WOMEN'S ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP IN ASIA

A review of WEL Programming

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TABLE OF ACRONYMS

AADC	Agri-Aqua Development Coalition
AMDF	Al-Mujadilah Development Foundation, Incorporated
BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CERD	Communication Education and Research Development
CNIC	Computerized National Identity Card
CTE	Chilli Traders' Enterprise
DA	Department of Agriculture
EU	European Union
EU-ACAP	European Union - Assistance to Conflict affected People
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
FHH	Female Headed Household
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEKN	Gender Equality Knowledge Network
GEM	Gendered Enterprise and Markets
GJ	Gender Justice
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
LGU	Local Government Units
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Learning
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning
NFR	NGOs for Fisheries Reform
OMP	Oxfam Mindanao Programme
OPAL	Oxfam Programme, Accountability and Learning system
PBPF	Paglilingkod Batas Pangkapatian Foundation, Incorporated
PCVA	Participatory Capacity and Vulnerability Analysis
PKKK	Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan
PO	Peoples Organisation
PPAT	Programme Performance and Accountability Team
PWEL	Poor Women's Economic Leadership
R1	Rice Watch Action Network
RLT	Regional Leadership Team
SARC	Sustainable Agriculture Resource Center
SDA	Southern Development Authority
SEEDS	Sarvodaya Economic Enterprise Development Services
SPC	Southern Province Council
SWOAD	Social Welfare Organization Ampara District
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WEL	Women's Economic Leadership

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes an internal review of Women's Economic Leadership (WEL) programming in Asia. Conducted by an internal MEL advisor in 2013–2014, the review draws upon project documentation, evaluation reports, site visits and staff and partner interviews to try and reflect how WEL programming is being implemented by Oxfam and partners in Asia. Part of a formative evaluation activity, the report aims to help gather and consolidate good practice, based on what Oxfam project teams and partners have learned through recent experience and evaluation. There are at least four distinct topics covered in this report that may be of specific interest to readers.

1. **Describing what 'Women's Economic Leadership' programming looks like in Asia, in 2013–2014.** WEL programming targets different groups depending on the socio-economic characteristics of different areas and communities – but always involves a majority of women participants. Similarly, strategies differ by intervention – though WEL projects always tend to involve both economic activities (asset provision, business skill training for producer groups, facilitating market linkages, etc.) and 'standalone' gender interventions (such as gender awareness training, violence against women referral systems).

2. **Pulling out common challenges, lessons and good practices for WEL programmes.** The review outlines a set of consistent challenges that have been identified across different projects, where possible identifying strategies that WEL project teams have employed or are employing to help address them. Some key challenges are listed.

    - Working with very disadvantaged women: recognizing that projects involving women who are severely disadvantaged may require more intensive interventions or more time to achieve even modest success.
    - Aligning good practice with partners: delivering technically strong market-focused livelihoods interventions that also have a strong commitment to women's leadership is difficult. It is sometimes a new undertaking for Oxfam teams and local partners. Achieving a shared understanding of 'quality' gendered WEL work – and modelling that through project delivery – is a challenge for partnership work.
    - Achieving policy implementation (government delivery of services such as agricultural extension) to scale, consistently at local level.
    - Communicating with men so that they are well informed about project activities, or finding ways to appropriately involve men in projects.
    - Confronting limitations on women's mobility outside the home.
    - Working in areas with deeply conservative cultural practices.

The 'key challenges and associated lessons' section of this report explains these challenges in greater detail, also outlining the lessons learned and strategies employed by different teams in Asia.

3. **Further developing the conceptual framework for WEL.**

    This report builds upon an existing 'conceptual map' of Women's Economic Leadership concepts. It tests different concepts and definitions and proposes a 'conceptual framework' for WEL in Asia. The framework includes:

    - a series of four 'guiding principles' – essentially values statements that underlie WEL programming;

- reference to different research and analytical steps at the project design stage;
- the inclusion of both gender and livelihoods intervention strategies (though a comprehensive list, model or blueprint of these is not included);
- a series of (now-)informal 'quality checks' that Oxfam staff use to help understand if an economic intervention is appropriately including and delivering for women;
- a list of 11 outcome areas which could be included as intended/planned results (outcomes and goals) for WEL projects.

The full report explains each component of the framework in greater detail, providing a list of definitions and some illustrative examples from practice.

4. Suggestions for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in WEL

The report includes a list of indicators, mapped against the conceptual framework, which have been used in MEL for WEL projects – or which arose from interviews. This is not a comprehensive list, nor a compilation of the 'best' indicators against these changes. More significantly, the report outlines a series of strong MEAL practices and approaches used by teams in Asia working on WEL projects.

The report concludes with a series of 'strategic considerations' which were intended to prompt discussion among different evaluation stakeholders during project debriefs. There is no formal management response to this project, though it is expected that a number of steps will be taken to share findings internally and use them to advance good practice in WEL[1] – as a minimum, through considering different outcomes at the project design stage, and through developments in MEL.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Oxfam's Asia Regional Leadership team commissioned a formative evaluation of the women's economic leadership (WEL) programme. The aim was to help understand more about how WEL has been implemented across the region, and to inform future WEL work. Considering that WEL is at the heart of the economic empowerment strategy and the GEM approach, the report aims to take stock of what we have achieved so far, bring out key learning from countries and draw lessons and recommendations to move forward with high quality programming and effective learning.

The evaluation focused primarily on contexts where WEL approaches have been well-tested, and where there was learning that could be identified and 'drawn up' to share at regional level. In particular, Sri Lanka and the Philippines offered rich sources of experience and documented evidence about what Oxfam and partners have attempted and what the results have been. [2]

The Asia WEL Community of Practice (CoP) is a community of WEL practitioners from across the region who, over the last few years, have been implementing and learning from WEL approaches. Regional-level specialists (notably the GEKN Manager and WEL Regional Change Lead, both Oxfam GB staff who operate across the Asia Region) also have a wealth of knowledge. Both CoP member and the advisors were involved in the review process, to keep it grounded and to validate and make sense of findings.

Expected **key audiences/users** of the evaluation of such findings are:

- the Regional Leadership Team in Asia;
- the Economic Empowerment Team and Gender Equity Knowledge Network teams;
- members of the WEL CoP in Asia;
- the global Gender, Enterprise and Markets team;
- participating country teams in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Philippines (especially livelihoods programme managers/staff and MEL leads).

Other audiences include livelihoods coordinators in Asia (outside of the WEL CoP) and MEL coordinators in Asian countries. These groups will not be actively involved in the evaluation, but should receive evaluation findings.

1.2 METHOD

1.2.1 Data

This evaluation is based on data from a small sample of WEL projects and programmes in Asia. Two country WEL programmes were reviewed as in-depth case studies (Sri Lanka and the Philippines). These studies are complemented by documentation from other projects, interviews with global and regional WEL advisors and interviews with other WEL practitioners from other countries in Asia. A full list of documents and interviewees is available as an Appendix A.

Case studies: Sri Lanka and the Philippines
Sri Lanka and the Philippines were selected (by evaluation commissioners) for the more in-depth studies as sites where WEL thinking and practices are embedded and where good practices can be observed and shared. (An additional in-depth study of the Bangladesh programme was cancelled, due to unplanned crises and ensuing time constraints.)

The Sri Lanka study includes two specific projects which have recently closed: one relatively small project working with women in the South in the coir (coconut husk fibre) industry and one in the East and North, working in conflict-affected communities who cultivate rice paddy. The review includes notes from site visits and discussions with producers, partners and government officials involved in the projects. These all took place during a 10-day visit in September 2013. This report also draws upon considerable documentation produced by the Sri Lanka team, including a report on WEL in Sri Lanka, two end-of project evaluations and a project effectiveness review.

The Philippines case study also looks across the programme, incorporating learning from multiple projects in the Oxfam Mindanao programme and in the Economic Justice campaign. A January 2014 visit did not extend to rural areas, due to weather and flooding. However, this report also builds on considerable documentation (including a participatory action learning project and numerous evaluations) and interviews with staff and partners involved in WEL projects in the Philippines.

Desk review of project documentation: Pakistan and Bangladesh projects.
To complement the case studies, we looked at some limited project documentation pulled from OPAL, against projects in Bangladesh and Pakistan (PKNB91). In particular, these documents contributed to the identification of:

- indicators that have been used to review programme results
- challenges faced by programme teams
- as a comparison point for the case study programmes

Interviews with advisors and CoP members.
Jo Villanueva (Regional Change Lead, WEL) and Mona Mehta (Gender Equality Knowledge Network Manager) provided input as thematic experts in two ways. First, they participated in telephone interviews early in the project. Second, they provided comments and feedback on an early version of a revised conceptual framework.

Some WEL CoP members were invited to participate in Skype interviews. Three such interviews took place, with staff from Indonesia and Afghanistan.

Observation – Community of Practice meeting.
In November 2013 members of the Asia WEL CoP met in Mindanao, the Philippines and the researcher also participated. While there was no formal data-collection (interviews, focus groups) during the meeting, notes and observations from that week have contributed to this review.

1.2.2 Analysis and Process

Data Analysis
Field observations and notes from informal interviews were recorded immediately following site visits. Formal interviews were not recorded and transcribed, but notes were taken and later typed.

NVivo10 and Microsoft Excel were used for data analysis. The evaluator used the former to code and organize field and interview notes and secondary data (evaluation reports, etc.) against evaluation questions. Excel was used to colour-code and sort project indicators against different outcomes in the conceptual framework. (See analysis frames in Appendix B.)

Process
This review aimed to involve practitioners and subject-matter experts in the analysis process, helping to ensure a better quality end product. As an internal learning process focusing on a complex area of programming, the involvement of different people – including project teams and regional advisors – was critical. In some cases, this involved helping to construct important concepts, and in other cases staff played a 'validation' role – providing corrective or positive feedback on initial findings.

Two thematic advisers from Oxfam's Asia team provided feedback and input into the revised conceptual framework. The evaluator produced a draft list of definitions in December, along with a re-work of the WEL conceptual framework. The two thematic advisers provided feedback (correcting or clarifying the definitions in writing or through verbal feedback), which was incorporated into the first draft report.

At the country level, country visits included a debrief session with the Oxfam programme team, where some initial observations were shared and then discussed. For example, in Sri Lanka this included a formal presentation, followed by reflections and responses comments from Project Coordinators, the Programme Manager and the Country Director. Partner organization representatives were not present.

In February, the draft report and an accompanying Powerpoint slide deck was circulated to CoP members for comment, discussed on a webinar and feedback invited through email.

In March, the report findings were shared in a two-hour workshop with the Asia Regional Leadership team, including Oxfam Country Directors from across Asia. Workshop attendees also used the conceptual framework to help focus learning activities, during an earlier field visit in Nepal.

In September 2014, the report was edited for clarity, so that it could be shared with external audiences on Oxfam's Policy & Practice website. This did not affect the content of the report.

1.2.3 Limitations

There are at least three key limitations that should be outlined for the reader.

Evaluator perspective. This evaluation has been conducted by a MEL specialist without a deep grounding in livelihoods or WEL programming in Asia. Wherever possible, the researcher sought to address this limitation by involving subject-matter experts at the regional and country level. This meant including the voices of experienced practitioners in the data and including CoP members and thematic specialists in the review and validation (or invalidation) of the draft report.

Data sources. This evaluation draws heavily upon existing project documentation and evaluations. In some cases, these are very strong and invaluable learning resources. However, there will be gaps. Where possible, the researcher has tried to address limitations through triangulation, and the inclusion of multiple sources and voices.

'Bias'. This is an internal Oxfam review, focused on learning from experience. There are likely to be positive and negative trade-offs in using an internal evaluator. For example, teams may be more able to discuss more honestly organizational challenges or use shorthand to talk about their work. However, partners or beneficiaries (who understand this is an Oxfam exercise) may be more likely to paint a rosy picture than they might otherwise. As a learning review that focuses on compiling and synthesizing learning, this report aims to weigh and present evidence alongside key stakeholder viewpoints.

2 DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

2.1 HOW DOES OXFAM 'DO' WEL?

Women's Economic Leadership (WEL) is the term used to describe how issues of gender and women's rights are to be integrated into Oxfam's livelihoods programming in Asia.

Design considerations
WEL projects have a series of guiding principles that inform key decisions in their design and management. They are:

- smallholder agriculture beyond production – the idea that smallholder farmers should have the ability to play a large role in the market than as simply producers;
- women as active agents;
- women as powerful actors and leaders;
- equal relations between women and men.

Formally, WEL projects are also the product of a series of analytical steps that look at gendered roles in a given context, such as markets for various products and opportunities for women in the marketplace. Together, these principles and analysis inform the design of a given project or programme.

Targeting: Who participates?

WEL projects may involve women only or groups of men and women. The decision to deliver a women-only or mixed project is made by the design team for each specific project. It is based on the characteristics of families, livelihood practices and cultural norms around men and women's work in that area.

Projects that involve solely women seem to be smaller in scale – for example, the moringa enterprise or white scallion initiative in the Philippines or the coir project in Sri Lanka (involving a few dozen or hundred participants, rather than thousands). Larger projects – those that involve hundreds of households and thousands of potential beneficiaries – seem to operate by engaging households as the primary unit, though women might remain the key household member engaged in a project in some or most homes.

Projects that involve both men and women – for example, recruited as households – may include quotas to ensure that women are able to participate in (and presumably benefit from) the project. Or, projects may particularly seek out female-headed households (FHHs) or widows to participate. (It is sometimes unclear if FHH in these contexts are particularly vulnerable, marginalized or poor – or if they are prioritized because they clearly include women.)

There is mixed opinion among Oxfam staff about the appropriateness of involving men in producer groups and enterprises – in some cases, out of concern that men will crowd out spaces for women to lead. This question seems to depend on the project and context. WEL projects generally do not promote all-male producer or farmers organizations.

Whether or not men are specifically involved in the livelihoods project, teams across multiple sites (in the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka) have highlighted that men (husbands, in particular) must be considered in the design of projects. They may not necessarily be involved in the enterprise, but they must, as a minimum, be informed of project activities and rationale, so that they allow their wife's participation. (See LESSONS LEARNED)

Strategies: A suite of interventions

WEL projects include a suite of interventions targeted at three main areas.

A typical overview of Type 1 Strategies – From Bangladesh

... by organizing producer groups, giving technical training and facilitating linkages with markets and financial institutions. Partners will identify promising value chain items (e.g. chillies or milk) that villagers are already producing. They will then organize producers into 'producer groups' of 15–30 producers. These groups will work together to jointly plan their work, and partner-NGOs will build their technical capacity through workshops and then introduce them to businesses which sell affordable, quality inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc). Finally, producer groups will be given information about, and access to, local and regional markets and financial institutions (banks, micro-credit NGOs and micro-finance institutions). Producer groups will work jointly for the benefit of their individual businesses....

3. Delivering interventions to address production and livelihood issues. Key decisions (such as choice of which product or value chain to work in) are based on (not simply informed by) a solid gender analysis and gendered market selection. The analysis takes into consideration women's roles and responsibilities, and opportunities to participate in, and benefit from, markets. However, the interventions themselves may appear gender neutral. For example:
    a. providing, or providing access to, new inputs or methods of production – such as new seeds or organic farming methods to households;
    b. providing producer training to a mix of men and women.

4. Delivering interventions that address women's particular needs and opportunities in the marketplace. For example:
    a. providing training or opportunities for reflection that encourage participants (women and men) to look at women's workloads and consider the barriers that women's responsibilities present to market participation;
    b. providing support or training to women specifically.

5. Delivering complementary interventions focused on affecting WEL outcomes and not simply economic conditions, such as income levels or enterprise viability.

Based on the conceptual framework, these 'WEL outcomes' are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 : Outcomes for Women's Economic Leadership

For women directly	Enabling outcomes
• Self-perception and confidence • Voice and decision-making • Women's capabilities • Substantive income • Resource access and control	• Norms about gendered roles and responsibilities • Physical security (in particular, issues of mobility and intimate partner violence) • Attitudes and beliefs about women's participation in the marketplace • Laws and policies and how they are implemented • Flexible structures

2.1.1 Standards

All projects covered by this review involved organizing women into groups. They were in rural areas and focused on the agricultural sector. The projects generally involved women who had access to land of some kind (if only small areas in the home compound) and not rural labourers. WEL projects are generally not 'one-off' or simple engagements, but longer-term interactions that support women to address multiple challenges in order to gain more power in markets.

It is difficult to identify a set of clear benchmark-style standards for projects that operate across such a variety of contexts, and use a range of intervention strategies. However, there are some basic aims and considerations that all WEL projects do (or should) apply.

All projects, all contexts

All projects should align with the three components of the framework.

1. Be informed by a series of gendered analysis that informs market selection and project design.
2. Seek to achieve economic changes (like level of production or level of income) which are regularly 'quality checked' to ensure that they are delivering for women. For example that they are:
   - appropriate for women, considering their specific needs;
   - involving women, therefore, at least 50 per cent[3] of project participants are women;
   - meaningfully beneficial to women (at least as much as to men who may be participating);
   - providing opportunities for women to gain power and take leadership;
   - not resulting in disproportionately negative results for other women – for example, younger girls who take on unacceptable additional burdens when their mother goes to work.
3. Aim to achieve economic benefits for participating women and shifts in non-economic WEL outcomes (the blue circles in Figure 1).

Mature projects which exemplify the WEL approach

Projects operating in more promising contexts, or which have been operating for a substantial period of time should be able to do the following:

- demonstrate (through monitoring or evaluation) that they are actually achieving shifts in economic and non-economic areas;
- demonstrate that women's voices and perspectives have contributed to programme learning/project management;
- seek to affect 'enabling outcomes' (the outermost circle, Figure 1) at the community level and market level – not simply among individual women, or within the groups of women directly involved in the project.

2.2 CHALLENGES AND LESSONS

2.2.1 Key challenges and associated lessons

Within producer groups, enterprises

A number of the WEL projects identified experienced challenges to becoming economically successful. However, the nature of the challenge varied depending on the project's context, design and level of ambition. The Sri Lankan coir project and the Philippines moringa project had challenges with the quality and sustained quantity of inputs (coir fibre from mills and seedlings, respectively). Groups producing rice and rice flour in Eastern Sri Lanka and pinukpok in Mindano faced challenges in ensuring a consistent and high level of production for buyers. Many producer groups, coops and federations faced challenges in making links with a range of market actors, so that women producers would not be left in an overly vulnerable position with only one buyer. Many of the challenges faced by WEL projects are also likely to be faced by other market-based livelihoods projects and are not unique to gendered projects. However, the time lag between cultivation/investment and production/sale does seem to present specific challenges for women, who may prefer a quicker return[4]. Project participants in Sri Lanka, when

asked what advice they would give to women entering similar projects, stressed the 'need for patience'.

Among participating women

The nature and depth of challenges facing WEL projects relates to the nature of the population that projects are supposed to benefit. Projects working with very poor and highly disadvantaged women will probably have to do more, over a longer period of time, to help women gain power and strength – individually and in groups. In Southern Sri Lanka, an experienced partner delivering business consultancy and capacity-building services had to completely redesign their support offering in order to work with Oxfam's project beneficiaries. Partner staff explained that the participating women would simply not have understood the material – it was pitched at the wrong level.

Similarly, in Indonesia and elsewhere, projects have provided basic literacy training to women who are involved in livelihoods projects. Good record keeping is essential to economic success and those who can't read or do basic accounting cannot keep records. In the Philippines, partner staff told a story of a participating woman who did not understand that invoices and receipts each required a separate slip of paper in the record book – in a well-meaning attempt to save paper, she wrote multiple orders out in small handwriting on one invoice slip. This is an example of the type of additional challenge that WEL projects encounter when working with more disadvantaged women. Trust-building, learning (particularly individual capacity and confidence building) and eventual economic activity take time, and this time investment is something that should be recognized if Oxfam intends to work with extremely marginalized or vulnerable women to gain real power in markets.

Severely disadvantaged women may face certain conditions that will pose challenges to full participation in, or benefit from, WEL programmes. For example, some female-headed households in Sri Lanka lacked the time to participate in some of the EU-ACAP activities. Some might face severe shortages of capital, and have to deplete already meagre assets – in Sri Lanka this commonly involves pawning jewellery. Staff from the Oxfam Mindano Progamme (the Philippines) and in Indonesia noted that project participants' low tolerance for risk meant they sometimes refused to take on loans to finance greater production. They noted that commodities that are high-risk or with a 'steep learning curve' are particularly challenging for disadvantaged groups – 'if you fail once, you lose many [participants], if you fail twice, you lose them all'.[5]

With other actors

WORKING WITH PARTNERS ON WEL

The most consistent challenge articulated across every project/programme in this review was that of working with partners to deliver a high-quality WEL programme. Some of the nuances and complexities in WEL can be difficult to understand. Designing and delivering a WEL project involves understanding the principles inside-out, so that one is able to turn them into practical actions that are appropriate to women in that particular context. Market-based livelihood projects are likely to attract partner organizations with specific skills in business development or marketing – not necessarily with a strong understanding of gender aims (though there are, of course, exceptions). If selected 'geographically' (responsible for delivering WEL in a specific area), partners are required to know a range of different things – to be 'experts in everything', in the words of one programme officer. Different programmes have responded to this challenge in different ways.

- By designing specific learning opportunities for partners on WEL topics. This has taken the form of specifically designed training, attendance at regional CoP meetings, collaborative research or monitoring practices or even locally-formed (and Oxfam-supported) 'communities of practice' among partners. WEL is not a simple and intuitive programme approach, and across the board Oxfam seems to struggle to identify partners who can deliver on the mix of economic and gender outcomes that WEL programming requires.

- By remaining focused on those WEL 'quality checks' for programme design and delivery, so that Oxfam can work with partners to identify and resolve quality issues (where projects are not prioritizing delivery for women) as they arise. For example, during one project activity Oxfam staff noted that the partner organization had relegated women to kitchen duty, sending men out in the field for agricultural and technical work. This (naturally) raised concerns about the partner's understanding of gender issues – which was then reportedly addressed through more conversations about gender issues, between Oxfam and partner staff.
- In another project, Oxfam encouraged one small CBO to become a 'mentoring' organization to others on gender issues. After years of delivering strong gendered programming this organization is not interested in scaling up the direct reach of its programming – so Oxfam is working to encourage them to help share their thinking and practice on gender with other CBOs.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTORS

Policies and practices that support women's empowerment can be included in local and national laws, statutes and decrees – but they mean nothing if they are not understood and implemented by local government actors. Oxfam WEL projects struggle with the challenge of policy implementation, when government actors lack either the capacity (resources or knowledge) or willingness to implement pro-women policy. Achieving success at scale (supporting local government actors across many sites) is costly and difficult – and rarely do Oxfam's projects seem to be that large in scale. Here are some illustrative examples.

- In the Philippines, Oxfam partner NFR secured a huge win in changing the registration form for fisher-folk so that women could be included. Women can be invisible actors in the fisheries sector, with men who take boats out clearly recognized as fisherman – but women who also work in the sector (in on-shore roles) left out of official statistics. An important first step to meeting women fisher-folk's needs is recognizing that they exist – they must be recorded in official government statistics. However, despite the new policy and forms, local enumerators and LGUs sometimes continue to only register men – an issue that will need to be addressed at the local level, across hundreds of communities.
- Again in the Philippines, a Presidential Decree allocates 5 per cent of local budgets to gendered activities. Oxfam partners explain that local officials either don't understand or refuse to heed this policy – 'they say that they'll invest it in roads or infrastructure, because gender means men and women and both men and women use roads'. (Interview with Oxfam partner) Local womens' organizations are lobbying their government units, but women often need training in how to present themselves and how to engage in a dialogue with government actors. This is a challenge to overcome on a large scale.
- Agricultural extension services are often overstretched or poorly funded. In some cases, Oxfam projects fill government budget gaps in the short term, helping governments deliver land registration services (Eastern Sri Lanka) or newly-trained agricultural extension graduates (Northern Sri Lanka). In other cases they may simply help identify the priority needs of small-holder farmers to stretched government agriculture agents (the Philippines).
- In Northern Sri Lanka, a project funded an agricultural extension training programme for local graduates. Running Friday–Sunday over three months, the course was certified (and largely delivered by) the Department of Agriculture. Sixty per cent of the participants were (predominately young) women. Agricultural extension services have relatively little coverage, so programme graduates are in high demand in their communities, with some hired by agricultural firms. In this case, the government is seeking to continue the project with future cohorts – and an official reports that on the back of the evidence from the first group, they are optimistic they may be able to gain

funding from another INGO.

Gendered realities for women in their home community

Oxfam WEL projects work across a range of rural contexts, so there are few very consistent challenges faced. For example, a 36-year-old widowed mother of two with 2 hectares of land in Sri Lanka and another 36-year-old indigenous woman living with her husband and children in the interior of Mindanao will encounter different barriers. That said, three specific challenges that seem particularly significant are consistent across contexts: how projects informed and involved men, issues of women's mobility and the effects of highly conservative practices.

INVOLVING AND INFORMING MEN

WEL projects have involved only women or a mix of women and men in income-generating activities. However, Oxfam has learned that men must be considered and involved in the project in some way, as a minimum so that they understand the project's intentions and do not block their wives' participation.

Projects should include strategies for informing men (primarily husbands) and other family members about the project, its intended goals, how women will participate and the effects this may have on the family.

For example, partners in the coir project in Sri Lanka explained that husbands of project participants stopped partner staff who were visiting the community, demanding to know what they (primarily young men, recent graduates) were doing calling their wives. After explaining things immediately in person, the partner organization also sent a senior leader to the community to explain the project in detail to the husbands. Future training sessions were then sometimes conducted in or around the home, so that men could informally observe and better understand how and what women were being taught. In one project in the Philippines, a partner held a 'Family Day' so that all family members could learn about project activities.

Some projects include complementary gender training components for men.

Some projects (Indonesia, Sri Lanka EU-ACAP) have included training on gender issues for male partners of project participants. The focus has included basic gender concepts, issues around the household division of labour, and gender-based violence. This has taken different forms: a series of public debates, plays or public events, standalone workshops or training sessions or discussion groups taking place in homes so that men can observe (but not be required to participate).

In other situations, men are recruited as advocates for women's rights. One partner in the Philippines noted that a core group of men will sometimes approach other men who are restricting their wives' participation in a project. In another country, an Oxfam programme manager explains:

> *'When I came to the project at the end of the second year, most of the beneficiaries were women – in the women's economic groups all of the participants were women. [Now], we would like to involve men to become gender focal points to be more effective. In the third year, we were also approaching men in some villages in the four districts and inviting them to workshops and training with our gender advisor. As gender focal points, they can work with groups but also influence their family and local leaders.'*
>
> Paraphrased interview, CoP member, 2013

WOMEN'S MOBILITY

Limitations in women's mobility were mentioned as challenges across every country involved in this review. In some cases, these were simply practical constraints arising out of women's roles

as housekeepers and carers for children. In other areas, they existed because women were not safe travelling to their fields or over longer distances to larger markets, for example early in the morning while still dark. In other circumstances, women's mobility is restricted because a husband or a community does not allow women to travel out of the community alone, or at all.

At some sites with highly restrictive practices, Oxfam has focused on ensuring that inputs are available to women closer to home. Or, Oxfam has taken this limitation into consideration when selecting a product or value chain for that group of women to participate in – recognizing that while not a *transformative* approach, simply getting women involved in income-generating activities was a necessary first step for this group.

In some areas, women could address mobility concerns by travelling together in groups to the market. In others, it was simply agreed that the husband would be better placed undertaking this trip.

DEEPLY CONSERVATIVE CULTURAL PRACTICES

In Afghanistan, Pakistan and parts of Indonesia and the Philippines, Oxfam staff and partners described deeply conservative or traditional cultural norms and practices that put severe restrictions on women's roles outside the family sphere. This often seemed to be associated with Muslim communities, though respondents were clear that restrictions on women's rights were sometimes simply 'cloaked in' religion, explained by a particular interpretation of religious laws. Such restrictions were enforced not only by men and husbands, but also by women themselves, who can internalize and perpetuate negative attitudes ('women cannot be political leaders') and practices themselves. This seems to be an extremely challenging condition for WEL projects, but one which different programmes have responded to in a variety of ways.

- By adopting less ambitious accommodating and gender sensitive strategies at project outsets – seeing broader attitude and cultural change in these communities as something that would need to be achieved in stages, over the longer term. Deep relationships with local leaders and religious officials are nurtured to try and create a foundation of trust – which will be needed if the project intends to challenge old practices in the future.
- By ensuring that partners and Oxfam staff have a particularly good grounding in, and knowledge of, those communities.
- By looking specifically to religious texts to seek out rationales for women's empowerment or to undermine harmful cultural practices such as early marriage.
- By looking to the next generation, seeking to influence how gender is taught in secondary schools.

Conservative cultural norms and practices do not appear to be an all-out barrier to WEL projects, but they do mean that interventions start from a different place. In this case, changes in attitudes and practice may appear less significant to outsiders – but they can still be transformational, simply from a very restrictive starting point.

> ***Quote from Project Participant*** *'Before, my mind was stocked because I am more focus to assist my husband in the farm. My usual day-to-day work was traditional as what housewives normally do in rural areas. After doing household chores, I need to go to the farm bringing the food for my husband and assist him as well. But now, the establishment of moringa enterprise revitalized my mind and gives me opportunity as well to mingle other people. As manager, I need to plan and monitor the whole enterprise. I need to monitor especially at this moment when production stage for moringa is very crucial. Other than that, I need to monitor my co-women worker in the management team as well.'[Quote from member of Philippines moringa enterprise*

2.3 EVIDENCE OF CHANGE

2.3.1 Documented success

Table 2 shows examples of successful WEL outcomes from different projects in Asia. Everything included is based on formal evaluations or arises from multiple sources.

Table 2: Examples of changes documented in project reports and evaluations, by outcome area

Outcome Area	Change documented
CORE WEL OUTCOMES	
Substantive Income	In areas reached by a project in Eastern Sri Lanka, an effectiveness review found that household incomes were estimated to be 8 to 10 per cent higher than they would have been without the project, though they did not move out of poverty.
Resource Access and Control	The same effectiveness review in Sri Lanka shows robust evidence that the project has successfully affected household wealth among supported households in Batticaloa district. Hundreds of female-headed households in the same project received formal land ownership certificates/registration for the land they lived on and farmed.
Power, Voice and Decision-Making	
Self-Perception and Confidence	In the Philippines, participants in the 'Women at the Centre' project reported increased self-esteem, based on gaining respect from other women who asked them to share their knowledge. 'We are no longer just "wives" but have something else to offer as well.' In Sri Lanka, groups of women associated with the coir project began interacting with government officials and making demands for further project support. These women, Oxfam and partner staff, and government officials saw this as a clear indication of their increased capabilities and confidence. (However, gains in confidence were variable across different participants.)
Women's Capabilities	Partners reported an increase in women's capacity after participating in action research. Leaders gained technical skills in action research but also gained a 'conscious lens on their daily lives'.
ENABLING AND RESTRICTING OUTCOMES	
Women-Friendly Structures and Supports	In Pakistan, the project facilitated women gaining an identity card (CNIC), a precondition for being able to access a women-focused government income support programme. (More than 60 per cent

	of project participants in some regions received this income support, though it is unclear what proportion was the result of the project.)
Norms about Gendered Roles and Responsibilities	In Pakistan, the final evaluation team (EU Food Facility Project) noted that the project (which required 60 per cent of producer group members to be women) seemed to have prompted changes in 'men's attitudes towards women's participation in community development work'. A 2012 effectiveness review in the Philippines noted 'significant differences between respondents in the project and non-project villages... on several of the women empowerment measures.' These include those related to: women's perceived role in influencing community affairs and self- efficacy and the attitudes of men towards the economic roles of women. However, there was no evidence of change in women's attitudes and men's attitudes remained worse than women – so there was still 'work to be done'.
Physical Security	A good proportion (39 per cent) of household survey respondents in the Oxfam Mindanao Programme reported a decrease in violence in the last 12 months. Programme staff attributed this to the programmatic intervention (at domestic level) as levels of community-based violence had not decreased during that time.
Attitudes and Beliefs about Women	
Laws and Policies	In the Philippines, partner organization Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK) facilitated changes in land titling registration, so that women could be recognized as joint owners of land.

2.3.2 Indicators

There are two near-universal indicators present in the MEL documentation of sampled projects: the proportion of women who participated in project activities and the level of income either generated by the project activities and flowing out to households or reported by households.

Table 3 shows indicators used by WEL projects in Asia, that were either formally reported in MEL plans or documentation, or that arose out of interviews conducted with Oxfam staff, partners and beneficiaries during this review. (The former are sometimes articulated as goal statements and targets, and have been reproduced as they appeared in the documentation.)

Table 3: Examples of Indicators from WEL Project Documentation

CAPABILITIES		
	Women coir producers will gain the knowledge and skills to develop successful businesses and link directly to markets.	
INCOME		
	Amount of yearly household income increased. (BDT12,000 increased by 2015)	
	Percentage of women's control over income and access to strategic assets.	
	Percentage of women consuming the profit by their own decisions. (Interpreted by evaluator as: Percentage of women who use additional income/profit in a manner in which they choose)	
	Over the three years, the average monthly income of women coir producers will have increased by 20 to 30 per cent.	
	Thirty per cent increase in household income of targeted beneficiaries by the end of the project.	
RESOURCE ACCESS AND CONTROL		

	Percentage of women's control over income and access to strategic assets.	
	Percentage of women involved in CBO, local government, market committees, enterprise management, producer group committees.	
	Percentage of women consuming the profit by their own decisions. (Interpreted by evaluator as: Percentage of women who use additional income/profit in a manner in which they choose)	
	Percentage of women receiving services from public and private service providers.	
	At least 40 per cent of targeted women entrepreneurs own enterprises making a profit of more than 25 per cent by the end of the project.	
	Participants report an increase in assets during the project period.	
EQUAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEN		
	Percentage of women involved in CBO, local government, market committees, enterprise management, producer group committees.	
	Government and industry representatives will be motivated to respect and advocate for women's rights.	
POWER, VOICE AND DECISION-MAKING		
	Percentage of women involved in household / enterprise / community decision-making.	
	Perception that the site of production is seen as a powerful or important physical space in the community.	
	A bank manager returned to the community to offer a producer group loans which had previously been rejected.	
	Women have the opportunity to hold leadership positions in POs (including participation in decision-making in POs and in constitutional/procedural provisions for the POs/Cooperatives).	
PHYSICAL SECURITY		
	Women have safe and consistent access to water sources.	
	At least 50 per cent of women who received information on referrals and experienced GBV would seek assistance from relevant government and non-government agencies.	
	Increased number of referrals to government GBV services.	
	Monitoring whether or not VAWG protection mechanisms are in place (women's desks, referral units).	
SELF-PERCEPTION AND CONFIDENCE		
	Vulnerable women in the community participate and try to influence village-level planning meetings.	
	Women from producer groups try to gain positions in legislative office.	
	Women are willing to speak up in community meetings.	
	Women are well-groomed and proudly wearing the uniform of their producer group (for the respect they feel it garners).	
	Women's increased ability to interact with people in a range of outside-the-home environments (e.g.: offices)	
	How much and how confidently participating women speak to staff during project visits (rather than being spoken to).	
	Women's visibility outside the home during project visits (when previously they would hide).	
ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS		
	As women make economic gains, they will experience increased status and respect in the home and community.	
NORMS ABOUT GENDERED ROLES AND RESPONSIBILTIIES		
	Percentage of people who agree with women's economic roles.	
FLEXIBLE STRUCTURES		

	Number of full-time equivalent jobs created for women in CTE.	
	PCVA tool involves measurement of labour (time), which is measured at the beginning and end of the project for women and men.	
LAWS AND POLICIES		
	The District Steering Committee will address issues and influence policies in favour of poor women coir producers.	
	At least 3 effective pro-poor pro-woman government policy briefs or positive changes are implemented in policies on livelihood related issues.	
	At least 60 per cent of individuals who have sought assistance from project supported services are able to retrieve their legal documents from relevant government institutes.	
	Analysis of existing policies and policy recommendations regarding land rights and GBV issues in the post-war context are articulated and disseminated to a broad civil society audience.	

2.4 PROGRAMME LEARNING

2.4.1 WEL Community of Practice/Advisory support

Findings in this area come from Skype and face-to-face interviews with project staff. A planned online survey was not circulated to large numbers of CoP participants, so the input here is based on a relatively small number of 'opportunistic' engagements and interviews. This is a limitation of which to be aware.

The WEL Community of Practice is a network of livelihoods practitioners in Asia which counts members from among Oxfam staff and partners. The group is coordinated by the WEL Regional Change lead (an advisor, based in a regional team) and undertakes periodic group learning activities – usually in the form of exchange visits to WEL countries in the region, which have been taking place since 2009.

Interviews and site visits revealed that the formal multi-country programme learning is seen to contribute to programme quality in two ways as outlined here.

1. Through staff development.
When asked about programme learning and CoP participation, staff talked about advisory staff visits, CoP workshops and individual exposure visits and ongoing contact with livelihoods programme staff in other countries. Staff (men and women) who specialized in livelihoods programming, but without a specific background in gender, found that participating in programme learning did build their understanding and capacity in a way that enabled them to work better with community leaders at the micro level.

Importantly, the CoP system as structured (with events that bring together staff and partners from across the region, in person) allows peer-to-peer relationships to develop. For example, interviewees mentioned that they would contact other CoP participants after the event to ask for project documentation.

Ways of learning

I think this is the best model of learning session in Oxfam. I think we should have this learning model – we discussed in forum, conversation and going to the field. You get a lot of experience and also we could get information and could get sharing and learning from others – Oxfam partners.

- *CoP event participant and programme manager*

2. Through supporting the development of new projects and approaches programming.
WEL learning activities seem to raise new questions and new challenges for programme staff, which has sparked either more intensive research (for example, more sophisticated market and gender assessments) or new research initiatives within programme teams. For example, the Afghanistan team is conducting new research on the barriers, challenges and potential for women in the almond sector. They credit exposure visits and contact with the Pakistan team,

participation in trainings and workshops at two CoP meetings and a specific 2010 visit with a regional advisor with getting them to the point where they can deliver a WEL-focused project proposal.

The Philippines OMP staff found advisory support in particular to be useful in demystifying concepts and bringing things down to a practical level. They noted that there is a 'deep bench' of advisory support available (many different types of expertise) – and the programme certainly took advantage of that, looking to a range of different affiliates (Oxfam Novib, GB, Australia and Hong Kong) for support in developing projects and programmes in this area. There were three separate regional and global advisors who contributed support. Again, the team linked global support with their production of a quality project design – in this case, the BINDS project.

It is interesting to note that an Oxfam partner (AADC) is using WEL concepts as part of its own organization's strategic planning and board-level reporting. As an OMP partner, the organization was introduced to WEL and joined in programme learning activities at country level, at the same time that it was moving to an outcomes-based organizational performance assessment system. They adopted WEL and some of the key concepts in the framework (substantive income, decision-making at household level, leadership not just participation) to help them articulate their ambition and then track progress in gender-based changes. This is a relatively new initiative, but it is notable that a strong partner organization of small-scale producers saw WEL as relevant and useful, and has integrated it into their own organization's management practices.

Suggestions for Improvement

There were two specific suggestions for improving CoP learning activities, which arose over the course of the interviews. First, two different country teams suggested that they would benefit from focusing more on how things work/are done in particular similar contexts, rather than looking across a range of contexts or learning questions that are more general. There seems to be a demand for attention to be very focused on practical issues that arise in particular social or economic contexts. One respondent in particular stressed their interest in looking at strategies and approaches to reaching the most poor or marginalized women.

2.4.2 MEL Practices at country level

Oxfam has a basic set of minimum practices for project and programme design – for example, having clearly articulating project logic, tracking of outcomes, adherence to the evaluation policy. Projects also participate in funder-mandated practices, such as monitoring visits. This section focuses on MEL practice that appears to go beyond basic indicator-tracking and donor compliance, and which appears to have affected programme design or delivery. The Sri Lanka and the Philippines livelihoods project teams have done a lot of research and practice-based learning to understand and inform their work; this section will explain a few different but quite strong MEL practices or approaches in greater detail.

Sri Lanka

<u>Mid-term evaluation: Bringing in voices from the community</u>
The EU-ACAP-funded project delivered in Eastern and Northern regions of Sri Lanka encountered a range of fairly substantial challenges at the start of the programme – mostly linked to shifting needs and political climates at the end of the conflict. The project was delayed, and as a result the 2012 mid-term evaluation took place quite soon after project delivery commenced. The team recruited two external evaluators to undertake a process evaluation, which focused heavily on bringing in voices of 'beneficiary' communities through focus group discussions and perceptions surveys.

The ‘Beneficiary Perceptions Survey’ covered 280 beneficiaries from across different districts. Respondents were asked to rate the ‘relevance, usefulness/benefit, efficiency and sustainability’ of various activities in their community. The evaluation report paints a picture of what activities are being implemented in different areas, alongside commentary on how community members perceive those activities. For a large project implemented in different districts with a range of delivery partners, this seems like an appropriate way to gather actionable information on project delivery, in a way that appropriately includes voices from project communities.

Surveys were complemented by focus group discussions (FGDs) with Oxfam staff, partner staff and community leaders. Interestingly, the FGDs generated numerical ratings/scores from 1-5, then compared scores on the same questions across the different groups. Oxfam staff ratings were nearly always higher than partner staff ratings, which were higher than Community Leader ratings. While scores could vary for any number of reasons, the Sri Lanka project manager confirmed that the discrepancy in scores did prompt closer questioning on the part of the project team.

Most significant change projects

In the Eastern region, the project team used a Most Significant Change (MSC) process three months before the project ended, to help identify gaps that could still be addressed. The programme coordinator also explained his ambition to produce a Tamil-language book to help document the important changes that had happened over the years.

Oxfam brought together representatives from all local partner groups and some people from beneficiary communities, requesting each implementing partner identify between 300 and 500 project participants – out of this, 125 people were chosen who said they’d experienced significant change and were willing to tell their stories.

Three local university graduates were present for each interview, collecting stories from 5–6 people per day. Collected stories were shared with partner organizations at a face-to-face meeting, where people asked questions and clarified the meaning behind certain stories. Over 100 stories were chosen as ‘significant’ by that group – including stories that talked about changes in income and in attitudes, some of which involved numbers and some of which didn’t.

The programme coordinator suggested that the MSC process could be used more regularly – for example, in a lighter way, four times a year as part of project monitoring. Or, it could be used two or three times over the life of a multi-year project, visiting the same people and looking at their stories to see change over time. (Note: this kind of use of MSC in a WEL programme is being used in Indonesia.)

The Philippines

Participatory action research

The OMP team have used participatory research to help understand new areas of programme work, and to look for ways to improve the WEL approach. Here we’ll describe two projects undertaken in 2010–2013.

The first project was ‘Women at the Centre’, (W@C) a piece of research intended that sought to help evidence Oxfam’s public facing campaign on Adaptation and Climate Finance, which aims to ensure that climate funds are provided for, and directly accessible to, women and small producers. Working with two partner organizations (PBPF and CERD) and approximately 150 women in two sites, the project involved ‘process documentation’ – looking into the ‘processes employed, key activities, lessons learned and related issues and concerns’ around two models of gendered climate adaptation. In the process, the project also sought to document the changes in the lives of women involved in the project. This particular approach to programme learning is significant, in that it marries ‘development’ project MEL activities with the generation of evidence for a broader advocacy programme. It is also a good example of applied research

used to inform Oxfam's strategy and practice in a complex and newly-emerging area of work – gendered adaptation strategies in rural livelihoods programming.

A second project, involving participatory action research, was carried out over an eight-month period from 2010–2011. Again involving two partners (AADC and AMDF), the project intended to create a dialogue at two levels: between women and men and between communities and implementing partner organizations. The dialogues were intended to explore questions of gender relations in particular community contexts, while also helping to illuminate 'opportunities for change in gender roles in markets and gender dynamics within the households...with the women themselves actively engaged and asking these questions themselves'. The action research involved focus group discussions among project participants which looked at questions of 'negotiating spaces' and practices within households, and on gendered norms and practices for earning incomes and making decisions in those communities.

Both projects are impressive, in their use of participatory research to both inform programming and to help support and catalyze change. However, both projects are quite small in scale and very time- and labour-intensive. OMP staff themselves wondered if there were more efficient (not their wording) ways to conduct such research, or to do it on a larger scale.

Effectiveness reviews

Both the EU-ACAP project (Sri Lanka) and a project in the Oxfam Mindanao Programme (the Philippines) were randomly selected as sites for 'Project Effectiveness Reviews' – quasi-experimental impact assessments conducted by a central impact assessment team. In the case of the OMP, the team decided to use a similar method in designing the BINDS programme MEL strategy.

Cross-Cutting observations on MEL practices in Sri Lanka and OMP
It is important to note that teams in Sri Lanka and the Philippines OMP have all used research and MEL practices to deepen their understanding of gender issues in the communities in which they work. Also to understand the appropriateness and relevance of project activities to a particular context, or to track changes arising out of the programme. Both used evaluations and cross-cutting reviews to synthesize findings and formalize learning that would otherwise reside with individual members of project teams. Many methods complemented impact assessments and evaluations that were less participatory in nature, and took care to involve partner organizations – ensuring that learning (and the benefits from it) was not captured by Oxfam alone. Many methods also emphasized seeking out the voices and perspectives of participating women (and sometimes men) – which is appropriate and necessary, as well as being good practice. While every project will be different, this section has tried to highlight a variety of different approaches that Sri Lankan and OMP programme teams have used to ask and answer questions about a rather complex area of programming.

3 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

3.1. Never enough?

The WEL conceptual framework is broad and ambitious, which can be a good thing, in that it is sufficiently broad to inform programming across a range of contexts. It also reflects Oxfam's belief that empowerment is not a simple or one-dimensional state or process. WEL posits that truly transformational (significant and sustained) changes in women's lives and in gendered power relationships require both economic catalysts and a series of interdependent and mutually-reinforcing changes at the individual, household and community levels.

However, the ambitious nature of the framework also carries the risk that some WEL programming, even that which prompts significant changes, can be judged as not having measured up. As countries who have delivered truly ground-breaking WEL work for Oxfam demonstrate, even quite successful work will never quite satisfy Oxfam's ambitions. (There is always something better that could have been done – some power imbalance that can still be considered and challenged.)

The Asia team may wish to take a decision here: does WEL describe 'best practice' – economically successful projects that also create changes in non-economic outcomes for women and gender changes in communities? Or does WEL describe projects that have an ambition to do those things – even if challenges in context mean that actually achieving significant change may be some time off?

3.2. Moving towards standards

Earlier, in the discussion of 'standards for WEL', this report suggested that WEL projects are too complex, and contexts too different, to establish a clear 'blueprint-style' model for WEL programming. This is true. To do so would be difficult, and probably not a good use of time – this review counted at least 35 different types of interventions that various WEL projects have employed.

That said, WEL projects could be more specific about their alignment with the WEL framework, using the outcome areas to guide how they articulate the changes they seek to catalyze. Projects need not be overly prescriptive and specific about indicators (these are, after all, intended to be empowerment projects – it is right that women participants themselves be involved in designing success). However, being clear about which specific WEL outcomes the project is seeking to influence may help to design a more focused project, or come to a greater understanding with partners or participating women.

4 PROPOSED WEL CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The WEL conceptual framework is broad and ambitious, which can be a good thing, in that it is sufficiently broad to inform programming across a range of contexts. It also reflects Oxfam's belief that empowerment is not a simple or one-dimensional state or process.

Over the last few years, teams in Asia have used a 'conceptual map' that lays out some of the key concepts and changes at the heart of the WEL approach. This evaluation is an opportunity to look again at the conceptual framework, to see how it matches up to practice, and to look for further improvements.

The following section explains the new version of the framework, including definitions of different outcome areas and links to what this has looked like in practice in Asia.

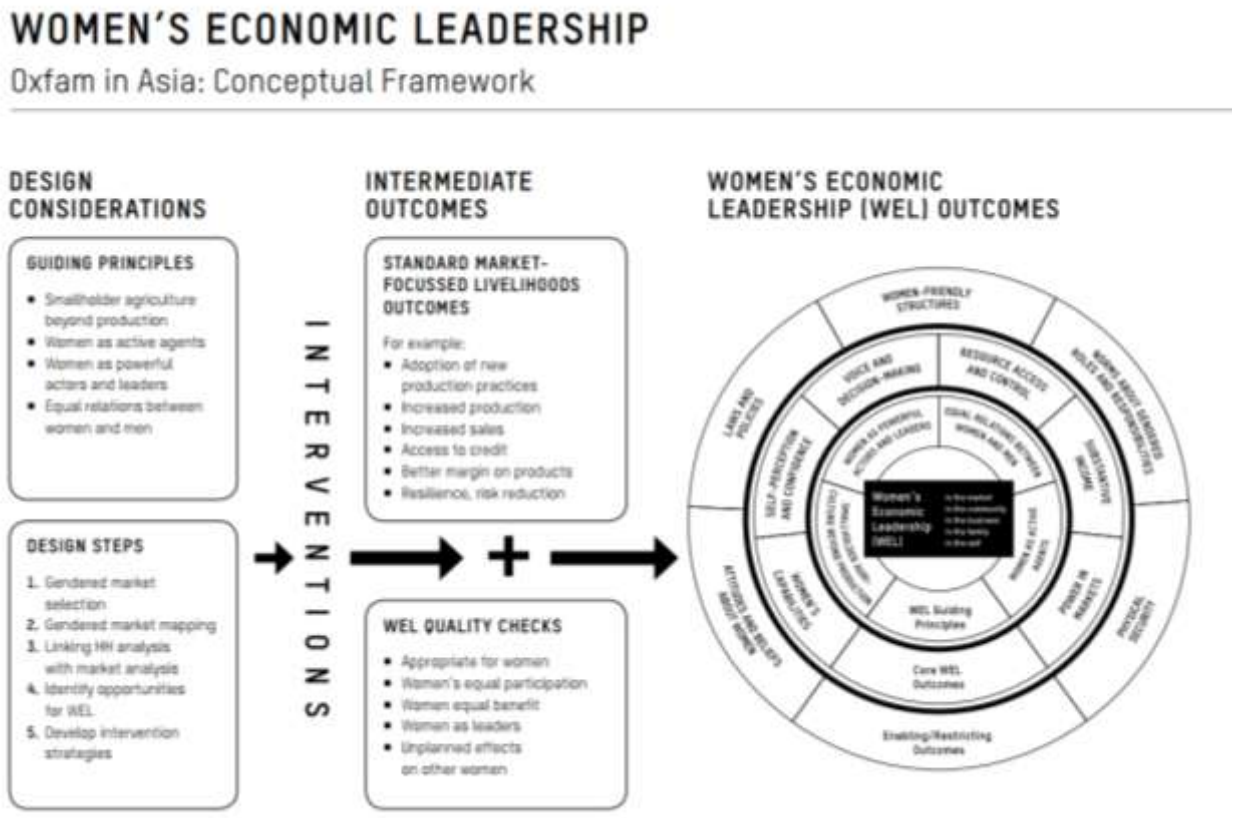

Figure 1: Revised WEL Framework

Read from left to right like a results chain, the framework suggests that the WEL approach is informed by a series of four 'guiding principles'. These principles, when combined with a series of steps of analysis and the design process, inform project/intervention strategies. These strategies vary significantly across contexts and in response to women's and communities' needs – but notably, they will contain both a mix of traditional livelihoods-focused interventions and complementary activities designed to bring about changes in women's power, leadership, decision-making, etc.

WEL projects use economic empowerment as an 'entry point' or catalyst for broader change. Therefore, it is entirely natural and appropriate that many of the intermediate outcomes the

projects aim to shift are focused on things like increasing production, improving access to credit, etc. WEL projects should use 'quality checks' (which don't always show up in documentation or formal MEAL plans, but are priorities for project staff) to ask critical questions about women's participation in, and benefit from, programme activities.

Figure 2: Outcomes in WEL Framework

Ultimately, WEL programmes are trying to provoke a positive shift across a range of outcome areas, which always includes substantive income, but will also include shifts in other areas such as access and control over resources, women's power, voice and decision-making, etc. Most commonly these shifts are intended to be at the level of individual women (and their families) who directly participate in the project. However WEL projects also seek to create shifts in broader structures and environments (in markets, communities and at the policy level) – these are represented in the outermost ring of the circle.

The following section aims to explain and define each outcome area (and one guiding principle), presenting definitions and examples from WEL programming in Asia.

WEL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

EQUAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEN

This principle (previously 'Inequal relations') was not very clearly understood across WEL programmes. It would be best not to treat 'equal relationships' as a defined outcome area, but rather as one of the fundamentals on which all programming is based. It involves fundamentally recognizing women and men as equals – though not always the same. This kind of approach shines through in the STORIES ABOUT WORKING WITH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS TO UNDERSTAND WEL, and the challenges encountered when the key principle of 'equal relationships' is not commonly understood or shared.

CORE WEL OUTCOMES

POWER, VOICE AND DECISON-MAKING

The concepts of leadership and power are important to this outcome area – it is more than raising ones' voice or being involved in decision-making for participations' sake. This outcome area links to the concept of 'beyond participation', to look at women taking leadership roles (in the community or enterprise) and sharing in power at all levels.

Definition: Women are meaningfully involved in decision-making processes, including being represented among decision makers. This covers decision-making at various levels – from within the couple/family/household through to the community and marketplace.

Examples from practice:

It is quite common for projects that work with producer group or farmers' organization structures to look at (formally or informally) the number or proportion of women in formal leadership roles as an indication of women's participation in decision-making. Oxfam staff sometimes commented that this can obscure women in less powerful roles (Secretary or Treasurer rather than President or Chairperson).

Programme staff spoke about this outcome as linked to women's increasing confidence and willingness to make demands of power-holders (local government officials, for example) or to groups of women participating in formal power structures, such as the local legislative environment (Indonesia).

At the household level, this is sometimes monitored by looking at self-reports concerning who makes decisions around the purchase or use of various household assets, or around who makes key decisions about household production (for example, what to plant or when).

In an earlier review of WEL programming in Sri Lanka, the author notes that Oxfam does not seem to use formal mentoring or role model strategies[6] as a means of encouraging women's leadership – something that is supported by the academic literature and which has been done by CARE. This may be an additional strategy for Oxfam WEL teams to consider.

MEL notes:

Mapping women's roles in formal leadership positions in producer organizations and federations is a good and relatively simple practice, and staff are right to take into account that not all executive positions have equal power. Teams in large projects may wish to find a way to do so efficiently and consistently across a range of structures.

SELF-PERCEPTION AND CONFIDENCE[7]

Changes in women's confidence and positive self-perception are probably the area of greatest discrepancy between project plans, formal indicators of success and staff and partners' informal comments about success. That is, few (if any) project plans make mention of 'increased confidence' in the formal monitoring frameworks, but stories of project success always comment on this kind of change, among individual women and among groups.

Definition: This outcome area could cover women as individuals or as members of a small group, meaning that they have belief in themselves and their capabilities. It may be linked closely with 'Attitudes and Beliefs', in that women who believe that women *in general* have rights and are valuable and capable actors, are presumably more likely to feel confident in themselves, their value and their capabilities.

Examples from practice:

When Oxfam and partner staff visit communities, they observe changes in how women present themselves. For example, in one project, women in a producer group chose to proudly wear a uniform to show that they were employed. In a nearby project, the project coordinator remarked that the women appeared differently over the course of the project – they brushed their hair or wore nice clothes. She attributed this not to having more time or money, but to having more 'self-respect'.

> *'I compare the community the first time I met them with 2 ½ years later. The first time I visited them, it's only me and the staff who spoke. After 2 ½ years it's they who talk to us and we're just quiet. They know much already – how to count, how to go to the market, how to make negotiations with partners for example. We just hear from them.'*
>
> Paraphrased from Oxfam staff interview

> *'We can see the changes – women used to hide when visitors came in. They were in the kitchen or doing laundry. Their greater success in trading gave them the confidence to be around when visitors come.'*
>
> Paraphrased from other Oxfam staff interview.

Participating women and government actors have talked about how women are able to interact in different settings and with different people, as indicators of their increasing confidence. For example, in Pakistan, a woman who went from a labourer to a producer explained, 'I could not deal with anyone outside the home, now I can address people in offices'.

In Indonesia, women's ability to make requests of government actors (for extension services, credit, etc.) was seen as an indication of confidence. In Sri Lanka, the same applied. A mid-ranking government official explained that a group of women participants came into his office to make a grant request. Before the project he thought they would never have had the confidence to walk into an office and make requests – or indeed have the knowledge of how to present them in a business plan.

MEL notes:

The blog post **"Documenting changes in women's confidence" on Grow Sell Thrive** [8] deals with this issue in greater detail.

POWER IN MARKETS

'Power in markets' relates to women's roles in the marketplace – it can reference change at the individual level, but is probably more often associated with increases in collective power. Power is gained when women increase their bargaining or negotiating authority, take on leadership roles in institutions or businesses or gain new or more powerful positions or roles in the marketplace. For example:

- women becoming more active as leaders at managing and directing larger groups such as cooperatives, producer federations or medium and large enterprises;
- women becoming active participants at different stages in value chains and in different positions in a given marketplace;

- women being perceived as legitimate players and equal actors within a marketplace – for example, as traders who are powerful and equal to men.

SUBSTANTIVE INCOME

'Substantive' income is one of the central concepts in WEL. The phrase is used across different teams in Asia, however, Oxfam would benefit from a slightly clearer definition of the phrase and what it means. Based on feedback from regional advisors, the following is a working definition for substantive income.

Definition: A substantive income is income that allows a woman to meet her and her family's basic needs and is:

- of an adequate level for a woman to provide for herself and her dependents, if required;
- accessible to the woman, so that she can access and control (invest, save or spend) as she chooses;
- seen by others – including her husband and family – as belonging to her.

Still up for debate – a bird in hand

Various Oxfam staff have commented on womens' preference for certain *types* of income, suggesting that women prefer sources of income that are stable and predictable (rather than risky), that generate lower returns more quickly or that are available to generate cash on demand. As an example, a group of women in Northern Sri Lanka who had been trained in handicrafts methods with palmyrah noted that they liked the handicrafts project because it could be done at home in the evenings and could generate cash quickly: '*If the school says they need something you can say "I'll get you the cash in two days" and be able to guarantee it.*' The level of importance of these factors is not very clear or consistent – this appears more to be some womens' preference, rather than a 'must have' part of substantive income, so it has been omitted from the definition.

Still up for debate – use of income

Does it matter how a woman spends her substantive income? Is it 'better' if she chooses to buy something for herself (new clothes or jewellery for example), make investments in her own business (buy new equipment) or if she simply chooses to put most of her new earnings into the welfare of the household? It is probably beyond the scope of WEL projects to aim to influence women's spending decisions. Instead, WEL should simply focus on ensuring that women are able to make decisions around the use of their earnings.

Examples from practice:

In Indonesia, a WEL project working with rural women sought to double income from a base of 300,000 rupiah (about US$24.60) per month. Some groups are on track to achieve this, though project staff note that there are a range of income sources coming in to the household – not only the project income.

In the Philippines, a beneficiary survey conducted as part of the OMP terminal evaluation found a self-reported increase in income of '22.6 per cent. Applying this then 87 per cent of households were under the poverty line before the project and reduced this to 68 per cent at the time of the evaluation'.

In Northern Sri Lanka, women reported they could make 7,000R (US$52.50) monthly through handicrafts and aim to be able to make 10,000R monthly through improvements in production and marketing. They say they became involved in the project through necessity – they need to work, as their husbands' incomes are not enough to provide for the family.

MEL notes:
Measuring income and expenditure through self-reporting is notoriously problematic, with people often under-reporting income or appearing to over-report expenditure. WEL projects sometimes circumvent this issue by monitoring the business records of collective enterprises, focusing on monitoring the income that is paid to members and documented in accounts.

However, we know that Oxfam project activities are usually only one source of a family's income. We also know that there can be an opportunity cost to different livelihood strategies – there is only so much time for work, so focusing on one income source can affect another. Increasingly, there are concerns that participating in livelihood efforts (without other measures in place) can add to a woman's double burden (care, income) or can add to the burden of other women in the home.

WEL projects consistently monitor income levels – any programme manager on any project is usually able to report on baseline and change in income. However, Oxfam is much less consistent about looking into how families and communities see that income – for example, whether it is seen as belonging to a woman and hers to decide how to spend.

Taking all this into consideration, WEL projects should achieve certain things through their MEL.

- Understand and document the range of different sources of income coming into households – in real and proportional terms, at different stages in the project cycle – and men and women's different roles and time investments in generating various types of income. (As a minimum, be able to paint this picture at the project beginning and end.)
- Understand and document the amount of income generated by a project, and also the time and energy inputs from women and men (separately) in generating that income. (As a minimum, be able to make cost estimates of the return on time spent.)
- Understand if, and how, women are seen to own and have responsibility/decision-making over income that is produced, at the household level. (Should be able to make reasonably well-evidenced statements about how women and men in households involved in a project see and make decisions about using any additional income, at least once during the project's life.)

Figure 3: Income and Time in a Household

WOMEN APPLYING CAPABILITIES

Earlier versions of the conceptual framework did not include reference to changes in 'women's capabilities' – that is, acquisition or development of skills and knowledge (beyond basic agricultural production techniques) which helps them become stronger players in the marketplace. The framework did make reference to women 'as active agents'. I suggest that these two concepts be combined into one outcome area, which looks at how a project has affected women's knowledge and skills that women can use to be more powerful agents, primarily in the marketplace. There is probably a relationship between increased capabilities and changes in self-perception and confidence, however, it would be better to consider these as separate but linked.

Definition: Changes in women's knowledge or skills that can be expected to help women become stronger advocates for themselves and more powerful players in the market.

Examples informed by practice:

- Women better understand principles of how markets function and how small businesses operate in those markets. They are able to understand how this theory applies to their own group's activities, and use this knowledge to make more informed economic and business decisions. (Example: Potential results from business training practices in Sri Lankan coir and paddy projects.)
- Women are able to analyse gender power dynamics, including at household level. They are able to use new analytical and reflexive skills to understand and respond to their own situation (PAR project in the Philippines).
- Women are more literate, better able to read and write, do basic maths and keep business records. They are able to keep business records and understand how to use the records to understand how their business is doing (Indonesia).

Not covered by this definition:

Changes in production practices that are aimed at helping women increase production of goods. (Example: Increased knowledge of variety of seeds, agricultural implements and veterinary products.)

RESOURCE ACCESS AND CONTROL

Access to, and control over, resources is often mentioned and well-understood across WEL programme teams. This usually refers to the resources a woman needs to participate in, or become a leader in, markets – which might include land, tools, agricultural inputs or more.

Definition: A woman is able to gain access to, and control over, resources that enable her to develop a sustainable livelihood. These might involve 'productive resources' to be used for economic activities (access to natural resources, financing, etc.). It might also involve control over stewardship of natural resources that are important to the community.

Examples informed by practice:

In both Sri Lanka and the Philippines, programmes focused on helping women gain formal titles to land or communal resources. In Sri Lanka, the EU-ACAP programme helped connect thousands of families with government agents, to formally register land ownership and achieve land titles. This was a precondition to those families (often female-headed households) accessing finance and credit. In the Philippines, the Economic Justice programme has worked with national advocacy partners to promote the idea of 'Women-Managed Areas', trying to secure communal access rights to waterfront areas that have traditionally been used by women for livelihood activities. Work with partner PKKK also produced changes in the land titling policy,

so that women's names appear alongside their husbands (rather than simply '....and wife') for jointly owned landholdings.

The terminal evaluation of the OMP (the Philippines) reported that nearly 80 per cent of 123 respondents questioned purchased assets following participation in a WEL programme. The most popular assets acquired were animals and farm tools.

Projects such as the EU-ACAP programme and coir project in Sri Lanka both provided assets in the form of processing machinery, usually through grants or loans, to individual women and groups.

The EU-ACAP programme in Sri Lanka involved a large-scale infrastructure development component, constructing roads and water reservoirs ('tanks') in communities. While this was judged to be relevant and useful, this kind of large-scale infrastructure construction is not what Oxfam would typically undertake in a livelihoods programme, nor are they examples of the kind of community resources or assets covered by this outcome area.

ENABLING AND RESTRICTING OUTCOMES

WOMEN-FRIENDLY STRUCTURES
Women-friendly structures was formerly written as 'flexible structures' – meaning the kind of structure that women would want to create for their livelihoods actions, rather than simple recreations of structures that work for men. For example, women-friendly structures might include work schedules that meet the needs of women with caring responsibilities.

Definition: Common practices, institutions and 'rules of the game' that govern how women behave in executing their livelihood strategies.

NORMS ABOUT GENDERED ROLES AND RESPONSIBILTIES
Changes in this area refer to shifts in how people believe that gendered roles 'should' be performed. For example, women should be responsible for the home sphere and men responsible for gaining a living. These norms may not be actually reflected in everyday life – but they are the mental rules and constructs for how people understand gendered roles.

Definition: Informal rules that govern the way that people behave – in particular, around women's and men's different responsibilities for paid and unpaid labour (earning income, participating in marketing and business activities, acting in leadership roles, caring for children and older people, maintaining the home, etc.).

PHYSICAL SECURITY
Physical security here warrants a broad definition including real or perceived threats against women in the home and in the community.

Definition: Individuals, families and communities are free from physical threats to their safety. For women, this includes freedom from gender-based violence, including violence within the family and also the freedom to move within public spaces – importantly (though among other things), to conduct economic activities and participate in public life.

ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS ABOUT WOMEN
This area is similar (but not identical) to 'norms'.

Definition: People's perceptions of what is true (belief) and their settled way of thinking (attitudes) as they relate to women's economic activities, women's leadership and broader issues of gender and relationships between men and women. Attitudes and beliefs can be held at individual levels and can influence group or community. Women themselves can hold deeply limiting attitudes and beliefs about women. Important attitudes and beliefs in this sphere might

relate to roles and responsibilities, women's capabilities, knowledge, leadership, spaces that women occupy and women's entitlements (what women deserve or can rightfully expect or claim or want).

LAWS AND POLICIES

Definition: Are the formal rules that may exist at the organization, market, local or national level that may enable and promote (or disallow or restrict) women and men from taking on different roles and responsibilities around paid and unpaid labour. WEL work in this area may seek to influence the content of laws, policies and/or the actual implementation and practice of those in daily life.

APPENDICES

A. LIST OF PROJECTS, DOCUMENTS AND INTERVIEWEES

Case Study Programmes and Projects

Sri Lanka

The Sri Lanka study covers two very different projects in three regions of the country. Data collection took place during a 10-day visit from 9-20 September, 2013.

Interviews with Project Partners, Producer Group Members and Others

Coir Projects

1. Matara Coir Producer Group – 6 women members.
2. Matara Coir Producer Group – 3 women and 1 male worker/members.
3. Wasana Shakthi Coir Producer Org – 5 women workers/members (Matara).
4. Thirukovil producer group (6 women, 3 men – 5 representatives government, partner, us).
5. Federation of Chambers of Commerce of Sri Lanka – Project contact (Nantha).
6. SEEDS - 3 Project Contacts (Navindra, Dilshan).
7. Assistant Director, Ministry of Industries and Commerce, Southern Provincial Council.
8. Assistant Director, Southern Development Authority.
9. SWOAD – 3 Project Contacts.

EU-ACAP Projects

10. Women's group and SARC (Kiran, Batticaoloa) – 11 participating women, 2 partner representatives.
11. Producer group and 2 farms (Vavunativu) – 4 participating women.
12. Tonic Sales centre (Navithanveli) – 3 women and 2 men.
13. Vavuniya farmer beneficiaries at home – 3 women, 1 man.
14. Vavuniya producer group at centre – 4 women, 2 men.
15. Vavuniya North dairy cooperative – President.
16. Palmyra handicrafts producer group (Vavuniya) - 12 women members/producers.
17. Vavuniya Livestock Breeder's Coop Society – President.
18. Vavuniya District Agricultural Office – Deputy Director.

Oxfam Staff

19. Tharanga Gunasinghe, PWEL Programme Coordinator (Colombo Office).
20. Kamanee Hapugalle, Senior Programme Manager (Colombo Office).
21. Roxanne Abduali, Programme Manager – European Commission Funded IDP Programme (Colombo Office).
22. Sinnathamby Raguramamurthy, Senior Programme Coordinator (Batticaloa Office).
23. Sivarajah Sivanesarajah, EU Programme Coordinator (Batticaloa Office).
24. Unknown, Project Officer (Vavuniya office).

Documents included in the analysis

1. 'Improving Socio Economic conditions of paddy farmers in East Sri Lanka – Project Effectiveness Review' (Summary Report – Final) Conducted by: Oxfam GB PPAT Team, August 2013.
2. 'External Evaluation of Women Economic Leadership (WEL) in coir Industry in Matara and Hambantota Districts' (Final Report). Conducted by: Institute for Participatory Interaction in Development, 31 March 2013.
3. 'Rising from the Ashes' - Case studies on resettlement of war affected IDPs in Sri Lanka, 2013. Oxfam Publication, 2013.
4. 'Review of Women's Economic Leadership among Selected Projects Oxfam GB – Sri Lanka' by Alicia Clifton, February 2013.
5. 'Mid-term evaluation of EU-Oxfam Socio-Economic Development for Conflict Affected People in North and East Sri Lanka' by Shubh Kumar-Range and Mallika Samaranayake, September 2012.

Table A1: Outline of project visits

Date	Activities	Location
Monday 9	Visit planning Interviews/discussion with Oxfam staff.	Colombo
Tuesday 10	Interviews/discussion with Oxfam staff. Interview: FCCISL at Oxfam office.	Colombo
Wednesday 11	Interview with SEEDs staff, at their office. Interview with SPA and SDA representatives, at their offices. Visit to 1 coir producer group; group discussion/interview.	Matara
Thursday 12	Visit to 2 coir producer groups; group discussion/interviews.	Matara
Friday 13	Interviews/discussion with Oxfam staff. Visit to 2 producer groups in Kiran and Vavunativu. 2 farm visits at Vavunativu. Interview/discussion with SWOAD representatives at their office.	Batticaloa
Monday 16	Visit with producer group in Thirukovil; group discussion/interview. Visit to producer group in Navithanveli. Visit to completed tank, farm and organic tonic/fertilizer shop.	Ampara (Central Camp)
Tuesday 17	Briefing with Oxfam staff. Visit with 2 groups of producers/beneficiaries; group discussion/interview. Visit to completed tank.	Vavuniya
Wednesday 18	Visit to Vavuniya North dairy cooperative; interview with President. Visit completed tank. Visit to multipurpose paddy store; interview with accountant. Group interview with Palmyra handicrafts producer group at their building. Interview with President of Vavuniya Livestock Breeder's Coop Society (at their office). Interview: Deputy Director, Agriculture District.	Vavuniya
Thursday 19	Return to Colombo; report-writing.	
Friday 20	Debrief with Colombo team.	

The Philippines

The Philippines case looks across the country programme, at different livelihoods projects that make up the Oxfam Mindanao Programme (OMP) and at their connection to national-level Economic Justice partnerships. This case relies heavily on OMP's quite detailed project documentation, along with interviews with staff in Oxfam and five partner organizations. Visits to project sites were cancelled due to flooding in project areas.

Interviews with Project Partners, Producer Group Members and Others

Interviews with partners

Denis Calvan, Executive Director, NGOs for Fisheries Reform

Hazel Tanchuling, National Coordinator, Rice Watch Action Network (R1)

Ampy Miciano – Deputy and 4 colleagues, Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (Rural Women's Coalition)

COM

Oxfam Staff

Rodilyn Abella-Bolo, Project Manager (MEAL), Oxfam Mindanao Programme

Lyca Sarenas, Mindanao Programme Manager for Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Rights

Felipe S Ramiro Jr, Philippine Programme Manager and former Global Adviser on Women's Economic Leadership (WEL)

Dante Dalabajan, Oxfam Mindanao Programme Coordinator (interim)

Observation/Presence in Meetings

Gender Justice evaluation debrief – observation during a team's review and debrief on findings of an external evaluation on Gender Justice work in the Philippines

Observation during a 'Gender Sensitivity Training' conducted with men and women rural leaders from central Mindanao, conducted in Davao City and hosted by partner COM

Documents included in the analysis

Evaluation and Learning Documents from Oxfam Philippines

OMP Terminal Evaluation Report

PAR Women at the Center Process Documentation Report

Social Obligation and Respect: Seeking Ways to Improve the WEL Approach through Participatory Action Research

Cases of WEL-Inspired Shifts (Writeshop Report)

Effectiveness Review (June 2012) of PHBL40 – full report and management response

Reports and documents shared by partners

Gender amendments to the CNFID (PFR)

PKKK quad-fold brochure

DA Press Release: IIMC Plant 50,00 mangroves in Apuao Island

Highly extractive fishing activities and privatization of foreshore lands: impact on the everyday lives of municipal fisherfolks

Palihan Journal (vol 1, no1) (treated as background)

Table A2: Outline of project visits

Date	Activities	Location
Monday 20	Visit planning with OMP staff.	
Tuesday 21	Interviews/discussion with Oxfam staff.	

	Interview with AADC.	Davao City
Wednesday 23	Observation of gender sensitivity training workshop. Brief group interview with COM staff.	
Fri 24	MEL Discussion with OMP staff, document review.	
Sat 25	Economic Justice partner interviews NGOs for Fisheries Reform Rice Watch Action Network (R1) Pambansang Koalisyon Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK)	Manila
Sun 26	Interview with OMP staff	
Mon 27	Observation: GJ evaluation debrief discussion (Oxfam staff)	
Tues 28	Visit debrief	

Desk Review

Pakistan: Enhancing food security and resilience of small farmers (Project PKNB91)

- Final Narrative Report to EU (pulled from OPAL)
- Project Closure Report (pulled from OPAL)
- Project Effectiveness Review (forthcoming)
- Impact Assessment Report: Enhancing Food Security and Resilience of Small Farmers in Sindh and Balochistan Provinces of Pakistan. Authors: Ms. Umm e Zia and Mr. Pervaiz Ahmed Cynosure Consultants, 30 January 2012.

Bangladesh (Chili and REECALL Projects)

- MEL Framework for Bangladesh EDP (Chili Traders; Enterprise – Fulchari, CTE-f)
- REE-CALL (Resilience through Economic Empowerment, Climate Adaptation, Leadership and Learning) Project – 'Lessons learnt during project development'
- REE-CALL Project Logframe (dated October 2013)
- REE-CALL Project Proposal (submitted to Oxfam Australia, 2013)

Additional Interviews and Contributions

Interviews with Project Partners, Producer Group Members and Others

<u>Country Programmes</u>
Abdul Latif Walizada, Senior Programme Coordinator (Afghanistan)
Boedi Sardjana Julianto, Programme Manager (Indonesia)
Jaya Tulha, Livelihood Adviser (Indonesia)

<u>Regional</u>
Mona Mehta, Gender Equality Knowledge Network Manager (Asia)
Jocelyn Villanueva, Regional Change Lead, Women's Economic Leadership

B. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

56 documents were uploaded and coded using qualitative analysis software. These included existing project documentation and evaluation reports as well as field notes from visits and notes from interviews. Coding was a reasonably straightforward sorting-style exercise, working from a basic coding frame derived from evaluation questions and the WEL conceptual framework. New codes were added if 'new' concepts were identified in the data.

Category	Sub-Category	Code	Description
Activities and Strategies		New Process	Introduction or promotion of new production or processing methods.
		Awards	Use of awards, contests or similar incentives.
		Brokering Role	Oxfam or partners playing role of 'honest broker' between or with other parties.
		CCA	Climate change adaptation activities or training.
		Collective Action	Project participants organizing or undertaking something together.
		Consultancy Business	Support specifically on business development and similar – for example, coaching on the development of business plans.
		Cottage Industry	Support to small-scale local products of industries.
		Extension Credit FS	Provision or strengthening of agricultural services – agricultural extension, credit or financial services.
		Farmer Field School	A specific hands-on learning process.
		Grain Bank	Practice of saving grain – either for later sales or use during lean times.
		Infrastructure – large	Construction or improvements of farm or community level infrastructure, such as reservoirs.
		Input provision	Provision of agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizers.
		Insurance	Introduction or promotion of insurance products.
		Kitchen gardens	Promotion of small-scale gardens, usually close to the home.
		Land access	Providing access to land or support to secure land rights.
		Microenterprise	Support to the development or strengthening of very small businesses.
		Mobile phones	Interventions using mobile phones.
		New place value chain	Encouraging movement beyond basic production.
		Research Policy	Research, policy or advocacy activities.
		Training	Interventions focussed on transferring knowledge or skills.
Challenges		Challenge Overcome	Identification of a problem solved or a challenge overcome.
	Within Enterprises	WEL Trade-off	Challenge of developing profitable businesses or at-scale market interventions, while focussing on gendered change at household level.
		To Production	Difficulties with increasing quantity of production.

		Limited Inputs	Difficulties with accessing enough or high quality inputs.
		Stuck at Production	Difficulty in moving higher up value chains.
		Time Lag	Challenges associated with the gap between planting and sales ,or between the intervention and visible impacts on people's lives.
	Within Oxfam team or the project	Lack Clarity WEL	Lack of shared understanding about concepts or application of WEL interventions.
		Disaster	Slow or rapid onset natural disasters, or conflict.
		Government	Challenges associated with government actors.
		Partnerships	Challenges associated with partner organizations, or the holding of strong partnerships.
		Scale	Challenges in achieving change at larger-than-small scale.
		Staff Capacity	Difficulties associated with Oxfam or partner staff capacity – hiring or retaining people with specific skills into posts.
	Within participants or groups	Care	Relating to 'care' activities for dependents and family members, usually falling on women.
		Group Behaviours	Challenges with dynamics in producer groups, or in supporting individuals within producer groups.
		GBV	Gender based violence.
		Low Tolerance Failure	Belief that project participants are unlikely to adopt or maintain a new crop or production technique.
		Reaching Most Vulnerable	Challenge to reaching the most marginalized or poor people to participate in or benefit from an intervention.
Impact and Changes		Attitudes Gender Roles	Attitudes about men and women's gendered roles, particularly around economic activities.
		Community Level Change	Change at the village or local community level.
		Confidence Self Percep	Changes in confidence or self perception, at the individual level.
		Empowerment Undefined	References to successful 'empowerment.'
		Entrepreneurship Leadership	Changes relating to leadership development, particularly in groups and economic activities.
		Equal Relationships	Changes relating to levels of power between women and men.
		Flexible structures	Characteristics of groups / institutions that make them suitable or welcoming to women's participation and leadership.
		Harmony Family	Concept of happiness, peace and good relationships in a family unit.
		HH Roles	Roles and responsibilities of men and women in a household, particularly around labour for care and economic activities.
		Income	Money received by an individual or household.
		Norms Gendered Roles	Perceptions about the way that men or women 'should' behave normally.
		Physical Security	Security or freedom from violence.

		Policy and Laws	Changes in the development or implementation of policies or laws, by government actors.
		Power Voice Decision	Changes relating to an individual or group's ability to influence decisions.
		Resource Access Control	The ability to access, use or control a given asset or resource.
Lessons		Lessons	Things that have been learned by someone.
		Feedback to Oxfam	Specific feedback given by an external actor (usually in an interview), which they wished to have shared with Oxfam.
		GoodPractice	Practices or activities that were identified as 'good practice' by participants or publications.
Miscellaneous		Sustainability	Relating to the likelihood of changes persisting over time.
		Transformative	Situations or changes that were identified as 'transformative' or 'transformational' – or that seem likely to substantially affect gendered power relationships in a sustained way.
What is WEL		Household	Characteristics of WEL interventions at a household level.
		Men	Comments on the involvement or non-involvement of men in WEL interventions.
		Not WEL	Characteristics that make an intervention not a WEL intervention.
		Targeting	Comments related to targeting of beneficiaries or project participants.

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C. INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE

Questions for CoP members (not in countries reached by the case studies)

- Can you tell me about the livelihoods projects you work on – and in particular, how they incorporate gender?
  - How do you know if the project is successful for women, or not?
- What are some of the big challenges to success that you have faced in your project?
- Has that project's delivery been straightforward or to plan? Have you had to make any major adjustments or course corrections?
  - If so: what were they? Why? How did you know they were needed?
- Could you tell me a bit about how your team does project/programme monitoring? How do you review data?
- Could you tell me a bit about if/how you've used formal studies – baselines or evaluations – in your project?
  - Did you find them useful at all? (Why/why not?)
  - Did they influence how you do your job at all? (if so, how?)
- Have you ever taken part in a WEL Community of Practice Learning Event?
  - Did that change anything you or your team do? (If so, how/why?)
- In your context (country/project), what does 'women's economic leadership' mean to you?
- You know that this interview is feeding into a review of the WEL approach in Asia. With that in mind, is there anything else you'd like to say?

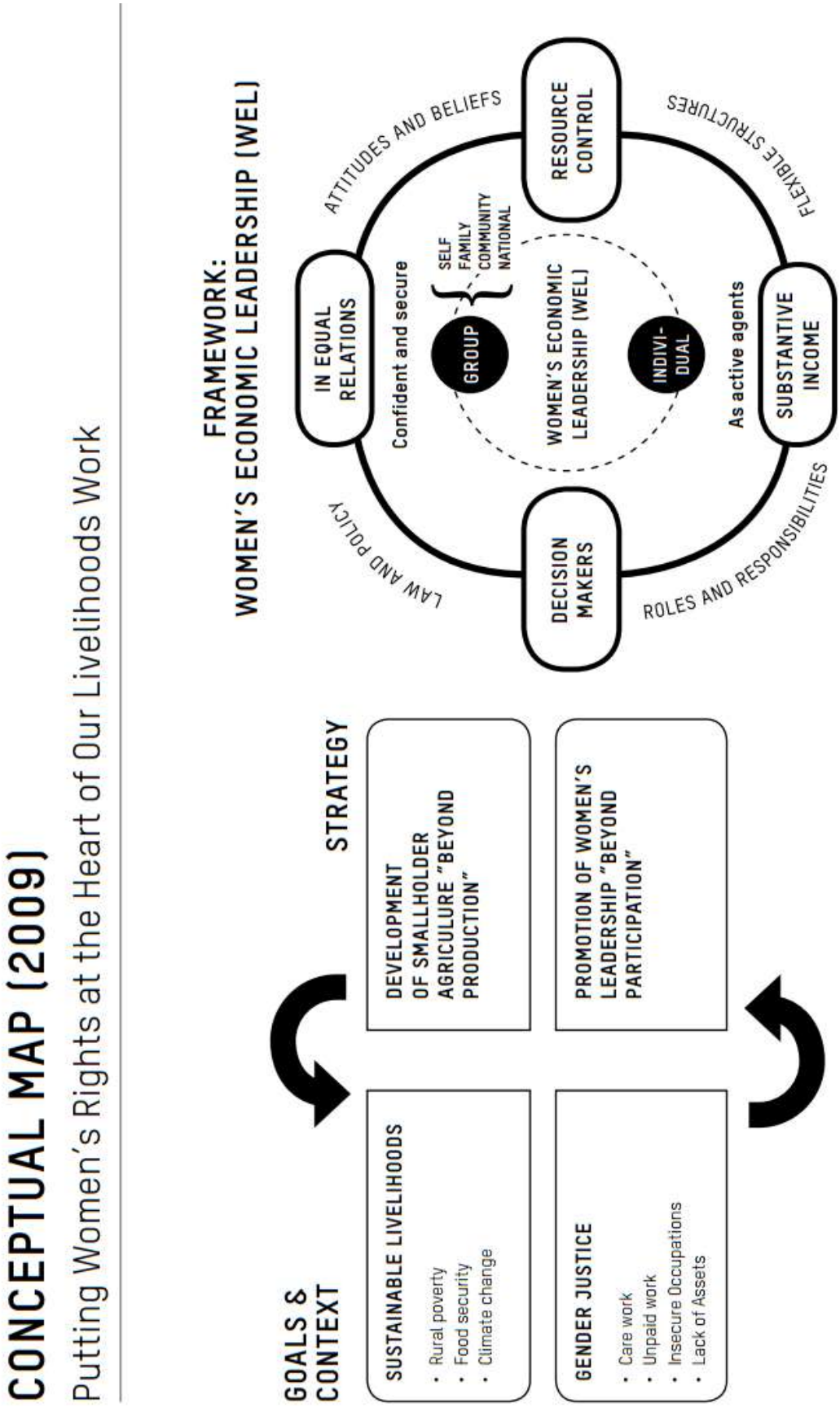
D. FEEDBACK ON EARLIER DRAFTS

Four people provided written comments on the draft; at least 12 more joined a webinar presentation. Some of the key discussion points or comments are included here.

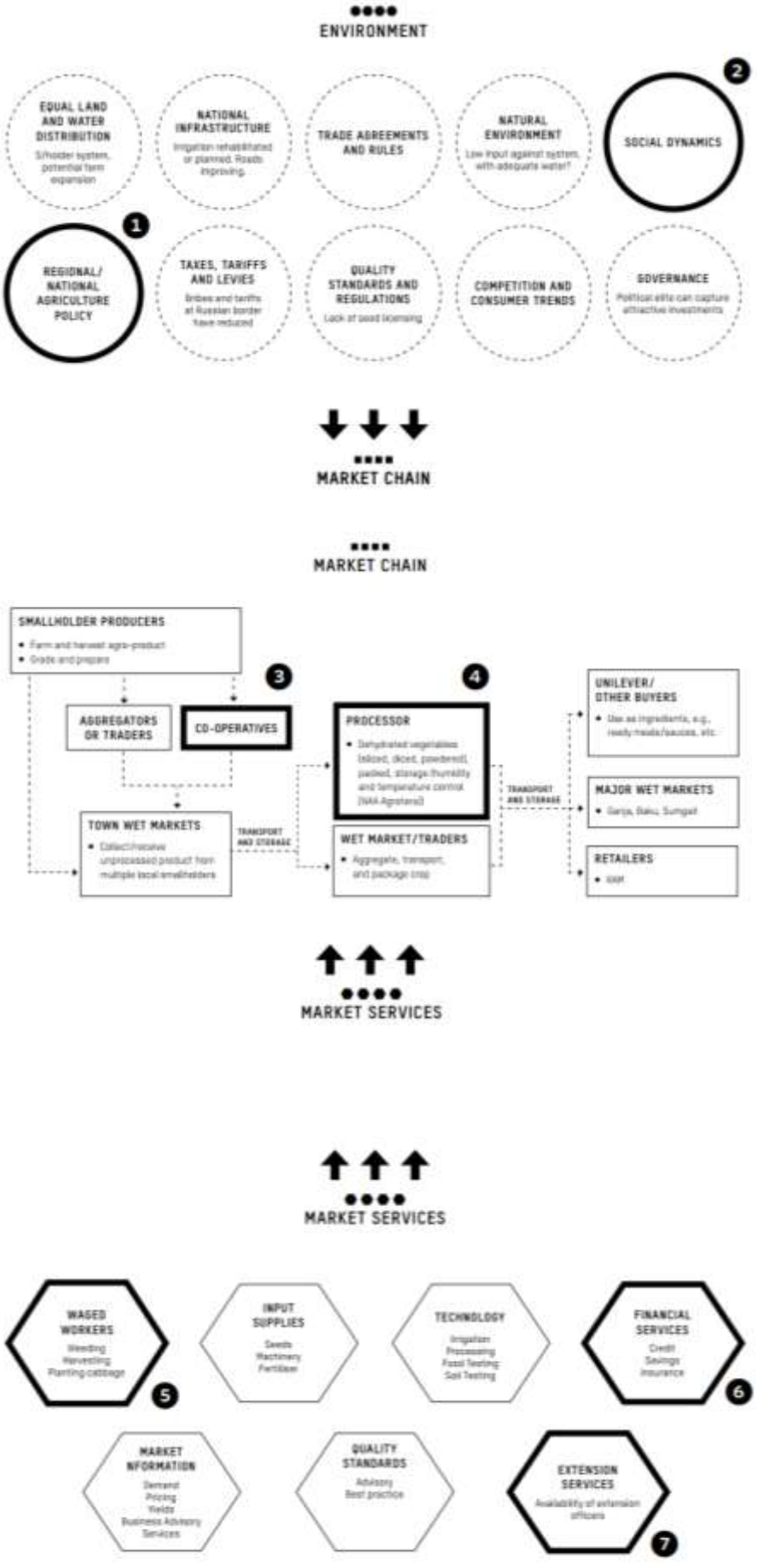
- The absence of disaster risk reduction or resilience from the framework. For simplicity/feasibility, the framework does not include issues of DRR, though these are frequently a feature of livelihoods projects in the region. This is a limitation of the framework and report. Discussants noted clear links between economic outcomes (livelihoods diversification, increases in income) and increased resilience.
- Discussion around what decisions are taken based on the economic benefits that result from a project. This report proposes that Oxfam's women's economic leadership projects should seek to achieve women's involvement in decision-making, but not necessarily concern themselves with what women decide to spend their money on. The point is that women have decision-making power – not that they exercise it in a certain way, buying certain 'types' of things. This may be a controversial proposition that some teams find inappropriate in certain projects.
- Farm and care economy analysis should be integrated into the list of components at the design stage.
- Questions about alignment with other women's empowerment programming and MEL approaches, including WEMAN and GALS.
- Belief that the tools for implementing WEL were still quite scattered and difficult to find.
- An earlier draft omitted the 'Power in Markets' outcome area, which was suggested by a reviewer.

E. CONCEPTUAL MAP (2009)

This 'conceptual map' was developed by thematic advisors in the Asia region, and expresses some of the key concepts associated with WEL. It is the foundation upon which the proposed conceptual framework is based.



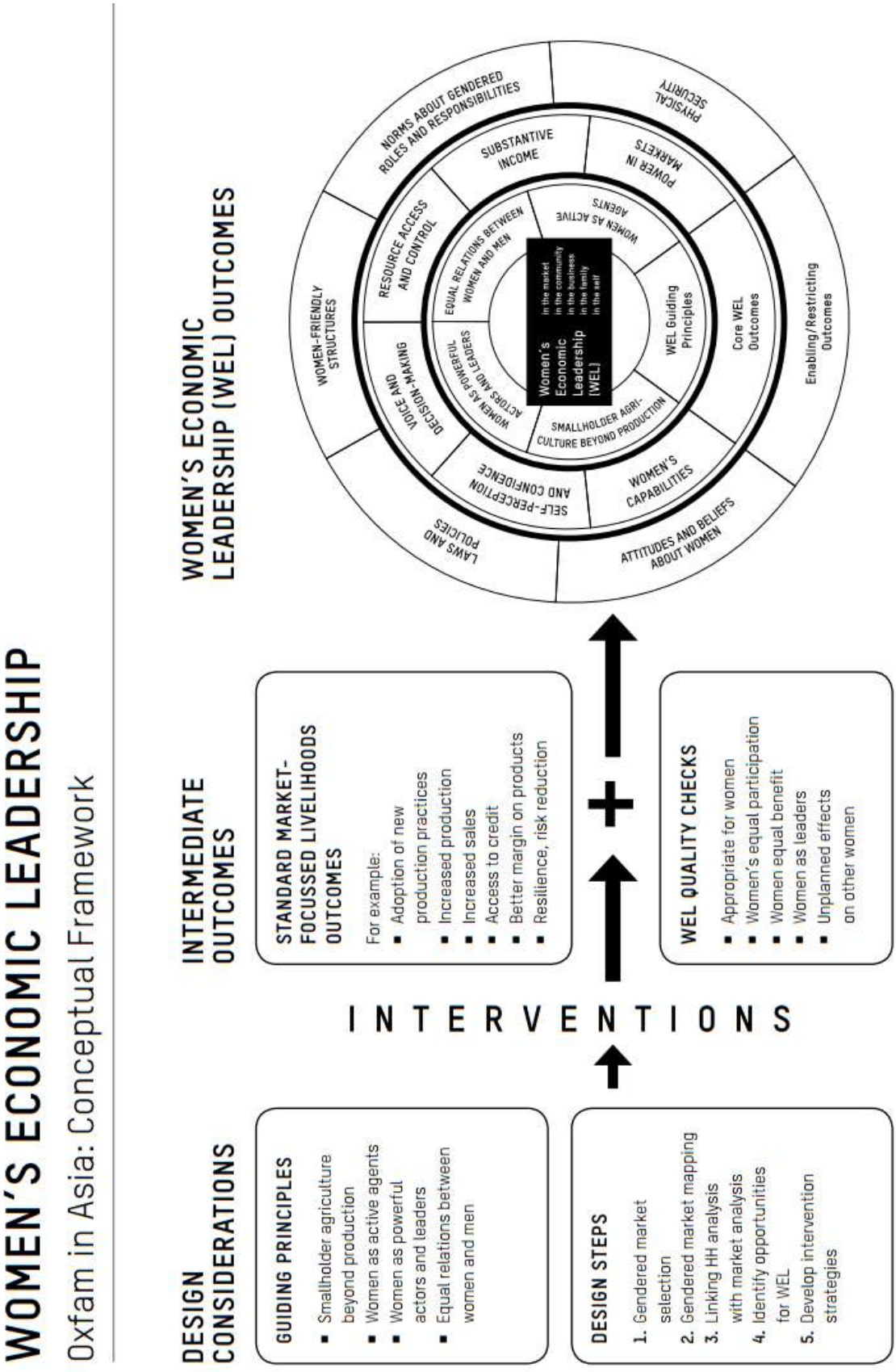
Approach: Markets



Steps in Designing WEL in Agricultural Markets:

- Gendered market selection
- Gendered market mapping
- Linking HH Analyses with market analysis
- Stakeholder analysis
- Identify opportunities for WEL
- Identify Critical barriers
- Develop Strategies

F. REVISED FRAMEWORK (2014)



NOTES

[1] As of the date of publication, this internal dissemination has taken place through regional leadership team meetings, and through regional and global advisors.

[2] A full list of documents and interviews are included in Appendix A.

[3] This is a relatively low figure; most projects identified involved between 60-100% women.

[4] As an example, a group of women involved in handicraft production in Sri Lanka explained that they spent their income on schooling costs. They appreciated that they knew how to produce woven materials, because if a child came home needing money for school costs, his/her mother could put in many hours and have cash in hand to take to school, the following week. The fact that they could generate money in a relatively short period of time, reliably, was valuable to them.

[5] Interview with Oxfam staff member, Community of Practice on WEL in Asia.

[6] Clifton (2013), p.13

[7] Another way to articulate this quality might be to call it 'self-efficacy' – that is, the depth of belief in ones' ability to complete tasks and achieve goals (Definition from Wikipedia). This wording has been used in women's empowerment effectiveness reviews. However, confidence is the word that all actors involved in this review used.

[8] Also available on Oxfam's Policy & Practice web site at: http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/blog/2014/02/more-than-words-observing-changes-in-womens-confidence

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Oxfam Discussion Papers

Oxfam Discussion Papers are written to share the results of programme reviews and programme learning, to contribute to public debate and to invite feedback on development and humanitarian policy and practice. They do not necessarily reflect established Oxfam policy positions.

This paper was written by Kimberly Bowman. Others who supported the research and writing are listed in Appendix A.

For more information, or to comment on this report, email KBowman@oxfam.org.uk

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