



The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development

## Women's Economic Empowerment Working Group (WEEWG)

Minutes of meeting, Online, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022

*v. 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022*

### Participants:

- Claudia-Dominique Geiser (BMZ/GIZ)  
– Chair
- Abigail Dalton (WB)
- Adrianna Sierra Leal (ILO)
- Amy Fallon (ITC)
- Beccy Davies (FCDO)
- Chieko Yokota (IFC)
- Daniela Buchmann (SDC)
- Diepak Elmer (SDC)
- Jana Schulte Hürmann (BMZ/GIZ)
- Jessica Neumann (UNIDO)
- Jill Engen (Norad)
- Judith Fessehaie (ITC)
- Karen Moore (GAC)
- Lianne van Beek (NL RVO/CBI)
- Lotte Harmanni (NL RVO/CBI)
- Martha Melesse (IDRC)
- Miriam Maeder (SDC)
- Natsumi Yamada (JICA)
- Ruta Aidis (USAID)
- Suzuka Sugawara (JICA)
- Virginia Rose Losada (ILO)
- Beatriz Muriel (INESAD Bolivia)
- Daniela Romero Romay (INESAD Bolivia)
- Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat)
- Jim Tanburn (DCED Secretariat)

**Apologies:** Gisela Strand (Sida), Nicolas Schmidt (UNIDO), Nozomi Ide (FAO), Faidlyne Policard (GAC), Laura Atienza (EC), Diego Ubfal (WB), Arjan de Haan (IDRC), Jennifer Hansel (USAID)

### Welcome, introductions, Co-chairing update:

Claudia Geiser (BMZ/GIZ) opened the meeting, inviting new members of the group to introduce themselves. Claudia also gave a summary of the agenda and mentioned that the group is still looking for a new Co-chair. GAC have volunteered to take up the Co-chairing role, but contingent on finding a second organisation to Co-chair alongside them. Karen Moore (GAC) confirmed this and encouraged another organisation to step forward.

### External speaker: INESAD Bolivia

Beatriz Muriel of INESAD presented a research project titled "Creating indigenous women's green jobs under low-carbon COVID-19 response and recovery in the Bolivian quinoa sector". INESAD are one of 12 grantees on IDRC's [GLOW](#) programme, and they are at the stage of collecting evidence, to inform interventions that will begin in 2023. Beatriz gave an overview of the Bolivian context, in terms of social and environmental conditions, and explained

possible approaches to building broad social protection system evidence based on green jobs for indigenous women.

During the Q&A session following Beatriz's presentation, discussion centred around clarifying how INESAD define 'fair, decent and sustainable' jobs, and how they will ensure that jobs created fit that criteria, following a question from Ruta Aidis (USAID). Diepak Elmer (SDC) also brought up informality, and Beatriz explained that their approach will focus a lot on social protection – this is a really important part of their approach. Virginia Rose Losada (ILO) commented that ILO work with some Bolivian organisations in the quinoa sector, and she would be happy to follow up after this meeting to link Beatriz to those organisations. Lianne van Beek (RVO/CBI) complimented the approach of including both gender and climate and asked about the inclusion of quinoa buyers as well as producers. INESAD is working with fairtrade and are looking to make contact with more buyers. There are other organisations working with buyers on the price of quinoa in the region. Beatriz also mentioned insurance in her presentation, so discussion also touched on what kind of insurance INESAD are looking to influence, following a question from Suzuka Sugawara (JICA). Beatriz clarified; insurance in terms of public sector insurance for producers.

#### **Presentation of the WEE Gateway, Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat):**

Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat) presented the WEE Gateway, an interactive online tool. The content was developed under the previous 2 annual work plans, and the Gateway is now live (though not yet linked from the DCED website homepage). Ella took the group through the structure of the webpages and gave visual examples of what the webpages look like.

The WEE Gateway is now ready to be launched, so the task team will take up ideas for dissemination. Ella offered one other point for discussion – whether member agencies use the term 'gender sensitive' or 'gender aware' to describe a PSD programme that is aware of how gender affects/could be affected by the programme but doesn't actively address gender issues as part of the programme. Members offered their thoughts in the chat box and gave links to individual internal definitions documents.

#### **Updates on current work items:**

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

#### **Task team: FAO, SDC, Sida, UNIDO**

Jessica Neumann (UNIDO) presented. She gave some background information; this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> piece of work on GLI, the previous two being research reports on how donor agencies can most usefully be involved in the GLI landscape. It became clear from this research that any approach to GLI must approach power relations and bias across the investment process in financial organisations. However, bias trainings have been proven to do little in terms of affecting change. Based on these conclusions, the task team will take an innovative approach and design a business simulation game to address power dynamics and identify levers of

change, with the aim being that players will then become champions of gender, of their own accord.

The task team are developing Terms of Reference, with two key parts: 1) A collection of experiences feeding into technical content for the game and 2) methodology and game development. Jessica took the group through a flowchart slide detailing a theory of change describing what the game could focus on.

**Jessica welcomed other new members to join the task team if interested.**

Ruta Aidis (USAID) complimented the innovative approach and asked whether there would be any certification available for completing the game, e.g., a LinkedIn badge. Jessica thanked Ruta for the idea. Karen Moore (GAC) asked for more details on an ISO business simulation game that Jessica mentioned. **Jessica welcomes anyone to connect bilaterally for more information.**

- **Work item: WEE and climate**

**Task team: Sida, SDC, IDRC, ILO, BMZ/GIZ**

Adrianna Sierra Leal updated the group on behalf of Gisela Strand (Sida, task team lead). The task team has recently met, with interested members of the DCED Green Growth working group, to brainstorm ideas for this new work item. Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat) drafted a briefing note to inform this discussion, and the task team decided to focus on good examples of women *collectives* working on climate mitigation, resilience and adaptation in the green economy, and what factors enabled their success. It will be important to frame any research within a narrative that does not treat women as victims, but as change-agents. The task team will meet again later this month to further explore and validate this idea. **They would really welcome any suggestions of related research papers, as well as case studies of women-led collective action towards climate change - please reach out over email.**

- **Work item: Gender digital divide**

**Task team: ILO, RVO/CBI, IFC, USAID, SDC**

Virginia Rose Losada (ILO) updated the group. Similar to the climate item, the task team is still in the phase of narrowing down on a specific focus for this work, after meeting for the first-time last month. ILO has recently drafted a first concept note, and the work item will focus on an analysis of members' current efforts to support digital platforms. The two main questions for the research are 1) who is left behind in the world of digital platforms and what are different agencies doing? and 2) what can be inclusive solutions to this problem, and how can we arrive at such solutions? **Virginia invited members to please share any resources they have that are related to this topic.** She is happy to share the draft TOR, if anyone here that is not in the task team would also like to review them or contribute – **please reach out over email.**

Claudia reminded the group that anyone is welcome to join task teams at any time, please reach out over email.

- **Work item: Women MSEs and Care**

**Task team: GAC, IDRC, ILO, USAID, SDC**

Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat) updated the group on behalf of Arjan de Haan (IDRC, task team lead). The report, [Childcare Solutions for Women Micro and Small-Enterprises](#), was published in April 2022, and there is a [WEE Talks](#) episode on the topic. Arjan encourages all members to use the report internally. The task team is now concentrating on disseminating the research, with a view to possibly commissioning additional research e.g., on elderly care, later this DCED-year.

**Member agency updates (see slides for full text):**

**JICA**

Natsumi Yamada presented. JICA has launched a new research project with the PSD team on gender-inclusive market system approaches, as well as new 2X aligned overseas investments. They have also recently published a [new tool on mainstreaming gender in PSD](#), a publication on [understanding financial inclusion in Mongolia from a micro perspective](#), and another on [unpacking the influence of business approaches to development on the expansion of women's choices and empowerment in the Kyrgyz Republic](#).

**IFC**

Chieko Yokota presented, noting that the last time IFC joined a WG meeting was in March 2022, so this update is since then. They have published four new publications, including one in partnership with Coursera on [women and online learning in emerging markets](#). Another focusses on [advancing gender equality in the distribution network of the fast-moving consumer goods sector](#). A third new publication focusses on gender-based violence and harassment, on the [business case for creating respectful workplaces in Sri Lanka](#), and a fourth puts the spotlight on Grupo Alltex, Mexico, on [supporting employees through childcare](#). In terms of programming, IFC launched [Mexico2Equal](#) in April 2022, focusing on approaches to reduce gender gaps related to women's employment in the private sector and increase workplace diversity and inclusion, and [Invest2Equal](#) in August 2022, focusing on gender diversity in private equity and venture capital firms and investment processes. Chieko also shared a [link to the gender pages of the IFC website](#) to access other resources.

**UNIDO**

Jessica Neumann presented. In September, [UNIDO delivered regional training](#) on gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean, funded by Norway. It included representatives from 14 countries. Jessica invited WG members to the hybrid online/in-person Vienna Discussion Forum on 3 November 2022, 14:00 CET, where the focus is on 'Women on the move: Surviving forced displacement and building a new life'. She also reminded the group that all six modules of the [UNIDO GLI training](#) are now online (module 1 is also available in

Spanish), and mentioned a forthcoming publication on gender equality in the sustainable energy transition, with UN WOMEN.

### SDC

Daniela Buchmann presented. SDC has reorganised as of 1 September 2022, with new organisational sections. They have also recently published the [2021 Gender Status Report](#), including a chapter on WEE. Otherwise, SDC continue to support the [GenderSmart Initiative](#). Diepak Elmer then took over and **encouraged anyone who is attending next weeks' in-person GenderSmart Summit in London to get in touch**. He also mentioned a new gender mainstreaming component added to SDC's flagship project 'Promoting social entrepreneurship in Latin America and the Caribbean (2018-2024)'. **Diepak is happy to connect bilaterally with anyone who would like to know more about this project.**

### World Bank

Abby Dalton presented. The WB gender strategy has been updated with strategic direction for WB support to client countries and companies to achieve greater gender equality. As part of this, they will be publishing a set of evidence notes, which Abby will share with this group as they become available. The full strategy update is anticipated to be delivered in early 2024. Abby also mentioned the WB [Invest in childcare initiative](#), focussing on expanding the size and quality of WB investments in childcare to improve WEE, child development outcomes and broader benefits for families, businesses and economies. This initiative will run until the end of 2026. **Abby is happy to connect bilaterally with anyone who would like more details.**

### GAC

Karen Moore presented. She firstly noted that the WB Invest in childcare initiative is supported financially by Canada, amongst other donors and philanthropic organisations, and they are excited to see it launched. Karen then gave an overview of new WEE-related projects that started in 2022, under Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy. More information about these projects is available on [Global Affairs Canada's project browser](#). **Karen is happy to connect bilaterally with anyone who would like more details.**

### IDRC

Martha Melesse presented. IDRC held a workshop in Nairobi earlier this month that brought together over 70 researchers, policymakers and implementing partners from East Africa to discuss insights from the GrOW initiative. 11 of the GrOW research projects are currently exploring solutions to unequal gendered distribution of care work in East Africa. A new report on GrOW will be available by the end of the month – Martha will share the link when it is available. IDRC is also planning an evidence review on gender and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement and **welcomes anyone working on similar to reach out bilaterally**. They have also recently done a mapping study on care work and energy transition and are developing proposals for a new portfolio on gender and low-carbon initiatives.

## BMZ/GIZ

Claudia Geiser presented. BMZ [officially launched](#) a feminist development policy on 27 September, with civil society participation. Strategy and policy guidelines are expected in mid-2023. There is a factsheet already available, which will be shared over email after this meeting. As part of the feminist development policy, BMZ has committed that 93% of projects will be gender-sensitive, and 8% will be gender-transformative. This marks a significant increase compared to current percentages. Claudia mentioned a, for example, a project on [promoting employment in Africa through public-private cooperation](#), that will become gender-transformative in a next iteration. In GIZ, Claudia's team are focussing on gender just transitions, and are producing a study with the IIED on this. **She would be happy to connect with others that have mentioned similar in this meeting.**

## ITC

Amy Fallon presented. This is ITC's first WG meeting, and Amy began with thanks for being invited to join – she already sees the value in being a part of the group. ITC has been working on WEE and trade since 2010, including through the [SheTrades Initiative](#) since 2015. They have just come to the end of a 5-year programmatic period and are now looking at planning the next phase. They have developed what they call a 'gender moonshot' strategy and want to commit to being more gender-transformative, not just gender-sensitive. For example, they have now created a network of 12 SheTrades hubs across Africa, Asia and Latin America that are hosted by local institutions and serve as a resource centre for women entrepreneurs to access trainings and market/investment opportunities offered by ITC.

## ILO

Virginia Rose Losada presented and clarified that this update is specifically from the women's entrepreneurship development team. ILO has a new director-general so is in a bit of a transition period. They recently published a guide on [gender sensitive value chain development](#) and will be holding a related webinar on 2 November. ILO are also finalising a compendium of interventions geared to support women's entrepreneurship development, to be published before the end of the academic year. Virginia then gave an overview of relevant ILO projects, for example in Honduras, Nigeria and Moldova. They also have a project just beginning on women in digital business with ITC and Microsoft, and an upcoming event with the WEA partnership on women's entrepreneurship, innovation and digitalisation on 18 or 22 November, in Geneva. **Virginia will share more information on this event when available.**

## USAID

Ruta Aidis presented without a slide but is happy to send links after the meeting. USAID also contributes to the WB Investing in childcare initiative, so is happy to see that launched. They are also developing a women's economic security strategy with the 12 other USG agencies. It will have 5 areas of focus and will be launched later this year after it has been passed by the Whitehouse. Every US agency will then have to put together reporting measures on the 5

areas. Within USAID, they are currently updating their gender policy, and have just launched a resource on gender-based violence, broken down into 12 sector briefs.

#### AOB

Claudia Geiser (BMZ/GIZ) invited any other business. She offered her thanks to everyone for attending, and also for their enthusiasm over the time of her Co-chairing, as this is her last meeting. Jim Tanburn (DCED Secretariat) offered thanks to both Claudia and Lisanne van Beek (RVO/CBI) for their Co-chairing and encouraged others to take up the now open Co-chair position.