

WOW Helpdesk Evidence Digest

January 2019

About WOW

The Work and Opportunities for Women (WOW) programme is a flagship programme funded by UK's Department for International Development (DFID).

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 DFID and other UK government staff;
- Targeted guidance on cutting edge WEE issues and themes
- Regular evidence and learning updates drawing on Helpdesk assignments.

The WOW Helpdesk has responded to 2 mini, 4 medium and 2 large queries this quarter. Read selected reports 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

- Report: BCTA at UNDP have put out a new report on Business and WEE/Inclusive Business: <https://bit.ly/2E6yc93>
- Report: Voluntary Sustainability Standards and Gender Equality in Global Value Chains, ICTSD, Nov 2018 <https://bit.ly/2QYAw8D>
- Report: Who cares? Why older women's economic empowerment matters for the Sustainable Development Goals, Age International Nov 2018 <https://bit.ly/2A2QmFy>
- Report: Shifting Social Norms in the Economy for Women's Economic Empowerment, SEEP <https://bit.ly/2UU4xWj>
- Report: A Changing Landscape: What the 2017 Index Tells Us About Mobile Money, Women's Financial Inclusion and Savings in Vulnerable Households FINCA International Oct 2018 <https://bit.ly/2RF7rMA>
- Blog: The business case for investing in women's access and agency – Beam Exchange Aug18 - <https://bit.ly/2UllRDt>
- Blog: APEC Women and the Economy Forum 2018: the GBC4WEE Linda Scott Sep 18 <https://bit.ly/2G58NiF>
- Event: Investing in the Hardest to Reach Girls: Challenges and opportunities ICRW Mar 2019- <https://bit.ly/2KXPPsO>

Helpdesk Queries & Evidence Highlights

1. Land Programming and Women's Economic Empowerment

DFID Ethiopia requested the WOW Helpdesk to map donor interventions that support women's use of land for economic empowerment, building on programmes that aim to secure land tenure and identify what works. Key findings are below.

Complementary interventions

Land programming on its own will not necessarily deliver economic benefits to women, without complementary interventions:



Awareness & Agency

Building women's awareness of land rights is always essential to empowering outcomes, regardless of context.

1. Securing women's land tenure does not necessarily facilitate their access to finance. Programmes need to work with government and microfinance institutions to innovate around alternative forms of collateral.
2. Land programmes promoting tenure security can lead to women increasing their investment in natural resource management practices.
3. There are promising outcomes from initiatives engaging women in climate smart agriculture where targeted skills training and group formation is combined with a focus on crops with good market potential.
4. Interventions aiming to economically empower women through their use of land need to be accompanied by land rights awareness and training on dispute resolution, due to risks of dispossession associated with productive land.

1. The design and implementation of land governance programmes should be shaped by grassroots women's organisations and women's champions in order to achieve greater impact.
2. Engaging men is essential. Without it there will be limited progress on women's agency and ability to influence or make decisions.
3. One size does not fit all. Land governance and empowerment interventions should be targeted at specific groups, taking into account the context as well as intersecting drivers of vulnerability.
4. Building capacity of government land officials on women's land rights is an important enabler for scaling up impact on WEE.

2. Sexual & reproductive health (SRH) programming

A WOW Helpdesk "mini" literature review for DFID Mozambique looked at how best to use sexual and reproductive health (SRH) programming to reap a "gender dividend" and the link between the demographic dividend and women's economic empowerment.

WEE & reproductive choice - a virtuous cycle

1. Investing in reproductive health and education can delay age of first birth, allowing women to stay in education or employment, contributing to their well-being as well as economic growth.

Invest early

3. Investing early is essential in early marriage and pregnancy reduction, and multi component approaches are the most effective, however, much more evidence to understand what works where and why is needed.

2. The relationship between fertility, female labour force participation and the demographic dividend is context-specific:

- Investments in reproductive health and education will have more impact for better educated women in urban areas, than for less educated women in rural areas.
- In regions with high fertility rates, flexible working arrangements and initiatives promoting workplace childcare can contribute to women's economic empowerment.

4. Adolescent girls' economic empowerment

- Girls' lives need to be understood, i.e. intersecting factors that shape their opportunities and barriers to economic empowerment
- Age-appropriate financial services are needed
- Employment programmes need to be linked with market needs and opportunities programmes

Read the full version of this report here: <http://vit.ly/2LxpDWs>

3. Understanding tradeoffs between scalability of market interventions & gender inclusion

On behalf of the Business Innovation Facility (BIF), a five-year DFID-funded Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P) programme, the WOW Helpdesk reviewed experience from DFID-funded as well as other donors' M4P programmes to identify potential trade-offs between the scalability of market interventions and gender inclusion.

Trade-offs between scale and gender inclusion depend on the sectors and socio-cultural context – with three main scenarios identified:

Markets where the labour force is female dominated and women's contribution is both visible and recognized

In this case, trade-offs are expected to be low as women are de facto the target group and interventions will necessarily need to be tailored to their needs. However, there is a risk of male capture of women-led value chains.

Markets where women play a key role, but their contribution is less visible to other market actors or not recognised (e.g. informal/unpaid family labour)

In this scenario, tackling gender-based constraints can unlock significant value, contributing to scale, as these constraints also contribute to significant market inefficiencies which are then reduced. However, shifting such constraints requires lead time and upfront investment, particularly where gender social norms are rigid.

Markets which are traditionally 'male dominated' but where women may be able to enter into new roles

In this scenario there are greater potential trade-offs between scale and reaching targets for gender inclusion as entry barriers to women are likely to be higher but focused investments can lead to breakthroughs in gender roles.

Expected size of tradeoff

In all cases, trade-offs can be minimised by ensuring that implementation teams include technical capacity on WEE and gender inclusion from the outset.

Key Lessons:



1. Consider gender inclusion and WEE in the design stages of M4P programmes including in market identification and selection, and use robust gender analysis to guide decisions



3. Invest in understanding private sector incentives and willingness to address gender inclusion and WEE, and work collaboratively with them to pilot initiatives that build the commercial case, seeking out 'win-win' scenarios



2. Set targets for gender inclusion that are appropriately ambitious but also a) balance breadth and depth of outcomes and b) are continuously monitored, evaluated and reviewed based on context specific analysis



4. Scope opportunities to partner with existing development programmes and initiatives on gender inclusion and build synergies

Change story: How the WOW Helpdesk influenced Prosperity Fund (PF) Mexico

The PF Mexico Programme is investing £60k over 8 years (2015-2023) to reduce poverty, improve gender equality and support inclusive economic development in the areas of energy, financial services, future cities, education and business environment. The WOW Helpdesk delivered a 4-day Gender and Inclusion training workshop for PF Mexico and British Embassy staff during August 2018. The capacity building sessions focused on how to adapt Gender and Inclusion (G&I) tools to evaluate proposals, monitor performance and hold suppliers to account during and after procurement. In addition, the WOW Helpdesk supported the PF Mexico team's bid evaluation process in September through the participation of a Gender Expert and held a debriefing session with the team to discuss how G&I was mainstreamed in the process. Following the support received, the PF Mexico team:

- Is designing a Gender Strategy Action Plan, which is intended to be adopted across the entire British Embassy in Mexico and championed by the newly appointed Ambassador.
- Reports feeling confident in using and replicating the knowledge and skills acquired through the training across everything they do. Specifically, they have started requesting the incorporation of gender and inclusion awareness in the design of bids and programmes in collaboration with colleagues, partners, and private sector contractors.
- Has shared training and evaluation documentation and key learnings through the Prosperity Fund bulletin, reaching all PF staff. Some country offices have already reached out to their colleagues in Mexico to seek further guidance on gender and inclusion (e.g. PF India).
- Will share learnings from their engagement with the WOW Helpdesk in the PF American conference taking place in January in Colombia.

Elsewhere in the WOW programme:

WOW workshop on increasing the visibility of women workers in GVCs and influencing companies and related stakeholders

WOW hosted a workshop on the 4th December on "Women in Global Value Chains: Visibility and Influence." Convening over 30 participants from a number of organisations and six companies, it aimed to enhance the visibility of women workers by promoting better data and information; influence companies and related stakeholders; and provide a forum for networking and information sharing.

The workshop consisted of three main interactive sessions:

- **Why** increasing gender visibility is important which considered women's contribution to business, reporting and tracking change on women workers, and assessing strategies and initiatives to promote WEE.
- **What** core common data and information indicators are most meaningful for gender equality across companies, gender initiatives and external stakeholders including the feasibility of collecting this through social compliance and other mechanisms.
- **How** to increase data coherence, improving collection, reporting and recording on gender, and how to build collaboration across companies, stakeholders and initiatives including the 'ask' to them in order to scale up the visibility of women workers.

A working committee drawing expertise from those actively engaged in gender and GVCs has been set-up following the workshop. WOW aims to convene a follow up workshop in late 2019.

Working with retailers to advance women's rights

WOW is working with Marks & Spencer (M&S) to advance women's leadership in its supply chain. The retailer has a commitment to advance women's rights and gender equality throughout its business and global value chains.

The retailer has identified the tea and horticultural value chains in Kenya as important sectors for women. They are working with WOW to improve data on women's work and understand the barriers and opportunities for supporting women into leadership roles in a smallholder context.

WOW will carry out a research trip to Kenya in January 2019 to visit two sites that supply the retailer – one in tea and one in green beans. WOW will produce a comparative study of women in smallholder production in both value chains and will identify opportunities to enhance the role of smallholder women. WOW will then use the research findings to provide recommendations to the retailer on which value chain to work in and the interventions needed to enhance women's leadership.