

**ANNEX 11**

**GENDER MAINSTREAMING & FOOD SECURITY**

# Gender Mainstreaming and Food Security

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Since the Beijing conference (1995) United Nations (UN) organizations, bilateral cooperation agencies, development organizations and governments, including the Zambian Government have adopted gender mainstreaming and women empowerment strategy to reach the goal of gender equality and equity. Women play a vital role in the agricultural sector both as producers, processors and consumers of agricultural products, however compared to their male counterparts women are disadvantaged in agricultural production due to their triple roles, lack of access to agricultural productive resources and opportunities and socio cultural factors. Integration of gender in all conservation agricultural (CA) processes is crucial for adoption, up-scaling, increased productivity and attainment of food security in the participating communities.

### Relevance

FISRI project is relevant to the needs of women and men particularly with respect to staple food availability. Food access is a practical gender need for women as they have the gender roles for food preparation and its provision for the family. The relevance of the project for women was affected by the lack of clear definition of gender outcomes and indicators in the FISRI project design. In the project farmers have been taken as a homogenous group but in reality female and male farmers have different needs, power dynamics, roles and responsibilities in CA processes. Although gender and women empowerment (GEWE) is given priority in the SNDP the FISRI project has not deliberately and systematically planned for GEWE at project design and implementation stages. Whilst lead farmers are key players in the project, the selection criteria has been unfavourable for women, consequently 28% of the lead farmers are women despite the fact that women are the major food providers for households. Relevance of the project with regards to gender concerns has been compromised by the lack of consideration of the differential social and gender relations between women and men in CA processes.

Introduction of mechanization and herbicides in CA processes is relevant for women because they are predominantly involved in hand basins and hand weeding. However fewer women compared to men (22-25%) benefitted from mechanization. All the tractor and ox-drawn rippers which were provided by the project on a loan basis were given to male lead farmers, none were provided to women lead farmers. In Male headed households decision making on use of herbicides was said to be usually done by men. The low literacy levels of women was said to affect them in accurate herbicides use. The type of available knapsack sprayers that are carried at the back was reported to be unfriendly for women. It is unsafe for women to do herbicide spraying because of their gender role for food preparation and biological role for breastfeeding (in case of breastfeeding women).

**Food security** : The project has enabled households to have adequate food and dietary diversification through following of CA principles. However the project design has not integrated other important food security components such as food storage, nutrition, food safety, food conservation, food consumption and value addition. These could have augmented the project's food security relevance to the community.

### Effectiveness

The effectiveness of FISRI regarding gender equity issues has been affected by weak gender mainstreaming design issues. The logframe did not provide for gender based outcomes and indicators. There was no definition of the intended purpose or results of the project with respect to gender equity issues. The monitoring and evaluation systems did not provide for gender disaggregated data or collection of gender qualitative information.

Although there is no documented information on gender dimensions in the project, discussions reveal that the project contributed to attaining of women's strategic gender needs of leadership for those women who were chosen as lead farmers. Although they were fewer women compared to men who were chosen as lead farmers, the few who participated have provided extension service delivery to female and male farmers. This has boosted the participating female lead farmer's self esteem. Women's leadership as lead farmers has been accepted by both female and male farmers in the farming communities. Some women have diversified their CA produce with other income earning activities.

FISRI has improved food availability and access especially the staple food however, food security goes beyond staple food self sufficiency, because this largely ignores access (market/household income) issues as well as issues of nutritional quality and acceptability of food available and consumed. The project has not paid enough attention to food conservation/processing or value addition which can provide for safe and nutritious food availability throughout the year.

### *What were the challenges?*

Challenges encountered by women stem from their marginalised and disadvantaged position in society where time consuming and physically demanding tasks such as hand basin making and weeding are ascribed as women's roles by society. However when the tasks are mechanised, made easier and commercialized, men take over and women become sidelined. Women especially those from male headed households are not predominantly active in marketing of CA products and they do not have decision making role on the proceeds of the sales from their labour. Cases of gender

based violence were reported when some women insisted on accountability regarding the money from the marketed products from their spouses. Discussions with the women revealed that because of this challenge women are not encouraged to put a lot of effort for production of surplus, some women would rather be involved in production that is adequate for household food consumption.

### **Efficiency**

FISRI has not performed adequately on the promotion of gender equity. There is no strategy to promote gender equity in FISRI. There is little evidence that staff have competence of mainstreaming gender dimensions in CA programming as is evidenced by the limited planned integration of gender dimensions in the entire FISRI project cycle. Mainstreaming of gender is not included as a crucial element in the performance appraisal of staff which means there is no accountability for gender mainstreaming for staff. Consequently some of the surveys and progress reports that have been produced are silent on gender dimensions and the results cannot be used to influence gender sensitive programming. FISRI does not seem to have rigorous gender quality control mechanisms and systems and this has resulted to the limited gender related results in the project components. CA capacity building has not included social and gender issues. FISRI has not adequately promoted gender equality amongst its partners who it subcontracted to perform certain tasks. For instance the partner which was subcontracted to implement the mechanization component, the gender dimension as a social product in the agricultural sector has not been integrated in this component resulting to few women benefitting from mechanization and no women owning project facilitated tractor rippers. There is no deliberate engagement of the partners it subcontracts for gender mainstreaming, subsequently gender mainstreaming has not been a commonly shared, and prioritized agenda during project implementation processes.

The project does not have effective and efficient and well supported gender focal person with clear terms of reference to play the crucial responsibility of acting as a gender think tank, gender systematic quality control and initial gender screening point. The M&E system has not collected sex disaggregated data and gender qualitative information for use in gender sensitive programming.

Discussions with beneficiaries indicated that farmers have attained food self sufficiency, through the increased productivity from CA, they now have food (staple food) for home consumption and some have managed to get surplus from their produce to market. However M&E systems have not provided trends of food sufficiency within the lead farmers and participating farmers over the past three phases.

### **Impact**

Women do not usually own draft power as cattle are a male domain traditionally, however conservation farming has managed to encompass even the women and men who do not have draft power and this enabled women and the youth who are less likely to have draft power to participate in CA. However, high labor requirement of CA had a negative impact especially on women as it resulted in additional heavy workload burden for them. Women compared to men are involved in a variety of reproductive roles such as home and child care. Fewer women have benefited from mechanization and in addition gender dimensions reduce women's adoption of herbicides. The weekly farmer field training meetings of five-seven hours after walking for long distances (ranging up to 20km ) because of lack of bicycles is not appropriate for women who have to walk back late to do household chores. The training meetings calendar is not gender friendly.

CA training, empowered women lead farmers, increased their knowledge asset levels and contributed towards their livelihoods. Some women indicated to the Mission that they had managed to pay fees for their children, gained confidence and developed social skills as a result of mixing and networking with others.

### **Sustainability**

The lack of consideration of gender concerns in CA is a threat for future sustainability of CA operations, food security and contribution to overall household economy since women are the major food producers but there has been no pre-planned approach of their involvement in order to increase their participation, access and control of proceeds. The longer term possible impact of FISRI if gender concerns are incorporated include reduced labour burden for women and men in CA processes, expansion of area under CA, increased livelihood assets, equal access and control of assets and benefits by women and men.

CASU could consider integration of diverse food products with value addition and market linkages to provide increased incomes for women. Consider inclusion of potential female lead farmers for ownership of mechanised services and increased access of mechanisation services to female headed households and female farmers to ease off the burden of women on weeding and basin making. CASU could develop a gender sensitive model for providing support for herbicide spraying to women since there are gender related challenges for women to directly use herbicides. Such a model could include contracting of herbicide spraying to a contractor who could be thoroughly trained and specialised in the task to avoid discouraging and risky mistakes. Gender sensitive criteria could be worked out regarding provision and ownership of services.

### **Conclusions**

- Gender Mainstreaming and related social aspects were not adequately addressed in FISRI and there were no specific targets for outcomes, outputs and activities in this regard;

- Food Security is not comprehensively addressed in the project design, though it is focused on food production and availability, as it has not addressed nutrition requirements, food storage, food preservation, and food safety aspects;

#### **Lessons learnt**

- Focus on CA technical issues without attention to gender relations, equality and social issues can reduce the impact of CA in terms of its adoption, impact and sustainability. Lack of consideration of socially ascribed gender roles in CA, the differential access and control of benefits and resources, practical and strategic gender needs of women and men in the community can reduce CA adoption and up-scaling;

#### **Recommendation.**

- Gender Mainstreaming and ‘latent’ social issues need to be addressed in any CA adoption programmes, as issues around mechanisation, herbicide use, cash-crops and access to markets have residual issues to be addressed which affect womens’ involvement and empowerment.