

PROJECT SUMMARY

GENOMAWORK: LEVELING THE WORKING FIELD (CH-G1010)

Diversity in companies enhances their innovation, productivity, and financial performance. However, the labor market in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean is characterized by persistent gender gaps that take various forms: lower rate of workforce participation among women, gender segregation of roles within companies, pay differences between men and women in the same job positions, few women in leadership positions, and the overburdening of women with care tasks and unpaid work.

A failure to address these gaps will have high costs not only for the population's quality of life but also for economic growth and the competitiveness of organizations. For example, according to UN Women reports, achieving equal participation of men and women in the labor market could drive up regional GDP by 34% by 2025.

The breakneck development of new technologies, accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, has pointed up the importance of digital skills, given the increased demand for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics jobs; clearly, the workforce needs technical as well as soft skills in order to adapt and successfully navigate a landscape of constant change. The demand for labor in the technology sector will steadily rise in areas including web development, design, project management, user experience, quality management, data analysis, cybersecurity, and innovation. This need for talent represents a major opportunity for the inclusion of women in the workforce.

However, a factor that perpetuates the gender gap in workforce participation and leads to gender-based discrimination in the labor market are the persistent biases that impede women's access and career development within companies. These gender gaps often take hold during the companies' recruitment and selection processes, which can now be optimized through the use of new technologies that democratize access to job opportunities, help eliminate biases in job postings and candidate screening, and provide an objective assessment of performance potential.

These tools are having a major impact on how recruitment and selection cycles are implemented, but the efficiencies they create will take companies in the right direction only if the technology is developed on the basis of ethical principles, to prevent the replication of human biases and ensure transparency, explainability, justice, and the validity of the systems' performance.

Genomawork is a startup whose proposal was selected in the gender and artificial intelligence challenge organized by IDB Lab in 2022, as part of the fAIr LAC initiative. The company was legally incorporated in Chile in 2018, with the purpose of leveling the working field. The project objective is to help close the gaps in women's participation in the labor market in Latin America and the Caribbean through private sector adoption of unbiased and nondiscriminatory recruitment and selection processes, supported by the consolidation and expansion of Genomawork.