



Gender Innovation Lab

Rationale

It is the objective of the World Bank's Africa Region to advance development for both men and women. Standing in the way are some grim facts. Agricultural yields for female farmers are significantly less than for their male counterparts, a pattern driven by lower use of labor, crop choice, and the fact that they are responsible for child rearing. Female-owned firms are also less profitable, in part because of the industries they are in, as well as discrimination in credit markets. And attitudes and norms such as inheritance practices perpetuate many of these inequalities across generations.

Identifying gender disparities has been an important step in setting the groundwork for solving these disparities - we now need to shift the gender argument by rigorously assessing solutions that address the underlying causes of gender inequality.

There are still pressing knowledge gaps, particularly in the productive sectors and relating to voice and agency. For instance:

- In the case of agricultural productivity, while we know that productivity on farms in Sub-Saharan Africa could increase between 10 and 30 percent if women used inputs at the same rate as men, we still do not know how best to provide women with consistent access to these inputs.
- In the entrepreneurship and employment sector, we know that if women were to shift to male-dominated sectors they could improve their returns, but we do not know how to effectively spur and sustain that change in economic roles.
- While we have made some progress toward equality of men and women under the law, we do not know how to ensure that women know and make use of the tangible benefits of legal reforms, especially in areas where customary law is predominant, such as in access to land.

What is the Gender Innovation Lab?

The **Gender Innovation Lab (GIL)** seeks to fill these complex knowledge gaps. Maintained by the Africa Region Gender Practice in partnership with other World Bank units, donors, NGOs and researchers across the globe, the Lab carries out rigorous impact evaluations for initiatives with an explicit or implicit gender perspective (For instance, an intervention focused on agriculture may still display effects on household labor decisions, education, or women's voice within the household).

The Lab's approach is based on research that builds evidence to determine what works and what does not. **What kind of evidence are we talking about?** In Kenya, we found that providing vouchers and information to students could nudge women into lucrative trades that are traditionally dominated by men. In Rwanda, improved land tenure security led women owners to increase their investments by 18% - twice the level observed for men. And in Uganda, a skills and health training program for adolescent girls boosted earnings and dramatically reduced the number of young women who reported engaging in risky behaviors. These impact evaluations help to document not only what works (and what does not) to address gender inequality, but also the tangible economic benefits of doing so.



The Lab is currently working on over 20 impact evaluations in the areas of agricultural productivity, entrepreneurship and employment, and assets. We are now entering Version 2.0 of the Lab, advancing from asking how programs impact men and women differently, to developing and testing innovative policy solutions for alleviating gender-based constraints. With significant new help from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the Lab will launch another 12 impact evaluations over the next five years,

using rigorous quantitative methods and high-quality qualitative analysis. We will also increase efforts to improve the quantity and quality of gender-informed statistics, and to build up the capacity of African academics to contribute to this growing body of knowledge.

Policy Impact

Developing effective policy responses to persistent gender gaps will require experimentation, innovation and learning. The Gender Innovation Lab actively shares its findings so that project teams and government policymakers are able to use this knowledge to decide whether to undertake or scale-up an intervention. Our active collaboration with leading academic researchers, NGOs and government agencies provides multiple venues for sharing these results -- from leading academic journals, to small seminars with key policymakers, to high impact international forums.



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