

# Social Norms and Women's Empowerment

*Women's Empowerment in Development (WED) Lab  
Seminar Series*



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International Development Research Centre  
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# Panelists



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# Social Norms and Women's Empowerment

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September 24, 2019



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# What are Social Norms?

- Social Norms:
  - "collective definitions of socially approved conduct, stating rules, or ideals"  
(Pearse and Connell 2016)
- Gender Norms
  - Social norms “applied to groups constituted in the gender order – mainly, to distinctions between women and men...Gender norms are embedded in social life and institutions and should be understood relationally”
- Determines Expectations AND Establishes Limitations





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# Why is this important for women?

- Women's status and empowerment:
  - is central for economic, social, and political development
- Increases in girls' secondary education and women's labor force participation:
  - Decrease infant, child and maternal mortality rates
  - Reduce rates of HIV
  - Increase educational rates for children
  - Increase economic growth and income equality





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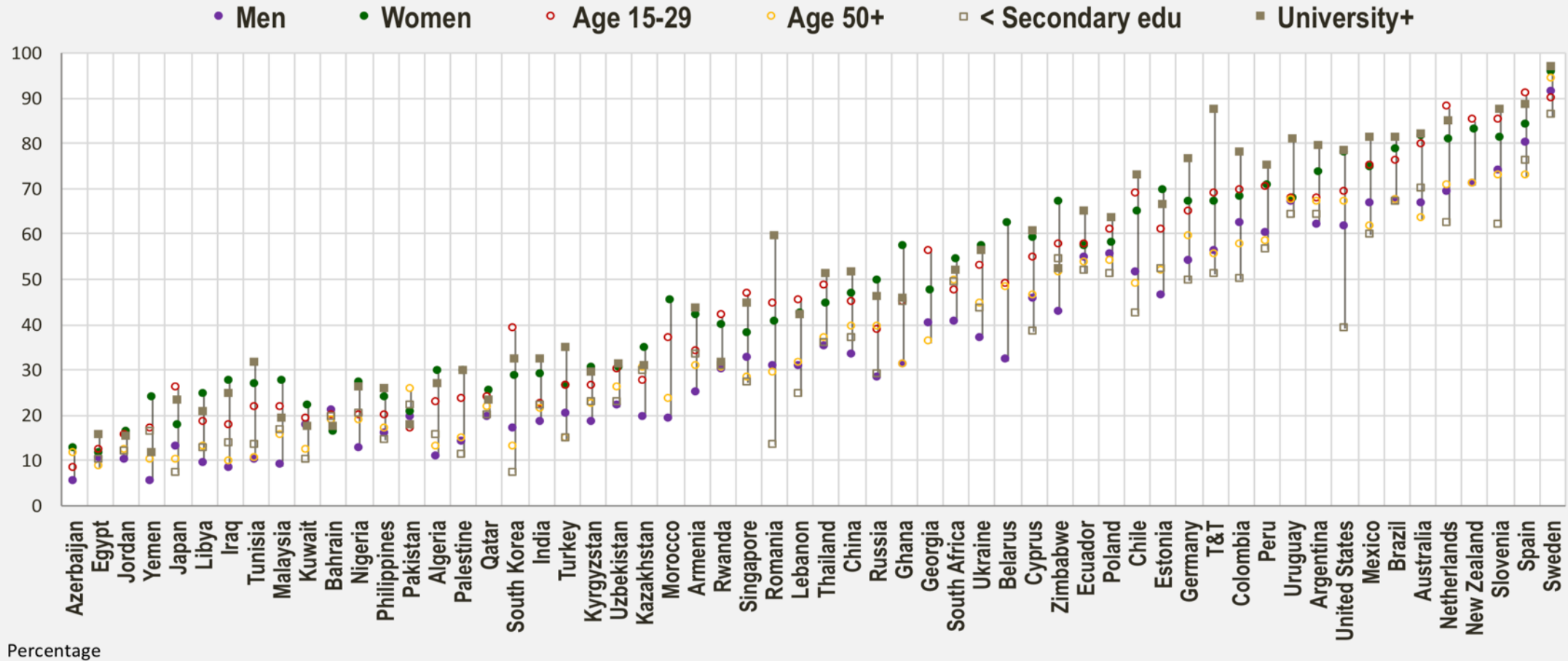
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# Patterns



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## DIFFERENTIALS IN VALUES – RIGHT TO A JOB



Source: [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/Finland\\_Oct2016/Documents/UNFPA\\_ppt.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/Finland_Oct2016/Documents/UNFPA_ppt.pdf)





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# Constraining Women's Job Opportunities

Factors that enable  
or constrain  
women's economic  
empowerment



developmentprogress.org/empowerment  
#EmpowerWomen

1. Women or/and Men
2. Policy and/or Community





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# Targeting Women: WID and WAD



- Women in/and Development
  - (WID and WAD)
  - Economics vs Reproduction



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# Women: Community Level

- Micro-**Credit** Programs

- Weaknesses

- Reinvestment in business limited
- (Because investing in household)
- Backlash from men

- Micro-**Savings** Programs

- Strengths (WORTH Program):

- Entrepreneurial Skills
  - Business, banking, literacy
- Women supporting each other
- Health for children improves



- Considerations

- Including men
- Context



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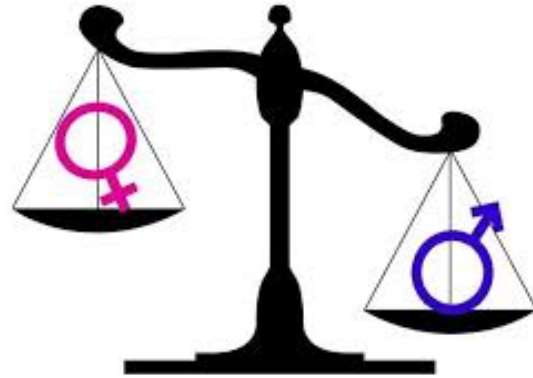


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# Women: Policy Level

## Quotas

- Weaknesses
  - Backlash
  - Ornamental
- Strengths
  - Role Models
  - Changed Perception of Women
  - Issues that are addressed



## Quotas

- The Case of West Bengal, India
  - 1/3 village councils reserved for woman chief council
  - More women voted into political positions
  - Aspirations and educational attainment for girls
  - Infrastructure addressed: water, roads, welfare programs, housing, and electricity



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# Targeting Men and Masculinities

- Men/Masculinities and Development
  - Emphasis on men
  - Strength: Can address problem at core
  - Weakness: Perceived as taking resources away from WID/WAD programs
- Why Men and Masculinities?
  - Addressing “gatekeepers” to gender inequality
  - Central to institutionalization of social norms
  - Men have potential to transform norms





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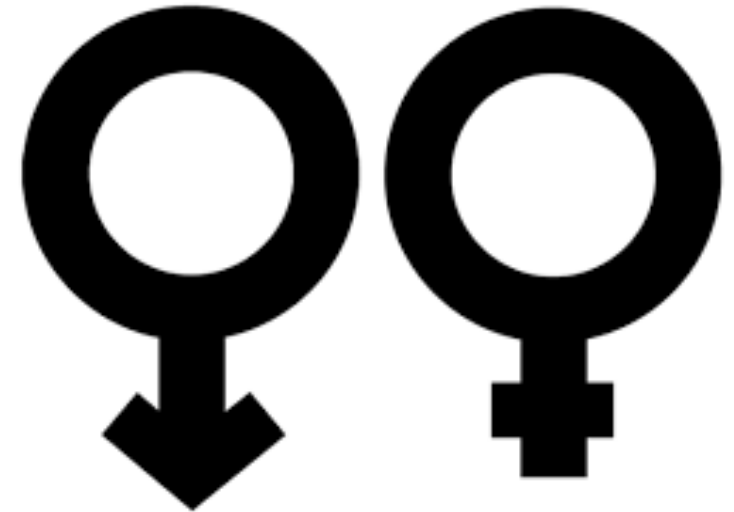
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# Gender and Development

- Gender: Not just women
- Incorporating men into women's programs



Policy + Community



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# Maternity Leave

- Policy
  - Higher compensation leads to decreases in fertility
    - Particularly in countries with low GDP and low secondary enrollment
  - All policies lead to decreases in child mortality
    - Particularly in countries with low-mid GDP and mid secondary enrollment rates







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# Maternity Leave



- Policy + Community: Mexico's Estancia Childcare Services
  - Subsidized childcare program for poor mothers
  - Entering labor force and increase decision making
  - BUT, negotiating with men





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# Maternity Leave



- Community: Promundo

- NGO seeks to engage men and boys in partnership with women and girls to promote gender equality
- Engaging men in women's economic empowerment, business, health, well-being etc.
- Transformations in childcare participation, increased income, and decrease in couple conflict



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# Female Genital Cutting

**Tostan**  
Dignity for All

- Policy: Ineffective
- Tostan
  - an NGO in Senegal: Community Empowerment Program
  - Drawing on local knowledge
    - Own experiences, community leaders, songs, dances, plays, poetry, etc.
  - Inclusive of Men
  - A 2008 study by UNICEF:
    - 10 years after communities pledged to stop FGC, 77% had stopped
  - Expanded from Senegal to 5 additional countries





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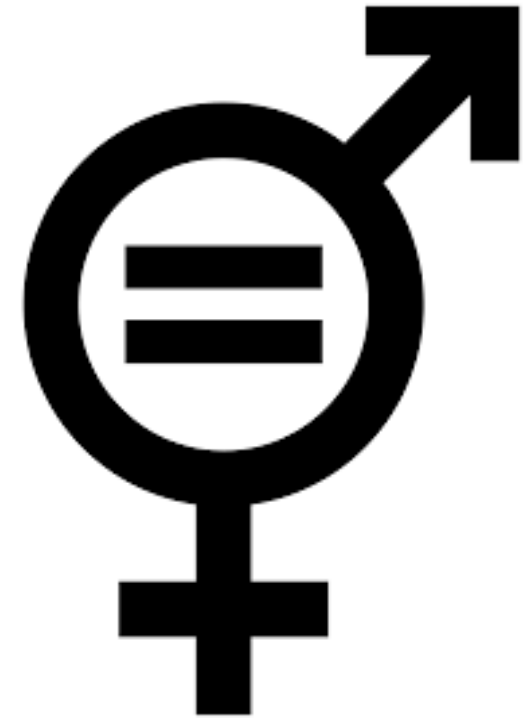
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# Conclusion

- Many ways to transform social norms
- BUT some primary things to consider:
  - Moving beyond the traditional binary
  - Incorporating men into the process is useful
  - Context should be considered
  - Addressing changes best from multiple approaches
    - Policy and Community



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1. Describe your experience working with/implementing gender and WEE programs, and the ways that social norms were addressed, either directly or indirectly. What were some of the challenges faced in your work related to norms (if any) and how did you overcome them?



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# Gendered Social Norms and Women's Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Roles

Doris Buss, Blair Rutherford, Gisèle Eva Côté; Jennifer Hinton; Richard Kibombo; Joanne Lebert, Abbie Sebina-Zziwa, Jennifer Stewart



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## Project: Women and ASM in Central and East Africa: Empowerment Challenges and Possibilities (DRC, Rwanda, Uganda), 2014-2017

- Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women (GrOW) Initiative (IDRC, DfID, Hewlett Foundation).
- Carleton University (Doris Buss, Blair Rutherford, Jennifer Stewart, Jennifer Hinton [IAS adjunct]),
- IMPACT: Joanne Lebert, Gisèle Eva Côté;
- Development Research and Social Policy Analysis Center (DRASPAC), in Kampala.
  - 2 sites per country: Gold & 3Ts
  - IMPACT overseeing field research DRC + Rwanda





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## Sites under 'GrOW' study



- Central Region, Uganda – Gold
- Western Region, Uganda – Tin
- Northern Province, Rwanda – Tungsten
- Southern Province, Rwanda – Tin and Tantalum
- South-Kivu Province, DRC – Tin and Tantalum
- Ituri Province (ex-Orientale), DRC - Gold



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## Research conducted: 'GrOW project'

1. **SURVEY** (7 mines; 3 DRC; 2 Uganda +Rwanda):  
**878 surveys**
2. **Focus Group Discussions:**  
**60 groups (400+ participants)**
3. **Life Histories:**  
**28: 22 women; 6 men**
4. **Participant observation:**  
**6 mine sites (2 each country)**





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# Women's ASGM Livelihoods in Kenya, Mozambique, Sierra Leone

## Two Projects:

- 1. 2014-2020 – Field research in one Gold site in each country + interviews resource governance initiatives (SSHRC Insight Grant)**

Collaboration between: Blair & Doris Buss (Carleton), Eileen Alma (Coady International, St. Francis Xavier), Joanne Lebert (IMPACT) Aisha Ibrahim (Fourah Bay, USierra Leone).

- 2. 2018-2021 - Connecting research results to policy makers (mining areas, national, international) SSHRC Partner Develop't**

Partnership: Carleton, Eduardo Mondlane, Nairobi, Sierra Leone universities; UNECA; Network Movement for Justice + Development (SL), Forum Mulher (Mozambique), GIZ Sierra Leone, Eileen Alma



E.g. Survey showed gender norms generally limit women from excavating

Type of work	Male	Female	% M	% F
Head of mining team/head of mill	29	8	7	2
Digger	253	56	62	15
Washing the ore	21	57	5	15
Grinding the ore	8	81	2	22
Sluicing	47	3	11	1
Panning	115	80	28	21
Carrier of ore	34	85	8	23
Carrier of water	29	69	7	19
Trading in the mineral/product	30	29	7	8
Selling food/water for personal consumption	5	66	1	18
Selling other provisions for either personal consumption or production	7	35	2	9

- 15+ types of work at the sites...
- 62% of men surveyed were diggers but only 15% women were
- Women engaged in less remunerated activities, discouraged from most remunerated activities such as digging/excavating the ore
- Women combined mining with their traditional household roles





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# Normative Injunctions Against Women in Digging/Mining Work

- A. Women are physically unable to do certain tasks (yet women routinely do heavy, physically demanding work)  
*“They cannot do it, they are not able. Working in ground sluicing is very difficult and it requires experience. There is one young woman who sometimes does panning but she is like a man not a real woman. Ground sluicing is for men not women”*  
*(Rwandan woman, cassiterite site)*
- B. Women are polluting - will chase away the gold  
A woman gold-buyer observed that *‘if I am in my periods I do not buy sand because I know I will make a loss; even in the Bible it is stated that they should not go to church while in menstruation’*.



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# Normative Injunctions Against Women in Digging/Mining Work

- C. Respectable Women Do Not Mine

*“The society looks at girls and women who are working in mines as prostitute, without culture and values. Mother cried the first day I came, thinking that one time I will go back with pregnancy and the whole family will be ashamed because of me” woman, Rwanda Wolframite site, but added “at the end of the month, they all know that I will give something as my contribution in the family.”*

...



“Don’t ask me to go into a tunnel because on that day my husband will chase me, if he doesn’t kill me!”

*(Il ne faut pas me demander de descendre dans un tunnel, car ce jour là mon mari peut me chasser, s’il ne me tue pas !).*

(woman, tin site, DRC)







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# Effects of gendered social norms on women's mining livelihoods

Women's mining roles are less well remunerated than the roles from which they are mostly excluded;

women's mining roles tend to mirror the activities women do in the household: supporting male miners (through food, water, sexual services, assistance with mining activities);

Women have less control over the ore and acquire less knowledge about the technical aspects of mining and ore seams (for e.g.,)



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*“In all cases in mining, women need men to succeed: this is because women do not have enough experience in mining so that they can make all decisions on their own as women. As you have observed there is no woman digger, no woman paneers, no woman works in timbering, etc.” (Man, Rwanda Cassiterite site).*



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# Gender Norms and Women's Productive and Reproductive Work



“My husband cannot fetch water, cook, collect firewood and activities which are related to house cleaning. He said if other men saw him doing such kind of activities, he will be ridiculed and feel uncomfortable in the society, because some people would interpret this as the husband has been poisoned by his wife ...”

Woman, Rwanda Wolframite site



2. What tools or approaches did you/do you use to address discriminatory social norms and structural gender inequalities? Provide insight/evidence on how norms can shift and what drives those shifts, if this was part of your experience.



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### 3. In which directions would you like to see research push knowledge on social norms?



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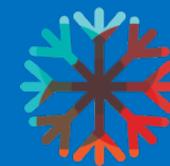
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# Next WED Lab Seminar/Webinar

“Using Quantitative Methodologies to Study Women’s  
Empowerment in Development”

Thursday, October 24 – 1:00-3:00pm (EST)

Visit the WED Lab website for more information and to  
register:

<http://womensempowerment.lab.mcgill.ca>



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