

Afrodescendants and the matrix of social inequality in Latin America

Challenges for inclusion

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UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC



Themes addressed in this work

- 1. The regulatory framework for the protection of the rights of Afrodescendants and the importance of Afrodescendent movements, organization and participation.**
- 2. The demographic context: the number and location of Afrodescendants in Latin America and the statistical visibility of this population group.**
- 3. Access to income, services and basic infrastructure.**
- 4. Inequalities in rights to health, education and work, and the situation of persons with disabilities.**
- 5. Various forms of violence that affect the Afrodescendent population; racism and migration.**
- 6. Institutional frameworks and policies to fight racism and foster racial equality.**
- 7. Conclusions and recommendations.**

Racism is a central element of the culture of privilege: inequalities based on ethnicity and race are structural and affect all rights

- Higher incidence of **poverty, feminization of poverty** and vulnerability to **falling back into poverty**.
- More **limited** access to adequate housing, water, sanitation, electricity and the Internet, especially in rural areas.
- Higher rates of infant and maternal **mortality** and adolescent pregnancy.
- Increased access to the **education system** and years of schooling, but still high education lag and school dropout rates at the primary and secondary levels, and worsening inequalities at the tertiary level.
- Higher levels of **unemployment** with lower labour income, especially among women and young people, even with higher education levels.
- Various forms of **violence** restricting the lives and development of Afrodescendants.
- **Racism and xenophobia** deepening the social and labour exclusion of migrants, and worsening because of the pandemic.
- Need for **universal policies and affirmative action policies that are sensitive to differences** to end these inequalities.

The recognition, visibility and guarantee of the rights of Afrodescendent populations are key to the democracies of the twenty-first century

- Discrimination, part of the legacy of exclusion deriving from the centuries-old practice of slavery, persists today, obscuring Afrodescendants' contribution to development.
- The relentless struggle and resistance of Afrodescendants in the face of age-old injustices has resulted in their historical demands being placed on the public agenda.
- Afrodescendent organizations and movements have played a fundamental role in the adoption of regulatory frameworks that recognize and protect the rights of Afrodescendants.
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the International Decade for People of African Descent provide an opportunity to drive and accelerate the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action: **it is time to settle the historical debt.**

Policies, regulatory frameworks and instruments to protect and guarantee the rights of Afrodescendants and to combat racism

- The major **international, regional and subregional instruments and agreements to foster and protect the rights of Afrodescendants** have been ratified by most Latin American countries.
- **The constitutions** of 13 countries condemn racial discrimination, 5 include specific references to Afrodescendants and 3 include the recognition of Afrodescendants as peoples.
- Sixteen countries have **laws against racial discrimination** and categorize this as a crime.
- The **recognition of the collective ownership of ancestral lands**, which is a key element of the demands of Afrodescendent communities, is being gradually incorporated into national regulatory frameworks.

Greater inclusion in identification of Afrodescendants in population and housing censuses, but gaps remain in various sources for national statistical systems

Census rounds in Latin America and the countries that include identification of Afrodescendants

Included in household surveys in just six countries: Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Uruguay

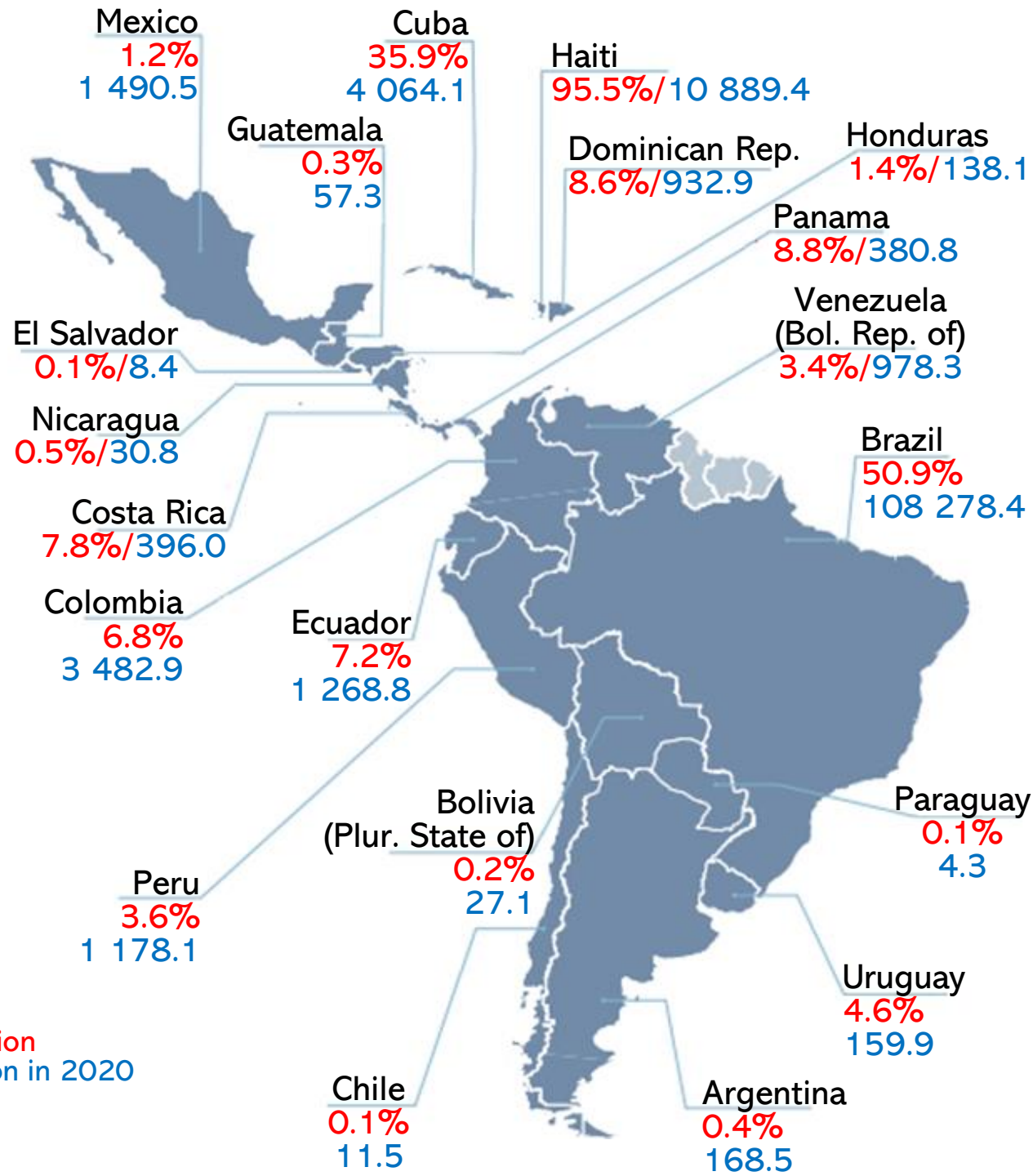


(*) Guatemala 2002 only includes Garifuna people

The Afrodescendent demographic context

**134 million in Latin America,
21% of the region's population**

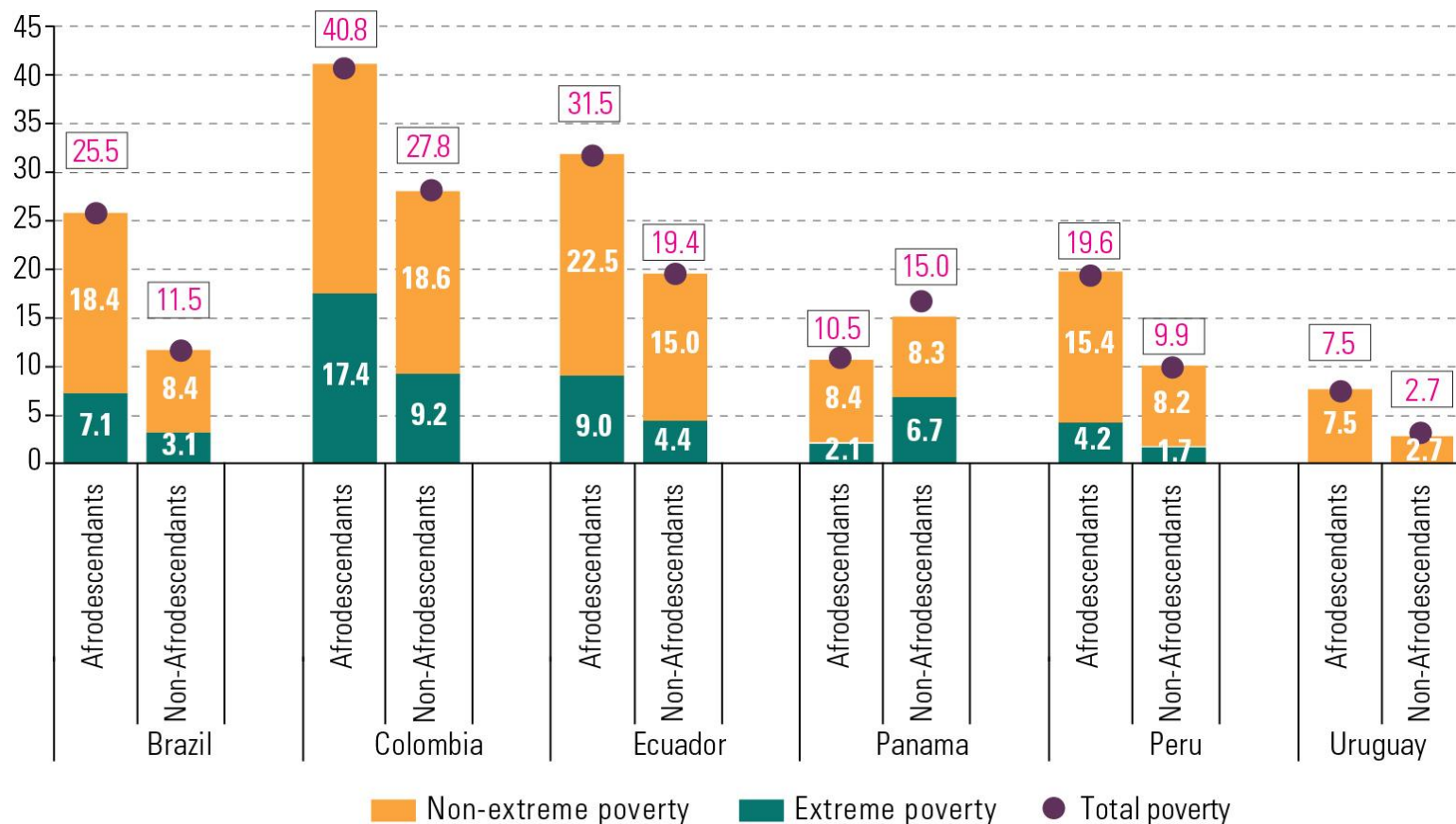
- High demographic heterogeneity in absolute and relative terms
- Age structure currently undergoing population ageing
- Majority in urban areas
- Large Afrodescendent presence in a number of municipalities and major historical settlements



Percentage Afrodescendent population
Estimated Afrodescendent population in 2020
(thousands)

Poverty and extreme poverty are more prevalent among Afrodescendants, and gaps are persistent even in countries with low poverty levels

Latin America (6 countries): prevalence of poverty and extreme poverty, by ethno-racial status, around 2018



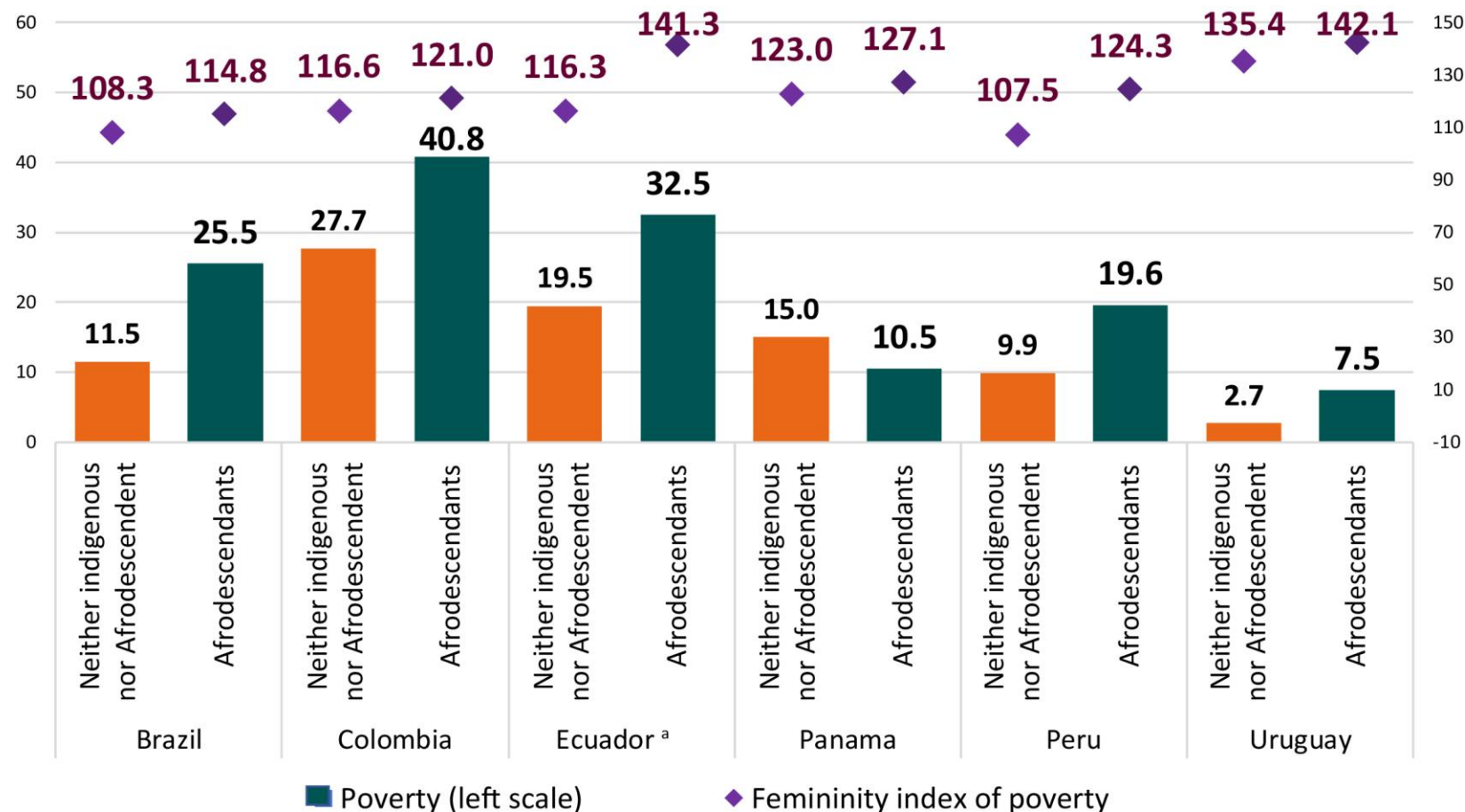
- In Uruguay, the country with the lowest poverty levels in the region, the percentage of Afrodescendants living in poverty is triple that of non-Afrodescendants
- In Brazil, the rate is 2.2 times higher for Afrodescendants, in Peru twice as high and in Colombia 1.5 times higher
- Only in Panama is the prevalence of poverty lower among Afrodescendants

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

Note: The non-Afrodescendent population does not include the population that self-identifies as indigenous or cases in which ethnicity or race is not known.

Femininity indices of poverty are higher for Afrodescendent households

Latin America (6 countries): poverty rate and femininity index for poor households, by ethno-racial status, around 2018^a



- Poverty affects Afrodescendent women more than Afrodescendent men, with femininity indices ranging from **114.8** in **Brazil** to **142.1** in Uruguay
- The difference between femininity indices for poor Afrodescendent households and poor non-Afrodescendent households ranges from 4 percentage points in Panama and Colombia to 25 percentage points in Ecuador

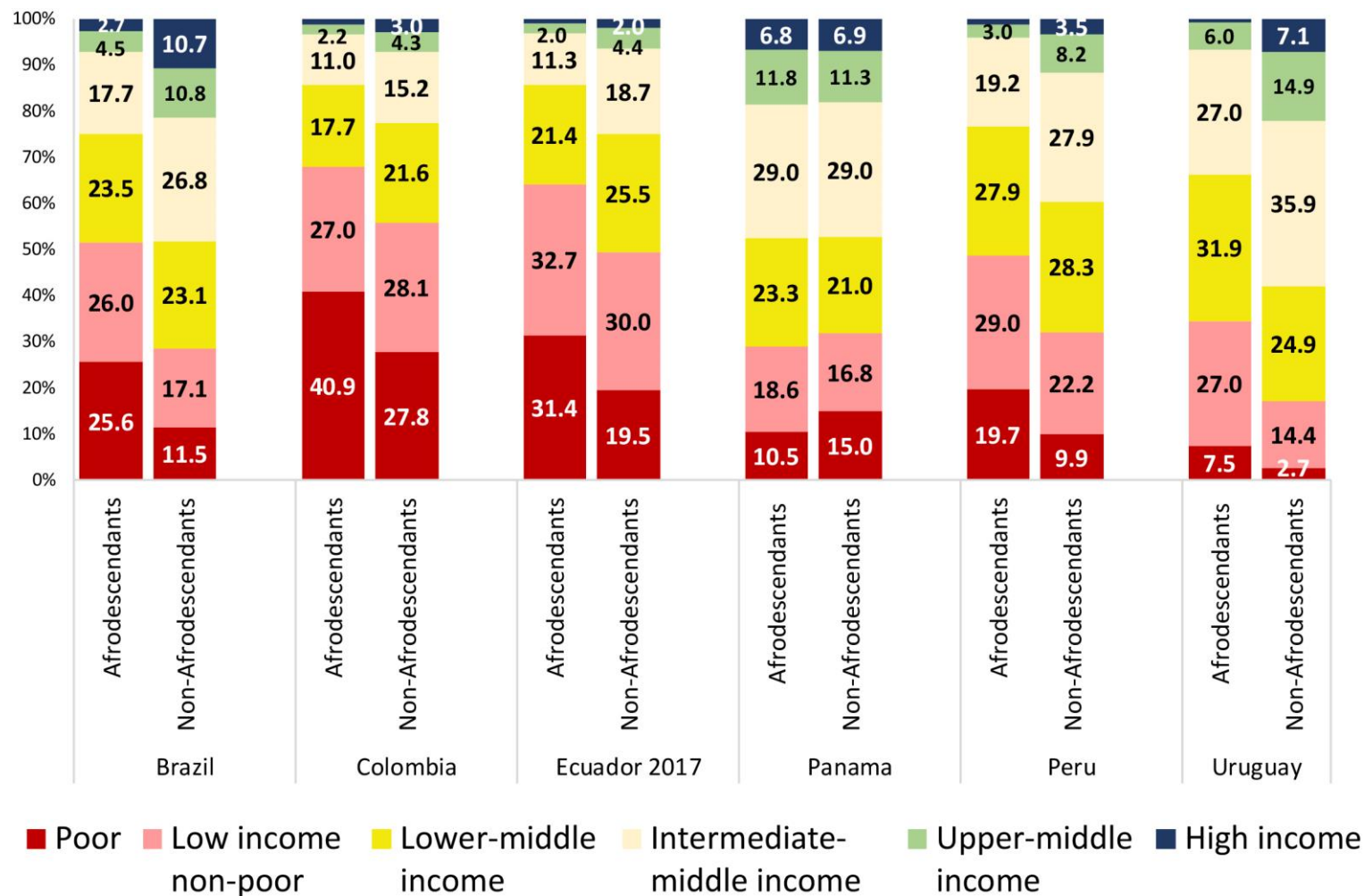
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

Note: The non-Afrodescendent population does not include the population that self-identifies as indigenous or cases in which ethnicity or race is not known. ^a2017



Around one third of the Afrodescendent population is vulnerable to poverty

Latin America (6 countries): distribution of the population by ethnicity and race and by per capita income strata, around 2018

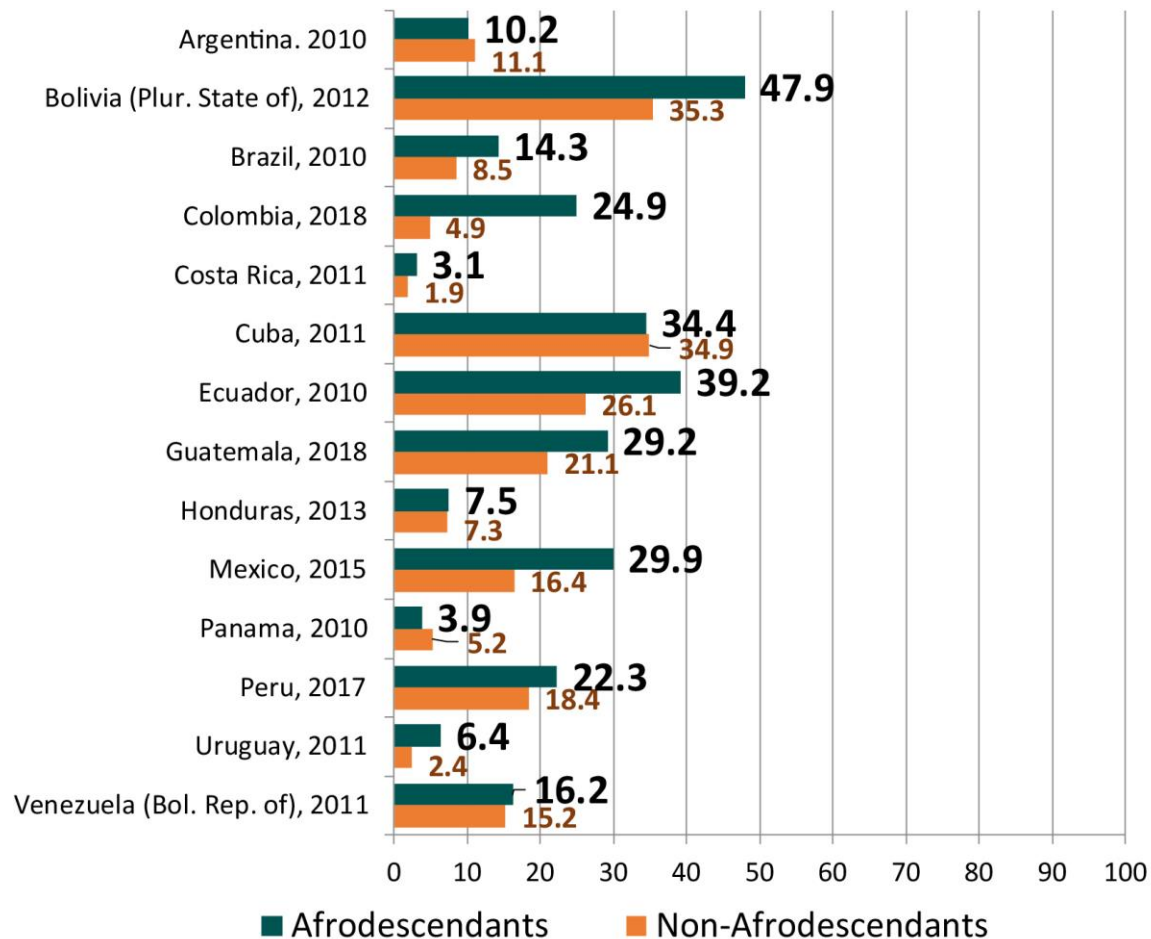


- With the exception of Panama, around 30% of the Afrodescendent population is in the low-income non-poor stratum (per capita family income of 1 to 1.8 poverty lines)
- The largest gaps in share within this income stratum are found in Uruguay, where the Afrodescendent population is double the non-Afrodescendent population, and Brazil, where it is 1.5 times larger

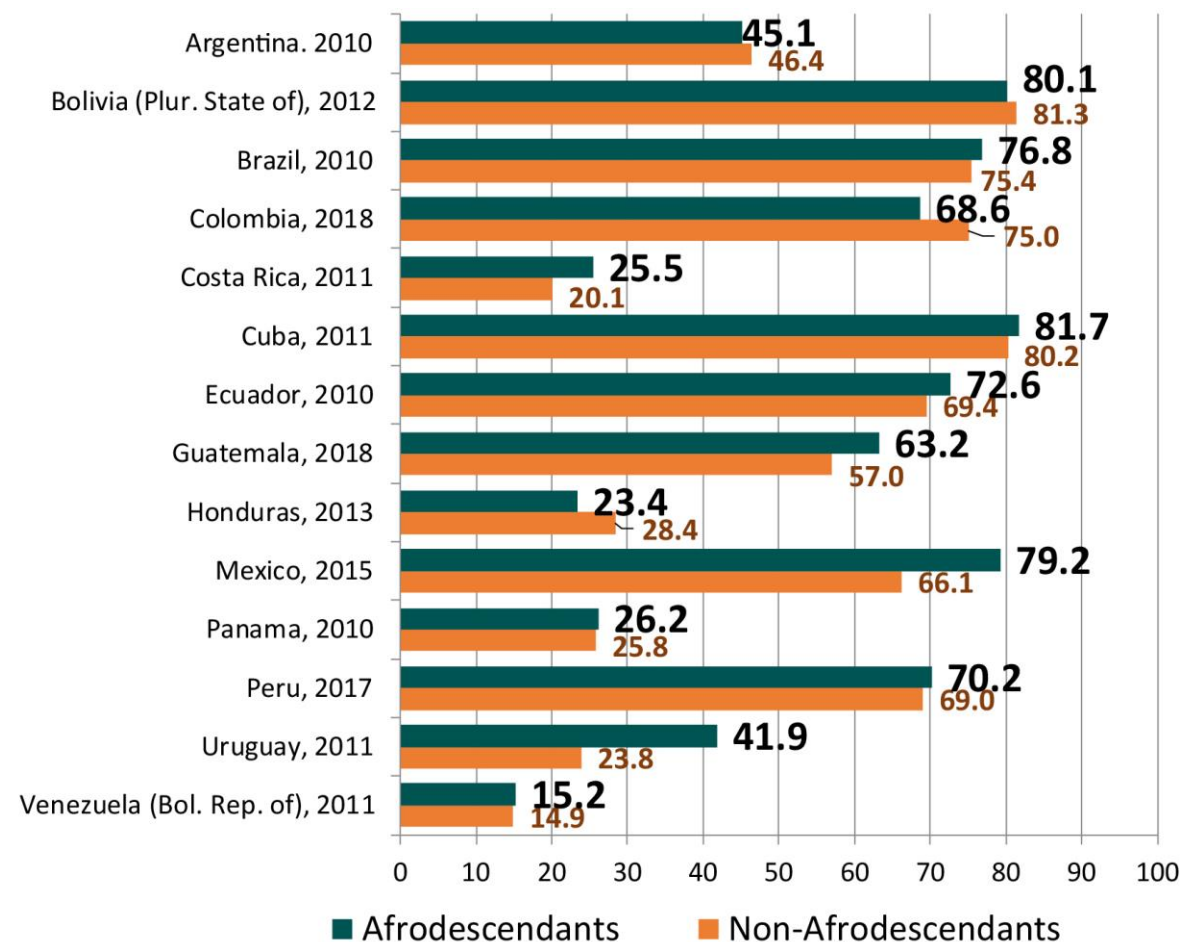
Deprivation in access to water is more severe among Afrodescendants in the great majority of countries

Latin America (14 countries): population with severe or moderate deprivation of access to water, by ethno-racial status, most recent year available
(Percentages)

Urban areas

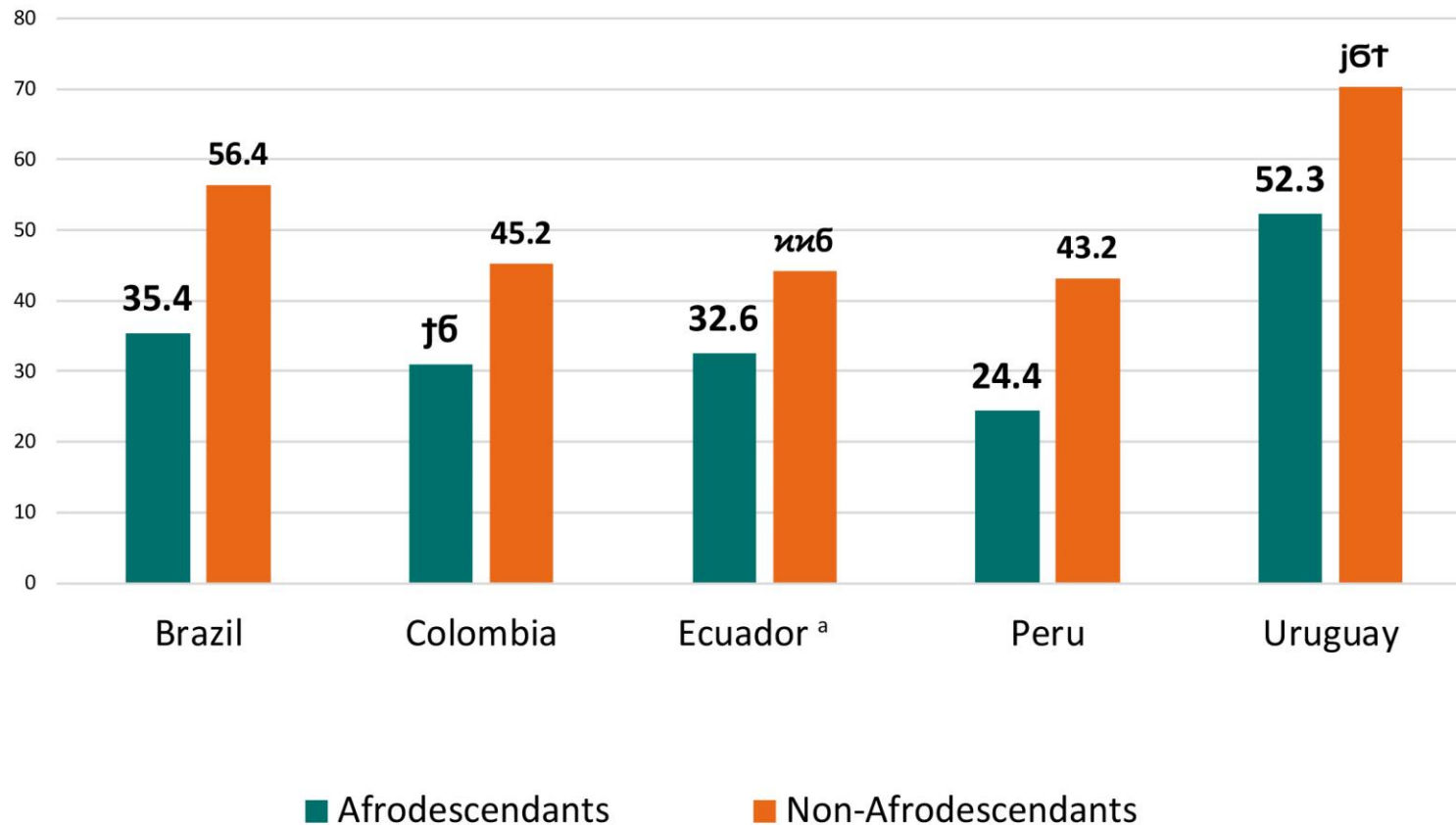


Rural areas



Clear ethno-racial inequalities in Internet access, which is important for social inclusion

Population aged 15 years or more with Internet access in the home, by ethno-racial status, 2018
(Percentages)



- The gaps to the detriment of Afrodescendent populations range from 11.5 to 21 percentage points in Ecuador and Brazil, respectively
- Uruguay is the only country in which more than half the Afrodescendent population (52%) has Internet access in the home
- In Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador this proportion is around 30%, and in Peru it is less than 25%

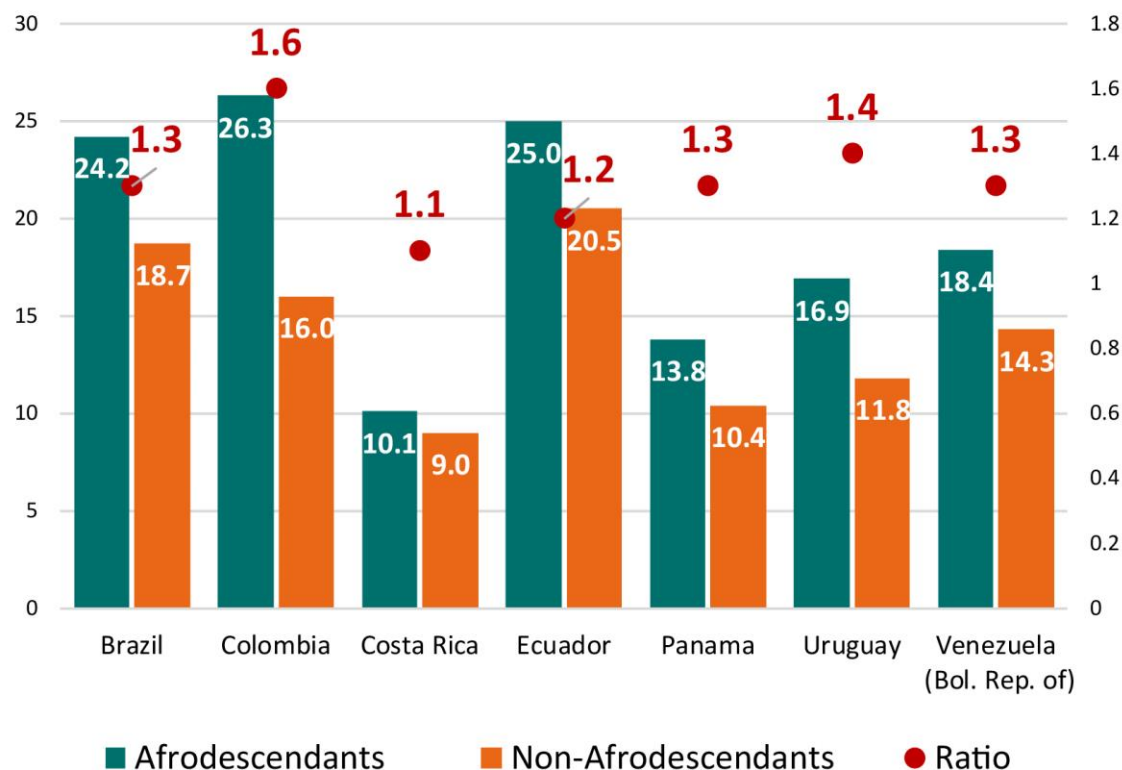
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

Note: The non-Afrodescendent population does not include the population that self-identifies as indigenous or cases in which ethnicity or race is not known.

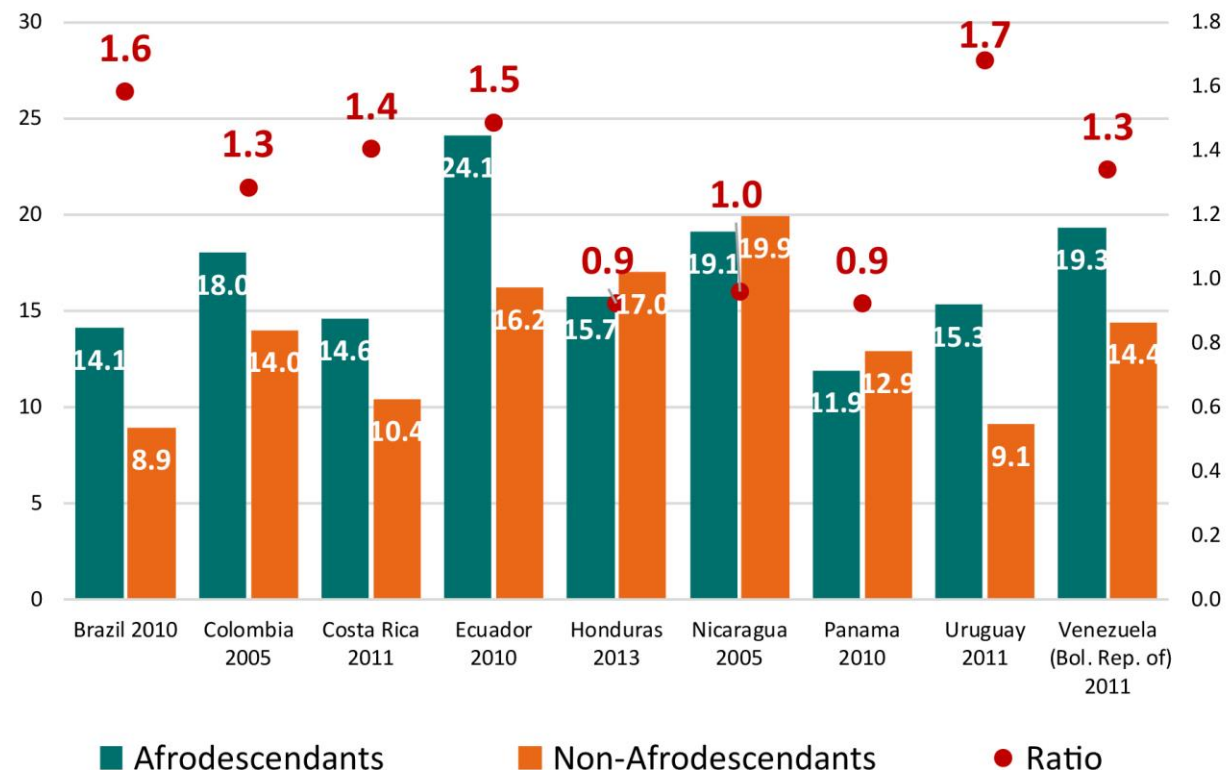
^a2017

Gaps in the exercise of the right to health, particularly in childhood and adolescence, lead to cumulative exclusion throughout the life cycle

Latin America (7 countries): estimates of infant mortality by ethno-racial status, 2010
(Number of deaths per 1,000 live births)



Latin America (9 countries): adolescents aged 15–19 years who are mothers, by ethno-racial status, 2005–2011
(Percentages)

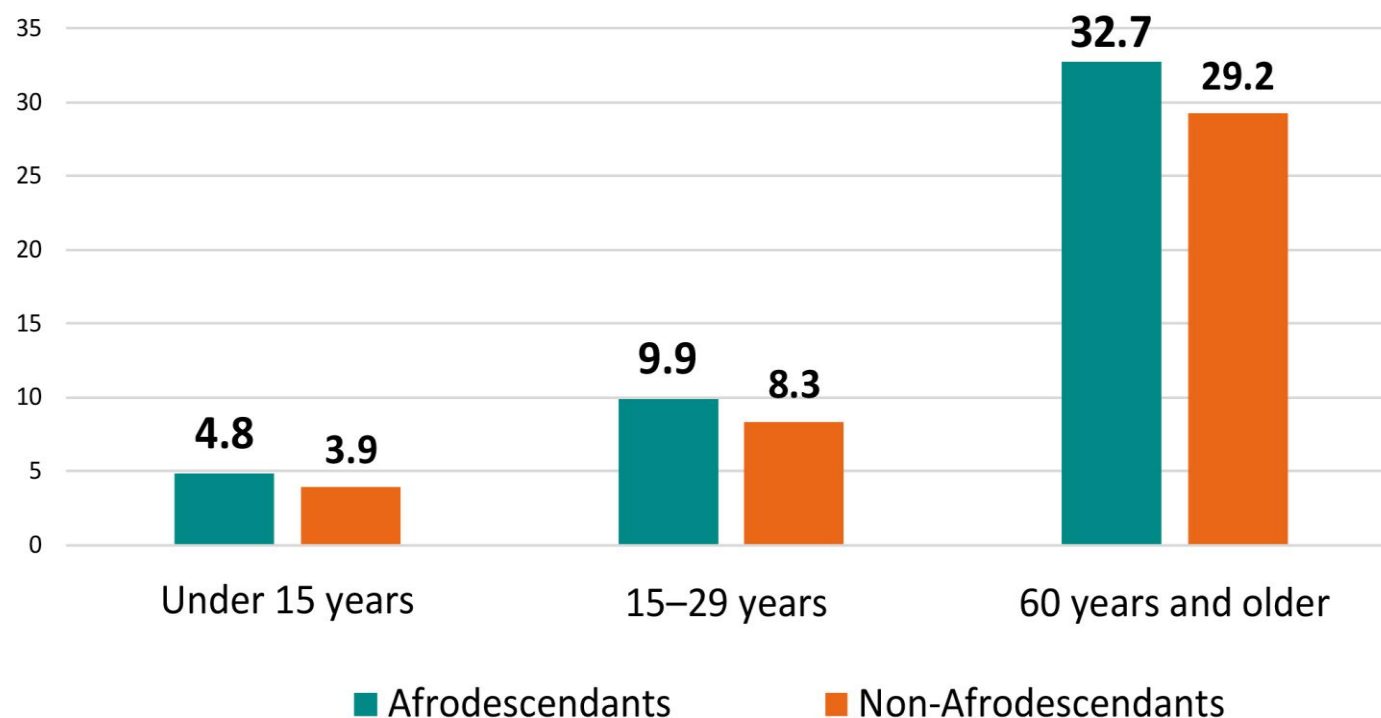


Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), “Situación de las personas afrodescendientes en América Latina y desafíos de políticas para la garantía de sus derechos”, *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2017/121), Santiago, 2017; and population and housing censuses of Argentina, 2010; Brazil, 2010; Colombia, 2005; Costa Rica, 2011; Ecuador, 2010; Honduras, 2013; Nicaragua, 2005; Panamá, 2010; Uruguay, 2011, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), 2011.



Multiple forms of discrimination and exclusion: the situation of Afrodescendants with disabilities

Latin America (11 countries): persons with at least one disability, by age group and ethnicity, around 2010
(Percentages)



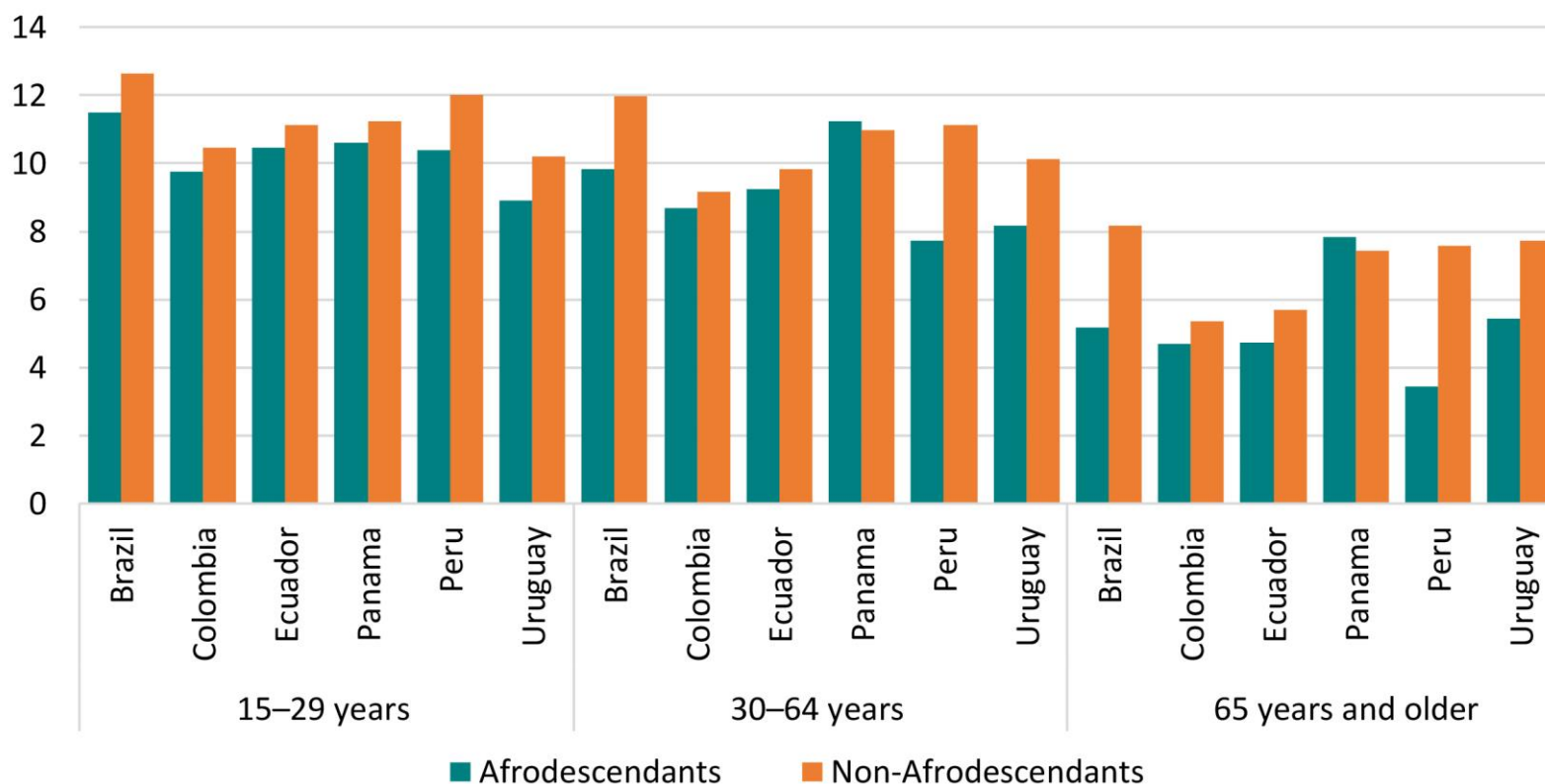
- There is a higher prevalence of disabilities among Afrodescendants, particularly those aged 60 and over, than among non-Afrodescendants
- Women of African descent have a higher prevalence of disability than men of African descent and non-Afrodescendent women
- Afrodescendants with disabilities are left behind in one key dimension of social and economic inclusion: secondary school completion

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "Situación de las personas afrodescendientes en América Latina y desafíos de políticas para la garantía de sus derechos", *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2017/121), Santiago, 2017.

^a The countries included are: Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Honduras, Panama, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Expanding access to education and increasing school attendance produce a rise in average years of schooling: ethno-racial gaps are narrower among younger people

Latin America (6 countries): average years of schooling, by ethnicity and age group, around 2018



- The gaps in years of schooling are wider among adults and especially among older persons.
- Young Afrodescendants have two fewer years of schooling than non-Afrodescendants in Peru; the gap is one year in Brazil, Ecuador and Uruguay and less than one year in Colombia and Panama.

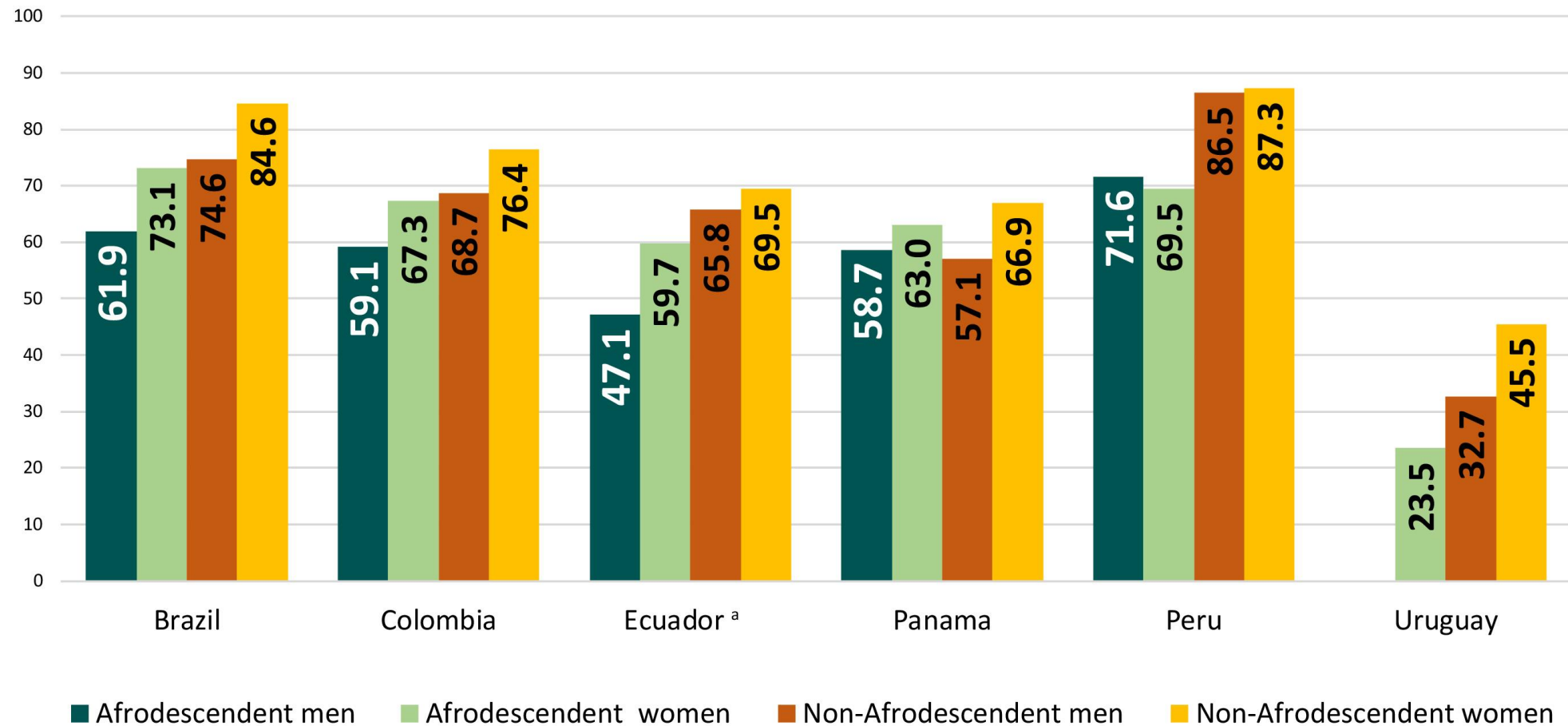
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

Note: The non-Afrodescendent population does not include the population that self-identifies as indigenous or cases in which ethnicity or race is not known.



The secondary school completion rate is lower among Afrodescendants. Women show better educational achievements, but this is not reflected in the job market

Latin America (6 countries): proportion of young people aged 20–24 who have completed secondary education, by ethno-racial status and sex, around 2018
(Percentages)

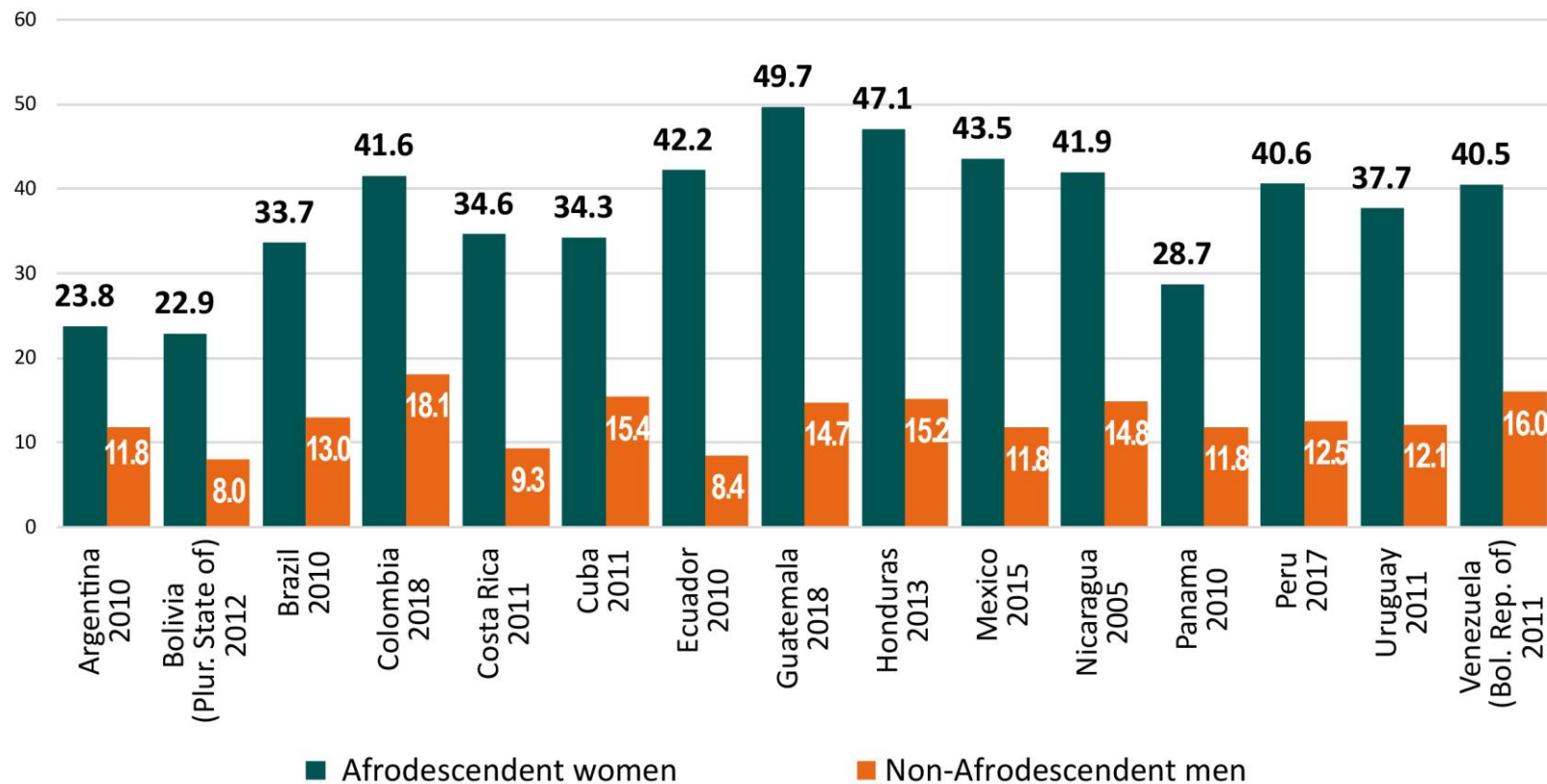


Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

Note: The non-Afrodescendant population does not include the population that self-identifies as indigenous or cases in which ethnicity or race is not known. a/ 2017.

Intersecting inequalities: the difficulties young people face when entering the labour market are far greater for Afrodescendent women owing to the greater burden of domestic and unpaid care work

Latin America (15 countries): young people aged 15–29 who are in neither education or employment, by ethnicity and gender, latest census available
(Percentages)

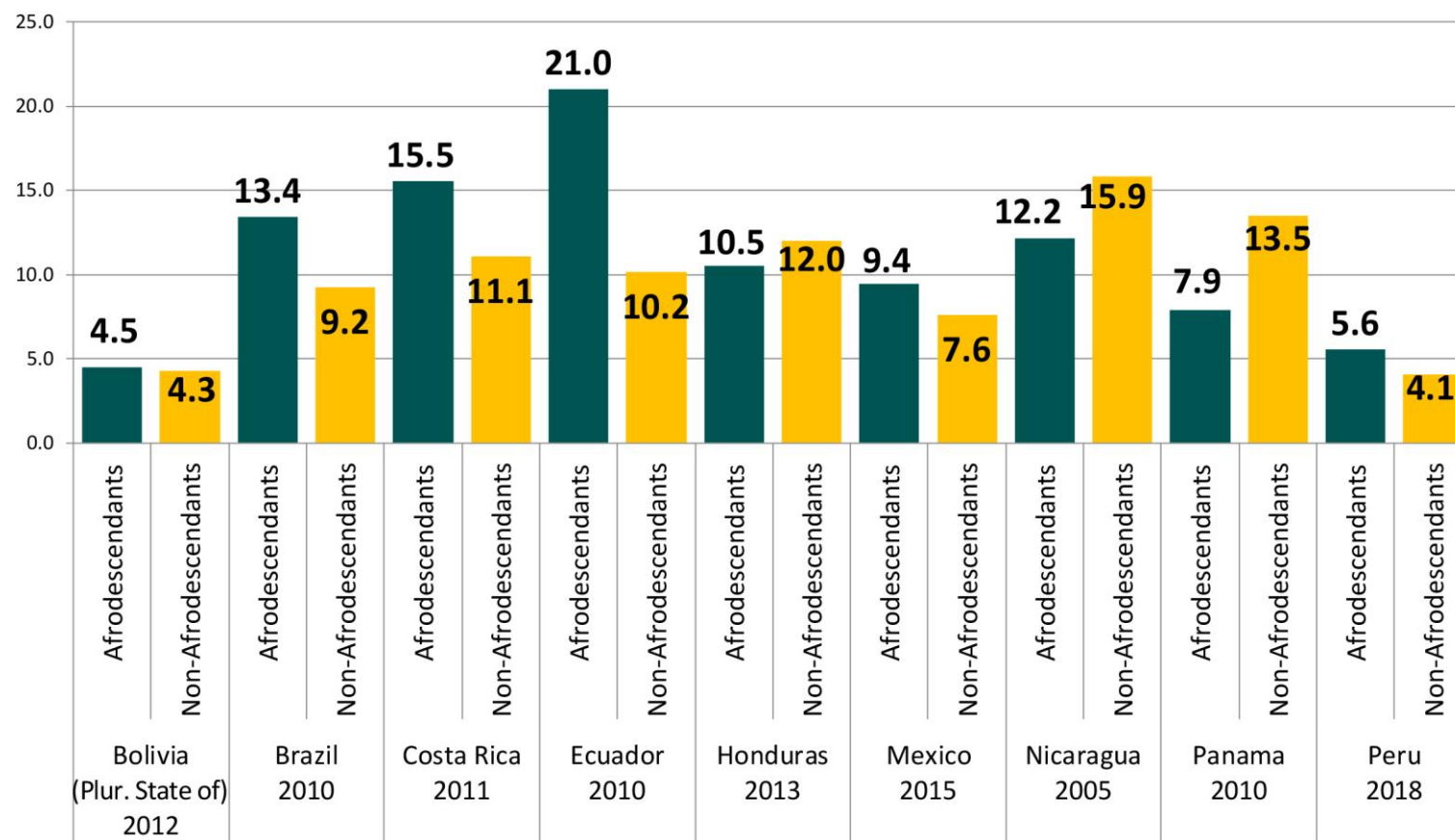


The percentage gap between young Afrodescendent women and young non-Afrodescendent men neither in education or employment ranges from 12 points in Argentina to 35 points in Guatemala.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of special processing of census microdata using Retrieval of Data for Small Areas by Microcomputer (REDATAM) software.

Paid domestic work provides a point of entry to the labour market for women from low-income households with low education levels, but it is socially undervalued

Latin America (9 countries): paid female domestic workers aged 15 years and over, by ethno-racial status and area of residence, latest census available for each country
(Percentages of total women employed in each zone of residency)



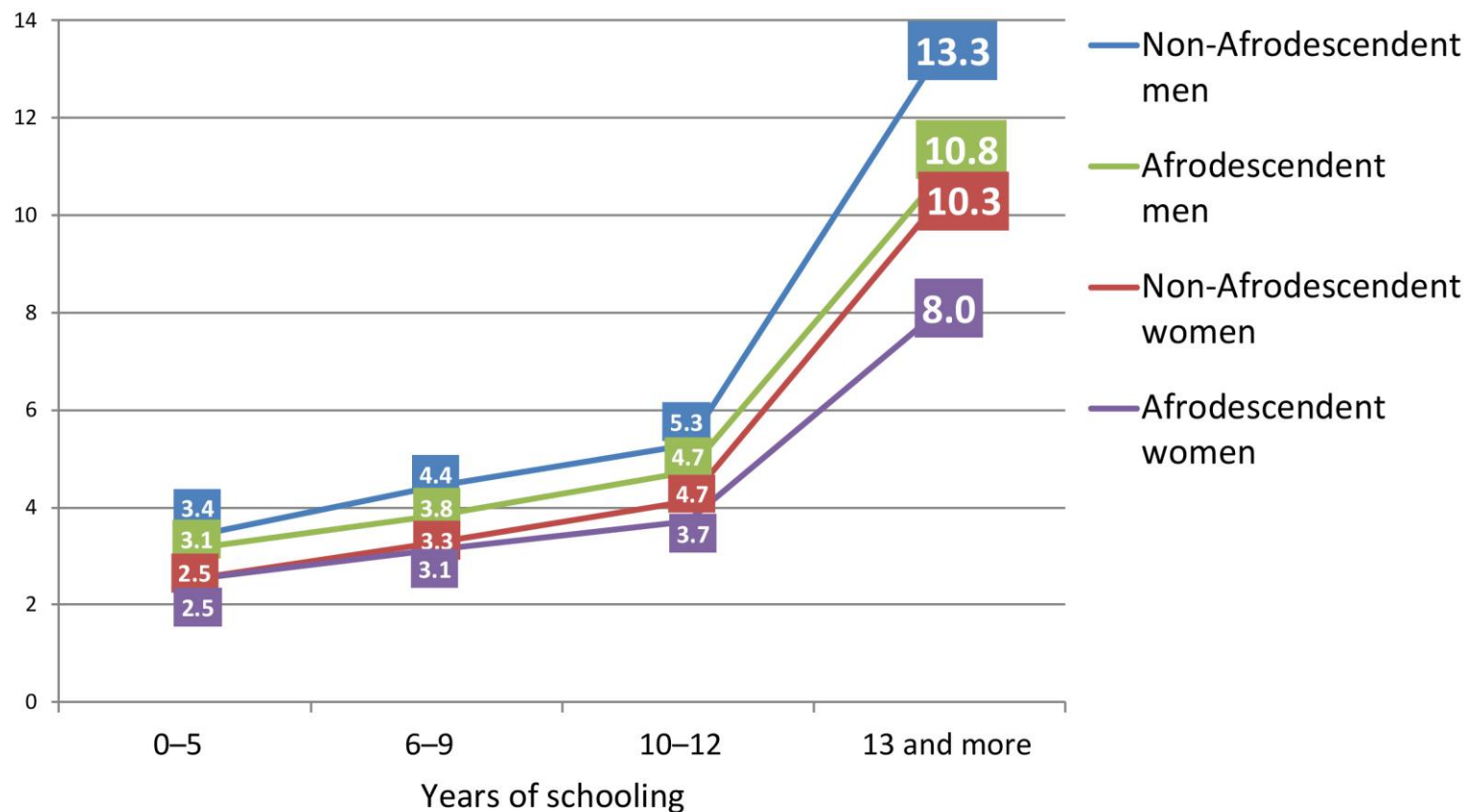
- In six countries (Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru) more Afrodescendent women are employed in paid domestic work than non-Afrodescendent women; the opposite is true in three countries (Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama).
- Despite recent progress in the recognition of the labour rights of paid domestic workers in several Latin American countries, this type of employment remains highly insecure.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

Note: The non-Afrodescendent population does not include the population that self-identifies as indigenous or cases in which ethnicity or race is not known.

Despite women's higher educational achievements, large income gaps remain—and they penalize Afrodescendent women the most

Latin America (6 countries):^a weighted average of hourly labour income of the employed population aged 15 and over, by ethno-racial status, sex and years of schooling, around 2018
(International dollars)



- Even after controlling for hours worked and years of schooling, there is a clear hierarchy in labour income, marked by **intersecting gender and racial inequalities**: non-Afrodescendent men are the best positioned, and Afrodescendent women are the worst positioned
- **The higher the level of schooling, the larger the gap**

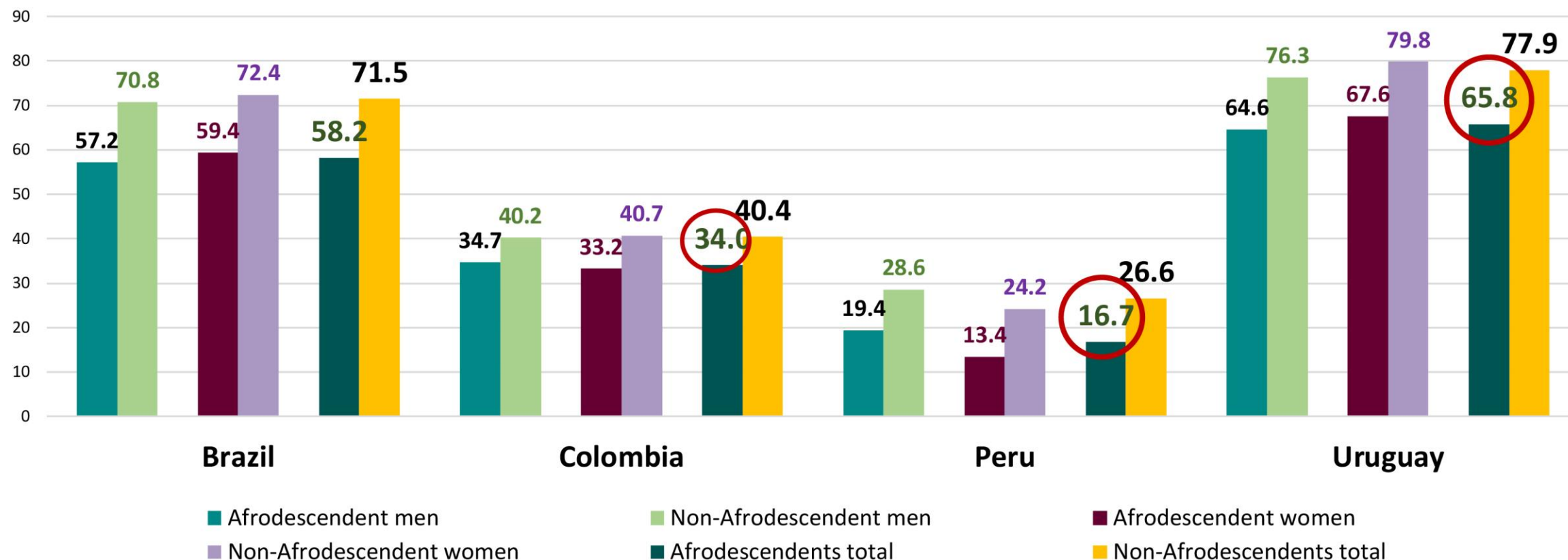
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), “Implied PPP conversion rate” [online database] <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/PPPEX@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD>.

Note: The non-Afrodescendent population does not include the population that self-identifies as indigenous or cases in which ethnicity or race is not known.

^a The countries included are Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Uruguay.

The Afrodescendent population's lower rates of affiliation to pension systems reflect greater difficulties in achieving good-quality, stable integration into the labour market, one of the obvious expressions of structural racism

Latin America (4 countries): employed population aged 15–64 years affiliated or contributing to a pension system, by ethno-racial status and sex, 2018
(Percentages)

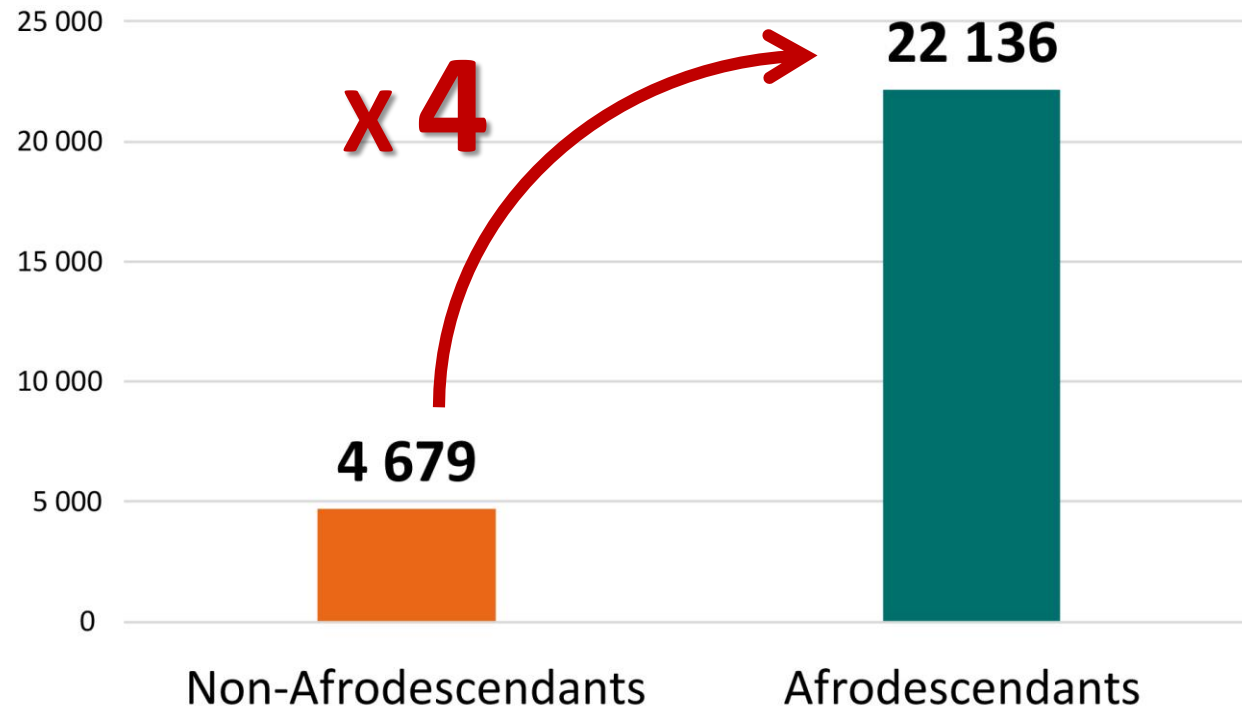


Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

Note: The non-Afrodescendent population does not include the population that self-identifies as indigenous or cases in which ethnicity or race is not known.

Greater violence with profound impacts on their lives and development, as well as on their communities and on wider society

Brazil: homicides of young men aged 15–29 years, by ethno-racial status, 2018
(Number of deaths)

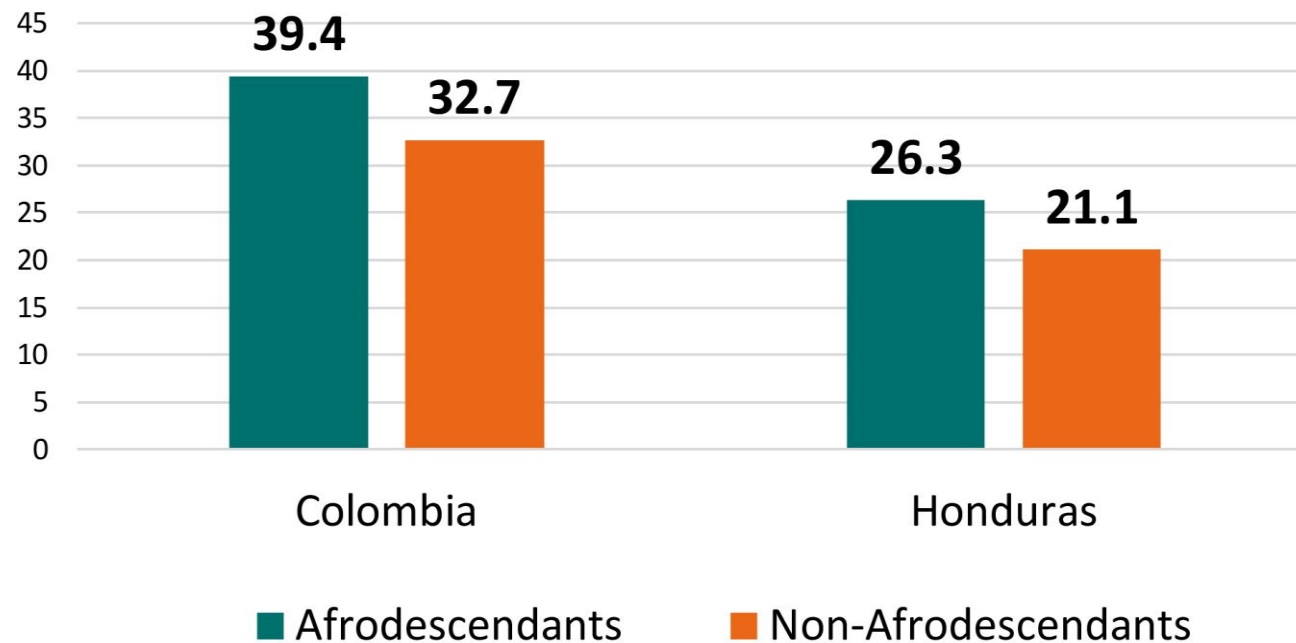


Every day 61 young Afrodescendent Brazilian men suffer a violent death, more than **2 every hour**

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Ministry of Health of Brazil.

Afrodescendent women suffer higher levels of violence associated with racism and misogyny, which are particularly acute in certain territories

Colombia and Honduras: women aged between 15 and 49 years who report having experienced violence at the hands of their partner, by ethno-racial status
(Percentages)



- **Limited information on femicide disaggregated by ethno-racial status**, the most extreme form of violence against women
- In **Brazil**, the percentage of Afrodescendent female homicide victims aged between 15 and 49 is **more than double that of white women**

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of demographic and health surveys of Colombia, 2015, and Honduras, 2011–2012.

Greater migration flows coincide with rises in racism and xenophobia

- Greater intraregional migratory flows of Afrodescendants to new destination countries.
- Progress in national regulatory and institutional frameworks treating migrants as rights-holders.
- The gender perspective has been incorporated into migration legislation in a dozen countries and progress is also being made in the development of institutional frameworks devoted to migrant women.
- Costa Rica, Ecuador and Uruguay have incorporated an ethno-racial perspective into migration regulations.
- Well-being gaps persist between Afrodescendent and non-Afrodescendent migrants and also in comparison with the local population.
- Racism and xenophobia render the social and labour inclusion of Afrodescendent migrants more difficult; this has tended to be exacerbated in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Institutional frameworks and public policies

14 countries have government mechanisms for racial equality or for Afrodescendent affairs

Latin America: countries that have an institutional framework for Afrodescendent affairs by year of creation



Ending racism is a task for everyone and is central to building fairer, more democratic and egalitarian societies

- The creation of government mechanisms and the implementation of policies to tackle racism and promote racial equality are the result of sustained advocacy work by Afrodescendent social movements, civil society organizations, governments and international organizations.
- Policies to combat racism, promote affirmative and evaluative actions, strengthen traditional communities and foster the participation and consultation of Afrodescendent people and communities have been expanded.
- **Overcoming the deep structural inequalities and persistence of racism as key elements of the culture of privilege calls not only for universal policies but also for affirmative action policies, as part of a universalist approach sensitive to differences.**

In order to leave no one behind, Afrodescendants must be included as a matter of urgency in the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda, and the exercise of their rights guaranteed

- **Guarantee the rights of Afrodescendants by redoubling efforts to achieve greater equality more quickly: affirmative actions are required urgently in various areas of development.**
- **Guarantee the full participation of Afrodescendants, including women and youth, in the design and monitoring of public policies.**
- **Implement policies to combat structural and institutional racism, discriminatory practices and racial violence, in a sustained manner.**
- **Establish government mechanisms at all levels to formulate, coordinate and monitor racial equality policies.**
- **Redouble efforts to improve the statistical visibility of Afrodescendants, including the democratization of information.**



Thank you

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