



AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION TRUST FUND

ARTF Gender Working Group Meeting

October 25, 2017

Meeting Minutes

An ARTF Gender Working Group (GWG) Meeting was held on October 25, 2017¹. The meeting was chaired by Wezi Msisha (Senior Operations Officer, World Bank); Ms. Nafisa Khohistani (Head of International Relations Department Ministry of Women's Affairs); and Ms. Sheela Samimy (Ministry of Finance) also participated in the meeting.

Discussion Highlights

The meeting opened with introductions of the GWG members, overview of the GWG terms of reference, and the proposed meeting agenda. The Bank explained that the gender focus and approach for the Afghanistan program including for ARTF financed projects is guided by the World Bank Group Gender Strategy for 2016-2021, and the Country Gender Action Brief (CGAB). The GWG requested that the next GWG discuss the gender dimensions of the next ARTF Financing Strategy, and for the Bank to share the Afghanistan CGAB and World Bank Group Gender Strategy with the GWG.

1) Review of Gender in the Afghanistan Portfolio:

Ms. Hiska Reyes (Sr. Social Development Specialist) presented the main findings of a recent Bank internal review of gender in the Afghanistan country program portfolio. Key findings include:

- Attention to gender has improved with the introduction of the new gender tag and this is not just about numbers – it marks a shift in gender mainstreaming where teams consider gender issues as part of project preparation activities and are more focused on addressing gender gaps. While 78 percent (31 out of 40) of operations approved in FY10-16 had some attention to gender, only 38 percent (15 out of 40) were rated as gender-informed². The portfolio performs much better in FY17 – and can continue to do well in FY18 – with 75 percent (6 out of 8) of operations meeting the gender tag criteria.
- There is great improvement across the Bank's global practices (GPs): As expected, operations in the Human Development (HD) and Sustainable Development (SD) Practice Groups are consistently performing well on gender. In FY10-16, 86 percent (6 out of 7) of Human Development operations were gender-informed. Attention to gender has improved

¹ Attendees: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Ministry of Finance, Norway, USAID, World Bank.

² Gender-informed means all 3 dimensions (gender analysis, gender-specific intervention and indicators) are considered.



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in the Sustainable Development Global Practice; 83 percent (5 out of 6) of operations approved in FY17 were rated as being gender-tagged compared to only 32 percent (7 out of 22) rated as gender-informed in FY10-16. The review estimates that 63 percent (5 out of 8) of Sustainable Development operations under preparation in FY18 are meeting the gender tag requirements.

The positive attention to gender in HD and SD is largely in three Global Practices – Education; Health, Nutrition and Population (HNP); and Social, Urban, Rural and Resilience (SURR). Operations in the Economic Growth, Finance and Institutions (EGFI) Practice Group are lagging the other Practice Groups as less than thirty percent of operations in this Practice Group were gender-informed in FY10-16 or gender-tagged in FY17 onwards

- There was a marked difference between attention to gender and funding source in FY10-16 and FY 17, with a higher percentage of ARTF-funded operations having some attention to gender or being rated as gender-informed/gender-tagged.

Discussion:

- The Bank gender specialists explained that they are working with teams to explore how pipeline programs can be gender-tagged and incorporate behavior change and voice and agency aspects in their projects, and to ensure projects include smart indicators. They further clarified that the CGAB identifies health, education, and women's economic empowerment as priority areas and greater emphasis placed on these areas in a programmatic approach in which other operation and GPs will also contribute, and that the Bank's gender specialists are providing deep-dive support to these areas. The Bank team also explained how the gender tagging process works in practice in the country program, and the support that the gender specialists provide to various technical teams to ensure identified gender gaps are closed.
- The GWG asked whether the gender aspects of infrastructure projects for instance are considered. Bank clarified that while the CGAB identifies main areas where the largest impacts can be made in terms of closing gender gaps, all other operations and projects are screened and reviewed at the design stage to apply gender-tagging to the extent possible. The team gave examples of how jobs have been created for women in the ongoing rural roads and Trans Hindukush Programs for instance.
- How will issues of gender based violence (GBV) be addressed in health and education programs? There are currently efforts to identify ways to include aspects of health response to GBV in the new health program that is currently under design. Initial discussions held with leadership of the Ministry of Public Health, Bank and development partners earlier last week on this issue. The Bank team is also working with government counterparts to ensure the government anti-harassment policies/laws are implemented.



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- More discussion of the gender approach and aspects in the ARTF/Bank program in the ARTF Financing Strategy. Bank to work on an updated brief on gender to share with the partners. Partners need to show that programs financed under the ARTF have clear gender tags are gender informed.
- Behavior Change: It was agreed that a presentation to ARTF GWG or Strategy Group to give them a flavor or behavior change approaches would be arranged by the Bank's gender team

2) Presentation on Lessons Learned from Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan.

Ms. Najla Sabri (Social Development Specialist) presented the main findings of this study. The objectives included identification operational approaches to support the Women's Economic Empowerment National Priority Program (WEE NPP), and key constraints and challenges in WEE programming over the past decade; and outlining key lessons learnt on WEE program implementation. General observations from the study included: lack of common understanding of WEE which constrained the identification of WEE activities and programs; lack of consolidated data on WEE, and gender disaggregated data. Key lessons from the study include: (i) the need for the concept of WEE to be clearly defined and for programs to have better linkages with interventions that bridge gender gaps in endowment and agency; (ii) WEE effectiveness depends on accurate gender statistics; (iii) literacy and numeracy deficits hinder WEE; (iv) WEE starts in the social sphere; (v) WEE can be both profitable and culturally compatible; (vi) traditional credit is not enough to achieve WEE; and (vii) development partners must develop an exit strategy from WEE programs. The Study recommends a roadmap that takes a comprehensive multi-sectoral approach to achieve long lasting impact.

Discussion: The Bank team explained the status of the WEE NPP support, and the ongoing activities that the Ministry of Labour team responsible for the WEE NPP were currently working on. It was clarified that the study aimed to distill and streamline the operational knowledge on Women's economic empowerment to support the implantation of the WEE-NPP. The importance of the role of men in WEE activities were also discussed and highlighted in the meeting.

- 3) **GWG Meeting Schedule:** (i) it was agreed that starting in November, 2017 the GWG meeting would be held on the fourth Tuesday of every month from 2-4 pm at the World Bank Office; (ii) the proposed topics for each meeting would be updated to include suggestions made during the meeting, and GWG will send other topic suggestions by email; (iii) members will send nominations for the next donor co-chair for the GWG by email and agreement will be reached at the next meeting in November planned for Tuesday November 28, 2017.