

Women's Agency for Ghanaian Agricultural Development  
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## **Abstract**

In Ghana there are a variety of factors limiting women's participation in agriculture, which makes up over fifty percent of the Ghanaian economy. Women face systemic resource bias, restrictions on land rights, and barriers to accessing to more robust commodity markets such as the cocoa sector. International development organizations, social enterprises, and local governments are attempting to tackle gender equity issues with a variety of initiatives. The current initiatives addressing these disparities often take simplistic approaches that disregard the underlying structural causes of gender inequity. I argue that in order to foster gender equality, organizations need to focus on an agency-based approach to women's status within agricultural value chains. An agency-based approach includes giving woman an autonomous voice and independent access to resources. This paper examines what forms of agency can be identified in agricultural initiative for women's development and what the most effective factors are in fostering women's agency.

Three different forms of agency are presented and evaluated through three different types of initiatives. The forms of agency include leadership, household, and resource based. While all three are important, household agency tends to make the most significant impact because it requires the involvement of men at the most basic level. The three initiatives evaluated are a social enterprise, a government program, and a non-governmental organization. The social enterprise, a Ghanaian cocoa cooperative, takes a gender mainstreaming approach including women in all levels of leadership while also offering education programs to women participating in the agricultural cooperative. This causes the social enterprise to meet most of the agency criteria – distinguishing itself as a holistic, systemic based approach to gender disparities in Ghanaian agriculture.

Future research can use this framework as a basis for surveying women who are benefiting from development programs. Program design as well as program outcomes need to be evaluated in depth in order to determine the effect of presenting different forms of agency have on an organizations ability to increase a woman's agency.

## Introduction

In most West African countries, agriculture constitutes a significant portion of the economy –upwards of 50% of the population is reliant on agriculture for a livelihood. Due to this dependence on agriculture, many aid organizations ranging from public to private to non-profits have focused on agricultural based development to reduce poverty in West Africa. Economies in Africa are heavily influenced by the lack of access to resources and opportunities. Because women are often faced with cultural and discriminatory barriers to resources, they are usually the last to benefit or be chosen to participate in various programs (Makine 2006). In Ghana and most of West Africa, men grow the cash crops, often for export, and women grow the subsistence crops. The male farmers who grow cash crops are offered significantly more resources than those who grow non-cash crops, creating a systematic resource delivery gender bias (Holmes & Vigneri 2009). Collins (2018) echoes this idea that there is a “tendency to ignore or compartmentalize gender imbalances in policies addressing governance, market participation and agricultural land access.”

In an attempt to bridge this development gap, different agencies and stakeholders are creating agricultural initiatives for women’s development, referred to as initiatives for the rest of this paper. These initiatives can take many different forms –development organization sponsored deliviers of resources, private based models that are working towards a social good, or government sponsored programs. Because initiatives often dictate the way that resources are delivered to disadvantaged populations and because different types of development agencies approach their work through initiatives, they will serve as the unit of analysis for the evaluative framework in this paper.

Oftentimes these initiatives fall short due to the difficulty of confronting the systemic issues that gender presents. Gender functions differently than other types of systemic oppression because “household and interfamilial relations are a central locus of women’s disempowerment” (Malhotra & Schuler 2005). This disempowerment of women extends across all classes and ethnic groups making it an even more challenging issue to confront. Differences in the treatment of people based on gender are buried deeply in social and cultural norms making the issue of gender equity overwhelming and the obstacles seemingly insurmountable.

This thesis will analyze three different programs working to enhance women’s participation in agriculture in Ghana. Because agency is critical to their overall success, this thesis will address the following questions: 1) What evidence of fostering enhanced agency can be detected in these three distinct programs? 2) Which program factors seem to be most effective in fostering women’s agency?

The evaluation of the role of women’s agency in initiatives will begin by discussing different definitions of agency and how the holistic approach of agency differs from the generalized facile use of the term “women’s empowerment.” The generalization of types of agency increasing initiatives focus on either technology delivery or social and community organization. Once the types of initiatives are explained I will discuss the conceptual framework for analysis to determine indicators of agency increasing initiatives. The framework will serve as a way of analyzing three different initiatives, the GROW project sponsored by MEDA, Rural Enterprises Initiative sponsored by the Ghanaian Government, and Kuapa Kokoo Women’s Program a social enterprise. These three initiatives are compared to each other using the framework and it is found that the Kuapa Kokoo Women’s Program is most effective at addressing multiple types of agency.

## **Institutionalized Gender Inequalities**

Institutional gender bias has existed as long as the institution – making it necessary to change their structure and composition to address the root of gender inequality. This makes it more difficult for intervention instigators to think about “gender as a changeable discursive habit pertaining to the institution” (Kevane 2014). The social and cultural gender norms affect a women’s ability to participate in agricultural economic empowerment. Women’s property rights, for example, are based in cultural norms and social relations which associate a person with the value, both social and fiscally, that comes from owning land (Lambrecht 2016). Ghana is a matrilineal society, which means land rights pass through the women’s line. Despite the power associated with land rights, women are still used as “pawns for loans between men” and have significantly less control over land than men (Kevane 2014). It is not just the land rights themselves that influences a woman’s ability to have a voice within her household.<sup>1</sup>

Women in agriculture are at a disadvantage when working to sell or trade their harvests due to “weak bargaining positions with[in] predominantly male networks in the [agricultural] value chain” (Selhausen 2016). Lambrecht (2016) argues that there is a cultural expectation for men to produce more than his wife (or wives) in order to maintain his position and authority as head of the household. Therefore, men limits their wives’ access to land and restricts their ability to earn income independently. This inhibits a woman’s ability to produce her own income as she is not being paid for the time she is cultivating subsistence crops for her family. Women tend to farm the lower value crops while men often farm and sell the cash crops, a higher level value chain (Selhausen 2016.). Ignoring this “broader understanding of patriarchal structures of power”

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<sup>1</sup> This paper will not focus on land rights in its analysis of initiatives, but it is impossible to properly understand the role of gender on women’s opportunities without acknowledging the role of land tenure rights.

leads to ineffective initiatives that do not take into account cultural and societal expectations (Collins 2018).

Initiatives with the intention of bridging the gender gap headed by international organizations often struggle with the cultural sensitivity necessary to approach the system rather than simplistic issues. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), one of the most visible agencies of international development aid, “builds gender issues within existing development paradigms” (Jahan 1997). New initiatives are not created, instead they are “adapted to take into account women-and-gender concerns” using a development technique called integration (Ibid). By including women in development agendas that were formed without a gender focus it becomes almost impossible to address the systemic, patriarchal structures that are ever present in institutions (Malhotra & Schuler 2005). Ganle (2015) argues that in order to create a truly effective intervention, communities and households need to address “powerlessness and gender based discrimination.” As Selhausen (2016) found in her evaluation of women’s agricultural cooperatives, the most important indicator of a woman’s ability to benefit from a cooperative group was the state of her intrahousehold relations.

In this analysis, I will be using “women’s agency” to evaluate gender initiatives as opposed to “women’s empowerment” because certain connotations of women’s empowerment. According to Ruth Phillips, using the term empowerment has “emerged as a possible counter force to achieving gender equality” (2015). Phillips argues that women can benefit from services that are meant to “empower,” such as microcredit programs, but still be constrained by structures of oppression such as negative household relationships or barriers to leadership. Because empowerment is associated with “simplistic problem-solving devices” I will focus my measurement on “agency” (Phillips 2015).

## **Defining & Analyzing Women's Agency**

The complexity of factors that contribute to agency, including cultural and societal norms, makes defining and measuring gender-based initiatives a convoluted endeavor. There is no standardization for how to measure and define agency making it almost impossible to create a universal definition of “agency” for women in order to evaluate effectiveness of different intervention types. The typical mode of measuring success of development programs -- structured surveys -- do not allow a deeper understanding of an initiative's role in increasing women's agency as a whole (Ganle 2015). The most significant debate in determining women's agency revolves around the importance income should hold when evaluating a woman's agency. While it is one of the easiest numbers to obtain and one of the few quantitative measures of agency, income does not necessarily indicate equality or autonomy for women.

The difficulty in measuring agency lies in societal and cultural factors outside of quantitative measures. While these factors are significantly more difficult to both measure and change, they are vital to creating equality for women not only in the agriculture sector but also around the world. The UNDP, by including gender equality in the Sustainable Development goals, “was theoretically committing itself to supporting a transformation in social relations” (Eyben). Yet, development organizations have not proven their commitment to such dramatic transformation thus far. When the majority of large aid organizations do not subscribe to an inclusive and structural approach to women's agency, it makes creating an enabling environment for women much more difficult.

The term agency encompasses both economic and structural factors of gender equity and equality. Felix Selhausen's definition: “women's ability to take autonomous choices in life and to control resources” describes agency in a simple, understandable way (2016). In Selhausen's

survey, which evaluates the effectiveness of Ugandan coffee cooperatives, he measures “intra-household decision-making agency” through a four area index including household expenditures such as health, education, and food (Ibid). This ensures that both economic factors are considered while also evaluating a women’s role within her house and in her community. Another useful way of measuring agency is presented by Ganle et al. in their Perceptual Pathway Matrix (2015). This matrix measures both “reduced economic dependence on husband” and “mobility and self-confidence/assertiveness” (Ibid.). By including social, cultural, and economic factors, we are better able to evaluate a women’s increase in agency.

## **How Initiatives Can Create Agency**

In current development theory, two main strategies are proposed to help a disadvantaged or resource-limited community. One way is to provide technology that will increase efficiency and therefore allow for more economic opportunities for a person or group of people. Another form of development initiative is based in community and social relationships. These involve creating social structures such as cooperatives that lead to a more equitable distribution of resources as well as bargaining power.

### **Technological Initiatives**

Technological initiatives are one of the most common modes of supplying women with agency because technology can improve efficiency, and efficiency is correlated with poverty reduction (Gill et al. 2010). Quisumbing alludes to a study in which there were large differences in the maize production between men and women in Ghana. However, once the technology gap between men’s and women’s inputs was accounted for, the difference in production was no

longer significant (Quisumbing 2010). Based on Gill's research, technological initiatives are most successful when they involve women in the creation, distribution, or other aspects of the technological lifestyle (2010). In order to provide useful technology initiatives for women, the technology must be tailored to women, acknowledging the unique, gendered challenges. This includes taking into account women's lesser bargaining power and control over household resources when creating both marketing strategies and larger development initiatives (Gill et al. 2012). These technological solutions can take a large variety of sources including irrigation systems, solar lanterns, more efficient cook stoves, improved seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides (Ibid). Regardless, the literature is in consensus that technological handouts by themselves are not a solution; nesting them in social and cultural contexts is vital to the success of technological initiatives.

### Social and Community Initiatives

Social and community initiatives are a mode that is strongly supported by feminist theorists because the intercommunity approach tackles many of the issues that technological initiatives cannot. One common approach to community development is group lending to women. In Ganle et al. World Vision, an international development NGO, supplies microcredit loans to women's groups in the Nadowli Area of Northern Ghana. While the micro-loans were incredibly helpful to certain women, the cultural and social context led to adverse effects for others (2015). This shows that initiatives must be constructed with the cultural barriers to women gaining agency in mind in order to avoid cultural backlash. Microcredit can be empowering for women, but acceptance of the lending programs must be closely monitored on a community level.

Evaluating acceptance includes analyzing household dynamics, the ability for women to access income generating activities (even with financing), and the timing of loan distribution to increase the effectiveness of such programs (Ganle et al. 2015). Jaquette criticizes microcredit programs for being too simplistic, claiming, “women and development have become nearly synonymous with microcredit programs” (2017). Microcredit has become popular because it is a pro-market approach bolstered by the plethora of research finding that women use their money for children’s nutrition, health, and education significantly more than men do (Ibid). Without taking cultural factors into account, such community-based initiatives can end up harming women more than helping them.

Another example of community-based initiatives is the creation of cooperatives, either gender specific or not. The goal of cooperatives is to give more power to smallholder farmers by combining forces, making each of them a stronger actor within the larger agricultural value chain. Selhausen examined a coffee cooperative in Uganda that welcomes both men and women. He found that the primary determinants in women’s participation and level of commitment in the cooperatives relied on land ownership and an intra-household dynamic that involves pooling of funds and co-marketing. The overall outcome of these dynamics reduced spousal competition and increased likelihood of profitable participation. Selhausen draws a distinction between the effectiveness of women and mixed gender groups saying, “underlying social norms prevent women’s participation on an equal basis are likely to be more effectively addressed in the long run in mixed groups” (2016). Once again, the benefits of this type of intervention are dependent on the cultural factors that give women power within their communities as well as the willingness of the men in the community to forgo their own cultural advantage to give women a platform.

## **Evaluating Initiatives in Cases**

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of different development programs in promoting women's agency, there needs to be a definition of agency. This evaluative matrix provides three primary definitions of agency based on reflections of how a woman can exercise autonomy and freedom within her household and her community. These three manifestations of agency are leadership, household power, and resource access.

While there is overlap in the types of agency created, the breakdown of three different types of agency serves as a conceptual framework to recognize the complexity and wide ranging role of agency in a woman's life. This understanding of agency was inspired by "Turning on the Lights," a study reported in a white paper that measured both qualitatively and quantitatively the enhanced agency of women in rural Tanzania when participating in a social enterprise selling solar lights and educating women entrepreneurs (Gray et al. 2017). In this study, some of the questions measuring agency focused on involvement in the community that was sparked by the introduction of solar lanterns. For example, the researchers asked "have you met new people?" The questions were aimed at determining the role of the women within their community and the changes of attitudes that accompanied those roles.

While this current analysis of agency within development does not use interviews with women who are benefitting from the three intervention cases, the survey from Gray et al. can be informative in creating an evaluative matrix for ways of defining agency. Questions based in community involvement and leadership are included in the evaluative matrix below. The assumption is, if a woman is given a leadership role in her community, she will be both more respected and have more bargaining power from the gain in new relationships.

The first evaluative section, household power, is based in both Selhausen's and Ganle et al's research in cooperatives and micro-lending (2017, 2015). Both studies emphasize the effect of a woman's household decision-making power in the ability for an outside intervention to improve her agency and livelihood. Nussbaum echoes this idea by discussing how agency does not belong only in the idea of resource management but "a life that is really human is one that is shaped throughout by these human powers of practical reason and sociability" (2000). This means that a woman must have the ability to not only survive on the basic necessities of human life, such as food, shelter, and bodily protection, but also participates in social situations that contribute to her own human dignity and sociability. Her role in the household is key to her ability to have agency in all aspects of her life. Because of patriarchal household structures, often times women are severely limited by their husbands expectations of how she must act as a wife. Even in Ghana, dominated by a matrilineal traditional social structure that serves to assert rights and privileges, women are still "offered up as pawns for loans between men" (Kevane 2014). Household agency therefore contributes to the affiliation factor of agency that Nussbaum uses as the two most important factors to asserting a woman as a human being. If a woman is being traded or treated as property, she is less likely to be able to fulfill the affiliation capability of "having social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified human being whose worth is equal to that of others" (Nussbaum 2000).

In some cases, household empowerment is measured by income controlled by the man and the woman but this "implicitly assumes that a fifty-fifty split in earned income should be the goal of all societies" (Bardhan 1999). By giving women power in the household to make decisions, the women develop more confidence as well as the opportunity to expand her reach outside of the household to establish support networks. The household agency section of the

evaluative framework examines how the initiatives are addressing the underlying structural issues present in household relationships. This requires that the questions search for agency that goes beyond equal income distribution to ensure that households are providing enabling environments for women to gain affiliations, confidence, and agency.

The final evaluative section, resource access, is based on the typical approach to women's empowerment in the development sphere. A woman's ability to keep books or read gives her the necessary skills to create a business or participate more actively in a value chain, but does not directly relate to the leadership and household sections. Resource access contributes to a woman's agency by increasing the "importance of her perceived contributions," therefore increasing her own bargaining power within her household, community, and the larger agricultural value chain (Nussbaum 2000). If a woman is able to obtain a loan, she can use the money to increase production. This could interest a local buyer to invest in the woman, which would give her more ability to increase her production. Then, by contributing to her household income in a larger manner, she obtains more bargaining power within her household. Education is included under resources because an increase of bargaining power does not necessarily have to be correlated directly to income or productivity outside the house. If a woman has literacy and numeracy, she is able to increase her efficacy to assist in the distribution of income within a household and has a larger perceived contribution.

All three of the categories overlap, but can be distinguished because the leadership, household decision-making, and resource access tend to be addressed in different manners. In some ways, resource access can be a stepping stone to the more systemic confrontations of issues such as leadership and household agency. Resource agency, cannot by itself be considered a complete fulfillment of agency for women because it does not directly address affiliation

concerns or focus on human dignity. An explanation of the questions for each type of agency can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1. Framework for Assessment**

<b>Category of Assessment</b> <i>(Typologies)</i>	<b>Reasoning for Evaluation</b>
<b>Household Agency</b>	
<b>Does the program address the issues of shared household income?</b>	Shared household income is correlated with a women’s safety and agency
<b>Does the program teach confidence skills?</b>	The confidence gap often times inhibits woman from rising up and maintain larger bargaining power within her household and community
<b>Does the program actively involve men in the breaking down of systemic issues?</b>	Gender based issues must have a cross gender approach that includes the education of men on women’s issues
<b>Does the program require land ownership or rights in order to participate?</b>	Land rights are a huge bargaining chip when it comes to participation in value chains

<b>Leadership Agency</b>	
<b>Does the program require women in leadership positions within the organization?</b>	Setting a quota for or encouraging women in leadership positions helps override cultural stigmatization and gives women a window of opportunity to rise up
<b>Does the program teach and provide an enabling environment for women to become better leaders in their community?</b>	One way of overcoming the confidence gap is to equip women with leadership lessons increasing her efficacy and therefore her likelihood to take on leadership positions

<b>Does the program create a value chain that intentionally incorporates women?</b>	Often times in agriculture women are shut out of higher prongs of value chains because they do not have the social capital. Creating social structures that allow women to participate in bargaining increases her agency and confidence
<b>Does the program encourage women to participate in local, regional, or national elections?</b>	Women gain agency through collective bargaining power as well, active political participation ensures that local leaders have women's interests in mind and leads to a larger societal change

<b>Resource Based Agency</b>	
<b>Does the program offer a technological package?</b>	Offering financing for technology is one of the simplest ways to overcome systemic resource bias
<b>Does the program offer a financial package?</b>	By providing women with a financial resource they can re-invest in their own businesses creating an avenue of income outside of their normal household roles
<b>Does the program educate women in business skills and numeracy?</b>	Education leads to a woman's higher bargaining power both in the household and in the community because it increases her overall perceived contributions
<b>Does the program teach women literacy?</b>	Education leads to a woman's higher bargaining power both in the household and in the community because it increases her overall perceived contributions

## Initiatives Examples

For the purposes of this paper I will be examining three different examples of agricultural initiatives that focus specifically on the role of women in agriculture.<sup>2</sup> In order to look holistically at the types of initiatives in Ghana, each case study focuses on a different type of organization ensuring to cover public, private, and non-profit initiatives. Additionally, selection

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<sup>2</sup> A simple break down of the three initiative,s including missions, goals, and effectiveness, can be found in Appendix A.

was based on distinctive types of initiatives. Representing technological and community-based initiatives is important to understanding the variety of forms development can take. To narrow the scope of organizations this paper will focus on initiatives that are driven by local organizations and the Ghanaian government.

The first selected case is Kuapa Kokoo Women's Program. Kuapa Kokoo (KK) is a Ghanaian cooperative established in 1993. The organization is the only fair trade certified cooperative in Ghana. KK LTD is a social enterprise, the private sector case study, as it is the only farmer owned cocoa buying and trading company in Ghana. KK established gender equity from the beginning by creating gender quotas for leadership on both local and regional levels although there is no gender quota for the national board. In order to ensure that ownership of capital would not be a barrier, the membership of KK is 0.20 Ghanaian cedis, pennies in US dollars. KK also created a specific Women's Program that acknowledges the systemic biases aimed at women and works to combat them. In this program, women are offered microcredit packages, a variety of training and capacity building classes, including literacy and numeracy, and skills trainings to increase agricultural inputs and ensuring the women are getting premiums for fair trade certified crops. KK was chosen as the private sector enterprise because it is a national organization that has a well-established women's program. Because KK is a cocoa cooperative, it is able to address inequities directly within the agricultural value chain by ensuring women's participation on all levels of production and leadership.

The second case is the Rural Enterprises Program (REP) developed and implemented by the Ghanaian government. This is one of the few gender-centric programs aimed specifically at women within the agricultural sector. The development objective is to increase the number of rural micro social enterprises (MSEs) that generate profit, growth and employment opportunities.

The goal of the REP is to diversify income generating activities with a specific focus on rural women. Rather than equipping women to be more productive within the agricultural economy, REP hopes to increase women's empowerment by offering new value chains to rural women through MSEs. The Ministry of Trade and Industry is responsible for the implementation of the project. The Ministry is, at the time of this paper, working to reach over 600,000 women across Ghana in order to educate them on entrepreneurial skills and slowly transition rural livelihoods away from a complete dependence on agriculture. This may create new avenues for women but there is a lack of evidence supporting this case study's ability to address women's role in a community's structure.

The third case study is on Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), a non-profit international economic development organization. MEDA runs the Greater Opportunities for Rural Women Project (GROW) in Northern Ghana in collaboration with a variety of local organizations. The GROW project focuses its efforts in the North because of the massive wealth inequalities in that region. The goal is to improve food security for families in Northern Ghana by assisting women farmers to grow more soybeans while creating market links to increase incomes. The project is ongoing and is hoping to reach over 20,000 women by the end of 2018. The program relies heavily on the distribution of information through SMS messages on mobile phones. Because there is a systemic resource distribution bias, especially in Northern Ghana, MEDA created a lead farmer structure to ensure that ownership of the phone is not a barrier to women. The lead farmers, women with phones, attend a training where they learn to understand and pass along the information they receive via their mobile devices. These lead women then share the information with 25 other women in their community. Not only does this increase the passage of knowledge, but also reaffirms female communities. By arming women

with more information, MEDA hopes to leverage their bargaining power within the agricultural chain by increasing production and knowledge. This program meets the selection criteria for this examination because it relies heavily on contracts with local companies in order to implement the program. For example, MEDA works closely with Farmerline, a Ghanaian based social enterprise, in order to send the SMS messages out to the women.

**Table 2. Framework Analyzing the Initiatives**

<b>Category of Assessment</b> <i>(Typologies)</i>	<b>Kuapa Kokoo Women's Program</b>	<b>Ghanaian Government (Rural Enterprises)</b>	<b>MEDA Greater Opportunities for Rural Women Project (GROW)</b>
<b>Mission Statement</b>	The principal objectives of the Programme was to promote social, economic and political empowerment among women; stimulate women's economic activities; break the vicious cycle of poverty among women and vulnerable groups; cultivate the habit of savings among women; and improve women's access to credit.	The Development objective is to increase the number of rural MSEs that generate profit, growth and employment opportunities	Focuses on improving food security for families in Northern Ghana by assisting women farmers to grow more soybeans and forge market links that will increase incomes.

<b>Household Agency</b>			
<b>Does the program address the issues of shared household income?</b>	No	No	No

<b>Does the program teach confidence skills in order to give her more decision making power at home?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Does the program actively involve men in the breaking down of systemic issues?</b>	Yes	No	No
<b>Does the program require land ownership or rights in order to participate?</b>	No	No	No

<b>Leadership Agency</b>			
<b>Does the program require women in leadership positions within the organization?</b>	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Does the program teach and provide an enabling environment for women to become better leaders in their community?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Does the program create a value chain that is created to incorporate women?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Does the program encourage women to participate in local, regional, or national elections?</b>	Yes	Yes	No

<b>Resource Based Agency</b>			
<b>Does the program offer a technological package?</b>	No	No	Yes
<b>Does the program offer a financial package?</b>	Yes	No	No
<b>Does the program educate women in business skills and numeracy?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Does the program teach women literacy?</b>	Yes	No	No

## **Analysis**

Based on the evaluative framework, the KKWP has the strongest focus on creating agency for women. The Rural Enterprises program by the Ghanaian government was the least effective at addressing women's agency. However, it is important to note that even though Rural Enterprises addresses fewer criteria, the program does fulfill three out of the four leadership criteria. This framework is not meant to determine what is the correct way to help increase women's agency in agricultural development. Instead, it is meant to bring attention to different types of agency and a program's strengths and weaknesses in addressing a wide variety of agency. It is also intended to distinguish between different types of agency and bring into discussion the impact of leadership agency as opposed to resource based agency as opposed to household agency.

Not all forms of agency are created equal and must be taken into account when evaluating initiatives. This is what puts KKWP above the other two initiatives. Because KKWP emphasizes leadership and collective action for women above all else, the other types of agency follow. KKWP is taking a top-down approach to increasing women's agency by making it a requirement that women are considered equal members of all participating agricultural communities. A woman is perceived as a contributing member of the community because she is able to participate in the cooperative and has an equal opportunity to be a part of the leadership committee as a man.

While MEDA focuses on women in leadership, it offers women leadership structures within communities that are solely female. This is important because it creates networks of support for women, but men are not being actively included in the increasing of agency for women. This absence of male participation limits the abilities for the women's leadership to breach the larger community and agricultural value chains.

The difference between KWWP and Rural Enterprises and GROW is the emphasis on the concept of gender mainstreaming. Rural Enterprises and GROW approach gender initiatives through an integrative mainstreaming approach common to international development organizations such as the UNDP. This means that these organizations "build gender issues within existing development paradigms; the overall development agenda is not transformed but each issue is adapted to take into account women-and-gender concerns" (Jahan 1997). On the other hand, KWWP approaches gender initiatives through the concept of "agenda setting" mainstreaming. The initiative transforms the existing development agenda with a gender lens, allowing women to play an active role in the creation and implementation of development

programs. This in turn creates a fundamental transformation in the way development is carried out and the way women interact within their respective communities.

One of the reasons that KKWP is able to take an agenda setting mainstream approach is because it is a social enterprise, rather than a government agency or international NGO. Social enterprises focus on “the innovative use of resources to explore and exploit opportunities that meet a social need in a sustainable manner” being explicit in a “social change agenda” (Haugh 2014). Social enterprises are in a unique position because they are locally based allowing them to truly understand the cultural and social barriers that international organizations often struggle (Gill 2012). Gender equality is an issue that must be addressed within local settings through community organizations that are supported by funding that does not base its indicators solely on standard measurements of success, such as farm productivity and income. Therefore sociological factors cannot be adequately addressed through an international setting. Social enterprises are the most equipped to create holistic gender initiatives that include both technology and community as they “orient the focus of entrepreneurial activity towards the pursuit of freedom and autonomy relative to an existing position” (Haugh 2014). KKWP is able to offer freedom and autonomy to women within their program while reaching for larger social change. GROW and Rural Enterprises still play an important role in the development sphere but will need to focus more on agency as a whole in order to achieve their goals of gender equity.

## **Conclusion**

Development organizations continue to search for ways to fulfill the UN Sustainable Development goal five of gender equality with a greater awareness of what gender equality means. The SDG five’s definition of “providing women and girls with equal access to education,

health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large” will require a larger cultural and societal change. Therefore, how to create and offer agency to women should be at the forefront of discussions when it comes to development initiatives. By breaking down types of agency, each program would be able to see the weaknesses their initiatives have in addressing women’s equality and would either be able to adjust their initiative or cooperate with another program in order to further improve the livelihoods of women in agriculture.

Future research can use this framework as a basis for surveying women who are benefiting from development programs. Program design as well as program outcomes need to be evaluated in depth in order to determine the effect of presenting different forms of agency have on an organizations ability to increase a woman’s agency.

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## Appendix A.

Program	Goal	Solution	Effectiveness
<p><b>Kuapa Kokoo Women's Programme (Social Enterprise)</b></p>	<p>Enhance the participation of women in the decision making process at all levels of operation and organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quotas for shared governance</li> <li>- Don't require land rights</li> <li>- Targeted training for women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1/3 membership includes women</li> <li>- Women have increased access to microcredit and resources to increase incomes</li> </ul>
<p><b>MEDA's Greater Opportunities for Rural Women Project</b></p>	<p>Improve food security by assisting women farmers to grow more soybeans while creating market links to increase incomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distribution of information through SMS messages on mobile phones</li> <li>- Lead farmer model, she oversees 25 farmers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yet to address underlying patriarchal structures</li> <li>- Increased social support</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rural Enterprises &amp; (Ghanaian Government)</b></p>	<p>Offer alternative form of income to women in agriculture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Train smallholder farmers for entrepreneurial ventures</li> <li>- Increase no tilling land practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased women's employment in non-agricultural related enterprises</li> <li>- Little to no work to help women farmer's specifically</li> </ul>