

Evaluation of the Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project, Phase 2 Gender and Empowerment Frameworks and Tools

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RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Agriculture for
Nutrition
and Health

Led by IFPRI



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Acknowledgments

This work was undertaken as part of, and funded by, the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH). It was supported by CGIAR Trust Fund contributors (<https://www.cgiar.org/funders/>).

Views expressed in this report belong to the evaluator and do not necessarily reflect official opinions of the program commissioning the evaluation.

The evaluator would like to thank all those who contributed to this evaluation, especially the GAAP2 core team, the GAAP2 project partners, and the funders. The evaluator is grateful to evaluation manager Amanda Wyatt of the A4NH Program Management Unit for her invaluable advice and support in the design and implementation of this evaluation.

Acronyms and abbreviations

A4NH	CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health
ATAI	Agricultural Technology Adoption Initiative
A-WEAI	Abbreviated Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
CEGA	Center for Effective Global Action
CultiAf	Cultivate Africa's Future Fund
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
GAAP2	Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project, Phase 2
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
HKI	Helen Keller International
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IPV	Intimate partner violence
M&E	Monitoring & evaluation
Pro-WEAI	Project-level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
RBE	Reach, Benefit, Empower framework
RFP	Request for proposals
SELEVER II	Soutenir l'Exploitation Familiales pour Lancer l'Elevage des Volailles et Valoriser l'Economie Rurale
ToC	Theory of change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WHO	World Health Organization
WorldVeg	World Vegetable Center

Abstract

Two key outputs of the Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project, Phase 2 (GAAP2) are the project-level Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (pro-WEAI) and the Reach, Benefit, Empower (RBE) framework. An e-survey was used to get a sense of awareness and use of the pro-WEAI and the RBE framework among a target population of potential users (A4NH program stakeholders). More than 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted with funders, implementers, and evaluators, mainly but not exclusively associated with GAAP2, to understand how tools were used at different stages of the program/project cycle, from influencing program objectives and outcomes to program/project design to impact evaluation. The evaluation found that even though the pro-WEAI and the RBE framework are relatively new and their use is not yet widespread, their use in projects is growing and they have contributed to changes in project priorities and in how projects seeking to empower women are designed and evaluated.

1. Introduction

This study looks at uptake and use of tools and methods from the Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project, Phase 2 (GAAP2), in particular the project-level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (pro-WEAI), a tool for measuring women's empowerment in the context of agricultural development projects, and the Reach, Benefit, Empower (RBE) framework, which helps project designers and implementers understand their gender objectives. This study is part of a series of evaluative studies and reviews commissioned by the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) to document lessons from both phases of its program (2012–2016, 2017–2021). Findings can inform both what agricultural research for development programs do and how they work.

The study is organized as follows. Section 2 describes the GAAP2 project and its theory of change (ToC). Section 3 reviews the research questions and methods. Section 4 presents the results of an e-survey of potential RBE and pro-WEAI users. The following sections look at influence at different stages of the program/project cycle, from influence on program objectives and outcomes (Section 5) to program/project design (Section 6) to impact evaluation (Section 7). These sections draw on both survey results and semi-structured interviews with survey respondents, GAAP2 participants, and other users of the GAAP2 tools. In each section, we seek to document influence as well as to identify factors that enhance or constrain uptake and use of RBE and pro-WEAI. Influence is illustrated with examples from specific projects mentioned by interviewees (see Annex 1). Based on these projects, we estimate the reach of the tools. Section 8 discusses the findings and their implications.

2. GAAP2

GAAP2 builds on the findings from the first round of the program (2009–2013), which fed into the development of the asset, social capital, and time-use components of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI).¹ The second phase of GAAP2 adapted and validated a measure

of women's empowerment that agricultural development projects can use to diagnose key areas of women's (and men's) disempowerment. GAAP2 also designed appropriate strategies to address deficiencies and monitor project outcomes related to women's empowerment. The main output of GAAP2 was the pro-WEAI.

Led by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), GAAP2 was supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and A4NH.

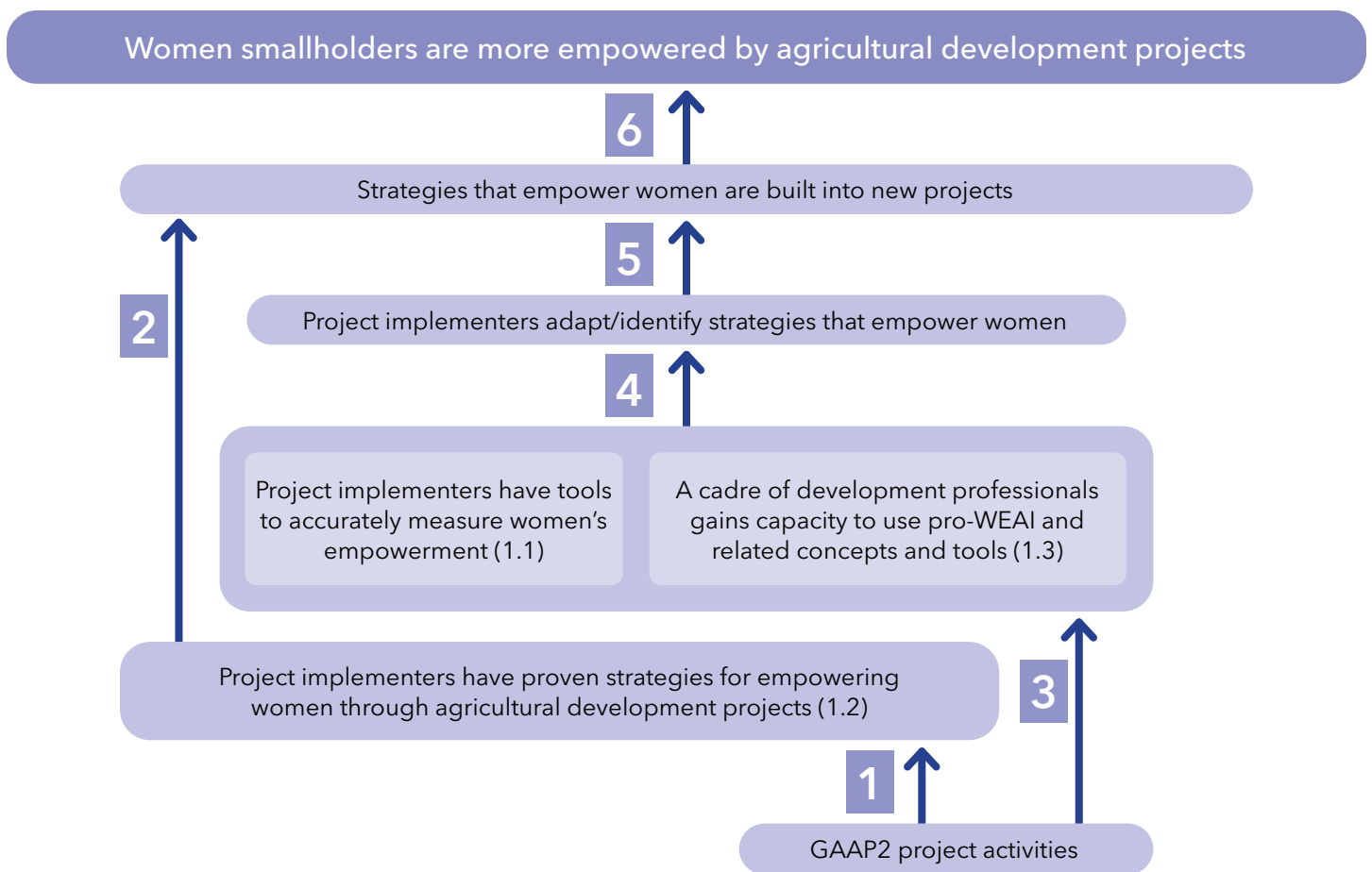
A key feature of GAAP2 was that the IFPRI research team partnered with implementers and evaluators on a portfolio of 13 agricultural development projects in South Asia and Africa south of the Sahara. These 13 projects, which focus on nutrition and/or income and have explicit women's empowerment objectives, were selected through a competitive call for proposals, which emphasized rigorous impact evaluation design. As part of their participation in GAAP2, the projects received top-up funding to integrate the initial version of pro-WEAI into their program monitoring and evaluation (M&E). GAAP2 researchers worked closely with the project teams throughout the process to ensure rigorous implementation and, at the same time, to validate the Index, for example, by including development and implementation of qualitative protocols (Meinzen-Dick et al. 2019) and conducting cognitive testing (Yount et al. 2019). On the basis of these validation exercises and the impact evaluations results, pro-WEAI was initially launched in 2019 (Malapit et al. 2019) and will be revised and re-released following the end of GAAP2 in 2021.²

The GAAP2 ToC describes how the GAAP2 activities (developing pro-WEAI and testing/validating it in the context of the 13 projects) were expected to lead to outputs including the Index itself, the impact evidence, and the cadres of people trained to use it (Figure 1). Those outputs were expected to contribute to better project design through incorporation of more effective strategies for empowering women into agricultural development projects. This would happen directly through the use of proven strategies or indirectly through use of the tools in project M&E.

1 Descriptions of the relationship between the versions of the WEAI and their differences can be found on the WEAI Resource Center site.

2 The most up-to-date research outputs from GAAP2 can be found on the GAAP2 website and on the WEAI Resource Center site.

FIGURE 1. GAAP2 theory of change



Source: GAAP2 proposal

To facilitate the identification of effective strategies for empowering women, the GAAP2 team compiled and analyzed the empowerment strategies of the 13 projects. The exercise revealed that while all projects had empowerment objectives, they did not always have clear ToCs explaining exactly how their activities were expected to contribute to those objectives. The results of the analysis (Johnson et al. 2018) not only helped projects refine their strategies but also led to the development of the RBE framework, which was first shared outside of the GAAP2 community in an IFPRI blog post and has more recently been updated and disseminated as an animated infographic.³ Table 1 shows the timeline for the development and dissemination of the earlier tools to measure women’s empowerment (WEAI and Abbreviated WEAI or A-WEAI) as well as the pro-WEAI and RBE.

TABLE 1. Key milestones in the development and dissemination of Pro-WEAI and RBE⁴

Milestone	Date and source
WEAI is formally launched	2012 (Alkire et al. 2013)
A-WEAI is released	2015 (Malapit et al. 2017)
Inception workshop for GAAP2	January 2016
Launch of RBE	2017
Pro-WEAI is released ("soft launch")	2018 Rome
Pro-WEAI Distance Learning Module is launched	January 2020
Animated infographic of RBE is released	March 2021
Final workshop held for GAAP2	April 2021
Updated version of pro-WEAI released	June 2021 (tentative)

³ It should be noted that data collection for this evaluation (e-survey and most interviews) were conducted before the RBE animated infographic was released. Therefore, we refer to RBE even though in the infographic the term "transform" was added to the framework.

⁴ See WEAI Resource Center (<https://weai.ifpri.info>) for details.

3. Questions and Methods

The key questions for this study loosely follow the program/project cycle (Table 2). To address these questions, we first undertook a brief e-survey of practitioners, policymakers, and funders who represent important target audiences for the GAAP2 tools. Respondents were identified from a list of individuals who have shown interest in A4NH and requested updates about its work.⁵ The results are intended to provide an estimate of how, and how widely, the tools are currently recognized and used among an audience of potential users.

TABLE 2. Research questions by stage of project cycle

Stage of project cycle	Key questions
Defining priority outcomes	Which funders and implementing organizations are applying the Reach, Benefit, Empower framework, and how? What implementing organizations are now trying to address empowerment in their programming?
Refining theories of change and project design	How have implementing organizations adjusted their programmatic theories of change to better address women's empowerment?
Measuring impacts	What funders and implementing organizations are using pro-WEAI for their impact assessment? What is the total value of investments using pro-WEAI-related metrics and measures?

To gain a better understanding of how users became aware of the tools, the factors that facilitate and constrain use of the tools, and outcomes associated with their use, we conducted 32 semi-structured interviews, four with respondents to the e-survey who indicated they would be willing to be contacted for follow-up and 28 with people associated with GAAP2 (funders, implementers, evaluators). These interviews

included people associated with six funders⁶ and with seven implementing organizations,⁷ and 17 evaluators who worked on 10 GAAP2 projects.

4. Summary of survey responses

The e-survey was short (nine questions) and designed to provide a sense of stakeholders' awareness and use of pro-WEAI and RBE, and included a question about the importance of gender in the respondent's work.⁸

Importance of gender. According to the results of the e-survey, 99 percent of respondents (71 of 72) answered yes to the question, "Is gender an important component of your work at your organization?" Ninety-three percent (67 of 72) answered yes to the question, "Is women's empowerment one of the outcomes your project/program/organization seeks to influence?"

Awareness. Thirty-six percent of respondents were aware of pro-WEAI (26 of 72), while 64 percent were aware of WEAI (46 of 72). This is not surprising, given that WEAI was launched in 2012. Thirty-three percent were not aware of any version of WEAI (24 of 72). Twenty-nine percent of respondents were aware of the RBE framework (21 of 72).

Use. Forty-two percent of those who were aware of pro-WEAI had used it (11 of 26).⁹ The most common use was for program/project design, followed by monitoring and impact evaluation (Table 3).

TABLE 3. Ways respondents reported having used Pro-WEAI

Use of Pro-WEAI	% (#) of users
Site characterization	18.75% (3)
Program or project design	50.00% (8)
Program or project review, for example for funding	25.00% (4)
Population or participant targeting	18.75% (3)
Program or project monitoring	43.75% (7)
Impact evaluation (baseline and/or endline survey)	43.75% (7)

Source: E-survey.

5 An invitation to participate in a survey on uptake and use of some of A4NH's recently developed tools for understanding and measuring women's empowerment in the context of development investments was sent by the A4NH Director to a subset of email addresses from the full mailing list in November 2020. CGIAR addresses were excluded. The invitation explained the purpose of the study and provided a link to the survey on SurveyMonkey.

6 BMGF, CEGA, GIZ, IDRC, USAID, and World Bank.

7 Trias, Grameen, Tanager, Heifer, World Vegetable Center, FAO, and Pradan.

8 The invitation to participate in the study was sent to 527 email addresses. Of these, 39 invitations were undeliverable. By the time the survey closed on December 1, 72 respondents had completed the survey on SurveyMonkey. This was a 15 percent response rate (72 of 488).

9 Five respondents reported having used pro-WEAI even though they said they had not heard of it. This is why the number of users in Table 4 is greater than 26.

Of those who were aware of RBE, 43 percent had used it (nine of 21). The most common use was for communication, followed by program/project design, portfolio assessment, and training (Table 4).

TABLE 4. Ways respondents reported having used RBE

Use of Pro-WEAI	% (#) of users
In the design of a program or project	44.44% (4)
In the review of proposals for programs or projects	11.11% (1)
As part of portfolio assessment or management	44.44% (4)
As part of training, for example of colleagues, grantees, project staff, or other stakeholders	44.44% (4)
In communication, for example with colleagues, grantees, project staff, funders, or other stakeholders	88.89% (8)
Impact evaluation (baseline and/or endline survey)	43.75% (7)

Source: E-survey.

Key findings: The overall response rate was relatively low and respondents were overwhelmingly already focused on gender and women’s empowerment. Awareness and use levels are consistent with what might be expected at this early stage of dissemination. Since the majority were not yet aware of pro-WEAI or RBE, there is significant scope to expand awareness. However, there may be limited scope to influence institutional priorities since empowerment is already an established objective.

5. Influence of GAAP2 tools on how programs and projects define their gender-related objectives and outcomes

The original GAAP2 ToC focused on projects that already included women’s empowerment as a target outcome and were looking for ways to measure their impact. When it became clear that not all projects had a clear understanding of the difference between focusing on women and empowering women, the RBE framework was developed to help project teams understand their gender-related objectives and relate them to their programming (i.e., strategies).¹⁰

A clear understanding of program objectives and their links to programming is important because accurately labeling what projects are doing and what they are trying to achieve can help improve the evidence base by more appropriately matching strategies and outcomes. For example, the results of an impact evaluation of a project that claims to be empowering women but has no empowerment activities and finds no impact on empowerment outcomes adds little to the evidence base. It could even be detrimental if it leads to a general impression that projects cannot empower women.

A clear understanding of gender objectives and their links to programming could also lead an organization to update or expand its gender objectives to bring actual objectives in line with intended objectives. If these changes lead to an increase in programming and resources focused on women’s empowerment, the impacts could be large.

In this section, we look at whether the GAAP2 tools helped organizations understand their gender objectives, and whether that understanding led to any changes in gender outcomes that the organizations are targeting in their programming, particularly a greater emphasis on women’s empowerment.

5.1 Funders

We interviewed representatives of six funding agencies. All knew about pro-WEAI, and five of the six knew about RBE. Two were funders of GAAP2 (BMGF, USAID), but all six had some connection to the GAAP2/IFPRI/WEAI team (International Development Research Corporation [IDRC], Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH [GIZ], Center for Effective Global Action [CEGA], World Bank).

Three interviewees worked at funding organizations that had “corporate-level” women’s empowerment outcomes, and three worked at funders that did not. Of the three that did, in two (USAID, GIZ) the respondents reported widespread and enthusiastic use of the RBE framework within their organizations. This use occurred among staff both overseeing (i.e., program officers) and implementing (i.e., project heads) projects, as well as with stakeholders such as the US Congress, partner organizations, and grantees. In addition to its role as a communication tool, RBE was also used by the funders as a diagnostic tool to assess where their current project portfolio fell in terms of *reaching, benefiting, or empowering*. The respondent from GIZ reported that, in the case of her program, a large multicountry assessment revealed that most of their projects were really “only” reaching women. USAID provided an example of how RBE was used to shift the focus of a potato value chain project involving private sector partners from reach

10 This led to the addition of an outcome 0 (project has an empowerment objective) in the GAAP2 ToC, which is not shown in Figure 1.

to *empower*. As a result of seeing RBE, the corporate partner embraced the idea of changing gender norms and working with men to change mindsets, even if it meant that they would likely reach fewer total women, albeit with deeper impacts. The project is currently operating in one state in India and will expand to another state, as well as to Pakistan, Colombia, and Viet Nam. RBE and a focus on changing gender norms will be part of that expansion.

In the case of IDRC, although the organization does not have an empowerment objective, the interviewee had used pro-WEAI to integrate gender objectives and activities into specific agricultural projects that fell under a 10-year partnership between IDRC and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, known as Cultivate Africa's Future Fund (CultiAF). The existence of a tool for measuring empowerment facilitated its incorporation into the projects. IDRC had also used RBE to organize an evaluation of its gender work, but no explicit outcomes from that evaluation were mentioned in the interview.

Another funder was identified through the e-survey and interviewed. CEGA recently launched a Gender and Agricultural Transformation request for proposals (RFP) as part of its Agricultural Technology Adoption Initiative (ATAI) that was informed by GAAP2 (and includes RBE). In this case, ATAI recognized that gender had not been a priority in their portfolio and wanted to change this, so their funding agency connected them with the GAAP2 team. Since the RFP had just been launched during this study, it is too soon to say whether it will lead to new studies on women's empowerment, but the RFP now explicitly calls for more than business as usual.

5.2 Implementing organizations

All of the seven implementing organizations interviewed were part of GAAP2. All were familiar with pro-WEAI but not all were aware of RBE as a stand-alone tool or framework. From the interviews, it was clear that the implementers understood the concepts behind RBE and used them to describe their organizations' objectives and their programming portfolios. For example, one interviewee said, "50 percent of our projects stop at *reach*." Unlike with some of the funders, this statement did not necessarily imply a desire to increase that percentage. One reason for this could be that, in the case of funders, gender specialists were interviewed for this evaluation, whereas in the case of project teams, that was not always the case.

Only two implementing organizations (Grameen, Trias) described changes in gender priorities that were linked to GAAP2. Grameen recognizes that benefiting and empowering women involves engaging with both men and women, and that men can also be disempowered. Changes are being made at the

organization and project levels to reflect this understanding. According to the respondent, GAAP2 and pro-WEAI contributed to these changes, but largely by validating their thinking rather than by introducing entirely new ideas.

In the case of Trias, the baseline pro-WEAI results for its Maisha Bora project revealed high levels of intimate partner violence (IPV). These results, and similar results from their evaluation partner's research in these same communities using tools from the World Health Organization (WHO) to assess IPV, motivated Trias to develop another project focused on IPV. Trias was able to raise money for it based on the pro-WEAI evidence. It has also shifted its organizational focus to empowering, rather than reaching, women, and has an inclusivity focus and inclusivity leader. The contribution of GAAP2 and pro-WEAI to this broader change is less clear.

Key findings: There is evidence that funders and implementers are using both RBE and pro-WEAI to better understand their gender objectives. In some cases, that use is contributing to changes in objectives. Four of the six funders provided evidence of actual or potential influence of GAAP2 tools on the share of programming focused on women's empowerment. Two of the seven implementing organizations provided evidence that the tools contributed to expanding the focus on empowerment at the organization and/or project level. Use of RBE (explicitly or implicitly) to characterize projects is also widespread, which should lead to more accurate project descriptions, more realistic expectations, and better-defined impact evaluations.

Based on our interviews, the focus on women's empowerment is enhanced because of improved understanding of what women's empowerment means and what it looks like. Both RBE and pro-WEAI are useful as tools for unpacking these complex concepts. The RBE is associated somewhat more with funding agencies; the pro-WEAI with implementers. This is likely because the implementers associated with GAAP2 have already internalized the concepts behind RBE.

These findings are an important complement to the results of the e-survey because they highlight that having a women's empowerment outcome at the organizational level does not mean that all the programming in the organization is targeting women's empowerment or that the organization has systems for monitoring how women's empowerment is changing. Rather, organizations, especially funders, seem to have a menu of outcomes to which projects can choose to contribute. That means that there is scope for increasing programming on women's empowerment both by increasing the number of organizations that have empowerment "on the menu" and by increasing the number of projects that "order" it. RBE and pro-WEAI appear to be contributing to both these changes.

So far, this shift is occurring among organizations that are quite closely linked to the GAAP2 team; however, there is evidence of spontaneous spread, especially for RBE.

6. Influence on program and project design and strategies

According to the e-survey, agricultural program and project design was the most common use of pro-WEAI (50 percent of users), followed by program and project monitoring (44 percent). This is consistent with the original GAAP2 ToC. There are two pathways through which this was expected to happen. The first is through use of “proven strategies” (see arrow 2 in Figure 1), and the second is through project implementers adapting/identifying their own strategies (see arrows 4 and 5 in Figure 1).

Eight organizations (three funders, six implementers) provided examples of using GAAP2 tools to make changes to their project design in order to increase the likelihood of contributing to women’s empowerment. In some cases, this followed from adding an empowerment objective to a project (as discussed in previous section). In others, it occurred in projects that already had empowerment objectives but staff had become aware that they were not on track to achieve them.

The examples¹¹ shared by interviewees include:

- GIZ added entrepreneurship to a project in India when their RBE assessment suggested the project might only reach and benefit.
- USAID added an empowerment objective to a potato value chain project as a result of RBE. The project reduced its scope to work more intensively with a smaller number of women.
- IDRC’s CultiAF projects added empowerment objectives.
- Trias revised the gender ToC for its Maisha Bora project when staff realized (and a midterm evaluation pointed out) that they did not have a clear gender strategy. However, they said a lack of resources prevented substantive changes in Maisha Bora project activities. As mentioned earlier, the evidence on IPV levels in the pro-WEAI baseline led to another project addressing that issue. The Trias staff members also mentioned that while the Maisha Bora approach led to positive impacts on women’s empowerment on some dimensions (i.e., group membership), there were other areas of disempowerment that were not addressed, which could lead to future programming changes.
- Grameen staff mentioned adding a focus on men. They specifically mentioned using resources from CARE for gender and power dynamics at all levels of the organization and with partners in large projects, but there may be other changes as well.
- World Vegetable Center (WorldVeg) is rethinking its home gardens model in Africa, where it may not be as effective as it has been in Asia. This is mainly due to nutrition findings, but the empowerment results also contributed. They do not have a clear empowerment ToC or outcome but were expecting to contribute to empowerment as part of the pathway to nutrition outcomes. Even though the interviewee had some doubts about whether pro-WEAI was the right tool, he felt the results were valid enough, especially in terms of identifying overall low levels of women’s empowerment in the area, to justify a rethink. WorldVeg has therefore redesigned their home garden intervention model by putting much greater emphasis on participatory adult learning methods and strengthening of community groups as they see these as key to achieving nutrition outcomes and empowerment. Showing what does not work is as important as showing what does work.
- Heifer Nepal became aware of more aspects of empowerment and now pays attention to these. For example, staff reported that they always pay attention to control over assets, but now also think about participation in decision-making in relation to agricultural activities, services, and inputs. The evaluator felt that Heifer is making changes such as building in a focus on markets, and that the pro-WEAI results may have confirmed things that Heifer already suspected. The results showed relatively small impacts at the household or group level, which could be because the lack of a market limits the potential for income from sale of products.
- Tanager is currently working on strategies for Soutenir l’Exploitation Familiales pour Lancer l’Elevage des Volailles et Valoriser l’Economie Rurale (SELEVER II), even though the program is already approved. One respondent from the implementing organization said that because they work through local contractors, they finalize project activities and strategies with them. She said they develop their own strategies internally, rather than relying on those of other organizations. Another respondent acknowledged that they are struggling to figure out how to adapt their

11 Among these examples, only the ones actually using pro-WEAI in some way for impact evaluation are included in the list of projects in Annex 1.

programming based on pro-WEAI results. She said it would be useful to have a guide that maps strategies to specific elements of pro-WEAI, such as was developed for WEAI.

- Pradan mentioned that they need to integrate new project activities to get at different dimensions of empowerment. The interviewee also talked about wanting to share their lessons learned so that others could avoid their mistakes.

There were two cases where projects did not make any changes or have any lessons learned from pro-WEAI or RBE. In both cases, changes – loss of funding, shift away from agricultural focus – were made during the course of implementation that reduced the relevance of GAAP2 work to the key objectives.¹²

Key findings: There is clearly evidence that pro-WEAI and, in a few cases, RBE are influencing project strategies. While there may be some examples of use of “proven strategies,” implementer adaptation is more common and pro-WEAI plays a key role. Changes to projects come from new insights about disempowerment (e.g., from pro-WEAI baselines), new insights about aspects of empowerment that had previously not been considered (“the logic of pro-WEAI” as one interviewee put it), and evidence from impact evaluation about what seems not to have worked.

It is too early to expect there to be “proven” strategies available that use pro-WEAI as the outcome measure. While the evidence base will continue to grow, it may be unrealistic to expect that any strategy will be truly “proven” any time soon. The home gardens model is a good example of how long it takes to build a good evidence base, and even then, it may only work in some contexts. It might make sense to move away from the terminology “proven strategy” to something focused more on a clear ToC toward women’s empowerment, for example “promising strategy.”

While there is some evidence that projects take ideas and evidence from other implementers (e.g., Grameen’s use of CARE resources on gender and power dynamics; World Vegetable Center’s reliance on evidence from Helen Keller International (HKI); Trias triangulating pro-WEAI baseline with research from their implementing partner, Savannas Forever), there is also a tendency for organizations to be proprietary about their programming approaches. This, combined with the lack of a strong evidence base to support specific strategies, argues for strong emphasis on supporting implementers to use their own pro-WEAI findings, from monitoring as well as impact evaluation, to make sensible design changes. Such support would also help implementers who reported struggling to understand what to do with their results. Some doubted

their own technical capacity to interpret and explain results, while others expected the evaluation partner to provide programmatic interpretation and were disappointed when recommendations did not seem feasible or consistent with what funders wanted.

To enhance the ability of one project to learn from another’s impact evidence, greater attention could also be paid to characterizing the “strategies” that projects are implementing so others will have a better idea of what was done and what it would take to replicate it. Johnson et al. (2018) identify four strategies for empowering women: distributing goods and services to women; strengthening organizations (formal and informal); building knowledge and skills; and influencing gender norms and attitudes. While these are still useful general categories and are being used in the GAAP2 synthesis paper, it would be useful for a project under evaluation to provide more detail about their empowerment strategies. There are many ways to build capacity, with different levels of intensity and different expected outcomes. Greater specificity on this as part of the evaluation could make the results more useful to others. While not all implementers would go this far, HKI has prepared a publicly available manual for its HKI Nurturing Connections module.

7. Measuring impact using pro-WEAI

Pro-WEAI was developed as a tool to measure impact in projects. According to the e-survey, impact evaluation is the second-most common use of pro-WEAI (44 percent of respondents). Using pro-WEAI in impact evaluation does not immediately contribute to development outcomes, but it can contribute to impact in the future by providing evidence on the effectiveness of specific programmatic approaches—and, potentially, strategies—and through validation of the pro-WEAI tool.

Through the interviews, we identified 26 development projects beyond GAAP2 using pro-WEAI for impact evaluation (Annex 1). While we were not able to get complete information about every project, some findings about how and why pro-WEAI is used in evaluations are:

- Examples of new projects come largely from funding agencies and evaluators. Use initiated by implementing organizations (e.g., in new projects) is less common, even where the implementer clearly benefitted from use of

¹² These observations came from evaluators. We were not able to talk directly with implementers in these two projects to confirm these observations.

pro-WEAI in GAAP2. Budget and capacity (in implementation and analysis/interpretation) seem to be the main factors driving this. Implementers often reported using “pro-WEAI inspired” rather than pro-WEAI based measures.

Beyond budget and capacity, implementers and evaluators also raised concerns about whether pro-WEAI was the “right” tool for their project. In some cases, this was related to the specifics of the project, like high levels of migration, or the fact that in value chain projects, it is not always easy to find and interview both household heads. There were also more general concerns about the type, number, and sensitivity of indicators measured. These will mainly be resolved through more empirical evidence from use of pro-WEAI, but capacity development efforts could increase implementer comfort with pro-WEAI by addressing such issues. USAID-funded work on an instructional guide for using pro-WEAI could be helpful here,¹³ along with an implementation guide that maps indicators to strategies.

- There are relatively few examples of the use of the full pro-WEAI. This generally happens when “encouraged” by funders, through a combination of carrots (providing funding to do it) and sticks (requiring it). Several interviewees mentioned proposing to use pro-WEAI but dropping some or all of it due to time and cost. The shift to phone surveys in 2020 during the COVID-19 global pandemic seems to have been especially detrimental to pro-WEAI. Several people asked whether a phone version could be developed.

Related to “sticks,” there were examples of funders asking (but not requiring) project implementers to use the pro-WEAI in projects that did not have women’s empowerment as a primary outcome (e.g., World Vegetable Center’s project funded by the Netherlands). Most people interviewed (funders, implementors, and evaluators) recognized that pro-WEAI should be used for projects with explicit empowerment objectives. Dissemination efforts could emphasize where it should and should not be used. Also, clarification on different versions of WEAI, which seemed to be a source of confusion for some people, will be needed.

- There is broad agreement that pro-WEAI adds value to the current toolkit in terms of being able to measure empowerment in agricultural development projects. That value is likely higher for organizations that did not previously measure empowerment than for those that were using existing measures such as decision-making questions (e.g., from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS),

asset ownership, or self-efficacy that were capturing at least some aspects of what is measured by pro-WEAI. Nevertheless, some people thought the versions used in pro-WEAI were improvements over previous, similar ways of measuring specific indicators.

People saw value in measuring a range of indicators to capture unintended consequences (even though some complained it was too long and then only used a subset of indicators in future studies). People also liked the intrinsic agency measures, and thought that requiring interviews with men and women is also useful because it makes people deal with gender.

Pro-WEAI’s specificity to agriculture was considered good for evaluations of agricultural projects, although this limited its use more broadly. In the future, it will be important to be clear that pro-WEAI and other related tools are for use in agricultural projects.

- Following on the previous point, there is a need for a pro-WEAI evidence base on how well the tool works, including both the individual indicators and the Index. How sensitive is it? What magnitude of changes can be expected? People saw this as different from an evidence base on effective strategies, though there is obviously some overlap. Such evidence is essential for knowing when to use pro-WEAI and when not to use it.

The database compiled for this evaluation includes 26 projects leveraging US\$82.2 million and reaching at least 576,000 people (Annex 1). It should be noted that these are underestimates since we were only able to obtain data on budgets for about three-quarters of the projects, and on beneficiaries for half the projects. Combined with previous estimates (and accounting for duplicate projects), there are currently 48 projects known to be using pro-WEAI in evaluations, leveraging US\$2.4 billion and reaching 10.5 million people.

8. Conclusion and recommendations

Pro-WEAI and RBE are still in early stages of dissemination and most examples of influence are closely connected to the work of the GAAP2 project team. Having said that, the project team has made considerable effort to spread the word on the tools, including not waiting for final versions and, as a result, influence has been significant. There is evidence that influence

¹³ Having such a guide is a step toward having pro-WEAI included in the USAID approved indicator list.

is growing beyond the contacts of the GAAP2 projects, at least among the main target population of people working on gender and women's empowerment in agriculture.

The main recommendations of this evaluation are:

1. Continue promotion of both tools. Innovative approaches to knowledge translation, like the animated infographic version of RBE, are promising ways forward. In the case of pro-WEAI, differentiating among the growing number of WEAI versions will help ensure that people know which version they are using and use the appropriate one.
2. Target promotional activities not only to impact evaluation specialists but also to M&E staff, project designers, and project managers. Like RBE, pro-WEAI is useful conceptually, and both its qualitative and quantitative tools are useful in project diagnostics and monitoring. Emphasis could also be placed on building capacity among users to interpret and explain pro-WEAI results.
3. Continue to validate pro-WEAI, including through comparisons to other women's empowerment metrics.
4. Continue to look for ways to shorten pro-WEAI, in particular so that it can be added more easily to project evaluations that measure a range of different livelihood outcomes. In addition, given that people are already only using parts of the tool, it could be useful to provide guidance on good practices for doing this in ways that maintain both data quality and comparability of findings. Some ideas mentioned in the GAAP2 final workshop were to maintain the conceptual distinction between instrumental, collective, and intrinsic agendas, or to collect data on fewer indicators but measure them exactly as in pro-WEAI.¹⁴
5. Consider replacing phrases like "proven strategies" and "identifying what works" with more nuanced language and approaches to supporting the design of more effective projects. GAAP2 recognizes the project- and context-specificity of impact evaluation results. Rather than identifying "what works," individual projects need to develop "strategies that take account of the context and a solid diagnosis of gender relations and women's constraints." (Ruth Meinzen-Dick, personal communication). Then, ongoing analysis of strategies could provide an opportunity to identify more generalizable findings. Also, in future GAAP2-like projects, it would be useful to characterize projects strategies/approaches up front, including activities and costs, so that other projects can get a better sense of how they work and how they could be implemented or adapted.

¹⁴ The GAAP2 final workshop was held virtually the week of April 12, 2021. The evaluator attended the workshop as part of this study and some ideas were incorporated here in the recommendations.

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Annex¹⁵

Project Title (development project)	Implementing organization	Country	Donor	Budget for development project(USD)	# beneficiaries	Full pro-WEAI or parts of it	Pro-WEAI influenced objective?	Pro-WEAI influenced project design?
Safe locally produced vegetables for West Africa's consumers (SAFEVEG)	World Vegetable Center CIRAD, WUR	Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali	European Union, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs	14,042,000		Full		
Tapala!	Trias	Tanzania	Belgian aid - Directorate General for Development Cooperation and humanitarian aid (DGD)	454,404		Part (IPV)	yes	
Market Access through Digital Innovation in India (MANDI)	Grameen Foundation India (GFI), Grameen Mittras (local female agents providing banking services)	India (Uttar Pradesh)	Walmart Foundation Grameen Foundation USA		12,000	Full		
Aquaculture: increasing income, diversifying diets, and empowering women in Bangladesh	WorldFish	Bangladesh, (Nigeria)	BMGF	12,452,943		Full but not optional parts		
A Win-Win for Gender, Agriculture and Nutrition: Testing a Gender-Transformative Approach from Asia in Africa	CARE	Burundi	BMGF	2,578,671	7,500			
Supporting women's agency and empowerment in East Africa	Tufts University and One Health Central and Eastern Africa in Uganda	East Africa Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda	IDRC (LVIF)	1,224,500		Full		
Advancing women's participation in livestock vaccine value chains	University of Florida	Nepal, Senegal, and Uganda	IDRC (LVIF)	1,232,400		Full		
Gender inclusive distribution systems for smallholder farmers in Kenya	University of Nairobi's Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies, the Cooperative University of Kenya, and the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO)	Kenya	IDRC (LVIF)	1,224,500		Full		
Transforming the vaccine delivery system in Ghana: identifying approaches that benefit women	CARE International Ghana ILRI	Ghana	IDRC (LVIF)	1,248,200		Full		
Satellite for Farming (Sat4Farming)	Grameen	Ghana				Full		
Landscape Conservation in Western Tanzania	Jane Goodall Institute, Pathfinder International	Tanzania	USAID			Part (intrinsic, qual)		
Reaching smallholder women with information services and resilience strategies to respond to climate change	Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India, GROOTS in Kenya, and Uganda's Africa Institute for Strategic Animal Resource Services Development (AFRISA) of Makerere University	India, Kenya, Uganda	BMZ PIM		30,000	Part (A-WEAI with the pro-WEAI time use module. FGDs but not pro-WEAI qual protocols)		
SPIR: Strengthen PSNP4 Institutions and Resilience	World Vision, the Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA), CARE	Ethiopia	USAID, PIM		500,000	Part		
Testing an Integrated and Innovative Women-Centered Homestead Food Production Model as a Means to Improve Food Security, Nutrition and Women's Empowerment in Cambodia for Future Scale Up	Helen Keller International Cambodia	Cambodia	BMGF Global Grand Challenges (Women and Girls)	1,330,398		Full		

15 the annex represents the evaluator's best efforts to compile and validate information from interviewees about projects. In most cases, we have incomplete information which is reflected in empty cells.

Project Title (development project)	Implementing organization	Country	Donor	Budget for development project(USD)	# beneficiaries	Full pro-WEAI or parts of it	Pro-WEAI influenced objective?	Pro-WEAI influenced project design?
Improving Agricultural Productivity and Resilience with Satellite and Cellphone Imagery to Scale Climate-Smart Crop Insurance	ACRE Africa KALRO, IFPRI, WUR	Kenya	IDRC/ACIAR Cultivate Africa's Future (CultiAf2)	26,000,000	25,000	Full	yes	yes
Gender inclusive youth entrepreneurship in Kenya	United States International University-Africa (Global Agribusiness Management & Entrepreneurship Center) Busara Centre for Behavioral Economics, KALRO	Kenya	IDRC/ACIAR Cultivate Africa's Future (CultiAf2)		Full	yes	yes	
Scaling supply of precooked beans for food and nutrition security	National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO), Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Lasting Solutions Limited, Community Enterprises Development Organization and CARITAS	Kenya; Uganda	IDRC/ACIAR Cultivate Africa's Future (CultiAf2)		Full	yes	yes	
Inclusive financing for scaling improved fish processing technologies in Malawi	Malawi's Chancellor College, the Fisheries Research Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture, WorldFish Centre, the Malawi Bureau of Standards, FDH Bank, and People's Trading Centre LTD	Malawi	IDRC/ACIAR Cultivate Africa's Future (CultiAf2)		Full	yes	yes	
User-driven approaches for productive smallholder irrigation in Mozambique	The Eduardo Mondlane University National Institute for Irrigation	Mozambique	IDRC/ACIAR Cultivate Africa's Future (CultiAf2)		Full	yes	yes	
INSFEED2: Insect feed for poultry, fish and pig production in Kenya and Uganda	The International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology, the United States International University-Africa	Kenya, Uganda	IDRC/ACIAR Cultivate Africa's Future (CultiAf2)		Full	yes	yes	
NutriFish: Harnessing dietary nutrients of underutilized fish and fishbased products	Makerere University; National Fisheries Resources Research Institute; NUTREAL (U) Limited; McGill University	Uganda	IDRC/ACIAR Cultivate Africa's Future (CultiAf2)		Full	yes	yes	
Implementation of a sustainable IPM program to combat fruit flies	International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE), Department of Research and Specialist Services, Zimbabwe, Zambia Agriculture Research Institute, Department of Agricultural Research Services, Malawi and the Eduardo Mondlane University	Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe	IDRC/ACIAR Cultivate Africa's Future (CultiAf2)	Full	yes	yes		
KhetScore: A cluster randomized trial on the impacts of using digital technologies to unlock risk-contingent credit for marginal farmers in Odisha	Dvara E-Registry	India	International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)	250,000	2,000	Part		
Lesotho Enterprise Survey	IFPRI support to MCC	Lesotho	MCC			Part		
Impact evaluation of Jigisémèjiri, the Government of Mali's social safety net program	Government of Mali with NGOs leading BCC and WFP distributing the preventive nutrition packages	Mali	Government of Mali, PIM, the European Commission, and an anonymous donor			Part		
Women's Economic Empowerment and Equality, Land Rights, and Agricultural Engagement in the PepsiCo Potato Supply Chain in West Bengal, India	TetraTech, Landesa	India (West Bengal) is first but will scale to other states and Colombia, Vietnam, Pakistan	USAID, PepsiCo	20,000,000		Full, with qual	yes	

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