

**The
Hunger
Project.**



Women's Empowerment Index Toolkit

A Guide to M&E for Improved Gender Programming

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Preface

The Women's Empowerment Index (WEI) is a composite index designed by [The Hunger Project](#) (THP) to measure progress in the multi-dimensional aspects of women's empowerment. It considers empowerment to be a factor of both women's achievements as well as of gender parity with men. WEI measures progress on women's empowerment by aggregating results across five key areas (or "domains"). Each domain is comprised of a series of metrics (or "indicators") which quantifies performance in this domain. The WEI draws on the theory and model of IFPRI's innovative Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), a survey-based index designed to measure the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agriculture section.

The [Women's Empowerment Index white paper](#) that we published in October 2015, highlights the theory and reasoning behind developing the WEI, the domains and indicators that comprise the index, how to score the WEI, and how it can be used to analyze women's empowerment in a community. It is recommended to read the white paper as a starting point in using this toolkit.

This toolkit was created to provide practitioners from various institutions a guide for implementing the Women's Empowerment Index as a cost-effective and easy-to-use measurement tool for empowerment and gender programming. The toolkit is designed to guide practitioners through the preparation, implementation, and learning phases of using the WEI. The preparation phase highlights a series of questions that practitioners can use to determine if the WEI is the right measurement tool for their programs. The implementation phase discusses survey design and how to calculate the WEI. Finally, the learning phase provides examples of analysis, data visualization, and learning examples. The appendices contain supporting materials, including an example survey that can be used to capture the data needed for the WEI and a template for scoring.

We invite the users of the WEI toolkit to share their experiences and research to learn and strengthen the validity of the WEI as a metric of women's empowerment. If you have any experience to share, please contact impact@thp.org.

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Introduction

About The Hunger Project

We have a 40-year track record of partnering with people living in poverty as they work to end their own chronic hunger. Our approach is based on three fundamental pillars: (1) Mobilize people at the grassroots level, (2) Empower women as key change agents of their own development, and (3) Forge partnerships with local government. Our work reaches more than 16 million people in 15,000 communities in Africa, South Asia and Latin America.

Overcoming gender inequality is absolutely critical to achieving the end of hunger. The vast majority¹ of the world's poor are women. Two-thirds² of the world's illiterate population are female. Of the millions of school age children not in school, the majority are girls³. And today, HIV/AIDS is rapidly becoming a woman's disease. Women comprise nearly 60 percent⁴ of all people living with HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa. Women often bear the responsibility for meeting the needs of their family; yet they are systematically denied the resources, information and freedom of action to fulfill this responsibility.

Studies show that **when women are supported and empowered, all of society benefits**. Their families are healthier, more children go to school, agricultural productivity improves, and incomes increase. In short, communities become **more resilient**.

Why WEI?

We firmly believe that empowering women to be key change agents is an essential element to achieving the end of hunger and poverty. Wherever we work, our programs aim to support women and build their capacity.

To assess impact and review performance in this area, we sought to identify and adopt a standard, recognized approach. Yet, it became quickly clear that there was a gap in standard measurement approaches to such an important area of our work. Though women's empowerment is a mainstay feature for many international organizations' programs and practices, a standard, collective approach for tracking progress is still missing.

Therefore, we decided to fill this measurement gap by building the custom Women's Empowerment Index. The index builds on research and innovations by a variety of organizations, yet is unique to THP, allowing for a special focus on measurements that we recognize as central to overcoming rural poverty and disempowerment.

¹ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202010%20En%20r15%20-low%20res%2020100615%20-.pdf#page=10>

² <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2103.html>

³ <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/>

⁴ http://files.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/epidemiology/2013/gr2013/UNAIDS_Global_Report_2013_en.pdf

What is WEI?

The Women's Empowerment Index (WEI) is a composite index designed to measure progress in the multi-dimensional aspects of women's empowerment. It considers empowerment to be a factor of both women's achievements as well as of gender parity with men. WEI measures progress on women's empowerment by aggregating results across five key areas (or "domains"). Each domain is comprised of a series of metrics (or "indicators") which quantifies performance in this domain.

	Agency	Women are able to make decisions and exercise control over resources and are free to exercise these decisions without fear of repercussion.
	Income	Women have the ability to benefit from economic activities and enhanced access to markets and financial resources
	Leadership	Women have the ability to participate in community activities and are encouraged to speak in and for their communities.
	Resources	Women and girls have access to the resources and skills they need to become equal participants in society
	Time	Women and girls are reducing domestic drudgery (time spent on hard, menial, or dull work) freeing up time to pursue productive endeavors, education, child care, and leisure activities.

Participatory M&E at The Hunger Project

We take a different approach to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) that empowers participants in our programs as both collectors and consumers of data. Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) is designed to recognize and include communities as important stakeholders in data collection and evaluation. PM&E requires including community voices in monitoring and evaluation, as well as building the capacity of community members to become active partners in this process.

WEI vs WEAI

Though the two composite indices share a great deal in common, there are key differences between the two.

In the main, the differences are in the survey length, study intensity, and cost of calculation.

The Hunger Project's solution to tracking women's empowerment had to be fairly simple and cost-effective. Thus, integrating questions and methods for the WEI into existing outcome evaluations was critical. Regular implementation of the extremely rigorous WEAI is cost-prohibitive. The WEI strives to seek a balance between precision, cost, and timely program feedback.

WEI	WEAI
Aggregate Community Score	Individual Household Score
Gender Parity 40% of score	Gender Parity 10% of score
Collected as part of regular household survey (25-30 minutes of questions)	Collected as part of a special survey (60-90 minutes of questions)
No special sectoral focus	Special focus on agriculture
Considers decision-making, business ownership, literacy, prenatal care, and use of financial services	Considers control over income and assets, workload, and leisure time

Our Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) department developed WEI in-house, based on extensive external research and internal testing. Though WEI is grounded in decades of research and program practice in women's empowerment, the theory and model are primarily based on the innovative [Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index](#) (WEAI), a survey-based index designed to measure the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agricultural sector. WEAI provided an incredibly valuable theoretical framework and ample layers of rich research from which we could develop its own index (more background on WEAI can be found in Appendix 1).

As an M&E tool, WEI allows for comprehensive benchmarking of program progress for empowering women and helps strategically design and implement programs for empowering women in its focus regions.

In its inception phase, the WEI was developed using data from 8 countries and nearly 10,000 randomly selected households. Today, the WEI has been used in 10 countries and over 25,000 households in 63 communities in which we work.

Development of Toolkit

This toolkit was created to provide practitioners from various institutions a guide for implementing the Women's Empowerment Index as a cost-effective and easy-to-use measurement tool for empowerment and gender programming within their respective organizations. The toolkit is designed to guide practitioners through the preparation, implementation, and learning phases of using the WEI.

The toolkit was created considering input from interviews with practitioners both within and outside of THP. The research phase and initial draft was led by a group of student researchers from Columbia University and New York University. The toolkit was then refined through consultation with internal and external practitioners.

Preparation: Is the WEI right for me?

The preparation phase contains a list of guiding questions and advice that should be considered before using the WEI. These questions will assist you, the practitioner, in determining whether the WEI is well-suited for your program and begin conversations around the preparation and resources needed.

Advantages of using the WEI

- Cost-effective
- Easy to implement
- Quick
- Cross-sector applicability
- Rigorously tested for validity
- Easy to interpret
- Provides actionable program improvements

Programmatic Suitability

What are the goals and objectives of the program that you would like to evaluate using the WEI? How does the WEI fit into your theory of change? Which of the impacts of your program are captured in the WEI? Which ones aren't?

The WEI measures the empowerment of women and girls in rural communities with the following objectives⁵:

1. Increase women's leadership and agency at the local level
2. Expand economic opportunities for rural households, especially women
3. Improve health outcomes for women and girls
4. Foster environment for female leadership and agency
5. Improve gender parity and education

Your program should aim to empower women along the domains of agency, income, leadership, resources, and time for the WEI to be a recommended impact measurement.

Timeframe & Budget

What is the timeframe of your project? Do you expect to see impact-level change within this timeframe?

Community-level interventions are designed for programs lasting approximately 8-10 years. A minimum of two years is needed to see the impact-level changes measured in the WEI, though a timeframe of 3-5 years or longer is the most ideal.

⁵ An example of how WEI integrates into our theory of change can be found in Appendix 2.

Target Population & Budget

Who are your target beneficiaries? How many households do you expect to impact? Will you be able to interview both men and women? What is the budget of the project and the budget for evaluation?

The WEI was designed as a household survey to primary male and female household members, resulting in an aggregate community score. The WEI requires both men and women to be interviewed in order to produce the Gender Parity Ratio, which accounts for 40% of the WEI score. The index could also be applied to households that participate in a specific program (i.e., households that are cooperative members or a client roster).

The individuals that you intend to impact with your programs, or your population, is closely connected to your sample size and budget. Since we intend to create impact at the community level, our sample population is the population of the community, generally taken from national census data, divided by the average number of household members to estimate the number of households within a community. The evaluation budget should be reasonable within the full cost of the program. We estimate that monitoring and evaluation costs should be approximately 10% of the program costs. To determine your sample size and create your budget for the evaluation, refer to our tool for sample size and budgeting in Appendix 3.

Data Collection Logistics

What systems currently exist to collect data? Can any of those systems be leveraged to collect the WEI? How will the data be collected?

The WEI is implemented as a household survey, and it can be used as a standalone tool or integrated into an existing survey. An assessment of the resources and responsibilities for data collection should also be assessed prior to launching the WEI:

- 1. What sampling strategy will you use?**

We use multi-stage sampling to survey a randomly selected, representative number of households in its communities. The WEI works best when it is applied to a representative sample of your program. Refer to our tool for sample size and budgeting in Appendix 3 to determine what your sample size should be.

- 2. Who will collect the data? Is it appropriate for them to do so? What kind of training and resources will be needed?**

We contract and train third-party enumerators to conduct its household surveys. Using enumerators who are part of neither the community nor the implementing organization minimizes survey bias. It is also important to contract enumerators who speak the local language.

3. Where will data be collected?

Visiting the actual household of program/project participants will yield the highest quality data, even when the program target is not the household (such as a school or a cooperative). It also is more likely to ensure the availability of both male and female participants for the survey⁶.

4. What tool(s) will be used to collect the data? Will you use a paper-based or digital survey?

We use mobile data collection via iFormBuilder, a tool created by [Zerion Software](#), to collect data for the WEI. Digital surveys reduce the risk of error and the need for data entry costs. However, depending on the budget and project length, a paper-based survey may be more appropriate.

5. How often will you collect the data?

WEI data is the most useful when collected at the beginning (baseline), middle (midline), and end (endline) of a project. A minimum of two years is needed for impact-level change, though more years is recommended.

6. How will you ensure the confidentiality and security of the data collected?

Enumerators and staff must be trained in confidentiality agreements and the organization is responsible for maintaining this agreement. Another advantage of digital data is that it can be encrypted. Data should be stored in a secure location and de-identified before analysis.

7. Who will analyze the data?

Assess what is needed for data entry, cleaning, analysis, and reporting. Consider who will be responsible, what analysis software will be needed, and how much it will cost.

Participatory M&E

How will your target population be involved as collectors and consumers of data?

The WEI requires that community members are recognized as the primary stakeholder in the data collection process. It will be essential to consider how to include the community and close the data feedback loop before implementing the WEI.

1. Which community leaders need to provide consent? Which community stakeholders need to be advised prior to launching the survey? Who needs to be involved in logistics?

Though we do not recommend using community members as enumerators, permission is received from community leaders prior to surveys. Community members are advised on the logistics, content, and goals of an evaluation prior to data collection.

2. How will data be presented to the community post-evaluation?

After the data is collected, we host “[Community Data Presentations](#)” to inform community members of the results and use the data for goal-setting and planning.

⁶ For the WEI to work, a sufficient sample of both men and women needs to be available. This has been an issue for some of our surveys where an insufficient number of men were surveyed to have statistically representative answers.

Implementation: Collecting Data for the WEI

In the implementation phase, the questions in the preparation phase have been sufficiently answered and you have determined that the WEI is the right tool for your organization and project.

Required questions for the WEI

There are 11 indicators whose answers make up the WEI score. These indicators (listed below) are presented in survey format in our example household survey, in Appendix 4. Eight of these 11 questions must be asked to both men and women.

Figure 1: WEI Questions

Domain	Indicators	Who answers?
AGENCY (20%)	Proportion of women and men who jointly share responsibility for making community decisions (D04)	One adult male and one adult female (ideally, household heads)
	Proportion of women and men jointly share responsibility for making household decisions (D05)	One adult male and one adult female (ideally, household heads)
	Proportion of women and men with negative perceptions on domestic violence (D06)	One adult male and one adult female (ideally, household heads)
INCOME (20%)	Proportion of women and men owning and operating businesses (B04, E03a)	Household level, the person who knows the most about the business
	Proportion of women and men with access to financial services (B04, B10)	All females and males over the age of 18
LEADERSHIP (20%)	Proportion of women and men with membership in community organizations (D01)	One adult male and one adult female (ideally, household heads)
	Proportion of women and men comfortable speaking in public (D02)	One adult male and one adult female (ideally, household heads)
RESOURCES (20%)	Proportion of literate adult women and men (B04, B06)	All females and males over the age of 18
	Proportion of women receiving minimum prenatal care visits (4+ visits) (G03)	Women who have given birth in the last 3 years
TIME (20%)	Proportion of households purchasing fuel sources (C01, C01a)	Household level
	Proportion of households where women and men are the primary collectors of cooking fuel (C01, C01a, C01b))	
	Proportion of households with water source in home or nearby (C02)	Household level
	Proportion of households where women and men are the primary collectors of drinking water (C02, C02a, C02b, C02c)	

Supplementary Questions for the WEI

In addition to questions that contribute to the index's score, we recommend other questions also be included. These are useful because they will provide greater context for the index, which can allow deeper analysis into program strengths and weaknesses. Others are recommended because they are 'testing points' to validate the index's findings. These are data points which have been (or are being) tested for correlation with WEI's results.

Useful for added context	Useful for correlation analysis
Demographic profile of all household members: age, gender, education level, marital status (Module B)	School attendance for ages 4-18 (B07-B07a)*
If literate, in which languages can the person read or write? (B06a)	Prevalence of child marriage and average age of first marriage (B08-B08a)
Type of cooking fuel used by the household (C01)	Use of mobile phone ⁷ (B09)
Knowledge of period for exclusive breastfeeding (G05)	Participation in workshops (and which types) offered by the organization (D03-D03a)
Number of prenatal visits and attended births for the household (G01-G04b) ⁸	Poverty levels (recommend using the Probability of Poverty Index ⁹)*
Type of water source and amount of time spent collecting water (C02-C02b)	Primary expenses of the households (C03)
Type of business owned (E02)	Primary source of income of the household (C04)
	Household Hunger Score (F01-F03)
	Women's dietary diversity*
	Comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDs (H01-H06)
	Tested for HIV (H07-H07b)
	Knowledge and use of family planning (H08-H08c)
	Sisterhood survey (estimator for maternal mortality) (G06-G09)

*These indicators showed a strong correlation¹⁰ with the WEI in 10,000 households' worth of data across 10 countries for The Hunger Project; similar correlation relationships exhibited in USAID/IFPRI's WEAI.

⁷ This could be a future indicator under the resources domain.

⁸ THP only ask questions about births in the household over the last 3 years to improve recall and reflect the amount of time between evaluation surveys.

⁹ The [Probability of Poverty Index](#) is a poverty measurement tool for organizations and businesses with a mission to serve the poor. As it is contextualized to every country, this index is not included in the example, but it is recommended to add the appropriate module for the country where the survey will be conducted.

¹⁰ Pearson's r measures linear correlation between two variables (x and y) between +1 and -1. In this case, the positive one would indicate perfect positive correlation (as x increases, so y increases by the same amount) and negative one perfect negative correlation (as x increases, y decreases by the same amount). As numbers move towards 0, correlation relationships cannot be observed.

In addition to supplementary quantitative data, it is recommended to collect supplementary qualitative data. A list of qualitative questions that we have used successfully can be found in Appendix 5.

Calculating the WEI

The WEI is composed of two parts: the women's achievement ratio (WAR) and the gender parity ratio (GPR). WAR measures women's achievement towards a pre-defined set of goals, while GPR measures women's achievement in comparison to men's achievement in the same community. WEI provides an aggregated community score.¹¹ This index calculates an aggregated community score as opposed to calculating individual scores for each household, as is done when using the WEAI.

Women Achievement Ratio

For the Women's Achievement Ratio (WAR), every indicator is given a target threshold of "sufficient" achievement to indicate empowered women (see setting targets on page 16). Data from household surveys are aggregated and averaged, and this average is compared to the target for each indicator. The final WAR score is a value between zero and one. For the sake of calculation, WAR is capped at a total possible score of one, meaning that if the average percentage point calculated from the survey is better off than the target, it is believed the community has reached full adequacy of women's empowerment for that indicator. WAR is 60 percent of the total WEI score.

Gender Parity Ratio

For the Gender Parity Ratio (GPR), women's performance in each indicator is compared to men's performance. As with WAR, the GPR value can range from zero to one and it is capped at a total possible value of one. A value of one means that women's and men's scores are equal on that indicator. GPR is 40 percent of the total WEI score.

The time domain calculates the GPR differently. As the survey questions are asked at the household level rather than to women and men separately, the best way to calculate the GPR is to examine only the proportion of households where women are responsible for fuel or water collection and subtract that from the total. The GPR still ranges from 0 to 1. A value of 1 means that there are no households in the community where women bear a heavy burden of fuel or water collection, while a value of 0 means that women are bearing the burden of domestic drudgery in all households.

Domains

The WEI is comprised of five equally weighted domains (agency, income, leadership, resources, and time). Each domain contains two to three data points, which serve as indicators to capture critical aspects of performance

¹¹ Intended for simplicity and ease of calculation; if the intended survey population isn't a community but a particular group (e.g. cooperative or client roster) the single score still applies but to that cohort instead of the community level.

under that domain. For instance, the domain of “leadership” is measured by (1) Proportion of women and men with membership in community organizations and (2) Proportion of women and men comfortable speaking in public. The table below shows the 11 data points used to measure performance in WEI and their weight in the final score. Each indicator is weighted and receives a score based on the WAR and GPR. The result is a number between zero and the indicator’s weight.

Table 1: Weighting the Domains of WEI

Domain	Indicator	Weight
Agency	Proportion of women and men who jointly share responsibility for making community decisions	7
	Proportion of women and men jointly share responsibility for making household decisions	7
	Proportion of women and men with negative perceptions on domestic violence	6
Income	Proportion of women and men owning and operating businesses	10
	Proportion of women and men with access to financial services	10
Leadership	Proportion of women and men with membership in community organizations	10
	Proportion of women and men comfortable speaking in public	10
Resources	Proportion of literate adult women and men	10
	Proportion of women receiving minimum prenatal care visits ¹²	10
Time	Proportion of households purchasing fuel sources	10
	Proportion of households where women are primary collectors of fuel	
	Proportion of households with low burden of drinking water collection ¹³	10
	Proportion of households where women are the primary collectors of drinking water	

Scoring the WEI

For each indicator, WAR and GPR are calculated and multiplied by the weight of that indicator. The individual indicators’ performance is summed to find the total WEI score. The WEI is scored out of a total of 100 possible points with each domain counting for a maximum of 20 points. We have set a threshold score of 80 points as a mark of an adequate level of empowerment in each community.

¹² As prenatal care visits only apply to women, there is no GPR for this indicator and the WAR is 100% of the weight.

¹³ Defined as having a household tap or a water source close enough that 10 minutes or less are spent each day collecting water.

To summarize, the overall WEI is constructed by calculating the sum of 11 indicators' weighted WAR and GPR:

$$WEI = \sum_{i=1}^{11} [(0.60 \times WAR_i + 0.40 \times GPR_i) \times weight_i]$$

After collecting the data in the surveys, each indicator should be cleaned and then calculated. The calculation tool provided in Appendix 6 includes both an example calculation used from a THP-Malawi program site and a calculation template. Calculation directions can be found in Appendix 7. We recommend a double calculation¹⁴ process to be certain that values are free from errors.

WEI Correlation with Other Performance Indicators

To test the validity of the WEI score, correlation analysis was conducted with other key performance metrics to see if the score was associated with other outcomes. Strong positive correlations were observed with children's secondary school enrollment levels ($r=0.61$)¹⁵ and women's dietary diversity levels ($r=0.79$). This signifies that communities with high WEI scores also have high rates of secondary school enrollment for children and women have more diverse diets. Strong negative correlations were observed between WEI and proportion of households below the poverty line ($r=-0.8$). In other words, communities with lower poverty levels exhibit higher WEI scores. Weak correlations were noted for knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding practices ($r=-0.19$) and prevalence of household hunger ($r=-0.2$).

Though these are promising results, a relatively small data sample was available to perform the correlation analysis. Though thousands of household surveys are represented in the data, scores are averaged by community making the number of available WEI scores much smaller. The range in community performance for certain metrics is so small that correlation cannot be sufficiently tested at this stage. For instance, all but one study in the dataset have rates of 90 percent or more attended births, thus attempting to test correlations with this indicator is problematic. As more studies are conducted using WEI analysis, these correlations must be retested.

Contextualizing the WEI

Changing Indicators

The WEI should accurately reflect the program that it will measure and fit clearly into that program's theory of change. While we recommend using the same indicators for WEI, there may be instances where the

¹⁴ In house, we have two separate team members (or consultants) calculate each indicator value and then revise until all numbers match.

¹⁵ Pearson's r measures linear correlation between two variables (x and y) between +1 and -1. In this case, the positive one would indicate perfect positive correlation (as x increases, so y increases by the same amount) and negative one perfect negative correlation (as x increases, y decreases by the same amount). As numbers move towards 0, correlation relationships cannot be observed.

recommended indicators are not the best reflection of your programs¹⁶. In this case, it is recommended to identify other indicators within the domain that would best represent your program.

When using this guide, practitioners must also recognize that regions differ by geographical and sociocultural factors. The WEI tool should be piloted to ensure that the questions are appropriate to the local culture. This step is especially important if there are any changed indicators.

What makes a WEI a WEI?

Defining Features of the WEI

At a minimum, the Women's Empowerment Index must have:

- An aggregate population score ranging from 0-100
- Measurement of the five domains of empowerment – agency, income, leadership, resources, and time – with equal weight given to each domain
- Women's Achievement Ratio ranging from 0-1 for each indicator, comparing women's achievement to a target
- Gender Parity Ratio ranging from 0-1 for each indicator, comparing women's and men's scores
- Analysis of empowerment as a factor of the weighted Women's Achievement Ratio and Gender Parity Ratio
- Responses from both men and women within a household
- Minimum of two indicators within each domain

Setting Targets

Target-setting is one of the most crucial elements for the WEI and ensures the indicators' have thresholds appropriate to the project aims and community needs. We have set standard targets across all project sites¹⁷, but the process of rolling this out in other contexts and for other types of work could require revising the targets to set appropriate achievement goals.

When determining appropriate targets for your program, consider:

- What inputs can your program provide to achieve the target? How long is the project? How much budget is available? What activities do you expect to do that would impact each indicator? Based on

¹⁶ For example, if your program focuses around creating employment opportunities for women rather than household-level income-generating activities, a better indicator for income might be whether women and men in the household are employed full-time at a salaried or wage job.

¹⁷ Project sites number 315 across 10 countries (Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mexico, Mozambique, Senegal, Uganda)

the answers to these questions, you can set targets that show improvement while still being feasible according to your program, timeframe, and budget.

- Is there any existing data that indicates the status of the women you work with today?
 - *Example:* THP had internal data that showed a low percentage of women having access to financial services, so the target was set conservatively at 35% because that was a significant yet feasible increase through THP programs.
- What are your program's goals regarding these indicators?
 - *Example:* THP has a strong focus on maternal health as absolutely critical for its communities, so the target for the proportion of pregnant women making 4 or more visits to the health clinic while pregnant was set at 100%.
- If no data exists, what secondary data is available that could inform your targets?

Keep in mind that the higher your targets, the harder it will be to get a high score on the WEI.

It is important to remember that **the validity of the WEI was tested under THP-established indicators and targets**. The more changes to the WEI made, the less certainty can be guaranteed around its validity, and additional correlational analysis will be needed. For best results, we recommend maintaining the survey, indicators, and targets discussed in this toolkit.

Learning: Using the WEI for Improved Gender Programming

The learning phase analyzes the data collected during the implementation phase for improved project planning and management. This section serves as a guide to interpreting the results, recommendations for data visualization, and an example case study of how the WEI was used to pinpoint programmatic recommendations. Each organization should determine the analysis method that best suits the needs of its stakeholders.

Interpreting the WEI at a Glance

- The WEI score ranges from 0-100. The higher the WEI score, the stronger women's empowerment in the target population.
- The Women's Achievement Ratio (WAR) ranges from 0-1. The higher the WAR, the more targets women in the target population have achieved. A score of 1 means that the target has been achieved or exceeded.
- The Gender Parity Ratio (GPR) ranges from 0-1. The higher the GPR, the more similar the result between men and women. A score of 1 means that men and women are performing the same on the indicator.
- Each indicator is assigned a weight between 6 and 10 (see Table 1). The higher the indicator score, the better the target population performed on that indicator.
- Each domain is scored based on adding the score of its individual indicators, with a maximum of 20 points. The closer to 20, the stronger the performance in that domain.

Visualizing the WEI

Visualization is a strong tool for understanding the WEI. Below, two recommended methods of visualizations are highlighted. Additional options for visualization are available in Appendix 8.

Analysis by Domain Achievements

By comparing the results of each domain, it is easy to identify domains that are performing strongly and those on which more focus is needed. For instance, a community with low performance in the leadership domain needs to focus on building the capacity and confidence of women to lead their communities, while a community with a weak performance in the time domain should focus on time-saving technologies and promoting chore sharing among household members.

The radar graph below compared the domain achievements of three program sites in different countries. These communities were all surveyed in 2014, 2 years prior to their estimated project completion. Scores are represented as the achievement out of 20 possible points in each domain - the farther out each point is on the graph, the stronger the performance in that domain.

PERFORMANCE BY DOMAIN

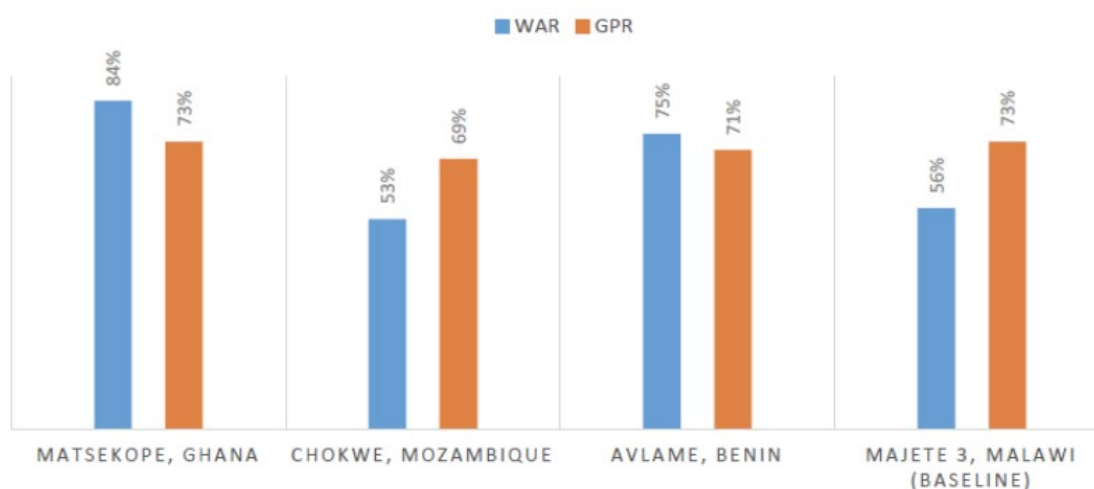


Boulkon, Burkina Faso for instance, is performing exceptionally well in leadership, while exhibiting poor performance in the time and income domains. Avlamé, Benin, excelled in income but also showed poor performance in the time domain. Matsekope, Ghana, on the other hand, shows nearly equal and high performance across all domains.

Analysis by Sub-Index

Since WEI is calculated through a composite of women's achievement ratios (WARs) and gender parity ratios (GPRs) it is possible to assess whether constraints placed on women's empowerment result from not having sufficient (1) ability to achieve it, (2) equality with men, or (3) both. Depending on what the analysis indicates, very different program responses may be required. For instance, a community showing low levels of gender parity compared to women's achievements should work on fostering more equitable division of labor, resources, and decision-making between both genders.

PERFORMANCE BY SUB-INDEX



The figure above shows a range of observed scenarios. In Avlamé in Benin, both WAR and GPR scores are performing at similar levels, indicating that analysis of the five domains could provide clearer insights. The baseline study of Majete 3 in Malawi shows much higher performance on gender parity, indicating more serious constraints on women’s achievements than on gender roles. In Matseko, there is a higher WAR and a lower GPR, which indicates that although women are meeting many of their achievement targets, they are still underperforming when compared to men.

Additional visualization examples can be found in Appendix 8. Templates to create all visualizations can be found in Appendix 6, WEI Calculation Template.

Post-Evaluation Action Plan

After collecting, analyzing, and visualizing the data, a post-evaluation action plan should be created based on the results. The purposes of the action plan are:

- To analyze the results in comparison to the baseline or midterm surveys, if available
- To point out areas of success and identify areas for further improvement or targeted programming.
- To examine qualitative data in comparison to quantitative results looking for gaps and contradictions
- To create a list of program recommendations and learnings based on the data
- To identify best practices that can be leveraged to share our approach externally
- To find and document programmatic actions based on the findings
- To assign responsibility and the timeframe for completion of each set of actions

A strong post-evaluation action plan will include concrete actions with a justification, the individual(s) responsible, budget, due date, and a status check. The plan should be referred to on a regular basis to follow up on any incomplete items.

Recommended follow-up actions for WEI may include:

- Sharing results with community members for awareness and goal-setting
- Developing a list of further questions from the WEI results and investing resources in answering those which are critical to the program
- Applying best practices to other program sites and/or external audiences
- Focusing on areas of needed improvement with targeted interventions
- Monitoring action plan implementation
- Measuring WEI results over time and comparing results

The WEI offers an opportunity for ongoing learning and iteration. The WEI analysis will undoubtedly direct your organization towards programmatic recommendations and key questions for improving gender programming. It will be up to your organization to determine which actions are critical for success.

Learning from the WEI: A Case Study on Income and Time

After analyzing the initial results of the WEI in 2014 we identified some common trends across program sites and countries that warranted a closer look. Communities scored consistently weak in the “time” domain, indicating that a closer look was needed to offer programmatic recommendations to improve women’s time. The income domain showed the widest range of scores, from communities that performed relatively poorly (i.e., Boulkon in Burkina Faso) to those that performed relatively strongly (i.e., Matseko in Ghana).

We collaborated with a group of graduate students from Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs to conduct a case study on income and time in Ghana and Burkina Faso. The goal of the project was to identify specific factors or activities accountable for the results recorded in these two countries and to generate programmatic recommendations aimed at improving the time and income domains. Through a combination of desk research, field visits, staff interviews, and data analysis, the students identified the most critical factors contributing to the time and income scores and recommendations for each.

Time Results

The students identified that time scores were due to a confluence of factors, most critically tradition, inconsistent trainings, external interventions, environment and geography, and indicator construction¹⁸.

Specific recommendations included:

- Implementing domestic chore-sharing education sessions
- Conducting participatory community-level time-use surveys
- Integrating division of household chores into other relevant trainings
- Training and utilizing men in programming
- Increasing focus on time-saving technologies (e.g., improved cook stoves, motorcycles, or piped water to households)
- Expanding childcare initiatives
- Adding a leisure indicator to the WEI

Income Results

The students' research revealed that women's increased access to income has also improved their agency, which normalized women working outside the home and increased decision-making. In general, the income domain performed better than time and was closely linked to THP microfinance program in Africa. However, income was more variable than time, with results depending greatly on national development factors, program structure, and the formation of strong partnerships in communities. Specific recommendations included:

- Market expansion for women's products produced through income-generating activities
- Expanding or launching micro-savings initiatives
- Integrating men into financial education sessions

There was an average 18% increase in WEI scores between the midterm data gathered in 2014 and the endline data gathered in 2016 (an average score of 64 in 2014 compared to 74 in 2016). There was a notable average 58% increase in the time domain. The actions identified in this case study, many of which were taken up by program countries, may have contributed to this increase.

Conclusion

The Women's Empowerment Index allows THP to measure progress on women's empowerment, a concept central to our work. As the organization continues to implement the WEI, the addition of more longitudinal data (surveys of the same location over time) will also help demonstrate program learning and responses to

¹⁸ It was noted that collecting cooking fuel and water may have a strong intercorrelation. It was recommended that The Hunger Project substitute one of these for an indicator of leisure time. We are piloting a leisure indicator in 2017 and will test its validity as part of the index once sufficient surveys have been collected.

the index. Though initial correlation analysis of WEI suggests a rigorous and well-designed tool, more research and data points are required to continue to validate its design.

We look forward to continuing to explore the program learnings that this valuable tool makes evident, so that the organization can continue to improve practices for empowering women in rural communities. Using the WEI, we will be able to identify which practices and interventions are the most successful for women and their futures.

This toolkit was designed to support practitioners in preparing, implementing, and learning from the Women's Empowerment Index within their own organizations. For additional information or to share your experience using the WEI, contact impact@thp.org.

WEI Toolkit Appendices

Appendix 1: Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)¹

Launched by International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), and USAID's Feed the Future in February 2012, WEAI is the first comprehensive and standard measure to directly capture women's empowerment and inclusion levels in the agricultural sector. Recognizing the importance of women in growing and producing the world's food², the creation of this index was an important step in quantitatively demonstrating how to capture and track over time a concept as complex as women's empowerment.

The WEAI is comprised of two sub-indices: one measuring the empowerment of women along five domains (5DE), and the second measuring the gender parity of empowerment within the household (GPI). From the two sub-indices, individual households are scored based on exhibited levels of "empowerment." Programs seeking to demonstrate impact should show more households demonstrating empowered women over time through their score.

DEVELOPING WEAI

WEAI was piloted in 2011 and 2012 in nearly 1,200 households in Guatemala, Bangladesh, and Uganda. After consolidating research from the pilot exercise, the WEAI was finalized and launched in 2012. As of mid-2015, studies using WEAI had been conducted in 19 countries, surveying thousands of households. The WEAI research has inspired countless case studies and academic research into designing programs to empower rural women.

Sub-index: The Five Domains of Empowerment (5DE)

The Five Domains of Empowerment (5DE) index theorizes that to be "empowered" one must have autonomy in many areas of her life. Thus, 5DE posits that women's empowerment, in agriculture, can be exhibited through five key areas in a woman's life: decisions about

¹ Most of the content in this section is taken from publications in the "WEAI Resource Center," which can be accessed here: <http://www.ifpri.org/book-9075/ourwork/program/weai-resource-center>

² Alkire, Sabina et al. The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index; IFPRI Discussion Paper 01240; Dec 2012

agricultural production, access to and decision-making power over productive resources, control over use of income, leadership in the community, and time allocation (see figure on page 9). The 5DE is 90 percent of the WEAI's score.

For each of the five equally weighted domains, a threshold (or targeted level) is defined. If the woman meets or exceeds the threshold in the household, she experiences “sufficiency” (or adequate achievement) in this domain. A woman is defined as “empowered” in 5DE if she has adequate achievements in four of the five domains or is empowered in some combination of the weighted indicators that reflect 80 percent total adequacy.

Sub-index: The Gender Parity Index (GPI)

Though empowerment is multidimensional and absolute, it is strongly influenced and can be limited by social and environmental factors. WEAI characterizes empowerment both in terms of what women have in absolute terms (5DE) and what they have relative to men (GPI). It explores the relationship between empowerment in men and women through the Gender Parity Sub-index (GPI). GPI compares the empowerment achievements of men and women in the same household using the same five domains³. This sub-index accounts for 10 percent of the total WEAI score.

The Five Domains of Empowerment in the WEAI

Domain	Indicator	Weight
Production Decision-making	Input in productive decisions	1/10
	Autonomy in production	1/10
Access to Productive Resources	Ownership of assets	1/15
	Purchase, sale, or transfer of assets	1/15
	Access to and decisions on credit	1/15
Control over Use of Income	Control over use of income	1/5
Community Leadership	Group member	1/10
	Speaking in public	1/10
Time Allocation	Workload	1/10
	Leisure	1/10

Scoring through WEAI

In the WEAI model, a woman is seen as enjoying empowerment if she scores 80 percent or higher in the five domains or has gender parity with the primary male in her household. For those households that have not achieved women's empowerment in agriculture, the sub-indices can point to gaps in the five domains and gender parity that need to be closed for women to reach adequate empowerment.

³ While the 5DE score is calculated using all women in the sample, the GPI score is not calculated for women living in a household where no adult male is present.

The WEAI is particularly useful in analyzing areas where programs or activities have been successful in moving the needle on empowerment and areas where women's autonomy still lags behind.

The overall WEAI is constructed by calculating the weighted average of the 5DE and GPI as follows:

$$\text{WEAI} = (0.90 \times 5\text{DE}) + (0.10 \times \text{GPI}),$$

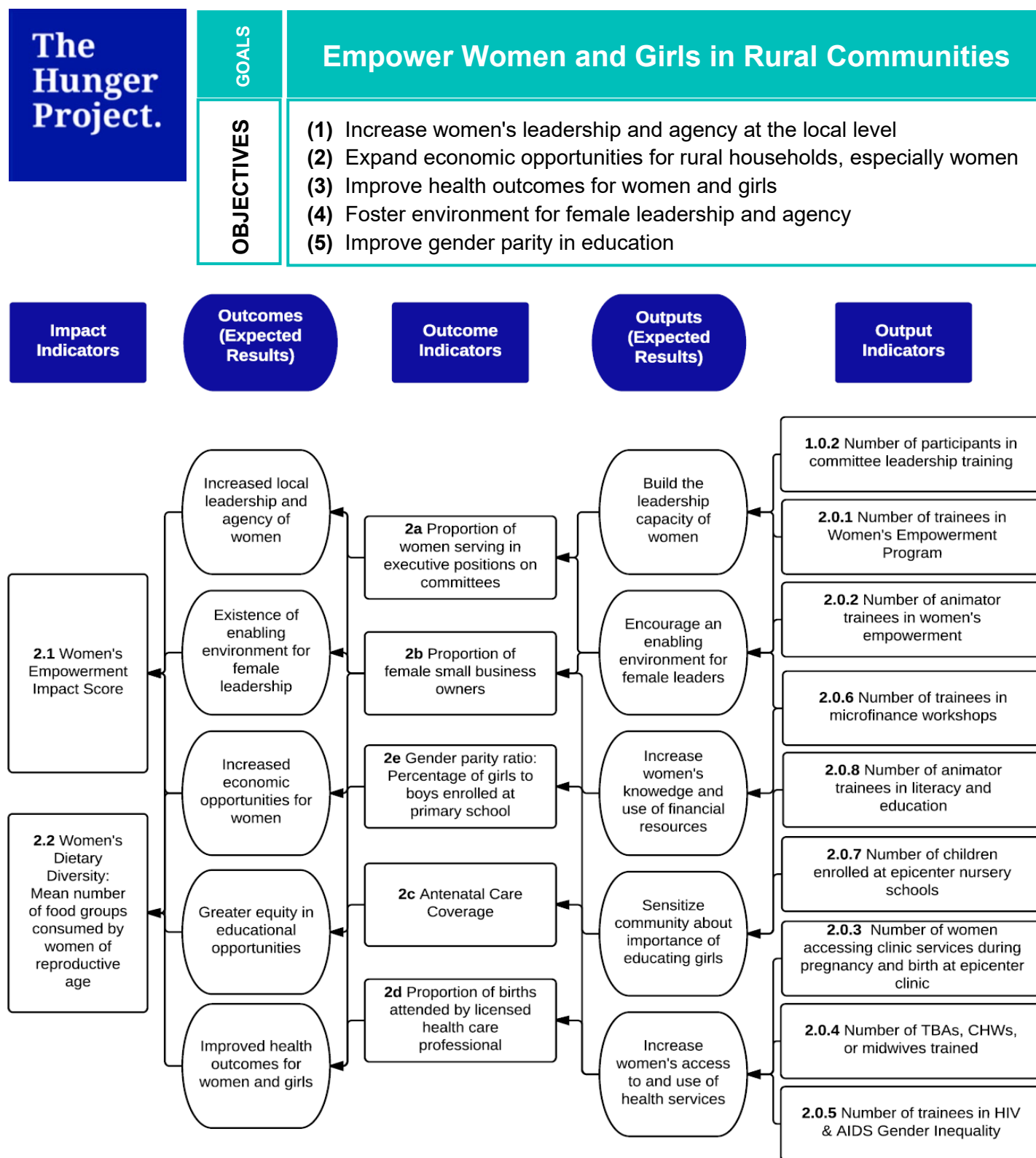
5 DE= $H_e + H_d \times A_e$ (H_e is the percentage of empowered women; H_d is the percentage of disempowered women; A_e is the average absolute empowerment score among the disempowered); and

$\text{GPI} = 1 - \text{HGPI} \times \text{IGPI}$ (HGPI is the percentage of gender parity-inadequate households; IGPI is the average empowerment gap between women and men living in households that lack gender parity).

WEAI Correlation with Other Measures

Further research has demonstrated that WEAI's score is positively correlated with several key indicators including wealth, decisions about family planning, completing secondary education, minimum acceptable diets for children, and breastfeeding for infants.⁵ A higher WEAI score is therefore associated with better performance in these indicators. These types of correlation analyses demonstrate the validity of the index.

Appendix 2: Women's Empowerment Theory of Change



Appendix 3: Planning Your Evaluation - Determining Sample Size and Budget

[Appendix 3: Determining Sample Size and Budget \(Excel\)](#)

Appendix 4: WEI Household Survey Template

[Appendix 4: WEI Household Survey Template](#)

Appendix 5: WEI Calculation Template

[Appendix 5: WEI Calculation Template \(Excel\)](#)

Appendix 6: WEI Indicator Calculation Guide

Women's Empowerment Index Calculation Guide

GOAL: Empower women and girls in rural communities

PROGRAM AREA: Women's Empowerment

OBJECTIVES:

- Increase women's leadership and agency at the local level
- Expand economic opportunities for rural households, especially women
- Improve health outcomes for women and girls
- Foster environment for female leadership & agency
- Improve gender parity in education

INDICATOR 2.1: Women's Empowerment Index

DEFINITION:

A consolidated score comprised of results under 5 different domains of empowerment--agency, resources, income, time, and leadership. The impact score has 11 indicators, each of which has been assigned a weight based on their relative contribution to an overall change in women's empowerment. The score is calculated taking into account the Women's Achievement Ratio (the status of women currently) and the Gender Parity Ratio (comparison of women to men). The results are compared to a target for each of the 11 indicators.

The five domains, their definitions, and their weights are:

Domain	Categories (source)	Indicator	Points/Weight (out of 100)	Target
Agency	Men and women jointly share responsibility for making community decisions (D04)	X% of respondents (male and female) say that men and women share equal responsibility in making decisions for the community	7	75%
	Men and women jointly share responsibility for making household decisions (D05)	X% of respondents (male and female) say that men and women share equal responsibility in making decisions for the household	7	75%
	Spousal abuse is unacceptable (D06)	X% of respondents disagree (or strongly disagree) that it is acceptable for a husband to hit his wife	6	100%
Income	Women owning and operating businesses (B04, E03a)	X% of women own business	10	22%
	Women have access to financial service(B04, B10)	X% of women are accessing financial services	10	35%

Leadership	Membership in community organization/groups (D01)	X% of participants in community meetings/groups are women	10	40%
	Women report they feel comfortable speaking in public (D02)	X% of women in the household survey reported they feel comfortable speaking in public	10	75%
Resources	Literacy Rate (B04, B06)	X% of adult women/men are literate	10	50%
	Women seeking prenatal care (G03)	X% of women are making 4 or more visits to the clinic while pregnant	10	100%
Time	Women spend less time gathering cooking fuel (C01, C02b, C02c)	X% of households where women take responsibility for collecting fuel	10	55%
	Women spend less time & effort collecting water for households (C02, C02a, C02b, C02c)	Women and girls are now spending X% less time on collecting water for daily household use	20	50%
Total			100	100%

RATIONALE:

The index uses a robust, multidimensional approach to define the vast meaning of the word "empowerment". Since empowerment is a multi-faceted concept ranging from the ability to make decisions to resources to enact those choices, attempts to reflect this approach must cover many domains. The index is based loosely off USAID's Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) which significant time and resources were devoted to developing.

UNIT & CALCULATIONS:

Number (score out of 100)

The index has 11 indicators. For 10 indicators, the scores of women and men are compared. The exception is women seeking prenatal care.

Data cleaning tip: Exclude blanks, "no response", and "don't know/not sure" from all calculations.

% of respondents (male and female) say that men and women share equal responsibility in making decisions for the community

Numerator: Number of women/men who say decisions are shared equally. Based on question D04, "In the community, who has the primary responsibility for making decisions about the community (projects, policies, disputes)?"

Denominator: Number of women/men who answered the question. Exclude any blanks or any respondents that said "Don't know/not sure". Based on question D04.

% of respondents (male and female) say that men and women share equal responsibility in making decisions for the household

Numerator: Number of women/men who say decisions are shared equally. Based on question D05, "In the households, who has the primary responsibility for making decisions about the family?"

Denominator: Number of women/men who answered the question. Exclude any blanks or any respondents that said "Don't know/not sure". Based on question D05.

% of respondents disagree (or strongly disagree) that it is acceptable for a husband to hit his wife

Numerator: Number of women/men who say they “disagree” or “strongly disagree” to the statement “It is acceptable for a husband to hit his wife”. Based on question D06.

Denominator: Number of women/men who answered the question. Exclude any blanks or any respondents that said “No response”. Based on question D06.

% of women that own nonfarm businesses

Numerator: Number of nonfarm businesses with a female/male owner reported on the business subform. Based on question E03a, “Gender of owner/manager.”

Denominator: Number of women/men 18+ in the sample. Based on question B04, “age”.

*Note: Exclude any people without age or with an age >120. Review the businesses to ensure they are nonfarm business. If any data is blank, exclude that entry.

% of women are accessing financial services

Numerator: The number of women/men accessing at least one financial service. Based on outcome evaluation survey question B10, “Has (s)he used a financial product in the last twelve months?” The numerator is all who responded “yes”.

Denominator: Total number of respondents over 18 years of age who answered the question. Based on outcome evaluation survey question B04, “Age”. Remove anyone who answered B10 with “don’t know”. Exclude any people without age or with an age >120.

% of participants in community meetings/groups are women

Numerator: The number of women/men participating who said “yes” to question D01, “Are you a member of a community committee, group or cooperative?”

Denominator: The number of women/men who answered question D01.

% of women in the household survey reported they feel comfortable speaking in public

Numerator: The number of women/men who said they “agree” or “strongly agree” to question D02, “Agree or disagree: I feel comfortable speaking in community meetings and public forums.”

Denominator: The number of women/men who answered question D02. Exclude anyone who answered “no response”.

% of adult women/men are literate

Numerator: The number of women/men 18+ who answered “yes” to question B06, “Are you able to read/write in any language?”

Denominator: The number of women/men 18+ in the sample who answered question B06.

% of women are making 4 or more visits to the clinic while pregnant

Numerator: The number of pregnant women who attended 4 or more prenatal visits. Based on question G03, “How many visits did the pregnant woman make to the health clinic prior to giving birth (while pregnant)?”

Denominator: The number of pregnant women who answered question G03.

% of households where women take responsibility for collecting fuel

Numerator: The number of households where female household members gather fuel.

Denominator: All households

*Note: If the household said they are “not sure” who is collecting fuel, that answer should be excluded from the calculation. If the household said “other” for who is collecting fuel, this answer should be reviewed to see if it is a valid source or if it needs to be reclassified. If they did not specify for other, this should be excluded.

**Note: The question of who collects fuel is not asked if it is not a collectable fuel source (i.e., electricity) or the household says they purchase the fuel.

% of households where women take responsibility for collecting water

Numerator: Number of households where female household members gather water

Denominator: All households.

*Note: If the household said they are “not sure” who is collecting water, that answer should be excluded from the calculation. If the household said “other” for who is collecting fuel, this answer should be reviewed to see if it is a valid source or if it needs to be reclassified. If they did not specify for other, this should be excluded.

**Note: Households with a tap in the home or a daily collection time of under 10 minutes are not asked who collects the water, but are still valid in the denominator.

Women’s Achievement Ratio (WAR):

If the survey results are greater than or equal to the target, the WAR is 1 (target achieved). If the survey results are less than the target, the WAR is (result/divided) – shows how much of the target has been achieved.

$$\text{WAR} = (\text{women's score})/(\text{target})$$

*If the women’s score is greater than or equal to the target, they receive a score of 1. They should never have a WAR greater than 1.

For the indicators in the time domain, the direction of change is a decrease. If the women’s score is less than or equal to the target, they receive a score of 1. If the women’s score is greater than the target, the formula changes to:

$$\text{WAR} = (1 - \text{women's score})/(\text{target})$$

Gender Parity Ratio (GPR):

If men’s result is higher than women’s, the GPR is women/men. If women’s result is higher than men’s, the GPR is men/women.

$$\text{GPR} = (\text{women's score})/(\text{men's score})^*$$

*If women are outperforming men, then the ratio should be flipped. The idea is to achieve a result between 0 and 1, with 0 being no parity and 1 being perfect parity.

WEI:

$$\text{weight} * (0.6 * \text{WAR} + 0.4 * \text{GPR}) = \text{final score on each indicator, with a range of 0 – weight.}$$

To breakdown the WEI score into its 5 domains, sum all the scores from each domain.

The final score is the sum of each indicator score. The maximum points is 100.

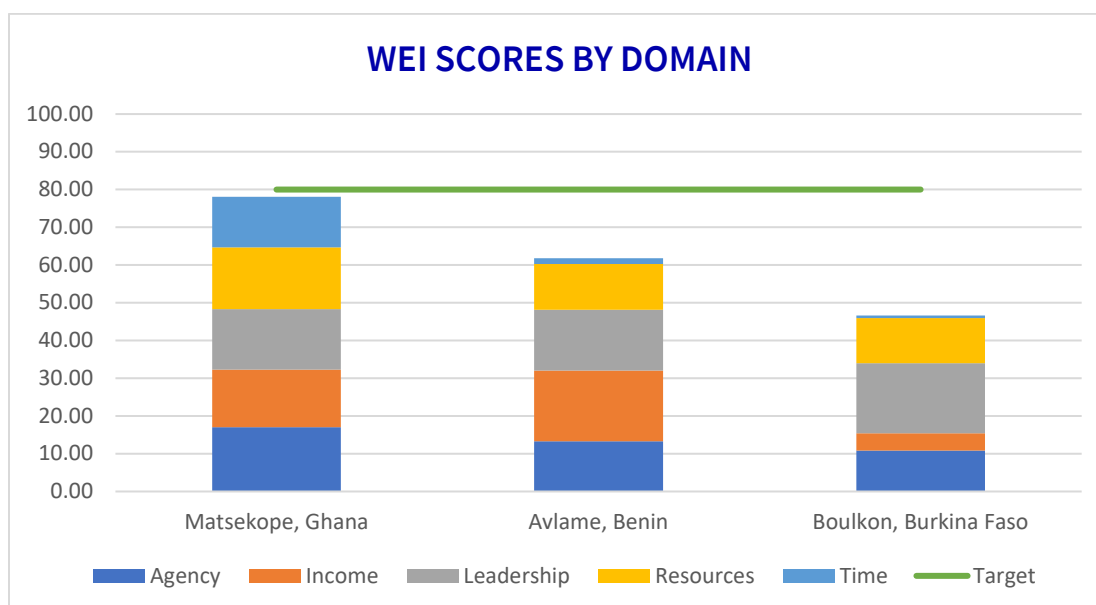
TYPE: Impact	DIRECTION OF CHANGE: Increase is better
DATA SOURCE: WEI survey	
MEASUREMENT NOTES: • HOW IT SHOULD BE COLLECTED: Household surveys • FREQUENCY OF COLLECTION: 2-3 years, when outcome indicator collection occurs	

Appendix 7: Data Visualization Examples

Templates to make each of these graphs are available in the WEI Calculation Template.

Stacked Column Chart

A stacked column chart shows the WEI score (0-100) with the number of points received within each domain.

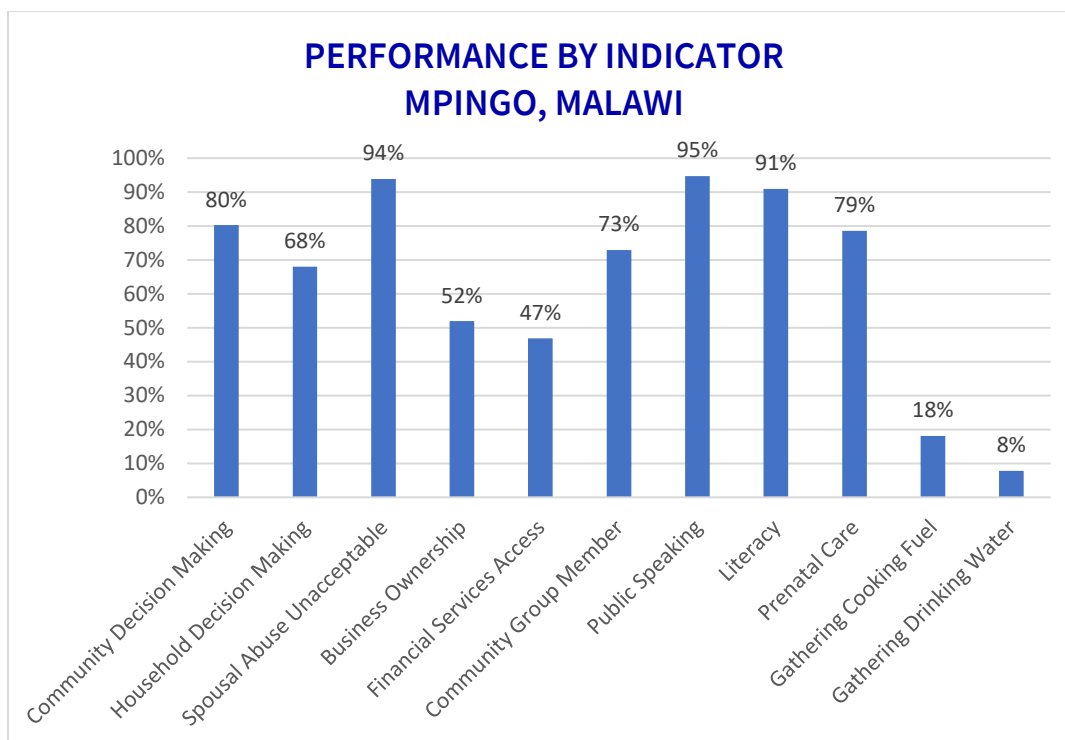


The first conclusion is that none of the program sites have reached the target of 80 points (though Matsekope is close), which indicates that there is still attention needed in all three communities. Matsekope shows a nearly even contribution from each of the 5 domains. In Benin, the most points are coming from the income domain and the fewest from the time domain. In Burkina Faso, the graph shows a weak performance in both income and time.

Analysis by Indicator

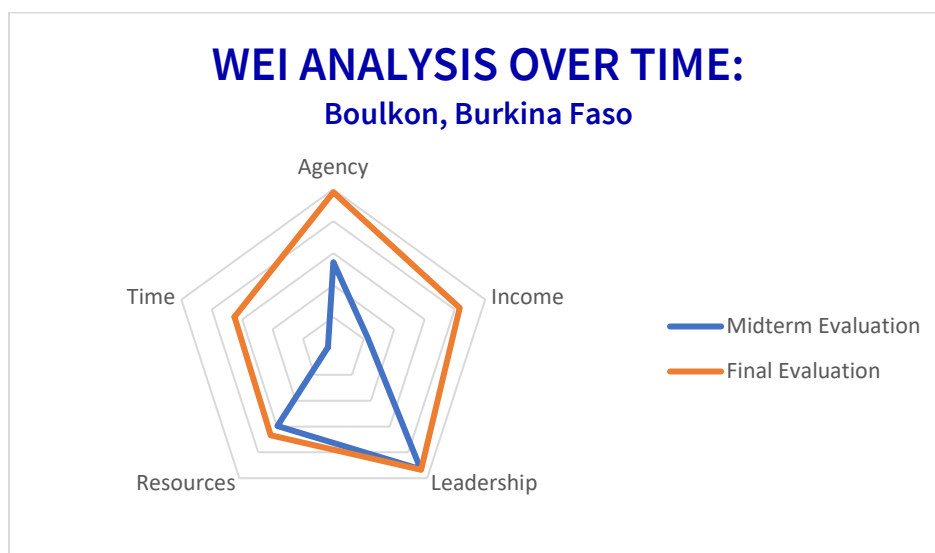
For an analysis at a deeper level than those above, it may be useful to look at the results of each of the indicators individually. The figure below shows the percentage of possible points achieved for each indicator, by weight⁴. This more detailed view reveals that women are performing best in comfort in speaking in public, literacy, and perceptions on spousal abuse. There is still space for improvement in financial services access and business ownership. This view again highlights that women are still largely responsible for gathering fuel and water in the household.

⁴ For example, if an indicator is weighted at a maximum of 10 points and the indicator score is 5, it would show as 50% on this graph.



Analysis Over Time

The WEI can also be analyzed comparing the domains, sub-indices, or indicators over time to track specific changes. The figure below highlights one example of the domains over time from Boulkon, Burkina Faso.



The graph shows substantial changes between the midterm and final evaluations. There is a huge jump in achievement in time and income, the two areas that were lagging the most in the midterm. There was very slight change in leadership and resources, though these areas were relatively strong at midterm. These results suggest that the targeted programming because of the midterm evaluation may have been successful in shifting the results. For a deeper analysis of where the change occurred, the sub-indices or individual indicators could be analyzed over time.