

University of Florida

# **Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index: Case Studies**

*A Guideline for Using the WEAI Index in Gender  
Research*

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## **Background**

The International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), in collaboration with the University of Florida (UF), and Jordan's National Center for Agricultural Research and Extension (NCARE) conducted focus group discussions with men and women from communities at the Water and Livelihoods Initiative (WLI) Jordan benchmark site<sup>1</sup>. These participants revealed important gendered socio-economic information critical to the success of the WLI project in Jordan. A central component of this study was the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), which was used as a guide to construct questions in a qualitative survey instrument to pilot in Jordan and later to recommend to other WLI countries.

## **Gender analysis**

While women make up as much as 70-95% of the agricultural labor in the WLI countries<sup>2</sup> (although levels of involvement vary by country), the roles and responsibilities of women in agricultural production are often neglected by researchers. Often surveys conducted at the household level are given to male household heads, thus reflecting a masculine and one-sided view point of agricultural tasks and production while under-capturing the other side of the story. This common approach neglects the complex dynamics of the household and the particularities of agricultural production which are often gendered. For example, in many communities in the Middle East, it is the men who are responsible for marketing agricultural produce, while women fulfill other tasks on the farm including planting, harvesting and processing. These gendered tasks necessitate different responsibilities and thus different agricultural experiences (i.e., production, processing and marketing) for men and for women. It is the goal of gender analysis to study these gender differences and thus integrate women into development projects as full participants and determine new entry points for interventions.

Assessing household power dynamics is a crucial component of gender analysis, although it is often overlooked by research teams. One way of uncovering the power relationships within a household is through recognizing who owns, controls and has access to different assets (i.e., natural capital, physical capital, human capital, financial capital, social capital, and political capital). For example, women may have ownership rights to land and access to land (as a natural capital), but they may not have decision-making power with regards to production on that land. Identifying the complexity of the relationships to assets within the household is an important element of gender analysis.

Despite the need for gender analysis in social and agricultural research, it has been difficult for researchers to collect sex-disaggregated data. A new tool, the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), has been developed in collaboration between the United State Agency for International Development (USAID), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, which is designed to measure

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<sup>1</sup> The WLI is a USAID-funded project which is implemented in eight Middle Eastern countries (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen). The benchmark sites were carefully selected to represent each of the three agro-ecological systems in the region (irrigated, rainfed, and rangeland) and to pilot specific water and land management techniques that optimize productivity and improve rural livelihoods.

<sup>2</sup> WLI: Strengthening a Vision for Gender Empowerment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Report, University of Florida, 05/2012, pp.7.

women's empowerment in the agricultural sector and within the household in order to determine the constraints and opportunities for women's full engagement and equality in controlling family resources. The WEAI therefore provides a useful framework for conducting a gender assessment of asset usage and control.

### **The Tool: Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index**

The WEAI is a new index tool used for monitoring gender gaps in agricultural production and development projects. The index consists of five domains of empowerment including women's decision-making role in agricultural production, control over income and production resources, leadership opportunities, and available time for leisure:

- **Production Domain:** Understanding women's decision-making roles and responsibilities within the household about agricultural production activities can help to discern power relations within the household.
- **Resource Domain:** The purpose of this domain is to determine if women own and have access and control over productive assets, including land, livestock, equipment and technology, extension services, and credit.
- **Income Domain:** Understanding household relationships concerning the control and use of income and expenditures, one can help assess who brings in income (cash and in-kind/barter), how it is used, and who makes allocation decisions. Analysis of other financial assets, such as savings, can be also considered through this domain.
- **Leadership Domain:** This domain addresses empowerment through social capital. The main goal is to assess the gendered differences in social or economic group membership. Membership is operationalized through participatory actions, such as taking on leadership roles, membership in community groups or public speaking.
- **Time Domain:** Another strategy of gender analysis is to assess the gendered differences and similarities regarding the time allocated for agricultural tasks. In identifying the time constraints/allocations for each household member, the researcher can also identify time available for leisure activities.

When conducting gender analysis, it is important that researchers use the WEAI tool to attain information not only about the rural livelihoods and conditions of women, but also of men. While engaging women with the WEAI questionnaire is an important component of gender analysis, it is also critical to account for men's daily activities and control over assets and income. Through this more holistic approach to gender analysis, researchers will be able to more accurately assess the gender gaps within the household and ultimately in the community. In addition, women's empowerment can be measured through men's perspectives.

Because the WEAI is a new tool, the best method of implementation for data collection is still being explored. IFPRI has released a quantitative survey instrument<sup>3</sup> that is now being field-tested by researchers and practitioners. Our research team<sup>4</sup> developed a qualitative questionnaire

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<sup>3</sup> The instrument is available on IFPRI's website: <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/womens-empowerment-agriculture-index>

<sup>4</sup> Research team was comprised of the University of Florida graduate students (Chesney McObmber, Nargiza Ludgate, Kristen Augustine, Claudia Youakim, Jeremy Lambeth) supervised by Drs. Sandra Russo and Constance

which encompassed different components of the five domains of empowerment, capturing the content of the quantitative questionnaire in a more descriptive format. This questionnaire then served to compliment the quantitative baseline socio-economic data that had been previously collected by the Jordan NCARE's socio-economic team<sup>5</sup> in 2007. The expectation was that this qualitative information derived from the WEAI domains would provide a deeper and more detailed understanding of gender roles in agricultural production and the social mechanisms that promote or impede women's empowerment. The WEAI-based questions were used in a focus group setting to facilitate detailed discussions about women's agricultural and domestic concerns and responsibilities with regards to water and land management.

## **Methodology**

Our research team used qualitative methodologies to obtain comprehensive sex disaggregated data. This data was acquired through the use of focus groups and other participatory methods such as the problem tree and daily activity calendar. With the help of these methods our research team was able to facilitate in-depth discussions with the participants in five focus group discussions conducted with the communities of the Jordan's WLI benchmark site.

### ***Focus Groups***

The research team decided to use the qualitative methodological tool of focus groups to explore the domains of the WEAI. With proper planning and preparation, the focus group can be an efficient way of gathering descriptive data and can help shed light on the extensive social experiences and relationships within a community. The research team will usually target a particular sub-section of the population, asking those with relevant experience or relationships to the research topic to participate. The ideal group size is between seven and eleven participants, as this tends to produce an environment conducive to active participation by each person present in the focus group discussion. A group too large may produce confusion, noise, or one person dominating the discussion, thus making it difficult for all voices to be heard; a focus group that is too small may not produce enough diversity of opinion to get a broad range of perspectives or a thorough understanding of the research topic. The discussion questions are pre-selected and presented in a manner that promotes dialogue between the participants. The focus group is guided by a facilitator that engages the group while other members of the research team take notes and observe the dialogue. The discussion is carefully guided by the facilitator who keeps the dialogue on topic without offering any personal opinion of his or her own.

### ***Problem Tree***

The problem tree is constructed by focus group participants through the facilitation of a researcher. First, the participants identify problems within the community and then prioritize them. The top priority problem then becomes the focus of the discussion. Next, the focus group identifies the causes of the problem through participatory and collaborative discussion. These causes are arranged in a way that visually represents the "roots" of the problem. Organized into first-level and second-level causes, the group then draws connections between the causes and prioritizes the strength of each in relation to the problem. The second component of this exercise is to identify the effects of the problem on the community. These effects are written on cards and

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<sup>5</sup> Jordan's NCARE is one of the WLI partners for Jordan. The socio-economic team is led by Dr. Samia Akroush

placed above the causes and the main problem which symbolize the “branches” of the problem tree. Again, the community organizes and ranks the effects into first-level and second-level sequence. It is important for the community and researchers to recognize that the causes and effects listed maybe linked and in fact, cyclical. Finally, the problem tree is completed when the community identifies solutions to the causes and effects. This strategy is an effective tool for use in focus groups because participants are able to immediately see the results of a brainstorming activity in an organized way. The process also facilitates full community engagement in analyzing the roots of their problem, the associated effects, and developing their own solutions to address the problem. Allowing for the collection of qualitative data, this structure is highly visual and facilitates directed discussion pertaining to the identified community problem.

### ***Daily Activity Calendar***

The daily activity calendar is used as a tool to capture how people in the community spend a typical day. The facilitator can use two methods of attaining this information. The first method is by providing a chart which lists the hours of the day. The community then fills in the various activities usually done next to the appropriate time slot. Conversely, the researcher can list various activities (i.e., cooking, cleaning, etc.) and the participants indicate the time in which this activity is usually done. The second method is by simply asking the different community members what they do on a typical day from the time they wake up until the time they go to sleep at night. The facilitator can then encourage more detailed explanations of the daily activities including the hours tasks are done and the length of time each activity takes. For the purposes of this study, our research team chose to use the latter strategy as it was less structured and provided a better opportunity to gather more detailed and qualitative data.

### ***WEAI Domains Applied***

Our research team applied the following WEAI domains in the study:

- Production (men’s and women’s focus groups): Women’s role in the decision-making process regarding agriculture and livestock production,
- Resources (men’s and women’s focus groups): Ownership, access to, and control over productive resources and assets,
- Income (men’s focus group only): Sole or joint control over income and expenditures within the household,
- Leadership (women’s focus group only): Opportunities available in the community or cooperative (i.e., benefits from membership, activities for women), and
- Time (men’s and women’s focus groups): Availability of time for leisure. This domain was also supplemented by gathering information regarding the men’s daily activity calendar (to construct a typical day for the men in the community) and an agricultural activity calendar (to determine the division of labor in agricultural tasks).

The domains of resources and time were explored in all focus groups. The domain of income was explored only with men, while the leadership domain was explored with women only. The discussion questions were primarily focused on gendered power dynamics within the household, emphasizing women’s decision-making roles and participation with particular regard to assets and resources allocation control<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> A complete report (Gender analysis of Jordan WLI benchmark site) is available upon contacting the WLI project team, <http://icarda.org/wli/contact-wli.html>

The WEAI also helped us inquire about women's access to water resources (potable and agricultural) and decision-making; perceptions about climate change and its associated behavioral changes were also addressed. The questions included sources of water, water quality and responsibilities within households, changes to water use patterns during droughts and associated patterns about how resource allocation decisions/priorities are made.

Below we present case studies on each domain. The discussion in each domain is based on our experience and information gathered in Jordan. The purpose of these case studies is to help researchers in the WLI countries understand the purpose of the WEAI and how it can be applied in gender research.

## Case Study 1: Production Domain

### Purpose:

The purpose of this activity is to understand women's participation in the agricultural sector, particularly women's role in the decision-making process and their autonomy to make production management decisions regarding crop and livestock. This case is built on focus group discussions held with the WLI benchmark community members. The focus groups were conducted separately with men and women to obtain their views and perceptions on which member of the family is responsible for making decisions about different agricultural tasks within the household.

### Methodology:

The activity modules are presented for use in the focus group discussions to enable the research team to gather important information about gender role-based differences in the household and the level of empowerment women have in different business aspects of the household's income generating activities.

- Activity Modules (*includes Tables 1 to 4*)

The Activity Modules are comprised of four tables: 1) to measure women's participation in agricultural production and the decision-making process, 2) to measure women's participation in livestock operation and the decision-making process, 3) to measure the division of labor within the household to support farm activities (what is done by men, women, children or together), and 4) to measure the division of labor within the household for livestock operation (what is done by men, women, children or together). The modules include questions from WEAI. The questions are flexible and should be adopted to incorporate the context of the environment and activities that are relevant to the participants. The modules are given as guidelines to prompt researchers to think what questions and techniques they should explore to obtain facts and uncover accurate/representative explanations from each subset group. Prior to conducting a focus group discussion, the researchers can reference documented sources (e.g., official published data, reports, etc.) to update or construct the activity modules for focus group discussions. It is advisable to repeat each module for different crops or livestock types (especially focusing on crops and animals that are important for women)

Table 1: Women's participation in agricultural production and the decision-making process

Agricultural activities	M: (only by men)	Mw: (mainly by men, with some help of women)	W: (only by women)	NA: (not applicable)	FC: (Female children)	MC: (Male children)
Who decides to buy or rent land?						
Who decides what crops to produce?						
Who decides where and when to plant which crops?						
Who decides on use of inputs (e.g., whether to use fertilizer, pesticides or herbicides; or where and how much to purchase)						

Who decides on purchase of agricultural tools and equipment?						
Who decides on irrigation and which crops to be irrigated?						
Who decides on hired labor?						
Who decides on how much and where to market the produce/crop and at what price?						
Who decides on what to do with the revenue generated from sales?						

Table 2: Women's participation in livestock operation and the decision-making process

<b>Livestock activities</b>	<b>M:</b> (only by men)	<b>Mw:</b> (mainly by men, with some help of women)	<b>W:</b> (only by women)	<b>NA:</b> (not applicable)	<b>FC:</b> (Female children)	<b>MC:</b> (Male children)
Who decides when to feed animals						
Who decides to take animals for grazing (i.e., when, how often and where)						
Who decides on veterinary care for animals?						
Who decides on use of inputs (e.g., whether to use forage supplements, artificial insemination)						
Who decides on hired labor?						
Who decides how much milk to process?						
Who decides on how much and where to market the dairy products and at what price?						
Who decides on what to do with the revenue generated from animal or dairy products sales?						

Table 3: Division of labor for agricultural activities (what is done by men, women or children)

<b>Agricultural Tasks</b>	<b>Responsibility: Crops (Identify most important crops)</b>					
	<b>M:</b> (Only by men)	<b>Mw:</b> (Mainly by men, with some help of women)	<b>W:</b> (Only by women)	<b>NA:</b> (Not applicable)	<b>FC:</b> (Female children)	<b>MC:</b> (Male children)
Protected agriculture						
Land preparation						
Planting						
Fertilizer application						
Weeding (manual)						
Irrigation						
Spraying (e.g., pesticides)						
Harvesting						

Storing						
Marketing						
Processing						
Planting winter crops						

Table 4: Division of labor for livestock activities (what is done by men, women or children)

Livestock Tasks	Responsibility					
	M: (Only by men)	Mw: (Mainly by men, with some help of women)	W: (Only by women)	NA: (Not Applicable)	FC: (Female children)	MC: (Male children)
Marketing						
Feeding (hand feeding)						
Feeding (grazing)						
Cleaning stable						
Veterinary care/services						
Selling of produce						
Processing – milk, cheese						
Processing - shearing						
Milking						
Taking care of new born						

### Key Findings:

- Men consider themselves as sole decision-makers in the agricultural sector*

Our focus group discussions with the WLI benchmark community in Jordan revealed that men considered themselves as the sole decision-makers in the agricultural sector. Men acknowledged the help they received from the women, but they did not put much emphasis/value on it.
- Division of labor and gender role-based differences*

The division of labor between men and women is important to consider. A lot of women working in the agricultural sector are unpaid laborers, whose agricultural output is primarily to maintain the household's nutrition needs. As a result, women's contribution remains invisible. Because men and women have different agricultural or livestock production tasks and responsibilities, the division of labor for commercial production or income generating activities should be gathered separately from men and women. This gender-disaggregated data will help researchers, policy-makers and development practitioners identify the role differences in crop and livestock production, understand men's and women's different managerial and financial control over production, storage, processing and marketing of agricultural produce, and develop technologies or policies that benefit every participant in the process and the value chain.

- *Small scale vs. large scale production operation*  
It is known that men tend to work on larger scale cash crop/commercial or livestock operations, while women tend to focus more on household food production (e.g., home gardening). This difference is also characterized by men dealing more with mechanized production, while women focus on lower levels of technology. This is an important factor to take into account especially when designing and implementing a technology transfer training program. Extension and advisory services should know and target what the real needs of the women farmers are and their technical ability and relevance to the proposed training programs.
- *Crops and livestock important to women*  
There are particular crops and/or types of livestock that are important to women. Research shows that while the main cash crop that each family produces is important for the household, there are also certain crops or animals considered by women more important in terms of providing their household's with the desired level of nutrition. Women's preferences should be studied and addressed accordingly in order to equip women with skills that are relevant to their production needs and presented on a level that is accessible for the women.

### **Connecting the Dots:**

- Our research showed that women's roles in small-scale agricultural production (e.g., home gardening) were recognized by the male members in the household, while their role in large-scale agricultural commercial enterprise and engagement in the commercial value-chain remains invisible. This significantly affects the engagement of women in the agricultural sector because of the different tasks, responsibilities and access to production resources that are characteristic to different farming systems managed by either women or men. Moreover, the migration of men to the urban areas for better economic opportunities is resulting in women taking more responsibility in agricultural production. However, this shift has negative effects on the production output. Migrating men take with them the production skills and knowledge, while women taking over men's tasks may not necessarily possess the knowledge necessary to meet the needs of the existing production system or technology employed, which results in reduced production output. Researchers along with policy-makers and development practitioners should understand this and devise capacity building strategies that will help women acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to close these gaps in productivity.
- *Tailoring technology transfer to the 'real players' in the production cycle:* Because agricultural production is gendered and under-studied in the Middle East, the majority of technology transfer is believed to be focused on men by default. Differentiating who is doing what in various crop or livestock production systems will help design more targeted training programs.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Production activities (crop and livestock) should be differentiated between small scale operations (e.g., home garden) and larger scale operations (i.e., commercial crop production or livestock farming).
- Responsibilities and participation data in the decision-making process should be gathered from both men and women (separately).

- Before the focus group session, the activity modules outlining the production activities or tasks should be prepared and used as a guide to be completed with the participants' input. The facilitator should be flexible about the modules and willing to incorporate activities provided by the participants, which may not be listed on the table.
- The activities listed on the activity modules should be contextually appropriate; the research team should take into consideration, for example, the specifics of crops or livestock production, cropping season, or type of agricultural system (rainfed vs. irrigated) in order to develop a chart that is representative of the participants' production or income generating activities.

### **For further exploration:**

- Understanding men's perception of women's responsibilities and their participation in the decision making process with regard to production or income generating activities is critically important. This helps illuminate how men perceive women's economic contribution to the household's financial welfare, understanding whether men value women's contribution, and if men seek women's participation and advice in major decisions.
- Time-use surveys that cover agricultural or livestock production activities may help determine how much time women spend in performing their tasks. Time-use surveys also help to understand how women's time-use varies depending on the crop (or livestock), the phase of the production cycle, management structure, age and other factors. Research indicates that women have greater involvement in small scale livestock operations (e.g., poultry) than men, who tend to put more effort on large-scale commercial livestock operations.

### **More Information:**

- Case study examples on:
  - Women in Upland Agriculture in Asia, <http://www.uncapsa.org/Publication/CG33.pdf>
  - The role of women in agriculture, FAO, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/am307e/am307e00.pdf>
  - Gender in Crop Agriculture , World Bank <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENAGRLIVSOUBOOK/Resources/Module12.pdf>
  - Gender Roles in Crop Production and Management Practices: A Case Study of Three Rural Communities in Ambo District, Ethiopia, <http://www.krepublishers.com/02-Journals/JHE/JHE-27-0-000-09-Web/JHE-27-1-000-09-Abst-PDF/JHE-27-01-001-09-1953-Ogato-G-S/JHE-27-01-001-09-1953-Ogato-G-S-Ti.pdf>
- For more information on *Production Domain* in the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index go to <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/womens-empowerment-agriculture-index>, download "Questionnaires and Manual"; then go to Module B: "Role in household decision-making around production and income generation".

## Case Study 2: Productive Resources and Assets Domain

### Purpose:

This case study was developed to obtain understanding about women's ownership, access to and control over agricultural production assets or resources, including land, livestock, equipment and technology, extension services, and credit. This study captured findings from focus group discussions conducted with the WLI benchmark site community in Jordan. Because water was identified as the main resource constraining agricultural production and household wellbeing, the case covers this resource more extensively and focuses on women's access and decision-making role about water used for drinking, household hygiene and irrigation. The focus groups were conducted separately with men and women.

### Methodology:

The main methodology employed by the research team was interactive focus group discussions. The participants were the members of the same community. Some participants were crop growers, and some were livestock owners. The research team explored all productive resources and assets to the greatest extent possible. The discussion about productive resources was more thorough in the men's focus groups, as they were more heavily involved in agricultural production. The discussion with women was directed more towards the availability of extension services for women and their need for capacity building.

During the first two meetings with Majidyya community members, the research team employed the *problem tree* tool. The purpose of this tool was to engage participants in identifying the major constraint(s), exploring the causes and effects of the constraint, and the possible solutions to address the constraints or mitigate their effect. Water was identified by the community as the major resource constraint for agricultural production and rural livelihoods. The discussion with women revealed numerous interesting facts about water use and management, and also led to analyzing women's perceptions regarding the effects of climate change on household well-being.

### Key Findings:

- Our discussion revealed that production resources available in the area were primarily accessible to men, especially if it was related to farm or livestock operation. Women's access to resources was limited to those resources used to support women's reproductive duties in the household (e.g., water supply for cooking, drinking or cleaning). Women seem to access and interact with water suppliers in the area, however their access and the level of interaction to obtain a resource was not explored in depth.
- When analyzing men's interest in technology transfer vs. women's interest, men sought solutions which involved high-cost infrastructure or technology development. For example, when a male group was asked to offer solutions to water shortages in the area, men pointed out the need for infrastructure rehabilitation and improvements. Women's interest in technology transfer was prioritized by access to training programs. In addition, women revealed their reliance on their own capabilities to solve their own problems rather than seeking external help.

### **Connecting the dots:**

- Women's capacity to effectively utilize modern production technologies and information to increase agricultural output depends on their easy access to productive assets and resources. Moreover, to advance their knowledge and performance, it was necessary to understand the conditions under which women-farmers access agricultural resources and assets. Access to information and technology transfer should go beyond production, but also focus on providing women with training in marketing, storage and processing techniques, as well as in basic management and accounting to encourage women's engagement in the value chain.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Collecting gender-disaggregated data on access to resources and assets should go beyond ownership rights and include factors such as use and control, which may provide more insight into how women use different production resources and what empowers their position in the decision-making process. In some cases, women seemed to have ownership rights to land for example (through inheritance) however; they may unofficially surrender their right to other male members in the household, thus restricting themselves of decision-making power or participation.
- Researchers should conduct secondary data collection on women's ownership rights characteristic to the region. The questions should be culturally sensitive, therefore desk research prior to focus group discussion is recommended to enable researchers to design questions that are inclusive of all factors. Additionally, researchers should explore who the providers of the production resources are in the area and how they operate.
- The study on women's access and control over resources should include the analysis of social aspects such as women's status, age, and occupation.
- Information should be gathered separately from men and women.

### **For further exploration:**

- *Measuring access to productive resources and assets*  
The group discussion tasked to identify women's access, control and ownership of productive resources and assets should spend a considerable amount of time exploring each asset in detail. Here we present productive resources and assets, and what each entails:
  - Access to land – women's ability to use family farmland, make decisions about selling, acquiring or leasing land
  - Access to capital – women's ability to obtain loans, micro-credit and banking services to finance farm or livestock operations. It is also advisable to explore if credit conditions for women differ from those granted to men.
  - Access to extension services and training – opportunities available for women to develop technical skills through training. The research team can also explore if extension services have female agents who can work alongside women farmers. It is also advisable to explore the training format acceptable to women, and the location of the training programs. This becomes an important factor in communities where women's mobility is restricted due to cultural or religious values.
  - Access to technologies – women's ability to use cost-effective technologies for production and post-harvest tasks. The production technologies in this section include

- improved varieties/breeds, artificial insemination, vaccine, seed quality, fertilizer, pesticides, irrigation water, and modern agricultural equipment.
- Access to farmers' groups or cooperatives– availability of these institutions in the area and their membership by women. The goal of these institutions is to provide women with financial or legal support, savings facilities and market access, as well as serve as a platform to build social capital and networking.

**More Information:**

- Case study examples on Productive Resources and Assets:
  - Improving Access to Productive Resources and Agricultural Services through Gender Empowerment: A Case Study of Three Rural Communities in Ambo District, Ethiopia, <http://www.krepublishers.com/02-Journals/JHE/JHE-27-0-000-09-Web/JHE-27-2-000-09-Abst-PDF/JHE-27-02-085-09-1954-Ogato-G-S/JHE-27-02-085-09-1954-Ogato-G-S-Tt.pdf>
  - Rural Women's Access to and Control Over Productive Resources: Implications for Poverty Alleviation Among Osun-State Rural Women, Nigeria, <http://www.krepublishers.com/02-Journals/JHE/JHE-18-0-000-000-2005-Web/JHE-18-3-000-000-2005-Abst-PDF/JHE-18-3-225-230-2005-1339-Adereti-F-O/JHE-18-3-225-230-2005-1339-Adereti-F-O-Full-Text.pdf>
  - Access of Rural Women to Productive Resources in Bangladesh: A Pillar for Promoting their Empowerment, <http://www.vri-online.org.uk/ijrs/April2008/Access%20of%20rural%20women%20to%20productive%20resources%20in%20Bangladesh.pdf>
- For more information on *Resources Domain* in the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index go to <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/womens-empowerment-agriculture-index>, download "Questionnaires and Manual"; then go to "Module G3: Access to Productive Capital"

## Case Study 3: Income Domain

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this focus group topic is to explore the domain of income through discussions of wage labor, savings, and expenses. The following case study refers to three focus groups held in Jordan in June, 2012; one focus group was held with the Ngera community, in which only women participated, the other two focus groups (one for women, and one for men) were held with Muharib community.

### **Methodology:**

The research team used a focus group method to explore income generating activities taking place in the community. Two strategies were used in obtaining this information while in the focus group setting. Men were directly asked questions regarding income and expenditures. For the women, the discussion of income and expenditures was addressed directly and indirectly. The women were directly asked whether they were employed outside the home or had any means of income generation separate from their husbands. In the community of Ngera, many women did work outside the home. In the community of Muharib, this was not the case; women did not work outside of their homes or community and, while some produced dairy products, these were only for household consumption. Questions of expenditures were addressed indirectly through discussion of water management and domestic responsibilities within the household.

### **Key Findings:**

- *Income generation based on gender roles*  
Analysis revealed that, while men were always the primary income providers for the household, women's participation in income generating activities differed between communities. In one community, women were engaged in various income generating activities- primarily through a local cooperative, but also through small private businesses. In the second community, women seemed not involved in income generating activities outside their households. Both women and men explained that women were limited by their educational opportunities. There were also cultural barriers which prevented women from participating in a workplace where men were present, such as in the market place. While the focus group discussion affirmed that men were the primary income providers, which could also be revealed through a household level survey, it was the additional probing questions inherent to the focus group methodology which provided further information as to why women were not as involved. Furthermore, the flexibility of the focus group format can potentially allow the facilitator to expand the conversation, in order to understand why women in one community can be more active than women in others.
- *Expenditures based on gender roles*  
Additionally, the men's focus group was asked to discuss household expenditures. The participating men focused primarily on two expenses, education and social events (i.e., weddings). These expenses seemed to be more important to men as they represented large expenses for the household and require big resources. Men seemed indifferent to smaller expenses such as food or transportation costs and didn't even mention them. Women were not directly asked about expenses in the focus group, however indirect questioning revealed that women were aware of the costs to run a household. For example, they knew the cost of

water used in the household and were often responsible for the weekly purchase of drinking water or a tank of water delivered by trucks. This exercise allowed the research team to learn that there were gendered differences in household expenses, men focused on larger expenses while women held responsibility for day-to-day expense management, and thus it is important to record accounts from both sexes.

### **Connecting the dots:**

- *Recognizing limitations and working within them*  
In comparing the two women's focus groups, the team learned that there were several limiting factors which prevented one community of women from participating in the work force and engaging in income generating activities. From a development standpoint, understanding these limiting factors is important in addressing how to eliminate these factors and equipping women with income generating activities.. This domain allows the researcher to identify and advocate important intervention points. Lack of education for women is one major constraint; therefore, perhaps providing training courses and programs to enhance women's education would be useful for increasing women's income opportunities. Cultural constraints also inhibited women's ability to work in wage labor alongside men. However, through the focus group method, the research team observed that the social relationships between the women were strong. Acknowledging these cultural constraints, the establishment of a women's cooperative (such as that in the Ngera community) may provide more economic opportunities to women and further empower them.
- *Making social inference from focus group discussions- What was said, and what wasn't*  
People share what they know through their own daily experiences, and these experiences can differ between men and women. This was seen through the discussion of expenditures. Men noted major expenses, of which the planning and decision-making regarding those expenses were primarily men's responsibility. As mentioned above, these expenses included education and social events. Other items, such as household food expenses, healthcare costs, cleaning expenses, and transportation were not mentioned by the men. This may be, in large part, due to the fact that they are not responsible for these expenses within the household and they consider them insignificant when compared to larger expenses. In contrast, while women were not directly asked about household expenditures, they seemed to be engaged in the day-to-day expense management. For example, women described the cost of purchasing water for the household. As women and men have different roles and responsibilities within the household, it is critical that both men and women are consulted about income and expenditures in order to obtain a more complete understanding of household income resources and how they are used.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- *Sensitivity*  
The focus group method may not always be the best method for exploring this particular domain, however. When this method is used, the discussion should always be directed with particular awareness and sensitivity to the fact that information about income is often a private issue and difficult to capture in a group setting. As an alternative, an individual survey is recommended which can be conducted separately with male and female members of the household. The results of focus group and individual surveys can be later compared to

fill the gaps and construct a more thorough picture women's access and control over household's income and expenditures.

- *Making inference from other domains*

It is important to recognize that researchers can use one WEAI domain to inform another. For example, while women were not as involved in income generating activities, they expressed an interest in participating in training programs and increasing opportunities for income generation. The daily activity calendar exercise can show when women are available for training programs. In our focus groups, the application of daily activity calendar revealed that women have a significant amount of time to engage in income generating activities. This is a great way for the researcher and the participants to understand the interconnected relationships between the domains. We can use information from each domain to strengthen our understanding of a more holistic picture of women's livelihoods.

### **For further exploration:**

- *Expenditures from women's perspective*

Men were the only group directly asked about income and expenditures. While they had much to contribute about these topics, a complete analysis of the income domain cannot be done without the input from women. They provide a different type of knowledge about household expenditures, particularly because men are often not involved in day-to-day domestic expenses. These differences must be taken into account when conducting gender analysis through the use of the WEAI domains.

- *Solutions for income generating activities*

It would be useful to conduct a *problem tree* exercise for women using income generation as the central component. Through this exercise women could identify the root obstacles to their access to income generating activities. Furthermore, they can collectively identify solutions to overcome these obstacles.

### **More Information:**

- Case study examples on Income and Methodology:

- India: Tribal women's control over household expenditures, [http://www.ifad.org/gender/learning/role/decision/in\\_1\\_3.htm](http://www.ifad.org/gender/learning/role/decision/in_1_3.htm)
- Enhancing Resource Availability, Allocation and Efficiency: Programme and Policy Responses, <http://www.unsystem.org/SCN/archives/npp06/ch10.htm>
- Gender and Rural Poverty in Tanzania: Case of Selected Villages in Morogoro Rural and Kilosa Districts, <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/r4d/PDF/Outputs/Livelihoodsresearch/Ladder-wp18.pdf>
- Overseas Development Institute. "Planning Tools: Problem Tree Analysis". Access [Online] <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/docs/6461.pdf>

- For more information on the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index go to <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/womens-empowerment-agriculture-index>, download "Questionnaires and Manual.

## Case Study 4: Leadership Domain

### Purpose:

The purpose of this focus group topic was to explore the domain of leadership through discussions about social capital. Social capital refers to the relationships and the networks built on trust and reciprocity between individuals, which serve to provide support networks; additionally those networks formed from strong social capital can increase an individual's access to resources. Furthermore, social capital can be a source of empowerment for women, as these support networks can transform common interests into social action and participatory involvement in development programs and trainings. The following case study refers to two focus groups held in Jordan in June, 2012; one focus group was held with the Ngera community, in which only women participated, the other focus group was held with the Muharib community.

### Methodology:

- *Focus group*

The team employed focus group methodology to gather information about the social relationships existing in the community. The focus group can be an effective way of exploring the leadership domain for two reasons. First, it provides a space for open dialogue where people can openly discuss the opportunities for women to participate in local organizations or cooperatives. Secondly, it provides a lens by which the researcher can observe the social relationships which exist within the community. Observing how the women interact in a focus group forum can reveal aspects of social order which are important to recognize; those women who participate actively in the conversation or who are most listened to and respected can reveal important information about leadership dynamics within the community of women.

### Key Findings:

- *A Space for Social Development*

In one community, women were involved in a cooperative which provided trainings for community members- especially women- in income generating activities, as well as legal rights. The community space and regular meetings provided the foundation for strong social relationships and a sense of reciprocity between these women. The women explained that, if a cooperative member was unable to attend a meeting, the women would ensure that she received the information she missed. The research team was also able to observe a sense of comfort and trust between the women, and noted that they were comfortable speaking in front of their peers. Several women explained that, through regular trainings offered by the cooperative, the women began to feel comfortable with each other.

Space is also an important component to recognize when conducting focus groups. It is important to utilize a space that is conducive to discussions (i.e., private space, comfortable seating, good acoustics and relative closeness so all participants can speak and be heard) so that those who are present feel comfortable participating. When the meeting is held in an appropriate setting, the research team is able to observe the social dynamics of the group and recognize the most vocal or engaged participants and those who feel less comfortable in leadership roles. In our case the focus group discussion with the Ngera women happened in

the cooperative's office which was a regular meeting area for women to meet. We believe the fact that the meeting happened in the familiar environment also facilitated the open discussion with women.

- *Everyone has a role to play: Leadership through Dissemination of Information*  
Leadership comes in many different forms, from the local organizer to the local disseminators of information; many different people have different roles to play in empowerment through leadership. For example, one way of assessing leadership is by understanding how women receive information. What mediums do they use to receive agricultural or health updates? Who disseminates this information? Are there women specifically responsible for this role within the community? Who organizes action based on this information? These are important questions to ask when exploring the domain of leadership. Through this social capital analysis, the team quickly recognized that, although the communities have access to technology like cell phones and television, they primarily use traditional means of information sharing. These "traditional" modes of sharing include paper fliers from the Agricultural Ministry, and more often, by word of mouth from other women in the community. The younger women explained that they relied on elder generations of women for health information. Thus, leadership in the sharing of information seems to come from the elderly women in the community, especially with regards to the issues of health and agriculture. Despite this fact, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) use has become a popular way for organizations and extension offices to reach farmers, and many of the younger women have access to this new technology. The older women, then, must rely on the younger women to share this new knowledge. As a result, there are new opportunities for younger women to take up leadership roles, despite their age ranking and social status which may be less influential than the elderly women.

### **Connecting the dots:**

- *Diversity of Individuals*  
It is important to recognize that women have different social experiences within the community. These experiences may be a consequence of class, age, education, and/or marriage. Furthermore, these experiences may contribute to their empowerment among other women, and may also lead to their leadership roles within the community. In both focus group meetings, the women who were most engaged in discussion and most talkative were the elderly women. These women seemed to have a level of respect among the other women in attendance, and these women were definitely leaders of the focus group meeting. As a result, the team observed that while women on the whole were less empowered than men, some women were more empowered than others in the domain of leadership.
- *Diversity of Communities*  
Just as the individual experiences of women within communities can be diverse, communities themselves can also be diverse. The team conducted assessments of the leadership domain in two communities, who had distinctly different experiences with leadership opportunities. In one community, the women rarely had the opportunity to gather in a community meeting setting. These women seemed to be drawn together solely by kinship ties, which did not extend further into action within the community through development programs or trainings. In the second community, while most of the women present at the focus group meeting were related, their tie to action was through the cooperative. This cooperative seemed to serve as the foundation for trust and reciprocity

among the women which further enhanced the success of development trainings offered. Therefore, it is important to recognize that holds true for one group of women may not necessarily hold true for other communities of women, despite the fact that they may be neighboring communities.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- *What does leadership domain tell us?*  
The leadership domain informs us about how social networks operate within agricultural communities. It shows us who the active members are, and also who has the influence in the community to reach out to other women. The leadership domain can act as an indicator of empowerment on the individual level, but also on the community level. As more women are actively involved in meetings and generating support networks of trust and reciprocity through social capital, they are developing leadership characteristics which serve not only to empower the self but to empower the group.
- *Using flexible Methodologies*  
Using the WEAI survey questions from the leadership domain, the facilitator first asked questions about involvement in local organizations and cooperatives. The benefit of a qualitative focus group methodology is that, unconstrained by the structures of a household survey, the facilitator was then able to ask more specific questions to address their responses and to probe further into the underlying social conditions for women in the community. For example, the focus group discussions in Ngera enabled us to know what sorts of activities built women's confidence among her peers. In Ngera it was the participation of women in trainings with other women. It was also attributed to building social support networks within the community. Therefore, the focus group provides the flexibility necessary to begin to unravel the social dynamics within the community and how to improve outreach to women.

### **For Further Exploration:**

- *Methodological Explorations: Problem Tree and Social Mapping.*  
While our research team used solely the method of focus groups, it may be very beneficial to explore the domain of leadership through different participatory methods such as the problem tree exercise. In the focus group setting, the facilitator can include a problem tree exercise into the focus group discussion; with the central "problem" focused on leadership (see additional resources below for more information on how to use the problem tree methodology). The problem tree is a great way to encourage participants to discuss the causes and effects of various obstacles to leadership opportunities for women. In discussing these obstacles, women can then begin to develop solutions to these obstacles which can enhance leadership opportunities not only for those women participating in the focus group, but for women in the community more broadly. Another method to assess the leadership domain qualitatively is through social mapping. This method will allow the team to assess social capital by observing social networks drawn by women in the community. These two tools, used in a focus group setting, may provide a more thorough understanding of the leadership domain within communities.
- *Mixed-sex v. Sex-segregated Focus Groups*  
One element which the team did not explore was if women would demonstrate their leadership potential when meeting with men in the community. In the communities where our team was working, men and women could not meet in the same room due to religious

cultural norms. This is not the case in all communities, however, and it would be interesting to see how these power dynamics worked within a mixed sex focus group. Would women feel equally entitled to speak in the community meeting as men? Are there certain women who are more comfortable speaking in front of men in the community? (It is important to note that mixed sex groups may also have a debilitating effect on women's participation and therefore should not exclusively be the method for observing women's leadership, but should be used as a comparative example to the sex-segregated focus group meetings.)

Intersectionality of women and men is a critical social component when conducting gender analysis in communities, and it is therefore important to recognize that class, age, and education can affect women and men's social statuses in the community. Women who have more education or are elderly may hold a certain level of prestige in the community and thus have more opportunities to take on roles of leadership. It may also be the case that women have more authority to speak and take leadership roles on particular issues, perhaps on issues such as health or children, than men do. These are important observations to make when conducting gender analysis and particularly with regards to the leadership domain of the WEAI.

### **More Information:**

- Case study examples on leadership and methodology:
  - Falk, Ian; Sue Kilpatrick. 2000. "What is Social Capital? A Study of Interaction in a Rural Community" *Sociologia Ruralis*. Vol. 40. No. 1. pp. 88-110
  - IFAD. "Evaluating the Impact of Participatory Mapping Activities": Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation" Access [Online] [http://www.ifad.org/pub/map/pm\\_iv.pdf](http://www.ifad.org/pub/map/pm_iv.pdf)
  - Overseas Development Institute. "Planning Tools: Problem Tree Analysis". Access [Online] <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/docs/6461.pdf>
  - World Bank. 2004. "Participatory Approaches to Increase Women's Voice in CDD Projects: Examples from Indonesia". Access [Online] <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENDER/Resources/IndonesiaCDDPromisingApproach.pdf>
- For more information on the Leadership Domain in the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index go to <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/womens-empowerment-agriculture-index>, download "Questionnaires and Manual"; then go to Module G4: "1) Individual leadership and influence in the community, and 2) Group membership and influence in the group".

## Case Study 5: Time Allocation Domain

### Purpose:

The purpose of this activity is to understand the amount of time women and men dedicate to productive activities, reproductive activities, and leisure. The following case study refers to three focus groups held in Jordan in June, 2012; one focus group was held with the Ngera community, in which only women participated, the other two focus groups (one for women, and one for men) were held with Muharib community.

### Methodology:

The methods listed below enabled the research team to gather important information about the time allocation based on gender-role based differences in the household.

- *Daily Activity Calendar/Clock/Routine*

The daily activity calendar for this participatory exercise was constructed from the WEAI survey chart for time allocation. This chart was modified to include activities contextually relevant to the WLI participating countries by including activities such as praying, which occurs five times a day. There were some activities in the chart which were redundant in nature but they were necessary to obtain a complete picture. The execution of the method demonstrated that the research team should be prepared in advance and be flexible to improvise necessary adjustments to capture complete calendar. The chart used by the research team is displayed below:

Daily Activity Calendar for Men	
Activity	Time
Praying (5 times a day)	
Eating meals	
Caring for children (e.g. school pickup)	
Caring for livestock	
Working in the farm	
Working in the home garden	
Working as employed	
Marketing (i.e. selling farm/household produce)	
Shopping (for household needs)	
Shopping (for farm or livestock operation)	
Travelling/Commuting	
Community meeting	
Leisure	
Sleeping/Resting	

Daily Activity Calendar for Women	
Activity	Time
Praying (5 times a day)	
Eating meals	
Cooking	
Processing Food	
Cleaning	
Laundry	
Childcare	
Sewing/knitting	
Collecting water (e.g. fetching)	
Caring for Livestock	
Working in the farm	
Working in the home garden	
Working as employed	
Marketing (i.e. selling farm/household produce)	
Shopping (for household needs)	
Travelling/Commuting	
Community meetings	
Caring for sick	
Leisure	
Sleeping/resting	

- *Focus group*

In order to obtain qualitative information, this daily activity calendar was used more as a guideline than a format to be strictly followed. It was important for the qualitative goals of the project that facilitators did not merely tally responses and write them on to the chart, but instead used the responses to engage in thorough discussions about the daily routines of the households. Through the focus group discussion, combined with daily activity calendar the research team was able to enrich the content of the collected data. No attempt was made to gather quantitative data, e.g., hours spent on particular tasks.

### **Key Findings:**

- *Time allocation based on gender-role based differences*

Time allocation should be gathered from both men and women. Although our analysis revealed that men and women expressed many similarities in their daily activities, there were instances in which men and women had different daily tasks and routines which are important to acknowledge. One example of this is the women's childcare and reproductive responsibilities (i.e., cooking, cleaning, or laundry) which solely lie with women and described by the women as dominant in-home activities. This information is important when conducting development work because it is necessary to know whether newly introduced technologies or projects will comply with both men and women's schedules and responsibilities. Furthermore, it is necessary to understand whether participants will have enough time to take on these new projects in addition to their daily commitments. In some cases, men or women may be more available during different times of the day/week/year to become involved. Therefore, a gendered approach to the assessment of time allocation is critical for the success of development projects.

- *Intersectionality in gendered time allocation*

Occupation, age, status, education and other demographic information should be taken into consideration when constructing a focus group discussion about time allocation. Just as men and women have different responsibilities and tasks within the household, our analysis of the daily activity calendar revealed the intersectionality within the lives of each sex. This is to say that, not all women (and not all men) have the same responsibilities and tasks in the household. The roles and responsibilities they hold are often a factor of age, class, and occupation. We often found that elderly women had less domestic responsibilities than the younger women participants and had more choice. Likewise, women with younger children had different schedules than those who had older children or no children at all, as they needed to combine their household maintenance tasks (i.e., cooking, cleaning) with childcare duties. Similarly, men expressed a diverse range of responsibilities which depended upon their age, class, and occupation. As many of the families in this community had shifted away from agriculture as a primary livelihood, younger men were often engaged in out-of-the-community employment which involved daily commuting. They therefore had less time flexibility to invest in agricultural projects/activities than the older men in the community, who were retired. That being said, our analysis displayed that both men and women have significant periods of time in their daily schedules to allocate for training programs. This daily activity calendar allowed the research team to understand where those periods of leisure time overlap so that both men and women can be targeted for participation in the WLI activities.

### **Connecting the dots:**

- *Making social inference from time data:* Interrogating the WEAI domain of time allows us to make broader inference about social characteristics, thus informing researchers further about the agricultural livelihoods within the community. Our discussion with WLI benchmark site women in rural Jordan revealed that women had a significant amount of time for leisure. Further probing demonstrated that women spent their leisure time with other women through socializing and networking. Some communities demonstrated strong social ties. For example, in the Ngera community, the women had activities more formally coordinated through the women's cooperative. In the Muharib community, women had strong kinship ties and, while they did not participate in a formal organization, these women found opportunities to socialize and rest together (e.g., watching TV or drinking tea). While the community themselves may not recognize this phenomenon as a social capital strengthening activity, the outcomes of the social capital in place were a sense of community support among the women. The discussion around time domain framework provided a setting that allowed exploring women's access and availability to social capital activities, which is critical to account when conducting gendered research in the community.
- *Time available for training programs:* Another interesting connection between time allocation and capacity building is to explore women's interest in training programs and to determine the time that is most suitable for trainings. During our community discussions, the research team determined that women had sufficient time for leisure which can be used to hold capacity building activities for women. In addition, the team was able to identify what the time of the day when training programs can be offered and their duration. Asking women if they are interested in training is not enough, the researcher should also explore the time that is suitable for women to participate in the capacity building activities.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- The facilitator should use the daily activity calendar during the focus group discussion to obtain a complete understanding of household's daily routines, disaggregated by sex and, where possible, age and occupation.
- The time allocation should be gathered from both men and women, and if possible, from all household members.
- Before the focus group session, the chart outlining the daily activities should be prepared and used as a guide to be filled with the participants' input. The facilitator should be flexible about the chart and willing to incorporate activities provided by the participants which may not be listed on the chart.
- The activities listed on the daily activity calendar chart should be contextually appropriate; the research team should take into consideration, for example, the religion or occupation of the participants in order to develop a chart that is representative of their daily routines.
- The facilitator can provide his or her daily activity routine to the participants as an example to encourage open conversation.

### **For further exploration:**

- *Understanding men's perspectives of women's time allocation:* Although the research team acquired valuable information about the daily activities of men and women, it would be interesting to understand women's daily routines from the men's perspective. This might

help illuminate perceptions of household tasks with regards to time allotment, and also understand whether women's time is valued accurately by men.

- *Acknowledging gendered weekend routines:* Another factor that can be explored are the differences between gendered time allocation during weekdays and weekends to determine if there are changes and if women are busier when their family is at home on weekends and vice versa.
- *Seasonal Calendar:* Just as men and women's tasks differ from each other on a daily occurrence, men and women may also have different responsibilities and time schedules in during the cropping season. This was not explored with focus groups in Jordan, but can be included in future discussions, as this is a critical component to understand the differences in time allocation between cropping and non-cropping seasons for both men and women.

### **More Information:**

- Case study examples on Time Allocation:
  - Gender-role based differences in time allocation: A case study of Shenzhen, China <http://www.ugpti.org/pubs/pdf/DP190.pdf>
  - Time allocation in rural households (the indirect effects of conditional cash transfer programs), [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2010/03/31/000158349\\_20100331131245/Rendered/PDF/WPS5256.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2010/03/31/000158349_20100331131245/Rendered/PDF/WPS5256.pdf)
- For more information on *Time Allocation Domain* in the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index go to <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/womens-empowerment-agriculture-index>, download "Questionnaires and Manual"; then go to Module G6: Time Allocation on page 46