



AG SECTOR COUNCIL | DISCUSSION SERIES

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

AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

SEPTEMBER 16, 2015

This document was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by the Feed the Future Knowledge-Driven Agricultural Development (KDAD) project. The views expressed are those of the author and do not represent the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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PRESENTATION

Julie MacCartee:

Good morning everyone. Thank you very much for coming. My name is Julie MacCartee and I'm a knowledge management specialist with the USAID Bureau for Food Security, and I'll just be facilitating our seminar webinar today.

I would like to welcome you all to the September installment of the Ag Sector Council seminar series titled: "Help WEAI Help You: New Opportunities to Utilize the Women's Empowerment and Agriculture Index". This seminar series, the Ag Sector Council, is a product of the USAID Bureau for Food Security and implemented by the Feed the Future Knowledge Driven Agricultural Development project, or KDAD.

We hold these events monthly, sometimes with an in-person component as we have today, and sometimes as webinar-only. And all of them are recorded and archived on the Agrilinks.org website. So if you would like to see all of our past seminars for the past four years, approximately, they are on Agrilinks. And we'll also be sending you an email with a recording of today's webinar in case you'd like to share it with your colleagues or review any of the content.

So before we embark on a really interesting discussion on monitoring and evaluation of gender integration and women's empowerment I have a few quick logistical items. First, we always ask that people silence your cell phones here in the room, just so that we don't interrupt the speakers. So I'll silence mine as well.

Second, we will hold about a half hour, or hopefully a bit more for questions and answers but we ask that you hold your questions until after the presentation so that we can pass around this microphone and make sure that our webinar audience hears your questions, make sure they're in our transcript and the like.

Although if you're joining by webinar we encourage you to post your questions throughout the seminar. And we actually have a featured webinar contributor today: Chiara Kovarik, with the International Food Policy Research Institute, who will be helping answer some of the questions online.

So with that we want to dive into the content. So I would like to introduce Grace Hoerner, who will be giving our introduction today. And Grace is a presidential management fellow, currently with the USAID Bureau for Food Security's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning team and her home position is with the U.S. Global Development Lab's Center for Development Innovation. So Grace will kick us off.

Grace Hoerner:

Thank you, Julie. And thank you all for joining us today, both in-person and virtually to discuss monitoring and evaluation of gender in agricultural and food security projects, and particularly the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index, or the WEAI, as you will hear it referred to throughout the day.

So I know some of you are very familiar with the WEAI, perhaps using the data in your own programming or even collecting it yourself, while for others of you this may be the first time that you're learning about the tool.

So I have kind of an introduction for the WEAI novices. Despite the very prominent role that women play in agriculture in many developing countries there are persistent gender gaps in access to productive resources, in group membership, in time availability, in social norms around decision making. And yet at the same time there's consistent and compelling evidence of the strong linkages between women's empowerment and agricultural productivity.

It is estimated that if women had the same access to agricultural resources that men do they could increase their yields by 20 to 30 percent. So the good news is that that represents a great opportunity to raise overall agricultural output in developing countries through the reduction of gender inequality estimates of 2.4 to 4 percent. So therefore it's really essential that we all ensure that our programming is responsive to the actual situations of both male and female farmers. If agricultural project design does not fully understand these gender gaps and these differences in constraints that are faced by men and women, then projects will be less impactful.

Recognizing this, Feed the Future has made reducing gender inequality and empowering women a key component of its strategy. But in order to do this we needed a way to measure, understand and track those differences. And it's to fill that need that the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index was created.

Designed, developed and tested for Feed the Future by USAID, the International Food Policy Research Institute, or IFPRI, and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, or OFI, and launched in 2012 the WEAI measures women's and men's empowerment and inclusion in the agricultural sector.

The WEAI is a survey-based index, so it's not based on aggregate statistics or proxy indicators or secondary data. It uses interviews of men and women from the same household, asked the same questions to robustly capture intra-household and intra-community gender dynamics and compare the relative empowerment of women and men within households.

The WEAI focuses on five standardized domains of empowerment within agriculture, which you'll hear more about later that are designed to be applicable across countries and across contexts.

Now the WEAI is an essential component of the Feed the Future monitoring and evaluation system. So for performance monitoring

purposes the WEAI is collected every few years in Feed the Future focus countries in order to track changes in relative inclusion of women that may be resulting from the initiative's interventions.

It's included in a large population-based survey that covers a representative sample of the geographic areas where Feed the Future activities are concentrated. So based on data that's collected in 2012 and 2013 – and a baseline report is available that summarizes results for 13 countries. Data collection is currently underway for a second time as a part of the Feed the Future interim surveys.

And in addition to its use in monitoring USAID missions have also used the WEAI as a diagnostic tool, so utilizing its insights to identify the domains where women and men are most disempowered and men designing or adjusting activities to either focus on these areas or devise strategies that can overcome the constraints identified.

But it's not just USAID who has used the WEAI. We are aware of over 40 cases of organizations using the WEAI around the globe. A Google search has yielded over 16,000 hits for Women's Empowerment in Agriculture index, including surfacing a study in China that we were not aware of that was using the WEAI. So that's kind of neat, and shows the breadth and the reach of this tool in its short lifespan so far.

The WEAI has been collected, calculated and analyzed as a variable in impact evaluations, as part of gender assessments in project design, in academic research, looking at cross country comparisons, women's empowerment and its linkages to various factors.

And these projects have really interestingly modified the WEAI in various ways to fit their respective needs. So either choosing only the domains that are the most relevant, adding new domains entirely specializing existing domains to focus on particular crops or interventions.

So we are really excited about this proliferation of uses of the WEAI and it's made clear how important it is that the tool is responsive to all of these different purposes, interests, and demands.

So with that today we're going to be introducing new versions of the WEAI that respond to this feedback that we've received and recognized all the different ways that you can use the WEAI and fill needs in your own programming.

So I would like to introduce our two speakers today: Emily Hogue is joining us remotely. She is the team lead from Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning with USAID's Bureau for Food Security, where she oversees efforts related to accountability and learning for the Feed the Future initiative. And Emily will discuss in greater detail the origins and continued evolution of the WEAI over the past few years.

And then we will hear from Agnes Quisumbing, a senior research fellow at IFPRI in the population health and nutrition division, and she'll be

introducing the new abbreviated WEAI and project level WEAI, as well as the WEAI community of practice, and sharing how your projects can be involved in those efforts.

And Emily and Agnes are some of the masterminds behind the WEAI who have been there since the very beginning, so we're very lucky to have them with us today.

And then for the question and answer session we will be joined by Christie Jacobs, a gender advisor here with the Bureau for Food Security. And as Julie mentioned for our webinar participants Chiara Kovarik will be answering questions online for our remote participants.

So as you listen to our speakers today I hope you will think about how your USAID mission, your organization, your projects could utilize the WEAI in any of its various forms to improve the design and monitoring of gender inclusion in your own programming. So I encourage you to take this opportunity to ask any and all questions during the question and answer sessions, from the minute to the broad, that you may have about this tool, as well as monitoring and evaluation of gender more broadly. So thank you very much, and with that I will turn it over to Emily on the phone.

Emily Hogue:

All right, can you hear me? I just unmuted. Yes? Okay, thank you.

Well hello everyone. I am glad to be on the phone here with you. I'm sorry I couldn't be there in person but it seems like we have a pretty good audience on the phone anyway. So we're joined electronically. And it's good to be talking to you.

My part for today is to take a step back and talk about some background in the women's index, walk you through the early life of the index, and in doing that talk about sort of all we've been through, all we've learned with the index.

And to do this I'm going to use the analogy of having a baby and raising her up through her teenage years. That's about where we feel like she is in terms of age. She's grown a little bit in the last few months so maybe we'll – looks like she's around 18 or 19, sort of getting close to that 20-year mark.

But the two images you see on the slide are snapshots of moments in her life. The one on the left is the brochure of when we launched the index, initially rolled it out to the public and the one on the right is the report from the baseline, only we had results from 13 of our focus countries. And that's sort of farther in towards her adolescence. So I'm going to walk you through the women's index from conception to adolescence today.

As Grace said, I have been working on the index since its start. I started with the Bureau for Food Security in 2010 and when we were in the early stages of Feed the Future and creating the monitoring and evaluation system. So I have had the joy of working on this project now for five years, and it really has been – it's been a wonderful opportunity.

One of the things that excites me, just in the chat box we were seeing several graduate students that were talking about how they're going to use the women's index in their master's research or their dissertation research. And seeing that is still – just every time we see one more person using it it's really inspiring to see how far this has reached and what we're able to do in terms of building a community around this.

So as I go to the slides – for all the slide there will be an image in the upper right hand corner that show the stage of life that I'm talking about for the women's index in that moment. And a little background on why I'm using the analogy. We've used this, those of us on what we call the WEAI team, those of us that have been working on its development since its inception. A lot of – we've looked at it a long time and we really do feel like it is a child; we joke about that.

But we've put so much love and time into it. And we really want to know that we've raised her well and we've brought a child into the world that's going to make a contribution to this world. That's a lot of times how we think about it. But it's also a great analogy because as it is often said it takes a village to raise a child. And many of you have really been part of her upbringing and we can share in that together.

So from the start – this conception, as you can see, from the picture in the upper right corner – and I'm going to give you some background on why we decided to conceive. And I'll tell you when I was making this presentation that was the least racy picture I could get when I googled images of conception, okay? So that's a little explanation of that image. But it's pretty scientific so I tried to stay with that one. But this is some theory behind Feed the Future that set the stage for why we decided to create this index.

So on the right you see the target-like image, and that's the overall goal of the initiative, which is to reduce poverty. That's one of them, to reduce poverty and hunger, but reducing poverty through inclusive agricultural growth. That's one of the goals of the initiative.

But how we would do that is through – if you look over on the left there are several boxes. And these are some of the key tenets of Feed the Future. We focused geographically. We focused on increasing productivity in a few key value chains in each country where we worked. We were working on national policy reforms, leveraging the private sector to bring in the private sector resources to ensure sustainability. And then strengthening country systems.

And through those – those are some of the actions but, you know, there are various others. Those are five key ones. We would transform local economies through increased ag productivity, trade and jobs. But if we were going to transform anything we knew we needed to be inclusive of the populations in those local economies. And we need to include a large number of the actors in the areas where we were working. And women are a big part of that. Having an economic growth strategy they're usually over 50 percent of the population where you're working and making sure you're

engaging women in ways that they are not just increasing their numbers and how you're working with them also the quality of how they're engaging the economy. So that is the – some of the theory behind where women fit into Feed the Future, and how we want it to be inclusive in growth.

Which takes us to what I'm going to – for this analogy I'm going to refer to as the family tree. Now in actuality if you're familiar this is the Feed the Future results framework. But you can see where the women's index fits in relation to the brother, sister and cousin indicators. And the women's index is in that red explosion-like image there drawing. She is an indicator for inclusive ag sector growth, which is one of the high level objectives.

But you could see where the other indicators reside and, like I said, a brother and sister and cousin indicators. Then – and those are all in the white boxes for the – in the indicators framework. And then you could consider that the objectives under the results framework which are in the colored boxes, the blue and the green boxes, those might be the parents and aunts and uncles for the purpose of this analogy. So that's – that's where she fits in the family.

So that takes us to in utero. We had decided to conceive and then we have – we have this baby that we're – that is being developed. The first thing we did is USAID determined five domains and those were, to make a long story short, developed – those were discerned or pulled out of the strategies for Feed the Future. We looked through the strategies, what we're intending to do in the countries who were working for Feed the Future. We also did a review of the literature, made sure, you know, how these connected with the literature. And we came up with these five domains, which Grace already named before.

After we had the five domains we started working with IFPRI and Oxford to develop the index and the tools, we often call it the WEAI team and that's probably how I'll refer to it if it's referred to again in the presentation. So we developed questionnaires, we piloted the instrument and we constructed the index – this is for a large study Oxford helped us do because they have the experts in this methodology that's used.

So within the five domains we had ten indicators – you could compare that to a baby's got ten fingers, ten toes sort of thing. And then we finalize the women's index survey. And that all happened roughly in 2011.

So that takes us to the birth of our baby, which was in 2012. WEAI – the WEAI was launched in February of 2012 at the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women meetings. There was a high level panel with – we had all of the partners represented and we also had key colleagues from some of the countries where we were working. We had the minister of women and children affairs from Bangladesh was present as well. And that's the brochure for our original launch.

Right after that – well actually right around that time we started collecting the index for baselines. And that started in fall of 2011 in Bangladesh and then it rolled through the other 19 countries from there.

So as we collected the baselines that took us into what I'll compare to the toddler years, and the joys and the woes of the toddler years. And for all of you who are parents who've had toddlers you will understand, and hopefully appreciate, this part of the analogy.

So to start with the joy. We had a lot of discovery during this period. And one of the things that we quickly discovered was that this wasn't just a good monitoring and evaluation tool, or monitoring tool which – the original intent was to track change over time.

But it was also a great diagnostic tool that collected key data for understanding how the issues and constraints of women's empowerment and gender equality in areas where we were working – and gave us more data than a lot of times we ever had for some agenda assessments that we did with those programs. We discovered the use of the diagnostic tool. It was really great. It was like our toddler was learning to count or something. There was some new skill that our toddler had developed.

Then we got feedback from a lot of the countries where we're working that women respondents felt value just by having the survey, which was interesting. So kind of like our toddler was polite and kind; she was well-mannered, made people feel happy.

Then we started hearing a lot about how other organizations were starting to adapt and adopt the WEAI. They were taking it on and making it applicable to their programs. And that wasn't something we'd originally thought a lot about, but it makes sense. And we were very happy that that's happening. And it was like our toddler was inspiring other people to have kids, which is probably the greatest compliment you can have, right, when your toddler makes other people want to have kids.

But then there were some woes. And the main woe that we were getting at first was we're getting feedback that it was too long. We knew when we developed it it was a pretty hefty sort of thing there. It wasn't going to take just ten minutes. So it did take some time and it would take some resources to do. But depending on the situation that could be very problematic. So we took that like our kids was sort of out of shape. The other kids had to get out of the way when she was coming down the slide because she just – it was just too big and she just wasn't working for some of the – in some of the places, or she was posing some problems.

Then there were some questions or dimensions that were problematic. They just didn't work – sometimes they didn't work in certain contexts, sometimes they were just not – they're not working in a lot of context so it wasn't just cultural, it was something related to the questions that we needed to refine. So it was like our kid was tough to understand – it didn't react well in certain situations.

And then the last one was we heard, as we got to data collection, that partners had trouble calculating the WEAI. It's a complex tool and we know that. But that was posing some practical problems. And that – we

took that like our kid had a complex psyche that kept people afraid. It kept people sort of staying away from the kids because they couldn't understand her.

But those woes stayed with us past the toddler years a bit. We knew we needed to address some of them over the long term. And the last one we have largely addressed, the creation of the WEAI Resource Center, which is housed at IFPRI, that developed materials to support it, helped with technical assistance to actually calculate it and provided support to partners.

But the first two woes were ones we needed to address through something a bit more invasive. We would have to do something to make the questionnaire not as long, field time not as long, and we'd have to address some of those problematic questions.

So then we got to school age and all of its wonders. And those are the, you know, our fresh results. And our child had learned her manners, she could cope with her emotions a little better than maybe in the toddler years, and she was off to integrate in the world a bit more. And if you look at the picture in the upper right corner – wouldn't you know it? – our kid was a total nerd. But she was always raising her hand, had to try to answer the question. But despite her intensity she's still really, really adorable.

During this period we got to see findings from our baseline data as they were coming in and we were learning so much and it was so amazing, some of the stuff we were seeing. Also partners had adapted the WEAI and had results to share of their own. And they sometimes created new domains and new calculations, and that was something to see, both substantively with the content about women's – the constraints to women or how women were engaging in ag, but also understanding methodologically and mathematically how the index could be adapted. And this is when we really started to learn even more from the WEAI. And she brought us home new information every day about the constraints when we were facing in different contexts.

So then that took us up to adolescence and all the learning came together and we got a more complete picture of all that the index was and what she could do. And we had the – so the learning came together from our complete picture.

And we had the women's index baseline report, which we rolled out in May of 2014. And through that we could communicate findings on women's empowerment from 13 countries but the data were rolling in for nearly 20 countries – we had 19 in total that we had data for.

And we had findings like the greatest constraint on women's empowerment – women in agriculture was a lack of access to credit and power over credit-related decisions, excessive workloads or constraints around time use, and a low prevalence of group membership – women not really engaged in groups, and lacking social capital.

Another big finding was that constraints dominate certain regions. Like group membership is a primary constraint in Asia, and credit issues are more of a constraint in East Africa, and workload was a greater constraint in Southern Africa. And one of the things about the indexes, because we were testing across all these countries, we could see how they were socio-culturally specific, or how they worked out in these different contexts which – this was really one of the – one of the first comprehensive tools that was measuring all these different dimensions on women across so many different contexts.

Additionally we had empirical evidence that empowerment was most strongly associated with health or education levels and income levels and maternal behaviors related to nutrition like dietary diversity and exclusive breastfeeding. Some of those things we already had an idea of, but here was empirical evidence about that.

But also some of the roles remained that I talked about before. She still didn't fit in anywhere. We still had issues with it being a large survey, having problems with some of the questions. And she also didn't cover every domain related to empowerment. And there – for some people that didn't – it didn't fit with their programs because there was sort of something lacking. And so they had to add to it.

And also that the cost to field the index was too high for many organizations. We had set aside – USAID had set aside money in our budgets to be able to cover it. But if you really want to do the index you do have to put the resources towards it.

So we wanted to address those. And there was still work to be done. And that takes us about to the point where we are now. Which brings us to the next stage – so what is it going to be? Is it college? Is it a year of finding herself? Or is it going to be the Peace Corps years, which might be a fitting analogy for this crowd.

Agnes is going to take us through a little bit of where we are now and where this analogy is going to lead us. But that offers you a bit of background on what we've gone through in terms of maintaining and enhancing and developing this tool, and the focus that we want to put to certain areas, and making this a useful tool for a broad community, and putting forth a tool that's really going to help us improve gender equality and women's empowerment through this tool we developed.

So I will stop there and turn it back over.

Agnes Quisumbing:

Thank you so much, Emily. That was a great jumping off point for myself, which is going to be on the next stage, which is projecting WEAI: adopting WEAI for project use and building a community of practice.

I only represent, I'm only part of a very large WEAI team.

And what I want to do is give you the tasting menu version of the progress in developing the next stage of WEAI. So Emily has her childhood

analogies and I have my food analogies because I work for the International Food Policy Research Institute; we think of food all the time.

Many of you in this room are going to be very familiar with WEAI but there may be people who are joining online who may not. So please forgive me if I go over some of the background which might be repetitive for you but which I think is necessary so we have a common understanding and grounding as we move forward.

So it's really quite a challenge to measure women's empowerment, partly because there's so many ways of defining it. We like to use the definition put forward by Naila Kabeer, which really talks about expanding strategic life choices. But there has actually been a bit of a backlash against efforts to measure this, and I have been on the receiving end of criticisms that, "But you can't measure empowerment. Don't even try. It's so personal, it's so context-specific." And I agree it's difficult to measure empowerment, it is very personal, it's very context-specific, it's cultural, etc.

But as a development organization we have to try to measure it because if we cannot measure it we can't assess progress against it. And if it is important as an objective then we have to learn how to monitor progress, even if such measures may be flawed, or even if such measures are always evolving. So this was in fact the rationale for developing the WEAI.

When I gave a similar presentation at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation a couple of months ago there were those who asked, "But is it rigorous? Is it methodologically robust? Did you just pull it out of thin air like a rabbit from a hat?" No we did not. It is very similar to the family of multidimensional disease, the poverty gap, the poverty incidence, all that. They all belong to the same families in disease.

But it's quite innovative because it uses interviews as the primary male and primary female adults in the same household, allowing you to look at inter-household differences. And I think what is a big step forward is that it focuses on empowerment in agriculture, which is a productive domain, in contrast to other indicators of empowerment which are focused mostly on reproductive domains.

So the details in the construction are in an article in *Rural Development* by Sabina Alkire and others, and there have been actually a number of new peer-reviewed articles which are now coming out on various analytical approaches to looking at how the WEAI correlates with various outcomes that we are interested in in Feed the Future such as food security, child nutritional status, maternal nutritional status and health and nutrition-related behaviors.

So let me just go over this very quickly. The WEAI is made up of two sub-indices. One sub-index is the five domains of empowerment, and the other indices' a gender parity index which is the women's achievements relative to the primary male in her household.

There are five domains, five fingers. The production domain is made up of three indicators: input into productive decisions and of dominant production. The resources domain is made up of three indicators, covering asset ownership, purchase, sale or transfer of assets, access to credit and decisions in credit. There's only one indicator in the income domain, which is control over the use of income. There are two indicators in the leadership domain: whether the person's a group member, and speak in public. And lastly there are two indicators in the time domain of perception about whether one has enough leisure, and also a workload indicator, which is based on the 24-hour recall.

Now when you find empowerment as a woman who is – a woman is empowered if she has achieved adequacy in 80 percent or more of the weighted indicators. So you basically stack up the indicators. If you are at or above 80 percent mark you are defined as empowered.

Now because you want to look at empowerment relative to men we have a gender parity index, which reflects two things: the present age of women who enjoy gender parity. So a woman has gender parity or achieved gender parity if she's empowered, or if her score is equal to or greater than the score requirement in any other household, as well as the empowerment gap, which is the average present-day shortfall that a woman without parity experiences relative to the male in the household.

Now – so that was just as a background. Now moving forward – Emily has mentioned that a lot of organizations are making a lot of adaptations to the WEAI. And in a sense it's like making the perfect omelet – which is probably suitable for this time of having analogies around breakfast: brunch time.

So there are very many variations on omelet, but all omelets have eggs. And so I want to discuss two omelet types today. One is the aggregated WEAI, which we call the A WEAI, which was developed partly to meet the need to people who want to have a more nimble instrument. They were complaining about the long time it takes for administrative instruments. And the second one's a project level WEAI, or the pro-WEAI. And this arose because of a need by projects to find something that is more suitable to their particular context because agricultural development projects, for example, are quite diverse. They might have different focuses, whether it's a crop project or a livestock project.

And many organizations have in fact already adopted the original WEAI to fit a specific program or project by adding or removing indicators and domains, or changing the wording of questions.

So for example a lot – some of the core part of this project in its India site, we tried to look at the issue of mobility, which is a very important constraint to women's empowerment in some cultures but perhaps not in others. So the question is how far can these adaptations go and still have a WEAI, or when it is no longer an omelet.

So I'll give you two examples. One is that I – in the process of reviewing papers on WEAI, or students who were working on WEAI, I read stuff which says, "I'm using the WEAI in my analysis," and I look at it: "No, you're not using the WEAI. You're using some of the questions from the questionnaire. You're not collecting all the domains." So it's WEAI-inspired. It's not really a WEAI.

And I guess my analogy there is like – I have a son who used to be allergic to eggs, and I would make vegan scrambles for him, you know, a tofu scramble, with turmeric to make it yellow. But it wasn't fooling anyone. It wasn't a real omelet. It was yummy but it wasn't an omelet.

So the point is that if you are going to do some adaptation you're going to have some problems with standardization and comparability.

So for USAID, for example, who's looking at the whole range of projects in different countries, if each project made its own tweak at some point you may have difficulty comparing the projects across your portfolio. To what extent is one project doing better than the other, including those empowerment gaps – have the metrics changed so much that you can no longer call it a WEAI?

So with that in mind we first tried to address the issue of it's really too long. So that was the motivation behind creating the A WEAI, the aggregated WEAI. So the goal of USAID was to streamline the survey, to reduce administration time by about 30 percent, and to improve modules that were difficult to administer in the field. And these were the time use module, the family and production module, the credit module and speak in public.

The process of doing this was that the IFPRI team, working with the USAID team and the OPHI team developed a pilot questionnaire, Doing Plenary Early Planning '14. We conducted cognitive testing, which was really a very systematic methodology using qualitative interviews to find out whether respondents actually understand what you are asking – are you getting across?

Pilot fieldwork was conducted in the summer of 2014 in Bangladesh and Uganda and Katie here was involved in the Uganda pilot and Chiara in the Bangladesh pilot. And in this year, early this year we analyzed the data for the pilot. And we have come up with a version of the WEAI with six indicators as streamlined questions. Note that we have five domains – I want to show you a table in the next slide.

And this is a version which can be used by USAID, other donors, and potentially by national statistical assistance for household surveys. So if you were going to compare, for example, the original WEAI and the A WEAI the original WEAI has five domains and ten indicators. The A WEAI still has five domains but it has now six indicators.

So four indicators were jobs: so economy and production indicators, job – it has turned out to be a bit difficult to implement in the field, although now that we're using vignettes it's much easier to implement. The indicators

and purchase, sale or transfer of assets was dropped because it highly correlated with ownership. So they were practically capturing the same thing. The speaking public question was dropped because it was problematic in countries where you could be at risk if you spoke out in public. And so people were not necessarily forthcoming about whether they spoke in public or not.

And lastly the leisure question was also dropped because it was kind of subjective and we actually got a lot more mileage out of just using the workload instrument based on 24-hour recall. Know that for comparability purposes the original WEAI is being collected in the interim survey.

So very – just to go over the pros of the A WEAI. So we were able to reduce administration time by about 30 percent. It doesn't include some of the more problematic modules from the original survey. And of course you want to know how comparable are the results.

So when comparing it using the second pilot data the top two constraints contributing to men's and women's disempowerment remain the same, group membership and workload.

The con, of course, is that you want to look at ten indicators; it will only cover six. It will only be comparable to the original baseline if you restrict your analysis to the six indicators. So you would do an indicator by indicator analysis. And when comparing to the original WEAI you have second pilot data. One of the top three indicators changed, which was a credit indicator. But this could also be because of the way credit was asked in the baseline.

The big caveat here is that the pilots are based on small samples of about 350 and 400 households in two countries, so the results are only indicative. And even in the original pilots in 2011, when we compared that to, for example, a national representative for the whole Feed the Future PBS the results would necessarily be different because you're look at really very different sample sizes. So this is something that needs to be taken into account.

There will be a webinar next week, September 23, where Hazel Malopit, who is really involved with the nitty gritty of implementing and using the A WEAI. And at that webinar the following resources will be released, the new A WEAI questionnaire. So it's very similar to the old WEAI questionnaire, except that some of the ambiguity in some of the questions have been removed. It's shorter. The orderings have been different, there is some clearer response codes. There is an enumerator's manual and an instructional guide.

So if you had any questions, any detailed questions about A WEAI, I suggest that you hold onto them, right them down, don't forget them, and ask Hazel about them next week.

And then – so I want now to turn to the challenge of trying to adapt WEAI to project use and still maintain comparability. So you mentioned earlier

that you were very happy about the proliferation of WEAI users. I am not particularly happy because some of them have not been very rigorous in documenting how different the WEAI is from the original WEAI. And as I said, I have reviewed enough student papers where the only thing common to the WEAI is the name when I look at the indicator like, "What in the world is this?"

So is this WEAI if you modify the survey instrument? Yes, it can still be a WEAI. You have five indicators and five sub-domains, same indicators. Is this the WEAI is you drop or add indicators? Possibly, as long as you keep the five domains. And you can still compute – even if you add a domain you can still compute the comparable WEAI by restricting analysis of five indicators. But believe me, there has been so much adaptation that sometimes it's very difficult to compare.

So how to choose among these flavors of WEAI. So there is a WEAI version stable which displays the four variations of WEAI. There's original WEAI, there's abbreviated WEAI – it talks about the pro WEAI and ad hoc adaptations.

Now I must point out that pro WEAI isn't even on the menu yet, okay? It is under development. And it should capture what projects wants from WEAI. They want more streamlined, easier-to-collect indicators that can be part of regular M&E. We want to do more adaptable project context. They want to understand better the qualitative aspects of empowerment: how and why? And depending on the particular context some projects might be interested in mobility, gender-based violence, reproductive health, self-confidence, political participation, etc. Some of these are now outside the agricultural purview of the Feed the Future program.

But if you want other organizations to take this up they must be able to use it and it must be able to fit their needs. So for example, depending on the project they might want more detail on control and ownership and livestock, and less detail in others like crops, and the reverse for crop projects. It might extend beyond agriculture. It might look at autonomy in different spheres. So for example control over income or participation in the labor force might be a more telling area of women's economy compared to decision on what crops to grow. Some would say, "Well we've always planted that crop, so there's really no autonomy involved." And ability to tackle the measures of empowerment that relate to health and nutrition outcomes.

So the issues here is how – if you're – especially if you're a large donor organization with a large portfolio how can it help comparability across your different projects, and how do you know what strategy works best in empowering women if the metrics are different? So this means that you need to have an approach which is a portfolio approach of testing and developing this new indicator.

Fortunately IFPRI's experience in the Gender Agriculture and Assets project which was funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and which has now recently been funded for which a second phase has been

funded precisely to develop a pro WEAI. So it builds on the approach that it will be working with a portfolio project in South Asia and Africa and focus countries. It will work with agricultural development projects to develop a WEAI for project use which we call the pro WEAI. The projects will be invited to submit applications for participation in a portfolio, depending on the commodity focus or the objective. And I was asked to mention that project means something in USAID-speak, so it covers both project and activities. Those of you from USAID will know what that means; I don't.

So basically we want to populate the four cells of that matrix. This project, this Gender, Agriculture and Assets Project phase two is being supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is also supported by USAID, and the Consortium Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health.

So what we want to do, using a portfolio approach, is to develop comparable metrics for empowerment across different types of commodities and project objectives. The GAAP2 team will work with projects to develop standardized add-on modules. For example a mobility module, it should be standardized so it can be used by different countries but of course there will always be room for adaptation.

And these modules will be adjusted to a core set of original WEAI modules or A WEAI modules, measuring other domains of women's empowerment.

We are also setting up a WEAI community of practice. And a community of practice is both a physical and a virtual facilitated network of projects, implementers, researchers, M&E specialists, etc. Just everybody's interested, whether on an implementation side, M&E side, research side.

And the gain from joining a co-op is that we found in GAAP1 that the projects were actually learning from each other but we didn't provide them the space to interact outside our regular meetings. So we're hoping to have a virtual community as well, an opportunity to share experiences, questions and insights. And it will be facilitated by professional collaboration facilitators, radical inclusion, and it will include webinars, virtual conferences, online tools to be housed at the WEAI Resource Center at IFPRI.

So a call to join the pro WEAI co-op has been posted in the GAAP website and Farzana and Emily have I think disseminated this to your partners. There are two levels of the call – call to join the community of practice. It's open to all interested – just give us some information about your project.

And the second part of the call is a call to join the GAAP2 portfolio to help develop pro WEAI for the project clusters defined above. We can only find ten from GAAP2 but the portfolio will consist of ten to fourteen projects, some to be funded by the respective donors, and the deadline for USAID partners is October 2. Ferzan and Emily said that they will answer questions from USAID partners.

I guess analogy here is that those who are chosen for the GAAP2 portfolio, based on the application, are the ones who are actually going to be in the test kitchen. It's like joining Chopped or – who's the new Food Network star? Whereas the rest in the committee of practice can just browse online and use the recipes after they've been developed or send in comments as recipes are being developed.

So the criteria are in the call but I'm going to go over them briefly in case people here want more information. They should be located in the following focus countries. Now if your project is not in the focus country but it really has some particular innovation then make the case in your application. It should fit in one of the project categories, either a horticulture crop project or livestock dairy project with a value chain or income objective or improvement in general health objective. It should try to empower women. It should have a rigorous M&E plan. We should – the project people should be eager to collaborate with us and be active participants in the committee of practice.

You have to be able to fit in two rounds of data collection, ideally with enough intervening time to detect impacts, so two rounds of data collection of the pro WEAI modules. This would mean basically if our inception workshop is in January of 2016, being ready to go to the field for a baseline or first round of pro WEAI by March of April of 2016.

And all projects are invited to submit for full support, so must demonstrate that they meet the criteria. But wish projects are ultimately selected, depends on the composition of the overall portfolio.

Okay, so the thought takeaways from this quick tasting menu is first that measuring women's empowerment is necessary for monitoring progress in addressing gender issues in agriculture and food security programming. If we can't measure we can't monitor. Secondly there are different versions of the WEAI which are available to serve different purposes. Choose the one that fits your needs. And if the one that fits your needs isn't on the menu then join us and help us develop it

So thank you very much for listening in and I look forward to questions.

[Applause]

[End of Audio]