FOCUS Gender and Equity

Highlight 1: A Dynamic Portfolio of Gender Research Projects

SE LEVER

Improving poultry value chains and nutrition in Burkina Faso

SE LEVER is a five-year integrated poultry value chain project implemented by Tanager that aims to increase poultry production and improve women’s and children’s nutrition in three regions of Burkina Faso. The intervention includes three components:

1. Expanding access to value chain services such as poultry vaccination and marketing;
2. Improving diets and hygiene practices through behavior change communication; and
3. Promoting women’s empowerment and gender equity through community-level sensitization and women’s groups.

The IFPRI-led impact evaluation, a cluster randomized controlled trial implemented in 120 rural villages, will assess whether SE LEVER is able to increase women’s and young children’s micronutrient intake, improve young children’s dietary diversity and feeding practices, and increase household poultry production, sales, and profits. The baseline and lean season quantitative surveys were completed in 2017, and follow-up and endline surveys are scheduled for 2019, 2020, and 2021.

Women’s agency in decisions about nutrition and poultry

Women have the potential to play a crucial role in the poultry value chain in Burkina Faso, yet they have limited agency in how they participate in poultry production and marketing. In addition, empowering women in poultry-producing households is one pathway to improved diets and poultry production, sales, and profits. However, women often have limited control over diet-related decisions and how and when their poultry are bought, reared, and sold, relying on husbands and sons to connect with input suppliers, traders, and markets. Men own most poultry and have better access to value chain services such as training, veterinarians, and vaccinations. The SE LEVER impact evaluation will assess whether the intervention package improves women’s empowerment, decision-making about nutrition and health, and participation in poultry services and marketing.

The SE LEVER impact evaluation is also part of the portfolio of the Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project, Phase 2 (GAAP2), which is developing the project-level Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (pro-WEAI), a survey-based tool for assessing women’s empowerment and inclusion in agricultural development projects. Using pro-WEAI will allow SE LEVER to assess both women’s and men’s empowerment in poultry-producing households.

A mixed methods approach to understanding impact

In 2019, SE LEVER will conduct a process evaluation, including qualitative field work to complement the quantitative impact evaluation. Focus groups and semi-structured interviews will provide insight into participants’ perceptions of intrahousehold food allocation, diets, empowerment, and gender norms. The interviews will also delve into the roles that various actors, such as traders and village volunteer vaccinators, play in the poultry value chain, as well as how agricultural value chains, markets, and household activities vary by season.

The SE LEVER impact evaluation is led by the International Food Policy Research Institute, implemented by Tanager in collaboration with local NGOs, private institutions, and governmental services, and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health.

We would like to thank the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for their support of this research. We also would like to thank all funders who supported this research through their contributions to the CGIAR Trust Fund.