Why Gender Equality is Important for *All* of the MDGs

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Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Gender equality in capacity and access to resources accelerates economic growth

- It also enables poor women to climb out of poverty more easily
Links to growth

- Reducing the gender gap in schooling in sub-Saharan Africa would have increased economic growth by 80% during the 1960s-1980s.

- Small loans to women in Bangladesh increase family income twice as much as similar loans to men.

- Distributing farm inputs equally to women and men in Kenya would increase outputs by one-fifth.
Links to poverty reduction

- Women earn only 73% of what men with similar educations and work experience earn
  
  => Reducing discrimination would increase the incomes of poor women

- Protective labor legislation tends to reduce women’s access to jobs or higher pay

- Men’s relative lack of participation in household work leads to time poverty among poor women
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

- Girls are 60% of the children not in school, worldwide
- Need to ensure enrollment and retention of girls to meet Goal 2
- Even in LAC, girls schooling lags in minority and low income populations
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

- Relevance of gender equality to this goal is obvious!

- Target for this goal involves achieving equality in schooling at all levels by 2015, but goal is far broader
  - Includes political participation, participation in paid work, access to resources, etc.

- In LAC, fewer than 10% of the seats in national parliaments are held by women (lower than any other region except MNA)
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality

- In a study of 25 developing countries, 1-3 years of maternal schooling reduced child mortality by 15% (vs. 6% for paternal schooling)

- Mothers’ income has 20 times the marginal impact on child survival as fathers’ income
Goal 5: Improve maternal health

- One woman per minute dies from complications of pregnancy, child birth or abortion, primarily in developing countries.
- Maternal mortality has improved very little over the past two decades.
- Education, income and empowerment of women all contribute to improved maternal health.
Goal 6: Fight HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

- Growing HIV infection rates among women reflect women’s economic dependency on men, inability to negotiate safe sex, and traditional norms about sexual relations.

- The burden of caring for AIDS victims falls disproportionately on women and girls, as does the care of AIDS orphans.
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

- Where women farm independently of men, their lack of title to land bars them from improving land and making its use more sustainable.
- Plant species valued by women but not by men often are neglected because men dominate household decisions about crops.
- Water and sanitation systems controlled by women are more sustainable and effective than those controlled by men.
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

- Women are underrepresented in decision-making bodies at all levels in almost every country.
- Greater gender equality in the political sphere might mean stronger investment in development cooperation.
- Example of women development ministers in Europe suggests women tend to be particularly concerned with poverty reduction and investing in human capacity.
The World Bank’s 2 strategic pillars for contributing to the MDGs

1. Improving the climate for investment, job creation, and sustainable economic growth in client countries

2. Investing in poor people and empowering them to participate in development
WB support for the MDGs

- **Education Financing**
  - 164 projects in 82 countries
  - US$6.3 billion to girls’ education since 1995

- **Health Financing**
  - Largest external funder of health programs, including HIV/AIDS programs

- **Infrastructure Financing**
  - Major funding for rural roads, water & sanitation systems, renewable energy

- Monitoring and statistical capacity building
- Gender mainstreaming policy