



#AccelerateEquality



FORMAL CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED 2024-2030 WORLD BANK GROUP GENDER STRATEGY

November 21, 2023

Lilongwe, Malawi

Government Representatives, Civil Society Organizations

OVERVIEW

On November 21, 2023, the World Bank Group and CARE International Malawi held a hybrid consultation on the proposed World Bank Group Gender Strategy 2024-2030 with representatives from government and civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the gender space in Malawi. The discussion 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 consultation are summarized below and will be considered in developing the strategy.

KEY THEMES AND FEEDBACK

- **Gender as a human right:** Participants welcomed the proposed strategy's emphasis on gender equality, and called for the strategy to recognize gender equality as a human right that should be placed at the core of development efforts. They suggested that the World Bank Group explicitly address the need to promote women and girls to have the agency to make their own life choices.
- **Intersecting inequalities:** Participants appreciated that the proposed strategy recognizes the critical issue of intersecting inequalities and indicated that their explicit integration into World Bank Group projects could bring about transformational change. Participants underscored the importance of supporting diverse women and encouraging their meaningful participation to be able to directly influence decisions. They recommended exploring synergies with the UN's Generation Equality initiative. The views and needs of LGBTQI+ women were highlighted, with an emphasis on the inclusion of intersecting inequalities in discussions beyond the gender space for holistic development approaches.
- **Engaging women as leaders:** Participants highlighted the critical need to invest in and promote women's leadership, especially through institutions like the Malawi Women's Caucus of Parliament. They suggested that the proposed strategy should encompass concrete actions to advance gender equality, ensuring women's full participation in political, public, and private sectors.

- **Gender-based violence (GBV):** Participants advocated for a zero-tolerance approach to attacks against women. They encouraged the World Bank Group to foster a safe and enabling environment, allowing civil society and women leaders to engage freely in discussions regarding World Bank financing. Targeted interventions were deemed necessary to create favorable conditions for women leaders to safely assume leadership responsibilities. Addressing GBV was recommended to take place at the portfolio or country level to ensure maximum impact, moving beyond a project-by-project approach that may result in duplication of efforts.
- **Economic justice:** Participants highlighted the need for the proposed strategy to promote women's economic justice, building on successful models like CARE's Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSAs), known for providing local banking access and supporting women in varied roles.
- **Climate change and justice:** The imperative of linking women's economic justice and climate justice for sustainable development, particularly in rural areas, was underscored. Participants suggested that the proposed strategy should include women's voices in climate discussions for a more effective approach, addressing historical gaps.
- **Data:** Participants stressed the critical role of data in informing analysis, measuring change, and supporting transformation. Weaknesses in Malawi's data infrastructure were highlighted, affecting both government and civil society planning.
- **World Bank Group investments:** It was recommended that the World Bank Group prioritize investments to promote the participation of women's organizations in finding local solutions to challenges such as gender-based violence prevention, migration, and emergency response. Improving funding quality for women-led and women's rights organizations was proposed, along with considering strengthening institutions and financing from a gender perspective, ensuring transparency in processes, including monitoring and reporting. The inclusion of women's organizations in project design and implementation, fostering partnerships for collective action, was underscored.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

- CARE International Malawi
- Extra Mile Development Foundation (EMDEF)
- GGI Malawi
- Malawi Girl Guides Association
- Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, Government of Malawi
- Mphatso Zathu Foundation
- NGO Gender Coordination Network
- Young Women Rise