Asia-Pacific Generation Equality Dialogue

ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND RIGHTS

Breakout Room Insights
WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO THEN COLLECTIVELY DISCUSS AND IDENTIFY:

(i) 2-3 Priority actions for this region for the next 5 years (based on the area of discussion) – and we can link these recommendations to other concerns for women and girls

(ii) Up to 2 recommendations of:
(a) strategies and/or
(b) opportunities for strengthening multi-stakeholder intra-regional collaboration and collective action. It would be good to be clear on which kinds of collaboration will be key

ACTION ROOM 1: INCREASE WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT BY TRANSFORMING THE CARE ECONOMY

Facilitator:
Bharati Silawal-Giri
Chair-National Network Against Women and Girls Trafficking (NNAGT) & Founder Member - Human Rights Organisation of Nepal (HURON)

Discussant 1:
Keiko Nowacka
Senior Social Development Specialist (Gender and Development), Asian Development Bank

Discussant 2:
Nadira Yusoff
Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Kiddocare

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:

INSIGHT 1
The care economy must be treated like any other economic sector, meaning that broad investments, policies, and regulations are put into place to ensure affordability, accessibility and quality care provision

INSIGHT 2
Technology and innovative market-based solutions have the ability to provide opportunities for decent work for some women while allowing working women to take full advantage of paid work outside the home
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:

**RECOMMENDATION 1**
Governments must take a **holistic approach** to the care economy that includes measures such as infrastructure investments, subsidy provision and upskilling and certification for caregivers.

**RECOMMENDATION 2**
Collecting and generating **stronger gender data around women's economic empowerment** and specifically women’s care burdens must be a priority.

**RECOMMENDATION 3**
Addressing the care economy requires **intra-ministerial coordination and collaboration**. It cannot be siloed to women's ministries.
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KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:

INSIGHT 1

Peer networks and collectives are critical in resilience - informal workers in collectives and solidarity networks were more resilient and received better support. Informal workers in collectives also interface more with the formal economy and it offers routes for enterprise formalization. Informal networks can also be engaged in data collection and data sharing as they know the information better.

INSIGHT 2

Savings and finance - capital support in the recovery is critical, whether low cost loans and small grants to avoid predatory loans and savings depletion, loss of business

INSIGHT 3

Digital inclusion - this offers a way to enhance resilience of workers and enterprises in both the formal and informal economies. Need to close the digital divide and enhance skills to engage in the digital economy and to utilize it also for network building and expansion
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:

RECOMMENDATION 1:
Data and reporting - we need multi-stakeholder collaboration and consensus on indicators for measuring progress on workplace gender equality in formal enterprises, and this needs to be done alongside enhanced regulatory frameworks to guide the transformation, and need engagement between private, public, civil society, workers organizations, etc. (including for example engagement between informal/formal workers, government and supply chain organizations). In the informal sector, we need more gender data and information on the impacts and needs.

RECOMMENDATION 2:
Social protection - key for protection of informal workers and formal workers in time of crisis, it needs to be more responsive to women’s care roles, needs to engage women in design of responsive protection, and needs to be prepared for a crisis - registration of informal and vulnerable workers to support them when crisis hits. Also needs to capture a larger definition of informal workers and be understandable and accessible to even formal workers who need to fall back on it.

RECOMMENDATION 3:
Enterprise support hubs to support women in informal enterprises and entrepreneurs, that recognize their issues and needs, and can take learning from urban to rural areas. Collaboration between workers themselves and their collectives, along with government at different levels and private sector.
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KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:

INSIGHT 1

It has become evident that access to land helps increase income of rural women by 30%. In order to access productive assets, women need financial support to restore their livelihoods. Flexible financial mechanisms that are transparent are essential

INSIGHT 2

Many women are not counted in the value chain (e.g. urban informal sector, micro entrepreneurs, etc.). Procurement needs to include women in value chains, especially collectives who represent the rural economy, in order to provide them with representation and growth opportunities through income opportunities

INSIGHT 3

Banking terminology and processes can hinder access to financial support. It is vital to understand women’s specific needs and assist them accordingly. Make operations more women-friendly and simplify banking processes
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:

RECOMMENDATION 1

Improve access to digital devices such as mobile phones, which are game changers since they cut across geographical borders. This helps women access financial loans, and connect them with financial services in the market. It provides them with learning opportunities with free resources to enhance their skills. This helps them build social cohesion with other women in communities. Financial literacy/access should be promoted in tandem with digital literacy/access to increase empowerment, income and personal assets.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Create a sub-regional coalition with private sector, government representatives and UN.

INSIGHT 4

Cross-collaborative opportunities for organizations/institutions work together to scale-up, build on and leverage existing initiatives to bring information to the masses.

INSIGHT 5

There are discrepancies between gender-budgeting implementation and M&E. The issue is accountability.
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ACTION ROOM 4: PROMOTE GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE ECONOMIES

Facilitator:
Paula Uniacke
Senior Program Officer (Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality), Asia Foundation

Discussant 1:
Lilika Fusimalohi
Gender Program Coordinator (Fiji & Small Pacific Island countries), Gender and Economic Inclusion Group, International Finance Institute (IFC)

Discussant 2:
Dr. Fahmida Khatun
Executive Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:

INSIGHT 1

Private sector businesses can play an effective role in addressing gender equality - including by providing evidence on the demand for gender equality to steer national policy and regulation to provide an enabling and productive economic environment.

INSIGHT 2

Gender equality is not only a social and moral imperative for the private sector but also a business and economic necessity. A win for the business, employees, the family unit and the community.

INSIGHT 3

Regulations and policymakers should provide guidance to safeguard gender-related risks and access to gender friendly finance.

INSIGHT 4

Provide access to financial resources for women-led MSMEs - to enable women to continue their businesses, make key investments (e.g., digitize operations), or even tap into new opportunities- example from Huairou Comm member in Nepal (in context of lock down). For example, could support digitalization of women-owned MSMEs by boosting skills and access to financing.
INSIGHT 5

Regarding stakeholder engagement, maybe connect with existing networks (organisations who have social/community resources) create space for dialogue with different actors to join the same event to start the dialogue. Build trust with key policy makers, through evidenced based studies.

INSIGHT 6

Need to promote the sense of belonging that women rights is human rights and to align the respect of human rights in the role of women and meaningful inclusiveness gender means.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION:

RECOMMENDATION 1

Strengthen women's equal rights on property and resources that will contribute to build a gender sensitive financial system.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Need initiatives to ensure transparency and accountability in distributing government packages for the poor to face the challenge of COVID-19.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Women also need training and capacity development in order to avail the opportunities. Access to technology and the skills to use technology is also very important.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Increase dialogue platforms for local service providers, private sector and public sector on key social constraints such as gender based violence, childcare and mental health well being. For example, employment conditions, occupational safety and health measures to address violence and harassment.
RECOMMENDATION 5: Encourage more engagement between private sector, governments, the local labor market, value chains on the business case of gender equality especially the impact of gender-based violence, childcare, flexible working arrangements and mental health well-being.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Governments to prioritise the collection of gender disaggregated data.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Build trust with key policy makers, through evidenced based studies and promote the activities by the stakeholders through various platforms.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Regarding stakeholder engagement, connect with existing networks, (organisations who have the resources), create space for dialogue with different actors to join the same events to start the dialogue.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Consider leveraging government and private sector procurement opportunities to include women in value chains.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Strengthen social protection measures to support care economy and informal workers.