

Gender equality, employment and green transition: policies for inclusive development

Ecuador in the «Fair transition energy and green job creation» study

COUNTRY
ECUADOR



Ecuador has taken a firm step in the face of the global climate crisis with the official presentation of its **Second Determined Contribution at National Level in 2025**. Although Ecuador accounts for only 0.16% of global emissions, it is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Ecuador has established a solid legal and political framework to address the challenges of climate change. Through an Executive Decree, adaptation and mitigation to climate change has been declared a state policy. In addition, the country has the **Inter-institutional Committee on Climate Change (CICC)**, which coordinates and implements public policies in this area. Instruments such as the **National Climate Change Strategy 2012-2025** and the **National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change 2024** seek to empower women, especially those of indigenous peoples and nationalities, Afro-descendants and montêias, in decision-making on natural resource management and adaptation to climate change.

1. Public Policy Review

1.1. National policies for a just and energy transition

* [Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008](#): Recognizes the importance of protecting the environment and the right to live in a healthy environment. Article 413 states that the State shall promote energy efficiency, the use of clean practices and technologies, as well as renewable, diversified and low-impact energies.

* [Organic Law of Energy Competitiveness 2024](#): This law aims to promote economic solutions and power generation to overcome the country's energy crisis, optimizing the management of public resources associated with the electricity sector in the public and private sectors.

* [National Climate Change Strategy 2012-2025](#): Establishes measures to reduce vulnerability and greenhouse gas emissions, aligning with international commitments and integrating gender

into the category of priority focus groups; as a population particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

* [National Climate Finance Strategy \(ENFC\)](#): Launched in 2021, it seeks to mobilize financial resources for climate change mitigation and adaptation projects. This strategy focuses on optimizing the use of national and international funds, both public and private, to meet the country's climate commitments, and so that climate finance is an opportunity to advance gender equality.

1.2. Planning tools and instruments

* [Second Determined Contribution at National Level 2026-2035](#): proposes the implementation of 81 initiatives (55 mitigation and 26 adaptation) between 2026 and 2035, prioritizing strategic sectors such as energy and including gender, intergenerationality and interculturality as transversal axes, Ensuring that women gain more decision-making power and control over resources and develop more resilience and adaptation capacities.



- * [National Plan for Climate Change Mitigation Ecuador 2024-2070](#): Among its lines of action prioritizes the energy sector and, in addition, advocates a just and equitable transition, focused on reducing gender inequalities, strengthening capacities, and promote research and technology transfer to reduce the workload and improve women's quality of life.
- * [Gender and Climate Change Action Plan 2024](#): This plan seeks to integrate a gender approach in the management of climate change. Includes the active participation of women in policy formulation and action in sectors such as energy, agriculture and housing.
- * [National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change 2023-2027](#): It

is a key instrument for climate action, which enables the implementation of the ENCC, including a gender approach.

- * **Technical Table on Gender and Climate Change**: It is an inter-institutional space, constituted in 2019, that articulates public and social actors to integrate the gender approach into climate action. His statement highlights the need for climate policies that recognize the care economy, ancestral knowledge and participation of women and indigenous peoples in a just ecological transition.
- * [National Energy Efficiency Plan 2016-2035](#): Addresses the need to build an energy efficiency policy to diversify the country's energy matrix and reduce dependence on

non-renewable sources, However, the proposals focus on technical efficiency without considering gender inclusion or equitable participation criteria.

- * [Development Plan for the New Ecuador 2024-2025](#): Establishes political and administrative guidelines for the implementation of public policies in Ecuador. Includes a gender, intergenerational and intercultural approach in its strategies, recognizing the differences in climate change impact between men and women. Promotes the participation of diverse groups, including women, in decision-making related to infrastructure, energy and environment.
- * [Opportunities Creation Plan 2021-2025](#): Establishes guidelines



for job creation in sustainable sectors, promoting ecological transition and social inclusion. Although no specific actions are detailed, the importance of ensuring women's equal access to employment opportunities is recognized.

* [Strategy of "Green Jobs"](#): The Ministerial Resolution No. MDT-2022-024, issued by the Ministry of Labour in 2022, establishes the guidelines for sustainable development in labor matters, through an employment portal focused on promoting opportunities related to the transition to a green economy.

1.3. Inclusion of the gender dimension in public policies

Ecuador has made significant progress in integrating the gender approach into its public policies related to climate change, energy transition and sustainability. Through various strategies and policy frameworks, the country has recognized the need to address gender inequalities in these areas, ensuring the active participation of women, especially those from historically marginalized sectors, as rural, indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian women.

The [National Agenda for Gender Equality 2021-2025](#) is the main public planning instrument that currently guides gender equality policies in Ecuador. This agenda includes the gender approach in

various sectors, and one of the most relevant axes is "Environment and Climate Change", which sets out specific strategies to ensure the active participation of women in sustainable management of natural resources and decision-making related to climate change and energy transition.

The **2024 Gender and Climate Change Action Plan** is also a key instrument in implementing inclusive policies, promoting gender equality in green sectors such as energy, agriculture and natural resource management. Through the **Technical Bureau on Gender and Climate Change**, progress has been made in mainstreaming a gender approach into national policies, although there is still a need to strengthen the implementation and evaluation of these policies.

2. Analysis of opportunities and potential

2.1. Identification of policies that favor the integration of women in green jobs

In Ecuador, various public policies have been implemented to promote the employment of women in green jobs, recognizing their potential in sustainable sectors and their contribution to ecological transition:

The **National Green Jobs Strategy** seeks to create green jobs

with a gender focus. Includes actions such as improving the capacities of the Ministry of Labour and strengthening the public employment service to facilitate the integration of women into sustainable sectors.

The **Coordinating Committee for Green Jobs (CCEV)**, created in 2022, is an inter-institutional body that articulates environmental, economic and labour policies to promote inclusive green jobs. Its holistic approach seeks to maximize employment opportunities for women in sustainable sectors.

2.2. Recommendations to improve the inclusion of gender in public policies

Although Ecuador has implemented significant reforms to address gender inequality in key areas such as the energy transition, there are still structural and social barriers that limit women's full participation. These barriers include lack of access to specialized technical training, low representation of women in decision-making positions, and inequalities in access to financial resources. Effective inclusion of women in these sectors requires the strengthening of existing policies and the development of new strategies to ensure that women can take advantage of the opportunities offered by the transition to a green economy.



* Strengthening training and access to technologies for women in the energy sector and creating financing funds for green entrepreneurship led by women. This will ensure a just transition, where women are not only passive beneficiaries but active agents in the implementation of sustainable energy solutions.

Practices to highlight

The inter-institutional agreement between OLADE and the Ministry of Energy and Mines (2024) seeks to integrate gender equity in the energy sector and promote the adoption of clean technologies and renewable energies. It has as one of its key objectives the creation of a road map to integrate gender equity in the energy sector and define strategies to increase women's participation in technical and leadership areas.



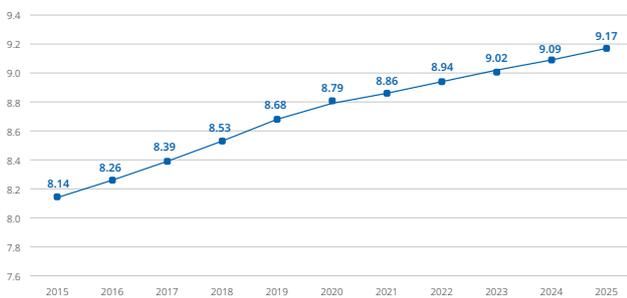


3. Statistical data

A. Demographic data

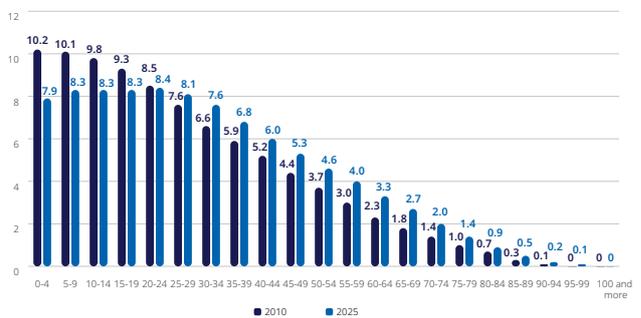
Population distribution statistics

Number of woman, millions

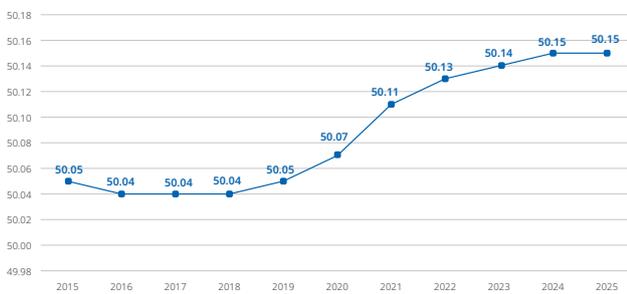


Age distribution statistics

Age distribution of the female population

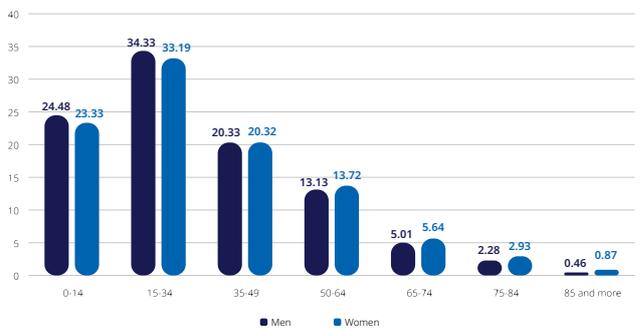
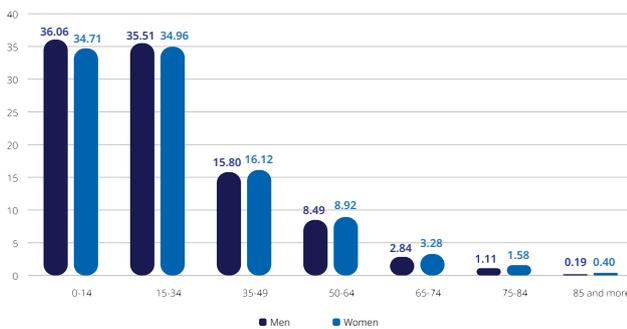


Percentage of woman



Population distribution statistics by age

Age distribution by sex, percentage





Ages	Women			Men		
	2000	2025	Difference in percentage points	2000	2025	Difference in percentage points
0-14	34.71	23.33	-11.38	36.06	24.48	-11.58
15-34	34.96	33.19	-1.77	35.51	34.33	-1.18
35-49	16.12	20.33	4.21	15.8	20.32	4.52
50-64	8.92	13.72	4.8	8.49	13.13	4.64
65-74	3.28	5.64	2.36	2.84	5.01	2.17
75-84	1.58	2.93	1.35	1.11	2.28	1.17
85 and more	0.41	0.87	0.46	0.19	0.46	0.27

Interpretation of demographic data

Distribution of the population by age and sex (2000 vs. 2025): Ecuador is experiencing a sustained process of population ageing. In 2000, 34.7% of women and 36.1% of men were aged 0-14 years. By 2025, these percentages are projected to decline to 23.3 per cent and 24.5 per cent respectively, reflecting a fall of more than 11 percentage points. In contrast, the older age groups are increasing significantly. Women aged 50-64 will grow from 8.9% to 13.7%, and those aged 65-74 from 3.3% to 5.6%. This change poses significant challenges in terms of geriatric care, pensions and long-term care policies.

Evolution of the percentage of women in the total population (2015-2025): the proportion of women in the Ecuadorian population remains stable, ranging from 50.04% to 50.15% during the period 2015-2025. However, their greater presence in the upper age groups implies a progressive feminization of old age, which must be approached with a gender approach.

B. Education level data

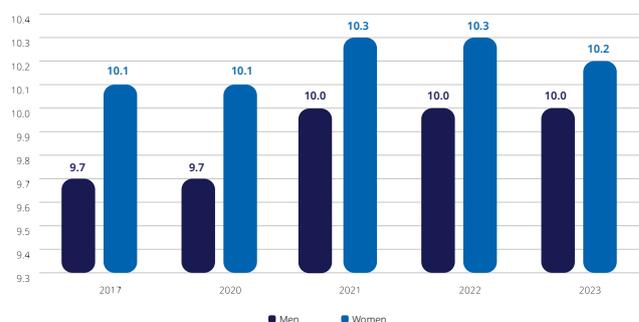
Educational attainment statistics

Percentage of bachelor, population 25+



Statistics on years of study

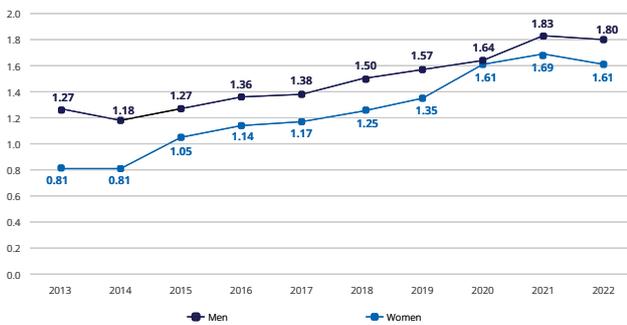
Years of education



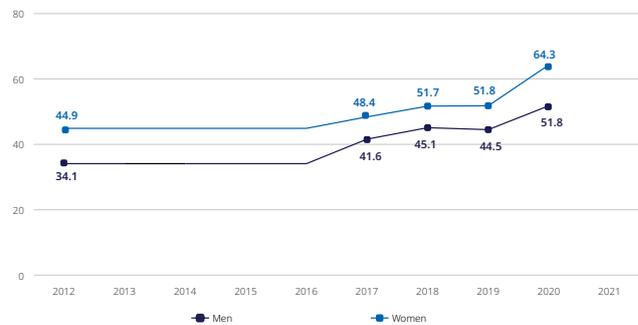
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Percentage of master, population 25+



Gross tertiary enrolment rate, percentage



Interpretation of training data

Access to tertiary education: tertiary enrolment rates have risen steadily. In 2021, women reached a rate of 51.8%, compared to 44.5% for men. This reflects a substantial improvement in women's access to higher education.

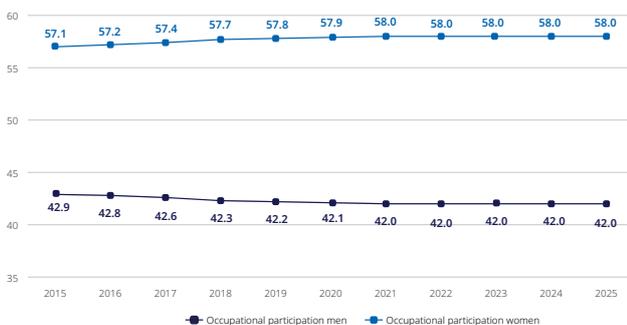
Level of education achieved (bachelor's, master's, doctorate): in the case of bachelor's degrees, women have consistently outperformed men in all years since 2015. The same is true for master's programmes from 2018 onwards, although with narrower gaps. Information on doctorates is limited, but available data suggest that women are under-represented.

Average years of formal education: Women have equaled or outperformed men in average years of schooling since 2017. In 2023, women reach 10.3 years of age compared to 10.2 for men.

C. Employment data

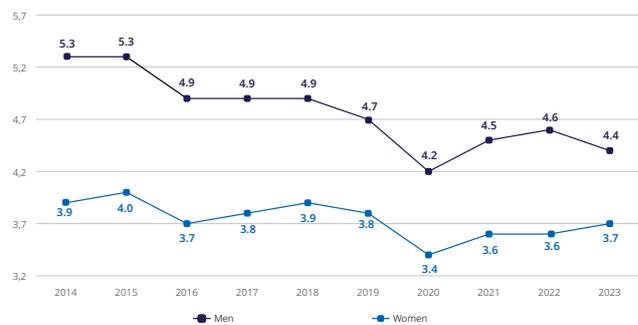
Employment statistics

Economic participation rate, percentage



Income Statistics

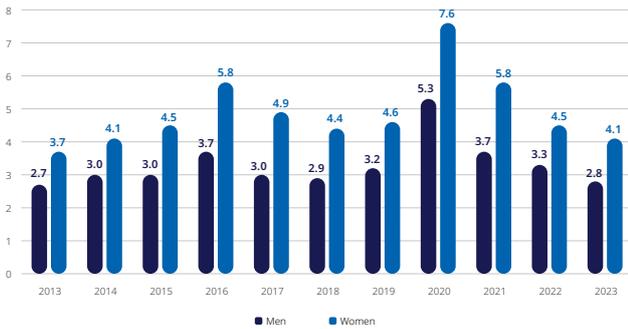
Average income, in multiples of the poverty line





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Unemployment rate, percentage



Percentage of adult women dedicated exclusively to unpaid work



Interpretation of employment data

Economic participation rate: by 2025, 42.0% of women are projected to participate in the labour market compared with 58.0% of men. This gap of 16 percentage points reflects persistent structural barriers to women's integration into employment.

Unpaid work: Unpaid work affects a significant proportion of adult women, especially in rural areas. In 2022, 26.9% of rural women and 24.1% of urban women were exclusively engaged in these tasks. This severely limits their economic autonomy.

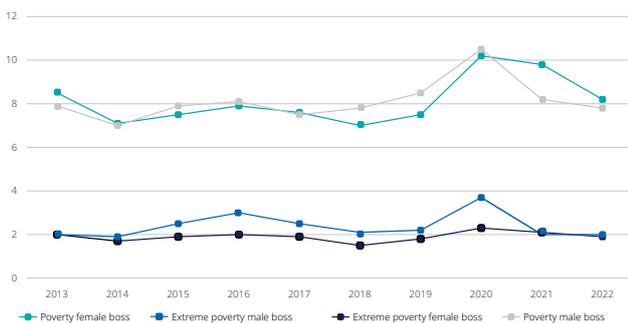
Unemployment rate: in 2023, the female unemployment rate was 5.7%, compared to 4.6% for men, marking a persistent gap that has been maintained throughout the decade.

Income: men have higher average incomes than women: in 2023, their income was 4.8 times the poverty line, while women had only 3.8.

D. Poverty data

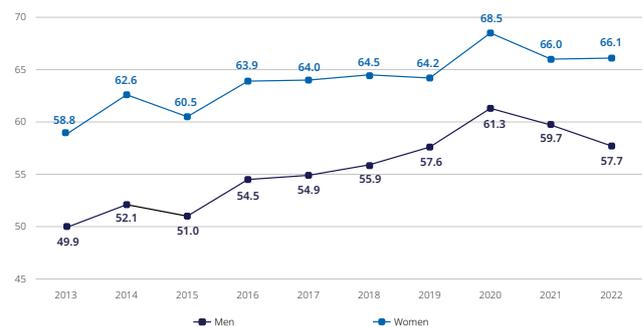
Statistics on poverty and extreme poverty

Poverty gap coefficient, percentage



Employment and vulnerability statistics

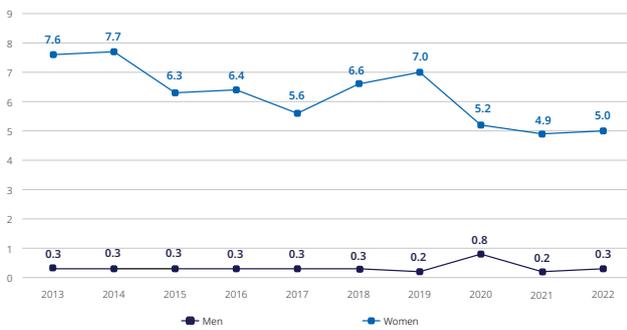
Total employed in low-productivity jobs, percentage of urban employed population





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Employment in domestic work, percentage



Interpretation of poverty and vulnerability data

Low-productivity jobs: 66.1% of Ecuadorian women employed in 2022 were in low-productivity jobs, compared to 57.7% of men. This precarious insertion restricts women’s access to social security and sustainable career paths.

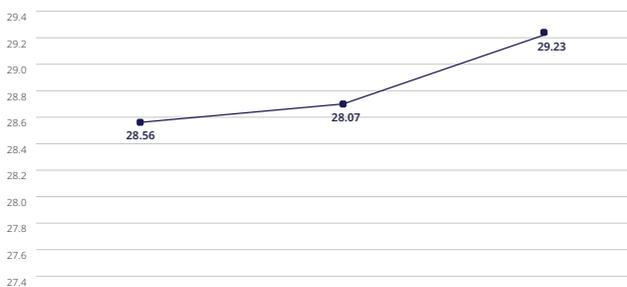
Poverty gaps by type of household head: female-headed households consistently have higher levels of poverty and extreme poverty compared to those led by men. This feminization of poverty responds to structural factors such as lower incomes, increased burden of care and limited access to formal employment.

Employment in paid domestic work: Paid domestic work is highly feminized. In 2022, 7.0% of women were in this type of employment, compared to just 0.3% of men.

E. STEM education and employment data in the energy and transportation sectors

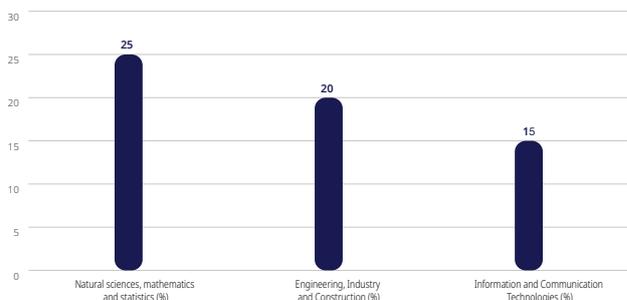
Graduate Statistics

Percentage of STEM graduates

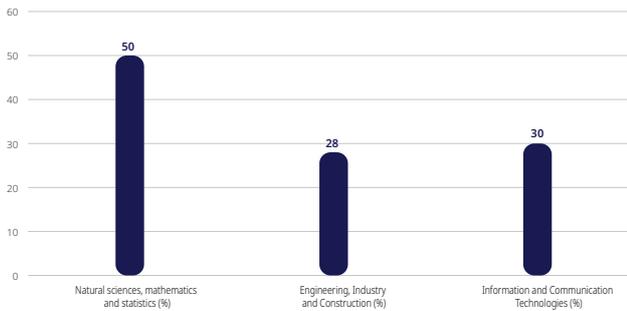


Student statistics by STEM major

Percentage of female graduates from selected STEM majors (2022)



Participation of women in STEM careers



Interpretation of training and employment data in STEM and strategic sectors

Female participation in STEM careers: In 2018, women accounted for only 25% of those studying natural sciences, mathematics and statistics, 20% in engineering, manufacturing and construction, and 15% in information and communication technologies.

Graduates in STEM disciplines: between 2014 and 2016, the percentage of women graduates in STEM careers remained between 27% and 29%, without showing significant changes, which shows a stabilization in low participation levels.

Employment in strategic sectors (energy and transport): in 2023, only 0.3% of employment in the energy sector was accounted for by women. In transport, female participation was 2.4%, compared with 10.3% of men. These data reflect a deep exclusion of women in sectors of high technological and economic value.

General conclusions

Disconnection between educational attainment and employment: despite women's increasing access to higher education, this does not translate into labour or pay equity.

Segmentation and precariousness: women are over-concentrated in informal, low-paid and low-productivity jobs with little representation in strategic sectors.

Overburden of unpaid care: a significant proportion of women, especially rural women, are engaged exclusively in caring work, which hampers their economic autonomy.

Feminization of poverty: housewives and domestic workers face higher levels of poverty, with limited access to labour rights and social protection.