

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (WEE)

JULY 2023

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE EVALUATION






THE EVALUATION

NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC) undertook a portfolio performance evaluation for the United States Agency for International Development's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub (USAID/GenDev). One cluster NORC evaluated was the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) activities. These activities aim to overcome barriers and foster women's economic participation. WEE activity theories of change (ToCs) hypothesize that if women's engagement in the workforce increases, then economic growth increases, and all of society benefits. Listed below are the activities, data sources, and the evaluation questions NORC answered.

Activities

1. A Micro-Journey to Self-Reliance (Micro-Journey), in Benin
2. Enabling Environment for Economic Empowerment of Women (E4W), in Burundi
3. Global Labor Program (GLP): Levi-Strauss Partnership, in Lesotho
4. Engendering Industries (Engendering), in Nigeria
5. WEE in Mesoamerica (WEEM), in Guatemala

Data Sources

-  Desk review of 119 program documents
-  38 key informant interviews (KIIs) with USAID/GenDev staff, implementing partner (IP) staff and local partner organizations
-  11 focus group discussions (FGDs) with IP staff, program participants, and local partner organizations
-  1 field observation and site visit
-  3 computer-assisted personal interview surveys completed by 351 respondents

Questions




1
Is the activity cluster based on context-specific and international evidence?

2
To what extent is the activity cluster achieving the targeted GBV results?



3
To what extent is the activity cluster sustainable?

LESSONS LEARNED

What worked?

-  The activities were well-monitored using appropriate measures, such as quarterly quantitative indicators and qualitative reporting, to generate data for decision-making.
-  Program participants indicated appreciation for activities' focus on economic empowerment and the encouragement for women to achieve self-sufficiency.
-  Active and joint engagement of local grassroots organizations, community members, and key decision-makers was critical in planning and implementation of processes.

What did not work?

-  Needs assessment requirements were not specific, which allowed for variation in their level of rigor and focus on specific elements of intervention design. Some approaches were weaker because they only drew on existing sources of information and did not involve gathering primary data from potential participants and stakeholders.
-  Lack of long-term funding and support challenged sustainability across the activities.

▲ Including men (e.g., coworkers in Engendering and husbands in E4W) in programming, training, awareness activities, etc. seemed to increase the likelihood that interventions would have meaningful effects among women and in the community.

▼ Lack of systemic support, including for judicial and policy stakeholders, challenged the effectiveness of GBVH prevention and response policies.
▼ Social and cultural norms, including wariness around LGBTQIA+ topics and groups, created resistance to change.

RECOMMENDATIONS



NEEDS ASSESSMENTS SHOULD BE MANDATED AS A FIRST STEP IN ACTIVITY DESIGN.

These exercises should also include representatives from relevant stakeholders and anticipated participants, because this can foster buy-in from important stakeholders, not least the intended target groups. Integrating the voices of GBV survivors from the design stage would ensure that activity components accurately represent their needs, interests, and perceptions. To maximize the value of these initial research components, donors should also provide some professional research guidance and support to help groups generate and use intervention-focused evidence and integrate equitable versus tokenistic participatory methods with local stakeholders whenever feasible.

“This [baseline study] allowed us to see how, where to go through, which door to enter in order to be able to face these difficulties, hence the intervention which is more based on economic empowerment as a safe and sustainable indirect means of combating th[is] violence.” (Implementing Partner KII)



INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE SHOULD BE CONSULTED FOR OTHER SIMILAR INTERVENTIONS, ESPECIALLY INTERVENTION EVALUATIONS.

There are growing numbers of GBV interventions around the world, with increasingly robust evaluations embedded from the very beginning. Groups should be assisted to collect and consider similar practices in different settings to determine which intervention approaches might be relevant to achieve their projected outcomes. Literature searches to identify systematic reviews could provide a good starting point.

One implementer noted it would be valuable to synthesize experiences, methodologies, and lessons learned in one document that activities can reference before beginning work.



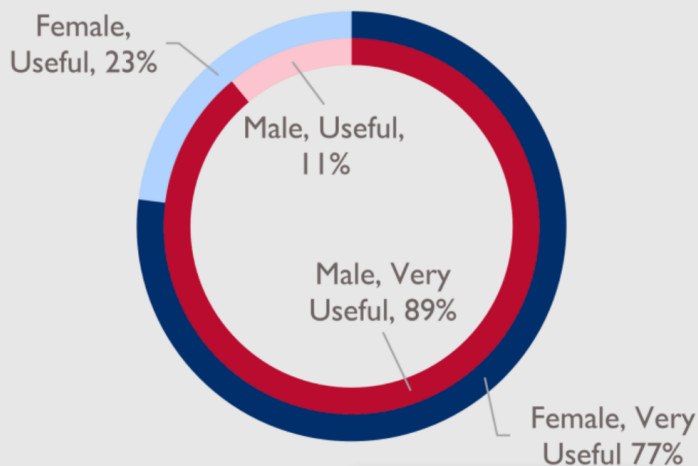
INCREASE MALE ENGAGEMENT IN ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE GENDER EQUITY AND REDUCE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT.

Results suggest that including men in programming (e.g., coworkers in Engendering and husbands in E4W), training, awareness activities, etc., seems to increase the likelihood that interventions would have meaningful effects among women and in the community, and achieve targeted GBV results. Donors might wish to raise this issue with prospective grant recipients to help advocates and service providers consider when more inclusive, joint programming approaches might be safe, feasible, and useful.

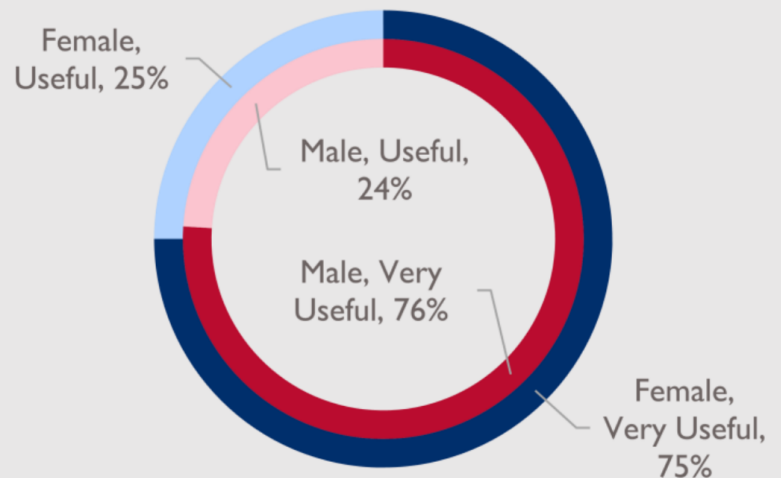
“...With the hands we brought on board—an international firm that specializes in male engagement—to tap into that area and see how we can increase the level of engagement when it comes to that audience—that has been amazing. It's been amazing, the levels of engagement that we see from that program, and what continues to happen is amazing. And even the shifts in mindset. That was like instant drop—I call it the drop from head to heart, instant, fast, accelerated. We're seeing amazing things happening as a result of that.” (Implementing Partner KII)

The data below from E4W shows how program participants perceived the utility of two services that engaged male community members.

Usefulness of gender awareness program for men and women within coffee farmer cooperatives in preventing GBVH (Burundi, n=133)



Usefulness of awareness-raising sessions for key male stakeholders in preventing GBVH (Burundi, n=133)



SUPPORT ACTIVITIES TO INCLUDE INDIVIDUALS IN DECISION-MAKING ROLES OR POSITIONS OF POWER, ESPECIALLY IN EMPLOYMENT SETTINGS.

Local groups may not have the same status or linkages that donors can arrange, such as collaborations with high-level decision-makers, including corporate executives and government representatives. However, collaborations must not be forced, as local groups will likely know best who may be good allies in their work toward gender equitable norms and practices. The following quote from an implementing partner emphasizes the key role local stakeholders played in GLP.

“When you involve the key stakeholders or the key players within a corporate setting—in this instance it’s the buyers more specifically in the process—it makes a good program, and you mix the buyers with the organized labor, it makes sense in terms of the people who are bringing in the investment, and the people are producing the clothes when they sit down together in a negotiating table and come up with a plan to end issues of gender-based violence. It becomes a success, because there is an understanding and the accountability issue—it becomes something that everybody has signed on: it’s the buyer, the worker, and the factory owners.” (Implementing Partner KII)

PROMOTE AND PAY FOR COLLABORATION WITH BENEFICIARIES.

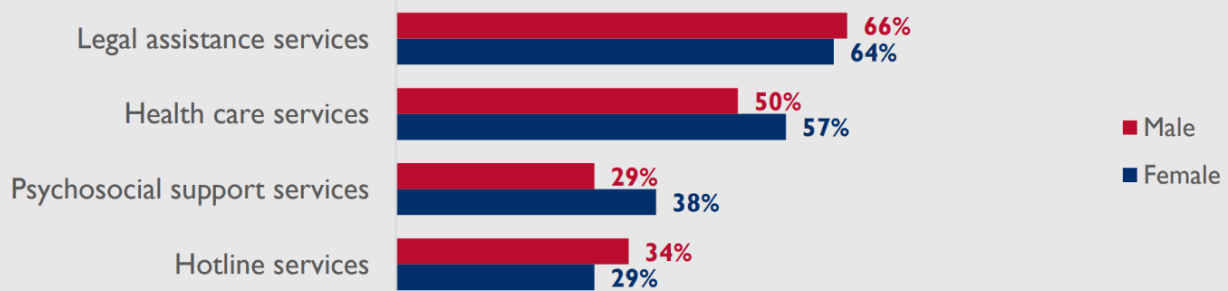
Findings indicate that greater effectiveness can be achieved when activities invite and pay fairly for the time and engagement of GBV survivors and local community stakeholders, especially when trying to adapt the activity design and implementation. Donors should provide technical and financial support to gain regular feedback from affected groups or activity participants, which can be used to iterate and adapt survivor-informed activity designs toward greater effectiveness.



PROMOTE SUFFICIENT TIME, FINANCIAL, AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR LOCAL IMPLEMENTERS TO ADVANCE BEYOND AWARENESS-RAISING AND SENSITIZATION TECHNIQUES TO STANDARDIZE GENDER EQUITY AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS FOR VIOLATIONS.

The activities reportedly made progress shifting perceptions and understanding about gender equity and violence. Activities seemed to encourage women’s economic participation and bring to the forefront concepts such as women’s rights to be free from sexual harassment in the workplace. However, for Engendering Industries, budget cuts at IBEDC and employees’ limited time to spend on the activity also posed some challenges. For GLP, the figure below shows the top four resources (out of a list of nine response options) that respondents believed were needed most to prevent gender-based violence and harassment.

What are the top resources that workers at Nien Hsing need most to prevent gender-based violence and harassment? n=139



ENCOURAGE ACTIVITIES TO COLLABORATE WITH A VARIETY OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS, ESPECIALLY BY WORKING WITH ORGANIZATIONS WITH WIDER REACH AND DECISION-MAKERS WITH SUBSTANTIAL INFLUENCE.

While several intervention models appeared to have an influence on their direct target group (e.g., within their organization or company), sustainability will be fostered by greater horizontal reach that goes beyond simply the single business or sector. For example, survey data (see figure below) showed that E4W and GLP program participants frequently believed that there were important stakeholders that were not included in activity programming and implementation.



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