

Co-meta's Collective Impact Strategy to Promote Women's Economic Rights in Jalisco

By: Ana Magdalena Rodriguez Romero*

*Co-founder and Director, ProSociedad

Keywords: Collective Impact, Gender equality, Social innovation, Systemic Change, Collaboration

Abstract

Gender inequality is a systemic social challenge related to multiple causes and the intertwined relations of public, private, and social actors in the ecosystem. This article proposes a social innovation called Co-meta, inspired by the collective impact of equity and justice lens. Co-meta is a collective impact initiative that has united actors from private, public and social sector in Jalisco since 2018. The common goal of this initiative is that of helping women access quality economic empowerment opportunities (education, accompaniment and network support). These are expected to reduce the gap in gender economic participation in the Jalisco from 30.81% to 25% by 2030.

Introduction

Women in Jalisco encounter unequal access to their economic rights. In terms of labor participation, the economic participation rate¹ of women is 47.24%, which represents a difference of 30.81% with respect to men (National Institute of Statistics and Geography, Gender Atlas, 2019). Women also face inequality in terms of income; Gender Atlas indicates that women in Jalisco earn an average of 2.91 pesos less than men per hour worked (National Institute of Statistics and Geography, Gender Atlas, 2019). It also highlights that 6.6% of employed women do not receive any remuneration for their work, 14.40% of women earn at most a minimum wage and 31.80% women earned between 89 and 177 pesos per day (National Institute of Statistical and Geographical Information, 2019).

Women's unequal access to economic rights in Jalisco is a complex problem. From a systemic perspective, this situation is related to multiple causes and the intertwined relations of public, private, and social actors in the ecosystem. Some root causes include unequal participation in care work, gaps in labor rights and professional development, along with gaps in participation in leadership in the economic sector.

Social Issue Challenge

We will discuss the three main issues within the social issue challenge that explain the unequal access of women to economic rights in Jalisco. First, we will analyze the impact of unequal participation in care work, which reflects how women dedicate disproportionate amount of time compared to men to care tasks, such as children care, house chores, etc. This

is also true when both women and men have paid work outside home. Next, we will see that gaps in labor rights and professional development are a root cause that explains why women and men earn unequal wages and have long-term impact on their economic autonomy and well-being. Finally, we will look at how gaps in participation in leadership in the economic sector also reinforce unequal wages and maintain *status quo* of gender inequality by making women invisible and leaving a gender perspective out of decision making.

Researchers Merike Blofield and Juliana Martínez point out the double workload for women when they enter the labor market, since they must carry out a large part of the unpaid work in the home. In their article, *Work, family and changes in public policy in Latin America*, they point out that in Latin America, “Seven out of ten women of reproductive age are part of the labor force” (Blofield & Martínez, 2014, p. 108). This represents a problem for them, since care tasks are associated with women.

In Jalisco, women spend about 28.42 hours a week in unpaid work, while men 10.67, which means a difference of 62.46% (National Institute of Statistics and Geography, Gender Atlas, 2019). It should be noted that the state ranked second nationally in inequality of hours of unpaid work (National Institute of Statistics and Geography, Gender Atlas, 2019).

Gaps in labor rights and professional development

Women who have paying and subordinate jobs have worse working conditions than men on equal terms. Although the statistical data in this regard is limited, an indicator of this is the difference that exists between the population of women who have access to retirement compared to men. In the case of Jalisco, 30% of inactive men have retirement while only 5.79% of inactive women have it.

Regarding access to opportunities for professional development and occupation of leadership positions, various studies (Saavedra et.al. 2015) have indicated that women have fewer opportunities to gain experience in management and decision-making positions. This is regardless of whether they're employees or employers. This, in turn, has harmful consequences in the vicious circle of gender discrimination, since it has been proven that the percentage of women in high positions in companies led by men is lower than when they are led by women (Ilie et al. 2018).

Gaps in participation in leadership and power positions in the economic sector

In general, there are important gaps in the economic participation of women in positions of employers. In “employers” there are 8% men and 3% women (Secretaría de Igualdad Sustantiva entre Mujeres y Hombres. n.d). On the other hand, female employers are alienated from business ecosystems. Various studies prove that women entrepreneurs are less likely than men to have interacted with key actors and that few of them are registered in business networks or associations (Todaro et.al. 2002; Klyver, 2011) and hold a managerial position within them (Zabludovsky, 2017).

The low representation of women in the business sector affects the prevalence of gender discrimination policies and economic culture. This occurs because culturally gender stereotypes are reinforced, where it is precisely the man who exercises said leadership and power spaces and in contrast there are few models of female leadership in the business sector to which other women and men can refer.

Collective Impact Common Agenda and Theory of Change

Co-meta is a collective impact initiative that unites actors from private, public and social sector in Jalisco with the common goal of impacting women by helping them access quality economic empowerment opportunities (education, accompaniment and network support). This is expected to reduce the gap in gender economic participation in the state from 30.81% to 25% by 2030. To achieve this, Co-meta promotes the implementation of evidence-based program to promote women economic empowerment.

Following the collective impact evaluation framework proposed by Spark Policy Institute ORS Impact (Lynn, J. et al, 2018), Co-meta systemic theory of change can be seen in figure 1. This theory of change incorporates the Collective Impact approach in terms of including the collective impact conditions as the intervention components linked to early system changes as well as broader intermediate systems changes and ultimately population changes.

The theory of change also incorporates the equity and justice lens as a crosscutting agenda along all the systems transformational process. Equity and justice lens (Wolff et.al. 2017) applied to collective impact proposes six principles to promote transformative changes in power within collective efforts to achieve profound systemic change. These principles are:

1. Explicitly address issues of social and economic injustice and structural racism;
2. Employ a community development approach in which residents have equal power in determining the coalition or collaborative's agenda and resource allocation;
3. Employ community organizing as an intentional strategy and as part of the process. Work to build resident leadership and power;
4. Focus on policy, systems, and structural change;
5. Build on the extensive community-engaged scholarship and research over the last four decades that show what works, that acknowledge the complexities, and that evaluate appropriately;
6. Construct core functions for the collaborative based on equity and justice that provide basic facilitating structures and build member ownership and leadership.

Co-meta's systemic theory of change (Figure 1) offers a route of how these collective impact intersectoral efforts will contribute to the improvement of Women Economic Empowerment (WEE). The final goal is to impact in population changes, which relate to WEE goals such as increased women participation in the economy, increased women's economic autonomy, and reduced gender economic inequality. To achieve these, following our systems analysis, we have mapped critical system changes that need to take place. These include the interaction between economic and social policies, the delivery of holistic and high-quality services, and

the investment of more infrastructure, equipment and human resources to deliver these services, specifically for women that have intersectional inequalities.² Systemic change will occur after early changes take place. These early shifts relate to changes in the relations among actors within the ecosystem, specially enhanced collaboration, and sustained partnerships. They also have to do with capacity building and the use of data for better decision making within the ecosystem. Then, early changes are promoted and intimately linked to the collective impact conditions taking place. Finally, as cross-cutting issues, the equity and justice lens are principles that guide all the process mapped by the theory of change.

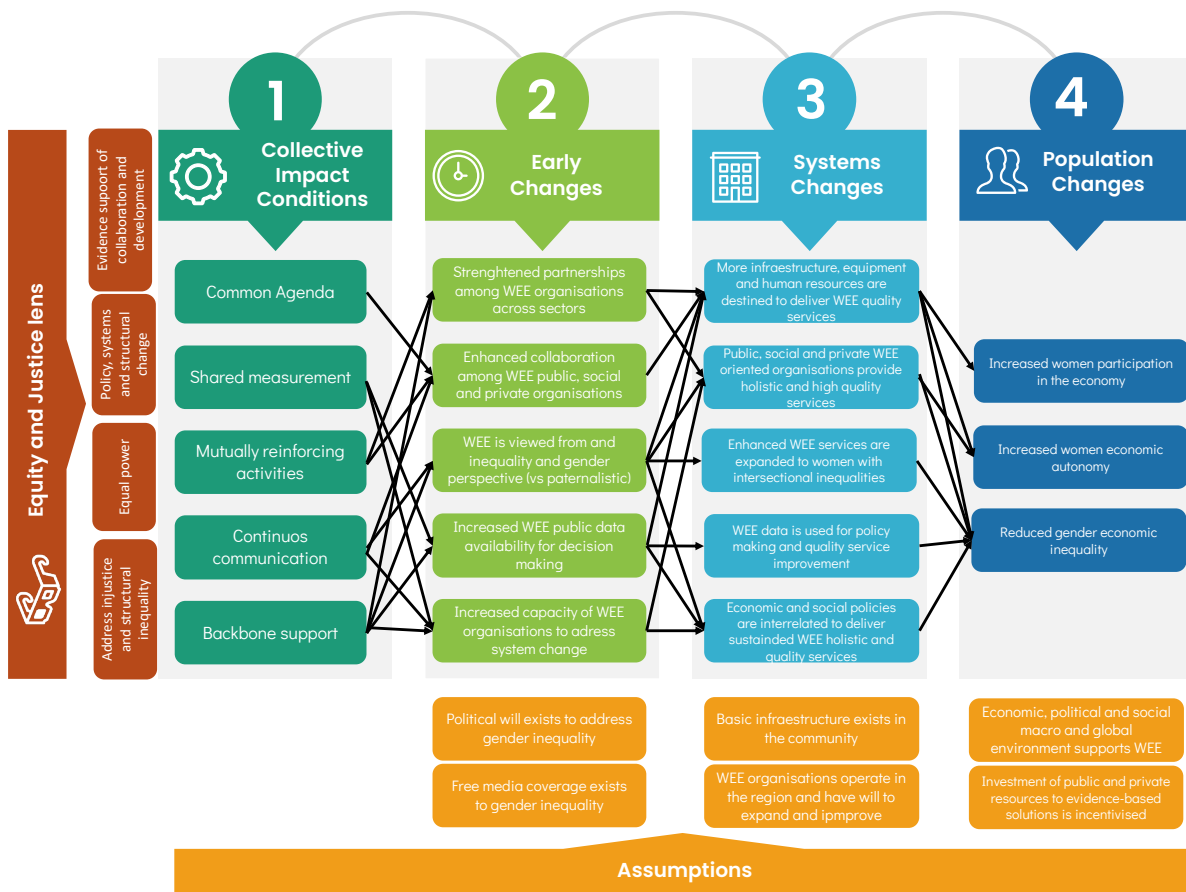


Figure 1: Co-meta system theory of change

Co-meta’s Collective Impact Strategy

Co-meta applies a community-based strategy to achieve its goal. Within each Women Economic Empowerment Center located in the 6 communities in the metropolitan area of Guadalajara, a collective of private, social, and public organizations works towards the common goal. Each collective has a backbone organization, also called ‘anchor actor’, that brings support to the local agenda established among local actors. These are often interrelated to WEE services locally and promote continuous communication among local partners along with the collection of data in a globally shared measurement system. With the purpose to promote equity, the women’s committee is a recent addition to this initiative. This women’s committee is integrated by women leaderships that are either currently receiving services and support from the local collective impact platform or are tutors, facilitators or mentors of other women locally.

The Collective Impact Platform is then integrated by representatives of the local collective impact platforms, particularly by the anchor actors that, at the same time have a global backbone organization support. How this works is represented in the Figure 2.

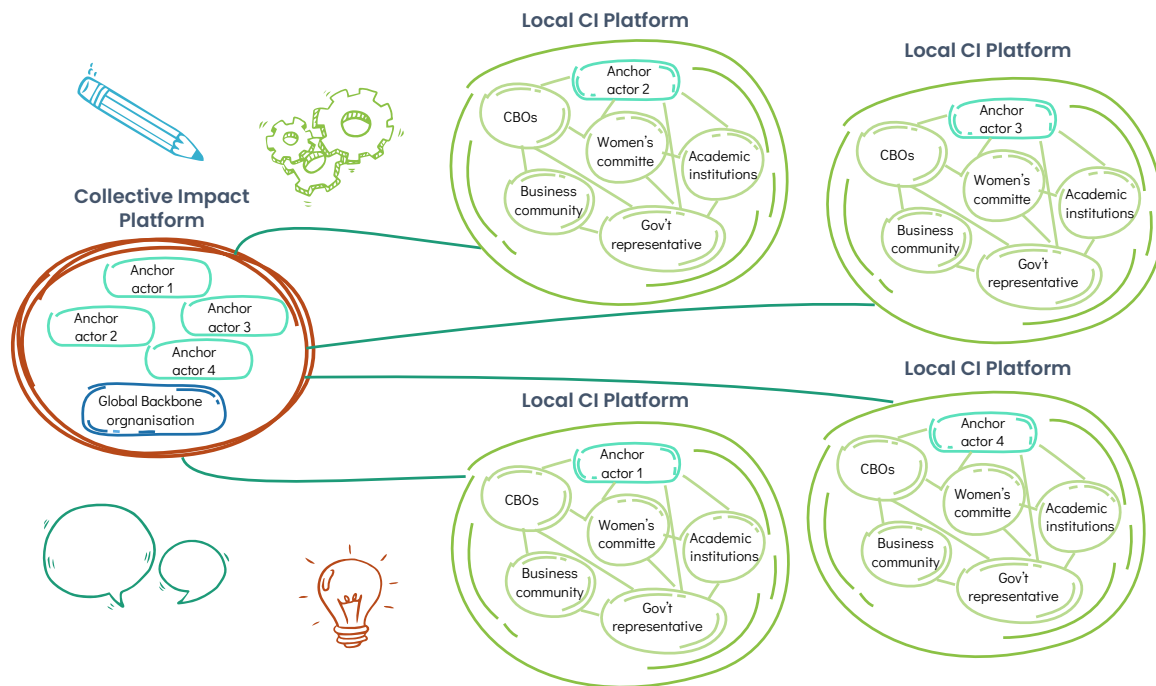


Figure 2: Co-meta governance model

This solution is different from any other WEE initiative seen in Latin-America. This is because this model allows WEE initiatives to scale, while remaining locally grounded and preserving the central value of Co-meta initiative; to have women, especially those with more intersectional inequalities, at the center of decision making. Scalability of this model is grounded in the fact that it articulates existing infrastructure and human and material

resources for a common goal. This makes it financially viable. Moreover, this model is different from others in terms of promoting long-term relations that are inclusive, gender sensitive, and sustainable because they align community incentives towards the common goal.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

Actors within Co-meta are working together within a broader framework of action that is informed in the robust evidence and best practices of WEE models (Banerjee et.al. 2015). These best practices function as music score to guide actors along a route of action (Figure 3) that articulates public, social, and private actors to the common goal of promoting women economic empowerment. This route is also accompanied by a monitoring and evaluation system that allows partners to have intermediate indicators for success related to how the collective impact partners are working together and the ultimate goal of reducing gender economic gaps.

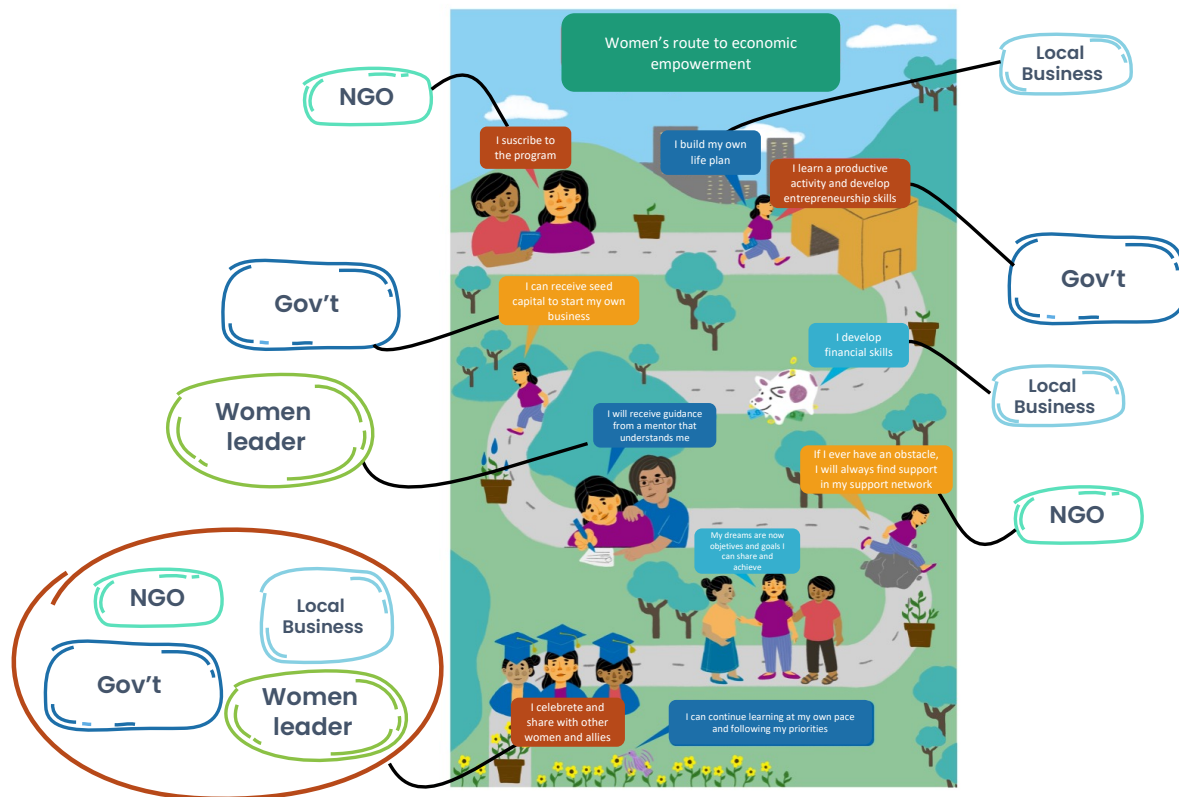


Figure 3: Co-meta actor articulation within the WEE model
Source: Based on the Second Chance Education model (UN Women Mexico, 2020)

Discussion

Co-meta is an initiative that is already in place and the strategy and process to engage local partners is based on a system mapping effort that was made in 2019. This system map allowed the global backbone initiative to engage main public, social, and private actors to engage in the effort. An actor, for example, in the public sector is the Municipality of Zapopan that now works as an anchor actor in this territory. The State Secretary of Substantive Equality between Women and Men (SISEMH) in the state of Jalisco has collaborated as a sponsor of the initiative since 2018. In 2021, the Second Chance Education program promoted by UN Women Mexican became an anchor actor in the Municipality of Guadalajara. It now provides access to quality education opportunities through digital technologies for women as a part of the same alliance. From the private sector, CEMEX is as an anchor organization and HP and Intel, as sponsors, are part of the initiative. Dozens of local businesses also support the initiative in various ways. In the social sector, Promexico, ProSociedad, local universities such as ITESO and Tec de Monterrey, and dozens of community-based organizations also complement their efforts towards the common goal.

There is a long way to go for this collective impact model to function as planned. An evaluation of the initiative done by Reach Project of the Toronto University in 2018 found that there are three main areas that Co-meta needs to improve to become a more robust collective impact initiative:

1. Strengthen the sense of the collective at the global sphere. Local anchor actors are still not clear of their role at the global platform and the communication among them is still limited;
2. The deepening of relations in the local collective initiative in terms of inclusion of women's participation and a broader representation of other actors. This will imply the capacity building of anchor actors to promote this process locally;
3. Finding a financial sustainability model for this initiative that allows the local collective initiatives and the global platform to sustain their efforts and avoid competition of scarce resources.

Conclusion

Co-meta strives to tackle one of many gender inequalities that women face in Jalisco: economic rights. Co-meta is possible because there is an emerging ecosystem of public, private and social organization that share the same vision. Co-meta's collective impact strategy is a route that uses the collective impact approach and the equity and justice lens to guide its members to deliver its ultimate goal to reduce gender economic participation gap. This promising effort still has a long way to go, but now it has a clearer view of *how to* achieve this, building on decades of the experience and knowledge around collaboration for development.

References:

Banerjee, A., Duflo, E., Goldberg, N., Karlan, D., Osei, R., Parienté, W., ... & Udry, C. 2015. A multifaceted program causes lasting progress for the very poor: Evidence from six countries. *Science*, 348(6236).

Blofield, M., & Martínez, J. 2014. Work, family and public policy changes in Latin America: Equity, maternalism and co-responsibility. *Cepal Review*.

Camarena, M. E., Saavedra, M. L., & Saldívar, D. D. 2015. Panorama del género en México: Situación actual. *Revista Guillermo de Ockham*, 13(2), 77-87.

Ilie, C., Cardoza, G., Fernandez, A., & Tejada, H. 2018. Entrepreneurship and Gender in Latin America. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3126888

Klyver, K. 2011. Gender differences in entrepreneurial networks: adding an alter perspective. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*.

Lynn, Jewlya, Sophie Oppenheimer, Lauren Gase, Alex Dane and Julia Roos. 2018. When Collective Impact has an Impact. A Cross-site study of 25 Collective Impact Initiatives. ORS Impact and Spark Policy Institute <https://www.orsimpact.com/blog/When-Collective-Impact-Has-Impact-A-Cross-Site-Study-of-25-Collective-Impact-Initiatives.htm>

National Institute of Statistics and Geography. n.d. "Gender Atlas", Accessed October 2019. http://gaia.inegi.org.mx/atlas_genero/

Secretaría de Igualdad Sustantiva entre Mujeres y Hombres. n.d. Programa Estatal para la Igualdad entre Mujeres y Hombres del Estado de Jalisco. (PROIGUALDAD) 2020-2024. Accessed October 20, 2021. https://www.jalisco.gob.mx/sites/default/files/23092020_proigualdad_2020-2024_ventregable.pdf

Todaro, R., Godoy, L., & Abramo, L. 2002. Desempeño laboral de hombres y mujeres: opinan los empresarios. *Cadernos pagu*, 197-236.

Wolff, T., Minkler, M., Wolfe, S. M., Berkowitz, B., Bowen, L., Butterfoss, F. D., & Lee, K. S. 2017. Collaborating for equity and justice: Moving beyond collective impact. *Nonprofit quarterly*, 9, 42-53.

Zabludovsky, G. 2017. Las mujeres en México: trabajo, educación superior y esferas de poder. *Política y cultura*, (28), pp. 09-41.

Endnotes:

- 1) The economic participation rate is the percentage represented by the economically active population (EAP), that is, people who have a job or are looking for, with respect to the population aged 15 years (National Institute of Statistics and Geography, 2015).
- 2) Intersectional inequalities refer to the condition that some populations, such as women have, in which the inequalities that the encounter overlap, creating critical conditions of discrimination. For example, a low-income immigrant women from a indigenous community will encounter much more higher discrimination than a graduated woman with higher income.