The GrOW team wanted to enhance your summer break, by sharing some of the exciting developments in our program. This year and the next will focus on communication efforts from GrOW and its partners to bring you all the latest findings from our research in 50 countries on the barriers to women’s economic empowerment and the links to economic growth.

Our newsletter is one example of said efforts. This edition features resources from partners on key topics like women’s role in mining, early child marriage and the care economy, and introduces the brand new GrOW Research Series. These includes a closer look at two of its staffers, Sonia Laszlo and Kate Grantham, in our Spotlight Section!
The GrOW Research Series has launched!

The GrOW Research Series is the official research platform for the Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women (GrOW) program. Its goal is to bring together scholarly research on women’s economic empowerment and economic growth in low-income countries, and provide a conceptual and empirical basis for policy-making.

The series is housed at the Institute for the Study of International Development at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Since its launch in May, the series is disseminating working papers, policy briefs and other outputs produced by GrOW projects online at: http://grow.research.mcgill.ca/. The submission process will be opened-up to individuals from other programs and institutions in September.

The Series is a wonderful tool for policy uptake. It provides researchers with a hub and tools, including policy briefs and social media promotion. Click on Submit Papers for more information about the submission process. Follow the Series on Twitter @GrOW_Research or email: grow.research.isid@mcgill.ca.

Above: The GrOW Research Series web site.

Canada’s new feminist international assistance policy

Canada has recently announced its first feminist international assistance policy, which targets gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The Minister for International Development stated that “For Canada, this is the most effective approach to reducing poverty and building a more inclusive, peaceful and prosperous world”. The policy followed a year of consultations with 15,000 stakeholders in 65 countries. Six action areas were identified, including:

1. Core Action Area: Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls
2. Human Dignity (health and nutrition, education, humanitarian action)
3. Growth That Works for Everyone
4. Environment and Climate Action
5. Inclusive Governance
6. Peace and Security

To achieve these goals, Canada will advocate for and support initiatives that enhance the
protection and promotion of women’s rights, increase women’s participation in decision making, and give women more equitable access to and control over resources. The government of Canada has committed that by 2021-22 at the latest, at least 95 percent of Canada’s bilateral international development assistance investments will either target or integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Read more about this feminist international assistance policy here.

Gender Speaker Series at Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

The Inclusive Economies program at IDRC has launched the Gender Speaker Series, a space for researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and students to come together and share lessons learned and challenges on the road to gender transformation.

With a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectorial lens, the series invites speakers to share their work on promoting gender equality. Open exchange follows with series members. All presentations are recorded, and sent out to the series’ community for future exchange amongst members.

Here is a recording of our event on with Dr. Henri Myrttinen, titled “Not Just a Case of ‘Dealing with the Bad Guys’, on gender approached to preventing and Countering Violent Extremism” If you are interested in becoming a member (with a promise not to flood your inbox!) email: eg@idrc.ca

Call for submissions: Knowledge for Democracy Myanmar Initiative

The Knowledge for Democracy Myanmar Initiative at IDRC, has launched a competitive call for research proposals on democracy and growth through the lens of gender equality. The call is intended for teams of Myanmar-based researchers with expertise in economics, public finance, gender, political science, and other related social sciences.

The multi-disciplinary team is to be led by a local or international project leader within a
consortium of local or international research organizations with a track-record of research and policy engagement in Myanmar. The call closes on August 7, 2017.

Learn more and apply here.

Call for submissions on inclusive growth practices: World Economic Forum, World Bank and IDRC

IDRC, in partnership with the World Economic Forum and the World Bank Group has launched an initiative to document and share inclusive growth practices from around the world. The first call for case study submissions identified 20 promising practices, selected through an independent panel of judges.

IDRC is inviting additional case study submissions of inclusive growth practices that help countries meet Sustainable Development Goals. Winning proposals will be featured on the Inclusive Growth and Development Platform, an interactive digital community, and will be profiled in the World Economic Forum's global and regional summits.

To inquire about this call and/or send a submission email eg@idrc.ca

RESOURCES

Blog: Claiming rights for women in Pakistan’s informal economy

Urban growth in Pakistan brings new challenges for women and new gender inequalities. GrOW grantee from the Urban Institute, Ammar A. Malik and Hadia Majid identify key factors which could help women workers in the informal economy to advocate for better recognition, greater access to services, and a larger share in economic growth.

Read their Oxfam’s Views and Voices blog here.

Photo by World Bank Flickr
Blog: From Burden to Boon: Accounting for Care and its Links to Women’s Economic Empowerment

Unleashing women’s economic potential calls for changes in how care work is valued and distributed within households and workplaces, as well as shared between men and women. This blog by GrOW Officer Alejandra Vargas, was produced for SEEP’s Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE) Global Learning Forum. Its goal is to bring visibility to care work, and capture some of what we know and what is needed towards a more holistic view of women’s economic empowerment in policies and programs.

Read the blog here.

*Photo by Alejandra Vargas of the balwadi program near Udaipur*

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Working paper: Gender and Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Central and East Africa: Barriers and Benefits

Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) in Africa is increasingly the focus of global, regional and national efforts aimed at regulating the sector to increase national benefits from mining, and address violence and conflict. Women’s significant participation in artisanal mining (estimated at 25-50% or more of artisanal miners) is largely overlooked in these efforts.

This paper draws from ongoing research from a three year, mixed-method study in six artisanal mining sites across the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, to explore the gendered dynamics of ASM and some of the constraints and possibilities facing women’s ASM livelihoods.

Read this paper by GrOW partners from Carleton University, Partnership Africa Canada and the Development Research and Policy Analysis Center here.

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How mining could be a boon for African women
In northeastern Congo, unequal pay and cultural taboos have kept women from sharing in the country’s mineral wealth. Activists and researchers are trying to change that, and Canada’s ‘feminist’ foreign aid policy has a part to play. This Globe and Mail’s article Geoffrey York showcases research findings by GrOW partners from Carleton University and Partnership Africa Canada.

To unlock the economic potential of women miners, researchers point to the need to reduce the restrictions on pregnant miners, give women a greater voice in mining policy decisions, provide technical and safety training, and launch education campaigns to tackle the cultural taboos that limit women to lower-paying mining roles.

Read the article here.

GrOW Policy Briefs are online!

Looking for some summer reads that are short and to the point? Nothing beats GrOW’s policy briefs. Stay abreast of the latest findings across the portfolio with our latest communication products.

All policy briefs from the GrOW program can be found at the IDRC Digital Library. Titles include:

- **From school to work in six African countries: how are women faring?** - policy brief - McKay, Andy; O’ Neill, Mary; Vargas, Alejandra; Melesse, Martha (2017)

- **Unpaid care and women’s empowerment : lessons from research and practice** - policy brief - O’Neill, Mary; Vargas, Alejandra; Chopra, Deepta (2017)

- **Reducing child marriage and increasing girls’ schooling in Bangladesh : policy brief** - Buchmann, Nina; Glennerster, Rachel; O’Neill, Mary; Vargas, Alejandra (2017)

- **Brazil’s trade liberalization reduced gender gaps in employment : policy brief** - Gaddis, Isis; Pieters, Janneke (University of Goettingen, 2017-05)

- **Does paid work put women at greater risk of domestic violence?** : policy brief - Lenze, Jana; Klasen, Stephan (University of Goettingen, 2017-02)
GrOW Talks videos are also online!

Got 4 minutes to spare? To learn more about GrOW projects directly from the researchers leading it, go to Youtube and subscribe to the GrOW Program. You will get access to our videos from the Series GrOW Talks. Share them via Twitter and email!

Check out this video by Rachel Glennerster, from JPAL describing what has struck her about early child marriage and Bangladesh from her field work as part her GrOW- supported project.

SPOTLIGHT

Meet Sonia Laszlo and Kate Grantham

What motivated you to work on research on women's economic empowerment?

How does the saying go? If you aren’t outraged then you’re not paying attention—the revolution starts with knowledge. Women, in every country, experience a disproportionate lack of access to economic resources, social equality and political power, for no other reason than because they are women. This is an outrage. Our work in this area is therefore fueled by our passion to create more inclusive and socially just societies, and a genuine belief in the ability of evidence-based policy-making to support the equitable redistribution of power and resources.

What does women’s economic empowerment mean to you and what is a key challenge that you think we need to address to unlock women’s potential?

The highly contextual and multidimensional nature of women’s economic empowerment makes it inherently difficult to define and measure. But at its most basic, the term refers to women’s equal access to and control over resources when compared to men. Challenges to achieving women’s economic empowerment are again context-specific, and exist in various forms at the individual, household and societal levels. For this reason, promoting women’s empowerment necessitates a balanced approach that meets women’s immediate survival needs in the context of their daily lives, while also opposing broader systems that create conditions ripe for women’s disempowerment—systems like patriarchy and neoliberal global capitalism.
Evidence-based policies are relevant, now more than ever. How can researchers think/act outside the box to inform policies in an efficient way? What are some successful examples you have used to promote uptake?

Gender inequality is pervasive, but it manifests materially in highly localized and context-specific ways. Thus, to be effective, policies combatting gender inequality must also be context-specific and locally-driven. Research uptake into policy domains is only likely to occur when it is propagated by passionate and informed individuals from within the affected community—be it women, local leaders or civil society groups. It is these individuals that are equipped with the lived experience necessary to review evidence, and then advocate and implement policies effectively in the local context. Strategic partnerships between researchers and local stakeholders informed by participatory approaches are certainly not “outside the box” thinking, but they are less common and more complex in practice than is often assumed.

Why should researchers and decision makers participate in the GrOW Research Series?

There are so many reasons to participate in the GrOW Research Series, as an author, as a peer reviewer, or as a reader! But the main reason is to review the evidence and policy lessons coming out of GrOW projects in more than 50 countries around the world.

For authors who submit their work to the series there are several additional benefits, including: contributing to GrOW’s research outputs, getting support for copy-editing, the opportunity to showcase research results in an open-access platform, and the chance to get online visibility before the paper appears in a scholarly journal. For authors who want more substantive feedback on their working paper, we will send it out for peer-review. Taking advantage of our peer-review process can improve future chances of success publishing in a scholarly journal.

When you are not working by your computer or in the field, you are...

(Kate) You can usually find me outdoors in Ottawa walking my dog, Buster, with a coffee in hand.

Sonia (left) and Kate (right)

The GrOW newsletter is meant to encourage learning, knowledge sharing, and network development among partners working on women’s empowerment. To make the information contextual and useful, please reach out to grow@idrc.ca and let us know about your work at the local, regional, and international level. We want to hear from you!

Subscribe to the newsletter here.
GrOW is a multi-funder partnership with the UK Government's Department for International Development, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and Canada's International Development Research Centre.

Questions or comments? Send us your feedback at grow@idrc.ca.

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