

WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



Photo: UN Women ESARO

Lessons from the following evaluations:

(all evaluations available at <https://gate.unwomen.org/>)

2018

Mid term evaluation of Women Economic Empowerment project in Gaza, Mozambique.



2017

Mid term evaluation of UN Women Strategic Note, Kenya.



2018

Evaluation of JP "Advancing and Sustaining Gender Equality Gains" in Rwanda.



2016

Country Portfolio Evaluation, Tanzania.



2018

Country Portfolio Evaluation, Rwanda.



2017

Evaluation of UN Women ESARO Capacity Development Initiatives.



1. WHY IS WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IMPORTANT?



Photo: UN Women/ ESARO

There is a growing understanding that, as the world is facing an unprecedented economic crisis, there will be severe consequences for women and their children in developing countries.

These include higher infant mortality, more girls being withdrawn from school, and reduced women's income. At its heart lies the unequal nature of the

economic structures of markets and financial systems that restrict women's economic opportunities compared to that of men. Women economic empowerment is viewed as a top priority in the work of UN Women. It includes various dimensions such as building income generation capacity for women, changing attitudes and perceptions, gender responsive budgeting and work on social protection.

Key strategies for Women Economic Empowerment.



2. WHICH APPROACHES HAVE PROVEN EFFECTIVE FOR WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT?



Photo: UN Women/ Tumaini Ochieng

Evaluations have confirmed that in many countries supporting women to access civil registration rights is a pre-requisite for their economic empowerment. Such access opens the doors for their eligibility to obtain vital services, such as financial services including loans, services for social protection, inheritance and even voting rights.

Evaluations have also demonstrated that targeting men together with women in Women Economic Empowerment activities can be a high potential intervention. It helps to transform socio-cultural practices, in particular, at the family and community levels. Consequently, men start becoming supportive agents, rather than obstacles, in advocating for

change in the existing socio-cultural norms and beliefs.

Programmes that showcased the capacity of rural women to perform productive economic activities, including those that are traditionally considered masculine, have helped to transform attitudes and perceptions towards women in the world of work.

When designing capacity building initiatives on topics related to Women Economic Empowerment, the use of local language to deliver training packages has enhanced comprehension, particularly amongst the most vulnerable women with low literacy levels. Examples include trainings on digital literacy and other relevant skills to improve their livelihoods.

Lessons on Women Economic Empowerment.



SUPPORTING WOMEN

TO ACCESS CIVIL REGISTRATION RIGHTS IS A PRE-REQUISITE FOR THEIR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT.



TARGETING MEN TOGETHER WITH WOMEN

IN WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT ACTIVITIES CAN BE A HIGH POTENTIAL INTERVENTION.



USE OF LOCAL LANGUAGE

TO DELIVER TRAINING PACKAGES HAS ENHANCED PARTICIPATION AND COMPREHENSION, PARTICULARLY AMONGST THE MOST VULNERABLE WOMEN WITH LOW LITERACY LEVELS.

3. HOW CAN UN WOMEN IMPROVE ITS WORK ON WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT?

UN Women should engage in extensive dissemination of existing funding opportunities for women and increase their awareness of availability and access to credit that is appropriate to their needs. The approach will widen access to financial sources for women entrepreneurs and respond to their financial needs after UN Women's programmes are phased out.

Rather than launching new interventions, UN Women should consider focusing on ongoing economic empowerment interventions and consolidate their achievements, including completing initiatives that are currently on standby. Evaluations have shown that active business development requires a sustained effort. A longer-term approach will allow women who, for instance, in the first phase, have received training and support through start-up kits for economic empowerment to make profits and expand their business in the second phase. To enhance project effectiveness and sustainability, women beneficiaries have recommended that after training and support with economic empowerment start-up kits, programmes should consider continuation of the support and follow-up to beneficiaries for at least one year. This will allow the transition into a profit-making phase of the businesses and further strengthen women's capacity for self-reliance.

Improved partner selection is critical in intensifying the organization's efforts for effective outcomes for Women Economic Empowerment. UN Women, thus, needs to identify relevant women economic empowerment partners for implementing programmes, policies and strategies as well as for monitoring accountability at national and/or local levels.

To ensure the sustainability of the initiated programmes, UN Women should provide support to the catalytic initiatives launched with civil society and private sector organizations. Examples include topics such as refresher trainings on business management and administration, enhancing women's financial inclusion, women's entrepreneurship and mentorships for in- and out- of school girls. They should be considered as part of a comprehensive package for women to achieve self-reliance and increase chances that achievements become sustainable.

UN Women should consider expanding the spectrum of its joint interventions on women economic empowerment with other UN agencies. Reinforcement of synergies within the One UN Framework is more likely to increase the impact of economic empowerment programmes. It is also essential that the programmes coordinate and build strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders and partners to improve productive economic activities for women.

UN Women should also improve efforts in knowledge sharing, documentation and dissemination of good examples of gender mainstreaming efforts in economic activities at the national and local levels. The same knowledge materials on women economic empowerment should be used to promote campaigns that address harmful cultural norms and practices, myths, and attitudes that exacerbate gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls in the East and Southern Africa region.

DISSEMINATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SOURCES FOR WOMEN



PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT PACKAGE FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

FOLLOW A LONGER-TERM APPROACH THAT ALLOWS NEW BUSINESSES TO BECOME PROFITABLE



ENGAGE IN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND JOINT PROGRAMMES TO INCREASE IMPACT