



POLICY AND PLANNING

Policy-making and planning for agriculture and rural development often fail to address adequately men's and women's different roles and needs. A number of issues illustrate how the human factor has often been overlooked by policy-makers and agricultural development planners. One of these issues is the lack of gender-specific information about men's and women's roles in achieving food security and agricultural development, and particularly about women's contributions. There is also a trend to rely on analytic approaches that emphasize increasing production, mainly of cash crops, without considering the socio-economic and gender implications. Development policy-making processes are now undergoing a transformation to promote greater stakeholder participation in planning and decision-making at all levels, expand the role of the private sector and increase the decentralization of decision-making. This transformation will require more accurate and systematic statistics on rural women and men producers, as well as their greater participation so that their voices can be heard.

A key issue is thus the collection, analysis and dissemination of gender-disaggregated data and information, as recommended in the Strategy for Action (*Equal Opportunities and Food Security: The Role of Information*, FAO, Rome, 2000) of the High-Level Consultation on Rural Women and Information that FAO convened in 1999. This meeting stressed the need to enhance the production and dissemination of information on rural women in order to improve the understanding of their role in social, cultural and economic development and to develop better gender-balanced policies.

Participation is an essential ingredient of gender-responsive, participatory rural and agricultural development policies. Rural women and men need to be empowered so that they can take development into their own hands. Capacity still needs to be built as the fundamental basis for their full participation in all spheres of society (economic, political, social, cultural), at the community, national and international levels.

The information gap

During the last 20 years, the information on rural women has increased significantly, but its validity, relevance and usefulness in decision-making and planning are still questioned – partly because it is often not sufficiently substantiated by reliable statistics. Gender-related information also suffers from weak dissemination and a lack of real awareness of the

target audience. It is seldom used to elaborate agricultural policies.

For example, nearly half of a sample of 93 national agricultural censuses conducted worldwide between 1989 and 1999 did not include information on female-headed holdings. However, census data from surveys conducted in several developing regions indicate that one out of five farms is headed by a woman. It is recognized that this figure underestimates the proportion of farms that are owned or managed by women. The legally recognized male head of household is often assumed to be the head of holding as well, even when women are responsible for the day-to-day work and decisions of running the farm.

One reason for women's work remaining largely invisible in statistics is that a great deal of it takes place outside the formal economy. Much of women's work is unrecognized because the informal sector (both within and outside agriculture) is frequently considered to be a "residual" category, which does not contribute significant output to national economies.

Informal occupations provide the livelihoods (paid or otherwise) of more than 80 percent of women in low-income countries and 40 percent of those in middle-income countries. Together, these countries account



planning for action

The FAO Gender and Development Plan of Action includes a wide range of commitments aimed at mainstreaming gender analysis and participatory methods into agriculture and rural development policy, planning and research (see Box for examples). Gender mainstreaming in the collection and analysis of data is also considered a priority issue.

Data collection, research and analysis

- ⊙ Analyse the effects of the shift to intensive, industrialized livestock production from a gender perspective, and design, negotiate and test policies for dealing with threats and opportunities at the local, national, regional and international levels.
- ⊙ Analyse gender patterns in the commercialization and globalization of agriculture, and prepare a report on women and commercialization.
- ⊙ Review data systems for evaluating farm productivity, income, labour use and cash flow, and support improvements to include gender-disaggregated data on the division of labour.
- ⊙ Guide member countries to include gender considerations when collecting and tabulating data,



for 85 percent of the world's population. Studies in nine developing countries found that women spend only 34 percent of their time on market and 66 percent on non-market work. Men, on the other hand, devote an average of 76 percent of their time to market work.

Obtaining data that adequately reflect the importance of women's work requires methods that recognize the value and time consumption of women's productive and reproductive activities, both paid and unpaid.

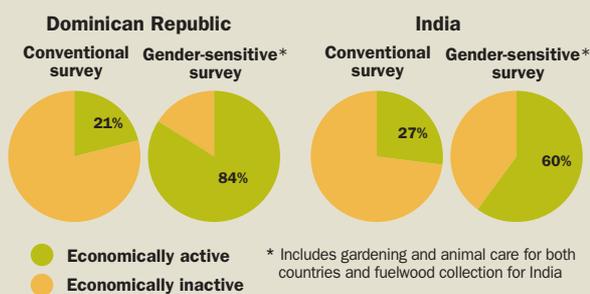
As political and economic liberalization processes create new challenges, it will be of the utmost importance to make statistics available to a wider variety of users. Such greater availability of data will help to empower rural women and men through better knowledge, greater representation of their interests and more opportunities for collective action for development.

The importance of this issue was raised during the High Level Consultation on Rural Women and Information, organized by FAO in 1999. This meeting had stressed the need to improve the production and dissemination of information on rural women in order to better understand their role in Social, Cultural and Economic Development, and to formulate more gender equality focused policies.

Even policies that do not appear to make any distinctions by gender are likely to have very different impacts on men and women farmers. An increase in the price of fertilizer, for example, might appear to be gender-neutral, but it might mean that fertilizer becomes accessible only to farmers growing cash crops, most of whom are male, while women farmers growing food crops can no longer afford it. Policies also need to recognize and address existing inequalities. If women are denied access to land and extension services, for example, policies that fail to counteract this reality may end up reinforcing it. ■

Counting women's labour

Estimates of the proportion of women who are "economically active" increase dramatically when gardening, animal care and fuelwood collection are recognized as productive work. The proportion would be even greater if other reproductive activities, such as cooking and childcare, were included.



Source: FAO

particularly through national agricultural data collection programmes.

- ⊙ Improve data collection practices, and frame new methods to assess gender contributions in income generation.
- ⊙ Analyse methods for collecting gender-disaggregated data about the people who work in artisanal fish processing.
- ⊙ Monitor and report adequate data on the roles of women and men in the fisheries sector in order to enhance national policies world wide.

Policy

- ⊙ Prepare working papers and reports on the impacts that are specifically related to gender issues within economic and social policies, especially those that affect access to food.

- ⊙ Produce reports that analyse the economic viability and sustainability of the commercial culture of the main fish species grown in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, identifying major constraints and discussing policies and strategies that alleviate these and that seek to understand the role of women in aquaculture development and the impact of promoting commercial aquaculture on women's livelihoods, especially in terms of generating better employment opportunities.
- ⊙ Conduct Forestry Sector Outlook Studies that examine the ways that forestry policy, tree tenure and aspects of forestry provide or limit opportunities for women and men, as well as examining the equitable sharing of benefits and opportunities in sustainable forest management.
- ⊙ Undertake studies on specific gender issues, in particular

Gender-disaggregated data (GDD) for agriculture and rural development

Since the 1980s, FAO has been assisting its Member Nations to collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data, produce gender-disaggregated statistics and make these data available for agricultural planning and policy formulation, as well as for monitoring and evaluating development interventions.

In 2000, the Organization started to develop a training methodology and tools (Gender-Disaggregated Data for Agriculture and Rural Development) to help improve the skills of agricultural data producers, including statisticians, planners and policy analysts, in considering gender when collecting, tabulating, analysing, interpreting and presenting agriculture-related information.

The methodology and tools were tested at workshops in Namibia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe under the Integrated Support to Sustainable Development and Food Security (IP) programme. They were also tested during a workshop in Romania for Central and Eastern European Countries. Following the workshops in Namibia and Zambia, FAO worked with specialists from ministries of agriculture and central statistics offices to retabulate existing data sets in order to produce gender-disaggregated databases that can be used with decision support tools in the formulation and planning of agriculture and rural development policy. The retabulated data can serve as the basis for a gender analysis that leads to a more in-depth understanding of agriculture and rural development. They can also be used to introduce a gender dimension into national systems of statistical data production and use. ■

Analytical framework

Only gender mainstreaming can ensure that attention to gender equality is a central part of all agriculture and rural development interventions in areas such as research, policy advice and legislation, as well as in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects.

Gender mainstreaming requires an analytic approach that takes into account the linkages among different social and economic activities, as well as the differences in the ways that men and women in socio-economic groups are involved and affected. The Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA) approach provides a framework for incorporating these considerations into development projects, programmes and policies (see Box).

Participation and empowerment

Improving the collection and analysis of data about the division of labour and responsibilities between rural men and women can help shape more effective and equitable policies. However, better numbers alone will not ensure that policies and programmes address the needs and priorities of men and women farmers. For that to happen, policies must be shaped by rural people's own understanding of the problems they face and the strategies that will eliminate those problems. Involving rural women and men in analysis and planning is essential.

► planing for action

women's access to land and other priority thematic areas for national regulation.

- ⊙ Take account of gender in the relevant parts of general publications in order to enable Member Nations to formulate national laws, regulations and policies on food and agriculture.

Participation and empowerment

- ⊙ Encourage women to attend national workshops that examine legal frameworks and economic instruments

that give impetus to the aquaculture sector, and stimulate governments to establish national policies and legal and economic instruments that are conducive to increased private investment in aquaculture.

- ⊙ Design a supportive policy framework and materials on participatory processes that support the participation of women and men stakeholders in natural resource management, including the formulation of policy, legislation and decisions concerning local resource management.



The term “participation” is open to very broad interpretation – even within a single agricultural planning process, different stakeholders may give it different definitions. Participation does not always involve all stakeholders, and may be limited to certain groups within a community. According to an FAO study, it can take place at a number of different levels:

- It may be limited to elite groups only (mostly elected representatives).
- People may be asked to legitimize or ratify projects that have been identified and formulated by government, but do not participate in the detailed planning and management of the project.
- People may be consulted from the very start and take an active part in the planning and management of projects.
- Different social and occupational groups may be represented in all the planning, coordination and evaluation mechanisms at all levels, including the highest policy-making level.
- Representatives of these groups may control the decisions at all levels.

For the last decade, the concepts of gender and participation have been used increasingly in development processes around the world. Each has generated new ways of thinking and working and, as a result, there is now a wealth of literature and a vast array of methods aimed at achieving the goals of social inclusion and empowerment. One of the methods used is participatory rural appraisal (PRA).



Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis

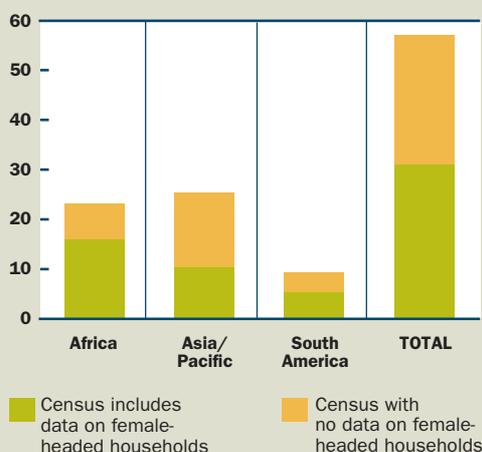
The Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis Programme (SEAGA) is aimed at incorporating gender considerations into development projects, programmes and policies in order to make sure that all development efforts address the needs and priorities of both men and women. It provides development workers with methods and tools for conducting socio-economic and gender analysis and for strengthening people’s capacity to incorporate gender issues in development.

The programme promotes an approach to development that is based on analysis of the socio-economic patterns affecting development projects and programmes and on the participatory identification of women’s and men’s development priorities. The analytical framework emphasizes the economic, social, institutional, political, environmental and demographic issues, and analyses the linkages among them from a gender perspective. The analysis targets three levels: field agents, development planners and policy- and decision-makers. For each of these audiences, it provides training and support through workshops, publications and ongoing collaboration.

Since its start in 1997, the training programme has trained and sensitized nearly 1 500 people (56 percent of them women) in more than 50 member countries. The materials used include handbooks for each level, training materials, guidelines and thematic guides in such areas as irrigation, microfinance, the project cycle, emergency programmes and monitoring and evaluation. These information materials are modified regularly and new tools and case materials are developed. Information about SEAGA is available at www.fao.org/sd/SEAGA

Counting female-headed households

A sample of national agricultural censuses conducted worldwide between 1989 and 1999 found that barely half included information on female-headed households.



source: FAO

▶ PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT



— An FAO project combined gender analysis with participatory planning methods, contributing to changes in both training at the grassroots level and attitudes at the Ministry of Agriculture.

FAO: Improving Client-Oriented Extension Training in Ethiopia

The project aimed to improve the ability of extension department staff at all levels to use participatory methods. It began with a training of trainers session on participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and gender analysis. The people who had been trained were then responsible for training field agents who conducted PRAs in the villages. Separate meetings with men and women farmers revealed their very distinct responsibilities, constraints and needs. Women, for example, worked far longer hours than men did – twice as many in the peak agricultural seasons and nearly three times as many at other times (working in the fields, fetching water and fuel, cooking, cleaning, child care, etc.). The PRA also emphasized men’s concerns, such as erratic rainfall which forced them to plough several times. Women, on the other hand, suffered more from shortage of farmland, deforestation and lack of access to agricultural inputs, credit and extension services. With their new insights into gender roles, extension staff were able to identify the areas in which each group, especially women, needed extension support. They also recognized the importance of bringing training to the villages, since women’s heavy workloads and cultural barriers prevent them from travelling to training centres. For many participating women, this meant that for the first time they had access to training that was relevant to their needs. ■

PRA draws on the knowledge and experience of women and men at the village level, using tools that facilitate research and action that are managed by the local community. The method is a good way of involving communities in information generation, analysis and planning. Specific tools, such as seasonal calendars, daily activity profiles, farming system diagrams and household and village resource maps, can be combined with gender analysis to study the livelihood systems of different socio-economic groups. Other tools help different socio-economic and gender-based focus groups to identify and prioritize their problems and resource needs and to develop group or community action plans.

Participatory approaches empower local men and women with the skills and confidence to analyse their situations, reach consensus, make decisions and take actions that will improve their circumstances.

However, the concept of **empowerment** (see glossary) goes beyond participation. It is more than simply involving more people in decision-making. It implies enabling people to understand the reality of their situation, reflect on the factors shaping that situation and, most important, take steps to change and improve it. Empowerment of women implies “adding to women’s power”. An empowerment focus involves the radical alteration of the structures that reinforce women’s subordinate position as a gender.

However, empowerment that is not also concerned with equity would help men rather than women, the better-off rather than the worse-off, and members of higher-status groups rather than those of lower-status groups. The challenge is to create a process in which the weaker are empowered and equity is increased. A wide range of development organizations, including UN agencies and NGOs, have established women’s empowerment as a policy goal by supporting such activities as microcredit programmes, political participation and leadership training. Many agencies have also developed indicators of empowerment and participatory evaluation to measure the success in advancing gender equality.

The Grameen Bank and the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, for example, use eight indicators to measure women’s empowerment, including: mobility, economic security, involvement in major household decisions, political and legal awareness, and involvement in political campaigns.



The scope of the Gender and Development Plan of Action is Organization-wide, encompassing operational and normative aspects of FAO's work, as well as the relevant institutional processes and mechanisms. While the Plan delineates the Organization's goals, objectives and priority areas of intervention, the commitment of Member Nations is vital to achieving a sustained impact.

Implementation of the Plan of Action will be supported at various levels of the Organization – at headquarters and in the decentralized offices – by operational arrangements and mechanisms to provide advice and coordination. FAO has allocated responsibility and resources at all levels to ensure that the Plan of Action is implemented effectively. A systematic and comprehensive training programme has also been developed to enhance both the commitment to gender mainstreaming and the skills to carry it out.

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Senior management will provide guidance on policy issues related to implementing the Plan of Action and will regularly review progress reports. The Programme and Project Review Committee will consider the approach to and the impact on gender roles and relations as essential dimensions of every project brought before it.

At the departmental level, each Assistant Director-General will be individually responsible and accountable for mainstreaming gender into the work of his or her Department.

Within each division and/or service, a gender focal point has been designated to support the unit managers in their responsibility for coordinating implementation of the Plan of Action. Each Division will be responsible for reporting on its gender-responsive activities.

The Gender and Population Division (SDW) will continue to act as the corporate focal point for gender mainstreaming and will ensure the overall monitoring and reporting of the Plan's implementation to FAO and UN governing bodies. It will also facilitate networking among the gender focal points.

Monitoring of the Plan of Action's implementation will become an integral part of regular corporate reporting and evaluation exercises, and will be managed by the Programme, Budget and Evaluation Office.

Building skills of FAO staff

A strategy has been developed for building the analytical skills required to mainstream gender and for generating awareness and sensitivity among middle- and upper-level management. The strategy includes a commitment to integrate gender analysis into existing training programmes. Gender will become an important part of curricula for all phases of technical cooperation projects, from formulation and design through implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation. In addition, specific training sessions will be provided during the first two years of the Plan of Action. These sessions will focus on how technical divisions can address gender in their areas of expertise and how they can employ specific socio-economic and gender analysis sector guides.

External partnerships and networking

Implementation of the Plan of Action will also involve promoting and coordinating gender mainstreaming efforts with external partners and networks. The FAO Gender and Population Division will take the lead in informing other UN agencies and in increasing inter-agency coordination to achieve the goals of both the Beijing Platform for Action and FAO's Plan of Action. All technical divisions will work to strengthen ties with relevant NGOs, civil society organizations and the private sector and to increase cooperation on development initiatives that advance gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women.

The Plan was prepared through a consultative process involving FAO technical departments and units that are responsible for staff development and training and information, as well as the Programme, Budget and Evaluation Division (PBE) and the Regional Offices. Divisions reviewed selected major outputs of the Medium-Term Plan 2002–2007 in order to incorporate a gender dimension more explicitly and visibly, as well as to identify verifiable gender-sensitive indicators for monitoring, and evaluating their implementation.



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Gender and Development Service

Gender and Population Division
Sustainable Development Department

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla - 00100 Rome, Italy

Tel.: (+39) 06 570 54297

Fax: (+39) 06 570 52004

www.fao.org

www.fao.org/sd

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