identifies that institutional leadership is vital to ensure meaningful and transformative changes. For example, those in positions of authority have the power to send clear and strong messages of zero tolerance for harmful behaviours such as harassment or micro-machismos. Raising men's awareness was identified as vital for the successful progress towards gender equality, capitalising on the common good.

Regarding flexible working, the report is innovative, as it clearly identifies and presents the types of flexible work that are already implemented on an ad-hoc basis. Based on this information, it proposes objective criteria for effective implementation. On the other hand, it shows the need for a better understanding of flexible work, as well as the implementation of new performance indicators.

Finally, the recommendations are summarised and classified by identifying individual, institutional, educational, and professional, as well as those at social and legislative level.

5. Definitions

Self-care

The **World Health Organization** defines self-care as “the ability of individuals, families and communities to promote, maintain health, prevent diseases and cope with illness, with or without the support of a health provider.”¹

Personal, family, and professional conciliation

Plan *Óptima* defines it as the balanced participation of women and men in family life and in the labour market, which is achieved through the restructuring and reorganisation of the labour, education, and social resources, with the purpose of introducing equal employment opportunities, change in traditional roles and stereotypes, and covering the needs and care for dependents.²

Quotas

The percentage allocated for women’s participation implemented through legislation and/or as part of internal policies in an organisation. Most quotas target to increase the representation of women in staff and/or in leadership positions, due to the underrepresentation of women. This is particularly relevant as women generally make up 50% of the population in any given country. These are temporary measures until gender parity is achieved.

Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap measures the wage (or salary or income) difference between women and men. It is a metric of inequality between men and women and captures a concept that is broader than equal pay for equal work.

Equal pay

Refers to the rates and/or methods of remuneration packages established without discrimination based on sex.

Psychological manipulation or gaslighting

It is a form of psychological abuse that consists of manipulating another person’s perception of reality. The individual and/or group that psychologically abuses, manipulates consciously/unconsciously a victim as to make him/her doubt of his/her own judgment through strategies such as denying that something has happened, sowing doubts in the victim, who no longer knows what to believe, generating anxiety, anguish, confusion, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, etc.³.

Micro-machismos

The term was coined by Spanish psychotherapist Luis Bonino Méndez in 1991 to typify practices that other specialists call “petty tyrannies”, “intimate terrorism”, “soft violence”. The phenomenon includes ideas, gestures, attitudes, and everyday behaviours, internalised, and justified as natural, which conditions women’s daily lives. Micro-machismo has a harmful individual and collective impact. Micro-machismos, or better known as “everyday machismos”, are behaviours, gestures, comments, and actions that we have to live with, which have become structurally normal, and whose purpose is to place men above women.

Gender-based microaggressions

They are every day, nuanced, low-intensity, brief, sexist remarks that denigrate or belittle women, as well as actions that are negatively directed towards women. A microaggression can be intentional or accidental. It is a form of discrimination. The people who provoke it may not do so with malicious intent; but the slow accumulation of it can lead to low self-esteem, feeling of alienation and, eventually, mental health problems. They also contribute to a toxic work environment.

1 World Health Organization https://www.who.int/es/health-topics/self-care#tab=tab_1

2 Pan-Hispanic Dictionary of Legal Spanish <https://dpej.rae.es/lema/conciliaci%C3%B3n-de-la-vida-laboral-y-familiar>

3 APA Dictionary of Psychology: <https://dictionary.apa.org/gaslight>

Psychologist Derald Wing Sue defined three types of microaggressions:

- **Micro-attacks:** when a person intentionally behaves in a discriminatory manner, even if he or she does not intend to be offensive. For example, a person telling a racist joke and then saying: “I’m just kidding”.
- **Micro-insults:** an accidentally discriminatory comment or action. For example, a person who says to a doctor from an indigenous community: “Your people should be proud”.
- **Micro-invalidations:** when a person’s comments or experience are invalidated or belittled by a certain group. For example, a white person telling a person of colour that “racism does not exist in society”.

Parity

It is understood as the balanced participation of men and women in positions of power, leadership, and decision-making in all spheres of life (political, economic, and social). It is fundamental for gender equality. A balanced presence of men and women aims to improve the composition of society, to ensure that women’s interests are guaranteed in the formulation of public policies, and to eliminate the perception that politics is a male domain.

Patriarchy and machismo

Patriarchy is a type of society where men, the masculine, have supremacy simply because they are men, relegating women, the feminine, to a secondary place. These two roles: that of power and domination by men; and that of service and submission of women, are sustained and perpetuated thanks to the support of society as a whole: the State, the justice sector, laws and norms, customs, beliefs, etc. Although patriarchy and machismo are two concepts that have a lot in common, they are not the same. Machismo refers to the behaviour and attitude of each individual (whether man or woman) or social group that considers women inferior to men⁴.

Conscious/unconscious bias

It refers to attitudes or stereotypes – positive and negative – that affect our understanding, decisions, or actions regarding an individual or group of individuals. This prejudice -conscious/unconscious – becomes a double-edged sword that, added to the limited forms of leadership implemented, directly affects women. UNDP’s first Gender Social Norms Index analysed data from 75 countries, which together are home to more than 80% of the world’s population⁵. The analysis reveals that despite decades of progress in closing the inequality gap between men and women, nearly 90% of both men and women hold some form of bias against women, providing new clues to the invisible barriers’ women face in order to achieve equality.

Flexible and agile work

It often means that, while the number of hours remains the same, there is flexibility in start and end times, as well as the option to work remotely. According to the **World Economic Forum**, flexible working is one of the great trends of the future and a more human way of understanding work that is committed to making structures more flexible, applying technology and adapting to the specific needs of individuals and companies.

4 Patriarchy and Machismo (Oxfam/Intermom) <https://blog.oxfamintermon.org/sociedad-patriarcal-como-luchar-contra-ella/>

5 Nearly 90% of men and women around the world are biased against women, 5 March 2020, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) <https://www.undp.org/es/press-releases/casi-el-90-de-los-hombres-y-mujeres-en-el-mundo-expresan-un-sesgo-contra-las-mujeres>

6. Project background and methodology

The Law Society of England and Wales, The Law Society, is a professional body representing over 180,000 solicitors in England and Wales. Its aims include defending the independence of the legal profession, the rule of law, and human rights in the United Kingdom and around the world.

The Law Society was established by Royal Charter in 1845 and has had consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations since 2014. Its activities are established by statute: the Solicitors Act, 1974; the Courts and Legal Services Act, 1990; the Access to Justice Act, 1999; and the Legal Services Act, 2007.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, structural barriers and a culture based on patriarchal models persist, which impacts women's unequal access to various public spheres. The Law Society's International Women in Law (IWIL) programme aims to increase gender equality in the legal profession internationally. Initiatives such as trainings, events, research, roundtables, and action plans are combined to create the conditions for long-term change to end gender inequality in the sector.

In June 2019, the Law Society published its global report "Advocating for change: Transforming the future of the legal profession through greater gender equality". One of the key challenges highlighted by the report is the lack of data (qualitative and quantitative) that showcases how important it is to achieve greater representation of women in the profession. For that reason, the Law Society began implementing research projects in several jurisdictions, with the support from various stakeholders (law societies, bar associations, firms, in-house counsels, etc.) with the intention of gathering evidence to strengthen the business case for women in the law.

This project was a joint effort of the Law Society, Aguilar Castillo Love, BLP Legal, Dentons Muñoz, UN Women Guatemala, and the British Embassy in Guatemala and consisted of three phases:

1. **Phase one:** a national survey that obtained 93 responses, conducted between 1 December 2020 and 29 January 2021, with professionals from the Guatemalan legal sector.
2. **Phase two:** 14 roundtables organised between July and September 2021 with 94 women lawyers from the private sector, public sector, NGOs, and academia. The roundtable discussions were conducted under Chatham House rules. This meant that participants were allowed to use the information received, but without identifying and/or attributing the identity or affiliation of the participants, to encourage free expression. The roundtables discussed the survey findings and explored specific questions in order to identify creative solutions in a safe and non-judgmental environment. All participants had equal status, regardless of hierarchies.
3. **Phase three:** the final report with recommendations that shares the results of the research.

7. Brief background on the legal profession in Guatemala

Article 4 of the Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala, which relates to freedom and equality, provides that:

*In Guatemala, all human beings are free and equal in dignity and rights. **Men and women, regardless of their marital status, have equal opportunities and responsibilities.** No person may be subjected to servitude or any other condition that undermines their dignity. Human beings should behave fraternally among themselves.*

Thus, the Constitution explicitly states that men and women, regardless of their marital status, have equal opportunities and responsibilities.

The Constitution establishes the mandatory membership of university professionals to promote moral, scientific, technical, and academic professional improvement, as well as the regulation of their practice. The Bar Association for Attorneys and Notaries of Guatemala is a non-profit professional union, originally founded in 1810 and formally constituted in 1947 according to the Law of Compulsory Professional Membership of 1947, in accordance with Legislative Decree No. 332, repealed in October 1991, by Decree 62-91 of the Congress of the Republic, which was subsequently repealed by Decree 72-2001 of the Congress of the Republic, in force since 22 December 2001.

The constitutional basis for the existence of the Bar Association for Attorneys and Notaries of Guatemala is based on Articles 34 and 90 of the Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala, which provides the right of association and professional collegiality. Likewise, it is governed by its own statutes, laws, and regulations. The purpose of the Bar Association for Attorneys and Notaries of Guatemala is to promote the welfare of its active professional members through the establishment of economic and social funds, as well as other means deemed appropriate and for the direct or indirect benefit of its members.

The Guatemalan Bar has the responsibility to guarantee that legal and related professionals, practice their profession with strict adherence to the Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala with justice, equity, responsibility, and ethics, for which they must promote the updating and social projection.

In 2017, the electoral roll had 26,464 registered professionals, but only 23,223 active ones. There are approximately 35,000 lawyers in Guatemala, with the majority being men, which is reflected on the decision makers, where power is concentrated in a minority.

It is important to note that, in Guatemala, lawyers in private practice are not treated as employees, but as professionals providing legal services and, therefore, do not have the same benefits as an employee.

8. Brief background on gender equality in Guatemala

Women represent 50.8% of the population in Guatemala, estimated in 2018 at 16.3 million inhabitants. After the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996, several mechanisms were created for the advancement of women, such as the Office for the Defence of Indigenous Women -DEMI- and the Presidential Secretariat for Women -SEPREM. Important laws were enacted to guarantee the exercise of rights, such as the Law for the Dignity and Integral Development of Women, the Law to Prevent, Punish and Elimination of Domestic Violence, the Law against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking of Persons, the Law against Femicide and other Forms of Violence against Women. Reforms were made to the Civil Code and the National Policy for the Promotion and Integral Development of Women -PNPDIM- was designed.

According to official data from the Public Prosecutor's Office of Guatemala, from January to December 2020, 56,565 women victims were reported for crimes typified as violence against women; 7,631 women and girls were victims of crimes of sexual violence and 453 victims of femicide. For 2021, the **Women's Observatory of the Public Prosecutor's Office** recorded 531 femicides and violent deaths of women.

After five consecutive years with a Gender Gap Index score of 0.67, Guatemala scored 0.66 in 2021. This is the lowest gender equality score since 2014 and represents a gap of approximately 34%, which means that women are 34% less likely than men to have equal opportunities. Political empowerment is the area of the gender gap where Guatemala scores the worst (Gender Gap Index, 2014 to 2021, 2 May 2021).

According to the data presented in UN Women's 2021 Country Profile on Gender Equality, men have a higher participation rate in the labour market. 86% for men of working age, compared to 37% for women, but these figures hide the unremunerated work women undertake at home. The figure exceeds 90% from the age of 20, compared to only 50% for women. The same report indicates that, for the period from 2010 to 2019, the labour participation gap between men and women increased steadily by 8.4%.

A new study undertaken by several UN⁶ agencies claims that gender-based violence and structural

inequality also limit the ability of communities to adapt to the effects of climate change, as well as to achieve sustainable peace and security.

In its November 2017 concluding observations, on the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of Guatemala, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) recognised the difficulties faced by the State in addressing the causes of women's persistent inequality in the economic and social spheres, added to poverty, exclusion, and the lack of access to land and productive resources, particularly for indigenous, Afro-descendant and Garifuna women. In addition, the Committee noted the deep-rooted racism and discrimination against women, which perpetuate violence. It also observed that there is pressure from groups campaigning against women's rights and noticed the growing risks of setbacks and regressions in achieving substantive equality for women.

The Committee also expressed its concern about the persistence of gender-based violence against women and girls in the country, including very alarming increases in the rates of femicide as well as other gender-based violence such as hate crimes, domestic violence, rape and incest, which have resulted in forced pregnancies. In addition, there is an absence of reliable disaggregated data and effective prevention strategies. Systemic impunity is reinforced by the low number of prosecutions, the light sentences imposed on perpetrators, and the non-existent reparations to victims.

6 Gender inequality gives climate change an advantage, 9th June 2020, <https://news.un.org/es/story/2020/06/1475742>

Guatemala has been a member of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) since 1982 and ratified its Optional Protocol in 2001. It has also ratified the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the Inter-American Convention on the Granting of Political Rights to Women, and ILO Conventions 45, 89 and 103.

These international frameworks affirm women's human rights, fundamental freedoms, and equality, including the right to equal participation in political and public life. In Article 2, CEDAW directs States to eliminate discrimination against women; in Article 4, it proposes the adoption of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women. Articles 7 and 8 call for the elimination of discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country, and to guarantee their equal participation in holding public office and exercising public functions at the national and international levels.

In this regard, the Constitutional Court of Guatemala issued an opinion at the request of the President of the Legislative Body on the draft reform of the Electoral and Political Parties Law (Decree 1-85 of the National Constituent Assembly), stating:

- e) The so-called "electoral quotas" or "political participation quotas" are true positive actions that, in the political-electoral sphere, are aimed at ensuring the effective participation of socially discriminated groups, insofar as they provide for fixed quotas that political organisations must observe when nominating candidates for elected office.

This type of mechanism is based on social realities that demonstrate, as in the case of Guatemala, a low political participation of certain segments of the population (women and indigenous peoples), and the root causes may be diverse and complex to interpret, but which, in the end, result in discriminatory practices that prevent them from effective representation in government bodies, direct access to decision making of collective interest, and a positive intervention in the implementation of their own development policies.

In the national context, the aforementioned statistical data, which reveals a low level of exercise of political rights by women and indigenous peoples and its harmful repercussions on the consolidation of a democratic regime, make the implementation of positive actions in this area, not only well-founded and justified, but even necessary and unpostponable. It should be reiterated that this type of actions are supported by international instruments and in recommendations made by specialised organisations, which shows their foundation and suitability. In addition, in comparative law, there are multiple examples of legislations that have adopted this type of mechanisms with the purpose of strengthening a democratic regime, based on the freedom and equality of all its citizens.

9. General data from the survey in phase one

Years of practice	Number	Percentage
Student	1	1.5
1-9	40	43
10-19	23	25
20-29	15	14
30-39	1	1.5
40-49	1	1.5
50+	1	1.5
Omitted	11	12
Total	93	100

Sex	Number	Percentage
Women	59	65
Men	24	26
Omitted	10	9
Total	93	100

10. Main factors that motivated the participation in this research

Changing traditional mindsets that prevent women from reaching and developing their potential in Guatemalan society

There was consensus among the participants that, if you are a woman, it is harder to build a robust reputation and solid prestige within the profession. Women lawyers are clearly at a disadvantage, due to biases, discrimination, and stereotyping. Survey participants commented that it is still a challenge to obtain parity in recruitment and remuneration because many women do not have the same access to job and educational opportunities. Added to this is the traditional view on the role of women in Guatemalan society, articulated through biases (conscious/unconscious), stereotypes and discrimination: for being a woman, for their ethnic background, for their age, or for having a lot or little experience. The patriarchal system conceptualises women primarily in the role of mothers, limiting their civic rights, minimising, and making invisible their talent and potential, which widen the gap between men and women.

Participants also indicated that women leadership in the profession is still very limited, and the few affirmative measures adopted have yet to be fully implemented. Therefore, it is necessary to rethink a multi-prong strategy: legislative changes accompanied by social, cultural, and educational transformations. The empowerment of women is vital for the country's development, so it is important to provide them with the tools to achieve this.

Breaking the existing paradigm and stereotypes is important to eliminate discrimination and bias, positioning transcendental and cross-cutting issues in all areas and sectors. All the participants said feeling responsible for working towards a more inclusive profession that contributes to a better integrated society in Guatemala.

Creating a more inclusive profession that reflects the reality and diversity in Guatemala

Participants said to be motivated towards achieving gender equality in the legal sector in order to support the development of the potential of women lawyers, especially those who have had few opportunities. It is necessary to integrate women's rights for a more equitable and innovative profession, where the talent of the new generations (men and women) is capitalised for the future sustainability of the sector.

Participants indicated that it is imperative to break the vicious circle of discrimination, from teaching to legal practice, so that new generations do not face the same problems. In teaching, for example, many women students do not have the opportunity to study law due to many restrictions, especially in rural areas, where women are still perceived as being dominated.

Many women lawyers suggested that women were treated at a disadvantage when it came to motherhood, due to the stereotypes associated with being a mother and the responsibilities it entailed. In this regard, this perception of motherhood hindered the progress in their professional careers. Likewise, women with disabilities are twice discriminated against for being a woman and for having a disability. There is also a structural inequality that severely limits indigenous women, as biases (conscious/unconscious) violate their collective rights.

Recognition of the experiences of women lawyers in the profession through the creation of safe spaces for exchange and dialogue

All participants agreed that, in Guatemala, there are very few safe spaces where women lawyers can share and discuss their experiences, whether in the private, public, or legal sector, which prevents them from establishing a positive, constructive, and forward-looking dialogue. It was very important for the participants to share their positive and negative experiences, communicate with each other, and learn from their perspective to seek solutions, strategies, and best practices. For example, the issue of motherhood and family care responsibilities are shared areas that affect professional mothers and mothers-to-be.

Having these conversations revealed that their stories are very similar, both inside and outside of the workplace. Some of these experiences end up being internalised due to stigma and fear of reprisals, especially when talking about certain issues such as sexual harassment. Creating safe spaces to share these experiences and discuss potential solutions are important because it allows to learn collectively .

Many of the participants chose to engage in this research to counter micro-machismos and microaggressions such as inappropriate comments, sexist compliments, biased treatment, and sarcasm, outside and inside the workplace. Comments such as, “Women are more emotional and can’t keep calm.” “Why aren’t you at home or in another profession?” “You are very smart for a woman!” are surreptitious expressions of minimisation.

Generating more solidarity and joint work among women

Many participants said to have felt privileged for having an education and to count with the support from their parents and partners, especially in the Guatemalan context. Other participants shared that they had limited support from their parents and/or partners, which pushed them to succeed and break barriers. Participants agreed that it is essential for women to support each other, to face sexual harassment and micro-machismos together, as well as to relate to each other. These conversations will allow exchanging strategies, for example, on how to balance the double burden of professional and family responsibilities.

Eliminating discriminatory policies and legislation to strengthen the rule of law and equality in Guatemala

Participants concurred that there are policies and legislation penalising and/or discriminating against women, which must be changed. New legislation initiatives could be proposed, and discriminatory laws could be reviewed as to increase gender equality. Lawyers can contribute to support these initiatives, as they have the necessary skills and knowledge of the law. It is also advisable to design codes of conduct aligned with these new proposals.



Challenges

11. Challenges related to conscious/unconscious biases

“In my role, I was once invited to attend a negotiation, at Central American level, where most of the negotiators were men. My boss said to me, ‘I’m going to send someone else because you’re going to be eaten alive’. His reaction made me feel awful because it was not only paternalistic, but he also underestimated my professional capacity. When another similar situation arose, my boss sent me with a male colleague. In spite of how I felt, I did an excellent job. My boss later apologised and acknowledged the work I had done.”

Anonymised comment



Progress has been made, but the mindset still needs to change

All participants coincided with the fact that, despite the progress made in recent decades, bias (conscious/unconscious) continues to be part of their daily reality in Guatemala, since there is a deep-rooted *macho* culture that prevents them from progressing.

They also remarked that work practices related to bias (conscious/unconscious) vary, depending on whether you work for an international or national company. If you work for a multinational company, there are policies in place, which are aimed at eliminating discrimination. Women are also more supported with greater availability of flexible working. By contrast, if you work for a national company, such policies may yet to be in place.

“At a meeting with some Guatemalan clients, they gave business cards to my male colleague, thinking he was the one chairing the meeting and I was not given any. In fact, I was the one presiding the meeting and my colleague was there to take notes. They were surprised. I think this is an example of unconscious bias.”

Anonymised comment

All participants recognised that listening to their similar stories contributed to developing shared experiences and greater awareness, breaking the silence and stigma, especially when it comes to incidents of harassment and sexist comments. Several participants concurred that they had been conditioned from childhood to play a certain role, because *macho* societies beget *macho* individuals. For that reason, education, including university education, must be transformed. One participant said that she came from a family with very traditional values, which she had to challenge because these values directly affected her self-esteem and worth as a woman.

Revealing discrimination and prejudice

Participants recognised that bias has no barriers, no gender, no social class, and no ethnic group. If neither women, nor men understand the impact of prejudices, they are likely to tolerate stereotypes and discrimination. Only a small number of participants said they were fortunate enough not to have experienced discrimination, but they recognised that discrimination against women exists in Guatemalan society.

“It is frowned upon if one breaks the established mould of how a woman should behave. They end up criticising and isolating, instead of capitalising on new talents and opportunities.”

Anonymised comment

Several participants acknowledged that they had biases (conscious/unconscious) and had to go through a process of self-awareness to realise that they were replicating those biases. One participant revealed that, when she graduated, her first job was at her family's firm; but her father limited her opportunities and, when she was working late, he would ask her, “And, who is looking after my grandchildren?” She decided to leave her family's firm because she felt it was restricting her professional growth. Another participant said that she initially thought that it was common for women to progress professionally at a slower rate than men, until she realised that this was untrue and/or should not be the case.

Another participant shared that she had been discriminated against for being a woman and for having a disability. Her own father thought that the law was a profession for men and did not support her. It was her mother who gave her the moral and financial support until her graduation. When she went for her first interview, she was asked inappropriate questions, such as whether her disability prevented her mobility, and whether she got more tired because she had a disability.

Participants also commented that tokenism is common practice in leadership positions – the practice of making only a superficial or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, for example, recruiting a small group people from under-represented groups, giving the appearance of having gender or racial equality within the workforce.

Shared intergenerational experiences

Participants believed that the roundtables gave them an opportunity to establish an intergenerational dialogue, which allowed them to share their experiences in the workplace. They were also surprised by the similarities in the testimonies. There are organisations where young women lawyers are allowed to grow, but where opportunities for promotion are limited. On the other hand, there are organisations where, when women reach a certain age, you are considered too old, but it is not the same for men.

Women lawyers with years of experience noticed that younger women have a false sense of the level of gender equality in Guatemala, because the limited progress thus far has created an illusion of equality. In reality, younger women lawyers have to be far more careful about their reputation, their presentation, their appearance, and in accessing leisure spaces. Their treatment is always unequal, because it is always about “putting women in their place”, when the reality is that women are using public and private space by right, not by privilege.

Participants said that many employers and clients mistakenly assume that you do not possess the ability and/or experience to handle complex cases because you are young and female. One participant commented that, on one occasion, a client came to her firm, asking to see the lawyer who had written a contract for him. She introduced herself and the client in disbelief told her with a hint of doubt, “Really?”, when she confirmed that she was. The client then apologised, saying that she looked very young. Another participant commented that, at the court entrance for lawyers, she was always asked to present her ID because she did not look as a lawyer as she was young and a woman. Another participant commented that being young and female prevented her from being hired for a position in the judiciary since it was assumed that she would not have sufficient authority. By contrast, a young man is given the benefit of the doubt; and an older man is assumed to have the knowledge, even if they do not have a good academic level and/or experience.

Social prejudices also persist about the marital age for women, which constrain professional development and social perceptions. Comments such as, “That ship has sailed”; “You’re going to stay an old maid”; “When is the baby coming?” are common. Such comments are also very personal and inadvertently put pressure on women.

Perpetuating traditional roles of women

“One time at university, we were working out of class hours with a professor plus students – men and women – and we ordered a pizza. When the professor came in, he said, ‘You ladies, serve us pizza.’ I protested and the professor got angry. Fortunately, my classmates reacted well and served themselves. Despite having excellent grades in that subject, I almost failed the class, as the professor took a dislike to me.”

Anonymised comment

Participants agreed that Guatemala is still a very conservative society where family customs restrict women’s opportunities due to a limited assignment of roles. It is expected that, once married, there is no need to continue progressing professionally. Men are seen as the head of family and responsible for working to provide for the household, even though the socioeconomic reality is very different, as many women work and are in fact heads of household.

Moreover, participants recognised that there is a stereotype where women are expected to be submissive and subservient. These stereotypes are expressed through actions, such as asking a woman, and not a male colleague, to take the notes and/or to serve coffee. To move forward, it is necessary to eliminate this mindset, which translates into macho attitudes. Changing mindsets requires time and investment; so, education is fundamental in order to be as inclusive as possible.

“I was at a meeting where I was the only woman, and it was evident that they were expecting me to serve the coffee and cookies.”

Anonymised comment

Another participant shared that when she was involved in a complex case, where a team was needed, she was asked during meetings, not only to write the notes of the meeting, but also to coordinate lunches for the senior staff; even though there were other attorneys and junior male assistants.

Psychological manipulation

Most participants mentioned that, when sexist jokes or comments are made and one decides to confront these, people deny that it has happened or disagree that it is a sexist comment. Women are also told that they have lost their sense of humour, that they should not take it so seriously, that it was a joke, or that they are too sensitive.

In many instances, the affected participants reported that this denial caused them confusion and doubt themselves, because they could not recognise that they are being manipulated. This causes them anxiety, low self-esteem, and lack of self-confidence. People making those remarks do not take responsibility for the negative impact they cause with their attitude and comments. Other phrases commonly used in the work environment were:

- “You react too much to things.”
- “You need help.”
- “You’re getting angry over nothing.”
- “You’re getting confused again.”
- “Don’t make a big deal out of it.”
- “Why are you always so defensive?”
- “What are you talking about? I didn’t say that.”
- “It’s your fault.”
- “You’re so sensitive.”
- “You always turn things around.”
- “I was just kidding.”
- “You’re intense, relax.”

Micro-machismos and microaggressions

“ I had a boss who made a lot of sexist comments and it got to the point where I had to complain, and he called me a ‘feminazi’; as I told him that his comments were denigrating women. I felt that going to human resources was a waste of time as I didn’t feel supported, and I was afraid of losing my job.”

Anonymised comment

Micro-machismos or everyday machismos

Participants reported having experienced micro-machismos or everyday machismos, from both men and women, in their daily lives, which included behaviours, gestures, comments and actions that have become normalised. Some participants noted that, if they are a bit late in the office, they are told, “She is going to use the justification about having kids”; if she is assertive, she is told that “She is bossy” or “she is super aggressive,” even though she may not be.

“ When we are demanding, we are labelled as hysterical or that ‘it’s her day of the month’, which minimises women.”

Anonymised comment

Furthermore, several participants noted that inappropriate comments have been made when there was a need to stay late: “But X has to go home to serve her husband’s dinner, so she can’t stay late.” Another comment when she delivered a case a little later than agreed, she was told, “Because she already has the ring [referring to her upcoming marriage], she doesn’t care about the work anymore.” Participants also observed that, when a young female lawyer enters a place full of men, gestures and comments with sexual connotations are made about her appearance.

“On one occasion, a fellow lawyer was invited to an event by a partner at the firm who told her to wear a black dress and heels. When she arrived, he introduced her as his escort for the evening and she felt very humiliated.”

Anonymised comment

On many occasions, participants heard their peers making sexist jokes, and upon realising what they had said, they apologised. When this behaviour was repeated and they were told again that their comments were sexist, they argued that they were not sexist because they had daughters and wives. Several participants commented that they had even been teased and belittled because of their soft-spoken tone of voice, which made people think that they were not suitable for litigation, despite having the capacity and evidence to the contrary.

Microaggressions in the workplace

“Sometimes we don’t notice microaggressions and machismos because we are so used to hearing them that they have become normalised. It takes time and effort to break these patterns.”

Anonymised comment

Some participants experienced gender-based aggression on a daily basis – which made them feel denigrated, with low self-esteem and feeling alienated – that created a toxic environment, which forced them to resign. The vast majority of participants experienced some form of micro-invalidation or micro-insults but had normalised it. Some participants were told what to wear for certain events, especially when there were people and/or institutions that the firm or institution wanted to impress or obtain a benefit.

On a personal experience concerning professional practice, one of the participants indicated that when they [women judges] arrived at the communal space of the femicide tribunal, they were told: “Watch out because the Holy Inquisition is coming: man seen, man condemned”. Some participants declared to be very grateful to their male employers for “giving them the opportunity to work,” instead of acknowledging that they had been employed because of their merit and talent, which is a micro-invalidation against themselves.

Several participants remarked that, when there is teamwork, if they give a presentation and someone tries to give them a compliment, they are told in a patronising way, “Look how well you absorbed it and/or understood it.”

Gender equality education must start at home

“I felt prejudiced from childhood and attempted to overcome the fears this type of upbringing engendered on me. I used to look at my feminine side as a deficiency, as a weakness, and tried to eliminate it as much as I could, so as not to feel so vulnerable, until I realised that it was an impossible situation. In the end, I concluded that, as a woman, I had my strengths too.”

Anonymised comment

All participants agreed that gender equality must begin at home by educating children. For example, placing all the responsibility on girls to undertake family support tasks continues to perpetuate traditional gender roles so this must change.

Participants shared that limiting women’s professional aspirations begins at a young age, and this has an impact on their future, including on their economic independence. For example, some participants pointed out that their parents had suggested studying to be a teacher because they thought that the law was a profession for men.

By contrast, their male siblings from the start were pushed by their parents to go to university. Few participants said that they were raised with equality at home and did not feel that there was a difference in treatment between men and women. They only began noticing those differences when they entered the labour market. Some participants said that they were raised in an environment full of brothers and that helped them to be accurate and clear and built self-confidence.

“As a lecturer, I have noticed that if my students hear a female classmate making an incomplete legal analysis, or a decontextualised comment, they make fun of her. But, if this type of comment is made by a male student, they don’t make fun of him. This got me thinking that we need to start eliminating gender inequality in the profession from university.”

Anonymised comment

This inequality continues to be expressed at university level. Several participants said that one professor told them directly that he was not going to support them because they were women – they were going to get married, and he was not going to waste his time in teaching them. Participants shared that they had also heard the following comments: “Women are at university looking for husbands” or “They should look for husbands, so they don’t fill the classrooms.”

Lack of solidarity and support among women

The UNDP Index found that 91% of men had at least one bias against women, compared to 86% of women⁷. This means that women are socialised in the same way as men – in the family home, at school, at work – so they are susceptible to the same prejudices, which paradoxically limit their economic and social potential.

Participants agreed that both women and men internalise and replicate the parameters of the patriarchal system. In the case of women, they have not had the opportunity to socialise their stories of how the cultural value system negatively impacts their lives and futures. Participants shared that many women are prejudiced against other women and minimise the aspirations of others with comments such as,

- “Poor you that have to work”;
- “Too bad your husband can’t support you”;
- “Why do you work so hard if you are getting married.”

Participants emphasised that it is important to confront these comments in an assertive manner and supporting each other, so that these phrases are not normalised. Women must also develop strong emotional intelligence – this is defined as a set of skills that a person acquires by birth or learns during his or her life, where empathy, motivation, self-control, enthusiasm, and emotion management stand out.

“We have to learn to support each other as women.”

Anonymised comment

In many instances, women in leadership positions look at others as a threat and, as a result, do not provide them with opportunities to excel. If society is disproportionately filled with men in top positions, we will also associate “man” with “leader,” “success” and “competition” and associate “woman” with “home,” “children” and “family.” Participants remarked that, to eliminate their own biases, they need to make a conscious decision to give women the benefit of the doubt, rather than thinking that she is not competent until she proves otherwise.

Relegated to perform administrative tasks or take on cases of social or family connotation

Participants outlined that, in their experience, women are entrusted with office administrative tasks, as well as cases relating to social, family, or human rights; while men are given cases involving commercial, investment and political analysis. The most common justification given is that women are more emotional and, therefore, do not have the capacity to deal with these types of cases and/or issues. This perception is based on a stereotypical view of women’s capabilities.

7 PNUD <https://www.undp.org/es/press-releases/casi-el-90-de-los-hombres-y-mujeres-en-el-mundo-expresan-un-sesgo-contra-las-mujeres>

Women are also expected to be subservient and are supposed to volunteer for these types of cases and/or tasks. Office “housework” may include scheduling meetings, planning parties, and doing actual office housework, such as serving coffee or lunch before or after a meeting.

There are certain areas where women are excluded or are prevented from getting involved, for example, in cases related to kidnapping. The justification given is that they are protecting them, but the risks are the same for both men and women. Several participants mentioned that they had been asked if they had children, and if they were married, because the job they had applied for required frequent travel in the country. In these cases, women with children or with a partner are assumed that they cannot travel, and are not given the choice to decide, which is not the case for men.

In addition, it is assumed that women have natural multitasking and management skills. Paradoxically, even though women’s abilities in administration and management are acknowledged, this does not translate into greater opportunities at executive level and/or in leadership positions.

Penalised for motherhood

“The fact that I had a son at a young age prevented me from getting ahead at the beginning of my career. However, I got my act together and managed to get my degree. Although I have not been asked if I have children, I consider this question inappropriate, as it does not reflect my ability.”

Anonymised comment

Participants noted that there are no mechanisms available to provide real support to women during and after motherhood. Participants noted that motherhood continues to be perceived as an obstacle, which directly affects their personal, professional and career development. Many are concerned about balancing family and professional life. It is even more challenging when women are single mothers with children, as they do not have the support of a partner. Bias (conscious/unconscious) is also preventing them from accessing job opportunities. Several participants

reflected that some employers may assume that a woman will become pregnant, and she will not have commitment to her work. Consequently, the opportunities for professional progress are few, even though there is legislation protecting maternity.

“When I came out of maternity, my metrics were lowered, and I was told that motherhood was to blame!”

Anonymised comment

One participant indicated that, upon becoming a mom, some clients -men and women- expressed their concern of whether she would have enough time to dedicate to her clients. Another participant was told that she would have a harder time in obtaining her master’s degree if she had children but noticed that to her colleague – a male lawyer – they did not raise the same objections, as it was assumed that he would not have the same demands.

One participant outlined that she had earned her bachelor’s degree during her pregnancy. When she took her last exam, one of the professors asked her what she was doing there, that her brain was not functioning properly due to her pregnancy. She filed a complaint, which led to a disciplinary process that set a precedent against this sort of comments. She later realised that she was not the first student to be mistreated by the same professor.

Likewise, participants noted that there is differential treatment when children are picked up from school. For example, one participant mentioned that, on one occasion, she was on a teleconference and apologised because she had to leave early to pick up her children, which reflected badly on her. In a similar situation, a male lawyer made the same apology, and the comment was, “Ah, what a responsible father.”

Motherhood as an obstacle to leadership

The issue of leadership is very important because women lose their opportunity to reach leadership positions due to prejudices relating to motherhood. One participant said that when she was pregnant, she was not given the opportunity to be promoted and to participate in an important case that would have allowed her to aspire to better remuneration and better cases. Only one participant said that she had not experienced discrimination and/or prejudice during her maternity.

A good percentage of clients prefer male lawyers

“There have been times when my advice has not been accepted unless it is confirmed by my male colleagues even though I am the subject matter expert. This undermines my self-esteem and generates a lot of frustration.”

Anonymised comment

Participants noticed that many clients prefer to be represented by male lawyers because of a bias (conscious/unconscious), which question women's ability and commitment towards their clients. In addition, if a woman has drafted a legal opinion, clients often seek reassurances from her bosses that her advice is correct. Clients also frequently expect lower fees for women lawyers, compared to male lawyers, without considering women's academic qualifications and professional experience.

“I've had clients taking me out of the email chain because they wanted to ask my colleague, a male lawyer, his opinion of my legal advice, as they didn't trust my expertise. If I was with other partners, they looked at me as the one with the least experience, even if it was the opposite.”

Anonymised comment

Mistaken as receptionists, administrators, or court staff

“There have been situations where clients have directly addressed male colleagues or women have been treated as receptionists or court staff. One participant commented that, on several occasions, police officers addressed a colleague of hers, thinking that he was the boss, leading the investigative diligence.”

Anonymised comment

More likely to be interrupted

Participants said that double standards are applied – for example, their male colleagues can unconsciously hog the floor and frequently interrupt others; but, if a woman does the same, they immediately criticise her for interrupting. One participant said that, during meetings, her male colleagues had cut her off while speaking for then to repeat what she was saying. This often happens whenever there are people present, they are trying to impress.

The double burden of family and professional responsibilities as obstacles for women

“If men look after their sons and daughters, they are heroes. If women care for their sons and daughters, it’s their job. This mindset must change.”

Anonymised comment



Many participants emphasised on the prevailing structural problem where women dedicate an exorbitant number of hours to unremunerated work in fulfilling home and family responsibilities. There has been no reconfiguration in the family caring roles, which means that this double burden still represents a major factor limiting women’s professional development. Men are not the sole breadwinners, and they are not prevented from undertaken household or family chores, but to do this, it requires their will and commitment.

Discrimination against women judges

In the judiciary, young women judges find it difficult to breakthrough into new spaces because it is assumed that they do not have sufficient knowledge and/or experience. In a domestic violence case, a judge gave a resolution so that the female victim, with the support from the police, could have access to her belongings. The victim proceeded to take this resolution to the police station that told her that the resolution had no weight and could not be enforced. The woman returned and asked that a new resolution was issued by a male judge, so that the police would take it seriously. The judge who issued the resolution had to challenge the police, so that they would enforce and prevent her authority being gnawed away.

A participant, who had applied to become a judge, shared that there were only two women of seventeen applicants to a judicial position. She managed to pass the first selection process, obtaining the highest qualification, with four men. She was hired but to a different position. She was told that, although she has demonstrated sufficient capacity, she has yet to ‘develop’ the same weight as a male colleague.

Women lawyers work twice harder than their male counterparts

All participants concurred that women lawyers had to work twice harder than their male counterparts to achieve the same objectives. Moreover, men are initially given the benefit of the doubt. By contrast, women must demonstrate their intelligence, ability, and commitment from the outset. On the other hand, highly qualified and educated women lawyers observed that men can be intimidated by their qualifications; whilst a highly qualified man attracts attention. When handling a joint case, and there are males and a females lawyers involved, the men analysis is generally given more credit, even though they may have at the same academic and professional level.

“I once shared a case with a fellow lawyer conducting a legal analysis and we both came to the same conclusion. During our presentation to the clients, I presented first. The clients asked my colleague if he also shared the same opinion. Fortunately, my colleague told them that we had both reached the same conclusion and, therefore, the analysis was a joint one. I have participated in other similar meetings, and it is generally the case that, if the man is presenting, there is no questioning of that kind.”

Anonymised comment



Furthermore, if women lawyers are aspiring to be considered for the same positions that their male colleagues, they have not only to defend themselves against everyday prejudices, but also have to possess higher academic qualifications and more experience.

Prejudices generated by personal appearance

“I once attended a meeting with my boss and the client said, ‘I didn’t know you worked with such beautiful women.’ The truth is that, even though the intention was to give me a compliment, it made me feel very bad because he looked at my personal appearance, not my professional performance.”

Anonymised comment

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Participants underlined that the way you dress can become a double-edged sword, because if you dress a certain way you lose respect, and if you dress conservatively, you are pretentious. In one instance, a participant was told that being very pretty was going to cause the firm a lot of problems, as they had several young single lawyers. Another participant said that at job interview she was told that the profile of the lawyer they were looking for was a young and pretty female lawyer without any environmental credentials.

“Because I always looked young, I wasn’t taken seriously. I often have been in situations where people coming to the office are asking for the boss, when the boss was me.”

Anonymised comment

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Participants agreed that focusing on appearance reflect stereotypes that detract attention from the skills, experience, and academic qualifications necessary to practice the profession.

“I was told I was hired because I was pretty. I felt undermined because I was judged on my appearance, not my professional ability.”

Anonymised comment

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One participant was told by a colleague that she should not put herself in an awkward position by choosing the wrong dress, but the same comment was not made to her male colleagues.

Attacks on women’s credibility are of a sexual nature

“If you get a promotion or a new job, people gossip that you slept with someone or flirted to get it. Condescension prevails and talent or academic qualifications are not recognised.”

Anonymised comment

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Participants underscored that the attacks to the credibility and capacity of women lawyers are commonly of a sexual nature. Reputation is crucial in the legal profession and smear campaigns invent illicit or inappropriate relationships to damage the public and private standing and honourability, which belittles the intellectual capacity of women lawyers. It is common to hear comments and jokes that women lawyers have a sentimental or sexual relationship with a boss to obtain and/or to keep their jobs and/or achieve a promotion. If a woman assumes a management position, it is said that she was probably having a sentimental relationship with someone in power that allowed her to reach such position. Participants expressed concern about the impact of these comments, since they not only degrade, but also devalue the academic and professional achievements of women lawyers. In contrast, men are attacked for their inefficiency, incompetence and/or corruption.

Harassment as a coercion and isolation tactic

“I was still at university when a well-known, high-profile magistrate, at a public event, cornered me and groped me without my consent. At the time, I didn’t know what to do or say. I had to block that experience very deeply, to prevent it from affecting my career and/or self-esteem.”

Anonymised comment

Participants remarked that experiences relating to sexual harassment are painful and happens from university to the workplace, regardless of the number of years practising the profession. One participant said that, on one occasion, she was forced to resign from her teaching job because she could no longer tolerate sexual harassment by a fellow professor. On that instance, her resignation was not accepted in recognition to her contribution and some of her colleagues also advised her to report the case. Several students also approached her sharing their stories of harassment suffered at the hands of the same professor. Instead of disciplining the professor, the university decided to offer him an early retirement so as not to damage his reputation. After this case, under the justification of preventing any similar allegations made against them, some male professors isolated her completely rather than supporting her and rejecting the position of their university.

Some participants said that their experiences of harassment had made them feel isolated, especially because the people involved were in a position of authority and/or power, which created fear of reprisals. In addition, participants stated not having a clear mechanism for reporting and/or seeking support. Most importantly, many of the affected participants expressed not knowing how to react or respond to a situation of sexual harassment, which the perpetrator took advantage of. In Guatemala, there is still no legislation, codes of conduct, or policies that criminalise sexual harassment or that facilitate or formalise sexual harassment complaints.

It is evident that harassment and violence are being experienced inside and outside the workplace, but cases remain unreported for fear of personal and professional retaliation. Participants expressed knowledge of cases of sexual blackmail, and some said they have blocked certain experiences for fear of being stigmatised, fear of reprisals, shame of not knowing how to deal with the situation, and lack of institutional and social support.

Women lawyers sanctioned for assertive behaviour

Some participants expressed that, although assertiveness and self-advocacy are often necessary for success in the legal world, women often feel that if they are too assertive, they are criticised for not behaving like a “lady”. Paradoxically, if they are not assertive enough, they are seen as lacking the confidence to succeed.

Discrimination for being a woman from an indigenous background

The patriarchal system in Guatemala seeks to homogenise, rather than recognise and respect diversity, which is reflected in macho attitudes and racial discrimination in the practice of law. Indigenous women lawyers expressed that they are discriminated against because of their dress and for having indigenous features. Many indigenous women lawyers have fewer economic resources as a result of systemic discrimination, which has forced to them form associations (groups) that have allowed them increase their academic and professional qualifications and to assert their rights.

The high costs and location of training and diploma courses prevent indigenous women lawyers from continuing their professional development; as most of these take place in urban areas. Some participants alleged that some universities do not allow courses on indigenous peoples’ rights to be taught by indigenous people. Moreover, some participants questioned the effectiveness of affirmative actions, as, in their view, these have had a limited scope and sometimes become a tick box exercise.

Indigenous women lawyers are victims of double discrimination, for being women and for being indigenous, which limit their access to the practice of their profession due to conscious/unconscious bias.

Bad practices in recruitment and hiring

The participants observed that biases and discrimination start with recruitment: whether you are a woman, young or old, indigenous, or from low economic means, etc. Some employers have even requested pregnancy tests, which is prohibited by law. During interviews, inappropriate questions are posed to female candidates, such as whether you have a partner, you plan to have children, you have children, or if you are pregnant.

Women's safety in the public and private spheres

“There are public places where I feel very vulnerable because of the number of men shouting or saying obscenities. Instead of finding ways of eliminating this behaviour, which is not only disrespectful but also a violation of my rights, people tell me to wear other clothes to avoid attracting attention.”

Anonymised comment

Participants stated that women's safety in the public and private spaces is fundamental for ensuring their physical and mental integrity, as women live in constant fear. The State has yet to provide the right level of public security necessary for women to live a full and productive life, as violence in public spaces is evident as revealed by cases of femicide.

Existence of discriminatory legislation

“Work should be measured by ability; therefore, what needs to be done is to eliminate laws that allow discrimination. The distinction by gender should not be the norm; instead the capacity of the person to opt for the position must be the constant. We have to see that all individuals can have access to the job regardless of their sex.”

Anonymised comment

Participants emphasised that, in the first instance, discrimination laws must be identified and removed, and sufficient funding must be allocated to propose and institutionalise new anti-discrimination laws. Much of the existing legislation needs to be reviewed to eliminate discrimination, which can be achieved through a comprehensive and coordinated effort by the legal profession.

“As a single woman, I was told why I wanted to have more work responsibilities, or a salary increase since I had no children and no responsibilities. They forgot to consider that, as a person, I had my aspirations, qualifications and the desire to progress in my career.”

Anonymised comment

“At Court, there are judges who say to me, ‘Hello, girl’, which I think is inappropriate, not just because I have been working as a lawyer for many years. They may think it's a familiar gesture, but it really undermines my years of experience.”

Anonymised comment

12. Challenges related to flexible working

“Family care always falls on women’s shoulders, making it difficult for them to progress in any professional field. It is important that caring responsibilities are seen as everyone’s responsibility (men and women), not just women. Flexible working hours and training for women do not address this. Flexible working and training do not address the root causes, it does not address the core issue.”

Anonymised comment

Through the findings in phase one (the survey), respondents acknowledged that the number of women entering the legal profession and the number of women studying law have increased. However, a better professional and family conciliation is needed so that the family caring responsibilities are shared equally with partners.

Demystifying flexible working

“Measures such as working from home and flexible working should continue to be implemented. This way of working was implemented more widely, not to support women lawyers, but because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, women lawyers have benefited from it.”

Anonymised comment

Participants articulated that, prior to the pandemic, there was a deep-rooted myth within the profession that favoured presentism, as well as inherent scepticism and stigma towards flexible working due to organisational culture, lack of understanding of how it worked, and lack of experience of how to introduce it. The pandemic helped to change many people’s views on the effectiveness of flexible working, as there is now clear evidence that it works, if managed and administered correctly. In addition, for flexible working to be a positive practice, a cultural shift in the workplace must take place, allowing greater balance between personal, family, and professional life.

According to the participants, there are productivity studies, which argue that spending over ten hours in an office, sitting in front of a computer, is not an indicator of being productive and/or a sign of “working hard”. Moreover, having a long working hours culture is a routine practice in the legal profession, without realising that people need to maintain good mental and physical health to be more productive. All participants concurred with the adoption of flexible working in the private and public sector and with changing the performance metrics. Some participants noticed that they are already implementing 100% remote working in their workplaces and that the rest of their teams operate in different parts of the world.

Many participants underscored that the fear of people abusing flexible working is unfounded without any evidence to support it. Many women lawyers, for example, compensate leaving work early by continuing to work at home.

Confusion about what is meant by flexible working

Participants stated that there is confusion about what is meant by flexible working. Flexible working is supposed to allow greater personal and professional balance for both men and women. Nevertheless, in some areas, having this flexibility is not possible due to the type of legal work, court schedules, facilities for interviewing clients, and so on. On the other hand, part-time contractual work or contract work can mean a more precarious working future for women, because they may not have social security, access to recreation, and a stable professional future. Moreover, contractual flexibility can contribute to disguise labour exploitation and hide the vulnerability of women's human rights.

In the case of the judiciary, there are instances where women judges may miss out on professional training because they have to pick up their children and have caring responsibilities. However, men miss out on training opportunities because of the so-called "gender scholarship", which effectively means that, through their unpaid work at home, women give up their time for men to continue their professional development and expand their potential for career and salary advancement.

One participant shared that, on one occasion at a meeting, there was a discussion about an important conference outside of Guatemala and several volunteers were needed to travel the following morning. This was an opportunity to raise the volunteer's professional profile. Several men said: "I just need five minutes to get ready and leave". They got up, called their wives, instructed them to pack their bags, and that was it. In my case, I said that I had no such facility, so I had to go home, pack my own bags and leave my household organised to ensure that things were OK while I was away. This may create an opportunity gap.

Lack of family conciliation

"If our male colleagues could make greater efforts to devote more time to family conciliation, the problem of flexible working would be solved."

Anonymised comment



According to the participants, work overload begins when there is no true equal relationship at home, because when women return home, they have to continue working, doing house chores, and taking care of the children. This double burden is underestimated and/or disregarded, because there is a culture where women are still living on unequal conditions. It is necessary that flexible working does not mean an increase in unremunerated time for women, because flexible working then does not necessarily translate into a benefit for them.

Balancing personal, family, and professional life is essential so that the burden is shared more equally. In some organisations, it is already established that women can leave earlier, especially if they have families.

"Working remotely allows me to be a mum, while also taking care of myself because I can go to the gym in order to manage stress, protect my physical and mental health, and maintain a professional life. It saves you from sitting in traffic and you can start much earlier and finish later, if necessary. However, flexible working has to be implemented properly to avoid a double burden."

Anonymised comment



Costs of flexible working

Some participants acknowledged that flexible working has enabled them to save on transport costs, as travel time can be long, plus there are also security risks. Other participants expressed that flexible working has brought them certain additional costs such as paying for electricity, water, internet, technical equipment, and office supplies. Additionally, there are still power outages and problems with connectivity in Guatemala, so these services need to be improved.

Participants expressed that flexible working has given them the possibility of performing tasks at home, spending more time with family and friends, and improving physical and mental well-being. However, working remotely has also had a downside of reducing the possibility of socialising

with colleagues, which can affect mental health and the loss of solidarity networks that are important to women. Some participants also reported losing the workspace, which gave them some respite away from home.

In some cases, greater flexibility has meant that people have to be available around the clock, as there is no time limit to work, which prevents having a proper break that can potentially disguise labour exploitation and prevent the separation of roles. Virtuality has provided greater flexibility, but it has also extended working hours, which also suggests a loss of the private space. It is important to recognise that this problem is not only due to flexible working, but also to the double burden of family and professional responsibilities due to the lack of equal distribution of duties between couples.

Some participants expressed feeling peer pressure, as performance is favoured over investing time to rest or taking holidays, which can become a vicious circle.

Problems with access and use of technology

The availability of flexible working is directly related to the nature of the work, and the availability of reasonable, available, and accessible technical and energy infrastructure. In Guatemala, it is still a privilege to have computers and/or laptops, so it is often necessary to attend the workplace, and in rural areas, access can be even more precarious. To some extent, mobile phones and online hearings have facilitated some legal processes, such as taking depositions of victims and/or defendants, but this practice has yet to become the norm. Electronic equipment is still very expensive, and many lawyers do not have the financial resources to purchase such equipment, especially in the context of the pandemic.

Participants also stated that not all institutions/ organisations supplied their employees with the necessary technology during the pandemic. Therefore, many women lawyers had to use their own resources to buy technical equipment, but that their sons and daughters also needed computers for their virtual studies. In addition, some companies applied an arbitrary criteria for allocating technical equipment, with some being allocated to middle and senior staff, and not to staff at lower levels in the organisation, even though they were all working virtually.

13. Challenges in the context of the gender pay gap

In phase one (the survey), 66.30% of respondents considered that, there has been progress in gender equality over the last five years within the legal profession in Guatemala, compared to 22.83% who responded that there has been no progress. However, the respondents remarked that there is a perception that men generally earn more than women, so a significant step forward would be to give equal pay based on ability, rather than by gender.

Moreover, emphasis was placed on the need for transparency in terms of pay, i.e. establishing transparent parameters for salary structure and monitoring the application of equal pay for equal work, as well as equal contractual terms. On the other hand, 70.11% responded that they had no knowledge or had any experience of gender pay gap in their workplace, and only 20.89% replied that they did have knowledge of the gender pay gap. However, 53.16% responded that no measures had been taken to address the gender pay gap, compared to only 46.84% who responded positively.

Only one respondent commented that, in Guatemala, there is an imposition of gender ideology that favours women, segregating men. And only two respondents said that there is no gender pay gap in Guatemala.

In phase two (the roundtables), participants noted that many institutions already have adopted a pay scale with clear job postings, as well as institutional salary policies that apply equally to men and women. These practices partly prevent pay discrimination and avoid differential treatment between men and women. There was a consensus among the participants that it is more difficult to hide the gender pay gap when there are pre-established job profiles and pay structures. A good percentage of participants said that they do not have gender pay gap problems, so there is no possibility that men can be paid more than women for the same work.

In instances where there is no clarity and/or evidence on the existence of gender pay gap, it is important to consider that, with labour liberalisation and the adoption of temporary service contracts, it is very difficult to identify gender pay gaps based on gender, sex, age, race, and so on. On the other hand, labour liberalisation has reduced the State's safeguards, which is supposed to protect women's labour rights. In Guatemala, gender pay gaps appear to be more related to flexibility in the contractual terms that negatively impact

on women's employment benefits, particularly at specific times of their life cycle (motherhood).

Given the dynamics in professional practice, even when there is no gender pay, there are micro-powers that can make a difference in subtly maintaining patriarchal privileges. More research is needed on this issue.

Conscious/unconscious bias in the context of the gender pay gap

Participants underscored that the gender pay gap goes hand in hand with (conscious/unconscious) bias, as women lawyers are not considered "heads of households". The gender pay gap is manifested for being a woman, for being indigenous and for having a disability. In the case of a new recruitment, a participant was offered a lower salary compared to the person leaving the post, who was male. Several participants pointed out that, when clients see a team of female lawyers leading a case, they ask for a reduction in fees, but it is not the same the group was constituted by men. One participant shared that when she asked for a salary rise, she was told why she wanted more money because she did not have a family – and other male colleagues had families – and she was a single woman. No notice was paid to the fact that she had invested a great deal in building her education and experience.

Clientelism vs. meritocracy

There is also clientelism, or "cronyism". This is where jobs or contracts are given to friends despite that other candidate might be better qualified and have a better profile. In addition, some participants mentioned that, if a woman is overqualified, this may be intimidating, so she is not called for interviews and/or end up being recruited.

Availability and access to better jobs

Participants noticed that another problem with the gender pay gap relates to access to better paid jobs. A comment was made about women's moral standing – in this example, one participant continues applying for a role in the judiciary, even though she is aware that the recruitment system is not based on meritocracy. She perseveres, not in the hope of succeeding, but to make it difficult to those applying without any merit and expose in that way the system of corruption.

Participants underlined the lack of family and professional conciliation and the unremunerated work at home prevents women from aspiring to better paid jobs.

“I have seen a case when a male lawyer had a baby, he was offered a salary increase, but the same did not happen when it was a woman. This is obviously discrimination.”

Anonymised comment



Lack of assertiveness in negotiating a promotion and/or a salary increase

Participants voiced their difficulty with negotiating a salary increase and/or a promotion. Many firms are led by men, who feel more comfortable discussing with each other, making salary and promotion negotiations far easier. Although some women invest more in their academic training, their terms and conditions of employment might not necessarily reflect their qualifications. One participant invested in obtaining better academic qualifications before she even began negotiating a pay rise, unlike her male colleagues who did not see this as a constraint to begin a salary negotiation.

Another participant reflected that it took her years to have the courage to ask for a pay rise, because she was preconditioned as woman to serve and not to ask, and she was uncomfortable with paid recognition for her efforts. The mantra used by many employers is: “If you don't like the working conditions, someone else with more needs will fill that role”. There is also a lack of protection by the State and the private sector, insofar as job instability is tolerated. Social security does not protect either, while there are also entities that do not provide social security for their staff.

Bias in terms of recruitment

Several participants highlighted that any discussion concerning pay increases are conducted confidentially, so the gender pay gap may be taking place but goes unnoticed. There may be a large gender pay gap, depending on the type of recruitment. For example, temporary contracts (three-month contracts) are common as employers may avoid granting employment benefits, which is facilitated due to high unemployment levels and fear of reprisals. Participants expressed concern about the terms of employment, as this may be unequal depending if you are man or a woman, unless there is a clear salary and employment policies and definitions in place.



Proposals and potential solutions

14. Proposals and potential solutions relating to conscious/unconscious biases

“We need to eliminate (conscious/unconscious) bias as it perpetuates stereotypical roles of women and men; with little or no involvement of men in family caring responsibilities.”

Anonymised comment

Tackling the complex interrelation between gender inequality, bias and stereotypes that lead to discrimination requires a multi-pronged approach – approaches may include education, awareness-raising campaigns and legislative changes that promote changes in individual and societal mindsets. It also requires investment, and shifting work cultures, where efficiency, performance, productivity, and quality of work are highly valued.

The results of phase one (the survey) underscored that firms must implement five important measures to enable more women to reach leadership positions:

1. Adopt more flexible working practices and cultures (86.96%).
2. Change performance metrics to allow fewer hours in the office (52.17%).
3. Introduce new ways of establishing professional networks to integrate women in the workplace (39.13%).
4. Widen performance metrics to include less visible activities such as recruitment, coaching and mentoring (30.43%).
5. Organise training programmes that increase leadership skills (26.09%).

Regarding internal policies and/or initiatives, phase one (the survey) highlighted some practices that are already being implemented within the firms. The five most mentioned were:

1. Flexible working policy (60.87%).
2. Diversity and inclusion policy (43.48%).
3. Regular performance and development reviews (32.61%).

4. Diversity and inclusion training (26.09%).
5. Training for managers and senior staff (25%).

It is concerning to note that despite progress, fewer than 50% of participants responded that their organisations have diversity and inclusion policies, regular performance and development reviews, diversity and inclusion training, and training for managers and senior staff. It is therefore imperative to continue the efforts to implement gender equality policies and initiatives as part of the organisational culture.

Rethinking the myth of meritocracy to search for new strategies

Contrary to what many claim, talent and hard work are not enough to achieve professional and/or economic success. It is clear that the economic gap makes a difference at individual level because of the starting opportunities, which distort equality of opportunities. For example, in the case of the legal profession, being assertive, having public speaking skills, knowing how to self-promote, and access to strong professional networks are not necessarily obtained at university or by taking an academic course. In addition, some soft skills may reflect certain socio-economic status such as adopting the correct dress code and/or having the appropriate behaviour in certain social situations, including interviews, which may confer some advantages.

In phase two (roundtables), all participants stressed that meritocracy should be the starting point to fill jobs with the best candidates. However, the context in Guatemala highlights that, although women represent 51% of the population, more than 70% of women work in the informal sector, which increases their vulnerability, as well as job and economic insecurity. This data indicates that there is no level playing field in Guatemala; and that no everybody has the same starting point in their professional, academic and/or social life. In this context, it is important to rethink meritocracy and seek new strategies and solutions, which will allow women to exercise their profession and have equal access to opportunities. It is important to continue raising awareness, where discrimination and bias are identified and confronted in a structured, systematic, and consistent way.

Affirmative action is important to correct the distortion created by historical, social, and economic inequalities that have limited women's opportunities. There was a division of opinion among participants, those for and against affirmative actions, for achieving gender equality. However, it is important to develop educational campaigns to explain what it is meant by affirmative action due to the limited understanding of the policy. There are other experiences in Latin America, such as Chile relating to quotas; however,

the Chilean context is very different to the situation of Guatemalan women (educational, economic and employment levels, femicide rates, etc.).

Tackling micro-machismos and microaggressions in a unified, safe, structured, and systematic way

Micro-machismos have a pernicious effect at individual and collective level. Beyond protective strategies, the key to combating macro-machismos is to break the silence and confront them to prevent them from eroding fundamental rights. Additionally, it is important to build solidarity between women and men in order to challenge them collectively. However, it is important that this is done progressively, safely, and collectively due to the prevailing violence against women in Guatemala. Some suggestions on how to confront them mentioned by the participants in the survey and in the research:

- Do not laugh if inappropriate and/or humiliating comments are made about other women. This is not evidence of a lack of a sense of humour, but it rather seeks to bring change, striving for a culture of respect and intolerance against belittling, stereotyping and discrimination. Seeking strength in collective action will be more effective when confronting situations and with the participation and support from men so that they view gender equality as something that also benefits them. This could be through messages and case studies, demonstrating the added value of gender equality to both men and women. For example, having access to paternity leave would give men the opportunity to spend quality time with their families, as well as improving their physical and mental health. Men and women must be involved in strategies for change.
- Micro-machismos and microaggressions can be eradicated. Keep a record of examples of micro-machismos and microaggressions to identify these expressions more easily and avoid falling into the trap of self-doubt or manipulation, as these behaviours should not be tolerated, because they are not "natural or normal".
- Supporting women with self-care tools as micro-machismos and microaggressions undermine their self-esteem. It is advisable to provide training for women so that they can learn to demand their rights; not let their guard down; and to build solidarity with other colleagues in the office. When we see a woman, whose rights are being trampled on, we should support her so that she does not feel alone and/or isolated.
- Confronting sexist comments through humour. Having a sense of humour is a very powerful tool, capable of turning the most complex problems, the deepest wounds or

the most uncomfortable situations into a laugh and a moment of complicity. By using humour to counteract micro-machismo and microaggressions, the harmful and outmoded nature of the comments is highlighted.

Increase formal and informal education as a transformative element

“They should organise conferences, talks and forums to encourage the participation of women lawyers to increase their visibility in the legal field, and thus inspire them to leave aside the preconceptions of what is meant to be a woman = mother, housewife.”

Anonymised comment

Participants recognised that, in Guatemala, not everyone has the same access to a good education, a well-paid job, possibilities for professional development, and access to professional and social networks. Therefore, affirmative actions are needed to levelling the playing field, which facilitates equal opportunities.

Strategies are needed to increase learning opportunities (formal and informal) because of the impact education has on women’s future. Education will enable them to negotiate and improve their prospects, to advance individually and collectively. For example, pursuing a master’s degree, access to a well-paid job, experiences abroad, access to good professional and personal networks will positively impact women’s progress. Some initiatives could be:

- Communicating with other women using new technologies.
- Receiving training in groups to share the costs of the trainer. If someone receives a tuition, organise a meeting to share the experience with others.
- Seek and provide mentoring, coaching and accompaniment support.
- Receive and provide training and raising awareness-about bias and stereotypes.
- Encourage opportunities for exchanges among women where key issues are discussed.

- Persuade the firms to adopt gender policies and provide training on the subject for both men and women.
- Develop scholarship programmes to offer new openings for women with limited resources.
- Implement awareness raising campaigns to encourage young women in rural areas to continue their education and training.

In the long-term, as education starts from an early age, it is essential to work on the implementation of early education projects where boys and girls are educated in gender equality.

Investing in self-care

Self-care is recognising that wellbeing is beyond meeting the basic needs and also extends the family and community. Having time available for self-care and taking active steps to protect mental, physical, and emotional health are very important for a more balanced personal and professional life. It is vital to recharge for achieving greater harmony and well-being. Self-care activities include pampering yourself by doing something you enjoy, training in subjects that interest you, practicing a hobby or sports, relaxing, reading a book, spending time alone or with friends.

Investing time and effort in self-care will also allow you to reflect on micro-machismos and microaggressions, as well as generating a process of empowerment that will assist you in adopting strategies to confront these as well as to strengthen emotional intelligence. It is necessary to share and design self-care plans to prevent burnout or the burned-out worker syndrome (which manifested through a state of physical and mental exhaustion that is prolonged over time and can alter the personality and self-esteem of the worker).

It is also important to cultivate soft skills, which are the result of a combination of social skills, good communication, personal image, networking, among others. These skills enable a person to relate and communicate effectively. Expressive skills (drama classes to improve voice, confidence, and communication) are as important as the development of intellectual (academic) skills. Other development opportunities include making daily spaces for reflection and training on how to build a personal brand. In addition, there is need for opening more spaces for socialising and fostering solidarity, so as to encourage interaction, professional exchanges and sharing of experiences.

Some of the soft skills most sought after by institutions and companies:

- Ability to solve problems by being proactive and decisive.
- Good communication skills to establish an efficient exchange between colleagues, line managers, and clients, which can improve your personal and professional opportunities.
- Good organisation skills, which positively impact outputs through time management and punctuality.
- Teamwork by demonstrating the ability to perform effectively in collaboration with others.
- Critical thinking to analyse, synthesise, and conclude, which enhance the ability to make decisions, based on experience.
- Empathy, ability to interact respectfully and in harmony with collaborators, as well as the ability to establish alliances. Being a naturally introverted person is not a bad thing.
- Creativity and innovation to find disruptive solutions to diverse situations, which is increasingly valued in the labour market, regardless of the area of work.

Create safe spaces of sisterhood for reflection and dialogue so that women continue to learn from each other's experiences and their own stories

Changing entrenched global systems like the patriarchal system requires certain tools as well as sisterhood that can help women feel less isolated. Sisterhood refers to the relationship of solidarity between women in the struggle for women's empowerment. It is important to establish a permanent dialogue between women to share experiences and potential solutions. It is also necessary to build consensus and find common ground among women advocates to avoid disunity, as they all have the same goal – to generate gender equality – they just need to agree on how to achieve that goal.

Some recommendations for improving sisterhood:

- Do not criticise other women for their dress or physical appearance, as it reinforces the patriarchal idea that women must have a certain image.
- Protect women in vulnerable contexts and do not judge as not to take the responsibility out of the hands of the aggressor and place it on the survivor.
- Do not allow sexist and belittling insults that prevents women's freedom of action.
- Be inclusive and open arms to all ethnicities and social classes, which empowers us as women because it binds us together as part of a community, making us feel supported.
- Create safe spaces of sisterhood where experiences, solutions, and best practices are shared. This will also help to increase support and professional networks, which facilitate active involvement with organisations and/or foundations.
- Learn to validate other women and not to expect to receive this validation only from male colleagues.
- Generate professional development, operational, personal, and strategic networks to share experiences in various areas, which will allow to negotiate better working conditions/practices. This will assist in the coordination and participation of women to share information, and events at national level.
- Seek ways to recognise women who have excelled as a way of inspiring and create role models among women.
- Learn to give opportunities to other women in a conscious, non-condescending way, especially those who, as a product of the system of discrimination, have limited economic resources.
- Raise awareness among women that bias and/or stereotypes are harmful as individuals, as a society, and for the achievement of gender equality.

Institutional leadership as a driver of gender equality

“It is important to underscore that women must be equally represented in decision-making, as well as resource management positions, and not only to fill the quota of women in minor, operational, and support positions.”

Anonymised comment

When there is an organisational culture that discriminates against women, not only women are affected, the whole team and the institutions themselves risk losing valuable talent. Organisational culture refers to an environment and values that are rooted in the social context. If sexism and inequality exist in society, even in the most progressive institutions there will be signs of discrimination against women. Consequently, it is important to recognise the nature of the sector. For example, the legal profession has a very hierarchical structure, so institutional leadership is vital to ensure meaningful and transformative changes. If a law partner or the head of an institution give a clear and strong message that misogynistic comments and harassment are not tolerated, the likelihood of achieving an environment of respect is higher.

Institutional leadership also serves as an internal and external protection to the organisation, as it empowers the individual and clarifies the organisation's standing on certain issues. For example, some participants commented that working in organisations with a mandate to promote and defend human rights, or in a firm with a clear position on gender equality, serve as a protection in dialogue with external stakeholders.

Institutional support and leadership from law partners are also very important as they have the power to adopt policies that eliminate impunity and silence. Such policies can be implemented through compliance (“enforcement”) programmes that do not penalise whistleblowing. Equally important is the creation of non-discriminatory and common values within the institution, where everyone feels identified and valued as a professional and as a person. In addition, partners play an important role in reassuring clients that they are in good hands, as well as empowering their staff.

Some suggestions:

- Seek the support from partners and managers in leadership positions as it will send a clear message that discrimination and misogyny will not be tolerated.
- Institutional and partner leadership is important, as well as the support of colleagues, both men and women.
- Raise and negotiate within institutions and firms for sharing equally administrative tasks between men and women.

Learning and sharing experiences on personal, family, and professional balance

Personal, family and work conciliation guarantees that:

- Parents can access and remain in the labour market without their family situation being negatively affected because of their opportunities of accessing employment and positions of responsibility.
- Children can be cared for and educated by both parents.
- Dependents can be cared for by their families whenever possible.

The personal, family and professional conciliation makes it easier for any working person to maintain a full professional career and, at the same time, exercise their right to care for their family, to develop their character, their training, or to enjoy their leisure and free time.

Who should be involved in the personal, family, and professional life?

- **Families:** men and women sharing domestic and family responsibilities equally, breaking with pre-established roles. This is co-responsibility over the distribution of time. Similarly, sons and daughters should participate in the domestic and family tasks according to their level of responsibility and development.
- **Companies:** applying equality policies, and implementing measures to reconcile work, personal and family life for their employees.
- **Public administration:** supporting equal opportunities between women and men and designing public policies that benefit work-family balance.
- **Workers:** exercising their right to work-life balance in a responsible way.

Learning to negotiate with one's partner and establishing a balance between family and professional life is essential to capitalise on the talents of both, for the benefit of the whole family, as well as reducing the problem of double burden.

Ongoing awareness-raising campaigns on a range of issues

The patriarchal mindset will not change unless the culture is aligned around a new vision of the future. It is imperative to create permanent national awareness campaigns through different media that promote equality and mutual respect between men and women. Such campaigns should be conducted in schools, universities, and workplaces to provide information on how to counteract sexism.

These dissemination campaign actions may include:

- Television and radio spots, as well as written media campaigns for explanatory and instructional purposes.
- Street advertising, billboards and leaflets using appropriate and clear language.
- Social media.
- Any other action considered appropriate for the dissemination of solutions to this social problem.

Campaign themes may include:

- Gender equality education.
- Highlighting the benefits of equality in the personal, family and professional spheres of life.
- Maternity is not an obstacle.
- Flexibility at work for the benefit of all.
- Change the language to identify micro-machismos and microaggressions.

These advocacy and educational campaigns will encourage institutions to take a leadership role on issues affecting women lawyers and go beyond the workplace. For example, some organisations and institutions are already implementing childcare facilities, so that parents can bring their children to the office, as well as breastfeeding spaces.

The role of men as agents of change

“Sensitising both women and men is a must. Raising awareness does matter because sometimes men are committed, but the way they act or make decisions is still subconsciously sexist. They don't even realise that they are preaching one thing but doing another.”

Anonymised comment

It is important that life partners and co-workers are part of this transformative element, where personal and professional successes are shared, as well as learning in balancing family and professional life. Raising men's awareness is vital for the successful progress towards gender equality, capitalising on common ground. We must also empower men to take paternity leave. We also need to create spaces for dialogue with men to find commonalities for generating a joint struggle – building bridges, not gaps.

An important element that was shared during the roundtables was the support male colleagues provide to women by giving them space and appreciating their work in front of clients. Colleagues should receive gender training, as this is an issue that affects both men and women.

Training women leaders who can inspire as role models

Training women to be role models that can inspire other women. In Guatemala, it has already been demonstrated that, by supporting women in the political and social sphere, it is possible to change the perception of women's political participation. For example, several participants shared achievements such as in Izabal, where two women lawyers have become parliamentarians, and where they successfully advocated for the creation of a Femicide Tribunal.

“The prototype of the successful woman is single and childless, which is totally unrealistic and violates women's citizens' rights. It is a way of thinking that has no place in the modern society we are trying to build in Guatemala, where we all have something to contribute.”

Anonymised comment



Raising awareness among clients to appreciate diversity

Sensitising and improving the relationship with clients so that they obtain better quality of services and client care. For example, through the creation of codes of conduct where clients know exactly what and when to expect from their lawyers. This will help establishing a professional relationship of trust, including clarity of opinion and advice. Raise awareness among clients to generate attitudinal change and greater acceptance.

Seek effective and innovative solutions

“In Guatemala, it is difficult to change the current stigma in firms and clients. There are talks, conferences, and support material, but, unfortunately in practice, there is no real support to promote women. On the contrary, one is confronted with and forced to live in a macho system in all areas, e.g. in the firms, in courts, during client's meetings, among others. The effort must be comprehensive.”

Anonymised comment



Women lawyers have been forced to form their own firms. This solution must be accompanied by ensuring gender equality practices to avoid replicating discriminatory patterns.

There are firms that have already adopted gender equality policies, as well as equal pay for equal work and based on skills; but these are not the norm, so making their contribution more visible is vitally important by creating a standard of recognition.

“In my firm, the issue of gender equality is already well advanced, as we have policies in place, an inclusion and diversity department, as well as anonymous reporting mechanisms.”

Anonymised comment



There was a consensus among participants that there is a need to organise face-to-face meetings at the institutional level, keeping with the spirit of working as a team, which leads to a collaborative effort. In that way, teams could have at least one working day in the office to prepare and discuss cases, exchange views, and so on. More training in planning and time management is also needed.

Eliminate and/or reform discriminatory laws, make proposals and facilitate the creation of codes of conduct

It is important to create non-discriminatory legislation accompanied by clear and effective complaint systems and promote the implementation of codes and manuals to eliminate discrimination, bias, and stereotyping. Promote inclusive policies. Promote legislative changes. The creation of the Presidential Secretariat for Women has helped to raise awareness and continues modifying these biases, as its purpose is to advise and coordinate public policies to promote the integral development of Guatemalan women.

Zero tolerance for sexual harassment

Zero tolerance for harassment, including seeking legislation to criminalise this harmful practice.

The role of institutions must be to discipline those committing sexual harassment, as well as to promote mechanisms for anonymous complaints, which will send a serious rejection to this type of behaviour.

Improving evaluation metrics

“Everyone must be evaluated according to their professional and intellectual capacities, but with a limited range of working conditions, taking into consideration working time, experience and others.”

Anonymised comment

In phase one (the survey), respondents stressed that many women are forced to cope with or adapt to a male-driven labour system that is incompatible with women's inclusion. Respondents underscored that new unbiased performance metrics are needed to evaluate employees, instead of focusing just on billable hours.

“There are skills or issues that women normally contribute more, which must be taken into consideration whenever we use new metrics, as billable hours normally do not permit a balance of having a family life or help at home.”

Anonymised comment

This was reconfirmed by participants in phase two (the roundtables), who endorsed that changing the performance metrics, to include results and capacity, will evaluate the quantity and quality and improved the recognition of the skills and commitment of women lawyers to their clients. Decisions must be based on clear performance metrics' parameters.

The role of the Bar Association for Attorneys and Notaries on gender equality

In phase one, respondents acknowledged that, despite the fact that there are talks, conferences and materials; unfortunately, in practice, there is no real and sustainable support to promote women within the legal sector. It is the task of the Guatemalan Bar Association for Attorneys and Notaries to support its members, without discrimination and with inclusion, in order to be a transformative entity in favour of gender equality. It is important that the Bar Association for Attorneys and Notaries becomes more open in the election of its representatives and promote substantive participation in order to be more representative, diverse, and inclusive.

15. Proposals and potential solutions related to flexible work

“There must be structural changes in society concerning the double burden of family and professional life. If you choose part-time work, even though it will allow you some flexibility, you get paid less and often end up working the same amount of time to compensate for not being in the office!”

Anonymised comment

Types of flexible work identified

In Guatemala, flexible working arrangements already exist, and several variants were identified, which are not necessarily standardised across the profession. Therefore, the professional and personal value of this practice has not been systematically quantified. However, there was consensus among the participants that flexible working facilitates a professional and personal balance and contribute to greater gender equality. It is important to define what flexible working means, and to provide a structure and transparency in its application. When applying flexible working policies, the different options, structure, and conditions for balancing cost vs. opportunity should be identified. Flexible working can also be effectively implemented through an induction process.

For this practice to work effectively, flexible working needs to be systematically integrated, managed and structured throughout the organisation. This will prevent the double burden (professional and/or family), as well as the potential abuse of this mechanism. There are endless possibilities for flexible working – the key is to analyse the needs of the individual and the team and design a plan that ensure its feasibility. To implement flexible policies, a cultural shift within the organisation is vital in order to generate the confidence that the work objectives will continue to be achieved.

The most common types of flexible working:

1. **Workplace flexibility (or remote working)** where there is no restriction on the physical location. Some of the options:
 - Working from home remotely connected to the office network.
 - Working from a satellite location designated by the firm, but not with the rest of the team at headquarters.
 - Varying the location of work during the year, e.g. six months in one city and six months in another.
 - Nomadic work with no fixed location.

The provision of computers, telephones and other technical equipment will allow effective flexible working, while maintaining contact with colleagues, clients, and access to a central office.

2. **Flexibility in working hours or volume of working hours**

This occurs when an employee has some ability to choose when to start and finish work, usually within certain pre-set limits. There may be hours when employees must be present at work, but the remaining hours can be recouped according to what suit the employee.

Other examples of flexibility in terms of the hours or volume of working hours:

- Covering a full-time position with two or more part-timers who can coordinate to carry out their duties jointly.
- Establishing arrangements for a specific duration that respond to specific needs.

3. **Flexibility in time off in lieu (TOIL)**

When staff in the organisation work over the established hours, usually to meet an increase in demand or activity, they can accrue the additional time they have worked and choose when to take the equivalent time off. The days available to take (TOIL) are generally within agreed limits or criteria.

4. Flexibility in the contractual relationship

Some examples of contracts that promote flexible working:

- Part-time contracts, with reduced hours or fewer days per week.
- Contracts to perform a specific work or service, with a performance target; no fixed hours, and it is up to the employee to complete the work to achieve the target.
- Commercial contracts or projects with freelancers, companies, donors, etc., depending on the type of work to be done.

It is worth highlighting that part-time or contractual work can bring some precarity in the working future for women, as it limits social provision, access to recreation and a stable professional future. Contractual flexibility can contribute to disguise labour exploitation and could potentially violate women's human rights.

5. Career breaks

When an employee takes a career break, it can be defined as a gap year or sabbatical. Sabbaticals are usually offered as an employment benefit, after several consecutive years of service to be defined by the contracting entity. Career breaks have proven to be very effective in providing employees with the opportunity to recover, to gain an academic qualification, and/or to broaden their perspectives, so that they return to work with a renewed attitude and energy.

Principles for implementing responsible flexible working

As the professional achieves greater work-life balance, companies and organisations also benefit from the positive impact on team motivation and productivity. In the not-too-distant future, these and other flexible solutions will be key to attracting talent.

However, there was consensus in the roundtables that there is a need to establish clear criteria on who has access to flexible working and whether it should be considered as an employment benefit offered by the firm, company and/or institution in order to increase employee engagement and loyalty. Flexible working can also be offered to attract talent. It was acknowledged that some people may not be able to access certain types of flexible working straight away due to the nature of their assignments. For example, recent graduates need greater supervision levels and attendance to get the experience they need.

Better understanding of flexible working

This can be done through awareness raising campaigns, which will contribute to the well-being of the whole sector. In addition, more flexible working hours are important since they can generate more loyalty, high job performance, and motivation. Clients need to be made aware so that they learn to value work-life balance and for better management of their expectations.

New key performance indicators

There are studies and proposals in evaluating productivity in the exercise of the legal profession under metrics that are not based solely on billable hours. The principle in the application of flexible working must be results-driven, where metrics are based on hours invested, with additional efficiency indicators. Consequently, new productivity metrics must be established, like key performance indicators (KPIs), as well as considering other variables such as customer satisfaction, professionalism, academic standards, business development, administration, and staff management. Furthermore, other areas such as pro-bono work must be considered and can contribute to the modernisation of performance metrics, as these activities will contribute to the firm's image and standing.

“Changing the culture in the family and in the profession are key to a better balance between men and women. Any couple must split the work 50/50.”

Digitise certain legal processes and invest in technological capacity building

During the roundtables, some participants underlined that the virtual world has allowed greater participation of victims/survivors of violence, as it facilitates taking depositions. It also has permitted better inter-institutional coordination, as staffing is insufficient and participation through virtual means reduces the difficulty of travel. As a country, it is required to invest in equitable access to connectivity.

To fulfil certain legal bureaucratic processes, some legal practices, such as stamp duties, can be paid online, saving time, and increasing effectiveness. Institutions must invest and improve the functioning and accessibility of technical infrastructure, not only connectivity but also investment in new technologies (such as google drive), which can also save time and money. This may involve access to IT systems in the city and in other areas, including to the internet and computers.

At the moment, there are software that can administer and control flexible working, so investing in structuring management and administration of this practice can add value to the process.

The virtual modality can contribute to retain and attract new talent. At institutional level, there are challenges relating to the availability of equipment, technical infrastructure, and training in new technologies, especially in public institutions of justice and security. The use of technology can facilitate access to justice, as the handling of paper-based files might be difficult due to the lack of photocopiers and other technical infrastructure. For example, supporting older people on how to use technology when they are in court can contribute to maximising efficiency in the implementation of justice.

Invest in strengthening communication within and outside the organisation

Technology benefits but can also make more complex team relationships, as there are greater possibilities for misunderstandings.

Flexible working for all

There was consensus that flexible working must be available to all regardless of gender, marital and/or social status, and family status.

Legal standard for the establishment of flexible working

There is still no legal standard to support flexible working. Public sector contracts, under line 029, do not establish start and end times, which may violate the respect of human and labour rights.

“Flexible working can promote productivity, may allow you to be a mother and have a life – to do any other activity you need to do. It impacts on generating good work. It has allowed me to be a better mum, a better woman and a better professional.”

Anonymised comment

Some operational principles for implementation:

- Establish a bespoke timetable in which each professional designs their flexible working according to their personal needs and those in their position.
- Working by objectives, with specific deadlines, and a flexible timetable according to the compliance timetable.
- In the case of working in a specific location, having greater flexibility on the time of arrival and departure by offering a wide range of time to undertake the work.
- Concentrate working hours into fewer working days, either for personal reasons or through working hours that are spread over a specific number of days.
- Extending working hours from Monday to Thursday to end the working day on Friday at noon.
- In the case of shift work, establish arrangements that facilitate personal and professional conciliation without affecting performance.
- Flexibility in taking breaks during the working day.

16. Proposals and potential solutions relating to the gender pay gap

- Increasing and investing in developing professional and personal networks.
- Writing your CVs to fit the job you are applying for.
- More research on gender pay gap, as there is not sufficient statistical data, even though it is an important area.
- Establishing salary metrics.
- Adopting clear pay policies with pay scales and job descriptions.
- Establishing clear performance metrics to determine when deciding on a new partner that it is according to academic, work experience, and professional quality criteria.
- Provide training on how to negotiate a salary raise.

17. Recommendations

At a personal level

- Invest in self-care and take measures that protect mental, physical, and emotional health to have a more balanced personal and professional life, as well as recharge energy and contribute to harmony and well-being. Develop self-care plans to respond appropriately to the demands of personal, work and family conciliation.
- Undertake therapy and continuous and permanent training for maintaining physical and mental self-care, given that micro-machismos, microaggressions, discrimination and stereotypes negatively impact self-esteem, confidence, and credibility.
- Learning to know and recognise one's own talents through self-knowledge as to learn to value oneself in front of others.
- Strengthen soft skills, not only in specialised areas of law and human rights, but also in communication, negotiation, diplomacy, and leadership.
- Support the empowerment of the women you work with, establish mutual respect, learning to value talents and contributions, beyond hierarchies.
- Create safe spaces of sisterhood, reflection, and dialogue to continue learning from each other's experiences and stories, and in particular, towards indigenous women and those with limited opportunities. This sisterhood should generate support networks, with the aim of positioning affirmative actions and advocacy for increasing women's human rights.
- Share experiences of harassment and coping strategies to avoid suffering in silence and/or isolation. Secrecy and silence contribute to perpetuate impunity and the continuation of these unacceptable and pernicious behaviours.
- Identify and eliminate conscious/unconscious bias through individual and collective trainings. Generate debates to discuss these issues.
- Tackle micro-machismos and microaggressions in a safe, coordinated, consistent, and systematic way. Establish a dialogue with other women and men to exchange ideas on how to deal with them individually and collectively.
- In the professional in dealing with men, both clients and colleagues, establish professional

standards based on respect through assertive, clear, diplomatic, and direct communication.

- Improve one's own skills in how to negotiate pay rises or professional fees, through best practice discussions and case studies. Analyse the workplace carefully to identify the key elements in salary negotiation. Establish and cultivate personal, professional, and strategic networks.
- Establish roundtable discussions to discuss various topics, books, and share experiences.

At institutional/firm level

- Adopt more flexible working practices and cultures, as well as policies and/or initiatives that promote diversity, inclusion, and gender equality, such as:
 - Flexible working policy
 - Diversity and inclusion policy
 - Regular performance and development reviews
 - Diversity, inclusion, and gender equality training at all levels and for all staff.
 - Comprehensive training programmes including leadership development.
- Expand productivity performance metrics to include less visible activities, such as recruitment, coaching, mentoring, pro-bono work, business development, which also consider new forms of flexible working.
- Introduce new strategies for growing networks and professional events, which must be inclusive and neutral to integrate women.
- Introduce transparent, non-discriminatory, and inclusive selection processes by adopting new forms of recruitment (blind selection).
- Eliminate conscious/unconscious bias in the workplace through assertive institutional leadership and positive actions that reinforce a message of intolerance to sexist comments, sexual harassment, micro-machismos, and microaggressions.
- In job interviews, eliminate gender-differentiated questions that reinforce stereotypes and selection criteria. For example, ensure that interview questions do not enquire into life plans, whether they are pregnant, whether they have children, and so on.

- Change the organisational culture through greater integration of flexible working, so that it does not become a trigger for other types of discrimination relating to personal and marital status, with or without children.
- When implementing flexible working policies, it is important to clarify what this means, give it a clear structure as well as transparency in its application, e.g. the different variants, structure, and conditions.
- Facilitate space for reporting sexual harassment within the institutional space.
- Establish genderless job profiles, focusing on skills and fixed salaries.
- Make the distribution of shared administrative tasks more equitable, based on negotiations with the professionals in the team.
- Teams should be made up of a diversity of people of different genders, age, and ethnic backgrounds.
- New messages need to be managed with the client so that women's knowledge and experience are valued.

At educational level

- Prepare and educate the new generation of lawyers by working with universities to embed new values, including gender equality.
- Training programmes at all levels (authorities, middle management, service, and administrative positions) on institutional policies concerning gender and women's human rights.
- Empowering women lawyers with the knowledge and the handling of specialised women's human rights instruments.
- Ongoing awareness-raising campaigns for diversity to be appreciated within and outside the firm including in the relationship with clients. Moreover, generate campaigns in rural areas to motivate young women lawyers to continue their studies and training.

At social and/or legislative level

- Foster strategic alliances with other organisations and sectors to build a coordinated, coherent, and long-term movement to achieve gender parity and equality.
- Engage men in programmes relating to new masculinities, making them aware of micro-machismos and gender biases.
- Actively engage in spaces that allow women to have a representative voice at all levels.
- Continue to position sexual harassment as a form of violence against women in national legislation.
- Promote the appropriation of women's historical struggles, and those women pioneers in the legal profession, through the systematisation of their stories.
- Support for legislative proposals that promote women's human rights, arising from women lawyers' groups and non-governmental organisations.
- Encourage men's co-responsibility in unremunerated work. Promote the respect of family and work life.
- Apply parity laws on a temporary basis, until equality is achieved.
- Create a legislative proposal, from the perspective of women's organisations, to regulate flexible working and guarantee women's labour rights (based on earned rights).
- Advocate for the elimination of civil and criminal codes and discriminatory laws and make proposals that include the creation of codes of conduct.
- Advocate for intolerance of sexual harassment.

At the level of the profession

- Promote a thematic agenda of common interest for women lawyers within the Bar Association for Attorneys and Notaries of Guatemala.
- Undertake awareness-raising activities to counteract the false sense of equality among young women. It is necessary to continue raising awareness and visibility in order to inspire change.
- Organise creative advocacy campaigns. Suggestions were made based on other successful campaigns. For example, some participants commented that they placed bras in a public hospital where the director was accused of rape and sexual violence towards several women.

- Creating international women's networks in the legal profession.
- Advocate for the improvement of technology, from culture and learning. Implement plans that highlight why technology is important, in addition to support programmes that consider the cultural context of communities.
- Reducing gender pay gap, making it necessary to work on the structural aspects of inequality for women: education, health, political participation, etc.
- Define performance parameters, which do not currently do not exist, to measure flexible working.
- Carry out intersectional analysis because discrimination against women in the legal profession is related to socio-economic class. Knowledge of how patriarchy, classism, image, and age discrimination operate is necessary to overcome such practices.
- Adopt a position of intolerance against sexual harassment in the profession.

