



AG SECTOR COUNCIL | DISCUSSION SERIES

HELP WEAI HELP YOU: NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO UTILIZE THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN AGRICULTURE INDEX

Q&A TRANSCRIPT

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PRESENTERS

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Q&A

Julie MacCartee:

Great. Thank you so much to our presenters. We have about half an hour available for questions and answers so we hope that you ask plenty of questions, either specifically about the WEAI, or it's all right to ask questions more generally about monitoring evaluation for gender integration and agriculture.

So we'll take some from in the room and also a couple from online. But I'll start here in the room. And please state your name and organization if you don't mind.

Audience:

Thanks, Julie. Judy from the Office of Food for Peace. It's a very welcome development. One of the big constraints our partners found when they tried to apply the WEAI was of course the time it took and how long it was. And we already had a long survey that we were adding it onto. What I'm wondering about, this new pro WEAI is about multisectoral programs. As you know, Food for Peace is longtime multisectoral programming where we have value chain or dairy components, income objectives as well as nutrition health outcomes. And if you look at the USAID multisectoral nutrition strategy, of which BFS is a part we really are talking about agricultural growth as well as improvement in nutritional status. So it already is multisectoral in its conceptual framework.

So I'm wondering in the GAAP2 requirement if it's income, dairy, livestock, or nutrition outcome. What about programs that have both? Would they be eligible to participate?

Agnes Quisumbing:

Yes. [*Crosstalk*] short answer.

Julie MacCartee:

And I forget to mention Christa if you'd like to head up to the front to help answer some questions please feel free. And Emily, we welcome you to jump in as possible; we might also call on you for the Q&A but if you have something to say don't hesitate to jump in. We can hear you here in the room.

Emily Hogue:

Okay and I will – I'm going to stop looking at the chat box, then, because it does distract my attention. So I'll focus on the questions for now.

Julie MacCartee:

Great. Do we have an online question to bring up or shall we take one more on --? All right, well then to our online audience for a question.

Audience:

Yes, so we've had a very active online audience; a lot of people have been asking very technical questions, which it's been great to have Emily online to help answer those. But one question for the room – this is from Kartika Rana – I apologize if I mess up your name. She wants to know is it possible to use the WEAI as a tool to compare women's empowerment between women involved in more traditional crop production versus non-traditional export or commercial cash crops.

[Crosstalk]

[Off mic conversation]

Emily Hogue:

So I can start and respond, and Agnes, Grace, feel free to jump in. I think it would be very interesting and certainly the pro WEAI would be open to cash crops. There are several cash crop value chains in Feed the Future as well. So I think it's definitely a possibility. You would have to do some playing with your sample size to understand – to be able to compare women in one country in one context who are doing cash crops with those doing subsistence crops and you always also have the very real possibility of people doing both.

Julie MacCartee:

Great. Do we have another question or a comment to share about how you experienced some of these programs in your own work? I'll pass it off to Judy.

Audience:

I'm Judy Payne from USAID Bureau of Food Security ICT advisor for ag. I'm not an expert on gender nor on M&E but I'm very happy to know a lot more about that index. My question is, based on the comment at the very beginning, about empowerment increasing productivity by 30 percent or something amazing. How do we know that? And is that holding other resources constant? And have we seen that actually in some Feed the Future countries?

[Crosstalk]

Agnes Quisumbing:

I'll answer that. I think technically – so these were simulations which were done by FAO based on estimates of productivity differences, or yield gaps beginning in men's plots or – and women's plots, basically by surveying the empirical literature. So it's not empowerment, it is equalizing the resources which are applied by men and women farmers, so fertilizer, education, credit – it's basically equalizing that.

And so the FAO folks will say that it is a back of the envelope calculation. There have been more rigorous empirical studies using the ISA, LSMS ISA service which were just released in a special issue of *Agriculture Economics*. And the yield gaps actually range – they're quite large. I mean some of them cluster around 20 percent, but they differ by crop and by country. So it's actually quite contextual. So I think the information it provides is like a big overview. But you really need, I think, for the purpose of the program you would need to go at the country level and look at the gaps are in what specific crops.

Emily Hogue:

And that's one of the reasons that we're very excited just starting in this past year to have more sex disaggregated gross margins and yields data in our Feed the Futures programs so we can see by crop and by country. So we're just starting to be able to answer that question a couple years down the road.

Agnes Quisumbing:

I wanted to say something about the nutrition program question, though I don't remember who asked that. You had asked – I think it was Judy from

Food for Peace who asked that question. You had mentioned – so I answered the simple question which was so what about programs which have both income and nutrition interest. Of course they can participate and help to develop new indicators. But I think the important thing about recognizing the nutrition objective is that there may be things outside agriculture which affect a woman's, or man's, ability to – empowerment in – to affect nutritional outcomes. So some of them may have to do with, you know, reproductive health, freedom from gender-based violence, whether you're able – for example, in an extended household, to command resources, or you have to hand over everything to your mother-in-law. So lots of it's very contextual.

So this means that the effort in developing these indicators, the focus on nutritional outcomes, will have to be done together with nutritionists as well. And the GAAP2 team, that's how nutrition is on board. So we're actually quite excited about this possibility.

Audience:

Hi, thanks, I'm Faustino Wobuido with Bread for the World. I just wanted to thank you very much for the insights you've shared. We – Bread for the World released its Study 1500 Report, it was empowering women in agriculture, and one of the things we really studied exactly the WEAI to help us make that argument for that when women flourish we can end hunger.

And as we visited some of the countries that we had in the report some of the issues you talked about today, especially perceptions, really came up. I remember this one woman in Malawi who said the fact that she does not speak in public has nothing to do with the fact that her husband, you know, prevents her from doing so. And neither did she necessarily feel it was cultural it's just personality. Like some of us in this room might not feel comfortable speaking in public – I might be one of them. So I was actually thrilled to see that that indicator dropped because we struggled with articulating that.

And also that speaks to the issue of since you're just looking at the relationship between men and the female and the male in the same household. In the even that you found that a man felt equally disempowered or you asked the male who said they didn't feel empowered what do you do with that kind of information?

And my quick last question is: has there been any interest from some of the governments, Feed the Future countries, that are seeing the value or the findings from the WEAI and adopting those, maybe in their own national government policies? Or is it too early?

Agnes Quisumbing:

It's not too early.

Audience:

Good. Thank you.

Emily Hogue:

Hey Julie? I'd like to jump in, especially on the last question, but also on the earlier ones. But we definitely have already engaged with the government of Bangladesh. They had specific questions from very high levels about what

the findings were from the women's index. And so that's one case. There may be other cases that haven't gotten back to us about the use of the data but we do know that specifically in Bangladesh there was already great interest.

And we also have an interest in promoting it because we're not sure always that the data are – have reached the highest level, or the ministerial level where we might want to make sure that they're aware that we've collected the data and we're analyzing it. But that is a part of what we wanted to do through the abbreviated WEIA is create a tool that was perhaps more streamlined and can be used for national surveys. And we're working with the World Bank and FAO now to determine where we might be able to fit the women's index in to one of the living standards of measurement studies, integrated surveys in ag. So stay tuned for that but we are trying to integrate the abbreviated WEAI in one of the countries where we will probably help to fund the collection of the ISA survey.

Agnes Quisumbing:

So I also wanted to answer your question about what do you do if you find out that men are disempowered. I think it's a very important finding because agricultural development projects have to try to reach all farmers, male and female. And often if you don't address issues of male disempowerment it can have a backlash for the women in their households.

So we were quite interested, for example, to see that in Bangladesh, for example, group membership was a constraint of both men and women; speaking public was a constraint of both men and women. So you – there are some aspects of empowerment, of disempowerment, which affect both and it should be addressed by programming.

And I'm really glad that Emily brought out this – the receptivity of the government of Bangladesh with the WEAI findings. So IFPRI has been working closely with them through our USAID-supported Policy Research Strategy and Support Program and so they have really been very engaged in using the findings to ask us to help them evaluate some new pilot programs for more gender-sensitive agriculture.

Emily Hogue:

One other thing I wanted to comment on, because there were several questions in there, but was about the speaking in public indicator because I know we've gotten feedback about, you know, that wasn't the right indicator. And a couple of things related to that – it may not have been – we may not have had the right questions in there but it still – it's an extremely important dimension in terms of women having voice. And it's not just about whether her husband lets her speak in public; that's not really the point. There are structural constraints that have to do with the community and the overall society that can limit women's voice. It may not have anything to do with her husband directly.

But that's part of what we were trying to get at as well, but do women – is the way that the – you know, the social dynamics are impacting the voice and communication of women – are women actually able to speak up about issues that matter?

So it still is a very important dimension; we just may not have had the questions exactly right, especially for this survey. But it is something that I think that should be measured – we should continue to look for ways to measure it. And particularly in a project level adaptation of WEAI, that may be extremely important to the programming; you would want to test some ways to get at that dimension a little better.

Julie MacCartee: Great questions and comments. Thank you. And thank you for the answers.

We'll toss it back to our online audience for a question.

Audience: So Sarah Mills has a question for the panel. She says: "I'm interested to know about experiences of including questions pertaining to violence and self-esteem on empowerment." Does anybody on the panel have something to talk about in that regard?

Agnes Quisumbing: It has not been included in any of the WEAI questions because it was outside the domain of agriculture. But the people who have experience in doing this are the people who work on reproductive health and the demographic and health surveys. So maybe people in the room with experience can talk about that.

Krista Jacobs: And that's I think with the creation of the WEAI there was a deliberate choice for what do we need to be looking at and what is missing in terms of women's empowerment in agriculture. There are lots of other indicators that are – I would say sometimes more regularly collected than some of the indicators within the WEAI. So we didn't think we would be adding anything – we didn't think we would be filling a big gap since we were addressing women's empowerment in agriculture by adding in the self-esteem and the GBV as part of the WEAI. While yes, they are certainly relevant to women's empowerment in general – and agriculture, there were already ways of doing that that have been developed and validated.

Audience: Sarah Loche-Darceaux with NCBA CLUSA. I was just wondering, with your baseline, what your experience was in dealing with responses in surveying polygamous households. Any impact on multiple wives and how that might affect their empowerment?

Krista Jacobs: The way that the sampling was done for the WEAI was within one household a primary male – the primary male decision maker and the primary female decision maker were interviewed. So it was only one man and one woman per household. And it was kind of these self-identified primary female and male decision maker. So that would be – we wouldn't have information – we would only have information on one wife's empowerment. We would be aware that there are other wives in the household. And we could see, you know, given that you are in a polygamous household is your empowerment any different? But I don't there'd be information on which wife you would be, so we couldn't go that deep into it.

Agnes Quisumbing: It's an interesting thing to do, but it wasn't in the baseline.

Emily Hogue: When I think different countries treated the sampling different, though, because there was some context – and I – I can't remember which one – we had – you know, conversations with several missions but there are missions where the cultural context distinguished – the household included all of the different wives and there were other contexts where there were different households, depending on if you use the definition that we had in the survey for what constitutes the household which was people eating from the same pot where actually they did not all eat from the same pot. So therefore they were distinct households, and it might have affected the sampling strategy.

We do have some things written up on that – I can't remember it all right now – but we have addressed the question. And I know Chiara has a lot of information on it as well. So that might be something we could follow up on in writing.

Julie MacCartee: Interesting. Thanks, Emily. All right, pass it here.

Audience: Thank you very much. My name is Karin Garnier, I'm with USAID Center for Resilience. And my question is about if you've known or experienced using the WEIA with pastoralist communities. I know IFPRI is using WEAI in Kenya but I remember it being with a more high potential area. But maybe there was other extenders in the world. And just maybe to be firm for the earlier question about the difference in productivity, the FAO State of Food and Agriculture released in 2011 a lot of more details covering different crops and in different contexts.

Krista Jacobs: So for pastoralists I don't know of anything specific to pastoralists. I know that we have our Sahel group, who you probably know better than I do. I've met them a few times in Dakar. I know that they have recently done a survey which included at least part of the WEAI; I don't know that it included all of it. So that would probably be the closest thing to a pastoralist-heavy WEAI that I know of.

Emily Hogue: What we did in Ethiopia, the survey – the population-based survey in Ethiopia included the pastoralist populations, and what was done in Kenya as well, the north.

Julie MacCartee: All right, we'll toss it back to our online audience and then get a couple more here.

Audience: We have a question from Kashi Kaffa. Question is: "Is women's empowerment an outcome or a pathway to achieve a well-being outcome?"

Emily Hogue: That's a really great question. I'll jump in and then Krista, as a gender expert, if you want to say a little bit more about it for Feed the Future. But it definitely – we considered it both an outcome in and of itself. Empowerment is – it's a social outcome. It is related to social well-being, being empowered and seeing a quality in society. But it also is – and if you look at our results framework it is a step – it's a way of measuring inclusive ag growth, which is getting us towards poverty reduction and hunger reduction. So it is – we would consider it both.

We do – for Feed the Future it really was essential because of trying to reach that top level goal, but we recognize the value of empowerment of both men and women for the sake of empowerment and what it can mean for the community and society.

Audience:

Hi, my name is Diasmine De Champlain, I'm a student at Brandeis University and also an intern at IFPRI. So my question is for projects that are more interested in the interplay between climate change and agriculture what is your impression of where the WEAI stands right now? Is it a useful tool for these kinds of projects? Or is the pro WEAI a more useful tool? Thank you.

Agnes Quisumbing:

The pro WEAI doesn't exist yet. So by definition it's more useful. No, but I think that to make – let's look at the issue of climate change. You would have to develop modules surrounding knowledge and practice of climate smart agricultural techniques which are not in the current WEAI. So I think that this is a good example, actually, in terms of product adaptation, which is to perhaps develop some very specific modules which are related to particular activities and outcomes that your project wants to try to achieve.

So some of the existing WEAI modules, or indicators, are going to be very highly correlated with climate change adaptation. For example whether you have control over resources, whether you can make decisions about agricultural production. But there may also be some specific practices which are not captured, and that's probably going to end up being developed in an add-on module which can be part of your specific project, but for comparability purposes might not be included in comparisons with other projects.

Krista Jacobs:

And I think in addition to the two that Agnes mentioned time use and workload is something that as you do know, climate smart agriculture is that increasing or decreasing the amount of time you're spending. How is it affecting your allocation? And also how is climate change itself perhaps affecting women's and men's time allocations. And can your project start to see some of those shifts.

Audience:

My name is Justin Schweigel, I'm working on the Land Topic and the Enabling the Business of Agriculture project at the World Bank. And I was just wondering, hearing some of the responses about certain things that are just related to cultural practices and societal pressures I was wondering those seem difficult to change through specific policy reforms. And if – I was curious if the indicators and questions were designed with policy reform in mind, and if so I heard there's been interest in Bangladesh to their scoring or their performance on these indicators. And are they addressing specific policy reforms that were envisioned if that's the case.

Julie MacCartee:

Any insights from our --?

Emily Hogue:

I'll let Agnes and Grace talk about Bangladesh. I'll make one point. So we know that there, especially around land and assets and property there's not sufficient information period in terms of does data exist. And it's also not

standardized and with the rigor that we would need. And this is the global issue in women's property rights.

So I think one contribution of the WEAI, what might not have been intended, to influence land policy because it is a way to start to get that information on ownership, access and control. It can definitely make a contribution just because now people can have the numbers in front of them.

Grace Hoerner:

Yeah, I would say the WEAI definitely was not intended as a tool to drive specific policy reforms but rather provide information that then could be used to kind of determine priorities and determine where reform or policy reform efforts should be focused. But to your point about kind of the – how difficult it is to change some of these things through policy and then also the – how long it takes to have policy reform I think there has been an acknowledgement that the WEAI results will definitely kind of need to take some time to reflect some of these outcomes that may have been generated through some of the insights gathered, and that we can't necessarily expect to see changes, you know, within a few years when we collect the WEAI data.

Audience:

[Inaudible].

Julie MacCartee:

Well we only have about five minutes left. I think we can probably squeeze in two more questions. But I just wanted to ask everyone to fill out the surveys on your seats before you leave. They just help us improve these events for next time. So any comments you want to fill in or opinions about what you like, what you don't like about our ag sector council seminars that's very helpful to us. And so I'll throw it back to our online audience and get one more in here.

Audience:

Thanks, Julie. So a few different people have been asking about this, but Danielle De Franco said in areas with high out-migration of men what other modifications would you propose for the WEAI?

Krista Jacobs:

I do know the China study actually that we found in the Google search looks at effects on women's decision making as a result of some of the migrations of men into urban areas in China. But I think that they – to go to Agnes' point, about adapting the WEAI in such a way that it might not be an omelet anymore. I think that because they were more looking at women specifically and not the women and men comparison it may lose some of that essential WEAI-ness.

Agnes Quisumbing:

So let me answer this question actually quite specifically because we did, Hazel and I, actually work on a study in Nepal, which has very rates of migration. So in our analysis we ended up doing analysis separately for households with male out-migrants and households where men were co-resident. And in many cases we ended up just looking at the 5DE, the five dimensions of women's empowerment, rather than the complete WEAI precisely because of the very high proportion of male out-migration. Nevertheless we did get very important findings out of just analyzing the women's 5DE.

The other thing that is also interesting to look at – and we did not have enough information to do this in Nepal – is to look at what, if you have a senior woman and a junior woman – so for example in many of these areas where men out-migrated the mother-in-law was present, and we didn't have sufficient information to look into that dynamic but I'm sure it will be quite interesting to go back and look at these qualitatively.

Grace Hoerner: But that could be an example where if you know that where you're going to be working does have a high proportion of male out-migrants, that you can in a pro-WEAI kind of setting ask questions about who else in the household is making decisions. Are the decisions we need to be asking about any different.

Julie MacCartee: Question?

Audience: My name is Enya Magarinska from CNFA, and my question is about the pro WEAI, looking ahead to the pro WEAI and thinking about adapting – do we get to project-specific the vine, and the different beneficiaries that exist in projects. So a project with a women's empowerment component might have different levels of beneficiaries the way in which the activities actually direct effective beneficiaries, whether they're more direct or less direct. And I was wondering how that affects the sampling for the surveys. From which level is the sample selected?

Agnes Quisumbing: I think that's going to depend on the project's own M&E plan. So I think the project might want to – so some projects are going to have very well-developed impact evaluation plans. And that will really help you try to tease out impacts. Some of them may only have following people who are currently in the program. And what I actually would urge project people is really to make an effort to follow the same individuals through time, even after they've left the program because many times projects make the mistake only of finding out about people who are currently in the program and not those who have left.

So if you for example, let's say that your people who are currently in the program they become empowered; they leave the program. Then next year you do a survey of the people who are currently in the program who just started the program. So they're going to end up looking worse, it's like if your empowerment is going down through time it's – but it's because you're not – because you're looking at a cohort of new people. And so you're really – I've seen this many times in a lot of smaller organizations which don't think these measurement issues through. And so I think that implementers need to work with their M&E folks to really figure out what's the best way of tracking progress as a result of the program.

Julie MacCartee: Okay, well with that I will go ahead and wrap things up. Thank you so much to our wonderful presenters for everything you've shared today. Thank you to the KDAD project for managing the webinar and all the logistics and kind of elements for this seminar. And most importantly, thank you to all of you who intended in person and online. We really appreciate your attendance and your feedback. And we encourage you to

always stay engaged with Agrlinks.org. Everyone here is invited to share information through that website, through that platform to help reach other ag development practitioners. It's open to everyone in the ag development space. If you have any questions about it come see me. And please take any food that is remaining outside. We don't want to have any leftovers.

So we'll see you next month, hopefully. Thank you.

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