



The lessons in this leaflet have been extracted from the following evaluations:

- ◆ **Malawi (2015):** Mid-Term Evaluation on the Gender & Agriculture Programme
- ◆ **South Africa (2015):** Mid-Term Evaluation of the Women Entrepreneurs Project
- ◆ **South Africa (2015)** Final Evaluation of the Pro-Poor Governance, Gender Equality & Women’s Empowerment from a Human Rights Perspective in Namibia
- ◆ **UN Women Corporate Evaluation (2014):** UN Women’s contribution to Women’s Economic Empowerment
- ◆ **Sudan (2014):** Consolidating efforts that contribute to Gender Equality & Women’s Empowerment in Sudan
- ◆ **Kenya (2014)** Government of Kenya (GoK)/UN Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (JP GEWE)
- ◆ **Zimbabwe (2013):** Final Evaluation of The Gender Support Programme (GSP)
- ◆ **Ethiopia (2013):** Joint Flagship Programme on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (JP GEWE)
- ◆ **Kenya (2012):** Final Evaluation of Gender, Human Rights & Governance Programme 2007-2011
- ◆ **Kenya (2012):** Mid-Term Evaluation Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
- ◆ **South Africa (2011)** Evaluation of UN Women Capacity Development Activities in Southern Africa (2009-2010)
- ◆ **Zimbabwe (2010):** Mid-Term Evaluation of the National Gender and Women’s Empowerment Strategy & Action Plan and the Gender Support Programme (GSP)

All UN Women evaluations are available on GATE (www.gate.unwomen.org) & the Gender Equality Evaluation Portal (<http://genderevaluation.unwomen.org/en>)

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Lessons Learned from Evaluations: Capacity Development in Women’s Economic Empowerment Programmes

UN Women & Women’s Economic Empowerment: what’s the issue?

Investing in women’s economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth. Women make enormous contributions to economies, whether in businesses, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, or by doing unpaid care work at home.

But they also remain disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination and exploitation. Gender discrimination means that women often end up in insecure, low-wage jobs, and constitute a small minority of those in senior positions. It curtails access to economic assets such as land and loans. It limits participation in shaping economic and social policies. And, because women perform the bulk of household work, they often have little time left to pursue economic opportunities.

1. WHY is capacity development within Women’s Economic Empowerment programmes important?

1 WHY is capacity development within Women’s Economic Empowerment programmes important?

◆ **Address delays in implementation:**

Gaps in capacity and expertise among implementing partners are the main causes for delays in implementation of activities and inadequate quality of monitoring, coordination and reporting.

Delays in receiving reports from IPs have a negative impact on the ability of UN Women to disburse funds and generate donor reports in a timely manner.

◆ **Realize Results:**

Success depends on partners having adequate capacity to carry out the work. Every link and joint in the chain must be strong. Expecting results through partners requires investing in their capacity.

◆ **Sustainability:**

Failing to link capacity development with a sustainable strategy poses risk of producing only short-term and small-scale results. The importance of “sowing the seeds” for future work is a great investment that can change women’s lives.

2. WHAT do we know about effective capacity development in UN Women WEE programmes?

3. HOW can UN Women better focus its capacity development initiatives for successful WEE programming?



WHAT do we know?

Lessons on 'Capacity Development' from UN Women WEE programmes across the region

Targeted Capacity Development Interventions: lessons from the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Malawi Gender & Agriculture Programme, 2014–2017.

The Gender & Agriculture programme in Malawi was built on the premise that women in Malawi are the primary group engaged in the agriculture sector. However, they are mainly involved in subsistence agriculture and not effectively accessing productive resources and other opportunities in the sector. In addition to this, the patriarchal system of marriage discriminates women farmers in the country.

The programme achieved success by therefore building capacities of women farmers to increase their voice and influence policies and strategies on agricultural inputs and support services. In this way, the targeted capacity development initiatives ensured that the programme leveraged the women's potential for fostering positive change by ensuring that services to the agricultural sector will not be only demand driven but also meet special needs and expectations of men and women.

2 WHAT is necessary for effective capacity development in UN Women programmes?

- ◆ **Map gaps:** Conduct capacity needs assessment early to identify gaps and address them at the beginning of the project/programme
- ◆ **Plan:** develop an explicit capacity development strategy for IPs. UN Women should include a component on institutional capacity strengthening in cooperation agreements with partners – to ensure accountability and sustainability and so that CD strategies are integrated into the programme as a mainstream activity.
- ◆ **Be strategic:** UN Women must specify in greater detail what particular aspects of institutional capacity or accountability mechanisms a programme sets out to affect, and thereafter invest strategically in partner and staff capacity development related to these areas.
- ◆ **Relevance:** Reassess the type of capacity support provided as the project dynamics evolve.
- ◆ **Monitor:** Keep records on which staff have completed what trainings, and what the overall expectations in regards to trainings are.
- ◆ **Provide demand-driven support:** Ideally, a UN Women partner organization would own and lead the process of assessing its existing capacity, identifying areas for improvement, and would sketch out a mid to long-term plan for addressing the key gaps.



- ◆ **Work at multiple levels; national & community:** work at the *national level* to improve the enabling environment and building the capacities of duty bearers – this will involve targeting and working to develop the capacity of country governments as duty bearers. Continued engagement of technical staff working in the institutions to bring change on gender is crucial.
- ◆ **Direct support to relevant ministries:** to help strengthen coordination in the gender sector. The Government as a whole, along with specifically targeted ministries, must be strongly involved in the planning and implementation of gender programmes as they are responsible for providing policy direction to the gender sector in-country. Finding allies within the government and building their capacity to locate the issues and to understand the array of possible interventions will be very helpful.
- ◆ Additionally, direct work at the *community level* to empower community structures and women (as rights holders), focusing on innovative approaches that can be scaled up. Focus interventions at community level on institutional capacity building of community structures and supporting innovative approaches with potential to generate good practice for replication and scale-up.
- ◆ **Ensure linkage and complementarity** between national/county level and community level interventions .



3 HOW can UN Women better ensure successful capacity development initiatives?

- ◆ **Support the collective agency of women's groups:** this is a sustainable approach to capacity development by enabling women's groups to help themselves as a collective. UN Women should also support coordination of women's organizations into harmonized national structures to enhance their ability to engage with government and deliver a unified agenda .
- ◆ **Advocacy:** Train women on advocacy to claim their rights, and to rights holders to respond. UN Women advocacy support has demonstrated to be instrumental in building capacities of partners to enhance their influence in incorporating strong gender equality dimensions in national laws, policies and strategies, and adoption of new constitutions. Capacities of community groups can be strengthened to recognize and demand for human rights. Such training may also support women's organizations to be able to advocate for government passing of gender-sensitive bills and policies.
- ◆ **Build technical capacity of gender machinery** at federal, regional and sub-regional levels on GEWE including through the **development and application of guidance materials:** develop guidelines, tool kits and materials to support gender analysis, gender mapping, disaggregated data and gender frameworks for implementation by partners.

TIP! LINK CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT TO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

UN Women should ensure that adequate capacity development and business development support is provided to ensure sustainability.

For example, the Evaluation of the Joint Programme for Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment in Ethiopia noted that women engaged in Income Generating Projects received only 1-2 days of Business Support Training. In order to ensure sustainability and profitability of their business ventures, there is an identified need to

HOW can we improve our approach to capacity development in WEE?

- ◆ **Capacity Development for Implementing Partners should focus on:**
- ◆ **Proposal writing:** improving skills of partners in this area would be beneficial both to the donor/fund manager and implementing partners
- ◆ **Results-based management:** to move away from reporting on activities and focus reporting on results .
- ◆ **Reporting:** this is beneficial both to the donor/fund manager and implementing partners.
- ◆ **Programme & financial management:** for both staff and implementing partners. The project or programme overall will face challenges if there is a lack of capacity around financial management and programmatic implementation amongst partners.
- ◆ **Follow sustainable approaches:** Training of trainers to further build capacity is highly encouraged.
- ◆ **UNW Internal Capacity Development:** As highlighted in the corporate WEE evaluation, to continuously further WEE programme successes, UNW should at the country & regional level prioritize the development of macroeconomic skills amongst staff.
- ◆ Internally, also support increased knowledge and capacity of COs to systematically apply Human-Rights Based Approach to WEE work and ensure that operational work is designed to support implementation of normative commitments & recommendations emanating from relevant human rights treaties & bodies.

