

Ivanka Trump's flagship policy program slammed by government auditors

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Washington, April 3 (RHC)-- In the U.S., the Government Accountability Office has issued a damning report about the implementation of legislation supporting Ivanka Trump's signature women's empowerment initiative, from her time as an adviser to her father, President Donald Trump.

As Ivanka Trump traveled the world talking up the so-called Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative, deep problems were developing in roll out of the bipartisan Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act of 2018 at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Trump's stump speech on the global conference circuit was anchored in stories about the legal and regulatory barriers many women face around the world in establishing their property rights and starting businesses, and she had a solution: W-GDP.

Launched weeks after President Trump signed the WEEE Act in early 2019, supporters of W-GDP saw it as a groundbreaking whole-of-government approach to female empowerment. Critics of W-GDP derided the work as too limited to make a real difference.

W-GDP aimed to codify gender analysis and deliver targeted finance across the women's programs of 10 U.S. Government agencies. At the individual level, the hope was that poor women entrepreneurs would receive the financial kick-start they needed to build a business.

One of the 10 agencies involved was the U.S. Agency for International Development, which is mandated to allocate \$265 million a year for support to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises under the WEEE Act. Half of the money is required to go to women, half to the very poor (some overlap between the two groups is expected).

While Trump touted W-GDP as a cohesive program "enabling us to rigorously track the execution and the efficacy of the money that we are spending," the GAO's 14-month audit demonstrates that, at least at USAID, the opposite was happening.

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