

Gender Assessment

FP020: Sustainable Energy Facility for the Eastern Caribbean

Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines | IDB | B.14/07



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Sustainable Energy Facility (SEF) for the Eastern Caribbean
Gender Assessment

I- Context

Eastern Caribbean Countries (ECC) –which includes Antigua and Barbuda (A&B), Dominica (DOM), Grenada (GRE), St. Kitts and Nevis (SKV), St Lucia (SL) and St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) — classify as small island developing countries and even if all six countries have a unique history and independent governments, their socioeconomic development (including gender issues), vulnerability to natural disaster and climate change challenges are very similar.

At first glance, gender inequalities in the Caribbean, and more specifically in ECC, seem to affect more men than women. For example, when analyzing education rates, secondary and tertiary educational attainment in ECC is higher for women than men as it can be seen in detail in table 1. Also, women’s political participation is prominent and sometimes even greater than men’s political participation. For example, in 2015 women in A&B and SL represented 41.2% and 27.3% of senators, respectively, and in DOM they represent 25% of ministers¹. Moreover, women’s labor participation in ECC (see table 2) is relatively similar to those of other Caribbean countries, where the regional average is 53.3%² (vs 71.1% for men, see graphic 1).

Table 1 – Secondary and Tertiary Attainment in ECC, by sex (2014)

Country	Secondary School Attainment		Tertiary School Attainment	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
A&B				
DOM	81.5%	76.5%	Not available	Not available
GRE	Not available	Not available		
SKN	84.7%	81.2%	79.7%	78.5%
SL	81.2%	80.2%	22.9%	10.9%
SVG	86.5%	83.9%	Not available	Not available

Fuente: Created by author (GDI/IDB) using data from the World Bank [GenderStats](#).

Table 2 – Labor Force Participation in ECC, by sex

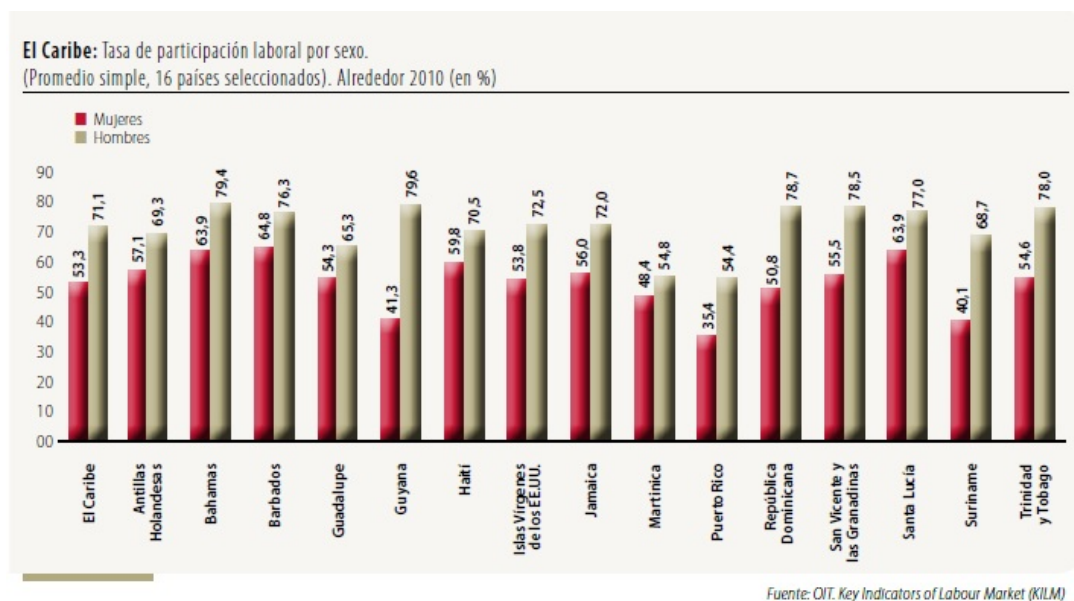
Country	Female (%)	Male (%)	Year
A&B	53.4	46.6	2006
DOM	41.6	58.4	2011
GRE	53.5	67.4	2011
SKN	68.2	77.1	2009
SL	63.9	77	2010
SVG	55.5	78.5	2010

Source: Created by author (GDI/IDB) using data from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and ILO (2013).

¹ IPU (2016). Women in Politics: 2015.

² ILO (2013). Trabajo decente e igualdad de género. ILO: Geneva.

Graphic 1 – Labor Force Participation in Selected Caribbean Countries, by sex (2010)



However, when taking a closer look at socioeconomic data in ECC countries, it is clear that gender inequalities also affect women in aspects such as poverty, violence, health and employment. For example, according to a USAID study between 40% and 50% of women in the Caribbean have experienced domestic violence³. Additionally, “the Caribbean is the second-most HIV/AIDS-affected region in the world, after sub-Saharan Africa” and is the leading cause of death in the 25 to 44 age range. It is estimated that annual HIV incidence is 3 to 6 times higher in women aged 15 to 24 than for men of the same age group; we can, therefore, talk of a “feminization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic” in the sub-region which can be explained, in part, by “unequal power relations and unsafe transactional sex between girls/young women and older men”.⁴ In fact, these unequal relations not only translate into HIV/AIDS incidence, but also in adolescent fertility rates⁵ since in half of ECC countries (see table 3) teenage pregnancy is much higher than the Latin American and Caribbean (19% in 2013)⁶.

Table 3 – Adolescent Fertility Rate ECC

Country	Rate (%)	Year
A&B	51	2013
DOM	40.3	2009
GRE	12.4	2013
SKN	14.5	2011
SL	Not available	
SVG	61.7	2013

Note: The age range of a teenager varies between countries.
Source: Created by author (GDI/IDB) using data from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).

³ USAID (2010). Gender Assessment USAID: Barbados and Eastern Caribbean. USAID: Washington DC.

⁴ USAID (2010). Gender Assessment USAID: Barbados and Eastern Caribbean. USAID: Washington DC.

⁵ The definition of Adolescent fertility rate is the percentage of adult females who reported having their first child before 19 years old, indicating a significantly high incidence of teenage pregnancy.

⁶ UNPFA (2013). Adolescent Pregnancy: A Review of the Evidence. UNPFA: New York.

Moreover, poverty rates amongst women can be masked when analyzing national data. For example, in A&B the percentage of male-headed households in poverty is greater than those of women (52.2% vs. 47.8%, respectively in 2005). However, when taking a closer look, it can be highlighted that women-headed households in A&B (48.4% vs. 51.6% of men in 2012) tend to be single-parent households (41%)⁷ and with only one income in the household, women struggle to support their dependents (children but also older parents), resulting in great levels of poverty in these types of households. This situation is similar in all ECC countries (see table 4). Female-headed households are amongst the most vulnerable groups and tend to have high levels of poverty and this is due to 1) low levels of education and 2) high unemployment rates and/or high under-employment rates. This situation is closely related to high teenage pregnancy rates since pregnancy for these women adversely impacted their access to tertiary education.

Table 4 – Female- or Male-headed Households in ECC

Country	Female (%)	Male (%)	Year
A&B	48.4	51.6	2012
DOM	39.2	60.8	2011
GRE	41.1	58.9	2011
SKN	42.6	57.4	2011
SL	43.6	56.4	2007
SVG	52.1	47.9	2008

Source: Created by author (GDI/IDB) using data from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)

Additionally, it is important to highlight that, like other regions of the world, ECC are characterized by gender occupational segregation. In fact, most women in ECC are employed in “traditionally female” sectors such as retail, services and clerical work, economic sectors that generally have lower salaries, are more unstable and have fewer benefits. For example, in DOM 63.1% of the people employed in the sales and services sector are women in 2011, in SVG 59% of the people employed in the tourism sector are women in 2011, and in SKN 58% of the people employed in the public administration sector are women in 2012⁸. Women also represent an important part of proportion of the informal sector. For example in GRE “almost one-quarter (24%) of poor female heads of households are not in the formal labor force”⁹ and according to the CDB Country Gender Assessment of DOM, “women predominate in the informal economy as street and market vendors, ‘hucksters’ in the inter-island trade in agriculture produce and other commodities, and vendors at tourism sites”¹⁰. Informality and precarious labor participation of women means that they do not recipient of social security benefits such as health insurance, paid leave (or maternity leave) and retirement plans. Finally, women also own a great percentage of SMEs focused on sales, services, trade and tourism that are closely related to traditional gender roles (cooking, cleaning, sewing, hairdressing, etc.). However, most of these enterprises are also informal and therefore women lack access to loans that could help them expand and or strengthen their businesses.

On the other hand, women are under-represented in sectors non-traditional sectors such as energy and construction, sectors that tend to be more competitive, have higher salaries, are more stable and have more benefits thanks to being sectors that are very unionized. For

⁷ CDB (2014). Antigua and Barbuda Country Gender Assessment.

⁸ Source: CDB (2014). DOM Country Gender Assessment; CDB (2014). Saint Kitts and Nevis Country Gender Assessment; and CDB (2014). Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Country Gender Assessment.

⁹ CDB (2014). Grenada Country Gender Assessment.

¹⁰ CDB (2014). Dominica Country Gender Assessment.

example, women in DOM represent only 8.1% of the craft and trades sector (including construction) in 2011, in SVG they represent only 16% of the electricity, gas and water sector and 22% of the construction sector in 2011, and 29% of the electricity, gas and water sector in SKN in 2012.