



Inputs for WBG Gender Strategy from INGOs

31 March 2023, The World Bank Office, London

On March 31, 2023, the World Bank Group (WBG) held a closed-door discussion with International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and representatives of think tanks on the World Bank Group (WBG) Gender Strategy for 2024-2030. The aim of this discussion was for the WBG to engage with and learn from CSO representatives to better understand opportunities and challenges for gender equality and empowerment.

Key takeaways and questions posed by attendees are summarized below and will be used to inform the drafting of the WBG Gender Strategy for 2024-2030.

Participating Organizations:

- ActionAid Ireland
- ActionAid UK
- CARE International UK
- Christian Aid Ireland
- Concern Worldwide
- GAPS
- Gender and Development Network (GADN)
- GOAL Global
- International Rescue Committee
- Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence (ICGBV)
- Mísean Cara
- ODI's Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE)
- Oxfam Ireland
- Oxfam UK
- Plan International UK
- Saferworld
- Save the Children UK
- Sightsavers
- Sightsavers Ireland
- Trocaire
- Women for Women International

I. Context of the Strategy

Conceptual Framework and Process:

- It will be important for the WBG to include feminist movements in its conceptualization of collective action. In engaging with feminist movements, work with adolescents is key.
- The WBG can leverage political economy analysis to understand how gender is conceptualized in power structures across society.

Context of Crisis

- The gendered impacts of crises are stark. The WBG could integrate lessons from Covid-19 on the increase in care and domestic work, with women picking up care, as well as health and education responsibilities when there was a lack of services. This will be increasingly seen in the context of climate change.

II. Ambition and Drivers of Change

Social Norms, Leadership and Implementation Gaps

- The WBG should consider that social norms change requires a long time commitment and sustained flexible funding. especially when we see so much backlash, at all levels and in all environments (formal and informal structures).
- Social norms change cannot be done in isolation. WBG approaches can take align with political and economic reforms.
- The shift norms, the WBG can engage community leaders, but will need to better address risk mitigation. There can be unanticipated harms caused by this programming, especially when here change is pushed too fast.
- There is a risk inherent in engaging men and boys that it can take space away from women and girls; the WBG will need to understand and address that risk in these approaches.
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Intersectionality

- It will be great to see women and girls with disabilities reflected in the Strategy, along with greater clarity on how this approach will align with other approaches of the WBG on this.
- The WBG can ensure that the Strategy reflects the adolescent bulge across the population. Many adolescents are growing up in poverty and the context of multiple crisis which impacts their capabilities; it will be crucial for the WBG to consider the vital importance of investing in girls for women's outcomes.
- It will be important for the Gender Strategy to ensure its approaches to intersectionality align with other approaches throughout the WBG.

Areas of Focus

More and better jobs, economic empowerment

- The WBG can advance the decent work agenda.
- The WBG's greater support to universal approaches to social protection and services is welcome.

Fiscal Policy

- The WBG could better outline what it plans to do to address structural barriers. There is a need to better reconcile conflicting approaches within the WBG. For example, Maximizing Finance for Development approaches continue to limit the role of the state which can disable the environment conducive to gender equality and empowerment, limiting the effectiveness of the WBG's dedicated approaches to advancing equality. Similarly, approaches that promote austerity and fiscal consolidation have a direct impact on women disproportionately, which the Strategy could better address. Investments in public services and building resources to combat austerity are vital for women and girls.
- The process of consultation on the WBG Strategy could focus not just on gender specific operations but on operations across the WBG, especially those that might impede gender equality but are not part of the "gender program."

Gender-based Violence (GBV):

- The WBG can further GBV minimum standards incorporated into the work. A dramatic change is needed in integrating GBV assessments and risks across the Strategy, and is cross-cutting with links to women's economic empowerment, political participation, climate change and more.

III. Implications for WBG

Data, measurement, results

- There is an increasing evidence base on what works to change norms and mindsets in households, but there is a need for greater evidence on what works at the community level. This could be an area of further investment for the WBG.
- Innovative data will be needed, especially in looking at adolescent girls in all their diversity, including differences based on disability, marital and migration status and more.

Partnerships and principles

- More clarity is welcome on how the WBG will engage in localization.
- The WBG approach to taking greater accountability in the Strategy is welcome, as is more information on how this will be implemented.
- The WBG can work with partners, local actors and other stakeholders in its approach to norms change to drive coherence.