

WOW Helpdesk Evidence Digest / March 2021

About WOW

The Work and Opportunities for Women (WOW) programme is a flagship programme funded by UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

This five year programme aims to enhance the economic empowerment of 300,000 women working in global value chains by September 2022. It will achieve this goal by supporting businesses, organisations and programmes that are ready and willing to act on women's economic empowerment; enabling players across the supply chain ecosystem to drive change; and influencing the UK and global agenda on women's economic empowerment.

The WOW Helpdesk

The WOW Helpdesk provides rapid, flexible, tailored and specialist analysis, guidance and 'know-how' to support UK government staff in addressing WEE in policy and programming, through:

- An 'on-demand' rapid research and technical assistance service for FCDO and other UK government staff;
- Targeted guidance on cutting edge WEE issues and themes
- Regular evidence and learning updates drawing on Helpdesk assignments.

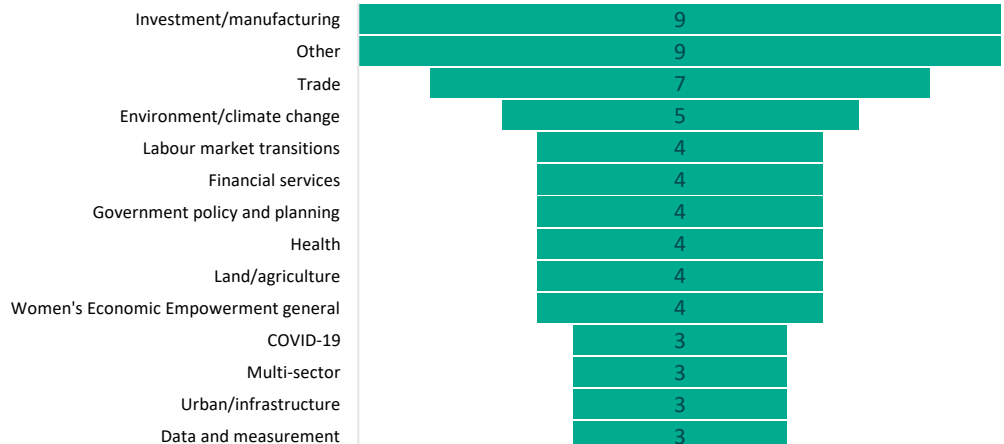
You can access published reports from our queries to date at: <http://bit.ly/2zM3Nku>

If you are interested in WOW Helpdesk support, please contact: enquiry@WOWHelpdesk.org.uk

News & Updates on Women's Economic Empowerment

- CARE (2021) Beyond Economic Empowerment: The influence of Savings Groups on Women's Public Participation in Fragile and (post) Conflict-Affected Settings, [EVC Influence-of-Savings-Groups-on-Women s-Public-Participation Jan2021.pdf](https://careinternational.org.uk/publications/beyond-economic-empowerment) (careinternational.org.uk)
- CWEEE (2021) COVID-19 and Women's Economic Empowerment: Background Guide for Policymakers- February 2021, [CWEEE-COVID-Brief-UPDATE Feb.2021.pdf](https://www.cweee.org/publications/cweee-covid-brief-update-feb-2021) ([icrw.org](https://www.cweee.org))
- Grantham, K., Dowie, G. and de Haan, A. (eds.) (2021) Women's Economic Empowerment: Insights from Africa and South Asia, [Women's Economic Empowerment: Insights from Africa and South Asia - 1s](https://www.routledge.com/9781138384441) ([routledge.com](https://www.routledge.com))
- Hogarth, J. (2020) Women can't shout loud enough...and other myths around female leadership, [Women can't shout loud enough... and other myths around female leadership | Development Blog | Blogs | CARE Insights](https://www.careinternational.org.uk/blog/women-cant-shout-loud-enough-and-other-myths-around-female-leadership) ([careinternational.org.uk](https://www.careinternational.org.uk))
- PwC (2021) Women in Work Index 2021, The Impact of COVID-19 on women in work, <https://www.pwc.co.uk/services/economics/insights/women-in-work-index.html>
- World Bank (2021) Women, Business and the Law 2021. [Women, Business and the Law 2021](https://www.worldbank.org/en/publications/women-business-and-the-law-2021) ([worldbank.org](https://www.worldbank.org))
- World Economic Forum (2021) Women's rights must be central to the global recovery. Here's why. [Why women's empowerment is essential to our global recovery | World Economic Forum](https://www.weforum.org/articles/2021/03/women-rights-must-be-central-to-the-global-recovery-heres-why/) ([weforum.org](https://www.weforum.org))

Queries by theme since WOW Helpdesk started



Highlights from recent queries

[Green growth opportunities for women and youth in urban areas](#) outlined the key “green sectors” that hold the most potential to generate economic opportunities for women and youth in urban areas. It draw upon a series of best practices, some of which are tabulated below:

<u>“Green sector”</u>	Example of best practice for promoting women and youth engagement
Urban farming and forestry	Sustainable oyster harvesting and mangrove production in Banjul, The Gambia : The TRY Oyster Women’s Association set up cooperatives for women to exchange techniques, receive training, access equipment and loans, set standards and coordinate processing, packaging, and marketing. Members reforested local mangroves and raised awareness on resource management.
Green energy and sustainable infrastructure	Solar Sister recruits, trains and mentors women and builds women-to-women networks to distribute solar devices and clean cookstoves in sub-Saharan Africa. The social enterprise has a network of over 5000 entrepreneurs that provide services to over 1.7 million.
Waste management and circular economy	Waste collection in Burundi : The Municipality of Bujumbura offered women survivors of war (e.g. widows and demobilized, displaced and repatriated women) the opportunity to become solid waste service providers through a partnership with an NGO. The City Council has plans to scale-up the initiative by including other municipal services.
Green entrepreneurship	Access to land in Argentina : the Rosario Urban Agriculture Programme created green jobs by providing land plots for women, trained on farming and sales skills, and established farmers’ markets. A total of 2000 workers, of which 62% are women, have gained between USD40 to USD150 to their monthly income.

A WOW Consultancy team is preparing a workshop for the [Manufacturing Africa](#) implementation team on women’s economic empowerment (WEE). The evidence base for overcoming barriers to WEE is strong:

- Private Equity and Venture Capital funds with gender-balanced senior investment teams generate 10-20% higher returns compared with funds that are not gender diverse.
- Workplace sexual harassment in Cambodia costs the garment sector USD89 million a year due to staff turnover, absenteeism and presenteeism. Presenteeism incurred the highest costs, with 13.5% of workers saying sexual harassment results in reduced work.

Fund Managers can direct capital to companies along five gender-smart investment strategies:

- (1) Women represented in leadership;**
- (2) Gender-diverse and equitable workforce;**
- (3) Gender-inclusive value chain;**
- (4) Products or services that consider the distinct needs of women as a consumer segment;**
- (5) Operations do no harm to women in the community.**

WOW Targeted Guidance 3 focused on climate change and the net zero economy



The WOW team are working on two complimentary papers that explore the differential effects of climate change.

- **Primer: Women’s Economic Empowerment and Climate Change** – brings together the latest thinking on how women’s economic empowerment and climate change intersect and presents a framework for prioritising actions in the lead up to COP26.
- **Briefing: Women and the net zero economy** – presents primary research with businesses across the retail, agriculture and energy sectors to identify opportunities for the transition to net-zero to deliver decent job opportunities for women

The complementary papers are being finalised and will be presented and disseminated in **April**.

GAP									
Raise ambition, enhance gender equality, and ensure a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs									
WEE			Access to decent work and control over work-related decisions			Access to and control over economic assets			
Use gender analysis to better understand context, intersectionality and power dynamics and design better climate change responses									
OPPORTUNITIES									
	Promote women's leadership in climate processes and in business	Engage women's organisations in climate processes	Change the rules and challenge social norms that create barriers to WEE and climate resilience	Ensure women get decent jobs in green sectors and the transition to net zero	Enhance education and skills for women workers in the green economy	Champion women innovators and entrepreneurs in the green economy and transition to net zero	Ensure women have access to natural and communal assets	Ensure women have access to and control over digital technology	Build women's resilience to climate shocks
↓									
COP 26									
ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS ENERGY TRANSITION CLEAN ROAD TRANSPORT FINANCE RACE TO ZERO RACE TO RESILIENCE NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANS NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS LONG-TERM LOW EMISSION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES									

The briefing considers the following megatrends that will shape the transition to net zero across three sectors. Drawing on primary research with companies and key informants to analyse the impact on the workforce and make recommendations to mitigate risks and increase opportunities for women.

	Garments	Agriculture	Energy
Megatrends	 Shift to renewable energy in manufacturing	 Agriculture Nature Based Solutions	 Rise in renewable energy
	 Manufacturing processes and automation	 Changing consumer diets	 Electrification
	 Circular economy models	 Digital agriculture	 Decentralisation
	 Preferred and recycled fibres	 Access to renewable energy solutions	
	 Nearshoring		