

Propcom Mai-karfi

Gender & WEE Strategy



1. BACKGROUND

Propcom Mai-karfi (hereafter referred to as Propcom) is an innovative, market-driven programme funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), with the overall goal of reducing poverty in northern Nigeria. More specifically, the programme aims to increase the incomes of 500,000 poor men and women in northern Nigeria by: (a) stimulating sustainable, pro-poor growth in selected rural markets; and, (b) improving the position of poor men and women within these market systems, to make them more inclusive.

The programme seeks to achieve this through a 'Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P)' approach, which hinges on designing and implementing catalytic interventions that target constraints faced by the poor in the selected markets, and results in systemic change. The programme's interventions are expected to deliver wide ranging changes, for instance realigning incentive structures, rules, relationships and support services, which shape the way markets work and change the way poor women and men participate.

2. WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (WEE) IN M4P PROGRAMMES

Rationale

Within Propcom's goal of reaching 500,000 rural poor, it is expected that half of this will be women. In rural northern Nigeria, the position of women is such that they are more excluded from economic systems, as well as other services such as healthcare and education. Furthermore, rural northern Nigeria is characterised by numerous socio-cultural constraints, intra-household gender relations, institutional norms and structural realities that result in high levels of discrimination in the way women participate and benefit from market systems. They have limited access to market support functions and discriminatory formal and informal rules often puts them at a disadvantage relative to men.

In view of the above, Propcom is working towards promoting gender equality and the economic empowerment of women in northern Nigeria. This is based on the premise that WEE is a critical aspect of poverty reduction, which is the ultimate goal of the programme. Propcom's definition and approach to women's economic empowerment goes beyond giving women economic assets or unlocking economic opportunities for them. It involves ensuring that women have the power and agency to make and act on economic decisions, thus benefitting fully from the income earned (see *figure 1*).

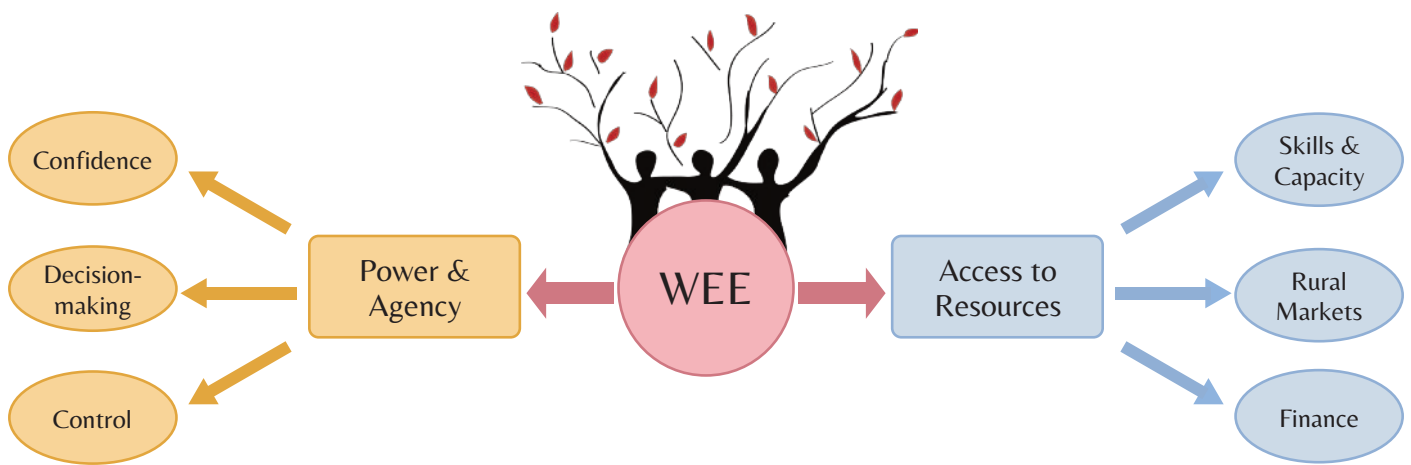


Figure 1: Propcom's definition of WEE.

WEE and M4P: Making the Business Case

In order to deliver more holistic WEE outcomes, Propcom works to integrate WEE into its M4P approach such that women not only have increased access to income and assets, but are also able to exert greater control over them (see Box 1). This is achieved by working towards sustainable changes

for women at the three levels: within the **CORE** (market exchange and individual's power, capability and knowledge); in the **RULES** (including laws and regulations, social norms and behavior); and **SUPPORTING FUNCTIONS** (including access to resources information and to support services).

Box 1: Making Markets Work for the Poor

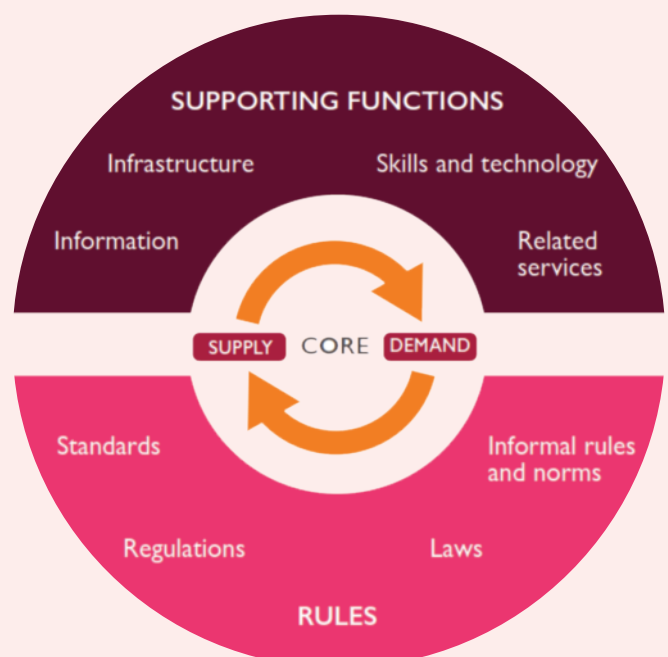
M4P is an approach aimed at effectively and sustainably improving the lives of poor men and women by understanding and influencing market systems. It is defined by several characteristics:

- An approach that provides guidance on understanding the poor in market systems (analysis) and how to bring about effective change (action).
- A focus on developing market systems, by addressing underlying causes (rather than symptoms) of weak performance.
- An ambition to unleash large-scale and systemic change.
- A commitment to sustainability. This means considering not just the existing alignment of market functions and players but how they can work more effectively in the future, based on the incentives and capacities of players to play different roles.
- A facilitating role for external agencies; seeking

to catalyze others in the market system (while not becoming part of it themselves).

- A means to complement and strengthen established development methodologies.

Source: *The Operational Guide for Making Markets Work for the Poor*. DFID and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC, 2014



3. PROPCOM WEE STRATEGIC GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Strategy

Propcom's Gender and Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy has been developed to serve as a guide for the programme in delivering on its mandate of increasing incomes and job opportunities for poor women within rural and agricultural markets in a holistic and sustainable manner. It is also a commitment from the programme to mainstream WEE approaches across all interventions and where necessary, target women directly to unlock their potential. Finally, it is a commitment by the Propcom team to develop capacity and skills to apply a gender lens in all interventions in order to identify entry points for WEE.

Guiding Principles

Propcom will apply the following guiding principles in executing the Strategy:

- Apply a gender lens to rural and agricultural markets by combining market analysis with gender analysis, to enable better targeting and identification of opportunities for women to earn or increase their incomes.
- Select markets with greater potential to achieve sustainable WEE outcomes such as enabling women to gain confidence, leadership and decision making skills within their households,

The Strategy is centered on the following goals:

- i) Propcom Mai-karfi designs and implements interventions that enable women to increase their participation and benefit from rural market systems, resulting in income increases and greater control/decision-making capacity over their income and economic assets.
- ii) Propcom Mai-karfi institutionalises gender equality and WEE approaches by developing internal capacity, knowledge and understanding of the issues, given the context in which the programme works.

communities and enterprises.

- Mainstream WEE into all interventions such that women are able to benefit equally as men, and where necessary, design and implement WEE-specific interventions to tackle the underlying systemic constraints faced by women, utilising a broader WEE perspective to improve women's power and agency over their income.
- Address cultural and social norms in cases where they could hinder the realisation of WEE outcomes through a gender analysis to

A group of women collecting shea nuts.



understand the environment and dynamics. Where possible, efforts will be made to design and implement supporting WEE activities within interventions that directly respond to those constraints in order to facilitate the market.

- Work with a ‘do no harm’ approach across all activities. This implies constant monitoring of activities to identify where women could be displaced, losing out in terms of income earning opportunities, or could be at risk of backlash.
- Promote a gender-sensitive approach when working with our partners including making the business case for WEE. Where possible, identify and work with partners that demonstrate potential to create systemic change for achieving WEE at scale.
- Track and report on WEE outcomes through the programme’s monitoring and evaluation system,

and use the lessons learnt to react appropriately if interventions are not impacting positively on women, as well as inform subsequent interventions. This includes disaggregation of data by sex for indicators and reporting documentation (results chains, quarterly and annual reports), as well as rigorous gender analysis of results.

- Develop team capacity through regular trainings on gender equality and WEE, and draw on support from the Gender & WEE Manager in intervention design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Encourage innovation and test approaches that can lead to sustainable WEE outcomes.
- Ensure accountability by all to deliver on WEE outcomes in a sustainable manner and contribute to Propcom’s overall goals. ♀



Members of a women co-operative enterprise with their tiller.

For more information, contact us at:

Email: info@propcommaikarfi.org

Website: www.propcommaikarfi.org

Tel: +234 (0) 805 479 6992

Propcom



Mai-karfi