

CLADEM - Comité de América Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de las Mujeres



CLADEM is one of the region's oldest and most respected feminist legal networks. Founded in 1987, it operates across 15 countries through a network of approximately 200 women's organizations, bringing together lawyers, researchers, and activists around a shared methodology: use law, data, and international accountability mechanisms to advance women's rights and hold governments to account.

A defining feature of CLADEM's work is its ability to combine a regional perspective with continuous national adaptation. Regional initiatives are developed and implemented in close coordination with member organizations and national coordinating bodies, ensuring that strategies respond to the specific legal, institutional, cultural, and social realities of each country.

This approach is grounded in comparative analysis and continuous learning. CLADEM draws on national legislation, jurisprudence, public policy analysis, research, and consultations with local actors to identify priorities and adapt methodologies, training materials, advocacy strategies, and monitoring tools to different contexts. The ongoing exchange of experiences across the network strengthens collective learning and enables innovative responses to shared challenges.

Collaboration is central to CLADEM's model. Over the years, the network has built relationships with universities, research centers, public institutions, national human rights bodies, and specialized civil society organizations throughout the region. This combination of specialized technical knowledge, national presence, networking, and a human rights-based approach has enabled CLADEM to develop initiatives that are both regionally connected and locally grounded, contributing to substantive equality across Latin America and the Caribbean.

CLADEM joined Equal Measures 2030 in 2019 as one of three regional partners — alongside FEMNET (Africa) and ARROW (Asia-Pacific) — making it a central pillar of Equal Measures 2030's global architecture in Latin America. The partnership connected CLADEM's legal and advocacy expertise to the analytical power of the SDG Gender Index and connected Equal Measures 2030's data tools to decades of frontline feminist organizing on forced pregnancy, femicide, sexual violence, and discriminatory laws.

15 14 country factsheets + 1 regional factsheet produced with Equal Measures data
factsheets

12 2 flagship diploma courses on forced adolescent pregnancy and femicide, reaching advocates across 12+ countries
countries

9 Shadow reports submitted for 9 countries to the Belém do Pará Convention mechanism
reports

100% of training participants reported new skills and improved readiness to use data in government advocacy
improved readiness

THE JOURNEY

Where law meets data: building the evidentiary case for women's rights



CLADEM has always operated at the intersection of law and activism. Its core methodology, strategic litigation, treaty monitoring, shadow reporting, and regional mobilization, is built on the premise that governments must be held to the standards they have signed. What the partnership with Equal Measures added was a rigorous quantitative layer: the ability to show, with internationally reliable data, how far governments were falling short.

Before Equal Measures, CLADEM's case-making on issues like forced adolescent pregnancy relied heavily on qualitative evidence — documented cases, survivor testimony, and legal analysis. Powerful, but vulnerable to dismissal. Government officials could claim that the cases were exceptional, or that data didn't support the scale of the problem. The SDG Gender Index changed that dynamic.

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“If data can strengthen advocacy efforts of civil society and help them to hold their governments accountable, then it becomes a tool to achieve equality. It is here that the paths of CLADEM and Equal Measures 2030 meet.” - CLADEM

What this partnership has achieved

CLADEM came to Equal Measures with over three decades of feminist legal expertise and a regional network that few organisations in the world could match. What Equal Measures provided was, amplification and extension: quantitative credibility for arguments CLADEM was already making, and access to data spaces where CLADEM had previously had less presence.

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“If the data do not include girls and women, then they reproduce inequity. If the data do not include different regions, they also reproduce inequity. As CLADEM, we join Equal Measures 2030 because we believe that data is needed to drive accountability and shed light on the inequalities and realities that girls and women face” - CLADEM

Building on their long-standing campaign against forced pregnancy, CLADEM's collaboration with Equal Measures helped them to combine their traditional focus on specific documented cases with broader quantitative data showing an increase in births in the 10–14 age group in recent years across the region. Index data and *Mira que te Miro* — a regional SRHR commitments tracker — were combined to produce 14 country factsheets and one regional factsheet, translated into Spanish-language advocacy tools and disseminated through CLADEM's entire network. These factsheets reached thousands of stakeholders through webinars, virtual dialogues, regional events, op-eds, and media engagement, and were used to influence key regional forums including the 2020 Regional Conference on Women in LAC, CSW65, the Generation Equality Forum, and the Latin America and the Caribbean Forum on Sustainable Development.

In 2021, this data integration became more sophisticated. CLADEM began systematically using the Index to identify data gaps on its core issues; forced child and adolescent pregnancy, femicide, sexual violence, and discriminatory laws. In Brazil, CLADEM documented the gendered impact of 'parental alienation' laws — a legal construct CLADEM and others consider a patriarchal tool to undermine women's testimony in custody disputes — in collaboration with scholars, civil society organizations, and mothers' groups. Their findings formed the basis of an *Amicus Curiae* filed to challenge the laws. The legal arguments were referenced by Judge Rosa Weber, Vice President of the Federal Supreme Court, when presenting a formal request for unconstitutionality. In Bolivia, CLADEM compiled data to support shadow reports to international human rights bodies and led a workshop with La

Paz municipal authorities advocating for better services for GBV survivors and access to safe and legal abortion. In Mexico, CLADEM highlighted major gaps in official data on violence against women and under-reporting of femicides, findings amplified by local media, strengthening calls for accountability and better national data systems. The pattern observed in Brazil, Bolivia, and Mexico reflects CLADEM's consistent approach: find the data gap, name it, link it to international commitments, and use it to drive a policy response.

The diploma courses were one of CLADEM's most significant avenues for regional impact. Two flagship programmes, one on forced adolescent pregnancy and maternity, one on femicide and sexual violence, integrated Equal Measures 2030's data tools into CLADEM's established feminist legal education infrastructure. These workshops were structured, multi-session courses reaching feminist advocates, legal professionals, health system leaders, and justice sector officials across the region. By integrating Equal Measures 2030's methodology into these courses, data-driven advocacy was incorporated into a long-standing regional learning architecture. Post-training evaluations showed 100% of participants reported learning new skills and feeling better positioned to use data to influence government action on gender equality.

The partnership also produced one of Equal Measures 2030's foundational products. The Bending the Curve report, Equal Measures 2030's analysis of what it would take to accelerate progress on gender equality globally, drew directly on CLADEM's regional expertise. It was one of the first examples of Equal Measures using a coalition partner's knowledge to contextualize global data with specific country examples in the region, setting a model for how Equal Measures and its members would continue to work: global quantitative data meeting regional lived experience and legal expertise.

Former CLADEM regional coordinator, Milena Páramo Bernal, was selected as a 2023 Equal Measures Data Journalism Fellow — researching the evolution of pregnancies among girls aged 10–14 between 2008 and 2017, producing data-driven journalism that shed light on a problem that remains poorly understood and underreported across the region.



[Read more here](#)

Advocating when the political winds shift

CLADEM operates in a region where the anti-gender movement is well-organised and well-funded, and where governments have actively sought to roll back hard-won gains on sexual and reproductive rights, GBV responses, and legal protections for women and girls. Brazil under the Bolsonaro administration, Argentina's rolling battles over abortion rights, the spread of "parental alienation" legislation as a legal strategy to silence women — CLADEM has confronted all of this.

Data has been key to the defense. When governments deny the scale of forced adolescent pregnancy, CLADEM can point to Index data showing regional trends. When a government claims its laws are aligned with international norms, CLADEM's shadow reports to the Belém do Pará mechanism can demonstrate otherwise, using both national data and international benchmarks. The partnership with Equal Measures did not create CLADEM's resilience — but it gave that resilience a sharper evidentiary edge.

COVID-19 tested this further. CLADEM rapidly shifted all its activities to virtual formats, maintained regional collaboration across lockdowns, and used pandemic-related data to highlight the gendered impacts of the crisis — influencing media narratives and advocacy priorities at a moment when public attention was overwhelmingly elsewhere.

LOOKING AHEAD

Femicide data is one of the frontiers where gaps remain most acute — and where the cost of those gaps is measured in lives. CLADEM has spent years advocating for better regional data and tracking, including through the 2023 regional strategic meeting on parental alienation co-organised with Equality Now and the Global Campaign for Equality in Family Law in Rio de Janeiro, and through ongoing engagement with feminist legal networks on evidence standards for gender-based violence. CLADEM's book 'Alienación Parental: una nueva forma de violencia de género contra mujeres y niñas en América Latina y el Caribe' positions the fight against legal backlash explicitly as a data problem: making the invisible visible, naming patterns that governments would rather deny.

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The Index puts us on alert about what is missing in each country, both in Latin America and the Caribbean and in the world. What the region lacks is a combination of political will, resources and distributive justice. We cannot wait centuries to change the structures of inequality, including those of gender.”

- CLADEM during the LAC launch of the 2024 SDG Gender Index, UN World Data Forum, Medellín, November 2024

CLADEM is also a full participant in shaping what comes after 2030. As a member of Equal Measures' emerging 2025–2030 strategy, it is helping define what data-driven feminist advocacy looks like in the next phase — including how global agendas like the Montevideo Consensus and the Beijing Platform for Action can be tracked at regional and local levels. Dr. María Guadalupe Ramos Ponce, elected as CLADEM's new Regional Coordinator in August 2025, brings decades of expertise on femicide documentation and feminist legal reform. She founded the Observatorio Ciudadano Nacional del Femicidio, drafted key violence against women laws in Mexico, and has spent nearly 40 years at the intersection of research and activism. Her election as Regional Coordinator signals continuity of this important work.

CLADEM's trajectory, from a regional legal network to a full partner in a global data architecture, shaping both the tools and the governance of feminist accountability, reflects what is possible when movement expertise and data credibility reinforce each other.

Learn more about CLADEM's work:



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