



The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development

Women's Economic Empowerment Working Group (WEEWG)

Minutes of Meeting, teleconference, 7 December 2020

18 December 2020

Participants

- Selina Haeny (SDC) – Co-Chair
- Sebastian Gilcher (GIZ/BMZ) – Co-Chair
- Lianne van Beek (NL RVO) – incoming Co-Chair
- Aatif Somji (ILO)
- Adriaan van Velthoven (NL MoFA)
- Adriana Sierra (ILO)
- Gillian Dowie (IDRC)
- Gisela Strand (Sida)
- Jessica Neumann (UNIDO)
- Karen Moore (GAC)
- Lynn Reinhart (SDC)
- Müge Dolun (UNIDO)
- Marc Blanchette (GAC)
- Nozomi Ide (FAO)
- Reneta Lambreva (GAC)
- Wade Channell (USAID)
- Jim Tanburn, Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat)

Apologies n/a

Agency updates and personal introductions

RVO (Netherlands Enterprise Agency)

Personal introduction: Lianne van Beek (incoming co-chair) is the gender coordinator in the international development department, which implements projects in developing countries on behalf of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Her role is to promote gender mainstreaming. Besides this role, she is managing two export promotion projects with cocoa and coffee SMEs in West Africa and Central America.

Agency update: [A guide for SMEs](#) was published last week within the framework of the Orange the World campaign against violence against women and girls, giving information on forms of violence and practical advice on how to monitor gender harassment and to take action. There will be Spanish and French versions as well as English. RVO is now developing and piloting gender-specific projects, taking obstacles for women in export value chains as a starting point. This will start with a gender survey among local stakeholders in focus countries and follow a bottom-up approach. They have also been investigating the digital gender divide, especially in the context of covid-19, and would like to connect with other members with experience/expertise in this area.

Sida

Agency update: Sida has a new gender strategy covering all parts of Sida, from the department to the field, with 4 themes, one of which is WEE. Another focus is on the intersection between gender and the environment (specifically climate change and biodiversity), and they are planning a webinar on this topic. Sida plan to pay more interest to gender lens investing (GLI) now and going forward, and Gisela Strand participated in an OECD gender financing webinar this morning, where much of the focus was on GLI. They have also recently run a [webinar on trade and gender](#), focussing on a recently launched world bank report on women and trade. Sida are also working with AfDB on their new strategy. [Sexual and reproductive health and rights](#) and [WEE](#) are important areas for them, and Sida might be conducting a study on this in the new year. Specifically, this would focus on WEE strategy in Liberia, Kenya, Mali and Mozambique, looking at social norms and masculinity. Also, in early 2021, Sida are launching more E-learning capabilities, with a 3-module system for Sida and partners.

FAO

Personal introduction: Nozomi Ide works with the FAO as an economist, working on research and implementation within WEE.

Agency update: The FAO have recently presented a [new strategy for work with the private sector, covering 2021-25](#). The Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equity Division established a task force to make sure gender and other inclusive issues will be integrated into all PSD work. Innovation, policy dialogue, technical cooperation and data sharing with the private sector are priorities for the new director general. FAO will be launching an online learning platform on gender in relation to food security and nutrition, which will be accessible to all for the purpose of knowledge sharing. It has taken a year to prepare and should be finished before the end of 2020. Nozomi will share the link when it is ready.

UNIDO

Personal introduction: Muge Dolun is the gender coordinator at UNIDO, responsible for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women within the Organization, including the systematic gender mainstreaming of all policies, programmes and organizational practices.

Jessica Neumann is an investment and technology promotion officer on a UNIDO project in Germany. She also serves as gender focal point and therewith forms part of a network of gender focal points throughout UNIDO. She makes sure there is gender mainstreaming in projects and in project documentation (M&E).

Agency update: UNIDO recently ran a [webinar on GLI post-covid](#). Selina Haeny from SDC (co-chair of this group) was on the panel. This was part of a digital series in connection with the [GMIS conference](#), co-chaired by UNIDO. Other work at the moment focuses on bringing a gender lens into UNIDO programmes on green technology and climate. UNIDO is also now trying to turn the resources created immediately post-covid, including the Code of Conduct: To Prevent Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment at UN System Events and Gender Lens

Investing, into training modules. Furthermore, in October 2020, UNIDO together with IOM organized a [webinar on flexible working arrangements \(FWAs\) and the future of work](#). The webinar was part of the 19-23 October 2020 Enabling Environment Week, a joint initiative of the Gender Focal Points and Focal Points of Women of the Vienna-based United Nations organizations (VBOs) and the International Gender Champions initiative.

GIZ/BMZ

Personal introduction: Sebastian Gilcher has been co-chair of this working group for 3.5 years, but this is his last meeting. He is moving positions within the organisation to work in WEE programming in the field.

Agency update: BMZ continue to support the EU gender action plan and remain focussed on WEE. Their new strategy will be more focused with fewer countries, and gender is going to be a quality feature in all projects. For example, there will be focus on the gender pay gap, women entrepreneurs, and the gendered imbalance of unpaid care. GIZ, on the implementing side of things, had been struggling to mainstream gender in practice in the field, so they launched a live helpdesk. Field officers call in and pitch their challenge and they get a live consultant response. This has been successful, especially as other field officers experiencing similar issues can listen in. Looking ahead, they will be aiming to run more WEE training for field officers, most likely online, and welcome advice from others in the group that have mentioned e-learning.

ILO

Personal introduction: Adriana Sierra, from the ILO WEE programme, has taken over as her colleague, Charleine Mbuyi-Lusamba has recently taken up a new role at the AfDB.

Aatif Somji is a technical officer, working on integrating a stronger gender lens into market systems development work.

Agency update: – The ILO are working on finalising a paper on women's procurement to support women entrepreneurs, as part of the Women's Entrepreneurship Enterprise Programme. They've brought on someone who works more on policy to help with the business environment reform side of things. Lianne van Beek from RVO shared this [new report on Making Public Procurement Work for Women](#). The ILO are also working on digitalising some entrepreneurship tools, e.g. training programmes, which is piloting in the coming weeks. They are also soon launching a women's entrepreneurship self-assessment tool. Aatif Somji updated the group on ILO work on childcare services and the link of this with WEE. They recently published a [research brief on how childcare can be integrated into programmes](#).

SDC

Personal introduction: Selina Haeny is a policy advisor on gender equality and the private sector within SDC.

Lynn Reinhart works partly on WEE in her role at SDC and is joining the group for the first time.

Agency update: SDC, in collaboration with Roots of Impact, recently released a [study on gender-inclusive fintech funds](#). They ran an online workshop on the study as well, which some

members of this working group were involved in. On the implementation side, SDC have recently approved 10m CHF for 5 years for a project called [Aceli](#), working on SME financing in agricultural value chains, including impact linked finance – e.g., impact bonus for loans with gender or climate focus. She is happy to share more details with those who are interested.

GAC Global Affairs Canada

Personal introduction: Karen Moore works specifically on the care economy, within the Economic Growth and International Financial Institutions team with Reneta Lambreva and Marc Blanchette.

Reneta Lambreva is in the same team as Karen Moore.

Agency update: Their strategy has a lot of focus on gender, including unpaid care. They will follow up with others who have said they're running events, as they are keen to share knowledge around gender mainstreaming.

IDRC

Personal introduction: Gillian Dowie is usually based in Delhi. She works on research with policy implications in the Sustainable and Inclusive Economies team, with a focus on gender and the environment in value chains, trade agreements etc.

Agency update: Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, IDRC reached out to think tanks and other research institutions to work on short and medium-term strategies, and more recently long-term strategies, on 3-year projects ([e.g. with IDS](#)). This ensured that researchers had work during the pandemic and that gendered data were being collected as the pandemic went on. They are now seeing some of the results of that research and are launching 21 new projects, concentrated in Africa, on a staggered basis. [GrOW's](#) second round, in collaboration with the [Gates Foundation](#) launched in the summer, with a focus on unpaid care and women in male dominated sectors, and the role of public procurement. They are still in the early stages but have selected 8 projects to work with. IDRC as a whole over the last year has been developing a new plan. It was delayed because of COVID-19 but is being thought about again, with exploratory work and strategic rethinking on bringing gender and climate work together.

USAID

Personal introduction: Wade Channell is the senior economic growth advisor for gender. He works full time on WEE, covering different areas including commenting on policy and documentation.

Agency update: USAID has allocated substantial funds to WEE work, including the [W-GDP](#), a large \$100m+ project, for which the funding is secured despite the upcoming presidential changeover. Whether it is on policy or initiatives, USAID sees space for connection and collaboration with this group. They have also [published recently](#), including on the [gender digital divide, especially in relation to COVID-19](#).

Netherlands MoFA

Personal introduction: Adriaan van Velthoven is the gender focal point on the policy side and works with Lisanne van Beek. He is listening in.

Work item 1: Research into COVID-19 and WEE

Task team: GIZ/BMZ, IDRC, SDC, contributions from all members

One of the work items in the work plan for this year is on the topic of COVID-19 and WEE, noting that women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic globally. For COVID-19 responses to be an effective relief for women, it is important that policy makers as well as donors and practitioners have access to relevant publications and knowledge.

Sebastian Gilcher (GIZ/BMZ) presented progress on the proposed actions for this work item:

1. An overview of what DCED members are doing on gender and COVID-19 is done. The task team welcomes new or further additions.
2. A policy brief giving a summary and gap analysis of COVID-19 and WEE resources is currently in preliminary stages; ToR are being drafted by Sebastian Gilcher (GIZ/BMZ).
3. A podcast series featuring 'voices from the field' is less urgent and will be done after action point 2 on the policy brief.
4. An online event presenting the main findings of the policy paper and the podcast series will be thought about after action points 2 and 3 are complete.

The task team asks for members to make some time, if possible, to speak to the consultant producing the policy brief in the new year.

Lisanne van Beek (RVO) pointed the group towards interesting [McKinsey work on the topic](#). Gisela Strand (Sida) liked the idea of podcasts and asked whether GIZ has experience in making podcasts. Sebastian Gilcher (GIZ/BMZ) indicated that there is a team in GIZ producing professional-standard podcasts rather economically, and there could be scope for getting them involved. Jessica Neumann (UNIDO) pointed the group towards a similar podcast to look at: [Capital Musings from UNCDF](#).

Work item 2: Creation of a WEE Gateway

Task team: GIZ/BMZ, ILO, RVO, SDC

The WEE Gateway work aims to create an interactive, digital, hands-on toolkit to support project design and implementation to better integrate a gender lens in PSD. It will involve contracting a consultant or team of consultants to map existing tools, courses and reports, conduct a gap analysis, and design and produce a selected number of interactive tools, chosen based on the research of what is already out there. Lisanne van Beek (RVO) presented on progress thus far. A draft ToR was shared with the group by the task team since the last working group meeting, and the ToR have now been finalised. They are currently liaising with IFC

regarding the tendering process and have a short list of consultant candidates. The work item is set to be completed by June 2021.

Sebastian Gilcher (GIZ/BMZ) highlighted that they now have a list of consultants who work on WEE from looking for a consultant for this work. Wade Channell (USAID) offered that he also has a similar list, which could be consolidated for the benefit of group members, and says he likes the idea of the WEE Gateway. USAID would like to collaborate and provide information to the consultant as well as using it themselves on completion.

Work item 3: Introduction to Gender lens investing (GLI)

Task team: FAO, SDC, Sida, UNIDO

The work item on GLI involves hiring a consultant to a) map GLI in the developing world and b) provide a framework for assessing GLI.

Selina Haeny (SDC) presented progress thus far on this work item. ToR have been produced and have been commented on by IFC, who believe that such an orientation briefing for newcomers to GLI will be helpful. The task team have sub-titled the item *“I work for a DCED member agency and I want to implement Gender Lens Investing; what do I need to know?”* The group discussed whether they would like to see the final draft of the ToRs and Lisanne van Beek (RVO) and Marc Blanchette (GAC) indicated that they would like to read them. Therefore, the ToR will be shared with this group within a week for final comments. The task team welcome suggestions for consultancy firms and individuals who could undertake the work.

Work item 4: Care economy

Task team: GAC, IDRC, ILO

Reneta Lambreva (GAC) shared a presentation on paid and unpaid care. The task team for this work item have not had a chance to meet yet but shared their vision and starting points. Unpaid care is a key barrier to WEE, and paid care work is often precarious. Paid care work is mostly done by women and makes up an estimated 12% of total global employment. There is a need to address the research gap on what works in practice in addressing gender issues in the care economy and how to scale up initiatives. The main entry points will be through looking at specific programmes that are already in progress. Reneta Lambreva (GAC) indicated that GAC has many such programmes.

Next steps: the task team will meet and draft ToR.

Presentation from DCED Secretariat

Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat) presented an introduction to two slide decks that the Secretariat have recently produced, as requested by the WEE Gateway task team. The slides may be useful for others in the working group as well as for the WEE Gateway task team. The two separate decks are:

1. Spotlighting a selected few of the most recent resources available on the DCED [Women's Economic Empowerment Knowledge Page](#), to make it more accessible.
2. Reviewing online Women's Economic Empowerment platforms, to inform the ToR and work on the WEE Gateway item.

Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat) presented sample slides from each deck and indicated that we would like ideas on what next to do with them. Sebastian Gilcher (GIZ/BMZ) and Gillian Dowie (IDRC) both indicated that they would like to share the slides with colleagues in their organisations. Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat) will share the slide decks via email.

AOB

- Sebastian Gilcher (GIZ/BMZ) indicated that the next working group meeting will be in March, and that members should send requests for new work items to Selina Haeny (SDC) and Lianne van Beek (RVO).
- As it was his last meeting and he is stepping down as co-chair, Selina Haeny (SDC) led a thanks to Sebastian Gilcher (GIZ/BMZ) for all his work over the last few years with the group. His energy and inputs have increased participation by DCED members in the group very substantially and made the group very productive. She wished him well with his next position.