WOMEN & CORRUPTION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Over the last decade, women across Latin America and the Caribbean have been speaking out in ever greater numbers in support of equal rights for women and girls. From Argentina to Costa Rica and Brazil to Mexico, women are marching for reproductive health, demanding action for #MeToo and building a strong and dynamic women’s movement to make their voices heard.

While considerable progress has been made to empower women across the region, there is still much work left to do to inspire real change. The recent release of the Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) – Latin America and the Caribbean is an important step for understanding how corruption affects women. Based on a survey of more than 17,000 people in 18 countries across the region, the report reveals new data that could help develop more gender-sensitive anti-corruption programmes and policies.

While existing research shows some forms of corruption disproportionately affect women, historically, there has been little data on how. For the first time, the GCB highlights data on sexual extortion, or sextortion, one of the most significant forms of gendered corruption. It also presents new data on women’s experiences of bribery.

Access to public services
As primary caretakers for their families, women are often dependent on public services, which also makes them more vulnerable to certain types of bribery.

**Women are more likely to pay bribes for health services.**

**Poorer women are more vulnerable to paying bribes for court services compared to wealthier women.**

**Only 1 in 10 women who paid a bribe in the previous 12 months, reported it to the authorities.**

**Women with higher levels of education are more vulnerable to paying bribes to public schools.**

Sexortion

When sex is the currency of the bribe, evidence points towards a gender bias that particularly affects women; some women are coerced to provide sexual favours in order to receive public services, including health care and education.

**71% think sextortion happens at least occasionally.**

Of these, 55% are women.

**Only 8% of citizens think it never happens.**

**1 in 5 people experiences sextortion when accessing a government service, or knows someone who has.**

**Women not taken seriously when reporting corruption.**

In several countries, a majority of people think that complaints made by men are more likely to result in action than those made by women.

**What do women think about corruption?**

**Women think corruption is unacceptable.**

**Women think corruption is on the rise.**

**Women think politicians abuse their positions and connections for private gain.**

**Women paint a bleak picture.**

Women are less likely to think ordinary people can make a difference to stop corruption.

Women are less likely to think appropriate action will be taken once corruption is reported.

Women are less likely to know what their right to request information from public institutions.
Recommendations
While the data presents a grim reality of women’s views and experiences of corruption in Latin America and the Caribbean, the past decade has shown that when women have come together to demand change, they have succeeded in countries across the region. To advance equal rights for women and girls, government leaders should:

1. Develop legislation to curb and end corruption and ensure the right tools to address sex cases.
2. Cultivate, analyze and disseminate gender data on corruption.
3. Support women’s participation in public and political life.
4. Include women in anti-corruption decision-making.
5. Encourage women to report abuse and ensure the mechanisms to do so are gender-sensitive.

About the Survey

What we’re doing

Transparency International works with 17 chapters across Latin America and the Caribbean to advocate for women at the highest levels of government and among global, regional and national policymakers. In addition, 10 chapters recently began a multi-country research project to review legislative frameworks related to sextortion, identify improvements, and make policy recommendations.

In Guatemala, our chapter, Acción Ciudadana, trains women leaders in tackling corruption, exercising social audits, and other forms of advocacy and citizen participation. In Peru, our chapter, Proetica, conducts research to better understand the linkages between gender and corruption at a national level. In Argentina and Mexico, we also conduct case studies to evaluate the impact that women in politics have on anti-corruption efforts.

What you can do

1. Develop legislation to confront and end sextortion and ensure justice systems have the right tools to address sextortion cases.
2. Collect, analyse and disseminate gender data on corruption.
3. Support women’s participation in public and political life.
4. Include women in anti-corruption decision-making.

1. Report sextortion when it happens. Find an Advocacy & Legal Advice Centre (ALAC) near you to report any cases of sexual extortion.
2. Learn more about gender and corruption. Visit Transparency International at transparency.org for more information.
3. Speak out on social media. Spread the word about how corruption impacts women. #WomenAgainstCorruption
4. Contact your local chapter. Get in touch to see how you can help.
5. Empower women to report abuse and ensure the mechanisms to do so are gender-sensitive.

Global Corruption Barometer 2019
Women & Corruption in Latin America and the Caribbean

Conducted from January to March 2019
17,000+ people aged 18+
18 countries surveyed
Nationally representative (face-to-face in 17 countries, by telephone in one country)