



MILLENNIUM
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Fact Sheet

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MCC's Commitment to Gender Equality

Many countries with high levels of gender inequality also experience high levels of poverty, and gender inequality can be a significant constraint to economic growth and poverty reduction. The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is committed to ensuring that gender is considered at all stages of its work with partner countries—from country selection and policy reform to project development and implementation.

As the U.S. Government continues to further its commitment to strengthening gender equality and to improving the economic rights of men and women around the world, MCC strives to deepen its efforts to ensure that men and women are champions of their own development.

Updated Gender Policy

MCC's groundbreaking Gender Policy was developed in 2006. The policy mandates gender differences and inequalities are considered in selection of eligible countries and integrated into development and design of compact programs, assessment and implementation of projects, monitoring of program results, and evaluation of program impacts.

The *MCC Gender Policy* is intended to provide guidance to partner countries on their responsibilities for integrating gender into all stages of compact development and implementation. The MCC Gender Policy was updated in April 2011 to incorporate MCC's new Gender Integration Guidelines.

Gender Integration Guidelines

In March 2011, MCC released the *Gender Integration Guidelines*, a document describing 27 Gender Integration Milestones and Operational Procedures, which provide specific operational guidance on social and gender integration in the compact development and implementation phases. Examples include the recruitment of a social and gender specialist and the development of the Social and Gender Integration Plan, a cross-cutting strategy to integrate social and gender issues, throughout the compact.



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Partner countries and MCC are responsible for ensuring the successful execution of the Gender Integration Milestones and Operational Procedures during the development and implementation phases of the compacts.

New *Gender in the Economy* Selection Indicator



The new *Gender in the Economy* indicator builds upon the MCC Gender Policy by recognizing the relationship between growth, poverty reduction and gender equality.

commitment to promoting gender equality by providing men and women with the same legal ability to interact with the private and public sectors.

The indicator measures the legal capacity of married and unmarried women to execute 10 economic activities: get a job, register a business, sign a contract, open a bank account, choose where to live, obtain a passport, travel domestically and abroad, pass citizenship onto their children, and become head of a household. The indicator uses data from the International Finance Corporation's Women, Business and the Law report.

The *Gender in the Economy* indicator builds upon the MCC Gender Policy by recognizing the relationship between growth, poverty reduction and gender equality and responds to the policy's mandate to integrate gender in the country selection process.

Each year, MCC publishes scorecards that measure policy performance for every low income and lower middle income country. These scorecards are available to the public at www.mcc.gov/selection.

MCC uses a rigorous evaluation process to select countries for compacts. This process uses third-party indicators to assess countries' policy environments and determine in which countries MCC funding will be most effective in reducing poverty and promoting economic growth.

MCC evaluates policy performance using objective and quantifiable independent indicators in three policy areas: Ruling Justly, Investing in People and Encouraging Economic Freedom. MCC seeks indicators that have broad country coverage, cross-country comparability and consistency in results from year to year.

In fiscal year 2012, MCC updated its selection criteria to improve evaluation of country policy performance. This update included the addition of a new *Gender in the Economy* indicator, designed to assess a government's

Gender Integration in Partner Countries

As part of MCC's country ownership principle, each partner country creates an implementing entity organization called a Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). Each organization is staffed by local citizens and leads compact implementation. Many have made strides in integrating social and gender issues into their compacts.

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso was one of the first countries to develop a compact Gender Integration Action Plan. As part of this plan, MCA-Burkina Faso appointed a gender specialist to lead this process and established gender focal points for each sector, contractor team, and implementing partner. The focal points are responsible for ensuring effective implementation of the Gender Integration Plan and contributing to quarterly monitoring reporting to MCC.

One of the compact's projects, the BRIGHT II Schools Project, includes construction of classrooms in 132 public schools originally built during Burkina Faso's MCC Threshold Program. The project seeks to increase school enrollment, attendance and completion for children in remote areas, with a specific focus on girls.

To celebrate International Women's Day in 2011, MCC invited two BRIGHT students, Fatimata Yanta and Aissatou Diallo, to participate in events at the White House and on Capitol Hill. Both girls had the opportunity to share their experiences with First Lady Michelle Obama, students at Washington's Oyster-Adams Bilingual School and others. The girls spoke passionately about the impact of the MCC project on their lives and their futures.

"Before the BRIGHT school, very few girls went to school because the only school in the area was too far away," Fatimata said. "My father said, 'When they're done building the school, I want you to go there, because even though I can't read, I want you to be able to read.'

"I'm now in the sixth year at school. I have always been first in my class and do better than all the boys! I'm still responsible for watching some of the little children, but at the BRIGHT school I can take them to the *bisongo* [school day care] so I can attend class. When I grow up, I want to be a teacher or a doctor.... I wish all the girls in Burkina could go to school like me."



Fatimata Yanta, a student at an MCC-funded school in Burkina Faso, visited the United States Senate to share her story with members of Congress. She said, "When I grow up, I want to be a teacher or a doctor.... I wish all the girls in Burkina could go to school like me."



Mongolia

MCA-Mongolia integrated a gender focus into all five compact projects: the Property Rights Project, the Health Project, the Vocational Education Project, the Energy and Environment Project, and the North-South Road Project. MCA-Mongolia has appointed social and gender specialists and assigned gender focal points in each project unit.

Vocational schools seek to link industry skill standards with modern curricula. Although female students predominate at higher levels of general education, there are more male students enrolled in vocational education and training institutions. As part of the compact, female and male students are encouraged to explore non-traditional and higher paid sectors.



The MCC compact with Mongolia encourages vocational students to explore non-traditional and higher paid sectors.

The Property Rights Project seeks to improve the system for recognition of and accessibility to full property rights. The project has made major headway by increase the government's and civil society's understanding that women's and men's access to land differs, by sex-disaggregating the data on all available land titles and undertaking an extensive outreach campaign to educate women on the importance of legal land rights.

Because of outreach activities, Mongolia experienced a five percent increase in women's participation in land ownership in 2011 in targeted areas. Women now hold about 40 percent of land titles in eight regional centers.



Senegal

Senegal developed its compact before MCC's Gender Integration Milestones and Operational Procedures were adopted. Despite this, MCA-Senegal successfully integrated gender into the compact.

Senegal was the first partner country whose compact was already in implementation to align its staffing with the Gender Integration Milestones and Operational Procedures. MCA-Senegal's gender specialist was elevated to a senior-level position that reports directly to the MCA director-general, giving her the authority and independence needed to ensure that gender is integrated throughout the compact. And although the compact did not initially include funds specifically for the purposes of gender integration, budget resources have since been allocated to support ongoing social and gender integration efforts.

MCA-Senegal has also signed a formal agreement with the Gender Laboratory at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar. This collaboration will strengthen gender analysis, advocacy and monitoring and evaluation efforts during the remaining three years of compact implementation. The results of this work

will inform annual updates of the Social and Gender Integration Plan, as well as provide social and gender information that may be used to improve compact projects.

MCA-Senegal is currently finalizing its Social and Gender Integration Plan, a key gender milestone. During 2012, the organization will conduct a series of gender capacity building trainings, which will include a diverse audience of both internal and external stakeholders.

To learn more, visit www.mcc.gov/gender.