



The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development

Women's Economic Empowerment Working Group (WEEWG)

Minutes of meeting, Online, 11th October 2023

v. 27th October 2023

Participants (19):

- Karen Moore (GAC) – Chair
- Abigail Dalton (WB)
- Fabian Werner (BMZ/GIZ)
- Heather Kipnis (IFC)
- Jessica Neumann (UNIDO)
- Joanna Kahiluoto (EC)
- Lianne van Beek (RVO/CBI)
- Lotte Harmanni (RVO/CBI)
- Maria Maslanka (UNIDO)
- Martha Melesse (IDRC)
- Miranda Fiedler (SDC)
- Reiko Wakatsuki (JICA)
- Reneta Lambreva (GAC)
- Ruta Aidis (USAID)
- Suzuka Sugawara (JICA)
- Valentina Verze (ILO)
- Bjoern Struwer (Roots of Impact)
- Natasha Dinham (Roots of Impact)
- Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat)

Apologies: Nozomi Ide (FAO), Gisela Strand (Sida), Diepak Elmer (SDC), Judith van Doorn (ILO)

Welcome, introductions, update on Chairs:

Karen Moore (GAC) opened the meeting. **She invited a Co-chair to join her**, as the position is still open, and indicated that anyone interested should contact her or the Secretariat. Karen then summarized the meeting agenda.

Updates on current work items:

- **Work item: Gender lens investing (GLI)**

Task team: UNIDO (lead), FAO, SDC, Sida, IDRC IFC

Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat) updated the group on behalf of the task team. This phase of the work (3.1) focusses on the suitability of business simulation games and other innovative methods to influence individuals involved in funding, in the financial sector. The task team has begun working with LeFil Consulting on producing a short report; the first deliverable, an annotated bibliography, is due this month.

Jessica Neumann (UNIDO) added that she is now back at her desk after a period of leave, and looks forward to leading this work again.

- **Work item: WEE and climate**

Task team: Sida (lead), IDRC, ILO, BMZ/GIZ, IFC

Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat) updated the group in Gisela Strand's (Sida) absence. The aim of this work is to commission a set of six case studies of women collectives in the climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience space, and a short summary report. The task team will have a kick-off call with The Canopy Lab consultancy to begin the work next week.

Member agency updates (please see slides – circulated with the Minutes but not posted on the website - for full updates, with links to resources mentioned):

World Bank

Abby Dalton updated the group. She flagged the WB Annual Meetings flagship event today, available on [World Bank Live](#), and spoke on the ongoing consultation for the World Bank Gender Strategy 2024-2030. Details of the draft are [available online](#).

SDC

Miranda Fiedler updated the group. She explained SDC's continued support to 2X Global (her colleague Diepak Elmer was recently at the 2X Global Conference), and spoke on recent work 2X have launched on gender-smart certification. She also pointed the group towards new WEE-related podcast episodes from SDC. Ruta Aidis (USAID) commented that her colleagues were also at the 2X conference, and it would be good to table a discussion about how donors can best get involved in GII.

GAC

Karen Moore updated the group. She first presented Canada's continued focus on care, through two key projects; Time to Care and Scaling Care Innovations in Africa, the second of which was described in more detail by Martha Melesse/IDRC (as below). Both **Lisanne van Beek (NL RVO/CBI)** and **Jessica Neumann (UNIDO)** indicated that they would like to connect on the project *Investing in Women in Nigeria*. Lisanne shared links on CBI projects in the [shea](#) and [ginger](#) sectors in Nigeria.

IDRC

Martha Melesse updated the group. IDRC are focussing on private sector engagement, scaling impact and capacity building in the care economy. [A new CA\\$25 million initiative on scaling care innovations launched in partnership with Global Affairs Canada](#), with a focus on promoting policy and program innovations that foster the recognition, reduction, and redistribution of women's unpaid care work in sub-Saharan Africa. Martha can update the group further on this once they have confirmed the projects they will be working with. **She offered to provide more information bilaterally to anyone interested.** Ruta Aidis (USAID) queried how IDRC and GAC's initiative differs from the World Bank Childcare Initiative. Martha explained; their focus is broader, including country-level and workplace policies, as well as looking broader than *childcare* (they include other types of care such as elderly care and disability care). Nonetheless, IDRC and GAC will be looking for synergies with the WB initiative. **Heather Kipnis**

(IFC) would like to connect bilaterally to discuss synergies with their work on financing care providers, and the CORE Women report mentioned on IDRC's slide.

ILO

Valentina Verze updated the group. The WED programme that she is part still sits under the wider private sector development umbrella, but has moved to the Enterprise Formalisation team in the SME unit, and Virginia Losada has now changed positions and is based in Lima so will no longer be involved in the WG. Valentina provided updates on new coaching packages and training-related projects from the ILO, specifically focussing on the upcoming launch of the platform of Lead Trainers and Trainers of Gender and Entrepreneurship Together [GET-Ahead](#) in the first semester of 2024.

USAID

Ruta Aidis updated the group. Her team have a particular focus on the topics of climate and digitalization, and she particularly emphasized the importance of USAID's [Women in the Digital Economy Initiative](#), in which she is personally involved. **Jessica Neumann indicated she would like to connect on the Climate Gender Equity Fund.**

UNIDO

Jessica Neuman re-introduced herself and her colleague Maria Maslanka. UNIDO have made steps towards gender equality internally in 2022 and 2023, with more favourable parental leave policies and flexible working arrangements. Work continues on gender mainstreaming into UNIDO projects and programmes. Additional to the information on UNIDO's slide, a new UNIDO–UN Women publication has been launched on gender equality in the sustainable energy transition showcasing. Maria further presented information on upcoming UNIDO events incl. the Vienna Discussion Forum on “More diversity, less corruption? – Seeking efficient and just solutions for a green economy on 8 Nov 2023. Ruta Aidis (USAID) applauded the idea of celebrating internal gender champions. Maria explained that the initiative is called “[International Gender Champions](#)” and the Vienna Hub is currently coordinated by UNIDO (the coordination rotates around the Vienna-based organizations that are part of the Vienna Hub). Additionally, she noted that there are six IGC hubs in total, namely Geneva (HQ), New York, Vienna, Nairobi, Den Haag, and Paris. **Maria is happy for follow up bilaterally to connect Ruta to the relevant regional hub coordinator.**

Fabian Werner (BMZ/GIZ) shared a link to their [new publication on gender-just transitions](#). Reiko Wakatsuki (JICA) shared the news that JICA sponsored and participated in 2X Global's first event in Japan, including a panel discussion and GLI seminar. Ella Duffy shared two links to events ([1](#), [2](#)) from Nozomi Ide (FAO).

Impact linked finance with SDC and Roots of Impact

Miranda Fiedler (SDC) introduced the session. Bjoern Struwer and Natasha Dinham (Roots of Impact) then presented on why they founded Roots of Impact, where and how they work, and

examples of the differences between types of financing. For example, they explained that the major difference between impact-linked finance and gender lens investing (GLI) is that GLI generally focusses on gender at the organizational level, and gender considerations are the screening criteria, whereas impact-linked finance generally focusses on gender at the end-customer level, and gender considerations are the performance criteria (though it was emphasized that both are important approaches, needed in tandem). Bjoern emphasized that impact is an additional demand so there must be incentives in place for entrepreneurs and their investors to optimize for impact. Roots of Impact work with investors and offer additional cash incentives or lower interest rates (sourced from donor funding) to investees that can prove they have created social value additional to the financial value desired by the investor. Roots of Impact are technically a non-profit trust fund made up of grant funding from donors, who then co-invest with investors, providing the impact incentives.

Natasha emphasized that impact metrics are co-designed in a bottom-up way with investees, and that the challenges that they face are generally around how to ensure additionality (that the impact created is in addition to what would anyway have been created, without the extra incentive).

Discussion followed each presentation. Jessica Neumann (UNIDO) queried at what point the extra cash incentive is transferred to the investee; when they're showing additional impact or when they have the idea, but need the money to scale up? Bjoern explained that they generally supply impact-linked loans; Roots of Impact would provide the loan up front and then reduce the interest rate when the investee proves that impact is occurring. They require impact results to be independently verified.

Ruta Aidis commented that USAID work with Roots of Impact and Accion Adventure Labs to support gender integration into portfolio companies they already work with, for example on the Trukkr project in Pakistan. Bjoern explained to the room that, in the specific case of Trukkr, Roots of Impact add a cash incentive for additional impact (rather than lowering the interest rate on repayments).

Heather Kipnis (IFC) commented that IFC use performance-based incentives in concessional capital and blended finance (e.g., including cash for gender-related technical assistance to financial institutions). Discussion followed on the need to motivate local banks to expand their products to women-led businesses, and that there is not yet enough demand in the private sector for paying for gender impacts. Discussion also turned to the similarities between paying for gender impact and carbon credits (paying for climate impact). Bjoern reflected that the carbon credits are a cost-effective way for the private sector to achieve net zero commitments but that there is not any similar mechanism for gender impacts. A role for the public sector could therefore be requiring gender-related commitments.

Ruta Aidis (USAID) continued conversation on the role of donor agencies, and Natasha added that another key role for donor agencies is to pull capital together into one fund that organisations like Roots of Impact can draw on for impact-linked finance. They have found that gives more security than handling impact payments transaction by transaction. Another key role for donor agencies that was discussed is their role in influencing the private sector to incentivise gender impact.

Martha Melesse (IDRC) asked for clarification on the difference between impact-linked finance and outcome-based finance. Bjoern explained that outcome-based finance is the overall umbrella term; impact-linked finance is a type of outcome-based finance that is applied in the private sector. Impact bonds, for example, are also a type of outcome-based finance, but are used almost exclusively in the non-profit sector. Jessica Neumann (UNIDO) asked for clarification on the tickets sizes Roots of Impact work with.

Bjoern and Natasha offered that anyone is welcome to connect with them over email.

AOB

Ella Duffy briefly presented ongoing work from the Green Growth Working Group on creating a toolkit for women entrepreneurs and women-led businesses to engage in nature-based solutions for climate adaptation. The task team leading that work are seeking members for an Advisory Group to validate the toolkit at various points throughout the process between now and early 2024. **Ella requested that anyone interested get in touch with her via email recommending themselves, colleagues, or partner organisations for the Advisory Group. She will follow-up with more information over email.**