

# Women, Work and Economic Development



**AN EXAMINATION OF WOMEN'S  
ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT IN FRAGILE  
AND CONFLICT AFFECTED STATES**

**FEMALEFIRST**



ACROSS THE WORLD, **WOMEN ARE IN THE LOWEST-PAID WORK. GLOBALLY THEY EARN 24% LESS THAN MEN, AND AT THE CURRENT RATE OF PROGRESS, IT WILL TAKE 170 YEARS TO CLOSE THE GAP.**<sup>1</sup>



**75% OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPING REGIONS ARE IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY - WHERE THEY ARE LESS LIKELY TO HAVE EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS, LEGAL RIGHTS OR SOCIAL PROTECTION.**<sup>2</sup>



ACCORDING TO THE WORLD BANK WOMEN SECURING PAID WORK IS ONE OF **THE 'MOST VISIBLE AND GAME CHANGING EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF MODERN HOUSEHOLDS AND COMMUNITIES'.**

Image on the front cover:

Female First development workshop hosted by CTG in Gaza 2018, assisting female graduates with advice on how to apply for roles in the humanitarian and development sector.

<sup>1</sup>Oxfam International. 2020. 'Why The Majority Of The World's Poor Are Women'. Available at: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/why-majority-worlds-poor-are-women> (Accessed: 14 Apr 2020)

<sup>2</sup>Oxfam International. 2020. 'Why The Majority Of The World's Poor Are Women'. Available at: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/why-majority-worlds-poor-are-women> (Accessed: 14 Apr 2020)

<sup>3</sup>Munoz Boudet et al. 2012. On Norms and Agency: Conversations about Gender Equality with Women and Men in 20 Countries. Washington D.C: World Bank. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/234151468324057689/On-norms-and-agency-conversations-about-gender-equality-with-women-and-men-in-20-countries> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019)



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A woman collects airdropped food aid in South Sudan.  
Photographer: Patrick Meinhardt



## FOREWORD



**ALICE LAUGHER**, CEO,  
CTG (Committed to Good)

Business for Peace Honouree  
and SDG Pioneer for Empowering  
Women in Conflict Settings

May 2020

**FEMALEFIRST**

Recent research and evidence from the ground shows that increasing work opportunities for women in fragile and conflict-affected states can change the course of global conflict and economics. We all have a role to play in making this happen.

CTG is a global provider of human resources, project management and operations services, supporting clients that are implementing humanitarian and development projects in fragile, conflict and disaster settings. CTG's Female First recruitment initiative launched in 2017, and pledges to improve women's access to job opportunities in the humanitarian and development sectors in the environments where we operate. The goal is for women to represent 30% of all CTG's roles by 2030. To date, significant successes have been seen in Afghanistan and Somalia where we have reached 20% representation. Considerable progress is also being made in South Sudan, Yemen, Libya and Gaza. The benefits for these women and their household's welfare should not be understated. Through its endeavours, CTG is making its contributions to changing gender dynamics in labour markets.

It has not all been plain sailing; CTG have faced difficulties when pushing to increase the number of women who apply for and secure positions. Precarious and dangerous security situations have to be continually navigated and monitored. Deep-rooted prejudice and outright opposition have been confronted and cultural stereotypes have been challenged. Training, whistleblowing, and monitoring mechanisms have also had to be implemented to eliminate workplace harassment. Today, Covid-19 adds another threat to women's welfare and empowerment, making the need for collaborative efforts to tackle inequality even more urgent and necessary.

I am proud that CTG has been recognised as a champion of women's economic empowerment in conflict-affected areas. CTG's staff are unified in their support for this vision. But to really make a difference, we need to increase access to employment opportunities for women across every sector.

This is why we have published this paper. To encourage everyone to follow a similar path, and to experience success like we have through our Female First initiative. This is based on the firm belief of the value of the ripple effect – more access and more opportunities lead to more progress for women and their communities worldwide.

*Alice Laughher*

## PRIORITISING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT DURING COVID-19

The spread of Covid-19 is having a differential impact on men and women; while men are more likely to die from the virus, it is threatening women with long-term health, social and economic consequences. Gender inequalities risk being exacerbated and hard-won progress for women's rights may be put back years.

**This report was written before the outbreak of the virus, and before it was classified a global pandemic. However, the issues the paper addresses are no less significant now than they were before. In fact, the need for gender equality in all aspects of women's daily life is of even greater concern now.**

As 70 percent of the world's healthcare workforce and primary carers in the home, women are at a unique risk of contracting the virus. To compound this, women's limited representation in senior leadership roles means that there is insufficient focus on women's needs in decision making. Stress over health or income, accentuated by the confined conditions of lockdown, have resulted in increased levels of domestic violence, leaving women very vulnerable. These circumstances are made worse by increased childcare responsibilities and subsequent reduced working productivity – if women are able to work at all.

Crisis situations, whether due to outbreaks of violence as covered in this report, or health pandemics as we are facing today, reinforce the fragility of women's employment. Employment opportunities for men will inevitably take precedence. As lower earners who assume a greater proportion of part-time and informal work, women are the first to lose or give up jobs, and to suffer salary reductions.

For the same reason, women find it harder to recover than men, especially when a crisis provokes a longer-term economic slump.

In developing contexts women's income is often crucial to keeping families above the poverty line.<sup>4</sup> Securing women's empowerment through decent work is therefore critical to help entire families and communities navigate crises and economic hardship.

Countries that once considered themselves secure and stable have unexpectedly found themselves in very fragile situations because of Covid-19. The virus has exposed economic, social and health weaknesses across all regions, which has raised critical questions: are countries really as prepared and secure as once believed? Are all countries challenged by an underlying element of fragility that risks surfacing each time an unknown threat arises? What does increased fragility mean for women's security and safety?

Our immediate focus on Covid-19 must not divert us from the equally important mission of women's empowerment and gender equality. Not just for the women, but for everyone. As recent events have shown, women's contributions to all areas of life are critical - in times of peace, fragility, and crisis.

<sup>4</sup>Sida. 2009. Women's Economic Empowerment: Key Issues and Policy Options. Regeringskansliet: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sweden. Available at: [https://www.sida.se/contentassets/a7f86b2b8a774b0dadb7bce5f689dae5/womens-economic-empowerment-key-issues-and-policy-options\\_296.pdf](https://www.sida.se/contentassets/a7f86b2b8a774b0dadb7bce5f689dae5/womens-economic-empowerment-key-issues-and-policy-options_296.pdf) (Accessed: 24 Apr 2020)

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Paid employment in the formal economy can be a game changer in the pursuit of gender equity. It can alter dynamics in patriarchal societies and give women agency and economic freedoms that they have never experienced before.**

**Paid work reduces poverty for women and their economic reliance on men. Women's economic empowerment is not only essential for economic growth but has also shown to contribute to sustainable peace and security by reducing conflict and violence within communities, and throughout entire countries.<sup>5</sup>**

Countries with a large female workforce typically experience greater economic growth and improved health and wellbeing across the board.<sup>6</sup> Most importantly, it reinforces women's rights.

In fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS), women securing formal employment is essential.<sup>7</sup> Through these jobs, women contribute to the economic wellbeing of their families and their communities, and they can help rebuild their countries' economies. The McKinsey Global Institute calculated that if women participated in the world's economy equally to men, it could add as much as US\$28 trillion or 26% to the

annual global GDP.<sup>8</sup> This figure would be even higher if the domestic and unpaid work women already carry out was taken into consideration.

According to data from the World Bank, half of the countries in extreme poverty today are also considered fragile states<sup>9</sup>. By 2030, 85% of countries in extreme poverty will be considered fragile.<sup>10</sup> Women are uniquely vulnerable to poverty because on top of their unpaid domestic work, they are often employed in insecure jobs with low earning potential. According to Oxfam International, 75% of women in developing regions work in the informal economy – where they are less likely to have employment contracts, legal rights or social protection.<sup>11</sup>

The international community is in a unique position which enables it to address the gender imbalance. This includes through its offers of financial support, opportunities and new norms to countries that have been ravaged by conflict, poverty and disease. Girls' education and women's vocational training receive various investments, and worldwide individuals and organisations support national governments to enforce women's rights in law and in practice.

As a result, CTG has witnessed a shift in the attitude of local private and public sectors in many countries. But it must also be recognised that commitments towards gender equality are ineffective if there is no acknowledgement that women's historical and social disadvantage has left them in a subordinate position to men. Between women and men, the playing field is not level, and this must be accounted for to achieve real equality.

Women face multiple barriers from an early age. In many FCAS, women's access to education is limited more than men's, and they are challenged by pervasive cultural, religious, familial and personal expectations of who they should be and how they should behave. All of these factors restrict their access to paid work. Increasing employment opportunities for women is essential but it does not work if the barriers are too great.

CTG's Female First initiative is one example of trying to rebalance the scales. It takes an active approach to sourcing, submitting and selecting applications from qualified women for all roles in humanitarian and development projects, including those that are not normally carried out by women, such as engineers, field operators, drivers, mechanics and guards. Where challenges arise during endeavours to persuade employers that women can fulfil these roles, it is often difficult to convince women to apply for these roles in the first place, and, the pressure for women to perform well is much greater than for men once they do secure roles.

Some of CTG's work is dispelling myths: that women always need special treatment in the workplace and with childcare, that they cannot do field work or travel, and that their vulnerability exceeds that of men in politically unstable and violent environments. Care must be taken to not jump to these sweeping conclusions. Men can be far more

affected by random violence, and in FCAS or the developing world women often have much greater access to childcare than families do in the West.

*Opportunities for women in different countries and different communities require careful assessments of the barriers and local conditions.*

Over the past few years, the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG) of reaching gender equality has become everyone's responsibility. It is no longer sufficient to place the onus solely on governments and international institutions. As a private sector recruitment and project management company, CTG has identified where it can make a difference. This paper shares lessons learnt from CTG's Female First initiative to encourage others to identify how they can contribute. Only by adopting a shared commitment and effort can women have equal opportunities to flourish and thrive.



<sup>5</sup> Klugman and Quek. 2018. *Women's Financial Inclusion and Economic Opportunities in Fragile and Conflict Affected States*. Available at: <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Womens-Financial-Inclusion-and-Economic-Opportunities-in-Fragile-and-Conflict-Affected-States.pdf> (Accessed: 7 Apr 2020). See also Petesch. 2011. *Women's Empowerment Arising from Violent Conflict and Recovery*. Washington DC: USAID. Caprioli. 2005. *Primed for Violence: The Role of Gender Equality in Predicting Internal Conflict*. *International Studies Quarterly*, 49 (2), 161-178. Schmeidl and Piza-Lopez. 2002. *Gender and Conflict Early Warning: A Framework for Action*. *International Alert*. Available at: [https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Gender\\_Conflict\\_Early\\_Warning\\_EN\\_2002.pdf](https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Gender_Conflict_Early_Warning_EN_2002.pdf) (Accessed 7 Apr 2020).

<sup>6</sup> International Monetary Fund. 2018. *Pursuing Women's Economic Empowerment*. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2018/05/31/pp053118pursuing-womens-economic-empowerment>. (Accessed: 7 Apr 2020). Leonardo Gasparini et al. 2015. *'Female Labour Force Participation in Latin America'*. Working Paper: Centro de Estudios Distributivos, Laborales y Sociales. Available at: <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/127697/1/cedlas-wp-181.pdf> (Accessed: 27 Jan 2020).

<sup>7</sup> CTG uses DFID's working definition of fragile and conflict-affected states which includes 'countries where the government cannot or will not deliver core state functions, such as providing security and justice across its territory and basic services to the majority of its people'. DFIDs list of FCAS is based on indices provided by the World Bank, the Fund for Peace and the Upsala Conflict Database. For more information see DFID. 2005. *Reducing poverty by tackling social exclusion: a DFID policy paper*. Available at: [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/development/docs/social\\_exclusion.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/development/docs/social_exclusion.pdf) (Accessed: 1 Apr 2020) and Independent Commission for Aid Impact. 2014. *DFID's Scale-up in Fragile States*. Available at: <https://icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/Fragile-States-ToRs-Final.pdf> (Accessed: 1 Apr 2020).

<sup>8</sup> McKinsey Global Institute. 2019. *The power of parity: How advancing women's equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth*. New York: McKinsey & Company. Available at: <https://mck.co/2yePIGY> (Accessed: 6 March 2020)

<sup>9</sup> The World Bank. 2020. *Fragile and Conflict Affected Situations*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/region/fragile-and-conflict-affected-situations>. (Accessed: 11 Mar 2020). The World Bank. 2020. *GDP Per Capita*. Available at: [https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?most\\_recent\\_value\\_desc=false](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?most_recent_value_desc=false) (Accessed: 11 Mar 2020)

<sup>10</sup> MMarcus Manuel et al. 2018. *'Report: Financing the End of Extreme Poverty'*. Overseas Development Institute. p.13. See also Kharas and Rogerson. 2017. *Leave No Country Behind: Ending Poverty in the Toughest Places*. *Global Economy & Development Working Paper 110*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution.

<sup>11</sup> Oxfam International. 2020. *'Why The Majority Of The World's Poor Are Women'*. Available at: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/why-majority-worlds-poor-are-women> (Accessed: 15 Apr 2020)





A young Afghan woman at beekeeping training, part of a project to work to improve the province's agricultural capabilities.



# INTRODUCTION

**Worldwide, substantial cultural and institutional barriers confront women who enter and progress within the formal economy and workplace. It is even worse for women in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) who also face – along with the men – insecurity, instability, limited access to education, and weaker government and state support.<sup>12</sup>**

**Currently, 4 in 10 women living in FCAS are formally employed and paid, compared to 7 in 10 men.<sup>13</sup>**

This means that over 30 million women are not employed in the formal labour sector of economies that need their contributions the most.

The adoption of the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has inspired a global commitment to leave no one behind. Gender equity and equality in SDG 5, and the promotion of women's economic participation in SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) are critical to this agenda. Beyond the SDGs, nations around the world have ratified UN Conventions that prohibit discrimination against women.<sup>14</sup> For those nations, efforts to recognise that all men and women have the same rights are not just an international moral obligation, but a legal one too.

Women's economic empowerment is first and foremost an essential human right, but broader social and economic benefits of women securing decent work also exist. If today's patterns of discrimination persist, women will continue to be disproportionately excluded from decent work and subjected to higher incidences of poverty. Compared to men, women will also be at a greater risk of experiencing diminished health. SDGs that focus on eradicating poverty, achieving gender equality and promoting decent work for all, will not be delivered unless the world maximises the social and economic opportunities for the 257 million women living in FCAS.<sup>15</sup>

This paper addresses and explains the ripple effect of increasing women's access to paid formal employment across FCAS. CTG's ultimate goal is to reach gender equality – giving men and women equal opportunity and equal treatment. But this assumes that women

start from an identical place to men. This is obviously not the case, particularly in FCAS, and is the reason that CTG has adopted a gender equity approach which acknowledges the different needs of men and women but "which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits and opportunities".<sup>16</sup>

Focusing on FCAS, the first section of the paper provides a review of the literature concerning the benefits of women's employment and includes opinions and experiences from organisations that work alongside CTG, particularly in Afghanistan, Libya and Somalia. The research and the interviews with people on the ground shed light on the broader impact of the employment status of women. They show that unpaid and informal employment can have a profound effect on the poverty and social status of women and can contribute to their vulnerability and decreased personal safety. At a country level, this is a missed opportunity in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and conflict resolution.

The second half of the paper highlights the barriers and opportunities in providing paid employment opportunities for women in FCAS. This section challenges preconceptions which many share related to the conditions needed for women's employment; this includes assumptions related to flexible working hours, additional childcare, and providing women with special treatment. The following section outlines CTG's Female First initiative, and shares lessons

learnt from its endeavours to increase the numbers of women in CTG roles across more than 25 different fragile and conflict-affected countries.

The conclusion lays out a set of practical recommendations for further action to reach gender parity in the labour markets of FCAS. Particular focus is placed on the humanitarian and development sector, while recognising that the size of the sector means that it will have limited impact on formal employment statistics. In light of this, the paper aims to mobilise others, including private sector organisations, to play their part in improving the accessibility of jobs for women. CTG hopes that a renewed focus on the value of formal employment for women in fragile and conflict-affected countries will bring everyone closer to a safer, fairer and more peaceful world.



<sup>12</sup> CTG uses DFID's working definition of fragile and conflict-affected states which includes 'countries where the government cannot or will not deliver core state functions, such as providing security and justice across its territory and basic services to the majority of its people'. DFID's list of FCAS is based on indices provided by the World Bank, the Fund for Peace and the Upsala Conflict Database. For more information see DFID. 2005. Reducing poverty by tackling social exclusion: a DFID policy paper. Available at: [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/development/docs/social\\_exclusion.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/development/docs/social_exclusion.pdf) (Accessed: 1 Apr 2020) and Independent Commission for Aid Impact. 2014. DFID's Scale-up in Fragile States. Available at: <https://icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/Fragile-States-ToRs-Final.pdf> (Accessed: 1 Apr 2020).

<sup>13</sup> Yvonne Quek. 2019. Women's Work Amid Fragility and Conflict: Key Patterns and Constraints. Washington D.C.: Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. Available at: <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Womens-Work-Key-Patterns-Constraints.pdf> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019) 14UN General Assembly, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 18 December 1979, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1249, p. 13, Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3970.html> [accessed 11 December 2019]

<sup>14</sup> UN General Assembly, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 18 December 1979, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1249, p. 13, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3970.html> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019)

<sup>15</sup> World Bank. 2018. World Development Indicators: Population Female, Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations. Washington D.C.: The World Bank. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL.FE.IN> (Accessed: 3 Feb 2020).

<sup>16</sup> International Labour Organisation. 2000. ABC of Women's Worker's Rights and Gender Equality. Geneva. p.48.

# THE VALUE OF FORMAL EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN IN FCAS

According to data from the World Bank, half of the countries experiencing extreme poverty today are also considered fragile states.<sup>17</sup>

By 2030 it is estimated that 85% of countries in extreme poverty will be considered fragile.<sup>18</sup> Today, FCAS specifically have poverty rates of over 20%.<sup>19</sup>

Women across the world are undervalued, being paid less than men or in some cases not even paid at all for the work they do. Globally, not only are 700 million fewer women in paid work than men, but those in paid work earn on average 24% less than men.<sup>20</sup> In developing regions, 85% of women work in insecure jobs in the informal sector.<sup>21</sup> These insecure jobs often consist of shorter hours, without contracts, legal rights or social protection and with such low pay that these working women cannot break the poverty cycle.<sup>22</sup>

Women securing decent jobs in developing countries and FCAS establishes their economic participation as a standard and broadly accepted practice. This lays the foundations for transformative change in gender dynamics.<sup>23</sup> Women entering work in public spaces that have previously been dominated by men can challenge pervasive gendered expectations and stereotypes that restrict women's access to different market roles.

Tipping the scales of gendered power dynamics gives women greater agency over their own lives. Their meaningful participation in the economy and local and national governance also increases, an essential component needed for the strong recovery of FCAS.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The World Bank. 2020. *Fragile and Conflict Affected Situations*. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/region/fragile-and-conflict-affected-situations>. (Accessed: 11 Mar 2020). The World Bank. 2020. *GDP Per Capita*. Available at: [https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?most\\_recent\\_value\\_desc=false](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?most_recent_value_desc=false) (Accessed: 11 Mar 2020).

<sup>18</sup> Marcus Manuel et al. 2018. 'Report: Financing the End of Extreme Poverty'. Overseas Development Institute. p.13. See also Kharas and Rogerson. 2017. *Leave No Country Behind: Ending Poverty in the Toughest Places*. Global Economy & Development Working Paper 110. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution.

<sup>19</sup> ODI estimate. Marcus Manuel et al. 2018. 'Report: Financing the End of Extreme Poverty'. Overseas Development Institute. p.9.

<sup>20</sup> Oxfam International. 2019. *Why the Majority of The World's Poor are Women*. Available at: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/why-majority-worlds-poor-are-women> (Accessed: 16 Jan 2020)

<sup>21</sup> Florence Bonnet et al. 2019. *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Brief*. Manchester: International Labour Office.

<sup>22</sup> Oxfam International. 2019. *Why the Majority of the World's Poor are Women*. Available at: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/why-majority-worlds-poor-are-women> (Accessed: 16 Jan 2020)

<sup>23</sup> Mayra Buvnić et al. 2013. *A Roadmap For Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment*. United Nations Foundation and ExxonMobil Foundation. A.M Golla et al. 2011. *Understanding and measuring Women's Economic Empowerment: Definition, Framework and Indicators*. Washington D.C.: ICRW.

<sup>24</sup> Pilar Domingo et al. 2014. *Women's Participation in Peace and Security: Normative Ends, Political Means*. London: ODI (Overseas Development Institute). Available at: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8961.pdf> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019)



Zahra Ibrahim, CEO of SOSTEQ (Somali Software and Technology Company) at CTG's Committed to Good Summit in Mogadishu 2019

## COMPUTER SCIENCE IN SOMALIA: ZAHRA IBRAHIM

Zahra's interest in technology began when her father worked in Kenya. He would send faxes home to her mother in Somalia. Zahra was fascinated by how this worked. After gaining a secondary school diploma, she joined the Institute of Tech in Mogadishu. She wanted to study computer science but was actively discouraged by her teachers. They said that computer science is not a subject for women. Zahra was offered a place to study medicine but she insisted on computer science, despite serious reservations from her parents. Medicine offered stable prospects.

Zahra finished her degree in computer science in 2005. Typically, tech is a male dominated industry in Somalia and establishing businesses

is a real challenge, especially without significant capital. She started her company with a single computer, a single desk, and no capital. She struggled until 2010. But today, SOSTEQ (Somali Software and Technology Company) is a well-established company with 35 employees (both men and women).

Zahra wanted to make a difference to her country and is working with communities to educate the importance of leveraging technology and its associated benefits. She created her own platform in 2018 for girls to take tech courses such as coding and designing. To date, they have trained 36 girls.

Zahra is the first female lecturer in computer science at Somalia's top university. She sees a growing interest among girls to study computer science. And, today her parents are proud of her decision and her success.



## RESOLVING SECONDARY POVERTY

**Poverty is often measured at household level, where it is assumed that everyone under the same roof lives at the same level of deprivation. However, this is simply not true.<sup>25</sup>**

Within developing countries it has been well documented that many men withhold a considerable share of their income for their own personal consumption. This may include spending on items or activities, such as drugs, alcohol and extra-marital affairs, that impact the welfare of other household members.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, where male heads of household do choose to make contributions to their household, this sometimes bears no relation to women because they do not have access to this income and are not given a say on how it should be spent.<sup>27</sup>

Overall, 30% of married women from developing regions have no control over household spending on major purchases, and according to a World Development Report, in Yemen and Afghanistan, this figure is over 50%.<sup>28</sup> And, just because a woman earns her own income does not mean she controls it: 10% of married women in developing regions are not consulted on how their own cash earnings are spent.<sup>29</sup> Women's lack of control over the family budget, which is cemented by this unequal distribution of resources and a woman's dependence on men, causes "secondary poverty" for women and children. This happens to married women and unmarried women who have delayed marriage in order to financially support their natal family.

This is even worse for female-headed households who are considered the "poorest of the poor". Gender inequality in employment dictates that their household income can never match that of an equivalent male.<sup>31</sup> In some post-conflict settings female headed households have been found to constitute 30% or more of all households.<sup>32</sup> In the countries of southern Africa, this reaches an average as high as 43% of households with children having only a mother present.<sup>33</sup> With a single income earner these families are extremely susceptible to poverty.

Women tend to spend their income on fundamental things such as food, or education for themselves or their children. This is to the entire family's advantage, including men and boys, and improves the household's health and educational prospects.<sup>34</sup> The benefits of a woman's choice to invest in her family also reverberates further and creates stronger and more resilient societies. This is particularly true when they invest in family health and productivity throughout their local communities.

Not employing women or taking necessary measures to increase their access to employment in challenging environments equates to missed opportunities for the women, their families, and communities, as well as their societies for which they can perform a substantial role in restoring.<sup>35</sup>

*The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, considered to be the most comprehensive global framework for women's rights, recognised that "poverty has various manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterised by a lack of participation in decision making and in civil, social and cultural life."*

UN Women, Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> UN Women. 2015. *The World's Women: Chapter 8 Poverty*. New York: UN Women. Available at: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/chapter8/chapter8.html> (Accessed: 17 Jan 2020), and Esteban Ortiz-Ospina and Max Roser. 2018. *Our World In Data: Economic Inequality by Gender*. Oxford: Oxford University. <https://ourworldindata.org/economic-inequality-by-gender> (Accessed: 16 Jan 2020)

<sup>29</sup> UN Women. *The World's Women*.

<sup>30</sup> UN Women. 2014. 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome'. Available at: [https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa\\_e\\_final\\_web.pdf?la=en&vs=800](https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf?la=en&vs=800) (Accessed: 6 Mar 2020)

<sup>31</sup> Dr. Sarah Bradshaw, 2002. *Poverty: An Analysis from the Gender Perspective*. Catholic Institute for International Relations for New York: Global Policy Forum. Available at: <https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/218/46391.html> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019)

<sup>32</sup> J. El-bushra. 2003. 'Fused in Combat: Gender Relations in Armed Conflict'. *Development in Practice*, vol. 13. No. 2 & 3. pp. 252-265. M. Gervais. 2004. 'Human Security and Reconstruction Efforts in Rwanda: Impact on the Lives of Women' in Afshar and Eade (Eds), *Development, Women and War: Feminist Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxfam.

<sup>33</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017). *Data Booklet: Household Size and Composition Around the World 2017*. (ST/ESA/SER.A/405).

<sup>34</sup> CARE International, *Women's Economic Empowerment Impact Report 2018*. See also World Bank. 2012. *World Development Report 2012: Gender equality and Development*. New York: World Bank. Available at: <https://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1315936222006/Complete-Report.pdf> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019). And World Bank. 2013. *World Development Report 2013: Jobs*. Washington D.C.: The World Bank. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/11843> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019). Louise Vaughan. 2019. *Humanitarian Mine Action and the Empowerment of Women*. Thornhill: The HALO Trust. Available at: <https://www.landminefree2025.org/humanitarian-mine-action-and-the-empowerment-of-women.html> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019)

<sup>35</sup> Hudock, *Women's Economic Participation*. *Girl Stats*, Available at: <https://girl-stats.org/about/> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019)

## ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF GENDER PARITY FOR FCAS

*Women's ability to work for pay is cited by the World Bank as one of the 'most visible and game changing events in the life of modern households and communities'.<sup>36</sup>*

The McKinsey Global Institute calculated that if women participated in the world's economy equally to men, it could add as much as **US\$28 trillion or 26% to the annual global GDP.**<sup>37</sup>

Based on data from the International Labour Organisation, it is estimated that of the 865 million women worldwide who have the potential for greater engagement with their national economies, 812 million live in emerging market and low-income nations.<sup>38</sup> The McKinsey Global Institute also calculated that Africa as a whole could add \$316 billion or 10% of GDP incrementally in the period to 2025 if each country made advances in women's equality to match the country in the region that has achieved the most progress.<sup>39</sup> Likewise the Middle East could add over \$400 billion or 9% of GDP.<sup>40</sup>



**812 MILLION WOMEN**  
living in emerging and  
low-income nations

**& 264 MILLION WOMEN**  
living in FCAS have the  
potential for greater  
engagement with their  
economies.<sup>41</sup>



Africa as a whole  
could add

**\$316 BILLION  
OR 10% OF  
GDP BY 2025**

with gender equality.



The Middle East  
could add over

**\$400 BILLION OR  
9% OF GDP BY 2025**

if each country made  
advances in gender  
equality.

<sup>36</sup> Munoz Boudet et al. 2012. *On Norms and Agency: Conversations about Gender Equality with Women and Men in 20 Countries*. Washington D.C.: World Bank. Available at: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1164107274725/On-Norms-Agency-Book.pdf> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019)

<sup>37</sup> McKinsey Global Institute. 2019. *The power of parity: How advancing women's equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth*. New York: McKinsey & Company. Available at: <https://mck.co/2yePIGY> (Accessed: 14 Apr 2020)

<sup>38</sup> DeAnne Aguirre, Leila Hoteit, Christine Rupp, and Karim Sabbagh. 2012. 'Empowering the Third Billion. Women and the World of Work in 2012.' Briefing Report. Booz and Company, New York.

<sup>39</sup> Lohini Moodley et al.. 2019. *The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in Africa*. New York: McKinsey Global Institute. p.vi

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> The World Bank. 2020. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL.FE.IN?locations=F1> (Accessed: 1 Apr 2020)

Gender inequality provokes striking economic losses. 20 out of the World Bank's 36 fragile and conflict affected countries are in Africa. 19 out of the 36 countries can be found in sub-Saharan Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa, it is estimated that economic losses due to gender inequality stand at \$2.5 trillion, which as an initial share of wealth represents 11.4% of the base regional wealth.<sup>42</sup> The average annual GDP growth per capita in these sub-Saharan African countries could be higher by as much as 0.9% if income and gender inequality were reduced.<sup>43</sup> Calculations have also shown that prior to the onset of conflict in 2014, Yemen's GDP could have increased by 27% had gender gaps been closed by increasing women's labour participation.<sup>44</sup>

In developing nations in general, gender inequality and preventing women's access to the labour market represents both a lost opportunity for economic growth, and results in direct economic losses.

### ECONOMIC BENEFITS: LATIN AMERICA CASE STUDY

*During the 1960s only 2 in 10 working-age women in Latin America were working or looking for work. By the start of the 2010s, this number was 6 in 10.<sup>45</sup> The workforce grew by 66 million workers between 2000 and 2016 and this expansion accounted for 72% of GDP growth in the region.<sup>46</sup> Growth in female income also accounted for 30% of extreme poverty reduction across the region. Poverty rates*

*continued to fall during the 2007-2008 world economic crises which suggests that because of women's labour force participation, the region was resilient to the shock despite the region's GDP contracting by 4%.<sup>47</sup> Increases in female labour income and labour market participation also contributed to higher enrolment rates and the closing of the gender gap in education. Secondary and tertiary education in the region have not only reached gender parity but have reversed it with girls now significantly outnumbering boys.<sup>48</sup>*

Working women spur local economic reconstruction by producing higher aggregate wealth, maintaining the function of markets and increasing productivity in resource utilisation.<sup>49</sup> Working women's financial benefits reverberate further into the community, particularly when they require others to manage household duties while they work.<sup>50</sup> While these benefits are greater when women have higher paid jobs, the same results have been witnessed despite women having low paid jobs and earning less than men.<sup>51</sup> These local benefits also translate into state-wide benefits through women's provision of a larger tax base for their government. These taxes can be reinvested into social services and infrastructure, which can improve education, health, and economic institutions state-wide.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Quentin Wodon and Benedicte De La Briere. 2018. *Unrealized Potential: The High Cost of Gender Inequality in Earnings*. The World Bank Group. p. 8. Washington D.C.: The World Bank Group. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/gender/publication/unrealized-potential-the-high-cost-of-gender-inequality-in-earnings> (Accessed: 20 Jan 2020)

<sup>43</sup> Dalia Hakura, Mumtaz Hussain, Monique Newiak, Vimal Thakoor and Fan Yang. 2017. *Women, Work and Economic Growth Leveling the Playing Field*. Ed. By Kalpana Kochar, Sonali Jain-Chandra, Monique Newiak. Washington D.C.: International Monetary Fund. p.195.

<sup>44</sup> Marc Teignier and David Cuberes. 2014. *Working Paper: Aggregate Costs of Gender Gaps in the Labour Market*. Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona.

<sup>45</sup> Leonardo Gasparini et al. 2015. 'Female Labour Force Participation in Latin America'. Working Paper: Centro de Estudios Distributivos, Laborales y Sociales. Available at: <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/127697/1/cedlas-wp-181.pdf> (Accessed: 27 Jan 2020).

<sup>46</sup> The World Bank. 2012. *The Effect of Women's Economic Power: In Latin America and the Caribbean*. Available at: <https://www.bancomundial.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/PLBSummer12latest.pdf> (Accessed: 27 Jan 2020)

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> UN Women. 2012. *Women Working for Recovery: The Impact of Female Employment on Family and Community Welfare after Conflict*. New York: UN Women. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/media/Headquarters/Media/Publications/en/05BWomenWorkingforRecovery.pdf> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019)

<sup>50</sup> Ann Hudock et al. 2016. *Occasional Paper Series: Women's Economic Participation in Conflict-Affected and Fragile States*. Washington D.C.: Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. Available at: <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Occasional-Paper-Series-Womens-Economic-Participation.pdf> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019)

<sup>51</sup> UN Women, *Women Working for Recovery*.

<sup>52</sup> Girl Stats. Bath: Verisk Maplecroft. Available At: <https://girl-stats.org/about/> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019)



## INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY: PEACE AND RECONSTRUCTION

**Women's economic participation through work is critical to maximise the productive potential of growing economies. This is vital for securing peace and stability because economic growth is correlated with lower levels of conflict.<sup>53</sup>**

**World Bank figures revealed that a country with a GDP per person of just \$250 has a predicted probability of internal conflict over the next five years at 15%.**

The probability of internal conflict reduced by half for a country with a GDP of \$600 per person.<sup>54</sup> The consequences are a world where conflicts are concentrated in poorer areas, with the wealth gap between countries in conflict and those not in conflict becoming greater now than ever before.<sup>55</sup> Strengthening economies by mobilising women will reduce the global wealth gap and the probability of conflict in fragile states. Women's economic potential therefore must be optimised in FCAS.

### WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

*"[...] Addressing economic empowerment issues during conflict and post-conflict phases is a prevention strategy, as disputes over access to economic resources are one of the most prevalent drivers of conflict. If we are serious about sustaining peace, we can no longer allow women's economic rights to remain a blind spot in efforts to respond to crises and plan for peace".*

**UN Security Council Report of the Secretary-General, Women Peace and Security. 9 October 2019. S/2019/800**

Nechem, Afghanistan - Village elders greet Afghan aid representatives

Shutterstock

<sup>53</sup> Mcartan Humphreys. 2003. *Economics and Violent Conflict*. Massachusetts: Harvard University. Available at: [https://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Economics\\_and\\_Violent\\_Conflict.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Economics_and_Violent_Conflict.pdf) (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019)

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.



Over the years, the United Nations Security Council has passed multiple resolutions that recognise “the disproportionate impact that conflict has on women and girls”.<sup>56</sup>

They have also called for women to be active participants in conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction, and for the protection of women and girls against sexual violence. Not only are women the first to notice growing tensions and conflict, they are also the first responders to pick up the pieces in the aftermath. Including women and being responsive to their needs is essential in conflict resolution and post-conflict rebuilding.

NATO’s Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is an example of international action. Its biannual plan follows three principles: integration of gender mainstreaming across all operations and policies; inclusivity of women representatives at all levels across NATO and national forces to enhance operational effectiveness and success; and integrity to address the systemic inequalities to ensure fair and equal treatment of women and men Alliance-wide.<sup>57</sup>

**TAKING THE UN’S WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA FORWARD, UN WOMEN HAS IDENTIFIED SIX GOALS:<sup>58</sup>**

- 1. Make leadership accountable for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, through improved data and gender analysis;
- 2. Ensure women’s meaningful participation in peace processes, the implementation of peace agreements and related decision-making;
- 3. Protect women’s human rights defenders and women’s organizations;
- 4. Ensure women’s participation in economic decision-making in post conflict situations;
- 5. Increase the number of women in uniformed services in peacekeeping missions and national security services;
- 6. Finance the women, peace and security agenda and invest in women peace builders.

The employment and participation of local women in FCAS make reconstruction efforts more effective because they reveal invisible problems that otherwise go undetected by men.<sup>61</sup> Women’s participation is also important because male local humanitarian teams in FCAS sometimes have a contradictory propensity to reinforce conservative attitudes on women’s roles and needs.<sup>62</sup>

**AFGHAN WOMEN’S RIGHTS ARE FRAGILE ACCORDING TO SUSANNE E. JALBERT, PH.D., CHIEF OF PARTY OF USAID-AFGHANISTAN, PROMOTE – WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT (CHEMONICS)**

*Women make up approximately 50% of the Afghan population, and around 64% of Afghans are under 25. While gains have been made for women in Afghanistan, women under Taliban rule face severe restrictions. Human rights groups report that girls’ schools in Taliban controlled areas are regularly coming under attack just for them trying to get an education. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the Taliban refuse to protect equality provisions for women in the Afghan Constitution in the current peace talks. Frustratingly, women were excluded from the negotiations and local women’s groups are fearful that they will be unable to hold onto the rights they have gained since the topple of the Taliban in November 2001.*

*Dr Susanne E. Jalbert, Chief of Party for USAID Promote – Women in Government (WIG) (implemented by Chemonics) has spent her life fighting for gender equity. She has worked in more than 50 countries and has spent the past 11 years working on several projects in Afghanistan. This project for USAID, training women to work in the civil service,*

*has just come to an end. Over the five-year period of the project and with apt political will, the percentage of women civil servants jumped from 22% to 27.5%. This progress is phenomenal, considering the entrenched local patriarchal culture and the high levels of poverty that prevent women from fully contributing economically.*

*Beyond the civil service training and employment programmes, much of WIG’s work has been to address gendered deficiencies in the workplace legal framework and raise awareness of women’s right to work, engage male allies and advocate for women in all areas of life. As Dr. Jalbert leaves her current project, she is wary for the future for Afghan women. The gains in gender equity are not secure, especially in Taliban held areas of the country. There is little privacy, dignity, or safety for women at work. The infrastructure and services do not currently exist to create a safe, hospitable work environment for women.*

*Violence is a thread that runs through everything in Afghanistan. Dr. Jalbert believes that peace is not just an absence of violence. It is a just rule of law, and equitable economic well-being. Without pushing for women’s rights, including the right to work, peace is not durable.*

WOMEN’S ROLE IN RECONSTRUCTION

Current post-conflict reconstruction efforts are dominated by and overwhelmingly benefit men. In many countries, women do benefit from development projects such as those which incorporate health and education programmes, or support for micro-enterprises. But, in many cases women lose out because they are rarely mobilised into well-paid, permanent employment opportunities alongside men in large scale development projects.<sup>59</sup> CTG and others in the development field are keen to involve women in peace building and reconstruction work, because ensuring that women are active participants can help strengthen peace. With women at the negotiating table, peace accords are 35% more likely to last.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>56</sup> NATO. 2020. Women, Peace and Security. Available at: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_91091.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_91091.htm) (Accessed: 1 Apr 2020)

<sup>57</sup> Women, Peace and Security. 2019. NATO. Available at: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_91091.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_91091.htm) (Accessed: 1 Apr 2020)

<sup>58</sup> UN Women. 2020. Women, Peace and Security. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-peace-security> (Accessed: 1 Apr 2020)

<sup>59</sup> Caren Grown and Cristina Otano. 2019. The Gender gap in the disaster risk management sector: why it matters. Washington D.C.: The World Bank. Available at: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/sustainablecities/gender-gap-disaster-risk-management-sector-why-it-matters> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019)

<sup>60</sup> Laurel Stone (2015). Study of 156 peace agreements, controlling for other variables, Quantitative Analysis of Women’s participation in Peace Processes in Reimagining Peacemaking: Women’s Roles in Peace Processes, Annex II.

<sup>61</sup> Tina Saarikoski. 2019. Humanitarian Work Requires Women. Helsinki: Finnish Red Cross. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/humanitarian-work-requires-women> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019).

<sup>62</sup> CARE international. 2017. She is a Humanitarian: Women’s Participation in Humanitarian Action Drawing on Global Trends and Evidence from Jordan and the Philippines. Geneva: CARE International. Available at: [https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/media/k2/attachments/CARE\\_She-is-a-humanitarian-report\\_Feb-2017\\_high-res.pdf](https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/media/k2/attachments/CARE_She-is-a-humanitarian-report_Feb-2017_high-res.pdf) (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019)



Empowering women by enabling them to earn economic security through permanent employment in fragile contexts helps them to amplify their voices within the household and beyond. This is not just beneficial for women, but also for the wider community. By working on humanitarian or development projects, women's increased civic engagement has shown to have a positive impact on social relations and trust among members of the community, and to strengthen local institutions.<sup>63</sup> Social cohesion and stronger institutions safeguard economic stability in FCAS, and are important for forging a state's capacity to mediate between competing groups in society.<sup>64</sup>

Humanitarian and development work must meet the individual needs of men, women, girls and boys in order to provide wholesome and sustainable results. This applies to all echelons of development: consultation, strategy, implementation, and procurement. Failure to recognise and deliver on diverse gender needs hampers effective responses and can threaten the lives of all beneficiaries.

**DAY IN THE LIFE OF CTG STAFF**  
**AFIFA HABBASSI, OPERATIONS AND**  
**QUALITY ASSURANCE OFFICER, MALI**

*"Originally from Tunisia, I left my home country in 2018 with the aim of using my skills to aid the humanitarian mission in Mali. I arrived in September 2018 and commenced work as an Operations and Quality Assurance Officer in Improvised Explosive Device Disposal. My role in the mission involves supervising the training of the Explosive Ordnance Device teams, liaising with contractors, and planning convoy operations, with the overall goal to support the mission to protect and save the lives of the populous of Mali whilst facilitating the 're-building' of this conflict-stricken country.*

*"Working in this environment is tricky because I'm surrounded by so many men...No one expects the instructor to be a woman, so they'd say to each other in Arabic 'what does she know?', not realising I understand the language.*

*There are not many women working in this field, in fact I am the only female NATO certified in Explosive Ordnance Device instructor in my country, and one of very few working out in the field. This is a man's world. Finding another woman with expertise in explosives and weapons would be hard work; however, if we were to find women interested in participating in training, I would gladly support them."*



Afifa Habbassi conducts UN police weapons training. Read her story [here](#).

Efforts working towards gender equality through economic empowerment also help offset state-level conflict and violence which is often driven by unequal gender relations.<sup>65</sup> While there may be exceptions, gender inequality, power hierarchies and discrimination are grounded in traditional patriarchal gender identities which often characterise men as strong protectors and fighters, and women as vulnerable and in need of protection. These beliefs, norms and values are instrumental in building support for and perpetuating violence, which makes conflict much more likely in countries where these norms are actively practiced.<sup>66</sup> Cultures that restrict women's agency and access to resources, and which treat women as property and tolerate domestic violence, are more inclined to state repression and violent conflict in the public domain.<sup>67</sup> This is because these norms of gender inequality, subordination and discrimination legitimise the use of violence as a valid tool of conflict resolution.<sup>68</sup>

Having women work in FCAS mitigates the impact of these damaging norms and contributes to wider conflict prevention by forging a culture where women are equal to men, and violence is not understood to be a sound means of conflict resolution.<sup>69</sup> The devaluation of women and girls by restricting their work opportunities is therefore a major obstacle to stability and forward thinking, two factors that are critical to allow fragile countries to overturn recurring turmoil.<sup>70</sup>

Strengthening women's economic prospects through good paid work in the formal sector, and with that the opportunity for greater economic control, prevents female dependence on their male partners. This increases women's resilience to crises by enabling the woman to choose and provide her insight into how resources are distributed within the home, which will often prioritise her children and the future. This strengthens the resilience of households, communities and economic markets as a whole.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>63</sup> UN Women, Women Working for Recovery.

<sup>64</sup> P. Justino. 2009. 'Poverty and Violent Conflict: A Micro-Level perspective on the causes and duration of warfare', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol.46, no.3, 315-333. See also M. Hutchinson and K. Johnson. 2011. 'Capacity to Trust? Institutional Capacity, Conflict and Political Trust in Africa, 2000-2005', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 48, 737-752.

<sup>65</sup> M Caprioli. 2005. 'Primed for Violence: The Role of Gender Inequality in Predicting Internal Conflict', *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 49, pp. 161-178.

<sup>66</sup> Caprioli, Primed for Violence. See also H. Wright. 2014. *Masculinities, Conflict and Peacebuilding: Perspectives on men through a gender lens*. London: Saferworld. Available at: <https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/862-masculinities-conflict-and-peacebuilding-perspectives-on-men-through-a-gender-lens> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019). Sján Herbert. 2014. *Links between women's empowerment (or lack of) and outbreaks of violent conflict*. Birmingham: GSDRC for Birmingham University. Available at: <http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/hdq1170.pdf> (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019)

<sup>67</sup> Susanne Schmeidl and Piza Lopez. 2002. *Gender and Conflict Early Warning: A Framework for Action*. London: International Alert. Available at: [https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Gender\\_Conflict\\_Early\\_Warning\\_EN\\_2002.pdf](https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Gender_Conflict_Early_Warning_EN_2002.pdf) (Accessed: 11 Dec 2019)

<sup>68</sup> B. Bonta. 1996. 'Conflict Resolution Among Peaceful Societies: The Culture of Peacefulness', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol.33, no.4, 403-420. See also Z. Maoz. 2003. 'The Controversy over the Democratic Peace: Rearguard Action or Cracks in the Wall?', *International Security*, vol.22, no.1, 162-198.

<sup>69</sup> Johan Galtung. 1969. 'Violence, Peace and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 6, no.3, 167-191.

<sup>70</sup> Jeni Klugman. 2019. *What's good for Women and Girls can be Good for Men and Boys*. New York: Centre for International Cooperation. Pathfinders For Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies. See also Richard Dobbs et al.. 2015. *No Ordinary Disruption: The Four Global Forces Breaking All the Trends*. New York: McKinsey Global Institute. And Sherman. *Future of South Sudan*.

<sup>71</sup> CARE, Women's Economic Empowerment.

# SIX MISLEADING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WORKING WOMEN IN FCAS

Here we highlight six misleading and sweeping assumptions about employing women in FCAS.

Understanding the context of FCAS and how each country, region and community operates is essential to allaying fears and fighting misconceptions about the possibilities of paid employment for women.

Female graduate attending a Female First Development Workshop in Gaza run by CTG. Training included interview techniques and CV writing for those wanting to get into the humanitarian and development sector. Read more about it [here](#).

## 1. WOMEN REQUIRE SPECIAL TREATMENT

Providing special treatment to women is not necessary for them to be able to fulfil the demands of formal employment. Sometimes allowing women to leave early and keeping men working late, or only providing women with transport to and from work, can backfire. As a result, women can be perceived as 'difficult' or less flexible employees, making employers more reluctant to hire them. It also reinforces social norms that see women's primary role in home and men's role at work. Providing a measure of flexibility for everyone helps overcome these assumptions.

## 2. SECURITY AND ACCESS ARE BARRIERS FOR WOMEN

Research has shown that men are just as vulnerable to political insecurity and conflict-related casualties as women.<sup>72</sup> Likewise, the majority of global homicide victims are men, killed by strangers, where in contrast, women are far more likely to die at the hands of someone they know.<sup>73</sup> In some contexts, women can move across high risk areas with greater ease than men because they are less likely to be searched at security checkpoints. But there is regularly a need for a chaperone and compliance with 'gender appropriate behaviour'. In field work, women can also have greater accessibility than men, who do not have access to women in highly sex-segregated societies. Sometimes women who are perceived as different (because of their work, education, or origins) can have access to both men and women.

## 3. CHILDCARE IS A BARRIER FOR WORKING WOMEN

People assume that childcare is a barrier for women seeking work in all countries. However, childcare is a bigger barrier to women's work in the West than it is in other regions of the world. In many FCAS, women live in extended households with other female family members that provide help with childcare. 'Outsiders' should not assume that all women face the same challenges.

<sup>72</sup> Ormhaug, Christin et al. 2009. Armed Conflict Deaths Disaggregated by Data. PRIO: International Peace Research Institute, Oslo.

<sup>73</sup> UNODC. 2018. Global Study on Homicide: Gender-related Killing of Women and Girls. Vienna.



#### 4. ONLY MEN ARE BREADWINNERS

There are many circumstances where a woman takes on the role of breadwinner, such as widowhood, when men have been injured in previous conflicts or simply when they are the only one in the family who can secure employment. In some cases, women refrain from marriage and become breadwinners to support their natal families.

#### 5. QUALIFIED WOMEN DO NOT EXIST

There is broad perception that qualified women do not exist to fill certain jobs that are associated with men. In the main, this has not been CTG's experience. 21 out of 360 Local National Engineer roles at CTG are filled by women despite engineering often being considered a 'masculine' occupation. On the other hand, in some nations such as South Sudan, CTG have found it difficult to source both men and women for certain positions.

#### 6. ONLY MEN ARE PREJUDICED AGAINST WOMEN

Prejudice comes from all different groups of people and includes both conscious and unconscious bias. This includes women across all countries, classes, and ages. Older women from very conservative communities are particularly known to exhibit prejudice against younger working women.



Salwa Nassar, CTG Civil Engineer, Gaza.  
Read Salwa's story [here](#).



Somali woman on her way to work in Mogadishu; she works as a cleaner at a camp in the AAIA zone.

Photographer: James Puttick



# BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES: RECRUITING WOMEN IN THE HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT SECTORS IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT AFFECTED COUNTRIES

## OPPORTUNITIES

**Despite the many challenges and barriers faced by women in securing decent employment and faced by organisations in recruiting suitably qualified women in FCAS, there can also be opportunities.**

During conflict women may come to play as crucial a role in their countries' economies, through paid work, as they do through domestic and subsistence work.<sup>74</sup> Conflict disrupts gender dynamics in societies as much as other societal norms and structures. Men's active role in armed conflict often results in women securing employment to support their families. This increased economic participation sometimes continues as societies stabilise and recover. With new skills and experiences, women can continue to participate in the private, governmental, and non-governmental sectors of the economy.<sup>75</sup>


Additionally, for countries such as Afghanistan, large amounts of development aid have increased the exposure of certain groups within the population to, and experience of, different work practices including women holding senior management roles and men and women working closely together. While there is still far to go, in FCAS significant numbers of women

do work in senior positions, and alongside male colleagues, as co-workers in the private sector, in civil service jobs, in civil society organisations and in the humanitarian and development sector.

There is a wide variety of roles available in the development and humanitarian sector due to the diverse nature of development needs. Technical experts are required in areas including but not limited to infrastructure, irrigation, public health, food distribution, rule of law, governance, water, and sanitation. Humanitarian and development programmes also require coordination, logistical, financial, and monitoring support.

CTG alone has people currently employed in over 1500 different job roles. All of these diverse roles are available to women. The following table shows the 25 positions where CTG employs the largest number of people. Out of these, there are only three positions where women are not currently employed: mechanic, convoy leader, and airdrop coordinator.

## CURRENT CTG POSITIONS WITH THE GREATEST NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY ORGANISERS	CONVOY LEADERS	NURSES
DRIVERS	OPERATIONS ASSISTANTS	LITERACY TEACHERS
REVENUE MOBILIZERS	DATA ENTRY CLERKS	DATABASE ASSISTANTS
CLEANERS		ACCOUNT MANAGERS
FIELD MONITORS		INFORMATION MANAGEMENT OFFICERS
REVENUE MOBILIZERS		PROJECT CLERKS
TEAM LEADERS		KITCHEN ASSISTANTS
VARIOUS TYPES OF ENGINEERS		AIR DROP COORDINATORS
RETAIL LOGISTICS CONSULTANTS	MEDICAL OFFICERS	GUARDS
PROJECT ASSISTANTS	MECHANICS	VARIOUS TYPES OF SURVEYOR

## BARRIERS

**Despite the opportunities described, CTG as a large employer in the humanitarian and development sector, encounters a range of barriers when recruiting women into various positions.**

These challenges emerge at three different stages in the recruitment process: when candidates are sourced, when qualified candidates are submitted to clients, and when candidates are selected for employment. While they vary to some degree from country to country, there are many similarities, given that all countries where CTG works are fragile and have particularly asymmetrical gender relations. These barriers are faced by most organisations working in the development sector.

Barriers begin from childhood starting with the type and length of girls' education. Education is crucial in shaping access to decent work and skilled jobs. Not having appropriate qualifications, skills or experience restricts access to jobs, reduces pay and earnings growth.<sup>76</sup> Lack of education can also include language skills for which there are often particular requirements within development work.<sup>77</sup> Lower levels of education also determine the contract conditions a worker will accept as higher levels of education can put potential staff in a stronger position to negotiate better terms of employment.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> SIDA. 2009. 'Women's Economic Empowerment in Conflict and Post-Conflict Countries'. Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden. p.19.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Fernandez et al. 2016. *Faces of Joblessness: Characterising Barriers to Inform Policy*. Paris: OECD. Available at: [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/faces-of-joblessness\\_5jlwvz47xptj-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/faces-of-joblessness_5jlwvz47xptj-en) (Accessed: 20 Jan 2020)

<sup>77</sup> Women's Career Development Workshops are hosted by CTG in FCAS in partnership with language training institutes where English Proficiency Diploma Scholarships have been offered to high performing participants.

These proficiency courses are offered in a bid to improve their English language skills and therefore their accessibility to decent work within the aid and development sectors.

<sup>78</sup> ILO. 2015. 'Education and Labour Markets: Analysing Global Trends with the KILM'. International Labour Organisation: Department of Statistics. p.1. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/publication/wcms\\_424077.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/publication/wcms_424077.pdf) (Accessed: 6 Mar 2020).



Gendered expectations of women’s and men’s roles and capabilities have a critical impact on women’s employment opportunities by inducing conscious and unconscious gender bias.

So, even where women do manage to achieve the necessary education and qualifications for different positions, gendered expectations may limit or prevent access to employment opportunities. Barriers to women’s employment based on gendered expectations fall into four categories.

- 1. EMPLOYERS’ PERCEPTIONS
- 2. SOCIETY’S EXPECTATIONS
- 3. FAMILIAL EXPECTATIONS
- 4. WOMEN’S BELIEFS

Firstly, potential employers’ perceptions of what women can and cannot do, and what men and women should and should not do.

Secondly, societies have generalised expectations about what women can or should do. In the most extreme cases, it is considered unacceptable for a woman to undertake any type of paid work, beyond a few select positions such as health care and teaching, provided this only takes place in sex-segregated spaces. Globally, 40% of men and women believe that a man has more right to a job than a woman during times of unemployment, and this perception is exacerbated during times of insecurity and conflict.<sup>79</sup> This can result in more men being employed just because there is a perception that men have more right to employment among employers and society at large.

Thirdly, a woman’s family can restrict her employment fully or at certain stages in her life cycle, for example, when she has small children. Even when a woman’s immediate family is supportive of her working outside the home, pressure from extended family members can stop her from working. This can result in women and their families having to keep employment a secret from disapproving but influential extended family members.

Fourthly, and importantly, women themselves can share ideas about women’s correct role in society that confines them to the domestic realm. They belong to societies that hold gendered expectations and they often agree with or conform to them. Furthermore, even where women want to and believe they should be able to work in a wide range of professions, they may lack the confidence to apply for such jobs, or they believe that they would not be employed in such positions if they did apply.

These factors not only restrict women’s ability to secure decent employment but also result in occupational segregation, with women being limited to domestic and care work, or to jobs which coincide with their society’s accepted gender roles. This gendered segregation of work roles also contributes to gender pay gaps.

MEN AND GENDER EQUALITY  
HASSAN FAHIMI, THE ROTARY PEACE  
CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD

*Hassan Fahimi believes that men play an outsized role in changing gender norms in Afghanistan. Women are often accused of subversive, anti-Islam behaviour if they advocate for their rights. But when men promote and support women to reach gender equality, they normalise new behaviours.*

*Women and men do not value the work done at home. Without a cash contribution to the household finances, women are seen as unequal partners and subordinate to their husbands and male family members. This imbalance can be changed through formal employment that will bring in cash to the family. It gives women agency to make their own decisions and participate in the family decision making processes. It changes the power dynamics in families and enhances women’ status among their communities. By changing women’s gender roles and responsibilities, the gender discourse will reduce family violence and place men and women on an equal footing. Men must be prepared to not only accept this change but advocate on its behalf.*

*The concept of gender has taken root in Afghanistan and its acceptability has increased*

*compared to 13 years ago. There is a greater awareness of women’s rights, but these are threatened by a lack of security. Fragility and conflict reinforce women’s vulnerability by preventing them from moving around freely in insecure areas and leaving more at risk of violence. Men remain in control – not only through the conflict but inside their families; women remain insecure when their rights are not recognised.*

*The story of the Mia Khan, who travels 12km every day to take his daughters to school and back every day, has become a viral sensation. It has hit a nerve across the country, not just in the more liberal, urban centres. Khan said, “I am illiterate, and I live on a daily wage, but my daughters’ education is very valuable to me because there is no female doctor in our area. It is my greatest desire to educate my daughters like my sons.”<sup>80</sup>*

*Recently, the elders (all men) in the Khost Province – a largely tribal community on the border of Pakistan – declared that any family who deprives their daughters of an education will be charged with a fine. There is a “ripple effect” when men recognise the value of work and education for their wives and their daughters. It changes perceptions within the wider family, with their neighbours and their communities.*

<sup>79</sup> UNDP. 2020. 2020 Human Development Perspectives: Tackling Social Norms, A Game Changer for Gender Inequalities. New York: UNDP. Available at: [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hd\\_perspectives\\_gsni.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hd_perspectives_gsni.pdf) (Accessed: 24 Mar 2020)

<sup>80</sup> The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (2019). Available at: [https://www.facebook.com/swedishcommitteeforafghanistan/posts/3473904009291162?\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=K-R](https://www.facebook.com/swedishcommitteeforafghanistan/posts/3473904009291162?__tn__=K-R) (Accessed: 15 Apr 20)

Barriers for women include restricted access to public spaces and information technology (IT). Cultural practices, such as Purdah, promote the seclusion of women from the public sphere or limit their mobility within it.

Such customs have a negative effect on women’s participation in paid work, by limiting their access to social and/or professional networks.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, women’s access to IT is often limited. As men are more likely to be employed, and in better-paid jobs, men are more likely to have their own income that can be spent on IT. Women with lower levels of education and lower paid jobs, are less likely to have disposable income to spend on their own IT. This leaves them dependent on male family members for access. Poor households that can only afford one mobile phone will prioritise men’s use of it. Both factors reduce women’s access to formal and informal professional networks, which most people use to secure their employment.<sup>82</sup>

FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The rise of female entrepreneurship overcomes some of the barriers presented above. Manizha Wafeq set up the Afghanistan Women’s Chambers of Commerce and Industry in 2013 to offer Afghan businesswomen research, advocacy, capacity building and networking opportunities. Afghan businesswomen are not a new phenomenon. Many have built businesses in handicrafts, nursing, and childcare. But more recently, there has been a surge in women opening businesses in a much broader range of sectors such as construction, logistics, IT, shipping, and restaurants. There are more opportunities opening up for women but not all women are aware of the hard work demanded by a business.

Similarly, in Somalia, Dr Sadiyo Siad, founder of the Hano Academy, has recognised the value of supporting female businesses. Made a refugee at 17, she has focused much of her efforts on education and economic empowerment. Dr Siad believes that Somali women are very resilient but are not given

a chance to thrive in male-dominated work environments. Recently she has partnered with international agencies to support women-led cooperatives in farming and beekeeping. Much of the Somali economy is based around farming and livestock. Surprisingly, many women actually run the farms in rural areas but do not have the business and entrepreneurial support that they need.

Both Sadiyo and Manizha warn that women’s business organisations must not be tokenistic. Women have to fight in Somalia to be given a seat at the table in discussions about business, trade, and the economy. Sadiyo believes that “women need to go into the room and sit down. You need to show them that you have what it takes to show the men.” Manizha goes one step further – she thinks that women have a responsibility to ensure that their contributions count. Successful women in high positions check cultural stereotypes and challenge deeply rooted beliefs. If these women perform badly, they close doors to other women. She says that the women at the table “must be door openers for the next generation.”

Women’s relative lack of mobility in FCAS, which is limited by both real and perceived risks, is another important barrier. Merely getting to work may be more of a challenge for women than men. In many places where there is limited public transportation and paid work is frowned upon, levels of sexual harassment are high for women when travelling to and from work. Men are more likely to own their

own cars and to drive themselves to work. Despite these challenges, women do find solutions including sharing taxis with other women who live and work in the same area; arranging for a male family member to take them to work; travelling on public transport with other women; and when in a better paying job, paying a driver to drop off and collect them from work every day.

MOBILITY IN LIBYA  
[ANONYMOUS]

There has been a big shift in the way women move around in Libya. In the past, women were not permitted to travel by themselves. This was not a legal restriction – for few it was for religious reasons, but mostly it was not culturally acceptable. Over the past decade, we have seen a shift in the way women travel, particularly in towns and cities. There is more pressure from women for greater mobility and greater equality. This change, which has affected all parts of Libyan society, has come about in part from the TV and internet.

There are also many more opportunities for women with the growth of entrepreneurship.

They can decide where they want to work and who they need to visit. They don’t need to travel as much and families are much more open to this type of working. There are more businesswomen than ever before.

That is not to say that mobility is no longer an issue. There are still places that are not female-friendly and there are still people who actively harass women if they come onto their premises. Families will not allow women to travel to certain areas. A major university in Tripoli, a primary centre for political science, law, and economics studies, is well known as a place where women are harassed, threatened and discouraged from studying there. By restricting access to places, women are still limited in what they can achieve.

Field work is another challenging area for women in development and humanitarian work. Many assume that all women cannot travel at all for field work (see misleading assumptions) whether that be for daily commutes from their office base to field locations, or to different districts, provinces or states for overnight stays. While there may be limitations on some women in some contexts there are usually means that can enable women to undertake field work. For example, in Somalia, CTG hires local women for field work so that they retain the customary protection offered by their clan. Many male field workers also work in the areas where their clans are based.

It is important to highlight here that men experience restrictions and lack of access in conducting field work too. In many fragile countries, strict norms of sex-segregation are applied, which restrict non-familial men’s access to women and dwellings and relatedly young children. Not employing large numbers of women to conduct humanitarian and development field work can lead to half the population being underrepresented at best, and completely missed at worse. For humanitarian and development projects to achieve their desired outcomes it is not just an option to employ women, but an essential component.

<sup>81</sup> M Niaz Asadulla and Zaki Wahhaj. 2016. ‘Discussion Paper Series: Missing from the Market: Purdah Norm and Women’s Paid Work Participation in Bangladesh’. IZA Institute of Labour Economics.

<sup>82</sup> Research has suggested that 85% of open positions are filled through personal and professional networking. For one example see: National Society of Fundraising Executives. 2007. ‘Advancing Philanthropy: Volume 14’. The Society at The University of Virginia.



# FEMALEFIRST

## PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST: CREATING AN INCLUSIVE, REWARDING AND SAFE WORKPLACE

**GOAL:** BY 2030, 30% OF CTG'S PROJECT-RELATED ROLES WILL BE REPRESENTED BY WOMEN.

CTG's Female First initiative was launched in 2017. Its main imperative is to overcome the very barriers described in this paper, and to employ the best possible staff to undertake the variety of roles and positions available in the humanitarian and development sector.



Increasing CTG's ratio of women makes for better project and programme implementation and, as argued in the first half of this paper, with economic empowerment, supports countries in achieving their development goals. This area of CTG's work resonates closely with UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 and reflects CTG's core internal values.

CTG began Female First to ensure its recruiters, managers and senior directors, whether based at headquarters or field offices are prioritising overcoming the barriers that would otherwise prevent women from securing employment with CTG. CTG also works with its clients to encourage their support for the Female First objectives and to ensure complementarity between CTG's Female First initiative and the client's own gender parity objectives.



Yasmin Alkanouni, is an Operations Assistant for displacement tracking in Libya. She increases awareness of the Voluntary Humanitarian Return programme which offers reintegration support to migrants and helps them return home safely. [Read her story here.](#)

## Female First is comprised of four projects:

### 1. OPENING THE GATES: SOURCE, SUBMIT, SELECT.

**SOURCE:** CTG endeavours to increase its female talent pool through online and outreach campaigns using job platforms, developing partnerships with local universities, and facilitating learning events for women through its Committed to Good Curricula in host countries.

**SUBMIT:** Where before one in three candidates that were submitted to CTG's clients were women, now CTG aims to submit two in three.

**SELECT:** CTG advocates the importance of hiring women to its clients and shares monthly success stories on its efforts.

### 2. WOMEN IN AID LEADERSHIP: INTERNSHIP AND MENTORSHIP

This programme engages young women interested in gender equality, aid and development. CTG works with women across all its operational countries to provide experience and mentorship opportunities that support their pursuit of a successful career in the aid and development sector.

### 3. TRAIN AND PARTNER

Called the Committed to Good Curricula, this programme aims to provide bespoke, in-person and online training activities that address unconscious bias, employability skills, and professional development. The goal is to support recruitment and retention of women in the workplace. To deliver this CTG partners with local universities and institutions in its operational zones. So far, CTG has held workshops in Gaza and Somalia.

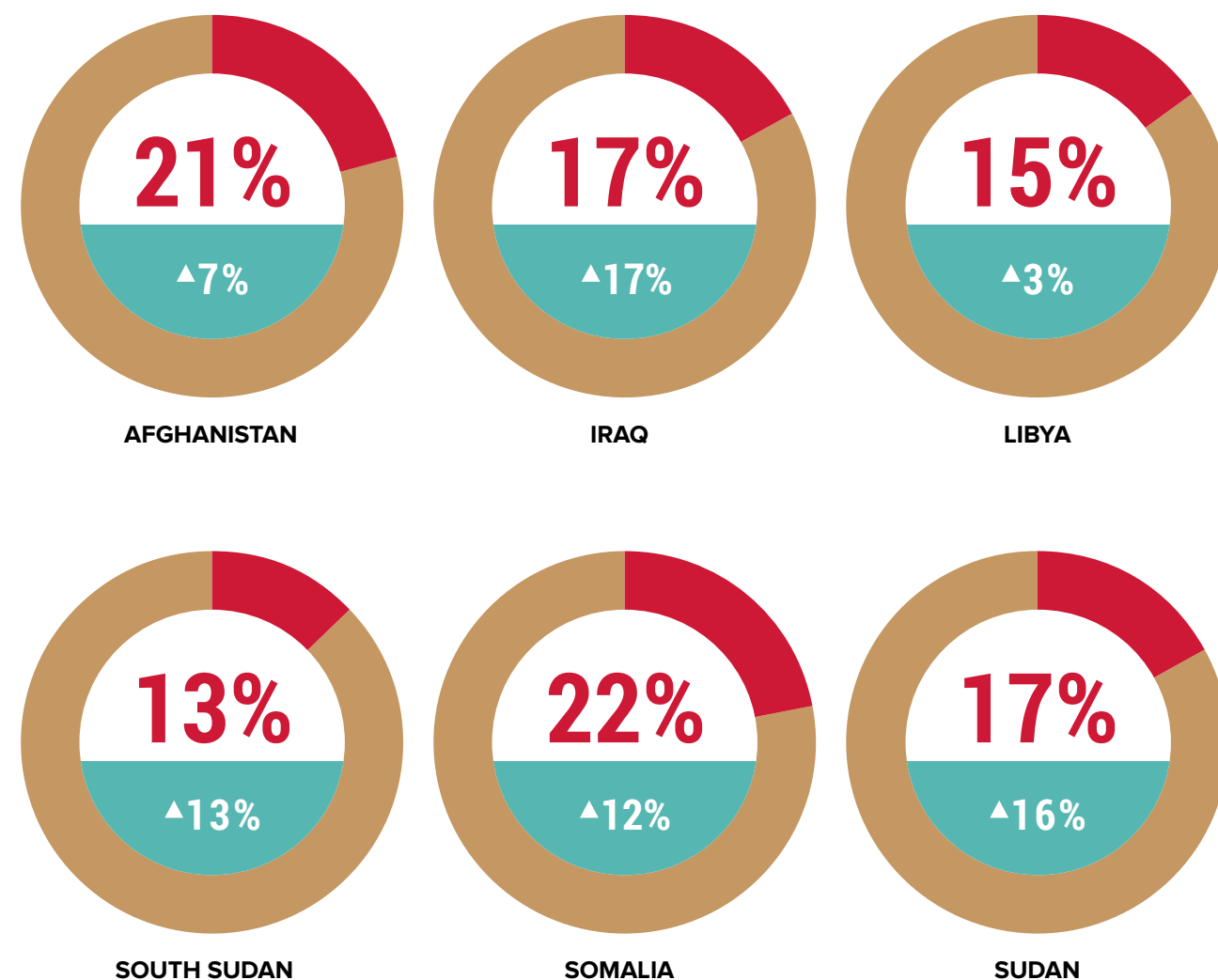
### 4. WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES (WEPS)

CTG uses the seven principles outlined by UN Women to integrate best practices into its policies and lead by example towards ensuring that gender equality is reached in the humanitarian and aid sector. CTG actively advocates for the adherence of WEPS in each of the business communities where it operates and beyond.

Due to the larger impact it has on the number of women CTG employs, this section will focus on the Source, Submit, Select part of CTG's Female First Initiative. As a human resources provider, CTG has two different groups of employees – staff who manage client accounts, recruit and manage employees, and project-related staff in FCAS.

90.5% of project-related staff are local nationals and 9.5% are international consultants. At its headquarters, CTG has an equal proportion of women to men, with a 56% to 44% breakdown in favour of women. ¾ of the senior management team are also women.

At the outset, the Female First initiative registered significant successes. Starting from a relatively low base, the first two years saw the percentage of female employees in some countries increase by more than 15%. However, despite CTG's company-wide commitment, recent months have seen the number of women employed by CTG plateau and it has become increasingly difficult to push the proportion of female to male employees closer to the 30% target.



# 5371

Female candidates who have signed up with CTG since the launch of Female First

# 136

Different nationalities of female candidates

Sometimes, extra measures are taken by CTG to level the playing field for women. Equality means treating everyone the same and people having access to the same opportunities. However, equal treatment can only be successful if everyone begins their journey from the same place. If women begin at a disadvantage, treating them the same as men will restrict their access to the same opportunities. Structural barriers which hinder women's professional development mean that they will not be offered the same work opportunities. This is why CTG has adopted an equity approach to its recruitment process. Equity means giving everyone what they need to succeed and offering men and women equal chances of securing a job.

Removing gender bias in CTG's approach to Source, Submit and Select is dependent on context-specific activities which differ from country to country and are designed to meet country-based targets. Each stage is interlinked. For example, a successful submission stage is dependent on CTG having sourced sufficient numbers of qualified female candidates.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Success cannot be achieved alone. Others must be encouraged and harnessed to support CTG's efforts to improve women's access to work on a much larger scale.**

Most of CTG's efforts focus on its local nationals. However, CTG also recognises that more needs to be done to alter the gender balance among its international consultants as well. Some of the approaches taken by CTG to accelerate local women's employment in the humanitarian and development sector are highlighted below. CTG believes that many of these recommendations can be used by other organisations in similar fields.

### SOURCE:

**To overcome women's lack of access to professional networks, CTG taps into other personal or social networks that qualified women may be a part of.**

For instance, in Afghanistan CTG is reaching out to thousands of women who have taken part in leadership development courses, job readiness trainings and internships, as well as local labour organisations, and university and educational networks. CTG will also sometimes contact professionals working for development projects that are imminently closing, as these women are likely to be qualified for the positions that CTG recruits for.

Tapping into non-formal professional networks also helps CTG overcome women's lack of IT access by encouraging less restrictive word-of-mouth networking. CTG is also exploring specific sourcing, such as targeting women's rights networks that will forward job adverts to their e-mail lists, or targeting women who are already connected with civil society, and in turn, the humanitarian and development sector.



The most effective advertising platform or outlet differs from country to country, so it is crucial for organisations to understand which internet sites qualified women tend to access prior to advertising an open position. In Somalia, existing list servers can be accessed through Facebook pages or SomaliJobs, whereas advertising on ReliefWeb in South Sudan, or YemenHR in Yemen are often much more successful. Targeted advertising can also encompass other methods such as newspaper adverts or broadcasting campaigns through radio or television, in order

to reach qualified women with reduced access to internet; CTG is exploring these methods.

CTG also recognises that it is not just where a job advertisement is posted that matters but also how that advertisement is worded. Women themselves may feel they are not suitable for a position due to role expectations in the society in which they live. Countering this is challenging but the use of gender-neutral language, explicitly stating that women should apply, and other similar methods can help.

*“My path to becoming a Human Rights Monitor, started with a passion for the law. In Hadhramaut, I was the first female lawyer. There was a big outcry, especially from my father’s tribe, as they say that being a lawyer is a man’s job.”*

**Human Rights Monitor employed by CTG, Yemen**



500 CTG staff were involved in the response to the outbreak of Ebola in Liberia. Celeste Olale was the head nurse at one of the Ebola Treatment Units. Read her story [here](#).

CTG has found that men dominate both as candidates and as current employees for certain roles, including those roles that seem high-risk. The numbers of qualified female candidates are often much lower than men for roles such as de-miners or security guards, most STEM roles, or positions

that require machines to be operated, including drivers. The development sector could benefit from organisations and companies specifically recruiting women into these areas, to open doors for women into what may be perceived as ‘less conventional’ roles.

### **STEM STUDIES IN AFGHANISTAN FARISHTA HELLALI, DEPUTY CHIEF OF PARTY FOR USAID’S PROMOTE SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT FUND**

*Farishta manages a \$50m five-year scholarship endowment to encourage women to study STEM subjects at Kabul university. This is a new endowment and the first of its kind in Afghanistan. The response in the first year has been surprising with 600 applications for 45 places. To date, Afghan women have stayed clear of science and engineering degrees. While there are many more women today studying business or more vocational degrees, there are far fewer women engineers in Afghanistan. It is difficult to encourage women to study STEM if there are not jobs on offer for women following graduation.*

*Formal employment for women is on the rise across the private and public sectors. There*

*are many more educated women today but there are still capacity issues. They do not yet have women in every field. This endowment fund is designed to fill the gap in STEM. Other initiatives are available to support girls who want to go on to higher education.*

*Girls’ aspirations and preferences are changing. With more girls in school, there are many more 18-year olds wanting to be financially independent and with ambitious goals. The international community’s focus on the importance of education for girls has shifted cultural attitudes across the country and across socio-economic classes.*

*Farishta is optimistic about the future. While there is a long way to go in terms of gender equality, with each new generation in school, and with revisions to the school curriculum that include gender dynamics, Afghan society is inching closer.*

Having lower numbers of female candidates does not mean that qualified women do not exist for these positions. Instead, different methods need to be applied when identifying candidates. CTG has made greater efforts to improve and broaden its outreach to ensure women are included in the candidate pool. However, fewer available candidates could also be an indication of women being restricted by any of the above-named barriers.

### **FITSUM DEMEKE TALENT MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST AT CTG**

*For some roles, such as demining, river convoy leaders or mechanical engineers (specifically in Yemen), it is much harder to find qualified female candidates. When a role is advertised, we turn to our candidate database and sometimes, we may find that we do not have any qualified female candidates there. Because we aim to shortlist at least*

*two female candidates for each role, in this instance we source our candidates through focused recruiting. To find women who match the requirements, recruiters at CTG will conduct searches on different job platforms such as LinkedIn, or we contact current employees in a similar role and ask them to refer potential candidates. We then invite these women to apply to the advertised position. For some positions focused recruiting can give us leads to many female candidates, but for other positions it can still be difficult to find even one or two.*



### SUBMIT:

**Women cannot be selected for jobs unless their application is seriously considered, or they are shortlisted.**

Longer-term structural barriers limit the number of women that apply to positions and are shortlisted. Because there are so many factors that can hinder women's success in being short-listed, CTG has taken a strategic evidence-based approach to increase the number of job applications that are submitted by women. CTG does not provide women special treatment based on a lack of abilities, but instead looks to mitigate the impact of the barriers and to level women's opportunity for employment with men. Accordingly, CTG develops and reviews targets for how many female candidates' CVs should be submitted for different positions. It aims to ensure that at least two qualified female candidates' CVs are included in every short list when candidates are submitted to its clients.

Efforts to convince people to hire women can backfire if women candidates have not been fully vetted to ensure they are qualified, understand the position requirements, and are willing to undertake the role. When women under-perform or are unable to travel, colleagues sometimes use this as an excuse to not recruit women to such positions in the future. The same does not happen when a man does not perform as expected. Pre-interview calls with local national female candidates are becoming a standard practice incorporated into the submit part of CTG's recruitment process. This is to ensure female candidates understand and can perform the requirements of the position, and to provide them with some additional encouragement and confidence enhancement.

### SELECT:

**A key factor to ensuring the success of Female First and to undermine the impact that ingrained gendered expectations can have on women's access to work is to cement shared commitment towards gender parity. Success of the submit phase cannot be achieved without buy in at the select stage.**

CTG works with its clients to ensure that gender bias, both conscious and unconscious, is tackled, particularly among hiring teams and project managers. It identifies gender champions among its clients, and CTG shares its successes. Keeping gender parity in employment at the forefront of everyone's minds can help provide women more opportunities for decent work, and in jobs that have traditionally been seen as male only domains in particular contexts.

CTG's Female First initiative is regularly monitored, evaluated and adapted to ensure CTG's targets are being met. CTG recognises that achieving its 30% goal is a challenge. This is one of the primary motives for reviving the dialogue around women's employment in FCAS. CTG is looking towards other stakeholders to adopt a commitment to gender parity similar to CTG's in order to encourage a broader transformation of the labour markets where CTG operates.

#### REASONS THAT HAVE BEEN PUT FORWARD TO CTG OF WHY WOMEN SHOULD NOT BE HIRED FOR CERTAIN JOBS:

- *"Women prefer to work at the office"*
- *"Women can't work on sites outside the capital city"*
- *"You should hire a man for the position instead"*
- *"Qualified women cannot be found for that position"*



Veronica Mutakyala, Workshop Supervisor, South Sudan. Veronica leads Traffic Monitoring Assistant Workshops and organises the spare parts supply chain. Read her story here.

Photographer: Anthony Jouannic



# CONCLUSION



**The ripple effects of creating jobs for women in fragile and conflict-affected states are vast.**

This paper has argued that the failure to encourage women's meaningful integration into the economy and society through decent paid jobs is a lost opportunity not just for them, their families and communities, but also for their country to achieve greater stability, security and prosperity.

A strong and coordinated approach that prioritises the interests of women is needed. Responsibility to make this happen does not only lie with governments and public sector organisations. The private sector must play its part in not only making job opportunities available for women, but also in actively bringing qualified women into positions of leadership with responsibility. Companies should sign the Women's Empowerment Principles, openly express support for SDG 5, look to other organisations for best practice and adapt recruitment procedures. Private sector champions can be powerful forces of social change.

## The Women's Empowerment Principles

**The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) are a set of Principles offering guidance to businesses on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. Established by UN Global Compact and UN Women, the WEPs are informed by international labour and human rights standards and grounded in the recognition that businesses have a stake in, and a responsibility for, gender equality and women's empowerment.<sup>83</sup>**

# 1.

### PRINCIPLE 1: HIGH-LEVEL CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

Corporate leadership is a key and integral part of making gender equality and women's empowerment a top strategic priority. It publicly signals the CEO's and the executive team's goals and targets for implementing the WEPs and how the seven Principles will become part of the corporate sustainability strategy, day-to-day operations and organizational culture.

# 2.

### PRINCIPLE 2: TREAT ALL WOMEN AND MEN FAIRLY AT WORK WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION

Treating all women and men fairly at work aligns with international human rights principles. It also translates to better talent acquisition, higher employee retention and satisfaction, increased productivity and better decision making. Removing all forms of discrimination in corporate policies, strategies, culture and practices is a solid step forward in a company's WEPs journey.

# 3.

### PRINCIPLE 3: EMPLOYEE HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND SAFETY

Employers play a key role in preserving and promoting the physical and emotional health, safety and wellbeing of their women and men employees. Sexual harassment and violence signify high costs to women in terms of lost earnings, missed promotions and overall wellbeing. Companies are impacted in form of employee absenteeism and productivity losses.

# 4.

### PRINCIPLE 4: EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Training for all employees about how the company is advancing gender equality and women's empowerment can align everyone around shared values and help ensure compliance with company policies and practices. Effective programmes to support women's professional advancement include education and training that is complemented by networking and mentoring programmes.

# 5.

### PRINCIPLE 5: ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT, SUPPLY CHAIN AND MARKETING PRACTICES

Negative and diminished conceptions of women and girls are one of the greatest barriers for gender equality. Advertising is a powerful driver to change perceptions and impact social norms –portraying women and men in modern, authentic and multidimensional roles. Companies can also influence business partners through inclusive supply chain policies and standards of engagement.

# 6.

### PRINCIPLE 6: COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND ADVOCACY

Companies are increasingly investing in community development programmes to make valuable, effective and responsible contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment. A key motivation is to respond to consumer preferences to buy from companies with gender-responsive business practices and who are actively supporting community initiatives.

# 7.

### PRINCIPLE 7: MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING

Transparency and accountability are required for companies to uphold their commitments to gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community. Measuring and reporting mechanisms are crucial to monitor and track performance and progress. Business leaders and stakeholders agree that while not everything of value can be counted, it is difficult to manage what is not measured.



<sup>83</sup> The Women's Empowerment Principles. Available at: <https://www.weps.org/about> (Accessed: 21 Apr 2020)

**CTG is committed to reaching its Female First objectives. Together with the international humanitarian and development sector, CTG will:**

- Where possible, invest in and promote women's formal education.
- Develop an adaptable and inclusive recruitment process.
- Where feasible and if required, adopt flexible working for all employees.
- Use new channels to reach more potential female candidates.
- Provide women with learning opportunities in business, technical, vocational, and life skills.
- Provide internship, mentoring and leadership opportunities for women.
- Take measures to eliminate conscious and unconscious gender bias.
- Raise awareness of the significance of women's employment.
- Inspire younger generations to enter the formal labour market.

**FEMALEFIRST**

Women's employment and economic empowerment are integral to securing peace and stability in FCAS. Where widespread understanding of the value of women's employment and their role in securing this peace already exists, people must recognise that it is more than just valuable. As this paper has shown, it is an essential component for a successful and comprehensive post-conflict reconstruction processes. Changing discriminatory gender-dynamics and giving women the agency to actively participate in their communities has a direct impact on the fragility of countries where their rights are subdued.

The value of formal employment for women is clear. Everyone must continue to confront and overcome the barriers impeding women's access to jobs because full economic participation for women is not only a right but can help achieve the goal of a more peaceful and prosperous world.



Nasra, Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant, East Africa. Read Nasra's story [here](#).

#### HOW YOUR ORGANISATION CAN SUPPORT THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION BY PROMOTING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT<sup>84</sup>

##### 1. PROMOTE PEACE BY ENGAGING WOMEN IN PEACE PROCESSES

- Promote peaceful conflict resolution and peace by encouraging the employment of women in jobs that are related to peace-building or development.

##### 2. SAFEGUARD AND PROMOTE BASIC WORKER'S RIGHTS

- Promote women's economic rights and independence by improving their access to employment and adhering to safe work practices and conditions.

##### 3. ENCOURAGE WOMEN'S EQUAL ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN EMPLOYMENT

- Take extra measures as necessary within recruitment processes to ensure the equal employment of women to men.
- Where possible facilitate the transition of women from the informal to formal sector of employment.
- Eliminate occupational segregation by promoting women's equal participation and placement in highly skilled jobs and senior management positions.
- Encourage the diversification of men and women's occupational choices to take up non-traditional roles.

##### 4. ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION

- Address systemic discrimination, bias and unconscious bias against women in the labour force particularly with respect to hiring, retention and promotion.

- Eliminate discriminatory practices such as unequal pay for work of equal value or discrimination against a woman because of her reproductive role.

##### 5. PROMOTE AND ENSURE WOMEN'S ACCESS TO TRAINING AND STUDIES ON AN EQUAL BASIS WITH MEN

- Ensure equal access and promotion of women's studies, effective job training and retraining for both traditional and non-traditional roles prior to work to support entry into the labour market, and during employment.

##### 6. PROVIDE OR STRENGTHEN INFORMATION SHARING WITH WOMEN

- Establish or strengthen outreach programmes, networking and information exchanges to inform women of all groups of work opportunities.
- Facilitate the dissemination of information about successful women in traditional and non-traditional jobs and the skills required to achieve success.

##### 7. IMPROVE WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

- Recruit women for leadership, decision-making and management positions.
- Encourage women's upward mobility and promotion within the labour market.

<sup>84</sup> UN Women. 2014. 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome'. Available at: [https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa\\_e\\_final\\_web.pdf?la=en&vs=800](https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf?la=en&vs=800) (Accessed: 6 Mar 2020)



# WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: WHERE WE STAND



**Gender inequality in the economy costs women in developing countries \$9 trillion a year** – a sum which would not only give new spending power to women and benefit their families and communities but would also provide a massive boost to the economy as a whole.<sup>85</sup>



From 'legitimate' rape in India to unfair inheritance laws in the UK, **over 150 countries in the world still have at least one actively sexist law in place.**<sup>87</sup>



Across the 149 countries assessed in the WEF Forum's 2018 Global Gender Gap report, **women held just 34% of managerial positions – and less than 7% in the four worst-performing countries: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Pakistan.**<sup>89</sup>



**Two thirds of women in Sub-Saharan Africa do not have access to bank accounts.**<sup>88</sup>



Across the 149 countries assessed in the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2018 Global Gender Gap report, **there are still 44 countries where over 20% of women are illiterate.**<sup>86</sup>



According to the World Bank's 2020 Women, Business and the Law report, **only 6 countries in the world have provided women with equal legal work rights as men.**<sup>90</sup>



**Gender parity is an economic imperative** – if all countries globally closed gender wage and participation gaps, women around the world could participate in labour markets at the same rate as men, **\$28 trillion (or 26%) could be added to the global economy by 2025.**<sup>91</sup>



**At the current rate of progress, it could take Africa 140 years to achieve gender parity.**<sup>92</sup>



**600 million women are estimated to be in insecure and precarious forms of work – making them more susceptible to poverty.**<sup>95</sup>



**122 women between the ages of 25 and 34 live in poor households for every 100 men of the same age group.** This coincides with the peak productive and reproductive ages of men and women, and likely reflects that as young women become wives and mothers, they often stop working in order to care for their husbands and children. Sub-Saharan Africa, home to most of the global extreme poor, has the largest gender poverty gap.<sup>97</sup>



**Across the world, women are in the lowest-paid work. Globally they earn 24% less than men, and at the current rate of progress, it will take 170 years to close the gap.**<sup>93</sup>



**Women do at least twice as much unpaid care work, such as childcare and housework, as men** – sometimes 10 times as much, often on top of their paid work. The value of this work each year is estimated at least \$10.8 trillion – more than three times the size of the global tech industry.<sup>96</sup>



**75% of women in developing regions are in the informal economy** – where they are less likely to have employment contracts, legal rights or social protection.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Oxfam International, 'Why The Majority Of The World's Poor Are Women' (2020). Available at: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/why-majority-worlds-poor-are-women>

<sup>86</sup> The WEF Forum, 'The Global Gender Gap Report' (2018) [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2018.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf)

<sup>87</sup> Global Citizen, '7 Of The Most Appalling And Outrageous Gender Inequality Facts' (2016) <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/shocking-facts-gender-inequality-international-wom/>

<sup>88</sup> UK Government, 'UK Aid Boosts Support For African Women Entrepreneurs To Expand Businesses Into Global Markets' (2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-aid-boosts-support-for-african-women-entrepreneurs-to-expand-businesses-into-global-markets>

<sup>89</sup> The WEF Forum, 'The Global Gender Gap Report' (2018) [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2018.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> World Bank, 'Women, Business and The Law' (2020) <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/32639/9781464815324.pdf>

<sup>91</sup> McKinsey Global Institute, 'How advancing women's equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth' (2015) <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/employment-and-growth/how-advancing-womens-equality-can-add-12-trillion-to-global-growth>

<sup>92</sup> McKinsey Global Institute, 'The Power of Parity: Advancing women's equality in Africa' (2019) <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/the-power-of-parity-advancing-womens-equality-in-africa>

<sup>93</sup> Oxfam International, 'Why The Majority Of The World's Poor Are Women' (2020) <https://www.oxfam.org/en/why-majority-worlds-poor-are-women>

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<sup>97</sup> World Bank Blogs, 'No, 70% Of The World's Poor Aren't Women, But That Doesn't Mean Poverty Isn't Sexist' (2018) <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/no-70-world-s-poor-aren-t-women-doesn-t-mean-poverty-isn-t-sexist>

# ABBREVIATIONS

ACORD	Association for Cooperative Operations Research and Development
CTG	Committed to Good
EU	European Union
FCAS	Fragile and Conflict-affected States
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nation
UN	United Nations Security Council
USA	United States of America
WEF	World Economic Forum
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

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Committed to Good (CTG)  
Atalanta

**Authors & Editors**  
Alice Laughher  
James Veysey  
Mia Zickerman-White  
Dr Deborah J Smith  
Vanessa McCulloch  
Alisa Helbitz

**Design**  
Nuun Designs

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A young Afghan woman at beekeeping training, part of a project to work to improve the province's agricultural capabilities.  
pixabay.com



