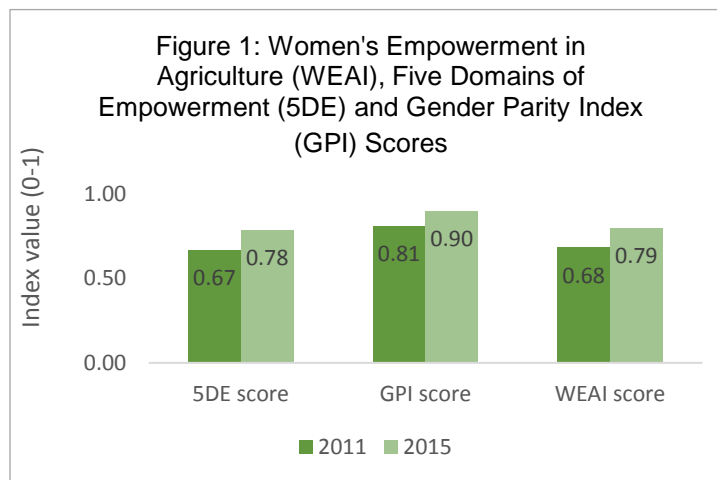


## BANGLADESH

2011 Baseline – 2015 Interim [Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index](#) Results

### Key Findings

- Bangladeshi women in the Feed the Future Zone of Influence (ZOI) experienced significant increases in empowerment, with the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture (WEAI) score increasing by 17 percent in four years.
- The Women's Gender Parity Index (GPI) score increased by 11 percent, which indicates increasing gender equality within a household.
- Group membership and speaking in public continue to remain top contributors to disempowerment for women and men.
- Control over use of income, speaking in public and input in productive decision making indicators all experienced substantial gains in the proportion of women with adequacy.
- WEAI research in Bangladesh suggests that women's empowerment improves a wide range of household, women and child nutritional outcomes, such as household food security and dietary diversity. Increases in women's empowerment also helps people move out of poverty.
- The results from the WEAI have been used by the Ministry of Agriculture to inform the design of agriculture and nutrition programs; those proven effective in improving household income, nutrition and women's empowerment outcomes will be implemented at scale.



### Sample

Bangladesh is the only country in the WEAI study with a sample that is nationally representative of rural areas. However, this summary presents results from the Feed the Future ZOI only, comprising a sample of 1,961 households in 102 villages belonging to 73 upazilas. Data collection was completed from January to March 2015 as part of the [Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey](#). The sample is a longitudinal study; the same households were interviewed at baseline in 2011.

### WEAI Score

The overall WEAI score for the Feed the Future ZOI is 0.79. It is a weighted average of the Five Domains of Empowerment (5DE) and GPI scores. This represents a 17 percent increase from Bangladesh's baseline score in 2011, illustrating Bangladeshi women in the Feed the Future ZOI are experiencing improvements in empowerment status.

### 5DE Score

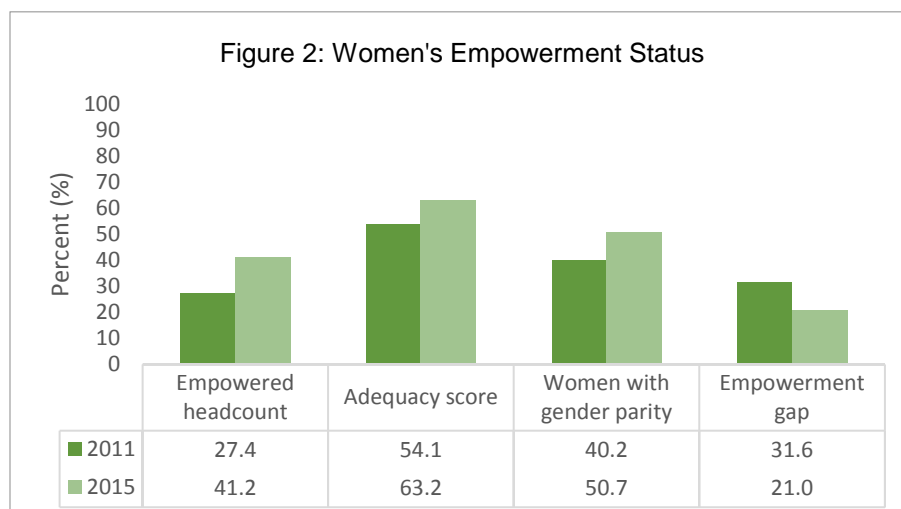
The 5DE score is 0.78. A total of 41.2 percent of all women are empowered. The remaining 58.8 percent who are disempowered have adequate<sup>1</sup> achievements in about three of the five domains (63.2 percent). This represents an increase of 9.1 percentage points from 2011 to 2015.

<sup>1</sup> 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 three of five domains is equivalent to achieving adequacy in six of 10 indicators.

## GPI Score

The GPI is 0.90. A total of 50.7 percent of women have gender parity with the primary male decision maker in their household. For the 49.3 percent of women who do not have gender parity, the empowerment gap between the primary female and male decision maker in the household is 21.0 percent. While men also increased their empowerment, the

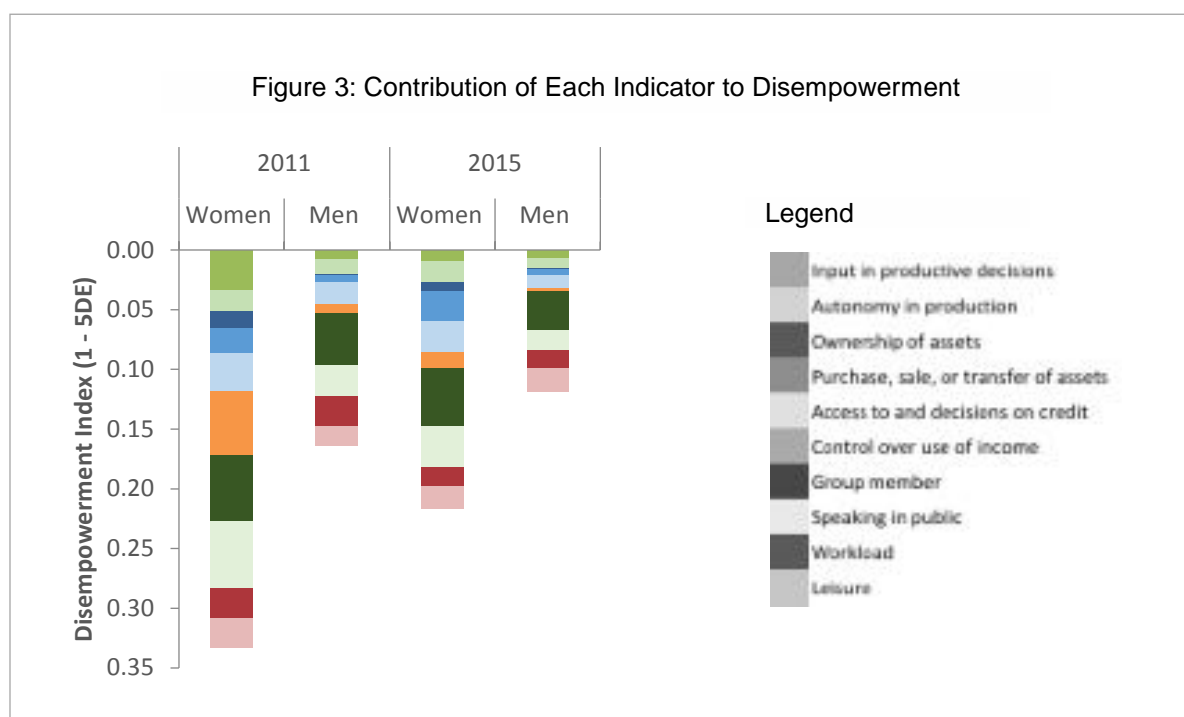
percentage of women that have gender parity increased by over 10 percentage points, and the average empowerment gap faced by women without gender parity declined by over 10 percentage points. These factors contributed to an 11 percent increase in the GPI score, which indicates that there has been an increase in gender equality within a household.



## Top Contributors to Disempowerment

Figure 3 compares male and female disempowerment showing that women are about twice as disempowered as men, although the gap seems to be decreasing slightly over time. Group membership and speaking in public continue to remain top contributors to disempowerment for both men and women.

In 2015, for nine of the 10 indicators, a greater proportion of men achieve adequacy compared to the proportion of women. The indicators exhibiting the greatest gap in male versus female achievement are purchase, sale or transfer of assets and access to and decisions on credit.



In terms of the proportion of women reaching adequacy, one of the largest increases has been in control over use of income, in which less than 75 percent of women achieved adequacy in 2011 as compared to 93.4 percent in 2015. Speaking in public and input in productive decision making also saw substantial gains. Further research is required, but these gains may be due in part to USAID interventions specifically designed for women's participation and control, including the promotion of homestead gardens, involvement in market sales of produce and emphasis on improving nutrition among women and children.

### **WEAI Application in Programming**

[Research findings from the baseline data](#) reveal that women's empowerment plays a key role in improving household food security and dietary diversity of children, women and other household members. Additionally, agricultural production diversity is associated with dietary diversity. These results have been used to design the [Agriculture, Nutrition and Gender Linkages](#) (ANGeL) pilot project (2015-2018), which recognizes the importance of women's empowerment and its relationship to agriculture-income-nutrition pathways. Among other activities, the program brings together husbands, wives and other household decision makers to discuss traditionally gendered domains. This gives men and women more opportunities to weigh in equally on decisions where they had little or no input before. The Ministry of Agriculture plans to use the findings from the pilot to design, implement and scale the most effective countrywide interventions to improve farm household income, nutrition and women's empowerment.

Going forward, given that group membership and speaking in public consistently rank as top contributors to disempowerment (contributing 39 percent) these are important areas to prioritize in designing programs to increase empowerment.

### **WEAI Research in Bangladesh**

Based on [recent WEAI analysis](#), greater intrahousehold inequality is associated with lower dietary diversity, calorie availability and rates of exclusive breastfeeding. Control over income as well as purchase, sale and transfer of assets have positive associations with a number of household, mother and child nutritional outcomes. Access to and decisions on credit are most strongly associated with positive infant and young child feeding outcomes, while the reverse is true for group membership, suggesting there are potential trade-offs between group participation and child care.

### **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.