Society for International Development
Washington Chapter

FY 2020
ANNUAL REPORT

Gender & Inclusive Development Workgroup

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENDER & INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT WORKGROUP

The SID-Washington (SID-W) Gender and Inclusive Development Workgroup is a group of individuals actively committed to advancing the roles of women, men, girls, and boys in social, economic, and political development. With events ranging from social inclusion in infrastructure to women in the media, this workgroup aims to promote and facilitate collaboration and knowledge-sharing to identify successful solutions to obstacles facing women and girls in particular.

## Dear Members of the Gender & Inclusive Development Workgroup,

Our Fiscal Year 2020 was unusual for us, as it was for so many, ending during a global pandemic. This certainly affected our ability to deliver programming. Despite this hurdle, the Workgroup still produced three great events including Gender and the Digital Divide and Putting disability inclusion at the center of our work.

We would like to thank former Co-Chair Katie Cheney (EnCompass LLC). She helped to create many fantastic events for this Workgroup over the past several years. We wish her the best moving forward and hope she stays engaged with the Workgroup.

Now that we have mastered the art of virtual programming, we look forward to offering more events accessible to a wider audience and providing an even more dynamic community for interaction. We hope to see you at some of our upcoming events. You can see all of our programs on our website – and please check back often as we add new ones regularly.

Thank you for your interest in and support of SID-Washington's Workgroups. If you have questions, comments or ideas, please send an email to events@sidw.org.

Best regards,
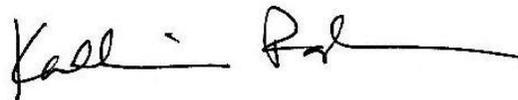
Katherine Raphaelson

Paul A. Sherman

FY 2020 WORKGROUP CO-CHAIRS

Denise Wales
Consultant,
GameChangers 360 LLC

Denise Wales specializes in the design and delivery of democracy and governance programs in fragile and conflict-affected areas. She is dedicated to addressing issues of social inclusion and empowering under-recognized and underestimated actors to foster peaceful, just, and sustainable societies. Denise has held management roles at both the headquarters and field levels for non-profit and for-profit implementers such as: DAI; International Relief and Development; Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation; and the International Foundation for Election Systems. She has worked in Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe and served long-term assignments in Afghanistan, Indonesia, and Kosovo. She started her career in international development as US Peace Corps Volunteer serving in the Slovak Republic.

Currently, Denise works as an independent consultant and is affiliated with GameChangers 360, LLC, a women-owned social enterprise, and Steve Kroll and Associates, LLC, a small business consulting firm. She is also a trainer for Humentum, conducting workshops on USAID rules and regulations and financial management.

Katie Cheney
Gender Integration
Specialist II,
EnCompass LLC

Currently a Gender Integration Specialist II with EnCompass LLC, Katie Cheney specializes in gender and women's empowerment, HIV/AIDS, capacity building and organizational development, and private sector engagement. Her gender-focused support to various USAID contracts include supporting child protection protocol implementation for an evaluation tracking gender-based violence, contraceptive security, and integrating gender empowerment principles into project design. As Communications Manager for First Peoples Worldwide, an Indigenous small-grants organization, Ms. Cheney led the organization's communications program, and as Field Associate conducted a culturally-appropriate needs assessment with the Central Kalahari Game Reserve's Indigenous San population. Katie has an M.S. in International Development from Tulane University's Payson Center for International Development and a B.A. from Pennsylvania State University, where she majored in Anthropology and minored in Women's Studies and Religious Studies. Her academic background in women's studies included independent field research on socio-political and economic freedoms of Eastern European women before and after State Socialism.

Wednesday, August 7, 2019
4:00 PM - 5:30 PM ET | SID-Washington

Gender & Inclusive Development Workgroup Planning Meeting

Thursday, March 26, 2020
4:00 PM - 5:30 PM ET | Online via Zoom

Gender and the Digital Divide

Friday, April 10, 2020
9:30 AM - 11:00 AM ET | Online via Zoom

Putting disability inclusion at the center of our work

Gender & Inclusive Development Workgroup Planning Meeting

Workgroup
Co-Chairs:
Katie Cheney, Gender Integration Specialist II, EnCompass LLC
Denise Wales, Consultant, GameChangers 360, LLC

Event Description: The Gender & Inclusive Development Workgroup met on Wednesday, August 7th at 4:00 PM to plan events for the group in the next year. In recent months, the group organized events on topics such as Gender and Sexual Minorities in International Development and Digital Solutions — Integrating Gender from Design through Delivery.

This event was followed by a happy hour.

Meeting Agenda

I. Introductions
II. Brainstorming Activity
III. Possible Event Themes
IV. Proposed Event Topics and Event Format Ideas

V. Next Steps

Key Takeaways

I. Introductions

II. Brainstorming Activity
• The Workgroup Co-Chairs, Katie Cheney and Denise Wales, asked attendees to shout out possible ideas and themes to discuss during the meeting. These included the following:
  • Capturing women's leadership role in politics
  • Diving further into the women, peace, and security sector
  • Do we practice what we preach at an organizational level?
  • Early warning systems, and what it looks like in the women, peace, and security space
  • Equal access to energy
  • Gathering data on people with disabilities
  • Gender and global value chains
  • Gender, environment and social inclusion
  • Gender lens investing
  • Lookng into gender-based access groups
  • Monitoring policy to practice
  • Operationalizing intersectionality
  • Organizational best practices for gender-based learning
  • Operationalizing the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative

  • Practical interventions based on social norms
  • Transforming masculinity
  • Violence against women in politics (digital and physical)

III. Possible Event Themes
The Co-Chairs and attendees focused on the following four themes that received the highest number of votes:
  • Do we practice what we preach? Monitoring policy and practice, and organizational best practices for gender-based learning
  • Gathering data on people with disabilities
  • Gender, environment, and social inclusion
  • Operationalizing intersectionality

IV. Proposed Event Topics and Event Format Ideas
Attendees discussed the following themes and proposed event topics and event format ideas:

» Do we practice what we preach? Monitoring policy and practice, and organizational best practices for gender based learning
  • Diversifying panels to bring in different perspectives
  • Future panels: recruiters from USAID, Society for Human Resource Management, and diversity and inclusion experts
  • Problematizing language in the development
  • field
  • Operationalizing "nothing about them, without them"

» Gathering data on people with disabilities
  • How do we integrate disability considerations into all sectors?
  • Looking into the USAID policy on individuals with disabilities
  • More inclusive methods/tools for data collection especially with ethics and disclosure

» Disaggregating data
» Responsible data
» Using data to inform program design

» Gender, environment, and social inclusion
- Early warning systems and prevention challenge (i.e. relating to climate change and focused on and/or coming from marginalized groups)
- Examining the role of rural and indigenous women in leadership positions and how to increase their numbers

» Operationalizing intersectionality
- Organizing trainings for senior, executive, management and entry level leadership on diversity and inclusion
- Possible training event ideas:
  » In her/their shoes exercise
  » Constraints exercise
- Practical tools and practices for the workplace

V. Next Steps
Based on the discussion, the Co-Chairs will compile the feedback from the meeting and coordinate with SID-Washington Staff to roll out exciting events over the course of the next year.

Gender and the Digital Divide

Speakers: **Jennifer Johnson**, Strategic Partnerships, Cell-Ed
               Rebecca Rouse, Program Director, Financial Inclusion Program, Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA)
               Revi Sterling, Ph.D., Director, W-GDP WomenConnect Challenge, USAID

Event Description: Digital technology is revolutionizing the world by broadening access to information, services, networks and opportunities. Across developing countries, mobile is the primary way most people access the internet. For women, access to the internet is critical to reaching their full economic potential. However, in low to middle income countries, 300 million fewer women than men use mobile internet. The internet user gap is as high as 70% in some countries.

Advancing women's digital connectivity is key to promoting their empowerment in an increasingly digital world. Yet the persistent gender digital divide is reinforcing, and even exacerbating, existing socioeconomic gaps between men and women. While some studies show the gender gap decreasing, others show just the opposite. What is the true state of the gender digital divide? Can technology address the technology gap? In some cases, yes. This panel looked at how technology can be used to change restrictive gender norms, address literacy and digital literacy, and create new algorithms for sustainable gender equity.

This event featured a conversation about this divide, recent improvements, and where advancement is still needed.

This was the first event in our Series on Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion.

Key Takeaways:

1) Closing the Gender Divide

Revi Sterling (USAID) began the event by describing the gender digital divide as the lack of access to technology that women have in different communities around the world. Tech organizations and non-profits often take the approach of introducing technology and allowing for access to the internet as an important tool for education and poverty alleviation for numerous communities globally. Sterling stated that in certain communities and regions, women are still unable to access technology due to societal issues, gendered stereotypes, and cultural norms. Sterling drew attention to how digital development can be navigated within such communities, thus emphasizing the need for technologists to understand the underlying issues that the women in these communities face. According to Sterling, co-creating tech literacy or digital development programs with the women from the community is essential in closing the gender digital divide and making technology more accessible to women.

2) Barriers to Women's Financial Inclusion

Rebecca Rouse (Innovations for Poverty Action or IPA) introduced IPA's project in the Dominican Republic, which focuses on developing a gender-differentiated credit scoring model. Building on the gender digital divide that Sterling talked about, Rouse introduced how this phenomenon affects women when applying for loans as technology and finance merge. Low-income women around the world often have an inadequate financial history due to factors such as informal jobs and pay, inability to prove income history, or inability to fill credit applications. IPA is therefore working to ensure that factors that lead to this gender-differentiated credit scoring can be taken into account through digital development. Rouse therefore stressed the need to design financial models in which the gendered biases — specific to the communities from which they stem — can be removed from the algorithm that supports credit scoring.

3) Using Technology to Educate

Jennifer Johnson (Cell-Ed) presented how Cell-Ed was designed as educational programming that would be accessible to women. Cell-Ed operates through portable devices such as tablets, mobile phones, and flip phones to provide lessons on topics such as financial literacy and maternal health through a system of text messages and call-backs. This makes lessons accessible, as it reduces some of the barriers to education that women face, namely travel and time. Johnson explained that lessons provided by Cell-Ed are customizable to the needs of the individual accessing them, and the trainers are often women from the same communities, ensuring linguistic and cultural familiarity for the individuals accessing the lessons. Johnson also emphasized the importance of adapting the lessons to issues relevant to women and gave an example of how Cell-Ed is developing lessons for women and children to access education that may have been halted due to COVID-19.

Putting disability inclusion at the center of our work

Moderator: **Jerry Mindes**, Senior Adviser, Leonard Cheshire Disability/DC

Speakers: **Carolyn Alesbury**, Basic Education Advisor, Save the Children
Jahan Ara Begum Hena, President, Women with Disability Development Association (WDDA)
Kathy Guernsey, Agency Disability Rights Coordinator, USAID/DCHA/DRG
Ruby Holmes, Inclusive Governance Technical Advisor, Humanity & Inclusion

Event Description: Approximately 15% of the world's population experiences some form of disability, and an estimated 80% of those people live in developing countries. Various governments, bilateral donors, and international organizations have enacted a range of policies, conventions, and agreements – from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by 181 countries; to disability discrimination laws and constitutional provisions adopted by over 40 countries; to specific disability policies established by the world's largest development funders, including USAID, DFID, DFAT, and the World Bank. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states that disability cannot be a reason or criteria for lack of access to development programming and the realization of human rights.

While these policy advancements indicate an emphasis on disability rights in development agendas, there is relatively minimal programming dedicated to disability, let alone effective mainstreaming of disability and inclusion. During the panel discussion, these key questions were covered - how do we increase dialogue between leaders in the disability rights space and the larger development community? How do we mainstream disability inclusion in development agendas? What steps can development practitioners take to improve inclusion at the project, corporate, and donor levels?

Key Takeaways:

1) What are the organizations doing in terms of disability and inclusion?

Jerry Mindes (Leonard Cheshire Disability/DC) began by providing a brief history of disability in international development.

Ruby Holmes (Humanity and Inclusion) mentioned that Humanity and Inclusion works closely with disabled persons' organizations (DPOs), governmental entities, and service providers to ensure that policies and services are inclusive of persons with disabilities. She explained that there needs to be a focus on the time and funding required for quality inclusion policies.

Kathy Guernsey (USAID) stated that organizations should work together to strengthen the capacity of DPOs so that they can properly function. USAID recognizes that its staff and partners must be equipped with the knowledge and tools to build an inclusive development community. Since 2002, an internal e-learning course on disability inclusive development has provided USAID's staff with in-depth training on topics, such as the misconceptions about disability, removing physical and social barriers, inclusive program design, and monitoring and evaluation strategies.

Carolyn Alesbury (Save the Children) discussed that Save the Children has created work groups and an effective response structure to support their inclusive education team. She shared that Save the Children is committed to providing an education environment that emphasizes equity in access and participation and responds positively to the individual learning needs and competencies of all children while also promoting their rights.

Jahan Ara Begum Hena (Women and Disability Development Association) explained that DPOs in Bangladesh lack the necessary funding to operate. Therefore, organizations need to encourage more investment and partnerships with DPOs, learn from them, and support their capacity building to promote development in disability inclusion.

2) What needs to change for disability development to succeed?

According to Hena, more opportunities need to be given to persons with disabilities to promote their success. Without these opportunities, there cannot be changes to areas such as access to quality education, health care services, a supportive work environment as well as social protection among others. This, in turn, would allow for the protection of the rights of the persons with disabilities.

Alesbury mentioned that implementing inclusive education and literacy programs are vital in creating successful outcomes in the disability inclusion sector. To achieve this success, teachers may need to adapt how they view all students: as learners, and not just as persons with disabilities. She further mentioned that United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) developed a few resources, one of which being inclusive booklets and webinars to support children with disabilities access to education.

Guernsey shared that to succeed, organizations need to widely share their mistakes to help others from repeating the same failures in their field of work. Organizations should also focus on rectifying their past mistakes to promote positive changes in disability inclusion.

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Photo Credit

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