

Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project Phase Two: Developing Project-Level
Indicators to Measure Women's Empowerment (GAAP2 for pro-WEAI)



Midterm Workshop Report

March 9-11, 2017

Colombo, Sri Lanka

With the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the United States
Agency for International Development

Co-organized by the International Water Management Institute

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Abbreviations and acronyms

3D4AgDev	Farmer Participatory Rapid Prototyping via 3D Printing for Improved Labor Saving Innovations for Women Smallholders in Africa
A4NH	Agriculture for Nutrition and Health
ANGeL	Agriculture, Nutrition, and Gender Linkages
AVC	Impact Evaluation of the Bangladesh Agricultural Value Chains
AWARD	African Women in Agricultural Research and Development
A-WEAI	Abbreviated Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
CAPi	Computer-assisted personal interviewing
CGIAR	Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers
CoP	Community of practice
EAC	External Advisory Committee
FAARM	Food and Agricultural Approaches to Reducing Malnutrition
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GAAP2	Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project, Phase Two
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
JP-RWEE	United Nations Joint Programme on accelerating progress towards the economic empowerment of rural women in Ethiopia
PI	Principal investigator
Pro-WEAI	Project-level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WINGS	Women Improving Nutrition through Group-Based Strategies

Goals and objectives of the workshop

The second phase of the Gender, Assets, and Agriculture Project (GAAP2) is led by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH). GAAP2 was launched with an inception workshop in Nairobi, Kenya in January 2016. The group met again in March 2017 for a midterm workshop in Colombo, Sri Lanka, co-organized by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI). Attendees included the members of the GAAP2 core team, members of the GAAP2 External Advisory Committee (EAC), representatives from the GAAP2 projects, and institutional partners. Similar to the Nairobi workshop, this workshop was facilitated by Radical Inclusion partner Stephan Dohrn and co-facilitator Wiebke-Anka Koch. Appendix 2 contains a full list of workshop participants.

The goals of the workshop were: (1) to learn from the initial activities of the GAAP2 projects to increase the impact of the projects on women's empowerment and (2) to improve the research instruments used to measure women's empowerment.

The objectives of the workshop were:

1. To learn from the quantitative and qualitative research activities to date of the GAAP2 project
 - Use data collected by participating projects to diagnose empowerment gaps.
 - Develop strategies to adapt and improve the projects to increase their impact on women's empowerment.
 - Improve the pro-WEAI survey and qualitative research instruments
2. To build and strengthen the GAAP2 community
 - Share and jointly analyze information and support each other in improving project implementation.
 - Identify joint networking and learning needs and opportunities and define ways of connecting and communicating beyond the workshop.

Slack at the workshop

Slack is an important online tool for collaboration, communication, and document sharing among the GAAP2 community. Slack was introduced to the GAAP2 community during the inception workshop and, prior to the workshop, Radical Inclusion trained GAAP2 team members in virtual facilitation in order to build the community of practice. During the workshop, Slack was used extensively to communicate logistics; share discussion results, comments, and pictures; and organize side meetings to socialize and further discuss aspects of the GAAP2 projects.

To encourage participants to familiarize themselves with Slack, the workshop organizers created a scavenger hunt, or "Slack-athon," through which participants explored the channels in the GAAP2 Slack site and learned to use various functions such as posting in channels, sending and receiving direct messages, searching within channels, updating and viewing user profiles, and liking and commenting on posts. The winners of the Slack-athon were awarded packages of Sri Lankan tea.

Interactive discussions at the workshop

Each workshop session included time for interactive small group discussions. Participants recorded the insights, surprises, and learnings harvested during the session, along with a one-sentence summary of the discussion, on posters created by co-facilitator Wiebke-Anka Koch. At the end of the session, each group posted their one-sentence summary and a picture of their poster on the workshops channel of the GAAP2 Slack group. Co-facilitator Stephan Dohrn hung the posters around the workshop room and participants were given time to read other groups' comments. Stephan then led facilitated gallery walks during which the group discussed common threads and unique observations from the group discussions.

Visual recording of the workshop

During the workshop, co-facilitator Wiebke-Anka Koch created a mural showing a visual representation of the topics discussed and questions raised by participants. Appendix 3 shows this product.



Image 1. Wiebke presents the visual record at the end of day two.

Workshop Day 1 – March 9, 2017

Welcomes and introductions

Co-PI Agnes Quisumbing, Senior Research Fellow at IFPRI, welcomed participants and introduced the main objectives the workshop. Co-facilitator Stephan Dohrn introduced himself and co-facilitator Wiebke-Anka Koch and discussed the use of Slack to communicate and collaborate during the workshop. Prior to the workshop, each participant was assigned a “workshop buddy” to meet up with before the first session. At each table, participants introduced their buddies to the group.

Empowerment scores from the projects: presenting results from the A-WEAI

Representatives from the six projects that had already collected baseline data and calculated the abbreviated Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (A-WEAI) briefly presented their results to the group. Presenting projects included the Agriculture, Nutrition, and Gender Linkages (ANGeL) program in Bangladesh, the Impact Evaluation of the Bangladesh Agricultural Value Chains (AVC) program in Bangladesh, the Food and Agricultural Approaches to Reducing Malnutrition (FAARM) program in Bangladesh, the Women Improving Nutrition through Group-Based Strategies (WINGS) program in India, the Empowerment, Resilience, and Livestock Transfers program in Nepal, and the United Nations Joint Programme on accelerating progress towards the economic empowerment of rural women in Ethiopia (JP-RWEE). Many of the projects reported similar results from their preliminary A-WEAI calculations. For both men and women, indicators that contributed most strongly to disempowerment were group membership, workload, and access to and decisions on credit. Some projects found little difference in disempowerment between men and women, while others found a large difference in disempowerment. Following these presentations, participants split into groups to discuss the empowerment indicators and gaps shown in the A-WEAI results.



Image 2. Group discussions of preliminary A-WEAI results

Highlights from the group discussions:

- What factors drive disempowerment? Does A-WEAI accurately capture drivers of disempowerment?
 - Lack of group membership was the strongest driver of disempowerment in the A-WEAI results, indicating that a large proportion of women were not members of groups in the community. However, the workshop participants thought that being a group member is not necessarily empowering. Also, group membership is both an indicator of empowerment and a process that facilitates empowerment.

- To make the group membership indicator more nuanced, perhaps the threshold for group membership should be different; for example, it could distinguish between membership and active membership or between different types of groups.
- Participants were surprised that control over income and ownership of assets were not strong indicators of empowerment.
- Other factors – such as migration, position within the household, and seasonality – may also impact empowerment.
- There is a trade-off between minimizing the time needed to complete the pro-WEAI survey module and the need for rich data.
- Should the index weigh all domains of empowerment equally? Should weighting vary between geographical regions?
- Why did some projects find similar levels of disempowerment in men and women?
 - Women’s workload may be underestimated because some work is not recognized by their families, communities, or themselves.
- How can we contextualize the A-WEAI results?
 - Researchers should be cautious in comparing A-WEAI results between different contexts and regions.
 - Qualitative research may help to contextualize the results and define and interpret the indicators of empowerment.



Image 3. Participants read the results of group discussions.

How can qualitative research improve or validate quantitative research? Insights from qualitative work

Co-PI Ruth Meinzen-Dick, Senior Research Fellow at IFPRI, introduced the session and discussed the importance and difficulty of collecting and analyzing qualitative data. Representatives from projects that had already collected some qualitative data briefly shared their experiences and preliminary results. Presenters included Ana Paula de la O Campos from JP-RWEE in Ethiopia, Una Murray from the Farmer

Participatory Rapid Prototyping via 3D Printing for Improved Labor Saving Innovations for Women Smallholders in Africa (3D4AgDev) program in Malawi, Ruth Meinzen-Dick from the Empowerment, Resilience, and Livestock Transfers program in Nepal, Megan Gash from the Building Resilience of Vulnerable Communities program in Burkina Faso, Sheela Sinharoy from FAARM in Bangladesh, and Susan James from the evaluation of women's food security program for impoverished Maasai households in Tanzania. Each presenter then led two rounds of group discussions about their qualitative research, allowing attendees to learn about the experience of qualitative research in two different projects.

Highlights from the presentations and group discussions:

- Based on the qualitative results, what factors influence empowerment?
 - There are many factors that may influence men's and women's empowerment: family structure (such as an absent or non-contributing husband), socioeconomic status, age, participating in NGO activities, level of education, caste, ethnicity, assets brought to the marriage (such as dowry or *pewa*), migration, occupational status, loans, group membership, and exposure to gender training (especially if men participate).
 - Some indicators of empowerment – such as joint ownership and decision making – may vary between agricultural products (e.g., staple crops, high-value crops, or livestock).
- What was difficult in qualitative data collection?
 - Projects found that interviewer bias, travel to remote areas, translation, programming problems, budget constraints, seasonality, long interview duration, and an overload of data collection instruments were challenging.
 - Projects also found that project activities can influence local perceptions of empowerment. Some projects were concerned that the responses were not truly reflecting local definitions of empowerment because respondents were anticipating what they wanted to hear (“NGO speak”).
- What worked well for qualitative data collection? What tips can you share?
 - Review the data as soon as possible for quality control and re-training.
 - Use experienced enumerators who can anticipate difficult questions and have strong language skills. Correct translation is essential, as are word choice, language, and examples.
 - Principal investigators (PIs) should be involved in enumeration training and piloting.
- How is qualitative work valuable?
 - Qualitative work helps us understand what empowerment is and what it means to different people.
 - Qualitative work helps validate the quantitative results and give meaning to the numbers. It can also inform where cut-offs for empowerment should be in each domain.
 - Qualitative work helps us understand context and social norms.
 - The process of qualitative work can be empowering for the local people, particularly women. It also helps the programs be more accountable to their participants and communities.
 - Sometimes qualitative results do not align with the researchers' expectations.
 - Qualitative work can help to elucidate potential barriers to program impact, implementation, and sustainability.
- How can we improve the qualitative modules of pro-WEAI?

- Keep open-ended questions in the qualitative portion and yes/no questions in the quantitative portion.

Networking reception

Participants chatted and enjoyed appetizers, drinks, and desserts together at the Curry Leaf restaurant at the Hilton Colombo. The event also included a Sri Lankan dance, music, and fire eating show.



Image 4. Performers eating fire at the reception

Workshop Day 2 – March 10, 2017

What have we learned from fielding pro-WEAI and qualitative research?

To start off day two, participants broke into groups to discuss learnings from either quantitative or qualitative research.

Highlights from the discussions of quantitative research:

- What are the challenges of implementing the pro-WEAI survey modules?
 - Interviewing men and women separately can be difficult.
 - In polygamous households, it is difficult to decide which wife to interview. It can also be difficult to define a household for polygamous families.

- Pro-WEAI questions do not always capture the nuances in empowerment (e.g., women's decision making capacity for borrowing money can depend on the amount borrowed).
- How should we interpret the A-WEAI and pro-WEAI results?
 - There may be gender differences in reporting – men and women may answer questions differently.
 - Sometimes the quantitative results can be counterintuitive. Qualitative research can help us interpret and verify the quantitative work, refine the survey instrument, and provide a contextualized understanding of empowerment.
 - Qualitative work can also provide context. There are trade-offs between contextualization and standardization.
 - The process of creating and validating the pro-WEAI index will require patience.

Highlights from the discussions of qualitative research:

- What are the challenges of collecting qualitative data for pro-WEAI?
 - There is tension between local and universal definitions of empowerment.
 - Tools for qualitative data collection are not project-specific.
- How can we improve qualitative research for pro-WEAI?
 - Establish a systematic approach in the pro-WEAI guidelines that integrates qualitative work, quantitative work, project implementation, and project monitoring and evaluation.
 - Design effective ways to analyze and present the qualitative data

How can we integrate quantitative and qualitative research in our projects?

Following the small group discussions of quantitative and qualitative research, the whole group came together for a fishbowl discussion about integrating quantitative and qualitative research. One representative from each small group joined a “fishbowl” circle of chairs in the center of the room. While the rest of the group observed, the fishbowl participants had a public discussion about the insights and learnings from the small groups and ways to integrate quantitative and qualitative research. Observers joined the fishbowl circle when they had pertinent questions or insights.

How can we improve project implementation?

Next, project implementers representing each of the GAAP2 projects led small group discussions about their experiences and challenges in the field. Other participants learned about project implementation and helped the implementers to brainstorm ideas to address their difficulties.

Highlights from the group discussions:

- What factors contribute to successful project implementation?
 - High quality enumerators are important. Projects need both male and female enumerators with good language skills.
 - In-country staff for the research team are essential for identifying implementation issues.
 - Flexible funding allows implementers to adapt projects when needed.
- How can we improve project implementation?
 - Create best practices for translating into local languages.

- Adapt the implementation of the survey tool to fit the context (without changing the tool itself).
- Enhance communication between researchers and implementers, both before and after project implementation and data collection. For example, project implementers need timely feedback about the pro-WEAI results to incorporate them into their projects.
- How can pro-WEAI support project implementation?
 - Pro-WEAI can be useful for adapting projects to improve impact.
 - Pro-WEAI is not always suitable for monitoring and evaluation of fast-evolving indicators.

Regional groups: focus on project implementation

Participants broke into groups to discuss project implementation in each of three regions: South Asia, Eastern and Southern Africa, and West Africa.

Key insights, learnings, and surprises:

- What are the region-specific challenges of project implementation?
 - Defining a household can be tricky, especially for polygamous households. Eating from the same pot may not be a relevant definition anymore.
 - It is difficult to know who to sample in polygamous households. Also, sampling should consider the order and age of the wives. The pro-WEAI tool should integrate a roster of wives when appropriate.
 - Men are sometimes missing from the households due to migration.
 - Culture and gender can influence a person's understanding of ownership and decision making.
 - There may be regionally specific indicators of empowerment that are missing from the survey tool.
- How can we improve project implementation in the regions?
 - Good translations that consider the intent and meaning of the questions are essential.
 - Create a process to identify a specific subset of indicators that should be incorporated in each region.
 - Use qualitative research to understand the context in each country and region.



Image 5. The West Africa group

Workshop Day 3 – March 11, 2017

Regional groups: five bold steps to move ahead

Participants met in the same regional groups they had formed during day two to discuss region-specific challenges and the next steps for strengthening GAAP2 projects in their regions. Each group identified a goal for GAAP2 projects in their region and five steps to achieving that goal. The goals and steps from each group are outlined in Appendix 4.

Highlights from the group discussions:

- What are the challenges of GAAP2 research in each region?
 - Time differences, internet connectivity, financial resources, and coordination between projects are all challenging.
 - Attendees also highlighted the difficulty of allocating time and capacity and getting the GAAP2 community engaged in Slack.
- How can we improve the GAAP2 research in each region?
 - Develop regionally specific indicators for pro-WEAI to ensure that the index accurately measures empowerment in each region.
 - Add region-specific questions to the qualitative protocols.
 - Provide a forum for communication on Slack between the projects in each region. These Slack channels can be used to share notes, documents, codebooks, journal resources, and more.
 - Hold online summits or webinars for members of each region to discuss and troubleshoot. It may be useful to have regional webinars before the quantitative summit.



Image 6. The South Asia group discusses their goals and challenges.

Way forward: five bold steps for pro-WEAI, qualitative research, and implementers

In the last session, participants chose six topics that they felt still required attention, including validating the nutrition and health module, planning the quantitative summit, discussing implementation challenges, brainstorming other ways to use pro-WEAI, planning the analysis and reporting of the qualitative data, and exploring the use of cognitive interviewing to validate pro-WEAI. Each group defined a goal for that theme and outlined the necessary steps to reach that goal in the near future (three to six months). The goals and steps from each group are outlined in Appendix 4. Many of the groups planned to use Slack and Dropbox to facilitate continued collaboration between projects after the workshop. Though the topics were varied, many groups anticipated similar challenges, such as funding limitations, long surveys, high workload, different priorities between projects, and balancing pro-WEAI development with project monitoring and evaluation.

Closing and Next Steps

Co-PI Hazel Malapit, Research Coordinator at IFPRI, reviewed the objectives of GAAP2, the process for selecting pro-WEAI pilot projects, and the accomplishments of the GAAP2 inception workshop. She then outlined the plan and anticipated timeline for constructing and validating the pro-WEAI index.

Co-facilitator Stephan Dohrn summarized the work achieved at the workshop and thanked participants for their attention and active participation. Co-facilitator Wiebke-Anka Koch presented the final visual representation of the conference. To end the workshop, each participant shared one word representing how they were feeling at the end of three days of learning and discussion.

Appendix 1: Workshop agenda

Day 1: Thursday, March 9, 2017

Getting to know each other and the bigger picture: understanding empowerment

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER
8:00	Registration	
8:30	Welcome and objectives of the workshop	Agnes Quisumbing
8:45	Slack @ the workshop	Stephan Dohrn
9:00	Introductions	All + Stephan/Wiebke Koch
10:00	Break	
10:30	Empowerment scores from the projects	Speed-dating to share the results
11:30	Groups: understanding empowerment gaps	Groups
12:30	Lunch	
14:00	Facilitated Gallery walk	Stephan/Wiebke
14:45	How can qualitative research improve or validate quantitative research? Insights from qualitative research	Projects that undertook initial qualitative work
15:30	Break	
16:00	The importance of qualitative work	Groups
17:00-30	Closing and end day 1	Stephan/Wiebke
18:30	Reception	

Day 2: Friday, March 10, 2017

How to make the most out of GAAP2: generating ideas to improve data collection, data analysis, and project implementation and strengthen the community

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER
8:30	Recap day 1, agenda day 2	Core team member + Stephan/Wiebke
9:00	What have we learned from fielding pro-WEAI and qualitative research?	Groups for quantitative and qualitative researchers to support each other
10:30	Break	
11:00	How can we integrate quantitative and qualitative research in our projects?	Fishbowl with qualitative and quantitative researchers
11:30	How can we improve project implementation?	Groups in support of the project implementing teams
13:00	Lunch	
14:30	Facilitated gallery walk	Stephan/Wiebke

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER
15:00	Regional groups: focus on project implementation	Groups for South Asia, East/South Africa, and West Africa
16:00	Break	
16:30	Reporting	Stephan/Wiebke
17:15-30	Slack-athon; closing and end day 2	Stephan/Wiebke + core Team member

Day 3: Saturday, March 11, 2017

The way forward: next steps and setting the stage for self-organization of the community

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER
8:30	Recap day 2, agenda day 3	Core team member + Stephan/Wiebke
9:00	Regional groups: 5 bold steps to move ahead	Regional groups
10:00	Break	
10:30	Way forward – 5 bold steps for pro-WEAI, qualitative research, and implementers	Groups based on need and interest to plan next steps
11:30	Organizing workshop follow-up	Stephan/Wiebke
12:30	Closing	Ruth Meinzen-Dick or Hazel Malapit + Stephan/Wiebke
13:00	Joint lunch and end	

Appendix 2: List of participants

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Appendix 3: Visual representation of the workshop



Image 7. Mural of days 1 and 2



Image 8. Mural of day 3

Appendix 4. Goals and five bold steps to move ahead

Goal setting in regional groups

Region	West Africa	Eastern and Southern Africa	South Asia (qualitative group)	South Asia (quantitative group)
GOAL	<i>Ensure that pro-WEAI accurately measures empowerment in West Africa.</i>	<i>Create a pro-WEAI for Eastern and Southern Africa.</i>	<i>Develop regionally-specific indicators and correlates for pro-WEAI.</i>	<i>Create a tailored approach to pro-WEAI in South Asia.</i>
Step 1	Create a region-specific Slack channel.	Create a region-specific Slack channel.	Develop a list of items to add to the qualitative protocol (e.g., religion, caste).	Develop a protocol for validation.
Step 2	Share results on Slack.	Post Google Docs on Slack by theme (project descriptions, topics of interest, challenges, etc.).	Share de-briefing notes through Slack.	Write Stata code for table shells.
Step 3	Hold a troubleshooting summit before the quantitative summit.	Hold quarterly webinars.	Share the qualitative codebook.	Analyze data (by each project).
Step 4	Share journal resources on Slack.	Hold a summit in Arusha.	Organize regional webinar(s).	Hold a quantitative summit.
Step 5	Share methods and tools.	Decide how to analyze and share quantitative data between countries.	Summarize region-specific indicators.	Present results to implementers.

Goal setting for additional topics of interest

Topic	Validating the nutrition and health module	Planning the quantitative summit	Discussing implementation challenges	Brainstorming other ways to use pro-WEAI	Planning the analysis and reporting of the qualitative data	Exploring the use of cognitive interviewing to validate pro-WEAI
GOAL	<i>Validate the nutrition and health module of pro-WEAI</i>	<i>Hold a successful quantitative summit in late 2017.</i>	<i>Share and learn about implementation challenges.</i>	<i>Link pro-WEAI to other outcomes of well-being.</i>	<i>Develop methods for analysis and reporting of qualitative work.</i>	<i>Use cognitive interviewing to refine and validate pro-WEAI.</i>
Step 1	Share results and data from other nutrition and health modules.	Create a quantitative summit Slack channel.	Use the existing implementation Slack group.	Link pro-WEAI with the quantitative summit.	Identify products to develop from qualitative research.	Share A-WEAI cognitive testing materials on Slack.
Step 2	Link to existing qualitative protocols on nutrition and health.	Write and comment on summit objectives.	Encourage and help implementers to use Slack.	Consider Gates initiatives on linking measures.	Outline qualitative research products on Dropbox.	Develop cognitive testing modules for the new pro-WEAI modules.
Step 3	Develop cognitive testing protocols for the nutrition and health items.	Construct and comment on table shells.	Distinguish between project monitoring and evaluation and pro-WEAI.	Create a lab in the field working group.	Request feedback on outlines.	Use cognitive interviewing to refine the nutrition and health module.
Step 4	N/A	Create a codebook, table shells, and a do-file.	Share analyses and results in a timely manner.	Integrate a less resource intensive version of the pro-WEAI into national surveys.	Share and request feedback from the quantitative team and project implementers.	Have [X] number of projects use cognitive interviewing.
Step 5	N/A	Create and share tables and short presentations about quantitative results.	Orient project teams on pro-WEAI.	Engage with national statistical agencies.	Establish guidelines based on feedback.	N/A