

## Women's Economic Empowerment Working Group Annual Meeting

**Date: December 8, 2020**

**Time: 8:00 – 10:00 am (EST)**

Attendees (46)

### Meeting Agenda

1. Introduction to WEE WG, Summary of 2020 Accomplishments
2. Keynote Presentation: Dr Linda Scott
3. Facilitated Discussion on Addressing Unintended Consequences
4. Breakout Room Discussions on 2020 Thematic Priorities
5. Plenary Discussion & Voting on 2021 Thematic Priorities
6. Next Steps & Close Out

### Notes

#### Introduction to WEE WG

- Founded in 2014, the Women's Economic Empowerment Working Group (WEE WG) brings together a diverse group of individuals committed to improving practice and scaling successful approaches.
  - o Curates technical resources
  - o Sources information for state of practice reports
  - o Works collaboratively to develop new learning products
  - o Hosts online discussions, webinars, and learning events
- We aim for members to have peer-to-peer support and opportunities to strengthen alliances and shared commitments.
- Currently 2,823 WEEWG members
- To sign up visit <http://seep.newsletter-signup-form.sgizmo.com/s3/>
- Introduction of Julia Hakspiel, WEE Working Group facilitator, SEEP team, and [Steering Committee](#) members on the call

#### Summary of 2020 Accomplishments

- 6 topics of focus for 2020
  - o COVID-19 and WEE
  - o Intersectionality
  - o Women's Agency
  - o Climate & Resilience
  - o ICT/Technology
  - o Addressing Unintended Consequences in WEE

- In partnership with FinEquity, we facilitated an interactive virtual roundtable on COVID and WEE, with a focus on employment and entrepreneurship
  - o Moderated by Wade Channell, USAID and Lis Meyers, Nathan Associates
  - o Discussion explored the impact of COVID-19 on women's economic empowerment and how projects and organizations are responding to these challenges in practical ways, with a focus on bringing practical, actionable insights from the field to a wider audience
  - o Watch here: <https://seepnetwork.org/Webinar-Post/Virtual-Roundtable-Womens-Economic-Empowerment-in-the-Time-of-COVID-19-Webinar>
- Last year the WG published a brief on measuring agency in women's empowerment
  - o Continued dissemination of the brief findings through the FinEquity network, with brief co-author Anna Mecagni presenting key components as part of a webinar focused on enhancing women's agency
  - o <https://seepnetwork.org/Resource-Post/Practical-Tools-and-Frameworks-for-Measuring-Agency-in-Women-s-Economic-Empowerment>
- Final year of the AWEF Learning Series
  - o Arab Women's Enterprise Fund (AWEF) was a 5 year program funded by DFID focused on the economic empowerment of women through a market systems approach
  - o For the past 2 years we have been sharing best practices and lessons learned from AWEF as well as other programs on how to apply market systems approaches through a gender lens
  - o While the core program has ended, the Egypt program continues for another year, so we may still release some additional learning outputs
  - o Links to all publications and resources shared can be found here: <https://seepnetwork.org/AWEF-Learning-Series>
  - o Previous Resources
    - Learning Brief: Making Digital Finance Work for Women in the MENA Region: Eight Lessons from the Field
      - 8 lessons on building inclusive digital financial interventions in MENA, including several case studies from AWEF and 12 partner organizations
    - Webinar: Does Market Systems Development Work for Women's Financial Empowerment?
    - Blog: Discovering a Route to Formalize Women-Owned Businesses in Jordan
- Coming Soon – stay tuned!
  - o COVID has meant a slight delay in some of the WG's activities
  - o Planning to publish two blogs before the end of the year
    - Blog with curated resources on an intersectional response to COVID-19
      - Resource Compendium now live!
      - <https://seepnetwork.org/WEE-COVID-Intersectionality-Compendium#>
    - Q&A with IFC's Disruptive Technologies & Gender Experts on the role of artificial intelligence, big data and tech in general can play in WEE

### Keynote Presentation: Dr. Linda Scott

- Emeritus DP World Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, University of Oxford
  - o Best known for concept of the Double X Economy, a perspective describing the global economy of women not just as consumers or workers, but as investors, donors and entrepreneurs
  - o Check out her recent book here: <https://www.doublexeconomy.com/the-book>
- Been a part of the WEE community for about 15 years, the book, DoubleXEconomy, brings together Linda's learnings over the years and those of the wider community
- Key findings to share
  - o We need to start broadening our view of the women's economy
  - o Over the past 15 years, gender inequality was treated as something local because it was seen as cultural, and more of a feature of poverty than a cause of it
  - o Linda argues that the data as a whole shows gender inequality is something that occurs in every nation, with the same basic pattern everywhere, same economic mechanism holding it in place for a very long time
    - DoubleXEconomy: this mechanism of systemic and structural constraints that women share together
- Scatter plot of global landholding by sex
  - o Significant difference between men and women's landholding across the world
  - o Such a dramatic pattern that we cannot in any way describe this as random – suggests some structural mechanism giving land to men, not women  
Despite some outliers on the high and low sides, developed nations have a bigger problem than developing nations
- What is the structural source – where does this come from?
  - o You can trace land ownership belonging exclusively to males and laws that support that back to 2000 BCE
  - o Only in the last 100 years/50 years within the Western nations that this has started to recede
    - For example, the last law giving all property in a household to a man was struck down in the United States in 1982
  - o Very entrenched system as opposed to something local, cultural or easily excused in the name of cultural sovereignty
- Looking at the flip side of the data
  - o Shows consistently that economic growth results from women's economic inclusion
  - o But also, that poverty and suffering result from women's economic exclusion
- Back to the property ownership issue
  - o In poorer countries around the world even if women can inherit, they customarily cannot access it. This links to the staggering figures of widows and their children affected by poverty
- This ancient structure also contributes to food insecurity, conflict and human trafficking

- It's definitely, however, something we can change. The book introduces some practical suggestions about how we can change it, and why we are able to
- This movement is bigger than many of us think and has grown exponentially over the past 15 years

### Q&A

- Can you speak more to how developed countries have a bigger gap in land ownership than developing countries?
  - o Inequality is greater in terms of landholding – For instance, in the Netherlands, which is traditionally thought of as having nearly eliminated gender inequality, only 6% of land is owned by females. This is roughly equal to many countries in the Middle East where land cannot be inherited by women
  - o Important not to get caught up in the misconception that Western nations don't have a gender inequality problem, and/or don't deserve the same attention in this space
  - o Laws can often go unenforced, and customary practice changes very slowly following a legal change
  - o Because land is the main store of wealth, this rolls up over time into male control of capital
- Are female leaders and women in roles of power aware of the extent of the problem?
  - o Yes, I do feel they are aware and have used their influence to do a lot
  - o Very top people in this world are mostly male and tend to dismiss this issue. Thus, it's very important to get women into positions of power.
  - o Stop detracting from the notion that women being in positions of power within the economy as well
  - o Women leading corporations also critical
- What are your thoughts on developing countries leapfrogging and moving at a pace faster than developed countries in some instances?
  - o Focusing on the Middle East, one of the things blocking progress in policy circles – the idea that gender inequality is local and cultural, or stemming from Islam, which dissuades people from broaching the topic
    - Book discusses how it's not cultural, and not stemming from Islamic scripture, but rather is derived from these initial male-focused laws
  - o Very politically charged conversation – important to reach out and explore the commonalities between women in the Middle East and women in the rest of the world
  - o Data shows public opinion is in fact for this change, including men, which provides a foundation to build on

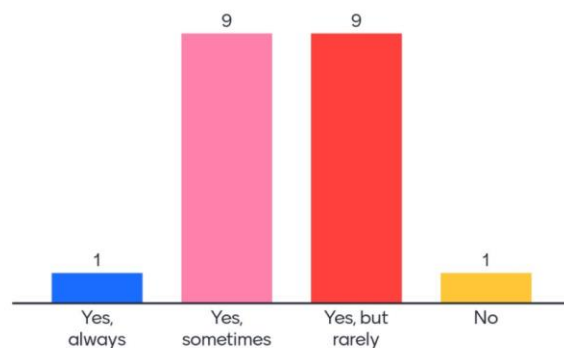
## Facilitated Discussion on Addressing Unintended Consequences

- Consequences of programming
  - Most organizational theories of change live inside the positive intended box, and less often consider unintended consequences
  - Negative intended – risk mapping, may also be in the TOC
  - Unintended consequences – usually learn about these through anecdotes
    - Rare that organizations systematically think about these unintended consequences
    - What we don't expect in our program, and not in the TOC
      - For instance, increased demands on women in terms of time poverty, GBV and backlash in a household or community to women standing up to power, saturating a local market with many people trained in a same skillset, etc.
- Brief summary of what the subgroup on Unintended Consequences has been working on
  - Composed of Eva Noble, Mansi Anand, Bobbi Gray, Maryam Piracha, Julia Arnold (formerly of ICRW)
  - 2019
    - Multiple calls for submissions of resources relating to unintended consequences in WEE – very little submitted
  - 2020
    - As a group looked within our own organizations (Grameen, PRISMA, Women for Women International, Oxfam) and compiled these resources
    - Discussed overlaps between unintended consequences, Do No Harm principles, safeguarding and safe programming rules/frameworks
  - Moving forward
    - Would now like to gather what we've missed, establish what resources the WEE WG can create together to fill needed gaps
- Safeguarding
  - *All actions taken by organizations to protect their personnel from harm and from harming others*
    - Are there grievance submission mechanisms? Are we looking at program implications of decisions we make?
    - Designed to protect beneficiaries, staff of core and local partners, associates, and other program stakeholders from harm by inadvertent or deliberate actions that place them at risk, resulting from project activities
    - Crucial to successful programming, the reputation of the program, and the wellbeing of beneficiaries and staff
- Safe programming
  - Fundamentally, making sure that programs are safe to participate for ALL people

- *Proactive measures to ensure we do not inadvertently cause harm to people, nor undermine the values, standards and norms that underpin our work*
- Monitoring, identifying and mitigating risks and adapting programs as needed
- Includes actively listening to communities, being conflict sensitive, preventing or reducing the risks of gender-based violence, and upholding humanitarian principles
- Do No Harm Principles
  - History in medical ethics, according to which an intent to do good or provide help must be the underlying motive for any intervention
  - Potential for good must sufficiently outweigh the potential for harm
  - Never possible to predict every possible outcome of an intervention, but with proper analysis of the potential risks involved, potential harms can be greatly reduced, and procedures can be put in place for mitigating harm if it does occur
- Compilation of Practical Resources listed in the [accompanying presentation](#)
  - Decent guidance documents asking us to think about unintended consequences, but not specific to WEE
- Key takeaways
  - Broad M&E frameworks exist to consider and capture Unintended Consequences with suggested methodologies.
  - Some resources exist to highlight potential negative unintended consequences of WEE programming with suggestions for safe programming principles and mitigation.
  - Few practical resources at M&E or program guidance level e.g. how to learn about and address unintended consequences in WEE programming or ways to implement Safeguarding/Do No Harm principles at the practical/programming level
  - Frameworks are organization-specific (though could be adapted by outside-users)
- Mentimeter activity: What have we missed? What can we create together?

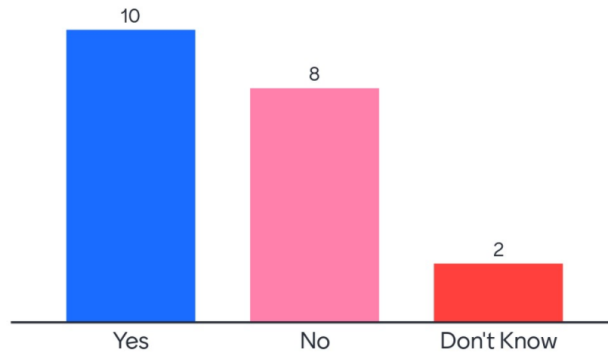
**Does your organization consider unintended consequences in its WEE programming (In project design, planning and implementation phases)?**

Mentimeter



Does your org provide guidance or a process to identify risks and form mitigation strategies for potential negative consequences of WEE programming?

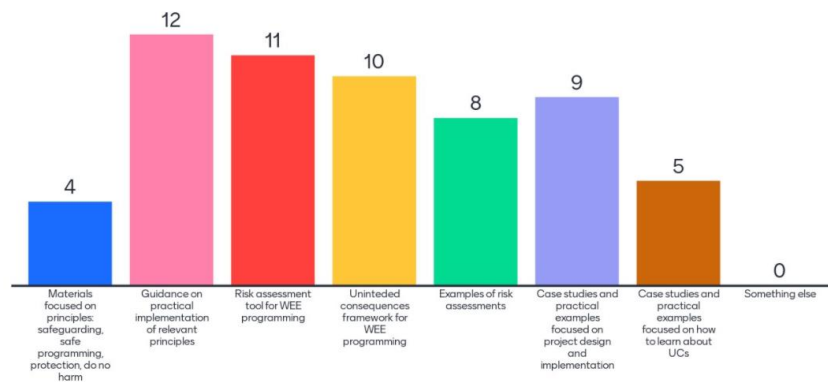
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If SEEP WEE WG can produce a piece of guidance or report related to WEE & Unintended Consequences, what would be most helpful to you / your org?

Mentimeter



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## What resources did we miss in regards to Unintended Consequences and WEE? (please submit details/links that we will collect & share)

Mentimeter

sorry, I don't know of any	Gender Markers (CARE and/or IASC)	I am not sure
We are in the process of developing a toolkit for integrating GBV in agricultural programming. It should be published by USAID in 2021	guidelines	SAve the Childre, gender marker
VSO has a comprehensive core approach programme...social accountability, gender, resilience, etc	human capital--use HR best practices to hire values aligned people from the start who will be equipped to lead design discussions, distill knowledge.	excell spreadsheet



### Breakout Room Discussions on 2020 Thematic Priorities

#### Addressing Unintended Consequences

- Continuation of the earlier presentation and resources
- Appetite for practical guidance – case studies highlighting successes and failures
  - o What are safe spaces for organizations to share some failures?
- Decision tree/flow chart for what types of UC emerge and what can be done to address them
  - o How to learn about them, apply lessons practically and respond to UC
- GBV – some contradictory data, lots of anecdotal data (practitioner stories & experiences) sharing an increase in GBV whereas aggregate data may not show the same trend – these can both be true at the same time and should continue to be investigated
- UC of emotional violence may be harder to capture
- UC of instilling the value of women are worthwhile when they are earners, if they may not be able to earn
- Research group – how to link this learning to program respond
  - o Brief
  - o Blogs
  - o Webinars
  - o Spaces to share failures
- No one size fits all

#### Intersectionality

- Interested in continuing this focus, but looking to explore beyond intersectional approach to programming and policymaking – to organizational commitment to more inclusive staffing, hiring, etc.



- Interest in continuing blogs, would appreciate commenting on them and being a part of the discussion
- Case studies and blogs crafting the business case for inclusivity
- Engage more in peer to peer learning
  - o Smaller forum for small group discussions similar to the breakouts we just had
  - o Exchanging questions, learn & engage with each other
  - o Discussions & Q&A in addition to traditional webinars

#### Climate & Resilience

- Would be good to carry this into 2021 given the growing impacts of climate change and resilience programming
- Survey of what existing resources are out there – identify gaps, recommendations
- Intersection of climate/resilience but also WEE, bringing those sectors together more intentionally
- Facilitate conversations between these two groups (blog?)
- Survey broader community on program examples and best practices/lessons learned

#### Women's Agency

- Generally agree there's value in continuing the work
- Lot of resources out there, but a need for more practical, field level experiences
  - o Case studies – integrating agency within program design, what does that mean
  - o Focus on a broader, global view
- Interest to look at it from a monitoring angle, reoccurring topic of interest
- Newer ideas – agency with respect to male perception on agency, etc.
- What are some of the more recent publications on this topic – J-PAL
- Communications
  - o Something useable, snapshots
  - o Guides, condensed, user toolkits

#### ICT/Technology

- How can we share some of the failures and lessons learned? Oftentimes talking of the excitement and potential of technology, as opposed to what experience we have gained
- Movie Social Dilemma – considering how technology may harm in the future?
- Bringing back Fail Fest methodology from previous SEEP Annual Conference
- Digitizing SG information, Blockchain, introducing social media, etc.

#### COVID-19

- Continue addressing this topic
- COVID has brought to light many issues around WEE and gender equality that were always there, need to continue addressing there

- COVID will not go away immediately with the release of the vaccines, particularly in developing economies
- Subtopics of interest:
  - o Practical examples of addressing this, what's working
  - o Social norms, crises allow for fast evolution of social norms, need for more male engagement
  - o Savings Groups, how SGs respond to the new reality in terms of digitizing effort – how that may or may not be reaching women
- Communication channels
  - o Podcast?

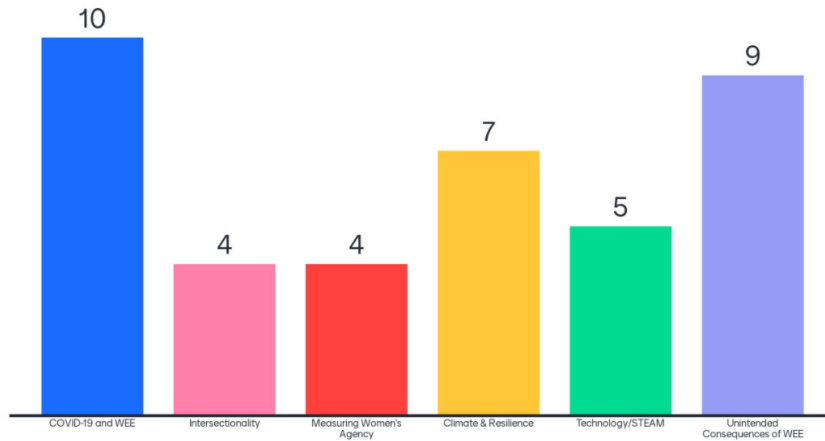
## Plenary Discussion & Voting on 2021 Thematic Priorities

## What new topics should the WEE WG focus on in 2021?

 Mentimeter

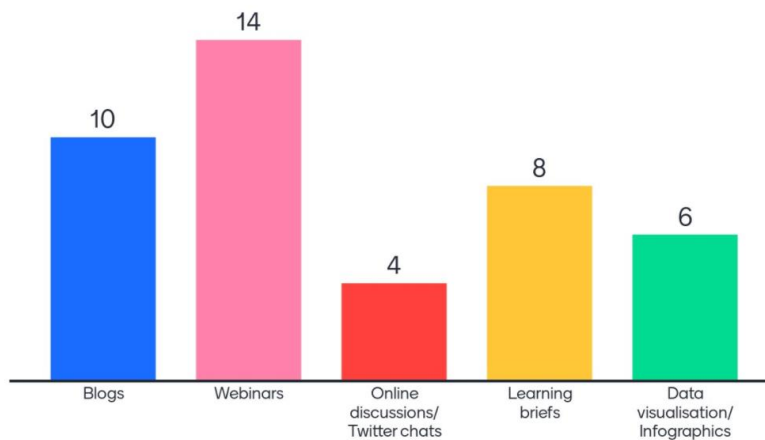
## Which topics from 2020 would you like to see continued in 2021?

Mentimeter



## What communication channels should we use?

Mentimeter



## Any other suggestions for WEE WG activities and events in 2021?

Mentimeter

Nothing at the moment	Topic level focused discussions	more webinar/discussion activities like today's that include working groups + members
hosting a donor and practitioner event on WEE	small group discussions	
Talk programs - bringing in motivators, Focused group meetings and activities like this.	Technical meetings - say on Trade facilitation and E-commerce	brief (20-30 minutes) open networking time via zoom around certain topics
		happy hour :)



### Announcing Innovation Fund for Gender Intentional Savings Groups

- [Women Saving for Resilience](#) (WS4R): two-year program funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and implemented by the SEEP Network in partnership with MarketShare Associates
- The program aims to improve the technical, adaptive, and collaborative capacity of Savings Groups, and organizations that work with them, to respond to and recover from the gendered effects of COVID-19.
- Within WS4R, SEEP is excited to announce a challenge fund to support innovations in gender intentional COVID response and recovery efforts related to Savings Groups. SEEP will award four to six, 18-month grants, with **applications due on January 22, 2021**.
- Learn More: <https://seepnetwork.org/WS4R-Innovation-Fund>

### Next Steps & Close Out

- Steering Committee meeting in late January
- Committee will finalize yearly priorities as voted on today, and announce to the Working Group shortly after
- There are a few committee spots open for next year. If you are interested in joining, learn more here and apply by **Jan 4, 2021**: <https://seepnetwork.org/Marketplace-Post/Apply-to-Join-the-WEE-Working-Group-Steering-Committee>
  - Please note that all Steering Committee members must be SEEP members in good standing, whether organizational or associate (individual) membership. For more information on applying for membership, please see here: <https://seepnetwork.org/How-to-Apply>
- Thank you for joining and please share your feedback in this brief meeting evaluation: <http://seep.Evaluation-WEE-WG-Annual-Meeting.alchemer.com/s3/>