

WOW Helpdesk Evidence Digest

June 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.

You can access selected reports from our past queries at:

<http://bit.ly/2zM3NKu>

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

WOW Helpdesk User Feedback

Advisers tell us that after working with the WOW Helpdesk they feel more confident to design, evaluate or scale up and extend programmes after receiving Helpdesk advice.



4.5 out of 5

New resources on Women's Economic Empowerment

- **Report:** Qualitative Evidence on Barriers to and Facilitators of Women's Participation in Higher or Growing Productivity and Male-dominated Labour Market Sectors in Low and Middle-income Countries: Systematic Review, DFID (April 2019): <https://bit.ly/2XpTiWK>
- **Report:** Enabling Women's Economic Empowerment: New Approaches to Unpaid Care Work in Developing Countries, OECD (June 2019): <https://bit.ly/2QLgLii>
- **Report:** Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment: Time Use Data and Gender Equality, OECD (February 2019): <https://bit.ly/2MxoDpx>
- **Report:** Progress of the World's Women 2019-2020: Families in a Changing World, UN Women (June 2019): <https://bit.ly/2RyyVEF>
- **Report:** Corporate Commitments to Living Wages in the Garment Industry, SPERI. (May 2019): <https://bit.ly/2YXLLYX>
- **Report:** A Feminist Approach to Cash Transfers Programming (CTP), Action Aid (May 2019): <https://bit.ly/2EMcOp4>
- **Report:** The Future of Women at Work - transitions in the age of automation, McKinsey Global Institute (June 2019): <https://mck.co/2KpCmf4>
- **Webinar:** Making the Business Case: Women's Empowerment in the Apparel Industry SEEP Network (March 2019) - Recording available online at: <https://bit.ly/2WyNc9g>
- **Event:** National Stakeholder Meeting: Saving Groups and Women's Empowerment in Tanzania (2nd July - <https://bit.ly/2JKrQj7>) and Ethiopia (5th July - <https://bit.ly/2WAI4IA>). SEEP Network
- **Quiz:** How Many Years Will it Take to Close the Gender Gap? FinDev Gateway (May 2019) <https://bit.ly/2VGXy26>

Helpdesk Queries & Evidence Highlights

1. Gender, Inclusion and Trade



Key considerations for designing gender sensitive trade-related research or programmes in middle-income countries (MICs)

1 Robust social and context-specific gender and social analysis is needed to understand gender, inclusion and trade linkages, and the potential mechanisms through which trade interventions can impact on gender inequalities.

2 Recognising women's multiple and specific roles within the economy and supply chains - women can be workers, producers, business owners, entrepreneurs or traders, consumers, taxpayers and unpaid carers - **and adapt respective tools and policies.**

3 Considering both the gender-specific and gender-intensified constraints that women experience. A 'gender-specific' constraint is faced particularly by women, whereas a 'gender intensified' constraint, affects both women and men but its impact on women is greater.

Best practices relevant to the Prosperity Fund's (PF) focus on Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs):

Standards & Technical Regulations

- Promote women's employment and build gender capacity in national regulation
- Work with standards bodies to identify NTBs likely to raise gender issues
- Address women producers' and traders' ability to comply through targeted training and mentorship

Trade Facilitation

- Consider gender and inclusion effects of new border infrastructure
- Train customs personnel on gender and human rights
- Ensure representation of women's associations on national trade facilitation and border committees

Trade Policy Analysis

- Obtain a gendered picture of the economy
- Model social and gender impacts or conduct ex-ante assessments of new trade policies
- Consult with women stakeholders, to ensure policies are holistic and inclusive

Intellectual Property

- Greater representation of women in STEM occupational fields
- Simplify administrative processes to protect traditional knowledge and ensure that IP benefits are shared between women and men
- Compulsory licensing to produce basic medicines

Read the full version of this report here: <https://bit.ly/2JLfLdy>

Working with retailers to advance women's rights in Bangladesh

- The WOW team continues the work with Marks and Spencer (M&S) to foster female leadership across both their Food and Clothing & Home supply chains, with work starting soon in Bangladesh. WOW will do this through strengthening HR performance management systems, supporting individual women and changing perceptions of women leaders. With M&S Food, the WOW team has carried out research into barriers for women leaders in smallholder value chains and is working with M&S suppliers to identify an impactful and scalable programme.
- WOW is also working in partnership with a well known personal care company to address unpaid work and care carried out by

female producers in their supply chain, beginning with women hemp product producers in southern Bangladesh. WOW conducted a scoping trip to understand the care needs of hemp product producers and their families and the existing resources available to meet these needs. This helped uncover the significant care tasks, including cooking, cleaning, repairing mud houses, and caring for children and the elderly, which are primarily performed by female producers in addition to their paid work. WOW and this company will co-design a programme to support the recognition, reduction, and redistribution of care, which will be piloted in Bangladesh with an aim to scale this up across other supply chains.

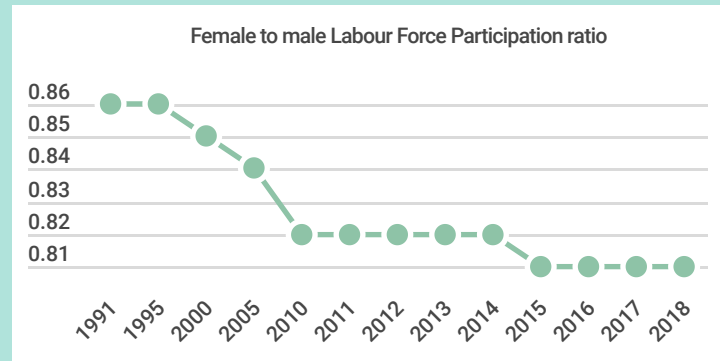
2. China Country Brief



Has China's economic growth delivered on gender equality and women's economic empowerment?

The country is often heralded as an economic success story but from 2006 to 2018 China dropped down the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index from 63 out of 114 countries to 103 out of 149, reflecting a slowdown in China's pace of progress on gender equality in recent years.

While female Labour Force Participation rates in China remain high, the ratio of female to male participation has declined since 2005



World Bank: <https://bit.ly/2XOVKGU>

The WOW Helpdesk's [China Country Brief on Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment](#) for the Prosperity Fund, analysed the factors that are limiting progress towards gender equality and what measures can be implemented in order to overcome this trend:



The country's **rapidly ageing population** is increasing pressure to raise the birth rate. The term "leftover women" has emerged in popular consciousness stigmatising unmarried and childless women over 27.



The **female to male share of unpaid care work** has been estimated at between 2.36 and 2.67. This **unequal burden** is particularly pronounced in the country's rural areas.



The **Chinese Communist Party (CCP) relaxed its one-child policy** in 2013 yet there is some evidence that this has resulted in discrimination, with employers fearing that women will take more maternity leave.



China has **strong social norms** that children will care for elderly relatives. Single children face the **4-2-1 phenomenon**: a woman may have to care for two parents and four grandparents in retirement, at the same time as possibly caring for children.



Improved workplace maternity/paternity provision, affordable child care, tackling gender based discrimination in the workplace and gender norms on caring roles are potential entry points to address these challenges.

Read the full version of this report here: <https://bit.ly/2VZy8wP>



The WOW Helpdesk has completed **21** queries during its first year. You can access selected reports from our queries in the last 18 months at: <https://bit.ly/2ZxhQ0c>



Get in touch with the WOW Helpdesk team today to find out more about our offer and how our pool of more than 70 experts can provide tailored support to your needs at any point of your policy and programme cycle.