



## WORLD BANK

### Good practice

The World Bank is using innovative approaches to reduce persistent gender inequalities and raise incomes. In Vietnam, a pilot project has increased women's access to land. Vietnam's land use policy is gender neutral but, with just enough space for one name on land tenure certificates, registrants were often the male heads of households or husbands. Despite their often disproportionately large contributions to family labor on the farm, women had no legal proof of their rights to land as they lacked certificates in their name. At a time when families may need to take advantage of these usufruct rights, such as when husbands are away from the village for extended periods of time, wives could not use the land as collateral for credit. The pilot project re-issued the land tenure certificates bearing the names of both wife and husband. In an economy transitioning from collectives to smaller family farms, the project increased opportunities for rural families to use their most productive asset to generate income.

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### Recent policy statements

Since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the World Bank has taken several important steps to make gender equality an important dimension in its fight against poverty. In 2001, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors endorsed a new gender mainstreaming strategy which called for country-specific gender analysis to be conducted in all borrowing countries. Since the launch of the strategy, over thirty countries have undertaken such assessments. The issuance of a new operational policy on gender and development in March 2003 was also an important step towards making the commitment made at Beijing a reality in the World Bank's day-to-day work. The policy documents reflect the recommendations and priorities of the Bank's gender mainstreaming strategy and outline the procedures to be followed by staff in implementing the policy.

### Programme objectives

The gender mainstreaming strategy relies on a basic process that involves working with countries to: (a) prepare periodic, multi-sectoral Country Gender Assessments, (b) develop and implement priority policy and operational interventions that respond to such assessments; and (c) monitor the implementation and impact of these policy and operational interventions. The strategy builds largely on the findings of the 2001 World Bank publication "Engendering Development-Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice," which outlined the empirical links between gender, public policy and development effectiveness. The implementation of the strategy involves a potentially wide range of activities that span analytical work, policy advice and lending.

### Operational activities

Since Beijing, the World Bank has made progress in integrating gender issues into its operations, especially in health and education. Between 1995 and 2000, the Bank lent more than \$3.4 billion for girls' education programs, and was also the single largest lender in the world for health, nutrition and population projects, three-quarters of which contained gender-responsive actions. Ongoing Bank-supported operations that promote gender equality include: a HIV/AIDS project in Zambia, a community-based empowerment project in southern India and a tourism and regional development project in Honduras. Innovative initiatives in gender-based development, such as a rural roads project in Peru, a women's empowerment and rural electrification project in Bangladesh, and a water and sanitation project in Ghana continue to receive additional funding and technical assistance from the Bank. Supported by grants from the Governments of Norway and the Netherlands, the Trust Fund for Gender Mainstreaming in the World Bank has supported numerous path-breaking endeavors, including: engendering post-conflict reconstruction in the Congo, work on gender and law dimensions of HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the creation of a sex-disaggregated statistical database for the entire Latin America and Caribbean region.

## **Other recent activities**

A new research initiative on gender and economic policy is developing a substantial body of analytical work to impact policies in areas such as trade and competitiveness, public expenditures, safety nets and public sector downsizing. The World Bank has also partnered with international development agencies on research that empirically demonstrates the links between gender equality and all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The World Bank is promoting gender-based analysis of private sector development and the investment climate assessments prepared by the Bank have incorporated questions to capture gender-based differences. ■