



# MID-TERM PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF THE ROUND I WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (WEE) ACTIVITIES

**USAID-PepsiCo Partnership, West Bengal, India**



Members of Eid Mubarak Group at Harvesting, Moloypur, Hooghly.  
PHOTO: Tetra Tech/ILRG

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- CA:** Community Agronomist
- EET:** Empowered Entrepreneurship Training
- EQ:** Evaluation Question
- ET:** Evaluation Team
- FGD:** Focus Group Discussion
- FY:** Fiscal Year
- GALS:** Gender Action Learning System
- GBV:** Gender-Based Violence
- HA:** Hectare
- IDIQ:** Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity
- ILRG:** Integrated Land and Resource Governance
- IP:** Implementing Partner
- KII:** Key Informant Interview
- KPI:** Key Performance Indicator
- LEAP:** Learning, Evaluation, and Analysis Project
- LGU:** Local Government Units (Indian State administration bodies)
- LLG:** Land-Leasing Group
- MT:** Metric Ton
- NGO:** Non-Governmental Organization
- NPI:** New Partnerships Initiative
- NRLM:** National Rural Livelihood Mission (India's flagship development program)
- NuCon:** Nurturing Connections
- PPE:** Portfolio Performance Evaluation
- PRO-WEAI:** Project-Level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
- SEE Change:** Self Empowerment and Equity for Change
- SFP:** Sustainable Farming Practices (PepsiCo agronomic training program)
- SHG:** Self-Help Groups (part of India's Rural Livelihoods Program)
- SOW:** Scope of Work
- SRLM:** State Rural Livelihood Mission of West Bengal
- STARR:** Strengthening Tenure and Resource Rights II IDIQ
- USAID:** United States Agency for International Development
- WEE:** Women's Economic Empowerment
- W-GDP:** Women's Global Development and Prosperity

## INTRODUCTION

A National Security Presidential Memorandum (NSPM-16) established the Women's Global Development Prosperity Initiative (W-GDP) in February 2019. The former W-GDP Initiative adopted the first whole-of-government approach to advancing women's economic empowerment (WEE) globally. The activities funded by the former W-GDP Initiative and the W-GDP Fund include USAID's Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Portfolio coordinated by the Bureau for Development, Democracy and Innovation (DDI), Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub (GenDev). GenDev staff work closely with the USAID Bureaus and Missions, implementing the WEE activities. The fiscal year (FY) 2018 funds support the Round I activities. The WEE Round I activities focus on three goals, which are viewed as foundational pillars:

- **Pillar One:** Advancing workforce development and vocational education to ensure women have the skills and training necessary to secure jobs;
- **Pillar Two:** Promoting women's entrepreneurship and providing women with access to capital, markets, technical assistance, and networks; and
- **Pillar Three:** Striving to remove the legal, regulatory, and cultural barriers that constrain women.

This case study is one of the 45 activities assessed by the USAID Learning, Evaluation, and Analysis Project (LEAP III) as part of a mid-term portfolio performance evaluation for USAID in 2020–2021. The evaluation team (ET) developed four case studies in close collaboration with USAID staff and implementing partners (IPs) associated with each of these activities. These four case studies of the Fund activities and their surrounding contexts provide insight into how a complex intervention is being implemented and the achievements, challenges, and unintended effects to date. The selected activities included:

- Expansion of Engendering Utilities implemented globally;
- USAID-PepsiCo Partnership implemented in West Bengal, India;
- Producer-Owned Women's Enterprises (POWER) implemented in Tamil Nadu, India; and
- World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) implemented in Cote d'Ivoire.

The case study aims to provide deeper insights into the implementation of the Fund activities by including the perspectives of three additional groups of stakeholders: beneficiaries, local partners, and critical associates. This field-based research gives voice to the beneficiaries and local partners, which is critical for identifying the activities' efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. The findings allow the ET to assess further the local context and binding constraints to WEE, identify challenges and opportunities, and describe lessons learned from the perspectives of beneficiaries and local partners.

The findings of this case study are presented in this report and aggregated into the evaluation report produced for USAID.



Farmer working in her potato field in Teligram, Hooghly.  
PHOTO: USAID LANDLINKS

# ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

## USAID-PepsiCo India Partnership

<b>Implementing Partner</b>	Tetra Tech ARD Landesa, Oxford Policy Management (subcontractors)
<b>Activity Dates</b>	July 27, 2018 – July 26, 2023
<b>WEE Award</b>	Pre-existing task order USAID-PepsiCo India partnership Integrated Land and Resource Governance (ILRG) Task Order 7200AAI8D00003/7200AAI8F00015
<b>WEE Funds Committed</b>	\$750,000
<b>WEE Pillars Addressed</b>	Pillar 1: Women in the Workforce Pillar 2: Women as Entrepreneurs Pillar 3: Women Enabled in the Economy
<b>Private Sector Partner</b>	PepsiCo
<b>Non-profit Partners</b>	Landesa Land Rights non-governmental organization (NGO) <sup>1</sup> Johns Hopkins University, Oxford Policy Management
<b>Public Sector Partner</b>	Government of West Bengal
<b>Activity Locations</b>	State of West Bengal, India
<b>Case Study Locations</b>	Maloypur, Dhuluk, and Boragori Localities in West Bengal

### Activity Mechanism

The USAID-PepsiCo India partnership activity is funded through a pre-existing task order under the Integrated Land and Resource Governance (ILRG) program, implemented globally by Tetra Tech under the Strengthening Tenure and Resource Rights II (STARR II) Indefinite Duration, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract in July 2018. The goal of the ILRG task order is to improve land and resource governance, strengthen property rights, and build resilient livelihoods for strong economic growth, stability, and resilience in target communities. WEE Round I funds were used to mainstream women's economic empowerment initiatives into the ILRG global land rights program through a partnership between USAID and PepsiCo under the New Partnerships Initiative (NPI).

### Activity Implementing Partners

As the prime IP, Tetra Tech oversees contract compliance and management and provides land rights and gender expertise. Tetra Tech also provides technical expertise in adult education design and overall gender support, including hiring a Gender Advisor to support gender integration into the ILRG program globally. Tetra Tech staff manage the activity components and partners and ensure an effective delivery approach that fits into the work and life schedules of the female beneficiaries and value chain partners. Landesa, a global non-profit dedicated to improving land rights for the rural poor, directs land policy efforts and group land leasing efforts with participating Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Oxford Policy Management's role is limited to conducting base- and end-line surveys for the Project-Level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (PRO-WEAI) tool to measure women's empowerment. Johns Hopkins University is involved in the Empowered Entrepreneurship Training (EET).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Home." n.d. Landesa. Accessed June 2, 2021. <https://www.landesa.org/>.

<sup>2</sup> PRO-WEAI measures women's empowerment in various types of agricultural development projects, <https://weai.ifpri.info/versions/pro-weai/>.

## BOX 1

### Activity Plans PRO-WEAI Assessment to Measure WEE Outputs Among 540 Families In 12 Partner Communities

In measuring gender norms change, Tetra Tech worked with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) to tailor the PRO-WEAI framework to this activity, but with limited success. While qualitative measures were devised, staff reported needing stronger indicators to measure the link between women's empowerment efforts and economic outcomes. In March 2021, ILRG began coordinating with the USAID-funded Passages Project to provide capacity-building workshops to ILRG staff on social norms and prepare an assessment plan to capture qualitative data on gender norms.

PepsiCo is the primary private sector partner, providing access to its production sites and farmers, corporate sustainability plans, and gender policies while also making its sustainable farming practices (SFP) available for adaptation by Tetra Tech as a primary activity component. PepsiCo operates large production sites in West Bengal that employ about 16,000 registered farmers, of which

50–70 percent are females, growing potatoes for its Lay's potato chips. The pilot WEE activity benefits about 1,000 of these registered female farmers across 12 communities. PepsiCo's cost-sharing includes internal staff dedicated to training, data collection, and piloting new approaches to employing women in one of its supply chains.

The activity works in tandem with local government units (LGUs) under the Indian National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), which is a long-standing state program in West Bengal (known locally as Anandahara). The NRLM maintains an extensive network of SHGs across every rural locality. NRLM assists marginalized communities to self-organize, devise local development solutions, and obtain membership in SHGs. Through NRLM, farmers can be identified and recruited to participate in the SFP program.

The theory of change for this WEE Fund partnership posits that by integrating a gender lens into production operations, crop production and women's economic empowerment can be significantly improved (see Figure 1). This theory is piloted in West Bengal with women in farming households who produce potatoes for PepsiCo's Lay's potato chips. The USAID-PepsiCo partnership pilot in West Bengal builds on the ILRG land rights model (implemented by Tetra Tech globally) with agronomic training, entrepreneurial capacity building, and expanded gender interventions to strengthen women's economic empowerment within PepsiCo's potato supply chain at the farm, group, and community levels.

Figure 1. ILRG Theory of Change



Source: ILRG Program Fact Sheet 2021

## Activity Approach and Model

The USAID-PepsiCo Partnership operates with three main objectives and multiple overlapping interventions (see Figure 2 and described in the following), leveraging partnerships and local systems.

### Figure 2. USAID-PepsiCo Partnership Objectives

#### INCREASING WEE AND GENDER EQUALITY

- Production and agronomy trainings (SFP, CAs)
- Land access (LLGs)
- Entrepreneurship (EET)
- Gender norms change (CAs, GALs, NuCon)

#### STRENGTHENING PEPSICO'S GENDER CAPABILITIES

- Gender sensitization, discrimination in workplace, GBV prevention
- Training of field staff, management, and supply chain partners

#### LEVERAGING GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALE

- Self-Help Groups (SHGs)
- Local govt units (LGUs)
- Pepsi SFP program, gender policies
- Access to Pepsi farmers and suppliers

NOTE: CA = Community Agronomist; GALs = Gender Action Learning System; GBV = gender-based violence; LLG = land-leasing group; NuCon = Nurturing Connections.

The USAID-PepsiCo Partnership mainstreams gender in agronomic and entrepreneurship skills development because agronomy trainings help prepare rural women to become economically successful in the agriculture value chain. About 230 female potato farmers in 12 communities received training in information and skills on land preparation, seed treatment and plantation, safe use and storage of agro-chemicals, soil health and nutrient management, common pest and diseases, harvest, sorting and grading, and record keeping and record analysis.

A limiting factor is there are only three dedicated ILRG female field agronomists who deliver these trainings on behalf of this activity due to limited training and funding opportunities. These ILRG Field Agronomists are aided by female Community Agronomists (CAs) who are experienced women farmers and provide daily support to female farmers and collect harvest data from group members; CAs also recruit women farmers from target communities to attend agronomic and farming training events.

In Year 2, ILRG began<sup>3</sup> testing two approaches to norms change: Gender Action Learning System (GALS) and Nurturing Connections (NuCon), targeting men and women in registered PepsiCo farming households and key value chain stakeholders. These interventions address women's time poverty and promote gender equity at the farm, group, and community (including household) levels. The high visibility of the female Field Agronomists and CAs helps to reduce gender stereotypes that limit or undervalue the contributions of female farmers and plays a role in shifting gender norms by modeling women as agronomic experts and professionals.

The activity works with LGUs to increase female farmers' abilities to lease land for crop production, including land lease group (LLG) models and joint leases (husband and wife), and includes women in land governance decision processes.<sup>4</sup> The primary intervention to increase women's access to land for crop production is promoting LLGs among SHGs in the 12 target communities. The LLGs replicate an innovative group leasing approach that several SHGs have successfully used since the early 2000s in West Bengal. This leasing approach helps individual women overcome legal and social barriers in accessing land for production in India. Women benefit in multiple ways by dividing the burdens of lease payments and labor, sharing their collective agronomic expertise and inputs, and having full decision-making power over all aspects of crop production. Landowners and institutions benefit from the lower risk of pooled resources and the shared liability distributed among the group.

The USAID-PepsiCo partnership also integrates training modules that have been designed and tested by the USAID-funded Self-Empowerment and Equity for Change (SEE Change) Program. For example, the EET module developed under SEE Change Program is a five-day course to increase women's access to decision-making,

<sup>3</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic significantly delayed Year 2 efforts; see Finding 4: Achieving Results (EQ4) for details.

<sup>4</sup> This component was delayed due to COVID-19 but slated for Q4 FY 2021 or Q1 FY 2022.

local markets, financial capital, and business networks. The EET component aims to enable female farmers to progress along the value chain by becoming supply farmers, sub-vendors, or aggregators selling potatoes and various crops to PepsiCo and other entrepreneurial enterprises. Paused due to COVID-19, the ILRG team focused on staff training and curriculum translation and preparation in 2020. The plan is to begin EETs in September 2021, COVID-19 conditions permitting. Courses will be offered to women farmers, CAs, crop aggregators, and lead farmers.

## ACTIVITY CONTEXT

West Bengal is one of India's most populous and prosperous states, with a population of 90 million, a gross domestic product of \$200 billion in 2019, and annual growth exceeding ten percent annually.<sup>5</sup> Agriculture comprises about 20 percent of the state's economy and employs approximately 44 percent of the labor force in 2019. The top cultivated crops are potatoes, rice, and maize.<sup>6</sup> West Bengal enjoys relatively high average annual household incomes (\$988) versus the national average (\$720).<sup>7</sup>

West Bengal's 23 million rural women still face substantial barriers to taking full advantage of economic opportunities on par with their male counterparts. Major impediments include lower literacy rates (76 percent to men's 82 percent), fewer job training opportunities, and high child marriage rates.<sup>8</sup> Social norms create considerable time poverty for women to pursue income-generating activities. For example, only 22 percent of rural women in West Bengal participated in the paid workforce, compared with 87 percent of men in 2019.<sup>9</sup> Gender discrimination is prevalent at the household and community levels, and women seldom own land and are usually confined to the home. Obtaining legal titling for land is complicated in India, particularly in West Bengal, which challenges poor farmers (male and female) to access land for production.



This activity collaborates with the local chapter of the National Rural Livelihood Mission, whose flagship SHG system was established to promote women's economic empowerment in 2012. SHGs have been established throughout India and West Bengal, where the local NRLM chapter is called *Anandadhara*.<sup>10</sup> Over the last 20 years, SHGs have formed land-leasing groups to secure the tenure of arable land for women. SHGs are voluntary groups of ten or more women who pool savings and extend loans to one another, which supported the activity's recruitment of female farmers to participate in the WEE activity. Various agricultural cooperatives are also active in West Bengal, whose members overlap with activity participants, across SHGs and PepsiCo farming families. In addition to targeting women in existing PepsiCo farming families, the activity leverages these SHGs as an entry point in target communities to recruit women farmers.

<sup>5</sup> Government of West Bengal. 2020. "Medium Term Fiscal Policy Statement and Fiscal Policy Strategy Statement for 2020-2021." Finance Department. February 2020. [http://www.wbfin.nic.in/writereaddata/Fiscal\\_Policy/FRBM20\\_Part1.pdf](http://www.wbfin.nic.in/writereaddata/Fiscal_Policy/FRBM20_Part1.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Government of West Bengal. n.d. "Economic Review 2020-21." Department of Planning and Statistics. Accessed June 2, 2021. [http://www.wbpcpm.gov.in/SiteFiles/Publications/1\\_08Feb2021459PM.pdf](http://www.wbpcpm.gov.in/SiteFiles/Publications/1_08Feb2021459PM.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Government of India. n.d. "Table 16: Per Capita Net State Domestic Product (Constant Prices)." National Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. Accessed June 2, 2021. [https://rbiidocs.rbi.org.in/rdocs/Publications/PDFs/T\\_16733E99D11B8D43D6984E97DA0F8427AA.PDF](https://rbiidocs.rbi.org.in/rdocs/Publications/PDFs/T_16733E99D11B8D43D6984E97DA0F8427AA.PDF).

<sup>8</sup> 40 percent of Bengali women under the age of 24 reported being married before age 18 in 2019, [http://rchiips.org/nfhs/NFHS-5\\_FCTS/FactSheet\\_WB.pdf](http://rchiips.org/nfhs/NFHS-5_FCTS/FactSheet_WB.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Government of India. 2020. "Annual Report Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2018-19." New Delhi, India: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, National Statistics Office. [http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/publication\\_reports/Annual\\_Report\\_PLFS\\_2018\\_19\\_HL.pdf](http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Annual_Report_PLFS_2018_19_HL.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> "ANANDADHARA." n.d. <http://www.wbprd.gov.in>. <http://www.wbprd.gov.in/anandadhara/index.aspx>.

## METHODOLOGY

This case study was developed in close collaboration with USAID staff and IPs and informs the overall WEE Portfolio Mid-term Evaluation. For this portfolio evaluation, primary and secondary data were collected using a mixed-methods approach. The data collection methods included 1) document review of the WEE Portfolio data, 2) key performance indicator (KPI) assessments, 3) electronic survey, 4) key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs), and 5) four case studies. Data analysis methods included refining the descriptive statistics and content analysis. Whenever possible, existing quantitative data such as the Portfolio’s performance indicators were utilized.

The portfolio mid-term evaluation addresses five evaluation questions (EQ) and 33 sub-questions, refined for the field-based KIIs. (The full list of EQs and sub-questions can be found [here](#).) The data analysis contained in this case incorporates relevant information for significant findings rather than addressing each EQ separately. The EQs are:

- **EQ1:** How are USAID’s Round I activities contributing to achieving USAID’s WEE priorities?
- **EQ2:** How effectively are internal and external partners supporting the funding, design, and implementation of the Round I activities?
- **EQ3:** How effectively are the Round I activities addressing economic gender gaps and WEE needs?
- **EQ4:** Are the Round I activities achieving expected results?
- **EQ5:** What are the early findings regarding the sustainability of the WEE activities?

This case study used qualitative methods to understand the direct beneficiaries’ perspectives of the USAID-PepsiCo Partnership activity. The ET supplemented data from interviews with a desk review of all available activity documents, partner websites, and communications materials. The ET interviewed 50 individuals for this case study between November 2020 and January 2021, and 45 KIIs were conducted in face-to-face meetings in West Bengal.

The ET selected 38 female respondents from a subset of 106 female farmers to participate in the interviews using a stratified random sampling technique to select beneficiaries who had engaged with the activity for

the longest time. The lists of female beneficiaries were provided by the IP and ET selected both female beneficiaries and staff from implementing organizations (Tetra Tech, PepsiCo, and Landesa), and the USAID Contracting Officer’s Representative (see Table I).

**Table I: Respondent Type**

NO.	RESPONDENT TYPE	ORGANIZATION
38	Female beneficiaries	Self-Help Groups
4	Prime IP staff	Tetra Tech U.S.
3	Prime IP in-country staff	Tetra Tech India
2	Private partner staff	PepsiCo India
2	In-country partner staff	Landesa NGO
1	Contracting Officer	USAID/Washington

The sampling criteria required that farmers are female and members of an SHG because these groups were the vehicle for both the PepsiCo and ILRG empowerment activities. The ILRG Country Director identified ten SHGs that had completed a minimum of two agronomy training activities completed at the time of data collection in India (January 2021). Sampling purposefully selected a mix of SHG officers and members and a range of ages and ethnicities across the ten groups.

The ET consisted of two U.S.-based senior evaluators, two national evaluators, and a logistician. All team members participated in joint training to design the data collection protocols, survey instruments, and coding for data analysis. All evaluation tools, including structured key informant interview guides, were tested and adapted to reflect the local context while considering COVID-19 restrictions and precautions.

Data collection occurred from January 18–27, 2021, in three localities in West Bengal: Maloypur, Dhuluk, and Boragori. Detailed notes were taken during the interviews, which served as the data for analysis. Interviews were recorded for quality control, and participant responses were anonymized and reported in the aggregate. All qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analytic techniques in NVivo12 software. All interviews were conducted in person and followed all COVID-19 safety precautions.



## Limitations

The primary data collection limitations were due to COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions. To optimize local knowledge, local language proficiency and to reduce costs, two national evaluators and one logistician conducted the field-based research with the guidance from a U.S.-based ET. A combination of online training materials, detailed data collection tools, and close management by the ET facilitated rapid initiation of the field study activities. The IP provided logistical support and introductions to the beneficiaries and local partners.

January is a busy time in the potato value chain in West Bengal, which limited the time allotted for interviews of direct beneficiaries and partners. Accordingly, the field-based evaluators interviewed 38 women in eight focus groups of four to seven women in small groups during a 90-minute window organized by field managers at three sites. About two percent of the 1,000 female beneficiaries were interviewed. This small sample size provides important insights but does limit the findings.

Another potential limitation was the possibility that social desirability bias could influence the findings.<sup>11</sup> Several practices were adopted to mitigate this bias during the interviews. Before conducting the interviews, the evaluators informed the female beneficiaries of the interview's confidentiality. The evaluators also incorporated icebreakers to create a relaxed and informal setting and tone at the beginning of the interview. Both FGDs and KIIs were conducted with the female beneficiaries to minimize social desirability bias when female beneficiaries spoke in a group setting. The ET identified no significant differences between the data gathered during the FGDs and the KIIs. The KIIs with the beneficiaries did provide additional benefits because the interviewer could ask follow-on questions and obtain greater detail on specific issues. KIIs also enabled less vocal respondents to share their perspectives and experiences more fully.

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<sup>11</sup> Social-desirability bias is a type of response bias that is the tendency of survey respondents to answer questions in a manner that others will view favorably. It can take the form of overreporting "good behavior" or under-reporting "bad" or undesirable behavior.

## FINDINGS

The USAID-PepsiCo Partnership Activity is an effective multi-pronged approach to addressing the economic empowerment barriers women face in West Bengal's potato value chain. This activity increases women's economic empowerment across the entire supply chain for potatoes in the State of West Bengal as well as strengthening women's land rights and increasing their livelihood opportunities. Key strengths include an innovative program design based on proven gender mainstreaming approaches, effective leveraging of existing host government programs, engaging local NGOs to provide gender services to farmers, and applying evidence-based management decisions in program implementation. PepsiCo contributes to cost-sharing by deploying staff to conduct technical trainings and easing access to its value chains. Challenges included the complexity of land rights in the target area, entrenched perceptions of women as family laborers and not as economic actors, and the deep capacity gaps in agronomic and financial skills. Additionally, women suffered from time poverty that reduced their availability for income-generating activities.

### FINDING 1: Collaboration with Local Government Partners is Critical

This activity collaborates with the National Rural Livelihood Mission, whose flagship SHG was established to promote WEE in 2012. Established SHGs have management committees, hold regular meetings, and are usually linked to a local bank—once credit is established, groups can access bank loans. The local NRLM chapter, *Anandadhara*, provided critical early support to the USAID-PepsiCo Partnership by identifying female farmers who were good candidates for joining SHGs and sharing their experiences in forming land-leasing groups to secure tenure of arable land for women.

Tetra Tech, PepsiCo, and Landesa staff integrated best practices from the successful SHG model in the activity design and development of the monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan. As part of this engagement, Tetra Tech, PepsiCo, and USAID developed a scope of work (SOW) for a joint field assessment in May 2018.<sup>12</sup> The SOW outlined the examination of land tenure arrangements, potential local partners, the structure of the PepsiCo and potato supply chains, and women's roles in production and land management in the target area.

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<sup>12</sup> Tetra Tech. 2019. Women's Economic Empowerment and Equality, Land Rights, and Agricultural Engagement Assessment in PepsiCo Potato Supply Chains in West Bengal, India: Agricultural Assessment. USAID ILRG Task Order under the STARR II IDIQ.

Cross-learning among partners and applied learnings from other USAID programs were significant factors contributing to the activity's effectiveness. ILRG India collaborates with several other USAID projects and WEE Fund activities in India, including the India Forest Plus project, Engendering Utilities, and Producer-Owner Women Enterprises. ILRG staff regularly coordinate with PepsiCo, Resonance, and the International Center for Research on Women regarding best practices and lessons learned in applicable gender programming. The ILRG team in Kolkata, India, also reported collaboration with the International Potato Center, the Central Institute for Women in Agriculture, the Central Potato Research Institute, and SRLM for technical support on potato production techniques to save female farmers' time. Training materials were exchanged with Anandi and PRADAN, Indian NGOs working on women's empowerment, and leveraged PepsiCo's partnership with Digital Green to produce a farmer-led video training for Indian field agronomists.

Respondents described Tetra Tech and Landesa as "opening the way" for women to participate in the program and becoming paid laborers. Respondents described PepsiCo as a major buyer in the local potato market and supporting farming families through agronomy

and SFP trainings and subsidized inputs. When asked about the benefits of the training, women described technical skills in crop production, including pest and disease control, field waste management, and water conservation that improved crop quality. At this early stage, the ET could not estimate increased yields and income generation of the WEE activity training and inputs.

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**Staff surveyed cited the pairing of a global commercial company with development organizations as a key activity innovation—and one that shows signs of paying off.**

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The Tetra Tech and PepsiCo partnership has strong potential for scaling and financial sustainability. The PepsiCo cost-share to this activity is direct and structured access to thousands of target potential beneficiaries through its operations in West Bengal. PepsiCo's corporate gender policies provide gender sensitization training for staff, managers, and value chain partners. PepsiCo also offers its contract farmers access to quality seedlings, a guaranteed pre-season price for chips potatoes, and networking with other expert organizations for other inputs, which the respondents characterized positively. The PepsiCo cost-share included staff time for training, baseline data collection, and investment in piloting a new approach in one of its supply chains. The partners demonstrated a strong commitment to training their managers and partners in gender issues, which could provide a foundation for future expansion by company operations funds.

## **FINDING 2: Agronomy Training and Participation in Self-Help Groups Has a Multiplier Effect**

The agronomic trainings were found to be the heart of this activity. In response to lower levels of participation by women farmers in training and leadership roles in the potato value chain, the activity deployed a corps of all-female agronomists to increase women's participation in both agronomy and SFP training programs. This initial corps of agronomists comprised three professional ILRG Field Agronomists and CAs, and experienced female farmers recruited from target communities and trained by IRLG to supplement the professional field agronomists with day-to-day support and perform field data collection. The CAs addressed social and workplace discrimination and prepared women farmers to be paid producers and entrepreneurs, not just informal labor. Women



USAID and PepsiCo sponsor training for Eid Mubarak group members.

PHOTO: Subarna Maitra, ILRG

interviewed often cited the corps of female agronomists and the agronomy SFP programs as helping to shift perceptions of gender roles in agriculture both on the farm and at home: “Now we are getting the same skills as the men.”

**“Earlier, our role in farming was confined to helping our husbands. Now it’s our own venture—we take our own seeds from vendors. We feel self-dependent.”**

– Female Beneficiary

The field agronomists and CAs build women’s technical capacity as farmers while shifting perceptions to normalize women as farming experts and instructors and shifting social norms about women’s role in agriculture. In addition to building women’s farming skills, the activity’s two-pronged approach to gender equity in the workplace was unique in creating an enabling environment for women in leadership roles in the value chain. PepsiCo’s pre-existing policies and a 2019 gender sensitization workshop targeting 35 PepsiCo managers and external supply chain partners were mentioned as effective approaches to addressing gender barriers in the workplace.



Self-Help Group members attend ILRG training.  
PHOTO: Pinaki Halder / Landesa

The random sampling of female farmers in this case study exceeded global and national yields in agricultural production. Although a few SHGs reported some crop losses in 2020, CAs recorded a total harvest of 846 metric tons (MTs) of potatoes<sup>13</sup> in their two localities—extrapolating to all 465 women trained suggests approximately 4,230 MT of potatoes were produced, of which 2,225 MT (53 percent) were sold to PepsiCo. The average yield among these women farmers was recorded at 30 MT/hectare (Ha)—this is higher than the 2019 global average of 21 MT/Ha and India’s national average of 15–20 MT/Ha.<sup>14</sup>

**“We know about things better now. We know about seeds, medicines [pesticides], how to spray the plants—all kinds of things.”**

– Female Beneficiary

In FY 2020, the activity reported reaching 465 women in 48 SHGs with potato agronomy training across the 12 target communities, exceeding the Year 1 target of 390.<sup>15</sup> Female field agronomists led the agronomy and SFP training in all 12 communities. Both agronomists and farmers in this case study reported that this was the first time most women had received any agronomic training. CAs provide technical support visits and collect potato harvest data from SHG members in their assigned localities, Dhuluk and Boragori. Eight new female CAs are scheduled to deploy in pairs to four additional localities in FY 2021, which is a significant achievement in the first year of implementation.

Seventeen members from two SHGs successfully secured two new group land leases without male signatories and produced potatoes for PepsiCo for the first time in 2020. The SHGs Subho Chandimata in Balitha and Eid Mubarak in Maloypur collectively produced 22,100 kg of potatoes on 0.83 Ha for a total net yield of 25.6 MT/ha in FY 2020—this is higher than both the 2019 global average of 21 MT/Ha, and India’s national average of 15–20 MT/Ha.<sup>16</sup> To date, only two group land leases have been achieved, which reflects inadequate results.

<sup>13</sup> The latest production data available for this study comes from March 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Embassy of the Netherlands, Department of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality n.d. “Potato.” RVO Agro Portal. Accessed March 2021. <https://www.agrifoodindianl.com/subsector/potato>.

<sup>15</sup> Tetra Tech. 2020. “Integrate Land and Resources Governance (ILRG) Program Annual Report.”

<sup>16</sup> Embassy of the Netherlands, Department of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality n.d. “Potato.” RVO Agro Portal. Accessed March 2021. <https://www.agrifoodindianl.com/subsector/potato>.

Activity staff reported significant delays or postponements in agronomy trainings, including conducting the PRO-WEAI/Prindex baseline,<sup>17</sup> gender norms change dialogues, and EET training. Staff noted that the pandemic hit the gender norms components the hardest, as they require the most physical interaction, including in-person trainings that could not be delivered virtually. In response, staff developed alternative approaches to reaching women farmers by having CAs maintain support and collect data from participating farmers while Tetra Tech and PepsiCo staff were under travel restrictions. When site visits were not possible, curriculum development and staff training continued.<sup>18</sup> COVID-19 impacts aside, activity reports and stakeholders cited notable results from January–December 2020.

For example, Johns Hopkins University’s EET training component had not been delivered to beneficiaries during the development of this case study. The EET component aims to enable women farmers to become supply farmers, sub-vendors, or aggregators in their own right—

selling potatoes to PepsiCo and various crops to buyers across the seasons. The business and social skills can also be applied to other income-generating activities. Activity documents indicate that ILRG India staff participated in a five-day training on the EET approach in Delhi in February 2020. A team from the SEE Change program and a local consultant conducted a reconnaissance visit to the LLGs in Year 1. According to local staff, EET materials have been translated and adapted to the West Bengal context. The next round of EET will focus on preparing women to become small aggregator potato off-takers that will buy directly from farmers, then sell to aggregators that then sell to buyers and companies. If proven effective, the EET model will be made available to PepsiCo lead farmers and vendors.

Table 1 below shows the activity targets and results in 2020. Despite the impact of COVID-19, 465 female farmers were training in agronomy and sustainable farming practices, reaching about 30 percent of the target goal of 1,500 female agronomists.

**Table 2: Period of Performance Targets and 2020 Results**

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE TARGETS	2020 RESULTS	TARGET REACHED BY DEC 2020 (%)
1,500 women farmers trained in agronomy and sustainable farming practices.	500 women (as of Dec 2020) across 48 SHGs trained in improved agronomy.	33 percent
540 PepsiCo farmers (270 couples) trained and serve as role models for gender norms change.	Slated to roll out to six communities in 2021; new curriculum materials (GALS and NC) translated and adapted to Bengali in 2020.	0 percent
20 women (individuals) employ group land leasing to produce potatoes for PepsiCo.	17 women across two SHGs were signatories on Group Land Leases.	85 percent
41 PepsiCo staff in West Bengal trained in gender equality in land access, WEE and GBV issues.	34 PepsiCo staff attended the gender sensitization workshop in 2019; nine aggregators of PepsiCo potatoes participated in a one-day gender sensitization orientation.	83 percent 104 percent with aggregators

Other Key Results Achieved as of December 2020:

- Women farmers in the program grew 4,230 metric tons (MT) of potatoes.<sup>19</sup>
- Average potato yield from women farmers: 30 MT/Ha (national average: 15–20 MT/Ha).
- Women farmers sold 53 percent of their potato crop to PepsiCo.
- Four CAs were active in 2020, and eight more are in training for 2021.

<sup>17</sup> ILRG staff reported in March 2021 that baseline data collection is complete, and analysis is underway.

<sup>18</sup> See section on activity strengths and innovations for details.

<sup>19</sup> The latest production data available for this study comes from March 2020.

### FINDING 3: Accessing Land is the Most Significant Barrier for Female Farmers

Respondents consistently stated that women’s property rights are the most significant legal barrier, confirmed by desk research. Traditions of male inheritance, exclusion of women from family and business decisions, lower literacy rates among women, and a lack of awareness among men and women on women’s land rights were the most common obstacles hindering women from accessing land for production and hence income. Women and staff noted that the benefits of agronomic and financial training were limited without land rights. In addition to legal and cultural barriers, shortages of available land in target areas and increased leasing costs—up to three times 2019 rates due to the high price of table potatoes in 2020—also pose challenges to male and female Bengali farmers.

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**“How can we get return on [crop production] investment if we don’t have it [land leases] in our name?”**

– Female Beneficiary

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LLGs made inroads to circumventing institutional barriers to land access. All partner staff and a few female farmer respondents cited Landesa’s role in this activity as the primary instrument to enable women farmers’ access to production land. Informed by the 2019 activity study, the design choice promoted LLGs as an effective short-term solution to secure leases in women’s names. Building on the example of other SHGs across India, LLGs directly involve landowners to facilitate women’s land leasing in their names, even if in groups. This was an effective “middle step” to facilitating women’s access to production land on the long road to women’s legal and social parity with men. Additionally, like the gender sensitization of PepsiCo staff and partners, direct engagement of these key decision-makers (landowners) has the added potential of shifting perceptions among male leaders across the agriculture sector to see women as legitimate and low-risk contract farmers. Plots of land are fundamental assets for agricultural production. The activity’s promotion of LLGs most directly addresses the community’s legal and cultural barriers by strengthening women’s access to land leases in their names as an essential first step to women’s participation in the formal agricultural economy. Landesa spearheads this component by facilitating SHGs to lease land in groups and engaging West Bengal LGUs to reduce legal barriers to women’s land access. According to local partners and respondents, the two group land leases obtained

through SHGs, and LLG interventions have helped women become decision-makers regarding crops and increased their bargaining power in agricultural supply chains. Women reported that the land tenure elements had “opened their eyes” to business opportunities—crop production for income generation—previously considered only for men.

As men migrate out of the agricultural sector in India to pursue work in cities, more land is left underutilized, presenting an opportunity for women to fill this gap as contract farmers and suppliers<sup>20</sup> if they can secure land for production.<sup>21</sup> The reverse migration of male laborers back to their villages due to COVID-19 in 2020 reportedly spurred some SHG members to accelerate their entry into the formal economy and apply their training. Several respondents said they planted off-season crops of potatoes in 2020 despite COVID-19 challenges and price spikes in leasing rates. The female respondents reported that having reliable income during COVID-19 boosted their confidence and helped them gain their husbands’ respect and support for participating in the WEE-funded program. As one respondent noted, “We like being able to help male members of our families in income generation. Some men have had to come back to villages from cities, where they would usually earn money. Home-based livelihood generating activities like tailoring would be good for us. Other crops like mushrooms or poultry farming would be good in terms of economic gains.” It is uncertain whether the men will return to the cities to work after the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted and leave the unused land for women to farm.

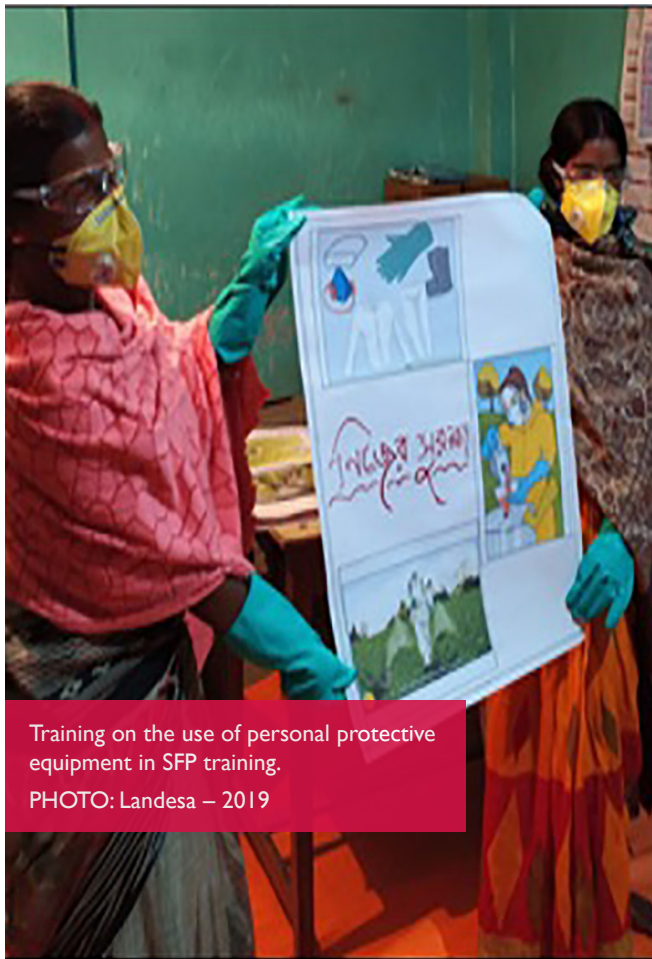
### FINDING 4: Building Networks Amongst Female Farmers is Important

One of the most salient findings was the importance of self-confidence and female solidarity regarding women’s economic participation in the work environment. The respondents credited the activity’s intervention of fostering women’s groups as critical to building the self-confidence necessary to participate in the offered economic empowerment interventions. The activity promotes social solidarity, but there is insufficient data to measure these intervention’s widespread tangible economic benefits.

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<sup>20</sup> Tetra Tech. 2019. Women’s Economic Empowerment and Equality, Land Rights, and Agricultural Engagement Assessment in PepsiCo Potato Supply Chains in West Bengal, India: Agricultural Assessment. USAID ILRG Task Order under the STARR II IDIQ.

<sup>21</sup> Landesa. 2019. Review of Full Report on Women’s Group Leasing Models. United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Integrated Land and Resources Governance Task Order under the Strengthening Tenure and Resource Rights II (STARR II) IDIQ.



Training on the use of personal protective equipment in SFP training.

PHOTO: Landesa – 2019

Social support was cited as the activity’s greatest benefit for women farmers. Focus group responses found that women are reluctant to participate in income-generating activities or the formal economy until they feel socially acceptable. This requires both a positive self-image and a minimal level of social acceptance of women in decision-making and formal economic roles—if not active support, at least without fear of reprisal. Women overwhelmingly reported that without self-confidence and a receptive environment at work and home, they would not participate in trainings or apply their skills outside the home. As one staff member shared, *“Trainings give them a great opportunity to get out of the house, gather together, share lessons and experiences, have access to resources, and this is boosting their confidence to go out and participate in social and economic life.”*

Addressing social discrimination is linked to economic participation. In meeting this challenge, female farmers enthusiastically credited the shift in perception of women’s roles in the potato value chain—and community life in general—as helping them overcome this barrier. Several women reported they had never participated in either

the SHGs or the SFPs before this program, even though both programs pre-date the activity. After joining, the primary benefit respondents cited most often was the solidarity and sense of acceptance for their participation. By attending trainings, working land, and even traveling to and from trainings and production sites in groups, women reported feeling less intimidated than when attempting these alone. Several women also reported that the shift of some activities to mid-day helped with time poverty.

SHGs proved an effective entry point to recruit women farmers into the activity. The approach was to engage female farmers from registered PepsiCo farming families while being open to women farmers keen to participate. SHGs have a high percentage of marginalized groups (Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, and religious minorities) who are more likely to be landless and had a higher percentage of women members than the female attendance rates of the PepsiCo SFP program. SHGs provided an established structure as an effective entry point to reach these women. They capitalized on their existing collective agency while providing the potential to expand PepsiCo’s farmer supply base. As a government program, SHGs also offer built-in political support, an asset to sustainability.

**“We feel money is important, but the ability to navigate social barriers also matters. The road to empowerment should stand on both legs.”**

– Female Beneficiary

Primary data collected during the activity’s implementation phase led to further innovations. A key finding regarding the overall activity design was using evidence in intervention design and implementation pivots. Data showed a 1:4 ratio of male to female farmers participating in the PepsiCo value chains, which mirrors statistics for the composition of the paid workforce in West Bengal. After noting the low participation of women across the PepsiCo supply chain, program documents and staff cite a study conducted with activity funds in December 2018 by Tetra Tech and Landesa on women in land tenure arrangements and the PepsiCo supply chain to uncover the drivers of these low rates.<sup>22</sup> The study revealed social norms keep women’s labor participation rates low due to restrictions on women’s participation in public life and lack of mobility.

<sup>22</sup> Landesa. 2019. Review of Full Report on Women’s Group Leasing Models. United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Integrated Land and Resources Governance Task Order under the Strengthening Tenure and Resource Rights II (STARR II) IDIQ.

These primary data from target communities led to the activity's strategic pivot to engage women agronomists to deliver agronomy and SFP trainings to women farmers directly, using LLGs to increase women's access to land and making gender norms change efforts among men in the program to make women's participation more socially acceptable. These components are proving to be pivotal innovations.

## BOX 2

### Some Women Report Social Discrimination Dampens Successes

While still early in the program, some female farmers described limitations to their program benefits. Some respondents reported earning cash from crop sales but stated that their husbands still make all financial decisions for the family. SHG members note increased mobility and socialization opportunities, but this is still restricted to going out in groups or attending program activities. They cite an increased willingness among landowners to give land to women for cultivation, but sometimes with restricted crop choice.

**“[They] give lands to us women for growing potatoes, but not other crops like cereals or oilseeds.”**

– Female Beneficiary

## FINDING 5: Addressing Broader Gender Gaps Must Be Embedded in The Approach

All stakeholders surveyed for this study identified economic barriers specific to female farmers in West Bengal from their perspective (implementer, manager, or beneficiary) and how the activity addressed these specific barriers. The greatest impediment to advancing Bengali women's economic empowerment is cultural gender discrimination in social, workplace, and institutional contexts. Female farmers and IP and partner staff, also cited lack of access to inputs (land for production, money, and production skills) and time poverty (domestic duties plus farm labor). The activity addresses these gaps through interventions, but more critically, by directly engaging key stakeholders—men in positions of power in the sector—to reduce gender discrimination across the value chain.

Traditional gender norms in India relegate women to lower status than men in all spheres of life. Harassment of women working in the fields and husband's disapproval was cited as deterring mobility and freedom of movement for a large proportion of women in the study areas. As discussed in the Activity Context section, most women farmers in the area are not members of local SHGs due to a lack of social and financial support, which is further evidence of this challenge.

**Technical skills in agronomy and financial management are key at the individual level. However, women often testified that they are not accessible to women without reducing barriers at the social and institutional levels.**

This gender norm is pervasive across activity documents and interviews with staff and women themselves. For example, while the activity's 2019 baseline study found that women in West Bengal's potato value chain performed nearly 70 percent of the physical labor, representation in management or business roles across the potato value chain was negligible. Staff and farmers surveyed also widely reported a lack of access to product markets, financial capital, and business networks (e.g., aggregators) for women. Gender biases were found across the potato supply chain in activity documents and survey responses. The selection and promotion of lead farmers, supply farmers, agronomists, agronomy trainers, crop managers, off-takers, and other roles were overwhelmingly given to men.



INDIA – 2019: ILRG Gender Training with supply chain partners.

PHOTO: Tetra Tech

To further mitigate social discrimination barriers, activity staff reported plans to incorporate the Nurturing Connections model from Hellen Keller International and the GALS approach into gender trainings.<sup>23</sup> Activity documents describe these programs as focusing on gender parity in domestic tasks to alleviate women's time poverty and joint decision-making on family finances between husbands and wives as a path to sharing economic resources.

Gender sensitization among male leaders in the potato value chain was an important "other half" of gender discrimination in the workplace. Working on social norms change with PepsiCo staff and other supply chain stakeholders, like aggregators, who are "front-facing" to farmers, in parallel with interventions at the family and community level, addresses discrimination in the workplace from both sides. According to program documents and staff interviews, the activity held a comprehensive workshop with PepsiCo staff and partners on Gender Sensitization in 2019. GBV awareness and prevention workshops planned for 2020 were delayed due to COVID-19 but are slated to resume once restrictions are lifted.

In 2019, the activity conducted a gender sensitization workshop with 31 PepsiCo agronomists and three area managers. Nine of these participants also attended a separate one-day sensitization program organized by concerned aggregators. Staff noted that the training helped them recognize and mitigate biases for men when selecting contractors, lead farmers, and suppliers. As one staff member noted, *"Women play critical roles from preparing soil right through to harvest, so we can't only be reaching out to men because that would be the wrong audience, even from business consideration."*

<sup>23</sup> This component was delayed in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions of staff field visits and group gatherings; these efforts re-started in February 2021 but were quickly affected by the second wave of COVID-19 in India in April/May 2021.

### BOX 3

#### COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on Results

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impeded most activities in 2020, but innovative management pivots kept the activity on track. Staff from all partners reported significant delays or postponements in agronomy trainings, the PRO-WEAI/Prindex baseline, and EET training of SHG members. Staff noted that the gender norms component was the hardest hit by the pandemic, as they require the most physical interaction (trainings, regular site visits, mentoring). In response, staff developed alternative approaches to reach women farmers, including social media platforms like WhatsApp to communicate with target families. CA's maintained support and collected data from participating farmers while Tetra Tech and PepsiCo staff were under travel restrictions. Weekly live phone-in programs on the radio were also employed. When site visits were not possible, curriculum development and staff training continued.

#### FINDING 6: Sustainability is Linked to Public-Private Partnership

Respondents voiced great enthusiasm for their continued participation in the activity. They did not, however, articulate a sense of how the activity could be sustained without extensive support from the IPs and partners. Respondent beneficiaries voiced heavy dependence on PepsiCo, Tetra Tech, and Landesa staff for technical expertise, legal advocacy, and ability to navigate the supply chain. This is likely due to their limited experience of the entire activity program at the time of the interviews.

For example, women noted that the agronomy trainings made them feel qualified to make farming decisions with their husbands or male counterparts and even train men on proper practices. In addition, women reported seeing themselves as farmers after agronomic trainings and that their families and communities increasingly recognized their roles as producers, teachers, and in a few cases, entrepreneurs in agriculture. *"We are now also able to participate meaningfully in the cropping decisions led by our husbands. Earlier, we merely followed instructions."* (Female Beneficiary).



## CONCLUSIONS

The female beneficiaries saw activity results as mixed, likely because the activity was in its early stages at the time of this case study. The most frequently cited complaint was the limited number of trained female Field Agronomists and female Community Agronomists (CAs). The most promising approach for increasing women's access to land for crop production is through the obtainment of group land leases (LLG)s but only two Self-Help Groups (SHGs) successfully secured group land leases by breaking through institutional barriers. Obtaining only two LLGs is a modest achievement that will need to be accelerated significantly in subsequent years. Women's increased participation in SHGs has been achieved but the members require targeted interventions in obtaining LLGs. As noted in the findings, SHGs are not new interventions, but SHG members reported gains in learning and socialization opportunities despite many restrictions regarding women's mobility that hindered their ability to attend the SHG activities.

Establishing support networks by female farmers who received training was viewed as vital by beneficiary respondents. Receiving training in agronomy and softs skills training along with steady improvements in confidence was cited by many female respondents as critical to their advancement in the value chain. Respondents cited an increased willingness among landowners to give land to women for restricted crop cultivation. One woman noted, *"We will be able to apply learnings from the economic losses this time around in the next cropping season."*

Collaboration with the LGUs administering the Government of India's livelihoods program is an important feature of local solutions for development because it not only increases female farmers' ability to lease land for crop production but also includes women in land governance decision processes. Close association with local government entities and experienced NGOs that support increases the political buy-in of communities and the likelihood that this important WEE vehicle will remain viable in target communities.

While respondents frequently noted technical skills and income generation as benefits of the activity, female farmers commonly cited intangible outcomes, including respect and self-confidence. By proving their capabilities in growing quality crops, managing farms, training others, and selling directly or as aggregators, beneficiaries reported that their status as decision-makers and businesspeople was raised, improving the gender dynamics in their homes and communities.

The two-way capacity-building model for gender norms change is an important innovation with both community and private sector IPs. The activity stressed the importance of social acceptance of women as economic players. Nevertheless, female farmers described some advances and limitations about results to date. For example, some women who reported earning cash from crop sales also noted that their husbands still make the financial decisions for the family.

The ILRG implementation team collected data and used it to inform management decisions and adapt rapidly to changing circumstances. Overall, the USAID-PepsiCo Partnership demonstrated a comprehensive and effective partnership strategy that included USAID, PepsiCo, Landesa, local host government partners, and NGO service providers. This approach leveraged existing program models and community structures to achieve quick start-up, investment, and ownership by beneficiaries and local partners. Based on early feedback, PepsiCo benefitted from the NPI incubator that facilitated the partnership with USAID.

This activity achieved demonstrated and considerable sustainability potential in September 2020 when USAID and PepsiCo announced a new five-year, \$20 million GDA partnership, based on this pilot to promote WEE in PepsiCo's supply chains in four more countries.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>PepsiCo. 2020. "PepsiCo, USAID Launch Five-Year, \$20 Million Partnership to Empower Women in Agriculture." PepsiCo, Inc. Official Website. September 9, 2020. <https://www.pepsico.com/news/press-release/pepsico-usaid-launch-five-year-20-million-partnership-to-empower-women-in-agricu09092020>.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following seven recommendations were developed based on the findings presented in this case study:

**1. Facilitate women's access to leasing or owning land through the LLG or household model.** The activity should put more effort into forming LLGs, setting more ambitious LLG formation targets and provide technical assistance to new LLGs while monitoring the formative phase of the new LLGs.

**2. Expand the number of female CA, and Agronomists who serve as trainers and mentors who help accelerate female farmers' advancements along the value chain.**

This technical training bolsters women's self-confidence and can increase women's access to local markets, financial capital, and business networks.

**3. Continue technical support to SHGs, which have proved to be an effective entry point to recruit female farmers while providing the potential to expand PepsiCo's farmer supply base.** As a government program, SHGs also offer built-in political support and likely long-term sustainability.

**4. Deepen and expand collaboration with the Government of India's NRLM program to scale assistance to marginalized communities (Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, and religious minorities) to self-organize, devise local development solutions, and obtain membership in SHGs.** The NRLM maintains an extensive network of SHGs across every rural locality, through which female farmers can be identified and recruited to participate in WEE activities.

**5. Monitor the EET rollout and consequences of the delayed training.** This is a key element of preparing women to become small aggregator potato off-takers that will buy directly from farmers and then sell to aggregators that sell to buyers and companies. If proven effective, the EET model will be made available to PepsiCo lead farmers and vendors.

**6. Encourage continued gender sensitization interventions for PepsiCo staff and partners.** Given the critical role of employers in creating an enabling environment for women's advancement in the workplace. The bi-weekly meetings with PepsiCo Area Managers overseeing production and logistics could provide a venue for periodic sessions on strategies for closing gender gaps in operations.<sup>25</sup>

**7. Utilize existing USAID learning platforms and communities of practice** to share learnings from this unique PPP and the roles of SHGs and female agronomists in tackling the binding constraint of accessing land and reforming property rights. There is the potential to build an evidence-based case for the LGUs to provide formal support for group leasing by SHGs across West Bengal and, potentially, India.

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<sup>25</sup>Some of these bi-weekly meetings were virtual or postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions in 2020.

## **ANNEX I: SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS**

COVID-19 Data Collection Protocols: [https://www.integrallc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Integra-COVID-Field-Protocols\\_Domestic-or-In-country-Only.pdf](https://www.integrallc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Integra-COVID-Field-Protocols_Domestic-or-In-country-Only.pdf)

USAID-PepsiCo Partnership Study Key Informant List: [https://www.integrallc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/LEAP-III\\_WEE-Fund-PPE\\_KII-List\\_PepsiCo.pdf](https://www.integrallc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/LEAP-III_WEE-Fund-PPE_KII-List_PepsiCo.pdf).

USAID-PepsiCo Partnership Case Study Preliminary Findings Presentation: [https://www.integrallc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/LEAP-III\\_WEE-Fund\\_Case-Study\\_PepsiCo\\_Final.pdf](https://www.integrallc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/LEAP-III_WEE-Fund_Case-Study_PepsiCo_Final.pdf).

WEE Fund PPE Case Study Instruments (AORs/CORs, Activity Managers, IPs, and beneficiaries): [https://www.integrallc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/LEAP-III\\_WEE-Fund-PPE\\_Field-Study-Instruments.pdf](https://www.integrallc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/LEAP-III_WEE-Fund-PPE_Field-Study-Instruments.pdf).

WEE Fund PPE Case Study Orientation PowerPoint: [https://www.integrallc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/LEAP-III\\_W-GDP-PPE\\_Field-Study-Orientation\\_Final.pdf](https://www.integrallc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/LEAP-III_W-GDP-PPE_Field-Study-Orientation_Final.pdf).

WEE Fund PPE Case Study Selection Process: [https://www.integrallc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/LEAP-III\\_WEE-Fund-PPE\\_Field-Study-Selection.pdf](https://www.integrallc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/LEAP-III_WEE-Fund-PPE_Field-Study-Selection.pdf).

