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Gender Aware Approaches in Agricultural Programmes – International Literature Review

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Sida

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Foreword

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This working paper belongs to the evaluation project on Gender Aware Approaches in Agricultural Programmes jointly commissioned by the Sida Secretariat for Evaluation and Team Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security. Findings from the project are synthesised and analysed in the main report, *Gender aware approaches in agricultural programmes: a study of Sida-supported agricultural programmes (Sida Evaluation 2010:3)*. For information on other publications belonging to this project see the bibliography at the end of this report. All reports can be downloaded from www.sida.se/publications.

Team Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security and Secretariat for Evaluation

Table of Contents

Foreword	3
Abbreviations	6
1. Foreword	7
1.1. Context	7
1.2. Objective of the International Literature Review	7
1.3. Methodology.....	7
1.4. Structure of the International Literature Review	8
2. Promising Approaches to Involving Women in Agricultural Development	8
2.1. Gender Sensitivity of Extension Methodologies	8
2.2. Promoting Access to Land and Natural Resources	13
2.3. Developing Household Food Security	18
2.4. Women as Market Actors	20
3. Gender Mainstreaming: Challenges and Opportunities	25
3.1. From WID to GAD	25
3.2. The Pitfalls of Gender Mainstreaming	26
3.3. Successful Gender Mainstreaming Experience in Agriculture and Rural Development Pro- grammes	27
3.4. Gender Issues in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).....	29
3.5. Gender Mainstreaming in New Aid Modalities	30
4. Recommendations	32
Bibliography	35

Abbreviations

ATMA	Agricultural Technology Management Agency
BDS	Business Development Service
BSF	Belgium Survival Fund
CIAT	International Centre for Tropical Agriculture
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department For International Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFS	Farmer Field School
GAD	Gender and Development
GCMMF	Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ICT	Information & Communication Technologies
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ILC	International Literature Review
INA	National Agrarian Institute
MARENASS	Manejo de Recursos Naturales en La Sierra Sur
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
O&M	Operation & Maintenance
POVNET	Poverty Network
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PPB	Participatory Plant Breeding
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PROGENDER	Programa de Genero
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RCL	Rice Credit Line
SEWA	Self-Employed Women's Association
SHG	Self-Help Group
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VO	Village Organization
WID	Women in Development
WUA	Water Users Association
WUC	Water Users Committee

1. Foreword

1.1. Context

The present review is part of a study on “gender-aware approaches in agriculture”, funded by Sida. In response to the persistent inequalities of women in farming despite decades of development assistance, Team Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security at Sida headquarters has initiated a thematic evaluation of how gender issues are tackled in Sida-supported agricultural programmes. The purpose is to increase understanding of how Sida’s development assistance in agriculture should be designed, implemented and funded to ensure that female farmers are reached, that their needs as producers are met, and that they are able to benefit from the support to achieve a positive impact on their livelihoods. As part of this, the study also aims to understand the ways in which particular aid modalities impact upon the ability of programmes to reach women farmers effectively.

There are two mutually supportive documents to the thematic evaluation: “*Gender aware approaches in agricultural programmes: a comparative study of Sida supported agricultural programmes*”, an *Evaluation Report* (Sida Evaluation 2010: 3) and an *International Literature Review* (ILR).

1.2. Objective of the International Literature Review

The first phase of the evaluation envisages the review of different programme documents and studies produced by a range of multilateral and bilateral agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and academics with respect to ensuring the effective targeting and involvement of women farmers in agricultural programmes. The International Literature Review (ILR) aims at identifying success cases, lessons learnt, and gaps in knowledge that can be taken forward into both the review of Sida’s documentation and the interviews at Sida headquarters, as well as during fieldwork in the selected countries. The International Literature Review therefore serves the dual purpose of providing Sida and its partners with an overview of relevant issues at the same time as it informs the evaluation’s methodology.

1.3. Methodology

The ILR aims to address the following questions:

- Which methodologies and instruments have been used by donors to *widen the scope of women’s agency* in agricultural development programmes?
- To what extent has the work of programmes on involving female farmers impacted upon overall agricultural outcomes?
- What are the most important lessons? What is working well and what is working not so well (effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability)?

The paper is based on an extensive literature review of programme/project documentation. A broad range of gender-related documents produced by different institutions was selected and analysed for the purpose of the ILR. Documents that (i) focus upon assessing the impact and effectiveness of gender-related donor interventions; and (ii) have been published recently, were prioritized. To facilitate the desk review, a grid for collating information was developed in order to extract and systematize the relevant gender-based information contained in the selected documents. The grid was structured around two main sections: (i) background information; and (ii) processes and outcomes. The first section systematizes background information on the project/programme analysed, including a description of its objectives, main activities and gender strategy. The second part analyses processes and outcomes

in terms of women's agency and household food security as well as in relation to changing structures and ideologies that sustain gender inequalities.

Gender issues are addressed in relation to specific thematic areas: extension services, land and natural resources, food security, markets, gender mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and new aid modalities. Some of these issues have been prioritized following the inputs and suggestions provided by Sida staff during discussions in December 2009. A critical reflection on problems, reasons for success and areas for further work is included in each chapter.

1.4. Structure of the International Literature Review

The ILR is divided into two main parts. Chapter 2 "Promising approaches to involving women in agriculture" analyses gender-specific constraints in agricultural livelihoods and the strategies and mechanisms adopted by different donors to overcome these constraints in relation to different areas of interventions. Chapter 3 "Challenges and opportunities with gender mainstreaming" reviews the strategies to mainstream gender in project and programme design, new aid modalities and M&E. Recommendations are formulated in the conclusions (chapter 4).

2. Promising Approaches to Involving Women in Agricultural Development

2.1. Gender Sensitivity of Extension Methodologies

2.1.1. Overview

The gender division of labour in agriculture (sex-disaggregated activities across the lifecycle of a plant or animal, separate "male" and "female" crops and animals) "means" that female and male farmers usually have different extension needs. However, extension services worldwide remain dominated by men. It is estimated that globally only 15 % of extension agents are women (World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2009). Male extension agents frequently target male-dominated farmers groups and focus information and inputs on their needs (World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2009), sometimes because it may not be culturally acceptable for them to interact with women. When women do participate in extension activities they may not be provided equal recognition for their responsibilities and skills. This is because farmers and farming activities continue to be perceived as "male" by policy makers, planners and agricultural service deliverers, thereby ignoring the important and increasing role women play in agriculture.

In Mozambique, for instance, although cashew nut production in rural areas is highly dominated by women, male extension agents target mainly men farmers (Kanji et al., 2004). Men tend to dominate training courses, association membership and community level meetings. In some cases, women are initially involved but because of heavy workloads and the quality of communication with women farmers, they tend to drop out. Moreover, the difficulties of carrying out the recommended spraying programme correctly and the relatively high cost of the treatment made the programme unattractive to poor farmers and particularly women (ibid.).

By the mid-1990s, evidence that centralized, technology-driven extension systems tended to benefit mostly farmers with more assets, initiated an on-going paradigm shift in development practice. In many developing countries, the emphasis of technical support has moved from the objectives of enhancing productivity, using top-down methods, to those of improving rural livelihoods through decentralization, participation and ownership (Swanson & Rajalahti, 2010). This shift towards a livelihoods oriented

approach has opened up favourable opportunities to women. For instance, the recent diversification in food production in Malawi and Zambia away from green revolution technologies (hybrid maize) to traditional, female entitled crops (roots, tubers and legumes) has improved women's involvement in agricultural development programmes and farmers organizations (Charman, 2008). In many countries, the menu of options available to farmers has become more diversified. For instance, in Ethiopia the creation of a "women's development package" indicates that agricultural officials are trying to improve their services to women (Tewodaj et al., 2009).

Donors and governments have begun experimenting a broader range of extension approaches, including the use of participatory methodologies, and encouraging a larger role for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector (World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2009) in service provision. However, this shift from a top-down, technology-driven extension system toward a more decentralized, farmer-led and market-driven system, requires a radical transformation of the strategy, approach and structure of traditional extension systems as well as strong investments in human resources (Swanson & Rajalahti, 2010). Many extension systems are still not well enough equipped to effectively transform their traditional approach and way of operating effectively. For instance, extension workers have largely been unaccustomed to using participatory methodologies aimed at facilitating farmers' own learning. Rather, they tend to treat farmers as passive recipients of externally defined technological packages and do not encourage them to take an active role in the definition of their needs. A study of the extension system in Ethiopia indicates that the pronounced "top-down" nature of public service delivery makes it difficult to tailor agricultural extension to farmers' demands (Tewodaj et al., 2009).

2.1.2. Increasing the Number of Women Extension Agents

A shortage of women extension workers may limit the possibility to successfully promote change and innovation among women farmers. Particularly in those societies where local gender norms restrict women's interaction with men who are external to the family, it can be difficult for women to participate in extension activities. A study (Lahai et al., 2000) of agricultural extension services in Nigeria found that women farmers who were supervised by women extension officers were more likely to participate in extension activities, adopt recommended technologies/practices than those who were supported by men. The women supported by female extension workers also expressed higher levels of satisfaction with the service provided.

Among the main factor, which makes it difficult to increase the number of women extension workers are the low number of women trained in agriculture and the difficult conditions of working in the field. An evaluation of gender mainstreaming activities in Middle Eastern and North African countries found that although great efforts were undertaken to recruit women extension agents, they were generally reluctant to work in remote and inaccessible areas, particularly in countries such as Yemen and Egypt. This was further exacerbated by the lack of adequate financial incentives (Ibrahim, 2009).

A project supporting participatory plant breeding (PPB) in India introduced practical changes to overcome the constraints that impeded women students to working in the field, such as the difficulty of finding safe overnight stops, chaperoned use of public transport, and the requirement to travel to another block than their own in order to avoid bias in the identification of farmer innovators. Arrangements were made for women to stay in a village with families known to the project team; they were permitted to work in their own block, and travel was arranged so that they could be accompanied by another family member. The participation of women students was deemed necessary, as male students were working mainly with men farmers. The result was that more women innovators were located, raising the proportion of women to male innovators documented to 20:80 (Farnworth & Jiggins, 2006).

DANIDA in India has conducted policy dialogue activities to increase the number of women extension agents. One of the greatest achievements has been to create a number of regular posts for female staff in an environment where 99 % of the staff is male. At the national level, a new "Policy Framework for

Agricultural Extension” was adopted in 2001, which envisages a shift from the traditional training & visit (T&V) approach towards a broad-based farming-systems approach in agricultural extension. The policy includes a section on gender mainstreaming in agriculture, which also addresses the need to increase the number of women extension workers. DANIDA-supported projects have played an inspiring role in promoting the new extension framework (DANIDA, 2004).

2.1.3. Using Women’s Social Capital in Service Delivery

In order to improve rural livelihoods, it is essential to promote farmers’ participation in extension activities by organizing them into producer groups. The use of social networks for service delivery can enable farmers to learn from the experience of others about innovative methods in agricultural production, thereby contributing to strengthening relationships of solidarity and mutual learning among them. These networks are particularly important for women because they usually have less access to formal channels of dissemination (Quisumbing & Pandolfelli, 2009).

The training of village-based female extension workers is an effective way to reach and actively involve women in extension activities as it ensures that appropriate communication strategies are used to interact with women. Women in fact may find it more difficult to participate in formal training activities outside the village because of lack of self-esteem and education. Weak self-esteem can hinder women’s capacity to speak out freely in group meetings and interact with extension agents. In addition, since women bear primary responsibility for childcare and reproductive work, extension services need to be brought closer to female farmers at times when they can attend meetings (Quisumbing & Pandolfelli, 2009).

In India, farm women groups (“*KrishakMahila Shakti Samuh*”) have been formed to act as focal points for agricultural support services targeting poor female farmers. The emphasis has been on simple low-cost, environmentally-friendly technologies such as seed selection and treatment, making compost, use of bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides, post-harvest storage, etc. Agricultural training was found to have a positive impact on women in terms of both increased income and greater self-esteem. Some women reported having acquired a greater role in decision-making after the training both in farm-related matters and gender issues. Women reported that they are now being regarded as experts on agricultural methods, that others are seeking their advice and that they have gained the respect of the community (DANIDA, 2004).

Women’s groups can also be used as a platform for disseminating important information concerning family nutrition, health and property rights issues and to stimulate discussion so as to build women’s capacity to articulate their strategic interests. In Ethiopia, active and capable women’s organizations have successfully promoted women’s access to extension services as well as stimulated discussion around gender-specific constraints and problems (Tewodaj et al., 2009). In El Salvador, female agents with leadership skills have been selected from local communities and involved in an intensive process of capacity building. In this way, women developed an innovative leadership role in their community and became agents of change in gender relations and women’s empowerment (IFAD, 2006).

Strengthening women’s leadership skills is essential to enable women to participate in decentralized governance institutions and articulate their extension needs. In many countries agricultural extension systems are increasingly decentralizing programme planning and management functions to the district and sub-district levels, as a way to create a more participatory, demand-driven extension system. In India, the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) coordinates extension programmes at the district level. The ATMA Governing Board includes representatives of all categories of farmers within the district, including women farmers and ethnic minorities (i.e. scheduled castes and tribal groups). The participation of different categories of farmer, ensures that their specific needs are reflected in the definition of the extension programme. The ATMA also contracted specialized NGOs to develop an approach to form women’s associations and Self Help Groups (SHGs) and build the capacity of extension staff to train women leaders (Swanson & Rajalahti, 2010).

2.1.4. Participatory Learning-by-Doing Methodologies

The methodology of training activities is of primary importance. Reaching asset-poor farmers with low levels of education can be challenging, if adequate communication and learning methodologies are not adopted. Peer-to-peer education has proven to be a valuable means to transfer knowledge to farmers, particularly women (DANIDA, 2004). Exchange visits and demonstration activities are also important instruments to promote the internalization of technical knowledge and the ability to convert it into practice. The CORREDOR Puno-Cusco is a demand-driven project, which uses “learning routes” as “drivers of local demand”. Learning routes have the potential to stimulate new business ideas. Participation in these learning activities is not only a powerful learning experience for women but also an occasion for diversion and leisure time (Gallina, 2010).

In the process of creating a more participatory and demand-driven extension system, the National Institute for Agricultural Extension Management in India has trained research officers within districts on how to conduct a participatory rural appraisal (PRA). PRA teams engage different categories of farmers in a participatory learning process, through which farmers are enabled to critically reflect on their production problems, and possible solutions. PRA findings are used to define research and extension priorities. Poor landless women, who know little about new productive opportunities, are encouraged to consider alternative income-generating opportunities based on the use of common property resources (e.g. leasing a village pond to produce freshwater fish) or on producing products within their own households – backyard poultry, gardening, mushrooms or producing vermin compost (Swanson & Rajalahti, 2010).

Since the 1990s, many donors and development organizations have experimented with different participatory methodologies to involve farmers in research. In the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach, the extension worker shifts from a top-down “technology transfer” mindset to becoming a facilitator who stimulates discussions and learning processes among farmers. FFSs bring farmers together in the field to explore different methods and technologies to improve production. These schools generally stimulate the participation of women as they spend a great deal of their time working in the field planting, weeding and harvesting. A study conducted in Bangladesh (Bartlett, 2004) found that participation in regular meetings through FFSs has given women a space to express their voice. FFSs were a vehicle for women to participate in education activities for the first time in their life. It also gave them the opportunity to interact with people from outside their communities and strengthen group solidarity and social networks. One of the critical factors that contributed to strengthening women’s solidarity included the ability of field staff to create trust.

However, the impact of the project in terms of improved social capital did not automatically lead to an increase in women’s capacity to retain control over income. The majority of women were found to produce vegetables and fish that were sold by male members of the family. According to the report, the fact that the project lacked a coherent strategy for promoting women’s empowerment may have limited impact on women’s capacity to retain control over income (Bartlett, 2004). Similarly, a study assessing the impact of FFSs in India (Mancini et al., 2006) reports that increased household cash flows arising from the project translated into the purchase of new physical assets, mostly for men. These findings question the notion that women’s empowerment at the community level can automatically reinforce women’s position at the household level.

2.1.5. Family-centred Approaches to Extension

Targeting all household members in training and other extension activities can be an effective way to promoting women’s involvement in agricultural support programmes. Family-centred approaches to extension are particularly suitable in those contexts where women face strong mobility constraints or in indigenous societies where development interventions need to be culturally embedded and revitalize traditional forms of organizations. The EMPOWER project in Ethiopia (The Women

in Development, 2003) promoted the participation of women in project activities by convincing men to bring their spouses to training sessions. Training families, rather than individual farmers, can also contribute to maximizing the impact of technical assistance, as family members can support each other in the learning process. Given the gender division of labour in agriculture, women and men are usually “specialized” in different activities, and may need to help each other to complement their respective knowledge. For instance, under the CORREDOR project in Peru women expressed that they were satisfied with the technical assistance received because all family members were invited to participate. In this way women with lower levels of education could be helped by their children and husbands. Moreover, this promoted a more integrated approach to farming (Gallina, 2010).

The Household approach, as developed under the Agriculture Support Programme in Zambia (Bishop-Sambrook & Wonani, 2008), envisages a process whereby individual meetings between ASP-coded households and camp facilitators take place over a period of three years. All adult household members (husband, wife and older children) participate in setting the household vision and preparing an action plan, work together during implementation, and share the benefits together. Extension workers have gone through an intensive capacity building process aimed at strengthening their capacity to implement this innovative approach.

Findings from an impact study (Bishop-Sambrook & Wonani, 2008) indicate that this process has a tremendous positive impact on both household food security and women’s empowerment. As a result of their involvement in the programme, women have dramatically improved access to and control over household resources. Gender relations at the household level have improved and workloads are more equitably shared among men and women. Women have strengthened their self-esteem and decision-making capacities within the households as well as in the broader community. There is clear evidence among beneficiary households, that improved harmony and resource sharing among household members have translated into greater agricultural development and income, which in turn had a positive impact on household food security and asset-building. The Household approach is an effective and non-confrontational way of addressing gender issues. The peculiarity of this approach is that it aims to bring about changes in gender relations “from within”, rather than “from without”.

Standard approaches to gender mainstreaming are based on the assumption that empowering women “outside” the household domain will automatically increase women’s bargaining power within households. Women’s enhanced social capital and agency at the community level can greatly contribute to strengthening women’s position within the household. However, as illustrated by the experience of FFSs, this correlation cannot be taken for granted. Promoting collective forms of women’s agency, thereby cutting across households, does not necessarily challenge intra-household inequalities. Thus, the Household approach can be seen as a promising option to bring about effective and tangible changes in gender relations by breaking the reproduction of women’s subordination at multiple levels.

2.1.6. Promoting Women’s Access to Private Service Providers

In many countries agricultural extension is progressively becoming more pluralistic. In particular, private firms such as input suppliers play increasingly important roles in service provision, particularly for better-off, commercial farmers. In addition, NGOs are often contracted to provide both technical and non-technical services to poorer farmers, including women. Donors generally outsource specific services to NGOs and other private providers, which are more efficient and effective in services delivery than the public extension system. Governments in many developing countries are also increasingly engaging civil society organizations and private service providers in service delivery through outsourcing (Swanson & Rajalahti, 2010).

The ATMA in India contracts specialized NGOs for social mobilization and group formation activities, particularly with the poorer farmers and women. Moreover, the ATMA Governing Board includes not only representatives of different segments of civil society but also representatives of input supply firms,

NGOs and rural banks (Swanson & Rajalahti, 2010). The Extension Master Plan in Mozambique (National Directorate of Agriculture Extension, 2007) aims to develop a new extension paradigm which also envisages, developing a partnership with other actors. Greater participation of the private sector is also foreseen, particularly to strengthen the business orientation in agricultural extension.

Specialized service providers can play a key role in ensuring outreach to women farmers through the use of appropriate, participatory methodologies and the provision of adequate pro-women services. An important issue is institutional sustainability. Project-funded private service providers will stop servicing their clients and move to other areas as soon as the project terminates, which in turn can endanger the long-term sustainability of project interventions (Swanson & Rajalahti, 2010).

IFAD-funded projects in Andean Peru have experimented with an innovative methodology to promote sustainable access by women to private service provider. This methodology is based on the organization of public competitions (*concurso*) in which farmers present their business proposals and compete for public funding that can be used to contract technical assistance. A committee formed by representatives of local institutions, communities and civil society organizations, is responsible for making decisions on the allocation of funding. The *concurso* is a public ceremony attended by a variety of different actors, which draws upon the cultural, mythological, and religious traditions of “pacha mama raymi”, the festival of mother earth. Competitions are a catalyst for change, and also an effective means of sharing, disseminating and replicating local technological innovation and business ideas throughout the entire project area. Prior to the *concurso*, women participate in exchange visits to stimulate new business ideas and learn how to formulate business proposals through simple pro-poor business formats (Gallina, 2010).

The most innovative aspect of this mechanism is that it enables women to make autonomous decisions regarding their livelihoods. Rather than providing externally defined training packages, the women themselves define their training needs and choose and contract the service provider accordingly (Ranaboldo, 2000; Gallina, 2010). The selection of the experts is an empowering experience for women, as they can choose the experts that better meet their needs and socio-cultural characteristics. Women use their social networks to identify the service provider, tending to choose quechua-speaking trainers coming from neighbour communities. The fact that they also have to contribute to the cost of the investment, maximizes the impact of learning. This system has strongly promoted the development of a market for pro-poor, pro-women services in the Andean region. The evaluation of this programme found that the impacts and benefits of this mechanism are much higher than traditional, subsidized supply-driven extension services (Ranaboldo, 2000).

To ensure the sustainability of this mechanism in its last phase, the CORREDOR Puno-Cusco project introduced an important innovation. The methodology was progressively transferred to local municipalities, which are now increasingly using *concursos* to channel public investments in rural areas, in a transparent way. The decentralization process offers political opportunities for scaling up this initiative. The implementation of this mechanism not only contributes to promote women's access to private services, but also to enhance the participation of citizens in the governance of their territory (Gallina, 2010).

2.2. Promoting Access to Land and Natural Resources

2.2.1. Overview

Rural women worldwide generally have weak property and contractual rights to land, water and other natural resources. Gender inequality in access to land and property is due to discriminatory inheritance practices, unequal access to land markets and gender-biased land reform (Kabeer, 2009). Many land titling programmes are grounded in the notion of individual land rights, as opposed to co-ownership. This notion is rooted in the biased assumption that women are not farmers and thus not interested in owning land (Deere & Leon, 2000). Under customary law women acquire their rights to land through their relationship with male relatives, who are the owners of the land. This makes women

vulnerable to land dispossession in the event of abandonment, divorce or death of the household head. Moreover, land scarcity and erosion of traditional governance institutions have undermined customary and religious laws that recognize women's usufruct rights to land.

In many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the HIV/Aids pandemic is increasing the number of women-headed households, which in turn requires action to enable widows to retain control over family land and other productive resources. This is the case, for instance, for poor widows in Southern Nyanza – Kenya – the province with the highest rates of HIV/Aids-related deaths. When the head of the household dies, the land is often grabbed by male family members, thereby depriving women of their main productive asset (ILC, 2003). Market-based land reforms have further favoured land grabs by individuals and corporations, thereby fuelling poverty, marginalization and conflicts (Action Aid, 2008).

Gender discrimination can exist in user groups and natural resource management committees, which in turn hampers women's participation in the governance of natural resources. Climate change, drought and natural resource degradation contribute to further exacerbate inequalities in access to and control over resources (World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2009). Rapidly increasing deforestation is making it more difficult for women to find firewood and to gain income from non-timber forest products (World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2009). This can have a disrupting effect on the livelihoods of landless women, such as widows and single women, who depend primarily on the use of forest and other common pool resources for their survival.

There is a growing body of evidence that promoting women's rights over land and natural resources is key to enhancing women's livelihood security and promoting women's empowerment. Land ownership is likely to have positive effects on agricultural productivity, food security and children's education (Agarwal, 2003). Land can be rented or used as a collateral, thereby facilitating access to credit for investments in agriculture and in other non-agricultural businesses. Findings from a study undertaken in Nicaragua and Honduras by Katz and Chamorro (2002) show that land ownership can enhance women's role in the household economy, by promoting greater access to credit and control over agricultural income. Finally, in most developing countries, land ownership is often a requirement for membership in Water Users Associations (WUAs) and other farmers' organizations (IFAD, 2007). Thus, promoting women's rights over land can increase women's participation in local governance institutions such as farmers' organizations and user groups.

2.2.2. Gender-focused Land Titling Programmes

Deere & Leon (2000) suggest that historically many land titling programmes in Latin America have lacked clarity about the bundle of property rights embedded in the household, which might comprise three different types of property, namely that of the wife, the husband and common property. Lack of legal literacy, weak implementation and pervasive gender biases can further constrain women's ability to claim their rights and participate in land titling programmes. In Peru, women's organizations have engaged in public campaigns to provide women with legal advice and support for obtaining land titles (Deere & Leon, 2000).

In some countries such as Nicaragua and Colombia, the involvement of civil society organizations and women's farmers unions in campaigns for the promotion of women's property rights have contributed to incorporating a gender-progressive mandate in land titling programmes. The most common measure adopted is mandatory joint titling of land to couples in programmes of state land adjudication (e.g. in Colombia, Nicaragua and Brazil) or in land titling programmes (Deere, 2005).

A project in Honduras implemented a land titling component focused on gender. An agreement was signed with the National Agrarian Institute (INA) to extend property rights to women by titling couples rather than the head of the household. Training activities were developed with all main institutional actors involved, aimed at both sensitizing them on the importance of addressing gender issues in land

titling and building the institutional capacity to implement the programme. An information campaign was launched in rural areas to sensitize farmers on the advantages of co-titling. As a result of the programme more than 50 % of titles issued were in women's names. However, when an evaluation was conducted, the programme's impact on women's empowerment was deemed unclear as men were found to play a major role in decision-making concerning the use of the land (CIDA, 2004).

In many African countries, the practice of titling only household heads can discriminate against women and actually deprive them of customary access. As a result, efforts to improve tenure security may actually weaken customary rights, and disempower women and other marginal groups. The land certification programme in Ethiopia is considered as a positive example in terms of gender. The programme has promoted joint land ownership by spouses and inclusion of their pictures on land certificates; land administration committees at the *kebele* level (the smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia) were required to have at least one female member and land certificates were issued after public registration to ensure transparency (Deininger et al., 2008).

The certification programme was found to have positive impacts on gender relations and land-related investment (Deininger et al., 2008). In some cases, widows were able to win court cases to hold on to their land rather than being dispossessed. In polygamous households, the requirement to have separate certificates for any spouses resulted in increased willingness to invest in land co-owned by the wives. However, a study carried out in the Amhara Region (Demessie, S., 2003) identified several constraints for new women landowners, including weak access to training activities and inputs. Furthermore, since ploughing is not a culturally acceptable activity for women they continue to be dependent on men to do it for them and have to relinquish up to three quarters of their land or produce in payment.

Some gender specialists have questioned the potential of joint titles to serve women's interests (Razavi, 2007). Agarwal (2003) considers that family-based approaches in land titling do not necessarily enable women to retain control over produce and income, nor to claim their share in case of marital conflict. In addition, securing access to land, either through joint or individual titles, may not necessarily translate into higher production if women's difficult access to non-land resources, such as credit, inputs and technical support, is not addressed. Whitehead (Whitehead & Tsikata, 2003) suggests that in sub-Saharan Africa, women farm less land than men do, not because they are prevented from accessing land, but mainly because they lack access to capital, inputs and markets. Similarly, a gender study of an irrigation scheme in Mozambique found that women were more likely to lose their plots as they were unable to meet the productivity criteria of the irrigation scheme management, due to poor access to inputs and technical assistance (Pellizzoli, 2009).

2.2.3. Promoting Women's Participation in User Groups

Frequently, user groups established to promote community management of natural resources in the context of decentralization, tend to exclude women through discriminatory rules and social norms (Kabeer, 2009). As rights to resources are progressively transferred from the State to community-based organizations, promoting women's active participation is essential for ensuring sustainable access to and control over common pool resources. In order to overcome this issue, an IFAD-funded project in Nepal, which leases user rights to forest land to groups of poor households who are in charge of rehabilitating the land and entitled to use the forest products, has promoted the formation of women leasehold groups. This has empowered women to exert their rights over forestry resources and increased their leadership role in the community. A committed staff open to listen to and learn from women farmers, gender awareness training and the formation of a team of specialized women promoters, are some of the measures that made this project a successful experience in terms of empowering poor women by securing access to natural resources (ILC, 2001).

As the Nepal example demonstrates, in some cases the formation of women user groups to manage common pool resources may be preferable, particularly in contexts where women are key users

of a resource. This is the case, for instance, of the central tribal belt of India, where women hold primary responsibility for collecting and processing forest resources. Therefore, environmental policies that decentralize natural resource management can have significant consequences for women (Agarwal, 2006). Yet, changing organizational values and norms that exclude women from local governance structures may be difficult to achieve in the short term. In Mozambique, although water collection is largely considered to be a woman's task, Water Users Committees (WUCs) are usually dominated by men. Lack of adequate training for WUCs and women in operation & maintenance (O&M) activities, as well as unaffordable user fees are identified among the factors that limited women's participation in these committees. Very often women are also reticent to participate in male-dominated organizations, as they find it more difficult to express their voice in group meetings and influence decision-making processes (BSF, 2009).

Despite these difficulties, women's participation in user groups can lead to better governance practices, thereby improving the management and conservation of natural resources in poor rural communities. In Bangladesh (Sultana & Thompson 2008 in Quisimbing & Pandolfelli, 2009) it was found that compliance with rules limiting fishing in protected areas is higher when both men and women are actively involved in fishery management groups. Likewise, in India, when women belong to forest protection committees, control of illicit grazing and felling tends to increase (Agarwal et al., 2006). Thus, a positive correlation exists between greater involvement of women and improved regeneration in the forest. Efforts to increase women's participation, however, need to challenge inequalities in governance structures and membership requirements (Kabeer, 2009).

Affirmative action is essential for strengthening women's roles in decision-making when the use and management of resources is concerned. Important complementary activities such as capacity development, awareness raising and access to capital can also contribute to support women's active participation in user groups and improve their livelihoods. A DFID-funded project, which developed a methodology for producing visual training products on agro-forestry and other issues, made a positive contribution to women's education. By equipping them with more knowledge, women developed the capacity to influence the management process of forestry resources (Bennett, 2005).

2.2.4. Reforming Customary Systems

In customary systems, access to land and resources is an integral part of social relationships (Cotula, 2007). As already pointed out, women generally acquire their usufruct rights to land through their relationship with male relatives. Marriage is an important site for accessing land, and the husband generally devolves the land to the wife for farming (Whitehead & Tsikata, 2003). The important role women play in agricultural production gives them bargaining power in claiming access to land vis-à-vis men. Women, however, experience several disadvantages. In case of death of or abandonment by the head of the household, a woman can easily lose the rights acquired on her husband's land.

Customary rights regimes are highly complex and dynamic, and present opportunities for change and negotiation. Addressing women's rights in the context of traditional land tenure regimes can require commitment and negotiation capacity from projects. A programme in the Gambia promoted the devolution of land ownership from local landowners to landless farmers, mainly women head of households, by facilitating processes of intra-community negotiations between landless farmers and traditional authorities.

Because of the shortage of fertile land with access to freshwater, the project decided to reclaim tidal swampland under perennial freshwater conditions. While the owners of the swampland did not have sufficient labour to undertake reclamation activities, women and other landless farmers needed incentives to provide labour for land reclamation. Through the facilitation of intra-community negotiations, an agreement was reached which enabled women to gain land ownership in exchange for their labour. This agreement gained legal value within the traditional law system, since it was made at the

community level. Now women, who comprise 90 % of the programme's beneficiaries, permanently own land and can transfer it to their children through inheritance. Food security has increased because of increased land availability for rice production and improved yields (IFAD, 2004).

This project demonstrates the importance of adopting a bottom-up approach to support a more equitable land allocation system within the framework of traditional governance structures and customary law. In this regard, a project in Kenya addresses the dispossession of women's land rights in the context of HIV-Aids through community sensitization and dispute resolution mechanisms, and recognizes the need to raise community awareness of women's land rights through traditional local fora and educational theatre. During project design, participatory meetings were organized in rural communities aimed at documenting the views of poor rural women on the value and importance of secure access to land and other natural resources (ILC, 2003). The findings provided input for the formulation of the project.

The emphasis on "the customary", however, can have disempowering implications for women given the strong patriarchal nature of local power structures (Whitehead & Tsikata, 2003). Customary rights cannot be seen in isolation, and their interface with formal laws is critical for women's land rights (Whitehead et al., 2003). Legal recognition of customary rights may help women to negotiate better forms of tenure security and access to resources. However, the relation between customary and formal laws is extremely complex and can be difficult to translate in practice (Cotula, 2007).

2.2.5. Acquiring Land through the Market

In the context of discriminatory inheritance practices and gender-biased land reform, the market represents an alternative channel to acquire land. Land markets, however, are not gender neutral and tend to disfavour women. While women's income-generating opportunities expand, they are still more limited than those of men. Moreover, gender disparities in wages and access to credit can make it difficult for women to purchase assets. In some contexts women may also have weaker negotiation power in land markets, which translates in higher prices for less productive land. Data from a study on economic restructuring in Latin America shows that land purchases are a much more important source of land acquisition for men than for women (Deere, 2005).

According to Agarwal (2003), working in groups to lease or purchase land may offer significant advantages to women, particularly the poorer ones. Individual or family-based approaches in promoting women's rights over land may not necessarily have an empowering effect in certain contexts. Individual women willing to invest in their land may face constraints in buying inputs and may not be able to mobilize sufficient labour for farming. Moreover, the size of their plot may be too small for undertaking productive investments. As already pointed out, a family-based approach would also disadvantage women, as male relatives may exert pressure on women landowners to control land, produce and income.

Several NGOs in South-Asia who have helped landless women to purchase land in groups and cultivate it jointly have experienced positive results (Agarwal, 2003). By sharing costs and responsibilities, women have been enabled to hire tractors and travel to distant towns to market their produce at a better price. This resulted in increased self-confidence and greater ability to control income. However, internal conflicts or simply uneven interests among group members can endanger group sustainability. For instance, it may be difficult to motivate women to stay together when individual cultivation becomes more profitable (Agarwal, 2003).

Microfinance can be an important means for women to acquire land through the market. The Grameen Bank provides women with large, longer-term loans to buy housing and land. House sites and land are registered in women's names, as a way to secure the loan as well as to increase women's control of assets. This has resulted in improving women's security and decreasing both the divorce and

abandonment of women (Mayoux, 2009b). As part of its membership training programme, SEWA encourages women to use their savings to buy assets, particularly land, in their own name and sensitizes them on the importance of acquiring assets for social security (Nanavaty, 2009).

In Bangladesh, some women have used their loans and the increased income from project activities to purchase both agricultural and homestead land. The fact that women are usually the conduits for credit, enabled them to negotiate their land rights with their husbands, and challenge the Bengali law of inheritance which seeks to retain the land within the patrilineage. To allow them to acquire land titles, women convinced their husband with the argument that, since they had borrowed the money, they were entitled to have the land in their names (Kelkar et al., 2004). For many women the acquisition of homestead land represented an opportunity to building a stable livelihoods system. Homestead land is in fact used to raise goats and other livestock or grow vegetables, which are key activities for both self-consumption and income generation.

2.3. Developing Household Food Security

2.3.1. Overview

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that women produce more than 50 % of the food grown worldwide and constitute the vast majority of smallholder farmers in developing countries (World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2006). The roles that women play in agriculture vary from region to region and country to country. Overall, however, women play a key role in food production and participate in each node of the food chain from the field to the plate. Moreover, different spending patterns exist between men and women, with women tending to use their income to meet family needs, while men are more likely to purchase private goods. Despite the importance women play in household food security, gender-based inequalities all along the food production chain impede the attainment of food and nutritional security (World-Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2009).

Food insecurity occurs not only from a lack of food, but also stems from inequalities built into mechanisms for its distribution. Examining food security requires an analysis of food availability in a community as a whole as well as of the differential “access” to food between households. Food secure households always have enough food to meet their needs. Food insecure households may face seasonal or daily shortages. Important disparities in access to food also exist between women and men. In the context of asymmetric gender relations, the distribution of nutritious and costly food is most likely to favour the male members of the household. In terms of project outcomes, this has implications for the sex ratio (number of men to women) and for stunting by gender, as simply ensuring that the household has “enough” food will not necessarily challenge the traditional male-oriented pattern of intra-household food distribution.

Women’s limited access to and control over key resources such as land, water, inputs and technology, can strongly undermine household food security. Yet, historically, donors have tended to channel resources, input and technologies to male farmers, assuming that the benefits will trickle down to the household. Women’s ability to produce food is further constrained in the context of the HIV/Aids pandemic. Women are usually required to care for the sick or orphans, thereby reducing the time they spend on farming and other productive activities. More importantly, women can lose their land after the death of the household head (World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2009). Global land grab by individuals and corporations, as well as, more frequent droughts and natural disasters as a result of climate change, can further destabilize the food security situation of many developing countries, (Action Aid, 2006).

With the introduction of cash crops, market development can undermine food security, if an appropriate balance between food and cash crops is not found. When cash crops replace food crops there is a risk of greater dependency on markets for food, which may affect nutritional balance. In many sub-Saharan countries women are traditionally responsible for food production, though they also participate

in cash crop production alongside men. If the area for high-value crops is increased, or a new variety is introduced, women's labour can be diverted from food production to providing free labour for cash production, which in turn may lead to an increase of women's workload, thus affecting the time they have available for working on their plots and reducing household food security (IFAD, 1999). Women may also lose their entitlement to land if a traditional women's crop acquires a market value, thereby being captured by men.

2.3.2. Focusing Technology Transfer and Research on Women's Needs and Roles

Agricultural technology transfer and capacity development is one of the main instruments to increase agricultural production and productivity. Very often women are not targeted by projects because it is assumed that the men of the families will transfer skills and knowledge to them (World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2009). Moreover, technology research and innovations are rarely focused on women's specific needs and roles. For instance, little is invested in technology research into on-farm crop processing, which is largely undertaken by women farmers. As a result, rural women generally lack access to improved technologies for use in farming and processing, and the large majority of them still rely on traditional, labour-intensive and time-consuming technologies. Daily reproductive activities such as the collection of water and fuel wood, reduce the time spent by women on farming and other income-generating activities. Women's time poverty and lack of access to improved technologies and techniques lead to low agricultural yields and low levels of food security (Carr, 2009).

A study (Johnson-Welch, 2000) shows how an analysis of women's time and labour burdens was used to address women's practical constraints in farming and food production. The data generated through the analysis was useful in defining the type of technologies that could increase women's efficiency and productivity. This led to the introduction of food processing technologies to women, such as solar dryers, grain mills or efficient cooking stoves in Ethiopia or oilseed presses in Tanzania. In Mozambique, the Belgium Survival Fund introduced an innovative water pump, which due to its easy repair and maintenance could reduce women's dependency on men for an operational pump. The wells were built closer to homesteads, so as to enable women to save energy. A gender evaluation revealed that women gained 1 or 2 hours for domestic, agricultural and fishing activities. The extra time spent in their fields or fishing for shrimps enabled them to bring more food home for consumption and sale in the market (BSF, 2009).

A project in Ecuador (CARE, 2005) shows the importance of valuing women's knowledge and traditional farming techniques to promote household food security. The project, which targets Shuar people in the Amazon region, is restoring the traditional "*aja*", or family garden system, which has been weakened by the introduction of modern farming practices that are often harmful to the ecosystem. Modern techniques, typically taught to men, disrupt the oral transmission of farming knowledge that has helped ensure food security for Shuar families. This shift has also worsened the social condition of Shuar women within the community. Through project support women are now recording, preserving and spreading their farming knowledge and skills, weaving in new methods adapted to the ecosystem and developing marketing linkages for the surplus food – tubers, vegetables, medicinal herbs, fruits and forest plants. The Shuar women have significantly improved their families' food security, while preserving their environment and renewing the value attached to the knowledge and tradition of the "*aja*".

2.3.3. Beyond Food Production

Food security interventions should direct their focus beyond agricultural production, towards addressing the multiple factors at the household, community and policy level that hamper the attainment of food security. Three distinct variables should be considered, namely: availability, access and utilization.

The possibility for women to exercise control over key productive resources is a fundamental priority in food security interventions. In many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, where women's access to land and resources always depends on household transaction, improving women's bargaining position within

the household and in the whole community can strengthen their capacity to challenge gendered norms of entitlements that constrain their access to productive resources and food. For this reason, the EMPOWER project in Ethiopia (Women in Development, 2003) supported improved household production and food security while creating an enabling environment for both men and women to effectively work towards ensuring and sustaining future food security.

The implementation of the Household approach in Zambia clearly demonstrates that addressing traditional gender roles and practices can make a great contribution to the goals of food security. Food and nutrition issues have been systematically addressed in training activities with target households. In the household, women and men now make joint decisions regarding what to grow, timing of sales of crops and livestock, and reserves for household food security. This has resulted in a situation in which men feel more responsible for household food security and family well-being and are now able to make decisions which previously were only made by women (Bishop-Sambrook & Wonani, 2008)

A further issue relates to the importance of addressing constraints to food utilization to achieve nutritional outcomes. Some of these constraints include: (i) nutrient losses during food preparation; (ii) unhealthy practices; and (iii) lack of knowledge of nutrition and child-care techniques. Nutritional education, for instance, should be an integral part of extension messages. Yet, many extension approaches are still characterized by a narrow focus on production and productivity.

In Mozambique, FFSs have been promoted by FAO with a strong focus on food security (FAO, 2009). Thus, the learning of new farming practices to improve food production is complemented by nutritional education as a central part of the “special topic” session. Women have learnt how to wash vegetables and cook healthy food and are now more aware of the nutritional content of different foods. Participation of women in FFSs is generally higher than that of men, which is partly because food and nutrition issues discussed in the special topic session are generally of greater interest to women.

The importance of addressing physical consumption in agricultural interventions aimed at achieving food security is well illustrated by an action research study conducted in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (Johnson-Welch, 2000). The study compares the effects of an intervention focused exclusively on agricultural inputs and production with one that included actions to improve consumption of food products, using the beta carotene-rich sweet potato and utilization of nutrients by young children. The result was a significantly better intake of vitamin A by children whose mothers participated in the expanded technology package.

2.4. Women as Market Actors

2.4.1. Overview

Markets are gendered institutions which articulate gender relations and roles through a system of rules, practices and ideologies. Female farmers face gender-specific barriers to accessing markets, which includes limited access over productive resources, training and market information. Women farmers generally grow low-value products on smaller plots, with less access to capital, labour and inputs (Gamage, 2005), and find it more difficult to move to higher value, more profitable crops. Poor illiterate women generally know little about new business opportunities, particularly in non-traditional sectors. Hence, most women’s enterprises are small and tend to be concentrated in less profitable sectors (World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2009).

In addition, producer organizations very often adopt membership requirements that women cannot meet. In the Dominican Republic, for instance, groups of women vegetable producers cannot become members of the vegetable producers “cluster” (an umbrella organization of vegetable producers) as the size of their land is below the minimum requirement. Affiliation to the organization would allow them

to capture a higher share of the final value by linking them directly to supermarkets and exporters (IFAD, 2009).

Market liberalization can have serious consequences for women, as they find it more difficult to access resources and opportunities to participate in export-led growth. The shift from the cultivation of domestic food crops to export-oriented agriculture in developing countries can negatively affect women farmers as they are mainly concentrated in subsistence crops. Very often, it can be difficult for women to retain control over production and marketing of traditional crops when they acquire a market value (see also section 2.4.). The development of export horticulture in Kenya has led to an erosion of women's control over their produce, as men farmers have increasingly entered vegetable production, which is traditionally dominated by women (Dolan, 2002).

Both donors and market actors frequently assume that male farmers are more innovative and more interested in cash production than women (Farnworth & Hutchings, 2009). Women's role in farming is generally associated with household food security. Although there is no doubt that in many parts of the world women play a key role in subsistence farming, this assumption ignores the important role they also play in cash crop production. Many women, for instance, grow vegetables and raise small livestock, which are key activities for both self-consumption and income generation. Cash crop production is critical to enable women to access and control an independent source of income, which is often invested in household well-being and children's education.

Local markets can offer good opportunities to earn income through the sale of staple crops and vegetables. More importantly, the rapid expansion of supermarkets in urban areas, the increasing demand for high-value, labour-intensive crops, such as vegetables, which are usually associated with women, as well as increasing investments in processing and value-addition, open up important marketing opportunities for women farmers (World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2009). New employment opportunities for women are also created in export-oriented agricultural markets, such as the horticulture sector, although such jobs are usually low paid, informal and insecure (Quisimbing & Pandolfelli, 2009).

2.4.2. Addressing Gender Concerns in Value Chain and Market Analysis

Poverty-targeted value chain interventions are designed by donors with the aim to ensure that poor smallholder farmers are the main beneficiaries of upgrading. Women and men are usually involved at different stages of the value chain as producers and entrepreneurs, in marketing and as consumers (Mayoux & Mackie, 2007). A gender approach to value chain analysis can provide an understanding of men's and women's specific roles and responsibilities in the chain and how gender inequalities influence the distribution of benefits to value chain actors. For instance, a gender analysis of the shrimp value chain in Bangladesh (USAID, 2006), reveals that women and girls are less involved in farming but outnumber men in processing activities. The analysis also shows that the terms and conditions of employment along the value chain tend to disfavour women (USAID, 2006).

Very often, value chain interventions tend to overlook gender issues, mainly because women are usually concentrated in less profitable and less visible areas of the value chain. For example, women's important contribution to cash crop farming is often ignored. Thus, when chain interventions introduce new cultivation, this can increase women's labour, but it does not necessarily increase women's ability to control income (Mayoux, 2009a). As a result, lack of understanding of gender issues in a given value chain can contribute to perpetrating gender inequalities, thereby limiting impact on poverty reduction and food security.

Gender sensitive value chain mapping, using participatory methodology, can enable women to better understand their position in the value chain and define the type of support they need to upgrade their skills or take-up new roles. Participatory methodologies can also promote mutual learning among the different actors involved in the chain and facilitate the negotiation of win-win strategies

that incorporate gender concerns (Mayoux, 2009). Several donors and organizations have developed participatory tools to conduct participatory market analysis by involving both women and men farmers (see for instance Mayoux, 2007).

The Enabling Rural Innovations programme in Uganda and Malawi focuses on participatory action-research approaches to strengthen the capacity of rural communities to access and generate technical and market information. This initiative takes a “beneficiary” rather than a “commodity” starting point for technology development. Research objectives are defined by assessing market analysis, community interests and their assets. Gender-sensitive participatory tools are used to identify differences in intra-household allocation and control over resources in order to understand constraints and opportunities to technology adoption and market access (Kaaria et al., 2008).

Positive impacts were found in terms of household income, and in intra-household decision-making towards more shared skills in analysing and understanding markets. However, the study suggests that more efforts are required to ensure that benefits are equitably distributed among value chain actors and among women and men within the value chain. This is reflected by the fact that significant income disparities were reported between women and men farmers.

2.4.3. Promoting Market Linkages

Selecting crops or commodities that are traditionally associated with women when planning a value chain intervention may not be enough. In India, the creation of milk cooperatives which link farmers directly to markets by eliminating the middleman, has resulted in increasing the participation of men in the sector, although women are the ones who manage primary production. Milk cooperatives in India are male-dominated institutions since the head of the household, namely the man, is often registered as cooperative member and takes part in training and marketing activities (IFAD, 2010). As a strategy to increase the number of women in milk cooperatives, the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) has established a quota for women participants in management committees and started a Women Leadership Programme. However, participation of women in milk cooperatives remains lower compared to men, as it is usually difficult for women to enter male-dominated organizations.

Promoting women’s access to markets can be challenging particularly in those contexts where women’s mobility restrictions may reduce their ability to sell their products directly in local markets. In Bangladesh, markets are considered to be male spaces where women are not expected to congregate. A study undertaken in the country (Kelkar et al., 2004) reveals that women prefer to sell their produce, mainly poultry, vegetables and milk, to itinerant traders at the doorstep, rather than giving it to male family members to be sold in the market. Where the men take the produce to the market, this can lead to a lessening of women’s control over income. Hence, in certain contexts, project strategies which aim to remove the middlemen, can increase profit margins but also disempower women. Traders and middlemen can be vital links in the chain. The challenge is to empower women to interact with market intermediaries on fair terms (Collett & Gale, 2009).

In order to enable women to better understand prices and markets and improve their bargaining power vis-à-vis traders and market actors, enterprise development training needs to complement agricultural training. The Indian organization Udyogini selects and trains women to become grassroot business development service (BDS) providers. The newly recruited women BDS providers participate in an intensive training programme aimed at strengthening their market-oriented perspective as well as their ability to understand and negotiate with market players. The training programme also includes exposure visits to stores and shopping areas in key cities, which enables them to understand prices and market demands. These women are responsible for providing production and marketing services to other women, but also to train other women as BDS providers, in order to expand marketing support services in rural areas (Viswanath, 2005).

Marketing-oriented functional literacy can be a powerful means for market linkages. In Mozambique, for instance, women's participation in functional literacy training has promoted women's involvement in trading activities (BSF, 2009). Increasing access to information and communication technologies (ICT) for women entrepreneurs is also an important and expanding area of donor support (Gammage et al., 2005). ICT services can enable producers to access information on market prices, better plan their production and improve their bargaining position in the market. The African Women's Centre in Ethiopia help women's groups gain access to new information technologies through community information centres (ibid.). The spread of mobile phones in rural areas is creating opportunities for women to establish direct linkages with final buyers, thereby bypassing the intermediation of both the men of the family and the middlemen.

Ensuring access to appropriate processing technology, storage and transport facilities is crucial to strengthening the market integration of poor rural women producers. The construction of roads can contribute to overcome women's mobility constraints and facilitate their access to markets and sale points. Interventions supporting the construction of rural roads, and other market-related infrastructure are more effective in addressing gender issues when both male and female farmers are enabled to address their specific transportation needs (IEG, 2010). As a result of the active involvement of women in project design and implementation, the Peru Rural Roads Programme improved 3,000 kilometres of non-motorized tracks that are mainly used by women. Women have increased their participation in markets and fairs, which in turn led to a sustainable increase of their income and a reduction in their working time (World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2009).

2.4.4. Setting Women's Cooperatives and Enterprises

Setting women's cooperatives or women's brands in economic activities dominated by women, or in which women have a comparative advantage is an important instrument for securing economies of scale when dealing with the market, creating direct linkages with buyers and establishing women as competitive producers in their own right. When women are empowered and well organized they are more able to produce quality goods according to market standards and manage their business independently (Mayoux, 2009a). Many women's cooperatives develop around processing and value addition activities. For instance, important opportunities exist for women in growing export markets for health and beauty products which tend to be based on raw materials which they traditionally collect and use.

In Burkina Faso, a women's association produces and sells shea butter both nationally and internationally. The association has enabled women to acquire new technical skills and organizational capacities and to gain access to an autonomous source of income. As a result, women have enhanced their social status in the family and in the whole community. Some of the factors that contributed to the success of this experience include: (i) the presence of a dynamic women leader; (ii) the choice of a sector in which women are competitive; (iii) the increased international demand for shea butter; (iv) donors and government support to the sectors; (v) direct linkages with foreign buyers; (vi) the adoption of appropriate technologies which significantly reduced the time and labour needed for processing; and (vii) functional literacy (Solidaridad, 2009).

The CAFEFEMININO brand is an initiative which aims to empower women organic coffee growers in different Latin American countries. The experience of CAFEFEMININO in the Dominican Republic is notable, as the programme promotes women's property rights over land by convincing the man of the household to transfer a portion of the land to the woman. In this way women can exercise control over the coffee they produce and market it directly without the intermediation of men, who are traditionally responsible for marketing activities. The programme also facilitates access to credit and technical support, through which women learn how to acquire the organic/CAFEFEMININO certification and manage the productive process. As a result of this initiative, women have acquired greater self-

esteem and increased their income. Moreover, the active presence of women in the directive board of coffee producers' organizations has sharply increased (IFAD, 2009).

CAFEFEMININO is an example of the economic and marketing opportunities that exist in the organic sector. A study which assesses the impact of organic farming on women (Farnworth & Hutching, 2009) found that women's participation in organic farming led to an increase in agency and decision-making capacity for women. Changes have also been documented in women's access to, and control over resources as a consequence of shifting from a subsistence-based farming system to market-oriented organic farming. The impact of organic agriculture on women's perceptions of their role is demonstrated by the fact that in Uruguay they describe themselves as "collaborators" in conventional farming whereas they call themselves "farmers" in organics. In order to meet the high quality standards for organic products, organic production demands more labour, which is often supplied by women. However, a research in Uganda (UNCTAD in Solidaridad, 2009) shows that women involved in organic farming have to work longer hours and reduce the time spent in other income-generating activities, which in turn is found to reduce their income.

2.4.5. Addressing the Multiple Factors that Constrain Women's Access to Markets

The burden of women's unpaid work in the household is a key constraint to women's marketing and enterprise activities. Without adopting appropriate measures to free women's time, enterprise activities may overburden women and negatively impact their well-being. This may also generate intra-household conflicts and violence as the excessive pressure on women's time may constrain their ability to fulfil their household responsibilities. As the experience of women shea butter producers demonstrates, the adoption of appropriate, labour-saving technologies is key to allowing women to combine their domestic responsibilities with productive activities outside the household. Promoting men's support or sensitizing them on the benefits that can accrue to the family from women's economic empowerment can also be critical for modifying traditional patterns of workload distribution.

As Agarwal (1997) points out, women's subordinate position within the household and in the market place may reinforce one another, thereby creating a cyclical reproduction of women's subordination. The experience described further above suggest that market-oriented interventions aimed to promote the development of gender equitable value chains need to tackle gender discriminatory norms and practices at multiple levels, i.e. at the household/community, institutional, market and policy level. According to Mayoux (2009a) women's cooperatives and enterprises are only likely to succeed if due attention is paid to women's property rights and training needs. Policies that enable women to own, buy, sell and inherit land can promote women's access to credit by providing collateral. These same policies can enable women to upgrade existing production by accessing extension services that were previously directed at male farmers (Gammage et al., 2005).

Addressing gender-specific constraints at multiple levels may require a comprehensive support strategy. The experience of the Self Employed Women Association (SEWA) is worth mentioning in this regard. SEWA offers women a "livelihood finance" package which addresses the need for: (i) building women's collective strength and bargaining power through institution building; (ii) asset creation through appropriate financial services; and (iii) business and marketing facilities through training and market linkages and services. Providing education, health and childcare services as well as organizing women workers and producers around struggles and campaigns which address both women's practical and strategic needs, is also considered essential for the promotion of full employment among women (Nanavaty, 2009).

3. Gender Mainstreaming: Challenges and Opportunities

3.1. From WID to GAD

The Women in Development (WID) discourse in the 1970s assumed that the lack of development for women was the result of an oversight by policy makers and advocated the inclusion of women in development programmes. One of the most important objectives of the WID discourse was to unveil gendered forms of discrimination in development projects, such as the lack of recognition of women's role in agricultural production (Razavi et al., 1995). Several studies have been conducted to demonstrate that the provision of inputs, credit and support to men farmers, assuming that they could exercise control over their wives' unremunerated labour, could actually create tensions as women were resisting attempts to appropriate their labour and produce (Dey in Razavi et al., 1995). Strong criticism was also directed at the unitary household model used by planners and policy-makers, which assumes that household members share resources and interests. In contrast, bargaining models highlight that household members are never purely cooperative but also have conflicting agendas (Sen, 1990).

In the WID discourse, however, women were perceived as a separate and homogenous category, which resulted in the implementation of women-targeted projects or women project components (Baden & Goetz, 1998). Although WID interventions were often successful in increasing women's income, many of them focused on enhancing traditional, frequently less profitable "female" activities that did not challenge the status quo, but rather contributed to further marginalizing women from mainstream development. Although WID highlighted the importance of supporting and upgrading women's role as producers, many income-generating projects were in reality converted into traditional welfare action for women during implementation (Buvinic in Razavi et al., 1995).

As a response to the disappointing outcomes of the WID approach, the Gender and Development (GAD) discourse adopted a holistic view, which called for gender analysis in all aspects of programme design and implementation. It argued that "mainstreaming" as opposed to specifically targeted "women's programmes" was the best way to transform gender relations. Mainstreaming requires a move towards more systematic and systemic procedures and mechanisms for explicitly incorporating gender issues at all levels of policy-making and programme design and implementation. The GAD approach also implies a more widely shared responsibility for gender issues beyond small and under-funded gender units (Jensen et al., 2006). The new approach highlights the importance of conceptualizing gender relations in understanding women's subordination. Thus, addressing gender inequalities requires tackling power relations between men and women rather than solely concentrating on women (Bennett, 2005).

Since the 1990s many donors and development organizations have adopted the terminology of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, formulated gender policies and provided training to build capacity on how to integrate gender concerns in the project cycle (Moser et al., 2005). The aim is that gender in project design should cut across all project components to ensure that women and men are given equal opportunities to participate in mainstream development. Gender has become an important cross-cutting issue for development planning, and gender analysis tools have been developed to help organizations reflect critically about gender relations and the way they influence access to resources and power. Although donors' sensitivity towards gender issues has certainly increased, problems and difficulties are still documented in addressing gender concerns systematically, particularly at the level of implementation.

3.2. The Pitfalls of Gender Mainstreaming

Different gender evaluations undertaken between 2002 and 2006 by national and international development organizations identify several problems in relation to gender mainstreaming (Aesen, 2006). These include: (i) lack of attention to women's empowerment; (ii) weak reporting of results in the area of gender; (iii) inability to use gender-disaggregated information to improve outcomes; and (iv) the provision of insufficient resources to implement policies and strategies. Several sources (Aesen, 2006) suggest that the move towards a gender mainstreaming approach saw a reduction in resources to promote gender issues, and made lines of responsibility for gender less clear. As a result, policy evaporation, which often occurs when moving from design to implementation, is a common risk in gender mainstreaming.

In agriculture and rural development programmes, problems with gender mainstreaming are further exacerbated by the tendency to undervalue the importance of social issues. This means that little attention is paid to socio-economic, gender and power relationships among the actors involved and the way these relationships determine different interests and livelihood choices, influence the capacity to access resources and take advantage of existing opportunities. Agriculture is still largely considered by both donors and government institutions as a male-dominated sector. In many developing countries ministries of agriculture are dominated by men who are the principal actors in policy-making. In addition, donors are increasingly directing their interventions to supporting male-dominated high-value crop production, given its potential to generate higher economic returns.

Evidence from the gender evaluation of DFID interventions (Jensen et al., 2006) shows that gender perspectives have often been addressed as isolated women's issues and "add-ons", thereby failing to address strategic connections between rights, structural inequalities, pro-poor growth and the concepts of gender equality and women's empowerment. Women are often mentioned as project beneficiary, but without any clear indication of how they will actually benefit. In some cases, for instance, the menu of activities proposed by the project may not be attractive to women. In other cases, it may be difficult for women to participate in the proposed activities, unless positive actions or incentive mechanisms are in place. The stock taking exercise of IFAD operations in West and Central Africa (2004) reveals that most projects envisaged to promote women's economic status. However, very few activities were actually designed to reach this objective adequately. Moreover, many projects lacked a plan for a monitoring system using gender-disaggregated performance and impact indicators, which in turn made it difficult to assess the extent to which women farmers were actually benefiting (IFAD, 2004).

Some feminist scholars have criticized the way in which the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming has led to a progressive de-politicization of the gender equality agenda. According to Baden and Goetz (1998) gender analysis has become a technocratic discourse which no longer addresses issues of power in gender relations, but it is rather used in very descriptive ways, thereby leaving unchallenged the structural causes of gender inequalities. Participatory methodologies used for understanding gender roles in agriculture and in society as a whole may take "*naturalized categories at face value and promote bottom-up approaches to development that are sensitive to local constructions of gender but does not necessarily further the goal of putting them into question*" (Kandiyoti, 1998).

Furthermore, the expression "women's empowerment" is often used in a vague and imprecise way, showing the lack of consensus and proper understanding of its meaning (Eyben et al., 2008). In some cases, empowerment is simply understood as involving women in project activities, without a genuine commitment to enhancing women's capacity to challenge those power relations that sustain their marginalization. At the same time, the gender evaluation of DFID programmes (Jensen et al., 2006) points out that gender roles are grounded in deeply rooted norms and ideologies, which cannot be easily changed by projects in the course of a few years. The question of whether changes in gender relations should be prompted from the outside or rather be left to women's own forms of resistance

and contestations within a community is difficult to answer. Poorly handled interventions can disrupt existing gender roles without gaining community acceptance, thereby creating conflicts and increasing the potential for gender-based violence.

Despite these difficulties and problems, gender mainstreaming does increase the “potential” for empowering women as it aims to address power inequalities between men and women. However, this potential, seen in gender-responsive analysis and planning, needs to be carried through in implementation by responsive and representative institutions and participatory processes. This is not always the case, nor is the GAD approach always accepted as a principle among development actors. As a result, the promise of gender mainstreaming has not been fully fulfilled at the level of implementation.

3.3. Successful Gender Mainstreaming Experience in Agriculture and Rural Development Programmes

A review of gender mainstreaming practices (Moser et al., 2005) reveals that development organizations prefer to adopt a dual strategy for mainstreaming gender equality issues into all policies and programmes, combined with targeted actions for gender equality. Very often, particularly in societies with a high level of gender segregation, mainstreaming gender into all project components also includes specifically women-targeted components to facilitate the effective involvement of women and to overcome initial attitudes toward their participation. Preference for a combined strategy is also reflected in the fact that responsibility for gender mainstreaming within international organizations is generally shared by all staff but also supported by gender specialists (Moser et al., 2005).

Gender-sensitive project design is the necessary entry point for promoting equal participation of men and women in project activities. A gender evaluation of World Bank programmes (IEG, 2010) found that in most of the Bank’s operations, women will participate less in project activities and benefit less from them if the project does not implement measures to mitigate this. Understanding gender relations and roles, with attention to intra-household decision-making and negotiation processes concerning resource use and management, can help identify the mechanisms and approaches to effectively reach and benefit women. A study of two development projects in Bangladesh (Tabassum Naved, 2006) shows that when intra-household dynamics were disregarded in the design of the programme, women were minimally involved, and the projects soon became controlled by men.

A well-conducted gender and poverty analysis using participatory methodologies is also key to unpacking the homogenous category of “women” and addressing their different socio-economic/ethnic and age conditions. This analysis should be used to tailor the menu of activities and service delivery to women’s needs and capabilities. For instance, the provision of simple, low-cost, environmentally-friendly technologies using community-based women extension workers (DANIDA, 2004), has enabled poor female farmers to participate in agriculture support services. In contrast, under a World Bank programme in Bangladesh, training on aquaculture targeted at both men and women, benefited mostly men because they had better user rights to ponds than women did (IEG, 2010). Attention should also be placed on the adoption of pro-women eligibility requirements for participation in project activities and in community-based organizations.

From the case studies reviewed, there is ample evidence that targeting women in groups rather than individually or in mixed groups can create appropriate space for women to express their opinions openly and claim what they want, thereby strengthening the demand-driven orientation of projects and programmes. Savings and credit groups have often been used to address strategic gender interests (Kelkar et al., 2004) and build women’s capacity to influence decisions at the household and community level. Likewise, if appropriate support services and training are provided, the formation of women-only cooperatives can enable women to effectively control their production, processing and marketing, thereby mitigating the risk of male capture of their crops and income (Solidaridad, 2009; Mayoux, 2009).

The formulation and implementation of successful “gender strategies” should always be context and culture-specific. However, this cultural specificity should not compromise the empowerment goals of development interventions. Working with women farmers within culturally accepted institutional frameworks should go hand in hand with adequate awareness raising and capacity development measures to support women in their efforts to enter male-dominated spaces, such as markets, non-traditional crops and community groups, thereby challenging traditional gender norms in their society. To achieve this objective, projects should also involve men in the empowerment process to gain their support. This is why SEWA (Nanavaty, 2009) in India focuses on the household as a unit, although the process is undertaken under the leadership of women as chief implementers. The Household approach as a new extension paradigm, was found to facilitate women’s involvement in programme activities, improve intra-household cooperation, and result in a situation in which both men and women felt empowered because intra-household relationships were less tense and more productive (Bishop-Sambrook & Wonani, 2008)

Although the incorporation of a solid empowerment strategy in project design, grounded in gender analysis, is essential for achieving gender equality goals, a certain degree of flexibility is needed to allow project staff to reflect critically on the project’s actions and strategies, capture local processes and reorient the course of action accordingly. A project in Peru (Ranaboldo, 2000) gradually evolved from a traditional WID approach based on the formulation of a woman-targeted component to a more complex gender strategy that promoted the introduction of labour-saving technologies, and expanded opportunities for enterprises and business initiatives among women, which were not envisaged in the original design. Complementary activities such as training in self-esteem and leadership skills encouraged women to upgrade their business activities and gradually move to male-dominated community-based organizations where key strategic decisions were made. The capacity of field workers to interact with and learn from women farmers was key for detecting positive tendencies and changing the project’s strategy accordingly (Ranaboldo, 2000; Gallina, 2010).

Effective gender targeting will depend largely on the gender sensitivity and experience of the implementing agencies, government services and NGOs, and contracted project/programme staff. Thus, it is important to ensure that gender-related criteria are included in the terms of reference (ToR) for both service providers and project staff. Newly recruited staff should be trained in order to strengthen their capacity to understand gender issues and use appropriate facilitation and participatory methodologies. When commitment and capacity does exist to address gender issues in project activities, particularly at the field level, this increases the likelihood that women will benefit.

Finally, the gender evaluation of World Bank support found that to be effective, gender mainstreaming needs to support institutional and policy reforms that are critical in order to sustain empowerment outcomes at the field level. Support to gender equality can be more effective if commitment and ownership is promoted at the local and national level. The experience of DANIDA in India (2004) demonstrates that using projects as strategic entry-points for policy dialogue activities on gender equality, can lead to important pro-women institutional and policy reforms. In order to address the shortage of women professionals in the agricultural sector, the EMPOWER project in Ethiopia has provided scholarships to upgrade the credentials of women to serve decision-making and leadership roles in the agriculture and rural sector, thereby building their capacity to participate in policy-making processes (Women in Development, 2003). The formation of networks of committed individuals can be a powerful catalyst for change (DANIDA, 2008).

Supporting institutional change at the local government level is also crucial, particularly in the context of decentralization. Despite the fact that challenging deeply rooted gender norms in local government institutions can be difficult to pursue, it can open up unique opportunities for strengthening women’s capacity to voice their demands in decision-making fora and exercise their rights as producers and citizens.

3.4. Gender Issues in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Monitoring project impact on gender relations is extremely important in order to detect gender disparities in the distribution of benefits and change the course of action accordingly. This requires the establishment of a strong M&E system that records and tracks gender differences and collects gender-disaggregated data through baseline and end-line surveys. During the design stage, information should be collected on different target groups, disaggregated by gender, socio-economic characteristics, age and ethnicity. This analysis should inform the definition of appropriate activities and indicators and the M&E should provide feedback on how the programme activities impact on different groups (World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2009).

The Swayamsiddha project in India (Bhirdikar, 2006) made a learning-oriented M&E system an integral part of its overall processes. Gender-disaggregated indicators were developed in a participatory way and outcomes were tracked at various levels. At the family level they were tracked through access to income and improving the educational levels of girl children; at the community level this was done through linkages established with mainstream organizations, change in infrastructure to reduce drudgery, counteracting violence and changes in gender roles. The findings of the monitoring were used as a feedback to modify approaches, plan capacity building processes and make work plans that were responsive to women's needs; the evaluation findings were fed into institutionalization processes.

Although gender figures as a key cross cutting issue in agricultural and rural development, the development of qualitative and quantitative indicators in this area still presents weaknesses and problems (World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2009). Particularly when gender is not considered at the programme design stage, it may be lost during implementation. Very often, projects limit their M&E activities to accounting for the number of participating women and men (IFAD, 2006), thereby disregarding the development of appropriate impact indicators which could assess the extent to which women's participation is converting into real benefits. For instance, the gender evaluation of World Bank support (IEG, 2010) documents that in many countries, although women's participation in training activities was high and women acquired new skills, lack of resources to establish productive livelihoods prevented them from converting the training opportunity into economic benefits.

Training opportunities, availability and use of gender tools and methodologies are among the factors that contribute to improving the gender sensitiveness of the M&E system. IFAD in Latin America has promoted the use of innovative tools and methodologies to assess gender impact. This has contributed to some positive results. For instance, two projects, one in the Dominican Republic and the other in El Salvador, used innovative gender indicators developed through the application of the "Closing the Gap" manual to measure and monitor the impact of the programme both in qualitative and quantitative terms on gender equity within rural organizations. This manual was developed to assess the gender sensitivity of rural organizations and to guide them in the development and monitoring of a strategy to promote women's active participation in decision-making (IFAD, 2006).

Combining quantitative and qualitative indicators is key to fully capture the impact of a project on gender relations and women's empowerment. Special studies should also be conducted on a yearly basis, as qualitative changes in gender relations cannot be measured on a monthly or three-monthly basis. Empowerment can be challenging, given the intangible and subjective nature of empowerment processes. Assessing project impact on gender relations and empowerment requires looking at intra-household negotiation processes. This is important, as intra-household dynamics can affect the outcomes of development interventions. A correlation exists between empowerment processes and project outcomes in terms of poverty reduction (Eyben et al., 2008), which could be better detected and explored through in-depth qualitative studies. This is an area, however, which has not received due attention so far. Some donors perceive it to be complex, costly and socially divisive (Mayoux, 2004).

A promising instrument to capture local perceptions and processes that can be difficult to measure with standard monitoring indicators is participatory M&E. Taking into account the views and perceptions of different stakeholders in assessing project progress and impact can contribute to promoting local ownership and improve project performance (World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2009). Participatory monitoring, however, can have cost implications (time, money and other resources), which should be carefully assessed. For example, women may not be able to take part in participatory monitoring due to time and mobility constraints. In addition, participatory M&E can only be an instrument to promote gender equity, if women are able to take an active role in group meetings and openly express their opinions. Appropriate action-learning methods should be used to enable women to critically reflect on their needs and demands (Mayoux, 2005).

3.5. Gender Mainstreaming in New Aid Modalities

New aid modalities include direct budget support in the form of general budget support (GBS) and Sector Wide Approaches (SWAs), and are grounded in national planning processes like poverty reduction strategies (PRSs) and national development plans (NDPs). These aid modalities operationalize the five guiding principles for development cooperation contained in the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness (2005). These include: ownership, alignment, harmonization, mutual responsibility and managing for development results. The gender perspective is not explicitly incorporated in the Paris Declaration, but only mentioned in the “harmonization” chapter in connection with other cross cutting issues. The provisions of the Accra Agenda for Action (2008), however, have greatly improved this situation, emphasizing that all programmes and policies of donor and partner countries must be in line with a yet to be established international agreement on gender equality (GTZ, 2009).

Different donors (Asen, 2006) believe that new aid modalities have contributed to divert attention away from women’s and gender equality issues. A survey conducted by the OECD (2007) reveals that many agencies perceive accountability to be more elusive under programme-based approaches than in traditional projects, because the country, not the donor, is responsible for implementation. Others believe that donor agencies lack expertise and commitment.

Mainstreaming cross cutting issues, including gender in agriculture SWAs, can be particularly challenging. Agriculture, like other productive sectors, is strongly perceived as a male domain. Hence, addressing gender-specific needs and demand in agricultural development strategies can be much more difficult than in sectors like health or education, which are traditionally associated with women. Stakeholder consultations used in SWAs have often overlooked gender equality issues. Although agriculture SWAs frequently recognize the importance of women’s role in agricultural production and food security, they rarely address the structural conditions that reduce women’s productivity, such as unequal access to land, capital and other inputs to farming (Shephard & Cabral, 2008). M&E of SWAs, including agriculture are generally inadequate for understanding gender impacts. This is also due to the fact that despite an increasing supply of gender-disaggregated data and studies of women’s roles in agricultural production and food security, there is still a lack of capacity to analyse and use this information to inform the policy-making process.

Very often, the development of gender-sensitive policy frameworks is not backed up by effective implementation. Weak commitment and implementation capacity of sector ministries can make it difficult to translate policies into practice. For instance, the appointment of gender focal points (GFPs) in sector ministries to promote gender mainstreaming activities may be ineffective as they are often organizationally isolated and unable to participate and influence key decision-making processes (UNIFEM, 2006). In Mozambique, for instance, GFPs within the Ministry of Agriculture are usually selected from technical rather than managerial staff. Consequently, they have a weak capacity to influence ongoing plans and activities. (Waterhouse & Calane, 2002). Donors on their part have often shown weak coordination

and uneven approaches to gender mainstreaming (Jensen et al., 2006). Without active commitment to gender mainstreaming among donor agencies and sector ministry staff, gender equality issues tend to evaporate from the agenda.

Yet, aid reform and new aid modalities can offer important opportunities to gender advocates to address gender equality issues in national development strategies. New aid modalities can provide a platform for engaging in policy dialogue activities which could give donors more power to influence the gender sensitivity of agriculture and rural development policies, than accorded through project funding of projects (UNIFEM, 2006). Moreover, the use of a sector approach can provide gender advocates with better information on resource allocations and the implementation of women's rights. Linking economic planning and poverty reduction frameworks offer the potential for greater accountability and evidence-based policy advocacy (UNIFEM, 2006).

Although PRS, have traditionally shown weak incorporation of gender issues, mentioning a few female problems in an isolated and superficial manner (Zuckerman 2002), the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data are starting to be given more priority. Several initiatives have been supported by donors to engender PRSs. These include the use of qualitative poverty assessments to inform the poverty diagnosis (Bell 2003), the development of more participatory monitoring processes and the involvement of civil society organizations, such as NGOs and women's rights advocates, in the PRS process. The challenge, however, is to translate PRS concerns into budgets and programmes (Shepherd & Cabral, 2008).

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is a promising activity which can be considered to be – along with other interventions – a useful tool against “policy evaporation” (Budlender, 2008). However, GRB instruments and approaches are still largely underutilized and further efforts should be undertaken to expand GRB to agriculture and other key economic sectors. In Kenya, experience has shown that at least three years of capacity building and financial and technical support are needed to ensure that gender mainstreaming concepts are embedded in national organizations and in strategic and budget frameworks (GTZ, 2005 in World Bank/FAO/IFAD, 2009). Moreover, ministries of finance, which play a key role in setting the development agenda under programme-based approaches are usually unaware of gender issues.

Despite these promising initiatives and although some donors have shown positive results in different activities, they have not yet found a formula for success. Higher investments in capacity building are needed as managers are usually overburdened and do not have sufficient time for gender mainstreaming. Likewise, for the OECD (2007) suggests that if donors are to succeed in matching their implementation with their policy commitments, they will need to increase their investments in gender mainstreaming, make management and staff accountable for progress in this area, and increase the number of senior gender specialists in the field.

Some positive experience with gender mainstreaming in new aid modalities:

- Partnering with in-country civil society organizations to strengthen demand for gender equality actions;
- Promoting the development of gender action plans in partner countries;
- Coordinating with other donors to make poverty reduction strategies and sector-wide plans more gender responsive;
- Introducing specific gender issues into country dialogue; supporting analytical work to identify gender inequalities;
- Investing in gender-responsive budget initiatives; and
- Linking gender equality actions to other cross cutting issues, particularly HIV/Aids.

Source: OECD, 2007

Finally, it is important to point out that even though donors recognize the importance of avoiding the fragmentation of aid interventions and promoting government ownership of sector strategies, they

need to maintain a balance of funding approaches as a way to diversify risk as well as to explore different entry points for gender mainstreaming activities (Global Donors Platform for Rural Development 2007). Complementarities between different aid modalities is the best approach. Projects and sector-based approaches should be seen as mutually reinforcing strategies. If SWAPs, for instance, can offer important opportunities for policy-dialogue activities on gender equality, projects are the most effective instrument to kick-start innovative approaches for reaching and empowering women at the field level, which can then feed into government strategies and actions. Scaling-up processes, however, require leadership, commitment and long-term investments in research and capacity-building.

4. Recommendations

Design context-specific and gender-sensitive interventions

Gender-sensitive project design is the necessary entry point for promoting equal participation of men and women in project activities. Perceptions of what is important when making livelihood decisions such as which crops to grow or which asset to sell, are gendered. Thus, it is important that the perceptions, experience and interests of women as well as men are taken into account in project design and implementation. Projects that explicitly incorporate gender concerns are more likely to succeed than those that neglect them. Understanding gender relations, with attention to intra-household dynamics of power, can help identify the mechanisms and approaches to effectively reach and benefit women. There is evidence that when women-targeted interventions did not pay attention to gender relations, women benefited only minimally and project resources soon became controlled by men.

Tailor the menu of activities and service delivery to women's needs

To avoid “superficial mainstreaming”, project designers should specify how women will actually benefit from proposed interventions. The definition of activities and delivery mechanisms should be grounded in gender analysis and take into consideration the needs and characteristics of women in each specific context. As the case studies reviewed demonstrate, interventions are more likely to succeed when they adapt products or service delivery to women's needs. This requires tailoring agricultural extension messages and approaches to the characteristics of women and designing appropriate low-cost pro-women technology. Decentralized, village-based female extension agents have a great potential to reach poor female farmers.

Adopt a conscious empowerment strategy

A conscious empowerment strategy should be incorporated in project interventions. Women are unlikely to benefit from project activities unless their capacity to retain control over assets, production and income is enhanced by challenging discriminatory gender norms and practices. Promoting women's empowerment can have a positive impact on poverty reduction and pro-poor growth. A strong gender-sensitive M&E system should be in place to monitor project impact on women and detect gender inequalities in access to benefits. However, qualitative indicators and impact studies should also be used to understand whether women's participation in project activities effectively translates into empowering gains.

Involve men in the empowerment process

Support from husbands, other family members and local leaders is essential to promote women's participation in project activities. Lack of men's support to women's involvement in economic activities may increase intra-household conflicts and hamper women's ability to control their produce and income. Projects should always be prepared to negotiate with men in order to gain their support towards changing traditional gender roles. The Household approach facilitates women's involvement in programme

activities, improves intra-household cooperation, and results in a situation in which both men and women feel empowered.

Create space and mechanisms in which women can articulate their demand and claim what they want

Given women's lower participation in formal groups and community-based organizations, projects should create space and mechanisms which enable women to express their voice. Forming or strengthening women farmer groups as a mechanism to facilitate service delivery, is an appropriate way to enable women to interact with extension workers, express their opinions freely and articulate their needs, thereby strengthening the capacity of projects and programmes to respond to local demand. Demand-driven mechanisms that enable women to make autonomous choices regarding their livelihoods, and to access services that better meet their demands, can have a tremendous impact on women's empowerment.

Adopt a holistic approach

Project interventions that pursue women's empowerment goals should engage in diverse and complementary processes in order to address the multiple factors that hamper women's abilities to participate in and benefit from agricultural development interventions. Food security interventions should direct their focus beyond agricultural production, towards addressing issues of "access" and "consumption". Likewise, to be sustainable and have an impact, women-targeted value chain interventions should address women's training and credit needs, and promote women's property rights.

Sustain investments in women's human and social capital

Enhancing women's capacity to participate in rural development and agricultural markets requires sustained investments in women's human and social capital. Literacy and education is key to improving women's capacity to participate in project activities and exert greater influence in decision-making processes at different levels. Strengthening women's groups provides a platform for addressing strategic gender issues and improving women's agency. Efforts must also be invested in time-saving technologies and infrastructure, HIV/Aids education and increasing access to services.

Invest in gender-sensitization and capacity-building

Several experience show that building the capacity of field-staff to listen to and learn from women farmers is essential to ensure that project's interventions are responsive to women's demand. Gender training is needed to build capacity and commitment among all project/programme stakeholders to address gender equality issues more effectively.

Use participatory, learning-by-doing methodologies

Participatory approaches can be time-consuming but can produce a higher level of commitment and ownership. They can enhance women's capacity to critically reflect on their needs and priorities and make decisions project activities. Learning-by-doing methodologies are critical to enable poor female farmers with low levels of education to effectively learn innovative farming practices and achieve self-determined goals.

Incorporate gender concerns in value chain development

The promotion of gender-sensitive value chains needs to be based on gender-focused value chain analyses and a genuine interest in identifying and addressing gender issues at different stages and levels of the value chain. Setting women's cooperatives in economic activities dominated by women, or in which women have a comparative advantage is an important instrument for establishing women as competitive producers. Value chain interventions that overlook gender issues can inadvertently increase women's labour, without enabling women to benefit from upgrading opportunities. Lack of understanding of gender issues in a given value chain contributes to perpetuating gender inequalities, thereby limiting impact on poverty reduction and food security.

Promote women's access to land and natural resources

The case studies reviewed agree that women's limited access to financial and agricultural support services, markets, farmer organizations and community-based institutions is often due to a lack of access to land. Hence, efforts to strengthen women's land rights must continue by supporting legal reforms, providing legal advice and strengthening women's awareness of their rights. Both customary and formal tenure systems are dynamic and can accommodate changes and opportunities (Kabeer, 2009). Donors' actions should also address the issue of women's marginalization from natural resource user groups. Active participation of women in users groups can not only improve women's livelihoods but also improve the management and conservation of natural resources.

Support institutional and policy reforms that are critical for sustaining empowerment outcomes at the field level

Support to gender equality can be effective only if commitment and ownership is promoted at the local and national level. Strengthening local government institutions is essential to ensure the sustainability of project interventions. Projects can use their own institutional processes and innovations to support this strengthening. Donors should identify windows of opportunities to engage in policy dialogue activities on gender equality. This requires commitment, leadership and sustained investments in research and capacity building.

Strengthen capacity for mainstreaming gender in new aid modalities

Donors should enhance their capacity to address gender issues in new aid modalities by increasing investments in capacity building for both donor staff and country partners, supporting gender responsive budgeting and procedures, and improving donor coordination by creating opportunities for mutual learning and exchange of experience.

Adopt a mix of funding mechanisms

Donors need to consider different aid modalities when supporting agricultural development. Complementarities between different funding mechanisms is the best approach. Project and programme-based approaches should be seen as mutually reinforcing strategies. Sector-based approaches, for instance, can offer important opportunities for policy dialogue activities on gender equality. To reach and empower women on field level, projects are the most effective instruments to kick-start innovative approaches which can then feed into government strategies and actions.

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Gender Aware Approaches in Agricultural Programmes (Sida Evaluation 2010:3)

Gender Aware Approaches in Agricultural Programmes – Ethiopia Country Report (UTV Working Paper 2010:4)

Gender Aware Approaches in Agricultural Programmes – Kenya Country Report (UTV Working Paper 2010:5)

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- 2010:1 Gender Equality in Swedish Development Cooperation
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Secretariat for Evaluation
- 2010:2 Gender Equality in Swedish Development Cooperation
Annex V: Kenya Country Report**
Charlotte Örnemark, Pauline Nyamweya
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- 2010:3 Gender Aware Approaches in Agricultural Programmes - International Literature Review**
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Secretariat for Evaluation
- 2010:4 Gender Approaches in Agricultural Programmes - Ethiopia Country Report
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- 2010:9 How Basic Community Infrastructure Works can Trigger Livelihood Improvements
and Good Governance
Personal notes on a validated model integrating socio-economic progress
and democracy development in poor urban areas**
Pierre Frühling
Department for Conflict and Post-Conflict Cooperation,
Team for Regional cooperation Latin America and the Caribbean



Gender Aware Approaches in Agricultural Programmes – International Literature Review

The International Literature Review (ILR) is part of a study on 'gender-aware approaches in agriculture'. It aims at identifying success cases, lessons learnt, and gaps in knowledge that can be taken forward into both the review of Sida's documentation and the interviews at Sida headquarters, as well as during fieldwork in the selected countries. The review aims to address the following questions: which methodologies and instruments have been used by donors to widen the scope of women's agency in agricultural development programmes; to what extent has the work of programmes on involving female farmers impacted upon overall agricultural outcomes and; what are the most important lessons; what is working well and what is working not so well (effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability)? The paper is based on an extensive literature review of programme/project documentation.

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