



# GENDER ANALYSIS REPORT

## SELEVER PROJECT BURKINA FASO

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October 2016



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1	Major Findings and Recommendations .....	1
<b>2</b>	<b>Background and Objectives</b> .....	<b>3</b>
2.1	Key Questions and Themes.....	4
<b>3</b>	<b>Methodology</b> .....	<b>5</b>
3.1	Desk Review .....	5
3.2	Geographic Sampling .....	7
3.3	Research Participant Selection .....	7
3.4	Data Collection.....	8
3.4.1	FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS.....	8
3.4.2	In-Depth Interviews .....	8
3.5	Data Analysis Process.....	8
3.5.1	Sensemaking.....	8
3.5.2	Qualitative Data Coding.....	9
3.6	Study Limitations .....	9
<b>4</b>	<b>Findings</b> .....	<b>9</b>
4.1	Time-use and Labor .....	9
4.1.1	Time use and division of labor.....	9
4.1.2	Women and paid work .....	12
4.2	Access and control over productive assets.....	14
4.2.1	Land .....	14
4.2.2	Other resources.....	14
4.2.3	Control over revenue.....	15
4.3	Economic Opportunities and Barriers.....	16
4.3.1	Reasons for Poultry Production.....	16
4.3.2	Financing poultry activities.....	16
4.3.3	Division of labor in poultry production .....	16
4.3.4	Gender and the right to raise poultry.....	17
4.3.5	Reasons for women’s exclusion from poultry production .....	18
4.3.6	Women and poultry selling .....	20
4.3.7	Obstacles to poultry production.....	21
4.3.8	Gender and the poultry value chain.....	22
4.3.9	Women’s interest in poultry activities .....	23
4.4	Local Governance and Decision-Making.....	23
4.5	Gender norms and influencing factors .....	24
4.6	Engaging men and mitigating risks .....	26
<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b> .....	<b>27</b>
5.1	Local Buy-In.....	27
5.2	Access to Finance and Inputs.....	27
5.3	Technical Training and Information .....	28
5.4	Selling Poultry .....	28
5.5	Culture of Poultry Production.....	29
5.6	Risk Mitigation .....	29

5.7 Future Research ..... 29

**6 Bibliography .....30**

## Acronyms

ASI	Agribusiness Systems International
CVD	Village Development Committee
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
INSD	National Institute for Statistics and Demography
MFP	Multifunctional Platform
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
ONG	Organisation Non Gouvernementale
SELEVER	Soutenir l'Exploitation Familiale pour Lancer l'Élevage des Volailles et Valoriser l'Économie Rurale
VVV	Vulgarisateur Volontaire Villageois

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, the research team wishes to extend its deep gratitude to the research participants—women, men, and all community leaders in the Boucle du Mouhoun and Center Ouest regions of Burkina Faso—for their time and participation in interviews and focus groups. This report was prepared by Sita Zougouri, gender lead and technical director for the SELEVER project with ASI, an affiliate of ACDI/VOCA, and Emily Cook-Lundgren, independent consultant, with contributions from Jean-Marie Zongo, nutrition lead for the SELEVER project. Kelsey Jones-Casey, formerly of Isthmus and Strait, provided overall leadership and research guidance for the gender analysis. Zougouri, Zongo, Cook-Lundgren, and Pascaline Bicaba, also of ASI, contributed to data coding and analysis. The research team wishes to thank the following individuals and organizations for their instrumental role in this study: the regional and local authorities of Boucle du Mouhoun and Centre Ouest regions; the Coalition Burkinabe des Droits des Femmes du Burkina Faso for their leading role in the data collection process and providing adequate conditions for fieldwork; the entire ASI Ouagadougou team for their excellent work running the gender analysis; the team of reviewers including Vicky Wilde of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Jenn Williamson of ACDI/VOCA, and Hannah Guedenet and Romain Kenfack of ASI; the data collection team including Ouédraogo Mariam, Toé Sanata, Tiegna Saiba, Nikiema H. K. Aristide, Sedgo Lamoussa, and Diessongo Madeleine; and everyone else who contributed in some way to the completion of this gender analysis.

## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Soutenir l'Exploitation Familiale pour Lancer l'Élevage des Volailles et Valoriser l'Économie Rurale (SELEVER) project is a five-year project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and implemented by Agribusiness Systems International (ASI), an affiliate of ACDI/VOCA. The project aims to improve the nutritional status of women and children in Burkina Faso through an integrated strategy that: 1) increases household poultry production and incomes and 2) empowers women in society, the economy, and the household. SELEVER seeks to build women's empowerment and entrepreneurship capacity through increased poultry production, which will ensure an increase in women's incomes and capacity to control the income as well as improved nutritional behavior for women, children, and the whole household. SELEVER's gender approach stems from a theory of change that women's increased decision-making capacity, self-efficacy, and influence over household nutrition behavior is necessary to ensuring that increased poultry production and incomes will result in better household nutrition.

The purpose of this gender analysis is to identify and make recommendations to address gender gaps, challenges, risks, and opportunities related to the SELEVER project in order to improve income and nutritional status for women and children through participation in poultry production and to increase women's empowerment in the household and community. The analysis explores what gender norms, gender-specific barriers, and community engagement level could influence possibilities and opportunities for women to become more involved in poultry production and other entrepreneurship domains in order for them to be empowered and to impact positively on households' (particularly women and children) nutritional status. The analysis focuses on four main themes, including 1) division of labor and time use; 2) control over productive assets; 3) economic barriers and opportunities; and 4) local governance and decision making. Building upon a gender desk review conducted in September 2015, the gender analysis targeted the Boucle du Mouhoun and Centre Ouest regions of Burkina Faso where the SELEVER project will be implemented. Major findings and recommendations are reported below.

### 1.1 MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key findings from the gender analysis include:

- *Women spend a majority of their time on unpaid household and care work.* Domestic work is considered a woman's responsibility, and women report little time spent on rest or leisure. During the rainy season, women also spend a substantial amount of time on agricultural activities. Despite these heavy time burdens, neither women nor men considered women's time use an obstacle to participation in poultry activities.
- *Women do engage in paid work outside of the household, depending on the region.* The paid work may be agricultural, small trade, or handling of construction activities. Women generally expressed interest in increased participation in income-generating activities.
- *Women have limited control over resources.* Women's belongings are few and typically include kitchen utensils, her clothing, her poultry and pigs, and the millet she cultivates. In many places, however, everything in the household, including the woman herself, is ultimately considered the property of the man. Further, women have limited control over income from the sale of animals (and poultry in particular). Even though the decision to sell may come from women, men generally are the ones who control any revenue from animals, even if the animals belong to the women in practice.



- *Women do not own or inherit land.* While women may have access to a portion of land for farming, the land tends to be less productive than men's land. Women's limited access to and control over land has implications for poultry production in terms of building a poultry house and the time she spends tending to her allocated parcel of land, which may detract from other income-generating activities.
- *Prevailing gender norms limit women's autonomy as poultry producers.* While women are often the primary caretakers of poultry—responsible for feeding, watering, and hygiene—they are not considered the owner or producer. Further, women are typically prevented from selling birds at the market; in some cases, women are allowed to sell birds at home to a roaming purchaser, but they have little leverage in setting prices.
- *Access to inputs and information also serve as obstacles to women's poultry production.* Women face difficulties accessing quality poultry feed and obtaining housing for birds, and lack information or technical knowledge, for example, about poultry vaccination.
- *Poultry production is not viewed as an income-generating activity.* Communities tend to view poultry production as insurance rather than a commercial activity. In addition, women view their contributions to poultry production as domestic work, not as a productive activity.
- *Community-level interventions are not sufficient for addressing women's exclusion from poultry production.* Even in a community where a past intervention worked at the community level to lift the ban on women raising poultry, there remains low poultry production among women.

Based on these findings, recommendations to address the cultural, social, and economic obstacles to women's poultry production include the following:

1. Secure local buy-in at the individual, household, and community levels to gain support for women's increased role in poultry production from key stakeholders including women themselves, husbands, and community and religious leaders
2. Facilitate women's access to finance and key inputs, including credit to initiate poultry production, as well as vaccines, nutritious poultry feed, poultry houses, and land
3. Enable technical training and information-sharing on good practices in poultry production, including vaccinations, nutrition, and access to price information
4. Strengthen women's ability to sell their poultry by working with men and women to shift cultural norms and attitudes around women selling poultry, creating linkages to traveling buyers and facilitating access to price information
5. Promote a culture of poultry production as an income-generating activity, demonstrating the potential benefits to the household
6. Mitigate against risks including domestic violence and increased burden on women's time use by providing information, training, and reporting resources on gender-based violence and through sensitizations on sharing household responsibilities
7. Consider future targeted research, including further gender analysis to better understand the gender dynamics of household nutrition; barrier analysis to elucidate some of the obstacles to women's poultry production, such as women collecting termites; and periodic monitoring to gauge changes in women's time use and control over resources

## 2 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

SELEVER is a five-year project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and implemented by ASI, an affiliate of ACDI/VOCA. The project's goal is to improve the nutritional status of women and children in Burkina Faso through a market facilitation approach that: 1) increases household poultry production and incomes and 2) empowers women in society, the economy, and the household. The project seeks to build women's empowerment and entrepreneurship capacity through increased poultry production, which will ensure an increase in women's income, capacity to control the income, and improved nutritional behavior for women, children, and the whole household.

The SELEVER gender approach is based upon the theory of change that women's increased decision-making capacity, self-efficacy, and influence over household nutrition behavior is necessary to ensuring that increased poultry production and incomes will result in better household nutrition. This approach will also ensure that all actors—including men—within the household and communities are engaged throughout the project activities. The project is implemented in partnership with local nongovernmental organizations (NGO), private institutions, and government services in the Boucle du Mouhoun and Centre Ouest regions of Burkina Faso.

Previous analyses have shown that poultry production is one of the most valuable sectors for investment for rural economies in Burkina Faso. The poultry value chain has historically been a male-dominated activity in most Burkinabe communities. Although women's participation is central to poultry production through the labor they provide, men traditionally own the poultry and are in control of the sale and profits of any birds. In addition to lacking ownership or control of poultry, women traditionally do not have control or ownership over land on which to graze birds or build poultry houses, nor do they have access to financial services or information about markets, veterinary services, or best practices. Poultry production is closely dependent on other value chains such as agricultural production, where women's participation is also central and where they face similar challenges to time use, decision making, access, and control over resources.

Within this context, the SELEVER project is working through a participatory learning process that will promote women's empowerment and economic strengthening through poultry production with the aim of positively impacting household nutritional status. The project aims to have a coherent and unified approach for gender mainstreaming strategies across all components to ensure the overall objective of the program.

The present gender analysis aims to make recommendations that address gender gaps, challenges, risks, and opportunities related to the SELEVER women's poultry program in order to promote women's participation as poultry producers and owners, improve income and nutritional status for women and children, and facilitate women's empowerment in their households and communities. The analysis explores what gender norms, gender-specific barriers, and level of community engagement could influence possibilities and opportunities for women to become more involved in poultry production and other entrepreneurship domains in order for them to be empowered and to impact positively on households' (particularly women and children) nutritional status.



## 2.1 KEY QUESTIONS AND THEMES

Through this gender analysis, SELEVER seeks to understand the gaps, challenges, risks, and opportunities women face in participating in poultry production in the project areas. The analysis addresses the following four primary areas of inquiry in order to shape SELEVER's programming and strengthen the project's capacity to improve the income and nutritional statuses of women and children:

1. **Division of Labor:** What are the differences between men's and women's activities and the amount of time they spend on them? How is labor divided within the household?
2. **Control over Productive Assets:** What is the difference between men's and women's rights to property and productive assets? Who owns, uses, and controls which assets?
3. **Economic Barriers:** What constraints do women face as employees and entrepreneurs in the poultry value chain (vaccinators, input suppliers, traders, etc.)?
4. **Local Governance and Decision Making:** To what extent do women participate in local governance or have influence in decision-making processes at the community level?

## 3 METHODOLOGY

Because this analysis primarily examined the attitudes, feelings, and beliefs that shape people's behavior around gender issues, the research team employed qualitative methods to carry out the gender analysis.

### 3.1 DESK REVIEW

This research builds on a gender desk review carried out in September 2015 to inform SELEVER project planning and provide a foundation for the gender analysis. The review explored six fundamental research questions related to gender roles, relations, and differences in Burkina Faso generally and within poultry production specifically, and examined how SELEVER can equitably engage women and men in program interventions.

According to the review, the majority of households in Burkina Faso possess between five and 20 birds, and men generally produce more bird flocks than women.<sup>1</sup> Although women play an active role in tasks associated with raising poultry—watching over flocks, feeding, and watering—it is largely men who control poultry activities and production. There is heterogeneity across regions in women's roles as poultry farmers. In the Boucle du Mouhoun region, for example, women are more involved in poultry production than in the Centre Ouest region. In spite of women's participation, poultry production and selling remains highly controlled by men.<sup>2</sup> Further, the notion of women's poultry ownership is contested. Some reports indicate that both women and men control poultry activities and own birds, while most suggest that men exert full control, even if in practice the birds belong to women.<sup>3</sup>

The review also considered women's roles in household decision making as well as access to and control over resources. While women in many regions engage in small trade, they do not typically have control over their profits.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, only one in five women indicate having decision-making power for major household purchases.<sup>5</sup> In the majority of households, it is the household head who is the primary decision maker, and it is largely men who occupy that role. A previous gender analysis found that households engage in their own form of budget negotiations whereby men are typically responsible for expenses such as food, school fees, health care, and other family production costs, and women cover condiments, their own clothes, water, and food processing. Of note, for women to be able to engage in traditionally male tasks, they "learn to assist without him requesting it"; in other words, they subtly take it on so as not to break gender norms.<sup>6</sup> Women and men face difficulties accessing credit, and women in particular are unlikely to qualify even when credit is available.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Batamaka, Some. *Women's Role in Poultry Production and Household Decision-Making in Burkina Faso*. Draft Report for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2015): 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Wendyam Kabore ep. Zare, Yacouba Yaro, and Dan-koma M. Ibrahim. *Background Study of the Inter-Agency Joint Programme on Violence Against Women: Burkina Faso*. The Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality: Task Force on Violence Against Women (2008): 21.

<sup>5</sup> National Institute for Statistics and Demography (INSD) and ICF International, 2012. *Enquête Démographique et de Santé et à Indicateurs Multiples du Burkina Faso 2010*. Calverton, Maryland: INSD and ICF International.

<sup>6</sup> Some, *Women's Role*.

<sup>7</sup> Aeschliman, Chet. *Financial Cooperatives in Rural Finance Case Study: Burkina Faso's Caisse Populaire Network (RCPB)*. The World Bank Agriculture and Rural Development, 2007.

Gender and time use was also explored in the review. According to a Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency gender analysis, the majority of women in Burkina Faso, regardless of ethnic group, are responsible for “grinding and pounding grains, cooking, fetching water, and collecting firewood.”<sup>8</sup> They also contribute a significant amount of time to agricultural production relative to men.<sup>9</sup> This has implications for an intervention that aims to increase women’s involvement in poultry production. The review warns against increasing women’s workload without ensuring equitable distribution in benefits, and also describes an example technology to mitigate against this risk. This technology, known as a multifunctional platform (MFP), is a machine designed to serve multiple technological purposes including grinding grain and pumping water. Not only does the use of the MFP result in time savings, allowing women more time for other activities such as training, education, and business, it also promotes women’s involvement in the community. Indeed, the presence of an MFP in a village was found to be a key determinant of women’s agency and self-determination.<sup>10</sup>

The review also reported a negative correlation between women’s participation in income-generating activities and household food insecurity access, suggesting that women do not succeed in reinvesting their income in household nutrition.<sup>11</sup> However, according to data from the 2010 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), less than half of all women in Burkina Faso work for payment in cash, limiting women’s ability to invest in household nutrition.<sup>12</sup>

Other gender considerations for a poultry production intervention include education and domestic violence. While education is low for both women and men in Burkina Faso, the literacy rates highlight the gender disparity: only 29.3 percent of women are literate compared with 43 percent of men.<sup>13</sup> Literacy has the potential to impact poultry production as men’s and women’s literacy skills enable access to information, the adoption of new skills, or participation in learning opportunities that often require the ability to read presentations and handouts.<sup>14</sup> Women also face increased risk of domestic violence and psychological pressure as their status and autonomy increase, not only because intimate partner violence is a common occurrence but also because shifts in women’s status disrupt the power norms of communities and households, to which men may respond with increased violence as a means of control.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, domestic violence is already prevalent in project implementation areas. DHS data indicate that in regions of Boucle du Mouhoun and Centre Ouest, respectively, 26.9 percent and 16.4 percent of women surveyed said they had experienced physical violence in the last 12 months before the survey.<sup>16</sup> The promotion of women’s empowerment and gender equity could further exacerbate this challenge to gender relations without deliberate mitigation strategies.

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<sup>8</sup>Helmfrid, Sigrun. *Towards Gender Equality in Burkina Faso*. SIDA Department of Policy and Methods, 2004. Retrieved from [http://www.sida.se/contentassets/2a5008bc2f3c4a11ad797d56602745de/towards-gender-equality-in-burkina-faso\\_422.pdf](http://www.sida.se/contentassets/2a5008bc2f3c4a11ad797d56602745de/towards-gender-equality-in-burkina-faso_422.pdf).

<sup>9</sup>Anand Swamy, Christiaan Grootaert, and Gi-Taik Oh. "The Local Level Institutions Study: Local Institutions and Service Delivery in Burkina Faso, Local Level Institutions." Working Paper No. 8, World Bank Social Development Family Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Network, 1999: 18.

<sup>10</sup>Araujo, Claudio, Catherine Araujo-Bonjean, and Victor Beguerie. "The Empowering Impact of Multifunctional Platforms on Women in Burkina Faso." Paper presented at the 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the French Economic Association, 2015.

<sup>11</sup>Maisonneuve, Catherine, et al. "Women's Empowerment: A Key Mediating Factor between Cotton Cropping and Food Insecurity in Western Burkina Faso." *Journal of Food Security* 2, 2 (2014).

<sup>12</sup>INSD and ICF International, 2012. *Enquête Démographique et de Santé et à Indicateurs Multiples du Burkina Faso 2010*. Calverton, Maryland: INSD and ICF International.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Some, *Women's Role*.

<sup>15</sup>Banks, Jacqueline L, Stuart H. Sweeney, Kathryn Grace. "The Geography of Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality in Burkina Faso." Paper submitted at the Population Association of America 2015 Annual Meeting, April 30–May 2. Retrieved from <http://paa2015.princeton.edu/abstracts/150708>.

<sup>16</sup>INSD, *Enquête Démographique et de Santé et à Indicateurs Multiples du Burkina Faso 2010*.

## 3.2 GEOGRAPHIC SAMPLING

The gender analysis targeted SELEVER’s intervention provinces and regions to ensure that the findings could be used to inform the project’s implementation. In the Boucle du Mouhoun region, the analysis covered Kossi, Nayala, and Mouhoun provinces, and in the Centre Ouest region, Boulkiemde and Reo provinces. Data were collected from a total of 10 villages—two in each of the five provinces. Purposive selection was used to identify the village sites within each province based on proximity to urban centers and existing poultry production activities. Table 3.1 summarizes the sample target locations.

**Table 3.1 Sample Locations**

Region	Province	Village
Boucle du Mouhoun	Kossi	Nouna Secteur 4
		Ira
	Nayala	Koin
		Sien
	Mouhoun	Soukuy
		Safané
Centre Ouest	Boulkiemde	Poa
		Nayalgué
	Reo	Tita
		Bonyolo

## 3.3 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Enumerators worked with the president of the Village Development Committee (CVD) or ex-municipal counselors<sup>17</sup> to inform and get permission from village chiefs, and to identify households and informants who were both available and met the following selection criteria:

*Household characteristics by village:*

- One monogamous
- One polygamous<sup>18</sup>
- One female-headed

*Individual characteristics:*

- One representative under 30 years old
- One representative between 30 and 50 years old
- One representative over 50 years old

*Community leader characteristics:*

- Customary leader (village chiefs or land chief)
- Religious leader (imam, pastor, priest depending on the village religious color and also taking into account possible diversity of community leaders in each region)

<sup>17</sup> In the current political structure (May 2016–current), municipal counselors no longer exist, but former counselors are still viewed as leaders and hold considerable sway in the village.

<sup>18</sup> In cases of polygamous households, only one wife was selected, alternating between the first and the last wife.

*Women leader characteristics:*

- One representative (head or leader) of women’s association within the village who was available at the time of the data collection

*Female Vulgarisateur Volontaire Villageois (VTV) characteristics :*

- Women occupying the role of village vaccinator available at the time of data collection

The president or ex-municipal counselor also facilitated introductions to the village chief and ultimately the informants.

## 3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative data were collected through focus group discussions (FGD), household individual interviews, and key informant interviews. Data collection was conducted in the local language—Dioula in the Boucle du Mouhoun region and Moore in the Centre Ouest region—and enumerators then translated transcripts to French for coding and analysis. Interviews were conducted privately to avoid outside influence or bias resulting from the presence of spouses or other individuals.

### 3.4.1 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The data collection team conducted two FGDs in each of 10 villages, one with women and one with men. The enumerators (facilitators) employed some participatory techniques, including group activities to determine women’s and men’s daily calendars. Focus groups were led by a moderator, who was supported by a lead and a backup note-taker. Enumerators rotated roles for each focus group, allowing every enumerator an opportunity to occupy each role.

### 3.4.2 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

In each village, the enumerators also conducted five household-level interviews—one with each of the following types of individuals: (1) women in monogamous relationships, (2) women in polygamous relationships, (3) men in monogamous relationships, (4) men in polygamous relationships, and (5) women who head their households. Men and women interviewed ranged from 18 to 83 years of age.

In addition to 50 in-depth household interviews and 20 FGDs with men and women, the research team also interviewed community leaders, representatives of poultry producer organizations, female poultry vaccinators, and civil society representatives.

## 3.5 DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

### 3.5.1 SENSEMAKING

Throughout the data collection process, the team leaders led the data collection team in an initial stage of analysis referred to as “sensemaking.” Each day following data collection, the enumerators completed and cleaned their notes from the day. After this, they summarized a few key questions related to responses from research participants, and reflections from their own experiences. Their reflections were then used to guide the analysis process later on.

### 3.5.2 QUALITATIVE DATA CODING

Once the data collection process was completed, transcripts and interview notes were coded according to the areas of inquiry and themes that emerged throughout the data collection and coding process. Data coding employed a hybrid approach of a priori and grounded codes. A codebook with descriptive codes corresponding to the interview questionnaires formed the basis for a priori coding. Grounded codes were added as they emerged during the process of analysis. Coding was done using Dedoose, a web application for qualitative and mixed method data analysis.

## 3.6 STUDY LIMITATIONS

Due to the qualitative methodology employed in this gender analysis, it was not possible to sufficiently explore all topics of interest. In order to prevent interviews and FGDs from becoming too lengthy, questionnaires could not contain all possible desired components, chiefly the research questions around nutrition. The nutrition component, ultimately eliminated, was intended to capture gendered information on nutrition knowledge and practices ranging from food purchasing and cooking to food distribution and order of eating. A follow-up gender analysis could be carried out to adequately explore gender dynamics of household nutrition knowledge and practices.

While the research team was aware of the potential sensitivities around discussing gender dynamics, informants and communities in fact welcomed the discussions and were very engaged. However, they did note the length of discussions as a drawback and suggested shorter discussions in the future.

## 4 FINDINGS

### 4.1 TIME USE AND LABOR

#### 4.1.1 TIME USE AND DIVISION OF LABOR

Across both regions, household work is divided between women, men, and children. Other family members may also participate. Domestic work, however, is always the responsibility of women.

Women's work can be organized into four categories:

- **Domestic (reproductive/caretaking) activities:** These are all activities associated with keeping up the household and are constant across seasons. They typically include preparing and cooking food; sweeping the house; taking care of children; collecting water for household use; collecting firewood; pounding millet; feeding; washing and cleaning dishes; and feeding and watering poultry and other animals (cows, sheep, goat, pork, etc.). Women in some areas spend up to 15 hours per day on domestic activities.
- **Household productive activities:** This includes cultivating the husband's fields, collecting water for animals, watering the husband's garden, and harvesting cotton and cereals. Time spent on these activities increases during the rainy season.
- **Individual productive activities:** These activities are linked to the woman's individual productivity and include cultivation of her own field, pig farming, paid work in someone else's field for diverse harvesting work, and, in some cases, poultry production.
- **Income-generating activities:** These encompass the work women engage in outside the household to earn income and often include small trade, catering, and food sales, preparing and selling "dolo" (local brew), and weaving and selling cloth/fabric.



Chart 4.1 provides an illustrative example of the gendered division of labor and time use in Boucle du Mouhoun during the dry season.

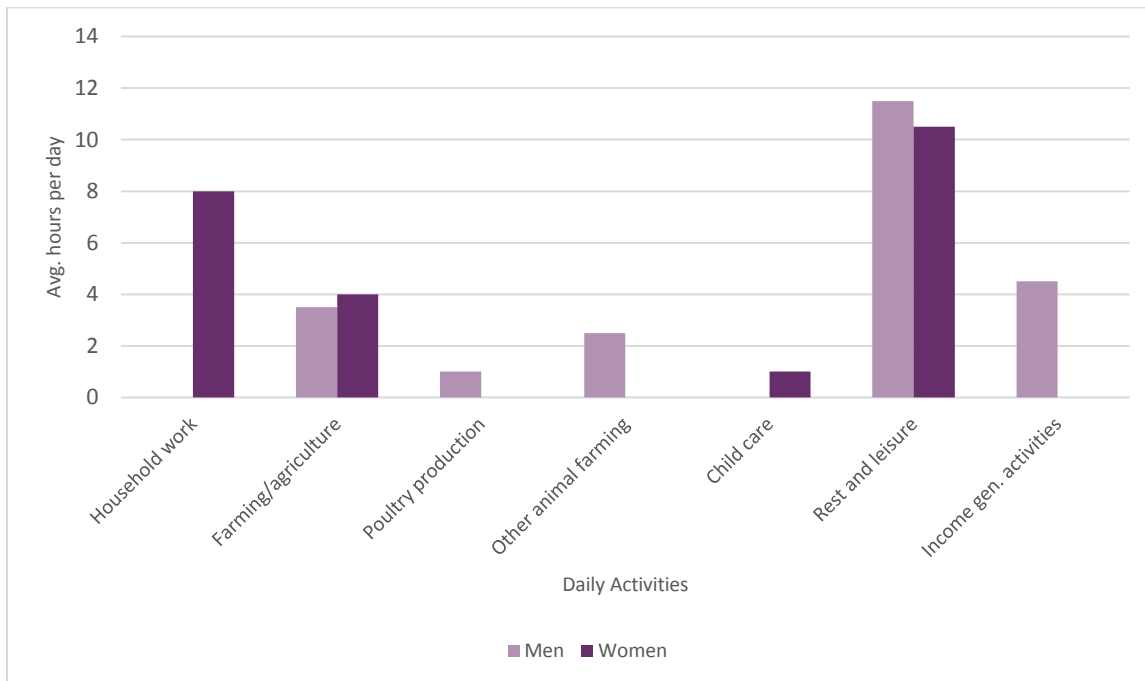


Figure 4-1 Gender and Daily Time Use – Boucle du Mouhoun, Dry Season

While women may receive help from their children and husbands, it varies depending on the season and other obligations. Children attend school during the day and thus are not always available to help in the household, particularly in the dry season when school is in session. Children may help out after school or during holidays, and it is more often girls who help in the household. According to a woman from Sien, “when there is no school, the girls help us to pound millet and collect water.” Another woman from Nouna said that “sometimes when my children are not going to school, they are the ones who help me wash the dishes, sweep the yard, and sell dolo.” When it comes to men helping women with domestic and income-generating activities, the data illuminate that only “good men” help their wives in the household, and these instances are rare. As one male informant from Soukuy shared, “I help my wife with her gardening. I’m the one who went to collect wood for her to have a fence, and I help her with all of her gardening.”

Most men, in contrast, made no mention of assisting their wives around the household. Of note, the code “helping” is mentioned most in the data in the context of women discussing helping their husbands and not the reverse. However, women rarely complain about not receiving help from their husbands; they acknowledge the husband’s encouragement or permission to carry out income-generating activities as satisfactory; according to a woman in Sien, “He can help you in your activities or he can encourage you.” In Poa, one woman said that “yes, normally women must have the approval of their husbands; because if their husbands join their project they can occasionally help.” Indeed, this fits within the gender norms of society, in which men who help their wives are not necessarily viewed positively by their counterparts. As a man in Sien explained, “For others it is a sign of weakness, which is dominated by his wife, and some advise him not to submit.” In Koin, one man said that “the other men say in fact the man who helps his wife has no words to say to his wife. They also say that he is charmed by his

wife.” According to one woman in Ira, “It is well received in the household, but in the community, others will say that he is his wife’s slave (*mouso djon*).”

Regardless of the season, women’s workload is significant relative to men’s. However, women’s workload is especially high during rainy season, which demands increased time in the fields in addition to regular domestic responsibilities. Yet even during the dry season, women’s responsibilities leave little time for rest or leisure. Some women reported rising as early as 2:00 a.m. to prepare food or begin other domestic duties, often working late into the evening. Indeed, when discussing their daily calendars, women rarely mentioned leisure activities. Chart 4.2 provides a comparison of men’s and women’s daily calendars between regions during the rainy season.

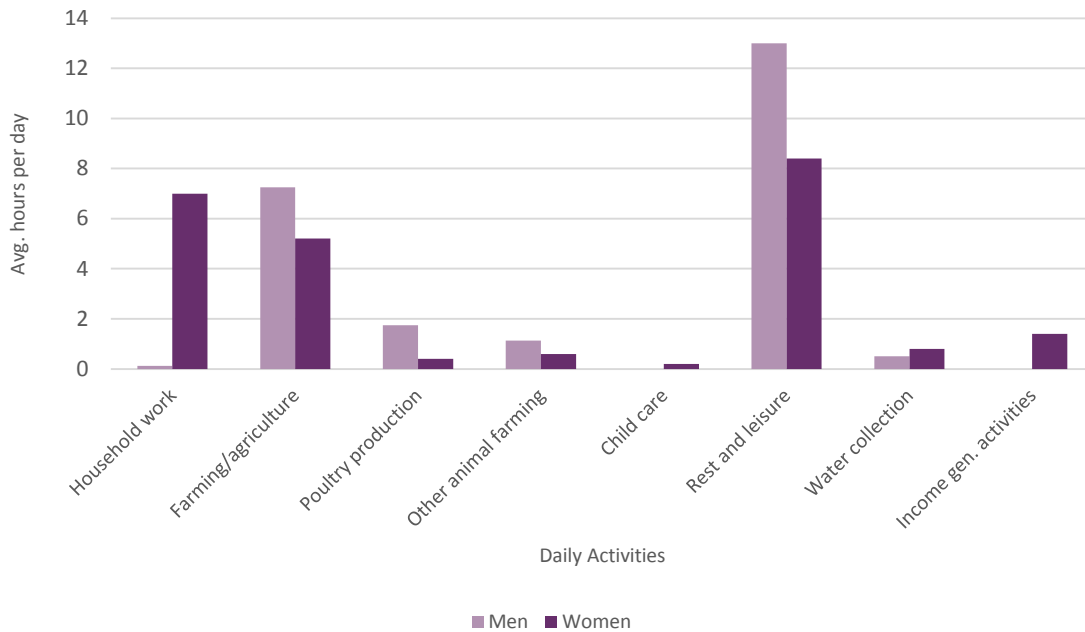


Figure 4-2 Gender and Daily Time Use by Region – Boucle du Mouhoun, Rainy Season

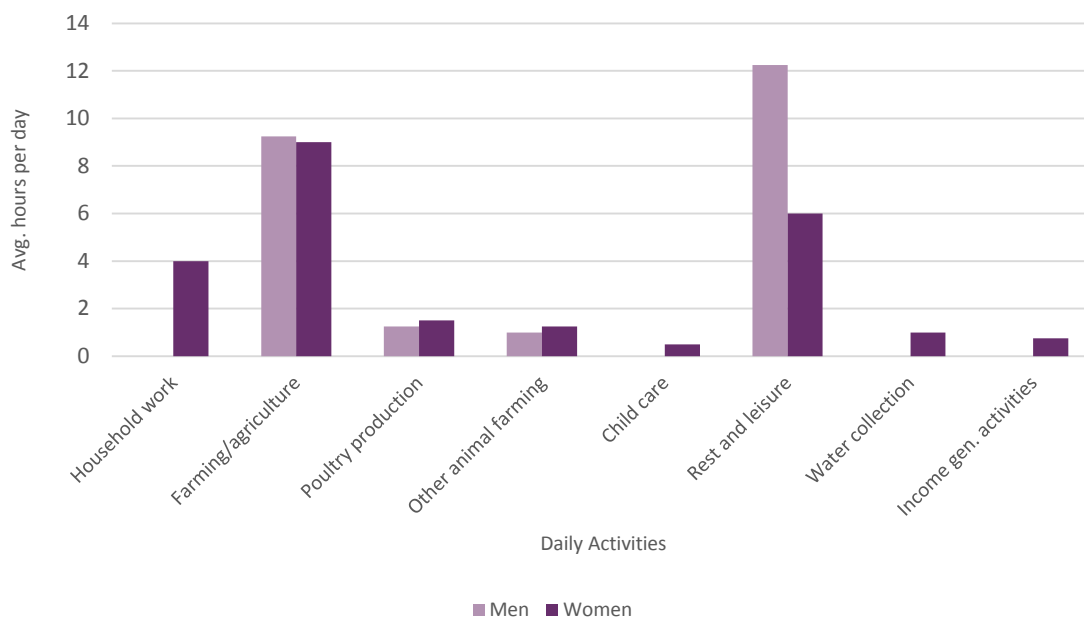


Figure 4-3 Gender and Daily Time Use by Region – Centre Ouest, Rainy Season

As the chart highlights, women are almost exclusively responsible for household duties, child care, and income-generating activities across both regions. Likewise, across both regions, men report more time for rest and leisure relative to women. Of note, women in Centre Ouest report more time spent on poultry and agricultural production compared to women in Boucle du Mouhoun. In contrast, women in Boucle du Mouhoun spend more time on income-generating activities than women in Centre Ouest.

Neither men nor women considered women’s workload or time use a barrier to additional economic activities such as poultry production. Participants across the board suggest that if women wish to engage in poultry production, they simply need to better organize or prioritize their time. These responses indicate that women’s engagement in poultry activities is viewed as an individual activity and choice rather than something that could benefit the whole household and might necessitate increased help from other family members in relieving some of women’s existing duties. Women in Boucle du Mouhoun, for example, discussed prioritizing poultry production over farming their own individual piece of land, recognizing that the land women farm is typically not very fertile or productive (indeed in one of the local languages, Dioula, women’s land is referred to as “dionforo,” or “land of the slaves”). Women also brainstormed the possibility of paying someone else to farm their fields as another way to take on poultry production without abandoning their responsibilities to farm their own fields.

#### 4.1.2 WOMEN AND PAID WORK

Women are generally not paid for the work they do within the household. In some villages, they are also not compensated for their contribution to productive work for the household. While they may receive grains from their husbands, this is not considered salary or compensation for the work they do. As a woman in Koin explained, “It is not for paying the woman; it is just an assistance. Here we don’t pay women for work in the home. We cannot pay the woman for what she does.” In other places, the perception is different. Receiving compensation for helping the husband with cultivation is viewed as normal. According to a woman in Soukuy, “Often if you cultivate with him in the field he can give you some of the harvest. If he sells cotton, for example, he can give you some money, maybe 5,000 or

10,000 francs.”<sup>19</sup> In Ira village, a woman explained that “women are paid in kind every day until all crops are harvested from the husband’s field.” Thus, a single conclusion cannot be drawn when it comes to the issue of payment for household production activities, as the interpretation varies greatly among individuals and regions. Some view it as payment while others view it as a reward or expression of thanks. According to a man from Nayalgué, “Women are not paid for the work they do in the household, but they just receive thanks.”

Conversely, outside the households, women in many areas are accustomed to paid work for productive activities. According to one group of women in Bonyolo, “Yes, women do paid work outside their households.” Women find time and receive permission to do paid work, including harvesting cotton, vegetables, or grains. One woman in Sien explained, “It is the daily work in the fields (cultivating and weeding) and harvesting cotton, millet, and beans. Sometimes they receive money and other times grains.” This type of work pays 250 to 500 francs per day (the current market rate is 500 francs for a day of work). It is important to note that this type of paid work is only possible through group membership, typically in women’s associations;<sup>20</sup> in other words, an individual woman who is not part of a group cannot engage in this type of paid work. Women’s work as part of a group seems to be an acceptable approach because it takes place simultaneously with the agricultural work expected of them in the household. However, it is not always easy for women to get permission to engage in this group work, particularly in households where the husband opposes women getting paid work, such as among the Dafi. According to a woman in Safané, “A man should not let his wife cultivate [for pay].”

Apart from farming, women across both regions are involved in various types of paid work outside the household, including catering/food selling, laundry, helping with the preparation of “dolo,” and making bricks, among other activities. Men generally express support for women’s engagement in income-generating activities and recognize the corresponding benefits to the household. As discussed above, however, the support is conditional on women meeting their existing obligations within the household. Women may engage in income-generating activities if they can find time outside of their caretaking and household work. In this way, women’s contributions to the household from income-generating activities are not viewed as essential to supporting the household. Indeed, a woman gaining money from her business activities to help her husband is not part of men’s and women’s perceptions of a “good wife.” Only one transcript from women in Nayalgué mentioned that a “good wife” is “... a woman who helps her husband regardless of her co-wives, who pities her husband, who helps her husband financially.”

Women’s interest in the types of paid opportunities that allow them to have an income was evident throughout the research. As one woman in Nayalgué stated, “Women want paid work, but they don’t always find it.” However, they also seem to be aware that the relatively little pay may not always be worth the effort. According to a woman in Ira, “As soon as you arrive back at home, the insignificant amount of money is quickly spent.” In general, though, women expressed interest in increased economic independence and the desire to be able to provide for their children and contribute to their households, for example, by supplying food and helping with children’s school fees. As one woman in Dédougou articulated, “This is our wish...to have more income and financial autonomy, to take charge and take care of family expenses.”

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<sup>19</sup>Equivalent to approximately \$8.50–\$17.00.

<sup>20</sup> There are women associations (*groupements de femmes*) within the village, and usually women belong to these groups. These groups are not always formalized; however, they are platforms that allow women to have some opportunities, take some initiatives, and engage in paid work.

## 4.2 ACCESS AND CONTROL OVER PRODUCTIVE ASSETS

### 4.2.1 LAND

Land is one of the most important productive assets for both men and women. Throughout both regions, communities are largely agricultural and rely on agricultural products harvested from land for their subsistence and livelihoods. Familial land, which belongs to the husband, takes priority as the productive asset that generates food for the household and on which harvests are stored. Men, women, and children are all involved in tending this land, including plowing and weeding. Women may also have the right to use a portion of land, typically acquired through marriage, which they alone cultivate. Because the majority of women's time is devoted to helping in the familial field, their own land does not generally produce high yields.

In general, the time women spend in their own fields is a point of negotiation and contestation between men and women; women negotiate with their husbands to find more time to cultivate their own land, but these attempts are often not well received. Women might have a total of three days in a season to devote to their own land or spend time in the evening after working all afternoon in the familial field. Some women spoke of "stealing time" during their husband's absence; indeed, some expressed a preference for their husband's absence in the field because, while it might result in more work for the woman, she alone is able to make decisions about and better manage her time. The issue for women then is not only about accessing land for their needs but also having control over the time necessary to make the land productive. This time is not always granted. A discussion of land in relation to poultry production follows in Section 4.3.7, "Obstacles to poultry production."

### 4.2.2 OTHER RESOURCES

Apart from land, the study attempted to understand gendered access to and control over other resources. In general, there are very few resources considered the property of a woman. Both women and men seem to agree that women's property includes kitchen utensils, her clothes, her poultry and pigs, and the millet she cultivates; in sum, "anything you buy with your own money, you can say it is yours," according to a woman in Soukouy. What appears to distinguish women's property as her own is the fact that she can take it with her in cases of divorce.

However, the data also suggest that even property considered to be a woman's is not really her own because ultimately everything in the household—including the wife—belongs to the husband. This sentiment emerged throughout focus groups and interviews. As described by a woman in Tita, "Women do not own anything in the household. Even things she bought with her own money do not belong to her. The woman herself, and her poultry, are property of the man. The woman may have access to property, but it does not belong to her." According to a man in Soukouy, "The serpent said to the toad that its stomach and body belong to it because after having swallowed it the toad died. This is to say that what belongs to the woman also belongs to the man, for she is a man's property."

These perceptions are also common across both Boucle du Mouhoun and Centre Ouest regions; indeed, the spectrum of a man's property is quite expansive and includes his own inheritance and resources, the woman's property, and the woman herself. This of course extends to the woman's poultry. In the words of a woman in Nayalgué, "It is the man who is the owner of the poultry house." In fact, the question of women's property appeared to make participants laugh or feel uncomfortable, as the question itself was

perceived as incongruous. As a woman in Bonyolo described, “It is forbidden to say that this or that is women’s property; everything belongs to the man, even things the woman bought with the man or with her own means. However, pigs, cooking utensils, and the woman’s granary may in practice be considered the woman’s property.”

Participants also discussed property shared between the man and the woman, including children and anything the wife has contributed to acquiring. According to men in Koin, “Many things, everything the woman has helped to acquire she can say is theirs together. Even the granary is for everyone, and the woman can even say the field is theirs.” Again, however, the data also illustrate that property that may be considered shared really belongs to the man: “The house and everything in it, the wife, the children, and animals are the man’s property,” as described by a woman in Poa.

#### 4.2.3 CONTROL OVER REVENUE

When it comes to control over revenue from productive assets, women’s scope is limited. While they technically may have control over revenue from their belongings—kitchen utensils, clothing, millet, their portion of land—it is the man who controls any revenue from animals, even if the animals belong to the woman. This is linked to the fact that men are the ones who make and negotiate terms of sale once the woman decides to sell the animal. In essence, even if the woman owns poultry or other animals, the inputs and outputs are controlled by the man, and her decision to sell the animal is not sufficient to assert full ownership or control over the revenue. As one man in Sien said, “If it is the goats or poultry, I’m the one who keeps the proceeds from the sales.”

While it is uncommon for women to keep and control revenue, it is important to qualify that this can vary from village to village and household to household. In some households, women do keep and control the revenue from sales of their assets, including animals, particularly areas of Boucle du Mouhoun. Elsewhere, men are more likely to keep the revenue from women’s property, often at the woman’s request. Both women and men indicate that this is true; one woman in Bonyolo said, “I give the money from my pigs to my brother-in-law so that he can keep it for me. Women must always give her money to a man to keep for her. When the woman wants to buy something like shoes, pots, or dishes, she lets the man know and he gives her money for the purchase. But for other purchases like a bicycle she tells the man she wants it and he makes the purchase.” Another woman in Tita said, “It is our husband who keeps and controls everything we receive from sales,” while a man in Safané stated that “after selling something, my wife shows me her money and gives it to me to keep for her.”

On the other hand, women exert relative control over their revenue from income-generating activities; when the products belong to the woman, she can sell and keep her revenue. Most of the informants agree that women do keep the revenue from their sales. As one woman in Poa explained, “Money from the sale of my cereals is mine, and I manage it as I wish.” Some women also use local banks or microfinance institutions to save their money, particularly in the Boucle du Mouhoun region. However, the fact that many women keep their revenue does not necessarily mean they have ultimate control or decision-making power over its use. As a woman in Koin described, “Men and women decide on the way the incomes will be used...I must show the money first to my husband and then tell him that I want to buy this and this thing.” Informants also highlight the fact that a woman can show her money to her husband before, using it as sign of respect, or if she trusts him she can give him the money to keep it for her, as said above by the man in Safané. In sum, the issue of control of her revenue from income-generating activities is relative and depends on the household gender relations and woman’s empowerment status.



## 4.3 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS

As discussed in section 4.1.2 in relation to women and paid work, there is general support throughout the two regions for women's participation in income-generating activities. However, this support is not uniform and may depend on, among other things, the type of activity and the community. In order to better understand the viability of women's increased engagement in the poultry value chain, it is important to first understand the existing context in which poultry activities take place.

### 4.3.1 REASONS FOR POULTRY PRODUCTION

There are different reasons households in the target regions engage in poultry activities, which generally relate to meeting household basic needs. Households might sell poultry in order to purchase grains for consumption, to pay for children's schooling or medicines, or to satisfy social and cultural obligations ranging from dowries to funerals. As one group of men in Koin expressed, "It is only when there is a need that we sell our poultry. When we receive a visitor, we might slaughter a bird in their honor. It is less often that we slaughter a bird just for our family's consumption." This same sentiment emerged across interviews and regions; with the exception of special occasions, poultry is typically not intended for household consumption. Another important distinction is that, while the primary aim of raising poultry is typically to sell it, raising poultry is not viewed as a business but rather as insurance to sell in times of need.

### 4.3.2 FINANCING POULTRY ACTIVITIES

Across the two regions, households generally finance their poultry activities with revenue from agriculture and income-generating activities. This means they may sell part of their harvest or spend part of their income to purchase their first birds. It is important to note that households are not accustomed to borrowing money for poultry production, as they perceive there to be a number of risks associated with raising poultry, which may inhibit them from repaying loans. There are also distinctions between how men and women acquire poultry. According to a man in Bonyolo, "Since women cannot buy their own poultry, they get their chicken from their husbands or they sell their groundnuts in exchange for poultry. Men buy their poultry by selling off some of their harvest."

### 4.3.3 DIVISION OF LABOR IN POULTRY PRODUCTION

When it comes to division of labor in raising poultry, women are typically the primary caretakers; indeed, as noted previously, caring for the birds is widely perceived as a woman's domestic responsibility. As a man in Ira shared, "It is the woman who is usually responsible for raising the poultry, but everybody helps." While women bear considerable responsibility for the poultry, men do not consider the day-to-day tasks of raising poultry—giving them food and water, cleaning the poultry house—as part of the primary poultry production activities.

The division of labor in poultry production exploits existing gender roles and activities. Whether or not the woman owns poultry, her lack of mobility and presence at home is an asset when it comes to raising birds. While the man may tend to them in the morning or evening, it is typically to count the birds and to make sure none is missing. As a man in Ira described, "The man does the supervising." Women, with the help of children, are the ones who do the work to keep the birds alive. Particularly illustrative of the

gendered nature of poultry care is the common view that poultry production is generally considered an activity that does not take much time.

#### 4.3.4 GENDER AND THE RIGHT TO RAISE POULTRY

Throughout the Boucle du Mouhoun region, as articulated by an informant from Ira, “Men and women can raise poultry.” In certain villages, such as Ira, both men and women can raise poultry regardless of the type of bird. In some places, raising poultry is even viewed more as a woman’s activity than a man’s. As women in Nouna explained, “In general, raising poultry is the work of women. It’s the women who start this activity and men generally don’t do it. It’s when men see that it is a profitable activity that they follow suit.” In other words, once men view the activity as potentially profitable, they become interested or more supportive.

In most places, however, women are generally not involved in raising guinea fowl because women’s participation is viewed as a risk for conflict. According to women in Safané, “Women have the right to raise poultry but rarely guinea fowl because the collection of their eggs can lead to disputes or misunderstandings.” Indeed, guinea fowl are different from other birds both in the care they require and their daily habits, and these factors contribute to the perception that women’s involvement may lead to disputes. The mortality rate among guinea fowl chicks is particularly high, thus requiring meticulous care. In particular, someone must wake during the night to ensure the chicks stay warm enough, and it is not generally acceptable for women to wake and go out during the night, which presents an obstacle to their ability to raise guinea fowl.

In addition, guinea fowl lay eggs everywhere, even outside of the producer’s compound; harvesting eggs then becomes tricky, as it often requires going to the neighbor’s house to claim the eggs, which is particularly difficult for women who generally have little claim to property. Guinea fowl also require much more space, which women do not have; women resort to raising their birds in whatever little space is afforded to them, often under the granaries. Moreover, there is no variability in the plumage of guinea fowl making them all look alike, which becomes a source of confusion when trying to distinguish your birds from your husband’s or neighbors’ birds.

Finally, guinea fowl are wild and therefore difficult to keep and monitor, characteristics associated with men and frowned upon among women. A woman should not reproduce guinea fowl behavior; a “good woman and wife,” as described by both male and female informants, should be a “saga muso” or “pagapegso”—a “sheep woman”—meaning a woman who is kind, respectful, and submissive. As articulated by a woman in Poa, “May God give you a sheep woman.” As a man in Bonyolo stated, a woman should do “a job well done ... she washes the clothes of her husband, her children, and her in-laws; she takes care of strangers, asking him news before the arrival of her husband; she is not talkative; she is kind; she is always listening to her husband and her children; cooks well and serves everyone even though she is angry.” According to a woman in Tita, a woman should “always request permission from her husband for all her movements (mobility).” As a result, women are generally forbidden from raising guinea fowl in order to fulfill the requirements of a “good wife” and avoid disputes with husbands, neighbors, and co-wives.

In the Centre Ouest region, raising poultry is primarily viewed as a man’s activity, and women are not typically allowed to engage in poultry production. This is particularly true for the Moaga ethnic group. While women are not considered the primary poultry farmers, it is not uncommon for them to help care for the birds. Even in places where women are permitted to raise poultry, they must first obtain the husband’s permission. According to one group of women in Tita, “Women can participate in poultry

activities as long as it does not interfere with the husband’s poultry production, and she must not complain if the husband decides to sell her birds without her knowledge. The man is in charge of the woman and everything she possesses. She must allow him to sell the poultry.” As in Boucle du Mouhoun, it is uncommon and even forbidden in the Centre Ouest region for women to raise guinea fowl.

Again, women’s inability to raise guinea fowl is linked to a perception that doing so may result in household or community conflicts. This helps explain why it is particularly difficult for women in polygamous households to raise poultry; the perception is that multiple women in the same household lends easily to disputes and conflicts around poultry possession. While women in monogamous households also face challenges, they may have an entry point into poultry activities through the “name of their children.” As noted in the women’s focus group in Poa, “Some women raise poultry under the cover of their children to avoid arguments with their husbands.” In such contexts, women raise poultry in the names of their children. Since children cannot yet control property, they pose no threat to a man’s property, and it is therefore acceptable for the children to “raise” poultry. Using her children’s name allows a woman to circumvent the norms that can prevent her from raising poultry.

Women in female-headed households arguably have the largest degree of autonomy and freedom as poultry producers. As one woman in Nayalgué stated, “Yes, for single or widowed women, they are allowed to raise poultry.” In addition, it is generally considered acceptable for women in Protestant households to raise poultry: “It’s only widows and women who are Protestant who may be producing poultry.” Table 4.1 summarizes women’s access to poultry production and markets.

**Table 4.1 Summary of Women’s Access to Poultry Production and Markets**

Region	Poultry Raising – Guinea Fowl	Poultry Raising <sup>21</sup>	Poultry Owning	Poultry Selling at Home	Poultry (Guinea Fowl Included) Selling at Market
Boucle du Mouhoun	Allowed in some villages	Allowed	Allowed in some parts of the region	Allowed	Not allowed
Centre Ouest	Generally not allowed	Allowed	Generally not allowed, with the exception of a few female poultry owners	Generally not allowed, with the exception of a few female poultry owners	Not allowed

#### 4.3.5 REASONS FOR WOMEN’S EXCLUSION FROM POULTRY PRODUCTION

The reasons women are excluded from poultry activities vary but tend to be linked to fears about household and community disputes and the perceived threat to men when women become economically empowered. In terms of disputes, participants across both regions expressed the sentiment that allowing women to raise poultry opens the door to conflict around ownership of the birds and their eggs, or related to women’s refusal to let their husbands do as they see fit with the poultry. In essence, when women take measures to protect or preserve their limited resources, their husbands or communities often deem this excessive or unacceptable. The resulting assumption is that women lack the ability to manage conflicts over the possession of property, including poultry, and as a consequence are prevented from engaging in poultry activities. According to one man in Tita, “It is

<sup>21</sup> Considered a domestic activity.

forbidden for women to raise poultry because it creates problems and can even lead to divorce. The woman only raises pork, which does not engender these same problems because it's imported from Europe." In other words, pork, as an outside animal, does not hold the same cultural significance or value as poultry, and thus it is acceptable for women to engage in pork production.

Another reason women tend to be excluded from poultry activities is the fear of shifting gender and power relations as a result of women's increased economic independence. In discussing reasons women cannot own poultry or livestock, participants expressed that men lose respect if their wives raise poultry or that men refuse to let women grow their flock. Indeed, according to a woman in Poa, "Men say that women don't respect their husbands if they have a lot of poultry." Women's participation in poultry activities is perceived to threaten husbands' authority and sense of self-worth not only in the household but also in the community. Any refusal by a woman to allow her husband to control her is viewed as a lack of respect and a refusal of her status as a submissive wife. According to a man in Tita, "This refusal is seen as a lack of respect for the head of the household who is supposed to have the right and the authority to control everything in the household. Consequently, to avoid insubordinate behavior on the part of the wife, which can lead to misunderstandings, women must not raise poultry." This indicates a fear on the part of men, and of society, of women's empowerment because men sense that women's economic autonomy through poultry production could lead to her full independence and awareness of her rights, limitations, and decision making. As one informant in Poa explained, "Because wives begin to stop respecting the husband when they have poultry, because they have money through the sale of their poultry, they start to address problems without involving their husband. The husband sees that he no longer has authority, and that's why men refuse." In this way, the view that "the man is in charge of the woman and everything she possesses (poultry)," as articulated by women in Tita, is an obstacle to women's economic empowerment.

According to men in Tita, female heads of household may raise poultry in some families and not in others. For married women, they are not allowed to raise poultry as some men think it will lead to insubordinate behavior from the wife. In some cases, wives refuse to let their husbands use the wife's poultry for their own purposes, such as to solve their own money problems. This refusal is seen as a lack of respect for the head of the household who is supposed to have the right and the authority to control everything in the household and leads to misunderstandings in the household, so women are not allowed to raise poultry in order to avoid these disagreements..

In some villages in the Centre Ouest region, superstitious beliefs further serve to hinder women's participation in poultry activities. In Poa, for example, men explained that "a woman's bird must not stay in the husband's yard or else her husband might die." In Nayalgué, a woman expressed similar sentiments: "Women do not have the right to raise poultry. If women here insist on doing so, they might die." Indeed, superstitions are often used to discourage women from raising poultry. In many cultures, superstitions are cultural beliefs that strictly reinforce social norms or boundaries. Because superstitions are strongly believed, they maintain boundaries and are reinforced by community members. Such superstitions can come with negative consequences because transgressors may be punished by their own community. Thus, both the belief

in the superstition and the threat of punishment maintain the ongoing social norm (i.e., not only does the fear of her own or her husband's death prevent a woman from owning poultry but also the possibility that her neighbors would kill the birds to prevent that outcome or that they might ostracize her for ignoring the superstition).

#### 4.3.6 WOMEN AND POULTRY SELLING

One of the most salient commonalities between the two regions is that women are generally forbidden from *selling* poultry. Even female poultry owners are not allowed to sell their poultry themselves at the market but rather are forced to rely on male family members to do so. As one man in Tita said, “Women cannot sell their poultry themselves; they pass through male intermediaries to do it. The wife can inform her husband that she wishes to sell her poultry, and the husband will do it for her. If she isn’t married, she’ll ask another male family member. It’s because women cannot discuss the price.” As a woman from Safané also adds, “I have no problem because when I want to sell poultry, I have two

**“What? Go sell chickens at the market? I have never done it. Is this a woman’s work?”**

This view of women in Sien is indeed grounded in a context where even though women can own and raise poultry, their roles within poultry-raising activities remain domestic. Indeed, a woman is primarily involved in the less important tasks, and her husband is the one to sell the birds. As she notes, “Poultry-production activities are done by me, my husband, and my children. My husband collects termites for the chicks. The children and I give them food and water. We clean the poultry houses. It is my husband who calls the vaccinator to vaccinate the poultry.” The perceptions of women’s involvement in poultry selling seem to be grounded in three dimensions:

- Sociocultural: local division of labor that constructs poultry raising as feminine and selling poultry on the market as masculine
- Economical: men control poultry markets and revenues
- Political: access to public sphere where economic interactions take place, access to diverse information (price and poultry merchants), and participation in public debates (using one’s own voice and garnering support from others)

choices: either I defer to my husband when present and available, or if he is absent or indisposed, I call the buyer to my home.” The idea that women should not go to market to sell their poultry is a common perception among men and among women themselves. Participants described it as something “that isn’t done” or “never been seen” rather than as a taboo. In sum, multiple factors interact to limit women’s ability to sell their birds, principally gender norms that dictate going to market and negotiating prices as men’s work as well as women’s lack of access to price information.

Illustrating the beliefs associated with the aforementioned gender norms, some men expressed that women selling poultry themselves at market demonstrates a total lack of respect for husbands. In local terms, “pag san yeti rayita ti raowoa pa yeti rayita, rayit pa rayit yé; pag rayit pa siid rayityé,” which translates to “if a woman says tomorrow, and a man does not say tomorrow, tomorrow is not tomorrow. Tomorrow of the woman is not tomorrow according to the man.” In other words, if the woman wants something, for example to sell her poultry, and her husband does not approve, she will not sell the poultry. Thus, the only person who can make decisions about selling poultry is the man. An important distinction, however, is that selling poultry from home to a traveling buyer is perceived differently than going to the market to sell poultry. Some women are in fact permitted to sell poultry from home, even while they are not allowed to go to the market themselves. In spite of this relative freedom, women still face the disadvantage of limited bargaining power with the passing collector and rely on men to determine the price. According to one man in Soukuy, “Some women do not have difficulties, some do. Very often it is difficult for a woman to discuss with a male collector.”

Several participants cited price setting as a man’s duty and, by extension, a reason woman cannot go to the market to sell poultry. This view seems to be generally accepted, as men and women alike recognize that it is men who have access to information about changes in market prices and thus are in a position to determine at what price poultry should be sold. A woman who rejects this status quo is tantamount to a woman refusing to submit to her husband. Across both regions, the poultry market—from the

household to public spaces—appears to be controlled by men. Selling poultry is constructed as a masculine activity, which illustrates the status and role of the man in the household, community, and poultry market.

Women's exclusion from the poultry market also has implications for women's relationships with poultry merchants. Because women have historically been excluded from the market, poultry merchants start distinguishing between poultry that comes from a man and poultry that comes from a woman. Some poultry merchants view the poultry trade as a man's environment and refuse to buy from women. As a woman from Nayalgué explained, "When a woman wants to sell their poultry, buyers are hesitant. Some refuse to buy because they are afraid that poultry does not belong to the woman or that the poultry is stolen." Even if women do succeed in raising their own poultry, this risk of being doubted or refused by poultry merchants undermines their overall success.

#### 4.3.7 OBSTACLES TO POULTRY PRODUCTION

Both women and men in communities throughout the two regions described obstacles to raising poultry. The most commonly acknowledged obstacles include death of poultry from various diseases, absence of a poultry house (and associated lack of financial resources to build a poultry house), and lack of poultry feed. Participants also mentioned specific obstacles they have experienced, including poor poultry house hygiene, failure to vaccinate (particularly among female poultry farmers), and lack of technical knowledge about raising poultry.

One of the most common challenges cited by women is theft of poultry, which interestingly is not discussed as an obstacle men face. Indeed, women's opinions on the question, as articulated by women from Soukuy, Koin, Ira, Nouna, Sien, and Safané, such as "there are also thieves, if there is not enough financial means it is a problem" or "apart from the theft problem, I do not know any other difficulties" or "they lack space and they are afraid of thieves" or "engage the community leaders who can also do the blessings (prayers) to prevent thieves from stealing people's poultry," illustrate the gravity of this challenge. A question, then, is why this obstacle appears to be unique to women. This could be related to the availability of a poultry house for their birds or depend on the husband's willingness to support women in their poultry activities, for example, by allowing the woman to be a poultry producer, to share his poultry house, or to assist her in securing an area for her to build her own. Husband's support indeed is mentioned as an important factor in poultry production in both regions.<sup>22</sup>

As discussed at length above, women's exclusion from the poultry market and inability to sell birds themselves is another major factor preventing women's full participation in the poultry business. Some women recognize this as an obstacle, while others accept this norm as given. Either way, lack of control over this element of the poultry market chain is an important consideration for women's poultry production. The data illuminate this. According to a woman in Nouna, "It is only the difficulty of doing it (selling) without passing through someone else. Sometimes men spend all the money or part of it from what was given to them after selling the chickens." In Bonyolo, "it is forbidden for a woman to sell her own poultry to the market"; in addition, women have difficulty "[passing] through male intermediaries to sell their poultry and then difficulties asking the intermediary for their money after the sale and at the end the intermediary remains with the woman's money." Even when women themselves are able to sell poultry to traveling buyers, they still face challenges. First, they often lack information about prices and

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<sup>22</sup> Some female informants think that the theft could come from husbands who do not support them so may encourage the stealing of the birds or be the thieves themselves. According to a man from Poa, "a chicken or guinea fowl of the woman may die out, be stolen. The woman often accuses the husband; so this is a fight in the household."



are therefore not in a position to negotiate a better price. In addition, not all women who do succeed in selling birds on their own have the ability to keep and control the money they receive.

Women also face difficulties accessing high-quality food for their birds. As one woman from Nouna described, “We have difficulties related to accessing food; there is not a shop nearby that sells poultry feed, so we resort to giving them food we can find nearby, like grains and cereals, which lack vitamins.” Compounding this is the fact that women are forbidden from collecting locally available food like termites, which are recognized by communities as an important and nutritious food for poultry and chicks. This sentiment was expressed by women and men alike. One man in Soukuy explained, “Women don’t raise poultry here. It’s not forbidden, but they prefer to raise pork over poultry because it is difficult for them to find termites for poultry. If there is millet, that’s what they give to chickens.” Indeed, informants describe collecting termites as “men’s work” or “men’s duties” or “it is men who have access to it.” One community leader in Ira even expressed this view: “Men’s strengths in poultry raising, I cannot say much. But I know they are better placed to search for termites.”

Women’s access to land is another limiting factor when it comes to building a poultry house and raising poultry. In order to access land, women must seek approval not only from their spouse but also from the head of their lineage—typically someone outside the household who ultimately controls all the land in the lineage. In most cases, women in both regions lack access to a piece of land where they can build an adequate poultry house. As such, if women do engage in raising poultry, they must either rely on their husband’s poultry house or leave their poultry outside. In one woman’s words, “Even though my sister regularly vaccinates her poultry, she doesn’t have a poultry house, so her birds sleep outside, which causes health problems.” Indeed, lack of shelter for birds increases the risk of theft, disease, and death of birds. A key question, which is not well discussed, is whether it is acceptable for a household to have two poultry houses in cases where both husbands and wives are raising poultry. The data do not include mentions, in such instances, of whether women claim to have their own poultry house or the possibility of separate men’s and women’s poultry houses.

#### 4.3.8 GENDER AND THE POULTRY VALUE CHAIN

Men primarily occupy all roles in the poultry production value chain, including poultry vaccination, the sale of poultry and inputs, information and training, and poultry processing. The role of poultry vaccinator appears to be more strongly associated with men in some areas, such as Sien, as explained by one man: “The work of the vaccinator is done only by men.” In some cases, however, the data suggest this view may stem from the fact that women often lack the proper training. As a man in Bonyolo described, “Poultry vaccinators are men. Women do not have the training to be vaccinators.”

Although men dominate most roles, there are communities where women are active in the poultry value chain. According to one female poultry vaccinator in Poa, “There are already women who sell food for the birds. They can also be producers of chicks. But they prefer to sell food over birds themselves.” Notably, women throughout both regions express interest in increased participation in poultry value chain activities. As a woman in Nouna articulated, “Women could be interested in this because it is an opportunity to earn income, and it could help women in the production of their own birds; it could allow them to vaccinate their own birds on credit and then repay that with the income they earn.”

#### 4.3.9 WOMEN'S INTEREST IN POULTRY ACTIVITIES

In spite of the obstacles to women's full participation as poultry producers, opportunities also exist. In particular, women generally express interest in raising poultry, becoming better poultry farmers, or occupying roles in the poultry value chain traditionally reserved for men. As one woman in Nouna stated, "There are many women who wish to be trained in poultry feed production in order to sell it here." Similar sentiments emerged throughout both regions. Quantitative data from the baseline report corroborates women's beliefs that they can succeed as poultry farmers. In the General Self-Efficacy Scale, which includes a series of 10 questions assessing perceptions of one's ability to overcome challenges and deal with difficult tasks or situations, women averaged a score of 24.45,<sup>23</sup> signifying moderate or just-below moderate levels of self-efficacy. While this does not demonstrate the highest levels of confidence, with encouragement, training, and shifting social norms, women have the potential to embrace new roles.

However, women's lack of control over poultry revenues may discourage them from fully embracing poultry production as a business. While there is an increasing presence of female poultry producers (particularly in the Boucle du Mouhoun region), this does not extend to the whole poultry value chain. When women cannot sell their poultry themselves or keep and make decisions about the profits from poultry sales, they may be less able and inclined to fully engage in the poultry business.

#### 4.4 LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING

While women's participation in community organizations and governance varies by location, the data suggest that women are increasingly involved in both economic and political activities throughout the two regions. Women's increased economic participation—for example, paying for their children's schooling—may be linked to increased political participation and is viewed favorably by some. As one man in Poa described, "Now that women contribute to their children's education, they speak a lot during parent meetings. We men like when women express themselves in public because they have good ideas and good advice."

Women also have an increasing presence in local governance structures, including roles as mayors, counselors, or as part of village development committees. Both women's and men's perceptions of women in these roles are generally positive. According to a man in Soukuy, "Women are active in the local administration; for example, my sister-in-law is on the village development committee and settles disputes. She is very effective and works without anybody's influence." A female leader in the same community said, "They respect me...there is a certain consideration. My role is well received by my husband, and other women are proud of my role; they take it positively. Some of them thank me and congratulate me for the advice I give."

Nonetheless, challenges remain. In some places, women's limited mobility prevents them from occupying leadership positions in the community, which may perpetuate the view that women cannot be community leaders. As one man in Ira said, "Yes, there is a female counselor here, but women are not as effective as men. It's difficult work and the road to town is sandy, and women cannot easily get on a motorbike to travel to town."

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<sup>23</sup> Score is out of 40 possible, with 40 signifying the highest level of self-efficacy. Men in the baseline averaged a score of 29.8.

## 4.5 GENDER NORMS AND INFLUENCING FACTORS

In order to better understand women's roles in household decision making and the possibilities and opportunities that exist to improve women's access to resources and poultry raising, and to fully understand communities' perceptions of women's empowerment, it is necessary to further explore the gender dynamics and expectations expressed by informants around gender relations and what changes are possible.

Women appear to be confined to fairly rigid gender roles. The data suggest that a woman's identity is strongly linked to her role as a wife, which she is expected to fulfill to perfection. A "good woman" is one who respects her husband above all else, who thinks of the image of her husband before her own, and who behaves in ways that prioritizes the husband's needs without being asked. This notion of women respecting their husbands was widely highlighted by both women and men across both regions; indeed, a woman's submission to her husband is something that many participants do not wish to see change. One proverb in particular was mentioned by informants across both regions and illuminates this view: "a good woman is like a sheep" ("une femme mouton" in French, "paaga pesgo" in Moore, "saga muso" in Dioula) and is tolerant, hard-working, respectful, submissive, and docile. In essence, as community leaders in Poa and Sien described, "a good woman always recognizes an inclination toward her husband and asks forgiveness. She asks permission before doing anything"; similarly, "a good woman is faithful, she listens to her husband and does what he wishes—that is a good woman."

When compared to the perceptions of a "good man (husband)," there is a large emphasis on the man respecting his wife, taking care of her, and, more explicitly, not beating his wife (wives).<sup>24</sup> A "good husband" is "the one who takes care of his wife, who is tolerant, who respects the parents of his wife, does not beat his wife, who has earned enough to feed his family," according to a woman in Soukuy. A "good man" is also associated with buying soap for the families; this is an interesting issue to examine and take into account in the SELEVER water and sanitation health intervention approach, as hygiene seems to be the responsibility of women, while they also claim that men's involvement is necessary.

A good woman is also one who remains mostly at home and avoids moving around too much outside of the household. Indeed, women's mobility emerged as an obstacle to engaging in income-generating activities. In Moaga areas, women were historically considered rare goods; it was difficult to get a wife, so when a man did marry, he would do everything in his power to protect her and protect against any risk of losing her. Thus women were prevented from going out not only for their own protection but also to facilitate husbands' control. According to one man in Tita, "Before, there were not enough women to marry and they were highly sought after, so we would not allow women to leave the house for fear of another man stealing her." Indeed, the abduction of women was and, to an extent, remains a practice in some communities in Burkina Faso. However, as the informant continues, there is no reason today for this practice to persist or a need to prevent women from engaging in work outside the household: "...this is no longer the case. There is no longer anything to fear; women can carry out any sort of activity they want." In spite of this rather positive view, the evidence from interviews with women suggests that women's mobility is still highly controlled by men. While this does not necessarily mean most women

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<sup>24</sup> By looking closely at the words used by female informants, we have noted that "husbands should not be beating wives" came from the Boucle du Mouhoun region and not from the Centre Ouest region. In Centre Ouest, the words that appeared more often were "husbands should respect more wives." We cannot conclude that it is because women from Centre Ouest do not encounter the issue of domestic violence, but it could be also that women from Centre Ouest have difficulties opening up about the issue and thus use other terms such as "respect." This needs to be clarified and updated in the SELEVER Early Warning System document that monitors this issue in the two regions.

are at risk of abduction when they leave the house, women still face challenges when it comes to mobility and often have to negotiate the issue with their husbands.

A “good woman” is still forbidden from certain activities, including poultry production in some villages, and is expected to respect the norms that exclude her from this sphere: “a ‘good woman’ must not engage in the business of livestock or poultry,” according to a man in Tita. On the other hand, women are still expected to work hard, to not be lazy, and to contribute to the household and help her husband, including in his work raising livestock and poultry. In fact, the woman’s financial contribution to the household is considered an appropriate behavior that is not only appreciated but, in some cases, sought out. According to a leader in Koin, “The majority of men want the woman to do something to help.” Female informants confirm that, as long as their activities contribute to the household and benefit the family, including the husband, and fall within the realm of feminine work, women are able to obtain the full support of their husbands. As an informant in Sien shared, “Today many accept that their wife engages in commercial activities outside the home. Before, there were men who beat wives when they would go out to sell for long periods of time, but now men have realized that women are doing work to support the family.”

Other economic activities that are constructed as masculine and remain out of reach for most women include cash crop farming and raising small and large livestock. According to one woman in Soukuy, “A woman cannot farm cotton.<sup>25</sup> Her husband will not accept it.” Others say that if a woman earns a lot of money, she will forget about her husband. “He will not accept it. A woman who grows cotton! You will not see that here.” The data from Boucle du Mouhoun demonstrate that the dynamics around women’s economic participation are not straightforward. It can be perceived both as something that can threaten men’s authority but also as an avenue for improving women’s rights and involvement in household decision making. As a woman in Nouna explained, laughing, “If a man refuses something, it’s because he has nothing to gain from the situation. If there’s something in it for him, maybe he’ll even accompany you to get your poultry vaccinated himself!”

Certainly these perceptions help to define and maintain gender norms that apply broadly throughout both regions. However, it is apparent from the data that there is a diversity of perceptions and expectations that vary from one household to another and thus depend on the gender dynamics between the man and the woman in each household. Indeed, there exist households where the woman is allowed to farm poultry, where she participates in decision making for the household, where she keeps her income, and where she is actively involved in the management of household affairs.

The fact that these variations in gender dynamics exist suggests that change in attitudes and behavior around gender relations is possible. Interestingly, in observing body language during focus groups, men quickly reached consensus, while in individual interviews, men expressed a diversity of views around gender relations. This supports the concept that the power of the group, and peer approval or disapproval, is a factor in expressions or perceptions of masculinity and gender norms.

A relevant example of this comes from the community of Poa. A previous program (*Programme d'Appui aux Filiales Agro-Sylvo-Pastorales*)<sup>26</sup> worked at the community level through traditional and religious leaders to change ideas around gender, particularly in terms of valuing women and increasing their participation in poultry production. Once these community leaders were convinced, they were in a

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<sup>25</sup> Cotton is considered a cash crop.

<sup>26</sup> <http://pafasp.org/>.

position to influence views in the community more broadly and to “correct” the ban on women earning income or raising poultry. The leaders organized a “nonséiuré,” akin to an engagement (or “pugpugsum” within the Moore ethnic group) that means “the engagement of women with chickens” so that women could have permission to own and raise chickens for themselves. The “nonséiuré” signified the lifting of the ban against women farming chickens.

However, this action at the community level did not always translate to change at the household or individual level. Indeed, the data suggest that the majority of women in Poa are still excluded from poultry production. This raises questions about what kind of interventions are needed to ensure change both at the community level and individually for men.

#### 4.6 ENGAGING MEN AND MITIGATING RISKS

As discussed in the previous section, men expressed varying degrees of support for women’s increased participation in income-generating activities and household decision making. In general, men are eager to have more financial resources to take care of the household, and to the extent that women’s involvement in income-generating activities contributes to that, men tend to be supportive. As an informant from Ira described, “In the household, things are changing. Men accord more and more time to their wives for them to earn income outside of the household.” This may also reflect a shift in gender perceptions and norms within some communities, where girls and women are viewed as more equal members of society. The informant continues, “Often women have better ideas than men.” As another informant in Nouna stated, “Before, we treated girls and boys differently, but now we understand that all children should be treated equally.”

However, the path toward women’s empowerment is not without challenges. In some communities, men are envious<sup>27</sup> of women’s success or fearful that women’s empowerment comes at their expense and will cause them to lose control over their spouses. As one man in Sien expressed, “But there are women who, when they make their own money, they do not consider their husbands. They might even say ‘you are nothing without me’.” In addition, some men associate women’s mobility and independence with infidelity. In communities where women must secure men’s permission, this fear can serve as a hindrance to women’s autonomy.

There are serious risks associated with such views. According to one community leader in Ira, “Domestic violence happens often because often the woman will ask for something that her husband doesn’t have, and that can be a source of disputes.” Indeed, as women begin to use their voice and become more independent, spouses may feel threatened and react in hostile or violent ways. Engaging husbands from the outset and framing the message around improved household welfare may be one way to combat this.

While there are real risks that must be considered in any effort to facilitate women’s empowerment, the increasingly positive attitudes toward women’s economic participation may serve as an entry point and opportunity for engaging men. According to one leader from Bonyolo, “Gender relations in the community are improving. There is an awakening of consciousness; women are more and more considered, and they at least have the freedom to carry out their income-generating activity.”

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<sup>27</sup> From a female focus group in Nouna: “If his wife has a lot of money, he becomes jealous.”

## 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 LOCAL BUY-IN

As evidenced by the previously discussed perceptions of women as poultry farmers, gaining local buy-in at the community and household levels will be crucial to the success of SELEVER's interventions. Engaging men, and in particular husbands, is especially critical. In order to gain buy-in, the project should consider sensitization around the household and community benefits of women's increased economic participation and role in poultry production, including discussion of why women have historically been excluded from poultry production. Activities to gain local buy-in may include:

- Identify and promote "model households" within the community where the woman is already involved in poultry production
- Initial meetings with village, religious, and/or traditional leaders to introduce and seek support for the program, particularly through their leadership in lifting local bans on women's poultry production
- Identify and engage "champions" among village, religious, and/or traditional leaders who disseminate messaging, serve as a point of contact, and encourage ongoing support for women's activities
- Community-wide introduction and sensitization meetings to introduce program and featuring village "champions" and "model households" to cultivate support for the program
- Household-level sensitization with husbands and wives to introduce the program and discuss potential benefits to households in terms of income and nutrition
- Role-playing activities featuring women in traditionally male roles (for example, as poultry sellers) so both men and women can visualize women in these roles

### 5.2 ACCESS TO FINANCE AND INPUTS

The data illuminated a number of challenges women face in accessing finance and inputs to initiate poultry production. Because poultry production itself is viewed as risky, taking credit to purchase birds is viewed as equally risky. In addition, women may face other obstacles in accessing credit related to collateral and accessing a bank or creditor. As such, the project should consider ways to facilitate access to finance to support women in obtaining the necessary inputs to begin poultry production.

In addition to financing, women also experience obstacles in securing nutritious poultry feed and providing adequate shelter for their birds. These challenges stem from gender norms related to women's work, mobility, and land ownership and present serious limitations to women's success as poultry farmers. As such, the project should consider ways to link women with suppliers of nutritious feed or work to challenge norms that prevent women from collecting termites. Additionally, women often lack the authority and resources to build their own poultry houses to provide shelter for their birds. Solutions may include women sharing poultry houses with their husbands or as part of a group, or assisting women in obtaining support to build their own poultry houses.

Activities to support women's access to finance and inputs may include:

- Facilitate access to finance, either through creating linkages to local creditors or working directly with financial institutions to design financial packages tailored to female poultry producers
- Consider other mechanisms to help women access credit, such as village savings and lending groups



- Create linkages to poultry feed suppliers, including the possibility of home delivery
- Explore dynamics around gender and termite collection to better understand why women are not allowed to collect termites, and examine alternatives such as raising termites right at the household or other viable, nutritious options for poultry feed such as maggots or fish residues
- Support women in securing land on which to build poultry houses, either individually through negotiations with husbands or in groups using a shared parcel of land in the village through negotiations at the village level
- Facilitate linkages to inputs for and construction of poultry houses
- Consider forming women's groups for poultry production, which may provide leverage for securing land, accessing poultry houses, or accessing birds to initiate production
- Sensitization at the village and household levels to seek men's support in women using or owning poultry houses

### 5.3 TECHNICAL TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Another obstacle to women's participation in poultry production is lack of information and technical knowledge about poultry care and markets, including feed, hygiene, shelter, vaccination, and price information. Both men and women generally expressed the belief that women could succeed as poultry producers *if* they have the proper information and training. This suggests that training and support is needed to make sure women have adequate information and resources to succeed. The project should also consider participants' literacy levels and tailor training materials accordingly. Specific activities may include:

- Initial training on types of poultry feed, proper hygiene and shelter, and vaccination
- Linkages to poultry vaccinators and/or vaccine suppliers
- Training for female poultry farmers to become community vaccinators
- Resources on market prices and negotiating the sale of poultry
- Creation of mobile networks to access price information
- Ongoing mentoring or support to ensure women are practicing proper poultry care
- Text messages or pre-recorded phone call reminders in local languages about proper poultry care and/or market prices, tailoring the delivery mechanism to account for women's low literacy levels

### 5.4 SELLING POULTRY

The limitations on women when it comes to selling poultry emerged as a considerable challenge to women's ability to fully engage in poultry production, stemming from lack of information about prices and, more significantly, cultural norms. The former is more straightforward to address, as discussed in the previous section. Changing the gender and cultural norms around women selling poultry is more complex. There are several potential routes to address this. One is to bolster the practice of women selling poultry from their homes to a traveling buyer. However, the data suggest that even when women are able to do this, they have little leverage in setting the price. Another route is to facilitate women's travel to the market to sell poultry themselves, which also necessitates sensitization at the market level so buyers are comfortable purchasing poultry from women. With this in mind, potential activities could include:

- Engage traveling buyers to purchase from women sellers, including sensitization around women's ability to set the price
- Training women on negotiation and price-setting techniques

- Sensitization with men/husbands to enhance women's mobility
- Formation of women's groups to sell poultry together
- Sensitization of poultry buyers to change negative perceptions around purchasing from women
- Establish transport options or network for women to facilitate getting to market
- Beyond poultry sale, conduct household sensitization and training to encourage women's control over their revenue; this could include resources on secure options for women to store their revenue, or discussion and breaking down of norms that prevent women from controlling their incomes

## 5.5 CULTURE OF POULTRY PRODUCTION

Another recommendation relates to the current culture of poultry production in the regions studied. As described above, poultry production is not generally a commercial activity but rather an insurance in times of need. As such, the project should take care to cultivate a shift in attitudes toward poultry production as an ongoing income-generating activity. Potential activities may include:

- Calculate and communicate the economic profitability of poultry production as an income-generating activity
- Identify "model households" that are engaging in poultry production as a business to help promote a culture of commercial poultry production
- Conduct nutrition-sensitive household budgeting training with spouses to promote shared decision making and help them plan for times of need

## 5.6 RISK MITIGATION

As discussed above, women may face increased risk of domestic violence or psychological pressure as their status and autonomy increase. Engaging men and husbands from the outset may serve to minimize this risk. In addition, the project should consider linking women with resources on domestic abuse and violence and support women in learning how to engage in the household and community as they become more independent.

With women's increased participation in poultry production, there is a risk of increasing her workload and time burden without a commensurate increase in benefits. If women spend more time raising poultry while maintaining their current household responsibilities and without reaping the full benefits, this risks undermining the empowerment objectives of the project. As such, it is critical that informational and sensitization meetings include discussions of women's workload and how poultry activities can be incorporated without further burdening women. The project should monitor women's time use throughout the intervention to further mitigate against this risk.

## 5.7 FUTURE RESEARCH

If possible, the project should undertake further research to better understand some of the obstacles to women's full participation in poultry production and related opportunities for engagement. For example, this analysis revealed that women do not typically collect termites, a norm that limits women's ability to supply nutritious food for their poultry. However, the research did not uncover the underlying reasons for this, which may have implications for addressing it. Further research might be useful in exploring and combatting this issue. As mentioned in the Limitations section, additional gender analysis

is also needed to explore the gender dynamics of household nutrition knowledge, practices, and decision making.

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