**Rural women: striving for gender transformative impacts**

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# Topic note

In March 2018, at the 62nd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), once again the spotlight will be turned on to address the challenges and opportunities  rural women and girls face.

This online discussion, led by FAO with IFAD, UN Women and WFP, invites you to reflect on the current understanding of gender dynamics of rural livelihoods and share information, views and experiences in preparation for CSW62. The main objective is to highlight critical gaps and priority areas for action on how to accelerate gender transformative impacts for rural women. The discussion will focus on three principal questions, presented below, over the next three weeks.

**Changing context of rural livelihoods**

Moving forward from the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, the needs and priorities of rural women have been firmly on the development agenda and significant progress has been made. Many women have gained improved access to markets, information, financial services, greater engagement with the private sector, skills development, energy, labour-saving technologies and remittances, and some became successful entrepreneurs, leaders in the community and more respected in their homes. Women fulfil important roles throughout agrifood value chains, and play essential roles in food security and nutrition, and in the management of natural resources.

Nevertheless, the lives of many rural women remain unchanged. They work long hours combining productive work with unpaid care and domestic tasks, and their empowerment opportunities are constrained by limited security over land and an inability to borrow. Too often rural women cannot benefit from improved technologies, are exposed to the risks of climate change, and experience significant post-harvest losses. Their lives are also challenged by rapid population growth results in the youth bulge, out migration, an aging rural population and degraded natural resources.

**Gender transformative approaches**

To achieve the SDGs and “leave no one behind”, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for transformational change, in countries and at all levels. There is growing recognition that the standard approaches to addressing gender inequalities have often not been enough. Many gender mainstreaming initiatives have focused on empowering women economically – ensuring they have access to inputs, technical advice and markets, and have a voice in decision-making bodies and rural institutions – which contribute to short-term productivity gains. However, to enjoy long-term sustainable benefits, women want not only be able to work productively and have a voice in how the income they generate is spent. They want the quality of their lives to be improved, reduce the time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, and be free from gender-based violence.

More needs to be done – and in a different way - to achieve lasting benefits for improving the quality of life for rural women and their families. This involves moving beyond treating the symptoms of gender inequality, such as the unequal access to resources and benefits, to addressing the underlying causes deeply rooted in gender norms and behaviours, power relations and social institutions.

**Question 1: What are the main challenges rural women and girls are facing today?**

* The context of rural livelihoods has changed significantly during the past 20 years, with significant implications for rural women.  Is our understanding of the challenges rural women and girls are facing still up-to-date?
* How do the needs and priorities of rural women differ based on their age, education, household composition, resource base and cultural context?
* How do some rural women manage to move forward and become successful entrepreneurs, whereas others are trapped in a life of food insecurity and poverty?

**Question 2: Are we using the right approaches and policies to close the gender gap?**

* How can the policy gap be closed? Most countries have ratified international and regional instruments to protect and enhance women’s rights. Yet, in many countries there is a gap between the policy framework on gender and what actually gets delivered, including the failure to mainstream gender considerations into other policy frameworks, such as food security and nutrition policies.
* Why is it so challenging to convince the private sector to engage with rural women as economic actors, despite the evidence demonstrating that this generates profitable outcomes?
* As we approach 2020, what are the emerging economic opportunities for rural women? Are current capacity development programmes enhancing the right set of skills for rural women and girls? How can we better update them?

**Question 3: How can we best achieve gender transformative impacts?**

* What can be done to strengthen women’s voice and wellbeing in the household and the community? Many initiatives focus on empowering women in their productive role and as members and leaders of producer and community groups. While they become empowered in the public space, this does not necessarily translate into improved household dynamics and quality of life.
* Has sufficient attention been paid in engaging men and boys for positive behavioural change? Do they understand the links between gender roles and inequalities, and their impact on the productivity and wellbeing of their households? Are their needs being overlooked, resulting in their marginalisation and disengagement from household development?
* What approaches have proved successful to address deeply rooted gender norms, power relations and social institutions?

Thank you and I look forward to a stimulating discussion,

Clare Bishop

# Contributions received

## Mahesh Chander, Indian Veterinary Institute, India

Is our understanding of the challenges rural women and girls are facing still up-to-date?

There is a saying, if you are able to diagnose the problem, half the problem is solved. We have to think, are we solving the right problem? On the gender transformative front, it seems to be true that we are not designing our interventions towards attaining early transformative impacts. Gender roles for instance, continue  as tradition in many societies. Cattleshed cleaning, feeding cattle, collecting grass/fodder for livestock and fuledwood collection by women are some invisible works where women predominantly engaged since very long and there  is little shift in this primarily due to mindset even of women that they feel it is fine that not men but women doing these menial tasks. This will continue for long unless women are encourgaged for higher education. Once educated, women may not like to do these menial tasks but look for more productive engagement. Whatever developmental interventions are made to shift in these roles for transformative impact, it won't change the scenario much unless efforts are made to tackle the root cause i. e poor educational level of women mostly in poor and developing countries. The education is the key which will empower women that they will look for their roles in skilled work. In some cultures, women would not like to see their men doing certin tasks like cleaning of house and utensils, cooking food or baby sitting! It is very fundamental that women and men must think that there is no difference whether men is doing or women is doing the task - work is work whether men do it or women do unless specific skills needed which either men or women can do it well due to some kind of uniqueness.

Looking forward to interesting and stimulating contributions from diverse world!

## Marcela Ballara, Red de Educacion entre Mujeres REPEM LAC, Chile

**Original contribution in Spanish**

Pregunta 1: ¿Cuáles son los principales desafíos a los que se enfrentan hoy las mujeres y las niñas de las zonas rurales?

En Chile, las mujeres rurales jóvenes están fuertemente vinculadas a cumplir su rol reproductivo y del cuido, especialmente en edad temprana y muchas veces comenzando en la niñez . Aun no han logrado una mayor autonomía que las libere de la responsabilidad exclusiva de las tareas reproductivas y de cuidado. En una sociedad patriarcal , predominante fuertemente en el sector rural la división sexual del trabajo aun necesita mucho tiempo para cambiar.

No obstante esto, según cifras de la CEPALSTAT, se ha verificado un aumento entre 1995 y 20015 de las mujeres rurales que han entrado en la actividad económica, en Chile. Esto se debe a que ha aumentado el acceso de las mujeres a la educación lo que ha permitidoen cierto sentido , el retraso del matrimonio y la reducción de las tasas de fecundidad y de mortalidad materna.

La expansión en el acceso a la educación a comienzo de los 90 con el apoyo de los gobiernos democráticos resulto en la expansión sustancial del numero de escuelas en el sector rural , facilitando así el acceso de las mujeres rurales . También programas como “Chile Califica” dio oportunidades educativas a las mujeres rurales que no consiguieron terminar su educación primaria. Programas de especialización técnica organizados por el Ministerio de Agricultura, El SERNAM ( hoy Ministerio de la Mujer ) entre otros abrieron mas oportunidades para que las mujeres rurales se integraran en mejores condiciones al mercado de trabajo, realizando trabajo rural no agrícola, o trabajando en los consorcios agrícolas creados a partir de la la mecanización del campo y exportación horticultura . También hay que agregar que durante los años 90 hubo una gran movilización para organizara las mujeres rurales e indígenas, y con apoyo del gobierno se creo la Mesa de dialogo de la Mujer Rural que abocó permanentemente por la integración de las mujeres a la actividad económica, al empleo decente. A esto se suma que en el marco del proceso de la modernización del Estado también se creo y funciono por varios años ( hoy debilitada) los PMG de Genero ( programas de Modernización del Estado con perspectiva de Genero ) donde se incentivó a las instituciones del agro a realizar e implementar actividades dirigidas a las mujeres rurales e indígena .

Un fenómeno importante que ha estado ocurriendo en los últimos 10 años es la feminización del campo chileno especialmente en la agricultura familiar. La migración de varones jóvenes con mejor educación y especialización en busca de mejores alternativas laborales ha ido en aumento , especialmente motivados por las diferentes alternativas económicas que se han abierto en el mercado chileno.

**English translation**

Question 1: What are the main challenges rural women and girls are facing today?

In Chile, young rural women are strongly committed to fulfilling their reproductive and caregiving role, especially at an early age and often beginning in childhood. They still have not achieved greater autonomy that frees them from the exclusive responsibility of the reproductive and caregiving tasks. Changing the gender division of labour in a patriarchal society, highly prevalent in the rural sector, requires plenty of time.

Nevertheless, according to CEPALSTAT statistics, the number of economically active women has increased in Chile between 1995 and 2015. This is due to their increased access to education which has, to a certain extent, delayed marriage and reduced the fertility and maternal mortality rates.

With the support of democratic governments, wider access to education in the early 1990s significantly increased the number of schools in the rural areas. The access to education for rural women was facilitated as a result. Programmes such as “Chile Califica” also provided educational opportunities to rural women who failed to complete their primary education. Technical specialization programmes organised by the Ministry of Agriculture and SERNAM (nowadays the Ministry of Women) among others, provided more opportunities for the successful integration of rural women in the labour market, either doing rural non-agricultural work, or working in agricultural cooperatives that were established following agricultural mechanization and the increase in vegetable exports. There was also a major mobilization to organise rural and indigenous women during the 1990s. With the government support, the Rural Women's Dialogue Table was established and continuously advocated for the integration of women in economic activity and for decent employment. In addition, and within the framework of the national modernization process, Gender-responsive State modernization programmes were also implemented for several years (nowadays these programs have weakened), encouraging agricultural institutions to organise and implement activities aimed at rural and indigenous women.

An important trend in the last 10 years is the feminization of Chilean rural areas, especially in family agriculture. The migration of better trained and specialized young men in search of better employment opportunities has increased, especially due to the diverse economic alternatives that have emerged in the Chilean market.

## Bertha Yiberla Yenwo, Tabwand Support Network, Cameroon

Rural women and girls of my community lack the  education and  skills.

They need the knowledge that can help them to diversify their production, the financial and mangement skills, the agricultural technicians should be able to go to them than wait for women to come to them, there is need for the young girls to get used to ICTs, learn the technology that will help them  in the future because the rural women are aging.

However those rural women who have been working so hard in increse their production should be motivated by the state.

## Byansi Hamidu, Byansi Passion, Uganda

I am Byansi Hamidu, doing BSc. agriculture, Makerere University, Uganda.

1.The current challenge that most girls face is their circumcision, in kiswahili, "UKEKETAJI" mostly in my home country, Tanzania by some tribes.

2. They too don't get access to quality education, an example is those in my village, Kyerwa, Kagera region, Tanzania, since most men unlike my Father, believe that educating a girl child is wastage of funds.

3. Women in this area lack still access to agricultural resources, no control over some resources and mostly are tortured still.

These challenges are faced most by poor, non-educated, non-political ladies and mostly those young girls who are forced in to marriage before the accepted age.

Those who have moved forward and have become successful, it's mainly because their husbands are already in that area like politics maybe. Others have some resources that others lack, that allow them improve their entrepreneurial skills hence succeed than others.

Policy makers should put in to consideration some of these gender issues. Extension services should reach those girls and women deep in villages and schools, let them know that WITHOUT THEM, THERE'S NO WORLD hence identify their importance in society. Encourage them to get involved in Agricultural activities mostly as groups, this shall make their voice to be heard.

The problem with the private sector, they tend to use men to solve women problems and focus on the so called Technical Know Who!

As we approach 2020, due to increasing opportunities in agribusiness, let the women be encouraged to engage in this venture, let them begin as small groups determined to make a change, policy makers should include women in this process, trust me, there shall be a significant change in their lives.

Set a thief to catch a thief, let women be allowed to look in to women challenges and offer solutions not men. Extension services should move to schools and let this begin with young girls, let them know how important they are to the society, let them be given what they need.

Currently, this issue of Sanitary Pads has spread all over Africa, if this challenge is dealt with, a girl's education can improve, her voice can be heard and this improves the nation, as the swahili saying goes, "Kumsomesha msichana, ni ku elimisha taifa".

Yours

Byansi Hamidu

## Dr. Amanullah, The University of Agriculture Peshawar, Pakistan

Q1. The issue is because of unemployment due to high population. As men have job problems so it is very difficult for women to find jobs in rural areas and therefore women are ignored. The second issue is because of religion i.e. in Islam women are not allowed to move freely in the society like men. In urban areas however due to more education and more jobs opportunities women face less or no problems as compared to rural women. Jobs for rural women is most important otherwise no success.

Q2. I do not agree the approaches and policies are ok for every region in the world. I means different policies and approaches are required for different regions, different countries and different religions.

Q3. Education in rural areas for women. Jobs in rural areas especially for women. The religious scholars can play a huge role to give importance to women in rural areas, etc.

Dr. Amanullah

## Mbuchi Peter, Sustainable Management Services Ltd, Kenya

To bring about the needed gender transformation, there is need to work with both men and women. Men and women need to agree to change certain things for transformation to take place. Mostly women and men are found at the household level(families) and real transformation has to begin here.

For the last three years I have been working with smallholder coffee producers in cooperative societies in Kenya. For along time coffee at the household level has been taken as a male crop and women only provide labour for production activities. When coffee payments are done, they do not benefit from the incomes because its paid to the men who own the bank accouts or are shareholders.

Sustainable Management Services Ltd, a company owned by Ecom Agroindusrial commodities introduced the Gender Action Learning System(GALS) to be renamed (Family action Learning System) approach to the producer organisations and the farmers. The aim of the approach is to encourage men and women to have common visions, plan on how to achieve the visions as they also analyse the family issues that can hinder the achievements of those visions. In this way the men and the women start seeing coffee as an opportunity to assist them achieve their dreams. Its out of this that men have been able to let the women have bank accounts from where they access coffee payments. Men have been able to invest in biodigetsres to lessen the burdens for women in the kitchen. With Biogas the men can be able to prepare food. From the visions families are able to buy water tanks for water storare, lessening the burden for women to fetch water from long distances and hills. Women are able to use the coffee payments to secure loans from the savings group and are able to meet other needs of their own. Men have been able to reduce unnecessary expenditures that contribute to the poverty of the family through cooperation with the wives.

For real transformation to take place, there is need to invest in the real things that can assist to remove on some of the barriers that make women not enjoy equality.

## Kala Koyu, Rural Enterprises and Remittances Project, Nepal

There is no doubt that women face challenges in their everyday life, but the issues that rural women encounter is becoming more complex with the present day scenerio. In Nepal, the rural areas are womenised due to male out-migration. This has expand the public space of the rural women and considered as a positive impact on the women mobility and empowerment. However, this impact is short lived and now the women whose husband have migrated face social scrutiny. The temporary household head title they owned and exercised is now filled with more discrimination and public gaze. The national media bylines showcase the patriarchal mindset to report one-way adultry of women left at home. There are superhit movies that showcase the migration stories of cheating wives. And there are thousands of likes and shares to a link containing cheap storylines against women.

All these acts around us, from national media, national actors/actress to individual social site users is troublesome and also an indicator that we are not yet sensitive enough to view any problem from gender equality or we are yet proud to carry on the patriarchal norms. The problem of a rural women starts from the way she speaks, the way she dress up, the way she laughs. Not to mention with all these scrutiny, she has to carry double workload in absence of her husband.

The present programs on remittances/migration is much focused on safer migration, or channeling the remittances into prodctive investment. However, the safer migration or productive investment will not be enough to bring the change in the discrimination against women. It will just change the form of discrimination.

The economic opportunities for rural women in the present context is involving themselves in the enterpreneruship as most of the rural men are migrated. The left behind women are the sole person to look after the family, take everyday decision and manage the remittances. Thus, the biggest economic opportunity is already at our door, rural women need to realise this situatin and their own potential on how much more they can contribute. However, there are issues of public scrutiny, negative labeling to demoralise the women which needs another policy in action to discourage the immoral actions of the society.

Involving both male and female, father and mother, husband and wife, boys and daughter is the most effective approach to buycott the gender discrimination. We are emphasizing only on daughters to be strong, we are emphasizing only women to be vocal and empower, however we are lacking that how our boys need to be raised, how men need to react or how men behave to gain gender equality.

No doubt, education for girls, sensitization and empowerment of women and the family members are the first step to move towards equality. For this specific policies needs to be in action in specific to the country and the culture in addition to the international treaties. Although, Nepal has progressed in terms of girls education and gender equality compared to other southasian countries, there are still practices of lowest level of discrimation like considering impurity during menstrual period and making the girl stay in shed where she is sometimes raped, biten by snake and die. We have advanced in one form of gender equality at the same time we are not leting go off the traditional norms that discrimanates against women and their body. We advance in technology and education but we lack the wisdom on analysing our discriminatory practices and actions.

## Mahesh Chander, Indian Veterinary Research Institute, India (second contribution)

Apart from Education, technologies like ICTs have big role in gender transformative impacts. The growing number of smart phones in rural areas in India including with girls ( though far less compared  with boys) is the game changer ([http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-3681418/Mobiles-m...](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-3681418/Mobiles-mobility-key-rural-India-villagers-spend-smartphones-cars-ever.html) ).The number of Internet users in India was  expected to reach 450-465 million by June'2017, up 4-8% from 432 million in December 2016 ([http://www.livemint.com/Industry/QWzIOYEsfQJknXhC3HiuVI/Number-of-Intern...](http://www.livemint.com/Industry/QWzIOYEsfQJknXhC3HiuVI/Number-of-Internet-users-in-India-could-cross-450-million-by.html) ). The socialnetworking via social media channels like Facebook and Whatsapp are influencing men and women, challenging the established patterns and disruptive too, making women more assertive about their roles, needs etc. The exploitative social norms are being challanged by women making men uncomfortable at times. These tools are likely to bring homogneiety in the society in long run since both men and women will understand what  is good for whole family.

Well planned use of ICTs can bring faster transformative impact in developing societies.

[https://www.google.co.in/search?q=smart+phones+in+rural+areas+india+wome...](https://www.google.co.in/search?q=smart+phones+in+rural+areas+india+women&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjdstbispLVAhUKS7wKHV-AAycQsAQIMw&biw=1152&bih=567)

[http://www.gadgetsnow.com/tech-news/Smartphones-are-helping-rural-women-...](http://www.gadgetsnow.com/tech-news/Smartphones-are-helping-rural-women-get-better-at-business/articleshow/55788307.cms)

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## Ekaterine Gurgenidze, IFAD/AMMAR Georgia Project, Georgia

Hello, I'm from Georgia and want to discuss about one gender topic. During the last 20 years the gender issue is becoming more prioritized and important to our government. But the rural women stay in the same women of development as it was 20 years ago.

I have one question for discussion:

How can we help rural women to help with self respect and understand their significant role in community, family and society?

## Cathy Holt, Holt Transition Strategies, United States of America

Land tenure is crucial to security and overcoming poverty.  In an EGM on women's issues held during the process of consultations contributing to the UN Habitat New Urban Agenda, grassroots women and global experts indentified land tenure as paramount to women's security.  The recommendations of this EGM included: Institutionalizing land rights for women; creating and instituting policies prohibiting discrimination against women in owning and renting housing; and adopting policies that protect the disenfranchised from commercial land grabs. Grassroots women in Jamaica, Peru and the Philippines gained secure access to land and created a construction training program of low-cost building practices that provided women with economically viable building skills and improved living environments.(1) Other grassroots women in rural areas have organized into groups to create farming collectives and seed banks for control of distribution of local seeds. Their work is dependent on land security.

Parallel to the development of land tenure security is the establishment of legal frameworks that grant and protect these rights.  These legal frameworks must be addressed in conjunction with other laws that affect women, such as marriage and inheritance laws. The security of tenure must be protected from generation to generation. And, women must receive education and guidance about their tenure rights, so that they know their rights and may challenge any obstruction of these rights.

In response to the question from Ekaterine Gurgenidze, "How can we help rural women to help with self respect and understand their significant role in community, family and society?"

There are many grassroots women's groups around the world who are organizing, mapping their communities and proposing solutions to challenges they encounter and must overcome.  The Huairou Commission has been working for 20 years to support these women, many rural women, and connect them to share their creative solutions through peer to peer exchanges.  Having women empower women with similar circumstances works. Meeting women who have overcome similar challenges is empowering and life changing. I think that all organizations should look to the grassroots for input on programs that supported them in transforming cultural role norms.

1. Pritchett, Regina and Jacqueline Leavitt. June 2012. Women.Cities and Economic Empowerment: Lessons from the Expert Group Meeting, Harvard University Expert Group Meeting.

## Clare Bishop, facilitator of the discussion

Dear all,

Thank you to the early contributors for getting the discussion off to an interesting start.

The main challenge is to secure a mindset shift which several contributors noted: How to help rural women gain self-respect and understanding of their role ([Ekaterine Gurgenidze from Georgia](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8152))? How to encourage young girls to know how important they are to society [(Byansi Hamidu from Tanzania](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8142))? How to overcome the traditional division of work between women and men, with respect to productive tasks ([Mahesh Chander from India](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8139)) and reproductive and care tasks ([Marcela Ballara from Chile](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8140))? How to move on from the ‘Technical know who’, for example, where the private sector uses men to solve women’s problems, rather than letting women work to solve their own challenges ([Byansi Hamidu from Tanzania](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8142))?

Several pathways for change have been identified, including:

- The crucial role of education and training (especially for non-agricultural rural work) in empowering women to look for more skilled opportunities ([Bertha Yiberla Yenwo from Cameroon](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8141), [Marcela Ballara from Chile](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8140), [Mahesh Chander from India](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8139),[Dr. Amanullah from Pakistan](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8143), [Byansi Hamidu from Tanzania](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8142));

- ICTs – and in particular smart phones with internet access – are also a game changer. As noted in [India](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8150), social media are challenging social norms and encouraging women to be more assertive even though, at present, girls have less access to phones than boys.

- The feminisation of rural areas, as a result of male outmigration, is enabling women to be recognised as the principal decision-makers and actors in the rural areas ([Chile](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8140) and [Kala Koyu from Nepal](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8147)).

- The growing agribusiness sector could engage more with women, working in groups to make their voice heard and supported by extension services reaching out to women and girls ([Tanzania](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8142)).

- The importance of an enabling policy environment, such as the Rural Women's Dialogue Table in Chile, which focused on the integration of rural women into economic activity.

But change is not without its challenges. Men can feel uncomfortable when traditional roles are challenged ([India](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8139)) while women left to manage households in areas of male outmigration can be subject to negative public scrutiny and labelling which are degrading and demoralising ([Nepal](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8147)).

Working with both men and women can overcome some of this backlash to change and result in gender transformative impacts. The Gender Action Learning System (GALS) encourages men and women to have common visions at household level and to analyse family issues that can hinder the achievement of these visions ([Mbuchi Peter from Kenya](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8144)). Through enabling both women and men to appreciate the benefits of more equitable approaches, the productive potential of the family is unlocked.

Please share more examples of working with men and at household/family level to tackle the more fundamental causes of gender inequality.

Clare

## Atika Marouf, Seed Development Project (SDP) funded by IFAD, Sudan

Although all projects targeted women according to gender maistreaming policy, still they are facing economic and socail problems; they are illiterate and they dont have finance to create business.

I propose if the projects specify certain component target women only, they will benefit more and let women get more access to the projects opportunities.

## Mahesh Chander, Indian Veterinary Research Institute, India (third contribution)

Starting from no or little encourgagemtn from families,  improper policies, unequal opportunities, lack of literacy, education,  lack of skilling programmes for women and lack of finanacial support, most of the women are trapped in a life of food insecurity and poverty, while only a few rural women manage to move forward and become successful entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurship programmes are focussed mostly on men, while women find them engaged in menial jobs having no potential to turn them into entrepreneurs. The formal participation of women in development oriented meetings are also very limited. Women need- skilling, more formal participation, policies favouring their enhanced role in developmental activities, programmes. From the early age they need mentoring for entrepreneurship and importance of being independent to be able to stand on their own.May be  in schools courses are  introduced to mentor them on economic independence and value of income generating skills to earn one's  own livelihood. The families need also programmes to motivate them to encourgage female members of the households to acquire skills to earn income and have finanacial independence to reduce burden on families. The Finanacial institution should come forward to support skilling programmes for women and helping in setting up ventures by women since women often lack colletrals land titles being not in their names. I find women Dairy Cooperative programme of NDDB in India as one wonderful initiative (<http://nddb.coop/services/cooperative/enhancewomen>) owards empowering women. Likewise, we need programmes to skill, support, handhold rural women so that they can stand on their own through economic activity undertaken by them. I had once an opportunity to evalauate Women Dairy Cooperatives established under the programme, "Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)" of Ministry of women & Child Development in India ([http://wcd.nic.in/schemes/support-training-and-employment-programme-wome...](http://wcd.nic.in/schemes/support-training-and-employment-programme-women-step)). I found it very beneficial for women who could learn skills and empower themselves finanacially and socially. Such programmes implemented in the right spirit can be the real game changer.

## Emile Houngbo, National University of Agriculture, Porto-Novo (UNA), Benin

**Original contribution in French**

La lutte des femmes rurales pour faire évoluer favorablement les inégalités entre les sexes est une limite rattachée à la lutte contre la pauvreté. Car, la pauvreté est plus rurale et plus féminine aujourd’hui. L’erreur commise à ce jour est de développer des actions d’intervention sans la prise en compte de l’hétérogénéité de la population pauvre (formes de pauvreté). Les pauvres ne sont pas les mêmes. Et pour être efficaces, les actions d’intervention doivent en tenir compte. Ce qui n’est pas encore le cas.  
  
En définitive, les problèmes des femmes sont rattachés aux faits qui font que la pauvreté chronique frappe plus les ménages dirigés par les femmes que les autres. La question n’est pas à mon avis une question d’autonomisation des femmes ; une notion que je n’ai souvent pas aimée, parce que la cohésion des ménages tient à l’interdépendance entre l’homme et son épouse. Il ne s’agit donc pas de renforcer la femme contre son époux, mais surtout de viabiliser davantage les ménages et de sauver les femmes, notamment celles en situation de chefs de ménage. Je tire ces déductions des travaux de thèse que j’ai effectués sur la dynamique de pauvreté. Il s’est dégagé que le taux de pauvreté chronique est beaucoup plus élevé au sein des ménages dirigés par les femmes qu’au sein des ménages dirigés par les hommes : 47,1 % contre 25,7 %. Toute la lutte pour la promotion de la femme pour la réduction des inégalités de genre est une lutte contre la pauvreté chronique. Il s’agit d’une approche technique et fondamentale qui a toujours manqué à ce jour. La pauvreté chronique relève de dispositions structurelles économiques et socioculturelles qui affectent négativement la capacité de production des ménages. C’est alors que je dégageais la nécessité de prendre des mesures structurelles telles que la prise en charge sociale de la santé, la dotation en actifs des ménages et la promotion des femmes chefs de ménage. Un article sur le genre et la pauvreté chronique est disponible en ligne : [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259527591\_Genre\_et\_pauvrete\_chronique\_en\_milieu\_rural\_au\_Be](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259527591_Genre_et_pauvrete_chronique_en_milieu_rural_au_Benin)

**English translation**

The struggle of rural women for a favorable outcome to gender inequalities is a constraint linked to the fight against poverty. For poverty today is more than ever rural and more affecting women. Up until now the mistake committed has been to develop interventions without taking into account the heterogeneous nature of the poor population (different kinds of poverty); the poor are not all the same. And to have any effect the interventions ought to be taking this fact into account, which so far is not the case.

In the final analysis, women's problems are tied to facts that cause chronic poverty to impact more on households headed by women than others. The question is not in my view a question of women's autonomy; a notion that I have never really liked because households are held together by the interdependence between the man and his spouse. It is not therefore about reinforcing the woman against her spouse, but mainly about making the households more viable and coming to the aid of women, in particular those assuming the role of head of the family. I have drawn these conclusions from work carried out in connection with my thesis on the dynamic of poverty. It is clear that the chronic poverty rate is higher in households where a woman is head than in those families where the man is head: 47.1% versus 25.7%. The whole struggle for the promotion of women in order to reduce gender inequalities is really a fight against chronic poverty. It is a question of a technical and fundamental approach which has until now always been missing. Chronic poverty arises from the economic and structural dispositions that negatively affect the productive capacity of households. This is why I have distinguished the need to take structural measures such as accepting the social cost of health care, allocation of assets to households and the promotion of women as heads of families. An article on gender and chronic poverty is available online: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259527591_Genre_et_pauvrete_chronique_en_milieu_rural_au_Benin>.

## Kuruppacharil v. Peter, World Noni Research Foundation, India

Many measurers are taken by the Government of India to empower women in the household for livelihood security.The ration cards issued to each house hold in Kerala(India) are in the name of eldest women in the house and ration card carries the pass port size photograph of the owner women.There are several incentives to self help women groups.Recently the Cochin Metro opened with a lot of fanfare, women are the piolets and transgenders are given jobs in the metro train.Harassment against women is treated as a non-bailable offence.Despite all these, representation in the powerful assembly and in the state cabinet is abysmally low.At grass root Panchayat level there are legally reserved wards, blocks and Panchayats where women are the elected members/Presidents.There are visible improvement in the literacy levels of women.There are all exclusive women magazines carrying success stories of women in many walks of life.

## Nancy McCarthy, LEAD Analytics, Inc., United States of America

I would like to build on Peter Mbuchi's comments, which focus on the need to work with both men and women in order to attain gender transformative impacts. My colleague, Talip Kilic, and I have been looking at the impacts of increasing both women's empowerment per se, and of cooperation within the household -- through joint decision-making -- in rural Malawi. We found that greater women's empowerment can lead to increased household income per capita, but that collective action led to much larger increases in household income and consumption per capita as well. Our full results can be found in our working paper here: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/26482>. Looking at the literature, we found very little empirical research on how cooperation within the household impacts key welfare outcomes for household members for rural households in developing countries, in fact, we found just one article that found a positive impact of couple's training on the ability of spouse's to reach cooperative outcomes in experimental games settings (Lecoutere and Jassogne, 2016). However, there is a larger literature on family-run businesses in developed countries; this literature often highlights the importance of mechanisms that promote "shared visions" amongst family members in increasing profitability -- a similar argument made by Peter Mbuchi in his comments.

Interestingly, a paper comparing women's empowerment across six countries by Njuki et al. (<http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/pathways-global-baseline-report-2013.pdf>) finds that though there is absolutely room for increasing women's empowerment in Malawi, women in Malawi tend to be more empowered than their counterparts in all five of the other countries included in that study. This raises the question of whether promoting cooperation in the household is more likely to generate positive results when women's empowerment is also "high enough", or whether promoting cooperation can itself lead to greater women's empowerment.

We expect that household welfare outcomes for all members to be best when there is both women's empowerment per se as well as cooperation amongst family members. It seems like a very good time to include consideration of cooperation within the household in addition to women's empowerment. And, because empirical evidence is scarce, learning from current project approaches -- such as the Family Action Learning System -- as well as generating more evidence from empirical research could lead to real changes in the way we structure projects and policies to address both women as individuals and women as family members, in order to reach transformational changes that improve everyone's welfare.  
  
Cheers,  
  
Nancy

## Yanfang Huang, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), China

Women problem has been the central issue of social and economic field both here and abroad. Women's empowerment is a participatory process, is extended free choice and the ability of an action, it means the right of control and decision-making in all aspects of political, economic, cultural, social and other rights are transferred to those who are denied the right to control the hands of women, to enhance social development resources and the decision and force. Measurement is a controversial content in the study of women’s empowerment. At present, methods for measuring empowerment include Gender Development Index (GDI), Gender Equity Measurement (GEM), quantitative investigation, ethnographic survey, focus group interview and case study.

Agricultural women's empowerment index (WEAI) is by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Oxford poverty and human development project (OPHI) joint development, it is to measure the weight status of Ministry of agriculture the first comprehensive, comprehensive, standard and direct measurement of women. The index consists of two parts, namely, the 5 dimensions of agricultural empowerment (5DE) and the gender difference index (GPI), with weights of 90% and 10% respectively.

According to the construction method of adjusted WEAI, we practiced a program from the "impact assessment of agricultural comprehensive development projects in poor areas of Inner Mongolia" supported by the international agricultural development fund in 2014. The project of data acquisition by household questionnaire structure mainly relates to Inner Mongolia Wulanchabu Chayouqian flag, chayouzhongqi, Chayouhouqi, Siziwangqi, Shangdu County, Huade County, Xinghe County, Liangcheng County, Zhuozi County, a total of 9 counties, a total of 900 households were.According to the research, sample impoverished county women's empowerment index increased from 0.794 in 2008 to 0.835 in 2014, an increase of 11.5%; the proportion of women empowerment is not also declined, falling from 25.3% in 2008 to 20.1% in 2014, down 25.9%. The women's empowerment index decomposition, the lack of control of agricultural production decisions and productive resources are the main factors that leading to women’s empowerment is insufficiency; in addition, the credit ability also affect women's empowerment. The three indicators of the contribution rate has greatly exceeded the weight reached 20%, 20% and 19.7% respectively, which indicates that the weight status in these three aspects of women than the other declined, so the more the need for intervention to improve women's ability and power. We also examine the influence of women's empowerment on food security. The results showed that there was a significant relationship between women's empowerment and food security, that is to say, in the case of other conditions unchanged, the more women’s empowerment, the higher their food security.

Please see the research paper attached [Chinese only].

Attachment:

<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/discussions/contributions/Mongolia_women%27s_empowerment.pdf>

## Nitya Rao, School of International Development and LANSA, India

This is an important discussion in preparation for the CSW in March 2018. On behalf of LANSA (Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition in South Asia), we had organised an FSN Forum last year (130) on Transforming gender relations in agriculture through women’s empowerment: benefits, challenges and trade-offs for improving nutrition outcomes. We had a very interesting discussion around similar issues and I will not repeat the points that emerged, but do look at the summary report attached.

While the feminisation of agriculture and agricultural labour is recognised in many countries of the world, women are still  not adequately supported to perform these roles, their needs and interests not given priority attention within agricultural policies, research and extension services. Recognition of women's economic contributions to agriculture and provision of equal entitlements are central to protecting their rights and helping them overcome disadvantage. Explicit legal recognition as farmers with equal entitlements as men is a precondition to removing inequalities in access to resources and services.

An important issue that has emerged in our research is women's time burdens, especially during peak agricultural seasons, when they end up working close to 14 hours a day, in agriculture and domestic work. As  agricultural work needs to be done, given the seasonal nature of work cycles, women's care-work is squeezed, with negative implications for their own health and that of their children. We find a particular trade off between agricultural work and care of the young child, contributing to the persistence of nutritional deprivation intergenerationally.

Apart from ensuring equal productive entitlements, it is therefore also necessary to support women's reproductive and care work. This can be done through public investments to reduce rural women's drudgery by provision of basic infrastructure as well as time and drudgery reducing technologies. Social protection programmes need to pay attention to increasing women's choices, especially with respect to the season work-care time trade-offs. Further, alongside encouraging men to share care responsibilities, states also need to ensure the provision of reliable and good quality facilities for child care and feeding, especially during the peak agricultural seasons. This is because amongst the poorest, men often end up migrating to towns to earn a living, and given their absence from rural areas, cannot share women's work burdens.

Attachment:

<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/discussions/contributions/FAOFSN-Summary.pdf>

## Mahesh Chander, Indian Veterinary Research Institute, India (fourth contribution)

The Societal norms sometime are big hurdles in achieving transformative impacts. Look for instance some norms in parts of India's rural areas:

1. Women will take food only when men have finished their meals. A wife is expected to eat only when husband has finished food. Generally, women are left with little food especially vegetables and better part of food cooked has already been eaten by males. Women mostly cook food and they are the last one to eat it.

2. Holding a baby in lap, feeding babies/baby sitting are considered unmanly in some societies/communities in parts of India.

3. Wife can not walk by the side of her husband, she has to walk a little behind. This conveys a lot about the prevailing mind-set which has many ramifications.

These are just a few of the social norms but speaks volume on gender relations in societies. Women are not allowed education after certain level and also, they can not go for jobs even if they are capable to take. Women running business is a distant dream in such societies. India has progressed a lot, there are many schemes and programmes and reservations for women at different levels to empower them. The societal norms mentioned above are getting weakened with passing time yet the progress in gender transformative impacts is slow due to these norms.

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Recently we organized a Rural Youth Mentoring Programme ([http://www.ypard.net/testimonials/mentoring-rural-youth-make-agriculture...](http://www.ypard.net/testimonials/mentoring-rural-youth-make-agriculture-attractive%C2%A0) ) to attract and retain youth in agriculture. We found it difficult to make it gender balanced since parents were reluctant to send their daughters  to mentoring programme, while boys had no such problem. In many other similar capacity building programmes, boys/men freely participate while women are left out not by choice but by familial pressure or circumstances. From here itself difference arise as women miss the opportunities, which otherwise could have equipped them with awareness, knowledge and skills to take up productive entrepreneurial tasks. We plan now, in coming months, to motivate parents to send their daughters to mentoring programmes, may be we have to work more in our efforts to motivate parents. The Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVKs) in India organize a large number of training programmes for men women, youth on various aspects of agriculture and value addition, here too often they face problems in ensuring participation of women. Women are not able to particpate full time due to their familiy responsibiliites, while men are not affected on this count. Its a matter again of unequal opportunities which can be corrected with suitable family level couunselling of all family members that men & women alike need training for better outcome of efforts.

## Hazel Bedford, IFAD, Italy

A root cause of gender inequality, and major obstacle to women's empowerment, in both rural and urban areas, is the huge burden of unpaid care work carried out by women and girls. This takes up a big proportion of their time and energy, leaving little for education, paid work or starting small businesses. Redistributing the burden of care work within the family -- and beyond, with the state, private sector and the community bearing some of the burden -- is crucial to giving women and girls the possibility to be empowered economically and socially. Participatory grass roots approaches to intervening at household level include IFAD's Household Methodologies <https://www.ifad.org/topic/household_methodologies/overview> and the GALS.

## Astghik Sahakyan, ICARE Foundation, Armenia

This is very interesting and urgent topic since the women in rural areas still remain the most vulnerable. In recent years many NGOs in Armenia have been particularly active in addressing the problems of women in rural areas. Some examples that I'd like to share with you.  
  
**Harvest festival: Rural Life and Traditions**-the aim of this festival is to gather the women from different regions of Armenia to  sell their fruits, vegetables, homemade jams, honey during the festival which is usually taking place in the capital of Armenia. Prior to the festival, the NGO, that is organizing the event is contacting rural women and doing trainings for them so that they know what is sold better, they help this women to do the packaging and helping them to make the product more marketable. And also the NGO does the whole PR and Marketing of the event. Many international organizations and ministries are being contacted, so that they are aware of the event and they come to buy natural products from rural women. One  very  good thing about this festival is that whole family of these rural women help them to participate for this event. So that young boys help their mothers with the logistics and selling the products. Although very young, theseboys and girls realize how important they are to their families and to the society.They see that their mom is doing something very useful to their families and they can be part of it. These way the division of work between men and women disappeares. These women may not become millionaires during the festival, but their mindset change:Rural women and their families feel appreciated and very respected,  they realize that they can do something with the resources they have, earn money and be helpful.  
  
**Trainings for Rural Women**-at first when NGO's and minsitries started organizing trainings in remote areas of Armenia, it's been quite difficult. Most of the women in rural areas faced the issue that their husbands were not allowing them to participate in trainings, because of lack of trust and also it sounded strange to them, it was something new. The organizing NGOs decided that it will be easier at first to have women as trainers so that to overcome the barrier of mistrust of husbands. The women trainers held discussions with husbands and invited them to trainings as well, so that they know what's going on and also get involved in discussions held. Having a woman trainer and inviting men as well improved the situation a lot. Rural women and their husbands had an example of a woman trainer who succeded in life and now she was sharing her experience with others. These trainings were very much motivating and educating at the same time. And now the situtation improved a lot. Many male trainers visit rural areas and organize trainings on a wide range of topics. Women are eager to participate, since their husbands have nothing against and it's a good occasion to learn something new and useful and somehow get out of  everyday rural life and works.

## Clare Bishop, facilitator of the online discussion

The recent contributions have highlighted various barriers which result in women missing out on opportunities, including:

* Shortage of time: the huge burden of unpaid care work which takes up a big proportion of the time and energy of women and girls, leaving little for education, paid employment or their own businesses ([Bedford](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8165) from Italy); the seasonal work-care time trade-offs with negative implications not only for women’s opportunities for empowerment but also for the care of young children and their nutritional well-being ([Rao](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8162) from India); and the inability to share the care workload with men in settings where men have migrated to town ([Rao](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8162) from India);
* Cultural norms held by parents and families: which prevent women and girls attending training and mentoring events to broaden their horizons and develop skills, or to participating in development-oriented meetings ([Chander](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8163) from India);
* Absence of legal recognition of women’s equal entitlements to resources as men ([Rao](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8162) from India), especially land tenure security ([Holt](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8153) from America);
* Chronic poverty: which disproportionally affects households headed by women ([Houngbo](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8158) from Benin).

What I have found particularly exciting in the recent contributions is the recognition of the importance of the household, not only in terms of women’s empowerment but also for transformational change that benefit all household members. [McCarthy](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8160) (from USA) draws attention to the benefits derived from cooperation within the household – through joint decision-making and shared visions – as distinct from women’s empowerment and increased bargaining power in the household. [Houngbo](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8158) (from Benin) talks about the importance of making households more viable and the role of reducing gender inequalities in a fight against chronic poverty, especially those headed by women.

Ways of supporting change in cultural and social norms at the household level include: family counselling ([Chander](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8163) from India), participatory approaches through household methodologies ([Bedford](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8165), Italy) and the Gender/Family Action Learning System ([Mbuchi](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8144) from Kenya); breaking away from traditional gender roles by encouraging sons – as well as daughters - to help their mothers at produce festivals ([Sahakyan](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8166) from Armenia); and overcoming mistrust by hiring women trainers and inviting husbands to accompany their wives to training ([Sahakyan](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8166) from Armenia).

It is also recognised that, in some contexts, specific affirmative action is necessary to push forward on the women’s empowerment agenda. Examples include: creating space for women through women-only initiatives in Sudan ([Marouf](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8156)); promoting women’s dairy cooperatives in India ([Chander](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8157)); women’s employment on the metro train in India and positive media coverage of successful women ([Peter](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8159)); visibility for rural women’s produce through festivals in Armenia ([Sahakyan](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8166)); peer-to-peer exchanges among rural women initiated by the Huairou Commission ([Holt](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8153) from USA); child care facilities, especially in communities where men have migrated ([Rao](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8162) from India). Explicit legal recognition of women as farmers with equal entitlements as men ([Rao](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8162) from India), with legal frameworks both granting and protecting these rights ([Holt](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8153) from USA) is also essential.

The use of the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) as a tool for identifying the principal sources of women’s disempowerment was noted ([Huang](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/comment/8161) from China).

## Kanchan Lama, WOCAN, Nepal

**Question 1: What are the main challenges rural women and girls are facing today?**

The context of rural livelihood in developing country like Nepal has been changed into new characteristics, such as:

* Increased migration of men of working age
* Increased in flow of remittance money
* Shortage of men labourers
* Increased workloads of women
* Changing gender role
* Due to labor shortage, parts of agricultural land is left fallow
* Due to heavy work burden and also under discriminative socio-cultural barriers, women still face problems in freedom of mobility and decision making, such as, over seeds, credit and market linkages, resulting on cutting down the coverage of agriculture.
* At the same time, it results on women’s overburdening of physical work and mental tension, such as, seeking labor to till the land, bargaining for labor charge with tractors for ploughing; in some cases, specially in case of single women, they face negative comments from society when asking for other men to help in agricultural work.
* Thus, rural women farmers, with their low literacy skills, less or no exposure, lack of access to information, technology and credit, together with absence of women extension workers, face a harder working condition in agriculture fields.
* Even if they get some consideration in agricultural inputs and services, it is not equitably distributed (despite Government policy guides equitable distribution of resources);
* There is deeply rooted caste discrimination making equitable distribution of resources impractical at the ground, under the culture of domination of higher case women and richer women over other so called low caste and poorer women; intersectionality is an element affecting equitable sharing of benefits from development.
* Young women and men hardly undertake agriculture; however those who are occupied with agriculture, they hardly have access to agricultural technologies;
* Nevertheless some young women participate in agriculture training now as their mothers are less literate and over engaged with household chores and other agricultural work. The men youths complain that due to agriculture development policy provision, all agriculture training include more women (40% to 50%) rather than men participants. (based on findings of a research conducted by Women Leading for Change in NRM with Glasgow Caledonian University, UK, 2016).

*How do the needs and priorities of rural women differ based on their age, education, household composition, resource base and cultural context?*

Across all castes and ethnicities, age factor is a common determinant factor for women to claim and access services.  In Nepal, the rural society seldom sanctions open communication for younger women to men extension workers as well as going to market independently. They are also not allowed to decide on own about making choices for inputs, services or market mobility and participating in training and exposure visits, etc. This group of women is also required to take care of household chores, they are required to remain under control of husbands and both men and women–in-laws, whereas for elderly women these barriers are not very strong or less existent. In the same way, women from remote areas are more marginalized in accessing services and participation in agricultural development activities due to the lack of rural infrastructures, technologies, inputs suppliers, services and market infrastructures.

The views about extended families and nuclear families differ from women to women in regard to obtaining support from family members. Indigenous culture.

*How do some rural women manage to move forward and become successful entrepreneurs, whereas others are trapped in a life of food insecurity and poverty?*

Education, exposure and agriculture development projects have contributed to women’s position to influence household decisions in agricultural choices.

In 2011-2012, I worked as a gender specialist in Nepal Economic Agriculture and Trade Activity (NEAT) Project[[1]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/gender_CSW#_ftn1), the project intervention promoted women lead farmers by policy adoption for at least 40% women leader farmers. A 39% women lead farmers were developed. I want to mention one case below:

From Kailali district of western Nepal

One Tharu (indigenous) community woman developed as lead farmer initiated piloting of improved rice variety, when her father in law opposed, even saying that if the plantation fail, he will kick out his daughter in law from home. Despite having strong resistance from the family members, the lady continued to practice the improved variety; Later when the new variety produced three times more paddy than the usual production, the father in law began to claim, “My daughter in law is smarter than any other extension workers, she has done the best among all. Listen and learn from her, you will make better production.” In this case, the driver of her transformative decision making power or role can be credited to the project extension worker, who was also female and motivated the lead farmer to try for change, this not only enhanced the position of the daughter in law in production technology but also improved her RELATIONSHIP within the family.

In some cases, when women live as the household heads, or women living single have some different experience of being free to decide on their own. Although in some cases, they would not feel confident enough to give final decisions without asking their neighborhood men. This is because of the existing norms about “men knowing better than women” in Nepali society. Also sometimes due to their limited skills for marketing or asking agro services, they rely on men of neighborhood. However with the growing trend of women cooperatives and women farmers groups in some places, these days women feel comfortable to discuss their problems in groups.

**Question 2: Are we using the right approaches and policies to close the gender gap?**

Very recently Ministry of Agriculture and Development (MOAD) of Nepal has developed (UNWomen supported) a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy to mainstream gender equality and inclusion issues in the National Agricultural Development Strategy of Nepal.

MOAD has liberal policies to ensure involvement of women in all activities and services. However until and unless MOAD recruits rural women agriculture development extension workers, until Government provides special subsidy for poor , single women farmers, and until there is a special technology led and empowerment focused programme targeting women only groups, I do not think our rural women farmers could be given the appropriate share of respect and identity as the PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS in agriculture development debates and planning. Even if women work more than 80% in agricultural fields, normally men are defined as farmers, not women.  I think the first step must be that the government must acknowledge women ad the farmers and knowledgeable, ensure that local level officials and extension workers consist of 50% women and single and poor women farmers are given subsidized land, seeds, training and market linkage.

In Bhutan I saw how well the government has developed the beautiful, comfortable, women and child friendly market place , cleanest, most hygienic, with sanitation provisions, canteen facilities, where I saw majority shopkeepers were women only. The farmers pay a very minimal charge of USD 3 per month for the space for individual shop; some pay USD5 per month; I wish every municipality provides such market spaces for women (and men) farmers’ market.

In one study done in Jajarkot, a remote village of western Nepal, the women farmers wished they could have rural transport and roads so that they could supply their products by themselves to the daily market in the nearest town. In the absence of rural road and transport, the women farmers are compelled to rely on outsider middlemen for their marketing of vegetables and maize. So provide rural agriculture development roads.

**Question 3: How can we best achieve gender transformative impacts?**

*What can be done to strengthen women’s voice and wellbeing in the household and the community? Many initiatives focus on empowering women in their productive role and as members and leaders of producer and community groups. While they become empowered in the public space, this does not necessarily translate into improved household dynamics and quality of life.*

Support women farmers’ association, help them manage federations; provide young women farmers technologies  for communication and marketing besides production. Organize empowerment focused social mobilization of women in groups’ power. Engage both women and men of the same families in gender sensitization courses. Encourage integrated development  planning processes among various agencies for collaborative planning in food security nutrition purposes.

*Has sufficient attention been paid in engaging men and boys for positive behavioural change? Do they understand the links between gender roles and inequalities, and their impact on the productivity and wellbeing of their households? Are their needs being overlooked, resulting in their marginalisation and disengagement from household development?*

The trend of engaging men and boys along with women and girls has started in Nepal. We have men gender change agents developed by INGOs like CARE, Action Aid, etc. but very limited number. Yet this is a good initiation and has proven to be helpful for women’s advancement as well as men changing in attitude and behavior. This must be scaled up by government policy and strategies.

[[1]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/gender_CSW#_ftnref1) The project was funded by USAID, operated by Chemonics and WOCAN ([www.wocan.org](http://www.wocan.org/)) was sub contracted for gender activities.

## Mahtab S. Bamji, Dangoria Charitable Trust, India

The gender specific roles where women lose out, are deeply entrenched in the mindset of both women and men.

In one interaction with children in a rural school we asked the girls what they do when they go home? They replied, describing different household tasks like sweeping, fetching water, helping with cooking etc. When asked what their brothers do, the replies were: they go out and play, watch television, study etc. When asked why the brothers can't help with household tasks- there were surprise and blank looks. Some said the mother does not ask them ( brothers). With this discussion we tried to get them thinking on unequal gender roles. One teacher was unhappy with us for putting ideas in the minds of girls who are perfectly happy doing what they are. Especially since now they even go to school.

On other occasions when women are asked about what happens at dinner time and whether they eat with the rest of the family, the answer is invariably- they eat last and if there is insufficient food left they cook some more-( never done). Women eat last and often the least, but see nothing wrong with this situation.

There has to be change in mindset and for that, right from primary school, education should include the subject of gender equality.

The other aspects are: skill development; price tag on household work and that getting reflected in national statistics when women are classified as home-makers; equality of daily wages and many others.

## Muhammad Raza, University of Agriculture, Faislabad, Pakistan

Gender, that is socially constructed relations between men and women. Agriculture is underperforming in many developing countries for a number of reasons. Among these is the fact that women lack the resources and opportunities they need to make the most productive use of their time. Women are farmers, workers and entrepreneurs, but almost everywhere they face more severe constraints than men in accessing productive resources, markets and services. This “gender gap” hinders their productivity and reduces their contributions to the agriculture sector and to the achievement of broader economic and social development goals.

## Rieky Stuart, Canada

One of the issues that has not been raised yet is the difficulty of entrepreneurship in general, and of farm entrepreneurship in particular. While this applies to both women and men, women may face additional challenges in lacking mobility to access more distant markets, being less aware of prices and standards, in being less able to interact with market intermediaries of the opposite sex, and in having less ability to re-allocate or postpone household and care work. To reduce failure rates, women’s enterprises may need additional support in terms of local availability of timely inputs, and processing/marketing support. The examples of the Indian dairy cooperative, Lijat Papad in India, or BRAC-supported agricultural enterprises in Bangladesh show how that support can be organized among women or in enterprise systems to reduce the risks and increase the benefits.

## Atika Marouf, Seed Development Project (SDP) funded by IFAD, Sudan

Unless gender issues was kept on the mind of all project key staff we could not close the gender gap.

At the institutional level: It is good the availability of gender specialist within project key staff, also we need to mobilize the project key staff to tackle gender issues seriously, their terms of reference should include their promotion for gender mainstreaming in policy and programme implementation processes.

At the community level: To enhance business skills for rural women and girls we need to train them on (market information, negotiation skills, bargaining skills and decision making), they will be prepared to be engage with private sectors.

## Cathy Farnworth, Pandia Consulting, Germany

I would really like to hear from other contributors about women's empowerment in relation to the extended family. Many interventions and also analytic frameworks such as the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) centre on strengthening and measuring women's autonomy in decision-making in the assumption that strengthening their voice will improve their bargaining power in intra-household decision-making.

However, data I have been looking at from Nepal (obtained through GENNOVATE) suggests that in the surveyed community some of the strongest women innovators have secured the support of their extended family (the one they married into). In particular, the evidence suggests (and we are still analysing it) that women innovators in extended families consciously deploy their agency to 'sell' their project to family members. Innovator women manage intra-family (so to say) bargaining processes to their own advantage whilst maintaining social norms requiring women to consult. The trade-off in personal autonomy in decision-making is arguably compensated for by support from extended family members for the innovation project. Conversely, single women without extended family support networks may not benefit from support networks and the material resources associated with these, and thus find it harder to maintain innovatory practice.

Love to hear views on this and specific research papers, etc. would be great.

In response to the post by Nancy McCarthy I would like to draw attention to CIMMYT-CCAFS research in Malawi which investigated the potential of household methodologies, specifically GALS, to improve intra-household cooperation. One paper,  *Exploring the Potential of Household Methodologies to Strengthen Gender Equality and Improve Smallholder Livelihoods: research in Malawi in maize-based systems* has been accepted by the Journal of Arid Environments for a special issue on women and is thus forthcoming. A second paper, using quantitative survey data, is in preparation.  Our paper supports, empirically, Nancy's study. I paste in the abstract below. However, I want to point out that in Malawi there are huge differences in women's baseline empowerment between matrilineal and patrilineal areas and so it is important not to make generalisations such as 'women in Malawi are more empowered than in neighbouring countries'. NASFAM, our partner organisation, selected intervention sites in Malawi due to indicators they had previously collected which showed very weak to no participation in leadership structures etc.

*Abstract to our Paper*

Household methodologies (HHM) intervene directly in intra-household gender relations to strengthen overall smallholder agency and efficacy as economic agents and development actors. Strengthening women's agency is one mechanism for progressing towards collaborative, systemic farm management. It is expected this will contribute to improved farm resilience in the face of climate change, strengthen food and nutrition security, and improve other development indicators.

HHM are built around a vision, gendered analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT),an action plan, and indicators. Some HHM - including Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS), the focus of the research - use drawings making them easy to use for low-literate individuals. There is considerable evaluation report evidence of the efficacy of HHM in strengthening value chains, food security, and gender equality. However, this has yet to be complemented by a robust systematic evaluation of the methodology which includes non-intervention communities as controls. Here we report on the findings of a research study into GALS in Malawi where the National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM) has been implementing GALS since 2013 with 4,274 farmers (2821 women and 1453 men to May 2016). We held sex-disaggregated FGDs with 40 GALS households and 40 non-GALS households, all NASFAM members. Community profiles and a matrix activity focusing on task allocation, asset distribution, and expenditures by gender with 125 non-GALS and 135GALS respondents were also conducted.

Our analyses indicate a significant shift towards sharing of on-farm tasks and household tasks, and joint realization of the benefits from agricultural produce in GALS households. They are building up portfolios of assets including livestock, houses, ox-carts, and land, unlike non-GALS households. Respondents in GALS households, particularly de facto women-headed households, report an increase in social standing and participation in community life. In both GALS and non-GALS households, men and women agree that men continue to dominate marketing and are final decision-makers. However, financial transparency and intra-household agreement on expenditures characterize households with GALS participants.

## Huda Abouh, World Food Programme, Sudan

The lives of many rural women really remain unchanged. My comment is to focused on social behaviors change communication (SBCC) through community volunteers working in nutrition centers and home visitors, in additions to awareness raising through SBCC to the community leader and local authority.

Thank you.

Huda Abouh  
Field Monitor  
Sudan- West /Central Darfur  
El Geneina

## Libor Stloukal, FAO, Italy

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to contribute to Question 1 by focusing on a particular "challenge": the feminization of agriculture.

“Feminization of agriculture” denotes a trend whereby women’s participation in the agricultural sector is increasing. In developing countries, the process has been observed since the 1960s and linked to fundamental changes in rural economies driven by factors such as failed liberalization policies, globalization of agri-food systems, and reduced male populations as a result of outmigration and excess male mortality (due to diseases, accidents or armed conflicts).

While signs that the agricultural sector is “feminizing” are evident in many countries, the process is in fact very hard to assess rigorously, because quantitative data available from censuses and sample surveys often fail to capture the full range of activities in which rural women and men engage, including secondary and seasonal work.

In December 2016, FAO and the World Bank published a research paper that assesses available evidence about the feminization of agriculture (<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25099>). The paper finds that the share of women in agricultural employment is increasing in all developing regions except for East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

In sub-Saharan Africa, women have traditionally been heavily engaged in agriculture. Currently, the average share of women in agriculture in the region is 47 percent, but it reaches well over 50 percent in many sub-Saharan countries. While women’s employment rates in the agricultural sector have not changed significantly in the last few decades, their roles and responsibilities may be changing – e.g. from subsistence farming to wage employment, and from contributing household members to primary producers. However, these changes are hard to detect from the data currently available.

In the rest of the developing world, women’s employment in agriculture relative to that of men is on the rise. The change in women’s role appears to be most dramatic in Near East and North Africa. In the Near East, the share of women in agricultural employment has almost doubled since 1990. In North Africa, it has increased from 25 percent to more than 30 percent in the same period.

Women’s share in agriculture employment is rising also in South Asia and the Central and Eastern (non-EU) Europe and the Commonwealth of the Independent States. More remarkable than the regional averages are the trends in some countries. For example, the share of women in the agricultural workforce in Bangladesh has risen from 50 percent in 1990 to 66 percent; in Nepal, from slightly more than half in 1990 to 60 percent in recent years; and in Afghanistan and Pakistan from slightly more than 15 percent in 1990 to 21 percent and 36 percent, respectively.

Even in Latin America, where farming has traditionally been a male occupation, the share of women in agricultural employment is increasing. For example, in both Colombia and Panama, few women were employed in agriculture in 1990, but in both countries their share has increased to more than 20 percent in recent years. In Ecuador and Paraguay, the share has more than doubled – from slightly more than 15 percent in 1990 to 32 percent and 37 percent respectively in recent years. In Peru, the increase has been from about one-third to almost 40 percent.

As already mentioned, East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific are the only developing regions in which the share of women in agricultural employment is currently not increasing. This is not surprising, given that women already form near to, or even more than, 50 percent of the agricultural workforce in this part of the world.

What causes the feminization of agriculture? According to the FAO-World Bank paper, male outmigration from rural areas and the growth of commercial farming are among the key factors driving women’s increasing employment in agriculture, along with agro-technological change, conflicts, and climate change.

Is the feminization of agriculture contributing to rural women’s empowerment? Unfortunately, it seems that in many rural settings women’s growing labour force participation does not necessarily translate into an improvement in their employment status relative to men, or in their well-being. Further research is urgently needed to understand to what extent and under what conditions women’s expanding roles in agriculture actually lead to welfare improvements and a greater gender equality in access to resources and human capital. FAO is working to expand available knowledge on the linkages between feminization of agriculture and women's empowerment. In doing so, we hope to increase understanding of rural transformation processes in individual countries and strengthen the evidence base for agricultural policies and programmes.

Libor Stloukal, on behalf of the gender team in FAO

## Andrea Sánchez Enciso, FAO, Italy

Dear all, the FAO Dimitra team would like to share with you the experience of the Dimitra Clubs in relation to question 2 and 3.

Over the past ten years, the FAO-Dimitra project has implemented a successful participatory approach called the Dimitra Clubs based on gender equality and community mobilization in order to facilitate rural people’s empowerment, without leaving anyone behind.

The Dimitra Clubs are spaces for dialogue and action at community level. They are informal groups of women, men and youth– mixed or not – that meet regularly to discuss the problems they face in their daily lives, express their needs, identify their priorities and challenges, exchange their experiences with other clubs, make informed choices and take collective action to solve these problems using their own resources.

The clubs have achieved impact at various levels. They proved to be successful in improving women and men’s access to information, resources, markets, credit and extension services and helping informal groups to transform or join formal producers’ organizations. The approach has promoted rural people’s empowerment, community mobilization and social cohesion, community dialogue, as well as better nutrition and sanitation practices, education for the girl child, behavioral changes and collective action, including on resilience and social protection.

In particular, the clubs have boosted the self-esteem and leadership of rural women, encouraged more equitable relations between women and men, thus improving the quality of life of rural households and small farmers. They have also led many rural communities to put an end to harmful practices - such as gender-based violence - and contributed to improving rural women’s access to decision-making at local level (in rural organizations, for example).

Today there are more than 1 600 Dimitra Clubs in six sub-Saharan countries: Niger, DR Congo, Senegal, Ghana, Burundi and Mali.

Transformative change can be achieved if interventions that aim to empower women are not solely focused on empowering women economically. Interventions must also aim to trigger processes of change that gradually lead to changes in behaviours and social norms that continue to impede women to progress on an equal foot as men.

## Sofie Isenberg, FAO, Italy

In response to Questions 2 and 3, I would like to add that achieving significant progress in closing the gender gap and transforming gender relations requires development actors to first come to terms with their own responsibility in relying on excessively broad (and often outdated) assumptions about gender in the planning and design of interventions aiming to empower rural women. There is no question that global data on the constraints faced by rural women is of paramount importance to furthering our understanding of the issues and enhancing advocacy efforts. The sharing of recommended actions and documented good practices to address constraints is also a valuable enterprise. The problem arises when these resources are adopted as cheap replacements for context-specific analysis and participatory approaches in the implementation of interventions.

Time and again, we have seen efforts to empower women “miss the mark” because of blanket assumptions about women’s needs that do not take into consideration the households and communities they are situated within, or their own agency and preferences. Not only is the desired effect not achieved in such cases, a detrimental impact is often felt instead (e.g. women’s work burden increases, discrimination and socioeconomic tensions in the community worsen, men appropriate profitable inputs and activities, etc.).

In this sense, I find myself in agreement with Dr Amanullah when he says: “I do not agree the approaches and policies are ok for every region in the world. I means different policies and approaches are required for different regions, different countries and different religions.“ In response to his comment as well as Ekaterine Gurgenidze’s question: “How can we help rural women to help with self respect and understand their significant role in community, family and society?”, I would like to reiterate an often-cited but rarely implemented solution: **include rural women in the conversation.**

The Dimitra Clubs approach cited by my colleague Andrea Sánchez Enciso provides a rare example of the radical potential benefits of putting communication at the centre of efforts to empower women. By putting women and men at the centre of the conversation, the approach has stimulated significant changes in gender roles and strengthened the organizational capacity, participation and bargaining power of the most vulnerable people in every country in which it has been implemented. As a result of the inclusiveness of this process, the benefits seen by women have been accompanied by strengthened social cohesion rather than increased tensions in the communities. (for more information: <http://www.fao.org/dimitra/home/en/>)

Finally, in order to be included in the conversation, rural women must also be included in the story. A 2015 report by the Global Media Monitoring Project found that women made up “only 24% of persons heard, read about or seen in newspaper, television and radio news” and that representations of women as economic actors were scarce. In the rural context, these statistics become even more stark: a mere 6% of stories about rural economy, agriculture, farming, and land rights included women as a central focus or discussed issues of gender equality/inequality (<http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp/gmmp-reports/gmmp-2015-reports>).

## Libor Stloukal, FAO, Italy (second contribution)

Dear Colleagues,

When we contemplate about how to best achieve gender transformative impacts (Question 3 of this Forum), we should not forget about agricultural policies.

Agricultural policies are powerful instruments for directing rural development. As such, they have a strong comparative advantage to close the gender gap in rural societies. Specifically, they help to regulate – and therefore can improve – the conditions under which rural women access productive resources (such as land and water), rural services (such as rural finance, rural infrastructure, rural advisory services, etc.), economic opportunities (jobs, markets) and critical institutions (such as producer organizations, agricultural committees, etc.). Indirectly, agricultural policies can also affect the decision-making within rural household and communities, for instance by providing sector-wide incentives to register land in women’s names, let women and girls participate in farmers’ trainings, create cooperatives and start enterprises, etc.

It is a regrettable reality that agricultural policies often remain gender-blind. Let me use CAADP as an example. Numerous CAADP representatives and official documents have emphasized that gender should not just be a paragraph in the plans, but should be included in every stage of the CAADP process. And yet a 2011 review by ActionAid of CAADP country plans for Nigeria, Malawi, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana and Zambia found “a persistent failure to identify and prioritise the needs, constraints, and opportunities of women farmers” (see [http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/making\_caadp\_work\_for\_wom...](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/making_caadp_work_for_women_farmers_april_2011_final.pdf), page 11). I believe such a gap between policy rhetoric and policy reality can be found in many other countries around the world.

So what can we do to make agricultural policies work for women farmers? Several lines of action come to mind:

* Increase the availability of sex-disaggregated data on agriculture, to improve knowledge about the magnitude of gender gaps and provide firmer evidence-base for policy formulation and monitoring.
* Sensitize agricultural policy-makers to the needs and capacities of rural women, and build their confidence for the formulation and implementation of policies to address gender inequalities in agriculture. Policy-makers must understand also rural men's concerns, if policy change is to be effective.
* Analyze agricultural policies from the gender perspective, to identify gaps, inconsistencies and possible entry points for improvement.
* Collect and disseminate good practices in gender-sensitive policy-making, and learn from examples of agricultural policies that have measurably improved women’s well-being.
* Enhance the participation of rural women in agriculture-related policy processes, so that their voices can be heard and their preferences duly reflected in policy documents.
* Promote policy dialogues among various stakeholders (including CSOs, producer organizations, the private sector, among others), as well as south-south exchanges of policy experiences and ideas.
* Help to ensure that agricultural policy-makers are mandated to address rural gender inequalities, held to account for undertaking specific gender-related actions, and assessed on their achievements. Mandates and accountability give teeth to policy initiatives.

If I may, I would like to add that in FAO we are developing what we call the Gender in Agricultural Policies Assessment Tool (GAPo). The GAPo aims to provide policy makers with practical, evidence-based guidance for promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment in agricultural policies, with a view to achieving the new Sustainable Development Agenda 2030. It allows stakeholders involved in policy formulation processes to analyze and assess the gender equality gaps in national agricultural policies and identify concrete solutions to address those gaps. As a policy tool, the GAPo:

* promotes a participatory approach to policy analysis, with particular focus on facilitating an open dialogue among representatives of key government bodies, civil society organizations, producer associations, the private sector, and the academia;
* places special emphasis on those policy areas that have the strongest potential to influence rural women’s livelihoods, including: access to productive resources, employment, markets, financial services, research, rural advisory services, and rural organizations;
* recognizes that within each key policy area, gender equality should be considered at all stages of the policy cycle: policy formulation, definition of policy goals and impact indicators, budgeting, capacity development of relevant actors, monitoring and evaluation, and policy adaptation.

FAO has already piloted the GAPo in Ghana and Kyrgyzstan and our experiences indicate that the tool can be quite effective in helping national stakeholders to understand how agricultural policies affect rural women and what kind of policy action may be needed to make existing policies more gender sensitive. We hope to be able to make the GAPo publicly available very soon.

Libor Stloukal, member of the gender team in FAO

## Sosan Aziz, Economic Transformation Initiative Gilgit Baltistan, Pakistan

**Rural women: striving for gender transformative impacts**

The context of rural livelihoods has changed to a large extent during the paste 20 years. The farming women were uneducated twenty years before but in the current generation the women farmers are educated youth. The young educated women take more interest in farm based entrepreneurial activities. Different and innovative approaches will be needed to cater both the groups of women. Previously there was more emphasis on women's economic empowerment and less concentration on improvement of gender relations but with the passage of time there is much improvement with a slow pace. The educated women are more overburdened with productive, reproductive roles and household responsibilities. The introduction of labour saving devices in farming would be a solution to reduce the workload. 

## Libor Stloukal, FAO, Italy (third contribution)

Dear Colleagues,

Several contributors to this forum have highlighted that one of the critical constraint that rural women face is the huge burden of unpaid care work.

A significant part of that burden results from women’s role as mothers – or, to put it demographically, their fertility. As societies modernize, they typically undergo a profound demographic transformation in the form of significant declines in fertility (as well as mortality) from the high rates characteristic of pre-modern and low-income societies to the low rates characteristic of advanced, industrialized societies. Demographers call this process the demographic transition (and there is a huge amount of literature available about it). What drives the demographic transition is typically a combination of factors, including: an overall improvement in the standards of living, better nutrition and sanitation, progress in health care and medical service provision, the emancipation of women, a declining role of the family as the unit of production, diminishing economic and social advantages of larger families, and (in some countries) explicit family planning programmes.

One of the key effects of demographic transition is that in post-transitional regimes, childbearing and childcare occupy a much smaller portion of women’s lives than in transitional settings. In addition to direct health benefits for women (e.g. reduced rates of maternal mortality and other pregnancy-related health risks), declining fertility tends to lessen the conflict between domestic and non-domestic responsibilities, with the consequence that women are becoming better able to access educational and employment opportunities outside the domestic sphere. Having fewer children also allows women to maintain continuity of employment, which may have significant positive implications for their earnings and occupational choices, as well as employers’ willingness to hire and train them. Furthermore, formal employment usually gives women some measure of control over self-earned income, thereby increasing their self-esteem. And by becoming contributors to a joint household income pool, women may gain a stronger intra-household bargaining power and a greater say in household decisions.

However, the demographic transition does not automatically lead to improvements in gender equality and women’s empowerment. While fertility declines make it generally easier for women to participate in non-domestic activities, they often continue to have primary responsibility for the domestic tasks. As the demographic transition progresses, women may become increasingly confronted with a growing “double burden”: they are not only expected to fulfil usual “female” roles – that is, bear and rear children, care for other dependents in the household, carry out day-to-day household tasks, and work in the informal context of smallholder agriculture – but also perform well in a formal occupation outside the household.

Moreover, in many settings, women have traditionally earned their social status through the children they have reared, and there may be a significant time lag between the fertility decline and a shift in societal perceptions towards greater acknowledgment of women’s occupational and income-earning roles. Thus, women may lose the basis of status that motherhood once gave them, without acquiring a standing equal to men in the labour force.

I would like to conclude by saying that policy-makers and rural development practitioners should pay close attention to population trends and be prepared to implement appropriate measures to maximize the potential gender equality benefits of the demographic transition. In general, the demographic transition can foster a reordering of gender relations and a more equal distribution of roles and responsibilities between women and men. But the degree to which this potential is actually realized depends greatly on the existing socio-economic, cultural and political context. Conditioning factors include such things as the economic health of the society; availability and nature of employment opportunities outside the domestic sphere; availability and quality of publicly provided social services; cultural norms and practices; and the distribution of power and resources within the household. Many of these contextual factors are open to policy intervention.

Libor Stloukal, member of the gender team in FAO

## Salome Amao, International Forestry Students Association, Nigeria

Poor education or lack of education is one of the barriers which has resulted in women missing out opportunities and this is a direct consequence of poverty in most africa countries. A girl/woman with little or no education will have a little understanding on what gender transformative impact really means.

Another barrier is lack of self esteem: A girl/woman that doesn't feel good about herself or believe in her abilities will not strive to be an agent of transformative impact.

To overcome some of these barriers, there should be a redefining of parental orientation as regards sponsoring the girl child education and also organising programmes that will broaden the knowledge of the girl child on gender roles and also build her confidence.

## Sangeetha Rajeesh, LANSA Consortium, MSSRF, India

Coming in from the communication and research uptake perspective, I would like to share my personal experience both as a writer-documenter-photographer of rural women in India, and from trying to understand the research-policy landscape where pertinent to rural women while strategising uptake approaches.

I found women from rural communities far more inspiring than most educated ones. The clarity with which they see their problems and come up with brilliant solutions has stayed with me. So, to answer your question: ***How do some rural women manage to move forward and become successful entrepreneurs, whereas others are trapped in a life of food insecurity and poverty?***- a fitting example to share is: the monograph called ‘Trail Blazers: Stories of Women Champions from IFAD Projects’. Downloadable PDF is here: <https://www.ifad.org/documents/10180/6566a2a2-0b9f-41cd-9fe4-6f43c22ffde9>

This coffee table books presents 23 snapshots of the lives and achievements of simple rural women from IFAD project areas whose immense courage and dynamic leadership helped improve their own lives as well as the lives of their families and communities. These are **real life stories of extraordinary achievements of ordinary women** - of women who dared to take a stand against all odds to break the mould and of women who were not afraid of being ambitious while continuing to play their traditional roles in the family and society. The book captures the narrative along simple lines of Women Champions who have emerged in the process of institutional building, livelihood development, enterprise development and governance in 5 Indian states – Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Uttrakhand and Odisha.

These are just 23 women – I won’t event dare to declare a percentage of could be out there for us to discover, document and communicate within our country and across the world. My impression is that there so much we are doing to communicate on behalf of rural women, and so much more we can do to get the word out to the right people – that brings me to the Research Uptake part of my contribution to this useful discussion topic.

In a bid to begin to tackle ***Question 3 - Are we using the right approaches and policies to close the gender gap?*** – I feel that the dilemma with ‘right approaches’ and ‘policies to close gender gap’ are many and it has always been a complicated and sensitive area for research communication and uptake strategies because we are dealing with customs and people, patriarchy and rights, etc. Policies are intertwined with too much cultural sensitivity, and this makes articulating research findings for policy uptake a much-needed skill. There is great need for gender specialists, social scientists, communication specialists and research uptake / knowledge brokers to work more closely together - understand from the other’s perspectives and together develop a strategic approach to communicate to policymakers. This would hopefully be more sustainable and promise transformative action to close the gender gap.

Attachment:

<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/discussions/contributions/india.pdf>

## Kuruppacharil V. Peter, World Noni Research Foundation (second contribution)

There are many notable legislative and administrative actions taken for gender transformation into decent, self respectable, self income earning and respected members of the society and community in India and more particularly in Kerala. Women are now occupying important positions in all the branches of professions and administration. There are reserved legislative positions-member in panchayat, president of panchayat, mayor in corporations and in judiciary. At farming level all women labour army render cultivation of crops a proud and decent job. A lady Inspector General Of Police leads the team to investigate a serious crime and brining culprits to book. The ration card enabling food items etc. is in the name of elderly women member. There are times when an Indian Lady officer leads the armed battalion in functions like Republic Day. Being under subjugation for years it may take time when men and women have equal opportunity to grow. The role of women as a mother is to be understood and praised.

## Jyoti Shrivastava, Women and Child Development MP, India

**Rural Women Striving For Gender Transformative Impacts**

India is a male dominated country. Where long standing traditions and customs has defined men and women's mind-set and the development of women is hindered due to the gender discrimination created on this basis. It is essential that both men and women should contribute equally towards the development of women. Also when both men and women develop equally in the economic and social sphere, a developed family, society and nation will be possible. Today, the problems of women in the rural areas are mainly due to the following problems:

1. Generally, the Labour class men spend most of their own and their wives’ earnings in the habit of smoking and drinking, and abuse them. While the children are looked after by wives.

Therefore, this habit of smoking and drinking has to be stopped in men. This will prevent domestic violence and men will be able to look after their family properly.

2. In rural areas, women and adolescent girls spend most of their time in cooking, picking firewoods from the forest, fetching water from outside, cleaning the animal shelter and agricultural work.

Hence, women will have to work through planning for drudgery reduction. They have to be provided with such resources which will make their daily activities easier, so that they can find time for studies and economic activities.

3. In the villages, the unemployed youths spend most of their time sitting at random places, playing cards and commenting on females passing by.

Therefore, in the village, the men and women will have to be provided with employment opportunities simultaneously. By which both men and women of each family can work together.

4. In villages, mother and father often go to the wages and leave their daughters to take care of house and her younger siblings. Therefore girls either do not go to school or leave school after primary.

Therefore education should be compulsory for every boy and girl till higher education and it is the government's responsibility to provide resources for this.

5. There are many schemes of Government for the development of women in villages. Which is operated by different departments.

Therefore, it is necessary that all these schemes should be operate under an umbrella by which all the eligible women can get the benefits accordingly.

6. In society percentage of men and women is 50-50.

Therefore, participation of 50-50% for women and men should be compulsory in the development plans and both male and female dominating fields should give equal importance to the other gender.

7. In the villages mostly family has more than 3 children. So they can’t look after them properly.

Hence, family planning is also necessary.

Jyoti Shrivastava  
Deputy Director  
Women & Child Development  
Madhya Pradesh Govt.  
INDIA

## Morgane Danielou, Private Sector Mechanism, France

Submission by the Private Sector Mechanism - Working Group on Women's Empowerment

**Question 1: What are the main challenges rural women and girls are facing today?**  
  
In rural areas, women and girls lack especially legal equality, including rights to land and other productive resources; access to financial services, business registration and operation, and employment opportunities. Furthermore, especially in developing countries rural women lack also access to education programs, aimed at providing literacy, basic math skills, and general education. National governments are certainly the primary actors involved in addressing these challenges by setting adequate legal frameworks but other stakeholders can help to spread knowledge and incentives that can be useful for rural women trapped in a condition of food insecurity and poverty.

Indeed, the private sector has engaged in many initiatives, in particular to connect female farmers to market and to finance learning programmes about innovative technologies in agriculture.

With respect to the first, we want to bring to the attention initiatives like the SheTrades Initiative by the International Trade Centre in collaboration with Google and CI&T, a Brazilian technology company.  Through the SheTrades app, women entrepreneurs were able to share information about their companies, increase visibility, expand networks, connect and internationalize. SheTrades, which aims to connect one million women entrepreneurs to market by 2020, also helps corporations to include more women entrepreneurs in their supply chains. More information about the initiative here: <http://www.intracen.org/itc/women-and-trade/SheTrades/>

With respect to the second instead, we can mention the joint initiative by Cargill, Kellogg and U.K. retailer ASDA to launch a female-only training which will benefit up to 1,000 women cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire. The training focuses on teaching better agricultural practices, supporting cocoa tree nursery development as an income-generating activity, as well as providing business skills training and improving literacy. More information can be found here: <https://www.cargill.com/story/empowering-women-cocoa-farmers>

**Question 2: Are we using the right approaches and policies to close the gender gap?**

Investors, donors, and governments must focus on supporting women smallholder farmers, including their access to resources such as inputs, agricultural extension services, grain storage, and information. Gender sensitive approaches to increase access to agricultural extension services must be spread. Long term gender inequities are often perpetuating because specific training with mechanisms to manage gender-based biases on access to land, banking, and marketing opportunities are lacking. Initiatives to train entrepreneurs to run their businesses by adopting a more gender sensitive approach are now needed more than ever to incentivize the private sector to engage with rural women as economic actors, generating proved profitable outcomes.

One example is Nestlé’s work to empower women in the cocoa supply chain in Côte d’Ivoire, which has helped to train four cocoa cooperatives on gender issues in order to open more roles, such as lead farmers and nursery managers, to women. The cooperatives have also now produced their own action plans for improving the positions of women in the cocoa supply chain. More information here: <http://www.nestle.com/media/news/nestle-empowers-women-in-cocoa-supply-chain-update>

To help women to access to financing more easily, companies should give their support to initiatives such as the Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) initiative sponsored by Cargill in Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire. Thanks to this project, managed and governed by local communities, women in those countries have started to access affordable finance at very competitive interest rates. More information here: <https://www.cargill.com/story/village-savings-and-loan-associations>

**Question 3: How can we best achieve gender transformative impacts?**

It is fundamental to encourage women’s capacity to organize themselves as well as to foster women leaders. Rural women workers’ wages and labour conditions must be protected and their roles as small scale entrepreneurs must be promoted. All stakeholders must ensure that women’s leadership and expertise, particularly for women smallholder farmers, be recognized in national legal settings as well as the legal equality for women, including rights to land and other productive resources; access to financial services, business registration and operation, and employment opportunities. Companies should favour women’s employment by providing access to proper maternal health services and ensuring particularly proper nutrition for the first 1000 days of mother and child. Governments should create supportive mechanisms for co-operatives and other enterprises that allow smallholder women farmers to aggregate their harvests, negotiate better prices, and introduce value-added processing.

A successful example of a co-operative gathering smallholder women farmers is the PurProjet in Morocco. The cooperative has been the result of a rural development project of feminine entrepreneurship, which brought some associations of women to gather and share their annual harvests in order to be able to make economies of scale and ensure a higher quality of olive oil thanks to technical and trade support. More information can be found here: <http://www.purprojet.com/project/femmes-du-rif/>

At national level, Rwanda has been implementing a communications campaign across four national districts, in order to raise public awareness of a key element of land reform: equal rights between men and women. The USAID LAND project partnered with Radio Ishingiro, a community radio station, to broaden citizens’ understanding of land governance and promote values of gender equality. Through the campaign’s innovative and media-savvy outreach strategies, Rwandan citizens learned how gender-equal land rights can benefit them, their families, and their communities. More information about the project can be found here: <http://chemonics.com/OurImpact/SharingImpact/ImpactStories/Pages/From-Policy-to-Practice-Exercising-Gender-Equal-Land-Rights-in-Rwanda.aspx>

## Sidra Mazhar, Collective for Social Science Research (CSSR), Pakistan

**Question 1: What are the main challenges rural women and girls are facing today?**

The recognition of women’s work has been a key concern of feminist politics and scholarship. Agriculture is one such sector where the blurred boundary between productive and reproductive work can lead to the extraction of unpaid and underpaid labour on a large scale. Flagship surveys continue to undercount women’s contribution to the economy and this is one of the great challenges faced by women these days.

Secondly, In addition to their roles as workers, women are more likely to be caregivers within their households. As a result, they have competing claims on their time which influences the choices they make with respect to time allocation, impacts their productivity as well as the quality of the care they provide, and overburdens them.

Women have unequal access to resources and opportunities in agriculture, especially in the developing world. Research and evidence show that women are disadvantaged in terms of asset possession, which includes the highly unequal access to land, and lack access to technologies, agricultural innovations, government services. They are also disadvantaged when using tools and equipment because even though they are meant to be gender neutral they are more suitable for men

**Question 2: Are we using the right approaches and policies to close the gender gap?**

Donor efforts to empower women often start with the reallocation of economic resources between men and women. It is undeniable that such programs have led to economic freedom for women, and to better economies. But does having more economic resources necessarily lead to empowerment of women? This gender gap cannot be closed unless women empowerment is achieved.

Secondly, there are many policy measures which aim to provide women with opportunities and conducive environments outside the home, such as work laws, and equal transport facilities, data shows that work must first be done to give back women their basic right to “choose.”

**Question 3: How can we best achieve gender transformative impacts?**

One of the policy recommendations given by the FAO State of Food and Agriculture Report 2011 to close this ‘gender gap’ is by improving the collection and quality of the data to allow for gender differences and implications to be highlighted for more gender-aware agricultural policy.

To tackle the issue at grass root level, policy making needs to focus on changing the mindsets of both men and women. This change can come only through working to change internalized mindsets of “appropriate” gender roles because these very people will go on to become the policy makers, the bosses and the vehicles to convene women’s empowerment. In societies where the power of religion is so strong that people use it to marginalize women, same religious teachings must be used by educated masses to give women their due rights and respect.

Agricultural policies and programs are often framed for the benefit of male farmers. Women agricultural workers, even when they are recognized as farmers, are peripheral to mainstream agricultural policies, despite the fact that they increasingly provide a large part of the low-paid labour, which sustains many agricultural activities. Agricultural and other policies must work for the benefit of women.

## Johanna Schmidt, FAO, Italy

**Women’s work burden and time poverty**

Flavia Grassi and Johanna Schmidt, FAO

Thank you very much for interesting and valuable contributions to this online discussion. As IFAD colleague, Hazel Bedford and Nitya Rao, School of International Development and LANSA, pointed out: one of the main challenges that rural women and girls are facing today, is women’s time burden, and that a large amount of women’s work remain unpaid and unrecognized. That is, at the production, household and community level. The competing demands linked to this triple role, affect not only women’s capacity to better engage in businesses and farming, but they also affect their health, decision-making, and the whole household, including children and youth.

So how can we address these challenges? A key is to encourage the collection of sex-disaggregated labour and time use data, to make women’s contributions visible and promote evidence-based policy formulation. An example of this is a recent case-study on [aquaculture in Bangladesh and Indonesia](http://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/72946551-42b5-4d1a-a8ca-d2163f1b17fd/), highlighting women’s contributions to the sector.

Another important step to reduce women’s work burden, is to promote labor-saving technologies and practices (LSTs). FAO has very successfully introduced several LSTs, for example [Fish Drying Technologies](http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/278337/icode/)and [Kitchen Gardens](http://www.fao.org/zhc/detail-events/en/c/262821/). There are also many integrated agro-aquaculture-livestock practices which include labour-saving solutions (for example fish integrated in rice fields considerably reduce weeding requirements).

However, what might be even more effective is to address one of the main root causes: household dynamics and prevailing discriminatory gender norms. A successful example on gender transformative efforts is the project [Engaging Men](http://www.prio.org/Publications/Publication/?x=7249), carried out by CARE in Burundi. A recent [FAO publication on time-use in Viet Nam](http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/d8c5cbef-eed9-4b38-8258-759d9419a74d/), also explores how gender norms affect labour and access to productive inputs, technologies and services. Based on these findings and in response to Question 3, the following recommendations should be taken into account:

- Challenge gender norms by encouraging discussions and the promotion and redistribution of work-burden at the household level

- Support inclusive community dialogue to identify needs and strengthen technology development

- Support women’s needs of training, technology and services

Finally, supporting capacity development of implementing national partners and extension service providers, is crucial to raise awareness and to make a change. For additional information  on women’s time burden, please also see one of FAO’s flagship publication on the topic, [Running out of time](http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/da549560-cd7f-426c-9f6e-7228621cfbfd/).

Flavia Grassi, Senior Gender and Development Expert, FAOJohanna Schmidt, Gender Consultant, FAO

## Aanand Kumar, CARE India Solutions for Sustainable Development, India

The questions asked are all encompassing, and I would like to just focus on one aspect and its relation with mechanisation - Why is it so challenging to convince the private sector to engage with rural women as economic actors, despite the evidence demonstrating that this generates profitable outcomes? I have some limited experience that I would like to share.

In India, we do find large companies engaged in developing farm equipments that are used across India in larger and larger numbers. Indeed - India is the largest market for tractors. Additionally to promote such mechanisation, the government has been very helpful in providing subsidies to the farmers so that equipment usage increases. The issue is that such equipments have in majority of cases, led to removal of employment opportunities for women from the farms. Additionally, as manufacturing large equipments require large capital and buying them also requires high capital, this tends to be a network managed by men.

Since the margins are higher - for the large private sector, it becomes easy to set up distribution chains comprising of distributors and retailers. This margin also helps them engage with Agriculture University experts, make and test several prototypes before finalising a design, getting it passed through accrediting institutions and then manufacturing. The holy gravy trail is to get the equipment passed through the government subsidy providing system, which although takes a lot of engagement - ensures that the equipment are bought in hundreds and thousands. Advertisements of moustache wielding strong men promoting such equipment acts as marketing cues and does the rest!

The large private sector does not engage with women because they feel that women have poor purchasing capacity. They feel women need small sized and user-friendly machines, and these do not have much margins attached to them for the private sector to feel that they can invest in their design, manufacturing, accreditation and distribution and make a tidy profit. Local small time fabricators (such as welders and mechanics) who can play a stellar role here, are not trained enough nor receive training to design and fabricate such machines.

However in instances (one in which I was involved) where the technique has been transferred to local fabricators who are not far from where the potential impact population resides, and have invested a small amount of capital - the results have been good. The machines are sold at a cheaper cost, women Self Help Groups have purchased them, used them, and gone back to demand repairs. In such cases, women have been very vocal of the benefits of the machine and the news has spread, creating its own demand.

This is a work of labour and love, and I feel that only a women focus can make it successful. It needs patience and commitment and months of convincing the fabricators and the women that they can create a local ecosystem of demand and supply. I am not sure if private sector, with their focus on the bottom line is interested to work in this, and take peanuts as profits.

## Mahesh Chander, Indian Veterinary Research Institute, India (fifth contribution)

Women need to begin with family support and encouragement, skilling/training followed by handholding and linking with markets to channel the products made by them, be it food stuffs/pickles, textiles or garments/ handicrafts. In India, sewing garments offers good potential to rural women, where they can work in groups and enjoy the work and earning. But this to happen successfully they need all kinds of support which must come to them by international, national or local agencies like Rural Banks. I was impressed to read this blog from The World Bank, Stitching Dreams: In Tamil Nadu, Rural Women Show the Way to Start Up India ([http://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/stitching-dreams-tamil-...](http://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/stitching-dreams-tamil-nadu-rural-women-show-way-start-india)). The collective actions by agricultural and rural development agenices including the banks may help bring the gender transformative impact. Also,  It is worth to mention the role of microcredit for rural women, considering the transformative impact of Yunus's Grammen Bank on women  in Bangladesh. Apart from economics or financial gains, Socially, small loans from Yunus’s Grameen Bank have also proven transformative. women Borrowers from poorer segments are required to go to a weekly meeting where they meet with 30 to 40 other women. At these meetings, they not only make repayments on their loans but also make new friends, get support for their small businesses and learn how to speak up for themselves. They agree to abide by Grameen’s “Sixteen Decisions” that include making dramatic lifestyle changes such as building a latrine, growing more vegetables, keeping their families small and sending their children to school. While these are impossible goals for many women to accomplish completely, they provide a vision of a better life and a pathway ([https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/the-impact-of-microcredit-on-wo...](https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/the-impact-of-microcredit-on-womens-lives-in-bangl/) ).

 The programmes which offer opportunities of more development oriented interactions among women like the cases mentioned above may have grater transformative impact on women, while showing them the way of independent thinking and entrepreneurship.

## Jipara Turmamatova, UN Women, Kyrgyzstan

Greetings to the organizers for starting a very topical discussion in the forum.

I would like to share experience of implementing a Joint Programme on Rural Women Economic Empowerment in Kyrgyzstan. It is implemented jointly by UN Women, FAO, IFAD and WFP, and has actually been launched as a result of the CSW 58 on Rural Women.

JP has been designed to address the breadth of challenges faced by rural women, however, practical implementation had to be tailored to the priority needs. Hence, while impressive results were achieved on accessing productive assets, improving nutrition and food security, increasing income, such issues as reproductive rights and violence against women have been sidelined. Practical focus has proven effective in preparing ground for rural women to become politically active, engaging in local decision-making processes, and standing for local elections. It also gave them better voice in families, and household methodologies have been useful in starting re-negotiation of power, distribution of unpaid work, etc. Household methodologies are excellent way of engaging men without directy investing funds and providing resources to men. The results and transformational changes in rural women's lives have been recognized by an external evaluation and mosty attributed to the good coordination mechanism, which allowed UN agencies to deliver as one, going with an intergated development package to the same group of beneficiaries with their specific expertise, and addressing multiple dimensions of poverty, food insecurity and gender inequality.

Some reflections on the challenges relate to JP not explicitely addressing issues of reproductive rights and violence. JP did not aim to work on such root causes of inequalities, as education and social norms. These were partly addresses by JP, also through building partnerships with other UN agencies, but due to limited funding could not be addressed at the required level. Lack of funds also prevented JP from upscaling results at the policy level. While a good progress is made in Kyrgyzstan's legislation, policy discussions on gender issues remain within the boudaries of social policies, and are de-prioritized in sectoral policies. Especially, this concerns macro-economic policies, which have important gender implications, but are often seen as gender-nuetral by policy-makers. Engagement in macro-economic discussions, including fiscal policies, priorities for government spending, monetary and trade policies is necessary to bring gender dimension into these discussions. Reduction, redistribution and recognition of unpaid work requires government spending on provision of these services to rural areas. Cases exist demonstrating economic effects of investing in care economy on the growth in the number of jobs and poverty reduction. These policy discussions are not possible yet due to lack of expertise in the civil society and national government, and sectoral experts.

## John Weatherhogg, Italy

The most difficult part is obviously Question 3: how to have a gender impact? Success largely depends on finding the best entry point. In this respect women’s traditional roles can be an advantage rather than a hindrance. Looking at the experience of World Bank funded projects in Punjab/Haryana/Himachal Pradesh there seemed to be a notable success in formation of women’s groups created with the task of collecting money to maintain drinking water systems installed by the project as a component of a wider watershed rehabilitation and development programme. While these had started with this limited aim some at least had developed into rather wider informal savings and loans societies and clearly seemed to have resulted in significant women’s empowerment. Provision of safe water supply is always a high priority for all communities. A water supply component more or less guarantees community support for a project and is an important catalyst for it’s success. It is therefore important that such water supply projects be carefully targeted as part of a more general area development approach. Self-standing initiatives may be successful in solving the drinking water problem, but there is so much more that that catalyst could achieve – if only it was given the chance.

## Sudha Rani, University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences, SHIMOGGA, India

Good afternoon.

I am here by sending the article entitled the above subject to publish / post in FAO (FSN forum). This is for your kind information and further needful.

Thanking you

--

Regards

Mrs.N. Sudharani  
Assistant professor (Food Science & Nutrition)  
College of Horticulture  
Mudigere, Chikkamagalur District  
UAHS, Shivamogga  
Karnataka, India

Attachments:

<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/discussions/contributions/FN%20FAO%20forum%20gender.docx>

<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/discussions/contributions/gallary.docx>

## Elizabeth Koechlein, Italy

Dear colleagues,

Thank you for this wonderful discussion; I’ve been learning a lot by reading through your many insightful comments and am sure this will continue to be a very productive dialogue. Though I’m new in this space, I would like to contribute a few thoughts without (hopefully) echoing the contributions of others too much. These include 1) how one lens through which we might confront the root of gender inequality is by investigating our own assumptions that often get built into research questions and interventions; 2) the essential function of social policy in improving the quality of life for rural women; and 3) the intertwined role that conflict and climate change are playing and will play in the lives of many rural women.

Despite progress, there are clearly many challenges facing rural women and girls today. As highlighted throughout significant FAO publications, these challenges are evident through deficits in quality of life as well as productivity gaps caused by lack of access to productive assets and technology. Meanwhile, the skills and mindsets of women and girls in rural contexts are changing, as are those of the communities around them.

Whether our understanding of the needs and priorities of women in rural contexts is accurate depends very much on how we frame research questions, facilitate focus groups, and allow for the vast diversity of perspectives arising from the groups that comprise ‘women and girls’. As we seek to understand needs and priorities we should continuously interrogate the assumptions that might underpin our research or intervention design, because the questions we ask shape the answers we receive. Are our questions context appropriate? Do they rely on unfounded assumptions about the innateness of certain gender roles or stereotypes? Are we sufficiently accounting for intersectionality in our understanding of gender (whose voice is missing)? Most importantly, are we listening enough?

Tying this ‘at the root’ approach to interventions to ensure sustainability: FAO already brings the perspective of men and boys into interventions that seek to enhance women and girls’ access to technology and skills training; the support of an entire community is necessary for progress.  For example, in community in programs that seek to increase women’s access to Rural Advisory Services (RAS), women’s enhanced productivity through access to RAS is framed as a benefit to the entire family and wider community. To avoid the pitfalls of making women solely responsible for the unequal institutional context of patriarchal societies, capacity enhancing exercises must continue to be paired with ambitious interventions aimed at changing detrimental perspectives about women and work. If we continue to perpetuate a society in which women’s work is undervalued because they are women, regardless of what skills they employ and jobs they undertake, the mere act of women performing that work will lead to that work being undervalued.

To follow the thread of undervalued work- I would like to highlight the essential role of context-appropriate social policy and programs- particularly social protection, but also education and health systems- in enhancing quality of life for women and girls across the life course. It is essential that any intervention designed to enhance the lives of women and girls in rural settings be viewed within its existing policy ecosystem, particularly social policy, as this setting will determine whether and how women and girls can make use of enhanced access to resources or new skills.

Care burden was mentioned in this discussion as an example of an impediment to improvement in the quality of life for women and girls. Women and girls still provide the vast majority of care. Care is necessary work, but when it is undervalued it gets in the way of education, other types of productive work, and essential free time needed for physical and mental health.  Addressing care burden can take many forms depending on the needs and preferences of the community. It can mean the provision of childcare so that women can engage in economically productive activities, it should include interventions aimed at changing the undervaluation of care work, it can take the form of programs that allow people to be paid for the very difficult work of caring for loved ones, or can involve labor market regulation that is sensitive to the schedules and needs of those who provide care.

Other social protection systems can enhance quality of life for rural women and girls by reducing vulnerability to risk related to life contingencies, prevent engagement in activities that enhance short-term gain at the expense of more sustainable activities, enable women to leverage transfers as productive investments, or can intervene in labor markets to support the participation of marginalized groups. From a broader social policy perspective, universal health and education systems serve to decommodify- empowering women to access their rights to education and health regardless of employment or financial status, contributing to a supportive environment for women’s productive agricultural engagement, and an environment in which girls can prioritize education.

Social policies that are context appropriate are appropriate not just for the population but also for the policy environment. This means ensuring that the redistributive functions of social assistance and insurance programs are not undone by regressive taxation structures, or policies that disenfranchise or otherwise prevent women, girls and other marginalized groups from accessing their rights. Productive social policies complement agricultural polices to improve the quality of rural lives.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the intertwined role that climate change, conflict, and crises will play in the lives of rural women and girls. The uncertainty that climate change generates for rural livelihoods and the threat it poses in the form of increased intensity and frequency of natural hazards demands vigilance as well as adequate policy interventions that shape the way we engage in agriculture and our environment, and how we support those affected by disasters.

Changes in productive land and fears about resource allocation can lead to conflict. A primary concern will be to prevent conflict over land and resources from becoming violent conflict. However, many rural women and girls currently live in contexts of violence and insecurity. As many have pointed out, conflict and other forms of human insecurity affect men and women differently. For women, this often means targeted violence, a lack of legal protection systems related to violent crime, domestic violence/IPV, property rights, exclusion from labor and credit, burdens of labor from informality and fractured families, exclusion from education, and can weaken health and social services for women.

Interventions in conflict or post-conflict settings can often fail to accurately understand the role of women and girls in conflict, and therefore fail to fully integrate them in the process of building a positive peace. Gender roles structure responsibilities, capabilities, access to rights and engagement with the post-conflict process, and failure to account for gender in this process can have implications for the rights and entitlements of women and girls in long-term development.  Post conflict contexts offer a brief window of time particularly receptive to transformative policy change. If leveraged, this can mean transformative policy gains for gender equality.

Thank you,

Liz

## Mahesh Chander, Indian Veterinary Research Institute, India (sixth contribution)

Coming again to the role of women dairy cooperatives in bringing transformative impact on the lives & lihelihoods of rural women in India, attached is our article with a summary in the introductory para.

Attachment:

<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/discussions/contributions/Women%20cooperatives-Indian%20Farming-Mchander.docx>

## Clare Bishop, facilitator of the discussion

Thank you to all new and returning contributors for your inputs to the online discussion during the last week.

A summary of the contributions by topics addressed shows that we have already covered a lot of aspects of question 1 (in terms of the context, needs and priorities of rural women), question 2 (the policy framework and skills development), and question 3 (ways for addressing deeply rooted gender norms and engaging with men).

**Have the interests and priorities of rural women in your country of region been adequately reflected in the discussion?**The contributions during the last two weeks have shared insights from around the world on different aspects of the empowerment of rural women. The greatest number of contributions have come from Asia. If you feel the discussion is missing a perspective from your part of the world, please feel free to contribute.

**Are there more examples of the private sector creating space to empower rural women?**  
The topic which has received less attention overall – although there have been some very valuable contributions – is around engaging with the private sector and women’s entrepreneurship. How can women be facilitated to fully engage with private sector opportunities?

**Men – are we hearing your voice?**  
Men have been active in this debate, accounting for one quarter of the contributions. But if you have more to say, especially regarding effective ways of engaging with men and boys to achieve gender transformative impacts, please write in.

## Kuruppacharil V. Peter, World noni Research Foundation, India (third contribution)

Marine and Inland water fisheries are sectors operated by women. Rural fish markets in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are managed exclusively by women."Malsyfed" a co-operative organized by Government of Kerala has all women fish selling kiosks spread all over Kerala. Coir industry in the coastal zones of Kerala had more of women. Cashew industry where nuts are burned and kernel separated depends on women. Drinking water collection from common ponds and pipes is again a prerogative of women. Tailoring is catching groups of women for self employment. Home nurses are again dominated by women. Avenues are endless. Group approach is safer for women in the context of reported atrocities against the fair sex.

## Anne Chele, FAO, Kenya

One aspect in the progressive realization of economic empowerment of women is in terms of having an increasing presence of women in decision-making bodies. More can be done however particularly in enabling women to participate in decision making more effectively. Numbers is not just enough; but is a good start- there is need to address the quality of participation in decision-making. This requires investment in capacity building interventions that enable the women to better understand the issues and build their confidence enough to be willing and daring to engage and contribute ideas in male dominated fora. This is, of course, a progressive transformation to be realized over time; but key to women’s effective participation. Women who acquire skills and knowledge are able to be independent minded and self-driven; and the external interventions leverage what they are already doing.

Policies and approaches used in the various women focused interventions should be tailored to fit specific contexts as much as possible to avoid situations where this springs negative reactions. For instance, approaches applied to women headed household may need to be different from those applied to male headed ones. For the male headed households for instance, policies/approaches may need to focus more on the family unit- not to appear to isolate the woman and give them some special treatment. The policy should support “freedom of families to sit and discuss” the proposed women focused interventions. Women will do better if they are supported by their families/men, who, when they are involved, appreciate their women’s contribution to the development of the family, as opposed to perceiving them as competitors. Support for women should not appear as alienating the men, rather, it should create strong households, not empowered women and disempowered men.

## Takele Teshome, Association for Sustainable Development Alternatives (ASDA), Ethiopia

**Gender transformative approaches**

Dear All

My name is Takele Teshome, Founder and executive Director of Association for Sustainable Development Alternatives (ASDA). I was not able to actively participate in the online discussion since I was out on field trip where Internet access is difficult. I am now ready to share my thoughts and experiences in the field.

**Question 1: What are the main challenges rural women and girls are facing today?**

The key challenges of rural women in Ethiopia were unequal access and control over resources. Insufficient knowledge and access to information have also affected economic empowerment of women in general and women headed households in particular. Gender violence is also part of the challenge. However, although a lot remains to be done there are improvements in the recent years.

**Question 2: Are we using the right approaches and policies to close the gender gap?**

Noticeable effort has been exerted in areas of policies and strategies. However, practical actions to bridge the gaps are insufficient. A lot has been done to address practical gender needs such as reducing work - loads, increasing access to education, reproductive health etc. Programmes and projects are often formulated based on general need assessment, not on proper gender analysis, not on in-depth analysis of underlying causes for gender gaps and gender sensitive targets and indicators

**Question 3: How can we best achieve gender transformative impacts?**

AS to ASDA, programmes and project be formulated based on gender analysis to understand underlying causes for existing gender inequality and harmful traditional practices and gender violence. Research agenda should also consider gender inequalities. Feed back should also be collected not only from males but also from females using gender lense.

The population ratio between men and women in many countries is about 50:50. But when it comes female extension experts and development agents is unacceptably low. The challenge is very serious when it comes to female headed households and orphan girls (child/youth headed households.

ASDA has success stories in enhancing economic empowerment of women. It has established fuel efficient stove production, seedling production women groups, vegetable growers, poultry keepers and sheep fattening groups. These livelihood diversification options promoted skill acquisition and economic empowerment. The project also enhanced management and leadership capacities to run their business and increase self esteem.

In addition to this, ASDA established community dialogue center in one of the project districts to facilitate discussion among women groups on matters that affect their lives and come up with women driven projects and local actions. In ASDA, women participation in water users and care takers committee, social accountability committees natural resource management groups.

Women initiated and managed projects were presented to good practice competition at national level and undergone series of reviews at various levels and now short listed as top 5 best practices winners where the final ranking will be done by the panel of Judges in recent future.

## Yannick de Mol, FAO, Italy

About Men’s voice

I wish to share with you elements about the FAO-Dimitra Clubs approach regarding this point mentioned by Clare. Andrea Sanchez already presented the approach last week but if you need more info : <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4706e.pdf> or <http://www.fao.org/dimitra/en/>.

Striving for gender equality is indeed an important prerequisite for viable and sustainable rural development. So, a strong awareness of gender is woven into all the Dimitra Clubs’ activities. Of course, much importance is given to strengthening the visibility of women and their ability to take part in decision-making. But the approach does not focus only on women, a lot of attention goes on the relations between men and women, with strong emphasis on encouraging the involvement of men and on the expression of the respective needs of women and men. Both play an active and equal role in the life of the clubs. It is clearly the most efficient way to trigger gender equality at community level, working with local institutions (traditional and political authorities, producers organisations, etc.) often composed of men. For this process to succeed, identification of the partner organisation (that will accompany the Dimitra Clubs) and capacity development on the long term is essential and can be challenging. Switching to engaging equally women and men takes knowledge of the context, skills and time.

The case of Isangi in DR Congo is interesting on this matter. In the Tshopo Province, in the northeast of the country, traditional schemes of labour division between men and women have been questioned and sometimes broken. Tshopo is covered by the rainforest and watered by the Congo River and its tributaries. On this huge territory, fishing is a key economic activity, traditionally controlled by men. However, recently, women have begun to make their contribution, in the village of Isangi for instance: “equality and the gender division of responsibility were discussed in the club for the first time. We have realized that women can also play a proactive role in fishing activities,” said Henri, one of club’s members. Behaviours have gradually changed and today women carry out tasks that were previously attributed to men, just like fishing. This redefinition of women’s roles by the community increased the household’s fish catches and consequently their incomes. As a result, their diet is now more varied and balanced. This example is mentioned in a video of the series FAO produced last year: <http://www.fao.org/dimitra/dimitra-clubs/en/>

## Mahesh Chander, Indian Veterinary Research Institute, India (seventh contribution)

About the question, what can be done?

Will it help in gender equality, if Gender sensitization is included in school curriculum ?

I am sharing here information about a recent Campaign in India, to MAKE GENDER SENSITISATION COMPULSORY IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM. The proponents of this campaign say, “In our tradition-bound society, certain attitudinal change and change in the mindset is needed to respect women and to ensure gender justice. Right from childhood years, children ought to be sensitized to respect women. A child should be taught to respect women in the same way he is taught to respect men. Gender equality should be made a part of the school curriculum. School teachers and parents should be trained, not only to conduct regular personality-building and skill-enhancing exercises, but also to keep a watch on the actual behavioural patterns of the children so as to make them gender sensitized.”

Read more about this campaign:

<http://www.firstpost.com/jaagore/issues-womens-safety>

## Mauro Bottaro, FAO, Italy

Hello everyone,

My name is Mauro Bottaro and I work for the Dimitra project of FAO.  
On behalf of my team, I would like to address the issue of women's leadership, one of the topics that most frequently arises in this very interesting discussion. Indeed, a fundamental condition for women’s empowerment is their autonomous and full participation in the development dynamics, both at household and community level. In order for all this to happen, women need to acquire self-esteem, capacity to recognize, identify, argue and expose their needs and also take necessary actions to overcome economic and social barriers to meet those needs.  
As already mentioned by my colleague Andrea Sánchez in an earlier intervention, Dimitra Clubs’ participatory communication is an endogenous social mobilization approach: women and men inform and communicate, each according to her/his specific capacities, roles, responsibilities and needs. It is a process that enables communities to envisage, define and pursue their own transformation and development practices, where special attention is given to vulnerable or marginalized groups, such as women and youth.

This approach ensures that specific conditions are created so that leaders can emerge, whether men, women or young people. As a result, Dimitra Clubs allow rural women to improve their self-esteem and fully participate in community life. Many of them have seized that opportunity and have gradually taken up a leading role within households, formal and informal organizations and communities.

Some examples on women’s leadership:

* In DR Congo, in the village of Yanongé, Maguy Atilomoi was one of the first women to get involved in the clubs approach. She is a young woman and mother of two from a modest rural family, who gradually made her way up until she became President of the Producers Organization, Vice President of the Yanongé Producers Union and Dimitra Club moderator. She also supports the activities of about 15 clubs in her area, by visiting them once a week and giving advice to members to help them move forward. Maguy makes a living thanks to farming. She farms groundnuts, palm nuts and a local vegetable called niebé. This is a demanding activity but she still finds time to attend school: “I am attending a farming school where I learn agriculture techniques. I am an agronomist, I work like men,” Maguy said.

In some cases, women of the Dimitra Clubs have also acquired specific skills that have led them to develop a political leadership:

* In Niger, Ramatou Issouf - member of the Dimitra Club of Wadata in the village of Wadai - became president of the local office of a political party. She also decided to be a candidate in the municipal elections. She is 46 years old and has four daughters. She mentioned that she developed oratory skills and the capacity to argue with relevance through the Dimitra Clubs.
* In Niger, in the village of Falwel, seven women, members of the local Dimitra Club have been candidates for local elections.

As previously mentioned by my colleague Yannick De Mol, Dimitra also produced a video series to illustrate the dynamic nature of the Dimitra Clubs and the impact that they can achieve. Other examples on women’s leadership can be found in this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6cPjEYzC8I&feature=youtu.be>

## Nitya Rao, School of International Development and LANSA, India

For gender transformative impacts, your first question already gives a clue, and that is, to understand the differences amongst rural women, in terms of needs and priorities, but also their coping strategies. We dont give adequate attention to the ways in which women are already using the resources they have to survive. Sometimes this involves risky strategies, including engaging in non-legal activities or transactional sex. Once we are able to map out women's gendered vulnerabilities, especially in a context of climate change and growing male migration, we then need to ensure that policies and strategies support or enhance their strategies, provide them information that can ensure safety, for instance.

In much of Africa, an analysis of data reveals an increase in the number of female-headed households. What this indicates is that often women are opting out of marriage, but making economic and emotional partnerships that ensure some support and reciprocity. This has implications for resource access, but equally health and fertility. Gender transformative impacts may then emerge from different starting points, but the bottomline is that the processes of engagement need to address unequal power relations, be it of class, ethnicity/caste or gender.

## Mahesh Chander, Indian Veterinary Research Institute, India (eighth contribution)

Hello everyone,

Movies can and should play powerful role in women empowerment- sharing here the case of recent Hindi movie-DANGAL.

In 2016, movie DANGAL by Aamir Khan was released in India, which is a story of two sisters groomed by their father as wrestlers. He basically wanted boys not girls as usual in Indian society, but he thought otherwise later and focused on his daughters to turn them worldclass wrestlers. It is impactful movie like a game changer in bringing sea change in the mind set in the traditional societies where focus of family is mostly on male child, be it feeding, schooling or career, while for girls- their marriage is the only goal. After watching DANGAL, Men and women were equally appreciative of the approach of the film to bring about change in thinking on gender issue especially the craving for male child that girls too can do what boys do.  The famous dialogue or punch line in this movie, “*Maari chhoriyan chhoron se kam hai ke”*meaning- "Are my girls any less than boys?" itself has the biggest transformative impact in thinking of Man.

Here are some links which indicate the potential of movies in bringing about change in mind set towards gender transformative impacts.

<https://bhavpritah.wordpress.com/2017/01/07/women-empowerment-lessons-from-movie-dangal/>

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/5-bollywood-films-women-empowerment-feminism-queen-astitva-phir-milenge-dor-english-vinglish/1/429115.html>

<http://www.dnaindia.com/mumbai/interview-empowering-women-through-films-2178506>

Thanks, it is stimulating to participate in the discussion.

## Queen Katembu, FAO, Kenya

Hello everyone, great discussions going on and a great topic for discussions and to hear people's views on the topic. I am glad to give my little contribution. The topic "striving for transformative gender impacts" is best viewed from a collaborative point of view. I would like to give a case study of a project FAO implemented collaboration with Actionaid Kenya. The project “One voice against gender inequity: Addressing Gender inequalities in Food Security and Agriculture recovery in the Horn of Africa drought crisis” targeted mostly women groups in Mwingi and Kyuso wards. The women groups collaborated with youth groups to generate resource maps by use of GIS. The women understood where the health centres were located and the personnel in each health centre. They learned about the location of schools and the number of teachers in each school. They learned the location of water points and many other resources. In addition to this, the women and men in the targeted groups were also trained on the rights of women and human rights in general and understood both men and women had rights and that even women could be appointed to positions of leadership. The men confessed that the training helped them and they promised to support women candidates for elective positions and the women confessed that they were volunteering themselves for elective positions and they were campaigning freely to be elected without fear of being prejudiced or ostracized by the community.

The GIS resource maps helped the women to articulate their development needs with the county government such that the women took lead in discussing what they need the county government to do for them and not what the government should do for them. To me this is was very transformative that brings total transformation to the lives of rural women. The women partnered with the youth from their community who have embraced technology like GIS mapping, mobile technology and translated the information in language simpler for the women. Empowering the women and men in the community with information on development, statistical facts, accountability and leadership, their rights to make choices, training them on public speaking and how to articulate their development issues before policy makers and development actors and how to hold themselves and their leaders accountable and brings lasting transformative impact in our societies. Women can bring transformative impact in their homes and community if their minds are transformed and all limitations imposed on them by culture and traditions is lifted. This project helped me understand that information (empowering information) is power and is liberating and once women are organized into groups, have access to information and have support of men and youth, there is nothing that can stand in their way to transformative development.

## Dineshkumar Sing, TATA Consultancy Services, India

mKRISHI®  started as a **Digital Innovation** for rural masses at **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)**Innovation Lab Mumbai.  But soon it was felt that mere introducing the technology would not yield the intended results. Hence, TCS' experience in "**Problem solving**" and "**Program management**" also came handy.  TCS picked up two large pilot projects, one with World Bank and other with IFAD, through it's partners to experiment few **process improvement and project management models**. This helped in creating a "**participatory environment**" where each stakeholder - including the women members of the family, participated. The experiences are shared in the attached ppt herewith.

Some of the highlights are as below:

**Creating a Mindset Change** - (through Awareness) - most critical of all interventions and involved the role of NGOs, community development agencies and also spiritual organizations (as it runs deeper within the society).

**Improve Accessibility (through ICT)**- Mobility kind of created a "virtual open gate" through which "Window to the World (WOW)" was established. Information was accessible, right there, where the person was! This brought more awareness, about the changing world, *rights of the individual* and the **role models**!

**Develop Livelihood - (through small scale Entrepreneurship)**- Women in India had always been contributing in family agriculture business, but more like a "hidden labor".  But the concept of new "micro agro businesses" and availability of the credits and government funding / schemes, helped them to push to "pilot the enterprenuer" among them.  This was a role transformation i.e. from a housewife or house labor to an enterprenuer.  Access to finance brought lots of respects from family, it boosted the confidence and also brought "livelihood security" amidst agri crisis.

So overall a new world could be seen within the same age-old, village world. These interventions helped Mindset Transformation, from a society from “demanding subsidy” to “Self Reliance”.

Read the brief case study attached.

Attachment:

<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/discussions/contributions/Gender%20Equality%20-%20mKRISHI_v02.pdf>

## Brad Wilson, United States of America

Here are some thoughts on the role of "farm wife" in comparison to "farmer," with regard to male and female roles on farms during my lifetime, (1950s to today,) here in Iowa USA. This was inspired by your discussion questions.

It's called: "Farmer Vs Farm Wife: Which is Most Highly Valued," but it addresses more than that: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/brad-wilson/farmer-vs-farm-wife-which-is-most-highly-valued/1388893231148421/>.

## UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Germany

Contribution from the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) to the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) – Rural women: Striving for gender transformative impacts.

**Development policy and rural contexts**(in relation to questions 1 and 2)

Challenges to the empowerment of women and girls living in rural settings cannot be generalized, either across regions or within countries. A variety of socio-cultural, economic and political factors specific to their different contexts create these challenges. Nevertheless, while in some respects challenging, these contexts can also contribute to creating enabling conditions to empower women. In this regard, for example, there may be variation in the organization of rural communities, including in the way in which households are structured. In some cases, a matriarchal form of social organization may prevail rather than a patriarchal one. The conception of family in African societies can differ from those found in other regions. Families in Africa can include community members and others beyond the nuclear family. Furthermore, the experience of women in rural areas is diverse, with the most disadvantaged included those with disabilities, pregnant or lactating, single mothers, widows, the chronically sick and the elderly. The economy in rural areas also varies, with some households deriving their income from agriculture, while others make a living from non-agricultural activities including the provision of services, such as tourism. That said, from, a global point of view, rural areas tend to be the poorest and the most deprived in relation to public services such as roads and transportation, sanitation, electricity, clean water and school facilities.

Key point: International and national development policy aiming to reduce gender inequalities and strengthen the empowerment of women should take into consideration the needs and priorities of women living in rural contexts that are diverse, while also learning from the similarities within and across rural areas, in order to effectively bring about change. Policy also needs to be flexible enough to adapt to rapidly changing contexts. For example, rural settings can be affected by conflict or natural disasters, which have an impact on the configuration of households, and on the already impending need for basic services, and the employment demands from various sectors.

**Entrepreneurship, sustainable livelihoods and the relevance of education for women’s empowerment** (in relation to questions 1 and 2)

It is important to have a common understanding of what it means for women to be entrepreneurial. There is a long history of attempts to define entrepreneurship. In our discussion, we adopted an understanding of entrepreneurship involving women being able to set up and run their own enterprise/business in ways that enable them to increase their socio-economic contribution to their household and society, while, at the same time, further enlarging their opportunities to achieve decent and productive work in ways that make societies more equal and just.

Women who are entrepreneurial in rural areas often benefit from family support, including financial resources to undertake proposed initiatives. They also benefit from arranged childcare that allows them to engage actively in entrepreneurial activities. Some of these women have had the positive experience of growing up with female role models who have themselves been entrepreneurial. The completion of basic education is a key factor in enabling women to go forward with entrepreneurial initiatives.

However, the education women receive must be relevant to their needs and choices in ways that, in the long term, contribute to their human development and well-being, as well as to that of their household and community. Education can contribute to women’s entrepreneurship, but, importantly, also to other kinds of empowerment such as having voice and participation in decision-making that brings change in their living conditions, as well as in asserting their rights, including decisions on their reproductive health.

It is not enough for girls and women simply to access education; that education must also be inclusive, equitable and of good quality. Importantly, curricular content and the pedagogical approaches used in formal and non-formal educational settings should not reproduce gender stereotypes (in roles, values and behaviours) that diminish women’s expectations for individual and social change.  Education should enable women to have the knowledge and skills to strengthen their ability to choose their future autonomously.

Some women may have access to education, but may, occasionally, find that, once completed, it has not been relevant to giving them a sustainable livelihood, to helping them find a place in the labour market, or to their life choices. Sustainable livelihoods imply a set of capabilities and assets which represent a means to a living. There may be a mismatch between available educational opportunities (including, for example, those in technical and vocational education), and the knowledge and skills that are needed for women to achieve sustainable livelihoods or lives they have reason to value. This mismatch prompts the question: What do you need to learn to be entrepreneurial or to improve your livelihood and where and how do you learn this?

At UIL, we support lifelong learning that is rooted in the integration of learning and living. It covers learning activities for people of all ages, in all life-wide contexts (families, schools, communities, workplaces, etc.), delivered through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal, and informal) which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands.

In rural areas, learning is taking place within families, in the community and across generations. There are cases in which the knowledge, experience and skills needed to run a small business are acquired by women within community self-help groups or families, or through self-directed learning. The government can play a key role, not only in ensuring that there is an employment structure responsive to or compatible with the educational and life choices of women, but also in recognizing and validating the knowledge and skills that women may already be developing outside formal schooling. It is important that women with such skills can move along flexible pathways into non-formal and formal educational opportunities that can lead into further employment and social development.

Key Point: Based on the principle of lifelong learning, the education sector, in collaboration with other sectors, should recognize, document, assess and validate any prior and ongoing learning undertaken by women which is relevant to their livelihoods, in ways that can lead to further education, work opportunities and life choices.

**How do women access information in rural areas and how does this empower them? How is their access to Information and Communication Technologies empowering?** (in relation to questions 1, 2 and 3 and the CSW62 [2018] review theme):

It is crucial for women to have free and ready access to key information that can further expand their opportunities for better work, education and health. In line with the right to education, the government should make sure that all girls and women have equal and free access not only to educational opportunities, but also to information on how to exercise this right.

Women in rural areas exchange information by word of mouth, and often by listening to the radio in their vernacular language. The radio is key in developing non-formal and informal learning. At the same time, radio content, as well as that disseminated by the media, can be influential in reproducing gender stereotypes, as well as in empowering women with information that can allow them to contest disempowering conditions. Radio programmes can disseminate information relevant to women’s rights and how to exercise them, while also helping women participate in long-distance education programmes. Overall, radio is a key technological tool that should not be underestimated in comparison to other more recent information and communication technologies, such as mobile phones. Though the use of mobile phones is increasing globally, according to marketing studies following mobile network subscriptions, rural areas often lack the necessary technological infrastructure to make the best use of these devices, including electricity and coverage from internet providers for whom extending a service to just a few subscribers does not make business sense. Private network providers and the state sector could consider partnering to provide such a service in rural areas. Overall, family households still struggle to afford a mobile phone device for each individual, not to mention mobile network subscription and related services. Furthermore, mobile phone devices in these communities often come with features in languages and scripts not relevant to the learner’s needs.

It was also noted that network subscription data alone cannot generate a picture nuanced enough to capture the reality of mobile use by women in rural areas. A device may be in the name of a woman’s husband, but she may the one overseeing its use in the household, leading to collective, peer-to-peer learning experiences with family members and the community. In general, however, women’s use of mobile phones can be restricted by low literacy levels (but not necessarily), lack of digital skills and prevailing socio-cultural norms and practices.

**Changing deeply rooted gender norms** (in relation to question 3)

The social and institutional transformation envisioned by policy and legal frameworks supportive of gender equality is difficult to achieve in practice. The desired change will take time, and needs to build on and/or take into consideration existing socio-cultural values and norms underlying gender practices and behaviours. Changing these might be the most difficult aspect. Yet, if all those with a stake in such change, including both women and men, are brought together by their traditional community leaders to discuss (in ways respectful of tradition) how all might benefit from the pursuit of a common good in relation to gender equality, there is a better chance that policy can be implemented in practice that has relevance to the well-being of people and their communities.

Attachment:

<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/discussions/contributions/UILContributiontotheGlobalForumonFoodSecurityandNutrition_RuralWomen_August3_2017_final.docx>

## Emily Janoch, CARE, United States of America

For many women, the biggest barrier they face is the societal belief of what women should be, and how they should be allowed to behave. That’s the underlying cause of a lot of barriers for rural women. CARE Ethiopia, and especially the [GRAD project](http://www.care.org/grad)(funded through USAID’s Feed the Future), use [Social Analysis and Action](http://www.fsnnetwork.org/sites/default/files/realize.pdf), a technique for engaging men and strengthening women’s wellbeing in the community. SAA creates community dialogue on social norms, and provides safe spaces for men and women to discuss challenges and come up with solutions. Following an [Outcome Mapping evaluation](http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/grad_learning_brief_6_gender_outcome_mapping.pdf)process, the communities highlighted their results:

“Now we do not argue with our husbands like before. We discuss issues, especially about our resources like how to sell our land or cattle.”

- 40-year-old mother from Hawassa Zuria

According to the review process, women’s economic engagement appears to have been a stepping stone towards a number of other changes in gender relations, including women’s greater involvement in household livelihood decisions. Women’s participation in VESAs—often alongside their husbands—was an important catalyst for these changes.

The subtle signs of more equitable relationships—such as men and women eating together or calling each other by name—are rewarding and can be self-reinforcing, leading to ever greater communication, understanding, and trust in the relationship. For programs that aim to shift gender dynamics, it may be that putting more energy and focus on relationship behaviors such as these (rather than, say, insisting that men begin to take on previously taboo tasks) could lead to a more profound process of renegotiation of power dynamics in the household.

More information is available in the learning brief or the full evaluation.

For many women, the biggest barrier they face is the societal belief of what women should be, and how they should be allowed to behave. That’s the underlying cause of a lot of barriers for rural women. CARE Ethiopia, and especially the GRAD project (funded through USAID’s Feed the Future), use Social Analysis and Action, a technique for engaging men and strengthening women’s wellbeing in the community. SAA creates community dialogue on social norms, and provides safe spaces for men and women to discuss challenges and come up with solutions. Following an Outcome Mapping evaluation process, the communities highlighted their results:

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More information is available in the [learning brief](http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/grad_learning_brief_6_gender_outcome_mapping.pdf)or the [full evaluation](http://www.careevaluations.org/Evaluations/GRAD%20Outcome%20Mapping%20Mid-Term%20Process.pdf).

## Szilvia Lehel, Italy

Thank you for this opportunity. In my modest view, in relation to the changed context of recent decades, climate change merits special attention. Kindly find some points suggested for your consideration.

Q1

In all regions of the world, women play a paramount role in the management, conservation and use of natural resources. Their responsibility for growing food and collecting water and fuelwood has made them profoundly aware of their environments and the devastating impacts of deforestation, desertification and other forms of environmental degradation. The evidence is clear: climate change is having gender-differentiated impacts, and in many cases is intensifying the constraints that already place women, especially those that are reliant on agriculture for their livelihoods at a great disadvantage. Social, economic, political and cultural factors influence vulnerability and adaptive capacity and may render specific groups more susceptible to adverse change. For example, an empirical study conducted in Malawi (Asfaw and Maggio, 2015) established that **weather shocks significantly reduce consumption and nutritional outcomes** with more pronounced effects where the share of land area owned by women is higher, which suggests that in the context of high climate variability, women involved in agriculture are much more vulnerable than men and less able to cope with shocks.

**Rural women**rely more on biomass than men (such as wood, agricultural crops, wastes and forest resources) for their energy and livelihoods and ecosystem services for food security (through agricultural production and/or natural resource harvesting). This places them at greater risk to the negative effects of climate change. These gender differences in the use of natural resources and ecosystem services also explain gender differences in exposure to risk and vulnerability to biodiversity loss and changes in access to and management of natural resources and in their adaptive capacity. In many contexts, women also have more limited access to agricultural advisory services and formal rural institutions, further reducing their opportunities to gain knowledge and information about adequate coping strategies and climate-smart approaches.

Increasingly, research is documenting that the workload on women left behind is multiplied many- fold because the nature of migrant work being uncertain, remittance from migrant males is often sporadic. Agriculture remains critical for the family remaining at home to survive. Not only must the women do household work and child and elderly care, but also generate income usually by taking on their husbands’ role in agriculture. This too without access to capital or credit, while negotiating existing agricultural services dominated by men, where the women have to overcome several cultural barriers. In many areas these single women called drought widows or flood widows, especially in Southeast Asia, by their communities, report increased incidences of assault and violence. **Environmental / disaster-driven forced migration**is likely to increase further, according to IOM.

It is clear that climate change affects everyone, yet its impacts are often not gender neutral. Due to their socially constructed gender roles and statuses in society, women and men may experience the effects of climate change in very different ways. In order to design adequate solutions, a gender-responsive approach is needed for a nuanced understanding of the root causes of vulnerability and the defining factors of adaptive capacity, allowing gender-based inequalities to be redressed effectively.

Q2

In a consolidated framework developed by [IFPRI](http://womenandclimate.ifpri.info/files/2014/09/PN_2014_GCC_01_web.pdf),  the pathways through which climate change affects well-being at the individual, household, and community levels (kindly see . It can be used to promote a better understanding of the differential impacts of climate change on men and women and, similarly their differential responses. In the context of vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, this framework emphasizes the value of information, livelihood resilience, institutions, and asset accumulation. Ultimately, the policy goal is to tackle distribution of assets and decision-making where these asymmetries are the underlying cause of women’s vulnerability to climate change and strengthening national and local institutions, fostering coherence between climate and agricultural policies, financing and investments.

The **gender-climate-change-agriculture nexus**is complex. However, there is convincing evidence that a deeper understanding of different behaviours, realities and capabilities of women and men in the agricultural sector (especially in relation to the adoption of climate-smart agriculture practices), and the institutions and services supporting them (e.g. extension) services will have multiple co-benefits – both for productivity and gender quality (Kristjanson et al, 2017). **Designing policy frameworks**which enable coherence and convergence across the gender, climate and agriculture nexus are challenging as interventions need to manage trade-offs that may result in policy contradictions and they are more difficult to cost/quantify (IFAD, 2016). To identify technologies that are affordable easy to adopt/implement (particularly for women smallholders), government advisory services and climate information provision need to be tailored to the local agro-ecological conditions and benefit from multi-stakeholder processes through which local people evaluate and make decisions. A lot of good practices and materials exist that need to be upscaled.

Q3

On a positive note, while climate change can exacerbate existing gender inequalities in agriculture, it can also tap into women’s potential, if their role in adaptation and mitigation is recognized and they are provided with equal opportunities and equitable access to productive assets, markets, climate information services information, technology and training.

Women’s asset ownership was found to be significantly and positively related to uptake of some climate-smart practices. Where women have secure and rights : greater yields and increased food security is observed. When individuals had secure rights to land, they were more likely to use soil conservation techniques.

It was also observed that small-scale farmers with land rights were 60% more likely to make investments that prevent soil erosion. A study of 90 countries found that, as land rights instability increased, natural forests decreased. Increased land tenure security, in contrast, has been linked with decreased deforestation. Findings from Latin America show that female farmers tend to plant a diversity of crops, improving household resilience to the effects of climate change (e.g. Mexico and Bolivia) noting that women are playing increasingly important roles in maintaining knowledge about different plant varieties, as well as deciding which crops to plant, particularly as many men migrate away from the farm. **Therefore therie is a strong business case to investing in women for climate-resilience .**

There is an important opportunity to make use of previously underused (and under-recognized) abilities, knowledge and talents. To **this end, a re-evaluation of agricultural practices and innovations will be required, hence the need for gender-responsive climate-smart agriculture.**

Agricultural sectors feature in over 90% Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)[1] and more than **40 percent of the NDC submissions mention gender-related issues**, at least 65 countries have considered gender as part of their national priorities either within the adaptation and/or mitigation areas of work. As countries and regional economic communities aim to mainstreaming gender in climate policy in the context of agriculture, especially in the implementation of NDCs, National Adaptation Plans and National Agricultural Stategies and Investment Plans, there are wide-ranging opportunities to develop interventions linked to key gender issues. This can bring about more effective and equitable participation of women smallholder farmers in climate change adaptation efforts and effectively enhance the overall resilience of food systems.

Future efforts need to aim to strengthen **country-level planning**, in harmony with private investors and development partners. In the increasingly challenging context of climate change, public programmes, such as disaster risk reduction and **social protection**, and insurance, will become increasingly important, by giving special attention to vulnerable groups, tailoring the insurance packages to different groups of clients (men and women, with or without a guarantee).

Crucial actions that support climate-smart agriculture also include the enactment and enforcement of conducive and inclusive agricultural policies and investments ; the improvement of relevant infrastructure and the distribution agricultural incentives; the provision of pertinent weather-related information, as well as weather, climate and extension services (equitable tenure, access and control rights as well as socially and environmentally sustainable technologies and employment opportunities. THese could be successfully advocated for by development agencies or NGOs, and they can make a real difference in enabling the development of inclusive food systems where rural communities thrive.

Investments however need to be significantly scaled up. Climate change adaptation in the agricultural sector is expected have a cumulative cost of USD 225 billion to 2050 (Lobell et al, 2013). **Yet only 0.01 percent of all global grants address climate change and gender equality together , despite women’s proven pronounced vulnerability**. Gender-responsive climate finance mechanisms are crucial to establishing sound policies and on-the-ground interventions. The two largest climate finance mechanisms, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) have corporate dedicated gender equality policies and action plans, carrying gender-specific conditionalities and call for “projects that produce economic, social and gender development co-benefits”. This is a most welcome trend, that needs to be met with action and commitment from all stakeholders in the way forward.

[1] Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are specific climate actions outlined by countries in committing to the international climate agreement that was achieved at the conclusion of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP21) in Paris in 2015, to ensure the path towards a low-carbon, climate resilient future. INDC serve to clarify the overall scope of many national climate change plans and policies, including components such as adaptation and means of implementation

## Subhalakshmi Nandi, UN Women, India

Hi, some of my initial thoughts to contribute to the discussion, are as follows.

**Main challenges for rural women**

* Climate change and agrarian distress brought about by political, economic and environmental factors - leading to dispossession of resources (land, water, forest, etc.)
* The continuum of collapsing rural livelihoods, leading to distress migration and trafficking
* Lack of gender responsive infrastructure (rural roads, energy, water, etc.), public services and social protection - thereby, aggravating women's unpaid work - not only in care work, but also in subsistence livelihoods
* Invisbility of women workers - as 'family farm workers' - and therefore, lack of social protection
* Multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination - ethnicity, regional diversity, geography, marital status
* Lack of rural women's voice and representation - in government, in unions, in farmer cooperatives, in all decision-making bodies
* Gender based violence within the home and outside

**Shifting approaches: Transforming gender relations and empowering rural women**

* The concept of 'family farming' does a disservice to understanding and addressing intra-household poverty and inequality
* Focus on women as farmers - as individuals and as collectives (cooperatives, producer companies, unions) - rather than as 'family farmers'
* Strengthen agriculture policy with the larger framework of macroeconomic and trade policies (e.g. WTO), labour market dynamics and industrial policies - need to be coherent with and complement each other
* Need for human rights based approaches enshrined in CEDAW (Article 14), and its General Recommendation 34, as well as in the Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)
* Need for a greater emphasis on ‘leave no one behind’ – defining a ‘farmer’ to include small and marginal, sharecroppers, agricultural workers, saltpan workers, fisherfolk, forest produce collectors and traders, etc. – all to be included in policy and programme for farming and agriculture
* Think beyond 'microcredit'/financial inclusion as a the sole staretgy with rural women
* Invest in learning, literacy, education and skills for rural women
* Advocacy on land rights to be holistic - include private land/inheritance, common property resources, water resources, etc.
* Investing in stronger institutionalisation of the gender agenda in design, implementation and monitoring of rural development and agriculture programmes - through audits, Gender Action Plans, gender-repsonsive budgets and MIS/data, capacity devleopment of staff/functionaries, etc.
* Organise, organise, organise....! And visibilise rural women/farmers...!

**UN Women's work in India**

UN Women in India has supported the creation, expansion and activities of the ***Mahila Kisan Adhikar Manch (MAKAAM) – Forum for the Rights of Women Farmers.***MAKAAM is an advocacy alliance that addresses the persistent poverty and vulnerability of women farmers and rural women, to build their resilience in the face of rising insecurities related to social, political, economic and environmental factors. Currently MAKAAM is forum of more than 120 individuals and organisations of farming women, of women farmers' collectives, civil society organisations, researchers and activists, drawn from 24 states of India. In 2016-17, the National Commission for Women (NCW) , Mahila Kisan Adhikar Manch (MAKAAM – Forum for Women Farmers’ Rights) and UN Women have come together in a unique partnership to collectively review legislation and policy frameworks, and advocate for removing barriers, as well as for creation of an enabling ecosystem for women farmers to realise their rights.

Read more here:

<http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/01/securing-rights-of-women-farmers>

Through research and training inputs under an Action Research on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), a flagship programme of the Government of India to promote rural employment, progress was made in adoption and implementation of Gender Action Plans (GAPs) in the Act, leading to increase in women’s participation; from 3 to 21% in the state of Uttar Pradesh (UP), 12 to 16% in the State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and 17 to 30% in the state of West Bengal (WB). The success in these 3 states led an overwhelming demand by the Ministry for expanding the action research to 4 new states.

A related article:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/3/experts-take-subhalakshmi-nandi-unpaid-work>

An older film:   
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pC-YVHSWpk>

Some more information:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/ruralwomen/unwomen-good-practice.html>

The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) with UN Women technical support drafted the first ever Community Operations Manual (COM) on gender and list of gender indicators for the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) with special focus on gender-responsive institutional mechanisms, capacity building of all rural development officers, and institutionalization of gender analysis and agenda setting. NRLM works chiefly with marginalised rural women and has the mandate of reaching out to 100 million rural poor in 6 lakh villages across the country. Five departments of the Ministry of Rural Development implemented Gender Audit Guidelines for 5 flagship programmes with UN Women support.

More on UN Women's work with NRLM:

[http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/-/media/field-office-eseasia/docs/publica...](http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/-/media/field-office-eseasia/docs/publications/2015/southasia/publications/engendering-rural-livelihoods-final.pdf?la=en)

A film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJwaOXTmkHQ>

A project report:   
  
<http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/10/supporting-gender-responsive-implementation>

Through UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) Project more than 8,000 Dalit women manual scavengers were liberated in 3 states, and 6,657 women were provided alternative employment registering a 310% increase in income.

## Anke Stock, Women Engage for a Common Future, Germany

CSW Consultation – Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF) 5 August 2017

Challenges:

Rural women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate change and extreme weather due to cultural norms, lack of power, and having unequal access to productive resources. Women are often excluded from training programs on new sustainable technologies and agricultural practices, making it difficult for them to adapt to changes in climate and make use of the most cost and energy efficient methods of farming. Also lacking representation in the political sphere, women are unable to influence policies that dictate how their communities will support sustainable development and mitigate climate change. This could lead to communities or countries adopting strategies that will benefit the large-scale farming done mainly by men, while failing to address the issues associated with smaller, household gardens that many women use for financial gain and livelihood. Women as the main caretakers in the home are highly dependent on water and energy resources. However, these resources are often located far distances away or are difficult to collect, and the roads leading to them are rarely safe, lacking sidewalks and clear road signs. This difficulty in accessing water and energy resources causes women to have to spend many hours a day collecting them when they could instead be gainfully employed and generating income. The poor access to natural and productive resources traps women in a cycle of poverty and food insecurity because they have less time to spend on income-generating activities and are also unable to participate in the decision-making process on policies that could improve their situations.

Approaches:

Gender mainstreaming is the overarching strategic approach for achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment at all levels, as mandated by the Beijing Platform for Action. Results show that a consistent use of mainstreaming gender into other sectors leads to more effective policies, also for rural women. Even though the method has been known and practiced since over 20 years, it has not been applied systematically and therefore responses and impacts are still limited. A major challenge is the context-specific approach requiring teams with diverse expertise and the willingness to cooperate across disciplines.

Rural women have difficulty creating employment opportunities for themselves because of their unequal access to financial institutions and assets (loans etc.). In many communities, women are legally unable to own property, leaving them with nothing to provide as collateral for commercial loans. Without loans, credits and other financial assets, it is difficult for women to develop entrepreneurial economic activities that can lift them out of poverty and provide them with independence. In order to improve this, CSOs should work with governments and banks to develop low-cost loans available for women and women cooperatives working to generate economic empowerment for themselves.

Transformative Impacts:

In terms of “transformative change,” the following of the 2030Agenda’s sustainable development goals would have an enormous impact for rural women’s empowerment. The program Women 2030 enacted by Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF) in cooperation with partner worldwide works to provide gender-responsive strategies for achieving SDGs, promotes gender mainstreaming on all levels and focuses, i.a. on SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 13 (mitigating climate change). SDGs apply to both the global north and south, and with projects designed especially for each region, the 2030Agenda can really impact women’s empowerment. Like stated before, a major obstacle for rural women is access to productive resources, so with the more sustainable technologies and practices implemented under the SDGs, resources will become more readily available to women, who will have to spend less of their time gathering them and will be able to spend more time on education and gainful employment. Efforts to achieve the SDGs will also engage the male population, who are prominent actors in the relevant fields of climate science and renewable technology, and if gender-mainstreaming is used in SDG achievement, men will be exposed to the issues facing rural women and will hopefully become more gender sensitive. One possible solution would be to build the capacity of rural women and women NGOs on social and professional development, while increasing their engagement in policy development. The creation of formal dialogue platforms would be useful in bringing together women CSOs and representatives from local and regional governments to not only increase women’s participation in the political sphere, but also to ensure that gender responsive strategies are used when drafting new legislative measures. This would also allow rural women to monitor the implementation of policies and be able to advocate for improved access to natural resources, especially water and energy, for better enactment of gender-equality laws, and for more sustainable rural development. These platforms for conversation will allow CSOs to bring the government’s attention to the issues facing women, and will provide women with the opportunity to develop greater agency.

## Rwendeire Peniel, Climate Smart Agriculture Network, Uganda

I believe in house hold approach of empowering a house hold to live in mutual understanding of each other.The Agriculture sector is the largest employer of the population and continues to offer enormous potential in employment and livelihood to Ugandans including the youth. In 2012/13, the agriculture sector employed 72% of the working population, 77% of whom are women and 63% are youths residing in rural areas (UBOS,2015).

using house hold approach to empower a house that includes both man,woman and  children will promote gender transformative impacts. social constructions that devalue the strength of another should be minimised and  promote gender for growth that seeks to focus on the strength of each other and how it contributes to the sustainable well being of each other.

## Tania Sharmin, CARE, Bangladesh

One of the biggest tools we can use to address the barriers rural women face is about transforming gender norms and focusing on engaging men to change the way women can act in the household and community.   The [Agriculture Extension Support Activity](http://www.aesabd.org/), funded by USAID’s Feed the Future in Bangladesh and implemented by Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) has seen that working not just on access to agriculture extension for poor women farmers, but also on transforming gender norms, can help solve some of the main problems women face.

CARE as a technical partner of the project see impacts on time poverty.  The triple burden of productive work, household chores, and caring for children and the elderly means that in developing countries, women often work [16 hours a day](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5586e.pdf).  A 2016 [evaluation of gender impacts](http://www.careevaluations.org/Evaluations/Gender%20Impact%20Study%20Agriculture%20Extension%20Support%20Activity.pdf) shows that women who had an opportunity to take part in [gender dialogue sessions and used daily time use tools](http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/FFBS_4_Gender_Tools.pdf) with their husbands had on average 1-2 hours more leisure time than the control group.  76% more women who had access to this opportunity got leisure time at all compared to the control women.

One of the major change in the social believe is recognition of the women as ‘farmer’. One of the male group member of the ‘PAKSHIA HAWLADER BARI’ producer group of Potuakhali district acknowledge and state that – “we (male person of the family) only do 40% of the work for mung bean cultivation which are mainly related to land preparation and seed sowing. All other work done by them. We didn’t recognize this earlier but during the daily time use session this fact has been come out.”  Not only the male group members but also the female members had the same realization after the session. As a result of such change, women farmers are now more confidant to communicate with extension worker – both public and private. Sub Assistant Agriculture Officer in Bhola mentioned that women now a days ask him for more suggestions through mobile phone calls and sometimes requests for an onsite visit.

In addition to helping the women get more time, the project also saw that women were able to overcome barriers to participating in leadership. It has been found that 28 were elected out of 116 female member of the groups contested for local electoral office this year. Women in the project are 69% more likely to be involved in production decisions, and 124% more likely to have participate in decisions about household spending than women who were not a part of the project.

Tania Sharmin

National Technical Coordinator, CARE

USAID Agricultural Extension Support Activity Project

## Jipara Turmamatova, UN Women, Kyrgyzstan (second contribution)

Dear organizers,

thanks for this excellent discussion and in-depth inputs on this topic. I would like to share some insights from the work of the four UN agencies, UN Women, FAO, IFAD and WFP on the Rural Women Economic Empowerment in Kyrgyzstan. It is a unique joint programme of the four agencies, which aims to address the multiple challenges faced by rural women in an integrated manner. The programme brings together expertise of the four UN agencies, and has proven to be effective in providing an integrated response to the various aspects of rural women's empowerment. Specifically, an external evaluation has found the programme to be a flagship joint programme due to a single entry point, through which the UN agencies have provided a single integrated development assistance to the same group of beneficiaries. This has accelerated internal empowerment process, allowed the rural women to build on the increased economic agency to internalize leadership skills, practice them at the level of their households and communities. Evaluation has also confirmed transformative changes taking place in rural women's lives due to the multidimensional approach taken in the joint programme, which included access to productive assets, business skills, access to revolving funds, institutionalization of women's groups through establishment of women's cooperatives, access to processing technologies for moving women's groups up along the value chains for increased value added and higher negotiation powers, capacity building for women's better leadership, participation and influence on local gender-responsive development planning, service provision and decision-making processes. Finally,the programme has allowed to bring the voice of rural women to the national level policy debates, policy formulation and legislative processes.

The evaluation also called for continued collaboration focusing on the rural women in the country. The programme in Kyrgyzstan has established effective coordination mechanism, whereby it not only benefitted rural women but also allowed cross fertilization of approaches used by UN agencies, shared knowledge production in the interventions with the highest transformative effect on the rural women. While the focus so far has been on mobilizing the most vulnerable groups of rural women, there is a need to continue institutional support to women entrepreneurs supported through the programme, and women's cooperatives. Short term and funding challenges of the programme created challenges for upscaling of these approaches on a wider scope and to engage in longer-term policy discussions. It is great to see that many inputs recognize the importance of addressing sexual and reproductive rights of rural women. Unfortunately, due to funding limitations, these issues have not been a priority for the joint programme, and have only be partly covered through partnership with other UN agencies. However, upon reflection we see that empowering rural women to exercise reproductive rights is important for transformation of their lives. In addition there is a need to engage in policy discussions at both local and national levels to recognize, redistribute and reduce the care burden on young rural women. There is an urgent need to engage in macroeconomic policy discussions, which go beyond mere support to women's enterpreneurship, but integrate and focus macroeconomic policies on creating environment for the empowerment of rural women. Rural women tend to concentrate in informal employment sector without social security and pension support. Fiscal, monetary and trade policies should be formulated with a focus on creating better opportunities for rural women. Discussions around government spending should be informed by the exsiting research on the huge potential of investing in the care economy and early childhood development. This is unfortunately not possible within a short timeframe and limited funding of the joint programme. It also requires building of local research and expertise in policy formulation from gender perspective.

Finally, in line with the 'leaving noone behind' principle it is important to understand that rural women are not a homogenous group, and contains groups with multiple forms of discrimination, including single mothers, female-headed households, women with disabilities, women with children with disabilities, women from ethnic and religious minority groups, young women, women of non-traditional sexual orientation, etc. It is important to ensure that these groups have equal opportunity to benefit from the government policies and development assistance.

## Alok Shrestha, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Nepal, Nepal

Here, I want to share two cases from rural and remote mountain region of Nepal with respect to Q3. Although it’s simple and small initiative, it makes us think about such initiatives with respect to improving nutrition of women and children.

In one of the remote districts of mid-west Nepal, woman farmers have now realized nutritional importance of growing vegetables instead of tobacco in their field. Under the Nutrition in Mountain Agro-ecosystems (NMA) project funded by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and jointly implemented by IFOAM-Organics International, FiBL and HELVETAS Swill Intercooperation, there is a ‘school nutrition garden’ micro-intervention which is being implemented by a local NGO: Women Upliftment and Awareness Centre (WUAC) in Mugu district. Under this micro-intervention, the students are taught about theoretical and practical knowledge and skill on nutrition and nutrition sensitive agriculture. Technical persons from District Agriculture Development Office, District Health Office also provide technical knowledge about, for instance, composting, importance of nutrients to human health, nutritional importance of local food and method to grow it, hygiene and sanitation to the students on monthly basis. This knowledge are being ultimately replicated in household level of the students. Their mothers – woman being nutrition gatekeeper of a family – learn such knowledge from their children. As a result, the greenery that was due to tobacco in their land is now replaced by seasonal and off-season vegetables, as mentioned in the paragraph below.

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**‘Now we don’t plant tobacco now, rather cultivate leafy vegetables, carrot, fruits’**

- Mrs. Tara Khadka, Chairperson, School Nutrition Garden, Ima village, Mugu

Earlier we used the leisure time after household chore in smoking tobacco. We used to plant tobacco leaves in our land; only the green in our land was tobacco. Even young girls used to consume it, and still many people consume it. After intervention of nutrition garden in our school, we knew about its health hazard from our children. We also got knowledge about health benefits of vegetable crops and its consumption; we knew about including vegetables, green leafy vegetables, fruits, meat, egg, pulse in our daily diet. From our children, we know about new technology to grow it. I have now started cultivating vegetables in small kitchen garden for household consumption. I also provide vegetables in day food for my children. I also sell excess vegetables in the local market – the earning has supported my family expense including health, children’s education.

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Such type of intervention, in spite of its limited coverage, has been effective in changing behavior of people, particularly of women towards agriculture and nutrition, and is helping to improve nutrition of their children and family. Considering its bright side, District Education Office – for wider impact – has prepared a curriculum on nutrition and nutrition sensitive agriculture and is being taught to the students of grade 1-5 in 18 schools now. The District Education Office has decided to teach the course to the students of grade 1-10 in all schools from the fiscal year 2018/019 in the district.

The NMA project is promoting and scaling-up such nutrition sensitive agricultural practices in mountain agro-ecosystems through an action network of empowered rural service providers (RSPs), which is named as Mountain Agro-ecosystems Action Network - MAAN ([https://maan.ifoam.bio](https://maan.ifoam.bio/)).

Similarly, some of the RSPs involved in MAAN are also using various types of role play and demonstration to improve the nutrition of children and mothers of golden 1000 days and reduce gender discrimination in remote rural mountain in Nepal. In the region, there is a big gap in nutrition among pregnant, lactating women and children under the age of 5 years. Usually, Nepali women have many different tasks at household level: caring for their children, preparing food, collecting firewood and water, sometimes looking after the livestock, and a lot more tasks. The challenge is that they go on with these tasks during their pregnancy and the lactating time. Women face serious health problems and risk the life of the baby (by having a uterine prolapse). Among the local people, the relation between the workload of pregnant women and uterus prolapse is often not known and ignored.

To make families and especially men aware of women’s burden, their own and their child’s need of care, and their need of a balance diet (especially during the 1000 golden days), the RSPs organized different role plays as part of local level food fair in Dailekh district. They invited the husbands of the intervention to join the role plays, and make them aware about the situation of their wives. During the role play, the men got some pillows under their clothes to feel a big belly and were ask to move around, miming typical work of women. In this way, they could feel some difficulties and realize the tasks of their wives. In the end, the people including local politicians asked men to be more cooperative with women in sharing household responsibilities and to ignore the so-called ‘natural’ division of work between men and women.

[Story I](https://maan.ifoam.bio/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=15204783)

[Story II](https://maan.ifoam.bio/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=15208633)

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Another SDC-funded and HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Nepal-implemented project – Sustainable Soil Management Programme (SSMP) – promoted simple and climate smart agricultural technologies in mid-hill regions of Nepal. Effect of these technologies in improving soil fertility and farm productivity and income is described in the attached file. Besides, to what extent these technologies were successful in reducing women’s workload and its ultimate effect in sharing workload between men and women is also mentioned with simple study in later part of the attached file.

This paper was shared in national conference on climate smart agriculture organized by Ministry of Agriculture Development in August 2016 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

## Taibat Moji Yusuf, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria

Contribution to FAO Discussion on Rural Women: Striving for gender transformation impacts

By Taibat Moji Yusuf, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria

Introduction

Gender defines how power and resources are shared among females and males. Both rural women and men throughout the world are engaged in a range of activities essential for household welfare, agricultural productivity, and economic growth. However, women’s substantial contributions are marginalized and undervalued in conventional agricultural analyses and policies. Policy makers and agricultural administrators assumed that farmers are men while women only give helping hands on the farm. For this reason most government policies, programmes and services were mainly focused on male farmers. However, the changing rural social structure resulting from male out-migration and wars has drastically changed gender responsibility. Rural women are becoming more responsible for household food security and children welfare as indicated by the increasing number of female headed households in the developing countries. Estimated numbers are 45% in Kenya,35% in Malawi, 30-40%in Zambia and 15% in Nigeria (FAO 2005). The main global challenge now is how to make the female farmers who had no access to education, land and other productive resources and were victims of the harmful cultural practices to do the work of “male” farmers effectively and efficiently and also to ensure gender balance in agricultural development. The rest of the discussion looks at the challenges of gender balance, the consequences of the challenges and how the challenges could be tackled to ensure gender balance when there will be equal participation of women and men in decision making, equal ability to exercise their human rights, equal access and control of resources and benefits of development.

Major Challenges to gender equality in Agricultural production in Nigeria

These are grouped under four major headings;

1) Women Legal and cultural status: these have to do with cultural laws, customs, beliefs and attitudes in some communities which confine rural women mostly to the domestic sphere and limits their participation in politics and public activities. They affect women access to productive resources, services, education, employment and credit. In some regions in Nigeria, girls are not allowed to go to school or are often removed from school instead of boys to help with farming and household work anytime there is a work burden in the family. Also Women are made to handle low-paid tasks in agro-processing and their wages are usually lower than males.

2) Property rights and inheritance laws: Lack of property right and the patrilineal system of land inheritance operating in most regions in Nigeria, do not permit women to have direct access to lands and other natural resources except through their husbands and male relatives. Since access to land and property right are tied to access to credit and acquisition of capital assets, women often have difficulty obtaining credit or acquire capital like the new labour and time saving farm innovations. Extension service which is to provide agricultural information and access to farm resources is equally tied to farmers’ land title and making women to lose out in important information and training that will improve their farm efficiency.

3) Gender Role; has to do with behaviours and tasks that a society considers appropriate for men, women, boys and girls. In some societies, male are mainly responsible for commercial agriculture. They prepare land, irrigate the crops, harvest and transport to markets. They own and trade large animals, cut, haul and fell timbers from forest. Women and girls play largely unnoticed, unpaid but important roles in generating family income by providing labour for planting, weeding, harvesting and threshing crops and processing produce for sale. In most parts of Nigeria, women are responsible for maintaining households, raise children, grow and prepare food, manage small animals, collect fuel wood and water

4) . Financial systems that perpetuate women discrimination; Banks consider women a higher risk because they do not trust women entrepreneurship ability and as such do not provide credit to women. They do not have gender- specific modes of transactions, they expect women to handle voluminous bookwork as educated male farmers and demand for loan collaterals which by right (rural) women do not have. Most of the financial institutions including newly introduced Microfinance banks are concentrated in the urban areas rather than rural areas where are large number of women farmers who seriously need financial assistance.

Consequences of the Gender constraints; considered under two major aspects include;

1) Economic exclusion resulting into

wasted Human capital

low labour productivity

low agricultural production

food insecurity and

slow development

2) High Social Cost in terms of

High rates of under nutrition

High infant mortality

and high HIV/AIDS infection among others

Ways to address the deeply rooted gender norms and involving men and boys to achieve gender transformative impacts

This aspect is considered under the three tiers of government levels operating in Nigeria including Local Government Authorities (LGAs), State Government and Federal Government levels

Local Government Authority

The property and land inheritance law which inhibits rural women from having direct access to land and other natural resources could be addressed right at the local government level. All it takes is to encourage formation of separate cooperative societies among men and women. These societies are to be registered in each local government areas (LGAs) of the country. Since women do not have right to property, the local government authorities should acquire large parcels of land, clear and prepare the land then distributes on legal basis amongst the registered women cooperative members. Similar treatment should be extended to males without access to land (this group can be known through farm analysis). Those male farmers with land asset should be encouraged to pull their assets together and work as registered cooperative groups to benefit from the transformation agenda of the government. The separation of the groups will make it easier for women to participate actively in agricultural production without any fear of being molested or shortchanged by men. It will also provide the opportunity for women to own land and better bargaining power in the purchase of farm inputs and selling of their farm produce. Education and training which has always been the main problem of most women, preventing them from accessing credit, productive resources and use of modern technologies could also be handled through this arrangement using staff of the extension units of the local government authorities. The legal status of women could be addressed by the inclusion of Government / policy processes in the extension programme. This will help men and women to know their rights and how to fight for their rights.

In a nutshell a well coordinated and managed LGAs is the solution to problems of property right and land law, education and training, legal status and better bargaining power in buying and selling activities

State Government Level

Because of the very low level of education, culture and norms , rural women in Nigeria still depend largely on hired labour on their private farms for land clearing and preparation ( to complement their personal labour) at exhorbitant prices because they have to compete with the male farmers in this regard. They also supply labour on their husband farms in the area of planting, weeding, fertilizer application, harvesting and processing in addition to the domestic workload thus, making their work more over whelming and less attractive. To tackle the labour problem, Nigeria Government established national center for agricultural mechanization (NCAM) in two states Ilorin in Kwara State and Ibadan in Oyo State to provide simple improved farm tools for rural farmers. Although the gesture is in the right direction, NCAM products are few, expensive and not gender friendly. Most of their products are constructed for male farmers.

For the purpose of gender equality, a gender specific tool which will save labour, cost, time and can be easily handled by both men and women should be provided. The centers may be provided with recommended specifications and funds to produce large quantity.

To ensure usage and patronage, the centers should be replicated in all states. The earlier formed farmers’ cooperative societies in each LGAs should register separately with the centers in their states. Gender specific tools produced by the centers should then be distributed to the different groups of farmers on loan to be paid back after harvesting. Each society should be made to sell their produce directly to the centers since the centers have various storage facilities such silos, cribs and cool room to their credit. This will allow the centers to deduct their money and pay the farmers their dues. The produce bought from the farmers can be supplied directly to the processing companies for value addition Thus NCAM could be used as an assembling centre for farm produce as well as collecting center tor processing companies to ensure fair transaction devoid of the harmful practices of middlemen

However the centers need initial funding ,for replication in each state and large production of their products. The initial funding should be in form of revolving loan which should be paid back as soon as the centers find their feet. The refund of the loan should be made on yearly basis as they collect their pay from the farmers. The cooperative farmers and the processing companies also need funding for their various initial take off.

Positive transformation to farm mechanization, active participation by individuals in the society and value addition food chains will be made possible through this arrangement and will later translate to increased food production, farmers income, food security and poverty reduction.

Federal Government level

National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme is a Nigerian programme organized for young graduates to serve their fatherland after graduation. It was established by the FG several decades ago to foster unity among the youths and provide man power where such is lacking. Right now the program seems to have outlived its usefulness, because the youths in some states are been used as sacrificial lambs for the purpose of politics. The program can be rebranded and made more functional by diverting the energy and interest of the vibrant youths towards productive agricultural activities. Doing this will engage both the boys and girls in productive activities where they can acquire entrepreneurship skills which will prepare them for real life experience and curb the problem of youth restlessness resulting from idleness and unemployment which often lead into various vices in the country. In addition the arrangement will provide plenty of agricultural produce for home consumption and exportation.

The Procedure for engaging the youths

The government needs to procure large area of land in each state, Provides tractors and implements for land clearing and preparation, farm inputs, improved seeds and seedlings, storage facilities, processing facilities and regular payment of the corps allowance. The corps members in each state should be grouped according to their fields of interest to handle various aspects of agriculture. For instance ,those in education and extension may be made to handle extension education, those in medicals to take care of their colleagues, those in animal science to take care of animal management, the veterinary to take care of animal reproduction and health, those in economics to coordinate the farm activities and handle the issues of trading (buying and selling) . The few youths who are not educated could be absorbed at the local government level.

## Mahesh Chander, Indian Veterinary Research Institute, India (ninth contribution)

On the question, what approaches have proved successful to address deeply rooted gender norms, power relations and social institutions?

Quoting from an interesting article, "A field of her own:Advancing rights of women farmers can revolutionise the rural ecosystem, by Tarini Mohan (<http://googleweblight.com/i?u=http%3A%2F%2Findianexpress.com%2Farticle%2Fopinion%2Fcolumns%2Findian-women-farmers-agriculture-sector-patriarchy-land-ownership-4781311%2F&grqid=yz3aV_-Z&hl=en-IN>), the chance of propertied women being physically abused is reduced from 49 per cent to 7 per cent due to an increase in the wife’s bargaining power. But, as many as 87 per cent of women do not own their land; only 12.7 per cent of them do. Moreover, despite their hard labour in the field, women are not officially counted as farmers, and are either labelled “agricultural labourers” or “cultivators”. This is because the government does not recognise them as farmers those who do not have a claim to land under their name in official records.

Some key points taken from this article may lead to successful approaches to address deeply rooted gender norms, power relations and social institutions:

1.Providing women with access to secure land is key to incentivising the majority of India’s women farmers.

2.With security of tenure, female farmers should be provided with the three critical driving factors — the incentive, the security, as well as the opportunity — to invest in the land they harvest.

3. The government should not label women merely as “agricultural labourers” or “cultivators” but recognise them as farmers even if they do not have a claim to land under their name in official records. We need to change the stereotypical image of an Indian farmer- a mustachioed man, clad in a white dhoti with farming tools in hand. Women in India constitute close to 65 per cent of all agricultural workers as also,  74 per cent of the rural workforce, is female.

Finally, we need to create a new image of farmer, which is women inclusive!

## Muthoni Nguthi, Climate Smart Agricultural Youth Network (CSAYN), Kenya

Contribution from the Kenyan Chapter of the Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network  (CSAYN)

1

Undeniably, life in the rural areas has experienced change in the past two decades. Whether the change has been positive or negative for its dwellers, however, depends on where in the world you look. Positive change can be attributed to the inclusion of rural people’s interests in most national discussions. There have also been numerous inquiries made by private actors into the livelihoods of rural women, the most recent being a declaration by the Associated Country Women of the World to convene the first International Forum on Rural Women and mark the International Day of Rural Women. This attention has led to rural electrification projects, construction of proper transport systems and incorporation of technology in rural agricultural schemes. Conversely, in other countries such as the USA the widespread closure of rural industries such as Rubbermaid and Smith Corona and outsourcing of production to cheaper labour markets has left many people unemployed, both male and female.

It is important to also acknowledge that for some rural women, life has remained virtually unchanged throughout the decades. Their respective governments have not been able to promote development in these regions; some deliberately. In spite of the numerous leaps and bounds made, there is still a chasm between the sexes. Inequality exists at every level of society. In rural areas, however, is where these inequalities manifest in their rawest form. Young girls are forced into early marriage. These marriages have very low success rates, more often leaving the woman to raise the children unaided. Needless to say, this deprives them of a high quality education leading to economic stagnation. Older women lack proper geriatric care as they are more likely to be the only dependable source of sustenance for their families. After all, it has been reported that women spend 90% of their earned income on their families compared to 30% of men. In Africa, Asia and even Latin America, culture has been by far the biggest impediment. We have zealously clung to beliefs that insist on the submission of women.

In Kenya, where rural urbanization has been a relative success, it is not uncommon for rural communities to even engage in cross-border Female Genital Mutilation. This is despite enactment of a statute directly criminalizing this activity. Even more noteworthy, leaders from those particular communities that have risen to national leadership positions have completely ignored these activities in return for political support. Regardless, a considerable number of women have risen to wealth and good fortune. As easy as it is to attribute this to plain hard work and sweat, it goes deeper. The reality of the situation is that there are simply no success models in the rural setting. If there are, the pathways are highly limited, marred with obstacles and almost miraculous. Almost always, the attainment of success is contingent on either physically leaving these areas or an internal dissociation from the ‘smalltown’ mentality by these women. In truth, the rural definition of success for women lies on their ability to marry and produce children. A girl may actively pursue their primary and high school education but it rarely goes beyond that; a life of academic success and its accompanying returns are a fantasy in that environment.

2

The battle for policy reform and institution is gradually being won. With the exception of countries like Sudan, U.S.A, Tonga, failing to ratify the Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), many countries have made considerable efforts to effect policy that furthers gender equality. Even so, the disconnect between ratification and implementation of relevant policy is equally global. Rural women are especially vulnerable to these failures because of their isolation. It is time to focus on other fronts. It is time to realize that any and all the policies we conceive are at their core, only an ideology. The only reason, for example, that Constitutions govern nations, is because the individual citizens have agreed to abide by their stipulations.

Although gender equality is often presented as a stand-alone goal, there is agreement that progress on any and all of the SDGs will be minimal if gender equality is not prioritized. Arguments and evidence from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) find that lower levels of discrimination against women are linked to better outcomes in several areas, including educational attainment, child health and food security. For example, where women have a more equal status in the family, children are more likely to complete primary school, even when allowing for differences in country income level, urbanization and the fertility rate. Where women have greater “physical integrity” (control over their own bodies), child health outcomes improve. Similarly, countries where women lack any right to own land have on average 60% more malnourished children. At The Farm Management Association of Nigeria’s 2004 Conference, it was presented that African women have mainly shouldered the responsibility for domestic food production and processing. FAO (1983) estimates show that in West Africa, 60-90 percent of the domestic farm and marine produce are handled by women. Women farmers work on the average from 10-14 hours in many parts of Africa and carry multiple responsibilities for food, water, fuel, housework and childcare making their agricultural productivity lower than it need be6 . Private companies are aware that supporting rural women will increase profits. Paradoxically, few to none are investing huge amounts of money in efforts to improve their competiveness by promoting women’s empowerment in their supply chains; even though many strive to project the image of a gendersensitive (or transformative) company. In fact, OXFAM’s Behind The Brands revealed that despite women contributing 43% of the agricultural labour force, the big ten food companies are barely prioritizing women’s support; with the best, Coca-Cola, scoring a 6 out of a possible 10. Efforts have been made, however, by the likes of Kellogg’s (making the most significant leap in the past year), Unilever and MARS7 . A lot more could be done but, in a capitalistic world, the truth is that it will require significant buy-in to support differentiated empowerment for female workers.

Most companies are also reluctant to focus on a female workforce in areas where increased mobility of women results in an increase in gender-based violence. This translates to sporadic interruptions of the production chain.

3

It’s time for mankind to look inward. In Stanislaw Lem’s words: “Mankind has gone out to explore other worlds without having explored his own dark passages and secret chambers; and without finding what lies behind doorways that he himself has sealed.” The root causes of gender inequality are only partially understood. We need strategies that will directly target cultural norms and informal institutions in societies. Otherwise, the impact of any external efforts will only be temporary. These norms are largely to blame for the perceived lack of interest by the private sector in engaging with rural women as economic actors despite its proven benefits and the fact that Africa has been described as the region of female farming per excellence, with women, particularly in the rural areas regarded as the hidden productive force in the countryside. In conclusion, the hearts of men must embrace the value of gender equality. Cultural and religious beliefs still insist on separation of gender roles often to the detriment of the woman. Drafting of policy without first addressing these roots only servesto build resentment as opposed to respect between the sexes. In Wollstonecraft’s A Vindication of the Rights of Woman she scribed, “… I appeal to their understandings; and, as a fellow-creature, claim, in the name of my sex, some interest in their hearts. I entreat them to assist to emancipate their companion, to make her a help meet for them! Would men but generously snap our chains, and be content with rational fellowship instead of slavish obedience, they would find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable mothers – in a word, better citizens.” She could not have summarized better.

Attachment:

<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/discussions/contributions/CSAYN-KENYA_ContributiontotheGlobalForumonFoodSecurityandNutrition_RuralWomen_August%20_8_2017.pdf>

## Siyanbola Omitoyin, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

What are the main challenges rural women and girls are facing today in Nigeria?

The key challenges of rural women in Nigeria include Socio-cultural constraints: the patriarchal nature of Nigerian culture is a key challenge. Also  unequal access and control over resources. Insufficient knowledge and access to information have also affected economic empowerment of women in general and women headed households in particular. Gender violence is also part of the challenge. However, although a lot remains to be done there are improvements in the recent years.

Women  do not have equal access to productive resources . There is gender disparities in land holdings. Access to resources, and Participation in decision making Inclusion of women in programmes from the onset not as an addendum will help in bridging the knowledge gap

Omitoyin Siyanbola (PhD)

Fisheries Administration, Policy and Gender Dept of Aquaculture & Fisheries Mgt,  University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

## Maria Lee, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resources Management (WOCAN), France

**What are the main challenges rural women and girls are facing today?**

Some of the main challenges of rural women - which were already mentioned in the online discussion- remain time poverty (women’s disproportionate responsibility for domestic work and unpaid care) and lack of access to / control over financial resources and assets such as land. Recently WOCAN conducted an assessment of the Gender integration in REDD+ and ERPD in Nepal and concluded that rural women are still facing the following challenges:

1. A high level of engagement in labor- intensive forest- related unpaid activities on a daily basis, but low level of engagement in decision-making processes.
2. Women’s workloads within and outside the household is high and “time poverty” is a critical issue. Their traditional roles as family care givers and food producers are unpaid and under-valued, and take up most of women’s time and energy
3. Women’s access to resources to improve their income and roles in decision-making is low.

<http://www.wocan.org/news/final-sharing-workshop-assessment-gender-integration-redd-and-erpd-nepal>

Some of the conditions that contribute to empower women as entrepreneurs include their access to trainings to build their skills in leadership, negotiation and business, and access to financial services; as well as their access to technologies that reduce their workloads and improve the productivity of their production; the capacity of women to organize in groups and cooperatives (or be active members in mixed cooperatives) can also facilitate their negotiation power and access to better inputs and markets.

**Are we using the right approaches and policies to close the gender gap?**

Beyond the lack of investment in women and women’s organizations, one element that is lacking is a robust means of measuring outcomes of projects, approaches, policies (going beyond outputs) to better understand what works and improve design and implementation.

WOCAN developed the W+ Standard to address those gaps ([https://youtu.be/LGQ5KupYaKs](https://youtu.be/LGQ5KupYaKs))). At this time, certification schemes and standards do not quantify benefits or outcomes to women of project communities; many refer only to gender and women in relation to their workplaces or social safeguards.

The W+ Standard measures progress in women’s empowerment in six areas: Time, Income & Assets, Health, Leadership, Education & Knowledge and Food Security. The measurement of progress in projects, which is verified by an independent auditor, results in W+ women-benefit units, that individuals, companies and investors can buy, and be confident that their investment is making a meaningful and measurable positive impact. A share of the sale of units goes back to women and women’s groups. Putting money directly into women’s hands has proven to be transformative for their lives, as they are more likely than men to reinvest this to meet needs of their families and communities.

By measuring results and putting money into the hands of women, the W+ Standard can contribute to incentivizing project developers and investors to invest in women and contribute simultaneously to SDG # 5 and other SDGs where women play a critical.

The W+ Standard was recognized by the UNFCCC and awarded the Women for Results award of the Momentum for Change in 2016. A video produced by the UNFCCC shows the application of the W+ Standard to a biogas project in Nepal (<https://youtu.be/bm-hyVY7680)>

Thank you for organizing this important forum!

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Maria Lee  
Assistant Director | Regional Coordinator for Europe  
WOCAN

## Samuel Opoku Gyamfi, Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network, Morocco

Hello,

I would like to contribute on "Question 3: How best can we achieve gender transformative impacts".

I strongly believe in the power of education and the influence our educational systems can have in making our fight for gender equality feasible. The world is where it is today because of the way we were educated and brought up some years back. Before the second world war, most women never worked because they weren't given the opportunities to do so, until the need arose for women to work in factories and production houses because most of the men who actually were the workforce at that time had gone to war. Since then, the liberation of women has been slow but sure, but we all agree that more needs to be done.

I believe special modules on gender equality should be incorporated in our school systems right from primary school. We shouldn't wait till we get to the university and then start hearing about gender equality. By then, society would have pumped in so many ideologies that make people function in a biased manner uncosciously.

But if we are to start from down up, we will have a whole new generation of people who think differently. Thank you.

Dr. Samuel Opoku Gyamfi

Regional Coordinator - North Africa

CSAYN.

## Leocadia Muzah, GIZ, Zimbabwe

Hi. I would like to respond to the 2nd question - are we using the right approahes in addressing closure of the gender gap. Two strategies have been said to be used 1- Women empowerment and 2 -Gender and deveopment. Apparently most organisations have then decided to dwell on strategy 1 which is what most of us are all talking about. But from what i am seeing strategy 1 has sustainability issues. Gender equality and equity are being exercised in a way that leverages women to be 'empowered' but even when they are up there, they are still not confident because they feel they were favoured to be there. When male counterparts jeer at them for making a simple mistake they crash easily. Hence she is left in a worse of case than where she was before. In some projects I have worked for, women are given start up capital for their businesses but still they are robbed of those finances by their husbands, and still cant report back about it. If she decided to stand her ground and fight back it then results in a divorce.

But if organisations are to dwell more on strategy 2 - gender and development, it means men will be equally engaged on gender issues as much as women. Men generally being more influencial than women can then speed up the process of closing the gender gap. Often men fight gender related issues because most of them do not understand how it will benefit them as men. hence lack of knowedge is resulting in resistance. Yes women may be empowered, and do all kinds of things but men will always remain her draw back unless men fully understands what gender is about, then he will gladly pull women up.

The gender and development strategy is the way to go.

## Annelise Thim, OECD, France

Hello,

I am writing from the OECD Development Centre where we are currently working on the update of the [Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI),](http://www.genderindex.org/)a cross-country measure of discriminatory social institutions that hold back women and girls’ from realising their rights. One important area covered in the SIGI is women’s access to resources and assets including land. Results [from 2014](http://www.genderindex.org/sites/default/files/docs/BrochureSIGI2015.pdf)found that in 102 countries women still face discriminatory laws and customs in accessing land and non-land assets. Although it is widely acknowledged that legal equality does not automatically translate into equality of outcomes, the SIGI confirms this: of the 102 countries where discrimination was found, only 7 countries had legal discrimination, the remaining 94 countries granted women and men the same legal rights to access land, but customary, traditional and religious practices curtail women’s rights in practice.

Discriminatory inheritance laws are another significant barrier women and girls face when accessing family land and property: in over 100 countries there is evidence of discriminatory inheritance laws or practices limiting women’s ability to inherit equally as daughters and spouses. This ranges from negative social norms that beleive only men should own land to acts of property grabbing.

When we think about how we can best achieve gender transformative impacts, it is important to see how we can improve on the enormous amount of work already being done. Over USD 3 billion of [Official Development Assistance](http://stats.oecd.org/)was committed to rural and agriculture projects targeted gender equality and women’s empowerment; however only around 5% of this aid targeted gender equality as a principle objective (approximately USD 187 million). Thus, projects with the ability to transform negative gender roles and empower rural women and girls remain a small part of rural and agricultural development aid. Harnessing this aid and improving on the existing work already being done through the application of a social norms lens to the design and implementation process is one way to ensure that it benefits rural women and girls.

In addition there is a need to invest in data that captures not just outcomes but also social norms that drive the gender gaps in outcomes. [The SIGI Uganda country study](https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/Uganda%20SocInstitut%20SIGI%2020x20-web-2.pdf), launched in 2015, was the first nationally representative survey measuring discriminatory social imitations. The results from the report highlight how discriminatory practices such as unequal inheritance or land ownership are often grounded in discriminatory attitudes. Indeed, the survey found that there is widespread support for gender inequality in land ownership: 27% of the population supports unequal land rights, reaching as high as 54% in the Mid-Northern sub-region. This is reflected in women’s lower levels of land ownership: only one-third of land is owned or co-owned by women. This any policy that wishes to support women’s land ownership will need to address these discriminatory attitudes.

## Alejandra Safa Barraza, FAO, Italy

Dear Colleagues,

Food and agricultural systems are rapidly changing in the global, regional and national markets, providing rural women with new economic opportunities but also confronting them with strong challenges.

Previous contributions mentioned a list of limitations for women entrepreneurs in accessing resources and services: education, training and information, markets, financial services, among others, that inhibits their potential.

Although these constraints are relevant, several experiences and research have proved that facilitating access to productive resources and services to women might not sufficient to eliminate existing inequalities and promote women’s entrepreneurship and equal participation in agrifood value chains / commercial agriculture.  It is evident that a more holistic approach is needed.

A value chain approach embraces the referred challenges on women’s entrepreneurship, global markets, trade policies an women’s economic empowerment.

FAO’s guiding framework Developing Gender-Sensitive Value Chains (GSVC) (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6462e.pdf>)  proposes two categories of analysis to identify gender-based constraints affecting value chain development and unveil the role of women and men in the different nodes of the chain, from production to processing and marketing.

These two categories of analysis are access to resources – assets, agricultural services and financial services; and power and agency, which includes capabilities, self-confidence and decision making power.

The GSVC analysis also highlights the importance of understanding the individual and household level, since each individual is part of a household in which specific dynamics and power relations are in place that influences how women and men participate in the value chain.  Gender inequalities often originate within the household and the individual agency and power might also depend on intra household dynamics.

The framework allows to make women’s contributions and needs visible and identify gender based constraints, providing entry points for action.

The framework has been piloted through the FMM Sida Programme “Enable women to benefit more equally from value chains” (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5417b.pdf>) in eight countries in Africa during 2015 – 2017.

This transformative approach has put in place some of the following initiatives: family as a business, business development service centers, women’s entrepreneurship, women’s participation in producer’s organizations, gender sensitive policies, among others.

Alejandra Safa - Valentina Franchi and Nozomi Ide

## Abdul-Aziz Seidu Jawula, CSAYN Ghana, Ghana

Hello,

Responding from question 1-: I will say that most initiatives of state and non state actors are usually rolled at in the urban areas to the neglect of the rural communities. The rural communities have lots of challenges and these challenges could either be socio-econmic or sociocultural. Hence to find sustainable solutions to these challenges, Community Based Organizations from such areas be consciously targeted for Capacity Building training for them to further understand the critical issues and better appreciate them and suggest home based solutions to resolving them. Such CBOs are usually led by the Youth and with the requisite training, coaching, exchange visits and financial support to role community level activities and projects, I believe it will go a long way to finding sustainable approaches to rural problems thereby guaranteeing community ownership.

## Anja Rabezanahary, IFAD, Italy

**On Question 3: How can we best achieve gender transformative impacts?**

What approaches have proved successful to address deeply rooted gender norms, power relations and social institutions?

Norms, power relations and social institutions are very context-specific and can differ from one community to another. Changing norms, power relations and social institutions is only achievable when people are defining the change process themselves. Empowering measures are the most effective approach where men and women are skilled and equipped to make decisions on the changes they are willing to see. In IFAD, an innovative and transformative approach based on participatory action learning system has been tested in the past ten years. It has been developed to tackle root causes of inequalities and social exclusion with a focus on gender justice: the Gender Action Learning System (GALS). All male and female members of the household are equipped with tools to lead change through visualization of the various areas of inequalities (power relations, division of labour, decision-making processes, access and control over resources and assets) and negotiate the solutions they want. The approach/methodology has now demonstrated transformative impacts on women and men such as redistribution of power, balanced workloads, improved relations and communication to make decisions that contribute to gender equality and sustainable poverty reduction. Tangible results and impacts are reported by the beneficiaries and encouraging IFAD to upscale the methodology.

Learn more

* Households at the heart of change <http://bit.ly/1spvNId>
* Can household methodologies contribute to changing lives of rural poor people? <http://bit.ly/28NGUqp>
* Rwanda: Fighting poverty with equality <https://youtu.be/UR59c3-OPQQ>
* Uganda: Imagine your life differently <https://youtu.be/8EJhyerEeQE>
* GALS website <http://www.galsatscale.net/>

## Farming First, United Kingdom

Dear colleagues,

You may be interested to read an illlustrated account of the following:

**Why are women so important to agriculture?**

**Where does the gender gap in agriculture exist?**

**What are the impacts of the gender gap in agriculture?**

This infographic, produced by Farming First and FAO contains easily shareable facts and statistics, that can guide investment and research in this crucial field. Access it here:

<https://farmingfirst.org/women_infographic/>

## Taylor Tondelli, FAO, Italy

Within the forestry sector, one of the biggest challenges for women is their limited access and control over land tenure. Many other persistent issues women in forestry face - economic inequality, policy inequality, decision making inequality and empowerment challenges- are linked back to the issue of insecure land rights. Despite some progress in Sub-Saharan Africa in reforming legal frameworks, customary law, unequal inheritance practices and lack of awareness of policies, cause the continuous marginalization of women. When a women has limited access or control over land, she often ends up working informally on land owned by a man, gets cut out of decision making processes reserved for "land owners" and receives only a fraction of the profit from products or timber produced on that land. However, there are some successful examples of community based policy formulation where better tenure policies (statutory and customary) have been realized.

In Liberia, the Foundation for Community Initiatives (FCI) has found bottom-up, grass-roots approaches to be more effective if rural women involve themselves in the process by positioning themselves as leaders and collaborate with traditional leaders (usually men), headpersons and chiefs, to transform customary practices. The involvement of the community can lead to empowering women to lead community mapping efforts is a another way to improve land governance across a community.

Securing equal land and tenure rights for women is essential for their livelihood and empowerment, and both statutory and customary inequalities need to be addressed. Involving communities and especially rural women in policy formulation is key to improving gender equality for women in forests.

## Clare Bishop, facilitator of the online discussion

Dear contributors and followers,

Thank you all for your contributions during the last three weeks which have resulted in a rich discussion.

There have been 66 individual contributors, representing over 30 countries and a mixture of organisations, multilateral and bilateral agencies, NGOs, research institutes, colleges and universities. It has been encouraging to see so many men actively engaged in the discussion – accounting for 25% of the total contributors – because this is the path to gender transformative impacts. A detailed review of the proceedings will be prepared over the coming weeks. The principal findings will be discussed at an Expert Group Meeting which will be held in Rome in September, as part of the preparatory activities for the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2018.

Consequently, in this short piece, I have decided to focus on the inter-play between new opportunities and the constraints imposed by social norms. One such example is male outmigration. The movement of men away from rural areas in search of employment, and many rural women becoming the primary farmer, could be seen as an opportunity to create space for women to become more involved in economic activities and redefine their role in the agriculture sector. This may take place in the short-term, as women step in to fill the gap left by their male counterparts – partly out of necessity but partly taking advantage of the opportunity. They get involved in new areas of business, engage with the market and broaden their networks and horizons. But in the longer term, their dreams and professional aspirations risk to be reined in by persistent social norms. Their new behaviour may be considered to be unacceptable, colliding with the idea that a women’s place should be in the home, that they should not be making independent decisions, etc.

A major thread throughout this discussion has been the recognition of the need to address the root causes of gender inequalities in order to achieve sustainable development. Behaviour change, based on a full understanding of the meaning of gender equality - of a just and equal world for all - is crucial. It has been exciting to read of so many different approaches being used to stimulate gender transformative change at the individual, household and community levels. These will be explored in more detail in the follow-up actions.

Once again, thank you for your contributions. There is still time to post contributions or to send them to [FSN-moderator@fao.org](mailto:FSN-moderator@fao.org) by Friday 11 August; after that date, the discussion will be closed.

We look forward to sharing the synthesis report with you in due course.

Clare Bishop

## Kennedy Phiri, Zambia

In contribution to question #2, we need to look at local context and ask, what is being said about the role of women and girls in development? who is saying what? what are the implications of what is being said? Most marginalisation and disempowerment happen through narratives that people and communities use. In Zambia for example, the passing marks for girls are lower than those of boys. This could be seen as affirmative action. However, what does it say? That girls are less intelligent that boys? These actions created subtle narratives that in turn becomes norms to the extent that empowering women and girls becomes unsustainable because of the narratives in community that perpetuate the notion that women and girls are less able to perform. We need to look at who is perpetuating these narratives and work to change these stories. For now, we are dealing with results of underlying societal biases that have been reinforced by national policies in various sectors.

## Catherine van der Wees, Gender Smart Solutions, Netherlands

Relating to your question 2, sub-question on the private sector, I recently found a contribution by Tom Wilson, Chairman and chief executive officer of the All state Corporation and vice chairman of the US Chamber of Commerce, who states: " for decades, corporations have been expected to concentrate on one mission: maximizing profits or shareholders. This single minded focus on profits is largely due to Milton Friedman, Noble Prize winning economist. In his 1962 book "Capitalism and Freedom", Friedman declared " There is one and only one social responsibility of business .... to increase its profits." That argument has shaped the thinking of business leaders and created the corporations we have today".  According to Wilson, the emphasis on profits has widened the trust gap between corporations  and society... " (Washington Post, 29 September 2016).

This single focus on profits is still present in many companies, we try to convince of gender equity. However, they simply do not see the evidence that women can contribute to their profits.

Secondly, a framework used by the "Making markets work for the poor (M4P) approach", is the "will-skill" framework, which is useful in identifying which player you might partner with and the nature of support required to change their behaviour. A prospective partner needs the incentives and capacity to change. Private sector partners are the most difficult to change if they have neither the incentive nor the capacity to change.  If companies have their focus on profits only, they may not have the incentive, and often they also do not know how to go about engaging rural women as active actors.

According to Wilson, "the corporation of the next 100 years must take on social problems. On their own, governments, social service and charitable organisations simply do not have the capabilities and resources to solve problems, such as inadequate education and poverty. And most people agree: in a recent survey, 87 percent of young Americans said corporations should do more than just make money. "

## Margot Tapia, Dirección General de Cooperación Multilateral (DIGECOOM), Dominican Republic

**Original contribution in Spanish**

**Pregunta No.1**

En el caso de la República Dominicana, las mujeres rurales continúan mostrando inaceptables indicadores de discriminación, subordinación y marginación social. Estas representan solo el 10% de los trabajadores agrícolas y de esas, sólo el 72% es remunerado su trabajo.[1]

A partir de la adopción de la Ley 55/97 sobre reforma agraria se desarrollaron diversas iniciativas para mejorar el acceso a la tierra, pero solo el 26% de las personas beneficiarias fue mujeres y el tamaño de las parcelas recibidas por las mujeres fue un 30% inferior a la de los hombres[2]

En 15 años no se verifica un aumento significativo de las mujeres en la producción agropecuaria correspondiente a personas físicas la realiza el 83.7% de los hombres y el 16.3% de las mujeres, según datos del Precenso Nacional Agropecuario realizado por la ONE en 2015. En la región Higuamo presenta el mayor porcentaje productoras 25.3% (ONE 2016).

Otras limitaciones están relacionadas con la violencia sexual y doméstica y la sobrecarga del trabajo en el hogar, los hombres siguen ausentes de las labores domésticas.

**Pregunta No.2**

En República Dominicana contamos con una serie de instrumentos nacionales e internacionales para impulsar el desarrollo rural con equidad.

Contamos un marco jurídico amplio que van desde la constitución hasta leyes específicas. Se establecen objetivos, indicadores y acciones específicas para asegurar la participación de las mujeres rurales en el desarrollo rural en la Estrategia Nacional de Desarrollo, Plan Plurianual, Plan Nacional de Equidad de género (PLANEG), el Gabinete de Políticas Sociales a través del Programa PROSOLI tiene programas orientados a la seguridad alimentaria a través del impulso de los huertos familiares; el Ministerio de Agricultura tiene la Oficina Sectorial de la Mujer (OSAM) entre otras. Sin embargo, para continuar avanzando en la aplicación efectiva d, a través de evaluaciones periódicas que den cuenta de los avances logrados.

De igual manera es necesario continuar trabajando en la sensibilización y capacitación de hombres y mujeres para vencer las resistencias, estigmas y discriminación de las mujeres rurales en nuestra sociedad.

**Pregunta No.3**

En relacion a la tercera pregunta considero importante trabajar con las organizaciones rurales para transversalizar el enfoque de género con procesos de integración real de las mujeres, definir, desarrollar e implementar procesos en diversos ámbitos, acorde con su realidad institucional. Tener la disposición de trascender el discurso desarrollando procesos de capacitación integrales, asignación de recursos a organizaciones de mujeres y apoyo a mujeres emprendedoras con recursos suficientes para desarrollar sus proyectos de manera autónoma.

Involucrar a las mujeres, sobre todo a las jóvenes en actividades relacionadas con el uso de las Tecnologías de la Comunicación e Información para aplicarla en los programas y proyectos agrícolas que desarrollan.

Abordar el empoderamiento de las mujeres desde la formación de capacidades en proyectos productivos, comercialización y generación de ingresos.

Distribución del trabajo doméstico, incidir en las unidades familiares para promover una mayor participación de las mujeres en los espacios públicos y promover la incorporación de los hombres en las labores del ámbito privado.

Tambien, urge asignar mayores recursos economicos para programas  de investigacion sobre la realidad de las mujeres en el campo, en nuestro pais no hay inoformacion reciente y los datos son dispersos. De igual manera las asignaciones presupuestarias son muy bajas para los proyectos de mujeres.

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[1] Censo Agropecuario, 1998

[2] FAO, CONAMUCA y Veterinarios sin Fronteras (2012): La equidad de género en la tenencia de la tierra y los programas de reforma agraria en República Dominicana, Santo Domingo.

**English translation**

**Question No.1**

In the Dominican Republic, discrimination, subordination and social marginalization indicators keep showing unacceptable figures for rural women. Only 10% of the agricultural workers are women and just 72% of these are paid for their work. [1]

Since the adoption of Law 55/97 on the agrarian reform, various initiatives have been developed to improve the access to land. However, only 26% of the beneficiaries were women and the plots allocated were 30% smaller than those assigned to men. [2]

The number of women involved in agricultural production has not increased significantly in the last 15 years. According to the Agricultural National Pre-census (Precenso Nacional Agropecuario) conducted by the National Statistics Office (known in Spanish as ONE) in 2015, 83.7% of the agricultural working force were men, whilst the remaining 16.3% were women. The highest share of women producers (25.3%) was registered in the Higuamo region (ONE 2016).

Other limitations are related to sexual and domestic violence and the overload of work at home, where there is still no cooperation from men.

**Question No.2**

In the Dominican Republic there are several national and international tools to promote rural development with equity.

There is a broad legal framework in place, ranging from the Constitution to specific laws. Specific objectives, indicators and actions are established in the National Development Strategy, the Pluriannual Plan and the National Gender Equity Plan (known in Spanish as PLANEG) to ensure the participation of rural women in rural development. Through the PROSOLI Programme, the Office of Social Policies has programmes aimed at improving food security by promoting home gardens. The Ministry of Agriculture has the Sector Office for Women (known in Spanish as OSAM) among others. However, to continue moving forward in the effective implementation of these policies, periodic assessments should be conducted to report on the progress made so far.

Similarly, we need to keep working on raising awareness and training men and women to overcome the resistance, stigma and discrimination rural women suffer in our society.

**Question No.3**

Working with rural organizations to mainstream the gender approach with processes of real integration of women, but also to define, develop and implement processes in different areas aligned with their institutional reality, is important.  The willingness to go one step further and develop comprehensive training processes, allocating resources to women's organizations and supporting women entrepreneurs with sufficient resources for them to develop their projects independently, is key as well.

Involving women, especially the young, in activities related to the use of Communication and Information Technologies to implement these in their agricultural programmes and projects is also important.

Addressing the empowerment of women by training them in productive projects, marketing and income generation would be advisable.

Distributing domestic work, focusing on family units to promote enhanced participation of women in public spaces and foster the incorporation of men to the private sector, is also desirable.

Allocating more economic resources to research programmes on the reality of rural of rural woman is deemed urgent. In our country, there is no recent information and data are scattered. Similarly, budget allocations are very low for women's projects.

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[1] Censo Agropecuario (Agricultural Census)1998

[2] FAO, CONAMUCA and Veterinarios sin Fronteras (2012): La equidad de género en la tenencia de la tierra y los programas de reforma agraria en República Dominicana, Santo Domingo.

## Kouakou Valentin Kra, Université Alassane Ouattara, Côte d’Ivoire

**Original contribution in French**

**Question 1 : Quels sont les principaux défis que doivent relever les femmes et les filles rurales ?**

Thème : Stratégies de résilience des femmes face à leur exclusion de la gestion foncière rurale : cas des productrices de beurre de karité et des potières dans la zone septentrionale ivoirienne.

          A travers le monde et principalement en Afrique, le genre est un principe fondamental de l’organisation des sociétés, notamment sur le plan de la répartition du travail et sur le marché. En imposant des limites aussi bien aux hommes et aux femmes, les rôles de genre sont plus répressifs sur les femmes. Dans le domaine agricole, et principalement dans les régions nord de la Côte d’Ivoire, cette situation est plus marquée en ce qui concerne l’accès des femmes au foncier dans une économie de plus en plus dominée par les cultures de rente (coton, anacarde). De fait, si les femmes et les hommes effectuent les travaux agricoles aussi bien pour les cultures de rentes que pour les cultures de subsistance, force est de constater que leurs fonctions et leurs responsabilités sont différentes. Ainsi, l’accès ou le contrôle du foncier et des cultures de rente par la gente féminine reste une des problématiques essentielles auxquelles est confronté le développement rural. Pourtant, en Afrique les femmes représentent 52% de la population et contribuent à 75% des travaux agricoles (GUILLET L. et al, 2013, p20)[[1]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/node/4447#_ftn1).

         En effet, cultures de rente et propriété foncière sont liés, complémentaires et associées au pouvoir dans nos sociétés africaines. Or culturellement, il est difficilement acceptable pour les hommes de partager le même pouvoir que leurs épouses et leurs progénitures (les jeunes) ; quoi que dans ces sociétés le rôle de la femme est essentiel. Dans ces conditions, les femmes sont défavorisées dans la mesure où la gestion du pouvoir leur échappe et leurs droits fonciers sont véritablement entravés. Les parcelles auxquelles elles ont accès et sur lesquelles elles exploitent les cultures de subsistance sont en général exigües, de moindre qualité et donc impropres aux cultures de rente. Face à cette situation de vulnérabilité, quelle est la capacité de résilience des femmes du monde rurale ? Comment se servent-elles de leur statut d’exclues du champ foncier pour se positionner comme de véritables leaders dans d’autres domaines d’activités du monde rurale ?

            Dans la zone septentrionale de la Côte d’Ivoire, la capacité de résilience des femmes du monde rural est remarquable. Ainsi, de leur exclusion du foncier, elles se sont investies dans des filières porteuses ; à savoir la production du beurre de karité et l’artisanat. La production du beurre de Karité est devenue la principale occupation des femmes du nord ivoirien. Selon l’USAID, au cours de l’année 2007 la production du beurre de karité en Côte d’Ivoire était d’environ 200000 tonnes.  En plus du beurre de karité, la gente féminin s’y positionne également à travers l’artisanat.  A cet effet, l’exemple des potières Mangoro[[2]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/node/4447#_ftn2) dans la région de Hambol[[3]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/node/4447#_ftn3) est révélateur.

            Toutes la production issue de ces activités féminines (beurre de karité et pots) est écoulés vers les grands centres urbains et constitue un relais important dans les relations villes-campagnes. Ces activités sus-mentionnées sont de véritables moyens d’autonomisation de la femme et une source de revenu leur permettant répondre efficacement aux besoins familiaux surtout durant les périodes de soudure. D’ailleurs, avec l’instabilité des prix des matières premières agricoles, ainsi que la périodicité à laquelle elles sont soumises, ces activités permettent aux femmes de se positionner comme les principales actrices de l’économie rurale qu’elles contrôlent dans ces localités. Au-delà, de l’aspect économique, ces activités féminines s’imposent comme une indenté culturelle et une spécificité du grand nord ivoirien. Bien plus, il y a un changement ou encore une transformation,  du lien social dans une société marquée par la domination des valeurs masculines. Ce changement se perçoit de par le rôle nouveau que joue la femme dans ces sociétés naguère dominées par les valeurs masculines.

            L’exclusion de la femme de  la gestion foncière dans le Nord ivoirien n’entame outre mesure leur rôle combien importe dans l’économie rurale. A travers des activités extra-agricoles comme la production et la commercialisation du beurre de karité et autres produits artisanaux (pots par exemple), ces femmes font preuve de leur capacité de résilience et à participer au changement social dans une société masculine. Cependant, elles sont souvent limitées dans leurs actions en raison de leur faible taux d’alphabétisation[[4]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/node/4447#_ftn4)mais également le manque d’organisation et de promotion de ces secteurs d’activités qu’elles contrôlent.

            Les principaux défis que doivent relever ces femmes du milieu rural pour faire évoluer favorablement les inégalités entre les sexes s’expriment en termes d’éducation dans la mesure où c’est la base du développement. Ce module est axé sur  l’alphabétisation, la formation à la gestion financière[[5]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/node/4447#_ftn5), la santé de la reproduction[[6]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/node/4447#_ftn6), et le leadership. C’est à ce prix que les femmes africaines du monde rural pourraient survenir aux pesanteurs sociologiques qui constituent une entrave à leur épanouissement et à leur autonomisation. Par ailleurs, il s’avère important que celles-ci s’organisent en coopérative pour mieux défendre leurs intérêts socio-économiques. Se faisant, elles pourraient mieux défendre les prix de leurs productions et initier les politiques de financement de leurs projets (octroi de microcrédits par exemple). De plus, leurs activités doivent être valorisées à travers leur promotion et leur prise en compte dans les politiques nationales de développement.

[[1]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/node/4447#_ftnref1) GUILLET L. et al, 2013- Inclusion sociale et genre au niveau local : enjeux et appuis au Maghreb, AFCCRE

[[2]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/node/4447#_ftnref2) Les Mangôrô sont un groupe ethnique  du Nord ivoirien

[[3]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/node/4447#_ftnref3) La Région du Hambol fait partie du grand nord ivoirien dont le chef lieu est Katiola

[[4]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/node/4447#_ftnref4) Selon l’UNICEF (2006),  49% des filles vivant en Côte d’Ivoire ne sont pas scolarisées et la région du nord représente 78% de ce taux.

[[5]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/node/4447#_ftnref5) Dans la plupart  des sociétés africaines où dominent les valeurs masculines, les revenues des femmes sont en général gérés par les hommes.

[[6]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/node/4447#_ftnref6) Les femmes sont de plus en plus actives et épanouies dans leurs activités socio-économiques quand elles sont en bonne santé et parviennent à planifier les naisances.

**English translation**

**Question 1: What are the main challenges rural women and girls are facing today?**

**Topic: Women’s strategies for resilience in the face of exclusion from rural landowning management: the case of the shea butter producers and the potters in the northern Ivorian region.**

Throughout the world and mainly in Africa, gender is a fundamental factor in the organization of societies, in particular regarding the division of work and the marketplace. Imposing limits both on men and women, the gender roles are more restrictive for women. In agriculture, and mainly in the northern regions of Ivory Coast, this situation is most evident where women´s access to land tenure is concerned in an economy more and more dominated by cash crops (cotton, cashew nuts). Indeed, even though women and men carry out agricultural work for cash crops as well as for subsistence crops, it must be noted that their functions and responsibilities are different. Thus the access of women to land control and cash crop production is still one of the fundamental problems facing rural development. In Africa, moreover, women represent 52% of the population and contribute 75% of agricultural labor (GUILLET L. et al, 2013, p20)[[1]](#footnote-1).

Actually, cash crops and land tenure are linked, complementary to and associated with power in our African societies, for culturally it is difficult for men to accept sharing the same power as their spouses and their offspring (the youth); even though the role of women in these societies is essential. In these conditions, women are disadvantaged to the extent that they have no authority and their rights to land are literally obstructed. The plots to which they have access and on which they produce the subsistence crops are generally hemmed in, of less quality and therefore not adequate for cash crops. In view of this vulnerable situation, what capacity for resilience do rural women have? How do they use their status as excluded from land tenure to position themselves as true leaders in other fields of activities in the rural sphere?

In the northern region of Ivory Coast, rural women´s capacity for resistance is remarkable. Thus, given their exclusion to land tenure they have invested in remunerative sectors; namely the production of shea butter and handicrafts. The production of shea butter has become the main occupation for women in the north of Ivory Coast. According to USAID, in the course of 2007 the production of shea butter in Ivory Coast was around 200 000 tons. As well as shea butter, women have positioned themselves also through handicrafts. For instance, take the example of the Mangoro potters [[2]](#footnote-2) in the Hambol region.[[3]](#footnote-3)

All the production of these women’s activities (shea butter and pottery) is moved towards the large urban centers and makes an important link in the relationship between cities and villages. The activities mentioned above are true means of gaining autonomy for women and a source of revenue which allows them to meet the needs of the family efficiently, in particular during lean periods. Moreover, with the price instability of agricultural unprocessed products as well as the seasonal nature to which they are subject, these activities allow women to position themselves as the main actors of the rural economy which they control in their districts. Going beyond the purely economic aspect, these women’s activities establish themselves as a cultural identity and a particular feature of the great Ivorian north. Furthermore, there is a change or even a transformation of social relationships in a society marked by the domination of masculine values. This change is perceived in the new role that women play in these societies, not long ago dominated by masculine values.

The exclusion of women from land tenure management in the Ivorian north does not unduly configure how much their role contributes to the rural economy. Through these extra agricultural activities, like the production and commercialization of shea butter and other handmade products (pots for example), these women give proof of their capacity for resilience and participation in social change in a masculine society. Even so, their actions are often limited by their low literacy rate[[4]](#footnote-4) and also by the lack of organization and promotion of the sectors of activities in which they are engaged.

The main challenges that these rural women must overcome in order to secure a favorable evolution of the inequalities between the sexes is summed up as education since this is the basis of development. This module is centered on literacy, training in financial management[[5]](#footnote-5), reproductive health[[6]](#footnote-6), and leadership. It is at this price that African women in rural areas could overcome the sociological obstacles which constrain their fulfillment and empowerment. Furthermore, it appears to be important that they organize themselves in cooperatives to better defend their socio-economic interests. Doing this, they could better defend the prices of their products and introduce financing policies for their projects (provision of microcredits, for example). At the same time, their activities should be enhanced by their being promoted and taken into account in national development policies.

## Joy Muller, Switzerland

I would think that communities need to provide opportunities -- such as platforms/foras -- that allow women to exchange their experiences and knowledge for them to help each other, grow, and thrive together.

Allow me to use the Mothers’ Club set up by the Togolese Red Cross as an example, with an analysis that I did in 2015.

According to the Human Development Report 2014 (UNDP, 2014), Togo’s Human Development Index value for 2013 is 0.473— which is in the low human development category—positioning the country at 166 out of 187 countries and territories.  To improve local living conditions, the Togolese Red Cross (TRC) since 2000 has set up the Mothers’ Clubs in different regions of the country to engage mothers in activities aiming to improve their well-beings.

The two goals of this set-up serve not only as incentive but also as the expected outcome of public values shared by the TRC and mothers (and their family): one is for improved community health, and the other for better socio-economic development for women.

As Togo has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.579, ranking it 127 out of 149 countries in the 2013 index. (UNDP, 2014).  It is not enough for mothers only to share the value with the TRC: before joining the Club, many of them have to get the consent from their husbands.  Only when their husbands recognise the potential benefits of the shared value, women are able to join and become an active members to receive training.  Thus the authorising environment is composed of, in a general term, women and men in the communities.

The TRC’s volunteers living in local communities.  Through their own community’s Mothers’ Club, they provide training to its members.  The volunteers in this case represent the 1st level operational capacity as they provide awareness-raising on community health (including mother and infant health, prenatal and postnatal health care, family planning, HIV & AIDS prevention, malaria control and diarrhoeal illness control), and sanitation and hygiene education (i.e. waste management, well-mock etc.), as well as micro credit management.  Mothers when trained then become the 2nd level operational capacity as they are then capable to share their knowledge with their family and others in the same community who are not member of the Mothers’ Club.

Mothers then become a contributor to local development with the knowledge they shared and effort they invest in the community. When the communities experience the benefits, men are more likely to give approval to their wives to join the Club and as a result enlarge the authorising environment.  As a consequence, with more women joining the Club, the operational capacity can increase for better public value outcomes.

I hope this is clear.  With best regards,

Joy

## Amon Chinyophiro, MERAMO Consulting, Malawi

Dear good people,

You will notice that my responses are not arranged in the order of the questions because some of them respond to more that one question.

1. Approaches that speak to the man's wisdom should be encouraged. Men and women should be exposed to approaches or methodologies that bring out self-reflecting on their actions which emotionally injure the other. The understanding gained can help the men and women make judgement for themselves. When people are reminded of their wrong doings they tend to be defensive citing culture, religious beliefs and other factors as backing for their actions.

2. Promote approaches that are easy to understand and interpret but they bring out evidence of gender imbalances and injustices without any provocation. Tools used in gender action learning system (GALS) are the best example known for peacefully giving visual evidence of gender imbalances.

3. All approaches that help men and women to see the value, love and respect of one another will win the battle. The approaches whose principle is guided by coercion and fear motivation only work in the short run but leave more serious gender gaps thereafter.

4. Best are the approaches that strengthen family ties. Targeting people as couples could be costly but the change achieved is ever self sustaining. Targeting one spouce per household is only good for satisfying quantitative indicators while compromising quality of the desired impact.

5. More behavioural research needs to be done in order to understand changes in people's behaviours as they respond to issues around them. With technology advancement, political instability, climate change, diseases and many other situations, humans change their behaviours and locations in order to survive the harsh situations sometimes in ways that increase societal gender gaps.

6. Most policies especially in least developed countries are carefully drafted sorely to attract donor funding. However, the actual policy implementation suffers serious underperformances, often times deliberately.

7. Rampant corruption tendencies especially in African countries mostly affect budgetlines that support gender interventions. Governments make realocations moving funds from gender budgetlines to fund the critical ones such as health and direct food support.

8. Men and boys have not adequately been involved in the drive to reduce gender gaps to the extent that the term 'gender' is grossly mistaken to mean women. The world needs men that can interpret existing gender gaps and effectively influence fellow men to change. Men who promote gender equality and advocate for fairness and impartiality need to understand that it is their passion and dedication to facilitate change will help them succeed otherwise society will regard them as weak minded.

## Khadidja Nene Doucoure, IFAD, Senegal

The context of livelihoods in rural areas has changed significantly during the last 20 years: so new needs and ambitions are emerging from rural women with a very high level of demand and requirement to overcome poverty and food insecurity, to strengthen their economic empowerment and to make their voices heard in peasant organizations and rural institutions at local and national levels.

My conviction is that Africa (the region I know best) is progressing slowly but surely on rural women's empowerment even if gender inequalities are a persistent reality. We all know that the underlying causes of these inequalities are deeply rooted in gender norms and behaviours, power relations and social institutions. The systems of social and cultural organizations still influence and very often the distribution of responsibilities in the public and domestic spheres.

Lesson learnt :

1. Qualitative changes in male-female relations, roles and positions in household and public arenas occur over a period of time, well beyond the normal timeframe of a project: these cannot be obtained by command and will have to be pursued over time.

2. Among the main levers of change, I think two are more crucial in striving for transformation impacts on rural women's wellbeing: education and workload reduction: Due to their low educational levels and heavy workloads (food cropping, domestic duties, the transportation and sale of agricultural products, food preparation, etc.), any strategy aimed at reducing the poverty and vulnerability of rural women and hence of their families must focus strongly both on alleviating their workload through new technologies and on enhancing their access to knowledge and skills.

3. More focus on rural young girls' education: The education of young rural girls can be a driving force and a strong accelerating factor of change. The situation of girls in West and Central Africa region is particularly challenging, especially in the rural areas where only 55% of the girls of school age are in school (compared to 88% for boys). Difficult access to education, early abandonment of school and a heavy workload within the home, are major reasons why adult women do not know how to read and write. A young woman’s prospects for a better life are further compromised by early marriage and frequent pregnancies.

Some good practices:

In order to reach the poorest and most vulnerable rural women for transformative impacts, promote the value chain approach and focus on crops/sectors in which poor households and women are already more present or could easily integrate

Re-position food crops (millet, maize, cowpea, rice, fonio, etc.) to market-oriented crops/cash crops

Document and share good practices and innovative models and approaches that have achieved conclusive results and sustainable impacts on the living conditions of rural women

Scale up these innovations /good practices and lessons learned (from less successful experiences) to reach a critical mass of rural populations, including women particularly

Implement this scaling up with a differentiated approach that takes into account the specificities of each context according to its social and cultural realities

Deliver the different support and services as a "package'' rather than separately.

## Judith D’Souza, India

 I think the process of transforming gender roles and norms is not a new one, though the terminology has gained much mileage in the last 10 years. Many of us in the women's movement have been striving to find that critical edge (gender transforming) in addressing women's empowerment ..striving to understand and address it in a more holistic approach.  But some major questions still prevails in my mind as we endeavour to understand the transformational process.

Women have managed to fend for themselves in the best ways they know, within their given constraints. They create spaces for themselves, that may not seem always progressive to an outsider. But they are spaces nevertheless built by the dreams, songs and blood of other women before them ... each generation taking a small daring step so that the next can have a few extra moments to breathe. Armed with our baggage of knowledge, we endeavour to "empower women" taking their needs and priorities into consideration. But I have found inadequate evidence of where we have tried to understand what constitutes empowerment from the women's perspective and what are the safe/empowering spaces that women currently have in their lives that we can maximise upon.

While working with families, men and boys and policy engagement is extremely important, beaking social norms and taboos is extremely difficult. We may be able to achieve something within the project cycle that can be monitored and measured. But what then? Are our project duration long and intensive enough to bring about change that can be sustained by a community? With decrease in funding and shorter project cycles, target achievement is sought even before the project can actually commence. It is not possible to address underlying social norms and constraints in such an environment. Women and men, girls and boys have to be conscientised to demand better services, better opportunities, better laws and better futures before any policy can have an impact on the ground.

Gender education also is being seen as a possible intervention for transforming gender norms. However it cannot be a one off class but has to be sustained from junior to high school and at least cover the duration of an entire generation. Teachers have to be trained and sensitised to provide the required support in imparting this kind of education. All these things require time and most importantly a strong political will of all stakeholders.

## Santosh Kumar Mishra, S. N. D. T. Women's University, India

**Question 1: What are the main challenges rural women and girls are facing today?**

* *The context of rural livelihoods has changed significantly during the past 20 years, with significant implications for rural women.  Is our understanding of the challenges rural women and girls are facing still up-to-date?*

The critical role of women in advancing agricultural and rural development, and in ensuring food security, has been widely acknowledged. Our understanding of challenges faced by women and girls from rural sectors has increased significantly over the years. It has been possible due to several advocacy initiatives as well as vast amount of research activities. However, gender issues being complex and varying in nature, a lot more needs to be investigated into. Around the world, girls and women face unique challenges which are personal, practical, economic, political and cultural. Understanding potential obstacles leads to the development of positive, sustainable strategies (source: <http://guides.womenwin.org/ig/programme-design/understanding-and-overcoming-challenges>, accessed on August 10, 2017). A complex understanding of the context surrounding a problem is needed to even begin to address the obstacles facing rural women.

Among the most pressing sub-issues within the topic of rural woman’s empowerment are gender discrimination and poverty and food security. Each of these areas directly impacts the lives & abilities of rural women, creating impediments to their capacity to positively change the world around them. Gender discrimination is so engrained in ways of living that it will take a lot of time, money, and education to help teach people the inherent equality and rights of every human. There is so much potential to unleash in counteracting the oppression of an entire half of our planet. The more people able to work on the problems of the world, the faster and better we can solve them. Rural women face many challenges including but not limited to poor access to healthcare, especially during pregnancy; being forced to give up their education and other opportunities to work or care for their families at home; being denied access to resources (like education) solely because of gender and more(source: <https://calymca.org/images/documents/MUN/16th_MUN/TPGs/NGO-TPG--Rural-Women.pdf>, accessed on August 10, 2017).

*Most importantly,* rural women overwhelmingly spend more time in domestic or household work than both urban women and men. They, *however*, do not necessarily benefit from the aid of various organizations in the absence of the ability to provide input and make decisions. This is one of the key aspects understanding of which is essential on the part of policy makers and other stakeholders.

* *How do the needs and priorities of rural women differ based on their age, education, household composition, resource base and cultural context?*

With reference to age, education, household composition, resource base and cultural parameters, *“basic needs”* of both urban and rural women are same. *Howeve*r, rural women have some *“specific sexual and reproductive health requirements”* which need to be looked into. These requirements represent different contexts and situations within which they emerge. Both information and services are needed for the purpose of enabling women to take rational decisions in birth planning matters. Investment in this endeavour is key to future development. Thus, these are the areas where there is need to empower women from rural areas, especially those with lower levels of educational attainments. National governments need to do more (source: <http://www.wfo-oma.org/documents/empowering-rural-women-and-improving-livelihoods.html>, accessed on August 10, 2017).

* *How do some rural women manage to move forward and become successful entrepreneurs, whereas others are trapped in a life of food insecurity and poverty?*

If we have a closer look at the circumstances that have paved way for successful women entrepreneurs, we find that there are several contributing factors, depending on the contexts and locally prevailing situations. As against this, there are women who are left behind in the race. Following description highlights contributing factors that were responsible for rural women’s successful efforts in the area of entrepreneurship in the context of different initiatives in different countries. Here, presentation of key facts has been broken into three sections, namely, *issue* (problem area), *strategy sought* (interventions that were implemented), and *outcome of the initiative* (results achieved due to interventions). Presentation of data in this manner will explain why *some rural women manage to move forward and become successful entrepreneurs*. Discussion follows:

* Mozambique-Contributing factor: Streamlining regulatory business environment in the provinces:

1. Issue: Administrative barriers to investment and to the legalization of enterprises have significant adverse effects on business growth by discouraging the initiatives of entrepreneurs. Micro-and small enterprises are disproportionately affected. In Mozambique, obstacles include bureaucratic procedures, lack of accurate information, costly and time-consuming customs procedures. Delays and unnecessary financial requirements in obtaining business licences arise from inefficient inter-departmental coordination among the different government bodies. On average, it takes the six or more public institutions involved in the process four months to legalize economic activities.
2. Strategy sought: As a measure to overcome the administrative obstacles to investors and entrepreneurs, the Provincial Government of Zambézia, in cooperation with UNIDO, created the Balcão Único (one-stop shop) in Quélimane. The Balcão Único (BU) facilitates correct and efficient applications of rules and regulations in order to stimulate private sector-led growth. *Further*, the BU ensures coordination among different provincial departments on licensing new businesses. *Furthermore*, the BU: (a) *aims* to speed up review and approval procedures for licensing and to disseminate information on regulatory requirements and incentive programmes; and (b) *enables* the entrepreneur to treat all paperwork at one location instead of visiting several government offices and to make only officially required fee payments in a transparent manner. A continuous monitoring and accompanying process follows until the decision is made and the licence is handed over to the entrepreneur. Thus, while the actual processing of applications is not done by BU itself, it guarantees the proper and transparent application of existing legal frameworks. This is achieved by accepting payments only by way of bank deposits and by offering relevant information on fees and clients’ rights and obligations. BU ensures an efficient monitoring of the process by using routing slips to register the administrative time needed and by means of its database. The database provides statistical information necessary for the planning of development policies by the public authorities
3. Outcome of initiative: The BU has been successful in its activities so far and has been praised both by the business community and by the provincial government. From its inauguration in June 2001 until August 2002, BU handled 143 applications from enterprises, out of which 79 received licences. An estimated 35 of them were operational by August 2002, representing a new source of tax revenue for the public sector. The processing time has been reduced to 25 days on average. Entrepreneurs find that BU has improved processing time, increased transparency, efficiency and professionalism of the licensing process, uniform and consistent interpretation and application of regulations, reliable information on procedures and consistent charges of fees as determined by law(source: <https://www.unido.org/uploads/tx_templavoila/A_path_out_of_poverty.pdf>, accessed on August 10, 2017).

* Uganda-1: Contributing factor: Private sector assisting private sector:

1. Issue: Entrepreneurs in rural areas suffer from a lack of training and advisory services that would allow them to upgrade their managerial and technical skills and solve immediate production problems, thus improving productivity and increasing profitability. The Government of Uganda often does not have a sufficient budget to finance the costs of training and advisory institutions. The technicians of public institutions may not have the necessary private-sector orientation and business spirit to provide practical advice to entrepreneurs. In Uganda, where more than 70% of enterprises employ less than 20 people, micro-and small enterprises play an important role in the economic and social life of the majority of citizens. *However*, the growth and the competitiveness of this sector are hampered by a lack of managerial and technical skills, weak infrastructure, difficulties in accessing loans, and complicated company registration processes.
2. Strategy sought: One of UNIDO’s activities focuses on improving the access of small entrepreneurs in rural districts to advisory services and training. The project has introduced the concept of a Master Craftsmen Programme (MCP) in six districts of Uganda. It is a self-sustaining, demand-driven and private sector-led system of assistance to entrepreneurs, coordinated by the Uganda Small-Scale Industries Association (USSIA). About 100 small-industry entrepreneurs have been selected and trained to provide fee-based services to other micro and small-scale industrial entrepreneurs in their districts. The six districts are Masaka, Mbarara, Kabarole, Mubende, Mbale and Lira. Essential in this strategy are the dynamics of communal obligations as the driving force, which work in a way that business people in the same business community help each other. *However*, clients were not used to paying fees for training and advisory services, sometimes affected by heavily donor-subsidized services. The UNIDO project has not given any financial incentives or subsidies to the MCP, but helped in the conceptual development, preparation of methodologies and manuals, training of advisors and campaigning for the fee-based services. The MCP services focus on metalworking, electrical and electronics engineering, food processing, textile, leather and woodworking. The major functions are industrial advisory services, training in business and technical skills upgrading, encouraging the formation of entrepreneurial self-help groups, and secretarial services at the association’s district offices.
3. Outcome of initiative: (1) A total of 100 entrepreneurs and skilled technicians have been trained as MCP advisors and are operating in six districts. (2) Over 750 entrepreneurs in the six districts improved their managerial and technical skills. (3) Training manuals and operational manuals for the MCP are being used. (4) Neighbouring districts have requested the services of the MCP advisors. (5) USSIA district officers have been trained in the management of the association and the coordination between the national and the district offices has improved. (6) A network of NGOs cooperating with MCP has been expanding (source: <https://www.unido.org/uploads/tx_templavoila/A_path_out_of_poverty.pdf>, accessed on August 10, 2017).

* Uganda-2: Contributing factor: Preparing youth for entrepreneurship-curriculum development:

1. Issue: Whereas most students look for jobs after leaving secondary schools, some go further on to a vocational school in order to acquire specific technical skills. Once these young people are in the labour market, they learn about business on-the-job and there are few opportunities to systematically learn about business. In an environment where almost half of the population is under 15 years old and most of them have to find jobs in the private sector, knowing the basics of business at an early age is an advantage. It stimulates the students of secondary schools to associate academic subjects in concrete terms and is useful for students in vocational schools in order to associate their technical skills with overall business concepts. A large number of entrepreneurs build up savings while they work as employees in order to start their own business. It is, therefore, important that the young people develop a notion of the private sector and entrepreneurship before entering the job market. The Education White Paper (1992) of the Government of Uganda aims at putting in place an education system to produce manpower, which will help create employment opportunities, support modernization of agriculture, start industries and contribute to rapid economic growth and transformation.
2. Strategy sought: The UNIDO Project has introduced entrepreneurship curricula to secondary schools and to a vocational training centre. For secondary schools, the curriculum was developed for the classes of 13-18 year old students, and the Ministry of Education approved it to become an official course. UNIDO assisted the National Curriculum Development Commission (NCDC) in developing the textbooks and trained the instructors. The curriculum has been introduced in 10 schools with 5,000 students for a pilot operation since July 2002. So far, school-masters, instructors, students and parents are happy with the pilot phase. The Nakawa Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) located in Kampala thought it was useful to combine the vocational training with entrepreneurship training. NVTI hoped that some students would become interested in starting their own business after some years of employment by using the vocational skills obtained. UNIDO developed the entrepreneurship training curriculum for NVTI targeting the students of 19-22 years old and trained the instructors.
3. Outcome of initiative: (1) The Ministry of Education has approved the entrepreneurship curriculum materials for secondary schools as an official curriculum. According to an estimate, over 5,000 students at secondary schools started to take the entrepreneurship curriculum during the first pilot year. (2) The NVTI has approved the entrepreneurship curriculum and has established a specialized department for the entrepreneurship-training programme. Some 270 students are also taking the entrepreneurship course at NVTI. It is expected that the average annual enrolment in future will be on a similar level (source: <https://www.unido.org/uploads/tx_templavoila/A_path_out_of_poverty.pdf>, accessed on August 10, 2017).

* Rwanda-Contributing factor: Strengthening the role of women entrepreneurs in a post conflict situation:

1. Issue: Women’s burden is particularly compounded in post-conflict situations. Frequently, they are the sole breadwinner of the family as their male family members have been either lost or separated in the war, fled or jailed. Their immediate needs for sustaining the family mount tremendously when the supply of goods and services ceases and traditional community help schemes collapse due to the restricted mobility and security. In war torn areas of Rwanda, it becomes a critical issue to provide women and widows with means to reassure their proactive role in community development and to support their families’ well-being. Due to the devastating situation after 1994, their need for improved and sustainable business operation has become even more critical as a long-term solution to sustainable livelihood. It was necessary to restore women’s self-help initiatives and increase their business potential, especially in *“small food processing”*.
2. Strategy sought: A careful analysis was conducted on the socio-economic environment of the villages where women run a business. Cultural, religious and ethnic composition of the community were analysed together with the physical and social infrastructure, market access and gender division of labour. Existence of any groups of displaced people as well as returning soldiers in the community was reviewed in order to avoid an imbalanced distribution of benefits and power structure. The project targeted women already engaged in some form of processing activities, such as dairy, fruit and vegetable products in view of the importance of this sector for improved food security in the communities. Trainers were selected from the group of specialists working in the business. Bank officers and field extension officers were invited to run a series of mock consultation sessions with the women to discuss their business plans. By getting to know each other and sharing their business experiences and problems in ethnically mixed groups, women became aware of the need to reconcile efforts to strengthen their self-help initiatives and networks in the communities.
3. Outcome of initiative: (1) Some 40 women entrepreneurs were trained in dairy products and fruit and vegetable processing in Byumba and Kigali Rural Prefectures. Ten of them obtained credit from local development banks for expanding their business and two of them successfully marketed their products into the urban market in Kigali. (2) Trained women entrepreneurs started playing the role of a local adviser to fellow entrepreneurs at their own settings—a network was thus established among women entrepreneurs to share information, resources and equipment to produce food products. (3) Some 26 trainers were trained in the organization of skill training for women entrepreneurs and 23 of them went through refresher training courses. More than half of them belong to local NGOs and institutions (source: <https://www.unido.org/uploads/tx_templavoila/A_path_out_of_poverty.pdf>, accessed on August 10, 2017).

* Vietnam-Contributing factor: Establishing a *“traditional craft village”* for export promotion:

1. Issue: Promoting artisan craft development for export markets can create job and income opportunities in rural areas. However, the preservation of traditional culture is often neglected in this undertaking. This in turn affects the livelihoods of the artisans and their families and ignores export potential based on a strong cultural reference. Craftspeople are often unaware of the possibilities to export, mostly due to a lack of contacts. In addition, artisans are frequently not organized well enough to realize their potential capacity of production and the quality of products is often not sufficiently high to meet foreign market needs. The Government of Viet Nam has recognized the need to reconcile the preservation of traditional artisan crafts and cultural heritage with effective marketing efforts to enter into export markets.
2. Strategy sought: The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has conducted various types of technical cooperation projects in the field of artisan crafts development. The project in Viet Nam prepared policies and guidelines for artisan craft sector development and provided a wide range of assistance to preserve and promote Vietnamese artisan crafts. One of the crucial issues in the promotion of the artisan craft sector is improving the technologies and marketability of products through craft quality and design upgrading, research and training as well as the collection and dissemination of information. The project therefore included advisory services for the establishment of an integrated centre (the so-called *“traditional craft village”*). The village will act as a tourist attraction while containing training and research and development facilities as well as an exhibition hall. A training component was included in the project during which on-the-job training was provided to artisans in order to improve the quality of selected crafts. *Furthermore*, the project carried out a state-of-the-art survey on minority tribes’ artisan crafts in the context of rural and mountainous village development. The survey put forward a strong need to elaborate the future development visions for mountainous tribes’ traditional craft promotion. Experiences were disseminated through seminars and workshops.
3. Outcome of initiative: (1) Policy recommendations for promotion of traditional crafts were adopted by the Government of Vietnam and reflected in the Prime Minister’s decision on the promotion of rural industrial development in November, 2000. (2) The project provided the conceptual foundation for the *“traditional craft village”* centre. The land with 7.2 ha has been secured for the establishment of the proposed village including a training centre and exhibition hall. (3) The specific requirements for quality improvement for export promotion have been clearly recognized by policy makers and artisans. The Government has placed a high development priority on training of national designers and craft development coordinators. Training programmes have been conducted to improve the quality of products to meet foreign market needs. (4) A master plan on artisan craft development for rural development is being carried out to formulate the long-term detailed development strategies (source: <https://www.unido.org/uploads/tx_templavoila/A_path_out_of_poverty.pdf>, accessed on August 10, 2017).

* Morocco-Contributing factor: Promoting productivity improvements in rural women’s businesses:

1. Issue: Women entrepreneurs in Morocco are often faced with a lack of operational and managerial skills resulting in low productivity and competitiveness. Cultural constraints are additional obstacles that inhibit the efficient conduct of business for women. The resulting loss of productivity not only has adverse effects on their income but also on economic growth. Some of the most promising sectors for the Moroccan economy and those in which women are the most numerous can be found in the north of Morocco, in one of the most disadvantaged regions of the country. However, inefficient production mechanisms and a lack of managerial skills have resulted in a loss of productivity and income for women entrepreneurs. This is particularly true for traditional weaving, olive oil production as well as industrial processing of figs, prunes, medicinal and aromatic plants. In the past, traditional weavers exclusively used artificial fibres, thus attaining only low prices for their products. Almost 20% of olive oil was lost due to inefficient production methods and the high acidity in the oil was hazardous to the health of the consumers. No processing of figs and prunes took place. The fruits thus had to be sold on local markets at low margins or perished quickly.
2. Strategy sought: The UNIDO’s project aimed to enhance the competitiveness of enterprises managed by women. As a first step, the project attempted to make women aware of how they can improve their production and thus their income. They are then trained in both business management and production techniques. The trainers are either members of women’s groups or of existing public and private support institutions, which have been assisted by UNIDO in improving their capacity to provide services to women entrepreneurs. Two types of training are currently offered by the project: (a) training of trainers with the simultaneous creation of a network of people skilled in areas such as economic activity identification, information provision, business management and marketing, who will be able to follow up on the women they train; and (b) direct training of women. Trainers are in regular contact with women’s groups to identify the exact needs of these women and to adapt the courses accordingly. A third type of training in formation of associations and in the administration of cooperatives is being introduced. A fundamental element of the training is the improvement of production techniques. At a pilot training unit, the project provides training on new methods using locally available equipment. In the traditional weaving component of the project, women learn how to diversify their products, how to work on subcontract and to use natural fibres in order to increase the export potential of their products. The olive oil component has been assisting women’s cooperatives and groups to improve production methods and the quality of the oil. Course participants have learned how to use a mobile unit that increases production efficiency, techniques that reduce the acid content of the oil as well as waste management. The women have also received training in classification of the produced oil, in quality control and marketing. Several trainers have already replicated the training in different rural areas. The project component, concentrating on the processing of figs, prunes, medicinal and aromatic plants, focuses on drying of the products, packaging and marketing. The equipment was developed by UNIDO in collaboration with the University of Vienna and is also being used in other projects.
3. Outcome of initiative: (1) The project has so far provided comprehensive training, including coaching in production, business management and marketing, to 339 women (traditional weaving: 60 women, olive oil production: 156 women, processing of figs and prunes: 123 women). (2) The training in the weaving component of the project resulted in the participation of some of the participants in trade fairs. As a result, one cooperative has doubled its income. (3) About a dozen new weaving businesses have so far been started as a result of the training. (4) As a part of the coaching programme of the olive oil component of the project, a pilot association has received assistance in quality control, in business and financial management, in the preparation of a label, in registering their trademark, in promoting the products and in the procurement of packaging material. (5) The project is creating a critical mass of trainers (both technical and managerial) who are staff of local support institutions as well as a network among these institutions, local NGOs and credit institutions (source: <https://www.unido.org/uploads/tx_templavoila/A_path_out_of_poverty.pdf>, accessed on August 10, 2017).

* Kenya-Contributing factor: Socio-economic empowerment of women entrepreneurs:

1. Issue: Women entrepreneurs see the establishment of a productive business as a means to improve their status in society as well as their family’s standard of living and to serve their community by creating employment opportunities. *However*, due to a lack of technical skills, confidence, strong individual involvement and the willingness to take risks, women are often unable to establish and sustain successful businesses. In Kenya, women are the main food producers and small farmers of the country, yet their potentials remain largely untapped due to unequal access to resources and the lack of support services for women’s economic activities. Women operating in food processing in Murang’a and Kilifi districts, where large proportions of the population live in absolute poverty, face several major constraints. These include their inability to judge the profitability of their operations due to a lack of basic accounting skills, insufficient technical and business management skills as well as socio-cultural constraints.
2. Strategy sought: The project aimed at the socio-economic empowerment of women in the food processing sector in Murang’a and Kilifi districts by assisting them in their active search for business opportunities. New technical skills, basic computer literacy, business start-up assistance, improved financial and business management as well as the establishment of wider marketing networks are among the services offered. In contrast to projects focusing solely on technical skills upgrading, this project assists women in strengthening their role in society and their contribution to the community. This is achieved through self-confidence building, information provision on HIV/AIDS and, if required, through functional literacy programmes. Training in conducting self-assessment enhances women entrepreneurs’ competitive thinking. By facilitating women’s access to tools and skills to improve, monitor and evaluate their progress as entrepreneurs, the project enables them to set goals for themselves and to achieve their business objectives, both individually and by working in groups. Women entrepreneurs are encouraged to organize themselves in a business association. Thus, they can get into touch with like-minded women, exchange ideas and take part in policy preparation processes that determine the future of micro and small-scale enterprises.
3. Outcome of initiative: A total of 170 women have been integrated into the project so far. Feedback received from participants indicates high satisfaction rates. (2) In general, interest in business has increased in the course of the training and women developed awareness of the essential role of personal initiatives and self-confidence to succeed in business. (2) Most of the participants would like to start their own business or improve already existing ones. Women felt that their self-confidence as businesswomen has been enhanced. So far, approximately 70 women have started their business with the help of the programme and have, on average, generated employment possibilities for two to three persons. (3) Several of the women entrepreneurs employ youngsters to market and distribute their products by bicycle, thereby adding to employment creation. (4) Women entrepreneurs participating in the project have understood the importance of pricing and quality standards of raw materials, thus enhancing their bargaining power when dealing with middlemen or larger enterprises. (5) Women entrepreneurs in one region felt so confident after their training that they successfully negotiated a market-sharing arrangement with the commercial village bakery. (6) Women envisage using the skills acquired to improve the diet of their families and to contribute to food hygiene in the country. They consider serving the community by helping train other women in food processing and preservation (source: <https://www.unido.org/uploads/tx_templavoila/A_path_out_of_poverty.pdf>, accessed on August 10, 2017).

**Question 2: Are we using the right approaches and policies to close the gender gap?**

* *How can the policy gap be closed? Most countries have ratified international and regional instruments to protect and enhance women’s rights. Yet, in many countries there is a gap between the policy framework on gender and what actually gets delivered, including the failure to mainstream gender considerations into other policy frameworks, such as food security and nutrition policies*.

Gender equality is not just about economic empowerment. It is a moral imperative. It is about fairness and equity and includes many political, social and cultural dimensions. It is also a key factor in self-reported well-being and happiness across the world. Many countries worldwide have made significant progress towards gender equality in education in recent decades. Girls today outperform boys in some areas of education and are less likely to drop out of school. But the glass is still only half full: women continue to earn less than men, are less likely to make it to the top of the career ladder, and are more likely to spend their final years in poverty. Gender inequality means not only foregoing the important contributions that women make to the economy, but also wasting years of investment in educating girls and young women. Making the most of the talent pool ensures that men and women have an equal chance to contribute both at home and in the workplace, thereby enhancing their well-being and that of society (source: <https://www.oecd.org/gender/Executive%20Summary.pdf>, accessed on August 11, 2017).

* *Why is it so challenging to convince the private sector to engage with rural women as economic actors, despite the evidence demonstrating that this generates profitable outcomes*?

Contributions from the private sector to the development process in developing countries are becoming more significant. Private sector stakeholders (private foundations and for-profit private sector) are contributing with development funding and sharing of experiences, including in aid projects. Donors have increased their engagement with the *“for-profit private sector”* to catalyse contributions to development objectives. *Likewise*, partner countries are recognising the contribution of private sector in national poverty reduction and development plans. New collaborations are being worked out, most notably so called public-private partnerships (PPPs) in order to combine the strengths of different stakeholders. Whilst there are plenty of initiatives focussing on the role of the private sector in development, there has been less focus on the private sector in the context of initiatives aimed at women’s development (source: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/47088121.pdf>, accessed on August 11, 2017). Private sector involvement in development will be more effective if the donors and national governments ensure enabling environments are more geared towards upholding development rights of marginalized communities and according due sensitivity to the survival rights. Many donors still need to fulfil commitments to human rights and aid effectiveness principles into their private sector strategies. As development standards progress, private sectors’ human rights commitments and implementation also need to keep similar pace. Many corporate bodies and bilateral donors are yet to adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007 and to recognize their inherent right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent despite their operations in indigenous peoples land and territories (source: <https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&ved=0ahUKEwjy16yZyc7VAhUHYo8KHdJFCBQQFgg4MAM&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.undp.org%2Fcontent%2Fdam%2Fuspc%2Fdocs%2FPPT_Challenges_%2520Private%2520sector%2520in%2520Development.pptx&usg=AFQjCNHRBzvjhas2EPKQGnTSvFIgJZi5ww>, accessed on August 11, 2017).

* *As we approach 2020, what are the emerging economic opportunities for rural women? Are current capacity development programmes enhancing the right set of skills for rural women and girls? How can we better update them?*

1. *What are the emerging economic opportunities for rural women?* In this context, linking rural women with the global market is significant. Today, transformation in rural areas is linking rural women more closely to the global market. People buy flowers in New York packaged by women workers in Ecuador. A consumer in Sweden buys cheap clothing produced by rural women workers who have migrated to towns and cities in search of work in Asia. A Jamaican domestic worker now living in Canada sends home money to her family living in the rural areas. A South African woman worker picks fruit destined for a European super-market. A woman farmer in Uganda moves from producing food on her own small plot to farming crops under contract to an exporter. A Moroccan seamstress sews clothing that will soon be on a shelf in a Spanish department store. A woman in a village in Bangladesh makes money by selling the services of her cellphone, and a woman in a village in Jordan is able to find the best market for her handicrafts through the Internet. The extent to which rural women can effectively utilize these market opportunities is dependent on their access to and control over productive resources, assets and services, as well as their roles in decision-making processes (source: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/Women%202000%20-%20Rural%20Women%20web%20English.pdf>, accessed on August 11, 2017).

1. *Are current capacity development programmes enhancing the right set of skills for rural women and girls?* Yes, past experiences indicate that current capacity development programmes are enhancing the right set of skills for rural women and girls. Flourishing rural areas are vital to regional and national development. Education, entrepreneurship, and physical and social infrastructure all play an important role in developing rural regions. Skills are central to improving employability and livelihood opportunities, reducing poverty, enhancing productivity and promoting environmentally sustainable development (source: <http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Discussions/WCMSTEST4_175658>, accessed on August 11, 2017).
2. *How can we better update capacity development programmes?* The full integration of women and development issues into a country's general and sectorial planning unquestionably fosters harmonious and sustainable development. Conversely, ignoring women and consigning them to invisibility can lead to imbalances and have a negative impact on the process of change. Creating a development policy for rural women that is incorporated into planning mechanisms is a process of active involvement, leading to the discovery and implementation of solutions to the problems women face in gaining recognition and appreciation of their status as producers in their own right. Such a policy constitutes a general framework for formulating action plans based on objectives approved by all the partners in development and integrated into development programmes and projects for the agricultural and rural sector. The preparation and implementation of a development policy benefiting rural women is closely linked to a whole series of political, economic, social and environmental factors. It cannot, therefore, be limited by an overly systematized approach and, instead, calls for a multidisciplinary one. In order to ensure the policy's relevance and effectiveness, however, an operational procedure and certain key elements will be suggested (source: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/V2715E/v2715e02.htm>, accessed on August 11, 2017).

**Question 3: How can we best achieve gender transformative impacts?**

* *What can be done to strengthen women’s voice and wellbeing in the household and the community? Many initiatives focus on empowering women in their productive role and as members and leaders of producer and community groups. While they become empowered in the public space, this does not necessarily translate into improved household dynamics and quality of life.*

Rural women constitute one-fourth of the world’s population. Their contributions are vital to the well-being of families and communities, and of local and national economies. They are central to the development of rural areas: they account for a great proportion of the agricultural labour force, produce the majority of food grown, especially in subsistence farming, and perform most of the unpaid care work in rural areas. It is critical that their contributions be recognized and that they are included in decision-making processes at all levels of governments, and within rural organizations. Rural women’s economic empowerment is key. If rural women had equal access to productive resources, agricultural yields would rise and this would substantially reduce hunger worldwide (source: <https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&ved=0ahUKEwjB1I3O1c7VAhWHqo8KHfcnBAMQFghAMAQ&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ohchr.org%2FDocuments%2FHRBodies%2FCEDAW%2FRuralWomen%2FConceptNote_GR_Article14.doc&usg=AFQjCNHRd4lNG0Jln_IbqzG0KxC_4hcKI>, accessed on August 11, 2017).

Efforts aimed at strengthening women’s voice and wellbeing in the household and the community will require closing gender gap. Gender equality is important in its own right. Development is *“a process of expanding freedoms equally for all people: male and female”*. Closing the gap in well-being between males and females is as much a part of development as is reducing income poverty. Greater gender equality also enhances economic efficiency and improves other development outcomes. It does so in following three ways:

1. *First*, with women now representing 40% of the global labor force and more than half the world’s university students, overall productivity will increase if their skills and talents are used more fully. For example, if women farmers have the same access as men to productive resources such as land and fertilizers, agricultural output in developing countries could increase by as much as 2.5 to 4%. Elimination of barriers against women working in certain sectors or occupations could increase output by raising women’s participation and labor productivity by as much as 25% in some countries through better allocation of their skills and talent.
2. *Second*, greater control over household resources by women, either through their own earnings or cash transfers, can enhance countries’ growth prospects by changing spending in ways that benefit children. Evidence from countries as varied as Brazil, China, India, South Africa, and the United Kingdom shows that when women control more household income—either through their own earnings or through cash transfers—children benefit as a result of more spending on food and education.
3. *Finally*, empowering women as economic, political, and social actors can change policy choices and make institutions more representative of a range of voices. In India, giving power to women at the local level led to greater provision of public goods, such as water and sanitation, which mattered more to women (source: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2012/03/revenga.htm>, accessed on August 11, 2017).

* *Has sufficient attention been paid in engaging men and boys for positive behavioural change? Do they understand the links between gender roles and inequalities, and their impact on the productivity and wellbeing of their households? Are their needs being overlooked, resulting in their marginalisation and disengagement from household development?*

Work with men has demonstrated significant potential in contributing to building gender equality, including improving the health of women and men. *Howeve*r, most work with men has tended to be local in scale and limited in scope. To be more widely effective – that is to transform the pervasive gender inequalities that characterize many societies globally – efforts to transform men’s behaviour need to be significantly scaled up. Policy processes and mechanisms are key elements in any effort to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality. The need for policy approaches to build men’s meaningful engagement to achieve gender equality is based on four interwoven points, namely: (a) Work with men is key to advancing gender equality, (b) Programme and policy interventions have been shown to bring about positive changes to men’s gender-related attitudes and behaviours, (c) There is an international mandate for policy approaches on engaging men and boys in achieving gender equality, and (d) Policy efforts must be comprehensive and large scale (source: <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/44402/1/9789241500128_eng.pdf>, accessed on August 11, 2017).

* *What approaches have proved successful to address deeply rooted gender norms, power relations and social institutions?*

Gender shapes power relations at all levels of society. In fact, the set of roles, behaviours and attitudes that societies define as appropriate for men and women *(‘gender’*) may well be the most persistent cause, consequence and mechanism of power relations from the intimate sphere of the household to the highest levels of political decision-making. One of the most persistent patterns in the distribution of power-over and power-to are huge inequalities between men and women. This becomes apparent as soon as gender is considered by simply differentiating individuals into *‘men’* and *‘women’*. For example, one of the most consistent features of political decision-making is women’s lack of influence. This is in turn often the result of what feminist scholars have problematized as perhaps the most pervasive, institutionalized and detrimental power-over relationship in our world: the domination of women by men.

Gender roles are power relations. Gender is not only a cause but also a consequence, instrument and embodiment of power-over relations. It is a key mechanism through which power not only constrains but constitutes individuals and is perhaps the most persistent form of *‘invisible power’* in our world. This can be seen by problematizing the ways in which societies define appropriate masculine and feminine behaviour.

Men and women consequently often consider women’s lack of power ‘natural’ and appropriate. This, for example, significantly reduces women’s access to decision-making as they may lack the self-confidence or be actively prevented from speaking up in public meetings. Recognizing these dynamics, work on women’s empowerment has stressed women’s sense of self-worth and self-knowledge (power-within) as a critical aspect of the process for change.

Power relations in the *‘public’* and *‘private’* spheres often interact in complex ways to shape development outcomes. In Ethiopia, for example, a power analysis highlighted that *“political power structures are learnt, or embodied, through family power relations from a young age: men are superior to women, elders to younger”*. This results in a rigidly hierarchical culture, which is a key constraint on democratic governance. Further, in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, power analyses showed how wider economic trends have increased female employment and access to resources. This has often challenged power relations between men and women in households, leading to conflicts in families and, paradoxically, a wider resurgence of social control over women (source: <http://www.ungei.org/Technical_Brief_Final.pdf>, accessed on August 11, 2017).

*Further*, there is also growing evidence and understanding on how schools as institutions can reinforce gender norms and violence through their policies and practices. Institutions outside the school, such as families and cultural and religious institutions, which are critical in shaping gender norms and are therefore important stakeholders in development initiatives. Also, important is an understanding of how wider structural inequalities like poverty, can combine with gender to create acute conditions for the occurrence of discriminating societal practices. Understanding how social norms underpin practices and how they can be changed is a subject of wide ranging enquiry and study for development practitioners and donors. Some social norms can reflect common practice based on mistaken knowledge but gender norms tend to be based on values that arise from deeply held societal structures that are more difficult to change (source: <http://www.ungei.org/Technical_Brief_Final.pdf>, accessed on August 11, 2017).

*Furthermore*, there is increasing recognition in the field of international health and nutrition that gender inequities and dynamics are a major social determinant of health and nutrition outcomes. *However*, reviews of evidence to date have tended to concentrate on comparisons of health and nutrition outcomes, healthcare utilisation or coverage of services/programmes between boys and girls or women and men. There is, thus, need to research into the ways in which gender influences household dynamics in relation to aspects of young child health and nutrition (source: <https://www.unicef.org/Gender_Influences_on_Child_Survival_a_Narrative_review.pdf>, accessed on August 11, 2017).

## Joycia Thorat, Actalliance, India

Working with women farmers and farm laborers in Yavatmal I would like to share the following input:

Rural women’s life is limited between their home and farm land even in this time and age which is a huge drawback. Mobility, increasing the mobility of women through exposures and travel outside their village, freeing them from burden of house hold chores /farm chores even for few hours or few days and engage in “other work/ learning” can bring in gender transformative impact. Mobility for the purpose of participation in training program in another village or another district , travel to taluka place for banking work of Self-help groups and microfinance group , travelling to district headquarters for meeting government officers to claim government schemes and programs for their village community , meeting agriculture department officials and seeking support for farm work as per government plans and policies , proposing new schemes for the community which is agriculture based on their experience can be very transformative and liberative .

This turns them into leaders automatically in their village. This renewed strength has ripple effect and many more women join this empowerment process. However men need to be trained on gender equality, need to take care of household chores for this transformative impact to be complete. Otherwise women will end up doing more work which becomes a double burden.

Capacity Building programs on various issues from importance of participating in local governance, to be aware of all government programs and policies , Gender justice training for both men and women ,Organic farming and low cost agro production training entrepreneurship , managing self-help group and finance etc. helps women in transformative impact and supports the sustainable food security and nutrition .

Entrepreneurship programs to be encouraged among women to diversify from agriculture as well as to add value to agriculture product and market it. To keep away from money lenders and escape the vicious cycle of getting stuck with the loan sharks self-help group, seed money support programs etc. should be encouraged. Women are excellent in managing value chain processes. Small Support will help many women to become independent.

## Kuruppacharil V. Peter, World Noni Research Foundation, India (third contribution)

The Malayalam month "Karkadakam" prior to "chingam" is celeberated as "Ramayanam Month" and Hindus spend time in prayers and adorations.The great saint Valmiki wrote the epic Ramayanam -the story of Lord Ram and Lordess Sita-.Lord Ram,Lordess Sita and brother Laxmana were send to wilderness to fetch for them self.The devilish Ravana hijacked Lordess Sita and took her to Sri Lanka.The celestial war ending in the rescue of Sita and total destruction of Sri Lanka is the anti-climax of the great epic.The epic reveals the importance and central position given to women in socio-political and cultural fabric of Asia.Annie Besant,Sarojini Naidu,Indira Gandhi and many others molded the destiny of 1000 millions of people.Many acts and judicial pronouncements came to protect women and prevent atrocities against them.Women empowerment through collective self employment is showing positive results."Kudumbasree" an all women movement in Kerala is making waves in sectors like hospitality, street vendoring, public cleanliness, environment protection,patient care,postal services, banking, postal services etc.The success stories in Kerala need to be spread to northern states of India where honour killing and child marriages are common.I am attaching a paper published by LANSA, MSSRF Chennai.

Attachment:

<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/sites/default/files/discussions/contributions/Reviving%20and%20strengthening%20women-s%20position1.pdf>.

## Jeanette Cooke, Italy

Comments re the implementation of behavior change approaches based on recent primary research in rural Malawi.

The effectiveness of tools to bring about behavior change and overcome the root causes of gender inequality strongly depends on how they are implemented. Even the most proven and well-designed tool can have a limited impact on people’s lives if it is not matched with local capacity in terms of skills and resources to implement and monitor it. Across several of the poorest districts in Malawi, the Household Approach is being implemented through the public agricultural extension service. An important lesson learnt, in a context with limited local capacity, includes the need to monitor the trade-off between quality (of implementation and impact) and quantity (number of households reached).

Comments re male outmigration based on recent secondary research into gender roles in rice farming systems in the Philippines. (Key sources in research: Paris et al, 2010, Interrelationships between labour outmigration, livelihoods, rice productivity and gender roles; Asian Development Bank, 2013, Gender equality in the labor market in the Philippines)

In the Philippines, more women have migrated away from rainfed rice farming systems than men and roughly equal proportions of men and women have migrated away from irrigated rice farming systems. Where the outmigration of men has led to de facto female headed households, women’s workloads have not necessarily increased thanks to income from remittances used to hire farm labour. Women are more likely to face problems accessing key inputs and extension services. Meanwhile, it is reported that when women migrate, the men left behind often find it difficult to take on responsibility for domestic chores and care work.

Jeanette Cooke, Consultant, Italy

## Juliane Friedrich, IFAD, Italy

This very interesting and important discussion makes us realize that although, gender has been on the agenda for decades, we are still in some areas not or only partly progressing. There are some islands of happiness but overall rural women and girls are still facing many challenges, which are not only impacting on the individual but on entire nations. There is no “one size fits all” but there are some fundamental human rights to be respected including the rights of a child hitting in particular the girl child.

Girl child education is essential for empowerment of women. There are still a number of countries in which early marriages are almost a norm and not an exception. Even if the legal framework is there, girls are becoming brides even before they reach the age of 18 years. They are too young to become mothers and too young be a wife. If we talk about the educational level of rural women we cannot avoid to look at this. Early pregnancies often resulting in low birth weight babies – a major risk factor for undernutrition - do not only perpetuate the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition, they also destroy the educational hope of a girl child. Later in their life, they might be included in a development programme focusing on women’s empowerment but the full potential is already gone. Being a nutritionist, of course I connect gender issues with their impact on nutrition and it is shame that this is not really captured in the SDGs – strictly speaking.

I see numerous agriculture programmes in which the major trunk e.g. large irrigation schemes are directed to men or male dominated Farmer Organisations and the small scale kitchen gardens left for individual women or women’s group (sometimes described as mother’s support group) almost as an alibi for women inclusion. Kitchen gardens targeting women for home consumption and irrigation projects targeting men as majority for commercialization. The “logic” behind this is still the perception that women deal with cooking and feeding and the men deal with the real business. This also means too often that kitchen gardens do not get sufficient attention by extension workers in terms of services like training, high quality agricultural inputs, innovative technologies etc. And, by the way, a kitchen garden by definition looking more or less at vegetable and fruit production only is even from the nutritional point of view not sufficient and an Integrated Homestead Food Production approach integrating livestock and fish is of higher value.

The request for more female extension workers needs to be taken serious, however, let’s not forget that the women are already educationally deprived and might not have the right qualification for becoming an extension worker. I personally don’t mind having the majority male extension officers provided they have received a proper gender (and nutrition) training and this goes beyond being aware that setting up meetings have to take the busy schedule of women into consideration. A crash course in gender does not help much as extension officers are coming from the same community/society in which cultural norms are not necessarily in favour of adolescent girls and women. These cultural norms not allowing women to participate in meetings and trainings without the consensus of their husbands are norms hindering the progress of women in agriculture. Of course, men and boys have to be included in discussions and they need to have the understanding that these training programmes targeting women or also for their benefit but I don’t think this enough. What is needed is also an enabling political environment promoted by policy dialogue on the importance of women being fully accepted by Ministry of Agriculture. Often I find the women in MoA mainly in the Home Economics department dealing with cooking demonstrations and kitchen gardens. This is not the idea of empowering women in agriculture. Food security and nutrition at household level is determined by women and they need to heard and need to be seen. And, I totally agree, that we have to listen more and discuss with them and not about them. This also counts for the Youth. I am actually very frustrated when I read “Youth”. There is the female and the male youth with different opportunities and different challenges. My favourite example is a dairy project, in which the successful job creation for youth turned out to be the establishment of milk transportation with motorcycles operated by young men. This is gender-blind – full stop!

The feminisation of agriculture is very much a result of the rural exodus of working male. This is a challenge we need to address. Agriculture needs to become more attractive and profitable for women and men. Otherwise, everybody who can run will end up in the city and the ones remaining – often the women with their children or other family members in need of care – have to carry all alone the burden.

We need role models of young women being successful in agriculture and this requires engaging more women into value chains. We might need affirmative actions for this but it is worth it.

Right now, gender is not the only cross cutting theme but we have nutrition, climate change and youth as well. The problem with cross cutting themes is always that they are everybody’s business but nobody’s responsibility. Sometimes, I sense the perception that cross cutting means it is automatically everywhere and does not need special attention. This is killing the theme.

IFAD has taken up the challenge of a horizontal integration of the cross cutting themes of gender, nutrition, climate change, and youth. It is still work in progress but at the end of the day, it will hopefully break-down the silo thinking.

Although, I am in favour of checklists but many checklists became tick boxes only – meaningless and useless. This also applies to some targets e.g. 30% of beneficiaries are women – this does not tell the story ... what are these women do, what role do they play and what authority do they have and not to be forgotten: what change did they experience in their lives.

We need to apply a detailed accountability framework on gender transformation with SMART indicators. It is not new but still not universally applied.

In the discussion, we learnt of many positive examples but these examples need to be replicated and scaled up. The islands of happiness will not bring the change unless we take them as guiding format.

There is so much more to say and to do (in particular on gender and nutrition)… maybe there will be another opportunity.

Juliane Friedrich

IFAD-OPE

Senior Technical Specialist Nutrition

## Halimatou Moussa, FAO, Niger

**Original contribution in French**

CONTRIBUTION DE MME HALIMATOU MOUSSA IDI / COORDINATRICE NATIONALE DU RWEE AU NIGER

**Question 1 : Quels sont les principaux défis que doivent relever les femmes et les filles rurales ?**

Dans le contexte particulier du Niger, des facteurs tels que le changement climatique, des contingences liées à la sécheresse, aux crises alimentaires et nutritionnelles, aux inondations régulières, les invasions de criquets, les afflux massif de réfugiés, créent  un environnement difficile qui menace les moyens de subsistance de la population rurale.

En outre, filles et femmes rurales adressent chaque matin des défis  qui font obstacle à leur bien-être et leur potentiel socio-économique (4 des 5 pauvres sont des femmes). Ces contraintes incluent :

* l’analphabétisme (taux d’alphabétisation pour les personnes âgées de 15 et plus haut (c'est-à-dire qui peut lire et écrire) est de 19,1 % (hommes : 27.3%; femme : 11 % (2015).Leur **faible taux d’alphabétisation et de scolarisation**, limitant leurs connaissances et compétences indispensables pour mieux conduire leurs activités productives, économiques et politique
* le très haut taux de fécondité (indice de fécondité est de 7, 6 enfants par femme – (EDSN 2012),
* l’accès limité aux ressources productives (terre, intrants agricoles, finances et crédit, services de vulgarisation et technologie) :  Une étude réalisée par le NEPAD[[1]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/gender_CSW#_ftn1) en lien avec l’accès aux services de vulgarisation, de formation/d’information/de communication, de diffusion de la technologie et de l’alphabétisation démontre que : 76% de personnes n’ayant pas accès à un service sont des femmes ; seules  34,7 % des femmes ont accès aux services de vulgarisation ; 38 % des femmes ont accès aux semences ;  32,5 % des femmes ont accès aux engrais ; 22,8 % des personnes qui bénéficient d’un crédit rural sont des femmes ; 88,5%  des terres appartiennent aux hommes. Les 11, 5% restants sont détenus conjointement par le mari et la femme, ou par la femme et les enfants.
* Les femmes sont surchargées avec les travaux domestiques : (préparation des repas, la corvée de la collecte de l’eau et de bois, de transformation de produits agricoles, le travail pastoral et l’éducation des enfants), prendre soin des malades et personnes âgées, le poids des traditions et des coutumes, la confusion entretenue sur les préceptes de l’islam (mauvaise interprétation), les règles des communautés et les droits de la femme.
* Le faible accès des femmes rurales aux services publics, à la protection sociale,  aux innovations, aux marchés locaux et nationaux et aux institutions en raison de normes culturelles enracinées et  des défis sécuritaires.
* L’accès difficile au foncier et aux moyens de production éloigne les jeunes en milieu rural (filles et garçons)  du monde agricole ;  les formations professionnelles y sont peu accessibles et les opportunités de s’installer à son propre compte sont limitées par manque d’accès aux crédits. Les hommes décident sur les dépenses des ménages, de la vente du bétail (84,7% des cas) et l’utilisation de la culture (84,1%). Dans les espaces privés et publics, les hommes incarnent l´autorité, fixent les règles, les codes de conduite et assurent le contrôle des biens familiaux et communautaires. Cela contraste fortement avec la participation massive des femmes dans les activités agricoles et génératrices de revenus. Pour ce qui est des décisions par rapport aux produits agricoles 30,3% des femmes en décident, 29,6% pour les produits de l’élevage et l’accès au crédit (20%)[[2]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/gender_CSW#_ftn2).
* L’accès à l’information, qui pourrait permettre aux femmes rurales  d’élargir leurs connaissances et d’échanger leurs savoirs et pratiques, est très restreint. L’accès et le contrôle des biens et des services ; les inégalités sociales, économiques et politiques entre hommes et femmes compromettent la sécurité alimentaire, freinent l’accroissement économique, atténuent les avancées dans tous les domaines et limitent la prise en charge des changements possibles par les populations rurales elles-mêmes en générale et par les femmes rurales en particulier.

**Question 2 : Sommes-nous en train de suivre les bonnes approches et politiques pour réduire les inégalités entre les sexes ?**

En termes d’approches, j’aimerais souligner l’importance d’agir en partenariat  à tous les niveaux (partenariat entre acteurs au développement et partenariat hommes-femmes pour un bienêtre partagé), car les défis sont nombreux et aucun acteur pris individuellement ne peut les gagner tout seul.

Ceci m’amène à partager l’expérience du programme conjoint **« Accélérer les progrès vers  de l’autonomisation économique des femmes rurales » (Rural women economic empowerment) RWEE au Niger**. Il vise à soutenir l’effort du Gouvernement Nigérien pour l’autonomisation de la femme et la sécurité alimentaire à travers une approche multisectorielle basée sur le renforcement de la synergie entre  l’ONU Femmes, la FAO, le FIDA et le PAM pour une mise en œuvre conjointe et complémentaire, afin d’avoir un impact plus important sur les bénéficiaires au niveau des communes.

Les quatre agences ont convenu que l’approche des clubs Dimitra soit la porte d’entrée pour les activités du programme, ce qui a permis de travailler avec les hommes et les femmes, jeunes et non jeunes sur plusieurs questions du bienêtre en milieu rural en gros investissement extérieur. D’importants résultats ont été atteints par ce programme en termes d’accès à l’information et à la communication participative, d’augmentation de la production agricole par les agricultrices, d’accès aux marchés avec les produits agricoles par les femmes, d’allègement des tâches ; de la participation des femmes et des jeunes aux processus de prise de décision communautaire, le score de diversité alimentaire est passé de 3,8 à 5  en moins d’une année etc. On note également l’amélioration de la participation des femmes aux institutions rurales telles les comités de gestions des établissements scolaires, les organisations paysannes etc.

**Question 3 : Quelle est la meilleure manière de générer des changements significatifs en matière de genre ?**

La meilleure manière de générer des changements significatifs en matière de genre est de s’attaquer aux causes profondes de l’inégalité entre les sexes et du déni de droit avec plus d’engagement des hommes. Il est important  de travailler avec les femmes, les hommes afin de transformer les normes sexo-spécifiques néfastes à l’équité et à l’égalité de genre, de transformer les attitudes et les considérations sociales qui légitiment la discrimination. Étant donné la place sociale et le rôle que les hommes jouent dans la famille et dans la société, il est important de reconstruire avec eux,  une masculinité positive aux droits des femmes ; de bâtir une  masculité et une féminité qui perçoivent les droits des femmes comme partie intégrante des droits humains. L’expérience du RWEE au Niger a permis une fois de plus de  confirmer qu’hommes et femmes sont victimes de socialisation,  qu’ils peuvent ensemble  être le moteur du changement social. Il s’agit maintenant d’aller de l’avant, en mobilisant plus de ressources afin que les hommes et les femmes revoient  ensemble les processus de gouvernances qui régissent les institutions, les normes qui règlementent les relations de pouvoir dans lesquelles chacune et chacun se bat pour se frayer le chemin.

[[1]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/gender_CSW#_ftnref1) Etude réalisée par NEPAD dans le cadre de son Programme africain d’appui au genre, aux changements climatiques et à l’agriculture, 2012

[[2]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/gender_CSW#_ftnref2) Etude réalisée par NEPAD dans le cadre de son Programme africain d’appui au genre, aux changements climatiques et à l’agriculture, 2012

**English translation**

CONTRIBUTION from MME HALIMATOU MOUSSA IDI /National Coordinator for Rural Women Economic Empowerment (RWEE) in Niger

Question 1: What are the main challenges rural women and girls are facing today?

In the context of Niger, factors like climate change, events related to drought, to the food and nutrition crisis, to the recurring floods, the invasion of locusts, the massive influx of refugees, create a difficult environment that threatens the livelihoods of the rural population.

Furthermore, rural women and girls have to face each morning the challenges that obstruct their well-being and their socio-economic potential (4 out of 5 poor people are female). These restrictions include:

* Illiteracy (the rate of literacy for people aged 15 and over (that is they can read and write) is 19.1% (male: 27.3%; female: 11% (2015). Their low rate of literacy and schooling limits their knowledge and the much needed skills in order to carry out their productive, economic and political activities.
* The very high fertility rate (fertility index is 7.6 children per woman (EDSN, 2012).
* The limited access to productive resources (land, agricultural inputs, funding and credit, information and technology services): A study carried out by NEPAD [New Partenership for Africa´s Development][[1]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/gender_CSW#_ftn1)in connection with access to services for dissemination, training/information/communication, for promotion of technology and literacy have shown that: 76% of the people who do not have access to a service are women; only 34.7% of women have access to dissemination services; 38% of women have access to seeds; 32.5% of women have access to fertilizers; 22.8% of people who benefit from a rural credit are women; 88.5% of land belongs to men. The other 11.5% are owned jointly by husband and wife or by the wife and children.
* Women are overloaded by domestic work: (preparation of meals, the chore of collecting water and firewood, the transformation of agricultural products, farming and the education of children), taking care of the ill and elderly, the burden of traditions and customs, the confusion maintained on the precepts of Islam (faulty interpretation), the community rules and women´s rights.
* The poor access of rural women to public services, to social security, to innovations, to local and national markets and to institutions owing to deep rooted cultural norms and security risks.
* The difficult access to land ownership and to the means of production, pushes rural youth (girls and boys) away from the world of agriculture; very  little professional training is accessible there and the opportunities to start up on their own are limited because access to credit is not available. Men decide on household expenditure, on the sale of animals (84.7% of cases) and the management of crops (84.1%). In the private and public spheres, men personify authority, fix the rules, the code of conduct and undertake the control of family and community assets. That contrasts strongly with the enormous involvement of women in agricultural activities and the generation of income. For decisions on agricultural products, 30.3% of women decide, 29.6% for livestock products and for access to credit (20%)[[2]](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/gender_CSW#_ftn2).
* Access to information systems, which could allow rural women to increase their knowledge and exchange their knowhow and practices, is very restricted. The lack of access and control of goods and services; social, economic and political inequalities between men and women,  jeopardize food security, hold back economic growth, reduce progress in all areas and limit the undertaking of possible changes by the rural population themselves in general and by rural women in particular.

Question 2: Are we using the right approaches and policies to close the gender gap?

In terms of approaches, I would like to underline the importance of acting in partnership at all levels (partnership among development agencies and partnership between men and women for shared wellbeing), because the challenges are many and no actor working alone can overcome them by themselves.

This brings me to share the experience of the colaborative program « Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women» RWEE in Niger. It aims to support the effort of the Nigerien government for the empowerment of women and food security through a multisectorial approach based on the reinforcement of the synergy between UN Women, FAO, IFAD and WFP for joint and complementary implementation, in order to have a greater impact on the beneficiaries at the communal level.

The four agencies have agreed that the approach of the Dimitra clubs should be the entry point for the activities of the program, which has made it possible to work with men and women, young and not so young on several questions of wellbeing in the rural areas with major external investment. Important results were achieved by this program in terms of access to information and participative communication, increase of agricultural production by farming women, access of women to agricultural products markets, easing of taxes; participation of women and young people in the community decision process, and the rate of food diversity has moved from 3.8 to 5 in less than a year, etc.  One notes also the improved participation of women in rural institutions such as management committees of schools,

farmers’ organizations, etc.

Question 3: How can we best achieve gender transformative impacts?

The best way to generate significant changes in terms of gender is to tackle the deep causes of inequality between the sexes and of the denial of rights with more involvement of men. It is important to work with women and men so as to transform the sex-specific norms damaging to equity and to gender equality, to transform the attitudes and social considerations that legitimize discrimination. Given the social status and role that men fulfil in the family and society, it is important to rebuild with them a masculinity positive towards the rights of women; to build a masculinity and femininity that perceives women´s rights as an integral part of human rights. The RWEE experience in Niger has allowed once again to confirm that men and women are the victims of their social upbringing, that they can together be the drivers of social change. Now it is a question of forging ahead, by mobilizing more resources so that men and women together revise the processes of governance that rule the institutions, the norms that determine the balances of power in the midst of which each one is trying to make their way.

[1] Study carried out by NEPAD in the framework of its program Gender, Climate Change and Agriculture Support Project, 2012

[2] Study carried out by NEPAD in the framework of its program Gender, Climate Change and Agriculture Support Project, 2012

1. GUILLET L. et al, 2013- Inclusion sociale et genre au niveau local: enjeux et appuis au Maghreb, AFCCRE [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Mangoro is an ethnic group in the Ivorian north. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Hambol region forms part of the great Ivorian north where the main place is Katiola. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. According to UNICEF (2006), 49% of girls living in Ivory Coast are not schooled and the northern region represents 78% of this index. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. In the majority of African societies where the masculine values dominate, the women´s income is generally managed by men. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Women are more and more active and comfortable in their socio-economic activities when they are healthy and manage birth control. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)