



WHO...

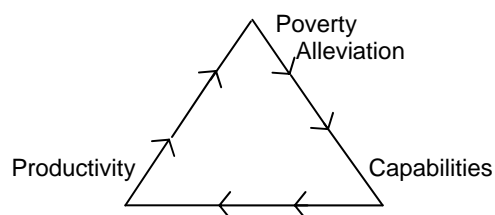
The Gender Team is part of the Poverty and Gender Group in the Latin America and Caribbean (LCR) Region's Poverty Reduction and Economic Management (PREM) Unit of the World Bank.

WHAT...

The mission of the LCR Gender Team is to contribute to the quality and effectiveness of development interventions and outcomes through the inclusion of the gender perspective in World Bank's work in Latin America and the Caribbean.

WHY...

Poverty alleviation and equal opportunity interventions are more efficient, effective and sustainable when women and men contribute equally to development. In fact, gender equality can reinforce some of the virtuous linkages illustrated below.



HOW...

The Gender Team promotes the inclusion of a gender perspective in development interventions by producing and providing gender disaggregated evidence for policy making; by developing and providing tools and expertise to identify and unlock barriers to women's economic, social, and political participation; by sharing knowledge and experience on good practices; and, by making gender visible and relevant in monitoring and evaluation processes.

The work of the Team is concentrated in five focus areas:

- Analytical Work
- Knowledge and Learning Activities
- Design and Implementation of Specific Initiatives
- Support to Gender Mainstreaming in Operations
- The Gender Action Plan

Topics where the Bank has experience and a comparative advantage include: the gender dimension of conditional cash transfer programs; conditions for men and women in the productive sector and on the labor market; joint and female land tenure; and capacity development activities aimed at improving women's access to different markets.

WORLD BANK'S FOCUS ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

A key dimension of gender equality from the point of view of economic development is women's economic empowerment. The focus on women's economic empowerment is based on the premise that expanding women's economic opportunities is smart economics.

Increased women's labor force participation and earnings are associated with reduced poverty and faster growth, partly because women tend to spend the money they earn in ways more beneficial to the entire household, for instance by prioritizing children's health and education.

Consequently, while women will benefit from their economic empowerment, so will men, children and society as a whole. Thus, the economic empowerment of women is fundamental to building more sustainable, inclusive and pro-poor growth strategies in the region.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, significant progress has been made on basic indicators of gender equality (access to education and health services and female labor force participation). However, women's economic opportunities lag behind their capabilities achieved in education and health, and new 'second generation' gender issues are emerging. The focus of second generation issues is in problem areas such as the quality of female labor market participation, boys' underachievement in education and gender-based violence.



GENDER ACTION PLAN

The objective of the World Bank's Gender Action Plan (GAP) is to advance women's economic empowerment in order to promote shared growth and gender equality. With support from the donor community, the activities under this Plan target women's effective access to four key markets: land, labor, product and financial markets.

In Latin America, the GAP has supported 20 initiatives in all countries. These targeted interventions have served to leverage existing work; to highlight important issues for policy dialogue; and, to spur innovation in operations related to employment and skills services, land titling, rural economy, gender mainstreaming and infrastructure. The GAP also has funded analytical work and technical assistance on productivity in the informal sector, impact evaluations, a regional study on second generation issues, and firm certification.

SELECTED GENDER INITIATIVES AT A GLANCE



Innovations for Rural Women's Economic Empowerment

In Nicaragua, the World Bank is implementing an initiative to identify best practices for the economic development of rural women. The program is supporting a series of integral and flexible alternative interventions on a pilot basis to improve the returns of income generating activities via gender empowerment, labor and financial training, productive cash transfers and improved access to financial services. The project also includes a strong monitoring and evaluation component to compare the impacts, costs and benefits of such interventions; allowing for a thorough understanding of the effectiveness of each program and their potential to be scaled-up and replicated.

Regional Caribbean Initiative on Boys at Risk

Recent analytical work shows that early drop-out and underperformance in school are behaviors that directly increase the risk of negative outcomes and engagement in other risky behaviors like crime and violence. Boys' underachievement in education in the Caribbean is a cross-cutting gender issue related to development challenges such as male marginalization, access to the labor market and poverty alleviation. In this context, the World Bank has launched a Regional Caribbean Initiative on Boys at Risk that includes a contest, a conference, adoption of an Action Plan and the development and distribution of materials.



Firms Certified for Social Responsibility in Gender Equity



The World Bank encourages social responsibility measures that improve labor conditions and eliminate practices that discourage women's participation in the labor force. The Firm Certification process provides firms that aim to offer equal development opportunities for women and men with the steps and tools to do so. The model for gender equity certification in the private sector was developed in Mexico (GEM 2003) and certified 105 private and 70 public institutions between 2003 & 2008. Results include improved work environment, better communication, increased productivity, increased number of women in managerial positions, and reduction in salary gaps.

Involving Women in Rural Water and Sanitation Management Processes

In Peru, the World Bank is financing the Project Rural Water and Sanitation (PRONASAR) implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure. The project initially did not include gender objectives, but workshops with community based organizations for water and sanitation maintenance allowed for a participatory evaluation on gender equity and women's involvement in water management processes. Community leaders discussed their organizations from a gender perspective; drafted action plans to increase female participation; and, shared good practices in gender equity, resulting in valuable inputs for project improvement.

