



Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprises (EOWE) Programme

Baseline Report

Vietnam



Acknowledgements

The results and lessons presented in this report would not have been possible without the diligent work and participation of the SNV programme team in Vietnam (Tran Tu Anh, Quang Truong Tran, Pham Lan Anh, Nguyen Cong Nhue, Resy Vermeltfoort) in addition to those in a global role (Leonie Hoijtink, Sanne van Laar, Sabdiyo Bashuna Dido, Raymond Brandes).

We also gratefully acknowledge the important contributions made by the programme partners, community leaders, interviewees and consultants who conducted the research for this Baseline report.

February, 2017

Founded in The Netherlands in 1965, SNV has built a long-term, local presence in many of the poorest countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Our global team of local and international advisors work with local partners to equip communities, businesses and organisations with the tools, knowledge and connections they need to increase their incomes and gain access to basic services – empowering them to break the cycle of poverty and guide their own development.

This report is based on research for the 'Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprises' programme funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands (DGIS) under the 'Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women' (FLOW) framework. Any part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form and by any means with proper referencing © 2017, SNV, Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprises Programme.

Contents

		<i>SUMMARY</i>	05
<i>CHAPTER 1</i> Background to EOWE and WEAI	09	<i>CHAPTER 2</i> Who participated in the study?	11
<i>CHAPTER 3</i> 5 Domains of Empowerment	16	<i>CHAPTER 4</i> Domain Time-use	20
<i>CHAPTER 5</i> Domain Control over use of income	22	<i>CHAPTER 6</i> Domain Leadership in the community	25
<i>CHAPTER 7</i> Differences between women from female- headed and male- headed households	26	<i>CHAPTER 8</i> Differences on socio- economic demographics	29
<i>CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION</i>	35		

Abbreviations

SDE	Five Domains of Empowerment
a-WEAI	abbreviated WEAI
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DGIS	Directoraat-Generaal Internationale Samenwerking (Directorate-General for International Cooperation under the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
EOWE	Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprises
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FHH	Female-headed households
FLOW	Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women
GPI	Gender Parity Index
IFPRI	International Food and Policy Research Institute
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices
MHH	Male-headed households
SME	Small or Medium Enterprise
SNV	SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment

Summary

The current report presents the results of a baseline study conducted in July 2016 in four provinces in Vietnam. The study focused on the level of women's economic empowerment in rural Vietnamese households. It applied the abbreviated version of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) that was developed by the International Food and Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). The baseline study informs the *Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprises (EOWE)* programme that SNV is currently implementing.

The programme

Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprises (EOWE) is a 5 year women's economic empowerment programme, funded by the Department of Social Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands under the 'Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women' framework (FLOW).¹ The programme aims to increase women's economic participation and self-reliance in Kenya and Vietnam by catalysing a conducive national and local environment for female entrepreneurship.

Women's capacity for entrepreneurship is limited by a series of structural barriers, including those that are related to gender, i.e. women's role within the larger society, their community, their business environment and their households. For instance, women's access to productive resources is limited by the gender norms that govern ownership of assets. But also lower access to agriculture production techniques, low levels of financial literacy and limited skills and confidence are amongst explanations given for women's limited entrepreneurial capacity. Consequently, women's businesses often remain informal, tend to underperform and have a high risk of failure.² This has a profound impact on gender disparity in employment and economic opportunities. The EOWE programme aims to address these issues by challenging gender norms at household and community level, supporting women to develop or start a business, promoting women leadership and through advocacy activities for the development and implementation of gender-sensitive business policies and laws.

The Vietnamese context

Vietnamese society is rooted in Confucian traditions, which is male-oriented and male-dominated with women playing a subservient role. Over the past 3 decades the Vietnamese government has taken steps to improve women's standing to become more equal. It adopted the treaty on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as one of the first countries in the world in 1982³; passed the Domestic Violence Prevention and Control Law in 2007⁴, and adjusted the Marriage and Family Law in 2014 to explicitly acknowledge that husbands and wives are equal.⁵ These steps have opened the door to female empowerment in Vietnam.

This report explores to what extent Vietnamese women with a business in rural, predominantly agricultural communities and households can be considered empowered. A business could be primary producers selling part of their produce (which was the large majority of respondents) or women owning a small or medium enterprise (SME). Results are based on a quantitative study conducted in July 2016 among 746 households with 1,312 respondents (746 women and 566 men) in four programme provinces in Vietnam: Binh Dinh, Binh Thuan, Ninh Thuan and Quang Binh. The women interviewed were all members of a cooperative and ran small family businesses, for instance by selling vegetables or rice. The study also draws from qualitative data collected during that same time period to triangulate and contextualise the quantitative findings. This data covers in-depth interviews as well as female, male and mixed focus group discussions.

IFPRI's Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index

According to IFPRI, empowerment is not only about individual choice, but also about someone's ability to act on those choices, which necessitates access to and control over material, human and social resources.⁶ In 2011, IFPRI

¹ FLOW: Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women, <http://www.flowprogramme.nl/Public/HomePage.aspx>.

² X. Cirera and Q. Qasim (September 2014). Supporting Growth-Oriented Women Entrepreneurs: A Review of the Evidence and Key Challenges. World Bank

³ UN Women: Asia and the Pacific, *CEDAW & Women's Human Rights*, <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/cedaw-human-rights/viet-nam> (accessed February 20, 2017).

⁴ Ministry of Justice, *Law on domestic violence prevention and control*, 2007.

⁵ http://www.moi.gov.vn/vbpg/en/lists/vn%20bn%20php%20lut/view_detail.aspx?itemid=3030 (accessed February 27, 2016).

⁶ National Assembly, *Marriage and Family Law*, 2014, <http://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Quy-en-dan-su/Luat-Hon-nhan-va-gia-dinh-2014-238640.aspx> (accessed February 27, 2017).

⁷ Alkire et al., *The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index*, IFPRI Discussion Paper, 01240, 2012.

and USAID created an index to measure women's empowerment, encompassing choice and control, aimed specifically at women working in the agricultural sector: the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI).⁷

This index focuses on 5 Domains of Empowerment:

1. **Decision-making power over agricultural production:** This dimension concerns decisions about agricultural production and refers to sole or joint decision-making about food and cash crop farming, and livestock and fisheries;
2. **Access to and decision-making power over productive resources:** This dimension concerns ownership of and access to productive resources such as land, livestock, agricultural equipment, consumer durables, and credit;
3. **Control over use of income:** This dimension concerns sole or joint control over the use of income and expenditures;
4. **Leadership in the community:** This dimension concerns leadership in the community, measured by membership in formal or informal economic or social groups;
5. **Time-use:** This dimension concerns the allocation of time to productive and reproductive (domestic) tasks.

It then also sets the scores of women against those of the primary male adults (usually husbands), to see to what extent women within households are at a par with men, to what level there is gender parity.

Results based on the 5 Domains

According to the WEAI methodology, a person is empowered when (s)he has achieved adequacy in 80% of the weighted indicators linked to the above 5 domains. Results from the current baseline study indicate that over half of the Vietnamese women interviewed can be considered empowered (57 per cent), compared to almost 70 per cent of men. Comparing these scores to other studies conducted with the WEAI, Vietnamese women's empowerment levels are quite high. For instance, approximately 40 per cent of women in Southwestern Bangladesh and Uganda, and less than a third of women in the Western Highlands of Guatemala could be considered empowered.⁸ The twin baseline study conducted for the EOWE programme in Kenya showed that women with a business there are more empowered, with 72% of women passing the threshold.

Access to and decision-making power over productive resources

The women in our study score particularly well on the domain of Access to and decision-making power over productive resources. A person is considered empowered, when they (jointly) own at least one major asset and at least feel they have some input on how those resources are being used. Virtually all women interviewed indicated that they solely own or at least jointly own major household assets, such as the family house, land and/or livestock. Access to credit or finances does not seem to be an issue either. In Vietnam, women are considered to be the purse string holder of household finances.⁹ They are known to be hardworking and frugal to be able to make ends meet and to pay back any debts or outstanding loans on time. In this study, 90% of women indicated they are usually the sole decision-makers on minor household expenses.



 Farmer couple in Ninh Thuan province, Vietnam.

Women indicated that they considered it their right to control household finances and as one woman put it:

"It's not right to have to ask for money every time you need to buy a bit of fish or fish sauce; women should handle cash to take care of the children. Cash left in men's hands would be lost."

And men seem to agree with this, indicating in focus groups that it's easy for them to overspend on issues such as cigarettes or alcohol.

⁷ USAID, *INTERVENTION GUIDE: FOR THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN AGRICULTURE INDEX (WEAI) - Practitioners' Guide to Selecting and Designing WEAI Interventions*, 2016, <https://agrilinks.org/library/intervention-guide-womens-empowerment-agriculture-index-weai-practitioner-guide-selecting> (accessed February 20, 2017).

⁸ Alkire et al., *The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index, IFPRI Discussion Paper*, 01240, 2012.

⁹ Teerawichitchainan, B., Knodel, J., Loi, V., & Huy, V. (2010). The Gender Division of Household Labor in Vietnam: Cohort Trends and Regional Variations. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 41(1), 57-85. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41604338>.

Three-quarters of the women state that they have friends or family members that they could borrow small amounts of money from in case of need. Indeed, women indicated in the qualitative interviews that they have borrowed money in the past, for instance to pay for the treatment of a sick child. 82% of women interviewed also feel that they would be able to get a loan from a bank or other formal institutions if they wanted or needed to, though only 25% has actually done so.

Leadership in the community

The women in our study are well-knit into society, and therefore score highly on the domain of Leadership in the community, as the WEAI methodology considers someone empowered on this domain if they are an active member of at least 1 group. Most women are members of a community group. For instance, over 75% is a member of a civic group aimed at community improvements and which organise social events such as weddings and funerals. Another 26% of women actively participates in agricultural groups and only 2.5% is a member of a trade or business association. This is (substantially) lower than membership of men to these groups (62% and 5% respectively). However, when women were asked to what extent they believe they hold influence in their community, 35% rated it at the lowest possible level of influence. This indicates that substantial progress can be made in this domain for women.

Decision-making power over agricultural production

Vietnamese women with a business therefore seem to have the 'Access to resources' part of IFPRI's empowerment definition covered. When it comes to the 'necessary control over the use of those resources', the picture becomes more complicated. On the domain of Decision-making power over agricultural production, many women taking part in the survey feel they have sole or at least joint decision-making power – which makes them empowered according to the WEAI methodology. The qualitative data suggest this might come forth out of specialised female and male farming tasks. Women seem to be in charge of things like choosing which rice varieties to plant, day-to-day care of small animals and what produce to sell. Men on the other hand are more focused on tasks related to farming technology, heavy labour (e.g. soil preparation and chemical spraying), large livestock and medical care for the animals.

Notwithstanding women's ability to co-decide on the utilisation of agricultural productive resources, there are two domains where substantial progress needs to be made for the Vietnamese women in our study to become fully empowered; areas that are particularly crucial for women running a business: Control over the use of income and Time-use.

Control over the use of income

Though women are regarded as the purse string holder in the family, they manage predominantly minor household expenses. For instance, money to be able to buy groceries, clothes for the children or things for the house. When it comes to big expenditures, such as buying or selling land, investing in farming technologies, machinery or other large investments, in 20% of the cases the man indicates to be the sole decision-maker versus 7% of females (when men point to their spouse as the sole decision-maker). Two-thirds of the women interviewed indicate that they are often involved in the decision-making process, but to what extent their opinion sways the decision in cases of disagreement seems to vary a great deal when this is further explored in the qualitative interviews. Some women state that no decisions are made without the full consent of the other:

"Decisions have to be made jointly, because we are a family".

Whereas others explain that: *"When we are consulting with each other, if we disagree, I take his side in fear of being blamed if I'm wrong."*

Even for women whose husbands are gone from home for prolonged periods of time, decisions on major expenses are in many cases dealt with only once he's back. For women with a business, their husband's moral support is crucial, and they feel they couldn't do without it. So, if no consensus is achieved on an investment the first time around, women try to persuade their husbands to agree to a decision, cooking their favourite food or being additionally caring. In rare occasions, women secretly go about a major expense and only admit to it once it is a success. But in the end, they all seem to agree: if their husbands cannot be swayed, it would be difficult to make investments.

Time-use

And if the husband and wife agree to open a business, agree to large investments, and agree to work to make it successful, there is still another major barrier for women: their existing workload. Time can be divided in several categories, such as sleeping, resting and recreation, and productive and reproductive activities. The last two compose workload. Productive tasks focus on activities that are needed to generate an income or household sustenance, reproductive tasks involve domestic tasks to run the households, such as cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing.

According to the WEAI methodology, a person is considered empowered if (s)he spends less than 10.5 hours a day on a combination of productive and reproductive tasks. On average, surveyed Vietnamese women spend 10.3 hours a day on these activities, of which 6.2 hours are spent on productive and 4.1 hours on reproductive activities. In comparison, male respondents spend an average of 8.4 hours on a combination of these tasks, of which only 1.1 hour is dedicated to reproductive chores and the remaining 7.3 hours is spent on productive activities. This division of labour between men and women in the household is rooted in the Confucian traditions of Vietnamese society.¹⁰ Men are supposed to provide for the family, and women are the main caregivers. Or as the Vietnamese saying goes: Men build a house, women build a home. And Vietnamese women take great pride in being able to do so, acknowledging this as their duty and that this is the way it is. As one woman puts it:

"Wife and husband have their own work, we both struggle with our own work all day."

And although both men and women seem to think that this division of labour within the household is set in stone, small changes are noticeable. Women indicate that they would appreciate their husband's help, for instance if they have been away at a more distant market to sell produce. And husbands mentioning that they think they should help out when their wives are struggling to cope. So there is room to manoeuvre in.

Programme focus following baseline results

This baseline report indicated that women with a business in the programme areas in Vietnam are relatively empowered on the domains of Decision-making power over agricultural production, and Access to and decision-making power over productive resources. Substantial progress still needs to be made in the domains Time-use, Control over use of income and Leadership in the community; areas that are particularly important for women that run a business.

Consequently, the EOWE programme focuses its efforts for women's economic empowerment in Vietnam on these three core domains. It does this via a multitude of reinforcing and interlocking activities, but specifically, it works by encouraging household dialogue; actively involving husbands and wives and communities to change existing gender norms on the division of labour within the household. For instance, if women with a business gain more control over income to include large investments, they can take decisions to benefit their enterprise, making it viable and perhaps even growing it. And if social norms held by both men and women around the division of labour change, women could have more time available to focus on making their businesses a success. They could attend trainings, expand their skills, their network and their client base.

The EOWE programme applies SNV's "Balancing Benefits" approach, a transformative gender approach tailored to the agriculture context and applied across integrated value chains. Underscored by the essential principle of ensuring equal opportunities for all actors in agriculture it explicitly aims to change gender norms and relations in order to promote more equitable relationships between men and women, and a more economically and socially enabling environment. Women's capacity for leadership, in cooperatives, associations, business and institutions, will be built and their bargaining power to enhance women's agribusiness in markets enhanced. Women are being empowered to take an active role and (co-)ownership of decisions around productive resources and assets. It supports increasing women's share of family incomes; enhancing women's entry and success in value added businesses; and influencing business environments to support women in agri-business and enhance equity of opportunity. In the next four years, the EOWE programme supports households in Vietnam to achieve a balanced division of labour and decision-making that gives space to successful female entrepreneurship.

¹⁰ Teerawichitchainan, B., Knodel, J., Loi, V., & Huy, V., "The Gender Division of Household Labor in Vietnam: Cohort Trends and Regional Variations", *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 41(1), 57-85, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41604338> (accessed February 27, 2017).

I Background to EOWE and WEAI

Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprises (EOWE) is a 5 year women's economic empowerment programme, funded by the Department of Social Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands under the 'Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women' framework (FLOW).¹¹ The programme aims to increase women's economic participation and self-reliance in Kenya and Vietnam by catalysing a conducive national and local environment for female entrepreneurship.

Women's capacity for entrepreneurship is limited by a series of structural barriers, including those that are related to gender, i.e. women's role within the larger society, their community, their business environment and their households. For instance, women's access to productive resources is limited by the gender norms that govern ownership of assets. But also lower access to agriculture production techniques, low levels of financial literacy and limited skills and confidence are amongst explanations given for women's limited entrepreneurial capacity. Consequently, women's businesses often remain informal, tend to underperform and have a high risk of failure.¹² This has a profound impact on gender disparity in employment and economic opportunities. The EOWE programme aims to address these issues by challenging gender norms at household and community level, supporting women to develop or start a business, promoting women leadership and through advocacy activities for the development and implementation of gender-sensitive business policies and laws.

To address this problem SNV in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands (DGIS) is implementing the "Enhancing Opportunities for Women's Enterprises" (EOWE) programme in Kenya and Vietnam. The EOWE programme is built on the opportunities that lie in strengthening women's entrepreneurship and improving their access to inputs, business assets and production techniques/technology in the sectors where the majority of women's businesses operate: agriculture and renewable energy. The programme focuses on challenging gender norms at household and community level, supporting women to develop or start their own business and advocating for the development and implementation of gender-sensitive business policies and laws. Increasing women's leadership in all spheres of decision-making is essential for advancing women's influence over issues that affect them, their businesses, and society at large.

One of the key aims of the programme is to challenge gender norms inhibiting women's access to economic opportunities through behavioural change advocacy and communication. Such gender norms are lived at the community and household level. Change, therefore, starts here.

Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index

To be able to identify how gender norms are practiced at the household level to set the baseline and to measure changes in these gender norms throughout the programme, EOWE applied the abbreviated Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI). This index was created by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) together with USAID in 2012 to be able to measure, evaluate and learn about women's empowerment and inclusion in the agriculture sector. It is an aggregate index that shows the degree of empowerment women hold within their communities and within their households. It does this by interviewing both the primary male and the primary female of the household.¹³

The index consists of two sub-indices: the Five Domains of Empowerment (5DE) and the Gender Parity Index (GPI).

¹¹ FLOW: Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women, <http://www.flowprogramme.nl/Public/HomePage.aspx> (accessed February 22, 2017).

¹² X. Cirera and Q. Qasim (September 2014). Supporting Growth-Oriented Women Entrepreneurs: A Review of the Evidence and Key Challenges. World Bank

¹³ USAID (2016), *INTERVENTION GUIDE: FOR THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN AGRICULTURE INDEX (WEAI) - Practitioners' Guide to Selecting and Designing WEAI Interventions*, <https://agrilinks.org/library/intervention-guide-womens-empowerment-agriculture-index-weai-practitioners-guide-selecting> (accessed February 20, 2017).

The 5DE focuses on 5 domains which track women's empowerment in agriculture:

1. **Decision-making power over agricultural production:** This dimension concerns decisions about agricultural production and refers to sole or joint decision-making about food and cash crop farming, and livestock and fisheries
2. **Access to and decision-making power over productive resources:** This dimension concerns ownership of and access to productive resources such as land, livestock, agricultural equipment, consumer durables, and credit
3. **Control over use of income:** This dimension concerns sole or joint control over the use of income and expenditures
4. **Leadership in the community:** This dimension concerns leadership in the community, here measured by membership in formal or informal economic or social groups
5. **Time-use:** This dimension concerns the allocation of time to productive and domestic tasks

As per abbreviated WEAI (a-WEAI) which was used in this survey, each dimension had only one indicator, except the dimension on Access to and decision-making power over productive resources, which is split into two indicators:

- ❖ Ownership of assets
- ❖ Access to and decisions on credit

The original WEAI questionnaire contained 10 indicators, but as this survey was deemed too extensive, the abbreviated version made use of less questions and therefore less indicators. The empowerment of respondents on the above domains are calculated for all female and male respondents of the survey using these six indicators.

The Gender Parity Index then, unlike any other available tool, measures women's empowerment relative to men within their households. This is calculated for females in male headed households only, and uses the 5DE profiles of women and compares them to their husbands.



📷 Female grape farmer in Ninh Thuan province, Vietnam.

Together, the 2 indices form the overall WEAI score, which provides a more robust understanding of the gender empowerment gap within households and communities. The score is measured on a scale from 0-1, where higher scores reflect higher levels of empowerment.

There were several reasons for choosing to work with the abbreviated WEAI (a-WEAI):

- ❖ It is an internationally applied and verified tool to measure empowerment. Since its creation in 2012, the WEAI has been applied by IFPRI in several African and Asian countries;
- ❖ It allows for the comparison of results to other studies conducted with the a-WEAI;
- ❖ Though time-consuming, it is a relatively straightforward tool to measure something as complicated as empowerment;
- ❖ It fits very well with the aims and objectives of the EOWE programme.

Outline of the report

Following this introduction into the EOWE programme and the a-WEAI tool, the next section goes into the psychometrics of our sample: who participated in our study? *Chapter 3* then briefly outlines the empowerment scores for the 5DE, the GPI and the WEAI for Vietnam, before *chapters 4 to 6* highlight differences between men and women on selected domains. *Chapter 7* explores if women from female-headed households are unlike women from male-headed households in their empowerment levels. *Chapter 8* then looks into other possible socio-demographic influencers of empowerment, before conclusions are presented. The study methodologies and qualitative interviews with women from our sample are provided in the annexes.

If following this report you have any questions, comments, feedback or would like to see more detailed data, please send an email to Leonie Hoijtink: lhoijtink@snv.org.

2 Who participated in the study?

This chapter looks into who participated in this study by providing information on for instance the number and percentages of people from the different provinces, what livelihood activities they are engaged in, what type of assets they own, how food secure they are and to what extent they are engaged in their communities.

Provinces

This baseline study was conducted in July 2016 in 4 provinces in Vietnam: Binh Dinh, Binh Thuan, Ninh Thuan and Quang Binh, see Map 2.1. The study sample was obtained by contacting cooperatives and randomly sampling cooperative members with their spouses. This means that the sample is not representative of the general Vietnamese population, but is a reflection of women (and their households) who are working in agriculture or energy as primary producers. For the calculation of the WEAI we interviewed 1,201 respondents, of which 525 men and 676 women.

Map 2.1 The four study provinces in Vietnam (shaded in dark green)

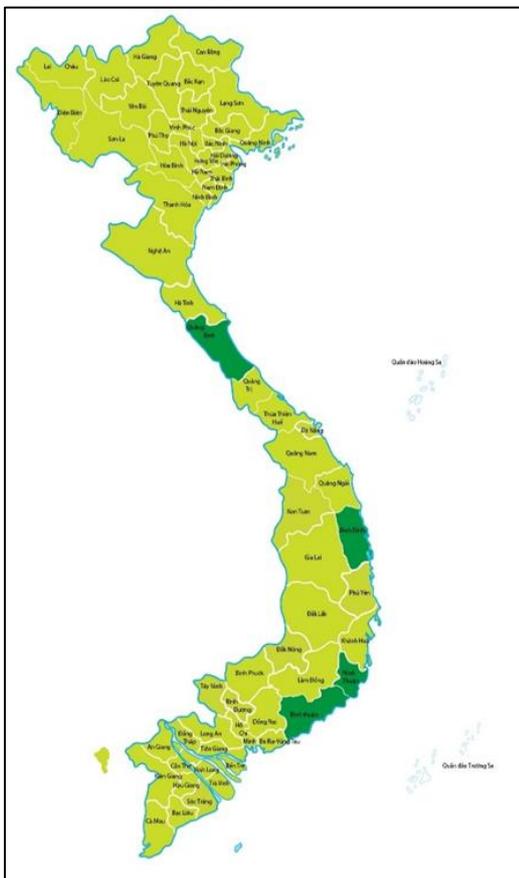


Table 2.1 shows the household characteristics of the baseline sample. The majority of households is from the largest province Binh Dinh, followed by Quang Binh, Binh Thuan and Ninh Thuan. The spread of households and respondents over the provinces is similar to the relative population sizes of these four provinces.

Female or male-headed households

Over a fifth of our sample is female-headed households (23%), although only 13% of overall respondents are from a female-headed household. This is because males and females from male-headed households are residing in the same household. According to the a-WEAI definition a household is "is a group of people who live together and take food from the same pot [...]. A household member is someone who has lived in the household at least 6 months and at least half of the week in each of those months." This means that men who were not present in the

household for more than 3 months out of the last 6 months, are not considered to be household members. Female-headed households are therefore households where the woman lives alone with or without children, e.g. because she is a widow or divorced, or where her husband is away for prolonged periods of time, because he is a city migrant worker or is out at sea. In our sample, 47% of the respondents from female-headed households indicate to be married, 32% is widowed and 14% is single or never married.

Household size

Households are small, with over half containing 1 to 3 household members (with 4% consisting of only 1 member), which is in line with the declining average household size that has been taking place in Vietnam since the 1980s¹⁴ and stood at 3.8 people per rural household in 2009.¹⁵ The average household size in our sample is 3.5 people.

Food Consumption Score

One of the household characteristics displayed is the Food Consumption Score, which is a weighted diet diversity score, calculated using the frequency of consumption of different food groups by a household during the seven days before the survey.¹⁶ It appears that almost all households interviewed scored an “acceptable”, indicating that access to food and diversity of food is in general not an issue for the respondents.

Level of education

Looking at the level of education of respondents in our sample, we see that a fifth of respondents has never attended school or has no qualification, and only 15% obtained upper secondary or a higher level of education. This is slightly lower than the general rural Vietnamese population, of which 30% has completed their primary education and 14% achieved an upper secondary or higher level of education.¹⁷ The sample therefore seems to have relatively low educational levels, although the census information quoted here takes into account the entire rural Vietnamese population older than 5. Our sample mainly consists of those over 40, as Table 2.1 shows.

Main source of income

Around two thirds of respondents earn most of their income from crop farming or keeping livestock. Female heads of households seem more involved in livestock rearing (24%) compared to male heads of households (19%).

Our sample therefore seems to predominantly consist of people active in the agricultural sector and with a lower educational level.

Table 2.1. Respondent characteristics of the baseline sample

Province	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Binh Dinh	833	69,4%
Binh Thuan	38	3,2%
Ninh Thuan	13	1,1%
Quang Binh	317	26,4%
<i>Total</i>	1,201	100%
Type of Household		
Female-headed (no male)	153	12,7%
Male-headed	1,048	87,3%
<i>Total</i>	1,201	100%
Gender		
Male	525	43,7%
Female	676	56,3%
<i>Total</i>	1,201	100%
Number of HH members		
1	49	4.1%
2-3	580	48.3%
4-5	418	34.8%
6>	154	12.8%

¹⁴ Nguyen, Thanh Binh (2011), *The trend of Vietnamese household size in recent years*. International Conference on Humanities, Society and Culture IPEDR, Vol.20, IACSIT Press, Singapore.

¹⁵ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), *The World Factbook*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/vn.html> (accessed February 21, 2017).

¹⁶ World Food Programme (2008), *Food consumption analysis: Calculation and use of the food consumption score in food security analysis*, http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/manual_guide_proced/wfp197216.pdf (accessed February 23, 2017).

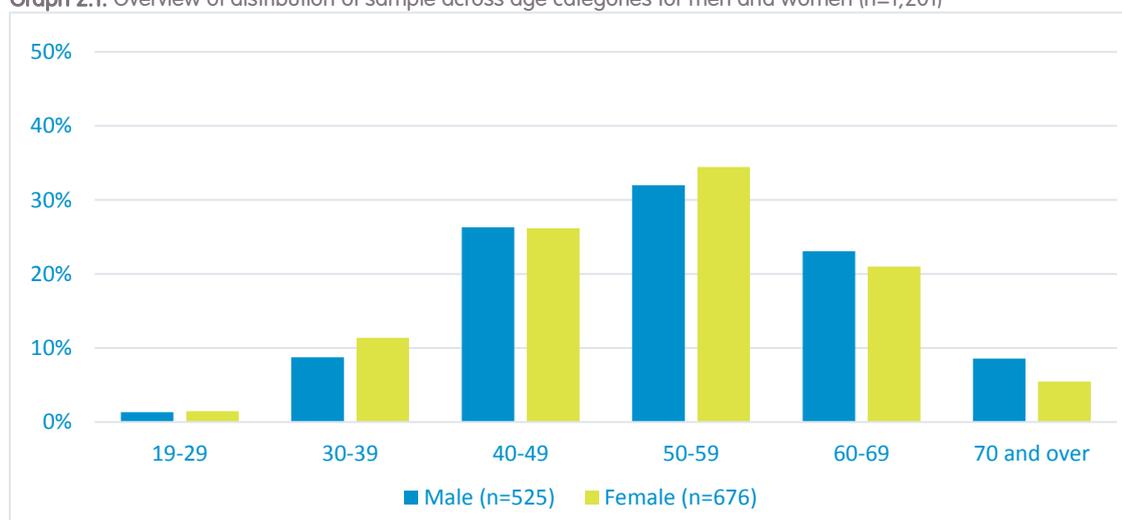
¹⁷ Central Population and Housing Steering Committee (2010), *The 2009 Vietnam Population and Housing Census*, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/wphc/Viet%20Nam/Vietnam-Findings.pdf> (accessed February 16, 2017).

<i>Total</i>	<i>1,201</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
Age		
19-29	17	1,4%
30-39	123	10,2%
40-49	315	26,2%
50-59	401	33,4%
60-69	263	21,9%
70 and over	82	6,8%
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,201</i>	<i>100%</i>
Highest grade of education		
No qualification or never attended	244	20,9%
Primary	374	32,0%
Lower secondary	373	31,9%
Upper secondary or higher	179	15,3%
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,170</i>	<i>100%</i>
Highest earning livelihood		
Salary/ wage employed	200	17,4%
Self-employed (goods delivery)	77	6,7%
Self-employed (service delivery)	58	5,1%
Crop farming	583	50,8%
Livestock farming	208	18,1%
Not working in the past 12 months	3	0,3%
Other (specify)	19	1,7%
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,148</i>	<i>100%</i>

Age

Graph 2.1 shows that the group of older people, men and women older than 55, in our sample is bigger (more than 50%) than the proportion of this group in the general Vietnamese population (14%).¹⁸ This can perhaps be explained by the fact that the sample was drawn from a list of cooperative members and therefore of people who sell (part of) what they produce.

Graph 2.1. Overview of distribution of sample across age categories for men and women (n=1,201)

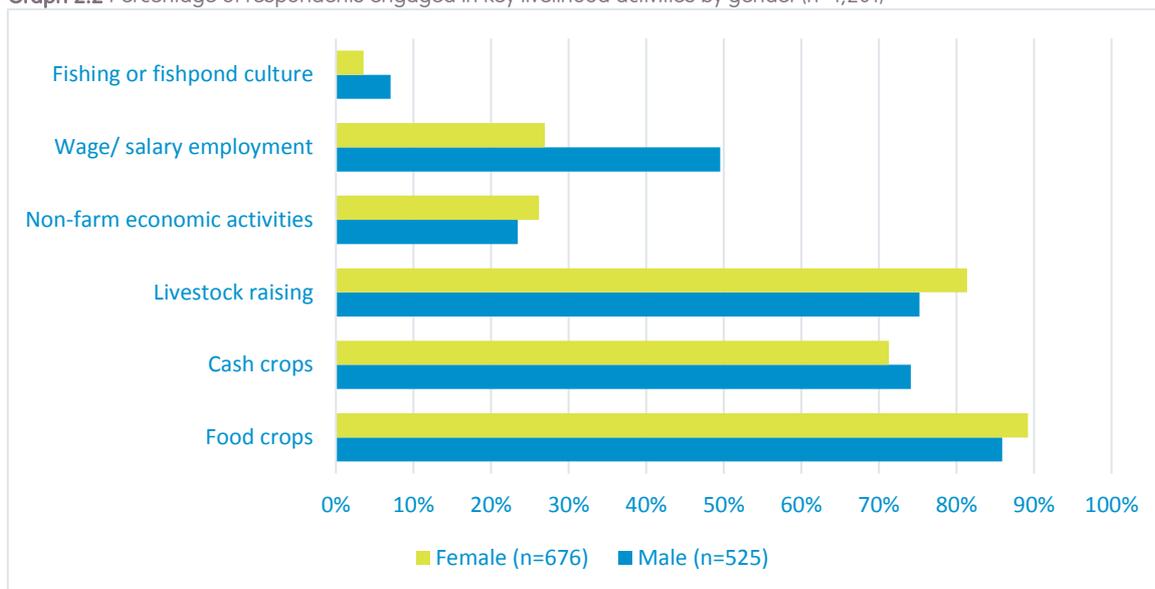


Livelihood activities engaged in

Graph 2.2 shows that a vast majority of men and women in the sample are participating in more than one livelihood activity. On average, men have 3.15 livelihood activities, and women 2.99. Most participants are working in food crop farming (88%) and livestock raising (78%), followed by cash crop farming (72.5%). Women seem to work more in livestock raising (81% vs 75%) and men are more engaged in wage and salary employment (49.5% vs 27% for women).

¹⁸ Central Population and Housing Steering Committee (2010), *The 2009 Vietnam Population and Housing Census*, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/wphc/Viet%20Nam/Vietnam-Findings.pdf> (accessed February 16, 2017).

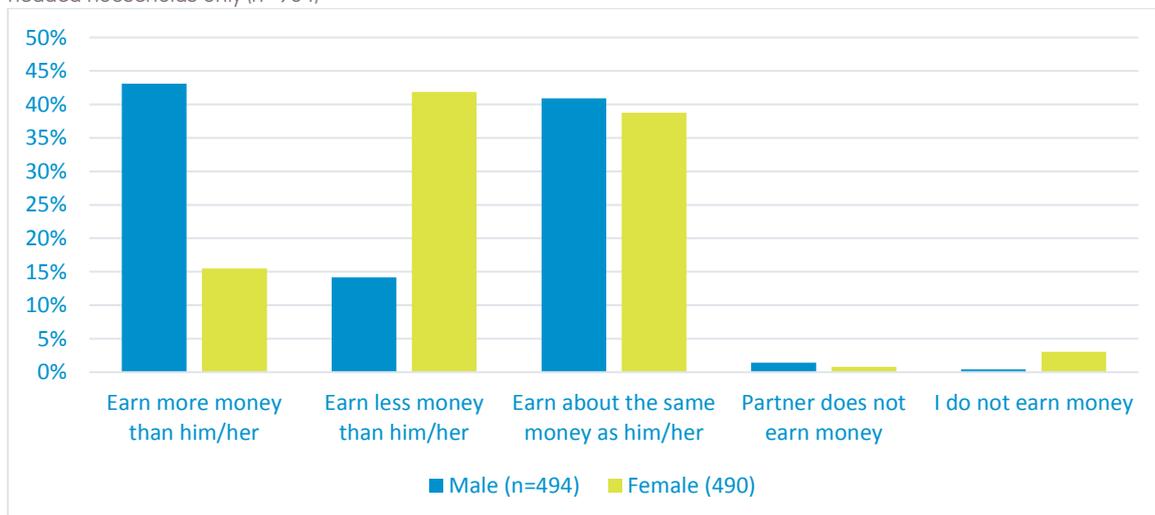
Graph 2.2 Percentage of respondents engaged in key livelihood activities by gender (n=1,201)



Income earned compared to partner

While engaged in these activities, men seem to earn more in comparison to their spouses. As can be drawn from Graph 2.3 43% of men indicate to earn more than their spouse, compared to 15.5% of women. At the same time, 42% of women indicate to earn less than their spouse, compared to 14% of men. In dual households (with both an adult primary male and female), men seem to be the main breadwinners.

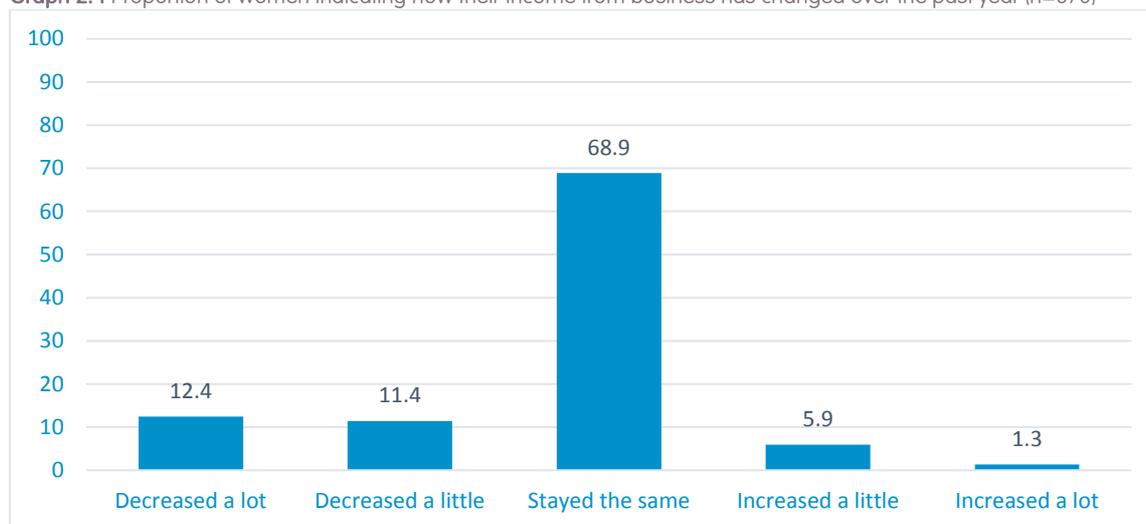
Graph 2.3 Percentage of respondents that indicates to earn more, less or the same as their spouse, asked to respondents from male-headed households only (n=984)



Women’s income from businesses

Female respondents were asked to what extent they felt their income from their business has changed in the past year. This business could be from primary producers selling their produce to a cooperative to women owning an SME. A large majority of women feel their income has remained the same (70%). Almost a quarter though felt that their income has decreased (11%) or decreased a lot (12%).

Graph 2.4 Proportion of women indicating how their income from business has changed over the past year (n=676)



Ownership of assets

As shown in Table 2.2 a vast majority of respondents indicates that their household owns agricultural land (94.5%), means of transportation such as a motor bike (98.5%) and a house (83%). Owning large or small livestock is less common (respectively 37% and 45%). In over 80% of the cases where a household does own an asset, both men and women indicate to jointly own that particular asset. Notable exceptions to this are the cell phone, which 74% of respondents own by themselves, and the means of transportation, such as a motorbike, which almost 30% of respondents owns solely.

Table 2.2 Household ownership of assets (n=1,201)

Asset type	Frequency	Percentage
Agricultural land	1,135	94.5%
Large livestock	441	36.7%
Small livestock	541	45.0%
Chickens/ducks/turkeys/pigeons	918	76.4%
Fishing/fishpond	91	7.6%
Farm equipment (non-mechanic)	920	76.6%
Farm equipment (mechanic)	256	21.3%
Non-farm business equipment	125	10.4%
House (or other structures)	996	82.9%
Large consumer durables	1,177	98.0%
Small consumer durables	1,176	97.9%
Cell phone	1,161	96.7%
Other non-agricultural land	727	60.5%
Means of transportation	1,183	98.5%

3 5 Domains of Empowerment

In this chapter we discuss the results of the WEAI index, the 5 Domains of Empowerment score and the Gender Parity Index (GPI). After that, we will further explore the differences between men and women on the 5DE score.

Overall WEAI, GPI and 5DE scores

Table 3.2 shows the percentage of men and women in our sample that are considered empowered and their 5 Domains of Empowerment Score (5DE). Only those respondents that answered all relevant a-WEAI questions were used to calculate the different scores.

According to the WEAI methodology a person is empowered when he or she has achieved adequacy in 80% of the weighted indicators. There are six indicators for the a-WEAI divided over the 5 domains, as depicted below:

Table 3.1 A-WEAI 5DE and their indicators

Domain	Indicators
Decision-making over agricultural production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input in productive decisions
Access to and decision-making power over productive resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ownership of assets Access to and decisions on credit
Control over the use of income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control over use of income
Leadership in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group membership
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workload

For an overview of the weights of the 6 indicators, please see reference Annex 2.

Each indicator is given a value of 1 if the respondent has exceeded the given threshold for the indicator and 0 if the respondent falls below it. According to the WEAI methodology a person is considered empowered if (s)he has adequate achievements in 4 of the 5 domains or is empowered in a combination of the weighted indicators that reflect 80% adequacy.

Table 3.2 Disempowerment and Empowerment Scores for men and women (n=1,201)

	Women (n=676)	Men (n=525)
Empowered headcount	56.9%	69.7%
Disempowered headcount	43.1%	30.3%
Average inadequacy score	33.1%	33.4%
5DE score	0.8575	0.8988
% of total sample used for calculation of score	90.6%	92.8%
	Women (n=494)	
Gender Parity Index (GPI) ¹⁹	0.954	
WEAI	0.867	

Results show that Vietnamese men are more often empowered than Vietnamese women: almost 70% of men pass the threshold compared to 57% of women.

The average inadequacy score shows that of the women that are disempowered, they are disempowered in 33.1% of the domains. In other words, those women that are not yet empowered according to the above defined cut-off, are empowered in 66.9% of the domains. Dismissing these women as completely disempowered would not reflect their actual situation.

¹⁹ For the purpose of this report, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) and women's empowerment score are only calculated for women to reflect the parity and empowerment of women relative to men

Therefore, to come to the 5DE score, the sum of these two figures (43.1% disempowered women * 66.9% of domains where they are empowered) is added to the percentage of women that did pass the threshold (56.9%): $0.5695 + (0.4305 * 0.6899) = 0.8575$.

When applying the same calculation to men, those men that are overall disempowered, are empowered in 66.6% of the domains. Leading to a 5DE score of: $0.6971 + (0.3028 * 0.6658) = 0.8988$.

The 5DE score gives an indication not only of the level of empowerment, but also the intensity of it.²⁰ The higher the score (between 0 and 1), the higher the level and intensity of empowerment. Compared to other studies conducted with the WEAI, it seems Vietnamese men and women enjoy relatively high levels of empowerment. In Southwestern Bangladesh, only 39% of women were empowered (with a 5DE score of 0.746), and 60.2% of men (with a 5DE score of 0.799). In the Western Highlands of Guatemala, 28.7% of women achieved adequacy in 80% of indicators (with a 5DE score of 0.690) and 60.9% of men were empowered (with a 5DE score of 0.871). And finally, in Uganda, 43.3% of women were considered empowered (with a 5DE score of 0.789), compared to 63.0% of men (with a 5DE score of 0.878).²¹

The Gender Parity Index is calculated for those women that live in male-headed households. The empowerment levels of these women is compared to the empowerment level of their male counterpart. This creates a group of women that have achieved gender parity and a group of women that have not. A second step is to then calculate the empowerment gap for individual women and the average empowerment gap for all women used in the GPI. This average gap is then multiplied with the percentage of women that do not have gender parity. When this is subtracted from 1, the GPI score emerges:

$$\text{GPI} = 1 - \text{Hw}(\text{Rp})$$

Hw= % of women without gender parity

Rp= average empowerment gap between women compared with men in their household

In the current baseline, the GPI is 0.954, which indicates that the current gender gap between men and women living in the same household is relatively small.

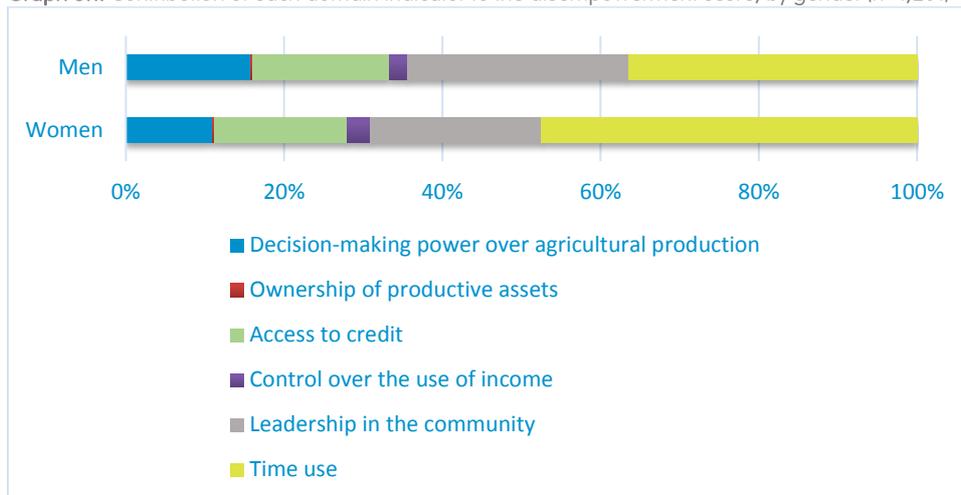
The 5DE score and differences between men and women

Graph 3.1 explores how each of the six weighted indicators, mentioned in Table 3.1, contribute to the disempowerment score of both groups. It appears that Time-use is the biggest contributor to disempowerment for men and women, though this is more so for the latter: for women, their score is for 47.5% made up of Time-use, compared to 37% of the score for men. Leadership in the community is the second large influencer of disempowerment, especially for men (28% of the male score compared to 22% for women), followed by Access to credit, at roughly 17% for both groups. Decision-making power over agricultural production seems to be a larger issue for women (16%) than it is for men (11%). And Control over income and especially Ownership over productive assets seem to be much less of an issue for both groups.

²⁰ Alkire et al. (2012). *The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index*. IFPRI Discussion Paper 01240.

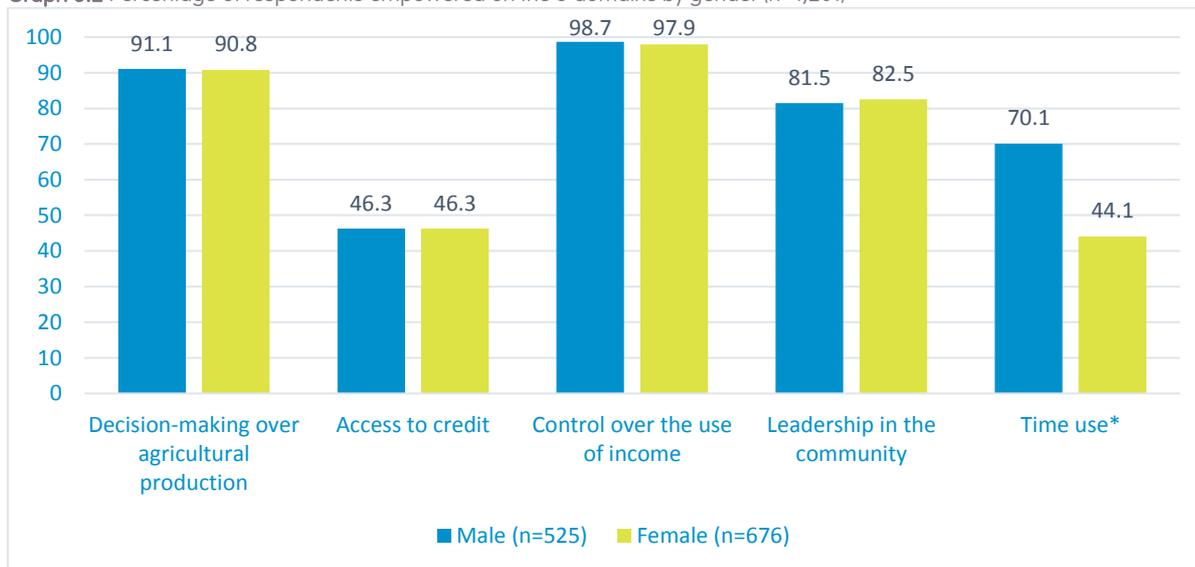
²¹ Alkire et al. (2012). *The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index*. IFPRI Discussion Paper 01240.

Graph 3.1. Contribution of each domain indicator to the disempowerment score, by gender (n=1,201)



Exploring these differences further in Graph 3.2, it becomes apparent that there are only significant differences between men and women on Time-use. A majority of women is disempowered in this domain (55.9%) compared to almost a third of men (29.9%), which is a highly significant difference. On the other domains, we see that men are in general more empowered, with the exception of Leadership in the community, but none of these differences between the two genders are statistically significant.²² They could therefore have been brought about by chance. This picture does not change if analysis is restricted to only those men and women from male-headed households, and is confirmed by the qualitative data.

Graph 3.2 Percentage of respondents empowered on the 5 domains by gender (n=1,201)



* Significant at p=0.000, Pearson's X2= 80.943

²² For both men and women, only 1 respondent had a score that reflected disempowerment for ownership of assets, this domain is therefore not further explored in any of the following analysis.

Focus group discussions found that decision-making in the household on agricultural activities and business, are often done jointly. This is partly due to the different roles men and women play in these activities. Women seem to be responsible for taking care of livestock, selecting rice varieties and the paddies, whereas men spray pesticides, do the husking, heavy lifting, as well as focus on technology and overall health of any animals. They both therefore have their areas of expertise. At the same time, the Vietnamese government has put a lot of emphasis in the last decade on the importance of harmony within the family, for instance by passing the Domestic Violence Prevention and Control Law (2007) and adjusting the marriage and family law in 2014 that recognises women as equals. Participants in the focus group discussions indicate that they make joint decisions to avoid unnecessary quarrelling and/or blaming.

"When I obstruct something that my wife proposes and she reacts forcefully, I have to accept and follow."

- Male, age unknown -

"I participate in only a few purchase and sales transactions because my husband is the major decision-maker. He often informs me about the decision after the transaction. When we are consulting with each other, if we disagree, I take his side in fear of being blamed if I'm wrong."

- Female, 53 years old -

Conclusion

Vietnamese men in the sample are more often empowered than Vietnamese women. Time-use is the biggest contributor to disempowerment for both groups, though this is a significantly bigger issue for women. Other domains that are problematic are Access to credit and Leadership in the community, although no significant differences between men and women were found for any of the domains outside of Time-use. The next 3 chapters will explore the differences between men and women further for Time-use, Control over use of income and Leadership in the community.

4 Domain Time-use

In the previous chapter, we saw that Time-use was the biggest contributor to disempowerment for both men and women. Moreover, it appeared that men are significantly more likely to be empowered in this domain than women. Therefore, this chapter looks into the difference time use categories to see where differences lie between men and women and what their underlying causes could be.

Domain Time-use

The domain Time can be divided up in several different categories of time activities:

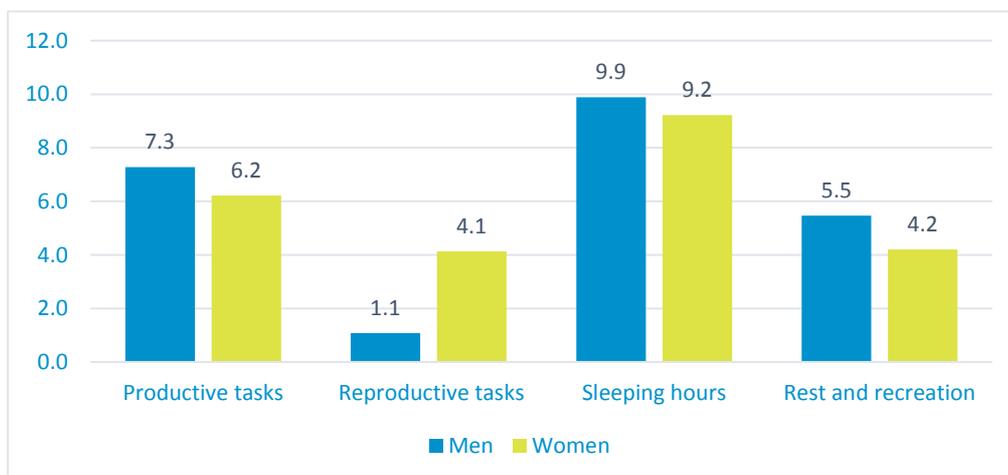
- ❖ Productive tasks – this includes time spent on farming, wage and salary employment, selling produce, but also commuting to work or the market place;
- ❖ Reproductive tasks – this spans tasks that are related to running the daily household, such as caring for children and the elderly, grocery shopping, cooking and cleaning, etc.;
- ❖ Sleeping;
- ❖ Resting and Recreation – this includes exercising, reading, listening to the radio, watching TV, etc.;
- ❖ Other – this concerns other time uses, such as going to school and studying.

According to the WEAI, a person is considered to be disempowered in time use if they spend 10.5 hours or more a day on a combination of productive and reproductive tasks – this can also be called someone’s workload.

Graph 4.1 shows that on average, women are very close to this disempowerment threshold at 10.3 hours a day, compared to 8.4 hours a day for men. They spend significantly more time on the combination of these two types of activities. However, men are significantly more involved with productive tasks (7.3 hours a day compared to 6.2 hours for women) and women spend more time on reproductive tasks (4.1 compared to 1.1 hours a day). Over 80 percent of women indicate that it’s always (56%) or usually them (29%) performing the reproductive tasks. These results seem to confirm the earlier conclusion in Chapter 2 that men are the breadwinners of the household.

Simultaneously, men sleep, rest and recreate and participate in “important community and family events” more than women do, so it seems men have more time to relax and unwind, whereas women dedicate a substantial amount of their day to reproductive tasks in addition to productive activities. Here too, this picture does not change if analysis is restricted to only those men and women from male-headed households.

Graph 4.1 Average number of hours spent on activities by gender (n=1,201)



Significant differences on productive tasks with $p=0.000$ and $t\text{-value}=4.710$; significant differences on reproductive hours with $p=0.000$ and $t\text{-value}=4.710$; significant differences on sleeping with $p=0.000$ and $t\text{-value}= 5.045$; significant differences on resting and recreation with $p=0.000$ and $t\text{-value}$ is 8.607

Men and women from the focus groups discussions, recognise that there is a gender divide in tasks, and that women work more than men. What makes women's workloads particularly heavy is the combination of being involved in productive tasks and being the main caretaker of the household. One man noted during a focus group discussion: "*Women are more miserable than men*".

This division of labour is rooted in the Confucian traditions of Vietnamese society. A good woman is defined by four characteristics:

- (1) *Công*: Do many domestic things with good quality;
- (2) *Dung*: Neat and humble physical appearance;
- (3) *Ngôn*: Speak gently with refrain from violence and anger;
- (4) *Hạnh*: Inner beauty.

And although the Women's Union updated this old framework to the more modern "Say No to 5 and Say Yes to 3", this still presupposes that the female is the predominant care taker. With this campaign, women should say (1) No to poverty and starvation, (2) No law violations, (3) No social evils, (4) No third birth and (5) No children quitting schools and bearing malnutrition, but should say (1) Yes to a clean person, (2) Yes to a clean house and (3) Yes to a clean neighbourhood.

These characteristics of a good woman are very much alive with the women and men interviewed. Women feel it is their duty to take care of the household, and also take a great deal of pride in being able to do so. At the same time, it's noticeable that women are open to receiving support at times, and that men are willing to help out where necessary. Although sometimes women have to force it.

But in the majority of cases, women feel it's their duty to take care of their family, and that their husbands are already working hard to provide for the family. Therefore women often feel that they should not be asking their husbands to help at home.

The wife's work is the wife's work when she's home, but when she cannot finish the work, husbands should help. I was hanging in the hammock, but when I saw the dirty floor, it made me feel uncomfortable and I just cleaned it. I help my wife with cooking the food. It is good I can cook what I like to eat."

- Male, age unknown -

"Women take care of household work and do business at the same time. One time, I went on a business trip and got home late, around noon, but still had to cook for the family; while the man was staying at home, but did not cook. This happened many times and made me very tired. After that, if I came home late, I decided not to cook for the family. Eventually, they had to go to the kitchen to cook for themselves when the wife is away or comes home late."

- Female, age unknown -

"It's because of me and the children that my husband has to work at sea in dangerous and harsh conditions, so when he comes home I exempt him from doing housework."

- Female, 53 years old -

Conclusion

The Vietnamese women in this study have significantly higher workload burdens than men, created by the expectation that women should both contribute to productive tasks, as well as being the main caretaker of the family, is. The qualitative data indicates that this expectation lives among both men and women, and is rooted in the country's Confucian tradition, which is male-oriented and male-dominated.

5 Domain control over use of income

In Chapter 3 we saw that Control over the use of income is not necessarily a main issue for women's economic empowerment. However, from the qualitative data collected it became apparent that there is a distinct difference between the control a woman has over small amounts of money and large amounts of money. Based on these qualitative findings, this indicator is further broken down to see if a different picture emerges on the differences between men and women.

Control over the use of income

According to the a-WEAI methodology, a person is considered empowered if there is at least one category of income in which (s)he has some input into income decisions for at least one domain or if (s)he feels that (s)he can make decisions regarding income and expenditures – as long as this is not only on minor household decisions.

The categories this domain looks at are:

- ❖ Income from Food crops
- ❖ Income from Cash crops
- ❖ Income from Livestock raising
- ❖ Income from Fishing or Fish Ponds
- ❖ Income from Non-farm economic activities
- ❖ Income from Wage/Salary

It then also includes decision-making over:

- ❖ Minor household expenses
- ❖ Major household expenses

Control over the use of income broken down between men and women

Despite the fact that there are no significant differences on the overall domain of control over the use of income, this domain blurs a possible distinction between the types of expenditure. The qualitative data collected indicate that women have more control over the use of income when it concerns relatively small expenditures, for instance when it comes to grocery shopping, school fees or clothes for the children. For large expenditures, that concern things as land and means of transportation, female participants claimed that although men might consult their spouses, they are the ultimate decision-makers.

"I have to consult and discuss with my husband regarding highly valuable assets like land, livestock and the money he makes at sea, but I alone decide and allocate the little money I make from sales of farm produce."

- Female, 34 years old -

Results presented in Table 5.1 show that women do have input into decision-making on how income from livelihood activities is spent, even on income from wage and salary activities, which is predominantly performed by males. In fact, women more often than men indicate that they have input into some or most decisions.

Table 5.1 Input into decision-making around the use of income from different livelihood activities

Decision-making income from food crops	Men	Women
No input or input into few decisions	7.74%	3.11%
Input into some decisions	38.05%	24.55%
Input into most decisions	54.20%	72.34%
Decision-making income from cash crops	Men	Women
No input or input into few decisions	8.72%	2.07%
Input into some decisions	35.38%	27.74%
Input into most decisions	55.90%	70.19%
Decision-making income from livestock	Men	Women
No input or input into few decisions	10.58%	2.87%

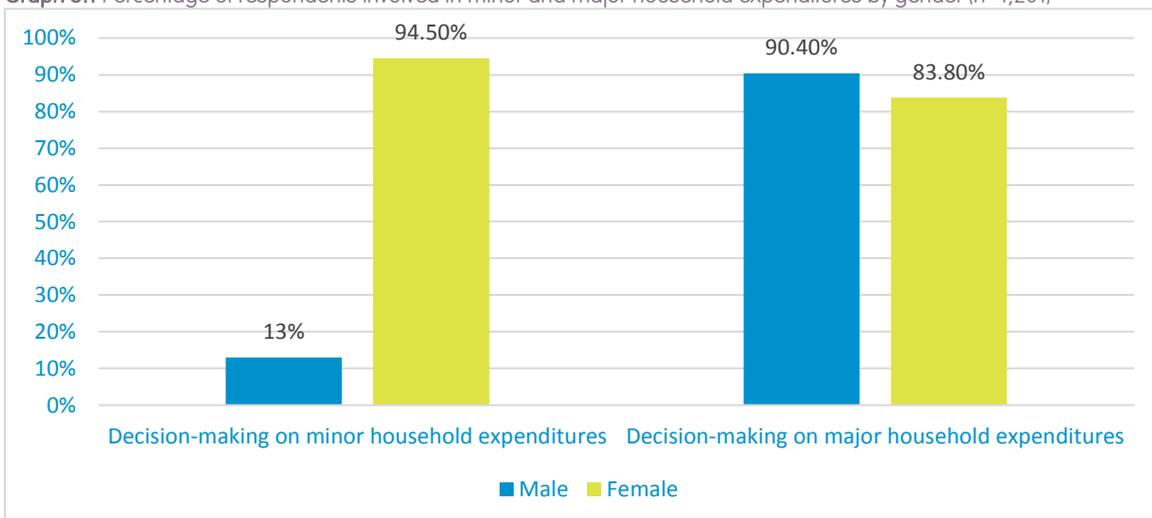
Input into some decisions	41.06%	25.13%
Input into most decisions	48.36%	71.99%
Decision-making income from wage/salary	Men	Women
No input or input into few decisions	7.60%	2.70%
Input into some decisions	21.29%	13.51%
Input into most decisions	71.10%	83.78%

* All differences are significant at the p=0.05 level

But when this input into decision-making is broken down by major or minor household expenditures, results from Graph 5.1 indicate that women’s influence is confined to minor household expenditures and men are significantly more involved in decision-making around major expenditures. Results from focus groups with men and women confirm this and even reflect that managing household funds is considered a woman’s right. Men admit that they are not used to managing money, and that it’s easy for them to overspend money on drinking or smoking. As one woman puts it:

"I take responsibility for keeping the cash, allocating expenses for the children’s school tuition, weddings, funerals etc. My husband doesn’t take part and only asks when he needs some. What to buy when going shopping is my decision. Women should be the ones who manages cash. Letting men do so would be disadvantageous. It’s not right to have to ask for money every time you need to buy a bit of fish or fish sauce; women should handle cash to take care of the children. Cash left in men’s hands would be lost."

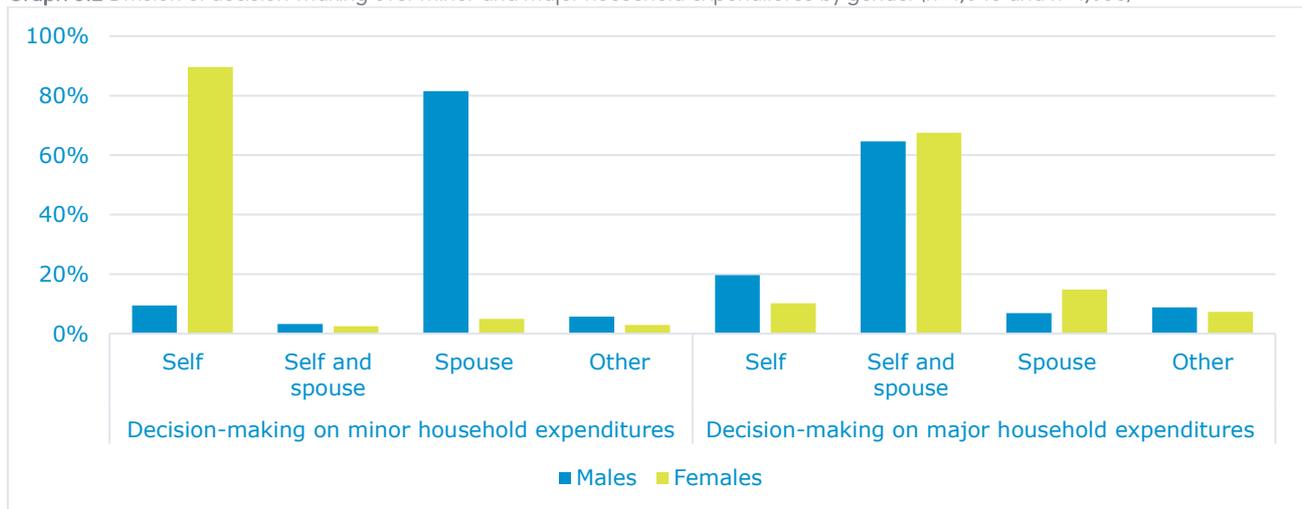
Graph 5.1 Percentage of respondents involved in minor and major household expenditures by gender (n=1,201)



* All differences are significant, for minor household expenditures p= 0.000 and Pearson’s X2= 812.1; for major household expenses p=0.001 and Pearson’s X2= 11.2

Focusing specifically on men and women from male-headed households, results in Graph 5.2 indicate that men are more often the sole decision-maker in relation to major household expenditures (19.6% of men versus 10.2% of women), but most men leave decisions over minor expenses completely to their spouses (81.2%). A vast majority of both male and female respondents respond that major expenses are decided over together with the spouse. However, from the focus group discussions and gender context analysis, it appears that women are often consulted and have some say, but that in cases of disagreement the man’s opinion weighs the heaviest.

Graph 5.2 Division of decision-making over minor and major household expenditures by gender (n=1,048 and n=1,038)*



*Differences in sample size are due to missing values for the 2 expense groups (minor expenses n=1,048; major expenses n=1,038)

Even though there is not a significant difference between men and women on their overall empowerment on control over income, there does seem to be a divide by the type of expenditure. Men often have the final say of major expenditures, and women decide over minor expenditures.

Conclusion

In Chapter 2, Graph 2.3 showed that the men in our sample more often indicate to earn more money than their spouses and that it appears that they are the main breadwinners. It's likely that this also positively influences the amount of power they have to make decisions on major household expenses. On the other hand, these men do not appear to be more educated than women, not even when the analysis is limited to men and women from the same household. And although men are significantly older than women, the difference is minor (1 year) and therefore negligible. So, these 2 characteristics are unlikely to make a large difference on the difference in level of empowerment between men and women.

6 Domain Leadership in the community

This chapter focuses on the domain of Leadership in the community. Despite most women being a member of a group, Leadership in the community is the second biggest contributor to disempowerment. It is worth exploring what types of groups women are members of, and if this pattern is different to the groups that men are members of. This could unveil possible other economic empowerment issues for Vietnamese women.

Leadership in the community

The WEAI methodology considers someone to be empowered in the Leadership in the community domain if (s)he is an active member of at least 1 community group. Examples of such groups are agricultural groups, water groups that discuss water and sanitation in the community, forest groups that discuss use and conservation of forests near the community, civic groups aimed at community improvements and that organise social events such as weddings and funerals, trade or business groups and religious groups.

Group membership

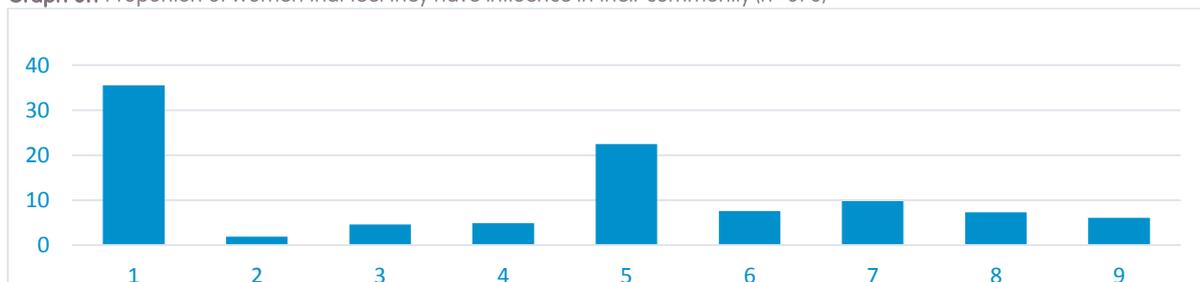
For both men and women, Leadership in the Community is the second biggest contributor to disempowerment, despite the fact that many of them are members of a group (84% of women and 82% of men). Looking further in the types of groups men and women are active members of, we see that men are predominantly members of agricultural groups (62%), civic groups aimed at community improvements (38%) and insurance groups (28%). Women have a similar top three, though arranged differently. They are predominantly involved in civic groups (75%), followed by agricultural groups (26%) and insurance groups (19%). For both men and women, only a few respondents are members of trade or business associations (respectively 5% and 2.5%). In fact, respondents indicate that such associations hardly exist. Over two thirds indicate such a group does not exist in their community, and another 16% don't know if they do. For women with a business, as the ones who are the subject of this baseline, such trade or business groups could help them create sustainable and viable enterprises.

Influence in the community

The WEAI asks women to what extent they are a member of groups, and assumes that group membership can then be extended to mean influence in the community. To test whether this is the case, women in our study were asked to rate the extent of their influence in their community on a scale from 1 to 9, where 1 is very little to no influence and 9 is the highest level of influence.

Surprisingly, as can be seen in Graph 6.1, the largest group of women felt they had only very limited influence, scaling it at the lowest possible rung: 1 (35.5%). Less than a quarter feel that they have relatively large amounts of influence, with 23% indicating it as a 7 or higher. This seems to be in line with the answers to the question if respondents ever voice their opinion in public: 43% of women indicates to never do so, compared to 6% who do so often.

Graph 6.1 Proportion of women that feel they have influence in their community (n=676)



Conclusion

It therefore seems that the assumption the WEAI makes that group membership equals leadership or influence is unwarranted. Instead, substantial progress could be made in this field to increase women's economic empowerment.

7

Differences between women from female-headed and male-headed households

In the previous Chapters, the analysis focused on the difference between men and women. Another important distinction could be the difference between women from male-headed and female-headed households. Women taking care of families on their own, might be more empowered as they might have more decision-making power. On the other hand, they could be more disempowered, if single women are restricted in for instance accessing credit. If such differences exist, this could influence the way the programme targets single female entrepreneurs and female entrepreneurs living with a spouse.

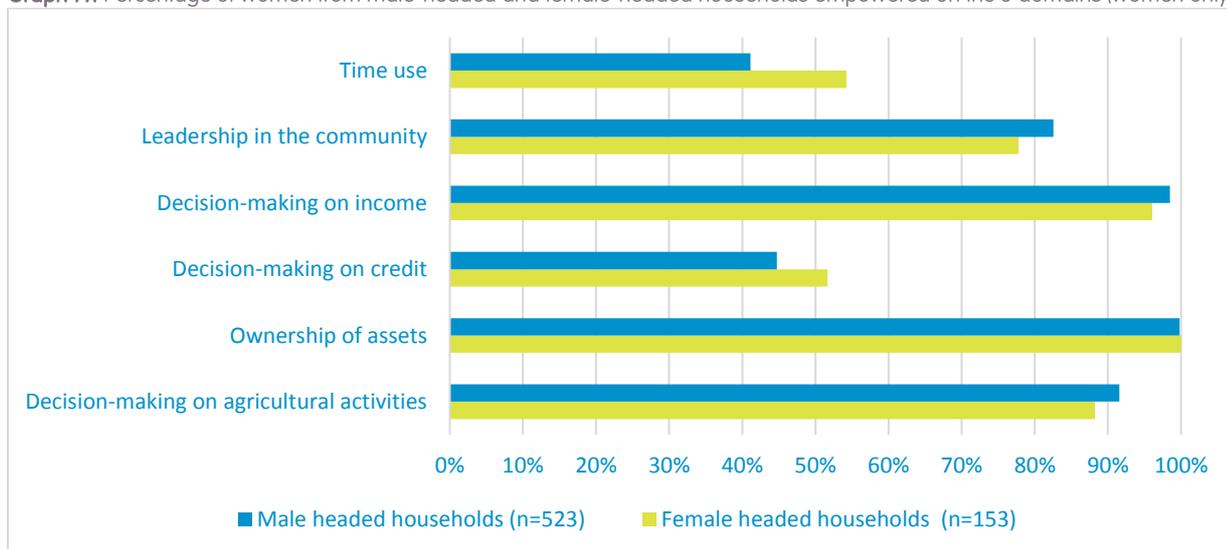
Male-headed or female-headed household

The a-WEAI methodology makes a clear distinction between female-headed households (FHH) and male-headed household (MHH). In FHH, there is no male adult present for at least 3 consecutive months at the moment of the interview. This could be due to long-term absence (e.g. when the husband is a migrant worker), divorce or death. In those cases, women live alone or with their children. In MHH, the woman lives with her husband and any possible children.

Differences between females from FHH and MHH on 5DE

The results in Graph 7.1 indicate that there are no significant differences between women from the different household types, except on workload. It appears women from female-headed households are more likely to be empowered in this domain (54%) compared to women from male-headed households (41%). So women from male-headed households have heavier workload burdens and are more likely to work 10.5 hours a day or more.

Graph 7.1 Percentage of women from male-headed and female-headed households empowered on the 5 domains (women only, n=676)



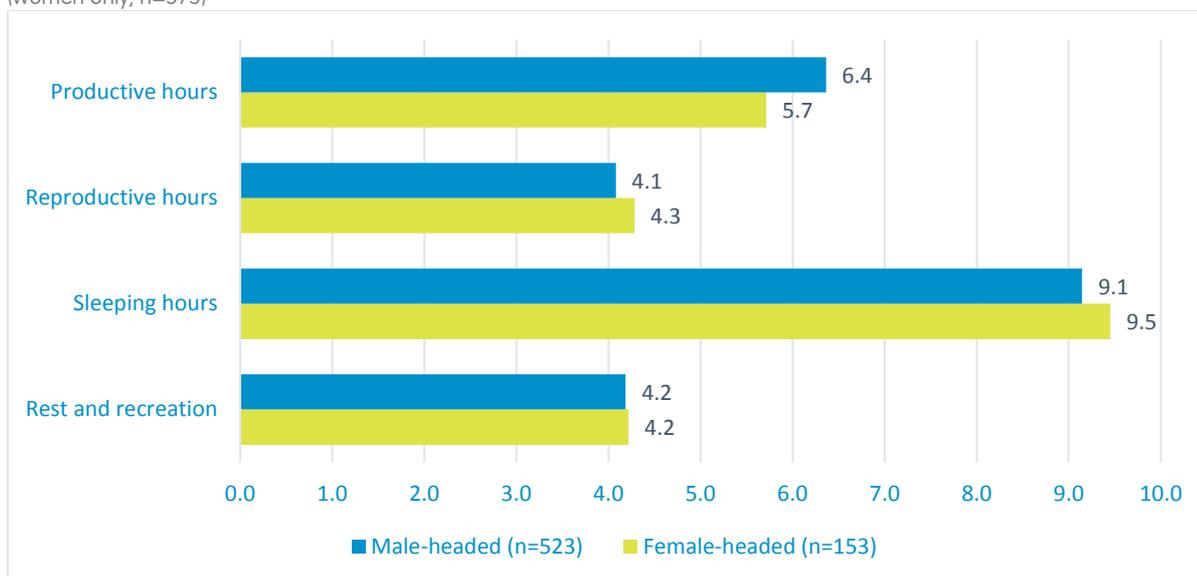
* Significant difference on Time-use with Pearson's $\chi^2=8.291$ and $p=0.004$; no significant differences on Leadership in the community with Pearson's $\chi^2= 3.118$ and $p=0.077$; no significant differences on Ownership of assets with Pearson's $\chi^2 =0.293$ and $p=0.588$; no significant differences on Decision-making on income with Pearson's $\chi^2=0.339$ and $p=0.068$; no significant differences on Decision-making on credit with Pearson's $\chi^2= 2.261$ and $p=0.133$.

Time-use

In Graph 7.2 the average amount of time women from the different groups spend on each type of time use are compared. And although women from male-headed households on average spend more time on the combination of productive and reproductive tasks (10.4 compared to 10 hours), none of the differences found in Graph 7.2 are statistically significant. Therefore, women from both groups spend roughly the same amount of time on each type

of activity, making it difficult to establish straightaway where the difference on overall empowerment on Time-use comes from.

Graph 7.2 Average number of hours spent per day on each time category by women from male-headed and female-headed households (women only, n=575)



* No significant differences were found

One possibility is that women from male-headed households have larger families, which appears to be the case. These women are more likely to have larger families compared to women from FHH.²³ On average women from MHH have 3.79 family members and women from FHH have 2.29. And in turn, women with larger families are more likely to be disempowered on workload, which makes sense, as larger families mean more mouths to feed and more housework to be done.²⁴ However, on the separate time uses, household size does not seem to make a difference, and from Graph 7.2 it appeared that females from FHH actually spend more time on reproductive tasks (though not significantly so).

Looking at the other socio-demographic differences between women from the two groups, it seems that women from MHH are more likely to be higher educated and more likely to be engaged in salary or wage employment, but do not seem to be significantly older or have significantly more social support.²⁵

A plausible explanation for the difference in empowerment for the Time-use domain could be that women from MHH have larger families, and to be able to take care of those larger families, are more likely to enter into salary/wage employment. These jobs have set hours per day, and women need to take on their reproductive tasks after their salaried job is finished. Women from FHH however, are more likely to be engaged in livestock activities (23.5% vs. 15.7%), which bind them to their house or community surroundings, making it perhaps easier and more time-efficient to combine productive and reproductive tasks.

Control over use of income

There were no significant differences between women from FHH and MHH on the control over the use of income, with relatively low numbers of women being disempowered (3.92% for FHH and 1.53% for MHH). Both seem to be involved in decision-making on minor and major household expenditures. Graph 7.3 indicates that women from FHH are significantly *more* involved in decision-making over major household expenses, but there are no significant differences on minor household expenses.²⁶ This makes sense, seeing how women from FHH are often the sole adult in the household, whether they are widowed, divorced or whether their husbands are away at sea or in the city for work. Though some women whose husbands are away for prolonged periods of time indicate in qualitative

²³ $t=-12.699$; $p=0.000$

²⁴ $t=3.805$; $p=0.000$

²⁵ Education: Pearson $X^2=35.656$; $p=0.000$

Salary/wage employment: Pearson $X^2= 13.555$; $p=0.000$, 19.6% vs. 11.8%

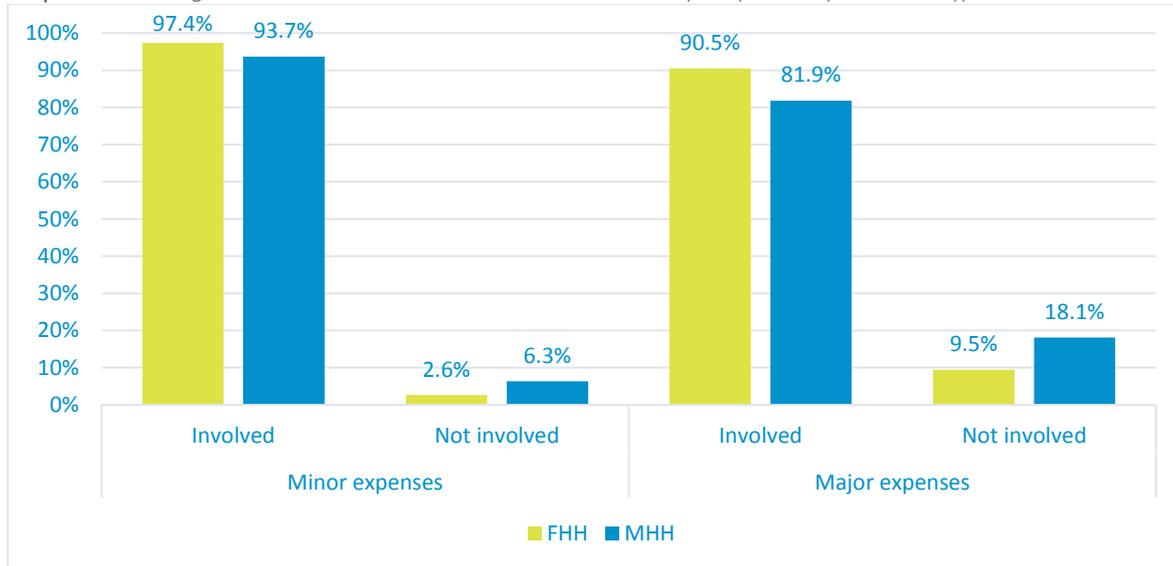
²⁶ Major household expenses: Pearson $X^2=6.394$; $p=0.000$

Minor household expenses: Pearson $X^2=3.124$, $p=0.077$

interviews that they prefer to wait with major household expenses until their husband returns, many seem comfortable to take those decisions.

It seems that on the domain of control over income, there are no differences between women from MHH and FHH that provide any basis for further analysis.

Graph 7.3 Percentage of women involved in decisions on minor and major expenses by household type*



* Differences in sample size are due to missing values

* Significant difference for major household expenses with Pearson's $\chi^2=6.394$ and $p=0.000$, $n=676$; no significant differences on minor expenses with Pearson's $\chi^2=3.124$ and $p=0.077$, $n=666$.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that a few significant differences were found between women from the two different household types on for instance on level of education (higher for women from MHH) and decision-making power over major household expenses (higher for women from FHH), there is no consistent picture emerging that would suggest that there are fundamental differences between women from different household types when it comes to empowerment.

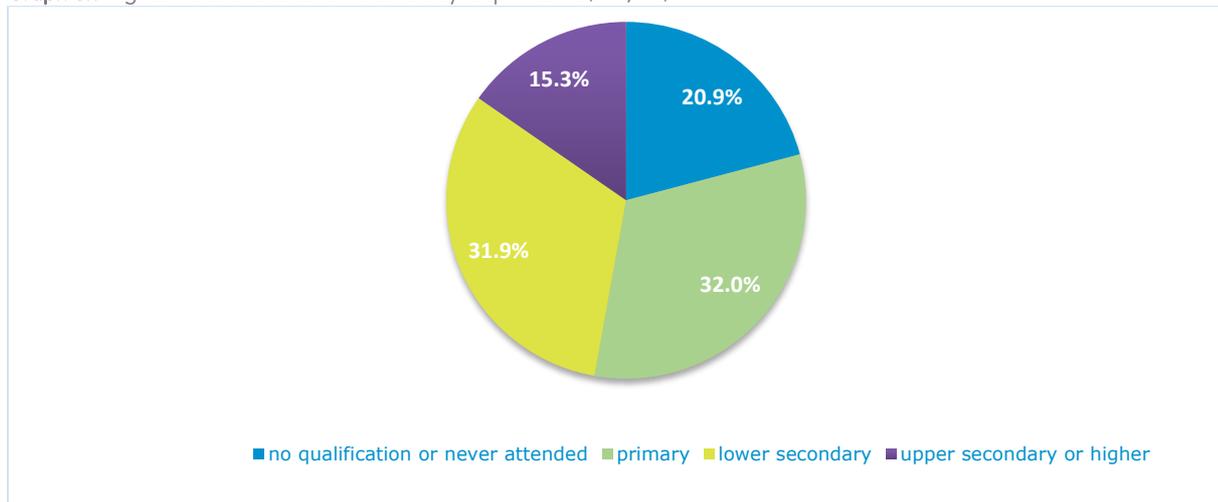
8 Differences on socio-economic demographics

This Chapter looks into possible differences in empowerment for different levels of socio-economic demographics such as education, age, livelihood activity and household size. Variations found here could indicate that these characteristics, rather than gender, influence whether some is empowered or not.

Education

Graph 8.1 provides an overview of the level of education attained by the respondents. A majority of respondents has no qualification or only got to primary school (53%) and only 15% finished upper secondary or higher levels of education. Levels of formal education are therefore relatively low. However, these seem to be in line with what is found in general for rural Vietnam. According to the 2009 census, the proportion of rural population with incomplete and completed primary school diplomas stood at 54.9%, and 13.8% of the rural population attained secondary or upper secondary degrees.²⁷ Therefore, the respondents in this study do not seem to be substantially different from the general rural Vietnamese population in relation to their educational attainment.

Graph 8.1 Highest level of education attained by respondents (n=1,170)*



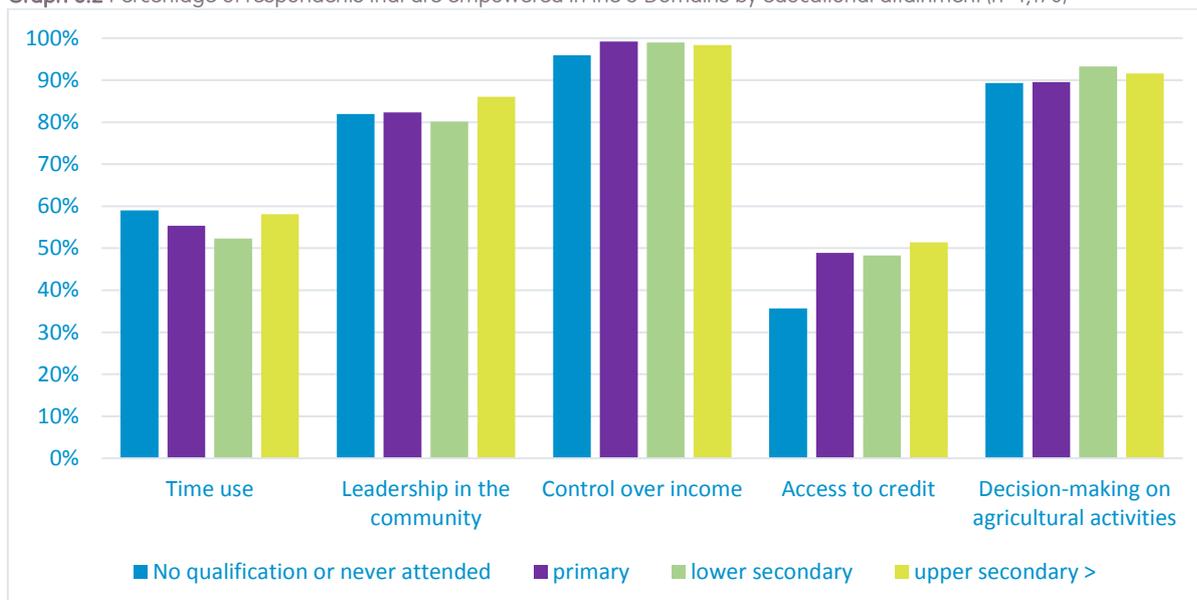
* For 31 respondents there was no information on their level of education

The assumption is that the lower the levels of education, the more likely a respondent is to be disempowered in a specific domain. The results listed in Graph 8.2 show that this is actually not the case. On the domains of Decision-making on agricultural activities, Leadership in the community and Time-use, no significant differences were found. For Access to credit and Control over income, there are significant differences, but these only apply to "no education or never attended" when compared to the other categories. There are for instance, no significant differences between those who finished primary school and those who have an upper secondary degree.

The few significant differences that were found, do not allow us to conclude that as people gain higher levels of education they are also more likely to be empowered in different domains. Therefore, the results of the current study do not indicate that education is a significant influencer of empowerment.

²⁷ Central Population and Housing Steering Committee (2010). *The 2009 Vietnam Population and Housing Census*, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/wphc/Viet%20Nam/Vietnam-Findings.pdf> (accessed February 16, 2017).

Graph 8.2 Percentage of respondents that are empowered in the 5 Domains by educational attainment (n=1,170)*

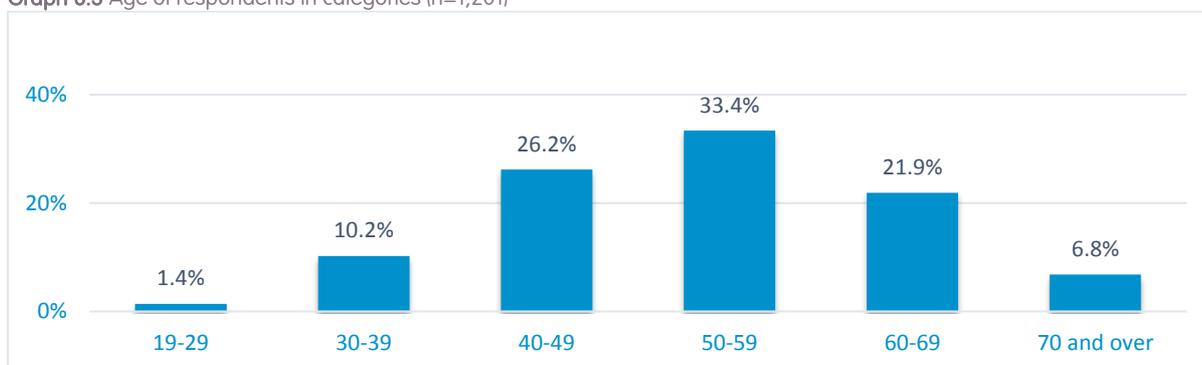


* 31 respondents had no information for their level of education.
 Access to credit is significantly different for no qualification or never attended at $p=0.002$ and Pearson's $X^2= 14.603$
 Control over income is significantly different for no qualification or never attended at $p=0.012$ and Pearson's $X^2= 11.6022$

Age

Graph 8.3 provides an overview of the distribution of the respondents across the different age categories. A majority of the sample is over 50 (62%) with an average age of 53 years. In a Confucian society as Vietnam, age in part determines how much decision-making power you have with the opinions of older people weighing more heavily than those of younger counterparts.²⁸ It is therefore assumed that the older someone is, the more likely they are to be empowered.

Graph 8.3 Age of respondents in categories (n=1,201)



Results from Graph 8.4 show that on several domains there are significant differences according to age. For decision-making on agricultural activities it appears that the older a respondent is, the more likely they are to be empowered. This holds especially true when those 19 to 39 are compared to those 40 to 69 years old. Differences on empowerment status are significant between these groups. The exception is for those older than 70 years, who seem to be significantly more likely to be disempowered than those in the younger age categories.

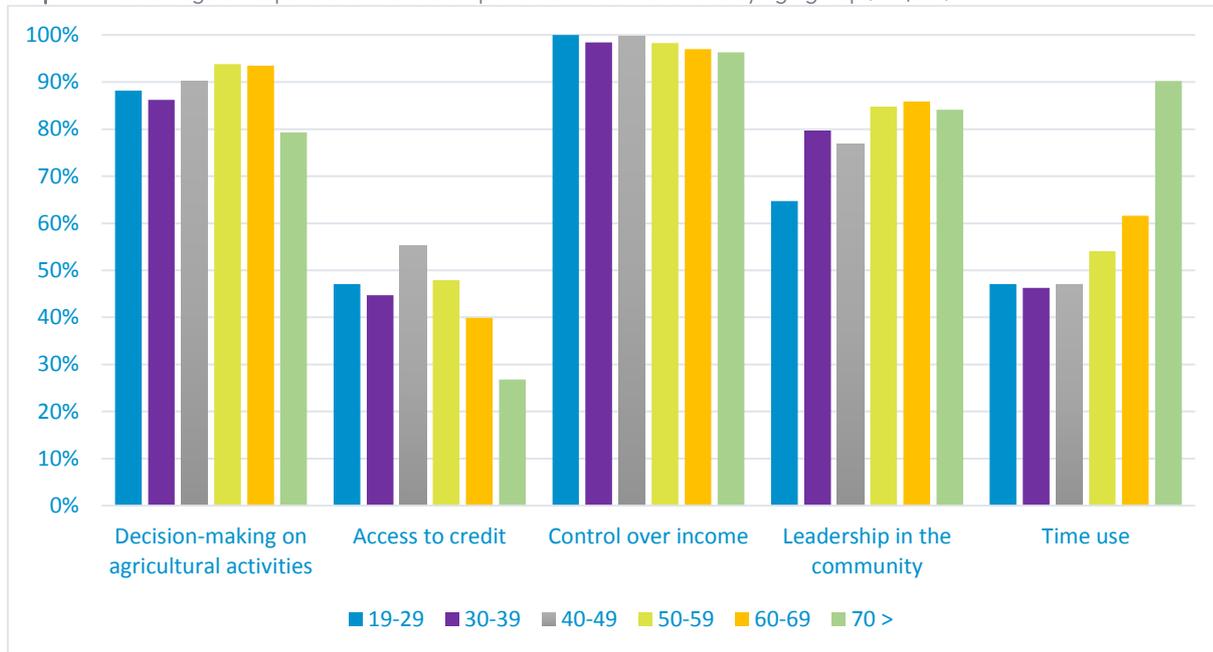
In the same trend, older people are significantly more likely to be members of community groups and as people get older they are also significantly more likely to be empowered on workload. This is predominantly because younger people spend more time on productive tasks.²⁹ Significant differences are also found on access to credit, but here it appears that as respondents are older, they are more likely to be disempowered. It seems that for those over 40 it is more difficult to get credit than for people who are younger. No significant relation is found

²⁸ Don C. Locke, Deryl F. Bailey (2014). Vietnamese in America. Chapter 9 in: Increasing Multicultural Understanding. SAGE publications: Singapore.
²⁹ Productive time: F-value= 18.948; $p=0.000$ / Reproductive time: F-value= 2.050, $p=0.069$

between age and empowerment status when it concerns control over income, indicating that age is irrelevant when it comes to deciding over how income is spent.

Age therefore does seem to influence someone’s empowerment status, and generally, the older someone is the more likely they are to be empowered.

Graph 8.4 Percentage of respondents that are empowered in the 5 Domains by age group (n=1,201)



Significant differences on Decision-making on agricultural activities $p=0.000$ and Pearson’s $X^2=23.327$; Significant differences on Access to credit $p=0.000$ and Pearson’s $X^2=27.456$; Significant differences on Leadership in the community $p=0.011$ and Pearson’s $X^2=14.878$; Significant differences on Workload $p=0.000$ and Pearson’s $X^2=58.253$

Livelihood activity

Graph 8.5 shows that the majority of respondents earns most of their income by crop farming (51%), followed by livestock farming (18%) and salary or wage employment (17.5%).

Graph 8.5 Highest earning livelihood activity of respondents (n=1,145)*

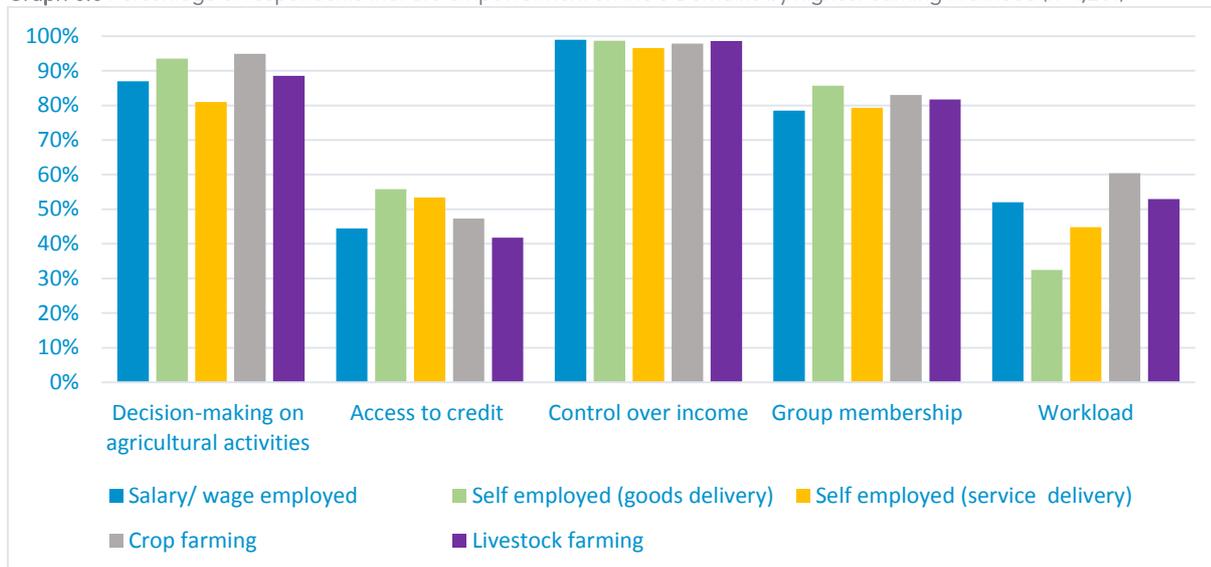


* Changes in sample size are due to missing values

Results in Graph 8.6 show that with the exception of decision-making on agricultural productivity and workload, there are no significant differences between the different livelihood activities. On the first domain of decision-making around agricultural productivity, it is clear that those people involved in crop farming are more likely to be

empowered compared to people engaged in other types of livelihood activities. Which makes sense seeing that they are most pre-occupied with agricultural tasks relative to the other livelihood categories.

Graph 8.6 Percentage of respondents that are empowerment on the 5 Domains by highest earning livelihood (n=1,201)



Significant differences on Decision-making on agricultural decision-making $p=0.000$ and Pearson's $X^2= 24.608$
 Significant differences on Workload $p=0.000$ and Pearson's $X^2=26.095$

On the domain of Time-use results indicate that those self-employed, and especially those self-employed in goods delivery are significantly more disempowered than others: only 32% of the latter category work less than 10.5 hours a day, compared to 60% of those working in crop farming and 53% of people working in livestock. When this is further broken down, it appears that this difference is caused by number of hours spent on reproductive tasks, rather than productive activity.³⁰ So people with their own business spend more time on reproductive tasks. Though this might invite the idea that women are more likely to be self-employed, this does not appear to be the case.³¹

The above results indicate that the type of employment with which a respondent predominantly earns his or her income is not an important influencer of their empowerment status.

Household size

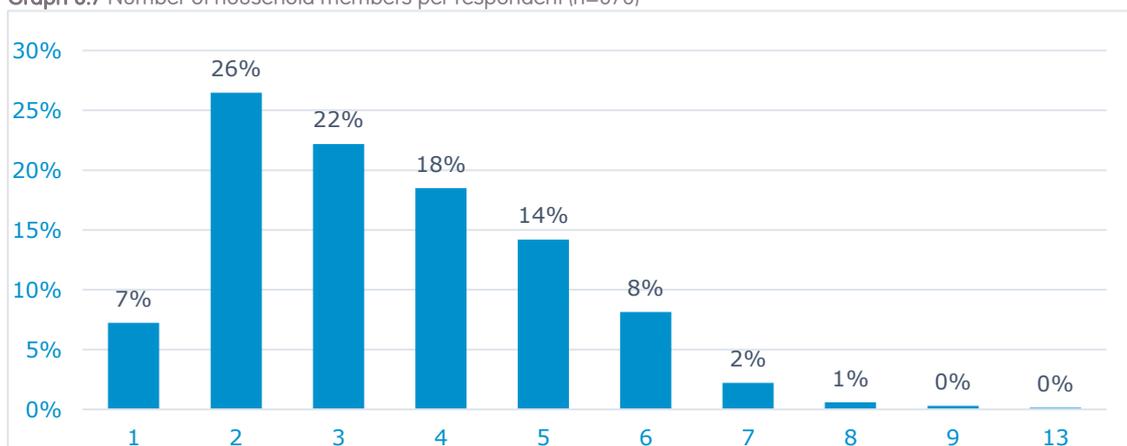
Household size can be indicative for a household's economic vulnerability; the larger the household, the more children and/or elderly are present and the more mouths that need to be fed by 1 or 2 adults.³² Overall, the dependency ratio in our sample – the number of those 1-14 and 65+ years old vs. those 15-64 years old, was 47.7%. The dependency ratio has the flawed assumption that those over 64 do not work, which does not hold true for the people we surveyed. However, it does give an indication of the economic situation of the sample households: the lower the dependency ratio, the less stress is put on income earned to provide for basic needs.

³⁰ $F= 4.195$; $p=0.002$

³¹ Pearson $X^2= 6.474$; $p=0.166$

³² http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/indicators/methodology_sheets/demographics/dependency_ratio.pdf

Graph 8.7 Number of household members per respondent (n=676)*



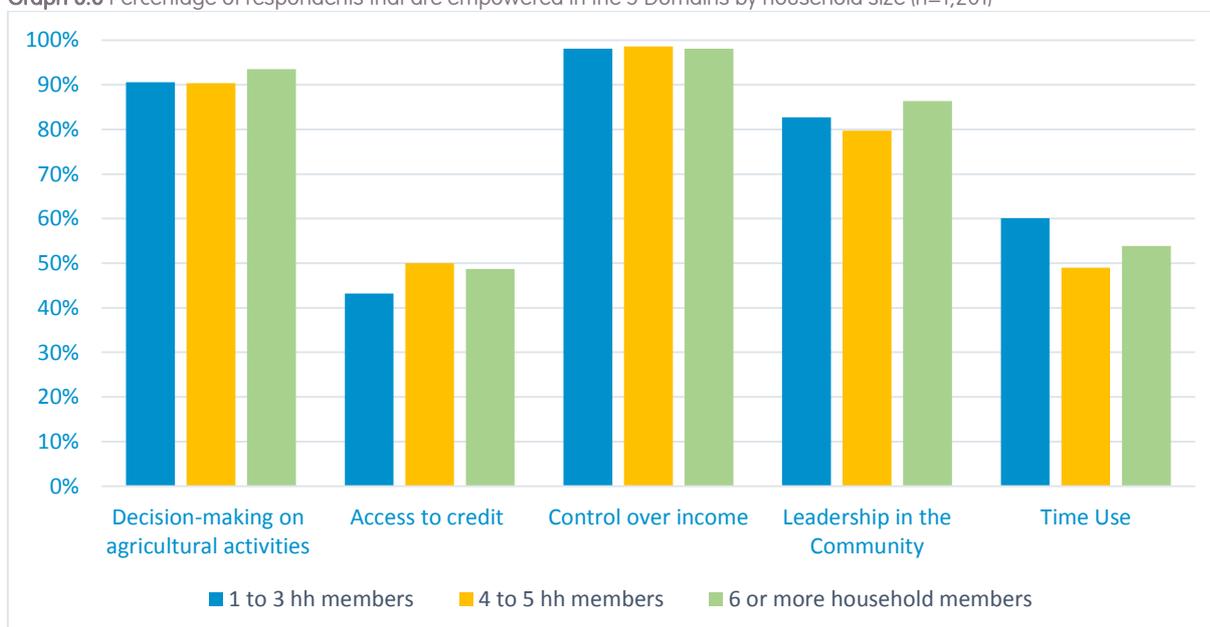
* Please note that the female respondents were used to reflect the number of household members, as males and females from MHH were sampled from the same household. This would lead to double counting and affect the percentages

Graph 8.7 shows that the majority of households has 1-3 members (55%), though the average number of household members is 3.45. This is similar to the overall Vietnamese average for rural households, which stood at 3.8 household members in the 2009 census.³³

Results presented in Graph 8.8 show that the size of the household does not affect people's empowerment status, with the exception of Time-use. Here, there is a significant difference on the amount of time people with larger households spend on productive tasks, so activities that earn an income or help provide for the family. No significant differences were found on reproductive tasks. As mentioned in the previous section on women from FHH and MHH, it makes sense that respondents with larger families would work more hours, since they have more mouths to feed and therefore need more income or more produce to be able to sustain their households.

Household size therefore also does not seem to be an important influencer of empowerment status.

Graph 8.8 Percentage of respondents that are empowered in the 5 Domains by household size (n=1,201)



Significant differences on Workload with $p=0.002$ and Pearson's $X^2=12.591$

³³ Central Population and Housing Steering Committee (2010). *The 2009 Vietnam Population and Housing Census*, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/wphc/Viet%20Nam/Vietnam-Findings.pdf> (accessed February 16, 2017).

Differences between men and women on socio-economic characteristics

The focus group discussions and gender context analysis point to the Confucian tradition as a main root of the division of labour within households: men are the heads of household and breadwinners, women are the caregivers. However, socio-demographics could also influence the different levels of empowerment for men and women. For instance differences in level of education between men and women, in age or in how much income they earn in comparison to their spouse. Analysis indicates that men are significantly more likely to say that they earn more income in comparison to their spouse, but they are not more likely to be higher educated or be many years older.

Conclusion

With the exception of age, none of the socio-economic characteristics explored here provided a consistent pattern of results that would indicate that they significantly influence whether or not someone is empowered. With age, we found that as someone gets older, they are more likely to be empowered.

9 Conclusion and discussion

The current baseline report explored to what extent Vietnamese women in our study could be considered empowered. The women were sampled from cooperatives and had their own business: the large majority were primary producers of for instance rice, fruits and vegetables, some ran SMEs. As a framework, the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), developed by the International Food Policy Research Institute, was used. The WEAI makes use of 5 Domains of Empowerment to highlight in which areas women could be considered empowered and in which areas progress could be made:

1. **Decision-making power over agricultural production:** This dimension concerns decisions about agricultural production and refers to sole or joint decision-making about food and cash crop farming, and livestock and fisheries;
2. **Access to and decision-making power over productive resources:** This dimension concerns ownership of and access to productive resources such as land, livestock, agricultural equipment, consumer durables, and credit;
3. **Control over use of income:** This dimension concerns sole or joint control over the use of income and expenditures;
4. **Leadership in the community:** This dimension concerns leadership in the community, measured by membership in formal or informal economic or social groups;
5. **Time-use:** This dimension concerns the allocation of time to productive and reproductive (domestic) tasks.

Limitations of the study

The study is subjected to two main limitations. First of all, the study focuses on women with a business and their husbands, which is in line with the EOWE programme objectives. A prime aim was to create a sample of women and men that would be an accurate reflection of the programme's target groups. Sampling relied on incomplete cooperative member lists and the willingness of respondents to participate in the study. Although all possible efforts were made to overcome obstacles and to replace respondents if necessary, it is important to be aware that the current report is based on results from a sample of our target groups.

Secondly, our programme in Vietnam targets both primary producers as well as female owners of SMEs, but our sample consists predominantly of primary producers. At the time the baseline study was conducted, it was unclear which type of SMEs the programme would be working with. It was therefore difficult to determine which types of SMEs should be sampled. Consequently, female owners of SMEs take up only a small part of the current sample. Within the analysis and reporting of results, an assumption is made that the results apply to both groups of women. Seeing how gender and culture seem to influence the division of labour and the balancing of benefits, we trust that this assumption holds. However, it is our intention to focus on possible differences between primary producers and owners of SMEs during the midline study in 2018.

Conclusion

We found that 57% of the women in our sample could be considered empowered, compared to 70% of the men. Vietnamese men participating in this study are therefore more often empowered according to the WEAI methodology than their female counterparts.

Women struggle especially in the domain of Time-use. Over half of them are disempowered, as they spend on average over 6 hours a day on productive tasks (those that generate an income, either in cash or in-kind), and another 4 hours a day on reproductive tasks (those that focus on maintaining the household and caring for its members). On the other hand, a third of men is disempowered in the Time-use domain. Much of their time is spent on productive tasks (over 7 hours), but on average only 1 hour a day is dedicated to domestic activities. The difference in this division of labour between men and women is rooted in the Confucian traditions of Vietnam, which is predominantly male-orientated and male-dominated. In Vietnamese society, a woman is supposed to take care of her family and the household, while also substantially contributing to the farming tasks, whereas men are supposed to provide for their families. Women are therefore carrying a double burden, which could possibly keep the women in our sample from being able to create viable or more profitable businesses.

Another issue this report identified was women's relative lack of control over major household expenses. Though women are respected by men for their ability to effectively manage household finances, most women from male-headed households are not able to make large household financial decisions without their husbands. Even though



 Farmer couple watering their dragon fruit plants in Binh Thuan province, Vietnam.

men are in a position to do so. It seems that despite frequent claims that most major household expenses are jointly decided over, in many cases women's input is symbolic, rather than pivotal. For women with a business, being able to make decisions over investments and allocation of relatively large funds is essential for overall management of their business.

Finally, over 80 percent of the women in our sample were members of community groups. However, the large majority of them actively participate in civic groups, those that come together to organise social events such as weddings and funerals and to bring community improvements. Their membership of agriculture production groups and trade or business associations is trailing behind the membership of men. These groups could be specifically of interest to women with a business as part of networking, training and promotional platforms. Moreover, large groups of women feel they have only limited influence in the community and indicate they never voice their opinions in public. Female leadership, whether in the community or in business seems to be in need of a confidence boost.

The differences we found in our sample on empowerment status, are likely to be a product of the culturally decided division of labour between men and women. As the Vietnamese saying goes: Men build the house, but women build a home. With the exception of age, other socio-economic demographics such as education, livelihood activity and household size, do not appear to have a consistent influence on a respondent's empowerment status, in the way that gender does.

Discussion

Comparing the results of this study with results of other WEAI studies across the South, the scores of our sample of Vietnamese women are relatively high. This could be triggered by several things.

First of all, the study focuses on women with a business and their husbands. These are women that are primary producers and sell part of their produce to cooperatives or, in some cases, are women that own a SMEs. That these women have already established their own business, over which they decide, invest efforts into and earn an income from, probably means that they have already taken the first steps towards full empowerment. It is likely that they are relatively more often empowered than women who do not own a business. Results of this study can therefore not be considered representative of the general Vietnamese female or male population.

Secondly, choices made within the WEAI index calculation methodology seem to endorse a very broad definition of empowerment and might not be an accurate reflection of Vietnamese society. For instance, a person is counted towards being empowered if they "jointly own" assets. But joint ownership does not necessarily mean a person also has a say over the use of these assets. It could merely reflect their availability for use. Moreover, it might be social desirable for a respondent to answer that there is joint ownership within the household, even though this might not hold true in practice. The same applies to decision-making power, where "feel you have input into some or most decisions" also contributes to empowerment. However, from the qualitative data it's apparent that Vietnamese women often feel they can have input, but in the end their spouses take the decision. To what extent this is real empowerment, can be questioned.

Thirdly, the government of Vietnam has taken active steps in recent years to improve women's empowerment and promote the idea of gender equity among its citizens. Participants of the focus group discussions often indicated to be aware of the term women empowerment. These efforts could slowly be paying off.

This does not mean however, that women's economic empowerment in Vietnam does not need to be addressed. There is still a way to go.

The EOWE programme moving towards implementation

Following the results of this baseline report, the EOWE programme in Vietnam will focus its efforts for women's economic empowerment predominantly on Control over Income and Time-use. It does this via a multitude of reinforcing and interlocking activities, but specifically, it works by encouraging household dialogue; actively involving husbands and wives and communities to change existing gender norms on the division of labour and control over income within the household. For instance, if women with a business gain more control over income to include large investments, they can take decisions to benefit their enterprise, making it viable and perhaps even growing it. And if social norms held by both men and women around gendered divisions of labour change, women could have more time available to focus on making their businesses a success. They could attend trainings, expand their skills, their network and their client base.

The EOWE programme applies SNV's "Balancing Benefits" approach, a transformative gender approach tailored to the agriculture context and applied across integrated value chains. Underscored by the essential principle of ensuring equal opportunities for all actors in agriculture it explicitly aims to change gender norms and relations in order to promote more equitable relationships between men and women, and a more economically and socially enabling environment. Women's capacity for leadership, in cooperatives, associations, business and institutions, will be built and their bargaining power to enhance women's agribusiness in markets enhanced. Women are being empowered to take an active role and (co-)ownership of decisions around productive resources and assets. It supports increasing women's share of family incomes; enhancing women's entry and success in value added businesses; and influencing business environments to support women in agri-business and enhance equity of opportunity. In the next four years, the EOWE programme supports households in Vietnam achieve a balanced division of labour that gives space to successful female entrepreneurship.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. References

- Alkire et al. (2012). *The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index*. IFPRI Discussion Paper 01240.
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), *The World Factbook*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/vm.html> (accessed February 21, 2017).
- Central Population and Housing Steering Committee (2010). *The 2009 Vietnam Population and Housing Census*, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/wphc/Viet%20Nam/Vietnam-Findings.pdf> (accessed February 16, 2017).
- Cirera, X. and Qasim, Q. (2014), *Supporting Growth-Oriented Women Entrepreneurs: A Review of the Evidence and Key Challenges*, World Bank.
- FLOW: Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women, <http://www.flowprogramme.nl/Public/HomePage.aspx> (accessed February 22, 2017).
- Locke, D.C, Bailey, D.F. (2014). *Vietnamese in America*. Chapter 9 in: *Increasing Multicultural Understanding*. SAGE publications: Singapore.
- Ministry of Justice, *Law on domestic violence prevention and control*, 2007, http://www.moj.gov.vn/vbpg/en/lists/vn%20bn%20php%20lut/view_detail.aspx?itemid=3030 (accessed on February 27, 2016).
- National Assembly, *Marriage and Family Law*, 2014, <http://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Quy-en-dan-su/Luat-Hon-nhan-va-gia-dinh-2014-238640.aspx> (accessed on February 27, 2017).
- Nguyen, Thanh Binh (2011). *The trend of Vietnamese household size in recent years*. International Conference on Humanities, Society and Culture IPEDR, Vol.20, IACSIT Press, Singapore.
- SNV Netherlands Development Organisation (2016). *Appendix 1.12A Context, Gender and Actor Analysis in Kenya and Vietnam*.
- Teerawichitchainan, B., Knodel, J., Loi, V., & Huy, V. (2010). The Gender Division of Household Labor in Vietnam: Cohort Trends and Regional Variations. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 41(1), 57-85. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41604338>.
- UN Women: Asia and the Pacific, *CEDAW & Women's Human Rights*, <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/cedaw-human-rights/viet-nam> (accessed February 20, 2017).
- USAID (2016). INTERVENTION GUIDE: FOR THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN AGRICULTURE INDEX (WEAI) - Practitioners' Guide to Selecting and Designing WEAI Interventions.
- World Food Programme (2008). *Food consumption analysis: Calculation and use of the food consumption score in food security analysis*, http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/manual_guide_proced/wfp197216.pdf (accessed February 17, 2017).

ANNEX 2. WEAI Methodology

The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)

Based on the Alkire-Foster methodology (Alkire and Foster, 2011), the WEAI is an aggregate index, reported at the country or regional level based on individual-level data collected by interviewing men and women within the same households. The WEAI comprises two sub-indices:

- (1) the 5 Domains of Empowerment (5DE) index
- (2) the Gender Parity Index (GPI)

The 5DE assesses the degree to which women and men are empowered in five domains of empowerment (5DE) in agriculture. It also takes into account the percentage of individual domains in which women are empowered. These domains are (Alkire et al, 2013):

1. **Decision-making power over agricultural production:** This dimension concerns decisions about agricultural production and refers to sole or joint decision-making about food and cash crop farming, and livestock and fisheries. No judgment is made on whether sole or joint decision-making was better or reflected greater empowerment.
2. **Access to and decision-making power over productive resources:** This dimension concerns ownership of and access to productive resources such as land, livestock, agricultural equipment, consumer durables, and credit.
3. **Control over use of income:** This dimension concerns sole or joint control over the use of income and expenditures.
4. **Leadership in the community:** This dimension concerns leadership in the community, here measured by membership in formal or informal economic or social groups.
5. **Time-use:** This dimension concerns the allocation of time to productive and domestic tasks.

In this study, the abbreviated WEAI (a-WEAI) is measured by a total of six indicators was used (Malapit, 2015).³⁴ Other than the resources domain (no.2), which has two indicators – ownership of assets and access to and decisions over credit, the other four domains are represented by one indicator each. In the original WEAI study, the 5 Domains were represented by 10 indicators. However, as this survey was shortened for easier administration, the number of indicators was reduced to six.

To be able to calculate the 5DE, GPI and WEAI, each of the indicators is assigned a weight:

- 1) Decision-making over agricultural production = 1/5
- 2) Ownership of productive resources = 2/15
- 3) Access to credit = 2/15
- 4) Control over the use of income = 1/5
- 5) Leadership in the community = 1/5
- 6) Time-use = 1/5

Each indicator is given a value of 1 if the respondent has exceeded the given threshold for the indicator and 0 if the respondent falls below it. The weighted sum of the 6 indicators is then used to determine whether or not an individual is empowered. A person is considered empowered if (s)he has adequate achievements in 4 of the 5 domains or is empowered in a combination of the weighted indicators that reflect 80% adequacy.

The 5DE is then calculated by first taken the proportion of women that are empowered. Then, there are also respondents that are disempowered overall, because they don't pass the threshold, but that are empowered in some domains. Dismissing these women as completely disempowered would not reflect their actual situation. Therefore, to come to the 5DE score, the percentage of domains that disempowered women are empowered in, is added to the proportion of women that passed the cut-off. The 5DE score gives an indication not only of the level of empowerment, but also the intensity of it.

5DE score = proportion of empowered women + (proportion of disempowered women * proportion domains empowered)

³⁴ IFPRI (2015). *The Abbreviated Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (A-WEAI)*. Available on the World Wide Web at <https://www.slideshare.net/IFPRI-WEAI/the-abbreviated-womens-empowerment-in-agriculture-index-aweai>.

Or in a more scientific approach:

$$5DE = He + Hn (Aa)$$

Where:

He = the proportion of women who are empowered

Hn = the proportion of women who are not empowered

Aa = non-empowered women that still have adequate achievements in proportions of domain

The score ranges from 0-1, but there is no specified cut off point. The closer the score is to 1 the higher the level of empowerment (Alkire et al., 2013).

The second sub-index (the Gender Parity Index, GPI) shows the empowerment gap that needs to be closed for women to reach the same level of empowerment as men. GPI measures gender parity within surveyed households. GPI reflects the percentage of women who are equally empowered as the men in their households. For households that have not achieved gender parity, GPI shows the empowerment gap that needs to be closed for women to reach the same level of empowerment as men.

$$GPI = (1 - (\% \text{ of disempowered women} * \% \text{ gap between them and the households' primary males})).$$

The score ranges from 0-1. The closer the GPI is to 1 the more the gender parity (Alkire et al., 2013).

The WEAI is the weighted sum of the aggregated 5DE and GPI and is calculated as:

$$WEAI = ((5DE * 0.9) + (GPI * 0.1))$$

The closer the WEAI score is to 1, the more the women are empowered. An increase in the WEAI score can be achieved through improving the 5DE and/or GPI scores (Alkire et al., 2013).

For more details on the exact computation of the WEAI, we refer you to the WEAI Resource Centre:

<http://www.ifpri.org/topic/weai-resource-center>

The complete questionnaire is available upon request.

ANNEX 3. Sampling

Study area

The baseline study was conducted in four coastal provinces of Vietnam, Quang Binh, Binh Dinh, Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan (see Map 2.1 in Chapter 2).

Proposed intervention sites

EOWE activities will be conducted in four provinces of Vietnam, Quang Binh, Binh Dinh, Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan. These provinces were selected because they are prone to disasters (mainly floods) and have vulnerable low-income women actors in the agriculture and renewable energy value chains. The interventions intended for these areas include creating a conducive environment (at household, community and policy level) for female entrepreneurship as a vehicle for change. This means enhancing women's capacities for entrepreneurship in the agriculture and renewable energy value chains, as well as assisting existing government bodies to be able to implement gender equitable policies.

Sampling, data collection and analysis

An Equal Probability sampling strategy was employed with the number of respondents in a province being equal to the proportion of the general population in that province (based on the latest population information obtained from the Vietnamese provincial governments). Lists of cooperatives in the four programme provinces were obtained, which also included – to the extent possible – all members of each cooperative. A cooperative would be eligible for inclusion in the study if it met the following criteria:

- (i) Be involved in agricultural related activities such as fishing and fish marketing, poultry keeping, pig rearing, dairy cattle, vegetable growing, and fishing; and
- (ii) Constitute mainly (>50%) of female members.

Subsequently, members were randomly listed by cooperative per province. A simple random sample was then taken within each province by creating random numbers in Excel – coinciding with the number of respondents to be selected in each province. Simultaneously, an additional number of random numbers were created in excel – and therefore an additional number of substitution members, to be used when originally selected members were not available for the study or did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the baseline. Cooperative leaders were then contacted to be able to get in touch with selected members for inclusion in the study.

One common issue encountered during fieldwork was the obsolete list of members of cooperatives provided by the local partners. Many of the household heads in the list were deceased, which prompted the enumerators to seek out the prevailing primary and secondary members of the households directly in the field, sometimes with the support of the local guides.

Another issue was that at the time of data collection (July 2016), many male heads of the households were out at the sea for the fishing season and were not present at home for interviewing. In these cases, if the member lived in the household for less than 3 months, that male head was no longer considered to be a member of the household (in line with WEAI guidelines). Enumerators then proceeded with the interviews of those who were still in the household and coded that household as female headed. For cases where the male member was still part of the household but could not be reached to be interviewed, the enumerator replaced that household with another, taken from the list of substitution members.

A total of 746 households were interviewed, which were distributed across the 4 provinces as indicated in table A3.1.

Table A3.1 Households sampled and interviewed in the study

	Binh Dinh	Binh Thuan	Ninh Thuan	Quang Binh	Total
Number of households	530	21	7	188	746

The survey was conducted using the platform of SurveyCTO³⁵ which includes:

³⁵ <http://www.surveyccto.com/product/how-it-works.html>

- SurveyCTO Collect: an Android application that the enumerators use to fill out forms – the e-version of the survey questionnaire. After data has been collected, it is uploaded to the SurveyCTO Server. This app was installed in all the tablets assigned to the enumerators during and after the training.
- SurveyCTO Server: MDRI has its own account on SurveyCTO Server, a central repository for filled-in survey forms. This is where MDRI manages and monitor the filled-in questionnaires in real time.

MDRI has used SurveyCTO for numerous surveys and received full support from the Technical Team of SurveyCTO in case of troubleshooting.

Data entry

The data entry form was developed by the data management team based on the revised version of the questionnaire³⁶. The form was built in the Microsoft Excel template, in which logic checks and data constraints were incorporated to ensure that only correct and reasonable data can be inputted, preventing common data entry errors. For this survey with its specific nature and requirements, special attention was paid to data entry constraints on specific questions, for example:

- The number of respondents for individual questionnaires should match the type of households (both male and female or female only household);
- The individual questionnaires are directly linked to the household questionnaires in the data entry form, so that data collected on the household and individuals can be matched based on the household ID;
- The relationship between the primary male and female should make sense (they cannot be sisters for example);
- A confirmation dialogue pops up when there were consecutively “No” or “Not applicable” answers;
- Some multiple choices should not overlap (e.g. most important expenditures, most important reasons for the lack of money) and the total choices should not exceed a certain number (3 or 5);
- The most challenging question to design constraints on data inputs concerns the Module of Time Allocation. The entries to this question were designed so that the enumerator could not proceed to the next question and submit the questionnaire without filling in exactly 1440 minutes in a day.

The form was then uploaded to a server and could be easily accessed by Tablet PCs which install the SurveyCTO app. In case any issue arose in the fieldwork (e.g. the list of households for replacement is pooled in) data technicians only needed to make adjustments to the form, then all the forms in the enumerator Tablet PCs would be synchronized accordingly.

Survey CTO allows multiple types of data entry including text, numeric, and multiple-choice questions. During fieldwork, the survey teams recorded the respondents’ answers by simply typing in the Tablet PCs. Once a survey form was completed and submitted, it was automatically sent to the server, so the chance of data to be lost due to physical reasons was limited to the minimum. Data security is safeguarded through transport encryption and survey data encryption. The data collected from the questionnaire (including coordinates of the survey points) was submitted.

Data cleaning

At the end of each fieldwork day³⁷, data was downloaded from the server for checking and cleaning. The data team developed a data cleaning program (based on STATA .do files) to check for redundant information, outliers, coding inconsistencies, and mismatched codes among the data files. The received data would be matched with the information provided by the daily reports sent by the enumerators to control the amount of received data – the number of sent e-questionnaires. The survey teams were informed about any issues or doubtful entries in a timely manner so that they could verify and correct any possible errors. Thanks to the meticulous design of the data entry forms, which already solved most of the common data entry errors in advance, data cleaning did not encounter major issues and could be completed within 2 days after the fieldwork had ended.

³⁶ Before the official fieldwork started, MDRI went on a pilot field data collection in Binh Dinh province to test the contents of the questionnaire in Vietnamese language.

³⁷ MDRI applied several ways to supervise the data collection process. The field supervisors worked closely with the survey teams through a telephone hotline, where all issues arising in the field were solved in a timely manner. The enumerator performance was also assessed everyday thanks to the CAPI technology. The data collection software has an add-in application which randomly records the interviews and sends those recordings to the server automatically. At least two interviews of each enumerator were checked by supervisors to ensure there was no data cheating. Supervisors could provide quick feedback to the enumerators in order to help them interview more precisely and efficiently if necessary.

Data analysis

The WEAI scores were prepared in Stata 14.0 after adaptation of the WEAI Stata.do file prepared by the international Food Policy Research Institute, IFPRI. Analysis was then switched to SPSS version 24. Responses to the in-depth face-to-face qualitative interviews with 10 women were analysed inductively.

ANNEX 4. List of cooperatives used for sampling

The following cooperatives were used for the sampling of our respondents.

Table A4.1 List of cooperatives used for the WEAI study

No.	Province	Cooperatives	Village name
1	Bình Định	Hoài Mỹ	Phú Xuân
2	Bình Định	Ngọc An	Bình Phú
3	Bình Định	Phước Hưng	Thôn Lương Lộc
4	Bình Định	Phước Sơn	Xóm 11 - Thôn Phụng Sơn
5	Bình Định	Tây An	Xóm 1
6	Bình Thuận	An Phú	Thôn An Phú
7	Bình Thuận	Hàm Hiệp	Thôn Phú Nhung
8	Bình Thuận	Hàm Kiệt	Thôn Dân Bình
9	Bình Thuận	Hàm Minh	Thôn Minh Tiến
10	Bình Thuận	Hồng Sơn 4	Thôn 4
11	Bình Thuận	Tà Zôn	Thôn 4
12	Ninh Thuận	Gốm Bàu Trúc	HTX Gốm Bàu Trúc
13	Ninh Thuận	HTX SXKD nho Văn Hải	KP 3. Phường Văn Hải
14	Ninh Thuận	HTX SXKD nho Xuân Hải	Thôn Thành Sơn, xã Xuân Hải, huyện Ninh Hải
15	Quảng Bình	Lộc Long	Xóm 1
16	Quảng Bình	Mỹ Lộc Thượng	Đội 1
17	Quảng Bình	Quảng Xá	Quảng Xá
18	Quảng Bình	Quy Hậu	Thôn 1 Quy Hậu

ANNEX 5. Qualitative interviews with the 10 women from the WEAI

Name of respondent : Do Thi Hoi³⁸

Hoi is 51 years old and has been co-habiting with a partner for the last year, but not married. She has one child and has had no formal education.

Hoi considers her house, where she was born and which she inherited from her parents after their death, to be her most valuable asset. She also inherited, from her parents, land and household appliances, but bought cattle herself. She recently saved some money and borrowed the rest to fix the house.

Hoi is able to use farmlands, small cattle, chickens, simple agriculture tools, the house, small and large household appliances, the phone, the residential land and motorcycle. She has control over assets inherited from her parents and those that she share with her partner, namely, the farming land, cattle, appliances, the house, phone and residential land. The motorcycle isn't hers, but her partner's.

Gender roles are clearly defined with the man mostly engaging in waged employment and occasionally helping with crop farming, whereas Hoi is in charge of household and agricultural chores.

She participates in the majority of decisions regarding purchase and sale of assets used for production because they live at her home and farm and they have cohabited for only a year. In any case, her husband (this is what she refers to him as) is usually only involved in wage employment leaving agricultural decisions to her. She single handedly decides on how to allocate income in the family because the husband's wage is small and he allows her to manage it all.

Hoi is not satisfied with the current distribution of roles and responsibilities by gender. She would like to be employed for a wage as she raises crops and cattle. She would like to earn more income to improve her family's living conditions. She can't find a job close to home and her husband forbids her to look for jobs further away because there would be no one else to look after the family.

She is not a leader, has never been and scarcely partakes in community activities, but she believes women can lead as they do in women's unions.

She would like to have lots of money to buy jewelry or clothes, which she never had, having had to bring up her child single handedly as her parents disapproved of the child. At some point, she had to leave the child with her parents against their will to seek wage employment far from home in order to be able to raise him. Now she would like to do something for herself, but she is still in debt after renovating the house, does not do wage work anymore and her priority is to spend money on her family rather than herself, because she considers expenditure on herself to be unnecessary. Her child is still young and dependent on her and she doesn't know how long her husband will stick around to earn money for them. Right now she wants to save more.

"Before my husband moved in, I was in a lot of trouble: Raising a child on my own, my parents didn't like the kid so they didn't help, I had to juggle caring for a child and working. When my child got older, I left him at home with my parents in spite of their disapproval and traveled far for work. This was the hardest part of my life but I got through it and I raised my kid. After my husband moved in, economic hardships were shared so I'm less stressed than before."

She had not heard of the term "Empowerment", but once it was explained, she considered herself to be empowered because she raised her child on her own for a long time. During that period, she managed and made decisions on everything. When her new husband moved in, the decision making pattern did not change much although she consults with him.

Name of respondent: Le Thi Hoa

Hoa is 62 years old, married with six children and has completed the 2nd grade.

³⁸ Names of respondents have been altered to maintain their anonymity.

Her most valued assets are a table, her closet, the paddy field and 4 sows. This is because sows produce piglets, which are then sold to pay for home expenses and the dozens of rice sacks obtained after the harvest season is used for family consumption.

The assets that Hoa is able to use include the paddy field, furniture, TV, the refrigerator, gas stove, the fan and the "81" (Cub motor-cycle). She saved money and bought all her assets herself. The household participates in growing paddy and raising pigs. On paddy, the types of paddy grown are dictated by the cooperative. Both spouses plant the seeds, choose the fertilizer and harvest the paddies. In terms of gender roles,

"My husband sprays pesticides whilst I take care of weeding, hiring labor and renting harvesting machinery, because spraying pesticides is labor intensive work, only the husband is able to carry the pesticide canister. Weeding is a task suited for women, men can't crouch and usually gets backaches. In the harvest season I'm the one who checks on the paddy field, so I decide on the date of harvest as well as employ workers and machinery."

"We decide jointly what breed of piglets to raise and when to sell the pigs." On separate gender roles, she stated, "My husband helps with washing the pigs and the pig sty, I cook porridge and acquire vegetables for the pigs. This is because washing the pigs requires pumping water, which is left to the husband. The other tasks require getting up early, which he can't do, but I can."

Hoa participates in the majority of decisions regarding the purchase and sale of assets used for production. Both spouses have to agree to raise pigs because "Decisions have to be made jointly because we are family." I single handedly decide how to distribute income in the family. This is because

"I take responsibility for keeping the cash, allocating expenses for the children school tuition, weddings, funerals, etc. My husband doesn't take part and only asks when he needs some. What to buy when going shopping is my decision. Women should be the ones who manage cash. Letting men do so would be disadvantageous. It's not right to have to ask for money every time you need to buy a bit of fish or fish sauce; women should handle cash to take care of the children, cash left in men's hands would be lost."

She is satisfied with the current distribution of roles and responsibilities by gender. *"We are comfortable, the distribution is logical and enough for the family. I take care of family matters such as washing and cooking, but if I'm occasionally busy he's able to help out."*

Hoa doesn't need any change as there is only her husband and herself, *"that distribution of work is okay, I'm also old so I don't want any changes."*

She is not a community leader, but she is a member of the elderly community and no other. She thinks women leaders fulfill their responsibilities, but only the Women Union has woman chairpersons. This is because female leaders have to be elected by other women to become a chairperson and requires the elected person to be trustworthy. About her desires, she desires that her children are able to make a living, and for those in school to be able to acquire stable jobs when they graduate. This is because she thinks she is approaching senility and therefore, wants nothing for herself.

She has not achieved her desire completely because some of her children are still in school, but she is glad that her grown daughters got married and are now settling down with their families.

There wasn't much difficulty in her household except for financial challenges when the children were in school. She overcame these by borrowing money from relatives. Then she'd gradually paid back with money raised from selling livestock.

She did not know of the term "Empowerment" prior to this interview, but after being told what it means, she stated that she believed that married women cannot be entirely empowered because they have to consult their husbands over most decisions.

Name of respondent: Nguyen Thi Phung

Phung is 34 years old, married, with two children and has attained grade 12 of education. Her most valued assets are cows and the forest land because they contribute towards a large proportion of the family income.

Phung is able to use and manage the refrigerator, motorcycle, gas stove, electric rice cooker and electric stove. She and her husband bought these assets using money that they had saved from selling farm produce, making transactions and going on sea trips. Her husband works at the ocean, is mostly away and only visits home a few days per month (he, therefore, doesn't meet the 3month/6month standard used to identify household members).

Phung is the main actor in household production activities, which include planting paddies, planting wheat, working at a breakfast shop, raising livestock (pigs and cows). She decides everything single-handedly, ranging from employing machinery and workers, picking the day of planting and harvesting, etc. Her husband occasionally helps when he is home, but this is rare.

"I have to take care of everything because I'm the one who is mainly at home, my husband works far away and only occasionally comes home. I make decisions to purchase, sell and use assets required for production. I decide everything on paddy farming: from buying production tools, hiring labor, and renting machineries. I have to consult and discuss with my husband regarding highly valuable assets like land, livestock and the money he makes at sea, but I alone decide and allocate the little money I make from sales of farm produce."

Phung is not satisfied with the current distribution of roles and responsibilities. Every morning she has to get up early to work, with no one to share the burden, since husband's work keeps him away. She would be happier if her husband could get a more stable job closer to home and hopefully helped lessen the labor intensive workload, discuss with her big and small matters, bond more as family and help with educating the children. She is currently a leader chairing the village women's committee. As the chair, her duties include notifying the committee of meetings, collecting contributions and encouraging fellow women to participate in activities (For example they are implementing the "Rice-Saving Jar" program, organizing visits to the sick, funerals, balance checkbooks and represent the women committee in other forums).

"Our community's perceptions about women in leadership are outdated, gender equality has not been attained and women movement is not yet strong. For example: Local women are only chairpersons of female unions, if the agricultural union voted for a female chair, this outcome will be disapproved."

"I desire to reduce the amount of work that I do, have time to unwind and relax, stay healthy, and have a happy and peaceful family. There's too much work in the village, I have no time for recreation and income is so low that it is not enough to pay for medical expenses. An illness in the family adversely affects the family. For example, I suffer from goiter, but I am unable to control it because I can't afford to pay for the required periodic checkups."

The most adverse situation she had to face was buying a plot of land she really liked. Although she didn't have enough money or a place to borrow some from, she took a bank loan, bought the plot and borrowed money from relatives to pay off the bank. To date, she is still repaying her debt, but now has that plot of land.

She has heard of the term "Empowerment" in various mass media. To her, "Empowerment" is the conferment of authority from the husband to the wife, giving her the right to decide matters on her own. She considers herself to be empowered. She also observes that her circumstances leave her no choice but to make most decisions unilaterally.

Name of respondent: Do Thi Diep

Diep is 52 years old, married and has two children. She has attained the 9th grade of education. Her most valuable asset is her health because health is the most important factor. We need good health in order to be able to worry about things, work, and create wealth.

She is able to use the harvester, television, and refrigerator because she saved and borrowed money to buy these assets.

Together with her husband, they work in the field, planting and harvesting paddy and doing business (using harvester to reap for others). Alone she makes *non la* (traditional palm-leaf conical hats) and manages finances including calculating the cost of machinery repairs. The husband operates and repairs the harvester.

On decision making, *"I participate in the majority of decisions regarding assets. For example, both of us discuss repairs and improvements to machinery before coming to a decision. I also participate in the majority of decision making concerning the distribution of income within the family. I independently decide on small transactions, but with matters of greater importance I consult with my husband, so my involvement drops to 50%-70%."*

She is comfortable with the current distribution of responsibility and wants nothing to change. She believes it is logical for the husband to do manual labor and the wife to do less labor intensive work while taking care of household matters.

She is not a leader of any group or organization in the community. Her community do not see female leadership as a peculiar phenomenon. However, she is only aware of the chair of Women's Union as a female leader.

"A difficult situation for me was when my family was poor and wanted to buy a harvester but lacked the money. I was able to borrow and get through that hurdle."

Before this interview, she had not heard about "Empowerment". Now that she has, she considers herself to be empowered because she is the decision maker and manages everything in her household.

Name of respondent: Huynh Thi Loi

Loi is 53 years old, married, with four children with highest level of education attained being third grade. She considers the cows to be the most valuable assets because in addition to milk, they give a calf almost every year. Cow husbandry doesn't require too much effort and investment like pigs. Cattle graze on natural straws and grasses.

Loi manages and uses everything in her house because they are mutual assets bought from her and her husband's earnings and savings.

"My husband usually works at sea year round so he doesn't help with family chores. When he comes home he drinks alcohol rather than help with household chores. I have to do all the housework, the cattle and crop farm chores. He didn't help even when I was pregnant. He doesn't help with chores because he's always at sea and only comes for a few days at a time. Asking him to help would get me scolded."

I participate in the majority of decisions regarding the sale and purchase of production assets. My husband fears my disapproval so he consults my opinion on everything.

I manage the income generated from production assets and single-handedly decide about small transactions, but notify my husband about larger expenditures. He works away from home, leaving me with the children so I have to be the one managing household expenses, my husband also reports to me when he spends money. In short, I manage household expenses."

She is comfortable with the current distribution of responsibilities and wouldn't want it to change. *"It's because of me and the children that my husband has to work at sea in dangerous and harsh conditions; so when he comes home I exempt him from doing housework. He's been working at sea for years, so I've gotten used to doing everything. It's gotten to the point where I feel more relaxed when he isn't home because I won't have to clean up after him. But if possible, when he gets home, I want him to help with tasks like feeding cattle."*

She is not and has never been a leader. Most community members support and are not jealous or disapproving of female leaders. A few individuals curse and whisper against women in leadership, but this is only behind their backs.

"What I want most in life is for my children to find husbands and wives and settle down, to have enough to eat and dress adequately, that's all a mother wishes for. I have lived in bad circumstances so I hope my children will have a better life. So far one of my children has settle down and the rest have gotten jobs. In general, I'm a bit glad but still worried; I hear there's more boys than girls, and fear my boys can't get wives."

One of the hardest periods in her life was after she had just given birth. Her child had appendicitis and they had no money to pay for treatment. Her husband decided to sell the cows to pay for the treatment, then left for work on the sea. She and her kids were left behind working, they could not celebrate *Tet* (Vietnamese Lunar New Year, the most important holiday of the year). Her husband sent home his first paycheck, which helped so much. Another time, the husband saved enough money to start raising ducks, but she failed and lost everything. Then she used their savings to raise pigs, but failed as well. After that, she stopped livestock farming for a while, and sought paid employment in order to make and save some money before trying farming again.

Loi had not heard about "Empowerment" before the interview. After being told what it is, she said, *"I consider myself to be empowered, because I can decide anything. My husband has been working at sea for 26 years, and with communication difficulties, I have to be able to take care of the children and the house by myself."*

Name of respondent: Nguyen Thi Cau

Cau is a 60 years old, married with six children and has attained 2nd grade education. Her most valuable assets are the cows because she has neither gold nor silver. She has rice for sale in case the cows get ill.

She is able to use the following assets: the water pump for bathing the pigs and pumping drinking water, the bike, furniture, the rice-cooker, pots, dishes and bowls, which she saved money and bought except the rice-cooker, which she was gifted by her children.

"The household participates in growing paddy, raising pigs and cows: "I do all the work mentioned above. Before, my husband was the main worker in the family. After he got sick in 2007, I manage everything, from taking care of him to agricultural work. If I accidentally left tools at home whilst in the field, he couldn't bring them to me. I work 24/7 in the field, tending to the cows, pigs and chickens so I don't have the luxury of rest and relaxation like others. I also have to plant paddy sprouts, fertilize the field, drain field water, make porridge for the pigs, and treat the field with pesticides, when the cattle become ill I buy medicine and treat them myself. Generally speaking, I do everything.

I make all decisions to purchase and sell assets used for production. I take care of hiring workers, renting machinery, and decide how to care for the pigs and cows because there's no one else to make decisions, no matter how tired I still have to take care of work, there's no one else that I can rely on to help."

She single handedly decides on how to distribute income from assets used for production and plan to gradually pay back all her debts. Because her ailing husband can't do anything, he leaves all decisions to her.

"I always feel restless and depressed, if only one of my kids could settle down and live close to home, I could work less and leave things like carrying seeds or stacking straws to him/her. I don't have much strength and should stop doing labor intensive work, but I still have to because there's no one else.

I really want change, I want someone to help share my burden. I have a son close by who's settled down with his wife, but he works on the sea and rarely comes home. My other children tell me to ask him for help rather than them, so I still have to do things by myself."

She heads a group of the elderly by organizing annual meetings for the committee, encouraging contributions, helping the less fortunate and organizing charity and festive events.

The community encourages women to become leaders. For example, *"when I became the head of group 1 of the committee, everyone gave me support, told me to not give up since no one else could do it, they encouraged me and pushed me on."*

Her life is full of hardships, she only wishes for a bit more money before leaving this world peacefully, that's happiness for her.

She believes she is poor because she can't make money. Her hardest experience was when her husband was diagnosed with a nervous system disorder and then an oesophageal tumor. The treatment process, which is still ongoing has been economically and physically draining.

She had not heard of the term "Empowerment" before this study, but once the meaning was explained, she said she considered herself at 80 – 100 percent empowered because nobody can decide for her, it's her right. Her husband can't do anything, even borrowing money. Owing to her circumstances, she has to manage and take care of everything.

Name of respondent: Nguyen Thi Due

Due is 54 years, married, has three children and is educated up to the 9th grade.

To her, the house is the most valuable asset because it is a place to live and the result of all her hard work and investments (an expensive asset). She is able to use and manage fishing equipment (tools and boat), the television and the motorcycle because she worked, saved money and bought the assets.

Together with her husband, they participate in fishing, working in the field and chicken husbandry. More specifically, she tosses the fishing net, classifies the caught fish, and sells them to merchants. The husband pulls the fishing net from the river (the most labor intensive part of fishing), and feeds and medicates the chickens.

Due participates in the majority of decisions regarding the sale, purchase and usage of production factors. This is because *"I'm better at making calculations, more experienced, and agile compared to my clumsy and unprofessional husband."*

"I also participate in making most decisions on distribution of income within the family because I conduct a lot of transactions and, therefore, know how to best spend money and logically allocate funds. I also know commodity prices because I visit the local market regularly. I'm comfortable with the current distribution of responsibility and want nothing to change. My husband is slow and frivolous, so I have to be the main decision maker in the family."

Due is a leader because she hires laborers and trains and coordinates them. The community is happy to have women leaders.

What Due wants most in life is to be able to dress and eat well, have happy children and a happy marriage. She hopes that her children will get jobs and be good citizens, staying away from drugs and the like.

She has achieved 80% of her dreams and all previous obstacles. Her children were also able to settle down.

"One difficult situation was when I had a duck farm consisting of thousands of ducks, but I lost everything to the plague and fell into debt. I couldn't get loans from the bank because I feared that I might not be able to pay it back. With my sibling's help, I was able to borrow money (he took out a loan under his name with his LURC)."

Before the interview, Due had not heard about "Empowerment". Once she understood what it meant, she said she considered herself empowered because she is proficient and, therefore, decides everything in the family.

Name of respondent: Nguyen Thi Thoa

Thoa is 51 years old, married with four children and has attained the 5th grade of education.

The most valuable asset for her is the house because it is the communal place for activities and life. She is able to use and manage the altar, the closet and the water filtration machine because she bought them.

Together with her husband they grow crops and take care of livestock. On her own, Thoa goes to the market to do the groceries, takes care of cooking and looking after poultry and pigs. The husband works in the crop fields (plants seeds and harvests) and takes masonry jobs.

Thao contributes 50% of decisions on the purchase and sale of production factors. She independently decides *"on small transactions, but I need to consult my husband on matters of greater importance."*

She is comfortable with the current distribution of responsibilities and wants nothing to change. She is not a leader and her community is indifferent to whether the leader is male or female.

What she wants most in her life is to have health and for her children to find stable jobs and settle down. "I want health to continue working, and happiness is what every parent wishes for their child." She has not yet achieved this dream because her health is failing and her children's future is unknown.

Thoa has experienced many difficult situations like drought destroying crops she had invested so much effort in. Other instances involved pests destroying crops, resulting in bad harvests.

Before this interview, Thoa had not heard about "Empowerment". After understanding what empowerment means, she said that she considered herself partially empowered because she sometimes needs counseling and assistance from others to in order improve herself.

Name of respondent: Tran Thi Tam

Tam is 32 years old, married with two children and has attained 9th grade of education.

Her house is her most valuable asset because it is the communal place for activities and life. Tam is able to use and manage the motorcycle, the television, refrigerator, and the phone because she bought them.

"My husband is the main worker in the family and earns wages. I stay at home, educate the children and take care of housework. I participate in the majority of decision making concerning the distribution of income in my family because my husband works away from home and doesn't have time to participate in decision making. He leaves in the morning, comes home late at night, and occasionally leaves home for 2-3 days at a time. There are elderlies and children at home so I have to make decisions because I know what is best for the family. I'm comfortable with the current distribution of responsibilities between my husband and I want nothing to change."

She considers herself to be a leader because she is a member of the Women Union's committee. The community is easy going and indifferent to notions of male and female leaders.

What Tan wants most in life is to have a happy family and well-behaved children because her family is important to her. She is gradually able to achieve my dream as she has barely experienced obstacles.

She had heard about "Empowerment" prior to this study and to her it represents the situation whereby the husband leaves the ability to decide household matters to the wife. She, therefore, considers herself to be empowered, partially because she independently decides on small matters and her husband decides on large ones.

Name of respondent: Truong Thi Ban

Ban is 53 years old, married with four children and has attained the third grade of education.

Her most valuable asset is the agricultural production land because soil and land are needed for annual crop production and their livelihood is dependent on the production land.

She manages and uses everything in her home because they are mutually owned assets, but she and her husband consult each other on decisions to purchase and sell. Ban is able to decide unilaterally on small matters, but is afraid of being deceived or blamed while making important decisions, so she consults on those.

Ban and her husband bought assets from their earnings because their parents did not leave them any.

"My husband only does work as a mason. I have to take care of everything else: taking care of the chickens, pigs, the field and garden, etc. When harvest season arrives and I get overloaded with work I ask him to stay home to help and he does. I try my best to handle all housework so that he can take masonry jobs which provides economical help.

I participate in only a few purchase and sale transactions because my husband is the major decision maker. He often informs me about the decision after the transaction. When we are consulting with each other, if we disagree I take his side in fear of being blamed if I'm wrong.

- I manage the income generated from production assets and decide whether to save or spend it. But choices with large expenditures are my husband's decision."

Ban is comfortable with the current distribution of responsibility because her husband does wage employment. She stays at home and does all that she can. When she is overwhelmed with work, she asks him to help. She tries not to ask often as his helping is at the expense of his waged masonry work.

Ban is not a leader in anyway and has no skills or experience in leadership. Her community is indifferent to whether it is men or women in leadership. Both genders can be leaders if they possess the ability to do the job well.

What she desires most in her life is to be able to clear their debts they have accrued as a result of their child's illness. Every month, she worries about banking interests and principals. She believes that if the debt were to be reduced, she would be able to take better care of the family's nutrition less stressfully.

She has not been able to achieve her dream because of her sickly child. Her husband and she raised him, nurtured and gave him education, but when he graduated he had his own family to take care of. She and her husband can't burden him with their debts.

"My hardest moment was when my husband fell ill and couldn't contribute to the family's livelihoods. Back then, my child was young, and the family was poor. I worked day after day, doing every employed work I could find as well as raising pigs, I had no free time but luckily the sale of good piglets helped out. I managed to borrow money from my parents to get by until my husband got well and was working again.

"Prior to this interview, I had not heard about "Empowerment". Now that I understand its meaning, I consider myself to be empowered, because when my husband was sick, I managed all family matters and did everything."