

ENABLING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Integrating a cross-cutting issue like gender equality into the Bank's work in a wide range of development landscapes is a challenge. The Bank has an Operational Policy on *Gender and Development*, and has created institutional responsibilities and systems to implement and monitor the impact of this policy. This section describes enabling institutional changes undertaken in the past decade to facilitate gender mainstreaming in the Bank's work.

ADOPTING A GENDER MAINSTREAMING STRATEGY

Several key institutional changes have been implemented to facilitate the integration of gender issues into Bank assistance. Since Beijing, each of the Bank's six regional departments has appointed gender coordinators who assist regional operational staff to mainstream gender issues into their analytical work and lending operations. In addition, and in parallel with the Bank's decentralization, over 70 country gender focal points have been appointed in World Bank country offices.

In the past decade, the World Bank's poverty reduction approach has become increasingly participatory and country driven. The country ownership principle is embodied in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), which encapsulate a country's own development vision and puts the country in the driver's seat. This approach has had implications for the Bank's work on gender issues and is a key driving force in the Bank's current gender mainstreaming strategy.

In September 2001, the Bank adopted a strategy to integrate the promotion of gender equality into its country assistance. Two Operations Evaluation Department evaluations of the Bank's record in mainstreaming gender between 1990 and 2000 played an important role in formulating the new strategy. The World Bank's Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, *Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work: A Strategy for Action* (2001b), uses a country-led, country-specific approach in which the Bank takes responsibility to:

- Conduct periodic assessments of the gender-based barriers to economic growth and poverty reduction in each of the Bank's active client countries (via a country gender assessment);
- Use the assessment's findings in country dialogue to identify priority gender-responsive interventions; and
- Integrate gender analysis and gender-responsive interventions into lending in the priority sectors identified in the assessment and agreed to in the country dialogue.

Following the adoption of the strategy, the Bank updated and reissued its Operational Policy on *Gender and Development* (OP 4.20) to reflect the strategy's recommendations. It also issued a Bank Procedures statement (BP 4.20) defining procedures for Bank staff. Together, the OP and BP provide the policy framework for the Bank's actions in gender and development.

BOX 4.1 Evaluating the Bank's Gender and Development Activities

Two evaluations of the Bank's implementation of its gender policy during the 1990s, conducted by the Bank's Operations Evaluation Department (OED), found that Bank assistance was most effective when it was based on a sound diagnosis of the gender context, was comprehensive rather than restricted to a particular sector, was framed within a country-led agenda, and was delivered with strong country ownership at different levels, collaboratively with other partners. These findings contributed to the development of the Bank's country-led, country-specific gender mainstreaming strategy.

The evaluations also found there had been satisfactory gender mainstreaming in the health and education sectors and confirmed the existence of positive results on the ground for both men and women. Integration of gender issues into Bank assistance in the economic sectors was found to be relatively weak and *ad hoc*. Whether in the financial sector, public sector, small and medium enterprises, or the private sector, gender considerations were mostly absent or only marginally discussed in project design and implementation. The evaluations also found that the existing gender policy framework was unclear to many Bank staff; that gender mainstreaming responsibilities and procedures were inadequately established; and that there were weak systems for monitoring results and policy implementation. OED's main recommendations were that the Bank: clarify its gender policy; take into account country policies for women or gender; and strengthen local institutions to implement these policies. The Bank's current Operational Policy and Bank Procedures address these recommendations.

BOX 4.2 The Operational Policy and Bank Procedures Statement on Gender and Development

The Operational Policy on *Gender and Development* (OP 4.20) states that the Bank's "gender and development policy is to assist member countries to reduce poverty and enhance economic growth, human well-being, and development effectiveness by addressing the gender disparities that are barriers to development and by assisting countries in formulating and implementing their gender and development goals." It does so by preparing country gender assessments in all countries in which it has an active program. The results of this assessment are incorporated in country dialogue and reflected in the Bank's country assistance strategy. The Bank Procedures statement (BP 4.20) specifies both the procedures to be followed in preparing the country gender assessments and the institutional responsibilities for ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the policy.

MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

To track the strategy's implementation, Bank staff conduct annual monitoring exercises and share the results with the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors as well as with Bank management and staff.

Findings from the most recently completed monitoring exercise show progress in implementing the Bank's gender mainstreaming strategy:

- By the end of June 2004, close to 40 country gender assessments had been completed, with additional CGAs planned for subsequent years.
- Attention to gender in the Bank's country diagnostic work, especially in poverty assessments, and its country assistance strategies increased markedly over the last five years. All poverty assessments completed between July 2003 and June 2004 analyzed the gender dimensions of poverty and proposed gender-responsive actions, and more than 80 percent of all country assistance strategies approved in that same period proposed actions to address gender issues in at least one sector.
- Attention to gender issues in the Bank's assessments of PRSPs has also increased. Between July 2003 and June 2004, over half of the World Bank–International Monetary Fund (IMF) joint staff assessments of PRSPs provided concrete advice on how to improve attention to gender issues; some assessments also recommended further steps in the collection and monitoring of sex-disaggregated data.

- The Bank's MENA region identified gender as one of their five focus areas (the others are public sector reform, private sector development, education, and water). These focal areas are intended to shape all Bank activities in the region.

GENDER EQUALITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Bank collaborates on gender equality issues with other development agencies, both bilateral and multilateral, and has ongoing collaborations with civil society. These partnerships greatly strengthen the Bank's efforts to promote gender equality.

Partly in response to requests from civil society representatives at the 1995 Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, in 1996 the World Bank established an External Gender Consultative Group (EGCG) to advise the Bank on the design and implementation of its gender policies and to help strengthen dialogue on gender issues between the Bank and civil society. The EGCG includes members from national women's organizations, academia, and CSOs from around the world. The EGCG meets periodically with World Bank management and staff to provide guidance on key gender and development issues. This group's advice was instrumental during the preparations of the Bank's publication, *Engendering Development*, and the gender mainstreaming strategy. EGCG advice also assists the Bank in implementing the gender mainstreaming strategy.

To facilitate a more proactive Bank engagement on gender issues at a regional level, the Consultative Council on Gender for MENA was established in January 1999. Since then, this Council, which comprises regional civil society representatives and experts on gender issues, has helped the World Bank identify and formulate solutions to the most pertinent gender concerns in the MENA region. The Council promoted the idea of training all regional Bank staff on gender equality issues, identified and contributed to gender-focused research, and contributed to engendering other regional analytical work.

The World Bank regularly coordinates gender-related development activities and shares operational and organizational experiences with other international development agencies, including those in the United Nations system, the regional development banks, and bilateral development cooperation agencies. The World Bank is a member of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network for Women and Gender Equality, is an official observer at the Network on Gender Equality of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and is a member of the Multilateral Development Banks/IMF Working Group on Gender. These groups



seek to share experiences and harmonize policies and procedures across development agencies. The World Bank also participates in sessions of the United Nations Commission on the Status on Women.

Strong partnerships have been established with particular bilateral donor agencies to promote gender equality in developing countries. For example, the governments of Norway and the Netherlands have contributed to a Norwegian/Dutch Trust Fund for Gender Mainstreaming (GENFUND) for several years.

Partnerships with other development agencies have been especially valuable in conducting country gender assessments. Of the 38 CGAs completed to date, almost half have been completed with the financial or technical assistance of multilateral or bilateral donors. For example, the Malawi CGA received UNDP technical and financial support; the Ethiopia CGA was conducted jointly by the UN Economic Commission for Africa; the CGA for El Salvador was a joint World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank study; and the UNDP, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank jointly supported the Cambodian CGA, which was published by the Cambodian government. Bilateral donor partnerships have also supported CGA preparation, including in Uganda, Tanzania, Argentina, Ecuador, and Nepal.

BOX 4.3 The Norwegian and Dutch Trust Fund for Gender Mainstreaming

In 2001, the Norwegian Government, which has a long track record of supporting World Bank gender activities, initiated a trust fund designed to encourage gender mainstreaming in the World Bank's work, and the Trust Fund for Gender Mainstreaming was born. The trust fund was designed to support strategic and innovative work on gender equality, with a strong focus on poverty reduction and an emphasis of activities that would produce good results and could be replicated. In 2003, the government of the Netherlands, also a long-term champion of gender work within the Bank, joined Norway in financing the trust fund.

To date, the GENFUND has allocated more than \$3 million to 68 World Bank activities in a variety of sectors and countries. Some examples include: documenting rural women's knowledge in providing primary health care and nutrition in Guinea, Malawi, and Mali; improving young women's access to information and communication technologies in Uganda; and integrating gender into Bank or government policy and analytical instruments such as poverty assessments, public expenditure reviews, and PRSPs.

Many World Bank country offices also participate actively in donor or UN agency forums focused on gender and development issues. These forums partner on a range of activities, from co-funding of small-scale activities to conducting country-wide consultations on new government gender policies or action plans. Overall, partnerships help strengthen the Bank's work to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in developing countries. Strengthening these partnerships is one of the Bank's goals for the coming years, as is discussed in the next section.

