

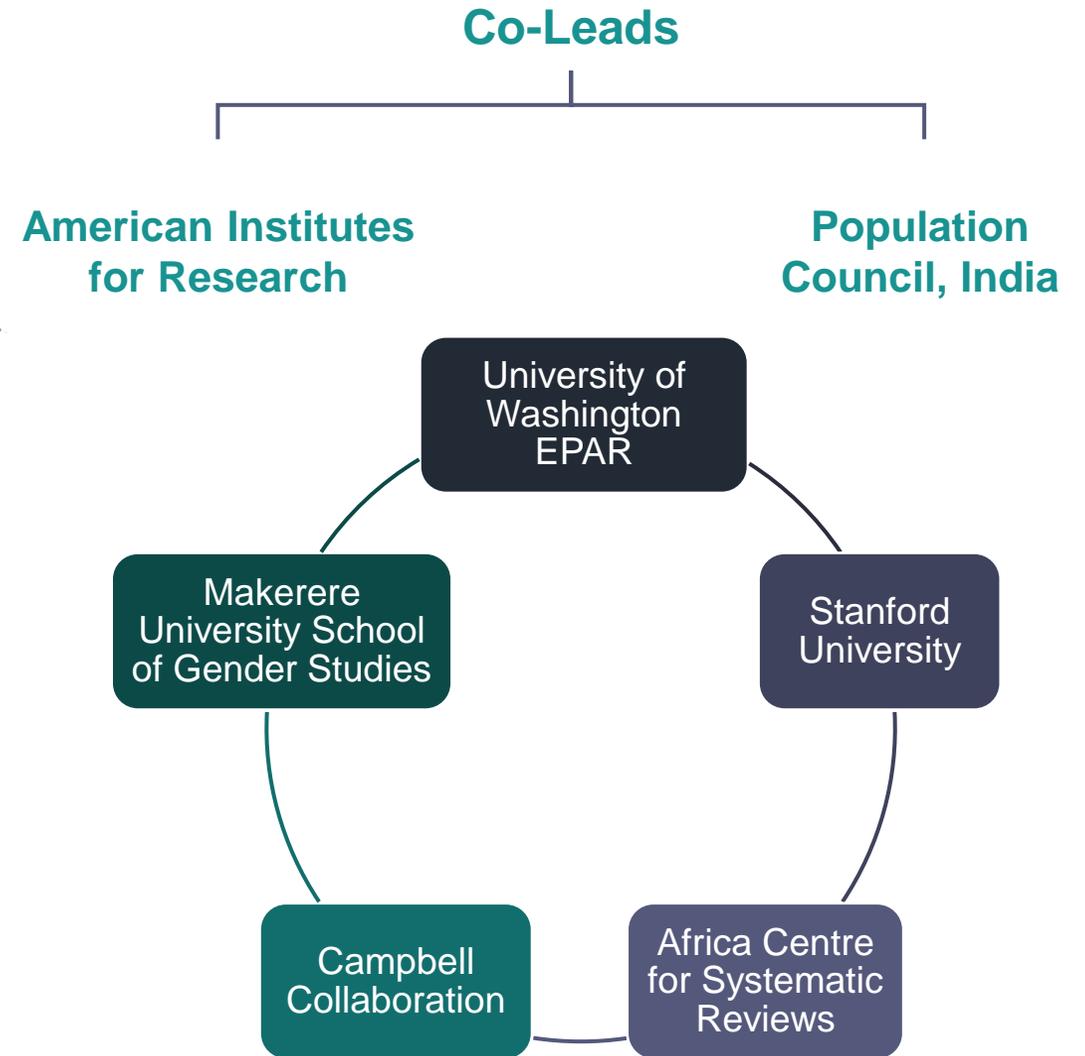
Typology of Women's Groups in South Asia

Sapna Desai, Ph.D. and Thomas de Hoop, Ph.D.

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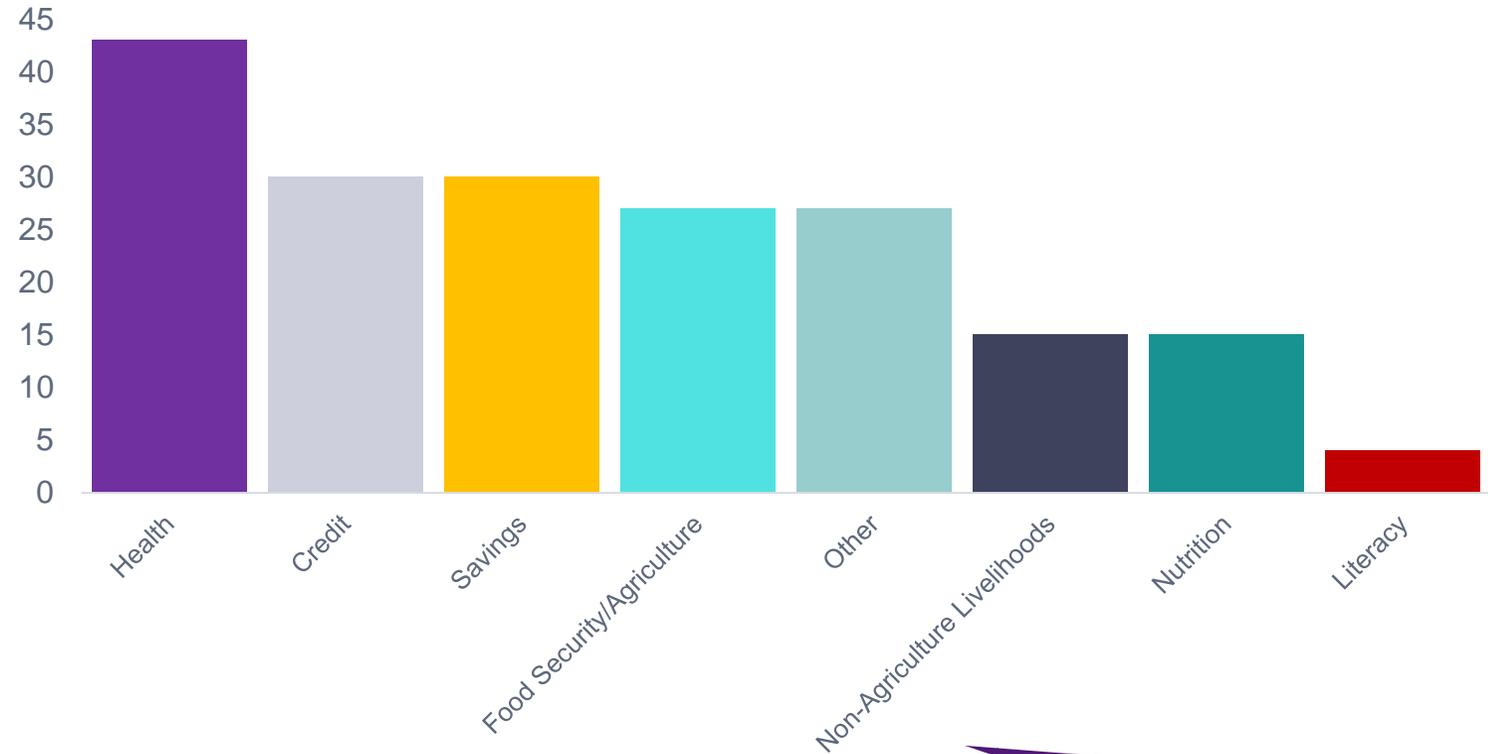
Evidence Consortium on Women's Groups

- **Policy and program-relevant research** focused on India, Nigeria, and Uganda
- Address evidence gaps on **costs, cost-effectiveness, and implementation** of women's groups at scale
- Multidisciplinary and cross-country **collaborations** to examine women's groups
- **Technical support** to implementation and evaluation partners of BMGF



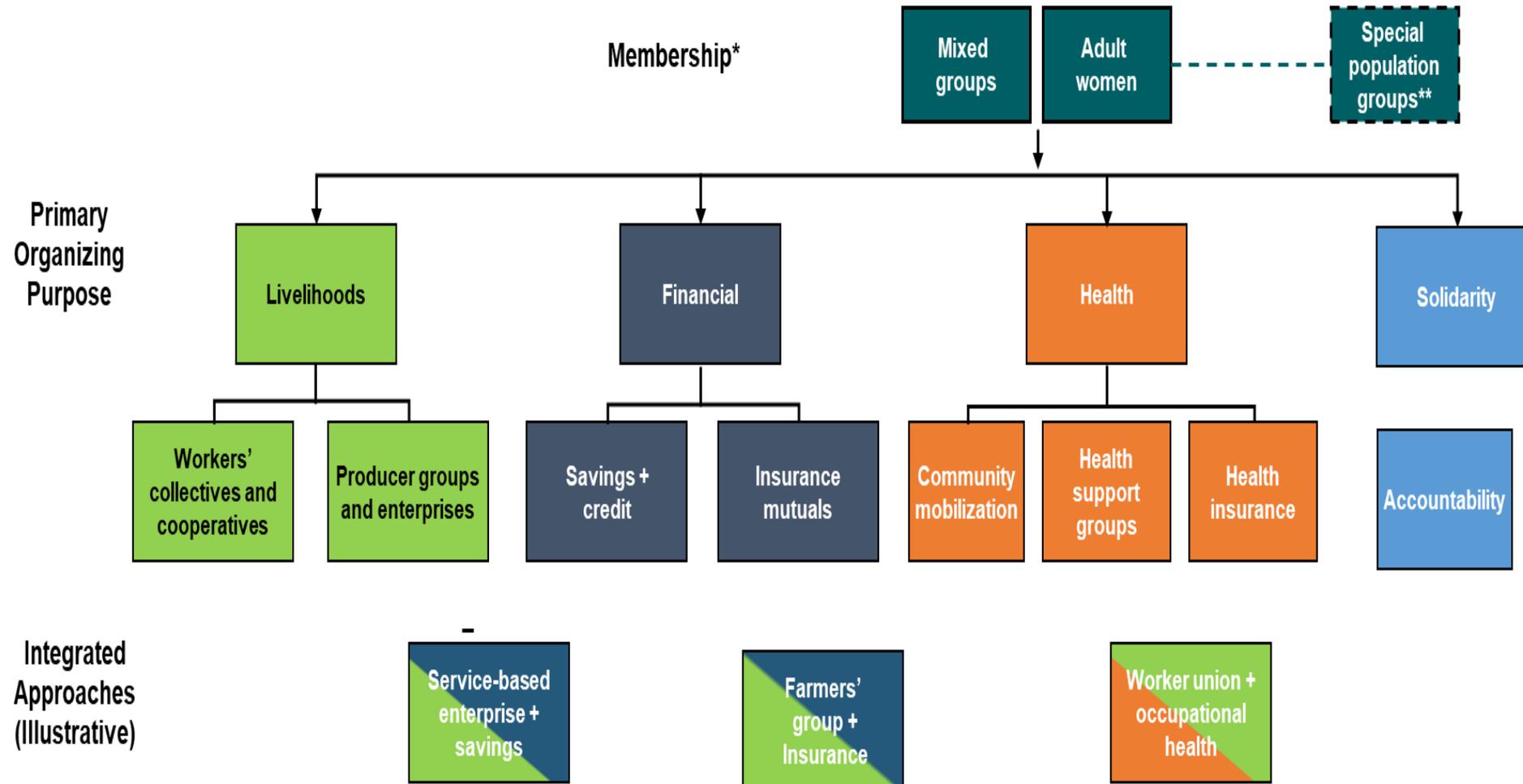
What is a women's group? Many forms, many names

1. **Diverse/inconsistent** use of terms in the evidence base (e.g., Brody et al., 2017; ; Diaz-Martin et al., 2022)
2. Groups typically perform **multiple functions** in practice (Anderson et al., 2019)



- **Self-Help Groups, Women's Groups, and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)** are the most common identifications
- For single purpose groups, **health groups are the most common**

A broad typology of groups across domains and approaches



Economic Groups in South Asia: A typology

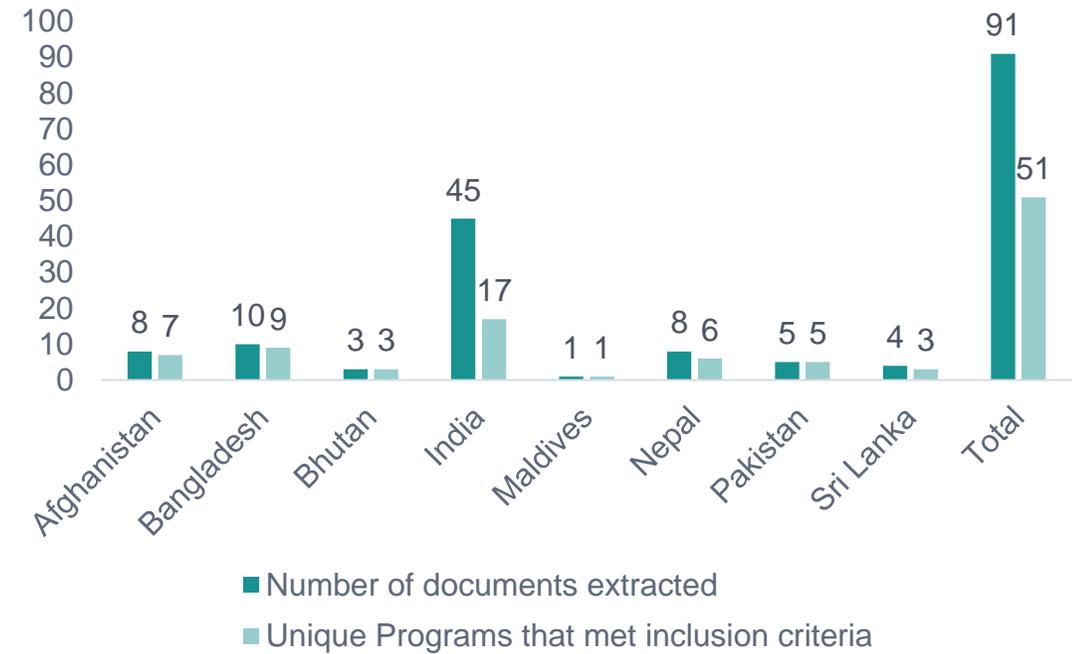
With the Gender Innovation Lab, the ECWG aimed to develop a typology of **economic groups in South Asia**

Documentation of Women's
Groups Implementation Models

Combining Findings from
Impact Evaluations &
Systematic Reviews

Synthesis to create a Typology
& Conceptual Framework

Geographic Distribution



We observed variation in programs along three axes - Membership, Primary Organizing Purpose, and Group Approach



Membership criteria: 1) Open or Closed 2) Women/Mixed/Special population



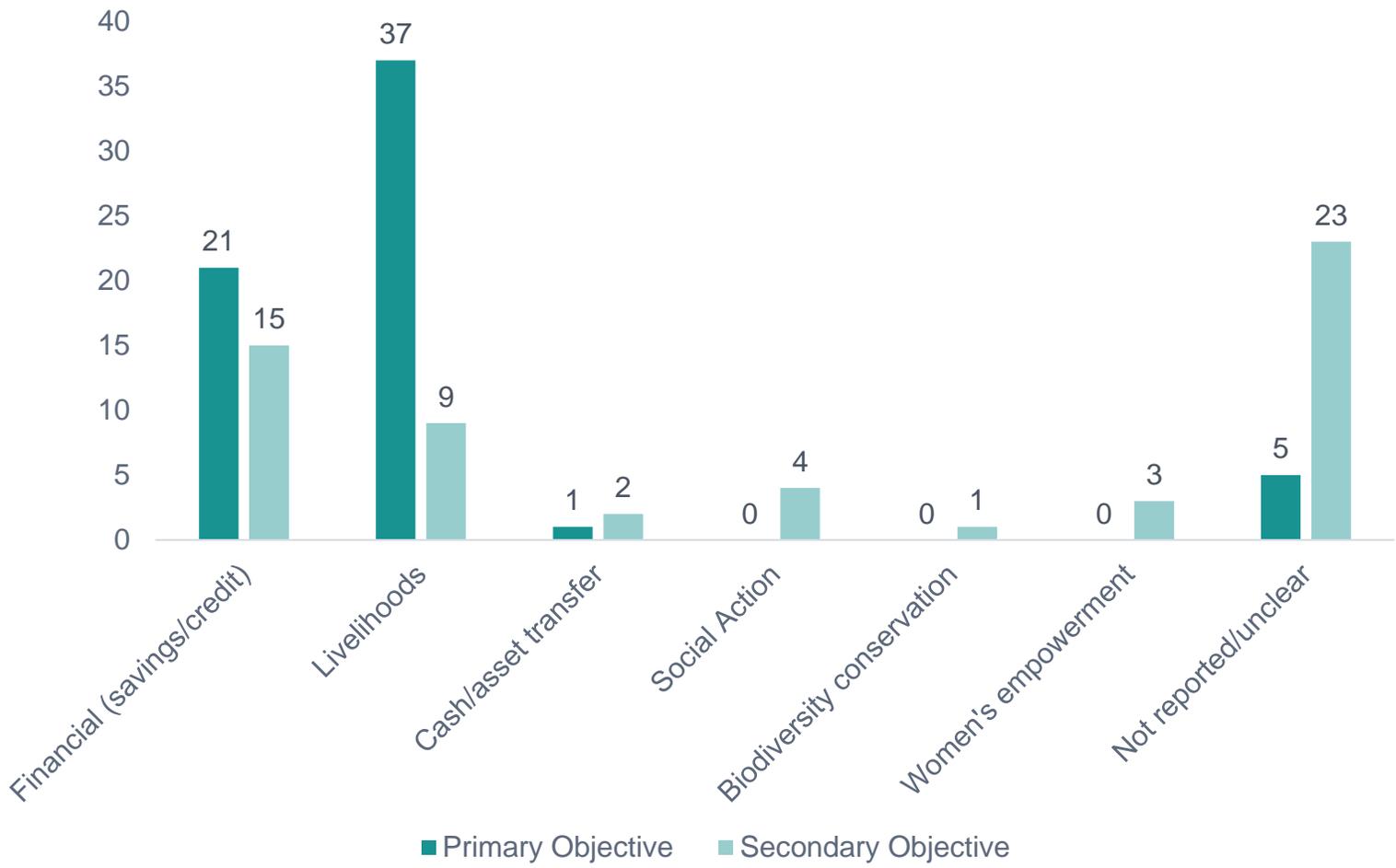
Groups typically engage in several activities, but we differentiate these from how and why members were organized into a group:
1) Livelihoods 2) Savings and Credit 3) Poverty Alleviation 4) Social Action



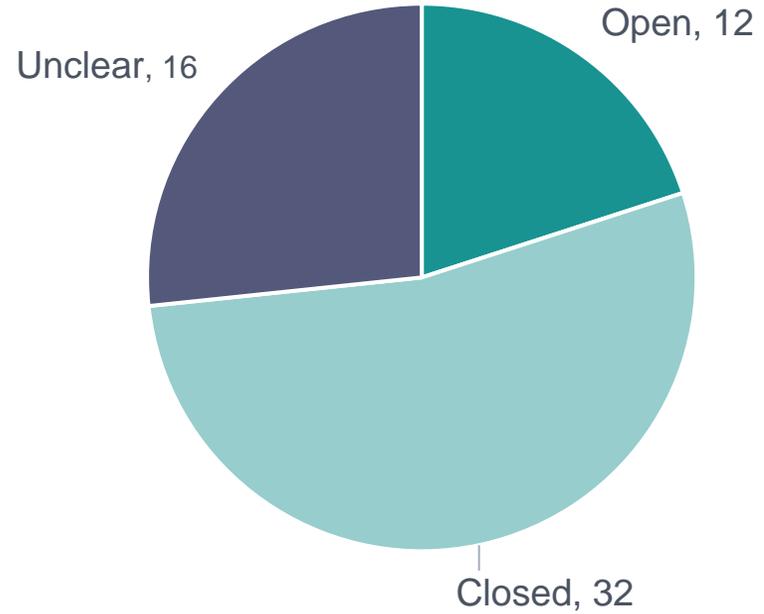
Programs vary considerably in how they “use” the group structure:
1) Group as *logistical convenience* 2) Group as *agent/conduit* 3) Group as *collective*

We observed variation by objective and membership criteria

Group Description by Objective



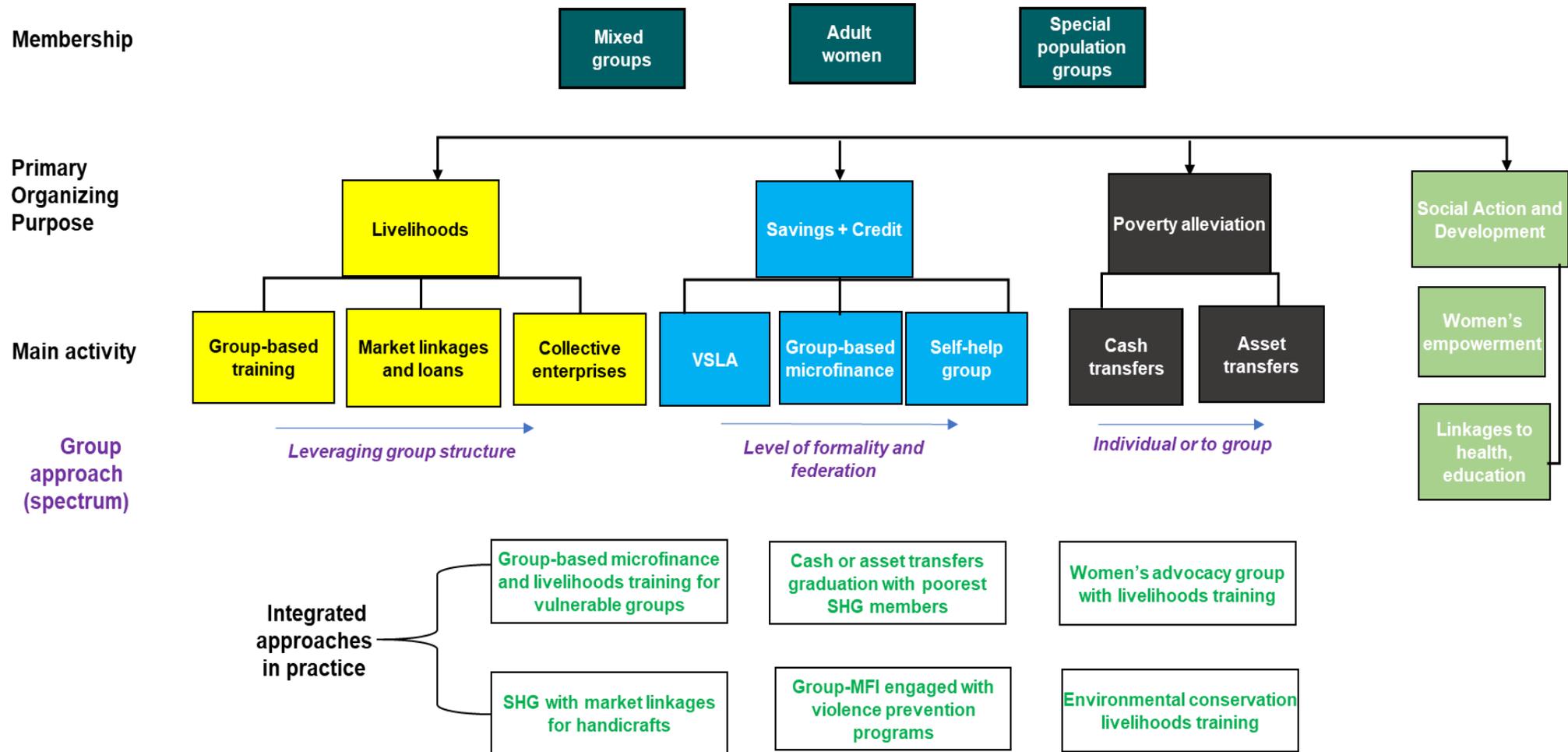
Open or Closed Groups



Programs vary in how they use the women's group structure

- Some programs delivered trainings to existing groups
- Some groups allow individual women to access microfinance or access to markets but do not actively build group strength or identity
- Some groups capitalize on the group structure by building group dynamics to enable linkages with other development programs

Typology of economic women's groups in South Asia



*Groups may be open or closed with respect to membership.

** Special population groups may include vulnerable farmers, refugees, or the poorest

Typology of economic women's groups in South Asia

Membership

**Mixed
groups**

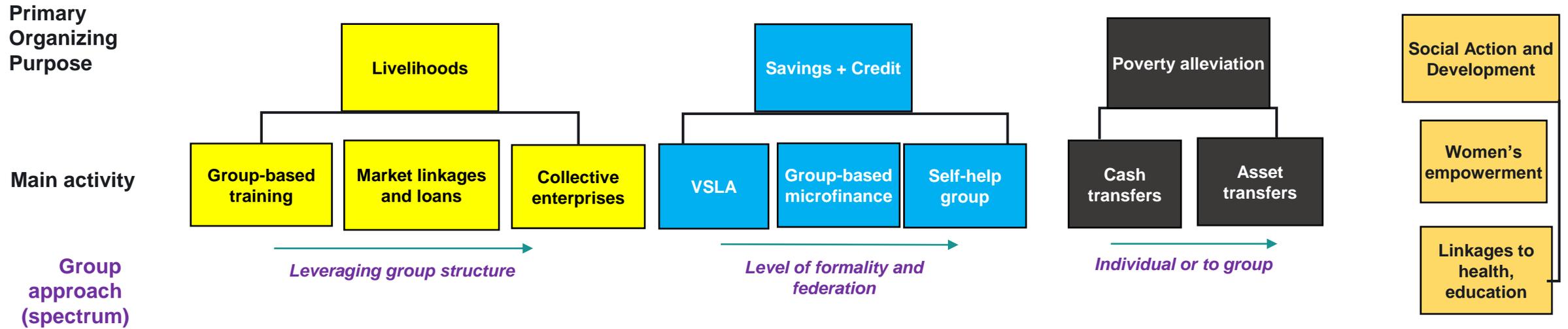
**Adult
women**

**Special
population
groups**

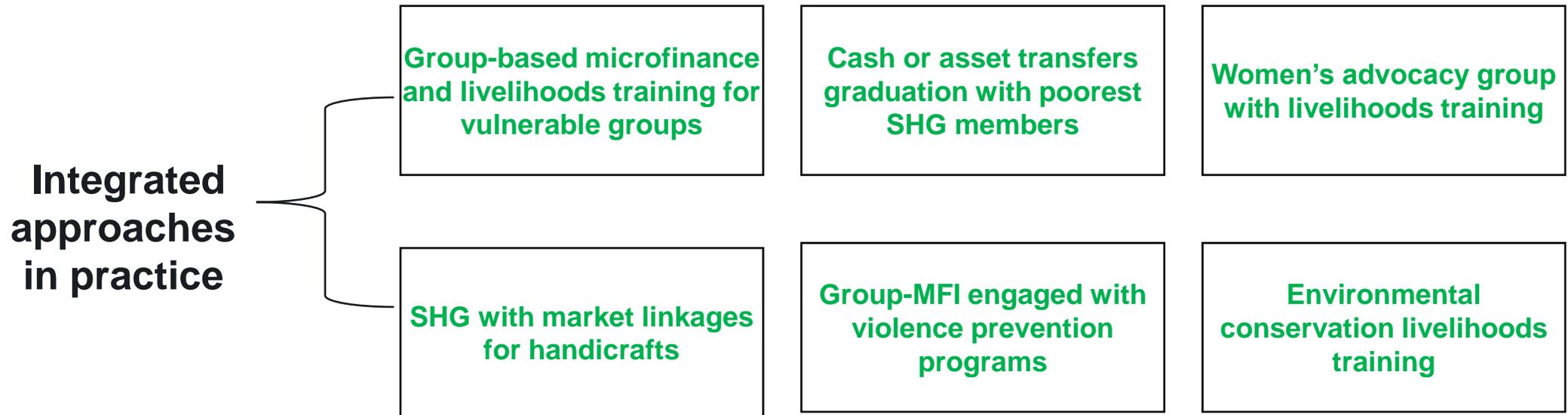
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Typology of economic women's groups in South Asia



Typology of economic women's groups in South Asia



Implications: more consistent reporting of implementation and pathways

- Future evaluations should describe groups better, and consistently
- Impact evaluations should consider pathways linked to group type, and examine the impact of specific group components

ECWG Checklist to improve reporting on women's groups

Purpose

- Primary objective
- Secondary activities
- Primary target population
- Group initiators
- Formation process
- Years of operation

Governance / functioning

- Group registration
- Formal leadership
- Federated

Group membership

- Number of members
- Open/closed group
- Eligibility criteria
- Age
- Gender
- Specific population group
- Requirements for retention
- Other eligibility

Meeting Norms

- Frequency
- Length
- Place of meeting
- Primary meeting activity

Facilitators

- Who
- Gender
- Educational criteria
- Paid
- Must be from local community
- Trained by
- Facilitator to group ratio

Future impact evaluations could focus on four specific pathways linked to the typology



Current impact evaluation evidence suggests four pathways that are driven by different women's group components from the typology: 1) Microfinance pathway, 2) Asset transfer pathway, 3) Livelihood pathway, 4) Social capital pathway



Three of the pathways are specific to the three different organizing purposes we identified in the typology, while the social capital pathway applies to all women's group types we identified, regardless of the organizing purpose.

Future impact evaluations should examine the effects of specific components of women's groups

1

Evidence on the impact of women's groups is promising but mixed

2

Future impact evaluations could focus on the effects of federations, scale, and specific program components of women's groups

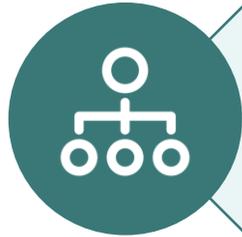
3

Existing evidence does not allow for establishing how different women's group implementation models may result in different effects

Conclusions



The results suggest that programs varied along three axes: (1) membership, (2) primary organizing purpose, and (3) group approach



We found large variation in the extent to which programs invest in underlying group structures and dynamics.



Savings and credit groups operated through slightly varying models, but overall implementation models are not well documented



Only very few studies examine the differential effectiveness of specific group implementation needs.