Linking Gender Approaches of a Multisectoral Nutrition-**Sensitive Agriculture Intervention with Indicators of Women's Empowerment in Rural Ghana: A mixed-methods study**

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BACKGROUND

- Research findings on the influence of nutrition-sensitive agriculture (NSA) on women's empowerment have been inconsistent.¹
- There is an inadequate understanding of how NSA projects contribute to women's empowerment and gender equality.²

OBJECTIVES

To assess a NSA case study for (i) its gender-specific approach, (ii) theorize its pathways to women's empowerment, and (iii) examine the changes in women empowerment using a mixed-methods lens



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Data sources:

METHODS

- LinkINg Up (LU) project²⁻³
- Project documents, endline focus group discussions [FGD] and in-depth interviews [IDI]), and baseline and endline surveys

Sample:

- Qualitative: 78 participants from treatment group, selected purposefully for 14 FGD (7 with women, 7 with male partners) and 32 IDI (16 with women, 16 with male partners)
- Quantitative: 330 women (Treatment, n=166; Comparison, n=164)

Assessment framework and tool:

- Reach, Benefit and Empowerment (RBE) Framework¹
- Project-Level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (intrinsic, instrumental and collective agency)⁴

Analysis:

- Inductive thematic analysis approach with MAXQDA 2022
- Generalized linear mixed models adjusting for baseline outcome values, covariates, and clusters

RESULTS

Linkages between LU and women's empowerment indicators

Baseline characteristics of *LU* **women**

	Treatment	Comparison		LU gender approach
Variables	n = 166¹	n = 164¹	P value ²	5 11
Individual				
Age, y	$\textbf{45.3} \pm \textbf{12.8}$	44.3 ± 14.5	0.50	
Education level ³			0.05	Agency-related
None	49 (29.5)	53 (32.3)		 Target active female
Primary	65 (39.2)	44 (26.8)		members of farmer-
Secondary or higher	52 (31.3)	67 (40.9)		based organizations
Married/cohabiting	124 (74.7)	122 (74.4)	0.95	involve male partners
lousehold				Provide training
Wealth			0.25	activities
Low	50 (30.7)	59 (36.2)		
Medium	52 (31.9)	57 (35.0)		
High	61 (37.4)	47 (28.8)		
Women's Empowerment ⁴	112 (67.5)	69 (42.1)	< 0.001	



Qualitative

- Self-efficacy
- More respect from

Mean \pm SD or n (%). ¹Total n = 330 for all but age (n = 319), wealth (n = 326). ²Independent Student's t test or Chi-Squared test of independence. ³Highest completed.⁴Based on 12 pro-WEAI indicators.

CONCLUSIONS

- Based on the RBE framework, the LU project had three gendered approaches that led to women's empowerment.
- The findings demonstrate the benefits of designing NSA interventions that leverage and strengthen existing resources (i.e., farmer groups and service institutions) to allow women to increase their agency.

household and community

- Freedom to move due to income and male support
- Aware of rights in relation to domestic violence

aOR=1.9 95% CI [1.10, 3.24]

Mobility

Quantitative

Resource-related

Provide in-kind loans and agriculture inputs through local rural banks and agriculture sector

Instrumental agency

- Hires labour support, hence reduced workload; more leisure time
- Has savings; access to loans
- More control over income
- Investment in assets

Access to/ decision on credit

aOR=3.4 95% CI [1.95, 6.03]

Collective agency

- Empowerment outcomes may change but may not entirely be reflected in the quantitative pro-WEAI indicators measured.
- Integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods is important for assessing empowerment over time.
- Improve women-staff interactions and capacity building opportunities Strengthen

Institutional-related

multisector

collaboration

Higher participation in community groups (e.g., social fund)

- Takes on leadership roles within group
- Social recognition

Membership in influential groups

aOR=1.9 95% CI [1.07, 3.40]

Overall women's empowerment

aOR=1.7 95% CI [1.02, 2.93]

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