



## Gender mainstreaming as a key strategy for building resilient livelihoods

### Increase the resilience of both men and women's livelihoods to threats and crises

#### → The gender dimensions of natural and human-induced disasters

Women and men play specific and complementary roles in agriculture and food and nutrition security, which must be taken into account in efforts to build the resilience of their livelihoods. In most countries, women have less access to productive resources, services and employment opportunities than men. This gender gap is found for many assets, inputs and services such as land, livestock, labour, education, information services, and technology, all affecting their capacity to protect their communities from crises. While men account for the majority of direct casualties during wartime, for example, women and children suffer more from displacement, reduced access to services and assistance, and loss of livelihoods. Moreover, the burden of work for women and girls increases during and after disasters. Responsible for securing fuelwood, water and fodder, they spend increasing time in these activities and are often exposed to heightened protection risks. Addressing the differences between men and women in policies and programmes is essential for building resilient livelihoods for all.

#### → How FAO contributes to empowering women as agents of resilience building

- **By supporting the development of policies and programmes in disaster risk reduction (DRR)** that address the specific vulnerabilities of women and men, based on participatory and gender-sensitive processes.
- **By enhancing women's access to decision-making at community level** through collective action (farmer field schools, junior farmer field and life schools, community listeners' clubs) to strengthen technical skills and raise gender awareness.
- **By disseminating technologies and practices** that prevent and mitigate disaster impact, while reducing women's work burden.
- **By increasing women's access to information and training** on how to prevent and mitigate the risk of food insecurity through agricultural extension services.
- **By increasing women's access to productive resources and assets**, including land and livestock, to safeguard against shocks and crises.

#### → Key facts and figures

*Women comprise 43% of the agricultural labour force in developing countries and work on average longer hours than men.*

*In developing countries, between 10 and 20% of all land holders are women.*

*Worldwide, women access less than 10% of agricultural extension services.*

*After the food price crisis of 2007-08, women-headed households were 1.6 times more likely to be food insecure than those headed by men.*

#### → References

*FAO (2011): State of Food and Agriculture 2010-2011. Women in Agriculture.*

*FAO & IFPRI (2014): Gender in Agriculture. Closing the Knowledge Gap.*

*FAO (2014): Women's resilience to food price volatility: A policy response.*



## Unleashing the potential of women and girls to become agents of resilience

It is widely acknowledged that reducing gender inequality is an important part of the solution to end global hunger. The 2011 State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) report showed that by providing equal access to productive resources, services and employment opportunities to men and women producers, agricultural production can be considerably increased, with a significant reduction in the number of undernourished people in the world. Women play a major role in food and nutrition security through their multitude of roles and capacities as farmers, innovators, and entrepreneurs. We need to benefit from the potential of both women and men to build resilient rural livelihoods.

## Capitalizing on good experiences

By building and upscaling lessons learned, FAO turns knowledge into action. Below are three examples of different strategies that FAO has employed to invest in women's expertise and leadership to build resilient livelihoods.

### → Women's leadership in disaster risk reduction

Rural livelihoods in **Kenya** are affected by a multitude of shocks, such as unpredictable weather patterns, drought and animal diseases. Through a joint FAO/WFP/IFAD project aimed at empowering women in resilience building and disaster risk reduction, women were trained and equipped as community-based vaccinators to strengthen animal disease control and reduce bird deaths, thus enhancing food security with minimal inputs and little space. The project also succeeded in introducing drought-resistant seed varieties, reducing pests and diseases affecting vegetables, increasing household incomes (4-fold in some households), diversifying family diets, and increasing women's access to local decision-making structures.



### → Trees for resilience

During the last three decades, the arrival in **Pakistan** of Afghan refugees and their livestock has put tremendous pressure on forests and land resources for farming and grazing. This, coupled with prolonged drought has created fodder and fuelwood shortages, increasing women's heavy work burden.

Although women contribute significantly to the agriculture sector, extension services are traditionally geared towards men. FAO engaged women extension workers to provide training in tree nursery management and entrepreneurship through Women Open Schools, building on their local knowledge and expertise. This approach has resulted in increased incomes and reduced work burden by increasing access to firewood and fodder for the participating households.



### → The Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE)

The SAFE initiative addresses the multi-sectoral challenges linked to fuel access, production and use in crisis settings. SAFE activities are ongoing in Ethiopia, Kenya, Myanmar, South Sudan and Sudan. As part of the SAFE activities, FAO introduced fuel-efficient stoves and practices to reduce the need for fuelwood, and thus the protection risks that women and girls face when venturing into unsafe territories in search of fuelwood to cook food for their families.



### → More information

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#### On resilience good practices:

- [KORE@fao.org](mailto:KORE@fao.org)
- [www.fao.org/in-action/kore/good-practices/en/](http://www.fao.org/in-action/kore/good-practices/en/)

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