

Results-Based Initiatives

Women's economic empowerment works. We can prove it.

Piloting Innovative Strategies

The Results-Based Initiatives (RBIs) pilot innovative programmes that advance and measure the impacts of women's economic empowerment, in line with Millennium Development Goal 3 on promoting gender equality. They cover a gamut of core issues, such as strengthening women's entrepreneurship and access to markets, linking agricultural productivity and food security, and making gender central to private-sector human resources management.

A growing body of evidence suggests that gender equality fuels thriving economies. When women can find decent jobs and acquire assets, they earn incomes and accumulate savings to help themselves and their families. The pool of human resources, talents and economic contributions expands, spurring productivity and growth. Feminized poverty declines.

Less is known about which interventions are most effective in advancing women's economic empowerment and rights. Making this determination requires careful experimentation and the scrutiny of rigorous measurement. Clear understanding of what works best is critical for mobilizing political and financial support for women's economic roles, and for wisely investing resources.



Proving What Works

Each RBI has two parts. The first involves implementing interventions that can be replicated and scaled up, reaching a broad cross-section of women over time. The RBI must yield relatively quick results, and have high potential economic benefits for participants, their families and communities. The second component entails designing and undertaking a rigorous impact evaluation so that lessons can be captured and applied to current and future projects.

Six countries have been chosen for RBIs. In each, projects are linked to priority national strategies for economic development and gender equality. They aim to expand existing national capacities, and strengthen implementation of progressive policies and laws.

The RBI concept is premised on strong partnerships. These involve government agencies, donors, development agencies and civil society organizations. UNIFEM collaborates with counterparts to



implement the RBIs, using funding from the World Bank Group's Development Grant Facility. The International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) conducts the impact evaluations.

What If... Women Had More Economic Options?

Early results from the RBIs suggest that:

Kenyan women could expand their incomes and drive forward a flourishing small business sector. Under the RBI, "Strengthening Export Competitiveness of Women Bead Workers," 850 Maasai women producers of traditional beadwork are cultivating entrepreneurial skills to build their export competitiveness. Success will be measured by increased orders and profits, and expansion to new markets.

Peruvian women could use property rights to access formal credit, a cornerstone of small business growth. "Strengthening the Economic Empowerment of Women Urban Property Owners" helps women acquire new business and financial management skills. Success will be measured by improved access to credit and increases in business innovations.

Women in Cambodia and Lao PDR could track market trends to make their bamboo handicraft businesses more lucrative. "Improving Bamboo Handicraft Value Chains for Women's Economic Empowerment" is introducing technology to manage market information and spur productivity, measured by increased productive capacity and higher product prices.

Egyptian women could enjoy better working conditions and career opportunities. "Gender Equity Model Egypt" is partnering with 10 private sector firms to make gender equity policies central to human resources management, with a goal of increasing productivity and improving work conditions. Success will be measured through reduced gender gaps in pay, hiring and promotion.

Liberian women could improve cassava production practices and provide food security. In Nimba County, 500 women cassava producers are working through the RBI, "Value-Added Cassava Enterprise for the Ganta Concern Women's Group," to boost cassava production. New processing, marketing and management skills aim to sustain profitable businesses, measured through increased incomes and yields.

RBI Partners

UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations. Established in 1976, it provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies that promote women's human rights, political participation and economic security. Today the organization's work touches the lives of women and girls in over 100 countries.

The World Bank is working to increase women's economic opportunities by investing in better access to jobs, land rights, financial services, agricultural inputs and infrastructure.

ICRW's mission is to empower women, advance gender equality and fight poverty in the developing world. To accomplish this, ICRW works with partners to conduct empirical research, build capacity, and advocate for evidence-based, practical ways to change policies and programmes.

For more information:

UNIFEM, 866 UN Plaza, Suite 586

New York, NY 10017, United States

www.unifem.org; caroline.horekens@unifem.org

World Bank

1818 H Street, NW

Washington, DC 20433 USA

www.worldbank.org

ICRW

1120 20th Street, NW

Suite 500N

Washington DC 20036, United States

www.icrw.org; agolla@icrw.org