



A FEMINIST APPROACH TO WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

HOW CANADA CAN LEAD ON ADDRESSING
THE NEGLECTED AREAS OF WEE



OXFAM CANADA

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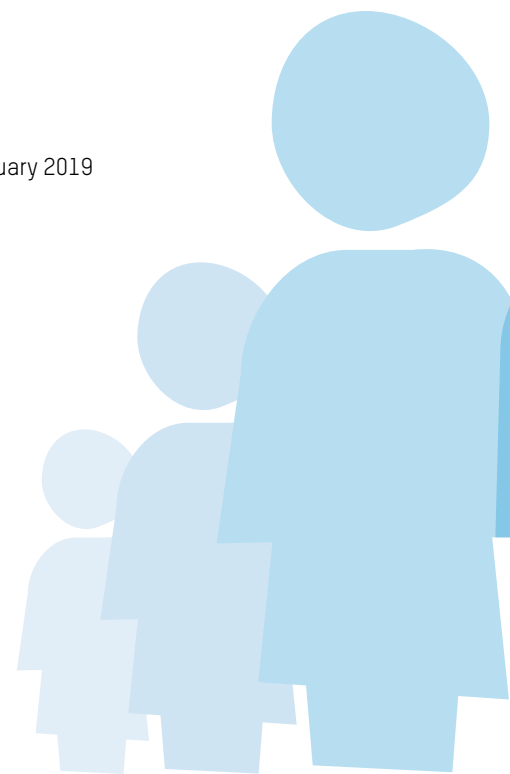


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When I got pregnant, they let me work in the warehouse. There were many boxes full of shoes and my job was to put the stamp on. Those shoes would fit my son perfectly, they are very nice. I'd like my son to have shoes like these, but he can't. I think he'd want them and I feel sorry for him. The shoes are very pretty. You know that one pair of shoes that we make is valued more than our whole month's salary."

— Lan, garment worker, Vietnam

Lae Lae paid a smuggler to leave Myanmar for Thailand when she was 21 years old and hoping for a better future. After six years of working on a rubber plantation, she found work as a hotel housekeeper. Despite her extremely long hours and back-breaking labour, it is impossible for her to save any money. Strapped for money and time, she had no choice but to send her two children, now six and 11 years old, back to Myanmar to stay with relatives. She hasn't seen her children in four years.

— Lae Lae, hotel housekeeper, Thailand



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current economic model is broken. While the top 1% accumulates extraordinary amounts of wealth, the poor are incapable of escaping poverty despite working long hours day in and day out. Around the world, women consistently earn less than men and are trapped in the lowest paid and least secure jobs, which rarely provide formal workplace protections or social security. They also experience multiple and intersecting disadvantages due to, for instance, their race, class or religion, and are especially vulnerable to gender-based violence at home and in the workplace. Fundamentally, gender inequality and economic inequality are inextricably linked.

Feminists are calling for new economic models that work for everyone, not just the rich. Unless we tackle gender inequality and economic inequality simultaneously, women's economic empowerment (WEE) will be impossible to realize. This means efforts to support WEE, through the programming of international assistance for example, must address the social norms, laws and economic policies, and structural barriers that restrict women's choices and opportunities.

This report makes the case for a feminist and intersectional approach to WEE. Drawing from the experience of Oxfam and its partners, the Government of Canada and other countries and donor agencies, it details practical examples of feminist support for WEE that can be replicated or scaled up and makes recommendations for how Canada can adopt transformative feminist programming and policies. This must start with focused attention on neglected areas of WEE, including economic rights and legal frameworks, labour rights and decent work, the care economy, and the links between gender-based violence and WEE.

With global momentum on WEE, a feminist prime minister and a government committed to feminist aid and foreign policy, Canada is well positioned to play a leading role in the promotion of the economic empowerment of women. This report offers a comprehensive list of recommendations for the Government of Canada to support and invest in a feminist and transformational WEE agenda. Among them, Oxfam Canada calls on the government to:

- **SUPPORT WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE ORGANIZING ON ECONOMIC AND LABOUR RIGHTS:** Promote and invest in women's collective organizing, and support feminist and women's rights organizations and movements working on women's economic and labour rights, through increased, predictable, long-term, core and direct funding to enable them to consistently and effectively advocate to government, civil society and the corporate sector.
- **PROMOTE WOMEN'S ECONOMIC RIGHTS:** Promote women's economic rights by working with trade unions, labour movements and feminist and women's rights organizations to advocate for government reforms, gender budgeting and impact assessments, and the removal of legal barriers to WEE and to unionization.
- **SUPPORT WOMEN'S LABOUR RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO DECENT WORK:** Support the realization of women's labour rights and access to decent work by engaging the business sector and governments to pay living wages, adopt gender-inclusive policies, support collective bargaining, combat occupational and gender segregation and support organizations of informal workers, including domestic and care workers.
- **BECOME A GLOBAL LEADER ON THE CARE ECONOMY:** Become a global leader in addressing women's unequal responsibility for paid and unpaid care by supporting and investing in programming that targets the most marginalized workers and addresses the 4Rs of care work: recognition, reduction, redistribution and representation.
- **SUPPORT EFFORTS TO ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE:** Address gender-based violence and the links between gender-based violence and WEE through research, policy and programming that adopts a holistic and multidisciplinary approach. Support governments and organizations advocating for the elimination of workplace violence and discrimination and support a new binding International Labour Organization convention and recommendation to end sexual harassment in the workplace.
- **INVEST IN DELIVERING WORLD-CLASS FEMINIST AID PROGRAMMING:** Ensure Global Affairs Canada is fit for purpose to deliver on feminist WEE programming and policy. Prioritize policy coherence by appointing a senior feminist economic adviser to work across all three Global Affairs Canada pillars, adopt intersectional and gender-based analysis, explore standardized methods for tracking and measuring WEE in programming and investments and invest in feminist monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks.

2. INTRODUCTION

Women face a myriad of barriers to their economic empowerment. Patriarchal social norms and structures determine what women can and cannot do inside their homes and in public spaces, including employment. Women spend on average one to three hours more a day on housework than men, and two to 10 times the amount of time each day to care for children, the elderly and the sick.¹ Many countries legally restrict women's agency or freedom of movement, and most have laws preventing women from working certain jobs due to gender bias and discrimination.² Women experience multiple disadvantages due to their race, class or religion and are especially vulnerable to gender-based violence at home and in the workplace.

INTERSECTING BARRIERS

In India, gender, religion, class and caste combine to shape women's experiences of social and economic inequality. Estimates suggest that there are 1.3 million manual scavengers in India, mostly Dalit women. Manual scavenging involves cleaning dry latrines of the wealthy and carrying the excreta to dumps. While employing manual scavengers has been banned as a health and sanitation issue and deemed the responsibility of government, many states do little to enforce it. These women are under social pressure to do the work and unaware that they have the right to refuse it. Victims twice over, they face discrimination in their homes for the job they do, in addition to discrimination from the upper caste.

The Guardian. (1 March 2016). The women who refuse to do India's dirtiest job. Retrieved 3 November 2018 from: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/mar/01/the-women-who-refuse-to-do-indias-dirtiest-job>

Informality is significant because workers in the informal economy make up 61% of all workers worldwide³ with women respectively making up 92% and 84.5% of informal workers in low-income and lower-middle-income countries.⁴ This means that women have limited access to financial services and assets, fewer opportunities for education and skills development, and no social protection. Social norms also constraint women's mobility and time, restricting them to home-based or low-quality work.⁵

Macroeconomic trends further undermine women's economic empowerment. Trade liberalization has created a 'race to the bottom' on taxation, wages and labour standards that hits hardest on the poor, especially women. Neoliberal policies, prescribed by multilateral agencies, discourage governments from investing in public infrastructure and delivering basic services. As a result, women have to take on more unpaid domestic and care responsibilities, which in turn limits their ability to access education and the labour force. Feminist economists have reached implicit consensus that paid and unpaid care, human well-being, agency, ethics and intersectionality are vital to understanding economic systems and should be critical measures of economic success.⁶

For several decades, Canada's international assistance has promoted women's empowerment and gender equality by integrating women into economies and markets, mainly by providing access to jobs, training, credit and financial services.⁷ However, the root causes of women's economic inequality can be traced to economic and patriarchal structures and social norms that permeate and shape the market,⁸ drive expectations around women's role as primary caregivers, perpetuate gender bias and discrimination in the labour force, and dictate attitudes towards women's rights, mobility and the acceptability of violence against women.⁹

Focusing on economic inclusion alone cannot guarantee women's broader empowerment¹⁰—we need feminist and intersectional approaches to transform unequal power relations, norms and structures in society. Promoting and investing in feminist collective organizing is key. So is addressing the intersection of social, economic and political disadvantages that women face—as workers, as members of different classes (in both urban and rural settings) or as members of specific groups (racialized women, indigenous women, informal workers, [im] migrants, women with disabilities).

This report makes the case for a feminist and intersectional approach to women's economic empowerment (WEE). Drawing from the experiences of Oxfam and its partners, the Government of Canada,

other countries and donor agencies, it details practical examples of feminist support for WEE that can be replicated or scaled up and makes recommendations for how Canada can adopt transformative feminist programming and policies.

This must start with focused attention on the neglected areas of WEE, including economic rights, laws and policies, labour rights and decent work, paid and unpaid care work, and gender-based violence and WEE. Other areas – including migration, macroeconomic policy and trade, climate change, as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights to name a few – are important for feminist programming and advocacy on WEE, but beyond the scope of this report.

With global momentum on WEE, a feminist prime minister, and a government committed to feminist aid and foreign policy, Canada is well-positioned to play a leading role in the promotion of the economic empowerment of women. International assistance has a role to play by investing in transformative programming for WEE that addresses the structural causes of gender and economic inequalities and makes economic growth truly inclusive.

‘I refuse to accept the idea that we can simply shoehorn women into a global economy that is exploiting them and then celebrate it as women’s economic empowerment.’

— Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director, Oxfam International

3. EVOLUTION OF WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

3.1 APPROACHES AND CRITIQUES

Understandings of the concept of WEE have changed over time and feminists critique the current model propagated by donors and aid agencies. Early feminist approaches—like Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD)—promoted different strategies but shared a common focus on women's agency, collective organizing, patriarchal social norms and other sources of institutional and structural inequalities.¹¹ As these early feminist approaches gained momentum, gender equality concerns began to enter the mainstream of development work: the United Nations (UN) declared 1976–85 to be the UN Decade for Women, which led to the establishment of women's ministries in many countries, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and three major UN conferences in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985).

Over time, the economic dimensions of women's empowerment have increasingly trumped the social and political dimensions within development discourse, policy and programming, leading to a widespread equation between WEE and women's access to productive resources, including paid work.¹² The concept of WEE has subsequently drifted from its original feminist meaning that encompassed structural and transformative change to reduce women's social, political and economic barriers.

The focus on WEE by donors and aid agencies has been to promote approaches focused on individuals who fit within the current neoliberal economic model, rather than addressing larger structural change and supporting collective organizing to unravel patriarchal and neoliberal economic structures that perpetuate and exacerbate inequality. WEE is routinely heralded as 'a prerequisite for sustainable development and inclusive growth',¹³ quoting projections such as: closing the gender gap in labour force participation will increase economic growth and boost gross domestic product (GDP) by anywhere from 5% to 20% for most countries¹⁴ and increase global GDP by \$28tn by 2025;¹⁵ and achieving WEE will contribute to reduced poverty, better household nutrition and improved child health and education.¹⁶

Part of the problem is that there is currently no universally accepted definition of WEE, leaving many key global actors to define it for their own purposes:

- **GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA** notes that 'in simple terms, economic empowerment combines the concepts of empowerment and economic advancement'.¹⁷
- **THE ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT'S (OECD) DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE NETWORK ON GENDER EQUALITY (GENDERNET)** focuses more on outcomes, defining WEE as women's capacity 'to contribute to and benefit from economic activities on terms which recognize the value of their contribution, respect their dignity, and make it possible for them to negotiate a fairer distribution of returns'.¹⁸
- **THE UN WOMEN HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT** emphasizes women's economic agency, specifically 'women's ability to succeed and advance economically and their power to make and act on economic decisions'.¹⁹
- **THE SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY** defines WEE as the 'process which increases women's real power over economic decisions that influence their lives and priorities in society. WEE can be achieved through equitable control over critical economic resources and opportunities, as well as the elimination of structural gender inequalities in the labour market including a better sharing of unpaid care work'.²⁰
- **OXFAM** adopts a holistic rights-based definition, including women's 'rights to control and benefit from resources, assets, income, and their own time' and 'the autonomy and self-belief to make changes in their own lives, including having the agency and power to organize and influence decision making, while enjoying equal rights to men and freedom from violence'.²¹



Aubrey Wade/Oxfam

Tika Darlami, 45, (pink scarf) participates in a meeting of the 'Nari Utthan' (translation: women ascending) Community Discussion Class.

Oxfam asserts that effective economic empowerment for women occurs when women enjoy their rights to control and benefit from resources, assets, income and their own time, and when they have the ability to manage risk and improve their economic status and wellbeing. However, for WEE to translate into meaningful empowerment, women must also have the autonomy and self-belief to make changes in their own lives, including having the agency and power to organize and influence decision making, while enjoying equal rights to men and freedom from violence.

Despite the lack of consensus on a definition, WEE is widely recognized as fundamental to achieving gender equality and wider development objectives. In recent years, the international community has prioritized WEE through a large and growing number of global commitments. To name a few, the UN Secretary-General appointed a High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment to make concrete recommendations on removing barriers to WEE. WEE is prominent in 10 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 33 of 169 targets under them. It is also embedded in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development for which there are five areas of commitments and more than 16 policy and financing actions to promote women's rights to economic and productive resources.²² The G7 and G20 have made numerous statements and commitments relating to WEE, and Canada made advancing gender equality and women's empowerment a central theme integrated

throughout its 2018 G7 Presidency. See Box 1 for recent Canadian high-level commitments related to international assistance and foreign policy.

A meaningful approach to WEE 'requires moving beyond helping women to benefit from existing economic opportunities ... [to incorporate] an understanding of the unequal gendered power dynamics that infringe on women's rights'.²³ To this end, Oxfam Canada advocates for transformational feminist approaches that are concerned with 'address[ing] the root causes of structural and systemic inequalities and transform[ing] systems of power, many of which are grounded in social constructions of gender and patriarchal attempts to control women's bodies and choices'.²⁴

Attention must turn to programming in areas that have been neglected and address WEE holistically and from a feminist perspective. These areas include supporting gender-sensitive and progressive macro-level economic policies, addressing unpaid care work, improving

BOX 1: RECENT COMMITMENTS TO WEE BY CANADA

- A focus on WEE at the G7 Ministerial Meeting of Finance and Development Ministers on [Investing in Growth that Works for Everyone](#) co-chaired by Minister of Finance Bill Morneau and Minister of International Development Marie-Claude Bibeau
- G7 Finance Institutions, including Canada, commit to the [Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative \(We-Fi\)](#) which launched in October of 2017, with the first round of funding allocations announced in April 2018. [Global Affairs Canada names Danièle Henkel a leadership champion of the Women's Enterprise Leadership Group](#) to assist the We-Fi in supporting women entrepreneurs in developing countries
- Launch of the [Canada-United States Council for Advancement of Entrepreneurs and Business Leaders](#) and the [G20 Business Women Leaders Taskforce](#)
- The inclusion of WEE as one of three main themes of [Canada's new development finance institution - FinDev Canada](#)
- Global Affairs Canada calls for proposals on WEE during 2017 and 2018 including: for women in rural and conflict-affected regions of [Ukraine](#), WEE innovation in [Ghana](#), green and inclusive economic growth for indigenous women and youth in [Guatemala](#) and empowerment, entrepreneurship and employment for women and youth in the [West-Bank and Gaza](#)

labour rights, challenging harmful social norms and promoting women's participation in decision making. A holistic approach involves addressing intra-household dynamics as well as work in the community, national and international spheres. Adopting an intersectional approach and partnering with feminist and women's rights organizations and movements are key to achieving change in these areas.

While the dominant 'add women and stir' approach to WEE adopted by donor countries has been important for mainstreaming gender equality issues in development programming, it also has several notable limitations. First, the focus on economic growth and increasing GDP as a rationale for WEE runs the risk of privileging economic growth at the expense of women's human

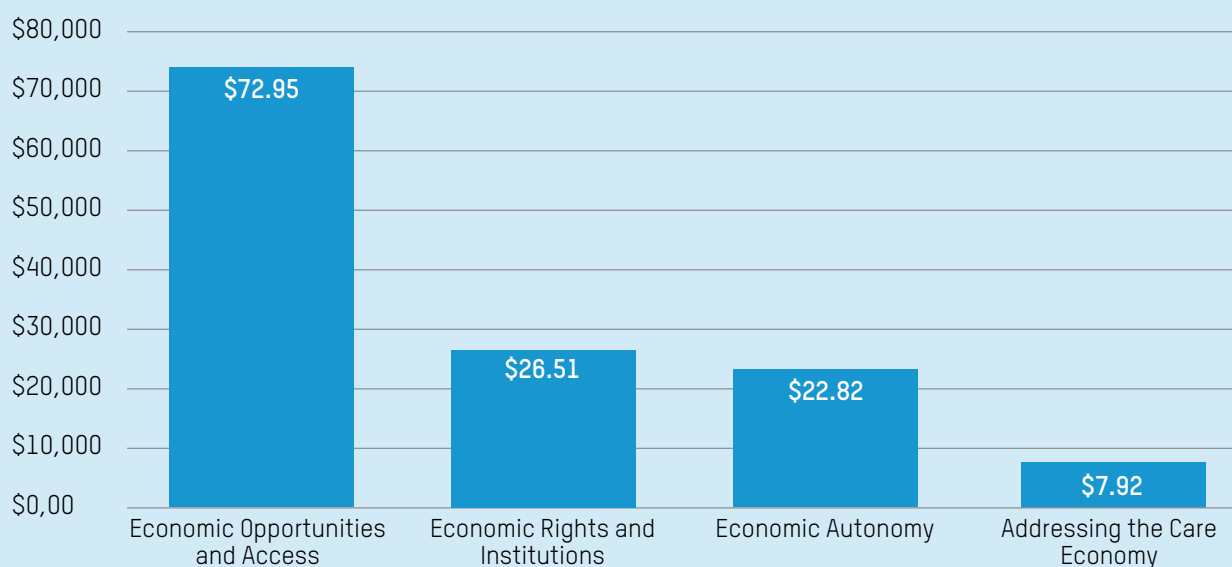
rights, gender equality and social change. This risk is problematic since evidence shows that although women's increased labour force participation can support economic growth and wider development objectives,²⁵ not all forms of economic growth are associated with an increase in decent employment opportunities and rights for women.²⁶ In unequal societies, economic growth regularly does not deliver benefits for everyone, especially the poorest.²⁷ These facts make arguing for WEE as a driver of growth problematic at best, if that growth will not deliver any benefit for many or most women. Second, the emphasis on individual women's opportunities is insufficient without due consideration of the structural barriers that they face.²⁸ Third, strategies that are employed when WEE is viewed in individualistic terms tend to target women for specific interventions based on a view of women's experiences as universal, plus do not recognize intersectionality.

3.2 GLOBAL AND CANADIAN INVESTMENT IN WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The amount of aid focused directly on WEE has been called a 'mere drop in the ocean' by the OECD. Of total OECD²⁹ donor investment to the economic and productive sectors in 2013–14, less than one-quarter targeted gender inequality as a primary or secondary objective, far less than the 34% average for aid to other sectors. Aid that targeted WEE specifically as a principal objective amounted to only 2% of total aid to economic and productive sectors and the amount has been stagnant over time.³⁰ These figures clearly leave room for engagement and donor interventions that can close the gap between high-level commitments and action on the ground.

Research by the Canadian International Development Platform found that projects focusing on women's economic opportunities, access and inclusion receive, by far, the most OECD donor investment targeting WEE—approximately 3.6 times more than other WEE areas.³¹ Significant investment in entrepreneurship, access to markets or supply chains, and other elements of individual financial inclusion dominate the WEE landscape. Few donors or implementing agencies address unpaid care, social norms or gender-based violence. Fewer still integrate these neglected areas through a holistic and intersectional approach. Analysis of the WEE landscape in Canada pegged investment in WEE as less than 0.5% of Canadian official development assistance. On an annual basis, Canada's WEE investments only ranged between \$12m and \$22m over the period of 2011–15. Of that, care work, both paid and unpaid, received very little investment from all donors and only around US\$8m³² over five years in the case of Canada.³³

CANADIAN ODA IN SUPPORT OF WEE BY THEME 2011-2015 (USD MILLIONS)



*These categories of WEE are mutually non-exclusive (akin to a marker). One project can belong to more than one WEE theme. This is imminently defensible as large projects (such as Canada's efforts in Pakistan) cover a range of WEE themes.

Over the past decade, Canada's approach to WEE has prioritized the economic benefits of gender equality. For example, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, quoting the McKinsey Global Institute, stated that 'narrowing the gender gap in Canada could add \$150 billion to our economy by 2026'.³⁴ Despite a holistic and progressive guidance note on WEE in place to guide policy and programming from 2013 to 2017,³⁵ Canada's international assistance for WEE has largely focused on women's 'increased access to education and training opportunities, including demand-driven skills, for women and girls to enable them to take advantage of economic opportunities'.³⁶ And while the OECD has applauded Canada for higher-than-average donor investment in gender equality within the economic and productive sectors, it also noted that most donor spending by Canada is on agricultural and employment programs, while investments in wider economic policy and infrastructure to support gender equality remain low,³⁷ despite their importance as potential drivers of WEE and economic equality. In fact, despite Canada's global advocacy for women's rights, overall aid commitments (0.26% of gross national income in 2017) remain low relative to peer countries.³⁸

Canada has made some notable progress over the past two years in advancing a feminist agenda, including in foreign policy with the release of the first Feminist International Assistance Policy in 2017 in which gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls take centre stage in Canada's development assistance efforts.³⁹ However, additional strategies to address intersectionality and broader patriarchal social norms and structures that perpetuate gender equality are needed in order to avoid instrumentalist approaches to WEE. Efforts to address the twin struggles of gender and economic inequality need to be scaled up and policy commitments to feminist international assistance and WEE must ensure that gender equality remains a central objective.

The Feminist International Assistance Policy commits that within five years, investments in programs that will specifically target gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will represent 15% of Canada's \$2.6bn of bilateral development assistance, up from 2% in 2015-16.⁴⁰ Investments also include a dedicated \$150m over five years for the Women's Voice and Leadership Program to support local women's organizations in developing countries⁴¹—one of a few new funding commitments announced under the policy.

Aid specifically targeted to support women's economic rights and empowerment is one of six action areas of the Feminist International Assistance Policy, namely policy action area three or 'growth that works for everyone'. The policy action area, when released, will guide the implementation of the feminist international assistance policy in WEE together with a guidance note on women's economic empowerment. To address meaningful WEE, this action area must tackle some of the most significant barriers to WEE. Compared to previous approaches, Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy appears to take the issues of structural inequality and gender power relations seriously, rather than simply providing women with economic resources, like paid work. Holding the government to account and monitoring how commitments play out in both policy and programming will be critical in the implementation phase of the Feminist International Assistance Policy.

BOX 2: GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA – WEE PROGRAMMING IN PAKISTAN

WEE has been a priority for Global Affairs Canada programming in Pakistan for many years, and will continue to be a focus under the Feminist International Assistance Policy and the policy action area Growth that Works for Everyone. CIDP and Oxfam Canada research found that of all WEE investments by country over the period of 2011-2015, WEE programming in Pakistan, totalling \$26.8 million, was by far the greatest bilateral investment made by Global Affairs Canada. WEE investments in Pakistan were over three times greater than those of Bolivia - the second largest recipient - that received \$8.42 million over the same period.⁴²

Canada's programming in Pakistan has sought to improve women's economic participation, increase women's incomes and raise awareness and respect for women's rights through public campaigns, social mobilization and training. For example, Canada supported women entrepreneurs by facilitating their access to institutional finance, and enhancing their business development skills, as well as raising awareness in the community about women's economic and social rights.⁴³ The following is one example of WEE programming in Pakistan in partnership with the Kashf Foundation, a Pakistani micro-finance institution.

PROJECT TITLE: Financial Literacy and Business Development Services for Women

CONTRIBUTION: \$9 million over 5.5 years

DESCRIPTION: In 2017-2018, Global Affairs Canada continued its important support to the Kashf Foundation, a micro-finance institution in Pakistan, for women's economic empowerment. Since the program's inception, more than 1 million women have been trained in basic financial literacy and about half a million women have been trained in business finance. More than 25,000 women have received business development training; they later reported an average increase in sales of their products of 50%. On average, women supported by the project have increased their incomes by about 30% and increased their savings by 60%. Advocacy campaigns highlighted constraints that women face in social and economic spheres. Campaigns also raised awareness about a woman's right to participate in economic activities, and the detrimental effects of early marriage and child sexual abuse.⁴⁴

4. PRINCIPLES OF A FEMINIST APPROACH TO WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

To achieve meaningful WEE and inclusive 'growth that works for everyone', international assistance must address the root causes of gender and economic inequalities within households, communities, institutions, legal systems and markets. The following seven principles, proposed by Oxfam Canada, are central to a feminist approach to WEE and should inform the design of future policies and programming in this area.

ADDRESS THE STRUCTURAL AND SOCIAL CAUSES OF ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

It is important to adopt a holistic approach that addresses the underlying structural and social causes of women's economic inequality, including enacting and enforcing laws and economic policies that ensure the rights of women, while simultaneously changing attitudes, norms and behaviours that perpetuate gender inequality and economic inequality overall.

TREAT WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AS AN END IN ITSELF

A feminist approach to WEE puts human rights and dignity at the centre of all strategies for economic empowerment, shifting the focus from 'advancing women's rights for economic development outcomes'—where women are employed as instruments for economic growth—to 'improving economic systems and processes to ensure women's rights and empowerment'. This approach also raises questions about the extent to which 'win-win' rhetoric for WEE and economic growth prioritizes gender equality and feminist objectives.⁴⁵

SUPPORT WOMEN'S AGENCY AND DECISION-MAKING POWER

It is crucial to move beyond an approach that treats women as beneficiaries towards one that places women at the centre as decision-makers with voice and agency. Women's empowerment is the process through which women gain the capacity to exercise strategic forms of agency in relation to their own lives as well as in relation to the larger structures of constraint that position them

as subordinate to men.⁴⁶ Agency also 'allows us to recognize that women are knowledgeable experts in their own right'⁴⁷ and to see them as partners in the development process.

PROMOTE AND INVEST IN FEMINIST COLLECTIVE ORGANIZING

Where governments have been able to make meaningful progress on WEE, that progress has always been supported by the work of strong feminist and women's rights organizations and movements pushing the agenda forward. Feminist and women's rights organizations and movements are spaces through which feminists organize for reform of policies and laws that discriminate against women, bring about changes in social practices, and provide support and services that help realize women's rights.⁴⁸ In adopting a feminist approach to foreign policy generally and international assistance specifically, Canada should ensure it coordinates with—and builds on—grassroots feminist movements, organizations and leaders who have a wealth of knowledge and evidence about what works and how to achieve change.

INCORPORATE INTERSECTIONALITY

Officials designing WEE programs must recognize women's diversity and the ways that multiple aspects of identity intersect to create individuals' lived experiences of economic inequality. It is important to recognize and address the needs of women who are most marginalized in communities due to their race, class, sexuality, disability, or marital or indigenous status, among other aspects. Intersectional analysis requires differentiating between women (and between men) and ensuring that all workers have the same rights regardless of sex or status. For example, women informal workers have multiple identities—as women, as informal workers, as members of poor households or disadvantaged communities—and each of these identities creates barriers and constraints.⁴⁹ Identity is also about strengths, networks and opportunities for solidarity. People's diverse identities and experiences lead them to understandings of the prejudices that they experience but also the powers that they can hold. Working with

an intersectional lens can help value the experiences of others. A more inclusive analysis can lead to strategies rooted in the interests and aspirations of the people engaged in programs—in all their diversity. Incorporating an intersectional lens in gender-based analysis, program design and reporting frameworks, and budgets is an important first step.

ENSURE DATA COLLECTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The regular collection, analysis and use of data disaggregated along gender and intersectional lines is necessary to benchmark progress as well as hold governments and organizations accountable for their work on WEE. Equally important are questions about how to apply feminist principles to program monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks⁵⁰ and how to assess and compare the impacts of WEE programs across diverse contexts.⁵¹

ADOPT A COHERENT APPROACH ACROSS ALL AREAS OF FOREIGN POLICY

Improving coherence across all areas of foreign policy, including trade, diplomacy, humanitarian work, defence, security and aid, is key to strategies for WEE. International assistance efforts can be contradicted and undermined if other foreign policy areas are not working towards shared objectives and upholding the same high standards for women’s human rights and gender equality.

These seven principles can help policy-makers translate Canada’s existing commitments to implement a feminist approach to WEE. The following sections explore how these principles can be applied to address currently neglected areas of programming on WEE.

5. NEGLECTED AREAS OF PROGRAMMING ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

As mentioned, dominant approaches to WEE programming tend to prioritize individual women's access to economic opportunities and markets, often by providing them with access to jobs, training, credit and financial services. These are important issues and useful entry points, though a focus on individual women's opportunities obscures the structures that create gender and economic inequalities in the first place,⁵² leaving them intact and therefore undermining progress.

A feminist approach to programming must be grounded in a solid analysis of the structural barriers and social norms that create gender and economic inequalities. Intersectionality must be central to the analysis in order to identify the institutional and structural disadvantages faced by women as members of poor households and disadvantaged communities and in vulnerable types of paid work. The needs and experiences of informal workers—the majority of all workers globally—deserve special attention. These workers include rural women (smallholder farmers, day labourers, fisherfolk, etc.), migrants and other groups facing distinct vulnerabilities.

Oxfam calls for a rights-based, holistic approach to WEE. This approach considers women's ability to: participate and lead in decision making and collective action; earn a living wage, lead an enterprise or retire with sufficient savings; recognize, reduce, redistribute and share care responsibilities; have control over income, assets and natural resources at the household and institutional levels; lead a life free from violence; and build resilience to shocks and risks.⁵³ Key to a holistic approach is supporting women in power and economic negotiations at different levels—the individual, household, community and national levels—as well as both formal and informal rules and practices.⁵⁴ The recognition, reduction, redistribution and sharing of care responsibilities, as well as other forms of unpaid work (e.g. collecting firewood), are essential to addressing 'time poverty' and allowing women the space to engage in paid work but also to network, organize, participate in policy and decision making or rest.⁵⁵

At the heart of Oxfam's approach to WEE is the recognition that social norms are a key factor influencing WEE (see Box 1). To advance women's agency, there is a growing consensus that we must change negative social norms that limit women's economic participation, such as those that perpetuate violence, stigmatize informal labour, and reinforce gendered roles and abilities.

Canada has an important role to play in delivering a transformational feminist agenda on international assistance, including WEE. Through analysis of the structural causes of gender and economic inequalities, certain areas of programming become evident as parts of a transformational feminist agenda. The following neglected areas of programming on WEE are central to a feminist approach that transforms WEE and places women's rights, voice and agency at the centre of strategies for economic growth and sustainable development.

Beyond the neglected areas addressed below, other important areas underpin success on WEE and require further attention. Future research could consider looking at the impacts of migration, macro-level economic policies, trade and climate change on WEE from a feminist perspective as well as supporting women's transformative leadership and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

BOX 3: ADDRESSING SOCIAL NORMS

There are social norms and gendered roles in an economy. Social norms are collectively held and often unsaid beliefs about what people do and should do. They include structures, attitudes and behaviours that guide how individuals interact in society at large, in the economy and within the household. Social norms are embedded in both formal and informal institutions, policies and laws. Social norms regarding gender determine which economic spaces women and men occupy and which are considered appropriate for their gender. Such norms create biases against women and limit the extent to which women can participate in the economy, which economic spaces they can occupy and how they benefit from the economic growth that they generate. Social norms determine what counts as work and the value of work. In many places, women's unpaid care work is not considered work, which is reinforced by the fact that economists and policy-makers do not take non-monetized goods and services in consideration in policy and investment decisions. Even when care work is paid, it is often considered petty, unskilled or not valuable—and is therefore poorly remunerated.

Supporting transformative change and applying a feminist lens to WEE requires changing discriminatory social norms that devalue women and girls in all their diversity. Not taking social norms regarding culture into consideration when promoting WEE can undermine the transformative potential of WEE efforts. Tackling discriminatory norms requires long-term, sustainable programming and generally demands collective action and strategies that work towards changes at multiple levels: within ourselves, households, institutions, the economy and society.

Change in social and gender norms has been often dismissed as too complex to address, part of culture and outside the scope of development. More recently, such change has been receiving greater attention in development research, policy and practice and is increasingly recognized as important by international development actors and social justice advocates working on WEE, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and child, early and forced marriage.⁵⁶ Oxfam's WEE framework identifies the need to engage with influential 'norm-setters', including traditional and community leaders, as powerful allies in this work. Engaging men and boys is also critical.

Tailored to a context, programming to address social norms could include: reduction and redistribution of care work; literacy promotion; leadership and confidence building; support for women's collective action; promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as access to services; and addressing the root causes of gender-based violence.⁵⁷ Programs can be delivered through innovative use of social media, information and communications technologies, radio talk shows and road shows, theatre, funding of safe spaces, research on what works in changing social norms, and advocacy to change beliefs and practices in the private sector and among service providers in addition to communities. For example, Gender at Work has undertaken work on social norm change in South Africa with mixed community groups and social service providers to reduce gender-based violence by bringing perpetrators and victims together or through less common methods like sports and vegetable gardening. In Pakistan, through Oxfam Canada's 'Creating Spaces to Take Action on Violence Against Women and Girls' program, partner organizations are planning research which will engage fathers to explore their role in facilitating child and early forced marriage. They will then use the research findings to write and perform theatre scripts that highlight harmful effects and why marriage should be delayed. In Indonesia, Oxfam Canada's 'Power Up' program is using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and other web-based tools to increase women's participation in the village budgeting process. The system creates feedback loops between local women and government offices to ensure accountability and transparency.

BOX 4: SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The realization of the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls is a critical driver and prerequisite for WEE and inherently part of a feminist agenda. For progress in WEE, we must invest in sexual and reproductive health and rights. Ensuring that women and girls have full autonomy over their lives and bodies is necessary for improved health and education outcomes as well as their freedom to participate in all aspects of economic life.⁵⁸ Canada recognizes this interrelationship making sexual and reproductive health and rights a priority for the Feminist International Assistance Policy, and committing \$650 million over three years to closing critical gaps in SRHR.⁵⁹

The rights to decide when and if to have children, bodily autonomy and live lives free of violence are fundamental rights that, when upheld, contribute to women's ability to enter the labour force and ensure their economic empowerment.⁶⁰ Globally, female labour force participation decreases with each additional child by about 10 to 15 percentage points among women aged 25–39 years.⁶¹ This decrease is in part due to the fact that women's unpaid care work burden increases. When women take on a disproportionate amount of unpaid care work, the economic opportunities that they might have outside of the household are affected.

Conversely, without access to comprehensive contraceptive care, women might have more children than planned or desired, exacerbating inequality in caregiving and affecting their ability to find and stay in work. Policy-makers interested in WEE must recognize that women require control over their most important productive asset: their bodies. Without such control, and the associated labour that it produces, economic empowerment is unachievable.

For more information, see:

Preethi Sundaram, IPPF for Oxfam Views and Voices, September 2, 2016:

[Why we can't talk about one without the other: Sexual and reproductive rights and women's economic empowerment](#)

The International Planned Parenthood Federation's landmark 2017 report: [Sexual and reproductive health and rights- the key to gender equality and women's empowerment](#)

UNFPA's State of the World Population 2018 Report: [The Power of Choice: Reproductive Rights and the Demographic Transition](#)

5.1 ECONOMIC RIGHTS, LAWS AND POLICIES

In countries around the world, discriminatory laws limit women's mobility, property rights, land tenure and access to financing, hindering their agency and financial decision-making power. Out of 189 countries, nearly one-third (30%) legally restrict women's agency or freedom of movement and more than half (55%) have laws preventing women from working certain jobs, like those in the manufacturing and construction industries, due to gender bias and discrimination.⁶² Women comprise just 20% of the world's landholders and in many countries have limited rights to secure land ownership. Women may also be forced out of their homes upon the death of a husband or if an abusive partner kicks them out.⁶³

Economic rights are further influenced by marriage and divorce laws that can limit a woman's ability to inherit financial assets, obtain a fair division of assets or lay claim to spousal and child support.⁶⁴ Similarly, laws relating to gender-based violence, violence against women, or harmful practices relating to child, early and forced marriage or female genital cutting can help protect women from such violence and practices, which in turn can create opportunities for women's economic well-being and empowerment.⁶⁵

Even when laws are in place to protect women's access to land or freedom to hold jobs, customary laws and practices can discriminate against women by restricting their control or ownership of land and property.⁶⁶ In Uganda, for example, women are recognized in the constitution as equal, though in practice social norms and pressure from families and husbands prevent many women from putting their names on deeds and claiming property rights.⁶⁷ Addressing social norms, attitudes

and behaviours should be holistically integrated into all aspects of WEE programming, including in processes to secure economic rights or enact policy or legislative change.

Beyond gender discrimination, further discrimination occurs for those members of the economy, both men and women, who have no legal status or recognition in public law as a result of their informality,⁶⁸ which violates their economic rights. Displacement can cause additional challenges. For example, research by Oxfam and partners in Jordan found that despite the urgent need for Syrian refugees to generate income, government restrictions only allowed Syrian women to register a home-based business under local laws if in partnership with a Jordanian. This left Syrians dependent on Jordanians and potentially exposed to exploitation related to the business.⁶⁹ Extensive lobbying by Oxfam and allies, including through donors and diplomatic channels, led to a Cabinet decision where the Government of Jordan has agreed to allow Syrians to register their home-based businesses, important progress in securing labour rights for refugees.⁷⁰ Syrian refugee women can now better integrate into markets and have more options for work in Jordan.

Feminist programming around women's economic rights should focus on the most economically and socially marginalized women in society. Support for feminist and women's rights organizations and movements to work on economic rights, such as tax justice or inheritance law, is imperative, as is core funding for groups with economic rights mandates. Examples might include funding for organizations to undertake public campaigns advocating for governments to protect and support the rights, experiences and demands of women informal workers or providing workshops and other resources to educate women workers about their rights in accessible and local languages.

Supporting women's collective action is essential to realizing and upholding women's economic rights. Global Affairs Canada should encourage partnerships between feminist and women's rights organizations, labour movements, trade unions, economic justice organizations and other groups working to promote women's economic rights both domestically and internationally. Partnerships could include a cross-sector movement to develop feminist analysis and advocacy in multilateral forums such as the UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights. Where gaps exist, support for capacity building of feminist and women's rights organizations to engage on economic policy and legal frameworks is critical. As such, the Women's Voice and Leadership initiative of the Feminist International Assistance Policy should include organizations working to advance women's economic rights. Box 5 presents two such organizations and their achievements.

BOX 5. GLOBAL MOVEMENT OF WOMEN'S INFORMAL WORKERS

WOMEN IN INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT: GLOBALIZING AND ORGANIZING (WIEGO)

Established in 1997, WIEGO is a global action-research-policy network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor in the informal economy, especially women. It builds and strengthens organizations of informal workers, improves research and statistics on informal employment, and promotes fair and appropriate labour, social protection, trade and urban policies. The organizations of informal workers who are members of the WIEGO Network have over 1,000 affiliates in 90 countries with over 4 million members.⁷¹

WIEGO's impact is global and significant, both at the grassroots, national and multilateral levels. For example, WIEGO supported a successful campaign led by HomeNet Thailand that resulted in legal rights and social protection for home-based workers in Thailand; and the successful legal struggle by waste-pickers in Colombia for their right to access waste and bid for public contracts and compensation for their recycling services. WIEGO has also worked closely with street vendor organizations in Ghana, Liberia, Peru, Thailand and South Africa and with market porters in Ghana and Peru. Its support for domestic workers led to the landmark International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers.⁷²

For more information, visit: <http://www.wiego.org>

THE SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION (SEWA)

SEWA is the world's largest trade union of informal workers. First registered in 1972, it now has nearly two million members, all of whom are working women from all religious and caste groups with low incomes from diverse trades and occupations. Its primary strategy is organizing: helping members form cooperatives, associations and federations so that working poor women can have a voice and representation to influence the policy and legal frameworks that affect their lives.⁷³ The advocacy efforts of SEWA and its partners led to the adoption of the first national legislation (the 2009 National Street Vendors Bill and the landmark 2014's The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act) that supports and regulates street vending in India, which requires all jurisdictions to establish vending committees responsible for protecting and regulating street vendors.⁷⁴ In 2016, SEWA and its members successfully lobbied the Indian government to issue identification cards for informal workers so that they could secure access to free health insurance and a range of other social services. It is now assisting 100,000 workers to apply for their cards.⁷⁵ At the international level, a successful SEWA campaign to protect homeworkers led to the 1996 ILO Home Work Convention. Other successes include government and employer negotiations for wage increases, bonuses and pension contributions for day labourers in construction and agriculture and industrial outworkers who produce garments, embroidered goods, incense or cigarettes at home. SEWA is co-founder of WIEGO and Women's World Banking.

For more information, visit: <http://www.sewa.org>

5.2 LABOUR RIGHTS AND DECENT WORK

The concept of 'decent work' is an internationally recognized labour standard endorsed by the UN and ILO, among other multilateral institutions. Despite this endorsement, WEE programming has not sufficiently supported women's access to decent work – in other words, work that allows for: safe, just and favourable working conditions; equal pay for equal work; compensation sufficient to maintain an adequate standard of living; and social protections such as the right to form and join trade unions.⁷⁶

Global economic trends present huge obstacles to realizing the decent work agenda, especially for women. Neoliberal policies focused on trade liberalization have spurred a race to the bottom for taxation, labour rights and working conditions. Within this context, it is essential that regulations and international labour standards are strengthened and enforced, particularly for global supply chains in sectors like agriculture, the garment industry and extractive industries. Research in garment factories in Vietnam and Myanmar chronicles the lives of women who work excessive hours—sometimes up to 18 hours a day or even through the night—yet still do not earn enough to sustain themselves and their families and face severe health consequences.⁷⁷

Dominant approaches to WEE programming that centre on promoting women's participation in the formal labour sector without a strong emphasis on decent work do not address women's economic insecurity. Even more, they risk excluding large numbers of informal workers, for whom access to basic rights, social protections and job security are especially lacking.⁷⁸ For example, 85.5% of women versus 70.5% of men in sub-Saharan Africa work in what the ILO defines as 'vulnerable employment' (i.e. they are self-employed or working informally with family members and have limited access to social security or a secure income).⁷⁹

Due to gender and occupational segregation, women who work in the informal sector are often concentrated in the most disadvantaged, vulnerable and lowest-paid informal jobs, such as housekeeping, agriculture or piece-rate home-based work.⁸⁰ These jobs are often informal and provide few social protections, opening the doors to exploitation, precariousness and abuse.⁸¹ Progress on making women equal to men in economies is painfully slow due in part to the persistence of occupational segregation. Feminist WEE programming must take this reality into account and support women workers to enjoy decent work and livelihoods.

Gender segregation and income inequality go hand in hand. Women earn on average 24% less than men.⁸² Not one country has gender parity in pay.⁸³ Women are also half as likely as men to work full time⁸⁴ and less likely

to receive a pension,⁸⁵ which translates into large income inequalities throughout their lives. There is also a risk that occupational segregation and gender inequalities will become more pronounced as digital technologies and automation replace lower-skilled, labour-intensive sectors and industries that have large shares of women workers.⁸⁶ Global Affairs Canada should include occupational segregation and automation as key issues in its action area 'growth that works for everyone' and embrace programming that works to improve conditions, pay and social protection policies in women-dominated sectors and industries, including smallholder farmers, garment workers, domestic workers and caregivers.

Although gender education gaps have narrowed over the past few decades, poor women and girls remain under-represented in technical and vocational education and training programs.⁸⁷ Of the limited number of such programs available to poor women, most tend to focus on stereotypically female occupations such as beautician training, tailoring and embroidery.⁸⁸ In India, for instance, there are virtually no opportunities for urban women with limited education and resources to acquire skills in more lucrative and growing fields such as transportation, warehousing and skilled construction work.⁸⁹ Beyond targeting women for increased enrolment in non-traditional fields, efforts are also needed to address the cultural biases and norms that limit women's educational options. Addressing social norms, attitudes

Tabitha Muwikali,
domestic worker,
Kenya

'One way the government can improve the lives of domestic workers is regulation of our wages. I'd like the government to be really involved in what domestic work[er]s do and the regulation of our pay. ... It would go a long way to ensuring we are fairly paid and that our living standards would improve.'⁹⁰

Domestic workers often face harsh working conditions. They are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation because their work is performed behind closed doors without formal working arrangements and generally excluded from labour and social protections. Tabitha Muwikali is a domestic worker in Kenya who wants regulated wages.

Women like Tabitha are standing up across the world to demand that their rights be respected and their governments build more human economies.

and behaviours should be holistically integrated into all aspects of WEE programming, whether in technical and vocational education and training or other areas.

To promote women's access to decent work, Canada should take on a leadership role in supporting the ILO's comprehensive Decent Work Agenda and work with other donors to advance the agenda.⁹¹ Such advancement is particularly important in sectors where women are concentrated and face barriers to earning quality and decent wages, such as the informal sector that employs a higher proportion of women or in agriculture, which remains the most important source of employment for women in low-income and lower-middle-income countries.⁹²

Economic growth alone does not advance gender equality. Such growth must come with strategies that advance women's economic equality and require decent work. Specific programming must be put in place that boosts the quality of jobs, holds private-sector actors accountable for rights violations all the way down their supply chains, regulates outsourcing and tackles barriers to decent work imposed by macro-level economic policies (e.g. fiscal constraints that prevent paid parental leave, early childhood education and care, and pensions).⁹³

There are several ways Canada can do this. One way is to strengthen regulation of Canadian companies operating abroad and put in place mechanisms for civil society to monitor and report violations. The creation of the independent Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise in 2018 is a welcome step, but it is important to expand the role to include sectors and industries that predominantly employ women workers and give the Ombudsperson a strong gender mandate.

Public procurement can also serve as an effective lever to support women entrepreneurs and incentivize the private sector to pay living wages, adopt gender-inclusive policies and increase diversity in supply chains.⁹⁴ Procurement currently accounts for 20% of global GDP, but women suppliers account for only 1% of the market.⁹⁵ Ensuring women are well-represented in labour movements and trade unions will further promote unionization and ensure stronger emphasis on barriers faced by women and female-dominated sectors and industries in accessing decent work.

Collective advocacy and organizing for greater social protections, freedom to unionize, labour rights and corporate social responsibility must be part of a feminist approach to WEE. To illustrate, the International Labor Rights Forum spent much of the last decade advocating and campaigning for the rights of workers, mostly women, in the cut flower industries of Ecuador and Colombia. They supported unions and legal organizations bringing grievances against employers, collaborated with certification initiatives and launched international campaigns, such as the 'Fairness in Flowers' campaign to promote awareness and create pressure to respect women's rights.⁹⁶

Another example is Sikhula Sonke, the women-led South African farm workers' union and movement, which advocates for improved livelihoods for Western Cape farm workers. It developed a representational governance structure that addressed disempowerment and deepened participatory democracy. Their strategies include targeting employers and government to challenge unfair labour practices.⁹⁷ Also, Oxfam has been working with Moroccan strawberry farmers to promote their labour rights (See Box 6).

BOX 6: DECENT WORK FOR MOROCCAN WOMEN PICKING STRAWBERRIES

Morocco's strawberry industry grew rapidly between 1995 and 2013, bringing an estimated 20,000 women into the workforce for the first time.

However, research by Oxfam and partners in 2009 showed that the jobs that women were brought into were characterized by low wages, sexual harassment, and poor health and safety standards. Women worked long hours, weekly rest was rarely respected, and overtime did not result in more pay. Women workers had a low level of awareness of their rights and were reluctant to challenge their mainly male supervisors who controlled their access to employment, payment, transport and supervision.

According to one strawberry picker (interviewed in 2014): 'When I started working ... I accepted the money they gave me without questioning the supervisor and without counting the hours I worked.' In response, Oxfam in Morocco and partners implemented a workers' rights program. This program involved training women workers to become leaders in their communities, who eventually went on to set up the Al Karama Women's Association, supporting more women to claim their rights. Realizing that many of the strawberries ended up on the shelves of United Kingdom supermarkets, which were members of the Ethical Trading Initiative, Oxfam in Morocco joined forces with Oxfam in the United Kingdom to raise the issue of workers' rights with the supermarkets. This collaboration resulted in the Better Strawberries Group, the membership of which comprises major supermarkets as well as importing firms.

A progress review in 2014 found that there had been increases in workers registered for social security, the number of women workers who were aware of their rights, and women refusing to take up work that did not pay the minimum wage. A member of a local non-governmental organization partner, Development Associations Network (RADEV), said: 'Now, when we go into the villages, women come to us to see if their employers have paid for the correct number of days. This is quite a change!' Following the program, the producers were also more aware of the importance of having a constructive relationship with their workforces. However, far more progress needs to be made to ensure that all growers respect workers' rights and supermarkets do not put pressure on them to lower standards in order to be more profitable. To sustain progress in the longer term, producers and the Moroccan government need to devote more resources to protecting the rights of workers in the agricultural sector. Buyers in other European countries need to act too. The initiative has taken the vital first steps in a long journey towards ethical trade in Moroccan berries. For now, for most of the women in that sector, a living wage in secure employment remains a distant dream.

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5.3 PAID AND UNPAID CARE WORK

Women's unequal burden of care is increasingly recognized as a key barrier to their social, political and economic empowerment. For example, Sustainable Development Goal 5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) aims to recognize and value unpaid care work 'through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies' (target 5.4), while a recent ILO report on the care economy found that unpaid care work is the main barrier to gender equality and women's participation in labour markets globally.⁹⁹

In every country, women shoulder disproportionate responsibilities for domestic and unpaid care work. Such work is often physically and emotionally demanding, inefficient and unequally distributed. For women and

girls around the world, household chores like laundry, cooking, cleaning, collecting water and caring for dependents take a huge amount of time and energy—between three and six hours per day, or more in rural areas.¹⁰⁰ These chores are in addition to any paid work activities, thus creating the 'double burden' of work for women, leaving them depleted and unable to escape poverty. Women's productive and reproductive double burden is further exacerbated by their role in the community and their contribution to communal work and management, creating a 'triple burden'.¹⁰¹

The gender care gap is most pronounced in developing countries, especially in rural settings and in contexts with high levels of male migration resulting in more single-parent female-headed households.¹⁰² Shortages of labour can also be an acute constraint for women farmers in rural settings. Evidence from Ethiopia, Malawi,

Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda demonstrates that women face constraints in mobilizing support on the farm, mostly due to care responsibilities. Furthermore, attempts to resolve these labour shortages, like by establishing community-based child-care centres, are rare.¹⁰³

In total, 16.4 billion hours are spent doing unpaid care work every day. Valued based on an hourly minimum wage, this work would amount to 9% of global GDP, or US\$11tn.¹⁰⁴

The drudgery of daily chores is amplified when families lack access to time-saving equipment, public infrastructure like electricity, transportation and running water, and basic services like childcare.¹⁰⁵ Poor and rural households are particularly impacted negatively, as they have fewer resources to pay for care services and less access to services and infrastructure that can help reduce the burden of domestic and care work.¹⁰⁶ The provision of basic labour-saving infrastructure and technology, such as water taps, efficient stoves, mechanical grinders or access to electricity, can have significant impacts towards reducing the burden of care.

Women's heavy workloads also have consequences for their children that range from neglect to a transfer of work duties, which means the children have less time to pursue their education and struggle to stay healthy.¹⁰⁷ Many older children are expected to shoulder adult responsibilities, such as looking after younger siblings and sometimes helping with their mother's paid work activities.¹⁰⁸ Recent research from Kenya shows that access to childcare can eliminate some of the potential harms to children and improve children's health and cognitive development, leading to higher lifetime earnings and life expectancy¹⁰⁹ as well as an increase in school enrolment for older siblings.¹¹⁰ Moreover, it is widely recognized that addressing girls' unpaid care responsibilities, including childcare, is central to improving girls' participation and achievements in secondary education.¹¹¹

While women's unequal burden of care is widely recognized as a barrier to WEE, action to address it has been minimal. Total funding for programming on care constitutes less than half of the amount of funding that other types of WEE programs receive. Canada's investment in initiatives relating to care totalled only \$8m over a five-year period from 2011 to 2015.¹¹²

We must also keep in mind that the entry of women into the labour force in the North has consequences for

women from the South who are escaping poverty and economic hardship. Many women migrants from the South assume the domestic and care roles of women in developed countries. Often, women migrate at the expense of their own families, which they must leave behind due to immigration rules.

Migrant women receive low wages, face precarious immigration status and experience difficult or vulnerable working conditions. In fact, those who are employed as caregivers and domestic workers face some of the harshest working conditions and are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation because such work is performed behind closed doors without formal working arrangements and generally excluded from labour and social protections.¹¹³ Support for domestic and care workers' rights must be at the core of a feminist approach to WEE. A good start would be for Canada to ratify ILO Convention 189 concerning decent work for domestic workers.

The ILO estimates that domestic workers typically earn less than half (and sometimes no more than 20%) of the average wage in any given country.¹¹⁴

More broadly, donors, foundations and international financial institutions have important roles to play in supporting efforts to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work as well as ensuring representation of care workers in policy making and labour movements—also known as the 4 R's (recognition, reduction, redistribution and representation) of care. While there is growing recognition that WEE programming must address paid and unpaid care, specific actions for the 4 R's are not always clear.

Solutions include investments in technologies that alleviate the drudgery or amount of care work, public services like early childhood education or childcare, and infrastructure like water, electricity and sanitation. Other potential solutions include innovative mechanisms for the delivery of care services, such as the ILO Provision of Care through Cooperatives initiative and the Canadian International Development Research Centre's pilot program on childcare provision in Kenya (See Box 6). Providing financial and technical support to Southern governments for strengthening care-supporting infrastructure and services through gender budgeting is another example. Advocating for the adoption of care-related policies is also crucial and might include government subsidies for childcare, social protection, better parental leave policies, or flexible working conditions such as remote work and flexible hours.

BOX 7: WHO CARES?

PROVIDING CARE THROUGH COOPERATIVES, ILO

In 2016, the ILO began pioneering research on cooperatives that provide care services. Exploring cooperative models for care work through case studies from 16 countries, the study provides examples for how cooperative enterprises provide care to diverse populations and decent work opportunities across the care chain. Evidence suggests that cooperatives can be models for improved wages, working conditions and reduced employee turnover and, as a result, can have a direct impact on women who make up the majority of care workers from low socio-economic status and ethnic minority groups. In addition to evidence of improved wages, working conditions and retention, the study demonstrated that cooperatives can make contributions to regulation and formalization of informal home-based care, care worker professionalization and training, and facilitation of safer working conditions and environments. Their focus on inclusion and autonomy provides for care workers, beneficiaries and families to have a voice in service provision and operations. Various other studies point to user preference for the cooperative model.

For more information: <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/care-economy/cooperatives/lang--en/index.htm>

CHILDCARE SUBSIDIES LEAD TO WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN KENYA, INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE

Aware that women's disproportionate childcare responsibilities greatly limit their ability to work, researchers from McGill University and the African Population and Health Research Center, with the support of the International Development Research Centre, began testing the impacts of subsidized childcare for poor urban women on their ability to work in paid employment. They found that mothers were eager to send their children to early care centres and that cost was the principal barrier that women had to accessing childcare centres. Mothers that received a childcare subsidy were 17% more likely to be employed than those who did not. Mothers who received subsidized childcare were more likely to find and maintain employment. The study demonstrates how subsidizing early childcare is an effective strategy for encouraging women's labour force participation and reducing gender inequality. It confirmed high demand for subsidized early childcare opportunities in urban Africa and simultaneously countered common perceptions that sub-Saharan African women's work opportunities are not hampered by childcare responsibilities because they can easily combine work and childcare and that there is a 'surplus' of female kin available for free care.

For more information: <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/56505/IDL-56505.pdf>



One recent project supported by the EU Regional Development and Protection Programme responded to Jordanian and Syrian women's needs and interests by providing them with training on early childhood education and care, enabling them to start their own nurseries or work to improve other facilities or services. The women had identified lack of quality childcare as a barrier. The proposed solution was successful in delivering both the provision of better quality childcare and the creation of employment opportunities.¹¹⁵

Rasha Obeidat from Irbid, Jordan, told Oxfam: 'If good-quality nurseries were established in our area, I would be comfortable and relaxed about leaving my children in the nursery. I would join the workforce or work at any place at ease.'

Holistic programming is important to simultaneously addressing and changing social norms and attitudes about care work. Social and gender norms, as well as cultural and personal attitudes and beliefs, play a significant role in defining care roles between women and men. Working with women, men, girls and boys to challenge harmful social norms is critical in moving the needle on equitable distribution of care. Feminist and

women's rights organizations work to challenge pervasive norms that limit women's economic opportunities and advancement in brave and innovative ways, breaking down social barriers and ending discriminatory policies that hold women back from economic equality.¹¹⁶ Oxfam's WE-Care program (See Box 7) provides an example of an integrated program that builds knowledge and undertakes advocacy on WEE and care work.

BOX 8: OXFAM'S WE-CARE PROGRAM

WE-Care (Women's Economic Empowerment and Care) is an Oxfam program that aims to make unequal care work more visible as a key barrier to achieving gender equality and overcoming poverty as well as ensuring that communities, governments, development practitioners and the private sector work together to reduce and redistribute care work. Programming includes collecting data on care, supporting communities to reduce and redistribute heavy and unequal care work, changing perceptions on care and gender roles, and advocacy targeting a variety of actors to invest more in care-supported infrastructure and services, facilitate feminist and women's rights organizations to participate in policy making and support their advocacy on unpaid care. It was launched in 2014 in five countries, within wider Oxfam programs on livelihoods, sexual and reproductive health rights and HIV/AIDS, and women's leadership. WE-Care approaches have been implemented in 23 countries. Achievements of the program include:

WE-Care's Rapid Care Analysis and Household Care Survey has been used in over 20 countries. It is widely recognized by development actors, companies and donors as a practical tool for building evidence on unpaid care to influence development policy.

WE-Care teams have carried out effective advocacy to influence policy change at a significant number of national, regional and global advocacy and media events with decision-makers. This has included the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, UN Women, the World Bank, OECD, the International Association for Feminist Economics and forums such as the Commission on the Status of Women and UN High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment.

Oxfam and local organizations have used evidence from WE-Care research to engage with stakeholders and win investments from government authorities and private companies. In Kenya, for example, advocacy resulted in the Nairobi County Government increasing local budgets on water and sanitation by 11% and early childhood infrastructure by 30%.

Research as part of the WE-Care program across five countries in 2015 and 2017 showed that social norms can be more important than people's preferences or personal attitudes. Oxfam learned:

Most women want men to do more care work. In 2015, research in five countries found that although 80% of women reported wanting to ask men to help with care work, only 50% of them had ever asked men to help.

Research in three countries showed that most men (80–100%) think that men should do care work, but 33–60% did not do it because they believed that other men would not approve.

In 2017, research across three countries found that most women and men said that men would do care work in situations where the community considered it acceptable.[ii]

This research demonstrates how social norms—beyond personal attitudes or beliefs—can prevent equitable care roles between women and men. Therefore, attention on shifting social norms alongside personal attitudes and ensuring boys and men engage in care activities is critical to WEE. This attention complements advocacy for increased public services like childcare and water and energy supplies as well as time- and labour-saving equipment like improved stoves, grain grinders and laundry machines.

See 'Women's Economic Empowerment and Care (WE-Care)' for more information: <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/our-work/gender-justice/womens-economic-empowerment/we-care>



Florence and Zakayo working together, WE Care, Uganda

‘This exercise has been very helpful, it has helped us realize how much work women do and how much it affects their participation in community work as well as income-generating activities. As you can see, it is very difficult to convince men in this area to take up some of the care work. However, it is now up to me as a chief to talk to my people about this. I will use the different community meetings to raise awareness for the men to be involved in care activities as well.’¹¹⁷

— Malawi WE-Care program - Community leader after participating in the Rapid Care Analysis:

Addressing unpaid care should be a stand-alone area of programming, but it also needs to be integrated into a wide range of programming, both on WEE and beyond, to understand how women with care responsibilities will experience interventions and the impacts of programs and policies. For example, Oxfam now integrates a care analysis into humanitarian programming.

For example, in the Philippines, Oxfam initiatives to address women’s heavy and unequal responsibilities

for unpaid care work were implemented by women’s rights organizations as partners. This led to an unpaid care analysis as part of a humanitarian cash-for-work program, where women acting as caregivers for their families after a natural disaster or conflict were included in the program. Their inclusion challenged social norms about what constitutes work and the value of women’s roles in communities, which can contribute towards gender equality in the long term.¹¹⁸

5.4 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The UN has declared that violence against women and girls is a 'global pandemic' and serious obstacle to sustainable development that imposes large-scale costs on families, communities and economies.¹¹⁹ One in three women has experienced sexual or physical violence in her lifetime.¹²⁰ Gender-based violence happens in the home, the workplace and public spaces, including while in transit. In many settings, women are vulnerable to abuse and violence when carrying out daily tasks linked to their livelihoods.¹²¹ Women are also more likely to experience gender-based violence if they have low levels of education¹²² and if they are members of economically marginalized groups like rural women, domestic workers, migrants and low-skilled women.¹²³ Despite the known

prevalence of gender-based violence worldwide, the links between economic participation and gender-based violence remain largely unaddressed in WEE programming.

Existing research has illuminated some of the impacts of gender-based violence on women's economic security. Women who are exposed to intimate partner violence are employed in higher numbers in casual and part-time work and their earnings are 60% lower compared to women who do not experience such violence.¹²⁴ Also, economic vulnerability can trap women in exploitative working conditions and exposes them to risks of unethical recruitment agents and traffickers.¹²⁵ Conversely, women with access to jobs, banks accounts and other financial services may have greater control over their earnings and more options to leave abusive relationships and employers.¹²⁶ Oxfam Canada's flagship program Creating Spaces to Take Action on Violence Against Women and Girls is just one example of a holistic approach to tackling gender-based violence that recognizes the need for WEE to reduce the risk of experiencing violence (See Box 8).

BOX 9: CREATING SPACES TO TAKE ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS, 2016–21

Oxfam Canada's program Creating Spaces to Take Action on Violence Against Women and Girls takes an integrated, multifaceted and holistic approach to programming, acknowledging that ending violence requires a shift in power relations and a change in social norms, negative attitudes and behaviours. Three strategic pillars guide program strategies: engaging community actors to promote positive gender norms; supporting women and girls who have experienced violence; and building knowledge and capacity of institutions and alliances to influence change.

Under supporting women and girls who have experienced violence is the goal 'increasing economic skills, knowledge and capacity among women and girls who have experienced violence'. Activities under this pillar target women and girls who have experienced violence, including child, early and forced marriage. Strategies also include working with civil society, feminist and women's rights organizations, governments and private sector actors that offer either social and legal support services or economic opportunities, with the desired outcome of improving awareness of economic rights, lifting barriers to realizing those rights and facilitating access by women and girls to services.

In India, the program works directly with women and girls who have experienced violence. Survivors and members of women's collectives identify their livelihood needs. The program also works with broader community members, functionaries and village leaders to build awareness of women's economic rights, identify barriers and opportunities for women's economic participation and influence the realization of women's economic rights at the community level. Similar approaches exist in Nepal, where workshops and roundtables have been held to raise awareness and strategies for realizing women's economic rights, mapping available resources by rural municipalities and mobilizing support from government officials, non-governmental organizations, community businesses, cooperatives, political parties, women's groups, and representatives from newly elected government bodies. In Pakistan, training has focused on understanding women's economic participation in the country, the importance of women's economic rights, and international conventions on economic rights. All WEE and rights awareness strategies are coupled with work to improve service provision for survivors, shift attitudes about social acceptability of violence and reduce stigma for those who have experienced violence.

Through the Creating Spaces program in Bangladesh, Shampa has set up a small business and has a newfound sense of independence and confidence. She and her business partner, Ferdousi, support each other in business and taking action on domestic violence.

For more information: <https://www.oxfam.ca/creatingspaces>



‘Before starting my business, my husband used to avoid me and didn’t pay any attention to my opinion. Now his attitude is changing gradually. Now that I earn money, I participate in making the decisions for my family. If I say something to my husband now, he listens to it carefully... I want to suggest all the women all over the world who have the same situation as me that from my own experience ... if you don’t have economic empowerment, you will not get that respect from your family.’

— Shampa, Chakul village, Rangpur, Bangladesh

Women are not only at risk of violence at home, but also during and on the way to work. Efforts to address workplace violence are gaining momentum. The ILO is currently developing a new convention on ending sexual harassment in the workplace as a first step towards spurring national action for ending violence and harassment at work. Women and workers must play a significant role in defining the scope, adoption, implementation, enforcement and remediation of the convention. The International Trade Union Confederation has been lobbying for and campaigning on this proposed convention to support unions and allies in getting government and employer support for eradicating gender-based violence at work.¹²⁷ The World Bank

has also recently recognized that women need to be safe from violence to be optimally economically productive.¹²⁸ The same attention must be paid to workplace or work-related violence, especially given that a government or dominant vested interest groups often hold responsibility for workplace violence.¹²⁹

There has not been enough research into the links between WEE programming and violence against women, though limited evidence has shown that WEE itself can be a threat and disruptive to existing power arrangements. Oxfam conducted research into WEE and domestic violence in 2015, drawing heavily on existing literature as well as Oxfam programs and employees

with many years of experience in implementation and evaluation of WEE and violence against women programs in Latin America, Africa and the Asia-Pacific region. The resulting study found that WEE programming can, in some cases, result in an increase in gender-based violence as women challenge the status quo and transform power relations.¹³⁰ In Bangladesh, researchers studying the impacts of microfinance programs found that the highest levels of violence against women occurred in villages where it was most apparent that a transformation in gender roles was underway.¹³¹ The Oxfam study suggests that WEE programs must be holistic and multidisciplinary, include risk assessments and components that reduce gender-based violence, monitor its occurrence and respond to incidents with safety plans and referrals.¹³² This will help ensure that women can benefit from WEE programming without putting themselves at risk.

Feminist programming on gender-based violence and WEE needs to adopt a holistic approach. The impacts of violence on women's work in other sectors, not only in activities targeting their economic and productive inclusion, should be considered. For instance, incorporating gender analysis in urban planning can ensure that roads, public transportation or street lighting help protect women and do not act as barriers to their economic equality. In Egypt, the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Development has adopted women's safety audits to guide urban planning in Cairo to promote respectful gender relationships, gender equality and safety in public spaces.¹³³

Local women's movements and organizations play an important role in addressing the various forms of violence that women face and are at the forefront of providing tangible solutions. Twenty years of research in 70 countries confirms that the most effective strategy for combating violence against women is to support a strong feminist movement.¹³⁴ Supporting feminist movements and the participation of local women's rights actors must be a priority in WEE programming not only to tackle gender-based violence as a barrier to WEE, but also to minimize the risk of gender-based violence in WEE programming.

6. DELIVERING FEMINIST PROGRAMMING

Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy and the action area ‘growth that works for everyone’ provide an opportunity to address the neglected areas of WEE from a feminist perspective and elaborate what a feminist approach to programming entails. A feminist approach is holistic in that it considers the manifold constraints that women face. Economic rights cannot be realized by working on economic issues alone. At the intra-household level, for example, a holistic approach would consider violence, sexual and reproductive rights, paid work activities, unpaid care activities and the distribution of other benefits as well as support women’s negotiation of better outcomes and distribution of benefits within their households. A holistic approach would also include norm change, collective organizing and engagement,

and advocacy on WEE at the community, national or global levels.

Ensuring that Global Affairs Canada is fit for purpose to deliver the Feminist International Assistance Policy requires reflection on the modalities of programming that can facilitate a feminist approach to WEE, taking into consideration: flexibility and responsiveness in program design and delivery; feminist monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks; and partnership mechanisms that prioritize women’s rights and feminist organizations and networks and their advocacy and collective organizing. These are among the feminist principles that underpin Oxfam Canada programming (See Box 10).

Programming must provide for flexibility and responsiveness in project design, implementation and evaluation, with longer timeframes. Program strategies should be able to be adapted to respond to new information and understandings of women’s needs or levers of change. Flexibility matters because change is complex and unpredictable, plus setbacks, backlash and small steps backward are common before major breakthroughs occur.¹³⁵ Empowerment is non-linear. Responsiveness matters because a feminist approach considers women’s agency. It is also good practice, as increasing donor interest in ‘adaptive management’ and ‘adaptive development’ - approaches that allow for adjustment due to changing information or contexts - demonstrates.¹³⁶ Responsiveness requires robust gender analysis in programming, including the involvement of a greater range of stakeholders, such as feminist economists, rights-based thinkers, activists, representatives from partner organizations and—most importantly—members from impacted communities in the design and evolution of programs.

A feminist approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEAL) values the agency, rights, autonomy and choice of people involved in WEE programming and requires authentic shifts in power relationships, allowing feminist and women’s rights organizations to define what success looks like. Investment in research on feminist models and approaches to WEE that can be replicated is critical, as is improving data collection to ensure sex-disaggregated, intersectional data and transformative indicators (e.g. decision-making power) are used to assess impacts. Feminist monitoring, evaluation and learning further allows space for qualitative indicators that measure what women define as success. Tolerance for risk taking and complementary approaches to results-based management and logical frameworks is a first step.

BOX 10: FEMINIST PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING OXFAM CANADA PROGRAMS



A. Transformative change means shifting power



B. Autonomous feminist and women’s rights organizations



C. A feminist social ecological approach to understand change



D. Intersectional analyses



E. Safe programming guided by a “do no harm” approach



F. Mutual accountability and shared decision making: ‘nothing about me without me’



G. Balancing, learning and accountability



H. Co-create knowledge through feminist approaches to research and MEAL

Credit: Anja Kessler, Oxfam Canada

Working with feminist and women’s rights organizations and networks, in addition to supporting their capacity, advocacy and collective organizing, is not only fundamentally important for WEE but arguably should be the cornerstone of the Feminist International Assistance Policy.¹³⁷ Beyond the Feminist International Assistance Policy target of 15% of aid going to gender equality and the empowerment of women, local feminist and women’s rights organizations must be the principal partners in programming on WEE. Feminist and women’s rights organizations require core institutional support, organizational strengthening, and research and space to build alliances and support WEE contextually. Despite doing the heavy lifting, they are chronically underfunded and require support to continue to understand and address women’s contexts and barriers. These organizations often work holistically and intersectionally, recognizing that credit or literacy are insufficient on their own, or that marginalized women have intersecting identities that conflate to create distinct barriers, and can work on strategizing, research, mobilizing and campaigning for policy or norm change beyond the intra-household or community levels, staying committed for the long term.

Fundamental to being fit-for-purpose is political will, adequate and corresponding resources, and a transparency and accountability framework that allows civil society—and Global Affairs Canada itself—to develop implementation strategies and track progress based on a standard or metric that corresponds to the feminist analysis that WEE should be based upon.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TAKING THE WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AGENDA FORWARD

The current political momentum on WEE has the potential to catalyze real progress and change globally¹³⁸ and Canada is well-positioned to be a global leader on implementing a transformational feminist approach to WEE programming. To realize its feminist ambitions and promote meaningful WEE, Oxfam Canada has several recommendations for the Government of Canada.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PROMOTE AND INVEST IN WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE ORGANIZING AND SUPPORT FEMINIST AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS AND MOVEMENTS

GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA SHOULD:

- Provide increased, predictable, long-term, core and direct funding to women's organizations, movements and coalitions working holistically on women's economic and labour rights to enable them to consistently and effectively advocate to government, civil society and the private sector.
- Recognize the legitimacy and contributions of women human rights defenders advocating for economic and labour rights. Protect, support and ensure a safe and enabling environment for their work.
- Support collective organizing among women working in marginalized sectors and industries, including informal workers, domestic workers and migrant workers, and support their advocacy efforts for labour rights and decent work at the local, national and international levels. Provide additional support for training and their fair integration into supply chains.
- Seek representation for feminist and women's rights organizations in operations and discussion in key multilateral forums such as the UN, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and OECD,

regional economic forums such as the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and trade negotiations and consultations and offer technical and financial support for their participation.

- Mainstream support for feminist and women's rights organizations, collective organizing and participation in decision making on all economic and productive sector programming.

2. PROMOTE WOMEN'S ECONOMIC RIGHTS

GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA SHOULD:

- Support governments to remove legal barriers to WEE including policies, laws and regulations that prevent or restrict women's agency or access to and control over resources (e.g. promote the right to own land, right to do certain jobs, right to assets following divorce, etc.).
- Partner with organizations and movements—such as feminist and women's rights organizations, trade unions and labour movements—advocating for reforms, the removal of legal barriers to WEE, unionization and economic rights for women workers. Support them to monitor and hold governments and the private sector to account on existing legislative protections.
- Encourage and support governments to undertake gender budgeting, with participation from feminist and women's rights organizations and civil society, to assess the impacts of economic policies on women's economic rights.
- Use diplomatic channels and available gender impact assessments to leverage economic, trade and investment relationships as a means to encourage and incentivize governments to remove barriers to the realization of women's economic rights.

3. SUPPORT THE REALIZATION OF WOMEN'S LABOUR RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO DECENT WORK OPPORTUNITIES AND CONDITIONS

GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA SHOULD:

- a. Leverage public procurement to support women's cooperatives, enterprises and entrepreneurs and incentivize the private sector to pay living wages, adopt gender-inclusive policies, support collective bargaining and increase diversity in supply chains.
- b. Recognize and support organizations of informal workers, both all-women organizations and mixed-membership organizations with women leaders, and include their representatives in policy-making processes, particularly at the multilateral level.
- c. Combat occupational segregation by promoting women's inclusion in traditionally male-dominated sectors and industries, while simultaneously supporting governments and advocacy organizations to tackle the gender wage gap and increase wages in sectors and industries traditionally made up of women (e.g. caregiving).
- d. Promote policy coherence by working with counterparts at Employment and Social Development Canada to ensure that all domestic workers, migrant workers and informally employed workers in Canada have access to decent work, permanent residency and services and that their economic and labour rights are protected. Ratify ILO Convention 189 concerning decent work for domestic workers and stand up for domestic workers globally by expanding the scope of legislation, policy and programs that allow them to enjoy the same rights as other categories of workers in Canada.
- e. Spearhead a progressive business and human rights agenda that includes:
 - i. Support and advocacy for the adoption of a UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights that holds companies legally accountable for human rights violations along their supply chains; support for the adoption of legislation that ensures Canadian companies conduct mandatory human rights due diligence, particularly for their international operations and global supply chains.
 - ii. Binding provisions in Canada's international trade and investment agreements that create positive obligations on Canadian companies to respect human rights and minimum labour standards.

- iii. Expanding the mandate of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise to sectors and industries where women are concentrated and ensure a strong mandate to promote women's rights and address women's economic inequality.

4. BECOME A GLOBAL LEADER IN ADDRESSING WOMEN'S HEAVY AND UNEQUAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PAID AND UNPAID CARE

GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA SHOULD:

- a. Take on a global leadership role by piloting a stand-alone stream of programming on care that includes support for both paid and unpaid care work and targets the most marginalized workers.
- b. Within this stand-alone stream of programming on care, invest in initiatives that address the 4 R's of care work—recognition, reduction, redistribution and representation. The initiatives should include support for, and recognize the rights of, both paid and unpaid caregivers as well as programming that tackles gender stereotypes and social norms.
- c. Invest in technology, transport and infrastructure that diminish the burden of domestic work, such as water, electricity and roads, and ensure that gender analysis is undertaken for such investments to reduce women's care burden and address time poverty.
- d. Provide technical assistance and aid to developing countries to develop, test and implement social policies, such as childcare and leave policies, and government investments that relieve women's care burden and shift that burden within the household as well as from family to government.
- e. Adjust funding mechanisms in all assistance programs to take into account care responsibilities (e.g. by committing to funding the parental leave of staff of implementing partners on the ground or including child care support in humanitarian cash-for-work programming).
- f. Complement existing *ex-ante* livelihood, food security and vulnerability assessments with an unpaid care analysis. Advocate for governments and multilateral institutions to collect and use better data on the distribution of unpaid care work and its contribution to an overall economy. Support the inclusion of women's and men's unpaid domestic and care work in national income accounting (i.e. GDP).

5. ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND THE LINKS BETWEEN GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND WEE THROUGH RESEARCH, POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA SHOULD:

- a. Take a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to WEE programming that includes risk assessments and anticipates and mitigates the likelihood of gender-based violence, ‘does no harm’ and is able to respond to incidents with safety and referral plans.¹³⁹
 - b. Ensure that a holistic approach to WEE programming includes consideration for real and perceived risks of gender-based violence (e.g. investments in gender-sensitive public transportation and safe urban infrastructure like streetlights).
 - c. Support governments and organizations advocating for the elimination of workplace violence and discrimination through legislation, prosecution and public information campaigns.
 - d. Take on a leadership role in supporting a new binding ILO convention and recommendation to end sexual harassment in the workplace.
 - e. Invest in more and better research and data collection on the links between gender-based violence and WEE, particularly in the workplace.
 - f. Ensure WEE programming builds in components designed to track the impacts of WEE activities on gender-based violence and minimize its likelihood.
- c. Explore standardized methods for tracking and measuring WEE in programming and investments, including against a feminist baseline (e.g. one that looks holistically at all aspects of WEE, including neglected areas such as the care economy or the intersection between WEE and gender-based violence). Develop measures to evaluate the extent to which WEE has been prioritized and ensure transparency and accountability.
 - d. Invest in feminist monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks that employ feminist principles, use mixed methods of data collection, prioritize women-led criteria for measuring success and give control to women’s rights and feminist organizations.
 - e. Appoint a senior feminist economic adviser who can work across all three of Global Affairs Canada’s areas of work—foreign affairs, international trade and international development—to support the department in maximizing the feminist economic dimensions of the Feminist International Assistance Policy.
 - f. Undertake an external review of WEE programming as a means to measure policy coherence, effectiveness, impacts and commitment to a feminist approach. Ensure the review is published and accessible publicly and can be used to both replicate good practices and ‘raise the bar’, or make improvements, where necessary.

6. ENSURE GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA IS FIT FOR PURPOSE TO DELIVER FEMINIST WEE PROGRAMMING AND POLICIES

- a. Adopt a coherent approach to all areas of foreign policy, including trade, diplomacy, humanitarian work, defence, security and aid, to ensure actions in these areas support WEE.
- b. Incorporate intersectional and gender-based analysis in all economic and productive programming, including budgeting and reporting frameworks, to provide proper scrutiny and fully assess the impacts of economic policies on women and girls. Support the training of partner organizations and governments to improve their gender-based analysis, budgeting and reporting frameworks.

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