

SDG 8



PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL

Sustainable Development Goals seen from a feminist approach

The concept of economic growth, as understood by the hetero-patriarchal neoliberal system, is incompatible with life. According to feminisms, tackling the sustainability of life and eradicating inequalities based on the exploitation and submission of women, their bodies and their sexualities are obligatory conditions for supporting any economic goal.

Women, doubly exploited

The neoliberal and **hetero-patriarchal** economic system relies on the **control over women's bodies** and on making reproductive and care work invisible to sustain itself. Acknowledging the **care economy** compromises the viability of capitalist exploitation as well as the existing inequalities between genders, social classes, and the global North and South.

Feminist economics analyzes the hidden reproductive and care processes that are carried out by women in the private economic spheres and puts them at the center.

Is economic growth compatible with life and the planet?

The current economic system is unsustainable for the planet and the dignified life of people. The central goals of growth and increased productivity are clearly mercantile and are based on processes of **accumulation by exploitation**. They specifically harm women. This system takes advantage of the undervaluation of care

provided by women and makes the work they do that it does recognize precarious. The GDP is a biased and masculinized* indicator, as it does not take into account the contributions to the economy made by women or other social groups. Patriarchal bias is present in all macro and micro economy indicators: unemployment and employment rates, demand, etc.

Another inseparable reality of the dominant economic system is that it exploits natural resources, which will threaten the viability of life on the planet when they are commodified. There is a direct relationship between **gender-based inequalities** and the **global expansion of neoliberalism**. Free Trade Agreements are based on **sexual and racial divisions of labor** and eliminate obstacles in order to be able to exploit every sphere: from labor rights to the weakening of the welfare state and commodification of basic rights such as education and healthcare, since said trade agreements are all sustained by the invisibility of care.

How is the oppression of women exploited by the hetero-patriarchal neoliberal system?

In the work sectors with a greater presence of women, the **salary gap** is lower but working conditions are worse. In contrast, in traditionally male-dominated sectors there are better benefits and working conditions, but women who work in these areas suffer more discrimination. Thus, the **feminization of labor** involves an economic and/or social undervaluation.

Although the incorporation of women into formal work is a reality almost everywhere, it is still **precarious**. In Catalonia, 76% of part-time workers are women**, which implies fewer labor rights and social benefits, lower wages and a greater burden in reconciling work and personal life.

* Eugenia Perona (2012), *La Economía feminista y su aporte a la teoría económica moderna*, UNC



Globally, 83% of domestic and care work is done by women, most of whom are deprived of labor rights (ILO). The **exploitation** of women domestic workers is recurrent, reflecting the patriarchal society and the value that capital places on care. When it comes to women migrant workers, this dynamic is even worse, as is the case, for example, in Lebanon with the **Kafala system** where employers “sponsor” women migrant workers. This is, *de facto*, a form of **exploitation** and even **slavery**.***

Sexual and Reproductive Rights (SRRs) in the working environment and body sovereignty

The **lack of legal protection** for women sex workers is an example of how the system of **control over women's sexuality** and sex prevents them from enjoying autonomy and freedom over their own decisions. The recognition of all women's SRRs and in particular this group of workers', who are especially vulnerable when it comes to the recognition of their rights, is essential for them to be able to make decisions, enjoy their sexuality, and exercise **body sovereignty**.

International instruments such as CEDAW or the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action recognize **women's right to exercise control over their own bodies** and to decide freely on matters related to their sexuality and reproduction. Although motherhood is an individual right that one must be able to exercise freely as these organizations, as well as others, declare, reproduction of life is also a collective and social responsibility. In order to achieve this, according to the SRRs, the right to reproduction and parenting should be recognized, institutionally protected and economically ensured, also in the professional field.

Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identities is recurring worldwide. The ILO emphasizes that one of the main causes of rejection and discrimination is due to the perceived non-conformity with **heteronormativity** as well as an existing **stigma** against **LGTBI+** people. In order to put an end to these attitudes, governments must create legal mechanisms and, in the case they already have them, they must promote actions to implement them.

Legislation in Catalonia

- ILO's Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189), 2011.
- Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia, 2006.
- Law 17/2015, of 21 July, on effective equality between women and men.
- Law 27/2011, of 1 August, on the updating, adaptation and modernization of the Social Security system.
- Resolution 56/XI, on making labor rights and conditions of domestic workers the same as those applying to the rest of the workforce, 2006.
- Government Agreement to improve working conditions in domestic and care work, 2019.
- Strategic plan of gender equality policies of the Government of Catalonia, 2019-2022.
- National Plan for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Catalonia, 2019.

Legislation in Lebanon

- Lebanese Constitution, 1962.
- National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW).
- Lebanese Labor Code of 1946, amended in 2000 to prohibit discrimination between men and women.
- Social Security Code of 1963, amended in 1998.
- Law on Protection of Women and Family Members, 2014.

In **Lebanon**, despite the existence of a legal system that does not limit the participation of women in the labor market, there is a lack of guarantees for the recognition of rights and their exercise. The Labor Code does not apply to migrants. Factors that impose economic limitations and, therefore, also limit the exercise of SRRs are:

- The participation of women in the labor force is 23%. The majority are economically dependent since they do not carry out any recognized activity.
- In 2011 a law was passed that prohibits all forms of human trafficking.
- The geopolitical situation and the large number of refugees the country receives, both impact the participation of Lebanese and refugee women. The labor market is saturated, precarious and irregular, and the jobs with the least value are assigned to women.
- Approximately 250,000 migrants, mostly women from Ethiopia, Kenya, the Philippines or Sri Lanka, serve as domestic workers under the Kafala system.
- The relegation of social affairs and services to religious authorities and the weakness of the State in these issues concerning family, gender relations, and Women's Rights means that the pressure on women in Lebanon to become mothers and take on care tasks is still enormous.

Neither Lebanon nor the Spanish State has ratified the ILO Convention 189 for male and female domestic workers.



** Observatori IQ: iqobservatori.org

*** Amnesty International, *Their House is My Prison. Exploitation of Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon*, 2019

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