

## TOPIC: The IFIs – Accountability Mechanisms at the World Bank Group and IMF

**Conceptual rating:** [BASIC to INTERMEDIATE level](#)

**Suggested module objectives:**

- 1) Learn about the accountability mechanisms at the World Bank Group and IMF
- 2) Provide an opportunity to evaluate the ability of advocates to utilize these accountability mechanisms to advance gender equality

*Notes to facilitator: These objectives assume that the audience will have at least a rudimentary knowledge of how the World Bank Group and IMF work, and a gendered critique of IFI policy conditionality.*

**Key concepts:**

- 1) Accountability for adherence to procedures vs. accountability for outcomes of procedures or policies
- 2) Rights and responsibilities of various stakeholders *vis a vis* the IMF and WB

**Cross references:**

- ***Link with Module 12:*** IFIs' mission and structure
- ***Link with Module 13:*** IFI rationale for not adopting feminist gendered macroeconomic policies
- ***Link with Module 14:*** Gender policies at the World Bank Group and IMF
- ***Consider pairing the material from this module in order to provide a full analysis of the potential to advance change through existing structures at the WBG and IMF.***
- ***Link with Module 17:*** Accountability mechanisms at the Regional Development Banks

**Time required:** at least 90 minutes

**Suggested methodology:** Large and small group DISCUSSION

*Note to facilitator: If possible, distribute readings in advance of the workshop. This will enable a more thoughtful discussion, and prevent participants from feeling rushed to read and analyze information in a limited time.*

**Relevant readings:**

- Bank Information Center, World Bank Toolkit for Activists, 2007.
- Best, Jacqueline, “Legitimacy Dilemmas: The IMF’s Pursuit of Country Ownership”, *Third World Quarterly*, 28:3, 2007.
- Bradlow, Daniel D., “The Changing Role of the IMF in the Governance of the Global Economy and its Consequences”, May 2006.
- Bretton Woods Project update: #56, May/June 2007. “From Wolfowitz to Zoellick: An Opportunity Lost”.
- Buira, Ariel, “The Bretton Woods Institutions: Governance With Legitimacy?” F-24 Secretariat, 2005. (first half of the paper.)
- CIEL’s Citizen Guide to the World Bank Inspection Panel, 1999
- GAP, “Executive Summary: Challenging the Culture of Secrecy. A Status Report on the Freedom of Speech at the World Bank”, 2004.
- Global Transparency Initiative, “Assessing World Bank Openness: A Transparency Scorecard”, Sept. 2006.
- Heinrich Böll Foundation, Gender Action, CIEL, “Gender Justice: A Citizen’s Guide to Gender Accountability at International Financial Institutions” 2007.
- Indian Law Resource Center, Position Paper on “Indigenous Peoples’ Right to Free and Informed Prior Consent...”, 2003.
- Knight, Danielle and Pound, Edward T., “Cleaning Up the World Bank”, *US News & World Report*, 3/26/06.
- One World Trust, 2006 Global Accountability Index, the IMF, 2006.
- One World Trust, 2006 Global Accountability Index, the World Bank/IBRD, 2006.
- Peretz, David, “The Process for Selecting and Appointing the Managing Director and First Deputy Managing Director of the IMF”, IEO, IMF Background Paper, 01, 2007.
- South Centre, “Comparative Analysis of Developing Country Participation in the Governance of Global Economic Institutions”, 2006.
- Vaughn, Robert, “Report on the World Bank’s Whistleblower Procedures”, April 30, 2005.
- Woods, Ngaire, “The Globalizers in Search of a Future: Four Reasons Why the IMF and World Bank Must Change, and Four Ways They Can”, Center for Global Development, 2006.
- World Bank, Operational Policy 4.10, Indigenous Peoples, July 2005.

### **Preparation and supplies needed:**

- Newsprint pad/flip chart paper and markers to record certain parts of the discussion.
- Write in large letters one heading on each of 5 pieces of newsprint/flipchart paper: “client” governments; “client’s” citizens; donor governments; donors’ citizens; UN. Post these on a wall so everyone can see and you can write on them.
- Review suggested reading material. Decide which items you will duplicate for participants’ use. If possible distribute them well in advance so participants can read them before the session.
- Decide how you are going to divide participants into two groups – one that will focus on the IMF, one that will focus on the World Bank Group.
- Review IMF, WB, BIC, and GenderAction websites to determine whether there are any new developments with respect to accountability mechanisms that should be incorporated into this module.
- Duplicate copies of the sections dealing with accountability mechanisms at the WB and IMF, and the related comparative charts in the Appendices of “Gender Justice” (OR acquire enough copies of the entire manual for participants.)
- On flipchart/newsprint paper, write out the questions you want the small groups to consider. If the groups will be in different rooms, make enough copies of the questions for each group to have one. Note: if there is a lot of reading material, consider a division of labor among the groups concerning which documents and policies to analyze. Divide up the reading to make it manageable in a limited time. Sample questions are listed in step 4 below, “Description of how to conduct the session”.
- Research whether there are any active groups and efforts in your country geared to improving the WB and IMF’s accountability. Have any complaints been filed related to a project/loan in your country? Be prepared to share this information during the session.

### **Suggested content to be covered:**

- In what ways, if any, participants think the WB and IMF should be held accountable to:
  - a) member governments who are “clients”
  - b) the citizens of the countries who are “clients”
  - c) member governments who are the primary donors
  - d) the citizens of the countries who are the primary donors
  - e) the United Nations

- The formal and informal policies and procedures for accountability at these two institutions as they currently exist
- Critiques of these policies and procedures, focusing on those critiques of greatest relevance to gender advocates
- Efforts geared towards improving accountability at these two institutions

**Description of how to conduct the session:**

1. Welcome by host group(s) and introduction of facilitator(s); provide any needed logistical information; outline goals for session.
2. Depending on size of group, invite participants to introduce themselves, share an expectation or question they bring. (Record expectations or questions on newsprint, if you are doing this step, and refer to them throughout the session.) If this is part of a larger economic literacy effort and the group has already met, this step may be shortened or eliminated.
3. **Large group DISCUSSION.** Warm up the group by asking participants a series of questions. Do not go into a lengthy discussion of each, but use this more to provoke thinking. Let everyone know that you will return to discuss this more fully after some small group work is done. Take notes of their answers on the newsprint/flipchart paper you prepared in advance. Here are sample questions:
  - a. What, if any, accountability do you think the IMF and WB have to member governments who are “clients”, like our own?
  - b. What, if any, accountability do you think the IMF and WB have to citizens of member countries who are “clients”?
  - c. What, if any, accountability do you think the IMF and WB have to member governments who are the primary donors?
  - d. What, if any, accountability do you think the IMF and WB have to citizens of member countries who are the primary donors?
  - e. What, if any, accountability do you think the IMF and WB have to the UN? (e.g. to achieve the UN’s Millennium Development Goals)
4. **Small group DISCUSSION.** If the group hasn’t been yet divided into distinct WB and IMF teams, do that and distribute reading materials. If the total number of participants is large, consider breaking down the WB and IMF teams into smaller sub-groups to maximize discussion and thinking. About 5-6 people is a good size for a group. Ask the groups to look at accountability policies and mechanisms. What exists formally and informally? What does that say about to whom that institution is accountable? How effective are those policies and procedures? Where are there gaps – particularly with respect to promoting gender equality? Prepare to report back to the large group.

5. **Large group DISCUSSION.** De-brief the small group work, going through one institution at a time. Track the salient points on newsprint.
6. Help the group synthesize what they learned by asking them if their ideas have changed re: to whom and how the IFIs should be held accountable. Talk about existing efforts to reform/transform the WB and IMF re: accountability. How much is gender a part of these efforts? Is anything happening within your country in this regard? Discuss, supply information about these efforts, and contact data, if relevant.
7. If this is part of a larger economic literacy effort, link this session to the next one. Provide logistical details related to the next session, as appropriate. Thank the audience for their participation.

**Ideas for alternative methodologies/modification of the level of discussion:**

- **For a more basic audience:** Instead of reading and small group discussion, consider inviting one or more speakers to talk about these issues.
- **For a more advanced audience:** After your group has done its own study and analysis of accountability mechanisms, and the Bank's involvement in your country in recent years, consider inviting a representative of the World Bank to dialogue with your group.

**Some useful organizations or websites related to this topic:**

- [www.bicusa.org](http://www.bicusa.org)
- [www.brettonwoodsproject.org](http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org)
- [www.ciel.org](http://www.ciel.org) Center for International Environmental Law, look under "IFI"
- [www.coc.org](http://www.coc.org) Look at the Rethinking Bretton Woods project info.
- [www.eurodad.org](http://www.eurodad.org) Information in French, Spanish and English
- [www.focusweb.org](http://www.focusweb.org)
- [www.genderaction.org](http://www.genderaction.org)
- [www.ieo-imf.org](http://www.ieo-imf.org) Official Website of the IMF's Independent Evaluation Office
- [www.if-watch.net](http://www.if-watch.net)
- [www.jubileesouth.org](http://www.jubileesouth.org)
- [www.oneworldtrust.org](http://www.oneworldtrust.org)
- [www.socialwatch.org](http://www.socialwatch.org)
- [www.twinside.org.sg](http://www.twinside.org.sg)
- [www.whistleblower.org](http://www.whistleblower.org) Website of the Government Accountability Project; look under "International Reform" tab
- [www.worldbank.org/inspectionpanel](http://www.worldbank.org/inspectionpanel) Official Website of the World Bank Inspection Panel