

Inclusive Finance Acronyms & Glossary Cheat Sheet



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Introduction

Opportunity's inclusive finance acronyms and glossary facilitate a shared understanding and effective communication among diverse stakeholders working to enhance access to financial services for underserved populations, with a particular focus on marginalised women and individuals with disabilities. We advocate for equity and respectful terminology, utilising inclusive, strengths-based, person-first, and non-stigmatising language to ensure that marginalised groups, including women, individuals with disabilities, indigenous communities, and other excluded communities, are described with respect. Furthermore, this glossary supports the onboarding process for new board members, staff, contractors, consultants, and partners who may be unfamiliar with inclusive language principles. This shared inclusive glossary helps bridge communication gaps between global and local actors, promote co-design and participation of excluded communities, and foster cross-sectoral and cross-country learning.

This cheat sheet is a living document and will be revised annually in the second quarter.

Inclusive Finance Acronyms & Glossary

Term	Definition	Source
Accessibility	Accessibility refers to the design of environments, products, services, and systems so that they can be used by as many people as possible, regardless of their circumstances. Accessibility can lead to inclusion. The key difference between accessibility and inclusion is that accessibility ensures usability for people with specific needs, while inclusion fosters a sense of belonging and value for everyone. <i>(See the definition of "inclusion").</i>	Digital.gov
Assistive Technology	Assistive technology is an umbrella term for assistive products and their related systems and services. Assistive technologies help maintain or improve an individual's functioning related to cognition, communication, hearing, mobility, self-care and vision, thus enabling their health, well-being, inclusion and participation.	WHO
Blended Finance	Blended finance is the use of catalytic capital from public or philanthropic sources to increase private sector investment in sustainable development (Convergence, 2023).	DFAT
Bond	A bond is a fixed-income investment product where individuals lend money to a government or company at a specified interest rate for a predetermined period. The entity repays individuals with interest in addition to the original face value of the bond. Some microfinance institutions (MFIs) issue debt securities to raise capital. Investors earn interest and receive the principal at maturity.	Investopedia

	<i>(See the definitions of "Debt Investment," "Equity Investment," "Crowdfunding Platform" "Hybrid Investment" and "Investment Vehicle")</i>	
Bottom of the pyramid (BoP)	The bottom of the pyramid (BOP) term in economics refers to the poorest two-thirds of the economic human pyramid, a group of more than four billion people living in abject poverty. More broadly, BOP refers to a market-based model of economic development that promises to simultaneously alleviate widespread poverty while providing growth and profits for multinational corporations (MNCs).	Britannica
Care Economy	The care economy encompasses all paid and unpaid activities related to caring for individuals of all ages and abilities, including children, the elderly, and those with disabilities. It includes services like aged care, disability support, early childhood education, family services, and social housing. The care economy is a significant employer, particularly for women, and plays a crucial role in supporting individuals and families.	PM&C
Cash Transfer	A cash transfer is a direct payment of money to individuals or households, typically provided by governments or aid organizations. These transfers are used as a form of social protection or economic support and can be either conditional or unconditional.	Cochrane
Catalytic Capital	Catalytic capital refers to debt, equity, or other financial investments that accept disproportionate risk and/or concessionary returns compared to conventional investments. Its primary objective is to generate positive social or environmental impact and enable third-party investments that would not be possible	The Impact Finance Research Consortium (IFRC), a collaboration among the Wharton School, Harvard Business School, and the University of

	under higher return expectations, lower risk tolerance, or less flexible/patient investment terms. Catalytic capital is often used to fill funding gaps in underserved sectors or geographies, promote innovation, support early-stage ventures, and attract mainstream investors to high-impact deals. It plays a critical role in addressing social and environmental challenges by unlocking and accelerating solutions that traditional investments might overlook.	Chicago Booth School of Business
Chamber of Commerce	A chamber of commerce is an association or network of businesspeople designed to promote and protect the interests of its members. It is often made up of a group of business owners that share a locale or interests but can also be international in scope.	Investopia
Charity Lens	The charity lens from a 'handout, not a hand up' perspective refers to an approach of charitable work that emphasises immediate relief rather than long-term empowerment. This approach is short-term, reactive, and often dependency oriented. <i>(See the definition of "strengths-based lens," "medial lens," and "market-lens").</i>	Community Foundation of Morgan County
Climate Finance	Climate finance refers to local, national or transnational financing—drawn from public, private and alternative sources of financing—that seeks to support mitigation and adaptation actions that will address climate change.	UNFCC
Commercial Bank	Bank that offers a broad range of deposit accounts, including cheque, savings and time deposits and extends loans to individuals and business. Commercial banks can be contrasted with investment banking firms, such as brokerage firms, which	Nasdaq

	generally are involved in arranging for the sale of corporate or municipal securities.	
Consumer Protection	Consumer protection is the practice of ensuring that consumers are treated fairly and protected from being exploited when purchasing products or services. It involves creating rules, regulations, and educating consumers to make informed decisions and promoting transparency in business practices.	Science Direct
Cooperative	A cooperative is a member-owned entity that seeks to meet its members' social, economic, and cultural needs. Each cooperative member has equal voting rights, regardless of the number of shares they own or their role in the organisation. A cooperative is a separate legal entity from the members, directors, and employees. These parties are not liable for the entity's debts. Cooperatives are not necessarily credit unions; they have a wider scope. <i>(See the definition of "Credit Union.")</i>	CFI
Credit Union	Credit unions are financial co-operatives, owned and controlled by their members. Credit unions operate by predominantly borrowing from and exclusively lending to their members. Credit unions are a significant alternative to the major banks. They are non-profit organisations, with any surplus arising out of their operations being allocated to capital reserves to meet capital adequacy requirements and to reduce cost of services to members. Credit unions are necessarily cooperatives. <i>(See the definition of "Cooperative.")</i>	National Credit Union Association Inc

Crowdfunding Platform	Individuals can invest small amounts in microfinance projects via online platforms, supporting entrepreneurs in underserved region. <i>(See the definitions of "Debt Investment," "Equity Investment," "Bonds" "Hybrid Investment" and "Investment Vehicle")</i>	Investopedia
Data Disaggregation	Data Disaggregation refers to the process of breaking down or separating aggregated data into smaller, more specific groups to reveal patterns or disparities that may be hidden within a larger dataset. This practice allows for the examination of different subgroups based on factors such as race, gender, age, socioeconomic status, or disability, which may be masked when viewing data as a singular whole.	The Oxford Review
Debt Investment (Financing)	A debt investment is a slightly less risky investment option than an equity investment. These types of investments usually offer a slightly lower yet more consistent return. There are also fewer highs and lows than in the stock market. <i>(See the definitions of "Bond," "Equity Investment," "Crowdfunding Platform," "Hybrid Investment" and "Investment Vehicle")</i>	Investopedia
Development Finance	Development finance is the efforts of local communities to support, encourage and catalyse expansion through public and private investment in physical development, redevelopment and/or business and industry. It is the act of contributing to a project or deal that causes that project or deal to materialise in a manner that benefits the long-term health of the community.	CDFA
Digital Bank	A digital bank as a deposit-taking financial institution that provides its products and services through a digital-first or digital-only business model.	McKinsey & Company

Digital Gap	Within a population, the disparity between individuals with access to information and communication technologies (ICT) who make use of services offered on the Web, and those who do not.	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
Disability	Disability is any long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society on an equal basis with others. Disability differs from 'impairment' because it refers to the impact that an impairment has on a person. An impairment becomes a disability once it affects or limits a person's full participation in society. <i>(See the definition of "impairment.")</i>	UNCRPD
Disaggregated Data	Data disaggregation is the breakdown of observations to a more detailed level where more comprehensive observations are taken. Hence, Sex, Age, and Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD) is data which is broken down into different categories. This can be one or all the categories, namely sex, age, and disability. The use of SADDD can show the differences and inequalities of conditions for different population groups.	UNDRR
Disability Equity	Disability Equity it is the commitment to ensuring fairness and justice in opportunities, resources, and outcomes for individuals with disabilities. It focuses on providing equitable supports to persons with disabilities. <i>(See the definition of "disability inclusion.")</i>	Sustainability directory
Disability Inclusion	Disability inclusion refers to the meaningful participation and integration of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society, ensuring that they have equal access to opportunities, resources,	The Oxford Review

	and services. It focuses on active participation of persons with disabilities <i>(See the definition of "disability equity.")</i>	
Ecosystems	Financial ecosystems encompass the entire range of market players in the financial system, having a role in efficient and sound capital allocation to sustainable, https://www.sdc-economy-education.ch/en/msd value adding projects, by matching savers and investors.	IGI Global
Equity Investment (Financing)	Equity investment in microfinance refers to the provision of capital to microfinance institutions (MFIs) in exchange for ownership stakes. This type of investment is crucial for MFIs that aim to scale their operations and become financially sustainable. <i>(See the definitions of "Bond," "Debt Investment," "Crowdfunding Platform" "Hybrid Investment" and "Investment Vehicle")</i>	"MFI Equity: An Investment Opportunity for the Broader Public?"
Exclusion	Social exclusion is a process where individuals or groups are completely denied participation in social, economic, political, or cultural life. <i>(See the definition of "marginalisation.")</i>	Hub Sociology
Financial Exclusion	Financial exclusion exists where individuals lack access to appropriate and affordable financial services and products – the key services and products are a transaction account, general insurance and a moderate amount of credit.	CSI
Financial Inclusion	Financial inclusion is universal access, at a reasonable cost, to a wide range of financial services, provided by a variety of sound and sustainable institutions. <i>(See the definition of "inclusive finance.")</i> The terms financial inclusion and inclusive finance are often used interchangeably.	UN DSAF

	While financial inclusion focuses on integrating marginalized populations—such as low-income individuals, rural communities, and people with disabilities—into the formal financial system, its scope is often limited to access. In contrast, inclusive finance aims to build financial systems that are fair, responsive, and sustainable for everyone, regardless of background or circumstance.	
Financial Service Providers	Financial Services Providers means any person, other than a bank, who carries on a business as a domestic financial institution as defined in section 102(n) or who carries on a business as a cash dealer as defined in section 102(e), including a person who offers financial products, which may include virtual assets, or advises, provides mediation services, provides reinsurance mediation services, or moneylenders or acts as an authorised agent in respect of financial products such as fund managers, pension or retirement funds, credit unions, financial advisers, investment managers or providers, insurers, development finance institutions privately operated or government-owned, finance companies.	LawInsider
Fintech	Financial technology (fintech) refers to broad range of technological innovations in the financial sector that enhance or change the way financial services are provided. The innovations typically include crowdfunding, insurance, budgeting software, blockchain (and cryptocurrencies), electronic payments and transfers, and robo-advisors and trading applications, helping to reduce costs and risks, as well as extending and broadening services to unbanked populations.	United Nations Economist Network
Gender Equality	The concept that women and men, girls and boys have equal conditions, treatment and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity, and for contributing to (and	Unicef

	benefitting from) economic, social, cultural and political development. <i>(See the definition of "Gender Equity.")</i>	
Gender Equity	The process of being fair to men and women, boys and girls, and importantly the equality of outcomes and results. Gender equity may involve the use of temporary special measures to compensate for historical or systemic bias or discrimination. <i>(See the definition of "Gender Equality.")</i>	Unicef
Gender Lens Investing	Gender lens investing, often referred to as GLI, is a strategy or approach to investing that considers gender-based factors across the investment process to advance gender equality and better inform investment decisions	GIIN
Gender mainstreaming / integration	A strategy to accelerate progress on women's and girls' rights and equality in relation to men and boys.	Unicef
Gender-Responsive Finance	Gender Responsive Finance (GRF) signifies the strategic allocation and deployment of financial resources with a deliberate consideration of gender dynamics. This Designation moves beyond gender-blind approaches, acknowledging that financial systems and instruments can affect women, men, and gender minorities in distinct ways	Sustainability Directory
Human-Centred Product Design	In the banking and financial services sector, Human-Centred Product Design (HCD) is defined as an approach that prioritises user needs, emotions, and contexts when designing financial products, interfaces, and services. It aims to make complex financial systems accessible, intuitive, and trustworthy for diverse users.	Tech Bullion
Human Rights Based Approach (Humanitarian-lens)	The human rights-based approach (HRBA) is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and	UNSDG

	operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyse <i>inequalities</i> which lie at the heart of development problems and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress and often result in groups of people being left behind. <i>(See the definition of "strengths-based lens," "market-lens" "medical lens," and "charity-lens").</i>	
Hybrid Investment	A hybrid investment is a financial instrument that combines characteristics of both equity and debt. These investments are designed to offer a balance between risk and return, often providing regular income like debt instruments while also offering potential for capital appreciation like equities. Hybrid investments offer diversification through exposure to both equity and debt markets, provide a balanced opportunity for regular income and capital growth, and typically involve lower volatility than pure equity investments—making them a strategic choice for managing risk.	Investopedia
Impairment	An impairment is any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function. It differs from the term 'disability' because it is not necessarily disabling. It is society that makes an impairment into a disability by limiting a person with an impairment's full access to that society. <i>(See the definition of "disability.")</i>	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Impact Investment	Impact investments are investments made with the intention to generate positive, measurable social or environmental impact alongside a financial return.	GIIN

Inclusion	Inclusion is the active practice of welcoming and valuing diverse individuals, ensuring they feel respected, supported, and able to participate fully. Inclusion is facilitated by accessible environments, products, services, and systems. The key difference between accessibility and inclusion is that accessibility ensures usability for people with specific needs, while inclusion fosters a sense of belonging and value for everyone. <i>(See the definition of "accessibility.")</i>	CDC
Inclusive Finance	Inclusive finance strives to enhance access to financial services for both individuals and micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. <i>(See the definition of "financial inclusion.")</i> <i>The terms financial inclusion and inclusive finance are often used interchangeably</i> The terms financial inclusion and inclusive finance are often used interchangeably While financial inclusion focuses on integrating marginalized populations—such as low-income individuals, rural communities, and people with disabilities—into the formal financial system, its scope is often limited to access. In contrast, inclusive finance aims to build financial systems that are fair, responsive, and sustainable for everyone, regardless of background or circumstance.	UN DSAF
Investment Vehicles (IV)	Pooled funds managed by professionals that invest in multiple MFIs, offering diversification and reduced risk. <i>(See the definitions of "Debt Investment," "Equity Investment," "Bonds", and "Crowdfunding Platform")</i>	Investology Hub

Intersectionality	Intersectionality refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation.	Victorian Government
Intersectional Analysis	Intersectional analysis is a theoretical framework that examines how multiple social identities, such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability, intersect and create unique experiences of privilege, oppression, and marginalization. It explores the complex ways in which these intersecting identities shape individuals lived experiences and access to power within society.	Fiveable
Intersectional Data	The intersectional data approach identifies inequalities within and between groups of people based on how multiple factors of a person's identity come together. However, it goes beyond this to ensure that data plays a part in reducing inequality. This includes using intersectionality as a lens to reflectively examine data practice, data processes, and institutions.	ANU
Loan Guarantee	A loan guarantee is defined as a form of insurance that protects a lender—typically a commercial bank—against the risk of default by a microfinance institution (MFI). If the MFI fails to repay the loan, the guarantor covers the guaranteed portion of the loan. This mechanism enables MFIs to access funding from banks that might otherwise be unwilling to lend due to perceived risk	CGAP: "Guaranteed Loans to Microfinance Institutions: How Do They Add Value?"
Marginalisation	Marginalisation refers to the process of relegating individuals or groups to the edge of society, where they have limited access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making. <i>(See the definition of "exclusion.")</i>	UNDP
Marginalised communities	Marginalised communities refer to groups of people who experience social, economic, and/or political exclusion or discrimination based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity,	ACTEC

	gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, or religion.	
Market-based Lens	A market-based lens / approach in inclusive finance involves applying commercial market principles, such as competition, demand-driven product design, and financial sustainability, to deliver financial services to low-income populations. This approach enables inclusive finance providers to operate in a financially viable, scalable, and responsive manner, rather than relying solely on donor funding or subsidies. <i>(See the definition of "strengths-based lens," "humanitarian-lens" "medical lens," and "charity-lens").</i>	CGAP
Medical Lens / Model of Disability	The medical model of disability views disability primarily as a problem of the individual, caused by illness, injury, or impairment, and sees the solution as medical treatment or rehabilitation to "fix" the person. It focuses on disability as a consequence of a health condition or impairment, with limited attention to the role of environmental and social barriers. <i>(See the definition of "strengths-based lens," "charity lens," "humanitarian-lens" and "market-lens").</i>	WHO
Micro Credit / Micro Loan	Microcredit (also known as a microloan) is a form of microfinance that provides very small loans to individuals—typically those who are low-income or financially underserved—to help them start or grow small businesses and become self-sufficient.	Investopedia
Microfinance	Microfinance is a term for financial services that are offered to individuals of low socioeconomic backgrounds or those who lack access to traditional financial services. Microfinance includes a	CFI

	number of services, such as savings accounts, checking accounts, fund transfers, microinsurance, and microcredit.	
Meaningful Employment	Meaningful employment is employment that goes beyond simply having a job; it provides growth, stability, and opportunities to belong. Meaningful employment also recognises talent and skills and fosters dignity.	Resque International
Net Zero Economy	A net zero economy is characterized by balancing the amount of greenhouse gases emitted with the amount removed from the atmosphere. This involves significant zero-carbon investments and innovation, alongside the elimination of harmful market failures, such as fossil fuel subsidies.	Net Zero Climate
Persons with disabilities	Persons with disabilities includes those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment/s, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.	Australiandisabilitynetwork
Reasonable Accommodation	Reasonable accommodations are necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments that are made to ensure to persons with disabilities enjoy and exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others.	CBM quoted CRPD
Remittance	A remittance is a transfer of money from one person or entity to another, most commonly referring to funds sent by individuals working abroad to their families or communities in their home countries.	Investopedia
Responsible Finance	Responsible finance refers to financial practices and systems that are designed to be inclusive, ethical, and sustainable, with a focus on consumer protection, financial resilience, and long-term well-being.	Responsible Finance

	From the World Bank perspective, the definition is expanded to include proactive efforts by providers, policymakers, and investors to: • Anticipate and mitigate risks (e.g., climate shocks, inflation) • Improve consumer outcomes • Build long-term financial health and resilience This approach goes beyond simply offering financial products—it emphasizes empowerment, dignity, and sustainability.	World Bank
Rural Bank	Rural banks by definition are traditional banks that serve farmers, fishermen, workers or communities away from the highly dense metropolitan cities in a country. By design, rural banks are physically well-positioned to respond to the existing financial gap given their geographic advantage and expansive network.	World Economic Forum
Savings Groups	Savings Groups are an improved form of the traditional ASCA (Accumulating Savings and Credit Associations). They provide members a secure place to save, the opportunity to borrow in small amounts and on flexible terms, and affordable basic insurance services.	CGAP
SDG Investing	Sustainable Development Investing (SDI) refers to deploying capital in ways that make a positive contribution to sustainable development, using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a basis for measurement.	Icgn
Social Impact	Social impact means any significant or positive change/s that solve or address social injustice and challenges. Businesses or organizations achieve these goals through conscious and deliberate efforts or activities in their operations and administrations.	Duke University

Social Impact Investment	Social impact investment describes the targeting of capital towards business models and assets that are seeking to contribute to solutions to the world's societal challenges, helping to build stronger communities and improve lives. It can be defined by an intention to create measurable social benefit, alongside a financial return.	Better Society Capital
Strengths or Assets Based Approach (Lens)	Strengths-based (or asset-based) approaches focus on individuals' strengths (including personal strengths and social and community networks) and not on their deficits. Strengths-based practice is holistic and multidisciplinary and works with the individual to promote their wellbeing. It is outcomes led and not services led. <i>(See the definition of "charity-based lens," "medical lens," and "market-lens").</i>	SCIE UK
Sustainable Finance	Sustainable Finance is the process of taking due account of environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations when making investment decisions in the financial sector, leading to increased longer-term investments into sustainable economic activities and projects.	World Bank Group
Theory of Change (ToC)	The theory of change (is an explicit process of thinking through and documenting how a program or intervention is supposed to work, why it will work, who it will benefit (and in what way) and the conditions required for success.	AIFS Weiss, 1995
Tokenism	The result of diversity without inclusion. The practice of making only a symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from under-represented groups in order to give the appearance of equality within a workforce.	Cambridge Dictionary Diversity Forward

Unbanked	Unbanked refers to adults or families who do not use banking services such as savings accounts, checking accounts, or credit cards, often due to financial constraints, distrust of banks, privacy concerns, or unsuitable access to banking services.	Investopedia
Underbanked	Underbanked refers to individuals or families who have a bank account but often rely on alternative financial services such as money orders, check-cashing services, and payday loans rather than on traditional loans and credit cards to manage their finances and fund purchases. This may be because they lack access to convenient, affordable banking services or because they need or prefer to use alternatives to traditional financial services.	Investopedia
Universal Design	Universal design is design that is usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.	The UD Project
Value for Money (VfM)	Value for Money (VfM) refers to the strategic and responsible use of resources to maximize development impact, equity, and sustainability by prioritizing cost-effectiveness, evidence-based decision-making, innovation, and transparency—ensuring that investments deliver equitable, measurable, and lasting outcomes.	DFAT – Value for Money Principles
Venture Capital Company	A venture capital fund is a type of investment fund that pools capital from multiple investors to invest in early-stage high-potential startups in exchange for ownership shares in these companies.	BDC
Washington Group Questionnaires	The WG-SS is a set of six questions designed to collect data for national-level censuses and surveys. The questions reflect advances in the conceptualization of disability and use the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health as a conceptual framework.	Unicef Washington Group

Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)	Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) refers to the process by which women gain the ability to succeed economically, advance in their careers or enterprises, and exercise power over economic decisions that affect their lives and communities.	ICRW
Women-Led Business Enterprise or Women-led business Enterprise (WBE)	A business that is at least 51% owned, controlled, operated, and managed by a woman or women. This means one or more women must have unrestricted control of the business, a demonstrated management of day-to-day operations, and a proportionate investment of capital or expertise	WBENC

Acronym	Definition	Source
CEDAW	CEDAW stands for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. It's a key international human rights treaty adopted by the United Nations in 1979 that aims to ensure women's rights are protected on an equal basis with men. It's often described as the "international bill of rights for women".	UN
CRPD	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) is an international human rights treaty. It aims to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms by all persons with disabilities.	DSS AU
DFS	Digital Financial Services (DFS) are financial services that rely on digital technologies for their delivery and utilization by consumers. These services leverage digital platforms, such as mobile devices and the internet, to provide convenient, accessible, and secure financial solutions. DFS encompass a wide range of financial activities and products, including electronic money, digital wallets,	World Bank

	and digital payment platforms, loans, savings, insurance, and investment.	
DSO	A Disability Support Organisation (DSO)—often referred to as a Disabled People’s Organisation (DPO)—is an entity that provides services, advocacy, and support for people with disabilities. What distinguishes a DSO or DPO is that it is typically led and controlled by people with disabilities themselves, ensuring that their voices and lived experiences shape the services and policies that affect them.	Persons with disabilities Australia
ESG	ESG stands for Environmental, Social, and Governance. It is a framework used to evaluate how organizations manage risks and opportunities related to their environment, relationships and governance.	IBM
GEDSI	GEDSI stands for Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion. It is a framework used in development, humanitarian, and policy contexts to ensure that marginalized groups—especially women, people with disabilities, and socially excluded populations—are actively included and empowered in all aspects of planning, decision-making, and implementation.	DFAT
IDEARS	Australia's International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
LMICs	Lower Middle-Income Countries. For the current 2025 fiscal year, lower middle-income economies are defined as those with a GNI per capita, calculated using the World Bank Atlas method, of economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$1,146 and \$4,515	World Bank

ME; M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is a systematic process used in development, policy, and program management to track progress, assess effectiveness, and inform decision-making. Its key components are: • Monitoring: The ongoing, systematic collection of data on specified indicators to track progress toward objectives. • Evaluation: The periodic assessment of a program's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.	OECD
MEL	MEL is similar to ME above, with the addition of 'L' for learning.	
MEAL	MEAL is a comprehensive framework used in development, humanitarian, and social impact sectors to ensure that programs are effective, transparent, and continuously improving. MEAL stands for: • Monitoring: The ongoing collection and analysis of data to track program activities and outputs, ensuring they are implemented as planned. • Evaluation: A deeper assessment of outcomes and impact to determine the effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability of interventions. • Accountability: Ensuring that programs are carried out ethically and transparently, with meaningful participation from stakeholders and affected communities. • Learning: Using data and feedback to reflect, adapt, and improve program design and implementation over time.	Eval Community

MFI	The term 'microfinance institutions' is generally used to refer to those financial institutions that are characterized by their commitment to assisting typically poor households and small enterprises in gaining access to financial service.	IMF Publication
MSD	Market Systems Development addresses poverty and unemployment by enhancing market systems. It aims for sustainable economic impact through the removal of bottlenecks and the promotion of inclusive growth. MSD adheres to core principles, including systemic change, market dynamics understanding, partnership facilitation, promotion of inclusive growth, and adaptive management. By connecting individuals, businesses, governments, and NGOs with domestic and international markets, MSD fosters investment, coordination, and thriving partnerships, ultimately strengthening inclusive economic growth. MSD encompasses strategic interventions, including analysing market dynamics, developing value chains, promoting financial inclusion, fostering entrepreneurship, and improving access to information.	SDC (2024)
MSMEs	MSME stands for Micro Small Medium Enterprise. <i>(See the definition of SMEs)</i>	Unicap
Organisation of Persons with disabilities (OPD)	Organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) are any organisations or associations led, directed and governed by persons with disabilities that are committed to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and fully respect the principles and rights affirmed therein.	Unicef
PAR	Portfolio at Risk (PAR) is a key financial metric used primarily in microfinance and banking to assess the quality and credit risk of a loan portfolio. It measures the percentage of loans that are	Accounting Guide

	overdue—typically by 30 days or more—and therefore at risk of default.	
RCT	A Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) is a scientific method used to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions by randomly assigning participants to either a treatment group or a control group. This design minimises bias and allows researchers to establish causal relationships between interventions and outcomes	Understanding Randomized Controlled Trials – Cognix Pulse
SDGs	The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an urgent call for action to all countries in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.	UN
SMEs	Small and midsize enterprises (SMEs) are companies that generally fall between small and large businesses. There is generally a threshold for the revenues, assets, and/or employees held by SMEs. <i>(See the definition of MSMEs)</i>	investopia
SPM	Social performance management (SPM) refers to the systems that organizations use to achieve their stated social mission.	The Microfinance Centre
Venture Capital	Venture capital (VC) is a form of private equity and a type of financing for startup companies and small businesses with long-term growth potential.	SmartAsset
Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA)	The Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) model creates self-managed and self-capitalised savings groups that use members' savings to lend to each other. VSLAs are comprised of between 10 and 25 members and offer self-managed savings,	VSLA

	insurance and credit services in urban slums and remote rural areas.	
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Resources & Tools

- [AFI's Financial Inclusion Dictionary](#)
- [Centre for Financial Inclusion](#)
- [CGAP: What is Financial Inclusion and why does it matter?](#)
- [ILO: Glossary of frequently used terminology](#)
- [G20 Financial Inclusion Indicators Glossary](#)
- [UNDP Glossary](#)
- [World Bank's the Glossary of Microfinance terms](#)