



# Addressing Gender Inequalities in Countries Affected by Fragility, Conflict, and Violence

An Evaluation of the World Bank Group's Support



**IEG**  
INDEPENDENT  
EVALUATION GROUP

**WORLD BANK GROUP**  
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Beatrice Wanjiku Njoroge, *Faces 9*, 2007

Born in Nairobi in 1978, Beatrice Wanjiku is one of Kenya's leading conceptual artists. She uses color to convey psychological states and engage viewers emotionally. In her Faces series, she seeks to probe the human condition, peeling away the layers that constitute social norm to revealing haunting, abstract figures.

"I am inspired most frequently by women, in particular African women... As I paint them, I deconstruct and disregard the resemblance to the subject and concentrate on using different colors to show their expressions and to help relate to human emotion".

Wanjiku graduated from Nairobi's Buruburu Institute of Fine Arts in 2000 and lives and works in Nairobi, Kenya.

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*July 13, 2023*

# Contents

Abbreviations	v
Acknowledgments	vi
Overview	viii
Aperçu	xix
The World Bank Group Management Response	xxxii
Report to the Board from the Committee on Development Effectiveness	xlii
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Purpose	1
Methodology	2
Limitations of the Evaluation	9
Road Map	10
<b>2. The Challenge of Promoting Transformational Change</b>	<b>14</b>
The Challenge	16
Strengths and Weaknesses in Planning for Transformational Change	17
The Trade-Offs	31
<b>3. Getting to Results</b>	<b>40</b>
Learning from Implementation to Improve Results	43
Shifting from a Project to a Country Focus	50
Measuring Results	56
<b>4. Factors Enabling and Constraining Transformational Change</b>	<b>64</b>
Prioritization of Women’s and Girls’ Economic Empowerment, Gender-Based Violence, and Gender Inequalities	66
Financial and Human Resources	69
Modalities of Engagement, Collaboration, and Coordination	73
Contextual Factors	82
<b>5. Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	<b>98</b>
Recommendations	103
Bibliography	105

## Boxes

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Box 1.1. Transformational Change and Its Elements	5
Box 1.2. Evaluation Questions	7
Box 4.1. Burkina Faso: The Effectiveness of Bottom-Up Approaches in Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment and Enhancing Women's Voice and Agency	80
Box 4.2. Nonjudgmental, Community-Led, Empowering Approaches That Yield Major Change in Adverse Gender Norms: Lessons from Tostan and the SWEDD Project	87
Box 4.3. Lebanon: When Multiple Contextual Factors Cause Crises in a Middle-Income Country	93

## Figures

---

Figure O.1. Elements Contributing to Transformational Change in Project Design	x
Figure O.1. Éléments contribuant au changement transformationnel dans les projets étudiés	xxi
Figure 1.1. Theory of Change	3
Figure 2.1. Elements Contributing to Transformational Change in Project Design	17
Figure 2.2. Prevalence of Individual Elements in Project Design	18
Figure 3.1. Elements of Transformational Change for All Projects Compared to Recent Projects	43
Figure 3.2. Evolution of Project Design in Select Projects	44
Figure 3.3. Gender Inequality Focus Areas in Subsequent Country Strategies	54
Figure 3.4. Prevalence of Indicators Related to WGEE and Gender-Based Violence in Analyzed Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks	58
Figure 4.1. Key Informants' Opinions on the World Bank Group's Potential Comparative Advantage	68
Figure 4.2. Factors Enabling and Constraining the Transformational Potential of Worst and Best Project Designs	70
Figure 4.3. Factors Enabling and Constraining the Achievement of Change for the Worst and Best Project Designs	71
Figure 4.4. Opinions of Key Informants on the World Bank Group's Performance in Coordinating, Establishing, and Leading Partnerships to Address Gender Inequalities	76

## Tables

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Table 3.1. Types of Gender-Relevant Indicators Used in Country Strategies	61
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## Appendixes

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Appendix A. Methodological Approach	122
Appendix B. Country Case Studies	154
Appendix C. Conceptual Framework	170

# Abbreviations

ALBIA	Local Development and Adaptation Project
CPF	Country Partnership Framework
CSO	civil society organization
DPO	development policy operation
FCV	fragility, conflict, and violence
FIP	Forest Investment Program
FY	fiscal year
GBV	gender-based violence
IDP	internally displaced person
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
IFC	International Finance Corporation
INGO	international nongovernmental organization
MGF	Mashreq Gender Facility
NGO	nongovernmental organization
RRA	Risk and Resilience Assessment
SCD	Systematic Country Diagnostic
SWEDD	Sahel Women’s Empowerment and Demographic Dividend
TTL	task team leader
UN	United Nations
WGEE	women’s and girls’ economic empowerment

*All dollar amounts are US dollars unless otherwise indicated.*

# Acknowledgments

This evaluation was prepared by an Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) team led by Elena Bardasi, senior economist, and coauthored by Serena Fogaroli, gender expert and consultant for the evaluation, with the support of Shiva Chakravarti Sharma, extended-term consultant. The report was prepared under the supervision of Galina Sotirova, manager, IEG Corporate and Human Development, and Oscar Calvo-Gonzalez, director, IEG Human Development and Economic Management, and under the overall guidance of Alison Evans, Director-General, Evaluation. During the last phase of the evaluation, Carmen Nonay supervised as Human Development and Economic Management acting director and Oscar Calvo-Gonzalez as IEG acting Director-General.

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# Overview

Increasing situations of fragility and conflict in recent years have called for the World Bank Group to step up its engagement in fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV)-affected countries and to fine-tune an approach to address gender inequalities in these contexts. The Bank Group’s 2020–25 FCV strategy recognizes that FCV affects and is affected by gender inequalities, which require tailored strategic and operational approaches.

This evaluation assesses the quality of Bank Group support to FCV countries in promoting women’s and girls’ economic empowerment (WGEE) and addressing gender-based violence (GBV). It does so by assessing the Bank Group’s support in terms of five key elements—namely, the extent to which Bank Group support (i) is evidence based and context specific and addresses the beneficiaries’ needs and priorities (relevance); (ii) involves key actors in the process of change, including in defining its goal and trajectory (inclusive ownership); (iii) is effective in achieving its expected outcomes and tackles the root causes of gender inequalities (depth); (iv) is set up to preserve progress over time (sustainability); and (v) aims at producing large-scale impact (scale). This is because, as the Bank Group recognizes in many corporate and strategic documents, these elements are needed to produce meaningful and lasting results—that is, to produce “transformational change,” as defined by this evaluation.

The evaluation analyzes the experiences of six countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lebanon, the Solomon Islands, and the Republic of Yemen) where the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation provided support to advance WGEE and address GBV during the past 10 years (from approximately 2010 to 2022). The evaluation draws on a combination of desk review of documents (related to analytical, operational, and strategic work); more than 200 interviews with World Bank and International Finance Corporation staff, government partners, and national and international stakeholders; and field visits, focus group discussions, and face-to-face interviews in Burkina Faso. The analysis and interpretation of findings are also guided by an extensive review of the literature on the

interlinkages among WGEE, GBV, and FCV and empirical research on what works to tackle gender inequalities in FCV situations.

## The Challenge

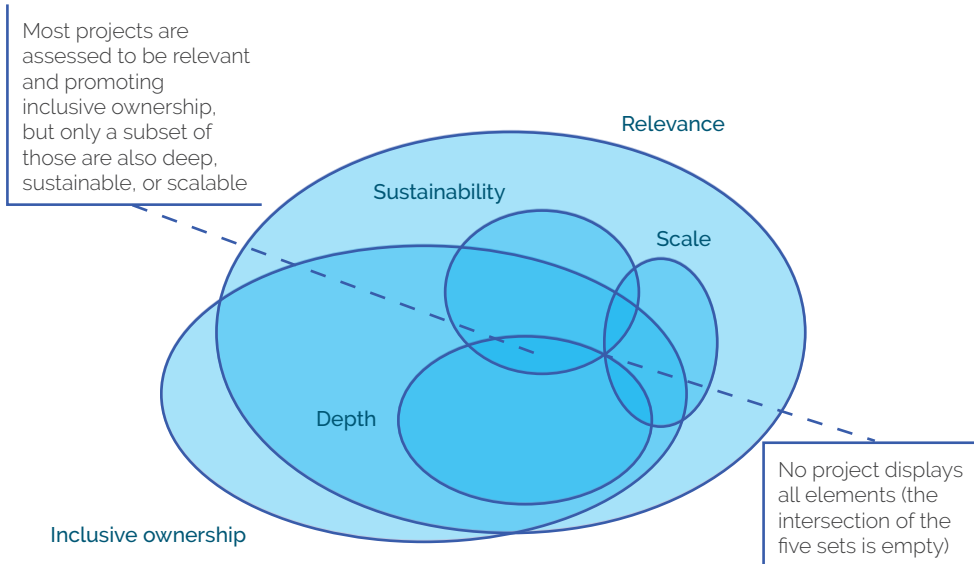
Addressing gender inequalities to produce change that is relevant, inclusive, deep, sustainable, and scalable in risky and weak environments is a complex task, which requires strong skills, collaboration, and local capacity exactly where these resources are particularly scarce. The evaluation found that Bank Group support to FCV countries to increase WGEE and address GBV is consistently relevant and promotes inclusive ownership but is much less frequently deep, sustainable, or scalable. Crucially, depth, sustainability, and scale are rarely found together in the same project design. (Figure O.1 shows the prevalence of these five elements in the projects analyzed by the evaluation and how they overlap. The figure shows that most projects both promote inclusive ownership and are relevant, but only a subset of those are also deep, sustainable, or scalable. Moreover, no project displays all elements—the intersection of the five sets is empty). These findings have several implications. First, the Bank Group embraces the goal of addressing gender inequalities in FCV countries, as evidenced by its inclusion of elements of transformational change in project designs. Second, there have been challenges in strengthening and expanding each individual element. Third, projects face difficulties in combining the five elements.

Although the biggest challenge is producing a change that is at the same time relevant, inclusively owned, deep, sustainable, and at scale, this evaluation also surfaced specific findings within each of the five elements analyzed as follows.

Interventions are more relevant when their design relies on gender assessments to identify women’s and girls’ specific needs and constraints. Projects that identify and address gender-discriminatory mechanisms in context-specific and culturally sensitive ways, and pay attention to the heterogeneity of women and girls, make the intervention relevant to different groups of women. Using female quotas to increase the number of female beneficiaries works only when the project also removes obstacles preventing women and girls from benefiting from the project. Despite

difficulties in tailoring its business model to FCV contexts, the International Finance Corporation has demonstrated through some of its investments (for example, in Lebanon’s Al Majmoua microfinance institution) that this can successfully be done.

**Figure O.1.** Elements Contributing to Transformational Change in Project Design



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Projects that foster inclusive ownership in implementation are relatively common in the evaluated pool of projects. The evaluation found that the Bank Group often conflates “country ownership” with “client ownership,” but this privileged relationship with the government leaves very few spaces for other actors, especially local actors. Consultations with local stakeholders and communities, including women’s organizations, are frequently used to generate ownership, but rarely as a means to involve local actors in project design.

Less frequent are deeper projects, understood as those that tackle the root causes of gender inequalities (one example is the Sahel Women’s Empowerment and Demographic Dividend in Burkina Faso and Chad). Achieving depth requires integrated and multisectoral approaches that combine multiple interventions—for example, supporting the demand for and supply of services and correctly balancing the two—and is a task that

has been difficult to achieve in many projects. Analytical work that examines the links between WGEE and GBV and could support deeper project design is also infrequent. Some of the work conducted by the International Finance Corporation analyzed the negative impact of GBV on WGEE, for example in terms of absenteeism, worker turnover, low productivity, and occupational hazards, and the firms' potential responses.

Explicit planning for the sustainability of achievements in WGEE and in GBV prevention and response—and of the increased capacity of the country to continue to promote WGEE and address GBV—remains rare. Supporting preexisting initiatives and local actors is an effective approach, and so is improving the enabling environment for WGEE and for GBV prevention and response—that is, the policy, legal, and institutional framework, both formal and informal, as exemplified by the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend and the Mashreq Gender Facility in the Sahel and Lebanon.

Few projects are designed to produce large-scale changes in WGEE and GBV prevention and response. A few aim at expanding geographically to more beneficiaries. Others, such as the social safety net projects in the Sahel region, more fundamentally plan to strengthen national or subnational systems. The evaluation did not find any example of a project that tried to achieve scale by partnering or coordinating with other donors to develop a common strategy to deliver larger, complementary programs or by “delivering as one.”

## The Trade-Offs

The Bank Group faced three trade-offs when pursuing WGEE and GBV goals within an individual project. The first trade-off is among the elements of transformational change—particularly depth, sustainability, and scale. The evaluation observed only one example where scale and deep change were both achieved within the same project design and found no examples where all three were achieved at once. For example, national social safety net projects are by nature large-scale but are not often deep. Likewise, various deep, integrated projects remain small-scale and are not yet sustainable. The second type of trade-off is among the different parts of the theory of change, which individual projects cannot effectively address. Promoting WGEE and

addressing GBV require holistic and integrated approaches that involve multiple sectors. However, individual projects did not have the scope or resources to address all of these interconnections and sectoral interventions at once. Some projects, for example, stimulated the demand for services at a level that was too high for the existing supply. The third trade-off is the nexus between emergency, humanitarian, and development goals (which is often a temporal trade-off between the short- and long-term perspectives in FCV situations). Many key informants, both inside and outside the Bank Group, recognized the difficulty in addressing both the impacts of fragility and conflict (that is, responding to the immediate humanitarian needs of women, men, girls, and boys) and the drivers of fragility, conflict, and gender inequalities (that is, fostering peace, resilience, and sustainable development for all).

## Getting to Results

The Bank Group has been improving the relevance, inclusive ownership, depth, sustainability, and scale of its interventions aimed at supporting WGEE and addressing GBV, although project design still has limitations.

The evaluation found that several projects included improvements at restructuring or in the second-phase design that made them more relevant and deeper, and sometimes larger in scale and more sustainable. Innovations were facilitated by using gender assessments and lessons from earlier project implementations, using gender expertise to address gaps in design, increasing budget allocation to promote WGEE or address GBV, and ensuring project continuity, flexibility, and timely adaptation.

The Bank Group also introduced innovative projects starting in 2019. These new projects are almost all FCV focused and intended to address both the impact and drivers of FCV, including conflict and climate change—hence, easing the trade-off between humanitarian and development goals. Several of these projects adopt decentralized, community-based approaches that include women and other marginalized groups and aim at building resilience and peace.

The approach is still centered, however, on delivering individual projects (which intensifies the trade-offs). Individual projects struggle to support the sustainability and scalability of deep approaches for WGEE and GBV; to adequately address the multisectoral, holistic nature of complex interventions;

and to meet both humanitarian needs and the long-term goals of gender equality, resilience, and peace.

Shifting from a project-centric approach to a strategic country engagement approach in addressing gender inequalities can help the Bank Group tackle the trade-offs identified by the evaluation by using its full portfolio of activities, engaging in regular policy dialogue on gender issues, and coordinating and collaborating with other development partners on the country gender agenda.

The Bank Group, however, struggles to adopt a country engagement approach to address gender inequalities. The evaluation found that the Systematic Country Diagnostic–Country Partnership Framework model in the six analyzed FCV countries does not include an explicit long-term approach for addressing gender inequalities in those countries and that the focus of country strategies on GBV and WGEE, when it exists, is easily lost from one strategy to the next. This discontinuity makes it difficult to connect individual projects to others over the long term. Moreover, it is rare for country strategies to define how various activities in the country portfolio combine to achieve higher-level goals related to WGEE or GBV. In addition, analytical work does not adequately explore the interplay between gender inequalities and FCV issues, although recent Risk and Resilience Assessments are more likely to discuss gender inequalities, especially the links between FCV and GBV, than older ones.

Project monitoring and evaluation frameworks do not adequately capture outcomes related to WGEE and GBV or the relevance, inclusive ownership, depth, sustainability, or scale of the outcomes and processes of change. Not many results have been documented so far in monitoring and evaluation frameworks because design and implementation have shortcomings, the most promising innovative projects are very recent, and indicators have limitations. Recent improvements in monitoring and evaluation position the projects to better capture outcomes in the future, but several elements of transformational change (such as inclusive ownership, changes in the enabling environment, capacity building, and others) are still not tracked.

Country strategy results frameworks generally use indicators taken from individual projects to measure what the project did (often just its outreach)

and not how the project contributed to the country's progress toward achieving gender equality.

## Factors Enabling and Constraining Transformational Change

This evaluation found four groups of enabling or constraining factors that can make Bank Group support to FCV countries in addressing GBV and promoting WGEE more or less transformational, understood as change in the five elements. These factors are the following: Bank Group prioritization of WGEE, GBV, and gender equality; the modalities of collaboration, coordination, and engagement with stakeholders; the use of financial and human resources and capacities; and the FCV country contextual factors, including conflict dynamics, gender norms, COVID-19, and implementing partners' awareness and capacity.

### Prioritization of Women's and Girls' Economic Empowerment, Gender-Based Violence, and Gender Inequalities

Addressing gender inequalities related to WGEE and GBV is seldom considered a priority in either country strategies or projects. Interviews suggest that gender inequalities are often considered by Bank Group staff as just another priority competing with many others. This is also indicated by how frequently country strategies identify gender as a “cross-cutting issue” without specifying which gender issues or gaps pertain to the strategy's priority areas. No key informant external to the Bank Group thought that prioritizing gender was a Bank Group comparative advantage, and many commented that the Bank Group could have the power to raise gender issues in policy discussions but does not do it. That said, the evaluation found many examples of projects that did not have gender-focused objectives, but whose design became relevant and deeper when the project team and management considered it important to identify entry points to address gender inequalities through those projects.



## Financial and Human Resources

Projects that recognized their potential to support WGEE and address GBV and allocated adequate resources to this end were more likely to achieve results in WGEE and GBV. By contrast, projects aimed at promoting WGEE without a budget that was fit for purpose struggled to achieve results in WGEE. In particular, projects that benefited from gender advisory support had more transformational elements at design. The availability of gender experts in countries is rare, which does not ensure quality gender advisory support to Country Management Units and project teams. Nor does it guarantee internal and external coordination on gender issues and the Bank Group's regular presence in gender networks.

## Modalities of Engagement, Collaboration, and Coordination

The Bank Group's coordination and collaboration are strong with implementing partners and on specific projects but are weak with women's rights organizations, donors, and international nongovernmental organizations on the broader gender agenda. Collaboration with the ministries of women and other government institutions in charge of gender issues is also weak and irregular. The Bank Group does not use the outcome of its consultations with civil society organizations to improve planning and project design, which can undermine project achievements. Bank Group engagement with key change agents, such as opinion leaders and men and boys, is still limited but increasingly pursued. Top-down planning without meaningful consultations can undermine the achievement of expected results in WGEE and GBV.

## Contextual Factors

Contextual factors make it difficult for the Bank Group to achieve transformational change on GBV and WGEE in FCV countries; however, in many cases, these factors can, and should be, anticipated and internalized in project activities. The Bank Group has dealt with conflict dynamics in several ways, from collaborating with United Nations agencies and using decentralized approaches to face a long-lasting conflict in a country without a governmental counterpart (for example, in the Republic of Yemen) to readjusting

interventions and adopting innovative approaches to maintain support for the empowerment of women and girls affected by the breakout of a conflict (for example, in Burkina Faso). COVID-19 has also required projects to adapt by shifting in-person interaction to remote support, which penalized the poorest population living in remote areas. The Bank Group has used various approaches to account for gender norms, including “nesting” sensitive interventions, such as GBV case management, in socially accepted ones; sensitizing communities to interventions challenging gender norms; and “seconding” gender norms, for example, by supporting women’s economic empowerment in their traditional activities. A more transformational solution is longer-term engagement with local communities and key change agents to transform gender norms—for example, through the creation of discussion spaces to foster community dialogue and engage with men, boys, and opinion leaders on positive masculinity. The awareness and capacity of implementing partners to promote WGEE and address GBV vary across countries but are generally low.

## Recommendations

The findings of this evaluation underpin four recommendations for the Bank Group to improve its support to FCV countries for WGEE, for GBV prevention and response, and for gender equality.

To strengthen its strategic focus on WGEE, GBV prevention and response, and gender equality, the Bank Group would need to

- » Make priorities regarding gender equality (including on WGEE and GBV) more explicit in country strategies, based on strong analytics (primarily Systematic Country Diagnostics and the World Bank Risk and Resilience Assessments) and in collaboration with key stakeholders. This explicit prioritization involves (i) identifying overarching, long-term gender equality goals that span across more than one country strategy, are consistent with the country’s context and needs, and transform the enabling environment; (ii) defining more focused, medium-term objectives that are consistent with the country strategy’s overarching goals and help coalesce the Bank Group’s various instruments, institutions, and sector interventions in relation to those objectives; (iii) coordinating and collaborating among Bank Group teams

in the Country Management Unit and Global Practices and at the corporate level; and (iv) leveraging the Bank Group's influencing power to consistently elevate gender issues in policy dialogues.

- » Foster engagements with communities, civil society, women's organizations, local authorities, and other key stakeholders to define gender equality objectives and the actions to achieve them. These engagements involve (i) identifying priorities related to gender equality (including WGEE and GBV) in a participatory way; (ii) tailoring interventions to specific FCV contexts, starting with bottom-up engagements with local stakeholders during the design stage; (iii) adopting flexible and decentralized approaches to account for local constraints and diminish project risks; and (iv) building on local knowledge, processes, and capacities to increase the local ownership, cultural sensitivity, and, ultimately, sustainability of the intervention.

To mobilize resources and partnerships at a level commensurate with its commitments to support countries in promoting WGEE and preventing and responding to GBV the Bank Group would need to

- » Ensure that gender expertise tailored to the context is available for FCV-affected countries to support projects, as well as the country engagement. This gender expertise should be adequate for (i) supporting strategic thinking to diagnose and identify gender-related priorities and integrate them into country strategies; (ii) ensuring the quality of project design and monitoring and evaluation; (iii) effectively using the Bank Group's convening power to support country-level engagement with relevant stakeholders for the identification of gender-related priorities, their translation into policies and programs, and their implementation, monitoring, and evaluation; and (iv) improving the capacity of Bank Group staff and local stakeholders to address gender inequalities in FCV contexts.
- » Coordinate and collaborate with relevant international stakeholders engaged in gender equality in the country, including humanitarian actors. This stronger coordination and collaboration should leverage each actor's comparative advantage to achieve common goals. The collaboration should also strengthen the adoption of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach and ensure the Bank Group's participation in national gender platforms and coordination groups to exchange knowledge and lessons, promote common

initiatives in policy dialogues, and establish synergies across interventions to enhance their depth, scale, and sustainability.

# Aperçu

L'augmentation du nombre de situations de fragilité et de conflit au cours des dernières années a incité le Groupe de la Banque mondiale à renforcer son engagement dans les pays en situation de fragilité, de conflits et de violence (FCV) et à affiner son approche afin de traiter les inégalités entre les sexes dans ces contextes. La stratégie FCV du Groupe de la Banque mondiale 2020-2025 reconnaît que la fragilité, les conflits et la violence (FCV) affectent et sont affectés par les inégalités entre les sexes et que ce constat appelle des réponses stratégiques et opérationnelles sur mesure.

La présente évaluation estime la qualité de l'aide apportée par le Groupe de la Banque aux pays en situation de fragilité, de conflit et de violence (FCV) pour la promotion de l'autonomisation économique des femmes et des filles (WGEE) et la recherche de solutions au problème de la violence basée sur le genre (VBG). Dans ce but, elle évalue l'aide apportée par le Groupe de la Banque à l'aune de cinq éléments : dans quelle mesure l'aide du Groupe de la Banque (i) est basée sur des éléments probants, est contextualisée et répond aux besoins et priorités des bénéficiaires (pertinence) ; (ii) implique les principaux acteurs dans le processus de changement, y compris dans l'établissement de son objectif et sa trajectoire (appropriation inclusive) ; (iii) atteint efficacement ses résultats attendus et s'attaque aux causes profondes des inégalités entre les sexes (profondeur) ; (iv) est conçue pour garantir le progrès dans le temps (durabilité) ; et (v) vise à produire des effets à grande échelle (échelle). Cette exigence est justifiée par le fait que, comme il est reconnu dans de nombreux documents stratégiques et institutionnels du Groupe de la Banque mondiale, ces cinq critères sont nécessaires pour produire des résultats significatifs et durables, pour créer un « changement transformationnel » comme cette évaluation le définit.

Cette évaluation propose une analyse approfondie des situations rencontrées dans six pays (Burkina Faso, Tchad, République démocratique du Congo, Liban, Îles Salomon et République du Yémen) auxquels la Banque mondiale et la Société financière internationale (SFI) ont fourni une aide visant à développer l'autonomisation économique des femmes et des filles (WGEE)

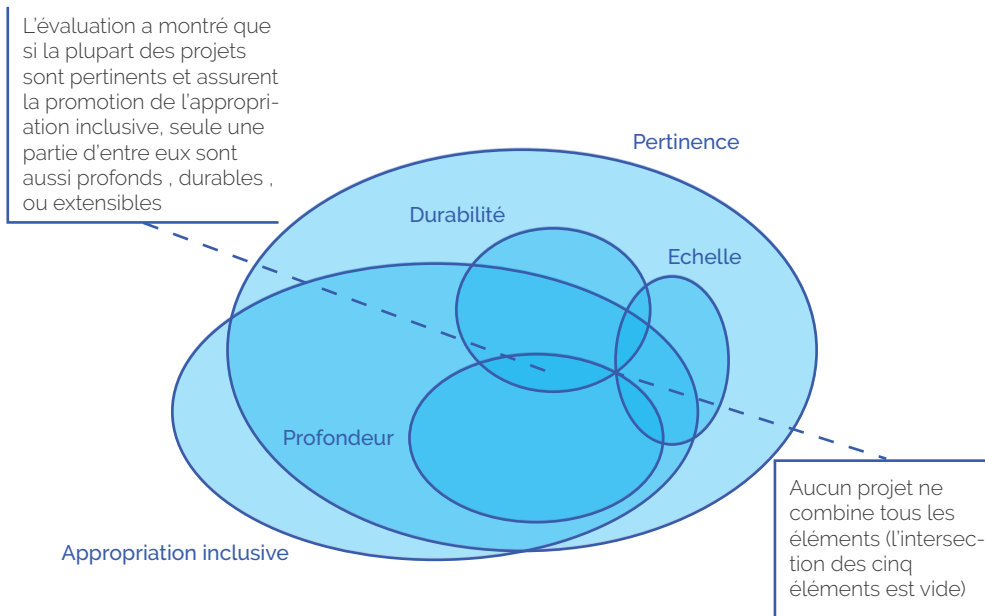
et à prévenir et prendre en charge les violences basées sur le genre (VBG) au cours des 10 dernières années. Cette évaluation s'est appuyée sur différentes activités : un examen approfondi de documents (de type analytique, opérationnel et stratégique) ; plus de 200 entretiens avec des personnels de la Banque mondiale et de la Société financière internationale, des partenaires gouvernementaux et des parties prenantes nationales et internationales ; et des visites de terrain, des groupes de discussion et des entretiens en face à face au Burkina Faso. L'analyse et l'interprétation des résultats se sont aussi appuyées sur une large revue de la littérature concernant les interconnexions entre l'autonomisation économique des femmes et des filles (WGEE), la violence basée sur le genre (VBG), la fragilité, les conflits et la violence (FCV) ainsi que sur une recherche empirique sur les mesures qui ont démontré leur efficacité dans la lutte contre les inégalités entre les sexes en contexte de FCV.

## Le défi

Lutter contre les inégalités entre les sexes afin de produire un changement pertinent, inclusif, profond, durable et extensible dans les environnements fragiles et à risque est une tâche extrêmement complexe qui exige des compétences, une collaboration et des capacités locales justement là où ces ressources sont particulièrement rares. Cette évaluation a établi que l'aide apportée par le Groupe de la Banque mondiale aux pays en situation de fragilité, de conflit et de violence (FCV) en vue de renforcer l'autonomisation économique des femmes et des filles (WGEE) et de rechercher des solutions au problème de la violence basée sur le genre (VBG) est pertinente et cohérente et qu'elle encourage l'appropriation inclusive, mais qu'elle est beaucoup moins souvent profonde, durable ou extensible. Il est important de souligner que la profondeur, la durabilité et l'échelle sont rarement associées dans une même conception de projet (la figure O.1 représente la répartition des cinq éléments évoqués plus haut dans les projets analysés par l'évaluation et leurs chevauchements). Ces résultats ont diverses implications. Premièrement l'inclusion d'éléments de changement transformationnel dans la conception des projets montre clairement que le Groupe de la Banque poursuit activement l'objectif de la lutte contre les inégalités entre les sexes dans les pays en situation de fragilité, de conflit et de violence (FCV). Deuxièmement, le renforcement et le développement de chacun des

éléments s'est heurté à des difficultés. Troisièmement, les projets ne parviennent pas à combiner les 5 éléments.

**Figure O.1.** Eléments contribuant au changement transformationnel dans les projets étudiés



Source : Groupe indépendant d'évaluation

Si le principal défi est de produire un changement à la fois pertinent, inclusif, profond, durable et à l'échelle, cette évaluation a aussi révélé les constats spécifiques suivants par rapport à chacun des cinq éléments analysés.

La pertinence des interventions est meilleure lorsque leur conception intègre un diagnostic sexospécifique (ou de genre) en vue d'identifier les besoins et contraintes des femmes et des filles. Les projets qui identifient et font face aux mécanismes de discrimination sexuelle en tenant compte du contexte, de la dimension culturelle, et de l'hétérogénéité des femmes et des filles produisent des interventions adaptées aux différents groupes de femmes rencontrés. Le recours aux quotas de femmes visant à augmenter le nombre de femmes bénéficiaires n'est efficace que lorsque le projet s'attache également à lever les obstacles qui empêchent les femmes et les filles de bénéficier du projet. Malgré les difficultés rencontrées pour adapter son modèle économique aux contextes de FCV, la SFI a démontré à travers certains de ses

investissements (par exemple dans l'institution de microfinance libanaise Al Majmoua) que cet objectif est atteignable.

Les dispositifs favorisant l'appropriation inclusive dans leur mise en œuvre sont relativement peu courants dans les projets étudiés. L'évaluation a révélé que le Groupe de la Banque mondiale combine souvent « appropriation dans le pays » et « appropriation par le client », mais que cette relation privilégiée avec l'État ne laisse que peu de place à d'autres acteurs, locaux, en particulier. La consultation des parties prenantes et communautés locales, y compris les organisations féminines, a souvent pour but de susciter l'appropriation, mais rarement d'impliquer les acteurs locaux à la conception du projet.

Les projets ayant plus de profondeur, c'est à dire ceux qui s'attaquent aux causes profondes des inégalités entre les sexes, sont peu nombreux (c'est, par exemple, le cas du projet pour l'autonomisation des femmes et le dividende démographique au Sahel (SWEDD) au Burkina Faso et au Tchad). L'objectif de la profondeur nécessite, pour être atteint, des approches intégrées et multisectorielles associant diverses interventions (par exemple, le soutien de la demande et de l'offre de services), et de maintenir un parfait équilibre entre les deux, chose que peu de projets ont réussi à faire. Les travaux d'analyse visant à identifier les liens entre l'autonomisation économique des femmes et des filles (WGEE) et la VBG, et, par ailleurs, capables de favoriser une conception plus profonde du projet sont également peu courants. Certains des travaux de la SFI analysent l'effet négatif de la VBG sur la WGEE, par exemple sur l'absentéisme, le taux de roulement des travailleurs, la faiblesse de la productivité ou les risques professionnels, ainsi que les réponses que les entreprises peuvent apporter sur ces questions.

La planification délibérée de la durabilité de la prévention et des réponses apportées à la WGEE et à la VBG – et du renforcement de la capacité des pays à promouvoir durablement la WGEE et la lutte contre la VBG – demeure rare. Le soutien des initiatives existantes et des acteurs locaux s'est révélé être une approche efficace, de même que l'amélioration des environnements propices à la WGEE et à la prévention et la lutte contre la VBG – à savoir le cadre politique, juridique et institutionnel, à la fois formel et informel, comme l'ont fait le projet pour l'autonomisation des femmes et le dividende



démographique au Sahel (SWEDD), et le Mécanisme pour l'égalité des sexes au Mashreq (MGF) au Liban.

Rares sont les projets qui ont été conçus pour produire des changements à grande échelle en matière de WGEE et de prévention et de lutte contre les VBG. Quelques-uns visaient un élargissement géographique pour augmenter leur nombre de bénéficiaires, tandis que d'autres, comme les projets de filets sociaux au Sahel, relevaient d'une logique de renforcement des systèmes nationaux ou infra-nationaux. L'évaluation n'a identifié aucun projet ayant basé sa tentative de changement d'échelle sur des partenariats ou une coordination avec d'autres organismes donateurs, en vue de formuler une stratégie commune proposant des programmes plus ambitieux et complémentaires, ou une « offre unique ».

## Les dilemmes

Le Groupe de la banque a dû se résoudre à trois dilemmes dans la poursuite de ses objectifs en matière de WGEE et de VBG au sein d'un même projet. Le premier dilemme concerne l'impossibilité de garantir la présence simultanée des critères de changement transformationnel, notamment la profondeur, la durabilité et l'échelle, dans le même projet. L'évaluation a observé un seul cas dans lequel les objectifs d'échelle et de changement profond ont été atteints dans une seule et même conception de projet, et aucun exemple de réalisation simultanée des trois objectifs. Par exemple, les projets de filets sociaux nationaux sont par nature de grande envergure mais ils n'ont pas souvent une grande profondeur. De même, beaucoup de projets intégrés profonds sont à petite échelle et pas encore durables. Le deuxième dilemme se produit entre les différentes parties de la théorie du changement, niveau auquel les projets individuels n'ont pas d'efficacité. Le soutien à la WGEE et la lutte contre les VBG exigent des approches holistiques et intégrées impliquant divers secteurs. Or les projets individuels étudiés ne possédaient pas la taille ni les ressources nécessaires pour pouvoir prendre en charge simultanément toutes les interconnexions et interventions sectorielles. Certains projets, par exemple, opéraient une stimulation excessive de la demande au regard de l'offre existante. Le troisième dilemme survient lors de la jonction des objectifs humanitaires d'urgence et des objectifs de développement (il s'agit souvent d'un dilemme « temporel » entre le court et le long terme en

contexte de FCV). Beaucoup d'informateurs clés, qu'ils soient intérieurs ou extérieurs au Groupe de la Banque, ont reconnu la difficulté qu'il y a à faire face à la fois aux effets de la fragilité et des conflits (en pourvoyant aux besoins humanitaires élémentaires des femmes, des hommes, des filles et des garçons) et aux facteurs à l'origine de la fragilité, des conflits et des inégalités entre les sexes (à fin de construire la paix et la résilience et promouvoir le développement durable pour tous).

## Les progrès vers l'atteinte des résultats

Bien que la conception des projets ait encore ses limites, le Groupe de la Banque n'a cessé d'améliorer la pertinence, la profondeur, l'appropriation inclusive, la durabilité et l'échelle de ses interventions dans le but de soutenir la WGEE et à lutter contre les VBG.

Cette évaluation a révélé que plusieurs projets contenaient des améliorations, concernant la restructuration ou la deuxième étape de conception, qui augmentaient leur pertinence et leur profondeur, et parfois leur échelle et durabilité. L'innovation était facilitée par le recours à des diagnostics genre et par les enseignements tirés de la mise en œuvre de projets antérieurs, ainsi que par le recours à l'expertise en matière de questions genre afin de pallier les lacunes de conception, d'accroître le budget alloué au soutien à la WGEE et à la lutte contre la VBG, et de garantir la continuité, la flexibilité et l'adaptation du projet en temps voulu.

Le Groupe de la Banque a aussi introduit des projets innovants à partir de 2019. La quasi-totalité de ces nouveaux projets porte sur des questions de fragilité, de conflits et de violence (FCV), et ciblent à la fois les effets et les facteurs à l'origine de FCV, y compris les conflits et le changement climatique, ce qui allège le dilemme entre objectifs humanitaires et de développement. Plusieurs de ces projets ont adopté des approches décentralisées et communautaires incluant les femmes et d'autres groupes marginalisés, et ils ont pour objectif de construire la résilience et la paix.

Pourtant, le dispositif reste focalisé sur une logique de projets individuels (ce qui intensifie les trois dilemmes). Ces projets individuels ont du mal à garantir la durabilité et l'extensibilité des approches profondes pour la WGEE et

la lutte contre les VBG ; prennent parfaitement en compte la nature holistique et multisectorielle des interventions complexes ; et ils répondent aux besoins humanitaires et respectent les objectifs à long terme de l'égalité des sexes, de la résilience et de la paix.

Transiter de l'approche axée sur le projet vers un engagement stratégique au niveau du pays pour lutter contre les inégalités entre les sexes peut être l'occasion pour l'institution de s'attaquer à la question des dilemmes identifiés par la présente évaluation. Pour ce faire, elle pourra mobiliser la totalité de son portefeuille d'activités et instaurer un dialogue politique régulier sur les questions d'égalité des sexes ainsi qu'une coordination et une collaboration avec ses partenaires en matière de développement pour les questions d'égalité des sexes dans le pays.

Le Groupe de la Banque peine néanmoins à adopter une approche d'engagement dans le pays pour lutter contre les inégalités entre les sexes. L'évaluation a révélé que le modèle « Diagnostic systématique du pays (SCD)-Cadre de partenariat-pays (CPP) » des six pays en situation de fragilité, de conflit et de violence (FCV) analysés n'inclut pas d'approche à long terme spécifique de lutte contre les inégalités entre les sexes dans ces pays, et que la focalisation des stratégies pays sur les VBG et la WGEE, lorsqu'elle est présente, a tendance à disparaître d'une stratégie à l'autre. Du fait de ces ruptures, il est plus difficile d'établir des liens à long terme entre les différents projets. En outre, les stratégies pays indiquent rarement comment associer différentes activités du portefeuille d'un pays pour atteindre des objectifs de haut niveau en matière de WGEE ou de VBG. Par ailleurs, le travail d'analyse n'étudie pas de manière satisfaisante les liens de cause à effet entre les « inégalités entre les sexes » et les problèmes de FCV, même si les récentes Évaluations des risques et de la résilience sont plus susceptibles que les précédentes d'aborder les inégalités entre les sexes, et particulièrement les liens entre la FCV et la GBV.

Les cadres de suivi et d'évaluation de projet ne permettent pas d'identifier clairement les résultats liés à la WGEE et aux VBG, ni la pertinence, l'appropriation inclusive, l'ampleur, la durabilité et l'échelle des résultats et processus de changement. Peu de résultats ont, à ce jour, été documentés dans les cadres de suivi et d'évaluation en raison de défauts de conception et de mise

en œuvre, des limites constatées des indicateurs, et du fait que les projets innovants les plus prometteurs sont très récents. Si les projets ont bénéficié d'améliorations récentes du suivi et de l'évaluation, ce qui leur permettra de mieux saisir les résultats à l'avenir, plusieurs critères du changement transformationnel (comme l'appropriation inclusive, les modifications apportées à l'environnement habilitant, le renforcement des capacités et quelques autres) ne font néanmoins toujours pas l'objet d'un suivi.

Les cadres de résultats des stratégies pays utilisent généralement des indicateurs tirés de projets individuels pour mesurer les réalisations du projet (ce qui se limite souvent à sa portée) et non pas la manière dont il a contribué aux progrès réalisés par le pays aux fins de l'égalité des sexes.

## Facteurs habilitants et contraignants du changement transformationnel

Cette évaluation a identifié quatre groupes de facteurs habilitants et contraignants susceptibles de renforcer ou d'affaiblir l'efficacité transformationnelle de l'aide apportée par le groupe de la Banque aux pays en situation de fragilité, de conflit et de violence (FCV) à travers la lutte contre les VBG et la promotion de la WGEE, sachant que ces facteurs ont été évalués au regard des cinq critères évoqués plus haut. Ces facteurs sont : la priorisation par le Groupe de la Banque de la WGEE, des VBG et de l'égalité des sexes ; les modalités de la collaboration, de la coordination et de l'engagement avec les parties prenantes ; le recours à des ressources et capacités humaines et financières ; et les facteurs contextuels des pays en situation de fragilité, de conflit et de violence (FCV) concernés, y compris la dynamique des conflits, les normes sexospécifiques (ou normes de genre), la Covid-19, et le degré de conscience et la capacité des partenaires de mise en œuvre.

## Priorisation de l'autonomisation économique des femmes et des filles, de la violence basée sur le genre et des inégalités entre les sexes

La lutte contre les inégalités entre les sexes liées à la WGEE et aux VGB constitue rarement une priorité dans les stratégies pays ou les projets pays. Les entretiens organisés avec des membres du personnel du Groupe de la Banque

ont montré que souvent ceux-ci considèrent les inégalités entre les sexes comme une priorité en concurrence avec de nombreuses autres. Ce constat est aussi corroboré par le fait que de nombreuses stratégies pays identifient la question de l'égalité entre les sexes comme une « question transversale » en omettant de préciser quelles sont les questions d'égalité des sexes ou les exemples d'écart entre les femmes et les hommes qui font partie des domaines prioritaires de la stratégie. Aucun informateur important extérieur au Groupe de la Banque ne considérerait le fait de donner la priorité à l'égalité entre les sexes comme un avantage comparatif pour le Groupe de la Banque, et beaucoup admettaient que le Groupe de la Banque aurait la capacité de soulever les problématiques de genre dans les discussions sur les politiques mais s'en abstenait. L'évaluation a toutefois identifié des projets n'ayant pas défini d'objectifs liés à l'égalité entre les sexes, mais dont la conception devenait pertinente et s'approfondissait dès lors que l'équipe et la direction du projet estimaient utile d'identifier les points d'entrée de la lutte contre les inégalités entre les sexes dans le cadre de ces projets.

## Ressources humaines et financières

Les projets ayant reconnu leur capacité à soutenir la WGEE et à lutter contre les VBG, et ayant affecté des ressources suffisantes à ces missions étaient mieux équipés pour obtenir des résultats en matière de WGEE et de GBV. Au contraire, les projets n'ayant pas affecté de budget à la hauteur de leur objectif de promotion de la WGEE ont eu du mal à obtenir des résultats dans ce domaine. En particulier, les projets ayant bénéficié de conseils en matière de genre avaient, dans leur conception, un plus grand nombre d'éléments transformationnels. Les experts en genre étant souvent rares dans les pays, les Unités de gestion-pays et les équipes de projet ont du mal à accéder à des conseils de qualité en matière de genre, et la coordination interne et externe sur les questions d'égalité des sexes, de même que la présence régulière du Groupe de la Banque dans les réseaux de promotion de l'égalité des sexes, ne sont pas garanties.

## Modalités de l'engagement, collaboration et coordination

La coordination et la collaboration du groupe de la Banque sont efficaces avec les partenaires de mise en œuvre et sur des projets spécifiques, mais elles sont insuffisantes avec les organisations féminines, les autres partenaires techniques et financiers et les ONG internationales sur la question plus générale de l'égalité des sexes. La collaboration avec les ministères chargés de la promotion des droits des femmes et les autres institutions gouvernementales responsables des questions d'égalité des sexes est également insuffisante et irrégulière. Le Groupe de la Banque n'exploite pas les résultats de ses discussions avec les organisations de la société civile pour améliorer la planification et la conception des projets, au risque de compromettre leur réussite. L'engagement du Groupe de la Banque auprès des acteurs clés du changement, comme les leaders d'opinion, ou les hommes et les garçons, reste limité mais il se développe avec le temps. Enfin, la planification descendante peut compromettre la réalisation des résultats attendus en matière de WGEE et de GBV si elle ne s'accompagne pas de consultations suffisantes.

## Facteurs contextuels

Si le Groupe de la Banque a du mal à réaliser le changement transformationnel en matière de GBV et de WGEE dans les pays en situation de fragilité, de conflit et de violence (FCV) en raison des facteurs contextuels, il reste souvent possible, et nécessaire, d'anticiper et d'intégrer ces facteurs dans les activités des projets. Le Groupe de la Banque a géré de plusieurs manières la dynamique des conflits, depuis la collaboration avec les agences des Nations Unies ou l'adoption d'approches décentralisées face à des conflits de longue durée dans des pays n'ayant pas de gouvernement capable de tenir le rôle d'interlocuteur (par exemple en République du Yémen), jusqu'au réajustement des interventions et l'adoption d'approches innovantes pour maintenir le soutien à l'autonomisation des femmes et des filles impactées par l'éclatement d'un conflit (comme au Burkina Faso). La Covid-19 a aussi rendu indispensable l'adaptation des projets en basculant les échanges en personne vers l'aide en distanciel, ce qui, au passage, a pénalisé les populations les plus démunies habitant des zones reculées.

Le Groupe de la Banque a adopté différentes approches pour prendre en compte les normes de genre (ou sexospécifiques), notamment l'« imbrication » des interventions sensibles, comme la gestion des cas de VBG, dans des interventions socialement acceptées ; la sensibilisation des communautés aux interventions remettant en cause les normes de genre ; et l'adaptation aux normes de genre, par exemple en soutenant l'autonomisation économique des femmes dans leurs activités traditionnelles. Il a aussi mis en œuvre une solution plus transformationnelle en s'engageant sur le plus long terme aux côtés de communautés locales et d'acteurs clés du changement dans le but de transformer les normes de genre – par exemple par la création d'espaces d'échange favorisant le dialogue dans la communauté – et de s'engager auprès des hommes, des garçons et des leaders d'opinion sur le thème de la « masculinité positive ». La prise de conscience et la capacité des partenaires à promouvoir la WGEE et de lutter contre les VBG varient d'un pays à l'autre mais sont globalement faibles.

## Recommandations

Les résultats de cette évaluation ont été intégrés à quatre recommandations destinées à permettre au Groupe de la Banque d'améliorer l'aide qu'il apporte aux pays en situation de fragilité, de conflit et de violence (FCV) pour la promotion de la WGEE, la prévention et la lutte contre les VBG, et la promotion de l'égalité des sexes.

Pour renforcer son orientation stratégique en matière de WGEE, de prévention et de lutte contre la VBG, et d'égalité des sexes, la Banque Mondiale et la SFI vont devoir :

- » Rendre plus explicites les priorités concernant l'égalité des sexes (y compris sur la WGEE et les GBV) au sein des stratégies pays, en s'appuyant sur des analyses de données solides (essentiellement les Diagnostics-pays systématique (DPS) et l'évaluation des risques et de la résilience de la Banque mondiale) et en collaborant avec les parties prenantes principales. Cette priorisation explicite implique (i) d'identifier des objectifs d'égalité des sexes fondamentaux à long terme portant non pas sur une seule mais sur plusieurs stratégies-pays, qui devront être en cohérence avec le contexte et les besoins du pays et opérer une transformation de l'environnement capacitant ; (ii) de

définir des objectifs à moyen terme plus ciblés qui devront être en cohérence avec les objectifs fondamentaux de la stratégie pays et contribuer à fédérer les différents instruments, institutions et interventions sectorielles du Groupe de la Banque autour de ces objectifs ; (iii) de coordonner et de collaborer entre les différentes équipes du Groupe de la Banque au sein de l'Unité de gestion-pays et des Pratiques mondiales et au niveau institutionnel; et (iv) d'exploiter le pouvoir d'influence du Groupe de la Banque pour mettre en avant de manière cohérente les questions d'égalité des sexes dans les dialogues politiques.

- » Favoriser l'engagement auprès des communautés, de la société civile, des organisations féminines, des autorités locales et des autres parties prenantes en vue de définir des objectifs d'égalité des sexes et les dispositifs nécessaires pour les atteindre. Ces engagements impliquent (i) d'identifier de manière participative des priorités liées à l'égalité des sexes (y compris la WGEE et les VBG) ; (ii) d'adapter les interventions aux contextes spécifiques de la FCV, en s'appuyant premièrement sur des engagements ascendants (de la base au sommet) auprès des parties prenantes locales pendant la phase de conception ; (iii) d'adopter des approches flexibles et décentralisées pour faire face aux contraintes locales et réduire les risques liés au projet ; et (iv) s'appuyer sur les connaissances, les processus et les capacités locales pour renforcer l'appropriation locale et la sensibilité culturelle et, au bout du compte le caractère durable de l'intervention.

Pour mobiliser des ressources et des partenariats à une échelle en rapport avec son engagement d'aider les pays à promouvoir la WGEE et à prévenir et lutter contre la VBG, le Groupe de la Banque devra :

- » S'assurer que les pays touchés par la FCV aient accès à une expertise en genre parfaitement adaptée au contexte afin de soutenir les projets ainsi que l'engagement dans le pays. Cette expertise en genre doit permettre (i) de soutenir une réflexion stratégique en vue de diagnostiquer et d'identifier des priorités liées à l'égalité des sexes et de les intégrer aux stratégies pays ; (ii) de garantir la qualité de la conception, du suivi et de l'évaluation des projets ; (iii) d'exploiter efficacement le pouvoir d'influence du Groupe de la Banque en vue de soutenir l'engagement au niveau du pays avec les parties prenantes concernées dans le but d'identifier les priorités liées à l'égalité des sexes, de



les traduire dans des politiques et des programmes, et d'assurer leur mise en œuvre, leur suivi et leur évaluation ; et (iv) d'améliorer la capacité du personnel et des parties prenantes locales du Groupe de la Banque à lutter contre les inégalités entre les sexes dans les contextes FCV.

- » Coordonner et collaborer avec les parties prenantes internationales concernées, engagées dans la promotion de l'égalité des sexes dans le pays, y compris les acteurs humanitaires. Le renforcement de la coordination et de la collaboration devrait donner à chacun de ces acteurs de nouveaux atouts à faire valoir pour atteindre les objectifs communs. Cette collaboration devra renforcer l'adoption du nexus humanitaire-développement-paix et garantir la participation du Groupe de la Banque aux plateformes et groupes de coordination nationaux sur les questions d'égalité des sexes afin d'échanger des connaissances et des enseignements tirés de l'expérience, de promouvoir des initiatives communes de dialogues politiques, et de créer des synergies entre les interventions pour renforcer leur profondeur, leur ampleur et leur viabilité.

# The World Bank Group Management Response

Management of the World Bank Group thanks the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) for the report *Addressing Gender Inequalities in Countries Affected by Fragility, Conflict, and Violence: An Evaluation of the World Bank Group's Support*. The Bank Group's commitment to both gender and fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) issues is strongly rooted in the respective strategies, the scale-up in Bank Group financing and results achieved, and the policy commitments in successive International Development Association (IDA) replenishments. Management welcomes the timeliness of the evaluation in a context of the upcoming updates to the Bank Group's gender and FCV strategies and the ongoing work on the Bank Group evolution road map. Management thanks IEG for the constructive cooperation throughout this evaluation.

## World Bank Management Comments

### Overall

Management concurs with the report's finding that situations of conflict and fragility can amplify gender gaps and notes the heterogeneity of challenges across FCV settings. Gender inequalities can be magnified in certain FCV settings, for instance, when a higher risk of gender-based violence (GBV) compounds challenges of limited access to quality health, education, and employment opportunities. The FCV strategy notes that the underlying drivers of fragility and its manifestations vary across countries and thus, there can be no one-size fits all approach.

Management is pleased that the report recognizes the progress made by the World Bank on gender in FCV settings and welcomes the identified areas for further improvement. The World Bank's work in this area, whether in promoting women and girls' economic empowerment (WGEE) or reducing gender-based-violence (GBV) recognizes the critical role of laws, regulations, policies, and institutions and their interplay with deep-seated social norms. These challenges notwithstanding, management is

pleased that the report recognizes the progress made on gender in FCV settings, including some transformative operations (for example, the Local Development and Adaptation Project in Chad and the Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project).

Management values the approach around “transformational change” used in this evaluation but notes that it may not be fully applicable in certain FCV settings. The FCV strategy recognizes that operating in FCV settings is far from business as usual because of “often rapidly changing circumstances, differing levels of insecurity, fragile and volatile political situations, macro-economic instability, low institutional capacity, a weak enabling and investment climate for the private sector, higher risks of violence against vulnerable populations, and significantly higher risks and costs of engagement” (World Bank 2020h, ix). The 2021 IEG evaluation on the World Bank’s engagement in situations of conflict noted similar challenges (World Bank 2021e).

## Main Findings

Management welcomes the useful insights provided in the report on factors that have led to improved project design and measures to strengthen the impact of gender operations. The report recognizes that identified projects strengthened the consolidation and sustainability of results, developed local capacity, and improved the enabling environment for WGEE and GBV. Management acknowledges the work that lies ahead in further improving outcome orientation in gender operations in FCV settings. This would be analyzed in the upcoming updates to the gender and FCV strategies. Management agrees that the objective of achieving more depth and scale is appropriate and recognizes that having transformative gender impacts is challenging when faced with entrenched inequality.

Management notes that maintaining an appropriate mix of country engagement and project focus would be critical in FCV contexts. The report makes the case to move away from a project-centric approach and toward a strategic country engagement approach to address gender inequality. Management agrees with the country engagement approach—that is, a clear definition of WGEE and GBV priorities at the country level along with defined overarching, longer-term gender equality goals would support better outcomes. At

the same time, management believes that project focus can also contribute to improved gender results. In some FCV environments where the situation does not allow broader country engagement, the first entry point may be at the project level.

Management would like to caution against some broad generalizations made in the report. The evaluation is mostly based on a relatively small sample of 40 projects in six countries. Given that, management cautions against potential misinterpretations of generalizations made in chapter 4, such as the following: “Addressing gender inequalities related to WGEE and GBV is rarely a priority for the Bank Group when addressing poverty and fragility” (66); “Knowledge of gender issues among World Bank technical experts in Global Practices is uneven and generally weak” (72); and, “It was common for TTLs [task team leaders] to not understand the difference between providing GBV safeguards in projects and addressing GBV as a countrywide problem” (73). The progress made by the World Bank on gender and FCV has been recognized in other recent IEG evaluations, notwithstanding the work that lies ahead in both areas.

## Recommendations

Management agrees with the first recommendation to “make priorities regarding gender equality (including on WGEE and GBV) more explicit in country strategies, based on strong analytics and in collaboration with key stakeholders” (xvi). Management is committed to and has made progress in embedding gender in country strategies and strengthening the underlying analytics through Systematic Country Diagnostics (SCDs) and Risk and Resilience Assessments (RRAs). During the SCD and RRA processes, the Bank Group will continue to identify key gender-related constraints as well as opportunities for engagement related to WGEE and GBV in FCV contexts and integration where appropriate in the country engagement cycle. Management acknowledges the challenge in closing gender gaps in some FCV contexts facing significant political, security, and institutional constraints. Management will continue to leverage the Bank Group comparative advantage to raise policy, regulatory and institutional issues constraining gender outcomes in FCV settings, through the appropriate mix

of financing instruments relevant to the country context, underpinned and complemented by knowledge, technical assistance, and convening efforts.

Management agrees with the second recommendation to “foster engagements with communities, civil society, women’s organizations, local authorities, and other key stakeholders to define gender equality objectives and the actions to achieve them” (xvii). Management remains committed to ensuring that the design of gender in FCV projects and strategies are built on a solid understanding of local realities and stakeholder involvement, while noting the limitations posed by the security situation in some FCV environments. The World Bank remains committed to stakeholder engagement for gender interventions during project design and implementation. As part of the IDA20 Policy Commitments, management will in “at least 15 IDA countries, of which five are categorized as FCS [fragile and conflict-affected situations, support GBV related services in health systems, and implement GBV prevention and response protocols as part of safe and inclusive educational institutions” (IDA 2022, viii).

Management agrees with the third recommendation to “ensure that gender expertise tailored to the context is available for FCV-affected countries to support projects, as well as the country engagement” (xvii) Management remains committed to mobilizing the appropriate skills and knowledge that tap into global as well as country specific expertise. This will be done among others during the SCD and the RRA process with the objective of contributing to country partnership frameworks and operational engagements with relevant gender-informed analytics. Management will continue to draw on local gender knowledge and skills and stakeholder engagement to improve the design and effectiveness of its operations.

Management agrees with the fourth recommendation to “coordinate and collaborate with relevant international stakeholders engaged in gender equality in the country, including humanitarian actors” (xvii). This recommendation will be implemented as part of the Country Partnership Framework process as well as through gender-specific work at the operational level whenever projects focus on WGEE or GBV aspects. The Bank Group will draw on its comparative advantage to support client countries in addressing gender inequality, exploring partnerships with international

stakeholders in FCV settings wherever feasible to exchange knowledge and inform policy dialogue.

## International Finance Corporation Management Comments

Management of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) welcomes IEG's evaluation *Addressing Gender Inequalities in Countries Affected by Fragility, Conflict, and Violence: An Evaluation of the World Bank Group's Support* and the recognition of IFC's efforts to strengthen gender in FCV operations. IFC recognizes the importance of this evaluation, which looks at the intersection between two strategic priority areas for the institution (gender and FCV), with a focus on promoting WGEE and addressing GBV.

We have seen that in countries affected by fragility and conflict, women often face disproportionate barriers to economic participation compared with men, such as increased risk of violence, restrictive gender norms, and laws and regulations that limit women's economic empowerment. The evaluation provides important insights for the Bank Group gender strategy.

### Overall

IFC appreciates that this evaluation reflects the important challenges of gender inequality in FCV settings. However, we note the limitations in the representativeness and applicability of findings for IFC. While we acknowledge that the evaluation takes a country-focused approach, we note the following gaps: the limited sample size of projects reviewed, which only included three IFC projects across two clients and did not include a review of other projects that integrate a gender lens (via a gender flag) in the in-scope countries; the exclusion of several FCV countries (including Papua New Guinea and many countries in Africa) where IFC has a rich gender footprint; and finally, the limited number of interviews with private sector stakeholders, including companies and business organizations.

Management acknowledges IEG's suggestion that the Bank Group shift from a project-centric focus to a strategic country engagement. IFC is looking to further develop a strategic country engagement approach and believes that it is important to advance sectoral approaches. In addition, IFC highlights the

importance of regional approaches and engagement, especially given WGEE and GBV is cross-border in nature in situations of forced displacement and economic migration. Regional Bank Group programs, facilities (for example, the Mashreq Gender Facility), or engagement with regional blocs (for example, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development) may be needed to deliver transformative change and address the root causes of fragility and gender dynamics in countries of origin of forcibly displaced populations. Country program collaboration should also include IFC's country teams and industry colleagues, in addition to the World Bank's Country Management Unit and Global Practices, to help ensure that the private sector participates in the country engagement approach.

Management does not fully agree with IEG findings that IFC has difficulties tailoring its business model to FCV contexts. IFC tailors its approach in FCV in several ways, such as through investments (including via blended finance facilities), research and programs (such as the respectful workplaces advisory offering), peer learning platforms, and the Africa Fragility Initiative's application of the Contextual Risk Framework.

IFC management acknowledges IEG's finding that "IFC's engagement with the private sector to promote safe and gender-equal workplaces has shown promising results but did not involve governmental institutions or women's organizations in designing these measures beyond initial consultations" (81–82). IFC acknowledges consultation and collaboration with government and women's organizations could be strengthened in some instances; however, it would also like to highlight situations where this did occur. Examples include Myanmar, where IFC worked with the Business Coalition for Gender Equality to provide gender-focused advisory support and worked to establish the Inle Professional Women's Network to support women's economic empowerment; Papua New Guinea, where IFC founded the Papua New Guinea Business Coalition for Women to build local knowledge and capacity; and Malawi where IFC stakeholder consultations included government (through the Reserve Bank of Malawi, the Ministry of Gender, and women's associations [for example, the COMESA Federation of Women in Business]).

IFC management recommends that future evaluations reflect more strongly on the business environment and the potential role of the private sector

in advancing gender equality and highlight implications for IFC associated with its role. Stakeholder consultations should more systematically include private sector stakeholders, including corporations, business organizations, and chambers of commerce, during the evaluation process.

## Recommendations

IFC management agrees with the first recommendation to “make priorities regarding gender equality (including on WGEE and GBV) more explicit in country strategies, based on strong analytics (primarily Systematic Country Diagnostics and the World Bank Risk and Resilience Assessments) and in collaboration with key stakeholders” (xvi). IFC supports greater and more systematic country engagement, leveraging tools such as SCDs and RRAs to identify opportunities and define priorities relating to WGEE and GBV. IFC management also suggests that IEG consider joint World Bank-IFC analytical tools such as the Country Private Sector Diagnostics (CPSDs). IFC’s Africa Fragility Initiative (AFI), for instance, regularly contributes fragility analyses to these strategic documents and applies IFC’s Contextual Risk Framework, which offers a more systematic approach to identifying high-risk environments. Since IFC launched this framework, it has been used to quantify gender risks in strategic documents in African FCS countries, including in three RRAs, five CPSDs, and six IFC country strategies.

For example, in Mali the CPSD explicitly identified GBV and associated protections as a high-risk indicator and a key driver of fragility. The CPSD assessment prioritized a focus on inclusivity of women in the workforce and supply chains, women smallholder farmers, and female health access to close gender gaps and build resilience. Three recommendations from the assessment focused on interventions intended to directly affect gender disparities in the country and in turn affect this important driver of fragility.

IFC management agrees with the second recommendation to “foster engagements with communities, civil society, women’s organizations, local authorities, and other key stakeholders” (xvii). IFC management notes that IFC has a robust consultation process in place and collaborates with external private sector clients and partners to design and execute gender-focused projects in FCV. In many instances, this process also includes local stakeholders,



such as civil society, government, United Nations agencies, and women's organizations, including to identify priorities in a participatory way, tailor interventions, ensure the project approach is flexible and can adapt to local constraints, and to build local capacity and knowledge.

Finally, IFC highlights the importance of fostering regular and deep engagement with the private sector to define and achieve gender equality objectives and actions. IFC regularly works with private sector partners, such as companies, chambers of commerce, and other business organizations, to inform program design and build buy-in on proposed gender interventions (for example, women's employment, respectful workplaces). This is critical because these stakeholders are often more relevant to IFC operations and are well placed to respond to challenges relating to WGEE and GBV in FCV contexts.

IFC management agrees on the third recommendation, which affirms a need to “ensure that gender expertise tailored to the context is available for FCV-affected countries to support projects, as well as the country engagement” (xvii). To support this, IFC has

- » Purposely strengthened the presence of gender experts in FCV countries, with seven staff and consultants from the Gender and Economic Inclusion Group currently based in FCV countries.
- » Expanded support to conflict sensitivity and gender equality by scaling up the AFI Initiative (12 pilot countries) to 32 FCV countries.
- » Leveraged industry gender leads and teams to support an increased gender footprint, including in FCV countries.

Further, IFC agrees on the importance of building staff capacity more broadly to address gender inequality in FCV countries and encourages further consideration on how the Bank Group can continue to increase gender knowledge exchange across the institutions and better incentivize staff to integrate gender considerations into their programs more widely. This is important because several structural, gendered, and cultural barriers exist that affect IFC's ability to directly hire and retain experts locally.

To date, IFC has already worked to address these barriers by increasing knowledge exchange on gender equality across the organization. It has also

worked to leverage gender experts to support project teams in meaningfully integrating gender considerations into their investments and advisory services projects. For example, an in-depth training on IFC’s respectful workplaces client offering was recently delivered to almost 20 IFC gender staff across the Gender and Economic Inclusion Group and industry gender teams, to strengthen their GBV expertise and sensitivity in project design and implementation, particularly in FCV countries where GBV risks are heightened. Training to advance gender equality in FCV contexts has been integrated into courses for investments officers, such as Tools for Investing in FCS and LIC IDA. IFC has also worked to support knowledge exchange through conflict sensitivity frameworks and guidelines for engaging the private sector, which incorporate gender as a key dimension, to better enable operational staff to embed into project design an understanding of issues related to conflict. AFI launched a corporate wide e-learning on conflict sensitivity to train IFC staff working in FCV countries on approaching their operations in a conflict-sensitive way. Together with the industry team, AFI led a client engagement and business development training for over 30 team members in FCV countries across the region.

As a result of these efforts, IFC’s gender focus has strengthened in projects in FCV countries. The share of gender flagged advisory projects in FCV countries has consistently grown, reaching 50 percent in FY22 and 64 percent in FY23 to date (from 33 percent in FY16). Similarly, so far in FY23 gender-flagged investments account for 27 percent share of long-term finance commitments in FCV countries (from 11 percent in FY19). Further, as of June 2022, AFI supported over 100 investment and advisory projects in 24 FCS countries and facilitated \$82.39 million in financing through advisory support—and gender equality is often a key dimension.

IFC management agrees on the fourth recommendation with the importance of coordinating and collaborating “with relevant international stakeholders engaged in gender equality in the country, including humanitarian actors” (xvii). In addition, IFC believes that other international stakeholders may also be critical for success, including those representing the private sector and IFC’s development partners.

On the topic of collaboration with humanitarian actors, IFC has been working with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Labour Organization, UNICEF (the United Nations Children’s Fund), and partners to implement projects to improve the lives of the forcibly displaced and the host communities, including in Brazil, Colombia, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Uganda, Iraq, and Lebanon. In 2021, IFC officially launched a joint initiative with UNHCR to create inclusive economic opportunities that will benefit refugees and their host communities. IFC’s Kakuma Kalobeyi Challenge Fund worked with UNHCR to attract new businesses to the refugee settlement and support their scale-up to increase access to products, services, and jobs, and to develop and grow refugee and host community owned businesses. Gender equality is a specific focus of this initiative and includes activities such as dedicated outreach campaigns to generate more applicants from women-owned or managed businesses and provide additional support mechanisms to women-owned or managed businesses based on gender assessments.

# Report to the Board from the Committee on Development Effectiveness

The Committee on Development Effectiveness met to consider the report entitled *Addressing Gender Inequalities in Countries Affected by Fragility, Conflict, and Violence: An Evaluation of the World Bank Group's Support* and the World Bank Group draft management response.

The committee welcomed the evaluation, deeming it a relevant and timely input for the Mid-Term Review of the Bank Group fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) strategy, the new Bank Group gender strategy, and the evolution road map. Members took note of progress reported by World Bank and International Finance Corporation managements on gender in FCV settings, including promoting women and girls' economic empowerment and tackling gender-based violence. They acknowledged improvements in project design and measures set up to strengthen the impact of gender operations. Aware of the complexity and challenges of FCV settings, members encouraged management to strengthen efforts toward meaningful results and lasting impacts, stressing the importance of transformational change in reducing poverty and boosting shared prosperity.

Members appreciated management's constructive response to the Independent Evaluation Group's findings and recommendations. They emphasized that a shift toward a country-driven approach, guided by analytics and inclusive consultations with key stakeholders including local institutions and civil society organizations, is crucial for long-term outcomes. There was a request for the new Bank Group gender strategy to include a results framework that builds on a three-tier set of indicators to facilitate progress monitoring, results reporting, and impact measurement, consistent with outcome orientation principles. Such a framework would also be useful in solving the issue of Bank Group attribution. In addition, members raised concerns about data gaps, particularly in terms of collection, accessibility, and usage, and encouraged management to further increase investments in gathering relevant data

at the country level, including the use of Gender Innovation Labs, to help inform Bank Group operations. They also encouraged management to build gender expertise across the Bank Group and in FCV settings to strengthen the World Bank's interventions.

Members underscored the importance of operationalizing the evaluation's findings and recommendations. To this end, they urged both World Bank and International Finance Corporation managements to use all relevant financial instruments in addressing gender inequalities, raise this issue to the highest level of policy dialogue with governments, and ensure the systematic and consistent inclusion of gender equality in country strategies.



# 1 | Introduction

## Purpose

This evaluation assesses the World Bank Group’s contribution to addressing gender inequalities in countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV)<sup>1</sup> from 2010 to 2022.<sup>2</sup> The evaluation focuses on two goals of the Bank Group’s gender strategy (fiscal year [FY]16–23)—promotion of women’s and girls’ economic empowerment (WGEE) and prevention of and response to gender-based violence (GBV)—and will inform the Bank Group’s upcoming gender strategy on how to orient gender approaches in FCV countries. The evaluation will also inform the Bank Group’s implementation of its FCV strategy (2020–25), particularly the Bank Group’s efforts to address gender inequalities in FCV countries.

The evaluation is timely given the recent spread of FCV situations around the world and the COVID-19 pandemic’s disruption of gender equality advances. The World Bank estimates that by 2030, up to two-thirds of the world’s poorest people could live in FCV settings (World Bank 2020d) and that, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, 20 million more people are now living in extreme poverty in FCV countries (World Bank 2022e). There is also evidence that COVID-19 has caused gender gaps to increase (UN Women and UNDP 2022; World Economic Forum 2021). Women and children are especially vulnerable to increased poverty, discrimination, and GBV in FCV environments (Akseer et al. 2020; Bendavid et al. 2021; Buvinic et al. 2013; Kelly et al. 2021; Klugman 2022; Perezniето, Magee, and Fyles 2017; World Bank 2019d). Recent estimates (Pathfinders 2019; UNDP and UN Women 2018) suggest that progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals requires mitigating FCV’s impacts on gender equality. The Bank Group’s FCV strategy (2020–25) states, “FCV both affects, and is affected by, global factors including . . . gender inequalities, [which] . . . tend to be magnified in FCV settings” (World Bank Group 2020, 7).

## Methodology

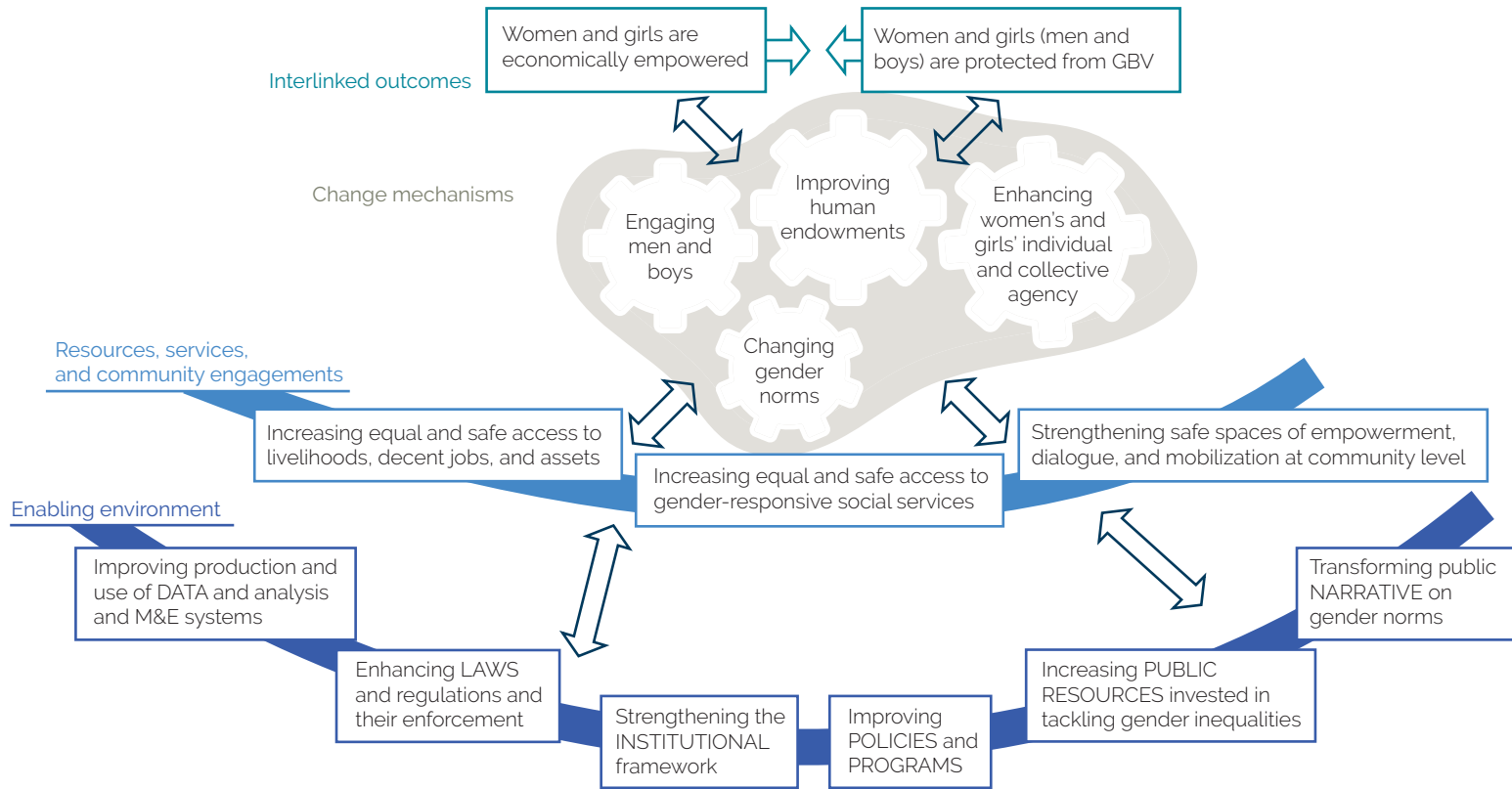
### Scope

This evaluation’s theory of change focuses on the interdependence of GBV and WGEE and their links with FCV. The theory of change of this evaluation assumes that the achievement of impactful changes in WGEE and GBV prevention and response in FCV-affected countries depends on recognizing the interdependence between them and addressing the root causes of gender inequalities.<sup>3</sup> These changes require safe and equal access to jobs, resources, services, and community engagements and are rooted in a country’s enabling environment (figure 1.1 and appendix C).

The evaluation focuses on the Bank Group’s support to increase WGEE and prevent and respond to GBV. The evaluation defines WGEE as the women’s and girls’ ability to participate equally in existing markets; access to and control over productive resources; access to decent work; control over their time, lives, and bodies; and increased voice, agency, and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels, from households to international institutions (UN Women 2018a). Likewise, GBV is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and based on socially ascribed gender differences. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering; threats of such acts; coercion; and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private (IASC 2015; World Bank 2015d). Economic (or financial) abuse—which is defined as a deliberate pattern of control of a partner’s ability to acquire, use, and maintain economic resources—is also increasingly recognized as part of GBV (Postmus et al. 2020).



**Figure 1.1.** Theory of Change



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: GBV = gender-based violence; M&E = monitoring and evaluation

The evaluation assesses to what extent the Bank Group’s support to WGEE and prevention of and response to GBV in individual FCV countries has been relevant, inclusively owned, deep, sustainable, and scalable—that is, to what extent it has contributed to transformational change. This evaluation assesses the Bank Group’s support in terms of five elements that are highlighted in the FCV strategy (2020–25) and other Bank Group strategic documents. The FCV strategy (2020–25) recommends that operations are *relevant* to each specific FCV context, because “given the diversity of FCV challenges, there can be no one-size-fits-all approach” (World Bank Group 2020, ix). Where a government’s actions or policies are directly responsible for causing fragility, conflict, and violence, a context-specific, context-sensitive approach “identifies factors that divide societies; provides a clearer understanding of local contexts to avoid aggravating social tensions, reinforcing power imbalances, or exacerbating conflict risks; and may also help promote accountability, sustainability and local ownership” (World Bank Group 2020, 17). The FCV strategy also recognizes that *inclusive ownership* is critical in FCV-affected countries, where exclusion, inequalities, and perception of injustice are drivers of fragility and conflict, and state institutions lack legitimacy, accountability, and inclusiveness. The FCV strategy also affirms that “addressing the root causes of gender inequality and closing gender gaps in human capital, access to jobs and assets, and voice and agency must be a priority [of the Bank Group]” (World Bank Group 2020, 21)—what this evaluation defines as *deep* support. The FCV strategy stresses that the Bank Group will pursue *sustainability* by addressing FCV’s drivers and strengthening populations and institutional capacities and resilience. It also highlights the need to *scale up* interventions and the comparative advantage of the Bank Group in scaling up. This evaluation consolidates these five elements into the notion of “transformational change,” defined as a change that is relevant, inclusively owned, deep, sustainable, and large-scale. (See box 1.1 for definitions of each of these elements).<sup>4</sup>

## Box 1.1. Transformational Change and Its Elements

Transformational change, as defined in this evaluation, encompasses five elements: relevance, inclusive ownership, depth of change, sustainability, and scale of change. Each one is necessary but not sufficient by itself to achieve transformational change.

**Relevance** is the extent to which the expected change responds to beneficiaries' needs and global, country, and partner institutions' needs, policies, and priorities and continues to do so if circumstances change (OECD 2019). The expected change is "relevant" if it is evidence based (World Bank 2016e, 2021f) and context specific (World Bank 2016e, 2020g).

**Inclusive ownership** refers to the participation of key actors, including government leaders, public officials, legislators, civil society actors, the private sector, service users and providers, academia, and citizens, in setting the development agenda (World Bank 2012b). In this sense, inclusive ownership is part of the broader definition of relevance. Inclusive ownership requires key actors' active involvement in the whole process and their capacity development (World Bank 2012b). Inclusive ownership is critical in countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV), where exclusion, inequalities, and perception of injustice are drivers of FCV, and state institutions lack legitimacy, accountability, and inclusiveness (World Bank Group 2020). Inclusivity considers the intersection of the key social differences that shape discriminations and social identities, such as age, gender, religion, ethnicity, disability, refugee status, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and so on, in each FCV context (World Bank 2020f).

**Depth of change** is the extent to which change is gender transformative and effective in achieving its expected outcomes in promoting women's and girls' economic empowerment and preventing and responding to gender-based violence. Gender-transformative change "actively examines, questions and changes rigid gender norms and imbalances of power that advantage boys and men over girls and women. It aspires to tackle the root causes of gender inequality and reshape unequal power relations; it moves beyond individual self-improvement among girls and women toward redressing the power dynamics and structures that serve to reinforce gendered inequalities" (UNFPA, UNICEF, and UN Women 2020, 1).

*(continued)*

### Box 1.1. Transformational Change and Its Elements (cont.)

**Sustainability** “ensures that today’s development progress is not reversed tomorrow” (World Bank 2016e, 11). Sustainability has multiple dimensions: economic, environmental, sociocultural, political, and institutional. In FCV contexts, sustainability is particularly challenging and requires flexible, multidimensional, and long-term engagements that adapt and build capacity (World Bank Group 2020).

**Scale of change** is the extent to which change has a large-scale impact. To this end, interventions must include strategies for scaling up, adapting, or replicating. They can also have a demonstrative or catalytic effect on other actors’ interventions (World Bank 2016e).

*Sources:* Independent Evaluation Group, adapted from OECD 2019; UNDP 2011; UNFPA, UNICEF, and UN Women 2020; World Bank 2016e; World Bank Group 2020.

“Transformational change” is a composite and dynamic construct for assessing change processes, and not just the intended and achieved outcomes from those processes. This lens is corroborated not only by the principles of the FCV strategy but also by external literature (ITAD 2019; UNDP 2011) and is fully aligned with the “transformational vision” of the Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN 2015) and the general recognition that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals requires reducing gender inequalities (UNDP and UN Women 2018; UN Women 2018b), especially in FCV settings (UN and World Bank 2018; World Bank 2020d). As such, promoting WGEE and addressing GBV requires transforming gender norms (Cislaghi 2019; Heilman and Stich 2016; IRC 2019; Jayachandran 2021; Klugman 2022; Klugman et al. 2014; Marcus 2018; Marcus and Harper 2014; Sida 2009; Van Eerdewijk et al. 2017; World Bank 2015d),<sup>5</sup> strengthening women’s and girls’ individual and collective agency (Evans and Nambiar 2013; Fox and Romero 2017; ICRW 2020; Kabeer 1999; Van Eerdewijk et al. 2017; World Bank 2012b), and working with formal and informal institutions to achieve gender-transformative change (Hillenbrand et al. 2015; Van Eerdewijk et al. 2017; World Bank 2012b, 2015d). (See appendix C for more details.) Therefore, the processes to achieve WGEE and reduce GBV are not just functional but are results in themselves. The approach also recognizes

that achieving transformational change requires improving country systems' enabling environments.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the methodology of this evaluation adopts a case study approach that uses the country as the unit of analysis.

Achieving transformational change requires a long-term perspective that is best developed through the country-driven approach. The Bank Group recognizes that engagement in FCV countries must go beyond individual projects by adopting a systemic and long-term perspective to address the root causes of gender inequality and fragility (World Bank 2012b; World Bank Group 2020). This long-term perspective allows the Bank Group to work across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, as stressed by the Bank Group FCV strategy (2020–25). The Bank Group, then, “seeks to integrate long-term development considerations of institutional support and sustainability” (World Bank Group 2020, 25).

The main evaluation question is as follows: How can the Bank Group improve its support to FCV-affected countries to produce transformational changes in tackling GBV and promoting WGEE? This overarching question consists of three main questions, listed in box 1.2, and several subquestions (see appendix A).

### Box 1.2. Evaluation Questions

EQ1. How has the World Bank Group supported fragility, conflict, and violence-affected countries to identify the transformational changes that were needed to tackle gender-based violence and promote women's and girls' economic empowerment?

EQ2. How has the Bank Group supported fragility, conflict, and violence-affected countries to undertake and assess transformational changes in gender-based violence prevention and response and women's and girls' economic empowerment?

EQ3. What are the main internal and external factors that have enabled or hindered the Bank Group's support for transformational changes in fragility, conflict, and violence-affected countries, and how has the Bank Group addressed them?

*Source:* Independent Evaluation Group.

## Research Methods

The evaluation analyzes transformational change at the country level. More specifically, the team analyzed the Bank Group’s country program in six FCV countries (see appendix B), including the program’s gender-relevant strategies, financing, analytics, and engagements. The country focus aligns with the Bank Group’s country-centered approach to development (World Bank Group 2014) adopted by the FCV strategy 2020–25 (World Bank Group 2020), the gender strategy 2016–23 (World Bank 2015d), the 19th Replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA 2020), the 20th Replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA 2022), and International Finance Corporation (IFC) strategies (IFC 2019a). The country-driven approach assumes that gender gaps are most effectively addressed through system change at the country level (World Bank 2012b, 2015d, 2021f; World Bank Group 2014). The six countries—Burkina Faso, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lebanon, the Solomon Islands, and the Republic of Yemen—represent a diverse cross-section of country contexts but are not representative of all FCV countries. The evaluation team chose to analyze these few countries in depth, focusing on how and why changes occurred, rather than carrying out a cursory review of the Bank Group’s entire FCV portfolio.

The evaluation used three methods for collecting and analyzing qualitative evidence. First, the team carried out an in-depth desk review of Bank Group strategies, project documents, and analytical work for each of the case study countries. Each case study analyzed two types of projects: (i) those that promoted WGEE or prevented and responded to GBV as project development objectives or components, and not just as safeguards, and (ii) those that influenced WGEE but were not explicitly designed to do so, and were ideal for learning.<sup>7</sup> The evaluation did not focus on the human development aspects of gender equality, so it excluded health and education projects, but it did include a health project in the Republic of Yemen because it had a “hidden” GBV case management component.<sup>8</sup> The evaluation looked especially closely at the Sahel Women’s Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) project because it is one of the Bank Group’s regional flagship initiatives (World Bank 2014b, 2015d). Second, the team conducted more than 200

semistructured audio or video interviews with World Bank staff, IFC staff, project task team members, government partners, and national and international stakeholders from the media, academia, religious and traditional institutions, international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), women’s rights organizations, and bilateral and multilateral donors. In Burkina Faso, a team member visited several target localities of two relevant World Bank projects,<sup>9</sup> where she conducted 15 focus groups with women and adolescent girls and 10 in-depth in-person interviews with other key informants. She also held informal conversations with local actors and observed the women’s income-generating activities for one project. Third, the team conducted a literature review of articles, reports, and gray literature, including World Bank and IFC studies, and an analysis of national statistics (see appendix A for additional methodological details).

The evaluation team pursued three strategies to ensure rigor and quality in the methodology. First, the team developed detailed templates to guide the data collection, particularly for interviews and the desk analysis. These templates ensured that each case study focused on the same issues and collected the same type of evidence. Second, case studies were conducted by gender experts who were familiar with the country by having lived in the country, speaking the local language, or having already conducted gender-focused evaluations in that country. This allowed the evaluation to understand the local context and reach out to a broader and more diverse set of key informants. Third, almost all country cases relied on local consultants to organize interviews and transcribe and translate documents. In Burkina Faso, a local consultant also collected field data.

## Limitations of the Evaluation

The evaluation’s reliance on country case studies limited the representativeness of the data. The evaluation is based on individual country case studies, and, therefore, the evidence is not representative of all FCV countries. The evaluation opted for depth in its analysis, not for breadth, and focused on processes as much as results. That said, the evaluation attempted to make the findings generalizable as well. It relied on established literature to build the theory of change, prepare the tools for extracting and analyzing information, and interpret the findings. The interviews helped triangulate the data.

COVID-19 and the unstable environment in FCV countries limited or delayed data collection and analysis. This was because the team could not organize missions to the countries and had to carry out most of the research remotely. Poor phone and internet connections caused interviews to be interrupted and routinely rescheduled, which greatly prolonged the duration of data collection. COVID-19 also impacted individual team members, key informants, or their families in various ways, which caused additional delays. Moreover, most case study countries had unstable environments and experienced various shocks during the data collection. This included multiple crises in Lebanon (see box 4.3), a coup in Burkina Faso, the Republic of Yemen's ongoing conflict, and the assassination of Chad's president and its aftermath. The evaluation planned to include a case study for Afghanistan, but this had to be dropped after the Taliban's takeover. These difficulties limited the evaluation's in-person research, thereby limiting the data's richness.

The difficulty of finding experts in some countries caused further delays and limited the number of country case studies. This evaluation required a combination of abilities that proved to be hard to find. For example, an ideal team member would have evaluation skills, deep gender knowledge (particularly of WGEE and GBV), and strong knowledge of the country and its language. As such, the process of locating and selecting experts to conduct and support country case studies was delicate and time-consuming. It also limited the number of case studies that could be carried out.

## Road Map

This evaluation consists of three main parts. The first part, or chapter 2, discusses the Bank Group's challenges with improving the relevance, inclusive ownership, depth, sustainability, and scale of its support for WGEE and for GBV prevention and response in FCV countries. The chapter discusses three trade-offs that the Bank Group experienced when supporting FCV countries in WGEE and in GBV prevention and response—first, among depth, sustainability, and scale; second, among elements of the theory of change; and third, between humanitarian and development goals. The second part, or chapter 3, analyzes the improvements in the design of Bank Group projects as they moved from initial phases to subsequent



phases and shows that projects approved after 2018 introduced innovative measures to reduce FCV's drivers and impacts. The chapter discusses the Bank Group's shift from a project-centric approach to a strategic country engagement approach to ease the trade-offs discussed in chapter 2 and facilitate transformational change in promoting WGEE and addressing GBV. The third part, or chapter 4, discusses the factors that constrain or enable the Bank Group's ability to produce impactful change in promoting WGEE and preventing and responding to GBV in FCV countries. The chapter first examines how country programs prioritize WGEE and GBV issues in FCV contexts. Second, it looks at some of the financial and human capacity constraints to achieving transformational change. Third, it examines the Bank Group's engagement, collaboration, and coordination with country-level stakeholders on WGEE and GBV issues. Fourth, it looks at the contextual factors of FCV countries that inhibit transformational change—including conflict dynamics, gender norms, COVID-19, and limited partner capacity—and the ways in which teams have overcome these constraints. Chapter 5 presents the evaluation's main takeaways and recommends four actions that the Bank Group can take to improve its support for WGEE and for GBV prevention and response in FCV countries.

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<sup>1</sup> This evaluation adopts the definition of “FCV-affected countries” put forward by the World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence (2020–25). According to this definition, FCV-affected countries include the following: (i) fragile countries, with deep governance issues and state institutional weakness (identified through policy-based and governance indicators); (ii) countries in active conflict (identified based on a threshold rate of conflict-related deaths); and (iii) countries with high levels of interpersonal and gang violence (identified based on the per capita level of intentional homicides; gender-based violence [GBV] and violence against children are included). The World Bank Group also uses a narrower definition of “fragile and conflict-affected situation” (FCS), which includes only (i) and (ii). The evaluation used the narrower definition to select the country case studies, based on the fiscal year 2021 FCS list.

<sup>2</sup> The period covered by the evaluation is roughly 2010–2022; it slightly varies across countries depending on when the projects being reviewed were approved and when the most recent documentation became available to the evaluation team (not all documents published in 2022 were available when the case studies were completed).

<sup>3</sup> A theory of change is an element of design that describes the main pathways through which a project, program, or policy can accomplish its desired change. By this definition, a strong theory of change presents not just the project’s desired results but all the activities, contextual factors, and assumptions that contribute to the chain of results and determine the causal links.

<sup>4</sup> The concept of “transformational change” has already been adopted by the Independent Evaluation Group evaluation *Supporting Transformational Change for Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity* (World Bank 2016e). That evaluation defines “transformational engagement” as “an intervention or a series of interventions that helps achieve deep, systemic, and sustainable change with large-scale impact in an area of a major developmental challenge” (World Bank 2016e, 2–3).

<sup>5</sup> Gender norms are a specific subset of social norms that relate to how men, women, boys, and girls are “supposed” to act and behave throughout the various stages of the life cycle, in a given group or society. They are generally implicit and can be part of the invisible social status quo: they are embedded in formal and informal institutions, nested in the mind, and produced and reproduced through social interaction. They play a role in shaping women’s and men’s (often unequal) access to resources and freedoms, thus affecting their voice, power, and sense of self (Cislaghi and Heise 2020).

<sup>6</sup> An enabling environment for gender equality can be defined as “a set of interrelated and interdependent systemic conditions such as policies, laws, institutional mechanisms, and resources, and so on, which facilitate the promotion of gender equality” (UN 2005, 2).

<sup>7</sup> The evaluation team selected and analyzed 33 investment project financings, a joint World Bank–International Finance Corporation (IFC) technical assistance (the Mashreq Gender Facility), one IFC investment, and three IFC advisory services—38 activities in total, which for convenience are going to be referred to as “projects.” In keeping with the World Bank’s definitions, two separate phases of a program (such as the Sahel Women’s Empowerment and Demographic Dividend [SWEDD] or the SWEDD I and SWEDD II) are counted as two distinct projects, whereas additional financing is considered to be part of the main project. However, two project designs were substantially restructured, and for this analysis, the restructured project design was treated as a different design; thus, there are 41 different designs in total. The list of all projects is included in appendix A.

<sup>8</sup> Human capital aspects and access to services were excluded from the evaluation following the recommendation provided to the team during the scoping phase to keep the assessment focused on the two priority areas of WGEE and GBV. That said, human endowments are part of the theory of change and were analyzed in interventions addressing WGEE and GBV as complementary and necessary elements.

<sup>9</sup> The SWEDD and the Forest Investment Program—Decentralized Forest and Woodland Management Project.

## 2 | The Challenge of Promoting Transformational Change

### Highlights

The World Bank Group's support to countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence for women's and girls' economic empowerment and for gender-based violence prevention and response was generally relevant and promoted inclusively owned, deep, sustainable, and scalable approaches.


However, these elements were frequently too weak to produce meaningful and lasting results.

There were trade-offs among these elements—especially among depth, sustainability, and scale—making it difficult for projects to achieve all five elements simultaneously.


There were also trade-offs between project efforts to address short-term emergency needs and efforts to build long-term peace and resilience, although recent projects have improved at this.

Projects had difficulties ensuring that the supply of project-related benefits met the demand for them.


Projects were most relevant when they were based on sound and context-specific gender analyses and addressed gender-discriminatory mechanisms with local and culturally sensitive solutions that recognized the multiple dimensions of discrimination, referred to as “intersectionality,” and not just gender-based discrimination.




In successful cases, projects fostered inclusive ownership through local consultations, decentralized and community-based approaches, and women's representation in decision-making bodies.



The Bank Group frequently consulted and involved local stakeholders, including women's organizations, in project implementation, but normally did not in project design, which reduced the relevance, ownership, and sustainability of results.



It was not common for projects to use integrated and multisectoral approaches when attempting to transform gender norms.



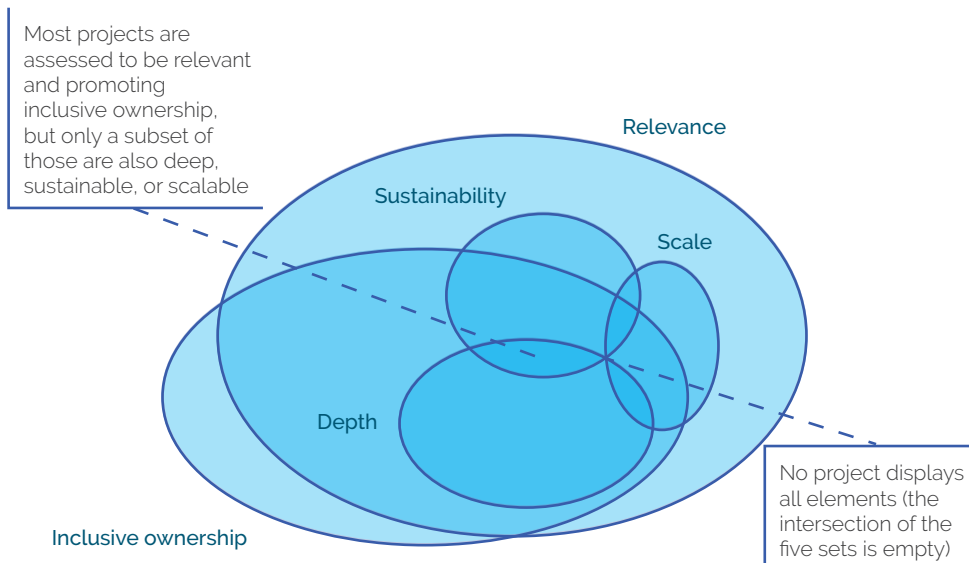
Very few project designs included planning to bring activities to scale or make them sustainable.

This chapter discusses the Bank Group's challenges in supporting FCV-affected countries to achieve transformational change in WGEE and in the prevention of and response to GBV. First, it describes the nature of these challenges. Then it explains how projects have or have not achieved relevance, inclusive ownership, depth, sustainability, and scale and discusses some of the pitfalls the Bank Group has encountered in integrating these elements in the six case study countries. Third, the chapter describes the trade-offs that projects face when pursuing transformational change on WGEE and GBV issues.

## The Challenge

The Bank Group faces challenges in making its support relevant, inclusive, deep, sustainable, and scalable and easing the trade-off among these elements. Bank Group projects that enhance WGEE and address GBV in FCV countries vary in the degree to which they include the individual elements of transformational change—relevance, inclusive ownership, depth, sustainability, or scale—in project designs. Among the 41 project designs that this evaluation analyzed in depth, several were strong in one or more of these elements, particularly relevance and inclusive ownership.<sup>1</sup> Depth, sustainability, and scalability were much less prevalent in designs. Crucially, as we will discuss, there are trade-offs among these three elements, and, as a result, the three are rarely found together in the same project design (figure 2.1). These findings have several implications. First, the Bank Group embraced the goal of addressing gender inequalities in FCV countries, as evidenced by its inclusion of elements of transformational change in project designs. Second, there have been challenges in strengthening and expanding each individual element. Third, projects face difficulties in combining the five elements and managing their trade-offs. This raises the question of whether it is possible to resolve these trade-offs within an individual project or whether this problem must be addressed at a higher level. This evaluation offers answers to these questions.

**Figure 2.1.** Elements Contributing to Transformational Change in Project Design



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: The total number of project designs is 41, and the total number of individual projects is 38 (the design of 2 projects was fundamentally changed at restructuring and counted as a new design). Nine projects have no transformational elements that are considered "sufficient" (score 3 or 4) and are outside of every set of the Venn diagram. Project rating criteria are described in detail in appendix A. The number of projects in each set is reported in table A.2, appendix A.

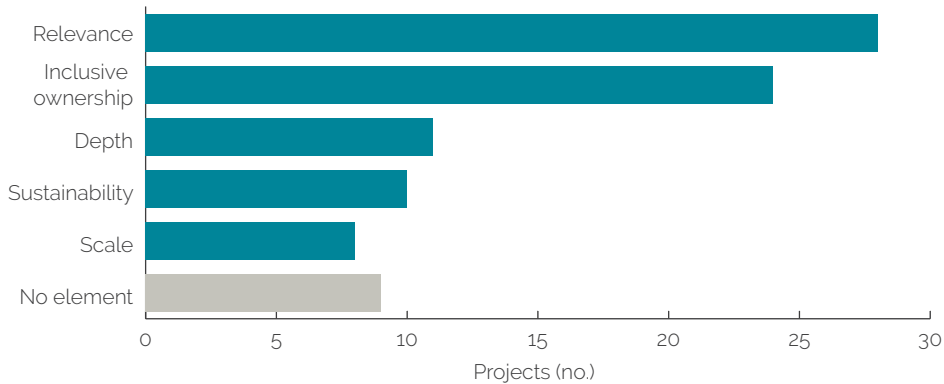
## Strengths and Weaknesses in Planning for Transformational Change

The intensity of relevance, inclusive ownership, depth, sustainability, and scale varies from project to project. The evaluation found that these elements were present in projects to varying degrees—not as a yes or no characteristic but on a continuum between yes and no. As a result, the evaluation had to define an absence–presence threshold to make the analysis possible (see appendix A).<sup>2</sup> The intensity of each element depends on different project circumstances, such as the operational team’s knowledge and awareness of these elements, the constraints that the project faced, and the opportunities that it could seize.

All projects had room to improve the intensity of certain elements. In 9 of 41 project designs, the elements were so weak that their intensity was negligible (figure 2.2). Moreover, even projects that were “sufficiently” relevant,

inclusively owned, deep, sustainable, or scalable rarely had individual elements of the highest intensity, let alone all of them at once. Indeed, no single project contained all five elements at an intensity to which the project could be judged “fully transformational.” This is true both of projects that had elements to reduce gender inequalities and of “stand-alone” projects (6 of 41 designs) that focused primarily on reducing them.

**Figure 2.2.** Prevalence of Individual Elements in Project Design



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: Categories are not mutually exclusive. Each element is considered to be present in a project design if it reaches at least a score of 3 on a 0–4 intensity scale (project rating criteria are described in detail in appendix A). The total number of project designs is 41, and the total number of individual projects is 38 (the design of 2 projects was drastically changed at restructuring and counted as a new design).

## Relevance

Only two-thirds of the 41 analyzed project designs were relevant (figure 2.2). To be defined as relevant, a project must address GBV or support WGEE in FCV-affected countries and must be tailored to local FCV conditions and demonstrate an understanding of how gender inequalities play out for specific groups of the population under specific contexts. This is recognized as a general principle in the gender strategy: “Although gender equality challenges prevalent in [fragile and conflict-affected situations] are broadly similar to those in other developing countries, important contextual factors call for different operational approaches” (World Bank 2015d, 20). However, almost a third of the project designs were not sufficiently relevant, meaning they were not adequately tailored to the local context and did not adequately address the needs, constraints, and gender inequalities of different groups of women and girls. This finding was surprising because the evaluation team expected all of the selected projects to be sufficiently relevant, based on the selection



criteria adopted by the evaluation and applied to projects that explicitly or potentially impact WGEE and GBV.

Several projects used quotas to increase their number of female beneficiaries, but this was only successful when the project also removed obstacles preventing women and girls from benefiting from the project. Quotas did not guarantee that projects included women's and girls' views in project designs, met their needs and expectations, or reduced gender inequalities. For example, Chad's Climate Resilient Agriculture and Productivity Enhancement Project set a 30 percent quota for female beneficiaries, but most activities could not meet it. This was particularly true for the project's e-services and pilot plots in rural areas, where women had lower access to land, cell phones, internet, and education compared with men. Similarly, in Burkina Faso, 31 percent of the Burkina Faso Agricultural Productivity and Food Security Project's beneficiaries were women, but for the e-voucher component only 14 percent were women because few women in rural areas have their own cell phones (Sawadogo-Kaboré et al. 2020). In the Solomon Islands, the Community Governance and Grievance Management Project recruited community officers to mediate between chiefs, elders, and local leaders and the provincial and central government, and set a quota of 50 percent female community officers. However, only 2 of the 49 recruited community officers were women. According to the project's Implementation Completion and Results Report, the main constraints to recruiting women were gender norms, insecurity, and the long distance to travel (World Bank 2022f).

Culturally sensitive projects that recognized and leveraged social institutions successfully alleviated aspects of gender discrimination. For instance, loan officers at Al Majmoua, a Lebanese microfinance institution receiving IFC support through the Blended Finance Facility Middle East and North Africa SME/ Trust Fund for Lebanon, promoted flexible individual loans over group loans, but this had the unintended consequence of excluding women, who worked from home so were less visible to loan officers and who found individual loans too expensive. With the support of IFC, Al Majmoua recruited female loan officers, reduced the collateral requirements for individual loans, reinstated group loans (making them more flexible), and offered bonuses to loan officers who brought in female

clients—all of which increased the project’s number of female beneficiaries. In Chad and Burkina Faso, some projects addressed discrimination that limited women from accessing land by supporting women’s inclusion in traditional land tenure systems, which are common in the rural areas of both countries.<sup>5</sup> For example, in Burkina Faso, the SWEDD and the Forest Investment Program (FIP)—Decentralized Forest and Woodland Management Project organized initiatives of advocacy and sensitization on women’s rights to land, involving women and traditional leaders (who are responsible for the distribution of common land), local authorities, and other key stakeholders. These projects supplemented these initiatives with technical and financial support to women’s associations to increase their production and productivity. A woman in Burkina Faso who participated in this initiative reported: “With all this information and the chief here in person, I had the courage to go and ask him for the plot. Thus, I acquired it. I did not know I could do this. Women from another village also obtained a plot to do market gardening.”<sup>4</sup> For the SWEDD in Chad, these efforts increased the areas cultivated by women’s groups from 152 to 1,921 hectares between 2016 and 2019 (World Bank 2022g), and the FIP project in Burkina Faso contributed to securing women’s associations’ access to land (World Bank 2023; World Bank Group, DGM Global, and CIF 2020). (See box 4.1 for more details.)

Bank Group projects did not reach the most marginalized women and girls when they failed to recognize women’s and girls’ differential needs and various types of discrimination they faced. Women and girls are not a homogeneous group and face discrimination based not only on gender but also on other identity characteristics, such as age, income, religion, education, ethnicity, disabilities, sexual orientation, marital status, position in the family, forced displacement status, geographical location, and others (Crenshaw 1989; Lutz 2015; Van Eerdewijk et al. 2017; World Bank 2020f). Some projects turned out to be relevant only for some, but not all, vulnerable women because they did not recognize this diversity, referred to as “intersectionality,” and did not provide the specific support that these groups required. Many projects planned to include “women and youth” but neglected the specific needs and double discrimination experienced by women who are also in the youth category. Moreover,

women of ethnic minorities can easily be excluded from the project's beneficiaries. For example, in one province of Burkina Faso, the FIP project gave Peuhl women's groups grants, but was unable to involve them in local management committees. Illiterate women faced difficulties participating in some projects. For instance, rural women's illiteracy limited female farmers' participation in e-support for Chad's Climate Resilient Agriculture and Productivity Enhancement Project. In some cases, projects provided specific support to address this additional disadvantage. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, an implementing partner nongovernmental organization (NGO) of the Great Lakes Emergency Sexual and GBV and Women's Health Project (hereafter "Great Lakes Project") and the GBV Prevention and Response Project included literacy training for project beneficiaries to help illiterate women participate in the activities of village loans and savings associations. Some projects adopted participatory learning techniques to increase the participation of illiterate women. For example, the SWEDD trained the mentors of safe spaces in facilitation techniques. As a young woman explained: "In the space, at the beginning, it was not easy for everyone to speak. But over time, and thanks to the facilitators' manners, all women participated."<sup>5</sup> Some projects specifically targeted marginalized or vulnerable women: for example, social safety net projects targeted female heads of household; the Democratic Republic of Congo GBV Prevention and Response Project targeted indigenous ethnic groups; and Al Majmoua targeted refugees. These projects, however, failed to tailor their support to each group's specific needs, even if they explicitly targeted the groups.

Analytical work that adopted an intersectionality lens made project designs more relevant to different categories of women. An assessment of SWEDD-supported safe spaces for young women's skills development (Population Council 2020) recommended separating participants into two distinct groups—married young women and unmarried adolescent girls—and applying a different curriculum for the two groups to better respond to each group's needs and expectations. In the Solomon Islands, a study on vulnerable young women's constraints to economic participation (Woo et al. 2019) informed the Community Access and Urban Services Enhancement Project. There are a few other good examples of analytical products adopting an intersectionality lens. For example, the Chad social safety net diagnostic

(World Bank 2016d) analyzed gender-specific vulnerabilities in the different geographical areas, and the *Land Property Rights, Farm Investments and Agricultural Productivity in Chad* report (Chaherli et al. 2020) examined the impacts of customary and religious law systems on women’s access to land in three macrogeographical areas of Chad (urban areas, the South, and the Sahelian area).

Political sensitivities can undermine the relevance of project designs to FCV contexts, but smart designs can partially overcome this issue. For example, in Burkina Faso, the Financial Inclusion Support Project did not target internally displaced persons (IDPs) because of the government’s objection that supporting IDPs was not a financial inclusion issue but a social inclusion issue, for which social protection mechanisms were better suited. However, project managers still succeeded in indirectly supporting FCV-affected women in two ways. First, the project allowed people risking default because of COVID-19 and other external shocks (including conflict and forced displacement) to restructure their debt. Second, the project supported the governmental institution financing women’s income-generating activities (Fonds d’Appui aux Activités Rémunératrices des Femmes) by allowing digital payments, which facilitated the participation of conflict-affected and forcibly displaced women in the project.<sup>6</sup> In Lebanon, the regional Mashreq Gender Facility (MGF) was not able to include Syrian refugees in country-level activities because of the government’s objection, but it established a regional window that facilitated the access of forcibly displaced women to economic opportunities in the three target countries (Hemenway et al. 2022).

IFC had difficulties tailoring its business model to FCV contexts, based on evidence for the six country cases, but was able to successfully invest in a client that targeted FCV-affected populations. IFC has increasingly focused investment and advisory activities on addressing gender inequalities in FCV-affected countries and challenging contexts, but in the countries analyzed there is little evidence that its work is addressing the drivers of gender inequalities related to fragility or the specific needs and constraints of FCV-affected women and girls. Only two of this evaluation’s case studies (Lebanon and the Solomon Islands) had significant gender-relevant IFC investments or advisory services. These activities, however, were not specifically designed to account for gender inequalities in an FCV context—for

example, inequalities related to refugees, environmental fragilities, or other contextual factors. One interviewee pointed out that it was difficult to apply IFC's approach to FCV settings and develop products relevant to FCV conditions. However, IFC showed that it could be done by investing in Lebanon's Al Majmoua microfinance institution, which specifically targeted female refugee beneficiaries.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the creation of platforms to support peer learning, such as Leaders4Equality (a program that is part of the MGF), is a promising avenue to address gender gaps and cultural norms that limit women's economic participation in challenging environments.

Gender studies and assessments helped make project designs relevant by tailoring them to local contexts and making them responsive to gender inequalities. Several projects used gender analyses during project preparation to inform their theories of change. For example, the design of phase II of the Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project integrated a gender action plan based on a gender assessment conducted during the Mid-Term Review of phase I and a gender gaps study conducted during the preparation of phase II. The gender action plan identified gender gaps among pastoralist populations and proposed measures to address them. In Chad, the Local Development and Adaptation Project (ALBIA) conducted a gender assessment, which included women's organizations and proposed a list of activities to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. In Lebanon, the World Bank Group carried out a gender assessment for the Creating Economic Opportunities program, which was canceled, but the assessment still informed the design of MGF. In the Republic of Yemen, the Emergency Electricity Access Project carried out a participatory gender analysis on the target communities' gender-specific needs for microfinancing opportunities and preferences for solar photovoltaic technology. In some cases, the World Bank used assessments by partners. For instance, the World Bank used a gender assessment by the French Development Agency to inform the design of the Lake Chad Region Recovery and Development Project. The project design followed the gender assessment's recommendations and promoted women's participation in community management committees and income-generating activities, psychosocial support to GBV survivors, gender sensitivity trainings for men,

and additional gender-sensitive studies to improve support for women's economic empowerment and their agency.

The Bank Group's analytical work, however, did not commonly focus on the interplay between gender inequalities and country-specific FCV issues. There is an increasing body of literature showing that FCV affects GBV and WGEE in specific ways,<sup>8</sup> but the majority of the analyzed Bank Group knowledge products disregard these interactions. This analytical work seldom examines how FCV exacerbates gender inequalities or is differently experienced by women, men, girls, and boys; nor does it examine how gender inequalities differentially impact FCV-affected groups. Moreover, these knowledge products rarely discuss how gender inequalities exacerbate fragility. A donor in the Republic of Yemen stated that "the World Bank does not distinguish between GBV in emergencies, sexual harassment in the workplace, and gender issues. These are different issues that require different types of interventions, focuses, and strategies."

## Inclusive Ownership

Inclusive ownership was frequent during project implementation but rare during project design. Involvement of local stakeholders is vital in FCV contexts and can improve project ownership at the national, local, and community levels (Atuhaire et al. 2018; Bojicic-Dzelilovic and Martin 2018; UN and World Bank 2018). More than half of the analyzed projects promoted inclusive ownership by consulting with local stakeholders, including women beneficiaries and women's grassroots organizations, and involving women in decision-making bodies and decentralized and community-based development approaches. The evaluation, however, unveiled that the Bank Group often gathered the input of local stakeholders but rarely integrated that input into project designs, which undermines the long-term ownership over the project by these stakeholders and can decrease project relevance and efficacy. The Bank Group more commonly involved women's community-based organizations and local NGOs in the implementation of subprojects whose designs were already finalized by the government's implementing agency. This was the case for the SWEDD project, the Emergency Food and Livestock Crisis Response Project in Chad, and the GBV Prevention and Response Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

These findings echo the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) evaluation *Engaging Citizens for Better Development Results*, which found that the Bank Group is not using citizen feedback to inform project designs or trigger course corrections during implementation (World Bank 2018g).

The World Bank operating modalities can restrict the extent of inclusive ownership. The evaluation found that the Bank Group’s business model, which uses the central government as its main interlocutor and counterpart in country programs, limits the Bank Group’s capacity to achieve local inclusive ownership over projects. As one informant put it: “In FCV situations, the key is to work the local way. We did a portfolio review and found that the World Bank has been struggling with impacting final beneficiaries in the countries because projects were focused on central level reforms and administration, but had problems with producing impact on the ground.” Informants from women’s rights organizations and CSOs believe that the World Bank can be more impactful in addressing gender inequalities by strengthening its partnership with CSOs that have experience working with communities and know how to effectively support them. A key informant of a local CSO in Burkina Faso said: “The [World] Bank would benefit from working with well-organized civil society structures. Even the government realizes that it cannot move forward without civil society. Where the government does not arrive, we do. We can better transform things. But directly with civil society, we know the field well.”<sup>9</sup> IEG’s *Social Contracts and World Bank Country Engagements: Lessons from Emerging Practices* meso-evaluation documented a similar phenomenon and noted that the World Bank’s operating logic did not facilitate social contract thinking, as citizens and other social actors (including subnational authorities, which play a key role in service delivery) were unlikely to be involved in Bank Group activities (World Bank 2019c).

In the Republic of Yemen, the Bank Group adopted a decentralized and multistakeholder approach because a central government counterpart was absent, but it missed an opportunity to involve the local stakeholders most engaged on gender issues. As IEG’s *World Bank Engagement in Situations of Conflict: An Evaluation of FY10–20 Experience* (World Bank 2021e) highlights, in situations of open conflict, United Nations (UN) agencies are better equipped than the World Bank to mediate and negotiate with multiple

stakeholders. Following the suspension of disbursements to the Republic of Yemen under Operational Policy 7.30, the UN began to implement the Bank Group's projects there. In so doing, the UN operated through community-, district-, and governorate-level stakeholders, including local implementing agencies and, when possible, relevant government bodies. For example, the Emergency Crisis Response Project adopted a community-based approach to identify, implement, and maintain small community infrastructure subprojects through labor-intensive public works. The UN involved women, youth, and IDPs in consultations and decision-making processes at the community level. This approach helped strengthen social cohesion, ownership, and engagement, as women helped identify project priorities and design activities that responded to their needs. However, in the Republic of Yemen, the World Bank did not collaborate with the stakeholders most engaged on gender issues, which partly explains why its contribution to WGEE and to GBV prevention and response was very limited.

## Depth

Few projects of those analyzed adopted integrated, holistic approaches to address the root causes of gender inequalities. The root causes of gender inequalities are complex and require “deep” approaches that are integrated and comprehensive. However, figure 2.2 shows that projects designed to achieve deep change were not very frequent. Those that did include deep designs were almost all recently designed projects: only phase I of the SWEDD and the Democratic Republic of Congo Great Lakes Project were deep projects designed before 2019. The SWEDD, for example, uses a multisector strategy and multiple entry points to increase women's and girls' empowerment and access to quality reproductive, child, and maternal health services. On the supply side, the project improves the quality of reproductive health services, whereas on the demand side, it builds girls' and women's capacity to make decisions, including on their fertility, and use reproductive health services. The project also intends to change gender norms through media and community-based communication activities and by actively engaging men, boys, and political, religious, and traditional leaders to work toward eliminating GBV.



Projects that did not adopt a theory of change that included all the necessary conditions for WGEE were less effective in promoting WGEE. The theories of change for projects that effectively support WGEE can be very complex (as shown in figure 1.1). These theories of change must consider multiple context-specific constraints to create the necessary conditions for WGEE, such as male acceptance or women’s freedom of movement, and women’s access to time, lands, skills, inputs, credit, markets, and information. For projects in which these various elements were not analyzed or integrated into the project’s design or implementation, intended results were not fully achieved at closing. For instance, the FIP—Decentralized Forest and Woodland Management Project in Burkina Faso technically and financially supported women’s income-generating activities; however, it underestimated the gaps in women’s technical capacity and ability to access markets, transportation, and business inputs, such as water and other resources. Focus group discussions revealed that failing to account for these gaps undermined the profitability and sustainability of project activities. Likewise, the SWEDD project provided young women with electrical and plumbing installation kits and technical and business development training to facilitate their access to traditionally male activities and increase their economic empowerment. However, when consulted for this evaluation, none of the beneficiaries had started their own business. This was because the project support neglected some elements of the theory of change: girls could not access credit for start-up costs, the installation kit did not include all the necessary materials or equipment for starting a business, and the training did not cover all the aspects required for a start-up firm. As a result, instead of starting their own businesses, the young female beneficiaries worked as apprentices in a male-headed firm.

To produce deep change in GBV and WGEE, it is necessary to consider the interrelationships between the two. The theory of change used by this evaluation (chapter 1 and appendix C) draws from an increasing body of evidence that shows the important interrelationships between GBV and WGEE. WGEE can enhance women’s status, agency, and bargaining power, thus decreasing GBV (Désilets et al. 2019; Kiplesund and Morton 2014; Klugman et al. 2014). However, it may also increase intimate partner or domestic violence (Désilets et al. 2019; IASC 2015; ICRW 2020; IRC

2019; Kiplesund and Morton 2014; Klugman et al. 2014) as men may feel uncomfortable or resentful about these advances for women. As such, these efforts require engaging men and boys to change gender norms, create a conducive environment for change, and build safe and equal relationships between men and women. They also require FCV settings to improve safety and protection from GBV as a precondition for women's and girls' equitable participation in economic life and decision-making (IRC 2019; Sida 2009).

The World Bank Group mitigated the risk of WGEE-related projects causing GBV as an unintended outcome by considering the interlinkages between WGEE and GBV in project designs. The Great Lakes Project, for instance, promoted GBV survivors' economic empowerment to support their socio-economic integration but also to reduce their vulnerability to violence and the consequent risk of GBV. The follow-on GBV Prevention and Response Project reinforced this component in design. The SWEDD project supported adolescent girls' and young women's economic empowerment to prevent child marriage and other forms of GBV, including domestic violence. As a young woman explained in a focus group, "When you stop holding out your hand every time, your husband respects you and sometimes negotiates."<sup>10</sup> The implementing NGOs also ensured that community leaders asked for the approval of husbands and fathers for the girls to participate in project activities;<sup>11</sup> organized activities of sensitization through radio, in-person training, and other channels; and targeted different community groups to foster men's support and reduce the risk of male resistance and domestic violence. In Burkina Faso, the Social Safety Net Project, informed by a local study that had been conducted in collaboration with the Africa Gender Innovation Lab (Gnoumou Thiombiano 2015), transferred cash to all the wives of vulnerable polygamous households to mitigate the risk of intrahousehold conflict and domestic violence. The Lake Chad Region Recovery and Development Project plans to engage and sensitize men "to ensure the broader understanding and encouragement of women's participation in these activities [labor-intensive public works], so as not to create conflicts at the household level" (World Bank 2020e, 26). The Community Access and Urban Services Enhancement Project in the Solomon Islands, by contrast, did not consider the potential unintended negative effect that promoting WGEE could generate and ran into strong male resistance. Some husbands were upset when their wives

participated in labor-intensive public works trainings because they felt threatened by their wives' education and by that class being coeducational. Some husbands went so far as to burn their wives' Community Access and Urban Services Enhancement Project training certificates.

Analytical work that investigates the links between WGEE and GBV supports deeper project designs, but this is very infrequent. Only 12 of 60 analyzed knowledge products explore the relationship between some aspect of WGEE and GBV. These are all gender-focused reports. Four are gender assessments, some of them recent (Lebanon: World Bank and UN Women 2021; Chad: World Bank 2020a), with in-depth analysis on, for example, how GBV drives gender inequalities in health and justice services and impacts women's productivity and access to the labor market (Lebanon: World Bank and UN Women 2021) or how GBV becomes a barrier to women's full participation in social and economic life (Democratic Republic of Congo: World Bank 2017b). Most of the remaining reports are private sector analyses of women's participation in value chains or leadership positions. These include IFC knowledge products that discuss GBV's negative impact on WGEE—for example, GBV's impact on absenteeism, worker turnover, low productivity, and occupational hazards (IFC 2016, 2019b). IFC's SolTuna report for the Solomon Islands (IFC 2016) discusses the concrete actions that the SolTuna company has taken to address sexual harassment in the workplace. These examples aside, the fact that so many knowledge products—especially sectoral or strategic diagnostic products—ignore these interlinkages greatly limits the Bank Group's ability to develop deeper, more comprehensive interventions.

## Sustainability

Sustainability is rarely planned for in project designs.<sup>12</sup> Aside from scale, sustainability was the most difficult element of transformational change for projects to pursue; only 10 of the 41 analyzed project designs sufficiently incorporated sustainability in their designs (figure 2.2). One of the reasons is that achieving sustainability and scale requires stability, strong institutions, and strong financial capacity of national and subnational governments, which are rare in FCV situations.

Projects aimed for sustainability by building on existing processes and actors and, less frequently, by improving the enabling environment. Some projects pursued sustainability by building on earlier phases of the same projects and supporting preexisting processes and engaged actors. For example, the FIP—Decentralized Forest and Woodland Management Project developed the capacity of communities and local institutions, such as women’s and farmers’ grassroots organizations, to sustainably manage forests and foster women’s voice, agency, and economic empowerment. Very few projects pursued sustainability by changing the enabling environment for WGEE and for GBV prevention and response—that is, by improving the country’s policies, legal framework, and formal and informal institutions. The SWEDD, however, did this in several ways: first, by engaging with traditional and religious leaders to change gender norms and with political leaders to adopt national policies for gender equality; second, by improving health systems and women’s and girls’ sexual and reproductive health; third, by helping countries in the Sahel produce and disseminate analytical work; and fourth, by building the capacity of government experts to plan and monitor programs that harness the demographic dividend.<sup>13</sup> The SWEDD’s new phase has increased the project’s focus on the enabling environment, particularly on strengthening the country’s legal framework and adopting budget practices that integrate the demographic dividend.

## Scale

Few projects were designed to produce large-scale changes in WGEE and GBV prevention and response. There are three ways for projects to achieve scale:<sup>14</sup> first, by progressively covering more people across more geographic areas; second, by strengthening country systems, including institutions and policy frameworks, to expand to a larger scale (this is also called endogenous scaling up and is intrinsically more sustainable); and third, by partnering or coordinating with other donors to develop a common strategy to deliver larger, complementary programs or “delivering as one.”<sup>15</sup> Only 8 of the 41 analyzed project designs planned for larger scales. Four projects in the Republic of Yemen and the Solomon Islands were designed to achieve scale in the first way, by progressively targeting more and more beneficiaries with cash transfer or cash for work programs for vulnerable women. Another

four projects planned for scale in the second, more sustainable way by strengthening national or subnational systems. This was the case for the FIP—Decentralized Forest and Woodland Management Project design, which integrated a gender-sensitive angle into the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation country strategy.<sup>16</sup> Other examples of the second way were the Social Safety Net Projects in the Sahel, which aimed to consolidate national social safety net programs and strengthen institutions. These Social Safety Net Projects were also the only ones that followed, to some extent, the third way of scaling up by developing synergies with other international development partners to establish a unified registry, at the country level, of the beneficiaries of social protection programs.

## The Trade-Offs

The Bank Group faced trade-offs among the five elements of transformational change. This evaluation has identified three such trade-offs. The first trade-off is among scale, depth, and sustainability (figure 2.1). The second type of trade-off is among the different parts of the project theory of change and emerges when projects attempt to achieve deep change. The third is the nexus between emergency humanitarian and development goals, which is often a temporal trade-off between the short- and long-term perspectives in FCV situations.

### Trade-Offs among Scale, Depth, and Sustainability

There are key trade-offs among scale, depth, and sustainability. The evaluation observed only one project design that aimed to achieve both scale and deep change (figure 2.1) and found no examples where all three were achieved at once. The MGF planned for both scale and depth. The MGF was a technical assistance to improve the enabling environment for WGEE in three Mashreq countries (including Lebanon). The MGF was at scale, as it worked simultaneously at the subnational, national, and regional levels, and at depth, as it supported different types of activities including capacity building, evidence generation, and experience exchanges. Even so, the MGF still struggled with sustainability. Several MGF results were potentially sustainable, such as the passage of a sexual harassment law and the development of women's economic empowerment action plans in five ministries,<sup>17</sup> because

these strengthened the enabling environment. However, the MGF was not connected to other relevant projects and partners to consolidate its achievements and new engagements; thus, the facility as such was not sustainable. No other analyzed project planned for both scale and depth. For example, the Sahel's Adaptive Social Protection projects planned for scale by supporting national social safety net systems that targeted FCV-affected populations and vulnerable women, including female heads of households, lactating women, and pregnant women. However, the depth of the project designs was limited because they did not try to transform gender roles and relations. Moreover, these projects, like other social safety net projects, defined eligibility criteria at the household level, thereby ignoring intrahousehold gender dynamics and inequalities.<sup>18</sup>

There are trade-offs among scale, depth, and sustainability for both WGEE and GBV projects. National social safety net projects, which are large-scale, have been successful in increasing the resilience and economic empowerment of vulnerable women. However, these projects only produced deep and sustainable results at the local level, where they supported small-scale activities for beneficiaries' productive inclusion, or "graduation," into income-generating activities. These activities were not a part of the national system of social safety nets. Likewise, the SWEDD, despite its phase II strategy to scale up by improving the enabling environment, struggled to provide coverage to all of the countries' in-need women and girls. Many of these trade-offs emerge from resource constraints. Scaling up a bundle of interconnected interventions to achieve deep change requires large financial resources that are difficult to mobilize in FCV countries. As a key informant reported: "The dormitories (for girls living far from the secondary school) are currently overwhelmed. There are plenty of girls on the waiting list. Resources are the challenge for scaling up. It is an exorbitant cost. In the country, there are one million girls at risk of child marriage, but we cannot support more than 600 girls. The expertise is there, the political will is there, the communities are welcoming, now it is a matter of resource mobilization. The World Bank alone cannot meet these needs."

Various integrated projects achieved results in GBV prevention and response, but they remained small-scale and were not yet sustainable. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the African Great Lakes Project supported

GBV survivors through complementary and coordinated interventions, but the scale of the combined intervention was small, and the intervention was not sustainable.<sup>19</sup> The follow-on GBV Prevention and Response Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo intends to expand the coverage of the Great Lakes Project,<sup>20</sup> but it cannot increase the full package of services to GBV survivors.<sup>21</sup> Equally, the SWEDD in Burkina Faso and Chad helped reduce the incidence of child marriage and other forms of GBV by promoting girls' education and skills development,<sup>22</sup> but these activities were small-scale and not financially sustainable. IFC engaged with 15 of the largest companies in the Solomon Islands, all of which committed to improving gender equality by promoting respectful and supportive workplaces for nearly 7,000 employees,<sup>23</sup> 42 percent of whom were women. However, this two-year initiative was too short to ensure deep and sustainable results, and it did not purposefully engage with the government and other projects to consolidate its achievements.

## Trade-Offs among the Different Parts of the Theory of Change

The second type of trade-off is among the different parts of the theory of change that are necessary for effectively supporting WGEE and preventing and responding to GBV. Addressing GBV and promoting WGEE requires holistic and integrated approaches, involving multiple sectors, that cover all the elements of the theory of change. This evaluation found that projects that, for example, were unable to balance supply and demand undermined their effectiveness. In some cases, projects created high expectations that generated a strong demand that the project could not meet. For example, the SWEDD adopted a multipronged approach that, on the demand side, aimed to remove constraints to women's and girls' access to services (through skills development, incentives for girls' education, communication campaigns, and engagement of opinion leaders, men, and boys as key agents) and, on the supply side, intended to improve the quality of education and reproductive health services. However, the project was unable to ensure the supply of education and reproductive health services matched the increase in demand.<sup>24</sup> It also happened that the services directly provided by the SWEDD—for example, safe spaces for young women's and adolescent girls' skills development—

were in short supply with respect to the demand. As a mentor reported: “There was a census by the local association in collaboration with the village’s community development committee. Afterward, the project team came to make the final selection of the girls and women beneficiaries by lottery. The women and girls who wanted to participate were numerous: the number exceeded the capacities of the project. The need is great. We would like the safe spaces to continue to be able to reach everyone in the village.” On the other side, the Great Lakes Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo did not adequately address demand-side constraints, such as the long travel distance to services and the fear of stigmatization and social exclusion, hindering GBV survivors’ access to GBV case management. As a result, the number of GBV survivors who asked for health support was lower than expected.<sup>25</sup>

## Trade-Offs between Humanitarian and Development Efforts

The third trade-off is between addressing humanitarian needs and pursuing longer-term development goals. Many key informants, both inside and outside the Bank Group, stressed the need to pursue long-term goals in FCV contexts, notably by building the resilience of FCV-affected populations and supporting FCV countries to exit from crises. According to the Bank Group’s FCV strategy, this is referred to as working “across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus” (World Bank Group 2020, 59). At the same time, the informants recognized the difficulty in investing in long-term goals, such as strengthening resilience, peace, and gender equality, when investments are needed for emergencies.<sup>26</sup> One may question, for example, whether it is possible to aim for long-term goals within countries, such as the Republic of Yemen, where there are much more urgent matters of violence, famine, disease, displacement, and so on. To overcome this trade-off, the *Lessons Learned Study: Yemen Emergency Crisis Project (ECRP)* proposes adopting a pragmatic approach that is clear on how the country’s transformation will occur and incorporates both the longer-term and shorter-term views (UNDP 2019). The study suggests that the activities should be articulated along a continuum of expected activities and results, ranging from short-term coping measures that provide temporary relief for the urgent needs of



individuals, households, and institutions to more systemic interventions that generate deeper and more sustainable results.

The World Bank Group bridged the humanitarian-development-peace nexus when it strategically collaborated with humanitarian actors. The World Bank’s comparative advantage lies in providing longer-term development solutions, not in short-term humanitarian relief. For this reason, the adoption of a nexus approach that meets both emergency and development needs requires the Bank Group to develop strong and strategic collaborations with humanitarian actors. In the Republic of Yemen, for example, the Bank Group established partnerships with UN agencies that have experience working in humanitarian settings. In this country, therefore, the Bank Group can focus on its comparative advantage in delivering basic services, building institutional capacity, and enhancing resilience among populations. Doing so also allows the Bank Group to focus on gender-related development issues in the Republic of Yemen, which it is beginning to do. This aspect is highlighted in the Bank Group’s Country Engagement Note (FY22–23) for the Republic of Yemen, which commits to supporting women’s and girls’ empowerment and building women’s resilience, because “despite many challenges, women in [the Republic of] Yemen are demonstrating resiliency and innovation in the face of crises” (World Bank 2022c, 21).

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<sup>1</sup> Each element was rated on a scale of 0 to 4 and was considered present in project design if the intensity was 3 or 4 or absent if it was 0 to 2.

<sup>2</sup> The evaluator assessed to what extent each project planned (at design) the different elements of transformational change (relevance, inclusive ownership, depth, sustainability, and scale). To this end, each evaluator rated the five elements of transformational change on a scale of 0 to 4. Each rating was accompanied by a justification. The assessment of each element of transformational change was guided by specific questions to ensure harmonization of the rating criteria across evaluators. All the ratings were reviewed at the end by a second evaluator to ensure alignment. A threshold of 3 was chosen to define the presence (3 and 4) or absence (0 to 2) of each factor. A “relevant” project, therefore, has to be understood as a “relevant enough” project—that is, where relevance is above the threshold. The same goes for the other elements.

<sup>3</sup> In Burkina Faso, the prevalent land tenure system in rural areas is the customary system. According to the customary laws, the traditional leader (*chef de terre*) distributes the land to men, whereas women receive plots from their husbands or other male members of their household (Gender and Land Rights Database, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, access date: January 2022, <https://www.fao.org/gender-landrights-database/en/>). In Chad, several customary land tenure systems coexist, but they have some elements in common. Traditionally, land is considered the collective heritage of a community, and it is sacred and inalienable. In the north and south of the country, the perception of the land as a community asset remains very strong. Land is managed within the framework of patrilineal organizations structured around traditional authorities (Chaherli et al. 2020).

<sup>4</sup> In French: « Avec toutes ces informations reçues et la disposition du chef du village devant tout le monde, j’ai eu le courage d’aller demander la parcelle à ce chef. J’ai utilisé mes relations en passant par le fils du chef qui était un ami à mon mari. . . . Ainsi, j’ai acquis ma parcelle sur laquelle je cultive. . . . Avant cette rencontre moi je ne savais pas que je pouvais demander une parcelle à un chef de terre et que ce dernier pouvait me l’octroyer. Je l’ai appris dans cette expérience. D’autres femmes aussi ont obtenu des parcelles c’est le cas des femmes de Bourasso qui ont pu gagner une parcelle pour faire le maraichage. »

<sup>5</sup> In French: « Dans l’espace, au départ, ce n’était pas facile de prendre la parole pour tout le monde. Mais avec le temps et la façon de faire des animatrices, toutes les femmes participaient. »

<sup>6</sup> The project did not allow the fund to access the project’s guarantee schemes, which resulted in excluding informal female entrepreneurs (the overwhelming majority of female

entrepreneurs in Burkina Faso) from credit, which was partially compensated by introducing digital payments. This decision was driven by the initial choice of the Global Practice to focus only on the formal sector.

<sup>7</sup> At some point, however, Al Majmoua stopped including refugees after a request from the government.

<sup>8</sup> Conflict and fragility (i) increase violence against women and girls before, during, and after conflict and negatively impact service delivery and women’s and children’s human development (Buvinic et al. 2013; Kelly et al. 2021; Pereznieta, Magee, and Fyles 2017); (ii) increase women’s vulnerability to poverty, especially women heads of households and widows in humanitarian settings (Buvinic et al. 2013; Klugman 2022), and (iii) amplify gender inequalities in accessing assets, productive resources, and jobs (Klugman 2022; OECD 2020).

<sup>9</sup> In French: « La Banque gagnerait à travailler avec les structures bien organisées de la société civile. . . . L’état lui-même se rend compte que l’état ne peut pas avancer sans la société civile. Là où l’état n’arrive pas, nous pouvons arriver. . . . Nous pouvons mieux capter, mieux transformer les choses. Mais directement avec la société civile, nous connaissons bien le terrain. »

<sup>10</sup> In French: « Quand tu ne tends plus la main chaque fois, le monsieur te respecte et négocie parfois. »

<sup>11</sup> A young woman participating in a focus group stressed that involving participants’ husbands and fathers and explaining to them the type of activities organized in the safe spaces was important to get their support: “There was no problem with participation because before starting, we involved our husbands to avoid any problem. . . . Our husbands and dads were called to ask their opinion on the participation of their wives and daughters in the safe space. . . . Then, the project brought us together with our husbands and fathers of daughters to check everyone’s support: everyone agreed before we started. When we came back from the talk, our husbands were curious to know what subjects we talked about and we let them know.” (In French: « Il n’y a pas eu de problème de participation car avant de commencer on a impliqué nos maris pour éviter tout problème. . . . Nos maris et nos papas ont été appelés pour demander leur avis sur la participation de leurs épouses et leurs filles à l’espace sûr. . . . Ensuite, le projet nous a réuni avec nos maris et papas des filles pour vérifier l’adhésion de tous : tous ont marqué leur accord avant que l’on ne commence. . . . Lorsque nous revenons de la causerie, nos maris sont curieux de savoir de quels sujets on a parlé et on leur raconte. »)

<sup>12</sup> In the context of this evaluation, sustainability was not understood as the ability to secure additional development aid for a subsequent phase of the project. Sustainability was defined

as the sustainability of the changes produced at the level of beneficiaries (for example, by strengthening women’s resilience) and sustainability of country and local systems to acquire and maintain their ability to continue to produce this change in the future (for example, via changes in formal and informal institutions to better address GBV and support WGEE). Improving the enabling environment by making institutions (state, religious, and customary laws and institutions; public service delivery systems; markets; and so on) work for the beneficiaries is addressing, at its core, the issues of the sustainability and continuity of the intervention to achieve and maintain outcomes in the medium and long term.

<sup>13</sup> For example, government experts were trained in developing the National Demographic Dividend Observatory and using it for decision-making, development planning, and monitoring progress to harness the demographic dividend. The demographic dividend is the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population’s age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working-age share of the population (14 and younger, and 65 and older). (Source: <https://www.unfpa.org/demographic-dividend#0>, accessed June 2023.)

<sup>14</sup> Increasing the number of beneficiaries through additional financing or a second or third phase of the project is not considered “scaling up” if the project still remains small-scale with respect to country needs or does not support a strategy of endogenous scale-up or coordination.

<sup>15</sup> IFC’s Respectful Workplaces Program, which started as a component of the Pacific WINvest project, has now become a global offering that is being deployed with clients in Fiji, Kenya, Myanmar, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam and will further expand to South Africa and the English-speaking Caribbean region. This evaluation has not assessed this specific strategy of scale-up at the global level.

<sup>16</sup> This objective—not yet achieved—is going to be integrated into the new Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation support project, currently under preparation (source: interviews with key informants).

<sup>17</sup> The sustainability of these results will critically depend on the implementation plan of the new law and the action plans.

<sup>18</sup> The gender assessment of the Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Program confirms the findings of this evaluation (Perezniето and Holmes 2020). In Burkina Faso, cash transfers were delivered to all wives in polygamous households who were pregnant or mothers of children younger than five years of age to prevent women’s discrimination and domestic violence. The impact of this criterion of targeting has not been evaluated yet.

<sup>19</sup> The number of survivors of GBV supported by the Great Lakes Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo was 17,741 in five years. The World Bank considered this coverage as “large scale” (World Bank 2020h, 47). However, this was the total number of GBV survivors receiving at least one of the four services provided, whereas the scale of the combined intervention was much smaller. The number of women benefiting from mental health support was only 1,064, and 49 percent of GBV survivors received only one service.

<sup>20</sup> The result indicator of the new GBV project in the Democratic Republic of Congo is 60,000 GBV reported cases who access at least one service supported by the project.

<sup>21</sup> Various reasons explain why beneficiaries cannot receive all services: the project’s financial resources are limited, coordination among the implementing partners is weak, the public health service providers’ ownership of the project is low (as reported by the Mid-Term Review), and the local referral system is weak. To scale up, the project would need a robust long-term strategy to implement partners’ ownership and coordination (including with civil society organizations and public health services) and to define how to expand the holistic GBV case management.

<sup>22</sup> Data from impact evaluation are not available yet. These findings are based on interviews and focus groups with key informants (including female beneficiaries) and review of monitoring and evaluation reports.

<sup>23</sup> They represent about 1.8 percent of the current labor force of the Solomon Islands, which amounts to 360,730 according to estimates in 2021 (<https://data.worldbank.org>).

<sup>24</sup> In the second phase, the SWEDD aims to address this gap by establishing synergies with other sector projects to increase public investments in reproductive health and girls’ education.

<sup>25</sup> The expected number was 20,075, whereas the number achieved at the end of the project was 14,446 (World Bank 2020h, 59).

<sup>26</sup> For example, a key informant from a local women’s organization that supports women of returnee communities in Chad reported: “[These women] have many problems. . . . They do not have food; they do not have land to farm; their children do not go to school. They do not know what to do; they have livelihood problems.” (In French: « Elles ne reçoivent pas les vivres, elles n’ont pas la terre pour cultiver, les enfants ne partent pas à l’école. Elles ne savent pas quoi faire. Elles ont des problème de moyens d’existence. »)

# 3 | Getting to Results

## Highlights


The World Bank Group has strengthened elements of transformational change in projects related to gender-based violence and women's and girls' economic empowerment, but these project designs still have limitations.

The Bank Group has improved project designs in later project phases or follow-on projects. This happened when projects applied lessons from previous projects to new designs, planned for increased women's participation in project activities and better addressed their needs and constraints in the new project designs, focused more on improving the country's enabling environment, built local actors' capacity, and coordinated better with and among stakeholders.


Since 2019, the Bank Group has approved innovative fragility, conflict, and violence-focused projects that address both impacts and drivers of fragility, conflict, and violence, thus easing the trade-off between humanitarian and development goals. These projects adopt decentralized, community-based, and inclusive approaches to build peace and resilience.

The Bank Group's country engagement generally uses a project-centric approach that pursues gender goals through individual and disconnected projects. This approach rarely defines long-term, overarching women's and girls' economic empowerment, gender-based violence, or gender equality goals and exacerbates project-level trade-offs.

The Bank Group's analytical products vary in quality and do not provide a deep and consistent analysis of the relationships between gender inequalities and fragility, conflict, and violence



issues. This is especially apparent in analytical work that influences country strategies.



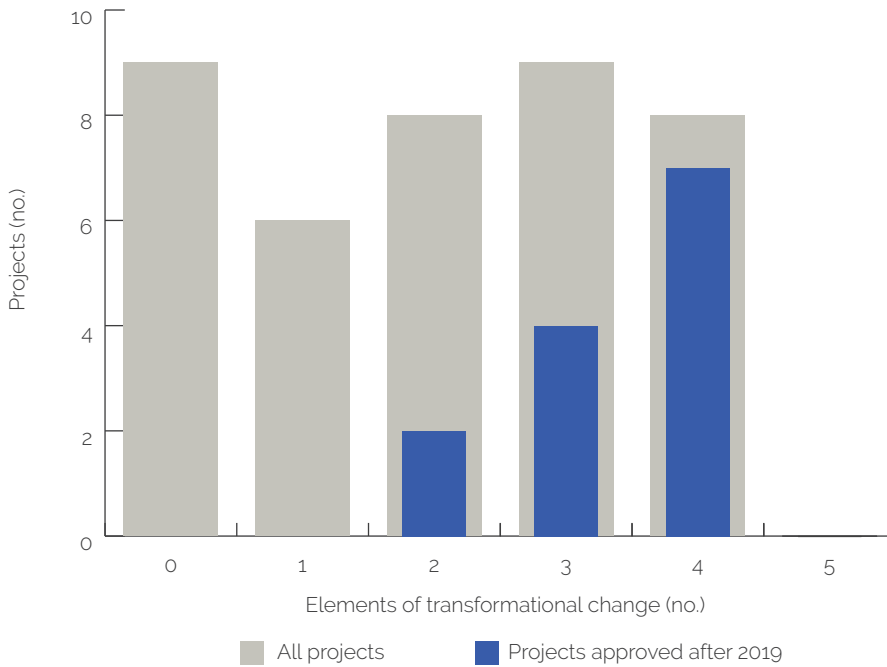
Monitoring and evaluation frameworks do not adequately measure transformational change processes or outcomes at either the project or the country level. This makes it difficult to systematically document what gender results the country engagements achieve and what gender-related interventions work.

This chapter analyzes the evolution of the Bank Group's support for WGEE and for GBV prevention and response in FCV-affected countries and discusses pathways and challenges to achieving better results. The chapter focuses on three areas: (i) the recent evolution of Bank Group support for WGEE and for GBV prevention and response in FCV countries, which shows improvements in the design of many projects that moved from initial to later phases, and the emergence of a new generation of innovative projects focused on FCV; (ii) the Bank Group's difficulties in shifting from a project-centric to a strategic country engagement approach as the pathway to achieve transformational change; and (iii) the limitations of the Bank Group's current monitoring and evaluation frameworks in capturing outcomes and transformational change in GBV and WGEE. The chapter argues that there have been improvements at the project level, but the Bank Group's focus on individual projects is limiting. Shifting from a project-centric to a strategic country engagement approach can allow the Bank Group to ease some of the trade-offs discussed in the previous chapter and better support FCV-affected countries in achieving WGEE and preventing and responding to GBV.

Recent WGEE- and GBV-related projects have a greater transformational potential compared with older projects. Thirteen of the 41 project designs analyzed for this evaluation were approved in 2019 or later, and of those, 11 have at least three elements of transformational change (figure 3.1). Six of the 11 projects are follow-on phases from previous projects, whereas 5 are entirely new projects. Moreover, 7 of the 8 projects with four transformational elements are recent. This shows that the Bank Group has applied lessons learned from previous projects to new designs in the same country or others.



**Figure 3.1.** Elements of Transformational Change for All Projects Compared to Recent Projects



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

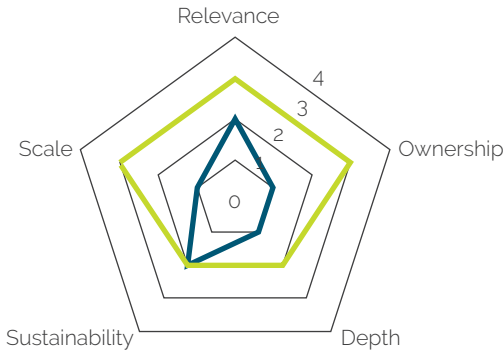
## Learning from Implementation to Improve Results

Project design improved over the evaluation period. Figure 3.2 shows that 10 of the case study projects improved the initial design (phase I) in a follow-up project (phase II) or additional financing design. All analyzed project designs were below full transformational potential (a maximum score in all elements), but in all 10 cases there were improvements in most elements from one phase to the next. These improvements were made possible by (i) using assessments and lessons from the previous project’s implementation, (ii) using gender expertise to address gaps in design, (iii) increasing budget allocations for WGEE and for GBV prevention and response, and (iv) ensuring project continuity, flexibility, and timely adaptation. Some of these factors will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

**Figure 3.2. Evolution of Project Design in Select Projects**

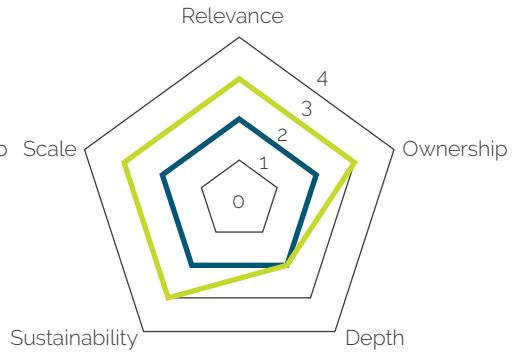


e. The Solomon Islands Rapid Employment Project and Community Access and Urban Services Enhancement Project



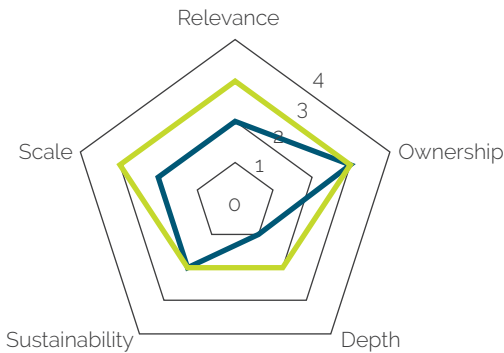
- Community Access and Urban Services Enhancement Project (parent project and additional financing)
- The Solomon Islands Rapid Employment Project

f. The Solomon Islands Rural Development Program (phase I and phase II)



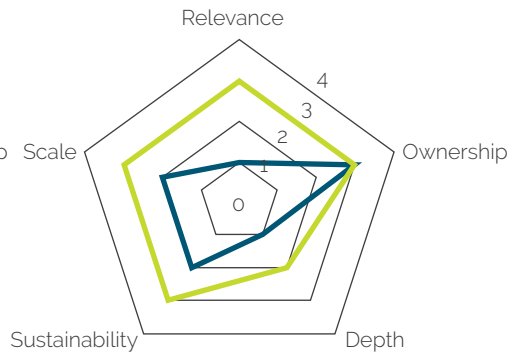
- Rural Development Program II
- Rural Development Program I

g. Yemen, Rep., Emergency Crisis Response Project and Emergency Social Protection Enhancement and COVID-19 Response Project (and additional financing)



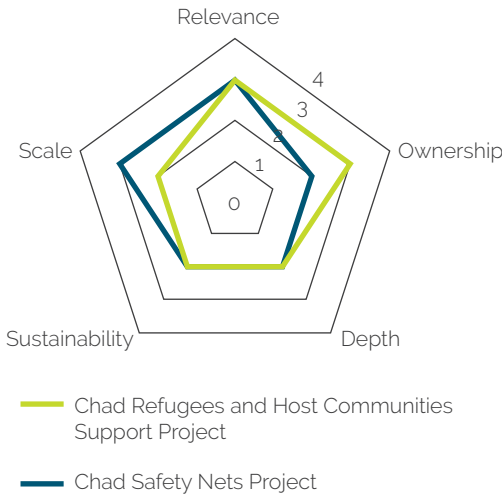
- Emergency Social Protection enhancement and Covid-19 Response (and additional financing)
- Yemen, Rep., Emergency Crisis Response Project

h. Yemen, Rep., Integrated Urban Services Emergency Project (phase I and phase II)

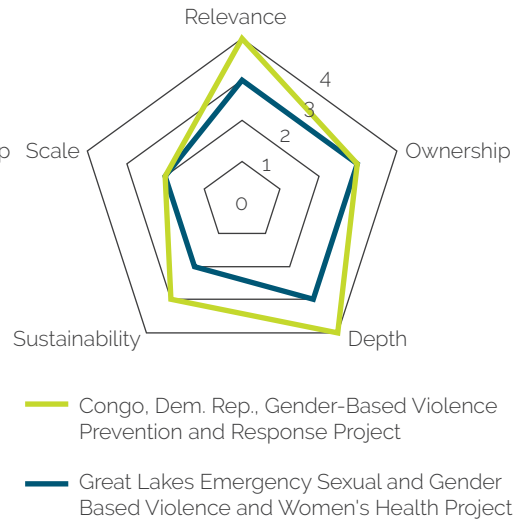


- Yemen, Rep., Integrated Urban Services Emergency Project I
- Yemen, Rep., Integrated Urban Services Emergency Project II

i. Chad Safety Nets Project 2017–20 and Refugees and Host Communities Support Project 2019–25



j. Great Lakes Emergency SGBV and Women's Health Project and Congo, Dem. Rep., GBV Prevention and Response Project



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: The blue (darker) line marks the score of the transformational elements in the early-phase project; the green (paler) line in the second-phase project. Project rating criteria are described in detail in appendix A. GBV = gender-based violence; SGBV = sexual and gender-based violence; SWEDD = Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend.

Projects increased relevance and depth by addressing shortcomings in the original design. For example, the GBV Prevention and Response Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo built on lessons from the earlier regional Great Lakes Project. The earlier project included activities to prevent GBV and meet GBV survivors' needs but did not include any specific strategy for GBV prevention, had a limited scope and outreach effort, and included communication campaigns that were too short to produce any significant change. In response, the Democratic Republic of Congo project integrated a stronger component of GBV prevention that mobilized the community and adopted tested approaches, such as Start, Awareness, Support, and Action and Engaging Men through Accountable Practice,<sup>1</sup> to transform gender norms, improve GBV reporting, and reduce GBV survivors' stigmatization. The project provided gender-transformative training to community activists who would manage cases, refer survivors to services, and mobilize community leaders to prevent GBV. Another example is the Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project covering Chad and Burkina Faso. The project's Mid-Term Review recommended undertaking a gender assessment, which

identified design shortcomings and recommended strategic investments in women’s income-generating activities (which, in Chad, had not been prioritized) and increased gender accountability and awareness at all levels (a more comprehensive approach than in the original design). Building off the Mid-Term Review, the project’s phase II integrated a new stand-alone component to support youth and women’s income-generating activities, improve the monitoring and evaluation framework, and “institutionalize” gender based on a gender action plan that included a stronger strategy for gender training and sensitization and added female participation quotas in consultation meetings and management committees.

In some cases, projects increased relevance and depth by integrating measures to increase women’s participation. Projects that did not pay sufficient attention to the constraints to women’s participation ended up with a lower-than-expected share of female beneficiaries. For example, in the initial phase of the Burkina Faso Agricultural Productivity and Food Security Project, women made up only 9.6 percent of the farmers recruited for training and 20 percent of the recipients of credit under a warrantage system. To address these shortcomings, the follow-on project mandated that 30 percent of project beneficiaries be women. To ensure that this quota was fulfilled, the project provided training to implementing partners and stakeholders, including farmers’ organizations, in Socio-economic and Gender Analysis.<sup>2</sup> Because of greater stakeholder capacity in participatory gender analyses and planning, women’s participation in the trainings increased to 34 percent (Sawadogo-Kaboré et al. 2020).<sup>3</sup>

Projects also increased their relevance by introducing activities to address gender inequalities faced by FCV-affected women and girls. The second additional financing of the Social Safety Net Project in Burkina Faso, for instance, increased social safety nets and broadened their target beneficiaries to refugees and host communities. The design of the additional financing incorporated lessons from the previous Youth Employment and Skills Development Project by enhancing FCV-affected women’s economic empowerment through cash transfers, skills development, and labor-intensive public works activities supplemented by childcare support. It also included a new component of community-based prevention of child marriage and other forms of GBV.

The new SWEDD project design increased relevance and depth by improving coordination among activities and project stakeholders. During the project's first phase, the SWEDD's complementary subcomponents were spread out among different geographical areas within the project countries—essentially, the theory of change was “broken down,” which decreased the project's overall effectiveness, because of the weak strategic and operational coordination among the implementing partners in the different regions. The project's second phase aims for stronger coordination among the implementing partners and establishes mechanisms to layer and connect the various pieces of the theory of change within the same localities. This would ensure that multiple interventions—for example, men's and boys' clubs, activities to support WGEE, and activities to improve sexual and reproductive health services—complement each other and operate together, rather than in isolation.

Projects strengthened sustainability and scale in three ways—consolidating results, developing local capacity, and improving the enabling environment. For example, both the SWEDD and the Great Lakes Project improved sustainability by consolidating results from the first phase to the second. The Democratic Republic of Congo GBV Prevention and Response Project design, which followed up the initial Great Lakes Project, consolidated the GBV case management component from the first project by helping implementing partners develop their sustainability plans, improve the referral system, and build the capacity of CSOs, public health service providers, and community-based organizations in GBV prevention. Nevertheless, the project still lacks a strategy to ensure its financial sustainability after the project closes. The SWEDD's project managers learned from SWEDD's first phase that they needed to improve the enabling environment to support WGEE and prevent GBV. To this end, the SWEDD II plans to create a regional legal platform to improve the country's legal framework,<sup>4</sup> increase the integration of the demographic dividend in the state budget and develop regional and national referral pathways for GBV survivors to access legal, medical, and socioemotional support.

The World Bank occasionally used impact evaluations to improve project designs. Two projects that used impact evaluations to inform their theories of change were the Great Lakes Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the SWEDD I in the Sahel. Both used the evidence from impact evaluations

of projects from other countries to justify holistic approaches to support GBV survivors in the Democratic Republic of Congo and promote women's and girls' empowerment and reduce child marriage in the Sahel. The Social Safety Net projects in the Sahel also benefited from impact evaluation evidence (and were themselves impact evaluated) under the Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Program, a multidonor trust fund supporting evidence-based design and adaptive social protection systems in the Sahel.<sup>5</sup> Outside social safety nets, the World Bank almost never used impact evaluations to develop the theories of change of women's economic empowerment interventions.<sup>6</sup> Some projects—such as the Social Safety Net projects in Chad, Burkina Faso, and the Republic of Yemen and the GBV-focused interventions in the Democratic Republic of Congo—were evaluated to inform subsequent project phases. However, the World Bank was not always able to use those evaluations because of misaligned timelines. For example, the impact evaluation of the SWEDD I was meant to inform the second phase, but the SWEDD II was designed and started before the conclusion of the impact evaluation.

Since 2019, the World Bank Group has introduced projects that use decentralized and community-based approaches to address FCV, support WGEE, and counter GBV. Many of these new projects address the impacts and drivers of FCV, such as conflict and climate change, and explicitly confront both sides of the humanitarian-development nexus. They do so by adopting decentralized and community-based approaches that target FCV-affected populations, such as forcibly displaced people, host communities, and populations living in open conflict areas. According to the literature, these approaches enable more inclusive mechanisms of governance that empower women and girls and other marginalized groups and improve the accountability and capacity of local institutions to address FCV's impacts and drivers (Atuhaire et al. 2018; Bojicic-Dzelilovic and Martin 2018; Cislaghi 2019; Gupta et al. 2020; Interpeace 2020; UN and World Bank 2018). For example, Burkina Faso's 2021 Emergency Local Development and Resilience Project, which has WGEE and GBV components, used consultations with women's organizations to identify and prioritize needs and mobilize communities to prevent GBV, through safe spaces for women's and girls' skills development, men's and boys' engagement, and initiatives of community dialogue to change gender norms. In Chad, the Lake Chad Region

Recovery and Development Project aims to engage regional and community stakeholders to forge “partnerships between humanitarian and development actors” (World Bank 2020e, 23). The project helps communities identify, implement, and monitor community development plans and apply a gender-sensitive approach. It also helps local authorities integrate project activities in municipal development plans.

Some new projects enhanced their support for preexisting initiatives and local actors to promote sustainability. These projects built on ongoing local processes and developed the capacity of local actors to generate change leading to sustainable results. For example, in Chad, the ALBIA, which promotes women’s economic empowerment, builds the capacities of the communities’ female leaders, supports preexisting women’s groups and their economic activities, raises the gender awareness of local authorities and religious leaders, and improves the gender responsiveness of existing agriculture extension services and local communal development plans. Likewise, the Lake Chad Region Recovery and Development Project plans to build the capacity of local authorities, community institutions, and community-based organizations, including women’s groups, to ensure they can sustain project results. The community-led initiatives will be integrated into the existing communal development plans.

## Shifting from a Project to a Country Focus

Shifting from a project-centric approach to a strategic country engagement on gender equality would ease the trade-offs discussed in chapter 2. The Bank Group focuses most of its support for WGEE and for GBV prevention and response on individual projects rather than country engagements (which combine many activities and pursue high-level gender equality goals over a long period). This project-centric approach does not correspond to the mandate of the organization, which centers on the country engagement model: “the Bank Group supports client countries to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity in a sustainable way, by contributing over time to high-level outcomes, consistent with a country’s development goals” (World Bank Group 2014). As we have seen, the intensity of some elements of transformational change has improved in recent projects, but even so, these projects do not achieve their full transformational potential and doing so is



out of the reach of individual projects. However, the evaluation found that the Bank Group’s country engagement on gender equality issues remains highly focused on delivering individual projects and that these projects are not part of a comprehensive and long-term strategic approach to gender. Projects cannot trigger transformational change for WGEE and GBV and contribute to high-level outcomes if they are self-contained and not woven into a longer-term strategic perspective, likely covering multiple country strategies. IEG’s meso-evaluation *Social Contracts and World Bank Country Engagements: Lessons from Emerging Practices* observed that redefining power relationships—whether renewing social contracts or addressing the root causes of gender inequalities—requires a long-time horizon that “does not fit into shorter-term country programs and lending instruments” (World Bank 2019c, 28).

A project-centric approach has limitations in terms of the depth, sustainability, and scalability of Bank Group support for WGEE and for GBV prevention and response. Individual projects cannot produce changes in GBV and WGEE that are simultaneously deep, sustainable, and large-scale because these changes require continuity over a long-time horizon, integrated and multi-sectoral approaches, and collaboration among a country’s development partners. This evaluation’s interviews and desk analysis corroborate the findings of IEG’s Mid-Term Review, which indicated that “closing country gender gaps is beyond the scope, budget, and timeline of a single project[;] fully addressing gender gaps takes sustained effort, spans multiple projects, and can be addressed more strategically using Bank Group instruments collectively” (World Bank 2021f, 28). The SWEDD project, for example, uses a multisector approach and multiple entry points to increase access to sexual and reproductive health services and empower women and girls. According to key informants, however, the costs of bringing the SWEDD’s complex design to a national scale would be prohibitive. A more viable option to expand the SWEDD’s approach consists of collaborating with other development partners to connect each one’s gender equality program. The SWEDD has decided to follow this option and has recently started a collaboration with the French Development Agency to socialize its approach. Another strategy would be to identify which SWEDD elements were successful and graft them onto the World Bank’s large sector programs, which are already at scale or more easily

scalable. Both approaches require the Bank Group to go beyond the project-by-project approach and explore connections and potential synergies across its own and others' projects to follow a long-term strategic direction.

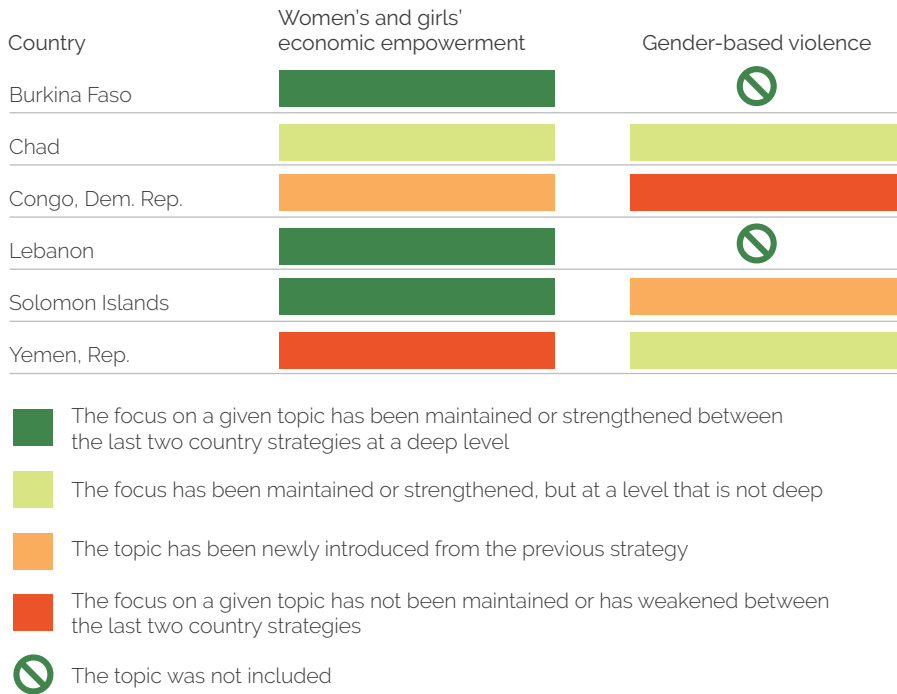
The Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD)–Country Partnership Framework (CPF) model in the six analyzed FCV countries does not include an explicit long-term approach for addressing gender inequalities in those countries. The SCD and CPF are core elements of the Bank Group's country engagement approach that outline the Bank Group's strategy in any particular country. Only 5 of the 16 country strategies analyzed for this evaluation include gender-related objectives or subobjectives. Two of these five strategies include unclear or unspecific objectives. For example, the Democratic Republic of Congo CPF (2022–26) includes an overly broad objective to “improve gender disparities and inclusion across sectors” (World Bank 2022d, 26). When it comes to WGEE and GBV, only one old country strategy (the FY11–14 Country Partnership Strategy for Lebanon) includes a subobjective explicitly related to WGEE, whereas none of the strategies include an objective or subobjective on GBV.

It is rare for country strategies to define how various activities in the country portfolio combine to achieve higher-level goals related to WGEE or GBV. A gender-specific objective or subobjective in a country strategy identifies priority gender-related issues and can orchestrate the use of various instruments, including analytics, operations, and technical assistance, toward achieving specific goals. However, the evaluation found this in only one case. Lebanon's 2010 Country Partnership Strategy specified improving women's access to finance as a subobjective and brought together different elements of a strategic approach to achieve that objective (World Bank 2010). The country strategy aimed to improve the enabling environment through technical assistance to review and amend the labor code, assess women's job informality and insecurity, and support women-owned businesses through IFC initiatives. This focus was somewhat lost in Lebanon's 2016 CPF, which maintained some emphasis on WGEE through planned analytical work but did not have a specific objective on women's access to finance (World Bank 2016c). This may be why the CPF's results framework did not include indicators on women's economic participation.

In several cases, country strategies do not explicitly articulate the contribution of projects to WGEE and to GBV prevention and response in the country. For instance, the Chad country program carried out an assessment of social safety nets that described women’s vulnerability to poverty and fragility and indicates women’s economic empowerment as a source of resilience (World Bank 2016d). The country program also included lending for social safety nets and planned the regional Sahel Adaptive Social Protection Program. These programs are listed in Chad’s CPF as items in the country portfolio, but their synergetic contribution to the economic empowerment of vulnerable women is not discussed.

The focus of country strategies on GBV and WGEE, when it exists, is easily lost from one strategy to the next. This discontinuity makes it difficult to connect individual projects to others over the long term. Figure 3.3 shows the discontinuity of WGEE and GBV across two subsequent country strategies for the six countries analyzed. We see that a focus on WGEE is more frequent and more commonly maintained or strengthened from one country strategy to the next compared with GBV. For example, in Burkina Faso, the 2013 Country Partnership Strategy discussed the need to bring women into a more active role in the economy (World Bank 2013a). Meanwhile, the 2018 CPF expanded this intent by also highlighting women’s systematic disadvantages in the labor market and calling for support to women-owned farms and businesses (World Bank 2018a). By contrast, GBV had not been introduced or was only recently introduced in three of six country strategies. In the Solomon Islands, the scope for decreasing GBV in the 2013 strategy (World Bank 2014c) was narrowed down to just providing GBV safeguards in the 2018 country strategy (World Bank 2018h). Moreover, in cases where country strategies consistently focused on a specific theme, they did not go deep in advancing that theme in subsequent strategies. Likewise, the Republic of Yemen’s consecutive Country Engagement Notes FY20–21 (World Bank 2019b) and FY22–23 (World Bank 2022c) emphasized the importance of providing psychosocial support to GBV survivors, but none discussed plans to operationalize that support.

**Figure 3.3.** Gender Inequality Focus Areas in Subsequent Country Strategies



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

The analytical work that influences country strategies does not adequately explore the interplay between gender inequalities and FCV issues. Gender-focused analytical products are more likely to provide a comprehensive in-depth analysis of gender in FCV settings than strategic analytical products. Some recent gender assessments provide great insights into how fragility exacerbates gender inequalities and how gender inequalities can contribute to fragility. For example, the Lebanon gender assessment (World Bank and UN Women 2021) analyzes female labor force participation and women’s access to services, by refugee status and vulnerability level, and shows that the country’s multiple crises have aggravated Lebanese women’s difficulties in generating income and improving their livelihoods (see box 4.3). Likewise, the Chad gender assessment (World Bank 2020a) examines the relationship between gender inequalities and demographic pressures, a key fragility driver, and also analyzes the gendered impacts of COVID-19. However, the influence of these in-depth gender and FCV analyses is not

evident in SCDs and CPFs. Poverty assessments and social protection reports may have a more immediate impact on strategy, but are notably silent on the interactions between gender and fragility. For their part, poverty assessments tend to limit their analysis to the poverty gaps between male-headed and female-headed households despite the abundant research that documents gender inequalities in the intrahousehold allocation of resources (Behrman 1988; Brown, Ravallion, and van de Walle 2019; Hoddinott and Haddad 1995; Thomas 1994).<sup>7</sup> Moreover, many poverty assessments do not explore the gendered impacts of fragility. For example, the 2021 *Chad Poverty Assessment: Investing in Rural Income Growth, Human Capital, and Resilience to Support Sustainable Poverty Reduction* (World Bank 2021a) describes the higher poverty rates for Central African and Sudanese refugees than for the rest of Chad, but does not provide any sex-disaggregated information. Similarly, the social protection reports for the Republic of Yemen (World Bank 2018d) and Burkina Faso (Vandeninden, Grun, and Semlali 2019) do not focus on the gendered impacts of social protection programs, despite recognizing that women are particularly vulnerable to crises.

Risk and Resilience Assessments (RRAs) increasingly discuss gender inequalities, especially the links between FCV and GBV. Eight of the nine analyzed RRAs discuss these links, and four identify gender equality as a source of resilience. For instance, the Sahel RRA (World Bank 2020c) frames demographic pressure as a key driver of fragility and gender inequality in the region. Similarly, the Democratic Republic of Congo RRA (World Bank 2021b) highlights sexual and gender-based violence as eroding social cohesion. Likewise, the Solomon Islands RRA (World Bank 2017e) shows how the social and economic costs of gender inequalities exacerbate the country's fragility. In other examples, the Chad RRA (World Bank 2021d) discusses the steep increase in GBV by state and Boko Haram factions; the Democratic Republic of Congo RRA (World Bank 2016b) explores the relationship between GBV and violent masculinities in situations of conflict; and the Republic of Yemen RRA (World Bank 2022i) highlights the susceptibility of vulnerable groups, such as IDPs, to GBV. It is still too early to know if these RRAs will stimulate a greater focus within country strategies and operations on the most important gender inequalities—that is, if these RRAs will make strategies and projects more relevant.

SCDs increasingly recognize the interlinks between gender issues and fragility, but only in a few cases do their analyses relate to local FCV contexts. Five of the six SCDs examined for this evaluation discuss the interplay between GBV and FCV, and four of six analyze constraints to WGEE. By contrast, SCDs do not account for the local FCV context or enabling environment. The Democratic Republic of Congo SCD (World Bank 2018f) is an exception; it emphasizes the acute GBV challenges for vulnerable women, such as IDPs and women with disabilities, in the context of a country's patriarchal norms, laws, and policies. Nevertheless, SCD analyses tend to be more coherent, relevant, and context specific when informed by RRAs. This was the case for the Chad SCD (World Bank 2022a), which discusses the impacts of the country's legal framework on GBV.

The Bank Group's gender-focused engagement with development partners and other nonstate actors is also centered on projects. When asked about the Bank Group's role in coordinating and leading partnerships on gender, 79 percent of Bank Group staff and implementing partner informants cited only projects as examples of collaboration and partnerships. Several Bank Group interviewees stated that it was only within "the framework of a project" that they coordinated with relevant stakeholders. Specifically, Bank Group staff discussed collaborating with implementing partners, cofinancing donors, and other project stakeholders but rarely mentioned collaborating with partners on policy dialogues or the creation of synergies between different initiatives. One Bank Group staffer stated that, outside of the project, "there is a level of communication, not coordination." Another Bank Group staffer stated that "it is more of an exchange of information."

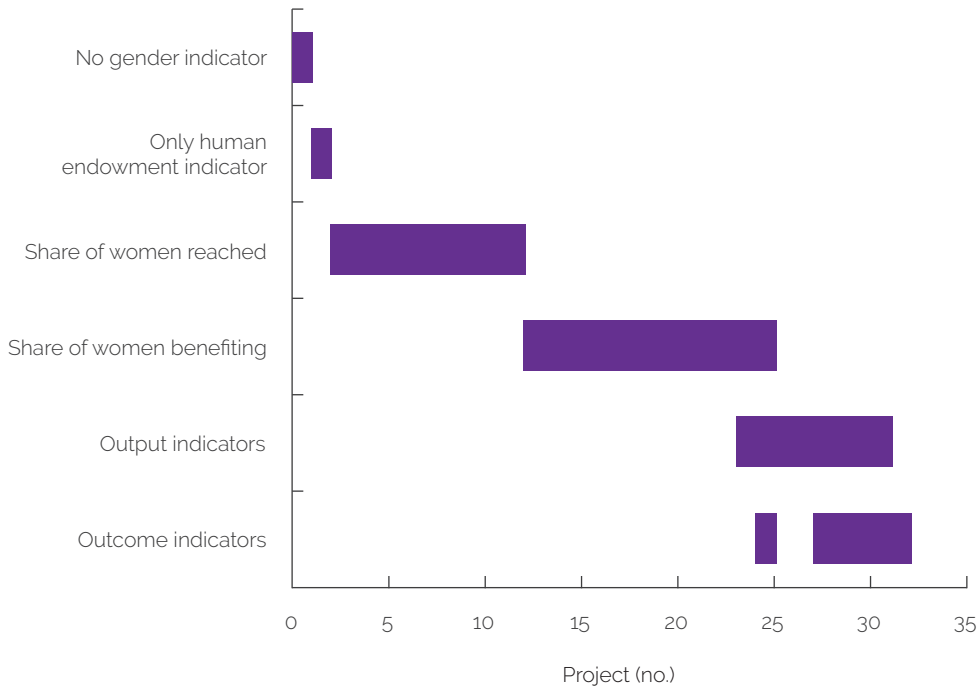
## Measuring Results

Monitoring and evaluation frameworks are also project-centric and have drawbacks that prevent them from measuring transformational change. There is not much evidence on the results of efforts to achieve transformational change. This is partly because many GBV and WGEE projects are new but also because monitoring systems of both new and older projects do not adequately capture results of transformational change elements in GBV and WGEE. Several key informants expressed the view that "quantitative data on women's participation in project activities" was key to the monitoring pro-

cess, and yet two-thirds of analyzed projects do not include indicators that measure outcomes related to GBV or WGEE. Of the 32 analyzed projects,<sup>8</sup> 30 have at least one gender-relevant indicator.<sup>9</sup> Of these, 10 projects measure only the share of women or girls whom the project reaches, and another 11 projects measure only the share of women or girls who benefit from an element of the project (figure 3.4). Projects with stronger monitoring and evaluation frameworks report sex-disaggregated outcome data—for example, the percentage of women employed after a job training program or the net enrollment rate of girls, instead of just the share of female beneficiaries in project activities.

Project monitoring and evaluation does not adequately measure progress in WGEE and in GBV prevention and response, despite improvements. The monitoring and evaluation framework of the SWEDD II, for example, is stronger than that of the SWEDD I because, as discussed above, it measures GBV case management and changes in the enabling environment.<sup>10</sup> However, even the stronger monitoring and evaluation frameworks have limitations. For example, an indicator measuring the number of legal frameworks that support girls' education and adolescents' sexual and reproductive health does not capture the actual goal, which is to improve those frameworks. Nor does an indicator measuring the number of GBV cases that are supported by a project capture improvements to the GBV referral system. In Chad, the ALBIA includes an intermediate indicator on women's economic empowerment—the percentage of women within the project reporting increased incomes from extension services; however, it does not measure the project's achievements relative to the target geographical area or the country's underserved population.

**Figure 3.4.** Prevalence of Indicators Related to WGEE and Gender-Based Violence in Analyzed Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: Only World Bank projects are included because the monitoring framework of International Finance Corporation projects is not fully comparable. WGEE - women's and girls' economic empowerment. The figure indicates how many projects have which type of indicators (also showing projects that have different types of indicators at the same time). For example, one project has share of women benefiting, output indicators, and outcome indicators; four projects have output indicators and outcome indicators.

Measuring the share of female beneficiaries does not indicate the results of the intervention. There are three reasons for this. First, counting beneficiaries is often misinterpreted; it measures outreach, not the positive impacts from the intervention. Second, setting target shares of female beneficiaries is typically based on what the project can provide, not based on the needs of women and girls. In addition, setting quotas relative to the project's capacity rather than to the country's needs may result in paradoxically setting minimum targets that are below the number of women whom the project will attract. This was what happened with Burkina Faso's Youth Employment and Skills Development Project, which attracted more women to its public works component than the original quota mandated (64 percent of women among the youth participating in public works compared with 30 percent of women



who were expected to participate). According to a qualitative evaluation (Grun et al. 2021) and key informant interviews, high female underemployment rates and the public works' low salaries made these jobs particularly appealing to young women but unappealing to young men. Third, in isolation, the share of female beneficiaries does not measure improvements in women's situations in either absolute or relative terms, even if it successfully measures the share of women who were economically empowered by the intervention.

Output and outcome indicators are, in most cases, weak measures of transformational change, even when they are related to WGEE or GBV. Six of the 32 analyzed projects have outcome indicators, and eight have output indicators that capture changes in WGEE and GBV (figure 3.4) or, in a few cases, measure improvements in service providers' capacity or other aspects of the enabling environment for WGEE and for GBV prevention and response. In most cases, these indicators do not measure elements of transformational change. Many project development objectives are output (not outcome) indicators that do not measure changes in WGEE or GBV. Moreover, indicators are frequently defined in relation to the project, not to the national, subnational, or local context. Projects usually measure results in relation to a zero baseline (that is, they measure their absolute contribution) rather than benchmarking the project's contribution against the needs of the communities or service gaps.

The paucity and inadequacy of indicators to measure processes and results partly reflect the lack of involvement of women and other relevant actors in monitoring and evaluation. The evaluation did not find examples of participatory monitoring—an activity that involves communities in choosing, collecting, and reporting meaningful indicators, which can be more easily identified by direct beneficiaries than nonlocal planners. For example, the experience of self-help groups in India, documented by the Social Observatory,<sup>11</sup> has shown that involving women in defining poverty indicators leads to more meaningful indicators that reflect what communities truly feel contributes to their well-being (Ananthpur, Malik, and Rao 2014).

Results frameworks in country strategies reflect the project-centric approach and do not measure transformational change in WGEE and GBV. The nine

reviewed country strategies that have a results framework include gender-related indicators—development outcomes and intermediate results—that are lifted from individual projects. These indicators most frequently measure project-level gender results—that is, they measure what the project did for the country (table 3.1, section a), not the country’s progress toward achieving gender equality, WGEE, or GBV prevention and response (table 3.1, section b). Moreover, eight of nine country strategies include the percentage or number of female beneficiaries as an indicator (table 3.1, section c), which is also a project-level indicator. Only the Solomon Islands Country Partnership Strategy (2013–17) had a country-level gender indicator (table 3.1, section b), and specifically a GBV indicator (World Bank 2013c). These country strategy results frameworks more commonly measured gender-related human capital indicators, such as female access to health and education (the “Other” columns in table 3.1), but less commonly measured WGEE and, especially, GBV, even at the project level.

Impact evaluations measured the impact of specific interventions but were normally disconnected from other types of evaluation that could have provided a deeper and broader perspective on results. Twelve relevant impact evaluations were produced for seven projects, almost all in Human Development in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>12</sup> These impact evaluations measured the impact of specific interventions within a project and have contributed to replicating successful interventions in other projects. For example, impact evaluations of activities of earlier projects informed new project designs, replicating a component that provides cash to women for improved nutrition and holistic support for GBV survivors in the Republic of Yemen or in the Start, Awareness, Support, and Action approach to prevent GBV in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The results of these impact evaluations have also facilitated the Bank Group’s government dialogues and helped motivate certain government interventions, such as the Social Safety Net Project in the Sahel. One weakness of impact evaluations is that they often focus on very specific or small components of much more complex interventions and have trouble measuring the combined impact from the various elements of the project’s theory of change. For this reason, impact evaluations are most useful when they evaluate the impact of multiple layered activities in the same locality or when they are complemented by other types of evaluations.

**Table 3.1.** Types of Gender-Relevant Indicators Used in Country Strategies

Country Strategy	Other Project-Level Indicators (a)			Country-Level Indicators (b)			Percentage of Female Beneficiaries (c)		
	GBV	WGEE	Other	GBV	WGEE	Other	GBV	WGEE	Other
Burkina Faso 2013	..	..	..	..	..	✓	..	..	..
Burkina Faso 2018	..	✓	..	..	..	..	..	..	✓
Chad 2016	..	..	✓	..	..	..	..	..	✓
Congo, Dem. Rep. 2014	..	..	✓	..	..	✓	..	✓	✓
Congo, Dem. Rep. 2022	..	✓	✓	..	..	✓	..	✓	✓
Lebanon 2011	..	✓	..	..	..	..	..	..	✓
Lebanon 2016	..	..	✓	..	..	..	..	..	✓
Solomon Islands 2013	..	✓	..	✓	..	..	..	✓	..
Solomon Islands 2018	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: Country Engagement Notes are not reflected in the table because they do not include a results framework. GBV = gender-based violence; WGEE = women's and girls' economic empowerment; ✓ = at least one indicator is present; .. = no indicator is present.

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<sup>1</sup> Start, Awareness, Support, and Action (SASA!; “now” in Kiswahili), developed by Raising Voices, is a theory-based approach for mobilizing communities to transform power imbalances between women and men through critical discussion and positive action, with the goal of preventing GBV. The Engaging Men through Accountable Practice approach, created by the International Rescue Committee, is an evidence-based, year-long program to engage men, in humanitarian settings, in individual behavior change to prevent GBV.

<sup>2</sup> Socio-economic and Gender Analysis is an approach to development based on the analysis of socioeconomic patterns and participatory identification of women’s and men’s priorities. It has been designed and implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and includes (i) the study of the environmental, economic, social, and institutional patterns and the links among them, which constitute the development context; (ii) the study of the different roles of women and men to understand what they do, what resources they have, and what their needs and priorities are; and (iii) a process of communication among local communities and development agents in which local communities take the lead in analyzing the current situation and planning, implementing, and evaluating development activities (FAO 2001).

<sup>3</sup> The activities planned at additional financing also consolidated and expanded the results achieved in the first phase by continuing to invest in women’s access to lowland, equipment, and the warrantage system.

<sup>4</sup> The weakness of the SWEDD regional legal platform is its limited inclusive ownership. Key informants of organizations that have historically been engaged in improving the legal framework to promote women’s and girls’ rights in Chad and Burkina Faso reported that they were not involved in this platform (source: interviews with key informants in Chad and Burkina Faso). By contrast, the Mashreq Gender Facility collaborated with other key actors (in particular, UN Women) and successfully supported a process that had been previously initiated by other donors and women’s rights organizations and that led to the adoption of a law on sexual harassment at work.

<sup>5</sup> One of the focus themes of the program is “Productive Inclusion and Women’s Empowerment.”

<sup>6</sup> The only exception is the Financial Inclusion Support Project in Burkina Faso, which used the evidence of an impact evaluation conducted in Togo on a very specific activity (personal life skills training for female entrepreneurs.)

<sup>7</sup> For example, the *Chad Poverty Assessment: Investing in Rural Income Growth, Human Capital, and Resilience to Support Sustainable Poverty Reduction* (World Bank 2021a) as well as *The*

*Solomon Islands Poverty Profile Based on the 2012/13 Household Income and Expenditure Survey* (World Bank Group 2015) and the *Yemen Poverty Notes* (World Bank 2017g).

<sup>8</sup> IFC projects were not included in this analysis because their monitoring and evaluation framework is not comparable with the monitoring and evaluation framework of World Bank projects; in particular, the criteria to set indicators differ significantly between the two institutions. Projects are not randomly selected, but as they are mostly gender relevant, these statistics are expected to be much worse for the broader project population.

<sup>9</sup> The other two projects (not included in these 30) consist of one without gender indicators and one with gender indicators related to access to services and not directly to GBV and WGEE.

<sup>10</sup> The indicators are the following: number of countries that have adopted budgeting practices that integrate the demographic dividend; number of national and regional legal frameworks that support enrolling and maintaining girls in school, adolescent reproductive health, and the elimination of GBV and harmful practices; and number of GBV and harmful practice cases reported in the project intervention areas that were referred for health, social, legal, and security support according to the referral process in place.

<sup>11</sup> The Social Observatory is an initiative of the World Bank that supports a \$2 billion portfolio for World Bank livelihood projects in India and fosters participatory tracking to empower communities to be equal stakeholders in projects.

<sup>12</sup> There are only two exceptions of IEs that were not carried out in Sub-Saharan Africa: one impact evaluation of Cash for Nutrition in the Republic of Yemen and one in the Solomon Islands. This latter study is marginally relevant because it does not concern GBV or WGEE, but women's participation and agency in community management committees of a Rural Development Program. Exceptions = not of Sub-Saharan Africa.

# 4 | Factors Enabling and Constraining Transformational Change

## Highlights


Addressing gender inequalities related to women's and girls' economic empowerment and gender-based violence is seldom a priority in projects or country strategies.

Key informants believe that the World Bank Group's support to a country's gender agenda would be more impactful if the institution used its multiple strengths for this purpose.


Financial resources can generate transformational change while insufficient budgets can jeopardize project efficacy. The evaluation noted several cases where the lack of financial resources left projects with unfulfilled supply or unmet demand for its services.

Adequate gender expertise at the country level can foster regular policy dialogues with the government on the gender agenda, local stakeholder collaboration, the regular presence of the Bank Group in national gender networks and platforms, and internal coordination among Global Practice teams.


The Bank Group's coordination and collaboration are strong with implementing partners on specific projects but weak with women's rights organizations, donors, and international nongovernmental organizations on the broader gender agenda. The Bank Group's engagement with opinion leaders and with men and boys is still limited but increasingly pursued.



Contextual factors can make it difficult for the Bank Group to achieve transformational change on gender-based violence and women's and girls' economic empowerment in countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence, but in many cases these factors can be anticipated and internalized in project designs.



The Bank Group has addressed gender norms through various strategies depending on the circumstance. These strategies include disguising sensitive interventions within standard ones, sensitizing communities to activities that challenge traditional gender norms, not openly challenging gender norms but working through them, and in a few cases, transforming gender norms directly.



The awareness and capacity of implementing partners to address gender inequalities vary across countries and projects but are generally low.

This chapter discusses the main factors that have constrained or enabled transformational change in supporting WGEE and addressing GBV in FCV countries. Transformational change is change that is relevant, inclusive, deep, sustainable, and scalable. The evaluation identifies four main groups of factors that impact, negatively or positively, individual projects and the World Bank Group’s approach as a whole: the prioritization of WGEE and GBV issues; the use of financial and human resources and capacities; the modalities of engagement, collaboration, and coordination with stakeholders; and the contextual factors in FCV countries.

## Prioritization of Women’s and Girls’ Economic Empowerment, Gender-Based Violence, and Gender Inequalities

Addressing gender inequalities related to WGEE and GBV is rarely a priority for the Bank Group when addressing poverty and fragility. Bank Group documents often warn against the negative impact that gender gaps have on growth, poverty, and fragility. However, interviews suggest that gender inequalities are often considered by Bank Group staff as just another priority that must compete with many others. This is also indicated by how frequently country strategies identify gender as a “cross-cutting issue” without specifying which particular gender issues or gaps pertain to the strategy’s priority areas. Among the 15 country strategies analyzed for the six country case studies, 10 strategies defined gender as a cross-cutting issue. This is not necessarily an incorrect approach: gender inequalities affect and are affected by all development issues and require coordinated cross-sectoral interventions. It is also commonly accepted: gender is integral to each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (UNDP and UN Women 2018; UN Women 2018b; UN Women, Women Count, and UN 2022), and cross-cutting approaches are used by other international financing institutions (World Bank 2015d). In the analyzed Bank Group country strategies, gender issues are not explicitly identified and prioritized but are instead sprinkled across pillars and the country portfolio, as also highlighted by the gender strategy Mid-Term Review (World Bank 2021f).<sup>1</sup> Strategy documents commonly advocate to “include” or “pay attention to” women and, less commonly, include gender elements in human capital,



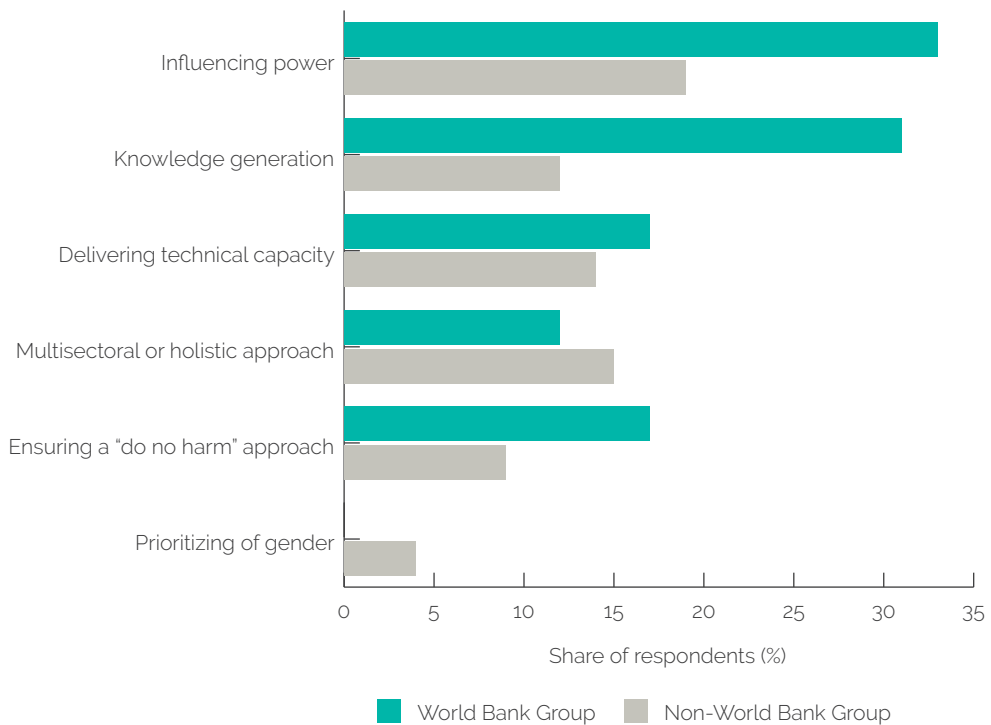
infrastructure, social protection, or health projects. What is missing in these strategies is an explicit prioritization to reduce gender inequalities and tackle related issues including WGEE and GBV, and defined, coordinated actions to address them.

Most key informants believe that the Bank Group could be more impactful in supporting a country gender agenda if it used its multiple strengths for this purpose. When asked to indicate the comparative advantage of the Bank Group in supporting WGEE and addressing GBV, almost none of the key informants outside the Bank Group stated that it prioritizes gender in the country engagement—and no Bank Group staff did (figure 4.1). At the same time, the majority of Bank Group key informants expressed the opinion that the Bank Group has a key role to play within countries in “moving the needle” on gender issues because it has strong influencing power and the financial capacity to go to scale. Moreover, many Bank Group staff indicated that the institution has the technical capacity to provide “development solutions,” produce high-quality analytical work, and identify lessons learned on gender from operational experiences in different countries. Similarly, external key informants referred to the potential but untapped Bank Group ability to use its financial influence and negotiate with governments to bring attention to gender issues; they consider that the Bank Group has the financial, technical, and reputational weight to support the gender agenda in the country, but it misses the opportunity to do it. In the words of a key informant in Burkina Faso: “Organizations like the World Bank can influence the government because they lend money to it. They can pressure it to apply laws and adopt gender budgeting.”<sup>2</sup>

Supporting WGEE and addressing GBV have not been Bank Group priorities in policy dialogues and advocacy, but recent development policy operations (DPOs) are paying more attention to WGEE. The Democratic Republic of Congo CPF (2022–26) recognizes that policy dialogue can persuade countries with fragile and conflict-affected situations to reduce gender inequalities (World Bank 2022d). Yet, there are very few concrete examples of policy dialogues pushing for WGEE or for GBV prevention and response; 94 percent of Bank Group key informants said that gender-related policy dialogue was either absent or narrowly focused on specific projects or activities. One example mentioned by the key informants was dialogues with the government

of Burkina Faso to institutionalize a mobile childcare approach—the focus was exclusively on a very specific activity (mobile childcare), not on broader themes, such as the unequal division of labor between men and women, among others. Nevertheless, a few recent DPOs include actions and indicators on WGEE. In the Solomon Islands, two recent DPOs (the First and the Second Solomon Islands Transition to Sustainable Growth DPOs) acknowledge that women-led firms are more exposed to and impacted by corruption than men-led firms, but neither DPO has any gender-specific intervention other than mandating that two of five positions on the Independent Commission Against Corruption be filled by women. In the two recent Burkina Faso DPOs, the Bank Group negotiated with the government to include indicators that measure the impacts of government reforms promoting the economic empowerment of vulnerable women.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 4.1.** Key Informants' Opinions on the World Bank Group's Potential Comparative Advantage



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: The number of World Bank Group staff is 42; the number of non-World Bank Group key informants is 95. The categories are not mutually exclusive.

Prioritizing WGEE and GBV in non-stand-alone projects can enable transformational change. The analysis of project-level enabling and constraining factors indicates that projects with greater transformational potential prioritized WGEE or GBV in designs (figure 4.2). This is also true of non-stand-alone projects—that is, those that were not designed to explicitly promote WGEE or address GBV but mobilize gender skills, financial resources, and analytical expertise to this end. Examples of non-stand-alone projects designed to enable transformational change are the ALBIA and the Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project.

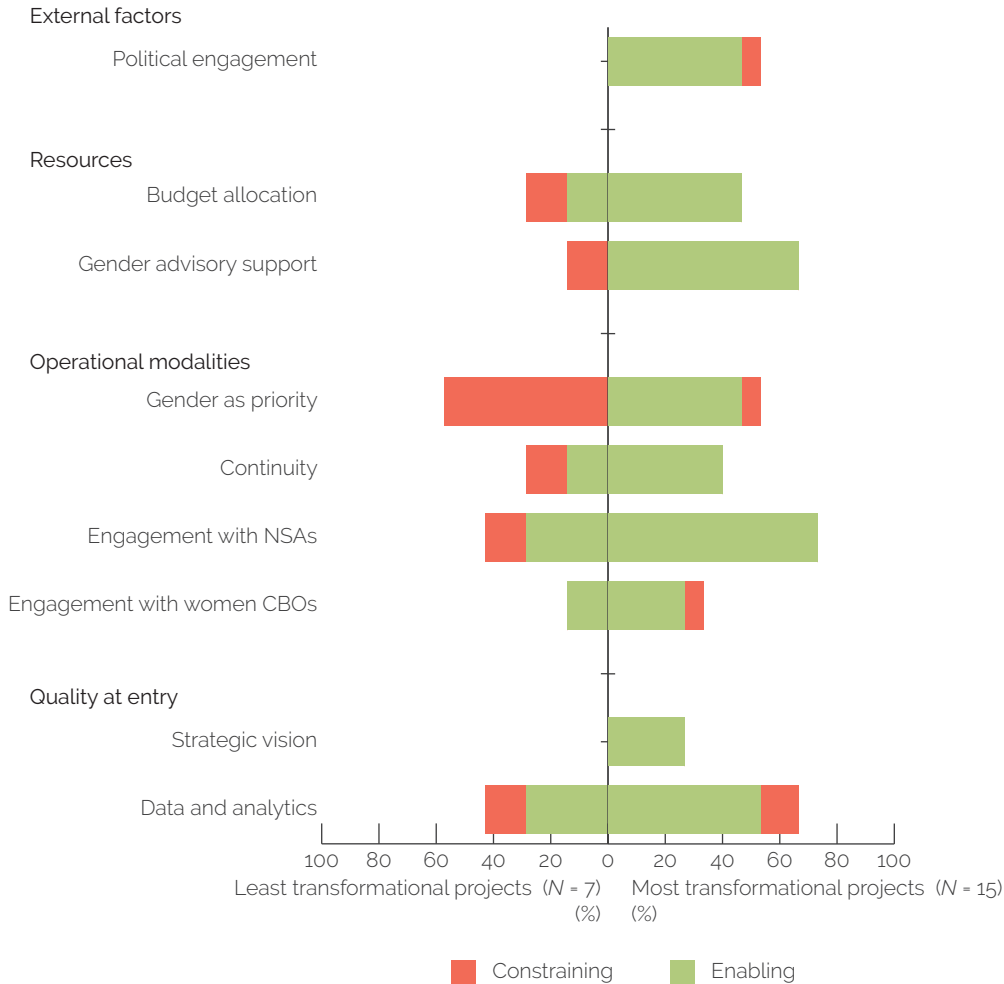
## Financial and Human Resources

Allocating adequate financial and human resources is necessary to promote transformational change in WGEE and GBV. Projects that recognized their potential to support WGEE and address GBV and allocated adequate resources to this end were more likely to achieve transformational change in WGEE and GBV. Figure 4.2 shows that the “best” projects were those more likely to secure budget and gender advisory resources. Figure 4.3 shows that sustaining resources and staff awareness during implementation is critical to transition from a design’s transformational potential to achieving transformational change. Some project designs promoted WGEE without dedicated budgets for addressing women’s needs, constraints, and expectations. As a result, these projects had trouble involving women and supporting their economic empowerment. A few of these projects learned from this mistake and allocated additional financial resources for WGEE activities in their second phase or additional financing phase. For example, the Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project in Chad did not produce strong results because there was no dedicated budget for WGEE. The second phase filled this gap and allocated resources to a specific component that economically empowered women and youth pastoralists.

In some cases, the increased demand that the project generated was too high for the project to satisfy. Several projects generated more demand from potential beneficiaries than their budget could satisfy. This made it impossible for the project to deliver services to all in-need persons and created frustration among many women and girls who were excluded. Some projects required a lottery to select who would receive the services, which ultimate-

ly excluded beneficiaries (this is what happened in the Burkina Faso Youth Employment and Skills Development Project’s labor-intensive public works component). The solution adopted by FIP (also in Burkina Faso) was to divide the budget among all subprojects proposed by women’s groups, but as a result, the budget was sometimes too thin for certain subprojects, such as those that supported income-generating activities, to operate effectively.

**Figure 4.2.** Factors Enabling and Constraining the Transformational Potential of Worst and Best Project Designs



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: "Least transformational" projects are defined as those with no transformational element reaching the score 3 (that is, the minimum threshold for the transformational element to be considered significantly present). "Most transformational" projects are defined as those with at least three transformational

elements reaching the score 3. Project rating criteria are described in detail in appendix A. CBO = community-based organization; NSA = nonstate actor.

**Figure 4.3.** Factors Enabling and Constraining the Achievement of Change for the Worst and Best Project Designs



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: "Least transformational" projects are defined as those with no transformational element reaching the score 3 (that is, the minimum threshold for the transformational element to be considered significantly present). "Most transformational" projects are defined as those with at least three transformational elements reaching the score 3. Project rating criteria are described in detail in appendix A. NSA = nonstate actor.

The World Bank and IFC’s gender skills and guidance were key factors for the projects that best promoted WGEE and addressed GBV in their designs. Figures 4.2 and 4.3 show that a project’s capacity to produce transformational

change in GBV and WGEE and the ability to tap into specialized gender advisory support and skills are highly associated. The IFC's MGF in the Middle East and North Africa, for example, strongly benefited from the provision of technical gender experts. This was also the case with the Republic of Yemen Emergency Electricity Access Project, whose project team included a gender adviser and a sectoral expert with gender expertise and ensured that gender issues were integrated into the project design. The World Bank's regional gender agenda in the Sahel (which included the SWEDD project) also invested significantly in technical expertise and analytical work on gender. The IEG's gender strategy Mid-Term Review (World Bank 2021f) confirms that gender expertise is essential for supporting task team leaders (TTLs), project leaders, investment officers, and practice managers. In particular, the Mid-Term Review noted the shortcomings from not having enough staff expertise on GBV and FCV, leading to designs that were not gender relevant.

The World Bank's gender experts rarely work in field offices, which limits field staff and partner access to regular, quality, and context-knowledgeable gender expertise. Moreover, key informants remarked that the World Bank Group seldom participates in national gender events or gender coordination groups because the Bank Group has no local gender focal point. By contrast, when the World Bank Group's gender expertise in FCV countries has been ample and continuous, it improved the quality and coordination of gender work. For example, interviews indicate that the presence of a gender focal point in the Bank Group's Solomon Islands country office until 2014 facilitated consultations with civil society and policy dialogues with the government on gender issues.

Knowledge of gender issues among World Bank technical experts in Global Practices is uneven and generally weak. In interviews, some Global Practice staff showed a high level of knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity on gender issues. However, many FCV and sectoral experts demonstrated an insufficient knowledge of analytical frameworks and operational approaches to gender equality, WGEE, and GBV. For example, several TTLs misunderstood what "doing gender" (as they called it) means. Many TTLs believed that tracking and reporting the percentage of women beneficiaries was sufficiently addressing gender inequalities. Similarly, TTLs and some Country Management Unit staff did not understand why FCV countries required a

tailored gender approach despite abundant evidence showing the need for this. As shown in figure 4.3, staff skills and awareness were highly associated with the projects remaining transformational during implementation. Many external informants confirmed the perception that the Bank Group lacked strong gender knowledge, saying that the Bank Group had “high technical capacity to provide development solutions,” but only one external informant said that the Bank Group had good “gender expertise.”

Bank Group staff also demonstrated a limited understanding of gender-FCV dynamics. Most staff interviewed for this evaluation described FCV as “conflict,” but failed to conceptualize the “fragility” and “violence” aspects and their interplay with gender inequalities. Two interviewees gave the examples of providing cashless transfers to avoid violence against women and including female IDPs as beneficiaries, whereas others stated that their projects were not in areas with active conflict—hence, the issue was nonexistent. The staff’s limited knowledge of these dynamics helps explain the limited combined gender-FCV relevance in projects and strategies.

It was common for TTLs to not understand the difference between providing GBV safeguards in projects and addressing GBV as a countrywide problem. The World Bank introduced the GBV—sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment action plan (World Bank 2017c) in 2018 to safeguard against World Bank projects unintentionally contributing to GBV. The confusion between the safeguard approach and the countrywide approach was evident in interviews. Many Bank Group staff and implementing partners said that the GBV—sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment action plan was addressing GBV, without realizing the different goals of a “do no harm,” safeguard approach and an integrated, countrywide approach to prevent and respond to GBV as a systemic issue.

## Modalities of Engagement, Collaboration, and Coordination

Internal coordination across project teams is weak and is hindered by weak accountability mechanisms and project delivery incentives. The Bank Group’s incentive structure does not foster, and often hinders, collaboration across project teams, according to interviews. Bank Group staff said they

were aware of the need to collaborate across sectors over a long-time horizon to address gender inequalities; however, staff still tended to “work in silos.” A TTL described the challenge: “Addressing gender issues cannot be done at the sectoral level. . . . It needs to be a coordinated approach. We need to work on several issues together—entrepreneurship, legal frameworks, childcare, demographics, health. . . . We try to work with others, but at the end of the day, we have to deliver our project.” Another TTL said: “Cross-sector collaboration is very important. GBV issues cannot be approached from only the health sector if we want to provide holistic support. We have so many entry points on gender, but we do not coordinate on all of them. It’s a pity! . . . It also has to do with staff’s bandwidth. Staff are overburdened and can often only do the bare minimum; so, finding project synergies is always last on the list.” It is also clear, as the gender strategy Mid-Term Review notes, that the main World Bank mechanism to monitor the gender strategy’s implementation—the gender tag—is a project-level tool and “creates incentives to focus on individual projects, rather than promoting a country-driven approach” (World Bank 2021f, 26).

Silos can be broken, although this is mostly left to an individual’s initiative. There are some good examples of internal coordination to address gender inequalities, but they strongly rely on the personal initiative of the TTLs. For example, during the preparation phase of one project, one of the TTLs proactively mapped the other Human Development projects that the World Bank was implementing in the same geographic areas, and which projects the TTL could collaborate with to build synergies to address GBV.

Coordination and collaboration among the Bank Group and external stakeholders on WGEE and GBV increase the likelihood of transformational change. Such collaboration allows an integrated approach to supporting WGEE and addressing GBV, whereby each stakeholder contributes to specific issues, covers different geographical areas, and targets different beneficiary groups. The involvement of multiple local stakeholders also ensures broad and effective ownership over interventions (World Bank Group 2020). The Bank Group has long recognized the benefits of establishing strong synergies and joint mechanisms among various interventions to assist vulnerable groups and close gender gaps (World Bank Group 2020). Figures 4.2 and 4.3



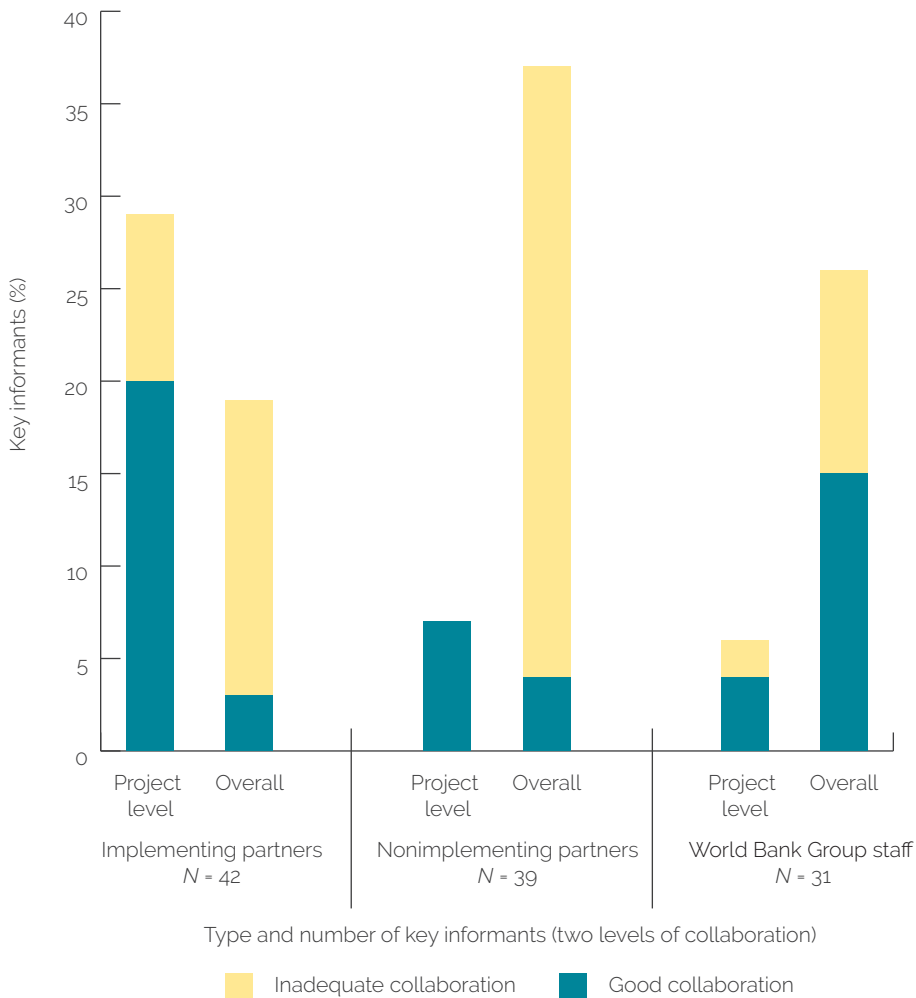
show that a good engagement with nonstate actors and women’s grassroots organizations is indeed important for transformational change.

The Bank Group’s coordination and collaboration are strong with implementing partners on specific projects but are weak with nonimplementing partners. These nonimplementing partners include donors, women’s rights organizations, NGOs, and INGOs. Figure 4.4 shows that 20 of 29 implementing partners (mostly government counterparts) expressed a positive opinion of the quality of the Bank Group’s collaboration at the project level. However, only 3 of 19 implementing partners expressed a positive opinion of the Bank Group’s collaboration on the broader gender agenda. By contrast, the majority (33 of 39 or 85 percent) of nonimplementing partners said they did not collaborate at all with the Bank Group on the country’s gender agenda or were dissatisfied with the quality of that collaboration. This group included stakeholders from women’s rights organizations who are leaders in WGEE and GBV but reported they were not even involved in consultations with the Bank Group on its activities. Respondents from INGOs (80 percent) and donors (80 percent)—not shown in the figure—also expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the Bank Group’s gender coordination in their countries. They said that the World Bank often leads coordination among donors and other stakeholders on other sectoral issues, but not on gender issues; nor does the Bank Group raise gender issues in these other sectoral coordination groups. In interviews, key informants stated that this collaboration was hindered by the lack of formal, institutionalized mechanisms and the different mandates and operational modalities of the Bank Group and its partners.

The World Bank Group’s collaboration with the ministries and other government institutions in charge of gender issues has also been weak. Four of nine government officials (44 percent) who were nonimplementers, including the ministry and other government institutions in charge of gender issues, reported having little or no collaboration with the Bank Group. Interviews also suggest that the ministry in charge of women and gender equality issues was not regularly involved. However, the Bank Group occasionally advocated for stronger collaboration with the ministry in charge of women and gender equality, although this was not common. For example, in Burkina Faso, the Ministry of Women and Gender is the implementing partner in the Financial Inclusion Support Project. A Bank Group key

informant involved in the project explained that this involvement was a result of policy dialogues: “In the discussions, it was clear that there cannot be a financial inclusion project without addressing women’s inclusion. On the World Bank side, in terms of advocacy, we had analytical work to highlight gender gaps. In our advocacy process, we convinced the Ministry of Finance that we will not reach this objective if we do not bring in the Ministry of Women and Gender.”

**Figure 4.4.** Opinions of Key Informants on the World Bank Group's Performance in Coordinating, Establishing, and Leading Partnerships to Address Gender Inequalities



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: The categories are not mutually exclusive.

A substantial share of World Bank Group staff (two-fifths) described their collaboration with stakeholders on gender as insufficient. Figure 4.4 shows that over half (58 percent) of the Bank Group staff who expressed an opinion in interviews said that the Bank Group collaborated well with external stakeholders on the gender agenda. However, a sizable share (42 percent) recognized that the Bank Group is not doing enough to collaborate. As one Bank Group key informant stated: “On many levels, collaboration is project by project. There is weak coordination. We could have done more and better.”

The World Bank rarely participates in donor coordination groups on gender and GBV subclusters. The World Bank often leads the coordination among donors and other stakeholders on many issues, but not on gender, and it tends to not raise gender issues in these other coordination groups. Key country-level informants from gender coordination groups and GBV subclusters reported that the World Bank is not a member.<sup>4</sup> Many of them wished that the Bank Group participated because of the key role it can play in sharing information, lessons learned, and expertise; coordinating interventions; and participating in policy dialogues. A member of a development partner’s gender group said: “The [World] Bank should work with the other partners. Nobody knows what the [World] Bank is doing. They should not remain isolated. The [World] Bank is a multilateral partner, and it has expertise on economic issues. It could guide other partners, for example, on effective support for the economic empowerment of women.”<sup>5</sup>

The Bank Group rarely collaborates with donors on improving the enabling environment for gender equality, although there are some successful examples. In Lebanon, the MGF provided technical assistance to partners advocating for a law, which eventually passed, on workplace sexual harassment. However, in many other cases, the Bank Group missed opportunities to support gender equality through existing platforms, processes, and key actors and instead created parallel initiatives with similar goals. For example, the SWEDD established a regional legal platform, with a local branch in each target country, to analyze and propose improvements to each country’s legal system with respect to sexual and reproductive health, girls’ education, and GBV. This platform did not involve some key women’s rights organizations, INGOs, and donors already working toward improving the country’s legal framework and did not coordinate with other existing platforms, such as the road map to end

child marriage in Chad and the action plan to end child marriage in Burkina Faso. Similarly, in Burkina Faso, the SWEDD did not coordinate with the government's existing gender budgeting initiative when supporting the integration of the demographic dividend in public budget allocations.

The Bank Group's consultations with CSOs, including women's rights organizations, are not systematic and do not typically inform project designs. Consultation with civil society is one of the main channels for the Bank Group to engage citizens and build inclusive ownership over projects. However, the evaluation found that the Bank Group's consultations with these actors are not consistent and are particularly weak with women's rights organizations.<sup>6</sup> The Bank Group regularly consults civil society when developing projects, country strategies, and knowledge products, but it does not systematically document the outcomes from these consultations—confirming a finding from IEG's *Engaging Citizens for Better Development Results* evaluation (World Bank 2018g). The desk review, for example, indicates that two of nine RRAs, three of six SCDs, and only the Republic of Yemen Country Engagement Note out of 15 country strategies specifically mention consultations with women or women's organizations. Sometimes Bank Group consultations occur but fail to inform project designs. A TTL explained: "One element is the project preparation process that informs the project ideas, and then we have the World Bank process where we have to simplify, simplify, simplify. We end up doing business as usual."

Top-down planning without meaningful consultations with key stakeholders, including women and girls, can undermine projects that promote WGEE or address GBV. For example, in the first phase of Burkina Faso's Agricultural Productivity and Food Security Project, the project team did not consult potential female beneficiaries on the type of equipment needed for processing food. As a result, the equipment did not correspond to the needs and operating capacities of the beneficiaries. This mistake was rectified in the second phase of the project, which involved women in choosing the equipment. In Burkina Faso, the SWEDD trained young women and adolescent girls to produce liquid soap as an income-generating activity. However, the implementing partner chose liquid soap without consulting beneficiaries, who felt that there was no market for it in their community because people preferred solid soap. Moreover, the ingredients were hard to source locally and expen-

sive to deliver to the community. As a result, the liquid soap activity was not profitable and had to be discontinued. In another locality, the safe spaces to develop skills for out-of-school adolescent girls and young women struggled to involve adolescent girls because they were working in the city as domestic workers. These adolescent domestic workers are among the most vulnerable girls in Burkina Faso and are at high risk of unwanted early pregnancies, sexual violence, and child marriage. The SWEDD would need to be flexible to identify other ways to reach this target group (for example, through conditional cash transfers combined with skill development). Identifying activities with local communities, women, and girls, rather than with central government authorities, would mitigate many of these targeting challenges (box 4.1).

Engaging with opinion leaders is necessary for advancing WGEE and preventing GBV. WGEE and GBV initiatives are sensitive endeavors, and the role of opinion leaders as allies on this agenda is critical. According to Le Roux and Palm (2021), religious and traditional leaders can influence social norms that either enable or hinder progress in addressing GBV. Opinion leaders have the influence to either affirm or resist positive gender norms at the community level (Cislighi 2019; ODI 2015; Rowley and Diop 2020). The SWEDD team recognized this and made engagement with religious and traditional leaders a project pillar at the regional, national, local, and community levels. A key informant in Chad stated: “Advocacy toward religious leaders is not enough; we must support religious leaders. We have developed a document based on the texts of African religion and tradition, we have trainers who build the capacity of leaders to show that religious precepts are not against family planning and are against [GBV]. From that moment, leaders got involved and delivered this message in mosques, churches, and royal courts.”<sup>7</sup> Engagement with religious leaders also supported peer learning across countries: “The discussions with religious leaders in Morocco have allowed religious leaders in Chad to understand that interpretations of Islam can be flexible.”<sup>8</sup>

### Box 4.1. Burkina Faso: The Effectiveness of Bottom-Up Approaches in Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment and Enhancing Women's Voice and Agency

In the Burkina Faso Forest Investment Program—Decentralized Forest and Woodland Management Project, the bottom-up approach was effective in supporting women's economic empowerment and enhancing women's voice and agency in local management of natural resources. The project organized participatory need assessments at the community level to define priorities and activities to support and significantly involve women in this process. The municipalities financed those activities, including those proposed by women. The projects also funded microprojects proposed by grassroots organizations, including women's groups; 48 percent of the grants went to women to support their economic activities. Involving women in consultations, training, and discussions about land rights and securitization and providing financial and technical support to women's groups increased both women's economic empowerment and their voice and collective agency. Women became increasingly vocal in community meetings, women's cooperatives became stronger, and women producing shea butter successfully advocated for securing land for shea nut collection.

This bottom-up approach was combined with a top-down mandatory quota of women in local governance committees (such as the forest management committees and the grievance management committees), which were also supported by the project. However, the women's presence in the local committees was not monitored, and it consisted only of "at least" one female leader. One woman in a committee of 7–12 men was not enough for women to influence decisions and keep the other women informed. Moreover, without a strategy to increase the awareness and capacity of institutional actors to promote women's participation and gender equality, this institutional mandate could not make the local institutions more sensitive to women's needs and gender equality. As a key informant highlighted: "What has been missed is the institutional change. The project did not have an overall strategy to change institutional actors. There could have been advocacy at the institutional level with the ministry and local authorities to make actors more aware of gender issues and how to address them."

*Source:* Independent Evaluation Group.

The World Bank has increasingly involved men and boys as change agents to transform gender norms, but this involvement is still limited. Projects that engage men, boys, and male opinion leaders to adhere to positive ideals of masculinity are more likely to enhance male acceptance of WGEE and rejection of GBV and promote more equitable gender roles and relations (Désilets et al. 2019; Doyle and Kato-Wallace 2021; IRC 2019; Promundo 2012; Promundo and UN Women 2017; Ruane-McAteer et al. 2020; Slegh et al. 2013; Van Eerdewijk et al. 2017; World Bank 2015d). The Bank Group’s gender strategy (World Bank 2015d) recognizes that engaging men and boys is a priority in FCV-affected countries. Many key informants highlighted that men and boys are key agents for transforming gender relations. For example, a female leader involved in the SWEDD in Burkina Faso stated that “working with men is necessary to change their mentalities, so that they support women, and they do not shun their responsibilities.”<sup>9</sup> Men are also the best role models for other men, as a religious leader in Burkina Faso explained: “It is easier for men to convince other men to allow women to do things.”<sup>10</sup>

Several projects engaged men and boys to lessen their resistance to change, but details on these initiatives are sparse. Few projects had structured and deep approaches for engaging men and boys. The SWEDD, for instance, supports the creation of men’s and boys’ clubs (also called “husbands’ and future husbands’ schools”) to promote positive masculinity in the target communities. Likewise, the GBV Prevention and Response Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo relies on two approaches (Start, Awareness, Support, and Action and Engaging Men through Accountable Practice), depending on the community, to engage men and boys. According to the Project Appraisal Document (World Bank 2018e), this project also supports male survivors of GBV and discrimination, but the Project Appraisal Document does not provide details on how it intends to do this.<sup>11</sup> This example aside, no other analyzed project explicitly targeted men and boys as survivors of gender-based discriminations and violence. In addition, the evaluation did not find any project or piece of analytical work that addressed GBV and discrimination against people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, and queer (and all other gender and sexual orientations) in these countries.

IFC’s engagement with the private sector to promote safe and gender-equal workplaces has shown promising results but did not involve governmental

institutions or women's organizations in designing these measures beyond initial consultations. In the Solomon Islands, IFC's Waka Mere initiative (part of the IFC Pacific WINvest advisory services project) supported 15 large firms in advancing gender equality at the workplace by adopting policies and practices to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and other forms of GBV and promote women's leadership and access to traditionally male jobs. Waka Mere increased the employees' and employers' perception of safety and comfort at the workplace and the proportion of women in positions of leadership and traditionally male jobs (for example, drivers; IFC 2019b). Two weaknesses that were highlighted by key informants were the project's unduly short duration (two years) and the lack of involvement of the Ministry of Women and local women's organizations in the project's planning. That said, a positive development was the interest expressed by the government of the Solomon Islands to adopt the lessons from Waka Mere for the public sector.

## Contextual Factors

Contextual factors make it difficult for the Bank Group to achieve transformational change in GBV and WGEE in FCV countries. FCV situations are, by definition, extremely risky environments. Fragility factors can hinder project implementation and dampen results. These factors also affect the size and accessibility of the private sector. The evaluation found four main factors that constrained the implementation of analyzed projects in FCV countries: (i) conflict dynamics and their consequences, such as insecurity and forced displacement; (ii) prevalent, unequal gender norms; (iii) the COVID-19 pandemic; and (iv) the weak capacity of implementing partners on GBV and WGEE issues.<sup>12</sup> Figure 4.3 shows that most projects that produced significant levels of transformational changes were able to mitigate the negative impacts of FCV's contextual factors.

## Conflict Dynamics

Conflict dynamics undermined WGEE and GBV outcomes in the case study countries. In the past 10 years, the case study countries were affected by different conflict dynamics, which required different types of responses. For example, addressing the challenges from the Republic of Yemen's



long-lasting civil war required a different response than what was needed to respond to the breakout of conflict in Burkina Faso. In the Republic of Yemen, the open and protracted armed conflict imposed hard constraints on the overall effectiveness and sustainability of activities.

The World Bank Group managed situations of long-lasting conflict, such as in the Republic of Yemen, by combining several strategies. The Bank Group's political neutrality has been a necessary condition for its operations in the Republic of Yemen. Moreover, the Bank Group made UN agencies its de facto client in lieu of a functioning government counterpart. The UN's perceived political neutrality ensured that they could have access to areas controlled by various warring factions. The UN also had an established network of local partners—CSOs, community-based organizations, and INGOs—that were able to reach even more remote areas. The World Bank maintained this neutral posture even before the conflict broke out by working with two key local implementing partners—the Social Fund for Development and the Public Works Project—with impeccable records of political neutrality and a history of implementing successful social protection projects. Bank Group projects relied on community-driven approaches to plan and implement activities after highly inclusive and consultative processes tailored to the self-identified needs of these communities. Wherever possible, local and regional administrations were included in the process as well. With the largest projects, such as the Emergency Crisis Response Project and the Emergency Health and Nutrition Project, target communities were selected using methodologies that ensured project neutrality and inclusiveness. In dealing with gender issues, specifically GBV, the projects followed the approach already used by the UN and INGOs, which “hid” GBV activities within social protection and health interventions.

In Burkina Faso, the World Bank used innovative approaches to adapt to conflict dynamics, which allowed it to maintain support for WGEE and for GBV prevention and response. Armed violence erupted in northern Burkina Faso in 2015 and rapidly expanded to other regions of the country, negatively impacting several World Bank interventions. The conflict prevented local project staff and implementing partners from reaching target communities. It also disrupted basic services, displaced beneficiaries and local stakeholders, diverted public resources away from development,

and increased the risk of armed groups gaining control over areas with activities focused on GBV, girls' schooling, and sexual and reproductive health. The conflict also had differential impacts on women and girls, affecting their freedom of movement and access to health and education services. In response to the crisis, the World Bank adjusted its projects' target localities to avoid conflict-affected areas, while maintaining support to conflict-affected populations. For example, the SWEDD's implementing partners tracked forcibly displaced girls and continued to support their schooling and skills development in their new communities. The SWEDD also empowered local and community-based actors to assume more direct responsibilities in coordinating project activities and led project trainings and monitoring efforts remotely.

The Bank Group and its implementing partners responded with prudence, discretion, and flexibility to the attitudes of Islamic armed groups toward gender initiatives. In the areas of Burkina Faso affected by attacks from the Islamic armed groups, World Bank projects faced a new challenge: the extremists threatened people who proposed any gender discourse or initiative that was not aligned with their radicalized gender norms. An implementing partner described the threats received by fieldworkers who discussed sensitive gender topics in community meetings: "Insecurity limits expression and assemblies to convey messages. Certain topics expose fieldworkers to the risk of reprisals from armed groups. To mitigate the exposure of agents and communities to these groups, the messages are toned down."<sup>13</sup> Another implementing partner described the approach: "There were also villages where terrorists were a threat. They say that what we do in the safe spaces is contrary to their preaching, so we have to adapt the strategies. It is important not to make a lot of noise about the intervention. We asked the mentors in the villages to assess the threat. If a threat is identified, mentors must suspend the activities to not put the girls at risk. There are also some mentors who no longer facilitate the sessions in fixed spaces; they do them in the courtyard of the families in order not to draw attention."<sup>14</sup>

## Gender Norms

Gender norms constrained WGEE progress and GBV prevention and response in context-specific ways. Several key informants said that adverse gender

norms constrained women’s access to services and participation in project activities.<sup>15</sup> As a local INGO staff member in Chad explained: “Social norms are at the origin of everything. For example, it is not easy for GBV survivors to report cases of GBV, and even when it comes to the empowerment of women or women’s access to resources and decision-making power, efforts are stymied because of social norms. In some areas, social norms prevent women from expressing themselves.”<sup>16</sup> In Chad, the Emergency Food and Livestock Crisis Response Project found it challenging to get young women to participate in trainings because many of these women are not permitted to travel alone, spend the night away from home, or be part of mixed-sex groups. In the Democratic Republic of Congo Great Lakes Project, the number of GBV survivors who received medical care was lower than expected, one reason being gender norms that discourage reporting and stigmatize GBV survivors.<sup>17</sup> In the Republic of Yemen, the additional financing for the Emergency Electricity Access Project had to decrease the number of female borrowers for home solar systems because of gender norms restricting women from making financial decisions. As a result, only 15 percent of targeted women were able to purchase solar power. In the Solomon Islands, the Community Governance and Grievance Management Project aimed to improve women’s access to justice, including for GBV cases, by including female community officers in the community grievance mechanisms that mediated between local leaders, such as chiefs and elders, and the provincial and central government. However, only 2 of the 49 recruited community officers were women, with one resigning after getting married. The Implementation Completion and Results Report commented that this was the result of “perceived gender roles and expectations entrenched in communities. . . . [F]eedback from communities suggested several obstacles to hiring more women [community officers] and contributing to the imbalance. These relate to perceived gender roles in functions of communal authority, security risks women faced by having to deal with grievances relating to violence, and having to travel large distances throughout the day” (World Bank 2022f, 19).

The Bank Group and implementing partners used three main approaches to address gender norms—bypassing, sensitizing, and seconding. In interviews, Bank Group staff emphasized the importance of “understanding the context” to address gender norms. The first approach, bypassing, consisted of disguis-

ing or attenuating sensitive topics or activities. For example, in the Republic of Yemen, support to GBV survivors was not explicitly included in any project and was “hidden” within health interventions. In some contexts, SWEDD fieldworkers introduced sensitive topics prudently and indirectly. As the representative of an NGO said: “There is also the sensitivity of topics such as girls’ marriage. In some contexts, such as the Sahel, we cannot treat the topic directly.”<sup>18</sup> The second approach was sensitizing the target populations, especially men and opinion leaders, to gender-related topics and activities, such as girls’ schooling, women’s skill development, and women’s economic empowerment. For example, before opening the safe spaces for adolescent girls’ and young women’s skill development, the SWEDD organized community meetings and, with the help of community leaders, asked fathers and husbands for their permission to invite female relatives to the safe spaces. The third approach, seconding, was to make GBV and WGEE activities consistent with traditional gender roles and support preexisting community women’s groups. For example, in Chad and Burkina Faso, projects supported agriculture value chains that were already dominated by women, such as milk, cassava, or shea butter value chains. This approach succeeded in increasing women’s incomes and fostering women’s participation without challenging traditional gender roles. Other projects have “seconded” gender norms that prevent women from working with or associating with men. For example, the Agricultural Productivity and Food Security Project and the ALBIA recruited female agriculture extension workers to work directly with female beneficiaries and organized consultations into separate gender groups when necessary. Similarly, in the Republic of Yemen, the Emergency Crisis Response Project recruited women officers and engineers to help reach out to women for consultations.

The World Bank also used deeper and longer-term engagements with local communities and key change agents to address harmful gender norms. This approach used various activities that targeted different groups. For example, the GBV Prevention and Response Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the SWEDD in the Sahel combined media campaigns with community-based initiatives to create discussion spaces to foster community dialogue, empower women and girls, and engage with men, boys, and opinion

leaders on positive masculinity. This approach has been used by NGOs such as Tostan, with very positive results (box 4.2).

#### **Box 4.2. Nonjudgmental, Community-Led, Empowering Approaches That Yield Major Change in Adverse Gender Norms: Lessons from Tostan and the SWEDD Project**

Tostan is a nongovernmental organization operating in West Africa. Its approach, centered on community well-being, has consistently led to transformation of adverse gender norms and has proven very effective in preventing gender-based violence.<sup>a</sup> Tostan's approach is nonjudgmental, inclusive, human rights based, and community led. The goal is to empower community members by providing communities with the instruments to discuss their own reality, identify their strengths and problems, and find ways to address them. It refrains from "attacking" their values and judging what is wrong and what is right. Rather, it provides the opportunity for communities to discuss a common vision of well-being and how this relates to human rights principles and deeply held values that include solidarity, peace, and nonviolence. This enables reframing of existing roles and behaviors, especially gender roles, from within. The approach has three main pillars: community classes, establishment and support of community management committees, and an organized diffusion process and training of decentralized government officials to cover entire districts. Community classes are led by a facilitator who encourages women's participation and leadership, helps participants to define their shared values and identify their challenges, and equips them with knowledge and problem-solving skills to find solutions. The community management committees are tasked with putting into practice what was learned in the community classes. The organized diffusion process, led by class participants and community management committees to share their new knowledge and understanding within the community and in other communities in their social networks, amplifies the movement of social change.

Gender equality practitioners increasingly recognize that trying to change behaviors by transmitting top-down messages on "wrong practices" does not work; rather, adopting culturally sensitive and nonjudgmental approaches that enhance existing cultural values and empower communities to pursue their goals is the way to go. One  
*(continued)*

## Box 4.2. Nonjudgmental, Community-Led, Empowering Approaches That Yield Major Change in Adverse Gender Norms: Lessons from Tostan and the SWEDD Project (cont.)

member of a nongovernmental organization partner of the SWEDD reflected on this increased awareness: "Not everything should be given up in our culture. Good cultural practices have not been enhanced. . . . For example, stopping female genital mutilations is good, and we all welcome it; however, this practice also played a part in the initiation of young girls. Although fighting the harmful part, which is the mutilation, what shall be done to replace the initiation part where young girls receive information on sexuality and are prepared for having a family?"<sup>b</sup> Another interviewee highlighted that approaches to family planning need to be culturally sensitive and that change cannot be imposed: "During the training, leaders denounced a project that did family planning for 12-year-old girls, and they said that nobody wants a wandering woman; the leaders were on edge, and they had to be listened to because the change imposed is not change. . . . These kinds of discussions help to redirect the messages."<sup>c</sup> Another key informant explained that a culturally sensitive and empowering approach means, in concrete terms, not imposing ready-made solutions but supporting the community to find its own way: "We have to work together, we have to think together, [and] we have to discuss the problem together; we do not have the solution—it is with them [the community] that we build the dynamics that must drive this transformation. . . . Gender is temporal, spatial, so it is with them that we are building together the possible solution for the fight against [gender-based violence]."<sup>d</sup> Dignity is at the core of culturally sensitive approaches to transform gender norms, as another key informant explained: "It is about stimulating an endogenous process in which men do not lose their dignity, thanks to the fact that the change is accepted by the community. . . . [The process needs] to maintain the dignity of the change agents. There are tasks that men 'should not' do; however, with the work we have done, [the man] will not feel embarrassed [and] will not be ashamed, and he maintains his dignity while doing this [traditionally 'female'] task."<sup>e</sup>

Community-led approaches are more effective in changing gender norms (Cislaghi 2019), but upgrading from a simple community-based approach to a community-led approach, in which the change is driven by the communities and the direction of

*(continued)*

## Box 4.2. Nonjudgmental, Community-Led, Empowering Approaches That Yield Major Change in Adverse Gender Norms: Lessons from Tostan and the SWEDD Project (cont.)

change is decided by them,<sup>f</sup> is not easy because it takes time and requires skilled and embedded facilitators in the communities to support the process.

*Source:* Independent Evaluation Group, from key informant interviews in Burkina Faso and Chad.

*Note:* SWEDD = Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend.

a. An evaluation conducted in 2008 found that gender-based violence prevalence had dramatically decreased in participant communities (from 86 percent to 27 percent), and attitudes toward girls' education, sex discrimination, intimate partner violence, and female genital mutilation had also remarkably improved. Participants also reported that gender relations improved, and gender norms had shifted (Diop, Moreau, and Benga 2008). More recent evaluations of the Tostan approach can be found at <https://tostan.org/resources/evaluations-research>.

b. In French: « Ce n'est pas tout à abandonner dans notre culture. On n'a pas valorisé les bonnes pratiques culturelles. . . . Par exemple, l'abandon de la pratique de l'excision est bien et le souhaiteraient tous, cependant, dans cette pratique, il y'avait la partie relative à l'initiation des jeunes ; tout en combattant la partie néfaste qui est la mutilation, quoi faire pour remplacer la partie initiation où les jeunes filles recevaient les informations sur la sexualité et les préparent au futur ménage? »

c. In French: « Dans la formation, les leaders ont dénoncé un projet qui a fait la planification familiale pour les filles de CM2 et ils ont dit que personne ne veut une femme vagabonde ; les leaders étaient sur les nerfs et il fallait les écouter car le changement imposé n'est pas du changement. . . . Ces genres de discussion permet de réorienter les messages. »

d. In French: « Il faut se concerter, il faut réfléchir ensemble, il faut poser le problème ensemble, nous n'avons pas la solution, c'est avec eux que nous construisons la dynamique qui doit impulser cette transformation. . . . Le genre est temporel, spatial, donc c'est avec eux que nous construisons ensemble la solution possible pour la lutte contre les VBG. »

e. In French: « C'est le fait de stimuler un processus endogène dans lequel les hommes ne perdent pas leur dignité, car le changement est accepté par la communauté. . . . La chose est faite pour maintenir l'agents du changement dans la dignité. Il y a des taches que les hommes ne doivent pas faire, mais avec le travail que on a fait, on arrive qu'il ne se sente pas gêner, n'a pas d'honte, il reste dans sa dignité pour faire ce travail. »

f. Cislighi suggests using Arnstein's ladder of participation to understand the difference between community-based and community-led approaches. This ladder ranks the approaches of community-based development "from manipulation of community members to align their [behaviors] with practitioners' views of what they should do (the bottom rung), to giving them full control of the intervention (the top rung). Community-led approaches, specifically, are at the top of the ladder. Here, community members themselves identify sociopolitical problems that matter to them, and develop and implement relevant, culturally sound solutions. In other words, in community-led approaches, transformative power is in the hands of community members, who make key decisions on aims and strategies of their collective development efforts" (Cislighi 2019, 6).

Combining communication activities with interventions that generate tangible benefits for women and girls has been an effective strategy for changing adverse gender norms. For instance, the SWEDD strategy combines activities of communication with practical support to girls' education, women's and girls' reproductive health and economic empowerment, and GBV case management. According to some key informants, this strategy helps in changing gender norms because women, girls, and their communities perceive that they derive a concrete benefit from the intervention and not just access to information and the ability to advocate

for their needs. As a key informant said: “The SWEDD meets the real needs of the population. The beneficiaries are directly affected by the implementation. The support comes directly to the population.”<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the Democratic Republic of Congo GBV Prevention and Response Project includes holistic support for GBV survivors and activities for community mobilization, behavioral change, and income generation.

## COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic undermined some of the advances in WGEE and exacerbated GBV risks in FCV countries. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the risk of GBV increased (Mittal and Singh 2020; UN Women and UNDP 2022), including in FCV situations (UNHCR 2021; Vahedi, Anania, and Kelly 2021). For example, during lockdowns, women and girls were forced to stay in crowded households, which increased their vulnerability to intimate partner violence. Lockdowns also hampered GBV support services, which faced closures because of operational disruptions, resource shortages, or the fear of COVID-19 transmission (World Bank 2021f). The COVID-19 pandemic also affected WGEE because it exacerbated gender gaps in access to jobs and income and disproportionately increased women’s and girls’ unpaid work burden, including increased household work (UN Women and UNDP 2022; World Bank 2021f; World Economic Forum 2021). Women working in the informal sector experienced even sharper pay declines and losses in working days compared with their male counterparts. This loss of income coupled with limited access to social protection resulted in rising food insecurity, which affected women disproportionately (UN Women and UNDP 2022). These impacts were very noticeable in the case study countries. For example, in Chad, the World Bank estimated that COVID-19 disproportionately impacted urban women because of high female unemployment; a greater risk of GBV, especially intimate partner violence; decreased access to sexual and reproductive health services; and disruptions in schooling, which exacerbated education gender gaps (World Bank 2020a). In Lebanon, women’s economic vulnerability and unpaid care work increased dramatically, as did GBV against women, girls, and gender-nonconforming individuals.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, marginalized women and girls—especially migrants, refugees, and older women—found it even harder to access support



and services because they often lacked cell phones or other information and communication technology (UN Women and UNDP 2022).

COVID-19 negatively impacted WGEE support and GBV prevention and response activities. The pandemic disrupted field research and analysis, stakeholder consultations for project planning, and project implementation. A World Bank TTL in Chad stated: “During COVID-19, we could not work because everything was closed, and we could not do distance work because of internet access issues in the country. We tried to put some measures in place to help the government build a resilient system, but it is not easy because everything here goes slowly, including the procurement process.” Projects promoting girls’ education were also badly impacted by COVID-19: “There was a tremendous negative shock to girls’ education interventions in Burkina Faso. Girls lost learning and were more likely to be married off because they are considered an extra mouth to feed. As a result, child marriage increased. That has a clear negative impact on women and their empowerment.” In Lebanon, many women dropped out of Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative activities during the COVID-19 pandemic because they had to care for sick family members and children who were in lockdown as schools were closed. The pandemic also affected IFC’s support to the Al Majmoua microcredit program because loan officers were unable to physically collect or disburse loans. Moreover, several of the project beneficiaries had to shut down their businesses when workers contracted COVID-19.

Projects adapted to COVID-19 lockdowns through flexibility and more remote work, but remote support was not always possible or effective in FCV countries. In Lebanon, the profound crisis undermined the success of projects, even when they were able to adjust (box 4.3). In Burkina Faso, the SWEDD suspended its communication campaigns at the outset of the pandemic and later shifted them from in-person interactions to radio and TV presentations. The project also provided more remote support to partners and beneficiaries to overcome lockdowns. This approach, however, did not work for the poorest populations living in remote areas, who did not have easy access to phones or the internet. This was especially true of women and girls, who had the lowest access to means of communication as shown by national statistics.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Lebanon’s Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative project shifted from face-to-face to online training. A TTL for a

project in Chad described the drawbacks of remote training as follows: “Remote learning inhibits engagement. It is second-best. Vulnerable people are the ones who have the least access.” The World Bank’s COVID-19 response project mitigated some of the pandemic’s impacts on the SWEDD by expanding social protection services, supporting girls’ and boys’ retention in school, and promoting GBV risk management in health services.

The World Bank supported FCV countries’ capacity to respond to COVID-19 but paid limited attention to alleviating growing gender inequalities. According to IEG’s evaluation of the early response to COVID-19, the World Bank financed an estimated \$30 billion in health and social responses to COVID-19 in the first 15 months of the pandemic, with an emphasis on small states, less prepared countries, and fragile and conflict situations. This support addressed most emergency needs in a country’s COVID-19 response plans but paid little attention to protecting against long-term human capital losses. The Bank Group’s emergency response also paid insufficient attention to gender equality and women’s and girls’ protection. Over 60 percent of all projects addressing gender equalities were concentrated in just 21 percent of the FCV countries supported by the Bank Group, with about half of the FCV countries having no Bank Group project addressing those inequalities. Moreover, the emergency needs and the limited preparedness of health systems made it challenging for the Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice to follow the guidance provided by the Gender Group to address gender-related needs and inequalities during the pandemic’s early response (World Bank 2022h).

### Box 4.3. Lebanon: When Multiple Contextual Factors Cause Crises in a Middle-Income Country

In fragility, conflict, and violence situations, sometimes multiple crises occur at once. This is what happened in Lebanon in 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic, Beirut's port explosion, and a massive financial crisis all hit the country at the same time. These compounded Lebanon's long-standing postconflict issues, persistent gender role challenges, and capacity limitations. All these factors undermined the success of International Finance Corporation support to Al Majmoua to increase women's access to credit. Before the crises, thousands of women-led small and micro enterprises were receiving credit from Al Majmoua, a nonprofit microfinance institution supported by the International Finance Corporation, but after the crises, many of these enterprises were suddenly unable to repay their loans. The financial crisis also evaporated Al Majmoua's liquidity; thus, it could not provide additional loans. In response, the International Finance Corporation did not declare Al Majmoua in default but provided technical assistance to help it develop a crisis management plan. The crisis also undermined the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative, a regional World Bank initiative supported by the World Bank and other donors. This financial issue, along with the destruction of property from the explosion, caused many beneficiary businesses to close. Moreover, the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative beneficiaries were unable to register on international e-commerce platforms to sell their products because they could no longer afford the subscription fees caused by the unfavorable (and falling) exchange rate. In response, the World Bank provided technical assistance to help businesses advertise their products on social media and connect to local markets. The implementing partner (the International Trade Centre) established a partnership with the postal service to encourage internal commerce and payment of cash on delivery.

*Source:* Independent Evaluation Group.

## Implementing Partners' Awareness and Capacity

The awareness and capacity of implementing partners to address gender inequalities in FCV countries vary across countries and projects but are generally low. Key informants highlighted that the implementing partners' limited awareness of gender issues constrained both project design and

implementation. The gender focal point of a project implementation unit, for example, said: “When we talk about gender, people tend to say, ‘That’s women!’; however, gender is not just about women. There is still work to be done at the institutional level to better equip actors with knowledge of the true meaning of gender.”<sup>22</sup> Several interviewees made it clear that implementing partners’ awareness is limited by their own embeddedness in local gender norms. A World Bank informant stated: “The difficulty is that the different actors are not open to bringing the risks of GBV into the discussion. GBV is taboo; people do not want to talk about it. They do not want agriculture or transport to deal with GBV, although something is starting to change with training and awareness raising.”<sup>23</sup> In addition to the lack of gender awareness, the evaluation also identified two capacity gaps among implementing partners. These include their weak gender knowledge and skills (that is, a weak understanding of gender issues and how to address them in the specific intervention and context) and their low capacity to implement the innovative approaches to WGEE and GBV planned in project designs.

The World Bank addressed partners’ insufficient command of innovative project approaches by providing additional assistance and capacity building. For example, in Chad, the SWEDD’s implementing partners had difficulties implementing the theory of change, especially setting up and managing safe spaces for girls’ skill development, an innovation in Chad, and clubs for men and boys. This prompted the SWEDD to develop a comprehensive strategy to strengthen the capacities of local partners, through face-to-face training, technical assistance, regional workshops, and tours to other countries to learn through shared knowledge and experiences. In addition, the World Bank recruited two experienced INGOs to provide technical assistance to implementing partners in the SWEDD’s target countries.

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<sup>1</sup> The gender strategy Mid-Term Review notes that “absent appropriate prioritization of gender in the program, a diverse set of projects tagged and flagged for gender in the portfolio can appear to be ‘sprinkled’ rather than strategic” (World Bank 2021f, 23).

<sup>2</sup> In French: « Ce sont les organisations comme la Banque Mondiale qui peuvent influencer le gouvernement, car ils donnent les prêts. Ils peuvent pressioneer pour l’application des lois et pour la budgétisation sensible au genre. »

<sup>3</sup> These are low-income women belonging to the informal sector (supported by increasing their registration in credit bureaus), women pastoralists (supported by increasing their access to small ruminants’ vaccination services), and female heads of household (supported by increasing their proportion in the unified social registry of beneficiaries from social safety nets).

<sup>4</sup> In the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the World Bank Group indirectly participates in gender and GBV coordination groups through the government implementing partners (the Social Fund of the Democratic Republic of Congo).

<sup>5</sup> In French: « La Banque devrait travailler avec les autres partenaires. Personne ne sait ce qu’ils font. Ils ne devraient pas rester isolés. . . . La Banque est un partenaire multilatéral et, de plus, elle a une expertise sur les questions économiques : elle pourrait orienter les autres partenaires, par exemple, sur un appui efficace pour l’autonomisation économique des femmes. »

<sup>6</sup> Most key informants from women’s rights organizations reported that the insufficient dialogue and collaboration with the Bank Group diminished the relevance, impact, and local ownership of Bank Group interventions.

<sup>7</sup> In French: « Un plaidoyer à l’endroit des chefs religieux ne suffit pas, il faut accompagner les leaders religieux. . . . Nous avons élaboré un document sur la base des textes de la religion et tradition africaines, nous avons des formateurs qui font le renforcement des capacités (des leaders) pour montrer que les préceptes religieux ne sont pas en contre le planning familial et sont contre les violence basées sur le genre. A partir de ce moment, ils s’engagent et ils portent ce message dans les mosquées, les églises et les courtes royales. »

<sup>8</sup> In French: « Les échanges avec les leaders religieux du Maroc ont permis aux leaders religieux du Tchad de comprendre que l’interprétation de l’Islam peut être flexible. »

<sup>9</sup> In French: « Il faut un travail sur les hommes pour un changement de mentalités, qu’ils soutiennent les femmes et ils ne fuient pas leurs responsabilités. »

<sup>10</sup> In French: « C'est plus facile pour les hommes de convaincre les hommes à laisser les femmes faire les choses. »

<sup>11</sup> The Project Appraisal Document states that “men and boys in targeted health zones will also benefit from project activities as survivors of [GBV], as family members of survivors and as key opinion leaders and community members promoting behavior change through [GBV] prevention programs” (World Bank 2018e, 16).

<sup>12</sup> The only contextual factor that significantly influenced the design of the specific set of projects analyzed in this evaluation was the political engagement of the counterpart, which was an enabler for most projects with the highest potential of transformational change (figure 4.2).

<sup>13</sup> In French: « L'insécurité limite l'expression et le regroupement pour passer les messages. . . . Certains thèmes exposent les travailleurs à des risques de représailles de la part des GANI [groupes armés non identifiés]. . . . Pour atténuer l'exposition des agents et des communautés aux GANI, les messages sont atténués. »

<sup>14</sup> In French: « Il y a eu aussi des villages où les terroristes étaient une menace, ils disent que ce que nous faisons dans les espaces sûrs est contraire à leurs prêches, donc il faut adapter les stratégies. Il ne faut pas faire beaucoup de bruits sur l'intervention. Ici nous avons demandé aux mentors dans les villages d'évaluer la menace. . . . Si la menace est relevée, il faut suspendre les activités pour ne pas mettre en risque les filles. Il y en a qui ne font plus l'animation dans des espaces fixes, elles font les animations dans la cour des familles, pour être confuses parmi les populations, ça n'attire pas l'attention. »

<sup>15</sup> Gender norms affected the presence of women and girls but also the quality of their participation. In many contexts, women and girls are not accustomed to speaking out during public events or in the presence of a man, leader, or elderly woman.

<sup>16</sup> In French: « Les normes sociales, elles sont à l'origine de tout. Par exemple (à cause des normes sociales), ce n'est pas facile (pour les survivants) dénoncer les cas des VBG, et même pour l'autonomisation des femmes, l'accès des femmes aux ressources et aux instances de décisions ça pose un problème à cause des normes. Dans certaines zones, les normes sociales empêchent la femme de s'exprimer. »

<sup>17</sup> In the Great Lakes Project, survivors of GBV faced major barriers to care seeking, particularly within 72 hours of sexual violence. These barriers included social acceptance of GBV and fear of stigma and isolation from survivors' communities; inadequate penal systems to hold

perpetrators accountable; fear of retaliation from the perpetrator; lack of economic autonomy (and fear of losing the only source of income if the perpetrator is arrested); long distance to travel to access the service; GBV survivors' lack of awareness of their rights and of available services; and preference for an "amicable solution" to avoid conflicts within the family or community (World Bank 2020h).

<sup>18</sup> In French: « Il y a aussi la sensibilité de sujets comme le mariage des filles. Dans certains contextes, comme le Sahel, on ne peut pas traiter le sujet de façon directe. »

<sup>19</sup> In French: « (SWEDD) répond aux besoins réels de la population, les bénéficiaires sont directement concernés par la mise en œuvre. Le soutien arrive directement à la population. »

<sup>20</sup> People identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, and queer (and all the other gender and sexual orientations), or LGBTIQ+, reported concerns and fears of harassment and violence from increased security patrols and checkpoints enforcing the lockdown. Because of deteriorating economic conditions, LGBTIQ+ individuals have reported moving back in with abusive and homophobic or transphobic family members or partners, increasing their exposure to violence.

<sup>21</sup> In 2015, among 100 adults who reported owning a smartphone in Burkina Faso, 67 percent were men and 33 percent were women (Karlsson et al. 2017).

<sup>22</sup> In French: « Quand on parle du genre les gens ont la tendance à dire: 'C'est les femmes!', mais le genre ce n'est pas que les femmes. . . . Il y a encore du travail à faire au niveau institutionnel pour mieux outiller les acteurs sur le vrai sens du genre. »

<sup>23</sup> In French: « La difficulté est que les différents acteurs ne sont pas ouverts à mettre les risques de violences basées sur le genre (VBG) dans la discussion. Les gens ne veulent pas que on en parle. Elles ne veulent pas que l'agriculture ou le transport s'occupent des VBG, mais ça commence à changer avec la formation et la sensibilisation. . . . Les VBG sont un tabou, les gens ne veulent pas en parler. »

## 5 | Conclusions and Recommendations

Situations of conflict and fragility amplify gender inequalities and call for the Bank Group's specific commitment to address them. Conflict and fragility increase the exposure of women and girls to GBV and make it more difficult for them to access social services, including sexual and reproductive health services. FCV also exacerbates their vulnerability to poverty and increases their unpaid work burden from their caregiving role. The Bank Group recognizes in many corporate and strategic documents, such as the FCV strategy and various International Development Association replenishments, that for Bank Group support to produce meaningful and lasting results toward greater gender equality in FCV countries, it needs to have five specific elements. These elements are relevance, inclusive ownership, depth, sustainability, and scale. The evaluation uses these elements to assess the Bank Group's country support for WGEE and for GBV prevention and response.

Achieving all these elements at once is challenging; however, recent project designs and results frameworks have improved in this regard. Project teams have applied lessons from initial projects to follow-on projects and designed innovative interventions that pay attention to gender inequalities and address FCV's drivers and impacts. For example, the evaluation shows that some projects added or adjusted components during project restructuring phases to respond to risks or better reflect overlooked parts of a project's theory of change. These adjustments increased the depth and, sometimes, sustainability and scalability of these projects. However, in the six analyzed FCV country case studies, the evaluation did not find any project design that had all of the five elements at the same time. In particular, we noticed a trade-off between depth and scale. Deeper projects—that is, those grounded in a comprehensive theory of change that used multiple entry points to address the root causes of gender inequalities—tend to be small, with little hope of achieving scale. Likewise, projects that achieve scale find achieving depth elusive.



Individual projects cannot produce the systemic changes that are needed to address gender inequalities. Promoting WGEE and addressing GBV requires transforming the “enabling environment” (that is, laws and regulations, policies, and formal and informal institutions). Time- and space-bound projects cannot produce deep, sustainable, and large-scale change in gender equality if the larger macroenvironment does not support that change. Nevertheless, there are some examples of individual projects that have contributed to systemic changes in a country. They did this by supporting the government in improving laws and implementing them, orienting development policies toward gender issues, and building institutional capacities, among other examples. However, single interventions were unable to produce substantial systemic changes.

The project-centric approach struggles to support long-term, integrated, and multisectoral interventions. Promoting WGEE, addressing GBV, and transforming the enabling environment to achieve these goals requires integrated and complex interventions that address the root causes of gender inequalities. For example, GBV interventions require a robust and integrated system of services to support GBV survivors; a variety of GBV-related laws, policies, and institutions; mechanisms to change entrenched gender norms and avoid the stigmatization of survivors; interventions that empower women and girls to react to GBV and strengthen their fallback positions; initiatives to increase men’s and boys’ support for GBV prevention and women’s and girls’ empowerment; and so on. An individual project cannot effectively provide all the interventions required for this level of integrated support.

The project-centric approach also struggles to simultaneously meet immediate humanitarian needs and longer-term development needs. FCV situations often require both immediate relief and the long-term capacity building of local institutions, civil society, and communities to build peace, resilience, and gender equality. This requires simultaneously addressing both the impacts of fragility and conflict (that is, responding to the immediate humanitarian needs of women, men, girls, and boys) and the drivers of fragility, conflict, and gender inequalities (that is, fostering peace, resilience, and sustainable development for all). Addressing the drivers requires strategic coordination within the Bank Group and greater cooperation

with humanitarian and development actors. For example, the Republic of Yemen's recent country strategy indicates that the World Bank Group is more assertively promoting gender equality by combining both sides of the humanitarian-development nexus through its collaboration with UN agencies that specialize in operating in humanitarian settings.

The Bank Group's top-down approach creates another obstacle to promoting gender equality for country engagements. The evaluation found that the Bank Group's support for WGEE and for GBV prevention and response in FCV environments is not sufficiently embedded in local contexts because it does not consistently consider local stakeholders' goals and capacities and FCV-affected women's and girls' needs, constraints, and expectations. The Bank Group's use of in-depth participatory gender analyses and existing knowledge platforms is generally limited. Instead, the Bank Group's project designs are typically negotiated with central government counterparts. The World Bank often conflates "country ownership" with "client ownership," but this privileged relationship with the government leaves very few spaces for other actors. This conflation makes Bank Group interventions less embedded in local contexts, which can undermine support for WGEE and addressing GBV. Moreover, although the Bank Group often involves local stakeholders, such as CSOs, local institutions, and community-based organizations, including women's organizations, in project implementation, it rarely involves them in project design. In addition, women's organizations are not generally involved in implementation at the national level. All of this means that the priorities expressed by female and male beneficiaries are rarely reflected in projects. The evaluation has documented several instances where this led to shortcomings in project relevance, efficacy, and sustainability.

The evaluation found that there are four factors that can undermine the Bank Group's efforts to achieve lasting and meaningful change in WGEE and in GBV prevention and response. These factors include the following: (i) the level of prioritization of gender issues in the country engagement, (ii) the level of human and financial resource support, (iii) the quality of internal and external collaboration and coordination between interventions and with stakeholders, and (iv) the ability to manage contextual factors (particularly in FCV situations). Currently, the Bank Group is not sufficiently addressing

these factors, which, if ignored, could easily turn into constraints to addressing gender inequalities.

Addressing gender inequalities has not been adequately prioritized in the Bank Group's country engagements. This is reflected by the absence of an explicit strategic approach to tackle gender inequalities across country strategies. Country teams typically identify gender priorities at the project level rather than at the country strategy level, which limits both the scale and duration (or sustainability) of engagements. Moreover, when a country program has strategic goals related to gender inequalities, they are not usually based on solid diagnostics, are often short-term, and do not persist from one country strategy to the next.

The inadequate allocation of human and financial resources for the Bank Group's support of WGEE and of GBV response and prevention have dampened achievements in FCV situations. Successful interventions to support WGEE and address GBV require gender experts or dedicated and adequately trained gender focal points supported by gender experts at the country level. These human resources can ensure regular exchanges with local actors and can foster synergies across Bank Group teams. They can also ensure collaboration with other development partners, the Bank Group's presence in national gender platforms, engagement in consistent dialogues with government counterparts on WGEE and GBV issues, and delivery of context-specific guidance to Bank Group and implementing partner staff. In addition, greater financial resources can strengthen overlooked components of projects' theories of change or mitigate trade-offs among the five transformational elements. By contrast, insufficient human and financial resources can constrain the Bank Group's efforts to achieve full transformational change in WGEE and GBV.

The Bank Group's limited internal and external coordination and collaboration with relevant actors constrain its support for WGEE and for GBV prevention and response. The evaluation found that there was weak coordination and collaboration within the Bank Group on WGEE and GBV issues (which limits the synergies across the Bank Group's projects, sectors, instruments, and institutions). In addition, it noted that there was weak Bank Group coordination and collaboration with local and international stakeholders that

work to promote gender equality at the country level. This reduces the possibility that different institutions will operate strategically and leverage one another's comparative advantage to achieve common objectives. By contrast, the evaluation shows that projects with strong engagements with nonstate actors and women's associations at the local and the national levels were more likely to achieve transformational change in WGEE and in GBV prevention and response.

Contextual factors in FCV countries can also threaten results if these factors are not anticipated and internalized in Bank Group project designs. The evaluation found that conflict dynamics, gender norms, COVID-19, and partner capacity have significantly influenced the Bank Group's support for WGEE and for GBV prevention and response in FCV countries. Some of these factors, such as gender norms and partner capacity, are known *ex ante* and should be integrated into theories of change and accounted for in project designs. We have seen that certain projects convincingly do so. Other factors, such as the emergence of COVID-19 or outbreaks of conflict and violence, may be less predictable *ex ante* but can still be anticipated and accounted for as risk factors in project design, and internalized in project design by adding sufficient flexibility so the World Bank Group can quickly adjust to changing situations.

The Bank Group can improve the transformational potential of its support for WGEE and for GBV prevention and response in FCV countries by using the entire country engagement model to deliver them. The project-by-project approach does not work for making lasting and meaningful inroads in promoting WGEE and addressing GBV. This is because addressing gender inequalities in FCV contexts is a difficult and complex endeavor that requires actions along multiple pathways and in multiple sectors. Individual projects inevitably face trade-offs that cannot be overcome within their restricted scopes and boundaries. Escaping these trade-offs requires the Bank Group to fundamentally shift from its current project-by-project approach to a more comprehensive country engagement approach that guides its overall support for WGEE and GBV response and prevention. Only a country engagement approach can generate long-term synergies across sectors, projects, and instruments within the country program to ease these trade-offs and effectively combine multiple interventions in a coherent and coordinated way.

## Recommendations

There are levers that the Bank Group can pull to better pursue transformational change for WGEE, GBV prevention and response, and gender equality in FCV countries. This evaluation found that planning for transformational change is challenging but not impossible. To do so, the evaluation recommends that the Bank Group transitions its approach to gender equality in FCV countries from a project-centric model to a wider country engagement approach through four actions. The first two actions strengthen the Bank Group's strategic focus on gender inequalities, specifically WGEE and GBV, in FCV countries. The third and fourth actions help mobilize resources at a level commensurate with the Bank Group's stated commitments to the gender agenda in FCV contexts.

To strengthen its strategic focus on WGEE, GBV prevention and response, and gender equality, the Bank Group would need to

- » Make priorities regarding gender equality (including on WGEE and GBV) more explicit in country strategies, based on strong analytics (primarily Systematic Country Diagnostics and the World Bank Risk and Resilience Assessments) and in collaboration with key stakeholders. This explicit prioritization involves (i) identifying overarching, long-term gender equality goals that span across more than one country strategy, are consistent with the country's context and needs, and transform the enabling environment; (ii) defining more focused, medium-term objectives that are consistent with the country strategy's overarching goals and help coalesce the Bank Group's various instruments, institutions, and sector interventions in relation to those objectives; (iii) coordinating and collaborating among Bank Group teams in the Country Management Unit and Global Practices and at the corporate level; and (iv) leveraging the Bank Group's influencing power to consistently elevate gender issues in policy dialogues.
- » Foster engagements with communities, civil society, women's organizations, local authorities, and other key stakeholders to define gender equality objectives and the actions to achieve them. These engagements involve (i) identifying priorities related to gender equality (including WGEE and GBV) in a participatory way; (ii) tailoring interventions to specific FCV contexts,

starting with bottom-up engagements with local stakeholders during the design stage; (iii) adopting flexible and decentralized approaches to account for local constraints and diminish project risks; and (iv) building on local knowledge, processes, and capacities to increase the local ownership, cultural sensitivity and, ultimately, sustainability of the intervention.

To mobilize resources and partnerships at a level commensurate with its commitments to support countries in promoting WGEE and preventing and responding to GBV, the Bank Group would need to

- » Ensure that gender expertise tailored to the context is available for FCV-affected countries to support projects, as well as the country engagement. This gender expertise should be adequate for (i) supporting strategic thinking to diagnose and identify gender-related priorities and integrate them into country strategies; (ii) ensuring the quality of project design and monitoring and evaluation; (iii) effectively using the Bank Group convening power to support country-level engagement with relevant stakeholders for the identification of gender-related priorities, their translation into policies and programs, and their implementation, monitoring, and evaluation; and (iv) improving the capacity of Bank Group staff and local stakeholders to address gender inequalities in FCV contexts.
- » Coordinate and collaborate with relevant international stakeholders engaged on gender equality in the country, including humanitarian actors. This stronger coordination and collaboration should leverage each actor's comparative advantage to achieve common goals. This collaboration should contribute to strengthening the adoption of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach and ensuring the Bank Group's participation in national gender platforms and coordination groups to exchange knowledge and lessons, promote common initiatives in policy dialogues, and establish synergies across interventions to enhance their depth, scale, and sustainability.

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# APPENDIXES

Independent Evaluation Group

*Addressing Gender Inequalities in Countries  
Affected by Fragility, Conflict, and Violence*

# Appendix A. Methodological Approach

## Evaluation Purpose and Questions

The goal of the evaluation is to examine how the World Bank Group can support countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) to produce transformational change in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and promoting women's and girls' economic empowerment (WGEE). This overarching question consists of three main questions and further subquestions (box A.1).

### Box A.1. Evaluation Questions

EQ1. How has the World Bank Group supported countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) to identify the transformational changes that were needed to tackle gender-based violence (GBV) and promote women's and girls' economic empowerment (WGEE)?

1a. How has the Bank Group supported FCV-affected countries to produce and use analytical work, data, and statistics to address GBV and promote WGEE?

1b. How, and how well, has the Bank Group supported FCV-affected countries to identify and design interventions aimed at producing transformational changes in the areas of GBV and WGEE?

1c. How has the Bank Group established complementarities and collaboration with other partners and stakeholders to guide its policy engagement with FCV countries in addressing GBV and promoting WGEE? What has and has not been transformational and why?

EQ2. How has the Bank Group supported FCV-affected countries to undertake and assess transformational changes in GBV prevention and response and WGEE?

2a. What are the changes that FCV-affected countries have produced (are in the process of being produced), with the support of the Bank Group, to tackle GBV and



### Box A.1. Evaluation Questions (cont.)

promote WGEE and to what extent have they been (do they have the potential to be) transformational?

2b. How has the Bank Group identified and addressed potential negative unintended outcomes (including through the adoption of "do no harm" approaches) and positive spillovers and externalities?

EQ3. What are the main internal and external factors that have enabled and those that have hindered the Bank Group support to FCV-affected countries to make transformational changes and how has the Bank Group addressed them?

3a. Which factors have enabled or hindered the Bank Group support to FCV-affected countries to produce transformational changes?

3b. How successfully has the Bank Group addressed these factors?

*Source:* Independent Evaluation Group.

## Methodology

The evaluation adopted a case study analysis approach to draw lessons on Bank Group's support for promoting WGEE and preventing and responding to GBV.

The unit of analysis was the country program encompassing Bank Group financing, analytical work, technical assistance, and convening engagements (including policy dialogue). The country case approach allowed for examining processes and pathways to generate intended outcomes. It also facilitated a close assessment of contextual factors that are crucial determinants of outcomes, especially in FCV countries, and the identification and involvement in the evaluation of key stakeholders. The intended outcomes examined were elements of transformational change, defined as a change that is relevant, deep, and sustainable, with large-scale impact, and that is based on inclusive ownership.

The assessment included three levels: (i) country level—Bank Group country engagement (such as country strategies) and initiatives of policy dialogue, collaboration, and coordination at the country level; (ii) select elements of the country portfolio—select country-level knowledge products (including gender-focused reports and reports meant to inform the country strategy) and select country projects, both stand-alone (with explicit gender objectives) and relevant sectoral and multisectoral projects expected to directly impact gender inequalities; and (iii) regional level—Bank Group regional engagement (such as regional projects, regional knowledge products, and regional initiatives of policy dialogue) and corporate engagement (such as Bank Group strategies and processes and structures within headquarters and Country Management Units [CMUs]).

Six countries were selected for the analysis from the population of 39 FCV countries. The selection was based on the following criteria: (i) FCV status in 2021, according to the Bank Group typology; (ii) significant Bank Group operational engagement in the focus areas of this evaluation to maximize potential lessons; (iii) presence of Bank Group and International Finance Corporation (IFC) interventions; (iv) geographic variability to allow drawing lessons from different regions; (v) lending status (the International Development Association, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, or blend); (vi) variability in socioeconomic and gender inequality outcomes; (vii) variability in FCV situations, such as active conflict and situations of fragility; and (viii) existence of recent evaluations and good practices highlighted in corporate, regional, and country strategies or action plans and their reviews (see box B.1 for details on selection criteria).

On the basis of these criteria, Burkina Faso, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lebanon, the Solomon Islands, and the Republic of Yemen were selected as case studies. Afghanistan, which was also initially selected, had to be dropped after the Taliban's takeover of the country. Haiti was also initially selected but was subsequently dropped too because of the challenging situation.<sup>1</sup> Three of the selected countries are from the Sub-Saharan Africa Region, which reflects the prevalence of FCV situations in this geographical area; two are from the Middle East and North Africa Region; and one is from the East Asia and Pacific Region. Despite adopting criteria in an effort

to ensure variability, the selected countries are not representative of all FCV countries. Representativeness was not the goal of the evaluation because the focus was on understanding processes in depth, rather than quantifying results for FCV countries. Further details on the case country selection can be found in appendix B.

## Evaluation Components

The analysis was based on a combination of deductive and inductive approaches. It rested on the following building blocks: quantitative and qualitative analysis of country context, structured literature reviews, structured review of Bank Group knowledge products, structured review of country strategy documents, structured review of Systematic Country Diagnostics (SCDs) and Risk and Resilience Assessments (RRAs), structured review of country projects, online semistructured interviews with key informants, and field visits (including face-to-face semistructured interviews, focus group discussions, and informal conversations). Specific methods of data collection and analysis are described in this appendix. Table A.1 highlights which methods were used to answer which evaluation question.

### Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of Country Context

The analysis included a standardized examination of country statistics extracted from the World Development Indicators and other international sources of gender statistics (online databases of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization; the United Nations Children’s Fund; the United Nations Development Programme; the World Economic Forum; and the World Health Organization),<sup>2</sup> including indicators on GBV, WGEE, gender inequalities in human endowment and in access to infrastructure, international gender inequality indexes, and country macro conditions (see appendix B). The quantitative data were accompanied by qualitative data, gathered from empirical studies and research reports, evaluations, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Beijing+ official and shadow reports, Social Institutions and Gender Index, and Women, Business and the Law country reports. These qualitative and quantitative data formed the basis for the country context analysis.

## Structured Literature Reviews

Two structured literature reviews were conducted on GBV and WGEE in conflict situations. These structured literature reviews were conducted based on the following steps.

**Inclusion criteria:** The evaluators included empirical studies with a strong methodological design or studies with a clear theory of change. Studies were included from the following disciplines: economics, political science, sociology, and gender studies. Studies were included if pertaining to countries (countries that were FCV at the time the study was conducted). Purely theoretical studies were excluded. The evaluators also used backward citation search; that is, they included studies referred to in the selected studies to ensure that no important evidence was left out. Studies were included if written in English; select studies written in French were included as well.

**Literature identification:** The first step was the identification of a set of appropriate keywords for WGEE and GBV through a high-frequency word search in NVivo using relevant World Bank Group reports. These reports were flagship reports and gender-specific studies produced by the World Bank Group over the past 10 years. After keywords had been identified, the second step was running a keyword search using a Boolean phrase on several peer-reviewed bibliographic databases: Google Scholar, EconLit, and Gender Studies Database. Studies were included if published in or after 2010.

**Boolean phrase for Women's economic empowerment:** Gender OR Women OR girls OR men OR rights OR female OR sexual OR children OR roles OR norms OR gbv OR woman OR girls OR inclusion OR sex AND Conflict OR violence OR fcs OR security OR fragile OR war OR justice OR fca OR peacebuilding OR armed OR humanitarian OR legal OR protection OR law OR violent OR agency OR reconstruction OR aid OR crisis OR displacement OR gendered OR fcas OR refugee OR displaced OR fragility AND Economic OR empowerment OR work OR access OR bank OR community OR participation OR opportunities OR education OR employment OR income OR communities OR household OR job OR cdd OR financial OR business OR growth OR assets OR households OR training OR poor OR livelihoods OR challenges OR need OR skills OR decision OR capacity OR land OR agriculture OR market OR

labor OR capital OR investment OR jobs OR school OR ict OR economy OR informal OR credit OR markets

Boolean phrase for Gender-based violence: Violence OR sexual OR health OR survivor OR gbv OR sgbv OR safety OR physical OR abuse OR domestic OR prevention OR intimate OR sexual OR forced OR rape HIV OR norms OR protection OR attitudes OR medical OR victims OR mental OR reproductive OR assault OR vulnerable OR AIDS OR adolescent OR trauma OR violent AND conflict OR armed OR war OR police OR soldier OR rebel OR refugee OR displace OR perpetrator OR emergency OR camp OR military OR slavery AND Gender OR women OR gender OR men OR girl OR children OR boy OR woman OR man OR LGBTI OR LGBT

Quality and eligibility assessment: The full text of the documents that had passed the initial screening was analyzed to determine the quality and eligibility of the studies. Articles were discarded if they did not pertain to GBV or women's economic empowerment in FCV situations or had a significant gender focus in their research focus or findings. The number of studies that were determined eligible is 108.

Data extraction and analysis: The studies were examined to extract and collate (i) patterns of GBV and women's economic empowerment in FCV situations, (ii) drivers of GBV and gaps in women's economic participation in FCV situations, (iii) impacts of GBV and lack of economic empowerment, and (iv) policy measures adopted in regard to GBV and women's economic empowerment.

## Structured Review of World Bank Group Knowledge Products

For each country, a selection of knowledge products of the Bank Group was analyzed. Regional knowledge products were also analyzed when they were relevant and referred the country selected as case study. The knowledge products included stand-alone analytical studies (focused on WGEE or GBV); country strategic diagnostics, such as gender assessments, poverty assessments, job diagnostics, private sector diagnostics, land and agriculture diagnostics, and RRAs; and relevant analytical studies used for project

preparation and project evaluation, such as impact evaluations. The knowledge products were selected using different databases: Standard Reports, Independent Evaluation Group DataMart, Enterprise Data Catalog, World Bank Open Knowledge Repository, and World Bank Gender Data Portal. In addition, analytical documents for specific projects were obtained from the Projects and Operations portal and interviews with Bank Group and implementing partner key informants. The selection was validated by the CMU of the country cases (there were two cases of no response).

In total, 60 knowledge products were analyzed for the evaluation. The review was conducted using a structured protocol to facilitate an in-depth and harmonized analysis within and across cases. The protocol was used to collect data on several aspects of knowledge products, such as the analysis of interplay between gender inequalities and FCV, data and knowledge gaps identified, use of other relevant external and internal knowledge products, identification of the comparative advantage of the Bank Group, and recommended modalities of coordination and collaboration. Moreover, the authors of the review filled out a table specifically assessing the knowledge product on the five elements of transformational change. The answers from the structured protocol were compiled into a database in Excel and qualitatively analyzed.

The evaluation also identified the relevant impact evaluations related to the 40 selected projects. The identification was based on searching the Gender Innovation Lab and Development Impact Evaluation databases and the country pages on the World Bank intranet and on the project document and interview notes analysis. The studies were examined to extract (i) evidence on the impact of World Bank interventions on GBV and WGEE, (ii) timeliness of the study in relation to project preparation, and (iii) evidence on the use of previous relevant impact evaluations to design these projects. Table A.2 lists the completed and ongoing impact evaluations of the 40 projects analyzed by this evaluation.

## Structured Review of Country Strategy Documents

For each country case study, the last two country strategies were analyzed. The set of documents included in the desk review consisted of Country Partnership Frameworks, previous Country Assistance Strategies, Interim Strat-

egy Notes, Country Engagement Notes, Performance and Learning Reviews, and Completion and Learning Reviews. This part of the analysis assessed (i) the World Bank’s own definition of contribution and value added related to GBV and WGEE and (ii) the operational modalities adopted by the country strategies to support case countries in addressing GBV and promoting WGEE. In total, over 25 strategic documents produced in or after 2010 were reviewed, referring to 15 country strategies.

The review was conducted using a structured protocol to facilitate an in-depth and harmonized analysis within and across cases. The protocol was used to collect information on several aspects of country strategies: linkages with SCD and knowledge products, analysis of country capacity, analysis of the interplay between gender inequalities and FCV, and inclusion of GBV, WGEE, and other gender priorities among country strategic priorities. Moreover, the authors of the review filled out tables to record gender-relevant outcomes and indicators and to provide an assessment of the country strategy on the five elements of transformational change. The answers from the structured protocol were compiled into a database and qualitatively analyzed.

## Structured Review of Systematic Country Diagnostics and Risk and Resilience Assessments

The review of country strategy frameworks was conducted in conjunction with the review of SCDs and RRAs to investigate the extent to which gender priorities were identified by these two sets of documents and integrated into the country strategy. Structured protocols were filled out for all SCDs and RRAs produced in the six case study countries in or after 2010—15 SCDs and 9 RRAs in total. The information extracted was compiled into a database and qualitatively analyzed.

## Structured Review of Country Projects

**Initial portfolio identification:** As a first step, the evaluation team screened all investment project financings, development policy operations, technical assistance, grant products, and, for IFC, investments and advisory services that were approved in or after 2010 in the six countries to identify those that included support to GBV prevention and response (beyond safeguard) or to

WGEE. The identification was undertaken using Independent Evaluation Group DataMart; IFC investments and advisory services were obtained from Business Intelligence.

**Portfolio screening and selection of projects for deep-dive analysis:** The key purpose of the portfolio screening was to identify a subgroup of interventions for a deep-dive analysis. The evaluation team selected 40 projects (for simplicity, this evaluation defines this category as “projects”; the text of the report specifies whenever a product is not an investment project financing) for this purpose in this second step. Projects were selected if (i) they had a focus on WGEE or GBV (stand-alone projects) or (ii) if they were expected to significantly do so, given the theory of change supporting their design, and they had a good learning potential. This latter group of projects included projects from Social Protection and Jobs, Sustainable Development, Financial Inclusion, and Agriculture and Food. Projects that provided only social services or infrastructure (such as education, health, transport, water, electricity, and so on) were excluded.<sup>3</sup> The final selection was validated by the CMU (there were two cases of no response). The list of the 40 projects selected for the deep-dive analysis is provided in table A.3.

**Data extraction and analysis:** The deep-dive analysis was based on an in-depth desk review of project documents: feasibility studies and relevant assessments conducted during preparation, Project Information Documents, Project Appraisal Documents, Implementation Status and Results Reports, project preparation studies, Mid-Term Reviews, and, for closed projects, Implementation Completion and Results Reports and Implementation Completion and Results Report Reviews and other monitoring and evaluation reports. Impact evaluations and qualitative evaluations were analyzed when available. The desk review was supplemented with interviews with relevant informants, such as task team leaders (TTLs), project implementation units, implementing partners, government representatives, civil society organizations, and other relevant stakeholders who were part of project design and implementation.

The desk review and interviews were used to fill out structured protocols for both project design and project implementation. The evaluator collected information on various aspects of project design, such as (i) whether the project design incorporated lessons learned (and which ones), (ii) intended



outcomes related to institutional strengthening, (iii) intended outcomes related to GBV and WGEE, and (iv) assessment of the five transformational elements. Information collected on project implementation included (i) results achieved in relation to WGEE, (ii) results achieved in relation to GBV prevention and response, (iii) results achieved in relation to other aspects of gender equality, (iv) indicators included in the results framework, (v) internal and external factors impacting the achievement of outcomes, and (vi) assessment of the five transformational elements. The deep-dive analysis also accounted for the evolution of project design and project implementation by examining additional financings.

### Online Semistructured Interviews with Key Informants

The evaluation team conducted 206 semistructured interviews remotely with various categories of key informants to collect evidence on Bank Group engagement.<sup>4</sup> The interviews were also used to verify the selection of relevant sources and collect additional documentation for triangulation purposes. Key informants were identified in the following categories: Bank Group management (including country directors and managers); Bank Group project TTLs and staff; CMU staff; World Bank staff in the Gender and FCV units; staff of the IFC Gender Business Group; program leaders; gender focal points; consultants, coordinators, and members of the project implementation units of selected projects; representatives of implementing partners (including government, United Nations agencies, and national and international nongovernmental organizations); and relevant international and national stakeholders (including international development and humanitarian partners, international nongovernmental organizations, local authorities, private sector, traditional and religious leaders, academics and think tanks, media, civil society organizations, and women’s rights organizations).<sup>5</sup> All current and most past TTLs of the projects selected for deep dive were interviewed, including the implementing agencies and the government counterparts related to the project. Representatives of the United Nations agencies, donors, and international nongovernmental organizations were identified based on their involvement in the selected projects or because of the significant role of these organizations in the country gender agenda. Some key informants were not available or could not be interviewed because of difficult country

conditions or poor video and phone connections. The data collection period was lengthened (from the originally planned four to five weeks to several months) to increase the response rate. The numbers of key informants who were interviewed, by category of informant, are provided in table A.4.

The interviews were conducted using structured guides. The evaluation team created separate interview guides for different types of interviewees. Interviews were conducted in English, French, and Arabic. Evaluation transcripts were collated, and the French and Arabic interviews were translated into English.<sup>6</sup> The transcripts were analyzed in two ways: manually and with NVivo using deductive and inductive coding. Topic modelling was conducted, and the results were extracted to harmonize findings.

## Field Visits and Focus Group Discussions

In Burkina Faso, a local consultant carried out field visits in two regions (Centre-Ouest and Boucle de Mouhoun), in the areas of intervention of two projects (the Forest Investment Program—Decentralized Forest and Woodland Management Project and the Sahel Women’s Empowerment and Demographic Dividend). The projects were selected based on their relevance in the Burkina Faso portfolio. The areas for the field visits were selected based on security, accessibility, and presence of different activities of the project. The local consultant visited the project sites and conducted face-to-face interviews with local key informants, including service providers, representatives for local civil society organizations and community-based organizations, and female and male community leaders. Moreover, the consultant conducted 15 focus group discussions with girls and women beneficiaries, male and female community leaders, and mentors of safe spaces for adolescent girls and young women. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in French, More, and Djula languages.

The guides for interviews and focus groups were prepared by the international team member responsible for the Burkina Faso’s case study (who had lived and worked in Burkina Faso) and were reviewed by the local consultant.

## Protocol for the Protection of the Privacy and Safety of

## Interviewees

The evaluation team adopted a simple protocol to protect the privacy and safety of all interviewees. First of all, the interviewers always informed the interviewees that all information would be used in an anonymous way. The report always refers to the source of information in nonattributable way (such as “a [World Bank] TTL” or “a member of one [nongovernmental organization] in Chad”). Table A.4 includes the number of interviewees in each general category, without providing any other detail that could make the individual source recognizable (such as the country, position, project of reference, name of the person, or the organization). The CMUs helped the team identify and contact the interviewees, but none of the CMU staff participated in the interview or has access to the information collected. Only the evaluation team has access to the interview notes. Moreover, the evaluation team never used information provided by interviewees who requested to keep this information confidential. In a few cases, interviews were recorded (it happened only for the Republic of Yemen case study); in those cases, the interviewer always asked the interviewee for permission to record the interview before starting. In the field, the name of participants in focus group discussions was not collected to encourage participants to freely express their opinions.

## Analysis

The analysis of the various data sources was conducted both “horizontally” (by blocks of evidence, after the protocols, to enable the comparative analysis across the case studies) and “vertically” (using all sources of evidence to derive findings at the country level). The evaluation team favored the “vertical,” country-focused approach first and allocated evaluators to each country study to conduct the analysis of each source of evidence pertaining to the country irrespective of the source and type of the evidence. This analysis was guided by a country matrix. The structured protocols and regular team meetings were critical to ensure homogeneity of the analysis, in particular the “horizontal” coherence within each source of evidence. Nevertheless, additional analysis was necessary to improve the coherence of the evidence

within each block, in particular with reference to the rating assigned to projects and the analysis of the enabling and constraining factors.

**Project ratings:** The evaluators assessed to what extent each project planned (at design) and achieved (with implementation) the different elements of transformational change (relevance, inclusive ownership, depth, sustainability, and scale). To this end, each evaluator rated the five elements of transformational change on a scale ranging from 0 to 4 for both project design and implementation. Each rate was accompanied by a justification. The scale from 0 to 4 indicates the intensity of the presence of the transformational element in design or in the results achieved—4 indicates a deep presence (for example, very relevant project design or results); 3 indicates a satisfactory presence (for example, relevant project or results); 2 indicates a partial presence (for example, project design or results partially relevant); 1 indicates very limited presence (for example, design or results relevant to a very limited extent); and 0 indicates the absence (for example, design or results not relevant at all). The assessment of each element of transformational change was guided by specific questions to ensure harmonization of the rating criteria across evaluators. All the ratings were reviewed by a second evaluator to ensure alignment. In case of discrepancy, the two reviewers met to discuss the justification of the ratings, going back to the original sources to verify the elements of disagreement when needed.

Large part of the analysis was conducted using a 0/1 dummy indicating presence or absence of a specific element. A threshold of 3 was chosen to define presence (3 and 4) and absence (0 to 2) of each element of transformational change. For the analysis of factors impacting transformational change, presented in chapter 4, a group of “most transformational” projects was defined as those with at least three transformational elements with a score of 3 or above, and a group of “least transformational” projects as those with no transformational element reaching the score of 3 (that is, the minimum threshold for the transformational element to be considered significantly present).

**Analysis of enabling and constraining factors:** For each project, each evaluator used the results of the desk analysis and interviews to identify the enabling and constraining factors to transformational change for WGEE

and GBV prevention and response in the country, at the project design and implementation stage. The analysis was based on the following steps: First, the evaluation team followed an inductive process and carried out a qualitative analysis of a subset of data retrieved from interviews and documents to identify a complete list of potential enabling and constraining factors. This analysis was conducted using the country matrixes and included additional sources of information (such as interview transcripts, project review tools, project documents, and so on) until saturation was reached. These factors were grouped in categories (see tables A.5 and A.6 for a complete list of factors impacting project design and implementation). Second, one evaluator used the information included in the country matrixes and the project tools to assign factors to the corresponding projects and verified through iteration with the author of each country case study that the factors were correctly assigned. Third, a comparative analysis was carried out to identify patterns in the factors assigned to projects. The team selected the “most significant” factors (that is, those that showed a clear association with the most transformational and least transformational projects) through eyeballing. Robustness tests were conducted using various definitions of most transformational and least transformational projects.

## Validity of Results

The evaluation team used various methods to ensure validity of the findings. The first method was triangulation of all the sources of information mentioned in this appendix—in particular, triangulation among information from documents extracted through desk review, evidence from the literature and data, and evidence from interviews and focus groups. The team also used regular meetings to discuss methodological issues and emerging findings and to identify areas of convergence and divergence in the comparative analysis. The findings were presented to CMUs in four of the six countries in the form of PowerPoint presentations to test the emerging findings and fill any potential gaps. This also helped confirm that all relevant material was included. As a follow-up to CMU presentations, five additional interviews were conducted with gender focal points and key TTLs, with the specific purpose of validating some new information and emerging findings.

## Limitations

The following limitations were identified.

**Representativeness of FCV situations:** This evaluation is based on country case study analysis and therefore is not representative of the population of FCV countries. The methodology clearly privileges depth over breadth. Triangulation of evidence with external literature and interviews allows for generalizability of the findings to a higher level than just the six country cases.

**Limited data on effectiveness:** Data on outcomes are limited because of shortcomings in monitoring and evaluation frameworks and because many projects are recent and still open (out of 40 projects analyzed, 22 are still open). This limitation partly justifies why the main focus of the evaluation is on processes rather than on final results.

**Potential impact on data quality due to remote evaluation:** The COVID-19 pandemic prevented country visits and direct observations by core team members. The team addressed this limitation by hiring local consultants to organize interviews with local informants, collect documentation, and visit project sites (Burkina Faso). The team included members with long experience and familiarity with country case studies, which allowed deeper understanding of the situation and easier access to local networks. The team also increased the duration of the data collection period to facilitate the completion of interviews and increase the validity of results. A strong effort was made to reach out to civil society, local authorities, women's organizations, engaged donors, and international nongovernmental organizations and to have different voices represented. Because of these choices, the quantity of information collected was not constrained by remote work. Nevertheless, remote work and the impact of the pandemic in the countries caused delays in the timeline and may have affected the quality of the information collected. The timeline and the quality of the information collected were also affected by the fragile environments. There were difficulties due to poor phone and internet connectivity. Often interviews needed to be rescheduled because of "breakages," and sometimes 1.5 hours generated barely 30 minutes of effective interview. As a result, the quality of some interviews was lower than a face-to-face interview could have allowed.

Constraints in the selection of the case studies **due to** unstable and challenging situation of FCV-affected countries: The evaluation faced several challenges because of the unstable situation of FCV-affected countries. As the Approach Paper was being finalized, Afghanistan and Haiti underwent dramatic political changes and the case studies had to be dropped. Similarly, the Chad case study had to be paused midway for three months as the precarious conditions after the president's assassination caused the Bank Group to suspend operations in the country. The country case was resumed when the World Bank established collaboration with the transitional government. The evaluation team addressed these issues by selecting alternative case studies and accepting delays in conducting the evaluation.

Constraints in the selection of case studies because of the difficulty to find available skilled experts in some countries: This evaluation required a combination of abilities that proved to be hard to find. For example, an ideal team member would have evaluation skills, deep gender knowledge (particularly on WGEE and GBV), and strong knowledge of the country and its language. As such, the process of locating and selecting international and national experts to conduct and support country case studies (including from the field) was delicate and time-consuming and limited the number of case studies that could be carried out.

**Table A.1.** Evaluation Methodology

Questions	Methods	Sources of Information and Sampling
<p>Overarching evaluation question: How can the World Bank Group improve its support to FCV-affected countries to produce transformational changes in tackling GBV and promoting women's and girls' economic empowerment?</p>		
<p>EQ1. How has the Bank Group supported FCV-affected countries to identify the transformational changes that were needed to tackle GBV and promote WGEE?</p>		
<p>1a. How has the Bank Group supported FCV-affected countries to produce and use analytical work, data, and statistics to address GBV and promote WGEE?</p>	<p>I. Structured literature review on GBV and WGEE in FCV-affected contexts (patterns, drivers, and impacts of GBV and specific aspects of WGEE; enabling and hindering factors of GBV and WGEE; and lessons learned on effective policy measures)</p> <p>II. Country context analysis (to inform the analysis of relevance of Bank Group's analytical work and solutions identified to address GBV and promote WGEE):</p> <p>a. Analysis of key gender indicators (current situation and trends 2010–21)</p> <p>b. Review of existing knowledge products produced by actors other than the Bank Group, which integrate the analysis of GBV, WGEE, and lessons learned from interventions (including government and donor-produced country gender profiles, SIGI country profiles, CEDAW and Beijing's government and shadow reports, qualitative research and survey reports focused on GBV and WGEE, impact evaluations of relevant interventions, and so on)</p> <p>Case studies—vertical analysis</p>	<p>Sources of information include the following:</p> <p>I. Documents retrieved from JSTOR, EconLit, the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, and other repositories</p> <p>IIa. International gender statistics databases: WDI, ILO, UNDP, WHO, UNICEF, DHS program, WEF, OECD, and World Bank Women, Business and the Law</p> <p>IIb. Key informants and internet search (consultation of relevant organizations' websites and Google search with keywords)</p>

*(continued)*



Questions	Methods	Sources of Information and Sampling
	<p>III. Structured review (using a common structured protocol in Excel) of Bank Group relevant knowledge products (delivered by the Bank Group and other actors with the support of the Bank Group) over the period 2010–21, contributing to the analysis of GBV and WGEE and reporting lessons learned from interventions, including strategic diagnostics (country gender assessments, poverty assessments, job diagnostics, and others); relevant impact evaluations; and all other Bank Group relevant knowledge products for the country</p> <p>The analysis used a specific protocol and was focused on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The relevance of Bank Group analytical work with respect to the country context (FCV-affected areas and populations in particular) and the level of engagement of local actors in the process</li> <li>b. The use of existing evidence to build an “evolving” and original body of analytical work and to create value added</li> <li>c. The contribution of the Bank Group analytical work to the identification of interventions to address GBV and promote WGEE</li> <li>d. The extent to which these interventions are expected to achieve transformational changes and in which elements: relevance, inclusive ownership, depth of change, scale of change, and sustainability (triangulation with the other sources of information required)</li> </ul> <p>IV. Review of relevant country strategic documents produced by the government and other key stakeholders to collect information on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The strategies and interventions identified to address GBV and promote WGEE and the expected transformational change</li> <li>b. The influence of Bank Group analytical work</li> </ul> <p>Horizontal analysis (comparative analysis across case studies)</p>	<p>III. World Bank and IFC knowledge products retrieved from World Bank Open Knowledge Repository, ImageBank, other World Bank and IFC document repositories, gender platforms, Gender Innovation Lab, World Bank and IFC gender teams, TTLs, and CMUs</p> <p>IV. Key informants and internet search (consultation of relevant organizations' websites and Google search with keywords)</p>

*(continued)*

Questions	Methods	Sources of Information and Sampling
	<p>V. Comparative analysis of the data retrieved from the structured reviews of 60 relevant knowledge products (covering the country case studies) contained in the Excel structured protocols</p>	
<p>1b. How, and how well, has the Bank Group supported FCV-affected countries to identify and design interventions aimed at producing transformational changes in the areas of GBV and WGEE?</p>	<p>Deep dive of 40 relevant projects of the country case studies</p> <p>I. A structured country portfolio review of relevant project documents of the Bank Group to collect information on the following:</p> <p>a. Which expected changes and which strategies were identified to address GBV and promote WGEE and how they were identified</p> <p>b. To what extent the Bank Group analytical work informed the identification of these strategies and interventions and the expected change</p> <p>c. The level of relevance, inclusive ownership, depth, scalability, and sustainability of the expected changes based on the project design</p> <p>II. Interviews with key informants to collect additional information and relevant documentation (valuable for 1b but also for 1a)</p> <p>Horizontal analysis (comparative analysis across case studies)</p> <p>III. Analysis of the 40 relevant projects using a common structured protocol in Excel and data analysis</p> <p>IV. Analysis of the 210 interviews with Excel and NVivo using deductive and inductive coding</p>	<p>I. IEG DataMart (Access), Enterprise Data Catalog, Standard Reports, ImageBank, IFC data set (Business Intelligence), and documents retrieved from key informants</p> <p>II. Key informants are the following: Bank Group country and regional gender advisors (or focal points), knowledgeable representatives of government's gender machineries, academics and think tanks, donors and international NGOs, and national women's rights umbrella organizations</p>

(continued)

Questions	Methods	Sources of Information and Sampling
<p>1c. How has the Bank Group established complementarities and collaboration with other partners and stakeholders to guide its policy engagement with FCV countries in addressing GBV and promoting WGEE? What has and has not been transformational and why?</p>	<p>For the case studies            Analysis of how the Bank Group has defined its contribution and value added to address GBV and promote WGEE in the country (and how it has used its analytical work to this end)            The analysis will focus on how the Bank Group has (in these domains) defined its strategic priorities, shaped its policy engagement, and coordinated and cooperated with the other relevant actors.            The analysis used three methods:            I. Structured review of Bank Group country strategies: parallel analysis of CPF, SCD, and RRAs and any other relevant strategic documents (including country gender action plans, if any; regional gender action plan) (2010–20)            II. Review of relevant strategic documents produced by coordination mechanisms, key development partners, and humanitarian actors (that is, relevant donor coordination groups, humanitarian clusters, country trust funds, and so on) and review of relevant stakeholders' mappings (if any)            III. Online semistructured interviews with key informants for complementary information and triangulation            Horizontal analysis (comparative analysis across case studies)            a. Structured review of Bank Group strategic documents (related to the six country case studies) using a common structured protocol in Excel and data analysis (15 country strategies, 15 SCDs, and 9 RRAs)            b. Analysis of the 210 interviews with Excel and NVivo using deductive and inductive coding</p>	<p>I. ImageBank, SCD tracking map, CMUs            II. Documents retrieved from key informants and from stakeholders' and coordination mechanisms' websites            III. Key informants are the following: Bank Group staff (CMU) and key partners, including lead agencies of donor coordination groups</p>

(continued)

Questions	Methods	Sources of Information and Sampling
<p>EQ2. How has the World Bank Group supported FCV-affected countries to undertake and assess transformational changes in GBV prevention and response and WGEE?</p>		
<p>2a. What are the changes that FCV-affected countries have produced (are in the process of being produced), with the support of the Bank Group, to tackle GBV and promote WGEE and to what extent have they been (do they have the potential to be) transformational?</p>	<p>For the case studies</p> <p>I. CPF, PLR, and CLR review to analyze any transformational change in the country systems that was planned by the Bank Group country strategy (CPF) to promote WGEE and address GBV and the results of implementation (PLR and CLR)</p> <p>II. Deep-dive analysis of the most relevant Bank Group projects and activities addressing GBV and WGEE in each country to collect information on the transformational changes that FCV-affected countries were able to adopt to prevent and respond to GBV and promote WGEE</p> <p>Method: In-depth review of available Bank Group projects and activities documents (including process and impact evaluations) and other documents produced by implementing partners and stakeholders on results and lessons learned from the intervention</p>	<p>I. ImageBank, SCD tracking map, CMUs</p> <p>II. Bank Group project documents are the following: baselines, PADs, ISRs, aide-mémoire, restructuring documents, ICRs, ICRRs, impact and process evaluations (quantitative and qualitative), and any other relevant project documents</p> <p>Other documents: documents retrieved from key partners and stakeholders</p> <p>Sources: IEG DataMart (Access), Enterprise Data Catalog, Standard Reports, ImageBank, World Bank and IFC knowledge repositories, and key partners' and stakeholders' websites (key informants for documents yet to be published)</p>
<p>2b. How has the Bank Group identified and addressed potential negative unintended outcomes (including through the adoption of "do no harm" approaches) and positive spillovers and externalities?</p>	<p>III. Online interviews with key informants</p> <p>VI. Analysis of potential unintended outcomes based on the theory of change and the reading of the literature</p> <p>V. Analysis of Bank Group and partners' documents to identify mention of unintended outcomes and risk mitigation measures (including social safeguard tools and any other "do no harm" tools with analytical or operational purpose)</p> <p>Horizontal analysis (comparative analysis across case studies)</p> <p>a. Comparative analysis of country cases matrixes</p> <p>b. Structured review of 40 relevant projects using a common structured protocol in Excel (including rating with scores) and data analysis</p> <p>c. Analysis of qualitative data retrieved by the 210 interviews, in Excel and NVivo (using deductive and inductive coding)</p>	<p>III. Key informants are the following: project TTLs, CMU staff, project staff, implementing partners, representatives of beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders</p>

(continued)

Questions	Methods	Sources of Information and Sampling
EQ3. What are the main internal and external factors that have enabled and those that have hindered the Bank Group support to FCV-affected countries to make transformational changes and how has the World Bank Group addressed them?		
3a. Which factors have enabled or hindered the Bank Group support to FCV-affected countries to produce transformational changes?	<p>For the case studies</p> <p>I. Identify the main internal and external factors that have enabled or hindered the support of the Bank Group to each country to produce transformational change in WGEE and GBV prevention and response</p> <p>Methods: Interviews with key informants and document review</p> <p>Horizontal analysis (comparative analysis across case studies)</p> <p>a. Qualitative analysis of a subset of data retrieved from interviews and documents to identify the list of all potential enabling and constraining factors (classified in categories)</p> <p>b. Tabulation of factors against each project and comparative analysis to identify patterns (identification of the "most significant" factors—that is, those that show a clear association with the "most transformational" projects [with at least three elements with the score 3 or 4] and "least transformational" projects [with all transformational elements below the score 3], including robustness tests using various definitions of "most transformational" and "least transformational" projects)</p>	<p>The same sources of EQ2 (the analysis of internal and external factors will be included in the methods used for 2a and 2b)</p>

*(continued)*

Questions	Methods	Sources of Information and Sampling
3b. How successfully has the Bank Group addressed these factors?	<p>For the case studies</p> <p>II. Analysis of whether and how the Bank Group (jointly with implementing partners) have addressed the predictable and nonpredictable factors to support each country to produce transformational change in WGEE and GBV prevention and response</p> <p>Methods: Interviews with key informants and document review</p> <p>Horizontal analysis (comparative analysis across case studies)</p> <p>Qualitative analysis of a subset of data retrieved from interviews and documents to identify the response to the most significant factors (identified in 3a).</p>	<p>The same sources of EQ2 (the analysis of internal and external factors will be included in the methods used for 2a and 2b)</p> <p>Based on the (possible) additional activities for EQ1 and EQ2, the analysis can be consolidated and or enriched.</p>

*Source:* Independent Evaluation Group.

*Note:* CEDAW = Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; CMU = Country Management Unit; CPF = Country Partnership Framework; CLR = Completion and Learning Review; DHS = Demographic and Health Surveys; FCV = fragility, conflict, and violence; GBV = gender-based violence; ICR = Implementation Completion and Results Report; ICRR = Implementation Completion and Results Report Review; IEG = Independent Evaluation Group; IFC = International Finance Corporation; ILO = International Labor Organization; ISR = Implementation Status and Results Report; NGO = nongovernmental organization; OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; PAD = Project Appraisal Document; PLR = Performance and Learning Review; RRA = Risk and Resilience Assessment; SCD = Systematic Country Diagnostic; SIGI = Social Institutions and Gender Index; TTL = task team leader; UNDP = United Nations Development Programme; UNICEF = United Nations Children's Fund; WDI = World Development Indicators; WEF = World Economic Forum; WGEE = women's and girls' economic empowerment; WHO = World Health Organization.

**Table A.2.** Number of projects by elements of transformational change

Element of transformational change	Projects (no.)
No element	9
Only relevance	3
Only inclusive ownership	3
Relevance and inclusive ownership	5
Relevance and sustainability	1
Relevance and scale	2
Relevance, sustainability, and scale	1
Relevance, inclusive ownership, and depth	5
Relevance, inclusive ownership, and sustainability	1
Relevance, inclusive ownership, and scale	2
Relevance, inclusive ownership, depth, and sustainability	5
Relevance, inclusive ownership, depth, and scale	1
Relevance, inclusive ownership, sustainability, and scale	2
All five elements	0
Total	40

Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: The number shown in the table are associated with the Venn diagram of Figures O.1 and 2.1

**Table A.3.** Closed Impact Evaluations Conducted within the Framework of the 40 Selected Projects

Project No.	Relevant Project/ ASA	Year	Location	Author(s)/ Editor(s)	Title	Type of Evaluation	Status
P124015	Safety Net Project	2016	Burkina Faso	Akresh et al.	Evidence from a Randomized Evaluation of the Household Welfare Impacts of Conditional and Unconditional Cash Transfers Given to Mothers or Fathers	RCT	Closed
P124015	Safety Net Project	2012	Burkina Faso	Akresh et al.	Cash Transfers and Child Schooling: Evidence from a Randomized Evaluation of the Role of Conditionality	RCT	Closed
P156479	Chad Safety Nets Project	2021	Chad	Kandpal, Schnitzer, and Dayé	Cash Transfers and Women's Productive Activities and Subjective Well-Being: Evidence from an Ultra-Poor Setting	RCT	Closed
P156479	Chad Safety Nets Project	2020	Chad	Kandpal, Schnitzer, and Dayé	Disaggregating the Effects of Cash Transfers on the Men and Women in Poor Households: Evidence from Chad (draft)	RCT	Closed
P147489	Great Lakes Emergency Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Women's Health Project	2018	Rwanda	Doyle et al.	Gender-Transformative Bandebereho Couples' Intervention to Promote Male Engagement in Reproductive and Maternal Health and Violence Prevention in Rwanda: Findings from a Randomized Controlled Trial	RCT	Closed
P147489	Great Lakes Project	2020	Congo, Dem. Rep.	Africa GIL and IRC	Engaging Men to Transform Gender Attitudes and Prevent Intimate-Partner Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo	RCT	Closed
P147489	Great Lakes Project	2021	Congo, Dem. Rep.	Africa GIL	Evaluation d'Impact de la Thérapie par Exposition à la Narration (NET) à l'Est de la RDC	RCT	Closed

Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: ASA = advisory services and analytics; GIL = Gender Innovation Lab; IRC = International Rescue Committee; RCT = randomized controlled trial.



**Table A.4.** List of World Bank Group Projects Reviewed for the Deep-Dive Analysis

Project Name	Country	Project Type
Burkina Faso Emergency Local Development and Resilience Project	Burkina Faso	IPF
FIP—Decentralized Forest and Woodland Management Project	Burkina Faso	IPF
Financial Inclusion Support Project	Burkina Faso	IPF
Agricultural Productivity and Food Security Project	Burkina Faso	IPF
Agricultural Productivity and Food Security Project (Additional Financing)	Burkina Faso	IPF
Youth Employment and Skills Development Project	Burkina Faso	IPF
Social Safety Net Project (Parent) and Additional Financing	Burkina Faso	IPF
Social Safety Net Project Additional Financing 2—Scale-Up and Responding to the Needs of Refugees and Host Communities	Burkina Faso	IPF
Chad Safety Nets Project (Project Filets Sociaux)	Chad	IPF
Chad—Refugees and Host Communities Support Project (PARCA)	Chad	IPF
Emergency Food and Livestock Crisis Response Project (PURCAE)	Chad	IPF
Climate Resilient Agriculture and Productivity Enhancement Project (PROPAD)	Chad	IPF
ALBIA—Local Development and Adaptation Project	Chad	IPF
Lake Chad Region Recovery and Development Project (ProLac)	Chad	IPF
Community-Based Recovery and Stabilization Project for the Sahel	Burkina Faso	IPF
Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project I (PRAPS I)	Chad and Burkina Faso	IPF
Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project II (PRAPS II)	Chad and Burkina Faso	IPF
Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend Phase I	Chad and Burkina Faso	IPF
Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend Phase II	Chad and Burkina Faso	IPF
Great Lakes Emergency Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Women's Health Project	Congo, Dem. Rep.	IPF
Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response Project	Congo, Dem. Rep.	IPF
Supporting Innovation and Medium Enterprises (ISME)	Lebanon	SIL

(continued)

Project Name	Country	Project Type
Al Majmoua I	Lebanon	IFC AS
Al Majmoua II	Lebanon	IFC Investment
BLC Bank	Lebanon	IFC investment
Mashreq Gender Facility—Women's Economic Opportunities	Lebanon	World Bank Group ASA
E-Commerce and Women-Led SMEs in MENA	Lebanon	World Bank ASA
Lebanon Emergency Project	Lebanon	IPF
National Volunteer Service Program	Lebanon	IPF
Community Access and Urban Services Enhancement Project	Solomon Islands, the	IPF
Community Governance and Grievance Management Project	Solomon Islands, the	IPF
Rapid Employment Project	Solomon Islands, the	IPF
Rural Development Program Phase I	Solomon Islands, the	IPF
Rural Development Program Phase II	Solomon Islands, the	IPF
Pacific WINvest	Solomon Islands, the	IFC advisory
Emergency Crisis Response Project	Yemen, Rep.	IPF
Emergency Social Protection Enhancement and COVID-19 Response	Yemen, Rep.	IPF
Emergency Health and Nutrition Project	Yemen, Rep.	IPF
Emergency Electricity Access Project	Yemen, Rep.	IPF
Integrated Urban Services Emergency Project I	Yemen, Rep.	IPF
Integrated Urban Services Emergency Project II	Yemen, Rep.	IPF

Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: AS = advisory services; ASA = advisory services and analytics; FIP = Forest Investment Program; IFC = International Finance Corporation; IPF = investment project financing; MENA = Middle East and North Africa; SIL = specific investment loan; SME = small and medium enterprise.

**Table A.5.** Interviews by Interviewee Categories (Excluding Interviews and Focus Groups in the Field in Burkina Faso)

External or Internal Interviews	Interviewee Category	Number (no.)
World Bank Group	World Bank Group task team leaders	26
World Bank Group	World Bank Group staff	40
External	Project implementation units	17
External	Donors	32
External	Government	23
External	Civil society organizations	21
External	International nongovernmental organizations	15
External	Women's rights organizations	11
External	Private sector	6
External	Others (religious and traditional leaders, media, academics, and researchers)	15
Total	n.a.	206

Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: n.a. = not applicable.

**Table A.6.** Factors Affecting Transformational Change in Project Design

Types of Factors	Factors	Impact
External factors	Governance and rule of law	Political crisis
		Political engagement
		Legal framework
	Conflict dynamics and spillovers	Allocation of public budget
		Conflict dynamics and spillovers
		Economic shocks
	Natural disasters and pandemic	Economic shocks
		Climate shocks
		Outbreak of diseases
	Sociocultural norms	COVID-19
Gender sociocultural norms		
Women and girls' literacy, education, and skills		
Social services, infrastructure, and assets	Quality and coverage of social services	

(continued)

Types of Factors	Factors	Impact
		Availability and conditions of infrastructure and technology
		Women's access to lands
	Country actors' capacity and engagement on gender	Implementing partners' awareness and capacities on gender issues
		Donors' engagement and coordination on gender
Internal factors	World Bank Group financial and human resources	Budget allocation
		Availability of gender advisors in units and project teams
		Awareness, knowledge, and skills of World Bank staff
	Bank Group operational modalities	Gender identified as a strategic priority
		Management engagement
		Continuity of engagement
		Bank Group flexibility
		Top-down approach to planning
		Nexus approach
		Holistic outcome-oriented approach
		Intersectionality lens
		Internal coordination
	Engagement, coordination, and partnership with the Bank Group	Coordination and synergies between the Bank Group and other donors and INGOs
		Engagement with nonstate actors (local institutions, CSOs, opinion leaders, and CBOs)
		Engagement with grassroots women's organizations
	Outcomes that enabled or constrained transformational design	Transformational policy dialogue and strategic vision
		Transformational production and use of data and analytical work

Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: CBO = community-based organization; CSO = civil society organization; INGO = international non-governmental organization.

**Table A.7.** Factors Impacting Transformational Change in Project Implementation

Types of Factors	Factors	Impact
External factors	Governance and rule of law	Political crisis
		Political engagement
		Legal framework
	Conflict dynamics and spill-overs	Allocation of public budget
		Conflict dynamics and spillovers
		Economic shocks
	Natural disasters and pandemic	Economic shocks
		Climate shocks
		Outbreak of diseases
	Sociocultural norms	COVID-19
		Gender sociocultural norms
		Women and girls' literacy, education, and skills
	Social services, infrastructure, and assets	Quality and coverage of social services
		Availability and conditions of infrastructure and technology
Women's access to land		
Country actors' capacity and engagement on gender	Implementing partners' awareness and capacities on gender issues	
	Donors' engagement and coordination on gender	
	Budget allocation	
Internal factors	Bank Group financial and human resources	Availability of gender advisors in units and project teams
		Awareness, knowledge, and skills of World Bank staff
	Bank Group operational modalities	Gender identified as a strategic priority
		Management engagement
		Continuity of engagement
		Bank Group flexibility
		Top-down approach to planning
		Nexus approach
Holistic outcome-oriented approach		

(continued)

Types of Factors	Factors	Impact
		Intersectionality lens Internal coordination
	Engagement, coordination, and partnership with the Bank Group	Coordination and synergies between the Bank Group and other donors and INGOs
		Engagement with nonstate actors (local institutions, CSO, opinion leaders, and CBOs)
		Engagement with grassroots women's organizations
	Outcomes that enabled or constrained transformational design	Transformational policy dialogue and strategic vision
		Transformational production and use of data and analytical work
		Transformational design (only for implementation)

Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: CBO = community-based organization; CSO = civil society organization; INGO = international non-governmental organization.

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<sup>1</sup> The case study started very late because it took time to find a local consultant, and the president of Haiti was murdered on July 7, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>.

<sup>3</sup> The team included one health project in the Republic of Yemen, which did not explicitly integrate gender-based violence or women’s and girls’ economic empowerment but provided support to gender-based violence survivors “hidden” in one component to overcome potential sensitivities. This project was identified through an interview with a key informant of the World Bank.

<sup>4</sup> Most remote interviews were conducted using Microsoft Teams or Webex. When the key informant was not able to join Microsoft Teams or Webex, the interview was conducted by a phone call or WhatsApp video call.

<sup>5</sup> It was possible to consult private sector only in Lebanon.

<sup>6</sup> The notes of interviews and focus groups conducted in the field in Burkina Faso were written in French. They were not translated in English and were analyzed separately from the other interviews.

# Appendix B. Country Case Studies

The World Bank Group strategy for fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) adopts a broader and inclusive conceptual framework. FCV-affected countries include the following: (i) fragile countries, with deep governance issues and state institutional weakness (identified through policy-based and governance indicators); (ii) countries in active conflict (identified based on a threshold rate of conflict-related deaths); and (iii) countries with high levels of interpersonal and gang violence (identified based on the per capita level of intentional homicides; gender-based violence [GBV] and violence against children are also part of this definition). The evaluation adopted this conceptual framework for the analysis, but the scope for case country selection was restricted to countries included in the list of fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS) in fiscal year 2021.<sup>1</sup>

## Box B.1. Criteria for Selection of Country Cases

Country typology:

Countries included in the World Bank Group list of fragile and conflict-affected situations in fiscal year 2021

Programmatic:

Significant engagement of the Bank Group in supporting the country to advance gender equality and existence of relevant Bank Group projects and activities in the areas of gender-based violence and women's and girls' economic empowerment

Presence of both World Bank and International Finance Corporation gender-focused interventions

Diversification:

Location in different geographical areas (at least three different regions)

Inclusion of both eligible and noneligible (upper-middle income) International Development Association countries

*(continued)*



### Box B.1. Criteria for Selection of Country Cases (cont.)

Inclusion of countries with different levels of human development and different types of gender inequalities

Inclusion of countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence with different types of conflict (for example, different duration) or fragility

Pragmatic:

Capitalization on recent Independent Evaluation Group evaluations and validations with specific attention to gender issues (including Chad Country Program Evaluation; Independent Evaluation Group *World Bank Group Support in Situations Involving Conflict-Induced Displacement* (World Bank 2019), and the ongoing Implementation Completion and Results Report Review of Great Lakes Emergency Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Women's Health Project)

Identification of "good cases" (usually defined at the project level but extrapolated to countries) in Bank Group corporate documents (for example, gender equality strategy updates, International Development Association Mid-Term Review, and regional gender action plans) to establish an upper benchmark.

Source: Independent Evaluation Group

The case studies were selected in multiple phases. In the first phase, to identify the countries that could provide lessons on World Bank's and International Finance Corporation's engagement on GBV and women's and girls' economic empowerment, the evaluation team conducted interviews with key informants and elementary review of recent evaluations, corporate strategic documents and their updates, and other Bank Group reports on gender and FCV issues.

In the second phase, 12 potential case studies were selected based on the first phase review, along with the selected criteria exposed in box B.1. The purpose was to ensure that all the potential cases were included in the fiscal year 2021 list of FCS countries and that they also yielded a diverse (yet not representative) sample. First, the selection ensured that potential case studies covered five regions,<sup>2</sup> different types of fragility and conflict situations, and different income levels.<sup>3</sup> The countries also had wide distinct human

development and gender inequality measures, assessed using a database collated from the World Development Indicators; Inter-Parliamentary Union Data and Statistics; United Nations Children’s Fund; United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization; World Health Organization; United Nations Development Programme; and World Economic Forum data sets. Finally, the countries also covered the programmatic and pragmatic criteria of selection, as they hosted promising practices of engagement for GBV prevention and response and women’s and girls’ economic empowerment that were flagged by the gender strategy updates and other corporate reports and that were indicated by key informants.

In the final phase, the team conducted an assessment of the 12 potential countries to select seven case study countries with the purpose of identifying which countries had a sufficient gender-related engagement to analyze. This assessment combined different methods: consultations with key informants operating in the different regions (who provided advice on which case studies to select), a review of the last two country strategies, and a quick review of the Bank Group portfolio in the country. The team also used intranet and other searches to identify any relevant stand-alone knowledge products. The seven selected countries were Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lebanon, Haiti, and the Solomon Islands. However, because of Taliban’s takeover, Afghanistan was replaced with the Republic of Yemen, and Haiti was dropped because of difficulties of conducting the case study in the country. The six countries finally selected satisfied the eight selection criteria (box B.1). All six countries were FCS countries in fiscal year 2021 with significant World Bank Group’s engagement as found by the initially review. Two of the six countries, the Solomon Islands and Lebanon also had relevant International Finance Corporation operations. Geographically, three of these countries were in the Sub-Saharan Africa Region, two in Middle East and North Africa, and one in East Asia and Pacific.<sup>4</sup> They represent different income levels with three low-income countries, one upper-middle-income country, and one lower-middle-income country. They also represent different types of FCS situations: three countries have middle-intensity conflict, and three countries have high institutional and social fragility.<sup>5</sup>

The case country studies differed on human development and gender inequality measures. Table B.1 presents the statistics for the six countries on a list of

variables for the following areas: fragility and conflict, human development, economy and infrastructure, economic participation and opportunities, and GBV. Finally, these countries were “good cases” due to stand-alone projects, such as the Sahel Women’s Empowerment and Demographic Dividend project in Chad and Burkina Faso, the Great Lakes Emergency Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Women’s Health Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Mashreq Gender Facility in Lebanon, and International Finance Corporation initiatives in Lebanon and the Solomon Islands. This enabled the evaluation team to extract lessons that could be extrapolated to other fragility and conflict situations. The Republic of Yemen was selected as a very particular case of a country affected by a long-lasting FCV with an open conflict where the World Bank Group operates through the United Nations. The Republic of Yemen replaced Afghanistan (after Taliban’s takeover) to provide Afghanistan and other countries in similar situations with lessons on how to address GBV and promote women’s and girls’ economic empowerment in countries characterized by open conflict, deep-rooted discriminatory gender norms, and the absence of a government’s counterpart and the Bank Group in the country.

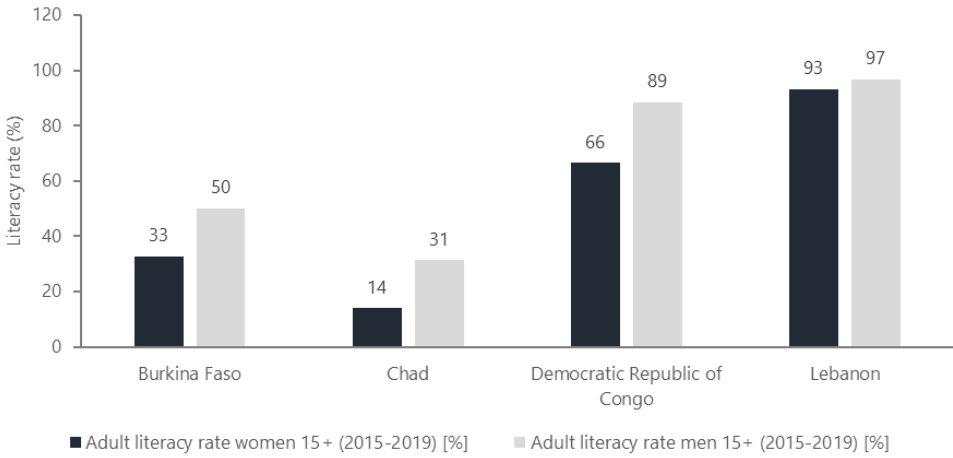
**Table B.1.** Case Study Countries

Country	Region	Years of FCS Status (FY10–21)	World Bank Group FCS Classification (FY21)	Income Level (2021)
Burkina Faso	Sub-Saharan Africa	2	Medium-intensity conflict	Low income
Chad	Sub-Saharan Africa	12	Medium-intensity conflict	Low income
Congo, Dem. Rep.	Sub-Saharan Africa	12	High institutional and social fragility	Low income
Lebanon	Middle East and North Africa	6	High institutional and social fragility	Upper-middle income
Solomon Islands	East Asia and Pacific	12	High institutional and social fragility	Lower-middle income
Yemen, Rep.	Middle East and North Africa	12	Medium-intensity conflict	Low income

Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: FCS = fragile and conflict-affected situations; FY = fiscal year.

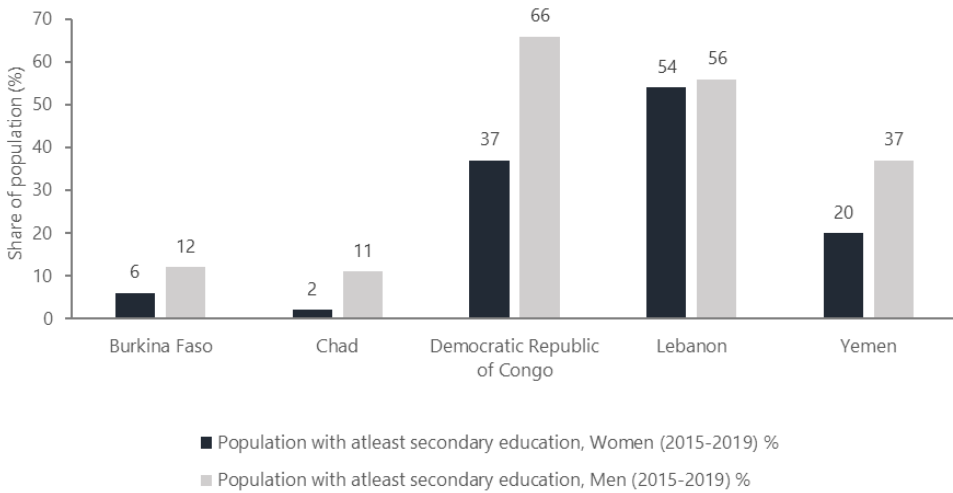
**Figure B.1.** Literacy Rates among Women and Men Aged 15 Years and Older



Sources: World Development Indicators: Demographic and Health Surveys and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys.

Note: Literacy rates are not available for the Solomon Islands and the Republic of Yemen.

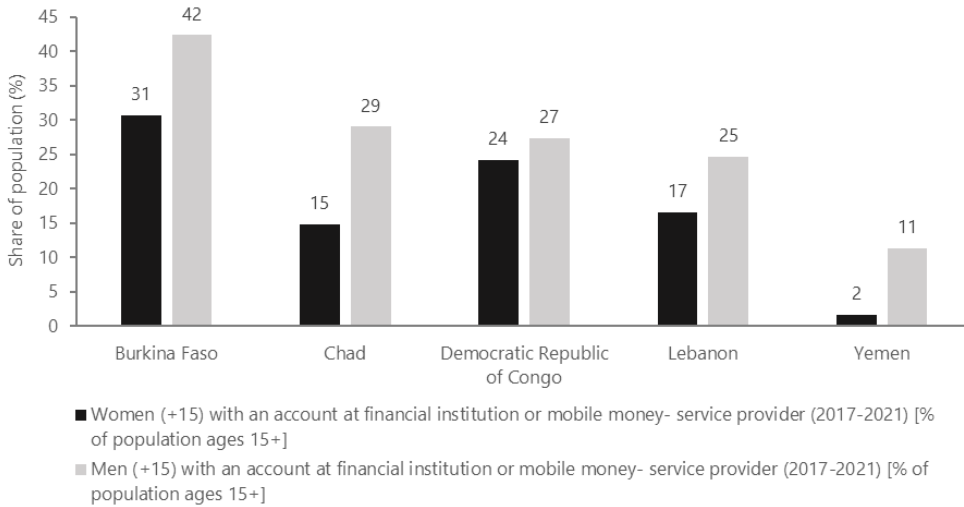
**Figure B.2.** Population with Secondary Education, by Sex



Sources: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics (2020): Demographic and Health Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, administrative data, and Barro-Lee data set (2018).

Note: Data are not available for the Solomon Islands.

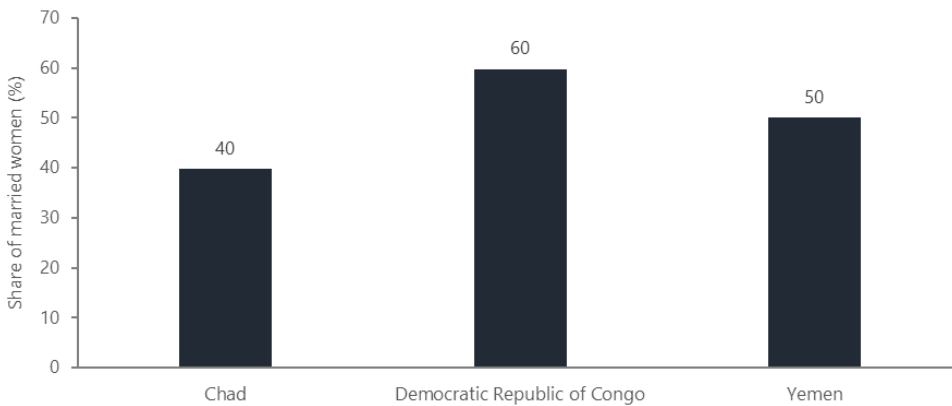
**Figure B.3.** Women and Men with an Account at Financial Institution or Money Service Provider



Sources: World Bank Global Financial Inclusion database; Demographic and Health Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, World Health Surveys, Family Health Surveys, and MHS.

Note: Data are not available for the Solomon Islands.

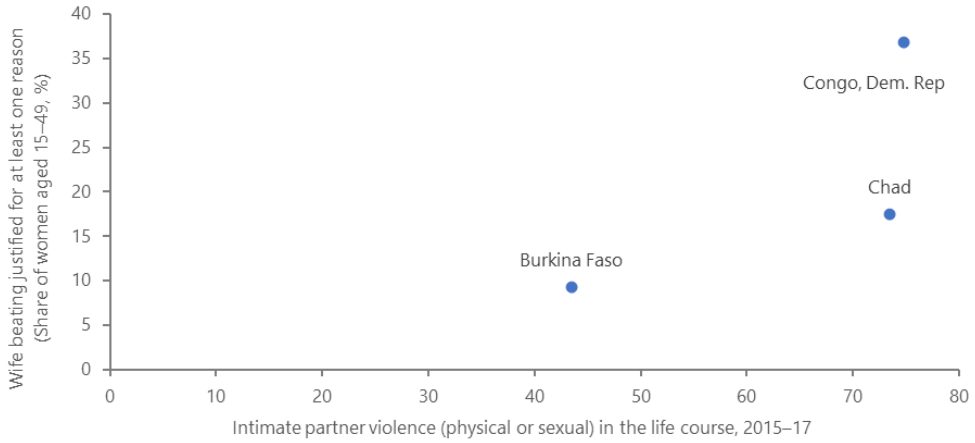
**Figure B.4.** Married Women Aged 15–49 Years Participating in Major Household Purchase



Sources: World Bank Gender Data Portal; Demographic and Health Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, World Health Surveys, Family Health Surveys, and MHS.

Note: Data are not available for Burkina Faso, Lebanon, and the Solomon Islands.

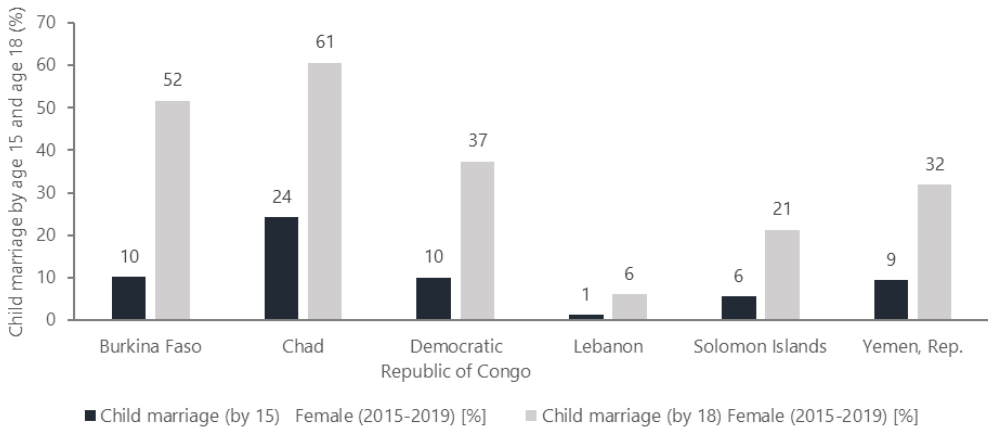
**Figure B.5.** Justification of Wife Beating by Women and Intimate Partner Violence, Physical or Sexual, in the Life Course (2015–17)



Sources: World Health Organization: Demographic and Health Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, and other national surveys.

Note: Data are not available for Lebanon, the Solomon Islands, and the Republic of Yemen.

**Figure B.6.** Child Marriage by Age 15 and Age 18



Sources: United Nations Children's Fund: Demographic and Health Surveys, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, and other national surveys.

**Table B.2.** Socioeconomic Indicators for Case Country Studies

Country	Burkina Faso	Chad	Congo, Dem. Rep.	Lebanon	Solomon Islands, the	Yemen, Rep.	FCS Average
Region	SSA	SSA	SSA	MENA	EAP	MENA	n.a.
Fragility and conflict							
Years of FCS status (FY11–22)	3	13	13	7	13	13	9.1
World Bank Group FCS status (FY22)	Medium-intensity conflict	Medium-intensity conflict	Medium-intensity conflict	High institutional social fragility	High institutional social fragility	High-intensity conflict	n.a.
No. of battle-related deaths per 100,000 live births (2020)	2.44	1.19	1.28	1.1	—	34.62	8.5
Refugee population by country or territory of origin per 100,000 inhabitants (2020)	75.4	63.9	938.4	18.4	4.4	488.9	3,204.1
Total IDPs per 100,000 inhabitants (2019)	5,142.7	2,082.1	5,882.0	23.5	—	53,256.6	5,144.9
Human development							
Adolescent birthrate per 1,000 women aged 15–19 years (2020)	97.5	151.6	119.4	13.7	79.2	56.8	89.4

Country	Burkina Faso	Chad	Congo, Dem. Rep.	Lebanon	Solomon Islands, the	Yemen, Rep.	FCS Average
Adult literacy rate: men aged 15 years and older (2010–18; %)	50.1	31.3	88.5	96.9	—	—	71.3
Adult literacy rate: women aged 15 years and older (2010–18; %)	32.7	14.0	66.5	93.3	—	—	57.6
Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births (2017)	320.0	1,140.0	473.0	29.0	104.0	164.0	415.1
Population (female) with at least secondary education (2015–19; %)	6.1	1.7	36.7	54.3	—	19.9	30.6
Population (male) with at least secondary education (2015–19; %)	12.3	10.5	65.8	55.6	—	36.9	38.6
Total fertility rate (2015–20)	5.2	5.8	6.0	2.1	4.4	3.8	4.3
Median under-five mortality rate, female population (2019)	80.1	103.2	74.5	6.6	17.5	55.5	54.8
Median under-five mortality rate, male population (2019)	89.6	116.5	87.4	7.3	21.1	63.6	63.5



Country	Burkina Faso	Chad	Congo, Dem. Rep.	Lebanon	Solomon Islands, the	Yemen, Rep.	FCS Average
Economy and infrastructure							
GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$; 2021)	2,330	1,540	1,170	10,360	2,680	—	4,322.3
Poverty head count ratio at US\$1.90 a day (2011 PPP; 2012–18)	43.8	38.1	77.2	—	25.1	18.3	29.5
Rural population of total population (2021; %)	68.7	76.2	53.7	10.9	74.9	61.5	53.5
Rural population with access to electricity (2011–20; %)	4.7	2.0	1.0	100.0	72.0	61.9	49.2
Economic participation and opportunities							
Contributing female family workers (2020; female employment %)	52.0	44.2	30.7	4.0	65.0	40.7	29.8
Contributing male family workers (2020; male employment %)	30.3	13.2	7.2	2.8	43.1	11.0	14.6

Country	Burkina Faso	Chad	Congo, Dem. Rep.	Lebanon	Solomon Islands, the	Yemen, Rep.	FCS Average
Labor force participation rate, female population (2020; %)	58.2	63.9	60.4	22.9	82.0	57	51.7
Labor force participation rate, male population (2020; %)	74.7	77.5	66.1	71.3	85.5	70.2	73.7
Married women (aged 15–49 years) participating in making major household purchase decisions (2013–18)	—	39.8	59.8	—	—	50.0	59.2
Men (aged 15 years and older) with an account at financial institution or mobile money service provider (2017–21; %)	42.4	29.0	27.4	24.7	—	—	36.2
Women (aged 15 years and older) with an account at financial institution or mobile money service provider (2017–21; %)	30.7	14.9	24.2	16.6	—	—	25.6

Country	Burkina Faso	Chad	Congo, Dem. Rep.	Lebanon	Solomon Islands, the	Yemen, Rep.	FCS Average
Own-account workers, female population (2020; share of female employment [%])	37.8	54.6	59.4	9.9	9.7	27.2	43.3
Own-account workers, male population (2020; share of male employment [%])	53.3	74.9	62.3	27.9	13.8	33.3	47.3
Proportion of female workers in agriculture sector (2020; share of female employment [%])	16.6	74.5	72.2	14.0	36.9	46.0	48.1
Proportion of male workers in agriculture sector (2020; share of male employment [%])	30.7	77.8	58.4	13.2	37.2	27.4	45.2
Unemployed female youth aged 15–24 years (2020; share of female labor force aged 15–24 years [%])	12.9	2.7	6.2	21.2	1.2	33.9	18.5

Country	Burkina Faso	Chad	Congo, Dem. Rep.	Lebanon	Solomon Islands, the	Yemen, Rep.	FCS Average
Unemployed male youth aged 15–24 years (2020; share of male labor force aged 15–24 years [%])	5.3	3.6	10.2	16.4	0.8	23.1	12.8
Wage and salaried female workers (2020; share of female employment [%])	9.8	1.1	8.8	84.4	24.9	29.8	25.8
Wage and salaried male workers (2020; share of male employment [%])	15.5	11.6	27.6	57.6	41.6	48.1	35.1
Gender-based violence							
Child marriage (by age 15 years), female population (2009–18; %)	10.2	24.2	10.0	1.2	5.6	9.4	9.3
Child marriage (by age 18 years), female population (2009–18; %)	51.6	60.6	37.3	6.1	21.3	31.9	33.6
Child marriage (by age 18 years), male population (2015–18; %)	3.9	8.0	5.7	—	4.4	—	5.6

Country	Burkina Faso	Chad	Congo, Dem. Rep.	Lebanon	Solomon Islands, the	Yemen, Rep.	FCS Average
Intimate partner violence (physical or sexual) in the life course (2010–17)	9.3	17.5	36.8	—	—	—	20.3
Wife beating justified for at least one reason, men aged 15–49 years (2010–18; %)	34.1	50.5	61.0	—	—	—	38.5
Wife beating justified for at least one reason, women aged 15–49 years (2010–18; %)	43.5	73.5	74.8	—	—	48.7	52.5

Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: EAP = East Asia and Pacific; FCS = fragile and conflict-affected situations; FY = fiscal year; GNI = gross national income; IDP = internally displaced person; MENA = Middle East and North Africa; n.a. = not applicable; PPP = purchasing power parity; SSA = Sub-Saharan Africa; — = not available.

## Reference

World Bank. 2019. *World Bank Group Support in Situations Involving Conflict-Induced Displacement*. Independent Evaluation Group. Washington, DC: World Bank

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<sup>1</sup> The list of countries classified as fragile and conflict-affected situations in fiscal year 2021 is available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/harmonized-list-of-fragile-situations>.

<sup>2</sup> Afghanistan (South Asia), Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger (Sub-Saharan Africa), Haiti (Latin America and the Caribbean), Iraq, Lebanon, the Republic of Yemen (Middle East and North Africa), Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands (East Asia and Pacific).

<sup>3</sup> One of the countries originally identified as a potential case study, Papua New Guinea, was excluded because IEG has been undertaking a Country Program Evaluation for Papua New Guinea, with a special focus on gender.

<sup>4</sup> At the beginning, the evaluation covered five geographical regions because it included two countries that were dropped—Afghanistan (in South Asia, replaced with the Republic of Yemen) and Haiti (in Latin America and the Caribbean).

<sup>5</sup> According to the 2021 classification, the Republic of Yemen has high-intensity conflict.

# Appendix C. Conceptual Framework

The theory of change describes the main pathways through which women's and girls' economic empowerment (WGEE) and protection from gender-based violence (GBV) are positively impacted. It identifies therefore the main entry points for World Bank Group's support. The theory of change is represented in figure C.1.

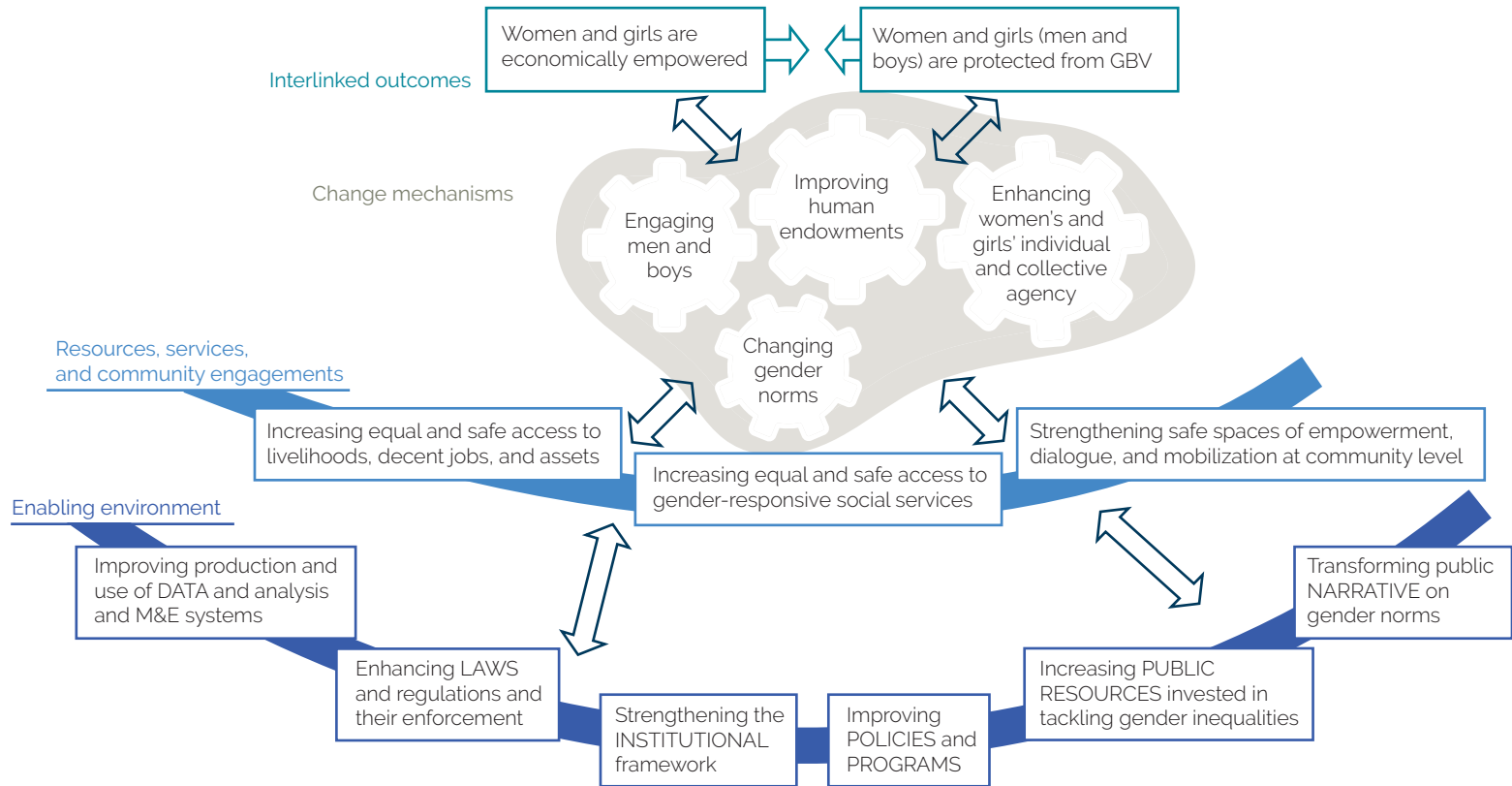
The theory of action characterizes the main modalities of World Bank Group's support that produce transformational change, in line with the theory of change. The theory of action defines therefore the type and quality of World Bank Group's support that can significantly contribute to address GBV and promote WGEE countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV). The theory of action is represented in figure C.2; the interplay between the theory of change and the theory of action is represented in figure C.3.

## Theory of Change

According to the theory of change (figure C.1), WGEE and protection from GBV in FCV-affected countries strongly depend on deep and systemic gender-transformative change,<sup>1</sup> which addresses the root causes of gender inequalities. This change can be achieved through safe and equal access to resources,<sup>2</sup> jobs, services, and community engagements, and they are rooted on a country's enabling environment that promotes this type of changes. Ultimately protecting women and girls (and boys and men) from GBV and increasing WGEE will positively impact all FCV-affected populations who will be able to better satisfy their needs and aspirations and improve their resilience to crises (World Bank Group 2015, 2020a; OECD 2017; UN and World Bank 2018; UN Women and IDS 2015).



**Figure C.1.** Theory of Change



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: GBV = gender-based violence; M&E = monitoring and evaluation.

## Interlinked Outcomes

WGEE and protection from GBV are strongly linked. WGEE can enhance their status, agency, and bargaining power; increase male respect and appreciation of women and girls; and foster women and girls' assertiveness and control over their life and their body, thus decreasing GBV (Désilets et al. 2019; Kiplesund and Morton 2014; Klugman et al. 2014). In FCV settings, decreasing women's and girls' economic vulnerability can also reduce the risk of their exposure to sexual exploitation (IASC 2015). Women and adolescent girls are overexposed to GBV because they disproportionately engage in informal activities, such as collecting and selling firewood or charcoal, running small-goods kiosks, selling goods door-to-door, or engaging in domestic work with receptor or host communities. These activities may force them to travel through unsafe areas or during dangerous times (IASC 2015). WGEE may also have potential unintended negative outcomes. It may increase intimate partner's or domestic violence as a result of the men's feeling of being "disempowered" and the possible perception of women's and girls' violation of social norms and socially accepted ideals of "good women" and "good girls" (Désilets et al. 2019; Kiplesund and Morton 2014; Klugman et al. 2014; IASC 2015; IRC 2019).

Addressing this risk requires engaging with men and boys and fostering a change in gender norms.

In turn, in FCV settings improved safety and protection from GBV is a precondition for women's equitable participation in economic life and decision-making (IRC 2019; Sida 2009). Several studies have demonstrated that GBV negatively impacts women's and girls' economic life as it damages their psychological and physical well-being and impairs their ability to develop human capital, access the labor market, hold a job, and generate income (WHO 2013). Intimate partner violence affects women's ability to work as it both causes physical injury and damages their mental health status, which decreases productivity and the number of days worked (Duvvury et al. 2013; Sida 2009). Protecting adolescent girls from child marriage and unwanted early pregnancy fosters girls' economic empowerment and contributes to their educational attainment, economic participation, and higher earnings (Wodon et al. 2017).

## Change Mechanisms

Improving human endowments is a necessary precondition to support WGEE and protecting them from GBV.<sup>3</sup> Better health of women and their children is leading to increased ability to work and higher productivity and earnings (Singh, Darrosh, and Ashford 2014; World Bank 2012). Equally, education increases women's and girls' skills and access to quality jobs (Bussemakers et al. 2017). Girls' and boys' access to safe and empowering formal and informal education, and culturally sensitive comprehensive sexuality education,<sup>4</sup> can also decrease child marriage and unwanted early pregnancies and increase girls' professional insertion.

In turns, higher WGEE and protection from GBV have positive impacts on human endowments. Both physical and sexual violence have harmful impact on women's and girls' (and men's and boys') physical and mental health and well-being and affect children's educational attainment. Preventing child marriage and unwanted early pregnancies contributes to breaking the inter-generational transmission of deprivations.

WGEE and protection from GBV rest on improved women's and girls' agency, men's and boys' engagement, and the affirmation of positive gender norms.

Women's and girls' agency is an integral part of WGEE (Fox and Romero 2017; Golla et al. 2018; Kabeer 1999; World Bank 2012). It can be conducive to women's and girls' protection from GBV by improving women's and girls' capacity to protect themselves, their bargaining power, and participation in decision-making and fostering more equitable gender relations (Klugman et al. 2014). The Bank Group recognizes the complementarity between women's and girls' individual and collective agency. Collective agency can be a catalyst of community, local, subnational, and national change (Cornwall 2016; Klugman et al. 2014; World Bank 2012). The Bank Group's FCV strategy highlights the importance of enhancing women's participation at all levels of governance, including peace- and state-building processes, to positively impact stability, peace, and resilience (World Bank Group 2020a). However, increased women's and girls' agency can also increase GBV; this risk can be addressed by engaging with men and boys to foster change in gender norms,

moving away from “hegemonic masculinity” to promoting equal, respectful, and violence-free gender relations.

Engaged men and boys can become agents of change in addressing gender inequalities. Men’s and boys’ engagement implies their adherence to “positive” ideals of masculinity that challenge gender-based discriminations and violence and promote equitable and respectful gender relations and roles, leading to increased involvement of men in care work, more equitable distribution of unpaid work, women’s and girls’ (and men’s and boys’) protection from GBV, and women’s increased agency and more equitable participation in decision-making and access to resources (Désilets et al. 2019; Green et al. 2015; IRC 2019; Promundo 2012; Promundo and UN Women 2017; Slegh et al. 2013; Van der Gaag et al. 2029; Van Eerdewijk et al. 2017; World Bank Group 2015). Promoting men’s and boys’ engagement is indeed recognized as a priority in FCV-affected countries by the Bank Group gender strategy (World Bank Group 2015). In conflict and postconflict societies, men may become more violent as they are compelled to adhere to a dominant model of “militarized” masculinity because they feel disempowered (as a consequence of shift in gender roles), or they are unable to provide for their families as a result of high unemployment (Atuhaire et al. 2018; Lwambo 2013; Plank 2020; Saferworld 2014; Slegh, Barker, and Levtoy 2014). A large body of research identifies a strong relationship between GBV and the existence of unequal gender norms and power dynamics among men and women, boys, and girls. (Dworkin, Treves-Kagan, and Lippman 2013; Jewkes, Flood, and Lang 2015; Ricardo, Eads, and Barker 2011). Men’s and boys’ engagement is therefore conducive to the affirmation of positive gender norms that prevent GBV and enable women’s and girls’ empowerment. They can undertake process of individual and collective empowerment and become proactive change agents that promote gender equality and the fulfillment of women’s and girls’ rights.

The affirmation of positive gender norms that promote equal, respectful, empowering, and safe gender roles and relations is conducive to the prevention of GBV (Cislaghi 2019; Green et al. 2015; Heilman and Stich 2016; Klugman et al. 2014; Marcus and Harper 2014; Rowley and Diop 2020;) and WGEE in FCV (IRC 2019; Marcus 2018; Sida 2009). Gender norms often reflect and reinforce unequal gender relations,<sup>5</sup> usually to the disadvantage of women

and girls and to men and boys who do not conform to the prevailing gender norms. Conflicts and other crises can exacerbate harmful gender norms but can also offer opportunities for change because they can open spaces for different gender roles and relations (Le Masson et al. 2016).

### **Key Resources, Services, and Community Engagements**

Increasing WGEE, preventing GBV, and improving human endowments require gender-transformative change in service delivery, resource distribution, and community dialogue and mobilization. Interventions in these three main domains are aimed at promoting women’s and girls’ safe and equal access to livelihoods, decent jobs, and assets; providing gender-responsive social services; and opening up (or strengthening) community spaces of empowerment, dialogue, governance, and mobilization toward gender equality.

Women’s and girls’ safe and equal access to livelihoods (food, fuel, water, shelter, and pocket money for basic needs) is a precondition for their economic empowerment and protection from GBV. Equal access is inclusive and nondiscriminatory based on gender but also age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, residence, disability, marital status, level of education, and socioeconomic status (World Bank Group 2020b). Safe access is particularly relevant in conflict and violence-affected areas, where insecurity increases GBV and limits women’s and girls’ movement and their access to services, resources, and livelihood (GIWPS and PRIO 2019; IASC 2015; IRC 2019; Sida 2009). Solving the problem of safe access to livelihoods is critical to promote women’ and girl’s economic empowerment in humanitarian settings, where they are often victims of sexual abuse or exploitation as they struggle to ensure food, fuel, or water for their families (IASC 2015; Le Masson 2016; Sida 2009, 2014). Women’s and girls’ control over livelihoods is also important for their economic empowerment and can be fostered by promoting equal access to ownership and property of land and assets and equal participation in collective decision-making—for example, in community’s governance of natural resources (IRC 2019; Klugman et al. 2014; Quek 2019; Sida 2009; World Bank 2012, 2016, 2021). Equal and safe access to jobs (in agricultural production, income-generating activities in the informal sector, entrepreneurship, or employment) requires equal (and safe) access to tangible and intangible resources (IRC 2019; Quek 2019; World Bank 2012, World Bank Group 2015).<sup>6</sup>

Positive gender norms need to be conducive to women’s and girls’ professional insertion and to the equitable distribution of unpaid work, including men providing care (Doyle and Kato-Wallace 2021; Marcus 2018; Promundo 2012; Promundo and UN Women 2018; Quek 2019; World Bank 2012, Van der Gaag et al. 2019; World Bank Group 2015).

WGEE and protection from GBV in FCV settings also require gender-responsive social services. Social services are gender-responsive when they guarantee inclusive and safe access, quality, and governance. Gender-responsive access means that services address the gender-specific barriers to a safe and equal access for women and girls (men and boys), including the most vulnerable ones. Gender-responsive quality means that services are tailored to the specific needs, problems, and aspirations of local women and girls (men and boys) and are proactive in addressing gender inequalities (for example, actively addressing harmful gender norms and promoting safe, respectful, and equitable gender roles and relations). Gender-responsive governance means that women and girls participate and have voice in the local governance structures of social services (World Bank Group 2015). Gender-responsive social services include the following: (i) formal and informal education (including vocational training, information, counseling, and life skills development); (ii) social protection services for vulnerable women and girls; (iii) care services for children, the elderly, and people with disabilities to reduce female nonremunerated work and support paid employment; and (iv) health services (including sexual and reproductive health). To address GBV, gender-responsive services provide survivor-centered and holistic support to GBV survivors, tailored to the specific and different forms of violence and social groups (Al-Tuwaijri and Saadat 2018; IASC 2015). Prevention of GBV requires gender-responsive services—education, health, social protection, justice, and security services (GPE, UNGEI, and UNICEF 2018; Marcus 2018).

WGEE and protection from GBV also require gender-transformative change at the community level. Gender-transformative change can be achieved through community-led programs. Expanding community-driven approaches that empower communities to address fragility drivers and support resilience dynamics is also one of the “areas of special emphasis” of the Bank Group FCV strategy (World Bank Group 2020a). Gender-transformative

community-led programs include the reinforcement or creation of (i) only-girls and only-women safe empowerment spaces (Baldwin 2011; IRC 2017; UNFPA 2015b, 2019; UNICEF, Women Refugee Council and CPC Network 2014; World Bank 2020); (ii) only-boys and only-men empowerment and engagement spaces (Doyle and Kato-Wallace 2021; Edström et al. 2015; Van der Gaag et al. 2019; World Bank Group 2015); and (iii) safe and inclusive spaces for community dialogue, governance, and community-level mobilization (Cislaghi 2019; Heilman and Stich 2016; Rowley and Diop 2020). For the affirmation of positive gender norms at the community level, the engagement of opinion leaders is crucial (Cislaghi 2019; ODI 2015; Rowley and Diop 2020), including the support to leadership and collective agency of women’s and girls’ organizations (Cornwall 2016; IRC 2019; Klugman et al. 2014; World Bank 2012; Van Eerdewijk et al. 2017).

## Enabling Environment

The foundations of the systems of access to resources, services, and community spaces of dialogue and mobilization (referred to as “enabling environment” in this appendix) are defining the extent to which these systems are truly gender-responsive. According to the *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development*, addressing gender inequalities requires to intervene at the level of public action, or policies, broadly understood. These policies address the determinants—the underlying causes—of gender gaps, rather than their symptoms, and “take a variety of forms and work through markets (taxes and subsidies), formal institutions (legal or regulatory changes and public service delivery), or even through informal institutions (efforts to change social norms)” (World Bank 2012, 288). The World Bank Group FCV strategy (2020–25) recognizes the Bank Group comparative advantage in supporting FCV-affected countries to build systems, develop capacity, strengthen institutions and core state functions, and “promote efficient and equitable economic and social policies” (World Bank Group 2020a, 16). Box C.1 highlights the key components of the enabling environment. Time- and space-bound stand-alone projects will not produce deep, sustainable, and large-scale change toward gender equality if the macrosystem does not support that change. To address gender discrimination and change social norms, broad-base and systemic change is required, moving beyond both individual

interventions and formal reforms that are not implemented (Klugman et al. 2014). Gender-transformative and culturally sensitive laws, policies, programs, and service systems can contribute to change gender norms by providing women and girls and men and boys the opportunity to develop their “capacity to aspire” and, at the same time, the practical conditions to fulfill their new aspirations (Marcus and Harper 2014).

### **Box C.1.** The Enabling Environment for Gender Equality and Its Components

The enabling environment for gender equality can be defined as “a set of interrelated and interdependent systemic conditions, such as policies, laws, institutional mechanisms, and resources, which facilitate the promotion of gender equality” (UN 2005, 2). The enabling environment includes several elements that are entry points to achieve systemic and transformational change aimed at tackling gender inequalities:

1. Production and use of data, statistics, and analysis, including monitoring and evaluation systems. This category includes national (and subnational) capacity to collect sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data, including data on gender-based violence (GBV) and constraints to equal access to livelihood, job, and assets; produce gender statistics; and use them to inform policies, programs, laws, institutional mechanisms, public budgeting, media communication, and service delivery systems. Data gaps on GBV are a challenge in all countries, especially in fragility, conflict, and violence settings, and considerably limit the ability to design adequate policies, programs, and services to prevent GBV and support GBV survivors (UNFPA 2013; WHO 2018). Analytical work is crucial to design sector and multisector policies and programs that contribute to address GBV and promote women’s and girls’ economic empowerment (World Bank Group 2015, 2021).

2. Legal and regulatory framework. It includes laws, regulations, and their enforcement mechanisms. Laws and regulations can substantially contribute to change gender norms and address gender gaps in accessing decent job, land, and other assets (Marcus and Harper 2014; Marcus 2018; SIGI 2019; World Bank 2012, 2021). Well-enforced laws are critical to address impunity and ensure GBV survivors’ access to justice. The potential coexistence of different law systems (modern, customary, and religious laws)

*(continued)*



## Box C.1. The Enabling Environment for Gender Equality and Its Components (cont.)

and the constraints to laws enforcement due to the possible existence of two conflicting political and institutional orders need to be addressed (SIGI 2019; World Bank 2012, 2021). In contexts of countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence, the state institutions' collapse and the lack of legitimacy, accountability, and inclusivity are other issues to be taken into account (World Bank Group 2020a).

3. Institutional framework. It includes governance, accountability and coordination mechanisms, and institutions in charge of managing service systems and implementing policies and programs. The institutional framework needs to ensure women's and girls' equal participation and voice and effectively promote gender equality. Gender machineries are critical and need to be given adequate power, capacities, resources, and spaces for collaborations with all sectors (World Bank 2012). The institutional framework encompasses state and nonstate institutional mechanisms; for example, it includes faith-based and customary institutions (UNFPA 2004, 2015a).

4. Policy and programs. This category includes stand-alone policies, strategies, programs, their implementation mechanisms, national and subnational development plans, sector policies and programs, and development and humanitarian interventions implemented by a variety of actors (government, private sector, civil society, international agencies, and nongovernmental organizations). Gender-transformative policies and programs are critical to promote gender equality (World Bank 2012, World Bank Group 2015).

5. Public resource allocation. It includes the public budget (at all levels of government) to finance the design and implementation of laws, policies, and programs. The lack of financial and human resources is often one of the main constraints to the implementation of national policies, strategies, and plans focused on GBV. Policy dialogue and gender budgeting initiatives can contribute to increase the public resources allocated to addressing GBV, promoting women's and girls' empowerment, and closing gender inequalities in human endowments in countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence (Holmes and Slater 2014).

6. Public narrative on gender norms. It consists of the public discourse on gender norms that shapes the representation of socially accepted gender identities, roles, and relations. The public narrative on gender norms is strongly influenced by *(continued)*

### Box C.1. The Enabling Environment for Gender Equality and Its Components (cont.)

leaders, opinion leaders (including religious leaders, social media influencers, singers, actors, artists, and other role models), and traditional and social media. The affirmation of “positive gender norms” in the public narrative can be promoted through opinion leaders’ engagement and capacity development, multichannel and broad-scope communication initiatives (ODI 2015), and gender-transformative community-led programs that support spaces of community empowerment, dialogue, and mobilization (Cislaghi 2019; Heilman and Stich 2016; Rowley and Diop 2020). Gender-responsive services, especially education, can also strongly contribute to change the narrative on gender norms (GPE, UNGEI, and UNICEF 2018; Marcus 2018).

Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

## Theory of Action

The World Bank Group’s contribution to WGEE and GBV prevention and response in FCV countries rest on context-specific intervention models, or theory of action. The World Bank Group acts at multiple levels of the theory of change, as shown in figure C.3. The theory of action is analyzed closely in figure C.2.

The Bank Group can significantly contribute to address GBV and promote WGEE by supporting FCV-affected countries to make systemic, structural changes, which are defined as “transformational” in this appendix (box C.2 and brown block of figure C.2). To this end, the Bank Group engagement needs to go beyond individual projects and adopt a more systemic and long-term perspective to aspire to transform formal and informal institutions to address the root causes of gender inequality and fragility (World Bank 2012; World Bank Group 2020a).

## Box C.2. Transformational Change and Its Characteristics

Transformational change encompasses five elements: relevance, inclusive ownership, depth of change, scale of change, and sustainability.

Relevance is the extent to which solutions respond to beneficiaries' needs and global, country, and partner or institution's needs, policies, and priorities and continue to do so if circumstances change (OECD 2019). Solutions are relevant if they are evidence based (World Bank 2016, 2021) and context specific (World Bank 2016, World Bank Group 2015, 2020a).

Inclusive ownership refers to the participation of all key actors (government leaders, public officials, legislators, civil society actors, private sector, service users and providers, academia, and citizens) in setting the development agenda priorities (World Bank 2012). In this sense, it can be considered part of a broader definition of relevance. Inclusive ownership can be pursued through key actors' active involvement in the whole process and their capacity development (World Bank 2012). It is crucial in countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence, where exclusion, inequalities, and perception of injustice are drivers of fragility and conflict and state institutions lack legitimacy, accountability, and inclusiveness (World Bank Group 2020a). Inclusivity should consider the intersection of the key social differences that shape social identities and discriminations in each specific fragility, conflict, and violence context, such as gender, age, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, refugee status, sexual orientation, and so on (World Bank Group 2020b).

Depth of change concerns the extent to which change is effective and gender-transformative. Gender-transformative change "actively examines, questions and changes rigid gender norms and imbalances of power that advantage boys and men over girls and women. It aspires to tackle the root causes of gender inequality and reshape unequal power relations; it moves beyond individual self-improvement among girls and women toward redressing the power dynamics and structures that serve to reinforce gendered inequalities" (UNFPA, UNICEF, and UN Women 2020, 1).

Scale of change is the extent to which solutions have large-scale impact. To this end, they need to include a strategy for scaling-up and adaptive replication. They can also have a demonstration and catalytic effect on other actors' interventions (World Bank 2016).

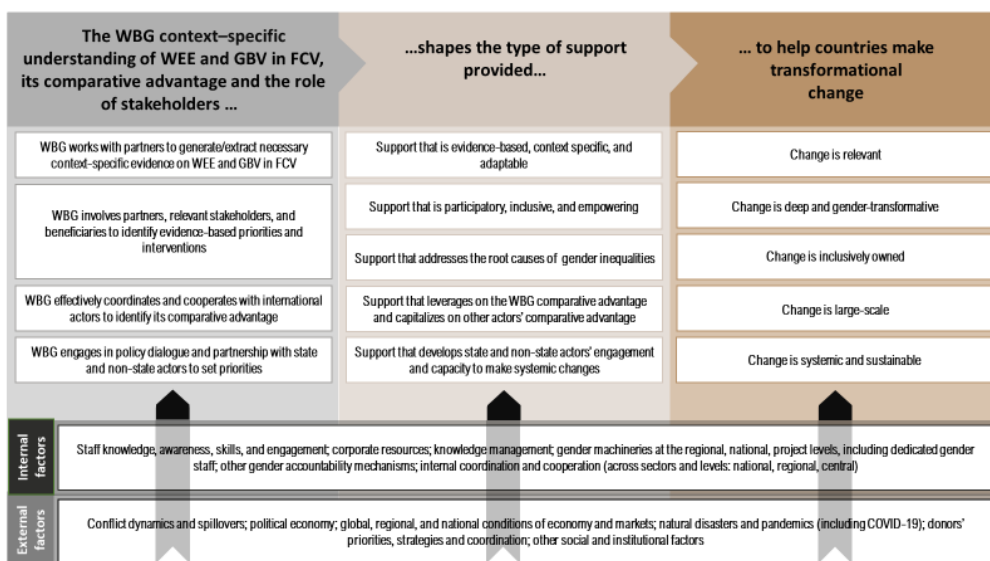
*(continued)*

### Box C.2. Transformational Change and Its Characteristics (cont.)

Sustainability “ensures that today’s development progress is not reversed tomorrow” (World Bank 2016, 11). Sustainability has multiple dimensions: economic, environmental, sociocultural, political, and institutional. In fragility, conflict, and violence contexts, it is particularly challenging and can be pursued through flexible, multidimensional, and long-term engagements that allow for capacity building and adaptation (World Bank Group 2020a).

Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Figure C.2. Theory of Action



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: GBV = gender-based violence; FCV = fragility, conflict, and violence; WEE = women's economic empowerment.

To provide effective support to FCV-affected countries for a transformational change, the World Bank Group can use specific modalities (gray block). Those modalities are the following: (i) working with partners and stakeholders to generate (or capitalize on existing) context-specific evidence of GBV and WGEE in each specific FCV context (issues to address, solutions previously adopted, and gaps and lessons learned); (ii) involving all key actors (including beneficiaries) in the identification of priorities and entry points,

based on the analysis of the root causes of GBV and gender gaps in economic opportunities and participation, and the main binding constraints; (iii) effectively coordinating with international actors (donors, nongovernmental organizations, and foundations) to identify the Bank Group comparative advantage and the right entry points in the specific country; and (iv) engaging and partnering with national, subnational, local, and community state and nonstate actors to set priorities and support capacity to identify, adopt, and implement transformational solutions.

These modalities of intervention aim to deliver support that can be transformational (pink block), as it is evidence based, context specific, and flexible enough to adapt to the specific country circumstances; it is inclusive, participatory, and empowering, thus fostering the inclusive ownership, depth, and sustainability of change; it addresses the root causes of gender inequalities, leading to a transformation of gender identities, roles, and power relations; it leverages on the Bank Group comparative advantage and capitalizes on other actors' comparative advantage, thus promoting actors' complementarity and synergy in supporting multisector and large-scale changes; it fosters state and nonstate actors' engagement and develops their capacity to make systemic changes, and in this way, it builds sustainability and ownership of change.

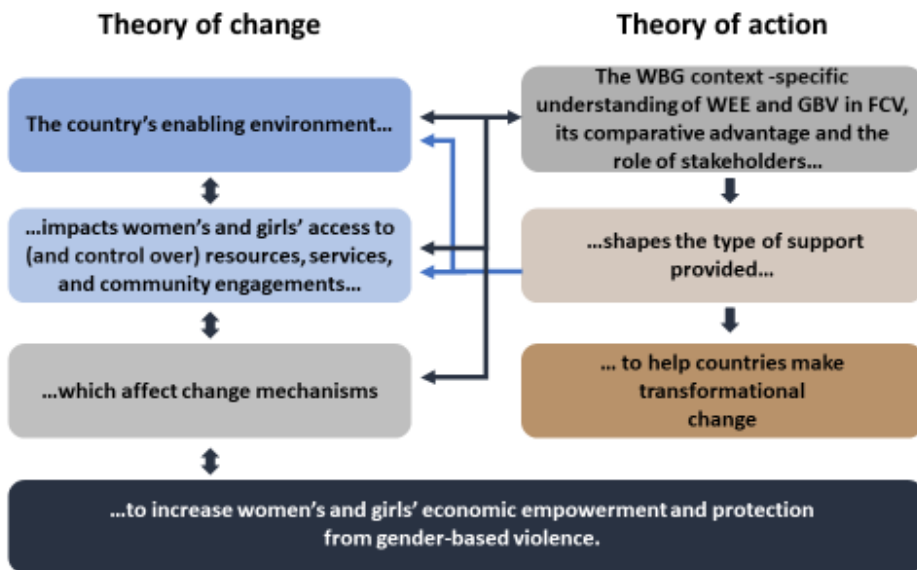
Several internal and external factors can represent constraints or enablers at each step of the theory of action. Internal factors are related to the Bank Group's institutional capacity and include staff's knowledge, awareness, skills, and engagement; management buy-in and engagement; functioning of the gender institutional mechanisms at the regional or national level (that is, gender focal points, gender platform, gender action plan, and so on); other gender accountability mechanisms (gender and FCV-sensitive monitoring and evaluation frameworks, gender and FCV-sensitive job descriptions, and terms of reference); internal coordination (intersectoral and multilevel, including coordination among Country Management Unit, Global Practices, and Gender and FCV teams); Bank Group positioning and engagement in the policy dialogue and leveraging in the country; and allocation of dedicated financial and human resources. External factors are related to conflict dynamics, the political arena, global and regional economy and markets, and the occurrence of natural disasters and pandemics.

To address the root causes of gender inequalities, the Bank Group needs to support FCV countries in improving the enabling environment for gender equality (figure C.3). Support delivered at this level aims to be systemic and long-lasting and to change the fundamental elements of the country system, impacting formal and informal institutions and the capacity of the country to introduce and manage gender-transformative approaches to change resource allocations, delivery systems, and community spaces to enhance WGEE and protection from GBV.

At the same time, the Bank Group can also support interventions that increase a safe and equal access of women and girls to resources, gender-responsive services, and community spaces of empowerment, dialogue, and mobilization. This “local” level of intervention that directly targets service delivery, resource provision, and support to community mobilization, while not necessarily designed to be large scale and long-lasting, can be crucial in FCV settings, where forced displacement, insecurity, and deterioration (or even collapse) of public services, infrastructures, and markets can represent great constraints to women’s and girls’ access to services, decent job, livelihood, and protection from GBV. Interventions at this level can also be supported as pilot initiatives to generate evidence to improve the enabling environment and produce “effective” models for an adaptive scaling-up.

The World Bank Group’s operating modalities will be continuously informed by evidence and feedback from the main blocks of the theory of change and vice versa. Flows of evidence of what works to support WGEE and address GBV will run from the various level—the enabling environment, the interventions at the level of resource distribution, access to services, and community engagement, and the transformation at the level of main outcomes to inform the action of the World Bank Group.

**Figure C.3.** Interplay between the Theory of Change and the Theory of Action



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: GBV = gender-based violence; FCV = fragility, conflict, and violence; WEE = women's economic empowerment.

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<sup>1</sup> A gender-transformative intervention “actively examines, questions and changes rigid gender norms and imbalances of power that advantage boys and men over girls and women. It aspires to tackle the root causes of gender inequality and reshape unequal power relations; it moves beyond individual self-improvement among girls and women toward redressing the power dynamics and structures that serve to reinforce gendered inequalities” (UNFPA, UNICEF, and UN Women 2020).

<sup>2</sup> In this context “access to” is a shorthand expression that also includes “control” and more generally decision-making power over resources, assets, livelihoods, services, and community spaces.

<sup>3</sup> According to the World Bank Group Gender Strategy (2016–23), human endowments encompass health, education, and social protection. Improving human endowments to close gender gaps involves addressing two sets of issues: first-generation issues and emerging (or second-generation) issues. First-generation issues include addressing maternal mortality, improving women’s access to health services, closing gender gaps in education, and expanding social safety nets. Second-generation issues include ensuring health care for aging population and preventing noncommunicable diseases; supporting early childhood development; breaking down gender stereotypes in teacher training and curriculum development; increasing girls’ enrollment in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; facilitating school-to-work transition; and developing innovations to promote women’s empowerment in social safety net interventions (World Bank Group 2015).

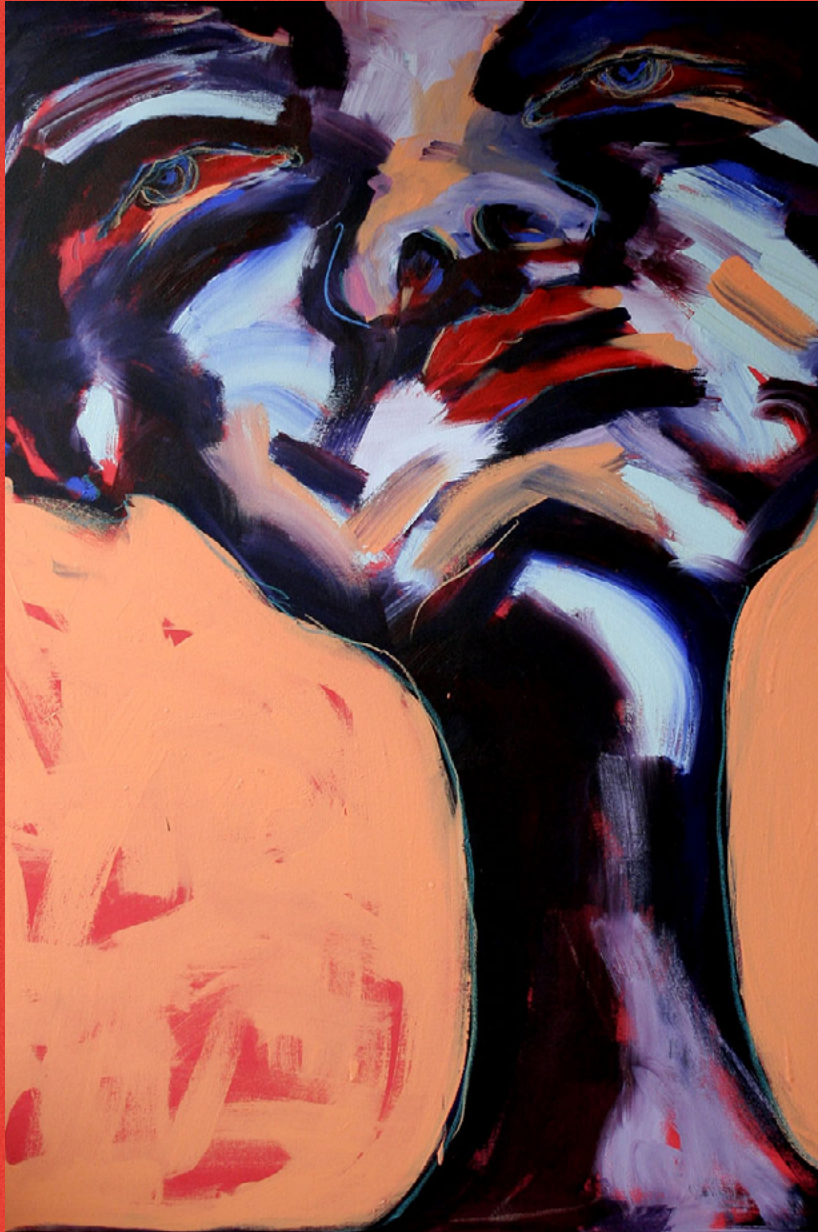
<sup>4</sup> Comprehensive sexuality education is a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that empower them to realize their health, well-being, and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives. Depending on the country or region, comprehensive sexuality education may go by other names (for example, life skills, family life, and so on). Comprehensive sexuality education has specific characteristics: it is scientifically accurate, it is delivered in formal and informal settings, it promotes human rights and gender equality, it is culturally relevant and context appropriate, and it is transformative and empowering (UNESCO 2018).

<sup>5</sup> Gender norms are a specific subset of social norms that relate to how men, women, boys, and girls are “supposed” to act and behave throughout the various stages of the life cycle, in a given group or society. They are generally implicit and can be part of the invisible social

status quo: they are embedded in formal and informal institutions, nested in the minds and behaviors, and produced and reproduced through social interaction. They play a role in shaping women's and men's (often unequal) access to resources and freedoms, thus affecting their voice, power, and sense of self (Cislaghi and Heise 2020). Gender norms intersect with norms related to ethnicity, class, disability, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity and how people experience them (Crenshaw 1989; Lutz 2015; World Bank Group 2020b).

<sup>6</sup> Tangible resources are assets (land, inputs, credit, savings, and machineries) and infrastructures needed to produce and sell goods, reach the workplace, and also reduce the burden of reproductive work (water wells and pumps, mills, electricity, transport, and so on). Intangible resources are time, information, knowledge, skills, social networks, and health.





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