



Towards a World Bank Group Gender Strategy Consultation Meeting with Government, 16 June 2015 Feedback Summary Brasilia, Brazil

The consultation meeting with **government representatives** was held on **June 16, 2015** in **Brasilia, Brazil**. After a presentation by the World Bank Group Gender Team on the background, intended scope and process for the strategy, the floor was open for participants' comments and recommendations. The summary below captures the main points and recommendations raised during the meeting.

Total Number of Participants: 21. A participant list is available [here](#).

Feedback from Stakeholders

1. KEY GENDER GAPS THE WORLD BANK GROUP SHOULD TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION AS PRIORITY TO HELP COUNTRIES REDUCE POVERTY AND PROMOTE MORE EQUITABLE SOCIETIES

- The World Bank Group (WBG) should prioritize the following areas:
 - **Issues of child and elderly care.** Currently, women bear the burden of care responsibilities in Brazil.
 - **Ageing.** The number of elderly women in Brazil is growing, which needs particularly attention because many elderly women live in poverty.
 - **Economic empowerment.** While the proposed focus on women's economic opportunities resonates, capacity building on issues such as microfinance and cooperatives is needed in Brazil.
 - **Political participation.** Men continue to dominate political leadership and there is little interest in opening up opportunities for women. While the existing quotas are an achievement, research on the policies implemented by these women leaders would have been helpful, particularly to explore whether or not they developed policies that

advanced gender equality. In this area, lack of resources for women is an issue. Additionally, cultural change is needed to shift the perception of women leaders. Often women do not see themselves in politics and sometimes do not support other women.

- **Norms and Culture.** Patriarchy in Brazil needs be deconstructed. The fight for gender equality could be lost due to sexism, therefore a particular focus on norms and culture should be prioritized.
 - **Education for gender equality and human rights.** Without investing in education, particularly education that promotes cultural change, long term, sustainable change will not be possible. Moreover, Brazil is experiencing a wave of political conservatism and there is resistance to integrating gender equality in school curricula. The WBG should consider investing in these forms of education paramount; even if it framed in a less controversial way, it should still be a focus.
 - **Overlapping disadvantages.** In the Brazilian context, the WBG should consider issues of overlapping disadvantages, such as race and ethnicity. Black and indigenous women in Brazil face particularly severe challenges.
 - **Sexual exploitation of adolescent children.** This is a large problem in Brazil. Sex tourism is widespread, with some tourism packages including such offers. This needs to be prioritized by the Bank Group.
 - **Violence against women.** This is considered the greatest obstacle to achieving gender equality in Brazil, especially due to the intergenerational effects. Details on measures to implement the Maria da Penha domestic violence law via the “*Women Living without Violence*” program were shared. As a part of this, domestic violence shelters with integrated services are being opened across Brazil. Two are currently opened and four more are slated to open this year. In addition, mobile service units are planned, including in the form of boats, to access remote areas. International domestic violence hotlines for Brazilian women living outside Brazil are available and border centers to combat trafficking have been established.
- The Bank Group should also focus on the following areas:
 - **Civil registration and vital statistics.** 5 percent of children and adolescents lack birth certificates and this figure stands at 32 percent for women.
 - **Persons with disabilities and accessibility issues.**
 - **LGBT women and their specific challenges and needs.**
 - **The homeless population, who can be considered the most vulnerable.**
 - **The poor working conditions of over 4 million rural workers.**
 - **Informal work.** Women predominate in informality, with approximately 1 million women engaged in informal work.
 - **International trafficking.**

2. EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR POLICIES, APPROACHES AND PROGRAMS THAT HAVE HELPED REMOVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONSTRAINTS TO WOMEN AND GIRLS AND THAT THE WORLD BANK GROUP STRATEGY COULD LEARN FROM

- The Bank Group could learn from the **“Casa da Mulher” domestic violence integrated service centers** and the **Maria da Penha law**, more broadly. In establishing these shelters, multiple stakeholders and agencies are mobilized to fight violence against women. The center receives women and their children and has on-site police, court services, prosecutors, public defenders, livelihood opportunities, medical and psychosocial support, accommodation, transportation and facilities for children.
- The **“Pro-Gender Equity Program”**, which targets public and private enterprises could hold lessons for the WBG. Entities enlist and commit to developing concepts and practices for human resource management and organizational culture that promotes gender equality. Organizations are awarded a seal in recognition of their commitment to gender equality in the workplace. One key feature is that these organizations have the freedom to choose the policies that they find doable for their own organizations; they are not imposed externally.
- The Bank Group could learn from **women’s police stations**. These have had a large impact and have made a difference in Brazil. These stations also help the LGBTQ population, particularly the transgender community. Cases against the elderly are also better handled in these police stations.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW THE WORLD BANK GROUP CAN BETTER SUPPORT COUNTRIES AND COMPANIES IN THEIR EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS WITH RESPECT TO GENDER EQUALITY TO YIELD MORE SUSTAINABLE RESULTS

- The WBG can help to create more sustainable results by:
 - **Considering regional differences/specificities.** Some areas are isolated and require a more targeted approach.
 - **Prioritizing diseases that affect women.** While women are increasingly affected by these diseases, budget allocations to address such diseases have been diminishing over the last decade. It is important to note that a National Policy on Care has been developed and will be voted on shortly. In addition, there are efforts to formalize the profession of caretaking, so that caregivers can access benefits and have more job security. The WBG could support these efforts.
 - **Supporting “Casa da Mulher” domestic violence shelters.** In 2012, the construction of these shelters began as a part of the implementation of the Maria da Penha domestic violence law. While the federal government has passed this law, state governments are responsible for its implementation. There is a commitment to build a shelter in all states of Brazil. All have agreed, with the exception of Pernambuco. While these centers can serve as good practices, challenge persist with respect to conflicting political interests and funding. Sometimes representatives from the federal, state and municipal governments are from different political parties, therefore there are conflicting interests. Moreover, state governments have committed to supporting the centers for two years, however, subsequent budget allocations are unclear. The WBG could support in this regard.

- **Promoting gender equality education in schools.** The WBG can provide support in this regard. With recent discussions of the National Education Plan, gender equality experienced a great loss due to its exclusion. Currently, discussions of gender equality are highly politicized in Brazil due to a wave of political conservatism. This is also driving the exclusion of other issues, such as challenges that the LGBTQ community faces. In addition, the WBG could help to mobilize teachers to discuss and teach the Maria da Penha law in schools. The aim of integrating this law into school curricula is to combat all kinds of prejudice. This form of education can have longer term effects for women’s empowerment and women’s labor force participation.
- **Supporting intervention programs for domestic violence perpetrators.**
- **Paying attention to underfunded women’s machineries.** Many of these agencies institutionalize the objectives of the feminist movement. While, these entities have action plans and strategies, they lack institutionalized budgets. Without appropriate funding, these agencies will remain weak. Additionally, the WBG can engage with leaders in this agencies who create national gender policies. Such policies could hold lessons for the WBG’s gender strategy.
- **Building dialogue among women leaders and groups that work on gender equality.** This could help to distill clear objectives and actions.
- **Moving away from micro projects.** The WBG should strategize about how it can create a larger impact by scaling its development projects.
- **Promoting awareness-raising on gender equality.**
- **The WBG can better support countries in achieving more sustainable gender equality results by facilitating public private partnerships in the following areas:**
 - **Gender-based violence.** All sectors need to become involved in this area. For example, the private sector could donate resources and equipment, like bicycles, to law enforcement, to bolster their efforts to combat violence. The WBG could use its convening power to bring the private and public sectors together on this issue.
 - **Internal diversity in state-owned and mixed capital enterprises.** Targeting private sector companies that are linked to the federal government in a collaborative way should be a focus. The WBG could promote gender equality, as well as human rights, racial justice, gay rights in these companies.
 - **Gender-responsive budgeting.** The Bank Group could help to share lessons from international experience and support the development of gender-sensitive budgets. While this discussion is more advanced at the federal level, there is room for improvement.

4. IMPORTANT KNOWLEDGE GAPS – AREAS WHERE WE DON'T KNOW ENOUGH AND THE WORLD BANK GROUP SHOULD PRIORITIZE IN ITS WORK TO HELP CLOSE GENDER GAPS

- **Norms and Culture.** Specific research on norms and their impact on women in Brazil is needed.
- **Measuring Results.** Five years ago, the government organized a training course for teachers in public education. The Bank Group could help to assess the results of such projects. While initial results are promising and the statistics are robust, no longitudinal studies exist. Therefore, the WBG could help to measure the change in schools as a result of this project, which was implemented nationally.
- **Investing in Violence against Women Research.** The WBG should develop a research fund to study the violent deaths of women. Moreover, it is essential to track what the government and civil society groups did to help them.
- **Database on Existing Activities.** In order to improve coordination and activities related to women's economic participation, the WBG should support the government in developing a database on existing public activities.
- **System of Data Collection.** While good data exists in Brazil, improvements are needed in terms of coordination, quality, dissemination and accessibility. The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) produces strong data and has a specific focus on gender equality data. However, bottlenecks exist regarding violence against women data. There are no unified or coordinated data sources and nothing is statistically representative. The WBG could help to establish a system of data collection and support the creation of linkages across institutions and sectors. This could help enable more effective and informed public policies.