



Towards a World Bank Group Gender Strategy Multi-stakeholder Consultation Meeting: 26 June 2015 Feedback Summary Beijing, China

The **multi-stakeholder consultation** meeting was held on **June 26, 2015** in **Beijing, China**. 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: 19. 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

- To close key gender gaps, the World Bank Group (WBG) should prioritize the following areas:
 - **Care.** Chinese women do three times the amount of unpaid care work as men. This is an increasing issue, particularly because of the ageing population. Additionally, the care burden could be linked to declines in the female labour force participation (FLFP). While China has a higher FLFP rate (67%) than other countries, the rate is in fact declining since 1993. The lack of public and private services for care could be a driver.
 - **Women's political participation.** Women's representation in government has stagnated over the last 20 years. More attention could be paid to the representation of women this especially at the village level.
 - **Access to financial services.** While credit is available to micro and small business women in China, without guarantees or collateral, the issue is the lack of credit history. Many women do not own credit cards, since their husbands control the finances, therefore this limits access to credit.
 - **Occupational sex segregation.** In this area, address norms and stereotyping in the education curricula.

- **Income inequality** between men and women in both rural and urban areas, particularly in the last two decades.
- **Voice and Agency.** The voice and agency of women in rural areas should be promoted.
- **Sexual and gender-based violence**, especially in schools.
- **Increase attention to elder women in rural development projects.** Elderly women, accounting for a large share of the aging population, are the poorest of the poor and how to help poor elderly women get out poverty is a huge challenge.
- **Working with men and boys.**

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

- In the area of working with men and boys, The United Nations' *HeforShe* movement was suggested as a good practice approach. So far, 5000 males have signed onto the movement.
- **"We Connect"**, a company that registers women-owned business, was also suggested as a good practice approach. In China there is a tendency for men to take over women-owned businesses when they start becoming successful; therefore, formally registering women-owned businesses is essential.
- The WBG should **consider a rights-based approach.** It is essential to recognize the indivisibility of human rights, empowerment and equality. A sample of community level advocacy work to decrease son bias was provided.
- The small grants provided under the East Asia Pacific Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality presents a good example of how to inform specific investments and policies with relevant gender data and diagnostic, for example the Forest Tenure Reform.

3. EXAMPLES OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMS THAT HAVE CREATED ACCESS TO BETTER JOBS FOR BOTH WOMEN AND MEN. ELEMENTS THAT HAVE MADE THESE WORK.

- To boost women's access to jobs and to help women entrepreneurs grow their businesses, the WBG should **consider promoting the integration of women and minority-owned businesses in the value chains of Chinese corporations.** It is critical to formally register these businesses as women-owned, since when businesses start becoming successful, husbands often try to take them over.
- **Microcredit programs** can help increase women's access to economic opportunities, raise gender awareness, and reduce gender-based violence.

4. 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

- To yield more sustainable results in the area of gender equality, the WBG should:
 - **Focus on public-private partnerships (PPP).** Awareness-raising is particularly important on this topic, since the PPP model in China is different. In China, PPPs are led by the government, in contrast to other countries where this is private-sector led. Therefore, more research is needed specifically on the Chinese model and its impact. Additionally, knowledge exchange is needed to share the various models.

- Support **public-private partnerships on the issue of care**. WBG should also support the implementation of **paternity leave** in China.
- **Address the legal framework**. In certain cases, legal barriers in the form “protective laws” prevent women from participating in certain kinds of work. Additionally, the Employment Promotion Law does not have a definition of discrimination. Labour dispute resolution or labour regulatory agencies tend to focus on solving labour dispute but not discrimination on the basis of sex. In addition, this law should include protection regarding sexual orientation and gender identity.
- **Work with the media**. China is media-rich, with 1.2 billion television viewers, therefore, there potential for impact is large.
- **Work more within existing structures, such as women’s federations** at the county level, which are very active on gender issues. More attention and training should be given to the heads of county-level women’s federations, who could be made long-term partners in projects.
- **Vocational education** is a good way to reduce poverty and should be expanded, with particular attention to girls, in collaboration with the private sector.
- The development of **e-commerce** such as “Taobao.com” has brought many opportunities to women. More policy support is needed in this area. The Bank Group can also help to tailor **internet-based financing** to women’s needs.
- Support the establishment of laws and policies that protect **sexual minorities**.
- Work with UN Women and other partners to promote dialogue and introduce good practices.
- **Raise awareness about gender inequalities** among the government as well as the public.
- Provide **capacity building** to government agencies, with targeting efforts for specific sectors.
- **Link the gender strategy and gender equality issues with current policy reforms in China**.
- **Pay attention to market risks for rural women**. Organize farm cooperative for rural women (all women cooperatives or targets for women members) to help them gain access to government or private sector financing and technical assistance.
- Involve **gender specialists** and ensure that project design, objectives and targets have a gender perspective. World Bank projects can also introduce and promote gender-disaggregated data and gender mainstreaming tools.

5. 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

- To help close knowledge gaps, the WBG should prioritize the following:
 - Research on **corporate social responsibility**, particularly in the context of state-owned enterprises.
 - Supporting the Chinese government in its collection and analysis of **sex-disaggregated data**.
 - Conducting a study on the **cost of homophobia in China**, similar to the Lee Badgett study on India.

- Study the impact of **technology** on gender equality in China.
- It would be helpful to share good practices and examples from World Bank-funded projects with state-owned enterprises and private sector firms.

6. ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS.

- There was one request for a standalone safeguard on gender equality.
- The focus on partnerships with the private sector to advance gender equality was well-received. This was thought to be particularly important to be successful in the Chinese context.