

Teaching Development Economics from a Gender Perspective

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Introduction

- Undergrad course in development economics presents ideal opportunity to introduce students to importance of gender differences in economic outcomes.
- Economic development textbooks typically used in the global North meet this challenge in a partial and limited way, which usually entails discussing gender inequality in the context of poverty, farm productivity, labor market status, health, education, and the demographic transition (Cypher 2021; Todaro and Smith 2020).
- Paper argues that systematic integration of gender into development economics courses based on standard textbooks is feasible and desirable.
 - Low-hanging fruit approach;
 - Pedagogically important.
- We provide a gendered narrative of how to engender a development economics course using as examples topics that are commonly taught.

Introduction

- We show how gender-aware scholarly articles, classroom activities, and assignments can complement a course based on standard textbook or set of articles
- Our goal: address male bias in content.
- New content reflects one or more core features of feminist economics.
- We propose to engender three main sections of a prototype development economics course:
 - meanings and measures of economic development
 - strategies for economic development
 - salient issues in development
- Also propose adding a forward-looking section on creating equitable development.

Questions/Exercises/Assignments for Each Section of Prototype Course

Resources

Meanings and Measures of Economic Development

1. Write or present a critique of GDP per capita as a development measure in light of Marilyn Waring's documentary.
- 2a. Interpret a country's performance in gender equality using one composite gender index. Compare with a high-income and a low-income country.
- 2b. Discuss in class: what are the similarities and differences between these four composite indicators?
3. Monthly 'Shining Star' in-class tribute to a feminist scholar in development economics usually ignored in mainstream courses. For this section of the course: Naila Kabeer's work on women's empowerment.

Show film: [*Who's Counting? Marilyn Waring on Sex, Lies and Global Economics*](#)

[UN Gender Inequality Index \(GII\)](#)
[UN Gender Development Index \(GDI\)](#)

[WEF Global Gender Gap](#)
[OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index](#)

Show film: [*Naila Kabeer: Breaking the Wall of Gender Inequality*](#).

Questions/Exercises/Assignments for Each Section of Prototype Course	Resources
<i>Policy Strategies for Economic Development</i>	
1. Conduct case study of export-led growth strategy and implications for women workers, in light of documentary on blue jeans factory in China and/or Maquiladora factories in Mexico.	Show film. Possibilities include <i>China Blue; Maquilapolis; and Pins and Needles.</i>
2. Assign a country case study on gender equality and macroeconomic policy. Students focus on a particular policy regime and time period, such as import substitution or stabilization and structural adjustment, and show the differential impacts by gender using a literature review and some descriptive statistics.	EconLit, Scholar.Google.
3. Monthly ‘Shining Star’ tribute. For this section of the course: Stephanie Seguino’s work on inequality and economic growth.	Show film: <i>Who Gets the Bad News of Capitalism?</i>

Questions/Exercises/Assignments for Each Section of Prototype Course	Resources
<i>Salient Issues in Development from a Gender Perspective</i>	
1. Complete a comparative assignment on time poverty for men and women using time use data for the U.S. and another country. Students can also create their own time use diary and impute value of their unpaid time.	Multinational Time Use Study Levy Institute Project on Time Poverty
2. Focus on a topic (such as health or education) and examine cross country data on a component indicator in one of the above composite indices.	GII, GDI, GGGI, SIGI described in text.
3. Discuss gendered dimensions of migration in light of documentary on migration of men from Mexico and women from the Philippines.	Show film: Letters from the Other Side, paired with Chain of Love.
4. Discuss pros and cons of randomized control trials and assign a specific RCT that examines gender impacts to evaluate these pros and cons.	Review in Rodgers <i>et al.</i> (2020). RCT case study: microcredit and gender.
5. Monthly ‘Shining Star’ tribute. For this section of the course: Bina Agarwal’s work on bargaining within the household.	Show film: Prof Bina Agarwal on the challenge of gender inequality.

Questions/Exercises/Assignments for Each Section of Prototype Course

Resources

Looking toward the Future: Creating Equitable Development

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| 1. Explore sex-disaggregated data on COVID-19 and track whether countries led by women had better outcomes during the pandemic | Sex-disaggregated data sources in Table 1 |
| 2. In-class activity: ask students questions on gender norms from World Values Survey questionnaire and compare their responses with country results | World Values Survey database |
| 3. Students create a final video project on creating equitable development and all videos are shown in an end-of-semester mini film festival. | Google Docs Sample Assignment by Jacqueline Strenio |
| 4. Monthly ‘Shining Star’ tribute. For this section of the course: Nancy Folbre’s work on caring labor. | Show film: The Economics of Care . |
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Helpful Resources

Sample Syllabi

International Association for Feminist Economics,
Course Syllabus Catalog
Exploring Economics: Syllabi and Other Resources

<http://www.iaffe.org/pages/resources/syllabus/>
<https://www.exploring-economics.org/en/discover/syllabus-gender-relations-and-economics/>

Online Modules

UN Women Training Courses on Topics in Gender and
Development

<https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/portal/>

Film Catalog

Women Make Movies

<https://www.wmm.com/>

Gender and Globalization Film Suggestions

<http://www.iaffe.org/weblog/2013/04/02/gender-and-globalization-film-suggestions/>

Helpful Resources

Classroom Activities and Pedagogical Resources

UNESCO Resources for Educators – Classroom Activities on Gender Equality (Sustainable Development Goal #5)

<https://en.unesco.org/themes/education/sdgs/material/05>

Gender-Disaggregated Data for Statistical Exercises

Data2x COVID-19 Resources: Gender Data

<https://data2x.org/resource-center/gender-and-data-resources-related-to-covid-19/>

UN Women's Women Count Data Hub

<https://data.unwomen.org/>

World Bank, World Development Indicators

<https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/data-set/world-development-indicators>

Demographic and Health Survey Program
STATcompiler

<https://www.statcompiler.com/en/>

International Labour Organization ILOSTAT

<https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/>

Conclusion

Pedagogical value:

- Systematic integration of gender awareness in a development economics class can be highly effective in students' understanding of economic development.
- Students will learn about importance of gender equality and women's well-being in the development process.
- They will also have better grasp of mediating institutions—communities, governments, and markets—impact the well-being of individuals as countries grow.
- These teaching goals can be achieved by incorporating gender-aware literature into the syllabus, and through pedagogical tools such as statistical exercises, videos, and classroom activities with an explicit gender focus.

Conclusion

Potential impact on gender composition and culture of economics:

- There are persistent gender gaps in the economics profession, some of which are perpetuated through a curriculum that is not gender aware.
- Large literature has documented relatively low representation of women among students who take economics courses and major in economics.
- These issues at undergrad level are interrelated with the persistently low representation of women among economics faculty members and the chilly climate that women economists continue to face.
- As a course with gender content, a development economics course with an explicit gender dimension could be a draw for women economics students.
- Broader relevance: The course could potentially attract additional students – women and men – who otherwise might find economics to have little relevance.
- With this innovation, prospective economists will gain gender awareness that could make the profession and policymaking more welcoming to women.