

MAY 2016



Photo: World Bank

The EAP Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality: Approach and Activities

This note is a product of the policy series of the EAP Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality (UFGE). Grounded in extensive research, the series summarizes country and regional activities funded by the EAP Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality.

Toward Gender-Informed Policy Making

The EAP Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality was established in response to the World Bank's 2012 *World Development Report*, which focused on gender. The EAP-UFGE aims to strengthen the capacity for undertaking gender-informed investments and policy making in countries of the region. This is achieved by supporting the integration of gender more strategically into World Bank projects and policy dialogue (for example, in accordance with the priorities identified in the Bank's regional and country gender action plans) and by improving the measurement of gender-differentiated impacts and results. Funds are allocated through calls for proposals under the three main pillars of UFGE:

1. Increasing availability of gender-relevant data and evidence by serving as a catalyst for innovation and investment in frontier issues (for example, women's voice and agency) and in areas with persistent gaps
2. Road-testing evidence at the country level to strengthen and expand successful approaches (for example, applying knowledge gained from pilot projects and impact evaluations) and to generate operationally relevant lessons on how to effectively translate new evidence into results on the ground
3. Leveraging partnerships to help advance gender equality through new ways of engaging development partners, research institutions, statistics bureaus, and civil society organizations in client countries.



Photo: World Bank

The World Bank's East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) region has experienced faster growth and more poverty reduction than any other region.^a These achievements have helped narrow gender gaps in education, health, and other areas. Gender gaps in access to education, including at the secondary and tertiary levels, have closed dramatically. Fertility rates have declined sharply. Female labor force participation is higher than in any other developing region, with about 70 percent of women participating in economic activities. Women also have higher participation in the management and ownership of firms than in other developing regions.

Despite progress, important challenges remain to achieving gender equality in the region. Growth and development alone are not sufficient to achieve gender equality in all dimensions and for all women. Gender gaps in economic opportunity and in women's voice and influence have proven particularly persistent. Some 70–80 percent of women still earn less than men for similar work. Female workers are more likely than men to work as unpaid family labor or in the informal sector. Female farmers and entrepreneurs own less land and have less access to productive

inputs, adversely affecting the productivity and profitability of their activities. Women also have a weaker voice and exert less influence than men in the home, in politics, and in civil society. Violence against women, an extreme manifestation of powerlessness, remains high, particularly in the Pacific, where the prevalence of gender-based violence is among the highest in the world. And while maternal mortality rates have declined in the region, they remain high in lower-income countries (such as the Lao People's Democratic Republic), in several Pacific countries, and even in Indonesia.

a. The countries that make up the Bank's EAP region are: Cambodia, China, Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Myanmar, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Vietnam.

East Asia and Pacific
A product of the EAP Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality



Photo: Curt Carnemark / World Bank

The review and selection process for projects to be funded under the EAP-UFGE relies on a multi-sectoral committee with representation across the Bank's Global Practices and chaired by the EAP Chief Economist. The selection criteria include: (a) relevance to EAP-UFGE objectives, (b) alignment with countries' sector priorities, (c) technical quality, (d) realism and readiness in terms of clearly defined outcomes and beneficiaries that are consistent with the available budget and time-frame, (e) regional and public good value, and (f) a plan for dissemination and communication of results.

From three rounds of calls for proposals under the EAP-UFGE, 18 different activities have been supported. Funded projects are focusing on first-generation gender issues such as maternal health that remain a challenge in some of the countries in the region. Several projects focus on fostering new opportunities and managing emerging risks associated with globalization and integration, migration, urbanization, aging populations, and information and communication technology—key trends affecting men and women of the EAP region..

The EAP Gender Innovation Lab (EAPGIL) was recently established to underpin a comprehensive program of activities to fill knowledge gaps and identify scalable, operational solutions to enhance women's economic opportunities. The funds for EAPGIL are housed within the EAP-UFGE, although the program is independently responsible for managing resources and

implementing activities. EAPGIL aims to build its knowledge base through impact evaluations and inferential research, to identify what works and what does not, and to ensure that lessons are fed back into the design of programs and policies, including the Bank's lending operations.

Project Activities and Results

Promoting Gender Equality in Endowments and Human Development

A woman's agency is affected in fundamental ways by her education, health, and assets, and by how these endowments are linked to economic opportunities. Gender inequalities in educational attainment and access to health services can hinder women's abilities to influence their circumstances in the home, to enter and participate effectively in politics, or to leave bad or dangerous household situations. A variety of projects in the region are looking at how to **close gender gaps in human development through evidence-based research in the health and education sectors.**



In Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Indonesia, projects have begun to reduce maternal mortality, increase the use of maternal health services, and to improve nutrition among women and children. In Lao PDR, a project entitled *Generating Evidence on Supply-Side Capacity to Inform the National Free Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Policy (2013–2016)* is looking specifically at what is needed to increase supply and demand for maternal and child health services in a gender-sensitive manner. In Cambodia, *Effect on Female Knowledge and Behavior toward Nutrition (2013–2016)* is piloting a cash transfer scheme to improve maternal and child health and nutrition. *Improving Maternal Health in Indonesia (2014–2017)* is supporting evidence-based decision making to tackle persistently high maternal mortality by assessing the supply-side readiness and capacity of the Indonesian health system to provide maternal health services in selected provinces showing a high number of maternal deaths or a high maternal mortality ratio.

In terms of education and literacy, *Hem No Leit Tumas (2013–2014)* in the Solomon Islands aimed to raise literacy rates, especially among women, by improving the design and implementation of informal literacy programs. The analysis resulted in a compendium of providers and programs that noted good practices and lessons learned.

Taking Active Measures to Close Gender Gaps in Economic Opportunity

Many indicators in the EAP region demonstrate the substantial challenges to be overcome to close the gender gap in access to economic opportunities identified in the 2012 *World Development Report*. The type of work women do remains very different from that of men, and their remuneration is lower. Women of all ages are more likely than men to be in poorly remunerated occupations and sectors; women are paid less than men for similar work; and gender norms in the division of labor within the household imply that women work longer hours than men, although fewer of those hours are devoted to remunerated activities. A variety of projects are being carried out to **enhance the knowledge base on the various determinants of labor force participation**.

Female Labor Force Participation and Care (2014–2016) is helping to gather knowledge on the participation of women over the age of 45 in the labor force of selected EAP countries by examining (a) the sectoral composition, type, and status (for example, urban vs. rural) of the work done by those participating; (b) transitions out of the labor force and the extent to which these are driven by policy and socioeconomic factors (the state of the economy, family needs, health status, and so on); (c) activities pursued after withdrawing from work; (d) primary sources of support for women who withdraw from the labor force; (e) pension policies and gender; and (f) supply of and demand for elder care and long-term care in China and related options for policy development. The project is producing valuable inputs for the ongoing dialogue on elder care and women's labor-force participation in



China, notably for a recently requested lending operation on elder care in Anhui province, China. For other countries, the work has improved the gender focus of analytical work for the regional study on aging.

Globalization can have a gender-differentiated effect on a wide range of outcomes, including earnings. The *Mekong Informal Trade Facilitation and Gender Study* (2013–2015) surveyed small and informal traders at border checkpoints between Lao PDR, Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam to investigate whether female traders face unusual difficulties. The results show that the higher costs incurred by female traders were traceable to their propensity to hire small taxi services to move their goods across the border. The finding has

been useful for designing policies and technical assistance and is likely to contribute to the reformulation of customs and border policies that affect small-scale trading communities.

Strengthening Women's Agency and Engaging Men

In many countries of the region women have a more limited voice and less influence than men in decision making in their homes, their communities, and society. Women are also more likely to be victims of gender-based violence. The inability of women to voice and act on their preferences affects their own welfare and is detrimental to development. Projects have focused on how to **strengthen the agency of women and improve the knowledge base on male-specific gender issues.**

Gender Impacts of Intelligent Transport System (ITS) (2014–2016) was designed to increase knowledge of the gender impacts of intelligent transport systems and to identify approaches to maximize their benefits for women in China. The expected outputs include (a) a report summarizing the gender impacts of the existing ITS in Wuhan and Urumqi; (b) a technical guideline to better incorporate gender considerations in ITS planning, design, implementation and operation; and (c) dissemination of key findings to cities hosting urban transport projects funded by the World Bank, academia, design institutes, and civil society.

Other projects have been designed to better understand and address male-specific gender issues. *Situation Assessment for Men and Youth in Conflict-Affected Areas in Southern Thailand (2013–2015)* is the first study in Thailand to look at the impact of conflict and violence on men and youth, the groups most directly affected by the long conflict in the country's "Deep South." International workshops have generated discussion on legal frameworks, compensation, and treatment and development programs targeting these groups. The findings of the study are also being used in a project supported by the Peace Building Partnership Fund to help at-risk men and male youth obtain psychological treatment and gain knowledge of the legal system. *Stopping Gender-Based Violence by Engaging with Men (2014–2016)* is looking into the underlying issues that lead Mongolian men and boys to adopt detrimental behaviors (such as violence against women, alcoholism, and leaving school) by piloting "Men Care" approaches through media and male support groups in Ulaanbaatar.

Building Capacity

The EAP-UFGE *Gender and Transport* program is building capacity among clients who are starting or planning investments in urban or rural infrastructure and transport across the region. Drawing on expertise among clients in the region and global lessons embedded in the Social and Transport Global Practices of the World Bank and its donor partners, the program is establishing a forum to develop local solutions that will shrink gender inequalities through investments in the transport sector.

The approach involves South–South exchanges; regional workshops and technical advisory services that offer clients concrete ideas on how to optimize the approach to gender in their operations or policies. Key topics include how to (a) structure consultations to ensure that both women and men's views are taken into account in the design of urban transport projects; (b) design and fund road-maintenance programs that employ poor women in rural areas; and (c) decrease the risk of sexual harassment for users of public transport systems. In cooperation with the Vietnam Ministry of Transport, the program is inviting representatives from transport ministries, provincial transport authorities, and project implementation units from Kiribati to China to learn about the Vietnam Third Rural Road project, where more than 68,000 women gained seasonal employment.

The *EAP Gender Capacity Program* also publishes a series of knowledge notes that share findings and results from individual EAP-UFGE initiatives and operations. The notes are available at <http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eap/brief/gender>.

Copyright © 2016

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank Group
1818 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20433 USA

All rights reserved.

The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this report are entirely those of the authors and should not be attributed in any manner to the World Bank, or its affiliated organizations, or to members of its board of executive directors or the countries they represent. The World Bank does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this publication and accepts no responsibility whatsoever for any consequence of their use.

The UFGE aims to strengthen awareness, knowledge, and capacity for gender-informed policy making. It supports the priorities identified in the East Asia and Pacific Regional Gender action Plan as well as in the EAP Country Gender Action Plans.

For additional information, please contact: Lourdes Anducta, landucta@worldbank.org