

ASSESSING GENDER IMPACTS

Women Raising Goats in Uganda



Studies show that empowering women is smart economics. But in places like Karamoja, Uganda, where tradition dictates the roles of men and women, the latter take on heavy agricultural workloads and virtually all childcare and domestic work.

The five-year Resiliency through Wealth, Agriculture, and Nutrition in Karamoja (RWANU) project, implemented by ACDI/VOCA and its partners Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe, focused on improving food security for women and men and reducing malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women and children under five.

Men in these pastoral communities traditionally care for livestock. In 2016, the project, funded by USAID's Office of Food for Peace, assessed how

providing women with goats influenced gender norms within households and communities and improved nutrition. A summary of the assessment follows.

New, Empowered Roles

Men typically control the assets of a household in Karamoja. But men involved in the project showed surprising levels of support for their wives to control their own incomes.

Most of the women—who were left out of decision making completely prior to participating in the project—reported that after participating in RWANU, they now made independent decisions or consulted with their husbands on when to sell their goats and what to buy with the money made. Most women spent what they earned on basic, family needs, like school fees.

"Before we got the goats, we were not participating in meetings, and women were not having that courage to express themselves. But now I have confidence, and I can even raise issues or any concerns I have and share with my husband freely."

— A female RWANU participant

AFTER WOMEN RECEIVED GOATS

74%

of women made decisions solely or jointly with their husbands



69%

of women felt comfortable speaking in public among men and women



First-time Leaders

Speaking up in public, particularly speaking in front of their husbands, was a huge taboo in Karamajong culture. The RWANU project worked to equip husbands and wives with stronger communication skills and encouraged listening and sharing in public meetings. Nearly half of the women reported a boost in self-confidence, which came from attending weekly livestock group meetings, savings and credit group meetings, and trainings. They built leadership and public speaking skills and even voiced their opinions during meetings of both men and women.

Many women felt more capable in their abilities. Nearly half of the community leaders interviewed said they recognized women's group members as leaders.

Changed Perceptions in Communities

Changes in gender norms didn't occur just with women. Male change agents, or men chosen to act as role models, proved essential in spreading positive gender attitudes

among other men. Taking a page from the women's book, men without livestock decided to earn enough to buy goats, as did other women in the village. More than half the community leaders said they believed women could own goats and buy and sell them jointly with men. Also, most community leaders said they believed men could help with childcare and domestic work.

Better Nutrition for Women and Children

Almost all of the women who received goats also took part in mother care groups, where they learned about child health and nutrition. Because they owned goats, many could more regularly give their children milk or milk products, such as butter and yogurt. RWANU promoted exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months to lower risks of child malnutrition and disease, and 86 percent of women waited six months before feeding their children goat milk.

Improved Marital Relationships

Women who received goats from RWANU learned about finances

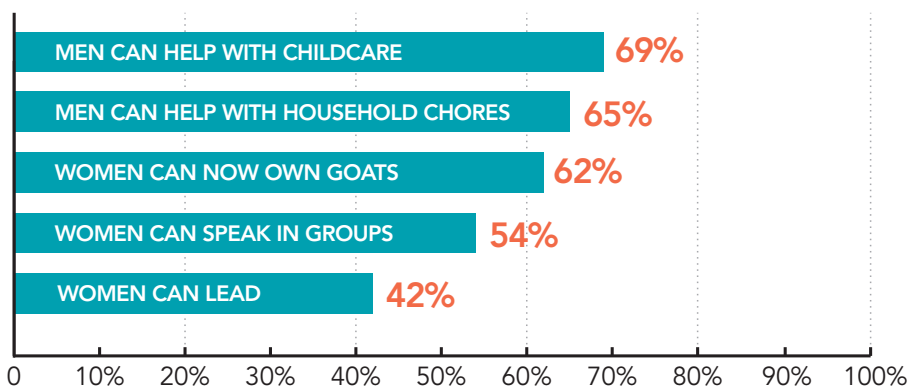


39%

of women reported improved household nutrition from owning goats

through savings and credit groups. Seeing their wives own assets for the first time, many husbands gained a new respect for them. Over half of the women saw positive changes in how their husbands treated them after owning the goats.

COMMUNITY LEADER NEW PERCEPTIONS



Source: community member interviews

"Since my family and my husband saw me getting the goats from RWANU, we all now have control over livestock together."

– A female RWANU participant

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