

Woman working peanut plot in Mubende, Uganda.



The Importance of Gender in the Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program

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La Paz, Bolivia June 29, 2007**



From WID to GAD

- **WID (Women in Development)**
- **GAD (Gender and Development)**
 - **at Virginia Tech**
 - **at USAID**
 - **in SANREM CRSP**
- **Gender equity and integration**

From WID to GAD to gender integration

- In the '70s WID sought to eliminate discrimination against women in international development projects.
- In the 80s GAD looked at women in development from the perspective of gender and power relations.
- We went from WID to GAD to gender integration with the idea that “we already did that,” or we can create gender experts in two days or four hour workshops.
- The word “gender” appears in funding proposals and project reports but often there is no gender work being performed on the ground.

Women in Development (WID) in Virginia Tech: Institutional Commitment

- 1978 – Virginia Tech receives funds from federal government (Foreign Assistance Act grant: Title XII)* to work with institutions in developing countries and to address issues of food security and poverty.

*(Requires women's participation)

- 1980 – Virginia Tech offers courses on women's role and status in developing countries.
- 1990 – The state of Virginia funds a WID position on a permanent basis.

USAID Requirements

- All funded projects must take gender issues into account.
- Collaborative research support programs (CRSP) are funded by USAID
- These should take steps to assure that 50% of the beneficiaries are women (researchers, farmers, etc.)
 - If not possible, explain, or better yet find a creative way to achieve it.



Dr. Sally Miller, Plant Pathologist from Ohio State University (OSU) teaches a group of farmers in Mukono, Uganda how to diagnose banana wilt in tomatoes.

Principles for Gender Integration in SANREM CRSP

Recognize that women and men's roles are socially constructed and their needs vary from one place to the next.



Women separating potatoes in Carchi, Ecuador while the men harvest.

1. Ask who does what? Where?

Which resources, crops, and tasks are men's, women's, or both? (Even if women don't consider themselves farmers, they are often still the ones providing labor in the field.) What obstacles impede women's access to resources? How can women's needs be incorporated?

2. Work with the people.

- With women and men participating equally; focus on the priorities they identify.



Women in Tiraque, Bolivia identifying community priorities.

3. Recognize men's and women's knowledge.

Don't erase local knowledge with "modern" technology imposed from the outside. Respect the knowledge that the men and women have about agriculture.



Woman weeding eggplant in the south of India.

4. Measures to ensure women's participation.

In surveys, it's important that men interview other men and women interview other women. Data should always be disaggregated by gender.





In many cases, women feel more comfortable, and speak more freely, in groups of women and with women researchers; however, this is not always the case. The most important thing is that women participate from the beginning of a project and help set its priorities.

5. Analyze the specific gender roles in the specific research environment.

- Gender information must be analyzed and the project may need to be refocused to take this into account. Researchers must ask: “Why are some tasks considered masculine and others feminine in different cultural contexts?” Why do women work many more hours than men in almost all rural environments? What can be done to balance this?

Which crops are women's responsibility and which are men's? Will a change in crop or technology increase women's work disproportionately? Will it displace women from their spaces and activities? Will women be excluded because the technology uses heavy machinery or large animals?



Women planting cowpeas in Ghana.



Why integrate gender?

1. For ethical reasons: we have the moral obligation to reduce hunger, poverty, and gender inequity in the world.

Women make up 50% of the world population. They:

- Are the majority of the 1.3 billion who live in poverty.
- Carry out 2/3 of the total hours worked, but receive only 1/10 of the income.
- Own less than 2% of private lands.
- Receive less than 5% of support services.
- Receive 1% of agricultural credit.
- Produce more than 1/2 of the world's food (80% in Africa; 60% in Asia; 35% in Latin America).

2. For practical reasons...

- Women can support or resist the project—sometimes determining its success or failure.
- They may have knowledge and responsibilities that need to be taken into account in order for the project to work.
- Sometimes women control the budget and need to be convinced of why there should be a change in household budget priorities.

If you don't have knowledge of women's roles, knowledge, and spaces, you don't know what's going on.



Chopping *Cassia tora* in Mali to feed the animals in dry season.

3. Because of women's importance in agriculture and natural resources management

- Since 1970, we've known women are fundamental to agriculture (Esther Boserup's en "Women's Role in Economic Development").



Guatemala

Generally women are the ones responsible for producing crops for household consumption, as well as household chores...

...Such as: processing and preparing food, hygiene, childcare, and gathering food and water.

- Therefore, environmental degradation often affects women disproportionately (*Feminist Political Ecology* -Rocheleau, Slayter and Wangari 1996).**



Carrying water in Mali.

Women manage and value integrated agrosystems and biodiversity

- They are specialists in conservation and seed management.
- They are more likely to integrate plants from different places: The wild, gardens, and fields.
- They are more likely to integrate livestock with plants.
- They manage food crops for diversity:
 - Diversity in the diet, different seasons, storage and food preparation properties, and consumption of quality food.

... they have specialized knowledge and perspectives

- Indigenous knowledge about pest management, plants, soils and micro climates are different by gender.



In the Philippines, Dr. Herminia Rapusas shows farmers how to improve their soil with biological agents.

Because women have multiple roles beyond agriculture, their responsibilities need to be taken into account and accommodated. Sometimes this means that researchers must schedule activities near the home and take women's schedules into account.



In Mali: gathering water and grinding corn.

Challenges

- Resistance in the “natural sciences” to recognize social sciences
- The definition of “household” and the focus on head of household
- The fact that family units (household) do not function as a whole in decision making
- Distribution of power and resources in the family unit tends to favor men (International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)’s Gender Research Program. “Food Security in Practice: Using Gender Research in Development”)
- Extension agents –when there are any— tend to be men and often do not work with women.
- Barriers to women’s participation include: limited mobility; lower education levels; domestic chores; lack of access to land, credit, and training; and the fact that they do not consider themselves “farmers.”



In Tiraque, Bolivia, four daughters help their parents harvest potatoes.