Gender at Work
Emerging Messages

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Key messages

1. Gender equality is integral to the WBG’s twin goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity

2. Progress has been too little and too slow

3. A broader perspective on jobs and constraints is needed, including:
   - Informal and non-wage work
   - Relationships between agency and economic opportunities
   - Constraints across the lifecycle

4. Progressive policy actions are needed to:
   - Mainstream gender equality into jobs and growth strategies
   - Reform institutional and legal frameworks
   - Engage the private sector in innovative solutions
   - Improve evidence and data in key areas
Why it matters

• The Empowerment Case
  Jobs can be intrinsically and instrumentally empowering for both women and men, and good jobs can increase women's agency, helping them overcome gender-based disadvantages in their communities

• The Business Case
  Firms benefit from increasing and diversifying their talent pools and expanding the consumer market

• The Development Case
  Poverty falls and economic growth is stimulated as jobs empower women
Contributing to poverty reduction: the LAC case

Female labor force participation increased by 7% from 2000-2010

Female income accounted for 30% of the reduction in extreme poverty from 2000-2010
Gender gaps are multidimensional

Gaps in labor force participation, type of employment, and pay

Ten countries representing one-third of the world’s population
Most of the world’s working poor, but especially women, work in non-wage jobs on farms and in household enterprises.
A broad view of equality and constraints

Source: WDR2012
Social norms underlie deprivations and constraints

Agree that men should have priority over scarce jobs

Relationship between perceived jobs equality and gaps in labor force participation

Source: World Values Surveys data

91 countries
Formal constraints are pervasive

Overlapping constraints on women’s agency

- Currently working with no constraints: 14%
- Movement: 5%
- Domestic violence: 6%
- Resources: 8%
- Not working: 16%
- Currently working with no constraints and domestic violence: 3%
- Currently working with no constraints and movement: 4%
- Currently working with no constraints and resources: 3%
- Domestic violence and movement: 3%
- Domestic violence and resources: 3%
- Movement and resources: 5%
- Not working and movement: 5%
- Not working and resources: 11%
- Not working and domestic violence: 4%

Source: DHS data for 25 developing countries
Addressing constraints through the lifecycle

- **Child and youth years**
  - Biased expectations and preferences
  - Inequalities in human talent development

- **Productive age years**
  - Time constraints and segregation
  - Legal discrimination and disincentives
  - Unequal access to productive assets

- **Elderly years**
  - Unequal old-age work regulations
  - Unequal levels of independence

In the World of Work
Childhood and youth

Policy actions can tackle inequalities through education and training.

• Transform norms while they are most pliable (e.g., through community- and school-based programs)

• Tackle gender-specific constraints to schooling
  – “Girl-friendly” schools in Burkina Faso with better sanitary facilities, community and teacher gender education, and attendance incentives increased girls’ enrollment by 23%

• Address streaming and stereotypes in education and training

• Boost non-cognitive and vocational skills
  – World Bank-funded youth employment program in Liberia that included vocational and life skills training, along with job placement help, increased young women’s employment by 50% and average weekly earnings by 115%
Productive age

Strategies to help women and men move into the labor force and higher-productivity activities

• Increase women’s time for paid jobs and men’s time for caring
  – The Mexican government increased women’s employment by 5% and earnings by 20% through a large-scale childcare voucher program
  – Companies such as Belcorp and SafariCom have increased access to childcare and health services for women employees and their families

• Increase equal access to productive assets

• Remove discrimination and disincentives in laws, tax codes, and subsidies

➤ Promote multi-sectoral solutions that boost women’s agency and economic opportunities simultaneously
  – A microcredit program in South Africa boosted women’s earnings and cut domestic violence by half by including gender norms and health training, plus social support groups
  – Finlays Horticulture Kenya improved employees’ agency by strengthening policies to prevent workplace harassment and introducing women’s committees to increase voice
WINvest Report

It makes **business sense** to invest in women workers

- Improved recruitment, retention and attendance
- Greater innovation and productivity
- Improved compliance, risk management and reputation
- Enhanced community outreach
- Better access to consumer markets
Policy actions can support equitable old-age labor regulations combined with appropriate social protection

- Sex-based differences in legal retirement and pension ages remain in the books in 49 countries
- Many elderly women are outside the scope of formal social protection due to the informal nature of their work

In developing countries, the elderly demographic is becoming increasingly important
Implications for the World Bank Group

- Integrate gender into country diagnostics
  - A gender assessment in Lao PDR showed constraints to women entrepreneurs’ finance and skills and recommended policy actions.

- Advance gender equality as a priority in growth and jobs strategies
  - Budget support to Brazil included actions to integrate female-led enterprises and rural producers into local supply chains and address gender violence.

- Support governments’ and other clients’ capacity to monitor and evaluate results.

- Invest in global knowledge
  - Impact evaluation in Nicaragua showed boosting women’s aspirations through interactions with female leaders increased earnings.

- Continue WINvest/work with companies to become gender-smart employers
  - Collecting data, revising their policies, measuring results.