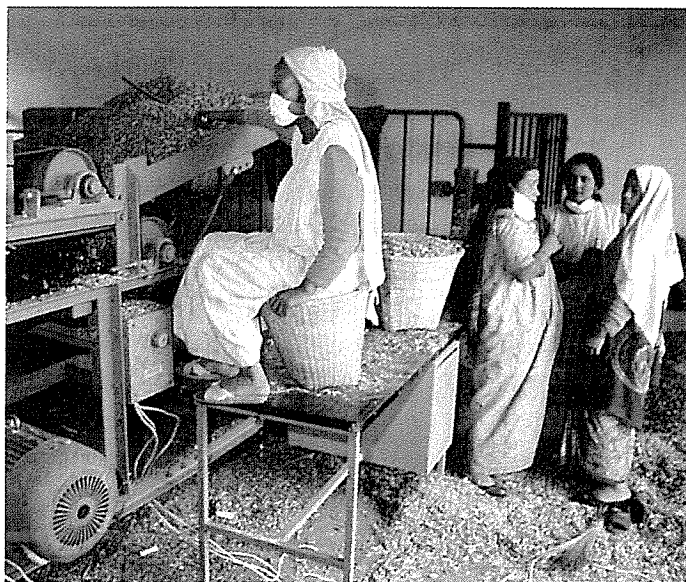




Strong research programmes are still needed on food crops and animals, usually the domain of women, especially indigenous local crops, poultry and small ruminants.

Research and agricultural technology development are also required for post-harvest activities, many of which are carried out by women. Where post-harvest losses are high, farmers often must cultivate the land more intensively to obtain the same yield. This places additional stress on the environment. **Providing rural women with the information and technologies needed to reduce post-harvest losses is an important means of increasing available food supplies**, reducing women's time and labour constraints, and easing environmental stress.



Scientific research and technology development needs to be far more gender sensitive (Nepal).

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND EXTENSION

The contributions of both female and male farmers are substantial and essential to agricultural development. Achieving agricultural development goals of efficiency, sustainability and equity is hindered by the predominant practice of directing extension and training resources primarily to men. A 1989 FAO global survey showed that **women received only five per cent of all agricultural extension services worldwide**. Such lack of access to information undermines women's ability to maintain environmental quality and the sustainable use of resources.

Agricultural extension services are not adequately reaching rural women. For the most part, extension policies do not specifically identify women as an integral part of the target audience. This is often due to

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

and rural development within the FAO International Information System for Agricultural Sciences and Technology/Current Agricultural Research Information System (AGRIS/CARIS) networks.

Agricultural Education and Extension

- Undertake studies on female enrollment in agricultural education institutions in order to develop country strategies to increase female student enrollment

and to increase the number of women extension workers.

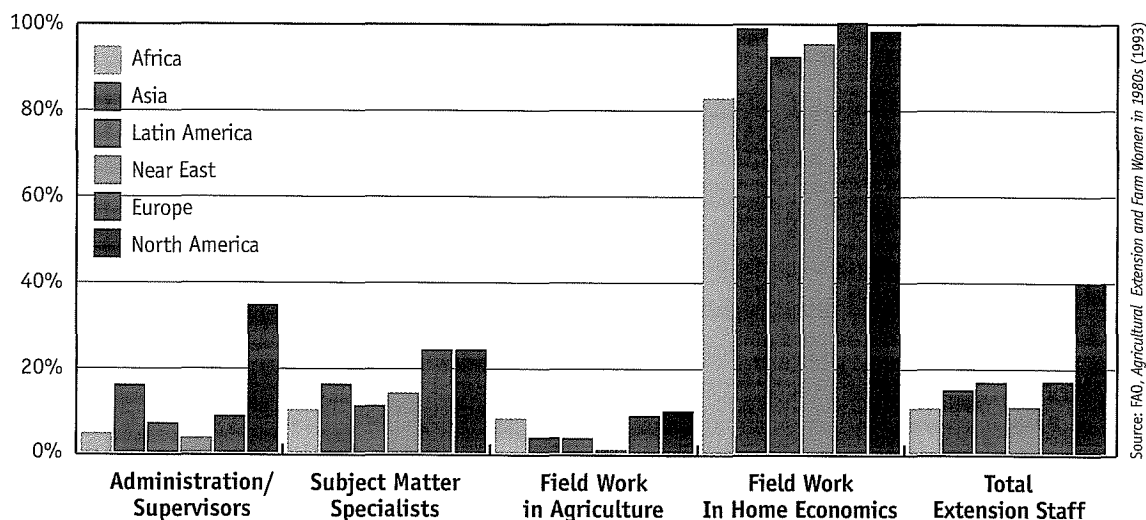
- Prepare a guide for developing curricula for agro-ecological study and training programmes that specifically addresses gender issues.
- Train extension workers in ways to integrate gender concerns, environmental and population education, into agricultural training programmes.
- Prepare a guide on *Incorporating the*



misconceptions about, and prejudices against, the actual and ideal roles of women. Traditional extension methodologies may not be appropriate for working with rural women. **A multi-directional communication is needed among rural women, researchers and extension agents to ensure the development and adequate transfer of technologies.** Existing extension services tend to focus on a few "progressive" farmers while neglecting many resource-poor farmers and the landless, including women. In some attempts to reach rural women, special women's units have been created, but these are often separated or have staff without sufficient backgrounds or funds to implement technical agricultural projects.

Women also face barriers in their access to tertiary (university and college) agricultural education. As a result **they are under-represented in research, extension and educational institutions.** The lack of curricula and programmes of study that address gender issues has meant that students of both genders are unaware of women's contribution to sustainable agriculture and rural development. The low level of participation of girls and young women in rural youth programmes in many developing countries further hinders their access to the knowledge and skills related to improved agricultural practices and to training in leadership development and community action.

WOMEN AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION STAFF



STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

From Words to Action...

Needs and Interests of Rural Women into Extension Messages.

- Prepare a gender-disaggregated database and directory of extension rural youth programmes that will show the number of male and female youth participants, volunteer leaders and young professionals.
- Develop a *Guide for Rural Youth Programmes* on the need for balanced participation of both male and female youth, and for curriculum materials that



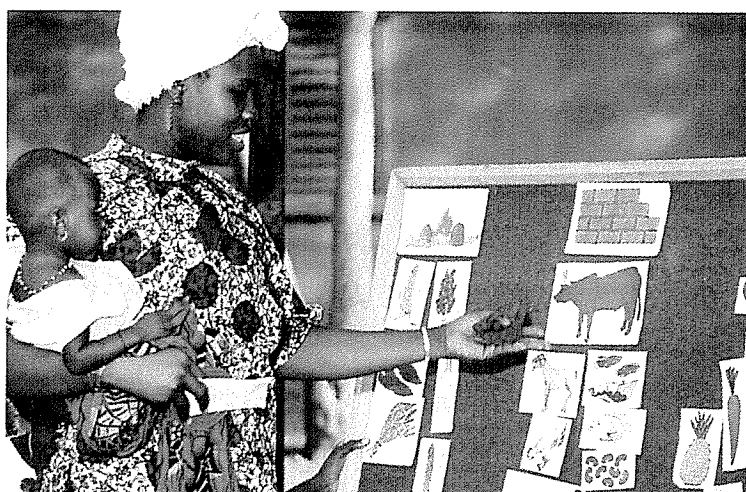
The contribution of both female and male farmers are substantial and essential to agricultural development (Peru).

COMMUNICATION

People-oriented sustainable development can only realize its potential if rural people are involved and motivated, and if information and knowledge are shared. **Participatory communication methods and media serve to establish a dialogue with rural people and increase their participation in decision-making.** Communication strategies have also proven effective in conflict resolution and in defining common goals. In many societies, women are increasingly using communication technologies to help their visions of sustainable livelihoods become reality.

At present, however, communication methods and techniques have not been sufficiently applied to issues of specific concern to rural women. Communication can play an important role in empowering rural women and increasing their participation in decision-making. At the same time, properly designed communication strategies can promote the sharing of information, knowledge and skills with women, as well as learning from them.

Communication is a deliberate intervention to affect social and economic change. A development strategy that uses effective communication approaches can reveal women's and men's underlying attitudes and traditional wisdom. It can help them to adapt their views, acquire new knowledge and skills, and spread new social messages to large audiences. The planned use of communication techniques, activities, and media gives women powerful tools both to experience change and then to guide it. An intensified exchange of ideas among all sectors of society can lead to the greater involvement of women and men in a common cause. This is a fundamental requirement for appropriate and sustainable development.



Properly designed communication strategies can promote the sharing of information, knowledge and skills with women (Burkina Faso).

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

address the specific needs of young rural women and girls.

- Develop training materials to train young rural women in leadership skills.

Communication

- Undertake studies on the constraints and access of rural women to communication media in order to develop more effective national communication policies and strategies.
- Develop training methodologies to

improve the quality and outreach of training activities for women as rural communicators.

- Carry out research on the relationship between the environment, land, food and family size; and develop communication strategies on how to improve women's and men's lifestyles.
- Develop multi-media materials to increase women's skills designed to enhance their participation in development.

From Words to Action...