

Tracking Gender Impact at the International Finance Corporation

By *Liane Asta Lohde and Carmen Niethammer*

In October 2005, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of the World Bank Group, launched its corporate Development Outcome Tracking System (DOTS) in response to increased demand from stakeholders, including IFC Management and the Board, to better demonstrate the developmental impact of its operations. Through DOTS, IFC is able to more efficiently assess its developmental impact.

The process of developing a set of appropriate gender impact indicators started in November 2006 when IFC Senior Management mandated that projects better track IFC's contribution to its mission and its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals. In June 2007, IFC's Development Effectiveness unit and the Gender Program followed by commissioning a review that was to examine how IFC investment projects track and report their gender effects. The review comprised the entire active investment portfolio and showed that 3 percent of IFC projects contained a reference to gender.


Leading up to the integration of core gender indicators in DOTS, the Development Effectiveness team went through a six month process that started with a dialogue with industry departments, resulting in consultations with DOTS departmental representatives, social and environmental specialists and the gender team. As a result, IFC now has in place a systematic gender & development impact tracking process.

"Engendering DOTS by including specific gender indicators means that IFC will have a better measure of its clients' development impact on women and will improve its understanding of the role that women play in private sector development, economic growth and poverty reduction," explains Roland Michelitsch, Manager, Development Effectiveness.

The gender & development impact tracking process can not only help IFC track and report female employment created through its investments, it can also report industry-specific gender outcomes, such as the number of female and male patients treated through IFC-supported investments in the health sector.

"Since DOTS informs the strategic directions at IFC, engendering DOTS will also help put gender issues more center stage. Ultimately, what gets measured gets done - including desirable gender-specific development impacts," adds Mr. Michelitsch.

To acknowledge the importance of gender impact tracking to IFC's mission, IFC's Executive Vice President and CEO Lars Thunell presented the first IFC CEO Gender Award to the Development Effectiveness team for their gender work in March 2008. The annual IFC CEO Gender Award will be given to an IFC team that has been exceptional in advancing IFC's gender agenda.

For more information contact gem@ifc.org or deeffectiveness@ifc.org, or visit www.ifc.org/gender and <http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/devresultsinvestments.nsf/Content/Home>. 

Liane Asta Lohde is a Private Sector Development Specialist, IFC, and Carmen Niethammer is a Program Officer in the Gender Entrepreneurship Markets, IFC.

In Brief

The World Bank Group will launch an Adolescent Girls Initiative on October 10 with the participation of President Robert B. Zoellick, Nobel Laureate Michael Spence and Nike CEO Mark Parker. Other invitees include Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. This public-private partnership aims to economically empower girls and young women. Three studies on young women and employment will be released in October prior to the launch. For more information, go to www.worldbank.org/gender.

A capacity-building workshop on gender and infrastructure, co-sponsored by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, will take place in Manila, Philippines, in November 2008. Fifteen case studies will be presented. For more information, contact dlallament@worldbank.org or kmedlin@worldbank.org.

"Equality for Women: Where Do We stand" will be launched on September 24. This new World Bank and OECD publication takes stock of progress on the MDG3, identifies the most important gaps and proposes a way forward. The launch is co-hosted by the International Center for Research on Women at their Washington DC headquarters, with a panel discussion on gender and development. For more information, contact abrunais@worldbank.org.

Global Entrepreneurship Week, an initiative that encourages young people to explore their entrepreneurial potential, will take place November 17-23 with events in over 65 countries. With support from the GAP, special events will be dedicated to women's entrepreneurship. For more information, contact jferreira@unleashingideas.org.