

Partnering for Gender Equality

World Bank Annual Gender Trust Funds Report

July 2012 – June 2013



WORLD BANK
gender and development

Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network



Photo: Sofie Tesson / Taimani Films / World Bank

The Gender Trust Funds Program comprises all trust funds managed by the Gender and Development Department in the World Bank's Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network. This report provides an update on progress and achievements of activities financed by these trust funds for the period July 2012 – June 2013. The report does not cover gender-specific and multipurpose trust funds managed by other World Bank Group departments and units.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFR	Africa	M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
AGI	Adolescent Girls Initiative	MDTF	Multidonor trust fund
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy	MIF	Multilateral Investment Fund (Inter-American Development Bank)
CSO	Civil society organization	MNA	Middle East and North Africa
EAP	East Asia and Pacific	NGO	Nongovernmental organization
ECA	Europe and Central Asia	PREM	Poverty Reduction and Economic Management (Network)
EPAG	Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (Liberia)	PRMGE	Gender and Development Group
EVENT	Enhanced Vocational Education and Training	RGAP	Regional Gender Action Plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization (of the United Nations)	SAR	South Asia Region
GAD	Gender and Development	SDTF	Single donor trust fund
GAP	Gender Action Plan	SME	Small and medium enterprises
GBV	Gender-based violence	TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
GENFUND	Trust Fund for Gender Mainstreaming	UFGE	Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality
GENTF	Gender Trust Funds	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
LCR	Latin America and the Caribbean	WBG	World Bank Group
ICT	Information and communication technology	WDR	World Development Report
IDA	International Development Association	WLSME	Women's Leadership in Small and Medium Enterprises
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group		
IFC	International Finance Corporation		

THE ROLE OF TRUST FUNDS IN ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY AT THE WORLD BANK



Photo: Charlotte Kesi / World Bank

The World Bank Group (WBG) promotes gender equality in developing countries through analysis, policy dialogue, knowledge, lending, and grants. Over the past several years, the WBG has ramped up its efforts to mainstream gender throughout its work. This has been reflected in high-level management support of the gender equality agenda, inclusion of gender equality as a corporate area of focus, and achievement of gender mainstreaming targets as part of the Corporate Scorecard and International Development Association (IDA) Results Measurement System. Ongoing efforts seek to deepen the treatment of gender equality in Bank operations and on implementation and results. This work will be monitored with new gender commitments and enhancements that are expected to accompany the IDA17 replenishment.

The World Bank's Gender Trust Fund (GENTF) Program has been crucial in cultivating these efforts and continues to provide critical supplemental resources to support strategic and innovative work on gender equality. The trust funds managed under this program have emerged in response to various global and institutional needs and opportunities.

The GENTF Program has been a pathbreaker for the Bank's trust fund reform. Since 2012, the number of trust funds managed under this program has been reduced from six to three. The program is now moving toward convergence in terms of its administration, reporting, and measurement of results with the recent establishment of the Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality (UFGE).

The resources managed under the GENTF Program enable staff to make critical investments in gender-relevant data and new evidence, including the piloting of innovative approaches, and engagement in frontier areas where current knowledge is scarce. Ultimately, these activities help the Bank respond with effective advice and development solutions at the country level. Through broad dissemination of data, research, and lessons learned, these activities also expand to the global knowledge base on gender equality.

As of June 2013, the GENTF Program totaled \$63.1 million¹ and comprised four main funds (table 1).

¹ All dollars in this report refer to U.S. dollars.

Table 1. Gender Trust Funds Program

Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality	\$39,393,344	Multi donor
Multi Donor Trust Fund for the Adolescent Girls Initiative	\$16,990,477	Multi donor
Multi Donor Trust Fund for Gender and Poverty—Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (closed on June 30, 2013)	\$3,250,000	Multi donor
Women’s Leadership in Small and Medium Enterprises	\$3,500,000	Single donor
Total	\$63,133,791	

Bank commitments on gender

Gender equality is an area of corporate focus for the World Bank. Progress is systematically monitored through a multi-tiered results framework reflected in IDA16 and the Corporate Score Card.

Since fiscal year 2011, the Bank has made large strides in integrating gender into strategies and operations. The *Update on the Implementation of the Gender Equality Agenda at the World Bank Group*, delivered to the Board of Directors in 2013, shows that in fiscal year 2013, all Country Assistance Strategies (CASs) were gender informed and around three-quarters included gender in the analysis, program content, and in the results framework. An increasing number of lending operations are integrating gender into their design, actions and monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and increasingly large amounts are going to gender-informed operations. In fiscal year 2013, 98 percent of lending (or \$30 billion) was gender informed. This trend holds true across all groups of clients, IDA, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and Fragile and Conflict-Affected States.

This progress has been supported by enhanced efforts to provide country teams with the support they need to advance gender equality on the ground. A range of new Bank-wide initiatives are underway to help ensure staff are equipped to incorporate gender into their work through training and learning events, technical

guidance, network support, and an improved Web site. Regional Gender Action Plans (RGAPs) set out regional priorities and include commitments to increase both the number and quality of country-level gender diagnostics and to ensure their integration into CAS products and operations. RGAPs provide tailored models of support to teams, including gender clinics, just-in-time technical support, and resources.

The challenge ahead is to translate these advances into sustained results on the ground, which will require increased investments in knowledge and data as well as sharpening the focus on gender equality during implementation and when reporting results.

Why trust fund resources are important

Trust funds are important catalysts for innovation and for expanding the frontiers of the gender equality agenda. These resources are complementary levers for maximizing the Bank’s work, in part by fostering cross-institutional collaboration and knowledge sharing and through leveraging innovative partnerships. Over the past couple of years, there has been a gradual shift away from the reliance on trust funds for mainstreaming gender into Bank projects toward investing in areas that have large externalities as well as a substantial public good element.

In the past, gender trust funds have incentivized Bank staff to innovate, expand into unfamiliar terrain, and gain important experience through “learning by

doing.” The Trust Fund for Gender Mainstreaming (GENFUND) in the World Bank and the Gender Action Plan (GAP) Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) used incentive funding to gain traction in sectors where gender mainstreaming had traditionally been weaker, like transport and mining, by encouraging staff who had never worked on gender to integrate gender into their projects. These trust funds not only helped build capacity for gender mainstreaming among Bank staff, but also contributed to the global knowledge base through investments in impact evaluations, research, and data that are publically available.

The GAP MDTF, for example, placed an important emphasis on increasing the availability and use of gender-relevant data and statistics. Broadly, activities focused on three key areas: (1) increasing the availability and use of gender indicators; (2) identifying and filling data gaps, developing new indicators, and gender-informing WBG and other surveys; and (3) building international and national capacity to obtain and use sex-disaggregated data. These activities produced 43 original data sets and multiple tools for gender analysis, including [ADePT Gender](#), gender-relevant indicators in the Enterprise Surveys, an expanded [Gender Data Portal](#), key gender employment indicators, and the [Little Data Book on Gender](#), among others.

Gender equality remains a complex and long-term challenge that requires continued investments to expand women and girl’s endowments and opportunities along with measures to tackle deep-seated structural inequalities and adverse norms and discrimination. There is still much we don’t know, particularly in frontier areas, as well as “what works.”

The current GENTF Program is helping us better understand which interventions work by supporting impact evaluations through Women’s Leadership in Small and Medium Enterprises (WSLME single donor trust fund [SDTF]) and smoothing the transition of adolescent girls and young women into productive employment (Adolescent Girls Initiative [AGI] MDTF). Many exciting areas are also being explored in the regions with funding from the UFGE. In Africa, the Gender Innovation Lab is conducting rigorous impact

evaluations to build the evidence base on how to close the gender gap in earnings, productivity, assets, property rights, and agency. The lab is currently working on over 20 impact evaluations across Sub-Saharan Africa.

The World Bank is also breaking new ground in areas such as women’s voice, agency, and participation; gender-based violence; equality in work; and discrimination under the law. The GENTF Program is providing the space with complementary funds to allow the Bank to push these frontiers. For example, new work will look at access to justice for poor women in Serbia, the implications that long-term care needs have on female labor force participation in China, and using women’s agency as a tool to overcome violent circumstances in Colombia.

Toward greater harmonization and strategic focus

With the recent establishment of the UFGE, the GENTF Program is seeking convergence in terms of its administration, reporting, and results measurement. The UFGE is firmly anchored in the World Bank Group’s gender mainstreaming strategy and will become the designated vehicle for channeling trust fund resources toward gender equality as the other trust funds in the GENTF Program are phased out.

Over the last two years, the number of trust funds managed under the GENTF Program was reduced from six to three. In fiscal year 2013, two trust funds were closed: the GENFUND and the MDTF for Gender and Poverty—Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls. The GAP MDTF closed at the end of fiscal year 2012.

The harmonization of gender-related trust fund resources under the UFGE will help reduce fragmentation created by having funds dispersed across several different funding instruments with differing reporting methods. Harmonization will help ensure that trust-funded activities are aligned with the Bank’s strategy and regional needs and priorities. Knowledge management efforts will be strengthened at the aggregate level so that lessons learned and policy messages can be shared across regions and with our partners. Finally, consolidating resources under the UFGE helps keep the focus on gender equality by

leveraging resources and strengthening efforts to make real progress toward closing persistent gender gaps.

Looking ahead

Going forward, the Bank will develop a renewed gender strategy in the context of the World Bank Group's strategic goals. This will be an opportunity to further advance the gender equality agenda and to recalibrate corporate targets to ensure that gender equality remains at the core of the World Bank Group's strategy. Work financed under the GENTF Program will complement this renewed strategy and help take the gender equality agenda to the next level.

This report provides an overview of the work funded by the GENTF Program between July 2012 and June 2013. The following section highlights some early results across the program. The remainder of the report is divided by each of the program's active trust funds, highlighting activities and providing financial details.

THE GENFUND: PAVING EARLY PATHWAYS FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The Trust Fund for Gender Mainstreaming in the World Bank (GENFUND) was established in 2001 to encourage innovative Bank-led work in gender and development, enhance gender mainstreaming capacity in client countries, and foster close links with development partners. The GENFUND was initiated by the Norwegian government, which has long-standing and strong commitment to gender. Additional generous support was provided by the Dutch government during 2003–2006.

The GENFUND's flexible approach was influential in shaping the World Bank's gender equality agenda. Above all, it was a tool for encouraging out-of-the-box thinking. Over the years, the GENFUND supported innovative gender activities that otherwise would not have taken place. The 2010 Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) report, *Gender and Development: An Evaluation of World Bank Support 2002–2008*, suggested that the higher levels of gender mainstreaming in 2002–2003 could be attributed to the catalytic nature of the GENFUND.

The GENFUND was marked by three phases, throughout which a particular but not exclusive focus on Africa was maintained. Initially (2001–2005), GENFUND support focused on demand-driven mainstreaming of existing Bank work. Then, with the adoption of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) in 2006, the GENFUND entered its second phase by bolstering the GAP agenda during its start-up phase. When the GAP was fully established, the GENFUND transitioned into its third and final phase, taking on a complementary role by seeking to advance areas beyond women's economic empowerment, areas not addressed by the GAP, such as education, health, law and governance, gender-based violence, and women in postconflict situations.

From its initial push for gender equality in the “hard” sectors, the GENFUND continued its “no business as usual” approach by exploring new gender topics such as the construction of masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa and its implications for HIV/AIDS, conflict, and violence. In Papua New Guinea, for example, the GENFUND supported the involvement of women in negotiations with local governments and mining companies to mitigate negative effects of mining and improve community welfare. Regional guidelines to integrate gender into extractive industries were developed and a \$1 million component for Women in Mining was included in an \$18 million mining technical assistance loan. In Uganda, the GENFUND supported local scholarships that allowed women and girls to use their schools' Internet facilities during and after school, and over 150 women received training.

The work of the GENFUND was captured in the [*2011 World Development Report on Conflict, Security, and Development*](#) and the [*2012 World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development*](#). The former drew on a GENFUND research program on gender-differentiated impacts of violent conflict, with country studies from Burundi, Colombia, Nepal, Rwanda, Tajikistan, and Timor Leste exploring areas of education, labor, and health. Much of this was presented at a workshop in Washington, DC, and an international conference held in Oslo in 2010. A 2012 paper, “[*Violent Conflict and Gender Inequality*](#),” was published in the *World Bank Research Observer* and provided an overview of this work. The paper emphasized the need to look beyond the more researched areas of sexual and gender-based violence and cover intergenerational poverty, employment, and political participation.



TOWARD GENDER EQUALITY RESULTS

Photo: Arne Hoel / World Bank

Reporting on results

Activities financed under the GENTF Program contribute to results in the following three areas:

- ∂ **better gender-informed policy making at the country level,**
- ∂ **improved design of operations and programs, and**
- ∂ **heightened awareness and increased demand for gender equality interventions.**

With the exception of the Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI), most activities under the current GENTF Program were initiated in the last fiscal year. It is therefore early to report results. The following section highlights how some of the ongoing and planned activities are expected to contribute to results.

Better gender-informed policy making at the country level

The GENTF Program aims to strengthen policy making by increasing the availability and use of gender-relevant data and evidence. It supports efforts to improve gender-informed policy making at the country level by investing in areas where inequality gaps persist and in new areas where evidence is weak. The following activities were recently launched and are expected to increase the availability of gender-relevant data and evidence at the country and regional level:

- Partnering with the Listening to Africa project to collect gender-disaggregated panel data on standard household information as well as focused data sets on key aspects of gender differences.
- A new Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Poverty and Gender module, which provides access to standardized gender-relevant data extracted from the household surveys used for regional poverty monitoring.

- In the Latin America and Caribbean Region, Building Women’s Agency as a Tool to Overcoming Violent Circumstances will provide empirical and operational evidence on the extent to which socio-emotional coaching, job training, and small firm start-up support can increase agency and improve development outcomes of women living in violent situations.

These data and evidence can provide an important basis to help inform policy decisions. Below are some examples of how recent work has contributed to evidence-based policy dialogue through addressing issues such as excess female mortality and gender gaps in economic opportunities.

Promising policy options to improve reproductive health

Despite some progress in lowering maternal mortality rates, pregnancy and the consequences of childbirth remain the leading causes of death and disability among women of reproductive age in developing countries today. A paper entitled “Closing the Deadly Gap between What We Know and What We Do” was prepared for and presented at the Women Deliver Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia—the largest global event of the decade to focus on the health and empowerment of girls and women. The paper argues that “investments in reproductive health are a major missed opportunity for development.” We know in many instances what works, but fail in translating this into practice. The paper is a useful tool for policy dialogue in that it reviews evidence and presents promising policy options that can be used to initiate more virtuous cycles in reproductive health outcomes.

Fostering dialogue on “girl-friendly” employment programs

The Haiti Adolescent Girls Initiative pilot is working with vulnerable young women, who are largely under-represented in formal labor markets, to facilitate a school-to-work transition and improve their employment and earnings potential. In addition to achieving a high completion rate (95 percent) for the first cohort of 500 girls, preliminary feedback from the project’s M&E system and qualitative evaluation has

shown high levels of motivation and satisfaction among the beneficiaries. The pilot has enabled new dialogue and partnerships among ministries that could form the basis of a larger engagement on technical training and entrepreneurship in Haiti, which are priorities of the government and key components to boost innovation, competitiveness, and growth in the country.

Improved design of operations and programs

While the GENTF Program does *not directly fund gender-mainstreaming* in Bank projects, the knowledge and evidence produced through its activities will lead to better-designed operations with a sharper focus on gender-informed implementation and results. Activities are underway that aim to strengthen and expand successful approaches and translate new evidence into results on the ground—examples are highlighted below.

Expanding approaches help young women transition to productive employment

In Nepal, the AGI implementation team is providing technical support to share “girl-friendly” implementation lessons with government implementers. Support is also being provided to develop M&E tools and mechanisms to assess project progress for thenationwide Enhanced Vocational Education and Training (EVENT) Project.² This will provide the government of Nepal with information on the accessibility of such programs for young women and on the immediate training and longer-term labor market outcomes.

Adapting evidence on entrepreneurship training to reach more women

A recent evaluation of a new entrepreneurship track in Tunisian universities—giving students the opportunity to graduate with a business plan rather than a traditional thesis—shows that the combination of business training and personalized coaching has been

²EVENT is a \$50 million IDA project that will benefit approximately 75,000 Nepali youth and includes incentive schemes to specifically target poor women between the ages of 16–35 and disadvantaged youth.

effective in increasing the rate of self-employment among graduates. Yet, this has proven to be relatively more effective for men than women. Identified constraints include lack of access to credit and limited experience as well as opportunities. The Women's Leadership in Small and Medium Enterprises (WLSME) Single Donor Trust Fund (SDTF) is supporting additional entrepreneurship and business development services, such as incubation and access to credit, to improve the effectiveness of the entrepreneurship track for women.

Heightened awareness and demand for gender equality interventions

The GENTF Program supports efforts to heighten awareness and increase demand for gender equality interventions through activities that promote dialogue and collaboration across the development community and lead to increased awareness and capacity among client counterparts, national civil society organizations (CSOs), research institutions, and the private sector. These efforts are directed at sharing knowledge and developing the capacity of both development practitioners and policymakers. Recent activities are highlighted in the following sections.

Researchers and practitioners discuss how to grow women-run businesses

Women entrepreneurs make a significant contribution to economic growth and poverty reduction around the world, but results on supporting women entrepreneurs have been mixed. A conference in Washington, DC, on April 23, 2013, brought together researchers and practitioners from the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to take stock of what we know and to discuss innovative interventions to grow women-run businesses. Participants also engaged in an interesting discussion on programs and interventions that failed, and the reasons behind their failure. The conference also saw the formal launch of a new [Female Entrepreneurship Resource Point](#). This

online resource provides practical guidance and recommendations and serves as a clearinghouse for emerging evidence on women entrepreneurs.

Balkan leaders join forces on gender-inclusive land reforms

On June 16, 2013, 30 land tenure, social, and gender specialists from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia participated in a week-long leadership workshop held in Montenegro. The objective was to help local land reform teams confront the challenge of how to make their projects and reforms equally beneficial to men and women. The workshop integrated technical content from a gender perspective with leadership skills-building sessions on addressing adaptive challenges, joint problem solving, coalition building, and the use of a results-based approach. The goal was for participants to become catalysts for change by creating and sustaining coalitions and moving gender-informed land programs forward. A one-year program will track progress toward goals developed at the end of the workshop.

A platform for regional dialogue

Adim Adim Anadolu (Anatolia step by step) was recently established by the Turkish Ministry of Family and Social Planning, the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TUSIAD), and the World Bank to provide a platform for dialogue and to raise awareness of ways to increase women's access to economic opportunities across Turkey. These dialogues aim to increase information and awareness for women in Turkey on the economic opportunities available to them, as well as public programs available at the local level to support them. Events have been held in five regions around the country and are preceded by discussions with local institutions to ensure ownership and that the event is tailored to the specific needs and interests of the region. The dialogues include discussions among stakeholders, including central and local governments, businesses, female entrepreneurs, women's groups, and academia.

UMBRELLA FACILITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY



Photo: Arne Hoel / World Bank

The Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality (UFGE) is a multidonor facility designed to strengthen awareness, knowledge, and capacity for gender-informed policy making. This new partnership model provides a single vehicle through which trust fund resources for gender equality will be channeled and constitutes a move toward increased consolidation of fundraising, management, and reporting for gender-related trust funds.

Progress and achievements in 2013

The UFGE supports the strategic directions of the Bank's gender mainstreaming strategy and Regional Gender Action Plans (RGAPs) by investing in priority areas critical to closing the gaps between what we know and what we do. It represents a concerted effort to expand our understanding of frontier issues such as women's voice and agency. The UFGE also builds on the important groundwork laid in past years on women's economic empowerment by translating evidence and lessons into results on the ground—applying knowledge gained from pilots and impact evaluations and bringing them to scale. This work is broadly categorized under three pillars:

- **Increasing availability of gender-relevant data and evidence** by serving as a catalyst for innovation and investment in frontier issues and in areas with persistent gaps;

- **Road-testing evidence** at the country level to strengthen and expand successful approaches and generate operationally relevant lessons on how to effectively translate new evidence into results on the ground; and
- **Leveraging partnerships to help advance gender equality** through new ways of engaging development partners, research institutions, statistics bureaus, and CSOs in client countries.

These activities require significant investment, yet have large externalities as well as a substantial public good element. By firmly anchoring allocations in a public goods rationale, the UFGE seeks to maximize returns on financing for gender equality. The UFGE also has an explicit knowledge plan that aims to foster cross-regional and cross-sectoral dialogue and knowledge exchange within the Bank and the development community more broadly. In this way, the UFGE complements the Bank's work along

identified priorities laid out in the 2012 WDR and RGAPs, but does not directly fund gender mainstreaming.

Setting up the UFGE

The UFGE was established for an initial five-year period (2012-2017). Much of the facility's first year involved establishing structures and processes for administering the facility. After a Bank-wide concept review and broad endorsement, the UFGE became one of the Bank's first pilot umbrella facilities and its design is regarded by many as a best practice. Building on lessons from past gender MDTFs and other successful funds in the Bank, the UFGE has a decentralized structure and is driven mainly by regional priorities. To date, the UFGE has received nearly \$40 million in pledges from 11 bilateral donors.

Given its public good foundation, the UFGE has adopted a strategic approach to generating, managing, and sharing knowledge. This approach is also central to the UFGE's value proposition of maximizing returns on gender trust fund sources by taking full advantage of the World Bank's comparative advantage as a global, cross-sectoral institution. Each Region has identified knowledge management activities as a part of its block grants, and much of the knowledge capture and dissemination will take place at this level. A central knowledge management plan has been developed to systematically capture and translate knowledge into policy-relevant public goods at a global level and foster knowledge uptake by supporting accessibility, knowledge sharing, and dissemination to development practitioners, partners, and clients.

As part of this work, the UFGE is supporting the launch of enGENDER IMPACT in the fall of 2013. It is an online resource point summarizing gender-relevant impact evaluations supported by the World Bank Group. It aims to facilitate greater uptake of lessons from the evidence. Starting with the 161 evaluations identified so far, the database will be continuously expanding and will include the many impact evaluations being funded by the UFGE. The resource point is organized around target outcomes areas such as education and skills, women's work and earnings, and gender-based

violence. It distills basic information in a standardized format, linking users to available papers. Short issue briefs summarizing key lessons across multiple evaluations will complement the resource point and help translate findings into user-friendly policy tools for practitioners and decision makers.

Funding regional priorities

Multiyear "block" grants are managed by each Region and provide predictable funding in support of priorities identified in RGAPs. This decentralized approach has received strong support from regional staff and management and aligns closely with the Bank's overall trust fund reform agenda. These block grants help push the frontiers of regional work on gender equality where evidence and data on what works is lacking and unlock new ways of engaging with partners, including at the regional and national levels.

In fiscal year 2013, the Gender and Development (GAD) Board—the UFGE's main decision body—approved regional allocations of \$17.5 million. This, in the form of \$2.5 million three-year block grants to each Region, with double the amount (\$5 million) to the Africa Region. These allocations were based on regional concept notes outlining priorities and expected activities over the full period, all of which showed a strong alignment with their RGAPs. Regional Poverty Reduction and Economic Management (PREM) directors appointed their Regions' focal points tasked with managing the allocations. Each Region received their initial allocation of \$600,000 in January 2013 (see table 2 for allocation projections).

Table 2. Anticipated allocations to each Region
(conditional on funding)

Fiscal year	EAP, ECA, LCR, MNA, SAR	AFR
2013	\$600,000	\$600,000
2014	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000
2015	\$900,000	\$2,000,000
2016		\$400,000
Total, each Region	\$2,500,000	\$5,000,000
Total allocation to Regions: \$17.5 million		

BREAKING NEW GROUND: WOMEN'S VOICE AND AGENCY

Do infrastructure investments increase women's ability to make their own choices? Do women left behind to farm when men migrate take on increased decision making and autonomy within their families? And how do we measure agency in the first place? These and other related questions are being explored across a range of interventions and surveys funded by the UFGE. In Latin America and the Caribbean, a survey of transport project stakeholders seeks to better understand whether and how infrastructure investments have paved paths for women to enter male-dominated sectors for employment and allow women to exercise more choice through increased mobility. In Central America, a study looks at "agricultural feminization" among smallholders due to male out-migration and how this affects women's role on the farm and within the household. Who makes decisions in this context and what role do remittances play? In Bolivia, despite high female labor force participation, improved access to education and high-level political participation, illiteracy is still highest among women, adolescent fertility above the regional average, and violence against women among the highest in the region. A perception survey on exclusion and discrimination will provide a basis for policy dialogue on the significance of norms, education, and targeted interventions in combating exclusion and discrimination, particularly among indigenous and native women. The study is also exploring innovative ways of measuring agency.

THE UFGE TAKES ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The South Asia Region, with the support of the UFGE, is putting in place a Gender-Based Violence Knowledge Hub designed to raise awareness, share knowledge, and forge partnerships with civil society, donors, government, and other stakeholders on this important issue. An interactive online platform will offer critical research in the region and information on good practices, complemented by South-South exchange programs, workshops, and communication efforts. The Knowledge Hub is part of a more strategic effort to take on gender-based violence (GBV) in the region, following the successful 2013 GBV "hackathon" in Nepal, which the Bank cohosted with Oxfam International. Along with the Knowledge Hub, the region seeks to explore the use of emerging information and communication technology and pilot and evaluate innovative interventions. The region will also develop standardized GBV modules for use in impact evaluations.

The UFGE aims for a broad sectoral reach, and to this end, Regions have put in place various mechanisms to ensure involvement from each sector. In the case of the Latin America and Caribbean Region (LCR), for instance, an intersectoral rotating subcommittee has been set up to guide and monitor implementation. In the Europe and Central Asia Region (ECA), allocations are approved by a cross-sectoral committee to ensure knowledge creation across a broad range of areas, and a portion of the funds have been distributed evenly across each sector.

Africa Region

The Region is investing in four key priority areas: excess female mortality, earnings and productivity gaps, differences in voice, and the perpetuation of

gender inequality across generations. The addition of UFGE funds allows the Region to strengthen the provision of knowledge in these important areas. A portion of the funds support the Gender Innovation Lab, which carries out rigorous impact evaluations to measure the differential impacts of interventions on men and women as well as identify effective, practical, and replicable solutions that address the underlying factors of gender inequality (see Taking on The Underlying Causes of Gender Inequality in Africa box). Funds will also support a partnership with the Listening to Africa (LTA) project, which collects high frequency welfare statistics using mobile phones to design surveys that elicit the gender dimensions of economic work in Africa. LTA is expected to yield large amounts of gender-disaggregated data across 10 countries,

including Malawi and Madagascar. Additionally, the Region will produce cross-country reports on trends and differences of gender impacts across core areas of growth and productivity in Africa. The first study will focus on women who “cross-over” into traditionally male-dominated sectors, both in the agricultural and entrepreneurial areas. Regional conferences aiming to enhance dialogue will accompany these reports, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing with and among African scholars as well as government and civil society stakeholders.

East Asia and the Pacific Region

UFGE funds are enabling staff in the Region to go beyond gender mainstreaming targets by investing in the knowledge and capacity needed to respond to its clients with effective advice and innovative solutions in priority areas. These areas were identified in the [Region’s companion report to the 2012 WDR, *Gender Equality and Development*](#)³: promoting gender equality in endowments and human development; closing gender gaps in economic opportunity; strengthening women’s voice and influence; fostering new opportunities; and managing emerging risks. Through an open call for proposals, an initial \$720,000 was allocated to nine activities aiming to strengthen gender-relevant data, improve gendered impacts of interventions, fill knowledge gaps, and use available evidence to scale up operations (table 5). This includes a pilot with the All China Women’s Federation to learn what challenges women face during the land registration process, and work in in the Mekong subregion to generate important lessons on ensuring women benefit (and avoid associated risk) from recent investments in increased trade and integration.

³[Toward Gender Equality in East Asia and the Pacific \(2012\)](#)

Europe and Central Asia Region

UFGE funds are filling an important financing gap, allowing the Region to invest more in activities that are multi-country, innovative, and push the frontiers of our knowledge. Much of the work centers on persistent gaps in education, employment and wages, along with critical but underinvested sectors (for example, energy and justice) and issues such as “missing girls” in the South Caucasus (see the It’s Not Just China box) and high adult male adult mortality. The latter includes efforts to better understand the gendered aspects of road safety in several countries. The Region is also producing a tool for generating gender-relevant data from its existing household and labor force surveys. Impact evaluations will be employed to understand labor market discrimination against Roma women and the role of behavioral skills. A cross-sectoral pilot aims to improve employability of Roma adolescents, and analytical work on excess male mortality and female care burdens will inform a regional report on aging (see table 5 for a full list of activities). Additionally, the Region has so far allocated \$200,000 to each of the four networks, Finance and Private Sector Development (FPD), Human Development, PREM, and Social Development) to ensure broad-based knowledge creation and innovation.

Latin America and Caribbean Region

According to the RGAP, women’s “agency” is the area where the Region is lagging the most. With little evidence in this area, the Region is using UFGE funds to invest in activities that will provide concrete recommendations on how to use agency-promoting interventions to improve development outcomes (see

REBUILDING LIVELIHOODS FOR AT-RISK BOYS AND MEN

One of the priority areas identified in the 2013–14 Thailand Country Gender Assessment is at-risk men and male youth in conflict-afflicted areas. Their high rates of unemployment place them at risk of being recruited by gangs and insurgency groups. Current government efforts are driven by security interests and sometimes fail to understand the particular profile of these men and male youth. Consequently, these efforts fall short in identifying the best solutions for rebuilding their livelihoods and their communities. The UFGE is funding a study to help identify policy solutions. These findings are expected to have broad application and will be shared with other countries facing similar challenges, such as Timor-Leste, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Myanmar.

Breaking New Ground box). To ensure that the evidence and knowledge resulting from this work remain relevant to the Bank's clients, these activities have all been linked to ongoing country engagements. Activities have been identified through an open call for proposals that provided an opportunity for all sectors to engage. These activities include an effort to reduce vulnerability to disasters by female-headed households and women-run businesses through climate adaptation in Saint Lucia—with important lessons for other Eastern Caribbean countries—as well as leveraging urban mass transport in Brazil to increase access to important resources and services for women (for example, training and education and domestic violence resources). UFGE investments over the coming years are expected to help bridge the gap between analytical work and its operationalization. A second call for proposals will be held in 2014.

Middle East and North Africa Region

In this period of regional change and uncertainty, there are challenges as well as opportunities for gender equality. Four key priority areas have been identified in the RGAP, namely: (1) bridging remaining human development gaps, (2) removing constraints to women's economic participation, (3) giving women greater voice and legal agency, and (4) strengthening access to data and promoting evidence-based policy making. The UFGE will play a critical role in this effort by contributing to thematic cross-country reports that will provide a basis for policy dialogue in these strategic priority areas. With the lowest female labor force participation rates in the world, the Region will invest in innovative, rigorous impact evaluations to

help answer “what works” in areas such as employment and entrepreneurship. This includes key areas such as legal reforms, access to justice, and voice and agency. Nontraditional sectors such as infrastructure and urban development are a top priority.

South Asia Region

Persistent and pronounced gender gaps in South Asia fall under areas such as political participation, decision making within the household (such as education, health, and nutrition), and labor force participation. UFGE funds provide critical support to the Region's ongoing work by promoting innovation to help expand the evidence base to inform policy making and provide blueprints for replication. Funded activities also help bring a more comprehensive range of stakeholders into collaborative efforts to advance the gender equality agenda. Investments will go toward tackling gender-based violence and gender inequality in labor markets, as well as providing rigorous evidence on what works in areas such as infrastructure. A South Asia Gender Innovation Lab will identify interventions that address the underlying causes of female and male disadvantages given a country's context. It will test gender-specific interventions in World Bank programs, or as stand-alone activities, in the areas of access to infrastructure services, voice and agency, and gender-based violence. The region will also explore opportunities emerging from the global virtual economy and the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). A number of pilots in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan will employ innovative ways to generate youth employment in emerging niches, particularly for women. The program will also explore ways technology can address

IT'S NOT JUST CHINA and INDIA: ECA'S MISSING GIRLS

ECA can boast low infant and maternal mortality rates, but low female births in some ECA countries is often overlooked. “Missing” girls is one of the emerging topics in *Opportunities for Men and Women in Emerging Europe and Central Asia*, the region's companion to the 2012 World Development Report. Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia suffer from the highest sex imbalance at birth in the world after China. For every 100 live girls born, 116 boys are born (in China it is 118). This suggests strong son preference and discrimination against girls. In light of limited research, the region has initiated a study to determine the severity of the issue and to understand why these outcomes may be occurring and what policy options are available to governments to address them.

challenges such as reducing gender-based violence and improving service delivery (for example, health services for women; see The UFGE Takes on Gender-Based Violence box). These efforts build on the successful 2013 Violence against Women “hackathon” in Nepal, where gender experts and technologists explored innovative solutions.

Strategic allocations

In addition to multi-year regional allocations, UFGE funds are also being provided for larger, single initiatives that are identified as a strategic priority by the Gender and Development Board. In fiscal year 2013, a total of \$25 million was allocated to five such initiatives.

The Africa Gender Innovation Lab

Over \$16 million of these funds have been allocated to the Africa Gender Innovation Lab, which tests innovative, scalable interventions to address gender inequality in the productive economic sectors. Partnering across the Bank, as well as with donors, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and private companies, the aim is to generate effective policies that target the underlying causes (rather than the symptoms) of gender inequality in Africa. Emphasis is placed on the underlying causes of gender inequality that persist even in the presence of economic growth. A key aspect of the approach is developing the capacity of local statistical agencies, local implementing partners, and researchers. The lab currently has over 20 ongoing impact evaluations of projects, largely related to agriculture, financial literacy, cross-border trade, business management, property rights, and the empowerment of adolescent girls. In June 2013, the lab received an overwhelming response to a call for expressions of interest, with over 170 proposals submitted. A total of 12–14 projects will be funded. Those already selected include efforts to change norms regarding childcare and women’s participation in the workforce through fathers’ clubs and encouraging spousal dialogue on gender relations through Village Savings and Loan Associations (see Taking on the Underlying Causes box).

Policy reform for improving women’s economic prospects

Turkey: The World Bank estimates that increasing the share of women in Turkey who work fulltime by just 6 percentage points could increase income by 7 percent and reduce poverty by 15 percent.⁴As the government of Turkey continues its efforts to boost female employment and entrepreneurship, the Bank is providing technical support to strengthen the evidence base for policy design. Expecting to inform future lending, the Bank is conducting a series of studies on barriers that impact women’s participation. Background studies on paid childcare and flexible work arrangements are being finalized, and various studies on female entrepreneurship are underway. Turkish research institutions are conducting this research, and regional dialogues and partnership platforms with the private sector will foster knowledge sharing. In June 2013, officials from the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Family and Social Policies participated in study visits to Chile and Mexico that focused on the expansion of child services and integrated systems for social assistance delivery to poor and vulnerable households. To inform and raise awareness of women’s economic opportunities, dialogue events were held in five regions. A Policy Advisory Committee, comprising government officials, experts from civil society and representatives from the private sector, will advise the government based upon the evidence produced through the program.

Western Balkans: A multi-country program in the Western Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Serbia) aims to promote gender equality by strengthening the knowledge base and evidence on gender disparities in these countries. Particular focus will be on market-, institution-, and household-level constraints that limit women’s access to economic opportunities. The work includes diagnostic studies on regional and country-specific gender issues to strengthen the policy-making process and innovations that push the knowledge frontier through new data collection as well as piloting and

evaluating gender-related interventions. A qualitative study on economic mobility, labor markets, and gender in Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently underway and in-country consultations have been carried out with a variety of stakeholders to inform the activities under this program. The team will leverage social media as a crowd-sourcing tool to generate ideas and feedback around key gender challenges in the four countries.

successful entrepreneurs or find wage employment. The UFGE is now supporting the Ministry of Gender and Development in adapting and expanding the EPAG pilot. Round three of the EPAG project incorporates design innovations based on research, experience, and lessons learned from the pilot. The four key design innovations are: (1) for the business development skills component, incorporating start-up capital for microenterprises through a “savings match scheme”;

TAKING ON THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF GENDER INEQUALITY IN AFRICA

We know productivity on farms in Sub-Saharan Africa can increase if women use inputs at the same rate as men, but we still do not know how best to provide women with consistent access to these inputs. We know that rigid gender norms constrain women’s ability to make decisions and control their own assets and earnings. We also know that increased control over resources and decisions within the household can enhance their ability to make decisions over other aspects of their lives, such as sexual and reproductive health, but we don’t know the best ways to change potentially harmful gender norms.

With hard data and rigorous evidence, the Africa Gender Innovation Lab is linking results to smart project design by equipping policy makers and development experts with the most important of tools: knowledge. It does this by selecting interventions with potential for uncovering what works and what doesn't and rigorously evaluates these. With support from the UFGE the lab is expanding its portfolio of evaluations and adding crucial ‘know-how’ to the global knowledge pool on reducing gender inequality. For instance, in Kenya where women account for as little as five percent of registered landholders, the lab is testing ways to better strengthen women’s property rights. It looks in particular at individual, household, and community norms regarding property rights, and includes an effort to promote the writing of wills. The lab also explores the decision making processes of men and women around the adoption of new agricultural technologies, which ultimately drive the gender differentials in agricultural productivity in Africa today. In Guinea, an innovative intervention looks at the role of access to capital and financial services in the promotion of micro, small and medium enterprises. This includes support in opening a bank account for savings and in-kind grants for building assets. As we know that attitudes and norms perpetuate many of these persistent gender gaps, several of the evaluations carried out with the support of the Gender Innovation Lab explore gender norms, including in Burundi and South Africa.

An adaptive approach to economic opportunities for young women

Liberia: The Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG) is the most successful youth project in Liberia. Piloted under the AGI, the project has helped young women aged 16–25 become

(2) for the job skills component, partnering directly with private sector companies at the outset and delivering specifically tailored skills-training packages to ensure higher employment rates for job skills trainees; (3) condensing the training timetable to maximize impact and cost-effectiveness; and (4) designing trainee profiles specific to business or job skills training and recruiting participants accordingly. The project will also strengthen the institutional

⁴ [World Bank \(2010\), Turkey: Expanding Opportunities for the Next Generation](#)

capacity of the Adolescent Girls Unit at the Ministry of Gender and Development and develop a version of the EPAG project for adolescent boys and young men.

Haiti: This activity draws on lessons and early results from ongoing AGI pilots to test interventions to socially and economically empower 1,000 Haitian women between the ages of 17–20. The pilot aims to improve the evidence base on what works to increase the employability of young girls and facilitate their entry into labor markets. The impact evaluation will review whether the intervention increased the skills of young girls, their employment outcomes, and/or their empowerment and agency. In June 2013, 421 young women from the first cohort graduated from the training program. In addition to a high completion rate (95 percent), preliminary feedback from the project’s M&E system and qualitative evaluation has shown high levels of motivation and satisfaction among the beneficiaries. The impact evaluation’s midline survey will take place in August/September 2013. The pilot has also enabled new dialogue and partnerships among ministries that could form the basis of a larger engagement on technical training and entrepreneurship in Haiti, which are government priorities and key components to boost innovation, competitiveness, and growth in the country.

UFGE financials

The UFGE has been made possible through generous contributions from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom that total \$40.5 million in pledges (table 3). Contributions include \$1.5 million in residual funds from the GAP MDTF, which

were rolled into the UFGE. As of June 30, 2013, the UFGE had approved allocations of \$25 million to strategic initiatives and an additional \$17.5 million to regional block grants (table 4). A smaller portion of funds (9 percent) has been retained by the Bank’s Gender and Development Group (PRMGE) as the UFGE secretariat for leveraging global partnerships, aggregate knowledge management activities, and administration of the UFGE. Plans are to allocate the bulk of the funds in the first two and a half years to provide predictability and sufficient time for implementation of activities.

To meet these allocation plans, \$5.7 million in additional pledges is needed by June 2014. These funds will enable the Regions to invest in areas where gender gaps persist and where knowledge and evidence on interventions that work is scarce. In the first six months of implementation, demand for UFGE funds from the Regions exceeded current allocations. For example, in LCR, a call for proposals was met with an overwhelming response—20 proposals totaling \$5 million were received—out of which only 10 activities for \$1.1 million could be funded. Similarly in EAP, 18 proposals were received totaling \$1.6 million.

The gender equality agenda is large and the challenges often complex. Meeting these challenges requires working in partnership and sharing expertise and knowledge. The UFGE provides an important vehicle for working in partnership and pooling resources for investments that have large externalities and the potential to make a real difference on the ground in the countries where we work.

Contributions

Table 3. UFGE contributions			
<i>Donors</i>	<i>In US\$</i>		
	Pledges	Receipts	To be received^a
Australia	1,055,423	513,975	541,448
Canada	152,633	152,633	-
Denmark	1,061,571	1,061,571	-
Finland	145,568	145,568	-
Germany	6,458,029	6,458,029	-
Iceland	246,407	246,407	-
Norway	3,082,669	1,437,608	1,645,062
Spain	551,151	551,151	-
Sweden	6,612,815	2,597,258	4,015,557
Switzerland	3,257,169	3,257,169	-
United Kingdom	17,826,681	642,168	17,184,513
Total	40,450,116	17,063,537	23,386,579

^a. Amounts for pledges not yet received will vary over time due to currency exchange rates.

Allocations

Table 4. UFGE allocation plan (US\$)

Allocations	Total	FY13	FY14	FY15
Regional block grants				
Africa	5,000,000	600,000	2,000,000	2,400,000
East Asia and Pacific	2,500,000	600,000	1,000,000	900,000
Europe and Central Asia	2,500,000	600,000	1,000,000	900,000
Latin America and Caribbean	2,500,000	600,000	1,000,000	900,000
Middle East and North Africa	2,500,000	600,000	1,000,000	900,000
South Asia	2,500,000	600,000	1,000,000	900,000
<i>Regional block grant total</i>	<i>17,500,000</i>	<i>3,600,000</i>	<i>7,000,000</i>	<i>6,900,000</i>
Strategic allocations				
Haiti	600,000	600,000	-	-
Bosnia Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo, and Serbia	2,085,850	2,085,850		
Liberia	1,990,080	995,040	995,040	-
Turkey	4,283,975	1,427,992	1,427,992	1,427,992
Africa Gender Innovation Lab	16,418,280	4,000,000	7,418,280	5,000,000
<i>Strategic allocation total</i>	<i>25,378,185</i>	<i>9,108,882</i>	<i>9,841,312</i>	<i>6,427,992</i>
Knowledge management, partnership, and coordination	2,500,000	500,000	800,000	1,200,000
Total allocation	45,378,185	13,208,882	17,641,312	14,527,992
Total pledges to date	40,450,116			
2% deducted for administrative fee and investment income	(778,300)			
Net available for distribution	39,671,816			
Funds to be raised to meet projected allocation	5,706,369			5,706,369

Grants

#	Activity	Region	Funding granted (\$)
1	Africa Regional Studies	AFR	950,000
2	Piloting Women’s Participatory Rural Land Registration in China	EAP	80,000
3	Gender Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework for Lombok Regional Economic Development Project (Indonesia)	EAP	50,000
4	Pacific Gender Indicators in Fisheries (Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Republic of Marshall Islands)	EAP	75,000
5	Meeting Needs for Long-Term Care and Implications for Female Labor Supply in China	EAP	140,000
6	Generating Evidence on Supply-Side Capacity to Inform the National Free Maternal and Child Health Policy (Lao PDR)	EAP	60,000
7	Situation Assessment for Men and Youth in Conflict-Affected Areas in Southern Thailand	EAP	70,000
8	GenderDimensions of Urbanization (China and Vietnam)	EAP	100,000
9	Informal Trade Facilitation in the Mekong Subregion (Lao PDR and Cambodia)	EAP	80,000
10	“Hem No Leit Tumas”: Evidence for Improved Outcomes in Solomon Islands Women’s Literacy Programs	EAP	65,000
11	Regional Fund for In-Country Capacity Building and M&E	EAP	450,000
12	Land and Leadership	ECA	120,000
13	ECAGEN Database	ECA	140,000
14	Gender-Informed Road Safety	ECA	220,000
15	Missing Girls in the South Caucasus	ECA	140,000

Table 5. UFGE grants

#	Activity	Region	Funding granted (\$)
16	Gender Modules in Household Surveys	ECA	200,000
17	Show Me Your Soft Skills: Gender-Age Hidden Biases in Employers' Assessment of Behavioral Skills (impact evaluation)	ECA	80,000
18	Addressing Ethnic and Gender Discrimination of Roma Women in the Labor Market in Romania (impact evaluation)	ECA	50,000
19	Adolescent Girls Initiative for Roma Girls and Economic and Social Integration of Roma Adolescent Boys	ECA	85,000
20	Gender Inequalities in Health Outcomes and Dependent Care Arrangements in the Context of the Regional Aging Report	ECA	85,000
21	Access to Justice for Poor women	ECA	50,000
22	Gender Sensitivity in Energy Projects	ECA	200,000
23	Land and Gender—Improving Data Availability and Use in the Western Balkans	ECA	45,000
24	Access to Finance for Women Entrepreneurs in Russia	ECA	90,000
25	Incorporating Gender in the Moldova Competitiveness Enhancement Project II	ECA	40,000
26	Jobs: The Engine of Shared Prosperity for Men and Women	ECA	100,000
27	Text Me Maybe! On Peer-to-Peer Sexual Education and Mobile Texting to Reduce the Risk of Teenage Pregnancy (Ecuador)	LCR	65,000
28	Expanding Women's Agency through Productive Inclusion in Rural Areas at Northeast Brazil	LCR	110,000
29	Building Women's Agency as a Tool to Overcoming Violent Circumstances (Colombia)	LCR	128,500
30	Urban Mass Transport: Gender Agency and Inclusion (Brazil)	LCR	150,000
31	Piloting the Delivery of Agency in Haiti	LCR	130,000

Table 5. UFGE grants

#	Activity	Region	Funding granted (\$)
32	Migration and the Changing Role of Women in Agriculture: The Case from Latin America and the Caribbean (Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Mexico)	LCR	114,000
33	Understanding Agency by Measuring Women's Perception on Exclusion and Discrimination (Bolivia)	LCR	120,000
34	Advancing Gender Agency in LAC: Experiences from the Transport Sector	LCR	150,000
35	Developing a Model for Gender-Sensitive Post-Disaster Response and Gender-Inclusive Climate Adaptation Finance (Saint Lucia, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, and Small Island Developing States)	LCR	90,000
36	Expanding Labor Market Opportunities of Women in El Salvador	LCR	60,000
37	LCR Knowledge Management of Regional Funds	LCR	600,000
38	Youth, Gender, and ICT Program	SAR	200,000
39	Gender Innovation Lab South Asia	SAR	200,000
40	Addressing Gender-Based Violence in South Asia	SAR	600,000
Strategic allocations			
41	Africa Gender Innovation Lab	AFR	16,418,280
42	Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (Liberia, Round 3)	AFR	1,906,325
43	Increasing Access to Economic Opportunities for Women in Turkey	ECA	4,275,000
44	Haiti Adolescent Girls Initiative	LCR	600,000
45	Promoting Gender Equality in the Western Balkans	ECA	2,085,850

Note: AFR = Africa Region; EAP = East Asia and Pacific Region; ECA = Europe and Central Asia Region; LCR = Latin America and Caribbean Region; SAR = South Asia Region.



ADOLESCENT GIRLS INITIATIVE

Photo: Stephan Bachenheimer / World Bank

Launched on October 10, 2008, as part of the World Bank Group's Gender Action Plan (GAP), the Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI) aims to help adolescent girls and young women transition to productive employment. The initiative is being piloted in eight low-income countries—including some of the toughest environments for girls. Each pilot is tailored to country context, with a common goal of discovering what works best in programming to help adolescent girls and young women succeed in the labor market. Most pilots include a rigorous impact evaluation. With new knowledge of what works, successful approaches can be replicated and brought to scale.

Progress and achievements in 2013

Pilot highlights

During fiscal year 2013, [AGI pilots](#) were underway in Afghanistan, Haiti, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Nepal, Rwanda, and South Sudan.⁵ Updates on each pilot are included at the end of this section. The pilots in Rwanda, Haiti, and Afghanistan are in the early stages of implementation and made significant progress over the last year.

The Rwanda Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women Project is being implemented by the Ministry of Gender and Promotion of Family, the Workforce Development Authority, and the Imbutu Foundation. Training is being delivered in three cohorts and will reach 2,000 girls in four districts. The first

⁵ The pilot in Jordan was implemented between December 2010 and August 2011.

cohort began training in May 2013 and includes 650 girls. Girls are being trained in vocations including food processing, arts and crafts, culinary arts, and agriculture. In addition, they are receiving training in life skills and business development as well as social support services.

In June 2013, 421 girls graduated from the first cohort of training in Haiti. The program in Haiti includes training in vocational areas that are considered untraditional for women and where there is proven employer demand such as, mechanics, refrigeration, electricity, construction, computer science, information technology (IT) services, and hoteling. Girls also receive life skills training and placement in internships following training to help them transition to the labor market.

The Afghanistan Female Youth Employment Initiative has mobilized applications from 2,822 female youth, which exceeded the target by 20 percent. All applications have been endorsed by families and schools and 50 percent of the applications were from youth under age 20. Applications were sourced through School Management Shuras, which facilitated acceptance and approval by parents and communities. Plans are underway for the training to begin in the fall of 2013.

The pilot phase for Lao PDR, Liberia, Nepal, and South Sudan ended during fiscal year 2013. The next section highlights post pilot plans and opportunities.

Going to scale

The AGI's approach to scaling up is to use the lessons, experience, and evidence gained from pilot interventions to reach more adolescent girls and young women through more effective project design and M&E. The strategy includes: (1) integrating pilots or applying the approach used in larger World Bank lending operations in AGI countries and (2) translating knowledge and evidence gained into project design and policy advice so that larger-scale operations more effectively reach adolescent girls in non-AGI countries.

The Liberia and Nepal AGI pilots were allocated additional funds specifically for these purposes under the AGI's Scale and Innovation Fund. These funds are being used to position the pilots for scale up and to build capacity based on implementation lessons and results from the impact evaluation.

In Liberia, two additional rounds of training are being planned. Rounds 3 and 4 are building on the results from the impact evaluation to better position the program for expansion. Design changes are being introduced to reduce program costs and expand the program's reach to younger women (ages 15–24) and those in rural and peri-urban areas. Support is also being provided to build capacity in the Ministry of Gender and Development to address the needs of adolescent girls through the establishment of an Adolescent Girls Unit. Lessons from the AGI are being



Photo: Sarah E. Haddock / World Bank

FROM THE FIELD: NEPAL ADOLESCENT GIRLS EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE

Sabita Sapkota lives in the Narayani Zone of southern Nepal. She graduated from a three-month mobile phone repair training in 2012. As part of the Nepal AGI program, Sabita also received five-day training in life skills and five days of business skills training. She found out about the training from a radio announcement and was eager to apply.

Before enrolling in the program, Sabita stayed home all day and spent her time doing household chores. Less than two months after completing the training, she used her own savings from her rotating savings club and some money from her husband to open her own mobile phone repair shop. She says that many customers come to the shop out of curiosity to see a woman fixing phones. Sabita has hired another young woman and is training her to be a shop assistant. In the future, she hopes to expand her shop and continue moving forward.

shared as the government of Liberia considers a broader youth development strategy.

In Nepal, the AGI is providing support to develop M&E tools and mechanisms to assess project progress for nationwide Enhanced Vocational Education and Training (EVENT) project (see From the Field box). This will provide the Nepal government with information on young women's access to such programs and on the immediate training outcomes and longer-term labor market outcomes. The AGI team is also providing technical support to share "girl-friendly" implementation lessons with government implementers. EVENT is a \$50 million IDA project that will reach approximately 75,000 Nepali youth beneficiaries and includes incentive schemes to specifically target poor women between the ages of 16–35 and disadvantaged youth.

Efforts are also being made to build on the experience of the South Sudan AGI. A \$21 million IDA financing of the Social Safety Net and Skills Development Program for South Sudan was approved in June 2013. The skills development component will expand on the AGI pilot to develop a parallel gender-sensitive training package for young men, as well as expand the reach of the current program for adolescent girls. The implementing partner of the AGI pilot, BRAC plans to maintain the current clubs in the communities where they were established.

In Lao PDR, AusAID has provided funding for a phase II of the Supporting Talent, Entrepreneurial Potential, and Success (STEPS) project. Priority in this next phase will be on: (1) launching another round of the Marketplace Competition to build on experience of what works in women's entrepreneurship and exploring integration of the model within larger World Bank, Young Entrepreneurs Association of Lao PDR, and/or government of Lao PDR programs; and (2) working with National University of Lao and Pakpasak Technical College to sustain the Career Counseling Offices for the 2013–14 school year and beyond.

Impact evaluations

From its inception, the AGI was designed to test innovative interventions to facilitate young women's labor market entry and to measure the results using rigorous evaluation methods. To this end, each pilot under the AGI includes a strong focus on M&E, with a core impact evaluation team that works closely with the projects during design and implementation. At the end of the initiative, the resulting evidence from these evaluations will serve to inform future Bank operations and contribute to the knowledge base on adolescent girls' empowerment.

In fiscal year 2013, significant progress was made on AGI impact evaluations. Of the eight pilots under the initiative; six are on track to have rigorous impact evaluations that employ experimental methodologies. For those evaluations at more advanced stages, the impact evaluation team has begun processing and analyzing data from surveys of AGI participants. As these evaluations progress and yield results, the impact evaluation and knowledge management specialists have been working closely to draw out key messages and disseminate findings both internally and externally through presentations, reports, and academic publications.

Knowledge management

In fiscal year 2013, [two note series](#) were launched. The operational series focuses on design and implementation lessons. Topics cover all stages of the project cycle—design, implementation, and M&E—and draw on the experience of AGI implementers and Bank task teams. The results series focuses on findings from the impact evaluations of the AGI pilots. In fiscal year 2013, four lessons learned and two results notes were published. The notes are available on the AGI Website and were distributed through an e-newsletter to a community of over 3,000 practitioners.

To raise awareness within the Bank, lessons and results are being disseminated through seminars organized jointly with other units. To raise awareness outside the Bank, findings from the impact evaluations are being presented and discussed at conferences such as the Making Cents Conference (September 2012,

Washington, DC) and Center for the Study of African Economies Conference (March 2013, Oxford, England).

Capacity building

World Bank teams and implementing partners of the AGI are actively engaging in cross-country learning exchanges. These capacity-building activities are helping to improve project implementation and increase dissemination and cross-fertilization of practical lessons learned. During the past year, three events took place and are highlighted below.

AGI Technical Workshop. Monrovia, Liberia, August 27–29, 2012: To facilitate learning across AGI pilots, the World Bank Gender and Development Group (PRMGE) organized a technical workshop hosted by the Liberia Ministry of Gender and Development. The objectives were to: (1) highlight emerging lessons from project design and implementation; (2) exchange experiences and lessons related to M&E; and (3) share learning on pilot institutionalization and positioning for scale-up. Participants included implementing partners and Bank task teams from six of the eight pilot countries (Afghanistan, Lao PDR, Liberia, Nepal, Rwanda, and South Sudan) as well as members of the Bank impact evaluation team, the Nike Foundation, UN Women, and donors.

Liberia-Rwanda Learning Exchange. Kigali, Rwanda, November 2012 and 2013: The executive director of one of the four service providers of the Liberia EPAG and a curriculum specialist who worked with the Liberia AGI traveled to Rwanda to advise the Rwandan AGI team on their program design. With the Workforce Development Authority (WDA; the agency charged with delivering trainings for the Rwanda AGI), the Liberian counterparts reviewed the Rwandan curriculum, introducing lessons from the experience of the AGI in Liberia. To make implementation more manageable, the WDA curriculum was reduced from nine tracks to four.⁶ These discussions helped refocus the arts and crafts curriculum and identify two areas,

⁶ Culinary arts (1), arts and crafts (2), food processing (3), and agro-processing (4).

jewelry design and textile tie and die, that have significant market potential. The Liberia team also assisted WDA curriculum development staff in creating reference manuals for the various curriculum tracks.

Social Protection and Learning Forum. Hyderabad, India, November 2012: The Liberia EPAG Monitoring and Evaluation Officer attended a learning exchange on social protection organized by the World Bank. The exchange highlighted evidence on the increasing number of employment opportunities in the informal sector and included site visits to successful interventions in Hyderabad, including village self-help groups (SHG). Lack of business inputs and start-up capital has been identified as a key constraint to business growth among EPAG graduates. The Liberia team is considering how the concept of the SHG could be customized for adolescent girls in Liberia.

Funds have been secured from the South–South MDTF for a learning exchange between the Afghanistan and Nepal teams and the Liberia and Rwanda teams. These exchanges will take place in the fall of 2013.

AGI financials

The AGI has received trust fund resources from the GAP MDTF (which is now closed), the Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls MDTF (which financed the Liberia pilot and has now closed), the AGI MDTF, and the UFGE. Table 6 lists the donors who have generously contributed to this initiative through the AGI MDTF and the Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls MDTF.⁷ Significant Bank resources have also been contributed in the form of staff time, however, these contributions are not reflected in the tables. Table 7 provides the overall AGI budget.

⁷ Funding was also received from the GAP MDTF. These funds are reflected in the overall AGI budget, however, the trust funds has officially closed.

Contributions

Table 6. AGI contributions

Donors	<i>In US\$</i>	
	Pledges	Receipts
AGI MDTF		
Denmark—Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs	5,039,524	5,039,524
United Kingdom—Department for International Development (DFID)	3,101,900	3,101,900
Norway—Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2,568,554	2,568,554
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)	4,280,498	4,280,498
Nike Foundation	2,000,000	2,000,000
Total AGI MDTF	16,990,477	16,990,477
Other Trust Fund Sources		
EPAG Liberia—Nike Foundation	3,250,000	3,250,000
Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality	600,000	600,000
AusAID Externally Financed Output (EFO)	202,777	202,777

Allocations

Table 7. AGI allocations	In US\$			Total
	AGI	GAP	Others	
1. AGI pilots				
Afghanistan	2,410,000	-	-	2,410,000
Haiti	1,140,000	1,000,000	600,000 ^a	2,740,000
Jordan	-	1,050,000	-	1,050,000
Lao PDR	-	200,000	202,777 ^c	402,777
Liberia	2,044,614	40,000	3,118,215 ^b	5,202,829
Nepal	2,410,000	-	-	2,410,000
Rwanda	3,231,360	-	-	3,231,360
South Sudan	1,670,616	500,000	-	2,170,616
Total AGI pilots	12,906,590	2,790,000	3,920,992	19,617,582
2. AGI IEs				
Coordination of the IEs	509,000	-	-	509,000
AGI IEs Africa	1,073,000	-	-	1,073,000
AGI IEs South Asia	768,000	-	-	768,000
Total AGI IEs	2,350,000	-	-	2,350,000
3. Scale and Innovation Fund				
Nepal	210,000	-	-	210,000
Liberia	200,000	-	-	200,000
AGI and Youth Employment Report	200,000	-	-	200,000
Technical assistance	150,000	-	-	150,000
Total Scale and Innovation Fund	760,000	-	-	760,000
4. Knowledge management	285,000	-	38,243²	323,243
5. AGI program administration and coordination	575,000	-	-	575,000
Grand total	16,876,590	2,790,000	3,959,235	23,625,825

Note: IE = impact evaluation.

a. UFGF MDTF.

b. EPAG MDTF.

c. AusAID EFO.

Status of Pilot Implementation



Afghanistan—Female Youth Employment Initiative (FYEI)

- Pilot financing: \$2.05 million
- Target population and location: 1,300 young women aged 18 to 30 who are high school graduates from Balkh's urban areas and select districts.
- Lead ministry: Ministry of Education (MoE)
- Implementing agency: MoE, Deputy Ministry of Administration and Finance, through Educational Quality Improvement Project.

Implementation update: The project was launched on January 31, 2012, at the MoE in Kabul. A baseline survey of 2,800 eligible girls was fielded in February 2013. The program will consist of 10 months of classroom training in demand-driven fields and life skills, followed by three months of follow-up and placement assistance. Malnutrition has been identified as one of the priority issues for the life skills training, and the program is collaborating with the Bank-supported South Asia Food and Nutrition Security Initiative to develop a nutrition education module. Competitive selection of the training providers is underway. Training is expected to begin in fall 2013.

Prospects for scale-up: The task team involved the MoE during the design phase and the pilot was designed in close collaboration with an existing World Bank–government education program to take advantage of potential synergies. The Minister of Education has since expressed support for scaling up the AGI to other provinces, if there is available funding and sufficient on-the-ground success from the pilot. The project is seeking links with other Bank programs, for example, with the proposed Afghanistan Skills Development Project II and Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Project.

Haiti—Adolescent Girls Initiative

- Pilot financing: \$2 million
- Target population and location: 1,000 vulnerable young women aged 17 to 20 living in Port au Prince.
- Partner ministries: Ministry of Women's Affairs (MCFDF), Ministry of Education and Technical Training (MEFP).

Implementation update: The project was launched in May 2012. The first cohort (500 young women) entered training in November 2012 and graduated in June 2013. The second cohort (500 young women) is expected to start training in September 2013. Participants are receiving four to six months of training in vocational areas that are considered untraditional for women and where there is proven employer demand—mechanics, refrigeration, electricity, construction, computer science, IT services, and hoteling. Training is being delivered at four training centers in Port-au-Prince. Beneficiaries receive a monthly stipend to cover the costs associated with training. The girls are accompanied in their neighborhood by recognized community organizations that provide support services and mentorship. The girls also receive life skills training based on a locally adapted curriculum. At the end of their training, the young women will be offered internships to help them transition into the labor market.

Prospects for scale-up: The design of the project will inform other Bank projects with a jobs/skill component (three pipelined projects have already been identified for potential mainstreaming of AGI project lessons). The pilot has also enabled new dialogue and partnerships in ministries that could form the basis of a larger engagement on technical training in Haiti, which is a government priority and a key component to boost innovation, competitiveness, and growth in the country.

Jordan—New Work Opportunities for Women (NOW)

- Pilot financing: \$1.05 million
- Target population: 1,800 young women graduates from eight community colleges.
- Implementing agency: Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research is also involved in design and implementation.

Implementation update: The pilot was launched in September 2010. Three hundred and seventy-three young women received employability skills training, and 97 percent of these women completed training by November 2010. By the time the incentive payments expired in August 2011, 301 young graduates had successfully used job vouchers to secure employment.

Evaluation findings: Results from the impact evaluation found that while the job voucher was active, female graduates with vouchers were 39 percent more likely to work than female graduates without vouchers. However, this effect was temporary and did not last after the vouchers expired. Outside central Jordan, girls with vouchers continued to have higher employment rates, but this may have come at the expense of those who didn't have vouchers. Employability skills training showed no statistically significant impact on employment outcomes in either the short or longterm. However, training did boost self-confidence and mental well-being among the graduates. The results suggest that wage subsidies can help increase employment in the short term, but are not a panacea for the problems of high urban female youth unemployment.

Prospects for scale-up: In consultation with government counterparts, the pilot was extended to include a hands-on job-matching program in October 2011. Insights from the evaluation are being used to identify demand-side and regulatory constraints to the school-to-work transition of young people.

Lao PDR—Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI)

- Financing: \$0.4 million
- Target population: Youth ages 18 to 35 (majority are female) from three provincial capitals.
- Implementing agency: Young Entrepreneur Association of Lao PDR (YEAL), National University of Laos (NUOL), and Pakpasak Technical College.

Implementation update: STEPS is experimenting with two different interventions to help young people increase their participation in the labor market: (1) a Marketplace Competition to promote a culture of entrepreneurship by identifying and supporting young entrepreneurs who are seeking to start or expand a business; and (2) Career Counseling Offices (CCOs) to provide job placement services to recent graduates who are looking for employment in the private sector.

Emerging results: Project monitoring data show that 59 percent of Marketplace participants (more than half of whom are female) reported starting a new business or expanding a preexisting business within one year of completing STEPS training. In total, 21 new businesses were started and 20 businesses expanded their operations. Forty-seven percent of the graduates registered with the CCO at NUOL (more than half female) and 44 percent at Pakpasak Technical College (more than one-third female) reported being employed within one year of graduation. Eighty-nine percent of NUOL students (85 percent female) and 95 percent of Pakpasak students (96 percent female) obtained an internship within three months of graduation.

Prospects for scale-up: Based on these encouraging M&E findings, the World Bank received funding from AusAID in July 2012 to support the program for an additional 18 months and launch a second round of the Young Entrepreneur Marketplace Competition, expanding to two additional provincial capitals. The STEPS program will continue its activities until December 2013. The World Bank is also continuing its support for the two CCOs and will focus efforts on the development of sustainability plans that fully integrate the CCOs into the schools' plans and budgets.

Liberia—Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (EPAG)

- Financing: \$5.2 million
- Target population: 2,500 young women ages 16 to 27 in Greater Monrovia and Kakata City.
- Lead ministry and implementing agency: Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD)

Implementation update: In the first round (March 2010), 1,131 girls received training, and in the second round (July 2011), 1,277 girls attended training. About 65 percent of the girls were trained in business development skills and roughly 35 percent trained in job skills. All girls received life skills training. Posttraining, all graduates entered a six-month support period where they were assisted with job searching and placement or otherwise supported to start their own businesses.

Evaluation results: Preliminary midline survey results include:

- The program led to a 50 percent increase in employment and a 115 percent increase in average weekly income among beneficiaries compared to those in the control group.
- The majority of the employment increase was driven by the business skills track.
- The program also significantly increased average weekly incomes and girls' savings.
- The results will be in the coming year, and a final endline survey will facilitate deeper analysis of longer-term impacts.

Prospects for scale-up: EPAG received \$2 million in strategic UFGE funding to adapt the model to reach a broader geographic base and prepare for scale-up. The project will also develop modules for targeting boys and developing agriculture skills. The project is working to strengthen the MoGD's Adolescent Girls Unit to become a driving force for adolescent girls' program coordination, monitoring, and policy advocacy in Liberia.

Nepal—Adolescent Girls Employment Initiative

- Financing: \$2.05 million
- Target population: 4,375 young women ages 16 to 24 who are socially discriminated against, poor, and have low levels of education.
- Lead ministry: Ministry of Education
- Implementing agency: Helvetas, with 20–25 training providers

Implementation update: Three rounds of training have been completed: 810 adolescent girls were trained in 2010, 1,664 in 2011, and 1,936 in 2012. Livelihood training spans 39 occupations across 44 districts of Nepal. All trainees receive life skills training and business and enterprise skills training for those interested in starting a business. Trainees are assisted with job searching and placement or receive mentoring to help start their own businesses.

Emerging results: Preliminary results from the impact evaluation did not find significant impacts on nonfarm employment or earnings among the 2010 cohort of trainees. However, participants in the 2011 cohort increased their nonfarm employment by about 20 percentage points, and increased their time spent working during the past month by nearly 30 hours. Furthermore, the likelihood of earning at least 3,000RS in the past month increased by about 20 percentage points for the 2011 trainees. Future work for the impact evaluation in 2013 will include refinement of the current analysis, expansion to other outcomes, and analysis of two-year impacts for 2010 trainees.

Prospects for scale-up: Strong links have been established with the Bank-supported Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) project. The monitoring system of the AGI is being integrated into this national program. AGI approaches, such as providing incentives for trainers to train girls from vulnerable groups, have informed the design of the TVET project. Over the next year, the AGI team will focus on documenting lessons learned and building government capacity to strengthen the focus on young women in national programs.

Rwanda—Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI)

- Financing: \$2.7 million
- Target population: 2,000 young women ages 16 to 24 who are literate from two urban and two rural districts of Rwanda.
- Lead ministry: Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF)
- Implementing agency: MIGEPROF, Workforce Development Authority (WDA), and Imbuto Foundation

Implementation update: The project was launched on April 2, 2012, during a ceremony in Kigali. A communication strategy and campaign to sensitize girls, parents, and communities began in mid-October, and since then, 650 girls have been recruited and selected to receive training in the first round of the program. The technical training will be delivered by the government agency WDA, covering four areas: food processing, culinary arts, arts and crafts, and agro processing. Training manuals have been developed for these areas. Training began in May 2013.

Prospects for scale-up: The Bank project team is working closely with a Bank-financed skills development project under preparation to ensure that AGI training modules are coordinated and mainstreamed into the larger Bank project. The Girl Hub in Rwanda (Nike/UK Department for International Development partnership), which has a magazine and radio program targeting adolescent girls, helped to advertise the AGI during the recruitment drive.

South Sudan—Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI)

- Financing: \$1.9 million
- Target population: 3,000 young women ages 15 to 24 from four states.
- Lead ministry: Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Development
- Implementing agency: BRAC South Sudan

Implementation update: 100 adolescent clubs, staffed with 100 adolescent leaders, have been established in five counties in four states of South Sudan. To date, 1,659 club members have received livelihood training. About 60 percent of members have received agriculture training; other fields include poultry farming, goat rearing, small business, tailoring, salons, catering, and carpentry. All 3,000 girls have received life skills and financial literacy training. BRAC is also providing savings and credit services to qualified girls.

Emerging results: According to project monitoring data, 1,449 trainees are currently employed. Informal conversations with girls and young women show high levels of engagement and confidence, reflected in increased awareness of issues such as protection against rape, early pregnancy and family planning, and increased knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDs. Project implementers report that family members and communities have more respect for their adolescent girls as they find their daughters more knowledgeable and able to earn money to support family expenses. Results from the impact evaluation are expected in the summer of 2014.

Prospects for scale-up: Lessons from AGI South Sudan life skills and livelihood training are being institutionalized through an IDA-supported social protection project. The social protection team is strongly committed to injecting substantial resources into creating stronger links with national policies and programs to streamline the lessons from AGI. BRAC is committed to continuing club activities at the current pilot phase level. BRAC is also interested in opening the clubs to younger girls as well as boys, and in reaching adults with literacy classes.



WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

Photo: Arne Hoel / World Bank

The Women's Leadership in Small and Medium Enterprises (WLSME) is an innovative partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) that aims to increase the entry and growth of women-owned and women-managed small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries. Understanding why women do not participate more actively in SME entrepreneurship and creating opportunities for their higher engagement through effective interventions can yield high dividends in terms of productivity and broad-based economic growth. The WLSME invests in rigorous evaluations of innovative interventions to help answer "what works" in promoting women-led SMEs.

Progress and achievements in 2013

The WLSME is a \$8.5 million USAID-supported initiative. The World Bank manages \$3.5 million of these funds in the form of a single donor trust fund (SDTF, 2011-2015). The fund has allocated \$3 million to evaluations of innovative initiatives in 13 countries in Africa, Central Asia, the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia.

Under the broad umbrella of promoting entry and growth of women-led SMEs, these evaluations measure the relative impacts and payoffs, within specific contexts, of investing in better access to finance for women, providing business training, reducing regulatory constraints, and improving infrastructure. Many of the evaluations also consider the relative importance of networking capital, risk aversion, and other attributes. This important work will ultimately offer policy lessons and examples of

concrete interventions that can be replicated or scaled up.

Each intervention selected for rigorous impact evaluation was drawn from the portfolio of existing or planned World Bank projects. Bank teams were invited to submit a proposal for the evaluation of their ongoing or planned work. The advantage of evaluating existing Bank projects rather than developing new experimental pilots is that evidence is gathered in the context of a full-scale intervention—reflecting a “real” project situation. Scalability can also be included because the intervention is already part of a government project or program. Funding was offered for the following activities:

- modifying the design of a project to better target women-run enterprises and incorporate an impact evaluation;
- strengthening the gender focus of an ongoing impact evaluation to measure gender-disaggregated outcomes; and
- designing an intervention that focuses on increasing the entry and growth of women-owned and/or women-managed SMEs.

The demand was overwhelming; 26 proposals totaling \$11,266,100 were submitted. A selection panel composed of USAID representatives and Bank staff selected eight proposals covering interventions in 13 countries.

Impact evaluations

WLSME impact evaluations seek to learn how policies and interventions can reduce the constraints disproportionately faced by women-led SMEs. Broadly, these constraints include:

Regulatory and infrastructure constraints: In Africa,⁸ evaluations are measuring the relative impacts of infrastructure investments on improving market access for women-led firms. In the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan, a Bank team is assessing the drivers of gaps between laws and their implementation—specifically, implementation of tax inspections—to better understand the resulting gender-specific impacts. In the Arab Republic of Egypt, the use of specialized windows for women by financial intermediaries is one of the innovations being evaluated to learn how to increase women’s access to finance and business development services.

Social capital and information gaps: Several evaluations, including the above, attempt to measure the role of social capital and access to information. The baseline assumption is that women tend to possess less social capital and have less access to information, which are vital for market access and the growth of their businesses. In South Africa, an innovative pilot using an online (Web and mobile) marketplace to

connect buyers allows for an experimental measurement of whether and how buyers discriminate when selecting suppliers.

Gender gaps in human capital: Can training help women start and grow successful businesses? And if so, what kind of training? The WLSME is supporting a number of evaluations of training provided to female entrepreneurs. The training ranges from standard business administration and management to personal “hand-holding” through mentors. Training is sometimes paired with a financial package or opportunities to build networks with peers to better understand what combination of support benefits women the most.

As of June 30, 2013, activities were in the early stages of implementation. Most evaluation and intervention designs had been finalized, and baseline results will become available in the coming year. In the case of South Africa, the baseline is complete and a chapter for an upcoming book on gender and trade in Africa has been prepared from a non-experimental analysis of the data. The chapter explores determinants of becoming an exporter and identifies potential key constraints to growth and participation in international trade for women-led firms—areas that will be explored in the final evaluation.

Early qualitative diagnostics have been completed in some cases to inform evaluation designs and identify priority areas. For instance, gaps in implementation of tax inspections were identified through in-country consultations as the regulatory focus area of the evaluations in the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan. Results of qualitative work in Tunisia designed to better understand the constraints to entrepreneurship will be presented at a workshop in Tunis in the fall of 2013. The entrepreneurship track at Tunisian universities being evaluated with WLSME support has received a lot of publicity and a documentary is in production.

Measuring firm performance through a gender lens

The WLSME recognizes that firm performance depends on the specific challenges faced by the firm’s decision maker, which often vary by gender. To help measure

⁸The Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, and South Africa.

firm performance and related gender gaps, the Bank led the process of developing common indicators to be included in impact evaluations and more general surveys. Six guiding modules provide standardized questions that can be adapted to specific project or survey contexts in the following areas: access to finance, noncognitive business-related skills, human capital, profits, and agency. All modules draw on lessons from recent literature and are available on the World Bank's Gender and Development Web site.

Knowledge sharing

The official launch of the WLSME took place on November 13, 2012, and brought together USAID, the World Bank, the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) and the Goldman Sachs Foundation, which have been pioneering work in this area. The event highlighted opportunities to draw women into business leadership roles.

In April, a conference was held in Washington, DC, for researchers and practitioners from the World Bank Group and USAID to take stock of what is known and discuss innovative interventions to grow women-led businesses. Participants also discussed programs and interventions that failed and the reasons for those failures. The event also served as the formal launch of a new World Bank Female Entrepreneurship Resource Point. This online resource provides practical guidance and recommendations and serves as a clearinghouse for emerging evidence on female entrepreneurs.

In the coming year, the WLSME will sponsor a series of learning events to engage researchers and practitioners in dialogue on how best to remove the constraints that women-led firms face. As baseline results emerge, preliminary insights will be made available. Ultimately, this innovative partnership is expected to produce important evidence and lessons on what works to be shared through papers, brief policy notes, tools for practitioners, and various learning events and workshops.

WLSME financials

The WLSME SDTF became active on June 1, 2012. Of the total contribution of \$3.5 million, \$3 million has been allocated to eight grants, with the remaining \$500,000 going toward technical support, administration and management, and knowledge sharing by PRMGE (tables 8 and 9).

As of June 30, 2013, \$1.3 million in pledges had been received and disbursed to each grant. Overall, disbursement across evaluations has been slightly slower than anticipated, as some of the evaluated Bank projects were awaiting Board approval. However, all evaluations are on track to complete on time.

Contributions

Table 8. WLSME contributions

<i>Donors</i>	<i>In US\$</i>		
	Pledges	Receipts	To be received
USAID	3,500,000	1,313,500	2,186,500

Allocations

Table 9. WLSME allocations

<i>Pilots</i>	<i>In US\$</i>		
	Allocations	Disbursed and committed	Balance
Measuring and Reducing Regulatory Uncertainty and Discretion for Female Entrepreneurs in Central Asia	600,000	199,251	400,749
Haiti—Fostering Woman’s Involvement in Agro-Enterprise for Improved Food Quality and Household Food Security	350,000	84,763	265,237
Testing Relative Impacts of Training, Access to Finance, and Social Networks for Fostering Entrepreneurial Success in Sierra Leone	300,000	112,932	187,068
Improving Market Access of WLSMEs in Africa through Innovative Programs	350,000	37,718	312,282
Providing Integrated Support and Incubation Services for Graduates of the University Entrepreneurship Track in Tunisia	350,000	74,228	275,772
Pakistan Women Entrepreneurs	400,000	35,049	364,951
Innovative Approaches to Develop Entrepreneurial Capacities of Female-Led Business	350,000	19,102	330,898
Egyptian Women Leadership in Micro and Small Enterprises	300,000	21,452	278,548
Subtotal pilots	3,000,000	584,496	2,415,504
Communication and dissemination	104,000	884	103,116
Technical support, supervision, and implementation activities	221,000	11,850	209,150
Program management and administration	105,000	30,320	74,680
Grand total	3,430,000	627,550	2,802,450

WLSME Interventions

Improving Market Access of Women-Led SMEs in Africa

Countries: Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, and South Africa

Intervention and evaluation: Market access for women-led SMEs relies in part on having adequate infrastructure in place, but it is also a matter of helping women overcome information asymmetries due to their lower networking capital. In South Africa, ICT is being leveraged with an online and mobile phone accessible marketplace that connects buyers to SME suppliers. The randomized control trial will help shed light on whether an online marketplace can help female entrepreneurs market themselves better and build trust through a ratings system, as well as understand whether buyers discriminate based on personal characteristics (including gender) when selecting suppliers. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Mozambique, Growth Pole projects are addressing the multiple, intertwined challenges SMEs face by improving infrastructure, delivering technical support to and incubating SMEs, and providing skills development training. Evaluations will measure impacts of infrastructure investments on gender differences in market access (for energy and mining, specifically in Mozambique) and firm performance.

Implementation update: A baseline report has been prepared for South Africa and early findings are presented in a background paper for an upcoming book on trade and gender in Africa. Evaluation designs for DRC and Mozambique will be completed in 2013 and baseline surveys carried out in 2014.

Measuring and Reducing Regulatory Uncertainty and Discretion for Female Entrepreneurs in Central Asia

Countries: Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan

Intervention and evaluation: Anecdotal evidence suggests the gaps between on-the-paper laws and regulations and their implementation lead to differential treatment of male and female entrepreneurs. Preliminary data also suggest that while women seem to experience governance-related issues less often, corruption has a more significant impact on women's business decisions. Taking advantage of ongoing investment climate projects in the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan, point-of-service delivery surveys of entrepreneurs will measure discrepancies between female and male entrepreneurs in the administration of tax inspection services. Additionally, the survey aims to address questions around women's access to information, whether knowledge gaps have more adverse impacts on women than men, and whether certain policy interventions can help reduce the discrepancies in implementation of tax inspections. The diagnostic will result in pilots of policy interventions, such as improving access to information or using feedback mechanisms, which will be impact evaluated.

Implementation update: The early diagnostic phase to identify and measure key drivers of the regulatory implementation gap has started, and stakeholder consultations determined tax inspections as the focus area. Enterprise Survey methodology was selected for data collection, and the evaluation survey instruments have been designed and firms contracted.

Fostering Women's Involvement in Agroenterprise for Improved Food Quality and Household Food Security

Country: Haiti

Intervention and evaluation: Increasing the quality and quantity of food produced presents an important market opportunity for Haiti and plays an important role in improving the country's food security. The IDA funded Re-Launching Agriculture: Strengthening Agriculture Public Services II Project, which aims to improve the Ministry of Agriculture's capacity to deliver key services (such as extension services) to small farmers. Female farmers face multiple constraints, such as low levels of financial literacy and limited technical knowledge. In one of the project's components, a matching grants facility for farmer groups, the WLSME is supporting an evaluation of training targeting the women's self-identified constraints. A combination of business administration, food quality-related, and noncognitive skills are being offered, and their impacts will be evaluated.

Implementation update: The impact methodology has been designed and will be finalized with the project's overall evaluation, which is still being planned. Work has begun on tailoring the training curricula. Collection of baseline data is underway, and a call for proposals for matching fund grants is expected to launch in late summer of 2013.

Innovative Approaches to Developing Entrepreneurial Capacities of Female-Led Firms

Countries: Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Togo

Intervention and evaluation: While the rate of entrepreneurship is high among women in Africa, significant gender gaps exist in productivity and performance. Closing gaps in human capital could help relieve some of the main productivity constraints that women entrepreneurs face. The WLSME is expanding the evidence base on how training and mentoring may promote development of entrepreneurial and managerial capacities. As part of the Private Sector Development Support Project in Togo, alternative business training models are being tested and their relative impacts evaluated. In Ethiopia, the Women Entrepreneurship Development Project is evaluating the potential effects of complementing access to finance with business and technical training. And in Nigeria, the Youth Enterprise with Innovation project is helping to understand the potential of business mentoring paired with a business plan competition.

Implementation update: The design of the pilot and evaluation in Togo has been finalized and the baseline survey is expected in fall 2013. The World Bank project in Ethiopia was recently approved and implementation will begin shortly. In Nigeria, the baseline survey and follow-up survey have been completed.

Testing the Relative Impacts of Training, Access to Finance, and Social Networks for Fostering Entrepreneurial Success

Country: Sierra Leone

Intervention and evaluation: In Sierra Leone, the WLSME is supporting the expansion of an impact evaluation of the ongoing Youth Employment Support Project. The project itself aims to increase short-term employment opportunities and provide a safety net through public works. The project also improves employability by building the capacity of young men and women to start or grow their own firms. With the additional funds from the WLSME, an evaluation will be carried out to explore the differing impacts of training, finance, and networks on men and women entrepreneurs. The evaluation will also take into consideration factors such as risk aversion, cognitive and noncognitive skills, and psychosocial attributes. The evaluation design includes four treatment arms: (1) technical and basic business skills training only ("technical training package"), (2) microfinance (MF) facilitation only, (3) technical training package plus MF, and (4) a control group. MF facilitation includes business development, support for accessing MF, and business clubs that provide the opportunity for peer networking.

Implementation update: A data collection firm has been contracted and the evaluation is on track for baseline collection in the summer of 2013.

Providing Integrated Support and Incubation Services for Graduates of a University Entrepreneurship Track

Country: Tunisia

Intervention and evaluation: Tunisia's high rate of youth unemployment has caused significant social and political unrest. There is little evidence on effective policies for transitioning young men and women from education into jobs, particularly self-employment. However, a recent evaluation of a new entrepreneurship track in Tunisian universities—giving students the opportunity to graduate with a business plan rather than a traditional thesis—shows that business training and personalized coaching have been effective in increasing the rate of self-employment among graduates. Yet, this has proven to be relatively more effective for men than women. Identified constraints include lack of access to credit and limited experience and opportunities. The WLSME is supporting the piloting and evaluation of additional entrepreneurship and business development services, such as incubation and access to credit, to improve the effectiveness of the entrepreneurship track for women.

Implementation update: A follow-up survey for understanding the longer term impact of the entrepreneurship track is underway and expected to be completed by December 2013. Qualitative work to better understand constraints faced by male and female graduates is complete and will be disseminated at a national workshop in the fall of 2013. The results will inform measures for strengthening the overall impact of the entrepreneurship track. The baseline survey is planned for fall 2013, with completion of the evaluation planned for 2014.

Egyptian Women's Leadership in Micro and Small Enterprises

Country: Arab Republic of Egypt

Intervention and evaluation: The unemployment rate for women in Egypt is twice that of men. In light of the need to create sustainable private sector jobs, the World Bank's Egypt Enhancing Access to Finance for Micro and Small Enterprise Project works to increase access to finance for small and medium enterprises, targeting in particular underserved populations such as women and youth in Upper Egypt. Because female entrepreneurs often face multiple obstacles, reducing the likelihood that they will benefit from the lines of credit offered through the project, the WLSME is supporting the piloting and evaluation of targeted support for women to increase their uptake of loans. This includes addressing lower capacity, offering customized financial products because of their lack of traditional collateral, and improving the regulatory environment.

Implementation update: The evaluation has been designed and the baseline survey is being conducted. Delays have occurred due to the country's current political and social situation.

A New Generation of Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan

Country: Pakistan

Intervention and evaluation: The recent report, *Are Women Entrepreneurs Being Served by the Microfinance Sector in Pakistan*, sheds light on the extent to which women entrepreneurs are financially excluded and why, and suggests how to reach women borrowers and entrepreneurs with appropriate financial services. WLSME funds are being used to pilot mentoring and networking support for women entrepreneurs, as well as innovative financial products that avoid discriminatory practices in loan screening and processing. The pilot is part of a larger World Bank investment, Pushing the Frontier of Financial Inclusion in Pakistan.

Implementation update: The WLSME funding has helped leverage additional funding from the Bank's Development Grant Facility. The design is in the early stages, exploring potential models such as the holistic packages offered through the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women Initiative.



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gender and development

1818 H Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20016, USA

www.worldbank.org/gender
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