



#AccelerateEquality



WORLD BANK GROUP
Gender

WORLD BANK GROUP 2024-2030 GENDER STRATEGY CONSULTATION MISSION FEEDBACK SUMMARY

September 28 – 29, 2023

San Salvador, El Salvador

Government Representatives, Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations

MISSION OVERVIEW

On September 28 and 29, 2023, the World Bank Group conducted a series of consultations in El Salvador on the proposed World Bank Group Gender Strategy 2024-2030. These discussions aimed to engage, learn, get feedback, better understand opportunities and challenges for gender equality and empowerment, and identify potential areas for collaboration. Key inputs from the consultations are summarized below and will be considered in finalizing the strategy.

KEY MESSAGES AND FEEDBACK

- World Bank Group gender strategy consultations in El Salvador **endorsed the proposed strategic objectives**, highlighting the urgency to end gender-based violence (GBV), elevate human capital, expand and enable economic opportunities, and engage women as leaders.
- **The consultations welcomed the proposed drivers of change, especially collective action.** El Salvador has a vibrant civil society with a wide range of groups working across the public and private sectors to advance gender equality. These groups view their own engagement as an essential ingredient to advancing gender outcomes.
- **There is strong support from the country office to expand work on gender.**
- **Rigid gender norms and discrimination** were cited as being pervasive across economic strata, economic sectors, and age groups.
- **Economic opportunities remain limited for women.** In El Salvador, there exists persistent gender disparity in labor force participation. The gap is pronounced, with less than 50 percent of females participating in the labor force, compared to nearly 80 percent of males. Occupational segregation is present across sectors, and there are large gender gaps in access to finance.
- **Adolescent girls face a constellation of challenges.** The discussants highlighted significant statistics, including that 26 percent of women aged 20 to 24 years are first married or in union before age 18, which is linked to

increased rates of adolescent pregnancy. Additionally, there is a notable gender gap in the share of youth who neither work nor study, with 37 percent of female youth and 14 percent of male youth falling in this category.

- **Gender-based violence (GBV)** was raised as a crucial issue, with data indicating that 67 percent of women have suffered from GBV during their lives.
- **Intersectionality:** In El Salvador where poverty, human capital, and gender data underscore the enormous challenges and need for tailored policies regarding indigenous groups and adolescents, intersectionality is viewed as being essential to understanding gender issues.
- **Sex-disaggregated data:** The importance of more systematic sex-disaggregated data collection was emphasized by both the public and private sectors, as well as by civil society organizations (CSOs).

MEETING TAKEAWAYS

Takeaways from stakeholder meetings included the following:

Meetings with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

Meeting 1

Participants:

- Catholic Relief Services
 - Concertación Feminista Prudencia Ayala
 - Fundación Gloria Kriete
 - FUNDASAL
 - Universidad de El Salvador
 - Universidad Francisco Gavidia El Salvador
- The participants offered their strong endorsement of the proposed World Bank Group gender strategy.
 - Key themes of the discussion included childcare, intersectionality (highlighting more significant gender disparities faced by indigenous women, women with disabilities, and migrants), and housing issues connected to gender-based violence. There was consensus on the need for support in improving data collection for these specific concerns.

Meeting 2

Participants:

- Action for Memory and Support for Equality (AMATE)
 - Asociación Entre Amigos
 - COMCAVIS Trans
 - DIKÉ – LGBTI+
- The need for data on gender and sexual minorities was emphasized.
 - While the inclusion of issues related to sexual and gender minorities in the draft of the strategy were well-received, there was a request for clarification on how the World Bank Group would engage in non-conducive contexts and in cases of backlash (referencing para 70 in the strategy draft).
 - Attention was drawn to the importance of gender-inclusive language in the Spanish translation of the strategy.
 - A recommendation was made to include SOGI considerations in the World Bank Group Evolution Roadmap.
 - Additional discussions covered health-specific challenges faced by gender and sexual minorities.
 - Opportunities for collaboration were identified, including data collection for an upcoming census of sexual and gender minorities and addressing SOGI-related issues in the upcoming Poverty Assessment.

Meeting with Government Representatives

Participants:

- Consejo Nacional para la Inclusión de las Personas con Discapacidad (National Council for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities), El Salvador
 - Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo de la Mujer (ISDEMU) - Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women
 - Ministerio de Economía (Ministry of Economy), El Salvador
 - Ministerio de Educación, Ciencia y Tecnología (Ministry of Education), El Salvador
 - Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), El Salvador
 - Ministerio de Salud (Ministry of Health), El Salvador
 - Office of the President, Government of El Salvador
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- Discussions covered various topics, including the necessity for a national gender strategy, the importance of changing social norms and mentalities, addressing gender-based violence, and recognizing the link between gender-based violence and mental health.
 - Ongoing childcare initiatives and collaborative efforts with the World Bank Group on early childhood support were highlighted.
 - Opportunities for collaboration were identified in relation to the upcoming Financial Access Strategy, with a specific focus on targeting women, as well as promoting the extension of paternity leave.
 - There was a strong consensus on the importance of collecting sex-disaggregated data, with an emphasis on including people with disabilities.

Meeting with Development Partners

Participants:

- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
 - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
 - UN Women
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- During an informal meeting with representatives from UN agencies, the importance of addressing rigid gender norms was underscored as a critical aspect of gender issues in El Salvador.
 - There was also an emphasis on the value of collaborative partnerships across different development institutions in tackling gender-related challenges.

Meeting with Private Sector Representatives

Participants:

- ASESUISA
 - Banco Davivienda El Salvador (HSBC Bank)
 - Banco Promerica
 - Bancoagrícola
 - Citibank
 - Federación de Cajas de Crédito y Bancos de los Trabajadores (Fedecrédito)
 - Fundemas
 - Quality Grains
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- Key topics discussed included building a business case for childcare, gender discrimination, low self-esteem, teenage pregnancies, time use, and the absence of comprehensive data on gender-related issues.
 - Participants identified several challenges and opportunities for improvement, emphasizing the necessity for a well-defined national gender strategy to guide efforts in the country. It was also mentioned that many initiatives exist by different stakeholders, and the World Bank Group could play a role in coordinating them and creating a repository of good practices. For such practices that already exist, the focus should be on their effective communication.
 - Concerning women-led small and medium enterprises (WSMEs), participants emphasized the potential benefit of socio-emotional training. They underscored the need for information on procurement spent on WSMEs, support for WSMEs to formalize their businesses, and the criticality of building trust in women. For instance, while banks provide women with credit lines, it was noted that better communication systems, alternative collaterals, and documentation are necessary to facilitate lending from the formal banking system. More specific data on the financial inclusion of WSMEs was also deemed essential.
 - Participants highlighted the need for changing social norms and importance of role models for girls.
 - On childcare, participants emphasized the need for accessible and quality childcare and an understanding of the demand and supply structure (at the employer versus close to home) in light of new government regulations. The discussion also touched on masculinity and the role of men in gender equality, with participants emphasizing the importance of highlighting that childcare services benefit both men and women. Various initiatives were noted during the discussions, such as STEM education and boot camps for girls, networking, and digital training.
 - Collaboration opportunities were highlighted, particularly in data collection and public-private roundtable discussions to share best practices on gender topics.