

Discussion on Measuring Gender Inequalities

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Presenters

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Gabrielle Groves:

Hello my name is Gabrielle. I'm not an economist, I am not a statistician, I am an academic, working in gender but I've also had some experience as a practitioner. So I think actually why I was invited is that I just recently completed the regional gender analysis for USAID/RDMA, so I had to deal with a lot of the issues being raised here today. How do I link the principles of gender equality to economics? How? Political issues of democratization these are huge challenges. I was given more or less 30 pages to do it in and I faced many of these issues. They varied across sub-region. They varied amongst ethnic minorities, ethnic majorities.

What I find when I listen to today's conversation is there is really a lack of a linkage between say the first presentations and gender. What I think we need to have, and I think this is a healthy start, is to have a discussion on where are our linkage is. Because there is -- I've seen it when I collect -- I use the data that you provide to me, but where I take say the quantitative data, which is often sex disaggregated or ___ out, a lot of times in my research I have to ask why: where is the qualitative aspect?

This is where we start to get our linkages, why is gender important? It is important, as the last presentation said: it gives us the measurement. It is difficult to put measurement often on moral issue. We tell our kids that. But why? Show us

the evidence. Is this really happening? How much does it cost us?

The other thing I find interesting is kind of -- I know gender's a very debatable issue, even though it's been around for a while, but the understanding is, and I think I've heard it from your comment on the economic aspect of it, and I know a lot of folks doing the presentations but I was trying to keep my ideas streamlined, let everyone talk. But gender inequality is not merely about women and men, and that's something we have to take into understanding. It is cross cutting, economic. I think, the first presentation from MGP said these issue cost incomes. It's not just a rich or poor, it's about making the marginal/invisible visible in our analysis.

So that's very important, and it is a dichotomy where the distribution of resources and power is central importance. So we have this economic side. I'll leave that.

What I wanted to talk about is gender equality indicators. It is a measurement of change as well. Why is it important? Because it is advocacy. It also improves our planning. As economists, social scientists it helps us to plan better as well as to see the barriers in our planning. It leads to better development, as well as the numbers provide us an opportunity for accountability. Who is accountable to make this change? Where are the numbers? As well as I heard a lot about the lack of evidence. This should also be an opportunity to simulate change.

A lot of times when I'm going through my own personal research I don't have these numbers. This is an opportunity for programs to say, "Hey,

there's something there that is invisible. Let's grasp this opportunity and let's improve our economic planning. That's a very important part of gender.

You talked a bit asking about the structural inequalities. In my own research for USAID, I found it's difficult if you just say it's agriculture. It's difficult if you just say it's education. There are structural inequalities, it is -- they're very connected so it's hard to separate them. But what I've done is I've put them into three categories which is: limited access to productive access and capital. The second is just discriminatory laws, policies and institutions. And number three being, restrictive norms and attitudes. These really crosscut all different sectors. So you can't just say it's not just the lack of economic participation because it also impacts health, it also impacts education. They're very, very cross-connecting and you can't really pull them apart.

Yumiko Kanemitsu:

My name is Yumiko Kanemitsu, I'm a regional evaluation specialist for UN Women, the regional office based in Bangkok. I just want to talk a little bit about costing of gender-based violence and gender – measuring inequalities. First I want to mention that costing gender-based violence is definitely not easy to assess. They include direct costs such as violence, illness, and missing work and also indirect cost like missed opportunities. So it's really hard to measure. But I think it's important to do this in the developing countries, especially these methods, more than in the developed countries such as the UK, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland. For instance, one example is in Canada, impact costing studies, \$900 million are spent, in policy correction, compensation assistance, etc., which is excluding

emergency costs. So it's really meaningful to do it in developing contexts.

Especially also violence against women's impact on women's self-esteem and their capabilities. For instance, women suffer disproportionately from depression symptoms. But the psychological cost of gender inequality has never been assessed. That's one example I wanted to make a point.

Another thing is measuring gender inequalities. We often here different indicators. The first one we hear is human development indicators by UNDP and then this one is mainly like life expectancy and economic prospect by using GDP per capita, and then adult literacy and school enrollment.

So then in 1996 UNDP introduced two indices to gender. One is that gender development indicators, GDI, and the other one is gender empowerment measurement, GEM. So this includes seats in parliament held by women, proportion of administrators and managers who are women. Proportion of professionals and technical workers who are women, and women's share of earned incomes. These are the differences between HDI and GDI. And further back, gender equality index, GEI, is also developed by the International Statistics Institution.

This one is more comprehensive, and what is included? Autonomy of the body. Who controls the body? And the autonomy within the family and household. And political power, material resources, and employment, income and time and gender identity. And the other one is called the threshold measure of women status, TMWS indicator. This identifies six areas. This is socio-

economic status, female household head-ship, education exposure, employment workload, management type, and ascribed status.

So this new TMWS is quite good but it's still lacking the detailed decision-matrix within a family, which requires more surveys _____ studies. And for instance including women's needing permission to travel outside of home, that kind of things.

Here's another one from the World Bank, too. World Bank's is life expectations, female proportion of labor force, sex, primary school enrollment, progression of youth literacy rates, fertility rate, contraceptive prevalence, maternal mortality rates. I find it interesting United Nations Common Indicators framework is similar. But it substitutes women's share in paid known agriculture employment for adult literacy indicators. We talk about this morning that agriculture sector is important the indicators substituted for literacy.

So what I wanted to say was that overall different methodological index but many countries the indicators differ about which areas that need attention. So it is a general consistency but do not find causal linkages between different measures. For instance relatively high levels of education are not clearly associated with high levels of political-power sharing.

So the UN Women is supporting the gender resource evaluations, so then we do more methodologically look at gender. So I brought the publications, outside. So please take a look. I don't want to take it back to the office.

Patty Allemande:

I'm Patty Allemande and I'm based here at USAID in Bangkok in a regional position looking at gender

equality and female empowerment. I work a lot with our USAID missions in many countries to continue the advancement of closing the gender gap in all of our development sectors.

I want to thank our colleagues from the UN, UN Women and UNDP for the presentations they gave. And I want to applaud them for particularly highlighting violence against women as a part of gender-based violence. And to build upon Steve's point and a couple of other points that came about after the presentation violence is something that no one should experience, and we should do it as a right and not necessarily for anything else. But I want to also highlight a couple of other things about that.

Just yesterday UNDP launched findings of a study they did on involving men and boys in the prevention of gender-based violence. So I really encourage you to look through those findings as well.

I'm going to give myself the challenge to somehow link these topics of the Summit. I'm going to try to link gender inequalities to the inclusive growth and then leave you with a challenge for this afternoon because I'll probably not be able to join you, on how you're going to measure that, inequality and development gaps.

I'm going to do that by focusing on three different examples. The first one -- this is going to echo the comments that everyone has been giving this morning. This is an incredibly complex measurement task, and that we are challenged sometimes by having to provide a regional index, or a comparison between countries on something as complex as inclusive growth. I echo your point

about I don't know if we should be trying to come up with one index to include all of these different components.

I want to take you down to a very specific example first, and that's what my colleague from Bangladesh, Farhini, brought up. And that's agriculture, and looking at women's empowerment in agriculture and an index that we have produced as part of the Feed the Future initiative. I really encourage you to look at what that one piece of economic growth portfolio and the needs to measure what does it entail. So in that index we've developed five domains of empowerment, including resources, including time, including other components of what does it mean for women's empowerment in agriculture. Those different domains are measured by different indicators, they're collected from women and they're collected from men. And then there's a parity index that is determined.

I mention this because what has it done for our programming. I always think -- we collect data to impact programming, to impact policy. With this index we're able to see exactly where should we be putting our resources when it comes to increasing women's economic opportunities in agriculture. In some countries you can look at data, there's data from around the world where this has been implemented. In some countries we need to be increasing women's access to credit. In other countries it's about increasing women's access in leadership in the agricultural sectors and make sure that the policies reflect what needs to happen.

I give you that example because that's one very small piece of economics. That's women in

agriculture. And the complexity of measurement at that level alone, let's take it up a notch.

So last week I was at Women in the Economy Forum for APAC, and APAC has four levels that they're looking at women in the economy, two of them being access to credit and access to markets. I bring up the example of access to markets to try to weave in what we heard this morning about violence against women. Sometimes from my economist friends they're like, "What does that have anything to do with the economy? Violence against women, gender-based violence."

An example from Papua, New Guinea: women working in the market selling goods. They have to have a policy and program to build protection in that market so women could sell the goods that they produced and not be victims of violence, albeit physical, sexual, or mental. So there're components of a policy environment when you're looking at access to credit; it's not just access to market, access to credit. It's not just about getting banks to have better lending policies or to be more appreciative of the different assets that people can bring, or the needs to -- like my colleague from Indonesia mentioned: the identification, and what does that mean for accessing credit? It's the social protections as well that we need to be looking at because the social protections and the economic protections offer economic opportunities for women.

Take it up one more step, and that's the discussion we had this morning that I thought was really great: looking at what are these different dimensions that we need to look at when we're looking at inequalities and we're looking at inclusive growth, and sustained economic growth,

poverty reduction, inequality reduction, broadening access to opportunities.

I challenge you: where are the people in this? Where are the women in this? Where are the men in this? Where's the human face to this? How do we take the complexities of the measurement of an agriculture and women index and the regional discussions on access to credit access to market to this overall inclusive growth discussion that we need to be looking at. And I give it as a task for all of us, who look at this from the minute levels of a researcher, a UN agency, and how detailed that level of analyses needs to be to answer the question and to give us the -- to close the gaps. What does that mean to collecting all of that and looking at inclusive growth on an economic platform regionally?

Moderator: Does anybody have an answer for that?

Patty Allemande: It's a challenge, Michael.

Moderator: Question and comments and now I've got a question proposed that hopefully will stimulate some conversation. Is there any specific questions people have, or comments?

Female Speaker: I'm Frahim from Bangladesh. I just wanted to echo the importance of evidence because when you talk about co-val cost of violence against women you're looking at numbers, even if it could be as low as 2 percent or 1.75 percent. But I can say it from experience in Bangladesh in 2011, USAID funded the Bangladesh co-val implemented by CARE and they found out that 2 percent of Bangladesh's GDP is thanks to co-val. So that's how much it cost.

In terms of our experience that was a number that for developing practitioners, for policy makers

made a little bit of sense, as opposed to coming up with no data, as opposed to coming up with qualitative information that women are underprivileged or the cost associated to violence.

I don't want to harp much on it but it's really important and that's how we can make changes to our policies, that's how we can prioritize our budget allocation and resources appropriately.

Moderator:

Let me pose the question -- we've got a few minutes, and somebody earlier observed that we really haven't had any discussions; we've had lots of presentations, we've had some comments. Let me put this out for discussion. This issue of gender equality obviously drives many of the decisions that we as development organizations make because it's so evident, as we've been talking about, it's the right thing to do. We believe in it, we know it's right, we've got data that shows it.

And so as we design our activities, despite what the policy environment may be we still march forth, designing activities that are taking these issues into consideration. Well let's get back to the question that was earlier posed, the slightly provocative question that we had earlier. It looks at policy making and we're going to be talking about policy making this afternoon. But as we start looking at considering the first presentation that we heard in which there really does need to be a policy in the regulatory environment, etc. in place to start providing the protections that are needed, for instance, or equal rights.

What is it, in your experience, that governments are looking for when they start making those hard choices on where we're going to be making investments? Which laws do we need to be

putting in place? In your experience, what can we be providing in terms of research findings, etc. that's going to start creating the kind of change at the policy level?

Male Speaker:

Hello everyone, my name is Enwai Soji, I'm with UNDP's regional center here in Bangkok. I'll also be speaking about this point in the afternoon as a panelist. I think we need to see -- and to answer your question we need to see exactly when the policy makers sit down to make decisions and what's the political economy surrounding these issues. And there often is the vested interests which go fairly deep. A lot of development programs don't change over a long time span even though there've been evaluations saying that certain things are wrong with the program. So we need to see how we can tailor our information and the evidence that we have to suit the exact needs of policy makers. I think there's an abundance of data, rather than the other way around. And it's not so much that there's capacity of it.

So we need to see how we can tailor information and data to suit the needs of policy makers, so essentially that's my response to your question.

Moderator:

Other thoughts? Other comments? Mina, what do you think?

Mina:

I'm just thinking of the measurement question I think which Yumiko was talking about. I'm divided about this, looking at the indicator or looking at an index. Because the index simplifies, but I think policy makers don't like countries to be compared. The reason why the HDI is very popular, or not popular because it ranks countries. But the problem with the gender indices is that they are composite but personally speaking I don't think any

of them say much. Okay? So I feel that the individual indicators, because it's such a sectoral issue, if you look at wage gaps it tells you something between men and women, or if you look at asset gaps it tells you something between men and women. But if you look at a composite, none of them really tell you much, to tell you the truth, because the GDI moves with the HDI.

The HDI was good because it's a crude measure but it compares countries and makes a policy-maker feel like "oh I'm five notches below," but I'm not sure about the composite gender indicators. I'm not sure if we've found an index for gender which is convincing. Personally I believe in the value of the individual indicators in terms of measurement because I think you have to be very specific to what sector you're speaking about and what in that sector you are talking about.

The other issue about costing, I think it's very important to do costing. But the problem is that when you do it very rationally you could also come up with a very small cost in numerical terms. And that will be a disincentive to the policy-maker because, for example, we were told how much will the economy benefit with having more women in the formal labor force. I think it _____ the calculations but it was like some \$89 billion or something. But then they said that's it? That's the number?

The thing with costing that -- it's already been said but I think that's the problem that even things like child labor, for example, people agree it's bad, but it could actually benefit the economy. And also violence in different forms could benefit the economy. So I still believe you have to be very

careful with costing because it could take you in another direction. So I think it's a very good exercise, but violence keeps also -- I mean there's violence pervasive everywhere, and it keeps societies together. Oppression keeps societies together. So I think -- I'm just saying that economy taken too far, the costing model --

Hector Salaami:

Hi, I'm Hector Salaami from J-PAL in Jakarta. I think this is a very interesting conversation, one that Mina and I will flesh out later on in our presentation this afternoon. We bring up a lot of issues about how do you get into a policy maker's office and what do they want to hear, what it is that you present to them that makes them change. I've had the experience of in my professional career to be both on the government side and now from this perspective trying to make some changes using research and evidence.

In some cases what will get you in the door is the costing strategy. You come to a policy maker and you say, "I can save you -- I can decrease the amount you're losing on GDP by 2 percent by implementing these types of programs that reduce this type of issue."

I think the key point that we haven't really discussed so far is you have to present the policy maker an actionable item. You have to present them options. If I come to you and I say, "Look, if you decrease violence to women then you can increase your GDP by 2 percent." "Okay that's great. Thanks for coming." But then if you come to them and you say you can increase your GDP by 2 percent by investing 0.2 percent of your GDP into X program, Y program, Z program. Then you

provide them something that they can actionably do, and that they can justify to their higher levels to say, "We invest this much; we earn this much overall." Just taking the costing strategy in context.

Ultimately what it comes down to as well is -- I think this is the point brought up earlier -- what's the implementation, the strategy, the program? In some places it might be educating the males. In some cases it might be finding other ways to engage with and encourage women to speak up and become leaders, etc. That's also where, as evaluation practitioners, we have to really understand that we need evidence as to what we're implementing on the ground and what these projects and programs are that we actually want to advocate for, and that we actually want to go to the policy makers and say, "This is what could work because we have evidence." We'll talk about this a little bit more.

Moderator: Excellent. Great. Two more comments then we'll break for lunch.

Female Speaker 2: I'm _____ from Indonesia, I'm working with one-off USAID project on water supply and the sanitation sector. I'm agreeing with Hector because with my experience with water supply and the sanitation sector, is promoting the understanding of gender itself through the decision-maker. Because sometimes when they think about gender they think about women only. So that's why in every indication about gender even they'll tell you women, not men because it is their understanding gender is women. So we need to promote more that when we talk about gender equity it's actually roles between men and women because in our project, especially in the sanitation

sector, when we talk about gender equity it should be in the infrastructure work. Usually this is the men's domain. But then how we can input women _____ to that work because if not, the sustainability of the sanitation facilities will not go longer because the design is only based on men's design not women because they don't care about pregnant women, children, and disabled people.

So we need to input the women concern in this part. Also when we talk about promotion of hygiene improvement, hygiene behavior change. Usually people tend to work only with women, but we also need some men involved in that because the behavior change on the hygiene this is also important more and _____ from men.

I think to make a good achievement in the gender equity should be more promotion on the understanding about gender itself to the policy maker, so they will have better awareness. And they will also support some of the discussion like having a policy on program that supports gender.

Michael:

Michael from MTB Exit. I have a suggestion and also a question for your experience on that because I believe what we're talking about here is how we frame the issues so it actually translates into the political economy.

Ultimately I would say the unit for a political economy is votes. And that is closely related to economic cost, of course. But I only have one experience where this somehow worked, in Cambodia with a law on passenger helmets where I was part of a study where it came out that about 98 percent of the passengers actually support a law for helmets for passengers. And that got something moving that got the community together

and got a statement to the ministry and it actually moved forward. It's not been actually implemented yet but it got something moving.

That's the experience and suggestion and now I would like to hear from your experiences to also engage in the learning, how much do you think actually creating awareness and showing that there is support from the public to actually introduce something like that can help to introduce policies here too.

Moderator:

As we said this afternoon we're going to be having a whole session on policy but we've got some speakers then so we can take that question into consideration. So we're going to break for lunch.

[End of Audio]