

**Date of Session:** February 19th

**Title of Session:** Developing Effective Research-Practitioner Collaboration

**Session Description:** *How are researchers and practitioners partnering to improve measurement and evidence around gender lens investing and entrepreneurship, and what is needed to help members of these two communities work together more effectively? This plenary session will include an announcement of the winners of ANDE's Gender Lens Impact Measurement fund, supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), followed by a breakout discussion of strategies to overcome challenges to productive researcher-practitioner collaboration.*

**Speakers:**

- Moderator: Matt Guttentag, Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs
- Panelists:
  - Rebecca Baylor, William Davidson Institute
  - Jessica Villanueva, MEDA
  - Caitlin Scott, Friendship Bridge

**Session Objectives:**

The objective of this session is to introduce International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Canada's project focus on impact measurement using a gender lens and introduce the winners of ANDE's Gender Lens Impact Measurement Fund, funded by IDRC Canada. The panel features both researchers and practitioners discussing why we need more of these collaborations in the sector, what are the challenges of such partnerships and how to overcome them.

**Lead Discussants' Remarks:**

We begin the session by understanding IDRC's evolution of the term "impact" and how a gender lens impact measurement perspective is important, and how IDRC has aligned with Canada's development strategy,

The finalist of the Gender Lens Impact Measurement Fund are then announced:

- **NESsT & Dr. Ruta Aidis:** *Bringing a Gender Lens to Early Stage Investing for Greater Impact:* NESsT seeks support from the Gender Impact Measurement Fund to create a gender lens investment strategy for its \$20M Loan Fund so that it can 1) assess gender dynamics and gender intersectionalities to better inform investment decisions, 2) intentionally and measurably address gender disparities, 3) be easily adoptable by SGBs and the investment community, particularly at early stage investing.
- **Root Capital (Practitioner) & Value for Women (Research Partner):** *Building the Capacity for Small and Growing Businesses (SGBs) to Improve the Climate Resilience of Women Farmers:* Root Capital, in partnership with Value for Women, seeks to use this grant to create and use impact measurement tools to assess the impact of small businesses-based interventions to improve the climate resilience of women coffee farmers in Central America.
- **Impact Hub and INCAE:** *How can SGB Accelerators apply a gender lens to program and impact measurement activities, and become drivers of gender equality in the SGB sector?* The aim of this

research project is the development of an open--source toolkit including best practices, tools, and metrics for how SGB accelerators can intentionally apply a gender lens to their programs and programs measurement.

- **Universidad Católica Boliviana San Pablo & Practical Action Bolivia:** *Tools to quantitatively and qualitatively measure the impact of the inclusion of gender approach in productive development projects.* The proposed project aims to create a tool kit for the rigorous measurement of the impact of gender inclusion in economic development projects.
- **MEDA, Agora Partnerships:** *Gender Equality Mainstreaming in Impact Measurement (GEMIM) Pilot:* The GEMIM pilot will conduct research to inform the development of a new gender inclusive impact measurement methodology for small and growing businesses' (SGBs) in the agriculture sector based in Central America.
- **Gente del Futuro & WDI:** *Using Gender Impact Data to Develop Strategies to Increase Engagement of Women across the Coffee Sector:* Together with the William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan (WDI), Gente del Futuro (GDF) proposes to collect empowerment data from women working with GDF in Colombia to examine how empowerment differs based on women's role in the coffee value chain. The goal of collecting this data is to supply practitioners from GDF with impact data they can use to inform their operations, in particular how they can better engage and empower women across the coffee value chain.

### Panel Discussion:

Challenges of creating effective partnerships between researchers and practitioners (crowdsourced):

- Money/fundraising challenge – the burden often falls on the practitioner
- Lack of alignment on incentives, goals, outputs, and priorities
- Timeline expectations – practitioners tend to expect a fast timeline, researchers have a longer-term timeline
- Different understandings of research processes/norms
- Different understandings of how to engage with research subjects
- Additional demands on staff when research is active
- What is interesting/useful to practitioner does not always match with what the researcher finds interesting/useful
- Discrepancies between what the “gold standard” is and what is feasible
- The setup of the collaboration
- Time and resource intensive

### Key Takeaways:

1. Different research methods might be a solution, time to get them right and modify them is to be considered and letting the operations know that results will come soon is important.
2. Employing the right incentives and setting clear expectations for all parties
3. Best research collaboration is among those individuals with flexibility who can keep up the good will of practitioners

4. WDI improves data quality by de-jargonizing the work and providing the team training to ensure understanding, familiarity and quality.
5. Control trial as a methodology is a challenging opportunity for ethical standards and group control

**Links/Resources mentioned or discussed during session:**

- [ANDE's Gender Lens Impact Measurement Fund](#)
- [WDI's Performance Measurement and Improvement team \(PMI\)](#)
- [MEDA's work with gender](#)
- [Friendship Bridge: Women's Agriculture and Credit Training](#)