



Overview

The key role played by women in agriculture was in the past largely unacknowledged in government statistics and decision-making. This situation has changed over the last two or three decades, and much has been achieved in giving recognition to the importance of women in the agricultural sector. The empowerment of women engaged in farming is gathering pace in many parts of the developing world.

The effect of global trends and mandates has been to give impetus to the search for a new model of rural development. The approach of governments and donors is increasingly to view rural development through the lens of 'sustainable rural livelihoods', a term used to direct all planned interventions in rural development to address the poverty issue.

The *Agriculture and Rural Development* manual identifies areas where progress is lagging and highlights the need for interventions. It includes recommendations for action in relation to five main gender issues that have emerged as being of particular significance in this sector:

- 1 equal access to land and water resources, and to credit and other support services;
- 2 gender differences in roles and activities;
- 3 gender and agricultural extension and research;
- 4 gender, agricultural biodiversity and commercialisation; and
- 5 women's empowerment and equal access to decision-making.

The appendix includes tools for gender impact assessment, policy analysis and implementation.

Points of entry

- The norm of unwaged work for women, men and children in agriculture needs to be addressed in the context of gender roles and responsibilities, access and control of resources and counting unwaged work in national accounts.
- Agriculture is heavily populated by women in subsistence farming, market vending and informal trading.
- Issues relating to global and regional free trade agreements include restructuring the agricultural sector and the impact of such restructuring on men and women.
- Advances are needed in the three areas of: land tenure, access to credit and technology, and the equal participation of women and men in policy-making and planning processes.

Barriers

- Recent advances may be under threat from such factors as trade liberalisation, the drive to commercialise agriculture and the retreat of government from rural development in many countries. These may create a situation where women's role reverts to being unrecognised and where gender-blind policies and programmes fail to address their needs.
- False assumptions are still being made in the underlying design of development schemes and projects about the roles and responsibilities of men and women.
- The feminisation of agriculture is a trend that has grown hand in hand with the feminisation of poverty.
- Recent changes are undermining the ability of many women to use and conserve increasingly scarce resources in a sustainable way.

What's in this module?

The module opens with an introductory session on international commitments (E1 'Rural women's rights'). Other activities focus on key issues for agriculture and rural development (E2 'Access to land and credit', E3 'Agricultural roles and responsibilities', E5 'Agricultural biodiversity'). Two examine processes for gender mainstreaming as applied to this sector: gender-sensitive consultation and decision-making processes (E4 'Village meeting role play') and gender impact policy assessment (E6 'Gender and agricultural policy').

Checklist

- Make sure you are familiar with the contents of the *GMS Agriculture and Rural Development* manual before you start to deliver the training activities in this module.
- The Toolkit Action Guide Unit 4 'Using the GMS sector manuals' will give you an overview and help you find out what is in the manual and where, and which sections will be most useful.
- Look through the 'To help you choose' table in the Introduction to this Trainer's Guide for activities, topics, methods and handouts from other modules and sectors that you can adapt to fit your purposes.
- Always start planning your training with an analysis of your learners and their needs.
- Use the 'How to' briefings in the Introduction to this Trainer's Guide to help you design your training.

Background

Besides *Agriculture and Rural Development*, relevant manuals are *Development Planning, Trade and Industry*, and *Science and Technology*.



ACTIVITY E1

Rural women's rights

Aim To review international commitments to the rights of rural women by looking at CEDAW

Outcomes

- Describe how far rural women enjoy the rights defined by CEDAW
- Identify barriers
- Suggest measures to overcome barriers

Time 1 1/2 hours

Materials Handout E.1 'CEDAW', flipchart

Steps

- 1 Remind the group that their government has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This addresses the issue of rural women in article 14. Distribute copies of the Handout E.1 and allow time to read it or read it out. (10 mins)
- 2 Remind participants that every four years, governments have to report to the body that monitors the treaty (the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) on the progress they have made in putting the convention into effect. Divide participants into five small groups and ask them to imagine that their government's CEDAW report is due. They have the opportunity to have an input into the report as it relates to rural women. They have been asked to look at two questions: (a) to what extent do rural women enjoy the rights listed? And (b) what barriers exist to that enjoyment (legal, cultural, etc.)? Ask them to write their responses on two flipchart sheets. (40 mins)
- 3 Bring the groups back together and have them post their flipcharts around the room. Ask them to walk around the room and read each other's ideas. Select the two groups that seem most promising to report back and give the other groups the chance to comment. (20 mins)
- 4 Ask participants to imagine now that they are members of the CEDAW committee. What measures can they suggest that the government could introduce to address these barriers? Write their responses on flipchart. (15 mins)
- 5 Sum up that many of the provisions of the convention have yet to be put into effect because of some of the barriers identified. However, as they have seen, there are steps that can be taken. Tell them they will be looking at this in more detail in the next activity.

CEDAW

Most members of the Commonwealth are States Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This convention has as its explicit objective the principle of equality between women and men.

Article 14 focuses on the rights of rural women. Governments that have ratified the convention agree to take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles that they play in the economic survival of their families. They agree to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas to ensure that women participate in and benefit from rural development. In particular, they agree to ensure rural women the right:

- 1 To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;
- 2 To have access to adequate health-care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning;
- 3 To benefit directly from social security programmes;
- 4 To obtain all kinds of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy as well as, inter alia, the benefits of all continuing and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency;
- 5 To organise self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self-employment;
- 6 To participate in all community activities;
- 7 To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land resettlement schemes;
- 8 To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transportation and communications.

Other articles of the convention that are particularly relevant to the situation of rural women include:

- Article 13b, which relates to women's rights to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit.
- Article 16h, which ensures women the same rights as men in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property.



ACTIVITY E2

Access to land and credit

Aim To identify problems that face women in accessing land and credit and to develop strategies to tackle them

Outcomes

- Identify barriers
- Suggest and evaluate possible strategies
- Relate to personal action

Time 1 1/4 hours

Materials Flipchart and markers

Steps

- 1 Tell the group that this activity looks at one of the main gender issues in agriculture: the lack of access that women in many countries have to land and credit. The CEDAW convention (see Activity E1), specifically talks about women's rights to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit, and about women having the same rights as men to own, manage and dispose of property.
- 2 Draw two columns on the flipchart and head them 'Problems' and 'Strategies'.
- 3 Ask the participants for ideas on the reasons why women have difficulty accessing land and credit. Write them in the first column. (20 mins)
- 4 Brainstorm strategies to deal with the obstacles and write them in the second column. Write down everything that is suggested. (20 mins)
- 5 Group the ideas that are similar and eliminate overlaps. Ask each participant to choose the strategy that best seems both effective and 'doable'. (e.g. 'pass a law to ban discrimination in inheritance' may be effective, but is there the political will to carry it out?) Use a show of hands to select the top choice. Discuss how this could be made a reality. (20 mins)
- 6 At the end encourage participants to state how they personally could help put the chosen strategy into effect.

Notes

- The 'Problems' might include versions of the following:
 - discriminatory inheritance/property laws
 - customary laws in force at the local level (that conflict with more equitable national laws)
 - resettlement and land redistribution policies that favour men
 - better land allocated to cash crops
 - women's traditional land use not recognised when land titles are issued (given to male heads of household)
 - because they don't own land, women lack collateral to obtain credit
 - banks may insist on male signatory to loan
 - lack of small-scale services such as micro-credit
 - lack of information about credit availability

ACTIVITY E3

Agricultural roles and responsibilities

Aim To explore the gender division of labour in rural environments

Outcomes

- Describe the different roles and responsibilities of men and women
- Consider the implications for planning and development of programmes

Time 45 mins

Materials Handout E.3 'Roles and responsibilities', flipchart

Steps

- 1 Remind participants that agricultural extension officers or representatives of development agencies have often gone to a community and consulted only with the men. Ask them for an example of the kind of results this may have (e.g. the placing of wells or taps in sites inconvenient for women even though they are usually the ones collecting the water). Point out that women's and men's roles and responsibilities in rural environments differ.
- 2 Give each participant a copy of the handout. Divide participants into small groups. Ask them to complete the grid by writing in what they think were the different roles and responsibilities that women and men have in each work area. (15 mins)
- 3 Bring the group back together and discuss the completed grids. (10 mins)
- 4 Broaden the discussion to look at the gender division of labour and women's triple role (productive, reproductive and community management). (10 mins)
- 5 Sum up that, because women and men have different roles and responsibilities, it is very important that both are consulted in the planning and development of programmes. Agricultural policy also needs to address women's participation, production and access to resources, inputs, support services and market outlets.

Notes

- Responses might include the following:
 - Livestock: female – small animals (chickens, goats); male – large animals (cattle)
 - Crops: female – subsistence crops for household food; male – cash crops for export
 - Wood/forest products: female – fuel, fodder for animals, medicinal uses; male – use or sell for building materials
 - Water: female – household use, sanitation; male – irrigation, for animals
- See *Agriculture and Rural Development* manual (p 20) for a discussion of the gender division of labour.



Roles and responsibilities

HANDOUT

E.3

| | Women | Men |
|----------------------|-------|-----|
| Livestock | | |
| Crops | | |
| Wood/forest products | | |
| Water | | |
| Other | | |

ACTIVITY E4

Village meeting role play

Aim To explore issues around women's empowerment and access to decision making

Outcomes

- Through role play, to experience the frustration of being ignored as a woman in decisions that concern you
- To relate the role play to real-life situations
- To suggest ways to involve women in decision-making

Time 1 1/4 hours

Materials Role cards, flipchart with map

Steps

- 1 Tell the group that you are going to do a role-play and ask for five volunteers. Take them out of the room and give them their role cards. Allow them a few minutes to think about their role. Divide the remaining group into three groups of 'women' from three villages and give them their role cards. Ask them to read the statements, then discuss in their 'village groups'. They should then hide the papers and not reveal their identity until asked to do so. (10 mins)
- 2 Invite the five volunteers to come back in and sit at the table, the three 'headmen' on one side. They introduce themselves. Explain the purpose of the meeting (see role cards) and that you will stop the role play occasionally by clapping your hands. After each of the five has spoken and a discussion has started, clap your hands and inform them that the audience is made up of women from the villages. Then tell them to continue. After a few minutes, if they have not consulted any of the 'women', clap your hands again and tell them to do so. Make sure they consult at least one woman from each village. After the consultation, if they return to their discussion as before, stop the role play after a few minutes (40 mins)
- 3 Ask the 'woman' from each village to say how they felt being excluded, not consulted, and bound by 'cultural rules'. Allow them to express frustration and anger. Look at differences in how the 'women' interpreted cultural norms. Ask the five volunteers for their reactions in turn. How did they feel about consulting the 'women'? If it hasn't come out in the role-play, ask why no-one discussed the design of the well (described on the role cards). Explain that it might not have been used wherever it was placed because of the design of the water vessels. Point out the difficulty of finding out useful information – such as what women use water for and how this affects their livelihoods – when the agenda is already set. (20 mins)
- 4 In large or small groups discuss the following: (a) have you ever seen a situation like this in real life? (b) what could be done to overcome it? (15 mins):

Notes

- This activity is adapted from Williams et al, 1994.
- Before the session, prepare the role cards. Draw a map of the villages on flipchart paper and display it where everyone can see it. Arrange a table with two chairs on one side and three on the other in the centre of the room.



ACTIVITY E4

Role cards

Development worker

- There is a lot of sickness in the area, which comprises three linked villages: Kalongo, Ikutha and Mwingi. Much of this is caused by contaminated water. Your agency has great expertise in providing water pumps that are hygienic and efficient. The pumps raise large amounts of water quickly and efficiently and have a flat concrete surround.
- There are only three places where it is technically possible to site the well: X, Y and Z. You favour X because it is nearer to the road and it would be easier to bring supplies.
- You have to liaise with the government and you are in contact with their department of water affairs. Your agency would like to consult with the community. The government department has been very slow but has at last set up a community meeting to discuss the issue.

Government worker

- You are the government worker in the department of water affairs. You are very happy that a foreign agency is willing to put in a water pump since there is a great need in the area and the government has limited funds.
- The foreign agency has said they want to talk to community leaders, so you have been obliged to set up this meeting. However, the government does not want foreign interference in political matters and you have to ensure there is no trouble stirred up in the villages.
- You know that three possible sites have been mentioned. You favour site Y because it is furthest from any other supply. This fits in with overall planning for the country by your department.

Kalongo village headman

- You are one of the community leaders (headmen) from Kalongo. You have been informed that a water pump will be installed that will supply three villages (Kalongo, Ikutha, Mwingi). You are very glad and want the pump sited as near as possible to your village.
- You have heard that one of the possible sites is Z, which is at the outskirts of your village. You don't think this makes sense as you want it put at the centre, which is near your home. Also, Kalongo is the largest village and therefore the greatest number of people will benefit. Furthermore, you have worked hard for the people and want to prove to them that you are a good leader by bringing development to them.
- You want to know what the pump is like and how it will benefit you.

ACTIVITY E4

Mwingi village headman

- You are one of the community leaders (headmen) from Mwingi. You have been informed that a water pump will be installed that will supply three villages (Kalongo, Ikutha, Mwingi). You are very glad and want the pump sited as near as possible to your village.
- You think the pump should be placed at the centre of your village because your village is between the other two villages so everyone will be able to use it. Also, if the water is there you might be able to take the produce to it without much difficulty.

Village women

- You are the women. One of your tasks is to provide water for the family. You collect it from different places in the river depending on the time of year. You have to travel many kilometres to get it, particularly if the rains have not been good. You use pots with rounded bases.
- Some of you come from Kalongo, the biggest village and the one nearest the river. You have vegetable gardens and use the water for irrigation. Some of you also have fruit trees. You sell the surplus after feeding your family.
- Some of you come from Ikutha. You have the biggest problem with water because you are furthest from the river. It takes you three hours to walk to the river during dry season.
- Some of you are from Mwingi. In addition to your other work, you sometimes go to town to sell surplus crops or other things in the market. You can only grow vegetables for part of the year as otherwise it is too dry.
- It is not considered proper for you to speak to strange men in public, or to contradict your husband or leader publicly, or to volunteer an opinion.
- There will be a community meeting for the community leaders to discuss the siting of a new water pump. You can attend if you are not too busy.
- DO NOT reveal your identity until asked to do so.



ACTIVITY E5

Agricultural biodiversity

Aim To emphasise women's role in supporting agricultural biodiversity and food security and discuss the threat to this posed by genetic engineering

Outcomes

- Identify reasons women are critical to agricultural biodiversity and food security
- Discuss issues raised by genetic engineering and a focus on cash crops

Time 1 hour

Materials Handout E.5 'Agriculture, biodiversity and food security', flipchart with drawing, index cards (or 3 or 4 pieces of paper approx 2" by 5") for each group, tape.

Steps

- 1 Remind the group that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) stresses "the significant roles that rural women play in the economic survival of their families".
- 2 Give out copies of the Handout. Allow participants time to read it. (5 mins)
- 3 Divide participants into small groups. Based on the handout and their own experiences, they should come up with at least three reasons why women are critical to agricultural biodiversity and food security. They should write each on a card. (20 mins).
- 4 Bring the group back together. Ask someone from one of the groups to bring up a card. Have her/him read it out and then stick it on the side of the circle (like a petal). Ask another group to come up with a different point, read out the card, and stick it next to the first card around the circle. Continue until all the reasons have been given and stuck up. (20 mins)
- 5 Explain that the flower represents the vital role of women in biodiversity and food security and how these need to be protected from commercialisation.
- 6 End with a discussion on some of the other issues brought out by the article. How are biodiversity and food security threatened by genetic engineering? By a focus on cash crops?

Notes

- On a flipchart sheet, draw a stalk with a circle on the top (like a lollipop). This will become a flower with the participants' 'petals' so make the circle big enough to take them all.

Agriculture, biodiversity and food security

As predominantly small farmers, women have been largely responsible for activities such as the selection, improvement and adaptation of plant varieties. This has both supported and increased agricultural biodiversity, defined by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) as “the variety and variability of animals, plants and micro-organisms that are necessary to maintain the structure, processes and key functions of the agricultural ecosystem for, and in support of, food production and food security”. Women are most frequently solely responsible for the household’s subsistence food production and the food security of the family. The partnership between women and biodiversity has kept the world fed through history, and it needs to be preserved and promoted to ensure food security.

Typically, rural development efforts focus on incorporating ‘modern’ scientific approaches and technologies into policies and programmes, primarily through the transfer of technologies, such as the introduction of hybrid cash crops. For many socio-cultural, economic and historical reasons, these efforts tend to favour better-off rural men, and marginalise poorer rural women. Often, because these crops are not native, they are outside women’s knowledge. Cash crops also compete with food crops and receive priority in terms of land and capital investment and labour. The threat to biodiversity is a real one: over the last century the rapid expansion of industrial and Green Revolution agriculture, with relatively few crop varieties cultivated in monocultures, has resulted in the disappearance of more than 75 per cent of agricultural crop varieties. At the same time, a wide range of unharvested species and ‘wild’ foods essential for food provision, particularly in times of crisis, have also disappeared. There is a risk of losing the diverse food production systems that conserve farmers’ varieties of crops and breeds of domestic animals that form the genetic pool for food and agriculture in the future.

The activities of multinational corporations, promoting patented technologies developed through genetic modification, also pose a threat. While it has become clear that in many countries women comprise the bulk of the labour in agriculture, little has been done practically to ensure that women and their indigenous (or local) knowledge are included in key decision-making processes related to technology definition, development and adaptation. This has far-reaching and potentially harmful implications not only for the broader socio-economic environments, but also for the conservation and sustainable utilisation of agricultural biodiversity.

Genetic engineering is altering the way that agriculture is practised. Its most widespread application is herbicide resistance, that is, the breeding of crops to be resistant to herbicides. When introduced to farming systems in developing countries, this technology leads to increased use of agri-chemicals thus adding to environmental problems. Also, what are weeds for the producers of herbicides are food, fodder and medicine for women. In India, women use 150 different species of plants for vegetables, fodder and health care. In West Bengal, 124 ‘weed’ species collected from rice fields have economic importance for farmers. In the Expana region of Veracruz, Mexico, peasants utilise about 435 wild plant and animal species of which 229 are eaten. The spread of herbicide resistant crops would destroy this diversity and the value it provides to farmers. It would also undermine the soil conservation functions of cover crops and crop mixtures, thus leading to accelerated soil erosion.

Another issue is that women farmers do not generally buy seeds to grow basic foods but rather save them from one year to the next, selecting those that show desirable traits, such as hardier plants that are resistant to disease. Intellectual property rights (IPRs) on seeds have the potential for making seed saving and seed exchange illegal. The attempt to prevent farmers from saving seed is not just being made through new IPR laws, but also through the new genetic engineering technologies. A seed has already been patented which has been genetically engineered to ensure that it does not germinate on harvest, thus forcing farmers to buy seed at each planting season.

Genetic engineering and IPRs can rob women of their creativity, innovation and decision-making power in agriculture. In place of women farmers deciding what is grown in fields and fed to families, agriculture based on globalisation, genetic engineering and corporate monopolies on seeds has the potential to establish a food system and worldview in which global corporations control what is grown in the fields and what is eaten. In contrast, it is the diversity of local knowledge systems and production systems that has traditionally sustained subsistent family farming strategies where women in the developing world continue to play a central role in food security.



ACTIVITY E6

The gender impacts of government agricultural policy

Aim To assess government policy related to gender equality in the agriculture and rural development sector

Outcomes

- Evaluate the gender perspective of government agricultural policy
- Suggest entry points for possible interventions

Time 1 hour

Materials Handouts E.6a 'Gender and agricultural policy' and E6b 'Agricultural extension policy'

Steps

- 1 Review with participants the previous activities in this module have that looked at the importance of women in agriculture, and how men and women have different roles and needs.
- 2 Explain that this activity assesses the gender impacts of government policy. Tell them that to reduce gender inequities in the agriculture and rural development sectors, government policies, plans, programmes and projects need to have a gender perspective. Depending on the interest/experience of the group, give out copies of handout E.6a or E.6b. Go through it asking participants the questions. Encourage as many participants as possible to have an input. Ask for examples to support their responses. (40 mins)
- 3 When all the questions have been answered, ask participants to assess how gender-sensitive they think the existing policies/programmes are. If not very, what would be a useful place to make an intervention to improve the situation? (10 mins)
- 4 Sum up, emphasising that one of the reasons for a lack of gender sensitivity is the limited role played by women in forming policy. At the end encourage participants to make the needed interventions that they identified.

Notes

- You need to be familiar with the government's policies and programmes.
- Alternative activity: divide participants into two groups and give each one of the handouts. They could then report back to the plenary on the group's findings. This activity would take longer.

HANDOUT
E.6a

Gender and agricultural policy

- Does government policy on agriculture:
 - incorporate equality and equity measures for women in agriculture, taking into account their interests, needs and priorities?
 - recognise differences between women and men farmers?
 - recognise differences in needs and priorities of women farmers from different categories of household, agriculture sub-sectors and agro-economic zones?
 - provide framework future planning, programming and resource allocation?
 - explore local level resource allocations?
- Were women and men equally involved in the development of the policy:
 - at ministerial level?
 - at the level of agricultural extension?
 - at the research level?
 - at the level of rural farming communities?
- Has the government taken steps to review and amend existing policies of the ministry of agriculture to include an explicit acknowledgement of the role of the ministry and its agencies in advancing gender equality and equity in agriculture?
- What steps have been taken to ensure that projects/programmes reflect the needs, interests and priorities of both women and men in agriculture?
- What measures have been taken by the government to develop rural-based agro-industries and entrepreneurs to improve the agricultural productivity of women beneficiaries, including the production of marketable quality products, and to enable them to undertake profitable economic enterprises and increase their income?
- What concrete actions have been taken to increase women's access to information, institutional credit and other agricultural inputs to increase their productivity and income?
- Are there any institutional mechanisms to promote collaborative programmes and linkage with other government agencies, relevant NGOs, training and research organisations and the private sector to enable the ministry of agriculture and related government and parastatal agencies to address gender issues in agriculture in a more comprehensive and co-ordinated way?
- What measures have been taken to increase the availability of sex-disaggregated data in the ministry of agriculture and related agencies including extension departments, NGOs and research institutes?
- To what extent do women-in-agriculture programmes include components that create an awareness of gender issues and concerns?
- Have any in-service or staff development training workshops addressed these issues?



Agricultural extension policy



Availability: Are extension services equally available to female and male beneficiaries?

Access: Do female and male beneficiaries have open access at all levels of extension services? Is there any conflict between policy and cultural practices with regard to taking advantage of such access?

Eligibility criteria: Do any requirements discriminate against female or male beneficiaries? Are there different provisions made for female/male beneficiaries that would favour one over the other?

Participation: Is there any conflict between policy and cultural practices with regard to participation of female/male farmers at production level?

Human resources: Have technical resource persons received training in gender analysis/planning? Do the curricula of agriculture education programmes reflect the importance of this issue in the preparation of extension workers for work at village level?

Financial resources: What is the nature of the financial support provided for extension? Is it government-supported, cost-sharing or privately funded?

Decision-making: How is resource use determined? Are women and men equally involved in decision-making on resource allocations? Are there mechanisms in place for monitoring gender policy?

Achievement/impact: With respect to agriculture-related work, how does the distribution of economic resources and power, both within households and in the wider society, impact on the life conditions and economic and social roles of women and men?



Use this space to make notes