

NEPAL

2013 Baseline – 2015 Interim [Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index](#) Results

Key Findings

- Women were over twice as disempowered as men at baseline.
- Group membership, workload and access to credit continue to remain top contributors to disempowerment for women; group membership and workload are also top contributors for men at baseline. Group membership and workload are also the two indicators exhibiting the greatest gap in male versus female achievement.
- In terms of the proportion of women reaching adequacy¹, there are statistically significant increases for ownership of assets, purchase, sale or transfer of assets, control over use of income, group membership and leisure.
- The indicators with the largest increases in the proportion of women achieving adequacy are group membership, speaking in public and leisure. Further research is needed to assess whether these gains may be due in part to USAID interventions specifically designed with women in mind, including the Multiple Use Water Systems, saving time for women collecting water, and Nepal Economic Agriculture and Trade Program, which targets women for microfinance, and the Education for Income Generation Program, which provides entrepreneurial-based literacy and life skills education to women.
- Research on women's empowerment and nutritional outcomes in Nepal finds that group membership, control over income, reduced workload and overall empowerment are positively associated with better maternal nutrition. Women's empowerment also mitigates the negative effect of low production diversity on maternal and child dietary diversity as well as children's height-for-age scores.

Figure 1: Women's Empowerment in Agriculture (WEAI), Five Domains of Empowerment (5DE) and Gender Parity Index (GPI) Scores



Sample

The [Feed the Future interim survey](#) collected data on 20 districts across three regions including the Far-Western, Mid-Western, and Western regions. The interim survey was conducted in 838 households across 44 clusters in the Zone of Influence (ZOI); a total of 760 women completed a Women's Empowerment in Agriculture (WEAI) survey. Feed the Future, in conjunction with its local data collection partner, New ERA, were responsible for the field work which was conducted from August to September 2015.

WEAI Score

Since data were not collected from men, and the autonomy in production indicator was not collected in 2015, the WEAI score cannot be calculated for the interim assessment. The baseline WEAI score was 0.80. The WEAI will be collected again at the endline.

¹ Adequacy is defined specifically for each indicator as being at or above a set threshold. For instance, a woman achieves adequacy for the workload indicator if she works less than 10.5 hours per day. Women who work more than 10.5 hours per day do not achieve adequacy for the workload indicator. Aggregated, achieving adequacy in 3 of 5 domains is equivalent to achieving adequacy in 6 of 10 indicators.

Figure 2: Women's uncensored headcounts



Notes: Group membership increase in part due to change in definition from baseline to interim. Women who report no groups in their community are considered inadequate rather than missing, as in the original construction. Asterisks indicate statistically significant difference.

5DE Score

The Five Domains of Empowerment (5DE) score was 0.79 at baseline. A total of 41.2 percent of all women were empowered. The remaining 58.8 percent who were disempowered had adequate achievements in about 3 of the 5 domains (63.6 percent). Given the interim survey did not collect one indicator (autonomy in production), the interim 5DE score cannot be calculated to be directly comparable.

GPI Score

The baseline Gender Parity Index (GPI) was 0.89. A total of 46.8 percent of women had gender parity with the primary male decision maker in their household. For the 53.2 percent of women who did not have gender parity, the empowerment gap between the primary female and male decision maker in the household was 21.5 percent. Given data were not collected from men for the interim survey the GPI cannot be calculated.

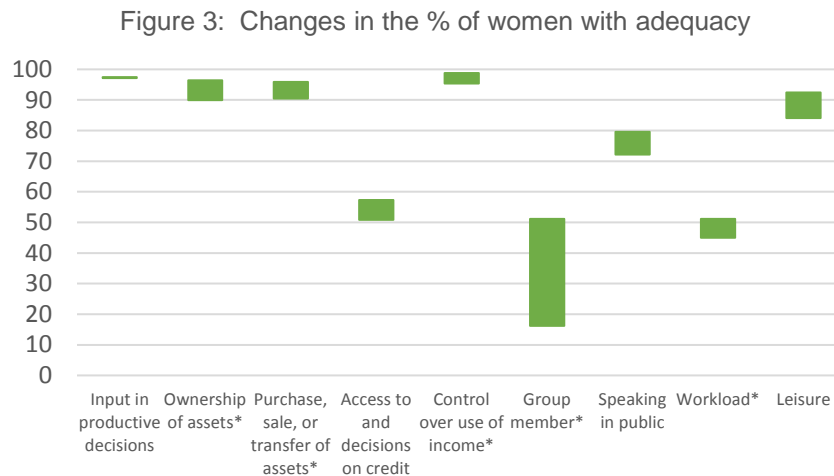
Top Contributors to Disempowerment

At baseline, women were over twice as disempowered as men. For 9 of 10 indicators at baseline, a greater proportion of men achieve adequacy compared to the proportion of women; the exception is input in productive decisions. The indicators exhibiting the greatest gap in male versus female achievement are group membership, workload and speaking in public.

Comparing baseline to midline (Figures 2 and 3), in terms of the proportion of women reaching adequacy², there are statistically significant increases for 5 of the 10 indicators which include ownership of assets, purchase, sale or transfer of assets, control over use of income, group membership³ and leisure. The three largest increases are for group membership, speaking in public and leisure, which each increased by approximately 8-35 percentage points, indicating 8-35 percent more women achieved adequacy for each of these indicators.

² Because 9 of 10 indicators were collected at the interim, the proportions reported for Nepal utilize the uncensored headcount — the proportion of women/men who have achieved adequacy on the indicator, regardless of their empowerment status, over the total sample. This is distinct from the censored headcount, which is the proportion of women who are *empowered* and achieve adequacy for the indicator over the total population.

³ Group membership likely increased in part due to change in definition from baseline to interim. Women who report no groups in their community are considered inadequate rather than missing, as in the original construction.



Note: Asterisks indicate statistically significant difference.

Further research is required to examine whether these gains may be due in part to USAID interventions specifically designed to target women. Broadly, the [Feed the Future strategy in Nepal](#) was focused on integrating women and other vulnerable populations into market-led activities, encouraging participation in agricultural and nutritional programs, and delivering literacy and entrepreneurship education to women. Specific projects targeting women include the Nepal Economic, Agriculture, and Trade program, a project whose goal includes increasing women's access to microfinance programs, the Multiple Use Water Systems project, which aims to decrease the amount of time women spend on water collection through improved technology, and the Education for Income Generation Program, which provides entrepreneurial-based literacy and life skills education to women to increase empowerment, establish savings groups and create market-based jobs.

WEAI Application in Policy/Programming Settings

The results of the WEAI in Nepal have been used to shape agricultural strategies, including Feed the Future interventions and Nepal's Global Food Security Strategy Country Plan. Most of USAID/Nepal's activities focus on increasing women's participation in groups and improving access to resources, including financial, and nutrition and health services. Going forward, group membership, workload and access to credit remain important areas to prioritize in designing programs to increase empowerment because they consistently rank as top contributors to disempowerment (contributing 43 percent to women's disempowerment at baseline).

WEAI Research in Nepal

While there have been no peer-reviewed publications using the Nepal Feed the Future survey data to date, [evaluation of the Suaahara program](#), a USAID-funded multi-sectoral nutrition program, finds women's group membership, control over income, reduced workload and overall empowerment are positively associated with better maternal nutrition. Control over income is positively associated with children's height-for-age z-scores (HAZ) and a lower GPI improves children's diets and HAZ. Women's empowerment also mitigates the negative effect of low production diversity on maternal and child dietary diversity and HAZ.

WEAI Background

Early in the initiative, Feed the Future, the International Food Policy Research Institute, and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative created the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index — the first tool of its kind — to make empowerment measurable. Feed the Future has used it as a diagnostic

to inform and shape programming as well as to monitor and measure impact. Today, partners around the world are using the tool to collect data in more than 47 countries.