



HEALTH, RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABLE POVERTY ESCAPES

QUESTION AND ANSWER TRANSCRIPT

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PRESENTERS

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Anastasia de Santos: Thank you so much for your patience. I'm Anastasia de Santos, and we'll move right over into Q&A. And I would like to start with the webinar questions. But I'm going to ask – the audio is very challenging in the room, so I'm going to ask you to answer any questions that you want to answer in the chat box, and then I'll ask Jennifer to read them aloud for us. So, can we start with the webinar questions?

Jennifer: Sure, thanks, Anastasia. Okay. There were a few that I clumped together, because the webinar started with a question around any changes with regard to regulatory barriers. And then a few more questions on restrictions and regulatory barriers. As restrictions are removed, are wages fair, or are more women taking less for the same work performed by their male counterparts? Both of those were from Indra Klein.

And then could some of the regulatory barriers for women in high risk job industries be informed by the cultural social need to protect women? For example, could there be a higher risk of sexual harassment for women in male-dominated fields? In remote locations such as mining, how can regulation overcome social cultural barriers without resulting in unintended consequences for women? And that's from Trafina Oval.

Liz: Okay, I will try to tackle all the questions. And I just might need help in remembering all of them. To address the first question on sexual harassment, yeah, it's been found that absolutely that is the case, that women are much more at risk of sexual harassment in male dominated spheres and sectors like mining. Could also be engineering, technology jobs. But that is not a reason to restrict women from having access to those job opportunities. Instead there should be policies designed to promote equitable workplaces, safe working stations for everyone, rather than saying well, the solution to sexual harassment is by just saying women aren't allowed, because then they won't be harassed.

So, we are promoting an alternative where there is investment in making the workplace safe and keeping women safe on the job, and hopefully in having women and men in both – in these different environments that are male dominated, but also improve the overall functioning of the industry. For example, last week I was at a conference and it was highlighted that only six percent of apps currently in the app store have been developed by women. But imagine what that – what could be done if you had more

women designing apps, and those perspectives that we're missing out of in app design by not having women present.

So, I think that helps show that we need women in these male dominated spaces, and rather than just say a workaround is to avoid it, we need to find ways to keep them safe. The other question was on – maybe you can refresh my memory.

Jennifer: Wages.

Liz: Wages. Yeah. So, one thing that we found was lacking actually, this was one of our action items at the end of the report, is that there have been very few impact evaluations or research studies on changes when the laws and regulations are changed, and how – what are the positive effects? We found that overall across the research there is just a real scarcity of studies that show what the positive effects are, and we identified that as a big call to action that as regulations change, we want to see more investment in studying the positive or negative effects as they change.

I think that there was an example that I highlighted earlier that did show that as women entered the workplace in greater numbers, and legal regulatory barriers removed, this is in Ethiopia, women were able to access higher level jobs. But unfortunately, none of the research that we reviewed looked at wages.

Anastasia de Santos: Thank you so much. Now I'll invite a round of questions from the room. We'll take a couple at least. And please keep your questions short and introduce yourself briefly.

Minerva: Thank you. Thank you very much for this data and showing us the gaps. My name is Minerva. I work with **the IFC**. Currently working at **the SMU Finance Firm** where I coordinate work on gender and data. And we have just categorized the women business and the law indicators to identify how these barriers affect a woman's ability to start a business, and access credit. So my question to you is – did you look at self-employment as a form of employment at the micro and SMU levels? Thank you.

Anastasia de Santos: Thank you. Do we have another question in the room?

Robin Mungee: Yes, I just had a quick question about sexual harassment in – oh, I should introduce myself. I'm Robin Mungee, I'm from the Solidarity Center. The sexual harassment study in the federal government. I'm guessing based on your description that the only cost that's been looked at is to the women. It takes time for men to do that. And they're also working. So, I'm wondering if that study included also the cost of productivity to the people committing, the perpetrators of the harassment.

Liz: So, to answer the question on sexual harassment first, this is – I will reframe it that it's a study from the '90s, and it's really unfortunate that this is some of the best data we have on sexual harassment and the cost of sexual harassment is from so many years ago. Now it's from – I was a child when this research was conducted. And so I was at an event with ICRW, who is also doing research on sexual harassment, and they said this is still the premier data out there. And I think that shows that there is definitely a need for more data.

The research that was conducted, however, tracked data on how women victims were affected, but also how the entire workgroup was affected. So while it didn't explicitly look at the costs of sexual harassment on perpetrators' performance, it had very convincing data and hard data that it's not just about the women who are being harassed, their performance declining, but that trickles down to the entire workgroup, affects morale, productivity, makes people less committed to their jobs across the whole workgroup. So, nothing on perpetrators, but yes about the wider workgroup.

And then the question from World Bank and IFC. So, this, we had a very specific mandate for this research, and it was specifically to look at women's wage employment and not look at women's entrepreneurship, and women starting their own businesses. I will say that women business and the law was just an enormously helpful bit of research. We had it – we acknowledged it early in one of my slides. But we used a lot of data from women, business, and the law, as well as from other resources, and it's

really valuable, and I think your point really illustrates that there is a need to also look at entrepreneurship restrictions as well.

Although many of the findings on women's ability to work I think would also translate to women's entrepreneurship, if women need their husband's permission to leave the home and travel, to open up a bank account, to get that ID, I think those all carry over.

Anastasia de Santos: Thank you very much. I'm going to take the prerogative as moderator and ask Kenana a question, and then I would also welcome any questions from the webinar following that. Maybe two more from the webinar. And for Kenana, is I noticed very interestingly at the end of your recommendations you say we should focus on the positive, and I'm just imagining a number of reasons for that in the context of Jordan, but would love to hear your elaboration on that. And then do we have a couple of more questions from the webinar?

Jennifer: Sure. While we wait for Kenana, she says thanks, so I'll read her response.

Anastasia de Santos: Jennifer, I can't hear you, sorry.

Jennifer: Hello? Kenana says thanks, so I will read her response once that comes through. But there were a couple of questions regarding the male perspective. So, one is with regard to buy-in for much needed change or evolution in thinking, what types of studies have been conducted to ascertain the male perspective to include intergenerational perspectives? And _____ changes made to what degree is the resentment by men, and how is such being addressed? Those were from Indra Klein.

Liz: Oh, is that it? So, can we –

Jennifer: Kenana is still typing, so –

Liz: On the topic of male perspectives, for the people who are tuning in via webinar, I count four, five men in the room, and I think that highlights just how important it is to get male perspectives, to get male buy-in and support. But even here, in our own development community, there's so many more women who showed up for this talk today. So, I wanted to flag that for the people who are not in the room today. And again, research is really limited on many of these legal and regulatory barriers. And there just haven't been too many studies that – I mean there haven't been too many studies about many of these topics at all.

Let alone how men consider these policies. There was some research that we included in the report that globally the majority of men do want women – like do approve of women working outside of the household. But still, proportionally, more women approve of that than men. So, there are still biases in that space. But obviously looking at issues of sexual harassment, as well as enabling parents to work, men are a really crucial part of that, of that puzzle to promote women's employment, and there should be a tremendous amount of investment in how we can make men allies and supporters of this work.

Anastasia de Santos: And I also want – if Kenana wants to answer that question, too, that would be welcome.

Jennifer: Yes, we have a response. Oh, she's typing again. But did you want to repeat the question again as –

Anastasia de Santos: So, my question is why – why does she think focusing on the positive is important in Jordan?

Jennifer: Great. So, she says I meant that we always tend to discuss the challenges and issues with women's access to work. But we need to also highlight the role models and successes and the impact of what women can offer to the economy. So not only look at what issues employees and employers face, but rather how they benefit from participating in the labor market, _____ employing more women.

Anastasia de Santos: Fabulous, thank you. We can come back to the room maybe, for a last round of questions, and we have three.

Chloe Bass: Hi, Chloe Bass from World Vision _____ technical advisor for women's economic empowerment. Thank you so much. This was really interesting. And I know there's no silver bullet, obviously, to the question of how we can get more women into work. But I was curious if your research showed of the different areas that you highlighted, _____ sexual harassment or getting parents to work or the other areas, was there one that it seemed to look like would be more impactful in getting women into the workforce, and getting them to stay there as well?

Kristin O'Planick: Kristin O'Planick, USAID. Both Kenana and Liz, just with the fact that regulatory issues are not easy flip a switch changes. And Kenana, you mentioned the fact that we need to also be thinking about long term things, like cultural shifts. And I feel like this is something our programming has stepped away from, in terms of _____ these bigger, more challenging enabling environment issues. So, I really love that this research is kind of bringing it back to top of mind. But how can we – this might be more a question for my USAID colleagues, but making sure that we keep pushing on these long-term things, even though they're going to go beyond the life of one of our activities until we see real change.

Patricia DeVecki: Patricia DeVecki, International Purpose. Again, my question is what's next? I mean you've done wonderful work, have a lot of information, so what then becomes of this? As a part of Nathan Associates and USAID.

Liz: Well, I can highlight a few things about what's next. I think it's really exciting. USAID is investing resources into the dissemination of this report, understanding that it shouldn't just be this one event that transfers the knowledge. So actually, Anastasia and I are headed to Vietnam next week, where we will be presenting on this research for ASEAN at an event that ASEAN is having on women's economic empowerment. So, this will be a great way to get some of these key findings, especially ones most

relevant to ASEAN member states, into the hands of people who actual have the power to do something about it.

And we've also taken this report and tailored it and produced a short 15-page brief that's also tailored to the ASEAN context, and that will also be available. So, if anyone has projects in any ASEAN countries, you could – when that brief is available, you can use that brief also for your projects in ASEAN. We'll also be presenting on key findings in the report at a second presentation in Vietnam that's more oriented towards Vietnamese stakeholders, including private sector actors and government officials as well as civil society. So that's really exciting.

But then I can also say that from people, my colleagues who have already started to use the report, they're saying, oh, we're doing a project in Kyrgyzstan, and I use this report to help highlight some of these key issues that I might not have been aware of before. And so, I think slowly we'll hopefully start to see some dissemination. But it's great that this report has only been out for a couple of months, and that already USAID is investing in dissemination and getting some of these key findings into the hands of the stakeholders who can make a difference. In terms of your question – oh, Kinana wants to weigh in?

Jennifer: She just had a follow-up. So, she said just to add to Anastasia's point, regulations and policies are important. In the case of Jordan enforcing the law is a challenge. We found that working on breaking customs and norms is important.

Liz: And to address Chloe's point, I think there is no silver bullet. And I think every country is going to be different in how you target these issues. So for example in a country where mining or restrictions on agriculture for women – those might be the obvious entry points. But then there are countries where women are not able to even work without their husbands' permission, and that might be the entry point. So, I think it really warrants looking at each country context, when you're going into the country and

saying what are the specific legal and regulatory barriers in this country, and what is the right approach?

I mean I think there's also uphill battles like I think childcare, and enabling parents to work, I think that has enormous potential to promote women's employment around the world. But I think in many contexts, that's going to be a really hard uphill battle, harder than many of the other battles like for example having women be able to work in mining or transportation jobs. And so, choosing that right mix of what will have the most potential, but what is also achievable. I think it's really like coming up with a specific recipe for each country.

Anastasia de Santos: And actually, I'd like to address the sort of timeline question, which is a great question. And I think actually Michelle mentioned this in the beginning. It's going to be really helpful that we have these high-level targets that measure equal pay for equal work, and are women participating in the same rates in the labor force and so forth. These are really outcome metrics and not just like did you change one law. So that will really help I think drive USAID and our partners' focus on getting to these long-term, very difficult outcomes that we want to see the gender gaps closed.

And the second thing I would say is kind of let's be practical. You're managing a five-year project. It's in the contract to deliver. I think we can't just say I have to deliver, it's do or die for this one regulatory reform. Because we've already seen that's not it. There are many other factors, such as cultural norms, which are even harder to change involved. So, I think it helps to outline your theory of change, and then pick some milestones around that causal map, so you can still demonstrate results.

And if you have a baseline of what the level of awareness was on this issue, and then you've changed a lot with different types of stakeholders, or you've increased the amount of advocacy and dialog on this, even in the media or public conversations, _____ sexual harassment is so important to even just start talking about it. And yeah, if you're able to demonstrate changes to the laws on the books, or actual cases of enforcement, that's great, too. But I think we need to pull from all these different milestones so that we can tell our comprehensive story and it doesn't all just hang on a very difficult to achieve milestone.

Liz: Also, another comment that I'll add is that I also think this report helps show that many well-intentioned policies are not necessarily doing as intended. Including these policies that are creating this wage penalty for working mothers are leading to making it harder for women to work, because they're not encouraging fathers to take leave, or to take flexible working arrangements. And so, I think this also will encourage, I hope will encourage this idea of doing more gender sensitive policy reviews. And when countries are coming up with policies, to say, okay, well, just by putting in 'and women', that's not enough. We need to assess what the impacts of those policies can be on men and women and go above and beyond to make sure that that policy is not gender blind.

And so, Nathan for example is working on an economic policy project in Mozambique with DIA. And so, we're already using this document to help show we really need to invest, as every policy is created, we need to invest in making sure that women are equitably able to participate and assess how that policy could affect women's employment or entrepreneurship.

Anastasia de Santos: Thank you. I just want to – did Kenana want to say any last words?

Jennifer: She says thank you all.

Anastasia de Santos: All right. Thank you so much for coming, everyone. Please complete our evaluation survey. It's super helpful for us. And we hope to announce future interesting work and link seminars very soon. Thank you.

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