other countries, are increasing their female clientele, and companies in male-dominated sectors, such as chemicals and construction, are increasing women’s access to jobs through more concerted recruitment and family-friendly work arrangements. Multinational firms have increased profitability in South Korea by actively recruiting women for local managerial positions. While success stories are encouraging, a focus on gender equality is still all too rare. ManpowerGroup surveys report that only 2 percent of employers across 42 countries have adopted strategies to recruit more women.

Private and public sector actors can form powerful partnerships to support women’s entrepreneurship, which in turn contributes to growth and a dynamic private sector. Women’s entrepreneurialship can be fostered through a combination of increased access to capital, networks, and new markets; high-quality business skills and development training; and access to broader services that offset gender-specific constraints.

Global ambition is needed to fill knowledge gaps about both the problems of, and the solutions to, gender inequality in the world of work. This involves increasing data gaps in such areas as earnings disparities, control over assets, and gender-based violence in homes and workplaces. But it also means contributing to stronger evidence on what works for increasing gender equality in the world of work. The World Bank recently launched eGENDER IMPACT, a gateway to its gender-related impact evaluations. This provides valuable and complementary frameworks to help policy makers advance gender equality in the world of work. The WDR 2013 approach helps us to understand how and when promoting gender equality in the world of work adds significant value to development. The WDR 2012, meanwhile, offers an important framework for diagnosing and addressing gender-specific constraints. An important link between the two WDRs is the notion of agency—women’s ability to make choices they value and to act on those choices. Jobs can increase women’s agency by expanding their life choices and their capacity to better support their families and more actively participate in communities and societies. Conversely, significant constraints on agency pose major barriers to women’s work and help explain the persistence of gender gaps.

Following the WDR 2013, “jobs” are broadly defined to include various forms of wage and non-wage work, formal and informal. Informal work is the largest source of employment throughout Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, and working women are more likely than working men to be self-employed or farming. The jobs that are best for women’s economic empowerment—and development goals more broadly—depend on country-specific job challenges.

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORLD OF WORK MATTERS

Jobs can bring gains for women, their families, businesses, and communities. Jobs boost self-esteem and pull families out of poverty. Yet gender disparities persist in the world of work. Closing these gaps, while working to stimulate job creation more broadly, is a prerequisite for ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity.

Gender equality in the world of work is a win-win on many fronts. A large and growing body of evidence demonstrates both the business and the development case. Boué de Company estimates that raising female employment to male levels could have a direct impact on GDP, increasing it by 34 percent in Egypt, 12 percent in the United Arab Emirates, 10 percent in South Africa, and 9 percent in Japan, taking into account losses in economy-wide labor productivity that could occur as new workers entered the labor force. Yet almost half of women’s productive potential globally is unutilized, compared to 22 percent of men, according to the International Labour Organization. In places where women’s paid work has increased, as in Latin America and the Caribbean, gains have made significant contributions to overall poverty reduction.

Both the World Development Report 2013 on Jobs (WDR 2013) and the World Development Report 2012 on Gender Equality and Development (WDR 2012) provide valuable and complementary frameworks to help policy makers advance gender equality in the world of work. The WDR 2013 approach helps us to understand how and when promoting gender equality in the world of work adds significant value to development.

WHERE DO WE STAND?

Gender equality in the world of work is multidimensional. Broadly, key dimensions include labor force participation, employment, firm and farming
Participation is as low as 25 percent in the Middle East and North Africa, where decades has stagnated, declining from 57 to 55 percent globally.2 Economic exclusion than men.

Social norms are a key factor underlying deprivations and constraints throughout the lifecycle. Jobs affect women’s work by dictating the way they spend their time and undervaluing their potential. Household, child-rearing, and elder care are often considered primarily women’s responsibilities. Further, nearly four in 10 people globally (close to one-half in developing countries) agree that, when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to jobs than women. A gender assessment for Sri Lanka found persistent wage gaps and self-employed women running smaller businesses. These diagnostic led to strategy recommend focusing on improving access to finance and business training for women entrepreneurs. A gender assessment in Vietnam identified adverse impacts of gender differences in statutory retire-

Avaligning research and practice is that women in paid work earn on average being a member of an ethnic minority, having a disability, or being poor.

Women generally earn less than men. ILO analysis of 83 countries shows that women in paid work earn on average between 10 and 30 percent less than that of male-headed households, a disparity stemming mainly from unequal access to productive inputs. Female entrepreneurs typically operate smaller firms and in less profitable sectors. In Latin America and the Caribbean, half of established businesses owned by women have no employees, compared to 38 percent of businesses owned by men.3 Female employees are more likely to work in temporary and part-time jobs, are less likely to be promoted, and are concentrated in occupations and sectors with lower barriers to entry. Women and girls also do the vast majority of unpaid care and housework.

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Gender sorting into different jobs, industries, and firm types explains much of the pay gap. Throughout the world, women are concentrated in less-productive and run businesses in less-productive sectors, with fewer opportunities for business scale-up or career advancement. The latest Grant Thornton Interna-

Gender sorting into different jobs, industries, and firm types explains much of the pay gap. Throughout the world, women are concentrated in less-productive and run businesses in less-productive sectors, with fewer opportunities for business scale-up or career advancement. The latest Grant Thornton International Business Report indicates that the share of women in senior management roles globally is only 24 percent. Across developing countries, 18 percent of non-agricultural self-employed male workers in business-oriented services, compared to only 5 percent of females; women are more heavily concentrated in retail services, often in the informal sector.

Inequalities in endowments and assets contribute to gaps in the world of work. While there has been important progress globally, in some countries fundamental deprivations persist. In 2010–12, female-to-male enrollment ratios for primary school were less than 90 percent in 16 countries, mainly in Africa, and some 57 million primary school age children were not en-

Examples of supply-side strategies that have shown positive results include: policies to support employers in enabling wage-earners to save, such as savings schemes, or to provide simpler tax incentives to encourage savings; policies to support employers in providing training for women entrepreneurs. A gender assessment in Vietnam found that young women have more opportunities to enter the labor market than men.

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While there are no “magic formulas,” effectively tackling gen-

depth of existing evidence provides a valuable framework for understanding the challenges. It high-

One strategy to address gender equality is at work is leveling the playing field. Reforms should focus on removing restrictions to women’s work in labor and employment, removing legal and de-

Agency is the ability to make one’s own choices and act upon them.