



**FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS  
RESEARCH COUNCIL**

FY19–24 Research and Learning Agenda: Progress and Insights

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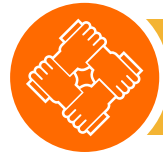
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Food Security and Livelihoods Research Council: FY19–24 Research Learning Agenda

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*World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. We serve all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.*



## INTRODUCTION

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World Vision is a Christian humanitarian and development organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. For nearly 75 years, World Vision and our local partners have worked to address the root causes of poverty and injustice in the world's most vulnerable communities. With a presence in nearly 100 countries across the globe, we contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focused on food security, livelihoods, economic growth, environment, education, child protection, gender equality, maternal and child health, and nutrition.



## RESEARCH COUNCIL WORKING GROUPS AND AREAS OF INQUIRY



Inclusive Food  
and Market  
Systems  
Development



Climate,  
Environment, and  
Natural Resource  
Management  
(NRM)



Food Security  
and  
Nutrition



Resilience  
and  
Sustainable  
Livelihoods



Women's  
Economic  
Empowerment

### FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS RESEARCH AND LEARNING AGENDA

World Vision's Food Security & Livelihoods (FSL) sector's support to SDGs aligns with our strategic focus on strengthening local and regional agrifood and market systems, catalyzing sustainable livelihoods and fostering household and community resilience. The significant economic and climate-related vulnerabilities experienced across the developing world in recent years have only increased the complexity of the root causes and solutions related to the daily challenges faced by the world's rural poor. Achieving durable, people-centered outcomes in today's landscape requires continuous program quality improvement, innovation, and thought leadership, as well as long-term strategic partnerships to amplify impact.

### FSL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Considering these realities, in 2019 World Vision established an FSL Research Council. The Research Council currently comprises seven research institutions including the University of Florida, IFPRI, TANGO (Technical Assistance to NGOs), ideas42, University of Illinois (AgREACH), Chronic Poverty Action Network (CPAN) at the University of Sussex Institute of Development Studies (IDS<sup>1</sup>), and Tulane University. The Council serves as the primary vehicle for defining and undertaking the research and learning agenda associated with World Vision's FSL sector strategy. The Council also fosters shared value among and across its members for the pursuit of globally relevant development program evidence of what works and what does not and builds research and learning capacity across local low- and middle-income country (LMIC) stakeholder groups. World Vision's FSL Research and Learning Agenda, developed through the Research Council, directly contributes to continuous program quality improvement within our FSL programming models, approaches, field practices, and theories of change across the spectrum of development contexts.

### ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Now more than ever, we believe that applied research must actively contribute to adaptive management within service delivery, take on board digital and remote solutions for data collection, and provide more frequent insight for LMIC government, global donor, and community-based decision-makers who must guide the architecture. Supporting the sector's overarching livelihoods and agrifood systems goals, World Vision's FSL Research and Learning Agenda describes a range of broad questions, across five areas of inquiry, that World Vision is exploring with our partners. This publication highlights some of the insights that result from the research conducted through this learning agenda since its inception. The content presents, by theme, an overview of the topics included within the research and learning agenda, along with a synthesis of results and insights from research and learning exercises completed to date.

In 2020, the FSL Research and Learning Agenda evolved to study the covariate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on poverty, food and nutrition insecurity, and livelihoods. And while some of the research insights below relate to COVID-19 impacts, the primary crosscutting theme that drives this report reflects research gaps and application of insights across the humanitarian development peace (HDP) nexus.

The FSL Research and Learning Agenda summarized within this publication is described in relatively broad terms. However, the Research Council discussions, through which questions were selected, prioritized the potential for each question to produce evidence that might improve program design approaches, policy measures, and systems outcomes across all five thematic areas of inquiry.

<sup>1</sup> CPAN was initially hosted at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) at the time of its inclusion within World Vision's Food Security and Livelihoods Research Council. World Vision remains grateful to ODI for its continued collaboration.

# FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS RESEARCH COUNCIL INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES

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## INCLUSIVE FOOD AND MARKET SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

World Vision's FSL sector works in this practice area to develop inclusive markets and integrate poor producers and marginal communities into market systems and build their resilience. Notably, we have been linking groups of farmers with input suppliers and buyers of produce using models such as the Inclusive Market Systems Development approach and Savings for Transformation. Furthermore, the FSL sector works with the extremely poor to build the minimum assets and capacity to participate in pro-poor value chains using the [Ultra-Poor Graduation model](#) developed in collaboration with BRAC. Our programming experiences and research analysis show that these approaches do improve access to markets and profitability in rural value chains, and economically uplift target communities and poor households. However, there are concerns about the sustainability and resilience of these outcomes. Through this Research and Learning Agenda, we seek to further innovate to expand the impact of these approaches, particularly in relation to improving household nutrition, women's economic empowerment, and resilient market systems.



## QUESTION #1

What inclusive financial and market systems development project approaches contribute to **increasing income/assets and nutrition** among the lowest income quintile and food insecure households? What interventions are most impactful in the face of emerging crises?

### Lead research partner

AgReach—University of Illinois

### Illustrative countries

Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Cambodia

### Methodology

Meta-review of monitoring and evaluation of market systems development projects

### Donor learning agenda link

[USAID Feed the Future 2018 Learning Agenda](#), question #4 under the Market Systems theme

## QUESTION #2

How can we optimize the sequencing of **social protection interventions like the Ultra-Poor Graduation with market interventions**? What factors, in combining these interventions, lead to more sustainable outcomes among the ultra-poor?

### Lead research partners

IFPRI, TANGO

### Illustrative countries

Bangladesh, Ethiopia

### Methodology

Meta-review of monitoring and evaluation data from World Vision Resilience Food Security Activities (RFSAs)

### Donor learning agenda link

USAID-BHA, under the Strategic Integration theme and the Optimal Package of Intervention subtheme  
[USDA Food for Progress Learning Agenda](#), question #1 under the Value Creation theme



## QUESTION #3

Which evaluation methodologies are best for assessing the impact of inclusive market systems development programming when direct interventions target key market systems entrepreneurs and business actors?

### Lead research partner

World Vision

### Illustrative countries

Cambodia— Commercialisation of Aquaculture for Sustainable Trade (CAST)

### Methodology

Review of monitoring methods, pilot activities

### Donor learning agenda link

[USAID Feed the Future 2018 Learning Agenda](#), question #1 under the Market Systems theme

## QUESTION #4

How do different motivators such as fee for service, commissions on sales, and material facilitation impact the effectiveness and sustainability of village agents (trade intermediaries) in value chain and market systems development programs?

### Lead research partner

AgReach—University of Illinois

### Illustrative countries

Zimbabwe

### Methodology

Meta-analysis, multi-arm trial

### Donor learning agenda link

[USAID Feed the Future 2018 Learning Agenda](#), question #3 under the Market Systems theme

[USDA Food for Progress Learning Agenda](#), questions #11 and #12 under the Market Linkages theme

## FSL RESEARCH & LEARNING AGENDA INSIGHTS TO DATE

Recent research from Catholic University and World Vision in Tanzania and Rwanda shows that participation in inclusive food and market systems development (iMSD) programs increases food security in participating households. It also creates a buffer effect, reducing the time of recovery from the impact of shocks and stressors, most notably concerning the impact of COVID-19. Specifically, in the wake of COVID-19, the availability and use of inclusive financial services was higher among iMSD project households in relation to comparison households in Rwanda and Tanzania. Critical to achieving the ‘i’ in inclusive market systems development is the need to directly target vulnerable populations, including women, with additional support to equip them with the skills required to participate in these programs, including business and financial literacy and linkages to financial services and social capital. Additionally, research undertaken by CPAN, BIGD, DATA, and World Vision in southwest Bangladesh shows that participation in an Ultra Poor Graduation (UPG) program with iMSD is associated with the development of absorptive and adaptive capacities that can tackle chronic poverty. Strengthening resilience capacities to anticipate and absorb disaster and health shocks, through the coordination and layering of Disaster Response and Management (DRM) programs, may prevent households from falling back or deeper into ultra-poverty. The selection of competitive value chains for business development is an important focus and results also suggest that DRM responses could be further expanded to target the priority livelihoods sectors, such as livestock practices amid floods and cyclones, to prevent program attrition and negative coping strategies.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR INCLUSIVE FOOD AND MARKET SYSTEMS RESEARCH:

- Role of inclusive market systems development in promoting resilience: evidence from World Vision projects. [EDM, 2022](#)
- World Vision & FAO’s [AgriFood Systems Series](#)
- Pathways out of ultra-poverty: A mixed methods assessment of layered interventions in coastal Bangladesh. [CPAN, 2022](#)



## CLIMATE, ENVIRONMENT, AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (NRM)

Through our Food Security & Livelihoods sector, World Vision promotes farming practices that ensure smallholder agriculture is productive, sustainable, nutrition-sensitive, and resilient. Across our global footprint, World Vision's program approaches include sustainable land management and land restoration (notably Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration, or FMNR), soil and water conservation (watershed management), small-scale irrigation and rainwater harvesting, agroforestry, conservation agriculture, disaster risk reduction, and climate-smart agriculture. Programming experience shows that when implemented alone, these approaches have not improved household income, food security, and nutrition as consistently as expected. There is a recognized need for strategies that can support more widescale adoption at community or landscape levels and among small-scale women producers. Research conducted by World Vision under the USAID-funded Zimbabwe ENSURE project has offered promising insights for future practice. Program evidence demonstrated that sustaining nature-based solutions to land restoration (e.g., natural resource management, or NRM) was closely linked to creating and supporting local systems and structures, such as inclusive community groups and traditional authorities. These citizen-led groups are also a powerful mechanism connecting communities to district and national regulatory structures, which help to address preparedness for climate related shocks and hazards, the scaling of best practices in NRM, and environmental awareness.



## QUESTION #1

Do multipurpose trees enhance the massive upscaling of land restoration?

### Lead research partner

AgReach—University of Illinois

### Illustrative countries

Sahelian countries, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Malawi

### Methodology

Meta-review of relevant studies

## QUESTION #2

What are best practices for reducing women’s time burden in NRM?

### Lead research partners

AgReach—University of Illinois, IFPRI

### Illustrative countries

Zimbabwe, Malawi, Peru, Ecuador

### Methodology

Meta-review to produce checklist with context adaptations



## QUESTION #3

How (if at all) does NRM contribute to child well-being?

### Lead research partners

IFPRI

### Illustrative countries

Mali, Ethiopia, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador

### Methodology

Multi-country quasi-experimental design, or panel study

## QUESTION #4

**How do active citizenship approaches effectively promote social accountability (e.g., Citizen Voice and Action [CVA]) and improve public institutions' abilities/responsiveness in Agriculture and NRM service delivery?**

### Lead research partners

AgREACH—University of Illinois, University of Sussex IDS (CPAN)

### Illustrative countries

Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Peru

### Methodology

Meta-analysis of existing studies, (as agreed) operations research

### Donor learning agenda link

[USAID-FFP](#), under the Access and Inclusion theme and the Social Accountability subtheme

## FSL RESEARCH & LEARNING AGENDA INSIGHTS TO DATE

World Vision's publication on program results in Niger and Ethiopia has shown that sustainable biodiversity and ecosystems outcomes require transformative shifts in gender norms and the integration of gender equality and social inclusion in natural resource management (NRM). Climate change and NRM programs must be designed to ensure that innovations, technologies, and practices are implemented to reduce women's time poverty, which has been a serious constraint for women's meaningful participation and decision-making. Research indicates that gender training can encourage male engagement in various tasks that are traditionally assigned to women, thereby removing obstacles to women's active participation and increased representation on relevant committees and community institutions. Enhancing women's participation in forest management groups and cooperative platforms increases access to forest products such as wood, trees, grasses, and water from revitalized ecosystems and increases women's engagement in extracting and selling these products. Further, women's decision-making around the use of this new income has been shown to improve household food security. The sustainability of NRM programs has been shown to be closely linked to the establishment of inclusive community networks and groups that can work through local structures and traditional authorities to improve and maintain the provision of technical supervision and services from all the relevant government agencies. These citizen-led groups are also a powerful mechanism connecting communities to district and national regulatory structures, which help to address preparedness for climate related shocks and hazards, the scaling of best practices in NRM, and environmental awareness.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR CLIMATE, ENVIRONMENT AND NRM RESEARCH:

- Building Community Resilience to Climate Shocks: Lessons from ENSURE in Zimbabwe: <https://www.fsnnetwork.org/resource/building-community-resilience-climate-shocks-lessons-ensure-Zimbabwe-2019>
- A gender-responsive approach to natural resources [Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2021](#)



## FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

World Vision promotes nutrition security through a range of nutrition-sensitive entry points such as inclusive market systems development; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), women’s economic empowerment; NRM; and social behavior change communication (BCC). While there is strong global evidence of the causal relationships between interventions in these areas leading to nutrition goals, more evidence is needed to understand interventions with the greatest impact in different contexts. Through this Research and Learning Agenda, World Vision seeks to gain a better understanding of how to best integrate and deliver potential approaches for improved nutrition goals as a co-benefit within food security and sustainable livelihoods programs. A randomized control trial research on the topic has been completed by IFPRI<sup>2</sup> in one of World Vision’s programs in Ethiopia. The research tested the potential BCC<sup>3</sup> techniques and redesigned livelihood interventions that can make social protection programming more nutrition-sensitive. There are additional identified opportunities in relation to FSL programming and the emerging literature where more knowledge and investment could potentially lead to improved maternal nutrition and child development outcomes, particularly exploring how to effectively increase consumption of animal source proteins, teach nutrition to adolescents and young children in schools, address maternal depression in vulnerable communities, and build more inclusive and resilient local agrifood systems.



<sup>2</sup> <https://doi.org/10.2499/p15738coll2.137009> Including scalable nutrition interventions in a graduation model program: Experimental evidence from Ethiopia. IFPRI Discussion Paper 2208. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

<sup>3</sup> <https://doi.org/10.2499/p15738coll2.136972> Can a light-touch graduation model enhance livelihood outcomes? Evidence from Ethiopia.

## QUESTION #1

What interventions/strategies can make **graduation model and social protection programs more nutrition-sensitive?**  
Is cash plus lighter BCC more cost-effective than a transfer modality research (TMRI) model?

**Lead research partner**  
IFPRI

**Illustrative countries**  
Ethiopia, Bangladesh

**Methodology**  
Mixed methods longitudinal study, or randomized control trial

## QUESTION #2

Which project activities within World Vision's **Ultra-Poor Graduation model** most effectively support women's economic empowerment and provide a pathway to improved nutrition among poor households?

**Lead research partners**  
IFPRI, TANGO

**Illustrative countries**  
Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Malawi, Honduras, Guatemala

**Methodology**  
Meta-analysis, multi-arm trial

**Donor learning agenda link**  
[USAID-FFP](#), under the Access and Inclusion theme and the Women's Empowerment/Integrating Gender subtheme



## QUESTION #3

Does **reducing maternal depression through community-based group therapy** improve child nutrition and early child development outcomes?

**Lead research partner**  
IFPRI

**Illustrative countries**  
Ethiopia

**Methodology**  
Multi-arm trial, behavior change

## QUESTION #4

What are **effective strategies to improve animal source food (ASF) consumption in vulnerable communities for children, women, and adolescent girls**? How do conflict, climate change, and/or economic shock affect communities' access to, perception of, and consumption behaviors for animal source foods?

**Lead research partner**

University of Florida

**Illustrative countries**

Ethiopia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Nepal, Dry Corridor

**Methodology**

Meta-analysis, multi-arm trial, behavior change

## QUESTION #5

What role does **ASF consumption in the first 1,000 days** (pregnant mother then child 6–23 months) play in birth outcomes and infant and young child growth and development?

**Lead research partner**

University of Florida

**Illustrative countries**

Ethiopia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Nepal, Haiti

**Methodology**

Meta-analysis, multi-arm trial, behavior change



## QUESTION #6

What is the effect of **small-scale poultry production on child nutrition**?

**Lead research partner**

University of Florida

**Illustrative countries**

Ethiopia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Nepal, Haiti

**Methodology**

Mixed methods longitudinal study

## QUESTION #7

What are effective, school-related pedagogical approaches to teaching nutrition (e.g., promoting dietary diversity, use of underutilized indigenous foods)? How do programs most effectively address the nutrition, social, and behavior-change needs of adolescent girls through these platforms?

### Lead research partners

University of Florida, IFPRI

### Illustrative countries

Mozambique, Cambodia, Kenya

### Methodology

Mixed methods longitudinal study, operations research, case study

### Donor learning agenda link

[McGovern-Dole FFE 2016 Learning Agenda](#), questions #5 and #6 under the Nutrition Evidence Gaps theme

## FSL RESEARCH & LEARNING AGENDA INSIGHTS TO DATE

Current research is clear that actions in nutrition-sensitive sectors, such as FSL programs, are critical in the global strategy to eliminate undernutrition. To achieve appreciable gains in this area, households need to reach a place where production and consumption decisions are separable. Research shows that to make sustained gains in nutrition-sensitive programming, it is important to offer women more control over resources and to include some component of a productive assets transfer within donor or government funded interventions. One study indicates that nutrition behavior changes alone, or even behavior change programming combined with a cash transfer only, do not result in the same appreciable level of gains in dietary diversity or nutrition among program participants as the inclusion of an assets transfer component. World Vision is currently conducting research in Rwanda, through USAID Feed the Future funding, on the increase of animal source food consumption through the provision of chickens as a productive asset. The anticipated benefits from this intervention approach are partly due to the synergy of chicken husbandry generally being seen as the domain of women and the ability of households to sell male chickens at market while retaining female chickens for production of eggs for home consumption. In addition to increased women's control over resources, it is important to address maternal depression, which has been shown to directly impact children's growth, wellbeing, and development. The use of community-based group therapy delivered through Care Groups has been shown to significantly reduce rates of depression and improve functionality and perceived social support among care givers, increasing their ability to adopt life-saving health, nutrition, and responsive caregiving actions for their children.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION RESEARCH:

- Differences in the early impact of COVID-19 on food security and livelihoods in rural and urban areas in the Asia Pacific Region. [Global Food Security, Johns Hopkins Univ., 2021](#)
- The role of poultry transfers in diet diversity: A cluster randomized intent to treat analysis. [Food Policy, IFPRI 2022](#)
- Including scalable nutrition interventions in a graduation model program: Experimental evidence from Ethiopia. [IFPRI Discussion Paper 2208](#)



## RESILIENCE & SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

The livelihoods of many poor rural households are at constant risk due to their vulnerability to a wide variety of stressors, including a range of environmental, intrahousehold, and societal forces. As envisaged in the strategy, World Vision will continue to leverage and innovate our programmatic approaches to build or secure resilience outcomes at household and community levels and in food and market systems. However, the emerging literature on resilience in relation to livelihoods stresses the need to expand our analysis (see box) beyond conventional economic outcomes such as assets, income, or agriculture productivity to consider less-tangible elements such as social capital, self-efficacy, and empowerment.



## QUESTION #1

What are the optimal modes and range of delivery for emerging models that seek to change mindset and harness faith identity contributors to agency? How effective are these models at enabling the extremely poor to cope economically and mentally with shocks and health pandemics such as COVID-19?

### Lead research partners

IFPRI, ODI, TANGO

### Illustrative countries

Ethiopia, Honduras, Zambia, Tanzania

### Methodology

Mixed methods, multi-country, longitudinal studies

## QUESTION #2

What aspects of women's economic empowerment most significantly increase household resilience?

### Lead research partners

TANGO, IFPRI, ODI

### Illustrative countries

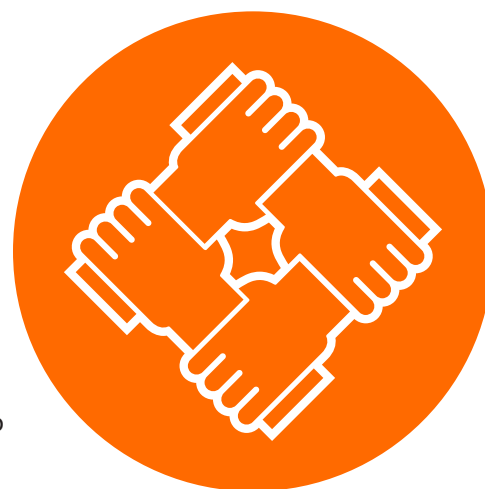
Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) countries within World Vision's portfolio

### Methodology

Analysis of panel data with qualitative life history interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews

### Donor learning agenda link

[USAID Feed the Future 2018 Learning Agenda](#), under the Gender and Women's Empowerment theme



## QUESTION #3

What are the most effective interventions for building social capital among the extremely poor in fragile contexts and in view of climate, conflict, and economic shocks?

### Lead research partners

TANGO, ODI, IFPRI

### Illustrative countries

World Vision fragile contexts

### Methodology

Meta-analysis

### Donor learning agenda link

[USAID-FFP](#), under the Resilience theme and the Strengthening Resilience Capacity and Social Cohesion subthemes

## QUESTION #4

How effective are current World Vision approaches for fostering faith identity as a driver of resilience capacities and sustainable livelihoods?

### Lead research partners

TANGO, ODI

### Illustrative countries

Countries with Citizen Voice and Action and Empowered Worldview projects

### Methodology

Relational interviews, life history interviews, gender-disaggregated focus group discussions

## FSL RESEARCH & LEARNING AGENDA INSIGHTS TO DATE

Recognizing the threats to development gains posed by COVID-19, World Vision pivoted some of our research investments to understanding the intersection of the pandemic and sustainable livelihoods. Recent research from TANGO, conducted through the THRIVE Tanzania program, explored how households weathered the COVID-19 pandemic. The study revealed most households participating in resilience programming in Tanzania were avoiding negative coping strategies like taking children out of school, reducing food intake, or selling off productive assets. Membership in savings groups and farmers groups were both associated with a higher probability that women participants experienced an increase in income and a lower probability of income loss. Likewise, in Tanzania, clients who participated in community-based interventions that fostered social cohesion and social capital were less reliant on negative coping strategies in response to shocks and stressors. Some research also points to the role of community savings groups in reviving the local economy during COVID-19. Research carried out by Chronic Poverty Advisory Network (CPAN) and World Vision on the role of faith groups, including World Vision's Empowered Worldview (EWW) project model, showed that the social cohesion of faith groups and the use of the Empowered Worldview methodology were both important to sustaining pre-pandemic gains. Participants in the EWW program in Zambia and other countries reported shifting mindsets from discriminatory beliefs about the role of women in society, family, and economic activities, which improved intra-household relationships. Results suggest that removing the constraints women face in accessing resources and increasing their agency can improve intra-household relationships which are important to household resilience and wellbeing.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS RESEARCH:

- Pathways Out of Ultra-poverty: A Mixed Methods Assessment of Layered Interventions in Coastal Bangladesh. [CPAN/ODI, 2022](#)
- Empowered Worldviews: Assessing the role of behavior-change programming on mindsets and livelihoods in Zambia. [CPAN/ODI and University of Zambia, 2021](#)
- Independent Study of Program Efficacy, THRIVE Tanzania. [TANGO, 2021](#)
- The Role of Behaviour-Change Programming on Mindsets and Livelihoods. [CPAN, 2021](#)



## WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The international development community has come to a shared understanding that secure, sustainable, and inclusive economic growth will not manifest without the full participation of women and girls in all economic activities. At World Vision, advancing women's empowerment is essential to promoting broader economic prosperity and gender equality. Women's empowerment is known also to be a source of resilience to shocks that affect livelihoods in low-income countries among the extremely poor. World Vision will continue to invest in this practice area, particularly to improve our own program approaches and evidence-gathering to expand understanding about the role of women's empowerment and related issues including gender bargaining power, religion and female empowerment, male engagement for women's empowerment, financial and digital inclusion for women, and women's involvement in paid labor and off-farm activities.



## QUESTION #1

What are the **critical impact pathways for women's economic empowerment outcomes** within food security and livelihoods programs?

**Lead research partner**

AgReach—University of Illinois

**Illustrative countries**

Peru, Honduras, Zimbabwe, Niger, Cambodia

**Methodology**

Literature review to develop WEE framework, potentially primary research to test pathways

## QUESTION #2

What is the **appropriate conceptual framework for understanding household bargaining in an extended family or within polygamous relationships?** Are some measures better for different contexts?

**Lead research partners**

ODI, University of Sussex, IDS (CPAN)

**Illustrative countries**

South Asia and Central Asia, Tanzania

**Methodology**

Qualitative



## QUESTION #3

Does **religion affect how households respond to opportunities for women's employment, financing, NRM, and other livelihood activities?** If so, what are the pathways for these different responses, and do the differences matter?

**Lead research partners**

ODI, University of Sussex, IDS (CPAN), TANGO

**Illustrative countries**

Zambia, Honduras, Tanzania, Rwanda (on Empowered Worldview projects)

**Methodology**

Mixed methods, quasi-experimental

## QUESTION #4

What are the necessary labor market conditions to support women's involvement in off-farm economic activities and entrepreneurship? Do the key factors vary across context?

**Lead research partner**

AgReach—University of Illinois

**Illustrative countries**

Vietnam, Bangladesh, Kenya, Uganda

**Methodology**

Quasi-experimental, with panel data

## QUESTION #5

Do women feel more empowered because of male engagement?

**Lead research partner**

IFPRI

**Illustrative countries**

Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Ethiopia (DFSAs), Dry Corridor

**Methodology**

Qualitative, meta-analysis of findings from ongoing studies



## QUESTION #6

How might women's empowerment mitigate the economic and health effects of covariate shocks among the extremely poor? What aspects of women's empowerment appear important in this respect?

**Lead research partners**

AgReach—University of Illinois, University of Sussex, IDS (CPAN)

**Illustrative countries**

Central America (Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua)

**Methodology**

Mixed methods, but mostly qualitative relying on Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (pro-WEAI), leverage natural variation in ongoing programs of women's empowerment, and M&E work to collect data on exposure to and experience with COVID-19

## FSL RESEARCH & LEARNING AGENDA INSIGHTS TO DATE

Recent studies by IFPRI and World Vision in Ethiopia have found that programs aimed at alleviating economic stress and improving well-being in the family decreased daily quarrels in the household, with almost all participants reporting decreased poverty-related stress. Women participants shared that financial independence made them more confident, allowed them to further participate in community activities and improve their social status. There was strong evidence that engaging men in nutrition behavior change communication contributed to improving gender relations and led to more participation by men in household chores and meal preparation, which in turn increased mutual respect between men and women. Results support the idea that including men and women in gender transformative activities is critical to the success of these programs, but at the same time may garner a negative response in the community, as norms at the community level are more difficult to shift. While some men appreciate women's financial contributions to the household, women's increased power may be perceived as a threat to the existing masculine power dynamic. There needs to be an appreciation of cultural context where traditional gender roles may prevail despite improvements in women's decision-making and empowerment. Findings indicate that social protection and complementary programs have the potential to be gender transformative and prevent the drivers of intimate partner violence (IPV). Given the increased importance of social protection in the COVID-19 response and recovery, as well as the increases in IPV due to the pandemic, research on women's economic empowerment, gender roles, male engagement, and gender transformative programming is likely to become increasingly important as well.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR WOMENS ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT RESEARCH:

- Government of Ethiopia's public works and complementary programs: A mixed-methods study on pathways to reduce intimate partner violence. (Social Science & Medicine, IFPRI, 2022).

