

29th June 2021

WOW response to Parliamentary IDC inquiry on aid to Pakistan

1. What is the programme?

The programme is called the Work and Opportunities for Women (WOW) programme. WOW has been scoped by and funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and is being delivered by an alliance of global experts that won an international tender process for this programme in 2017. PwC leads this alliance that includes BSR, CARE International, the University of Manchester, and Social Development Direct. For more information please see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/work-and-opportunities-for-women#overview>.

WOW has two projects operating in Pakistan. One is a corporate partnership with the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) to support increased economic empowerment of women cotton farmers. The other relates to the WOW Fund, a grant facility that funds grassroots organisations testing new pathways to women's economic empowerment - one such project is run by the Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising (WIEGO) with implementing partner HomeNet South Asia (HNSA).

2. What were its aims?

The objective of WOW is that women have access to improved economic opportunities through business interventions in supply chains and economic development programmes. This 5 year programme aims to enhance the economic empowerment of 300,000 women working in global value chains and work with 35 economic development programmes to increase the numbers of women beneficiaries by September 2022.

WOW's project with BCI aims to:

1. Promote the recognition of women in cotton production and improve their access to knowledge and training by:
 - a. Increasing the number of women currently recognised and registered as BCI Farmers and Co-Farmers
 - b. Increasing the number of women recognised and registered as BCI Farmers and Co-Farmers
2. Develop scalable guidance and models that could enable BCI Implementing Partners (IPs) to better recognise women in cotton, and better design and deliver gender sensitive programmes
3. Improve data collection and visibility of women cotton farmers and workers by conducting research to understand the status and role of women in the cotton value chain and any data gaps.

With WIEGO, WOW aims to empower home-based worker (HBW) leaders to negotiate better outcomes for their members working in precarious conditions in the garments sector. The initiative will also support the building of alliances between HBW organisations and wider civil society groups working for change in women's working conditions in the garments industry; support exchanges between HBW leaders in South Asia and East Africa, and contribute to the emergence of a global HBW Network. The learning generated will build understanding of how to build effective negotiating strategies that improve the situation of women home-based workers and on the role of national and global organising in enabling positive change for these women.

3. How long was the programme meant to run?

WOW is scheduled to run for the 5 years between October 2017 and end September 2022. As a result of the success of the programme, FCDO announced a £6.1m (inclusive of VAT), 2-year extension to WOW during the 2020 Africa Investment Summit with a commitment to improve access to higher productivity and higher return jobs for at least 100,000 additional women in Africa. This extension would allow the programme to run for an additional 2 years to October 2024.

Related to WOW's activities in Pakistan, the partnership with BCI was scheduled to take place between December 2019 and May 2022, although activities were heavily delayed and impacted by the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. WOW's funding for the project with WIEGO was scheduled to start in March 2019 and end in July 2022 and was similarly affected by delays.

4. How much funding was it supposed to receive overall?

The WOW programme (across all countries and not just Pakistan) has been allocated a total of £10.2m (without VAT) in funding over the 5 years to October 2022 before the £6.1m mentioned above.

For Pakistan, WOW's grant agreement with WIEGO was to disburse £498,752 of direct grant funding between March 2019 and July 2022, with further agreement to disburse an additional £20,920 for Covid-19 response (total £519,674).

WOW's partnership with BCI in Pakistan was in the form of technical assistance (i.e an agreed number of days of consultancy support) rather than direct funding. Information related to this is commercially sensitive and we are not at liberty to disclose

5. How much funding will it end up receiving overall?

By the revised end of the WOW project with WIEGO now scheduled to be at the end of July 2021, WIEGO will have received approximately £300,000 in direct grant funding.

Relating to the BCI project, as mentioned above, we are not able to disclose the change in number of days attributable to this project as this is commercially sensitive information.

6. When was the contract awarded?

The tender for WOW was released by DFID in January 2017 and the contract was awarded to the WOW Alliance led by PwC in October 2017.

7. When and how were you informed the programme had to be ended?

We received formal confirmation of the WOW programme's reduced budget from FCDO on 29th April 2021, but had received initial indications prior to this that allowed us to plan appropriately together with FCDO how this reduced budget should be allocated. This included the responsible closure of the two projects in Pakistan. We (PwC and the consultants working on the BCI programme) then informed BCI in April 2021 and then sent the formal termination letter on 18th May 2021. PwC informed WIEGO in May and sent the formal termination letter on 14th June 2021.

8. Were any of the desired outcomes achieved before closure?

BCI: The following Phase 1 deliverables were completed before project closure but the wider aims of the project were therefore not achieved:

- The completion of a Scoping Study to provide a closer look at gender issues in cotton production. The results of the study informed the planning of WOW activities, including training for staff at both BCI and BCI's Implementing Partners. This training was the first step in supporting them to adjust tools, practices and work-plans to strengthen recognition of women.
- Staff and field workers from BCI and its Implementing Partners received training to incorporate gender sensitive approaches in their training manuals and programming.

WIEGO

For the WOW-funded WIEGO project, it is important to note that WOW contributed towards the funding of a wider project, and so WOW takes a contribution approach towards the outcomes achieved, rather than direct attribution. Based on the latest report from WIEGO, the following activities have/will be completed prior to contract termination:

- Development of [*Working in Garment Supply Chains: A Homeworker's Toolkit*](#), including translation into multiple languages, and shared with numerous homeworker organisations in 4 South Asian countries (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan)
- At least 43 home-based worker leaders have been formally trained via local toolkit-based training using a Train-the-Trainer approach.
- Home-based worker leaders in at least 18 organisations in Africa, Eastern Europe & Central Asia, and Latin America have access to the toolkit.
- Virtual launch and the first Congress of the new global network, HomeNet International.
- Numerous research and communications publications developed by WIEGO and HNSA
- Mapping completed to understand the extent of HW presence and level of organization in global value chains in 2 African countries with sizeable garment and textile industries (Ethiopia and Kenya).

9. What was/will be the impact of the cancellation of the programmes on your company?

BCI: Phase 2 (Implementation of the pilot models) and Phase 3 (Learning, Adapting, Scaling) were/will not be carried out as a result of the budget cuts/early closure.

WIEGO:

Due to the contribution of WOW's funds towards the wider WIEGO-HNSA project, we cannot be sure which activities will continue despite lack of WOW funding, and where other donors will step in.

10. What was/will be the impact of the cancellation on the women and girls (or intended recipients) that the programme was targeting?

It is our understanding that WIEGO is already in touch with IDC on this project and has provided the required information.

Regarding the BCI project, the overall aims of the project will not be achieved as Phase 2 and Phase 3 will not be carried out.