



## Towards a World Bank Group Gender Strategy Consultation Meeting: 14 May 2015 Feedback Summary Amman, Jordan

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The **multi-stakeholder consultation meeting** was held on **May 14, 2015** in **Amman, Jordan**. 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: 14.** 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 consider the following as priority:
  - **Access to Justice.** While the focus is typically on women's economic opportunities, access to justice is inter-related and should also be tackled simultaneously. Additionally, access to justice initiatives should integrate psychosocial support and livelihood programs.
  - **Technology:** Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) could be transformative in the Jordanian context, particularly, as a way to boost women's labor force participation.
  - **Transportation:** Inadequate public transportation constrains access to economic opportunities. While addressing such infrastructure issues can be costly, they should be tackled directly.

- **Voice and Agency:** The strategy’s focus on jobs and assets was well-received, but considered insufficient. Issues such as women’s political participation, sexual and reproductive health, early marriage and social norms were suggested for inclusion.
- **Social Protection:** Reform of the social security system was proposed, particularly in ways that better protect women and recognize the value of all forms of work.
- **Labor Laws:** A stronger, more protective, regulatory framework in the workplace is needed. Pregnancy discrimination and pay inequity were raised as issues for the Bank Group’s attention.
- **Education and Training.** In this area, the WBG should focus on vocational training, as well as awareness-raising among women. Women are often unaware of existing legal barriers that affect them, for example, women cannot consent to surgery for their child without the approval of their husbands.

## 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

- On the topic of engaging men and boys, the Bank Group could learn from the following examples:
  - **The Jordanian National Campaign for Reproductive Health.** This campaign targeted both men and women and is generally hailed as a success for its work in reducing fertility rates. Systematic and long-term targeting of social norms around sexual and reproductive health were noted as successful elements of this program.
  - **The Jordanian National Commission for Women initiative.** The JNCW targeted government ministries as well as private sector organizations and encouraged them to analyse gender performance in their own systems. Consequently, many organizations implemented specific changes to promote gender equality internally.
  - **Sisterhood Is Global Institute policies.** Although SIGI is a women’s rights non-governmental organization, it mandates the participation of no less than 20% of any sex in its bylaws. Consequently, men participate at all levels of the organization and are actively engaging in gender equality initiatives.

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

- The WBG could learn from the establishment of “**satellite units**”. These units hire women to work in the garment sector, and with their increased economic participation, they are starting to shift social norms about women’s work.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS ON SOLUTIONS NEEDED TO INCREASE OWNERSHIP OF OR ACCESS TO LAND, HOUSING, FINANCE, AND TECHNOLOGY FOR WOMEN.

- **Bank Al Etihad** shared background about its **women’s empowerment program**. First, the bank conducted an assessment about women’s financial needs and collateral emerged as a major challenge. Now the bank is offering loans to women using non-traditional forms of collateral, such as gold. This approach works successfully for Bank Al Etihad; however, due to the lack of an appropriate ecosystem, expansion to other financial institutions is difficult. The Bank Group could consider developing this ecosystem through facilitating loan guarantees schemes that reduce the perceived risks of lending to women.

#### 5. 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 better support countries and companies in yielding more sustainable results, the **WBG should**:
  - **Tackle structural deficiencies** in the political, social and economic spaces directly, many of which relate to **social and cultural norms**.
  - Explore ways to **create jobs for women** as a part of infrastructure projects.
  - Consider a **rights-based approach when working on gender-based violence (GBV)**. Caution was expressed about linking GBV to economic arguments. Conversely, integrating GBV into economic opportunities was suggested as a way to create entry points for alliances and to bring others into gender equality work.
  - Explore **gender-responsive budgeting** as a way to strengthen country systems.

#### 6. 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 contribute to the evidence base, the Bank Group could conduct research in the following areas:
  - **Assessing the impact of transportation projects on economic opportunities**. In the short-term, beneficiaries who are involved in transportation projects can gain income that can reduce their vulnerability. Additionally, if properly designed, these projects can build assets that contribute to economic growth.
  - Evaluating the types of government structures that are most conducive to the participation of women.
  - Understanding the **drivers of low female labour force participation**. Analysis of the existing barriers was suggested as a first step. Anecdotally, causes could include lack of transportation, lack of jobs and the burden of care, however, empirical research was advised.
  - Undertaking a **comprehensive survey on violence against women and gender-based violence**, with a focus on the

costs to individuals, households and economies.

- Evaluating the **economic value of household work**.
- Rates of debt default versus repayment among women.
- To fill knowledge gaps, the WBG could facilitate access to **gender equality resources in languages other than English, for example Arabic**, and develop reliable statistics and analysis about informal work.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR EXAMPLES OF BETTER DIAGNOSTIC TOOLS THAT CAN BE USED TO HELP THE UNDERSTANDING OF CONSTRAINTS TO GENDER EQUALITY – BEYOND THOSE CURRENTLY USED BY THE WORLD BANK GROUP, IE. COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT AND RESEARCH ON GENDER.

- A **jobs diagnostic** for Jordan was suggested.

8. ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS.

- The WBG could focus on building the **capacity of professionals who work on gender equality**; the current level of skills were thought to be inadequate.
- The Bank Group could facilitate **donor coordination and stronger partnerships**. Currently, organizations tackle gender inequality in a fragmented way.
- The WBG should tackle the current **shifts toward religious extremist ideology**, which are unfriendly to gender equality.
- In attempting to increase access to finance for women, the Bank Group should be aware of **countries' regulations** and exercise caution in this arena. For example, defaulting on loans in Jordan can lead to jail time.