



Food and Agriculture
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Gender transformative approaches for food security and nutrition



GOOD PRACTICE Gender Household Approach

PREPARED BY

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SECTION 1

OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

Name of the methodology**Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (HRNS) Gender Household Approach****Countries with implementation experience**

- **East Africa:** Ethiopia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania
- **West Africa:** Côte d'Ivoire

Start/end date

2010 – ongoing

Lead organization sponsoring the development and implementation of the methodology

The non-profit foundation Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (HRNS) was established by Michael R. Neumann and his family as an independent organization in 2005.

The implementation of the HRNS Gender Household Approach has been supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Agricultural Business Initiative Trust, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and International Coffee Partners (ICP).

Purpose of the methodology and the domains of gender inequality that are addressed

The purpose of the methodology is to promote farming as a family business. In implementing the HRNS Gender Household Approach, the main objectives include: joint decision making and planning in smallholder farming households; the active participation of women in training activities, and the inclusion of women in leadership positions in farmer organizations.

The approach addresses key domains of gender inequality including:

- unequal decision making within the household and communities;
- uneven access to and control over resources;
- imbalanced labour distribution;
- low levels of participation by women in trainings and skill development;
- low levels of participation by women in the leadership of farmer organizations; and
- lack of role models for youth.

Contribution of the methodology to wider development/organizational/project goals

HRNS implements hands-on projects to improve the working and living conditions of smallholder farming families and enhance their economic and social development. Sustainable practices and the responsible use of natural resources are also promoted together with strategies to adapt to climate change. This is done through farmer field schools linked to producer organizations that are set up with support from HRNS. These objectives cannot be achieved if there are gender inequalities in households and within farmers groups.

The HRNS Gender Household Approach plays a key role in addressing the gender inequalities at the household level. Households make plans and decisions jointly on the use of their income. This enhances the profitability of household farming, improves livelihoods and strengthens resilience to climate changes or market shocks. The HRNS Gender Household Approach is not a stand-alone intervention. It is integrated into initiatives to improve livelihoods through farmer training on good agricultural practices and the establishment of professional farmer organizations.

Target group

The approach targets couples from smallholder coffee farming households who are members of producer organizations. It has also been successfully implemented in interventions that target youth.

SECTION 2

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Key entry points for applying the methodology

HRNS supports the setting up of producer organizations at the village level. They then form cooperatives, each comprising approximately 20 producer organizations.

There are three entry point for this intervention.

- At the household level, interventions target smallholder couples who are members of producer organizations through couples' seminars.
- At the community level, interventions provide sensitization through dialogue and drama shows.
- In farmer organizations, interventions work specifically with the leadership of cooperatives to address gender inequalities and increase female representation.

In addition, individual women are identified to participate in leadership training. These women already hold leadership positions in producer organizations or cooperatives, or are considered to be female 'change agents', and actively participate in farmer field school sessions.

Implementing partners

HRNS has local offices in Ethiopia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda that implement the HRNS Gender Household Approach.

Process of and criteria for selecting facilitators/champions/mentors

Champions (couples), who are referred to as 'change agents', are selected from the membership of the producer organization. After participating in a couples' seminar, two couples from each producer organization are chosen for further training, monitoring and support in their journey to improved joint household planning and decision making. The couples either volunteer or are selected randomly.

Training of facilitators/champions/mentors

Once a couple has been selected to become a change agent, they participate in change agent training. Topics include visioning, planning, joint decision making, counselling, conducting household visits, and the roles and responsibilities of change agents.

This is followed by project staff visiting each change agent's household to support them in developing their household visions and plans. Refresher sessions are conducted during self-assessment meetings.

They receive regular coaching and mentoring from the project's gender officer and/or farmer field school facilitators in order to support other households to overcome gendered inequalities.

SECTION 3

IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

Key steps in the implementation cycle

— **Step 1: Conducting a gender analysis to understand the gender issues in the area, develop suitable strategies and align tools**

The gender analysis is usually carried out by the in-house HRNS gender expert who is familiar with this work and has introduced the approach in several countries.

— **Step 2: Training project staff and management**

The training on gender awareness raising and the HRNS Gender Household Approach enhances the competences of the implementing organization and project staff and management to effectively implement the approach. This training is followed by continued support and additional coaching for field staff of the implementing organization (HRNS).

— **Step 3: Introducing the HRNS Gender Household Approach to leaders of farmer organizations, producer organizations and cooperatives and afterwards to producer organizations at the village level in order to engage and work with coffee farming households**

Sensitization meetings are held at the cooperatives to address gender inequalities in leadership structures and support the implementation of the approach. Leaders of farmer organizations are encouraged to introduce criteria for the registration of members that promote gender equality (e.g. not only registering the household head who is usually a man but also the spouse; scheduling meetings at times that are favourable for female and male members; and including women in their leadership).

— **Step 4: Conducting couples' seminars** (three to five hours)

Couples' seminars, which are conducted with members of the producer organization, form the building block of the approach. Members are encouraged to come with their spouse. Participants identify existing inequalities by creating activity profiles and control matrices. They then jointly decide on potential actions to address these inequalities together. The training is facilitated by the project's gender officer. At the end of the seminar programme, two change agent couples are identified for each producer organization.

— **Step 5: Training change agents** (five to six hours)

This step involves intensive coaching for the selected couples and is facilitated by the project's gender officer. Change agents receive support on household visioning and planning through regular training, individual household visits and coaching.

— **Step 6: Outreach by change agents**

The change agents play a strong role in sensitizing fellow members of their producer organization by sharing their own experiences. It is envisaged that each change agent couple will engage with at least 10 households for 18 months after the couples' seminar. They meet all households in a farmer field school every month and individual households at least once in every quarter.

— **Step 7: Training women in leadership and business development** (three to five hours)

Specific coaching is provided for women whose households are registered with the producer organization where the couples' seminars have been conducted. Female change agents are also encouraged to participate. The training, which is delivered by project staff, covers aspects of active participation, decision making and entrepreneurship.

— **Step 8: Sensitizing the community**

Change agents become role models in their community and expand their reach. They form drama groups and organize community discussions about the benefits of joint household management.

Average length of the implementation cycle

A project cycle may last from 36 to 48 months. However, changes begin to be observed after about 18 months from the first couples' seminar in a producer organization.

Graduation from the methodology

There is no official graduation system. However, the target has been reached if 60% of the couples from the producer organization have:

- attended a couples' seminar;
- attended at least nine of the monthly farmer field school sessions, or 50% of the producer organization/farmer field school meetings within the last 18 months; and
- received at least one household visit by a change agent, farmer field school facilitator or the project's gender officer.

SECTION 4

MONITORING

Monitoring system

- Bi-annual self-assessment exercise for change agents
- Annual progressive survey, individual gender survey, gender ratio in meetings and training activities
- Randomized control trials in Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania
- Indicators
- Number of women attending trainings
- Number of women in leadership positions (if elections are held during implementation cycle)

SECTION 5

BUDGET

Main items of expenditure

- Staff training
- Couple seminars
- Meetings with leaders of farmer organizations
- Training activities for change agents
- Follow-up household visits
- Women leadership training activities
- Drama shows
- Gender surveys and assessments

Total budget

Not available

SECTION 6

RESULTS

Number of beneficiaries reached

- Uganda: 17 000 households
- United Republic of Tanzania: 6 000 households
- Ethiopia: 2 500 households
- Côte d'Ivoire: 1 500 households

Main changes attributed to the methodology

- **Gender-related changes**
 - Overall increased collaboration and harmony within households
 - Increased joint decision making within households, including joint decisions regarding investments (e.g. the purchase of inputs) or where to sell their coffee
 - Increased joint planning on how to use the earnings from coffee production
 - Stronger participation by women in farmer organizations, in terms of their participation in meetings or the number of leadership positions occupied by women
 - Increased participation of women in farmer field school sessions
 - Women's workload has reduced significantly, and women are able to engage in other productive activities (e.g. running a restaurant or opening their own shop). This diversifies family incomes and increases the family's resilience to external shocks.
- **Other changes**
 - With increased participation of women and other household members in farmer field school sessions, there is a greater rate of adoption of good agricultural practices, which results in higher quality produce and larger yields.
 - Through improved transparency and sharing of benefits, side selling is reduced as individual household members no longer feel the need to 'steal the coffee' from their own production. This benefits the producer organization because more coffee is being bulked.

Key success factors and strengths of the methodology

- Transparency and joint planning and decision making are critical for household development.
- The whole household is addressed, both at farmer field school sessions and during the household visits.
- The HRNS Gender Household Approach brings to light other challenges faced within coffee farming households (e.g. HIV and AIDS, and domestic violence).
- The approach reaches out to married women in households and increases their participation in coffee value chain training activities.
- In male-dominated value chains such as coffee, the HRNS Gender Household Approach, because it is non-confrontational, minimizes resistance to changing the social norms and cultural beliefs that limit the voice of women in their own households and communities.
- Drama is an effective communication tool for rural communities as it entertains and engages the audience while they learn.
- The HRNS Gender Household Approach improves cooperation in the home and leads to the better management of household resources, which helps the household progress economically at a faster rate.
- Joint household and financial planning reduce side selling of coffee and improves household savings and business performance.
- The couple's membership in welfare groups and savings and loans groups strengthens these groups and improves the couple's household savings.
- Change agents have received intensive coaching and remain as resources in their producer organizations and continue to act as role models in the community.
- The approach is adaptable to different cultural and geographical contexts.

Challenges and measures to overcome them

- Skepticism from farmers who were opposed to changing their deep-rooted cultural beliefs and practices.
 - Select couples that exhibit signs of positive change in their relationship and use them as role models.
- Households require constant follow up, and consequently, resources
 - Involve farmer organization structures in following up on household developments.
- Motivation of change agents to continue
 - Change agents work on a voluntary basis. They are offered various incentives, for example going on farmer exchange and exposure visits; hosting demonstration plots and obtaining agro-inputs (e.g. fertilizer); receiving intense coaching from project staff; and gaining recognition during meetings.
- Many issues are brought up during household visits that need to be addressed including marital strife, land disputes, health-related issues (e.g. HIV and AIDS) and child welfare concerns
 - Links are established with relevant stakeholders and development organizations.
- Addressing polygamous households and monogamous households equally
 - Men started to apply the joint planning and decision making with one wife, and their other wives joined later, having witnessed the improvements in their co-wives' households.
- Working with couples when one partner is not available or is unwilling to participate
 - The couple is replaced as they are unable to carry out the role model function.

Potential for upscaling

- **Requirements to support upscaling**
 - Resources are needed to mainstream the HRNS Gender Household Approach into the livelihood approach and ensure that it is an integrated activity.
 - Gender issues need to be addressed from the outset.
- **Potential improvements to be introduced in the approach**
 - Increase transparency over coffee sales (e.g. by informing both husband and wife about the amount of coffee sent to auction) and the cash earned (e.g. through SMS or receipts signed by both spouses)
 - Free up more time for women so that they can participate in coffee farming, decision making and trainings (e.g. through labour-saving technologies such as efficient stoves, water harvesting, the provision of childcare during trainings, the convenient scheduling of trainings)
 - Integrate masculinity workshop for men
 - Incorporate a step-by-step approach to strengthen overall household resilience (e.g. income generation, climate change adaptation, sanitation, food and income security).

Potential for replication

The HRNS Gender Household Approach work started in Uganda and is successfully being applied in Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and the United Republic of Tanzania. It was adapted and implemented in the tri-border of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Currently it is being introduced to smallholder coffee farming communities in Indonesia.

Sustainability of the methodology once project/external input is complete

- The use of change agents who are members within existing farmer organizations enhances the sustainability of the approach.
- Training and orientation of cooperative leadership on the approach strengthens their buy-in and the promotion of gender equality both at the household and institutional levels.

SECTION 7

RESOURCES

Publications

- Confronting the wall of patriarchy: Does participatory intra-household decision-making empower women in agricultural households?
<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/research-groups/iob/publications/working-papers/wp-2017/wp-201713/>
- Improving intra-household cooperation for efficient smallholder farming. A field experiment in central Uganda
<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/research-groups/iob/publications/working-papers/wp-2018/wp-201807/>
- Joint forces – The impact of intra-household cooperation on welfare in East African agricultural households
<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/research-groups/iob/publications/working-papers/wp-2018/wp-201811/>

Videos

- Improving Gender Relations in Coffee-Farming Households – Full Version (17 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuPspJZu230>
- Improving Gender Relations in Coffee-Farming Households – Trailer (3 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuL3tH9iYn4>

Cover photo: Young change agent couple and their family. Mityana

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