

World Bank Gender strategy consultation

Oxfam draft response

Comments by 10am, (UK time) 13th July to Francesca Rhodes - frhodes1@oxfam.org.uk

Questions:

1) The World Bank Group is committed to supporting countries in their efforts to reduce poverty and promote more equitable societies. In this context, what are key gender gaps the World Bank Group should focus on to support countries in implementing these goals?

Oxfam welcomes this comprehensive concept note, particularly its clarity that women's empowerment is central to poverty reduction and shared prosperity; that women's economic empowerment requires parallel progress in women's political, social and personal empowerment; and that more and better data is needed, alongside a focus on learning and sharing knowledge about what works. The linking of this process with SDGs goals particularly goal 5 on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment is commendable and puts the WBG forward as a key contributor to achieving gender equality among other goals.

We appreciate and commend the attempt to focus the strategy on two key levers for change -- jobs and assets -- focused on women's economic empowerment. However, Oxfam hopes the Bank will maintain the valuable momentum it has created on the issue of women's voice and agency, and firmly root its strategy in a comprehensive understanding of women's human rights, of which economic empowerment is but one, albeit essential, dimension. It will be critical for the strategy to be explicit about how to tackle constraints to women's economic agency that are rooted in unequal power relations and limit women's choices, such as violence against women, lack of representation in decision-making, and disproportionate responsibilities for unpaid care (see more information on these areas below). The focus of the strategy must be not only on creating jobs for women and increasing access to productive assets, but especially on addressing the structural barriers that constrain their access and limit their empowerment potential.

We appreciate the role that the Bank has played in raising the importance of issues such as VAWG, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and women's voice and agency as key issues in gender equality in recent years. We particularly welcome the analysis and data collection given to these issues in the 'Voice and Agency' report. We would like to see the World Bank continue to champion these issues and maintain a holistic understanding of women's empowerment and a nuanced approach to women's economic empowerment which includes addressing these areas of women's lives.

One of the key challenges will be to effectively operationalize the strategy so that it is able to have a transformative impact on the Bank's work at the country level; in our experience with previous Bank sector strategies there is often a disconnect between global policy and priorities, and what is happening in country programs. To that end, we are pleased to see plans to

develop a much more meaningful and comprehensive results and reporting framework for Bank projects that will assess outcomes and impact on women's lives, not just process. We would like to see the Bank revise the Corporate Scorecard standards for lending so that its definition of "gender informed" is a more meaningful indicator of quality of impact on gender inequality.

Special recognition is also needed to address women rights in fragile/conflict states, including gender sensitivity and responsiveness to WBG investment in fragile states. The strategy must make clear provisions to ensure women's rights are promoted and secured, including redlines for not investing in countries/states where such investment benefits are linked to fuelling war and conflict directly or indirectly; or in companies with supply chains including extractives activities linked to violation of human rights including sexual violence, child soldiers, child labour etc.

Addressing women's lack of representation in WBG decision making

The Bank must place stronger emphasis on supporting women's collective action, particularly that of marginalized groups, and listening to the voices of women in the development of its operations at country level. A critical "Achilles heel" for the Bank is currently its inconsistent and sometimes nonexistent engagement with women's groups and other civil society at the country level. The strategy must build in a mechanism to strengthen women's capacity at country level to effectively engage with the Bank, and to institutionalize their participation in the development of country diagnostics, Country Partnership Frameworks, and ongoing dialogue around design of programs.

Violence against women and girls

It is positive that the Gender Strategy acknowledges the importance of addressing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), including through challenging social norms. VAWG is one of the most pervasive human rights abuses and is estimated to cost between 1.2% and 3.7% of GDP.¹ Violence impacts on a woman's ability to earn an income and has negative consequences for their employers as it limits their levels of productivity.²

Women's economic empowerment can be a key driver in challenging the social norms which create VAWG, and in allowing women to have the resources to leave violent relationships. However, women can experience increased violence as a result of their employment or economic activity, and it is important that the WBG's Gender Strategy, to increase women's economic participation acknowledges and mitigates against any increased risk of violence which this could result in. Women can experience an increased risk of violence as they travel to and from work, while they are at work as the result of being in public spaces, or from their employers

¹ Klugman, Jeni; Hanmer, Lucia; Twigg, Sarah; Hasan, Tazeen; McCleary-Sills, Jennifer; Santamaria, Julieth. 2014. Voice and Agency : Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity. Washington, DC: World Bank Group

² Georgia, T. (2015) DFID Guidance Note on Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Through DFID's Economic Development and Women's Economic Empowerment Programmes – Part A, London: VAWG Helpdesk.

themselves.³ For example, UN Women found that 55 percent of women working in market spaces in Papua New Guinea had experienced sexual violence in the previous year.⁴ Oxfam found through its work with strawberry pickers in Morocco that women were frequently experiencing sexual harassment from their supervisors.⁵ Religious norms can also impact on the prevalence of VAWG.

Women's increased economic independence can also challenge the power balance within their family or community, resulting in the use of violence to redress it.⁶ The relationship between violence, economic empowerment and social norms is therefore complicated and context specific. Oxfam recommends that the World Bank adopts a context specific approach to ensuring that increasing women's economic participation and access to assets does not increase their risk of violence, and works to prevent VAWG, including through addressing harmful social norms.

Disproportionate responsibilities for unpaid care

Addressing care work is a critical precondition for women's political, economic and social empowerment. Care has long been considered to be the natural responsibility of women, as a result of which the costs of providing care fall disproportionately on women. Women's unpaid care work has recently been recognised as a major human rights issue. Oxfam's recent WE-Care's quantitative research with 2200 women and men in 5 countries (Colombia, Ethiopia, Philippines, Uganda and Zimbabwe) shows inequality in responsibility for care: on average, women do 5.9 hours/day of care work and have responsibility to look after dependents for 11 hrs a day; men do 1.1 hr/day of care work, and report care responsibilities for 3.7 hours a day.⁷

The excessive responsibility is considered a "glass wall", an invisible barrier limiting women's time, mobility and ambitions to participate in economic, political and social activities. Women, especially those living in poverty, face heavy and unequal care responsibilities which impede efforts to promote gender equality and women's equal enjoyment of human rights.

Public services such as education, healthcare and childcare, and social protection measures such as parental leave and pensions are essential inputs to provide the care that society needs. When these measures are not in place, or are cut back due to austerity measures, women often

³ Georgia, T. (2015) DFID Guidance Note on Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Through DFID's Economic Development and Women's Economic Empowerment Programmes – Part A, London: VAWG Helpdesk.

⁴ UN Women (2014) In Brief: Safe Cities Global Initiative. New York: UN Women

⁵ Oxfam International (2014) Women Strawberry Workers in Morocco: Accessing rights to secure and decent work. Oxford: Oxfam International

⁶ Georgia, T. (2015) DFID Guidance Note on Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Through DFID's Economic Development and Women's Economic Empowerment Programmes – Part A, London: VAWG Helpdesk.

⁷ Remme, J., Kidder, T. And Michalopoulou, M. (2015) Women's Economic Empowerment and Care: We-Care: An Overview, Oxford: Oxfam GB, file://sumfile01/USERS/frhodes1/My%20Documents/Downloads/ml-we-care-initiative-overview-200415-en.pdf

step in to fill the gaps.⁸ This reduces the amount of time they have to participate in economic, political and social activities and means they are subsidizing the economy without remuneration.

Oxfam recommends that the WBG Gender Strategy should recognise the contribution of unpaid care work to the economy and promote infrastructure, time-saving technologies and quality public services such as childcare, care for the elderly, healthcare and regulatory frameworks for universal access to SRHR. The Gender Strategy should commit the WBG to understanding the direct or indirect impact of its work on women's unpaid care.

Access to and control over land

On the topic of increasing women's access to productive assets, as the strategy points out, access to land is a critical resource. Whilst the numbers vary and are often lacking, we know is that women around the world, but especially in Africa, have far weaker land rights and far less access to land than men. Women make up fewer than 5 percent of all agricultural holders in the countries in North Africa and West Asia for which data is available. In sub-Saharan Africa the picture varies, from women making up fewer than 5 percent of agricultural land holders in Mali to over 30 percent in countries such as Botswana and Malawi. The strategy acknowledges job creation and asset ownership are fundamental levers of economic and poverty reduction. The strategy however, places emphasis more on jobs creation as a source of income for most poor people and fails to bring out the plight of most women in the Agriculture sector who are small holder farmers, a sector which employs approx. 60% of women in most parts of the world including Africa who rely on land for their livelihoods.

At the same time, women rely in particular on common lands – access to forests and grazing lands to help feed their families. The bulk of land in Africa – about 75% -- is under customary tenure.⁹ Yet the World Bank says that 90 % of rural land in Sub-Saharan Africa is not registered, making those lands and the communities that live on them very vulnerable. A recent study by IFPRI found that 1.6 billion women depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. Of the huge surge in large scale land acquisitions – over 49 million hectares since 2000 - 35% are in Africa.

Women are at particular risk when land grabs happen in the name of agricultural investment. Oxfam has seen a repeated pattern around the world where we have worked with communities affected by land grabs. Women are often in a weaker position to bargain with government authorities or investors. And women are more at risk of violence where a land deal involves intimidation – Oxfam has documented stories of sexual violence against women in many countries from Honduras to Uganda, from Cambodia to Guatemala.

At the same time as they have much weaker land rights, women contribute 60-80 of the labour used to produce food for household consumption and for sale. In Africa it is estimated that

⁸ Seary, E. And Arendar, A. (2014) Even it Up: Time to end extreme inequality. Oxford: Oxfam GB for Oxfam International. file:///sumfile01/USERS/frhodes1/My%20Documents/Downloads/cr-even-it-up-extreme-inequality-291014-en.pdf

⁹ Land Policy Initiative 2013

women produce over 80% of the food. Women do not need more roles and responsibilities, they need more rights -- rights to land, other inputs, markets, which can give them a better return for the hard work they already do.

Oxfam is very concerned that current IFC practice of lending to financial intermediaries – such as local banks and private equity funds – is resulting in negative outcomes for women’s access to land. A recent Oxfam report found that this type of IFC lending to third parties has been associated with shocking abuses in projects across Asia, Africa and Latin America, including deaths, repression, land-grabs and violence.¹⁰ For example, as a result of one investment in Laos and Cambodia, in 13 affected villages at least 164 households lost residential plots and individually-held farmland, while entire communities suffered losses of communal lands and forests. The confiscation of land and destruction of forests has resulted in a sharp deterioration in living standards, with women facing a particular burden as they struggle with daily tasks such as collecting forest products and firewood, tending cattle and working on their farms.

As the Bank and the IFC begin to work more closely together, we see a critical opportunity to improve IFC lending practices to ensure they better address social and environmental risk, protect communities, and guarantee transparency. Without this kind of reform, other World Bank work to promote women’s access to land will be deeply undermined.

Intersectionality

It is important that the strategy also recognises the intersectionality of forms of inequality. The experiences and marginalization of women, as well as those of men, girls and boys, are not only determined by gender, but by other identity factors, such as race, class, and sexual orientation, to name a few – all of which are determined, shaped by, and imbedded in social systems of power. Development interventions need to respond to, and be relevant for, intersecting inequalities, as well as leverage and embrace the potentiality of diversity dimensions.

2) Beyond the issues you identified in Question 1, are there other gender gaps the World Bank should take into consideration as priority while developing the strategy?

Infrastructure

How infrastructure projects are initiated and designed can have significant impact on women’s access to services, such as water and energy provision, for which women and girls are often responsible in poor communities. The World Bank’s push for large scale “transformational” infrastructure raises additional concerns, where not only questions around access and costs can be limiting, but can also imply more substantial changes in circumstances where the scale or location of the project requires resettlement or implies other significant impacts on the environment that can impact negatively on women and children in particular. The renewed focus

¹⁰ Oxfam International (2015) ‘The Suffering of Others: The human cost of the International Finance Corporation’s lending through financial intermediaries’. Oxfam International: https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/ib-suffering-of-others-international-finance-corporation-020415-en.pdf

on public-private partnerships (PPPs) raise additional concerns; following the Independent Evaluation Group's 2014 review of the Bank's support for PPPs finding that "*little is recorded on the effects of PPPs on the poor*". Moreover 'gender' or 'women' does not receive a single mention in the IEG review, suggesting that no data is available from the Bank, hence the gender impacts of PPPs are not known.

Infrastructure projects implemented by the World Bank have the potential of reducing the impact of unpaid care responsibilities, through increasing access to water, transport, and energy. Consulting with and taking the needs of women into consideration should therefore be a priority for World Bank infrastructure projects in order to ensure consistency and coherence with the aim of increasing women's economic opportunities. A study of World Bank infrastructure projects in sub-Saharan Africa found that they failed to take unpaid care into consideration, and were implemented in gender insensitive ways as they failed to consider the needs of women.¹¹ The gender strategy should therefore include considerations of gender impacts, including related to unpaid care responsibilities, mandatory for all Bank infrastructure projects. This should include consultations with women during the project preparation phase to establish their needs and consider how to best reduce their unpaid care responsibilities through infrastructure investments, and to monitor and follow this up during project implementation.

Gender safeguards

It is essential that World Bank safeguards include gender, as women and girls experience negative impacts of projects at higher rates and in different ways. This is especially true amongst marginalised populations and people living in poverty. Adequate safeguards would ensure women and girls are able to benefit equally from World Bank financed development projects, and do not get systematically cut out of the economic development the Bank is entrusted to generate. To meet this goal, the Environmental & Social Framework must at minimum include a stand-alone gender safeguard. Without this critically important step, we cannot continue to believe that the World Bank is taking its commitment to gender equality seriously.

3) What are examples of policies, approaches and programs (either by the public or private sector) that have helped remove economic and social constraints to women and girls and that the World Bank Group strategy could learn from?

Oxfam has a number of learning resources from our work which are relevant to this question.

Oxfam America's publication 'Lessons learned in Gender Justice' contains recommendations for programming and approaches on gender equality, and can be accessed here:

http://issuu.com/oa-padare/docs/lessons_learned_in_gender_justice

¹¹ Sarah Bibler and Elaine Zuckerman (2013) The care connection: The World Bank and women's unpaid care work in select sub-Saharan African countries. UNU-WIDER Series: WIDER Working Paper Volume: 2013/131

Please see below an extract from a recent Oxfam paper on this subject: 'Meaningful action: Effective Approaches to Women's Economic Empowerment in Agriculture'¹² The full paper can be accessed here: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/meaningful-action-effective-approaches-to-womens-economic-empowerment-in-agricu-334788>

Oxfam's experience of working on women's economic empowerment through programme interventions is that interventions must integrate the structural barriers faced by women, and must be orientated to achieve decent work with safeguards. Without this dual approach, evidence shows that apart from a few exceptional women leaders, the majority of women may not be able to access jobs or benefit fully from them. Working women continue to face heavy and unequal responsibilities for household work and care, remaining in low-paid and precarious work, and vulnerable to abuse. Successful experiences have stemmed from integrated investments in social infrastructure, such as women's organisations, social protection, essential services and positive social norms, with transparent governance supporting good employment practices such as written contracts and a living wage.

Meaningful economic empowerment for women in agriculture and agribusiness goes beyond increasing women's market participation. Actions must address the risks of creating additional time pressures, of increased vulnerability to abuse for women or of concentrating women in low-paid, precarious work. It is therefore critical to address the structural barriers to women's economic empowerment through holistic approaches which support women's voices and rights and challenge negative social norms. Job creation for women must be accompanied by employment safeguards and social infrastructure to ensure that this leads to positive opportunities. Stepping up action on women's economic empowerment in agriculture is particularly important given a reduction in government support over recent decades and the high levels of women's engagement in the sector.

Increasing women's control over time, and economic growth

In Copán, Honduras, the Nuevo Amanecer rural enterprise conducted a Rapid Care Analysis¹³ which revealed that women worked on average a 94-hour work, compared with 61 hours a week for men; it also documented the lack of public services. Male leaders joined with a successful advocacy effort by women's group members to get the National Electrical Energy Company (ENEE) to undertake a \$100,000 electricity generating project, co-financed by the National Congress. With electricity installed, Nuevo Amanecer invested in an electric grinding mill and a refrigerator, eliminating arduous hand-grinding of corn, creating jobs for women in sales of processed foods and generating an income for the Nuevo Amanecer.

¹² Kidder, T. Bright, D. and Green, C. (2014) 'Meaningful action: Effective Approaches to Women's Economic Empowerment in Agriculture'. Oxfam International: Oxford, <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/meaningful-action-effective-approaches-to-womens-economic-empowerment-in-agricu-334788>

¹³ See <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/care>.

Domestic work limits rural women's participation in and benefit from economic development. Women's heavy and unequal responsibility for care work is a significant, often invisible barrier to their involvement in the labour market and affects their productivity and food security.¹⁴ In 2012, when Oxfam surveyed 20 enterprise development initiatives, staff reported that women leaders were dropping out because of difficulties in renegotiating household responsibilities. Positively, investments in infrastructure and services by governments, NGOs and employers can significantly reduce and redistribute care work, with positive impacts on women's economic empowerment. In Tanzania, when measures achieved a one-hour reduction for every ten hours spent on collecting water and fuel, the probability that women would engage in off-farm business activities increased 7 percent.¹⁵

Facilitating collaboration to help break down economic barriers

Oxfam has facilitated collaboration between governments and businesses to design integrated services, or asset transfers that enable women to overcome structural economic barriers. In northwest Bangladesh, for example, Oxfam has worked with both local government and PRAN, a national chilli processor, to create a model that has impacts for a range of women who are normally marginalized from the economy. Following the transfer of communal land plots through a regional government social protection programme, a small number of extremely poor women have moved away from the drudgery of low-paid agricultural work to become producers investing in chilli production alongside growing basic food stuffs for family consumption. They and existing women smallholders, who form 60 per cent of a local producer organization, have developed chilli production, sustained through training and a stable market offered by PRAN. Oxfam has provided the initial capacity building to ensure that the producer organization supporting the collective production and marketing of chilli was sustainable.

Giving women a voice and addressing social norms

Overcoming social norms and cultural attitudes to enable women to take advantage of economic opportunities, and to avoid violence if they do, requires parallel interventions on structural barriers for women, including social norms. In Nepal, as well as supporting two large seed-producing cooperatives through its enterprise fund, Oxfam has facilitated women's discussion groups as a key instrument of empowerment. Women seed producers in these groups have gained confidence, access to information, and collective voice on their priority issues. For the first time, women report, they realized that their voices could be heard in a public space. Groups have successfully taken on issues ranging from latrine construction through training on new seed varieties to polygamy. Norms are often tough to challenge, so a facilitator-leader supports the group in 'being heard'.

¹⁴ Olivier de Schutter, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food (2013) 'Gender and the Right to Food'.

http://www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/otherdocuments/20130304_gender_execsummary_en.pdf

¹⁵ UNDP (2009) 'Policy Brief: Unpaid Care Work'.

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womensempowerment/policy-brief--unpaid-care-work/>

In Tanzania, a TV programme was aired daily, which heightened the profile the work of women farmers in the search for a 'female food hero'. The public voted by cell-phone text message, and their votes were combined with feedback from facilitators who had worked with the women over the past few weeks. Finalists went through training on issues ranging from land rights and marketing to HIV and AIDS. This innovative approach allowed viewers to explore the unique challenges that women face in becoming farmers, and millions of viewers watched as Sister Martha Mwasu Waziri challenged the image of farming as a male role and was crowned Mama Shujaa wa Chakula (Female Food Hero) 2012. Both these strategies are being replicated in other countries.

Companies should first know where women are in their value chains, to be able to approach economic empowerment systematically. They should set the vision for the entire chain, using their influence for broader change, not just driving change in their own business. Specifically, they should take responsibility for ending the gender pay gap, improve access to decent employment opportunities for women and help to reduce the burden of caring for children and elderly relatives. Companies should systematically collect information on the roles women play and the barriers they face across regions and commodities, while adopting processes to ensure gender opportunities and violations are raised and addressed with suppliers. Governments should implement the necessary policy legislation and regulation to promote women's rights and economic empowerment. This should promote equal pay, decent work, and access to credit, promote equal inheritance and land rights, and promote positive social norms and attitudes for women. Agricultural policy should be responsive to the crops that women grow, ensure women's access to training, finance, and appropriate technology and extension services.

Governments should involve women's organisations and leaders in key decision-making processes and take action to recognise, reduce and redistribute unpaid care. For women to fully benefit from economic opportunities, Governments should scale their investment in publicly provided universal health, education and social protection.

Civil society organizations should take an innovative approach to holistic programmes, working with a range of actors to jointly create solutions or challenge poor practice and lack of action on women's economic empowerment in agriculture. This includes developing effective monitoring and measurement tools, and ensuring that learning on effective strategies to integrate women's employment alongside interventions addressing structural and social barriers is shared more broadly.

In this context, women's collective action should be supported by governments and by the private sector to give women a voice in their communities and in market governance.

A holistic approach

Oxfam's Raising Her Voice programme is an example of a successful holistic approach to women's empowerment. The programme ran from 2008-2013, and worked to create more effective governance systems by ensuring that women's voices influence decisions about

services, investments, policies and legal frameworks, from community, through to national and regional levels. To date, over one million marginalised women in 17 countries are estimated to have benefited from increased activism, leading to increased voice and influence, more effective engagement with targeted decision makers and greater institutional accountability. The programme's impact is wide ranging and impressive in both scale and depth. Together, 45 local partners, 141 community activist groups, and over 1,005 coalition members have contributed to ten new laws to prevent and protect against gender-based violence, and supported the passing of nine laws to promote a wider spectrum of women's rights globally. This includes new domestic and sexual violence legislation in Uganda, Nigeria, Mozambique and Pakistan, and a law aimed at preventing political violence against women candidates and voters in Bolivia.

The Theory of Change for the programme shows how it is essential to work across multiple spheres: personal, political, social and economic, in order to bring about sustainable change. It also shows that these interventions are most successful where complementary and coordinated work is carried out at local, national, and international levels. Change in women's abilities to participate in, influence and lead the decisions that affect their lives takes time. Funded projects should be conceived as stepping stones on a path towards a well thought-through, longer-term, process of change. The evaluation documents from this project which go into more detail on how this project worked can be found here: <http://raisinghervoice.ning.com/>

Addressing unpaid care work

Oxfam recommends that the WBG Gender Strategy should recognise the contribution of unpaid care work to the economy and promote infrastructure, time-saving technologies and quality public services such as childcare, care for the elderly, healthcare and regulatory frameworks for universal access to SRHR. The Gender Strategy should commit the WBG to understanding the direct or indirect impact of its work on women's unpaid care. Public care services, family friendly policies including parental leave are important to support this. Community day-care schemes have proven successful in increasing mother's income, access to the labour market and quality of employment. For example, in Guatemala City, the introduction of community day care increased the income of mothers by 30 per cent and made them more likely to be employed in the formal sector.¹⁶ In rural Colombia, community day care had positive impacts on women's labour participation, as well as benefits for children's well-being, while a pre-school programme in Argentina increased women's employment by 7–14 per cent.¹⁷ In addition, there is a need to tackle social norms that see the domain of care work as a women's work.

¹⁶ Todd P (2013) How to Improve Women's Employability and Quality of Work in Transition Economies. Research analysis produced for UNF. Available at Accessed 18 September 2014. See also UNDP and International Labour Organization (2009) Work and Family: Towards New Forms of Reconciliation with Social Co-responsibility. Women in Guatemala City cited lack of child care as the number one reason that they did not work in the formal sector.

¹⁷ Todd P (2013) How to Improve Women's Employability and Quality of Work in Transition Economies. Research analysis produced for UNF. Available at Accessed 18 September 2014. See also UNDP and International Labour Organization (2009) Work and Family: Towards New Forms of Reconciliation with Social Co-responsibility. Women in Guatemala City cited lack of child care as the number one reason that they did not work in the formal sector.

Addressing care case study - LOW-FEE CHILDCARE IN QUEBEC

In 1997, the Canadian province of Quebec created a low-fee childcare programme (costing only \$7 (CAD) per child per day) to improve the status of women and poor families, and to contribute to building a better labour force. Over the following years, the proportion of children in Quebec under the age of four attending daycare has risen sharply – from 18 percent in 1998 to 53 percent in 2011. Elsewhere in Canada attendance rates have remained constant at around 20 percent for children up to the age of five. The most significant impact has been on women's employment and earning potential. Between 1996 and 2011, the rate of female employment increased faster in Quebec than in the rest of Canada.

In Quebec, the number of mothers participating in the labour force rose faster than that of women without children, which was not the case in Canada as a whole. Moreover, the relative poverty rate of families headed by single mothers fell from 36 to 22 percent, and their median real after tax income rose by 81 percent. One study estimated that in 2008 nearly 70,000 more mothers held jobs than would have been the case without universal access to low fee childcare – equivalent to an increase of 3.8 percent in women's employment. The same study estimated that Quebec's GDP was about 1.7 percent (\$5bn (CAD)) higher as a result, and that the tax revenue that the Quebec and federal governments received due to that additional employment significantly exceeded the programme's cost.¹⁸ This reform was good for women, boosted the economy and promoted women's economic equality.

4) In your experience, what are the best examples of policies and programs that have created access to better jobs for both women and men? What made these work?

Oxfam's experience is that unless an approach is taken which integrates addressing the structural barriers women face with ensuring decent work, women are not always able to fully benefit from their employment opportunities. Successful experiences have stemmed from integrated investments in social infrastructure, such as women's organisations, social protection, essential services and positive social norms, with transparent governance supporting good employment practices such as written contracts and a living wage.

Improving conditions for waged workers

In Kenya, Oxfam and International Procurement and Logistics Ltd (IPL) studied the role of women horticultural workers and smallholder farmers in the supply chain for cut flowers and green beans. The study found that women smallholders reported three times the income of women who worked for wages. Women waged workers were generally disempowered, with roles highly demarcated by gender and a high risk of sexual harassment during the recruitment

¹⁸ P. Fortin, L. Godbout and S. St-Cerny (2012) 'Impact of Quebec's Universal Low Fee Childcare Program on Female Labour Force Participation, Domestic Income and Government Budgets', Université de Sherbrooke, Working Paper 2012/02, http://usherbrooke.ca/chaire-fiscalite/fileadmin/sites/chaire-fiscalite/documents/Cahiers-derecherche/Etude_femmes_ANGLAIS.pdf

of contract labour. There was also a lack of quality childcare provided by employers, so informal providers have sprung up, carrying the risk of negligence and abuse of children. In this case, 'economic empowerment' of adult women can come at the cost of their children's welfare and education, and is thus not generationally sustainable.

There is a positive lesson to this story, however. Some women horticultural workers were found to have benefited particularly from skilled work in packhouses, and over the past ten years have experienced real improvements such as more stable contracts, higher wages (though still well short of a living wage), better health and safety conditions and a reduction in sexual harassment. Key enabling factors were developing institutions as well as markets and collaborative ways of working: for example, companies implementing the ETI Base Code, more professional human resource management, Fair-trade certification and improved government regulation.

Helping women workers to claim their rights

In Morocco, strawberry production has increased 14-fold over the past three decades, with 20,000 women workers meeting the demand for labour in the sector. Before 2010, the mostly female labour force was informally recruited by male intermediaries, and women faced extremely long hours of work and payment below minimum wage levels, with physically harsh conditions and often the threat of sexual harassment. With support from Oxfam and civil society partners, female workers were trained on their rights and in literacy, which enabled them to claim labour rights, call for adequate health and safety measures and address the problem of harassment. Fifty-two per cent more workers were registered for social security, which entitles a woman worker with two children to 40 per cent more income. The Moroccan government has welcomed this approach and now sends social security staff to support female workers registering for the benefit. Employers report increased productivity and a more stable workforce.

5) What solutions have worked or are needed to increase ownership of or access to land, housing, finance, and technology for women?

Oxfam's programme work such as Gendered Enterprise and Markets (GEM), Enterprise Development (ED) and WEMAN, has shown that women must enjoy their rights across different areas of their lives in order to benefit from participating in the economy. For example, increasing women's participation and influence in decision making, access to health services, care services, skills training and education are important for supporting women to see the benefits of their agricultural activities.¹⁹

¹⁹ Kidder, T., Bright, D. And Green, C. (2014) *MEANINGFUL ACTION Effective approaches to women's economic empowerment in agriculture*. Oxford. <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/meaningful-action-effective-approaches-to-womens-economic-empowerment-in-agricu-334788>

Oxfam India has found that three policy interventions are the most effective at increasing women's ownership of land:

- Increase access to land titles for women
- De-link entitlements for farmers from land ownership, and increase women's access to schemes through affirmative action
- Support women farmers' collectives

For the full context and information please see: When Women Farm India's Land: How to Increase Ownership?, Oxfam India, available at: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/when-women-farm-indias-land-how-to-increase-ownership-304918>

6) How can the World Bank Group better support countries and companies in their efforts to strengthen their systems and institutions with respect to gender equality to yield more sustainable results?

Women's lack of representation in WBG decision making must be addressed. Countries should be supported to institutionalise the participation of women's organisations and movements, particularly those representing marginalised groups, in their policy dialogues and democratic process. The WBG itself must also use this strategy to institutionalise consultation and engagement with women's groups and movements in its operations.

The strategy makes a deliberate effort to focus on gender priorities at national and regional level; for which a results framework is drawn up and performance monitored/measured. This is commendable as local priorities will be addressed. However, the WBG's client-driven model must not absolve the WBG of responsibility and accountability to ensuring gender equality is meaningfully integrated into its operations. The strategy must not be used to support continued work in countries with weak human rights including weak policies on gender equality without obligating the Bank to take steps to challenge the status quo in borrower countries or up its own performance on gender equality.

The concept note asserts that the Bank will not have global gender targets, a situation which makes the whole process more outward-looking, rather than intending to improve the Bank's own global policies on gender. For this reason, Oxfam recommends that a) the Bank consider provision for gender targets at the highest (global) level, in which country and regional priorities (based on local analysis and priorities) can be embedded; and b) the strategy should clearly subscribe to international human rights conventions including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, CEDAW, Protocol to the African Charter on Peoples and Human Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol, 2003) as a framework within which the strategy will be implemented and achievement measured.

7) The World Bank Group uses assessments and data to understand and diagnose gender gaps. Country Gender Assessments available [here](#) and data and research on this topic available on our [gender portal](#) constitute our current set of tools. Do you have any

recommendations and/or examples of better diagnostic tools that can be used to help the understanding of constraints to gender equality?

The proposal for the development and filling of sex desegregated data; and intent to review existing and development of new framework for gender analysis and monitoring of results of key gender gaps; and development of a roll out plan is commendable. However, the emphasis seem to be more on exit phase to measure project impact than on the design/inception phase of the projects. These considerations should be taken into account at the design / inception phase , including those projects funded by IFC through Financial Intermediaries.

The strategy should also make sure the work to support countries to build their capacity to collect gender-related data is prioritized and well-resourced within the institution.

8) What are the important knowledge gaps – areas where you feel that we don't know enough and the World Bank Group should prioritize in its work to help close gender gaps?

Infrastructure is of key importance to addressing structural barriers to women's economic empowerment, however, the impact of WBG PPP infrastructure projects – as well as other types of PPPs -- on gender are not currently being monitored. Since infrastructure projects have the potential to have a transformative effect on women's unpaid care responsibilities, through increasing access to water, transport and energy, more research should be carried out in this area to establish how they can best be designed to do this. The strategy should include mandatory considerations of gender impacts for all Bank infrastructure projects as well as other types of PPPs, and consultations with women to understand their contexts and needs from the projects.

9) Any other comment or suggestion that you may have.

There is limited mention and emphasis on the work of WB and IFC with exception of structural opportunities noted in the document that bring the board members/directors from either side to participate in the development of the strategy. The gender strategy needs to show the point of interaction at operational level as well as accountability to the strategy by both WB and IFC. This could also be looked at in the context of WBG social safeguards for which some of the gender issues are profiled to ensure harmonisation e.g. need to have the guidance for strategic gender mainstreaming applied at all levels of the Bank's work.