

## Session Notes

**Session:** Gender Lens Investments in Agriculture, (June 8, 2:30pm)

**Session Reporter:** Long Pham

**Moderator:** Jeannette Gurung, Executive Director & Founder, Women Organization for Change in Agriculture & Natural Resource Management (WOCAN)

**Speakers:**

- Kevin Martin, Deputy Team Lead, Technical Advisory Group, U.S. Agency for International Development (Asia)
- Oskar Haq, Asia Regional Financial Sector Advisor, Oxfam GB Asia
- Parul Soni, Global Managing Partner & Co-founder, TTC - Think Through Consulting; Executive Director, WEConect International in India
- Joy Anderson, President & Co-founder, Criterion Institute

**Key Takeaways:**

- There is high awareness for the need to include gender analysis, but little know-how on how to do that. There needs to be less talk and more investment.
- There are real gender patterns in agriculture, but people who own the deepest knowledge about that are not necessarily in the investment process
- Women face different challenges from men: time poverty, gender stereotypes
- For interested policymakers:
  - The regulatory aspect is largely contextual: perspective of an investor (what can I invest in?), regulatory (how is the market functioning?)
  - Figure out what causes money to flow either through technology or into the value chain
  - Create data that proves risks and opportunities of gender lens investing

**Jeannette Gurung**

- Jeannette has been involved in efforts to achieve gender equality within agriculture and natural resource management in Africa and Asia.
- WOCAN is a global women-led network that works to increase women empowerment and helps organisations integrate women into their work through financing, leadership training, monitoring.
- WOCAN also hopes to give women equal access to resources, especially in rural areas.
- They developed a certification system called W+ Standard to measure women empowerment, through the lenses of important themes such as income, health, education, etc.
- Can apply labelling to products produced by women-owned businesses → let customers know that the extra premium they pay will go towards benefit these women

**Kevin Martin**

- Kevin has expertise in development finance and has served in the field across Asia.
- USAID has worked with Criterion Institute over the last 2 years on a report on possibilities of gender lens investing in Asia.

**Oskar Haq**

- Oxfam GB Asia bridges the gap in the connection between impact investors and programs to support enterprise development.
- Oskar is also working on a social Enterprise incubator for agriculture-related SMEs in Sri Lanka
- The majority of Oxfam's work includes investment and development research.

- Oxfam has a program that invests in specific value chain for women economic empowerment. One of the components is CSR work with the private sector. There is also the component of investment to scale enterprises and link them to markets and impact investors. The pressing questions are: How do we scale enterprises? How do we change the behaviour of financial institutions? This program is also complicated in terms of a wide network of partners.
- They look at gender lens investing as a more holistic approach. For them, it more about empowerment for women. It involves economic empowerment and non-economic empowerment.

#### **Parul Soni**

- WEConnect International is a global non-profit dedicated to helping women-owned businesses succeed.
- In 2016, Parul organised a summit called ThinkBig 2016 to foster women entrepreneurship.
- Taking traditional ESG framework and add the gender aspect.

#### **Joy Anderson**

- Criterion Institute was founded in 2002. It is a think tank aimed at using finance to create social change. Most of their work looks at gender lens investing and figuring out what is necessary to build the knowledge and the practice in the field.
- Over time, Asia will become the centre of gender lens investing in the world.
- A gender analysis will lead to smarter decision making within finance because you have better data, better analysis, better picture of the social picture.
- Criterion Institute has a project that looks at specific regions and funds impact investing intermediaries, largely in Australia but now increasingly global. This project helps these intermediaries improve their practices and due diligence activity, their analysis, their sourcing, how they evaluate deals and practical pieces. But then that raises a question about the support for people on the ground. The project piloted a program that trained women rights organizations to understand how to think about finance and the language and logic of finance, so that they can more fully engage. → We know that there are real gender patterns in agriculture, but people who own the deepest knowledge about that are not necessarily in the investment process. How do we make that connection and equip the people who have depth of knowledge about these patterns to participate effectively in conversations.