

# Listening to Client Voices

**JORDAN VALLEY LINKS  
ADOPTS GENDER PROGRESS MARKERS**



*Creating business solutions to poverty*



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# Introduction

A key question confronting funders and implementers is how to measure Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE). This technical brief presents guidance and learnings on how a project can collect behavior change data and monitor women's economic empowerment projects.

Jordan Valley Links (JVL) is a five-year project (2016-2021), implemented with the generous support of Global Affairs Canada. The ultimate outcome of the project is to increase the contribution by women and youth to Jordan's economic growth. JVL is supporting women and youth in the Jordan Valley in seizing new opportunities in targeted sectors, and ultimately to become strong economic actors. JVL will use two main approaches to achieve this goal:

- Improve youth and women's entrepreneurial and business acumen through capacity building and market linkages
- Work with communities, families, and market actors to reduce barriers to entry for enterprise development for women and youth

JVL will work in the Jordan Valley and surrounding areas to directly support 25,000 women and youth entrepreneurs in increasing their incomes and their contributions to Jordan's economic growth. A further 25,000 individuals are expected to benefit indirectly from the project's initiatives in three sectors: food processing, tourism and clean technologies.

To measure women's economic empowerment on JVL, MEDA has piloted Gender Progress Markers (GPM). GPM are a set of statements, describing a progression of changed behaviors for a target group of people, that monitor and measure the project's WEE strategy.

This technical brief will outline the JVL GPM process, domains, and preliminary data on women's economic empowerment as defined by our clients, partners, and staff. It will conclude with recommendations on integrating gender considerations into monitoring and evaluation processes and systems. It will also share how JVL is learning and reacting to real-time gender data to improve project approaches and activities. The audiences for this brief are inclusive market systems development programs, practitioners and donors.



Progress Markers are a set of specific, achievable and progressive statements of behavioral change for each target group

~ Care, [Pathways Program](#)

# Objectives

This brief aims to fulfill the following objectives:

- To demonstrate the importance of gender data collection and measurement in project activities
- To share JVL's experience – adapting a tool and methodology established by CARE– to serve as a guide for other organizations or projects interested in collecting more qualitative gender data to strengthen their women's economic empowerment in market system initiatives.

## Rationale

Data is power. It has the power to convert the invisible into the visible and counted<sup>1</sup>. It has been four years since the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced the need for more reliable gender data. Current gaps mean that we don't know about women's economic activity and conditions. This year's Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation letter highlights that the "data that policymakers depend on is bad...and even call it sexist."<sup>2</sup>

More – and better quality – data will inform policy and programming, to understand gender gaps, and to hold leaders accountable. Many donors have followed suit, requiring gender analysis to highlight the barriers that women and girls often face. However, more needs to be done to intentionally build the collection of gender data into project monitoring and evaluation processes and systems, especially for projects and programs with WEE strategies, because you are what you measure.

The measurement and monitoring of women's economic empowerment indicators are important. This is especially true in generating knowledge and awareness to begin the slow but necessary attitudinal change in behavior around social norms. Social norms are widely shared beliefs about how male and female characteristics shape the ways society believes women or men should act. "Social norms also have a significant impact on [key areas of decision-making on ] female labour force participation...such as the general acceptability of women working and gender roles of married women"<sup>3</sup> in Jordan.

The need to collect gender data and count women's participation in the economy was highlighted in our first data validation workshop<sup>4</sup> for the GPM.

**“Human beings adjust behavior based on the metrics they're held against. Anything you measure will impel a person to optimize [her/] his score on that metric. What you measure is what you'll get. Period.”**

**~ Dan Ariely, “[You are what you measure,](#)” *Harvard Business Review*, 2010**

<sup>1</sup> The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Announces \$80 Million Commitment To [Close Gender Data Gaps and Accelerate Progress for Women and Girls](#), The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation website, (2016).

<sup>2</sup> Yasmin Tab'a. (2018). [Our gender outcome mapping: Now we count them](#) (blog), MEDA.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank. 2018. Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan – [Understanding How Gender Norms in MNA Impact Female Employment Outcomes](#) (English). Washington, D.C. : World Bank Group

<sup>4</sup> Yasmin Tab'a. (2018). [Our gender outcome mapping: Now we count them](#) (blog), MEDA

In this workshop, one male client shared that “15 or 20 years ago, [male head of households] didn’t count women as family members, but now we do!” When staff asked him to clarify his statement, he shared that “usually if someone asked a man how many children he has, he would usually give the number of boys.”

But the status of women in Jordan is changing, as women and girls are increasingly seen as active citizens. An older male from that same focus group discussion agreed. “Now we count our girls and women,” he shared, “because they have proved their role in the community and income generating – not only managing the house matters.” Staff followed up on this story with the United Nations Population Fund’s Population Dynamics Program. The contact, Layali Abu Sir, stated that this practice of not counting women and girls was true a real challenge for people that work in population studies and statistics. Imagine the different decisions and policies, and the potential services that could have been available if women and girls were counted. This story highlights the importance of gender data in order to address size and nature of gender inequality in Jordan.

# Methodology

This brief was prepared and drafted by reviewing the collection of outcome mapping materials. This included tools, training materials, articles, and reports written on establishing gender progress markers. Foundational resources include:

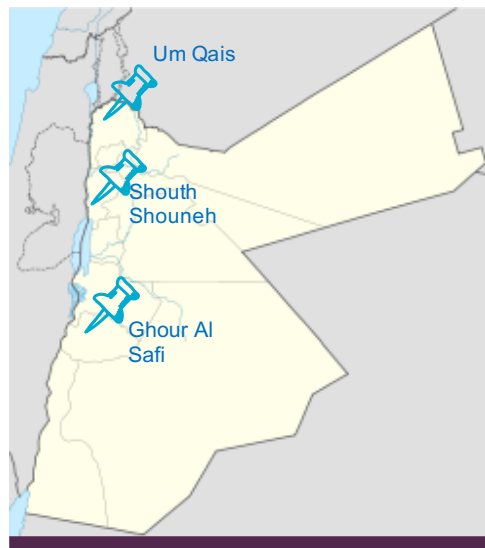
- Earl, Sarah & Carden, Fred & Smutylo, Terry & Patton, Michael. (2004). [Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs](#). IDRC.
- [Outcome Mapping Learning Community website](#)
- CARE (2013), [Designing a common gender indicator framework for CARE’s Pathways Program Pathways](#), USAID Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) program presentation.
- CARE (2016), Measuring and monitoring gender behavior change: Developing a common gender-indicator framework for the Pathways program
- Jones H. & Hearn, S., (2009). [Outcome Mapping: a realistic alternative for planning, monitoring and evaluation](#), ODI.

It is important to note that findings presented here are based on *surveyed* women entrepreneurs, male partners or family members, and traditional/ community leaders. For instance, the initial data validation process had a sample size of 32 women entrepreneurs and 32 men across two regions, soon to be three, where the project operates.

# Process

The ultimate outcome, or vision, for the JVL project is increased contribution by women and youth entrepreneurs (WYEs) in targeted sectors (Tourism, Food Processing, Clean Technology) to Jordan's economic growth. With the focus on WYE, we built gender into our monitoring and evaluation process and systems. However, we wanted to do more as a project to monitor attitude and behavior change as defined by our clients and partners and track our progress as a project. As a result, we instituted Progress Markers (PM), a component of outcome mapping (OM) methodology and gendered by CARE as a monitoring tool for their [Pathways Project](#).

Earl, Carden, and Smutylo stated that: "OM is appropriate when focused on changed behaviors or relationships, which may evolve...in a non-linear way; and when the intervention wants to focus on results as defined by local actors or beneficiaries."<sup>5</sup> For this reason, JVL adopted Gender Progress Markers (GPM) to help the project, its partners, and clients define the outcome: women's economic empowerment and male engagement and measure against that WEE definition.. GPM is being applied in community-based tourism and food processing in Southern Shouneh, the middle of the Jordan Valley, and Um Qais in the Northern region. In June 2019, JVL will develop its third GPM matrix in Ghour Al Safi in the southern part of the Jordan Valley with a partner in the clean technology sector.



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<sup>5</sup> Earl, Sarah & Carden, Fred & Smutylo, Terry & Patton, Michael. (2004). [Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs](#).

## Outcomes

As noted earlier, a central feature of GPM is that clients or beneficiaries define the results being measured. During a participatory process, JVL facilitated discussions with clients and partners on what success would look like in terms of increased women's economic empowerment.

The discussions yielded the following definitions of successful outcomes, as defined by our clients and partners:

Southern Shounah / Food Processing Sector	Um Quais / Community-based Tourism Sector
<b>An empowered woman is:</b> Confident, organized, bold, can talk freely in any situation or place she is in, a leader, with good communication skills, humble, and productive. She serves her community, can create anything from scratch, and has patience to challenge the negative social norms (culture of shame) [in her community].	<b>An empowered woman is:</b> a confident leader with good communication skills, productive at her house and in her business. She can create anything from scratch, serves her community, and has enough patience to challenge the negative social norms (culture of shame) [in her community].
<b>A male champion</b> trusts his wife, helps her in the household chores and with the kids, takes the kids to for health care, if needed, and had good communication skills, especially with his wife. He supports his wife in her business, if she has one, and promotes his wife business and work, and doesn't depend on her financially (if she has her own income).	<b>A male champion</b> trusts his wife and helps her in the household chores and with the kids. He supports his wife in her business, if she has one, and is proud of his wife's business and work.

These desired outcomes are the end goal of what the JVL project. JVL uses the PM to measure its progress towards the goal. The process to establish the PM is described in the next section of the brief.

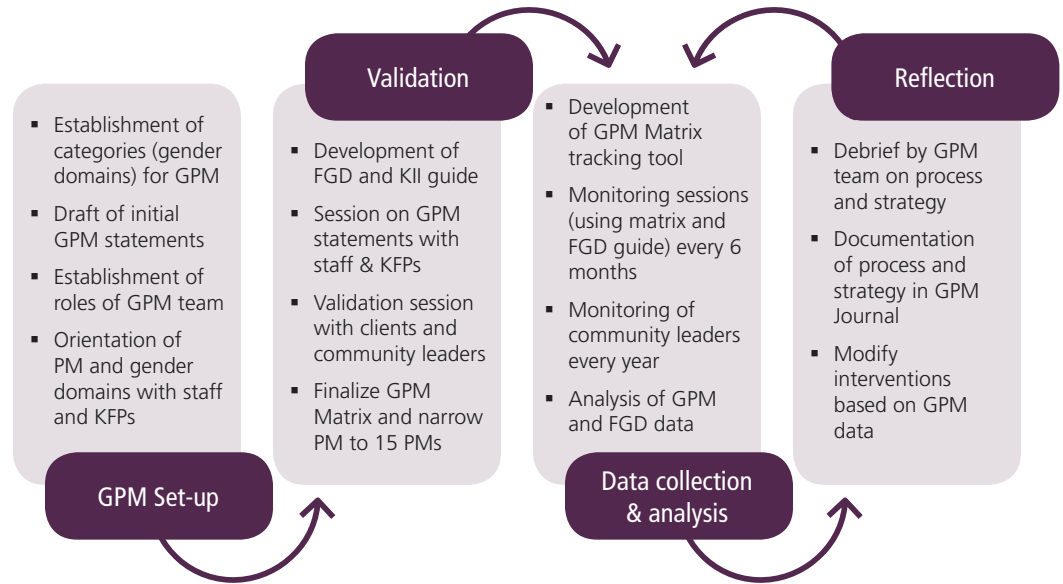
## Developing Progress Markers

JVL also worked with its clients and partners to develop their progress markers or landmark statements that will allow MEDA to measure changes in actions, activities, and relationship required to reach the outcomes. There were three objectives to the GPMs. The first was to better understand the current social dynamic in the selected communities and to understand if and how the project is helping to change the lives of our clients. The second was to collect qualitative and real-time data about our clients – the context and challenges. The third objective was to understand how the project can improve the work of our partners and staff overall, by making us more gender aware, reflective and accountable.



Progress markers are a set of graduated (usually 15) statements or mini-indicators describing a progression of changed behaviors in a target group. OM guidance indicates “that there should be four ‘Expect to see’ progress markers, which are attainable, early changes a project can achieve. Eight ‘like to see’ progress makers, which is the progressive changes, and three ‘love to see’ progress markers, which capture the transformative change that may be seen at the very end of the project.”  
 ~ Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs.

As referenced in the methodology section, JVL conducted a desk review of relevant OM and GPM materials. JVL also engaged with CARE Canada to gain further information and learning on their GPM process. Based on the information and learnings gathered, JVL developed its own approach, process, and tools for GPMs. Please see GPM process journey map below:



The tools developed included focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interview (KII) guidelines, along with monitoring and tracking sheets for the GPM. The project conducts monitoring sessions every 6 months with its key facilitating partners (KFPs)<sup>6</sup>, the JVL value chain specialist, and monitoring and evaluation staff. The JVL Gender and Youth Specialist, who serves as the GPM lead, also documents the project’s progress toward the outcome and strategy related information. This documentation<sup>7</sup> is comparable to the journals used in OM. Included in these progress logs are debrief information with GPM team members and also collected with the monitoring sessions.

<sup>6</sup> JVL piloted GPMs with Baraka starting in community-based tourism in June 2018, Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD) in food processing starting in July 2018, and will roll it out with Future Pioneers in Clean Technology in June 2019.

<sup>7</sup> For those familiar with Om, this documentation is comparable to the outcome journals, strategy journal, and performance journal drafted during the outcome and performance monitoring phase.



## Domains of Change

For the GPM pilots, JVL aimed to test the process in two regions with two sets of clients and two different sectors, along with their corresponding interventions. In total, three separate GPM matrixes will be developed. Each GPM matrix is broken into four categories or four domains of change that the project is looking to address and study. These domains include:

- Division of Labor:
  - ♦ The role of men in supporting their wives, sisters, or mothers in the household chores and childcare, especially his time spent with children is during his leisure time.
- Agency and decision-making:
  - ♦ Participation in decision-making between men and women within the household, especially in the management of household finances.
  - ♦ The level of control of men have in women's business and income.
- Self Confidence:
  - ♦ Women's confidence in their business management skills, such as negotiating deals with different market actors
  - ♦ Women's technical and financial management skills.
- Appreciation from family and community:
  - ♦ Men's level of support and pride in their partners' or family members' income-generating activity by promoting their businesses to the family and the larger community.
  - ♦ Degree to which women have the space to express their views and receive support from the community in their income generating activities.

The domains were selected based on JVL's gender analysis and it was these areas or gender-based constraints were gaps in women's economic participation in the Jordan Valley. Then the project drafted 15 statements, as seen by the example GPM box to the right that are related to the four categories. Each statement describes a changed behavior or attitudes by the target group that can be monitored and observed. The Gender and Youth Specialist and the HQ Gender Advisor developed the initial draft of statements, which were changed and validated by our staff, partners, and clients. As you can see in the example from Southern Shouneh (right), the GPM team drafted four progressive statements related to self-confidence. There are two "like to see" statements related to women's business acumen. These statements describe progress landmarks towards the desired outcome in the domain of self-confidence. Clients are asked to state where they would currently place themselves on the scale.

### Example of GPM for Self-Confidence in Southern Shouneh

**Expect to see:** Women are afraid of starting new businesses because of their limited financial and technical skills and have small home-based seasonal income generating activities.

**Like to see:** Women are comfortable with their levels of financial and technical knowledge and start unregistered home-based businesses which increased their household income.

**Like to see:** Supported by the KFP, women are meeting market actors, marketing their products and negotiating for better prices.

**Love to see:** Women are making deals with different market actors and negotiating better prices.

## Validation Process

The validation process included focus group discussions with groups of women and men in two regions. At the beginning of the validation discussions, the GPM facilitators presented the progress markets to the group, explaining that they are part of an ongoing study that MEDA is conducting, focusing on the impact of women's empowerment on family dynamics. JVL also conducted interviews with community leaders to gain their perspective on what community recognition and support looks like.

### Example of GPM for Family and Community Recognition in Um Qais

**Expect to see:** Husbands and male family members keep their wives' small income generating activities low profile because of the culture of shame and community gossiping.

**Like to see:** Husbands and male family members talk positively about their wives' businesses in front of their extended family.

**Love to see:** The community sees the value of women's contribution to the home and economy, and women can express their ideas/experiences among other women.

**Love to See:** Husbands and male family members talk proudly about their wives' businesses in front of community members.

# Findings

This section presents the main findings from JVL's experience in implementing GPM to date. The findings are applicable for both market systems programs which promote WEE by targeting women, and those that achieve WEE outcomes as a result of a gender mainstreaming approach.

1. **Build gender data, beyond sex-disaggregation, into your logic model and performance measurement framework (PMF) or log frame.** JVL uses a PMF and built in GPM as the source of data for three intermediate outcomes. It ensured that GPM would function as both a methodology and a source of data for the project. It also guaranteed that the project would provide the necessary investment and resources to see the GPM activity through. In other MEDA projects, project managers had tried to use new methodologies – including outcome mapping – to collect data, but if these were not written into project PMFs, they tended to be de-prioritized and dropped. JVL's leadership team was very supportive of GPM, which ensured appropriate resourcing, capacity building and operationalization on the project.
2. **Start small.** Another element of JVL's success with GPM is that the project started this initiative as small pilot with select partners, instead of engaging with all project partners. This allowed the team to adapt tools and processes to the Jordanian context and troubleshoot effectively before rolling out GPM more broadly. MEDA hopes that other new projects within MEDA will adopt GPM for their monitoring and qualitative data collection method.
3. **GPM Champion.** As noted above, one of the most important success factors for obtaining buy-in for the GPM initiative was a clear local champion and leader. Initially, the GPM initiative was to be co-led by the Gender and M&E teams. However, this shared leadership meant GPM lacked clear ownership. Additionally, the two teams had differing levels of familiarity and experience with the OM methodology and process. The project leadership decided that the Gender team (led by Gender and Youth Specialist in Jordan, with support for the HQ Gender Advisor) would lead the implementation of the GPM initiative. This can be seen in the timeline (right), under January 2018.
4. **Start GPM early.** JVL added this new methodology during the second year of the project. If this approach was integrated into the project earlier, we believe that the buy-in and uptake would have been easier and faster. As CARE Canada shared, the project participants and staff established GPM at the beginning of the project. Therefore, it is built in to participant and staff expectations from start rather than being added and retrofitted onto activities. JVL's GPM team has worked hard to orient staff and partners to the benefits of this approach but has struggled to get some partners to prioritize key steps



Key considerations  
for measuring  
behavior change in  
women's economic  
empowerment and  
market systems  
development programs

in the process. Despite these challenges with ownership by the KFPs, the team reflected that the GPM has helped them understand the project with new lens. One team member shared that he now understands the gendered regional differences between the two areas where the project is working. He said it was different than what he previously experienced and assisted him in understanding the client journey, which he plans to use to help design new activities with the KFPs.

## A brief history of

### JVL'S GENDER PROGRESS MARKERS (GPM) INITIATIVE

**Progress Markers** is component of the intentional design stage of outcome mapping. Progress Markers are mini-indicators or a set of statements (usually 15) describing a progression of changed behaviors in a target group or people, who are part of the project.

#### JANUARY 2018

GPM established in JVL Gender Strategy, with ownership of the monitoring activity under Gender team and support by the local partner, and M&E team.

#### APRIL 2018

Staff training and validation workshop  
GPM statements selected. GPM orientation with KFP partners and validation workshop with clients selected

#### JULY 2018

Client validation workshop to finalize GPM statements for JOHUD clients in Southern Shouneh.

#### SEPTEMBER 2018

GPM translated and monitoring template formalized

#### FEBRUARY 2019

JOHUD Data collection

#### APRIL 2019

Initial data (tables) presented to Funder

#### JULY 2017

Initial scoping to meet with prospective clients to understand constraints to establish domains. July 25, 2017 conducted orientation for staff and partners on new monitoring method.

#### FEBRUARY 2018

Dialogue with Care to learn more about their GPM implementation process and lessons learned.

#### JUNE 2018

Client validation workshop to finalize GPM statements in Um Qais and initial data collection with

#### AUGUST 2018

Initial data analysis of both partners and reflection journal. Two of GPM finalized for two sectors and partners

#### JANUARY 2019

Baraka data collection

#### MARCH 2019

Data analyzed for JOHUD & BarakaMEDA orients Future Pioneers to GPM

#### JUNE 2019

Future Pioneers begin GPM process & monitoring of their activities



# Key considerations moving forward

1. **Sex matters.** As in the case of data collection through surveys<sup>8</sup>, the sex of a GPM facilitator (or enumerator) matters. During the validation session, it became clear to the JVL GPM team that a male facilitator should lead men's sessions. When a female facilitator tried to facilitate the meeting, the men in the FGD struggled to maintain eye contact with her and were very quiet and conservative in their answers. In future sessions, the value chain specialists, who both identify as male, facilitated the FGD with the male targeted FGDs.
2. **Project power dynamics may impact on people's responses.** As noted in the JPAL Practical Guide to Measuring Women's and Girls' Empowerment in Impact Evaluations, power dynamics can affect discussions: people may be unwilling to say certain things in front of others.<sup>9</sup> As one of our value chain specialists reflected, the men appeared to be reluctant to provide detail on their relationship with their wives, only sharing what they thought we wanted to hear. The JVL staff member stated that this reticence could be related to the power dynamic: men do not want to jeopardize their wives' chances of receiving support from the project. Granted, the GPM process has also shown trust between the project and clients.

The project plans mitigate against this fear of jeopardizing support by continuing to communicate to the GPM participants and their families that JVL wants to hear their voices. As we stated to the participants at the beginning of the pilot, this is a study and their candid comments are confidential.

3. **GPM can build trust with clients.** Despite some clients' fears around expressing themselves too candidly in project discussions, JVL found anecdotally that GPM is facilitating constructive relationships with client through the regular, ongoing engagement. One male client specifically expressed feeling increased trust when JVL staff returned for the second monitoring session. In another region, a male client who had previously refused to engage with the female facilitator, openly discussed topics with her in a follow up meeting.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ictworks.org/mode-gender-survey-data/#.XOS72shKg2w>

<sup>9</sup> Glennerster, R, Walsh C, Diaz-Martin, [A Practical Guide to Measuring Women's and Girls' Empowerment in Impact Evaluations](#) (2018) J-PAL Poverty Action Lab's Research Workshop: IPA J-PAL Measuring Women's Empowerment Researcher Gathering

The project plans to continue to monitor this power dynamic between the GPM team, which includes the KFP partner. It also plans to share the findings with the participants, beyond the discussion and reflection generated after the clients' fill out the GPM tracking sheet.

## Conclusion

Practitioners and funders are trying to understand the complexity of gender inequality and promote women's economic empowerment. Gender Progress Markers are tools that can be integrated into measurement systems and projects to serve as a feedback loop, helping projects to understand their clients' journeys. GPM also helps teams to reflect and learn about the social dynamics of women clients in the Jordan Valley and beyond. The qualitative and quantitative data collected through the GPM monitoring provides fuller insight into women's economic activity and conditions. It allows implementors to go beyond what is happening in the project and helps us to understand why. JVL has found that GPM begins an important dialogue and helps our clients' voices to be heard, especially around gender power relations and social dynamics. Clients have the opportunity to define positive change for themselves and to describe the desired end goal. Ultimately, GPM has made this project and its partners more accountable to our target clients – women entrepreneurs.









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