



World Bank Group: Towards a New Gender Strategy Consultation Meeting: April 23, 2015 Summary of Meeting Managua, Nicaragua

The consultation meeting with the **development partners** took place **on April 23, 2015 in Managua, Nicaragua**. Following a presentation by the World Bank Group Gender Team on the strategy content and scope and the process for its development, the discussion was opened up and the participants were asked for their comments and recommendations. The following summary reflects the main points and recommendations made during the meeting.

Number of participants: 14. A participants list is available [here](#).

Comments

1. MAIN GENDER GAPS TO WHICH THE WORLD BANK GROUP SHOULD GIVE PRIORITY CONSIDERATION TO HELP COUNTRIES REDUCE POVERTY AND PROMOTE MORE EQUITABLE SOCIETIES

- The main challenge is understanding where the problems lie, which is particularly difficult in matters of gender equality since most of the **problems are structural**. It is important to be able to identify the barriers more clearly. In the long term, structural causes will need to be dealt with, which can be done via **education**. This is a complex issue with many social, cultural and religious aspects.
- Gender equality is a programmatic, cross-cutting area. Its **cross-cutting nature determines that it** is something that **must be handled over the long-term**. Additionally, it is difficult to measure outcomes and observe the impact of such cross-cutting policies at the country level. This challenge should be addressed.
- It is important to work on **gender stereotypes**; this would help to promote gender equality and prevent gender-based violence.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENABLE THE WORLD BANK GROUP TO BETTER ASSIST COUNTRIES AND BUSINESSES IN THEIR EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS SO AS TO ACHIEVE MORE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES FROM THE STANDPOINT OF GENDER EQUALITY

- The World Bank Group should focus on gender gaps in its areas of **comparative advantage**. Additionally, it should play a leadership role and work with other agencies, in areas of their respective comparative advantage. In general, **more cooperation with other agencies is needed**. At the country level, practical negotiated agreements should be reached to identify action and leaders.
- The fact that the WBG is adopting a strategic approach to the issue of gender and is focusing on two important areas identified in the Concept Note, namely more and better jobs as well as access to, control over and ownership of assets is welcome. Nevertheless, there are other **softer, less visible areas that require greater emphasis**. For example, in the economic empowerment of women, it is important to ensure that women do not just have access to assets and productive systems, but gain confidence, overcome fear and have a greater voice in decision-making.
- It is important to set **coordination mechanisms with other agencies and development partners**. It would be interesting to have **forums for sharing experiences, best practices and evidence** on what works and what does not. Without coordination mechanisms, part of what we can teach each other is lost. For example, the UNDP has an alliance with the Higher Council for Private Enterprise and with universities and could share examples of good business practices on gender equality issues in the area of job creation.
- Experience with the design and implementation of gender equality policies have varied. In the past there was a tendency to write specific sectoral policies, whereas now the preference is to make gender equality a cross-cutting issue. In the case of some agencies, such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), a mix of the two is being applied, so that there are specific gender programs but also gender equality targets and outcomes in each program, regardless of the sector. Moreover, this system includes internal accountability mechanisms to ensure its application. This approach was recommended for the WBG's consideration.

3. 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

- It is difficult to give visibility to projects, not just in the planning process but also in monitoring and evaluation. Unless the projects specifically focus on gender issues, it is difficult to raise the profile of gender aspects in cross-cutting projects. This points to the **importance of impact assessments**. Nicaragua does not have the capacity to do so without assistance.
- It is important to strengthen **results-based approaches** and expand the **evidence base**. This means improving our monitoring systems to enable us to monitor our operations, so that actions are recorded systematically.
- It is also important to improve **data collection and analytical systems**. Existing information systems have deficiencies in terms of the disaggregation of data by gender and ethnicity, and Nicaragua does not have the capacity needed to use this information. The

United Nations has been working with the National Statistics Institute to develop statistics systems and a system of indicators with a gender focus, but much remains to be done.

4. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

- The new strategy should better explain what the WBG means by gender equality as cross cutting area and how to achieve it.
- To ensure the appropriate implementation of a gender equality policy designed on a cross-cutting basis, it is important to **set up project teams that include gender specialists**. For gender specialists it is important to know the sectors in which they will be involved (particularly non-traditional sectors); without this knowledge it is utopian to think that gender equality can be integrated in any way other than an ad-hoc basis. At the same time, it is important to establish a **clear definition of roles and responsibilities** to ensure the appropriate accountability, so that the entire responsibility for a program or outcome does not fall on the gender specialist.
- The strategy should indicate what **accountability mechanisms the WBG** will use to ensure that the issue of gender equality is applied on a cross-cutting, comprehensive basis in all of its operations. **Greater clarity is needed on the indicators that will be used and how much responsibility for outcomes will be placed on management.**
- The strategy should include a section that explains more clearly the actions that will be taken within the **WBG to motivate employees to incorporate the gender equality lens**: Will this new strategy be reflected in the required qualifications included in job postings? Will annual performance assessments for employees include gender equality indicators? How will this new operating strategy be reflected in the Bank's budget?
- The issue of **partnerships** is important but it is often ill-conceived, since frequently partnerships are not strategic. On the issue of gender equality, financial resources are so limited that partnerships must help to maximize existing resources to obtain the maximum possible impact.