

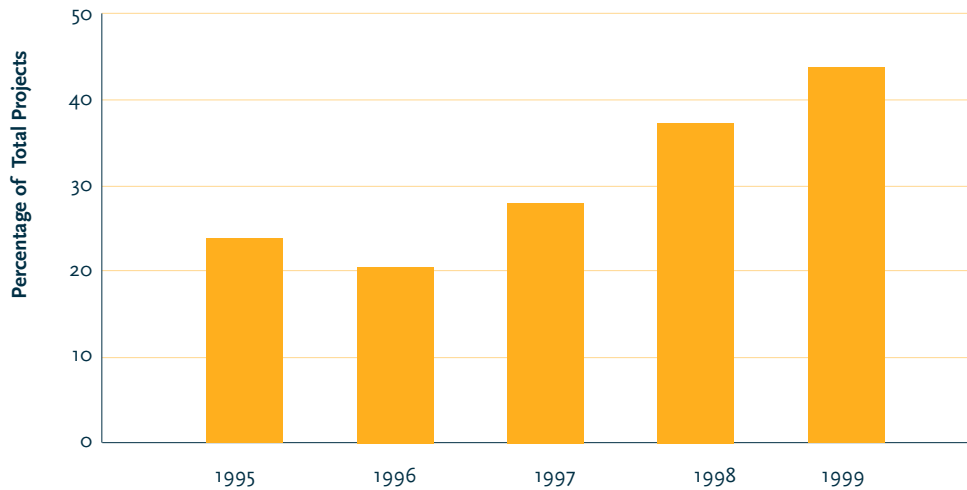
# INSTITUTIONALIZING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

**S**INCE BEIJING, THE WORLD BANK has increasingly recognized the importance of gender issues and the need to continue integrating them throughout its lending activities. The percentage of projects that include some consideration of gender issues in their design has almost doubled since 1995, climbing to more than 40 percent of all Bank projects (Figure 1). The percentage of projects that finance gender-related activities or support policy changes designed to reduce gender inequalities averaged 26 percent in 1995–99. However, much remains to be done to institutionalize gender issues in the majority of projects and particularly to ensure that such considerations are reflected concretely in policies and project activities. To strengthen its efforts in these areas, the Bank is working to develop accurate measures of progress in integrating gender issues into its operations.

In the last few years, support for gender issues in World Bank lending has advanced beyond traditional areas such as health and education. Gender has been integrated into projects in agriculture, water and sanitation, energy, transportation, community development, and legal reform. Projects that are par-



Figure 1: Percentage of World Bank Projects Designed with Consideration of Gender Issues



ticularly effective in integrating gender concerns are disseminated throughout the Bank as examples of best practices. The Bank has also begun to incorporate gender issues into adjustment lending.

### AGRICULTURE

Women have traditionally played a strong role in agricultural activities in low- and middle-income countries. Since 1995, about half of World Bank rural and agricultural development projects have addressed gender issues in their design. Some examples of gender-aware projects include the following.

The **Nicaragua Agricultural Technology and Land Management Project** (US\$44 million) took action during project implemen-

tation to improve client services, which helped focus attention on women’s needs. These actions included:

- Initiating a pilot program to demonstrate the impact of addressing gender issues in agricultural extension;
- Providing technical information on home gardens cultivated by women;
- Incorporating gender-related issues in technical training, drawing on an assessment of the role gender plays in decision-making in productive activities; and
- Preparing an action plan on gender and monitoring its implementation.

The initiatives resulted in a marked improvement in women’s contact with extension services, which increased sixfold as a result of the project.

When a mid-term review indicated that few women farmers took advantage of the services provided in the Côte d'Ivoire Agricultural Services Project (US\$50 million), gender analysis was used to redesign the project and introduce comprehensive corrective measures at several levels. At the institutional level, a bureau for women farmers was created in the government's Agricultural Services Agency to provide support and advice to the rest of the agency. The project helped provide training in gender-focused participatory diagnosis methods to Côte d'Ivoire's agricultural services staff, along with a review of gender-specific targets

and indicators. Although it is too early to assess the long-term impact of these activities, women's access to agricultural services has clearly improved.

## WATER

Women are the primary collectors, users, and managers of household water supplies in developing countries. The World Bank's work in water and sanitation in recent years has sought to give women, and poor women in particular, a greater choice of services and a voice in determining how these services are provided. Numerous Bank operations reflect these efforts.



The **Ghana Community Water and Sanitation Project** (US\$21.9 million) is an example of the Bank's efforts to increase women's participation in decisions about water and sanitation. The project used a highly demand-driven, participatory approach. Local NGOs work with communities to ensure that women actively participate in decisionmaking. A participatory midterm review of the project found that women as well as men play effective leadership roles. Women account for 48 percent of water and sanitation committee members and 35 percent of executive committee members. Increasing women's role in decisionmaking has allowed them to utilize their knowledge and expertise and increased the likelihood that the systems will be maintained.

The recently approved **Ghana Second Community Water and Sanitation Project** (US\$80 million) builds on the results of the first project. It emphasizes community-driven activities and gender-sensitive design, using several methods. For example, water and sanitation committees must have balanced representation of women and men. A key performance measure will be the number of gender-balanced water and sanitation committees. In addition, training for water and sanitation committee members will include a discussion of gender issues.

The **Morocco Rural Water and Sanitation Project** (US\$10 million) provides another example of a project designed to give women a voice in decisions on community infrastructure. The Bank developed the project after findings from a Bank-supported study

showed that men's and women's priorities for infrastructure often differ in Morocco.<sup>7</sup> Men, who were usually consulted on earlier projects, were interested primarily in constructing rural roads and ensuring a supply of electricity, while in many villages, women were concerned mainly with the lack of potable water. In much of Morocco, women and young girls fetch the water, often from as far as 5 kilometers away. As a result, girls often miss school. The project uses a participatory approach, sending out mobile participation teams (including at least one woman) to work with communities on developing water supplies. The project is monitoring the impact on school attendance, especially of girls. In one village a recent survey found that primary school attendance by girls more than doubled a year after the new water supply system began operating.

## ENERGY

The World Bank is adopting innovative approaches to serving the energy needs of women, notably through the Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP).<sup>8</sup> Meeting women's energy needs can free up many hours for more productive activities. In addition, energy sources are linked to health and environmental issues. For example, cooking consumes more fuel than any other activity in rural areas of low-income countries. Cooking fuel is often time-consuming to collect and, when burned, emits smoke and pollutants that cause respiratory problems, especially in women and children. Improving access to clean fuel for cooking not only saves time but



also improves household air quality, and reduces the incidence of respiratory problems.

In Senegal, for example, households (both urban and rural) consume 58 percent of all energy, mostly in the form of forest-based fuels (firewood and charcoal) that are used for cooking. Increased demand for wood has resulted in serious environmental degradation and the impoverishment of rural areas. The **Senegal Sustainable and Participatory Energy Management Project** (US\$14.5 million) aims to meet the ever-increasing demand for household fuels by fostering the participation of rural communities in the production of charcoal and of the private sector in the production and dissemination of improved household fuels. Women and young people

(who have primary responsibility for collecting firewood and play a central role in developing and managing natural resources) are key participants in the project and play an important role throughout its life cycle.

The **Bangladesh Opportunity for Women in Renewable Energy Technology Project** (US\$0.185 million), a technical assistance project sponsored by ESMAP, focuses on the coastal district of Patuakhali. The project is introducing a renewable energy technology—direct current solar lamps—and provides training to women to set up microenterprises that will manufacture and install these lamps. The project, which relies on the private sector and local delivery mechanisms, is expected to bring much-needed lighting to

more than 10,000 households on several islands that lie outside the reach of any electric power grid. It trains rural women to organize into group-owned microenterprises, helping them move away from domestic agricultural production to technology-based consumer production.

## TRANSPORTATION

Transportation projects are widely assumed to be gender neutral, with women and men benefiting equally from well-designed projects. But a growing number of studies show that men and women often have different transportation needs. Because men have the dominant role in community decisionmaking in many countries, women's transportation needs are often not considered in the selection and design of transport projects.

A Gender and Transport Thematic Group is working to raise awareness of the gender dimensions of transportation in the World Bank. The group develops and implements pilot initiatives aimed at creating guidelines and best practices for integrating gender in the transport sector. In 1999 the group launched a program designed to strengthen the gender capacity of rural travel and transportation programs in Sub-Saharan Africa. The program, which operates in 10 countries, supports a number of activities. Among these are studies on women's transportation needs and constraints to meeting them, pilot projects to increase women's access to bicycles and other intermediate means of transport, and a review of experiences with women's participation in labor-based road

construction and maintenance programs.

Several national workshops and a regional conference on gender and transport have also been organized. The goal of the three-to four-year program is to contribute to integrating gender in transportation projects and policies throughout Africa. Similar but more modest initiatives are also under way in Asia and Latin America.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development projects offer another opportunity for integrating gender initiatives. In the **Indonesia Kecamatan Development Project** (US\$225 million), for example, groups of villagers submit proposals to finance social infrastructure or productive activities. The project incorporates several features designed to ensure that women will apply for funding. Women are encouraged and trained to participate fully, and consultant firms are evaluated on the gender balance of their proposed facilitator teams. All training contains gender modules. Each village elects one man and one woman as village facilitators, and at least two-fifths of the members of the subdistrict decisionmaking body are women. Finally, if a village submits two proposals, one must be from women. After one year almost 500,000 women—one-third of the total number—have participated in the project.

## LEGAL REFORM

The World Bank is increasingly taking gender concerns into account in projects related to legal reform. In order to complement the

judicial reforms being implemented by Ecuador's Supreme Court, for instance, the **Ecuador Judicial Reform Project** (US\$10.7 million) includes a Program for Law and Justice that provides small grants to groups in civil society. A particular area of emphasis is improving access to the judicial system. The majority of these activities, including four pilot legal services centers in urban areas, serve women's legal needs. The centers in Duale and Santa Elena provide legal services for low-income women, many of whom have been underserved by the judicial system because of excessive delays in family law cases. Through mediation, the centers have been able to improve the efficiency of the court system as well as women's access to it. The centers are able to resolve child support cases in 3–8 weeks that previously languished in the courts for several years. Child custody cases are usually decided within 48 hours. These centers also provide consultations on issues such as child support, domestic violence, sexual violence against children, land disputes, and inheritance.

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Violence against women not only violates basic human rights but has steep economic, social, and human costs. As part of its expanded development approach, the World Bank has begun providing assistance to combat gender-based violence. Bank activities in this area include assistance to several NGOs in Africa, support for legal reform in Ethiopia, and studies on gender-based vio-

lence in Asia and Latin America. With the United Nations Fund for Women, the World Bank cosponsored the virtual working group *End Violence*, which culminated in a global teleconference in March 1999.

The recently approved **Lithuania Social Policy and Community Services Development Project** (US\$3.7 million) includes a Battered Women's Shelter that will provide a temporary residence for battered women and their children. The shelter will provide social services to help women find permanent and safe living accommodations. Project monitoring will pay special attention to issues such as the number of women served, the impact of the pilot project on women, and the appropriateness of the project's design.

## ADJUSTMENT LENDING

Adjustment lending has increased since the start of the East Asian financial crisis in 1997. Most adjustment loans are large and are often accompanied by policy reforms that may affect men and women differently. The Mali Economic Management Credit and the Rwanda Economic Recovery Credit have taken action to address gender issues.

The **Mali Economic Management Credit** (US\$60 million) supports the government's actions to address gender-based obstacles that limit women's access to land and financial services. Specifically, it has facilitated the preparation of an action plan that was included as part of the overall financial sector action plan approved in 1998. As a result, budget support has been provided for



women's income-generating activities. The operation has also facilitated women's access to land in the *Office du Niger* region. There has been a significant improvement in the number of women who have gained access to land, and a heightened public awareness of women's legal rights and the benefits of women's participation in the development process. An additional benefit has been the creation of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, which has strengthened the institutional capacities of the Women's Development Promotion Authority.

The recently approved **Rwanda Economic Recovery Credit** (US\$75 million) supports legislation to eliminate discrimination against women. It is designed to promote legal and institutional changes in the agricultural sector and labor market that will foster economic growth and reduce rural poverty. Amendments to the labor code will consolidate sectoral minimum wages into one national minimum wage and remove provisions that discriminate against women. The government will continue its public awareness campaign, advertising and discussing these changes.