



Gender Mainstreaming in Food Security:

Promotion of Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural Growth

'Women account for a great proportion of the agricultural labour force, produce the majority of food grown, and perform most of the unpaid care work in rural areas; yet, they do not enjoy equality with men when it comes to assets, land, food, and nutrition, work opportunities, education and participation in decision making' (FAO, 2016)



Hunger in the world

Studies show that, hunger in the world would decrease by 12% to 17%, if women had the same access as men to sources of production (MFA, 2013).



Impact increasing woman's income

A USD10 increase in a woman's income achieves the same improvements in children's nutrition and health as an increase in a man's income of USD110 (G4AW, 2016).

WHY



Women represent on average 43% of the agricultural labour force

in developing countries, ranging from 20% in Latin America to 50% in Eastern Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (FAO, 2011).



Productive resources

Women could increase their yields by 20% to 30% if they had the same access as men to productive resources, extension services, as well as a voice in policy-making (FAO, 2011).



Higher value

When products become of higher value, for example because of improved quality and increased access to markets, it is common for women to lose control over these and the resulting benefits, such as income (Doss, 2012).



Limited recognition of women's time burden

and power imbalances within the household makes them invisible, affecting their capacity to express their needs and seek support (FAO, 2016).

For more information and more detailed examples, please see corresponding [Memo](#)

Policy Challenges

Food security policies and programmes are mainly considered technical areas, with gender as an add-on



- Ensure project objectives and design are fully informed by a [gender analysis](#) of the food security problem being addressed, particularly the gender division of labour, access to and control over resources and anticipated project benefits.

- Allocate budget lines in programmes for capacity-building activities of staff and mainstreaming gender in a consistent and systematic way.

Lack of gender expertise and women's voices in policy development and implementation



- Ensure use of (in-house) gender expertise in implementing countries and coach/train them.

- Look for local partnerships with women's rights organisations and ensure women's representation in decision-making.

Lack of gender-differentiated data and indicators and of a deeper understanding of the role of women in food security



- Collect and critically analyse context-specific, gender-differentiated data for problem analysis and project design, establishing a baseline and M&E. Include [gender-sensitive indicators](#).

- Make use of existing databases and measurement frameworks, such as the [FAO database](#), the [WEAI](#) and the [FAO Agri-Gender Statistics Toolkit](#).

Lack of lessons learnt to inform policy development and practice



- Ensure all steps of the policy cycle are gender-sensitive and informed by [gender analysis](#), including [calls for proposals](#) see for example full proposal template of the G4AW tender documents.

- Use data from key gender and food security documents such as [FAO's State of Food and Agriculture 2010–2011](#), the [World Bank's Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook](#) and [ADB's GE and FS—Women's Empowerment as a Tool against Hunger](#).

Promising Pathways



Investing in women creates a multiplier effect in impact and scale to eradicate global hunger

- Recognise and invest in women as key users and clients of agricultural services. Improved access to and control over resources and markets for women can significantly increase their agricultural productivity.
- Work with both men and women in agricultural programmes. This can mitigate gender-specific bottlenecks that are not directly linked to agriculture, such as women's lack of voice in household decision-making that affects their nutrition.

Case: G4AW projects. A study showed the relevance of reaching out to women with tailored agricultural services. G4AW now makes it mandatory to conduct a gender analysis for project proposals to ensure grantees address women's needs and interests in the design of their agricultural services.



Recognising and valuing women's multiple roles and contributions to promote inclusive and sustainable agricultural growth

- Create programmes that reduce and redistribute women's unpaid care work. Reduce such work through time-saving innovations, redistribute the workload by involving men and recognise unpaid care work as essential for inclusive and sustainable economic growth.
- Promote solutions for women to access and control resources through collective action. Collective interventions tailored to women's multiple roles, positions, needs and interests can significantly promote inclusive and sustainable agricultural growth.

Case: ActionAid. Community women used time diary tools to demand redistribution of work-loads and to push for increased budgets for public services that would support them in their unpaid care work.



Promoting gender equality through the realisation of sustainable food systems

- Use context-specific knowledge of both women and men to realise sustainable food systems. This knowledge of farmers, particularly women, is often overlooked, even though it can promote food security and mutual understanding between women and men farmers.
- Promote women's land rights with a focus on increasing women's decision-making over the use of land. Women's access to and control over land can significantly increase farming productivity and enhance sustainable farming systems.

Case: FDOV-financed project Fanning the Spark. Results show enhanced mutual understanding between husbands and wives after they jointly designed and implemented Integrated Farm Plans to increase food security.