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Help WEAI Help You: New Opportunities to Utilize the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index

Speakers

Grace Hoerner, *USAID Bureau for Food Security*

Emily Hogue, *USAID Bureau for Food Security*

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Facilitator

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Grace Hoerner



Grace Hoerner is a Presidential Management Fellow currently working with the Bureau for Food Security's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning team. Her home position is as an Innovation Analyst in the U.S. Global Development Lab's Center for Development Innovation. Grace previously worked in Ghana for the African Cashew Alliance, a public-private partnership promoting the development of the African cashew industry. She also has experience evaluating adolescent girls' empowerment programs in Uganda and designing livelihood diversification activities for pastoralists in Ethiopia.



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Emily Hogue



Emily Hogue is the Team Leader for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning in the Bureau for Food Security where she oversees efforts related to accountability and learning for the Feed the Future initiative. Before joining USAID, Emily worked in academia and as a consultant for program design and assessment to international organizations such as Habitat for Humanity International and World Vision. Emily has a PhD in Comparative Sociology with a specialization in Anthropology from Florida International University and also holds an M.A. in Sociology and a B.A. in Spanish and English.



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Agnes Quisumbing



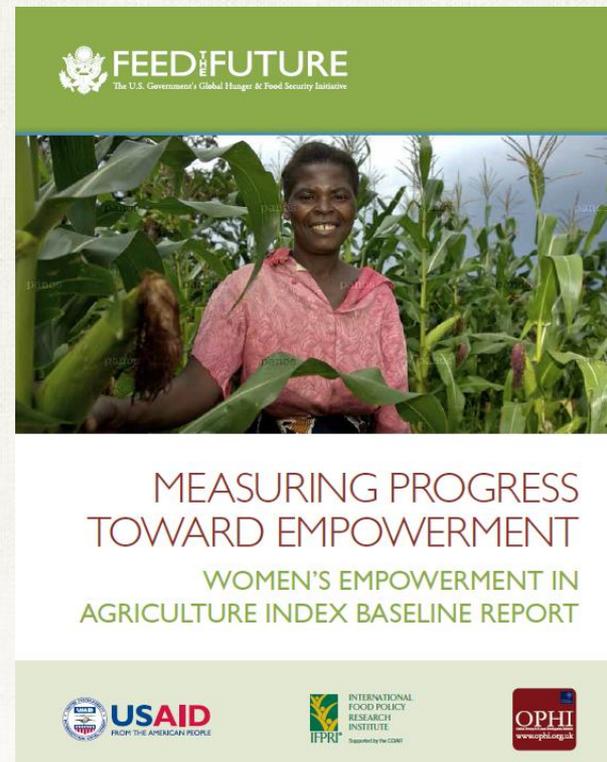
Agnes Quisumbing, is a Senior Research Fellow in the Poverty, Health and Nutrition Division of IFPRI where she co-leads a research program that examines how closing the gap between men's and women's ownership and control of assets may lead to better development outcomes. Her past work at IFPRI focused on how resource allocation within households and families affects the design and outcome of development policies. Her research interests include poverty, gender, property rights, and economic mobility. She received her Ph.D. and M.A. in economics from the University of the Philippines, Quezon City.



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The WEAI: Conception to Adolescence



Emily Hogue

Team Leader for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
USAID's Bureau for Food Security



Why We Decided to Conceive: Some Theory behind Feed the Future

Focus
geographically

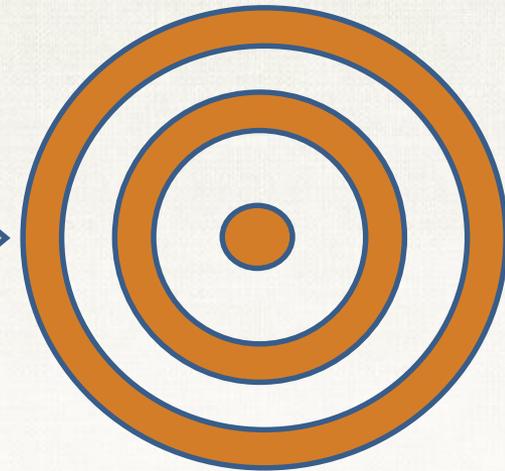
Increase
productivity in key
value chains

Promote national
policy reforms

Leverage private
sector resources

Strengthen country
systems

Transform local economies
through increased agricultural
productivity, trade, and jobs



Reduce Poverty
through Inclusive
Agricultural Growth

Feed the Future Goal: Sustainably Reduce Global Poverty and Hunger

- Prevalence of poverty
- Prevalence of underweight children

High Level Objective: Inclusive agriculture sector growth

- Agriculture Sector GDP
- Per capita expenditures in rural households
- Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index

High Level Objective: Improved nutritional status esp. of women & children

- Prevalence of stunted children
- Prevalence of underweight children
- Prevalence of malnourished women



The Family Tree

Programs and policies to support agricultural growth

AVAILABILITY

Programs and policies to increase access to markets and facilitate trade

ACCESS

Programs and policies to reduce inequities

STABILITY

Programs and policies to support positive gains in nutrition

UTILIZATION

Definition of Food Security



In Utero

USAID determined five domains:

- Production
- Resources
- Income
- Leadership
- Time

The WEAI Team:

- Developed questionnaires
- Piloted the instrument
- Constructed the Index within the five domains (10 indicators)
- Finalized the WEAI survey



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A Child is Born

- WEAI launched in February 2012 at the UN Commission on the Status of Women meetings
- Feed the Future started collecting the WEAI for baselines from Fall 2011





The Joys and Woes of the Toddler Years: Baselines 2011-2013



The Joys:

- Discovery of using as a diagnostic tool
- Feedback that women respondents felt valued
- Other organizations wanting to adopt WEAI

The Woes:

- Feedback it was too long
- Some questions were problematic, trouble in different contexts
- Partners had trouble calculating the WEAI



School Age and Its Wonders: First Results



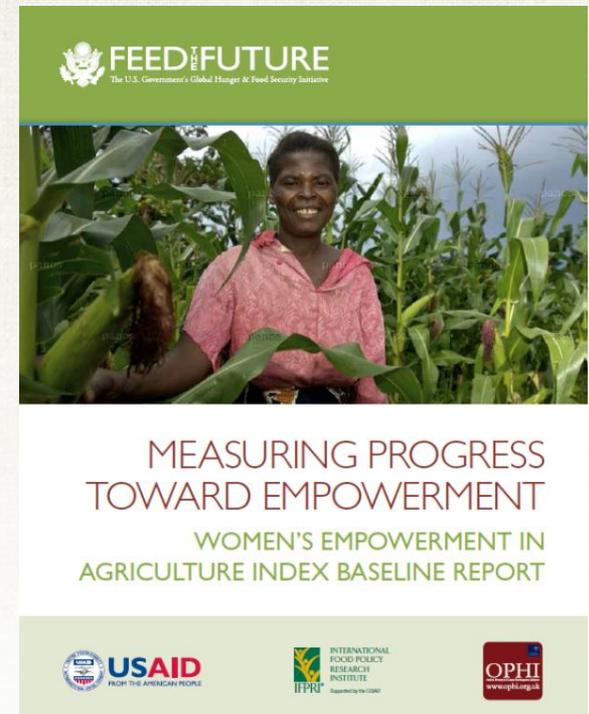
- Findings through the data
- Partners had adapted and were using the WEAI and had results to share: new domains, new calculations
- When we started to really learn from our child



Adolescence



- The learning came together for a more complete picture of all WEAI was and what she could do.
- Some of the woes remained.
- She doesn't fit in everywhere.
- A few personality flaws to address.
- Still work to be done.





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Which brings us to...
college?
a year of finding herself?
the Peace Corps years???



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Project-ing WEAI: Adapting WEAI for Project Use and Building a Community of Practice

Agnes Quisumbing

International Food Policy Research Institute



Measuring Women's Empowerment: Challenges and Opportunities

- Defining empowerment: “expanding people’s ability to make strategic life choices, particularly in contexts in which this ability had been denied to them” (Kabeer 1999)
- Challenges: empowerment is personal, context-specific, therefore difficult to measure
- But: what’s measured matters: if we measure, we can monitor, and use it as a benchmark for progress
- This was the rationale for developing the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)



Methodological foundations and innovations in the WEAI

- Key aspect of index construction: similar to family of multi-dimensional poverty indices (Alkire and Foster 2011, *J of Public Econ*) and the Foster-Greere-Thorbeck (FGT) indices
- Innovative because it uses interviews of the primary male and primary female adults in the *same* household
- Focus is strictly on **empowerment in agriculture, distinct** from economic status, education, and empowerment in other domains
- Details on index construction in Alkire et al. (2013), *World Development*



How is the Index constructed?

WEAI is made up of two sub indices

Five domains of empowerment (5DE)

A direct measure of women's empowerment in 5 dimensions

Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)

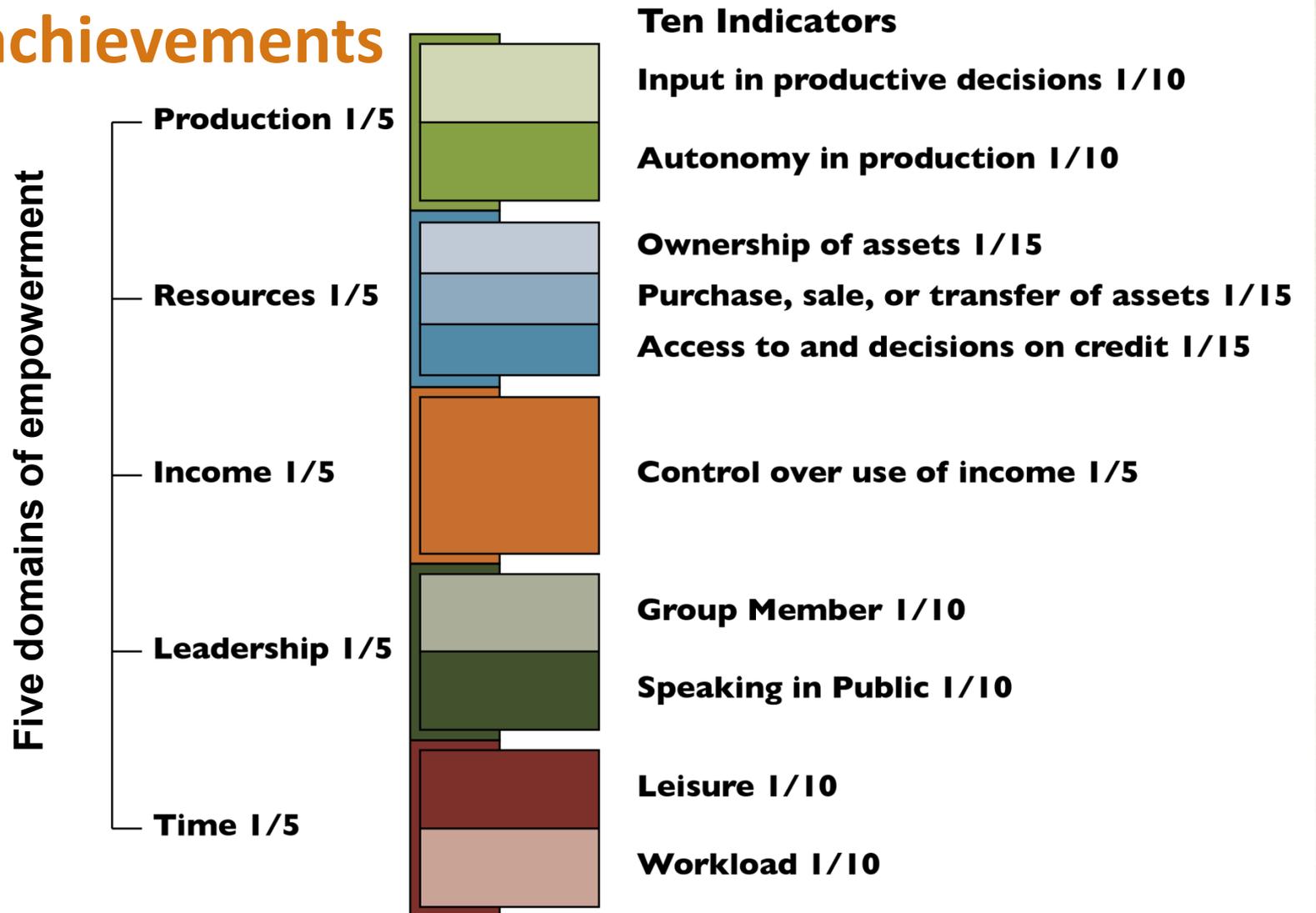
Gender parity Index (GPI)

Women's achievement's relative to the primary male in hh

All range from zero to one;
higher values = greater empowerment



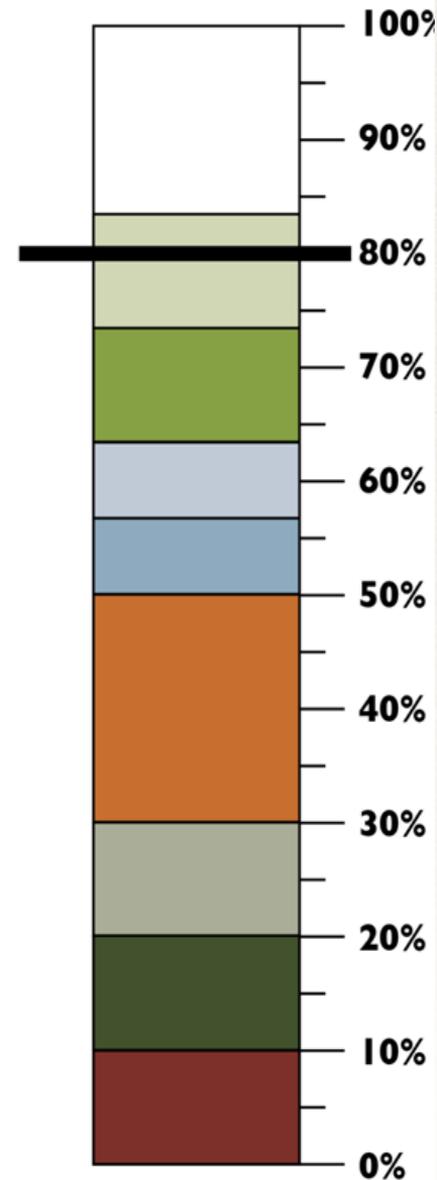
A woman's empowerment score shows her own achievements





Who is empowered?

A woman who has achieved 'adequacy' in 80% or more of the weighted indicators is empowered





Gender Parity Index (GPI)

Reflects two things:

- 1. The percentage of women who enjoy gender parity.** A woman **enjoys gender parity** if
 - she is empowered or
 - her empowerment score is equal to or greater than the empowerment score of the primary male in her household.
- 2. The empowerment gap** - the average percentage shortfall that a woman without parity experiences relative to the male in her household.

The GPI adapts the Foster Greer Thorbecke Poverty Gap measure to reflect gender parity.



WEAI for projects...Making The Perfect Omelet



Photo source: omletteshoppe.com

- Many variations, but always some standard “ingredients” (eggs!)
- Today I’ll discuss two options, one ready, and one under development

1. Abbreviated WEAI (A-WEAI)
2. Project-level WEAI (Pro-WEAI)

Many organizations have already adapted the original WEAI to fit a specific project or program by adding/removing indicators/domains, and/or changing the wording of questions (ex: ILRI in Kenya, CARE Pathways project)

How far can adaptations go and still have a WEAI? (or, when is it no longer an omelet?)



Process of Creating the A-WEAI (Abbreviated WEAI)

- **USAID Goals:**

- Streamline survey
- Reduce time to administer by ~30%
- Improve modules that were difficult to administer in the field (time use, autonomy in production, credit, and speaking in public)

- **Process**

- Developed a pilot questionnaire (2013-early 2014)
- Conducted cognitive testing (summer 2014)
- Pilot fieldwork in Bangladesh and Uganda (summer 2014)
- Analyzed data from pilots (2015)

- **Result:**

- Version of WEAI with 6 indicators and streamlined questions
- Intended to be used by USAID, other donors, and potentially by national statistical systems for household surveys



Original WEAI versus A-WEAI

Original: 5 domains, 10 indicators

A-WEAI: 5 domains, 6 indicators

DOMAIN	INDICATORS	WEIGHT	
1	Production	Input in productive decisions	1/10
		Autonomy in production	1/10
2	Resources	Ownership of assets	1/15
		Purchase, sale, or transfer of assets	1/15
		Access to and decisions on credit	1/15
3	Income	Control over use of income	1/5
4	Leadership	Group membership	1/10
		Speaking in public	1/10
5	Time	Workload	1/10
		Leisure	1/10
TOTAL		100%	

DOMAIN	INDICATORS	WEIGHT	
1	Production	Input in productive decisions	1/5
2	Resources	Ownership of assets	2/15
		Access to and decisions on credit	1/15
3	Income	Control over use of income	1/5
4	Leadership	Group membership	1/5
5	Time	Workload	1/5
TOTAL		100%	

Original WEAI being collected now in FTF interim survey



A-WEAI

- *Pros:*

- Shorter administration time compared with the original WEAI (reduced by 30%)
- Does not include some of the more problematic modules from original baselines
- When compared to the original WEAI using the second pilot data, the top two constraints contributing to women's and men's disempowerment remained the same (group membership and workload)

- *Cons:*

- Measures fewer indicators of empowerment; dropping four indicators
- Only comparable to original baselines if analysis is restricted to 6 indicators
- When compared to the original WEAI using the second pilot data, one of the top three indicators contributing to women's and men's disempowerment changed (credit—although this could be because of the way credit was asked in the baseline)

CAVEAT: Pilots are based on small samples in 2 countries, so results are only indicative



Guidelines on implementing and using A-WEAI

A-WEAI Webinar: September 23

Resources to be released:

- Questionnaire
- Enumerator's manual
- Instructional guide



And then there are the ad-hoc WEAI adaptations...

- Is it a WEAI if you modify the survey instrument?
- Is it a WEAI if you drop or add indicators?
- Is it a WEAI if you drop a domain?



So many flavors! How to choose?



Photo sources: Reddit and Williams Sonoma



Thankfully, the WEAI team has developed a table to help you make the hard decisions! The WEAI Versions Table, launched today, displays 4 variations of WEAI (original WEAI, A-WEAI, **Pro-WEAI**, and ad hoc WEAI adaptations).

But waiter, pro-WEAI isn't even on the menu!



What projects want from WEAI

- More streamlined, easier to collect indicators, that can be part of regular M&E
- Better adaptability to their own project contexts, specifics of their own interventions
- Better understanding of the qualitative aspects of empowerment (how and why?)
- In some cases, modules related to mobility, gender-based violence, reproductive health, self-confidence, political participation (CARE), ownership of an identity card (ILRI), shocks/resilience (FAO/IFAD), agricultural extension (iDE/IWMI), etc.



What projects want from WEAI--2

Depending on the project

- More detail on some areas (livestock), less detail in others (crops) for a livestock project, the reverse for crop projects
- Extends beyond agriculture
- Greater emphasis on autonomy in different spheres (control over income or participation in labor force, not necessarily agricultural decisions)
- Ability to tackle dimensions of empowerment that relate to health and nutrition outcomes

How to achieve this, but still have comparability?

How to know what strategy works best, if metrics are different?



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Fortunately, we have experience from the Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project (GAAP)





GAAP2 for pro-WEAI

- A second phase of the Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project (GAAP)
- Builds on approach of GAAP1:
 - Portfolio of projects, in South Asia and Africa, in focus countries
 - Work with agricultural development projects to develop a WEAI for project use (pro-WEAI)
 - Projects will be invited to submit applications for participation in a portfolio depending on: (1) commodity focus (crop or livestock/dairy) and (2) objective (value chain/income or health/nutrition)

“Projects” mean both “projects” and “activities”—both USAID projects and activities may apply



Pro-WEAI: Adaptable but standardized

- Stands for “Project-level” WEAI
- To be developed as part of a second round of the Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project (GAAP2), supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, USAID, and A4NH
- Portfolio approach will aim to develop comparable metrics for empowerment, across different types of commodities/project objectives
- Standardized add-on modules will be developed by the GAAP2 team, in collaboration with participating projects, for each project cluster and will be comparable within clusters of projects working on similar issues
- These modules will be added onto a core set of original WEAI modules measuring other domains of women’s empowerment

	Nutrition/Health Objective	Value Chain/Income Objective
Horticulture/Crop Project		
Livestock/Dairy Project		



The WEAI Community of Practice

What is a community of practice (COP)?

Both a physical and a virtual, facilitated network of projects, implementers, researchers, M&E specialists, etc.

What do projects gain from joining a COP?

Cross-project opportunities beyond annual meetings for project teams to interact, share, and learn from one another.

Opportunity to share experiences, questions, and emerging insights
“Learning from each other” and “learning by doing” in a more systematic way

How does a COP work?

The CoP will be facilitated by professional collaboration facilitators, Radical Inclusion. It will include webinars, virtual conferences, and online tool suites that will provide support to participating projects. It will be housed on the WEAI Resource Center, based at IFPRI.



An invitation to join the pro-WEAI Community of Practice

- A call to join the pro-WEAI COP has been posted on the GAAP site www.gaap.ifpri.info and disseminated by USAID to its partners
- Call for Expressions of Interest at 2 levels:
 1. Join the community of practice (open to all interested!)
 2. Join the GAAP2 portfolio to help develop pro-WEAI for the project clusters defined above (projects selected based on GAAP2 criteria)
- Pro-WEAI pilot portfolio will consist of 10-14 projects, 10 to receive funding from GAAP2
- Deadline for USAID partners: October 2



Criteria for the pro-WEAI pilots

- Located in one of the following countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, Bangladesh, India (Bihar, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh states)
- Fit in one of the project categories from typology: horticulture/crop project or a livestock/dairy project with a value chain/income objective or an improved nutrition/health objective.
- Have a women's empowerment objective
- Have a rigorous M&E plan (including a clear theory of change (TOC), well-designed impact evaluation plan), and a plan to use both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods
- Eagerness to collaborate with the GAAP2 team and be an active participant in a community of practice regarding pro-WEAI
- Fit the GAAP2 schedule in terms of two rounds of data collection, ideally with enough intervening time to detect impact
- All projects invited to submit full proposals must demonstrate that they meet the criteria. Which projects are ultimately selected will depend on the composition of the overall portfolio.

Top Take-aways

1

Measuring women's empowerment is necessary to monitor progress in addressing gender issues in agriculture and food security programming

2

Different versions of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index are available to serve different purposes - choose the one that fits your needs

3

All are encouraged to consider applying for the Pro-WEAI pilot and Community of Practice

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