

Lasting Impact:

Evaluating Ten Years of Advancing Women's Leadership



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DISCLAIMER

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of Plan International USA or the ExxonMobil Corporation.

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Global Women in Management

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INTRODUCTION

For over a decade, the ExxonMobil Foundation's Women's Economic Opportunity Initiative (WEOI) - a global effort to help women in developing countries fulfill their economic potential and serve as drivers of economic and social change in their communities—has invested in Plan International USA's Global Women in Management (GWIM) program. GWIM is a comprehensive program designed to strengthen the leadership potential, project management skills and technical abilities of women working in local civil society organizations that implement women's economic empowerment programs.

Despite compelling research from international institutions such as the World Bank and numerous United Nations agencies citing the importance of women's economic empowerment as a key determinant in improving development outcomes, there are still critical systemic challenges hindering women from participating in the local economy. The World Bank cites that more than 100 countries impose different legal acts for men and women related to issues of mobility, contracts, property rights, as well as engagements with the public and private sector (Bachelet, 2012). In Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries where women account for 40-50 percent of the labor force, they still only comprise less than 8 percent of top management positions (OECD, 2008). The challenges women face in developing countries are even more stark; according to International Finance Corporation estimates, as many as 70 percent of women-owned small to medium enterprises in the formal sector in developing countries are unserved or underserved by financial institutions (Global Markets Institute, 2014).

Through the GWIM program, participants not only build their personal leadership skills, but also strengthen their competencies in program and financial management, monitoring and evaluation, fundraising, advocacy, and strategic communications. Further, they examine strategies and tools related to entrepreneurship, microcredit and microenterprise development, business planning, product development and marketing, branding, and value chains. Following the workshop, alumni continue to

build on their learning during a year-long coaching program. Many participants are also offered the opportunity to take advantage of post-workshop and additional capacity development activities.

Graduates of the program have gone on to become chairwomen, treasurers and representatives of religious, community and volunteer groups. Many increased their volunteer engagement; a number report leaving their jobs to devote their full energies to development work; and several founded their own local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). A few alumni are even enacting more socially responsive policies through political office.

To measure the long-term effects of the GWIM program, Plan administered a mixed-methods evaluation (online survey of program alumni from the past ten years; focus group discussions with alumni and in-depth interviews with alumni and their supervisors). Though the online survey data are self-reported, this evaluation also triangulated findings from other program documents, including the six-month follow-on survey conducted after each GWIM workshop as well as other evaluation reports. Combined, these data provide essential information for not only assessing program outcomes, but also for improving future program design and implementation. During the period covered by the evaluation (April 2005 – March 2014), a total of 638 women leaders had participated in GWIM training programs. Twenty, three- and four-week workshops reached 499 women from over 475 non-governmental, community, and faith-based organizations, and five, two-week workshops reached an additional 139 women.

GWIM Workshop Themes

Dimensions of Leadership - Assess and strengthen personal and professional leadership traits; explore values and behaviors of ethical leadership; build and lead effective teams; strengthen mentoring and coaching skills; develop strategies for enhanced leadership.

Project Management & Monitoring and Evaluation - Examine management roles and responsibilities, tasks and challenges throughout the project cycle; develop and apply project design and management tools; develop monitoring and evaluation plans.

Financial Management - Examine and use financial management procedures and tools for transparency and accountability; develop project and organizational budgets; analyze cash flow; review and develop internal controls.

Fundraising - Understand donor differences; cultivate and sustain donor relations; develop proposal management tools; plan effective fundraising events; draft proposals.

Economic Participation – Generate business ideas and conduct market assessments; prepare business plans; examine social enterprise models and opportunities for replication; test approaches for product design; explore value chains.

Advocacy - Identify policy barriers to women's economic participation; analyze elements, opportunities and actors in the policy environment; explore tactics and skills for evidence-based advocacy; craft advocacy strategies.

Strategic Communications - Apply strategic communication techniques to educate, motivate and mobilize communities, decision makers and institutions.

BACKGROUND

The primary thrust of GWIM is to advance women's participation in the economy and give them greater control over resources by strengthening leadership, managerial, and technical skills of women NGO leaders implementing economic empowerment programs for women in their communities. The program consists of three distinct components.

RESIDENTIAL WORKSHOPS



Maritza Aurora Morales is the founder and director of HUNAB, A.C., an organization staffed entirely by volunteers. After attending GWIM 41 in 2006, she successfully registered the organization as a legal entity (2006) and obtained grants and donations for its activities targeting education and recreation, youth and women entrepreneurs. She has won various awards for her innovative leadership and has met with the last four presidents of Mexico. This year, National Geographic named her an Emerging Explorer recognizing her organization as a “force behind a major educational park focused not only on empowering children with conservation knowledge, but also with leadership skills to become strong activists and agents of change.” In May 2014, she won the Emprendedora del Año (Entrepreneur of the Year) award, presented personally by the President of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto (r).

Residential workshops have been held in Brazil, Cameroon, Egypt, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea and Washington, D.C. GWIM targets early to mid-career women with five to 10 years of experience working at community, sub-national or national levels in development programs. The women are employed or volunteer with local civil society organizations implementing women's economic empowerment programs, and have a minimum of two years of experience implementing women's economic programs (e.g., entrepreneurship, micro-credit, vocational training, income generation, etc.). Priority is given to applicants engaged in activities that use technology to enhance women's economic opportunities. The GWIM curriculum is designed with the overall goal of strengthening the leadership, management and implementation of women's economic empowerment programs through individual, organizational and systems capacity development. Since the first grant from ExxonMobil Foundation's Women's Economic Opportunity Initiative (WEOI) in 2005, the program has continued to evolve to meet the changing demands of globalization and reflect trends and best practices. In 2009, the program was modified to include a week-long technical track on women's economic empowerment to align with WEOI goals.

Field trips and sessions with experts from the private and public sectors working to improve lending, political, legal and socio-cultural

environments for women's economic participation are also an integral component of the workshop. These engagements provide participants with the opportunity to dialogue with staff from implementing and donor organizations to learn about successful approaches to supporting women's economic advancement.

GWIM alumni consistently highlight the participatory nature of the workshop as a unique feature of the program. Rather than simply attending sessions, participants are expected to critically analyze the content, collaborate with their peers, apply their learning to “real world” contextualized scenarios and share experiences. Participants are responsible for making presentations on their respective work and organizations, conducting daily evaluations and organizing social events. The training approach facilitates a learning environment where each participant is valued and treated equally, regardless of age, education or social status. This approach creates a safe space for learning and promotes respect and peer-to-peer learning. Participants forge a dynamic and supportive environment that is a significant feature of the program and greatly broaden their exposure to other ideas, cultures and the realities faced by women in other countries.

ALUMNI COACHING

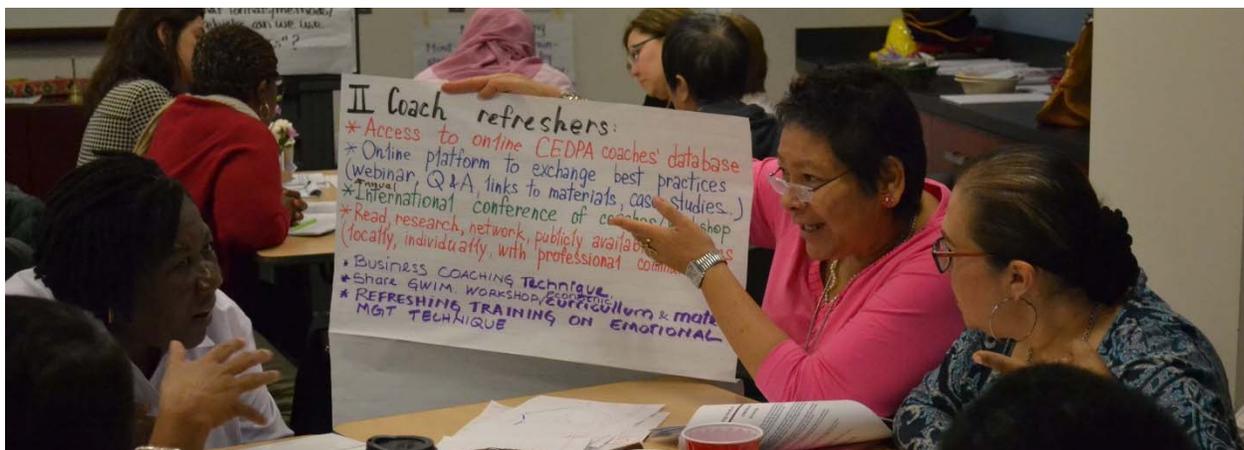
In 2005, GWIM introduced a unique south-south professional coaching initiative to extend participant learning beyond the workshop and strengthen the professional growth and performance of graduates. Managed by a Plan International USA Coach Advisor who conducts periodic check-ins with both coaches and clients, the program is a highly personalized and client-driven initiative, which complements the workshop by supporting the transition home and the application of new knowledge and skills.

“It helped us understand ourselves – helped us to know the usefulness of each person’s strength and opened us to so many things. It has given boost to everything I do. GWIM was my stepping stone to greater heights. I wrote proposals for two organizations and collaborated with two GWIM participants as a resource person. GWIM helped to bring out my talents.”

– GWIM alumna

After completing the residential workshop, GWIM alumni are paired with a coach—a senior GWIM alumna from their country or region—for a one year relationship. The sustained engagement with a coach allows time for reflection and professional growth as participants begin to apply new leadership, management and programming skills acquired during the workshop. Moreover, the benefits of the program are viewed to be mutual. Not only do recent GWIM graduates receive support for professional growth, but alumni coaches also strengthen their mentoring, supervision, assessment and outreach skills.

To date, Plan has organized five GWIM coaching workshops (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2013), training 118 alumni as coaches. Coaches are already strong and emerging women leaders who have participated in Plan’s women’s leadership workshops. Since coaches do not require expertise in specific technical areas, the coaching training emphasizes communication and interpersonal skills that can apply across sectors.



POST-WORKSHOP NETWORKING AND SUPPORT

Tapping into formal alumni networks, social media, consultancies and the alumni newsletter, alumni use informal and formal channels of communication to continue engaging with other alumni, not only from within their own cohort, but also across GWIM groups. For example, the quarterly GWIM electronic newsletter, *Alumni in Motion*, launched in 2014, was designed to augment the informal online networking among alumni by highlighting the achievements and news of alumni, who submit updates and stories on personal and professional milestones. Plan uses the newsletter and other media (e.g., email alerts, the Facebook page) to share information on resources, educational or professional scholarships and other learning opportunities and events. These different media also allow women to share lessons learned and best practices from their professional development endeavors, as well as sustain personal relationships that have developed over the years.

THEORY OF CHANGE

The GWIM program was designed based on a theory of change that starts with preparing mid-career women leaders from non-governmental, community and faith-based organizations to assume increased responsibilities and accountability in their personal lives, organizations and communities (See Figure 1). This capacity investment in women leaders will result in strengthened development organizations that are able to launch or expand high quality, replicable programs that are well managed and leverage the greatest sustainable impact. Stronger organizations, in turn, enhance women’s access to resources and networks, ultimately increasing their economic and social status. As a result, larger numbers of women are - able to participate in their local community’s development and economies. Because of the unique role that women play in society, these changes will contribute to economic, social and democratic advances in society at large.

“With her enhanced confidence, she approached the director of the mining company and assertively made the case that the hospital needed a major facelift (plumbing, electricity, etc.). We received \$1.25M to do the work, now underway.”
– Supervisor of GWIM alumna

FIGURE 1: SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENTS IN THE GWIM THEORY OF CHANGE



METHODOLOGY

Between March 2014 and April 2015, the evaluation team investigated the results of the GWIM program during the period of April 2005 to March 2014. Using a mixed methods approach, the evaluation team used the program's theory of change (ToC) as the cornerstone for measuring results. The evaluation strategy was based upon Kirkpatrick's model of training evaluation (Kirkpatrick, 2006). As such, the program review focused on four distinct levels: 1) reaction to program activities; 2) retention of the knowledge and skills developed; 3) application of learning within alumni organizations; and 4) changes in the benefit to women as a result of new or existing programs.

Plan regularly evaluates levels one (participant reaction), two (retention of skills) and early results of three (application) through a daily and an in-depth final workshop evaluation, a follow-up survey six months after the workshop and occasional qualitative studies on a specific topic, such as coaching. Long-term results for levels three and four (impact) are more difficult to measure given the broad scope of alumni backgrounds.

This evaluation primarily collected quantitative data from a global electronic survey administered to alumni in English, French and Spanish (58 percent response rate with 258 alumni from 53 countries completing the survey). Qualitative findings were derived from focus group discussions with alumni (n=54), as well as in-depth interviews with alumni (n=22) and supervisors (n=15) in seven countries (Africa: Nigeria, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea; Asia: Indonesia and Papua New Guinea; Latin America: Argentina and Mexico).

The evaluation team also reviewed participant lists, program descriptions, workshop agendas and other evaluation results, including the six-month follow-up survey results for each workshop. Finally, reports from other formative evaluations conducted by the program (e.g., the coaching program, alumni case studies, etc.) were also used in validating data findings.



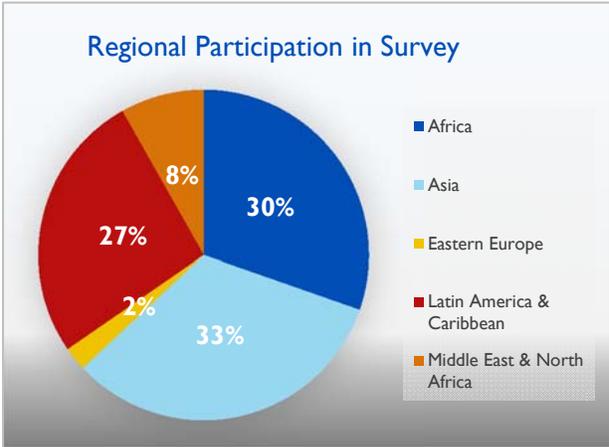
RESULTS

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



Overall, GWIM participants generally match the target profile, though they were still a diverse group. Africa (31 percent), Asia (33 percent) and Latin America (26 percent) comprise the vast majority of respondents, with a minor representation of respondents from the Middle East and North Africa (8 percent) and Eastern Europe (2 percent).

Whereas the greatest proportion of participants was mid-career professionals at the time of the workshop (38 percent of alumni were 36 - 45 years of age), a significant portion of respondents were younger (35 percent less than 36 years of age) and older (25 percent older than 45 years of age). Most of the participants had completed at least a university degree upon attending the workshop (86 percent), though 11 percent of respondents had never attended college. Most (69 percent of respondents) were at least mid-career professionals with seven or more years of experience, though approximately a quarter of the respondents (27 percent) had less than seven years of work experience when they attended the workshop. Currently, the vast majority of respondents hold a senior level (58 percent) or technical/programmatic (23 percent) position, with only 18 percent of respondents employed in other positions (e.g., administration, finance, communications, etc.).



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Table 1. GWIM Alumni Descriptive Statistics (survey respondents, N=258)*

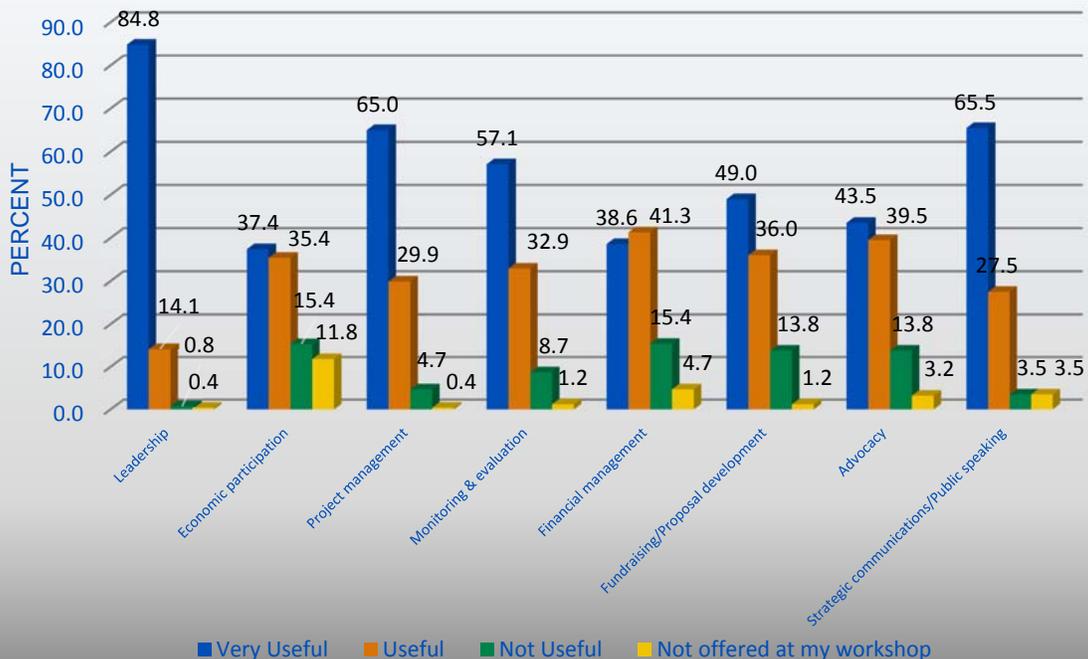
Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Region	258	100
Africa	78	31
Asia	84	33
Eastern Europe	6	2
Latin America & Caribbean	68	26
Middle East & North Africa	21	8
Age when attended the workshop	529	98
<36 years	90	35
36-45 years	98	38
46+ years	65	25
Level of completed education when attended the workshop	248	97
Primary/secondary/post-secondary	28	11
University degree	111	43
Professional certification	20	8
Post-graduate degree	89	35
Years of professional experience at the time of the workshop	247	96
<7 years	70	27
7-15 years	110	43
15+ years	67	26
Current professional position	256	100
Executive/Senior Management	148	58
Technical or Program	60	23
Admin/Finance/Comms	29	11
Other	19	7

*Discrepancies with n/% attributed to missing data

Evaluation findings show that the GWIM program creates a significant learning experience for the participants. As one survey participant description states, GWIM is “transformative far beyond the content.” The most useful aspects identified in the program were the technical content (24 percent), positive learning environment (23 percent), learning methods (23 percent), and the opportunity to meet participants from other countries/cultures (21 percent).

All of the GWIM modules were ranked as useful/highly useful by the participants, with the leadership module receiving the highest ranking (99 percent); this module was also rated as the most significant to their professional growth by 72 percent of respondents. The economic participation module received the lowest ranking with 73 percent of respondents reporting the module to be useful/highly useful.

Usefulness of GWIM Topics to Alumni's Work



Resoundingly, alumni expressed their increased confidence and strengthened knowledge and skills in project and organizational management, including economic programming, as a lasting impact from GWIM. Focus group discussion data emphasized that whereas prior to GWIM, participants were not

accustomed to sharing their views, they later found that their opinions had value. As one alumni shared, “I realized the power was within me. It was always within me, but I never used it to the fullest. I was not a victim, but allowed things to happen to me. Now, I have the boldness to speak my mind.”

Moreover, alumni underscored a more acute understanding of global social issues and a subsequent ability to access a greater number of regional and global resources (human and financial) as important outcomes to their participation in the program. One alumna stated, “It is as if I have now tripled my exposure, because I have heard the stories of sisters in other countries.”

An extraordinarily high percentage of alumni also considered their GWIM experience to have played a significant role in their professional development (62 percent rated GWIM as highly significant and 32 percent as significant). In particular, there was a significant relationship with alumni with less than ten years of work experience receiving a promotion ($p < .01$) and increasing their job responsibilities ($p < .01$).

Among all alumni, those with less than ten years of work experience at the time of the workshop were also more likely to train others on knowledge and skills acquired during GWIM ($p < .001$). Further disaggregating the data by region, Africa and Asia demonstrated statistically significant results in terms of alumni sharing their learning with others compared with the number of years of professional experience ($p < .05$).

The data suggest that it may take time to observe the long-term effects of GWIM. Preliminary logistic regression analysis of African alumni showed that more recent alumni (less than five years from completing the program) were less likely to state the significance of GWIM in their professional development as those who had completed the program five or more years earlier (Exp(B)/odds ratio=0.144; $p < .10$).

It should be noted that though 54 percent of the alumni did not render any constructive feedback in response to open-ended survey questions, 46 percent of the respondents did identify areas for improving the program. According to qualitative findings, three key themes emerged: a desire for more networking and communication opportunities (28 percent), additional training and meetings (14 percent), and grants and donor linkages (5%) were underscored as critical areas for further development ($n=59$). These sentiments are validated by another question probing areas for additional support. Not surprisingly, access to funding opportunities following the GWIM workshop, either by connecting alumni with donors or through grants from Plan and ExxonMobil (23 percent), greater investments in keeping alumni connected through formal and informal networks, online platforms, social media, etc. (17 percent), and additional training for alumni, e.g., TOT, advanced leadership training, online courses (11 percent), were highlighted as the top three areas ($n=53$).

“My organization went through dramatic changes in leadership, and I acted as the Interim Country Director. The leadership knowledge and skills I learned from GWIM have been very useful during that time. I also successfully raised more than \$30,000 within one month. The fundraising and proposal writing skills I learned from GWIM are critical in my work.”

– GWIM alumna

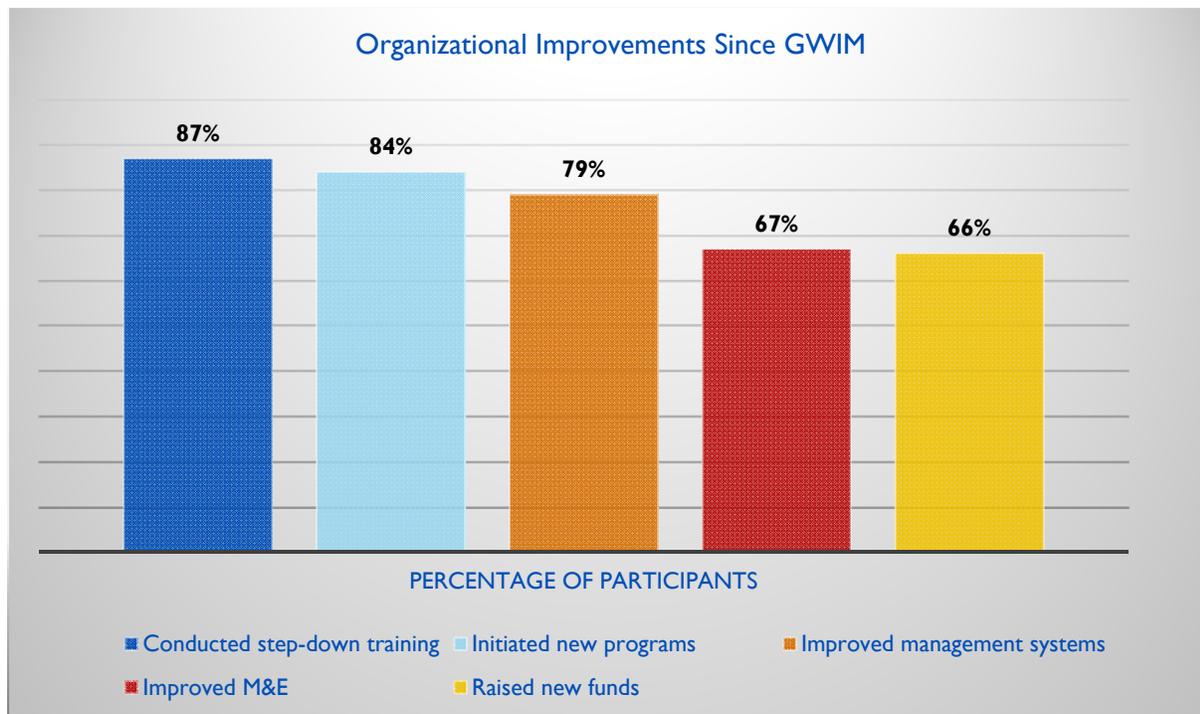
Organizational Impact



GWIM alumni have achieved numerous outcomes at the organization level. According to the six-month follow-up survey data (n=304), most alumni are able to implement a portion, if not all, of their proposed action plan activities (63 percent), and over half (57 percent) are able to raise new funds. Since 2010, it is estimated that alumni have raised \$14.4 million in funding for their organizations and trained over 5,000 people using GWIM content. Focus group discussion data echo the pride alumni feel in being able to strengthen their organization's development (e.g., attainment of local registration, establishing governing boards) and growth (e.g., improving financial systems and expanding their organization's donor base and international relationships).

“She increased our focus on microcredit and women’s empowerment, which is new. The rural areas still have a lot of machismo. Therefore, women’s microcredit and empowerment is incorporated into our existing mission of education and rural development. We also put emphasis on achieving a 50/50 school enrollment and have seen an increase in female students.”

– Supervisor of GWIM alumna



Online survey data show that alumni increased their application of knowledge and skills well after the six-month mark, with 87 percent conducting some form of step-down training; 84 percent initiating new programs or activities; 79 percent making improvements in management systems and procedures; 67 percent improving or implementing monitoring and evaluation systems; and 66 percent raising new funds.

In addition, it appears that there was a trend in the relationship between the usefulness of a workshop module and the desired outcome. For example, there was a significant relationship between ranking the usefulness of the fundraising/proposal development module and being able to raise new funds for their organization ($p < .001$); the same was true for ranking the usefulness of the advocacy module and organizing an advocacy campaign to change policies related to women ($p < .001$).

Among African alumni, those who had recently completed GWIM (less than five years) were more likely to make improvements to management systems and procedures within their organizations ($p < 0.05$); this could perhaps be interpreted as a result of being highly motivated upon returning to their country and wishing to effect change, especially within a region where there is a larger cadre of alumni from which to draw support. It should also be noted that with regard to raising new funds, the oldest age group (46+ years of age) was most effective in achieving this result ($p < .10$) as compared with their younger counterparts. This result may be related to the cultural dynamics of fundraising in developing countries.

Reviewing disaggregated descriptive statistics by education, those alumni with a professional certification/post-graduate degree tended to outperform their less educated counterparts on most measures of organizational change: raising new funds, improving management systems and structures, improving monitoring and evaluation systems, using data and expanding networks. That being said, less educated alumni were more likely to start their own NGO (43 percent) as compared with 25 - 27 percent of alumni with higher education backgrounds. Most also trained others (89 percent) and organized an advocacy event (54 percent). Twenty-one percent of less educated alumni even ran for an elected position, as compared with the range of 18 - 30 percent of more educated alumni.

Regardless, those holding an executive or senior management position at the time of the survey administration expressed that they were able to make improvements in their management systems ($p < .05$) and initiate new programming within their organizations ($p < .01$). Women who started their own organizations also offered programs to improve the status of women ($p < .05$). Thus, by the time the alumni obtain a certain status within their organizations, they are able to affect change from within and shape their impact in the communities they serve.

In fact, these women have not only introduced new content such as gender, advocacy, leadership, financial management and enterprise development to both existing and new programs, but they have expanded modes of engagement by using research methods (e.g., appreciative inquiry) and online platforms (e.g., YouTube and social media) to increase their access to more communities. In one case, an alumna established a creative approach to form economically viable mother's groups that address local needs by providing nutritious and cost-effective snacks for school children. Another alumna, with the approval of her board, restructured her organization and hired experts for all positions. Since 2010, the organization has increased program participation by a factor of ten. They are using technology to monitor programs, and an external firm conducts third-party evaluations. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is now a new donor.

GWIM alumni have stated that advocacy is now a critical strategy for facilitating change on behalf of the communities they serve. One alumna organized a network of NGOs to address the issue of school budget oversight, researching and presenting data to regional members of parliament. As a result, the topic became a strategic priority and the parliamentarians agreed to support six pilot projects using the new community budget oversight models proposed in their research. As a result of their success, her organization expanded its advocacy efforts to the national level.

"I think that participation in GWIM was an important moment in [her] life. It was her first opportunity for exchange with other women leaders from different countries, and it gave her a chance to go more deeply into concepts related to women's roles and leadership. She returned from the course surer of herself and with more personal strength. She felt recognized and valued. She keeps a group photograph from the course on her desk that I think is a reminder of the relevance the course had for her."

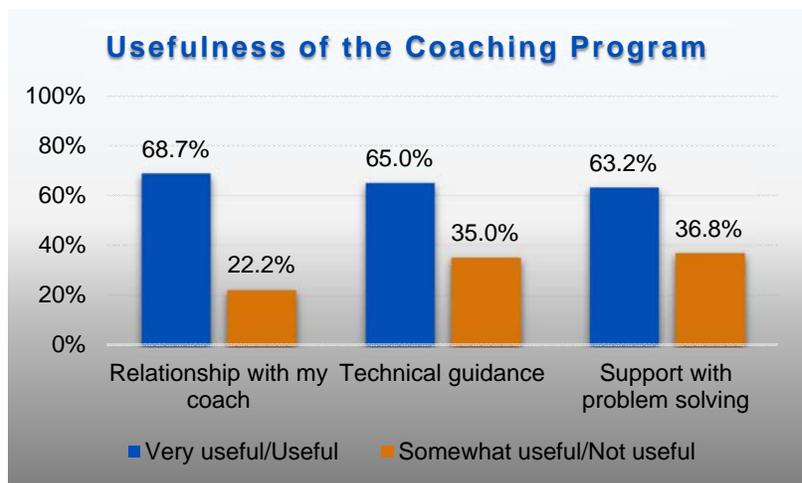
—Supervisor of GWIM alumna

COACHING



A 2008 evaluation report on the alumni coaching program found that the ingredients for a successful coaching relationship include a structured approach based on a clear set of objectives, face-to-face meetings, mutually understood boundaries, a significant client investment and an encouraging attitude from the coach. The primary challenges identified were infrequent communication, unrealistic expectations and insufficient time or interest.

Results from the online survey show that overall, alumni had a positive response to the coaching program, sharing that the relationship with their coach (68 percent), technical guidance (65 percent), and support for problem solving (63 percent) were useful/very useful. Among all alumni, there was a statistically significant relationship for those who participated as clients and their identification of GWIM coaches as one of the primary sources in helping them to apply what they learned at the workshop ($p < .001$). Resonating with other findings, mid-career professionals (36 - 45 years old) seemed to report the greatest benefit from working with GWIM coaches as compared with their younger and older counterparts. These data underscore the relevance of a coaching program in supporting alumni and their efforts to continue building their skills after completing the workshop.



Focus group discussion data particularly highlighted that the program was helpful for linking new people, ideas and opportunities. Some alumni appreciated the support for completing their action plans and tackling challenges in the workplace. In some cases, coaches maintained relationships with their clients after the prescribed period, forwarding resources, opportunities and invitations that matched individual interests.

Still, there were some notable frustrations with the program in two primary areas: poor communication and unmet expectations, issues that were described in the previous coaching evaluation report. Though some were satisfied with a virtual Skype/phone relationship, others desired in-person contact. Moreover, the frequency of communication with the coaches varied, with some clients expressing that their coach seemed “too busy” to provide them with adequate attention.

In addition, skewed expectations regarding the coaching relationship affected alumni perceptions. While some expected to receive specific technical skills development, others desired more general support. A misunderstanding of the purpose of the coaching program also led to confusion regarding why clients should actively engage with their coaches.

NETWORKING



The linkage between networking and other elements of the program is clear. Those alumni who found the coaching relationship to be useful/very useful were able to maximize their relationship to impact other areas of development. Not only did they receive support for solving problems, but they were also able to access new resources as well as new networks and contacts (all variables statistically significant with $p < .001$). Thus, the GWIM workshop initially cultivates relationships among alumni, but the coaching program expands relationships to establish a larger cadre and network of women who are able to connect with one another to achieve their goals.

At six months after the workshop, 92 percent of respondents reported ongoing contact with their GWIM group. Over time, this naturally decreased, though a significant portion of survey respondents still reported frequent contact with their GWIM group (76 percent).

The 36 - 45 year-old age cohort demonstrated the highest frequency in networking with alumni from their own workshop (82.7 percent), and those from other GWIM workshops (43.9 percent). Regionally, African, Asian and Eastern European alumni seem to network the most within and across GWIM workshops and with Plan International USA staff, though the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region reported the highest frequency of networking with their own GWIM-assigned coach (38 percent). Overall, over a third of alumni (36 percent) are collaborating with other GWIM alumni (it should be noted that there is a statistically significant relationship between collaboration with others and professional development ($p < .05$)). Together, these women are planning or implementing projects; joining the same network, coalition or advocacy campaign; creating a GWIM alumni network in their own country; co-training workshops; and founding NGOs.



Papua New Guinea: The Potential of Networks

In March 2014, Papua New Guinea (PNG) hosted the 59th GWIM workshop for 26 participants ranging from 24 to 60 years of age. The GWIM workshop provided a powerful experience of collaboration across geographic and deeply-rooted cultural and generational barriers. By the end of the three weeks, the women were seeking ways to break down communication gaps through email and social networking.

Just prior to GWIM 59, Plan convened the PNG alumni to determine interest in creating a formal PNG GWIM alumni network. This convening led to the launch of Advancing PNG: Women Leaders Network (APNG-WLN) in 2014 to serve as a resource hub and capacity strengthening platform for CSOs in PNG. The network, managed and governed by committed alumni volunteers, has the mission to strengthen outreach and linkages among women leaders promoting socio-economic development in their communities.

During its first year, the organization legally registered in PNG, developed its charter, elected a board of directors, established membership requirements, enrolled new participants and developed a strategic plan. They now have office space and, as of December 2014, an executive officer. In the coming years, the strategic plan will focus on refining the network's core competencies and programmatic priorities and managing its sustainability.

IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

Finding 1: Curriculum matters. Leadership is the cornerstone for confidence and professional development.

GWIM's leadership training sessions received the highest ranking of all training topics (99 percent of respondents), and were rated as the most significant to alumni's professional growth (72 percent of respondents). This finding was supported in six-month follow-up surveys and in focus group and individual interview data. Even ten years post workshop, alumni consistently report that the opportunity to reflect upon and adapt one's leadership style and skills is a key contributor to their increased self-confidence and professional accomplishments.

Implication: Women's leadership development programs produce meaningful and sustained outcomes.

Leadership curricula should be integrated into skills-based management and technical skills training programs by implementing agencies or offered as stand-alone capacity development interventions for women. Critical to the effectiveness of the intervention will be to integrate more opportunities for skills development and practice in diverse settings.

Finding 2: Change does not happen (nor may it be recognized) overnight.

African alumni who had attended the workshop more than 5 years ago continued to report positive effects of the training and were even more likely to attribute personal and professional accomplishments to the training than alumni who had graduated within the last 5 years.

Implication: Long-term evaluations are required to observe lasting effects.

It is important for funders and implementers to invest in long-term reflective evaluations for capacity development programs to measure the effects of skill building on professional growth. While women are actively engaged in implementing change, it may be difficult to distinguish confounding variables or other factors that influence success. However, women who are able to effect change and then reflect upon that change after considerable time has passed, are able to more objectively appreciate the elements that led to their success.

Finding 3: No two women are the same. Results shift across different demographic profiles.

Though there were clear trends observed among specific regions and age groups/professional sectors (e.g. younger age cohorts were more likely to start their own NGO, facilitate more step-down trainings and run for an elected office, versus older age cohorts appeared to network more consistently, as well as implement organizational and systemic change), there are no definitive results across all participants.

Implication: This type of programming should be made available to more women in various age groups, professional development levels and sectors.

Each woman carries a different set of priorities, motivations and goals. As such, individual outcomes are still very much personalized and context-specific. Though women with more work experience have a greater probability in effecting organizational change, their success does not preclude younger participants from achieving similar goals and/or outcomes while focusing their endeavors on community-based advocacy initiatives. While recognizing that the diversity of women engaged in GWIM programming can lead to more balanced and varied outcomes at the individual, organizational and community levels, there may be even greater value in implementing workshops for more homogeneous groups of women.

Finding 4: Post-training support for a) networking, b) access to funding opportunities, and c) additional and more advanced capacity development reinforces and sustains learning outcomes.

- a) Peer-to-peer relationships can lead to enduring transformations. Though GWIM's coaching program is a formal means for cultivating peer-to-peer learning and engagement, additional efforts to facilitate networking opportunities is a clear and expressed need, not only for technical skills development, but also for fundraising, maximizing synergistic program development activities and strengthening affective relationships among and across alumni groups.
- b) One of the greatest challenges facing alumni organizations is access to resources. Though reports of fundraising successes are impressive among alumni post workshop, they are not as widespread as anticipated because of limited funding opportunities. Alumni clearly identified access to grants and donors as a key post-workshop intervention, serving the dual purpose of reinforcing skills and expanding or launching new programs.
- c) Professional development is lifelong. Alumni continue to seek new and more advanced capacity development opportunities, both formal and informal, as they advance through their careers.

Implication: Capacity development needs continue beyond the workshop setting. Professional and personal collaborative development opportunities, access to small grants or funding and continued professional development (online, blended or face to face) should be routine program components after a training program has “completed.”





CONCLUSION

The evaluation findings, though based on self-reported data by program alumni, mirror and are supported by trends identified in other workshop and coaching evaluations conducted over the past ten years of the program. Alumni consistently point to the same program elements and characteristics when distinguishing GWIM from other capacity development experiences and when attributing outcomes of the program to individual, organizational and/or programmatic change. The foundation they have remains constant, even if the path they carve is never the same.

The findings demonstrate that GWIM distinguishes itself for its in-depth, transformational approach that changes attitudes as much as strengthens knowledge and skills. GWIM is unique in bringing together highly diverse women from around the world for one month. The curriculum, participatory learning approach, duration of workshop and diversity in regional, cultural and organizational backgrounds of participants create a powerful transformative effect on many women experiencing this combination for the first time. They leave the program with a new sense of purpose, heightened confidence and broader lens from which to view local, regional and international issues. After completing the workshop, women continue to build relationships as they forge new changes within their organizations and communities, implementing innovative programs and tackling new advocacy campaigns. The coaching program and other avenues of communication also help them to create a formidable global network of women leaders who are still actively sharing insights, resources and know-how years after completing the program. The results make it clear that GWIM in reality is a long-term process rather than a finite program. The evolution of alumni and their careers continue to shape how the program will be developed in the future.





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