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Q1: Respondent details

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Q2: Country or Customs territory

EUROPEAN UNION

Q3: Organization

Other (please specify)
 The World Bank Group (WBG) consists of five international organizations: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Development Association (IDA), the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).

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Q4: Title of case story

Gender in Agri- Value Chains, Kosovo, Moldova, Armenia

Q5: Case story focus

Infrastructure upgrading and the development of related services markets, including through support for investment climate reforms.

Q6: Case story abstract

In agricultural and agri-business value chains, work done by women often takes place in undervalued areas such as the home or informal businesses. Women tend to be underpaid and their jobs less secure. In agricultural settings, the economic contribution of women is often relatively invisible—even though they perform a large part of the farm-activities. Women-owned rural businesses face more constraints and receive far fewer services and support.

The project involved in-depth assessment of agri- value chains from a gender perspective with an eye toward developing policy recommendations for enhancing economic opportunity for women. The assessments focused on value chains employing a significant number of women and offering new job opportunities. Readiness for change of value chain actors was another key factor along with the existence of some level of organization of value chain actors, and low entry barriers for women entrepreneurs offering new opportunities for women.

Q7: Who provided funding?

Multilateral organization

Q8: Project/Programme type

Multi-country

Q9: Your text case story

- The origin of the project

Equality of opportunity for women and women's empowerment are recognized within the World Bank Group Gender Strategy as essential for economic growth. A range of factors underlies the under-realized economic potential of women. Female labor force participation lags globally; women are only half as likely as men to have a full-time job; women who have paid work earn up to one-third less than men and often work informally. Female-owned businesses are generally more growth-constrained because of a lack of access to productive inputs and assets, such as land, technology, finance, market knowledge, and business networks. Powerful prevailing socio-cultural norms as well as legal and regulatory barriers further limit women's full economic emancipation.

The project sought to assess the obstacles and opportunities facing women in agri- value chains in three countries in the ECA region—Kosovo, Moldova, and Armenia. Arguments for gender-sensitive value chain development can be categorized as follows:

1. Business arguments: women often play important (but invisible) roles in value chains, including playing a key role in upgrading strategies. Gender inequity in agricultural value chains creates a missed business opportunities.
2. Social justice arguments: men and women should benefit from development interventions. This approach affords a way of translating our commitment to gender equality into practice.
3. Poverty alleviation and food security arguments: women are important actors in achieving poverty alleviation.

- How the project was designed

The project was designed as an assessment that would compare three value chains based on growth potential and gender advancement criteria. It would proceed in two phases: value chain selection and value chain analysis. VCs were selected based on their potential to contribute to increased women's empowerment and gender equality; the chain must work for women. The selection was done through a participatory process to ensure that the choice was made based on a balance of the needs and interests of a variety of stakeholders. Additional criteria for selection included whether a VC employed a significant number of women and offered substantial job opportunities.

The objective of value chain analysis was to identify ways to make women more visible as significant contributors to a value chain. The focus was on a global gender-sensitive picture of the value chain, the actors involved, their linkages, and the percentages of men and women in each chain segment. The team's analysis identified constraints and opportunities for women to participate in the value chain, analyzed the differences in power positions in the value chain governance, and discovered opportunities for women to upgrade their position.

- How the project has been managed and who has participated

The project analysis was divided into three categories:

- Macro-analysis focused on the institutional environment and interrelations between actors throughout the chain. The approach was to analyze whether these are conducive to the development of pro-poor, equitable, inclusive, and responsive value chain.
- Meso gender value chain analysis reviewed the gender sensitivity of specific local structures, institutions, and organizations, and their delivery systems. The analysis considered whether these groups reflect gender equality principles in their structure, in their culture, in the services they provide, and in the way these services are provided.
- Micro-level analysis helped identify major constraints faced by women at the household level, which might have repercussions on the meso- and macro-levels.

Opinions were collected from a wide variety of stakeholders to ensure varying perspectives. The value chains selected for analysis were chosen, in part, based on an assessment of their readiness for change, the existence of some level of organization of chain actors, low entry barriers for women entrepreneurs (including time and mobility, access to technology and assets, cultural constraints) offering new opportunities for women.

- What the project sought to achieve and short and medium-term outputs and outcomes

According to the results of the analysis, key gender-based issues (constraints and opportunities) were identified and appropriate options for systemic action selected. Core issues to be addressed, as identified in the analysis, were:

- Skill gaps.
- Occupational sex segregation.
- Lack of care services for children and elderly.
- Limited mobility.
- Deficits in infrastructure (water, energy, transport).

The interventions are directed at improving the business environment for women and expanding trade and market opportunities for women, including:

- Creating, improving and effectively measuring jobs for women.
- Enhancing women's access to finance, linked to entrepreneurship, skills development programs.
- Explicitly addressing informality.
- Innovating around changing powerful socio-cultural norms.
- Developing growth, export and market entry skills for women.
- Promoting and enhancing women's participation and decision-making.

- Expected medium- and long-term impacts

The Project's expected impact is to enhance the ability of women to be economically productive, move into formality, and address differentiated high-value markets. This will be the result of increased legal protection and skill-based enhanced capacity; increased access to inputs.

Therefore, the project is measuring the success of interventions with a specific focus on gender issues. An initial set of gender-sensitive indicators is being developed. New indicators are suggested to facilitate meaningful outcomes and impacts from gender-sensitive interventions.

Q10: Lessons learnt

The project considers the scope and resources available for the specific interventions. Where a project will face limits on its ability to act directly to remove particular factors, other projects can be involved to collaborate on specific tasks.

The analysis identified several types of interventions as well as potential obstacles likely to complicate efforts to achieve significant change in the economic standing of women in value chains:

a) Female entrepreneurs face multiple constraints simultaneously, including limits on their access to skills, finance, and markets. Addressing one issue may not be sufficient to overcome the challenges women entrepreneurs face, given the complementarity of those constraints. To address these issues, an integrated set of entrepreneurship programs is required to provide female entrepreneurs with high-quality business education, including in management tools, financial education, interactions with financial institutions, business planning, soft skills (communication, leadership, negotiation, and presentation), and entrepreneurship development with the support of mentors and guest speakers from the private sector, including prominent local entrepreneurs, women role models, and professionals.

b) Two key intervention approaches will involve positioning women as rural entrepreneurs starting businesses and helping women to expand and strengthen existing business by providing the right services. This includes, strengthening forms of association and encouraging women to participate in cooperatives or other women's groups; encouraging businesses and identifying markets and formulating profitable business ideas; ensuring that women have access to business development services (like credit, information and ability to buy land) as well as technical support (business skills, literacy, technology, leadership skills, financial skills, etc.).

c) Building networks of women-owned small and medium enterprises can be an effective approach.

d) Strengthening the capacity of women's business associations will help create enabling programs and policies for women's economic opportunity.
