

# TH2.2: Measuring empowerment across the value chain:

The evolution of the project-level Women's Empowerment in  
Agriculture Index for Market Inclusion (pro-WEAI+MI)

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# Empowerment and Market Inclusion

- Is market inclusion conducive to women's empowerment?
- We won't know unless we measure it. We adapt the pro-WEAI to cover multiple stages and different types of value chain actors
- Iterative, mixed-methods approach
- Based on work in Bangladesh, Philippines, Benin, Malawi



Increased market orientation

Increase in rural nonfarm enterprises



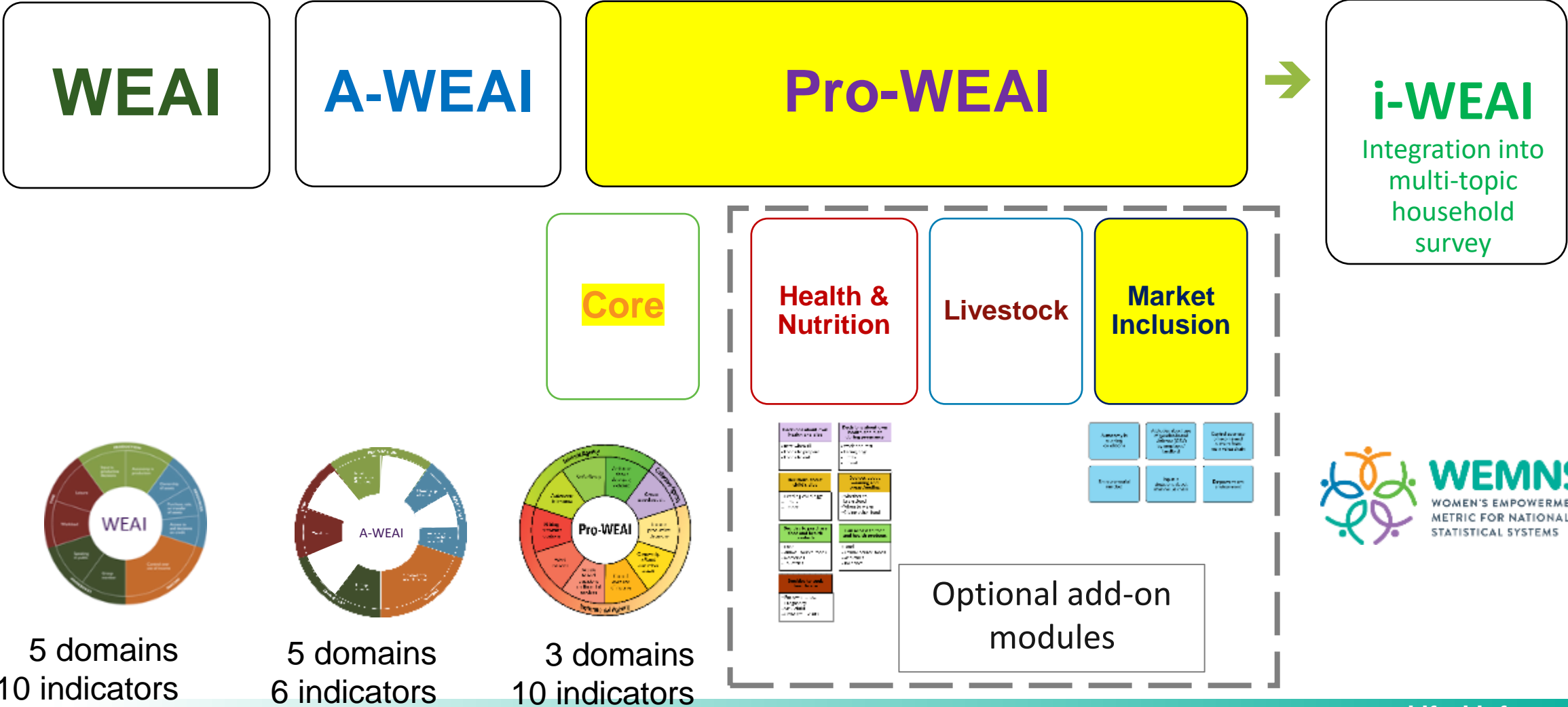
Increase in non-agricultural employment

Migration and urbanization



# Measuring empowerment and the WEAI family of indicators

Population-based surveys    Project-level impact evaluations



# Background on four studies

- **Philippines**

- Focus value chains: abaca, coconut, seaweed, swine
- 1600 households in 4 provinces (Sorsogon, Cebu, Bohol, Leyte)
- March – July 2017

- **Bangladesh**

- Focus economic activities: agricultural production, agricultural entrepreneurship, agricultural wage employment
- 1200 households in 5 districts in southeastern Bangladesh
- May – July 2017

- **Benin**

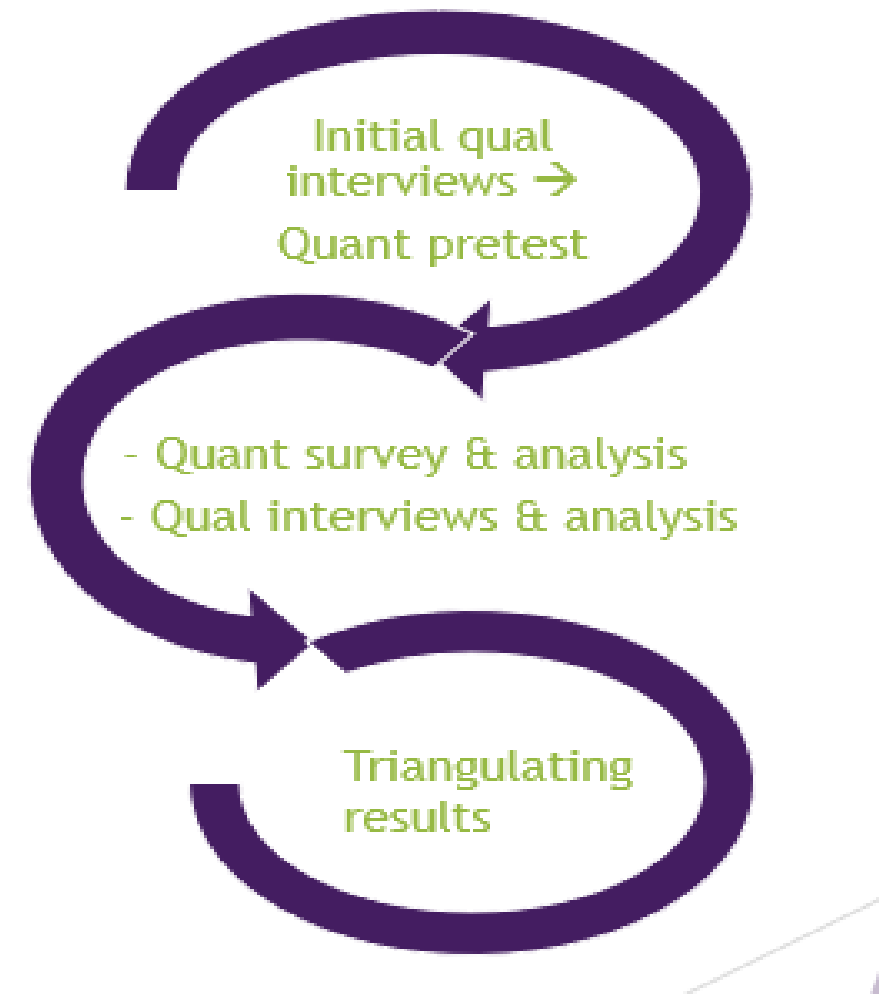
- Focus value chains: rice, soy, compost, poultry
- ~900 households in 2 departments (Atlantique, Donga)
- August – September 2019

- **Malawi**

- Focus value chains: fish, mango, vegetables
- 544 households in 5 districts (Lilongwe, Nkhosakota, Chitipa, Blantyre, Chiradzulu)
- September – October 2019

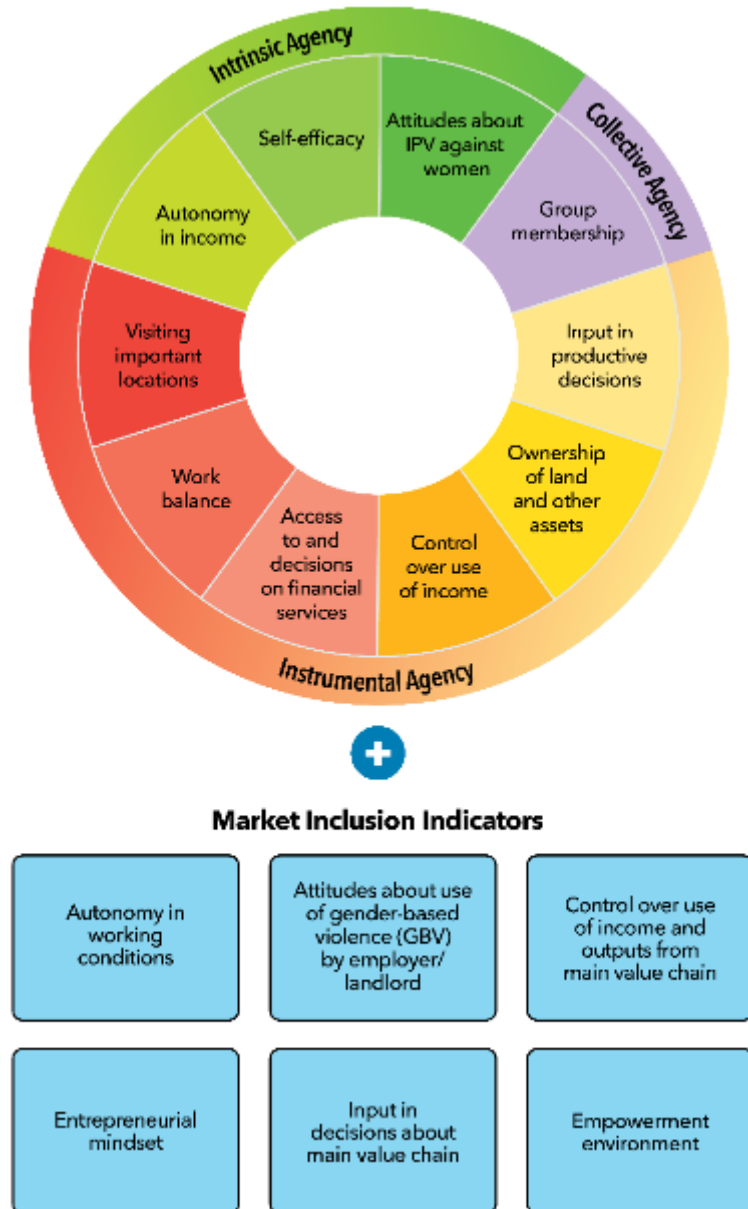
# Mixed Methods

- Robust approaches for both quantitative and qualitative methods
- Mixed-methods design was iterative within and across country studies
- **Qualitative methods**
  - Interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries and spouses, value chain actors (e.g., traders), government officials, extension agents, training instructors
  - Useful for identifying new potential indicators and understanding lived experiences related to indicators
- **Cognitive interviewing**
  - Refine concepts and item wording for new indicators
  - Benin and Malawi
- **Quantitative methods**
  - Household surveys—separate interviews with women and men
  - Source of data for developing indicators



# Pro-WEAI for Market Inclusion

- Pro-WEAI+MI tracks empowerment across multiple nodes of the value chain
  - Core pro-WEAI module plus new complementary indicators to investigate barriers to market access and inclusion for different value chain actors.
  - + dashboard of market inclusion indicators
- Validated using cognitive interviewing, qualitative work
- Enhanced ability to measure and contextualize empowerment and inclusion across value chains





# Market Inclusion Indicators



## Entrepreneurial mindset

*“Women have now realized that business is a way of life. If you look at a woman, you are looking at a whole nation. As women, we are encouraging more women to go into this business because we know it will change us socially, economically.” (woman, Malawi)*

## Autonomy in working conditions

*“If you have to plant rice in a paddy field, you have to work bending down all day long. It will tax your waist heavily. Whoever learned to do this work is doomed. It has become a liability. Since I have learned this skill, I cannot go do something else.” (woman, Bangladesh)*

## Attitudes about use of gender-based violence (GBV) by employer/landlord

*“She is being harassed by the landlord and she cannot act because the land is the source of her livelihood, so she just keeps quiet.” (stakeholder discussion, Philippines)*

# Market Inclusion Indicators

## Input in decisions in main value chain

*"I am capable of doing it [farming, going to the market to shop, getting a loan] myself so far. I do everything on my own will. There is none to stop me or to hold me back from doing what I do." (woman, Bangladesh)*

## Control over use of income and outputs from the main value chain

*"In coconut farming, once you earn you can already decide what important thing to do since you have the means to acquire or buy rice, food, and clothes for the children." (woman, Philippines)*

## Empowerment environment

- Access to reliable sanitation—including urination, defecation and handwashing facilities
- Sex and fertility agency—measures decision-making on childbearing and contraceptive use
- Sexual hostility in the working environment—perceptions of sexual hostility in the working environment

*"It's a private issue. But I can call the harasser to tell him to stop. If I go to denounce the person [in public], I can be the cause of the breakdown of his relationships at home. I wouldn't like or want that." (woman, Benin)*





# Recommendations

- Sampling strategy needs to be designed to capture the key actors in a value chain
- Market inclusion indicators cannot stand alone; they must be interpreted alongside the core pro-WEAI indicators
- Qualitative data collection is essential to triangulate findings and fill in missing gaps.
- Not all market inclusion indicators will be relevant for all value chains. Users should rely on contextual knowledge to select which market inclusion indicators to prioritize.



## Related papers

- Malapit, H., Ragasa, C., Martinez, E., Rubin, D., Seymour, G., & Quisumbing, A. (2020). “Empowerment in Agricultural Value Chains: Mixed Methods Evidence from the Philippines.” *Journal of Rural Studies* 76: 240–53.
- Quisumbing, A., Heckert, J., Faas, S., Ramani, G., Raghunathan, K., Malapit, H., & Pro-WEAL for Market Inclusion Study Team. (2021). “Women’s empowerment and gender equality in agricultural value chains: evidence from four countries in Asia and Africa.” *Food Security*, 13(5), 1101–1124.
- Ragasa, C., Malapit, H., Rubin, D., Myers, E., Pereira, A., Martinez, E., Heckert, J., Seymour, G., Mzungu, D., Kalagho, K., Kazembe, C., Thunde, J., & Mswelo, G. (2021). “‘It takes two’: Women’s empowerment in agricultural value chains in Malawi.” IFPRI Discussion Paper.
- Eissler, S., Diatta, A., Heckert, J., & Nordehn, C. (2021). “A qualitative assessment of a gender-sensitive agricultural training program in Benin: Findings on program experience and women’s empowerment across key agricultural value chains.” IFPRI Discussion Paper.