

Women's Economic Empowerment in Mesoamerica (WEE in Mesoamerica)

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JULY 2023

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

THE IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION (IE)

NORC conducted an IE* of WEE in Mesoamerica (2020 –2025) in Guatemala, funded by USAID's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub (USAID/GenDev) to provide economic opportunities to the most at-risk and marginalized women, including Indigenous women, migrants and survivors of trafficking.

Evaluation Questions:

1

Is the activity design based on local context and flexible to achieve results on the ground?

2

Is the activity reaching participants they are meant to target?

3

Is the activity achieving sustainability?

LESSONS LEARNED

What Worked?

- ▲ Design of the activity was informed by integration of desk-based gender analyses, experience and expertise of local partners, and on-the-ground baseline data from target participants.
- ▲ Outreach methods were tailored to local contexts and leveraged strategic alliances to foster participation, successfully reaching vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations.
- ▲ Monitoring and learning of the activity is strong with the implementation of the Women's Empowerment Business Development Approach (WEBDA) methodology and Pause and Reflect sessions to continuously synthesize and share lessons learned.
- ▲ Participant satisfaction is high among all activities, and the activity has surpassed target goals for several indicators.

What Did Not Work?

- ▼ Support of local organizations' needs and capacity-building was constrained by short contract timelines, resource limitations, and implementation challenges on the part of regional engagements.
- ▼ Administrative delays, particularly in approval processes, resulted in multiple instances of lost work, time, and products.
- ▼ While there was some flexibility to adapt and modify the activity as needed, barriers to redistributing resources between sub-agreements posed challenges to adaptive management.
- ▼ GBV-focus of activity components and capacity building was limited, with challenges reported in staffing of GBV experts and poor continuity and follow-up during GBV workshops.

*Data collection sources included 25 activity documents, a CAPI survey with 109 program participants, 2 FGDs with program participants, and 5 KIIs with the implementing partner and local partner staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementation Evaluation Question 1



Review and revise USAID and donor's **administrative processes** that hinder adaptive implementation of activities. Consider how to improve the efficiency of review and approval processes and respond to implementers in a timely manner to ensure that activity progress does not stall, and critical resources are not wasted.



Carefully consider **collaboration and funding structures** to promote equitable partnerships by ensuring that local partners receive enough capacity building training and are sufficiently funded.

Implementation Evaluation Question 2



Encourage better **integration of GBV-focused components and economic participation activities**. As a GBV-focused donor, USAID is in a good position to foster stronger integration of GBV protection mechanisms into women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship activities. A growing number of proven interventions that combine economic empowerment with GBV programming can serve as models for future investments in multi-sector designs.

Implementation Evaluation Question 3



Promote and fund a start-up phase for local partners to **develop intervention-focused evidence** from their community and build their capacity to integrate GBV programming into their current activities. For future GBV funding, it will be important to grant local partners adequate time, resources and technical support to research the GBV-related needs of their community and identify and work with other local or international groups working on GBV. Moreover, partners with limited experience undertaking GBV work should be provided specific technical support and time to learn how to implement safe, ethical GBV prevention or survivor services, particularly if they plan to address multiple forms of abuse and include a gender-diverse target group.

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