

Julio Conejero – President & Managing Director LAMEX Cluster, Organon



By increasing access to women’s healthcare, we aim to foster both social progress and economic growth

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Organon’s recently-appointed LAMEX Cluster Head Julio Conejero lays out how Organon is committed to improving women’s health and addressing unmet needs through its portfolio. This mission aligns with the rise of female leadership in Latin America and the broader movement towards women’s empowerment. Now based in Mexico – which accounts for about 60 percent of Organon’s LAMEX revenues – Conejero also explains how the company is working on innovative healthcare models like managed entry agreements that focus on outcomes rather than cost, helping governments understand the long-term benefits of investing in healthcare.

You spent a decade with MSD and then led Organon’s LATAM cluster for three years post-spinoff. Having recently arrived in Mexico to spearhead the new LAMEX Cluster, how has your experience been with this transition?

It has been both fascinating and exhilarating. Mexico’s scale and complexity offer unique opportunities for Organon to make a significant impact. For instance, our manufacturing plant in Xochimilco sets us apart from most other countries in the region, with Brazil being an exception.

The LAMEX Cluster, which I am honoured to lead, includes Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Central America and the Caribbean, Puerto Rico, and Mexico. If you consider the entire LAMEX region, Mexico accounts for approximately 60 percent of the cluster’s sales. This scale

demands a deep understanding of the market and regional dynamics, which has been both challenging and rewarding.

Latin America and Mexico present numerous opportunities that far outweigh the challenges. Our company's mission aligns perfectly with the global movement to empower women, a theme gaining traction across the region. This is a pivotal moment, with Mexico now having its first female president and many countries now having women in leadership roles such as Ministries of Health, or Minister of Women, among others. The rise of female leadership is undeniable and represents a tremendous opportunity, not only within for us as a company but also for the communities we serve.

As we embrace this era of empowerment, we are committed to leveraging these opportunities to drive progress, both internally within Organon and in the broader market, contributing to the advancement of women globally.

You have had extensive experience in Latin America. What are some of the key differences between the Mexican market and other Latin American countries that you have managed?

Mexico stands out for its relative economic and political stability compared to many other Latin American countries. This stability provides a solid foundation for healthcare initiatives and long-term planning. Overall, the consistent healthcare policy environment and the promising economic framework in Mexico have allowed us to cocreate and implement innovative and sustainable strategies, together with public and private sector partners, that can have a lasting impact on women's health, close gender gaps and increase the socioeconomic productivity of the country.

Having been in Mexico for four months now, how did you find the subsidiary, and what were the first changes you implemented?

The first step I took was to emphasize the importance of teamwork as a strategic pillar for sustainable growth. In a cluster, success is built on effective collaboration, which means navigating diverse time zones, cultural differences, communication styles and work practices across the region.

I focused on fostering a collaborative culture that not only embraces diversity but actively leverages the unique strengths of each country within our cluster. Our core values, especially "Be real," "Bring your fire," and "Rise together," have been instrumental in creating an environment where diverse perspectives are valued, welcomed and incentivized as drivers for innovation. This approach has ensured that everyone contributes meaningfully to our shared success.

Encouraging open communication and respecting feedback, whether positive or constructive, has been key to create a supportive and humancentric work environment. My leadership approach has been centred on setting clear expectations, communicating openly about our direction, and providing the necessary support. This has helped build a cohesive team that respects cultural differences while working towards our common goal of improving women's health across the region.

Earlier, you mentioned that Mexico represents about 60 percent of the market within the cluster, making it a key player. Can you elaborate on Mexico's strategic importance and how it is positioned to make a significant impact on women's health?

Mexico is pivotal to Organon's success in the region. Our strong foundation in primary care and trade businesses has been very robust. This strength continues into our new phase with Organon, where Mexico emerged as one of the top ten markets in emerging regions. The focus so far has been on sustaining and growing our core portfolio, which has been vital but does not encompass the full potential for future growth.

Our next step is to diversify and expand our offerings. To transition from a USD 200 million company to a USD 500 million company in Mexico, we need to explore areas like fertility, biosimilars, and medical devices. While our current portfolio remains important, embracing these new segments will drive significant future growth as we can better serve women at every stage of their lives.

Our goal is to address all stages of a woman's life through our portfolio. For instance, our medical device for postpartum haemorrhage can halt bleeding within minutes, potentially saving lives. Additionally, we have long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) to support women who want to manage their reproductive health effectively and prevent unintended pregnancies.

By filling gaps in our offerings, we ensure that our portfolio aligns with the full spectrum of women's unmet needs, enhancing our impact and providing comprehensive support throughout their lives.

Considering the challenges of accessing innovation in Mexico due to regulatory and budgetary constraints, how do you plan to address these issues?

Organon takes a holistic approach to women's health, offering value-based healthcare solutions that extend beyond medicines or devices. This comprehensive strategy is designed to have a broader impact on women's health, not only improving healthcare outcomes but also generating economic and social benefits. Our company is driven by a clear and strong purpose: by increasing access to women's healthcare, we aim to foster both social progress and economic growth.

One standout initiative in Mexico is a project in Xochimilco, where our manufacturing plant is located. In partnership with the UNFPA, National Population Council (CONAPO), Xochimilco local authorities, Mexico City authorities and Civil society organizations, this social impact project demonstrates our commitment to creating measurable value for women. We've invested nearly USD 500,000 in a project aimed at preventing unintended pregnancies among 35,000 adolescents, by integrating healthcare solutions with innovative financial models to attract private investment.

Over two years, the project has positively impacted more than 27,000 young lives through comprehensive sex education, sexual and reproductive rights awareness, access to youth-friendly health services and technologies, family planning counselling and life planning support.

This initiative is particularly important because it demonstrates how our manufacturing plant goes beyond production—it serves as a hub for generating social value in the local community. Many of our employees have deep ties to the area, with some working at the plant for decades. One employee, who has been with us for 35 years, credits her work with helping her put her children through school. For us, this plant represents a commitment to uplifting the community, reinforcing the connection between thriving local economies and the long-term sustainability of our company.

We're pioneering sustainable ways to scale our initiatives, bringing together a broader network of stakeholders. This approach not only yields significant economic and social returns but also fosters stronger, healthier communities. Our efforts have led to real, measurable business growth while supporting local communities, exemplifying our belief that a thriving healthcare ecosystem benefits

everyone. Finally, beyond Mexico, we've expanded our efforts in social impact investment connected to health to countries like Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Colombia, and Peru, reaffirming our commitment to advancing the women's health agenda across Latin America and the Caribbean.

How do you view the role of women's health in shaping the broader well-being and economic prosperity of a nation? What steps can be taken to prioritize women's health more effectively?

Women's health is fundamental to societal well-being and economic prosperity. Our mantra, "Strong women, strong societies," encapsulates this philosophy. Healthy women contribute more effectively to their communities and economies, while health challenges, particularly in reproductive health, have wide-reaching societal implications.

For instance, unintended pregnancies among adolescents can have significant socioeconomic repercussions. An adolescent who becomes pregnant is often forced out of the educational system and the formal job market. This disruption not only impacts her future opportunities but also diminishes her potential contributions to the economy.

Studies highlight the significant economic costs of not addressing unintended pregnancies in Latin America. According to UNFPA, this costs approximately USD 9.5 billion a year across ten countries, which represents an average of 0.38 percent of annual GDP. In contrast, the region's GDP grew by only 0.8 percent from 2014 to 2023. This striking comparison emphasizes the urgent need for investment in women's health, not only as a moral imperative for social equity but also as a strategic driver of economic productivity. By addressing these health challenges, we can make a tangible impact on poverty reduction and foster sustained economic growth.

What are your top priorities and ambitions for the next two years?

Our primary goal is to provide a comprehensive portfolio tailored to the Mexican population, with a special focus on women's health. We aim to go beyond being just a commercial partner; we want to position ourselves as a strategic ally in shaping a healthier population and contributing to a long-term vision that strengthens the overall healthcare ecosystem in Mexico.

We are also committed to driving digital innovation to enhance efficiency within the healthcare system. For instance, by utilizing artificial intelligence, we can assist Ministries of Health in optimizing healthcare resource distribution. This innovative approach allows us to add real value, ensuring that our role goes beyond product pricing; we're committed to delivering meaningful improvements to the healthcare system in the country.

Do you find that Latin American governments and societies fully appreciate the value of innovation in healthcare, or is the focus still primarily on pricing?

We're seeing a gradual shift towards recognizing the value of innovation in healthcare. Our focus is to demonstrate that value goes beyond the price of a product, offering additional benefits or value-added solutions. One way we are driving this change is through managed entry agreements such as outcome-based models, that connect the cost of an intervention to measurable health outcomes.

This shifts the conversation from a focus on pricing to a broader understanding of value.

For instance, some countries, like Ecuador, are beginning to understand that by investing in innovative healthcare solutions, they are not just purchasing a product—they are investing in better outcomes, which ultimately saves money. The argument is clear: if they don't invest now, the financial and health-related costs will be much higher later.

This approach also empowers decision-makers to make more informed budgeting choices based on robust evidence. We are committed not just to offering products, but to actively helping create a more sustainable healthcare ecosystem—particularly for women's health—by ensuring that innovation translates into meaningful results.

What message would you like to leave for our international readers about Organon's impact in Mexico and what Mexico contributes to Organon?

Organon is dedicated to enhancing women's health worldwide, with a vision of creating a healthier future for every woman. We recognize the critical role women play in society and our commitment extends far beyond simply selling products. We are deeply invested in empowering women and driving societal progress. In Mexico, for instance, we are tackling critical issues like unintended adolescent pregnancies and working to enhance overall women's health.

Our initiatives not only aim to improve health outcomes but also foster societal development, reflecting our dedication to empowering women and building stronger communities. By focusing on holistic solutions, we ensure that our efforts contribute to a healthier and more equitable future for all.

Currently, only four percent of global biopharmaceutical research is focused on women's unmet health needs. This creates both a tremendous opportunity and a profound responsibility for us to develop solutions that address these specific needs, fostering women's growth and closing gender gaps. Leading Organon LAMEX in this mission makes me incredibly proud—we are #HereForHerHealth.

Given your extensive experience with MSD and your three years at Organon, what has kept you committed to the company?

Working for a meaningful purpose is incredibly fulfilling. My goal is to leave a legacy of building a company that significantly impacts women's health globally. As we grow Organon from a USD 6 billion company to a USD 20 billion entity, we're developing a strong portfolio that truly makes a difference in people's lives. This mission drives my commitment and passion for our work at Organon.

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