



TOOL 1

# WEEGE IN ACTION— ENGAGING WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS



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Women and women's organizations often are missing from development funding and partnership structures. Part of the problem is that women's organizations, businesses and associations may be unaware of USAID opportunities, may not be connected to donor networks, or do not have the capacity to comply with USAID's or other donor's requirements and standards.

Engaging and partnering with women's groups may require additional time and resources as part of the design process. Nonetheless, when it comes to developing a country development cooperation strategy (CDCS), USAID must begin by listening to women and incorporating their concerns and solutions into designs, budgets, work plans and evaluations.

Listening is not enough, though. Partnerships with local civil society groups, businesses, government agencies and committed individuals are essential. Identifying and reaching out to a broader base of partners during the stakeholder consultation and gender analysis can enhance the final CDCS. Refer to Box 1 for ideas how women's organizations can assist USAID in attaining its development objectives.<sup>1</sup>

## Box 1: How Women-led Organizations and Businesses Improve Development Results

- ◆ "Women's business associations can advocate for changes in laws that constrain women-owned businesses and provide services to women business owners, including access to information and facilitation of credit."<sup>2</sup>
- ◆ These organizations galvanize women's abilities to challenge social norms that constrain their time, mobility, and access to resources, as well economic policies that overlook or undervalue their economic activities and contributions.<sup>4</sup>
- ◆ Collective organization and negotiation enhances women's abilities and capacities to negotiate terms and conditions of employment, to access markets and supply chains, and to influence policies that may have a direct bearing on their lives.<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ In low- and middle-income countries, women's greater availability and use of entrepreneurial networks are linked to smaller gender gaps in business sustainability. Peer-to-peer networks encourage women to set higher aspirations for their businesses, plan for growth, and embrace innovation.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> UN Secretary-General's HLP (2017), Leave No One Behind: Taking Action for Transformational Change on Women's Economic Empowerment. [www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/UNSG-HLP-WVEE-2nd-Report-.pdf](http://www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/UNSG-HLP-WVEE-2nd-Report-.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> UN Secretary-General's HLP (2016), Leave No One Behind: A Call to Action for Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment. [www2.unwomen.org/-/media/hlp%20wee/attachments/reports-toolkits/hlp-wee-report-2016-09-call-to-action-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1028](http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/hlp%20wee/attachments/reports-toolkits/hlp-wee-report-2016-09-call-to-action-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1028)

<sup>3</sup> UN Secretary-General's HLP (2017), Leave No One Behind: Taking Action for Transformational Change on Women's Economic Empowerment. [www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/UNSG-HLP-WVEE-2nd-Report-.pdf](http://www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/UNSG-HLP-WVEE-2nd-Report-.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Boston Consulting group (2019), Want to Boost the Global Economy by \$5 Trillion? Support Women as Entrepreneurs. [www.bcg.com/publications/2019/boost-global-economy-5-trillion-dollar-support-women-entrepreneurs](http://www.bcg.com/publications/2019/boost-global-economy-5-trillion-dollar-support-women-entrepreneurs)



## Suggestions For Finding Women’s Organizations

### ■ SPEAK

to relevant government ministries (including ministries of trade/commerce, economy, education and women’s affairs) to identify national women’s networks, local women’s associations or civil society groups and mentoring organizations. Obtain a complete list of women’s groups operating in the country if available.

### ■ CONTACT

the international or national chamber of commerce as well as industry associations (for example, for utilities, transport, health or education) to engage with businesswomen; professional women’s associations; and women’s collectives, unions and networks.

### ■ REACH OUT

to other donors as well as implementers to gather information on which women’s organizations they work with at the community, district and national levels.

### ■ REQUEST

recommendations from global or regional women’s associations, organizations or networks, such as [UN Women](#), [Global Fund for Women](#), [U.S. Department of State’s International Visitor Leadership Program](#), [Vital Voices Global Partnership](#), and [WeConnect International](#).

### ■ SURVEY

whether there are informal women’s savings groups, sector-specific organizations (including cooperatives and grassroots groups) or community committees that can be engaged.

### ■ CONTACT

academic departments (such as economics, engineering, health, education, business, women’s studies and gender studies) housed within local universities to reach female alumni as well as civil society and private sector women’s organizations.

Keep women’s economic empowerment and gender equality (WEEGE) principles in mind while partnering with women’s organizations; refer to Box 2.



## Box 2: How to Apply the WEEGE Principles when Partnering with Women's Organizations



### Principle 1: Understand the Systems

- ◆ Identify whether other matching funds or in-kind contributions can be allocated to local women's organizations or networks to engage with your program or activity.



### Principle 2: Amplify Women's Voices

- ◆ Consult with local women's groups, networks, and associations to understand their needs and priorities. Be sure that these groups represent women of different ages, backgrounds, and identities.
- ◆ Incorporate programming targets that require engagement with local women's groups, networks, and associations.
- ◆ Develop and report on performance indicators related to engaging women's groups, networks, and associations and their role in making progress on WEEGE.



### Principle 4: Engage Men and Boys

- ◆ Consult with men from the public and private sector as well as civil society actors to better understand the roles that men and boys can play in advancing in WEEGE.
- ◆ Connect male allies with women's organizations, networks, and businesses to support advocacy efforts.



### Principle 8: Partner with Women

- ◆ Consult with women's organizations, networks, and businesses in data collection processes.
- ◆ Require implementing partners to collaborate directly with women's organizations, networks, and businesses.
- ◆ Engage with women-owned businesses on procurement and services related to USAID programming.
- ◆ Contact women's organizations, networks, and businesses to ensure equitable participation of women in exchange visits, conferences, meetings, and events.

