



WeProsper

GLOBAL COALITION FOR
WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

WeProsper Research Salon Brief: Gender Data

WeProsper's Research Salons offer an opportunity for coalition members to share research on thematic areas of joint interest in order to expand the knowledge base and inform coalition advocacy on women's economic empowerment, justice, and rights.



Research Takeaways and Policy Insights

On December 13, 2022, WeProsper hosted a session focused on gender data, featuring research presentations by FinEquity/CGAP, CARE USA, Landesa, and the Kenyatta University Women's Economic Empowerment Hub. This brief is an overview of key takeaways and policy implications from research presented by each organization. Insights to translate this research into advocacy are also reflected in this brief to empower advocacy efforts on gender data in the women's economic empowerment (WEE) context.

Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment in Financial Inclusion¹

Jenny Morgan, FinEquity/CGAP

- There is a proliferation of women's economic empowerment measurement guides, indexes, and indicators from researchers and financial inclusion practitioners demonstrating increased interest in understanding the impact of financial inclusion on women.
- However, a clearly defined and harmonized approach to measuring investments' impact on women's economic empowerment (WEE) is needed to better understand financial inclusion initiatives' reach and their benefit for different populations of women, as well as to inform and strengthen future programs and investments.
- Building on previous efforts such as [Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment in Financial Inclusion](#) and [Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment: A Compendium of Selected Tools](#), the Center for Global Development, Data2X, and FinEquity launched a learning initiative bringing together experts across sectors to discuss the quality, relevance, and use of WEE measurement tools; develop a theory of change reflecting how financial inclusion interventions can impact WEE outcomes; and compile a set of indicators that can be used to measure all dimensions of WEE reflected in the theory of change. A forthcoming background paper outlines the theory of change and indicators that will be pilot tested in the coming year.²
- The theory of change is built on the three dimensions that define the concept of WEE: resources, agency and achievements, along with access to and usage of financial services. Within resources, there are indicators related to context (e.g. social norms), household (e.g. division of labor), and individual capabilities (e.g. financial capability

and skills). Agency within the context of economic empowerment focuses on the skills and resources to compete in markets; fair and equal access to economic institutions; and the power to make and act on decisions and control resources and profits. Achievements are the final outcomes of the empowerment process, defined by changes in both objective (e.g. changes in income and assets) and subjective measures (e.g. changes in self-esteem or well-being).³

Policy implications:

- Defining and measuring WEE in the context of financial inclusion initiatives will help governments, international financial institutions (IFIs), financial service providers (FSPs), and other financial inclusion stakeholders deepen their understanding of the outcomes of financial inclusion on women, how these outcomes are being achieved, and help to better identify what works and what does not in promoting WEE in financial inclusion.
- The indicators and accompanying guidance for measuring WEE in financial inclusion can provide a framework for organizations to understand the impact of their initiatives and how these can narrow gender gaps. Measuring WEE in financial inclusion can also contribute to a growing evidence base to support greater efforts to increase financial inclusion for women.



Source: Paula Bronstein, Bihar, India, Images of Empowerment

COVID-19 and Women: Saving for Resilience⁴

Kalkidan Lakew Yihun, CARE USA

- Evidence from various sources show the disproportionate impact COVID-19 had on women's and girls' lives, livelihoods, and rights across different contexts.⁵ To better understand the impacts, actions, and needs of women and girls in the context of COVID-19, CARE conducted a listening exercise called "Women Respond" with 4,185 members of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) in Burundi, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Uganda. The evidence is less clear on the impact of childcare investments on maternal income; some studies show a significant increase, while others show no increase.
- This included four rounds of quantitative surveys and two rounds of qualitative interviews, a combination which was more effective in supporting a thorough analysis and understanding. The quantitative data yielded much needed evidence on gendered impacts, actions, and needs. This was complemented by qualitative data that provided additional in-depth insights into women's lived experiences.
- The findings from the two-year study show COVID-19, combined with other context-specific shocks, continues to affect livelihoods, food security, access to education and health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene.
- VSLAs, particularly women, showed resilience and took collective action during the pandemic, adapting and playing a key leadership role in their communities. In particular, access to financial resources through VSLA savings and loans enabled members to mitigate some of the negative livelihood consequences. Beyond the financial aspect, VSLAs played a critical social role in communities by disseminating information and mobilizing the community to address early marriage, school drop-outs, and various social issues.

Policy implications:

- Women's voices and participation in policy and decision making spaces, especially during crises, are limited. Regularly investing in listening to women and data collection to reduce the data gap can help policymakers and development actors understand gendered impacts and design gender-responsive interventions.

- Specifically, data collection efforts should be regular, to support analysis of trends over time, and include both sex- and age-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data, which captures additional critical insights into gendered impacts and needs. Both data collection processes, starting from the design to the dissemination, must engage community members, especially women, and women leaders in the community, to be the most effective.
- Supporting and investing in women's access to financial resources and providing targeted social protection mechanisms to enable VSLAs to access cash and credit can help restore their livelihoods and address longer-term economic effects. This can also reduce their risk towards other shocks and crises.
- Identifying ways to collaborate with VSLAs and women leaders to foster women's meaningful engagement in local and national response and recovery decisions is critical.

Women's Land Tenure Security and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Tatiana Gumucio, Landesa

- A forthcoming evidence scan carried out by Landesa on the relationship between women's land tenure security (WLTS) and climate change mitigation and adaptation, found that a limited amount of research empirically analyzes the links between WLTS and climate change mitigation or adaptation. However, findings generally agreed on a positive relationship.
- There is evidence that WLTS contributes to long-term land investments, which in turn results in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Although this research has largely focused on female-headed households in sub-Saharan Africa. Evidence also exists for WLTS contributing to sustainable management of forest resources, with positive effects on mitigation and adaptation; however, this evidence is particularly limited.
- There is some potential to address knowledge gaps concerning the relationship between WLTS and climate impacts by connecting existing data on tenure security collected through The World Bank's [Living Standards Measurement Study – Integrated Survey on Agriculture](#) with remotely sensed data from satellites on weather and climate trends and other available datasets that can show mitigation or resilience impacts.

Policy implications:

- International development organizations and donors can help close significant regional gaps in the evidence by promoting data collection on WLTS and its relationships with climate change mitigation and adaptation in Latin America and in Southeast Asia — regions with particularly limited evidence as shown by the evidence scan. Data collection targeting non-agricultural livelihoods will also help close important evidence gaps that exist for marine, riverine, and pastoral livelihoods.
- International donors, development organizations, and civil society organizations can help address knowledge gaps concerning sustainable management of forest resources as a pathway to climate change mitigation and adaptation by supporting and targeting data collection on WLTS in collective rights arrangements.

Women's Representation in Management and Leadership in the Public Service in Kenya: A Gender Audit - 2010-2020⁶

Dr. Sheila Mutuma, Kenyatta University Women's Economic Empowerment Hub

- In 2010, the Kenyan government established a legislative framework for gender equality in their Constitution, which was complemented by the National Policy on Gender and Development. To assess whether these frameworks and policies were effective at increasing women's representation in management and leadership in the public service sector in Kenya, Kenyatta University conducted a gender audit (GA) for the period from 2010-2020.
- The GA analyzed data at three levels of management — entry, middle, and upper — across all 22 government ministries, and across demographic characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, and education level. The results found differing outcomes across these levels — at the entry level, women's representation declined significantly (from 42% to 32%), while at the middle and upper level, representation increased from 27% to 34%, and 23% to 29% respectively.

- These findings indicate that though there were improvements in the middle and upper levels, underrepresentation of women in management and leadership persists despite the establishment of these frameworks and legislation, with implications for women's economic empowerment, including gender wage gaps.
- With the exception of the middle level of management and leadership, efforts are falling short of the rule established in the Constitution that states that no gender should hold more than two-thirds of elected and appointed positions.

Policy implications:

- The policies and frameworks established by the government of Kenya, including the two-thirds rule, illustrate a commitment to gender equality, women's economic empowerment, and women's leadership, but programs and processes of implementation are a key component of translating these into more equal outcomes to meet established targets.
- Further investigation is needed in regards to what is driving improvements in some levels of management and leadership and not others, in addition to more ongoing audits to track progress toward established targets, including creating clear indicators for measurement, monitoring, and evaluation. Additional programs need to be designed and implemented based on these evaluations to drive greater progress in women's representation in management and leadership.
- Gender audits are an effective tool to evaluate whether gender equality is being mainstreamed within governments and to assess the impacts and effectiveness of policies. The type of audit performed here on management and leadership can be replicated in different types of organizations and institutions to evaluate the gender-responsiveness of a broad range of programs, policies, services, and budgets.

Research to Advocacy Connections and Insights

WEE gender data collection supports more effective policy.

This evidence illustrates how gender data collection across different aspects of WEE is essential to crafting effective policy that addresses needs and impacts. It also shows that policies and frameworks are not necessarily enough to achieve desired change without effective implementation plans and addressing underlying barriers, as in women's representation in management and leadership in Kenya. Advocacy for a wide range of gender data is needed to understand and address underlying barriers to WEE, including time-use data, household surveys, rapid gender-assessments during crises, as well as impact evaluations of programs and policies.⁷

Creating consensus-based, robust indicators supports advocacy.

Establishing a set of indicators for WEE and its subcomponents, such as the efforts for financial inclusion, can support effective tracking and gathering evidence on what works to drive change. Establishing a robust set of indicators that is based on the consensus of experts will create powerful, widely-applicable tools that can be applied across different contexts globally.⁸ The resulting data will support drafting evidence-based policy recommendations, consistent messaging, and advocacy campaigns.

Gender data gaps remain prevalent, creating a pivotal role for advocacy.

An analysis of 25 countries in three regions evaluating the gender data necessary for tracking Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets found that only 50% of the necessary indicators had sex-disaggregated data and 32% didn't report any data on the indicators over the past decade.^{9 10}

An expansion of advocacy efforts beyond the global level is needed.

The majority of efforts to support greater data collection are taking place at the global level, indicating a need to increase advocacy at the regional, national, and local levels given the power of gender data to support targeted and effective policy.¹¹

National level cross-sectoral collaboration can support gender data efforts.

Collaboration with other stakeholders who gather data at the national level, including universities, NGOs, and the private sector can support a more comprehensive understanding of gendered needs and impacts. This includes collaborations to collect qualitative data on the lived experiences of women and girls to complement quantitative data collection.¹²

Strategic advocacy is needed for investments at the national level in core data systems and statistical capacity.

Increased investments into core data systems and country statistical offices are needed to increase capacity and support their ability to effectively collect, package, and disseminate gender data. In most low- and middle-income countries, these investments are not prioritized, and levels are not adequate.¹³

Advocacy for international coordination and financing is crucial for building sustainable gender data systems.

Creating and adhering to international standards regarding data collection support efforts for comparing gender data across countries, as well as analysis for international commitments and goals, such as the SDGs. International collaborative efforts have been successful in creating momentum, such as the [Inclusive Data Charter](#).¹⁴ However, donor funding for gender data is currently low and volatile, not sufficiently supporting country or global gender data infrastructure or capacity. Donors would need to double their existing funding to \$500 million per year to adequately support core data systems.¹⁵

Advocacy for intersectional data collection is critical for creating inclusive WEE policies.

The needs, lived experiences, and economic outcomes for women vary widely based on many factors that influence levels of structural exclusion, including race, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, caste, and sexual orientation. Though intersectionality is increasingly mentioned in policy spaces, it needs to be integrated better in gender data collection to support more targeted and nuanced funding, policies, and programs that effectively address the needs of those that face the greatest economic exclusion.

Endnotes

1. *Forthcoming.*
2. *Forthcoming.* See the [FinEquity Resource page](#) for further resources.
3. For more information on each aspect of women's economic empowerment in the theory of change, see the Center for Global Development & Data2X publication [Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment: A Compendium of Selected Tools](#).
4. Lakew Yihun, K. (2022). [COVID-19 & Women: Saving for Resilience](#). Women (in VSLAs) Respond: Final Report. CARE.
5. Lakew, K. & Janoch, E. (2022). [She Told Us So \(Again\)](#). Rapid Gender Analysis: Women's Voices, Needs, and Leadership. CARE.
6. Mwatha, R.G., Musyoka-Kamere, I., Mutuma, S.N., Barasa, S. F., Mwongeli-Musau, S., Omondi, F., Otiato, J. F., Kimaru, W., & Mohammed, O. (2022). [Women's Representation in Management and Leadership in the Public Service in Kenya: A Gender Audit - 2010-2020](#). Kenyatta University Women's Economic Empowerment Hub.
7. Badiie, S., Swanson, E., Noe, L., Wahabzada, T., Baldi, E., Saeed, J., & Eprey, J. (2022). [Transforming the Data Landscape: Solutions to Close Gender Data Gaps](#). Data2X & Open Data Watch.
8. See the ongoing work of the [WEE Measurement Learning Collaborative](#).
9. Wahabzada, T. & Swanson, E. (2021). [Gender Data Gaps: A Comparison of Three Regions](#). Open Data Watch.
10. See the [Gender Data Solutions Inventory](#) for more information on what works to close gender data gaps.
11. Badiie, S., Swanson, E., Noe, L., Wahabzada, T., Pittman, A., & Appel, D. (2021). [State of Gender Data Financing 2021](#). Open Data Watch & Data2X.
12. Badiie, S., Swanson, E., Noe, L., Wahabzada, T., Baldi, E., Saeed, J., & Eprey, J. (2022). [Transforming the Data Landscape: Solutions to Close Gender Data Gaps](#). Data2X & Open Data Watch.
13. Badiie, S., Swanson, E., Noe, L., Wahabzada, T., Pittman, A., & Appel, D. (2021). [State of Gender Data Financing 2021](#). Open Data Watch & Data2X.
14. Badiie, S., Swanson, E., Noe, L., Wahabzada, T., Baldi, E., Saeed, J., & Eprey, J. (2022). [Transforming the Data Landscape: Solutions to Close Gender Data Gaps](#). Data2X & Open Data Watch.
15. Badiie, S., Swanson, E., Noe, L., Wahabzada, T., Pittman, A., & Appel, D. (2021). [State of Gender Data Financing 2021](#). Open Data Watch & Data2X.

About WeProsper

WeProsper is a global coalition that promotes women's economic empowerment (WEE) by engaging in strategic advocacy to advance gender equality, address structural barriers, and foster women's and girls' voices and power as economic actors. Together, we work to build and utilize the global evidence base on women's economic empowerment using a feminist and intersectional approach to meaningfully inform global policy, increase funding for WEE, and support prosperity for women and girls in all their diversity.

Please scan to view our ever growing member base:





February 2023