

THE NIPSS/dRPC-PAWED NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON WHAT WORKS AND SUCCESS FACTORS IN MANAGING WOMEN ECONOMIC PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA 17th AUGUST 2021



Table of Contents

Background	2
Objectives.....	2
Participant's profile.....	2
Symposium overview.....	3
Enabling factors.....	4
Measuring and monitoring success of WEE projects	5
Policy dialogue.....	6
Pre and post symposium evaluation findings	7
Outcomes	13
Next steps.....	13
Media links	13

Background

The Senior Executive Course 43 of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, Nigeria's theme for this year is **“Getting Things Done: Strategies for Policy and Programme Implementation in Nigeria”**. This theme underscores the government's determination to improve policy and program implementation in all sectors of the economy in order to fast-track national development. As part of government's policy to lift 100 million Nigerians out of poverty, various social intervention programs have been rolled out to achieve this objective. Women make up the larger population in the informal sector and vulnerable population.

NIPSS with support from the dRPC-PAWED project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation convened a one-day policy dialogue between key government agencies engaged in policy design, implementation and evaluation of women economic empowerment (WEE) programs at the national level and women economic collectives (WECs). The one-day symposium tagged – Making WEE policy work through improved coordination of ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) observed the challenges in assessments of past women's economic empowerment programs, specifically, the challenges with program implementation and evaluation, whilst also learning about the newly introduced M&E policy framework and its possible applications to WEE programs.

Objectives

- To provide a forum for WECs to raise the issue of sub-optimal coordination of WEE interventions.
- To provide a forum for government to address the issue of sub-optimal coordination of WEE interventions and introduce the M&E policy framework as it relates to WEE programs.

Participant's profile

The meeting had 55 attendees, with 33 participants from civil societies affiliated with WECs, 12 participants from government and 10 participants from the media. Disaggregated to 43 female and 12 males.

The special guest was the Hon. Minister of State, for Budget and National Planning, Prince Clem Agba represented by Dr Zakari Lawal mni. The Ag DG of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Brigadier General Chukuemeka Udaya (rtd) plsc+, mni chaired the event. Also present from the government side was the Director, Industrial Training Fund (ITF) and other Directing staff of NIPSS.

From the civil society side, the President of National Council of Women's Society, leadership from Association of Nigerian Women Business Network (ANWBN), Nigerian Association of Women Entrepreneurs (NAWE), NECA'S Network of Entrepreneurial Women (NNEW), Country Women Association of Nigeria – COWAN and Women in Maritime Africa – Nigeria (WIMA-Nigeria). Other partners in the room included representatives from ASG, the Hive, EpiAFRIC and Premium Times.

Symposium overview

The symposium started with the welcome address by the Acting Director General of NIPSS, Brigadier General Chukuemeka Udaya (rtd). In his welcome address, he stated that NIPSS was pleased to collaborate with the dRPC on this laudable initiative which has brought together CSOs, Government agencies and development partners here represented at this symposium to have impactful and productive dialogue on the pilot application of the new monitoring and evaluation national policy. This is of particular relevance and importance as the success of a project is only as good as the structures that are put in place to evaluate its impact, this informs the need to restructure, recalibrate and possibly scale. The ability to understand what works is central to development work and key to sustainable development. Research, monitoring and evaluation and learning are key tenets around which dRPC's projects are built. This is of particular relevance in any project but especially one such as PAWED.



While delivering his keynote speech, the Minister for Finance, Budget and National Planning, Prince Clem Ikanade Agba noted that “Monitoring and evaluation frameworks provide performance measurement systems that assist policy and strategy delivery. As it universally accepted that “it is what get measured that gets done”. The M&E framework provided for a



National M&E department to coordinate and institutionalize the M&E practice in all government agencies. And as part of the institutionalization efforts, the department has been providing routine M&E capacity building, training and technical support to government agencies. It has also developed participatory a set of agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with all the federal MDAs since 2011 and revised in 2020 to align with current development realities. The aim is to provide a standardized mechanisms for tracking the delivery of the

mandates of the MDAs at output an outcomes levels that will ensure better service delivery for Nigerians. To strengthen this function further, and to ensure more credibility in the generation of the information, better utilization and ownership by stakeholders including the citizens, the Ministry is moving forward with incorporating and deploying more innovative tools and strategies to promote transparency, citizen's participation and ownership of the M&E processes”.

The Hon. Minister also stated that “the ministry has no objections to collaborations on piloting the development and operationalization of the M&E framework”.

Enabling factors



As part of the interactive session, participants deliberated on the enabling factors that make WEE projects works -from project design to project implementation, and to project evaluation.

What works in WEE policies?

The outline of responses from participants includes willingness of the government to work with women, constant deliberate effort to economically empower women, awareness creation on the formation of women cooperatives, constant sensitization on WEE, Persistent, Consistent, and focused advocacy on WEE, and Collaboration between women groups.

What is not working in WEE policies

The outline of responses from participants includes Corruption and administrative bottlenecks, Lack of implementation of government WE policies, Women in the informal sector are not being carried along, High level of illiteracy among women especially in the rural areas, Lack of adequate information, Lack of training on how women can access credit and loans, Lack of commitment by the government, Lack of database on WEE projects and interventions.

Going forward

Participants provided the following steps as way forward

- ✓ Resource pooling and cooperatives
- ✓ NGOs should be carried along
- ✓ Capacity building for women
- ✓ Financial assistant
- ✓ MDAs should partner with CSOs on WEE interventions

- ✓ Development of strong monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the impact of WEE interventions
- ✓ Sensitization of women at the grassroots level
- ✓ Loan requirement should be gender-friendly

Measuring and monitoring success of WEE projects



Participants received a presentation on measuring and monitoring success of WEE projects delivered by Dr Zakari Lawal mni, the Director M&E, Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning. In his paper presentation, Dr. Lawal explained that the reason why Nigeria need M&E for WEE include the following:

- **Promoting Accountability** in Government for Actors in the Delivery of WEE.
- **Promoting transparency:** M&E findings if made available to a broader audience, promotes transparency among WEE stakeholders.
- **Support to learning and decision making:** M&E helps government and WEE stakeholders to understand “what works and does not” and assist in managing the service delivery function of WEE.
- **Support to Policy Making in WEE:** Sound policy making requires credible information. This information can only be acquired through a credible M&E system.

- **Support WEE Policy Execution:** Universal experience shows “what gets measured gets done”.
- Other Benefits M&E Frameworks for government include:
 - Reducing waste of public funds
 - Improving the quality of public spending
 - Providing an independent objective assessment of the merit of public policies strategies, programs and projects
 - Providing a source of reliable and meaningful information for the citizen to assess government performance.

The director further stated that the following were some challenges facing the implementation of M&E for WEE Policies in Nigeria: - Poor Understanding of WEE Policies by Stakeholders, Poor WEE Policy Frameworks (Policy not M&E Compliant), Weak Understanding of M&E processes by Stakeholders including WEE Stakeholders, Weak Institutional Frameworks for the WEE Implementing Agencies, Develop M&E Framework for all the WEE Implementing Agencies, Poor Operationalization Framework.

He proffered the following as the next steps for the way forward: Building Capacity of Stakeholders on WEE, develop a Detailed Collaboration Frameworks between Stakeholders, Make WEE Policies, Strategies and Plans M&E Compliant, Build Capacity of Stakeholders on the M&E, Develop M&E Frameworks for all the WEE Implementing Agencies, Operationalize the Framework.

Policy dialogue



In this session, the participants had further opportunities to dialogue with government on what can be done to improve WEE program implementation and the application of the M&E framework.

NIPSS proposed the formation of a TWG with membership to include government and WECs to support the accountability process of the application of M&E framework to WEE programs. NIPSS agrees to chair this TWG.

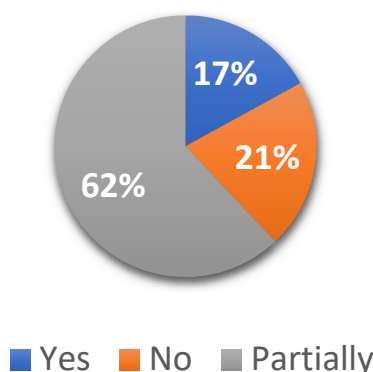
Pre and post symposium evaluation findings

A pre and post survey tool was used to measure the impact of the symposium. The evaluation tools (questionnaire with open and closed ended questions) were designed and administered to the participants. A total of 55 participants were present in the symposium and the response rate was 95%.

Pre-symposium findings

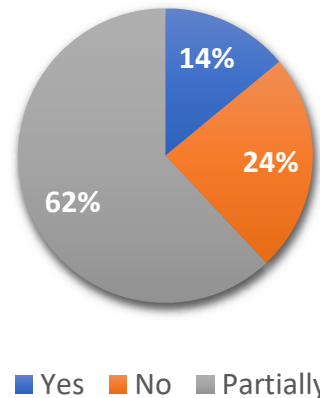
When we inquire from the participants if government policies and programmes are gender friendly. More than half of the respondents (62%) believed that government policies and programmes are partially gender-friendly even though there is lack of proper monitoring and evaluation of these projects. Twenty-one percent (21%) of the respondent believed that government policies and programmes are not gender-friendly while 17% believed that government policies and programmes are gender inclusive.

Do you think the government policies and programmes are gender-friendly?



When we inquire to know if the participants believe that government is doing enough in the area of women's economic empowerment. More than half of the respondents partially believed that government is doing enough in the area of WEE. Twenty-four percent (24%) believed that government is not doing enough to support WEE while 14% believed that government is doing its possible best to ensure that through its programs women are adequately empowered to contribute to the economic development of the country.

Do you think government is doing enough in the area of women's economic empowerment?



Perception towards government's funding for women's economic empowerment in Nigeria

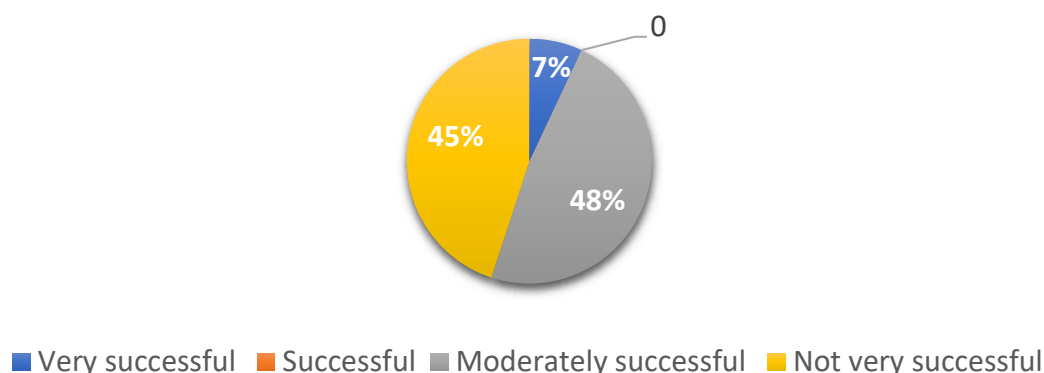
Majority (95%) of the respondents believed that government funding for WEE is not sufficient. In their response, they believed that government allocations for WEE should go beyond welfarism or relief efforts. It should be sustainable, monitored and properly accessed. Government should promote WEE by introducing different schemes and policies that target women and also ensure that funds allocated for these programs are easily accessed.

Challenges facing women's economic empowerment in Nigeria

- Lack of M&E of government WEE projects
- Difficulty in accessing loans and credit facilities
- Lack of government commitment
- High gender gaps

We then asked the participants to rate the impact of government's WEE policies and programs to address the aforementioned challenges facing WEE. Almost half of the respondent (48%) believed that government's WEE policies and programs have been moderately successful. Forty-five percent (45%) believed that government WEE policies and programs are not very successful in addressing challenges facing WEE in the country.

To address the above challenges, how would you rate the impact of the government's WEE policies and programs?



What would you describe as a successful WEE intervention?

All the responses were summarized as follows:

- A WEE intervention is successful when it can be sustained
- A WEE intervention is successful when intended intervention get to the targeted groups
- A WEE intervention is successful when it is measurable and has accountability framework
- A WEE intervention is successful when it creates more economic opportunities for women
- A WEE intervention is successful when women are self-reliance and have control over their own resources
- A WEE intervention is successful when it built the capacity of women and provides start up kits
- A successful WEE intervention would see women in rural areas begin to take active participation in politics, decision making and community development.
- A successful WEE intervention is when women across board can have the power to act and take decisions that affect their success, economic advancement and general wellbeing of their family.
- A WEE intervention is successful when it penetrates into the grassroots.

What do you think are the bottlenecks of lack of government's commitments towards WEE in Nigeria?

All the responses were summarized as follows:

- Inadequate performance indicators on how to track, measure and evaluate WEE interventions (poor monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning process)
- Lack of political will and drive towards advancing WEE
- Lack of database for women empowerment interventions
- Inadequate budget allocation for WEE
- Corruption
- Weak feedback mechanism
- Poor institutional capacity for policy delivery
- Low public awareness and accessibility
- Inherent gender-bias rooted in patriarchal worldview
- Lack of implementation of promulgated policies

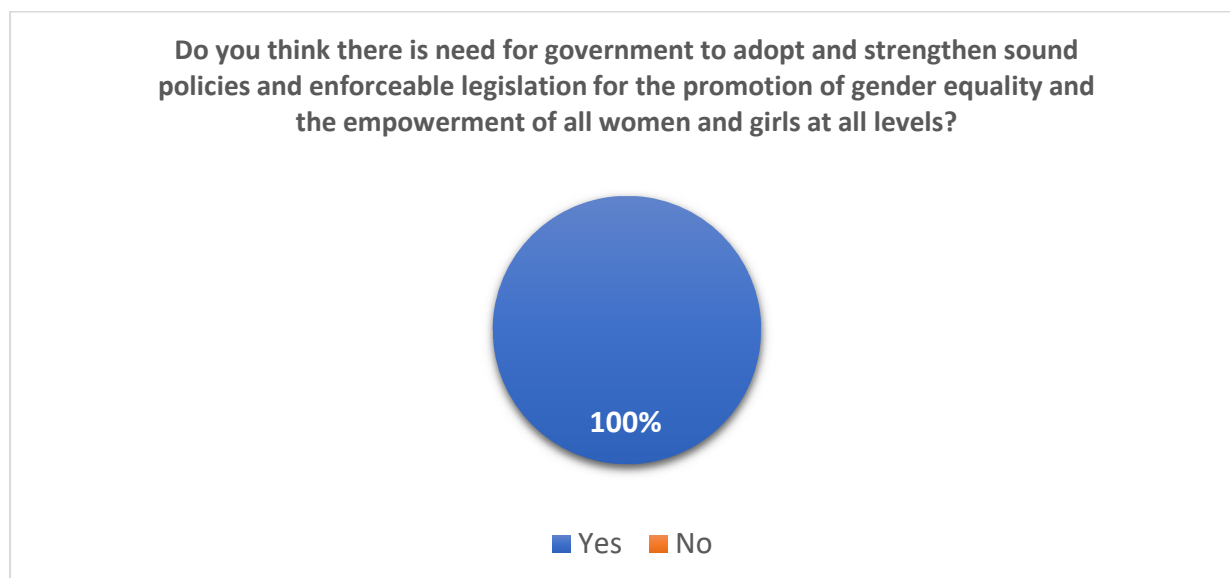
We asked the participants to provide steps they think government should take in addressing the bottlenecks identified

The respondents believed that the following steps need to be taken:

- Timely releases of funds
- Reduce bureaucracy
- Enact policies that will move more women into the formal sector from the informal sector
- Conduct M&E trainings and carry out proper monitoring and evaluation of WEE programmes
- Institutionalized a gender inclusive change management process in the public service at all levels
- Strengthen community driven development that are gender sensitive to ensure women participation and inclusiveness.
- Awareness creation on current WEE projects.
- Institutionalize a functional M&E framework
- Develop a database of vulnerable women groups

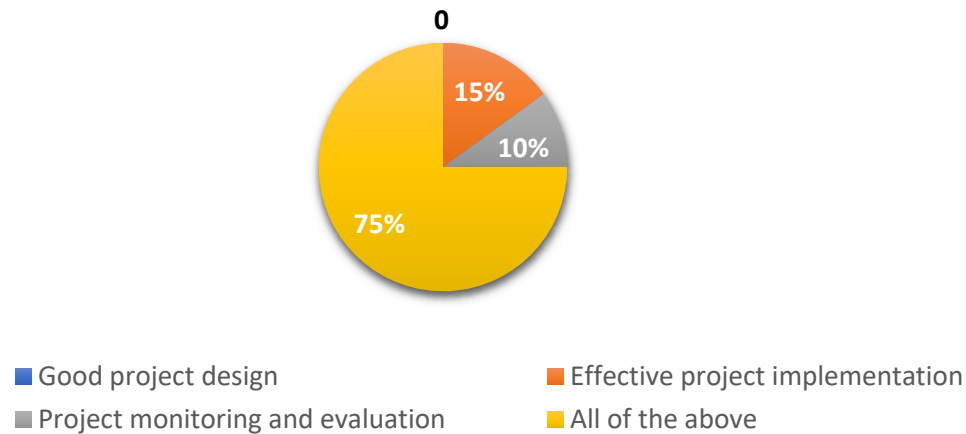
Post-symposium evaluation

After the symposium, we sought the participants' opinion if they think there is need for government to adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels. All the respondents (100%) affirmed that government should adopt and strengthen sound policies on gender equality and WEE at all levels.



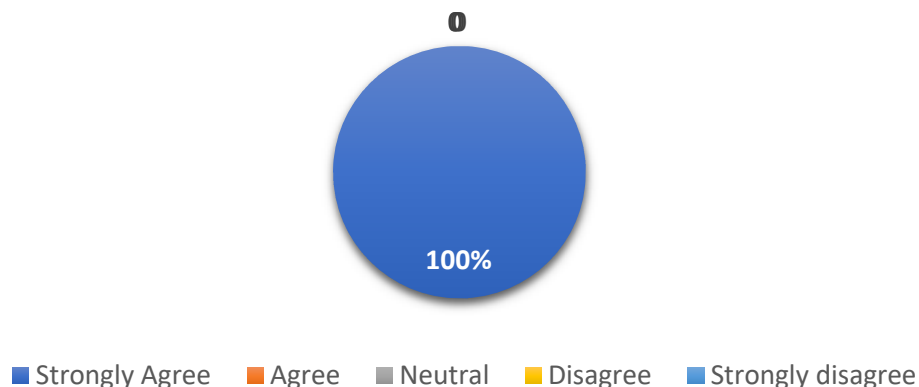
We inquire from the participant which areas do they think government need to strengthen to make women economic empowerment projects work. More than half of the respondents believed that government should strengthen the design of WEE projects, ensure effective project implementation and carry out project monitoring and evaluation of WEE projects. The implication is that by so doing, interventions will reach target groups and can be scale-up in the future.

Which area do you think government need to strengthen to make women economic empowerment projects work?



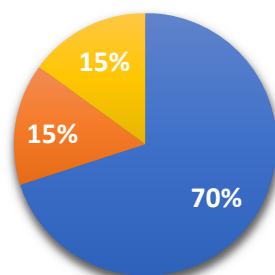
We inquire if the participants agree that there is need for a strong monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the implementation of WEE policies and programmes. All the respondents (100%) strongly agreed that government should ensure that a strong M&E framework is put in place to measure the implementation of WEE policies and programmes.

Do you agree that there is need for a strong monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the implementation of WEE policies and programmes?



We inquire if the participants agree that there should be a clear distinction between women's economic empowerment programmes and social protection programmes. More than half of the respondents (70%) strongly agreed that government should separate women's economic empowerment programmes and policies from social protection programmes.

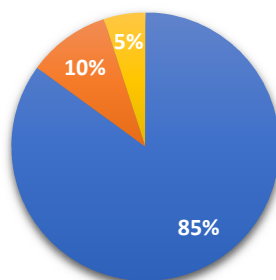
Do you agree that there should be clear distinction between women's economic empowerment policies/programs/interventions and social protection policies/programs/interventions?



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

We inquire if the participants agree that there is need for more improved coordination amongst MDAs to increase the effectiveness of women's economic empowerment interventions in Nigeria. Majority (85%) strongly agreed that there is need for a centralized effort by government MDAs to increase the effectiveness of WEE policies and interventions in Nigeria.

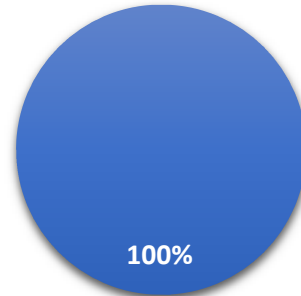
Do you agree that there is need for improved coordination amongst MDAs to increase the effectiveness of women's economic empowerment interventions in Nigeria?



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Lastly, we asked the participants if they want to become an advocate for women's economic empowerment in Nigeria. All the participants affirmed their readiness to increase the salience of WEE in their various occupations.

Moving forward, do you want to be an advocate for women's economic empowerment in Nigeria?



■ Yes ■ No

Outcomes

- Issues identified by CSOs were noted and addressed by government on WEE program implementations
- Formation of new Technical Working Group to support the accountability process of the piloting of the application of the Monitoring & Evaluation framework on WEE programs to be chaired by NIPSS.

Next steps

- Formal constitution and inauguration of the Technical Working Group (TBD).

Media links

- [NewsDigest - FG introduces tracker to monitor implementation of projects- Minister](#)
- [Daily Trust - FG To Introduce Tools For Monitoring Projects Implementation](#)
- [Punch - FG to monitor, evaluate projects with tracker](#)
- [NTA - FG to develop web application to track funds](#)
- [21st Century Chronicle - FG to deploy trackers to monitor projects – Minister](#)
- [Leadership - Federal Govt Adopts New Approach To Projects' Implementation](#)
- [AIT - Women Economic Empowerment-Forum calls for proper monitoring & evaluation of programmes](#)
- [Guardian - FG moves to strengthen projects tracking, monitoring systems](#)

