

FinEQUITY BRIEF

Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment in Financial Inclusion

A Mapping of relevant measurement tools

January 2021

As a growing number of researchers and practitioners have started using women's economic empowerment (WEE) measurements to better understand the impact of financial inclusion, there is widespread recognition that financial inclusion can help low-income women improve their livelihoods and resilience while contributing to their economic empowerment. Although measuring the more tangible aspects of economic empowerment, such as increased income and asset ownership, is well understood, the assessment of more subjective, context-specific aspects, like intra-household decision-making and bargaining power, is less clear.

This FinEquity publication developed by the Data & Measurement Working Group serves as a reference guide for financial inclusion practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders interested in applying WEE measurements to their work. Our guide maps out twelve WEE tools that allow users to quickly preview their content and assist them in selecting or developing measurement frameworks and approaches that meet their needs. These tools were selected for their relevance and applicability to women's financial inclusion initiatives following an extensive review of WEE measurement guides, indexes, and indicators.

For each resource, the mapping synthesizes the following elements:

- WEE definitions, measurement domains, and main-indicator domains.
- Description of the guide's main uses – such as monitoring and evaluation, impact evaluation, gender-analysis performance, among others, to design measurable interventions seeking to advance women economically and to access data on WEE indicators.
- References to additional resources included in each tool – such as guidelines on developing a program ToC, instructions on selecting and defining indicators as well as on developing surveys for data collection.

Measuring women's economic empowerment can be challenging but its importance cannot be overstated. Economic empowerment remains one of the most powerful routes for women to achieve their potential and advance their rights. This mapping exercise serves as a starting point for FinEquity's work towards a common approach to measuring WEE in financial inclusion as part of our newly launched Impact Pathways learning theme.

Acknowledgments

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TABLE 1. **WEE Measurement Frameworks for Women’s Financial Inclusion**

Description and How to Use	WEE Definitions	WEE Domains/Dimensions and Indicator Areas/Sub-Dimensions	Tools Included
WE3 (Women Economic Empowerment & Equality) United States Agency for International Development (USAID) <i>Fields: Education, Agriculture, SMME, Health</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WE3 dashboard is a visual and interactive tool that provides a quick assessment of women’s inclusion in the economy, showcasing the extent to which women have attained economic, social, and political empowerment. Users can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore a country’s performance on women’s economic empowerment. View and download supporting documents (i.e. methodology and indicators). Customize a comparison table with countries, regions, sub-regions, and income groups. Download the entire dataset used to populate the dashboard and its metadata. The Dashboard can be used by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysts performing gender analysis for a project. Policy makers using data from the comparison table to advocate for new policies or reform. Monitoring specialists using data as baseline indicators for projects and tracking changes over time to measure impact. Researchers comparing countries, regions, income groups across topic areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WE3 framework gives equal emphasis to access to resources, decision making, agency, and gender inequality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to capital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technology Financial services Ownership Access to markets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrepreneurship Business Labor force Human capital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education HIV infections Private leadership Gender based violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laws Violence Child marriage 	<p>A dashboard/visual and interactive tool with country and regional data on these indicators. Based on readily available data from secondary sources that allow for comparison between countries and regions.</p>

TABLE 1. **WEE Measurement Frameworks for Women's Financial Inclusion** (continued)

Description and How to Use	WEE Definitions	WEE Domains/Dimensions and Indicator Areas/Sub-Dimensions	Tools Included
Understanding and Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment			
International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW)			
<i>Fields: Any</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Dashboard offers a conceptual guide for practitioners, researchers, and donors to design effective measurable interventions for women's economic advancement. Measurement should align with the "slice" of women's economic empowerment that a particular program chooses to address. For evaluation purposes, a project should measure only what it will reasonably change. Determining which stage is feasible to measure depends on the project's resources, expected impact, and timeframe. All projects should measure basic process outputs and outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A woman is economically empowered when she has both the ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make and act on an economic decision. To succeed and advance economically, women need the skills and resources to compete in markets, as well as fair and equal access to economic institutions. To have the power and agency to benefit from economic activities, women need to have the ability to make and act on decisions and control resources and profits. 	<p>Power and agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control Over Assets Agency/Decision making Autonomy and Mobility Self-confidence/Self efficacy Gender Norms, Gender roles/responsibilities <hr/> <p>Economic Advancement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Productivity and Skills, Prosperity Business Practice Income Consumption Smoothing/risk Work Environment Prosperity <hr/> <p>Reach and Process Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation Issues faced by women Success Unintended Outcomes 	A detailed list of illustrative indicators for each framework area, at individual/household-levels and community/institution-levels.
WEAI (Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index)			
International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)			
<i>Fields: Agriculture; Market Development</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WEAI is a survey-based index that measures the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agriculture sector to identify obstacles and constraints as well as ways to overcome them. The WEAI is a composite measurement tool that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates women's control over critical parts of their lives in the household, community, and economy. Allows for the identification of women who are disempowered and ways to increase autonomy and decision-making in key domains. Tracks progress toward gender equality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defines WEE as a dynamic process: resources enable women to have agency, or the ability to make decisions, to achieve outcomes. 	<p>Production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input in productive decisions Autonomy in production <hr/> <p>Productive resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ownership of assets Purchase Sale or transfer of assets Access to and decisions on credit <hr/> <p>Control over income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control over use of income <hr/> <p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group member Speaking in public <hr/> <p>Time use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workload Leisure 	Survey data from the countries of intervention (Bangladesh, Guatemala, Uganda), tools and guidelines to develop similar interventions.

TABLE 1. **WEE Measurement Frameworks for Women's Financial Inclusion** (continued)

Description and How to Use	WEE Definitions	WEE Domains/Dimensions and Indicator Areas/Sub-Dimensions	Tools Included
IPSOS WEE Indicators			
IPSOS			
<i>Fields: Any</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A framework that provides a flexible and comprehensive basis to conceptualize the WEE within specific circumstances of the intervention under observation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WEE is not the result of a chronological chain of events where, for example, access to loans coupled with training leads to income generation, then to financial decision making, and eventually to economic empowerment. It is rather multi-dimensional and non-linear. WEE is dependent on structural circumstances within the community, the household, the individual herself, as well as the perceived realities and cultural norms. To really understand whether a woman is able to realize her rights, exercise agency, and fully participate in the economy and the society, it is necessary to understand how she feels about her ability to accomplish these things and the context of the structural and cultural norms in which she is present. 	<p>Objective Reality - Individual arena</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational attainment Knowledge, skills, and abilities Personal income Control over personal income Access to financial services Access to digital technology Time use Legal rights: property ownership <hr/> <p>Objective Reality - Household arena</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility for household activities Influence over household decisions Ability to move around without permission/chaperone Physical safety/lack of fear <hr/> <p>Objective Reality - Community arena</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in public life Contributions to community decision-making Influence over community decision-making Leadership positions in community Treated with dignity and respect Physical safety/lack of harassment <hr/> <p>Self-perception - Individual arena</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feelings of confidence/self-worth/value Self-efficacy Life satisfaction/happiness Future orientation <hr/> <p>Self-perception - Household arena</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role/contribution to the family is valued/respected Feels heard and treated with dignity in household Confidence in making financial decisions within family Confidence in making non-financial decisions within family <hr/> <p>Self-perception - Community arena</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feels respected outside the home Feels heard within the community Confident in ability to participate in the community Believe it can influence community decision-making <hr/> <p>Cultural norms - Individual arena</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women should have equal access to education and training Women should be able to generate their own income Women should be able to move freely without permission/chaperone Women should be able to access financial services Women should be able to access digital technology Women should be able to own property <hr/> <p>Cultural norms - Household arena</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A women's role in the family should be... Women's rights in the household should be... Household difficulties are dealt with by... <hr/> <p>Cultural norms - Community arena</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women's role in the community should be... Women's rights should be... 	<p>Metrics for each indicator; 12-dimensions WEE framework, examples of programs where this was used.</p>

TABLE 1. **WEE Measurement Frameworks for Women's Financial Inclusion** (continued)

Description and How to Use	WEE Definitions	WEE Domains/Dimensions and Indicator Areas/Sub-Dimensions	Tools Included
Gender Performance Indicators Women's World Banking <i>Fields: Financial Services</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicators for financial institutions to analyze and measure how well they are serving women and how these women clients contribute to the financial goals and social mission of the organization. Once a baseline is established for each indicator, the institution monitors it over time to analyze changes. This analysis enables an institution to set gender-performance targets for key departments, as well as the organization as a whole. 		<p>Client focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women Borrowers Women Savers Women's market penetration Women's market share Depth of outreach to women Understanding women's needs Product Diversity Women as an Asset Base Women's Repayment Capacity Retaining Women Borrowers Women's Assets Women's Saving Activity Client Satisfaction Women's Feedback Educating Women <hr/> <p>Institutional Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Diversity on staff, board, etc Advancing Women e.g. through promotion <hr/> <p>Financial and social outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Improvement Self-Determination Family Well-Being 	<p>Practical tips on implementing the indicators — how to measure, how to analyze, how to improve performance; examples from FSPs; detailed indicator definition and formulas, correspondence with client-protection principles and social performance standard.</p>
Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines for WEE Programs UN Foundation and Exxon Mobil <i>Fields: Women economic empowerment programs</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These guidelines describe the role of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in programs to empower women economically. The primary audience for the guidelines are implementers and funders of women's economic empowerment (WEE) programs. The purpose of the guidelines is to promote a harmonized approach to M&E in WEE programs and to provide a common framework to measure and communicate program outcomes. However, the guidelines do not recommend that all WEE programs use the same M&E procedures. Instead, they provide a menu of M&E methods that different WEE program implementers and funders can use to meet their individual needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These guidelines define WEE as an increase in women's productivity, income, and well-being. Based on this definition, a set of direct outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and final outcomes is identified for two groups of women: urban women and business leaders, and rural women entrepreneurs and farmers. 	<p>WEE Final outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income (business or household) Assets Life satisfaction Gender roles and norms Self-confidence Self-esteem <hr/> <p>WEE Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business/agricultural practices Gender roles and norms Value of business training/or of access to new or improved agricultural techniques Tech adoption and effective use Self-confidence Participation in community, business or farmers groups <hr/> <p>WEE Direct outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intervention take-up and retention Acquiring productive assets Learning new technology Acquiring new information Developing new skills 	<p>Detailed guidelines on how to develop a ToC, how to select indicators and measurement approaches. Example indicators for final, intermediate, and direct outcomes.</p>

TABLE 1. **WEE Measurement Frameworks for Women’s Financial Inclusion** (continued)

Description and How to Use	WEE Definitions	WEE Domains/Dimensions and Indicator Areas/Sub-Dimensions	Tools Included
A practical guide to measuring Women’s and Girls’ Empowerment in Impact Evaluations			
J-PAL			
<i>Fields: Any domain. Includes economic, social, intimate partner and family, political and civic, education and health indicators</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This guide is designed to support the monitoring and evaluation work of practitioners, researchers, and students interested in learning how to measure women’s and girls’ empowerment in an impact assessment. The recommended steps for using the tool are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step 1: Formative research: conduct formative research to understand gender and empowerment in the specific context. Step 2: Theory of change, outcomes, and indicators: map a theory of change to select appropriate outcome indicators. Step 3: Data collection instruments: develop and validate data collection instruments that minimize reporting bias. Step 4: Data collection plan: design a data collection plan that minimizes measurement error. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Naila Kabeer’s definition of empowerment - “the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability.” Like all power relations, the process of empowerment is also shaped by and interacts with norms and institutions (cultural, social, political, and economic) that define an individual’s possibilities in a given context. These institutionalized “structures of constraint” shape the choices available to women and girls at every step of the empowerment process. 	<p>Resources (pre-conditions) - gaining access to material, human, and social resources that enhance people’s ability to exercise choice, including knowledge, attitudes, and preferences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to financial services Participation in formal and informal financial services Mental accounting and savings habits, plans for savings, account ownership and savings Parent allocation of resources between boys and girls, who women can ask for financial support <hr/> <p>Agency (process) - increasing participation, voice, negotiation, and influence in decision-making processes about strategic life choices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic labor - time dedicated to household tasks Participation of various family members Expectations about future work, attitudes about women working Control over income and spending decisions Income-generating labor <hr/> <p>Achievements (outcomes) - the meaningful improvements in well-being and life outcomes that result from increasing agency, including health, education, earning opportunities, rights, and political participation, among others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education, health & nutrition, income generation & assets 	<p>Approaches to overcome a range of WEE measurement challenges; Approaches to develop a ToC; Examples of survey questions related to women’s and girls’ empowerment from J-PAL affiliated researchers’ randomized evaluations. Examples of a range of different types of non-survey instruments that can be used in quantitative analysis and pointers to decide when and how to use them.</p>
A conceptual model of women and girls empowerment			
Gates Foundation			
<i>Fields: Health and other development programs</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A tool to identify multifaceted barriers faced by women and girls in their journeys toward empowerment. The tool can be used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To inform program design so that users are better equipped to understand where the opportunities and/or constraints lie for the advancement of women’s and girls’ empowerment. As the foundational strategic basis and policy work on gender equality. To challenge users to consider the implications of investments, partnership development, and gender equality work in development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowerment is defined as a process of ongoing change through which women and girls expand their aspirations, strengthen their voice, and exercise more choices. A woman or girl can experience empowerment in varying degrees and across different areas of her life—in her home, her family, her workplace, and her community. Empowerment is also an outcome of women and girls having greater influence and control over their own lives and futures. 	<p>Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision making Collective action Leadership <hr/> <p>Institutional structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relations Norms Laws and policies <hr/> <p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bodily integrity Critical Consciousness Assets 	

TABLE 1. **WEE Measurement Frameworks for Women's Financial Inclusion** (continued)

Description and How to Use	WEE Definitions	WEE Domains/Dimensions and Indicator Areas/Sub-Dimensions	Tools Included
<p>Women's Empowerment and Savings Groups: Monitoring and Results Measurement Toolkit The SEEP Network <i>Fields: Financial Inclusion/ Savings Groups</i></p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The purpose of this toolkit is to support continuous improvement in the effective design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of women's empowerment outcomes through Savings Groups. It offers a first step towards a more holistic and consistent measurement of empowerment within Savings Groups and is designed to serve as a reference point for best practices, such as useful examples and practical tools that can be considered and adapted based on needs and context. This toolkit seeks to support technical specialists in Savings Groups, women's empowerment, gender equality, and monitoring and evaluation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frame women's empowerment within the context of Savings Groups. Collect more consistent, comparable, and holistic data on women's empowerment through Savings Groups. Develop a more nuanced understanding of empowerment trends and risks through improved data analysis and segmentation. Contribute to cross-sectoral learning and further the development of effective monitoring and results measurement tools and systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While Savings Groups alone may not address the underlying constraints to women's empowerment, they may have a positive impact on women's earnings and control over them if used in combination with targeted interventions. 	<p>Economic Independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to appropriate financial services, formal and informal Financial literacy Opportunities for employment or self-employment Control over productive assets Control over income and expenditures Access to markets <hr/> <p>Confidence and self-worth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive self-image and self-esteem Consciousness of self and others as interdependent Social norms related to behavior and relationships <hr/> <p>Decision-Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influence over household decisions related to finance, productive resources, education of children and self, family planning, consumables, and home improvement <hr/> <p>Voice and leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in economic or social groups Comfort in speaking in public Leadership positions (in group or community) Social norms related to positions of authority <hr/> <p>Time use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control over the allocation of time, including paid and unpaid work, and leisure activities Satisfaction with the allocation of time, including paid and unpaid work, and leisure activities Social norms related to gendered household roles <hr/> <p>Mobility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical mobility within – or beyond – the community <hr/> <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control over own body, physical and mental health, as well as bodily integrity Access to appropriate health services, including but not limited to reproductive, maternal, neonatal, and child healthcare 	

TABLE 1. **WEE Measurement Frameworks for Women's Financial Inclusion** (continued)

Description and How to Use	WEE Definitions	WEE Domains/Dimensions and Indicator Areas/Sub-Dimensions	Tools Included
Women's Empowerment And Markets Systems (WEAM) Framework			
BEAM EXCHANGE			
<i>Fields: Market Systems Interventions</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WEAMS is a resource for practitioners to apply a women's empowerment lens to research, analysis, planning, implementation, and monitoring of their market systems interventions. WEAMS can be used a reference throughout the project life cycle and offers links to other resources for additional guidance. The five steps of the project life cycle include: project strategy, diagnosis, vision, intervention, and measurement. The guide is most useful to those who already have knowledge of market systems approaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a market systems development, women are empowered through activities that make systems more favourable for those who are participating or who could/would participate in them. Women empowerment interventions are a means to contribute to the ultimate goal of gender equality. Increased empowerment of women in the market systems contributes to greater gender equality. 	<p>Economic Advancement</p> <p>Access to opportunities</p> <p>Access to assets, services and needed supports to advance economically</p> <p>Decision-making authority in different spheres, including household finances</p> <p>Manageable workloads for women</p>	<p>Practical step-by-step tips on how to implement the framework throughout the project life cycle.</p>
Project-Level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (pro-WEAI)			
International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)			
<i>Fields: Agriculture</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pro-WEAI is a new survey-based index used to measure empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agriculture sector. The tool helps agricultural developmental projects assess women's empowerment in a project setting, diagnose areas of women's disempowerment, design strategies to address deficiencies, and monitor project outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define WEE as a dynamic process: resources enable women to have agency, or the ability to make decisions, in order to achieve outcomes. 	<p>Intrinsic agency (power within)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autonomy Self-efficacy Attitudes about intimate partner violence Respect among household members <hr/> <p>Instrumental agency (power to)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input in productive decisions Ownership of land and other assets Access to and decisions on financial services Control over use of income Work balance Visiting important locations <hr/> <p>Collective agency (power with)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group membership Membership in influential groups 	

TABLE 1. **WEE Measurement Frameworks for Women's Financial Inclusion** (continued)

Description and How to Use	WEE Definitions	WEE Domains/Dimensions and Indicator Areas/Sub-Dimensions	Tools Included
Women's Empowerment Index Framework Oxfam <i>Fields: Women's Economic Empowerment; Resilience; Good Governance; Livelihoods; Accountability; Humanitarian response</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A practical guide on experiences and lessons learned to support evaluators and practitioners working on WEE. • Best used for evaluation purposes, it also has a potential application in monitoring processes. • It could be employed in any development project where the number of project participants is sufficiently large to allow for statistical analysis. For example, to trace changes over time among project participants or to compare different groups of women involved in the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's empowerment is a process whereby the lives of women and girls are transformed from a situation in which they have limited power to one where their power is enhanced. This framework recognizes three levels at which change can take place: personal, relational, and environmental. This process can also happen in the other direction, with changes in social norms and the broader society (environmental change) affecting how women interact with others (relational change) and how they see and perceive themselves within society (personal change). 	<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-confidence • Individual knowledge • Opinions and attitudes on women's economic role • Non-acceptance of GBV (Gender Based Violence) • Personal autonomy <hr/> <p>Relational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence and community • Control over household assets • Involvement in household decision making • Independent income • Experience of GBV • Control over time <hr/> <p>Environmental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to services and resources • Ability to influence at political level 	<p>Examples of the questionnaire structure, wording and data transformation used in formulating questions for some of the most common women's empowerment indicators.</p>