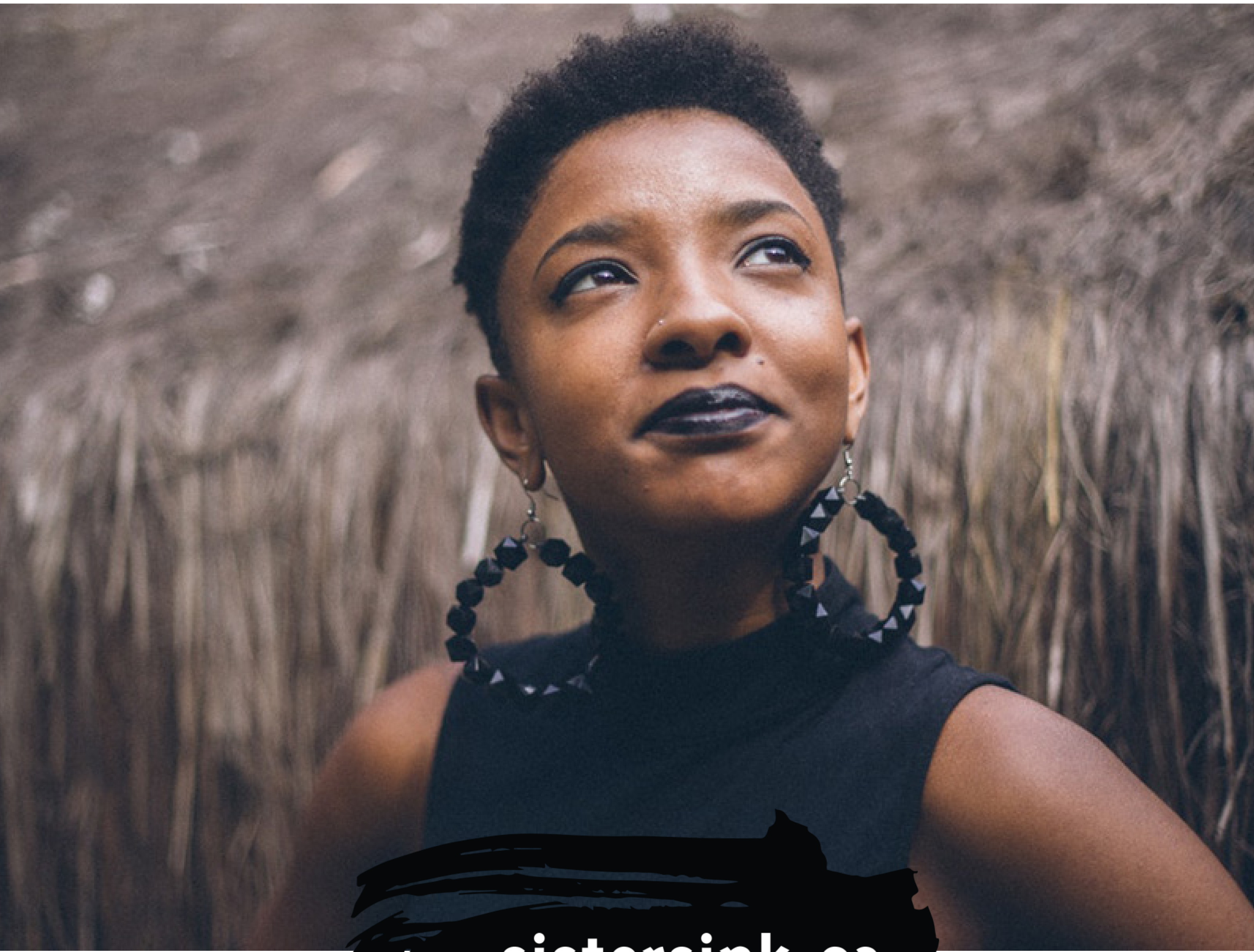

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IDRC EMPLOYMENT AND GROWTH LEARNING EVALUATION

Final Report
February 15, 2019

*Prepared by **Sisters Ink Ltd.***

Executive Summary

The Employment and Growth (EG) program of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) leverages innovative solutions for inclusive economies through investment of $CAD 70.8 million in research and research leadership across the Global South. The research takes place in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), as well as across different regions and globally. The program, begun in 2015, invests in research through 84 research projects (and sub-studies) to provide lasting impacts for women and youth in decent work and the economy, financial services, value chains, and through innovative business models. In many cases these areas overlap. Sisters Ink a global peer coaching and consulting group was contracted to conduct a formative Learning Evaluation for EG to both improve and direct programming for the EG team, IDRC management, and the evaluation unit. Secondary audiences include the wider programs at IDRC and the development sector more broadly.

Learning evaluation
Three key analytical questions guided the Learning Evaluation:

- What are the drivers of research quality plus (RQ+) for EG research?
- What are the drivers of EG programming effectiveness?
- What is the likely contribution of thought leadership by the EG program to the development field?

To address these questions, the evaluation team used a sample of 26 projects based on a randomized and purposive statistical process that represents the overall portfolio in terms of geographical scope, type of research, and research governance structure. Only projects that had finished research outputs and were research-focused were included. The sample was assessed to determine drivers of RQ+ (question 1) as well as EG effectiveness overall.

The evaluation team used a combination of the RQ+ assessment framework developed by IDRC and an outcome mapping process that assessed each quality (integrity/rigor; legitimacy; importance/relevance; positioning for use) domain with a set of conditions related to what EG would “expect to see,” “like to see”, and “love to see.” EG program effectiveness was also assessed through interviews and surveys of principal investigators, and interviews with project officers and program staff including the Inclusive Economies program director. The final question was answered through analysis of the sample in terms of importance, review of previous evaluations, and interviews with key thought leaders in women’s economic empowerment and youth employment.

Key drivers of Research Quality Plus
According to the rating exercise with the sample, 9 projects were considered highly rated, 8 moderately rated and 8 low rated. This means that 9 projects were quite exceptional, scoring “love to see” or “like to see” across the domains. The moderately rated projects were broadly what the EG would “like to see” as well as “expect to see” across domains – in other words, good performance. Low rated projects just met expectations or fell below expectations across the domains.

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What are the drivers of RQ+ - in other words, what are the drivers of rigorous and grounded influential research? These include:

- Strong research rationale grounded in clear objectives and coherent mixed methods approach
- Continuous engagement of key influencers
- Complementary actors involved in research, particularly research and practice
- Contextually-grounded innovators

The governance structure is critical to the quality of the research. It is where coherence, research team alignment, and quality control happen. It is also the means by which other actors are brought into the research. It is clear that the research itself is only part of what leads to research quality. There is much more involved in how the overall research process is carried out, particularly how actors such as researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers are aligned to be complementary. Multi-stakeholder networks carried out 60% of the overall portfolio. 71% of the highly rated projects were multi-stakeholder networks. The reverse, however, is not also true. That is, not all multi-stakeholder networks were high performing. Key drivers were the effective leverage and legitimacy of the actors involved.

There were four key challenges identified across the portfolio based on the ratings and evaluation team analysis: content-related issues; projects were too academic to influence; drift from the WEE mandate; ability to oversee quality effectively.

High rating and challenges were not specific to any particular type of partner or type of research though there were some risks identified. Research agencies and networks can be too academic to be well-positioned for use. Some funded partners, particularly strong and innovative private sector partners, demonstrated a drift from the WEE mandate. Some of the research was difficult to assess and hold accountable for quality. This was true of research where calls for proposals were held but IDRC was one removed from final research outputs. This was also true for implementation research where substantive research outputs were not produced. It is recommended that these be kept to a minimum of the portfolio.

Key drivers of EG program effectiveness

There were four drivers of EG program-level effectiveness. The first driver, close accompaniment and context-specific brokering, was also identified as one of EG/IDRC's unique value-add in the broader sector of donors.

Heterogeneity was a key driver that worked both ways. While heterogeneity was identified as a strength in terms of diversity of research, geographical focus, research methods, and issues, it can also be the program's weakness. Too much diversity compromises attention to program-level strategy, clarity of program mandate, and strong theory of change backed by solid outcome monitoring at the program level.

Context-specific conditions for policy "stickiness" was another program-level driver identified. The portfolio demonstrated well that different contexts required a different approach to evidence, partnership development, and influencing strategies.

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Included in the contextual conditions were the nature of practice and innovation that may influence partnership development, particularly with private sector partners. In some contexts, their innovation can drive influence and attract policy interest. The risk with private sector partners, particularly innovators, is their potential to drift from the WEE or YE mandate. Much can be learned from the partnerships that worked well.

The fourth driver of program effectiveness is an agile theory of change. The ability of the EG team to revisit the theory of change, question assumptions around it, and incorporate emergent learnings from the field is key to program effectiveness and impact in the broader sector.

Thought leadership and likely impact on the development sector
EG is encouraged to look strategically at its own positioning around thought leadership. More EG/IDRC visibility tied to coherent policy narratives would greatly enhance the opportunities for parallel funding and internal learning. Given global realities IDRC also has a role to play in these policy discussions. EG's strength in WEE extends beyond but certainly builds on the success and profile of GrOW and its messages around inclusive growth, the gendered nature of labour markets, structural features of markets that act as barriers, links to social norms, and the care economy. Also, it seems important to stress the policy message that growth is not enough, and equity may be necessary to ensure women and youth are included.

The EG portfolio continues to represent all of these policy messages. It will be important to see what emerges, particularly from strong projects, by the end of the program. The EG portfolio continued to build its strengths with work in the care economy, engendering value chains, attention to economic and educational transitions of young men and women, and the relationship between economic empowerment and social cohesion. The youth employment policy narratives are not yet clear but early indications seem to favour narratives and project clustering along regional lines.

EG/IDRC certainly has added value to the development field in how it funds and accompanies. IDRC could contribute more to the evidence-policy nexus by positioning research for influence and uptake. The ability of EG/IDRC to contribute to the development field is tied to how EG/IDRC monitors and assesses RQ+ and local research development. There is real potential to better describe these processes and how they inter-relate. IDRC takes a structural approach to research concerned not only about rigor and relevance but also positioning for use and redressing gendered power dynamics in the research and research process itself. These dynamics warrant stronger documentation.

Recommendations
The recommendations for the EG program for the remainder of the program are:

- **Build coherent policy narratives.** Use and revisit theory of change to map and dialogue around program-level policy narratives emerging, and support projects to align. Continue to cluster and peer-learn across components of projects. Cluster

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policy issues by region. Include good conversations about growth, inclusion, and equity.

- **Reduce mandate drift.** Support projects to ensure alignment with the WEE and YE mandate. Review rest of portfolio for mandate drift. Review private sector partners and implementation research as part of these. Keep an eye to positive deviance and review assumptions regularly.

- **Support projects to focus and align**. Support projects struggling with content-related integrity issues or coherence to find greater focus. Support specific projects with gender and intersectional analysis including the youth element. More academic research, particularly macroeconomic, may be required. Lower rated projects may need supports around integrity and positioning for use. Support projects to ensure that, where possible, there is research or learning available that may be more widely used.

- **Make a stronger case for building local capacity**. Provide clearer evidence on EG/IDRC's role in building a cadre of emerging researchers across the EG portfolio to redress gendered power dynamics in research. Make case and link to theory of change and RQ+.

The following recommendations are suggested for future programs:

- **Have a clear program mandate.** Consider clarity of intention with the program mandate up-front through either a commissioned paper, a prospectus or both as a way of providing some focus and intention.

- **Monitor pathways as complex systems**. Consider monitoring for complexity by utilizing the outcome-mapping and RQ+ frameworks that IDRC pioneered both for internal learning but also for sharing with the development sector.

- **Cluster and distinguish different types of research.** Consider different treatments of integrity for different types of research. However, ensure that all projects have at least a few strong research outputs.

- **Publish on the research-policy nexus.** Publish more on how different types of research and evidence, and different actors (public sector, private sector innovators, researchers) influence policy in different contexts. Help the global development sector understand how and why different contexts require different evidence, partnership/networking, and influencing strategies. Such an approach allows a focus on WEE that is intersectional and includes, for example, employment issues for young women and men where opportunities are limited by violence, migration, and vulnerability. It also includes analysis at the regional level.

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ACRONYMS

EG	Employment and Growth
GrOW	Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women
IDRC	International Development Research Center
IE	Inclusive Economies Program
LA	Latin America
MENA	Middle East and Northern Africa
N	North
PI	Principal Investigator
PO	Project Officer
RQ+	Research Quality Plus
S	South
SIG	Supporting Inclusive Growth
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
YE	Youth Employment

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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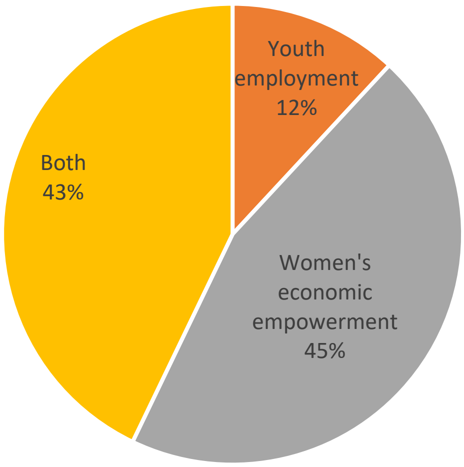
1. INTRODUCTION TO THE EMPLOYMENT AND GROWTH PROGRAM

1.1 Overview of the Employment and Growth Program

The Employment and Growth (EG) program of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) leverages innovative solutions for inclusive economies by investing in research and research leadership across the Global South. The program, begun in 2015, provided funding and accompanying support to 84 research projects to provide lasting impacts for women's economic empowerment and youth employment. Some research projects targeted both impact populations.

Figure 1: Target population and intended impact (n=84, 100%, as of August 2018)



The research program focused on expanding opportunities for women and youth in financial inclusion, access to better jobs and decent work, access to markets and value chains, policy-making and research capacity, and new business models. In some cases, these areas overlapped.

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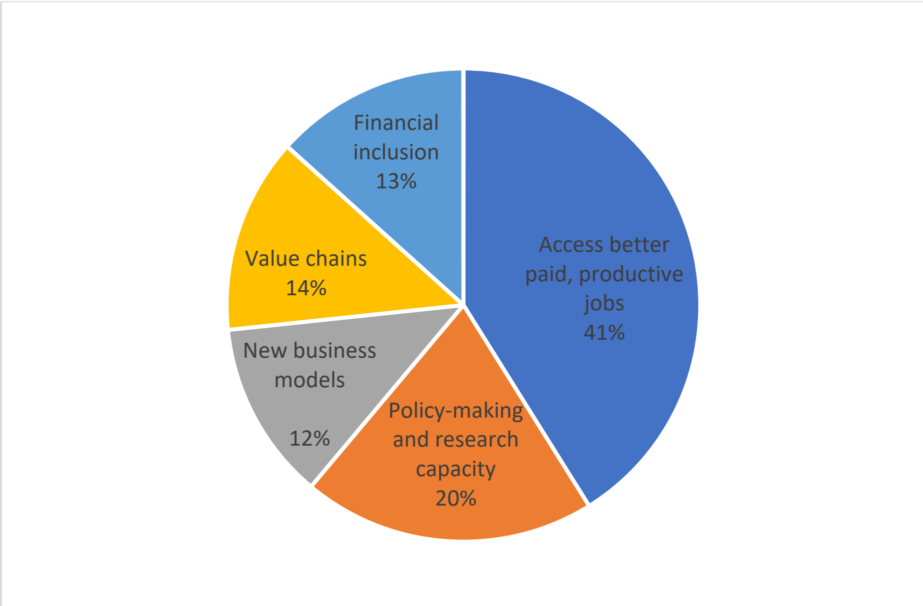
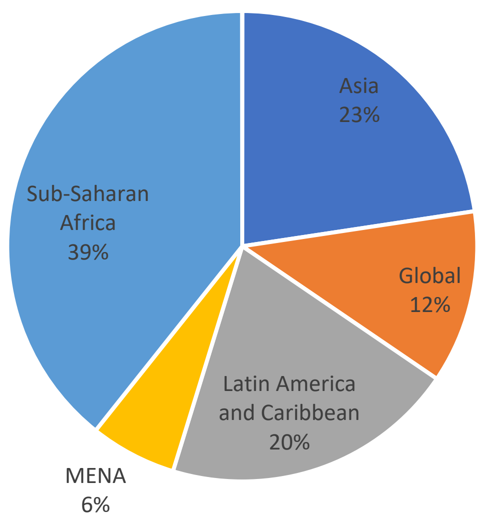
Figure 2: Intended intermediate outcomes (n= 84 projects; 90 instances)



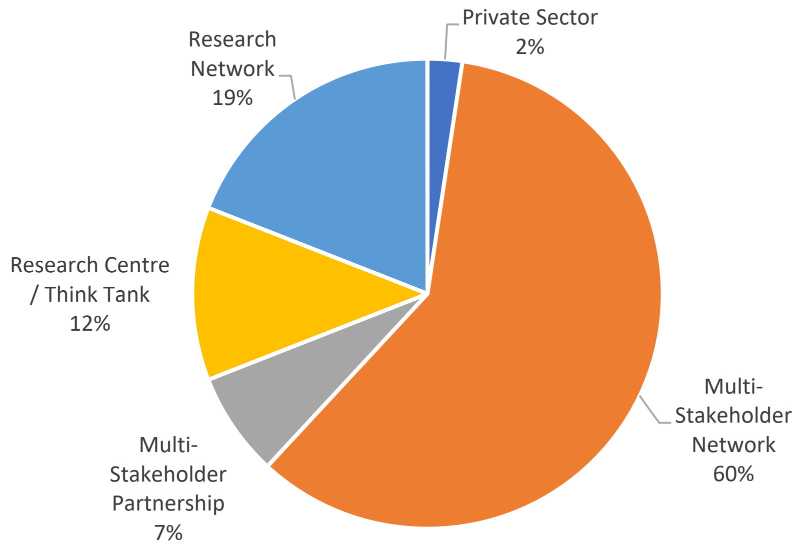
The research took place in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) as well as across different regions and globally, through 84 active research projects, 130 sub-components or studies valued at $70.8 million. The following figure represents the investments by geographical area. Those representing more than one region were considered global. The geographical regions were determined based on the allocations indicated in the Project Approval Documents.

Figure 3: Overall EG program by region (n=84 projects; 84 instances)



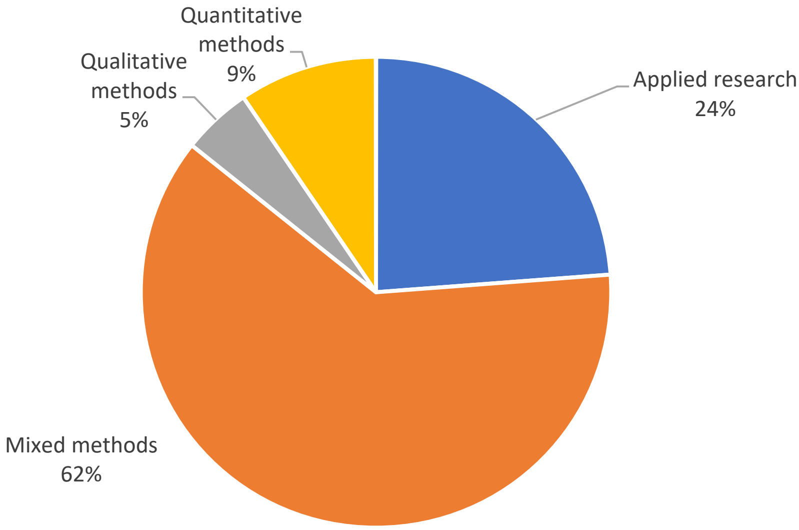
The research projects represented both research networks with more than 2 partners as well as partnerships of two institutions. Multi-stakeholder partnerships or networks refers to those where there was a mix of practitioners and academics or researchers, sometimes also policy-makers, private sector businesses, and other agencies. Research networks denote researchers from different universities or agencies linked in a recognized network for this project. The governance structure is important because it is the structure that supports decision-making, alignment of partners, quality, and cohesion of the research.

Figure 4: EG Program research governance structures (n=84 projects; 84 instances)



Funding was provided directly by IDRC and also through parallel funding from other sources such as Ford Foundation, DFID, and the Mastercard Foundation. Figure 5 shows the type of research used in the different projects of the EG program. This figure shows that the type of research that mixed methods is the most predominant type of research. Implementation research included experimental research such as randomized control trials, and action research where an intervention such as the testing or impact evaluation of skills training or a social business model was studied. Implementation research also included digital platforms that crowd-sourced information and data as a means of implementation.

Figure 5: EG program type of research



EG has a team of 11 staff, based in Ottawa headquarters and in Nairobi, Kenya and Montevideo, Uruguay offices. The team includes program support staff as well as research support staff. Collectively the EG team is responsible for program level strategy, theory of change, selection and accompaniment of projects, monitoring, and learning for adaptation.

The EG program has been a rolling progression of programs including Supporting Inclusive Growth (SIG) and Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women (GrOW) each with slightly differing but overlapping mandates. SIG ran from 2010 to 2015 and included the multi-funder initiative GrOW focusing on women's economic empowerment. Since then, there have been substantial shifts in the programming, including a move to more applied research, and new mechanisms for monitoring project outputs and outcomes by program staff as well as exploration of new partnerships such as private sector partnerships. GrOW continued up to 2018 under the EG program. Some of the currently supported EG research projects were approved under the SIG program.

Some of the shifts in EG programming have mirrored or been reinforced by strategic objectives at the IDRC corporate level. The EG mandate is part of a broader strategic direction at IDRC committed to continued investment in knowledge and solutions that have lasting impacts. The broader IDRC strategy has three strategic objectives: invest in knowledge and innovation for large-scale positive change; build the leaders for today and tomorrow; be the partner of choice for greater impact. IDRC's strategic plan is also at the mid-point of its implementation.

The EG program sits among the Inclusive Economies program area of IDRC, which includes three other programs (Think Tank Initiatives, Maternal and Child Health, Governance and Justice), all supporting knowledge, innovation, and solutions that help build more prosperous, just, and resilient societies. Another important component of this program area is communications through its grant making, such as embedding research uptake objectives in research design.

IDRC has contracted Sisters Ink Ltd. to support EG in conducting a formative or learning evaluation to learn from and leverage successes within the program. The scope of the learning evaluation is the 87 research programs (known as projects within IDRC) that fall within the EG portfolio including approximately 130 studies and sub-studies.

1.2 Contextualization of women's economic empowerment and youth employment

The Employment and Growth Program aims to have an impact on both women's economic empowerment and youth employment in the Global South. The stated impact goal for EG according to the Program Implementation Plan (2015) was to enhance the employment and economic opportunities of vulnerable groups by:

- supporting women's economic empowerment including solutions to remove barriers
- strengthening youth employment opportunities, supporting policy and practice that effectively prepare youth for gainful employment

Women's economic empowerment and youth employment are overlapping and related fields of inquiry and practice but also fields in their own right.

The term "women's economic empowerment" has a number of definitions and understandings beyond the scope of this review. However, the differences in how WEE is defined and treated in research and policy papers has important implications for what is validated, what has potential for influence and where IDRC's research is positioned for relevance in the landscape.

Perhaps the most widely accepted conceptual framework for empowerment is Naila Kabeer's conceptualization of the relationship between access to and control over resources, personal agency, and achievements in influencing broader decision-making and power processes. From IDRC's initial commissioned paper on women's economic empowerment Kabeer offers this definition:

> the conceptualization of empowerment that informs this research touches on many different aspects of change in women's lives, each important in themselves, but also in their inter-relationships with other aspects. It touches on women's sense of self-worth and social identity; their willingness and ability to question their subordinate status and identity; their capacity to exercise strategic control over their own lives and to renegotiate their relationships with others who matter to them; and their ability to participate on equal terms with men in reshaping the societies in which they live in ways that contribute to a more just and democratic distribution of power and possibilities (Kabeer, 2008 p. 27)

Kabeer's conceptualization of women's economic empowerment as empowerment more broadly is widely used and includes self-worth and the ability to exercise choice and control given social norms and identities as well as ability to participate in the re-shaping of these norms, policies, and programs at structural levels.

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Several high-level evidence reviews have identified gaps in women's economic empowerment research. These include GrOW's own literature review and concept paper commissioned to Naila Kabeer on WEE and inclusive growth (Kabeer, 2012; GrOW, 2013). Literature reviews on WEE by the Overseas Development Institute (2016), The UN Women report on Progress of the World's Women: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights (2016); The International Labor Organisation, Women in Work (2016), UN Foundation and Exxon Mobil, WEE Pathways (2016); the Gender and Development Network/Association of Women's Rights in Development had quite a lot of consensus in their identified gaps and priorities for women's economic empowerment:

- Transforming work to ensure it is decent (tackling root causes of sectoral and occupational segregation; addressing the gender wage gap; working conditions including harassment)
- Implementing a comprehensive framework to achieve harmonization of work and family responsibilities including unpaid work and care
- Structural issues, harmonized macro-economic and social policies, legal frameworks
- Context-specific evidence on what works where, for whom and why including the influence and interaction between gendered social norms and agency
- Beyond national border issues such as trafficking, migration and global conventions, legal frameworks
- Women's organizing and participation in decision-making (from international agreements to intra-household decision making) including collective action and women's movements as well as formal representation.

(GrOW, 2013; ILO, 2016 a, p. 94-95; ILO, 2016b; Gender and Development Network, 2016; UN Women, 2016; Buvinic et al, 2016; Kabeer, 2012).

The gaps are helpful to identify. They help to contextualize the wide-ranging treatments of women's economic empowerment as well as to position GrOW's research agenda within these gaps. Also, as will be later discussed, the portfolio emerged in interesting ways to address key gaps not originally intended.

WEE is widely analyzed at the moment, but there are often divisive views about WEE framing, arguably, between what Molyneux (1985) distinguished as practical interests of access to resources and opportunities, and broader strategic interests of voice, agency, structural changes that would continue to influence control over those resources. This divide sometimes translates to differing preference for types of evidence or research and a difference in perspective about how to influence change and policy effectively. With the current political landscape globally emphasizing economic growth, and the national Feminist Aid International Policy with Global Affairs Canada, the GrOW research and policy narratives are important and politically influential. IDRC is positioned to play an important convening -- perhaps even bridging -- role in the research input to policy dialogue going forward.

Youth employment is a distinct but related area to WEE. Adolescents in general, but particularly girls and young women, have distinct needs at this critical transition period.

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There are both constraints and opportunities at these junctures related to education and work pathways, and capacities to manage shocks and vulnerabilities, be they economic, health, or gender-based violence for example. How young women in particular navigate these school-to-work transitions can be limited by gendered social norms.

Importantly, there is a global demographic bulge in the youth population that is particularly evident in Sub-Saharan Africa. “Half of the population is under 25 years of age. Each year between 2015 and 2035, there will be half a million more 15-year-olds than the year before” (The World Bank, 2014, p.2). These issues are often framed as youth employment challenges, farm and non-farm work, more informal household enterprises, and regular waged work. Some also emphasize the need to curb urban violence and alienation in youth (The World Bank, 2014). Interestingly, a literature review by the University of Birmingham, aimed to better understand the links between youth unemployment as a factor leading to criminality, political violence, and armed groups found both a lack of consistent terminology and definitions as well as a lack of data to establish the link. The review found a lack of situational analysis with supply-led donor-driven program design rather than design based on youth demand. They also found a general neglect for the informal economy. Youth employment efforts that achieve the best results are part of a wider effort also tackling youth rights and psychosocial needs (University of Birmingham, 2016).

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2. LEARNING EVALUATION

2.1 Sisters Ink Ltd.

Sisters Ink is a global consulting and peer coaching group of self-employed women working on issues of women's economic empowerment based in Halifax, Canada. The consulting team has solid experience in empowering women and youth in inclusive economies, widening access to financial services, making value chains work for the poor, and exploring innovative business models including social entrepreneurship and social responsibility.

The consulting team is comprised of Nanci Lee (Team Leader with over 25 years of global experience in economic development practice and research including microfinance, enabling policy and regulation, financial literacy, youth financial literacy, and women's economic empowerment), Kunal Sen (Professor of Development Economics at the University of Manchester, UK, and Joint Research Director of the Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre with decades of research experience and thought leadership in political economy determinants of inclusive development and inclusive growth), Sabrina Beeler Stücklin (PhD anthropologist with solid research experience in French West-Africa and women's economic empowerment), Patricia Lopez-Rodriguez (PhD in Economics with solid experience in Latin America and strong skills in quantitative research, social policy, and women's and youth economic empowerment), and Momal Mustaq (with experience in social enterprise, online platforms and youth engagement).
See Annex A for biographies of the evaluation team.

Taken together, the consulting team has over 50 years of diverse experience in terms of geographical context, language, nature of expertise and mix of research, practice, and policy work. The mix within the team is a strong match with the EG portfolio both in content and approach. The team brings high levels of competence and diversity while also providing team members with opportunities to further develop their experience and skills. Since capacity building and recognition is part of the overall aim of Sisters Ink, contracts are always structured in ways that each team member can take a lead in driving one of the areas or phases of the contract. In short, the consulting approach has a similar ideological approach to the EG Program.

2.2 Purpose and Audience for the Learning Evaluation

The Learning Evaluation was contracted by EG to improve and direct programming. The mandate of the Learning Evaluation was to formatively evaluate Employment and Growth's (EG) program effectiveness in **supporting and expanding quality research and local research leadership to influence policies and programs that will economically empower and employ vulnerable groups particularly women and youth.** For a detailed Theory of Change for EG see Annex E. The evaluation process considered the program's current trajectory and included identification of strong processes and conditions for high research quality, and effective positioning for use and impact.

This Learning Evaluation built on the recent Mid-Term evaluation (2016) and Final Review of the GrOW program (August 2018) upon its closure as well as the final evaluation of the Supporting Inclusive Growth (SIG) Program in 2014, the earliest form of the EG Program. It is also noted that the SIG final evaluation focused on the early SIG agenda as it evaluated only closed projects. SIG was active from 2010 to 2015.

This learning evaluation assessed research mid-stream while examining progress on the three programs as a rolling process, each with its own emphasis and outcomes. Given the mid-stream nature of the evaluation, the focus of the evaluation was on identifying drivers, learning from successes, and providing concrete recommendations for the remainder of the program.

The primary users and audience of the Learning Evaluation is internal including the EG team, IDRC management, and the evaluation unit. For other audiences, including IDRC Board of Governors, grantees and partners, a detailed executive summary containing the evaluation's focus, purpose, objectives, findings, conclusions, and recommendations is provided. For the public audience and broader development sector, a thematic issue brief is also available.

2.3 Analytical Questions

Given that the program is mid-stream and many of the projects are still active with quite early results, the Learning Evaluation aimed to understand drivers of success for internal learning and dialogue. The aim was to understand where there is strength to be leveraged and also where risks could be mitigated. Three key analytical questions guided the Learning Evaluation:

- What are the drivers of research quality plus (RQ+) [1] for EG research?
- What are the drivers of EG programming effectiveness?
- What is the likely contribution of thought leadership by the EG program to the development field?

2.4 Methodological Approach

The three key analytical questions were based on three areas (pillars) of inquiry and corresponding analytical questions (Figure 6). As the following framework shows there were three key areas of analysis: a sample of research projects, the program effectiveness overall, and thought leadership and likely impact for the overall portfolio of research.

[1] Research that is not only rigorous but emphasizes relevance, legitimacy and positioning for use and influence. For more information on this framework see Onir et al. (2016)

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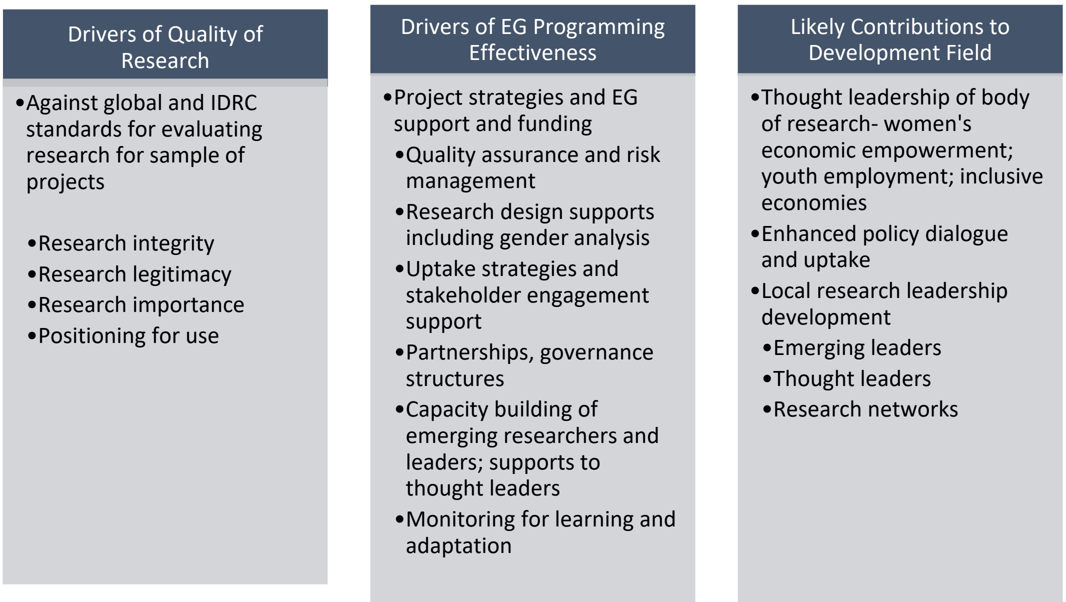
Figure 6: Methodological framework



While a sample of research projects were rated individually, emphasis was on the body of work and, in particular, the drivers and conditions that led to quality research. The methodology used IDRC's RQ+ Framework to rate the projects acknowledging that excellence or quality in research, regardless of methodological approach, is dependent on both technical merit and the research's effectiveness as demonstrated by its use, influence, policy relevance, actionable knowledge, or impact (IDRC, 2014). Programming effectiveness was analyzed based on the sample of projects as well as program-level reflections, evaluations, and strategies. Thought leadership and likely impact was based on the overall body of evidence. "The body of evidence" considers the quality, the size, the context in which the evidence is set, and the consistency of the findings produced by studies constituting the body of evidence (DFID, 2014).

The Learning Evaluation was based on considerable dialogue, iteration, and analysis with the EG team. The evaluation used outcome mapping as a springboard for dialogue around success, questions arising, and common understanding of change pathways.

2.5 Methods and Limitations

The following chart outlines the key methods and sources of data used to answer each of the three analytical questions, separated into various domains. See Annex B for the detailed tools and interview guides. See Annex C for a complete list of interviews.

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Chart 1: Analytical questions, domains, and methodological approach

Analytical Questions	Key Domains	Methods / Sources of data
Pillar 1: What are the drivers of quality plus for EG research?	1.1 Research Integrity (different criteria depending on types of research) 1.2 Research Legitimacy (gender; local/population; ethics) 1.3 Research Importance (How clearly and directly WEE and YE mandate is being addressed?) 1.4 Positioning for Use (Who is the research project intending to influence or who they should be. Policy and practice as well as academe.)	- RQ+ Assessment of 26 research projects, with focus on methodology, tools and 2 research outputs per project. - Outcome mapping using spider diagrams for the key domains with scores: below expect to see, expect to see; like to see; love to see - PO interviews - PI interviews (n=24) - 30 Survey responses (Research teams, usually PIs) - Literature Review
Pillar 2: What are the drivers of EG program effectiveness?	2.1 Quality assurance and risk management 2.2 Research design supports including gender, demographic analysis 2.3 Partnership and governance structure including financing form 2.4 Uptake strategy and stakeholder engagement 2.5 Capacity building of emerging researchers[2] and support to thought leaders[3] 2.6 Frequency and nature of monitoring and learning for adaptation	- Synthesis and identification of strong practices from research projects' own strategies for effectiveness combined with EG programming effectiveness to support projects both with funding and technical support. - Triangulation of perspectives from both EG team and researchers - Review of proposals (PAD) and reports
Pillar 3: What is the likely contribution of thought leadership by the EG program to the development field?	3.1 Thought leadership of body of research (the what- women's economic empowerment; youth employment; inclusive economies) 3.2 Thought leadership (the how -- such as local research leadership development) 3.2.1 Enhanced policy dialogue and uptake 3.2.2 Enhanced local research leadership development (emerging leaders; thought leaders; multi-stakeholder networks)	- Examination of areas and research projects across the whole EG program where there is real potential for thought leadership contribution and scale - Key informant interviews with thought leaders (n=39) - Triangulation of key stakeholders/thought leaders, key evidence and literature reviews, program, consulting team and project perspectives - Evidence of built capacity, research team perspectives - Review of SIG Final Evaluation, GrOW Mid-Term and Final Review

[2] An emerging researcher is a person who has completed training and some research, usually as part of a PhD or Post-doctoral program, or in an early to mid-career position in a university, think tank, research lab, public or private agency. They may lead smaller research teams or play an important but secondary role in larger research teams. They display potential to play a stronger role in the development of innovation from proof of concept to adoption at scale and/or are beginning to engage with policy makers and practitioners, providing evidence to inform discussions about economic change processes.

[3] A thought-leader is an established research leader who is recognized as an authority in a research field and whose expertise is sought and often rewarded. They use their expertise and influence to help advance solutions to support positive change.

The learning evaluation was designed so that the three pillars are braided or overlapping as a form of triangulation. The first analytical question is mainly answered by a sample of EG projects. The second analytical question is answered in part by the sample but also by reviewing EG program level strategies and documentation, and interviews with staff, researchers and stakeholders. The last analytical question is more outward facing, where EG is situated in the broader development sector, the thought leadership it brings and the impact it is positioned to have.

Quality was measured against global standards for evaluating research evidence (DFID, 2014) and mixed method research (Leech et al., 2009; Herr and Anderson, 2005; Piggot-Irvine et al., 2015) including IDRC's own "Research Quality Plus" Framework (Ofir et al., 2016).

Limitations

Limitations to these assessments were that only 16 of 26 projects had already produced research outputs to review and only 9 of 26 had methodology explicitly stated enough to assess -- including instruments and tools (and two WEE briefing notes).

A sample was the key unit of analysis for the first two analytical questions to understand both quality and effectiveness. For example, noting in one project that well-formulated objectives improves quality helps to potentially identify a driver at the program level to answer the second question.

Sampling process

The sampling process was a mix of randomization and purposive sampling. To establish the sample, the following exclusion criteria was applied: GrOW and SIG projects that were not research-focused were excluded from the sample but GrOW and SIG evaluations were drawn upon in answering questions related to EG effectiveness and likely impact on broader sector. The sample was truncated by including projects that were closed or were expected to be closed in 2018. This left 47 projects. These were randomly selected from the total 84 projects representing the EG universe representing a 90% confidence level and 5% margin of error and ensuring regional representation matching the total projects. These included representation from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Caribbean, MENA, Sub-Saharan Africa and those global in nature.

From these 47 projects, most projects were eliminated based on too few outputs, with some also being strong anomalies for the program including SIG projects that did not really align well with the EG mandate. Then the sample was reviewed to ensure that the sample also represented a range of project officer portfolios, governance structures, and types of research. To ensure this mix, replacements were made with attention to choosing a similar project to the one being replaced. 25 projects remained. Most of these projects received funding in 2014 or 2015.

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Figure 7: Intended impact for EG sample (n=25, 100%)

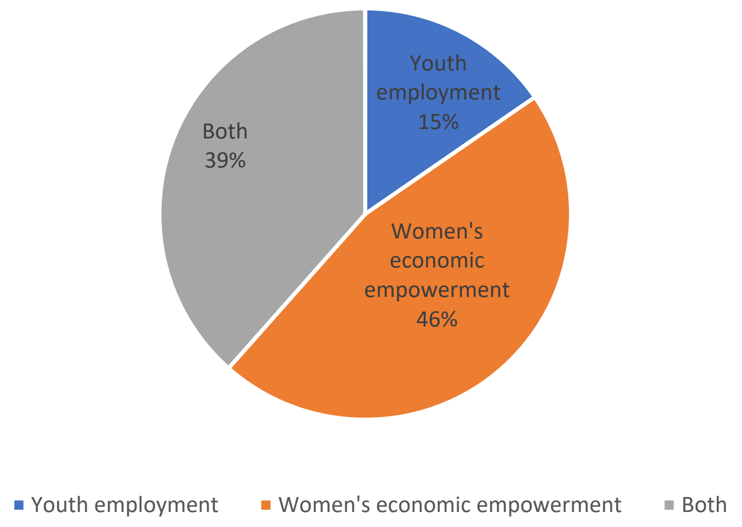
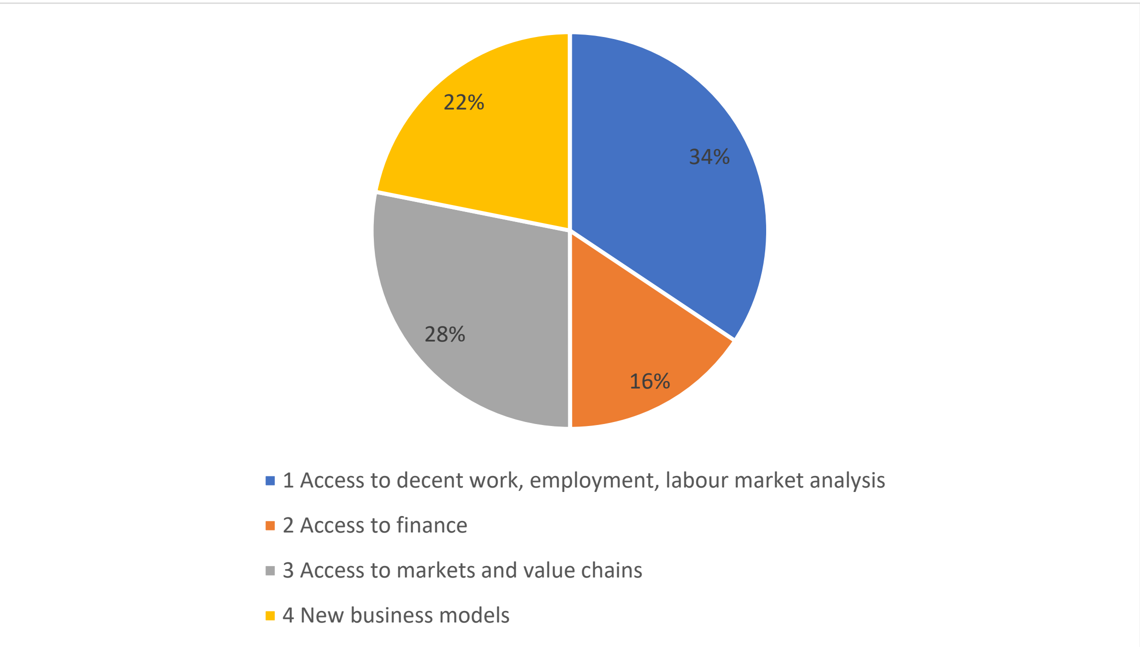


Figure 8: Intended outcomes for EG sample (n=25, 100%)



Effectiveness was analyzed at the project level (across the sample) but mainly at the EG program level in terms of program-level strategy, adaptation, learning and support and accompaniment to projects.

For the last analytical key question related to outcomes and impact, the analysis was not constrained to the truncated sample. The evaluation team looked across the portfolio to analyze and showcase projects which demonstrated potential for success, scale, thought leadership, and building research leadership and networks for influence.

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3. RESULTS: DRIVERS OF RESEARCH QUALITY PLUS

This section answers the question: What are the drivers of quality plus research? In other words, what are the drivers of rigorous and grounded influential research? These included:

- **Coherence**. Strong coherence grounded in clear objectives and usually a solid mixed methods approach
- **Early and continuous engagement** of key influencers
- **Complementarity** between actors involved in research particularly research and practice
- **Contextual innovation**. At least **one solid local partner**, usually the grantee, grounded the research in innovation for the country or region.

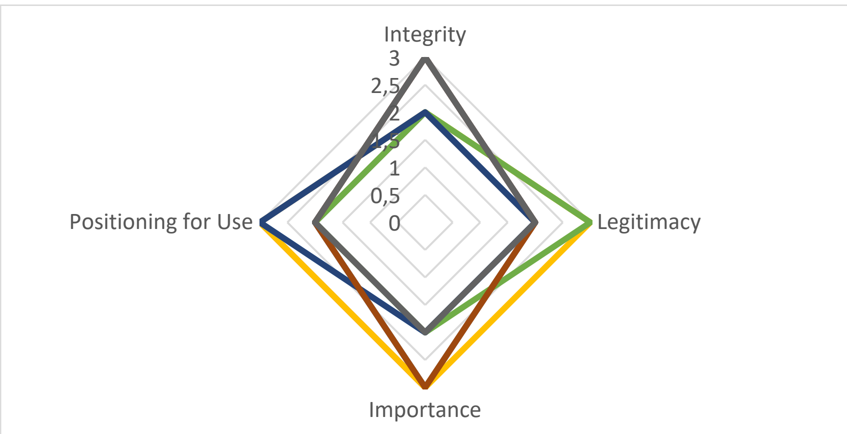
Results are presented based on an analysis of highly rated projects from the EG sample that exhibited these characteristics as well as lower rated projects that did not.

3.1 Highly-Rated Quality Plus Research Projects

Though the research projects varied in nature, there were a number of common characteristics of high-quality research. Eight projects fell into this category including those focused on ensuring decent work in value chains, economic opportunities, and financial inclusion for women and youth, supporting B corporations (socially-oriented corporations) and small enterprises, the care economy, and conditional cash transfers. Two of the highly rated projects focused on areas that are often left out of debates about economic empowerment: the care economy and social policies/protection. The projects spanned Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean.

As the following figure shows, high-rated projects were those that scored a “love to see” (3) or “like to see” (2) in all domains: integrity/rigour; importance; legitimacy; positioning for use. This means that these projects were exceptional in some way and rated highly across the four domains.

Figure 9: Highly rated research projects n=9



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Highly rated projects demonstrated a number of shared characteristics:

- **Strong coherence of the research** between quantitative and qualitative research methods, across different countries or different partners with varied forms of positioning. Sometimes coherence was achieved through a strong principal investigator with a mixed methods background or a team structure that allowed ample iteration if analyses were separate. 71% of the highly-rated projects used mixed methods for the research.
- **Complementary partners or actors in the research**. There was a good mix of rigorous research and practitioner influence. Regardless of the lead agency or funded partner, they were strong at networking and the overall governance structure ensured alignment across research and practice or strong positioning for use. Parallel funding was key in a number of instances both through other donor agencies such as Ford Foundation, Toyota Foundation and through government or private sector investments.
- **Continuous engagement with key influencers** but multiple strategies for uptake and influence highly tailored to influencers. This approach is distinguished from those projects that tend to do research in the first phase and dissemination of these findings and recommendation in a second phase.
- **Contextually-grounded** including gender-responsive approach to the projects examining structural issues that lead to unequal gendered power relations. There was a strong partner, usually the lead agency, who had a strong commitment to the mandate of women, youth or both. Usually this included a strong gender analysis.

To generate these characteristics, the evaluation team examined the high-rated research projects in the EG sample, in the GrOW final review, and in the low-rated research projects. While not exactly the inverse of highly-rated projects, low-rated projects tended to reflect the absence of drivers found in high-rated ones. For example, in one of the lower rated projects, where strong gender analysis capacity was not present internally, even external advisory support did not improve the RQ+.

When characteristics of strong projects were analysed, several drivers emerged of quality plus research as well as how these drivers related to the RQ+ framework. What seemed to be responsible for some of these high-performing charactersitics?

Chart 2: Summary of drivers of highly rated research projects

Characteristics of Strong Projects	Drivers	EG Supports
Strong coherence	Focus on the issues. At least one strong partner who played coherence role, usually had mixed methods background.	Risk identification. Well-crafted objectives for accountability. Support in focusing issues, outputs.
Complementarity- right balance of research and practice	Governance structure and process (both actors on research team and how the	Partner or advisor brokering. Peer learning across program, cluster.

Characteristics of Strong Projects	Drivers	EG Supports
	process helped to align different actors)	
Continuous and early engagement of key influencers (WEE, YE)	Governance process. At least one partner who helped to ground the WEE or YE mandate	Partner brokering and showcasing work for influence. Support in positioning for use.
Strong innovators in local context	At least one strong and embedded local partner who has demonstrated innovation in their field	Identification of strong partners. Knowledge of the context. Peer learning.

Focus. Highly rated projects had clear and focused theories of change. In some cases, POs supported that focus either in issues or outputs. Usually there was internal capacity in the research team where strong research and mixed methods research skills were evident. It seemed, from lower rated projects, that if these were not present internally in at least one partner, it was difficult to coach and mentor these skills externally.

It is also worth noting that it was difficult to determine anything issues-wise across the highly rated projects. The intended outcomes were so diverse that not much could be gleaned in the way of meta-narratives.

Governance structure. The governance structure is also critical to the quality of the research including at least one strong local partner to ground the research coherence, the mandate, and the legitimacy. The governance structure is where coherence, research team alignment, and quality control happen. It is also the structure by which other actors are brought into the research. Since continual engagement of influencers is one of the drivers, the structure and process by which they are brought in matters.

Both from a review of project ratings and through dialogue with EG staff, important conditions for reinforcing the complementarity seemed to be who was initially funded and where they are situated in the governance structure. Given the range of research teams, governance structures, and issues at play, there is no one right solution. However, who is funded and where they are situated are both “levers” that seem to shape the conditions and are within EG’s direct sphere of control. It is helpful to be intentional around these choices and supports as the program effectivess section will elaborate.

Strong research partners embedded in the local context helped to ensure rigor and coherence across countries or contexts. Ample time for iteration was important too. Advisory committees and boards were a helpful mechanism to support rigor but it was also important, as these projects showed, to have solid mixed methods research experience within the research team. 33.3% of projects used this quality control mechanism.

Governance process. Governance has many sides. It is the structure by which the research team is organized for most effective communication and flow of decisions. It is also the process by which the work is organized and outcomes achieved. It is also the informal norms and rules by which the various actors are engaged by the principal investigators. These are often highly situated and socio-cultural.

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By these points, it is clear that the research itself is only part of what leads to research quality. There is much more involved in how the overall research process is carried out, and how actors are aligned to be complementary -- particularly since 60% of the research was carried out by multi-stakeholders. When the evaluation team examined multi-stakeholder projects in more detail, a few interesting observations arose. First, 71% of the highly rated projects were multi-stakeholder projects. However, the reverse is not true. That is, not all projects involving multi-stakeholder networks scored highly or consistently high across the domains.

In fact, there was quite a range of ratings across the multi-stakeholder networks demonstrating that a governance structure type in and of itself is not key to influence. How they leverage the partners within and align to intended outcomes is key. Some began with researchers who brought in advocacy or policy influential partners. Others began with practitioners who engaged researchers to effectively design experimental or other approaches for testing their best pathways. In other cases, a think-tank or practitioner organization helped to coordinate multi-actors. There are multiple pathways.

Whatever the starting point, there was a complementarity ensured by the lead funded agency where other actors in the research process were effectively engaged. The spread of both analysis and influence across the stakeholders helps to ensure sustainability of the efforts. Policy influence is likely only beginning during the time frame of the project funding but the embeddedness of the partners, and their fit for the system in question, helps to ensure that influence will continue long after the research has stopped.

Put another way, the legitimacy of the various stakeholders involved in the research seems to be a driver of influence. One excellent example was a multi-stakeholder network that included a worker rights consortium, a university, an association representing the garment industry, and the Asian development bank, as well as a national development board, UN women, Japan's external trade office, and an international commission of jurists. When you have this breadth of stakeholders that really form key parts of the system, structural change becomes possible and it becomes possible to identify key leverage points where evidence can be helpful. Not all of these stakeholders were involved in the actual research. Many were part of policy consultations and dialogue. However, the engagement of this diversity of issues and stakeholders inevitably strengthens positioning for use and impact.

What role did POs play in supporting highly rated research? Overall, the close accompaniment was important. A number of elements of this accompaniment were identified in interviews with principal investigators and key thought leaders as well as reviewing highly rated projects:

- Well-framed objectives tied to outcomes and mandate for accountability
- Strong risk identification up-front
- Support to projects to focus and align the research with WEE/YE mandate and sectoral relevance
- Support in brokering involvement of other, sometimes unusual, stakeholders and external advisors
- Funding the right partner in the right place in the partnership

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Nine research projects rated moderate by the outcome mapping scale. Though details are provided in Attachment A of all of the ratings, these were not included in this report as the high and low rated conditions were more helpful for improving programming. Moderately rated projects usually had varied scores between 1 (expect to see) and 3 (love to see), meaning they did not clearly fall into highly-rated or poorly rated (largely expect to see and like to see). It is worth mentioning that even a rating of 1 still meets the expect to see criteria. Highly rated projects show what are exceptional.

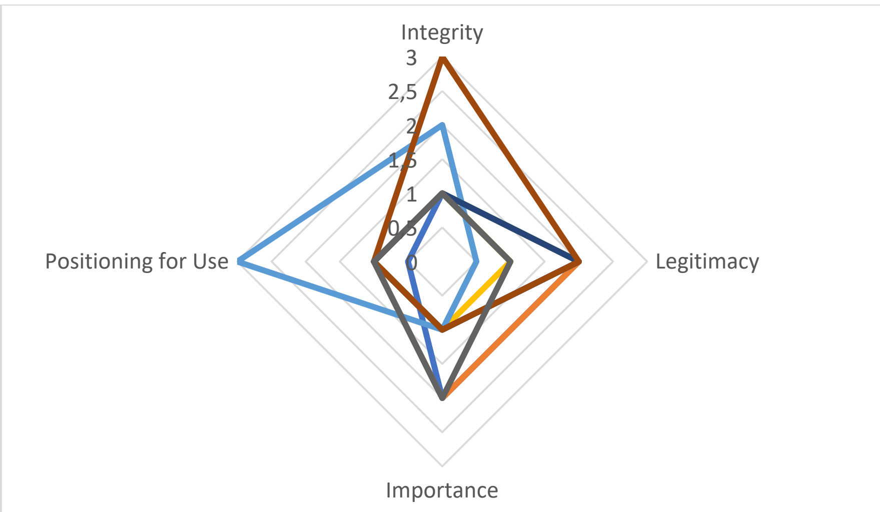
3.2 Lower-Rated Research Quality Plus Projects

In contrast to highly rated projects, lower rated research projects did not navigate the tensions as well between rigor, importance, positioning for use, and legitimacy. Based on the 8 projects that fell into this broad category there seemed to be trade-offs. Projects did well in a certain area such as importance or legitimacy but it seemed to be at the expense of integrity or positioning for use.

Most did not rate well in terms of integrity or rigor. Often there was weak coherence across research components or different contexts. In some cases, multi-country projects had dramatic unevenness where one country outperformed the others (often where the lead funded agency was located) and the comparative nature of the work was not strong. In some, the generalizability was not clear or the theory of change for the project had not materialized well. In the examination of gender, for example, there were examples of drift or limited treatment.

It is questionable, given low rigor, whether the research can then be well positioned to influence in the long run. While a few rated well in terms of positioning for use, there was definitely a relationship between low rating in integrity with low ratings in legitimacy and importance. Just as strong projects have mutually reinforcing outcomes, weaker ones reinforce in the opposite direction.

Figure 10: Lower rated research projects (n=8)



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In the case of lower-rated projects, there were not characteristics that spanned the projects. Rather, they could be described as having different types of challenges. The challenges can be broken into three types ranging from the easiest to the more challenging to correct: content; mandate drift; and limited ability to oversee quality. The following chart summarizes the challenges as well as potential corrective measures that could be used to improve the projects for the remainder of the program. It is important to note that oversight and governance issues may be more difficult to improve with corrective measures depending on whether the issue is structural or more to do with process and communication, or brokering that can be supported.

Chart 3: Summary of key challenges and possible corrective measures

Nature of challenge	Challenge	Corrective measures going forward
Content	Topics and issues too wide, lacking coherence	Support project to focus to ensure coherence. Instances where EG encouraged either issue, audience or output focus. It was helpful when these interventions were done early and grounded in well-framed outcomes.
	Poor integrity or rigor due to capacity issues in team	Provide capacity supports, external advisor.
Mandate drift	Too academic	Bring in external advisors, support brokering with key influencers.
	Innovative in field but drifting from WEE or YE mandate	Support project to ensure WEE or YE mandate does not drift. Review and reinforce mandate holder in team. Determine whether will, capacity or governance.
Limited ability to oversee quality	Research quality is more removed from EG oversight such as with call for proposals	Possible to request early outputs. As some projects have done, review proposal screening criteria and ensure alignment to mandate is clear.
	Some forms of data-based or implementation research rigor or integrity is hard to assess	May be a structural issue through research institution/partner or a process issue. In this case, minimize risk and perhaps expect at least one or two research outputs in future programs

It is helpful to review these challenges in more detail as well as what corrective measures might be possible to address some of them going forward.

Content-related challenges. There were two types of content related challenges. In some projects, the theory of change was not clear. Outputs and issue focus were too diverse for coherence. In some cases, these issues were related to capacity of a certain type of analysis-experimental research, or gender analysis. In other cases, the lack of clarity related more to a lack of focus.

Mandate drift. Notably, common across the lower-rated research projects was the lack of gender and youth built explicitly into the objectives. These objectives were helpful mechanisms of accountability that hold the projects accountable to the mandate.
There seemed to be two different types of mandate drift: academic and innovators.

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Too academic. Some projects were too academic to be in a strong position to influence policy or those outside academe. These projects were not strong in bringing in the practitioner and policy maker influence early or effectively enough.

Lowly rated projects included a category of research that was too heavily focused on academic publication over positioning for use. A sub-analysis of research centres and researcher network showed this type of governance structure to be much weaker on positioning for use and taking a dissemination approach to positioning rather than engagement. There was also a suprising mix in integrity rating. These findings resonated for at least one of the POs.

Evidence, as many in the interviews mentioned, does not influence on its own. The following is an excerpt from one of the key thought leaders or stakeholders. They highlighted well how multi-stakeholder networks support influence in the strong projects.

> You cannot be a researcher if you want to influence someone. Publish a journal and that is perfect for a number of researchers. You want applied policy or private practice it is something you cannot do by yourself. The dream I am doing this great research. And putting it into the system. It doesn't happen. You have to push it. Multi-stakeholder networks help. You want to be in those when you want to say something. Convince others. The more important part and difficult part is listening to others. And I think that is the key. If you are really willing to listening to others. If you say, you have to change everything. Not feasible and doesn't have a long life. You have to help the other understand your great idea. Most researchers find that difficult to do. -Key thought leader

Research and academic evidence, of course, play an important role in influence. It was important that the research process was well-combined with practice/innovation and appropriate engagement with policy makers and other influencers.

Mandate drift innovators. The opposite problem was also a challenge. That is, some of the projects, particularly those where practitioners or the private sector partners were directly funded, had drifted from the WEE mandate and gender focus. Several of these were large innovative private sector partners who had established themselves in their fields in financial inclusion, market systems work. There is strong reason to believe that there will be impact in the sector. However, a challenge and potential risk for EG with some of these partners is the lack of leverage with these partners. While EG/IDRC can push these partners to have a more gendered approach and commitment to women's economic empowerment, there is little to prevent them from doing "business as usual" and not following through with their commitment to the mandate. In one case, the partners committed to marginalized groups more broadly but not to women or youth empowerment. In another case, the partner explicitly stated that if gender was not of interest to the private sector partners they would not push the agenda. In these cases, the challenge seems more a matter of will and priorities than capacity.

There was a strong overlap between private sector funded agencies, social business models and implementation research. These partners were investigating opportunities in value chains, border economies, financial inclusion and associated regulation, small enterprises,

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and impact corporations. Just as women are disproportionately represented in informal work, the care and informal economy, and are found largely at the bottom of most value chains, the larger and more formal the business or economic resources at stake, the less likely a strong gendered approach is taken. There was evidence of drift from the WEE mandate with at least four of the sample projects where large established private sector partners were funded.

Strong innovative partners, especially from the private sector, or oriented to the private sector, have many streams of funding and have strong orientations to the way they work. As was reinforced by strongly established academic thought leaders and institutions, IDRC can have very little leverage with some of these partners if and where they tend to stray from the mandate. In the case of the private sector and alternative business model partners in the sample, some strayed from the WEE and YE mandate, some from strong gender analysis and some from both.

Examples include a focus on the national share of global chain activity with a focus on smallholders rather than a solid gendered intersectional analysis that identified gendered access and control within the value chains. Others identified that women and youth were the targets for greater access to finance but didn't really look at gendered differences in mobile use, one of the main vehicles being explored. Nevertheless, there were some highly rated private sector partners who were able to make effective use of research and stay grounded in the mandate. It is helpful to learn from what worked well.

Limited ability to oversee quality. The last challenge was the lack of ability to oversee quality for some of the projects, either because the project had not produced many outputs early enough or, in the case of implementation research or second-level competitive proposal calls, there were not always research outputs to assess directly. This lack of direct accountability is worth noting as something that needs to be well managed. As with any risks, it does not mean that these projects should not be funded but that the risk might be minimized as a percentage of the overall portfolio.

Much can be learned from "positive deviance." One project, for example, used a platform to bring researchers into the project to assess the social impact of social enterprises. Another strong performing project in financial inclusion combined practical and strategic implementation with research. The implementation research was the first step to learn about access and exclusion particularly for women and youth. In a second phase, when more had been learned about the dynamics and contextual differences in dynamics a more rigorous experimental randomized control trial was carried out to investigate different pathways and their respective effects on outcomes. This is a sound example of how implementation research can effectively be combined with more traditional research.

When those in the sample focused on implementation research were examined separately, it became clear that the implementation research was very strong on positioning for use. This is not surprising. However, the projects were not as strong on integrity or legitimacy.

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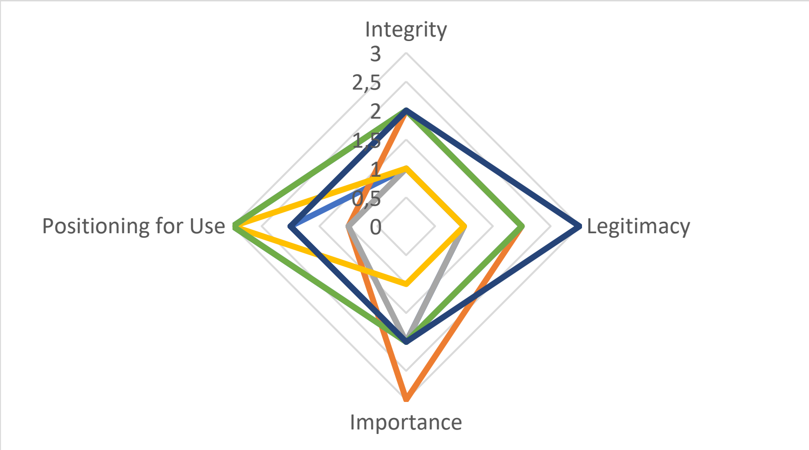
Figure 11: Implementation research (n=7)



In part, some of the projects focused on alternative business models did not produce research but rather created platforms for the crowd-sourcing, digitization, or generation of new evidence or data. While some of these have potential to add value, who will use the data and how it will be used for influence and impact is unclear. So, while, increasing revenues, or access, or information is valuable in and of itself, the wider implications for replicability and adaptation in different contexts likely rests on solid research around the application.

Future programs. For some of the projects corrective measures are more difficult because the issues relate to structural issues of governance. For instance, a bulk of the country researchers are new to the methods being used or there is not strong gender capacity on the research team. Contextual conditions such as a dramatic change in the economic or political situation are such that positioning for influence may be challenging.

In these cases, it is helpful to identify and support projects that may be at risk of lower quality research and impact. These can be limited in future portfolios based on risk identification. These assessments were highly helpful and accurate. Even thought these projects may not be able to contribute to the program-level policy narratives with solid evidence, focus can be placed on leaving greater built capacity of local researchers and practitioners to contribute to future work.

Another structural aspect that may be difficult to address by the end of the program is projects that do not demand research outputs. Drawing from those that were able to effectively combine experimentation, implementation, and research, it may be wise given IDRC's reputation for research, to expect at least one or two research outputs for every project regardless of type of method.

Drawing on literature on the evaluation of action and implementation research, the evaluation team, for instance, assessed the research based on whether new knowledge had been created as well as that a change in outcomes was evident or could be verified (Khan and Tzortzopoulis, 2016, Herr and Anderson, 2005). See Annex B for how different measures of integrity were used for the different methods.

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It may be helpful for EG to consider the use of different standards for integrity or rigor as the evaluation team did for different types of research distinguishing mixed methods, experimental methods, other quantitative methods, and implementation research. In the case of incremental research, other measures of integrity can be used. Within implementation research it may also be helpful to distinguish further between research that is implementation research closer to practice, experimental research (with controlled experiments), or evidence-based data platforms.

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4. RESULTS: DRIVERS OF EG PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

This section discusses the drivers of EG effectiveness at the program level. These drivers include:

- Close accompaniment and context-specific brokering
- Balancing project focus with program strategy
- Contextual conditions for influence and policy impact
- An agile theory of change

The program effectiveness is based not only on the relationship with projects and fundees. It is also based on the ability to support projects to position research well in context and to learn and adapt the theory of change for the program. Based on these drivers, recommendations are made throughout about how these could be even further strengthened.

4.1 Close Accompaniment and Context-Specific Brokering

As the previous section highlighted, one of EG (indeed, IDRC's) strengths and value-added in the sector is its reputation for having close accompaniment with knowledgeable staff who support projects in strengthening performance without dominating. One thought leader and principal investigator captured EG's strengths well and echoed many other interviewees:

> IDRC is not just a funder. They really get involved. That is one of the positive things about the team and how they work. I worked with several program officers. They were always in the research. Asking questions, participating in every single step. Not invading the space but supporting. Help with other networks and resources. And the second thing was very key in being patient. They supported us for 10 years not with a ten-year grant for years. The renewal of the support. But it required a lot of time. Influencing public policy takes a lot of perseverance and time. And that is very rare in the funding community.

As one PO put it, clearly EG POs put more time and resources than the industry average into accompaniment. This was confirmed by the majority of PIs and respondents interviewed.

What were the key elements to the success of this close accompaniment? A number of conditions arose from analysis of the interviews with principal investigators and key thought leaders as well as reviewing high rated projects:

- Knowledgable staff
- Well-framed objectives tied to outcomes for accountability
- Strong risk identification up-front
- Support to projects to focus and align the research with WEE/YE mandate and sectoral relevance

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- Support in brokering involvement of other, sometimes unusual, stakeholders or advisors
- Funding the right partner in the right place in the partnership

In many ways, EG supports projects to take a big picture, systems lens to the research. Through strong partner selection, brokering, and the design of objectives and outcomes, POs help to position the project as well as keep it aligned for sectoral relevance. One thought leader commented that "the operational dimension is well-managed and risk management of the team is very good."

Well-framed objectives seem somewhat obvious but they did prove important across highly rated projects and were not always present in other projects. Well-framed meant that the objectives helped the various partners or stakeholders clarify their roles and approach to the evidence. The objectives were also outcome-focused and clearly named policy positioning and were explicity about gender and youth mandates. Taking this time up front seemed to be an important investment in accountability so that as the project carried forward there was a clear, yet flexible, guidepost about the direction. It was also helpful if these objectives were already outcome-focused and helped to ground the overall program mandate.

There were good examples of how the POs and EG adapted to the context both in partnership brokering and risk mitigation. To minimize and mitigate risk including security protocols, insurance, more frequent communication, and appropriate changes in scheduling. Choosing the right partner to begin with was key, whether a new network of researchers or an existing think-tank, and required a sound understanding of the context and various stakeholders involved. EG's advantage of having a global perspective and a history of working with multi-stakeholders helps projects to identify what set of skills and perspectives might be missing. IDRC's wide network has been invaluable in terms of the brokering and, later, being able to support projects to showcase and share their work in important multi-lateral forums.

In terms of project accompaniment, it is also helpful to distinguish program levers that are preventative (effective selection; risk identification; supporting strong project objectives) and those that happen during the process (brokering advisory support; coaching related to skills, editing, positioning and show-casing work; risk mitigation).

4.2 Balancing Project-Focus with Program-Level Strategy

The bottom-up and heterogenous approach to a research portfolio is both EG's strength and its challenge. The heterogeneity or multi-disciplinary multi-stakeholder approach to research has been raised repeatedly, by thought leaders and key stakeholders as well as reflections of PIs and POs. The heterogeneity of approaches reflects the focus on local, context and bottom-up approaches to change. This heterogeneity is also reflected in the EG team itself, as this quote from an interviewee demonstrates:

> Strengths – team is multidisciplinary, which is critical to understanding women's economic empowerment; significant effort in identifying quality of research; needs

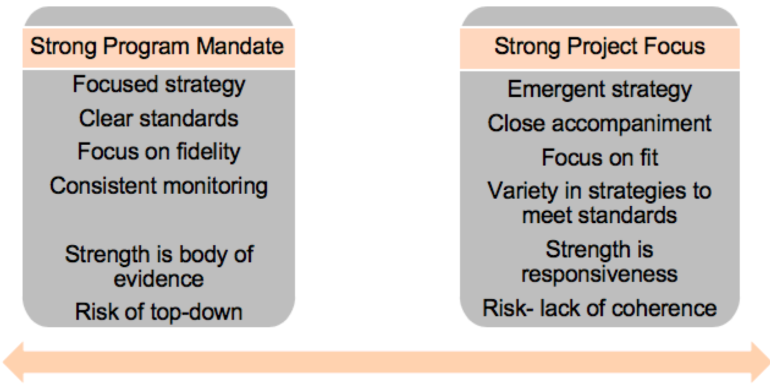
leadership to allocate resources, balancing of geographical priorities – key thought leader

It is clear that in-depth accompaniment to projects that allow for this heterogeneity is a strength of EG and IDRC overall. However, it is also true that this strength can also be a blind spot. Too heterogenous a portfolio makes it difficult to find coherence in the program overall.

While the project focus is important, it is not exclusive of a sound programming strategy and emphasis as well. The following chart illustrates some of the tensions and trade-offs. There are a few areas that are important to focus on to ensure a strong program-level focus: focused strategy; standards; monitoring and policy narratives (body of evidence).

Currently EG is far along the spectrum toward a strong project focus (vs. program) and while there are certainly benefits to this strong accompaniment focus, a stronger mandate would strengthen the program's overall positioning in the sector.

Figure 12: Balancing project with program focus



A stronger focus on the program would mean a focus on the program (vs project) mandate and ensuring alignment and coherence of emerging policy. A program focus means having a fairly clear theory of change while allowing that those pathways and assumptions will also emerge and adapt. It is acknowledged that many staff members interviewed commented on the workload implications of a more program-focused strategy including how intensive the GrOW program was for its outcomes. This is worth highlighting. However, it is still recommended that the EG program could move ever so slightly toward a focus on program vs its current focus of being highly, indeed almost entirely, project focused.

One project officer also noted, legitimately, that a focus on program coherence may come at the expense of countries with weak research capacity. While this may be a risk, given the heterogeneity of research projects, capacities across countries and regions, a greater amount of focus and coherence may also, arguably, have the reverse effect. If the majority of the portfolio focused more in certain outcome areas, peer learning and cross-fertilization becomes much easier. As it is, the atomized nature of the issues being addressed are so diverse that it is an issue both for meta-policy narratives and coherence but also for cross-learning. As the same project officer noted, impact and contribution of early investments on focus may not be visible for a decade or so. Given IDRC's commitment to building local capacity, this may be a real tension within most programs. Again, some of these tensions are mitigated by acknowledging that focus for the majority of the portfolio can still allow some anomalies that are identified as such.

The GrOW Mid-Term Evaluation observed that the program was much more project focused and its success by the end of the program would depend on bringing that focus up to the program level, ensuring coherence, alignment of the macro and micro research, and ensuring that evidence fed into a strong policy narratives at the program level. The GrOW team did an enormous amount of synthesis and alignment work and provided clarity on key bodies of evidence that emerged including contracting thought leaders for synthesis reports as well. It is important to acknowledge that not all of these resources or conditions will be available in the future to support similar programs. So, it is worth highlighting four elements that seemed important for GrOW success that could be transferrable to other programs. These included: clear focused program mandate; external funding and accountability; good outcome monitoring allowing adaptations and dialogue around quality; time invested in program level policy narratives and synthesis. While EG remaining and future programs will surely not have the level of supports that GrOW had, the program can still dedicate some more of its resources to the program level mandate.

Certainly, EG was able to leverage successful partnerships both for learning and funding. EG helped to mobilise and leverage $CAD75 million of external funding. There was a relationship between this mobilization and external funding. These strategic objectives are largely reinforcing of EG but there were pressures to engage with new partners particularly private sector partners that can certainly demonstrate quality plus and impact but may have trade-offs. It is worthwhile to have an intentional private sector strategy (perhaps in each region) so that these partners can be assured to feed the broader WEE and YE mandates.

In terms of the overall EG program, there has been a similar adaptive capacity though perhaps the adaptations have been more focused at the project rather than the program level. More program focus occurs at the start of the program through a collective vetting and selection process. Internally, time spent gathering synthesis and reflections at the program level such as for the IDRC Board meeting in 2017 and earlier for the GrOW program helped with program strategy. The practice of using cohorts, peer learning, and partnerships across the Inclusive Economies area also seemed important for program strategy. Broadly, the ability to understand pathways, clusters and trends across the program portfolio allows not only internal learning but also program adaptation to strengthen impact. The focus also better positions the program to articulate and share learning with the broader sectors. In some ways, the external parallel funding partners, programmatic partners, even internal PO learning partners, help to create accountability for coherence. The dialogue necessary for such partnerships to succeed help to focus and align partners, and therefore bring some clarity to the pathways. Partnerships do not necessarily bring the focus but provide an incentive to the internal work of mapping, strategizing, and revisiting outcomes.

There does not seem to be a strong culture of focusing at the program level. The EG team cited workload as an issue for program level strategy. While perhaps not a strong strategic emphasis, there are, however, demonstrations of mechanisms used to ensure a strong

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program mandate within EG. The prospectus originally used by the SIG program was an important element of ensuring a strong program mandate. Certainly, the existence of external and engaged funders (DFID, Hewlett Packard Foundation) helped to focus and strengthen GrOW through continual dialogue around program-level standards, strategy, and research quality. GrOW also drew on thought leaders to author literature reviews to help shape the program focus and address key gaps and opportunities. As well, thought leaders were contracted to help to provide syntheses. While these yielded some helpful insights, external support and accountability doesn't replace EG's own internal coherence and focus. The policy narratives could still be sharper to participate effectively in sectoral dialogue. How the EG team integrates substantive narrative lessons from the research it funds is key to ensuring that the program is lithe and effective in ways that reinforce its positioning in the broader sector.

One PO made an important observation about the supports necessary to ensure program strategy that is worth citing in its entirety:

> For instance, GrOW turned out to be the most visible part of EG maybe because of the program approach taken with GrOW, but also very likely because there were a designated knowledge management PO, AND a designated coordinator operating at the SPS level under the Program Leader. As strange (contradictory) as it may sound, GrOW probably had a strong program mandate with a strong project focus.
>
> A related lesson is probably that for the development of programs' impact pathways / theories of change, professional technical support should be provided to the various teams (in addition to ensuring consistency and articulating synergies within IE or more broadly, within IDRC).

4.3 Contextual Conditions for Influence and Policy Impact

Even close accompaniment and program strategy will have limited effectiveness if the context is not conducive to influence. Conducive contextual conditions were a driver of policy uptake found in the analysis of the projects that scored well on positioning for use and was a repeated narrative in the interviews. Many commented that not enough consideration is given to these highly important and varied contextual conditions for the success of the research and its influence. The program's effectiveness depends on a partnership and evidence strategy that is aligned with these contextual conditions.

It is common to consider research or evidence and the policy context in these discussions. However, the EG team and portfolio demonstrate that there are a number of underrecognized factors that affect the program's effectiveness in context. The EG portfolio is organized operationally around regions with each PO largely representing a particular region. This helps them to deepen their knowledge and relationships in these regions. Indeed, most have research and practitioner experience in the region they represent.

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Many of the PIs, the POs, and the thought leaders commented that not enough consideration is given to these highly important and varied contextual conditions for the success of the research and its influence. One thought leader interviewed captured well what many had mentioned:

> We like to think that good evidence influences policy and policy makers but, in reality, it just doesn't often work that way. Even when they know about the data there are all kinds of reasons, many political, why they choose not to follow the evidence- key thought leader

POs also mentioned the importance of considering the state of both research capacity and the maturity of the sector in each region as a baseline. Also, many projects in the EG were subject to change and even risk given changing political circumstances. It is difficult, or perhaps unfair, to compare projects against certain standards or expectations when there is such wide variance in conditions and capacities.

What influences evidence-based policy change in context? What are the routes to this change? It depends on what the evidence is building upon. Three elements seemed important beyond the evidence itself and the policy context:

- The state of local research and thought leadership
- The state of practice and innovation
- The policital context and will

Local research and thought leadership. The context for research and thought leadership helps to determine what capacity building strategies should be used. The following statement from an interviewee provides a good example:

> PIs talked about two groups broadly with different types of challenge- those that leave the country to study and come back (strong skills but not grounded in real issues here) and those who have remained in [named country] (weaker in terms of research skills but well grounded). They require different strategies.

The two types of researchers requite different influencing strategies, capacity building supports and may be involved in different approaches to evidence.

One thought leader and principal investigator offered a helpful perspective:

> There are two routes to policy impact – one, get a set of high quality academics together to do policy relevant research, and disseminate the findings in high visibility conferences. The second route is to work with locally embedded country researchers who have good links with their own policy communities. I have not seen IDRC do the first route well (or at all), but they have tried the second route with some success. The important conditions for both routes is high quality policy relevant research and clear links with policy-makers, either at the global or national levels. – key thought leader

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While this observation is helpful in higlighting that there are different types of researchers that may influence in different ways, it seems to open insights into even more routes to policy impact. The EG portfolio demonstrates more than these two routes alone and more than just the influence of researchers. Local practice, innovation, and political will seem to also matter.

Local practice and innovation. The highly rated projects, in particular, demonstrated that practitioners and private sector partners can play an important influencing role for policy change. Good examples exist in financial inclusion, markets, and employment research. Sometimes an innovation can attract the interest of a policy-maker rather than research evidence making a case for policy change.

The route where researchers bring in practitioners who know advocacy and positioning is a valid and important one for influence. However, private sector implementation that effectively makes use of researchers to understand the effectiveness and impact of their interventions (as with social enterprises) proved equally impactful in the portfolio.

The rating systems for small businesses, B Corporations, and impact investing are good examples of models or innovations that, when effectively tested, can be scaled. These innovations can be better understood through research and then replicated elsewhere to understand what contextual adaptations might be necessary. Such rating systems are an important part of supporting businesses and corporations to be inclusive and to attempt to redress some of the inequities.

It is also helpful to note that some of the alternative uses of technology that were quite innovative were not always large innovations. For example, the use of tablets for data collection or for the delivery of financial education were noted innovative examples of using technology to expand outreach. Technolgy and social media have an important impact on affecting gendered social norms and should be considered as influencing strategies – for example, an e-chat group and use of social media by a national network of women economists. It may be worthwhile to explore greater links with Networked Economies around how these various innovations and overlapping research areas could be better leveraged.

It is also instructive to understand where there were challenges working with private sector partners. In some of the value chains work, the project was not able to get the level of cooperation by factories around working conditions as had been hoped for in the project. As one of the PIs in the private sector explained, “it has to be clear how engaging in the project is benefiting the company or business. They may have an interest in the social aspects but their incentives cannot be assumed.” Particularly for the private sector, positive deviance may be an important strategy. Where are the factories that have done well with working conditions and what can be learned for them vs. where is the important or growth value chain and what can be done working with the factories? This example also highlights a tension between growth and inclusion vs equity. One PO mentioned in interview that there are tensions between the private sector as a source for new jobs, higher incomes and better opportunities for youth and women as compared to a focus on demands for better working conditions mentioned.

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Political context. Political context, not only the policy context, was mentioned by many of the respondents. Some of the countries participating were adjusting to a period of post-conflict, while others were experiencing a volatile political, economic or security situation. Some of the political and economic situations changed during the course of the program.There were good examples of how the POs and EG adapted to the context to minimize and mitigate risk including security protocols, insurance, more frequent communication, and appropriate changes in scheduling.

However, it would be helpful to have a better understanding of the various routes to influence and policy impact to understand where evidence and positioning strategies fit in. The political context may even determine who the right partners should be. One multi-country project, for example, on value chains recognized the importance of going through government ministries of agriculture in one country and through research institutions or directly through private companies in other cases, recognizing that some of the commodities and their value chains were highly politicized. It was a matter of being savvy about where the leverage points existed in each context.

4.4 Agile Theory of Change for the Program

Getting a better understanding of quality research, routes to influence, and policy impact mean an agile approach to the theory of change. Alignment and emergence around the theory of change could be considered another driver of program effectiveness. Put more practically, the team’s ability to revisit and tighten the theory of change over the course of the program reflects its ability to learn about routes to influence and policy impact. Sharpening this monitoring would not only help to show where EG/IDRC add value to the process, but would strengthen the program’s strategy, adaptation, and policy narratives. An agile theory of change helps the program to navigate the various building blocks: project success, contextual conditions, the IDRC and IE strategic directions, and emerging outcome pathways based on diverse positiong routes for influence.

The theory of change has been described as helpful for the team but it not as robust as it could be for understanding routes to influence and policy impact. It was a fine articulation as a starting point and it has been useful for the EG team but it could be leveraged further as a springboard for dialogue and learning about routes to policy impact. When we combine the theory of change (Annex E) with the reporting against it (Annex F), it seems that the monitoring is more focused on quantitative capture rather than more nuanced outcomes and pathways to policy impact and influence. Some of the indicators in the theory of change are too general (i.e. knowledge generation without a descriptor for quality) or too “bundled” to be meaningful in understanding pathways. One example is the intermediate outcome “women and youth have a wider access to financial inclusion and decent jobs through global value chains.” Not only does it bundle the impact populations, but it combines financial inclusion with decent employment and value chains. There are few projects that combine these aspects and doing so also makes it more difficult to assess progress against one of the sub-components in this statement.

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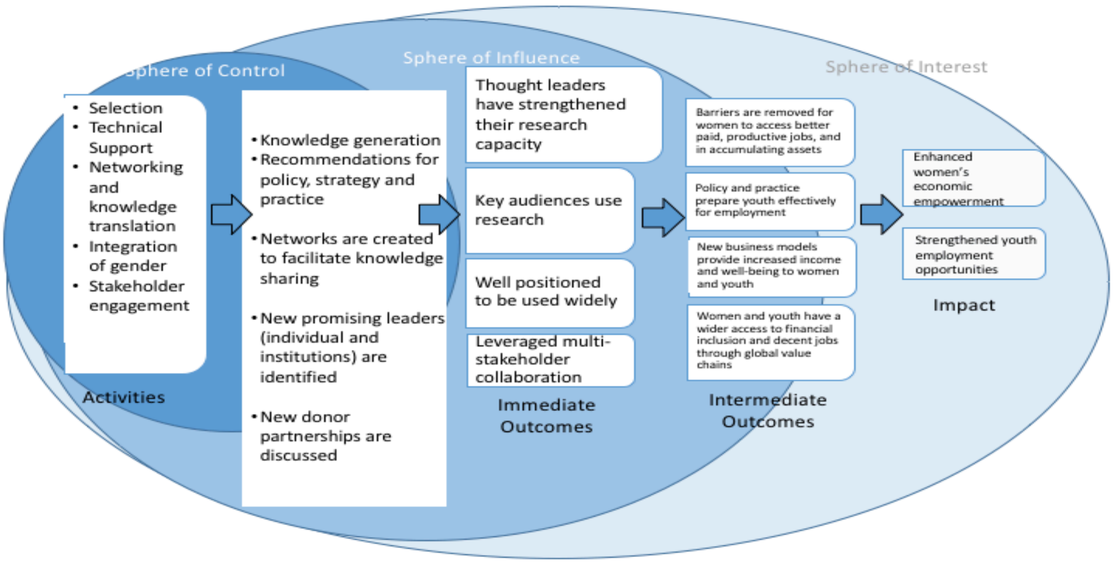
Figure 12: EG theory of change



As earlier stated, the theory of change is a fine starting point. Broadly, the activities are the activities related to accompaniment, immediate outcomes to how impact is achieved and intermediate outcomes more around the "what" of the research.

There was also an issue of consistency. It was noted during the assessments, for example, that POs had often different ways of anecdotally describing outcomes. This diversity illustrates the project vs program tension and also where the EG team might put some more pressure on the synergies around the theorie(s) of change. It is helpful to have consistent quantitative measures as found in Annex F against strategic objectives. However, it is also helpful to meaningfully understand and discuss what differences matter in making sense of pathways and positioning for influence.

For the remainder of the program, the EG team might use the theory of change as a springboard for discussion around where the projects in their pathways are clustering in different ways. What might be missing that has emerged in practice? What is in the theory of change that might need some reframing? What differences matter? The EG team might, by region as the portfolio is already organized, do some mapping and clustering to dialogue around trends, different project elements, and contextual differences. These would include a partnership strategy either generally or by types of partners.

Overall, the lack of clarity in the strategy for the new partners (often linked to new types of research) may have led to weaker learning because there is nothing to assess against. Because there are so many shapes and approaches to private sector engagement, the resulting performance of these partnerships is equally varied. The same was true for implementation research. There were some strong examples of experimental research that was well-applied and and produced important outcomes. However, some of the implementation research did not seem to have wide applicability beyond the project itself. Of course, heterogeneity characterizes EG and IDRC's strength. However, the engagement could have clearer aims or principles that guide it. A more sharpened strategy around private sector engagement could be developed, not as an end in itself since private sector engagement is not always desirable. Part of this strategy would include a savvy analysis of how, indeed if, private sector engagement supports other outcomes and where private sector partners fit into the landscape and system with respect to others. This area will be further deepened in an accompanying issues brief paper.

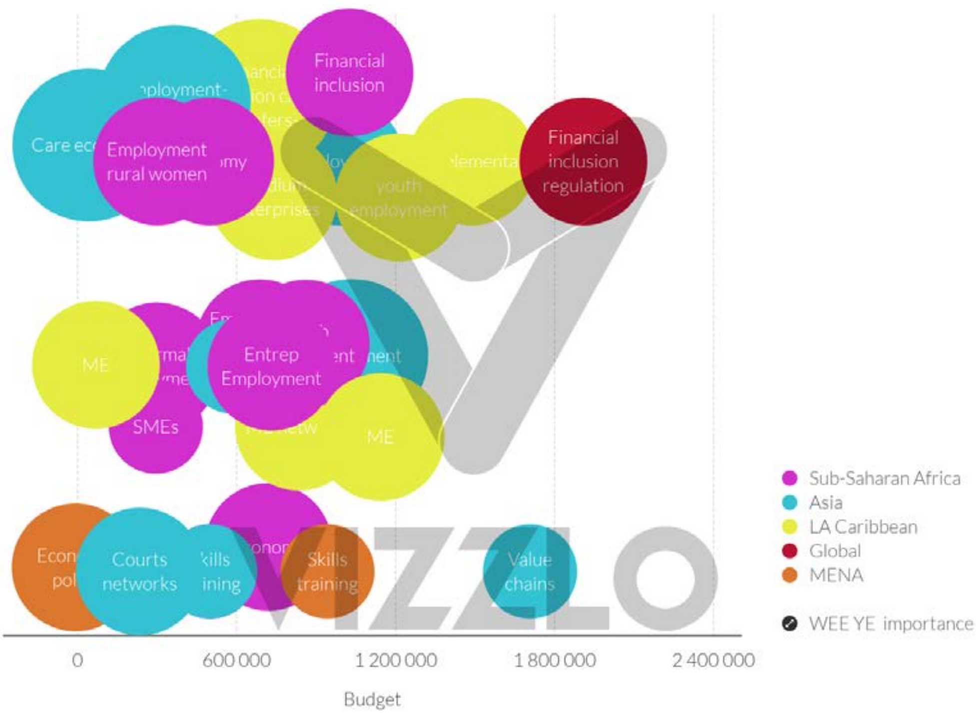
The evaluation team attempted to do some EG mapping and clustering. In the following diagram, the three rows represent highly rated, moderate rated, and low rated projects, while also showing the budget allocated, the research issues, and the alignment with WEE or YE mandate. While more illustrative than exhaustive, some interesting patterns arose.

The highly rated projects had more geographical representation in Latin America and the Caribbean. The approach to both employment and enterprises in this region tended to be more formal.

There also seemed to be many programs focused on the bottom of the pyramid in terms of working conditions, financial inclusion, entrepreneurship, and employemnt. There might be some policy narratives emerging for this sector.

It seems helpful to distinguish integration into formal employment and formal financial inclusion with informal micro, small, and medium enterprises (entrepreneurship). In this regard, the clustering or cohorts that EG has used to learn across, for example, financial inclusion projects or YE and violence, have been important. It would be helpful to continue to ensure peer learning across domain areas also for policy narrative coherence. What, for example, can a weaker example of financial inclusion learn from a stronger one?

Figure 13: Mapping of EG portfolio



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Reflecting on what has so far been learned by the EG program, some of this mapping of the theory of change could accommodate the following considerations and emergent learnings. There is more to understand about these processes to influence, position for use, and impact policy.

Chart 4: Emergent learning from the EG portfolio

Accompaniment	Contextual elements	Positioning for influence (how)	Contributions to evidence (what)	Impact areas
Pre (Selection; risk identification; parallel funding; learning partnerships)	State of research	Lead agency? (Research; practice/innovation; policy makers)	Financial inclusion	WEE
During (peer learning; capacity supports – i.e. gender integration, methods; brokering partners and advisors)	State of practice and innovation	Research partnerships Multi-stakeholder partnerships Researcher networks Multi-stakeholder networks (created; bridged; aligned; deepened)	SMEs (informal and formal), Social enteprises, B Corps, impact investing	YE
	State of policy and political will	Data platforms (on and offline)	Markets, value chains, labour markets	Where inclusion and where equity? Why?
		Building local research leadership	Employment and decent work (formal and informal)	
			Connection of economic with social norms, care economy, social policies	

These details show many of the elements that emerged in the learning evaluation that seemed to affect the effectiveness of the program. There are, for example, different aspects to consider around how EG supports projects in their governance structure. Sometimes new networks were created, sometimes different actors were bridged or better aligned. Sometimes an existing, perhaps established, network was deepened in some way through the research project. It may be helpful to be more granular about EG/IDRC's roles to improve learning and impact. The evaluation team will detail some of these examples in the issues brief.

EG/IDRC has a real opportunity to understand positioning for influence and policy impact. The demonstration of the research portfolio, as seen represented in the sample, provide more nuance and complexity to the original expression of the theory of change. From a systems approach to learning and adaptation, this is exciting and mirrors broader trends.

Over the last several years, there has been a movement away from results-based logical frameworks to theory of change approaches to monitoring, learning, and evaluation. While there are overlapping elements between these approaches, there are also some important distinctions. Theory of change:

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- Is an ongoing process of reflection to explore change and how it happens within a particular context or sector.
- Acknowledges explicitly that there are many pathways to change and the process is not necessarily linear.
- Is more focused on outcomes due to a realization that past log-frame approaches have been far too focused on activities and outputs.
- Is more like a compass than a map.

(Gassel, 2016; Valters, 2015).

Because of the many possible pathways to change, it may be more helpful to negotiate assumptions and render them explicit rather than try to pin down causal and logical relations between activities. Coming back to the theory of change, it means that there is a balance between counting and dialogue around pathways and assumptions, between the original theory of change intended and the reality that emerges.

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5. THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND LIKELY IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

This section identifies EG's likely thought leadership and impact on women's economic empowerment and youth employment as a factor of its:

- Likely contributions to women's economic empowerment evidence and uptake
- Likely contributions to youth employment evidence and uptake
- Ability to position portfolio for use and influence
- Clarity on EG's value-added

The first two drivers relate to what evidence is being produced that adds value to these sectors. The last two drivers relate to how EG and IDRC approach research and evidence and potentially demonstrate EG/IDRC's value-added particularly with respect to RQ+ and building local research capacity.

5.1 Likely Contributions to WEE Evidence and Uptake

From a weaker beginning with gender analysis in the SIG program, EG established itself as a global actor in the research, practice, and dialogue of women's economic empowerment as reconfirmed by virtually every key thought leader and EG and PI stakeholders interviewed. Overall, EG has developed a strategy that has adapted well to the broader sector, particularly WEE and the Feminist aid agenda in Canada.

EG's focus on WEE has been timely. The Centre is working on gender-transformative research and programming strategies. The Centre's Strategic Framework 2010-2015 recognises that economic inequality can coincide with exclusion and inequity along various dimensions such as gender, class, ethnicity, age, religion, geography, etc. Different forms of inequity often compound and reinforce one another. Particularly, research that purports to be "gender-blind" can contribute to entrenching existing disparities. It will be important to ensure that there is alignment going forward and that how economic inequalities play out in gendered ways continue to be deeply explored.

The part of the EG portfolio focused on women's economic empowerment, including but not limited to GrOW, was the most visible and influential part of EG by all accounts including key thought leaders in the field. Here are a few examples echoed by other key stakeholders interviewed:

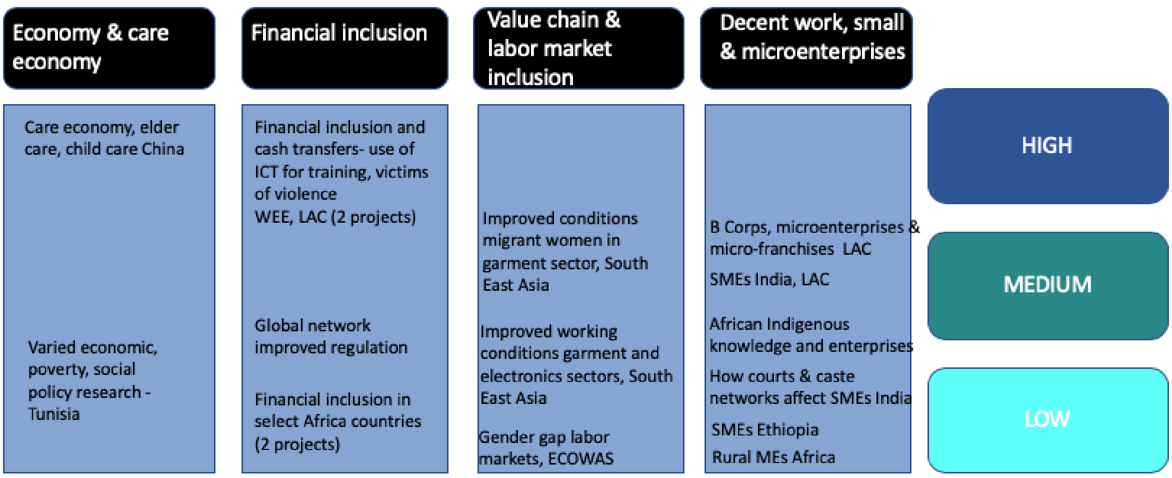
> Women's economic empowerment has been the most exciting..... The focus on context, structures of power, has been extremely revealing in WEE.
>
> [WEE was] One of IDRC's flagship programmes, relating to the agenda of women's economic empowerment, which is of global concern and in Canada in particular. The type of issues in EG are central to concerns in Canada in development policy. Great dynamic in terms of topics, policy making circles, actors.

The research on unpaid women's work and the care economy has been innovative, in particular.

Importantly, the combined WEE portfolio of GrOW shows the complexity of persistent labour market and occupational segregation, the limits of economic growth on its own, the importance of understanding paid and unpaid work and life dynamics, and addressing not only services and access opportunities but structural solutions, both social norms and laws and policies, that entrench inequity. It was helpful and important to have the synthesis work by both internal EG staff and thought leaders to help to gel the policy narratives.

The overall EG portfolio, as represented by the sample in the following diagram, does not lend itself to the same coherence of mandate or clarity in emerging policy narratives.

Figure 14: Likely contributions to WEE evidence



The evaluation team mapped the sample of research projects based on their ratings and current trajectory for impact in terms of their likely contribution to various areas within women's economic empowerment. The EG sample reinforces some of the synthesis messages from GrOW including the importance of the care economy and informal work and enteprises. However, the portfolio range is much more diverse both geographically and topically.

While it is unrealistic to expect the same intensive level of time and resources allotted to the GrOW program, it is helpful to learn from what worked well in this sub-program's success. Success factors included some intentional focus on synthesis, emerging policy narratives and what that means for IDRC positioning in the broader dialogue and practice. Some level of external funding and partnership seemed to help not only in terms of leveraging funding resources but in terms of accountability to the mandate and the incentive to dialogue and learning.

The EG synthesis and program-level policy narratives could still be clearer and more emphasized. It is important to be clear where EG and IDRC place themselves within the

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broader, very important and, at currently divisive, debates happening around macro-economic growth, WEE and YE. In a context of global austerity, populism and the clawing back of rights related to gender and marginalized groups, EG/IDRC has a role and a voice in these debates. There is perhaps even potential for EG/IDRC to help to bridge the divide between growth proponents and those advocating for equity of marginalized groups.

Based on the synthesis studies that IDRC commissioned, it is helpful to review specifically, where IDRC is likely to contribute to specific bodies of evidence. Even though the base of the following analysis was done through GrOW syntheses, the applicability is much wider. One of the highly rated projects in EG related to the Care economy and some of the value chains research examined how the nature of the macro-economic structure influences the empowerment benefits of women in key national value chains. Gendered social norms was also an important cross-cutting area that touched on work related to youth employment and violence, adolescent pathways, gendered nature of financial inclusion, and participation in value chains.

If not a divide, there is a tension between an approach to inclusion (be it financial systems, value chains, or labour markets) and equity. The first seeks to improve the markets and to include women and youth. The second focuses on the unique barriers, including structural barriers that perpetuate exclusion of women and youth.

In terms of WEE, there are four important policy messages coming from the earlier syntheses of key thought leaders that are worth attention and underscoring going forward, particularly to position IDRC in the broader sector. These interrelated policy messages, underscored by Nancy Folbre (2018), Stefan Klasen (2018) and James Henitz (2018) are:

- Labour markets are gendered institutions
- Structural features keep markets and work segmented: economic structure; gender-biased laws and institutions; social norms.
- Social norms like informal structural features and social organization that affect work, unpaid work, transition pathways, care ,and household responsibilities matter.
- Growth alone is not enough. Gender equity needs to be a goal in and of itself. Social policies need to complement economic ones.

These four policy messages lay out important synthesis narratives that are not widely understood or agreed upon in the broader sector. These messages also lay the ground for future research agendas and areas where EG naturally aligns with other Inclusive Economies programs such as governance and justice and their work on gender-based violence, for example, and more socially-focused programming such as Child and Maternal Health.

These messages, however, are not consistent with some of the projects that exhibited mandate drift, particularly a gendered approach, in favour of where growth is most favourable. One PI stated:

> That is where women are but that is not where the sector is growing. We have to focus on the growth areas.

The PI statement underscores the challenge of WEE and, similar to YE. Women and youth tend to occupy informal employment, financial systems, and enterprises. The sheer range of formal and informal options, as well as approaches to inclusive economies, makes the rationale and pathways to impact hard to understand. An approach to inclusive growth might show under what varied contextual conditions inclusive growth can include women and youth. In other situations and contexts, an intentional equity approach may be required to focus on women or youth where they are currently working and also providing the supports to reduce barriers.

There is an important tension between inclusion and equity. EG/IDRC could work to add evidence around these larger and deeper questions. Clear policy narratives are also important to leverage and build on this work through future research agendas. As Heintz (2018) demonstrated, there are important links across the bodies of evidence between economic growth, unpaid and care work, transition periods, alternative pathways, how these are grounded in context-specific gendered social norms, and where there has been policy or legal leverage. EG/IDRC's global portfolio can surely provide insights into these pathways and connections.

The policy narrative is also quite an important message globally at the moment at a time of growing austerity in many national approaches to fiscal and monetary policies. This message is not opposed to growth. However, the messages combined provide critical nuance and context-specific grounding to these debates. Even Femnet, an African Feminist network, found economic growth as well as diversification to be two key factors in supporting women's economic empowerment. Femnet (2016) outlined some important contextual conditions for WEE-related change that relate well to the GrOW portfolio and to our overall findings: economic growth; diversification of the economy; political will; and history, particularly the strength of the women's movement. What are the context-specific conditions for when and how conditions have improved despite persistent global trends in WEE? IDRC has the history, the mandate, and the accompaniment model focused on policy influence to tackle these kinds of questions.

Perhaps the term thought leadership is problematic for some but EG could certainly stand to be clear about where, in particular, it is weighing in on global discourse and practice around WEE. Doing so enhances its support to local research capacity and evidence. Lack of visibility may undermine EG/IDRC's ability to attract parallel funding and continue to deepen its impact. It is possible to be very focused on the Global South while still contributing, visibly, to what EG and IDRC is adding to our collective knowledge on WEE.

5.2 Likely Contributions to Youth Employment Evidence and Uptake

The evaluation team also examined the youth-focused projects for their likely contribution to the youth employment sector. 15% of the projects focus on youth employment and 54% of projects combined a focus on WEE and youth employment, so these formed a significant portion of the portfolio.

Overall, the quality plus of these research projects was more varied than other clusters. There is a much wider range of ratings across the youth-focused projects in the sample.

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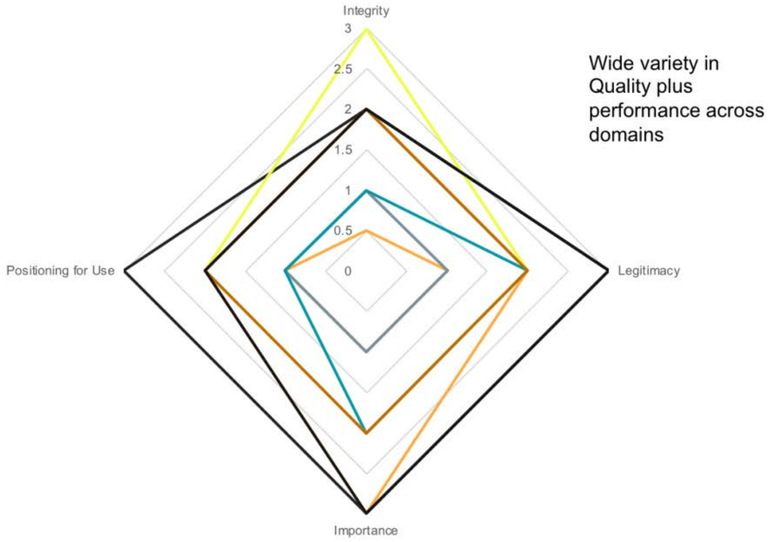
Figure 15: Research quality plus rating of youth-focused projects in sample



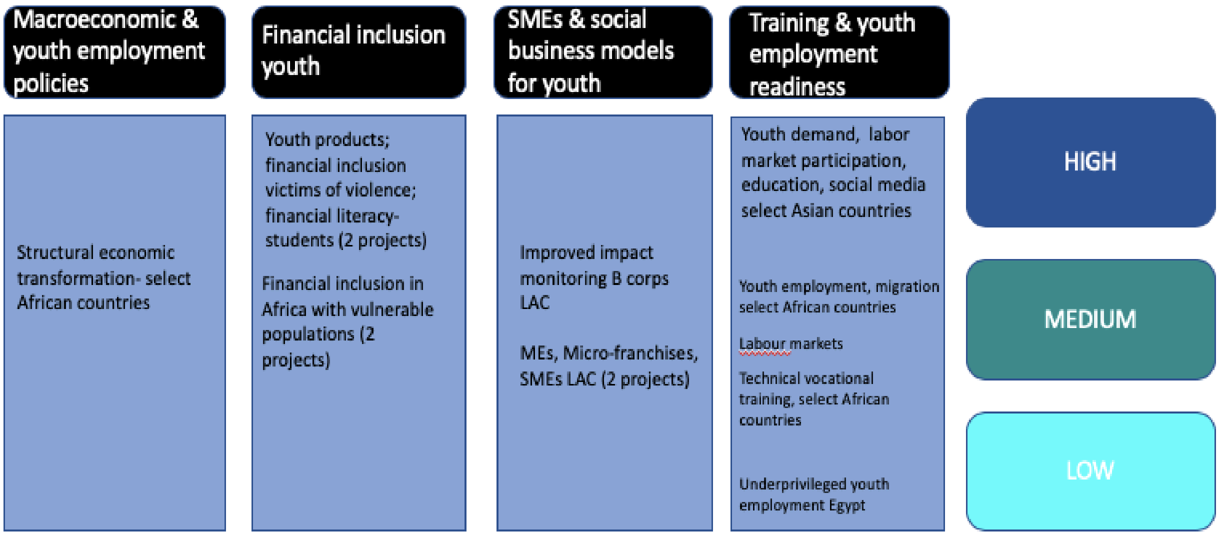
The sample ratings mirror feedback from respondents. Most of the thought leaders interviewed reinforced the fact that the youth employment agenda is not clear in its contributions to the broader sector. The following three comments demonstrate the repeated themes:

> There are a lot of players and a lot of research. I'm not sure what their vision is? What is IDRC's unique value add?
>
> Very honestly, I was not aware of IDRC's work on WEE and YE till I received an invitation from them to be present in a panel… I think that their work on WEE has made a bigger contribution, through GrOW, around women's work for example. I am not aware of their contribution on YE. [Our organization] does a lot of work in this area (e.g recent report on Youth Employment in our region), but I do not think IDRC figures in these conversations.
>
> YE is a crowded field – a lot of [our organizational] work is around skilling, training, SMEs, etc. For IDRC to make a mark here, they need to be clear what their entry point is. What specific contribution do they want to make? How can they leverage on existing work and add scale? As they did with GrOW, they need to work out what their value addition is, as a small donor.

It is worth noting that key stakeholders and thought leaders in the field of youth employment, including our evaluation team, had perspectives that reinforced these results. It was not clear to them what unique value-added IDRC added to the dense sector of youth employment.

The following figure is a mapping of the sample research projects in terms of their focus combined with their rating. What emerges, like WEE, is quite a range of topics, even across high and medium-rated projects.

Figure 16: Intended youth impact (n=7)



There needs to be much more focus (particularly in what is communicated externally) to impact policy and practice with research in youth employment globally. Further, more synergies can be drawn where cross-country and region research is able to speak to a certain issue or gap.

There are many players working in this area and agencies have become highly specialized now. Both the WEE and the YE portfolio in EG can be contrasted to the GrOW portfolio that had clarity in its mandate. It is also possible to contrast EG to other agencies doing research in youth employment.

The following chart is meant to support EG to align its program positioning with other agency foci on youth employment.

Chart 5: Comparators in youth employment sector

Organization or agency	Focus	Rationale or elaboration
International Development Studies, University of Sussex	Youth employment and the Private sector in Africa. Skill-building.	Shortcomings shift to how to promote productivity, boost private sector to generate the kind of growth that can create jobs. Early-career academics from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Private sector.
Overseas Development Institute	Economic security and to eradicate child exploitation.	Gender and adolescent-specific lens is important to understanding what works with economic strategies.
Mastercard Foundation	Youth employment in Africa. Focus on formal employment and financial inclusion.	When SMEs access financial services they can expand and employ. Africa is the youngest and fastest-growing continent in the world. Multi-stakeholders. By 2030, enable 30 million young people to secure employment that they consider dignified and fulfilling.
International Labor Organization	Global employment trends for youth. Decent	This analysis was based on the global framework “the youth employment crisis: a call for action” that was adopted by

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Organization or agency	Focus	Rationale or elaboration
	work for youth. Main policy areas to address youth.	representatives of governments, employer organizations and trade unions of the 185 member states at the ILC in June 2012. Five policy areas to shape action on youth employment are: • Employment and economic policies to boost job creation and improve access to finance • Education and training to ease the school-to-work transition and to prevent skills mismatches • Labour market policies to target employment of disadvantaged youth • Entrepreneurship and self-employment to assist potential young entrepreneurs • Labour rights that are based on international labour standards to ensure that young people receive equal treatment and are afforded rights at work.
Oxfam	Youth employment, vocational training. SMES, youth entrepreneurship address barriers faced by marginalized young women.	Active citizenship starting point. Co-creation with youth. Wide range of partners -- civil society, government and private sector. Youth and conflict. Youth at risk of radicalization and extremism and promotion of social cohesion. Strong link between lack of employment opportunities and youth radicalization. Wide range of conflict transformation projects in East and Central Africa, Sahel.
Plan International	Youth economic empowerment rather than youth employment to improve employment capacities and activities, rights of youth. Youth unemployment prevents young people from realizing their full economic, social and cultural rights. Child centered community development approach. Economic rights of children and young people.	Aims to allow youth access to legal and stable jobs of their choosing, which provide a decent salary, and make a positive contribution to civil society. Youth-led, based on sound research, build partnerships for scale and sustainability, provide marginalized youth with access to opportunities, use advocacy to influence funding, policy and structural reforms. Contextual labour market analysis. Gender challenges. Local barriers and relationship to poverty. Pathways to economic empowerment that include locally relevant mix of career counselling, skills training, empowerment training, mentoring, financial services, market linkages, apprenticeships.

As is evident from these examples, each of the organizations had a focus and a rationale for the mandate. EG could similarly dialogue around the rationale of its youth employment mandate to give it some focus. Even if there are regional or several mandates, these could be more clearly articulated in relation to one another.

Some of the respondents also noted that given the limited resources and the relative size of IDRC as a funder, focus is also important. EG/IDRC adds value in terms of supporting voice and evidence from the Global South but that alone is not enough to really be seen as key contributors in today's development sector. Local capacity and evidence is increasingly the norm in terms of funding and what is valued. That alone is not enough to distinguish a program. The policy narrative/focus is important not only for IDRC's reputation but also for the impact it can produce.

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There were, however, clear examples where the approach to youth employment added important value to the sector, regionally. The interrelated issues of youth violence including gender-based violence such as early marriage and other issues of bodily integrity, and economic vulnerabilities at transition periods of adolescence were particularly important especially for young women. The relationship between employment and social cohesion (or evasion of violence) was also an important issue in both LAC and Sub-Saharan Africa.

What may have led to the wide differences? The successes in Latin America and the Caribbean had been partially due to a stronger region in terms of the local landscape for solid research, practitioners and engaged policy-makers. In LAC, there was also a solid research partner who over a considerable period of time had identified youth issues as one of their mandates. One partner, in particular, supported several projects. The partner is an innovative think-tank that has a youth mandate and a history of strong connected relationships with private sector, practitioners and policy-makers as well as a proven track-record in research and evidence. The funding for this particular partner also took place over an extended period of time of experimentation, adaptation, commitment to the methodology, dialogue, and iteration with stakeholders and marginalized groups.

Such a calibre of partner cannot be expected in every context. In fact, it is worth asking, at a program level, the role of these multi-year funded partners. These partners seem to be able to take a layered and long-term approach to the research and interventions, where one can build on the previous. This is an important strategy for such complex issue areas but obviously limits the number of new partners benefitting from funding.

There is no question that regionally there are important issues that affect youth. Youth employment is an important issue, particularly how it intersects with other issues of vulnerabilitites, pathways, and violence for youth. Given the demographics globally, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, the issues raised by key partners in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the evidence of gaps identified in literature reviews for the MENA region with respect to youth employment and economic empowerment will continue to be central to aid agendas.

For the remainder of the program, as with WEE, it may be helpful to clarify the regional strategy and rationale as well as how it relates to the theory of change. There seems to be a strong case for a regional. As one PO reminded us:

> It also means that within the EG team, same portfolio size in terms of number of projects and dollar value can imply very different workloads for POs depending on their main region of programming in the world (a 10 million $ portfolio in a region that is lagging behind in terms of research capacity isn't the same as a 10 million $ portfolio in a region where research is more mature). This aspect of program resourcing / strategy should be an important part of the conversation because it impacts on the program's capacity (ability) to perform at that A+ level.

If it is desirable, going forward it may be strategic and fitting to frame youth as an intersectional gender issue to connect it to the other impact area of WEE. Being framed as

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an intersectional gender issue related to pathways and transitions might help to focus the youth agenda.

> Youth is a bit different. Youth is a transition moment between dependence and independence. In the case of younger women this is an intersection that is very complicated. Coming from the youth equation is quite different for women than for men, cultural norms. Discrimination. All of these other burdens in terms of the real opportunities that they have for that great transition. -key thought leader

An intersectional approach to women's economic empowerment is one way to ensure focus while not losing some of these important elements. The intersection of youth employment and social cohesion is also an important issue globally though only part of the EG portfolio. In the section on future research agendas there is more detail about where other agencies have focused on youth employment and how EG might position its policy narratives in the broader dialogues. It may that, in the youth employment, the focus is on regional not global policy narratives as has been done with WEE.

5.3 Ability to Position Portfolio for Use and Influence

It is clear from anecdotal evidence that there has been consideration of the fit of evidence and positioning strategies with context, particularly for highly rated projects. Conducive contextual conditions were a driver of policy uptake found in the analysis of the projects that scored well on positioning for use and was also a repeated narrative in the interviews.

Those projects that scored well tended to have a very specific and savvy strategy for adapting to the local context which included the state of local research (usually academe) and innovation (usually NGOs or private sector). The local landscape was also characterized by the state of the political will or policy environment as mentioned by many interviewed. The context would determine not only the strategy for how to influence or present evidence but also what might be most effective in partnership development for the research project. Partners weren't always part of the research team but may have been engaged in some way in the research process.

What are the variables or elements to examine in determining the routes to policy impact? If we use "positive deviance" and look at what was working well we see that it is more than just the research and the policy context. In fact, sometimes innovation driven by practitioners and the private sector get the attention of policy-makers through the innovation as is the case of financial inclusion in some contexts. Also, what is possible to build on in each context is determined by the existing state of research, academics, and think-tanks. Furthermore, policy makers are not the same as the political will. These can often be at odds. So, it is helpful to identify the leverage points specific to each country and context.

Key elements seem to be the political will and policy context, and the state of research and innovation. The following figure illustrates four scenarios depending on the contextual factors present.

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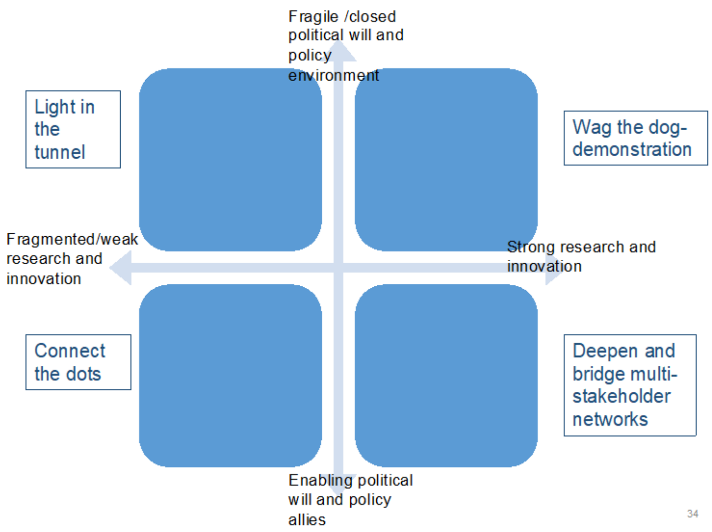
Figure 17: Routes to influence and policy impact



In the bottom right domain where there is strong research, innovation, and policy allies, multi-stakeholder networks may have strong leverage. This was the case in a couple of research projects focused on financial inclusion. There was a wide ecosystem of allies on which to build. EG/IDRC just had to be sure that they were funding the right actor(s) in that ecosystem. In one case, a think tank facilitated experimental research to improve gendered financial inclusion. In another case, a non-governmental network was financed to do implementation research with financial institutions. As one of the POs pointed out, it may be beneficial to fund the private sector partner in some cases, particularly with the implementation research, who brings in the research partner rather than the researchers. This seemed to be the case where private sector innovation was already high in the context.

Scale is often considered through the replication of an innovation or model but there is also scaling through networking. EG has effectively engaged a range of networks, some of them initiated by the funding and many already in existence, that could deepen their work. The work around financial inclusion, value chains, and care economy all drew on networks. These networks form a critical foundation on which to scale dialogue and processes that, while not necessarily as large in scope as expansion, have powerful potential to influence in country practices and policies. As earlier described, it is helpful to distinguish different routes of policy impact. It is also important to acknowledge the time needed to really develop networks and solid local partnerships that can influence policy over time.

In the top right domain, where the political will was somewhat fragile or closed but research and innovation were strong, it is possible to lead by demonstration or "wagging the dog." In these situations, where there was not a strong ecosystem of research or innovation backing the research direction, it meant that the research or evidence needed to demonstrate strongly in a context where there might not be a lot of precedence on which to build. An example of "wagging the dog" would be the care economy work in one project. Progress was made in one large progressive city around the provision of informal care-giving services that could be showcased and highlighted in the rest of the country, and more

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broadly, to bring policymakers along. A media campaign with advocacy partners was a key part of this research project.

In this case, the research may achieve scale not through replication of a model or innovation but through influence. It is not common to think about scale in these terms but it is helpful, for example, when dealing with gendered social norms around care-giving. Influence may focus less on practices and policies and more on changing perceptions or narratives around a gendered issue such as care-giving. Gendered social norms have a powerful impact on how formal institutions, programs, innovations, and actors perpetuate gender inequities.

In the top left domain, where the political situation is quite closed and the research and innovation is weak, as in fragile state situations, it becomes necessary to plant seeds or be the first "light in the tunnel." In this case, of course, the landscape is extremely challenging as there is not a great deal on which to build. While these were not highly rated projects the strategies seemed to fit the landscape. That is, to try to build a network of researchers to grow the base of research and innovation in the country.

Finally, the bottom left domain represents a rather odd situation where the political will or policy allies may exceed a fragmented or weak research and innovation landscape. In this case, as one project demonstrates, policy-makers will unusually be leading the innovation and bringing others in, or using evidence to engage others. In this case, the partnerships strategy is about "connecting the dots," taking what evidence is there and connecting actors who have potential to bring about influence with it. It is a scattered landscape so the brokering and connections made may be part of the strategy.

This approach to understanding what may or may not work in different contexts is both a political economy and a systems approach to the contexts. This allows a strategy about where in the system the funding and accompaniment is directed. It is not only important to fund the right partner but to be sure that the partner is the right one to be directly supporting in the system given the landscape of research, innovation, and policy or political will.

One key thought leader identified a driver that many had shared, the importance of a strong country partner with good links to policy makers or well-embedded in policy fora. They identified an important tension that high quality projects were able to reconcile.

- ..in India, it [*research*] did lead to debate on female employment. This may be due to a strong country partner with good links to the policy makers. There has been a tension between high quality research and engagement with policy processes in-country in GrOW. The latter has to be there right at the beginning. If it is supply side (that is, done towards the end), then the policy research/intervention is not successful.

As many projects demonstrated, the strength of the funding partner is important but also how well they are situated with other partners in the broader system for change.

The importance of contextual savvy was identified repeatedly by POs, PIs, and key thought leaders as essential for policy and other forms of influence. IDRC could be even more savvy

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about monitoring and creating strategies around the existing landscape and documenting how it supports research partners, be they think-tanks or networks to position evidence for influence.

This overall political economy approach to positioning evidence for influence will be the focus of a separate more detailed issues brief accompanying this final report. Key lessons include:

- The importance of considering fit of evidence, and positioning strategy to context
- The important role that political will, and not only policy-makers, play in considering positioning strategies
- The existing state of research is important for positioning (which includes a capacity building strategy)
- Innovative practice is important for positioning (which includes practitioner, advocacy, and private sector partners) whose work may attract the attention of policy-makers, influencers and politicians

5.4 Clarity on EG's Value-Added

This section of the learning evaluation identifies EG/IDRC's value-add in the development sector. It is worth noting that value-added may be distinct from thought leadership since there is some strong debate about thought leadership within IDRC. In part, the debate is based on differing understandings of the term "thought leadership" and in part there is not total alignment around the value-added of IDRC and the role that IDRC should be playing.

Some feel that IDRC, as a funder, should not have its own thought leadership. It should support research partners to develop and amplify their thought leadership through funding relevant research areas and in building local thought leaders. Others believe that IDRC should have its own thought leadership in these sectors. Some focused on the importance of content areas such as women's economic empowerment while others focused on the processes that lead to policy-influential research. It is worth considering how the approach to thought leadership could be more aligned.

Three possible areas of value-added are offered here for consideration: the issue of inclusive economies; a more robust approach to measuring quality in research; and monitoring research influence in complex systems.

5.4.1 Inclusive Economies

It is not entirely clear what has been learned about Inclusive Economies. The four policy narratives highlighted earlier seem worth emphasizing and bring important contributions to the wider dialogue and research around growth, inclusion, and equity.

Even the overarching frame and name of Inclusive Economies is a bit unclear or perhaps too narrow to encompass the range of programs and the complexity of research housed across them. Inclusive Growth, as defined by the Centre, is growth which ensures opportunities for

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all sections of the population, with a special emphasis on the poor, particularly women and young people, who are most likely to be marginalised. In some ways this framing returns to SIG's earlier agenda -- a concern with decent jobs and the promotion of small and medium enterprise. SIG aims addressed the fact that women face particular constraints to developing such economic opportunities. This framing is not keeping pace with EG's own GrOW portfolio, its best research and gender-transformative research across IDRC that has a more robust treatment of gendered relations, gendered norms and power relations where economic, social, bodily integrity, and health issues interact and intersect.

There were some good cross-program collaborations as mentioned earlier within IE that get at these nuances. How these are communicated going forward are critical to EG/IDRC contributing meaningfully to these dialogues. Currently, the synthesis papers within GrOW done both internally and commissioned externally are a strong start to these contributions. It would seem helpful to continue to have internal dialogue at the EG and IE level to glean learning about pathways and outcomes. The strategies, interconnections between programs, and pathways to change could be clearer and better documented.

5.4.2 A more robust approach to RQ+

While there are internal debates about where and how EG/IDRC should leverage its thought leadership related to the WEE and YE issues, there are two areas where IDRC does aim to distinguish itself. This is both in the RQ+ framework and approach to research, and in the building local research capacity toward widening local evidence.

Two principal investigators shared their perspectives on how the outcomes related to rigour, policy uptake, and capacity building are mutually reinforcing:

- "These are not conflicting because the purpose of research is to contribute to policy debate. We are quite keen on building capacity for many years and that is part of our goal so these three goals: Rigorous research, capacity building and policy uptake from the beginning."
- "The nice thing about IDRC is that they have a nice emphasis on rigor so they don't just push policy without ensuring the rigor. We need good evidence to do the policy advocacy. The goal of the project is to build evidence-based policy advocacy."

With the highly rated projects, this generally held true because the projects were intentionally designed to ensure that the three outcomes were mutually reinforcing. The teams were able to leverage multi-stakeholders, often more traditional researchers combined with more policy-focused partners, and strong rigour using mixed-methods research.

Building local thought leadership was another aspect of "how" identified by some of the thought leadership and most of the PIs and researchers interviewed. EG distinguished between emerging researchers and thought leaders which was helpful. Often emerging researchers were graduate students in formal university settings. They are generally mid-career, and lead smaller research teams or play a secondary role in the overall research but

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display potential to play a stronger role. A thought leader is someone established and recognized as an authority in the research field whose expertise is sought.

Overall, there were 950 men trained to enhance and produce policy-oriented research and 490 women as of the end of December 2017. In terms of graduate students, 506 men and 182 women were supported. These might be considered emerging researchers. Also 28 thought leaders were men and 12 women. Clearly, there is an issue of supporting women as well as men researchers at all levels. EG has committed to improving this inequity going forward.

Built local capacity was one of the characteristics of high rated projects as well as a factor mentioned by stakeholders as IDRC's value-add. While many not only spoke about this contribution in the landscape, a few had constructive suggestions about how to improve capacity building or the development of local thought leadership. One thought leader encouraged EG/IDRC to be much more savvy about capturing evidence of these changes in local thought leadership:

> I do not find clear evidence of IDRC contributing to research leadership in the South, especially LAC, a region I have knowledge of. However, it may be that there are examples I am not aware of.

The evaluation team grappled a bit with understanding success and progress in this area. The theory of change only references thought leaders strengthening their research capacity. The indicators used to track built capacity of local researchers is not robust enough to learn much. While these output-focused results help to describe the situation, they fall short of being helpful to improve programming and accompaniment. Again, a better understanding of how these numbers and sex-disaggregated data is contextualized would be important.

Thought leaders, when asked about what was required to support their thought leadership, reported the following: exposure; funding; skilled supports. Emerging leaders needed not only training but opportunities to co-publish, co-present, and "take the ball" in the research team. It is difficult to understand progress with existing indicators such as "researchers trained" or "graduate students supported." What does it mean to build a cadre of local researchers in feminist economics? What does it mean to build the capacity of local women to negotiate with city or policy officials? How are changes in perspectives as well as skills captured? One PI said that the project could have been much more influential if they had just done a base-line of policy-maker awareness or knowledge before and after the project. This type of feedback and iteration, learning about how capacities are built will be important to capture.

Also, many skills and capacities that arose are worth better understanding to improve future accompaniment. Some of these accompaniment skills included:

- Supporting quantitative researchers to ground locally in the contextual dynamics of why and how
- Supporting qualitative researchers to position their work within broader trends
- Supporting academic researchers to position evidence for influence

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- The skill of brokering across different stakeholders and agendas

One PI gave some good examples:

> An interesting strategy for building local capacity in young researchers was that each researcher was responsible for a report, with a strong external advisory committee. This opportunity enables the contributors to learn how to write an article for a reputable international journal; how to properly read referee reports and address the referee's concerns accordingly; and how to engage with feminist scholarship and embed econometric analysis in social contexts.

More of this level of specificity and program-level capture would be helpful.

Overall, the pathways to success could be clearer in EG and perhaps how it is nested in Inclusive Economies. In the Grow sub-program, for example, the three main outcomes were clear: quality evidence, strong evidence use, and built local capacity. In contrast, the EG includes thought leaders and emergent leaders as inputs (activities and immediate outcomes) that feed into the various research intermediate outcomes. The relationship between building local research capacity and research quality plus could be clearer. It is considered part of the conditions in the RQ+ framework but there is something awkward or unclear about only having it there. As a key value-added for the EG program, it would be helpful to explore pathways (as will be done to some extent in the issues paper related to positioning for use). There seem to be several different ways that building local capacity contributes to RQ+ and supports the evidence strategy. It is worth highlighting and learning from a few. There seem to be more than just two routes to policy impact as an earlier PI suggested.

What also is the relationship between highly rated projects and scale? Scale has been identified as replication of a model or innovation, scale as influencing social norms and scaling out through networking. Again, some exploration has been done on this issue related to positioning for use but more could be done.

While scale is important, it is perhaps a "love to have" within programs. Research is also needed, as the previous example illustrates, to take risks, experiment, analyze dynamics in context, and engage marginalized groups in that analysis. Remaining clear on the tensions inherent in a corporate leaning toward scale is important in the strategy.

It is also important to note that it was difficult to get a good sense of scale with the existing parameters as found in EG Performance against IDRC Strategic Objectives (Annex F). These are helpful starting points but more narratives with examples and pathways would provide a stronger understanding of scale and successful scaling strategies. Given the earlier notes on networks, there might be something related to strategies for working with local networks, not only policy makers.

EG is encouraged to demonstrate a broader notion of quality for research where it is not only rigor in the conventional sense but research that is well-positioned for influence and well-grounded locally. Part of the grounding is a longer, indeed, structural investment in

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building local research capacity and shaping the local research and policy networks for influence. In some ways, emphasizing that EG takes a structural approach to research that attempts to change underlying power dynamics in research seems central but is not really front and centre in narratives. It may be worth exploring how these elements can be best communicated with the world to emphasize what is truly distinct about IDRC's approach to research and accompaniment.

5.4.3 Monitoring research influence in complex systems

Something marked in reviewing the highly rated EG projects, as well as the GrOW highly rated ones, is the importance of being able to monitor complex systems and outcomes. Women's economic empowerment and youth employment are highly nuanced, context-specific areas which is why social science research and mixed methods projects that IDRC funds and supports are so critical. EG's strength is its diversity and, this has been said of GrOW earlier, also its biggest potential obstacle. There is a danger of "chronic uniqueness." That is, each context, each project is so unique in the issues being studied, the partnerships formed, and the evidence used that understanding anything meaningful beyond the project level is challenging.

However, strong monitoring for adaptation and learning allows the policy narratives to cohere at the program level (as well as identify outliers). The evaluation team, both for GrOW and EG, used an adapted approach to the RQ+ assessment in combination with another monitoring/evaluation approach pioneered by IDRC called outcome mapping. The combination of the two proved quite powerful for both understanding and having dialogue around complex pathways and assumption around change. Instead of an 8 point rating scale as the RQ+ assessment suggests, we used the four domains (research integrity, legitimacy, importance, and positioning for use) and outcome mapping that allowed varied pathways and combinations of pathways to be explored and tested. Based on document review and interviews, pathways for each domain were expressed in terms of what researchers and project officers "expect to see", "like to see", "love to see" and what would fall below "expect to see". Why is this approach helpful?

It allowed for a better understanding and unpacking of what each domain entailed. Because legitimacy, for example, involves many elements from gender-responsiveness to risk management, and engagement with local knowledge, it helps to uncover how different projects balanced these various elements. This approach also allows IDRC and researchers to have a realistic understanding of what they would like to see for each domain. What, if nothing else, would be expected in terms of legitimacy for a funded research project? In other words, what does a contextually-grounded, gender-responsive, field-legitimate project look like? Such a question allows there to be real and engaged dialogue around tensions and trade-offs, as there inevitably are. Sometimes scales and check-lists, depending on how effectively they are used, can end up being a "laundry list" of what is ideally wanted rather than a critical understanding of what is possible and feasible in context.

What did we learn using this approach? Based on analysis of the various pathways, tensions, and outliers, it is possible to have a better understanding of key drivers and conditions for strong research that performs well across the domains. In other words, there is a clearer

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understanding of RQ+ as well as how IDRC funds and accompanies those research partners and networks. Done this way, the evaluation is not only a one-off affair. Rather, it can be used as a very effective springboard for discussion about how change works and is working, so that the project can adapt and different perspectives can be aired and negotiated. Particularly as IDRC supports the capacity building of emerging researchers in the Global South, as well as brokering of partnerships across regions, this approach supports complexity in process as well.

Evaluation in this form, as earlier described in the outcome mapping guide by IDRC, is an art and science, a means of negotiating different realities and of leaving behind an increased capacity for everyone to make use of the evaluation findings (See Earl, Carden & Smutylo, 1971). However, it is done, it is recommended that EG ensure a strong focus on outcomes.

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6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

Globally, both women's economic empowerment and gender-transformative research is topical, particularly in Canada with Canada's Feminist International Aid policy but the relevance and applicability is much wider. The EG program at this point already makes a visible and influential contribution to this research, dialogue, and practice. While youth as a demographic, and youth employment are both important issues globally, EG's contribution is not entirely clear.

What makes relevant, policy-influential research strong? A sample of 42 projects were assessed through the RQ+ framework, not to evaluate them, but to identify drivers of strong research (plus) quality. The strongest of EG projects had a number of shared characteristics: coherence between quantitative and qualitative methods; early and continual engagement with key influencers; uptake strategies highly tailored to influencers; complementary partners with many being multi-stakeholder networks; legitimate and locally-grounded, gender-responsive approaches; and built local capacity.

Low-rated projects lacked coherence, showed unevenness across countries or contexts and generally showed an inability to navigate tensions between integrity and positioning for use. While there were some good examples, many of the implementation research projects showed weaker integrity, and broader influence is hard to assess without solid research to ground them. Private sector partners had mixed performance but while some were strong in innovation and positioning for use, the risk with some of these partners is a drift from the mandate and a commitment to gender.

At the program level, a number of drivers were found related to EG program effectiveness. These included: close accompaniment and context-specific brokering; the ability to balance project focus with program mandate and strategy; contextual conditions for influence; and an agile theory of change.

EG doesn't have to be "the" thought leader but it would greatly enhance EG/IDRC visibility, provide opportunities for parallel funding in future, and enhance internal learning to have coherent policy narratives, particularly in light of the contextual realities of the world. EG's strength in WEE extends beyond but certainly builds on the success and profile of GrOW and its messages around inclusive growth, the gendered nature of labour markets, structural features of markets that act as barriers, links to social norms, and the care economy. It is important to be clear in the policy narratives and messaging that growth is not enough and equity may be necessary to ensure women and youth are included.

The EG portfolio continues to represent all of these policy messages. It will be important to see what emerges, particularly from strong projects, by the end of the program. The EG portfolio continued to build on it with work in the care economy, engendering value chains, transitions and pathways of young men and women, and the relationship to violence. The youth employment policy narratives are not yet clear but seem to fall along regional lines.

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EG/IDRC certainly has value added in how it funds and accompanies and can contribute more to the evidence-policy nexus and positioning research for uptake. This is tied to how EG/IDRC monitors and assesses RQ+ and local research development. There is real potential to better describe these processes and how they inter-relate. IDRC takes a structural approach to research concerned not only about rigor and relevance but also positioning for use and redressing gendered power dynamics in the research itself.

The diversity and scope of diversity has been EG's strength and also seems to have been one of EG's challenges. While the in-depth accompaniment and bottom-up approach is a value-added, the program would benefit from a bit more program-level strategy and monitoring. This balancing of clear-enough program mandate and theory of change with allowance for policy narratives to be clearly aligned as they emerge is challenging. However, balancing this tension is key to clear policy narratives that can really have an impact in the broader sector.

EG has clear thought leadership to bring to the development sector related to women's economic empowerment. While this area has been visible and influential, the policy narratives arising from it could still be sharper to facilitate positioning IDRC in the broader dialogues around WEE. The intersection of youth employment and social cohesion is also an important issue globally though only part of the EG portfolio. In the section 6.3 on future research agendas there is more detail about where other agencies have focused on youth employment and how EG might position its policy narratives in the broader dialogues. It may be that, in the youth employment, the focus is on regional not global policy narratives.

These policy narratives should be clear enough to "weigh in" on various dialogues around growth, inclusion and equity but nuanced enough to capture the range of EG research including where it intersects with other Inclusive Economies areas and relates to social policies, care economy, and norms.

Given the complexity of the issues, the nature of these global debates, and the findings of EG's own research, EG and IDRC have a leadership role to play in sharing the connections and nuances of these policy narratives related to inclusive growth. These narratives don't challenge economic growth. They demonstrate how important it is to have gender equity and youth inclusion and to accompany analysis of economic realities with those of gendered social norms, even social policies that complement economic policies and institutions in critical, structural ways.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on these findings and conclusions, there are a few high-level recommendations for the EG program as it carries out the remainder of its term. The broadest recommendation is for EG and IDRC to be bold in leveraging the WEE portfolio and research agenda going forward. There are important opportunities at the intersection of WEE evidence, gender-transformative and feminist research and research quality plus.

The recommendations for the EG program for the remainder of the program are:

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- **Build coherent policy narratives.** Use and revisit theory of change to map and dialogue around program-level policy narratives emerging, and support projects to align. Continue to cluster and peer-learn across components of projects. Cluster policy issues by region. Include good conversations about growth, inclusion, and equity.

- **Reduce mandate drift.** Support projects to ensure alignment with the WEE and YE mandate. Review rest of portfolio for mandate drift. Review private sector partners and implementation research as part of these. Keep an eye to positive deviance and review assumptions regularly.

- **Support projects to focus and align**. Support projects struggling with content-related integrity issues or coherence to find greater focus. Support specific projects with gender and intersectional analysis including the youth element. More academic research, particularly macroeconomic, may be required. Lower rated projects may need supports around integrity and positioning for use. Support projects to ensure that, where possible, there is research or learning available that may be more widely used.

- **Make a stronger case for building local capacity**. Provide clearer evidence on EG/IDRC's role in building a cadre of emerging researchers across the EG portfolio to redress gendered power dynamics in research. Make case and link to theory of change and RQ+.

The following recommendations are suggested for future programs:

- **Have a clear program mandate.** Consider clarity of intention with the program mandate up-front through either a commissioned paper, a prospectus or both as a way of providing some focus and intention.

- **Monitor pathways as complex systems**. Consider monitoring for complexity by utilizing the outcome-mapping and RQ+ frameworks that IDRC pioneered both for internal learning but also for sharing with the development sector.

- **Cluster and distinguish different types of research.** Consider different treatments of integrity for different types of research. However, ensure that all projects have at least a few strong research outputs.

- **Publish on the research-policy nexus.** Publish more on how different types of research and evidence, and different actors (public sector, private sector innovators, researchers) influence policy in different contexts. Help the global development sector understand how and why different contexts require different evidence, partnership/networking, and influencing strategies. Such an approach allows a focus on WEE that is intersectional and includes, for example, employment issues for young women and men where opportunities are limited by violence, migration, and vulnerability. It also includes analysis at the regional level.

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EG and IDRC could really contribute thought leadership on WEE by deepening the field's understanding of the research process. EG and IDRC can show how the process of relevant, gender-transformative research influences policy and norms.

6.3 Research Agenda Going Forward

There seems to be some key research areas that would be strategic to pursue going forward building on current momentum in women's economic empowerment across GrOW. The success and profile of GrOW is important to acknowledge, but the EG portfolio continues to build on it with work in the care economy, engendering value chains, transitions and pathways of young men and women, and the relationship to violence. It is recommended that the approach to youth be an intersectional one examining the demographic and intersectional aspects of WEE in context. A gendered intersectional approach examines the pathways and transitions of both adolescent men and women. It is also important to note that a focus on gendered economic empowerment is much wider than the current interest of the Canadian federal government.

As stated in the recommendations, EG and IDRC could be even bolder. There is a real gap in understanding how WEE (the what) relates to gender-transformative research and feminist research. There is also a timely and important window to leverage the global interest and momentum in these areas where EG and IDRC have done solid work. IDRC could be at the forefront with CGIAR, Oxfam, and others publishing in these areas, indeed, leading some of the dialogue and practice in collaboration with these partners.

Suggestions for a future research agenda mirror the key policy narratives that have emerged as well considerations about routes to policy impact. IDRC's real strength is the global portfolio that can shed light on contextual differences. As earlier noted, it is valuable to understand how economic structures and growth interact with other highly-contextual conditions. Again, Femnet (2016) outlined some important contextual conditions for WEE-related change that relate well to the GrOW portfolio: economic growth; diversification of the economy; political will; history, particularly the strength of the women's movement. What are the context-specific conditions for when and how conditions have improved despite persistent global trends in WEE? IDRC has the history, the mandate, and the accompaniment model focused on policy influence to tackle these kinds of questions.

What has the EG program shown about context that could be deepened? There seems to be more to be learned about these topics: how structural change affects WEE; social norms, social organization of care and work; contextual pathbreakers.

Structural economic change Some specific contextual examples came from an interview related to macroeconomic structures and change:

> What kind of structural change will lead to women's economic empowerment? Bangladesh and India comparison is useful – in Bangladesh, increase in female labour intensive growth, India: domestic market, heavy on construction and primary sectors, small export oriented service sector, so limited progress in female labour intensive

> growth – same story in Tunisia/Morocco, the former's growth strategy female labour intensive, due to female labour intensive garments, Morocco and Egypt does not have that. SSA – women are in agriculture, so very little engagement with the exporting sectors – growth strategies may not particularly be female labour intensive.

Contextual understandings of work and gendered realities Folbre (2018) suggested areas for deepening and more precise research including a more explicitly intersectional approach to understanding intra-family, intergenerational transfers, how work relates to women's lives and vulnerabilities including poverty, early marriage, reproductive rights. This recommendation was echoed by Heintz (2018, p.15) who identified "a particularly important set of issues is the intersection of the choices regarding education, marriage, childbearing, and paid work that young women face, and the constraints that influence those choices." Many women are entering labor markets not for greater opportunity but in distress. It is as important to understand how they are pulled into employment and that they are disproportionately represented in informal, often precarious jobs.

Finally, all of the synthesis work found social norms to be an important part addressing WEE including a paper dedicated to the area (Marcus, 2018; Klasen, 2018; Folbre, 2018; Heintz, 2018). As one project officer put well, while GrOW did not set out to measure norm change, there were, nonetheless, important lessons that emerged. There were also projects whose rationale and issue focus should have yielded insights related to gendered social norms, both the research in Pakistan on mobility and skills and the women's empowerment program in India. Marcus (2018), in a comprehensive review of the projects related to gendered social norms across the GrOW portfolio, found that the evidence in these two projects was not very robust. In both cases, given the program objectives it would have been expected that evidence related to norms and changing social norms in the case of the historical analysis of CBPS might have been produced. The same can be said of insights related to collective action and the CBPS project. While there were some findings generated, in all, the project could have been much more strategic and focused on their contributions to broader gaps such as these.

Youth employment Framed as an intersectional gender issue related to pathways and transitions might help to focus the youth agenda and to connect it to the WEE impact area.

> Youth is a bit different. Youth is a transition moment between dependence and independence. In the case of younger women this is an intersection that is very complicated. Coming from the youth equation is quite different for women than for men, cultural norms. Discrimination. All of these other burdens in terms of the real opportunities that they have for that great transition. -key thought leader

One of the issues about "youth employment" is partially in the framing and partly the identification of where EG/IDRC adds value. Going forward EG/IDRC could be clearer about the rationale and theory of change for their focus on youth employment. Doing so would also help to clarify partnership and evidence strategies that would be appropriate to support. There seem to be promising areas related to youth employment and social cohesion or youth employment in the context of fragile or post-conflict states more generally. Also, the relationship between youth employment and gender-based violence as was explored in some of the projects is another promising area. A more general underlying

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theory of change that attempts to address the intersection of youth employment and violence/conflict may be a possible future focus.

Contextual pathbreakers What can be learned from what has worked well in leading to gender equity, equality policies and laws?

UN Women reinforced Kabeer (2012) and Femnet (2016) in identifying the links between collective action and organizing as important for employment, childcare services, and other gender equality laws and policies.

> Women's organizing and the strength of their autonomous movements are the strongest predictors of gender equality laws and policies across a range of areas from family law to violence against women and from non-discrimination in employment to childcare services (UN Women, 2016, p.17).

Further, the UN Report on Women found "among developing regions, Latin America has seen the most progress in family-friendly policies over the past decades and has also seen the most significant increase in women's labour force participation" (UN Women, 2016, p. 14). Heintz (2018) identified this same trend. It would be interesting to know the conditions for such anomalies. These are the kinds of helpful analysis that a global portfolio can tackle. As earlier described, both the what (wider treatments of WEE) and the how (longer term building of capacity, brokering and evidence for policy influence) seem highly relevant.

Of course, these are issues for discussion within Inclusive Economies and within IDRC. It is helpful, however, to position future research strategically considering where IDRC can really add value. It is, as many key stakeholders have mentioned, "a crowded field" with lots of research expertise that is highly technical and global in reach as well. IDRC and IE would do well to be clear about where their evidence, positioning and policy influence can have most impact.

There is consensus that structural barriers persist and demand mutually reinforcing interventions. It is not enough to assume that better integration of women into the labour market, even decent work, is enough. There is a fundamental need to structurally change the systems that are perpetuating the inequities.

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ANNEXES

Annex A: Biographies of the Evaluation Team

Nanci Lee (Canadian National). Nanci was the overall contact and lead responsible for quality, strategy and coherence. Nanci has over twenty-five years of global experience in economic development practice and research including microfinance, enabling policy and regulation (Central Bank of Angola) financial literacy and gendered aspects of economic security and justice. She has a Masters Degree in Rural Development Planning from the University of Guelph that focused on rural finance and gender issues. She has kept that focus on gendered aspects of financial capability, financial inclusion, engendered value chains and women's economic empowerment. Nanci brings strong leadership in varied research including a systematic review, quantitative impact analysis, field-based implementation research including both qualitative research and mixed methods including leading global North-South research partnerships. Nanci has taught an online course for the Carsey School of Public Policy for the past several years on member-owned microfinance using embedded action research as the basis of the course. Nanci has worked in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, East Asia and Latin America including time living and working in Mozambique, Angola, Bolivia and Colombia. She can fluently read and speak Spanish and Portuguese. Nanci also led the Universalia-contracted GrOW Mid-Term Evaluation and the GrOW Final Review.

Kunal Sen (Indian National). Kunal offered high-level substantive input providing secondary assessment of selected research projects, strategic oversight and both connections and expert opinion related to the thought leadership and sectoral positioning elements of the learning evaluation. Kunal was formerly a lecturer at the University of Manchester in the Economics department. At the end of this contract, he became Director of the WIDER program at the United Nations University. In his decades of global research experience and thought leadership, Sen has focused on the political economy determinants of inclusive development and inclusive growth including the role of state capacity, governance and political and economic institutions. Youth employment has been one of his key areas of publication and thought leadership. Sen also led the final evaluation of the SIG program that overlapped with the EG program.

Sabrina Beeler Stücklin (Swiss National). Sabrina worked closely with Nanci on writing and editing and played a role in quality control and project management. In addition to solid research skills and background, Sabrina complements Nanci's big-picture thinking by ensuring that the details of the work are well-covered and coherent. Sabrina has over 15 years of experience in microfinance, social performance, social responsibility including management and more than ten years of experience in applied field analysis in Africa, particularly French West Africa. She has a PhD in Social Anthropology from the University of Zurich (including 15 months field study in Mali) as well as an MA in Social and Cultural Anthropology, Economics, Italian Literature and Linguistics, University of Zurich. Sabrina brings proven research capacity to the team with a strong understanding of various research methods, analysis and fluency in written and spoken French and English. Sabrina worked

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with Nanci and Meryem on the MEDA Morocco evaluation. Sabrina also has good practitioner experience as she led the Research and Development unit within FIDES, a Swiss Microfinance Company active in several African countries. This position involved the development and institutionalization of a Social Performance Monitoring and Management System and the development of a Social Business Investment Vehicle. as well as market research. She currently teaches a course on microfinance at the University of Berne in Switzerland.

Patricia Lopez Rodriguez (Mexican National). Patricia grounded the synthesis and analysis of the project sample, examining trends across the assessments. She brought solid quantitative research skills and has published widely over 15 years on poverty measurement, economic and social policies, care economy and social capital, gendered divisions in income, and employment in Latin America. Patricia has a PhD in Economics and a Master Degree in Economics and Social Policy Analysis at the University of York at UK. Patricia has focused on gendered intersectional issues of youth and children throughout her career, mainly on financial inclusion and gendered access to assets as well as youth social mobility. Her skills include systematic review, quantitative research, statistical analysis and economic modeling. She also brings experience along her public work in charge of the income and employment office at the Mexican Social Development Ministry. Patricia has been working on impact evaluations of social programs for over 15 years. With Spanish as her first language, Patricia is well-placed to analyze the Latin American part of the portfolio and support analysis of the research quality and effectiveness of programming. She will review the sample selection methodology and contribute to review and edit the final report edition.

Momal Mustaq (Pakistani National). Momal provided support in analysis as well as led the development of charts, graphics and brought solid and proven award-winning social entrepreneurship expertise to the team as well as the ability to understand issues related to youth employment, entrepreneurship and barriers to economic empowerment. She has experience with both social business models and online platforms as well as first-hand experience making her way in a challenging context. Momal is interested to relate these issues to her upcoming Masters work in some way. She is an emergent leader in this field and while she is still building capacity related to consulting and research, she has a great deal to offer including solid organizational skills and strategies for youth uptake and relevance.

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Annex B: Tools and Interview Guides

Tool 1: EG Research Program Manager and Project Officer Interview Guide

Introduction

This specific interview guide is for individual in-depth interviews with the Program Manager, Project Officers and Uptake strategy officer. This interview will provide the evaluation team with some background and more nuanced information related to project adaptation, learning, capacity building, governance and team dynamics to complement project documents and reports.

The Employment and Growth (EG) program of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) leverages innovative solutions for inclusive economies by investing in research and research leadership across the Global South. The program, begun in 2014/2015, invests in research on employment and economic opportunities of vulnerable groups, particularly women and youth. The research takes place in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa through 80 active research projects, 130 sub-components or studies.

Sisters Ink, a global consulting company comprised of self-employed women, has been mandated to conduct a learning evaluation of EG for internal learning and adaptation. There are three key analytical questions that guide the Learning Evaluation:

- What are the Drivers of Quality Plus Research?
- What are the Drivers of Programing Effectiveness?
- Where is EG Most Likely to Contribute Thought Leadership to the Development Field?

The main aim of the evaluation is to support strategic reflection and dialogue on progress made, including drivers, as well as strategies to adapt and improve the program going forward.

This interview will focus on the second and third questions. It should take about 60 minutes.
Your answers will not be attributed but may be quoted to illustrate a key point. An executive summary of the learning evaluation will be shared with you at the end of the evaluation in September 2018.

Any specific questions about this process can be directed to Nanci Lee, Team Leader: nancilee@eastlink.ca

Interviewee

Full Name: Gender:

Position: Responsibility in EG and Time Involved:

General

1) How has the recent shifts including more implementation research and different types of partnerships helped EG to realize its purpose and outcomes?

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2) What strengths and weaknesses have emerged in EG's overall ability to learn, adapt and make strategic decisions over time? With what consequences? [may probe monitoring here]

3) What has been revealed, over time, about the choices and priorities set by EG in its ability to realize its purpose and outcomes?

4) What are the most promising or exciting elements of the research program so far in terms of advancing the sector?

5) Is scaling impact something you are planning for and, if so, how? Probe: How do you understanding scaling impact?

6) What are the key lessons for EG to improve its effectiveness and direction of travel going forward?

7) Can you talk about how you've addressed potential risks across your portfolio such as delays, governance issues, questions of quality?

Local Research Leadership

8) Tell a specific story from within your portfolio (or the program overall) about where you see real promise in EG's ability to contribute to grow local research leadership.

9) From what you seen in the research projects, what kinds of supports do emerging leaders as compared to thought leaders require to scale their impact?

10) What, if any, has been the role of multi-stakeholder research networks in scaling impact in the research projects?

11) How specifically have you supported gender analysis, networking and stakeholder engagement in your projects?

12) What are the drivers of growing local research leadership?

13) What are the key challenges in growing local research leadership?

Policy Use

14) Where, across the thematic areas, have you seen the most promising examples within your portfolio (or the EG Program overall) of key audiences or influencers making use of research? Or at least strong positioning to be used widely? Why might that be?

15) Can you give examples of a few of the weaker projects in terms of uptake strategies? What makes them weak?

16) What are the drivers of effective policy uptake that you are noticing? [probe: thematics; governance structures; political will; target group- women/youth; early engagement. Does it depend on the type of research?]

17) Can you provide some specific examples from projects where EG-supported researchers been sought out by the policy makers for their knowledge and expertise?

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18) Where have policy options put forth by EG supported researchers been discussed with policy-makers (within or outside a network)OR included in any national policies? [Please describe]

Overall Contribution to Thought Leadership

19) How do you understanding scaling impact?

20) How do you understand thought leadership?

21) Tell a specific story from within your portfolio (or in the Program overall) about where you see real potential for contributing to thought leadership in each of the thematic areas:

    a. Women's Economic Empowerment (financial inclusion; decent work)

    b. Youth employment opportunities

    c. Inclusive economies

    d. New business models

22) Anything else that would be helpful for the evaluation team to understand about the research project?

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Tool 2: EG Pre-Interview Survey for Research Projects

Introduction

The purpose of the survey is to complement and clarify research project strategies already reported in project approval documents and project monitoring reports. The aim is not to repeat information already provided but to clarify project priorities and strategies as well as have information in a way that allows an understanding of the EG Program across highly diverse projects. This information will be used as a basis for follow-up in-depth phone/Skype interviews to explore nuances and details.

The Employment and Growth (EG) program of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) leverages innovative solutions for inclusive economies by investing in research and research leadership across the Global South. The program, begun in 2014/2015, invests in research on employment and economic opportunities of vulnerable groups, particularly women and youth. The research takes place in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa through 80 active research projects, 130 sub-components or studies.

Sisters Ink, a global consulting company, has been mandated to conduct a learning evaluation of EG for internal learning and adaptation. There are three key analytical questions that guide the Learning Evaluation:

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- What are the Drivers of Programing Effectiveness?
- Where is EG Most Likely to Contribute Thought Leadership to the Development Field?

The main aim of the evaluation is to support strategic reflection and dialogue on progress made, including drivers, as well as strategies to adapt and improve the program going forward.

This survey should take about 20 minutes as it is mostly short multiple choice questions. Your answers will not be attributed but may be cited to illustrate a key point or trend. An executive summary of the learning evaluation as well as the issue briefs will be shared with you at the end of evaluation in September 2018.

Any specific questions about this process can be directed to Nanci Lee, Team Leader: nancilee@eastlink.ca

Please complete and send prior to your phone interview with the evaluation team. Any specific questions about this evaluation process can be directed to Nanci Lee, Team Leader: nancilee@eastlink.ca

Interviewee
Full Name:
Position: Institution (Country):

I. General

1. Please confirm your current state of completion on the overall research project as at February 28, 2018 by marking a large X in the stage that best reflects your current status:

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Overall stage of completion	Methodology and instrument design complete	Baseline data collection complete	Preliminary results or beta testing on datasets (not yet publically shared)	Second and third rounds of data collection in process (if applicable)	First draft paper, article or brief (but none yet publically shared)	At least one working paper, article or brief finalized (publically shared)

II. Quality Assurance and Risk Management

2. How did you identify the importance (relevance; innovation) of your current research areas in light of gaps in the overall field of women's economic empowerment?

- Systematic evidence review
- Literature review (informal but not a publishable output for EG)
- Literature review (as part of outputs for EG)
- Building on and identification through existing knowledge and body of work by lead researchers on the team (not captured in written form)
- Other (please specify):

3. What strategies are you using to ensure rigor and quality?

- Experimental research design
- Quasi-experimental research design
- Researcher team reflexivity and transparency about limitations
- Independent review of study protocol
- Quality control protocol such as Campbell Collaboration
- Strategic advisor
- Strategic advisory board or committee
- Other (please specify):

3. a) Have you completed an ethics protocol through your research institution or university? YES/NO

b) If not, how are you ensuring ethical standards are in place?

c) Are you using other mechanisms to ensure ethical and grounded practices in the local context? For example, transparency measures, reflexivity practices for researchers.

4. Gender analysis is, of course, central to any research on women or youth economic empowerment. Some projects, however, have incorporated gender analysis in various aspects of the research process

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as well. Please note where gender analysis has been used in the work and research process (Bold and mark an X for all that apply. Multiple choices may be selected):

- Research team management and oversight
- Overall research team composition
- Gender-disaggregation in research instrument design
- Overall methodological approach to research
- Conceptual focus of the research issues including differential impacts
- Gendered contextual analysis of stakeholders and key influencers in terms of uptake strategy
- Considered in capacity building efforts of research team
- Use of local gender focal points

III. Capacity Building and Research Leadership Development

5. Please select the strategies that have been used to ensure built capacity of graduate students and emerging researchers earlier in their career. (Mark an X beside all that apply. Multiple choices may be selected):

- Mentoring/overlap with principal or lead researchers
- External advisor or technical support has been brought in that includes mentoring/capacity building
- Research team governance/ management (the extent to which the way the team is set up and roles and responsibilities contribute to capacity building)
- Overall research team composition and structure
- Workshops focused on building key competencies
- Peer mentoring
- Opportunities to expand responsibilities. For example, presentations and co-authorship

6. What would be the strongest indication of success in building local research leadership by the end of the program?

IV. Positioning for Uptake and Use

7. With your understanding of how change and influence work, please specifically name (individual and/or institution) the two most important influencers in your research areas who already exist within your networks. Your responses will be confidential.

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8. With your understanding of how change and influence work, please specifically name the two most important influencers in your research areas who are outside of your existing networks. Your responses will be confidential.

9. Which fields or sectors, in particular, are you trying to influence?

10. Your uptake strategy is based on: (*Please number in order of importance only those that apply)*

- Credibility of lead or principal researchers and institutions and their existing relationships and networks
- Engaging policy makers and influencers in the research process
- An effective dissemination strategy primarily through publications
- An effective dissemination and outreach strategy through publications and influential policy networks and arenas
- Identifying influential policy makers and other influencers through the research
- The research itself is focused on policy and policy changes
- Other. Please indicate specifically:

11. Please mark an X beside the three most influential dissemination forums/mediums of your uptake strategy:

- Smaller more pointed meetings with key influencers
- Seminars or conferences specifically for this research
- Piggy-backing existing relevant conferences, events and forums
- Respected or peer-reviewed journals in the sector
- Our own website
- Key stakeholder websites and/or platforms
- Blogs and Social media (i.e., Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.)
- Press (newspaper, radio, TV)
- Films, CDRoms or Photo exhibitions
- Policy briefs
- Other (please specify) :

12. What would be the strongest indication of policy uptake success in your overall research project?

13. Your research uptake strategy is targeted to (please bold the correct response for each group of influencers):

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Policy makers a) largely b) in combination with other influencers c) somewhat d) not at all

Practitioners a) largely b) in combination with other influencers c) somewhat d) not at all

Thought leaders/ a) largely b) in combination with other influencers c) somewhat d) not at all

Academics

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Tool 3: EG Key Informant Interview Guide with Researchers

Introduction

The purpose of the interview with principal investigators and emergent research leaders to explore the research project strategies in more depth. In particular, the evaluation team will probe some of the issues that have arisen from the project reports, survey results and project officer interviews.

The Employment and Growth (EG) program of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) leverages innovative solutions for inclusive economies by investing in research and research leadership across the Global South. The program, begun in 2014/2015, invests in research on employment and economic opportunities of vulnerable groups, particularly women and youth. The research takes place in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa through 80 active research projects, 130 sub-components or studies.

Sisters Ink, a global consulting company comprised of self-employed women, has been mandated to conduct a learning evaluation of EG for internal learning and adaptation. There are three key analytical questions that guide the Learning Evaluation:

- What are the Drivers of Quality Plus Research?
- What are the Drivers of Programing Effectiveness?
- Where is EG Most Likely to Contribute Thought Leadership to the Development Field?

The main aim of the evaluation is to support strategic reflection and dialogue on progress made, including drivers, as well as strategies to adapt and improve the program going forward.

This interview should take about 30 minutes. Your answers will not be attributed but may be cited to illustrate a key point or trend. An executive summary of the learning evaluation will be shared with you

Any specific questions about this process can be directed to Nanci Lee, Team Leader: nancilee@eastlink.ca

Note to evaluation team: Essential that we have reviewed the documents, the project officer interviews, the completed surveys and draft research reports to determine where to probe further.

For Principal Investigator(s)

23) To what extent has the EG project allowed you (and your team of researchers) to advance work that may not have otherwise been possible? What unique value-added does this particular funding and project structure provide to your research? What would have done if you didn't receive EG funding?

24) What type of support, if any did you receive from IDRC/EG, aside from funding?

25) How does EG funding compare to other funding in terms of reporting, learning, support?

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26) How has the project navigated the tensions between achieving quality rigorous research, ensuring uptake by key decision makers and building local research leadership? (possible probing question. There is some debate as to whether uptake should be considered an aspect of quality. From your experience with this research project, what do you think?)

27) How do you ensure coherence where different researchers or researchers partners were conducting parts of the research? Or in mixed methods research between quantitative and qualitative?

28) How do you address the issue of comparability? External validity? [if across different countries and populations]

29) *If answered no to ethical protocol on survey*, how did you ensure that the process carried out in the research is ethical and transparent?

30) What kinds of supports are needed to scale research impact?

31) What are the most important drivers for effective uptake by key influencers?

32) At what stages in the research process have policy makers or other key decision makers been brought in to the research?

33) [*Referring to and building on survey response]* What are the specific ways that you can see this research influencing policy or decision makers?

34) Has political will and the specific policy context and landscape in which you are operating been part of your analysis in this research project? Please elaborate.

35) What is the role of multi-stakeholder research networks in scaling research impact and influence?

36) [*Referring to and building on survey response*] Can you elaborate on the ways this research project has supported emerging researchers and local thought leadership?

- acquisition of new skills
- increased visibility through publications
- increased visibility through conferences, panels or events
- increased ability to influence policy
- increased mentoring role within field
- better career prospects

37) What have been your challenges in building research leadership in emerging researchers?

38) Who else should be interviewed on your team to round out our understanding of the project? [Depends on the governance structure. Another stakeholder in multi-stakeholder network or

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partnership; for research centre emerging thought leader or researcher if this is an emphasis in the project]

For Emerging Research Leaders or Other Stakeholders Involved

39) Why did you join this project?

40) Did participation in this project allow you to do something your agency or organization would not have been able to do on its own? Elaborate.

41) Did participation in this research increase your ability to address the tensions between growth and empowerment?

42) Did you acquire new skills for analyzing the gender or demographic dimension in this research?

43) Did you learn any new skills related to research methods as a result of participating in this project?

44) Did you feel as though you were actively mentored or coached in the research project?

45) Did you increase your profile through publications and presentations originating from EG supported research? Were these profiles recognized nationally, regionally or internationally?

46) To what extent did you feel an opportunity to build or demonstrate research leadership in this project? Can you give a specific example?

47) What, for you, is important to consider in fostering local research leadership?

48) How did the EG support strategies help you to build research leadership? Check all that apply:

- new skills
- increased visibility (elaborate- publications, conferences, events, panels)
- increased ability to influence policy
- increased mentoring role within field
- better career prospects

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Tool 4: EG Assessment of Research Project Quality Plus

Introduction

The purpose of the assessment tool is to assess the sample of research projects in terms of project quality plus (integrity; legitimacy; importance; positioning for use). The assessment will attempt to identify the trajectory and progress of each research project as well as trade-offs between elements of quality. Each project will be assessed by one of the evaluation team with a second assessment by Kunal Sen. Overall the aim of the quality plus assessments is to understand drivers of quality.

The Employment and Growth (EG) program of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) leverages innovative solutions for inclusive economies by investing in research and research leadership across the Global South. The program, begun in 2014/2015, invests in research on employment and economic opportunities of vulnerable groups, particularly women and youth. The research takes place in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa through 80 active research projects, 130 sub-components or studies.

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- Where is EG Most Likely to Contribute Thought Leadership to the Development Field?

The main aim of the evaluation is to support strategic reflection and dialogue on progress made, including drivers, as well as strategies to adapt and improve the program going forward.

Note to evaluation team: Use the example assessment as a guide. All research project documentation should be thoroughly reviewed to complete the assessment.

Any specific questions about this process can be directed to Nanci Lee, Team Leader: nancilee@eastlink.ca

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Research Quality+ Assessment Framework (Spider Map)

		EXPECT TO SEE	LIKE TO SEE	LOVE TO SEE
Quality	Integrity *Quantitative, Experimental, quasi-experimental or big data focused research* Ofir et al., (2016) DFID (2014)	Research project demonstrates measurement internal validity (minimization of risk and bias errors including incomplete data, sampling, controls, selection bias, endogeneity, randomization errors); external validity (generalizability); reliability (consistency of results across contexts, tools; comparability if appropriate); cogency (authors have considered study limitations and alternative interpretations). A clear link to EG outcomes. Specific plans for a peer-reviewed article in a named influential journal.	Research project demonstrates measurement internal validity, external validity, reliability, cogency and a clear link to EG outcomes. Limitations have been rendered explicitly. There is strong coherence between quantitative and qualitative methods (where applicable). Acceptance of a peer-reviewed article in a reputed journal.	There is measurement validity (internal and external), reliability and cogency demonstrated in the methodology or protocol used. Limitations have been rendered explicitly. Clear link to EG outcomes. There is strong coherence between quantitative and qualitative methods (where applicable). Acceptance to more than one peer-reviewed article in influential journal.
	Integrity *Qualitative research, mixed methods* Ofir et al. (2016) Leech et al. (2009)	There is a coherent theory of change/hypothesis, appropriate, valid and reliable research methodology appropriate to questions, researcher reflexivity . EG outcomes are identified and arguments sound and coherent, backed by evidence. Specific plans for external publication.	There is a coherent theory of change/hypothesis stemming from identification of literature gaps. Validity, reliability of research methods. There is strong coherence between quantitative and qualitative methods. Each is well matched to the research questions. EG outcomes are identified as well as how they will be measured. Quality control mechanisms are defined and there is indication of use. Plans for a peer-reviewed article in a reputed journal.	Previous plus theory of change built from clear identification of gaps in literature. The study is using an existing research protocol (optional). Quality control mechanisms are defined and there is evidence of use. Outcomes are identified including how they will be measured. Evidence of improvements in methodological design. Acceptance to or publication in more than one peer-reviewed article in influential journal or book publishing.

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		EXPECT TO SEE	LIKE TO SEE	LOVE TO SEE
	Integrity *Implementation research* Ofir et al., (2016) Khan and Tzortzopoulis (2016) Herr and Anderson (2005)	Problem and opportunities have been clearly defined. Sound and appropriate research methodology. New knowledge has been created as well as change in outcomes evident.	Previous plus process of learning and reflexivity clear and collaborative problem-solving relationship between researchers and practitioners. Rigor has been made apparent through data and methodological triangulation. Action taken suitable and appropriate for the situation.	Previous plus research should engage in significant work and demonstrate new and enduring changes. Generalizability is possible. Action taken is also adaptable to the current practice and can be measured for effectiveness.
	Legitimacy (includes new gender transformation categories in PAD)	Ethics review standards (or equivalent) have been approved up to this stage. Indications of gender adaptations and local or contextual adaptation. Gender (the differentiated and intersectional experiences of women, men, boys, and girls) is considered in the research project's rationale, but is not an operative concept in the design and methodology). [gender aware]	Ethics review standards (or equivalent) have been approved up to this stage. Demonstration of gender and local adaptations in text. Local researchers played a role in ensuring that study is well-adapted to context. Gender is considered in the research project's rationale and is addressed in the project design and methodology but does not yet extend analysis and action to address structural power relations. [gender sensitive]	Ethics review standards (or equivalent) have been approved up to this stage. Demonstration of gender and local adaptations in text. Intention to inform long-term practical changes in structural power relations, norms, roles and inequalities. Sustained change through action. [gender responsive/transformative] Structural relating to gendered social norms and/or policy, lawas, budgets. Expert advisory group has provided feedback at a strategic time that led to changes in project focus or methodology.
	Importance	A convincing rationale has been made about the relevance, theoretical or methodological innovation and identification of this research gap nationally or globally. WEE and/or YE mandate is evident but may be marginal in treatment.	A literature review (not necessarily by the research project) has identified this gap in the literature. Research has been validated by at least one key external stakeholder in the sector. WEE and/or YE mandate is clear.	A comprehensive literature review or systematic review is part of the research project to identify gaps in the literature and ensure importance of this research. Research has been validated by more than one key external stakeholder in this particular sector which may include research team's knowledge of sector. WEE and/or YE mandate is central.

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		EXPECT TO SEE	LIKE TO SEE	LOVE TO SEE
	Positioning for Use	Identification of key stakeholders as well as strategies to ensure research is tailored to these stakeholders. A dissemination strategy has been outlined.	A strategic uptake strategy has outlined specific and key stakeholders to influence as well as detail about how the research has been positioned to ensure uptake. Research integrated into an already existing network and/or identification of new stakeholders through different modes of uptake.	There is demonstration of stakeholder mapping, context analysis and/or early engagement. There is differentiation of strategy for different types of influencers. It is clear how different research outputs have been tailored to ensure influence. There is a range of forums or modes of uptake appropriate to different audiences.

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Tool 5: Thought Leader Key Informant Interview Guide

Introduction

The purpose of this interview guide is to get perspectives from key stakeholders (researchers, policy makers, public and private sector donors, technical service providers) on the value-added and potential contributions of the EG program to thought leadership and local research leadership in the fields of women's economic empowerment, youth employment and inclusive economies. The guide will also support identification of the issue briefs.

The Employment and Growth (EG) program of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) leverages innovative solutions for inclusive economies by investing in research and research leadership across the Global South. The program, begun in 2014/2015, invests in research on employment and economic opportunities of vulnerable groups, particularly women and youth. The research takes place in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa through 80 active research projects, 130 sub-components or studies.

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The main aim of the evaluation is to support strategic reflection and dialogue on progress made, including drivers, as well as strategies to adapt and improve the program going forward.

This interview should take about 30 minutes. Your answers will not be attributed but may be cited to illustrate a key point or trend. An executive summary of the learning evaluation will be shared with you at the end of the Learning Evaluation in September 2018.

Any specific questions about this process can be directed to Nanci Lee, Team Leader: nancilee@eastlink.ca

[In advance of the interview, provide the EG Brochure outlining the research program and brief highlights. If there is another brochure that is relevant to the stakeholder, add – financial inclusion; better jobs for Asia]

1) Can you tell a story, from your own specific experience, about where you have seen research influence policy or sectoral practices even influential organizations or multi-laterals in the areas of inclusive economies or women/youth economic empowerment? What were the conditions or drivers that enabled research to have wide influence and impact?

2) How, in your opinion, does IDRC generally and (if you know it) the EG program specifically, contribute to the fields of women's economic empowerment / youth employment opportunities/ inclusive economies? *Note to evaluation team: tailor the field to the stakeholder being interviewed. Some will cross more than one field.*

3) What types of funding structures and supports are needed to greatly advance local research leadership?

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4) What is the role of multi-stakeholder networks in advancing local research leadership and evidence-based policy change?

5) Do you have anything else to add that may be helpful for the evaluation team to know or consider?

Thank you for your time and consideration

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Annex C: Schedule of Interviews

Schedule for Employment and Growth Program Staff and Project Officer Interviews with Evaluation Team

	Dates	Times	Names	Position	Evaluators
1	March 21 , 2018	8h30 – 9h30AM Atlantic Standard Time	Flaubert Mbiekop	Senior Program Officer Regional Office for Sub-Saharan Africa Tel : +254 709 074 452| Mobile: +254 541 760 fmbiekop@idrc.ca | Skype : maitreflau	Nanci with Sabrina
2	March 23, 2018	11h – 12h00PM Atlantic Standard Time	Carolina Robino	Senior Program Officer Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean Montevideo, Uruguay Tel: (+598) 2915-0492 ext. 3210 crobino@idrc.ca Skype: crobino-idrc	Nanci with Patricia
3	March 27, 2018	10:00 am Atlantic Standard Time	Rania	Consultant for MERO - Ottawa rania.fazah@gmail.com +1 613 979 1107 Skype: rania.fazah	Sabrina w Momal
4	March 27, 2018	3:00 pm Atlantic Standard Time	Paul Okwi	Senior Program Officer Regional Office for Sub-Saharan Africa Tel : +254 771 238677 pokwi@idrc.ca Skype : pokiira1	Sabrina w Nanci
5	27 March 28 March		Edgard Rodriguez	Sr. Program Specialist Myanmar Initiative | Initiative Myanmar +1 613 696-2318 erodriguez@idrc.ca Skype: Rodriguez_edgard	Nanci
6	March 29, 2018	10:30am Atlantic Standard Time	Arjan de Haan	Program Leader - Ottawa +1 613 696 2351 adehaan@idrc.ca Skype: Arjan.de.haan	Nanci – anyone who can attend welcome to join. Sabrina, Patricia, Momal
7	March 29, 2018	2 :00 pm Atlantic Standard Time	Gillian Dowie	Program Officer GrOW – Ottawa Policy Uptake Strategies +1 613 696 2344 gdowie@idrc.ca Skype: Gillian.Dowie	Nanci w Patricia Sabrina to attend if she can

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8	March 29, 2018	3:30pm-4:30pm	Tiffany Barnes-Huggins	Tiffany Tiffany Barnes-Huggins Program Officer, Knowledge Translation GrOW +1 613 696 2348 | tbarnes-huggins@idrc.ca	Nanci
9	April 3, 2018	4:30-5:30 pm	Frederico Burone	Frederico, IDRC management Federico S. Burone Ph.D. Regional Director LACRO - Acting Vice President PPB International Development Research Centre - Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean Tel: +589 27090042 Ext. 3207 fburone@idrc.ca	Nanci
10	April 4, 2018	4:00- 5:00pm Atlantic Standard Time	Martha Melesse	Senior Program Specialist - Ottawa +1 613 696 22016 mmelesse@idrc.ca Skype: melessem	Nanci w Sabrina
11	April 4, 2018	12:00-1:00pm Atlantic Standard Time	Bouba Housseini	Program Officer Ottawa +1 613 696 2230 bhousseini@idrc.ca Skype: Bouba.housseini	Nanci
12	April 12, 2018	12:00-1:00pm	Peter Taylor	Peter Taylor, inclusive economies Director Peter Taylor, Ph.D. Acting Director Inclusive Economies Tel : 613-696-2302 | ptaylor@idrc.ca	Nanci
13	April 20, 2018	11:30-12:00pm	Peter Taylor	Director, Inclusive Economies, IDRC	Nanci
14	May 4 , 2018	15:00-16:15 hrs Santiago de Chile time	María Emilia Correa	Principal Investigator B corporations	Patricia
15	May 7, 2018	11:00-11:55 am Bogota Colombia time	María Helena Jaén	Principal Investigator SCALA: Linking Vulnerable Youth	Patricia
16	May 10, 2018	11:00 Central Africa Time	Sara Feresu; Doreen Tirivanhu	Principal Investigator, Project manager/PhD student (both University of Zimbabwe) 108206	Sabrina
17	May 11, 2018	9:30-10:15 am Bogota Colombia time	Tatiana Rincon	Principal Investigator Enhancing Economic Opportunities	Patricia
18	May 11 , 2018	8:00-9:15 hrs. am Bogota Colombia time	Ivonne Villada	Principal Investigator Scaling Up Financial Inclusion	Patricia
19	May 11, 2018	10:00-11:15 am Santiago de Chile time	Eleonora Nun	Principal Investigator Enhancing Opportunities for Vulnerable Youth	Patricia

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20	May 14, 2018	9am Eastern Standard Time	Xiao Youan Dong; Yao Hui Zhao	Principal Investigators, Care Economy in China	Nanci
21	May 14, 2018	11am Eastern Stanard Time	Anirban Mukherjee	Principal Investigator, Courts, Startups, Business	Nanci
22	May 14, 2018	9:30 am Eastern Africa Time	Edward Bbaale (108174)	Principal Investigator (Dean School of Economics, Univ. Makere)	Sabrina
23	May 14, 2018	15pm Eastern Africa Time	Paul Musoke (108485)	Strategic Advisor (FSDAfrica)	Sabrina
24	May 15, 2018	8:32 am	Wendy Olsen	Professor, School of Social Sciences, University of Manchester, feminist socio-economist and PI of ESRC-DFID £500,000 grant on gender and social norms	Kunal
25	May 22, 2018	11am South Africa Standard Time	Toughedah Jacobs (108462); Sarah Marriott	Principal Investigator Project Manager (Univ. Cape Town) toughedah.jacobs@uct.ac.za; Communications Manager	Sabrina
26	May 22, 2018	10am Eastern Daylight Time (Toronto)	Linda Oucho (108368)	Principal Investigator Director of Research (AMADPOC Kenya), linda.oucho@amadpoc.org	Sabrina
27	May 28, 2018	12am GMT	Ed K. Brown and Richmond Commodore (108488)	Principal Investigator Director, Policy Advisory Services of ACET (African Center for Economic Transformation) ebrown@acetforafrica.org ; Research Analyst ACET rcommodore@acetforafrica.org	Sabrina
28	May 29, 2018	3:18 am GMT	Federico S. Burone	Regional Director LACRO - Acting Vice President PPB	Kunal
29	May 29, 2018	3:16 am GMT	Stephan Klasen	Thought Leader Professor of Development Economics, University of Gottingen, Germany	Kunal
30	May 30, 2018	10:00-11:00 Eastern time	Elizabeth A. Vazquez	Principal Investigator CEO and Co-Founder WEConnect International	Nanci and Patricia
31	May 30, 2018	7:37 am GMT	Andy Mckay	Thought Leader Professor of Development Economics, University of Sussex and recipient of GrOW grant.	Kunal
32	May 30, 2018	8:26 am GMT	Francisco H.G. Ferreira	Thought Leader Senior Advisor, Development Research Group, The World Bank	Kunal
33	June 15, 2018	10:45 am GMT	Peter Taylor	Director, Inclusive Economies Programme, IDRC	Kunal
34	June 15, 2018	9:15 am GMT	Renana Jhabvala	Thought Leader National Coordinator, SEWA	Kunal

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35	June 22, 2018	5:05 pm GMT	Arjan de Haan	Program Leader, IDRC's Employment and Growth programme	Kunal
36	June 27, 2018	12:38 Eastern time	Kyoko Kusakabe	Principal Investigator Professor, Gender and Development Studies Head, Department of Development and Sustainability School of Environment, Resources and Development Asian Institute of Technology	Nanci
37	June 29, 2018	11:45 Eastern time	Vathana Roth,	Principal Investigator	Nanci
38	July 1, 2018	6:13 Eastern time	Pranava Sethaputra,	Principal Investigator GrOW Asia	Nanci
39	July 23, 2018	13:00-13:50 Eastern time	Carolina Trivelli	Principal Investigator Proyecto Capital	Nanci and Patricia

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Annex D: Employment and Growth Programs Over Time

	Key Questions	Key outcomes	Observations and Lessons
Supporting Inclusive Growth	What drives inclusive growth, particularly for women and youth? What policies support growth and inclusion simultaneously?	- Enterprise development - Decent jobs - Enabling policy	- Appropriate strategy and progress overall - Gap between question and themes - Gender treatment not strong - Heterogeneity key
GrOW	How does growth affect WEE and vice-versa? What are the constraints for WEE?	- Body of quality evidence on WEE - Policy uptake - Built capacity of local researchers	- Strong portfolio & uptake overall - Treatment of gender strong - Demonstration of mutually reinforcing outcomes - Growth important to understand but not enough
Employment and Growth	How can policy-influential research and innovation support women's economic empowerment and youth employment?	- Decent work, labour markets, value chains - Financial inclusion - New business models	- Growth message - non traditional economic. Heterogeneity still key. - Links to Governance & Justice. Other areas IE? - Worth revisiting fit and synergy. Not all synergies clear. - Strength in WEE - Move to applied research, private partners, youth employment, networks - Return to SIG focus in some ways - Project the right unit of interest?

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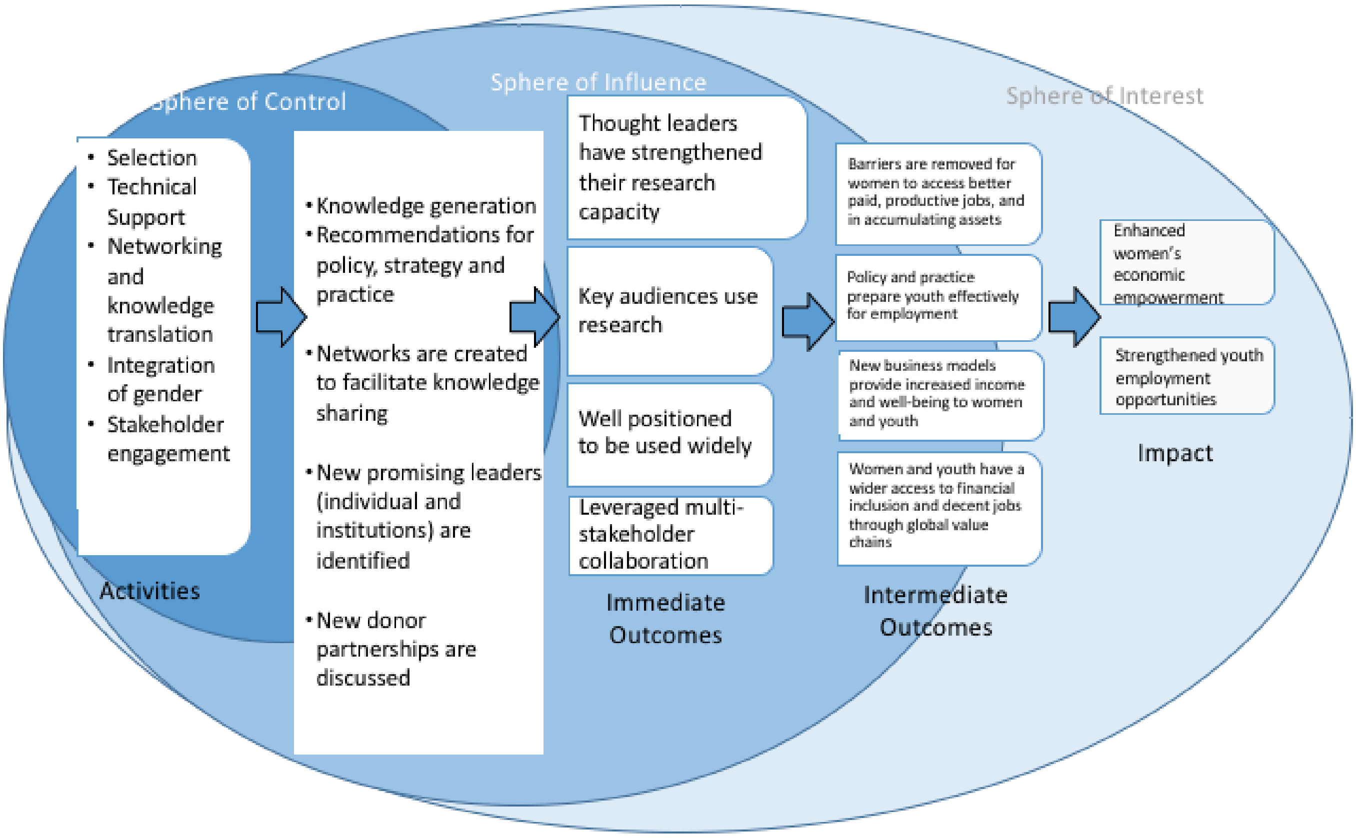
Annex E: Employment and Growth Theory of Change



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Annex F: Employment and Growth Performance Against IDRC Strategic Objectives on Scale, Leadership and Partnerships

EMPLOYMENT AND GROWTH 2017							
	Indicator	Target for 2020	Reported Nov 2016	Progress to Dec 2017	Development outcomes	SDG[4]	Some Key Examples
SCALE	Policies and programs that promote women and youth's economic empowerment in development or being rolled out informed or influenced by E&G	30	9	38	2 and 3	5 and 8	Target exceeded. 4 from GrOW and 21 from PEP. References in 13 countries. EG is also tracking the number of policies and programs that incentivize an inclusive business approach since July 2017 but doesn't have something to report yet given it is a new program priority.
SCALE	References to E&G research in national or international policies and practices		-	40	2 and 3	5 and 8	Indicator created in July 2017 to track more accurately policy influence at different levels. 13 out of the 41 are from PEP. References are documented in 16 countries.
SCALE	Stories of policy makers actively engaged in discussing economic issues at events	-	-	16	2 and 3	5 and 8	Indicator created in July 2017 to show a different way of reaching / influencing policy makers.
SCALE	Innovative tools, strategies and financial products that are identified and tested	-	2	7	3	8	On track. 5 innovations working with the private sector on commercialization networks, certifications, subsidized day care, TVET and social businesses.
SCALE	Case examples of pilot projects scaled up or expanded into new areas/countries	10	2	3	3	8	On track. Graduation programs, financial support through Proyecto Capital and AFI.
SCALE	E&G research cited in media	30	31	68	2 and 3	5 and 8	EG is also counting since July 2017 the numbers of peer-reviewed articles (56) and policy briefs (63).
LEADERS	Transformative organizations supported	35	7	9	2 and 3	5 and 8	Target exceeded. 9 think thanks, NGOs and research centres strengthened thanks to EG's support.

[4] IDRC Development Outcomes- *2: Enabling Gender Equality, 3: Enhancing Economic Empowerment, 4: Improving Governance for Better Policies and Services, 5: Improving Health for All, 7: Improving Safety, Security and Inclusivity*
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)- 3*: Good Health & Well-being, 4: Quality Education, 5: Gender Equality, 8: Decent Work & Economic Growth, 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, 11: Sustainable Cities & Communities, 16: Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions, 17: Partnerships for the Goals*

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	Indicator	Target for 2020	Reported Nov 2016	Progress to Dec 2017	Development outcomes	SDG[4]	Some Key Examples
EMPLOYMENT AND GROWTH 2017							
	Researchers recognized as thought-leaders or called upon for their inputs - male		22	28	3	8	Target exceeded but more emphasis to be put next years on obtaining more results for women. Numbers include 5 male and 2 female researchers who received a prestigious award or were asked to participate in high level committees.
	Researchers recognized as thought-leaders or called upon for their inputs - female		10	12	2 and 3	5 and 8	
	Graduate students supported - male	300	249	506	3	8	EG continues to support large numbers of leaders through various networks; targets under-estimated this. The number reported in June 2016 was corrected as it initially included 2 PTCI cohorts. Only the one ending in 2015 is now counted. As of today, two new cohorts of PTCI have started (2015-2017 and 2016-2018).
	Graduate students supported - female	200	72	182	2 and 3	5 and 8	
	Researchers trained to enhance skills and produce policy-oriented research - male	180	75	950	3	8	
	Researchers trained to enhance skills and produce policy-oriented research - female	120	68	490	2 and 3	5 and 8	
PARTNER-SHIPS	Amounts of external funds leveraged	$72 million	8.5 million	18.5 million	3	8	Behind schedule. Partnerships renewal is a major objective for 2018 as main partnership ends. Only parallel funding.
	Projects engaging with the private sectors or new actors	10 projects	7 projects	10 projects	3	8	Achieved. Collaboration with private sector mostly in portfolios on inclusive business and financial inclusion.

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