Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women

Generating evidence on women’s economic empowerment, gender equality and growth
CROISSANCE DE L’ÉCONOMIE ET DÉBOUCHÉS ÉCONOMIQUES DES FEMMES

Production de données probantes sur l’autonomisation économique des femmes, l’égalité des sexes et la croissance dans les pays à faible revenu
Introducing the program

• Rationale

• Research themes and questions

• Modalities: global research partnerships

• Innovating in research uptake
Embedded in IDRC’s Supporting Inclusive Growth

• Inclusive growth **not simply** a question of redistribution of growth
• Operational **emphasis**: research to promote opportunities for gainful employment and livelihoods
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Jobs
Rationale for the ‘GrOW’ program

• Much progress gender indicators – though with huge variations
• More progress on (and knowledge of) progress education, health – less on ‘economic empowerment’ (also political; WEF data)
• Disparities continue, including:
  - type and conditions of work
  - access to business, assets, finance
  - wages and other returns
  - care work: unpaid and paid; recognition; confidence

While gender inequality persists, issues, and thus policies, are context specific
Plus: Global interest how women can play a greater role

Gender equality and competitiveness (WEF data)
Definitions of economic empowerment

OECD: “Capacity of women to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth processes in ways that recognise the value of their contribution, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth”

DFID: “a process that increases people’s access to and control over economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets (from which one can generate an income), skills development and market information”

= analytical focus, ‘economic’ part of broader empowerment agenda
THREE THEMES

1. Barriers to women’s economic empowerment and to closing gender gaps in earnings and productivity? How can these be overcome?

2. How do specific patterns of economic growth and types of structural change affect women’s economic empowerment and gender equality?

3. How do women’s economic empowerment and gender equality affect economic growth?
1. Barriers to women’s economic empowerment

- Forms of employment and entrepreneurship that are empowering
- Constraints and choices on continuum of self-employment, wage employment, entrepreneurship
- Gendered silo of paid and unpaid care work, where innovation regarding care has been limited
- Constraints to women’s position in the household, wider society & economy -> individual choices and agency
- How can these barriers be addressed (women’s time; fairness at work; access to finance, assets, business)
How little we know – global data
labor force participation

GNI and Female LFP

Total Labour Force Participation Rate (% total population aged 15-64)

Female Labour Force Participation Rate (% fem. population aged 15-64)

R² = 0.0367

R² = 0.0207
Labor force participation rate (% of population ages 15-64) in 2011, WDI

- South Asia
- West Africa
- Southern Africa
- Central Africa
- East Africa

Female  Male
Account at a formal financial institution (% pop age 15+) in 2011, WDI

- Central Africa
- West Africa
- East Africa
- South Asia
- Southern Africa

Female
Male
Wages and salaries (in national currency), ILO

2. Impact of patterns of growth on women’s economic empowerment

- Evidence that economic growth promotes gender equality mixed
- Some of fastest growing countries show least signs of progress gender equality
- Impact patterns of growth on women’s economic empowerment and care, including competition, liberalisation, technological change
- When are outcomes of growth more positive: accompanying policies, education, child care, etc.
Economic development and gender equality in LICs: access to finance, 2011 (WDI)
Economic development and gender equality: Labour Force Participation in LICs 2011 (WDI)
3. Does women’s economic empowerment promote growth?

• Links between gender equality and economic growth complex and not uniform - need to further investigate relationships in various contexts
• Pathways through which women’s economic empowerment contributes to economic growth
• Hypotheses: more equal economic participation of women also improve efficiency, productivity and competitiveness, raise incomes, and improve conditions for growth
Program strategy

• Combine quality research, strengthen capacity, and policy outreach (research uptake)

• Competitive *global* call 15 mid-size research projects, focus on low-income countries (running, deadline October 25)

• Synthesis of evidence question 3: call expected in 2 weeks

• Research approaches: focus multi-disciplinary, cross-country

• After 5 years, body of evidence and cohort of researchers better able to address issues of women’s economic empowerment
Research uptake: how do we enhance policy impact?

• At program and project level, national-international: can these reinforce each other?
• Benefit from different donors & emphasis
• Projects:
  i. Ensure policy relevance research: what findings would have what implications for what policy and action?
  ii. Identify targeted audience & policy windows
  iii. Strategy and means communication stakeholders
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Calls for research proposals:

www.idrc.ca\grow
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