

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: REVIEW OF MONITORING GENDER AND ECONOMY IN MELANESIAN COMMUNITIES RESOURCE KIT

EVALUATION PURPOSE

In 2018, IWDA commissioned a review of the Monitoring Gender and Economy in Melanesian Communities resource kit in order to document its reach, practice and learning, to ensure that it remains relevant to gender transformative programming in Asia and the Pacific.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the review consisted of interviews with 12 practitioners and an analysis and summary of the findings. The consultant worked with IWDA to create the interview questions and 6 Likert scales to provide quantitative data. Of the respondents, 10 had used the resource kit, 2 had been exposed to the kit and all but one were from the Australian development sector.

KEY FINDINGS

Overall there was a positive response to the resource kit with the practitioners interviewed stating that they found it relevant and useful. One gender consultant, who used a range of tools from the resource kit during a CARE baseline study in Laos in 2015¹, expressed her appreciation of the kit:

“This is an incredible toolkit.....This was the best field work I have ever done and I feel privileged to be able to use the tools”.

Gender consultants and program managers were the most common users of the resource kits closely followed by academics and gender advisors. The majority were from an International Non Government Organisation (INGO) but there were also users from DFAT, NGOs and managing contractors. Most users tended to find the resources by chance. They noted that there was a need for greater promotion and engagement by IWDA, particularly with the academic community, to raise awareness of the tools.

Given the overall positive response by interviewees there is potential for users to become champions for the resource kits, for example two INGOs both CARE and Oxfam have used and promoted the kits to others. The participatory and visual elements of the kit along with its simplicity supported users to facilitate open conversations at a community level about gender equality. It increased facilitators’

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Between 2010 and 2012, IWDA, in conjunction with university partners and non-government agencies, undertook ADRA funded research in Solomon Islands and Fiji. The purpose of the research was to explore Melanesian understandings of gender and economy and to develop localised indicators and tools for tracking change in gender relations and economic opportunity / outcomes in Melanesia. A key publication arising from this research was a resource kit titled ‘*Monitoring Gender and Economy in Melanesian Communities: Resources for NGOs, government and researchers in Melanesia*’ (The resource kit).

The *Monitoring Gender and Economy in Melanesian Communities* resource kit contains:

- A ‘River of Change’ poster, describing four main tributaries of change necessary to improve gender relations in Melanesian communities
- A poster using floating coconuts to help in understanding roles of women and men in economies in Melanesia
- Flash cards for three participatory monitoring tools to test the strength and the flow of the ‘River of Change’.
- Instructions for two additional participatory monitoring tools to test the strength and the flow of the ‘River of Change’.
- A manual of indicators and tools for tracking change in gender relations and the economy in Melanesian communities.

¹ The baseline was conducted for the CARE ‘*Women organised for rural development*’ program.

confidence and knowledge in gender and helped draw links between issues such as violence and gender or economic empowerment.

Sixty seven per cent of users used the resource kit in a Melanesian context, others in South East Asia including Laos and Vietnam. The review noted that the resources do need to be adapted to be used effectively outside of Melanesia. Fifty per cent of users used the kit for monitoring and evaluation purposes while others used them as conversation starters, for project design or in program activities.

The most popular tools were:

- The floating coconut
- The river of change
- Participation of women and men in community level discussions (Participatory activity 1)
- Women’s control over their personal income (Participatory activity 2)
- Different approaches to managing household finances (Participatory activity 3)

The users did not use the following activities:

- Young men’s perceptions of what it is to be a ‘man’ and the influence of male role models (Participatory activity 4)
- Mapping community groups involving women (Participatory activity 5)
- Forms of cooperation and conflict between women, and conflict resolution approaches (Participatory activity 6)
- Comprehensive survey tool

This could be due to the lack of instructions, lack of flashcards and time and budget constraints. Most users picked different tools from the kit with no respondents using the full kit at any one time.

The following SWOT draws from perspectives of the respondents to provide an overall snapshot of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the resource kit in its current format.

Strengths	Weaknesses/ learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a feminist framing for economic empowerment that includes violence, unpaid and informal work, and decision making over income. • Easy for respondents to understand and use. • Resonates well in communities (particularly those in the Pacific), and is supported and loved by local facilitation staff. • Engages women and men in discussions about gender equality. Moves away from working with women alone. • Promotes personal reflection and change (within communities and staff teams). • Tools are easy to adapt and ideal for strong facilitators, who can use them to open conversations on a range of gender issues. • Contributes to “transformative” Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) practice by engaging communities in processes to reflect on their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no reported uptake of the tools by Pacific agencies (without the support of an external adviser/trainer). The language used in the kit may be a barrier to uptake. • The positioning of the resource kit (as Melanesian and M&E focus) may be limiting uptake of the tools which have proven to be widely applicable to a range of contexts. • The survey has yet to be trialled, this may contribute to lack of uptake. • Needs guidance on the need to always do a trial of tools in new locations, first to ensure that tools fit the local context and if being conducted in a foreign language, to have a translator present.

<p>own context and determine their progress towards goals defined by them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges commonly used didactic approaches to community work, enabling more participatory approaches. • The resources fill a gap in the Pacific for participatory tools that incorporate Pacific context and images. 	
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Threats</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a key opportunity to mainstream tools across IWDA (particularly in Pacific portfolios), in a range of contexts across the program life cycle to build staff skills and resources, and encourage peer sharing with other professionals across the sector. • Tools could be adapted to support program planning, partnership discussions and IWDA monitoring and evaluation activities. • IWDA programs provide a perfect opportunity to iteratively improve and develop these and other gender tools, and to contribute to IWDA's reputation as a resource/thought-leader in the Pacific region. • Several tools within the kit have the potential to operate as stand-alone activities with broad application across the program life cycle. Rebranding tools away from an M&E focus alone would likely expand interest and uptake.² • There is scope to expand the tools to an Asian audience. Linking with agencies that have adapted images would support this process. • There is a small but dedicated support base of users keen to engage in the resource kit's uptake in the sector through training and professional development activities. IWDA also has a network of consultants to market the resource kit to e.g. GenderWise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resource kit is IWDA branded but knowledge and internal uptake of the kit is reportedly low. This represents a missed opportunity for internal uptake and peer based marketing of the resource across the sector. It also represents a risk to the credibility of the tools. • All tools require strong facilitation skills to ensure that the wrong messages are not reinforced. IWDA does not currently monitor or train users of the kit; quality control risks exist for future distribution/uptake. • The resource kit does not currently have a focus on inclusion - it does not enable participation or empowerment of people of trans and non-binary genders or those living with a disability. As such it risks reinforcing exclusion of these groups.

² Further guidance would be needed to support this outcome.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations from the review were:

- Increase the resource kit's relevance and impact beyond Melanesia and M&E
 - Approaches to increase the relevance and impact of the tools arising in the review can be broadly summarised as: improving tool guidance, increasing geographic scope; creating individual stand-alone tool sets from existing tools, and; expanding the range of applications for each tool. These options can be explored independently or in combination.

- Increasing uptake of the resource kit through targeted marketing
 - IWDA is in a unique position to boost resource kit uptake in the future. The organisation has extensive consultant networks, regional NGO networks and links to universities. It also has a range of talented staff no doubt keen for new methods to supporting planning and M&E with partner agencies. This review proposes capitalising on these strengths to push the uptake of the materials in their future iteration.