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# Assessing Progress towards Women's Empowerment in Agricultural Development Project Portfolios in Africa and Asia

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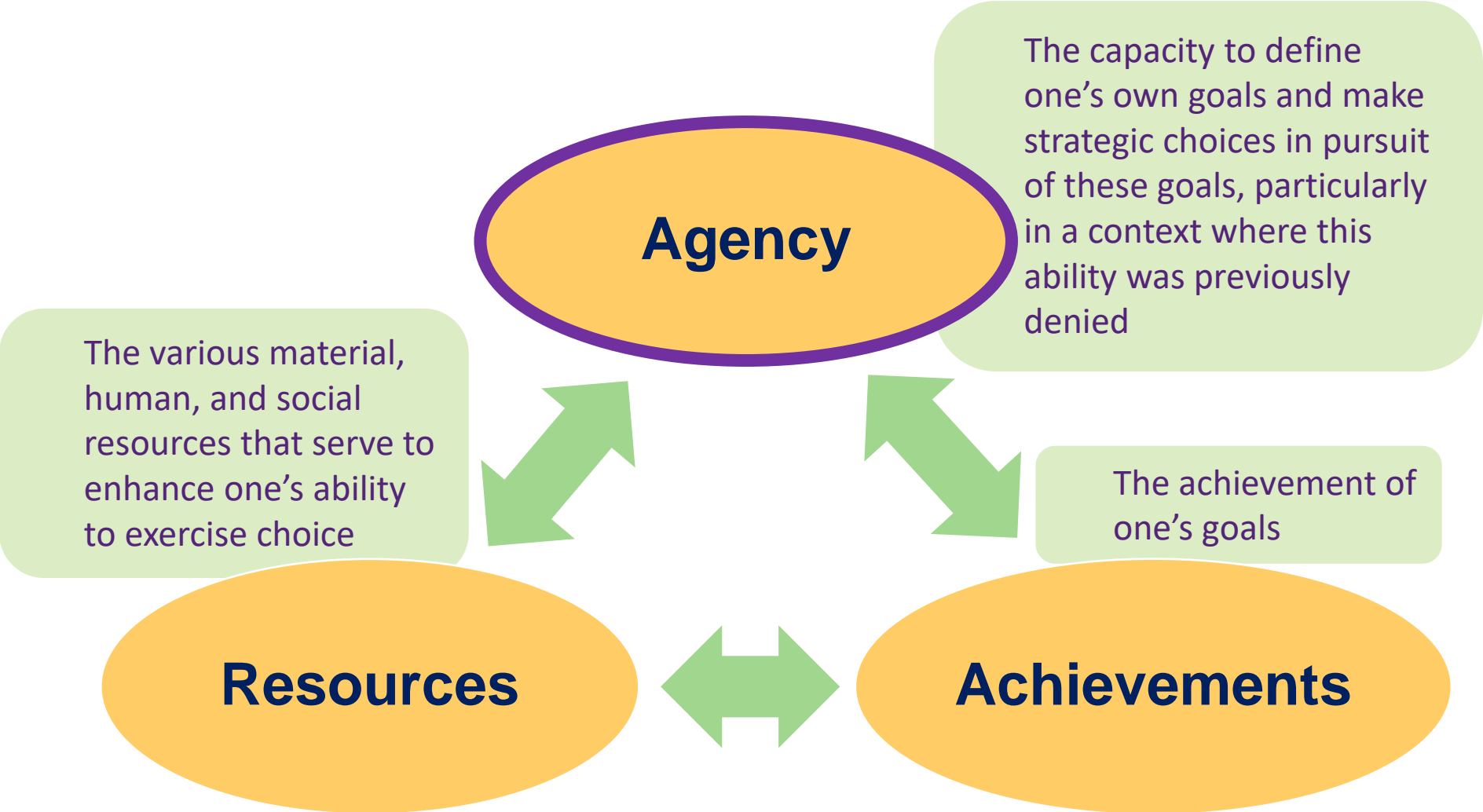
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# Presentation overview

- Empowerment metrics for population-level monitoring: WEAI and A-WEAI
- Reach, benefit, empower, transform framework
- Empowerment metrics for project level impact assessment: GAAP2 for pro-WEAI
- Insights from GAAP2 and JP RWEE portfolios for ADB programming



# Definition of empowerment



Source: Kabeer (1999)

# What is the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index?

- Developed by USAID, IFPRI & OPHI in 2012
- Measures inclusion of women in the agricultural sector
- **Survey-based** – interviews men and women in the same household
- Designed to look at decision-making and control over livelihoods, resources, and income (**both sole and joint**), mostly in agriculture, and in population-based surveys
- Data on men and women allow us to measure gender parity
  
- WEAI has two subindices:
  - 5DE (5 Domains of Empowerment)
  - GPI (Gender Parity Index)



# WEAI and A-WEAI for population-based monitoring

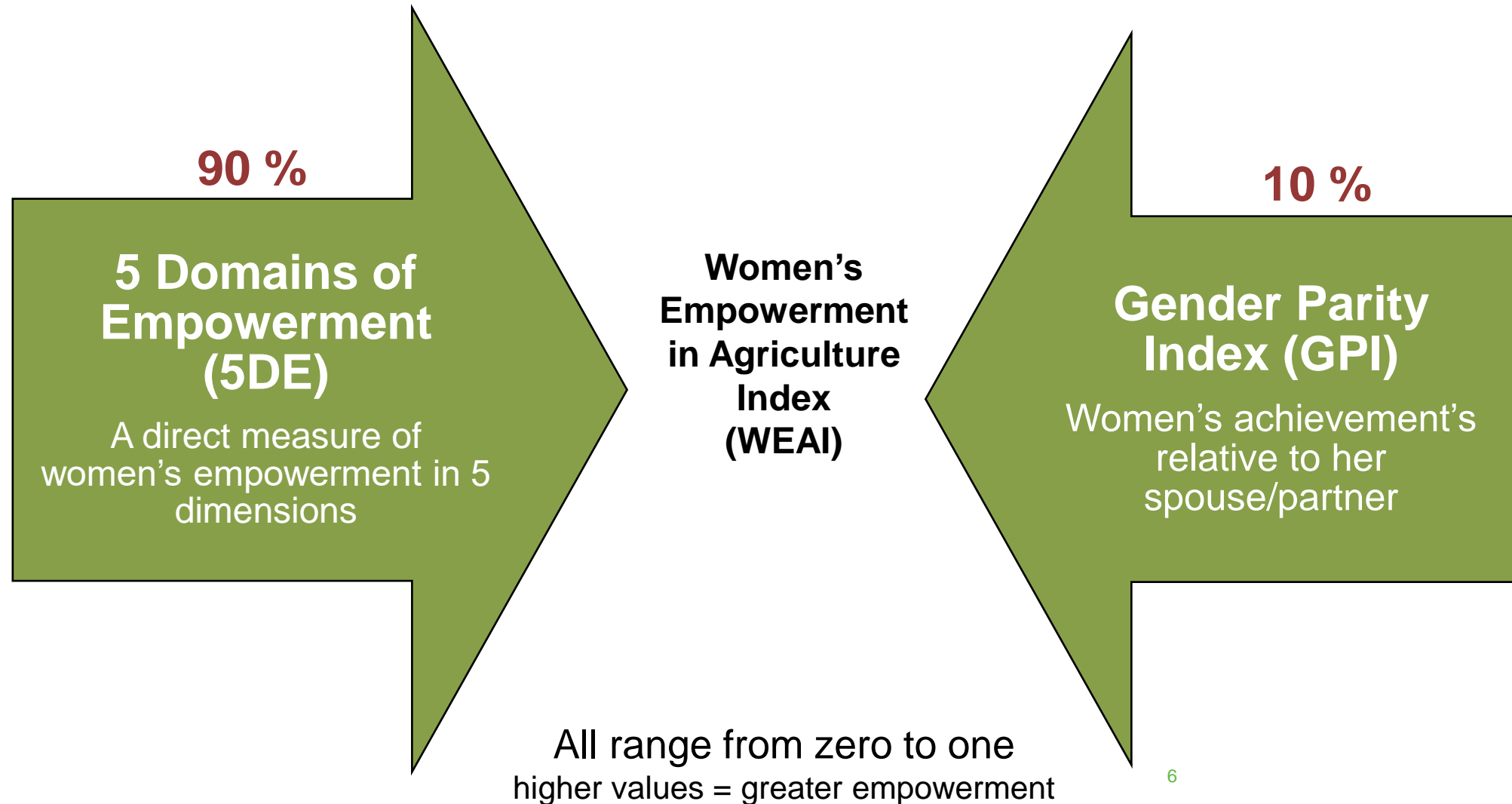


5 domains, 10 indicators



5 domains, 6 indicators

## Both WEAI and A-WEAI are made up of two sub-indices

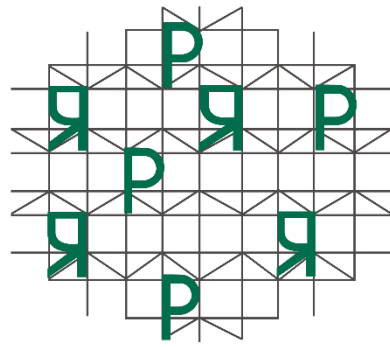


# Measuring and assessing empowerment at the project level: GAAP2 for pro-WEAI



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# Reach, Benefit, Empower, Transform (RBET) Framework

(Johnson et al. 2018; Morgan et al. 2023; Quisumbing et al. 2023)



Include women in program activities

*Reaching women means ensuring that women have the same opportunity to access the program activities as men.*

Increase women's well-being (e.g. food security, economic empowerment, health).

Requires more than reaching women:

- *Women value the intervention*
- *Direct benefits accrue to women*
- *Women's needs, preferences and constraints are considered in the intervention design and implementation arrangements*

Strengthen ability of women to make strategic life choices and to put those choices into action.

Goes beyond reaching and benefiting women:

- *Increases women's agency*
- *Changes gender attitudes among participants\**

*\*could be considered transformative, though depends on scale*

Goes beyond the woman to change gender norms and **structures** on a larger scale (changing households, communities and systems).

Goes beyond empowering individual women:

- *Involves men*
- *Changes gender norms at the community and societal levels*
- *Addresses structural and institutional barriers*
- *Mobilizes the power of the collective*

**Need strategies and tactics appropriate for each type of objective**

# Reach, Benefit, Empower, Transform (RBET) Framework



	<b>Reach</b>	<b>Benefit</b>	<b>Empower</b>	<b>Transform</b>
Key actors	<b>Project</b>	<b>Project</b> “Beneficiaries” Supporting actors (e.g. market agents)	<b>Women</b> Project Men Authorities	<b>Authorities</b> <b>Women and men</b> Projects Supporting actors
Outcomes	Women are “given opportunities”	Women are able to benefit from opportunities (defined by project or by women themselves?)	Women are able to define own goals and make strategic choices in pursuit of those goals --Particularly in context where this ability was previously denied	Systems are changed so that Women are not denied opportunities to pursue own goals

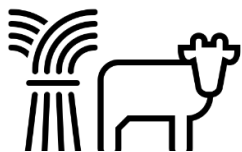
**Women  
empower  
themselves—**

***projects  
provide the  
opportunity***



# Types of women's empowerment strategies in GAAP2 projects

## Provide goods and services



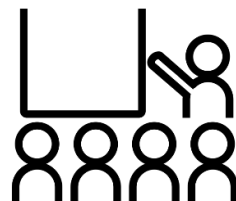
- Direct provision of goods/assets to beneficiaries
- Direct provision of services to beneficiaries
- Indirect provision by supporting availability, quality, or access

## Strengthen organizations



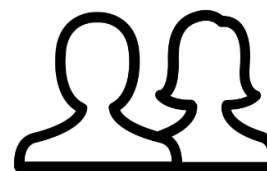
- Form/strengthen groups or other organizations (such as enterprises)
- Form/strengthen platforms or networks that link organizations

## Build knowledge and skills



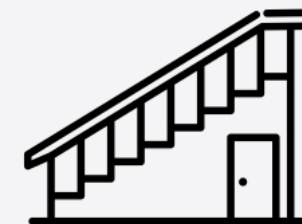
- Agricultural training and extension
- Nutrition education
- Business and finance training
- Other training

## Influence gender norms










- Community conversations to identify community solutions to gender issues
- Awareness raising about gender issues and their implications

## Transform structures



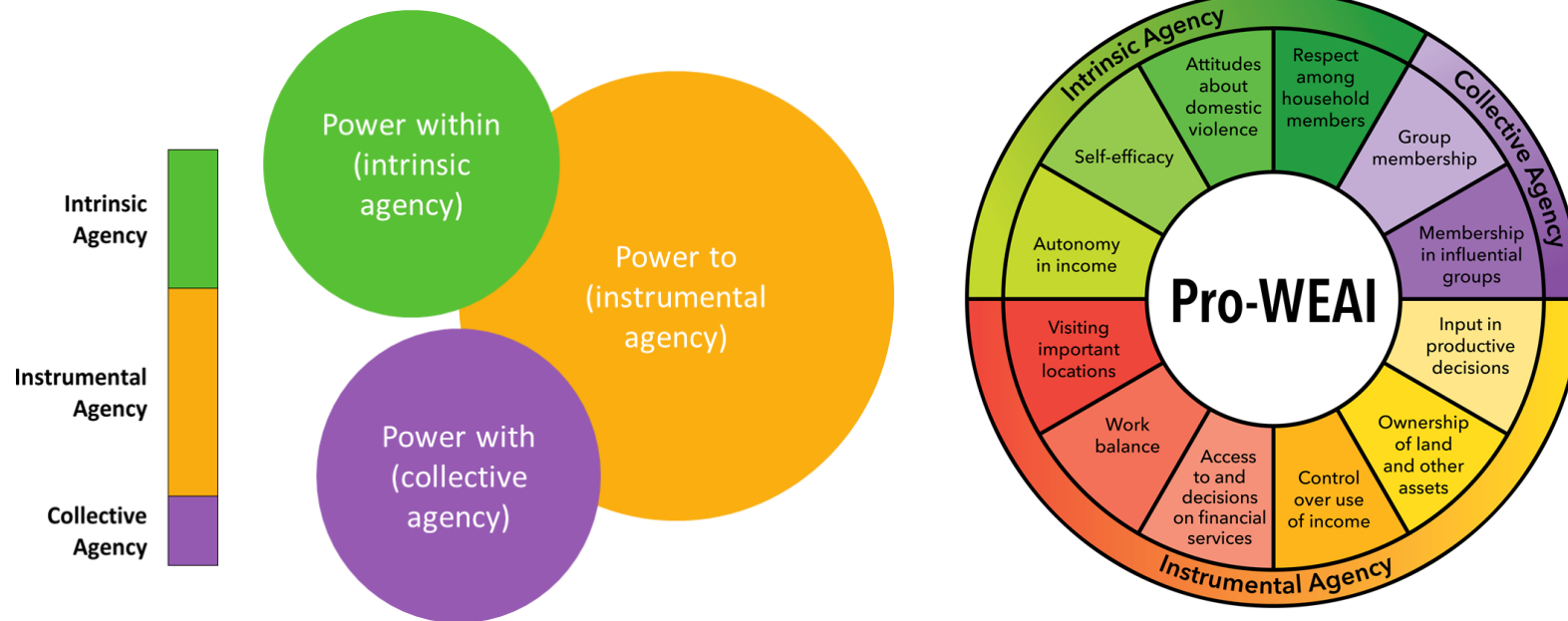
Gender-responsive policy frameworks;  
Institutional environment for women's economic empowerment;

# The Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project, Phase 2 (GAAP2) Portfolio

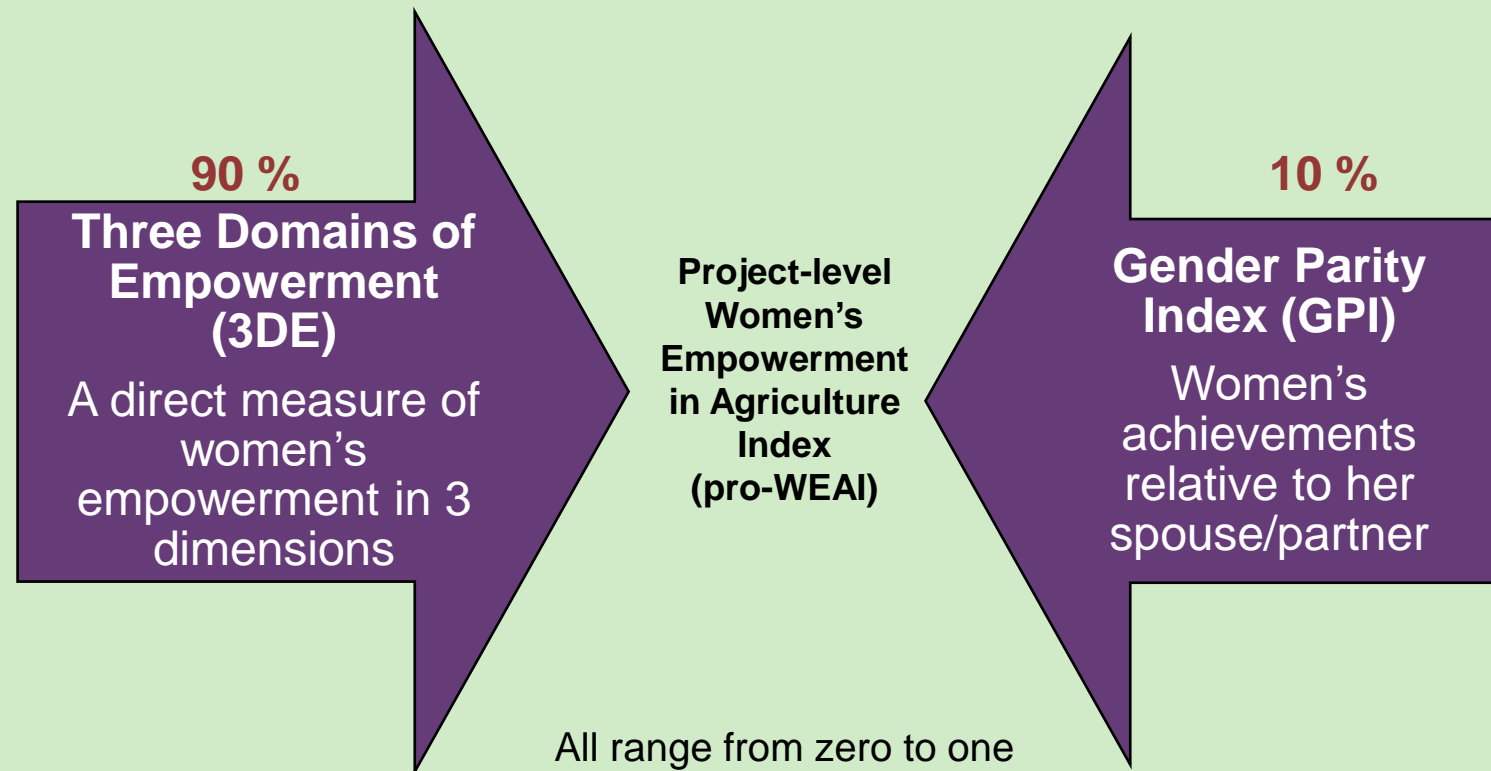
	 <b>Nutrition</b>	 <b>Income and Nutrition</b> 
 <b>Crops</b>	<b>ANGeL (Bangladesh)</b> <b>TRAIN (Bangladesh)</b>	<b>WorldVeg (Mali)</b> <b>AVC (Bangladesh)</b> <b>iDE (Ghana)</b>
 <b>Livestock</b>		<b>Heifer (Nepal)</b> <b>Maisha Bora (Tanzania)</b> <b>MoreMilk (Kenya)</b> <b>SE LEVER (Burkina Faso)</b>
  <b>Crops and livestock</b>	<b>FAARM (Bangladesh)</b> <b>WINGS (India)</b>	<b>JP-RWEE (Ethiopia)</b> <b>Grameen Foundation (Burkina Faso)</b>

# The Project-level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (Malapit et al. 2019)

- Survey-based index based on interviews of a woman & man in the same hh
- Three domains of agency (intrinsic, collective, instrumental) with 12 equally weighted indicators (pilot pro-WEAI), streamlined to 10 indicators (revised pro-WEAI)
- Developed using qual & quant methods



## Pro-WEAI is made up of two sub-indices



All range from zero to one  
higher values = greater empowerment

# Portfolio approach to impact evaluation

- 13 agricultural development projects in GAAP2 co-developed pro-WEAI and its associated qualitative protocols
- Pro-WEAI piloted by projects; refined using qualitative work
- Pro-WEAI implemented at endline; projects estimated impacts on empowerment indicators.
- JP RWEE Ethiopia was part of GAAP2; IFPRI asked to work on synthesis of three additional projects in Niger, Nepal, and Kyrgyzstan. Efforts made to harmonize indicators across both portfolios; same cut-offs used
- Outcome variables include aggregate empowerment measures, and the component indicators







# The Joint Programme accelerating progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women (JP RWEE)

An overview



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# The JP RWEE: a unique partnership

- Based on the comparative advantage and synergies of FAO, IFAD, UN Women and WFP
- **Donors:** Sweden and Norway

## JP RWEE Phase I ( 2015-2021)

**Countries of implementation:** Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda

**Budget:** USD 28,687,282

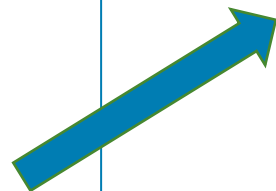
### JP RWEE I LEARNING AGENDA

- Independent external evaluation
- Project endline quant and qual studies
- **WEAI synthesis study with IFPRI**

## JP RWEE Phase II ( 2022-2027)

**Countries of implementation:**, Nepal, Niger, Pacific Islands ( Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Island and Tonga), Rwanda, Tanzania, Tunisia

**Budget:** USD 30,800,000



# How the JP RWEE works

## Four common JP RWEE expected outcomes

1. Food and nutrition security
2. Increased income and livelihoods
3. Enhanced leadership and participation
4. Gender responsive policy environment



	Ethiopia	Kyrgyzstan	Niger	Nepal
<b>FAO</b>	Agriculture production and agro technology training	Agro technology training	Dmitra clubs Community radios	horticulture production and kitchen gardening
<b>IFAD</b>	RUSACCOs supported and strengthened	GALS BALI	Rural pastoral kits for small livestock rotation	GALS
<b>WFP</b>		Fortified food assistance	Food storage and conservation	Food for asset
<b>UN Women</b>	Support to MoA to mainstream gender in its programmes	Mobilization of self help groups and management of revolving funds	Review of Land policy and National Nutrition security policy	Gender responsive planning and budgeting



# Assessing the impacts of GAAP2 and JP RWEE on empowerment outcomes



GAAP<sup>2</sup> phase

Gender, Agriculture & Assets Project

Led by IFPRI

JOINT PROGRAMME ON:  
Accelerating Progress towards the  
Economic Empowerment of Rural Women



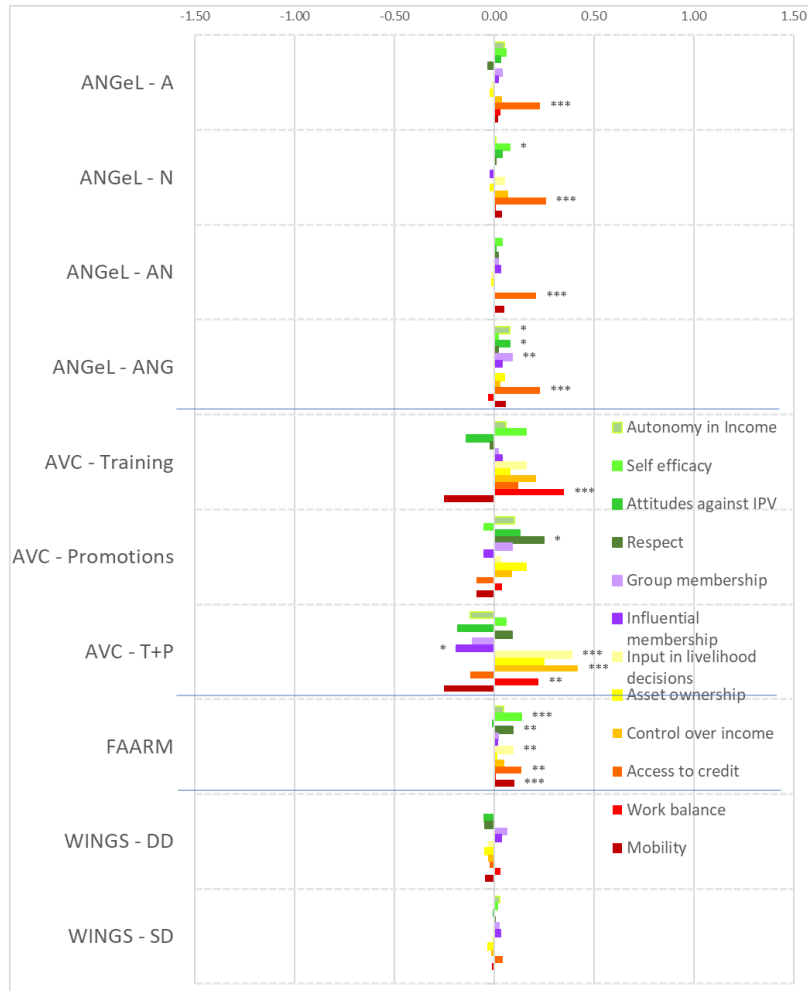
## Methods

- Each project estimated impact of the intervention (or treatment) on outcome indicators (pro-WEAI continuous and composite indicators; A-WEAI continuous indicators using pro-WEAI cutoffs))
- Compare effect sizes on continuous indicators (impact coefficients divided by standard deviation of outcome variable)
- Because JP RWEE synthesis used pro-WEAI cut-offs, estimates are comparable
- Assess distribution of effect sizes (negative, null, positive)
- Draw on qualitative work and theory of change to interpret results
- Use Reach, Benefit, Empower, Transform framework to inform lessons learned



# Impacts of GAAP2 on men's pro-WEAI continuous indicators

## South Asia

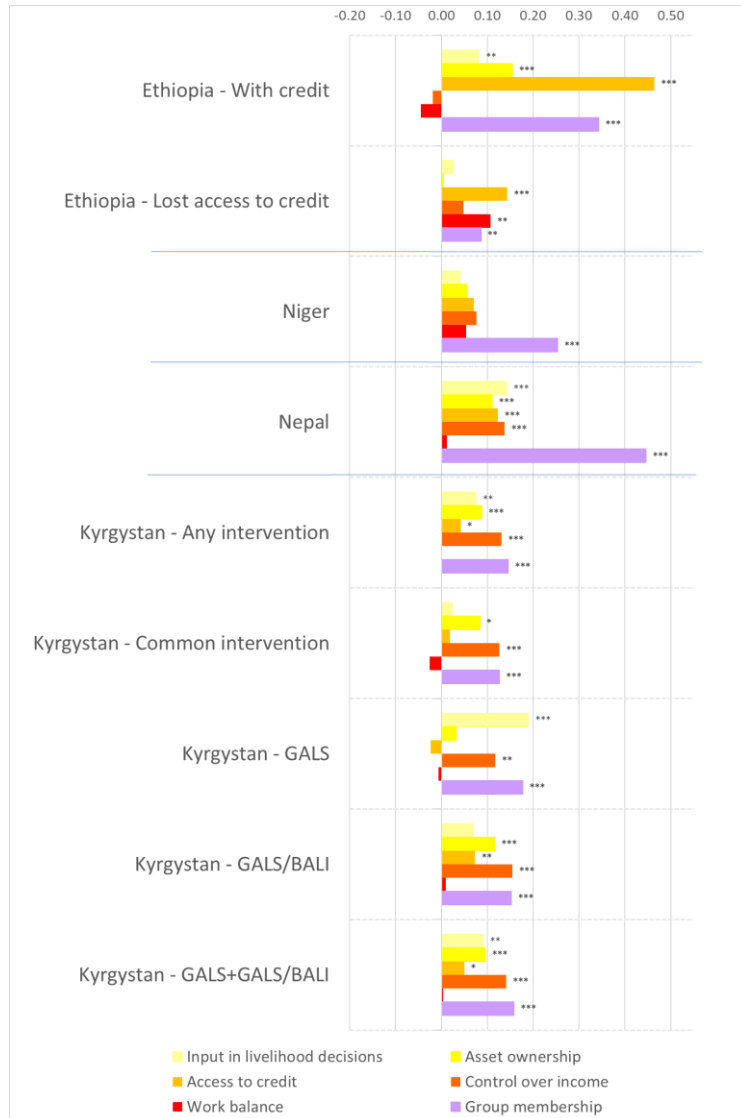


## Africa

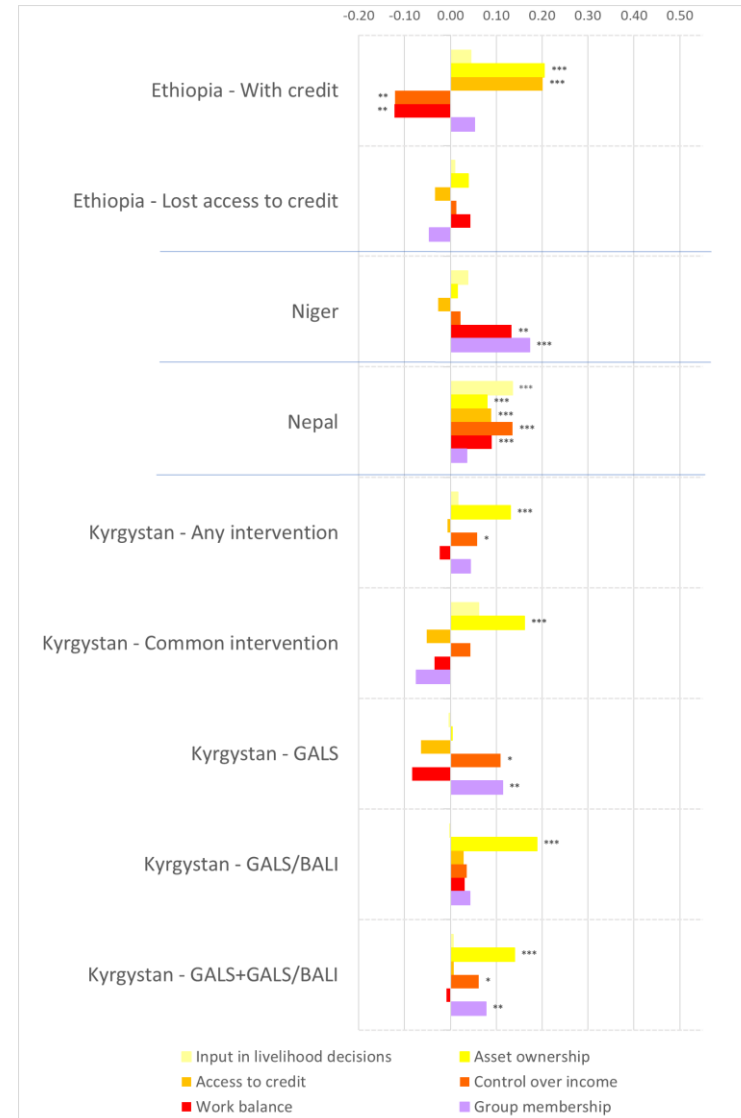


# Impacts of JP RWEE on pro-WEAI continuous indicators

Women



Men



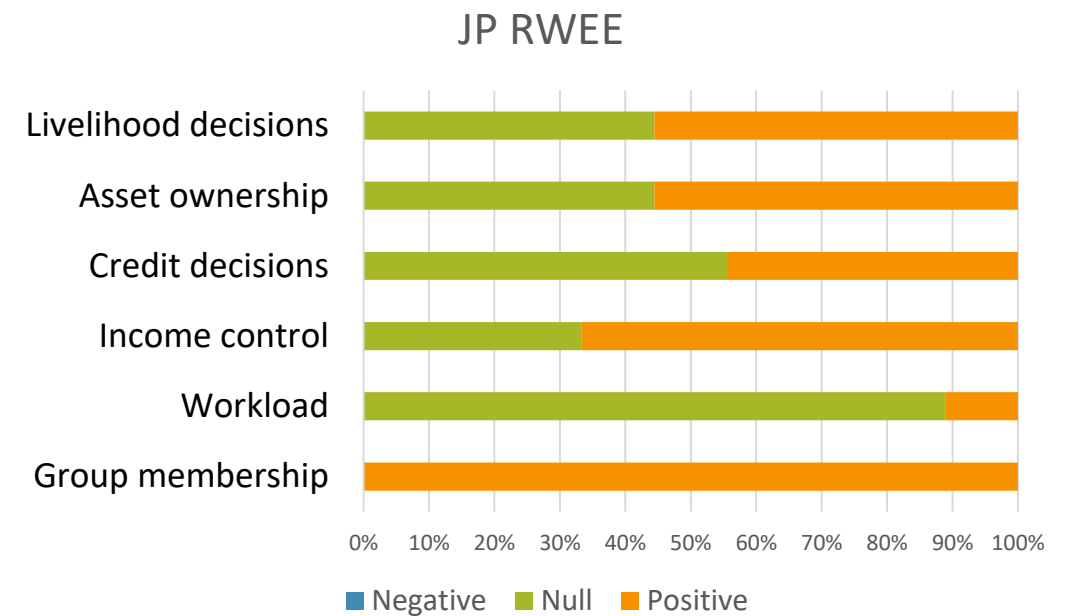
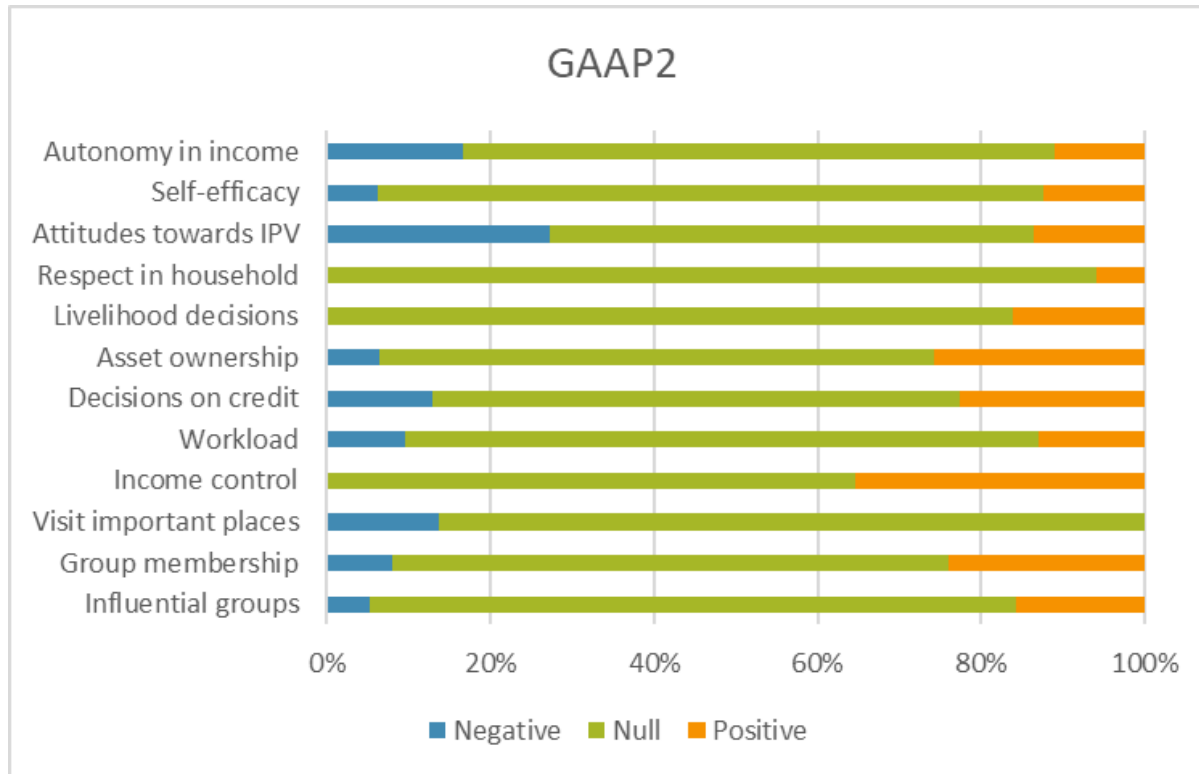


## Takeaways from GAAP2 and JP RWEE effect sizes

- GAAP2: most estimates are clustered around zero (impacts are small), more variation in the Africa estimates, for both men and women
- GAAP2: more significant impacts detected on women's indicators, since they are the target of most GAAP2 programming
- JP RWEE: larger positive impacts across indicators, except for men who lost access to credit (Ethiopia), but increases in workload as well
- Let's take a closer look at both portfolios

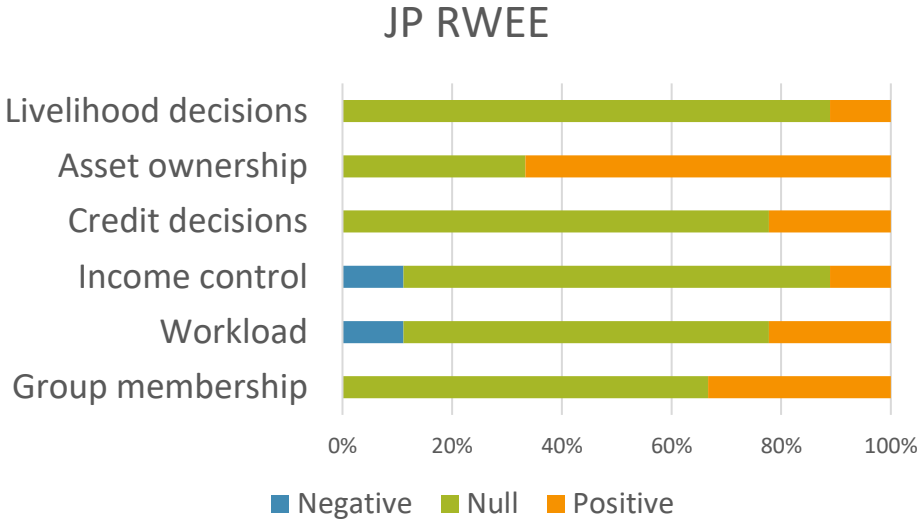
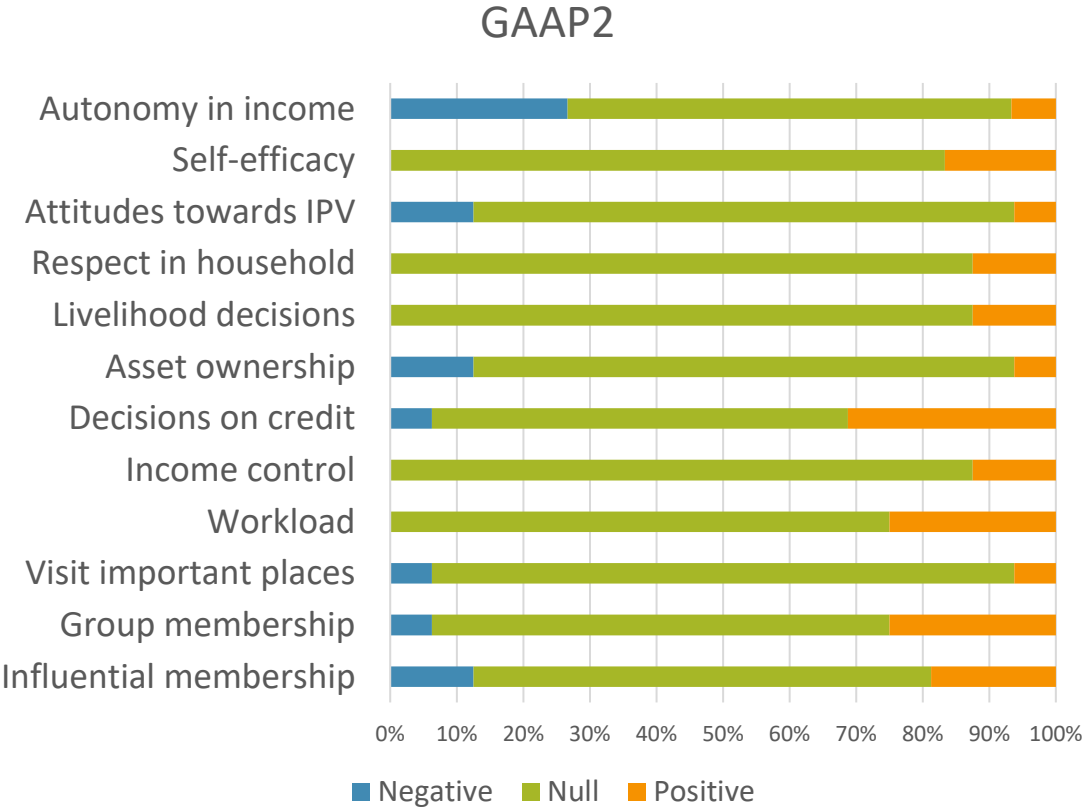


# GAAP2 projects report a larger proportion of null impacts on women's continuous indicators compared to JP RWEE.



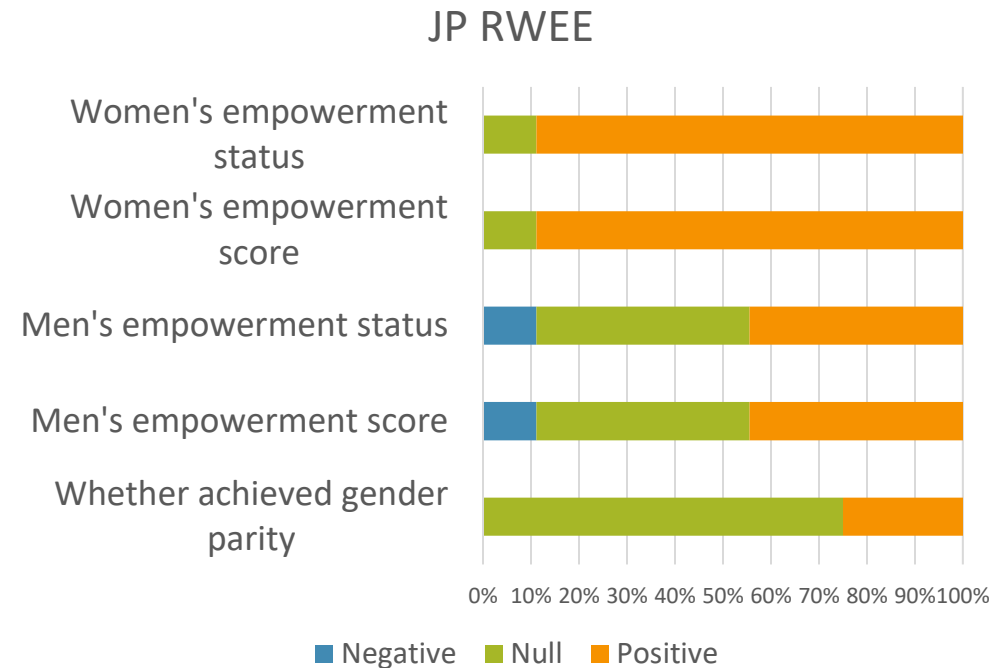
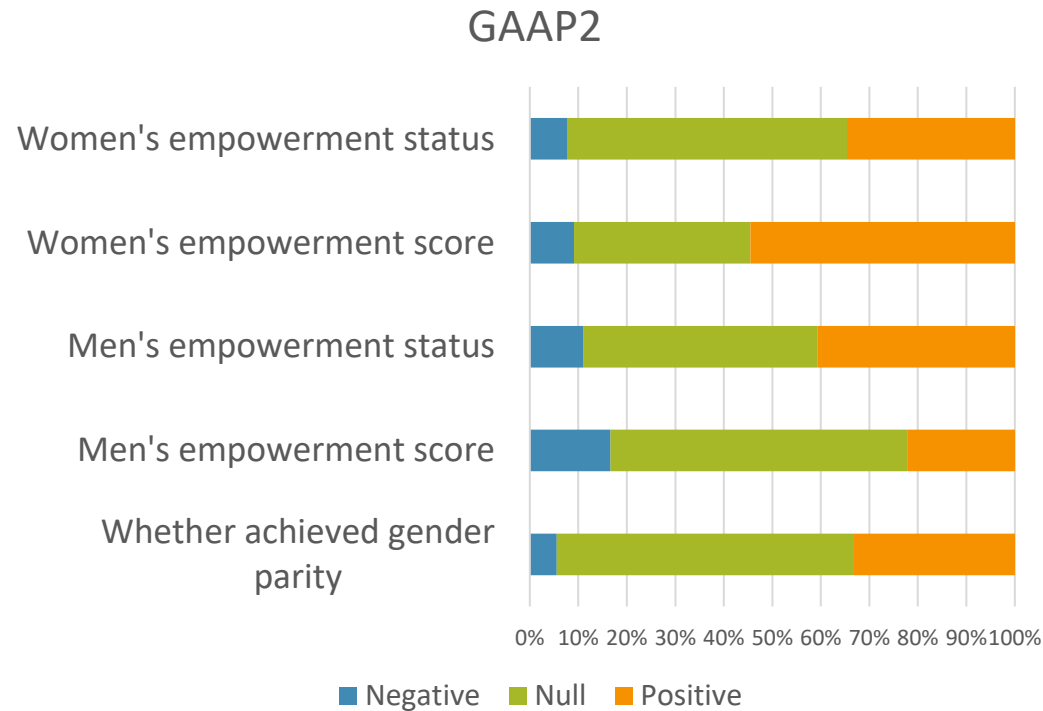
GAAP2 projects report more null impacts, but also some significant positive impacts and some negative impacts. JP RWEE has a larger proportion of positive impacts, except for workload (a positive impact indicates increased work hours). Group membership impact in JP RWEE reflects group-based nature of programming.

# Both GAAP2 and JP RWEE show more null impacts on men's continuous indicators, but also some positive impacts



Negative impacts indicate potential for backlash. Positive impacts on workload means it has also increased for men

# JP RWEE has a greater proportion of positive impacts on composite empowerment indicators and gender parity



Despite the smaller sample size, JP RWEE shows a higher proportion of positive impacts on women's empowerment indicators than the GAAP2 portfolio, reflecting more women-focused programming. But both programs report a large proportion of null results on men's empowerment and whether the household achieved gender parity. Gender parity is more difficult to achieve.

# Insights from qualitative work

## GAAP2

- Confirms + impacts on women's empowerment even if quantitative findings were weaker
- Capacity building strategies important
- Small, offsetting impacts on men's intrinsic agency consistent with qualitative findings, which affirm that intrahousehold dynamics are complex; vary by context, and may be constraint to changing gender norms
- Harder to measure collective agency: it may take time for a group to form, and even longer for it to be seen as influential.
- Explore inconsistencies! Nepal qual showed daughters-in-law more disempowered than mothers-in-law; quant showed no difference. Pointed to importance of **control over time**, not just hours worked

## JPRWEE

- Time use an issue in Nepal, Kyrgyzstan, Ethiopia despite null impacts on total workload.
- Active participation in groups and livelihood interventions may demand a large amount of women's time.
- Although trainings increased women's time burden in Kyrgyzstan, participation in GALS led to rebalancing of household duties among family members, allowing women to direct their time to income-generating activities.
- In Ethiopia, women expressed that their actual time use was less important to them **than control over how they spent their time**. Even if they increased time spent on productive work, women themselves may perceive this as positive, if they benefit from its returns.



# Can agricultural development projects empower women? Lessons from GAAP2 and JP RWEE

- Even with empowerment objectives, many agricultural development projects do not achieve significant impacts on empowerment indicators (within the time frame of the evaluations)
- Regional effects are important, and so are underlying gender norms
- We need to be mindful of potential backlash, which is why collecting data on men is important
- We need to pay attention to workload. In JP RWEE, we expected the program would increase women's productive work. Not much impact on childcare, but there were offsetting impacts as productive work increased for women and men
- But some projects are successful!



# What can we learn from successful projects?

- Successful projects:
  - are intentional about empowerment
  - try to address underlying gender norms and structures that restrict women
  - often work through women's groups
  - involve men and influential household and community members as part of the solution



## Lessons and implications for future work

- Empowerment and Transformation more challenging than Reach or Benefit
  - To do and to measure
  - Especially within short time horizons of projects and evaluations
  - Intentional strategies are important
- Consider interconnections
  - Among resources, agency, achievements
  - Among different indicators of agency (e.g. group membership, credit, workloads)
  - Between individual, household, community, and social/political structures
- Use empowerment measures as part of M&E and future design work
  - Baselines to inform project refinement (e.g. what is needed)
  - Qualitative and quantitative to inform each other
  - Lessons from past projects and evaluations to inform new interventions





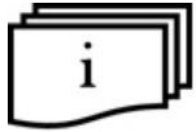
# Resources

- Reach, Benefit, Empower video: <https://youtu.be/fLGeZBLpaBY>
- Quisumbing, A. B. Gerli, S. Faas, J. Heckert, H.J. Malapit, C. McCarron, R. Meinzen-Dick, F. Paz. (2023) Assessing Multicountry Programs Through a “Reach, Benefit, Empower, Transform” Lens. *Global Food Security* 37: 100685. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2023.100685>
- Quisumbing, A., S. Cole, M. Elias, S. Faas, A. Galiè, H. Malapit, R. Meinzen-Dick, E. Myers, G. Seymour, J. Twyman. (2023). Measuring Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture: Innovations and evidence. *Global Food Security* 38, 100707. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2023.100707>
- Morgan, M., A.M. Larson, S. Trautman, E. Garner, M. Elias, and R. Meinzen-Dick. (2023). Gender transformative approaches to strengthen women’s land and resource rights. Bogor, Indonesia: Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and Nairobi: World Agroforestry (ICRAF) International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) <https://www.cifor-icraf.org/publications/pdf/project-briefs/GTA-Brief.pdf>
- Quisumbing, A., R. Meinzen-Dick, H. J. Malapit, G. Seymour, J. Heckert, C. Doss, N. Johnson, D. Rubin, G. Thai, G. Ramani, E. Myers, and the GAAP2 for pro-WEAI Study Team. 2024. Enhancing agency and empowerment in agricultural development projects: A synthesis of mixed methods impact evaluations from the Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project, Phase 2 (GAAP2). *Journal of Rural Studies* 108, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2024.103295>.
- Johnson, N., M. Balagamwala, C. Pinkstaff, S. Theis, R. Meinzen-Dick, and A. Quisumbing. (2018). How do agricultural development projects empower women? What hasn’t worked and what might. *Journal of Agriculture, Gender, and Food Security* 3(2):1-19. <http://agrigender.net/views/agricultural-development-projects-empowering-women-JGAFS-322018-1.php>

# WEAI Resource Center

weai.ifpri.info

## Guides and Instruments



Guides and manuals



Quantitative  
instruments & CAPI  
codes



Stata code for  
calculating WEAI (do-  
files)



Qualitative  
instruments

## Tool for “Choosing the right WEAI”

### Choosing the Right WEAI

The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) measures women's empowerment based on interviews of women and men within the same household. It can be used to assess women's empowerment as well as compare it to men's, generating important data to track progress toward the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG5) on women's empowerment and gender equity.

Different versions of WEAI exist for different uses, including the original WEAI, which is reported at the country or regional level, the Abbreviated WEAI (A-WEAI), and a version for project use, pro-WEAI. Pro-WEAI also has specialized modules related to health

and nutrition, livestock, and market inclusion. The WEAI data collection instruments include qualitative protocols for understanding local meanings of empowerment.

Which WEAI instrument is right for you? This interactive tool will guide you through a series of questions to help you identify the best version for your purpose. Once you have identified the right WEAI, check out the latest versions, guidelines, qualitative protocols, and publications on the WEAI Resource Center site and our mixed-methods online WEAI course. For additional information, contact IFPRI-WEAI@cgiar.org.

**Q1** Interested in empowerment or only reach and welfare benefits for women?

Empowerment:  
Go to Q2

Only reach or benefit: Use reach and benefit indicators related to your theory of change; possibly some indicators from WEAI, A-WEAI or pro-WEAI

**Q2** Dealing mostly with women in agricultural production or with women across value chains?

Agricultural production:  
Go to Q3

Across value chains:  
Pro-WEAI+MI

**Q3** Building on data from the

**Q4** Interested in 4 indicators dropped from the original WEAI?

Yes: Original WEAI

No: A-WEAI. But consider other indicators in pro-WEAI to see if it would be useful to have information on any of them. Continue to Q6 to check on add-ons.

**Q5** How resource-constrained is your survey?

Resources are tight, but we want to capture essential aspects of empowerment: Pro-WEAI. Continue to Q6 to check on add-ons

Need bare minimum of questions, even if we miss important aspects of empowerment: A-WEAI. But consider other indicators in pro-WEAI

**Q6** Livestock-oriented study/intervention?

Yes, we want detailed livestock modules: WEAI

No: Pro-WEAI. Continue to Q7 to check on add-ons

Mixed farming system, but livestock is important: Pro-WEAI + Livestock. Continue to Q7 to check if additional add-ons would be useful

**Q7** Health or nutrition-oriented study/intervention?

Yes: Pro-WEAI + Health and Nutrition

No: Pro-WEAI



## Pro-WEAI Distance Learning Module 1: Pro-WEAI Foundations

The Pro-WEAI Foundations Module addresses the importance of measuring women's empowerment within project-specific contexts.

Click to enter this course

Pro-WEAI Distance Learning Course  
<http://elearning.foodsecurityportal.org/>

