Measuring Impact

Measuring impact is an integral part of project design, implementation and completion, and should be considered at all stages within the project cycle. When **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)** is done well, it is seen and valued as an ongoing process, not just a donor reporting requirement. Monitoring activities help to identify trends (both positive and negative) during programme implementation in order to make real-time improvements in the programme, or course-correct if needed. Evaluation and learning should be processes of reflection and participation – helping staff and coaches to feel more connected and involved in the impact of the programme and inviting all stakeholders to be involved in improving the programme for future participants.

There's always more to learn, and we recommend taking one step at a time. Get started with what you have the time and resources to do. It might be helpful to write down which MEL activities your team is already doing, and what elements would be most useful and achievable to add, given your particular context and resources.

Where are you?

This section of the International Guidelines will outline the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning approach to designing sports programming.
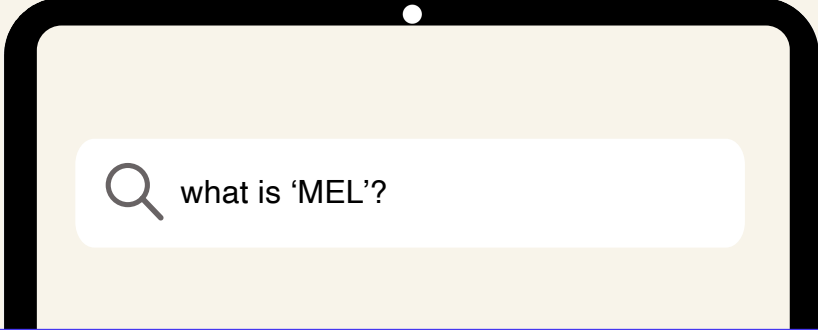
In this PDF, you will explore the following topics:

01   What Is MEL and Why Do We Do It?

02   Designing and Planning for MEL

03   Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning in a Programme

Image source: Amazing Masaai Girls Project, Kenya

01 What Is MEL and Why Do We Do It?

Q what is 'MEL'?

MEL stands for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning. It is the way that we ensure that we are doing good work, and is also a process of reflection, giving the opportunity to staff and coaches to see the results of their work on a higher

MEL can often seem very technical or boring, but it is an integral part of sport programming. Let's explore each step in the process in more detail:

Monitoring is a continuous practice that ensures activities are on track and that girls are successfully moving through the programme. In short, it is how you know your programmes are happening the way you planned.

Evaluation is an activity that usually occurs at the end of the programme that assesses whether or not a programme is achieving its intended objectives.

Learning is the process through which informa- tion generated from monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is reflected upon and intentionally used to continuously improve a programme's ability to achieve results.

Why Do We Do It?

Measuring the impact of a sport programme on adolescent girls as well as the surrounding community provides important information for organisations, not only **to show that what they are doing drives positive and social change**, but also to **improve their own strategies and approaches**. Measuring impact through research, monitoring, evaluation and learning helps to ensure that organisations' strategies and programmes are as effective as possible in their efforts to achieve results in both the short and long term. The data gathered can help persuade communities to embrace sport as a strategy for girls, particularly in places where society is hesitant to let girls play.

Timely and Reliable MEL:

Supports programme implementation with evidence-based input that informs decision-making to guide and improve programme implementation.

Contributes to programmatic and organisational learning and knowledge by encouraging reflection and insight-sharing.

Upholds accountability by demonstrating whether or not work has been carried out as agreed with participants, community members, partners and

Provides opportunities for stakeholder feedback, especially participants and community members, to provide input into work, in order to learn from
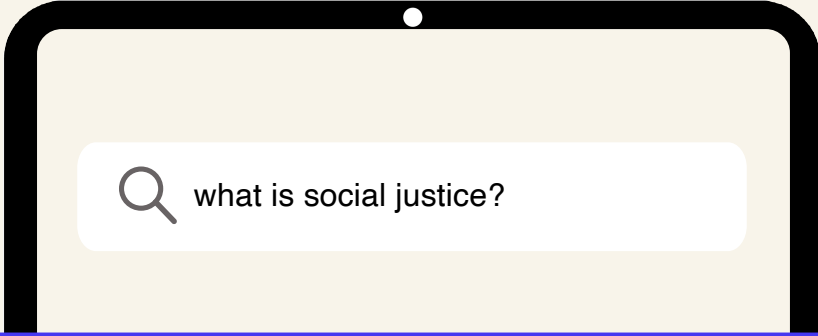
Promotes and celebrates work by highlighting accomplishments and achievements, contributing to communications and resource mobilisation.

Feminist MEL

Feminist MEL is an overall approach to measuring and evaluating impact and change that explicitly challenges unequal power relations, and questions assumptions about gender identities and roles. MEL is feminist if it recognises the unique needs of adolescent girls and young women. It should prioritise their expertise and perspectives, acknowledging that their experiences need to be accurately represented through a process that emphasises participation, empowerment, and social justice.

> **Q** what is social justice?

Social justice is a communal effort dedicated to creating and sustaining a fair and equal society in which each person and all groups are valued and affirmed.[1]

A feminist approach should also involve the active participation of programme participants across all stages of the MEL process, including design, implementation, analysis, and reporting. Some strategies to incorporate feminist MEL practices include:

Strategy 1: Engaging and training female participants to serve as data enumerators (i.e., someone who collects data).

Strategy 2: Using mixed methodology to ensure that stories that amplify female voices are included as a key component.

Strategy 3: Utilising participatory approaches from the design phase to data validation.

02 Designing and Planning for MEL

Tracking a programme's success based on the intended objectives should be integral to an organisation's monitoring and evaluation strategy. Put simply, it is important to **write down what change you expect to happen and how that change might come about.**

There are many tools that can help you to map and organise your programmes' inputs, outputs and outcomes, and we recommend using a Logical Framework ('Logframe') or Theory of Change (ToC).

[1] ttps://www.ccsu.edu/johnlewisinstitute/terminology.html

A **Logframe** is a common MEL planning tool consisting of a matrix which provides an overview of a project's goal(s), activities and anticipated results. It provides a structure to help specify the components of a project and its activities and for relating them to one another. Many donors require a logframe as part of the application process.

Theory of Change (ToC) is a description or illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen. A ToC fills in the 'middle' between outcomes and activities to explain HOW and WHY the desired change is expected to occur. Comparatively to a logframe, a ToC is a much more comprehensive methodology which shows a much bigger picture.

If you are getting started with a girls' sport programme, we suggest that you start with a simple logframe because it:

- Is a planning and management tool that helps to set out how the programme is expected to work and what it will achieve.

- Provides a framework for data collection and results monitoring.

- Articulates how change will be measured and monitored over time to stakeholders (and is often required by funders!).

- Is also used for accountability purposes, to report on programme progress and results.

- Can be used to track achievements and progress towards planned milestones and targets for each programme.


Image source: Moving the Goalposts, Kenya

Logical Framework (Logframe) Example Template

	PROJECT SUMMARY	INDICATORS	MEANS OF VERIFICATION	RISKS/ ASSUMPTIONS
Goal	10% increase in the number of Grades 5-6 female primary school students continuing on to high school within 3 years			
Outcomes	Improve leadership competency of girls in Grades 5-6 by 20% within 1 year	Leadership proficiency among girls in Grades 5-6	Base/endline survey using leadership indicators	Improved sport skills provides self-confidence required to grow as a leader
Outputs	500 Grade 5-6 girls in low-income communities complete a football summer camp	Improve leadership competency of girls in Grades 5-6 by 20% within 1 year	Improve leadership competency of girls in Grades 5-6 by 20% within 1 year	Girls apply what they learnt in the summer camp
	500 parents of girls in Grade 5-6 in low-income communities support them to practice leadership at home	Number of parents reporting supporting their daughters	Survey of parents conducted at the end of each football camp	Girls are interested in sharing with their parents
Activities	Run five girls football summer camps, with 100 Grades 5-6 girls in low-income communities	Number of summer camps run	Summer camp records	Parents of girls in low-income communities are interested in them attending the camps
	Distribute 500 Activity Book kits to girls attending football summer camps	Number of activity books distributed	Activity book distribution records	Girls are interested and able to use the activity books at home

Learning Agenda
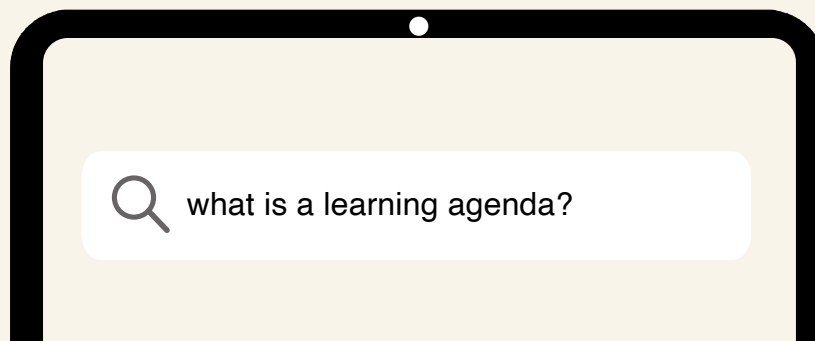
A **learning agenda** is a tool that can help you seek solutions to problems, test assumptions, and support you to make more informed decisions that make your work more impactful and efficient.

Women Win also recommends **creating a learning agenda for any new girls' sport programme** that you embark upon. They include:

- A set of questions addressing critical knowledge gaps.

- A set of associated activities to answer them.

- Products aimed at disseminating findings and designed with usage and application in mind.

The Process

To begin, the team should identify a set of short-term and long-term questions. Ideas for learning questions can come from many different sources, including:

- The existing project logframe and particularly the assumptions section.

- Problems that have been identified concerning how to implement the work.

- Identified gaps in the existing knowledge base relevant to the project.

For example:

Learning Questions

Short Term Learning Questions

- Are girls interested in using the activity books at home?

- What kind of workbook activities do the girls like most?

- What are some of the reasons why parents would not be interested in their daughter attending a sport programme?
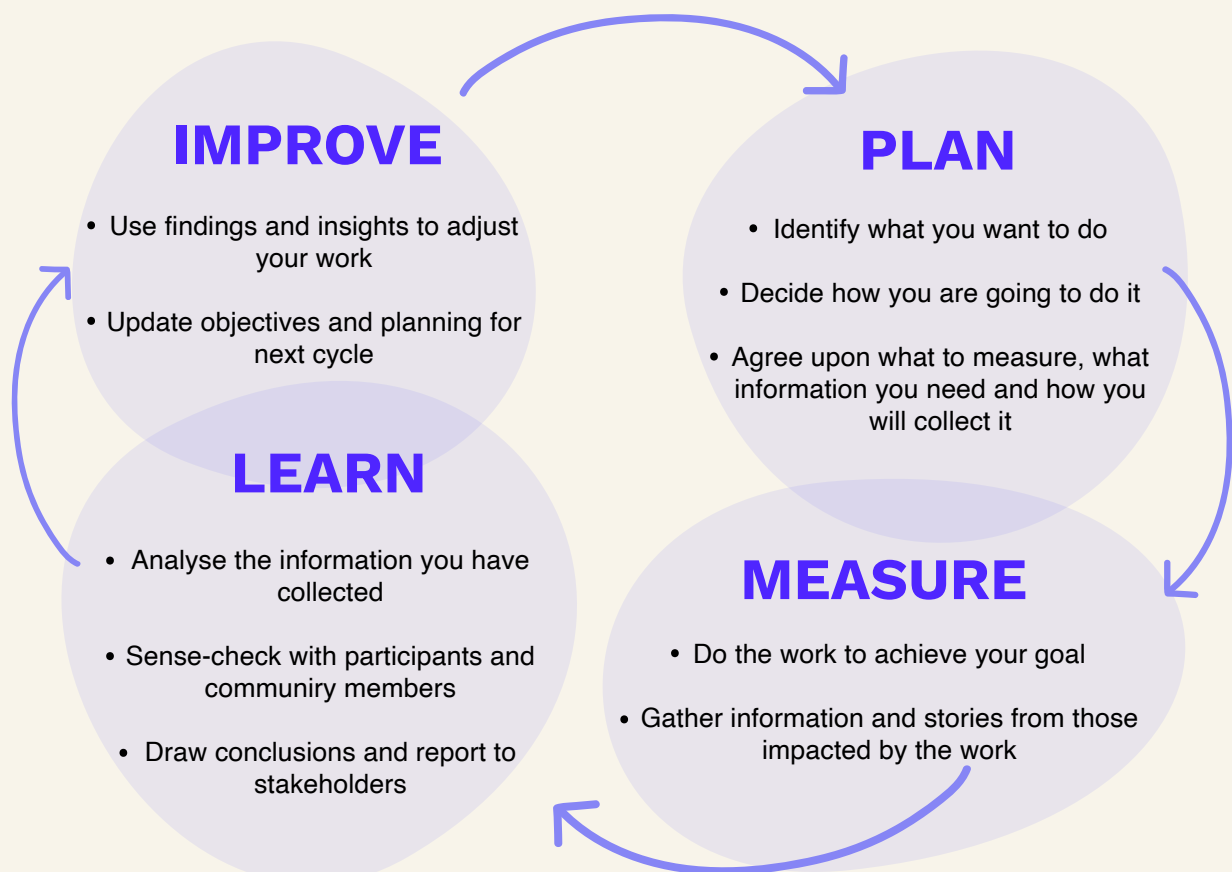
Long Term Learning Questions

- How do girls apply what they learned during the football camp to school?

- What are the key barriers to gaining self-confidence for girls in the target communities?

- Are girls more likely to stay in sports after the football camp?

From here, the team should plan for answering each of the learning questions. Learn more about Learning Agendas here.

The Reporting Cycle

Most programmes must stick to a donor reporting cycle, and compile data at the end of activities to share the impact of the programme. When MEL is planned and integrated from the start, learning and analysis can then easily be compiled, compared with the goals identified in the programme logframe, and detailed in communications and reports. It is an **ongoing cycle of reflection, learning, and change** that continues through programme planning, implementation, and reporting in order to create sustainable, long-term outcomes.

IMPROVE

- Use findings and insights to adjust your work

- Update objectives and planning for next cycle

PLAN

- Identify what you want to do

- Decide how you are going to do it

- Agree upon what to measure, what information you need and how you will collect it

LEARN

- Analyse the information you have collected

- Sense-check with participants and communiry members

- Draw conclusions and report to stakeholders

MEASURE

- Do the work to achieve your goal

- Gather information and stories from those impacted by the work

03 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning in a Programme

In this section we will explore both quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies and discuss best practices for carrying these out safely.

To gain an understanding of the many different changes that sport programmes can make in girls' lives, Women Win uses a unique framework of indicators based on what we call **B.A.C.K.S. (Behaviour, Attitude, Condition, Knowledge, Status)**. B.A.C.K.S. is a framework that **deconstructs individual social change** into five dimensions and this framework allows us to contextualise outcomes and makes the change in girls more measurable and understandable.We use this framework to help guide the content of our MEL tools. The most common classification of MEL tools is quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative tools are those that typically collect data that can be counted or compared on a scale. Qualitative tools are those that collect narrative or descriptive data.

B.A.C.K.S. – A Framework for Measuring Social Change

Our mission at Women Win is to equip adolescent girls to achieve their rights through sport. We believe that the progress our mission must be measured in outcomes – in other words, by measuring the social change that happens for an individual girl when she participates in sport and life skills programmes. We know that sport contributes to changes that are both internal and external to her (as opposed to those changes being attributed solely to the experience).

To gain an understanding of the more granular dimension of changes in girls' leadership, we Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning in a Programmehave developed a unique framework of indicators based on what we call the B.A.C.K.S. measures. B.A.C.K.S. is an acronym that deconstructs individual social change into fivedimensions, including and defined by the following:

BEHAVIOUR: The way in which one acts, especially towards others.

ATTITUDE: A settled way of thinking or feeling – a point of view – that shows ones' sense of self and values (attitudes inform behaviour)

CONDITION: The state of a person against a specific situation, context or circumstance which affects the way in which one lives (i.e. conflict or safety) – an external measure

KNOWLEDGE: The facts, information and skills one acquires through experience or education

STATUS: A position in a community – how one is perceived by their community – an external measure

2 Lucy Knight. Outcome Evaluation: Three Workshops.

The B.A.C.K.S. framework allows us to contextualis eoutcomes, and makes the concept of leadership more measurable and understandable. In full collaboration our partners and the girls they serve,we have defined a set of key changes that we measure through the programmes we support. The follow table contains examples of those measures:

BEHAVIOUR:	• I am a leader • I raise my voice • I take care of my body and health • I save money • I take action to stop violence in my community
ATTITUDE:	• I want to learn and develop • I am can influence my future • I am confident and courageous • I want to be a role-model and inspire others • I am equal to others and have unique skills and talents
CONDITION:	• Increased awareness and respect • Increased social mobility • Increased equality and opportunities • Increased stability and security Increased inclusion
KNOWLEDGE:	• I know my rights and how to act upon those rights • I know how to take care of my body and health • I know how to save money and become more economically secure • I have increased skills related to my sport
STATUS:	• I am seen as educated • I am recognised as a leader • I am seen as courageous and determined • I am seen as a girl with unique talents and skills • I am seen as an athlete / sports-girl

We use this framework to help guide the content of our MEL tools. The most common classification of MEL tools is quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative tools are those that typically collect data that can be counted or compared on a scale. Qualitative tools are those that collect narrative or descriptive data.
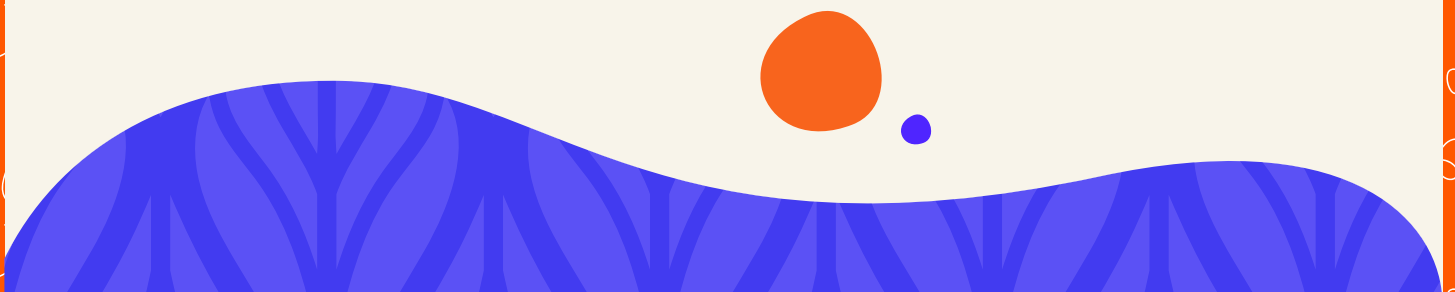
Quantitative tools include:

- Participant Registration Forms
- Base/Endline Surveys
- Attendance Tracking

Quantitative tools include:

- Most Significant Change (MSCs)
- Case Study
- Picture Story
- Focus Group Discussions
- Reporting

For comprehensive MEL, we **recommend you gather both qualitative and quantitative data**, with both methods being used to complement one another. This process of combining data from several different research methods is called triangulation. Triangulation provides a more in-depth and accurate depiction of a programme by constructing a picture that includes both different perspectives and different types of data. From a **feminist MEL perspective, it is best practice to leverage this 'mixed' methodology approach in order to give voice to participants and ensure that findings are grounded in the participants lived experiences.** On the next two pages, you will find more information about these tools.

Image source: Amazing Masaai Girls Project, Kenya

Types of MEL Tools

1. Quantitative

Participant Registration Forms	If you have the same participants coming to your activities regularly, it makes sense to have them fill out a registration form when they begin participating or when they sign up for the programme. This allows you to collect key data on who your participants are, and key information about them such as their age and geographic location. For more information, see: Goal Registration Form
Base/Endline Surveys	Surveys are one of the most common monitoring and evaluation tools. You can use surveys to collect data from a sample of participants, which can then be used to inform: • Progress towards your intended outcomes • Future programme design • Funder reporting • Annual reporting • Social media and website information. You can also use surveys to collect coach and staff feedback. Two important times to use surveys to collect data are before and after a new activity or programme. You can use a baseline survey to measure the level of knowledge or skills of a specific group before a programme begins. For programmes or activities that have an end-date and are not ongoing, you can use an endline survey to compare the knowledge level and compare the results to the baselines to measure progress. For more information, see: • Goal Baseline • Roll Models Leadership Self Assessment Baseline
Attendance Tracking	Taking regular attendance at all programme activities is an important step in monitoring how many girls attend training sessions or activities and who exactly is showing up and how often. This is important information for organisations in terms of better scheduling activities for increased atten- dance or better engaging with girls and their families to understand why they are not able to come on a regular basis. This also helps organisations track their graduation rates and drop-out rates and track attendance patterns, which in turn, helps them better understand where they are failing and how to improve. For more information, see: HeadsUp CPSO Attendance Sheet

2. Qualitative

Most Significant Change (MSC)	Most Significant Change is a form of qualitative, participatory monitoring and evaluation that uses participant stories to understand changes in programme participants. Each story represents the storyteller's interpretation of impact, which is then reviewed and discussed. This can be a useful way to gain meaningful testimonials and share the participant's perspectives. The process offers an opportunity for a diverse range of stakeholders (programme participants, coaches, field staff, facilitators etc.) to enter into a dialogue about a programme, its impact and its future direction. An example MSC question could be: "Looking back over the last months, what do you think was the most significant change regarding your self-esteem?" For more information, see: • MSC Guide • MSC Guide Appendices • MSC Templates • MSC Story Selection Template
Case Study	Collecting Case Studies is a simple and flexible data collection method. Through a series of questions, participants are able to reflect on their time within a programme, describe their experiences, both positive and negative, and share these in their own words. It is similar to Most Significant Change but does not require the same specific question to be answered. For more information, see: • Case Study Guide • Case Study Template • Case Study - Example Questions
Picture Story	Picture Story is a fun, engaging and participatory data collection method involving photos or drawings from participants. Picture Story uses images as a tool, posing meaningful questions and allowing participants to reflect and share their experiences, both positive and negative, represented in photos or drawings. The pictures selected are used along- side captions composed by the programme participants. Images and visual representation can evoke powerful emotions and reactions, making this a powerful methodology to demonstrate impact. For more information, see: • Picture Story Guide • Picture Story Template • Picture Story Prompts

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	A focus group discussion (FGD) is a qualitative tool in a group interview format that brings together specific programme stakeholders for a discussion around topics related to the change in participants as a result of the programme they are in. The information captured in the FGDs can be used to compare findings from other MEL tools. Individual participant questionnaires primarily measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours related to certain topics. FGDs provide the opportunity to learn not only if participants' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour changed, but also how they changed and how this has impacted other aspects of their lives. In this way, FGDs are a useful tool in measuring the changes in participants' status and condition, therefore gaining a more in-depth understanding of participants' broader experiences within their communities. For more information, see: • FGD Guidline • Example FGD Approach: Civic Signals
Reporting	Reporting communicates your programme's results to the funder(s) of the programme. Writing a detailed and accurate narrative report is one of the most important things to do to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of your programme. Depending on the funder, you could be asked to provide a range of information such as: • Programmatic updates • Any challenges or difficulties experienced and how you mitigated these • Any learnings and how you/your organisation will use these • Description of upcoming events • Quantitative data (number of participants, survey results, etc.) • Qualitative data (case studies, testimonials, etc.)

What is 'Safe' MEL?

MEL practices are considered safe if they do not place staff, participants or local communities at risk of any kind. Safe MEL activities actively work to avoid exposing those involved to additional risks through their MEL inputs and actions. 'Safe' refers not only to the physical safety of staff, participants and/or local communities, but also their emotional and mental safety and wellbeing.

> It is important to always prioritise the safety and well-being of all stakeholders involved in your programme. One way that you can ensure that your MEL practices do this is to involve these groups in conversations about MEL, especially when sharing and discussing learnings. This can make the process seem less intimidating and lead to more genuine, honest data and learnings.

Other general best practices for those responsible for carrying out MEL activities, such as coaches and MEL staff, include:

- Understanding the approach and be confident answering any questions participants may ask.

- Being aware of the organisation's safeguarding protocols in case any concerns are raised during data collection.

- Being aware of the various ways to address possible distress that might arise during data collection. This is of particular importance if addressing sensitive topics. Similarly, knowing of additional services and resources that might be helpful to participants.

- If engaging girls and women, where possible, ensuring that data collection processes are carried out by woman staff/coaches.

- Creating an environment where participants feel comfortable and able to ask questions if needed. Having a private or quiet space to carry out the MEL processes is preferable.

There are a variety of other considerations to take into account when thinking through how to embed safe MEL practices into your programme. These can depend on the approach taken to data collection, such as whether or not this is done in-person or virtually. For more information on safe data collection, safe digital data collection and safe data storage, please see Women Win's Safe MEL Guide for Partners.

For more information, also see:

- Women's Resource Centre: Data Collection and Analysis for M&E

Game
over!