Measuring women’s untapped potential for food security and market empowerment: a Human Development and Capability Approach to gender in WFP’s Senegal VAM activities to improve food security analysis in West Africa

a thesis (and internship report)

by Paige Enfinger

Roma Tre University Department of Economics HDFS Master’s Steering Committee

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Human Development and Food Security

Roma Tre University Tutor: Pasquale De Muro
WFP Supervisor: Simon Renk

October 2015

ABSTRACT: Gender analysis and gender-responsive interventions are increasingly important to humanitarian and development organizations. However, gender analysis is too often neglected or does not take into account the human dimensions, which define gender dynamics, namely inequalities. This study endeavors to identify key gaps in gender-responsive food security analysis and propose relevant alternatives to current practice. This is achieved through an adoption of human development ideologies of freedom and agency, as well as theories of women’s empowerment to support impactful humanitarian programming and to promote food sovereignty. A case study of World Food Programme (WFP) information and operations in Senegal is conducted to investigate and portray implications of gender analysis within food security assessments and subsequent interventions. The study finds that an absence of relevant gender analysis from WFP data and food security analysis in Senegal can be attributed to an outdated conceptual framework and contributes to missed programming opportunities in the long run. By neglecting appropriate gender analysis, WFP evades social sources and underlying vulnerabilities of food insecurity, and thereby overlooks opportunities for equitable interventions to more sustainably improve food security. The study recommends a reorientation of the WFP conceptual framework to emphasize women’s empowerment, and proposes an adaptation of the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), from the production paradigm for agricultural development to the human development paradigm in which access and utilization are central for food security. Such changes to the WFP conceptual framework are imperative to improving the capacity of humanitarian agencies, not only to more efficient and equitable response, but also to promote women’s empowerment, gender equality, and food sovereignty on a larger scale. Failing to do so risks reinforcing the very structures of inequality and systemic poverty that humanitarianism aims to dismantle.
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Introduction

In academia and development work, links between women’s empowerment and household food security are increasingly understood as opportunities for hunger eradication and human development\(^1\). This study identifies the strengths and weaknesses of existing tools for capturing and interpreting women’s empowerment in an effort to ameliorate them. It supports the development of a new framework of understanding how women and their families might be meaningfully implicated and empowered. Suggesting a shift in institutional food assistance, it promotes people’s food sovereignty\(^2\), such that organizations might better understand community realities and encourage autonomy in food security interventions.

Under the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and, more recently, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), gender\(^3\) equality is recognized as a human right and crucial element for sustainable development, officially affirming women’s empowerment as a policy objective on the international agenda. Development and humanitarian agencies, including the World Food Programme (WFP), are moving beyond sector-specific mandates for food assistance to promote internal gender mainstreaming, equitable programming, and collaborations with partner organizations to effectively close gender gaps, in agriculture in particular. WFP’s integration of gender analysis in food security assessments (identifying, analyzing, and reporting vulnerabilities) is a preliminary step to inform gender-responsive programming and ensure equitable service delivery to people in the field. Still, capturing gender dynamics is a work in progress, riddled with time, financial, and cultural constraints, as well as a lack of tools to process such information\(^4\). Through the human development framework, this study aims to underline relationships between women’s empowerment, agency\(^5\), and sustainable food security.

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1 Human development describes the process of improving people’s well-being by expanding their freedoms and opportunities. Referring to the real freedoms ordinary people have to decide who to be, what to do, and how to live, the concept of human development, developed by economist Mahbub ul Haq, is a paradigm that diverges from economic development and metrics for income. The human development and capability approach is discussed later as part of the conceptual framework of this study.

2 Developed by the international peasant’s movement La Via Campesina, food sovereignty refers to the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.

3 Gender refers to the socially constructed and learned roles of women and men.

4 This is also the case for other diversity-based vulnerabilities relevant for food security analysis such as age, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.

5 Agency refers to a person’s autonomous decision-making, or ability to express their ideas freely.
to contextualize the application of these principles for equitable humanitarian program design. Before focusing on the WFP’s food security assessments and programming in Senegal, as part of the strategy to improve gender analysis in Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) unit food security and market assessments in West Africa and globally.

WFP translates gender mainstreaming policies into practice by targeting women in program interventions for better food security, but such program design choices fail to be evidence-based without necessary gender analysis. Given that food security theories, measurements, and analysis affect policy objectives (Burchi & DeMuro, 2012), methodological reviews must scrutinize theoretical approaches rather than solely gender-disaggregated data. It also involves essential choices for data collection and analysis of specific gender issues, where the normative approach, semantics, and participatory research play critical roles in determining the accessibility, equity, and effectiveness of projects. Thus, this paper goes beyond the effort to accrue more information and data on women versus men, to examine specific gender roles and practices, and to qualify these in terms of empowerment for food security.

Much of the literature on gender in agriculture and development points to the need for more gender-disaggregated data. Often literature on women in agricultural markets focuses also on formalizing their agricultural activities. Still, even as agricultural development projects promote women’s empowerment in production and along value chains, the debate remains on how to best address gender disparities in such value chain strategies. Developing agricultural value chains and women’s participation in these may boost local, national, or regional food security, but such interventions have not been proven to enhance household food security (Quisimbing et al., 2014). Gender-related value chain impacts on women’s income and food security studies require further development. Such activities contribute to gender equality, promoting intrinsic values of human development beyond economic development.

6 This study overviews research on gender in food security methodologies, as part of an internship (August-October 2015) with the WFP VAM unit at the regional bureau for West Africa in Dakar, Senegal.

7 Gender-disaggregated data may also be referred to as sex-disaggregated data, or even sex-and age-disaggregated data (SADD) as a stronger concept. For the purpose of simplicity, gender-disaggregated data is used to refer to those issues relevant to gender analysis in food security assessments and programming.

8 These include cash crop market supply chains, rural labor markets, and reducing gender-based barriers to value chain development (Quisimbing et al., IFPRI, 2014).

9 Treated in the 2011 FAO/IFPRI publication Gender in Agriculture: Closing the Knowledge Gap, which outlines the problems of access to opportunities and productive resources faced by women in agricultural livelihoods.

10 From the study Promoting Gender-Equitable Agricultural Value Chains: Issues, Opportunities, and Next Steps: Recommendations for improving the research agenda include: focusing on domestic market opportunities; studying
Various West African case studies\textsuperscript{11} of women’s and men’s agricultural roles demonstrate that female producers and traders are more than numerous, experienced, and active throughout the region. However, women’s production and market activities are often limited or made “invisible” under ownership and control of men. Better understanding women’s food system activities, their capabilities and deprivations, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, can inform development interventions and evidence-based policies to promote equality over time.

Designing and refining data collection and analysis tools to capture and contextualize women’s roles can shed light on opportunities for agency and empowerment within the West African food system, thereby highlighting the role of and empowering women in promoting food security. Existing methodologies, which reduce food security and gender analysis to the comparison of male- and female-headed households in food security assessments, further contributes to the problem of invisibility as voices are not heard from those women (the majority of women) living in male-headed households (McMullan & Kieran, 2014). Gender analysis can highlight differences between male and female farmer productivity - food consumption and expenditure patterns- constraints faced by individuals working within each node along value chains- and the roles determining vulnerability and varying exposure to imminent shocks, beyond just the gendered comparison of heads of households\textsuperscript{12}. This meticulous study of food systems can reveals the unfortunate stigmatization, violence, harassment, poor working conditions, and lack of recognition of women’s economic contribution. Such inequities weave the fabric of the invisibility cloak women too often wear in informal work.

Human development-oriented analysis for people-focused operations considers access and agency rather than assuming higher incomes can resolve gender and food security gaps. Poor and rural women, often involved in crop production and the collection of non-timber forest products for household consumption rather than for sale, contribute significantly to household indirect effects and means to enhance equitable distribution of benefits to all household participants; and conducting gender analyses of value chain options (Rubin & Manfre, 2014).

\textsuperscript{11}For example, the 2000 study “Marginal producers or breadwinners: Women’s cropping strategies and access to agricultural key resources in Boulgou province, Burkina Faso,” by Thorsen and Reenberg. Another study from 2003 by Wooten, “Losing ground: Gender relations, commercial horticulture, and threats to local plant diversity in rural Mali” explores gender patterns of Bamana food economies.

\textsuperscript{12}This angle on gender analysis presented and elaborated by Sarah McMullan from IFPRI’s Markets, Trade and Institutions Division, and Caitlin Kieran of CGIAR Research on Policies, Institutions, and Markets.
food security; however their contributions are overlooked and understudied (Elias, 2013). Although development strategies continue to push capacity building (i.e. inputs for increased production or marketing for added value) to empower women economically, considering access and agency can reveal obstacles to address for solve gender and food security gaps.

Using West Africa as regional scope, this study examines the extent to which existing VAM tools at WFP’s West African Regional Bureau implicate women’s activities and bring visibility to gender issues within the regional food system, in an effort to review ways to improve gender analysis in food security and market assessments. Primary and secondary data analysis of WFP databases, procedures, and reports, interviews with WFP staff and partners, and scientific literature review are employed.

Historical legacies from traditions of male/female roles, ideas about femininity and masculinility, and divisions of labor in agricultural activities have influenced gender roles in West Africa (KIT, Agri-ProFocus and IIRR. 2012). Waves of colonialism altered power relations and social dynamics have shifted. Unpacking social and cultural heritage of gender roles contributes to human development approaches by informing issues of empowerment. This study delivers options for how existing knowledge might be improved through intentions to focus on people-- women’s activities and gender issues, in particular-- within food security and humanitarian work.

Following the review of existing WFP gender analysis, strategies to capture women’s voices, agency, and empowerment are proposed. The Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) is reviewed and adaptations suggested for WFP to consider shifting measurement and analysis to better implicate gender issues at individual, community, and national levels. To effectively develop and utilize the proposed tool, synergies between the VAM team, relevant

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13 Considering such gendered divisions of labor (including women’s multiple roles, reproductive sphere, and crop production), access to and control over resources, and livelihoods (informal activities, varied income sources, non-staple crops, and decision-making at the household and community level), can inform the approach, content, and methodology for surveying to effectively capture women’s empowerment for food security.
14 Part of an income and food availability approach to food security, studies such as USAID’s and IFPRI’s collaboration on the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index for the American Feed the Future Initiative focus on understanding gender roles surrounding agriculture in order to appropriately design projects to increase agricultural production.
15 To do this, VAM methodologies and existing assessments are analyzed, including the gender-specific language, remote data collection via mobile phone surveying (mVAM) techniques, and participatory research methods will be examined at the country level, studying the case of Senegal, for regional operations in West Africa.
16 Culturally embedded gender roles must be studied case by case to capture regional variations.
WFP units, and partner organizations are sought accordingly. Finally, conclusions and recommendations are made.

Beyond for the work of humanitarian and development organizations like WFP, this study underlines the social value of understanding interrelations between gender roles, market systems, and food security. Improving databases and awareness will serve wider communities of users in international fora\(^\text{17}\) including farmers’ organizations, academics, and advocates of human development and food justice. Gathering such information can bring visibility to food system inequities and illuminate opportunities to support livelihoods. If nothing else, this paper aims to advocate for a people-focused way of understanding and dealing with food security problems, suggesting participatory research for data collection for more human-focused, equitable action.

**Human Development as conceptual framework for analysis and programming**

Using the Human Development framework, this paper adopts a capability approach\(^\text{18}\) to food security analysis. It emphasizes agency, freedom, and the dimension of food utilization (beyond other dimensions of food availability and food access) as crucial elements for expanding basic human capabilities\(^\text{19}\). The capability approach is fundamental to food security analysis because of its explicit attention to the relationship between food intake and nutritional achievement\(^\text{20}\) (Burchi & DeMuro, 2012:16). Outlining the framework, Amartya Sen’s *Development as Freedom*\(^\text{21}\) discusses the centrality of women’s agency rather than wellbeing in development. Fellow human development scholar Martha Nussbaum explains “when poverty combines with gender inequality, the result is acute failure of central human capabilities” (Nussbaum, 2000). Heeding Nussbaum’s view that international political and economic thought

\(^\text{17}\) The lack of data is echoed frequently at the policy level as a major limitation for action; for example, the Committee on Food Security High Level Forum held at FAO on June 25, 2015, *Connecting Smallholder Farmers to Markets*, specified constraints to policy debates, conferences, and decision-making, including the need for more data on local food markets, especially in the informal sector.

\(^\text{18}\) A normative or moral framework developed by Amartya Sen in 1980s proposes that development be evaluated according to the extent of freedom that people have to promote or achieve what they value in their lives. Concepts of functioning, capability and agency are central to the approach. According to Deneulin and Alkire, “functioning is being or doing what people value and have reason to value. A capability is a person’s freedom to enjoy various functionings – to be or do things that contribute to their well-being. Agency is a person’s ability to pursue and realize goals she values and has reason to value.” (Deneulin & Shahani, 2009: Part I:1)

\(^\text{19}\) Within the human development framework, capabilities may be defined as the various combinations of functionings (individual beings and doings) that the person can achieve.

\(^\text{20}\) Access to inputs and individual age, sex, pregnancy, metabolic rates, climatic conditions affect these.

\(^\text{21}\) Sen, 1999: Development as Freedom. Chapter 8: Women’s Agency and Social Change
must be sensitive to gender difference as a problem of justice, this study discusses gender analysis as central to humanitarian and development practitioner activities to promote food security and empower people.

WFP methodologies for food security analysis tend to follow the Sustainable Livelihoods (SL) framework concerning tangible and intangible assets, with a long term, context-specific perspectives on issues of hunger, poverty, and development (Burchi & DeMuro, 2012: 15-17). Explicit SL focus on issues of sustainability, risks and shocks underlines vulnerability and coping strategies to deal with adverse trends and seasonality. Ensuing translations to WFP programming often involve emphases on resilience-building. While the SL and existing WFP framework are suitable for analyzing food crises and emergencies, famines, or extreme food poverty, it is less suitable for comprehending general food security and development issues (Burchi & DeMuro, 2012: 16-17). Understandably, gender analysis, specifically framing women’s empowerment for sustainable food security (as conceptually related within the human development framework) must be treated along with the SL emphasis on food crises, emergency, and extreme food poverty.

In contrast, the capability approach’s individual unit of analysis captures intra-household inequalities in the distribution and access to food within the family–problems that often hit women and children and are neglected in community and household level analyses. Furthermore, and most importantly for gender analysis, the human development and capability approach deals directly with freedom and agency issues (overlooked by SL, basic needs, and other conceptual frameworks), which are fundamental to food security analysis.

Limitations of women’s agency do not depend on wellness, but instead reflect deprivations to women’s ability to function, which negatively impacts all people within their network, beyond deprived women themselves. On the other hand, empowered women, holding agency, have opportunities to do what they value. Their freedoms may include literacy and financial independence. Thus, education and financial independence promote women’s voice

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22 Nussbaum discusses universalist feminism as a justice issue to underpin development planning and public policy.
23 Adopted by UN agencies (including WFP), NGOs (e.g., CARE, Oxfam) and governmental agencies (e.g. DFID, IISD, SDC, NZAP), that often develop different versions and applications of SL (Burchi & De Muro, 2012: 15).
24 SL assets are classified in 5 categories of capital: natural, physical, human, financial, and social capital.
25 This individual unit focus, beyond the household and community levels, as well as the general human development framework is adopted in the WEAI, which is explored in Chapter 3.
26 This implies a woman’s capability to earn an independent income, to find employment outside the home, to have ownership rights, and to be educated participants in decisions within and outside the family (Sen, 1999: Ch.8).
and agency, empowering women and making their choices more skilled. Hence, women’s power, as derived from economic independence and social emancipation, influences entitlements and can impact societal as well as family gender divisions. In turn, shifting these social dynamics promote food security and gender equality at household and community levels.

Based on the human development and capability approach, the conceptual framework throughout this study proposes people-focused food security analysis at different levels, starting with the individual. Focusing on women and men, their functionings27 and capabilities, the concept of empowerment must be distinguished from income and other benchmark markers of economic development, which do not necessarily translate to the broader notion of human development. Asking gender-responsive questions in household and telephone surveys, as well as organizing and compiling data, based on a perspective of women’s agency and empowerment recognizes women’s livelihoods, roles along value chains, and engagement in market activities, both formal and informal, as they relate to food systems and food security on different scales of analysis. Furthermore, measuring women’s empowerment more effectively can improve VAM methodology and analysis. This will support gender sensitivity in the scope of WFP’s food assistance strategies, to improve targeting, programming, and ongoing support beyond food distribution in emergencies and in gender-sensitive project development28. More importantly, in the long term, it can encourage strategic gender needs for long-term institutional change as part of an aim to transform unequal power relations (KIT, Agri-ProFocus and IIRR, 2012). Ideally, these steps may foment greater support in the gender-responsive policy environment for economic and social empowerment of women and girls.

27 Functionings refers to a person’s multiple states and activities, or their beings and doings.
28 Hence, this study first identifies what gender disaggregated information is available as a precedent for gender analysis throughout the WFP project cycle. Food security data emerge from community, household, and individual-level surveys before being processed by the WFP Senegal Country Office, and are then reported to the WFP West Africa Regional Bureau in Dakar (RBD) and finally utilized by programs to tailor activities for implementation back in the field as interventions throughout Senegal.
**Research questions:**

- How does WFP collect and analyze gender issues in food security and market assessments in West Africa?

- To what extent do existing VAM data, tools, and methodologies capture women’s agency and empowerment, bringing visibility and value to what women undertake within the food system?

- How can the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) be adapted to inform market-based interventions to address problems of access and gender gaps?

- How does food security analysis affect programming to empower women and men, impacting their lives in the long term?

**Hypothesis:**

Gender-specific information is crucial to improving food security assessments and programming, for more evidence-based and empowering interventions. Measuring dimensions of empowerment related to food security (including outside income, market involvement, asset ownership rights, community involvement, and collective action) in food security and market analysis, can better reflect underlying vulnerabilities people face. Beyond improving baselines through gender-disaggregated data from surveying, reorienting existing WFP conceptual framework of food security causes and solutions will better improve gender analysis. More gender-sensitive analysis will improve targeting and program impacts to support women’s agency, as well as support individual, household, and community food security enabling WFP to save lives and promote human development in long-term operations.
Chapter 1: Gender in Food Security Assessments & Market Analysis in Senegal

Gender in Food Security Assessments & Market Analysis: Measuring what matters for women’s empowerment and food security

The case of food security assessments for Senegal exemplifies the extent to which VAM methodologies for food security/market data and analysis capture gender aspects in food security assessments. Women’s agency and empowerment are considered for visibility and food sovereignty with respect to WFP interventions within the Senegalese food system. Logically, the way gender is treated at the data collection and subsequent reporting phases informs program design and implementation. Examining the flow of data and analysis from the regional VAM unit to program units will identify how the RBD services of technical support and quality control for gender may support the internal information supply chain to improve the food security situation and positively impact on the lives of men and women.

Gender mainstreaming, led by corporate-level WFP initiatives including the 2015-2030 Gender Policy, is treated along with the quotidian consideration of specific gender issues relevant to country-level programming and regional-level coordination of gender analysis for food security for individuals, known to WFP as beneficiaries. Available WFP data collection and processing shapes the capacity for more gender-specific information to be utilized. Women’s empowerment for food security is explored as a fundamental gender-perspective within food security assessments (at household and community levels) as well as in market analysis. Improving the focus of WFP operations around these issues will support more evidence-based program design and operations to tackle gender equality and food security, simultaneously.

Background on WFP in Senegal and gender programming considerations

29 Senegal, host country for the West Africa Regional Bureau in Dakar (RBD), serves as the national case study for examining VAM primary data and reports. Gender-disaggregated data (or lack thereof) and analysis are tracked throughout regional WFP information supply chain, from the sources of field surveys to the RBD and back to the field through programming. Data is first collected by Country Office staff and analyzed and transmitted to RBD VAM, and also to other program units, such as Cash and Voucher unit (CV) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), for impactful project design and due diligence.

30 WFP refers to people who receive food assistance as “beneficiaries” in official documents. By focusing on people’s reception of assistance, rather than their potential to become active, resourceful agents, it degrades individual’s agency by reinforcing notions of passivity, helplessness, or neediness. This study aims to avoid the problem of reducing people’s capability through the perpetuation of such terms.
WFP has been operating in Senegal since 1964 and currently supports the Senegalese government in objectives to meet MDGs and in the Plan Sénégal Emergent (PSE) for poverty reduction, social protection, and economic growth from 2014 to 2018 (WFP Country Brief, 2015). However, the third MDG explicitly deals with promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment. It specifies how these objectives for promoting women’s status and agency in decision-making relate directly to food security; hence, human development remains a pivotal point for impacting both objectives in practice. Now, SDG goal five aims to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls. Whereas MDG 3 focused on education as a single target, SDG 5 proposes a range of targets including ending discrimination, violence and harmful practices, recognizing and valuing unpaid care work, promoting participation and leadership in decision-making, as well as reproductive rights and universal access to sexual and reproductive health.  

In 2012, Senegal experienced a food crisis resulting from the unusually long lean season. That year, WFP’s relief activities in Senegal entailed food and cash voucher distributions as well as cereal bank support from April to October. Food for assets interventions for recovery, school feeding, and treatment of moderate acute malnutrition for pregnant and lactating women and children under five, continued after the crisis. According to WFP, food interventions in Senegal “assisted 1.8 million vulnerable men, women and children in 2012 with 38,000 MT of food assistance and US$4 million worth of cash vouchers.” Regarding the impact of these interventions on sustainability of household food security, subsequent considerations are suggested to better understand how such food assistance affect long term food security.

In 2013, as part of the Purchase from Africans for Africa (PAA Africa), WFP expanded local procurement of cereals and pulses to support agriculture, to supply school cafeterias throughout Senegal. Also being piloted in Senegal is the R4 (Risk reduction, Risk transfer, Risk taking, Risk reserves) Rural Resilience Initiative.

Concurrently, demonstrating commitment to improve mainstreaming, WFP partnered

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33 The PAA Africa is a strategy modeled after the success of Brazil’s national Zero Hunger initiative to address hunger and food insecurity while boosting small-producer incomes through school feeding and other safety net programs.
34 The R4 initiative encourages rural communities to cultivate agricultural assets and investments, including. It is also intended to strengthen the Senegalese early warning system for monitoring food security and nutrition, as well as the African Risk Capacity weather insurance scheme project. R4 is discussed in the following chapter.
with IDS in 2013 for a yearlong Participatory Action Learning (PAL) program\textsuperscript{35} to support five WFP Country Offices, including Senegal staff in developing expertise and capacities to improve gender equitable programs tailored to local realities and operational constraints, based on frontline staff experiences in the field (WFP & IDS Knowledge Services TORs, 2013). Findings from this partnership\textsuperscript{36} include women and girls’ disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work, the importance of engaging with men as well as women, the need to challenge gender stereotypes and assumptions for analysis, and the potential for capitalizing on women’s groups for R4 and P4P strategies in Senegal. Overall, the report advocates for improved general understanding of gender\textsuperscript{37} in WFP beyond staff gender parity policies and female targeting in food entitlements, which evidently recur most prominently.

During the 2014 lean season, WFP established systems for SMS money transfers in the Ziguinchor region, transferring money to some 55,000 people (of which many female heads of households were targeted) via text message-based financial support for coping with food insecurity during the lean season (Fall, WFP 2014). In spring 2015, WFP’s School Feeding Program began piloting vouchers in about 260 school canteens to support the purchase of fresh and nutritious food from local producers as part of a strategy for sustainable school meal programs (Cissé, 2015). This marks a shift from delivering food directly to school canteens to a voucher system. The shift decreases transportation and storage costs while allowing more choice. As vouchers are mainstreamed for large-scale purchases, women managing school canteens are afforded greater ownership and a more reliable market is sustained for retailers.

**Gender analysis in Senegal VAM food security assessments and market analysis**

Food security assessments conducted by WFP Senegal are encompassed primarily in two national reports for Senegal over the last five years. First, the *Enquête Nationale sur la Sécurité Alimentaire et la Nutrition* (ENSAN), produced for Senegal in 2013, can be considered Senegal’s non-emergency version of the Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA). This

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\textsuperscript{35} Objectives included understanding what works in gender equality and promoting women’s empowerment in WFP field programs and ideas for knowledge sharing of best practices.

\textsuperscript{36} Findings outlined in the Phase One: June 2013-2014 synthesis report, *Innovations from the Field: Gender Mainstreaming from the ground up for the World Food Programme*. The report, although scrutinized for its qualitative research methods, exemplifies progress being made to improve systematic attention to specific gender dimensions and inequalities across programs.

\textsuperscript{37} Specifically, the need to develop more flexible, responsive gender indicators for the gendered impact of WFP programs, is emphasized as IDS found that WFP staff refer to household decision-making despite the fact that indicators are not always employed to measure and monitor such intra-household dynamics.
2013 assessment was conducted after unusual climatic conditions, which compromised agricultural harvests, in order to capture the resulting incidence of food insecurity during and following the lean season. The second report, *Analyse Globale de la Vulnérabilité de la Sécurité Alimentaire et de la Nutrition*\(^{38}\) (AGVSAN), was carried out in 2014.

The Senegal 2013 ENSAN\(^{39}\) assessment summarizes the general state of food security, outlining changes in relation to other recent assessments. It notes that, despite a globally satisfactory 2012/2013 agricultural campaign, five percent of Senegalese households (some 675,000 people) were severely food insecure, while 13.8 percent (about 1,863,000) were moderately food insecure\(^{40}\). The most salient point from the ENSAN report related to gendered food security dynamics is made in review of the status of sex of the head of household for food insecurity. The reported trends of slightly greater insecurity observed with 20 percent of households headed by men experiencing food insecurity (p. 4), versus a slightly lower incidence of food insecurity of 14 percent for female-headed households. This gendered divergence, although not alarmingly colossal, is not explored beyond the disaggregation; hence, gender analysis is lacking.

Notwithstanding, an opportunity to incorporate gender elements is exemplified the conceptual diagram\(^{41}\) on page 12 (please refer to flow diagram, “Graphique 3” below), as it details interactions of factors contributing to food insecurity in Senegal, according to the FSN conceptual framework (belonging to VAM or the cohort of organizations – Food Security & Nutrition Working Group). As it stands, the following diagram is valid only for farmers and not for other livelihoods, given that it exclusively considers agricultural income and agricultural production. The limited and partial view of national food insecurity causes and issues in Senegal could be further developed to encompass further social dynamics and reflect the diversity of Senegalese livelihoods.

*Graphique 3 : Schéma des causes de l’insécurité alimentaire au Sénégal selon le cadre conceptuel de la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle* (Source: WFP)

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\(^{38}\) AGVSAN is the French version of the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA), which serves as a baseline food security report for the country.

\(^{39}\) ENSAN primary data was collected in June 2013 by WFP, was produced in collaboration with FAO, UNICEF, WHO, and the Senegalese Government’s Executive Secretary for National Food Security.

\(^{40}\) The report also discusses the fact that, while an agricultural campaign may be satisfactory, it would only be able to guarantee food availability but not necessarily food access, especially for non-farmers.

\(^{41}\) (English translation) *Graph 3: Diagram of causes of food insecurity in Senegal, according to the food security and nutrition conceptual framework*
This flow diagram lacks multiple layers of gender analysis, including elements on women’s empowerment within food security and food system dynamics. Although early and arranged marriages are mentioned as well as women’s work burden, dimensions of women’s empowerment, such as control of assets, and decision-making about income expenditures, are omitted. The basic problem of the diagram is that it is agriculture-centered and not people-centered. As a consequence, it neglects the gender dimension among other aspects of human development.

Cross-referencing with the ENSAN Questionnaire primary data, questions 473 & 372 deal with the sex of migrant workers, with selections for male or female, related to remittances from income being sent to family. However this data did not appear in the analysis as presented in the report. At the conclusion of the report, recommendations detail interventions and long-term development goals without mentioning gender or women’s empowerment, which may be attributed to the lack of gender-disaggregated data and low priority attributed to gender issues on the food security agenda. This is derived from the household approach to food security analysis, which neglects intra-household inequalities, and to household-centered surveys.

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42 Respondents included 8,521 randomly selected households, of which 14,860 are children under 5 years and 17,200 are women between 15 and 49 years of age.
In the 2014 AGVSAN\textsuperscript{43}, analysis is based on the primary data collected from the ENSAN which was carried out between June 10 and 30, 2013, in 45 geographic areas of Senegal. The AGVSAN refers to women and children as “vulnerable groups,” in detailing the nutritional status and need to support women’s improved dietary diversity. Discussing socioeconomic details, the AGVSAN gender of the household head is said not to be a defining characteristic of food insecurity for rural households in Senegal. This is explained by the fact that women in rural households retain access to land and are considered to maintain a certain production capacity to cover local food needs. By consequence, the gender of the head of household is assumed to be a characteristic of urban food insecurity, where urban female heads of households tend to have higher risk (with 10 percent insecure), relative to households headed by men, to be food insecure.

The AGVSAN conclusion on this matter, divergent from that of the ENSAN, is that urban areas, where households are more dependent on their purchasing power to meet their food needs, tend to exhibit higher insecurity of female-headed households. Presumably, this could reflect women’s inadequate income rather than the fact that they buy food, where the discrepancy in levels of education between men and women, as well as unequal access to livelihood-generating resources, are deemed deciding factors. Given this assumption about urban food security causes, further investigation into livelihoods, education, and other socio-economic particularities of women and men would underline causes. Gathering, processing, communicating, and analyzing data on gender related to food security will serve to underline more evidence-based understanding of the gendered intricacies of the food security situation of rural and urban households.

As compared to VAM food security assessments, market analysis features no gender elements in reports as analyses focuses on prices of staples and more macro-level economic trends. For example, a fall 2014 report for Senegal’s market analysis, the Rapid Assessment in Diaoube and Kedougou\textsuperscript{44}, examines the impact of the Ebola crisis on Senegal’s trade and food security. The South Senegal: Ebola Trade Impact mission report\textsuperscript{44}, published September 15,

\textsuperscript{43} While the ENSAN uses surveys of household food security, the AGVSAN (July 2014 for Senegal repeating much of the same information from the ENSAN) uses two indicators from the CARI methodology for food security assessments: the Food Consumption Score (also from ENSAN) for dietary diversity in the short term, and to the Food Expenditure to show the longer term economic vulnerability from spending money on food versus other items.

\textsuperscript{44} WFP Mission Report: South Senegal: Ebola Trade Impact Rapid Assessment in Diaoube and Kedougou. 15 September 2014.
2015, was conducted as part of a series of assessments on the impact of the West African Ebola outbreak on food security and staple food prices. The report details a drop in market activities by 50 percent since early August 2014 due to border closure with Guinea, according to traders. Cereal prices in Diaoube were reported as staying relatively stable since the beginning of 2014; this might be explained by the fact that cereals are typically managed and traded by men, whose market activities were likely less restricted than women’s during the Ebola outbreak period and resulting border closures. However, there is no mention of gender differences in trading activities or other gendered impacts within the market analysis. This showcases current VAM market analysis methodology, which does not comprehend relations between social fabric and market dynamics.

Studies of the gendered impacts of Ebola, cite the dominant narrative on the percentages of victims of the epidemic in Liberia as 75 percent women and 25 percent men affected, attributing the disproportion to traditional caretaking practices in the region (Kotilainen, 2015). Another point discussed in the same Southern Senegal rapid market assessment report is that fruit and palm oil, which are brought from Guinea to be sold in Senegal, were no longer available in border markets. In spite of the fact that both these products are typically produced and traded by women, no further explanation is given on the gender implications of the reduction in trading of such products. Withal, given the VAM mission objectives to analyze repercussions of the border closure on sub-regional trade flows as well as to collect market information from wholesale and retail traders in Kedougou and Diaoube (WFP), the gendered impact was not considered because it was not encompassed within mandated trade assessments. This reflects the orientation of the food security and market assessments framework, lacking human development and gender considerations.

Without gender-specific information from assessments and considerations for gendered market activities in analysis, explanations do not delve beyond superficial economic activities or explore, the level that market activities impact traders and consumers alike, male and female, which form central parts of the food security reality in question. More deliberate consideration of gender issues related to market dynamics and resulting food security (i.e., male and female trading activities and how these were respectively impacted by the incidence of crisis) would

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45 Although the discussed report deals with impacts of the Ebola virus in particular, it exemplifies the general style of trade and market analysis routinely focused on economic processes.
help integrate gender elements (such as gender roles within the supply chain and gendered market access) into market analysis moving forward.

According to Dr. Mbarou Gassama Mbaye of the UN Women’s Senegal Gender Equality Program, the invisibility of women’s domestic work and market activities should be accounted for in food security analysis. In particular, informality in women’s cross-border trading must be implicated in market analysis. Without legal knowledge, female traders’ commercial activities are conducted without declarations through customs to track sales and purchases. Potential factors contributing to the smaller quantity and informality of women’s trading in markets can include lack of access to information, security risks, and credit problems. For example, without legal knowledge, female traders’ commercial activities are conducted without declarations through customs to track sales and purchases.

Per Dr. Mbaye’s explanation, markets throughout the Sahel feature women selling non-timber forest products and other primary goods harvested directly with minimal processing. In the aforementioned South Senegal Diaoube market, female traders are prominent, trading primary products like millet, sorghum, and palm oil informally without declaring transactions. Men, on the other hand, tend to trade mass quantities of grains, using mechanized processing and transportation. Trading in greater quantities of goods, men tend to enjoy easier access to vehicles, and engage in transitory labor, moving large amounts of products. Credit problems are also gender-segregating as resources for trading and risks differ.

As potential solutions, Dr. Mbaye suggests mobile transfers as a safer solution for women, given the security risks associated with trading and dealing in cash. She argues monetary transfers through mobile phones or credit cards may facilitate tracking of commercial activities and reduce risks of robbery or assault. Meanwhile, many studies show how women in the region, especially women in rural areas, show lower mobile phone usage rates than men, and this is compounded by age and economic status biases.

Female cross-border traders in West Africa form a significant, although heterogeneous, segment of those participating in informal trade across the sub-region. They are typically small-
scale traders with little working capital, infrastructure and rudimentary numeracy and literacy skills, as evidenced by Fadumiyo\(^48\): “[...]women traders are a paradox because in spite of their contributions to the regional and national GDPS of their respective countries, they have not been recognized for their economic contributions.” Hence, studies remain to uncover the singularities of female traders, to quantify and qualify how their work plays into systems of markets, livelihoods, and food security solutions at varying scales.

**Cadre Harmonisé and importance for VAM analysis and WFP operations**

As part of VAM’s regional consortium activities, the unit works with CILSS\(^49\), in collaboration with FAO, FEWS NET and WFP, to conduct market and food security studies for West Africa\(^50\). The February 2014 synthesis report\(^51\), covers Senegal, Mauritania, and western Mali in the sub-regional analysis, and discusses climatic issues including (i.e. late rains affecting agricultural activities). Similar to VAM market analysis, the scope of Cadre Harmonisé\(^52\) analysis encompasses stock levels by types of actors, changes in prices of grains and livestock, and cross-border flows. Yet no attention is given to how local social dynamics influence and are influenced by market activities.

The declared objective of the February 2014 synthesis and February 2015 *Évaluation de la sécurité alimentaire et des marchés agricoles au Sénégal* reports is to evaluate market behavior related to the food situation in West African Sahelian countries. Cited objectives\(^53\) outline identifying possible climatic impacts on market functioning, analyzing implications of national policy on cross-border exchanges, and tracking supply of agricultural products. These address problems of availability with food stock inventories, whereas access to food, embedded in the social fabric of market dynamics, is not encompassed.

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\(^{49}\) CILSS is the French acronym for the permanent organizing inter-country committee to fight drought in the Sahel region: *Comité permanent Inter-États de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel* ([http://www.cilss.bf/](http://www.cilss.bf/)).

\(^{50}\) National market information systems are utilized to provide policymakers with a repository linking household food security and cross-border flows.

\(^{51}\) *Évaluation Conjointe des Marchés et de la Sécurité Alimentaire en Afrique de L’Ouest et dans les Pays Du CILSS*

\(^{52}\) Cadre Harmonisé refers to the consortium on food security and nutrition in the Sahel and West African region, to which WFP and other Organizations pertain, participating in meetings and assessments [http://www.agrhymet.ne/](http://www.agrhymet.ne/).

\(^{53}\) Other objectives included evaluating impacts of recovery grain stocks; purchases of cereals by poor households; evolution of livestock, cereals, and cash crops trade; and harvest results on markets functioning.
Pursuant to the above framework of objectives, analysis denotes products and prices, without human elements underlying dynamics of the market analysis. While the Cadre Harmonisé makes some mention of main actors, which could be an entry point for examining social dynamics, no indication is given as to the criteria for identifying these, with certainly no mention of women, gender issues, or informal traders, in particular.

The state of grain stocks and food crops on markets and prospects; the current price levels of different products; the comparison with the level of last year and the average over a period of five years; assessment of cross-border flows of agricultural products and livestock; measures and market constraints, prospects in terms of the actors regarding inventories, supply, demand and prices of food products are all identified and discussed. Certainly a human development perspective (adopted as a guiding normative framework throughout this study) would reconsider the supply-side approach to market analysis in order to understand the real impact on people’s lives.

In addition to learning more about traders and the barriers they face, knowing more about trade (quantity, products, and flow direction), will also help inform the gender within agricultural and market networks. Market database ventures promote the sharing of information about prices and market transactions so that producers and traders, especially women, might engage in fairer trading, knowing prices rather than risking loss of time, money, or bargaining power.

In sum, Senegal VAM and joint CILSS assessments do not exhibit sufficient data about gender for analysis of women’s empowerment or other relevant socioeconomic relations. Although clear VAM methodological guidelines outline data to be collected by sex and age of head of household, and often household members (common for key informants and focus group participants), questionnaires and reports do not detail much gender-disaggregated primary data beyond the breakdown of sex of head of household. The conclusion becomes that female heads of households have a lower (or higher in some cases) incidence of food security than those households headed by men, but this allows little room for analysis.

The lack of gender-specific data inevitably means the gender analysis, if imposed, is cursory without sufficient foundation in evidence for interpretation. Presumptions such as those made about the correlation of food security of female-headed households, are not evidence based through the assessments. Thus, elaborations or recommendations may misinform targeting activities for household-level interventions. Hence, program design risks being speculative. By
way of solutions to these problems, an imperative first step is to address the lack of detailed data on gender issues related to food security analysis. Furthermore, gender-disaggregated nutritional data would serve for nutrition dimensions of interventions.

Understanding the interrelatedness of how gender roles impact food security and may be, in turn, affected by the incidence of insecurity, should be explicit within a human-focused perspective of food security. Such a comprehensive framework of understanding would enable improved program design for gender-sensitive food security interventions. Since food security is susceptible to changes over time for a host of reasons, collaboration with programming is not explicit for improving VAM gender assessments, but is envisioned rather as a second step for fine-tuning the baseline questionnaires over time.

Given that the IDS study and PAL exercises focused on field and programming activities, investigations did not encompass gender in VAM data or methodologies. However the study (recall WFP Senegal country office participation) recommends employing transparent, gender-sensitive indicators to equate women’s empowerment. Incorporating gender-specific questions in VAM questionnaires and analysis tools may help better capture gender roles related to household and community-level food security. As part of a greater project cycle evaluation, outlining how data revealed therein should directly form be integrated for follow-up throughout targeting and program design, and in monitoring and evaluation activities must also be explored.

Incidentally, the WFP Gender Policy 2015-2030 underlines the need to conduct gender and age analysis for systematic incorporation in food assistance programs and policies. WFP considers gender analysis an integral and preliminary element of program cycle and quality control systems. Thus, there is significant impetus for WFP to implicate gender considerations

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54 To improve food security assessments and market analysis, WFP, and the VAM team in particular, may reconsider how gender issues fit into food security issues conceptually. Thus, integration of gender into household and community questionnaires to ask more gender-specific questions about roles between men and women might be more purposeful in relation with household, community, and national levels of food security in different dimensions, including availability from production, access via consumption, and utilization.

55 Without specifying which country offices, the IDS report explains that “some VAM teams displayed excellent knowledge of debates in gender-sensitive indicators in poverty, food security and vulnerability, and that gender is sometimes equated with women rather than being framed in terms of gender power relations that also involve men” (IDS & WFP, 23).

56 Importance of gender analysis for informing central planning documents at regional and country program levels is defined: “Collecting, analysing and using sex- and age-disaggregated data is the first step in designing sound food assistance programmes and policies. Gender considerations can then be mainstreamed into all phases of the programme cycle, from the initial needs assessment to the final evaluation. When gender and age analysis indicates that one population group is particularly vulnerable or at risk, actions targeting that group can be promoted” (WFP Gender Policy 2015-2030).
throughout, beginning with focus on appropriately capturing particularities in food security assessments. Intentionally conceptualizing gender issues within food security analysis frameworks will facilitate integration of gender-specific data to comprehend root socioeconomic causes of food insecurity. In addition, a larger strategy of conducting focus group discussions and other participatory research activities could support the gender policy’s aim to design sound food assistance programmes and policies. Sustaining conversations about gender issues will support more targeted, participatory, and empowering program design.

Ultimately the ability of WFP to support gender equality, and meet its strategic gender policy’s twin-track strategy of Minimum Standards for Gender Mainstreaming and Targeted Interventions, lies in the ability to improve evidence-based gender analysis. It is thus the responsibility of VAM units, at regional and country office levels, to coordinate with Program units to undertake data collection and analysis that will be explicitly relevant to household gender, food security and nutrition realities, and market systems of communities, considering and supporting the capacity and field experiences of WFP field activities. Hence, proposed ways to improve VAM surveys, with program-specific gender considerations, are explored in the following chapters.
Chapter 2: Senegal Case Study of WFP Data and Programming on Gender Issues

Tracking gender from VAM data collection and analysis to Program activities for WFP food security interventions: Senegal Case Study

To understand how VAM data on gender fits into program design and implementation of WFP operations, it is helpful to understand the generation and processing of VAM information within the context of targeting beneficiaries for food security interventions. Targeting people for food security interventions has historically distinguished episodes of food aid (typically referring to international concessional flows of bulk food commodities or cash for food purchases). Evidence of dependence problems extending beyond short-term relief of “food aid” has contributed to the shift in terminology and programmatic intentions (today referred instead to “food assistance” programs), and represents one of many benchmarks for sustainability and responsibility in humanitarian and development work.

Within the principles to guide decision-making for interventions, WFP defines targeting as the process by which areas and populations are selected for a resource transfer in a timely manner. As it has become institutionalized, targeting must be examined within the context of gender analysis.

Beyond VAM food security assessments and market analysis to identify food insecurity and economic needs, a WFP corporate Business Process Model (BPM) for Cash & Voucher (CV) program implementation was endorsed in September 2014 to guide country-level operations. The resulting WFP corporate process for risk assessment involved in targeting people to receive transfer cash, vouchers, or food assistance. Various WFP units, forming a CBV Working Group, carry out simultaneous assessments to determine which transfer modality to use for cash or voucher program interventions collectively. Gender and protection considerations are intended

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57 Forms of food aid, as defined by WFP, include Emergency food aid (freely distributed grants) and Non-emergency food aid: Project food aid (distributed or monetized; channeled multilaterally, bilaterally, or through NGOs, grants), and Programme food aid (bilateral, sold (monetized), grant or loan).

58 From Targeting in Emergencies, “targeting can be divided into two major activities: (i) identifying and selecting communities and people in need of food assistance [or the tasks of the Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping unit] and (ii) selecting delivery and distribution mechanisms to best ensure that those women, men and children are reached with assistance at the time they need it [coordination of other program units for project implementation following VAM assessments]. Identifying beneficiaries is crucial to good targeting, but the programming decisions about how and when to reach those people are equally important” (WFP, 2006).
throughout concurrent departmentalized risk assessments to determine which appropriate transfer modality may be feasible and risk-averse. In addition to household gender issues, other applications\(^{59}\) in determining the transfer modality and destination for interventions relate to the level of dignity associated, the sophistication of delivery mechanisms, and the flexibility of transfer requirements such as official identification (e.g., ID cards can be a segregating requirement because women may have more difficulty obtaining them).

Following gender mainstreaming policy, sectoral capacity assessment by respective WFP units, within a *Cash & Vouchers Business Process Model* (see Annex 1 for diagram), are also intended to consider gender issues in the respective assessments. Gender implications for CV programs are discussed along with protection because of the security issues related to targeting women.\(^{60}\) Additionally, contracting with food providers presents the challenge of finding a balance between male and female traders in supporting local market solutions.

Contracts with retailers and wholesalers tend to be commonly with male traders and organizations as staple products are often produced or handled by men\(^{61}\). WFP’s Procurement unit, responsible for sourcing international, regional, and/or local food purchases at appropriate cost, quality, and effective delivery, involves cost benefit analyses to assess the level of commercial formality as required to set up potential contractual trading operations. Fresh fruits and vegetables, which are often produced and traded by women in West Africa according to traditional gender roles in agriculture,\(^{62}\) do not easily meet requirements for contracting for CV activities. Rural women are often involved in smaller-scale crop production and the collection of non-timber forest for household consumption and food security rather than for sale on a larger scale or more formal market activities (Elias, 2013). Therefore, through the competitive assessments of the procurement, female producers and traders do not hold comparative advantage in the relative informality of their activities. They are thus excluded, inadvertently, for not meeting the criteria for cost-effective procurement to incorporate female-produced or female-traded crops into local procurement activities. To better determine why there are not many

\(^{59}\) Efficiency, effectiveness, and people’s individual preference for different transfer modalities are given special priorities beyond the cost-benefit analysis as well as calculation of the “omega value” or the nutrient density balance of micro and macro nutrients relative to the incurred cost. Transfer modality refers to the method of food assistance and means through which it reaches people.

\(^{60}\) WFP & UNHCR (2013). Examining Protection and Gender in Cash and Voucher Transfers.

\(^{61}\) Information on *Cash & Voucher Business Process Model* sourced from informal interview with WFP RBD CV staff in September 2015.

\(^{62}\) Gendered crop production may imply that women tend to grow more non-staple crops, in smaller quantities that may be important to their family livelihood (Elias, 2013).
contracts with female traders, it is important to understand what gendered or other barriers to entry may limit their ability to trade in an established or formal way. This issue could be better explored through an improved baseline from gender-specific market analysis from VAM, Procurement units, and WFP partners (i.e., from Cadre Harmonisé and FSNWG).

Concurrently, ongoing unit-specific assessments\(^{63}\) continue with opportunities to engage gender analysis in investigative activities for risk and feasibility assessments, wherever appropriate. Feasibly, each unit participating in the CV Business assessment process\(^{64}\) could apply gender analysis to understand how decisions might affect social equilibria. Based on this multi-level, cooperative CV working group for business needs assessment, elements are consolidated by programs into a general risk analysis output for risk register. Highlighting gender considerations throughout multi-sectoral assessments by each WFP unit may improve gender-sensitivity of resulting intervention selections.

The WFP & UNHCR joint 2013 study *Examining Protection and Gender in Cash and Voucher Transfers* outlined the issue of women’s empowerment, whether targeting women actually boosts women’s power or increased their access to food. Mainstreaming definitions for specific gender dimensions is emphasized, since women’s empowerment has been diluted to equate to women’s entitlement to food vouchers or cash, and to their increased financial income from selling surplus crops. Considering more subtle gender dimensions, such as access to productive resources, time burden, community engagement, or other livelihood and household dynamics relevant to women’s agency and empowerment, are encouraged.

The same year, as discussed in the previous chapter, IDS partnered with WFP to carry out a 2013-2014 study and PAL project with WFP Senegal Country Office on gender mainstreaming. Fieldwork involved focus group discussion challenging the policy of targeting women for cash, vouchers, and other interventions premised on stereotyped assumptions about male behavior– rather than the importance of highlighting women’s empowerment while also

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\(^{63}\) For example, the Finance unit’s economic sector assessments determine which commercial centers and businesses can support local transfers to beneficiaries. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) unit looks for the best mobile services providers to facilitate mobile money transfers for each area. The Logistics team conducts supply chain analysis to understand the retail environment in terms of the best interlocutor. This involves analyzing the objective of the market involvement, whether to strengthen or regenerate market activities. Even the Security unit is involved for risk analysis associated with different transfer modalities.

\(^{64}\) Certainly this cooperative needs assessment and risk analysis aims to be comprehensive in the level of detail mandated to units for sectoral evaluations and serves to determine a rational decision-making process ex-ante– before project design and implementation–helping to target and select the more appropriate tool for food assistance interventions in different communities.
engaging men. Participatory research\textsuperscript{65} revealed understanding of gender issues in CV where targeting does not provide a solution. Both Senegalese women and men affirmed that men would be loyal CV recipients. They cited women’s time burden and travel constraints as problems when women are targeted as exclusive recipients; the study found that men’s capacity for financial planning was supported, since male savings groups are not uncommon in Senegal.

From the experience of RBD CV officers overseeing the integration of gender issues into food security assessments for improved analysis and program design, the following questions emerged as outstanding:

- What local market-based response is available to address food insecurity?\textsuperscript{66}
- How is the decision made for how to spend transfers within the household?
- What are the preferences of people being targeted for different transfer modalities? (Why?) What determines this preference?

Having a better understanding of the gender roles within the local food system and particularly the involvement of women within supply chain, would likely support the CV business process working group in risk assessments. Considering geography in Senegal, for example, the fishing sector can be studied for gender and market analysis– however, women’s roles in fisheries are usually unrecognized in policy and management. Traditionally powerful Senegalese women in fishing sectors have operated in strong trading networks and fisherfolk organizations, built around wealth that women accumulated, yet the problem of women having comparatively weak access to decision-making processes persists (Bennett, 2004).

**Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) for program impact assessments**

Baseline M&E surveys supplement VAM food assessments by gathering more program- or project-specific information that may be relevant prior to implementation of interventions and allow for monitoring the progress of WFP’s activities. Then when program activities, such as CV transfers, are initiated, monitoring continues, but is not reported until a Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) report is conducted to survey the impact after an intervention. Beyond

\textsuperscript{65} Focus group discussions, questionnaires, and mapping exercises, representing diverse social groups (including women and men) in targeting committees, contributed to the success of CV initiatives.

\textsuperscript{66} This question demonstrates a common misconception that a “market” is an actor in itself. Markets per se will not address food insecurity. Given that human must react to food needs (rather than markets being able to address food insecurity), this same question might be reworded as follows: *How can interventions (market based food assistance) support local systems by connecting smallholder farmers to local markets and promoting agency within market consumption?*
following up on baseline observations, questions relate to beneficiary knowledge about WFP’s food assistance programs, access to food assistance, protection, and perception. The RBD M&E staff provided the 2015 focus for reporting in line with corporate gender mainstreaming mandate with a sample questionnaire developed for Central Africa, with updated M&E on gender balance issues for distribution related to local food assistance committees. However, this focus on gender equality in distributing food does not address household gender roles and implications on food security.

In a Senegal 2012 PDM Report, reports that 48 percent of TFD recipients were women, whereas a higher proportion of women, at 63 percent, were targeted as CV recipients. It is also stated that the gender of the recipient has no effect on the use of food, but that gender issues should be disclosed to all WFP partners. Still, the importance of continuing to target women for TFD and CV assistance is emphasized along with a note that the name of the individual receiving food assistance must match that on the identification card held by the targeted female.

Gender-specific questions and analysis about equity and vulnerability related to interventions, markers of underlying factors of food insecurity, should be included in M&E surveys to track program impacts. Considering gendered divisions of labor (including multiple roles, reproductive sphere, and crop production) access to and control over resources, and livelihoods (informal activities, varied income sources, non-staple crops, and decision-making at the household and community level) is crucial for effective gender-sensitive analysis (Elias, 2013). This will support monitoring of gender needs for basic welfare and survival, including the access to and distribution of food specific to men and women, versus strategic gender needs, which encompass longer-term institutional changes as part of an aim to transform unequal power relationships (KIT, Agri-ProFocus and IIRR, 2012).

**R4 Program for resilience in Senegal**

The Rural Resilience initiative’s comprehensive risk management program addresses vulnerability in farming in the face of climate changes. Also called R4— for the alliterative integration of: risk reduction, risk transfer, prudent risk taking, and risk reserves— the program

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67 Conducted from July 27 to August 1, 2012, the first of two annual PDMs in Senegal, 17 rural communities and two urban municipalities were surveyed in a sample of 300 households that received food at least once within Targeted Food Distribution (TFD) and on a sample of 100 households that received food vouchers at least once, as part of the cash voucher (CV) distributions.
targets women and women farmers through the provision of shared land, seeds, and local wells for gardens, micro-insurance, and other safety nets.

R4 strategies expand upon the Food for Assets (FFA) concept by adding insurance for agricultural activities among other strategies to build resilience to shocks related to climate change. For example, erratic rainfall requires water management for rice cultivation. The program encompasses four main activities, of which two are led by WFP and two are managed by OXFAM (WFP’s strategic partner). Gardening projects (or maraîchage) for women aim to promote household food security and allow a source of income from products sold. In turn homesteading and gardening for income help to pay for the insurance premium with FFA. Important gender issues include uncertainty about women’s time burden and other aspects of empowerment for “maraîchage” gardening projects that involve building plots, building wells, sewing seeds, and harvesting garden products.

Savings groups with risk reserves for women’s savings groups to pool money together and disperse as needed on a case-by-case basis and thereby are able to jointly decide and freely determine how to spend and share the saved funds. Since those working in agricultural and rural activities often do not have access to formal financial institutions, cereal banking is encouraged vis-à-vis financial institutions in order to preserve and later release stocks when communities’ needs for food increase.

Following the logic of tackling food security issues while integrating market systems and gender, a recurring intervention is to develop value chains in crops, focusing on women for their support of added nutritional and health benefits for families. However, this strategy often risks overburdening women by allocating them extra responsibilities. Thus, the gender and market section of Quisumbing et. al’s IFPRI/FAO book Gender in Agriculture: Closing the Knowledge

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68 A successful example, local women’s savings group model supports the Savings for Change (SFC) initiative and partnership with Oxfam USA to build on existing “tontines” where farmers and women in communities pool money together for need-based disbursement of loans for eventual repayment with interest.

69 Published on the WFP website, The R4 Rural Resilience Initiative In Senegal: A Joint WFP-Oxfam Initiative outlines R4 Senegal aims to: “contribute to the development of a comprehensive planning approach for food security, adaptation, and resilience by the government and its partners. R4 represents a new kind of partnership, bringing public and private-sector actors together in a strategic, large-scale initiative to innovate and develop better tools to help the most vulnerable people build resilient livelihoods” (WFP: Law, 2013).

70 R4 supports financial education spread through oral traditions of storytelling can discuss the importance of “prudent risk taking” to encourage safe investments without creating dependency problems.

71 According to WFP Senegal country office staff, preferences in Senegalese communities tend towards food to satisfy needs during the lean season and cash or vouchers during the dry season, but their sovereignty can also be preserved by setting up autonomous cereal bank systems as well as other resilience strategies to prepare for imminent risks and shocks related to food security.
Gap clarifies the need to combine value chain interventions with strategies to address social norms along with women’s access to productive assets and market opportunities, in order to not ignore the obstacle of women’s time burden. Certainly the task of addressing cultural and social norms surrounding this topic is an inevitable aspect to consider treating with the implementation of interventions to support food security and women’s empowerment.

While the R4 initiative aims for significant gains in women’s productivity, the issue of productivity must be evaluated and monitored in reference to the priority for women and communities. Beyond agricultural productivity, for which an increase of production may not necessarily support women’s status, gender equality, or even household food security, outcomes of empowerment through participation in groups and collective decision-making, for example, can be considered as intrinsically beneficial. Thus, it is important to understand the key objectives of targeting women through activities such as R4, and how participants match the food security profiles from baseline to end-line assessments. Besides celebrating productivity gains for women, baseline and M&E reports should address the following questions:

- What is the project’s impact on women’s lives, specifically their individual agency and wellbeing (elemental aspects of human development as defined by Sen) and household food security?
- Do gardening and other resilience-building activities continue when the WFP program is completed?
- Is household food security greater for families with gardens versus those without?

These questions examine issues of food availability versus access, livelihoods, and about the solutions of agricultural production via homesteading for self-sufficiency and autonomy or larger-scale farming to satisfy community or regional food needs. More importantly, they point to the need to assert the level of agency and voice to engage individuals, and groups of men and women. Given the mechanism already in place within WFP’s three-pronged approach to resilience building (encompassing national, sub-national, and local level partnered resilience building efforts), community-based participatory planning (CBPP), which encompasses participatory exercises to identify community needs and tailor program responses to local requirements by ensuring local prioritization and ownership (WFP, 2013 communication 261746), agency can be cultivated and community priorities in relation to WFP projects may be better understood through such participatory research. Because local priorities may vary
significantly from one community to another, identifying priorities for project implementation in light of food security and agricultural risks and considering gender implications may not be easy, but this element should be reviewed to appropriately tailor R4 and other program responses to local needs as defined by communities themselves. To prioritize these in outcome monitoring from baseline and end-line, considerations must also be made related to decision-making power, gender in agricultural production, market access, and food security.

**Purchase from Africans for Africa (PAA) in Senegal**

Inspired by the lessons learned from Brazil’s Zero Hunger initiative to eradicate hunger and promote food and nutrition security, Purchase from Africans for Africa (PAA Africa) seeks to promote the human right to adequate food by reducing the social and nutritional vulnerability of poor, small-scale farmers and school pupils. While Purchase For Progress (P4P) is being piloted countries where WFP operates, Senegal’s local procurement activities include PAA Africa, which helps link food assistance in schools to support for local agriculture by facilitating small-scale farmers’ access to institutional markets and promoting the food security of students. Still, beyond the success of PAA and P4P initiatives, by focusing on just small-scale farmers, WFP and FAO neglect to include other marginalized groups, including landless rural workers, pastoralists, urban poor, and fisherfolk, who are often experience food insecurity and exclusion from formal market activities.

In areas where they are developed, such localized procurement strategies promote local food markets, which, combined with long-term policies, can improve emergency responses, contributing to build more resilient communities and help prevent future food crises. Thus, plans for building off of and scaling up PAA Africa, including gender considerations for the local production systems, for a better understanding of gender roles within agricultural activities, will help improve the extent to which local social and economic networks are empowered through WFP interventions.

Improving baseline information about gendered agricultural production and local market systems will better inform issues of access in order to support the development of PAA, P4P, and other procurement activities to be more inclusive in empowering small-scale producers and traders, women and men alike in ensuring demand for their produce and will ideally satisfy  

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72 PAA Africa has partnered with Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger and Senegal, counting on the technical and operational expertise of FAO and P4P.
potential needs. It is a step closer in shifting WFP’s food assistance towards promoting beneficiary community food sovereignty, by localizing operations and supporting local systems.

**Addressing the (lack of) gender analysis in VAM methodology**

Data on gender roles and information related to women’s empowerment for food security analysis and program design can be thought of as a technical problem for improved interventions. The corporate gender mainstreaming agenda mandated by WFP and other agencies, on the other hand, advocates for gender equality within the social dynamics of operations and programming, acting sometimes as affirmative action. Significant progress has been made in distinguishing these levels of gender analysis in different WFP program initiatives, internal and external, and yet the discussion must continue in order to further develop these related but separate issues of gender analysis for food security, operational efficacy, and equality.

Transferring and building upon the lessons learnt from the field (IDS partnership work 2013-2014) may reflect gender issues in the structure and administration of food security assessments. For example, since the role and potential of women’s collective action was said to require more WFP attention, in particular framing work with women’s groups around an understanding of empowerment, considering opportunities for tackling the structural causes of food security even at the assessment level.

Revising VAM surveys to explicitly ask questions about female and male responsibilities, education, nutritional status, sources of income, asset ownership, and decision making, will generate more comprehensive gender disaggregated data, to paint a clearer picture of realities people experience, allowing for improved gender and food security analysis. Examples of explicit gender questions appear in a WFP VAM Cameroon 2014 household questionnaire.

Still, such initiatives are implemented ad hoc, usually in specific contexts upon detection of predetermined gender issues identified as extraneous for study in relation to the given food security situation. In addition to these context-specific case studies of gender elements,

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73 To support these activities at the country level, the Dakar Regional Bureau VAM unit might utilize a platform for gender questions and answers based on field experiences for best practices. See Recommendations section.

74 *Évaluation Rapide de la Sécurité Alimentaire des Réfugiés Centrafricains et Populations Hôtes à l’Est L’Adamaoua du Cameroun (Juillet 2014): Questionnaire Ménage*

75 In response to the lack of gender-disaggregated data, some regional RBD VAM food security analysts explain that gender mainstreaming into VAM food security assessments is being carried out ad hoc, often depending on the leadership for country or crisis-specific surveying (e.g. case of refugees in Northern Cameroon), or in response to a given shock that has been observed to have gendered impacts.
standardizing gender analysis within the framework of food security assessments will improve baseline, foment cultural understanding, and may reveal new relevant gender intricacies.

Considering opportunities for women’s market empowerment, WFP Country Briefs and VAM market reports on Senegal echo problems of market dependency for food procurement. According to these, household market dependency stands around 90 percent. This point is used to justify the study of market prices for household food security. However, the missing link of women’s involvement in household decision-making and access to market remains to be addressed in analysis and programming.

By reorienting market analysis to a human development framework, social causes of market dependency may be better understood, which may then lead to strategies to support people’s food sovereignty and sufficiency. With reference to learning more about women’s involvement in markets, a relevant amendment could be considered for the: “Market section” of ERASAN Community Questionnaire\textsuperscript{76} where current surveys ask questions about type of, distance to, procurement level of, seasonal accessibility to, and physical barriers blocking access to, as well as reasons for choice of market. Some of these questions\textsuperscript{77} could feasibly be repeated in household questionnaires to verify answers on individual levels.

According to the IASC Gender Handbook\textsuperscript{78} section on Gender and food security, food distribution and nutrition in emergencies, underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition include workload, dietary intake and diversity, health and disease, and maternal and child care. Within the gender implications of food security, it is important to consider the fact that women often play the principal role in ensuring nutrition, food safety, and food quality, and are also often responsible for buying, storing, processing, and preparing food for their households (IASC Gender Handbook, 2006). Because women tend to spend a considerable part of their cash income on household food requirements, baseline livelihood analysis can help determine how livelihood strategies of women and men may change following crises. Thus, new division of tasks must be

\textsuperscript{76} Also referred to by VAM as a “village survey.”

\textsuperscript{77} While questions about market from VAM ERASAN community-level surveys may seem like an ideal opportunity for gender-specific questions related to markets, the WFP Regional VAM Market Advisor noted that market assessments at community level generate qualitative information that is often cumbersome to interpret as findings may be dependent on assumptions. Reorienting the normative and conceptual framework to outline relationships between socioeconomic phenomena and food security implications may help in determining how qualitative data will be explicitly implicated in gender analysis and programming.

\textsuperscript{78} Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action: Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities (December 2006).
assessed to design effective rehabilitation programs and ensure food security and nutritional well-being for households (IASC Gender Handbook, 2006).

For WFP, this may mean increasing the gender-specific questions involved in the coping strategy index with respect to livelihood analysis. Economic factors should also be evaluated with specific questions to understand the economic impacts ensuing from crises:

“• What is the level of poverty of women, girls, boys and men?
• Do women and men have equal access to the local market?
• What is the process for local food procurement for women and men?
• Do both women and men have access to cash and food-for-work opportunities, credit and agricultural inputs?
• Is cash available for women and men to meet non-food needs?
• Do both women and men have access to food aid services and programmes?
• What are their levels of self-sufficiency in particular crops?
• Are there adequate and stable food supplies and access (quantity, quality and nutritional aspects) for women and men?”

(IASC Gender Handbook, 2006)
**Chapter 3: Adapting the WEAI for food security programming**

**Introducing the WEAI**

Originally commissioned for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and U.S. President Obama’s Feed the Future initiative to end global hunger, the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) was launched in 2012 by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), together with Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). The WEAI aims at studying how to empower women and girls while also increasing “aid effectiveness” in food security interventions. Thus, it was conceived for production-oriented projects, considering gender issues within the context of inclusive agricultural growth, for smallholder farmers to promote food security.

Extending beyond aggregate country-level measurements used in other gender indices, the WEAI is innovative in capturing individual empowerment outcomes. It is multidimensional with survey-focus on both women and men, individually and comparatively, within the same household, serving as a diagnostic tool in revealing disempowerment within any of five designated dimensions of empowerment related to growing food\(^79\). Separate from conventional proxies for women’s empowerment such as income or education, the dimensions reconsider interactions surrounding empowerment. Such specificity in gender analysis surrounding food production indicates particular areas requiring support or dimensions where women or men experience disempowerment. Identifying sources and area of disempowerment, is one step towards designing impactful and empowering interventions to address inequalities and close gender gaps to decrease food insecurity.

Following the same human development framework adopted in this study, it serves as an empowerment marker for projects. Women’s and men’s empowerment scores are calculated and examined relative to one another using a gender parity index, which compares overall empowerment scores of men and women, depending on achievements in each of the five identified agricultural-sector empowerment domains.

Among the countries where the WEAI tool has been tested, two Anglophone West African countries, Liberia and Ghana, were explored, while the experience of Francophone West

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\(^79\) Dimensions of empowerment include: (1) decisions about agricultural production, (2) access to and decision-making power about productive resources, (3) control of use of income, (4) leadership in the community, and (5) time allocation.
African countries remains to be examined. Given the index’s focus on agricultural production, rather than socioeconomic constraints in access to markets, much also remains to be explored to systematically measure issues of empowerment related to market activities and access to food.

**How women’s empowerment is measured in the WEAI**

Researchers and scholars developing the index recognized empowerment as a social construct, which may be defined in a multiplicity of ways, acknowledging difficulties in calculation and interpretation for policy objectives. However, IFPRI experts also specify the working definition of empowerment, within the context of the agricultural production paradigm and gender equality. Given its multidimensionality, women’s empowerment emerges from and affects many aspects of life including “family relationships, social standing, physical and emotional health, and economic power, the focus of the WEAI is on those aspects of empowerment that relate directly to agriculture—an area that has been relatively neglected in studies of empowerment” (IFPRI, 2013). Using Alkire’s notion that agency and empowerment are experienced with different tasks, quantified and qualified with diverse domains, and should be measured accordingly, USAID defined five domains of empowerment (5DE) in agriculture. The intricately designed and calculated measurement of empowerment within agricultural production involves ten indicators spread across 5DE (see Table 1: The Five Domains of Empowerment in the WEAI) is outlined in detail by IFPRI scholars and not easily summarized, but can serve as a foundation for understanding relevant aspects for gender equality and empowerment within studies of access to food.

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82 Image from: http://www.feedthefuture.gov/tags/weai
The indicator construction and surveying process behind the first WEAI domain, decisions about agricultural production, illustrates the level of attention in gender considerations. Made with two indicators—input in productive decisions and decision-making for purchase (sale or transfer of land and assets). Firstly, the input in productive decisions indicator, is constructed from answers to survey questions regarding whether the individual has sole or joint input in decisions about food or cash crop farming, livestock raising, and fish culture. Secondly, the extent to which the individual feels she or he can make personal decisions about certain aspects of household life if chosen (e.g., which inputs to buy, which types of crops to grow for agricultural production, when to or who would take crops to market, and whether to raise livestock) (Quisimbing et al, 2013). A determined “adequacy level” is set for each indicator, signaling a threshold for whether a person is empowered or disempowered. For the input in productive decisions indicator, the WEAI determines that an individual has adequacy if he or she participates and has at least some input in decisions or if someone else makes the decisions but the individual feels he or she could. All in all, the WEAI defines a woman or man as empowered in 5DE if she or he has adequate achievements in four or five dimensions, or in some combination of weighted indicators, reflecting 80 percent of total or maximum adequacy for each (Quisimbing et al, 2013).
Rather than suggesting that constructing a new index, an adapted version of the WEAI, will adequately implicate issues of women’s empowerment and gender into food security measurements, analysis, and program design, the proposed adaptation of the WEAI is offered as a reconceptualization of surveying methods, to capture relevant social dynamics for gender and food security analysis. The following proposal directs the conceptual orientation for adapting the WEAI as a potential tool for food security measurement and analysis, by shifting its focus in agricultural production to an emphasis on issues of access, power relations, and gender within local trade dynamics. Building upon the strengths of the WEAI’s individual-level questionnaire, quinti-dimensional aspects of empowerment, gender parity, the conceptual adaptation (in conjunction with the adaptation of WFP’s conceptual framework, as echoed as recommendation in this study) will require due process to appropriately devise technical metric systems for computing and analyzing such an adapted index, as well as extensive participatory research and pilot testing.

For the purpose of this study in propagating a gender-inclusive conceptual framework of food security, the WEAI dimensions of empowerment, indicator choices, justifications and means of collecting these are the main objects of interest. It could suffice to acknowledge that if a new index were to be created as an adaptation of the WEAI, that similar time, effort, and expertise would be required generate the new measurement tool. For instance, the statistical nuances of inadequacy scores, according to computation across indicators, and gender parity index calculations, are unnecessary to explore. Developing pilot versions, testing the ability and feasibility of using indicators to capture changes over time, for the purpose of including people’s individual experiences in measuring baselines and following project impacts and capacity for empowering people. Just as routine checks for indicator robustness and consistency were implemented for the WEAI, for example, so too could the adaptation of the Index proposed herein undergo in order to streamline a contextualized construction of adapted measurement tools for West African country VAM surveys.

Inevitably, additional time and funding would be needed, to carry out in-depth participatory research (an opportunity for intrinsic empowerment), conduct statistical modeling,
and construct the new tool in sufficient detail necessary to capture dimensions of empowerment as proposed and explored later on. Using the expertise of VAM unit staff at RBD, headquarters, and those of partners, the next phase of computing such a proposed index may continue to be modeled from original WEAI computations, in accordance with WFP VAM and Program unit’s agreed upon priorities for implicating gender in data collection and programming. However, it must be noted that improving data collection and analysis alone is not sufficient to achieve better targeting, gender equality, or empowering interventions in Programming. Instead, the proposed adaptation is part of a greater conceptual, or mental shift to people-focused and gender-sensitive communication that all WFP programs must prioritize in order to be able to significantly empower and positively impact people’s lives.

Adapting WEAI to improve WFP data on underlying vulnerabilities and emergency responses

To effectively recognize and meet the needs of food insecure individuals and communities, WFP must integrate gender and other social dynamics into quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. This will support evidence-based program design to address people’s food needs and empower them in the process, by understanding social dynamics and their relation to food security situations, enabling support of increased freedom and opportunity. Following a gender-harmonized conceptualization of food security, using more sophisticated metrics and operational tools to systematically measure access to markets, technology, capital and tools for fairer trading can support program activities that are more cognisant of gender and women’s empowerment.

Given WFP’s mandate to save lives in emergency situations, adapting WEAI as an innovative tool for WFP food security assessments and market analysis may improve organizational understanding, baseline data, and promote the systematic measurement of women’s roles and engagement in agricultural markets in response to shocks and crises. Following IFPRI’s Hazel Malapit’s discussion\(^85\) of the importance of measuring women’s empowerment, crises and shocks generate new gender issues that alter the existing state of gender dynamics at play, making baseline information on women’s status and gender roles more

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important to understanding the impacts of emergencies. Hence, ongoing gender analysis focusing on women’s empowerment for food security will better inform emergency-specific studies and responses to support coping strategies and comprehend changes in social dynamics. Actively supplementing baseline information available on gender in food security assessments, if properly incorporated, may inform programming and emergency responses, as crises tend to have gendered impacts that require appropriate operational considerations.

**Following the WEAI approach for WFP’s adapted gender-integrated conceptual framework**

Following the WEAI analysis to support USAID’s efforts in monitoring interventions to benefit the poor and include women through inclusive agricultural growth, the public domain of information and systematic measurement of empowerment forged by the index is open for adaptations. IFPRI and USAID encourage people, humanitarian and development organizations, practitioners, and academics alike, to personalize the WEAI as needed for different uses.

The original WEAI pertains to an agricultural production paradigm in the promotion of food security, following theories that success in agriculture generates income for investment in activities of value such as education, and access to human capital. The production paradigm tends to promote higher value field crops or movement along the value chain from producing enough for the household consumption to expand to more intensive market activities for income-generating trading, which will eventually raise the standard of living. Since agriculture is at the heart of rural livelihoods, understanding which part of the value chain women and men are operating, and what restrictions and opportunities may exist is an initial step to identifying methods to empower and transform their lives.

While the WEAI pertains to the production paradigm (promoting agricultural development to decrease food insecurity and dependency on food assistance), this study proposes a different focus, based on the idea of human development surrounding access to food and empowerment through local market systems. Applying WEAI innovations for measuring dimensions of empowerment to the work of humanitarian food assistance organizations like WFP, food security analysis can frame interventions as opportunities to connect actors within local systems, empowering individuals, supporting local markets, and encouraging communities to move out of food insecurity in the long-term. For instance, learning more about which food
crops are typically produced and sold by women and men, respectively, may help understand gender issues for equitable local procurement activities. Thus, if the objective is to empower women by securing a market for goods grown by female producers or traders, locally sourcing products that are predominantly produced and/or sold by women can have a transformative impact on women’s socioeconomic empowerment and gender relations.

This shifts the discussion of women’s empowerment within the context of food security from production and availability of food to the problem of access to available food through market systems. It also explores the WEAI as a food security assessment tool to ameliorate the baseline data on gender within food security analysis, rather than marker of project progress. One important outcome, relevant for WFP programming, is that scoring women’s empowerment related to agricultural and market activities will improve targeting and local market based interventions, making food assistance more supportive of small farmers and market access.

Women’s agricultural activities are defined by context-specific gender roles within West African food systems. The gendered agricultural and market activities, and women’s involvement in these, relate not only to women’s empowerment but also to the availability and access to food at the community and household level. To directly measure women’s inclusion in agricultural markets for local food security, individual food system engagement can inform trends at community and regional levels. Examining how gender roles regulate markets means considering the social institutions and gendered complexes that underpin marketplaces and staple food markets respective to societies (van Tilburg, 2000). So gender elements for West African food markets, the social institutions of production, traditions of gender ideologies, and household reproduction can inform female participation in marketplaces and food markets.

Fomenting understanding of gender and equity in existing market and food systems can reorient food security interventions to empower people to identify their own priorities, as opposed to pro-poor market or value chain development that may unknowingly overburden people or alter gender roles. The 2014 IFPRI study Gender, assets, and market-oriented agriculture: learning from high-value crop and livestock projects in Africa and Asia stressed that gender-sensitive efforts to encourage market-oriented agriculture are most successful when efforts are simultaneous to support of women’s assets, reducing gender asset inequality, and also meeting nutrition objectives, to balance women’s practical and strategic gender needs. Gender-sensitive high-value agriculture projects present challenges of facilitating women’s control of
physical and financial assets generated by their increased involvement in market-oriented agriculture in a sustainable way, without compromising the health and nutrition of themselves or their families (Quisumbing et al., 2014). Participatory research, including women’s focus group discussion, may foment understanding and help identify particular gender roles and implications for community, household and individual access to food.

Inviting women and men to participate in the data collection process may give them power and opportunity in itself. Given how the WEAI acknowledges the broad concept of empowerment and the need to specify a definition to allow for quantifying, women and men in different areas may have different ideas surrounding the concept and its relation to food security. Just as focus groups, collaborative discussions, and cognitive testing was involved in developing the WEAI, so too is participatory research is crucial to forge a better understanding of empowerment and access to food as defined by men and women.

Participatory definitions of relevant gender and food security issues and tailoring of survey questions allow food security assessments to be more effective in collecting data that is relevant to the realities of people themselves, as they are engaged and empowered throughout the process. It may involve first defining what it means to be an empowered woman related to the food market system. This inevitably requires an understanding of how market women view and express their own identity, roles, and responsibilities as producers, traders, consumers, and preparers of food- how their activities relate to those of other producers, fellow traders, particularly male traders- and what are the main barriers to trade. For examples of such questions for qualitative analysis, please refer to Annex 2: Market Questionnaire.

It may involve understanding who has access to market floors, individual or shared ownership of assets, autonomous power in making decisions about what and where to sell food, leadership in commercial activities (whether buying or selling), equal rights to those of considering food markets, or time to dedicate to market activities outside the home. Focus group discussions and other participatory research can invite West African women and men to define market empowerment issues in their own terms, but also in terms of their communities. Implementing more sustainable and empowering food security interventions will involve supporting people’s local market systems, recognizing the potential of individuals and respecting nuances within social fabric within the West African Region.
Supplementing participatory research with a gender-sensitive theoretical approach will allow the opportunity to reorient the systematic study. The proposed questions are constructed as an adaptation of the WEAI, where each dimension is customized to a corresponding point of relevance for women’s involvement in food market systems. Considerations are also made for the adaption of the index in the direction of more gender-sensitive food security assessments. Please refer to The table of Adapted WEAI Questions (see Annex 3: Table of Adapted WEAI Questions) for examples of relevant domains of food market activities as these determine access relative to dimensions of women’s empowerment (level of engagement within the food system and gender roles within the supply chain). Proposed for individual level surveying, this WEAI adaptation is intended for individual as well as household and community surveys. In conjunction with demographic questions for information about age, sex, marital status (single, married, polygamy), the number of children, education level, nutritional status, and income from producing and/or trading food will all be surveyed. Such background demographic questions serve to contextualize and specify analysis, where marital status, for example, whether an individual is married, single, or polygamous different implications for food security in defining who is the head of household and how intra-household dynamics, such as income expenditure decision making.

The proposed WEAI conceptual adaptation aims to consider gendered access to markets in understanding what key problems constrain women from achieving their potential within food systems. Examining barriers to trade and indicators that contribute to disempowerment, the idea is to understand how food security interventions might bridge gaps and empower people for better access to food, assets, and freedom throughout the process.
Conclusions

This study highlights a lack of data on gender and women’s empowerment in WFP country-level food security assessments and market analysis for Senegal. It has indicated some outstanding questions specifically related to WFP programming as well as general questions to improve baseline surveys of both market-, community-, and household-level questionnaires. It also highlights a distinctions to be made in the WFP approach to issues of gender and women’s empowerment in operations.

Distinguishing between gender mainstreaming as an overall corporate strategy and the specific task of women’s empowerment in relation to food security analysis and interventions is a challenge. In essence, focusing on gender roles, in accordance with WFP policy and compliance with UN SDGs, aims for equality, effectiveness, and political correctness in all aspects of operations. Meanwhile, a more narrowed spectrum of gender analysis to household, community, regional, and national food security issues for people points to opportunities for WFP to address gender issues in relation to food security.

Understanding more about gender and power relations at different levels is an important process that will take time to achieve. Instead, it is part of a long process of adapting to a more human-centered normative framework. This is part of a larger institutional reorientation, which not only WFP struggles with but the UN system as a whole faces.

As gender issues are embedded in every social interaction, they are relevant to WFP (and all other humanitarian, development, and informal organizations) at every operational level. This universality justifies the comprehensive policy for equality, but is also difficult to digest. At WFP it is referred to as “gender mainstreaming.” The complexity of gender analysis means that women’s empowerment must be defined and communicated clearly within WFP staff teams in office, community, and operational settings as it relates to goals at each stage and in different contexts of operations. To communicate and operationalize women’s empowerment, the concept must be defined by concerned parties, understood, and presented beyond concerns for women’s rights, food security, and gender equality. Rather, women’s empowerment must be treated actively as a powerful and efficient instrument for general human development, as an invaluable resource and sustainable foundation where household, community, and national food security and development projects can significantly build upon.
While improving data is a significant, necessary step (discussed in this study as fulfillment of the WFP Gender Policy and strategy to improve evidence-based program design and operations), an even more fundamental first step should be to improve the conceptual framework used by WFP and its partners such as FAO, FEWS NET or CILSS. As reviewed, the existing flow chart and conceptual framework outlines causes of food security and related issues, but is limited in scope and detail, missing dimensions of women’s empowerment and relevancy to livelihoods beyond agricultural production. Considering how this normative framework shapes data collection and programming, a more gender-specific framework, contextualized with a range of domestic, communal, and locally representative livelihoods would be more appropriate to study specific food security interactions. An improved conceptual framework would manifest the shift in perspective on gender issues that WFP seems to be aiming for, from a top-down, politically correct element of inclusion, to a valuable opportunity to better capture, communicate contextualized realities, unlock untapped resources, and empower people by including their relationships in modelling and conceptual design of human-centered interventions.

While it is not WFP’s or any other organization’s responsibility to criticize, impose, or intervene to alter gender norms, improving understanding is surrounding these is crucial for addressing food security and fighting hunger worldwide. Currently at WFP, dealing with gender issues means reviewing what knowledge is being used, and developing systems to build upon the gender studies for food security knowledge, using the technical work of VAM units for improving data collection on gender as a starting point to improve communication on related findings in programming moving forward.

**Recommendations**

In order to fulfill the SDGs, the WFP Gender Policy 2015-2030, and to better serve individuals, communities, and nation states, improving data collection is the first step WFP must take in being able to systematically address the interrelated problems of gender inequality and food insecurity.

As evidenced by the massive amounts of data collected and indicators not appearing in the reporting or program design process for Senegal, not all that is measured actually gets
managed. This indicates a need to improve the coordination and communication within and between program units (e.g. from VAM to Procurement).

Mandated gender training, adding gender to the long list of information WFP staff should consider in food security analysis and programming as an indispensable factor to generate a momentous shift in operations, will not necessarily address the mainstreaming problems. It is not about adding gender-sensitive vocabulary to program and project documents. Rather, a shift in mentality about the importance of gender analysis as crucial for food security assessments is what is needed to implement an updated conceptual framework.

WFP staff may view this opportunity to reflect upon and improve their own understanding of gender issues related to food security at the household and community level, through exercises of collaboration between units. Thinking creatively and actively about how each unit can support programs in improving understanding, actions, and coordination of gender and food security issues may develop systems of support for long term operational efficiency. In the spirit of agency, responsibility, and participatory research, each program unit may be invited to regularly reflect upon challenges and solutions related to food security and gender issues in their own activities, before also offering feedback on possible problems and solutions perceived in communication (or lack thereof) with other units. In essence, human, complicated, and poorly understood problems of food insecurity and gender inequality require initiative-driven, creative, and empowering solutions to generate significantly sustainable impacts, beyond fulfilling top-down policies.

Regarding office communications in particular, setting up a knowledge management system (currently lacking) to systematically organize previous and plan ongoing food security assessments, to consistently update records as new data becomes available, is a crucial element for making tools available to all staff members, to save time, energy, and promote efficiency in operations. Eventually, as knowledge management improves, databases on gender and relevant analysis tools can be cultivated through documentation, ongoing communications, and workshops, as needed.

WFP regards remote data collection via mobile technology (mVAM activities) as an important data entry point through rapid assessments of food security patterns. However, the current challenges of accessibility, problems of literacy, and gendered mobile phone usage add to biases of analysis and complicate mobile data as a solution to the lack of data available on
gender issues related to food security, especially in rural areas. Several studies\(^{86}\) aim to address these challenges; improving understanding may enable confidential, individual-level surveying.

The WFP Regional Bureau in Dakar is the sponge that absorbs and also the machine that synthesizes information coming from the country offices throughout West Africa\(^{87}\). Rather than just developing new tools for gender in food security analysis and mainstreaming gender language in project and program documents, to effectively integrate gender analysis, staff capacity building is necessary at every level. Specifically, training should explicitly cover dimensions of women’s empowerment as important for human development and food security at country office and field level. The regional bureau must be prioritized, as already outlined, in order to review the conceptual framework of women’s empowerment and gender issues related to household, community, and national food security. Furthermore, participatory research methods should be integrated between office staff and with communities in the field, since each brings different perspectives to the work at hand.

If WFP truly intends to improve the lives of the women, men, boys, and girls they are serving in communities in Senegal, and across West Africa, and internationally, the first step is to learn more about them. Specifically in practice, this translates to engaging with, listening to, and empowering people, building off of the community-based participatory planning, investing in people’s well-being in the long term, rather than targeting food assistance to short-term interventions.

The Senegal R4 program is a great example of how WFP initiatives are shifting to longer-term and more sustainable intervention, but may benefit from more gender-sensitive participatory research for better baseline data for monitoring impacts on women’s empowerment and food security. Hence, the R4 strategy to increase individual and community resilience, where projects target women directly, dealing simultaneously with some underlying or chronic causes of food insecurity and disempowerment, is a cooperative step in the right direction for dealing directly with the longterm impacts of initiatives of people's lives. Still, the R4 program in Senegal lacks evidence-based understandings of how such initiatives are transforming the lives of people over time.

\(^{86}\) For example: GSMA (2015) Bridging the gender gap: Mobile access and usage in low and middle-income countries.

\(^{87}\) The WFP West African region includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, the Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome, and Togo.
Moving forward, similar and forthcoming initiatives must improve baseline studies and ongoing research in order to meaningfully implicate and capture the changing realities of those people who are being targeted. As discussed and proposed in Chapter 2, a study of the impacts before and after on food security, sense of empowerment, and other agreed-upon benchmarks as designated by people themselves, will be the measure of how effective WFP is in understanding and impacting their lives.

While WFP’s operations follow a specific mandate to save lives, which limits the emphasis on time and resource-consuming development initiatives, the operational mandate for WFP to respond to emergencies and urgencies to save lives must also be weighed in relation to the organizational capacity to invest in improving people’s lives in the long term, preventing the incidence of crises, through ongoing operations, wherever possible. Surely, WFP’s priorities are already well oriented to respond to humanitarian emergencies by treating hunger, malnutrition, and recurrent food insecurity. This study simply suggests that WFP can continue to improve operations in its mission to fight hunger by better understanding, studying, and responding to the human-centered, social dynamics of food insecurity (beyond the economic causes) through an improved conceptual framework, project cycle communication for improved program design, and improved support of ongoing participatory research. Taking time and inviting space in WFP operations to implicate the voices of people throughout the organizational project cycle (from the data collection, processing, and program design and evaluation processes) will offer a better chance for interventions to meet the needs of the people as they stand. For participatory research in developing greater understanding of women’s empowerment issues and gender roles related to market and food security strategies, WFP would do well to continue and increase the involvement of women’s trader groups, cooperatives, farmers organizations, and other civil society organizations to ensure that their voices are heard throughout the process of designing better strategies to improve data collection and programming.
ANNEX 1: WFP CV Business Process Model
ANNEX 2: Market Questionnaire

Survey questions regarding market access, empowerment, and gendered market dynamics, to be implemented at community markets, in discussions with women’s trading groups, and individuals.

Which market? (What kind, where?)

How far travelling to sell there? How often?

Do you produce what you sell?

Do you regularly have time available to dedicate to market activities outside the home?

How do you decide what to grow, what and where to sell food, who exerts leadership in commercial activities (whether buying or selling)?

Who has access to the market (buying and selling)?

What process needed to have access to market floors (selling)?

Who has individual or shared ownership of assets in order to undertake market activities?

To you, what is important to know when considering women’s access to market?

Do you associate your market activities with power?

What does it mean to have market power?

Who controls the markets?

Who decides what is sold, quantity, price...etc?

Do women have equal rights to men related to food markets?

Do women have more or less power about what to sell, prices, transporting good?

What other demographic information about marketplaces can inform power and gender relations?
## Annex 3: Table of Adapted WEAI Questions
(Source: Author)

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<td>Level of involvement in commercial and consumption decisions (what to buy, sell, or trade for food stuffs)?</td>
<td>Mobile survey (mVAM); Household (HH) survey</td>
<td>Procurement, CV, P4P (Revise VAM Community Market questionnaire): Who sells? Where? When? How often? Seasonality? What price? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Access to productive resources</td>
<td>Ownership of assets (1/15); Purchase, sale, or transfer of assets (1/15); Access to market resources: information and access (transportation)</td>
<td>Barriers to Trade: distance, transportatio n, &amp; resources to access market</td>
<td>Do you experience barriers to trading? Are your market activities limited by physical obstacles (barriers to access e.g. poor roads), time burden, financial or social exclusion (control of market e.g. ID required to register as a trader)?</td>
<td></td>
<td>nVAM; VAM Community market surveys</td>
<td>CV, P4P, Procurement, B4; Understanding gender issues within local market barriers to trade (fees, quotas or ID documents to access market floor or register sales) and obstacles (transport, IDs, etc.) for consideration in local procurement activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Control over income use</td>
<td>Control over income &amp; expenditure decisions (1/5)</td>
<td>Control over market sales and expenditures</td>
<td>% of income spent in market expenditures</td>
<td>How much input do you have on the use of income generated from your selling? Do you decide what and how much to spend?</td>
<td>Household survey; nVam</td>
<td>Building on Food Expenditure score, by specifying which products decided by whom (associated gender roles) To what extent do you feel you have control over the prices for items?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Time allocation (domestic &amp; productive)</td>
<td>Workload (1/10); Leisure (1/10)</td>
<td>Time spent in market activities</td>
<td>% time accessing engaging in market activities</td>
<td>How much time to access market versus dedicated to food production? Purchase? Sale?</td>
<td>Household survey; nVam</td>
<td>Gender roles delineate level of freedom and capabilities of women and men. Market versus household food system activities are considered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Community leadership</td>
<td>Group member (1/10); Speaking in public (1/10)</td>
<td>Collective action</td>
<td>Participation in trading or savings groups, cooperatives</td>
<td>How do you decide how much to spend on food and what to buy? To what extent do you feel you can receive help from others if you face difficulty when selling?</td>
<td>Focus group discussion</td>
<td>Group membership and collective action can relate to resilience building and indicate opportunities to support and include existing networks, understanding power relations, in planning interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Questions related to WFP Programs</td>
<td>Other questions related to WFP Programs</td>
<td>What gender issues are important surrounding access to food in your community?</td>
<td>Which transfer modality preferred? CPV, Mobile transfer, credit at local store/market etc.</td>
<td>How is decision made for how to spend income and transfers within the household? (Jointly male and female, female, or male)</td>
<td>Household survey; nVam; focus group discussion</td>
<td>CV and ME, Procurement as interventions require better understanding of intra-household gender relations to monitor impact on food security, and also the local market capacity to meet community needs in a more sustainable way than displacing the local market through food assistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Survey Questions**

- **Level of involvement in commercial and consumption decisions**: What do you decide what and how much to spend on food and what to buy? To what extent do you feel you can receive help from others if you face difficulty when selling?
- **Control over income & expenditure decisions**: How much input do you have on the use of income generated from your selling? Do you decide what and how much to spend?
- **Time spent in market activities**: How much time to access market versus dedicated to food production? Purchase? Sale?
- **Collective action**: How do you decide how much to spend on food and what to buy? To what extent do you feel you can receive help from others if you face difficulty when selling?
- **Market activities & decision-making in household**: Do you experience barriers to trading? Are your market activities limited by physical obstacles (barriers to access e.g. poor roads), time burden, financial or social exclusion (control of market e.g. ID required to register as a trader)?
- **Access to productive resources**: Ownership of assets (1/15); Purchase, sale, or transfer of assets (1/15); Access to market resources: information and access (transportation)
- **Control over income use**: Control over income & expenditure decisions (1/5)
- **Time allocation (domestic & productive)**: Workload (1/10); Leisure (1/10)
- **Community leadership**: Group member (1/10); Speaking in public (1/10)
- **Production decision-making**: Input in productive decisions (1/10)

**Survey modalities**

- **Mobile survey (mVAM)**
- **Household (HH) survey**
- **Focus group discussion**
- **Survey; Household survey; nVam**
- **CV, P4P, Procurement, B4**
- **Building on Food Expenditure score, by specifying which products decided by whom (associated gender roles)**
- **Gender roles delineate level of freedom and capabilities of women and men. Market versus household food system activities are considered**

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**Data Relevancy for WFP program**

- **Procurement, CV, P4P (Revise VAM Community Market questionnaire):**
  - Who sells?
  - Where?
- **Understanding gender issues within local market barriers to trade (fees, quotas or ID documents to access market floor or register sales) and obstacles (transport, IDs, etc.) for consideration in local procurement activities**
- **Building on Food Expenditure score, by specifying which products decided by whom (associated gender roles)**
  - To what extent do you feel you have control over the prices for items?
- **Gender roles delineate level of freedom and capabilities of women and men. Market versus household food system activities are considered**
  - Group membership and collective action can relate to resilience building and indicate opportunities to support and include existing networks, understanding power relations, in planning interventions
- **CV and ME, Procurement as interventions require better understanding of intra-household gender relations to monitor impact on food security, and also the local market capacity to meet community needs in a more sustainable way than displacing the local market through food assistance**
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