

In Practice

- Brief -

Coaching in Economic Inclusion

Learning from Existing Models and Casting a Way Forward

By Shilohni Sumanthiran and Keetie Roelen

- for -
Volume

10

Coaching is used in 90 percent of economic inclusion programs and is increasingly seen as a critical component of such interventions.

As poverty is multidimensional in nature, coaching seeks to address a range of needs and challenges by providing participants with the support they need to take full advantage of program resources. This can range from livelihood training and business plan development to providing life skills and supporting health and nutrition practices. As a result, coaching is often considered the ‘X-factor’ in economic inclusion programming.

At present, programs around the world employ a wide range of coaching approaches with differences across design parameters of scope, depth and types of coaching, frequency, coaching tools, caseload, and staffing. For each parameter, designs range from taking a narrower focus and being less resource-intensive to adopting a broader approach and placing higher demand on resources. Given the relatively high cost of coaching in relation to other components of economic inclusion programming, gaining a better understanding of the range of coaching approaches, including their benefits, challenges, and resource requirements, is vital for taking interventions to scale.

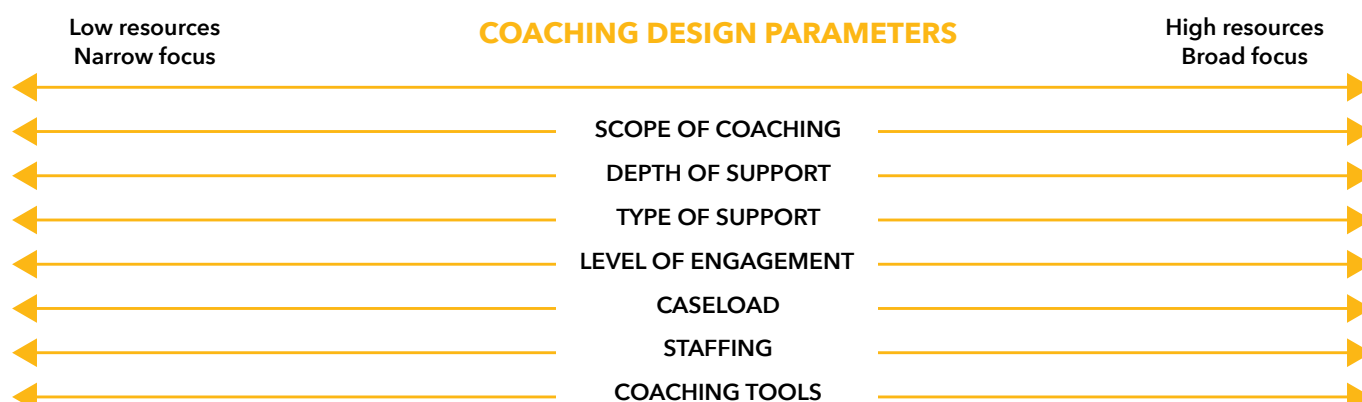
A review of programs shows that there is no one-size-fits-all or ideal coaching models. Approaches are highly context-specific with decisions across each of the design parameters bringing their own benefits and limitations. Evidence of relative impact of design differences across parameters is limited, as is information about their cost-effectiveness.

Economic inclusion programming

gradually integrates participants into broader economic and community development processes by using a bundle of multidimensional interventions that support participants in increasing their incomes and assets, and strengthening their resilience and future opportunities. Its design recognizes that the poorest and most vulnerable people face multiple constraints.

DESIGN DECISIONS

Decisions along each of the design parameters come with their own benefits and limitations and must be made against the backdrop of program objectives, implementation context, available resources, and participants' needs.



BEST PRACTICES

1. Consider participants' profiles and the coach's responsibilities when making coach staffing decisions.
2. Ensure sufficient training and support for coaches.
3. When possible, include families in coaching.
4. Give coaches agency to adapt content to participants' needs.
5. Limit the caseload, scope, and depth of a coach's workload to a manageable amount, enabling them to spend sufficient time with participants.
6. Embrace the role that digital technologies can play in addressing coaching challenges and improving the quality of coaching.
7. Include an inclusive and responsive feedback mechanism that allows all stakeholders, including coaches, to comment and reflect on program implementation.
8. Consider designs that enhance the ability of the program to self-fund its key components, such as coaching.
9. Establish effective communication and coordination systems.
10. Integrate or converge with government systems where possible.

In Practice

[Click to
read the
full volume](#)



Coaching in Economic Inclusion:
Learning from Existing Models and
Casting a Way Forward