



POLICY BRIEF

STRENGTHENING WOMENS ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN AGRICULTURAL TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Lessons from the ATVET for women project implementing the gender-
transformative approach and using the WEAI tool for measuring impact

Imprint

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Summary

This brief shines a light on the critical role of enhancing women empowerment in Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) to achieve gender equality and, therefore, increased food security and improved livelihoods on the African continent. While the key policy and strategy documents of the African Union already emphasise the need for gender equality and important advances have been made in the member states, there are still significant shortcomings in ensuring equal access and opportunities. The COVID-19 pan-

demix has significantly exacerbated this. The brief builds on lessons from the ATVET project with a specific focus on women empowerment, implementing the gender-transformative approach (GTA) and measuring impact with the *Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)*, developed by IFPRI (International Food Policy and Research Institute). Based on these experiences, the brief draws conclusions on strengthening interventions to achieve women empowerment by integrating GTA.

1 Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Agriculture — Relevant Policies and Strategies

As stated by the UN in the sustainable development goal number five (Gender Equality): “Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world”¹. This is also underlined by the African Union Commission (AUC) in its Agenda 2063, in which goal 17 is “Full gender equality in all spheres of life” and Aspiration 6 reads, “An Africa where development is people driven, relying upon the potential offered by people, especially its women and youth and caring for children”. Furthermore, Africa has witnessed the ratification of several important international conventions and developing regional instruments over the last two decades, with important implications for the agriculture, education, and rural sectors.

To achieve these objectives and comply with the conventions, the AU has set up a strong architecture for gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE)². These founding documents and commitments contain specific mentions to rural women and agricultural issues in terms of access to productive resources and services (land and credit, for example), ownership and business opportunities:

The African Union Agenda 2063 (2015)

Calls for people-driven, inclusive development through enabling rural women to access productive assets and financial services and fully empowering women with equal social, political and economic rights, including the rights to own and inherit property, sign contracts, and register and manage businesses. It also aims at eliminating gender-based violence and discrimination and guarantees political and professional parity. The above are financed under the auspices of the **Fund for**

African Women (2010) which was created to mobilise financial resources to support development programmes and projects for women. To facilitate the evaluation of implementation, the **African Gender Score Card (2015)** was developed: The scorecard measures national progress towards GEWE in seven core sectors: health, employment, business sector, access to credit and land, women and politics and decision-making, and education at secondary and tertiary levels. The overall responsibility to implement all the above within the AUC falls with the **Women, Gender and Development Directorate** located within the Bureau of the Chairperson and promotes gender equality within the AU.

The **AU Gender Strategy (2017–2027) on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE)**³ is the guiding document adopted in May 2018 by the AU Specialised Technical Committee (STC) on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment. It succeeds the AU Gender Policy of 2009 and takes cognisance of various advancements related to gender commitments. Structured on four pillars, the first pillar, “*Maximising opportunities, outcomes and E-TECH dividends*”, has three outcomes, the most important ones in this context being:

- **Outcome 1.1 — Education and care work:** Compulsory and free education for girls and women aged 3–18, market-oriented vocational training and literacy programmes for youth and women
- **Outcome 1.2 — Economic empowerment and financial inclusion:** Income autonomy and social protection for more women and girls

¹ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>

² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2441UNWomenSDGReport.pdf>

³ GEWE — AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.

The GEWE identifies women living in rural areas as one of its key target groups. It recognises that their role within households and communities towards achieving food security and income generation is hampered by the challenges they continuously face in accessing productive resources such as land, credit, and agricultural extension services. The strategy also acknowledges men and boys as a key target group and that to dismantle patriarchal systems, they need to be fully engaged in processes.

Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016–2025)

This strategy capitalises on the active players in the field of education and training in Africa to ensure that the achievement of Agenda 2063 is driven by skilled human capital. Its principles include, *among other things*: holistic, inclusive, equitable education with good conditions for life-long learning; quality and relevant education and training for entrepreneurship. Of its seven pillars, pillar 3 emphasises the need for gender equity, equality and sensitivity throughout the education and training systems. Where its Strategic Objective (SO) 5 seeks to “*accelerate processes leading to gender parity and equity*” and SO 8 “*expanding TVET opportunities at both secondary and tertiary levels, strengthening the linkages between the worlds of work and education and training systems*”⁴. In its operationalisation, CESA 16–25 identifies that for gender parity and equity, there is a need to scale up retention of at-risk groups and enhance their performance, mobilise communities to become partners and develop relevant interventions that address constraints at all levels.

Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CETA)

This strategy is the continental blueprint for TVET in Africa, which seeks to provide a comprehensive framework and an action guide for designing national policies and strategies expanding the premises set out by the CESA 16–25. The overall objective of the CETA aims to contribute towards youth employability and poverty reduction on the continent. The strategy highlights the importance of increasing access for women and girls to TVET, acknowledges misconceptions in society (i.e., typical jobs for women and girls would not require particular training), and elaborates the preferred pathways towards amending the system towards gender equality.

Plan of Action for the African Decade for Technical, Professional Entrepreneurial Training and Youth Employment (2019–2028)

The Africa Plan of Action (PoA in brief) defines concrete actions to reorient education and training systems addressing mismatches between supply and demand, improve TVET, STEM and the use of digital technologies and identify strategies for partner engagement and funding⁵. It provides the decade long plan towards achieving the long-term objectives of continental strategies such as Agenda 2063 and the CESA and CETA mentioned above. It clearly articulates the high barriers for young females, whose NEET (not in employment, education, or training) stands at 35% compared to young men NEET of 20%⁶. The PoA serves as a road map, and its objective 2: Enhancing Equitable access of TVET for all clearly articulates gender transformation in TVET as one of its intervention areas.

⁴ CESA 16-25 (Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025).

⁵ The Plan of Action for the Decade for Technical, Professional, Entrepreneurial Training and Youth Employment (2019–2028).

⁶ AfDB Report 2012.

2 Rationale for Women Empowerment in Agriculture and TVET and the ATVET4W Project

In line with the above commitments, policies and strategies, the principle of gender equality and women empowerment is reflected throughout all developmental efforts of the AUC and AUDA NEPAD. With a focus on strengthening the empowerment of rural women, it is clear that the agricultural sector plays a key role as it employs the highest number of African women. In addition, there are significant gains to be made: A McKinsey report found that by narrowing the gender gap, sub-Saharan Africa could potentially add an estimated USD 300 billion to the annual GDP by 2025⁷ and that closing the gender gap in agriculture can increase yields by 20–30%, thereby reducing the number of hungry people by 12–17%. In addition, girls' education has proven to be one of the most cost-effective strategies to promote development and economic growth. Africa could add USD 316 billion or 10 percent to GDP in the period to 2025 if each country makes advances in women's equality⁸. Therefore, the African Union's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy (GEWE 2018–2028) emphasises that for women to be economically empowered and contribute to sustainable development, they must have equal access to quality education and control over productive resources⁹.

Research has shown that gender approaches have often failed to deliver gender outcomes as intended. While they usually can reach women, they do not necessarily achieve lasting empowerment for them¹⁰. This is partly because activities often focus on addressing visible gaps while failing to consider persisting inequalities because of underlying structural factors, particularly gender norms. The fact that gender norms are underlying drivers

of gendered practices, which are dynamic and changeable, makes them critical leverage points for enhancing gender equality. The gender-transformative approach recognises these challenges and applies two mechanisms to achieve change; (1) it seeks to surface and engage with underlying barriers (norms); and (2) it engages both women and men as actors in catalysing equality. CGIAR has found that gender-transformative approaches catalysed three types of interconnected gender outcomes: (1) reductions in underlying barriers (such as gendered attitudes to partner violence); (2) improvements in women's empowerment (such as in decision-making and division of labour) and (3) contribution to other outcomes (such as production practices and nutrition).

The ATVET4W project was initiated by AUDA NEPAD, with support from the BMZ (German Federal Ministry of Cooperation and Development) and through the GIZ (German Agency for International Cooperation), in 2016, acknowledging that Africa's economy is still largely agriculture-driven. AUDA NEPAD sought to ensure that the women, who constitute 60% of the workforce in this priority sector, are at the forefront and empowered to participate in and benefit from the agricultural sector equally. However, within the CAADP (Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme) implementation process, a gap was identified: very few activities focused on developing the technical capacities of the labour force in the agricultural sector. Therefore, the AUDA NEPAD developed the ATVET for Women project to enhance women's technical and vocational skills in agriculture across Africa.

⁷ Africa Union Policy Brief: Promoting Youth Entrepreneurship in Africa <https://www.nepad.org/skillsportalfor youth/publication/policy-brief-promoting-youth-entrepreneurship-africa>.

⁸ McKinsey The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's equality in Africa The Power of Parity.

⁹ GEWE 2012–2028.

¹⁰ <https://gender.cgiar.org/news-events/potential-and-unknowns-gender-transformative-approaches>.

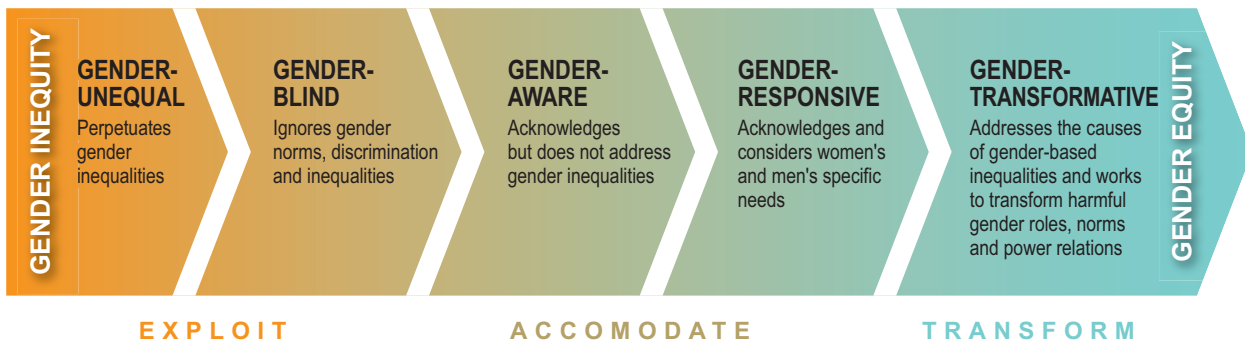


Figure 1: The gender equity continuum (Source: UNICEF)¹¹

The project applies the gender-transformative approach and focuses on establishing Women's Economic Empowerment through building skills and training women in not only technical agricultural capacities but also entrepreneurial skills while at the same time addressing gender norms and structural challenges. The idea is to strengthen awareness and shift from subsistence production to higher-income earning segments in selected

agricultural value chains. Whilst countless projects focus on women in agriculture, very few take on an approach that integrates the needs of men and women whilst addressing policy level interventions and piloting its activities at the beneficiary level. The ATVET4W project theory of change has followed the rationale that for change to be sustained, all facets of the TVET value chain must be addressed (see Fig. 1).

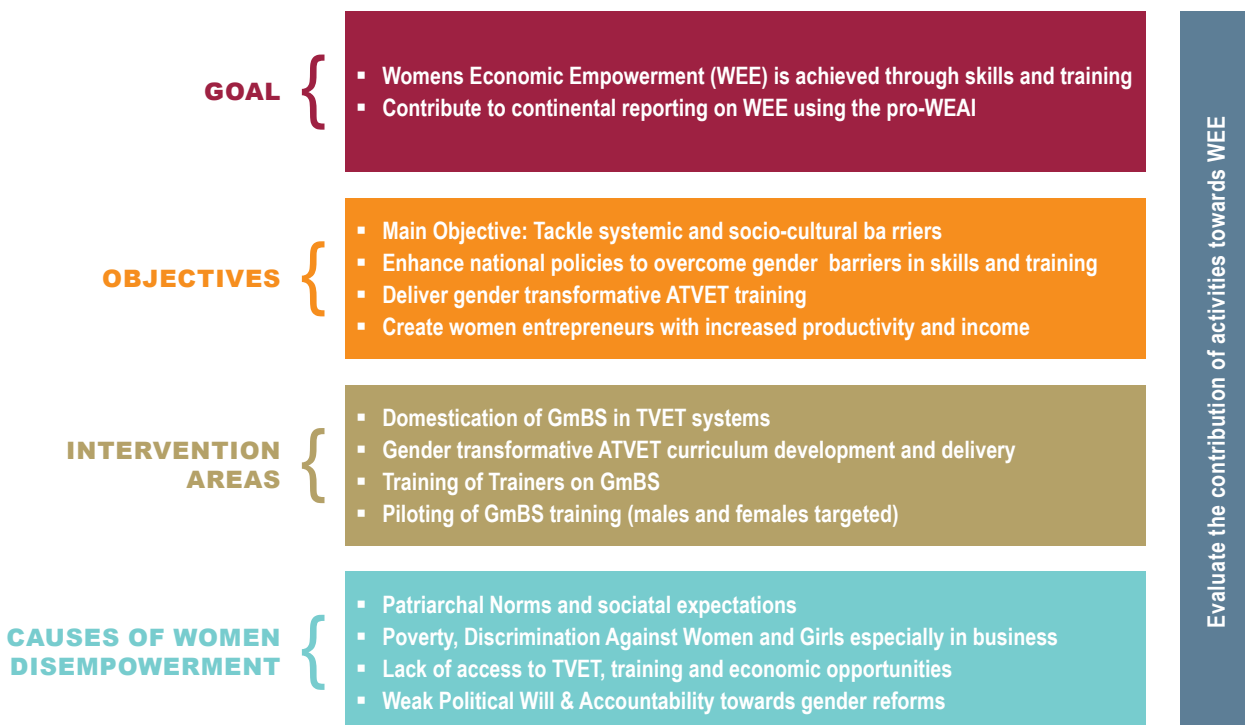


Figure 2: ATVET4Women project's Theory of Change (Caroline Mutepfa (2021) AUDA NEPAD)¹²

¹¹ <https://www.unicef.org/media/58196/file>.

¹² GmBS stands for Gender makes Business Sense, a training approach developed by the ATVET4W programme aiming at transferring gender equality and women empowerment aspects in combination with entrepreneurial skills.

3 Measuring Women's Empowerment

With rising interest and investments in projects strengthening women empowerment, researchers have increasingly been looking at how women empowerment can be measured, and various tools have been developed. With all the continental strategies committed to enhancing women's empowerment and the ATVET4W project's contributions towards WEE in the six countries it has piloted (Bénin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Togo), AUDA-NEPAD also saw the need for an effective tool or index to measure women's economic empowerment. This brought about a collaboration with IFPRI, who had developed and tested a "Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)" in 2012. Since then, the index has evolved, and various versions have been applied and tested, most importantly the pro-WEAI, which measures women's empowerment in various types of agricultural development projects and is more closely aligned with theories of agency, and the WEAI4VC, which measures empowerment in projects working on value chain promotion. During the IFPRI AUDA-NEPAD collaboration, another adaptation, the pro-WEAI+MI (MI=Mar-

ket Inclusion), was piloted, which adds additional indicators to capture other dimensions of empowerment relevant to participation in agricultural VCs and markets.

This flexibility for adaptation was one of the reasons for the AUDA team to select the WEAI after reviewing several indices and tools. The possibility of including and removing indicators and conducting individual and household level interviews (interviewing male and female household representatives) were strong arguments for working with the index. In addition, the pro-WEAI's versatility provides data that can be used for both the agricultural Biennial review process (through CAADP) and the CESA and CETA activities (through the PoA). By evaluating WEE using the pro-WEAI, the project can provide substantive data towards PoA's monitoring and evaluation processes.

The index combines two sub-indices, the Three Domains of Empowerment (3DE) and the Gender Parity Index (GPI), as demonstrated in Figure 3 below.

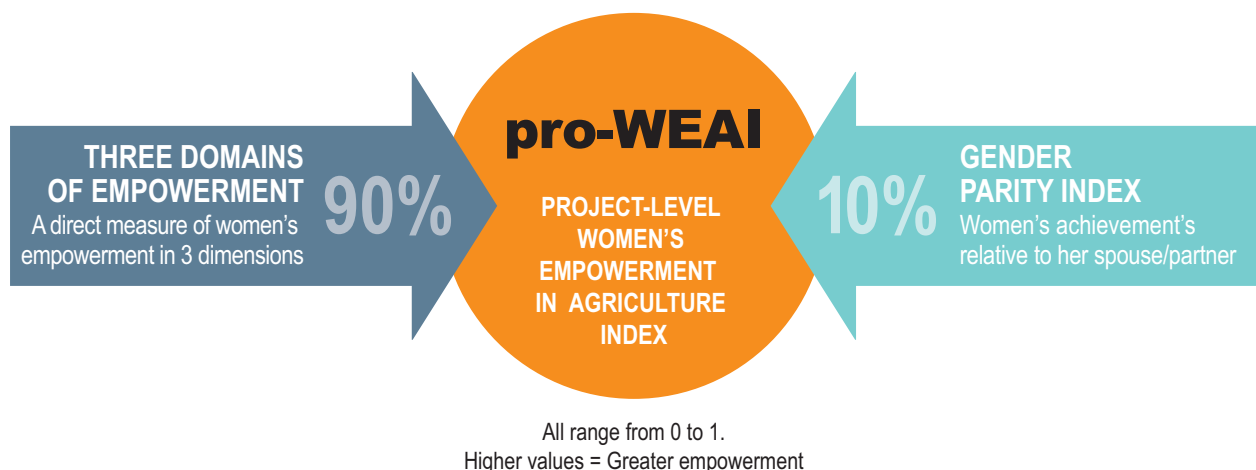


Figure 3: The two sub-indices of WEAI (Source: IFPRI)

The 3DE aggregates women's and men's achievements across 12 equally weighted indicators that measure three types of agency: intrinsic, instrumental and collective. To capture other dimensions of empowerment related to agricultural VCs and markets, additional indicators were piloted, including (1) entrepreneurship mind-set, (2) access to information, (3) sex and fertility agency, (4) access to reliable sanitation, and (5) sexual hostility in the work

environment. These indices have values ranging from 0 to 12, where higher values reflect greater empowerment. While the overall WEAI score is useful as a headline measure, similar to the use of poverty indices to track overall trends in poverty, the WEAI is also decomposable, which allows disaggregating the 3DE achievements by domain and by the indicator to see which specific areas contribute the most to both women's and men's disempowerment.

EACH PERSON GETS AN **ADEQUACY SCORE** (WEIGHTED SUM OF 12 INDICATORS)

EACH INDICATOR RECEIVES AN **EQUAL PROPORTION** OF THE OVERALL WEIGHT (1/12)

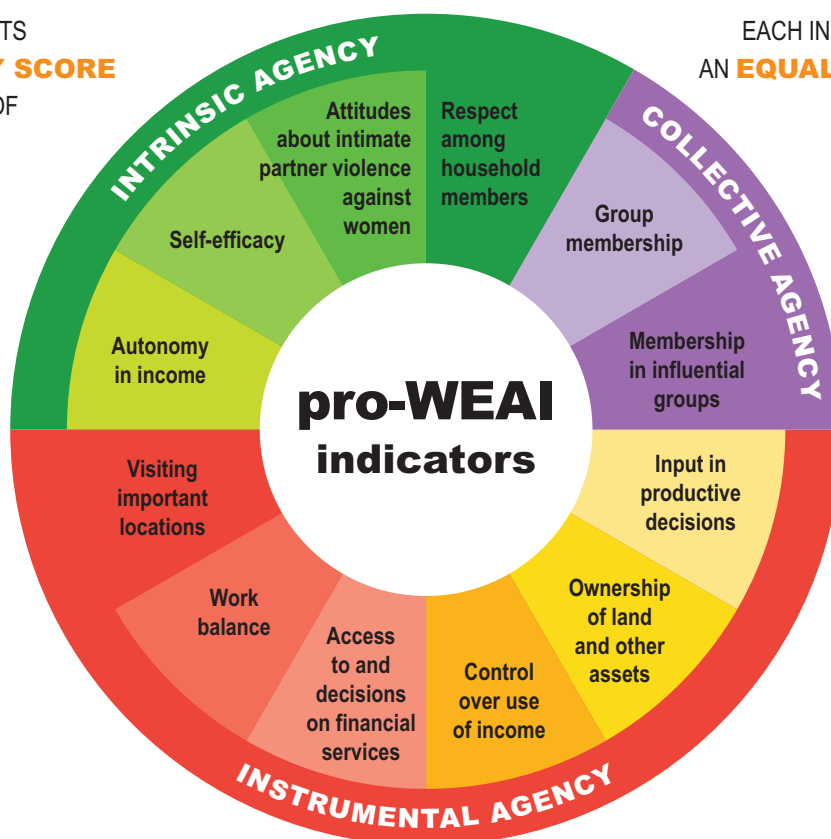


Figure 4: 12 Indicators of pro-WEAI (Source: IFPRI)

4 Policy Recommendations

As demonstrated, a lot remains to be done to ensure gender equality and women empowerment, with significant gains to be made from it for the continent. The following provides recommendations on strengthening GEWE, building on the gender-transformative approach and drawing on lessons from ATVET4W and the WEAI.

4.1 For the African Union

As highlighted above, the objective of gender equality and women empowerment is embedded in the AU system. With the AUDA-NEPAD being established as the technical arm of the AUC, this institution is mandated to strengthen its implementation in the member states and support monitoring and evaluation to be able to feedback the outcomes to the member states.

4.1.1 Adopt a continental approach on empowering women in the education sector and review existing strategies to address Gender Equality and Women empowerment

In line with recognising the need for gender-transformative approaches to address socio-cultural barriers and norms for interventions to be more effective in achieving women empowerment, there is a need to emphasise this more clearly in sector strategies and implementation. While the AU Gender Strategy (GEWE) makes provisions on empowering women, there is a need to translate these recommendations across the education sector and increase women's agency, resources and achievements. Whilst the opportunity to review strategies and frameworks at the continental level may be limited, through the ten-year plans (such as the Plan of Action), there is a need to ensure that GTA is mainstreamed and prioritised to the highest extent possible. In addition to ensuring access to training and linking them to the job market, underlying challenges also need to be addressed, and actors are sensitised on overcoming these. Where needed capacity building workshops on the

topic should be held to build the capabilities of the relevant human resources to implement GTA in their daily tasks.

4.1.3 Catalysing Member States into action to domesticate the gender-transformative approach

As part of its ongoing initiatives to strengthen and advise member states, the AUC and AUDA-NEPAD must include the recommendations from this policy brief in its regular discussion forums with the member states to inform them on the importance and benefits of strengthening gender equality and women empowerment and to catalyse them into taking further action on the subject matter. The information flow through forums and information-sharing and capacity-building sessions is recommended to ensure greater transfer of knowledge to the member states. This should be targeted at the national level to the relevant officers responsible for TVET and inclusion topics at a national level. The AUC must utilise the opportunity to provide technical support to the member states to strengthen the integration of GTA policies in agriculture training and across all education sub-sectors. There is a continental guideline on domesticating GTA in Agricultural TVET at the national level developed by the AUDA. The guideline is to be proactively shared across the continent, and support is provided towards process adoption where the interest arises. Domestication involves systemic interventions that promote sustainable implementation geared towards socio-cultural change, which requires time and patience.

4.1.4 Adopt the pro-WEAI as an evaluation tool for relevant AUC strategies and projects

The pro-WEAI and its related indices have proved a versatile and reliable tool to evaluate the contributions towards GEWE across the continent. Evaluation of GEWE is complex, and the methodology is fully customisable to many sub-sectors and value chains. Therefore, multiple projects commissioned by the AUC, AUDA-NEPAD and its implementation partners can be evaluated using one tool,

potentially reducing the cost implications of a periodic evaluation required by AUC's monitoring and reporting processes.

In countries where several development projects are being implemented, this tool can report on their combined and individual contribution towards empowerment. Forming a multi-sectoral committee on women's empowerment activities across the AUC's commissions and directorates would boost information sharing and collating information and best practices. The committee is essential for information sharing on implementation, as the process towards empowerment is an intricate one requiring several players to put into effect the mind-set shift required.

4.1.5 Expand on the Equity Intervention Area within the Plan of Action

As the road map towards implementing the AU strategies for Education and TVET, the PoA articulates the need for gender transformative approaches in TVET. It gives a clear entry point for the work like the ATVET4W project has done. However, the focus area lumps together several aspects of equitable access, such as gender, geographical location and economic status, as one challenge. At the same time, there is no mention of gender disaggregation or at least establishing a minimum percentage of women targeted throughout the interventions. Therefore, there is a need to review the Plan of Action to integrate the gender-transformative concept more clearly and integrate recommendations to ensure longevity and sustainability in the work.

4.2 Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

Over the years, the Regional Economic Communities on the continent have been strengthened through various capacity development initiatives to drive the implementation of continental strategies and frameworks such as CESA 16–25 and the Continental TVET Strategy. The main purpose of REC's is to promote regional integration on the continent in line with the objectives for the AfCFTA (Africa Continental Free Trade Area). In this context, it is important to highlight that women can only

benefit from liberalising trade and regional integration if they are empowered within their own countries before cross-border opportunities can be fully explored. Therefore, the following recommendations are to be considered by the RECs.

4.2.1 Strengthen Capacity of REC's

The capacity development need of all eight REC's on achieving women empowerment through the adoption of Gender Transformative Approaches in TVET (and other education sub-sectors) is evident. Provisions for capacity building of REC's especially on the GEWE, are made in its Outcome 3.3¹³, which states the need for REC's to have the requisite capacity to implement existing commitments and address challenges. The support mode can be channelled either through the ESTI, the Gender Directorate of the AUC or through combined efforts to ensure RECs can implement all frameworks. This should also include building the capacities of the M&E teams who report on the member states efforts to ensure that the officers responsible are aware of the next level interventions that GTA contributes towards achieving continental commitments.

4.2.2 Integrate GTA objectives within regional programmes

By establishing a gender desk or committing staff to the topic, REC's must begin reviewing and integrating GTA in any documents, processes, strategies and programmes. The gender desk or key personnel need to collaborate with their colleagues, sensitising and enabling them to conduct this exercise. This is a small step towards ensuring that the actions required are captured and hence, provides possibilities for activities to be carried out. Monitoring and Evaluation will play an important role in ensuring that implementation follows these revised strategies and programmes, and therefore, it is key to integrate indicators on women empowerment.

4.2.3 Scale up regional networking and establishment of Centres of Excellence

The sharing of best practices and lessons learnt has proved an effective way for member states to identify gaps in their systems and adopt modern systems, especially in education and TVET. REC's are encouraged to identify centres of excellence through the ATVET

¹³ GEWE 2018–2028.

for Women project. Ideally, these centres have been quick up-takers and adopters of innovation and technology and early implementors of GTA. In doing so, the facilitation of physical exchange visits to these centres allows other heads of institutions to identify areas for change and peer-to-peer advisory on how to change their *status quo*. REC's can also facilitate online Communities of Practice (CoP) through chats and other communication.

4.2.4 Support and Sensitize member states on GTA

The member states have signed commitments towards many of the continental strategies and frameworks, and there is a need to operationalise REC's commitment to supporting implementation, especially for GTA. As indicated in the principle of subsidiarity adopted by the AUC and its organs, REC's form the primary entry point for implementation and feedback to the AUC channels. Therefore, they play a key role in sensitising the member states and strengthening implementation and operationalisation.

4.3 AU Member States

The member states are the players that ensure the implementation of commitments, policies and strategies. Without them, it is therefore not possible to advance gender equality and women empowerment on the continent.

4.3.1 Enabling Environment for Women Entrepreneurship

The gender-transformative concept addresses structural limitations, which are hard-felt and magnified by socio-cultural norms on the continent. There are various levels to address structural limitations; the ATVET4W project has set about to change them by sensitising the policy level, capacitating training institutions and training agripreneurs. It has demonstrated first successes in the pilot countries and communities. However, the member states have much more to be done to strengthen the enabling environment for GTA and, therefore, women agripreneurs. Currently, limiting factors are often poor access to loans, limited access to high-value markets, social barriers to high-income earning segments, and value chains and family dynamics limiting their growth. The member states have done tremendous work



In Burkina Faso, the Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training for Women (ATVET4W) project pioneered a gender-transformative intervention that aimed to use co-creation to address women's challenges in accessing information on opportunities and rights when it comes to land, financing and training. For this purpose, ATVET4W collaborated with the design-thinking studio Butterfly Works to lead a participatory and co-creative process. The intervention aimed at being gender-transformative by including women and men from rural communities (e.g. husbands, community leaders) to jointly develop and share the right tools and messages to advocate for women's empowerment in agriculture.

The final output that resulted is a Boite à Outils or a Toolbox. The Boite à Outils is a modular solution that uses different formats that surfaced from the design research, concept development and prototyping workshops, including posters and guides featuring role models, scripts for role plays, scenario cards illustrating common "myths" surrounding women's access to land, finance and training and ways in which to address/ debunk these.

In terms of impact, the design thinking and co-creation process meant that the women took over leading roles and were active creators of messages to inform other women of their rights. Husbands and male community leaders were sensitised about the benefits of women's empowerment and formulated advocacy messages for other men to join them. Men from several communities committed to accompany women in acquiring land titles.

through local ministries on Gender and Women's Empowerment. However, a stronger sector-specific focus in the agriculture and education sector must be taken up. A key constraint for many women in the agricultural sector, for example, is their ability to own land, which continues to be contentious in several African member states.

4.3.2 Addressing agency and related socio-cultural practices that disempower women

Women's agency is central when talking about women empowerment (rf. Chapter 3). The main contributors to the disempowerment of

agripreneurs, and therefore limited agency, have been identified as lack of autonomy in income and work balance according to the pro-WEAI+MI study conducted in Benin and Malawi. Therefore, an emphasis on these factors must be prioritised by member states at a national level. Achieving autonomy in income and financial decision-making is imperative for women empowerment, and this can be promoted by ministries championing national programmes and initiatives towards this.

Similarly, promoting joint attendance and developing training for both male and female participants is imperative as most women and men lack autonomy in income. Both women and men reported that they are more likely to use income as expected by others rather than wanted (Annex Table 1). Low adequacy in autonomy in income may indicate that household incomes are inadequate to meet the needs of household members. The GTC-based training developed by ATVET4W, *Gender makes Business Sense*, addresses various aspects, including business management practices interwoven with discussions around gender norms.

4.3.4 Enhance investment in TVET training systems through enabling legislation and efficient policies to make the national TVET systems more inclusive

TVET remains largely the most underfunded sub-sector in education due to its poor perception and relatively low profile. This is reflected in the lack of adequate funding to TVET, which has led to the closure of many training institutions or conversion of TVET centres to Universities. Women can strongly benefit from improved skills development, and as outlined above, so can the societies overall. Therefore, legislation reform to produce efficient policies is necessary for the TVET sector to thrive and be set up more inclusively. Female students and entrepreneurs can benefit from it. It is strongly recommended that a portion of the funding be reserved for women's access to TVET and implementation of the recommendations provided.

4.3.5 Build capacities of National bureaus of Statistics on measuring women empowerment with the pro-WEAI

National statistics agencies have the potential to spell out more clearly specific challenges to GEWE in the respective contexts by focus-

ing their data collection and analysis more on gender-disaggregation women empowerment indicators. Therefore, it is proposed to introduce the WEAI, its indices and indicators, and discuss integrating it into national statistics and data collection processes. Whilst national statistics bureaus may not find the full WEAI evaluation suitable for their context. The flexibility allows the adoption of some or all of its indicators. This would go a long way towards improved reporting on GEWE at the national level. This capacity building should be a service offered by the AUC and AUDA-NEPAD to the member states.

4.4 TVET, Skills Development and Training Institutions

In skills development in the agricultural sector, the training institutions (referred to as Agricultural Training Centres — ATC's going forward) are key in educating the target group. Therefore, a specific focus on them is required. Implementation based on policies and strategies and application of gender-transformative approaches in skills transfer is the primary responsibility of ATC's.

4.4.1 The institutions must undergo capacity building

To support women empowerment in their sphere, ATCs must be gender-transformative at their core, in their operations and training delivery. Gender equality and women empowerment needs to be boss business, it might be necessary to rethink the ATCs business model and for their operational plans and strategies to make provisions for GTA. This can entail, for example, ensuring adequate representation of female and male trainers and upskilling trainers on the GTA methodology and their role as change agents. But also looking at women empowerment following the training delivery through mentorship, community inclusion and establishing networks. All of this is only likely to work if the importance is recognised and enforced at all levels and monitoring is done to ensure translation into practice.

Furthermore, to improve access for female participants, it is important to offer more flexible training means, i.e. provisions for trainers to go "off-site" and train women in their localities or provide part-time, modular, short or

blended learning courses (e-learning + face-to-face¹⁴). This is imperative where time constraints are limiting for women with household duties/ home-based care work: transportation, off-site training materials and other mobile devices may be required to facilitate the training.

Another important factor is for institutions to provide adequate facilities for female trainees, such as ablutions and sanitary solutions for their requirements. The provision of child day-care facilities can also play a role in increasing female participation.

4.4.2 Promoting the household approach

As highlighted in the gender-transformative approach, it is necessary to work with women when targeting empowerment and bringing in men to bring about social change. By adopting the household approach, the possibility of mind-set change intensifies. One of the biggest barriers to women's agribusiness participation has been the social norms around domestic responsibilities and household decision-making rather than their entrepreneurial actions. While it is generally difficult to have a man and woman from one household attend training, targeted and creative measures must be developed to have an integrative approach. The use of mixed media to pass the messages is also proving to be efficient, where community radios have proved a useful tool.¹⁵

4.4.3 Curriculum enrichment

The process of curriculum reform is a lengthy one. However, by creating short modules and courses, the institutions can enrich their offerings. The delivery's integration of gender-transformative aspects goes a long way towards the mind-set shift we seek to achieve. One example is the training *Gender makes Business Sense* (GmBS), which was developed in the ATVET4W project to integrate entrepreneurship training with education on GTA. The training aims at integrating gender-transformative approaches with entrepreneurship and business management modules for agripreneurs recognising that women empowerment has a positive influence on their business success as well. Roll-out in six African countries has shown very positive reception and opened eyes on the benefits of gender

equality. ATC's need to recognise the benefits of such enrichment for them (they can offer these at a nominal fee and obtain income from the training) and the communities they serve. The enrichment modules can include GTA, work-life balance, benefits of group membership and advocacy.

4.5 Private Sector

The private sector can strongly benefit from women empowerment in the form of increased labour supply and improved skills of their labour force. Therefore, it is in their own interest to invest and contribute to the implementation of GTA in agriculture skills development.

4.5.1 Adoption of GTA for Work-Based Learning practices

TVET qualification in the formal channel calls for a preferred blend on 40:60 theory to practical teaching ratio. A portion of this practical training must include Work Based Learning (WBL) for graduates to leave institutions "work ready". Despite this, in many African member states, the private sector is still very hesitant to engage TVET trainees for a period of work-based training or apprenticeship/ attachment. There is a need, to begin with, a call for more private sector players to begin to offer WBL and participate in TVET delivery through partnerships with training centres. Merely offering WBL, however, is not enough, and the GTA calls for the workplace mentors/ tutors to be trained on how to effectively incorporate women into these programmes whilst also ensuring their workplaces are safe, have the necessary amenities and protect female trainees from sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination in the workplace. The GTA approach emphasises the formalisation of the WBL partnerships by signing an MoP (Memorandum of Partnership) drawn up between the ATC and the Private Sector.

4.5.2 Adopting practices that support development of local entrepreneurship

The private sector remains the biggest off-taker of agricultural products and services and, therefore, women entrepreneurs. As such, the private sector must begin to participate in the discussion

¹⁴ For e-learning it is important to consider the digital gender gap and related limitations for women, rf. <https://www.oecd.org/digital/bridging-the-digital-gender-divide.pdf>.

¹⁵ WEAlfor VC report Malawi (2020).

around skills development in a gender-transformative way. Not only does improving the skills of women entrepreneurs boost the quality of the raw products they buy from them, but it also provides them with new niche markets/ products for their advanced markets. Hence, the private sector needs to engage more intentionally in TVET curriculum development by determining what skills they require and focus on establishing sustainable and fair partnerships with their suppliers. In addition, it is recommended to invest in the communities surrounding them, whether through Corporate Social Responsibility or similar initiatives which has the positive effects of strengthening demand for produce and the quality of labour supply.

4.5.3 Encouraging increased private investment in education and training

In countries with well-developed TVET systems, the private sector is the key driving force behind skills demand. This requires a well-organised private sector that can articulate its skills requirement, forecasting this well into the future. Therefore, establishing apex private sector bodies is a key requirement for the entire system to function well. These bodies must include a representative who is articulate on GTA issues and can adequately ensure the topic's inclusion throughout the organisations' implementation.

Conclusion

The groundwork for the numerous continental strategies and frameworks have laid gender-transformative changes through TVET developed. However, there is scope for further improvement to ensure the residual effects are long-lasting and sustainable in their efforts. While the PoA provides a framework for reporting on the achievements, the extent to which gender transformative approaches can be incorporated is varied and further strengthened.

Gender transformation is possible, but it can be long-term and needs sustained investments over time. This investment is beneficial for societies as a whole; if women have the same access to skills, resources and opportunities as men, they will be powerful drivers in the fight against hunger, malnutrition and poverty. Giving women decision-making power within the household and the community will allow them to have access to economic opportunities and drive economic development of African countries.



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