

**WOMEN'S FINANCIAL INCLUSION
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE
(COP) CHARTER**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
MEMBERSHIP	3
JUSTIFICATION	3
SCOPE	3
1.1 Mission.....	3
1.2 Goals	4
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION.....	4
1.3 Individual and organizational benefits.....	4
1.4 Community norms	5
1.5 Ground Rules for Being a Member.....	5
ASSUMPTIONS, CONSTRAINTS, AND RISKS	5
1.6 Assumptions.....	5
1.7 Constraints	6
1.8 Risks.....	6
1.9 Structure.....	6
1.10 facilitator	7
1.11 Financial Resources:	7
COMMUNITY CHARTER APPROVAL AND AMENDMENTS.....	8

Introduction

Between 2011 and 2014, 700 million adults worldwide became account holders, reducing the number of unbanked from 2.5 billion to 2 billion. Despite this important progress, women still lag behind men in terms of access to formal credit and savings, holding 7% less accounts globally and 9% less in developing countries. This gap is even starker in regions such as South Asia where there is an 18% gender gap in account ownership and the Middle East where the gap is 10%. There are various demand and supply side constraints behind the gap in financial access, as well as cultural and environment barriers that continue to affect women's access to and uptake of meaningful financial services tailored to meet their needs.

As part of the global agenda on gender equality and development, CGAP is committed to closing this gap and to addressing areas where progress on gender equality has lagged behind in financial services markets. CGAP is launching this new community of practice (COP) to support an informed dialogue around the solutions to increasing women's access to financial services in order to support improved practices and find solutions that will increase gender equitable outcomes.

Membership

Membership is open to all. We will also encourage active participation by influential thought leaders, practitioners and experts actively engaged and passionate about the role of financial inclusion in promoting economic empowerment among women. Members are interested and willing to share relevant tools and resources; develop best practices and innovative solutions to pressing problems; improve skills and disseminate knowledge; and provide a social and professional networking opportunities with community members.

Justification

While there is widespread support for and commitment to increasing women's access to finance across a broad range of stakeholders supporting financial inclusion, there is no common learning agenda or platform for sharing emerging practices and identifying key levers of change needed to bridge the persistent gender gap. Work on women's financial inclusion continues to be addressed in silos within the financial services and economic empowerment fields, with little coordination between the two, in spite of the interdependences of these disciplines. There are limited tools and guidelines to help inform operations and policy reform, and peer-to-peer support on common challenges remains ad hoc and often geographically specific in nature. Without a centralized resource for knowledge exchange, practitioners must rely on word of mouth to find up to date and real world solutions (case studies, evidence, emerging practices) that have worked and can be replicated, and collaboration is confined to ad hoc and bilateral opportunities, rather than more strategic partnerships that can benefit the community as a whole.

Scope

1.1 MISSION

The COP aims to provide a platform to share experiences across a broad set of actors (experts, practitioners and policy makers) with different experiences working on women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion. The COP will act as a bridge between these disciplines to identify key challenges, document and discuss emerging good practices, and solve common problems that will lead to the development of a more transformative agenda. The COP will provide valuable networking that will prevent duplication of efforts across all levels of implementation and

opportunities for collaborative learning that will result in tangible outcomes (e.g. tools, data, guidelines) to improve the effectiveness of programming. Ongoing feedback mechanisms on emerging ideas will be used to enhance shared learning and problem solving and a centralized, critically curated resource base for emerging research, evidence and practice will help address challenges being faced by members at an operational and policy level.

1.2 GOALS

The goals of the Community are as follows:

- **Capture and diffuse existing knowledge** to help influence practice by identifying solutions to common problems and a process to collect and evaluate best practices.
- **Generate new knowledge** to help people transform practices on the ground.
- **Enable dialogue** between and amongst the women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion community to explore new possibilities, solve challenging problems, and create new, mutually beneficial opportunities.
- **Stimulate learning** across individuals and organizations to improve skills and practice, and to raise overall effectiveness financial inclusion interventions for women globally
- **Facilitate collaborative processes** between researchers and project implementers to help advance learning around issues identified as priorities within the field.
- **Document or develop guidelines and best practices** for promoting women's financial inclusion to encourage standards adoption by practitioners.
- **Influence funders and policymakers** to apply evolving good practices for increasing access to and use of financial services among women increase development impact of investment policies at the field level.

These goals should be reviewed regularly by the broader members of the COP and should be inclusive of the needs of the members and the broader supporting organizations and stakeholders.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

1.3 INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL BENEFITS

Through the sharing, creation and management of knowledge around women's financial inclusion, the community enables individuals to

- Continue learning and developing professionally
- Access expertise
- Improve communication with peers
- Increase productivity and quality of work
- Network to keep current in the field
- Develop a sense of professional identity
- Enhance professional reputation

The COP benefits the organization by

- Reducing time/cost to retrieve information
- Reducing learning curves
- Improving knowledge sharing and distribution
- Enhancing coordination, standardization, and synergies across organizational units
- Reducing rework and reinvention

- Enabling innovation
- Benchmarking against influencing industry standards
- Building alliances

1.4 COMMUNITY NORMS

- Operate around the following governance principles: participation, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, and rules of engagement
- Be open to all with an interest in and who abide by COP norms
- Encourage the ongoing education of members and the deepening of expertise among members

1.5 GROUND RULES FOR BEING A MEMBER

- Members are willing to share challenges, and lessons learned as well as successes
- Members strive to create an environment of trust and to foster insightful, non-threatening discussion of ideas and experiences
- Members distribute leadership responsibilities and collectively share in the management of the COP
- Membership and topics reflect women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion issues
- Members advance their personal and professional goals through participation in the COP
- Members are practitioners, researchers and donors contributing to the COP through their experiences, skills, and time
- Members agree to be respectful and use appropriate language in group discussions and to listen and respond to each other with open and constructive minds
- Members will not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions, but refrain from personal attacks -- focus on ideas
- Members will participate to the fullest extent possible -- COP growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice
- Members commit to search for opportunities for consensus or compromise around emerging good practices and for creative solutions to common problems
- Members will contribute to an atmosphere of problem solving rather than stating positions
- Members agree to speak from their own experiences instead of generalizing ("I" instead of "they," "we," and "you")
- Members will attempt to build on each member's strengths, and help each other improve areas in need of further development

Assumptions, Constraints, And Risks

1.6 ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions were taken into consideration in the development of this COP. If any of these assumptions prove to be invalid then the COP could face a possible risk.

- There is an interest among members in forming informal and formal connections.
- There will be CoP members who take increasing responsibility for stewarding the success of the COP.
- Sponsors will support the time investment for their staff to participate in the COP.

1.7 CONSTRAINTS

The following constraints were taken into consideration in the development of this COP.

- The availability of members to participate collectively at a single unique time may limit the number of participants.

1.8 RISKS

The scope of this community is broad and it could eventually split into multiple communities with a related focus, going back to the original challenge as identified.

1.9 STRUCTURE

This section describes the structure of the COP.

Structure	Description	Responsibility
Members	The people who populate the COP. This will include donors, researchers, FSPs, policymakers, networks and potentially others with mutual interest in a women's financial inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve amendments to the charter by consensus• Share knowledge and experiences• Participate in discussions and other sessions• Raise issues and concerns regarding common needs and requirements• Devise workarounds and other solutions to shortcomings in formally documented methods and procedures• Alert other members to changes in conditions and requirements• Be on the lookout for ways to enhance CoP effectiveness (i.e. recruiting high-value members; changes to interaction processes, etc.)
Champions	Person or persons responsible for acting as a champion for the COP and providing strategic direction and support to the COP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve the charter to ensure a valid purpose for the CoP has been articulated

Structure	Description	Responsibility
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the strategy and overarching work plan for the COP, including working groups • Set clear requirements for and implementation of monitoring and evaluation of the COP's impact and effectiveness. • Stimulate interest in and contributions to the CoP • Communicate the contributions of the CoP to their respective organization
Working Group Leads	The acknowledged leader of the working group who has a recognized technical competence in the topic area. The Working Groups will be organized along topical / regional / and/or functional needs of the COP membership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify emerging trends and patterns in the area that impacts the practice • Develop a workplan for the groups activities • Promote adherence to good practice in the content areas • Articulate “good practice” for new members • Provide leadership in resolving problems with and in the practice area

1.10 FACILITATOR

The facilitator performs the day-to-day management of the COP with a specific focus on communications between and among members. The facilitator has specific accountability for managing the COP within the approved constraints of scope, quality, time, and cost, to deliver the specified requirements, deliverables and member satisfaction. The facilitator role will be played by CGAP for the launch phase of the COP, until such time as this charter is amended.

1.11 FINANCIAL RESOURCES:

CGAP is providing sponsorship for the development and launch phase of the COP, which covers the following:

- Dedicated facilitator to provide overall technical guidance and administrative support to the COP
- Annual operating budget to cover expenses related to the COP (virtual and face to face meetings, new content development, publications, communication materials, etc.)
- Internet and Telecom Infrastructure for internal collaboration and service delivery (website, etc.)

COP members are expected to contribute to the COP wherever possible, through:

- Volunteer time
- Direct coverage of costs related to member participation, airfare, hotels, per diem, etc.
- In kind support to COP activities, e.g. providing venues for events and working meetings, hiring consultants for development of technical content, etc.

Community Charter approval and amendments

Members of the COP are those individuals who attended the launch event or otherwise indicated their interest in active participation.

Champions of the COP self identified as part of the follow up survey as interested in participating in strategic planning meetings and dedicating 4-8 hours per month to the COP.

Working group leads are to be selected based on individual interest and approved by the COP members.

New members can apply to the COP through the web portal and volunteer for champion roles, based on the approval of the facilitator.

The champions of the COP acknowledge that they have reviewed the charter and agree to launch the COP for Women's Financial Inclusion. This Charter may be amended by COP members by consensus. Any amendments to this Charter will become applicable immediately. This Charter may be amended by COP members by consensus. Any amendments to this Charter will become applicable immediately.

