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Gender Mainstreaming in Agricultural Value Chains:

Promising Experiences and the Role of Rural Advisory Services

Prepared by Elizabeth Poulsen[a] for the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) as part of a contract with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

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The Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services GFRAS is about enhancing the performance of advisory services so that they can better serve farm families and rural producers, thus contributing to improved livelihoods in rural areas and the sustainable reduction of hunger and poverty. Rural advisory services help to empower farmers and better integrate them in systems of agricultural innovation.

The GFRAS structure reaches smallholder farmers via the regional rural advisory services networks, which are made up of national-level platforms. The national platforms include actors from all sectors working in rural advisory services, and work directly with smallholders. National platforms help prioritise national-level issues and formulate demands to be taken to the regional and global levels.

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Acronyms

BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
GALS	Gender Action Learning System
GFRAS	Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
GTA	Gender-transformative approach
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IICEM	Integrated Initiatives for Economic Growth in Mali
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
RESCAR-AOC	Le Réseau des Services de Conseil Agricole et Rural d'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre (RESCAR-AOC)
RAS	Rural Advisory Services
SOL	Sunseed Oil Limited
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Introduction

While much has been written about the importance of mainstreaming gender in agricultural value chains (and the challenges inherent in doing so), relatively few studies have provided details on cases in which gender integration[1] has been successful. This study, therefore, presents a collection of experiences in which rural advisory services (RAS) were able to successfully mainstream gender into agricultural value chains, categorised in terms of "best-fit practices". While the examples presented here cannot be precisely replicated in other contexts, they provide general guidance for organisations that implement programming related to agricultural value chains.

The information in this study may be used by a variety of organisations; however, it was specifically written for the Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture and Food Sector programme, implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. The Green Innovation Centres were launched in 2015 as part of the One World - No Hunger Initiative of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Operating in 12 countries in sub-Saharan Africa[2] and in India, the centres hold great promise to boost agricultural production in rural areas, thus decreasing poverty, food insecurity, and unemployment in target countries (GIZ, 2015). GIZ recognises that mainstreaming gender throughout this initiative will be essential to its success. Because of this, they have designated women farmers as a target group for the Green Innovation Centres initiative, striving to address gender throughout all programme activities.

Key terms

Best-fit Practices – As articulated by the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS), "Best-fit approaches embrace pluralism of approaches and service providers. They are based on local conditions. They value local and traditional knowledge, as well as research and good practices" (GFRAS, 2012). Best-fit practices also recognise that the success of initiatives largely depends on context, and thus cannot be implemented with a one-size-fits-all approach.

Agricultural Value Chain – GIZ (2013) defines a value chain as "the sequence of all production and marketing steps, ranging from primary production through processing and distribution up to the retail sale of the product and finally to its end users". These steps are sometimes referred to as nodes: for example, the "input supply node" or the "production node". Figure 1 shows that agricultural value chains can be characterised as consisting of context, actors, and supporters.

Gender Mainstreaming – This study will use the definition provided by UN Women (2016): "a strategy…to achieve the goal of gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities—policy, development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects".

Rural Advisory Services (RAS) – There are many characterisations of RAS. This study will use the definition provided

Chain context
Justice system, government, economy, weather, etc.

Chain actors
From farmer to trader to processor to retailer to consumer

Chain supporters
Financial Institutions, input suppliers, transport, business services, certification, etc.

Figure 1: Elements of an agricultural value chain include context, actors, and supporters.

1 Gender integration involves integrating gender into projects and fostering an organisation-wide commitment to integrating gender into every aspect of work.

2 Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Togo, Tunisia, and Zambia.

by GFRAS: "all the different activities that provide the information and services needed and demanded by farmers and other actors in rural settings to assist them in developing their own technical, organisational, and management skills and practices so as to improve their livelihoods and well-being. [RAS encompasses] the diversity of actors in extension and advisory provision (public, private, civil society); much broadened support to rural communities (beyond technology and information sharing) including advice related to farm, organisational, and business management; and facilitation and brokerage in rural development and value chains" (Sulaiman & Davis, 2012, p.2). Therefore, while some characterisations of RAS are limited to government services, this study uses a broader definition which includes private sector and NGO actors.

It should be noted that RAS services should ideally be provided throughout all nodes of the value chain with a variety of chain actors and supporters (as depicted in Figure 1); however, in most contexts, RAS services are currently mostly concentrated in the production node, with a somewhat lower concentration in the input supply node. Because of this concentration on early segments in value chains, the cases presented in this paper are also focused largely on input supply and production. The current movement toward demand-driven services and support for agricultural entrepreneurship will likely help to move RAS services down to other nodes of value chains such as processing and marketing. Gender mainstreaming efforts are equally important in these nodes as they are in others; hopefully in the future there will be more examples of successes in these areas as well.

Why should RAS try to mainstream gender in agricultural value chains?

Women make up nearly half of the agricultural labour force in sub-Saharan Africa, and the agricultural sector is the most important source of employment for most women in the region (SOFA Team & Doss, 2011). However, many barriers inhibit women's production and prevent women from fully benefitting from their agricultural activity. For example, women's agricultural work is often not "visible", meaning that it is not captured in official measures of agricultural labour; thus, women's work is often undervalued. In addition, women are often excluded from owning land or agricultural assets, and so they are often unable to join farmer's cooperatives. Women also have limited access to labour, capital and agricultural information. Lastly, gender norms in many contexts promote restrictive conceptions of what constitutes acceptable activities, roles, and spaces for men and women. All of these inequalities constitute what is often referred to as a gender gap in agriculture, according to which women are neither able to be as productive nor to benefit as much from their agricultural activity as men do. The FAO (2011) estimates that if women had the same access to agricultural resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20–30 percent, which could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5–4 percent, and reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12–17 percent.

While gender mainstreaming often requires focusing on women—because they are a vulnerable and marginalised population in many contexts in comparison to men—it also requires a robust awareness of men's roles and activities. It is also increasingly recognised that men should be involved throughout the gender mainstreaming process, as a lack of men's involvement can severely limit the success of mainstreaming efforts. In addition, there are men in many contexts who are also vulnerable and marginalised, as well as women who are not. Engaging as many people as possible in discussing gender roles, marginalisation, and vulnerability will help to ensure that gender mainstreaming efforts succeed and that they help those most in need.

While gender critically influences agricultural activities, other factors are also important to take into account: socio-economic status; age; caste; location; and ethnic group. These can also affect the opportunities and challenges facing farmers. Additionally, gender roles vary by geographic region and by time. Gender mainstreaming efforts therefore should seek to continuously gather information on gender roles in their programme areas, should recognise the diversity within various social groups, and should be conscious of the ways in which the interaction of multiple social characteristics can create challenges and opportunities for the diversity of male and female actors that are engaged in agricultural value chains.

Best-fit practices and promising experiences in gender mainstreaming

Seven best-fit practices will be presented in this section, each accompanied by several "promising experiences", or cases in which the practices have been successfully implemented in an agricultural initiative, with positive outcomes.

Best-fit Practice #1: Conduct gender-sensitive value chain analyses

Successful gender mainstreaming efforts must start with a clear understanding of how and where men and women are involved in a particular value chain. This is especially important considering that in many instances, men and women themselves (both farmers and rural advisors) do not have a complete understanding of each other's roles in the whole value chain (GIZ, 2013). While gender value chain analyses are often regarded as a preliminary step that comes before implementing strategies for

GIZ (2013) provides examples of important questions to ask during a gender-sensitive value chain analysis:

- How do women and men participate in the value chain? What are their roles and responsibilities? What gender-specific knowledge do men and women have?
- What are the benefits of value chain participation for women and men and how are these benefits used? Who controls and decides how benefits are used?
- What opportunities exist for women to be better integrated in value chain activities with regards to horizontal linkages (relationships within one stage of the chain, e.g. within an organisation, group of producers, or self-help groups) and with regard to vertical linkages?
- What opportunities exist for women to have greater control over income generated from value chain activities?
- Do women have access to value chain services such as credit and trainings, as well as to inputs, information, and new technologies?

mainstreaming gender, they can themselves begin the gender mainstreaming process, as they can help raise awareness about women's often "invisible" involvement in value chains and the lack of female actors in agricultural activities.

In addition to conducting a thorough gender analysis before the implementation of a project, it is important to engage in ongoing gender-sensitive data gathering as part of project monitoring and evaluation. Such data should not merely be output-oriented and quantitative (such as counting the number of women participants in activities), but should also explore the extent to which the project's intended impact is reaching women and other stakeholder groups, and the underlying reasons why this may or may not be occurring.

Promising Experience: Participatory gender analysis

In 2013, WorldFish and local partners in Zambia conducted an eight-month-long gender-sensitive value chain analysis as one of the first steps in a ten-year fish value chain development process. One tool used during this analysis was "activity clocks", in which separate groups of men, women, boys, and girls provided information about how they spend their time, especially in relation to agricultural activities and value chains (see 'Further Reading' box for toolkits that include activity clocks and other gender analysis tools). Among other findings, the analysis led implementing organisations to discover that women were very active in the fish trade in the beginning of the season, but their activity waned during the peak season, when men's activity became dominant. This influenced the types of fish traded at different times, the types and costs of transportation, and the profits made by men and women. This knowledge of seasonal variability of men's and women's labour allowed WorldFish to implement gender-sensitive activities at different times in the fishing season.

This gender analysis took a very important additional step: they presented the data gathered through the analysis tools back to the original participants, and asked for insight into the reasons behind their findings (for example, the difference in workloads for men and women). This participatory feedback process provided rich detail and nuance that a "regular" gender analysis may not have uncovered (Farnworth, Kantor, Kruijssen, Longley, & Colverson, 2015).

Recommendations:

- Dedicate sufficient time to conduct a thorough gender analysis. If time allows, an analysis can be performed over several months to capture seasonal variations.
- Use participatory approaches, including multiple rounds of data collection, to validate the data and to explore explanations underlying the findings.
- Utilise gender analyses as an opportunity to highlight women's "invisible" work and gaps in the value chain where women or men may not be active.
- Conduct gender-sensitive analysis throughout the life of a project (monitoring and evaluation).

Promising Experience: Analysis leads to the "visibility" of women's agricultural work

GIZ and Oxfam Great Britain conducted a six-month-long gender analysis of dairy value chains in Nicaragua to gain understanding about how to increase women's membership in farmer-owned cooperatives. Because this analysis shone light on the amount of work that women perform within the dairy value chain, which was previously underestimated, female participants in the analysis said that they came to see themselves as dairy farmers and as important actors in improving the quality of dairy products. Following the analysis, these women began to freely suggest improvements to their farms and demand a larger share of the income derived from milk sales. Men who participated in the analysis also reported an increased recognition of women's contributions to dairy production, and they acknowledged women's activities such as fetching water and cleaning pots as important work that contributes to the quality of the product. Encouragingly, several couples reported sharing tasks that they previously used to do alone (Vanderschaeghe & Lindo, 2012).

Best-fit Practice #2: Enhance women's access to resources

Women and vulnerable populations often have limited ownership of and access to key resources that are needed for agricultural production, such as land, labour, capital, credit, seeds, fertiliser, water, technology, and agricultural information. In

Further reading:

- Senders, A., Lentink, A., & Vanderschaeghe, M. (2012). *Gender in Value Chains: Practical Toolkit to Integrate a Gender Perspective in Agricultural Value Chain Development.* Agri-ProFocus Learning Network.
- Jost, C., Ferdous, N., & Spicer, T. (2014). *Gender and Inclusion Toolbox: Participatory Research in Climate Change and Agriculture.* Copenhagen, Denmark: CGIAR Research Programme on Climate Change, Agriculture, and Food Security (CCAFS), CARE International and the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF).
- Rubin, D., Manfre, C., & Nichols Barrett, K. (2009). *Promoting Gender Equitable Opportunities in Agricultural Value Chains.* United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

addition, women often have fewer opportunities than men to connect to markets. In many contexts, facilitating access to these resources can help to close the gender gap in agricultural production.

Promising Experience: Linking men's and women's farming contracts

In Malawi tobacco is traditionally farmed by men. Tobacco is a labour-intensive cash crop that is often grown in rotation with soybeans and groundnuts. To increase women's opportunities in agriculture, Sunseed Oil Limited (SOL) and other partner organisations piloted a programme in 2015 which hired women whose husbands have existing contracts with the tobacco company as contract farmers to produce soybeans. The contracts provided women with stability since they could be sure that someone would purchase their agricultural product. SOL implemented further measures to facilitate women's participation in the project: they provided the inoculant for the seeds (on a loan basis), as well as training on good agricultural practices and improved market and private sector linkages. SOL additionally agreed to pay a minimum price for soybeans—even those that were not produced as part of their project. Though most of the soybeans were sold directly to SOL for use in oil production, a portion was kept by the farmers for household consumption, thus boosting household nutritional status as well as income.

The project achieved only moderate success in its first iteration (45 farmers signed contracts out of a total of 200 targeted), but implementers remain hopeful that it will be more successful in coming years. The major lesson learned from the pilot phase was that farmers need to learn about the project several months in advance. This will allow them to save enough money to pay for the upfront charge of 15 percent of the loan for inoculant and seeds; it will also ensure that the farmers have not already made the decision to allocate their land to the cultivation of other crops. The implementing organisations also felt that providing literacy training to the project participants would help to improve their capacity-building efforts. This literacy training could be especially helpful for women, since they are likely to have lower literacy levels than men.

Recommendations:

- Facilitate access to resources such as land, credit/capital, inputs, etc.
- Where appropriate (taking care not to deepen inequalities), create linkages between men's and women's agricultural activities.
- Provide literacy and numeracy training where needed.

Best-fit Practice #3: Be responsive to time and mobility constraints

Women farmers often shoulder a double (or even triple[3]) burden in terms of their daily workload, taking responsibility for both productive and reproductive responsibilities. Productive activities include contributing to the production and processing of crops or livestock (as well as other income-generating tasks), while reproductive duties encompass household tasks such as cleaning, childcare, and cooking. In most contexts, women spend much more time than men on reproductive tasks. In India, for example, women dedicate nearly six hours each day to reproductive duties, while men only contribute 36 minutes (Budlender, 2010). This often creates a situation of "time poverty" for women, in which they have very little time for participating in additional activities. These time constraints often mean that women have more difficulty than men leaving their home to participate in activities organised by RAS, especially during times of the day when these duties are most demanding (for example, around meal times).

In addition, social norms in many contexts restrict the places where women's presence is considered acceptable. In extreme cases, women may not be allowed to leave their homes; in other instances, it may not be acceptable for them to participate in mixed-sex groups or to attend meetings in spaces that are traditionally male-dominated. Transportation expenses may also inhibit women's participation in activities. Fortunately, many organisations have discovered ways in which these constraints can be mitigated.

Promising Experiences: Overcoming time and mobility barriers

The World Vegetable Centre in Tanzania (AVRDC; http://avrdc.org) facilitates women's participation in their programming by providing small daily stipends or transportation subsidies; they also offer on-site residential facilities for long-term train-

3 Some, such as Moser (1989), classify community management as a third category of women's work, thus creating a triple burden.

ings (Rubin, Manfre, & Nichols Barrett, 2009). Manfre, Allen, & Colverson (2009) suggest that RAS activities should provide on-site childcare, and, if necessary, arrange for male chaperones to accompany women to trainings. Sundararajan and Prakash (2012) explain that projects that take place in or very near the household—such as poultry farming—can facilitate women's participation because women can combine their productive and reproductive activities. Lastly, Ludgate et al. (2015) found that in Jordan, where cultural barriers often limit women's ability to leave their homes, women were able to actively participate in well-established women-only agricultural cooperatives, since these were perceived as legitimate institutions that brought benefits to their households.

Promising Experiences: Time-saving agricultural technologies

Time-saving technologies that are specific to women's agricultural tasks can enhance women's participation in agriculture while also increasing productivity. For example, Paris, Feldstein, & Duron (2001) found that in Southeast Asia, post-harvest machinery for processing rice (such as rice hullers, rice micro mills, and rice flour mills) can have several benefits for women, including reducing the drudgery of hand pounding, increasing the volume of rice processed, saving time and flexibility in time use, providing additional income, and empowering women individually and as a group. In Malawi, the innovative 3D4AgDev programme utilises a grassroots approach in which women farmers design, prototype, and field-test a range of labour- and time-saving agricultural tools (see Figure 2). The tools are produced via a "rapid prototyping" method, such as 3D printing, arc welding, or metal casting. The tools have demonstrated great potential for saving time and labour; additionally, a social enterprise approach involving women smallholders will scale up the production and dissemination of the most promising tools (Gebremedhin, Spillane, & Murray, 2015).

Best-fit Practice #4: Establish or improve gender-sensitive producer organisations

Organisations such as producer groups and cooperatives are often less accessible to women than to men, for many reasons: women's lower purchasing power may inhibit their ability to pay membership fees and other costs associated with membership, cultural norms may inhibit women's access to or participation in meetings, and policies may only allow one member per household (often a man). In some instances, groups have rules to promote gender equity (i.e., 50% of the leadership must be female), but the women may still represent men's interests rather than their own when it comes to group decisions.

Promising Experience: Overcoming economic obstacles in mixed-sex groups

The Kenya Dairy Sector Competitiveness Programme (implemented by Land O'Lakes on behalf of USAID/Kenya) implemented several policies to reduce women's economic barriers to membership in dairy cooperatives. For example, they implemented a clause stipulating that funds for membership shares could be raised over time. They also mandated that the cooperative pay the same amount per litre of milk regardless of the delivery size, and that it sell all inputs at the same price regardless of the order size; this helped ensure that farmers with small-scale operations or lower purchasing power—such as many women farmers—would not be disadvantaged. Additionally, they called for allowing of "in kind" payments for milk, in the form of books, food, seedlings, and inputs, which helped to prevent men from "capturing" the income derived from sales (Farnworth, Kantor, Kruijssen, Longley, & Colverson, 2015).

Promising Experience: Single-sex producer groups

Other organisations have found success in protecting women's earning potential by creating women-only cooperatives. For

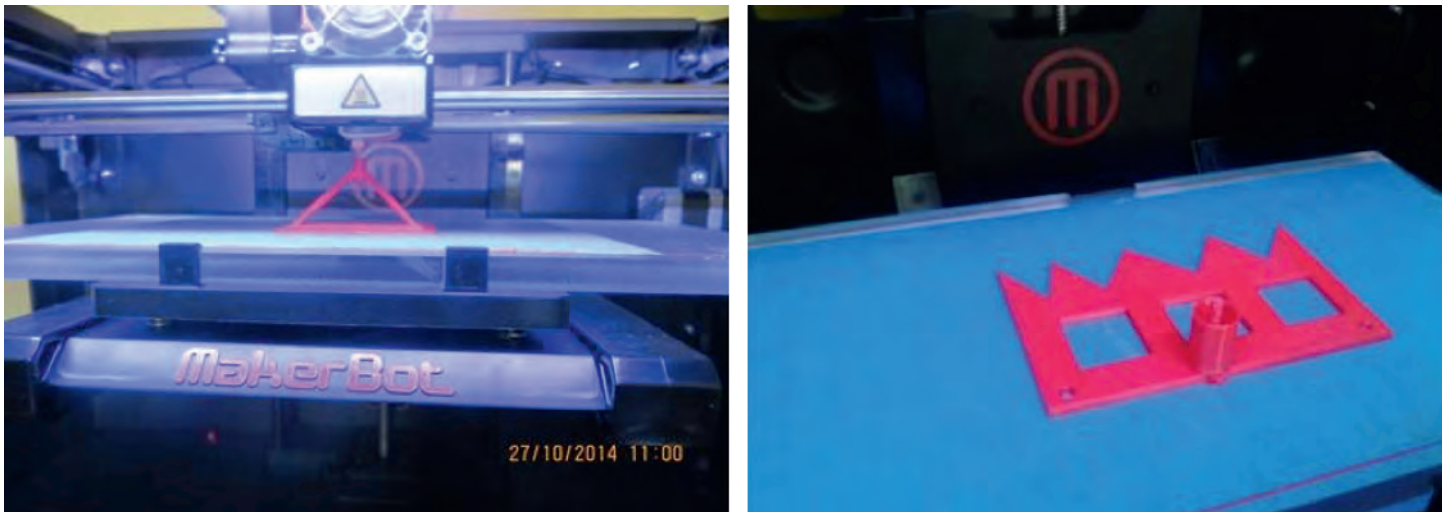

Figure 2: A 3D printer produces a weeding hoe designed by women farmers in Malawi as part of the 3D4AgDev initiative. *Photo: Zewdy Gebremedhin (www.ccafs.cgiar.org)*

example, in Indonesia, CARE created women-only poultry cooperatives, guiding the members through processes, such as creating a business plan and obtaining land. Women working in the poultry sheds earned daily wages that were three times higher than the average for women in the area, and local men even started welcoming women into their all-male poultry producer organisations because of their increased respect for the activities undertaken by women (Sundararajan & Prakash, 2012).

Promising Experiences: Changing social norms

In Indonesia, an NGO called LESMAN found that, to fit with social norms, only men should be active participants in existing producer groups. They therefore made a concerted effort to encourage women's participation in rice farmers' groups, for example by inviting women by name rather than issuing a general invitation. Group facilitators also made a conscious effort to ensure that women had a chance to speak, and special meetings were held to enable women to become accustomed to speaking in public. As a result of these efforts, the proportion of women participants in these groups increased from one-tenth to one-third, and women gained status as community organisers and leaders, and were even appointed to important local positions such as village chairpersons (Supeno, 2012).

A common strategy for encouraging women's participation in producer groups is establishing quotas. The bylaws of the Bukonzo Joint Cooperative in Uganda, for example, require that three out of five members of the groups' executive committee members be women, and that the executive board must also have a majority of women members (Baluku, 2012).

Best-fit Practice #5: Utilise gender-sensitive communication mechanisms

Agricultural information provided by RAS may not ever reach women farmers, for a variety of reasons. For example, information delivered in text format—such as printed materials or text messages delivered to mobile phones—may be less accessible for women than men because of the gender gap in literacy, as well as the gender gap in mobile phone ownership. Additionally, in many parts of Africa, the gendered gap in fluency in non-African languages (e.g., English, French, and Portuguese) may also make it more difficult for women to access information disseminated by RAS.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that cooperatives and other types of groups are accessible to farmers with small operations and/or low purchasing power, and that they provide equitable benefits to these farmers.
- Become familiar with the local context to determine whether mixed-sex or women-only groups would be most appropriate and effective.
- Do not limit cooperative membership to one member per household.
- Implement strategies and/or trainings to encourage women's participation in public meetings.
- Establish quotas and other policies mandating women's participation in groups.

Audio-based and video-based communication channels such as radio and television—though they facilitate access for illiterate populations—may also be difficult for women to access, since men are more likely to have the means to purchase (and thus, control) these devices and the means to operate them (batteries, electricity). A study in East Africa showed that even among women who have access to radios, reproductive responsibilities such as housework and childcare leave them little time and mental energy to absorb information transmitted over the radio (Myers, 2009). Lastly, women are also less likely than men to access the internet due to factors, such as limited mobility out-

Single-sex versus mixed-sex groups

Both mixed-sex and women-only cooperatives can help to effectively mainstream gender into value chains. To help decide which type of group to establish, it is essential to conduct a thorough gender analysis to become familiar with the local context. Manfre et al. (2013, p.13) detail potential upsides and downsides of each type of group:

"**Mixed-sex groups:** *Women in mixed-sex groups are able to overcome their own resource limitations by tapping into men's networks, resources, and information, which are often wider than women's (…) women's participation in mixed-sex groups is associated with better decision-making and improved resource management. Mixed-sex groups, however, often reproduce gendered patterns of behavior and resource distribution that limit women's voice and leadership";*

"**Single-sex groups:** *Single-sex groups can offer women more opportunities for empowerment and have been shown to build confidence and leadership skills…In Honduras, women expressed a preference for training with other women because men dominate discussion. Free of norms that influence how men and women interact with each other, women can work together to identify solutions to common constraints… Single-sex groups, however, risk reinforcing stereotypes about women (e.g., they are only interested in crops for home consumption) or inequalities in access to resources between men and women… Single-sex groups may be necessary in contexts with a high degree of gender segregation".*

side the home, limited access to mobile internet devices, cultural designations of internet cafés as "men's spaces", and less disposable income (Aina & Ajilore, 2012).

Rodriguez, Kulpavaropas, Annamalai, Wright, and Evans (2015) found that nearly a third of women farmers in Africa primarily receive agricultural information in person from extension agents or other government personnel; other popular (though less common) communication channels include printed media such as brochures or pamphlets, friends and family, radio, and websites. Tall, Kristjanson, Chaudhury, McKune, and Zougmore (2014) found that in rural areas of Senegal, women farmers preferred that agricultural information be delivered through SMS messages (in local languages), in written messages on blackboards displayed in their communities, through radio (at times of the day when they were not working in the fields), and through in-person information delivery (preferably by women); some women also reported that they could easily access agricultural information that was broadcast over mosque loudspeakers.

Promising Experiences: Combining ICTs with human interactions

The "Infolady" project in Bangladesh takes an innovative approach to reaching women and other vulnerable populations. In this project, rural women with few years of education are hired to deliver agricultural and health-related information and ICT services to people living in rural areas. These "Infoladies" receive a laptop that is pre-loaded with videos, photos, and other tips; alternatively, the laptop may connect to the internet using a USB modem. The Infoladies share information either during door-to-door visits or during group sessions in rural communities, making a concerted effort to reach women. Currently, there are around 60 Infoladies in six districts of Bangladesh, and they have directly reached over 600,000 people living in rural areas; another 1.3 million people have benefitted indirectly from the initiative (Infolady, 2016).

The M-Kilimo initiative in Kenya combines ICTs with personal interactions in a somewhat similar fashion. Created for farmers and extension agents, M-Kilimo operates a call centre staffed with agricultural experts who provide information in English, Swahili, and local languages on the topics of market price information, agricultural products and services, crop- and livestock-related information, weather forecasts, and other similar topics. The service is free for callers; they only pay the normal mobile usage rates for their calls (USAID, 2011). The programme received calls from around 45,000 farmers in its first 18 months of operation, 43% of whom were women (GSMA, 2010).

Other programmes have found success by showing videos on agricultural topics to groups of men and women farmers; examples include the Sustainable Tree Crops Programme in Ghana (David & Asamoah, 2011) and Digital Green in India (Harwin, 2013).

Other promising gender-sensitive communication channels

In many places, women prefer to receive information from female extension agents, although this is not true everywhere (Quisumbing & Pandolfelli, 2010). The Coffee Initiative project in Ethiopia was successful in recruiting a high number of female extension agents, thanks to several innovative tactics. For example, they advertised extension positions in areas where women tend to congregate, such as markets and churches; these advertisements explicitly stated that women were welcome to apply. Additionally, rather than using traditional interviews to select candidates for these positions, the project implemented an eight-day-long training with "teach-backs", and used this as their primary selection tool. This was done because women often do not perform as well in interviews as men do. Lastly, The Coffee Initiative supported female trainers by enhancing their maternity leave policies and by providing free childcare during training sessions (TechnoServe, 2013).

Alternatively, Poulsen, Sahko, McKune, Russo, & Ndiaye (2015) found that health clinics in rural Senegal could be a promising avenue for providing certain types of agricultural information—such as weather forecasts—to women farmers.

Recommendations:

- Use communication mechanisms that are accessible for low-literacy populations.
- Mitigate low technology literacy by combining ICT with in-person information delivery mechanisms.
- Provide information in a variety of languages, including local languages or dialects.
- Increase the number of female extension agents by using gender-sensitive recruitment tactics.

Best-fit Practice #6: Ensure gender sensitivity in capacity-building efforts

In many contexts, capacity-building needs will be different for men and women. For instance, because of lower schooling rates and less access to advisory services, women may have a higher need than men for basic literacy training, as well as orientations on basic crop management, storage, and marketing.

Promising Experiences: Literacy training as part of value chain intervention

USAID's Integrated Initiatives for Economic Growth in Mali programme (IICEM) recognised that low literacy rates among female programme participants were hampering their ability to benefit from the programme. IICEM therefore provided basic literacy and numeracy training to over 1,400 women participants, which increased the women's ability to conduct and record sales transactions, and therefore helped them to operate their businesses more effectively (Abt Associates, 2010).

Similar success in integrating literacy training for women as part of agricultural initiatives has been demonstrated in the Purchase for Progress programme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (WFP, 2014), and the Rural Women Striding Forward programme in Burkina Faso, Kenya, and Uganda (Global Fund for Women, 2016).

Best-fit Practice #7: Address root causes of gender inequality (Gender transformative approach)

Kantor, Morgan, and Choudhury (2015)[4] explain that "By not addressing the underlying causes of poverty and gender inequality, projects may produce superficial changes in the participation of women…that return to 'normal' after the project" (p. 297). For this reason, some recent programmes have sought to transform gender norms in order to promote more equitable relationships between women and men: in other words, they have used a gender-transformative approach (GTA). A GTA doesn't simply focus on the "visible symptoms" of gender inequality—such as differences in access to technology, land, or credit—but rather, it addresses the underlying social reasons for these inequalities; GTAs also attempt to change societies' understandings of acceptable behaviours for men and women. GTAs must operate on numerous scales in order to be effective, from the individual level all the way to organisational and governmental levels (see Figure 3).

Mechanisms used to implement GTAs in agricultural programming, as outlined by Cole et al. (2014, p.10), could include behaviour change communication (such as community theatre), "strategic use of evidence of the consequences of gender inequality", experiential learning approaches, collective action, and multi-stakeholder dialogue processes. Men's involvement and buy-in is critical to the success and sustainability of GTAs, and thus GTA activities should be implemented with both women and men.

Promising Experience: Gender transformation in Uganda's coffee value chain

The Gender Action Learning System (GALS) has been implemented with over 80,000 men and women farmers as part of Oxfam Novib's WEMAN programme in Uganda, Latin America, and Asia (Farnworth, Sundell, Nzioki, Shivutse, & Davis, 2013). In Uganda, the implementation of GALS tools with men and women coffee farmers helped to bring about a recognition that cultural norms seriously inhibit the economic and individual development of women and (by extension) communities and even entire regions. Participatory analyses as part of GALS shed light on the fact that women coffee farmers had very little control over their income; they furthermore showed that gender inequalities were the root cause of women's low productivity, which led to low quality and low prices at the farm level.

An evaluation of the GALS approach in Uganda found that it was successful in several arenas. For example, producers started paying more attention to coffee quality, and large traders started including women in their organisations. At the village level, men and women traders who were married to each other—who previously did not support each other's businesses—began to actively collaborate. In addition, women coffee sorters started to receive more money per day as a result of the recognition of their important contribution to quality control. Lastly, respondents reported that men started participating in reproductive tasks such as child care, drawing water, and cooking, which had never before been the case. Incidents of gender-based violence and men's alcohol consumption also both decreased (Farnworth, Sundell, Nzioki, Shivutse, & Davis, 2013).

Recommendations:

- Implement participatory research tools that use the GTA approach in order to uncover specific gender norms inhibiting women's agricultural production.
- Encourage men to support women's participation.

Further reading:

- Reemer, T., & Makanza, M. (2014). *Gender Action Learning System: Practical Guide for Transforming Gender and Unequal Power Relations in Value Chains.* Oxfam Novib.

Promising Experience: Fostering men's buy-in in Ethiopia's coffee industry

Although TechnoServe's Coffee Initiative project in Ethiopia did not directly address underlying gender norms, it was gender transformative in that it actively encouraged men to support women's involvement in the project. For example, Farmer Trainers were encouraged to explain to male farmers how their wives' participation in trainings would benefit them, and men were urged to bring their wives to meetings and trainings. Peer influence was fostered by encouraging community leaders to hold meetings to explain the importance of women's participation in the project; additionally, men who brought their wives to meetings were asked to explain to their peers why they had done so. By the end of the first phase of the project, over 30 percent of project participants were women. Lastly, in addition to encouraging women's physical presence at project activities, TechnoServe also expanded the types of activities that men and women performed: both men and women participants in The Coffee Initiative were trained in all of the coffee cultivation "best practices", regardless of

4 Kantor P., Morgan M. and Choudhury A. (2015). Amplifying Outcomes by Addressing Inequality: The Role of Gender-transformative Approaches in Agricultural Research for Development. In Gender, Technology and Development 19(3) 292-319. Asian Institute of Technology

whether these practices were traditionally considered "men's work" or "women's work".

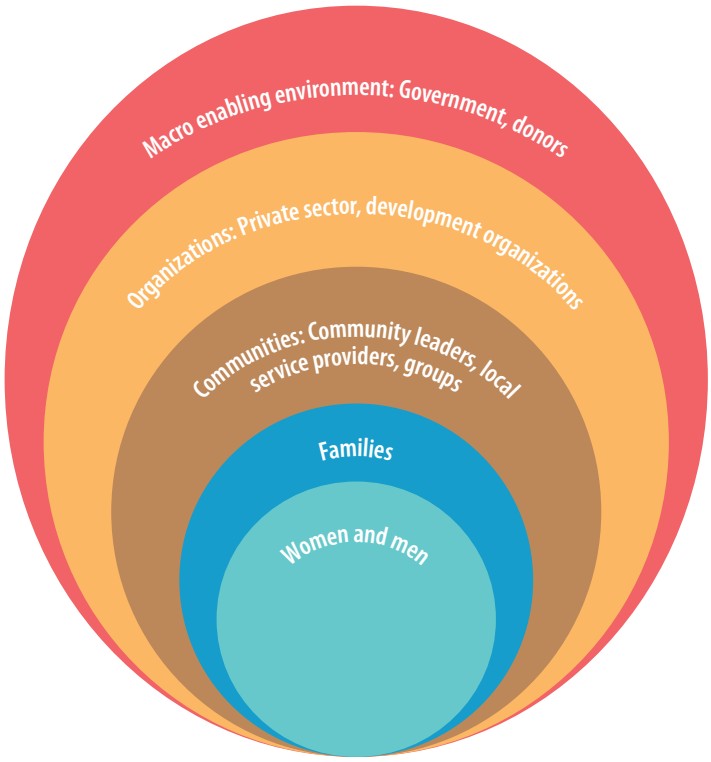

Figure 3: GTAs seek to foster change on several interconnected levels. (Source: Cole, Kantor, Sarapura, and Rajaratnam, 2014)[5]

Conclusion

Vulnerable populations, including many women, face numerous barriers to participating in and benefitting from agricultural value chain programming. For instance, these populations often have limited access to resources such as land, labour, capital, credit, technology, inputs, and information. In addition, reproductive responsibilities and social norms may limit the time that women have available to participate in development programmes, as well as the physical locations that are accessible to them. Low literacy, numeracy, language fluency, and technology literacy limit access to agricultural information. Additionally, underlying gender norms often restrict perceptions of what constitute acceptable roles, activities, and spaces for men and women.

Encouragingly, many value chain interventions have found promising ways to mitigate these challenges. For example, programmes that begin with a thorough gender analysis are much better positioned to target gendered opportunities and constraints throughout the life of the programme, especially if this is coupled with gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation efforts. Additionally, facilitating access to land, credit, inputs, and other resources can greatly improve the participation of women and other vulnerable populations. Programming can be responsive to time and mobility constraints by scheduling activities at times of the day that are convenient for women, and by providing on-site childcare, transportation or meal subsidies, or male chaperones; investment in time-saving technologies has also been proven to enhance women's agricultural productivity. Communication strategies should take into account low-literacy populations, especially by combining ICT programming with in-person services. Lastly, gender-transformative approaches can help both women and men identify and challenge underlying gender norms that may constrain agricultural activities.

Despite successes, many agricultural value chain programmes around the world continue to overlook the challenges facing rural women and vulnerable populations. Increased attention to these challenges must occur in order to enhance not only agricultural production, but also social justice and the realisation of basic human rights.

5 Cole SM, Kantor P, Sarapura S and Rajaratnam S. 2014. Gender-transformative approaches to address inequalities in food, nutrition and economic outcomes in aquatic agricultural systems. Penang, Malaysia: CGIAR Research Program on Aquatic Agricultural Systems. Working Paper: AAS-2014-42.

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Annex A: Recommendations for gender mainstreaming

Below is a list of all of the recommendations outlined in this report.

- Dedicate sufficient time to conduct a thorough gender analysis. If time allows, an analysis can be performed over several months to capture seasonal variations.
- Conduct gender-sensitive analysis throughout life of project (monitoring and evaluation)
- Utilise gender analyses as an opportunity to highlight women's "invisible" work and gaps in the value chain where women or men may not be active
- Use multiple rounds of data collection and ask participants for feedback to validate the data and to explore explanations underlying gender analysis findings
- Implement participatory research tools that use the GTA approach in order to uncover specific gender norms inhibiting women's agricultural production
- Where possible, formalize linkages between men's and women's agricultural activities
- Foster men's support of women's participation
- Implement strategies and/or trainings to encourage women's participation in public meetings (including leadership and self-esteem training)
- Assess whether mobility-related assistance is needed for women: assistance paying for transportation, provision of male chaperones, on-site childcare, etc.
- Become familiar with the local context to determine whether mixed-sex or women-only groups would be most appropriate and effective
- Establish quotas and other policies mandating women's participation in groups
- Do not limit cooperative membership to one member per household
- Ensure that cooperatives and other types of groups are accessible for farmers with small operations and/or low purchasing power, and that they provide equitable benefits to these farmers
- Facilitate access to resources such as land, access to credit/capital, inputs, etc.
- Investigate and invest in time- and labour-saving technologies that are specific to women's agricultural activities
- Use communication mechanisms that are accessible for low-literacy populations
- Increase the number of female extension agents by using gender-sensitive recruitment tactics
- Provide literacy and numeracy training where needed
- Provide information in a variety of languages, including local languages or dialects
- Mitigate low technology literacy by combining ICT programming with in-person information delivery mechanisms

Annex B: Study reviewers

Kathleen Colverson (Associate Director, IFAS Global [Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences], University of Florida)

Sandra Russo (Director, Office for Global Research Engagement, University of Florida)

Nargiza Ludgate (Chief Financial Officer, Livestock Systems Innovation Lab, University of Florida)

Andrea Bohn (Associate Director, INGENAES Project [Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services], University of Illinois)

Botir Dosov (Innovation Platform Coordinator, ICARDA-CA [International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas – Central Asia])

Hlami Ngwenya (International Development Consultant, GFRAS)

Andrew Kansungwi (Programme Officer, GIZ Malawi, Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture and Food Sector)

Sithembile Mkandawire (Programme Officer, GIZ Malawi, Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture and Food Sector)

Marco Hartmann (Coordination Unit, Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture and Food Sector, GIZ GmbH)

Natalie Ernst (Programme Officer, GFRAS)

Annex C: Questionnaire

1. Please give a brief general description of this project.
2. How was it determined that this strategy might be effective in mainstreaming gender?
3. Which parts of the value chain does this project impact? Are there certain parts which have more focus than others?
4. Does the project differ significantly between the different crops that are planted? What are these differences?
5. What challenges were experienced during the implementation of this project? Why do you think they occurred?
6. What successes did you experience during the implementation of this project? Why do you think they occurred?
7. What role did rural advisory services play in implementing this project?
8. Does this project have any direct impact on household nutrition?
9. What lessons have you learned from implementing this project? What recommendations do you have for organisations who might wish to implement a project like this?

Annex D: Workshop PowerPoint presentation

Presentation: Gender Mainstreaming in Agricultural Value Chains – Sept 29, 2016

Agenda

- Gender mainstreaming in ag value chains (30 minutes)
- Promising experiences in Malawi (30 mins)
- Discussion (15 minutes)
- Individual and group activities – What gender mainstreaming strategies can you implement where you work? (45 minutes)

Why should RAS mainstream gender?

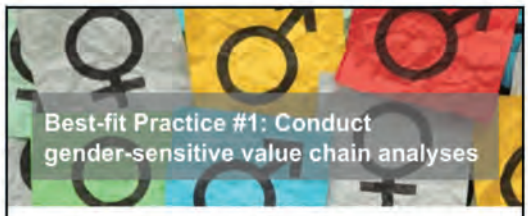
- Closing the "gender gap" will raise agricultural yields
- Many barriers facing women

Also...

- Essential to involve men
- Gender is not the only social characteristic that needs to be taken into account

"Best-fit" practices

- Embrace a variety of approaches and service providers
- Based on local conditions--no one-size-fits-all approach
- Value local and traditional knowledge



- Understand how and where men and women are involved in a particular value chain
- Not just a preliminary step; can begin the gender mainstreaming process

Best-fit practice #1: Gender analyses

Promising experiences

WorldFish in Zambia - Participatory gender analysis

GIZ & Oxfam GB in Nicaragua - Gender analysis led to "visibility" of women's work

1

Best-fit practice #1: Gender analyses

Recommendations

- Dedicate sufficient time
- Use participatory approaches
- Utilize analyses as an opportunity to highlight women's "invisible" work
- Conduct ongoing analysis throughout life of project

Best Practice #2: Enhance women's access to resources

In many contexts, women have limited access to land, labor, capital, credit, seeds, fertilizer, water, technologies, agricultural information, extension services, etc.

Best-fit practice #2: Enhance women's access to resources

Promising experience

SOL in Malawi - Linking men's and women's contracts

Sunseed Oil Ltd.

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Best-fit practice #2: Enhance women's access to resources

Recommendations

- Facilitate access to resources like land, access to credit/capital, inputs, etc.
- Formalize linkages between men's and women's agricultural activities
- Provide literacy and/or numeracy training

Best-fit Practice #3: Be responsive to time and mobility constraints

- Women spend much more time than men on reproductive tasks
- Social norms may limit places where women's presence is acceptable, or whether she can leave the house, etc.

Best-fit practice #3: Time & mobility constraints

Promising experiences

World Vegetable Center in Tanzania

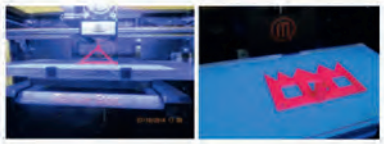
AVRDC The World Vegetable Center

Women-only cooperatives in Jordan

Presentation: Gender Mainstreaming in Agricultural Value Chains – Sept 29, 2016

Best-fit practice #3: Time & mobility constraints

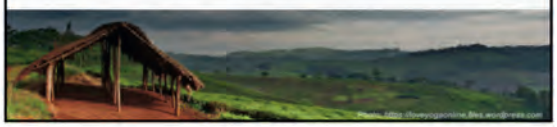
Promising experiences



Best-fit practice #3: Time & mobility constraints

Recommendations

- Provide assistance with transportation, provision of male chaperones, on-site childcare, etc.
- Investigate and invest in time- and labor-saving technologies that are specific to women's agricultural activities



Best Practice #4: Establish or improve gender-sensitive producer organizations

Possible barriers for women: lower purchasing power, cultural norms, restrictive membership policies

Best-fit practice #4: Producer organizations

Promising experiences

Kenya Dairy Sector Competitiveness Program - Mixed-sex producer groups

USAID | KENYA

Women-only poultry cooperatives in India

care

Best-fit practice #4: Producer organizations

Single-sex vs. mixed-sex groups

Single-sex groups

- Build confidence and leadership skills
- Do not need to "compete" with men during discussion, or for resources, etc.
- May be necessary in contexts with high gender segregation
- May reinforce stereotypes about women

Mixed-sex groups

- Women can tap into men's networks and resources
- May reproduce gendered patterns of behavior
- Women's voice and leadership may be limited

Best-fit practice #4: Producer organizations

Recommendations

- Ensure economic accessibility
- Weigh pros and cons of mixed-sex and same-sex groups
- Do not limit cooperative membership to one member per household
- Encourage women's participation in public meetings
- Establish quotas and other policies mandating women's participation

3

Presentation: Gender Mainstreaming in Agricultural Value Chains – Sept 29, 2016

Best-fit Practice #5: Utilize gender-sensitive communication mechanisms

Possible barriers: low literacy rates, low technology ownership and access, fluency in fewer languages than men, limited mobility

Best-fit practice #5: Communication strategies

Promising experiences

InfoLadies in Bangladesh

M-Kilimo call center in Kenya

KILIMO

Best-fit practice #5: Communication strategies

Recommendations

- Ensure accessibility for low-literacy populations
- Combine ICT programming with in-person services
- Provide info in a variety of languages

Best-fit Practice #6: Address root causes of gender inequality

- Known as "gender transformative approaches" (GTAs)
- Focus on challenging restrictive gender norms
- Build collaborative relationships between men and women

Best-fit practice #6: Gender transformative approaches

Promising experience

Gender Action Learning System (GALS) in coffee value chain in Uganda

Oxfam Novib

Questions/Comments

Annex E: List of workshop participants

	Total 30 (F= 23 and M= 07)				
	Name	**Gender**	**Country**	**Organisation**	**Contact**
1.	Ahou Linda Stephanie Goa née Konan	F	Togo	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH	ahou.konan@giz.de
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	Total 30 (F= 23 and M= 07)				
	Name	**Gender**	**Country**	**Organisation**	**Contact**
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20.	Samuel ABAH	M	Cameroon	Centre de formation Beka Hosseré	abadadaaba@yahoo.fr
21.	Sarah Njie	F	Cameroon	Bafia cooperative (farmer's organisation)	
22.	Sithembile Violet Austin Mkandawire	F	Malawi	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH	sithembile.mkandawire@giz.de
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30.	Zewdy Gebremedhin	F	Malawi	National Uni of Ireland	zewdy.g@gmail.com

Annex F: Methodology and outputs

Given the wealth of literature that currently exists regarding gender mainstreaming in agriculture, this study relied upon a literature review as the primary method of data collection. Most literature was obtained through the University of Florida library system by searching for key terms such as "gender mainstreaming", "agriculture", and "rural advisory services", with an eye toward papers that had been published within the last five years. Additional literature, especially case studies, were obtained through persons known to the author who have extensive experience working in this area and who shared publications about projects that they had personally been involved with (See Annex B for a list of people who reviewed and provided feedback on the study). Lastly, information about the Sunseed Oil Limited project in Malawi was obtained through correspondence with two of the project's Programme Officers: Andrew Kansungwi and Sithembile Mkandawire (See Annex C for the questionnaire used to gather data about this case).

The primary output for this endeavour, other than the study itself, was a workshop session that took place on September 29, 2016 during a two-day workshop entitled "Gender Mainstreaming in Value Chains – A workshop of the Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture and Food Sector in collaboration with GFRAS and RESCAR-AOC". The workshop session consisted of a presentation summarising the findings of this study (see Annex D), followed by a group activity in which participants identified concrete actions that they could personally take to improve gender mainstreaming in their respective projects. This workshop took place in Limbe, Cameroon from September 29-30, 2016. Nearly all the participants were engaged in GIZ's Green Innovation Centres programme in sub-Saharan Africa (see Annex E for a list of workshop participants).

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